



## *Letter from the Vice President*

Dear Members and Friends,

December marks the end of another year—56 to be exact since the Fin began in 1947-48. At midnight on the 31st, the 2004 New Year begins. No one can doubt that these twelve months have been good to us.

We had the pleasure of many very exciting outdoor events at the shotgun ranges; on the rifle and pistol ranges, on the archery ranges; up at the fly pond, middle pond, and lower pond; and out on the Bass Farm chasing geese, turkeys, pheasants, and deer. Hunting, fishing, and competitive shooting in all our sports have been outstanding this year, as always. We had more than our fair share of rain this summer—Dick Palmer said his pistol league was nearly a wash-out—but the fun times went

on regardless.

Last winter, our kids had a terrific fishing derby out on the fly pond ice. By the way, Frank Mauri, intrepid Fish Chairman, plans to demonstrate his winter fly fishing dexterity through a hole in the ice this winter. In May we rounded up our kids for another fun-filled day of landing trout, bass, and blue gill.

In August, we held the Annual Family Picnic at which kids of all ages frolicked in the hay, potato sacks, water balloons, dance floor, horseshoe pits, and food lines. Oh my God, remember those steamers?

We bought the last contiguous 26 acres for the Club!

The fall hunting season challenged our skills; and now the deer, turkey, goose, duck, and



*Some members were fooled, but Don Bajger and all the kids knew better. Santa is Santa, no matter what.*

pheasant hunting is almost finished. Some of us scored big; some didn't score at all, but we all had a grand time trying.

This holiday season take out time to reflect on the blessings our Club has enjoyed and all your friends have done for you. Your life is so much better because of this special place. Merry Christmas! —CB

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### Special points of interest:

- Easter Egg Hunt planned by John & Laura
- Work hours for bringing in new members!
- Pete Gianopoulos bags big buck; snakes prize from John Postemski--who tried for past 40 years!

## *Annual Game Dinner: January 18*

Get ready because the FFF 2004 Annual Game Dinner is scheduled for January 18, starting at 12:00 noon. This very fine event is for members only. Skip Dillon has agreed to serve as chef, providing a menu complete with venison, pheasant, duck, raccoon, and some-

body--not me--said opossum.

Like all club game dinners of the past, this is an event put on by club members for club members, so if you need to get in some work hours, you should contact John Pawelec ASAP and let him know you

are going to work on that day--as well as enjoy the great food and festivities. In case you haven't noticed, John and Laura Pawelec have taken over the kitchen responsibilities and are doing an excellent job. Mark your calendar: Be there on January 18 for a great time!

## Youth Pheasant Hunt a Great Success



*Thanks to FFF members' hard work, our 2003 Youth Pheasant Hunt was a great success.*

Through the efforts chiefly of Pat Enright, the Club sponsored a Youth Pheasant Hunt on the day before the season opener this year, consistent with the new CT Department of Environmental Protection policy allowing youngsters to get a head start on hunting.

Pat organized a team of dog owners, dogs, and assistants for a terrific hunt on the Bass Farm out back of the Green Barn .

One assistant was Kevin Segar, who was attracted to the event just before entering his deep winter hibernation. We haven't seen much of Kevin since the pheasant hunt.

Also, bringing along their fine hunting dogs were Bob Mullen, Paul Cardinal, and Bill Maloney.

The boys included Matt and Mike Bruckerhoff, Bob Cardinal, Will Foustman, and Josh Mullen.

It was a beautiful sunny day. The pheasants were plentiful and provided terrific sporting opportunities for the boys. At one point, however, one of the birds chose to perch high up in a tree, where he may have thought he was out of reach. Not so for he soon fell prey to Matt's 20 gauge and swiftly joined his companion in the game bag. Sunday dinner never tasted so good. Hats off to you for a great job: Pat, Kevin, Bob, Paul, and Bill.

## 2003 Christmas Party Thrills the Kid in Everyone

**What a great difference is made by just a few members who invest themselves in club events. You can make a difference, too.**

On December 7th, John and Laura Pawelec managed the club's 2003 Annual Kids' Christmas Party. This year there was a substantial amount of contributions from members, with money coming in from a variety of venues, including the monthly raffles, games and other events at the bar, and outright donations

from thoughtful, generous members.

According to John and Laura, there were 67 kids present for the party (8 no-shows) and the fattest, jolliest Santa anyone has seen in decades. Everyone got a big kick out of Santa's booming voice and playful taunting of the kids. No one

went without a present and in fact presents have been held back for those 8 kids who for whatever reason were not able to make it to the party.

John and Laura send their warmest thanks to the club members who helped make this year's Christmas party such a wonderful event for our kids.

## 2004 Easter Egg Hunt Planned



*OK kids, get your parents and grandparents to the Fin for the 2004 Easter Egg Hunt.*

The Pawelecs, John and Laura, are planning an Easter Egg Hunt for this spring on or about Easter Sunday. Keep on the lookout for the announcements in the Clubhouse Bar, our Internet website, and the next issue of the newsletter.

Word has it that somebody

could be tricked up in a bunny outfit, but there has been no word on just exactly what kind of a costume this enterprising bunny might be wearing. Some of the guys have entertained really fantastic ideas, though, about what they'd like to see on their preferred bunny.

Whatever might be the desires of the adult crowd, the kids will most surely have a terrific egg hunt, since everything John and Laura do is positively golden.

Now, keep your eye out for that bunny, Moon! She could be just about anywhere.

## Work Hours for Bringing in New Members

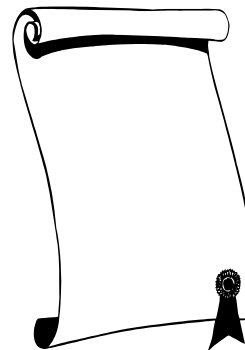
Yes, in case you have not been attending club meetings lately, the Executive Board reinstated the major benefit for club members who bring in new members in 2003-2004. If you know of someone who is toying with the idea of joining a first-rate sporting club in CT, well now is your chance to not only get that friend to shoot and fish with you at the club, you will get all 10 of your work hours completed in one quick signature--as the primary spon-

sor. A couple of years ago when we implemented this policy for the first time, we had a resounding success rate. Many new members came on board and many of you got your work hours completed.

The club needs new members simply because over time people choose not to renew their membership for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we have people who simply walk through the door asking to

join. However, one of our best ways of attracting and keeping valued members is through your efforts as recruiters. The Executive Committee recognizes this service you provide for the club and, so, is willing to give you the 10 work hours as a reward.

OK, don't waste time. You could bring that someone on board before the 2004 Annual Game Dinner, if you act now.



*Bring in a new member and sit back to enjoy the year at the club. Your work hours are done.*

## Black Powder Notes: The Good Samaritan

Everyone knows the story about the Good Samaritan who, as different from all the other passers by, helped an unfortunate soul who had fallen by the wayside.

It's not often that we find ourselves in the position of the person who needs help, but occasionally it occurs. It happened to me this past October on the way to the North-South Skirmish Association's 2003 National Skirmish in Winchester, Virginia. I had just pulled out of a gas station, making a left turn onto a side street with my 26 ft. travel trailer behind the truck, when this other driver cut in front of me. That slick move--which forced me to put on the breaks rather quickly to avoid a collision--required another corrective movement on my part. I had to allow more room on my left between my truck and trailer and her car than I had planned for--a lot more room. This meant my rig would have to go wide to the right, using part of the road's shoulder. That's when the trouble began. No small number of vehicles had been making that very same kind of wide turn--perhaps for the same reason (same other driver, too?)-- which accounted for a narrow trench about 12 inches deep just at the edge of the pave-

ment. All of you trailer towers out there know exactly what happened next. Yep. When my truck cleared the ditch, the trailer followed in near perfect tracking until the tires bottomed out in that trench. Thunk! "What in the heck was that?" I asked Matt and Mike who were riding along. No amount of Dodge hemi horsepower was going to budge the trailer. I got out to investigate and soon discovered that I had the trailer's axle positively embedded in the asphalt. In a wild effort, I took out the truck's scissors-type tire jack to see if it would lift the trailer, but couldn't even get that thing to work. Within a couple of minutes, the entire intersection was totally blocked with cars--angry drivers behind every wheel blaring horns.

Then, when I was about to throw up my arms in utter despair, this big guy about the size and happy-go-lucky character of our President, Don Bajger, appears from nowhere. "Hey buddy," he said, "You got yourself in a real fix. Want some help?" Just the way he said it was so convincing. There was no saying no. "Come along with me," he continued. We walked to his Chevy truck, where from

among a jumble of carpenter's tools, he hauled out one of those low profile racecar jacks with steel wheels. In the next ten minutes, we had jacked up the trailer's frame and shoveled the trench full of loose gravel. At this stranger's direction, I hopped back in my truck, put the transfer case in low 4X4, and started to pull the rig. That jack did just what the stranger said it would do--roll right along with the rig until the tires popped back up on the pavement. Presto we were back on the roadway and out of the ditch! In the meantime, a local police officer pulled up to lend traffic support. I asked the stranger if I could pay him something for helping us. "No Bro," he said with genuine VA lingo, "I been there and done that; just glad I could help you this time." Then he put on this wide grin and said: "It also gives me great pleasure every time I use my Chevy to beat a Dodge or Ford." We laughed at his good fortune and wise choice of trucks. From the bottom of my heart, I thanked him for his kindness was sincere. That day I met the Good Samaritan and he is one wonderful human being--the kind of person any one of us can be any time. Have a Merry Christmas! P.S. My truck now hauls a sleek racecar jack in the toolbox. --SB



## Demise of the Fin Pheasant Program



*John Postemski took Pete Gianopoulos to ME where Pete took this 227 lb. buck & snatched the ME Biggest Buck Patch from John.*

It seems that most pheasant hunters have not been listening of late to what Don Bajger has been saying about his plans for next year's pheasant raising program. He's not going to take responsibility for raising the pheasants!

Don has been managing the pheasant program for the past three years—with great success—but he's planning on stepping out of that job, so somebody else has to step

forward and do the work. Will you do the work?

Anyone who has worked in the pheasant raising program knows that it is labor intensive, especially in the early weeks with the baby chicks—but in truth all the way from spring through fall when the plump hens and cocks take to the air—or try to. And being chairman requires a commitment to making certain that everything is done right and on time. You

have to get a good team together and manage those guys for feeding, watering, debeaking, blinders, cleaning the pens, catching and releasing, and so forth. Then, you have the satisfaction of knowing that Club members go into the fields with their dogs for a great day of pheasant hunting in the fall.

However, 2004 will have no pheasant program if somebody does not volunteer for the job.

## Shotgun Sports Raises Fees for Rounds

Sometime this spring we need to get the paint on the skeet sheds where the weather is showing its handiwork.

As of January 1, 2004, the shotgun shooting facilities will begin charging members \$2.50 per round (25 clay targets) of skeet and trap shot at the Fin.

Also, all guests and non-members will pay \$3.00 per round in these sports.

Joe Pirolo, Shotgun Sports Chairman, announced the in-

creases at a recent Executive Committee meeting, noting also that the Club has had the same \$2.00 fee per round for members for at least 15 years. Most other clubs in the state, he said, have fees for rounds at the \$2.50 rate and some have facilities that are nowhere near the quality we have.

Besides, Joe noted, the Fin's shotgun guys and gals have never been ones to shirk their responsibilities when it comes to supporting this very fine outdoor sports club.



*Charlie Hill showing great form while busting clays earlier this summer--when the weather was sunny and warm.*

## FFF Skeet Teams for Members Only

It's now Club policy that FFF skeet teams must be made up of fully paid up members in good standing with the Club. If you have a team that has a member who has not paid his/her club dues and assessments in time for the January 30, 2004 deadline, you will be in serious difficulty when it

comes time to step up to the firing line and break clays.

Thus, start making calls and inquiries with members of your team and make sure they pay up before it's too late.

Also, if some of your members are the forgetful types, let them know that procrastination or

memory loss can be costly. It is now Club policy that if dues are not paid on time, the tardy member has to reapply, which means paying the \$100 non-refundable application fee.

See a related article in this issue of the R&GG for the 2004 Skeet Shoot Schedule.

## *Annual Club Raffle*

The word is out that Steve Davis and Peter Rich are hard at work on the 2004 Annual Club Raffle. Just exactly what the prizes are has yet to be revealed, but you are sure to find plenty of mouth-watering opportunities in the list when it is published.

New this year will be thirty tickets instead of the customary 25. The rationale for this increase is that members who are good at sales can most

likely sell another 5 as easily as they sold the first 25. Also, the best ticket salespersons typically go back to the club to get additional unsold raffle tickets. Now they have more to sell from the start.

As in the past, raffle tickets will be distributed at the Annual Game Dinner. Members who do not attend the dinner will receive their packet in the mail.

All members should recognize the great potential for the

Club's finances from the Annual Raffle. With 400 members selling 30 raffle tickets each at \$30.00, that translates into \$12,000. That money can go a long way toward helping the Club meet expenses for repairs and replacements of equipment or facilities, new programs, utilities, and so forth.

The bottom line is: every member has an obligation to sell 30 raffle tickets. Do your part.



*Here's Steve Davis signing up hopeful winners at the Club's Annual Picnic.*

## *Great Opportunities for Work Hours*

At a recent meeting of the Club's regular membership, John Pawelec and Ron Mott announced that they are forming special committees to work in the kitchen and building and grounds respectively. These ambitious committee chairmen have solid reputations for getting the job done on time and to everyone's genuine satisfac-

tion. The Club's kitchen needs repair work, parts/component replacement, and new equipment. We may need to engage in some fun time fund raising to pay for all that needs to be done. Similarly, with nearly 300 acres of property and many out buildings, the Fin's property has constant need of maintenance and repair.

John Pawelec and Ron Mott need help, so ask yourself if you would rather work with one guy or the other guy, or maybe you want to join both work details, but regardless of your preferences—they are both great sports—get your butt over to the Club and sign onto their committees pronto!

**John Pawelec & Ron Mott are waiting for your phone calls to help make 2004 a great year for improvements. Sign on NOW!**

## *Laminated Membership Cards*

This year Paul and Sharleen Sobol devoted time to laminating each and every club member's membership card. That plastic laminate not only protects your card from damage in the elements—including the bashing it gets from the big bucks in your wallet—it provides a little enhancement to

make our Club look all that much better than the ordinary place.

Next time you see Paul and Sharleen, tell them "thanks a bunch."

If you have paid your dues and assessments, you can pick up your shiny new card at the bar

the next time you visit the Club. If not, then come to the Annual Game Dinner, pay your dues and assessments, and get your 2004 card.

Pay fees at the bar. Bob "Moon" Hruskocy will record your payment where he's set up with the computer.



*Paul and Sharleen are the great looking couple squeezed in the middle.*

## Plans for Fishing at the Fin in 2004



*Use your imagination while keeping your feet warm by the fire. Summer 2004 is not far away.*

Plans will soon be finalized for stocking ponds during March (weather permitting) and April. More information will be available at a later point and will be posted for all to see.

A work party is being planned for April 3, 2004 to clear more brush from around the ponds. The fly pond needs a lot of cutting up near its origin at the big rock. The trees are overgrowing the area and will be cut back. The other ponds need to be cleared also so that the members have access all

around their perimeters. Lopping shears, brush hogs, and chain saws or other type cutters are needed.

Also in April we will hold a swap meet. The date has not been fixed as yet. Any and all types of sporting items can be brought to swap or sell. Table costs will be used to help pay for the fish being stocked!

If any one is interested we can have some fly tying instruction classes during March and April. We can decide on dates if there

is any interest. Please put your name on a piece of paper and leave it at the bar for me. Kenny will get them to me and we can firm up our plans.

The Kid's Fish Derby will be held May 1, 2004. The fly pond will be stocked expressly for the kids. The event will begin at 8 AM and will end at 12 NOON. Prizes and food will be available for the kids. They may use any bait except corn and minnows.

—Frank Mauri

## Latest Fish Committee Report

**Frank says there are fish in the club's fly pond, so make plans to cut a hole in the ice as soon as it's safe.**

During October the Fly Pond was stocked. About 100 trout were placed in the pond and have been fished over by the fly fishermen. Very few fish were removed from the pond during Oct., Nov. and Dec. until the pond froze over.

When the ice thickens to the extent that it may safely be walked on, the pond will be

open to ice fisherman! Any legal means of ice fishing may be pursued! The limit of trout that may be taken per day is 2! **Please sign in before starting to fish and sign out any trout caught!!** There are bass and bluegill sunfish in the pond and these may be taken without limit.

Last year organized tourna-

ments were held and this may occur again this winter. Those organizing the tournaments should post the date and times of the event in the bar and on the sign-in board at the fly pond, so all the club members may partake in the contest.



*Get with the program and you'll be recognized as Member of the Month, Man of the Year, or Lifetime Service Award.*

## Health & Welfare of the Fin

Members are surely aware that Mary Goss chose to take a break from the Executive Committee, where she served, once again, as Secretary--fulfilling the responsibilities nicely as always in the past. We shall miss her devotion to duty and great record keeping skills.

These days Mary is gallivanting in the countryside, showing her fluffy dogs or punching neat little holes in pistol targets. Either way, she is getting more and more awards for really fine work. Good luck Mary!

However, she has not abandoned her commitment to the

Club. This year she continues to help with Health and Welfare issues, notably working with Dick Palmer, our new Secretary, on getting plaques and awards for Man of the Year, Lifetime Service Award, and Member of the Month. Say hello to her at the Annual Game Dinner

# Registered Skeet Shoot Dates for 2004

On November 16, 2003, the Connecticut Skeet Shooting Association held its annual meeting at the Hartford Gun Club. One of the items on the agenda was the assignment of skeet shoot dates for 2004.

The Fin obtained the following weekend dates:

**June 5/6, 2004 "The Northeast Open"** - - We plan a shoot that will begin on Friday June 4 with Doubles, then on Saturday we will shoot the 12 gauge in the morning followed by the 20 gauge in the afternoon. On Sunday we will shoot the 28 gauge in the morning and finish with the 410 gauge later in the day.

**July 10/11, 2004 "The Fin Open"** - - This can be a 2 gun or a four-gun shoot. Current plans are for a four gun shoot along the lines of the "Northeast Open".

**Aug 7/8, 2004 "The Cool Hand Luke"** - - This also can be either a 2 or 4 gun shoot. The plan is for a four-gun shoot.

We own these weekends! No other registered shoots will be held in CT during these times and in fact no shoots will be held in nearby states. Our only competition is in states as far away as Maryland.

If the members of the Fin rally behind the skeet committee and devote a few hours during the shoot helping with targets, the grounds, refereeing or working in the kitchen, etc. we can hold four gun shoots and make a substantial profit for the club. Please consider working one or more of the shoots for as much time as you feel you can devote to the Fin.

Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Fin Member No:\_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) available to work:\_\_\_\_\_

I will be conducting referee clinics during April 2004. Anyone interested can attend and learn the rules governing the competition, the positions to be taken for each station and how to pull and score.

I'd like to be a referee:\_\_\_\_\_

—Frank Mauri

## FFF 2004 3D Shoots

March 14	May 9 (Moms shoot free)	September 12
April 18	June 13	Contact Rick Turcotte 860-742-6353



*Remember: empty hulls should not be left at the ranges. Clean up!*

Soon Joe Pirolo will be posting minimum rules for range use. Read and heed. This is our club as well as yours. Keep it in tip top shape.

# New Executive Committee Commences Work

The annual Club election of officers and directors took place in October, as provided for in the Fin's By-Laws. Several members who had served for the past few years chose to discontinue their service on the board. We are especially grateful for their hard work and determination to make the

Club a better place, and wish them the best in their "retirement" for the time being. New board members include Bobby Theriault, John Pawelec, Joe Pirolo, Ron Mott, and Keith Morehouse--as alternate. "New" doesn't really apply to Bobby T and Joe Pirolo, as they have served in this

capacity with distinction in the recent past.

Dick Palmer stepped up to the plate as Secretary, while President, Vice President, and Treasurer continue their long-standing service as officers.

We have another great EC.



*The buck stops here--just avoid the petty things.*



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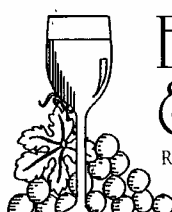


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## U.S. Constitution

### Bill of Rights Amendment 2

**"A well regulated militia,  
being necessary to the security  
of a free State, the right of  
the people to keep and bear  
Arms, shall not be infringed."**

**In God we  
trust....**

**With  
liberty and  
justice for  
all**

**Bring on justice!**

The Club's membership sends condolences to the Barry Wilson and Henry Wyszomierski families. These members passed away recently, and they shall be missed.

### Executive Officers

Don Bajger, President	860-423-6693
Charles Bruckerhoff, Vice-President	860-455-1229
Dick Palmer, Secretary	860-487-0388
Jon Guarino, Treasurer	860-423-3347

### Executive Committee

Steve Davis	860-558-1890
Bob Hruskocy	860-569-1592
Ron Mott	860-742-5372
John Pawelec	860-429-7033
Joe Pirolo	860-742-5003
John Postemski	860-423-9396
Bob Theriault	860-456-3431
Keith Morehouse (alternate)	860-547-1333

### Committee Chairpersons

Archery: Rick Turcotte	860-742-6353
Bar: Steve Davis	860-558-1890
Jon Guarino	860-423-3347
Black Powder: Charles Bruckerhoff	860-455-1229
Building/Grounds: Ron Mott	860-742-5372
By-Laws Review:	
Finance Review: Jon Guarino	860-423-3347
Jeff Arendholz	860-663-0858
James Northrop	860-642-6802
Fishing: Frank Mauri	860-974-1425
Hunting: Don Bajger	860-423-6693
Health/Welfare: Mary Goss	860-423-3211
Insurance Review: Eugene Lewis	860-423-3341
Junior Programs:	
Charles Bruckerhoff	860-455-1229
Pat Enright	860-429-0172
Kevin Segar	860-429-4925
Membership:	
Bob Hruskocy	860-569-1592
Steve Davis	860-558-1890
Charles Bruckerhoff	860-455-1229
Newsletter: Charles Bruckerhoff	860-455-1229
Pheasants: Don Bajger	860-423-6693
Pistol: Dick Palmer	860-487-0388
Rifle: Peter Mathewson	860-456-8588
Shotgun: Bob Frankland	860-742-6939
Joe Pirolo	860-742-5003
Sporting Clays: Dick White	860-456-4382
James Davidson	860-742-7676
Pete Stevens	203-573-0121
Trap: Don O'Neil	860-642-6805

On December 13, 2003, 600 brave United States ground forces of the Army's 4th Infantry Division captured Saddam Hussein in Tikrit, Iraq, where he was hiding like a filthy rat in a hole. It must have taken extreme restraint on the part of each and every allied and U.S. soldier not to give that scoundrel his due. Now we wait for justice to unfold on a grand scale, yet it is only possible through a military-type tribunal on foreign soil, for the liberal lawyers and courts abounding on our land would surely conspire to set the butcher free, overlooking tens of thousands he tortured, maimed, and murdered. Now soldiers: it's time for al Queda and Osama bin Laden! We salute you.

