

## August 2011 Trap & Field Article By Glen Lonneman

Here we are once again and the Minnesota State Shoot is upon us. Last year we had a great state shoot. The weather was good, the scores were great, and all the company of fellow shooters was excellent.

This year we have about the same line up as last year. The Youth day will be all day Monday July 9<sup>th</sup>, with the rest of the events to follow. Tuesday after the day of shooting the MTA will put on a pork chop feed for all shooters and family. Wednesday starts the high over all events. Thursday evening we have a Miss and Out event in front of the club house. This event has been a favorite of many shooters in the past. Bob Schultz of Target Shotguns has been the sponsor of this event in the past and is again the sponsor for this year.

Friday night we have the Minnesota State Trap Shooters Assoc. Banquet where we honor last year's shooters for their accomplishments. Come one and all to help us support and honor them. Following the meal we have the live auction for the youth shooters of Minnesota. Mark Zauhar puts on the event for the MTA along with the help of many other volunteers.

Saturday morning is the annual Minnesota State Trap Shooters Assoc. Meeting. Then to follow is every ones favorite event the Minnesota State Singles Championship. Followed by Sundays Diamond badge and then the Big event the Minnesota State Handicap event. It looks to be a fun filled week of shooting and events. Come and join in on the fun.

Now a little more on the Youth auction. I have asked my good friend and shooter Mark Zauhar to say a few things about how the youth shooting in Minnesota has taken off and why we need your help.

Marks Article

Thanks much and hope to see you all at the shoot.  
Minnesota Trapshooters Ass. President  
Glen Lonneman

## **Youth High School Program by Mark Zauhar**

When I wrote the piece about the youth high school program that was in the recent MTA newsletter, it was December and we did not have all the latest information regarding the growth the program was to experience in 2012. The updated news is even more exciting than one could imagine! The demand for team spots in the Scholastic Clay Target League was unbelievable. Just four years ago, before we, the MTA, sponsored the first State High School League State Championship event, there were but 8 schools participating in the league. This year there will be 100! This includes schools from all parts of the state, both private and public. The 100 schools include over 1500 young shooters! What is incredible is there were additional schools ready to participate but simply could not meet the deadline for this year even though it had been moved back to accommodate late entries several times already. Even more impressive is the fact that some schools imposed team number restrictions that limit the number of kids per team yet this restriction has not limited interest. Apple Valley, as an example, limited their squad to 30 shooters. They have 50 more on a waiting list and the team has not yet fired at even one target.

Now for the exciting news, the word of our state programs success has spread. Jim Sable, the leagues program executive director, reports he has requests from 7 other states requesting help and support to join or create their own state youth high school league. What started with one club in Minnesota wanting to grow future membership is soon to spread nationally affecting 100's of clubs across the nation.

The benefits to our sport that are coming from this program are huge. The immediate benefits are many. Many young people who would never have been exposed to shotguns or shooting are being exposed. Schools are learning that there is a place for firearm competition in their programs. Future voters are learning guns are not all bad. Local clubs are being overwhelmed by the numbers of kids practicing and shooting league targets. Parents are being exposed to the safe use of firearms and some are joining their kids for extra practice sessions at area clubs. Some clubs have added high school teams to their summer leagues and one club has added an all high school summer league.

While the short term benefits are impressive, we can't lose sight of the future benefits. For many years the population of our country has been becoming more urbanized. With the move to the cities, our population's views on many things have changed. Guns have become bad and gun clubs are not welcome. Hunting access is frequently limited. Kids are being educated that hunting, shooting and guns are not something "good" people do. As this process has continued, our organization, the ATA, has seen our average member age rise every year, the number of targets fired at drop every year, and shooter participation fall at all but a few clubs. If these trends continue, the ATA will soon become a small organization with few members and lack the resources to ever grow back to what it was. But the success of our program here in Minnesota is proof it does not have to end the way we were heading. When our program reaches all of our schools we will be turning out more shooters than days past when many rural kids grew up with their .22

rifle and moved on to dad's slide action shotgun. All kids can learn the safe use of a shotgun. They don't have to be tall as they do to play basketball, they don't have to be big and fast as they do to play football. Any kid, even those in a wheel chair can participate in our sport. Giving them the chance to participate is the best thing we can do to insure the future of both our kids and our sport.

If you've read this far, you probably are smiling and thinking this is great! It is great. But if I left it there, I would be remiss in my job. This program has been successful because a few people have done a lot of work. A few people have given financial support. But a few is not enough. The program needs coaches, badly. Nothing happens without coaches. These are the people that are at the clubs at practice time. These are the people that contact the school administrators to get the program started. These are the people that hug the kids when they miss a shot and pat them on the back when they hit the target. The program will continue to need money. The bulk of our, the MTA's, fund raising comes from our state shoot benefit auctions. For those of you that have given to these auctions, thank you and please continue to give. For those that have not, maybe it's time now to consider starting.

I want to close by thanking all past donors and supporters. From the Krieghoff's, DeVault's, Blaser and Remington who have donated guns. To the many state shoot event sponsor's both big and small. To the many shooters who have found a way to financially help get this program started. I want to say thanks. Oh, and lest I forget, it's not the time to stop giving; it's the time to start and or continue. You can contact me direct at 612-325-5678 or my email is [MarkZ@Pride-Eng.com](mailto:MarkZ@Pride-Eng.com) if you want to donate merchandise for either of our benefit auctions or to make a direct cash donation.

Thank you, Mark Zauhar