

GREETINGS TO ALL IOWA BLACK POWDER FEDERATION MEMBERS AND PHN READERS: This month we have guest writers for our column. Alison and Britton Gallagher are pre-teen and teen-ager who attend many shoots in our state with their Grandpa Dick Pound of Jefferson, IA. They are great young people and it gives us great pride in seeing them shooting black powder. They also do archery. I asked them to write from their view point of shooting.

## OUR JOURENY TO BECOMING MUZZLELOADER ENTHUSIASTS

By Alison and Britton Gallagher  
Jefferson, Iowa

Our love of shooting started with our grandpa (Dick Pound) when we were around eight years old. He first introduced us to shooting with our very own BB gun. We moved up to shooting a 22 single shot, 22 semi-automatic and then a 36 caliber muzzleloader.

When we first started shooting our grandpa recruited the help of Charlie Rice and Skeeter Wilber. Between the three of them, they provided support, guidance and a wealth of information. Our parents were pivotal in our shooting career by being supportive and allowing us to practice many hours with our grandpa, Charlie and Skeeter.

While acquiring a love of the sport, we have gained many valuable insights and tips from fellow gun enthusiasts. People always come up to us and say how much of a joy it is to see young kids that enjoy shooting. We travel and participate in many shooting events throughout Iowa but have also had the pleasure of being able to travel to Nebraska. Whenever we enter a shooting event, it doesn't matter if we win any medals. What matters the most is if we tried our best, had fun, engaged in conversations with other shooters and made new friends.

If shooting muzzleloaders would not have been an option for us, we would have nothing to look forward to in the summer. We enjoy every minute that is provided to us for shooting, whether it is for practice or a shooting event. What we value the most is not only the love of the sport but the time that we have been able to spend and get to know our grandpa. My mom often told us stories of hunting with our grandpa and our great grandpa Alan Pound. In our family, the love of shooting has been passed down through generations. Shooting is not only a sport but also an opportunity to learn to respect a firearm, the environment and each other. We have learned so many life lessons from our grandpa that we will be able to pass down to our children some day.

We hope that these examples will encourage other kids to participate in the sport of shooting, whether it be for competition or for spending time and learning from someone like their father, mother, grandpa or grandma. The best thing about shooting is that virtually any person can participate.

Without the sport and love of shooting, we can honestly say that we would not know as much about the world in which we live and met the amazing people that we have. Shooting is so much more than picking up a gun and aiming at a target. Shooting is taking the time to share a love of a sport and learn something new every time you pick up a gun!

Alison Gallagher  
Britton Gallaher  
(Grandchildren of Dick Pound)  
Jefferson, Iowa

Our other guest writer this month is Darrell Gideon of Des Moines, Iowa.

### **THE ART OF PISTOL SHOOTING**

by Darrell Gideon

When the IBPF board asked me to write an article on pistol shooting I thought it might be good to review my personal fundamentals again. Pistol shooting is like a fine Symphony. That incredible sound of an orchestra is the result of many types of instruments. If one instrument does not do its part or is missing, then that magnificent sound is diminished. Also, successful pistol shooting is comprised of many elements. Let me start by saying: you don't have to spend a lot of money to play this game. I shot my first 100 point target with a .50cal. Traditions Trapper, made from a kit and 15 grains of 3F.

Ok, first fundamental is SHOOTING STANCE: Develop an offhand standing position that is comfortable for you and stick with it. Wear shoes that enhance a good stable platform.

TARGET PLACEMENT: Before hanging your first target, stand at the firing line, pull your pistol up and aim at blank target backing and see where your arm and body settle in. Now hang the target so the X is at that predetermined level. This height will change daily with stress level, physical conditioning and fatigue.

TRIGGER CONTROL: This is the act of squeezing the trigger without disturbing sight alignment. Place a small black dot on a blank wall and while aiming at the dot, determine the type of squeeze and finger placement that gives the best result.

SIGHT ALIGNMENT: Ok, the human mind cannot process two things at the same time---only in rapid succession. That's why you can't focus your sights and target simultaneously. I feel keeping front and rear sight alignment is more advantageous, even if the bull is drifting off slightly.

MENTAL FOCUS: Yep, this is a tough one! Fatigue, stress, and distractions are the biggest group killers I can think of. Discipline your mind to think or to focus on that one shot, and

only that shot. Don't think about that last shot or the next, only the one you are about to make. This is probably the toughest stumbling block for me and many others.

VARIATIONS: If you detect, while holding for the shot, that the pistol wants to drift off left or right, then change foot placement slightly to correct. The fewer body muscles you have in use, the more solid your hold will be. I find that uneven ground at the firing line requires extra back muscle movement and my scores suffer. Don't try to make the shot if things start goin South, [example: hand shake or a distraction.] Lower the pistol, take a deep breath, clear your mind of all impure thoughts and start again. Remember, stay relaxed and don't rush, there ain't nobody shootin back! With practice, all the pieces will come together and you will soon hear the Symphony!

Good shootin and see ya on the pistol line.

Darrell Gideon