

# Notice to MSA/CSA Members



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There has been understandable confusion since my wife Ann, sent a letter to you responding to a blackmail threat by a mounted shooter in Tennessee. In the letter, she stated that she had asked me to shut down the MSA. She wanted to spare us, and my family any more abuse from those who have been stirring up cruel and hateful drama, in order to create a negative perception of the MSA and discourage people from participating in our organization. While it has been very difficult not to take these attacks personally, the truth is that every owner of the MSA has been the target of similar efforts of sabotage. While we could continue to ignore the negative campaign spreading false information and address the wrongdoers through another forum as we have begun to do, I do not feel I need to avoid being straightforward and transparent with you, our members, as this has always been the MSA way. Pretending problems don't exist is the worst strategy for making them go away. We must shine a light on the dark cloud that has been cast over our organization and expose it for what it is.

There has never been a war between the associations, as some have tried to spin, as the MSA has never tried to harm the CMSA and has never told its members not to participate with the CMSA. However, certain individuals feel it is necessary or desirable to harm the MSA through negative propaganda in the form of instigating and/or perpetuating false rumors about the MSA, including personal attacks regarding the private lives of MSA owners. Private lives that have no businesses being dragged into the business of mounted shooting. I doubt anyone cares to know, or has the time to worry about the intimate details of the business owner's lives of each of the countless businesses which they purchase from on a daily basis. This is especially true of false propaganda designed to harm those

businesses.

As many of you know, MSA has filed several legal actions in an effort to protect its brand and the reputation of its owners. It should be known that this was not only done after considerable thought and evaluation, but after trying to stop the propaganda machine through less confrontational means. Ultimately, legal action was a last and necessary resort.

After being blackmailed to threaten us to drop our lawsuits, I took some time to collect my thoughts and search my feelings regarding the future of the MSA, before I responded to Ann's request to shut down. In the meantime, we received several emails providing support from members and as I reflected on why I got into the business of mounted shooting, I felt strongly that I did not want to abandon the people I have cared so much about for over three and a half years. I bought the MSA because I respected its purpose of always being fair and transparent and generous to mounted shooters. As a competitor, I believed that it was important to bring the MSA back and to help it to lead a sport that had remained stagnant of growth for decades, as it was not promoted extensively outside of its membership. I found it very rewarding to see people having fun again and feeling they were valued as partners in our achievements.

The tipping point for my final decision came when previous CMSA owner Brady Carr, took to Facebook to brag that he had been telling people for ten years that MSA stands for "Mad Shooters ASSociation." This reminded me that the personal attacks against me have been part of a long-standing agenda to villainies every owner of the MSA, since it was founded 15 years ago. The reason for this is clearly to chill competition. It has long been obvious that some do not want **any** competition. They want a monopoly that allows a single organization to reap the benefits of having no competition to keep them in check. Those who think it is unprofessional to speak about our competition in this way should be reminded that we did not force any individuals or organizations to use the unprofessional tactics they have chosen and we will stand behind our lawsuit to prove who has indeed lacked integrity. Until mounted shooters learn to ignore trumped up drama, we have no choice but to respond to it and set the record straight.

I must however, be counted on to have a thick skin and take whatever is thrown at me and not allow anyone to threaten or bully me into throwing in the towel. When I am punched, I have always punched back. While this may not always make me popular, it is what a leader must do. We cannot allow ourselves to be intimidated or to appear weak for the sake of our business interests. Competition can be brutal between businesses and it is not for the weak hearted. My biggest difficulty is that I

care deeply about my members and I do not like it when they are targeted by haters who wish to portray me as someone I am not. I have many flaws, but my dedication to my members is not one of them and I feel I have proven this with years of effort on your behalf.

While it would be easy and personally wise to do as my loving wife wishes, to be successful, one must make decisions that are not easy nor always in our personal best interest. We must sacrifice our own egos for the greater good. I do not intend to let my members down and I have taken steps to assure that MSA runs strong and remains the leader in mounted shooting, offering our members what no other association can offer. Ann has always supported me through difficult times and she supports my decision to keep moving forward while we fight for our right to compete and to continue to invest in our members.

In that effort, I have closed a deal to become a sponsor of this year's **Patriot**. The billing for this event, which is the largest equestrian event in the United States, will be "**The Priefert Patriot, sponsored by Western Horse & Gun and The Mounted Shooters of America.**" As we return to the **Patriot**, we will once again lead the sport by promoting outside of membership to showcase mounted shooting to the entire country. This year will include a Saturday Night Showcase produced NFR style with special effects, which will be filmed for television. We will be releasing more details as the event grows closer, but mark your calendars for the last week of February 2016 and sign up for the chance to be highlighted on a television show that will air throughout 2016 with thirty hours of programming. There is no better opportunity for you to provide value to your sponsors or to gain new sponsors and unlike the CMSA; all your sponsors that appear in your bio are always announced and there is no charge for wearing sponsor patches, nor any rules against wearing other association patches. We continue to put the interests of our members first.

MSA will also be returning as a sponsor of **Road to the Horse** in Lexington, Kentucky, where our **All Star Team** will compete in front of a sell out crowd of over 6,000 people, once again providing unprecedented opportunity to showcase their talents and provide sponsorship value. These venues are unmatched in our sport and our members have exclusive access to these opportunities. We are asking that any member who wishes to be on our All Star Team, submit a letter detailing why you believe you would be an asset to the team. We will make special consideration for loyal members and those who can bring us a sponsor or who attend the **Patriot**. We must limit the number based on our time slots with the **Road to the Horse** program and will likely be selecting 25-30 members for the team. More details will be coming soon.

Let's not forget that we are also the only association that owns a national newsstand magazine, **Western Horse & Gun**, which has doubled its readership to over 25,000 readers in just two years of ownership. Our members have exclusive access to appear on the pages of this prestigious publication. **Western Horse & Gun** will once again be the title sponsor of **MSA Worlds 2016**, which will have \$50,000 in added money! You will not be required to pay to pick up your year-end awards, as our awards dinner is always our gift to you for your support. The MSA continues to be the most innovative, fair, transparent and generous mounted shooting association in the country. Our members have unmatched access to national venues that offer tremendous opportunities for you to promote yourselves, as well as unrivaled promotional opportunities for the entire sport, which benefit all associations.

We do not follow and we will not allow sabotage by small minded, hateful people who care nothing for the members of our sport to lead us astray from our goal to make mounted shooting a legitimate and respected sport in the equestrian world. No one has the right to own a sport, but leadership can be made clear. No one has matched our payouts or our ability to bring our sport to the national stage

As you can imagine, running a national bimonthly newsstand publication is a full time job. Thankfully, we have a tremendous staff of professionals who make this possible. Unfortunately, this interferes with our ability to give the MSA the full time attention it requires. Finding the right person to lead the MSA assures that the programs we have developed will be effective and our members will benefit from strong direction. As you know, we have given a share of ownership to Robby Moudy and made him President and we are confident that he is the right person to take the reins. Robby is a man of impeccable character and is hard working and dedicated to growing our association at the club level. He shares our commitment to our affiliates and our vision that they must lead the way to our success. We have redefined our programs and ammended our rule book to bring our CSA clubs into the fold at the end of this year, with as little change for them as possible. We wish our clubs to have as much freedom as possible to decide for themselves how to best meet the needs of their members. We also believe this makes us unique as an association, as we follow the American ideal of freedom for creating the best opportunity for all.

We will continue to offer club incentives through our new member reimbursement program and our club cup. Most importantly, Robby will be working closely with each affiliate and will be working hard to bring in new clubs. We encourage all of our affiliates to feel free to contact Robby with any questions or suggestions they may have. I want to thank club owners Brian Venem and Michelle Kinney and also

Jim Wallace, who have all reached out in support during this challenging time and have shown that the MSA is much bigger than just Ann and I and our immediate staff. It takes a village to triumph over difficulty and we are blessed to have such dedicated and helpful members who care so deeply about our association and its members.

Since becoming an owner, Robby has also been subjected to public, personal attacks. You can all help to dampen this effort. The next time you are approached by anyone who wishes to persuade you with personal attacks about MSA owners, keep in mind that they have an agenda that has been exposed and we will continue the process of enforcing our legal rights, which we hope will put an end to destructive activities that have been occurring since before we took over the MSA. Do not allow yourself to be manipulated into believing that competition is not good for our sport. If they want to brag about membership numbers, simply ask them to share the numbers from their checks and they will stop bragging.

Our focus is on new membership, not winning over selfish and destructive people who are intent on cutting off their own noses to spite their faces. It may surprise you to hear that we are not concerned with being the biggest mounted shooting association. Bigger does not equal better. We believe we are the best association and we have the venues, programs and leadership to prove it. Our agenda is to benefit our members, before ourselves. Ann and I have been very fortunate in life and we can place profit as a lower priority, in order to do what is best for our members. As an owner, Robby also commits significant time and energy without financial compensation. No other association is led by those who will make such assurances.

In case anyone wants to dispute that we are the most generous association in the history of mounted shooting, I will leave you with this photo with Chad Little, showing his total earnings for one year of competing with the MSA. Anyone claiming they are doing something new in mounted shooting, should educate themselves on our history of leadership. The 2015-2016 season will once again prove that our members and affiliates have the best opportunities available in mounted shooting.

I imagine that like myself, you have all tired of the drama created by others to disrupt our unmatched efforts on behalf of mounted shooting and I want everyone to turn their backs on the haters and turn their horses loose and shoot balloons and have fun with their friends and families. The best way to stop the sabotage is to turn a deaf ear to it and it will become quiet. Let's all focus our attention on what the MSA is all about: *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Victory!*

*Rick & Ann Pihl*

CEO and Chairman of the Board  
Mounted Shooters of America



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all of our wonderful sponsors!

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