



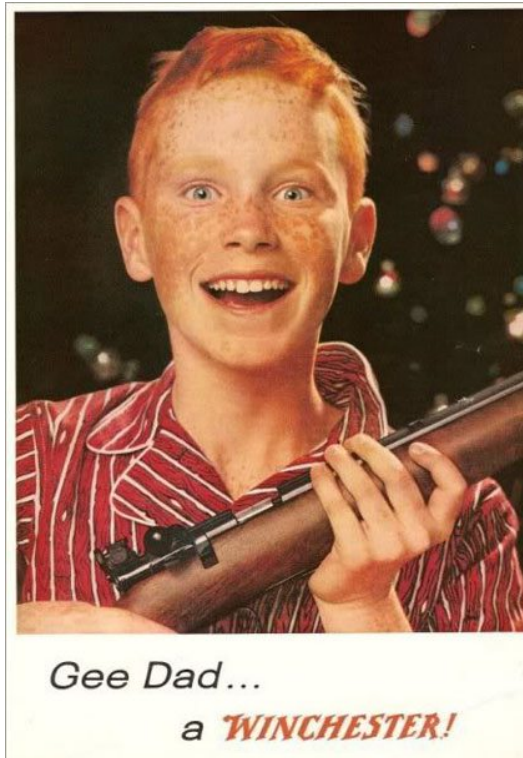
# Smoke Signal

Newsletter of the Alamo Muzzle Loading Gun Club, est. 1964

20

December

19



**¡FÉLIZ NAVIDAD! MERRY CHRISTMAS!  
WISHING YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A VERY HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!  
MUCHA SALUD A TODA LA FAMILIA**

**Annual membership first-of-the-year business meeting:**

By now you should have received your invitation to renew your membership in the Alamo Muzzle Loading Gun Club, and to attend the yearly business meeting. If you have not, then the secretary and/or the treasurer do not have your address? Hopefully we will have your email so we can direct it to you that way. Another alternative is to check the AMLGC.com website, or the club "Facebook" page.

**Saturday 4 January 2020** at 7pm. Please come early if you would like to get your food order in early before the meeting starts. The past couple meetings have lasted about an hour, although people are certainly welcome to stay later and catch up after the Christmas holidays.

Attendees can provide the lien release for insurance purposes *a photocopy of their valid drivers license* so we can have a custom gate entry code for each member, and a check for \$125 renewal, or \$150 for a brand new member. You can also get some *raffle tickets* for 2020's grand prize: A Henry .22lr "Golden Boy" lever-action rifle like this one: <https://www.henryusa.com/rifles/golden-boy/>

Last years raffle was so successful, and the failure to win so keenly felt, and the enjoyment of shooting this Western style lever gun reported by the winner, that the Board of Directors thought "well then, why not offer another one in 2020?" These really are a fun little rimfire rifle!

\***Grady's BBQ** at 7400 Bandera Rd. (Leon Valley, near the corner of Bandera Rd. and Ebert), 210.684.2899. We'll be in the banquet room in the back. There will be door prizes! Also the awards ceremony, and announcements will be held.

**For renewal bring:** 1. A photocopy of your drivers license.  
2. A check for \$125 for a family membership renewal, and [\$150 for first time joiners]  
3. A signed lien-release document for insurance purposes. These can be accessed here: <http://www.amlgc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/AMLGApplication-2018.pdf>

**Work Party!**—With a new year, comes the need for maintenance and up-keep of the range facility... So let's get this party started! Gary Quandt requests that volunteers consider coming on the Saturday after our yearly business meeting on 11 January 2020 after the holidays are over, and hunting season is winding down, etc. There will be fence work that has to be carried out, plus some carpentry work. So please bring out some tools and stuff you'd need to help out. To contact Gary Quandt, our range officer, go ahead and give him a call at 210.248.8182. Thank you!

**Match schedule**—Our match committee chair, Clif Denny, is drawing up the schedule of matches, shoots, etc. for 2020. If there is a particular type of match that you would like to see at the AMLG Club, modern center fire, a "woods walk," or something similar, then please let him, or another member of the Board of Directors know. It looks like there will be three skirmish type shooting events for 2020, for example, and the monthly

patched round ball matches, as well as some standing favorites like the “turkey shoot” the “knife shoot” and blanket match, but if there is a type of sport shooting event you’d like to see, now is the time to start organizing it. The Shooting Schedule in 2020 will be posted on the bulletin board of the club house/ office next year, as will several issues of the *Smoke Signal* newsletter so people can have that information available for themselves and their guests when using the range. If it rains a lot, then the schedule and the more recent issue can always be put into a plastic sleeve prior to mounting on the bulletin board.

No “White Christmas?” Well, how about a White Smoke Brigade match on 28 December 2019, after Christmas, but before New Years?

# White Smoke Brigade

## Match 170

### December 28, 2019

Shooting begins around 10:00 AM

There will be at least 3 rifle matches

I hope all the match shooters and their families had a

Merry Christmas and will have a Happy New Year

Bring that new rifle or pistol to the last match of the year.

If you are new to the group call me for directions to our site.

Joe Wolf

830-935-3121

February 2020 Rendezvous:

**TEXAS FREE TRAPPERS RENDEZVOUS XXX**  
**SHINER, TEXAS**  
**February 6-9, 2020**

- Pre-1840's rendezvous so please only period tents and clothing in the main camp area. Period dress is required for all competitors and campers.
- Period Camping – separate modern camping/no hookups. Bring water, firewood is available for gathering.
- Prospective and beginning buckskinners are welcome. Don't be bashful if your gear isn't perfect yet. We can help you.
- All shooting will be out of the pouch, using traditional weapons with open metal sights and patched round balls.



**THURSDAY (2/6)**

Gate opens at 1:00 PM for early camp and target setup. Your help will be appreciated.

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY 2/7-8 (events run both days)**

- Rifle Walk ➤ Rifle Match ➤ Pistol Match ➤ Knife & Hawk Match
- Fire Starting ➤ Period Archery Match (bonus points for all natural materials)

**SATURDAY EVENING 2/8**

- Potluck Dinner - bring a main dish or dessert and take part in the feast and fellowship
- Council Fire ➤ Awards, News & Announcements ➤ Period Tales welcome ➤ Music

**SUNDAY 2/9**

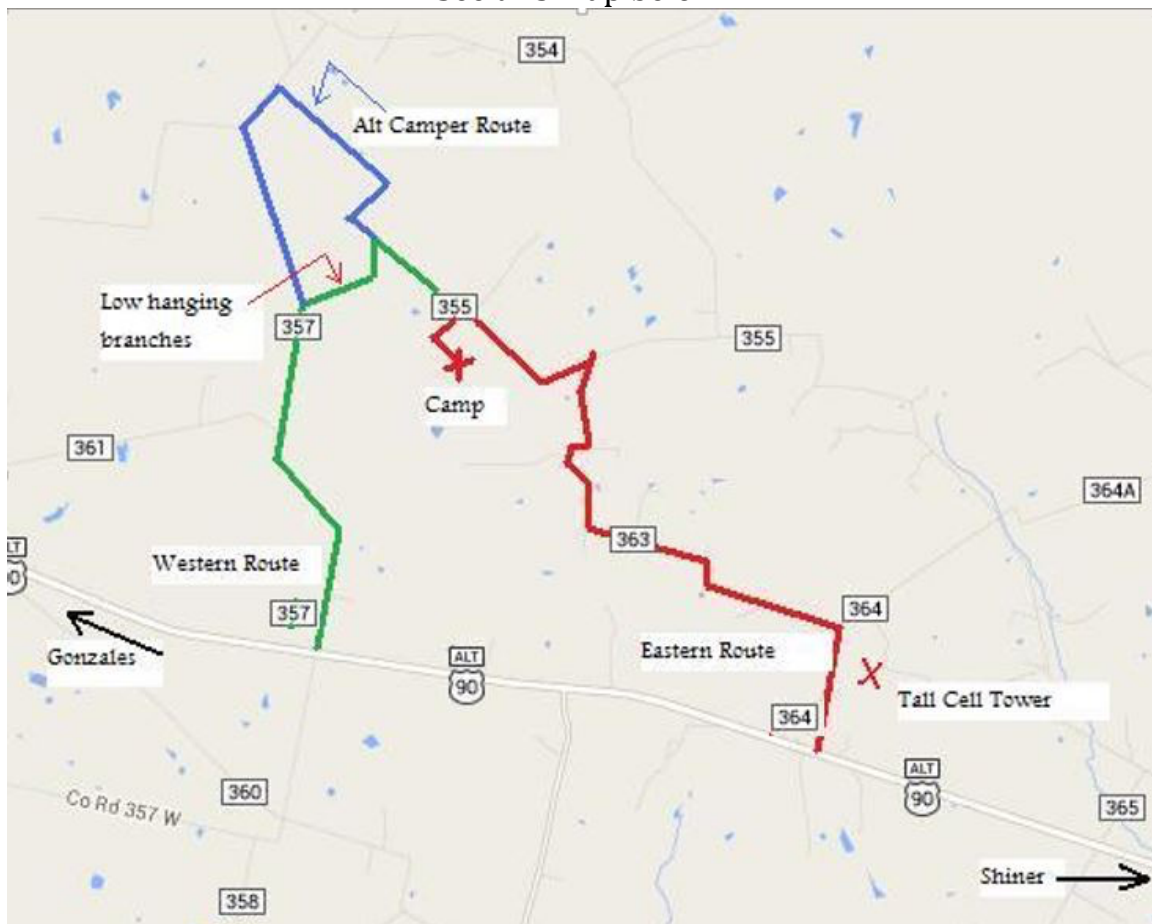
Break camp and clean up the site before heading home.

WSCB Family Dues - \$15/year. Competition fee incl. camping - \$15. Camping only fee - \$10/lodge. **No fee for seekers.** No additional fee for traders, but period or related items only. Each competitive event will have a re-entry possible for \$2. Each competitive event will have its own winners. Number of cash prizes will be based on numbers of competitors.

For more info contact Booshway Joe Wolf (Grey Wolf) 830-935-3121, 32wolfbear@gmail.com,  
or Segundo Rusty (Mató) Hathaway 512-422-0377, Rusty\_Hathaway@msn.com  
Facebook Group: Texas Free Trappers

Please R.S.V.P to Jack Simons ([jblmrm3@satx.rr.com](mailto:jblmrm3@satx.rr.com)), Booshway or Segundo that you will be attending. Entry into site is controlled and you must call Booshway or Segundo upon arrival so they can open up the gate. Any threat of cancellation due to weather, call before leaving home!!  
How to get there?

See this map below:



## **DECEMBER SCORES:**

### **Rifle Scores:**

1 Bull – 25 yds      2 Bull – 25 yds      1 bull – 50 yds      6 bull – 50 yds

#### **Class A**

1. Bill Knipscher 49-4x    1. Bill Knipscher 44xx    1. Bill Knipscher 47xx  
1. Bill Knipscher 40  
2. Rich Beardsley 46x    2. Clif Denny 41    2. Dennis Rich 40    2. Dennis Rich 2  
3. John Burke Jr 44x    3. John Burke Jr 40    3. Clif Denny 36    3. Clif Denny 25

#### **Class A aggregate scores:**

1. Bill Knipscher 180 8x
2. Dennis Rich 146
3. Clif Denny 145

#### **Class B**

1. Gary Quandt 44    1. Gary Quandt 42    1. Gary Quandt 31    1. Ian Straus 14  
2. John Burke Sr 42    2. Ian Straus 32    2. John Burke 26    2. Gary Quandt 12  
3. Ian Straus 39    3. John Burke Sr 17x    3. Ian Straus 26    3. John Burke Sr 10

#### **Class B aggregate scores:**

1. Gary Quandt 129
2. Ian Straus 111
3. John Burke, Sr. 95 x

#### **Rifle Top 10**

1. Bill Knipscher 1748 – 16x    2. Dennis Rich 1636 – 10x    3. Rich Beardsley 1459 – 4x  
4. Clif Denny 1449 – 10x    5. Gary Quandt 1203 x    6. John Burke Jr 1165 – 9x  
7. John Burke Sr 1158 – 5x    8. Greg Delk 1102 – 4x    9. Ian Straus 897 x  
10. John Moore 412

Class A Pistol    1. Clif Denny 82    2. Dennis Rich 76    3. John Burke Sr 61

Class B Pistol    1. Gary Quandt 69    2. Ian Straus 62

### ***Halloween or Christmas or Winter Solstice?***

In the contemporary United States, we tend to keep our holidays separated—although many stores don't get the memo, and as soon as September rolls around the Halloween candy makes its appearance, and increasingly, thanks to so-called "Black Friday" or the day after Thanksgiving it is practically *obligatory* to begin *Christmas shopping!*: Still, Halloween is in October thank-you-very-much, and

Christmas is the birthday of Jesus Christ (“Jesus is the reason for the season”), while very many older pagan traditions linger on into the holiday season. Like Christmas trees, for example. This is understandable given that the winter equinox, and the shortest day of the year, fall on 21 December in the Northern hemisphere. But did you know that a lot of other traditions have some rather spooky and scary “Halloween style” Christmas traditions?

**In Berchtesgarden, in upper Bavaria, Germany, for example there is a tradition of “Weinachtsschützen” that the Church fathers attempted to stamp out in 1708 as “un-Christian superstition.”**

During Christmas, New Year’s Eve, and even during Pentecost and at any of a number of peasant farmer weddings, huge noises and clouds of smoke are made with black powder! One week before Christmas eve, at 3pm, the church bells ring, the rosary is prayed, and a shot made in front of the farm house. On December 24, some shots are touched off ahead of Christmas mass. And after mass too. On New Year’s Eve, the shooting clubs get together a half-hour before midnight, and start shooting with very heavy hand cannons to greet the new year. In some places, like in Auer, the shooting keeps up until dawn.

Kissing under the mistletoe, or the centuries-old English predecessor, the “Christmas-bough” seems to have pre-Medieval antecedents. Christian civilization changed whatever previous meaning it may have had into a symbol of heavenly blessings, and embracing the host and hostess of a doorway so decorated implied that the guests bore no ill feeling or bad will.

Presents are typically found under the tree, but in times past, many presents and gifts were actually attached to the tree!

Once upon a time, drinks with a high concentration of alcohol were heated and consumed at Christmas. In some cases, raisins, almonds, or other preserved fruits were put into a goblet, and the mixture set on fire. Children were encouraged to pick the hot raisins out of the flaming cup! Easy to see why this old custom went by the wayside. This amusement was often nick-named “snapdragon.” “Oh what fun...?” NOT!

Then as now, the tradition of gift giving implied obligations for people to take care of the unfortunate. Special feasts and meals were organized, for example, for shoe shine boys, many of whom were impoverished and without means.

**As in past years, the Alamo Muzzle Loading Gun Club is donating \$500 dollars to the Toys for Tots charity, so that youngsters can have gifts this holiday season. Special thanks to John Burke, Sr. and Betty Burke for organizing the Christmas cheer, this year as in years past!**

Christmas means pork tamales in very many households! The head of the boar also figured in upper-class Christmas feasts in sixteenth-century Europe, believe it or

not. Still other families enjoy a Christmas ham, just as it was a very, very long time ago.

Wassailing involved consumption of bowls of hard cider and singing carols—many of them apparently intended to promote the growth of beneficial trees and fruit orchards.

In parts of southern Germany and Austria, the Christmas season starts with St. Nicholas Day on 5 December and runs through Epiphany or “Three Kings Day” on 6 January. So if good children may expect rewards in the form of presents under the tree... And responsible young adults perhaps even a first firearm ... What about the irresponsible and naughty or plain bad children? In times past lumps of coal or even switches during the times of corporal punishment might appear as “gifts.” But parts of Germany and Austria certainly ratcheted things up a notch or two. A hideous witch, “Frau Perchta” can administer all sorts of threats and punishments. Even more terrifying, the upper Bavarian and Austrian antithesis of good St. Nick is a truly terrifying “Krampus.” This goat-devil “anti-Santa” has goat or ibex horns and threatens the naughty children during advent. There are krampuslauf runs where many young men disguise themselves as crampus. Unfortunatley, thus emboldened by anonymity and typically too much hot mulled gluhwein, things often get out of hand and the police have to intervene. Typically he carries chains, once thought to symbolize the shackles of the devil, and bags to take away the naughty. If anything, there has been a revival of krampus figures throughout Alpine regions.

The Pennsylvania or Pennsylvucky rifle originated among German gunsmiths in Lancaster, PA in the early 1700s. There too, a similar “anti-Santa” figure persists in folklore. His name is “Belsnickel,” which is a portmanteau of the old German word “belzen” meaning to thrash or wallop, and “nickel” for good old St. Nicholas. He appears in ragged furs with a switch to frighten children into good behavior and candy or other small gifts to five children.

In parts of France, a grim and terrifying “anti-Santa” named Père Fouettard or “Father flogger/whipper” portrays a literal cannibal who pursues bad-tempered children alongside St. Nicholas distributing gifts to the good kiddos.

All a far cry from Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol” with tiny Tim, Scrooge, and the Ghost of Christmas Past, eh? Still, the continuities of these earlier, frightening wintry tales and the much beloved Christmas story are still discernible.

May your holiday be filled with cheer, merriment, fun, friends and family! Please be safe, and warmest best wishes for the coming New Year!