



(Photo by T.A. Crerand)

A group of cowboy style shooters are pictured with their loaded firearms at the loading station waiting their turn at a timed target event.

Shooting Club Recreates The Old West

By T.A. Crerand
WESTFALL — Using aliases and wearing handsome attire reminiscent of the Old West, members of the Single Action Shooting Society, Inc. (SASS) known worldwide with over 80,000 members, competed in a Cowboy Action Shooting style event for pleasure, not prizes, on a range at the Matamoras Rod and Gun Club Sunday.

The demonstration was open to the public to gain information about interest in forming a local club in Northeast Pennsylvania.

One could liken the experience to stepping onto a Hollywood Western movie set. All 27 shooters were outfitted in western clothing like a cowpoke wearing leather chaps, gambler in fancy duds, and sheriff with a shiny silver badge, all complete with a pair of Old West style firearms strapped in leather holsters with live ammunition and all wearing Western hats.

Most outfits were store bought, but some were handmade. And, it was not just cowboys at the event, there were ladies, as well as youth they called junior members. At times, they seemed in character living up to their alias namesake.

Suellen Werner (alias Sassy Southpaw) of Middletown, N.Y., competed in the timed events and called the Western style shooting event the fastest growing sport for families.

Their focus is to have fun safely, but they do keep score for speed and accuracy. Eye and ear protection were a requirement to be in the area of the action sport.

Paul Grasso, 38, of North Fairfield, Conn., (alias James Samuel Pike) is the Northeast region champion and is participating in SASS competition for the fifth year but has 25 years experience in shooting. He gave an inspiring demonstration during his turn at the staging area that caught the attention of all.

He said in an interview that he

dry-fire practices in his basement at home to build speed and only shoots live ammunition at events.

Firearms used onsite included single-action revolvers, lever action carbine rifles with an exposed hammer, and double barreled shotguns and pump shotguns with exposed hammers. Members have the option to use originals but prefer reproductions, particularly of revolvers and rifles.

Joe (alias Scalawag Joe) and Ann O'Connor (alias Esmeralda) of Dutchess County near Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 8-year veterans of SASS events, participated with their grandson Hamilton Korth, 13, (alias Hooligan Hoot) of Macomb, Mich., who was visiting with them for the summer and has participated in SASS for three years.

Ann is a skilled seamstress and made all their Western outfits. The couple even reloads their own ammunition. She explained that they shoot year round in New York and had the opportunity of using one indoor facility and shooting targets

outdoors.

Each event begins with someone reading a brief scenario that relates to the upcoming stages of competition that gives various situations to expect. Then they use live ammunition at a variety of steel targets to complete each stage.

The Aug. 24 event was a 4-stage match expected to take about a half-day to complete. They win token items like a belt buckle and, of course, earn bragging rights!

Werner's husband, Larry, who uses the stage name of J.C. Moose, explained that although it is a family event, members must comply with all state regulations including age requirements for junior members wherever an event is held.

Tom Calaluca of Monroe, N.Y. in Orange County uses the alias of Tom Payne and has participated for nine years. He explained that junior members are called buckaroo for boys and buckette for girls.

Sal Pinzone of Milford, a.k.a. Cameron Steele, is a member of SASS as well as an approximate

20-year member of the Matamoras Rod and Gun Club where the event was held. He and George Segnini of Milford (not a gun club member) coordinated the cowboy style event hosted by the Club in Westfall.

SASS members meet monthly for shooting events in Monroe, N.Y., an hour's drive from Milford, but Pinzone hopes to again hold future events in Westfall.

He said the nearest site in Pennsylvania where this type of Western style shooting event is held is in Allentown, well over an hour's drive away.

Grasso said club members are friendly and enjoy the camaraderie at events.

He has a five-year-old daughter already interested in the family sport who enjoys wearing her own Western attire and shooting her little cap gun.

Participants had a wood gun cart that held their ammo box and featured large wheels for easy navigation on uneven terrain typical of hunt club properties and shooting ranges.

Some gun carts are custom crafted to take on the appearance of a stagecoach, covered wagon, or train.

Some members have day jobs and some are retired, but all enjoy the monthly matches. You can be a spectator at a SASS event to observe the friendly competition and Western outfits like a lawman, blacksmith, schoolmarm or saloon girl.

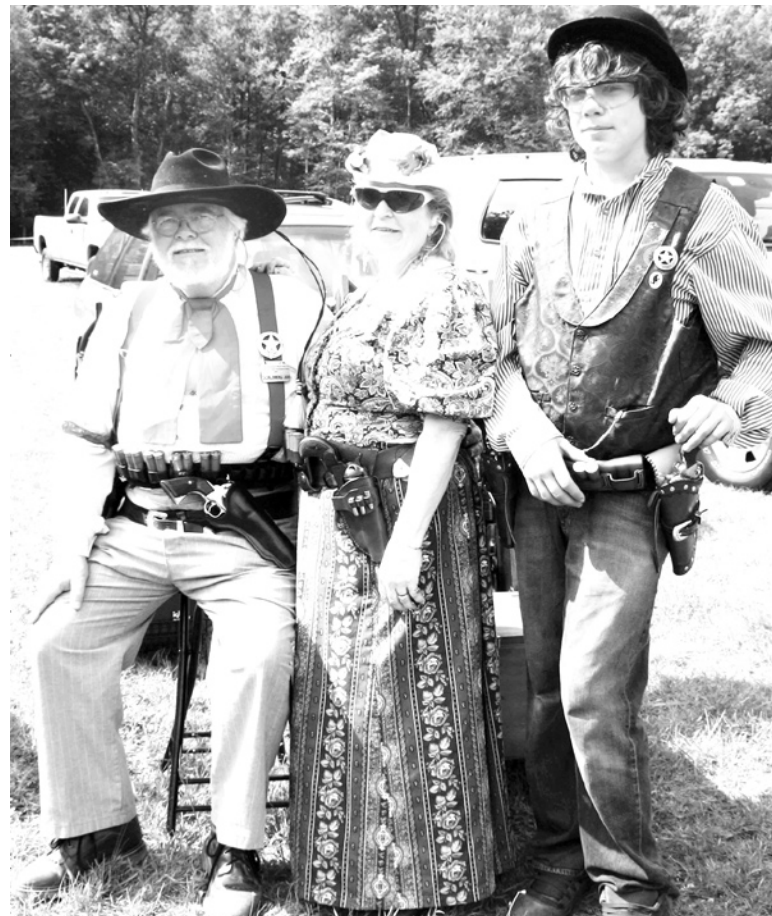
Visit the SASS website www.sassnet.com for more details and information about clubs throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe, South Africa and New Zealand.

Anyone interested in being a part of forming a local SASS club should contact Pinzone at 570-296-5853. You could also assist in helping to name the new club he hopes to form in Northeast Pennsylvania.



(Photo by T.A. Crerand)

Paul Grasso of North Fairfield, CT, (alias James Samuel Pike) is the U.S. northeast region champion of the Single Action Shooting Society, Inc. known around the world as SASS with over 80,000 members. He gave a rapid-fire performance at targets at a Cowboy Action Shooting event held at the Matamoras Rod and Gun Club.



(Photo by T.A. Crerand)

Joe and Ann O'Connor (alias Scalawag Joe and Esmeralda) of Dutchess County near Poughkeepsie, N.Y., participated in the western style shooting demonstration Sunday with their grandson Hamilton Korth, (alias Hooligan Hoot) who spent his summer visiting them from Michigan. Ann sewed their period clothing and even gave her hat, recycled from a yard sale, a bit of western flair.



(Photo by T.A. Crerand)

Suellen and Larry Werner (alias Sassy Southpaw and J.C. Moose) of Middletown, N.Y., are pictured with their wood gun cart featuring a moose on the lid of the ammo box. The large wheels make pulling the cart over rough terrain much easier.