

THE 2008 SOUTHWEST REGIONALS by Paul Whitwam

The Southwest Regionals (Arizona and New Mexico) were held the 17th and 18th of May at the beautiful San Carlos Apache Gold Casino Resort Arena just south of Globe, AZ with 84 shooters and 1 wrangler. The facilities are superb with a spacious covered arena, adjacent open practice arena, plenty of stalls and the casino on the other side of the arena providing restaurants, rooms and entertainment. The hope is that the casino enjoyed having mounted shooters and will invite us back for the Arizona State Championships in the fall.

Dan Byrd fresh off a Festival of the West Championship was the Mens and Overall Champion edging out the Reserve Champion and Overall Womens Champion Annie Bianco-Ellett by .021 seconds over 6 stages. Kristen Barnes was third Overall and Womens Reserve with Jim Rodgers fourth Overall and the Mens Reserve Champion. The competition was Arizona hot with less than 1.5 second separating these top four riders. Rounding out the Overall Top Ten were Bruce Dressel, Grant McMaster, Paul Whitwam, Diana Olson, Hugh Bishop (grandfather) and Sean Bishop (grandson). Overall class winners were Ladies 1 Charlotte Derrick Buchanan, 2 Meghan Detty, 3 Nell Kline, 4 Jenanne Overgaard, and 5 Annie Bianco-Ellett. Lee Banta won the Junior Ladies 1. Seniors Ladies winners were 1 Neoma Robichaud, 2 Tena McIntyre, 3 Cheryl Bosjoli-Mills, 4 Diana Olson and 5 Jana Morris. Mens winners were 1 Scott Crawford, 2 Ed Haines, 3 Jody Sanders, 4 Bruce Dressel and 5 Dan Byrd. Senior Mens winners were 1 Calvin Knox, 2 Doug Evans, 3 Paul Whitwam, 4 Billy Montgomery, 5 Tom Lattimore and 6 Jim Rodgers. Our wrangler was Montana Hynes. Kristen Barnes outstrided Annie Bainco-Ellett to win the Ladies Eliminator by .039 second followed by Lee Banta, Susan Turner, Amy Looper, Nell Kline, Faye Leerssen, Linda Whitwam, Amy Rogers and Sharon Little. Dan Byrd was the Mens Eliminator Champion chased by Tuffy Barnett, Bob Ostrenga, Grant McMaster, Patrick Morris, Scott Crawford, Ruben Gonzales, Raymond Crandell, Tom Lattimore and Mike Burns. The complete rifle results were not available but Taylor Marley bested Sean Bishop. For a complete listing of the results go to www.acmsa.com. Part of the competition was a "Border War" between Arizona and New Mexico. Arizona had 58 competitors with New Mexico 20 including Danny Byrd and Lily Rodgers who both were born and raised in New Mexico. NM won with an average time of 127.414 seconds to AZ 138,837. NM felt guilty (you believe that) and recalculated and giving Danny and Miss Lily back still won 129.017 to 138.034.

The balloon setters were once again the Globe High School ROTC. They have been setting AZ balloon for 3 years. Their leader for 24 years has been Jim Enfield (just like the rifle, as you would expect from a 23 year infantry veteren, 47 years in uniform). Jim left high school during the Cuban missile crises and received his GED in the Army. Jim is receiving treatment for metastatic cancer and is now retiring. When asked what he intends to do he says he is making a "bucket list" like in the recent movie when Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson are mking a list of the things they want to do before they "kick the bucket". The first thing to cross off his list is getting a high school diploma. He will walk across the stage with his granddaughter the week after the shoot. He says he and his wife, Linda, will continue to take the ROTC kids around in their van. Diana Olson, ACMSA President, make a moving presentation of the Friday night time only proceedes to Jim to help him cross more items off his "bucket List".

Competing for the first time since October was Mariette Kort who is also battling cancer. Mariette's fellow competitors came to the riders meeting wearing pink shirts and presented her with a welcome back gift, a pink shirt. It's great having her back and she picked up right where she left off finishing fourth in the always tough Senior Ladies 4 and 35th overall. I had the opportunity to talk with Jim and Mariette together. They both expressed the trials and tribulations of cancer and the treatment but both have smiles on their faces and spoke of the joy of living and the enjoyment of every day. I know Larry Key shares these thoughts.

Announcer supreme Matt Zinn brought his brother-in-law to the shoot. He is from Denmark where guns and even pocket knives are very restricted. He held a gun for the first time and shot 10 balloons like a wrangler. Matt said he was as excited "as a kid in a candy store" and still had a big grin on his face the next day. Makes us proud and grateful to be Americans.

Come to the Southwest and join us in some fast riding and hot shooting. See you down the road.