

L. C. Smith Speaks for Itself

Volume 1, Issue 4

December 2003

Who's Our Executive Director

By Frank Finch, Jr.

Special points of interest:

- Our New Executive Director
- Alexander Brown Biography
- Members Articles
- World Side-by-Side Gun And Rifle Championships

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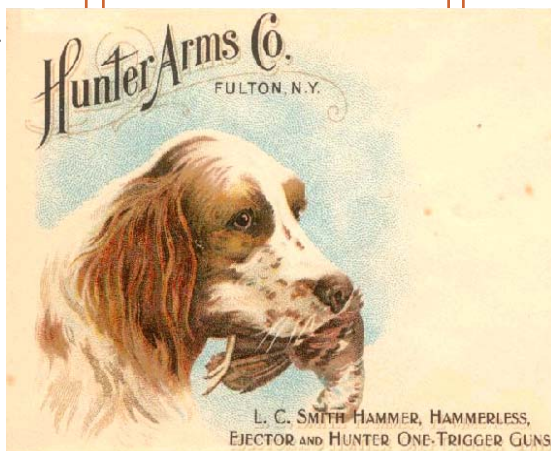
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I can remember being in the field as a child with my favorite dog and single shot .410 with my dad and thinking, "This is as good as it gets!" As I grew my time in the field grew. As an adult, attending college and even later as vice president in a pharmaceutical corporation, getting time in the field with my favorite 20 gauge LC Smith and my favorite dog, I can still remember thinking, "This is as good as it gets!"

And today as I continue my "field adventures" with my favorite LC and my favorite dog, to be appointed as the Executive Director of the LC Smith Collectors Association, I'm thinking, "This is as good as it gets!"

I've been part of the inception of this organization and "on the

road" enjoying the fun of meeting other enthusiasts at every event of the L.C. Smith Collector's Association, Inc. Our display at the various gun shows in Syracuse, Baltimore, Ohio, and Vintagers in New York



in 2003 has brought much L.C. Smith gun interest and many new members. We will display at these events again in 2004, and additionally we are researching avenues of attendance at other shows as we expand our reach West and South.

Our first annual meeting will be held in

conjunction with the Baltimore Show of the Maryland Arms Collectors Association on March 20, 2004. I'm excited as we continue the momentum! In the words of our Board of Directors', we want to "bring the organization up to the next level". I'm grateful for the vote of confidence from the Board of Directors and the opportunity to contribute to this organization as your Executive Director!

My philosophy is that an organization with a plan with goals and objectives will out perform one who is searching for direction. Good performance of a well-defined duty avoids the frustration resulting from mediocre performance due to the lack of information or under-

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standing . We're all interested in promoting LC Smith Association, Inc. objectives and increasing membership. As we get new members on board, it is important that we define ourselves. A policy book of Standing Rules of Order will enhance our bylaws with the "specific details" of each position and procedure to clearly define responsibilities

each member is taking on. Our members have special talents and resources to contribute which can be leveraged for the good of the organization and by their working together with the knowledge of what is expected they will know how best to serve LCSCA. That's when the fun begins...

How much fun it is to do what you enjoy, with others who enjoy it too! This is the reason for my desire to belong to an or-

ganization with others who enthusiastically appreciate hunting, shooting and collecting L.C. Smith's!!!!

Lots of good communication, networking and jovial camaraderie will bring us the "fun" part! This is our fledgling organization. Send me your suggestions or comments! I'm still thinking, "This is as good as it gets!"

Alexander T. Brown, a Biography

By Larry B. Schuknecht

Editors note: Some would say that Lyman Cornelius Smith was the father of the L.C. Smith shotgun, however, the heart of the gun, its rotary bolting mechanism was invented in March 1883 by a young employee of Lyman, Alexander T. Brown. The following biography of Brown is reprinted with permission of member Larry B. Schuknecht from his book "Multi barrel long gun patents and their inventors". It contains an alphabetical list of U.S. inventors, 118 biographies of inventors, an essay on German inventors and corresponding German patents along with 24 interesting patent drawings. The price of Larry's book is \$25.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. Contact Larry at shop-talk@dutchmanwoodworks.com

Alexander Timothy Brown (Nov.21,1854-Jan.31,1929) was born in Scott, Cortland Co., N.Y. to a farming

family, his father was Stephen Smith Brown (March 22,1827-March 19,1893) who was also born in Scott, and his mother was Nancy M. Alexander (Aug.16,1826-



Jan.26,1907) who was born in Leyden, Franklin Co., Ma.

As a young man he had a mind for mechanical things, and credited James T. Leland, a neighboring farmer for nurturing the inventor in him. Leland had a small

workshop on his farm where he tinkered on improving farm machinery, and it is here that young Alexander spent any spare time he had from the farm chores. At the age of 20 he designed a self-binding harvesting machine but when he attempted to patent it he found that someone else had beaten him to it.

His first true job was as a salesman for the D. M. Osborne & Co. in Auburn, N.Y. In 1879 he went to work for the W. H. Baker Gun Co. in Syracuse as a lathe operator. In 1880 he was active in redesigning the guns based on William H. Baker's patents no.167,293 of Aug.31,1875, no. 198,333 of Dec.18,1877, and no. 199,773 of Jan.29,1878. In 1880 W. H. Baker split with, and left, the association with L. C.

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(Alexander T. Brown, a Biography continued from page 2)

Smith, and it is speculated by some authorities that Alexander was given the task to find a way to circumvent the Baker patents. Whether this was due to, or the cause of Bakers departure is open to debate. By the age of 29 he was active in redesigning the Baker model shotgun into the L. C. Smith that we know today . On July 13,1886 he was issued Patent #345,362 on which the hammerless L .C. Smith was based.

His last known gun patent was #381,109 issued on April 17, 1888 for a Air Rifle. At this same time L. C. Smith took an active interest in the development of the Typewriter and of course he put Alexander to the task, and by 1888 he had Patents covering the improvements of that machine.

Alexander was not only a great inventor but he was also a good business man and the success of the Smith-Premier typewriter brought fame and fortune to both he and L. C. Smith as orders for the machine came in from around the world.

On April 2,1883 Alexander married Mary Lillian Seamans of Virgil, Cortland Co.. The ceremony took place in Scott, N.Y.. On April 20,1885 their first son Charles Seamans Brown was born, and on March 29, 1887 a second son, Julian Stephen Brown was born. It was during this period while involved with the manufacture of the typewriter that he developed an interest in bicycle tires and their application, and developed the "clincher" tire, upon which it is said, the manufacture of the Dunlop tire was

founded.

After the tire success he turned his attention to the Telephone, and developed an automatic switchboard which eventually led to the Dial phone. His patent for the automatic switchboard was



Alexander T. Brown (1854-1929)

sold to the Stromberg-Carlson Co.

Alexander next turned his attention to precision gears, and developed a two-speed gear for the bicycle. His interest in gears may have been influenced by his work with farm machinery in his youth. At that time such machinery depended on cast iron gears, cast iron sprockets, and chains. With a business partner named Charles E. Lipe, Alexander opened a small plant on Marcellus St. to manufacture his patented gear. This was an immediate success and in 1895 the Brown-Lipe Gear Company was formed. A short time after this Mr. Lipe died and was succeeded by Mr. H. Winfield Chapin. Alexander at this time looked at the technology of the early auto-

mobile and after purchasing one, saw the need for good gearing and immediately developed what we now know as the differential, and its housing. With the development of the air cooled engine by John Wilkinson, Alexander saw potential and with H. H. Franklin began building a automobile of their own. In an old die-casting plant which Alexander bought for the purpose, the first Franklin was built in 1902. As a founder of the firm Alexander served as its first President. The demand for differentials was so great that the Brown-Lipe Co. switched over to producing them alone. In 1910 a new company was organized, the Brown-Lipe-Chapin Co. Inc. for the manufacture of transmission gears. This company was purchased by General Motors in 1922.

Alexander is said to have been a modest and unassuming man who always looked to fulfill his civic duty when possible. He was an art lover and enjoyed collecting paintings, rare books, and rifles. He was a crack shot and had one of largest private collections of military rifles in the world at the time of his death. He was a life member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers. He was a charter member of the National Geographic Society, and one of the founders of the Syracuse Automobile Club. He served on the board of the New York State Collage of Forestry, and as a trustee of Syracuse University.

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(Alexander T. Brown, a Biography Continued from page 3)

He also served as a trustee of the Good Shepherd and Memorial Hospital. He was also a member of many other organizations to numerous to mention here.

Unlike W. H. Baker, and D. M. Lefever, Alexander was both a good inventor and a successful business man. During his lifetime he was granted over 300 patents.

He died at his home at 726 W. Onandaga St. after being ill

for several months, his cause of death being Bronchial Pneumonia.

(ref.-His Obituary from a Syracuse paper of Feb. 1, 1929, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints)

The Vintage Cup World Side-by-Side Championships 2003

By Frank J. Finch, Jr.

Our exhibit at the 7th *Annual Vintage Cup World Side by Side Championships and Exhibition* at Orvis, Sandanona, New York, on September 16 through September 21, 2003 was very successful! In the words of Ray Pourdrier, President of the Vintagers, "Very Professional!" Our display included L.C. Smith Guns for Bird Hunting and Clay Target Shooting, very rare 1894-1910 Hunter Arms Shooting Trophies, an original L.C. Smith framed poster and catalogs, and a mounted pheasant and hand-painted clay birds.

Lots and lots of visitors stopped by each day of the event to ask questions and share stories and comments and new members joined at the show and many took application forms to send later with their dues. Sometimes, even with the best laid

plans, obstacles need to be overcome (family illnesses, death, hurricane, and erroneously cancelled hotel reservations, etc.). But we succeeded and a good time was had by all! Andy Anderson and Oddvar Skadberg built and assembled

Guns...for the Bird of Your Choice". Due to Hurricane Isabel, besides chatting about our favorite topic, L.C.'s, each day we spent time disassembling, storing, and reassembling again! Oddvar, Andy, Mary Anne and I enthusiastically helped man

the exhibit throughout the show. Rich and Suzie Beyer joined the good time on Friday and Saturday.

The most fun was had when two visitors to our display brought their favorite LC's to include in the exhibit! Dennis Jenny brought his father's pristine 12 ga. Premier Skeet which we displayed next to my 20 ga. Premier Skeet. What a pretty sight to enjoy them together! Chris

Schotz, a member, brought along his very rare 12 ga. Quality 7! Rich Beyer brought an

(Continued on page 5)



The L.C. Smith Collectors Association at the Vintagers 2003
From the left Oddvar Skadberg, Andy Anderson, Mary Anne and Frank Finch

our display on Tuesday and Wednesday. Mary Anne and I joined them early Thursday to set-up our exhibit, "**L.C. Smith**

(The Vintage Cup Continued from page 4)
 Ideal 410 ga. Andy Anderson made a “big and small” comparison by displaying his 8 ga. Grade 2 and 410 ga. Field Grade adjacent to each other. I displayed unfired 20 ga. Monogram, Crown, Trap, and Premier Skeet guns. A feast for L.C. Lovers’ eyes!

What challenging fun was had when Andy, Rich, and Eric (Oddvar’s son) and I shot the Vintage Cup 20 ga. Event. As I say, we shot (and the birds flew)! Andy and I shot our L.C. 20 ga. Specialties and



Frank Finch at Station 3

the others suffered additional humiliation by using “Brand X” side-by-sides.

Although it may be blasphemy, my Lefever 20 ga. Optimus won two awards at the NRA’s “Gold Metal Concours d’Elegance of Fine Guns” held at the Vintage Cup. The *Upland Almanac Award* and the Lefever Arms Collectors Association award.

What a fitting beginning for our budding organization to exhibit at the prestigious Vintagers World Side by

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Frank Finch’s Wonderful display of shooting trophies and memorabilia



Mary Anne and Sally dog grace our display



Andy, Oddvar, Frank, and Rich man the display



L. C. Smith big and little

(The Vintage Cup Continued from page 5)

Side Exhibition! May this be a start of a long symbiotic relationship to feast our eyes and shoot our delightful L.C. Smith Guns!

More Questions than Answers

By Bob Trefry

Serendipity! Normally defined, serendipity is an unsolicited and therefore unexpected surprise. Bill Winter, Andy Anderson, and I were simply conducting some business in regards to the L.C. Smith Collectors Association's display at the Vintage Cup in September. Above and beyond such business, an encounter with a unique 'Elsie' took place. We all studied and admired this particular piece, and ultimately I added it to a modest collection. It is a project gun that simply had us all guessing. Upon arriving home and studying a bit further, there are additional questions that perhaps you might be able to help me with. Here are the specs:

1. L.C. Smith Specialty grade
2. Regular Frame
3. Straight Stock
4. A 1920 serial number
5. Two barrel set

Both forends have the Curtis patent infringement retainer with dog insert.
Both barrels are fine quality chain damascus in excellent condition.

Barrel #1

30 inch length
Choked Full and Full
3 inch chamber marked
No reinforced splinter
R prefix serial number

Barrel #2

28 inch length
Choked Modified and Modified
3 inch chamber marked
No Reinforced splinter
R prefix serial number ER suffix

Now the questions begin:

Non Ejector

Non Ejector
E suffix all but rubbed out
Letters WR & 4 4 on both barrels
There are a number of overstamps

Please note, this is a unique project gun, but very intriguing.
My questions for the membership are:

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(More Questions than Answers Continued from page 6)

1. Are patent infringement forends out of place in 1920?
2. Did L.C. Smith ever document over-stamping to produce a matched set of barrels in production?
3. Were 3 inch chambers used on Damascus barrels?
4. Does the "R" suffix on barrel set number 2 indicate refurbishing?
5. Are there any records of L.C.Smith taking an ejector set of barrels and machining them to extractor only (expertly done)?

Any insights you might offer would be appreciated. More to follow.

Notes from the Membership Chairman

By Len Applegate

It's November and that means election time in the United States. Likewise, it is election time for the L.C. Smith Collectors Association. In December of every year the membership will be asked to participate in the election of two directors. They serve, without pay, on the board for three years and are responsible for the direction of the Association. For continuity the directors are chosen from life members. The election process begins in the fall when the current board appoints a nominating committee. That committee is responsible for interviewing the life members to see who has an interest in serving the organization and, of those, who has something to bring to the organization. In the words of Tom Archer, this years nominating committee these are people who can "bring the L.C.Smith Collectors Association up to the next level".

Tom has done his work well and has presented us with a list of five candidates for your consideration.

We have two incumbents, Andy Anderson and Bob Trefry. They have so thoroughly enjoyed their short initial tenures that they would like to be elected to full terms. Along with the incumbents are Robert Devlin, Stanley Hackett, and John Houchins Elsie lovers all. Each of the candidates have provided short biographies which are included, along with a ballot, in this mailing. Please read the biographies and decide on two that you think can help the organization the most. We have included postage o your ballot so take a little time out of writing your Christmas cards and *vote*. Voting closes December 19 so get the ballots in the mail quickly.

Also included with the annual members mailing is

your bill for 2004 dues. We hope that you will "re-up". We will publish our first membership list with all members in good standing in the March newsletter so please have your dues in before February first or you will be removed from the membership list. Also, if you would prefer to be identified by name only on the membership list please indicate this on the bill.

We are getting some articles from members. They are very informative and interesting. I encourage all the members to be writers for the L.C. Smith Collectors Association.

With regard to the classified adds, if you sell the gun you have advertised or buy the gun you are looking for please tell me so I can remove your ad and make room for others.

Through the Years With My L.C. Smith Shotgun

By Dwayne Wells

The demands placed on a shotgun are many and varied ranging from the quick-pointing requirements so essential in the butts of a driven shoot in Britain to the durability requisite for rough shooting in other localities throughout the world. While British arms receive accolades from hunters as outstanding game guns, in all honesty they typically do not receive the hard use bordering on abuse so characteristic of shotguns in America. Here, generations of hunters have utilized the same shotgun while prowling the marshes for wildfowl as they used while seeking upland game birds. In the author's view, the L.C. Smith shotgun is uniquely qualified to fulfill these and any number of other demanding chores afield. Moreover, Elsie's keep on functioning in the harshest of environments and, as an added bonus, they look very good while doing so.

Then, too, L.C. Smiths simply point well. They have very good balance and possess sufficient weight forward to allow the shooter to maintain a smooth follow through regardless of whether the shot is a crossing or curling shot, an incomer, or a quartering kind of going-away target. They are neither excessively muzzle-light nor muzzle-heavy. The ratio of gun weight to powder

charge is about right hence the recoil generated by the shot is well within comfortable limits for most shooters.

Indirectly, the author's father pointed the way toward appreciation of the L.C. Smith shotgun. Dad was a hardscrabble farmer in West Texas near the town of Muleshoe. He described virtual swarms of Mallards and Canvasbacks that piled into the wet weather lakes formed in his fields, decimating his crops. He retaliated with a twelve-bore Smith hammer gun and became quite a shotgun marksman over time. As a young hunter, I found his accounts of hunting during those halcyon days intriguing almost beyond belief. Dad told of the unique kind of shoulder blade feature found on the Sandhill Cranes he bagged and of the erratic flight maneuvers of Prairie Chickens. Since Dad was a subsistence farmer, he was not averse to shooting an occasional rabbit in order to supplement the available food supply.

In a moment of euphoria, I succumbed to temptation and bought the first L.C. Smith gun I came across. I kept it for several years then sold it in order to pay off some of the debts that plagued me as a young married man. The next Smith was a lovely field grade twelve gauge possessing absolutely breathtaking color case harden-

ing. Since I still had limited financial resources, I managed to cajole my father into buying that gun for me even though as a married man I was now expected to pay my own bills and supposedly be on my own entirely. I guess I would have to say that Dad loved me and he loved L.C. Smiths. I still have that shotgun but by now it has gone through countless stumbles or missteps while I chukar hunted, and it just doesn't look quite so new. Still it is a handsome gun, and I'm not about to part with it.

Subsequently, I obtained a lovely little twenty-bore in field grade that was virtually brand-new. Unfortunately, the shotgun kicked more than any gun I had ever fired, and I couldn't seem to kill anything with it. Aesthetically, however, it was one of the prettiest shotguns I had ever seen. I parted with it very reluctantly when my financial situation deemed it to be absolutely necessary. Several years later I came to realize that I had been firing 2 3/4" shells in a shotgun having a 2 9/16" chamber. To the shotgun's credit it had withstood those tremendous pressures with no obvious changes in the gun. Obviously the practice was extremely dangerous and should simply not be done. Fortunately, I had fired it only a

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(Through the Years With My L.C. Smith Shotgun Continued from page 8)

few times. Apparently God looks after fools and unwise hunter/collector types like me.

Feeling somehow unfulfilled and with the image of that gorgeous little twenty-bore still lingering in my memory, I decided to do something about the situation. Just last week I

mailed in my L.C. Smith Collector's Association membership materials and on that same day ordered a nearly identical L.C. Smith twenty gauge from a dealer in Missouri. My new gun will be even better than the former one because my new shotgun has ejectors rather than extractors. Perhaps acquisition of that lovely little gun will

help assuage my appetite for Elsie's, but realistically I suspect the cessation will be only a temporary respite. I do love those L.C. Smith shotguns!



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*A Quarterly Publication
For The Bird Hunting Enthusiast*

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L. C. Smith Yellow Page

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L. C. Smith Collectors Association Mem- bership Application.

Make checks Payable to "The L. C. Smith Collectors Association, Inc"

Please send this application and you 2004 dues to :

**Bob Trefry
5104 Salima ST
Clinton, MD 20735**

Membership type:

Annual \$ 25.00

Life \$ 300.00

**Check here if you would prefer
your address and phone not to
be included in the published list**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

L. C. Smith Classifieds

The L.C. Smith Collectors Association accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the seller's description. All negotiations are strictly between the buyer and seller. The buyer and seller are responsible for complying with all applicable state and federal laws.

FOR SALE:

Pigeon Grade "PE" 12 gauge, 2 barrel set, 28 and 30 inch. Ejector, double trigger, straight stock. 100% barrel blue, 30% case color, 25% nitre blue on trigger guard, butt plate. Live bird gun (no safety). Good shooting dimensions 1 5/8, 2 1/2, 14 L.O.P. \$4500.00 Len Applegate (513)777-1946 apple102050@fuse.net

Field grade feather weight 12ga pistol grip stock in very good condition no crack showing no butt pad but the pistol grip cap is there and in good condition ser # 325XX \$350.00 contact; Bill Winter at shotgunwillie@aol.com

High grade beavertail forend wood and non-ejector forend iron \$150.00 for both. Carl 585-344-7183

WANTED:

L.C. Smith Grade 1 in 20 ga and Grade A-1 in 16 ga. Collectors quality. Will consider trade for other L. C. Smith guns possible. Frank 732-899-1498

L.C. Smith, GRADE 2, 16 gauge, with game scenes. Steel or damascus barrels. Collector quality. Andy 845-657-8491

OO, Number 1 & 4 grade any gauge, steel or damascus barrels, collector quality. Len Applegate (513)777-1946

16 gauge Speciality, 26 or 28 inch barrels, collector quality. Jim (402) 488-4240 or js@lcsmith.org

L.C. Smith field grade up to #2 & Trap any condition even those missing parts. Serial numbers 39000 and under. Pete (763)494-4057

12 gauge and 20 gauge Crown grade guns. Original only, no refinished guns. Carl (864)391-3440

Push button forend parts needed prefer complete forend however any parts for the latching mechanism desired contact; Bill Winter at shotgunwillie@aol.com

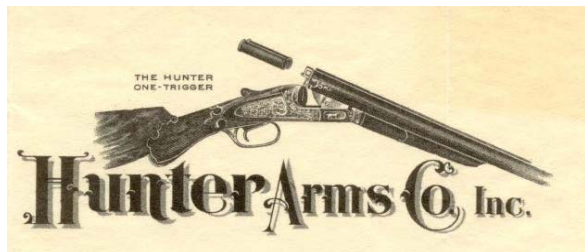
Forend iron with auto-ejector mechanism for 16 gauge. Carl 585-344-7183

Greetings L.C. Smith enthusiasts. I'm a great-great-grandson of the Hunter family who owned the Company at the turn of the century, and beginning to do research for our mutual benefit. I would be interested to hear from anyone with historical information and/or memorabilia for this study. I can be contacted at: Ken Baumgardt, 49 N. Old Baltimore Pike, Newark, DE 19702, 302-286-6223 kendig-ger@aol.com

PUBLICATION OF THE LC SMITH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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L.C. Smith the gun that speaks for itself

The purpose of The L.C. Smith Collectors Association is:

1. To Stimulate and educate members and the public in their knowledge of the history and production of the L.C. Smith shotgun.
2. To support the Cody Museum in utilization of the surviving L.C. Smith records.
3. To encourage creation of a L.C. Smith museum.
4. To encourage the value of good sportsmanship to members and the public.
5. To promote a positive and responsible use of firearms to members and the public.

L. C. Smith Collectors Association 2004 Tentative Schedule

Beside electing directors in the fall of the year, the directors have to decide on a show schedule for the following year. The decision process includes a budgetary discussion as to how much each show will cost the organization and which will yield the most new members. The last year show schedule yielded the most new members at the Vintage Cup at Sandanona, New York. This makes sense from the standpoint that the Vintage Cup attendees are all double gun people interested in collecting and shooting. With

that in mind, your directors through Andy Anderson, our Events Coordinating Chairman, have decided on the following tentative 2004 show schedule.

First and foremost will be the Annual Meeting of the Association in conjunction with the Maryland Arms Collectors Association Show during March 19-21, 2004. We are also planning a Sporting Clays shoot associated with the show. Please plan to attend.

We will again attend the Vintage Cup 2004 at Sandanona

as well as the Vintage Festival on May 14-16 at Quail Ridge near Cincinnati, Ohio. Also planned are the Tulsa Gun Show on April 2-4 and the Vintage Cup at Deep River, North Carolina on April 26-28.

These shows will be what we refer to as Sponsored Shows. Sponsored shows are those that costs are paid for by the Association and have to be voted on by the Directors during budgetary discussions in the fall. Sanctioned shows are those that members choose to participate in and bear the costs themselves.