

Thunder River World-Guardian

November, 2020

©Thunder River Renegades, Inc.

Vol. X, No 11

*The **Premiere** Cowboy Action Shooting Club in Grimes County, Texas*

⁹/₁₀ of a mile north of the Texas Renaissance Festival Main Entrance—look for the Red, White and Blue sign

► **Match this Saturday: October 24, 2020:** match of **6** stages.

Registration cut off **8:30** (Sunrise = 7:32 a.m.)

“Clean Matches, No Procedurals”

Sept 26:

Shotshell
Osage Mike
Nile City Slick



Oct 3:

♪ You're the reason God
made Oklahoma ♪ Dee
Trooper Siegle
Pappy Miles

Rusty Elder

Col Mackenzie
Shotgun Steve
Texas Drifter
cheyenne

Top Ten Shooters

Sept 26:

Shotshell
Tell Sackett
Manassas Jack
Dealin Lead
Cherokee Jones
Texas Ghost
Osage Mike

Bristlecone Jan

Nile City Slick
Frio Kid

Oct 3:

Oklahoma Dee
Shotshell
Texas Scout

Red River Raider

Wildcard Wayne
Lonesome Lefty
Dealin Lead
TJD

Bristlecone Jan

Manassas Jack

Top Lady Shooters

Sept 26:

Bristlecone Jan
Lady Doc
Ruby Red Rider
Diamond♦Rose

Lorelei Longshot

Mississippi Red

Oct 3:

Bristlecone Jan

Weezee Anna

Ruby Red Rider

Diamond♦Rose

Lorelei Longshot

Crash's Communications

Wow! What a great couple of workdays. There is so much that has been done over the last few workdays. On our major workday, last Saturday, I believe we had broken all attendance records. I believe we had 25 members that showed up to swing a hammer, dig fence post, clean out a bunch of trash, clear weed lines, lay the frame work for flooring, lay flooring and a complete shine and polish of everything that was part of the firing line.



I am always amazed at our clubs support. To all who helped. Thank You. You will notice a huge difference on your next trip.

We are getting ready for Last Stand at Thunder River 2020. If you have any donations that are cluttering up your loading bench or safe. Bring them on in.

Again many, many Thanks to all.

Keep your powder dry.

Crash

What is the optimum posse size?

By TJD

Since COVID arrived the posse size complaints have increased.



The posse is too big, the posse is too small. Lots of complaints without any real suggestions.

In my line of work if you have a problem to bring up you need to bring at least one solution with you.

So here is the math

	Posse		
	Size	Tiny	SmallNormal
Timer Operator	1	1	1
Spotters	2	3	3
Spotter and Scorekeeping combined	1		
Scorekeeping		1	1
Brass Shagger	1	1	1
Loading Table Officer		1	1
Unloading Table Officer	1	1	1
Shooter	1	1	1
Someone Unloading	1	1	1
Someone who has unloaded and is returning their firearms to their cart	1	1	2
Someone who is loaded and ready to be the next shooter		1	1
Someone Loading	1	1	2
Someone on their way the loading table		1	1
TOTAL -->	10	14	16

As you can see:

A Tiny Posse has zero buffers. Everyone hustles and everyone works. Some work 2 jobs. There is zero time to socialize. Zero fun.

A Small Posse is really about as small as you should go. But again no one has any time to do anything else.

A Normal Posse has enough room for people to stay busy but not be rushed.

So what is the problem?

Unless you have 28 shooters you can't make two Small Posse's so you end up with one really large Posse of 27.

Unless you have 20 shooters you can't make two Tiny Posse's so you end up with one large Posse of 20.

TRR strives for a posse size of 14-18 shooters per posse.

But we will never have two Posse's of less than 10.
Nor will have a single posse of more than 27.

If you have a better idea please let us know.

Regards,
TJD

Black Powder 101
or
How to Take Up Smoking with
No Adverse Health Effects

(First in a series)

by **Blackpowder Burn**



OK, so you've seen some folks at TRR or elsewhere shooting that nasty old smoky stuff and cackling and giggling like mad people. This is accompanied by big rolling BOOOMS! You wonder what the heck is so great? It's dirty, smelly, really hard to clean up, has to be cleaned every day (what a pain in the posterior!) and corrodes your expensive guns, right?! So why would anyone do that unless they're a freaking idiot?

Well.....while all the opinions expressed above are the prevailing "wisdom" about black powder, they are DEAD WRONG! Now I'm not saying you don't have to do some things differently, but it doesn't take much more effort and sure adds a whole new level of fun to our game. You actually get to shoot your guns with the proper all-organic "green" propellant they really used back in the day. After all, BP is made from charcoal, sulfur and bat shit (OK, the bat shit was just the common source of the potassium nitrate needed).

[Continue to rest of article](#)



Work Day & Work Day II were great successes:

as mentioned previously we had great turn-outs for both these days. Weather was a bit better but even with some heat/humidity folks flocked to the range and WORKED!

Oct 10 saw the old splatter fencing and amazing-hard-to-remove depart the range. The new framing for all three were built and the lack of enough pickets is the only thing that kept the job from reaching completion. **Willie** makes a great V-P as well as a job foreman.

After clearing out everything from the Land & Cattle Co (which was a full job in and of itself) most of the new framing and boardwalk was put down.

Slick was our Burn-Master and trucked (ATVed?) load after load of burnable junk to the fire. It is amazing how much we found we have been keeping for years that didn't need keeping.

Special praise to **Bristlecone Jan** and her crew of merry minions who reclaimed the Land & Cattle Co. storage building. It was hot, dirty and claustrophobic work but that didn't faze her in the least.

Shotglass' lunch was wonderful and everyone enjoyed the fellowship, rest and nutrients provided. First folks back at work after dinner were **Wild Card Wayne** and **Smokey TCK** with everyone else quickly following.

Work continued till the lumber ran out.

Work Day II: reported by **TJD**:

The cattle company has a new floor, 2 of 4 new loading/reloading tables have been completed, and the cattle company fence has 3 built in tables to stage your firearms...

The remaining spatter fence was put up.

The Cattle company crew **refused to quit** until the floor was done.

Here is the list of those who braved the Renaissance Festival crowds: **Smokey the Convoy Kid, Osage Mike, Cowboy, Crash, Slick, Caledonia Red, Texas Jack Daniels, Willie Cheatem**

Stage 5, TRR Land & Cattle Co. is open for business! **TJD** has declared this stage ready to go. We will be shooting it this Saturday.

One way to describe what happened here is to think back to everything that was wood—well, it's all new wood.

Also the stage's boardwalk probably doubled the amount that we had before construction began. Now you can run back and forth with wild abandon to your heart's content without worrying about slipping on wet grass.

I understand *Architectural Digest* is coming out next month to feature it on their cover. There is also talk of *Texas Monthly* doing a spread on it, too.





¡Cuba Si, Imprimaciones no! (Cuba Yes, Primers No!) The old timers in the group will remember the original chant from the early 60s.

We have been exploring different avenues searching for the elusive Large and Small Pistol primers and they are just not out there. We have used our contacts with major manufacturers, looked to sources in other countries and even researched refurbishing fired primers using caps on the red rolls we had as kids = no luck.



Word is that there are several reasons for the shortages, some more believable than others:

- The military received at 10,000,000 primer order at the first of this year with another one due the beginning of 2021.
- With all the unrest across the country people have flocked to buy guns as well as ammo for them.
- Primer manufacturers have directed all primers to the commercial ammo market as this has a higher profit margin than selling just the primers to the public.
- Big Brother is out to get you.

Many “experts” are thinking that once the election is over and next year arrives availability should improve. One can only hope.



The Thunder River Mercantile

Wooden Fully Adjustable Bench Top Shooting Sticks

Made in the U.S.A.

Solid Oak, wood sealed for long life, heavy duty construction, leather strips on uprights to protect rifle, pinned-easy height adjustment, fully adjustable to match shooting bench height and shooter, collapses for easy transportation.

If anyone is interested in owning one of these bench top shooting sticks built by one of your fellow TRR members

please contact Cartwright
at gauth1965@gmail.com. Currently have 7
shooting sticks ready for delivery.

Close-Out - \$60 Thanks, [Cartwright](#)



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



Everyone has been noticing all the wonderful signs appearing around the range. We have **Suzie Q** and **GW Ketchum** to thank for them.


Their son commercially makes



them up in Willis so if you're in the market for some custom made ones of your own give them a call (936.827.2560) or catch them on FaceBook: [click on their name] [Fallow Fabrications](#)


R3L Co.

Ruby Red Raw Lead Co.



50 Pounds Raw Lead
Recycled from Indoor Range
\$45.00 each
\$40.00 (3 or more)

rubyredrider.cas@gmail.com



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: 337.940.9400



Down South Leather, Custom Leather Goods for the Cowboy Life Style by **Rusty Reb** is proud to announce the opening of its Houston branch. Contact **Rusty** and discuss your needs and wants; he's only an email or phone call away: RustyReb49@yahoo.com or 346-261-9620



Osage Mike's: I'm a one man shop building custom

leather goods for cowboy action shooters. I build holsters, cartridge belts, shotgun belts and cowboy shooter accessories one at a time. TRR member

Osage Mike, jayemgee@msn.com

Phone: 281.785.2397

Shooting once a month not enough?

Oakwood Outlaws

2nd Sat. & Sun. every month and the Monday following the 2nd weekend. www.oakwoodoutlaws.org/

Willow Hole Cowboys 3rd Weekend of the month
<http://www.willowholecowboys.com/>

TRR Officers 2020

El Jefe: **Crash**

president@thunderriverrenegades.com

Vice-Pres: **Willie Cheatem**

vicepresident@thunderriverrenegades.com

Secretary: **cheyenne**

secretary@thunderriverrenegades.com

Treasurer: **Osage Mike**

treasurer@thunderriverrenegades.com

Range Master: **Texas Jack Daniels**

RangeMaster@thunderriverrenegades.com

TG: **Texas Jack Daniels (TJD)**

RangeMaster@thunderriverrenegades.com

Black Powder (continued)

For those of you who may have a slight itch to try black powder, but maybe haven't been quite brave enough to actually confess it to anyone, I thought I'd write a few short articles about what is required to join the "Dark Side". They will include:

1. A discussion of
 1. Common misconceptions versus what the truth really is.
 2. Bullet design and proper lubrication
 3. Cleaning requirements (and how simple it is)
2. Reloading pistol caliber metallic cartridges
3. Reloading shotgun
4. Reloading long range rifle caliber for when you want to really reach out and "touch someone" at 500 to 1,000 yards – or more!

These won't contain all the information you might need, as there are a lot of variables (just look at all the different load recipes in any reloading manual), but will touch on the major issues and differences between black powder and that new, fad smokeless stuff. It will give you a good idea of the things you need to do differently, and where BP is actually easier to deal with in a couple of ways. So.....if you're gonna play cowboy, do it right!

Common Misconceptions

Let's face it, black powder has not been in common use by reloaders for over 100 years. That being the case, a lot of knowledge about how to load with it has been forgotten. Well, not forgotten, it's out there if you dig for it, but it's certainly not common knowledge. And what "knowledge" folks have is mostly wrong. Think about the old game of whispering a sentence into someone's ear, and repeating it around a circle. By the time it gets back to the originator, it bears absolutely no resemblance to the original phrase. That's pretty much the same thing with what most of us know about black powder – we've been "whispering in someone's ear" for 100 years and "knowledge" has been distorted into having little relationship to reality.

To begin, I'll tell the story of my first experience loading black powder. I had a new Cimarron 1873 Deluxe rifle in 44-40, all decked out and beautiful. After all, if I'm going to play cowboy, I'm gonna do it right with the original cartridges available "in the day". I loaded up some smokeless loads with 7 grains of Unique (I'm no damn gamer!) and the rifle shot really well – life is good. So.....I decided to play with some black powder loads. I'd been thinking about it awhile, and decided the 44-40 rifle was the perfect gun to take the plunge with. After all, the cartridge was designed for black powder. All the "common" knowledge said to fill the case with Ffg black powder so there was no airspace and seat the bullet – so simple an Aggie could do it.

I went to the range and fired some of my smokeless loads to adjust my new Marbles tang sight – so far so good. Then I stuffed in some BP ammo and began to make smoke. WooHoo, this is neat! Then I noticed that after less than a magazine of ammo, I couldn't even hit the dang paper. What the heck is going on here?! I fired a few more, and it was even worse – couldn't even dignify it by calling it a "pattern". A cylinder bore shotgun would laugh at my "group". Disgusted, I went home cursing and scratching my head.

Upon arriving home, I tried to clean the barrel, and could barely get a brush through it. When I did, I started pushing out long stringers of lead and took a couple of hours to get it clean. "Well, that sucks!" says I to the mouse in

my pocket. This black powder crap just isn't worth it! How the heck did anyone ever hit anything with it?!

After calming down and doing more research, talking to a few people on forums, etc., I finally understood what had happened. I had violated several basic rules of assembling a reliable black powder load. The basics are.....

1. **Black powder does not play well with petroleum based compounds.** In our case, this is the hard, crayon-like lubes used on regular commercial cast bullets designed for smokeless powder. Petroleum compounds when in the presence of combusting black powder, will form the *fouling from hell*. This is what happens to most folks who try black powder for the first time, and it permanently sours them on it before they learn the cause.
2. Black powder requires a soft, non-petroleum based lubricant. There are lots of recipes out there if you want to make your own. Most involve beeswax, a light vegetable oil and toilet bowl sealing rings. Or, if you're lazy like me, there are quite a few sold commercially. The one most commonly used was developed and is sold by Steve Garbe (multiple national champion BP single shot rifle competitor) and is called SPG (for Steven P Garbe).
3. You need enough of this soft lubricant to keep the entire length of your barrel "wet", so that you have a wet "lube star" on the end of your muzzle. By doing this, you keep the black powder fouling soft and each subsequent shot wipes the bore of the fouling from the previous shot – thus you have an equilibrium with one shot worth of fouling in the bore at any one time. With properly assembled load achieving this, you can shoot indefinitely without cleaning the rifle.
 - *Thus, we "shoot down" the myth that you have to clean the bore of a BP firearm after every few rounds fired. I'll shoot a complete 10 or 12 stage match and never clean my guns. I'll also shoot a complete long range match without cleaning.*
4. BP ammunition works best with a soft bullet alloy, usually between 40:1 and 20:1 lead/zinc. This allows bullets to completely obturate (or expand to fill) the rifling grooves, which prevents flame cutting of the bullet and lead deposits.

So, these are the high-level basics of building good black powder ammunition. But let's address a few other misconceptions about shooting black powder.

1. Black powder guns have to be cleaned immediately after shooting – Well, yes and no. Yes, in that it is good to clean a gun that has fired black powder as soon as practical. However, the cause of corrosion is that black powder combustion products are hygroscopic (they absorb water from the moisture in the air). Once they become damp, the sulfur that is part of the BP compound forms various acids (i.e., sulfuric acid, etc.) and this causes the corrosion. HOWEVER....if you keep the gun in a climate controlled area with low humidity (your air conditioned or heated house) there is not enough humidity to cause a problem. While I don't like to make a practice of it, there have been occasions when my work schedule did not allow me to clean my gun for a week or more. I've had no corrosion and the bores are still bright and shiny.
2. Black powder is very hard to clean – This is probably the worst misconception out there. In fact, BP fouling is much easier to clean than smokeless powder fouling. The reason is simple, all of the fouling products are water soluble. The best BP lubricant/rust inhibitor I've found is Ballistol, which was developed by the Germans in the late 1800's for the purpose. Make about a 10:1 dilution of Ballistol in water and it forms a nice white emulsion that folks call "Moose Milk." Spray a little moose milk down the bore, and run a few patches wet with moose milk down the bore – done. I guarantee you I can clean any of my guns with 3 or 4 patches and a pull of the bore snake. Wipe down the rest of the gun with the moose milk and let dry. The water dissolves the BP fouling and when it evaporates, it leaves behind the Ballistol for lubrication and rust prevention.

Now, a few random thoughts.....

1. As mentioned above, you do need a bullet of soft alloy designed to haul enough lube to keep the bore wet. Many people who get "hooked" by black powder end up casting their own to use - "Once you go black, you never go back!" However, there are several sources of bullets you can buy commercially. A few of these are Buffalo Arms, Montana Bullet Works and Whyte Leather Works.

Mark Whyte is really good to work with and casts Dick Dastardly's Big Lube bullets lubed with SPG at a very reasonable price.

2. It's pretty common for someone wanting to shoot "black powder" to buy one of the substitutes, like APP, Triple7, etc. The attraction is that they can use the standard commercial cast bullets (don't need soft alloy and SPG), so it is viewed as simpler. There are, however, a couple of issues with these subs...
 - They are more expensive than black powder
 - They are more corrosive than black powder. They are all based upon some type of organic acid as a key component, such as ascorbic acid. They **MUST** be cleaned immediately or they **WILL** corrode your guns.
 - So.....if the real thing is less expensive **and** less corrosive, why would you use a sub?
3. Black powder is hard to find in metropolitan areas, stores just don't stock it. This is unfortunately a result of storage requirements and insurance for compounds classified as explosive. This is largely why substitutes exist. They are not classified as explosive, so can be stored and handled like conventional propellants. This is where the little brown truck is your friend. There are several good retailers that ship to your door – Grafts, Maine Powder House, Buffalo Arms, and my favorite – Powder Inc. The best pricing I've found is from Powder Inc and they are really nice folks to work with. Note that the prices quoted on their website include the Hazmat Fee as well as shipping, so it's an all-in price.

OK, that's enough to give somewhat of a high-level overview of the care and feeding of black powder firearms. We'll continue in subsequent months TRWG with more specifics on how to load BP ammo for various purposes (cartridge revolvers, cap'n ball revolvers, pistol caliber rifles, shotgun, big bore lever rifles, and big bore single shot rifles).

I love the smell of sulfur in the morning!

Blackpowder Burn

[Return to Main Article](#)