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Golden Heart Shootists to host Cowboy Camp

By **BOB ELEY** beley@newsminer.com | Posted: Friday, May 24, 2013 12:23 am

FAIRBANKS — The Golden Heart Shootist Society is hosting its annual Cowboy Camp this weekend at Old F.E. Gold Camp, 28 Mile Steese Highway in Chatanika

“Cowboy Camp is an introduction to the public about the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting” Poco Loco Louie, club president, long time instructor and host at the Cowboy Camp, said in a press release.

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.

Saturday’s schedule starts at 9 a.m. 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 18th anniversary on Sunday night.

Monday begins with a 9 a.m. memorial service. Registration for the main match starts and 10 a.m., with shooting commencing at 11 a.m. There will be a range clean up following the match.

A new discipline to Cowboy Action Shooting — Wild Bunch Action Shooting — will be part of this year’s event. 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 time-frame of the US Army’s Pancho Villa Expedition and the movie “The Wild Bunch” set around the 1915. Wild Bunch Action Shooting is a competition for advanced shooters using high power factor firearms and ammunition.

The club 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 for new shooters.

Experienced shooters with eye and ear protection and other accessories they like should bring the items to the match.

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

“Cowboy Action Shooting is an activity for the whole family” says Wind Drifter, the club’s Territorial Governor Emeritus.

There is a “buckaroo” category for shooters under 13 years old, and a Junior category for shooters younger than 16.

The buckaroos can use .22 caliber firearms and .410 shotguns, and all participants can use reduced power center fire ammunition.

“A 13-year-old recently won the Speed Pistol title at the National Championship match,” Wind Drifter said. “There are shooters over 80 years old, but don’t ask me how I know that.”

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

The Cowboy Camp is offered annually to provide newcomers information about the club, SASS, selecting an alias, costumes, range safety, shooting competitions and Old West firearms and replicas.

“Cowboy Action Shooting is first and foremost a shooting sport,” said Kootenai Brown, the club’s Territorial Governor, and representative to the national SASS organization. “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.

If you can’t attend Cowboy Camp, the club hosts monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month at the Mayflower Buffet restaurant.

The club holds shooting matches on the second Saturday and last Sunday of each month from May to September starting at noon at Chatanika.

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

“Cowboy Camp 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,” said Poco Loco Louie.

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