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## Montalbano helps develop straight-shooters

By David Dirks  
For the Times Herald-Record

Carmine Montalbano is a rare breed these days. For more than 38 years, Montalbano has devoted much of his outdoor life to teaching kids how to safely use firearms and become better competition shooters.

Through his activities with scouting and working with the Middletown Pistol & Rifle Association, he and his fellow outdoorsmen have touched the lives of literally hundreds of young adults. There's no doubt that it's a labor of love for him and the many others who give their time to these types of programs.

Since its inception in 1995, this Middletown club has distinguished itself from the crowd by fostering some exceptional shooters. For one thing, the club has five expert shooters in the four-position National Rifle Association small-bore .22-caliber rifle. Young adults like Patrick Murray, Mike Ieradi, Matt Van Vorst, Crystal Comfort and Paul Gallo are great role models for other kids today.

There are several former members of the Middletown Pistol & Rifle Association who have gone on to even greater national achievements. Todd Moisset, formerly with the team, joined the U.S. Navy and is currently shooting for the Navy team. According to Montalbano, on his first outing, Moisset won the coveted Admirals Cup and also has won several interservice competitions. He will compete in the U.S. championship later this year.

The team currently has 13 young members and always has room for more. For information, call Montalbano at 845-355-2102.

### Clem strikes back

It was inevitable that someone, somewhere, would decide that they didn't like my little tale of the deer-baiting adventures of Clem. Now, if you haven't figured it out, Clem is a fictional character I use when I feel the need to deal with ethical issues related to outdoor sports.

Indeed, the majority of hunters pursue their game ethically and legally. As usual, it's only the few who can give the outdoor sports a bad name by engaging in practices that are illegal and unethical.

So Clem decided to lash back at ethics and legalities by writing me a letter in pencil and signed only as "Clem & Ronnie."

The gist of his letter read, "I really thought you turned your column around, but your latest article about Clem should be in the comic section. ... There are too many deer, so what's so bad about baiting? You dressed up in camo and probably used some kind of call to get your two birds. Next time, dress up in orange and find those birds – get some exercise. Give the poor birds a chance."

Clem is referring to the turkeys in the column photo I shot last fall. Once again, Clem is on the wrong side of the fence. The fact is, those two turkeys were spotted in a flock. I used no turkey calling to sight or call them in. It took considerable skill to get close enough to those birds to get a shot. By the way, I shot both birds with one shot from a 20 gauge. Top that, Clem. And I did it legally and ethically.

Clem, you just don't get it. Baiting game during hunting season is illegal in New York state. I personally consider it unethical, as well. The problem isn't us, it's you, Clem.

### Upcoming events

Ducks Unlimited and Catskill Pheasantry are hosting their inaugural Sporting Clays Championship from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. This major fund-raising event is full of activities for all ages and abilities. In addition to a barbecue, gun raffles and a live auction, there also will be clay-shooting competitions, a continental power shoot and a host of side games available throughout the day.

Pre-registration for competitive shooting is required.

Contact Catskill Pheasantry for pricing and information at 845-887-4487.

*David Dirks' outdoors column appears Tuesday in the Times Herald-Record. Write to him at P.O. Box 87, Westtown, NY 10998, or via e-mail at dirksoutdoors@hotmail.com.*

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