



# VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

Est. 1983 (A Not-for-Profit Organization)

NRA Affiliate Number G8162



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## February 2016 VGCA Newsletter



🔴 **VGCA Meeting of January 21, 2016:** VGCA member Tor Johnson gave an outstanding and informative presentation on Spanish Firearms of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. His well-organized and lively talk was compelling and comprehensive and he displayed many examples from his extensive personal collection. While touching on minor manufacturers, he concentrated on the history and products of the big three Spanish firearms firms, Astra, Llama and Star, from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to their recent demise in the 1990's due, in large part, to changes in US law. Many of the firearms manufactured by these three companies were both innovative and copied the best features of other countries' arms, including the venerable U.S. Model 1911. Some of the innovations included a semi-auto pistol designed for cavalry that could cocked with one hand and the Astra 900, a select fire pistol that could go full auto. Tor also touched upon details that are important to collectors, such the Spanish marking systems and how to read the dates of manufacture from the marks on the guns, as well as how to determine the gun's caliber (on Star pistols) from the model designation. He also touched upon ammunition in the guns - the Spanish 9mm Largo (9x23) or Bergman, as well as the 9mm Luger, .32, .380 and .45 calibers. Tor's masterful presentation

concentrated on the three main families of pistols, Astra, Llama and Star. The Astra family started in the 1920's with the Campo Giro, a big blowback design that was improved as the Astra 400 that was adopted by the Spanish military until replaced by the Astra 600, which was used during the Civil War. The Germans in Spain during the Civil War liked it so much that Germany imported it for their own military during World War 2. The Astra 300 a small version of the 400 was popular with the German Luftwaffe. He continued the review of Astra pistols by covering the Astra 800 Condor (9mm Luger), the Astra 3000, Astra 4000, the Astra Constable (made to look like the popular Walther PPK while half the price of a Walther, and the Astra A60. He then talked about the modern Astra Model A-75 (a compact version of a SIG .45), Model A-80 (designed as a carry pistol, and the final Astra Model 100. Tor then covered the Llama family, which included the Llama Especial and the Llama IX-D, which were copies of the Colt Model 1911. He then went on to cover the Star family of pistols, including the Star Model 30, an innovative design that included the latest and best features of other pistol designs. It was a durable, double action pistol designed for the military which, unfortunately did not sell. Its features included all-steel construction, double, stack magazine, ambidextrous controls, an inside slide rail, de-cocker, and adjustable sights. The last gasp of the Star company in the 1990's was the Firestar, an improved Model 30



developed for the civilian market in .45 caliber. Although defensive and military semi-auto pistols occupied the bulk of Tor's comprehensive presentation, he also covered such arms as the Star Model F, a .22 caliber target pistol and the Astra and Llama revolvers. He described Spanish rifles made by the firms, including the was Destroyer Carbine in 9mm Largo, and the Star Model 110, a semi-automatic rifle in .22 caliber. Tor finished his superlative presentation by covering Astra shotguns.

❖ **January Business:** The business meeting was very short this month no new members were inducted though Tor introduced many guests including family and friends. Shannon also gave a Treasurers report, no major expenses.

❖ **Upcoming February 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** Marc Gorelick will present a video from the Historic Breechloading Smallarms Association (HBSA) of their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Machine Gun Demonstration. You will see 27 historic full-automatic (and a few semi-automatic) arms being shot, most from other countries and many of which are rarely seen in the United States. They range from the 5-barrel hand-operated .45 caliber Nordenfelt Naval Machine Gun through the weapons of World War 2, Korea and Vietnam, to modern times, including one sub-machine gun that was so new at the time of the shoot that it had not yet entered mass production. So come, enjoy the pizza and socializing with fellow club members, discuss the upcoming VGCA show, and watch a fascinating film.

### Acting President's Comments

We managed to dodge the snow for the January meeting and I want to thank new member Tor Johnson for an outstanding program on 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish firearms. It was very comprehensive, well organized and, to borrow Dave Litchfield's words, a superb presentation. Who knows what might happen weather-wise on February 25 (going back to our normal 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday schedule) when Marc Gorelick will be our featured speaker. Be sure to check our website for any cancellation notices if there is a possibility for nasty road conditions.

Those who have attended the last two meetings have noticed some new security measures in place at NRA. The NRA security staff will issue a key card to the first VGCA member that arrives for the meeting (in exchange for a driver's license). The card must be swiped in the elevator for it to function and make each trip down to the conference room. This requires the person with the card to remain in the lobby to let arriving members and guests go to the lower level. No card is needed to make the return trip up to the lobby. Upon my arrival (usually around 6 p.m.), I can take over the card duty in the lobby although it will be appreciated if someone can relieve me prior to 7 p.m. so I might get a share of any remaining food downstairs. After the meeting starts at 7 p.m. there will be no one in the lobby to assist members using the elevator. Moral of story: Don't be late!

We are still looking for speakers for the balance of our 2016 season. As incentive we are now offering a \$50 honorarium to members willing to share their knowledge and collecting interests. We have some talented people that can help with any technical support if needed. Think about collaborating with another member if you don't want to go it alone. That can also be said of display tables at our show. Display tables are still free for VGCA members.

The March show is almost upon us and we will have an update on table sales during our business meeting. We will also be looking to sign up volunteers for security and Friday set-up. There will be flyers available for distribution. Please lend a hand if you can. Many hands make light work for everyone. I hope to see you on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Bring a friend!

-Jim Burgess

### Other News!

❖ **Request for March Show Security:** Any and all interested in helping with the March Show please contact our new Head of Security, John Satanek at [jsatanek@comcast.net](mailto:jsatanek@comcast.net). We need security volunteers for all days.

✪ **Request for 2016 Speakers:** We still need a few more speakers for the 2016 calendar year. This is an opportunity to share your knowledge and passion for collecting guns. As was mentioned in the President's comments the Executive Committee has approved memorandums of \$50 for members and \$100 for non-members who give qualifying presentations starting with January 2016. Presentations need not be elaborate and may be put on by a group of people if you desire. Please contact any board member if you would like to present for the upcoming year. Contact information can be found on our website.

✪ **Continued Call of Articles for the Website:** We are making a call for articles for the website. They must be about guns or gun collecting not shooting sports or hunting. No political articles will be used. Articles may be about modern or antique firearms and may be historical and/or technical in nature. Detailed guidelines will be available on the website. Please fact check and proofread your own work. All articles may be submitted to Marc or Richard at [web@vgca.net](mailto:web@vgca.net). Official Guidelines for articles may be found on the education page of the VGCA site.

✪ **President Obama / CNN Town Hall Meeting:** Shannon Zeigler gave a briefing about President Obama's recent Town Hall Meeting, televised on CNN, which he and fellow board member TJ Parmele attended. Shannon related that the meeting was very well organized and scripted with the majority of the crowd being in favor of gun-control and the questions being pre-planned. TJ added that President Obama mentioned gun trusts, saying that criminals were getting guns through gun trusts. A lively discussion then ensued among the members present.

### Show and Tell



Member #1 showed a Star Model F .22 caliber pistol. According to the member it is a reliable, well-built gun, perfect to keep in a glove compartment or tackle box.

Member #2 showed a Star Model S in .380 caliber. It was a Spanish Air Force pistol from about 1946 and came in the original box with a magazine and cleaning rod.

Member #3 presented a beautiful Madsen Model 1947 bolt action military rifle. This was considered the last bolt action military rifle adopted and issued. It was designed for, and marketed to, the third world, despite there being uncounted numbers of new and surplus semi-automatic and



automatic rifles being supplied to developing countries. Although it was offered in many variations and calibers, there was only one sale – 6,000 to the Colombian Navy in 1958. This particular example of the Madsen, called the Colombian Model 1958, was .30-06 caliber and came with a bayonet that numbered to the rifle. The member stated that his rifle was a good shooter, being accurate and having a lighter than expected recoil because of its thick butt pad and flash hider.



Member #4 related an anecdote about a rare Spanish Navy Astra pistol that came into his possession and which he sold to a noted Astra collector and expert who had written a major reference on Astras.

Member #5 displayed a Star Model B that he wasn't quite sure was correct because of the barrel and asked for information about it. Tor Johnson and other Spanish collectors in the audience looked at his gun and assisted him.



**Upcoming Events and Shows**

PLEASE NOTE: There are sometimes changes in schedules by gun show promoters or errors on websites. Members are strongly encouraged to verify before driving to a show. These dates have been published as of this writing, but are not guaranteed. If you have a favorite show you would like to tell other members about, please email the Editor with a short review, including the show content, i.e., modern, new, collectible or antique, and I will include it as room permits.

**Yellow** = Collector organizations.

**VIRGINIA 2015**

- February 20-21, 2016 – Harrisonburg, VA – Rockingham County Fairgrounds – *Showmasters*
- March 5-3, 2016 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Convention Center – *SGK*
- **March 12-13, 2016 – Manassas, VA – Prince William County Fairgrounds – *V.G.C.A Show***
- March 19-20, 2016 – Hampton, VA – Convention Center – *SGK*
- March 19-20, 2016 – Richmond, VA – Richmond Raceway – *SGK*
- April 9-10, 2016 – Fishersville, VA – Augusta Expoland – *C&E Gun Shows*
- April 22-24, 2016 – Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *The Nationals Gun Show*

**MARYLAND 2015**

- **April 30-May 1, 2016 – Timonium, MD – Timonium Fairgrounds – *Timonium***

**PENNSYLVANIA 2015**

- **April 1-3, 2016 – Philadelphia, PA – Philadelphia Expo Center – *PAGCA Antique Gun Show***
- April 9-10, 2016 - Allentown, PA – PA Rodeway Inn Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- April 16-17, 2016 - Lebanon, PA – Lebanon Valley Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*

The e-mail address for any Newsletter related matters or a submission is [Newsletter@vgca.net](mailto:Newsletter@vgca.net). Feel free to email items for inclusion in the newsletter. For changes of address or non-receipt of the newsletter, either via email or the mailed hard-copy, please contact Larry Hare. v/r Richard Pripeton, VGCA Newsletter Editor

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**Membership Renewal Request (AMR-NL-2016)  
Larry Hare, P.O. Box 102, Afton, VA 22920-0102**

VGCA annual membership requires yearly renewal and payment of \$30.00. Life membership is still only \$150.00. If you have paid your 2015 dues, you may upgrade to life membership during the 2016 dues cycle for \$150 (only \$120 over the cost of annual membership.) Please complete and return this renewal form with your payment. Indicate Annual, Life or that you do not wish to renew your membership by checking the appropriate box below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Enclosed is \$30.00 for CY 2016 VGCA annual membership dues.
- I wish to upgrade to Life membership in VGCA. Enclosed is \$150.00.
- Remove my name from the VGCA membership rolls.

Make all checks payable to VGCA (NO CASH PLEASE). If you have any questions contact Larry Hare, Membership Chair at (540) 946-2050 or by email at [LaurenceHare@gmail.com](mailto:LaurenceHare@gmail.com).