

Adventures and Events - Travel, Firearms & stories in the west for the American Militiaman

In the last few weeks a few good things have happened that Cathy and I should bring you up to date on.

Heading south to the SAF - Gun Rights Policy Conference

On Thursday September 24, 2015 we headed south, 900+ miles by car, to Phoenix for the Second Amendment Foundation - Gun Rights Policy Conference. For this two day road trip, and the entire week long adventure, I planned to Open Carry my Springfield 1911 in the Fobus paddle holster, leaving the rail mount light at home. On the way down we went past lake Powell and the Glen Canyon Dam. The visitor center there is considered a secure government facility and was prominently posted with the usual federal no guns decals. This was the ONLY security precaution (other than CCTV monitoring), there was no security check point, metal detectors, etc.

Continuing on, the SAF three day event is held the last week of September every year and it is free to attendees - all they have to do is register in advance and then show up. Next year it is in Florida. The 70 speakers, to the 600 attendees, included many well known names and even a few personal friends like; Jeff Knox, Phil Van Cleave, John Lott, Alan Korwin and many more.

There were a few take-away concepts from this event. First, You can NOT convince an anti-gun (or anti-freedom) person of the error of their ways based on a technical data argument. They have formed an emotional barrier to any such argument, they know in their soul that they are right and it is their DUTY to correct the actions of the pro-gun forces of EVIL. They know it is their moral duty to remove guns from society and to restrain gun owners by any means, by hook and by crook and by force if necessary. One example of this attitude is the current practice of "Swatting" an open carrier, calling 911 to report a "person with a gun", often with inflated or misleading descriptions such as "brandishing" or "threatening". The hope is that the SWAT team will show up and gun down the offender. This has happened a few times in the recent past.

So, to counter the emotions, turn their argument around. If they say, "if it only saves one child", we say, "I will protect myself, and possibly many others - I may save many lives". Remind them that to prevent anyone from defending their own life, or that of another, is an Immoral Act. I can not cite all the anti-emotion arguments, you must look them up for yourself.

The second take-away is that it really is valuable to wave the freedom flag in public, to educate the general population. As an individual you can talk to the curious, or even those with an anti-gun bias, and try to offset some of the negative emotional pollution they have been fed. This seven day open carry excursion started at least a half dozen such conversations.

BTW, a video recording of the conference can be found at;

<<http://politicsandguns.com/saf-gun-rights-policy-conference-2015-video-segments/>>

We stayed at a Sheraton hotel in Phoenix and I carefully studied all the firearm laws for Utah and Arizona for our travel. Both are open carry states (with a few Utah strings)

and I planned to OC most of the time. I called the hotel and inquired of their policy. They said Arizona is a permitless (Constitutional) OC and CCW state, BUT they preferred that I NOT OC in the hotel. Upon arrival I noticed quite a few OC's and talked to them. We all agreed it was the right thing to do and for the next three days it was OC everywhere in Phoenix. I would guess that at least 100 of the 600 attendees were carrying, open or concealed, at least part of the time. For three days the Phoenix Sheraton Hotel was the safest hotel on planet earth.

As a side note, two of the long time MCSM members, Bob Holden and Rose, were in the area for a veterans reunion and we were able to meet up and talk for a few hours. They are doing well.

On the road - sight seeing as we head back north - Meteor Crater, Arizona

I had the urge to visit the Arizona Meteor Crater, just a few miles west of Winslow. Some strange force was drawing me in ;-). It is a private operation with a substantial visitors facility - and a BIG hole in the ground. The engineer in me forced me to calculate the terminal ballistic energy (at impact) at about 4×10^{16} Joules (about 4000 GW Hours). At the crater visitor center, as usual, I was very careful to look for any firearms information, first on their web site and then at the facility. None was found so we walked in and bought our admission tickets. The ticket taker eventually spotted my sidearm and called me aside to inform me of their policy. Being a facility with families and children present, they do not allow carrying firearms. A manager was summoned and he repeated the explanation and request. That was quite a lame excuse, and after a short discussion about not seeing any notices, and if we had known of this policy, we said would not have patronized them, etc. The manager then said to just conceal the sidearm and it would be OK. A clear example of changing "policy" to suit the situation. So I pulled my very light weight shirt tail out to ALMOST cover the holster and leaving a huge bulge from the 1911 grip at my hip. In a true CCW state that would almost certainly have gotten some attention for not properly concealing. The nice part of the rules in a Constitutional Carry state with both OC and CCW is that such inadvertent "Flashing" of a firearm no longer exists. We walked around without any further comment for several hours.

Grand Canyon

Next up (down) was a visit to the Grand Canyon south rim. We stopped briefly in Williams, Arizona to fuel up. Williams is the town where the last section of Route 66 was replaced by I-40. Continuing North into the Grand Canyon Village, we called to find a room and got the "manager's special", a non air conditioned room, but we did get a fan and the night time temperature dropped to the 40's. Just to set the scene, we stayed at the El Tovar lodge, a very nice 30's era park lodge. It is run by Xanterra lodges with whom I have had some firearm discussions about firearm policy in their lodges in Yellowstone. I know they have a no-guns policy but on entering I saw no signs. Just to be on the safe side I pulled the shirt tail and did a "crater" CCW routine.

We checked in and then looked around for late dinner prospects and noticed a No Guns sign at the bar (featuring a nice looking 1911 in a red circle with slash) and some AZ code language. Seeing the bar posted (as I expected) but the building not posted to my notice, we moved on and had bags delivered to our room. We had met the bell man staff member earlier checking on the fan for our room. I asked him about the hotel firearm

policy (while still Crater Carrying) and he confirmed the no guns attitude but then just said “don’t ask”, to which I said “OK, I won’t”. Smiles all around. BTW, on close examination there was a small red and black printed no-guns sign on a transparent background on the glass of the front door. The door was propped open and the sign was not visible to someone walking in and not easily visible even with the door closed because of its transparent nature.

The bellman also told us where the local informal shooting range was, complete with targets of opportunity like old washing machines. I said thanks, but we did not stop by to do any shooting, I was getting the impression that it was inside the park. We had a recent incident here within Grand Teton Park at Cattleman’s Bridge where a fisherman fired a sidearm to scare off a Griz with two cubs. There were no injuries and no one saw or heard the incident but he decided the right thing to do was to contact the rangers. Wrong move - he now has a date with a judge. Cathy fishes there often and I am in overwatch with the 1911 for just that reason. Her bear spray is somewhere in her fishing vest, but not too handy. I carried in the Grand Canyon park one full day walking the rim of the canyon without further comment.

Back through Utah

Next up was to travel back through Utah and stopping at some of the parks in the south of the state. Cathy wanted to visit the Kodachrome State Park, a little visited area within the Grand Staircase park. I carried up and down and over and around a rather rugged trail for about 2 miles without incident. We returned to the park entrance station and stopped when we met some of the fellow hikers, from Pennsylvania no less. Cathy talked about fishing and one of them commented on my sidearm. We had a casual conversation about carrying firearms and the Utah regulations. FYI, without a Utah CCW license one can open carry ONLY if the firearm is at least two steps away from being fired, as with an empty chamber. I carry with the hammer down on an empty chamber as my preferred extra secure method. Technically I would have to - release the holster thumb break, draw from the holster, cock the hammer (weak hands make this step necessary), rack the slide to load the chamber, and then I am ready to fire. I guess you could argue that is four steps to fire.

Two mandatory shopping stops were made near Salt Lake City, at Costco and Ikea. Cathy convinced me to not OC in the stores, but after that at a nearby motel I was back in the usual mode without incident.

Back in Wyoming we stopped in Afton for lunch at a well known sea food restaurant. I noticed the “firearms welcome” sign behind the cash register and knew I was home. The sign was a gun in a red circle WITHOUT a slash and the text, “Guns are welcome on premises, please keep all weapons holstered unless need arises. In such case, judicious marksmanship is appreciated”. That about sums up freedom. Oh yes, to illustrate the general security from crime in Wyoming, just inside the front door of the restaurant is a large framed display of an original Masters Golf Tournament Green Jacket with about 15 original autographs and other memorabilia. How it got there is a long story, but a quick check on the internet indicates that it may be worth several \$10,000's, and it is just hanging on the wall. We only



lock our doors and the safe when we will be away from home for some time. That is the polar opposite from Maryland.

Considering the recent Oregon school shooting, I must point out one item from the Gun Rights Policy Conference. The Buckeye (Ohio) Firearms Foundation has a program called FASTER. Details are at; <http://fastersaveslives.org/>. They provide a three day educational seminar to teach school personnel some major defense and emergency techniques. The training includes everything from crisis intervention to trauma first aid to armed intervention in a school shooting. The Oregon incident reports from survivors recount how the shooter had to reload while the students stood still waiting to be shot. What does that tell you about the knowledge and ability of young folks to react to a dangerous situation? When a single gunman confronts many victims, especially when he pauses to reload, there should have been numerous objects and persons flying toward him to bring him down and stop the attack. Are our youngsters taught from an early age by being given emotional stories and made ignorant and afraid? We started this adventure story with that discussion, about the emotional propaganda fed to the ignorant and how it must be corrected by us.

That is why Cathy and I are going to be teaching and coaching about 30 Boy Scouts, and their parents, in Riflery next weekend, 10/10/2015

Get informed, get active and go out and teach.

The American Militia knows this. <http://mcsm.org/ammilitia01.html>

Bob and Cathy Culver
Safe and still active in Wyoming