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## **Cowboy Camp scheduled for this weekend**

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**FAIRBANKS**—The Golden Heart Shootist Society will host its annual Cowboy Camp at Chatanika Memorial Day Weekend.

The event will be held at the GHSS Range and Old FE Gold Camp at 28 Mile Steese Highway.

“Cowboy Camp is an introduction to the public about the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting,” said Poco Loco Louie, a longtime instructor and host at Cowboy Camp.

Members of the Golden Heart Shootist Society create an old west persona or “alias” for themselves and maintain that character while participating in Cowboy Action Shooting events.

This year’s event starts at 9 a.m. Saturday with the flag raising ceremony and a meet and greet at the range. A new shooters seminar starts at 10 a.m.

After a break for lunch, live fire clinics are slated for 1 p.m. and novelty shoots take place from 3-6 p.m. There is an informal dinner at the Gold Camp in the evening.

Sunday features a Cowboy Action Shooting Match with main match registration at noon and the shooting competition from 1-6 p.m.

The club is celebrating its 16th anniversary on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

Monday begins with a • 9 a.m. memorial service, • 10 a.m. main match registration and the 11 a.m. main match. There will be a range clean up following the match.

Those who can’t attend Cowboy Camp are invited to the club’s monthly meetings, held the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Mayflower Buffet restaurant. The club also holds shooting matches on the second Saturday and last Sunday each month from May through September starting at noon at Chatanika.

From October through April the club uses the Air Curtain Range at the Fort Wainwright Small Arms Complex.

“This is a perfect opportunity for anyone interested to get some first-hand experience in one of the fastest growing shooting sports in the country, while gaining insight into an important era in our country’s history,” Poco Loco Louie said.

The Golden Heart Shootist Society is the local chapter of the international Single Action Shooting Society (SASS).

This weekend's Cowboy Camp is offered annually to provide newcomers information about the Golden Heart Shootist Society, Single Action Shooting Society, Cowboy Action Shooting, selecting an alias and costumes, range safety, shooting competitions and Old West firearms and replicas.

SASS describes itself as a "fantasy" sport because participants create their personal vision of the Old West.

"But Cowboy Action Shooting is first and foremost a shooting sport" says Kootenai Brown, the club's range boss, "so safety is our primary interest. We use strict procedures to assure that injuries won't occur."

All participants in Cowboy Camp will be provided training in range procedures and safe firearm handling.

Participants will have the opportunity to handle and shoot a wide selection of cowboy firearms under the guidance of some cowboys and cowgirls with many years of experience on the range.

This year, the GHSS will be introducing a new discipline to Cowboy Action Shooting called "Wild Bunch Action Shooting."

It is based on the Colt 1911 semi-automatic pistol (or replica). Participants also use a lever action rifle of .40 caliber or higher and a Winchester 1897 pump action shotgun (or replica).

The shooting scenarios are reminiscent of the timeframe of the US Army's Pancho Villa Expedition and the movie "The Wild Bunch" set in 1915. Wild Bunch Action Shooting is a competition for advanced shooters using high power factor firearms and ammunition.

The GHSS will provide firearms, ammunition, targets, safety glasses and ear protection.

Participants will be guided through handling and shooting single action revolvers, lever action rifles and pre-1900 design shotguns.

Experienced shooters with eye and ear protection they like should bring it with them.

Participants should bring items such as water, lunch, bug spray, sunscreen, rain jacket, hats, sunglasses, folding chairs and other items for an enjoyable weekend outdoors.

"Cowboy Action Shooting is an activity for the whole family," says Wind Drifter, the club's Territorial Governor and representative to the SASS organization.

There is a "buckaroo" category for shooters under age 13 and a Junior category for shooters under 16. Those in the buckaroo category use .22 caliber firearms

and .410 shotguns, and all participants can use reduced power center fire ammunition.

The Texas State Championship was recently won by a 12 year old buckaroo. There are shooters more than 80 years old, “but don’t ask me how I know that,” said Wind Drifter.

Contact the News-Miner sports department at 459-7581.

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