

Safety first

Firearms training for women, by women

The Union graphic

BY GREG MOBERLY
Staff Writer

After participating in a pair of firearms training classes, Jami Kearney says the difference between the two was “night and day.”

The Roseville resident felt much more comfortable on a recent Saturday afternoon at The Range in Grass Valley, than the initial course for which she had signed up.

The difference? She was in a class taught by a woman for women.

“It made me feel so good about it,” Kearney said.

Kearney said the attention to detail and being surrounded by women while learning bolstered her confidence.

“To tell you the truth, the first (class in Galt) was with a guy,” Kearney said. “It was not enough to where I was comfortable.”

For five hours, Kearney and 15 other women listened, asked questions and then got the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned in the firing range.

The Saturday classes, which instructor Angela Ford has dubbed “girls, giggles and guns,” have become so popular that the next session in March is already full.

Participants are already signing up for a May session and, if demand con-



Photo for The Union by Greg Moberly

Amber Evans of Roseville fires at a target at The Range in Grass Valley during a ladies' beginning firearms class. The class has become so popular, drawing many students from outside the Grass Valley area, that The Range is considering offering it once a month.

tinues on the two-year old women's firearms classes, the class might need to be offered once a month to keep up, Ford said.

“There are ladies who said they wouldn't come (to get any training) if there were men in the class,” said Ford, who is an investigator with the Placer County District Attorney's office.

And the women travel from a wide area, coming from as far away as Roseville or Browns Valley to attend the training session.

“The women are willing to drive to have that benefit,” Ford said.

Jane Benchener of Rocklin was

thrilled to benefit from the class but had one regret.

“I wish that I took a class first and then purchased a gun,” Benchener said.

She said the gun she has now isn't right for her because it releases 12 pounds of pressure every time it's fired.

“It would be great to be able to rent something here,” said Benchener.

Many of the women either had their own gun or their husbands or boyfriends had guns in the home. It was a matter of the women becoming familiar with how to use firearms if the

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need should ever arise.

"I came with my boyfriend (to The Range) about a month ago and asked about classes," said Lynn Whelan of Auburn. "I heard this would be a good one."

Whelan said she appreciated learning the proper stance, the proper way to hold a gun and how the safeties and gun locks work.

"It's just a hobby for me," said Whelan, who planned on purchasing a gun.

Owning a small handgun could be in Roseville resident Amber Evans' future.

"My husband signed me up," Evans said. "He purchased a rifle for home protection and he wants to get me a little handgun."

"I thought, it sounds good," Evans said. "I didn't grow up around guns at all. They are pretty intimidating."

Evans took the class mostly so she could learn how to protect herself.

"These are crazy times," Evans said.

But Evans added she'll be able to participate more when her husband goes out with friends shooting skeet and can

targets in rural Placerville.

Kearney's husband works in law enforcement and is issued a gun as part of his job.

She wants to know how to use a gun if she should ever need one for her protection.

"We need to get you a gun you're comfortable handling," Kearney said, describing what her husband told her.

"My husband signed me up. He purchased a rifle for home protection and he wants to get me a little handgun."

— AMBER EVANS

All the participants looked increasingly comfortable as the day went on.

Being able to handle the gun before going into the firing range "helped a lot," Kearney said.

The Range is located at 13235B Grass Valley Ave., Grass Valley.

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