

# Girl Scouts Highest Award Goes to Shotgunner Larkin Henkel



*By Peggy Tartaro,  
Executive Editor*

**As part of her Gold Award project, Larkin Henkel discussed available shotgun games as well as basic safety rules.**

The Girl Scouts' Gold Award is often compared to Boy Scouting's Eagle Scout designation. Only about 5% of Girl Scouts are eligible for the program, which is open only to Girl Scouts in high school.

The criteria for the award vary, but it takes serious effort to achieve the Gold Award, which challenges participants to "change their corner of the world" with a sustainable project, and leads to college scholarship eligibility.

Larkin Henkel, of Coeur d'Alene, ID, received her Gold Award for a shooting program in her high school, Lake City High School, called Aim for

Empowerment (AFE). After graduation, she started a similar program at North Idaho College, which she attends.

Larkin designed the program to focus on youth and women gaining self-confidence and empowerment through marksmanship and clay target shooting.

Larkin's journey began she was about 10 years old, when every year she and her brother would participate at a youth camp, where shotgunning was one component.

Her brother took up shotgunning with their dad, but eventually tired of it.

Looking to fill out a team, her dad recruited Larkin for his winter league. At 16, Larkin ticked two boxes on the team



**Larkin at a leadership breakfast discusses her Aiming For Empowerment project.**

roster—youth and female—and, her dad reasoned, since the lowest two scores on a team would be dropped, Larkin would allow the team to go forward.

However, as Larkin told me with a laugh, she eventually began outshooting her dad and other teammates, and a shotgun enthusiast was born.

Several years later, as a senior in high school, Larkin, encouraged by her mom, who she says is “her biggest cheerleader,” began her

different types of shotguns, the different games you can shoot with shotguns, and basic gun safety.

The team participated in the SCTP state shoot, and Larkin was high female shooter, winning a custom necklace made from a shotgun shell.

“AFE helped girls and boys gain confidence and feel empowered. I noticed that kids who were shooting for the LCHS team felt really good about themselves when they broke a target,” Larkin wrote in her Gold Award Completion Report.

“I learned a lot about myself during this project,” she said. “I affirmed



**Close-up of Larkin's Girl Scout vest with badges.**

how much I care about shooting and what confidence in target shooting can do for someone beyond the shooting range.”

Her North Idaho College team will be traveling to matches around the state.



**A group of participants at one of the many events Larkin attended in pursuit of her Gold Award. (Larkin is at far right.)**

Larkin acts as a coach on her new college team as well as team member, and is still involved with coaching the high school team as well.

Larkin told me she had recently capped her 12 years of scouting with a life membership so she “will be a Scout forever.”

The entire AFE project took over six months and nearly 140 hours of Larkin's time, but she said, “sharing my passion for shooting,” was the prime motivation behind the project.

Larkin's 12-gauge Beretta 682 Super Sport Over/Under has followed along with her from high school to her newly minted college team.

She is pursuing a degree in Political Science and Criminal Justice and hopes to work in politics, perhaps as a lobbyist on women's issues.

As part of her Gold Award project, she wrote the first Girl Scouts USA Safety Activity Checkpoint guidelines for clay target shooting (currently under review by GSUSA).



**Photo of Larkin taken for use in her college newspaper shows her ready on the line with her Beretta over/under.**

pursuit of the Gold Award.

She first developed the plan for AFE and then began the process of selling it, first to the Student Council which had to approve a new club and then to the school administration.

Working with the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) helped sell the program as did her arrangement with her home club, which agreed to not only host the program but to loan shotguns to the team.

Larkin also had to recruit a team, a process she said involved announcements and posters at school and one-on-one recruiting.

Her program continued with two AFE project presentations where she discussed the

# Another Look Around SHOT 2013

*By Peggy Tartaro,  
Executive Editor*

I haven't been to all 35 SHOT (Shooting, Hunting & Outdoor Trade) Shows, but sometimes it feels that way.

I like to think that, as a veteran of nearly two dozen, that I'm prepared for all the curves the four-day show can throw, but, of course, that's not the case.

The 2013 edition, held in Las Vegas—the show's permanent home these days—featured a wrinkle as soon as we got off the plane: It was 20 degrees warmer in Buffalo than in Sin City—and it stayed chilly the entire week. You could look down the famous Strip and see frozen fountains and red-cheeked tourists. I may not have been a Boy Scout, but I was better prepared than most: the gloves, scarves and extra sweaters that usually get parked in the hotel room were welcome additions to my wardrobe.

Arriving two days early to allow for set-up of the Second Amendment Foundation's booth and to attend the National Shooting Sports Foundation's (NSSF) Media Day also went awry, when a key carton of our display was M.I.A. for 48 hours, finally appearing late Monday morning. So I missed Media Day (but heard it was both awesome

and freezing).

That cut a big hole in my "looking around" time budget, but I still managed to see some new goodies as I made my way to and from the hall and around it as I hustled to appointments.

I was glad to stumble on The New Product Center, downstairs



**Details like the S&W logo fasteners on this cargo skirt with elastic fasteners in the pocket to keep a gun secure make this a practical option for nearly year-round wear.**

(and therefore about as far from the SAF booth as possible) on my second day.

I had made my way down there to say hello to a couple of friends and advertisers, Black Hills Ammunition and AirForce Airguns. Kristi Hoffman was writing business when I got to the Black Hills booth, so I left

her to it. (You can find Sheila Link's profile of Kristi online at [womenandguns.com](http://womenandguns.com)—just search the archives for this feature from a few years back.)

I did get to say hello and spend a few minutes with Yvette Hicks, manager of AirForce Airguns, and we commiserated about all things SHOT before I headed off for a look at a new line of clothing bearing the Smith & Wesson imprimatur.

Chris Goddard and Kim Pingaro walked me through the line, which features a number of women's items. The line officially launched late last year, and its success has prompted an expansion of items available.

A cargo skirt and pants with tactical features are now available in practical fabrics. Details include internal elastics to keep a firearm secure in the front pocket and the garment is available in women's sizes 4-16 in three colors—eclipse (a sort of light denim tone), pumice (near white) and olive, with an MSRP of \$68.

Nice detailing includes S&W branded snap fasteners and the signature use of gun-hammer metal for zipper pulls—discrete and well-done touches that don't advertise the pieces' extra utility.

Women's clothing such as their barn coat feature an antique "calico" print lining. Some of

the men's linings are a very cool "blueprint" of a 1930s Smith revolver. Maybe with some consumer lobbying, the print—either as a lining or maybe a

I turned in my gizmo and got a print out of all the items I was interested in along with contact information on each company. Very handy and high tech!

Since the items were all located in different parts of the huge show, if I didn't make it over to the booths, I could contact the companies afterward.

Although not much of a rifle shooter myself, Thunderbolt Customs' Little Sure Shot Rest caught my eye. First of all—great name! "Little Miss Sure Shot" was the sobriquet given to Annie Oakley, so the product bodes well for riflewomen, although the shotgun was Oakley's go-to piece.

Primarily intended for hunters and to replace shooting sticks, the rest is designed to provide a stable platform for your gun, and, the company says, allows the hunter to relax through the shoulders and stay on target longer.

Little Sure Shot's small size means it is much more portable and apt to go along on trips afield. It will fit in a large pocket.



**The Little Sure Shot Gun Rest is a handy and portable option for days afield.**

scarf—would be available for women.

The Spring line was set to be available beginning in March on S&W's website or at the licensee's, Wild Things, LLC. Currently there are several items online that are sale priced and worth checking out.

After looking through the clothing line, I found the New Product Center in a hallway. Dealers and media were invited to enter the cordoned off area and look over a variety of new items. As a media representative, I was issued one type of gizmo that allowed me to "zap" a counter card above each item and register my interest in it, similar to snapping a QR code with your cellphone. As I exited the center



**Otis Technology's new biodegradable gun cleaner, O12-GP, is now available in four sizes.**



**Looking for a smart gift for a smart phone user for Mother's or Father's Day? Niteize Connect Case is available in several colors and Mossy Oak camo.**

The company's website includes a background video on the product, which is made in the US, and contains a number of images of the product in use, including as a handgun rest for outdoor plinking.

Available in a number of colors, including pink, the Sure Shot Gun rest retails for \$19.95. W&G readers, however, can save \$5.00 if they email [CStockdale@ThunderboltCustoms.com](mailto:CStockdale@ThunderboltCustoms.com) and mention *Women & Guns*.

Otis Technology is a woman-owned gun care product company located in the beautiful Finger Lakes region of New York State.

Their New Product Center offering was the O12-GP Cleaner line. Available in four different sizes, from 2 oz. to 16 oz., the new cleaner line is safe on all gun metals and includes formulae and blends that remove carbon, copper, lead and plastic fouling. The new line is biodegradable and free of ammonia. Prices start at \$11.99 for the 2 oz. size.

O12-GP joins Otis' other cleaners as well as the company's cleaning kits, one of which comes in—you guessed it!—pink.

Otis also has a "Zombie Gun Cleaning System," which they playfully call a "no-brainer" for zombie aficionados and preppers.

SHOT always has a number of products that don't quite fit anyone's definition of "firearms or related," but are made with sportsmen and women

in mind.

One such item was Niteize's Connect Case in Mossy Oak camo for the iPhone 5s. Since I'm still learning how to use my \*&^\*^ version 4, it may be a while before I need this, but it looked like a nifty and dependable phone case and would make a nice gift as we head to graduation, Mother's and Father's Day season.

Made of high grade, shatterproof Lexan® polycarbonate, the Connect Case for iPhone 5 is slim, lightweight, durable, and practical. It offers serious protection from everyday wear and tear, dependable shock-absorption, and a unique design that keeps your iPhone's features accessible at all times. The innovative flex-hinge design



**The Transporter messenger-style bag from Designer Concealed Carry is a larger size that accomodates a laptop or tablet. It has a dedicated gun holster, shown in detail at right. Shown is a prototype—it ships with green canvas.**



makes insertion and removal from the case quick and easy. Included with the case is the removable Connect Clip, so you can conveniently attach your phone to pockets, straps, or belts; a carry clip; and a custom sized, anti-fingerprint clear screen protector.

In addition to the Mossy Oak version, it comes in a half dozen colors, which does, of course, include pink, although the company has tagged the color as “cranberry.” MSRP is \$34.95.

Meeting up with people at SHOT, even with an appointment in place, is always something of a challenge. It’s easy to run over on time with a previous appointment and even easier to get distracted as you make your way from Point A to Point B.

Since, as I mentioned, I didn’t get to Media Day, I connected with W&G writers who attended whenever I could. Carolee Boyles and I actually got to sit in the booth and discuss upcoming stories. I used my somewhat limited stalking skills to track down former contributor Gila Hayes across a crowded hotel buffet: I spied her husband, Marty, and followed him back to their table. Diane Walls and her husband, Tom, were well met in a parking garage, although they did later stop by the booth.

Diane included one of Designer Concealed Carry’s bags in her round-up on Page 12. I liked their big Transporter model, which looks like a high end messenger style tote.

The 13.5x12x3 bag in rustic finish brown leather with a canvas flap definitely does not

look like a gun carry purse. The padded interior divider separates and protects tablet or laptop from everything else and the 2” wide cotton webbing strap with 65 inch length adjusts from shoulder to cross body. The patent pending removable holster adjusts to fit all sizes of handguns. Inside features include: zippered pocket, two open pockets, slim pocket for pens, slots for cards, key hook, stretchy loops secure baton or flashlight, pepper spray, spare magazines. The MSRP is \$279.

I carry a large purse and have a tendency to put a lot in it—one of my pre-SHOT rituals is cleaning the darn thing out for less weight and a smoother interaction with TSA. But I defer to the experts on concealed carry purses—we’ve run a lot of stories on this method, and all the experts agree you will sacrifice some time to this mode of carry.

It seems to me, then, that this larger size is most useful for transport and to insure you have your gun with you—the added weight of the myriad items in such a large bag, including a tablet, would require serious adjustment to insure you could draw if need be.

Since larger bags are in style these days—and just so darn handy—I’d be interested in hearing from readers who are using a larger concealed carry bag as to the adjustments they’ve made. You can drop me a line or email me at [waguns@verizon.net](mailto:waguns@verizon.net).

As we continue throughout the year, we’ll be bringing a number of other items first seen at SHOT.

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## From the Editor

The urge to fix things, to make them right, is basic human nature. From the ill-advised lunge for the spilling cup of hot coffee to the consoling hug to a contrite child, we try to correct mistakes and move forward.

But unintended consequences are possible, and even likely. As we instinctively reach out to right the cup of coffee, it's possible to make matters worse—to ruin an antique tablecloth instead of a linoleum floor, or to burn the hand.

In the two months following the Newtown, CT, school shooting, there has been a lot of well-meaning lunging for solutions, for answers and for a surety that it won't happen again.

We know, intellectually, that “never again” is impossible. The evidence is pretty clear: scientifically, historically and even intrinsically—we know that horror is repeatable.

Many of us in the gun rights community, myself included, have spent those weeks talking to others. Certainly I can't remember an incident that provoked so many media calls, from around the world. I've also talked to friends and family about it and to other gunowners, notably at this year's SHOT Show.

As editor of this magazine, some of the calls I get are slightly different than others fielded by Second Amendment Foundation staff. And I'm profoundly grateful that others, chiefly SAF Founder Alan Gottlieb, have taken on

the really ugly media jobs, with appearances on *Hardball* and *Piers Morgan Tonight*, to name a few of the more prominent lion's dens.

But in talking to media, even when the subject moves away from mass murder and on to women gunowners generally, there still seems to be a disconnect between what people know to be true and what they would like to be true.

In this case most people know there was no law in place that would have stopped the carnage at Sandy Hook Elementary and that it is highly unlikely any new law, or set of laws, would have made a difference, either.

Short of door-to-door confiscation of all guns and an equally unworkable (and un-American) incarceration of everyone even remotely suspected of being mentally unbalanced, the good and innocent will always be at the mercy of the criminal or the insane.

That does not mean that we can't work for solutions that lessen the probabilities of such a horror being repeated, as long as we keep in mind that is the best we are doing.

At SHOT, any number of people, most who are in the firearms industry at some level, asked again and again, what can we do? And they also asked, what can we expect?

The Tuesday the show opened, attendees from New York were reeling from the passage of a draconian set of laws shoved through the legislature by Gov.

Andrew Cuomo and his willing partners in the Assembly and Senate (See related news story in this issue).

That no one who voted for the law fully understood it and that a few arms were twisted pretty hard to accomplish it, is par for the course in politics, and in New York State in particular.

Cuomo is on record as having wanted to be “the first” to “do something about Sandy Hook,” and, while I am no fan of his, I give him credit for the intelligence to know he was doing neither.

The same might be said of Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, who introduced a bill in the Senate with many of the same provisions that she knows—with absolute certainty—didn't work when they were rammed through in the 1994 Crime Bill, the so-called assault weapons portion of which sunset ten years later after proving only that it had no effect on crime or crime rates.

Now big city mayors, like New York's Michael Bloomberg and Chicago's Rahm Emmanuel want to bully firearms manufacturers out of business because they hold the power of the purse—in the form of pension funds invested in private equity funds that are often invested, in part, in firearms businesses, and in forcing manufacturers to do their bidding or risk losing lucrative police contracts..

All of this reminds me of nothing so much as the classic short story, *The Lottery*, by

Shirley Jackson.

First published in *The New Yorker* magazine in 1948, the story is still studied in school and anthologized 60 years after it was written.

Jackson's story starts with preparations for the title lottery, in a small town, where we gradually meet most of the townspeople, including the Hutchinson family.

There's a peculiar sense of foreboding about the event about to take place, but readers can't quite put a finger on what it is.

The phrase "Lottery in June, corn will be heavy soon," is repeated by townsfolk.

It is nearly at the end of the story that we learn what the lottery really is: families draw lots and the "winning" (or "losing"—we don't quite know at this point) family then draws lots until one person in the family is chosen.

The Hutchinson's mother, Tessie, is the holder of the ultimate ticket, and she is then stoned to death by her fellow citizens, and even her immediate family.

The lottery of the title is revealed to be a quasi-religious sacrificial ritual that unites a group of people into a mob mentality that, even as it knows it is acting irrationally, goes ahead in hopes of a good corn harvest and because they have always done so.

It is a shocking and provocative story whose lasting power is its utter plausibility.

When Jackson wrote the story, lotteries were not as ubiquitous as they are now, with nearly every state having some sort of "dollar and a dream" scheme and many participating in multi-

state events like PowerBall and MegaMillions.

In addition to studying the mechanics of a well-crafted story, *The Lottery* is also used as a jumping off point for a larger, wider philosophical discussion. Idealistic high schoolers aver that they would never act that way, and that such an incident would be impossible in their communities.

But, history is replete with examples of "just following orders," and similar phrases used to justify carnage, wars and genocide.

We are now faced with the specter of a different sort of lottery—no less superstitious, no less illogical and irrational, in which gunowners are sacrificed on an altar of "if it saves one life."

Everyone in the country was horrified and sickened by Newtown, and gunowners were no exception. I nearly quoted Shylock's famous "if you prick us, do we not bleed?" from Shakespeare a few times, but instead, when talking with reporters, stressed that we are all part of the community and no less parents, aunts, sisters, citizens because we are gunowners.

In fact, gunowners have a lot to contribute to the debate, because we are already armed with facts. In talking to friends who are not gunowners, I was struck at how seriously misinformed otherwise intelligent people could be. Just because something is given a literal bad name ("assault weapons"), doesn't mean it functions any differently than another gun. Just because "they're so readily available," doesn't mean it's true and just because "we

have to do something" springs to everyone's lips, doesn't mean that "something" is the first thing—the first lunge for the hot coffee cup—that comes to mind.

One non-gunowning friend said to me, "well, you have to admit the one thing all these incidents have in common is guns."

To which, I said, yes, they did, but the most recent mass murders also had something else in common: isolated and damaged young men, most of whom were known to have had some sort of problem. That's true in the Aurora movie theatre shooting, in the Virginia Tech shooting, and in the Arizona supermarket shooting that wounded former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

I also asked my friend if she was prepared for confiscation, and if she was, how she thought that would be accomplished.

Because, I pointed out, guns are generally pretty well made things, and the ones already legally owned would, with proper care, last several lifetimes.

I don't know that I changed her mind, but I may have altered what her perception of "something" to be done was.

At that's the point: if we don't truly discuss issues, even big difficult issues, and bring to the discussion our expertise and our personal credibility, we are doomed to be either the one the rocks are thrown at or part of the mindless mob.



*Peggy Tartaro,*  
*Executive Editor*