February 2020

Ah, February 1st, means one more month of winter down. I can almost hear the birds chirping and smell the flowers blooming. NOT! Even though I think winter has been great this year, I can’t wait for it to be over. February will bring us the 2020 Michigan All-State, Gauge and Concurrent Teams, which will be completed after all the events have been updated by NSSA and the State Teams Committee goes through the painstaking work of figuring it out; definitely not a small task. I am sure there will be some congratulations and backslapping in my March Message for all the team members.

Even though we’re still entrenched in winter here in Michigan, the Board of Directors is busy working and planning for the upcoming year. State shoot planning began this week as your belt buckles have been ordered, so it is time to start your quest for acquiring one of them. We have also been gearing up for the second year of the Buckle Race Events. With the addition of the new handicap in the Michigan, Huron and Erie divisions it is setting-up to be a great event. While I am on the topic of events, Gun River, Rockford and Genesee have regular events on the docket for this month. Get out and break some of those little orange devils.

Our committee of Loraine Malloy, Andrew Bielman and Bill Saylor has been working on Youth incentives from the newly established dues which will be collected from our Youth members. Some of the initial ideas show promise and when the committee firms them up, I will be sure to mention them to you all in a future message. As you all know, and I cannot say it enough, Youth participation is the future of our sport. There was one time when I was gathering data for something I was working on and I charted the age concurrent percentage of participants in Michigan; guess I have way too much free time, but don’t tell my wife! I don’t think it would surprise you that over 60% of our registered competitors are 50 or older. By the way, that is also what NSSA headquarters shows for their data. At that time, which I believe was about 5 years ago, youth participation was at about 16%. Now, it is around 6% of the registered targets thrown in Michigan. Youth coaches we need you to spur registered participation. The other dearth in the concurrents is between the ages of 21 and 49. In recent years that concurrent has come in a little higher but we still need more competitors. The Triple-Sub and Sub-Sub concurrents have always been tough ones to get participation in. So many things take up time for these age groups – new job after school, new wife and possibly children. I know that from first-hand knowledge, as I took 25 years off from shooting skeet in that time period to do the same. Still we need to somehow target this group, too; 5 or 10 new shooters a year could make a big difference.

I know over the winter some of you, as well as I, tend to dabble a little in sporting clays and I am sure that we all meet some different shooters. Why don’t we as members try and get one of the sporting clays crowd out to shoot an event at a registered skeet shoot. If they are NSCA members they can participate because of the crossover program and we can give them a free CLM for the MSA. We can all sit around the club and say, “Shoots are down”; “Where are all Triple-Subs?”; or, just plain say, “Our sport is dying.” The question is, “What are we going to do about it?” As the old saying goes, if we do what we have always done, we are going to get what we have always gotten. What we need to do is be proactive ambassadors for our sport and not just be reactive. I personally have a couple ideas in the fledging stage that I have thought about and hope to try and enact this coming year. I want to assure you that the Board and I are always trying to come up with ideas for the betterment of our sport, and we would truthfully love to have input from more of our members.

As I always mention, you can contact me at ricktraw@gmail.com and I hope to start seeing you all soon.

- Rick Trawinski