

FAHP News, October 25, 2010

The Maryland-Delaware Trapshooters' League of 1947: The date of October 25 refreshed my memory. In 1947, that Saturday was like a warm summer day, and the final shoot of the short-lived Maryland-Delaware Trapshooters' League was held at Yorklyn, with by far the largest attendance of the season. I had been instrumental (with my father's blessing) in founding the league in early spring that year, its objective being to encourage many young men to become registered trapshooters. There had been an earlier league with this name right after World War I, but it was long gone. The 1947 objective was highly successful, but the league lasted only one year.

Four gun clubs, two in Delaware and two in Maryland, were asked to participate, and each would have a team and a captain for competition fun among the clubs. The two Delaware clubs were Wilmington and Yorklyn; the two in Maryland, both new clubs, were Darlington (on Route 1 south of Conowingo), and Elkton. Wilmington was to have most of the Delaware shooters and those from South Jersey (except those in Yorklyn and Hockessin), Yorklyn had all the eastern Pennsylvania shooters who took part, and the Maryland clubs divided marksmen from that State, with Darlington picking up many from York County, Pennsylvania. Walter M. Grace, then Burgess (Mayor) of Kennett Square, was captain of the Yorklyn team.

There were scheduled twelve shoots between April and October, three at each of the four clubs. Ten of them were at 50 targets each, making it more affordable for new and younger shooters, but the mid-season shoot in late July at Darlington, and the post-season shoot at Yorklyn, mentioned above, were at 100 targets each. The attendance averaged about 85 shooters, but over 125 shot on that summer-like day in late October. Since we were back on Standard Time by that date in those days, we barely finished the program before darkness set in.

I was secretary and treasurer of the league, and I cashiered all the shoots, kept the records, and sent the scores in to the Amateur Trapshooting Association for the official averages. We gave about twelve trophies at each shoot, based on class shooting, which meant that those with similar averages competed against each other (Classes A, B, C, and D). The buying and awarding of these trophies was an additional responsibility of the secretary-treasurer. Several 50-straight shots were recorded during the season, but only one 100-straight, broken by J. Calvin Michael of Aberdeen, Maryland (at Darlington's 100-target event in July). The following year, 1948, Calvin was the high-average trapshooter in the United States with an average of .9880 on 2000 targets (he missed only 24!).

The league operated in the black, and the year-end proceeds were distributed among those who had taken part. If I recall correctly, the Darlington team had the highest composite score, Yorklyn was second, Wilmington third, and Elkton fourth. I enjoyed my work immensely, but had to give it up for more meaningful undertakings. No one stepped forward, so all was over after October 25, 1947.

Work Nights Progress

On Tuesday evening, work on the Model 735 superheater continued as Bill Schwoebel, Ted Kamen and Steve Bryce completed much of the bending, and Emil Christofano and Jeff Pollock worked on the Rauch & Lang electric, installing new hinges and aligning the door. The water tank on the Model 76 had been leaking and was removed by Steve Bryce and Ted Kamen so seams could be re-soldered, and Jerry Lucus and Jeff Pollock continued reassembling the Model K engine.

On Thursday night, Bob Stransky, Art Wallace and Tim Ward worked on the Model 607 leaf springs, cutting and peening the aligning carriage bolts, cleaning off the excess graphite paint and applying a final coat of primer. Bob Jordan cleaned the hanger for the front of the 607 engine. Jim Personti and Jeff Fallows worked on the adjusting mechanism, engine-to-rear, on the Model K engine rods, and Kelly Williams, Dan Citron and Ted Kamen finished the bending of the Model 735 superheater and fitted it into the burner.

WE NEED YOU to Put the Fun in Fall

The next Steamin' Day is right around the corner on November 7. If you can help make it special for our visitors, please e-mail Rose Ann Hoover (roseannhoover@comcast.net) so she can add you to the day's roster.

Check Out Hockessin Hauntings

Our neighbors in Hockessin are planning some trick-or-treating fun. They've been enthusiastically promoting our Steamin' Days so we are pleased to return the favor and encourage you to stop by Hockessin next Saturday, Oct. 30, 11 am to 4 pm ... starting with our friends at Wild Birds Unlimited who'll be hosting fire performers and handing out candy.