



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all. I am pleased to get a last news letter out for 2011. I am blessed to have shooting and the friends that comes with it. This news letter contains a story I requested from Neal Hanson. He has been shooting for a very long time and was around for the start of USPSA in this area.

There will be a **RO class in Missoula** the weekend before Area 1, April 21 and 22, 2012. Troy McManus will be the instructor and is the finest match director I have seen. The cost is reasonable and the class already has quite a few people in it so email Paul Miner at pminer@bsp.org to reserve a spot. I will see you there as I let my certification laps.

Area 1 is full. 350 shooters have signed up and there is currently a waiting list. Self squading is already going on with the caveat that you need to pay before you squad. The whole timing of Area 1 has been less than perfect in my opinion. The match is at the end of April when Montana shooters have had about a month where they can get outside to shoot. Squading and having to pay entry fees right before Christmas is a bit of a burden for those of us who don't fall into the upper income bracket. These are my opinions. I will pass this along at the Area 1 section coordinators meeting if it is held this year. It was not last year.

Single Stack Nationals! If you want to shoot Single Stack Nationals and are a member of one of the section clubs send me an email at martinmontana@yahoo.com or call me at 406-549-4167. The match is May 2-5, 2012 in Berry Illinois., **We got 5 slots and I would love to distribute them to section members.** Also the match fee is only \$200.00. Let me know.

There is a series of great trainings coming up in Missoula. Top shooter and instructor Mike Seeklander will teach **Your**

Competition Handgun Training Program on June 6 and 7, 2012, **Advance Competition Handgun** on June 9, 2012 and shoot the match with you the next day, **Your Tactical Handgun Training Program** on June 14 and 15, 2012, and finally **Your Tactical Rifle Training Program** on June 16 and 17. I will take the advanced pistol course and the tactical rifle course. Mike is the best instructor I have come across and I have taken multiple classes from many of the top shooters. I encourage you to take one of these courses. He will build a foundation to start to build a long term program to improve your skill level. I copied this out of the browser. Take a look.

http://www.shooting-performance.com/Shooting-Performance/About_Me.html

There will be a new faces running the matches in Bozeman. After many years of work, Nick Pipinich will step down as club president and Dennis Gentry and Joe Paulson will begin running matches. I look forward to some new blood and anticipate some interesting matches at Gallatin Action Shooters. There may be some progress in Big Fork as well. I am looking forward to developments with some new blood there.

There will be a Northern Rockies Section meeting in January. We will again use teleconference unless there are objections. Section representatives and club presidents should be looking for an email in the next week or so.

Thank you for letting me serve the section. I am excited to get it going for 2012 and look forward to an exciting new year.

Neal Hanson

At the 2010 NRS Championship



I do not come from a gun family but, like most young boys, I had an interest. My first introduction to firearms was as a little kid; Roy Rogers, Daniel Boone and “who was that Masked Man”?

I was very happy when I received a pair of matching cap pistols, a twin holster rig, vest, cowboy hat and boots. One day, I was all decked out in my cowboy garb, sitting in a worn leather saddle that was strapped on the back of a big brown horse. I drew my shiny pistols and fired at an imaginary bad guy (politically correct description here). I must have been five years old. The term “gun shy horse” comes to

mind at this point. I haven’t cared much for riding horses since then.

My introduction to real firearms came via my aunt’s husband, who wanted to introduce me to elk hunting. With my parent’s permission, I completed hunter’s safety and then was given a Winchester model 94 to carry into the woods on my first opening day. When I was much older, I purchased my own rifle and spent many snowy hours searching the mountains of Southwest Montana, experiencing all that the hunting season had to offer.

In high school I shot NRA small bore. Once a week a buddy and I would go to one of the local elementary schools where there was a small range located in the basement. We learned the fundamentals of accurate rifle shooting, to shoot from the various positions, score our targets and had a good time doing it, in a safe, controlled environment. At that time I also took private instruction from our local instructor. I really regret that I didn’t try out for the University of Montana Rifle Team while I was there. Yes, they had a firearms program on campus in those days! A letterman’s jacket would have been “way cool.”

I have been a member of USPSA since June of 1989, but became

interested in the sport much earlier when I was introduced to pistol competition by way of Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. A high school buddy of mine suggested that we take a ride to Great Falls to watch “some new shooting competition” that he had heard about. That was my first exposure to some very spectacular pistol shooting. Frank Cook was driving a 1911 in that match. He made quite an impression on me. That was it; I had the bug. Shortly after that I was picking up a revolver and ordering a Ted Blocker holster to start competing. I still have the 686 and leather.

The first match that I participated in was at the Butte Gun Club. It took me awhile to get up the nerve to expose my lack of skill with a handgun. One stage from that match was the Flying M. I had just finished, unloaded and showed clear. I was shaking like a leaf. I commented to the range officer that I was nervous. He said it meant that I liked it. The RO was Frank. How true that turned out to be. After that my high school buddy and I traveled to various club matches, including a Bob Munden organized steel match in Elko, Nevada. Bob had arranged for one of the local casinos to sponsor the match and the results were a spectacular prize table with handguns

and silver trophy’s. Bob’s Pepsi Challenge matches at the Butte range were great fun too, even though cans of stale beer were sometimes used as stop plates. The exploding cans were something to see. But alas, like so many other shooters over the years, my high school buddy found other things that interested him and he moved on. It’s been 20 plus years and I’m still here.

The evolution of pistol competition has lead me from my first S&W to a single stack .45, single stack comped .38 Super – pre red dot – to several full house Supers. I have been lucky enough to win a couple of firearms at matches I have attended (door prizes, I must admit) and I do take them to the range periodically, even competing with them once in awhile. But the eyes just prefer red dots. Along the way I have had the honor of squading with the likes of Jerry Miculek, John Allchin, Tom Kettells, Lisa Munson, Johnny Lim, Judy and Charlie Wooley, Pat Kelley, Joe Durnbaugh and of course just about everyone who has competed in action pistol in Montana. You know who you are.

I was involved in the initial meeting to set up what is now the Northern Rockies Section. I was asked

to arrange the meeting location in Butte, as it was centrally located for the clubs who were shooting IPSC like matches at the time. Dave Thomas and Dennis Sparrow, who were organizing matches in Missoula, along with Gary Marbut, attended. I was surprised to see that Gary brought bylaws with him. The Missoula crew must have been thinking about setting up a section way before we had that first meeting. Imagine that!

I remember some of the early Missoula matches. Scoring was by hand. It took forever to finish up. We often left the range after dark, headlights on and having to drive home, dog-tired. The good old days! We were also regulars at matches in Havre, Libby, Lewistown, Logan Great Falls and Butte. Often I would pull my travel trailer to the out of town matches and all who were there would party Friday night and try to compete on Saturday. Sometimes it didn't turn out so well. There were those who encouraged others to partake of libations, hoping to gain the advantage the next day. Sometimes it worked out. Judy Woolley was famous for encouraging the partygoers to throw down a few. What good times they were.

I have a map of the U.S. on my office wall at home where I keep track

of the various matches that I have attended over the years; sticking color coded straight pins into each range location where I have competed. Yellow for Nationals, red for Area's etc.. It's pretty interesting to actually see where I have competed. Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Southern California, Arizona, Minnesota, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and upstate New York, are just a few of the states where I have shot matches. Most of the pins are stuck in the western half of the U.S. of course, but I'm working on that.

Once I was sent home early from Area 1 in Golden Colorado. You know the old saying...I won't go any further with that one!

My impression of shooting in the west versus the mid-west and northeast is that the west seems to put more into their Area matches. I have not shot in the south nor the southeast so this comment comes with some caveats.

I have picked up some unique trophies over the years ranging from belt buckles, gold, silver and bronze medals from the State Games in Billings (Magic City Action Shooters), several steel silhouettes of the state of Idaho as awards for high finishes at their state championship matches, a high finish in class from Area 3, a plaque for a high

finish – Senior – from Area 1, along with miniature poppers and target silhouettes from our Montana clubs. I have been tempted to calculate what it has cost me over the years to win each one; the entry fees, food, gas and lodging. So far I have resisted. The real reward for participating in action pistol has come from the people I've met, the friendships that I have made and the country that I have seen.

It has been fun and a great challenge. I have learned a lot, certainly improved my scores and times. I have shot with the best and have been lucky to have some of them on my squad a time or two. I have seen parts of the country that otherwise I probably would not have visited, all with the acceptance of my life mate, wife Cheryl. And it's not over. I look forward to each and every season, as I am sure you do. Unfortunately some of our shooting pals are no longer with us but, each year new faces appear and we continue to compete and have fun. What more could we ask for?

On to World Shoot XVII – Frost Proof Florida 2014 and all the matches in between.

DVC,

Neal

For Sale

I have a one year old Remington 700 300 WSM for sale. It will come in a Remington SPS stock that leaves the barrel completely free floated. It will also have scope bases mounted. \$575.00. Nate Martin 406-549-4167.