



RIVER FALLS SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

THE FIRING LINE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE RIVER FALLS SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

SEPTEMBER, 2026

THIS ISSUE:

Sight-In days set

Tom Hennessy remembered

New AED now on-site

2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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715-781-0799

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715-781-7708

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Dan Herum
Rachel Vogt
Nate Schultz



Fundraising chair Ed Gibb, second from left, caucuses with firearms dealer Scott McLeod, and director Dan Herum as winners are recorded in order drawn. Teri Raiche, right, recorded the event for posterity and online-sharing.

Lucky gun raffle winners revealed Aug. 23rd

The RFSC's annual fundraiser appeared to have been a rousing success with virtually all 1,000 tickets sold at \$25 each. A small block of 15 or so tickets remained unaccounted for at zero hour. Those were thought to still be unsold somewhere at a local watering hole.

Winners of the "Baker's Dozen" gun offerings were:

- **Brody Olson**, New Richmond (Browning Maxus II Sporting, Adj. Comb., walnut, 12-gauge, or \$1,300 cash)
- **Mike Wasko**, Lindstrom, Minn. (Marlin 1895 SBL, laminate/stainless: 45-70, or \$900)
- **Rocky Berg**, Chippewa Falls (Browning X-Bolt Speed

camo/bronze: 6.8 Western, or \$800)

- **Dale Schauls**, address unavailable (Benelli M2, camo semi-auto: 20-gauge, or \$825)
- **Jack Bruns**, address unavailable, (Ruger Super Red Hawk: SS

7.5-in w/scope rings: 44 Mag, or \$800)

- **Matt Blanch**, address unavailable (Ruger AR 556 MPR: 5.56 NATO, or \$800)

-- **Jeremy Abell**, River Falls (Beretta A300 Ultima, camo, semi-auto: 12-gauge, or \$725)

-- **Luke Feser**, address unavailable (Smith & Wesson 686 Plus, SS, 7-shot 4-in barrel: 357 Mag, or \$725)

-- **Steve Evenson**, address unavailable (Kimber 84M Hunter Pro, Desolve Camo SS: 6.5 Creedmoor, or \$600)

-- **Chris Dull**, Roberts (Leopold BX-5 Santiam HD binoculars: 10 x 50, or \$500)

-- **Travis Teigen**, Glenwood City (Ruger LC Carbine: 10mm, or \$500)

-- **Parker Heise**, River Falls (Weatherby Vanguard, Badlands camo/bronze: 6.5 PRC, or \$500)

-- **Hunter White**, Chicago (Springfield Hellcat w/optics: 9mm, or \$500)

Shoot 'Em Up Sports dealer Scott McLeod was present for the drawing, conducted in front of a dozen or so club members and executed by trap employee Amelia Dull. A decision was made to transfer the near 1,000 ticket stubs from a home-built raffle drum to a plastic bin after Dan Herum -- doing a trial spin

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Amelia Dull provided unbiased picking for the raffle.

Fall work day cancelled

Members interested in earning a dues discount for their 2027 renewals will have to enterprise some volunteer projects on their own to accrue four hours before year-end.

The board decided at its August meeting to skip the autumn workday, in part, because there were no volunteers to organize it. Also, the grounds are in overall good shape due to such a productive spring workday with excellent turnout by volunteers, said Dan Herum.

Please welcome these new RFSC members!

Tim Groess, Dave Ray, Steve Hydal, Steve Nelson, and Sean Ntole **(June)**

Brady Neal, River Falls; Jer-rad & Rachael Lapp, River Falls; Noe Walberl, N St. Paul; Joe Madigan, Hudson; and Bill Peterson, Ellsworth **(July)**

Neil Roellich, Mike Vinz, Cory Wayne, Todd & Alena Behr, Isaac Lehman, and Paul Morris. **(August)**

Upcoming events

- Fall trap league begins Sept. 22nd, continuing each Tuesday and Sunday for five weeks.
- Members and guests looking for assistance or support in zeroing in that deer rifle are invited to visit the range on Saturdays -- Oct. 31st, Nov. 7th and 14th, for the Club's annual Sight-In offering. Non-members can pay \$10 per gun for a target and help from a volunteer to assure accuracy on Wisconsin's gun deer season opener, Nov. 21st.

Newsletter

Comments, tips, criticisms, contributions, obits, and club-related questions are welcomed. Write, text or call Steve Dzubay at #715-821-7537 or stevendzubay@gmail.com. Thanks to Deb & Rich Cernohous for proof-reading help. RFSC's Facebook site offers updates between quarterly newsletters. For club-related matters, write RFSC@sbcglobal.net.

Board briefs



PLANS TO DELAY the "second lift" on the club's new asphalt parking lot changed suddenly in June after Spring Valley contractor Asphalt Maintenance & Paving advised director Rachel Vogt that it would not extend its usual warranty if they were unable to complete the job until September. Grading was completed and a first layer installed in early October, 2025, with AMP's expectation to complete the \$69,300 job this spring. In May, directors worried that a week's closure of the lot would inconvenience trap-, school and archery league shooters, along with fears that vehicle traffic in hot weather might damage the precious surface -- thus the decision to delay the job. AMP completed the "lift" in mid-July. Parking was shifted to the former Sylvester property.

-- **RANGEMASTER ED GIBB** reported in June that Paul Kusilek initiated installation of re-bar to support the plastic snow fencing that hosts targets on the 15- and 25-yard ranges. Dan Herum provided assistance with welding. Herum also facilitated acquisition of four very large benches to provide more seating in the trap area -- needed regularly for large groups that assemble during school shooting sports. Directors thanked all those involved for the great improvements.

— **THE CLUB'S 10-YEAR-OLD ZOLL AED** got a \$1,400 upgrade in July by way of Jason Fouks, co-owner of Born Force Training in Roberts. The existing unit, which would have been no longer supported as of next year, was in need of new patches and batteries, at a cost of about \$800. Fouks offered a \$400 trade-in toward a new \$1,800 unit. The new defibrillator was put into service the evening of July 13th.

— **CLUB PRESIDENT** John Pietenpol volunteered to get a cost estimate on adding insulation to the clubhouse ceiling after crawling around up there while looking for a roof-leak. While Pietenpol doesn't think there is enough insulation, club manager Eric Swenson questioned whether an investment would be cost-effective, and treasurer Ben Gaus observed that utility costs have been pretty consistent year-over-year.

Gun raffle from page 1

saw some name tabs spill from the trapdoor, while others became stuck behind wooden braces inside the cage.

Everyone watched as Amelia swirled her hand around the bin before picking a ticket, then handing it to McLeod who recorded the winners sequentially for guns numbered one through thirteen. McLeod planned to contact each winner yet that afternoon. "I sold that one!" several people in the clubhouse remarked as the winners were announced.

This marks the second year a gun fundraiser has been conducted instead of a banquet with silent- and live auctions as well as various casino-style games.



From left, Jessie Stradt-mann, Wrenlee Ahlbrecht, Lexi Ahlbrecht, Dorothy Warren, Mel, and Gregg Warren.



Warren offers a word of advice to great- granddaughters in their shot-gunning techniques.



Warrens celebrate Mel's 90th

Family and friends of member Mel Warren gathered on Sunday, Aug. 23th to celebrate his 90th birthday with an "Annie Oakley" (which Warren won), with food, family and friends.

Hennessey played a pivotal role in clubhouse, trap improvements

Tom Hennessey grew up in a hard-scrabble existence in a rugged farmhouse with no electricity, a dirt floor and outdoor plumbing, according to son David, of River Falls.

Tom learned to use a .22 to harvest rabbits, squirrel and pigeons for the family table. His first taste of real hunting didn't come until 1962 when his brother encouraged him to join him for deer season.

It marked the beginning of a long, rich legacy later shared with sons Dan and David.

David said he's recorded and journaled 101 hunting trips with his dad and other family members over the years -- including pursuits for white-tail, mule deer, elk, and more across Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and western states.

Following service in the Air Force, Tom found a solid job at the local cooperative in Lester Prairie, Minn.,

where he and wife Beatrice settled down. At some point, Tom was invited to join friends at a local gravel pit to shoot clay pigeons. The group eventually fine-tuned their "range" with a trap house and it eventually became the Lester Prairie Sportsmen's Club.

It was trapshooting that spurred a longtime friendship with a fellow from nearby Glencoe, Minn. -- Mel Warren.

Warren was working for the Telex Hearing Aid Co. at the time.

Fast-forward to 1971 when then Lester's Buildings representative Joe Kusilek decided to retire and Lester Buildings leadership floated an invitation to Tom to assume Kusilek's 10-county territory in Wisconsin. Tom accepted, packed up his family and moved to River Falls.

Over the years, Tom proved to be

a good hire for Lesters'. Over 34 years, four months, he averaged sales of 2.6 buildings per week -- a company record that's still unmatched, son David said.



The late Tom Nennessey and son, David.

It wasn't long before Tom ferreted out trap-shooting opportunities at a gun club on Rifle Range Road. Mates included rifle-shooters Dick Pietzo and Orv Finstad.

"Dad saw potential," David recalls.

He and others started shooting out of an existing trap house that had a thrower. However it went from a few buddies to a competitive league very quickly. In addition to the new club house they added two new houses with concrete distance walks.

Tom later talked Lester Buildings leaders into selling the club a green-frame wall building at a wholesale price. Soon after, a second building was erected to store birds and trap supplies. Sometime thereafter, the "gun club" adopted a new name -- similar the group Tom was involved with in Lester Prairie. It became known as "River Falls Sportsmen's Club"

Paul Doekett was another elderly gentleman that was hanging out. Tom recruited him to be on the team he sponsored, David remembers.

David also grew up around the club, started first as a trap boy, then graduating to lead trap boy, clubhouse manager and rangemaster. He recalled hauling bar supplies from Emma's Bar to the club in his Ford Maverick.

Fund raisers were as vital to the club's success as the leagues, he

said. Turkey shoots were always very popular, up to three per year.

The club once also hosted a horse pull, drawing trucks and trailers from all over.

"The annual game feed was cool too," said David. "All members gathered for a big pot luck. (It was a) donation-only event. You were asked to bring any form of wild game. Yummy!"

"Also the casino night was a big hit! Ron Wilson and Noble Nygard thought that one up. I remember how happy everyone was when we hit 100 members! Didn't take long to get to 200! Mel Warren was also a huge part of our growth.

"He and Dad shot at Lester Prairie at the same time and many years later even went to the state shoot together.

"The RFSC was truly an amazing part of my growing up watching Dad at meetings working to grow the club.

"I sure am glad he and a few other guys saw what could be and worked to accomplish their dream."

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Tom's Lester's Building trap team regularly traded top honors with the crew from Deiss Sanitation including Gary, Randy and Jeff Deiss.

Members lost

Thomas Victor Hennessey of River Falls, peacefully passed away in his sleep on July 3, 2026, due to complications from his heart and diabetes at the Tomahawk Aspirus Hospital. He was 85.

He was born Nov. 22, 1940, in Olivia, Minn., the fifth child in a loving family of six. He was a proud graduate of Hector High School, where he excelled in football and wrestling. Tom later served his country in the US Air Force. In 1960, he married Beatrice Herrmann, and together they welcomed four children into the world.



In 1971, Tom and his family moved to River Falls, where he began his impactful career with Lester's Buildings, serving five counties. Retiring in 2005, his legacy at Lester's still endures, as many still affectionately refer to him as "The Legend."

Passionate about life, Tom enjoyed hunting, fishing, bowling, snowmobiling, trap shooting, golfing, and playing cards with family and friends. He created countless happy memories at Voyager Village in Danbury.

Family picnics and reunions were highlights of his life, where his wonderful sense of humor and love for others was always evident. He was also actively involved with the Knights of Columbus in his younger years.

Tom Hennessey Tom is survived by his children, Dan (Danielle) Hennessey, Danette "Nettie" (John) Koehler, Debbie (Gordon) Smith, and Dave Hennessey; nine grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; and his brother, Don (Roz) Hennessey, and sister, Marge Folsom. He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Jim and Roger Hennessey; and sister, LaVonne Bretzing.

Tom's life was celebrated with a memorial service on Saturday, July 18 at Bakken-Young Funeral & Cremation Services. A celebration of Tom's life followed at the Nutty Squirrel, downtown River Falls.

The family prefers memorials to the American Heart Association.

Arrangements were provided by Bakken-Young Funeral & Cremation Services.

RIVER FALLS SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

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New pop-up blind adds realistic challenge to archery range

Member and archery league organizer Nick Larson reports 12 active shooters are participating this year, and growing participation is a primary goal.

"We would also love to hear from club members about what they would like to see added or improved within the 3D archery program.

"This year, we introduced a "Bonus Target" challenge. An apple target is randomly placed on one of the course targets, and archers who successfully hit it earn an additional 11 points toward their score. It has been a fun addition that adds another level of excitement to each round.

"The course features 10 realistic foam animal targets positioned at varying distances and set up

in progressively challenging scenarios that change weekly. We continually work to create realistic hunting situations for participants. A recent new addition was a pop-up blind that requires archers to shoot from a seated position and adjust their form to simulate making an ethical shot in a real hunting environment.

"The league is designed with flexibility in mind. Participants can shoot at any time during club hours from Tuesday through Sunday, making it easy to fit archery into busy schedules. Scores are self-reported and tracked through an online spreadsheet that is accessible to all participants.

"In addition to the competition, we strive to build a strong archery community. Last month, we

hosted a cookout where members gathered to shoot, socialize, and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow archers and bowhunters. Over the past two years, our group has done an outstanding job supporting and mentoring one another. Both novice and experienced archers regularly share knowledge and advice, helping everyone improve their skills and enjoyment of the sport.

"As we continue to grow, we hope to add more 3D targets, expand the range space, add some realistic hunting scenarios and shooting challenges, grow participation, consider a women's league or children's archery nights," Larson said.

For more information, contact Larson at (715) 307-1675 or via rfscarchery@gmail.com.