

Hello to all.

With the 2011 shooting season behind us I am again compelled to extend thanks to those on both sides of the border whose encouragement and support led to another successful National Championship last August. Events over the last two years have reaffirmed not only interest in our sport in this country and the active promotion of it on the part of individuals too numerous to mention here, but also the ongoing commitment on the part of the DCRA to continue its endorsement of Long Range Black Powder competition. It recognizes our events as an important component of the Canadian Fullbore Championship. But more importantly, the DCRA acknowledges that we represent the legacy of the first international shooting matches in the latter half of the 19th Century, and reminds those engaged in modern disciplines that their competitions, now enjoyed by so many, are largely the consequence of the efforts of our predecessors.

All sports evolve. Technological and scientific investigation into the material, physiological and even psychological aspects of virtually any current sport one cares to mention have led to improvements resulting in performance unimaginable in generations past. It would be silly to presume that we haven't benefited from advances in engineering at the very least...comparing a bullet mould from the 1800s to even the least expensive commercial ones available today is one obvious example of how far we've come. Our ancestors could only have dreamed of the choices, quality, availability and affordability of equipment we now enjoy.

But, despite the advances, we remain fundamentally inhibited by the basic nature of Black Powder shooting. There probably isn't another shooting sport less technologically driven than ours. In terms of equipment and components we play on a more even field than those in any other discipline that comes to mind. It's the person behind the gun who casts a better bullet, reads wind and conditions better, has a better grasp of fouling control, and most importantly is always willing to learn, who will win. The human factor is our key to success.

All of which brings me to the point I'd like to make this time around. We have always chosen to do things the hard way compared to other shooters. Many of us for their own reasons have taken this to the next level by taking up muzzle loading, the popularity of which internationally has been rising for years. I'm not going to get into a debate about the virtues of Cartridge versus Muzzle Loading in terms of difficulty or purity of purpose, but simply remind all of the fact that *we support muzzle loading*. We recognize it in our National Championship. There has been an award structure in place for muzzle loading competitors for years, and I would welcome greater participation on the part of those so inclined. Please, contact me if you're interested and want more information...we've missed you and would love to see muzzle loaders in the field this year.

The 2012 Canadian Black Powder Championship will be held at the Connaught Ranges and Primary Training Centre from 16 to 18 August. As always, information can be obtained from the DCRA office or by contacting me directly via e-mail at chrisandpete@sympatico.ca, snail mail to the DCRA office address found elsewhere on this web site, or phoning me at 613-820-4759 after 7:00 PM EST. The DCRA and I wish you all a happy, successful and prosperous 2012, and look forward to seeing you in August.

Keep your shots in the black if you can, learn from those that aren't, and never forget those whose past sacrifices made it possible.

Chris Jones
January, 2012