

Promoting the safe use of firearms and wildlife conservation are just a few of the ideals endorsed by

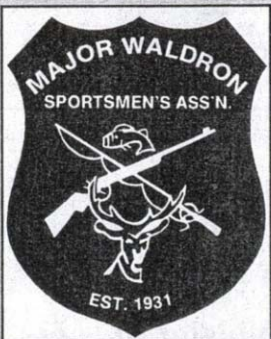
MAJOR WALDRON SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

BY MIKE WHALEY

BARRINGTON - Major Waldron Sportsmen's Association is 72 years old this year and with 400 members, give or take a few, it maintains a strong area foothold supporting, among other things, wildlife conservation and the right to safely use and bear arms for sport and protection.

Located in Barrington on Route 9 one mile east from where it intersects with Route 125, MWSA oversees over 200 acres and offers indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, including outdoor shotgun sports for skeet, trap and sporting clays.

The club's shooting grounds are open to both members and the public, although



the public may only use some of the shooting area. The annual individual membership cost is \$50 and \$65 for a family. Members must also join the National Rifle Association (NRA), which

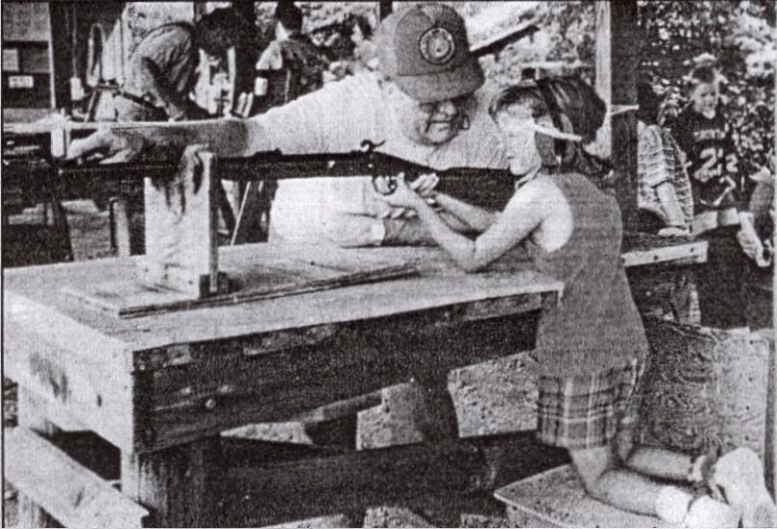
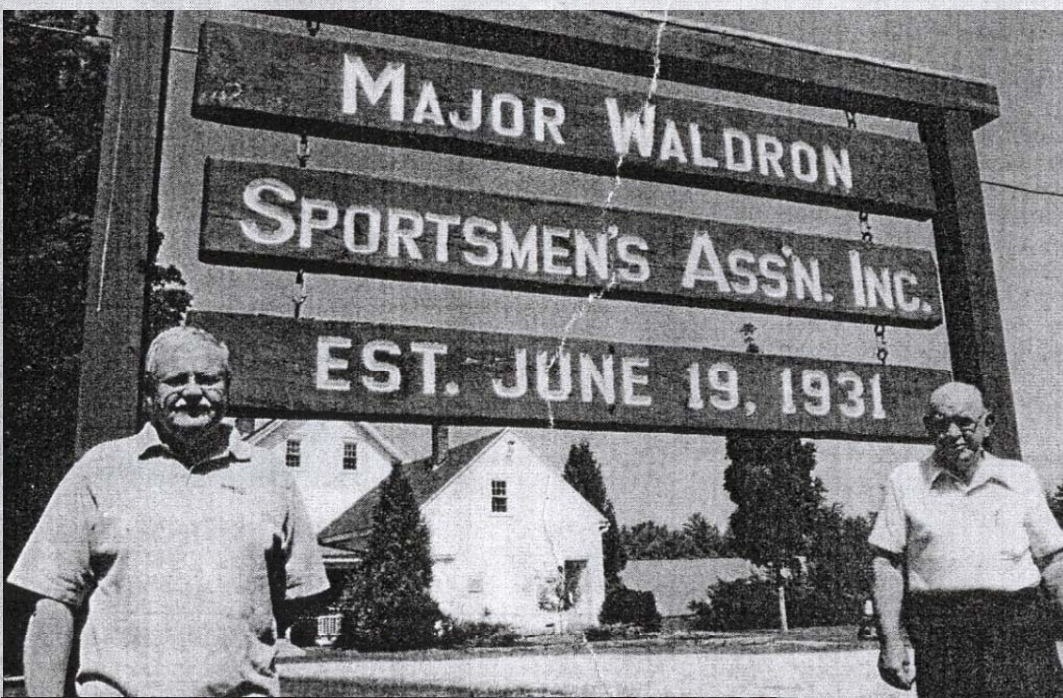
provides insurance for members and the ranges. Membership is currently open.

Included in the membership is full use of the facility, club newsletter and the expectation that members will provide five volunteer hours a year. If this requirement isn't met then members are assessed a \$25 penalty.

For instance, one group of members fullfills its volunteer obligation by picking up litter four times a year along a two-mile stretch of Route 9.

"We aim at families to get youth involved," says MWSA secretary Les Waterhouse. "They are the future of the outdoors. We want them to get familiar with wildlife habitats and firearms. We stress firearm safety."

MWSA remains ever community conscious. They are an active member of the Barrington Chamber of Commerce and



COURTESY PHOTO/ PHOTO BY MIKE WHALEY (Above) MWSA President Dave Tinkham and Treasurer Les Waterhouse pose in front of the club's sign. In the background is the Barrington clubhouse where meetings are held and an indoor shooting range is located in the basement. (Left) The club promotes and conducts the ongoing education and safe use of firearms for youth.

support numerous local organizations, and continue to be a training facility for the Strafford County Sheriff's Department, as well as the Barrington and Newcastle police departments.

They are also active with a 4-H Youth shooting program, area Boy Scout shooting and archery events and every year

offer a Women in the Outdoors program that introduces interested women in not only firearm use and safety, but also kayaking, fly fishing, ATV use and map and compass reading.

They run shoots that raise money to buy toys for needy kids at Christmas

SEE WALDRON, PAGE B3

The Barrington club also has a long and rich history

BARRINGTON - Major Waldron Sportsmen's Association was first founded on Nov. 27, 1927 in Dover as the Izaak Walton League. Fred Varney and Paul Knowlton were among those original founders.

The membership, which included some of Doyer's business leaders, grew and in 1931 the members decided to form a new club. The feeling was that the Izaak Walton League, which

was then and still is a national organization, no longer supported the goals and ideals of its members.

So MWSA was established in 1931 and named after a controversial local figure - Major Richard Waldron. One of Dover's early residents, he received a 400-acre grant and led settlers to Dover and built a garrison on what is now Second Street.

However, he later betrayed

area Indians and that ultimately led to his death at their hands during the Dover Massacre of 1689.

Meanwhile, the club's members were looking for a permanent location for a clubhouse and in 1935 they did just that. They purchased the partially burned Samuel Ham Farm on Route 9, signing a mortgage deed for \$1,000 on March 7, 1935. The club now had a clubhouse and 80

acres of land.

Alterations were slow, but steady. In 1936, they obtained 24 seats at 75 cents per seat from the Strand Theater and were given some folding chairs later that year from the Tasker Chesley Funeral Home.

In '36, Levi Felker presented a mounted snow owl and a gavel that he made himself. Rowell & Watson presented the club with a

SEE HISTORY, PAGE B3

HISTORY

FROM PAGE B1

mounted deer head. In 1938, Fred Small gave the club a brace of mounted ruffed grouse. In the spring of '41, a hardwood floor was purchased and put down in the main meeting room and knotty pine paneling was put on the walls, donated by Austin L. Calef.

Interest in the club was growing. The dues were \$1 per year and with 240 members there was not a surplus of funds to work with. Still, they ran a lot of shoots, dog trials and other events to raise funds.

The club raised trout which they stocked in area ponds and also ran a pheasant raising program in conjunction with New Hampshire Fish & Game. They also held kids' fishing derbies, which they continue to do to this day.

In 1932, MWSA started a tradition that is still going today - the annual game supper. Today it is no longer a game supper because game birds and animals are no longer available. Today's fare is now roast beef and scalloped oysters.

The annual suppers were held at the Dover City Auditorium, then later at Simpson's Pavilion. In recent years, they have been held at the Sugar Shack.

As the years went by from the '30s to the '40s, the club hosted coon dog trials and skeet shooting championships. In 1942, the club's mortgage was paid off and a mortgage burning ceremony

was held at the clubhouse followed by a lobster supper (\$1 per plate).

As the '40s moved along, the club dealt with the rationing of gasoline and heating oil.

The pheasant raising program continued to flourish into the '50s, although one year a dog dug in under the fence and killed over 100 birds. The Town of Barrington reimbursed the club for its loss.

In May of 1951, the club planted 850 white pine seedlings on the property. In 1964, they purchased 60 acres of land, bringing its total to 140.

In the late '60s lights were installed on the trap and skeet ranges. In 1971, the pheasant raising program was discontinued.

In 1973, 26 more acres were purchased. The '70s was also a troubling time due to vandalism, including one instance where a motorcycle was ridden up on the clubhouse porch and driven through a railing.

The Oyster River Fish and Game Club merged into MWSA in 1983 and that organization's sale of its property availed MWSA the funds to build an indoor rifle and pistol range.

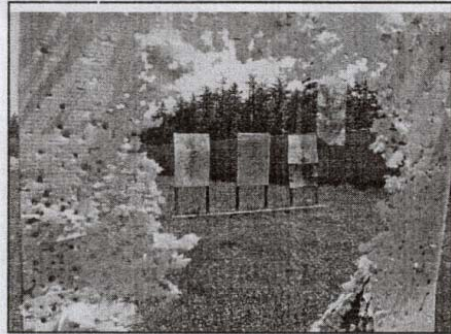
The club continued to purchase land, adding over 50 acres to bring its current total to over 200.

This is an abridged account taken from Les Waterhouse's detailed club history.



PHOTO BY MIKE WHALEY/COURTESY PHOTOS

Major Waldron's Sportsmen's Association not only promotes firearm use, safety and education for all ages, but it also provides youth events and shooting ranges - both indoors and outdoors - for its members to make ample use of.



WALDRON

FROM PAGE B1

The MWSA also offers, in conjunction with New Hampshire Fish and Game, two hunter education courses. In addition, they have an active handgun instruction program.

Tinkham noted that the club would like to assist area school systems in firearm awareness, but the schools haven't been necessarily open to the club and Tinkham feels that is a shame.

The club members meet every month on the third Monday, while the Board of Directors meets on the first Monday.

The comfortable meeting room, with its huge stone fireplace, contains various shooting trophies as well as some mounted animals. Some of the seating is made up of folding seats the MWSA obtained from

Dover's Strand Theater and some old deacon benches.

The lights on the outdoor skeet field came from Dover High School's football field, and while they have served the club well over the years, it is time to replace them.

The club recently spent \$12,000 to replace the roof on the indoor range and spent \$8,000 on the outdoor range the last several years. In recent years, the clubhouse has been sided, and fitted with new windows and a new roof.

"We take pride in the facility and we make a point of putting money back into it," says Tinkham.

He also points out that in this day and age, you can't just go out to abandoned sandpits and shoot your gun. That's how MWSA picks up some new members.

Female members have been on the rise in recent years, although Tinkham couldn't give any specifics on numbers.

MWSA also remains in the forefront to fight against anti-hunting, fishing and firearm legislation when it periodically arises. Both Tinkham and Waterhouse add that the club does not promote the use of automatic weapons.

"Our intent," adds Tinkham, "is to manage and improve the facility and yet not make it so expensive that one can't afford a membership."

Membership has held steady and Tinkham and Waterhouse see no reason why the club should not continue to thrive. Funds are used to keep a first class facility upgraded and the interest is there to learn the varying levels of firearm usage.