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Special points of interest:

- Happy Holidays to all our readers.
- Make plans for the Annual Game Dinner!
- Pay your dues early and help the Club meet expenses
- Black Powder Guys challenge the Shotgun Guys to a shoot-out next summer.

Letter from the President

It's hard to believe that another year has passed here at the Fin. Looking back, there were some great events, dinners, and other functions old and new that were put on by our members. Even though winter has arrived, more activities are yet to come.

Our club continues to put forth a great variety of events for all our members and guests. Every year we have some new ones. I am a firm believer in trying new ideas and keeping our club moving in a positive direction. It doesn't matter who you are here at the Fin, if you want to propose or try an event, dinner etc., or organize it, advertise it and most of all follow up on it! We have a lot of the same

members who give tremendous amounts of time and effort season after season for the benefit of everyone here without personal gain. But sooner or later these same people will grow tired and need a break. The New Year is upon us and I'm sure the calendar has room for something. Step up!!

Right now the club is quieting down as the last of our exceptional pheasants are being stocked and deer season is coming to a close. Winter skeet league is in full swing and the wood stove is keeping the clubhouse warm. Soon tip-ups will replace fishing poles and before I write the next article talk of pheasant chicks and fish stockings

will be the buzz.

The Fin has passed 50 years in existence, more years than I have been alive. I'm just looking forward to the next one. I've said before, we have a premier facility here, a great combination of old world charm of days gone by, with the support of modern day conveniences. Although it's quiet right now, the new season is coming. Let's hope we all can make it one to remember here at the Fin.

I want to wish everyone a very Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

Steven J. Davis
President

Club Annual Game Dinner—January 29th

It's that time of year again. The Club's Annual Game Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, January 29th, 2006. As usual, there is a demand for help with the kitchen and hall, involving food preparation, table service, and clean-up & set-up (both before and after the event). If

you need to complete work hours, this is an ideal opportunity to get that work done.

As usual, the Club will invite VIPs from the surrounding communities, which provides an opportunity for members to discuss with them, especially

the politicians, any current issues regarding hunting, fishing, shooting, and firearms range protection.

Mainly, this special dinner is a great time to sit down with other members and celebrate the good things we have.

Shotgun Sports

Currently, the only shotgun activities happening are Winter League Skeet and some recreational shooting on the weekdays. Trap, Sporting Clays, and Five-Stand are pretty much finished until April. However, the year 2006 will present a substantial task to our club as we will be hosting several important shoots:

- State Skeet Shoot - Labor Day weekend
- Zone Skeet Championship - August 10th – 12th
- Registered Skeet Shoot - early June
- One Registered Trap Shoot - June 18th
- Ducks Unlimited Sporting Clays Tournament - June 17th

Five Sporting Clay League events and periodic Five-Stand Shoots.

All of these activities require the cooperation of our Fin members to insure a successful event. Your help is desperately needed. We have the potential to generate a lot of revenue for the Fin, so please volunteer your time to help out.

At the October membership meeting, a year-end financial report was given which showed that Shotgun Sports is a profit-making entity. After paying all of our expenses, including targets, utilities and the mortgage on the fields, we still generated a profit of over \$6,700.

Additionally, we would like to make everyone aware that one of our own, Steve Krukoff, finished 6th

in the World Skeet Championship missing only 2 of 550 targets. This is a tremendous feat. Congratulations Steve from the FFF. We are proud of you.

In closing, those of us who run the shotgun sports events at the Fin wish to extend to all of you, our fellow "Finonians", a healthy joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

In hope of all 25's,
Jim Davidson
Bob Hruskocy
Joe Pirolo



Who is Santa Clause? Ask a little kid 2-3 years old to explain this to you and you'll get back in touch with the beauty of Christmas.

"These Officers and Board Members provide leadership for our fine Club. Make sure that they know your concerns and recommendations—and when they need help, be there to lend a hand. Work is not done by magic."

2005 Election of Club Officers & Board

Right on time, the annual election of Club officers and board members occurred during the Regular Membership meeting in October. Returning to his position as President for a second term is Steven Davis. Also, returning to office are Dick Palmer as Secretary and Tom Hoagland as Treasurer. The new Vice President is Don

Bajger, although not at all a new face on the Board, having served three years as the last President and then a follow-up year as Immediate Past President.

Election results for Board Members are as follows: Jim Gifford (Alternate), Jon Guarino, Bob (Moon) Hrus-

kocy, Keith Morehouse (Alternate), John Pawelec, Mike Sobol, Paul Sobol, Bobby Theriault, and Rick Turcotte.

Please join me in wishing these men a successful year of guiding the Fin into ever greater opportunities for all of the members! Congratulations men! —CB

Black Powder Boxes

The Holiday season is upon us and winter will soon be in full swing. It is not a time for skirmishers to hibernate, however, there is way too much to do to get ready for the 2006 season.

In addition to the usual lead prep and bullet casting, it is also a time to crank up the power tools to build a new and "improved" gun cart. "Improved" in this context means one to hold more muskets and carbines. Gun carts are often a reflection of their creator. They take on all shapes and sizes. Come Spring you can see them behind the firing line...big ones, small ones, colorful ones, drab ones. Carts to pique anyone's interest.

Mine is already finished; now I have to work on this winter's rationalization speech to justify the purchase of a yet-to-be-seen musket or carbine that will no doubt catch my eye at

one of the upcoming antique gun shows.

If you like what you see in the accompanying photo, drop me a note and I will be happy to give you the specs.

David Lee Volz
dlv@att.net

"Dave Volz has made one fine piece of equipment to roll out onto the skirmish line. Photos show front and back views. Fine work Dave! And thanks for keeping us informed about the black powder interests." Editor



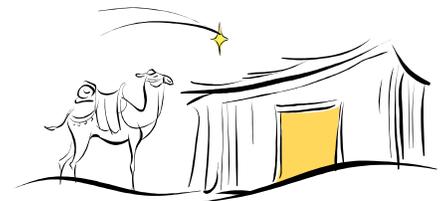
Challenge to the 3 Shotgun Guys

The article from the 3 Shotgun Guys on the previous page piqued out interest over here in Black Powder Sports. They impress us as some of the nicest guys, possibly also the best organized bunch of shooters anywhere, and they are not only bringing in much-needed revenue to the Fin, they are having great fun doing so.

But they also beat us on the deadline for submission of articles

to the *R&GG* by several days for this issue. That really got our attention.

In fun and fairness, we'd like to challenge them to a real contest with Black Powder firearms on breakable targets this next summer. Our guns and targets. Your skill against ours. May the best win. What do you say, Shotgun Guys? —CB



The Skirmisher's Equipment & Woes

"See the tight shot group in that target below? Too bad. That's a sign the poor skirmisher has to start all over with sight adjustment. There is no 'adjustable' sight on a musket, so work starts from scratch with the hammer, drill, and bastard file; and on another day, after many, many practice shots, finally it's just right...until the humidity changes, or the sun doesn't shine through the clouds, or something else intervenes to throw off the shot. All a normal part of the skirmisher's life. And we love it."

Without question, the most important equipment for the N-SSA skirmisher are guns, including one or more of the following: rifle musket, carbine, repeating rifle (e.g., Henry), pistol, and smoothbore musket. All of these are black powder guns, of course, as the requirement for skirmishers is that the firearms used in competitions must be approved as original or reproduction hand and shoulder arms used during the Civil War. And, any self-respecting skirmisher will have several of each kind, since one never knows when a particular firearm will not fire and a back-up piece is necessary.

The basic firearm is the rifle musket and having just that piece is sufficient to get started in this fun-filled sport. But not many beginners are willing to restrict their fun times to only one implement, so within a few years they acquire the other kinds of firearms, which not only enable them to compete in different events, but also add

more uncertainty, frustration, and vexation to the whole enterprise. Shooting black powder skirmishes is not for someone who likes to have everything just so and have it remain that way for ever. No way! The variables affecting any shot taken at any time from any gun are huge in number and kind, leading to incredibly surprising results down range. For the beginner, such "luck" can be exasperating, if not enticing.

Besides the ever-important and constantly accumulating guns, there is the supporting equipment and accouterments necessary for full participation in this sport. In the preceding article, Dave Voltz shows off his spanking new cart...a real gem. As he notes, any skirmish line is filled with carts in a myriad of designs, often fine, hand-made cabinets on wheels, like Dave's. Sometimes the cart is a kid's red wagon outfitted with gun racks. Now and then the weirdest contraptions roll onto the field, bouncing, spilling contents—a good laugh for everyone.

My box and equipment appears in the photo close by. As Dave noted, personal preferences dictate the cart's design. He wanted boxes; I wanted drawers. Both systems work. However, no cart has enough room for all of the stuff a skirmisher needs, including but not limited to: targets, leather ammo box, bayonet and scabbard, belt, rags, sufficient ammo for every gun, general tools, more tools, cleaning solvents and oils, cleaning rods for each gun, sight black and sight orange paint, leather gloves, caps aplenty, safety glasses (extras), ear plugs, special tools for the different guns, spotting scope, stapling gun, staples, tripod, haversack with raincoat, umbrella for wicked hot sun and torrential rainstorm, folding chair. And, for efficiency-style shooting, a specially designed MTM Skirmisher's Box that has all of the essential equipment for the line.

Did I leave anything out? A water bottle, sandwich, wallet, mosquito repellent, sunscreen, truck keys, cell phone, army issue cot, and portable toilet. No, just kidding about the cot and toilet. We sleep on the ground and water trees, which saves space for additional guns, because we never have enough of those. Interested? Contact Mike Thomas, Dave Thompson, Dave Voltz, Jim Nau-mec, or me any time. We'd love to show you our stuff and introduce you to the exciting world of skirmishing. Good shooting. —CB



What's Happening with Trap?

On November 5th, the Trap Committee held a beef brisket dinner. A total of 92 tickets were sold.

Member Dan Eaves, and his family cooked a fabulous meal. The cooking crew drove up from Texas to prepare for the event. After all expenses were paid, the club netted a profit of \$614.71. Furthermore, the bar had a great day as well.

A special thanks is due to Dan and his entire family for making the event a huge success. Thank you!

—Bob Hruskocy
Trap Chairman



Cooks hard at work preparing a great meal (TOP PHOTO); a few guests having a good time at the cookout (BOTTOM PHOTO).

Membership News

Invoices were mailed out a few weeks ago. If you have not received your invoice, please contact me ASAP. The membership cards will be available at the bar until the end of January. Don't forget to pick up your 2006 button as well. If they are not picked up by the end of January, they will be mailed to you.

A table will be set up at the game dinner as well to collect dues.

Dues must be paid in full by Jan 31st. If you have a true hardship and cannot pay your dues, please contact me.

Currently, there are 382 Regular members in the club, 100 Life, 37 Associate, & 18 Junior members.

If your email address has changed, please send me the new address.

Membership fun fact. In which city do most members reside? Coventry! 32 members!

Have a safe Holiday season!

—Bob Hruskocy
Membership Chairman

A Tribute to Steven Sabo, Jr.

“Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.”

John provided these photos and explained that Steve showed him the handsome storytelling headstone well in advance of his last days with us. As John notes, the Memorial at the Club’s flagpole is a fitting tribute to one of the Club’s greatest friends.

Requiescat in Pace.

For over 55 years, this man worked to make our Club what it is today. Through the years we have had many, many members who have worked many hours toward the success of the Fin, Fur, & Feather Club, but no one has come close to what Steve did.

The Club was meeting at Al’s and Irene’s Restaurant, which was on Route 6 across from Wal-Mart when Steve signed me as a member. We then moved to rented land and met in a Quonset Hut where the Eastern Connecticut State University Base Ball Field is located today. The little old farm house and barns where we are now was purchased with Steve’s involvement for \$12,000 as

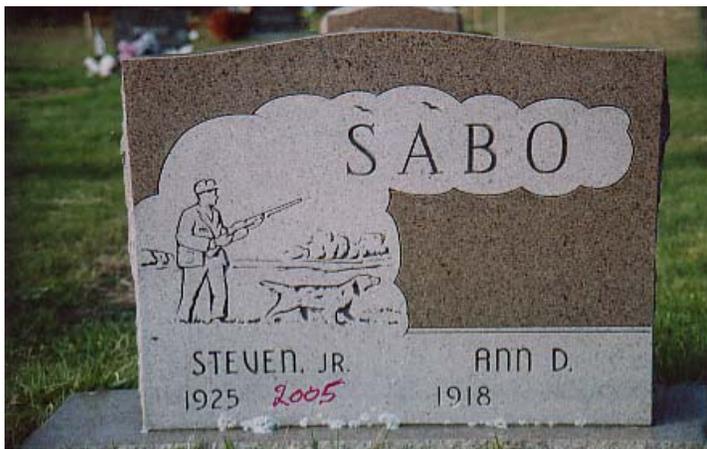
I remember it. He started the Pheasant Program and always took the leading role in finding land to stock birds. Our first trap field was across the driveway from his memorial monument, which he supervised.

Steve was so involved in everything that we changed the By-Laws so that he could only be President for two consecutive terms. I think he would have been President forever if we hadn’t done that. Right up to the end, with legs amputated, he was looking after just about every project that went on. When we were working on the new skeet fields, he would drive into the yard and sit in his car until I came out so that he could tell me what the

contractor was out of line on or that my water pump at the recently sprouted grass had stopped running. Without leaving his car, he would find holes in the Pheasant Pen and report how many birds were out.

We had differences, which is a normal thing amongst successful people, but we always—under his leadership—did what was best for our Club. I’m sure others will come along and do well for our Club, but Steven Sabo, Jr. will never be forgotten.

—John Postemski





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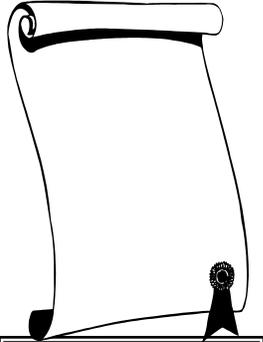
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2005 Children's Christmas Party a Success—Again!

The Children's Christmas party was held on Sunday, December 4th. The snow did not keep 67 children and their families from coming to see Santa arrive on his bright green 4X4 ATV. There was plenty of food, entertainment and great gifts for all.

Two very successful work parties were held to prepare for this event. All those who attended the work parties were well rewarded with delicious appetizers cooked by John Pawelec and chef Nancy Davidson. Many thanks to: Matt, Owen and Faith Halloran, Vance and Emily Stewart, Jim and Nancy Davidson, Sharlene Sobol, Tom Hoagland and family, Al Miffitt, Marie & Don Bajer, and Troy and Darla Quick--their decorating abilities helped to make this party such a success. Also, a big thanks to all those who helped take down all the tables, chairs and clean up after the party.

The Children's Party, Easter Egg Hunt, Prizes for the Fishing derby, and prizes for the family picnic are all funded entirely by the profits from the Dice Game, donations made in the jars on the bar and the various dinners served throughout the year. Your generosity is appreciated!

Next Children's Event is the Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 9th!!



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Ice Fishing Ahead

The thrill of fishing has practically no boundaries, certainly the weather outside puts no limits on this sport. Proof comes especially in winter in the sudden appearance of Ice Fishing Shacks that form tiny temporary towns all across the land, on the lakes that is, in the northern reaches of our great country.

With the sudden 2005 December cold snap we experienced here in CT, the time is near when the intrepid fishermen load up their gear, their bait, and their shack, and head out for a favorite spot on the ice. Of course, the shack is portable, so if one hole in the ice isn't produc-

ing fish, the shack is moved to another and yet another and another in the never-ending search for the illusive big catch of the season.

If we think of ice fishing in days long ago, we can easily imagine the primitive form of the sport. If warmth was an issue, often doubtful, then some kind of crude wood, charcoal or kerosene stove might be used. Today, however, portable propane furnaces offer the comfort of home, complete with a romantic flame, digital temperature controls, and ceramic logs.

Communication back then was little to none, offering hours upon hours for quiet contemplation.

Solitude was bliss. An occasional nip from a bottle might help one cope with any sense of loneliness. If a friend was along, all the better not to talk of fish stories alone.

Not so today, when the cell phone enables talk with anyone anywhere any time, or the ipod or DVD players with mega capacities. High tech gear may be stashed in the diminutive shacks alongside electronic fish finders and other gizmos. I'll bet, however, there are still some fishermen in those shacks who come from the old school, where ice fishing was a pole, line, hook, bait, and good sense. —CB



Leaving Pets Behind—In Good Hands

Some of the Club's newcomers may not know Mary Goss, but those of us who have been around awhile do. She has served in a number of important leadership capacities, doing good work for the Fin, the last of which was a long-term stint as our Secretary. She's also served on the Appeals Board and the By-Laws Revi-

sion Committee. Mary Goss was the Pistol Committee Chairperson when that range was upgraded, including adding the concrete floor, target turning apparatus, grading and landscape improvement, and so forth. We'll probably see her again at the Annual Game Dinner and be so glad she has time for that fun-time event.

But she also operates a home-based dog and cat care center in N. Windham, as her ad below indicates. I can testify that she provides the very best care for small animals. So, if you need to get away for a while and want to leave your pet(s) in the hands of a skilled and loving caretaker, give Mary a call. —CB

If man's best friend is a dog, then what is a cat? The long-domesticated house cat must be placed on earth by God not for man's enjoyment but rather for his frustration and puzzlement. The cat is a sphinx wrapped in fur.

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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.”

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Dick Palmer, Secretary	860-487-0388
Tom Hoagland, Treasurer	860-455-0641

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Jon Guarino	860-428-2873
Bob Hruskocy	860-569-1592
Ron Mott	860-450-0724
John Pawelec	860-429-7033
Joe Pirolo	860-742-5003
Mike Sobol	860-742-8575
Paul Sobol	860-228-0725
Rick Turcotte	860-742-6353
Bob Theriault	860-456-3431
Keith Morehouse (Alternate)	860-547-1333

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Bar: Steve Davis	860-558-1890
Black Powder: Charles Bruckerhoff	860-455-1229
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Let us never forget the men and women who today proudly serve this great country, the United States of America, and all who have done so before them. In our times, these brave soldiers continue to place their lives on the line especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, so that the freedoms we enjoy at home are not diminished, and so that the American ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness prevail. That is our gift to the world and as anyone knows who has served particularly in wartime, it comes with a high price tag: courage and at times self-sacrifice. We will measure up to our ancestors and we will not let down our children and grandchildren. Do your part. --Editor

