

Ladies Day 2018

Saturday, Nov 17th, saw nearly 70 women from all across our community come to learn about and practice shooting firearms. The event, hosted by Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club in Jacksonville, Florida, provided the ladies with a short orientation to safe gun handling, and gave them training in personal protection, pistols, air rifles, the AR-15 rifle, and cowboy action shooting.

It was a full day of fun for the ladies. We started with a welcome from Gateway's president, Don Hardeman, and a welcome from Ted Carter, president of Florida Sport Shooting Association and NRA Board member. Sue Carter, Ladies Day Coordinator and NRA Certified Instructor, gave the safety orientation, discussing the four rules of safe gun handling and what they mean.

After the safety brief, the women were split into five groups. They rotated through the different venues to sample different styles of shooting, as well as get a hands-on demonstration in personal protection.

Retired JSO police officer Barbara Weber once again gave the seminar on personal protection and self-defense. She discussed the current laws and how they apply. She stressed the need to be alert and aware of our surroundings, and talked about what you could do if faced with a problem. The women had the opportunity to learn different techniques to block various attacks, and even got to try them on each other.

On the air gun range the women were instructed how to shoot air rifles at a distance of 10 meters. The range was indoor, so everyone stayed comfortable. Marion Estes and the coaches gave a brief lesson on how the air rifle worked, and basic sight alignment and trigger squeeze. The ladies were seated and could use a sand bag if they wanted. Although the targets were small, they did well.

At the pistol range, the ladies shot .22 caliber pistols at 7 yards, standing and using two hands. They were separated into two relays, with coaches having one or two students at a time. After an orientation on the firearm, safe gun handling, and loading and unloading, the women were given 20 minutes to shoot as much as they wanted. The coaches reviewed the fundamentals of a good shot, position, grip, sight alignment, sight picture, breathing, trigger squeeze and follow through. Shooting iron sights, the goal was to learn to group their shots anywhere on the target.

Cowboy action shooting was a big hit for the ladies. Sheriff Misfire Mordecai and his gang did a great job of introducing the women to the period dress and the firearms of the era. They had the chance to shoot revolvers, rifles and shotguns at different distances and at fun targets. The firearms included were 1873 and 1866 Winchester rifles, a 1897 Winchester pump shotgun, a double barrel Stoeger Coach Gun shotgun, a Colt Peacemaker revolver and a Ruger Vaquero revolver. The patience and thoughtfulness of the Cowford Regulators working with the ladies helped many overcome their personal fears of the firearms and shoot pretty darn well with them!

On the rifle range, the ladies learned what an AR-15 was, how it worked, the different calibers available and why it was so much fun to shoot. The coaches reviewed the safety rules and the fundamentals of a good shot. The ladies were seated and used either a tripod on the rifle or a sandbag for stability. The reactive targets were set at 25 yards away. This was a great introduction for many of the ladies, and they came away with a new understanding and appreciation of the rifle.

Lunch was catered by the always delicious Gator BBQ. We all enjoyed smoked chicken, pulled pork, slaw, beans, rolls and banana pudding! No one left hungry!

A huge thank you to those of you that came out to help. Our group leaders were Preall Loncarevic, Lori Hallauer, Bobbi-Jo Fenner, Sue Walker, and Dori Royal. Marion Estes, April and Dakota Saltford, Alondra Rivera-Camacho, Jada Milligan, Robert Kindl, Carl Berg and Al Tyner were on the air rifle range. Ted Carter, Larry Watkins, Kathy Klimek, Dori Smith, Robert Fanucci, Jay Walker, Dana Baygents, Barry Abramowitz and Bill McMullen on the pistol range. Mike Hicks, Jane Cebulskie, Andy Loncarevic, Randy Erickson, Jody Keach, Gerry Fenner and Jerry Patterson on the rifle range. Thank you to the Cowford Regulators, Sheriff Misfire Mordecai led his posse of 11 Cowboys and Cowgirls, Alma Sacket, Red Bear, Misfire Mordecai, Willy Whiskers, Flamingo Joe, Snake Oil Osage, Hoorah Hank, Pocket Rocket, RIAMBSC, Southern Slim, Dakota Dutchman and Rattlesnake Sams. Thank you also to Bill Whitman who was my last-minute assistant. And thank you to Barbara Weber, who has been a presenter at Ladies for several years. Without this amazing group of volunteers, this event would have never happened!

Let us also recognize those businesses that supported us. Thank you to the Florida Sport Shooting Association for the goodie bags, Ruger and Glock for the swag, and GunGoddess for the lip balm. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office supplied the gun locks and Lucas Oil for the lubricant. The Well Armed Woman Jacksonville West Chapter provided several volunteers, and of course those delicious goodies for a small cost. These organizations continually give their support for our Ladies programs at Gateway and are truly appreciated! Please consider supporting them as well.

All in all, Ladies Day 2018 was a great success. The women had a fun time learning how to shoot and handle firearms safely. The instructors and coaches were happy to help, and everyone enjoyed lunch!

Keep your eye out for more events in 2019. We will be offering a Refuse To Be A Victim class in February, NRA's Women On Target in May, and of course, Ladies Day in November. The Jacksonville West TAWW Chapter meets the 3rd Saturday of the month, from 9-1130. Contact Sue Carter, twawjaxwest@gmail.com, if you are interested or want more information. See you next year at the range!