

WALLA WALLA GUN CLUB



June, 2013 • NEWSLETTER • NEWSLETTER • NEWSLETTER • Volume VI, No. 3



Bob Bloch
Editor

SCTP AT WWGC

You will be seeing the initials SCTP a lot over the next few weeks and months at our club. For you see, the Scholastic Clay Target Program has made its way to Walla Walla Gun Club.

I'll bet you never heard of the Scholastic Clay Target Program. Don't feel bad, I hadn't either, until a few years back. Yours truly ran into a fellow named Mike Borg at a Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife meeting in Ellensburg. Mike had just set up shop in, of all places, Colville, WA, and was the newly appointed Northwest Region Director of SCTP. Mike tried every way he could during that meeting to get WWGC to join up. I did the best I could to assure him that it would take the Board of Directors to make that decision.

So what exactly is SCTP? Started many years back by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the SCTP is an organization of clay target shooting teams of kids in high school, middle school, and grade school. There are thus three divisions. These teams compete on a regional and national level for team and individual trophies, and shooting scholarships to major universities with shooting teams. It's a great program, but it just hadn't caught on in the northwest. Mike's challenge was to change that.

Over the years, Mike and I have corresponded, he always letting me know the latest and greatest news out of the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF), the successor oversight organization. And I, on the other hand, would always say that we had no money nor any time to devote to it at the moment.

In a nutshell, Mike's email to me a month ago changed all that. All of a sudden, there would be \$9,000 available to new teams in the Northwest to be put into a Midway USA Foundation nest egg that the team could use for guns and ammo. In addition, Mike has hopes that we may qualify for a Dept. of Fish and Wildlife grant to buy more guns and ammo, and shooting vests and other stuff the team will need.

Gerry Taylor, Gene Gossett, and Malachi Matthews have "volunteered" to help yours truly with the project. We still need more assistant coaches and adult leaders. If you are interested, please contact your editor here and we will make sure your talents are put to good use.

You will hear more of this venture in the near future. ☺



(l-r) Jim Denoyer and Doug Luttrell shown enjoying a moment of quiet outside the shop at Luttrell's Automotive, 927 W. Rose Street in Walla Walla.

WALLA WALLA DRAG STRIP IS GUN CLUB'S GOOD NEIGHBOR

As most people are aware, our Club is not alone on its premises at Walla Walla Airport. There's another business just east of us called **Walla Walla Drag Strip**. Many WWGC members ask questions about our neighbor, a lot of which your editor has always been unable to reasonably answer. So it is that we thought for this issue of *Newsletter*, we'd do an interview with **Doug Luttrell**, one of the Drag Strip principals. You probably already know that **Luttrell's Automotive** is a regular sponsor of our Club. You can find their ad on the inside back cover page of our 2013 schedule. But we'll bet you don't know much about who runs the Drag Strip, or what they actually do there. To remedy that, below you will find a much edited interview we did this week with Doug, in the waiting room down at his business. (Ed is yours truly, Doug is Doug Luttrell.)

Ed: Doug, can you tell me a little bit about your organization?

Doug: It's called Walla Walla Drag Strip. It used to be called Bonanza Raceway, but when we took over in 2009 there were five of us that went together. There were a lot of local racers that thought it was a good thing to have, and a good thing for the community. **Steve Kelty, Larry Tomlinson, Doug Watts, Lee Champ**, and myself all went together and bought Bonanza Raceway from [the previous] group.

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WALLA WALLA GUN CLUB is located at 1212 Middle Waitsburg Road. Phone 509-529-7288.

Hours: 9:00 am-2:00 pm Sundays, 6:30-9:00 pm Thursdays. Other days & times by arrangement.

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Drag Strip, continued from page 1

Ed: How many racers do you think there are locally?

Doug: We probably have 25 or 30 that come out and race, but we probably have 70 or so that come from around the area, Pendleton, Lewiston, Walla Walla Valley, Spokane, Yakima, are our regular people.

Ed: Is drag racing becoming more popular as time goes on, or has it been hit by the recession?

Doug: When we first got going, we thought it would be a growing thing, but when the recession hit and gas prices went up, we saw not a decline but it quit growing, because of the economy. Big racing is like gambling: it gets into your blood and you can't stop.

Ed: Oh, it's just like trapshooting!

Doug: Yes, that's exactly right.

Ed: Drag racing is not an inexpensive sport. What do you suppose the average guy pays to drag race in a year?

Doug: It varies by class. We have Sportsman Class guys that, if they spend \$1,000 in a year I'd be surprised. But we have other guys [in the upper classes] that spend 10 times that. I've known guys that have spent \$40- or \$50,000 just for a car. It gets in your blood and you can't stop.

Ed: How much skill is required in one-eighth mile racing?

Doug: There's a lot of skill involved. What we do is called "ET" racing. You have a reaction time—the closer you get to a zero reaction time, the better chance you have of winning. Of course, what your car "dials" is very critical, you have to be within a hundredth, sometimes a thousandth of a second. I've seen races won by 3 inches, which is a thousandth of a second. It's not about speed, it's about reaction time and consistency.

Ed: So it's really more of a "man and machine" kind of interaction?

Doug: Exactly.

Ed: In that sense, [drag racing] is just like trap shooting. You can spend a million dollars on a trap gun and it doesn't make you any better of a shot.

Doug: Yea, I've seen guys spend thousands of dollars on a race car, but if you're not a good racer, you're not going to do well. For instance, we had a guy in our "Super Pro" class last time that won, the time before that he was runner-up; he's a low budget racer who doesn't win very often. But he got on a roll and he won over a lot of really high dollar cars. It was kind of neat to see one of our guys do that.

Ed: When you win out there, are there jackpots? What do you win?

Doug: Yes. We have three things. We have "Wallys," in NHRA racing that's kind of a big deal. Wally Parks was the founder of NHRA (National Hot Rod Association), so they named a trophy after him, it's called a Wally. We have three or four races during the year where you can actually win a Wally right here, and that's a BIG DEAL to racers. And then they have what they call NAPA Point Series, where we garner points for each race, and at the end of the year the guy that has the most points in each class will win a trophy from our track, and some money. Then at the end of each race (weekend), the winner and runner up win money. The top prize is \$500, and at the end of the year, the winner gets, if I remember right, \$1,200. It's sponsored by NAPA and each of the owners, who kick in some money each year. The weekend race money is usually paid out of the entry fees each racer pays when they come to race, and the sponsors.

Ed: So it's kind of like trap shooting.

Doug: Yes, very similar.

Ed: What do you see the future of Walla Walla Drag Strip out at the Airport? There was some talk a few years back about you guys going to a quarter mile track to attract the big dogs. Is that still on?

Doug: Probably not. When we first started, we thought that would be really neat, but the insurance goes up exponentially, and the cost of building the track out that far—we would have to

completely change the configuration of that track. There's just not enough run out there, so we'll probably stay eighth mile. Eighth mile racing has become a fairly popular sport. There's a lot more skill in my mind because in a quarter mile, you have a chance to make adjustments as you go down the track to beat the other guy. But in eighth mile racing, everything happens real fast—you don't have that much time. So in my opinion, a good eighth mile racer will be a great quarter mile racer.

Ed: I've seen all kinds of rigs out [at the dragstrip]. What sort of rigs do you allow, and what are some of the requirements?

Doug: NHRA has a rule book, and it's based on safety. There are several different classes out there, snowmobiles being one of them. We've raced pickup trucks, and legend cars that race around an oval track. We'll race anything that's allowed by NHRA, as long as they meet the safety standards.

Ed: The Port of Walla Walla is our mutual landlord. Are you guys planning on staying out there for a long time? Have you ever thought about getting your own place?

Doug: You know, in a perfect world it would be nice to have your own place so you didn't have to pay exorbitant rent, but in reality, the cost is just too great to start over. We'll probably stay there as long as we can afford to pay the [ever increasing] rent.

Ed: Tell me a little bit about Luttrell's Automotive. You guys have been so good to buy ads in our program, tell us a little bit about your business, who's in it, and some of the things that people might not know.

Doug: I started working on cars professionally in 1974 here in town. I actually came over here to go to college, but quit after a year and became a full time mechanic. In 1978, I worked for my father-in-law building BlazeKing wood stoves, and working on cars as a sideline in my garage. In 1990, my garage was getting too small, and the wood stove industry was fading out, so I rented this place in February, 1990. In 1995 I bought the building. In 1999, we

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built the shop over here, and in 2000 we built the warehouse next to it. My focus has always been on foreign cars, but we do work on American cars also. I have four "techs," a service writer Jim Denoyer, a bookkeeper, and a couple helper guys. We have a crew of eight.

Ed: Walla Walla is kind of stagnant, in that the population doesn't grow much. It seems that the better businesses do OK and stay around, and the other ones just fade away.

Doug: It's funny. When I first started here, we had about a two week backlog, but everything changed in 2009, and it's a daily backlog now. We can get cars out the same day they come in. That has definitely changed. I think people are scared of what's going on with our government, especially this being a fairly large Republican area, and I think it will continue to stay that way until we get some changes in Washington [DC]. Nevertheless, with the high cost of gas, and the high cost of new cars, we're seeing more and more people repairing their old ones.

Ed: Doug, what would you like to tell the Walla Walla Gun Club people that maybe you haven't had a chance to do. Is there anything that you want to tell us, or have us help you with?

Doug: The one thing I will say that I was surprised about: When I first started there at the track, I had heard rumors that the Gun Club people were hard to get along with, and there was all kinds of trouble. [But] I have not seen that one iota.

Ed: We have a great relationship [with you all]

Doug: You guys have bent over backwards to help us.

Ed: Well, you guys have helped us, too. It's a two-way street. We're just tickled to have somebody down there that we can work closely with. We're real pleased with how you guys have handled your deal down there, and we're glad to see you grow and do well. Thanks, Doug, for taking time today to talk with Newsletter.

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