TRAP & FIELD

February 2020 $7.00 Official ATA Magazine

2020 ATA ALL-AMERICAN TEAM CAPTAINS

Chase Horton
Open

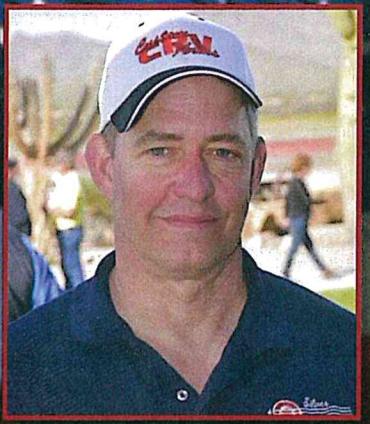
Stacy Rehor
Lady I

Deborah Ohye-Neilson
Lady II

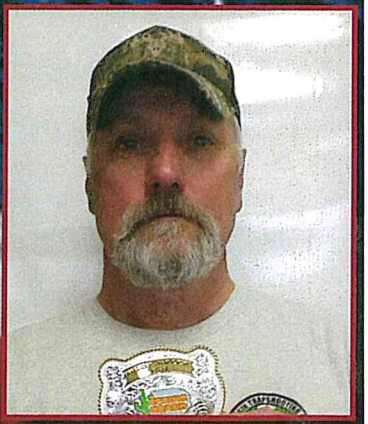
Ryan Denes
Sub-Junior

Ian Lawrence
Junior

Noah Gouge
Junior Gold

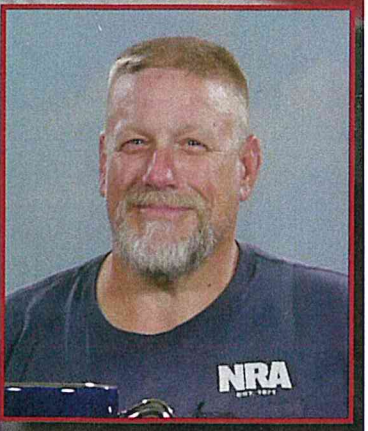


Chris Vendel
Sub-Vet



David Bessine
Veteran

Mike Westjohn
Senior Vet



Ziggy Tkaczenko
Chair

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AIM: The parents' perspective

Trap & Field is on the scene regularly with AIM'ers across the ATA who are loud and clear about how much they love being part of the ATA and its official youth shooting program.

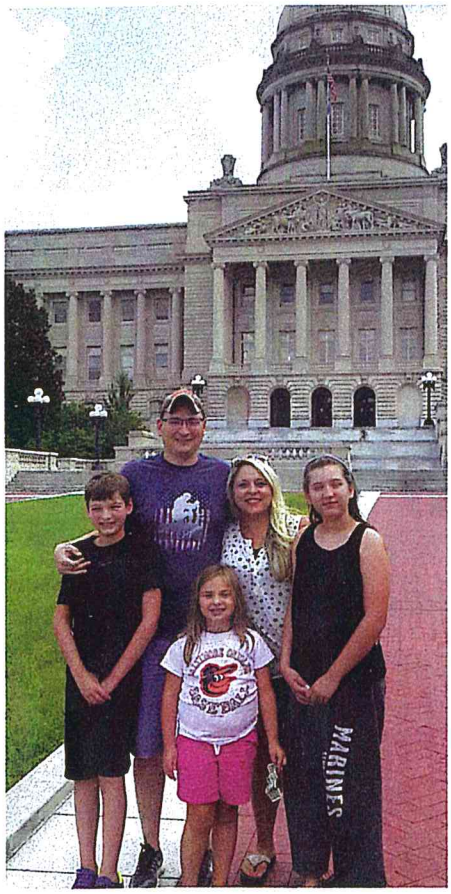
But what about their folks? What's it like to have young and aspiring trapshooting athletes in their families?

For their perspective, T&F spoke with new AIM parents, Maryland State Senator Michael Hough and his wife Joeylynn, a successful fundraiser and event planner. Their daughter Katelynn, 12, and son Grant, 11, joined AIM in 2019. Their youngest, Abigail, just turned seven and has a while longer to decide whether she wants to give her siblings some additional competition on the trapline.

Their ATA/AIM adventure began when Mike met members of the Thurmont C&SC and they invited his kids to go shooting. He thought it would be a great opportunity to get them involved in the shooting sports. He was in session at the time, so Jo took them.

Is there a family history in the shooting sports?

Mike: When I grew up [in Maryland], my father took me hunting and shooting.



On their way to the 2019 AIM Grand, the Hough family couldn't resist a stop at the state capitol in Frankfurt, KY.

Jo: I'm from North Dakota. I grew up with guns and shooting, but not trapshooting.

What triggered your decision to enroll Katelynn and Grant into AIM?

Jo: A friend and neighbor's son, Britten Pratt, was involved with the 4-H Firepower trapshooting team, which participates in AIM. Britten told our kids how much he really liked it. I wanted my kids to learn how to shoot, and I also wanted something that my kids and I could do together. None of the other sports offer this.

Mike: It's important to me that I pass on to my children an understanding, familiarity and respect of firearms.

Aside from chauffeuring them to practices and tournaments, what roles have you taken on in their trapshooting careers?

Jo: I've scored, loaded traps, cleaned the hall, and become a mentor and cheerleader. I even became a certified shotgun instructor and helped coach the Firepower team at the 2019 AIM Grand.

Mike: Like my wife, I've filled in when they've needed help. As a parent, it's important to motivate the kids and keep them focused.

Tell us about your experience at the 2019 AIM Grand.

Mike: I was really impressed, and so were our kids. They could see that a lot of these young people put a great amount of time and effort into this sport. We had a great time, and they enjoyed using some of the money they've earned from working at shoots to upgrade their gear.

Jo: It is an experience of a lifetime. Our kids got to see and meet kids from different states who are at all different levels with their shooting. They talked about what each of them was learning from their coaches. When the Grand American started, they got to see shooters from different countries. That was really fun for them—they thought it was super cool.

What changes have you noticed in them since they became AIM'ers?

Jo: I've seen them mature and grow. They've learned how to be part of a team and the importance of good sportsmanship. They've learned to persevere regardless of things like heat, wind and rain.

Mike: I think it's not just their shooting, but working the trapshoots that's really good for them too. Instead of sitting around playing video games, you sit in a traphouse on a Saturday loading those birds—that's a lot of work!

Have they changed in ways you didn't expect?

Jo: Yes, they have a new appreciation and respect for their parents! They know how much this costs and how much time we're putting in for them to be able to shoot trap.

Can you see what they've learned through AIM helping them in other aspects of their future lives?

Mike: When you become an adult, life is going to constantly throw you challenges, and it's very easy to throw in the towel or quit. You have to learn in this world to be mentally tough in order to be successful. That's a great part of trapshooting—it teaches mental toughness. It's easy to get frustrated or start falling off when you miss a target.

Jo, you also started to shoot ATA in 2019. Do you think this helps your kids with their own trapshooting careers?

Jo: Absolutely. I want to lead by example.

Do the roles ever get reversed—do your kids coach you?

Jo: Sometimes. They might tell me, "Mom, you missed because you lifted your head." And I'm like, "Okay, I hear what you're saying." It's frustrating!

What have you learned about your kids since they started shooting AIM?

Mike: I'm finding my daughter to be fearless, and my son has an amazing amount of endurance. I'm very proud of them both.

Jo: My son's perseverance actually inspired me to continue trapshooting. I'm learning how grateful they feel for the opportunity to be in the sport—they talk about this all the time.

What do you hope that they'll never forget about their AIM experiences?

Mike: I hope they remember that with hard work and mental toughness, they can achieve things they didn't think they could before.

Jo: I hope they'll remember the camaraderie and the lifelong friendships they made. Also, their respect for guns and trapshooting. I hope they'll never forget the memories we've made as a family in AIM.

What's the top reason you'd offer to coax other parents to introduce their kids to the world of ATA trapshooting and AIM?

Mike: The biggest thing I always tell people is to just get them out there. Whatever preconceived notion they have is probably different from what they'll see when they go to a club. For example, it's a very diverse sport. I think almost half of our kids' trapshooting team is female!

Jo: Whether you compete with your kids, or just shoot alongside them, you can create a lifetime bond with your kids through trapshooting, which they can pass on to their kids.

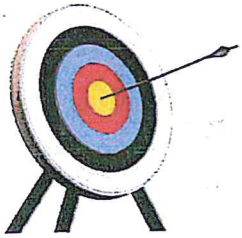
How would you sum up your perspective of the AIM program?

Jo: I love AIM because it provides a safe and positive experience with firearms, and it really promotes camaraderie.

Mike: It's a great program. I would encourage people to get their kids involved—and get kids that aren't theirs involved, too! Being a state senator, I can be a mini ambassador for the program in Maryland, but people everywhere need to be active and promote the program to grow it so that future generations can continue in the sport.

—Barbara Sheldon

4-H Members and Firearms: The Case for 4-H Shooting Sports (1)



The Instructional Focus of 4-H Shooting Sports

1. Life Skill and Positive Youth Development (PYD)
2. Training Adults to Teach Kids
3. Teaching the First Shot
4. Safety
5. National 4-H Mission Mandates - Healthy Living, Citizenship, STEM

Safety Record of 4-H Shooting Sports (2)

1. Reach 338,621 4-H age youth per year (2014)
2. About half in short-term experiences, i.e. camps or fair
3. About half in long term community club experiences
4. The program began in 1980
5. More than 6 million youth have been reached
6. Four documented injuries requiring emergency medical attention (1980-2013)

Youth Sports Injury Data

Sport	2014 Total Annual Participation	Number of Injuries Annually (2013)	Injury Rate
Football	5,286,000	354,300	6.7%
Wrestling	805,000	38,900	4.8%
Basketball	9,694,000	359,300	3.7%
Softball	2,622,000	53,000	2.0%
Soccer	9,828,000	171,000	1.7%
Baseball	6,711,000	106,100	1.6%
Hockey	743,000	11,200	1.4%
Gymnastics	2,809,000	33,000	1.1%
4-H Shooting Sports	338,621*	0.12**	Less than 0.00004%

* 2014 enrollment

** 4 injuries from 1980 – 2013 * 6 Injuries in 38 Years

Youth Sports Injury Comparison

1. Soccer vs 4-H Shooting Sports
   - 42,500 times more likely to be injured
2. Football vs 4-H Shooting Sports
   - 167,500 times more likely to be injured
3. 4-H Shooting Sports is one of the safest activities for youth

Rationale for Introducing Youth to Firearms

1. Teach safe and responsible use of firearms
2. Significant adults in the life of a young person
3. Opportunity for quality family involvement
4. Positive peer groups for kids
5. Respect the power of firearms and archery equipment
6. Education that emphases respect of other people

The Goal of 4-H Shooting Sports

The goal is not to claim Olympic gold medals.....

But to create "Gold Medal" kids!