Thunder River World-Guardian

October 2026 ©Thunder River Renegades, Inc. Vol. XI, № 10

The Oldest Cowboy Action Shooting Club in Grimes County, Texas

9/10 of a mile north of the Texas Renaissance Festival Main Entrance. Look for the Black & White sign, eastside



Help with the most hated job on the posse

Crockett Texas
TRR President

Is there a more thankless job on a posse than picking brass? You're expected to follow after the shooter, track down all their empty shells, and hurry up and get them picked up to clear the stage for the next shooter, all while staying out of everyone's way. On the bright side, you're less likely to be shot or injured by an exploding firearm than the TO, and unless you're counting, too, no one is going to be mad at you because you saw their misses.

But all-in-all, it's generally considered the least desirable task, one it is sometimes hard to get volunteers to cover. God bless the folks who regularly step up to take care of this at our matches!

As an efficiency expert, which sounds a lot better than "exceptionally lazy person," I am always on the lookout for jobs that are harder than they should be. Brass picking is no exception. Nothing makes brass picking more miserable than bad equipment. I've been shooting for several years now. I've picked brass at TRR and other clubs, too. I've used all kinds of equipment, and I've come to some conclusions about what works best.

It starts with a good grabber. You want a grabber with rubber tongs that come together to grip the brass tightly. This rules out grabbers with adjustable triggers. They often leave a gap at inopportune times. It also rules out grabbers with suction cups. They suck, and not when they are supposed to. They are too soft and squishy to hold shells reliably.

Click *to continue with article*

Come One, Come All



Ranger Bill

TRR Vice-President

Thunder River will be holding a work day on Saturday, October 3. The Renegades have a history of turning out in force when there's work to be done. The most recent example was building the new first stage – The Cheyenne Social Club – a Herculean effort that was done in a single day (plus just a little more).

We have a couple of projects that require attention. The main ones are replacing the roofing on the porch awnings at the General Store and Osage Mike's Leather shop. We also want to upgrade the roofing on a section at the Land and Cattle Company. We also will be adding brass-catching screens to the front of the recently opened Cheyenne Social Club, The Niles City Depot, and the Land and Cattle Company.

And there is always some clean-up and target shifting to be done. We can always find something to do in our Old Western Town.

Bring along wood hammers, battery-run drills and screwdrivers, pry bars, tape measures, ladders, skill saws, and any other working tools you might think would be handy. We'll have lumber, roofing panels, and hardware

ready to go. We've seen some relief from the heat lately, but we'll still have drinks available.
With a good turnout, we can have most of the work done around noon-time.
And don't overlook the bi-monthly mowing day opportunities, which include mowing, weed-eating, water hauling, and general maintenance on the 2nd and 4th Thursday before each match every month.
And LSTR draws ever closer on the calendar, so we will be looking at several things to spruce up and prepare for our annual signature match. We always want to put our best boot forward for our members and visitors from afar. Stay tuned for announcements about that.
Come on out and enjoy the fun and camaraderie that comes from being an active and supporting member of The Thunder River Renegades.

See ya' on the range.
Ranger Bill

Three Matches in October! Because a goodly number of members will be attending the Texas 3 Step Matches, we have added a Halloween, Oct 31 match into the mix. A regular match with the added attraction of allowing members to come in costume. Mark your calendars for this fun event.



From the Reloading Room; this time, the mystery repair. No matter how careful we are, there comes a time when your press and whatnot need service. It could be normal, routine maintenance, or something has gone 'south' and everything stops till you fix the problem. This time we'll look at the second option—something has broken or stopped working correctly.

Now there are three possible outcomes:

Result 1: you repaired or fixed the problem, and you're back in business. This is the one we all strive for. You're churning out ammo, humming the theme to *The Magnificent Seven,* and life is good.

Result 3: (yes, I know 2 comes next, hang in there) You tried your best, but nothing works—you don't have a spare for the broken part, your expert isn't answering his phone (think **Rawhide** for many of us), or you don't have the proper tools to fix it (who doesn't have a left-hand screwdriver in metric threads?) You're dead in the water, and time to give it a rest. And, yes, we've all been there. Order the part(s), send an email to your guru or just call it a day.

Result 2 is the one that wakes us up at 2 a.m., wondering what happened. You have a problem, you tear the machine apart—find nothing, replace nothing, and put it back together . . . and it works! For the life of you, you don't have any idea what you did or what happened, but it works. Yes, now and then we all 'luck out' and have one of these, but we still wonder in quiet times—just what the heck happened.

The Thunder River Mercantile

Dealin' Lead



Lone Star Wood & Leather

tahitipro@comcast.net
832-867-4102

Rayland Pless









Off-Cowboy but still a lot of fun: Did you know that **Crockett** is a Class 3 FFL? This means he can handle **suppressor (silencer)** sales. From the talk round the pavilion this sound like a lot of fun and while not cheap still is within the price range of many of us.

For more details contact him at: **trentffl@gmail.com**



Tells Primers

My wife, **Angels**, and I are traveling more these days, so it's best to contact me regarding primers and see what can be arranged. Or when I might be out to the range



I can be contacted at: **cmjdaj@gmail.com** or **texted at 714-857-4471.**

Tell Sackett

Recline Lodge: **Doc Jim Harvey's** storefront:



I have created some 10-10-4 merchandise on the TeePublic site (link below or click on the graphic on the left). Stickers, t-shirts, coffee mugs, travel mugs, and many more items are available. Check it out. I will be creating some more 10-10-4 graphics soon.

Link to his store: **LINK**

John Powers, Gunsmith

Powers Metal Works
228 Colorado Rd.
Duson, LA 70529

Phone number for Texas
281.513.3438 Cell
281.254.7881 Fax
NEW LA number: 337.940



Shooting once a month not enough?

Willow Hole Cowboys 1st Saturday of the month
http://www.willowholecowboys.com/

Oakwood Outlaws
2nd Saturday & Sunday of every month and the Monday following the 2nd weekend. www.oakwoodoutlaws.org/

Brazos Rangers (part of Greenwood Gun Club)
https://greenwoodgunclub.org/cowboy-action
Second Sunday of each month
If planning on shooting the Match, contact **Scott** beforehand to get the gate code for entry to the range.
Director: **Scott Miller** (AKA "Slimy") scottlittlefish@hotmail.com

Texas Historical Shootist Society: Weekend of the 3rd SUNDAY of the month(both days). https://www.thss.org/

Orange County Regulators: 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month.
https://www.facebook.com/orangecountyregulators
Texas Gator: rtexasgator@aol.com

TRR Officers 2026

President: **Crockett Texas**
president@thunderriverrenegades.com

Vice-President: **Ranger Bill**
vicepresident@thunderriverrenegades.com

Secretary: **cheyenne**
secretary@thunderriverrenegades.com

Treasurer: **Doc Jim Harvey**
treasurer@thunderriverrenegades.com

Deputy Treasurer: **Pawnee Possum**
assttreasurer@thunderriverrenegades.com

Range Master: **Colonel Mackenzie**
RangeMaster@thunderriverrenegades.com

Range Master: **Doc Ø☘Bay**
AsstRangerMaster@thunderriverrenegades.com

TG: **Texas Jack Daniels (TJD)**
TG@thunderriverrenegades.com

Continue with Crockett's article: The good news is, quality grabbers are easy to find and very inexpensive. They are easily replaced, too. I found one that suited my purposes pretty quickly online.
The next item is the basket. Some folks use little buckets on strings. Others use bowls or strainers without a handle. In my experience, you want a large, deep, wire basket. Dropping brass into it should not be a challenge! I see folks trying to use these teeny-tiny strainers that barely hold a cup full of brass. Please, Lord, deliver us from 3" strainers! It can barely hold all the casings and shotgun shells and you have to aim too hard to drop them in it. A good basket needs to be 8-10" in diameter for ease of use. It also needs to be at least 3-4" deep so empty shells won't bounce or fall out of it. The best choice is a wire mesh basket, which will allow pebbles and dirt to sift through in case this is an issue.

I found a wire mesh culinary basket made out of nickel-plated steel. It's probably meant to wash vegetables or strain pasta, but it will hold brass just fine. I made sure to get medium mesh, rather than coarse, to keep smaller shells from falling through. It came with a wire handle that I had Cheyenne saw off, leaving me just enough to work with.

The last item is the pole. To what are we going to attach our basket? Sometimes we see wooden handles or poles used. The most common item seems to be the handle of a golf club with the club sawed off. The handle already comes padded and this works reasonably well, but since the grip is straight, it sometimes requires an awkward wrist movement to change positions and dump the brass without accidentally spilling it. I looked for a better, more ergonomic option.

What about something sturdy you could lean on, with a curved handle to make dumping brass easier? I found a lightweight, adjustable-height aluminum walking cane that fit the bill. I used hose clamps and zip ties to secure it, then JB Weld epoxy to immobilize the lower half of the cane and keep it from spinning the basket around. And, since no cowboy action project would be complete without duct tape, I added some for redundancy. All you have to do to dump the brass is lift the basket until it is above the unloading table, then turn your wrist and the handle of the picker. It will all fall out, easy-peasy!

I made seven sets of brass pickers: Six to keep at TRR and one to raffle off at LSTR. We can keep them at the range and anyone who wants to is welcome to use them during our matches. Please don't take them home with you by mistake!

There's no reason picking brass should be any more difficult than it already is. I hope my creations will make the job easier and more fun. And the next time you are at the unloading table and some cowboy or cowgirl dumps your shells, remember to say "THANK YOU!" That's the true Cowboy Way.





Two examples of bad grabbers currently at the range. On the left, suction cups that suck, but not in the right way. On the right…I don't even know what this is, I just know it doesn't work.



Another bad grabber I have at home. Note the adjustable trigger and the tongs that don't grip together tightly.



A brass basket with a wooden stick. Not only is this ergonomically uncomfortable and hard to hold, the basket itself is far too shallow. Shells fall out of it too easily.



Two more baskets from the TRR range. This strainer can barely hold all the shells at once! It's too much of a challenge to get them into that tiny cup.





The new improved brass picker. Simple design and solid, rubber pads on the tongs for positive recovery.





The new improved brass baskets, mounted on a walking cane. The basket is 10” wide and about 3” deep.



Ergonomic handle is easy to turn when it's time to dump the basket. Height is adjustable.



The basket is secured with hose clamps and a heavy-duty zip tie. Epoxy and duct tape prevents the lower section with the basket from turning.



The new TRR brass picking sets, ready and at your service!!

Click to return to first part