



SPC Spectator

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE PISTOL CLUB

JANUARY 2021

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Syracuse Pistol Club experienced many ups and downs in 2020, but we remain a strong club with a growing membership.

The year started off with a Chili Cookoff and we found out just how competitive shooters can be in the kitchen. This will become an annual event, so perfect those recipes and join in with our past cookoff contestants. We moved on to Godfather Night with food and a shoot, and then Pi Day in March, where club members enjoyed a variety of pies. **We do seem to be a food driven bunch!**

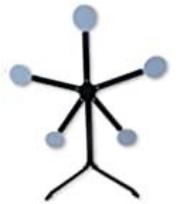
We were able to hold a Saturday Steel shoot that brought out many new members to learn about action pistol, steel shooting gave them a chance to try and master the Texas Star target.

While the club was closed, we engaged with a contractor who removed fourteen tons—**28,000 pounds**—of lead from our range. Several members pitched in to re-stock the range with 17 tons of rubber and gave the inside range a fresh coat of paint.

Bullseye and Action Pistol leagues have continued, with limitations and controls in place to ensure the health & safety of our members.

So, what does 2021 have in store for us? We're planning on Marksmanship classes, Stop The Bleed, First Aid/CPR, a women's only "She-Shoot" event, the annual chicken BBQ, Charity Shoots and other educational classes. We will need to be flexible with our schedules due to changing restrictions and recognize that ammunition is in short (and increasingly expensive) supply. We do not anticipate being able to hold a "Try My Gun" event for at least the first half of the new year, but we will resume this event as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the club – Shoot safe and shoot smart – Cheers To A Great 2021!



RANGE SAFETY

Let's take a moment to review the Universal Rules of Firearm Safety:

- Treat all guns as if they are always loaded.
- Never let the muzzle point at anything that you are not willing to destroy.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target and you have made the decision to shoot.
- Be sure of your target and what is behind it.

These rules are what keep people safe and what prevents property damage. Every person who enters our club must have a good understanding of these basic safety rules and how they apply to our environment. Unfortunately, there have been several incidents which indicate this may not be the case:

- Bullet through the roof at Station 1 on the outdoor bullseye range.
- Bullet hit overhead rail and through ceiling directly overhead of Station 12 on indoor range.
- Bullet through bench on Station 6 on indoor range.
- Bullet through pulley box directly overhead on Station 3 on indoor range.
- Bullet through wall on Stations 9 and 10 on indoor range.

Each of these incidents are the result of non-compliance with at least one of the Universal Safety Rules. Not only has property been damaged, but this type of behavior could have resulted in serious physical injury.

At Syracuse Pistol Club, the only truly safe direction is muzzle pointed at the backstop. The shooting bench, bench dividers, ceiling, walls and floor are NOT safe directions.

If, for any reason, you point your firearm anywhere else but the backstop, or if you have your finger on the trigger without having your sights on the target, you are not complying with the Universal Safety Rules.

Every SPC member has the responsibility to handle their firearms safely. If you are unsure that you are handling your firearm safely, please ask us for help.

If you see someone who is not handling their firearm safety, please help them, or notify Executive Range Officer Joe Gagliardo at 315-243-3879.

Finally, if you are responsible for a round impacting something other than the backstop, please let us know so we can repair the damage, and so we can help you improve your firearm handling skills.

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SHOOTER SPOTLIGHT

Our first Shooter's Spotlight is dedicated to Martin Toly and Joseph Leotta, who both passed away in 2020.

Syracuse Pistol Club will forever be grateful to these amazing men for their service to the club, and their dedication to providing a safe and friendly environment for club members to enjoy shooting sports.

IN MEMORIAM

MARTIN H. TOLY (1922 – 2020)

Martin H. Toly was a charter member of SPC and remained an active member until his passing in 2020 at the age of ninety-seven.

Each and every Wednesday morning, Marty could be found at the club calling range commands for bullseye with perfect cadence—and always a smile. With pencil and paper in hand for over seventy years, he managed all aspects of the bullseye league—registration, setting up teams, handing out scoring booklets—from the beginning of the league until his passing. He shared his vast knowledge of competitive bullseye shooting with novice shooters to encourage them in the sport.

Thank you, Martin, you will forever remain in our hearts.



IN MEMORIAM

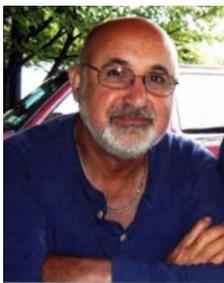
JOSEPH P. LEOTTA (1932-2020)

Joe was an avid pistol shooter and lifetime member of Syracuse Pistol Club and Pathfinder Fish & Game Club. Joe would shoot bullseye every Wednesday with his son-in-law, Tony.

Joe participated in the Empire State Games for many years and was awarded medals for his bullseye shooting. He was always willing to help novice shooters with tips and advice on how to improve.

He served on the Board of Directors as membership chairman, treasurer and as an active board member for many years. Joe and his family could always be counted on to support SPC events.

Joe operated Leotta Automotive Service and Fulton Firearms for many years.



We will miss Joe and forever appreciate all he has done for SPC.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The annual membership meeting was held on November 30, 2020 at the club and via Zoom. SPC President, **Mike Spuches** asked the following of club members in the new year:

- Shoot Safely – Know and enforce the safety rules.
- Think about how you can impact the success of SPC.
- Sell the club and shooting sports to your family and friends.

RULE REMINDER - GUESTS

- An individual may be a shooting guest of one or more members a maximum of 3 times in any 12-month period. They must sign in on the Guest Register Sheet in the clubhouse.
- The member is responsible for the conduct of their guests and must ensure their safe handling of firearms while on the range.
- Guests must read, understand and obey all posted range safety rules.
- A member may bring no more than ONE guest at any one time. With a guest firing, the member shall stand behind him or her to observe only and not shoot.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Please welcome the three new members of the SPC Board of Directors, **Sheila Brey**, **Milford Lovett**, and **CJ Polacek**. Below are the biographies they submitted in advance of the election (*submissions have been edited for length and clarity*).

SHEILA BREY

I have been active with the SPC for several years, assisting in many programs and projects. As a retired project manager, I have a good set of skills that, combined with my background in the shooting sports and range operations, are a benefit to the club.

I have been an active shooting competitor since 1985 and I am well-versed in a variety of shooting disciplines, primarily with a handgun, but also with rifle and shotgun.

My husband (Milford Lovett) and I own and operate the Rex Agency, LLC, a firearm related business. I also operate GunGal, LLC, a firearm instruction and consultant business. I am an NRA, TAWA, and USCCA Certified Pistol Instructor, USCCA Training Counselor, NRA Chief Range Officer and an

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NSCA Sporting Clays Shotgun Instructor. I regularly teach NY State Pistol License and NY Article 35 classes at Shooters Haven in East Syracuse.

At SPC, I am a Chapter Leader for The Well-Armed Woman (TAW) – Syracuse, NY Chapter. I am also a primary organizer of the SPC Action League, and Instructor for the Pistol Marksmanship class.

I am a NY State EMT with the Parish Volunteer Fire Company, where I also serve as treasurer.

MILFORD LOVETT

I am a Life-Member of the NRA and have been shooting firearms for as long as I can remember. At one time or another I have been an active and successful competitor in many shooting disciplines: Trap, Skeet, Sporting Clays, NRA Bullseye Pistol, USPSA and Precision Rifle. This diversity provides a good perspective into the various groups that can be represented in each organization.

I have been involved in several shooting clubs on an administrative level even serving as President of the Oneida Club many years ago. At SPC, I have assisted in indoor range repairs and I am a Range Officer during Action League and TAW Range events.

My wife (Sheila Brey) and I own and operate the Rex Agency, LLC, a firearm related business. I am an NRA Certified Pistol Instructor, NRA Range Safety Officer and an NSCA Sporting Clays Shotgun Instructor. I have also completed NRA training in Range Development and Operations which I utilized during the construction of several shooting ranges in the area.

CJ POLACEK

I have been an SPC member for the past 5 years, ever since joining The Well Armed Woman at its inception almost 5 years ago. I have been an active participant with TAW and for the past 1 ½ years have been a co-leader.

In addition, I am a USCCA Instructor, NRA Instructor, NRA Range Safety Officer, Refuse to Be a Victim Instructor through USCCA, and also am an instructor with Rochester Personal Defense. I also just completed Stop The Bleed sign up as well. I train frequently and also teach frequently, especially women.

I am also a Nurse Practitioner with many years of emergency services experience.

Although I am rather new to the gun world, I continue to advance my own training so that I can bring the most up to date information to the students I teach.

THE LAW...

We don't write them, so don't blame us—we're not lawyers either, this is not legal advice.

SAFE STORAGE

You are required to store your firearms so they are not accessible to minors, or to those who are prohibited from possessing firearms.



NY Penal Law; Article 265 – Section 265.45 Failure to safely store rifles, shotguns and firearms.

No person who owns or is custodian of a rifle, shotgun or firearm who resides with an individual who:

1. Is under 16 years
2. Is prohibited from possessing a firearm pursuant to a temporary or final extreme risk protection order
3. Is prohibited from possessing a firearm based on a conviction for felony or serious offence.



Shall store or otherwise leave firearm out of his or her immediate possession or control without having first securely locked in an appropriate safe storage depository or rendered in incapable of being fired by use of a gun locking device appropriate to that weapon. For purposes of this section "safe storage depository" shall mean a safe or other secure container which, when locked, is incapable of being opened without the key, combination or other unlocking mechanism and is capable of preventing an unauthorized person from obtaining access to and possession of the weapon contained therein.

Storage within a locked glass gun cabinet does not meet minimum requirements for safe storage (NY v Vittorio Ciraco; 2014).



And don't forget about safe storage within your vehicle. A gun in a car – even if the car is locked - is an easy target for a thief. Invest in an additional lock box for the car.

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DRY FIRING

Is ammo too expensive?

Only have a limited amount of ammo and can't find more?

If you answered yes to these questions, there is no better time than now to practice dry firing. This is a brief synopsis of what you need to get started.

Always, first and foremost, a review of the Universal Safety Rules when handling a firearm.

- Treat all guns as if they are always loaded.
- Never let the muzzle point at anything that you are not willing to destroy.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target and you have made the decision to shoot.
- Be sure of your target and what is behind it.

A few of the benefits of practicing dry firing:

- You will be able to shoot either at home or at the range.
- You will save money by not consuming ammunition, which is becoming more expensive and harder to source.
- You will become more familiar with handling your firearm.

Some older or antique revolvers, semi-automatics and rimfires may require a snap cap or barrel block in place in order to dry fire, so read your owner's manual to determine manufacturer's recommendations.

A product that we like to keep you safe while dry firing is called BarrelBlok (www.bloksafety.com).

It's an inexpensive and simple tool that completely blocks the barrel so that it cannot accept ammunition making it great for dry-fire practice.



To begin, make sure your ammo is in a completely separate location away from your firearm to prevent the possibility of any accidents. Your designated dry fire area should be a location free from distractions. Check and re-check your firearm is unloaded.

Get your mind ready to begin and develop muscle memory. If you state something out loud, you are more apt to actually do it so try starting with this statement: "I am beginning dry fire."

When you are finished with your session, say out loud, "I am now finished with my dry fire."

Strength and accuracy will become easier with strong and weak hand. The basics of sight alignment, trigger control, proper grip and stance will become a part of muscle memory, and soon it will be second nature.

All of this takes time and repetition.

You may want to concentrate on just one or two things at first and then, as you become more comfortable, introduce other things you would like to improve.

I've watched many YouTube videos on the subject, and if you choose to do the same, just keep this in mind—everyone on the internet believes themselves to be a professional, *but only a few are actual authorities in the field*. I've dismissed a lot of videos where the presenters aren't even following basic safety rules even if their dry fire content is solid.

As a starting point, Lena Miculek has some great content. Additionally, Sean Burrows has a two-part series that you might like. Just click on the link below.



Whether you are a novice or experienced shooter, it is always valuable to keep informed and be open to different perspectives. You can teach an old dog new tricks, it just takes a little longer and a few treats.

THE NEWSLETTER

We hope you enjoyed the first issue of the SPC Spectator Newsletter. We expect to issue a newsletter at least quarterly. If you would like to submit an idea or article for the newsletter, please contact Linda Bender @ LBender53@gmail.com.

