



SISTERS OF THE SECOND AMENDMENT

Professional Women for Education, Preservation, Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sisters of the Second Amendment Welcomes Female Shooters

(September 1) — Seven professional women with three goals: Education, Preservation, Recreation.

Sisters of the Second Amendment, the newest women's shooting club in Western Pennsylvania is now accepting members. The organization's leaders have been planning the group's shooting events and mission, which is to promote the rules of safe gun handling and ownership, to provide instruction and training for safe gun handling and ownership, to encourage women to develop their skills in gun handling and marksmanship, and to empower women in self-confidence and self-awareness.

The women who have developed the club are all certified NRA Firearms instructors who wanted to share their love of shooting and teaching with other women. The club meets once a month (typically the second Monday of the month) at Castlewood Rod and Gun Club in New Castle with each meeting consisting of an educational portion as well as time on the shooting range.

The women's talents, professional credentials, and shooting experience vary. The club's President, Diane Shaffer, is also the First Assistant District Attorney, Lawrence County. She is the original instructor of the group and is thrilled to announce the club's official "opening." Diane is also a certified Range Safety Officer and a Refuse to Be A Victim Instructor.

She said anyone can pick up a firearm and use it, but the concept behind S2A is more than just shooting guns. Safe handling, legal aspects, and techniques are all important parts of shooting. According to Shaffer, education is the main focus of S2A as well as safety. Many of the techniques and need to know safety aspects of shooting don't just come naturally. That is why Shaffer and the other women on the club's executive board saw a need for a club like Sisters of the Second Amendment.

"So many women today are purchasing firearms, whether for protection of their home, self and/or loved ones. Many are interested in carrying the gun concealed and are applying for licenses to carry concealed," Shaffer said. "What is most important in ownership of a firearm is knowledge about the firearm, gun safety, and security in maintaining a firearm whether on your person or in your home. Understanding how the firearm works and maintaining the firearm and learning the skills necessary to use that firearm in the proper and safe manner is vital, not only for the owner, but for those around them."

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Shari Quinn, the club's vice president and also a supervisor of global construction services for a major retailer, got involved with S2A because she wanted women in Western Pennsylvania to have the skills in personal defense and safety.

"I want to empower other women in safe gun handling and give them confidence to defend themselves," she said.

Cathy Clover the Club Committee Trustee is a wife, mom, grandmother and a licensed psychologist who has been practicing in Lawrence County for over 34 years believes it is important that women be comfortable around and confident with handguns.

"Women need to understand the responsibility that handling or carrying a handgun requires, and respect the responsibility that comes with handgun ownership," Clover said.

There is no need for ladies to be shy or nervous about attending their first meeting. Everyone was a beginner at one time, and the instructors are ready to answer questions and help women develop the techniques necessary for safe gun handling.

"It's relaxed and comfortable," according to Shaffer. "We reach out to women who are new to gun ownership and provide a forum for learning and understanding responsible gun ownership."

Debbie Michaels, a research study coordinator in the health field, is the club's treasurer. She believes that the concept of the club being for women only is beneficial when it comes to learning.

"I feel that the women feel less intimidated when shooting and learning with other women," she said.

Lisa Contessa, the club's Community Committee Trustee, agrees.

"We have an amazing group of women in our club. All the ladies want to help each other learn and improve," She said.

Contessa, a self-employed graphic designer and mother of two young boys, also sees the club meetings as a great ladies night out.

"I like challenging myself with the target. It's my stress relief. I work a lot, and am home all day with our kids. By the time ladies' night rolls around, mama is ready to get out and shoot," she said.

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Many of the club's members have mentioned that the comradery of a women-only group is one of the main reasons they joined the club. The club's leaders believe that concept along with the added educational aspects are the club's strengths.

The club's Education Committee Trustee, Kristen Smock, said for her it's the friendships that she has developed that matter. Smock spends her days working as a mental health patient advocate and enjoys sharing her skills in shooting with other women.

"The friends I have made and the support we give each other is priceless," Smock said.

For Tracey Ferguson, a marketing specialist in the financial industry and also the club's secretary, the highlight of meeting night is seeing the new shooters get excited about their first shots.

"I remember my very first shot," Ferguson said. "It was the most exhilarating feeling. I remember checking my first target and thinking that I wasn't too bad."

For Ferguson that was just a little more than a year ago. Now, she said she feels comfortable and confident with her firearm. She wants to share that love and confidence with other women.

Safety is the number one priority at all meetings. Attendees are asked to keep ammunition out of their guns, and their guns in a case or holster until it is time to shoot. All attendees are required to wear eye and ear protection and follow the rules of the organization's monthly shooting venue: Castlewood Rod & Gun Club.

Membership is \$50 per year, and members are also expected to obtain an NRA membership.

Shaffer said the organization has numerous sponsors including Duke's Sport Shop. Castlewood is the range sponsor for the Chapter.

For more information, visit the club's website www.sistersofthesecondamendment.com.

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