

NOTICE TO NEW YORK STATE SKEET ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

From the NYSSSA Executive Committee

Thanks to everyone who submitted a state survey form, we appreciate your input. We had 170 responses out of approximately 400 surveys mailed, so almost half of our membership took the time and effort to contribute their thoughts, pretty good.

The big news is that the 2007 New York State Skeet Championships will be held Labor Day weekend, Doubles on Friday, the other 4 guns on Saturday and Sunday. No registered events on Monday, Sept 3.

The poll results were strongly in favor of keeping the Labor Day weekend for the state shoot. Only 20% of those responding favored moving the shoot to another weekend.

There were two 4-day options which asked whether shooters were in favor of keeping the format of events the same, or changing the order, but only 36% of those responding favored these options as compared with 44% who favored dropping Labor Day altogether. While this is not resoundingly conclusive, your Executive Committee felt that a change was in order and we are willing to see if this enables more shooters to attend our state championship, the highlight of our registered shooting season here in New York.

The survey revealed that many of you think that people don't shoot more, or don't even get involved in registered shooting, because of the time and money involved. While there is little that we as individuals can do to control the cost of lead in China or the cost of gas in New York, your NYS Executive Committee has solved two of these problems with one stroke – by shooting only 4 guns in two days at the New York State skeet championships, we just saved you time and money.

The comments provided by members who responded to this survey were also very interesting, and we are publishing these along with the other survey results.

Over 75% of our members who responded compete in skeet leagues. Leagues are how new shooters move from practice to a taste of competition, and are a vital breeding ground for shooters who might want to become involved in registered shooting. Leagues are also good revenue for gun clubs, so it's win-win all around.

Almost 70% of those responding are actively recruiting new shooters, by urging them to come out and learn to shoot, providing guns and ammo, and even paying for their rounds. That says a lot for not only the friendship and sportsmanship prevalent in shotgun sports, but for the enthusiasm of our members for our sport and sharing this with friends and family. Everyone who promotes the sport is to be commended, good job.

The Executive Committee has prevailed upon Peter Coyne, past NSSA President and host of one of New York's all-time fun shoots in the past, to Chair a committee responsible for bringing the fun back to the state shoot. Peter will have a budget to work with, and will be soliciting prizes and sponsors. Peter also needs help in this effort, and anyone interested in assisting Peter in any way, can reach him at pacoyne@mindspring.com.

Unfortunately, the finances of your state association are such that we have been forced to increase NYSSSA daily fees. Right now we are losing money, and the agreement was to double the fees, and to use half of the increased revenues to improve the state shoot. This is the "Fun Committee's" budget.

Your state association pays for all of the medals at the State Shoot, for the prize monies earned by the Champions and Runners-up and contributes towards the cost of a qualified trap mechanic to ensure good targets. At our state shoot, ALL of your entry fee stays in class. Your state association also pays for engraving trophies, for Hall of Fame and State Team awards, and for the costs of running the association. Your directors all serve as volunteers, the only salary that is paid is to our Secretary-Treasurer who does all the work, and when finances are tight, doesn't even receive full salary.

Our only sources of revenue are your dues and those of your club, and daily fees. We make every effort to hold costs, we have not raised daily fees in years and years, and we regret the necessity for this increase now.

Your state association also maintains a web site, www.nyskeet.com, and one order of business at our Executive Committee meeting was to form a committee, Chaired by Greg Craybus, to better utilize this site as a communication vehicle for our NYSSSA members. You can contact Greg at gcraybal@twcny.rr.com.

There were several themes recurrent in the opinions offered in our survey, which were a little disturbing to Executive Committee members, in that they signify what the movies call "a failure to communicate."

- We have very few (if any) "full" shoots in New York State. If you are a shooter who only wants to compete for one day, or to shoot only one gun, and are not feeling welcome at any club, please contact Ed Freedman at the state association (edfskeet@twcny.rr.com), he will provide a listing of shoots and clubs where they will be happy to sign you up and treat you like royalty.
- One-gun and one-day shooters are also welcome at the New York State Skeet Championships. The State Shoot averages about 20 one-day or 1-gun shooters every year, does that surprise you? Have you been missing out on fun because of incorrect rumors? And yes, 1-gunners shoot the same rotations and fields as everyone else, a level playing field.
- New York State is very supportive of youth shooting but we can always do more. Many of you indicated that this was an area in need.

- Please contact Art Miller (AMShooter@aol.com), NYS coordinator for the Scholastic Clay Target Program, who will be happy to fill you in on getting involved in the New York State SCTP. This organization recently completed an excellent state shoot at Conesus Lake Sportsmen's Club, and Art is working on taking squads to the world championships in San Antonio, TX later this summer.
- The Heitman Foundation, with funds contributed through the efforts of the Friends of Doug Heitman, refunds to every sub-junior and junior shooter who competes at the New York State Skeet Championships the cost of their entry fees. The Heitman Foundation also awards a trophy at the state Hall of Fame banquet in honor of the high average junior shooter in New York. The kids do not have to apply for the award, shoot management submits their information to Lori Mitchell who administers the Foundation and refunds the entry fees.
- No junior or sub-junior shooter is required to pay New York State daily fees when shooting a registered event in New York.

We can all do more to promote skeet shooting across all age levels, not only the kids who are the most fun to watch as they improve. Your state association would appreciate specific input from any member who is willing to become involved in promoting skeet here in New York. You may contact any member of the Executive Committee, with comments or offers of help. Their contacts are included on the NYSSSA website.

Good shooting this summer, be healthy and be happy, and we look forward to this year's state shoot being one of the best ever.

New York State Skeet Shooting Assn Executive Committee

President, David McDonald, Watervliet Gun Club
 Vice-President, Mike Ferchaw, Addison Gun Club
 Secretary-Treasurer, Ed Freedman, Ilion Gun Club
 Zone 1 – David Besch, Hamburg Gun Club
 Zone 2 – Andrea Lehr, Rochester-Brooks Gun Club
 Zone 3 – Gary Blaise, Ilion Gun Club
 Zone 4 – Steve Woods, Watervliet Gun Club
 Zone 5 – Sid Miller, Happy Pineapples
 At Large – John Cicora, Addison Gun Club
 At Large – John Kujawski, 5-Point Gun Club

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING SHOOTING
(listed in order of number of times suggested)

9. How can we grow the sport to attract new shooters?

20 -- 1-day shoots

16 -- Advertise, promotion, point of sale brochures about skeet and gun clubs at sporting goods stores, booth at DEC hunting & fishing days, statewide open house, NSSA should work with local clubs to promote skeet; publicize events and outcomes in media

14 -- Reduce costs

16 -- Promote youth shooting, free clinics, target boy/girl scout groups, 4-H clubs, hold “kids day” at gun clubs, endorse and promote Scholastic Clays program

4 -- More money into the sport, corporate sponsors, merchandise

3 each -- Better website information; Let new shooters win; add trophies, medals, prize money to lower classes so they walk away with something; Encourage clubs to hold registered shoots, offer something like supplies or prizes, or recognition; Welcome new shooters, lose the elitist attitude

2 each -- Participation in new shooter programs by the clubs; NSSA should give out a free membership to new shooters for first year; Eliminate the mandatory purse; Skeet leagues; Offer more than just clay targets, most shooters come for the fun not the titles; make all shoots fun and for the family; better distribution of prize money to lower classes; Conduct “try it you’ll like it” shoots

1 each -- Special events for lower class shooters and beginners; Emphasize the fun; Start up a monthly NYSSSA newsletter; NSSA should provide instructions at gun clubs; Waive the NYSSSA daily fees for new shooters first year; Clubs reduce practice costs and subsidize from operating budget; Limit each club to one 2-day shoot a year to allow more 1-days shoots; Make it easier for Canadians to cross the border; try and find guys with lots of time and money; 2-year club memberships, first year free; Place emphasis on classification system which allows shooters to compete on a level playing field; Reduce NSSA daily fees; Change format to international style; Offer optional purses and lewis class; Work with companies to lower cost of shot; re-claim lead from all the clubs and build our own shot drop system and sell shot to all NYSSSA members at low cost; Consider “Vintager” events, low gun, side by side, pump gun; Political involvement to protect ranges; less emphasis on the 410

10. What keeps new shooters from shooting registered events?

55 -- Cost, including gas, travel, hotels

32 -- Too much time and money

25 -- Not competitive or fear of failure, intimidated by experienced shooters

6 -- Too time consuming

5 -- Don't want to shoot 4-guns

4 each -- Not clear how they benefit versus the expense; Lack of a mentor to walk through the process; lack of welcoming attitude, condescending

2 each -- Lack of information about tournaments displayed at the clubs; Perception you need to break 100's, eat, live and breathe skeet; drop one target, go home; no 1-day shoots, 1-gun shooters not encouraged at 4-gun shoots; Lack of significant prizes; Too far to travel; classification system; time consuming sign up, too hard to register; too many sandbaggers

1 each -- Nintendo games; Need to be a member of a club or know a member to shoot the event; Ilion should hold a small shoot in the spring to coach shooters on how to get started shooting registered; Other hobbies; They don't know about registered events; Preference at events for the "big guys and gals"; an attitude that there are "second class" shooters at registered shoots; lack of good teachers

11. Do you personally ever introduce new shooters into skeet shooting? How do you accomplish this?

61 -- Bring people to the club and introduce them to shooting including letting them borrow a gun, giving them shells even paying for rounds, making sure they are on a field by themselves, shooting easy targets so they'll break some, then they're hooked

9 -- Offer advice and help them break targets

6 -- Talk about the enjoyment of it, it's a family sport

4 -- Encourage shooters to join leagues

3 -- Encourage and sponsor family members to shoot

2 -- Work with local high school skeet and trap clubs; Boy Scouts

1 each -- Loan them Todd Bender's skeet video; Work at NRA skeet camps; Teach basic safety and fundamentals; Hound them; Shoot with new shooters; Sell them cheap re-loads; Recognition of new shooters by the club; Recruit from hunter training classes; provide guns, targets and instructors at gun club; free NSSA memberships; club hosts ladies night for new shooters

Other responses: (one suggestion each)

Need to make class competition more attractive
Allow shooters to come to 4-gun registered shoots and just shoot one gun
If we get more people to shoot, the state shoot numbers will increase. Changing the NYS shoot will not keep people shooting. We need to fix the engine, not the caboose!
Make the 100's equal, split the prize money, shoot off for trophies only
Thanks to everyone in the NYSSSA for our hard work. It is a thankless job

Other Options to Improve state shoot: (one suggestion each)

Doubles and 12 Saturday, 20 and 28 Sunday and 410 Monday so no one has to take a day off
Shoot low gun and a side by side or pump gun only event
Allow shooters to shoot just one gun
Labor Day weekend is not a good time for families with school-age children; a summer shoot would encourage more younger shooters to attend
With Option 2, put the 200 12-ga on Sunday as some one-gun shooters maybe working Saturday
Hold a youth event, along with E and D class shooters, at a smaller two-field club to get interest
Stop having it Upstate every year; there are shooters all over the state
Hold the shoot Memorial Day weekend

