



ROD & GUN GAZETTE

VOLUME 9: ISSUE 4

JUNE 2008

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donald A. Bajger, *The Iceman*



As I sit down to write this column, I can't help but feel Spring Turkey season has come and gone, and Opening Day for fishing (both at the Fin and statewide) has passed. The need for outdoor chores to be completed around the house has increased and it always seems to be a tough balance as to where one's time should be devoted. The Club grounds are looking nice and our generally cool, damp spring helped keep the foliage lush. Our pheasants appear to be growing well, and it will be interesting to see how our fall 2007 management of the fly pond affects weed growth in the warmer weather. If you are a new member, I'd like to welcome you to the Fin. If you do not know a lot of members already, you may feel a bit awkward in trying to 'fit in' with your particular outdoor interests. No need for that – don't sit on the sidelines. At the end of this newsletter is a list of folks that have responsibility for various activities in the Club. Just give them a call and let them know your questions and interests. One of the Club's premier events, the summer picnic, will be held later this summer (see page 3) and I hope to see you all there. In the meantime, have a great summer.

860-423-6693 or donald.bajger@snet.net



July 12/13	Registered Skeet Shoot
July 20	Sporting Clays Shoot
July 26	Hawaiian Luau
July 27	Registered Trap Shoot
August 17	Annual Family Picnic
August 23 – 24	Registered Skeet Shoot
September 14	Summer League Picnic
September 27	Connecticut Trapper's Convention
September 28	Sporting Clays Shoot

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Please note that the deadlines for material to be submitted for the next newsletters will be September 10th and December 10th. Thank you very much for any and all written submissions and photographs.

MEMBERSHIP

Bob Hurskocy, Membership

The membership at the Fin has been holding steady for several years; we are always interested in adding new members to help our club grow for the future. If you know of anyone who you feel would make a good member, please bring them up to the club and show them around. Hopefully, you can get them to join. Remember, all applicants (excluding Junior) must supply a completed background check. This is true regardless of whether or not they hold a current pistol permit. The forms are available at the bar or can be emailed to you. Also, if your email, phone or mailing address has changed, PLEASE send me that information, so I can keep your record updated.

Here is the breakdown of the club's current membership as of June 1st:

Regular members 400 (75 new dues structure, 18%)
Associate members 53 (25 new dues structure, 47%)
Junior members 33
Life 105

At a recent membership meeting, a member voiced concern that the Club's dues structure was not consistent with what some other clubs were charging. Obviously, there are clubs in the State that charge less than the FFF, but very few clubs can compare with the facilities and opportunities that we offer our members. There has been discussion on different ways to increase the Club's revenue stream (e.g., work hours, dues increases, etc).

As we all know, the price of fuel and grain has increased dramatically over the past year; we all feel it at the gas pump and at the supermarket. Unfortunately, the FFF is not immune to this inflation. The cost of feed grain for the pheasants will exceed last year's costs by more than \$5,000! Heating oil is at an all time high. Clay targets and bar products have increased in costs as well. The Executive Committee (EC) discussed these issues at the June EC meeting and felt there were 2 possibilities that would not be too much of a financial burden to the members. One idea was to make the raffle tickets mandatory for all paying members, this would generate approximately \$22,500. Our current raffle return is approximately \$13,000. The raffle tickets would be included on your FFF invoice; this would provide incentive for members to sell their tickets in order to minimize their own personal cost.

Another option would be to increase the Capital Improvement (Asst 1) to all members that joined prior to 2006 by \$50. Currently there are 353 members (Reg & Assoc) on the old dues structure, this would generate approximately \$17,650. The EC is open for any other suggestions that someone may have to raise revenue, please show up at a membership meeting and voice your opinions. Keep in mind the above ideas are only being discussed at this time. Any further action would require an official vote by the members.

Any questions, please feel free to contact me. Bob Hruskocy, Membership.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Tom Hoagland, Treasurer

Well here we are again, newsletter articles are due. Thanks to the effort of many, the Fin is doing very well financially. As with our budgets at home and at work, the price of fuel and other related items is making it difficult to function without raising prices. The members of the Executive Board have been discussing many options that the Fin can potentially adopt to make sure that we continue financially healthy. Our greatest and most efficient income generator is membership. May is the eighth month of our financial year and we are 2/3 complete. Our year-to-date income is \$18,070 whereas last year we had \$37,708. I am not trying to alarm anyone; we have money for all of our bills. I am just showing you the trend that is happening all over the country, greater expenses with less income.

Whenever we have a function at the club there is collateral money spent at the bar and on food through the kitchen. If anyone has any ideas about a function please do not hesitate to run it. It's generally pretty easy and the club benefits immensely. If you have any questions pertaining to the budget, please contact me.

SUMMER EVENTS

THE FIN OPEN



JULY 13, 2008

**FIN, FUR & FEATHER CLUB INC.
213 CHEWINK RD. CHAPLIN, CT 06256**

**12 Gauge Event – 100 Targets
\$40.00 PER EVENT**

**SHOOT-OFFS: DOUBLES 3, 4 & 5 MISS AND OUT BY STATION
EVENT PURSE: \$20.00 RETURNED TO SHOOTERS**

- 1 - 5 Entries In Class – 100% To Winner
- 6 – 12 Entries – Split 70/30
- >13 Entries – Split 60/25/15

**ALL CONCURRENTS AVAILABLE – FREE
OPTIONAL CONCURRENTS PURSE - \$5**

Quaker Doubles – 2 Classes - .9500 Break Point
Purse \$5 - >5 Per Class 70/30 Split

RESERVATIONS: CHARLES CONNELL JR. - 860-889-4901
Rotations – 9:30am, 11:00am, 12:30pm

Coffee, donuts & bagels, luncheon items will be served at the lower club skeethouse



ANNUAL FIN, FUR AND FEATHER FAMILY PICNIC

The annual family picnic will be held on Sunday, August 17th from noon through 6:00 pm at the FFF Clubhouse. This is one of the most enjoyable activities that the club sponsors each year and we encourage all members and their families to attend. Food is plentiful and includes hot dogs, hamburgers, kielbasa, steamers, cherrystones, chowder, corn, watermelon and beer, wine and softdrinks. As in the past, there will be many games for kids and adults, and the annual horseshoe tournament. A DJ will provide music for your listening pleasure and for dancing. A raffle will provide participants with an opportunity to win some great prizes including a 10 – 12 pound lobster.

The cost of admission is as follows:
Adults (18 yrs and older) \$15
Teens (Ages 12 – 17 yrs) \$5
Children (Ages 1 – 11 yrs) Free
There are no advanced tickets sales; pay at the door. A final note; All Ranges Will Be Closed at Noon on August 17th.

The Picnic will feature the 2nd Annual Dessert Bake-Off Contest. A \$50 prize will be awarded to the baker whose non-refrigerated dessert receives the most first-place votes. Sign-up in the bar or call Nancy Davidson at 456-8782.



HAWAIIAN LUAU

The 3rd annual FFF Hawaiian Luau will be held Saturday, July 26th beginning at 5 pm. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the Bar for \$20 each; food, beer and music will be provided. That's a pretty good price to enjoy a bit of the south Pacific in eastern Connecticut!



OUT IN THE FIELD

NORTHEAST OPEN SKEET SHOOT

Frank Mauri

The Fin hosted a renewal of our annual June skeet shoot over the weekend of June 6 – 8, 2008. Thirty skeet shooters from CT, NY and RI attended. Ten members of the Fin participated and performed well. Larry Shewokis was the big winner for the club by taking the Doubles, 12 Ga. and 28 Ga. championship. He also was Runner-up in the .410 event. Ted Naumec, shooting his first ever registered skeet competition, was also a winner in class for the Doubles, 28 Ga. and .410 events. His big performance of the weekend came in the 12 Ga. competition where he posted a 100/100 score. This was his first ever perfect score and it came in his first ever registered competition. Congratulations to both of these club members for their stellar performances.

As usual these competitive events require a significant investment of volunteer labor. The grass was mowed by Dick Palmer, Bill Spears and Dave Fromme. Targets were delivered to the skeet houses by Steve Krukoff. On the days of the shoot the skeet machines were kept full and operating by Art St. Lawrence, Alan Perry and Elmer MacCluskey. The field kitchen was provisioned and drinking water served by Neil Whippet, Tom Skoglund, Mike D’Amato, Tony DiCiccio, Jason Somers and the members mentioned above. The most important jobs at these shoots are refereeing and scoring each squad in each event. The referee pulls the target on the shooter’s call and scores the result of each shot. Consistency in throwing the target on call is the most important part of the referee’s job and this requires complete concentration. A referee pulls targets for squads composed of as many as five shooters. Each shooter fires at 100 targets in 4 rounds of 25. A referee must be exact for every target for each shooter for as many as 500 targets. Normally a referee pulls for 4 to 6 squads each day of the competition – that is a lot of work and exacting work at that. This weekend with its 90°F+ weather made the referee’s job very difficult. The referees for this weekend were Mike D’Amato, Tony DiCiccio, Jason Somers, Bill Dixon, Frank Decker, Alan Perry, Elmer MacCluskey and George Cirish. Thanks are extended to them for a job well done and for serving such an important function for the club. A final word of thanks goes to Connie Mauri for doing the cooking over the weekend in the field kitchen. She kept the shooters well-fed and therefore happy, and this further encourages them to return to our shoots.

The Fin will host two more shoots during this 2008 season. On July 13th we will host the Fin Open, a two-gun shoot in 12 and 20 Gauge. Finally on August 24th we will host the No-Name Open with 12 and 20 gauge shoots. This latter event occurs the weekend before the State Shoot and thus will provide a nice warm-up for that competition that will be hosted at the Hartford Gun Club.

The Fin will host the 2009 Zone 1 registered shoot and the 2009 Connecticut State Skeet shoot. Last year, these two events garnered us more than \$10,000 not including income from the bar and field kitchen. We need to prepare now for these 2009 events and some of this preparation should involve a club-wide attempt to increase the participation of members in the shoots this year so they will be prepared to compete in 2009.

SPORTING CLAYS

Nancy, Jim and Dick

Sporting clays is alive and well at the Fin. We have held two Eastern Connecticut League Fun Shoots with good turnout for shooters and help. Ducks Unlimited will have come and gone by publication time and we have two shoots remaining on July 20th and September 28th at the Fin. Also, looking forward to the Club’s Shotgun Championship on September 14th. Hope to see you there.



TRAP

Bob “Moon” Hruskocy, Trap Chairman

There will be a registered Trap shoot on July 27th. The shoot starts at 9:15am but please be at the fields by 8:00 am. I will need help setting up for the shoot the day before (i.e., on the 26th), if you can help, be at the lower fields at 8:30am. On the 27th help will be needed with scoring and loading houses and this is a great (and easy) way to earn your work hours. I also will need someone to cook lunch as well. Please let me know if you can assist me with this event. Hope to see you there.

LEAD FRAGMENTS IN GROUND VENISON

Lead shot has been in the news of the northwestern U.S. quite a bit this past spring. North Dakota placed a ban on the donation of ground venison to food pantries in that state after it was discovered that a significant number of samples contained measurable lead. Related stories have been published in Idaho and Oregon. For additional information on the North Dakota story, go to the following website:

<http://www.health.state.nd.us/lead/venison/Fact%20Sheet%20Lead%20in%20Ground%20Venison.pdf>

JUNIORS ACTIVITIES

Patrick Enright, Juniors Activities

On May 3rd the state-sponsored Youth Turkey Hunter Training Day took place. A record number of seven FFF Jr. Members participated in the hunt and the threat of rain did nothing to dampen their spirits. I spoke with many of the participants and their mentors at the end of the day and though only one youngster managed to tag his bird, all of them had a good time on the hunt. I think they all saw birds and there were a couple of misses which can be chalked up to turkey fever. Something every kid went home with that day is a great memory and the desire to go again; in my book that is a success! My thanks go out to Jeff Butterfield and Dick Palmer who both generously volunteered their time to mentor a couple of the youth hunters.



Shane Enright bagged a nice turkey this spring!

There is a Junior division to the Summer Trap League this year and four Junior Members have their sights set on becoming 'Club Champion'. Mike Sobol tells me he won't be relinquishing the title that easily but I am certain the kids will improve their abilities this summer and have fun doing so! My thanks to Bob 'Moon' Hruskocy who got them started off on the right foot by conducting a 'Juniors. Trap Clinic' on May 31st. The kids received some great instruction and all were crushing targets by the end of the clinic.

We have picked some dates for the kids to shoot together and will be starting off on June 15th (Father's Day).

If you have a youngster that would like to participate it is never too late, just give me a call and we will get them involved! Remember to **"PASS IT ON"**.

SPRING AND FALL FIELD TRIALS

Bird dog field trials will be held this fall on September 7th at the Mansfield Dam training area. These will include puppy, derby, shooting dog, and gun dog using liberated quail starting at 7:00 am. Dogs must be registered before 8:00 pm on the previous Friday. Anyone wishing to enter a dog or wanting to help with the trial can contact Ralph Fonda at 203-393-8922.



PHEASANT WORK DATES 2008

Many members enjoy the fine pheasant hunting opportunities offered by our club. If you hunt, please volunteer to assist with raising our birds to adults. No experience necessary; we will teach you what you need to know. The next group activity will be on July 3rd where we will apply blinders. See you at 4:00 pm at the Club.

RANDOM SHOTS

CHECK THE CLUBHOUSE BULLETIN BOARD AND POSTINGS

Everyone is reminded that monthly events are posted on the Club's website, so be sure to check out what's happening.

WANTED: A HEAVY WEIGHT SCALE

We are in need of a high capacity scale that can accommodate the large pumpkins that we anticipate will be entered in the competition at this fall's pumpkin festival. If you've got one that you'd be willing to let the Club use, please notify the bar. Thanks.



Bluefish will be running soon and they can be voracious feeders. Take a look at the number of squid and baitfish this bluefish had in its stomach!



Bob Cardinal enjoyed some early spring fishing at the Club's skeet pond.



The Club's President enjoyed a more relaxed approach to early spring fishing.

THANKS, JIM & NANCY DAVIDSON

John Postemski

Fifteen years ago, Jim and Nancy Davidson arrived as new members at the Fin. They brought with them a vision for establishing a sporting clays course at the Club and have more than fulfilled that. Shotgun enthusiasts enjoy the special challenge of sporting clays and the Fin course provides a very pleasant stroll for shooters. Many of us would not have had the opportunity to experience this wonderful opportunity had Jim and Nancy not provided leadership in this undertaking. Additionally, it is estimated that Sporting Clays activities have provided a profit of approximately \$40,000 during this time! The consistent return of the Ducks Unlimited shoot each year is a sure sign that our club's course is respected regionally. Jim and Nancy are stepping away from their leadership role with sporting clays; they wish to shoot more and work less and they've more than earned it. Dick Palmer will be taking over the reins in a gradual transition and he'll need the same enthusiasm and cooperation from the membership that Jim and Nancy received. Be sure to pass along your thanks to the Davidsons.



Jim and Nancy Davidson receive thanks from their successor, Dick Palmer.



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***Our Purpose:** To Promote The Conservation of Fish, Game, and Other Natural Resources, To Practice and Teach the Highest Degree of Sportsmanship and to Promote Safe and Proficient Use of Sporting Equipment.*

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Don Bajger, President	860-423-6693
Bob Hruskocy, Vice-President	860-569-1592
Dick Palmer, Secretary	860-487-0388
Tom Hoagland, Treasurer	860-455-0641

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Steven Davis (past-president)	860-558-1890
David Fromerth	860-742-6749
Jim Gifford	860-455-2034
Keith Morehouse	860-647-1333
Tom O'Neill	
John Postemski	860-423-9396
Mike Sobol Jr. (alternate)	860-918-0415
Bill Spears	860-822-6567

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

ARCHERY AVAILABLE

Your # here

BAR

Steve Davis 860-558-1890

PERMITTEE

Brenda Liappes 860-455-0521

BLACK POWDER

Charles Bruckerhoff 860-455-1229

BUILDING/GROUNDS AVAILABLE

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CHILDREN'S FUND

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FAMILY PICNIC

Bob Theriault 860-456-3431

FIELD TRIALS

Ralph Fonda 203-393-8922

FISHING

Jon Guarino 860-428-2873

HEALTH/WELFARE

Dick Palmer 860-487-0388

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Don Bajger 860-423-6693

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JUNIOR PROGRAMS

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Kevin Segar 860-429-4925

Arnie Postemski 860-423-4637

KITCHEN AVAILABLE

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Peter Mathewson 860-456-8588

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