

July 2007 NEWSLETTER

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JIMMY MULLER IS 2007 TRAVELLERS CLUB CHAMPION

By Donna Galotto

It was a perfect June day when 82 shooters took to the field on June 24th at the beautiful Mid-Hudson Sporting Ground in New Paltz, NY for the 2007 Rudy Passero CTSCA Club Championship. Most of you know that I have a particular fondness for this club based on a long personal history of shooting there and this was another terrific shoot in a long string of great events hosted at this venue. Although our numbers were slightly diminished because of the US Open being held at Hopkins Game Farm over this same weekend, there was still a delightful mix of Travelers who have been around for most if not all of the 20-year club history of the club and those who have joined more recently.

The course was well suited for gunners desiring to shoot challenging targets without discouraging those who may not have yet reached their fullest potential. One of my particular favorites was stand three which was shot from a platform and featured a quartering incoming flyer with a quartering outgoing rabbit on report. The angle and elevation made it very easy to shoot high and in front on the rabbit, so gun control was key here.

The course featured a terrific mix of report and simultaneous pairs with enough twists and tweaks so that the Mid-Hudson Regulars could be easily distracted—clearly this wasn't the same course they shot last weekend. Kudos go out to course designer Peter Wicker who put to our shooters, a deceptively challenging test.

“Those who should know” predicted a winning score of 92, but alas the champion posted an 86—better too difficult than too easy for a club championship, I suppose! The winners circle was reflective of the mix of old and new with some long time Traveler's picking up silver as well as the newer members showing they too can be Traveler's Tough.

Maestro Wicker reminded us that Mid-Hudson will be hosting the NSCA Zone I shoot July 13, 14 and 15. Check the Mid-Hudson website midhudsonsporting.com for details. Mid Hudson is open Wed through Sunday 10 to 4:30, and partner Joe Maresca is now keeping the club open Thursday evenings until about 7 pm.

The one slight disappointment in the day was that for the 2nd consecutive shoot we have had no class 6 participation. I'm not sure what might be the cause of this but I feel we all need to go out of our way to make sure the less experienced shooters get the same fabulous welcome that I had when I started. Bring a beginner to Orvis on July 8.

HOA	Jim Muller	86
Cl. 1 Champ.	Bruce Galotto	85
Cl. 1 RU	Kevin Goodspeed	84
Cl. 1 3 rd	Mike Boffolo	78
Cl. 2 Champ.	Guy Bonaquisto	79
Cl. 2 RU	Fred Roesslein	76
Cl. 2 3 rd	Bill Bretschger	73
Cl. 3 Champ.	Doug Moore	74
Cl. 3 RU	Howard Weiss	74
Cl. 3 3 rd	Ed Davies	73
Cl. 4 Champ.	Bruce Hoheb	72
Cl. 4 RU	Nile Pullin	69

Cl. 4 3 rd	Howard Berman	68
Cl. 5 Champ.	Jon Marwell	60
Cl. 5 RU	Bob Schraeger	60
Cl. 5 3 rd	Bob Blake	55
Lady Champ.	Donna Galotto	59
Lady RU	Carol Roesslein	59
Lady 3 rd	Olive Lawlor	57
Vet. Champ.	Jim Kline	85
Vet. RU	Ted Burke	75
Vet. 3 rd	Byron Loyer	75
SenVet.Champ	Martin Schroeder	77
Junior Champ	Peter Maggiolo	60
Junior RU	Kristen Hachmann	54
Junior 3 rd	Brandon Horn	52

CHAMPIONSHIP WON AND LOST— A NATIONAL TITLE AND THE “GARY PHILLIPS EFFECT”

By Phil Steinkraus

Editor’s note: This is an article I did last year for Clayshooting USA that didn’t make it into the magazine. It was my intention simply to tell this highly personal story of thrills and heartbreak, allowing the reader to come along for the ride. Some minor details have since changed but this story as it was submitted last July was accurate.

I’ve always regarded myself as an unlucky person—freakishly unlucky at times. The moment I met my wife Stefanie, I felt somehow that all had changed. That in some weird way her luck or karma or whatever you want to call it had somehow cast a long enough shadow over my ill fortune, that perhaps together we might be permanently immune from it. I now ask the reader to indulge me in allowing the use this space for selfish purposes to tell a tale of accomplishment and set the record straight with the truth: A truth that may or may not ever be properly reported on. I’m in a position to partially right a wrong and also shed some light onto the achievement of someone very close to me--an achievement that should have been the highlight of a shooting career instead of what I will always regarded as a travesty of sport and a fluke of bizarrely unfortunate circumstance.

Some background: My thirty-year-old German wife has been a FITASC shooter since she was 14. She has won the German Ladies National Championship multiple times, spent a year in the German Olympic training program for trap doubles and took second at the European Compak Championship in 1996. Since moving to America she has won Ladies titles at The New York State Championship, The Zone One Championship, The Great Eastern Lobster Classic, The Rose Hill FITASC, M&M’s Master’s Cup, The Hopkins Great American and countless others. She enjoys an ongoing relationship with Krieghoff and is currently an AA shooter.

Because the World FITASC Championship is in Minnesota this year, Stef and I decided to make parcoures de chasse the focus for the season. This meant a big road trip at the end of June encompassing the Hopkins Great American and Junior National Championship (see article in this issue) and the National FITASC Championship at Chuck Frasier’s Hunters Pointe in Washington, NC. The Hopkins event went smoothly enough and we drove through seven hours of rain and spent another 24 in a downpour cooped up in our tiny camper on the Hunters Pointe grounds. Finally on Tuesday afternoon the heavens shed their last and the sun shone through evaporating all that water into steam-iron humidity. We were just happy for the opportunity to finally dry out (We did our best impersonation of impoverished Appalachia when we hung every bit of wet clothing and bedding out to dry in the morning heat.)

Then we patiently waited out the days, hours and minutes until we could get under way again and finally it was upon us. Friday: Day one of the National FITASC Championship and the first seventy-five targets. The conditions were good, although the heat and humidity were brutal. I arrived at my first parcour and promptly gave birth to a fully-formed beautiful, bouncing flinch—severe enough that I almost fell off one of the raised platform pegs, nearly plunging through the railing in front of me while trying to chase down a straightaway with my second shot. It was embarrassing to say the least. I came through the morning with a trio of lackluster scores—and I was thankful for them! Wife Stefanie on the other hand had shot big numbers—63! She was lucky to be squaded with the recently crowned Pan-American FITASC champion, Rick Camuglia, with whom she immediately struck up a friendly rivalry. This as much as anything, she would confess, was a decisive factor.

Stef and I shoot so much together, we've developed a script of just what should happen under what competitive circumstance and the primary golden rule is, if she's is shooting well, don't tell her where she is on the score board. I took a quick look at Friday's numbers that night and recognized she was right where you want to be after a first day. She was running with the best company and simply needed to match those first day's score with similar numbers again—no easy feat as her first three parcours were some of the easiest of the event and her next three would be some of the toughest. We had an afternoon start Saturday, which helped as much as it hurt because any improvements in light conditions were more than offset by the unbearable afternoon temperatures. Happily, I was able to make up some ground on Saturday and actually managed to beat Stef's excellent score of 61 but my shoot was for all intents and purposes over. This was Stefanie's moment: Her two-day total of 124 put her in the cat-bird seat—a full four targets ahead of the next closest lady shooter. It was one of those surreal moments: I knew she was leading but I wasn't supposed to let on.

When we went to dinner that night, I discretely laid down the law to my table of nine shooters: No talk about scores or the leader board and no one could let slip that she was leading! My companions remained tight-lipped that evening and somehow we pulled it off—she didn't have a clue. We had an early start time that Sunday morning. I figured Stef needed to bang out a pair of 21s to win. Her next closest rival, the great Diane Sorentino, was four down and I could easily imagine Diane shooting a pair of 23's or 22's. I figured on a 42 for Stef and a 45 for Diane. Stef shot a hard and an easy layout for her last brace and came off with 19 and 21. I told her she'd started that morning four ahead and that I thought she may have just won Ladies. She wasn't as optimistic but as Diane shot our same rotation, we'd know soon enough.

I stuck my head in the club office door just as they were compiling that rotation's scores. They read off Diane's numbers and Stefanie had indeed won--by a single target. I wasn't about to jump for joy, though as there were still a few ladies out there who could feasibly pull it off but at that moment I did make the disclosure to shoot management that started the whole ball of wax rolling: Stefanie Steinkraus, a green card holder and New York State resident who's married to an American is still a German citizen.

I've always believed under all circumstances that honesty is the best policy. I don't think shoot management had a clue Stef hadn't become a naturalized US citizen until I told them, and I'd be willing to set the odds at fifty-fifty that if we'd just chosen to keep quiet, we'd have gotten away with it. Stef had accepted an invitation to shoot on the German National team for the European FITASC Championship just three weeks prior, however. Sure, she speaks with no discernable accent and she's as American as deep-dish apple-walnut pie with a scoop of Ben & Jerry's Vanilla on top, but I figure fair is fair: If you're willing to allow the fatherland pick up the tab for the shoot back in Italy, then you can't very well go into your Yankee-doodle-dandy act three weeks later when it suddenly becomes convenient.

NSCA Advisory Council members Joe Cantey, Jay Delphy and Bob Lepor were in attendance and I asked club manager Chuck Frazier if the four of them might put their heads together to consider the situation. I was sure we could all abide by whatever ruling they handed down. I returned to the camper and as it was a short day of only 50 targets and I was staring at that long drive home, I thought I'd rest for an hour before the awards ceremony. Stef was bubbly and chatty in the way we all are when victory is secured. She showered and put on the last set of clean clothes she had: A pair of Capri pants and a polo

shirt with *Krieghoff* stitched at the breast. She wanted to look her best: After all it isn't ever day you shoot the high score at a National Championship!

I closed my eyes and started to doze. HOA Ladies, 2006 National FITASC Championship: Of course the title would go to Diane – and quite correctly, I thought as I drifted off. But the trophy and prize money would go to Stef. That's the way it's done at State and Zone championships and I was certain it was they way it would be handled here. As I finally slid into REM sleep, I had visions of a free super-scroll for her (as opposed to the one I'm about to pay for) dancing in my head.

Then the camper door was pulled open—hard. “Take me home!” Stef demanded. It was all over apparently, and she was out. No trophy, no prize money—they were relegating her to a separate concurrent: High International Lady--never mind that she was the only international lady! “Wait.” I said as I jumped on my bike and peddled frantically back up to the clubhouse to investigate. Joe Cantey was just finishing lunch as I sidled up. He expressed his condolences, but clarified that what Stef had reported to me was correct and that the decision had been rote and based entirely on precedence: There was my bad luck biting my wife in the ass!

When Gary Phillips took the HOA at the National Championship in San Antonio in 1992, it was decided that he was ineligible for the title of National Champion, though he was allowed to keep the trophy and prize money and options winnings. In 2001 when he finished RU to Bobby Fowler he was denied the trophy, re-classed into a separate International concurrent and declared ineligible for prize and options money. They sent him a \$500 consolation for winning the International concurrent—a far cry from the \$4500 payday he would have seen for winning RU in the main event. But most importantly he was robbed of the recognition that went with such an important accomplishment. His achievement was minimized, then disparaged and finally swept under the rug--a phenomenon I've come to term the “Gary Phillips effect.” Can you imagine the difference it makes to a professional shooter in a sponsor's eyes to have that National title on their resume, or just to have it widely known that they finished second overall? Can you imagine how adversely the lack of that career-making credential has affected Gary's professional life? To this day, his accomplishments go largely unrecognized—as if they never happened. (The same phenomenon has also happened to Mick Howells and George Digweed but I don't know the details of those cases well enough to go into them here.)

Joe Cantey was sincerely sorry for the bad news he was obliged to deliver. I wasn't mad at him: He's a shooter like the rest of us, who instead of bitching about things and doing nothing about them, is trying to do right for the sport from the inside. As I turned away, he remarked that the irony was they'd just reviewed this whole policy in detail and put it to a vote and while resident aliens are confirmed to be eligible to win State, Zone and US Open titles, they remain ineligible to win titles, trophies and prize money at all National Championships including FITASC (I guess I spoke prematurely in a recent article when I said you'd see Stef and me for the autumn San Antonio Nationals in 2007!)

I pulled Chuck Frasier aside and discussed it with him. I wasn't angry with him either. He'd done just as I'd asked and convened this Advisory Council group to discuss the matter and they'd gone straight to the top with it: They got Mike Hampton, Jr. on the phone in San Antonio on his Sunday off to get the ruling straight from the horse's mouth. *You can't be a little bit pregnant: Either you are an American or you are not* (to paraphrase) came the ruling. There would be a special trophy for High International Lady sent in the mail and the options bets would be returned, but that was pretty much that. It was clear to me he felt terrible having to lay that on me—hell everyone felt terrible, but what could you do? Get loud? Start throwing punches? Get drunk at the awards ceremony and heckle the prize winners?!

It was over and I suddenly felt awkward—like the guest at a party everyone tries to avoid. I went to the leader board one last time and there it was: Stefanie Steinkraus still in the first slot with 164--still one target ahead of Dianne Sorentino's 163. Then this sheet was unceremoniously ripped down and the final scores posted. Diane was atop with 163 with the designation of Champion next to her name. Stef was no longer in evidence anywhere on the board. It was as if she'd never even shot the event! I wish now I'd had the foresight take that last sheet before the final—just to have.

So we left, pointing the truck North back toward our home in New York State. We discussed all that had happened like it was some sort of puzzle that could be solved if we just talked it through, but always the circular logic brought us back to the same start/finish. She had been tarred with the same brush as Gary Phillips. This was the sport of technicality: A bad rule based on vindictive precedent that has been allowed to stand far too long.

We stopped at a Waffle House in Delaware for a midnight dinner. This should have been a steak and champagne celebration back in Washington instead of a silent, joyless necessity at a dirty roadhouse halfway to putting the bad experience behind us. We pushed on until exhaustion made it too dangerous to continue and pulled into a rest stop on the New Jersey Turnpike. The night of greatest day of my wife's shooting career was spent sleeping in balmy heat next to an idling Semi, myself replaying the details of the day, vainly trying to re-engineer how we could have arrived at a different outcome. And then it finally really was over: I was back in my bed awakening from the sleep of 18 hours under my wheels. My wife was out working in the Garden and it was a warm sunny day—the day before the fourth of July.

These last weeks have been easier to live through than you'd think. No one even knows what happened so they can't very well remind her of it. I'm still chagrined by the whole thing. While admitting she couldn't have won trophies or money in ladies or AA class, they've listed her at AA5 and even awarded her a punch toward master: She's truly the woman who wasn't there! And there have been some condolences. My favorites are those who simply propose that she *Buck up and just go out there and win the World FITASC Championship or the US Open!* What do they know of it? What do they know of how many things need to go right and the multitudes that can go wrong to win something like this? Of how a shooter needs to believe they can do it—even when there's been evidence all season long that she couldn't? What do they know of having your heart's desire in the palm of your hand, seemingly possessing it for an hour or so, and then realizing that no part of it will ever yours? *No film in the Camera when you summited Everest? Well just pop down to photo-mat, get some film and climb it all over again!* I know of about three shooters on the planet who could actually be issued that momentous challenge and then go and do it. The truth is Stef may be a mom by next season, or it might be raining that weekend, or one of the good young girl shooters may hit their stride or Stef just simply might never shoot as well again? My point is she did it once, and once should have been enough.

I have a handful of less distinguished sterling silver trophies handed down by my family. I will select the most fitting of these and have it re-finished and re-engraved to read 2006 National FITASC Championship Ladies HOA (I feel this is accurate for the achievement and what should have been awarded to her.) If you're ever lucky enough to get invited to dinner at our house, you'll see this cup on display in the kitchen with Stef's other trophies. If you ask about it, we'll tell you the whole story—the same story I'm telling now, of how she won it but then she really didn't, and how the trophy isn't even bona fide. When the real trophy does arrive in the mail—the one that will read High International Lady, we'll mount it in a framed glass-enclosed case with a note explaining that Stefanie Steinkraus shot the high Ladies score at the National FITASC Championship but because she was not an American citizen, she was reclassified into the International Lady concurrent. I'll even include a color copy of the returned options check. This collage will hang in a place of honor on the wall of our home to serve as a reminder of how protectionist and prejudicial the NSCA remains in its policies. It will also serve as proof positive that the best woman FITASC shooter in America (if not the best American woman FITASC shooter) on Fourth of July weekend 2006 was a German New Yorker named Stefanie Steinkraus.

EPILOGUE: Hunter's Pointe never did get around to sending on that special trophy, I have yet to make up that promised trophy or collage I mentioned—though I still fully intend to, and Stef still has yet to win the US Open—though she did finish ladies second at the 2007 event just last weekend!

CONTACTING THE TRAVELERS...

CTSCA.ORG – Webmaster: Jeff Hunter, marist89@excite.com.

CTSCA Home Office: Al Anglace, email aaa738@aol.com (by far the best way) or telephone 203 417-6295 if you absolutely must.

Editor: Phil Steinkraus, e-mail philistein@aol.com

Membership, Address Changes and Shooting Class status: Contact John Hachmann, at email obuc@optonline.net.

Guide Book advertising and other questions contact Dick Orenstein at email oren@umich.edu or call 203-226-5251.

Past issues of *Reload!* are available online at www.ShotgunReport.com.

- - - 2007 CTSCA SHOOTING CALENDAR - - -

***PLEASE NOTE CHANGES IN THE REMAINING 2007 SHOOTING CALENDAR**

***JUL.8** – “SUMMERTIME, SUMMERTIME” Orvis/Sandanona, Millbrook, NY

JUL. 29 – **NWTF NORTHEAST CHAMPIONSHIP** – Mid County Rod & Gun Club, LaGrangeville, NY. CTSCA has so-sponsored this fundraiser for many years. It provides many opportunities to win one of the hundreds of prizes as well as a great lunch provided by the Mid County Club Members. Reservation/Information: Rhett Simmons rsimmons@NWTF.net or 800 843-6983, ext. 3711.

AUG. 10, 11 & 12 – **GREAT EASTERN LOBSTER CLASSIC**, Addieville East Farm, Mapleville, RI. CTSCA is a very important sponsor of this “Big Blast” NSCA Shoot. World Champion, George Digweed will make an appearance this year. Download a Reservation form from their web site or call 401 568-3185.

***SEPT. 30** – “SEPTEMBERSCHUTZENFEST” Millbrook Rod & Gun Club

OCT. 5, 6 & 7 – **Fall Tour**, Rhode Island Area Clubs.

OCT.21 – **SMALL GAUGE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS**, Fairfield County Fish & Game, Monroe, CT

NOV. 18 – “**SALUTE THE COLORS**” Ye Old Newgate Coon Club, Norfolk, CT

DEC. 16 – **DICK LOSEE MEMORIAL SHOOT / X-MAS PARTY**, Mid County Rod & Gun Club

- - - OTHER 2007 SHOTS OF INTEREST - - -

Always call ahead to confirm.

Jul. 1 – “**Freedom 100**” – Suffolk Trap, Skeet & Sporting. Mark 631 924-5600.

Jul. 14 & 15 – **Zone 1 NSCA Championships** – Mid Hudson Sporting Grounds, New Paltz, NY.

Jul. 22 – **North Atlantic Ducks Unlimited Shoot** – Addieville East Farm, Mapleville, RI.

July 28 – **Harlem Valley Classic** – Ten Mile River Preserve, Dover Plains, NY.

Saturday, August 4th - **FCF&GPA 2007** – “**The Crucible**” – Open shoot. Dom Uliano 203 562-0352.

August 19th – **Friends of NRA Sporting Shoot** – Mid Hudson Sporting Grounds, New Paltz, NY.

Contact David Wohlbach at htbear23@verizon.net.

August 19th - **Vermont State Open Championship** -- in Sutton, VT. Contact: tmurphy@together.net

Aug.25 & 26 2007 FCF&GPA Connecticut State Shoot. For information contact Dom Uliano

Email, dombklab@charter.net or 203-526-0352

THE UPCOMING **CTTRAVELERS** MONTHLY SHOOT

“2007 SUMMERTIME , SUMMERTIME”

ORVIS/SANDANONA

Route 44A, Millbrook, NY 12545

Sunday, July 8, 2007

It all started here twenty years ago.

Registration and continental breakfast opens at 8:30 AM.

Member entry fee: \$70.00. Guests fee: \$85.00.

REGISTRATION APPLICATION

--- *Your application must be received by [Tuesday, July 3, 2007](#)* ---