

**SPRINGS ROD & GUN CLUB NEWSLETTER - WINTER /SPRING 2009**  
DEDICATED TO YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF OUTDOOR SPORTS

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Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month at 8 pm during DST and 7 pm. when on EST.

THE WEBSITE: The club website is [www.springsrodandgunclub.org](http://www.springsrodandgunclub.org). Look for current information there!

BE SURE YOU SIGN UP FOR 2009\* - \$20 INDIVIDUAL, \$25 FAMILY.

You can sign up at Edinboro Outdoors, Finck Tire, Hendrickson's, John's Barbershop or use the application on the web site and mail it to the secretary.

\* NOTICE: Membership year has been changed to run July 1 to June 30, effective 2009.  
2008 memberships (orange card) are good until June 30, 2009.

**ARCHERY PARTY** March 21, 2009 – Venango VFW Post. This is a fun event and is a major fund raiser for the club. **MEMBERS: IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TAKE INTEREST AND HELP WITH THIS EVENT.** We need ticket sellers, set up workers, floor help at the event and tear down/clean up people. Contact Dave Wise at 398-4554 and let him know you will be there. Set up will start before noon, the event starts at 1pm and ends at 4pm. Clean up starts at 4pm. Workers eat for free. Tickets to sell/buy are available at Hendrickson's.

**2008 GUN PARTY/PIG ROAST** - The 2008 fall gun party was held September 15 at the Venango VFW Post. We had a nice crowd and the raffle winners had an especially good time. The rest of us ate well! Ticket sales were down so we came up a little short of our financial goal, but we made out okay. Each year we try to improve both the food and prizes. Any comments you have can be directed to the club officers or Emil Samec, the gun party chairman. Yes, we know we had some diet coke that was dated 2007 – somebody found it in the store room and didn't check the date. It won't happen again.

**BUILDING** After more than two years of work the new building is shaping up well. The kitchen and front entrance have been the focus of attention lately. Moisture problems this summer were remedied with a dehumidifier (we hope). We also experienced some blown in rain in one of the summer storms. We haven't had any rain problems since so it must have been caused by strong winds from a unusual direction. The completion of the front entrance concrete work awaits spring, the kitchen and men's bathroom work will commence during the winter months.

Martha Mathews donated the fixtures in the ladies room. The club thanks her for her generosity. Although the block retaining wall at the front entrance to the new building may not look like much work, we have more than 135 hours of volunteer time invested in it so far. And there is a lot more to do just on it when the weather breaks. There is another winter's work to finish the men's restroom, kitchen, install interior doors, baseboard and paint the floor. The Boy Scouts have been using the building for meetings and "sleepovers" and some members have done some indoor air rifle shooting. Other than club meeting, that is the only use of the building so far. Hopefully when the front entrance, kitchen and bathrooms are complete some rentals of the building will be in order.

**BIG TAX HIKE** We have been notified that our real estate assessment has been increased and we can expect our taxes to increase by a factor of FOUR. Members, that means our costs to operate the club are going to increase by something like \$1,500 per year. We aren't exempt from taxes like VFWs, American Legion Posts or Churches even though we are non-profit and do a lot of gratis work with youth.

**FINANCES/FUND RAISING** - 2008 was a busy year for the club. Ten high power rifle matches were held along with sporting clays shooting each month. We manned booths at the Cambridge Springs Fireman's Carnival and the Waterford Fair plus the spring archery party and the fall gun raffle. High power rifle has been a modest success as is sporting clays. Neither is a big money maker. If it were not for about four guys both would fold. The booths at the carnival and fair also are a lot of work for little profit – but much goodwill. The booths consist of archery and air rifle. We keep the charges low to encourage young people to shoot. We have even had shooters from other countries where gun ownership is prohibited. We could use an interpreter in some cases! The archery and gun parties are where we make the majority of our money. Mercer County Bank holds our mortgage of about \$16,000 @ 7.5%. We pay about \$221/month on the loan. A few successful archery and gun parties could make a large dent in the loan.

**HIGH POWER RIFLE** Your Club has hosted Civilian Marksmanship Program sanctioned High Power Rifle matches for many years now, and competitors in these matches are eligible to buy surplus rifles and ammo through the CMP ([www.odcmp.com](http://www.odcmp.com)). These matches traditionally are Service Rifle oriented, so any rifle from AR-15s, to the WW11 carbines and Garands, to U.S. and foreign made bolt-action rifles will be encountered on the firing line. This is a good opportunity to have fun with those old souvenirs or military surplus guns; the club has several kinds of surplus ammo available cheap, we shoot about 55 rounds per match.

SR&GC High Power matches are generally held the 4th Sunday every month; see the club calendar to be sure. Match fees are \$7 for adults, \$3 for Juniors, and Club ammo is still around \$0.20 per cartridge. We meet at the range at 8:30am for the 1st relay, and then usually offer a 2nd match at 1:30 in the afternoon (shoot both relays for a discount price).

On our club's 100 yd rifle range, we shoot at reduced Standard Military targets to simulate the official distances of 200, 300, and 600 yards. Shots are fired from Standing, Seated, and Prone positions, usually with slings, and a couple of controlled Rapid-Fire sections are included to wake things up. The club has several shooting mats and other equipment for participants use, and there's always an M1 carbine or some rifles available to try out or borrow for a match.

Why not come to our High Power matches this season? You will learn solid shooting positions and, like the rest of us, work on improving your own personal marksmanship. Although we are committed to safety on the range, and follow standard range procedure, the matches are really quite informal. Everything is explained as we go, everyone is friendly and helpful, all in all, it's about as much fun as you can have with your clothes on.

**RIFLE/PISTOL RANGE – DON'T FORGET TO SIGN IN WHEN USING THE RIFLE RANGE!**

We have maintained a sign in sheet at the rifle range for some time now. Please sign in when you use the range. The purpose of the sign in sheets is to give some idea of range usage. We know a lot of members pay dues specifically so that they can use the range and having data to support range improvements and aids in decisions to allocate the money. This past fall saw more range use than in the past several years.

There is always work to be done on the range. The target carriers get shot up every fall and somebody has to repair them. Just getting the carriers dragged/carried up to the canopy is a job, as is cleaning up the cardboard and cobbled up targets left on the range.

When you bring your magnum handgun please be careful that you don't destroy our sandbags with blast from muzzle brake or cylinder blast. I notice several sandbags leaking sand from such activity. The next guy with a nice gun doesn't appreciate the sand all over the benches or that there aren't any good sandbags to use!

Although there is more work to be done the pistol ranges (25 and 50 yd) are useable. They are for close range shooting. Shooting pistols on the rifle range has always resulted in ricochets; that is why we built the pistol ranges with the closer backstops.

**MISSING GUNS** A member lost two guns and some other equipment at the club on November 15, 2008. Through a mix-up, the guns were left unattended at the rifle range that afternoon and were taken. The two rifles were quite expensive guns. The gate was locked when they were left; it is most likely a club member picked up the guns. The officers of the club ask that the guns be returned to their rightful owner. If you don't want to identify yourself please leave a message with any officer or put the guns in the outhouse or old clubhouse – no questions asked. Let's help another members recover his loss.

**SPORTING CLAYS** continues to be shot with sign-ups from 11am to 1pm on the second Sunday of the month. Things move along well with small squads moving through the course. The target lanes have been improved and the targets have been adjusted so you can get a better look at them. Come out and shoot a round, it's fun!

**NEWSLETTER CIRCULATION** - scheduled to be mailed to current members twice a year. Editorials are solely the opinions of the writers. Anyone is welcome to write an editorial or provide news relating to outdoors activities. Submit your news item or editorial, in writing please, to the club secretary.

**Newsletter editorial** by Dave Birchard..... Well, the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States has been sworn in and we are entering another chapter in America's history. I wish Mr. Obama well and success in achieving all of his intended goals.

However, if you are a law abiding gun owner in these great United States of America – please beware. Possibly the most anti-gun President in America's history has just taken up residency in the White House. Here are a few examples:

- [1] President-elect Obama issued a questionnaire, to potential Cabinet members and staff, asking if the candidate (or anyone in his or her family) owned a firearm.....how is that relevant?
- [2] Hillary Clinton has been appointed as Secretary of State. In case you've forgotten, she has long been a gun-ban flag carrier and card carrying member of the misguided Million Mom March. Further, now she has direct dealings with other heads of state that may support the United Nations attempt to institute a world-wide gun ban treaty.
- [3] Rahm Emanuel has been named as Mr. Obama's chief-of-staff. Emanuel was instrumental in developing and promoting the Clinton gun-ban and is self-proclaimed gun hater in his own right. If he's the guy that will orchestrate the President's day-to-day business, look out.
- [4] Obama's appointment for Attorney General is Eric Holder – deputy AG under Janet Reno. Holder presented his own brief to the Supreme Court for the *Heller* case stating that the Second Amendment does not include protection of an individual's right to keep and bear arms.

These appointments are really only the tip of the iceberg relative to what may be in store for gun owners. VP Biden would love to see permanent Clinton-like gun bans. Speaker Pelosi certainly isn't our friend, either. And don't think it's only Washington legislators that are reaching into your gun safes, or your wallets. Last fall, Pennsylvania gun owners dodged a bullet when lawmakers failed to enact proposed legislation that would have placed a 5-cent tax on each round of ammo and required encoding ammunition with serial numbers and registering those numbers in a statewide database. This silly legislation likely will be reintroduced in 2009 and gun advocates expect to fight it again next year. This may be part of a growing national effort to regulate ammunition as one way to stem gun violence. Similar bills have been presented in several other states and the District of Columbia; fortunately none have become law – yet.

Some gun-banners may realize that an outright ban on firearms ownership may be tough, even on a state or local level. With that in mind, their efforts may be turning to a back-door approach at achieving the same goal, by excessive taxation of ammunition/components, encoding serial numbers on bullets/casings or other tactics. Any of these requirements would make ammunition costs virtually unaffordable to most gun owners.

All through the election, Mr. Obama proclaimed "I believe in the Second Amendment, and I believe in common sense gun safety laws". Stay informed and be on guard America. It may be wise to cruise through the following website and formulate your own opinion: [http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/nra\\_targets\\_obama.html](http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/nra_targets_obama.html)

What can you do?

- (1) Stay informed and don't hide your head in the sand saying "they can't come and take 'em".
- (2) Contact your US representatives and senators telling them to make sure President Obama sticks to his campaign promises and supports the Second Amendment. Also Contact your Pennsylvania legislators and remind them to say no to any ridiculous taxes, ammunition encoding or similar gun-grabbing antics.
- (3) Regardless of how you feel about National Rifle Association, NRA is fighting to keep all of our rights safe. Renew or upgrade your membership.
- (4) Recruit at least one new NRA member AND sign up a member to this club.

**Dead-Eye 4-H Shooting Club** The 2009 program is underway with our air rifle project. Over 20 area boys and girls are learning the fundamentals of gun safety and fine tuning their shooting skills. We meet Thursday evenings at the Church of God gymnasium. Come out and watch these kids. First Church of God has been a terrific host of this program – entering its 13<sup>th</sup> year. We hope to move the air rifle project to the club for 2010. The archery and muzzleloading rifle projects will be moving to the Springs R&G Club and will start in late March or early April. The shotgun project will be starting in May. Stay tuned for more information.

Many thanks are due to the dedicated volunteers, leaders and instructors to keep this program thriving. Further, thanks to NRA Foundation, Friends of NRA and Finck Tire for their continued financial support. Special recognition goes to Bob Mang for 25 years of service as a 4-H leader!!

**SECRETARY'S MESSAGE** I visited Dr. Ronald Martin's office in Cambridge Springs over the holidays for my yearly physical and was asked to fill out a new information form. Guess what? One of the questions is "Are there any guns in your home"? What business is it of my doctor whether there are guns in my house? You will be asked to fill out a form too. Check closely as to what questions are asked. My wife filled out the questionnaire and didn't pick up on that question as being out of line.

In my life I have seen many changes. In the 1940's seeing a deer track locally was really something to talk about. Small game hunting was excellent, rabbits and grouse were plentiful as were ring necked pheasants. By the late 50's deer were becoming more plentiful and deer hunting was really picking up. Small game hunting remained good. Fishing was also good, more streams were stocked with trout and French Creek yielded big walleyes and muskies. Then came the chemicals to control weeds and we saw the end of the cooperative pheasant programs. Chemical weed control and green hay harvesting destroyed the "native" pheasant population. Rabbits became more scarce as well. Now hunting birds is an act of chasing a stocking truck from one game lands to another. We have no grouse. There are lots of deer, but many, many more houses where I used to hunt. Houses where I used to fish too – and no-trespassing signs. The only thing that hasn't changed much is the fishing in French Creek although nobody fishes for suckers anymore. You have to work at it, but there are still some nice game fish there. There are more places to fish with the recently built artificial lakes – that is good – the other changes aren't so good.

**POTLUCK DINNERS** Recently the attendance at potlucks has gotten down to two couples and several potlucks were cancelled because one or both of the couples had conflicts. The potlucks will continue to be scheduled monthly on the second Saturday at 6pm, but here is how it is going to work: If you want to participate, and we hope you do, call Pete/Martha Mathews (398-4368) and find out what is planned. If there is no interest we will cancel. If interest doesn't pick up potlucks will be dropped next year.

**FISHING REPORT** Fishing is good no matter if fish are caught. Fishing is a relaxing sport, exciting only when the big one is hooked. Ice fishing is in full swing now with the cold weather of mid January. French Creek, when there is open water is always worth the effort. Winter casting makes cold fingers, but now and then you will tangle with some nice fish. I saw a nice musky caught in early January – not a legal fish, but very pretty and healthy. I have no word on any real big fish, but I see the same guys fishing during every warm spell. They do catch a fish or two. Keep releasing those big walleyes! Dave Wise reports catching some crappies on minnows in ten feet of water in Misery Bay the first week in January.

**2008 FIREMEN'S CARNIVAL & WATERFORD FAIR** We spent four nights at the Cambridge Springs Fireman's Carnival and six nights and two afternoons at the Waterford Fair. There were a lots of kids and some grown ups that gave us pretty much constant business. The archery and air rifle shooting seemed to draw equal interest. I heard it said at Waterford "this is the only concession that isn't just a rip off". Although we make some money, we primarily offer a lot of fun for kids, many of whom have not shot a bow or gun in their lives. It is a lot of work manning the booths and setting up and tearing down. If the help was paid we would have to close the door! The look on the kid's faces is our reward.

These efforts generate a lot of goodwill for the club and we want to continue running them. We do need more help so the burden doesn't fall on just a few guys. Some guys worked almost every night this year! Make a note and give the club a hand next year.

**FISHING DERBY** – The club has not sponsored a fishing derby for several years. At first it was because we lost access to the pond we had been using. Now it is simply the lack of somebody to take over and plan and manage a derby. Every club needs workers; Springs Rod & Gun Club is no different. The few workers we have are pretty well tapped out from working on the building for the past couple winters and lately with the work on the front entrance to the building. We need some guys willing to step up and run this nice activity for children.

**MEMBERSHIP** – The club membership at this writing stands at 166, a bit down from last year. With all the work done at the club you would think the membership would be increasing, go figure – it must be the economy. Of the active members, and there are only a few, several are well past retirement age and will be stepping down soon. Replacements are needed and additions to the active ranks are welcome. The same goes for officers to run the club. We haven't held a fishing derby for several years now - not for lack of interest. It is a situation where the few active members just can't take on anything more. The building is a good example; four guys have more than 90% of the 1200+ hours that have been worked on the building. They cannot do more. We scheduled a work party last fall and three guys showed up – two were from the four guys just mentioned. What is an "active member"? That is a tough question and requires a definition. Some active members are more active than others, some less active. We need the prior, people who are willing to run for office and fulfill the duties of the office, not just hold titles. People who will perform work at the club, especially those motivated enough to take on projects – Indians as well as chiefs, people with good ideas, who come to meetings and present those ideas. There is a future you know! We also need those folks who can only give a little time now and then. Some of those types have managerial skills – Oh boy do we need them!

**NRA EDDIE EAGLE** – NRA's mascot for the Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program – celebrated his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in late 2008. If you're not familiar with the program, here's a little background. The Eddie Eagle program was the brainchild of the National Rifle Association (NRA). In 2000, some club members took this on as our own little personal crusade. We wanted to offer a safety program to teach youngsters (preschool age to grade 3) what to do if they encountered an unsecured gun. As you will agree, Eddie Eagle's message of "stop, don't touch, leave the area, tell an adult" is a very important.

The program neither supports nor condemns gun ownership. Further, the program does not involve gun handling of any sort. Probably our biggest hurdle in the offering this program in the local schools was the fact that NRA was the sponsor. Initially, we had trouble convincing the school administrators as to the benefits of the program. However, once we received an endorsement by the PA State Police things went smoother. Since then, we have been invited back every year. In six years, our programs easily reached more than 2200 students in local schools. Countless other kids were touched as the Dead-Eye 4-H Shooting Club sponsored an Eddie Eagle float in the Cambridge Springs Fireman's Parade.

However, we have run out of steam. We are desperately in need of an Eddie Eagle program coordinator and some volunteers to once again help Eddie Eagle fly into local schools. We still have a costume on loan from City of Erie Police Department. The door is open and the schools are receptive, however, it takes a couple go-getters to track down some CS high school students to assist and make the

arrangements. If any of you know of a Penncrest 11<sup>th</sup> grade student looking for a senior project – this is a great one to tackle. Support and resources are available. Contact Dave Birchard by phoning 814 398 2262 or via email at [birchard4@verizon.net](mailto:birchard4@verizon.net) .

## SPRINGS ROD & GUN CLUB 2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Jan 11	Sporting Clays	Aug 08	Potluck Dinner
Jan 14	Meeting	Aug 09	Sporting Clays
		Aug 12	Meeting
Feb 08	Sporting Clays	Aug 30	High Power Match
Feb 11	Meeting		
Feb 22	High Power Match	Sept 05	Potluck Dinner
		Sept 7-12	Waterford Fair
Mar 08	Sporting Clays	Sept 09	Meeting
Mar 11	Meeting	Sept 13	Sporting Clays
Mar 14	Potluck Dinner	Sept 19	Gun Party
Mar 21	Archery Party	Sept 27	High Power Match
Mar 29	High Power Match		
		Oct 04	Terry Williams Match
Apr 5	Ham Shoot	Oct 10	Potluck Dinner
Apr 8	Meeting	Oct 11	Sporting Clays
Apr 11	Potluck Dinner	Oct 14	Meeting
Apr 19	Sporting Clays	Oct 18	Turkey Shoot
Apr 26	High Power Match	Oct 25	High Power/Turkey Shoot
May 9	Potluck	Nov 01	Turkey Shoot
May 10	Sporting Clays	Nov 8	High Power/Sporting Clays/Turkey sht
May 13	Meeting	Nov 11	Meeting
May24	High Power Match	Nov 14	Potluck Dinner
		Nov 15	Sight In Day
Jun 10	Meeting		
Jun 13	Potluck Dinner	Dec 09	Meeting
Jun 14	Sporting Clays	Dec 12	Potluck Dinner
Jun 28	High Power Match	Dec 13	Sporting Clays
Jul 08	Meeting		
Jul 11	Potluck Dinner		
Jul 12	Sporting Clays		
Jul 22-25	CS Fireman's Carnival		
Jul 26	High Power Match		

Meetings start at 7 PM when on EST, 8 PM when on DST. Sporting Clays sign up is 11 AM till 2 PM  
 High Power Rifle Matches start at 8:30 AM; Potlucks start at 6pm. All other events start at 1 PM.  
 The Boy Scouts will be using the clubhouse on Sundays from 4-5:30pm until April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**BORROWING CLUB PROPERTY** - Call Dave Wise at 398-4554

**Unusual Bird** - I found a very small sparrow like bird along Blystone road last week. Apparently it was hit by a vehicle. It had a little yellow on the wings and a slender pointed beak. We identified it as a Pine Siskin.

THE HEALTH OF A CLUB IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE PARTICPATION OF MEMBERS IN CLUB ACTIVITIES.