

ESTES PARK GUN AND ARCHERY CLUB

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Guns 101 -- Perspective on Gun Control

Dave Jiles, EPGAC Member

Another 2A Rant

I am an unapologetic supporter of the 2nd Amendment, a lifelong hunter, a recreational shooter, and a constant student of personal defense. I had a BB gun as soon as I was big enough to keep it from dragging on the ground, and I bought my first 22 rifle with my own money earned by mowing lawns, pulling weeds, and digging postholes, at the age of 12. It came via mail order catalog, and I could walk into the local hardware store and buy as much ammo as the coins in my pocket would cover. It provided lots of healthy game meat for our family and a great sense of responsibility for me.

Like many teenagers I had my share of being bullied, but it never once crossed my mind to take my squirrel gun to school and get even. By the time I was 19, I was in Southeast Asia with a Government issued, fully automatic M-16 "assault weapon" yet I was not old enough to vote for the President that sent me there.

That being said, I have little patience for simplistic "feel good" solutions to end "mass shootings", driven by emotions. Most often they are designed to serve a political end, and will have no impact on preventing the "next time". Does anyone seriously believe that a "No Guns Allowed" sign has ever stopped a mass killer? It is easy to convince ill-informed people that those proposals will help, because they so desperately want them to, but if our goal is truly to stop "active shooter" incidents then we had better get to work on real solutions rather than using every tragedy as an opportunity to chip away at the rights of a free and law abiding people.

Rant Over

Clean Up and SAVE \$50 on your membership

A big thanks to all that helped with the cleanup days over the summer, a lot of good work was done. There is another coming up on **September 15th**, in case you still need to get in your 3 hour volunteer time and avoid the extra \$50 charge when you renew in January. You are of course welcome to come out and help at the range anytime and as often as you like.



Spring Break Survival Tale

When we hear “spring break” we think of thousands of wide eyed teenagers and young adult students from well known colleges heading to Daytona Beach for a week of rock and roll, alcohol, and debauchery. Growing up as a dumb farm kid in Northern Wisconsin, I went to trade school, the military, and community college. To me and my friends, spring break meant that the ice had melted and you could probably risk going tent camping without freezing to death- and it was time to get the canoes out and head north. We would put into the Namekagon River on Saturday morning, and make a solid day of paddling downstream until we merged into the St Croix River where we had an established camp accessible by a pickup and set up by my friends Dad. After a good meal, a few beers, and a good night’s sleep, we would get back on the river for an easy morning of slow sightseeing, fishing, and trying to tip each other’s canoe over to dump them in the cold water. After all, that’s what friends are for. That was the plan, but as usual; Murphy, of “Murphy’s Law” fame raises his ugly head.



Once again the best season of the year is near, when the leaves get colorful, the elk bugle, the temperature cools, and the hunting seasons began. Non members and members alike are taking advantage access to the 100, 200, and 300 yard ranges to sight in their rifles in anticipation of the hunt. Best of luck to all that have drawn tags for special big game hunts, those with over the counter tags, and people just looking forward to small game, game birds, and waterfowl hunts.

It was the spring of 1975, and when the subject of a canoe trip came up, I was all in. We put together a team of four canoes. The canoes were manned by my friends Butch and his wife Mary, Tim and his wife Michele, friends Jerry and Richard, myself, and Butch's Mom Dorothy. She was the most outdoor savvy person I had ever met, male or female. She could catch the biggest fish, shoot the biggest buck, grow, harvest, and prepare food that was to die for, and build anything.

To top it off, she could paddle a canoe like an Indian Scout. I had a double insurance policy against becoming the “dump-him-over-victim” because my canoe carried the cooler with most of the beer in it, and Dorothy. And no one, I mean no one, wanted to dump Dorothy in the cold river.

The day started well, a nice sunny day, perfect temperature, and very few others on the river. Perhaps they knew something we didn't. The river was running well and for the most part we just paddled gently and kept the canoes pointed in the right direction. Around noon we pulled into shore and enjoyed some sandwiches that Dorothy had prepared for all of us and got a chance to stretch our legs and answer nature's call. The wind was starting to pick up and the clouds were beginning to form. Now that I think about it, I recall previously having been on this same stretch of river with much of the same company on a quick half day trip when we found ourselves wondering if we would make it down to where the cars were parked before being struck by lightning...

Our nice sunny day quickly morphed into wind, rain, lightning, and a severe drop in temperature. Despite the sense of urgency, our group's “Mensa” member, Jerry, decided it would be a great idea to stand up on the seat while moving and pee off the back of the canoe, turns out, he was wrong. He immediately began to complain about how cold it was, and would not even quit squawking about it when we got him back in the canoe and told him the wind would help dry his clothes. About the time we merged with the St Croix River we determined that he was seriously becoming hypothermic and pulled into shore to start a fire and get him thawed out. This presented another problem, between the cloud cover and the rapidly approaching sunset, we didn't know if we could identify our camp site when we got to it, or if we would just paddle downstream right past it.

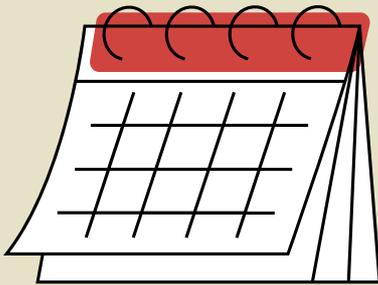
Dorothy and I went ahead so we could locate the camp while there was still daylight and make sure they could find it in the dim light when they got there. We paddled hard and fast for nearly an hour, leaving a wake behind the canoe. We knew that Dorothy's husband Joe would be there and have a fire going, but the St Croix is a wide river and there will be more than one campfire as well as small cabins with dim porch lights. (continued on page 3)

All we knew is that it would be on our left side and based on the time we should be close. Having barely enough ambient light to see anything but a fire, we saw what we thought was our camp as we paddled past it. Fortunately we turned around and made our way back, and there was Joe with the fire going and dinner warming up. We went about enlarging the campfire, hanging a couple lanterns near the shoreline, and watching for the rest of our group to make sure we saw them if they came past. When they came into our view we used the horn in Joe's truck to make sure we had their attention.

They made it in. We got Jerry thawed out, got a good warm meal in everyone, finished most of the beer, and crawled into our sleeping bags. We woke up Sunday morning, happy to see sunshine on the other side of the canvas, but unzipped the tent door to find 10 inches of snow on the ground.

We unanimously voted to pull the plug on the rest of the trip and try it again in late April. As young adults we all were beginning to learn about responsibilities and commitments of becoming grownups and our April redo never materialized. We all have good memories of our younger days, despite the occasional trauma and terror. You know when I think about it, most of the big ideas I have had involving water and floatation devices ended in some form of drama, it's probably a good thing that my four years in the Navy had nothing to do with ships.

--Dave



September 21st

Women's Group in September

Ladies, the "Women's Group" will meet September 21st at the outdoor range. Shooting starts at 5:00 pm and we start set up about 4:00 if you would like to help with that. Depending on October weather, this may be the last one of the season unless you want to have it at the indoor range.



The Narrative

With midterm elections coming, I thought this would be a good reminder as we fill out our ballots - *It's all about the narrative.*

Whatever you read, hear on the radio, see on TV, or pick up on social media, remember, "it's all about the narrative". Before you buy into anything, use your brain, do some research, find out for yourself. We give great credence to our right to vote and play a part in the political process, but along with those rights, come the responsibility to understand the realities of what you are voting for. Just because politicians say it will be free, it will be fair, or it will make you "safe" means nothing. "You get the Government you deserve" as they say and many of those people who seek those powerful positions are counting on you assuming that they have your best interest at heart, most do not.

Flashback to June 1947



(Estes Park Trail)

Quote by a forest ranger at Yosemite National Park on why it is hard to design the perfect garbage bin to keep bears from breaking into it:

"There is considerable overlap between the intelligence of the smartest bear and that of the dumbest tourist."

