

HOTR OR NIMBY?

At the Underhill Select Board meeting of July 24th a group calling itself HOTR or Homes On The Range presented a petition to the Board regarding the increased noise level since the new "7" range was built. I would like to rebut some of the comments made at that meeting. First the HOTR group is misnomer. They should be called Homes OFF The Range. None of us lives on The Range, just near or abutting it.

I have lived on Range Road for over 26 years. I used to live $\frac{1}{2}$ mile up on the road, and 12 years ago, when the last property at the top of the road next to the gate came on the market, I was ecstatic to be able to purchase it. I love having The Range as my unofficial backyard. There should not be anyone who purchased property on the roads around The Range who didn't know it was there, and by extension know that its name means exactly what it says - Ethan Allen FIRING Range.

It is an unfortunate fact that every single generation of Americans has had to face a war of one type or another. That is the reason we maintain a standing army. As time evolves so does the art of war, and with it, the weapons used to fight that war. If we expect our soldiers to return safely they need frequent effective training with these weapons. If that means developing new training areas, then that is their right and duty.

Although everyone who spoke at the meeting said they supported our troops, how can the HOTR group say that and still want to deny them the facilities for the training required to do their jobs effectively? HOTR's answer seems to be to move the new 3 million dollar state-of-the-art range to the middle of the Firing Range property. I have spent many (non-training) hours walking my bird dogs in the woods, and on the roads and trails of the Underhill Center side of The Range, and have driven on the Lee River and the Nashville Road sides back when The Range was able to generously provide Operation Bull's Eye for us to safely site in our deer rifles. Therefore I have seen many of the training areas first hand. If the HOTR group had even studied a functional map of The Range they would have known that moving the new range where their group wants it would place it right in the middle of the Vulcan gun firing cone. They also mentioned refurbishing one of the other rifle ranges, but the topography of those ranges is not suitable for the computer controlled multiple pop-up target system now in place south of Krug Road.

I admit to being occasionally upset with some of the activities, such as once having been awakened at 6 a.m. by the detonation of unexploded ordinance so training could begin for the day, or by the (mostly out-of-state) soldiers treating Range Road like the Indy 500 raceway, or by the loud speaker system on the new range. But these are issues Range personnel are willing and able to work on, without interfering with their necessary training schedules. I have found that a call to the Colonel's office with a question or comment generally provides a plausible explanation, or a willingness to look into an issue before it gets out of hand. These are small and temporary inconveniences I am willing to put up with in order to live where I do. The sacrifices being made by the men and women who volunteer to put their lives on the line, so I don't have to wear a burkha, is far greater than anything I am giving up.

Pam Parshall