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PORTSMOUTH HERALD

"Get the Picture" is a weekly column by Portsmouth Herald staff photographers describing how they got their shots.

Ready, aim...

By [Rich Beauchesne](#)

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I now think of myself as a responsible gun owner. Many people go crazy even hearing the word gun. Most assume you are going to shoot yourself or, worse, someone else. I am not a serial killer or convicted criminal nor do I desire to be one. It seems to me that upstanding citizens who choose to purchase firearms get a bad rap. I guess that is why I waited so long before making the decision to take a basic pistol-safety course — and obtain a firearm.

I only wish there were more shooting ranges available for people to take classes and become more educated. When I learned that Major Waldron Sportsmen's Association in Barrington was holding a beginner course, I decided not only to take the class, but also to document it with pictures and my own story.

I knew the instructors would be strict, but I never imagined there would be nearly 20 National Rifle Association-certified instructors on hand to share their knowledge and skills. Even more impressive, it was Saturday morning and all the instructors were there on their own time. These people are passionate about guns, but are equally concerned about safety and a "safe attitude."

I joked how the gangsters on TV hold their guns with the shooting hand turned

sideways. No one laughed. It is apparent that these poor images and sensationalized media views give safety-conscious gun owners a bad rap. Most states continue to make it harder and harder for civilians to own firearms. Like it or not, the Second Amendment protects the right of every law-abiding citizen to keep and bear arms. However, I believe that it is also each individual's responsibility to safely uphold that privilege. Carelessness and ignorance are the usual culprits in serious gun-related injuries and fatalities. I believe that firearm education through the NRA, such as the basic pistol-safety course, can help eliminate some of these tragedies. I know that I will not tolerate any unsafe gun handling around me.

People choose to own guns for a whole variety of reasons besides personal protection. Some enjoy collecting, hunting or competitive shooting tournaments. I found recreational target shooting challenging because it requires good hand and eye coordination along with discipline.

In the photo above, I am shooting a .22 revolver in a one-handed standing position with fellow student Joan Gustin of Epping.

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