

# AGARITA GAZETTE



A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society



Agarita Ranch

April 2012

Lockhart, Texas

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### Flag Marshal - **Artiman**

## Long Juan Here!

**T**here will be a short meeting of club members following our monthly match in May to consider approval of by-laws for the Plum Creek Shooting Society. Please plan to attend.



One our goals for the PCSS is to increase membership and the number of monthly shooters. We want to be sure we make them all feel welcome. **Dragon Hill Dave** and I collaborated on an article, *Advice for New Shooters*, that begins on page 2. We think the article will be a good resource for anyone wanting to learn more about our sport, but particularly for those just getting started in cowboy action shooting. Other articles that might be of interest are, *What's a Stage Scenario?*, that appeared in the September 2011 issue and *Looking the Part: Cowboy Dress*, that appeared in the June 2011 issue. Back issues of the *Gazette* are available at [www.tarryhollowgang.com](http://www.tarryhollowgang.com). Click on the tab for the Agarita Gazette and then on the link for the issue you want to read. There is also an index of articles.

We know we have a problem with the PCSS website. We are working to fix it. See the minutes of our April meeting for more details. Our goal is to have at least a new bare-bones site up and operating by *Continued next page.*



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**Long Juan Here** (continued) the end of April. Until then, our Yahoo Group is the place to look for information about activities, scores, etc.

<http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/PCCSS/>

We want your feedback on our new **registration and scoring procedures**. We want to speed things up and improve accuracy (scores, categories, etc.). We are now using the SASS Premier Scoring & Match Management System developed

by CD Tom and used by more than 250 clubs worldwide. We were very fortunate to have **Agarita Annie** (who has taken over for **Grouchy Spike** as Director of Publications for the Texican Rangers) at our April shoot to help with our first experience using the new-system. She brought along her husband, **Nueces Slim**, so he could shoot. Annie tells me they will be back to help and shoot again in May. **A BIG THANKS TO ANNIE and a hearty welcome to Slim!!**

On a personal note, I shot at **Comancheria Days** with the Texican Rangers the 5<sup>th</sup> weekend in March. Not surprisingly, it was a great shoot, at a great venue, with a great group of cowboys and cowgirls, put on by a great club. Thanks to Match Director **Buck Bradley** (a/k/a glutton for punishment – he was also Match Director of RPV12) and to all of the Texican Ranger volunteers who made a GREAT match possible.

## Profile: **DRAGON HILL DAVE**, President, Plum Creek Shooting Society

By Long Juan

**E**arly this year, we elected officers to run the **Plum Creek Shooting Society**. Our fearless leader for many years, **Delta Raider**, wanted and needed help. Starting this month and continuing for the

next few months, a profile of each officer will appear in the **Gazette**. This month, we start with our president, **Dragon Hill Dave**.

David Donaldson, a/k/a **Dragon Hill Dave**, started cowboy shooting in 2004. Both of his parents had died recently and he was looking for a way to re-connect with some of the things he enjoyed doing with them. Because they had hunted together often and appreciated guns (mostly shotguns and deer rifles), he thought he would try clay and trap shooting. He hooked up with an acquaintance and tried it, but found it wasn't what he wanted. Continuing with his web searches for shooting ranges in Central

Texas, he came across the **Tejas Caballeros** website and their description of cowboy action shooting. The next week, in June 2004, the Cabs were offering a new-shooter school. Dave went to the school at the Cab's old range in Driftwood, saw all the various western guns laid out, saw the stage facades and did a little shooting. He was hooked. The following weekend he discovered the **Texican Rangers** were shooting near Fredericksburg. He and his wife packed the camper and spent the night before the shoot in Kerrville. The next morning, while stopped at a convenience store, he happened to see a truck with a gun cart in the back. He followed it (continued next page)



to the range. It turned out to be the **Picosa Kid**, who also was just getting started in cowboy action shooting. When Dave got to the range, he told them he was there to observe. Surprise, surprise!! He was asked, "Do you want to shoot?" The *Texican Rangers* fixed him up with guns and leather and he shot his first match. He loved it and has been a dedicated cowboy action shooter ever since.

I asked Dave how he came up with his alias, **Dragon Hill Dave**. Here is what he told me.

I tried a couple of other aliases when I got started, but nothing felt right. At the time we were living in Wimberley at our little ranch, which we called Dragon Hill Ranch. My wife and I both have an interest in dragons, and our house was up on a hill, so when it came time to name our place that seemed right. I realized that if I called myself **Dragon Hill Dave**, the initials of that alias would match my real initials, allowing me to use initialed items I already had and use my initials in communications with cowboys and non-cowboys alike. Maybe this interest in efficiency was an early manifestation of my gamer instinct.

Dave tries to shoot every weekend. He shoots regularly with the *Plum Creek Shooting Society*,



the *Tejas Caballeros*, the *Texican Rangers* and the *Green Mountain Regulators*. He occasionally shoots with the *Travis County Regulators* and at *Tin Star Ranch* outside Fredericksburg. He tries to shoot *End-of-Trail* and *Winter Range* every year. He's been

to *Comin' At Cha* and has shot other matches in Washington state, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, Oklahoma and Wyoming.

Dave is a world-class Classic Cowboy shooter. His many awards include:

- 2011 End-of-Trail World Champion
- 2011 Texas State Champion
- 2010 Texas State Champion
- 2010 TSRA State Champion
- 2009 Western States Champion
- 2009 Oregon State Champion
- 2008 Oklahoma State Champion
- 2008 Texas Black Powder Champion



Dave doesn't do any other competitive shooting, but loves bird and deer hunting. He has been to Argentina three times dove hunting, which he says is unbelievably good. He has a deer lease near Fredericksburg and another in Llano County near Sunrise Beach.

As most of you know (if you even glance at any monthly edition of the *Cowboy Chronicle*),



**Dragon Hill Dave** shoots Classic Cowboy. When he got started, he was advised to shoot .38s. In Dave's mind, real cowboys don't shoot .38s; they shoot big-bore .44s and .45s. The Classic Cowboy category, with its clothing requirements, big-bore guns, duelist shooting style and hammered shotgun just felt right. Besides, Dave *says* shooting Classic Cowboy gives him lots of excuses why he is not the fastest shooter out there. I confess I had not noticed that he was slow. Sure seemed to me like he was standing up front a lot at *Ride with Pancho Villa*, accepting award after award for fastest this and fastest that. Dave shoots Uberti "Evil Roy" pistols 4 ¾"

barrels, an 1873 rifle (or a '66 if the '73 is down) and a TTN 12g hammered shotgun.

Dave now lives in Austin, but when he got



started in cowboy action shooting, he lived in Wimberley. He grew up in Odessa, Texas and played football for Permian High School. He went to school with and played football with some of the people who became characters in the *Friday Night Lights* movie. When he started cowboy shooting Dave was working as a constitutional and commercial litigation lawyer for a medium-sized law firm in Austin where he specialized in media law and intellectual property litigation. Then some good things happened in the family oil business that allowed him the freedom to retire early. In “retirement” he serves on the board of the oil company and stays busy in the fall teaching Media Law and Ethics to undergraduate journalism students at the University of Texas. Dave enjoys golf and snow skiing. He and his wife love to travel. Dave follows the Houston Astros and the Dallas Cowboys, which he says has been quite frustrating of late. Dave’s brother is the Sheriff of Ector County, Texas, where Odessa is located. His brother had a speaking part in the movie, *Friday Night Lights*, the definitive movie about Permian High School football. Dave says he has not done anything particularly interesting or impressive in his life (not all would agree), but he is one of only five people who graduated from Texas A&M in 1973 with a degree in philosophy. Yes, he’s an “Aggie Philosopher” and says,

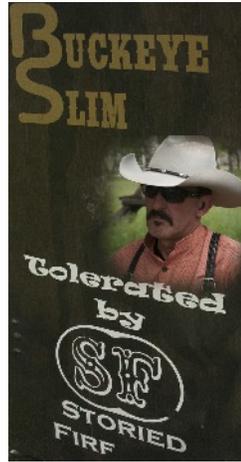
“Thank goodness I got into law school.” Now he teaches at UT. Go figure! Dave and his wife have been married for 40 years, which he views as his most impressive and treasured achievement. Apparently not wanting to seem that old, he was careful to tell me she was 18 and he was 19 when they got married. A SASS Life member like Dave, “Barely There” (her alias) does not participate directly in cowboy action shooting, but Dave says she tolerates and supports his shooting efforts, which he appreciates.

As president of the *Plum Creek Shooting Society*, Dave’s goal is to offer shooters a quality shooting experience that is fun and challenging. He wants shooters to feel they have gotten a great value when they shoot with us. He wants them to miss it when they don’t get to come. Dave thinks the **Agarita Ranch** is one of the shooting venues where every cowboy shooter should want to shoot each and every month. He will be working with the other *PCSS* officers to streamline and improve the sign-up and the scoring process and to look for new targets and other ways to improve the shooting experience. He plans to work with **Delta Raider** to promote the *PCSS* and the **Agarita Ranch** to shooters everywhere. Like all of us, Dave believes we have the best cowboy action shooting facility in Texas and he wants everyone to know it.

Dave is also vice president of the *Tejas Caballeros*. He intends to be very active in both clubs while he serves as president of the *Plum Creek Shooting Society*. Dave has extra guns and leather he will loan to new shooters who want to try our sport. He encourages anyone with an interest to come out to **Agarita Ranch** and experience the fun and excitement of cowboy action shooting. Of course, Dave adds that he will be encouraging anyone who accepts his invitation to shoot Classic Cowboy. He says, “that’s part of the deal.”

## April Shoot

We had a great turn out for our monthly match in April. The weather was good, if a little warm for early April. **Phantom** again wrote great scenarios for the six stages we shot. It clearly was Easter weekend. There were lots of bunnies, eggs and chicks in each scenario. Thanks to President **Dragon Hill Dave**, each posse received a basket of plastic eggs. Everyone got a piece of candy and one lucky person on each posse received a Plum Creek Shooting Society mug. Thanks Dave and **Delta Raider**. There were 48 total shooters, on 3 posses, shooting in 18 different categories. Winners *with competition* included **Gold Dog-Cody/Dixon Lever**; **Wild Hog-GAF Repeater**; **The Adobe Kid-Elder Statesman**; **Nueces Slim-Senior**; **Judge Menday Coming-Silver Senior**; **Buck Bradley-Senior Duelist**; **Klickitat Bob-Frontiersman**; **Dragon Hill Dave-Classic Cowboy**; **Lucky Nickel-Duelist**; **Phantom-49'r**; **Mesquite Creek Mike-Cowboy**; and **Victoria Whiskey-Ladies Wrangler**. Complete scores are posted on our PCSS Yahoo Group and are attached to the email sending this



issue of the Gazette. Having 48 shooters for a monthly match was GREAT!! We are hoping to top 50 in May. **Please remember it is important to show up on time.** Registration starts at 8 a.m. We need to be finished with registration by 8:30 in order to generate the posse lists in time for the safety meeting at 8:45 and to be hammers down by 9:00. If you show up later than 8:30, we may not be able to assign you to your preferred posse and may have to split up groups who would prefer to shoot together. As it gets ever warmer, getting started on time and finishing early will be critical. We will likely try to shoot six stages again in May, but will cut back to five probably for June through September. Following the shoot, we had lunch and the presentation of awards.



*Wild Hog - GAF Repeater*

**Delta Raider** reports his cost of providing lunch is exceeding the revenue. We are exploring solutions and welcome any suggestions. Hope to see you shooting at the Agarita Ranch in May.

*Scheutzum Phast*

*Captain Mack is Back*



*Cimarron Jones*

## Where's Chuck??

There were a couple of *incorrect* guesses last month, but no one found Chuck. See red circle to the right. He was hanging out with **Lincoln Drifter**, who was painting targets during the Western 3-Gun match at RPV12. Not even **Drifter**



found him and you can be sure he looked closely. Better luck this month! Chuck is in a photo. I promise. I even tried to make it easier this time. Find him and you will be “mentioned in the dispatches” next month.

## Klickitat Bob

As many of you know, **Klickitat Bob** (Don Fordyce) has been in Austin for the last



couple of years helping care for his son, Richard, who died of cancer in December. Don and his wife, Nancy, will be returning to their home in Arizona this month. While we are saddened by the reason for their long-term visit to Austin, we have benefitted from getting to know and shoot with Don. He is a great cowboy, shooter and leather maker. Many of us now sport butt covers on our rifles and shotguns that were made by **Klickitat Bob**. We also use holsters, belts, knife sheaths and more that he made. We will miss having him at our shoots

with a good selection of leather products each month. I got started doing a little leather work, primarily as a result of conversations with Don about his leatherwork. His latest project for me was a leather nameplate for the front cover on my new Rugged Gear gun cart. I had seen the one he made for his own cart and asked him to make one for me. I love it and it is particularly special because it was made by my friend, **Klickitat Bob**. If you have or



are getting a Rugged Gear cart and would like to have a leather front cover made for yours, you can reach Don at [drfordyce@msn.com](mailto:drfordyce@msn.com). I

understand he is in discussions with Rugged Gear about the possibility of some sort of more formal relationship. You may want to contact him before he gets famous and his prices go up. I know we will all miss Don as he moves most of his shooting back to AZ. He is a regular at Winter Range, so maybe we can hook up with him there. He tells me he will be looking for us and assures me he will be back to shoot with us at the Agarita Ranch from time-to-time. Happy trails to you, **Klickitat Bob!**





*Posse 2 being lectured by DHD*



*Spectators*



*Someone has to pick up brass!*



*Nueces Ranger*



*Bunkhouse Bob*



*The Adobe Kid*



*Longshadow - Brass a Flyin'*

*Victoria Whiskey*



*Texas Wrangler,  
True Blue's DAD*



*The spotters say, "clean"!*



*Klickitat Bob - BP Reloading Demo*



*Nueces Ranger  
AGAIN!  
Not sure how that  
happened?*

# ADVICE FOR NEW SHOOTERS

*What now-experienced shooters wish they had known  
or listened to when they first started shooting*

by Dragon Hill Dave and Long Juan

The following article is mostly a compilation of comments made in various posts on the SASS wire in threads responding to new shooters seeking information about cowboy action shooting. We have added a few comments of our own based on our experiences since getting started in cowboy action shooting. The now-experienced shooters posting responses on the wire include Korrupt Karl, Count Sandor, JD Trampas, Red Hooker, Samuel "Doc" Eells, Tom Bullweed, our own **Phantom**, Jackson Rose, Solo Sam, J Bar Binks, Jefro, Smokey Shane, Lone Dog, Captain Bill Burt and others. There is lots of good advice for new shooters and maybe some for more experienced shooters as well.

**Most Important Advice.** Don't do or buy anything until AFTER you have visited one or more cowboy action shooting matches, talked with more experienced shooters and done a little research (usually reading online at places like <http://sassnet.com/forums/> and <http://www.cascity.com/forumhall/>). When you show up at a match, let someone know you have an interest in cowboy action shooting and would like to learn what it's all about. Plan to shoot! Use what you have; accept what is offered for loan by other shooters. Virtually every cowboy shooter out there will do anything and everything he or she can to get you shooting. They will loan you guns. They will give you ammo. If you are given ammo frequently, the polite thing to do is offer to replace it next match. They will help you understand what is going on and how to shoot a stage or a match. Take

advantage of their advice and the opportunities to shoot a variety of guns and calibers.

**Guns.** If you do not already own the guns you think you might want or need, see the "**Most Important Advice**" above. Borrow now; buy later. Determine whether (1) you want or need to get into the sport as inexpensively as possible, knowing you likely will want to upgrade at some point if you stay in the sport, or (2) you want to buy quality first and only once. Yeah right! We challenge you to find anyone who has been in the sport very long who owns only the first set of quality guns he or she purchased. Neither of us can pass up a deal or even something that is not a deal, but we want it. Good guns can be found used on the wire and from other shooters you will meet at matches. New and used guns are available from retailers like Texas Jack's in Fredericksburg and Red's, Storied Firearms and McBride's in Austin. Guns can be purchased from gunsmiths who specialize in tuning firearms for cowboy action shooting, e.g., Pioneer Gunworks and Long Hunter and from many others. Guns are also available through online listings like the SASS Wire Classifieds, Gunbroker.com, etc. OK, when you have made the decision to purchase, ....

**Pistols.** Most cowboy action shooters shoot Rugers or Colt clones (e.g., Uberti-manufactured, imported and distributed by Cimarron, Taylor's, etc.). Some shoot real Colts and there are many



other options. The "right" caliber will be discussed below. Barrel lengths

available are generally 4 3/4", 5 1/2" or 7 1/2". Shorter is usually considered a little faster coming out of the holster and easier to maneuver from target to target. SASS matches are not fast-draw competition, but your time from buzzer to last shot is a major factor in how matches are scored. Longer barrels are considered by some to be more accurate. Remember, however, SASS target distances for pistols are usually only 7-10 yards from the shooter. Shooters, not short barrels, cause most misses. Some also consider longer barrels to be more "authentic." Bottom line, barrel length is shooter's choice. When deciding what manufacturer to give your money, at least one experienced shooter commented: "Rugers are the workhorse. I used to take back-ups to the shoot and now I just take the two Rugers I plan to shoot. They are like Timex; they take a lickin' and keep on tickin'." Rugers come in various models, with the New Model Vaquero being the most popular and available cowboy gun in the current Ruger line-up. Others swear by their clones of Colt, Smith & Wesson, Remington and other revolvers. Keep in mind that many pistols, and particularly the more esoteric Open Tops and such, require some tuning before they are slick and reliable. All require cleaning and some maintenance from time-to-time. Percussion or cap and ball revolvers are allowed and used by some shooters. They may not be the best guns to use when getting started.

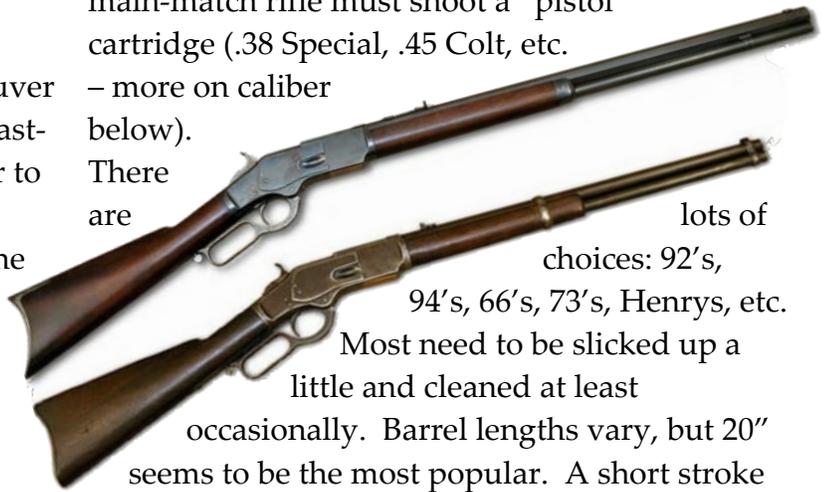


and keep on tickin'." Rugers come in various models, with the New Model Vaquero being the most popular and available cowboy gun in the current Ruger line-up. Others swear by their clones of Colt, Smith & Wesson, Remington and other revolvers. Keep in mind that many pistols, and particularly the more esoteric Open Tops and such, require some tuning before they are slick and reliable. All require cleaning and some maintenance from time-to-time. Percussion or cap and ball revolvers are allowed and used by some shooters. They may not be the best guns to use when getting started.

**Rifles.** There are lots of choices. Winchesters or clones and Marlins prevail. Keep in mind your

main-match rifle must shoot a "pistol" cartridge (.38 Special, .45 Colt, etc. – more on caliber below).

There are lots of choices: 92's, 94's, 66's, 73's, Henrys, etc. Most need to be slicked up a little and cleaned at least occasionally. Barrel lengths vary, but 20" seems to be the most popular. A short stroke kit for lever-action rifles is the most popular modification; that and a front sight the shooter can see. A clone of the Winchester 1873 lever-action is perhaps the most popular overall, if not the least expensive. Texas Jack's in Fredericksburg has a good selection if you want to look. Cimarron Firearms online is also a good place to look. <http://cimarron-firearms.com/>



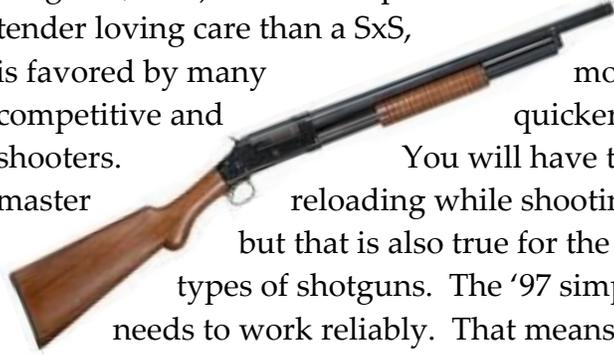
**Shotguns.** Shotguns used in cowboy action shooting include the side-by-side (SxS) coach gun, 1897 pump and the 1887 lever-action. The SxS is probably used by the greatest number of shooters – whether hammerless or hammered. It is a little slower overall, although some like Deuce Stevens can keep pace with even the best on the '97. Both the '97 and the SxS typically need a little work to be ready for competition. For the SxS, you will want the tubes slicked to ease shucking of the fired shells when reloading on the clock.

The shells used also have a significant impact – most who care swear by the Remington STS shell, whether you buy or reload (more on ammo below). You will want the SxS to open relatively easily and to hang open with enough clearance to load shells easily. Finally, you will want it to go bang reliably.

The '97 is the only pump allowed in SASS competition. It also is the only shotgun used for



Wild Bunch competition (1911 pistol, big-bore lever-action rifle and a '97 – like in the movie, “The Wild Bunch”, starring William Holden, Ernest Borgnine, et al). The '97 requires more tender loving care than a SxS, but is favored by many more competitive and quicker shooters. You will have to master reloading while shooting, but that is also true for the other types of shotguns. The '97 simply needs to work reliably. That means easy to load, shells ejecting when the pump is cycled, ease of loading new shells, etc.



The lever-action shotgun is for lovers of the more complex. It is fun to shoot and takes LOTS of practice. There are few everyday shooters who can excel with them.

For the hammerless SxS, Stoegers are a popular choice, although many recommend the less expensive Remington Baikal or the TTN. Ithaca SKB, Browning BSS, Savage Stevens 511 and Charles Daley shotguns are other favorites when you can find them. For a hammered SxS, the TTN, Pioneer, Pedersoli Wyatt Earp and CZ are all good options, depending on the price you are willing to pay and the quality you want. SxS shotguns come equipped with a single trigger for both barrels or two triggers, one for each barrel. Buyer’s choice. For '97 brands, there are still original Winchester '97s to be found, but most shoot copies, like the Norinco. Cimarron also offers a '97 replica. Cimarron Firearms is a good place to look at all the options online. Texas Jack’s in Fredericksburg usually has a pretty good stock of what Cimarron offers if you want fondle or, better yet, purchase.

For what it’s worth, our experience has been that the shotgun is where most people lose time, even more experienced shooters. Practicing transitions and shotgun reloads is a very productive way to reduce your overall time.

**Caliber.** For main match revolvers and rifles, SASS rules require center-fire, at least .32 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber. The cartridge must be a caliber commonly available in revolvers, e.g., .32-30, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .44 Special, .44 Magnum, .44-40 and .45 Colt. Percussion (cap & ball) calibers must be at least .32 and not larger than .45. The most popular cartridges among cowboy action shooters are .38 Special and .45 Colt. Advantages of .38 Special include less recoil and less expensive to reload or to purchase. .38 Special is favored by the speed demons and those who prefer or need less recoil, as well as those trying to save money. .45 Colt is often favored by those who want to be more “authentic” and/or simply more manly – at least that is how they perceive themselves even if not everyone else has the same perception. We can say that because we shoot .45 Colt and .44 Special. Another popular cartridge is the .44-40 (which meant in black powder days a .44 caliber bullet seated over 40 grains of black powder). The .44-40 is a little more difficult and expensive to reload than either .38 Special or .45 Colt, but is more authentic, as one of the few rounds that was actually used in both rifles and pistols in the Old West. Note that cartridges may be loaded with either black powder or smokeless. There are different shooting categories for those shooting black powder – either cartridge or percussion.

**Ammunition.** If you buy your ammo, be sure to get “cowboy” loads. Cowboy loads have lead bullets and are not loaded as hot (lower muzzle velocity). Brands include Black Hills, Ten-X, Winchester, Magtech, Ultramax, Focchi and others. If you reload, remember that lead bullets are required. Reloading will save money if you have the time and inclination. Even if you do not reload now, at least until you are sure you won’t in the future, save your brass. If you decide not to reload, give your brass to someone who does. Maybe they will reload a few rounds for you in

return. If you are looking for brass to reload, Starline has brass available for all cartridges routinely used in cowboy action shooting. <http://www.starlinebrass.com/> Our own **Buck Bradley**, Renegade Bullets, makes and sells bullets for virtually every type of cowboy ammo you could want to reload. See Buck's price list and contact information elsewhere in this issue. He will generally deliver at any monthly PCSS match. Red's, McBride's and **Phantom's** Storied Firearms sell cowboy loads, as do Cabela's and Midway USA. One last bit of advice, most like to use the same caliber for both rifle and pistol. It makes sense if you load your own and helps avoid confusion at the loading table during a match. For the shotgun, you can purchase or reload. Remington STS hulls have been mentioned. They are expensive, but seem to shuck the best and are certainly reliable. 12 gauge is the most popular. Shooting 12 gauge makes it easier to bum shells if you run short, but anything from 10 gauge to 20 gauge will work. Shot size must be #4 lead birdshot or smaller. Most use #7.5 shot or smaller (e.g., 7.5, 8, 8.5). Steel and plated shot are not allowed. Youngsters can shoot .410.

**Leather.** Now all together again, ... , try it before you buy it. Also again, you have a choice of going for quality (and expense) up front or buying for less, knowing you will likely replace. The first options to explore when looking for leather, if you want to save money, are with shooters at your local club or online. Like guns, most of us have accumulated more leather than we can ever use. For new leather, there are many quality leather makers, from local members of our own club, to leather makers you can find online – like Circle M Saddlery (a vendor at Ride with Pancho Villa 2012) - to large commercial makers, including Triple K, Black Hills Leather, Mernickle, Kirkpatrick, El Paso, Tombstone, Cochise and more. If you want to make your

own, check out Will Ghormley online <http://www.willghormley-maker.com/> and your local Tandy Leather store. Will is a fine leather maker if you want to have holsters and/or a gun belt made. His patterns for making your own are the best.

Before purchasing any leather, think about your plans for category and costume (see below), whether you intend to compete with more than just your friends and how authentic you might want to be. When you purchase, consider purchasing three holsters that match – left and right strong-side and an appropriate cross-draw. That way you will have options in the future. Long Juan started with two strong-side holsters, then tried cross-draw and now has settled on two strong-side holsters.

Remember to think about cartridge loops (for additional ammo you might need to reload during a stage) and loops for your shotgun shells. For both, you can use either a separate belt or bandolier or what is known as a slide. Loops can also be included on your gun belt.

**Carts.** Before too long, you will want a cart. NCOWS (National Congress of Old West Shootists) shooters are into authenticity. They often lug their ammo and other supplies in saddle bags or a garment bag and carry their rifle and shotgun in hand. Admirable, but tough, particularly in the Texas summer! If you can beg or borrow a cart for your first few matches, it will help you figure out what you want/need. You might even find someone willing to share space on their cart for a few matches. Best advice, avoid a really heavy or really flimsy cart, no



matter how perfect they might seem in the moment. Options for carts include (1) purchasing a well-designed and well-made wood cart or building your own from a kit, plans or your own design, (2) converting a jogging stroller, golf cart or something else with wheels to a gun cart and (3) purchasing a modern cart designed from the ground up as a gun cart, e.g., from Rugged Gear. <http://www.ruggedgear.com/> See **Klickitat Bob** story and pics on p. 6. Some, like **Kickshot**, even have wooden carts that look like stagecoaches, old Conestoga covered wagons or buckboards.

**Shooting Categories.** Except for fastest overall, shooters compete only with shooters who are shooting in the same category. There are age-based categories; there are shooting-style categories; and there are costume-style categories. It is probably best to start shooting in one of the age-based categories: Cowboy–any age, Wrangler–36+, 49r–49+, Senior–60+, Silver Senior–65+ and Elder Statesman/Grand Dame–70+. Note that you may always shoot in a “younger” category. For example, someone 37 years old can shoot Cowboy or Wrangler; someone 70 years old can shoot any of the age-based categories. Two categories are available junior shooters (age 16 and under): Buckaroo–13 and under, Young Gun–14-16. Buckaroos may shoot .22s and .410s. Parental consent is required for any shooter under age 21. Shooting-style categories include Duelist and Gunfighter. There is a Senior Duelist category for shooters age 60 and above. Costume-based categories include Classic Cowboy and B-Western. There are separate men’s and women’s categories for each shooting category. For example, a woman can shoot Ladies Wrangler or Lady Duelist. The link for the SASS Shooters Manual at the end of this article includes descriptions of the costuming requirements for these categories. The Frontiersman and Frontier Cartridge categories are available for those shooting cap and ball

(percussion) revolvers or black powder cartridges.

**Costuming.** You can get started with pretty much anything – jeans, a long-sleeve shirt, some work boots and a cowboy hat are pretty much all you need. Even if you don’t have some of those items, you are welcome to get started with whatever you have. At PCSS, we occasionally have first-timers shooting in shorts, a T-shirt, athletic shoes and a baseball hat. Look around and see what others are wearing. Then get what you need to dress in your own preferred style. Some prefer forever the minimalist approach. Others go all out. Read the SASS rules. Comply with the requirements for your shooting category as best and soon as you can. You will be required to comply at any state, regional or national match. Local club monthly matches are usually somewhat more relaxed, particularly for those who are just getting started. Try to avoid as soon as you can, however, the items prohibited by SASS rules (short-sleeve T-shirts for men, baseball caps, etc.). Also remember we are into *cowboy* shooting and costuming is part of the game we play. Otherwise we would just be a shooting organization with shooters who shoot older style weapons. Best advice; don’t go *totus porcus* (whole hog) right away. Start with the minimum. Observe and learn. Pick your category. Pick your style. Then start to acquire. Texas Jack’s in Fredericksburg is a great place to visit when you are ready to purchase clothing designed for cowboy action shooting. Good sources online include Texas Jack’s, River Junction, the Old West Gallery, Wild West Mercantile and others.

**Boots.** Boots may be the most important part of your costuming. Get something comfortable. You will be on your feet for 3-4 hours during a typical



monthly match, longer for most state, regional and national matches. Modern, pointy-toed, high-heel boots are not required and are often not particularly comfortable. Cowboy boots are required costing for only a couple of shooting categories: Classic Cowboy and B-Western. For other categories, boots are required and there are some restrictions, e.g., no lug soles, but leather work boots will work fine, at least when getting started. For the women there are a variety of options. Looking online will give you some good ideas. Fort Western offers a couple of good looking and relatively inexpensive 1870/1885-era boots.

<http://www.fortwestern.com/home.php?cat=218>

Of course, if health concerns dictate some particular footwear (or any clothing for that matter), it's not a problem.

**Other Equipment.** Good shooting glasses (prescription if you need them); good ear protection; and a "squib" rod (especially if you shoot with **Lucky Nickel**). Wearing eye protection is required by SASS. Wearing ear protection is recommended by SASS. PCSS requires both.

**Want to be a top competitor?** Find someone who already is. Find more than one person who already is. Follow them around. Ask questions. Observe. Learn the fundamentals: stance, grip, transitions (drawing the revolver, changing from one revolver to the other, etc.), shotgun reloading techniques, proper levering of the rifle, etc. Then purchase, practice and shoot accordingly. In fact, whether you want to be a top competitor or not, this is all good advice.

**What to read first.** *SASS Cowboy Action Shooting: Shooters Handbook.*

<http://sassnet.com/Shooters-Handbook-001A.php>

**Other places to look.**

<http://sassnet.com/About-What-is-SASS-001A.php> Description of cowboy action shooting on the SASS website

<http://www.curtrich.com/GettingStarted01.html> Captain Baylor's Getting Started in cowboy action shooting

<http://www.jspublications.net/> Doc Shapiro's website. Lots of good information.

<http://cowboysthooting.wordpress.com/2012/01/01/getting-started-in-cowboy-action-shooting/> Jeff Lynch's Blog – interesting discussions about cowboy action shooting in Texas. Be sure to explore Jeff's entire blog.

[http://www.gunblast.com/JimTaylor\\_CAS.htm](http://www.gunblast.com/JimTaylor_CAS.htm) Jim Taylor's discussion about getting started in cowboy action shooting on GunBlast

**The web in general.** Just search for "cowboy action shooting" and you will find a plethora of information. Some of it may be out of date, but you can learn lots, even from what is out of date.

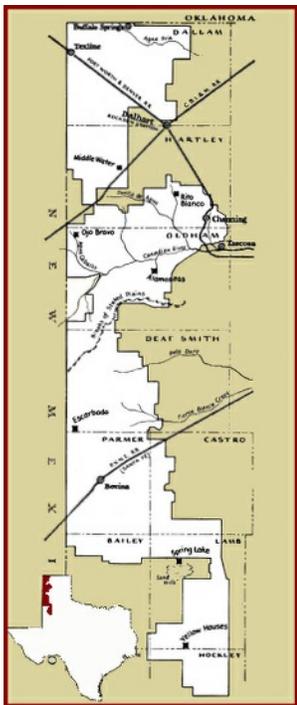
**Best Advice Overall! Tom Bullweed** says it well. *"I have enjoyed different types of competitive shooting for 15 years. In the other games, most shooters are standoff-ish. I started enjoying our game more when I stopped looking to be with the best shooters and started being with people that I like to shoot with. They are friendly yet competitive, eager to loan you their gun if necessary and do not complain about a match that is not perfect. Enjoying being around enjoyable cowboys and cowgirls makes me shoot more often and improves my skills in a much more enjoyable manner than just getting in a lot of practice."*

Heed Tom's advice, be safe and have fun!



## What's it mean? XIT

XIT was one of the most famous cattle brands of all time. It belonged to one of the greatest Texas ranches of all time. Containing more than 3 million acres of the Texas Panhandle, the XIT Ranch ran from the old Yellow House headquarters near what is now Lubbock, northward to the Oklahoma panhandle in an irregular strip that ran for more than 200 miles along the Texas border with New Mexico. The ranch consisted of seven divisions. At one time more than 150,000 head of cattle were run on the XIT. In 1887, the XIT Ranch set up a branch



operation in Montana and Wyoming, where each year it sent cattle that had been bred in Texas for fattening. An XIT herd was one of the last to travel the Great Western Cattle Trail.

Trail Boss Abner Blocker delivered the first herd of cattle to XIT division headquarters at Buffalo Springs in 1885. There he scratched "XIT" in corral dust with his boot heel to design the famous brand. The ranch included portions of ten counties,

which helped perpetuate the legend that the "XIT" brand stood for "Ten In Texas." In fact, the brand was created to make it more difficult for rustlers to alter.

The XIT Ranch prospered at first, but in 1901 began to sell land to meet its financial obligations. During the 1920s, the XIT Ranch was broken up, sold and divided into smaller ranches. Enhanced by the spread's sheer size, the romance of the XIT Ranch lives on in western lore. J. Evett Haley



Surviving Buildings of the XIT Escarbada Division Headquarters

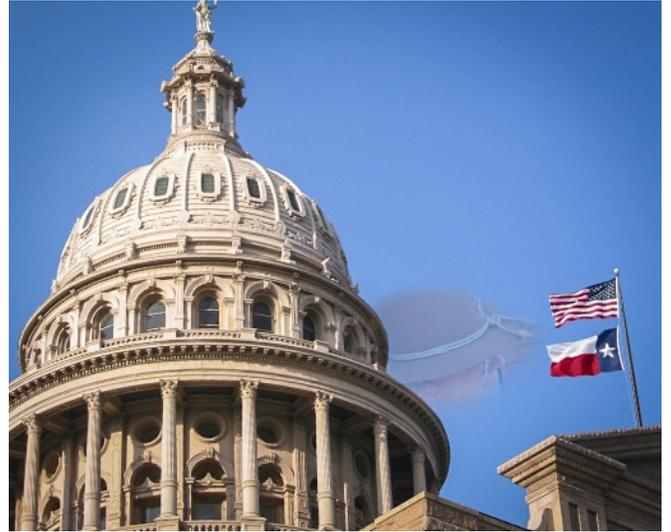
wrote a colorful history in 1929, *The XIT Ranch of Texas*. In 1949, Lewis Nordyke wrote a narrative history, *Cattle Empire: The Fabulous Story of the 3,000,000 Acre XIT*. Memoirs of former XIT employees, including Buck MacConnell, locally known as "XIT Buck", were published. The old general office building still stands in Channing. The old Las Escarbadas division headquarters was moved stone by stone from Deaf Smith County to the Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock. Memories of the ranch are kept alive in the XIT Museum in Dalhart. Each year, Dalhart hosts the XIT reunion with rodeo and parade featuring a horse with an empty saddle, in honor of range riders of the past. Permanent tribute to XIT cowboys is the "empty saddle" monument dedicated in 1940.



Other West Texas towns, including Muleshoe, Farwell and Bovina, advertise their common heritage with the XIT.

And now, as Paul Harvey would have said, the rest of the story. The XIT Ranch was established through the exchange of public lands to finance construction of the Texas Capitol. By the mid-1870s, the Texas Capitol in Austin had become small and cramped. In 1879, the Texas legislature designated a 3,000,000-acre tract in the Texas Panhandle to be used as payment for a new Capitol. Nothing much happened until

November 9, 1881, when fire destroyed the old Capitol. In 1882, the three million acres were awarded by the state to investors in exchange for construction of a granite Capitol in Austin. They built the largest state Capitol in North America. Texas was the biggest state in the Union. The XIT Ranch was the largest in the world under fence (more than 6,000 miles of barbed wire). The red granite Texas Capitol is still the largest state Capitol on the North American continent. It is second in size only to the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., but the dome of the Texas Capitol actually stands seven feet higher than the dome of the U.S. Capitol.



### RO's Corner: Holsters

All holsters must be safe. A holster must be capable of retaining the revolver throughout the normal range of motion. Holsters must be made of leather. They must be of a design typical of and be worn as they would have been worn in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, B-Western movies or western TV shows. Holsters for main match revolvers must be worn one on each side of the belly button, separated by the width of at least two fists. A holster may not depart from the vertical by more than 30 degrees when worn (violation is a stage DQ for each stage worn). In addition to these general

requirements, there are additional requirements for certain shooting categories. Those shooting in the B-Western or Gunfighter may not use cross-draw holsters. When shooting B-Western, holsters must be of the Buscadero or drop-loop style, meaning the entire revolver must be below the belt on which the holster is hung. B-Western holsters must be embellished with fancy stitching, conchos, spots and/or tooling. For those shooting Classic Cowboy, holsters may not be Buscadero or drop-loop style, meaning for Classic Cowboy, at least part of the revolver grip must be above the top of the belt on which the holster is hung.

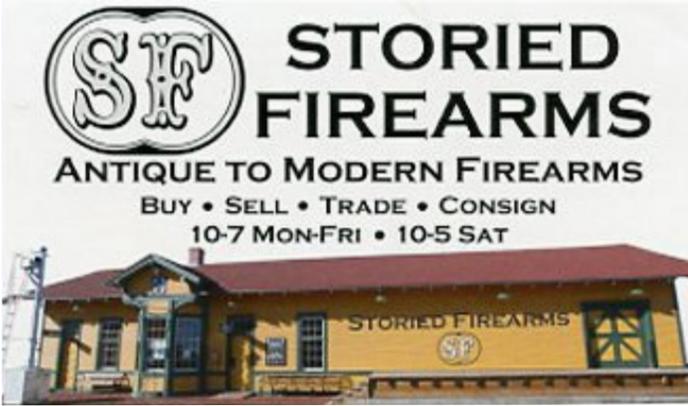


### Anticipation:

“Nothing is ever so worthwhile as it seems beforehand.” Cherry Malotte played by Marlene Dietrich in The Spoilers (1942)



Classic Cowboy or B-Western??



Renegade Bullet Company  
Pricing as of 1 February 2012  
830-446-2123

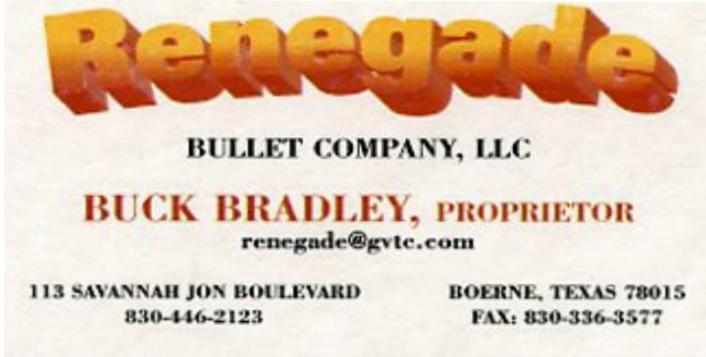
Caliber	Weight	Config.	Price/1000
.38	100	RNFP	53
	105	FP	54
	125	RNFP	58
	125	FP	58
	130	RNFP	59
	158	RNFP	63
	158	FP	63
	158	SWC	63
.380	100	RNFP	53
.38-55	245	RNFP	92*
.41	215	SWC	77
.44	180	RNFP	67
	240	SWC	81
.44-40	200	RNFP	70
.45 COLT	160	RNFP	76*
	180	RNFP	67
	200	RNFP	70
	250	RNFP	83
9MM	124	RN	58
	125	CN	58
40 S&W	180	FP	67
.45ACP	200	SWC	70
"New"	200	RN	70
	230	RN	79
45-70	405	FPT	168*



**RELOADING ON THE CLOCK!!**

Occasionally a writer of shooting scenarios will include loading a rifle round on the clock. C/D and GAF shooters of single-shot rifles always reload on the clock. A GAF shooter even reload his or her pistol on the clock. Here is how Charlie Goodnight did it in the 1850s. *"After Goodnight's shot, the butt of his gun swung to the ground, the barrel in the crook of his arm. His right hand grabbed the powder horn, he jerked the stopper out with his teeth, and poured a charge into the palm of his hand. As he poured it into his gun, he slipped out the rod with his right, then caught up the leather loader with his left, pressed a ready-patched bullet into the barrel, and rammed it home with the hickory rod. As he lifted the gun with his left hand, his right pulled a cap from his belt and slipped it into place, and he was ready to shoot again."*

Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman  
by J. Evetts Haley



Hawken "Plains" Rifle