

Nostalgia Corner

30 Years Ago ... by Paul Davison

The great “Rocky Mountain Rip-Off”



I've been often criticized that I write too many negative things about the NFAA's "Good Old Days." I promise that what follows will be the last such tragedy reported in the foreseeable future.

It concerns the 1974 National Outdoor Championships held just outside Golden, Colorado. On paper, the tournament was a major success — attendance was near 800 ... the most in a decade. The trouble was, however, that nearly all of the 800 weren't very happy the venue, the new T-System (see Jun/Jul 2004 *Archery*), the hosts, the leaky target butts, and/or the rain and wind.

The NFAA President in 1974 was Erv Kreischer of New Mexico — the most professional, gracious and diplomatic president, in my opinion, in NFAA's history. Erv never had a bad word to say about anyone, but he almost lost his cool when he wrote in the September issue of *Archery*:

"... It is both difficult and embarrassing for me to comment on the shooting facility or creature comforts, for they were much less than we expect. A last minute paralysis had set in on the host club and a near disintegration resulted. My heartfelt appreciation is extended to the mere handful of members who stayed to see it through, to the out of state archers from Illinois, California, Texas and New Mexico who rolled up their sleeves and provided the muscle needed on the shooting facility, and to the multitude of archers who served as good will ambassadors. My personal thanks to each of you for your support in a

most difficult situation".

The *Archery* magazine editorial staff was much more blunt in the October 1974 issue. Here are some excerpts:

"... It was a tournament that almost didn't happen. Months ago, with a single bid for holding the 1974 Nationals in Colorado on one hand and an energy crisis without end in sight on the other, your NFAA officials seriously considered canceling. They didn't cancel, but months later many people wished that they had. ... What promised to be a 'Golden Opportunity' came to be branded the 'Rocky Mountain Rip-Off,' ... the host club floundered and sank in its own internal problems, leaving the Nationals understaffed with only a few members valiantly trying to do the work of many. ... An unexpected overflow crowd came riding into Denver on that crest of enthusiasm which died at the base of the mesa."

Here's more:

"... The beginning was delayed considerably as a slow procession of vehicles snaked its way up, occasionally grinding to a halt as a car bottomed out, bending a pan and bottlenecking traffic."

"... when rain came to the mesa, ... Kreischer and Chraft, weary bale-toters, faced the prospect of all those archers stranded on a mesa with its roads running slick with mud and they stopped the round."

"... Perhaps the most regrettable instances occurred at the base of the mesa, where the youngsters attempted to compete without much supervision, isolated miles from their parents, competing on shot-out faces, and most unfortunately, subjected to unsportsmanlike activity on the parts of some of their peers."

"... one or two portable toilets stand out from the barren landscape against the enormity of the Colorado sky. A grasshopper buzzes you and maybe you think you hear a rattler."

It goes without saying that your

NFAA has since made the "Who-Does-What" tournament contract provisions much more definitive. Although there have been a few minor problems with hosts (mostly first-timers) since 1974, there has never been, or will there ever be, another Rocky Mountain Rip-Off.