

Presidents Report 2025-2026

St. John's Rod and Gun Club

This was a year of change for the Club, as we transitioned to the new membership system (Join It) and a new set of by-laws to govern the operations. We have also continued our program of upgrades to Ranges A, B and C, and other maintenance projects. Work has progressed on a skeet field, and looking at how to add a longer distance rifle range.

Membership - overall membership dropped this year, down to about 985 members (53 spousal, 32 junior, and 900 regular members. There are still 31 members in the prospective category and 41 members in the pending category. Those in the *prospective category* need to do Orientation before they are full members. Those in the *pending category* have not provided all the information that is now required. This included uploading a photograph, and filling in all the required fields in the online membership form. **Of particular importance is the need for members to sign off on the club waiver.**

Membership Fees - 2026 -2027. There was a moderate \$10 increase in spousal, youth and regular membership fees. However, with HST+ service charges via Join It and Sprite, the fee change is larger than \$10 dollars. Nonetheless our administration costs are down significantly from previous years.

Maintenance - our new approach to maintenance on the rifle and pistol ranges is to carry out berm and floor repairs every year. This year Range A had a significant upgrade to the range floor, Range C had the back stop rebuilt and Range B had floor and berm repairs. The Long Branch also had repairs completed to the eaves and a new metal roof installed.

Routine maintenance was also carried out on the trap and sporting clays ranges and equipment. Thanks to volunteers the furnace was rejuvenated in the main club house and we have a new oil tank and electric furnace to install in the clubhouse.

Upcoming Maintenance - the 100m and 200m back stops on Range B need to be rebuilt back up to standard. We will be looking at a new design for the back stops to minimize erosion. Our expectation is that the cost for these repairs will be substantial, but we will need to get bids in to be sure. Work is also needed on and around the IPSC and maintenance sheds on Range C.

There is also maintenance required on the main club house. Eaves, eave troughs and repairs to siding and decking.

New Projects - there was a plan for several years to try and put in a Skeet Range. This year, through volunteer contributions of labour and equipment, plus the help of the Chief Firearms Officer, we have begun to rough in a skeet field. We also had to get a safety zone extension from Crown Lands to facilitate this work. This is being done on a low cost basis, but if it proves popular then we will improve it over time.

Many members have asked for the a longer rifle range than our current (nominal 200m) range. An innovative idea has been put forth, and we hope to put in a lower cost version of a precision rifle range. Work has begun with the Chief Firearms Officer to see how we can do this.

There are reports from the committees posted on the club website - look for the AGM main page.

Comments on Membership and Activity -

The forest fires around the Avalon caused us to close the club for a period in August. Unfortunately this also led to the cancelation of the IPSC Atlantics that would have brought income into the club. In general, IPSC, IDPA and Steel Challenge participation was down this year. The restrictions introduced by the Federal Government had a lot to do with this, particularly with Pistol Caliber Carbines being banned. In an effort to increase interest in this area we tried some mini-rifle shoots (mostly 22's, although some 22's were banned as well). In the future we will need to up the role of rifle and shotgun matches.

Sporting Clays was highly successful in attracting members to matches. We hope to build on this, and hopefully the addition of another shotgun sport (skeet) will bring in more members.

There was club match in early in the season where pistol, rifle, trap, and sporting clays + an archery demonstration took place. This was a successful event and we will try to replicate it again next year. Memorial matches (Tony Mackey, sporting clays and trap) took place on separate days in the fall. These are generally well attended.

Credit needs to be given to the Youth Group who attended and had a go at many of these matches. It is great having parents and kids shooting together, and this is the future of our membership.

Volunteers - we are a large club but I would say that only about 200 to 250 members participate in our groups. Many members use the ranges, but are not involved in group activities. One venue that needs to be more fully developed is rifle competitions.

None of this can happen without more volunteers and more members fulfilling their roles to clean up and maintain the facilities. Currently we have a highly devoted group of volunteers (~ 40 to 50). We are always looking for more volunteers to step up and help. Some clubs have policies of volunteer hours that need to be put in, or you pay a higher fee. We have not looked at this in detail, but managing the facilities of a large club like ours cannot be left to a such a small dedicated group. Alternatively, we may just have to hire people to do the jobs, and this will impact the fees.

Communications is an issue. The new Join It system has a integrated mail system, and we are making more use of that. Join it is also offering a new Event management system at no additional cost. On at least 2 occasions this year we had twice as many members show up for matches, then indicated they were coming. Great to have the numbers, but getting squads set up, fees collected, etc. - with 50 people coming when we expected 25 slows down the start, and many people leave immediately after shooting.

Conclusion - this is a great club and we are trying hard to improve how it is managed and expand our facilities. The Executive and the Board, plus those on the Committees put a lot of time and energy into the club. I cannot say enough about all the support that I get as President. We have new younger members on the Executive and on the Board, and hopefully over time these people will step up and take over the more senior management roles. This is a large organization and only with a proper management structure, sharing of responsibility and a corporate memory and culture can we truly succeed.