

MY TAKE ON THE HISTORY OF FAST DRAW

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January 1967 thru June 1970

History is an elusive wisp that floats pass in the moment it is happening. Unless captured through some media in that moment it fades into the disappearing archives of memory.

Believable History, and rarely contested, is a recording of events by someone who lived in the moment and recorded the event, or events, in a fashion understandable by future historians. Less believable, but certainly holding a measure of credibility, are events recorded from the memory of individuals, at some later date, who lived in the moment in history that the events, or events, were happening. It doesn't mean that it's an accurate assessment by the person why it's happening at the moment or whether the individual even knows what it is. A comet recorded in the archives of a library appearing in the time before Christ may have been recorded as a supernatural bad omen but nevertheless an accurate recording of the event. Less credible are those who rely on hearsay, or search through historical events' and fill in their own version, or thoughts, and author a version of history that sounds plausible. If the event is not recorded in some fashion that future generations can interpret it clearly it is too often embellished, left to speculation, or forgotten. Too often lost are the details. Loss of details can be just unfortunate losses that leave out the colorful part of history, or be catastrophic to the truth. The pyramid at Giza is there. Why was it built? How did they build it? We don't know...so speculation runs from dozens of book author's ideas to aliens.

Where am I going with this?

The World Fast Draw Association was formed in 1976. I suspect some of the stories, and perhaps some of the individuals, critical to the moment are already lost to fuzzy memories. I have it on good authority that some of the records have gone missing during the postal system transfer of leadership. Unless these records can be duplicated by other private copies and saved, the transition will someday be told through faded memories and historical speculation. History may search for, and never find, the real pioneers of the moment. The stories will be as diverse as those you can now read on the Internet about the origin of Fast Draw, the individuals involved, and the evolution of the organizations that followed.

How did the World Fast Draw Association evolve? Perhaps just as important, who were the individual leaders that brought it about? What were the key elements in the moment of history that triggered decisions that altered the course of organized Fast Draw? These decision points and reasons for them seem to be as evasive as the imagination of those who have attempted to write its history.

Someone, somewhere, had to think it would be great fun to simulate a real gunfight without getting hurt. The sport of Fast Draw evolved out of that inspiration. Out of that

beginning through myriads of twists and turns; out of the dedication and expense of individuals who had the leadership ability; melted together enthusiastic groups of individuals' that as one entity, agreed on the way the sport, at that moment in history, should operate and manage itself. Who were those individuals and can their contribution be identified to the actual evolution of the sport to where it is today? The generalist will say every competitor in the sport helped move the sport from the first inspiration to the World Fast Draw Association. That would be like saying all the Jews who left Egypt brought about their freedom. In doing so ignoring the role of Moses and the leader who arose from the multitude who took control of the exit, Joshua. And just so I won't be criticized we won't forget Gods' role!

Some articles like to take the origin of Fast Draw all the way back to the opening of the American West. Some articles attribute the beginning to the advent of big screen Hollywood movies. Some articles propose the real history of the sport started with the advent of television westerns. Some christen Dee Woolem as the Father of Fast Draw and therefore the beginning of the sport. Well, perhaps if we left out one or more of these historical beginnings there may not have been a sport at all. I am not condemning anyone who has taken the time to look at the history of the sport and spend time telling about it from what they have learned or from their perspective. There seems to be some consensus to the fact that the SPORT of Fast Draw actually started somewhere in the mid-to early 1950's. I have yet to see or read a document written in the moment that somehow pinpoints the year it actually became a sport. In laymen's term, is there a record of when two or more gunfighters decided to see who was the fastest without dying in the process? Probably not. The fact that Dee Woolem is credited to have been the first one to build a fast draw timer and actually use it may be compelling information for accreditation that the SPORT should begin with him. My take is that unless someone has a record written in the moment, the beginning of the sport is lost to history, and we start it the best way we know how. I just have a hard time justifying the beginning of the sport that a timer was built, a Fast Draw Contest held in 1954, and a lot of gunfighters just showed up.

In my early days of competition, and certainly not from the beginning of the sport, I shot in contests using a DIPSTICK. The dipstick was an eight-foot wood rod balanced on a fulcrum at the exact center of the rod. A clothespin fastened at each end of the rod held the balloons. A circular ring of lead was placed over each balloon before it was attached to the pin. The wood rod and two lead rings were perfectly balanced. Two competitors were given the command, "Ready on the line". An operator would activate a light on a stand placed at the center of the two shooters near the fulcrum of the wood rod. At the activation of the light both shooters drew and fired at the balloon facing them. The shooter that broke the balloon first would drop his lead weight. That would cause the wood rod to drop on the side of the loser. On shots fired closer together both weights would drop. However, the rod would dip slightly on the loser side. Thus, the term "DipStick". The dipstick had two faults. Any amount of wind was a disaster to continuing the competition. Secondly, It was not unusual for the two shots to be so close together that both lead rings dropped and the dipstick stayed perfectly level. It required a rematch.

The explanation above logically dictates that some competition may have been around before the first fast draw timer was built by Dee. Non-mechanical devices are usually in use and precede mechanical devices. I know of no record in the moment of history when dipsticks entered the arena of the sport and no one appears to talk about them. Here, you see the facts of history could already be starting to get a little fuzzy. Memories years after the event can be no more than stories to have a beginning and perhaps a real pioneer, or pioneers, of the sport left to oblivion. Having said that, this gunfighter competition had to start somewhere. Some of my earliest recollections of competition were the walk and draw level events. There were no clocks. The shots were judged level using the flame and smoke from the barrel of the gun by three judges on each side of the two competitors walking toward each other. Two out of the three judges constituted a decision.

NOW, having said all this, I am comfortable with Dee Woolem being designated as the Father of Fast Draw. I am trying to make a point in the article and I hope you are all getting it.

I am going to discuss some things that appear to me to be missing links, or under discussed, in the evolution of the ORGANIZATION of the Sport. I am not qualified to discuss the origin of the Sport other than to give my opinion. The sport definitely started prior to 1959 when I jumped into it. However, one does not have to be a rocket scientist to understand the real explosion of the sport took place when fast draw clubs appeared on the scene. The formation of these clubs seems to have been an overnight phenomenon. Everyone wanted to be a gunfighter. Including me.

When I entered the sport communication was pretty much by telephone. You might not know the exact address of the shoot but it wasn't unusual to drive around town looking for the crowd or listening for the sound of gunfire. Clubs started maintaining addresses of other clubs and sending out flyers to the Club addresses. Someone in the club would notify other club members that a contest was being held in some location. Some clubs ran notification of shoots in the local paper. An Ad in the local paper got me to my first contest. Each Club had its own set of competition rules. I can remember some of the frustration competing at different Club contests without violating some rule. This frustration with the difference in competition rules would come back to visit me in later years between the Western Fast Draw Association and the Mid-Western Fast Draw Association. The formation of the Northern California Fast draw Association solved the local issue of competition rules. The issue of State Association rules is a matter that I will take up later in this article.

The articles that I have read regarding the history of Fast Draw, too often, leaves the reader with only one option. The only option is to believe what is written is authentic. We must remember that the entire SPORT of fast draw started and evolved to where it is today within one lifetime. That means there are still living individuals that lived in the moment of this sport's history. They should be the ones authoring articles of history if memory is the base truth of the article. Anyone else who did not live in the moment of history should be able to site a document written in the moment of history to substantiate the validity of his or her statements.

My take in this article is to identify some of the individuals that I was associated with personally in the moment of history and are candidates for "My Fast Draw Hall of Fame." The contribution of these individuals altered the course of the sport to its final destination, "The World Fast Draw Association." My take on history only encompasses the time I was introduced to the sport in 1959 thru my term as Chairman of the Western Fast Draw Association ending in June 1970. I will use actual records recorded in the moment or tell you if I am using memory.

My first memory: The first individual I nominate is a name lost to history. Sound crazy? I was working a shift early one morning at a California Quarantine Station on hwy 99 entering California from Oregon in 1959. This guy entered the station in a station wagon with gun belts in plain sight in the back of the wagon. At this time of the morning traffic was non-existent. I asked him about the equipment in the back. He jumped out of the wagon and gave me a few minutes course about this great sport of Fast Draw. Sold me. I was hooked. He handed me a program outlining an up coming championship contest in Sacramento, California. That would have been about a five-hour drive. He took my name and address and like the masked man of yesterday drove out of sight.

You don't need to hear my story about next day driving to Medford, Oregon purchasing a Ruger single six .22 revolver live ammo, a Mickey Mouse holster, and practicing at the local dump at 50-gallon drums. I was heading for the State shoot come hell or high water. You can read between the lines as to what info was left out from the station wagon encounter about ammo, equipment, etc. I have to give a high five to who ever it was for taking my name and address and having the unbelievable capacity to follow up with this one encounter and send me a notice that the contest had been canceled. It saved me from disaster. By the way, my right boot had a .22 caliber hole in the edge of the sole until I wore them out and replaced them. When the dust settled around my boot I got the wake up call that you could get hurt doing this stuff! Did it slow me down, No! I clipped a coil or two off the hammer spring and kept practicing. I wish I had kept the shoot brochure, the cancellation notice, the person's name and the boot. I didn't keep any of them so believe the story or not. I do have old 8mm film of the live ammo fast draw experience. I refer to it as "Stupidity in motion."

Why would I place this unknown gunfighter in my "Hall of Fame?" He altered the course of the sport by getting me into it. Having managed the Western Fast Draw Association for three and one half years as its Chairman the Association reestablished its direction and built a solid foundation toward Nationalization.

I know there are individuals in the line of leadership orchestrating the sport prior to the point I am going to start. I know there are individuals after my terms of office. But, here's the thing. I only want to share that part of the line that I can verify. I want you to understand that the information I share is information either from my memory living in the moment of history, or the written record, in the moment of history things were happening. As an example: I have been a past President of the Fort Sutter Pistoleros Fast Draw Club headquartered in Sacramento, California. I have the book of minutes in my

possession written at every meeting by Marge Kneezel beginning weekly on October 3, 1960. The record substantiates that there was a Northern California Fast Draw Association. I hold a record in my hand that the Club joined this Association on October 30, 1962 and paid its dues. However, I find nothing in the record that the Club or any of its members did anything that effected the course of Nationalization other than paying dues, voting on proposals, and sending an elected representative to the Association meetings.

Here is what I can verify.

In 1964 Bill Boyd was elected Chairman of the "Western States Fast Draw Association." I can verify that Bill Boyd was Chairman from my memory having lived in the moment of history and I have a copy of the 1964 Association by laws verifying his name as Chairman. And if you need further proof, at this writing Bill Boyd is still living. Now, are you starting to get where I am coming from? I can only relate to you what I remember or what I can prove.

I have read Bill Boyd's article "As I Recall". The article was well written. I read it with a great deal of interest. Every individual who was involved in the organizational leadership of the sport who lived in the moment of history should follow his example. I was disappointed in not reading something in the article that would provide some historical record regarding an interest in a National Association.

I have no intention to minimize the importance of Boyd's article or minimize his contribution to the sport. My take from reading his article is that he did not want to be a part of the destiny of the developing sport. I admire his loyalty to the Colt firearm and its part in the history of the sport. I admire his tenacity to his position that the sport was moving away from its western heritage to the twist fanning speedsters. I am delighted that he has lived to see the formation of the "Cowboy Fast Draw Association." I think "The Cowboy Fast Draw Association", outside of using guns other than Colt, is as close to the sport as championed by Bill Boyd as you are going to get.

Having said all this, Bill Boyd, as the Chairman of the Western States Fast Draw Association has a place in the leadership hierarchy of the organized movement to nationalize the sport. He has a place in my "Fast Draw Hall of Fame." Had the traditional concept of the gunfighter remained stable, in my opinion, Bill Boyd would be one of its historical champions.

No one could have altered the shift that took place engulfing the sport with twist fanners using the indestructible Ruger Single Action Revolver. Even the Ruger Firearms Company could not alter the course of the use of its gun. However, the Company made it plain that it's use for Fast Draw and any alteration would void the warranty. It took a lot of years for the Company to reverse its position and support the Sport.

As I mentioned earlier, according to the record listed in the minutes of the Fort Sutter Pistolero club there was an Association listed as "The Northern California Fast Draw Association" and the club was a member of that Association. It was clear that club members voted on proposals and a club representative presented their vote at Association meetings. I mention this record for a reason. The 1964 Western States Fast Draw Association by laws clearly commit the Association to Fast Draw Club participation and charging a club membership fee. Individuals could also join for a membership fee. (1964 By-Laws section IV membership and fees). Election of Officers and any changes in the By-Laws were conducted by Fast Draw Club designated Representatives at any WSFDA meeting, not by individual members (Section VI voting procedures). This is a point to remember.

Club membership in the Association was \$20.00 plus \$5.00 dues for each club member. Individuals can join for \$10.00 membership and \$5.00 dues.

There appears to be little change, from what records I have, from the Northern California Fast Draw Association to the Western States Fast Draw Association except the name. However, the name change in itself was a significant move forward for Nationalization. It moved the boundaries from Northern California to encompass the Western United States.

Ron Mossholder became Chairman in 1965. I knew Ron and competed in some of the same contests. I put Ron Mossholder in my "Fast Draw Hall of Fame" because he altered the course of the Sport in a very unique way.

I have in my records a subscription flyer offering for \$8.00 a membership in the Western States Fast Draw Association, and a 1-year subscription to the Top Gun Magazine. The magazine subscription alone was \$3.00. In other words, the magazine was open to anyone who wanted to pay the \$3.00 subscription fee. I also have a number of Top Gun magazines in which Ron writes his "Editor's Outlook" column. It is clear that Ron was wearing two hats in regard to management of the sport.

First, he was asking each person in the sport to subscribe to his "Top Gun" magazine and at the same time signing them up as independent members of the Association. This kept the structure of the WSFDA intact.

Second, the magazine was available to the public at large. Clearly this option opened the door to an expanded revenue source. All checks, including WSFDA membership fees, were to be made out to "Top Gun Magazine" not to the WSFDA. Once the subscriptions to the magazine provided the revenue, the move to his "North American Fast Draw Association" would be a smooth and natural transition. The brilliance of his leadership and the fulfillment of his dream were ended with the lack of support for the "Top Gun" magazine.

In addition to the above observation, the WSFDA club membership fee of \$20.00 and \$5.00 individual dues was eliminated and replaced with the \$8.00 and \$3.00 fee. Club

representation vote was eliminated and replaced by giving each member of the WSFDA a vote. It is clear that in 1965 each member of the Association had a vote regarding changes to rules and By-Laws (August Issue Top Gun Magazine Editors Note section). It is also clear that members could nominate officers and receives a voting ballot (Autumn issue Top Gun Magazine Editors Note section). There are some gaps in records that have me somewhat puzzled as to how the administrations in 1965 and 1966 received their authorization to implement their programs. However, that quest is not my take in this article.

Ron's mission, as I read his editorials, and remember that moment in history, seems to be pretty clear. He was on a mission to form a National Association. The name of his future Association was "The North American Fast Draw Association." His platform for that move was to be the money derived not only from Association dues but also from the sale of the Magazine subscription. His dream for Nationalization never evolved. However, Ron is in my Fast Draw Hall of Fame for two reasons:

1--He didn't just have a vision for a National Association. He made a major move to do something about it.

2-- His Administration gave each member of the Association a major role instead of relying 100% on Fast Draw Clubs to decide the future direction of the Sport. This move was absolutely essential as the next major step toward National recognition. It was a game changing move and an important milestone in the sport's evolution to the World Fast Draw Association.

Ron Mossholder was not just a visionary blip in the evolution of the sport. It was obvious to me then, and even clearer today, that he had a dream to nationalize the sport. Ron gave us his views on how the "North American Fast Draw Association" would operate in the autumn 1965 issue of the Top Gun Magazine He didn't just dream. He took action to get it started. He gave us the first professional fast draw magazine. The magazine was the foundation upon which he planned to fund his fast draw association. Ron announced that he was not running for Chairman of the WSFDA in 1966. The North America Fast Draw Association faded into oblivion as fast as it's vision. Ron's dream met the same fate as every other person that attempted to use a magazine subscription upon which to base a National Association as its foundation.

These attempts to nationalize the sport by some of these farsighted pioneers were doomed to failure from the start. They hoped they could use the revenue from their magazine to build the sport's future. Gunfighters did not support any of these magazines to the extent of the revenue required. Donald Oplinger said it best in his seventh and last publication of the "Fast Draw Digest" dated September 1, 1967:

"...I wish to thank the 30 percent who did support the Digest and to those (8) people who wrote to me. Thanks and; GOODBYE."

Ron Mossholder, Donald Oplinger and every other visionary leader throughout the history of Fast Draw that sought the elusive dream of a National Association should hold an honored place in our hearts. There can be no greater love for ones duty to others than the desire to see them gathered as one in solidarity.

I have one last comment regarding Ron. Ron attended the World Fast Draw Championship on August 22 & 23, 1970 held at the Santa Clara Fair grounds in San Jose, California. He was recognized with a distinguished honor.

FURTHEREST TRAVELED.....Ron Mossholder.....Viet Nam.

The 1966 Chairman was Harry Goudge. I put Harry Goudge in my leadership "Fast Draw Hall of Fame" for three important actions.

First, The Western States Fast Draw Association crashed at the end of Mossholder's term. The Top Gun Magazine subscription move to fund the Association did not materialize. Harry told me he accepted the Chairman job because no one else wanted it. I do not have, nor have I seen, a written record whether Harry was elected or whether he picked up the torch and carried it through the year. It is of little importance to my take regarding Harry. His compassion, courage and dedication to his convictions that the sport must survive must be recognized.

Secondly, Harry billed himself as "Chairman", "Western States and Canada Fast Draw Association". I did not have any record in my possession, nor did I ever see any official written record that changed the name of the Association. More than that, at that moment in history I didn't have a clue that the name had been changed. The first Newsletter issued in February 1967 was mailed as a WSFDA publication. Harry called me and told me the name of the Association was changed to "Western States and Canada Fast Draw Association." I complied with that notification and sent out the March Newsletter with the WS&CFDA designation. I have Mid-Western Fast Draw Newsletters in which Harry signed correspondence with the title encompassing Canada. I don't need further proof for my purpose in recognizing Harry. It was a change that once again would expand the boundaries of the Association.

Three, he talked me into running for Chairman in 1967. Like the unknown gunfighter on the border Quarantine Station in 1959, history has a way of completing its destiny

Harry will forever be one of my heroes. Harry loved the sport of Fast Draw in a way that only those who knew him understood. He loved to compete and winning was a side issue. His tie to the sport was never about Harry Goudge. His tie was his friends, the survival of the Association and championing the recognition for the Canadian competitors.

In looking back into history at the end of 1965 it is clear that the sport of Fast Draw was having a major setback. From the very inception of the sport the emphasis was on the western image of the gunfighter. Two competitors facing off in western dress in a traditional Hollywood stand up and tied down holster, hand off the gun (remember the six

inch hand rule). The transition to the twist fanning draw and the array of non-traditional stances was to many competitors an apostatizing movement. They quickly learned that if you wanted to be competitive you ditched tradition and switched. What it actually done was to eliminate a substantial number of dedicated gunfighters from the sport. My entry into the sport began with the traditional thumbing stand up style. I ditched and switched. A ton of gunfighters walked away. The dedicated traditional groups that switched and stayed with the sport continued to make their presence and love for past tradition known. The only gunfighter I remember who did not switch and remained loyal to the traditional style in all competition through out the years is Bob James.

The other impact that hit the sport was the demise of Ron Mossholder's push to nationalize the sport. That great effort that failed left organized fast draw in the West with no place to go. The sport needed a rebirth. Harry Goudge kept it alive through 1966. The Sport's rebirth started on January 1st 1967.

Now I enter a somewhat delicate section of this history lesson. I am going to talk about the years between January 1967 and June 1970. I have to talk about the moment in history in which George Reese was Chairman of the Association. I have always taken the position that if you have to tell someone what you have accomplished they don't need to know. However, I have taken the position that more individuals who lived in the moment of history should record their experience. I will do my best.

I was handed a list of names and addresses. Harry Goudge said he didn't know how many were paid members. The Treasurer, A. John said the Association had assets of \$216.99. John LaPaille was the newly elected Secretary. We stepped into the management of an organization that had crashed with non-existent historical records. Where do you start?

I mentioned earlier in this article that I had some issues with gaps in records. It will be an understatement to indicate that I started my term in office with records. I was handed a silkscreen printer. Words had to be typed onto a stencil. The stencil was rotated around a drum. Paper was fed into the printer and ink soaked through the typed words from the rotating drum and printed the page. I did not have typing skills, as anyone who has read one of my Newsletters will agree. I used my personal portable typewriter for months until the Association could afford an electric one. I was employed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture that required me to travel around the State. I continued to use the portable on the road typing stencils in my motel room after work. The evidence is clearly seen in most of my Newsletters as the pages reflect the two separate typewriter fonts, while on the road or at home. I pounded out 41 consecutive monthly Newsletters using over 1120 stencils printing over 500,000 words over three and a half years. My first attempt to use the printing machine was a disaster. The ink leaked on to our maple leaf dining room table. Virginia and I still have the table after 50 years and the missing four inches of varnish still reminds us of the good ole days.

We hit the ground running.

From that humble beginning, the paid membership expanded across the United States including Alaska, to the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and Austria. Canada continued its never-ending support as well. The membership received 41 consecutive monthly mailing of the Newsletter. The Newsletter evolved from a two-page beginning in February 1967 up to as many as 40 plus pages. Our first Association meeting was held in March 1967. Nineteen Proposals were sent out for membership vote. Seventeen passed. All of the amendments clarified various aspects of competition. Noteworthy of mention of those that passed were:

- 1- The name of the Association changed to “Western Fast Draw Association.” The WS&CFDA expanded the boundaries but excluded membership in other countries and other parts of the United States. The Generic name WFDA extended the boundary to encompass every member regardless of geographical location. The World Fast Draw Association would later implement and make specific the boundaries.
- 2- Membership dues were increased from five to ten dollars a year. Only two votes against this proposal was an indication of the great support that was to come from the membership.
- 3- The proposal to combine the WFDA newsletter with Don Oplinger’s Fast Draw Digest if suitable arrangements could be made. This proposal only received three negative votes. This was the first effort in the history of the sport to meld a part the Western sport to its Mid-western counterpart. The Digest never received the support to continue publication. My salute to Don and other pioneers seeking support for ideals, principles and leadership can be found on page 7, WFDA Newsletter, October 1967:

“...and the streets are paved with fast draw history written in sweat by pioneers like Bill Ihrig – Bill Boyd – Ron Mossholder – and Don Oplinger – between the faded covers of the Sagebrush Sentinel – Top Gun Magazine – The Virginia City Gazette and the Fast Draw Digest...”

Interestingly, the two proposals that failed included one that would have initiated a classification system for competition. It may be of some interest that the Mid-WFDA was well ahead of the West in the classification of competitors. However, for the record, John LaPaille and A John, WFDA officers championed the move to classification. They worked up a classification on all known members of the WFDA. The 1970 California State shoot held in Yuba City, California on May 30th & 31st was classified. The shoot came off without a hitch. This was the first major title classified competition in the West. Although the proposal to classify all WFDA competition in 1967 failed passage by the membership it was embraced by the WFDA in later years. I recall having a conversation with Al Brian early in my administration in which he championed the position that Fast Draw should be classified. He compared it to the clay target sport of trapshooting, a sport that I entered in 1978 and was honored in 2010 by induction into “The California Golden State Trapshooting Hall of Fame.” That is another story in another moment in history.

Thirty proposals were submitted in 1968. All of them except two were voted into the By-laws. Ten proposals were submitted in 1969. Four proposals were not accepted.

Major amendments were accomplished aligning the Mid-Western and Western competition rules. Dick Plum and I discussed some of the issues facing the sport after competing in some fun shooting at Rey Varney's National Fast Draw Range in Southern California in November 1967. Dick ascended to the Mid-Western Fast Draw Association Chairman position in 1968 and was re-elected in 1969. Over the next two years Dick and I were able to align many of the major differences in our By-laws of competition through submitting of proposals. Ron Bright was elected Chairman of the Mid-WFDA in 1970 and continued the quest for uniformity. His first newsletter in January 1970 talks about the acceptance of the WFDA obvious hand rule. It was always my firm belief that a National Association could only be accomplished by the co-operation between the WFDA and Mid-WFDA. If the competition rules could be uniformly applied there would be no need for two Associations. The progress achieved, although not completed, in uniformity of competition rules was a game-changing move toward Nationalization.

Vice-Chairmen were appointed to represent designated areas of the Association. Chairman and Vice Chairman sanctioned competition was initiated for record keeping and year end awards. Western State Associations, Fast Draw Clubs and foreign members adopted the use of The Western Fast Draw Association rules.

It may be of some interest to understand that the sport's competition rules were at one point controlled by each Fast Draw Club. The Northern California Clubs banded together and formed the Northern California Fast Draw Association. I am going to postulate that the reason the Association did not include the entire state was due to the distance from the Southern Clubs. In the meantime other States were forming their own State Associations and competition rules. By the beginning of 1967 State Associations were well established. Loyalty to their Association and competition rules was a major barrier to expansion of the WFDA. My task was to never shake their loyalty to their Association but move them to accept WFDA competition rules. By the end of my term that objective had been accomplished. I was another game changing move to National Organization.

When I stepped down from the Chairman position On June 30, 1970 twenty-four Association members were on the list nominated for the three Association offices.

That list of nominees for the three Association offices, if nothing else, stands as a monument to the success of my three and half years as Chairman. That is a huge step from where Harry Goudge had the job of finding someone to accept nomination. However, having said that, after I accepted the nomination, Al Brian put his name on the ballot. I have only good things to say about Al Brian. He is in my Fast Draw Hall of Fame for a lot of reasons. In this take I am only dealing with the move to National Organization.

The members of the Western Fast Draw Association never wavered in their support for the Association or their faith in me as their Chairman. Hopefully, I demonstrated the pride that can be instilled in people to never lose sight of the ultimate goal. I did my best and apparently it was good enough. Six and a half years after I stepped down the solid foundation built between 1967 through June 1970 carried the sport to its final destination, "The World Fast Draw Association." Recording my efforts as Chairman in moving the Association to its final destination does not minimize the dedication and leadership that continued after me.

I would be amiss if I did not extend my admiration and appreciation:

To all the members of the Association for their wisdom, dedication and support during my administration.

To State Association leaders, particularly Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Colorado, Washington and Wyoming, who had the vision to embrace the Association authority and recognized its importance to the future of the sport.

To the Canadians who have supported organization since its inception.

To Dick Plum, Chairman Mid-Western Fast Draw Association 1968 and 1969. Dick's dedication to Nationalization and our mutual co-operation were instrumental in enabling a number of amendments and additions aligning competition rules of the WFDA and Mid-WFDA. This was a game-changing move toward Nationalization. Dick Plum remained dedicated to his dream and would later serve the World Fast Draw Association as Chairman for six years.

To the following leaders who served with me and were instrumental in rebuilding the foundation of an organization that could not be chipped or cracked on it's way to Nationalization:

Treasurer

A. John served as treasurer for the entire years of my service to the Association.

Secretary

John LaPaille – Served as Secretary in 1967, 1968 and 1969 thru September.

Bob Bussinger – Served as Secretary from October 1969 through June 1970.

Executive Chairman – E.L. Warner – 1969 and 1970.

Vice-Chairmen – initiated in 1969

Canada - Den Robinson – 1969 and 1970

Washington -Mel Stockwell 1969 Jim Dyer 1970

Oregon -Jerry May 1969 and 1970

California -Van Gentry 1969 and 1970

Arizona -Kelly Gage 1969 Gary Tryon 1970

Wyoming -Jim Martins 1969 and 1970

Not to be left out of the recognition and appreciation arena is my wife, Virginia. She is more than four times Women's Overall World Champion and all the trophies in between. She is the person that was beside me burning the midnight oil printing and shuffling Newsletters for mailing. She is the forgiving person who through misty eyes cleaned the printing ink off her new Maple leaf table. She is the inspiration that has kept me going since we were both 15 years old.

The rewards of my leadership were returned many times over by the membership not only through their support in reestablishing the foundation of the sport but also through their ability to show their appreciation. The awards, including life membership in the Association, are still cherished treasures and far outweigh my accomplishments in the field of competition. I have been blessed in two sports by the honors bestowed upon me by those who have appreciated the results of my efforts. No one could ask for more out of life.

We should all remember the pioneers of our Sport. We should remember their dedication, leadership and personal expense. We should hold in the highest esteem and recognize the heartbreak of failure that haunted those across this Nation chasing the elusive dream of Nationalization that was not to be until it was to be. Although many tried, their efforts to move the sport to National prominence by circumventing the natural processes of evolution were like trying to cross the desert without water. The shortest distance between point A and point B may be a straight line in mathematics, but in the desert, fail to follow the path to a watering hole and you are going to die.

George A. Reese
January 25, 2017