

## Just for fun, but safety first for shooting

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By Contributor

It was a day of shooting for a group of friends who spent Saturday afternoon at the Quarry Ridge Hunt Club near Lena. Posing for a picture with unloaded guns, from left are, Leah McNett-Archer, Jane Lethlean, Teri Hovey, Gina Boop and Kim Boldt.

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It was Ladies Day Out this past weekend in Lena and, while many women took to the crafts, my friends and I spent the afternoon with a gathering of our own choosing – we took to the shooting range.

I have a great group of friends and we try to get together for fun and this time we decided to try something different. The discussion came up about a month ago. I was having dinner at The Rafters in Lena with my friends Kim, Leah and Teri. It came to our attention about the Quarry Ridge Hunt Club, near Lake Le-Aqua-Na. The club is owned by Gary Vehmeier, who also owns The Rafters. Cory Nelson, who manages the hunt club helped us set up a day and then all it took was a couple of phone calls to get Gina involved.

We showed up at the club and were greeted by Gary, Cory and Gary's son, Ross. They took us into the lodge, where gift bags were waiting for us with all the things we needed for the day — safety glasses, ear plugs and candy to sweeten the deal.

This was about gentlemen showing us ladies how to have fun and they started it off with some cheese, crackers and hot spiced cider. Next came the talk about awareness and gun safety. What we had was a lesson in weaponry, to respect the guns were we to use and above all be aware of our surroundings – keep it safe.

The group included myself, Leah McNett-Archer, Kim Boldt, Gina Boop and Teri Hovey. We have all been friends for years and have traveled to some pretty neat destinations, but I have to say, the shooting range became high on my list of favorite things to do with my friends.

I have shot a gun before – the beauty of having older brothers – but nothing prepared me for being competitive on the shooting range.

The guys had guns lined up, all unloaded, and the target sites were set against a beautiful backdrop of prairie grass. The countryside around Lake Le-Aqua-Na is like no other and the day could not have been any better, as far as temperature was concerned.

We all stepped tentatively toward the guns and, two at a time, we stepped up to plate. Instructions were serious and no gun was loaded until it was time to shoot target. The guns were handed to us with safeties on and once we finished a round, the safeties were put back on before returning gun to the handler.

We had experiences at shooting hand guns, rifles and shot gun and the real challenge was shooting skeet. I did OK and have my target to prove my skills. I think Leah and Kim were the best crack shots, but in the end, it was about camaraderie and safety.

While I never have had a fascination with guns, I have always wanted to target shoot to see what it was like. Gary Vehmeier and his crew showed us girls a great day on the range. When the shooting was over, we walked through the prairie grass before returning to the lodge for food and drinks.

It was a perfect "Ladies Day Out" for me and my friends and in the end, I learned I was not a bad shot — only Leah did it better.

Quarry Ridge Hunt Club is two miles north of Lena. This is a quality habitat stocked with birds and while the birds were safe with us, they are there for anyone who wants to hunt for game. For information, call Cory Nelson at (815) 541-4566.

*Jane Lethlean is no Annie Oakley, but had fun on the range. She can be reached at [jlethlean@journalstandard.com](mailto:jlethlean@journalstandard.com).*