

Franklin County Sportsmen's Club



February Newsletter

February 10, 2025

President's Notes

It is truly an honor to serve as President of the Franklin County Sportsmen's Club for a second time. This club has been a significant part of my life, and I am deeply proud of everything we've built together. Over the years, I've had the privilege of making lasting friendships here and continue to meet new people who share our passion for the outdoors, camaraderie, and stewardship of this incredible facility.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about the initiatives we have planned, including farming a portion of our property and recertifying our forestry program. These projects are a testament to our commitment to responsible land management and the long-term sustainability of our club.

As many of you know, third spaces—those places outside of work and home where people gather, connect, and build community—have taken a huge hit since COVID-19, and unfortunately, our club has felt the effects too. While our shooting programs remain as strong as ever, the downturn in attendance has been noticeable at our social events, like our monthly membership meetings and annual elections. When I think back to how full and lively the clubhouse used to be, I can't help but feel motivated to work together to bring that energy back and pack this place again.

That said, none of this happens without the dedication and involvement of our members. As we enter this new year, I encourage everyone to consider ways we can come together to make the club even stronger. Whether it's joining us for meetings, volunteering for projects, or bringing fresh ideas to the table, your engagement is what keeps this place thriving.

If you have suggestions for increasing member involvement or ways to enhance our meetings, I'd love to hear them. Let's work together to ensure that the Franklin



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County Sportsmen's Club remains a place we can all take pride in for years to come.

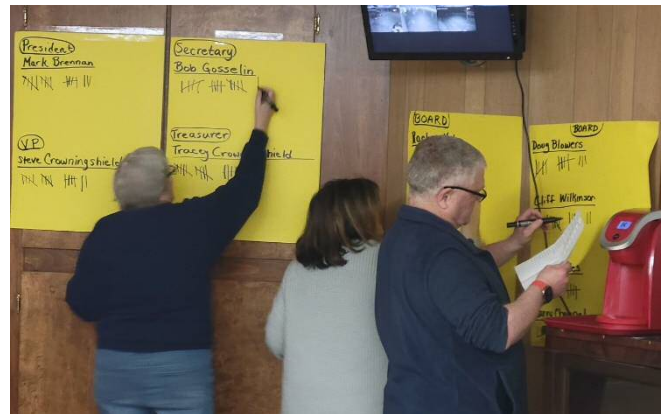
Thank you for your trust and support. I look forward to seeing you at the club and sharing in the wonderful experiences that make the FCSC such a special community.

Sincerely,

Mark Brennan, President

Announcement of New Officers/ Review of Election Meeting!

We met on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 6PM to complete the election of officers and Board of Directors for 2025. The officers for 2025 are Mark Brennan, President, Steve Crowningshield, Vice-President, Bob Gosselin, Secretary and Tracey Crowningshield, Treasurer. The Board of Directors for 2025 include Rachel Katz, Paul Choiniere, Scott Conti, Doug Blowers, Clifford Wilkinson, Greg Isles, Larry Channel, Paul Socquet, Mike Jasinski, and Mark Holley.



We enjoyed a great pot-luck meal, and raffled off a bunch of range gear and two BB rifles.

Larry Kleinschmidt

GOAL Gun Law Seminar

Regretfully, due to snow and wintry mix on Thursday, February 6th, we had to cancel our GOAL seminar. We will see when it can be rescheduled and let everyone know.

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Monthly Meeting Schedule Change Reminder

Please remember that we are on a quarterly schedule for general meetings. Watch the calendar for the date of the next meeting. FCSC website calendar:

<https://fclsc.org/calendar>

Larry Kleinschmidt

Email Address Reminder

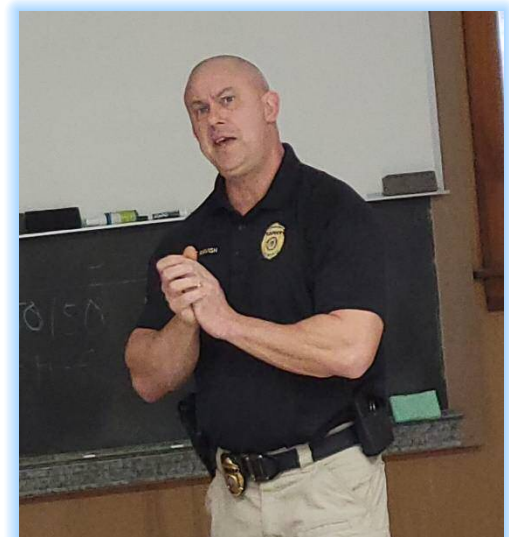
Have you been receiving email from the club regularly? No? Have you changed your email address recently? Remember that your FCSC email is being sent to the last address you recorded with the club. If you change your email address, please be sure to notify the club. Send an email from your new email address to [<steven.podlesny@gmail.com>](mailto:steven.podlesny@gmail.com) to be sure that the club updates your email address, and you will continue to receive the Newsletter and other FCSC communications. Steve Podlesny

Active Shooter Seminar Cancelled

We had to cancel the Active Shooter Seminar due to lack of interest. There were not enough people signed up to attend to justify using Sgt. Ravish's time. We will consider offering this seminar later in the year when the weather is more conducive.

We thank Sgt. Ravish for his dedication and willingness to do outreach programs such as this seminar.

Larry Kleinschmidt



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We Need Your Help

As you know, the FCSC is operated *completely* by member volunteers. We have no paid help! As we endeavor to maintain our club as one of the top ten clubs in Western Massachusetts, it is necessary for all of us to help out. Please volunteer your time to help us keep our club in top shape.

Steven Podlesny

The Welcome Wagon

In January we welcomed the following new members: Cameron Baranoski, Matt Denny, William Bratton, Jason Gehring and Ryan Burke! We hope that all our new members will enjoy our facility and our fellowship. Come join us at the general meetings and get involved. Watch our website calendar for upcoming events:

<https://fclsc.org/calendar>. Our new shooting programs have ended for this year, but they will resume in the spring. Get your target gun ready and come and compete for the Champion's Cup. We have a great Practical Handgun Group if pistols are your thing, and the skeet program is great if you like shotgun. Please remember to wear your badge when visiting our club, follow all safety rules, and pick up your brass when you shoot. Welcome!

Larry Kleinschmidt



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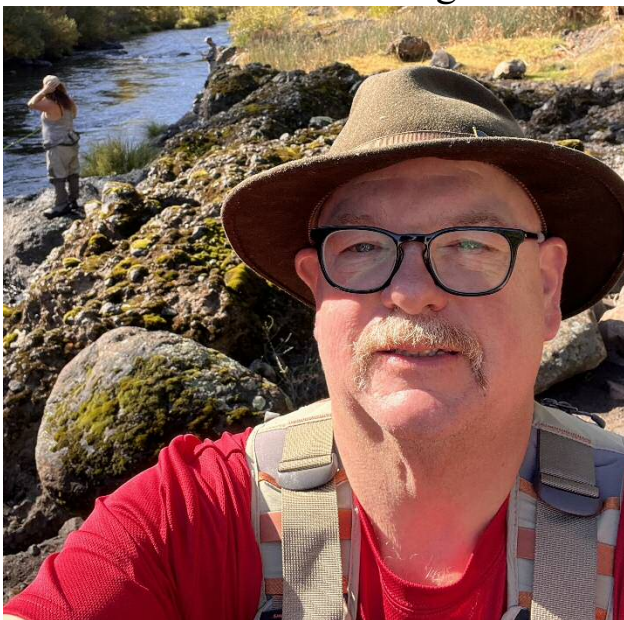
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Newsletter Writer Bio – Tim Houle!

We are going to feature a brief bio for each of our Newsletter Crew. We will start with Mr. Tim Houle. Here's Tim in his own words:

I was born in eastern Connecticut. My father was in the Navy, stationed on the USS Enterprise during the early Vietnam conflict. I grew up with my grandparents nearby with my mother, after my parents divorced. I got involved in scouting at age seven and stayed involved, earned my Eagle Scout in 1985. I was also involved in the Future Farmers of America in high school. I attended Becker Jr. College in Leicester and earned a degree in Horticulture.



After several attempts at finding my way in the horticulture field, I went after my childhood dream. I was a child of the early 70's and couldn't wait for my favorite show, *Emergency!*, on Saturdays. It was awesome and I loved watching Johnny and Roy and the life of firefighter/paramedics.

I began as a volunteer firefighter and EMS provider, then worked as an EMT and then became a paramedic in 1996. In 2003 I was hired as a firefighter paramedic for the town of Manchester, Connecticut. I have been there ever since and was recently promoted to Fire

Inspector in the Fire Marshal's office.

Amid all that, the important stuff in my life happened. In 1993 I married Alissa. She was the center of my universe for twenty-three years. She gave me the greatest gift of two amazing kids, Andrew and Jillian, both of whom have followed my path of fire and EMS. Andrew is an Advanced EMT and firefighter and works for the Brattleboro Fire Department. Jillian just attained her EMT and works for Community Ambulance in Marlborough.

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In 2016, unexpectedly, my wife passed away. I was lost and devastated. After some time passed, I was introduced to my current wife, Rebecca. After a fairly lengthy courtship, we married, and I moved to her hometown in Buckland. She spent many years as a paramedic and now works at a doctor's office as a medical assistant. She is the light of my life and an amazing travel partner and gift to the current chapter of my life. My love of firearms has been intermittent throughout my life, but Rebecca brought it out and turned it into an obsession.

Tim Houle

Skeet & Trap Shoot Reminder

We shoot skeet on both Saturday and Sunday mornings this time of year. Please come over and check it out. Shotgun is fun! Please be aware that due to the increasing cost of clay birds, it has become necessary to increase the cost of a round of skeet or trap to five dollars.

Larry Kleinschmidt



Clubhouse Security

When you visit the club, you are welcome to use the clubhouse, but please remember to turn off the lights, lock the building and set the alarm system on your way out. We have found that the alarm system has been left unarmed on several occasions recently. Please set the alarm system when you exit the building; if someone else is using the building when you leave, make sure that person

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understands that they must lock up and set the alarm when they leave.

Larry Kleinschmidt

Coming Events

The UMASS Police will be using the 50-yard range on February 6th, 12th, and the 19th. The Practical Handgun Group will meet on February 15th, starting at 12:30PM. On February 22nd, Tracey will present the Basic Home Firearms Safety Course. The Board of Directors will meet on February 13th, at 7PM, and we have a General Membership meeting on February 19th, at 7PM. Skeet will be shooting on Saturdays and Sundays at 10AM, weather permitting.

The pistol and rifle ranges are open for your enjoyment daily. Keep up with our events on the FCSC website calendar: <https://fclsc.org/calendar>

Larry Kleinschmidt

Rifle Events

The 100-Yard .223 Benchrest Event, the 200-Yard Centerfire Competition, and the 100-Yard Rimfire Competition will resume in April 2025. Get your equipment in shape, practice up and join in the competition. Watch the calendar for event dates. It's great fun!

Larry Kleinschmidt



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My First Rifle

(This is the fourth installment in a series of articles about the first guns club members owned or the guns that first got them interested in shooting. We all have our stories! If you would like to tell your story in the FCSC newsletter, please contact Mark at mastamand4@gmail.com)

To start off the new year, I will tell the story of my own first gun and how I came to enjoy shooting.

I was 10 or 11 years old when I first noticed there was a rifle standing up in the back of the closet at our cottage on Pawtuckaway Lake. It was hidden behind hanging sweaters and shirts, and old canoe paddles and life preservers.

When I asked my father about it, he first warned me not to touch it. Then he said it was his rifle from when he was a kid and when I got a little older, I could come up to the cottage with him in the winter when there was no one around and we could shoot it. Man, did I look

forward to that! The day finally came when I was 12. None of my four sisters were at all interested in visiting the cottage in the winter and my brother was too young, so it was just my father and I who made the trip to Nottingham, New Hampshire for the weekend. In winter Lake Pawtuckaway was a desolate place! I remember deep snow and bitter cold! We had to haul in jugs of water from the car and enough



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firewood from the stack of wood outside to feed the fireplace and woodstove through the night.

The rifle in the closet turned out to be a bolt action .22 caliber Mossberg Model 46M(a) with a tubular magazine and a Mannlicher stock, made in the late 1940s. It was a military trainer type of rifle, popular at the time, but long and heavy for a 12-year-old. My father taught me how to load the tubular magazine, align the sights, squeeze the trigger, and work the bolt action. We shot across the small frozen cove at a mark on a tree on the other side. He also taught me how to remove the bolt and clean the rifle. From then on it was always my job to clean it. After several winter trips to the cottage, my father allowed me to take the rifle down to the cove on my own and shoot. I only ever had one box of cartridges at a time, but my fingers were always frozen by the time I was done! I never saw anyone else up there in winter, except once when I was 14 or so. Another boy about my age showed up with his own .22 rifle and we took turns shooting across the cove at a target in the bitter cold. He let me try his .22, a newer semi-auto, and I let him try mine (just like what happens now at the club!). I could tell he enjoyed working the bolt of the Mossberg rifle as much as I did.

I shot that rifle on winter trips to Pawtuckaway with my father and later my brother all through my teenage years. When I turned 18 my father gave the Mossberg to me. I did not do any shooting during college, but for several summers right after college I worked at Camp Winauke on Lake Winnepesaukee and brought the Mossberg up there, as one of my duties was to supervise the .22 rifle range. What a different experience shooting prone on a range at real paper targets in the heat of the summer, rather than standing or kneeling in the snow and cold! My father's Mossberg rifle (I still always think of it as his) then sat neglected in the attic of my parents' house, the bolt removed for safety, waiting patiently for me to get through my unsettled twenties. By age 30 I had a wife, a baby and a new house. On a Christmas visit home it occurred to me that I should take the rifle back with me and find a local place to shoot. Bemused at my seemingly new interest in

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shooting, my wife agreed I could bring it home, provided I got a secure gun locker for it. Deal!

I found the gravel pit in Northfield where everyone in town would shoot, and soon I was shooting every weekend. Back then I could buy .22 ammo at the old Northfield Country Store. Eventually I decided I wanted a large caliber revolver to shoot also, but I had little money at the time and they were too expensive. I discovered reproduction cap and ball revolvers in a catalog and saw they were much more affordable, so I ordered a Euroarms .44 caliber 1865 Rogers and Spencer. And so began a 30-year love affair with percussion revolvers! For 20 years I shot them almost exclusively. In the end, after building a sizeable collection and shooting them so often, I am not sure I ended up saving any money. My shooting interests continued to evolve and expand, and lately I most often shoot .357/.38 Smith and Wesson revolvers or Ruger single actions. Since the construction of the club's .22 range, I have been shooting a lot more .22 rifle and handgun as well.

A little more than a year ago my interest in shooting my first rifle was renewed by a random event. I received a call from the husband of a former coworker, who asked if I would be interested in having an old rifle that used to belong to his father. He said it had been in his closet since his father passed away and he had no use for it. Of course, I said yes! As I sat in their living room visiting with my former coworker, her husband came into the room with a rifle in his hands and I felt a shiver go up my spine. It was a beat-up old Mossberg .22 with a full Mannlicher stock, almost identical to my father's Mossberg except this was a semi-auto and the tubular magazine was in the buttstock instead of under the barrel. It was missing a rear sight, but I happened to still have an old peep sight that at some point must have been on my father's rifle. I installed this, cleaned the gun up and took it and my father's Mossberg to the club's .22 range where they both functioned flawlessly.

On the internet I found a photo of a catalog page from the early 1950s that showed both Mossberg rifles, one above the other, models 46M (bolt action) for

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\$18.45 and 51M (semi-auto; “automatic rifle” in the parlance of the time) for \$23.50.

After so many years, and long silent stints in the dark corners of closets, these old rifles still provide so much enjoyment. Though now I tend to wait for the weather to warm up.

Mark St. Amand

Practical Handgun Group

We had the meeting on the 18th of January, and we utilized two steel targets at 10 yards apart, and at 10 yards from us, and practiced transitioning and speed accuracy. The three of us were very pleased with our accomplishments, and we welcomed Tim Houle and his son to join us for one round.

We look forward to the 15th of February when, hopefully, more members will attend. Be safe and utilize your awareness.

Gary Braff



Range Reminder

Please remember the ranges are for use by everyone. If you bring items to shoot, please clean up after you are



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done. I'm sure you've seen the signs, "PICK UP YOUR BRASS". Please take the time to police your brass and targets. The people who come after you shouldn't have to pick up your brass and take down your used targets. We have a beautiful facility; please pitch in to help us keep it that way. Thank you.

Steven Podlesny

FCSC Hunters Corner

We want to recognize and include our hunters in our Newsletter. If you had a good hunt this year and want to share the experience with our members, please contact larrykleinschmidt@comcast.net . We want to include your story and a photo or two of your hunt!

We are looking for a writer to tackle hunting subjects for our monthly newsletter. The articles will cover actual hunts by members and hunting advice of interest to the membership. Here's a link to the Massachusetts Hunting and Fishing Seasons information: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2024-hunting-season-summary/download>

Larry Kleinschmidt

FCSC Guest Policy Explained

FCSC is a private, members only club. However, as a member of FCSC, you can bring guests to the club, subject to club guest policy. As a club member you are responsible for your guest(s). Since you, as a member, are responsible for everything your guest does while at the club, you can invite no more than two guests at a time. When shooting with guests, only one gun may be used by your party at a time. This restriction assures that you, the member, can supervise everything that your guest(s) does while on the range. Remember, while your party is at the club, you the member, are responsible for everything they do.

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Who is a guest? If you have a single membership, anyone you invite to the club is a guest. If you have a family membership, anyone who is not named as part of your family is a guest. The guest fee is ten dollars per guest per visit.

When your guest enters the club, the first thing to do is have them sign the Guest Waiver of Liability Form; this must be done before you proceed to the range. Guest Waiver of Liability forms can be downloaded from the website:

(https://fclsc.org/files/Guest_Release_and_Indemnity_Agreement.pdf) . Also, hard copies can be found on the wall at the back of the clubhouse near the entry door.

Once the Guest Waiver form has been completed (one form for each of your guests), put it in an envelope along with the ten-dollar fee for each of your guests, and place the envelope in the locked box on the back wall of the clubhouse near the door.

Before proceeding to the range, be sure that your guest(s) are familiar with the NRA Gun Safety Rules. These can be found on the website:

<https://fclsc.org/p/52/Firearm-Safety-Rules> . The Guest Policy is presented on our website: <https://fclsc.org/p/60/Guest-Policy>

Larry Kleinschmidt

Concealed Carry or Not!

We are certainly in uncertain times and almost weekly it seems we see and hear stories of people speaking of not thinking they would ever be involved in a situation. There are lethal and non-lethal choices. There is a plethora of self-defense classes online. As an LTC holder, do you carry? Do you feel the need to carry? A topic that is spoken a little about, but certainly more by the people that don't want you to carry. Why, well because they tend to believe that the tool is going to jump out and wreak havoc to all around it.

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The choice to carry is very personal and I don't think many folks talk about it. I am new to firearms, having gotten my LTC in 2020 and first handgun in 2021. I spent the first 6 months researching weapons and doing a lot of research on types of handguns, the laws of our Commonwealth, and the restrictions put on the LTC holder as to the types of weapons they can carry, when and where.

After finding the firearm I had selected to be my first, I spent time on the range and dry firing at home learning the weapon. Then, following recommendations from several online articles and YouTube videos on the subject, I began to carry around the house. Tried different holsters and styles of carry. Then for short trips. Then longer ones. It is important to get over the self-consciousness of having that "thing" hanging off your side. Or rubbing inside your belt. Or pointing at your most sensitive personal spaces, if you decide to carry. Do your research. Decide what you are comfortable with. There is a lot to be concerned with and choices to make when you decide to protect yourself and more importantly your family. However you choose, make it an informed, educated choice based on facts and research you do.

Life is precious and short. Protect those whom you love and who love you, the best way you can. Make a choice, practice, get comfortable with that choice. Hopefully you never have to exercise that skill, but if you need to, you should be ready.

Tim Houle

What to know when it comes to your self-defense rights in Massachusetts

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (WWLP) – Massachusetts law prohibits you from acting in self-defense unless you have exhausted reasonable efforts.

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This discussion comes after a victim of a shooting in Chicopee fired back at the suspect. The 'Castle Doctrine', coming into play, allows an individual to lawfully use deadly force if their life is in danger at their home.

Unlike other states, Massachusetts does not have a stand-your-ground law, however, individuals have a duty to retreat before using deadly force outside of the home.

"If somebody is in their dwelling and they have a reasonable belief that a person is entering their home and they inflict great bodily harm," shared James B. Winston, Attorney, Winston Law Offices.

The Commonwealth examines the facts of each case to determine whether or not an individual would have been able to escape by getting to safety.

<https://www.wwlp.com/news/local-news/what-to-know-when-it-comes-to-your-self-defense-rights-in-massachusetts/> (Quoted News Article WWLP)

