

AGARITA GAZETTE



A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society



Agarita Ranch

July 2014

Lockhart, Texas

The Long Branch Saloon & More

by Long Juan



Not long ago, I came across the following short story while doing some research for another article in the *Gazette*:

The Long Branch Saloon of "Gunsmoke" fame really did exist in Dodge City - and still does. Sort of.

Anyone who watched the television show *Gunsmoke* growing up is well acquainted with Miss Kitty's Long Branch Saloon of Dodge City, Kansas. Viewers may not have realized that the Long Branch Saloon really did exist. No one knows exactly what year it was established, but the original saloon burned down in the great Front Street fire of 1885. The saloon was later resurrected and now serves as a tourist attraction featuring a reproduction bar with live entertainment. According to the Boot Hill Museum, the original Long Branch Saloon served milk, tea, lemonade, sarsaparilla, alcohol and beer.

That short story led to this article about the Long Branch Saloon, the Richardson-Loving Gunfight, the Front Street Fire, Dodge City, Fort Dodge and more.

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President's Word:

It has been a long road since the middle of June when **Barely There** and I started our trip to End of Trail. But it has been a very productive one as I am coming back with lots of new ideas that we can use at Plum Creek. I was very happy to see that **Shinbone Bob, Lefty Leo, Leo's Lady, Joe Darter, Long Juan, Delta Raider, PT, Lightning McQueen, Agarita Annie** and likely others made sure we celebrated the 4th in style and with lots of fireworks. I was very gratified to see 64 shooters come out and join us to blaze thru those 5 stages that **PT** put together for us. And I really enjoyed the photos that **Long Juan** posted, especially the black and white one with our Young Guns **SkinDawg, Matt Black** and **El Pantero**.

I was away for End of Trail, where I encountered the usual brand of competitors better than me (aka **T-Bone Dooley** and **Cowhand**) but found out there's a new sheriff in town in my category—**Dutch Coroner**. He put me away handily, but despite some hiccups on a few stages, I still came in 4th. I also shot a lot of Cowboy Clays, which is a relatively new event at EOT. I managed to win the Cowboy Clays buckle and came in 2nd on the Wild Bunch Clays. From side matches I picked up second places in Buffalo rifle and in Speed 1911-Traditional.



But the best thing that happened to me at EOT was being honored with SASS Regulator badge #59561. I want to thank everyone who had anything to do with me receiving that recognition. It means a whole lot to me to join that elite group within SASS. Just makes me want to work harder to assure that Plum Creek is on everyone's "gotta shoot it" list.

The Plum Creek Shooting Society put in a good appearance at EOT, with our best work done by **Phantom**, who is the 2014 World Champion 49r (and 7th overall). When you look at the competition in his category, you know he should be very proud of



having brought that trophy home. Look for it the next time you are at Storied Firearms. Another World Champion from Plum Creek is **Matt Black**, the World Champion Junior Boy. Matt tore up the stages (He had 6 stages where he was the fastest shooter overall on that stage-rank no. 1 and 2 others where he was second) but had some equipment problems on a few stages that kept him from the top 10 overall (he came in 27th) but he brought home a globe. Other Plum Creek members who made the top ten in their category were **Colt Faro** (2d 49r), **Tres Equis** (8th Cowboy), **Spur Broke** (5th Cowgirl), **Bandera Kid** (7th Senior Duelist), and **Bison Jim** (9th Elder Statesman).

After EOT it was time to give my wife, **Barely There**, a little time for her interests



so we headed up to Denver where one of her favorite artists—the glass master Dale Chihuly—had an exhibit at the Denver Botanic Garden. After the heat and the dust and wind of EOT, the Denver Botanic Garden was peace and tranquility. It is a marvel, set in the middle of downtown



Denver. It offers a nice stroll through a well-kept and curated garden that can teach you much about flowers plants, and what thrives in various environments. The Chihuly glass exhibit was built around the garden and accented what the garden had to offer. Sometimes it was hard to tell what was organic and what was glass.

From there we headed northeast to Nunn, Colorado and the Great Guns Sporting Club for the “Shootout at Pawnee Station,” the SASS Colorado State Championship. This was a good opportunity for me to see how other clubs put on a state match and to pick up some ideas on match management, stage design, entertainment and targets. I had a good match with several Classic Cowboys. **Brother King**, one of my fellow Magnificent Seven Classic Cowboys, drove over from Sturgis, South Dakota where he now lives and shot with me on my posse. We had an excellent time. We shot the



Cowboy sporting clays course as well. I took first on the '97 shotgun clays course and third on the side by side course. He beat me handily on the speed hammered shotgun side match (he is good with that thing!) But I got him on the Wild Bunch match (2nd in Traditional, he was 3rd). And I took first place in Classic Cowboy. **Spades**, another Classic Cowboy from Colorado who shot on our posse, took second and is the Colorado State Champion.

From there **Barely There** and I had a date in Jackson Hole, Wyoming the following weekend, so we took our time and went up to Cody, Wyoming where we saw the daily shootout at the Irma Hotel and the next day I went to the Buffalo Bill Cody Center for the West. I saw all the guns I ever wanted to see



and learned a lot about W.F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. This is a "must see" on every cowboys and cowgirl's bucket list.

From Cody we drove through Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park down to Jackson Hole. Because we could not find an RV Park close to town, we stayed in the Gros Ventre (pronounced "grow-vant") campground about 5 miles outside Jackson Hole. What a wonderful place! We drove by buffalo on the road to and from the campground and the other night a moose was feeding just a few yards behind our RV. We were in Jackson Hole to attend an event put on by Amy Ringholtz, a Western wildlife artist we follow. The event, called "Rise of the Fenix", was at the National Museum of Wildlife Art.

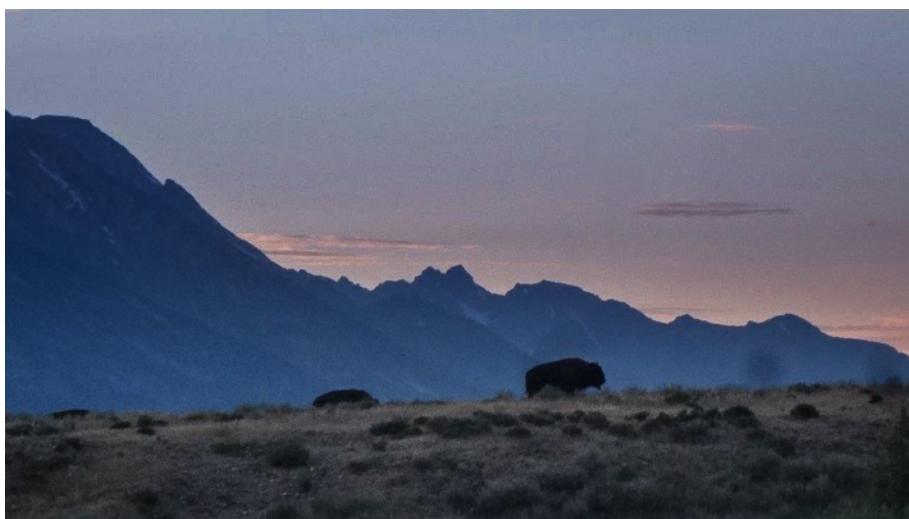
We arrived in Jackson Hole on Wednesday. Although our event was not until Saturday, we came earlier to see a presentation by

Mary Jane Bradbury (her cowboy name is **Alice Palmer**) portraying Nanci Russell, the largely illiterate wife of famed Western artist Charlie Russell who became his highly effective business

manager and promoter. We had met Mary Jane at the Colorado State shoot, When she heard that we were going to be in Jackson Hole, she invited us to come see Nanci Russell. Her performance was in conjunction with an exhibit of Charlie Russell's art at the National Museum of Wildlife Art—the same place where we were going on the weekend. We learned much about Charlie Russell and his art and life from this entrancing performance.

Because we had a day or two before the event, we spent a lot of time in Jackson Hole shopping, seeing the sights, visiting the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar, and then spent a day driving through Yellowstone around Old Faithful. We had a very good geyser day, arriving at the Old Faithful Inn just in time to see the Beehive geyser go off (that's pretty rare), then the Castle Geyser erupted (another big geyser that only erupts every 14 hours or so) and then Old Faithful performed as well. We toured some other geyser basins and mud pots, then came back home through the Grand Teton National Park.

The "Rise of the Fenix" was a blast with a large exhibition of the artist Amy Ringholtz's work, musical performances, drinking, dancing, and general fun. We had a chance to say hello to Amy who occasionally



comes to Austin to work when she is not in Jackson Hole. **Barely There** and I managed not to buy any more of her work at the time (we already have several pieces), but we are looking at a couple that we might talk about on the way back.

We are headed back now—1400 miles to Austin from Jackson Hole. It will take us 3-4 days depending on whether we drive hard or meander a bit. But we will be back to see you all at Plum Creek at our August shoot.



Barely There & Dragon Hill Dave

Find Delta Raider

We had a few more participants in our monthly efforts to find **Delta Raider** this month. A somewhat younger and real Vietnam era Delta Raider was hanging out in the Chili Petin hat. Hereby “mentioned in the dispatches” for finding **Delta Raider** in the June issue of the *Agarita Gazette* are **El Sabre, Skinny Steve, Manassas Jack, Jake Jones, Meadow Biscuit Slim, Preacher Man Lee, Lincoln Drifter, Czexican Dave and Buffalo Phil**. Let’s see who can find him this month. Remember, it has to be a picture in which he is hidden, not a photo of Delta Raider at the match.

An advertisement for "Chili Petin Hats". The ad features a large, textured military-style helmet. On the front of the helmet, there is a circular inset containing a small, hidden photograph of a man in a military uniform. The text "Vintage & Unique Hats" is written vertically to the left of the helmet, and "Chili Petin Hats" is written in large, stylized letters at the bottom. In the top right corner, there is contact information: "512.844.2023" and "rrhunters@hotmail.com".

Continued from page 1

The Long Branch Saloon. From about 1874 until 1885, the Long Branch Saloon was a well-known saloon in Dodge City, Kansas. It had many owners, most notably Chalkley "Chalk" Beeson and gambler and gunfighter, Luke Short. The saloon was built as the result of a wager between trail hands and soldiers from Fort Dodge playing ball. If the cowboys won the game, the soldiers would provide building materials to construct a saloon. The cowboys won and a saloon was built. Later, in 1878, Chalk Beeson, a well-known businessman, lawman and cattleman, and William Harris bought the saloon. Harris named it after his hometown - Long Branch,



Chalk Beeson

New Jersey.

Long Branch was a New Jersey beach resort town in the late 18th century, named for its location along a branch of the South Shrewsbury River. In the 19th century, Long Branch, New Jersey, was a "Hollywood" of the east, where some of the greatest theatrical and other performers of the day gathered and performed.

The Long Branch Saloon was a plain, storefront bar on Front Street in Dodge City, Kansas. It was typical of frontier saloons of the time and was a favorite of cowboys and gamblers. It was also a witness to some of



The Beach at Long Branch
by Winslow Homer

Dodge City's more notorious events. The Long Branch prospered until the railroad replaced the cattle drive. When the saloon burned down in 1885, it wasn't rebuilt.

During its day, the Long Branch was one of the more popular and refined saloons in Dodge City. Its owner, Chalk Beeson, was a talented musician. He led a five-piece orchestra that played nightly.

Milk, tea, lemonade, sarsaparilla and all types of alcohol, including champagne and beer, were served. Sarsaparilla, a type of root beer, was popular in the Old West. In western movies from the 30's to the 50's, ordering sarsaparilla instead of whiskey was often met with derision.

Gambling at the Long Branch ranged from a game of 5¢ "Chuck-a-Luck", a game of chance played with three dice, to poker with \$1,000 pots.

The Long Branch Saloon Shootout. In the spring of 1879, Dodge City had not yet been tamed, a fact that was confirmed by a gunfight in the Long Branch Saloon. Also known as the "Richardson-Loving Gunfight", the Long Branch Saloon Shootout involved Levi Richardson and "Cockeyed Frank" Loving. Richardson was a buffalo hunter. Loving was a gambler. The two often met at the Long Branch, where they gambled and became friends. Somewhere along the line, however, Richardson developed affection for Loving's wife and the friendship ended.

Loving was only 19 years old. He was a professional gambler whose reputation as a gunfighter developed later. He came to Dodge City from Texas, arriving in 1878. He married, became friends with Long Branch owner Chalk Beeson and associated with notable gunmen and gamblers, including Richardson. Richardson was almost 30. He was known for his tough disposition and was



disliked by most. He was thought to be slow and awkward, but also was reputed to be an excellent gunfighter.

In early 1879, Loving claimed that Richardson was making unwanted and disrespectful advances toward his wife, Mattie. The two threw taunts back and forth for a time. With nothing more than verbal confrontations until March, the dispute finally came to blows as the two argued on Front Street. Richardson ended up punching Loving in the face. Not being armed, Loving simply turned his back on Richardson and walked away, with Richardson yelling "I'll blow the guts out of you, you cockeyed son-of-a-bitch."

A few weeks later, on April 5, 1879, Richardson went into the Long Branch Saloon looking for Loving. Loving was not there. Richardson settled in with a drink to wait. About nine o'clock that evening, Loving showed up and joined Richardson sitting in front of a pot-bellied stove in the saloon. The two spoke to each other in hushed tones until Richardson suddenly shouted, "You wouldn't fight anything you damned son of a bitch." Loving calmly responded, "Try me and see."

What followed left the Long Branch filled with smoke, one man dead, one man slightly wounded and the rest of the crowd hunting cover, but miraculously unhurt. With the two men standing less than an arm's length

apart, Richardson drew his gun, prompting Loving to do the same. Both men fired. Richardson fired five rounds. Loving emptied his Remington No. 44. Richardson was hit in the chest, side and arm. Loving was grazed on the hand, but was otherwise unhurt. Loving was arrested as Richardson died on the floor of the saloon. Richardson was buried in Boot Hill on Sunday, April 6th, one more person who died with his boots on. Two days later, a coroner's inquest ruled that the killing had been in self-defense and Loving was released from jail.



Dodge City War. From its founding, Dodge City had a reputation for corruption and was often called "the Wickedest City in America." Take that Deadwood!

The Dodge City War occurred at the end of the city's first ten years of history, when cattle drives and saloons were fading as a dominant force in the city politics. An informal association known as the Dodge City Gang dominated law enforcement and much of political life in the community. The gang monopolized the whiskey trade. In 1879 an anti-gang faction won a closely fought election for control of Ford County, defeating popular gang member, Bat Masterson. While the new political faction identified themselves as reformers, they actually wanted to reap profits of the whiskey trade for themselves. The new "reform" mayor promptly fired Bat's brother, Jim Masterson, as city marshal and the "reform" town council posted a series of new "moral" ordinances.

In 1883, professional gambler and gunfighter, Luke Short, settled in Dodge City and purchased a half interest in the Long Branch Saloon. This put him at odds with the mayor and his allies, who made attempts to run Short out of business and then out of town as an "undesirable." In what became



known as the Dodge City War, Short appealed to Bat Masterson who enlisted the help of old friends, including Wyatt Earp.



Dodge City Peace Commission 1883

Front L-R Charles Bassett, Wyatt Earp, Frank McLain & Neil Brown Back L-R W.H. Harris, Luk Short, Bat Masterson & W.F. Petillon

While Short was in Kansas City discussing the matter with the governor, Earp and his friends were sworn in as deputies by constable "Prairie Dog" Dave Marrow. The town council offered a compromise, but Earp refused. When Short returned, there was no one ready to turn him away. The Long Branch reopened and the Dodge City War ended without a shot being fired.



Front Street - Dodge City, KS 1878

Front Street Fire of 1885. Three fires in 1885 each consumed an entire Dodge City block. To most residents, these three blocks were the heart of the city. They housed such notable establishments as Delmonico's Restaurant, Zimmerman's Hardware Store, the Long Branch Saloon and Hoover's Liquor Store. While many establishments were quickly rebuilt and reopened, the Long



Front Street 1879

Branch was not – until much later.

Dodge City – the Deadwood of Kansas. In 1865, soon after the end of the Civil War, Fort Dodge was established near the Arkansas River and the future site of Dodge



Fort Dodge 1879

City. The primary purpose of the fort was to protect the area and wagon trains along the nearby Santa Fe Trail from Indian raids. In 1871, H. J. Sitler built a sod house about five miles west of Fort Dodge. He opened the area's first bar inside a tent. The steady stream of travelers passing by on the Santa

Fe Trail made for good business. Dodge City was born.



In its early days, Dodge was a rough, lawless town. For 10 years, it stood at the edge of the frontier, a small town of less than 1,000 year-round citizens. There were 16 saloons. South of Front Street ("the Deadline"), there were uncounted assorted



Dodge City Buffalo Hide Yard

brothels and dance halls. As buffalo hunters, railroad workers, drifters and soldiers flooded into the town, they quickly found the saloons, brothels and dance halls. Fights inevitably followed. Many men died and had to be buried.

Dodge City's graveyard was the original Boot Hill, a name that became common for cemeteries throughout the Old West. Men buried had "died with their boots on", typically in a gunfight or from being hanged, as opposed to dying quietly in their beds of illness or old age. The modern Boot Hill Museum is located at the original location of the Boot Hill Cemetery in Dodge City. In the first season of *Gunsmoke*, the introduction to each episode shows Matt Dillon walking in

Boot Hill reflecting on the deaths of men buried there. A wistful poem by Josephine McIntyre graces a memorial wall at what remains of Boot Hill.



*To any traveler who may
pass this way
And climb this lonely hill to
pause and say
A prayer for us who early
found our rest
Upon the prairie's windswept
ageless breast.*

*Weep not for us who early
made our beds
Wrapped in our blankets,
saddle for our heads.
For we are happy here,
secure and still,
Locked in this rock strewn,
silent, sunbaked hill.*

The Santa Fe Railroad reached Santa Fe in 1880, which marked the end of the Santa Fe Trail. With few travelers on the trail and with the Indians effectively "lodged" on reservations, there was no longer need for a military presence. Fort Dodge was closed in 1882. By 1886, cattle drives had stopped. Dodge City became more tame.



After Fort Dodge was closed, a retired soldiers' home was founded at the site. Retaining the character of the famous old fort, the Kansas Soldiers' Home was opened in early 1890. Old troopers, including veterans of the Mexican, Civil and Indian Wars took up residence. The Home eventually housed veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Philippines, the Boxer Rebellion, World Wars I and II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The Kansas Soldiers' Home now includes a library/museum, a modern nursing home, a recreation center, five residence halls and 60 cottages. A peaceful park includes quiet, shaded, tree-lined walks and dignified buildings -- both old and new.



Chester, Kitty & Matt
in front of the Long Branch Saloon
Gunsmoke



Dodge City

The Long Branch Saloon in Modern Times.

The Long Branch Saloon was featured in almost every episode of *Gunsmoke*, on radio (1952-1961) and on television (1955-1975). The television version ran for 20 seasons and is the longest-running prime time, live-action drama with 635 episodes. In 2010, *Law & Order* tied the record of 20 seasons, but with only 456 episodes.

Since 1958 a new Long Branch Saloon has been part of the Boot Hill Museum in Dodge City. The exterior of the "new" saloon is modeled on period photographs of the original, while the interior is consistent with



saloons of the era. Appropriately, it is furnished with an 1881 bar adorned with two Golden Eagles once owned by Chalk Beeson.





Stories from Jake (Paladin that is): The Mule & the Mountain Lion

The original story. A couple in Montana were stalked by a mountain lion most of the morning on their way out to a hunt. They were pretty sure the cat was after their dog. The cat ambushed them, The mule tossed its rider and wanted a piece of the lion. That's when all hell broke loose... for the lion.

Shots were fired, but no one was sure if the cat was hit. The mule first snatched the

cat by the tail and started whirling it around, banging its head on the ground. Then he dropped it, stomped on it and held it to the ground by its throat. The mule then got down on his knees and bit the thing all over a couple of dozen times to make sure it was dead. Then Berry whipped the lion into the air again, walked back over to the couple, who were standing in stunned silence, and stood ready to continue the ride... as if nothing had happened.

Fortunately, the wife got these pictures...



The real story. Jerry hunts mountain lions in New Mexico riding Berry, his mule. The incident depicted came about when Berry became aggressive in pursuit of the big cats. The first time Jerry shot a lion while riding Berry, Berry casually nuzzled and nibbled on the dead lion. With each lion Jerry shot, Berry became more aggressive. Berry just could wait to get to the cat after Jerry shot it. The original story is, however, not quite accurate. Berry didn't actually kill the lion - he just picked it up and tossed it around after it was dead.

I like the original story better!



Long Juan Here

It was 4th of July weekend and it was HOT, but we had 64 shooters on 4 posses shooting in 24 different

categories. The top two overall - Matt Black and Phantom are separated in age by more than 30 years, but in final score by only .03 seconds, that's three one hundredths of a second. Congratulations to both for some fine shooting. Congratulation also to those finishing in the top 10 overall, to our 14 clean shooters and to all of our category winners. Complete scores were emailed the day after the match and are available the Scores page of the Plum Creek website. www.pcess.org. Thanks to **Lincoln Drifter**, **Dutch Van Horn** and **Old Bull** for providing most of the match photos this month. A few follow. More can be viewed on the Photos page of the Plum Creek website.



True Blue Cachoo



Nueces Slim



Business end of a '73



World Champion 49'r Phantom



P.T. shooting long range in honor of Elroy Rogers



E.T. came home



Agarita Annie



El Sabre reaching for the flag



There's a little mud on that there wheel, eh?



Montana Hannah & Johnny Morris



Boosey Babe



Annalong Longshot & G.T. Sharps

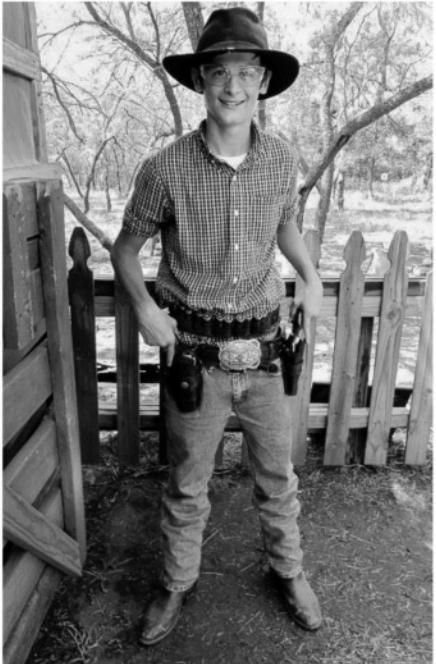


Two Spurs, Sunny Spurs & Montana Hannah



Big John Mesquite

Young Guns



SkinDawg



Matt Black



El Pantero



Hopalong Herbert after the swinger



Show Me a misfit



Captain Mack is back



Old Bull helps celebrate the 4th



Little Bullseye

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	125	FP	35	70
	130	RNFP	36	72
	158	RNFP	39	77
	158	FP	39	77
	158	SWC	39	77
.380	100	RNFP	33	65
.38-55	245	RNFP	59	117
.41	215	SWC	49	98
.44	180	RNFP	41	81
	240	SWC	52	104
.44-40	200	RNFP	45	90
.45 COLT	160	RNFP	46	92
	180	RNFP	41	81
	200	RNFP	45	90
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	125			
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*Price increase because of higher cost of lead. Sorry for any inconvenience.