

THE TARGET

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH DAKOTA SHOOTING SPORTS ASSOCIATION

Volume 22, Number 3

ISSN: 1086-4172

October, November, December 2015

Why are there not more bullet casters?

I have been casting bullets since 1978 (I know. Some of you were not even born then). I have found that bullet casting and reloading are great hobbies. You might even say that they are a lifelong hobby, but I didn't start quite early enough to say that with conviction about myself. I find that am able to relax and enjoy the process of producing great bullets and loaded ammunition. The ammunition that I produce is most often quite a bit better than what is available on the shelves of our sporting goods stores. Certainly, it is no worse. My ammunition is also quite a lot less expensive than what is commercially available.

So, why are there not more bullet casters? The process does not require a rocket scientist.

In the community of Devils Lake, I know of only about 10 people who cast and load their own ammunition. Actually, I could not name 10 people, but let's assume that there are 10. I know that there are a larger number who cast fishing lures and sinkers. We have a rather large number of people who enjoy shooting handguns, but only a minuscule percentage who cast their own bullets. Now, I know very well that the process of casting good bullets requires time and equipment. But I cannot think of any other hobby that doesn't also require time and equipment. The time spent casting bullets by a bullet caster is every bit as enjoyable as the time spent on any other hobby by another hobbyist.

From 1978 until about 2004, I cast and loaded between 500 and 750 rounds of 44 magnum bullets each year. Even at 500 rounds per year, that amounts to far more than 10,000 quality cast bullets. I still cast for the 44 magnum, but not in that quantity. The cost of loaded ammunition was quite a bit cheaper back then, but I saved a pile of money by casting my own bullets. The quality of those cast bullets and my loaded ammunition was and still is second to none (I have trophies and old match result bulletins as proof). Of course, I take quite a bit of pride in that quality. I have enjoyed the process of casting quality 44 magnum and many other caliber bullets for over 45 years now. Not many hobbies span 45 years.

Today, I was thinking about how few people shoot the 44 magnum anymore. I am convinced that the cost of commercial ammunition is part of the reason, but there are probably many reasons.

I have been hunting with a 44 magnum pistol and my own cast bullets since about 1980, and I have used a 44 magnum with cast bullets on gophers, rabbits, fox, deer and elk with great results. A very large number of metallic silhouette

targets have fallen to this combination as well. I should also mention the great job this combination does on bowling pins, water filled milk cartons, and dead trees. All in all, a very enjoyable and rewarding hobby.

I have included a little chart detailing the relative cost of cast 44 magnum bullets compared to commercial jacketed and commercial cast bullets as well as those cast by myself. That chart is on the last page of this issue. If you compare the cost of 10,000 rounds of 44 magnum at the current retail cost of \$.65/round (\$6,500) against the cost of my self-cast at \$.195/round (\$1,950), you see a difference of \$4,550. That is certainly not insignificant. This cost can be further reduced by selecting a different powder (Unique).

The chart is based on the use of WW 296. Loading cost with Alliant's Unique powder is roughly \$2.25 cheaper for a box of 50 at very little sacrifice in performance. Some would even say that loading midrange velocity (1,200 or so) in the 44 magnum is perfect. Recoil is reduced and performance on targets and game is excellent with the correct cast bullet.

So, are other people just lazy or am I one of those very few who find the activity of casting and loading bullets for my 44 magnum and many other handguns enjoyable and relaxing? I don't read much about hunting with a handgun anymore, and handgun silhouette with the 44 magnum is a sport with few competitors. I wish that were not the case, as these are very enjoyable and rewarding activities. It seems that there must be many 44 magnums gathering dust in gunsafes around the nation. I sure do not see them at our outdoor range anymore.

I know one thing. I plan to enjoy bullet casting and the loading and firing of cast bullets in my handguns and many of my rifles for as long as I am physically able to do so. I still see it as a great lifetime hobby after more than 45 years. I hope that a few of you can join me in the fun.

Rick Jorgenson



Editorially Speaking

As I write this, our great fall weather has given over to winter. So, many of us are getting a good start on the winter indoor shooting season. We enjoyed a great indoor season of matches with some great scores from our junior shooters that earned a record number of them invitations to USA Shooting's Junior National Championships. I look forward to an even better indoor season this winter.

There are many indoor matches and championships in the pistol and rifle disciplines, and I look forward to shooting with many of you over the next few months. Take a look at our Schedule of Opportunities and plan to attend a match soon.

Thanks to Rand's initiative in the creation of something new for our readers, we offer a new segment (Shooter to the Line) in this addition of the Target.

As I have said many times before this, it is a bit of a challenge to produce this newsletter without including a substantial amount of my own thoughts. Thanks to Rand and Bill for their contributions to this issue. Without them, you would be reading more articles by me alone. So, if any of you have what you think is an important thought about the shooting sports in North Dakota, write it down and email it to me. You may see and read about it in our next issue.

During the next few months, volunteer to help our match directors and coaches who make the matches possible. Almost all of our match directors would welcome your help, and you will learn more about what it takes to put on a good match. I think you will enjoy yourselves while you help. Our crew here in Devils Lake just finished getting ready for our December Airgun match, and it is great to have help from our club members who do not even shoot this match. I hope that our other match directors are as fortunate.

The members at our annual meeting voted to increase our association membership dues in an effort to insure the continued good health of our association. Thus, you will find our new dues structure outlined on Page 5.

This dues structure was effective May 1, 2015. Thank you all for your continued support of our association and its efforts to support marksmanship and the safe use of firearms by everyone in North Dakota.

NDSSA is a small organization that gets a lot of good things done. We are always searching for people to **join us** as members or officers. If any of you have a prospective member, share your copy of our newsletter or help them fill out the membership application that is on page 5 and send it in to **P O Box 228, BISMARCK ND 58502-0228**.

"The government is merely a servant—merely a temporary servant; it cannot be its prerogative to determine what is right and what is wrong, and decide who is a patriot and who isn't. Its function is to obey orders, not originate them."

— **Mark Twain**

"If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month."

— **Theodore Roosevelt**

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The Target

ISSN: 1086-4172

PUBLISHED quarterly (four issues a year) by the North Dakota Shooting Sports Association, Inc., P. O. Box 228, Bismarck, ND 58502-0228.; a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Rifle Association of America, for the purpose of promoting safety and education in the sport of shooting. The Target is provided to all members of the NDSSA. Individual subscriptions are \$10.00 a year and club subscriptions are \$20.00 a year. The editorials and articles appearing in the publication reflect the differing views present among sportsmen and gun owners, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Target, P. O. Box 228, Bismarck, ND 58502-0228.

DEADLINES: Closing date for material for each issue is the first day of the month preceding the month of publication. Publication dates are: January, April, July, and October. All materials are to be provided to the following address:

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2015 North Dakota Light Rifle a Year in Review

The competitive season for NRA 50 foot Indoor Light Rifle started in Bismarck on January 3rd & 4th with a 100 shot NRA approved match. The season opener was won with a very impressive score from Lee Widdel of 978-19x. Class winners for the match included James Ladwig 971-15x (Master), Rick Jorgenson 945-15x (Expert), Sommer Bradley 945-16x (Sharpshooter) and Tom Liebel 931-4x (Marksman). Those score set the mood for the North Dakota NRA Light Rifle Sectional match held in Grand Forks on January 24th.

The NRA Sectional is a 60 shot match with the state medal winners that included James Ladwig Gold Medal score of 579-6x, Travis Jorgenson took home the Silver Medal close behind with a 576-5x and the Bronze Medal went to Gary Sivertson just 5 points down with a 574-2x. Class winners for the Section Match included Tom Thompson (Master), Rod Gigstad (Expert), Georgette Bradley (Sharpshooter) and James Anderson (Marksman). The ND NRA Sectional scores are sent to the NRA's Competitive Division to rank the North Dakota Light Rifle athletes against those from all the other states that hold sectional events. So while waiting to find out how the North Dakota athletes fair against the rest of the nation the Bottineau Gun Club has been doing a great job keeping us practicing with a Light Rifle Postal Match.

This year's postal match included 40 competitors in the 10 target, 200 shot match. Gary Sivertson topped the standings list as the match winner for the 2015 postal match. Steve Lange's score put him atop the High Masters. Melissa Langer was on top for the Masters, Michael Weisz was top Expert and Trent Albertson and Paul Hauser lead the Sharpshooter and Marksman classifications. While the Bottineau club members scored all those targets they also prepared for the North Dakota Light Rifle State Championship match held at the Bottineau Gun Club in early April.

The State Championship Match has evolved over the years as the only NRA registered match with the exception of the sectional format. It now contains the 100 shot State Championship Match plus a 20, 40 and 60 shot match in a NRA format that allows for scores fired in each match to qualify for submission to the NRA as a National Record. This year's state Championship Match brought 23 light rifle competitors to Bottineau. Melissa Langer's score of 975-16x held up to add her name to the big state championship trophy. Melissa also won the 40 and 60 shot matches, while Lee Widdel topped the board in the 20 shot match. There is a big list of class awards for all four

matches held during the State Championship and it should be noted that Mike Hall set a new state record score of 100-6x his last targets of the match, but the bigger news might be that 12 new National Record scores were fired over the various courses of fire. Sommer Bradley from Berthold and Karsten Klein from Bismarck established new national record scores in the Intermediate Junior and Sub-Junior categories respectively in the 100, 60, 40, and 20 shot matches. While Melissa Langer bettered her previous national record scores in the Women's category in the 60 and 40 shot matches and also placed her name in the national record spot for open and civilian categories for the 40 shot match previously held by Lee Widdel. Thanks to hard work done by the Bottineau Gun Club submitting all the paperwork for national records, North Dakota competitors now hold 28 national records to date in 50 foot Indoor Light Rifle. It was nice to add the two young athletes to the books in Intermediate and Sub-junior categories. National records from the State Championship match aren't the end of the story for national recognition though for ND Light Rifle competitors. In June the NRA National Sectional scores were posted and North Dakota competitors also topped the standings list.

The 2015 NRA National Light Rifle Open Sectional Champion is James Ladwig, Argusville, ND. In fact at the top of the standings are a group of North Dakota natives with Travis Jorgenson, Vergas, MN, and Gary Sivertson, Bottineau, ND placing 2nd and 3rd in the nation. Melissa Langer, Bismarck, ND is the woman's champion, Daniel Schumacher, Thompson, ND is senior champion and Rodney Gigstad, Grand Fork, ND is the veteran categories champion. Classification awards went to Sommer and Georgette Bradley from Berthold, ND who took top spots in the nation in Expert and Sharpshooter classes respectfully. Robert Rock from Larimore, ND finished as the top Marksman.

That isn't all for light rifle. There was a fun match in Bottineau, and a spring match in Grand Forks that aren't listed here as well as many other local club competitions. So grab your .22 plinking rifle, peek at a rulebook to make sure it will work, leave your shooting coat and pants, offhand stand and scope, or heavy pistol box at home and come have some fun at a light rifle match this winter. The ranges are warm, the competition friendly and comradery is great. See you there.

Bill Langer

Shooter to the Line. (Tom Thompson's title).

Our intent here is to feature a shooter, club, coach or someone who is promoting the shooting sports in ND. As most readers of The Target are aware, we enjoy a plethora of young talented shooters in our state; so we decided to pick one, ask a few questions and possibly get to know them a bit better. I decided that our first victim would be Lana Fairbanks, and she was gracious enough to answer the questions that were posed to her. I hope you enjoy this new segment and of course if you have anything that you feel would improve, it let me know.

Lana Fairbanks is the daughter of Walt and Tammy Fairbanks. She is entering her final year of high school attending Century High School in Bismarck. Lana shoots with the Bismarck/Mandan Rifle and Pistol Assoc. Junior team and this will be the start of her 8th year shooting air rifle and smallbore. Lana is coached by Tom Thompson.

Who is the person that has most influenced you to shoot or who you aspire to emulate?

"My Dad first got me started, when I was 10, and right away I shot with the advanced kids that were in the program."

In your mind, the most significant accomplishment, victory, or goal that you have attained up to this date in your shooting carrier?

"Earning a bronze medal in my age group during my first year at the Junior Olympics."

Average hours of practice per week during shooting season?

"Every Thursday from 6-8, one Monday every month for air rifle practice from 6-8."

What has the discipline of shooting taught you?

"If you want to achieve a goal, you must practice often and work hard in order to achieve what you want."

Other interests or something most people may not know about you?

"I love to go camping in the summer and sit around the campfire eating s'mores. Most people don't know that I eat like Wimpy but look like Olive Oil."

Rand McLeod

Field Target Airgun in North Dakota

Ayr Rifles Sportsman's Club held its 2nd annual Field Target Match on Sept. 12. We didn't advertise as well as we should have, but 13 shooters endured the ND winds and spent the morning knocking down steel targets with their air rifles. After all the shooting was complete, Rich grilled some brats, and we had a picnic before picking up the targets and calling it a day. It was a good day and there were even some parents that shot with the kids. I think we all had fun and considered it a worthwhile event. One reason I bring this up is to recognize the organizations that make such events possible.

A grant through the ND Game and Fish Department, Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters Grant, helped supply a good majority of the targets that we use for this match. The grant also provides for additional pellets and insurance to cover such events. Also the FNRA has awarded our club a grant to purchase 3 air rifles specifically made for field target competition. Being involved with the FM area FNRA for the past 2 years has made me realize the work and commitment that these committees put into area banquets. It is fulfilling to see the monies generated from such programs come back to support clubs such as ours.

I am pretty sure that Field Target matches are not going to overtake High Power shooting in ND, nor would I want them to. However, if it were not for the grants that we have available to our shooting sports community, we wouldn't have the opportunity to try something out of the ordinary. We now have another reason to get out and enjoy North Dakota as a group and family.

Rand McLeod

Dakota Marksmanship Foundation, Inc.

P O Box 518

Bismarck, ND 58502-0518

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Provides support for North Dakota shooting programs through distribution of donated funds entirely within North Dakota.

If you or someone you know would like to be a part of the Foundation's effort to benefit shooting marksmanship and safety programs within North Dakota, please send us a note or contact:

Thomas Thompson – 701-255-4601

Eric Pueppke – 701-967-8450

Summer Schedule of Opportunities

Jan 2, 3	Light Rifle Match	Bismarck	Walt Fairbanks	701-751-0690
Jan 2, 3	Bullseye Pistol Match	Bismarck	Kevin Hertz	701-223-4225
Jan 9	Junior Olympics (Air Pistol, Sport Pistol)	Devils Lake	Rick Jorgenson	701-662-4760
Jan 9, 10	Open Inter Air Rifle Sec, 3P Metric Approved Match	Bismarck	Tom Thompson	701-255-4601
Jan 16, 17	Junior Olympics (Air, 3P Smallbore Rifle)	Minot	Rick Jorgenson	701-662-4760
Jan 16	USPSA Match	Bismarck	Delmer Dyk	701-222-4194
Jan 17	Approved Air Rifle and Air Pistol Match	West Fargo	Theresa Simon	701-200-0725
Jan 23, 24	Light Rifle Sectional Championship	Grand Forks	Denny Coulter	701-746-6959
???	100 Shot Offhand Match	Halstad, MN	Todd Westcott	218-456-2507
Jan 23	Indoor Cowboy Action Shooting	Bismarck	Mike Ripplinger	701-223-3085
Jan 30	NDSSA State Convention	Fargo	Rich Butler	701-261-2431
Jan 31	Air Pistol Sectional	West Fargo	James Ladwig	701-484-5236
Feb 6	Indoor Cowboy Action Shooting	Bismarck	Mike Ripplinger	701-223-3085
Feb 6, 7	Junior 3P State and Sectional	Minot	Wes Thomas	701-839-6075
Feb 6, 7	Collegiate Sectional, Rifle and Pistol	West Fargo	Eric Pueppke	701-967-8450
Feb ???	Military/Lever Action Silhouette	Bismarck	Jim Volmer	701-226-4156
Feb 13, 14	Open 3P State and Sectional	Grand Forks	Denny Coulter	701-746-6959
Feb 13, 14	52nd Annual Von Bismarck Pistol Match	Bismarck	Kevin Hertz	701-223-4225
Feb 20, 21	Open 50 Yard Regional SB Match, 3-Position (any sight)	Bismarck	Tom Thompson	701-255-4601
Feb 21	Approved Air Rifle and Air Pistol Match	West Fargo	Theresa Simon	701-200-0725
Feb 27	USPSA Match	Bismarck	Delmer Dyk	701-222-4194
Feb 28	Indoor Silhouette (22 - Conventional), Lever (22), & Pistol	Bismarck	Dave Tokach	701-663-8626
Mar 5, 6	Junior Air Sectional (Standing) Open Air Rifle State Championship	Devils Lake	Rick Jorgenson	701-662-4760

-Application-

North Dakota Shooting Sports Association

P O Box 228, BISMARCK ND 58502-0228

Also join via the web: <http://www.ndssa.org>

Yes, to protect my right to keep and bear arms; I would like to join the NDSSA and support the legislative efforts of the NDSSA. My dues for a membership as noted are enclosed.

Please return this form. Print name and address as you wish it to appear in our records.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ E-Mail Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Membership Dues Schedule-(Effective May 1, 2015)

Life.....\$500.00 One Year\$25.00 Clubs One Yr.....\$25.00
5 Year....\$100.00 Junior.....\$10.00 Club 5 Yr..... \$100.00

Interests

- Legislation Jr. Program
 Hunting Conservation
 Collecting
 Bullseye Pistol
 Air Rifle Hi-Power Rifle
 Air Pistol Smallbore
 Police PPC Other
 Rifle Silhouette
 Pistol Silhouette
 Hunter Safety

Make check payable to: North Dakota Shooting Sports Association and mail to above address.

(May 1, 2015)

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The Official NRA State
 Association Newsletter



How much does it cost to shoot a 44 magnum?

	retail	reload with 240 gr jacketed	reload with 240 cast PB	reload with 240 gr cast Gas Check	reload with 240 gr cast Plain Base
	loaded ammo		Purchased	self-cast	self-cast
44 magnum bullet	0.65	0.22	0.15	0.01	0.01
powder - 24 grains		0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085
Primer		0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035
Lube & size		0	0	0.01	0.01
case assume 10 loads		0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Gas Check				0.035	
Total cost/round	0.65	0.36	0.29	0.195	0.16
cost per 50	\$32.50	\$18.00	\$14.50	\$9.75	\$8.00

“In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.”
 — Eleanor Roosevelt