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## **'Four Bucks' and 'Bear Claw' to defend Golden Heart Shootist titles**

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FAIRBANKS — “Four Bucks” and “Bear Claw Becky” will return to defend their titles when the Golden Heart Shootist Society and the Single Action Shooting Society conduct the 16th annual Alaska State SASS Championship Match of Cowboy Action Shooting this weekend at the Old F.E. Gold Camp in Chatanika.

The Golden Heart Shootist Society is the home of Cowboy Action Shooting in the Interior. SASS is the international governing body of the sport.

The competition is scheduled Friday through Sunday.

Cowboy Action Shooting is an exciting shooting sport that uses firearms or replicas of firearms designed before the 1900s, typical of those used in the Old West years of 1860 to 1899.

The competition is for the fastest course of fire onto steel plate targets using two revolvers, one lever action rifle and a shotgun of double barrel side-by-side, lever action, or 1897 pump action.

A unique aspect of the sport is competitors create an old west persona for themselves, dress in clothing of the period and go by the “alias” name of the character they have created while participating in the events.

There are three other cowboy action shooting clubs in Alaska — Anchorage, Juneau and Soldotna.

Defending men’s champion “Four Bucks” and women’s champion “Bear Claw Becky” are from Anchorage’s Alaska 49ers Shooting Club.

There are 32 competitors registered, each looking to earn the title of fastest gun in the North.

The overall winners in men’s and women’s divisions earn entrance to the SASS Northwestern Regional Championship held in Bend, Ore., on Aug. 30.

Contestants compete in categories based on shooting style and age. Competitors are as young as 13 and some are older than 80 years old.

The event is held at the Golden Heart Shootist Society Range at Old F.E. Gold Camp, 28 Mile Steese Highway.

At the top of the Gold Camp driveway, at the road grader and sign to the Gold Camp, turn left for range parking.

Action begins at 1 p.m. Friday with side matches, including a Bowling Pin Duel, Cowboy Decathlon and a demonstration of Wild Bunch Action Shooting, which is a new discipline of Cowboy Action Shooting based on the end of the Wild West era as depicted in the 1969 movie "The Wild Bunch."

Wild Bunch Action Shooting features the 1911 semi-automatic pistol.

Main Match shooting takes place between from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Spectators are welcome. Eye and ear protection is required for spectators in the active shooting areas, and is available for loan in the event tent.

Pets must be leashed and remain in the parking area.

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