

FROM THE EDITOR

This summer I was showing some friends who had come to visit us on Nantucket the old Sankaty Head lighthouse that sits high on a bluff near Siasconsett, on the far eastern tip of the island. The Sankaty light, as well as scores of lighthouses up and down America's coastlines were once critical aids to navigation, helping mariners to determine their location and warning them of impending hazards. Today even if their beacons still shine, lighthouses are mostly quaint tourist attractions. It's not that they no longer work; it's just that with electronic navigation systems, they are simply no longer needed.

If you've hunted a few more seasons than you care to remember, I'm sure you can think of a few things you no longer need to take afield. As a kid I remember a can of waterproofing paste that I had to apply to the canvas exterior of our kapok filled decoys. Smelly stuff and thankfully, long a thing of the past.

Some things in our sport however, even despite being more than a century old, have yet to go out of style. Indeed, they may be more important and more vital than ever before. At the top of that list, in my opinion, are good manners—the code of polite behavior that in many ways defines good sportsmanship.

During a time when

more and more people are heading outdoors, those of us who do so with firearm in hand must always act thoughtfully and responsibly. It was dismaying to read in the *New York Times* this August about the problems being caused by recreational shooters on federal lands. In one area, the Times reported that, "Cleanup crews have hauled away 20 tons of trash a year – refrigerators and car parts, clay pigeons and sofas, even bowling pins." Yes, you can blame it on the irresponsible few, but it still is a black eye for all of us. And we are all aware of a recent hunting incident that didn't just make the national news but went viral, worldwide, in a heartbeat. The spotlight on



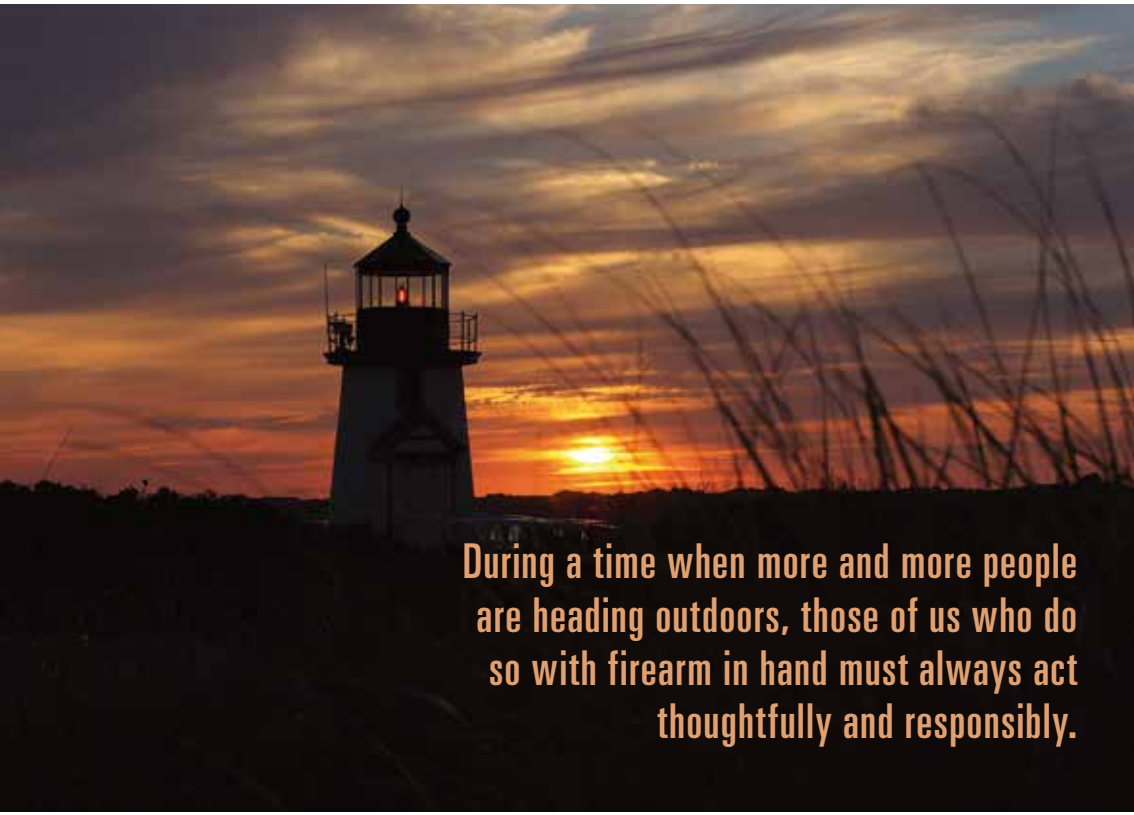
Doug Painter
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

us now beams brighter and, whether always justified or not, with a harsher light.

How landowners perceive hunters is also of increasing importance. According to a recent poll conducted by Southwick Associates, 18 percent of hunters hunt on land they own, while only 11 percent belong to a hunt club or hunt on land they lease. Thirty-eight percent of hunters surveyed said that they hunted on land owned by a friend or family member. That underscores the significant percentage of hunters who depend on public land or who gain access through the good graces of farmers and other rural landowners who allow hunting on their property. To be sure, most all hunters are respectful guests when hunting on someone else's land. Again, however, it takes only a few bad leaders to potentially close the farm gate to all.

If you're reading this you are, of course, not part of the problem. What I am suggesting is that more of us can be part of the solution by speaking out, by telling our story to our friends, neighbors, and co-workers, as well as to local groups and organizations. We have a great story to tell both in terms of conservation and fair chase. Let our beacon continue to shine brightly, casting a positive light on who we are and the values we hold dearly.

Hope to see you down the trail. ■



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