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Recognizing the Champions of Hunter Education

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The International Hunter Education Association – United States of America (IHEA-USA) is an organization involving some 55,000 instructors across the United States of America. The IHEA-USA is affiliated with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The Hunter & Shooting Sports Education Journal is the official publication of the International Hunter Education Association–United States of America. It is published four times annually (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) and distributed to more than 55,000 administrators and volunteer instructors in Canada, El Salvador, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa and the United States of America, that are responsible for education programs that total 650,000 new hunters annually. The purpose of the publication is to increase the skill and effectiveness of hunter education in administrators and instructors so they can improve the enthusiasm, safety, ethics and proficiency of their students as they embark on lifetime enjoyment of hunting and the shooting sports.

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On behalf of IHEA-USA Board of Directors, I am excited to announce the Association’s new Executive Director, David Allen. David began his transition into this role during our annual IHEA-USA Business Meeting and Conference in Alaska. There, he was able to attend seminars, meetings with international partners, and meet with many of the state administrators and instructors to learn more about the Association and our needs. Mr. Allen will be working remotely from his home in Laurel, Montana.

David Allen’s professional career spans 40 years of marketing and business administration, from managing special event marketing for Wrangler Jeans to representing Dale Earnhardt and his race teams until Earnhardt’s death in 2001. Allen recently completed 11 years as the CEO of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) where he led RMEF out of a serious financial debt and a shrinking membership in 2007 to a debt-free RMEF today with over 225,000 members—the largest membership in RMEF history.

Allen was born and raised in the Black Hills of South Dakota. He attended public schools in Deadwood and attended the University of Wyoming. Allen and his wife Toni have two sons who attend Montana State University. Today, the Allen’s make their home in Laurel, Montana about 10 miles west of Billings. His hunting passions are archery elk, mule deer, and late-season pheasants in Eastern Montana.

Allen said, “I am honored to be taking on a role within the Hunter Education community alongside the 50 state administrators, the thousands of volunteer instructors, and all of the related state and federal wildlife agencies. We all have a vested interest in advancing the culture of hunting and I am excited to have this opportunity. I think there is a significant amount of opportunity before us.”

Allen has served on the boards of RMEF, Congressional Sportsman Foundation, and Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports.

As Executive Director, Mr. Allen will develop IHEA-USA’s comprehensive strategic plan, which includes fundraising, communications, strategic partnerships, and support for IHEA-USA members. Furthermore, he will be working to raise awareness of hunter education in industry, among State and Federal government, and with both hunter education instructors and hunters alike.

We are delighted that David is joining IHEA-USA as our new Executive Director. His experience leading RMEF along with his skills in marketing, corporate relations in the outdoor industry, and his strong ties to the hunting heritage are assets to the Association.

We are looking forward to his perspective and experience to advance our mission of safety and hunting worldwide. We, as a Board, will be working together in the upcoming year on several projects, including interactive standards for course delivery, modernizing our website, and updating Trapper Education Standards with our partners in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). We will also be looking to expand instructor resources as recommended by the IHEA-USA Instructor Advisory Committee.

Please join us in welcoming him.

David’s contact information is: David Allen, 800 East 73rd Ave, Unit 2, Denver, CO 80229; Cell (preferred): 406-670-2655; Office: (303) 430-7233 Email: dallen@ihea-usa.org.

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Dreaming of summer vacation? Make sure you put National Shooting Sports Month, taking place throughout the month of August, on your calendar of things to do during the long school break.

This is our second annual event, and all during August, shooting ranges, firearms retailers, public and private shooting clubs, shooting sports organizations, and fish and wildlife agencies will focus their attention on the fun and excitement of target shooting by encouraging newcomers and experienced shooters alike to head to the range.

“For junior target shooters, National Shooting Sports Month focuses attention on the fun, safety, and sociability of our sports,” said NSSF President and CEO Steve Sanetti. “This is a great time to safely enjoy a day at the range with your family and friends.”

Manufacturers, shooting ranges, shooting sports organizations, and retailers will be participating in or lending support to National Shooting Sports Month. To help spread the word about the businesses and organizations involved while providing a one-stop resource for participants, NSSF has launched www.ShootingSportsMonth.org. Among its many interactive features, the site contains a search tool to identify participating ranges and retailers that have scheduled events by state, as well as safety information, target shooting skills...
tips, introductions to new shooting games, and information on how you can participate in the month-long Trigger Time Sweepstakes.

In addition, the celebration’s social media campaign will encourage inactive shooters to dust off their shooting gear, and active recreational shooters to invite someone new to the shooting sports and act as a mentor.

“We received so much positive and enthusiastic support from our industry family for last year’s inaugural National Shooting Sports Month, we think it will be almost impossible for anyone to resist grabbing their favorite firearm, a few friends or family members, and head to the range to see what all the excitement’s about,” said Zach Snow, NSSF Director, Range Services. “And we want to know about it! Tell us on our Facebook page, Tweet us and share your Instagram photos with the hashtag #LetsGoShooting, because this is what any of us who own a firearm have been waiting for.”

**Seven Great Ways to Celebrate National Shooting Sports Month This August**

1. **Try Something New.** Are you a passionate rifle shooter? Try out a shotgun and give sporting clays or skeet a try. Are you primarily a shotgun shooter? Sign up for a rimfire rifle or steel silhouette target event and test your other long guns.

2. **Bring Someone New.** There’s nothing quite like seeing the excitement on a friend’s face after they take their first shots. Bring a friend or family member to the range for the first time, with appropriate adult supervision.

3. **Watch the Video.** At www.shootingsportsmonth.org, discover how to hone your shooting skills with video tips from experts in handgun, rifle, and shotgun.

4. **Excitement for a Lifetime.** The shooting sports are affordable, accessible, and inclusive. They’re lifetime activities you’ll enjoy with family and friends.

5. **Tell Someone About How Safe the Shooting Sports Are.** The shooting sports are safe. Ranges emphasize safely handling firearms at all times and securely storing them when you’re finished at the firing line.

6. **Share It!** Our hashtag #LetsGoShooting is the theme of National Shooting Sports Month. Share the hashtag and your experiences on your social media networks, and remind others to give target shooting a try.

7. **Win a Great Prize!** Go to www.shootingsportsmonth.org to enter the sweepstakes for a chance to win great prizes during the National Shooting Sports Month celebration this August.

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In March, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke traveled to Horicon, Wisconsin, where he announced more than $1.1 billion in annual national funding for state wildlife agencies from revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration (PRDJ) acts. Allocations of the funds are authorized by Congress. To date, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) has distributed more than $20.2 billion in apportionments for state conservation, recreation, and education projects. The recipient state fish and wildlife agencies have matched these funds with approximately $6.7 billion throughout the years, primarily through hunting and fishing license revenues. Hunters, recreational shooters, anglers, boaters, and our industry partners should be very proud of contributing to these programs, and all the successful state projects supported by these dollars!

“American sportsmen and women are some of our best conservationists and they contribute billions of dollars toward wildlife conservation and sportsmen access every year through the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts,” said Secretary Zinke. “For nearly eighty years, states have been able to fund important conservation initiatives thanks to the more than $20 billion that has generated nationwide. Every time a firearm, fishing pole, hook, bullet, motor boat, or boat fuel is sold, part of that cost goes to fund conservation. The best way to increase funding for conservation and sportsmen access is to increase the number of hunters and anglers in our woods and waters. The American conservation model has been replicated all over the world because it works.”

This year over $160 million dollars will be apportioned to state fish and wildlife agencies for their Basic and Enhanced Hunter Education programs. The Wildlife Restoration Program, including the Hunter Education subprogram, has received unprecedented levels of funding in the past five years due to increases in the...
purchase of firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment. However, states still need to provide the required 25 percent match for Hunter Education grants. Many states use volunteer hours to provide matching dollars, which is why proper documentation of volunteer hours is crucial. Other matching options include third party in-kind match for firearm and archery range projects, or with your state hunter education associations. Revenue collected from hunting license fees are also used for match if volunteer or third party in-kind match options are not available.

What can states do with their Hunter Education funds? After the costs of conducting Basic and Enhanced hunter education programs, consider any improvements needed for your program. This may include updating or replacing equipment such as firearms, ammunition, 3-D archery targets, computers for hunter education classrooms, portable trailers supplied with live-fire equipment, hunting simulators, instructor uniforms, instructional DVDs, or non-functioning firearms. Another important activity could be the development of firearm and archery ranges by your agency or private hunting/gun clubs through a small range grant program (which is not available in every state.) Hunter R3 (recruitment/retention/reactivation) projects are also important. WSFR has developed some guidance for R3 grants and compiled resources on our WSFR Wiki site at https://fawiki.fws.gov/ (search for “R3”). Remember to include volunteer instructors in developing ideas, as they are a part of your program and its success too!

This year is an excellent opportunity to take full advantage of increased funding to make your state’s hunter education program one of the best in the nation! More information about WSFR is available at: http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/.

Questions? Contact your Regional USFWS Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration office and Hunter Education Program Coordinator: https://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/ContactUs/ContactUs.htm.

A portion of this article was excerpted from the Department of the Interior Press Release “Secretary Zinke Announces More Than $1.1 Billion for Sportsmen & Conservation” on March 20, 2018.

Christina Milloy is a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) in the Headquarters Office. She is the National Lead for the Wildlife Restoration Program/Hunter Education and Sport Fish Restoration Program/Aquatic Education programs. Contact Christina at: christina_milloy@fws.gov.
GOG Champions of Hunter Education - Thomas Cousins

The contributions hunter education instructors make is immeasurable. Or is it? If we were to total the number of students who have successfully completed hunter education in all the classes throughout all the states over all these past years, the number would be staggering, certainly in the hundreds of thousands. These instructors continue to teach safe and ethical hunting and conservation, among numerous other topics, and what they teach is passed on by their students so the education continues to grow, continues to spread, so yes, perhaps their contribution is immeasurable.

Everyone who hunts, shoots, or enjoys the outdoors owes hunter education instructors a debt of thanks. Gallery of Guns knows that, which is why they annually recognize six truly outstanding hunter education instructors, and this year will present to each of them a 30-06 Ruger American rifle.

“Hunter education instructors are the backbone supporting our nation’s great hunting heritage,” said Bill Bennett, director of marketing for Davidson’s and GalleryofGuns.com. “Without them and the thousands of hunters they educate each year, we would face losing the traditions we all hold dear and our country and our wildlife, habitat, and natural world would suffer tremendously.”

In this issue we highlight three Gallery of Guns Champions of Hunter Education. Three more will be recognized in our next issue.

Thomas Cousins, a 2018 winner of the Gallery of Guns Champions of Hunter Education award, “has made a huge difference in hunter education in the state of South Carolina through his use of technology and his innovative approach to teaching hunter education,” according to Sgt. J.K. Shelton of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

Shelton, who nominated Cousins for the award, said, “I also believe he has made a difference in the lives of many students. He has given the gift of nature to a large group of kids that may never have been exposed to it.

“I have witnessed this ordinary man do extraordinary things for the benefit of the youth of South Carolina,” he said. Cousins teaches outdoor education at...
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West Ashley High School in Charleston, a class he started about 10 years ago. That prompted him to get certified as a hunter ed instructor so he could incorporate it into his curriculum.

“It just evolved from there,” Cousins said. “And now, not only do I teach my students, but on weekends I teach up to 12 hunter safety courses for SCDNR each year.”

It’s something Cousins would like to see spread throughout schools and become a regular part of educational curriculum in schools in the United States.

“I believe every student in every school should be taught hunter education,” he said. “If by teaching hunter safety as much as I do I can prevent one firearm-related accident, I feel as if it is worth my time. I feel as if it is one of the most important things I do, so I make time to teach as many as I can.”

Cousins, who has been teaching and coaching for almost 25 years, started with 25 students in his first Outdoor Pursuits class, according to Shelton. That class grew into six classes with a total of 150 students and another 50 on a list waiting to get in, Shelton said. “Coach Cousins has written the state curriculum for outdoor education and continues to promote outdoor education to schools throughout the state,” Shelton said.

Last year, Cousins certified 309 hunter ed students and recruited two new hunter ed instructors. He also taught 16 boater education courses and was the 2017 SCDNR state volunteer instructor of the year, an accolade he added to his 2014 SCDNR Region 4 volunteer hunter ed instructor of the year award. For the past six years, Cousins has also coached both the NASP archery team and the scholastic clays team at West Ashley High.

Shelton said Cousins has also volunteered to take more than 70 youth hunters deer hunting at his hunting club. “He does this to allow them to apply what they have learned in his hunter education classes to real-life hunting situations,” Shelton said. “Coach Cousins has a passion for not only the outdoors, but also for teaching kids how to enjoy nature responsibly and safely.”

Cousins gets a sense of accomplishment from his volunteer work.

“Knowing I have taught hundreds of students who hopefully understand ethics, conservation, preservation, and the hunter’s role in wildlife management gives me a huge sense of pride,” he said. “I hope to influence a whole generation of people who understand the hunter’s role in overall wildlife management and to be confident and ethical in the outdoors and know how to safely handle a firearm. If we as hunter education instructors can accomplish this, imagine the world we would live in.”

Send Us Your Stories And Photos!

One of the main goals of the Journal is to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and teaching experience that can help improve the education process of the more than 650,000 new hunters annually.

In order to fulfill that goal we need the input of instructors in the field. Please submit your stories and/or photos about teaching techniques that work for you, thoughts about the state of our hunting heritage today, anecdotal stories about “it happened to me” in class, visual training aids, etc...don’t worry about spelling or grammar. We are also looking for success photos, especially involving youth. Every submission chosen for print receives a gift from supporting manufacturers.

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Ken Carter has a personal reason for teaching hunter safety. About 15 years ago, while preparing for the upcoming deer season by inspecting treestands and installing lifelines and safety straps, a homemade wooden stand collapsed, sending him to the ground.

Bear in mind, at the time Carter was an experienced hunter and a hunter ed instructor. Still, the accident happened to him. A light bulb went on. “It was one of those things that can happen to anybody and everybody,” he said. “You have to be super careful. It made me think I need to do a better job of teaching this.”

Carter was sore, but not seriously injured, and he had found his calling.

In addition to teaching hunter ed classes, Carter was instrumental in developing the Traveling Treestand Trailer with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries staff, VDGIF Recreational Safety Coordinator Bryan Branch said in nominating Carter for this award. The trailer, which provides hands-on opportunities to safely experience treestand use, is available for programs and events across the state.

Within the last three years, Ken’s work in treestand safety reached beyond Virginia when he was asked by the National Bowhunter Education Foundation to conduct their treestand safety instructor training in Florida and New York, Branch said.

It all started when Carter’s stepson, Scott, wanted to try hunting and Carter attended the hunter ed class with him. There, the idea of being a hunter ed instructor was planted. That was 1995. Carter became an instructor that year.

“I had taken the class as a Boy Scout years ago, and just felt it was something
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I wanted to do,” he said. “I had hunted all my life and thought it would be a great volunteering opportunity in the off-season. A friend at work was a hunter ed instructor and encouraged me to apply.”

Hunter education, he said, “is a way of giving back to the sport and helping future generations learn the right way to do things. My uncle was my teacher and mentor in learning safe gun handling and waterfowl hunting. I wanted to pass these along to others.”

A retired conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Carter’s passion has for years been rooted in caring for and preserving the natural world and passing on that passion to hunter ed students.

“I worked for 33 years helping farmers and landowners take care of the land, and now almost 20 helping young hunters learn the safe and ethical way to harvest wildlife,” he said. “Management of our natural resources, whether it be our soil and water resources or wildlife and habitat, is critical to the long-term future of the sports of hunting and fishing.”

Carter is considered “a passionate, well-organized, and prepared instructor who strives for perfection while being able to relate to all audiences,” Branch said. “He is a dependable go-to kind of guy and has taken the Treestand Safety program to new heights, raising the level of awareness for treestand safety and making it a top priority in the minds of the hunting community.”

For his part, Carter believes learning is best done face-to-face, one-to-one, in the classroom and in the field.

“With modern technology, users have the opportunity to read, stand for examination, and become certified to hunt at their pleasure in front of the computer,” he said. “Hunter education classes bridge the information gap to provide human interaction to stress the importance of firearms handling and safety, proper techniques for hunting, tree stand safety, and ethics.”

Seeing and doing provides a better learning experience, he said. “I feel youth and other beginning hunters will understand and retain important information better in a hands-on learning environment.” And, Carter’s treestand accident provides a first-hand account he can relate to students. “Having survived a treestand fall, the one-on-one contact and personal interaction to teach proper treestand use is very important to me,” he said. “Stressing the need for a fall arrest system and lifeline is much more effective in person than read from a screen.”

Asked what he wanted students to learn from his hunter ed class, Carter said that “they are there not to become better hunters, but safer hunters, and need to be aware of split-second decisions and events that can impact their life for years to come. Whether it is an accidental firearm discharge, a slip in a treestand, or taking an unsafe shot, all have consequences that can be avoided and prevented.”

Carter hopes “my students can learn to love the outdoors and safely enjoy the sport for years to come.”

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Steven Lanford goes the extra distance to teach hunter education in remote rural villages in Alaska, at times covering that distance in small planes, float planes, and ATVs.

Lanford, an instructor for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Hunter Information and Training (HIT) program since 1998, has conducted 140 classes for more than 1,927 students, teaching far more than the two classes per year he’s asked for, according to HIT Program Coordinator Ginamaria Smith. In fact, in the last three years, he’s taught 35 classes.

“Steve can always be relied on to travel from Fairbanks to remote rural villages to teach hunter education classes,” Smith said. Rural classes, like those held in Barrow, Hughes, Fort Yukon, Aniak, and Lake Minchumina, “are more challenging than a certification class held on the road system,” Smith said, because the HIT Program staff and Lanford must overcome numerous considerations not faced in more accessible (meaning: able to drive to) communities.

Challenges include planning:
- Travel logistics (many communities are accessible only by small plane or float plane, then an ATV ride to the village)
- Lodging, since hotels and restaurants are not available
- Class location, often a school or community center
- Cultural norms, which differ in remote villages
- Students, a normal challenge. Lanford often teaches school children as well as interested community members. “Getting students to complete pre-classwork can be challenging,” Smith said.
“Upon arrival in remote villages, Steve does a wonderful job setting up the outside field course so it is realistic and challenging,” Smith said. “We receive very positive feedback about Steve and the hunter education classes from the kids, the school districts, and the communities.”

Lanford, who grew up in a hunting family, said he became a hunter ed instructor after he and his wife, Jane, attended an annual outdoors show where he saw a flyer requesting volunteer instructors. “Jane had become a hunter after our marriage and remarked that I could be an instructor without having to study the books,” he said. “She had encouraged me to do volunteer work and it looked like this would be a good fit. I had been trained by the Navy with the mechanisms of teaching during my 21-year career.”

Lanford served in the Navy from 1972 to 1993. In 1997, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in anthropology from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and has worked as a seasonal archaeologist with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Seasonal employment allows him time to dedicate to hunter education, “actively working with the hunter education program during my off-season,” he said.

“Hunter education is important for reasons of safety, increased enjoyment of the outdoors, and understanding the hunter’s role in wildlife management and conservation,” Lanford said. “I believe people from all walks of life can benefit from the hunter education class, reducing the lack of understanding about the place for firearms in the world, particularly the fact that a firearm is a tool to be used. In addition, hunter education provides a place to learn about how the United States manages wildlife, its habitats, and people interacting with both.”

“One of the great satisfactions of being an instructor is the occasion when a former student tells me how their training has been used to become a satisfied, accomplished hunter,” he said. Lanford, a lifetime member of IHEA-USA, believes so much in firearm safety and sharing his knowledge with others that he testified during an Alaska Legislative session when there was discussion of cutting funding for the Fairbanks indoor range, helping ensure the range stayed open and available for hunter ed and firearm safety classes, Smith said. “Steve has been a voice for many people on hunter education issues.”

Other Lanford accomplishments include:
- Creating a practical field course to increase awareness of “shoot, don’t shoot” scenarios, as well as educate on environmental factors of hunting in Alaska
- Recruiting hunter ed instructors among co-workers and contacts at work
- Creating a wooden bolt-action rifle so students could practice safe firearm handling after he saw an illustration in the IHEA-USA Hunter and Shooting Sports Education Journal, before Remington produced non-functional training firearms
- Developing a simple class critique for students to evaluate courses which was added to the state’s official student course survey
- Winning numerous awards, including Region III (Interior) Hunter Education Instructor of the Year in 2000 and 2001; 2006 Alaska instructor of the year; 2006 Alaska Interior Marksmanship Committee instructor of the year; 2014 Alaska instructor of the year (again)

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Lesson Learned—Treat Every Firearm With the Respect Due a Loaded Gun

By Mike Van Durme

“Treat every gun as if it was loaded.”

We repeat this to our students, and every hunter and shooter has heard this over and over and it makes complete sense. Sadly, all too often we cringe when we see someone pick up a firearm and start fumbling with it or swing it around before they ask or check to see if it is loaded.

All too often the number of self-inflicted injuries surpasses the two-party incidents. It is surprising how many times people shoot themselves, usually in the foot, with an “unloaded” firearm. These are often the easiest Hunter Related Shooting Incidents (HRSIs) to investigate. The entire incident scene is less than one-foot square, and there are often several eye witnesses. The scenario usually goes like this: a group of hunters gets together at the roadside to plan the next part of the hunt. Most have unloaded their guns as they gather in a circle to discuss where to go next. One hunter in the group did not unload and stands in the circle with the muzzle resting on his foot. He mindlessly begins to play with the safety; safety-on, safety-off, safety-on, safety-off. He looks around the group and sees several open actions and broke open doubles as he fiddles with his safety. At some critical point he forgets if the safety is on or off, so he pulls the trigger to find out!

YES! This not only does happen, but most officers who have investigated many HRSIs will tell you they have seen it more than once! People in this situation have violated several safety rules, from “Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction,” to “Treat every firearm as if it was loaded.”

Too many tragic shootings happen inside of homes because somebody picked up a stored firearm and ASSUMED it was unloaded by somebody else before they put it away. Based on that assumption, and ignoring several safety rules, they pointed and fired it in an unsafe direction. Again, they violated “Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction,” “Unload firearms when not in use,” “Store firearms and ammunition separately and safely,” and finally, “Treat every firearm as if it was loaded.”

This rule could be written:

“TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS IF IT WAS LOADED. ALL THE TIME! EVEN IF YOU JUST UNLOADED IT!!!”

Robert and Jason were best friends and went squirrel hunting on the hill behind their homes. When they returned to Robert’s house, they unloaded their .22 rifles as they stood on the deck and talked. After Robert went into the house, he looked out the window and waived at Jason, who thought it would be funny to pretend to shoot his buddy. Jason had just unloaded his tube-fed rifle, so he knew it was unloaded, but he was so startled he dropped his rifle when he pulled the trigger and it went off and the window shattered! Fortunately, Robert was only cut by some flying glass, but he could have been killed by one careless action. Once again, several rules were violated: “Point a firearm only at something you intend to shoot,” “Avoid all horseplay,” and “Treat every firearm as if it was loaded.”

I have long been amazed when otherwise safety-minded shooters, even Hunter Education Instructors, think it is okay to ignore this rule some of the time.

I am talking about the safety of resting an “unloaded” shotgun on the toe of your boot between shooting stations at trap or skeet. The fancy leather “toe tabs” that lace onto your boot provide a perfect spot, and I guess it can make you look cool, too! These are called “Gun Toe Rests,” “Barrel Rests,” or the one that makes me laugh is “Toe Protector.”

While it may protect the toe of your boot from being scuffed, I am sure it will not protect your toe from an accidental discharge. Why would a fundamental rule of firearm safety not apply as long as you are a properly dressed competitor?

The problem with obeying rules sometimes but not all the time is that we can sometimes forget. We can forget why we went to the store, we can forget where we put our wallet or car keys, and we can forget if we unloaded the firearm or not.

Lessons Learned:
• Obey ALL the safety rules, ALL the time!
• It may still be loaded, especially tube-fed .22s. Check again and physically look to see the follower.
• Never assume that the last person who handled the firearm unloaded it
• Keep your finger off the safety and off the trigger until you have decided to shoot!

Mike Van Durme is a retired Environmental Conservation Police Captain from New York State and has been a Hunter Education Instructor for 35 years. He is a co-author of “Blood On The Leaves, Real Hunting Accident Investigations and Lessons In Hunter Safety.” He and co-author Sgt. Keith Byers, who retired from Georgia DNR, operate Hunting and Shooting Related Consultants, LLC and are regular contributors to the Journal.
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Helping Hunters Fill Tags for 35 Years
I have been thinking about that sauce as I write and lecture about R3 and youth hunting programs. I’ve asked dozens of young hunters why they like to hunt. Without exception, the most frequently stated reason for their attraction is that hunting is fun. Fun—a simple word but a complex concept. When people use words, I want to know precisely what they mean. I’ve gently asked young hunters, “Why is ‘fun’ fun?”

That question caused the pheasant sauce to pop into my mind. Most notable about the fabulous sauce—and this is the important point—was that the flavors of any specific ingredient—the shallots or garlic or peppercorns or even the wine, could not be isolated. The flavors from each ingredient had harmonized perfectly into something greater than the parts. The pheasant sauce is an applicable metaphor for ‘fun’ in hunting. As with the sauce, hunting ‘fun’ is the consequence, the cooking, of distinctly different but identifiable ingredients methodically orchestrated. This is important, because if we don’t make hunting fun for young hunters, to be blunt, hunting will not survive.

Here are four tips to make hunting fun.

Don’t Make Initial Hunting Experiences Unreasonably Mentally or Physically Demanding

Three facts were emphasized at the recent R3 Symposium in Lincoln, Nebraska, sponsored by the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports and the National Shooting Sports Foundation: the number of hunters is declining, the excise dollars collected from hunters are declining, and the commitment to hunting by young hunters is fragile. To stop and reverse these undesirable trends, and to nurture long-term hunters, hunting must be experienced, certainly initially, as desirable. Chris Willard, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife R3 Coordinator, said the hunting industry should be “customer obsessed.” Considering young hunters as our customers, that includes identifying and cultivating their desires, aspirations, and dreams, and to overcome hunting’s obstacles. Understanding our ‘customer’ is the top priority. Young hunters in confining treestands for hours, in inclement weather, without seeing game animals, are likely to be
unhappily frustrated. Hunt organizers should supply a firearm with which the youngster has practiced, that fits and is without punishing recoil, or a bow that can be competently drawn. Good food, plenty of fluids, proper layered clothing and a realistic assessment of getting an animal are vital ingredients of the hunter’s ‘sauce’ that leads to fun.

Show That Hunting Is a Worthy Competitor for the New Hunter’s Time

It’s difficult to get youngsters into the fields and woods. Lots of attractions compete for their time. If the adult hunter focuses on fun rather than trying to persuade the youngster to become a hunter, success will be more likely. I met then-twelve-year-old Luke Schreiner at a charity pheasant hunt sponsored by the marvelous Outdoor Buddies Organization. He explained his love for hunting. Among his reasons was the value gained by choosing to spend his time hunting. Luke said: “Most of my friends are still sleeping or playing on their computers when I’m outdoors hunting having a good time.”

A J Rainold, a ten-year-old hunter, made a powerful but sad statement: “A lot of kids don’t do anything that’s fun.” Their words reminded me of a graphic—a posting—showing six or so youngsters in front of a house, each totally engaged on a cell phone, none interacting with each other. The caption was: Children Playing Outdoors.

A persuasive way to show youngsters that hunting is worth their time is to give examples of how hunting is in harmony with their existing values. They want to be challenged; they want to achieve something unique. Luke told me: “If you wait and get your animal, it’s fun and gratifying, because you bring something to the table.” Hunting can be a source of pride, as when you make an ethical shot and the animal does not suffer.
Comparing benefits from competing uses of time is a productive way to get youngsters to choose hunting. What are the achievements gained from lying on a couch much of the day sharing comments on Facebook or Twitter or whatever, or playing video games? Nature’s beauty is not experienced; emotional and mental rewards from vigorous activity are not experienced. The end of the day seems rather similar to the beginning, with nothing accomplished and lacking any deep joy. Not so with hunting, where values are shared, the mind is sharpened, and conservation is achieved.

**Emphasize the Experience More Than the Animal**

“It is okay if you don’t get an animal.” A J told me. Every young hunter I’ve spoken to made it clear that fun in hunting is not dependent upon the kill. There may be disappointment, of course, for the animal is the point of hunting. But hunting, like Shrek, the Ogre, is multi-layered. Hunting is aligned with ethics and self-discipline. A J said to me, “I don’t want the animal to suffer. I know I have to make a good shot. That’s my responsibility.” Sometimes the most ethical shot is the shot not taken and no animal is wounded. That is a triumph of character that will be remembered a lifetime.

Here’s an analogy to sales. Rather than focusing on the sale, every good sales person focuses its audience on experiences and the mental and emotional connections with the product.

Substituting the harvested animal for the sale, these strategies are applicable to cultivating young hunters. Connections, emotional and cerebral, drive loyalty, and hunting is drenched in honorable connections: the land, to beauty, and to conservation.

**Show the Big Picture: Link Hunting to its Virtuous Cause**

Last but most important, hunting is about more than hunting. The adult doesn’t have to lecture or pontificate on the details of the Pittman-Robertson Act. Simply share that contributions hunters have made to conservation: the resurgence of deer, elk, turkey, bison, waterfowl.

Hunting is a noble pursuit. Hunting can encourage complex thinking about the big picture, as illustrated by Luke’s grappling with the hunter’s role in conservation. “I know I am taking a life, but I now understand that Nature is not so simple.” Hunting, he realized, is part of a larger process and he is part of it.

Just being in the field helps the larger cause, for every bullet purchased contributes to conservation. Hunting advances treasured values, and the end of hunting will cause the demise of those values. We all acknowledge the value of wildlife management, but, as Mark Duda said at the Symposium, “We must become expert at human management.” Creating fun, I argue, is one part of human management. Being strong, confident, competent, and doing a virtuous activity is fun!!

Michael Sabbeth is a lawyer, author, and consultant in Denver, Colorado. His email is michael@thehonorablehunter.com. See his book, “The Good, The Bad & The Difference: How to Talk with Children About Values” on Amazon: http://tinyurl.com/c5fimmu and and through Kindle as an EBook.
The Taurus Spectrum™ exudes style, comfort and functionality unlike any concealed carry pistol in its class. Lightweight—yet heavy on innovation—the subcompact 380 seamlessly incorporates soft-touch materials into the grip and slide for enhanced traction. While unique contours in the grip allow your hand to naturally conform to the firearm.
Hunter Education Can Be Fun Too

By Martin Frentzel, New Mexico HE Instructor

I suppose I should have been insulted.

A sub-junior shooter participating in New Mexico’s State Youth Hunter Education Challenge was pretty blunt when I was introduced as the scorer who would accompany his team around the .22 rifle course.

“I wanted him,” the kid said, pointing to Raymond Clark, the instructor in charge of running the rifle competition. “He’s more fun!”

A coach or parent got after the kid, but I came to his defense and agreed with him. “He is more fun than I am,” I told the team, and that is the honest truth.

A coach or parent got after the kid, but I came to his defense and agreed with him. “He is more fun than I am,” I told the team, and that is the honest truth.

I have watched Ray, an instructor from Artesia, play with young shooters every year I have volunteered at YHEC, and I admire a man who loosens up the shooters by teaching them the “Ray-Ray Dance.” Ray tells them they need to do the dance when they hit targets, and then he demonstrates by swinging his arms low to one side then the other singing “Whoop, there it is…whoop there it is!”

I am not humorless, but I realize my dead-pan delivery works against me. After saying something I think is funny to a class, I often have to stop and tell them, “That was a joke and it’s okay to laugh.” If you had been raised by a WWII Marine Corps Drill Instructor, you might not be that funny, either.

And we all know that safe firearm handling is and should be a serious business, but I repeatedly see that the instructors who get the highest marks on class evaluations are the ones who mix in a few jokes with their presentations.

For example, I teach with a guy named Richard Winn, Albuquerque, and he regularly makes jokes. He is a bowhunter and he has assembled a vast number of props he uses when teaching. When he shows the kids a “flu-flu” arrow, used for bird hunting, he tells them the feathers all come from Flu-Flu Birds found in southern New Mexico. He also tells them the birds have to fly backwards because they need to cool off their behinds after eating too many chile seeds.

Richard also assembled a combination compound bow and shotgun, which he uses to demonstrate all the rifle carries we teach in class. That bow-gun gets a lot of laughs, which proves the kids are paying attention.

Contrary to my typically somber life-and-death classroom presentations, I apparently did make the YHEC competition fun for one group of shooters. These were seniors out of Otero County, and they showed up with bandanas either across their faces or around their necks. The bandanas were intended to keep smoke out of their lungs—the Ute Park fire was burning some 20 or 30 miles west of us and the wind was covering the Whittington Center with what was at times a pretty thick haze.

That Otero team was the only one I saw in two days of competition that came prepared for the smoke, so I had to get a picture. I asked them all to cover their faces with the bandanas and pose. I captured them on my cell phone and then showed the kids their image, which loosened them up quite a bit.

After we finished their round, one of the parents came up to me and thanked me for “making it fun for them.”

After hearing the various comments that day, I have decided that maybe I should try to make my hunter education presentations more fun. I fully understand that handling firearms is serious business, but it’s apparent to me that a little humor can hold a student’s attention and make class more enjoyable.

I seriously doubt if I will ever make kids dance like Ray, or build a bow-gun like Richard, but certainly I should be able to think of something better than “That was a joke and it’s okay to laugh.” I’ll bet you can too.
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Firearm safety begins before you chamber a round and even before you step foot in the field or range. It begins with properly maintained equipment. Simply put, firearm safety begins with a clean gun.

On the other hand, dirt, fouling, and other contaminants can cause jams, ejection problems, misfeeds, misfires, accuracy problems, and other issues.

Two important rules of firearms maintenance are:

- Always refer to the manufacturer’s manual before taking apart your firearm.
- Use the proper cleaning solutions. Heavy oils and solvents can gum up parts and cause jamming and other problems. Birchwood Casey products are formulated for use with firearms and the environments they are used in.

Birchwood Casey experts recommend an easy 1-2-3 cleaning process to ensure your gun will perform safely, look great, and retain its value.

STEP 1

The first step is to break down materials that accumulate in your gun every time you fire it. Lead, copper, plastic, carbon, and powder can damage your barrel and affect accuracy. Birchwood Casey Bore Scrubber 2-in-1 Bore Cleaner removes copper and fouling quickly, effectively, and safely. It’s also great for softening residue in the receiver and trigger action assembly. Tough-to-reach springs can be removed and soaked. Tricky spots may require use of a brush or cotton swab.

**Bore Cleaner directions:** Place a clean, dry patch on the tip end of your cleaning rod and push it through the bore to remove loose fouling.

Soak another patch with solvent and “wash” the bore with a back-and-forth motion to saturate fouling.

Repeat with another wet patch and allow to soak for a few minutes.

Wet a bore brush with Bore Scrubber and scrub inside of barrel. Push and pull the brush completely through each way.

Continue to clean with a series of dry patches until they come out clean.

(Soaking choke tubes and other hard-to-clean parts in 2-in-1 Bore Cleaner is a good way to use less elbow grease to clean them.)

STEP 2

Birchwood Casey Gun Scrubber Cleaner will remove grit and residue broken down by the Bore Cleaner and essentially strip your gun of all oil, residue, and film.

**Gun Scrubber directions:** Your firearm can be disassembled into major components, if desired.

Insert the extension tube into the spray nozzle and spray liberally but in short blasts for best results. (Caution: wear eye protection and watch out for splash-back in eyes.) A brush is handy to assist in cleaning stubborn areas.

Be certain to direct the flexible extension tube into hard-to-reach places and other unseen areas. Use nozzle without extension tube for maximum flushing of open assemblies.

STEP 3

By completing Steps 1 and 2, you have effectively removed all oil and lubricants, which ensures smooth working actions and provides protection from the elements. You are going to replace them with fresh, clean Birchwood Casey Barricade, which unlike some other penetrant/lubricant products, is specially-formulated for use on firearms. Use sparingly in the action and trigger assembly. Barricade drives out moisture from metal pores and deposits a transparent coating to protect against corrosive moisture and fingerprints—common causes of rust on firearms. There is no need to leave it “wet” on the metal; a light coating provides complete protection.

**Barricade directions:** Wipe exposed metal surfaces with a soft cloth to remove dirt and oil before applying Barricade. Spray directly on metal parts, holding can about six inches from metal. Use the extender tube for hard-to-reach areas.

Wipe off excess Barricade with soft, clean cloth.

That’s it. Follow these steps and you should have a clean, safe firearm.
THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM STARTS INDOORS

Hunters learn something every time they go afield, yet their foundation as safety-conscious, ethical hunters likely begins in your classroom. The knowledge they gain from dedicated volunteer hunter education instructors like you sticks with them for a lifetime and also helps them mentor new hunters.

Through its printed and digital materials, the National Shooting Sports Foundation has been assisting volunteer instructors with teaching students about firearms safety, ethical hunting and conservation for decades. We can help with your mission.

Visit NSSF.org to order materials today.
**Instructor Discount Corner**

**Breakthrough Clean**

Knowing the importance of maintaining firearms in clean, safe, and operable condition, Breakthrough Clean offers hunter education instructors a discount on their innovative firearm cleaning and maintenance products.

“We at Breakthrough Clean Technologies wholeheartedly support IHEA and its instructors in their pursuit of advocating hunter education,” said Erick Navarro, owner of Breakthrough Clean. “IHEA’s efforts to ensure we have safe and responsible hunters are critical to the health of the hunting community nationwide, and we are proud to support their network of instructors in this endeavor.”

Breakthrough Clean made a splash on the firearms maintenance scene in 2013 by introducing their flagship product, Breakthrough Military-Grade Solvent, and then went on to expand their line of non-toxic, non-hazardous, non-staining, odorless, and eco-friendly products. Can there be such a thing as odorless gun-cleaning solvent and oil? Breakthrough Clean proves there can. And anything you can do to reduce or eliminate odors while hunting sensitive-nose game, which is most of them, might help up your success percentage.

And Breakthrough Clean products also work on fishing reels, bows, knives, and other gear.

To get your discount, go to www.IHEA-USA.org, click on Special Offers for Instructors (under the Instructors tab), then select Breakthrough Clean. Enter the password, and you’ll be taken to a page where you can access a discount price list and discount coupon code for ordering on their website, breakthrough-clean.com, where you can also view their entire line of products, which also includes cleaning kits, cleaning tools, and other accessories.

**Burris Optics**

In appreciation of the important work hunter education instructors do for the hunting and shooting sports, Burris Optics, manufacturer of quality hunting and tactical riflescopes, red-dot and reflex sights and binoculars, as well as rings, bases, and accessories, offers a generous 50-percent discount to instructors.

The discount applies to all Burris items, with no exceptions, though during busy seasons (usually Fall, as hunting seasons approach and get rolling) you may encounter out-of-stock situations. If that occurs, please be understanding and patient. Also, discount sales are handled directly by Burris, so please don’t ask for the discount at local retailers.

“Burris has been a strong supporter of hunter education since our humble beginning in 1971,” said Dennis Phillips, marketing manager for Burris. “We believe our future lies with each new generation of shooters and outdoor enthusiasts, and want to make sure educators have access to the best hunting and sporting optics.”

“Quality optics are essential for success in the field and the classroom, so we are happy to offer our line of riflescopes, binoculars, spotting scopes, mounts, and accessories to IHEA instructors,” he said.

Getting your discount is easy. Just go to ihea-usa.org and under the “Instructors” tab click on “Special Offers for Instructors.” You can then click on Burris Optics, enter the password, and it will take you to a link where you can view Burris products and prices, and another link which will allow you to download the Burris discount form. Just fill it out and submit as instructed.

For more information about the company and its products, visit their website at burrisoptics.com.
A hunter himself, Outdoor Edge President David Bloch is adamant and straightforward about the reasons his company has for years supported IHEA-USA.

“As an avid hunter, I feel it’s very important to support the organizations educating the next generation of hunters, which is why we choose to continue to partner with IHEA-USA year after year,” Bloch said. “Our business depends heavily on hunter participation, and there is no question hunter education instructors are at the front line when it comes to teaching new hunters about safety in the field and sharing valuable knowledge relating to local laws, regulations, and game identification.”

“The information IHEA-USA and hunter education instructors share is truly invaluable,” Bloch said. “And we are pleased to stand behind great organizations and people that support the next generation of hunters.”

To show their appreciation, Outdoor Edge offers hunter education instructors a generous 65-percent discount on their full line of knives, butcher kits, and other tools for personal and/or classroom use.

Outdoor Edge is known for combining hand craftsmanship and functional design with the sharpest, best edge-holding steel, and state-of-the-art production processes. Their Razor-Lite knives, for example, are popular among hunters because of their sharp, strong, razor-sharp blades that are quickly, easily, and safely replaced at the push of a button.

They also offer instructors huge discounts on their educational game processing DVDs, which are excellent for hunter ed classroom presentations. In addition, Outdoor Edge annually provides knives custom-etched with the IHEA-USA logo for instructors attending the IHEA-USA annual conference. Custom etching is also part of their offering to hunter ed instructors.

Details about Outdoor Edge’s offers to hunter ed instructors, including a discount program order form, are available at www.ihea-usa.org under the “Special Offers for Instructors” tab.

For more information go to: www.ihea-usa.com/instructors/special-offers-for-instructors

Instructor Access for IHEA-USA Website

Hunter Education Instructors have the opportunity to purchase many items at a discounted rate on the "Special Offers" section of the IHEA-USA website! For your exclusive access go to: www.ihea-usa.com/instructors/special-offers-for-instructors. Just click on the company hyperlink you are interested in and, when prompted, enter "gohunt" as your password. The password has no space and is all lowercase.

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CRKT Homefront
CRKT Homefront’s Innovative Field Strip Design Allows Easy In-Field Disassembly, Cleaning

When CRKT introduced the Homefront, a lot of people thought, “Now there’s a nice knife with a cool old-school WWII look to it.” When they looked closer and noticed the Field Strip design, they really got interested, and hunters especially perked up.

The Field Strip technology allows you to quickly and easily take the knife apart into three pieces—two handle slabs and the blade—with no tools. You’re with me already aren’t you, thinking how nice it would be to disassemble your knife right after field dressing and washing it clean?

To disassemble the knife, you close it, flip the front release lever, then spin the wheel on the rear of the handle which releases the handle so you can remove it from the blade. Simply clean the three components and reverse the process to re-assemble.

The Homefront and Field Strip both came from the innovative mind of Ken Onion, one of the top creative knife designers at work today.

The Homefront looks like some kind of classic World War I folding knife, with a five-point star at the pivot point. Even the flipper, which quickly and easily opens the 3-1/2-inch stainless steel blade, looks like a bayonet lug from that era. The aluminum handles, tinged a military olive-drab green, feature tank jimping on the back, which adds to the old-school military look, but also fits comfortably and securely in your hand.

It has a tactical look and feel, while the modified drop-point blade has a nice belly with a nice angle for field-dress cutting and also provides a rounded skinning edge. The blade is held securely open by a liner lock, and a pocket clip helps keep it handy.

Hunters will love the easy maintenance aspect, as will anyone who needs a workhorse knife, including mechanics who need to clean out grease and grime; soldiers, who need to quickly remove dirt, dust, mud, and other contaminants; anglers, ranchers, farmers and so on.

It measures 8.3 inches open; 4.7 inches closed; and weighs 4.8 ounces.

ORCA Podster Cooler
ORCA Podster Cooler Takes Cool on the Trail

The ORCA Podster Cooler is a backpack cooler—well, let’s call it a daypack cooler. It’s about the size of a daypack. (Though ORCA also makes the Pod Cooler, which is about twice as big and may qualify for backpack qualification.) But the daypack-sized Podster is just the right size for carrying a dozen 12-ounce cans of pop or a similar amount of bottled water or other refreshments, plus plenty of ice, allowing you mobility on the trail or in the field.

Padded shoulder straps and an adjustable T-strap across the chest helps you manage the load and keep it comfortably on your back. MOLLE webbing on the back allows you to attach additional accessories and necessities for your hunting or camping trip.

It’s waterproof and leakproof (you wouldn’t expect less, would you?) and it’ll retain cold for days with proper packing, thanks to the closed-cell foam insulation and EVA reinforcement in the lid, base, and back, which provides additional insulation, structure, and protection.

The ultra-sonic RF welding is the same used in construction of watercraft used on whitewater, so you can count on rugged, waterproof performance. The zipper, too, is waterproof. (Again, you wouldn’t expect anything less.) And the flip-top lid provides convenient, easy access for packing and unpacking.

The interior features FDA food-grade, BPA-free, and anti-microbial internal materials and the exterior is protected by a tough outer shell that shrugs off abrasions.

It’ll hold 14.25 quarts and measures 15 inches in length by 9 inches in width and 15 inches high.

Maximum load, they say, is 28-1/2-pounds, which allows you to pack quite a lunch.

And hunters will appreciate that it comes in Realtree Max 5 camo, but there are also a couple other color combinations if you prefer.

Great for hunting and camping trips, and a lot of other types of excursions in between.

ORCA, by the way, stands for Outdoor Recreation Company of America and is based in Nashville, Tenn.

For more information on ORCA products, visit orcacoolers.com.
Attention: Instructors!
Got yours yet?

The 2018 edition of Hunter’s Handbook magazine is now at state and provincial warehouses and ready for instructor distribution to students. The magazine is the official student publication of the IHEA-USA. This “how-to” guide takes the student beyond mandatory general safety guidelines, offering selection and use information regarding a variety of hunting-related products, with a special emphasis on safety in the field. The publication also contains the student and instructor entry form for the chance to win some great prizes!

If you have not received your copies, contact your state or provincial coordinator to arrange shipment. The publication is free of charge. If you prefer to contact us directly, we will pass the information on to your coordinator. Send an e-mail to barbara@focusgroupseattle.com or call her at 206-281-8520. Please provide your name, phone number, shipping address, and the number of copies you require for student distribution.
Promatic Inc. Introduces the Promatic Ranger 8 Chondel

The Promatic Ranger 8 Chondel has been created for any club or commercial grounds where target variety and presentations are cutting-edge and the volume demands 400 targets. The new Promatic Ranger 8 Chondel is designed and produced by their design and production team from the UK. The Promatic Ranger 8 Chondel comes with two arms and will launch rabbit or standard clays just like the Promatic Ranger 6 Chondel, but has the capacity of 400 targets. It has been tested by a select group of dealers and customers, and most recently at the U.S. Open Sporting Clay Championship hosted by Tucson Trap and Skeet and sponsored exclusively by Promatic. The Promatic Ranger 8 Chondel may be ordered from a Promatic dealer or by contacting Promatic headquarters in Plattsburg, MO. The machine is an excellent addition to the Promatic lineup that includes over 65 models.

Standard features include:
- 400 target capacity
- Launches rabbit or standard 108mm clays
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- Powered by a 12VDC battery or 120VAC transformer (not included)
- Backed by the Promatic Superior Service Team

Go to www.promatic.biz for more information.

The 2018 IHEA-USA Conference was a success, thanks to the awesome staff at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. Full conference coverage will be included in the Fall 2018 issue of the IHEA-USA Hunter & Shooting Sports Education Journal.
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- Mini 14 Style Flash Suppressor
- Scope Base Adapter
- Black Cordura Takedown Case
- 1:16 Rifling

Item #: 11125 • 25+1 • 16.62" Threaded Barrel
- Front: Red Fiber Optic, Rear: Adjustable Green Fiber Optic
- Black Synthetic Stock
- Drilled & Tapped
- Mini 14 Style Flash Suppressor
- Scope Base Adapter
- Black Cordura Takedown Case
- 1:16 Rifling

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