STRIKES TWICE.

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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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As we settle into the winter hunting lull, we are greeted with so many holiday activities and festivities that it can be easy to get distracted from time in the field or woods. For me, this time of year is a time to give thanks for all that has been provided in the pursuit of the outdoors. Giving thanks is part of the ethical tradition of hunting. We honor the land, game, our fellow hunters, and non-hunters. How do you teach others these ethics? Are you yourself a good example, or do things get dropped by the wayside as you find yourself trying to fit hunting and teaching hunter education classes into a schedule that only seems to get busier as each year passes?

Honoring the land can be done in many ways, from volunteering for habitat restoration projects with local groups to being mindful of your footprint on the land. Not leaving litter behind you after a hunt by double-checking your area before heading in for the night is an easy one. Maybe you hunt farm fields and there is an opportunity to help the farmer during other times of year as a way of giving back and saying thanks.

We care for the game we take, by taking it with respect and honoring fair chase. By ensuring that the game we harvest is properly taken care of and not wasted; whether we keep it for ourselves, our families, or donate it to the many food banks that feed those in need. As for our fellow hunters and non-hunters, we can show thanks by being respectful. I see so many posts about stolen tree stands and trespassing. Know the areas that you are hunting. There are so many hunting maps and resources, whether it’s hand-held topo maps or electronic apps, that are available to ensure that you are not trespassing. Respect the placement of your stands or blinds to another when hunting public lands, and when on private lands respect the wishes of the landowner. Your attitude and example of your conduct when you “think” no one is watching, sets the stage for the future of hunting and the public support of the hunting heritage.

I also give thanks to all of you. Your tireless efforts to teach the hunters of tomorrow are appreciated. From hours in the classroom instructing classes, time mentoring new hunters, continuing to learn new ways to grow as an educator to be more successful as a leader and a teacher, and the countless educational and environmental projects that you are undoubtedly involved in. The lasting effects of your volunteer time, across generations and volunteer hours, are priceless and for that I thank you.

Send us your stories and photos to: susiekiefer@msn.com or mail your submission to: IHEA-USA Journal, PO Box 432, Wellington, CO 80549

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It’s a New Ball Game

By David Allen, IHEA-USA Executive Director, dallen@ihea-usa.org

The business (and it is a business) of managing and servicing the hunting community is a whole new ball game from the 1970s or the ’90s or even the early 2000s.

like any other professional business, everyone within the industry has multiple obligations or responsibilities toward assuring a healthy bottom line, a growing customer base, and a quality product. Those are not words that are always embraced by some in the hunting industry. There are some of us who feel it is someone else’s job to worry about the bottom line performance of the business or it is another department or entity that should be accountable for the number of annual licenses sold or level of “service” being delivered to the hunting customer.

This is a human nature condition, to deflect or defer to someone else or “a higher authority” in such circumstances. In many ways, there are individuals or specific departments and entities that are more responsible than others for the overall success of any business, including the hunting industry. However, it is a simple, time-proven fact that success in nearly every business is directly correlated to the concerted efforts of the overall team that manages and delivers the product and services. As our wildlife is in the public trust, we all are a part of the equation of whether we can sustain the hunting/wildlife model in the U.S. Simply put, there is a saying in private industry that “new business is everybody’s business.” This applies not just in theory, but in reality, to all moving parts of the hunting industry, and business as well.

Never has this philosophy of business management been more relevant than in today’s current state of the hunting industry. Consider that the overall participation rates are soft to declining; the younger generations (anyone under the age of 40) live in ever-changing social structure/patterns; and the obvious constraints of attempting to hunt for newcomers like access and costs have created “the new ball game” in terms of recruiting and retaining new hunters (and some old ones).

I have long held the view that regardless of the specific circumstances in your geographic region “it is everyone’s business” to play a more positive role when it comes to considering the present and the future of hunting. The ballot box and the public comment process offers all of us multiple opportunities to play a role in the ongoing hunting business industry. I never have understood those who hold the belief that “I don’t really care how many people hunt or if the hunting numbers are declining. It will be better for me if there are less hunters” or something similar. This is foolish talk and small thinking that will lead to the long-term demise of hunting.

One of the beauties of the American hunting system is that it is substantially supported by the “user pay” method. However, one of the key indicators to our American system failing is when there aren’t enough users to pay for the system. In short, we need each other and many others to sustain this unique system. America will not survive if we slip into the European model or system of wildlife, which is primarily private land and only for those who have significant, disposable income to pay-to-play. Hunting will cease in this country if we let our system degrade to this level. In short, whether we like it or not, we need many, many hunters in our ranks at all times. We need newcomers at all times.

As I stated in this writing, this a whole new ball game. We ALL have to care and be more proactive in promoting, managing, and servicing the hunting customers. We all have roles to play. This all has to begin with all of us truly caring about the future of this culture. I’m at the point in my life where I want my kids and their kids to have similar outdoor and hunting privileges and opportunities as I have had. They won’t have either if we don’t step up today and address our issues, and this is everyone’s issue, not just a few.

Hunter education is the gateway to the hunting experience and the hunting community. We have a huge role to play and we have significant opportunities to play our roles.
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.

To view our more expansive digital library, visit nssf.org/safety.
In the last issue of the IHEA-USA Journal, we told you about our new website for target shooters, LetsGoShooting.org. We’ve now added a sister site dedicated solely to hunters, LetsGoHunting.org.

LetsGoHunting.org was created to be the go-to resource for all things firearms safety, hunter safety, and the pursuit of game. In the upper left-hand corner of the home page you’ll find the three-bar menu icon. Clicking on that reveals a short drop-down menu. One of the available selections there is “Resources,” and a slide to the right lets you choose between articles or videos—and oh! what a great library you’ll find in either.

Want to learn how to read the wind better for your deer hunt? There’s a video...
for that. Never been upland bird hunting and wondering how it all works? Take in the video of a family-and-friends outing—complete with some very happy and enthusiastic bird dogs—for pheasants in the Great Plains. And then there are the wealth of videos to help you perfect your shot in real-world field conditions, such as shooting from supports, binocular use, scope magnification tips, and staying accurate at distance across varying terrain, to name just a few. All are instantly shareable via Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit, and a quick-copy link makes sharing via other social media platforms, IM, or email fast and easy.

If you prefer to read about all that’s going on in the world of hunting, then choose the “Articles” selection in that same drop-down “Resources” option. “Do’s and Don’ts of Public Land Hunting,” “The Rifle Cartridge Name Game,” “Ground Blind Safety for Deer and Turkey Hunting,” and “Western Big-Game Tag Draws: Separating Fact from Fiction,” are just a few of the highly informative articles you’ll find there. And don’t forget to check out fantastic wild game recipes, such as “Venison Backstrap Carne Asada,” from Michael Pendley.

While many—even most—of you reading this are already active hunters, we know there are many out there who are interested in all the sport has to offer but don’t know how to get involved. Perhaps they don’t know someone who hunts, or maybe they’re just too shy to ask. The “Apprenticeship” title in the upper righthand corner of the page is here to help. Click on it and you’ll find a U.S. map highlighting all the states currently offering hunter apprenticeship programs in which those interested in learning about hunting can go afield with an experienced, licensed hunter without having to go through the full hunter education program first. It’s a kind of “try-before-you-buy” kind of thing, and it’s a great way to connect hunters old and new.

From there the possibilities are endless. The “Where to Buy” menu connects each user with the retailers in their area who have all the firearms, ammunition, and gear they need for a successful hunt. “Where to Hunt” gives you an interactive U.S. map that instantly connects you to the game agency websites for anywhere in the country you’re considering hunting, providing you with instant access to those game laws, public lands, and licensing information, and even application forms.

We encourage all Journal readers to visit LetsGoHunting.org, discover all it has to offer and share it with friends and family. Share it, too, with someone you think might want to have as much fun as you do in the field taking part in this great tradition. When most fall and winter hunting seasons close down in a bit, head on over to LetsGoShooting.org, find a range near you, and get in some practice time or even find a new target shooting sport to try. Hunting and target shooting offer year-round fun for everyone, which is what LetsGoShooting.org and LetsGoHunting.org are all about.
In August 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued guidance on recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) activities. The memorandum issued clarified the Service’s role in supporting State-led R3 efforts in a variety of outdoor activities including hunting and the shooting sports, and included a commitment from the Service to engage with States, Tribes, industry groups, nongovernmental organizations, and other partners on planning and implementation efforts.

Supporting State-led R3 efforts fits with other Department of Interior priorities to enhance conservation stewardship, improvement management of wildlife species and their habitats, increase outdoor opportunities for all Americans, expand access for recreation on lands managed by the Service, and increase collaboration with State and Tribal partners.

The Service is proud to be a partner on two Memorandums of Understanding, one signed in September 2017 and the other in May 2018, that highlight a frame of cooperation among Federal and State agencies, as well as industry and nongovernmental partners, to plan and implement mutually beneficial projects and activities to support R3 efforts.

Also in the memo, the Service expressed its support for the education and training of its staff so they are better aware of, and educated about, R3 efforts and concepts including the Outdoor Recreational Adoption Model.

Having more Americans enjoy the great outdoors benefits the Service and helps State fish and wildlife agencies meet their R3 goals. Improved coordination with States, Tribes, and other R3 partners using a shared strategic approach will enhance the success of cumulative efforts, and increase the capacity to plan and deliver local, regional, and national R3 programming. This will help to achieve the shared objective of increasing the number of outdoor recreation participants, and outdoor recreational opportunities for all.

Portions of this article were excerpted from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Director’s Memo dated August 27, 2018.

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Most people want to be good; and based on many conversations, most hunters—everyone I’ve spoken with—want to be honorable and ethical. For them, honoring the animal, the land, the hunting culture, and themselves are sources of pride and self-respect. But to be an honorable hunter, wanting is not enough. Doing good, doing what’s right, is the result of several complex thoughts, actions, and character traits.

What does it take for a hunter to be honorable? I share two situations that offer lessons on how a virtuous hunter behaves and which show important character qualities a hunter needs to do what is right. This first story was told to me by a fifth grader. Some of his classmates were throwing rocks at a bull snake slithering through bushes in the school playground. This youngster tried to stop the rock throwing, saying the snake was harmless and hurting or killing it was cruel. The classmates rejected his request. When the little fellow persisted, the classmates threatened him.

When the youngster finished telling me his story, he looked at me with searching eyes and asked a question that penetrated to my soul: “Why is doing good so hard?” That question has been asked for thousands of years. I haven’t found a satisfactory answer.

My other story is about a teenager hunting pheasant on public land with some friends. A dog flushed several pheasant that flew onto private property, where they had no permission to enter. The friends and their dogs chased the pheasant but the young man telling me this story refused to go along, even though the friends taunted him and one friend said, “We’re not inviting you to join us again.”

“The most powerful person is he who has himself in his own power.”
Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Roman Philosopher (3BC-65 AD)

The Limits of Ethics
What would you do in each of these situations? Before you answer, let’s think about how to figure out what’s right and what can motivate you to do what’s right.

Ethics is the study of what is right and virtuous. Ethics guides us to know what is good. With that knowledge, people should be encouraged to do good. If a person knows what is good, the assumption is, the person will do good,
or, at least, is more likely to do good. Obviously, and unfortunately, reality shows that this assumption is often not accurate.

Most of us know what’s right in any situation. For example, you don’t injure or kill living things just to be destructive and you don’t go along with breaking the law. However, more than knowledge is needed to do good. A person also needs moral courage and confidence. Moral courage requires, at times, standing up to or rejecting the requests of other people. These two stories are examples of the need for moral courage. It took courage for the fifth grader to stand up to those willing to injure or kill a harmless reptile. It took moral courage for the pheasant hunter not to join his trespassing friends.

The fifth grader showed moral courage, but he also had confidence in his beliefs and values. He was confident he knew what was right and that his actions were ethical. Even when his classmates turned on him like a mob, his confidence in his values motivated him to continue to try to make his classmates stop their bad behavior. The confidence the non-trespassing pheasant hunter had in his values was sufficient to overrule the emotion and peer pressure to act unethically and illegally.

Lessons to Be Learned

The fifth grader is correct—it is difficult to be good. It is difficult to stand up for what is right. Sometimes you can’t do it alone. In the snake story, the youngster would have benefitted from help from teachers and any other adults on the playground. Sometimes, as in the pheasant story, you have to act alone and stand up against a group even if you are not trying to change the behavior of the others. The pheasant hunter probably knew he could not stop his friends’ trespassing.

I share the pheasant story to make a point about friends and friendship. The human tendency to do what friends want you to do, that is, to give in to peer pressure, is among the most powerful human forces. So, let’s take a look at the magnetic power of friendship to figure out when, if ever, it should influence our actions.

What kind of friends did this non-trespassing hunter have? Friends that wanted him to break the law; that wanted him to risk having his firearm confiscated; that wanted him at risk for fines and perhaps lose his hunting privileges. Maybe they’re friends, but they cannot logically be considered friends that care about his best interests. At that moment, at least, they were not good friends.

A person can become stronger and more confident when, as in this pheasant hunter case, he analyzes and figures out the cost of a friendship, that is, what a person must give up to keep the friends. Bad friends making decisions for you is foolish. My point is that thinking and reasoning can make a person morally stronger. That’s why every person has a moral obligation to think. Many people don’t think,
of course, but that fact does not change the reality that thinking is a moral duty. Only by thinking can a person know right from wrong and what is better or worse.

Morally strong people are more likely to act morally. People become morally stronger by thinking about and understanding the consequences of their actions. The morally strong person has control, or more control, over him or herself. This understanding of human nature is seen in Seneca’s statement about being the most powerful person.

Thucydides, an Athenian historian, expressed a similar and equally important idea that links happiness to courage: “The secret to happiness is freedom, and the secret to freedom is courage.” The person, hunter or not, that has moral courage is often a happier person and happy people make the world better.

We should be very cautious about giving to others the power to influence us about right and wrong. Understand that morality—right and wrong—is not determined by the number of believers.

Whether one person disagrees with you or whether one hundred million people disagree with you has nothing to do with whether you are right or wrong. Either you are right or you are not. Either facts support your ideas and actions or they do not. Either your opinions and ideas have moral support or they do not. Numbers are irrelevant; character and honor are.

Michael G. Sabbeth is a lawyer and author living in Denver, Colorado. He lectures on ethics and rhetoric. He has written the book The Good, The Bad and The Difference: How to Talk with Children About Values, available at http://tinyurl.com/c5fjmmu. He is now working on a book titled No More Apologizing! Arguments to Defend and Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports. Visit his website at www.thehonorablehunter.com or visit his Facebook page at this address: www.facebook/thehonorablehunter.
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ops, it is discovered that there are only two bullets left from last year. Well, two deer a day is the limit anyway, so every shot must be very carefully placed. Oh, what about weather forecast? Rain, changing to snow, and gusty winds! Getting up at five a.m. confirms the meteorologist was right. I only needed to know to help decide how many layers of clothes and if I needed rain gear. To not go hunting because of weather is never an option, as every deer has to be somewhere no matter the weather. I did, just for a brief moment, wonder how many kids are still up playing video games and how many are sleeping in?

At the pre-hunt assembly there were seven youth along with parents and hunter education instructors. Several safety rules were reinforced, along with specific instructions regarding the time to be in the blind, loading firearms, no roaming outside of blinds, time for unloading and returning, and markings for limits of safe shooting zones. Then, the pairing of partners had me going to blind #5 along with my 12-year old hunter and his father. My young hunter had been out with his father on youth day but had never bagged a deer.

Off we went to the blind, set up, opened the flaps, positioned our chairs, loaded at the prescribed time, reduced our talk volume, and sat back for the wait, which turned into a few hours. In the four years I had been in this blind, I assured them, I had never failed to see deer during both the morning and afternoon hunts. I also reassured them that deer should move during the day since the weather last night should have kept...
deer from getting their usual overnight feeding. Maybe I was going to be wrong this time but then I whispered that I see a deer, two…five headed our way. First, three moved through some cover not presenting a shot but the last two came into an opening at 50 yards. The quick blow on a bleat call stopped them to investigate as my hunter steadies his gun and fires. Down went the larger doe appearing to have a broken back. Although the deer was able to scramble just out of sight, all were confident that our hunter had bagged his first deer. After a 20-minute wait, we called headquarters to get clearance to approach where the deer was last seen.

Investigation revealed a heavy blood trail for a short distance and then it turned to only a few small specks revealing the deer was able to get up and move along again. The tracking team was summoned to pursue after all other hunters were unloaded and heading back to the assembly for lunch and for some instruction on the history of muzzle-loaders. The tracking team was unable to recover the deer, speculating that the shot was near the spine causing a temporary paralysis. Because no vitals appear to have been hit there was a chance the deer would recover.

Now, off for the afternoon hunt. It did not take long before a doe appears out of nowhere at about 25 yards. My hunter positioned himself to take a downward sloping shot. I saw a brush shake over the deer after which it pranced away untouched. After a quick tip on how a gun shoots high if you see too much front sight, my hunter was cautioned to get his front bead level with his rear sight and maybe that would not happen next time.

Despite the thoughts that all deer were scared away, it did not take long until one was observed through the timber and on the horizon out of range. A few blows on the bleat call got its attention and it immediately began approaching and looking for that sound. After a series of head bobs and cautious...
steps, the deer was in the open and in range at the same location that its buddy had been injured earlier. My hunter takes aim from his tripod, perhaps with a little more attention to detail this time. A cloud of smoke obscured what happened but the wind allowed me to see that the deer was running away with its head down, making short quick steps. I gave a thumbs-up indicating that was a good sign. As the reloading process was underway it was announced, “Last bullet, we only brought four. Who would have thought we would need four bullets on a muzzleloader hunt?” My two bullets and rifle were in the truck as spares.

After twenty minutes of waiting, we called for clearance to leave the stand and track. A nice blood trail led us to the downed doe and my hunter has his first deer. His father gave the field-dressing lesson confirming a perfect shot through the heart and then we head right back into the blind. Considering the day’s experiences, my hunter announces he does not want to shoot another unless it is a large buck. This was a very mature, ethical decision despite the fact it is legal to shoot another deer in Bedford County of either sex. So, out with the grunt call this time. In a short while a buck, with antlers beyond the ears, can be seen coming toward us with his head bobbing up and down with curiosity seeming to have him acting risky. Maybe not, as he disappears and none of the three of us know where he went.

In opposite direction seems we have alerted another buck, a spike. As he approaches, he picks up the blood trail and comes to the same spot of the shooting and then eases off on the old blood trail from the morning.

As the final hours of the hunt wind down, we realize we hardly had a break from the parade of deer to take in the beautiful fall colors. Leaves, heavy with the earlier rain, were breaking loose in the breeze, showering all around us in a multitude of reds and bright yellows.
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The killing bothers me. Even so, I haven’t stopped hunting. Killing is, after all, the only way to make meat, and I enjoy meat. Raising grain kills, too. Every additional acre in cultivation is an acre not available as wildlife habitat, an acre lost to indigenous flora, an acre that loads another chamber in humanity’s slow game of pesticide roulette.

But that’s the stuff of rationalization, of apologia; I’m after more elusive game here. If the killing bothers me, what exactly is there about hunting that I like (or need) enough to cause me to tolerate the resulting deaths? What return do I get for my discomfort?

Bruce Woods began his essay, “The Hunting Problem,” with these thought-provoking questions, and I think they are questions every hunter should consider. If we are conceited enough to undertake such a permanent act as ending an animal’s life, each one of us needs to come to grips with our own personal reasons for believing that it is acceptable—even desirable—to do so. Too many hunters commit this irreversible act without ever considering this paradox: Hunters claim to respect, revere, even love the animals they hunt, and yet they are willing to take that animal’s life, to remove it permanently from the earth. This dichotomy requires some reconciliation.

Woods goes on to point out that, “The success of the hunt demands that it, the killing, be gotten over with as quickly as possible...Because killing is always ugly, and if poorly done it can forever poison the moment of anticipation with doubt, replacing triumph with self-disgust.”

Maybe it’s because in the winter the weather is cold and the days short and dark, or maybe it’s my recent contemplation of my own mortality as a loved one struggles with terminal health problems. Whatever the reason, these thoughts about death have circled around and crept into my mind again. Most of us have brought death upon animals—large, beautiful, exquisite animals. We’ve felt the elation of having been successful, the instinctive desire to pump fists, slap backs, dance a jig. But buried in the euphoria is a weight, a sorrow about the permanence of what we have done. At least there should be. And that dark part of the paradoxical moment deserves billing at least equal to the exultant part.

When talking about his first big game kill and about wrestling with the contradicting emotions, an introspective friend described it this way: “When I realized what I had done,” he mused, “I wondered if I was really worthy to have done it.” I understood precisely what he meant.

Whether we have come to terms with the blood on our hands or not, the successful hunter closes the circle. Death is final. And it’s heavy. And we should take seriously the responsibility of inflicting it. Woods concludes his essay thus:

Sure, the killing bothers me. It’s supposed to. And if it ever stops bothering me, I pray I’ll be big enough to let go of hunting forever. Because to hunt and not despise the killing would be to become not an animal, but a form of human that is already far too common in the festering cities of this world.
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No one builds a better rifle than both of us
Most two-person Hunting Related Shooting Incidents (HRSIs) are the result of the shooter intentionally firing their rifle or shotgun. They did not intentionally shoot at another person, but they shoudered, aimed at what they thought was a safe target, and pulled the trigger. Less often the HRSI is the result of an “accidental discharge,” and these are most often the result of somebody walking around with their finger on the trigger and then accidentally or sometimes invol untarily pulling the trigger without intent and without regard to where the muzzle is pointing.

Bobby, Mark, and Jason were pheasant hunting when Mark stepped into a hole, lurched forward, and involuntarily squeezed his grip on his shotgun as he pulled it close to his chest to control the muzzle, just like he had been taught in Hunter Education class a few years back. Unfortunately, he forgot to keep his finger off the trigger and he pulled hard on it when his grip tightened. Somewhere in the process of putting his gloved finger into the trigger guard, he had also pushed the safety off. The discharge just barely missed the back of Jason’s head, but the muzzle blast caused permanent damage to his hearing. The lifelong friends never spoke again, and the shooting resulted in a nasty drawn-out civil suit for damages.

All three learned several valuable lessons that day: Keep the safety on, keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, and keep your finger outside the trigger guard.

I have seen this commandment debated on social media more than any other. If you read any news story about an HRSI on the Internet, it will usually end with “The local police spokesman says, ‘It was just a hunting accident.’”

Three kinds of comments usually follow the article. First, there are those that are sincerely sorry for the victim and shooter and for their families and offer prayers for recovery. Second are the comments from the very sick anti-hunters that troll the Internet looking for these stories, so they can comment, “how happy they are that another hunter was shot,” “hopefully all hunters will get shot,” etc. And finally, there are those who debate how and why the incident happened, even when the news story gives little or no details.

This last group always fascinates those of us who have investigated these tragic incidents. One reader will comment that
2019 IHEA-USA MEMBERSHIP PROMOTIONS!!

PROMO #1 – “NEW” IHEA-USA MEMBERSHIPS
Each NEW Annual Member and each New Life Member application received from October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, will have their names entered into a drawing for one of the following prizes:

- Go Wild American .308 Rifle (#26926) (**see note below)
- Model #CB520842
  8x42 Roof Prism Binocular, Armored
- Model #CV16206060B
  20-60x60 Range Pro Spotting, Scope & Tripod
- Model #CD13RRG
  Electronic Reflex Sight, Heavy Duty
- Model #CB221050
  Full-size 10x50 Porro Prism Binocular, Armored

** Federal Firearms requirements required for this item, and any FFL dealer fees will be the responsibility of the winner.

Drawing will be held approximately April 5, 2019, and winners will be notified. Information will also be posted on the IHEA-USA website at www.ihea-usa.org.

Please note: Beginning with 2019, Annual Memberships and Lifetime Memberships will no longer include Volunteer Supplemental Insurance coverage.

PROMO #2 – IHEA-USA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS
Renewing your IHEA-USA membership for 2019 is critically important as it supports the one national organization with one voice on behalf of hunter education programs and instructors throughout the United States! On behalf of IHEA-USA and Hunter Ed—thank you for your support and membership! All 2019 renewal applications received from October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, will have their names entered into a drawing for one of the following prizes:

- Grand Prize: Lifetime IHEA-USA Membership ($450 value)
- 2nd Prize: $100 Cabela’s/Bass Pro Gift Card
- 3rd Prize: Styrka S3 Series Riflescope

Drawing will be held approximately April 5, 2019, and winners will be notified. Information will also be posted on the IHEA-USA website at www.ihea-usa.org. Please note: Beginning with 2019, Annual Memberships and Lifetime Memberships will no longer include Volunteer Supplemental Insurance coverage.
the shooter was a fool for obviously walking around with his finger on the trigger and several others will post comments like, “I need to be ready to shoot!”, “The birds around here are so fast you will never get a shot off if you are not ready!”, or “I was raised to always keep the safety off and my finger on the trigger, to be ready at all times!”

Beyond the obvious safety risk, is there any real advantage to keeping your finger on the trigger? NO! Simply and emphatically and scientifically proven, NO! Once you spot your game, you need to decide if it is something you will shoot, is there a safe backstop, is it in range, etc. etc. While making all these decisions, you need to shoulder your firearm and begin to take aim. Once you have decided to shoot, the safety is pushed off as you move your finger towards the trigger and begin to shoot. Having your finger on the trigger already does not shorten the amount of time it takes to shoulder, make these decisions, acquire a good sight picture, take it off safe, and fire. There is no advantage!

I was a certified Police Firearms Instructor for 25 years, and one of the drills we did was designed to prove to the officers we trained that there was no advantage. We used highly accurate timers that would start at the sound of a whistle and stop at the sound of a gunshot. We would tell an officer to draw his handgun and keep it at low ready, pointed at the ground in front of the target. The officer knew they were going to fire at that target as fast as he could, as soon as they heard the whistle.

In the first round they would be told to start with their finger on the trigger and in the second round they would start with their finger off the trigger, laid forward along the trigger guard. All of the times recorded were less than a second and all were virtually the same. There was no advantage at all to having the finger already on the trigger.

Lessons Learned:

Keeping your finger off the trigger and along the trigger guard is not only safer, but does not at all slow down your ability to get off a quick, safe shot.

One final comment:

When we introduce youngsters into the shooting sports, we are teaching that it is a very serious thing, and all the rules must be followed all the time. Keeping our instruction serious and mature at all times promotes the respect that we teach for all firearms and for the rules. Unfortunately, there is a phrase which I have heard too often from instructors across the country, a phrase that I believe belittles this very serious rule.

“Keep your finger off the trigger and out of the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot” is very clear and mature. Please do not demean the rule by teaching, “Keep your booger hook off the bangy part!”

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.

Note: The article titled “Be Sure of Your Target and What is Beyond” that appeared in the previous issue of the Journal was mistakenly credited to Mike Van Durme; however, it was written by Keith Byers.

Individual ANNUAL or LIFETIME Membership Information

Name: ___________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________________________
Province/State: _____________________________
Postal Code: __________________________________
Phone: (         ) ______________________________________
Fax: (         ) ______________________________________
E-Mail: ___________________________________________
I prefer (check one): ☐ E-Mail ☐ Paper correspondence

Method of Payment (US funds only):
☐ Check/Money Order ☐ American Express ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa
Card Number: _____________________________ Expiration Date: _____________________________
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Mail to: IHEA-USA • 800 East 73rd Ave., Unit 2, Denver, CO 80229
Website: www.IHEA-USA.org • Phone: (303) 430-7233 • E-Mail: info@ihea.com

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Name: ___________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________________________
Province/State: _____________________________
Postal Code: __________________________________
Phone: (         ) ______________________________________
Fax: (         ) ______________________________________
E-Mail: ___________________________________________
I prefer (check one): ☐ E-Mail ☐ Paper correspondence

Lifetime OR Annual Membership

Annual Individual Membership Fee $30.00
OR
Lifetime Membership Fee $450.00
Lifetime Membership Payment Plan
(3 Consecutive Mo. Installments) $150.00
---------------------------------------------------------------------Total Payment $500.00

Note: Beginning with 2019, Annual Memberships and Lifetime Memberships will no longer include Volunteer Supplemental Insurance Coverage. Please check the box below to indicate you have read and understand this change.

☐ I Understand

In addition to the benefits listed above, each new IHEA-USA Lifetime $450 *Membership will include:
• $100 Cabela’s Gift Certificate
• Recognition on the IHEA-USA website as a Lifetime member.
• Certificate signed by the Executive Director of the IHEA-USA.
• Continuing the Heritage #2 Print (16” X 20”)
• Getting Ready for the Hunt Print (16” X 20”)
• “Lifetime Member” Lapel Pin
• Cabela’s brand Duffel Bag (29”L X 16”W X 14”H) embroidered with “Lifetime Member”

Membership rewards are subject to change.
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Helping Hunters Fill Tags for 35 Years
Over the past few years as a Hunter Education Instructor in Wisconsin, I have experienced changes that have evolved in the delivery of a “sound” Hunter Education “Classroom” course transition from a three to four week course, to a mere nine-day course. Reason being that the Wisconsin DNR, as well as many other states, are navigating to eliminate “Classroom courses” and evolve/simplify obtaining a hunter’s certification using today’s computer technology, and require only a field day. At the same time, I see that the DNR is looking to put younger, responsible hunters out in the field as they have always done. I accept that and have no issues with it in the same aspect. However...

With all that stated, I must further state that I fear drawbacks and long-term shortcomings from such an approach. That being said, I shall try to clarify.

In the classroom environment over the original three to four weeks that were standard protocol when I started instructing, we instructors had the opportunity to closely (sometimes one-on-one) watch and monitor the “Character” that the student had or presented. That greatly helped us in our decisions as to whether or not that same student was truly prepared to safely and responsibly handle a live firearm and enter the hunting world with safe and sound decisions (T.A.B.K.), and ethical responsibilities. It also gave us a chance to correct weaknesses or shortcomings that we saw and offer a positive effort to correct such in the young students that we taught. In the majority of the cases, we were successful in doing so. I’ve had students that could rattle off the correct answer to any question in the student’s manual with ease, but when it came to handling a firearm with live ammunition, they seemed to forget it all. The most important and reinforced issue being T-A-B-K. As a bittersweet note, there were minimal students that had to be turned away simply because “they just weren’t ready.” (And we always courteously offered them a chance to retry at the following scheduled class.) That really allowed us instructors to truly apply our skills and make the hunting world a safer environment, and at the same time, aide the DNR in further reducing hunting incidents while keeping up the hunting tradition by putting new hunters in the field. Which is what the Hunter Education program is all about.

With the inevitable deletion of the current nine-day classroom course being transitioned to an Internet-driven “Computer” course, I fear that the professional (as a certified instructor) evaluation of a student and potential hunter will be constricted. Reason being, that in today’s Internet-based society, we all know that the Internet offers venues for anybody to “cheat the system.” Thus, removing the instructor’s ability to accurately evaluate the student’s “Character.” From an individual standing over the shoulder of the student “feeding them answers,” to all the social media (Facebook, Twitter, Tweet, etc.), all the answers to the student’s handbook will be readily available.

The only protection that we instructors will have in our support to know whether an “Internet student” has completed the course honestly and ethically, will be at the final field day. The answers to the final questions “CANNOT BE, AND MUST NOT BE AVAILABLE” (per Wisconsin DNR protocol, laws, and regulations) on the Internet. And above that, the safe handling of a loaded firearm comes into place. Although it is still not a requirement to fire a live firearm, it is at that point where I have seen the possibility that the student is not fully prepared or knowledgeable in the full concepts that they are preparing to endure. At such a young age for the student, I am compelled to weigh the differences and make a sound decision as an instructor and either pass or fail them based on what “I see and what they do,” and not what the student’s handbook answers show. I feel that the Internet course will greatly take away from that final opportunity to either add a responsible hunter to the great tradition of hunting or turn them away because they are not completely ready, as any mistake on their part could tarnish the very purpose that we as instructors set out to avoid in the first place.

As this transition takes place, I am preparing/educating myself to continue doing what I love to do as an instructor by getting certified in conducting the Internet field day. So, when the day comes that “Classroom” courses are done away with, I will be ready to conduct a field day, and still make a responsible decision in the success or failure of my students. But, it will be with one less VERY IMPORTANT tool. And that is the opportunity to professionally assess (again, as a certified H/E instructor) a student’s true “Character,” abilities, and comprehension/understanding of what the (Internet) course is designed to teach them.
New Products for Instructors

The Promatic Kestrel Presents the Perfect Application for Range and Field Days

Promatic has done it again – this time with a commercial trap unit that’s perfect for the Hunter Education range day or for full-time individual use.

With a price point that is half of what most competitors would start their commercial machines at, the Kestrel acts as a bridge product that fits a niche need for smaller demand situations.

Allowing the user to customize capabilities, the Kestrel offers instructors the opportunity to set it up perfectly for their range-day needs. Promatic also offers the same attention-to-detail and commercial grade build quality on the Kestrel as the rest of the premium Promatic machines.

The Kestrel features a 6-column 160-clay capacity with 1.5 second re-cocking, elevation control to 70 degrees, and the ability to slings clays beyond 70 yards.

You can find all of Promatic’s products, including more information on the Kestrel at [www.promatic.biz](http://www.promatic.biz).

Nosler Trophy Grade Ammunition

Nosler brings the extensive knowledge of their ballistic team and the strict quality standards of hardcore reloaders to their new Trophy Grade line of ammunition. Produced with expert reloaders’ attention to detail and high quality components, Trophy Grade ammunition provides accuracy and consistency usually reserved for precision hand-loaded ammunition.

Nosler incorporates the same types of steps precise handloaders insist on, such as sizing, chamfering, and truing neck sizes; checking flash holes for proper alignment; meticulous weighing of powder charges; and polishing and visually inspecting finished rounds.

There are three categories: Trophy Grade, loaded with Nosler’s famous AccuBond Partition Ballistic Tip or E-Tip bullets for deer, elk, moose, bear, and dangerous game; Trophy Grade Varmint, loaded with the proven Ballistic Tip Varmint or Ballistic Tip Lead-Free bullets for varmint and target shooting; and Trophy Grade Long Range, loaded with new ultra-high ballistic coefficient AccuBond Long Range bullets for deer, elk, and moose.

Inside tip: Nosler considers Trophy Grade Long Range the sleekest, fastest-shooting, bonded hunting bullet ever created. Trophy Grade Varmint comes in 204 Ruger, 22-250 Remington, 223 Remington, and 22 Nosler. Trophy Grade and Trophy Grade Long Range come in a wide range of calibers too numerous to mention here. Visit [nosler.com](http://nosler.com) and check it out.
Aimpoint, the originator and worldwide leader in red-dot sighting technology, has been a long-time supporter of International Hunter Education Association-USA and has been steadfast in supporting and applauding the enormous number of hours hunter education instructors volunteer each year.

In appreciation of the important work done by hunter education instructors to promote safe and ethical hunting, Aimpoint provides instructors a discount on their innovative sights.

“The IHEA and their tens of thousands of hunter education instructors play a crucial role in growing and developing the next generation of hunters,” said Andrea Cerwinske, Aimpoint’s Vice President of Marketing. “Aimpoint is proud to support these unsung heroes in our hunting heritage.”

To receive the discount, instructors should go to www.aimpointstore.com and create an account on the webpage. Remember to select “IHEA Instructor” as your category group.

Aimpoint’s founders set out to create sights that would allow shooters to acquire target quickly and consistently, and accurately hit moving targets in all weather and lighting conditions. The resulting red-dot sight technology revolutionized shooting and hunting.

The Mission Is to Grow With the Hunter

Mission Archery out of Sparta, WI just introduced four high-value bows to the market and reminds instructors that they are offering discounts on these “perfect for the first-time hunter” products.

“We introduced the Mission line to make high-quality bows more accessible to new archers and are always looking for ways to support the growth of the sport,” said Matt McPherson, founder of Mission Archery. “The combination of performance and adjustability in our bows provides the instructors a versatile teaching tool they can easily use and depend on in the classroom.” Check out the new MXR, SWITCH, and HAMMR at missionarchery.com, choose your bow, download their discount form, and head to an authorized Mission retailer with a copy of your Instructor certification and/or certification number. To find the Mission retailer in your area, instructors can go to www.missionarchery.com and click on “Find a Retailer.”

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.

Purchase these fine products and more!
Mike Brooks Receives IHEA-USA Executive Director’s Award

Missouri Department of Conservation’s Andy Dalton Range Manager, Mike Brooks, was recently honored for work with the Hunting Incident Investigation Academy.

A strong interest in the outdoors and a background in crime scene investigation has resulted in the Missouri Department of Conservation’s (MDC) Mike Brooks earning a national hunter education award.

Brooks, who is the manager of MDC’s Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center in Greene County, received the 2017 International Hunter Education Association (IHEA-USA) Executive Director’s Award. He earned this honor for his leadership and dedication to the Hunting Incident Investigation Academy, a national education program for training professional wildlife officers in the proper techniques for investigating and documenting hunting-related shootings. This information is used in hunter education programs for the purpose of preventing future hunting incidents.

“Mike brings so much organization and consistency to the Academy,” said former IHEA-USA President Megan Wisecup. “Mike is respected and looked up to by the entire teaching team. His passion for teaching conservation officers truly shows through in everything he does.” Brooks, a native of Ash Grove, received his award in September at the IHEA-USA Hunting Incident Investigation Academy in Moravia, Iowa.

Through Brooks’ efforts, MDC has taken a lead role in IHEA-USA Academy training programs. The Andy Dalton Shooting Range and MDC’s Bois D’Arc Conservation Area that surrounds the range has been the host site of several IHEA-USA Hunting Incident Investigation Academies, the most recent being in the fall of 2017. Brooks has also helped coordinate training events in other states and has been a ballistics instructor for the academy since 2004. Since 2016, he has been the director of the academy.

Brooks has a wealth of knowledge in hunter education, firearms program instruction, and in hunting incident investigation techniques. He’s been the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center’s manager since 2001 and, prior to joining MDC, he was a Greene County deputy sheriff for 16 years. Through his work in the sheriff’s department—part of which involved working with the South-Central Missouri Major Case Squad in the 1990s—Brooks gained experience in investigative techniques, blood stain interpretation, homicide investigation, photography, evidence collection, and scene reconstruction.

Though Brooks has been a leader in IHEA-USA activities, he gives credits to his team.

“The credit for this award is shared with my fellow instructors, both past and present, who secured the path to safer hunting through their efforts and support for this academy since 1993 when the first academy was held in Missouri,” he said.

Passing on Our Tradition

I received this photo and a warm note of thanks from Blaine Stratton (photo credit) and his wife Lisa (pictured second from right). I recently taught a Hunter Education class attended by the two boys, Konnor Gonzales (front left) and Jon Hueberger (front right).

After multiple trips to the range and hours of small game practice, the proud grandparents took the newly-credentialed hunters off to Texas to hunt deer with longtime family friend and football coach Randy Hicks (rear right). It was an obvious success.

I was deeply touched to see the part I played in bringing third generation friends and family together around the sport and tradition of hunting.

—Jack Becht
Muzlstiks Provide Highly Visible Safety Reminder

Joe and Tracy Rumpke knew they were on to something important, something that would be a valuable tool in firearm safety, with the reaction received from the earliest version of Muzlstik.

In the fall of 2013, planning to hunt deer the next morning, Joe had placed his muzzleloading rifle in the glass-front gun cabinet with the first Muzlstik prototype placed in the barrel.

He had made the prototype out of wood and painted “Loaded” on it as a visual reminder. A little while later, their son Leland, then 10 years old, came upstairs and asked, “Hey, is that gun down there really loaded?”

“We both about fell over because the Muzlstik really worked,” Tracy said. “It made our son ask questions. It made him think twice before handling it or even think of handling it.”

Everyone knows the first rule of firearm safety is to treat every firearm as if it is loaded, but unfortunately, accidents still happen. “We wouldn’t be having this conversation if everyone did that, would we?” she said.

“He knew exactly what the status of the gun was,” she said. “He didn’t have to assume the gun was loaded; it said it.”

Joe and Tracy improved and expanded the Muzlstik line. The original Muzlstik, a T-shaped device that fits in the muzzle of a barrel, evolved into a plastic version; then they added a clip-over-the-side model, great for use in gun safes, and a new chamber flag design, which blocks open firearm actions to prevent accidental firing while indicating whether the firearm is loaded or not.

No longer hand-fashioned of wood, Muzlstiks are now made of durable ABS plastic, and clearly marked “Loaded” or “Unloaded” in highly visible lettering. The lettering is also raised so you can tell by feel, even in the dark, if a firearm is loaded or not.

Muzlstiks are for use in the home, at the range, in the field, in classrooms, or anywhere firearms are handled. And not just for hunters and avid shooters, but for everyone who owns a firearm.

They are a practical educational tool for demonstrating firearm safety to hunter education students, and they indicate that the firearms in the classroom are unloaded and safe. They have also proven popular with range safety officers who appreciate the highly visible nature of these simple and effective devices.

That’s something to think about the next time you go to the range. Wouldn’t it be reassuring if everyone at the range used Muzlstiks to indicate which firearms are loaded or unloaded?

“If a Muzlstik can save at least one life by preventing the accidental firing of a gun, we have accomplished a great feat,” Tracy said.

Muzlstiks are simple and intuitive. “In life, we do not realize how much we read every day,” she said. “From street signs to billboards, we visually see things and read them without even realizing it. Muzlstik is a great product because you do not even realize that you are reading ‘loaded’ or ‘unloaded.’”

Joe, a lifelong hunter, conceived the idea for his muzzleloading rifle, realizing he and many other muzzleloader hunters simply removed the percussion cap at the end of a day of hunting and left the powder and bullet ready in the barrel. He realized the importance of knowing there was a charge in the barrel and the danger it could present if he forgot or if someone else used the rifle. An accidental discharge could result, or he or someone else could load the rifle again, double loading it by packing more powder and a bullet on top of the original charge, a potentially dangerous situation. A highly visible reminder, he thought, could be a life-saving solution.

But don’t think Muzlstiks are just for muzzleloading firearms. Yes, they work great in muzzleloaders, but they are also for every firearm in your home—rifles, shotguns, handguns—whether they are stored in a gun safe, gun cabinet, or bedside table. One of the Muzlstik styles will provide a fast, visible, reassuring reminder of the status of each of your firearms during storage, transportation, or at the field or range.

Muzlstiks are another tool, a valuable tool, now available to make firearm storage and handling safer. “If there is just one more step to helping remind people and others that are around, that serves its purpose,” Tracy said. “Something so small as a little, inexpensive sign could just be the answer to saving lives.”

Muzlstik’s simple, effective, and easy-to-use design is patented and comes in a choice of colors. And, they’re made in the U.S.A.

Visit muzlstik.com for more.
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