

Airgun Hobbyist

America's Airgun Magazine

Auction of
Cecil Whitesides
Airgun Collection



Tenth Edition
Blue Book



Umarex Morph



Benjamin
EB-22

Volume Two Number Three
July, August, September 2012



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Editorial

Welcome to this issue of Airgun Hobbyist Magazine. This issue includes more content on topics our subscribers said they wanted to see. This includes articles ranging from a squirrel hunting article by Jim Chapman to a gas ram versus spring article from Rick Eutsler

There will be articles about hunting in future issues of Airgun Hobbyist Magazine. Hunting and pest elimination are part of airgunning. Since hunting is about more than just how high the game can be stacked and to honor our war veterans who have told us that they have seen enough blood and killing in their day, the hunting articles will take the story up until the point that the trigger is pulled.

Our readers have also mentioned that they'd like to see the additional articles by professional airgun writers. We have contacted several writers and hope to add them in future issues.

We would like to thank you for your compliments such as this from Jim R. in Wisconsin "Thanks for a great magazine!"

Keep the comments and suggestions coming and tell fellow airgunners about Airgun Hobbyist Magazine.

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Airgun Hunting: Starting with Squirrels

by Jim Chapman

Airgun Hobbyist has been our only dedicated air gunning magazine in the USA for a few years now, and one that I've enjoyed, supported, and written the occasional article for. Early on there was a conscious editorial decision to steer away from the topic of hunting or pest control, so my previous contributions have been about the guns I use, without going into the details of how they were applied in the field. I was fine with this policy, the editorial direction of any publication has to follow the sensibilities of its readers, and the editorial leadership is responsible for setting the course.

Airgun Hunting

However, at the core I identify myself as a hunter sure airguns are my favorite tool for pursuing game, but it is the hunt that drives me. So when I met up with the owners and editors of Airgun Hobbyist at the recent TOYS THAT SHOOT airgun show in Findlay Ohio, I was pleased and enthusiastic when they asked if I'd write an inaugural hunting article for the magazine. They explained that many of the readers had expressed interest in hunting and they believed it was the right time to approach the subject.

However, they also understood that many readers didn't want to look at graphic pictures of dead animals or game stacked in piles. My personal guidelines have evolved over the years; I have no problem with showing a picture of animals taken, but try to have a reason behind it. It might be that

I want to show that a particular gun, or projectile, or article of gear worked effectively in the field. It might be that I want to show an especially impressive animal or one that I worked hard to take (yes, a trophy photo). But I also believe that describing the techniques and tactics applied, the performance of the gun, and talking about the gear used can be shared without photographs of a dead animal as well. So I will be contributing a few articles in future with the objective of sharing the hunting experience while at the same time understanding that a large number of readers (who are perfectly fine with the legal use of airguns for hunting) don't want to look at graphic photographs. I want the articles to share information on the travel, people, guns, gear, and quarry, an overview of the overall experience.

Hunting regulations vary from State to State, with most allowing pest control, many permitting small game, and a growing number bringing in regulations for predators and big game (with more powerful larger caliber guns). Several grass roots efforts are underway across the country to clarify existing regulations or add new ones to the books, as more local wildlife management agencies come to realize the potential of airguns as valid hunting tools.

Squirrel Hunting with an Airgun

One of my favorite small game hunts with an Airgun is for tree squirrels, in particular the gray and fox squirrels that are found across much of the country. It's been stated that the squirrel is the most popular game animal in America, though with the



As a rule of thumb, gray squirrels tend to spend more time in the trees and fox squirrels spend more time on the ground, though both species can occur in either. While preferring head shots, a chest shot is effective with the right gun and pellets combo.



LEGACY OF THE LEVER ACTION

by Larry Hannusch

In the early 1850's, a talented group of arms inventors began to explore the possibilities of producing a repeating arm using a self-contained metallic cartridge as its ammunition. These gentlemen, who became famous for their pioneering efforts, are well-known as Horace Smith, Daniel Wesson, and Benjamin Henry. Their early products are rare firearms collectibles with monikers now known as the Volcanic and the Henry Rifle Repeater. Woven within this early development, was the appearance of a man named Oliver Winchester, who continued to bring the early repeating designs through a series of rifles, starting with the New Haven Arms Co., and culminating in the birth of the monumental Winchester Repeating Arms Company.

Building heavily upon the design of the lever action, rimfire Henry Rifle, Winchester manufactured his Model 1866 to a fair degree of commercial success. But his subsequent Model 1873 was a vast improvement in reliability and strength to handle the much more powerful centerfire cartridges. There was no stopping the momentum of the Winchester Repeating Rifles, and various models were introduced and manufactured over the next twenty years. This series of Winchester lever action repeaters was brought

to the pinnacle of popularity when they introduced the Winchester Model 1894, which is still a best selling rifle after well over a century of production.

This avalanche of popularity of the Winchester Lever Action Repeater did not go unnoticed by other firearms makers, nor did it escape the notice of several makers of a new genre of gun known as the air rifle. Certainly, guns powered by the expansive force of compressed air had been known and made for centuries. But now for the first time, entrepreneurs of the 1890's recognized that there was a huge sales potential for air rifles marketed to boys that closely imitated the cowboy favorite Winchester Model 1894 Lever Action. This strategy has spawned an unfathomable sales phenomenon involving millions upon millions of lever action air rifles that has not abated even to this day.

By way of definition, the lever action air rifle is an airgun which uses a loop lever that pivots at the forward end to cock the action. This cocking lever is usually a closed loop with a straight or curved profile, though open levers are sometimes encountered. Working the airgun action simulates the firearm counterpart in ejecting a spent

cartridge and loading another live round into the chamber. In the lever action airgun, the cocking lever is pulled down and forward to ready the airgun for firing. Since most of these lever action airguns are of the spring piston design, working the lever cocks back the piston against the mainspring to ready the gun to fire. Incidentally, most of these type airguns are repeaters, though single shots are known.

Now what is ironic about this genre of airguns is that though they emulate an adult firearm, we find that 99% of these airguns are designed for kids. The lever action airgun designed for the adult market is a rather obscure breed. This adult lever action can be easily identified in that the gun is typically larger and more robust than the boys' airguns and the adult model will usually have a rifled barrel. A representative group of these adult lever action airguns, presented roughly in chronological order, are the subject of this discussion.

One might argue that the triggerguard-cocking gallery guns, both American and foreign, were some of the earliest forms of lever action airguns. However, most of these handmade airguns have a long cocking lever that pivots at the rear of the gun...

The FX Verminator Mark II

by Gordon D. Smith



Saab aircraft, Husqvarna motorcycles, Volvo automobiles, Ingrid Bergman and Anita Eckberg – just a few of the top exports to come out of Sweden. I recently had the pleasure of testing the new FX Verminator Mark II carbine, a synthetic-stocked PCP in .22 caliber and I'm adding FX Airguns to that list.

First, a little about FX Airguns for those unfamiliar with the brand: This Swedish company has been making airguns since 1999. It was started by Fredrik Axelsson, a self-taught engineering type, who still involves himself in day-to-day operations such as straightening every barrel that goes out the door. The company has 14 employees turning out about 7000 airguns a year. All of this was born out of Fredrik's disgust with an air rifle he purchased. He knew he could build a better one, and that is exactly what he did.

The Verminator is a high-end, carbine-sized air rifle with a 400cc pressure vessel forming part of the butt stock. It incorporates a polymer sleeve fashioned with a high ridge comb and vertically adjustable rubber buttpad. The sleeve is secured by a single hex screw, allowing it to be adjusted for length of pull as well as cant. The screw locks your adjustments by clamping to the air reservoir, so changes need to be made with the tank fully screwed into the gun first. Extending it almost to the end of the HPA (High Pressure Air) cylinder the overall length of the carbine was 31 ½ inches. This system is simple and works equally well for right or left-handed shooters. Loosening 2 hex screws accessed through the buttpad allows the user to slide the pad vertically to obtain the desired drop. Incorporating the butt stock as part of the removable air reservoir makes this gun a "takedown" model and

FX fitted it into a hard plastic briefcase sized non-locking case. The laser cut closed-cell foam interior provides secure compartments for the 2 pieces of the gun plus space for a rotary magazine, a scope, accessories such as the hex keys and a foster-type female adapter. The Verminator weighed in at almost 5½ pounds without optics.

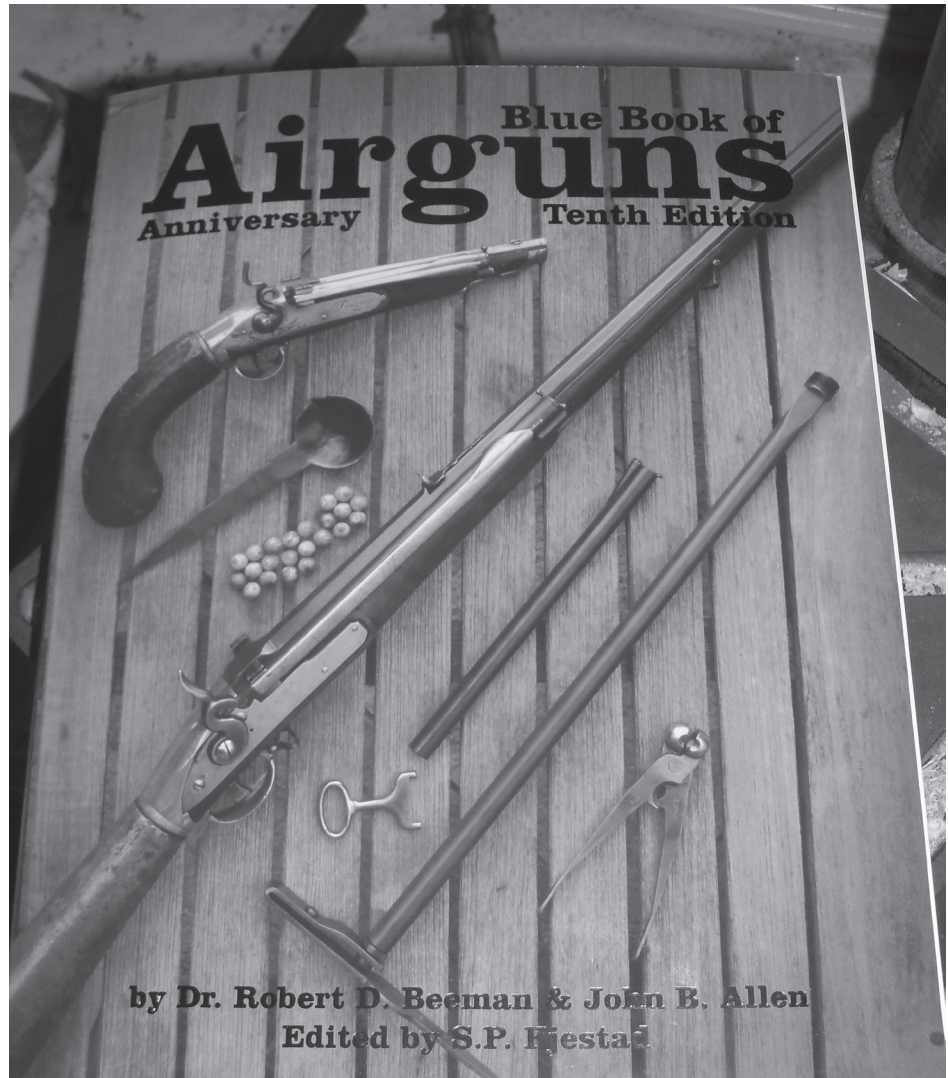
The unit I tested was the .22 version and this gun is also available in .177 and .25 calibers. It is an attractive, futuristic-looking carbine utilizing a straight pull bolt (biathlon style), rotary 12-round magazine and sporting a fully shrouded 300mm (approx. 12 inch) match grade "Smooth Twist" barrel. A manual safety that blocks the trigger is located on the right side behind the bolt handle and a knurled power adjustment wheel is on the left side ahead of the loading port. The power adjustment wheel has 3 settings

10th Anniversary Edition Blue Book of Airguns

Review by Sue Smith

Can you believe that the 10th Edition Blue Book of Airguns is already here? It is now a 680 page book. That's a long way from the 160 page First Edition published in 2001 and even further from just being a section in the Blue Book of Guns. The new 10th Anniversary Edition contains most popular 2012 models as well as vintage makes and models, detailed descriptions, over 1,200 black and white images identifying many makes and models with up-to-date pricing. Sections on such vintage trademarks as Daisy, Crosman, Benjamin and Feinwerkbau have also been greatly expanded. I loved the line in the intro "Please contact us with any corrections, additions, images, history, or information needed to make this a better title. If I miss one the first time, shame on me; if you know about it and do not inform me about what I missed, shame on you." To me, this just let me know the level of commitment they put into the book to get it right.

In the Gaylord Reports section, Tom Gaylord gives us a look at some of the new 2012 products that ranges from the Umarex Morph 3X to the FX Airguns Verminator. There is a six page article about Umarex and



Umarex USA's twenty-seven acre complex in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The 10th Edition also contains a ten page color article about the Girardoni Air Rifle carried by the Lewis and Clark expedition. It is really great to know an airgun played such an important part in United States history.

I have been using the Blue Book of Airguns since attending my first airgun show four years ago. I find it to be well organized and very informative. I often use the Blue Book for reference when a different variant of airgun comes in for repair. I really like the details that are in the book for such airguns as the Crosman 101. With the 101

being produced over a 25 year period with no model number or serial number and several variations, it makes it hard to figure out the exact manufacturing date and for those new to vintage airguns even what it is. In the years they were produced, the 101 series had four different logo patterns and four different cocking knobs and was made of either brass or steel with either a walnut or maple stock. With the information in the Blue Book, I can figure out a date range for the airgun and which variant it is and an estimate on the value. A good example is this Crosman 102 the repeater version of the 101.



At a glance, I knew it was a Crosman 102 because it's a .22 caliber and a repeater and looks like the 101. The "five groove" cocking knob helped me determine that the airgun was made between 1945 and 1950 according to the Blue Book. Further zeroing in on the date range, the air tube and barrel are both steel, which gives me more information. The only years Crosman used both steel tube and barrel are 1946 and 1947. It is also a Period Three variant. In its current functioning condition it is probably worth about \$165. Without the Blue Book, it would have been harder to know when this airgun was made or even know what to look for.

The thing I like the most about the Blue Book is to be able to learn more about an airgun that I have not seen before. While at the auction of Cecil Whiteside's airgun collection, we realized we had forgotten our copy of the Blue Book of Airguns. But fortunately Tim had subscribed to the on-line edition as well. He was able to look up the values of some the airguns we were interested in, using his smart phone.

Another nice feature to the on-line edition is that you can create an "online inventory" of your airgun collection. When you add an airgun to your "online inventory" you are able to store such information ranging from the caliber and serial number to the insured amount and storage location.

As stated in the Blue Book, it is a guide to how much an airgun should be valued and how to determine the condition of the airgun. As with everything, you might be willing to pay a little more for an airgun that you have searched for or you might feel that it is not worth it in the condition stated and value it a little less. As also stated, the values are for mechanically and pneumatically functional airguns.

The MSRP of the 10th Edition of the Blue Book of Airguns is \$29.95. A one year subscription to the on-line version Blue Book is \$19.95. Visit their web site at <http://www.bluebookinc.com> for ordering information.

So if you are a collector, airgun enthusiast or just love to look at pictures of airguns you need to get the Blue Book of Airguns. At 680 pages, you'll have enough pictures to last the whole year. They even have a few pages in there for you to write notes.

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