

“I Want to Go Places”

BY ANDREA BOGARD

Mikalya Scott



Standing in a Japanese steak house, I listened to Makayla Scott, champion bunker trap shooter and world record holder, say these words. It was promptly punctuated with a hiss and a fireball from the nearby grill.

Welcome to Grand Junction, Colorado. I am spending five days here wandering around the “A Girl & A Gun” National Conference at the Cameo Shooting Complex just outside of Grand Junction. Armed with a camera, laptop and an open spirit, I took to the dusty, hot and rocky ground in search of something. But what?

My goal—to find the stories I wanted to tell. It was a no-bounds, no roadmap project, meaning I could decide what the story was and how I wanted to tell it. Let’s go off-roading!

Ten minutes after arriving at the shooting complex, over 500 people clustered around a massive flagpole and observed our National Anthem. In a world fraught with “woke” cultural posturing, kneeling sports figures and condemnation of patriotism, it was like a salve to my wounded worldview.

I looked at the women around me. They were wives, moms, girlfriends, daughters, grandmas, sisters, aunts, partners, nieces and friends. They ranged in age from 12 to 77. They were from all walks of life, ethnic backgrounds, vocations and lifestyles. The one thing they all seemed to have in common? They were all passionately dedicated to growing as shooters.

A Girl & A Gun (AGAG) is a gun club established by women shooters for women shooters. They now have chapters in over 40 states and counting. Their focus is four pronged – recreation, education, competition and community. This is their 9th National Conference and they had 450 attendees – a new record!

Over 450 women. This means over 450 stories. Camera in hand, I started to walk around the massive shooting complex. I watched the intensity, focus, concentration and effort put forth by each woman as I observed the classes.

These were women encompassing a broad skill range. They were beginners who had purchased a new gun so they could “come to Conference.” They were serious competitors with the hardware to prove it. They were women determined to remain sovereign over their own bodies. They were protectors of their families and

Facilitator Beth Walker



defenders of their children. They were also women who just want to have fun. Shooting is FUN!

I spent the day talking to those I could, but I was more focused on observing the process. These were women on a mission. These were women determined to “go places.” The destination for each varied, but the process remained consistent. Be educated. Be empowered. Go to a new level or proficiency, competence and confidence.

That night, I had an opportunity to go to dinner with Makayla Scott and her travel companion, Jill—affectionately termed her surrogate mom—as well as a friend, Mike, who owns a shooting glass manufacturing/engineering company, SSP Eyewear.





wanted to go places. Whether that was a competition, a trip, a level of achievement, a score or peace of mind, all were looking to create a stronger, better, more accomplished tomorrow.

I smiled at Makayla as I mentally returned to the conversation. I took in her beautiful smile, excited glow and authentic giggle and was absolutely certain of one thing.

“Oh, girl, you’re going to go far,” I told her.

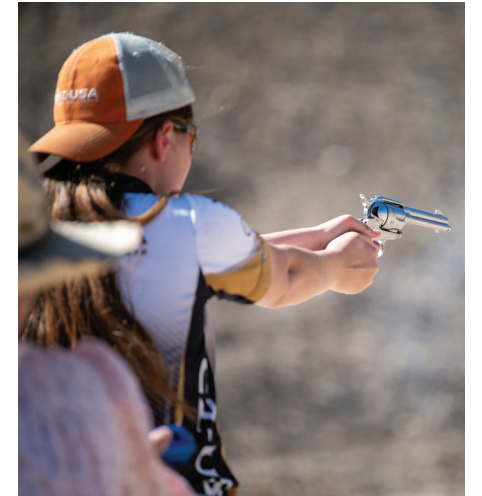
Ladies, this is for you. Figure out where you want to be tomorrow and work today to make it happen. Be it a shooting journey or a life hurdle, surround yourself with the people, tools and resources to make your tomorrow everything you dream of today.

AGAG is doing that for women shooters and changing lives daily through education, training, community, empowerment and encouragement. Do you want to go places? Then start today. ■

Makayla had never been to a Japanese steakhouse where they cook in front of you, so that’s where we went. We walked in and got our names on the list to be seated. While we waited, we chatted about shooting, hunting, travel and adventure.

Waving her hands, Makayla exclaimed, “I just love to go places!” She proceeded to rattle off destinations and adventures she had on her list of things she wanted to experience.

I watched her eyes sparkle as she talked, but her words faded. I circled back to my experiences earlier in the day on the range. The diverse group of women coming together for the Conference all had essentially one thing in common – they



Check out www.agirlandagun.org for more info!

#goplaces



AGAG Founder Julianna Crowder (L) and Executive Director Robyn Sandoval (R), with their husbands, who also serve as ROs.

