

**Sonny Beetch
Steven Phillips
(1954-2010)**



Husband, father, brother, Cowboy or friend. It doesn't matter what you called him, he was all of these things. He was true to himself, true to his passions. Willing to listen when need be, equally willing to step up and lead when necessary.

On the range, as in his 'normal' life, Sonny was always ready to help out a friend. New friend or old it didn't make any difference to him. If you needed something and he could help make it happen, he was right there. Advice on shooting for newcomers was readily available, as was his knowledge and equipment for reloading.

A bar for the club house, or a 'registration desk' in the Hotel, Sonny was there measuring, figuring, planning and then building it. A few weeks later he'd show up with the finished piece on the truck ready to install. What many of us would have said wasn't really useful Sonny could envision in a whole new way, and then he'd make it happen. He took an old feed shed for horses and turned it into a brand new stage.

Sitting around after a match or work day, listening to the stories of past adventures or newly gained knowledge of some old cowboy from "the real west". The merriment in his eyes, the smile or that deep laugh that was so infectious. Sonny had a way of drawing you nearer and making you feel his joy.

I think the lyrics of Toby Keith's song sum it up best for me;

"I'm gonna miss that smile, I'm gonna miss you my friend. Even though it hurts the way it ended up, I'd do it all again."

Sable Starr



Gunsite Gazette

Mississippi River Rangers
February 2010

Club Calendar

February

- 7 MSSA Sunday Match
- 13 MSSA Match
- 20 MSSA WB
- 20 MRR Set Targets
- 27 MRR Match

March

- 7 MSSA Sunday Match
- 13 MSSA Match
- 20 MSSA WB
- 20 MRR Set Targets
- 27 MRR Match

Jered's Cowboy Journal

Howdy Pards,

I can't remember a worse month than this past January. Losing Punkin' Seed was heartbreaking. The last time I saw her she was very upbeat and had that smile on her face that I know all of us will always remember. She was a wonderful, genuine and caring person.

That's why her smile was always so bright and engaging. And that smile will always be a cherished memory for me.



Sonny was just a shock. I talked to a few people these last couple of weeks about plans for our annual match and kept bringing his name into the conversation to help with this project or that. I know that eventually I'll stop doing that. My Aunt Marion once told me that if ever there was a kid that would grow up with square eyeballs from watching too much TV it would be me. Scenes from my favorite movies always seem to pop into my head when emotional situations occur. When Loco first told me that Sonny was gone I was stunned. As the day wore on and I thought of it more and more the scene from Open Range where Boss and Charlie have just buried Mose kept rolling through my head. Charlie asks Boss if he wants to say some words and Boss responds with spite and venom, "If you want to speak to the Man upstairs, go on and do it. I'll stand right here and listen, hat in hand. But I ain't talkin' to that Son of Bitch. And I'll be holdin' a grudge for him for letting this befall a sweet kid like Mose." Angry because he can't understand, because we can't understand the why. But in that same scene Charlie says "Well he sure as hell wasn't one to complain. Woke with a smile and seems like he could keep it there all day. Kind of man that would say 'good Morning' and mean it, whether it was or not." Remembrance of the good things, what made Mose special to him. They are true of Sonny also. That made me think of another scene from Lonesome Dove. They had buried Deets and Call comes up to the grave and without a word, just a sorrowful nod of his head, props a carved marker up in the stones. After he walks

away McCrae reads the marker. SERVED W/ ME 30 YRS FOUGHT IN 21 ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE COMANCHE AND KIOWA CHEERFUL IN ALL WEATHERS NEVER SHERKED A TASK SPLENDID BEHAVIOR. That was Sonny too. I thought about how I was going to miss him. I hope I never stop trying to include him in future projects. Saying his name is like bringing him back, if even for a moment. Sometimes it brings tears. They aren't really for Sonny, they're for Sharon and the girls. And us. When his name brings a smile, that's for Sonny. That's what starts the healing. In the end though I think the scene that popped into my head these last two weeks that was the most true for Sonny was from the Cowboys with John Wayne. After he is killed, the boys take the herd on to the railhead and return with a gravestone to mark his burial site. It simply reads...

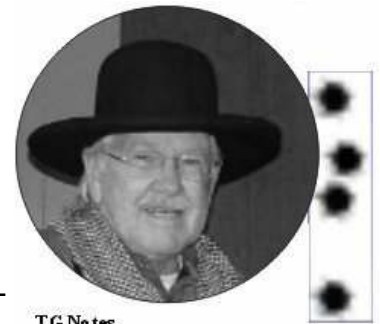
BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER.

Vaya con Dios

Jered

TG's Notes

I'm sure you have heard by now that the Southeast Regional will not be at Mule Camp this year. The only comment on the TG wire in the first six hours has been "Will the South East Regional still be called Mule Camp and is it possible that EOT will be held Memorial Day Weekend"! So much for the great loss being felt for the match having a 14 consecutive year history. There surely must be a story behind dropping Mule Camp. Will keep you posted.



I posted this thank you on the TG wire this week thanking the Kansas clubs for their being present at Sonny Beetch's service in Kansas.

A special thanks goes out to the SASS clubs in Kansas from the Mississippi River Rangers, Byhalia MS

The Mississippi River Rangers suffered a double loss the first two weeks in January 2010. Punkin Seed #44686 AKA Jan Butcher succumbed to her long battle with cancer. The cowboys turned out in large numbers to support Doc Butcher #44685 in his grief. Jan loved the whole idea of "the cowboy family".

Dr. Jimmy Latimer, AKA Sumner Bacon #76740, wrote the following in his Pastoral Epistle Jan 24. "I see very few "new" things as I minister from day to day because I have been at it so long! But things changed that weekend. We actually had here in our sanctuary a 19th century style funeral, where the members of the Mississippi River Rangers including myself dressed as we would have in the 19th century. But the thing that also impressed me was how the members of the club rallied behind the family both with love and friendship. They were a constant source of inspiration to Tom and all of us as we experienced "community" as we would have over one hundred years ago."

One week later Sonny Beetch #58253 AKA Steve Phillips age 55 died of a heart attack. We again held a cowboy wake in support of his wife Sharon AKA Loose E Cannon #75853 and the family.

Sonny was to be buried in Carlton, KS and Loose E ask if there was any way that there could be cowboys present at the interment. Using my TG contacts Tom Butcher and I got hold of Major Lee Wild TG Capital City Cowboys. I explained the circumstances seeking his help. Major Lee jumped right in and took charge. He contacted the local funeral home and got all the details and directions. The closest club to Carlton, KS is the Butterfield Gulch Gang. Kansas Flatlander the president told Major he would round up some folks. We know of a couple of names who were in attendance; Chap Man, Augustus Hammersmith and Major Lee Wild.

Again the "cowboy family" responded and lived up to our SASS motto:
THE COWBOY WAY"

Thanks Again

The Mississippi River Rangers



Safety Notes

Several shooters have asked "When will there be another RO1 course? Well, I had thought we might have one January 30th but Mother Nature canceled that one. While Casino Clair and I had planned to be on our way to Florida February 1st a little ear surgery canceled that. So I purpose two dates February 20th after we set targets and/or after the match February 27th. I like the 20th as it won't interfere with the social following the match. For those of you who took the course some time ago you are welcome to sit in and learn about some of the changes that they keep piling on.

If you plan to attend the RO1 course please down load the R01 2010 edition from the SASS web site and send me email at rabitridge@aol.com so we will know how many to expect.

Pointer to 1/23/2010 scores

http://www.mississippiriverrangers.com/uploads/Scores_2010-01-23.pdf

On the Trail with Capt. Augustus & Skip

This year sure hasn't gotten any better, but we must have faith that it will. Sonny will be missed by all. Other cowboy news has not been too good, but some folks are getting better.



This issue has been a challenge. First an article didn't get through, so it must be out in the ether somewhere. From now on, I will send a reply when I receive your article, so we'll both know I got it, or you can remind me that I did.

Then I was trying to get an order of loading strips into the mailbox, but that proved to be a quest. For some reason the dye would only color my hands and clothes but not the leather. Here went another day. Then I got to work and had four pages laid out and they disappeared. Are we having fun yet?

I talked to Mississippi Tom, and he said bring soup or chili, something hot for the social.

This winter is either disproving Al Gore or proving him right, I reckon we'll have to wait and see. It hasn't been as cold as I remember '96, but it's running a close second.

As to scores, I will provide a pointer to the scores and you can see or print them from there. Duplicating them sideways is giving Capt. McNelly a crick in his neck.

I want to thank all who sent me pictures of Sonny and you all will see them on the next page. Sable Starr, Pam Curry, Grizzly Jack, Marshal Sam Holland, Mountaineer Lefty and Dusty Kudzu were the folks who sent me pictures. If I did not mention you, I apologize.

Hopefully, we won't have to cancel any more shoots due to weather this year.

Take care and hope to see you at a shoot soon!

Announcements

Talladega Tickets for the April 24-25, 2010 race.

4 Sprint Cup tickets \$120/ea.

4 Nationwide tickets \$50/ea.

3 Campsites - West B - \$75/each

Contact Rattlesnake Rowan (Steve Rowan) 901-484-6658

Any questions, please let me know.

Thanks!!!

Sweetwater Sage

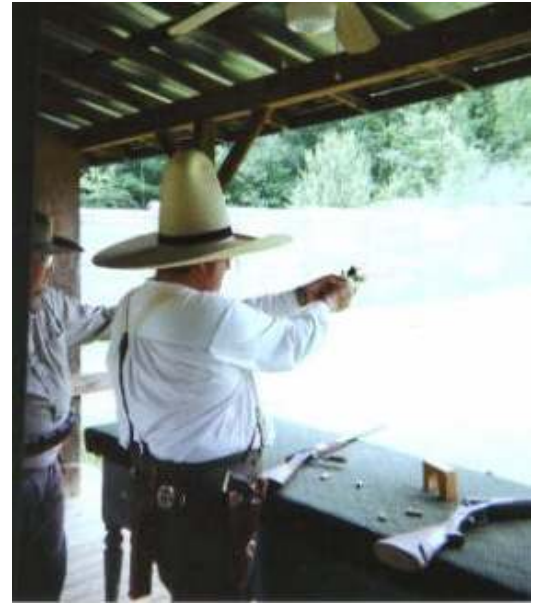
and

Rattlesnake Rowan

Would you please put in a mention for the Newsletter that there will be a gun show at the Southaven Arena on Hwy. 51 Saturday March 20, 9-5, and Sunday, March 21 10-5

Thanks,

Rosebrook Kid russ0646@aol.com





A CHRISTMAS POEM

It's a little late, but still good!!!!

Star and Star Jr. sent this in.

`Twas the night before Christmas, cold, dark and foreboding,
As I sat at the work bench, quite busy reloading.
The empties from autumn were polished so clear
For primers and powder, and bullets from Speer.

And Hornady's XTP's, and Nosler's Partitions
My bench ain't no place for brand name omissions!
All sat in their boxes, right next to the press
With dies from Dillon and RCBS.

When all of a sudden there came such a jolt,
I grabbed my Benelli and slammed home the bolt.
I spilled Hodgdon's powder all over the shelf
as I scrambled for cover, just to protect myself.

From up on the rooftop, came hoofbeats and snorting
Like the noise out of L'il Rock, from Clinton's cavorting!
I eased off the safety, to press-check my auto
With 3" Magnums, I'd knock 'em all blotto.

Were these rogue federal agents, sent by Schumer and Reno?
Or a staggering Ted Kennedy, in bad need of Beano?
My question was answered with a knock, and some sneezing,
"It's Santa, you moron, lemme in there, I'm freezing!"

I flipped off the dead-bolt and threw the door wide,
To find St. Nick a'shivvering, Rudolph by his side
He eyeballed my HK, with a nod of approval,
"You're all set," he said, "for dirtball removal."

"But this is no raid, we're not here to harm you
Or persecute, prosecute or even disarm you."
Instead, dear Santa said, I need to borrow
Your USP-C, 'till day after tomorrow

"It's okay," he assured me, with a hint of frustration.
"I'm enrolled in the National Rifle Association."
He showed me his card, 'twas a Life Member rating
"I've had this since me and the missus were dating!"

"And you see, ol' buddy, I've gotten real nervous
Since Feinstein was elected, with a promise to serve us.
So henceforth as I'm out there, my presents a 'stackin'
I want to assure you, I'm legally packin'"

Cowboy News from Sable Starr from the Internet.

Once again I am the bearer of sad news. Oglala Sue's mother has passed away. TX Bill & Oglala Sue will be traveling to FL for the services.

Please keep the family in your prayers, as they make this difficult journey.

I just received news on Capt'n Faulkner. He has been released from the hospital and is recuperating at home. He's doing well, and like most of us probably has cabin fever. I'm certain he would welcome phone calls from the cowboys.

Please continue to pray for his recovery.

Rosebrook is looking for stories/ anecdotes about Sonny Beetch and Punkin Seed. He is putting together Trail Markers to send to the Chronicle.

Please send anything you would like to include to him at russ0646@aol.com

Another bit of sad news to pass along. Ron Hamilton of Hamilton Dry Goods has lost his battle with cancer. Ron was a fixture around CAS and Mounted shooting for many years. His ready smile and giving spirit will be missed among the cowboys.

Please keep his family in your prayers.