

# CFDA, The Next Generation

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This article is one of the most important articles I've ever written. It's so important that even though I had written it in my mind over and over again, after I began writing it in chronological order, I knew that the "Why" would consume too many words. So many words in fact, that before many of you would learn what was about to happen to CFDA you just might quit reading for yourself, then have to depend on versions of what others are saying. So, I decided to write this in three parts, with the first part containing an "abbreviated why", but also getting to the point of describing exactly what is in the process of happening right now, and what will happen beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

## **Part One – Cowboy Fast Draw Association is Becoming a Non-Profit Organization**

**Why?** The Part One, and shortened version is because currently CFDA is a business that not only manages and administrates a sport, but also developed a "clearing house" for the niche products needed for both new and existing members to enjoy the sport of Cowboy Fast Draw, without waiting months to acquire them. I didn't want to repeat a bad situation years ago when I ran the WFDA. We lost so many prospective members just because they didn't have a place to acquire what they needed to get started and would just lose interest.

Our family met and decided that if something should happen to me, they did not feel confident that they could continue managing the sport at its current level, but would be willing and able to manage the products we worked hard as a family to create over the years. Alotta Lead and I have discussed this in-depth and are very committed to seeing that CFDA will go on, should something happen to either one, or both of us. We are also not willing to sell CFDA to any one person or to a for-profit company.

You may be surprised to learn that I've always cringed at being called the "Owner" of CFDA. Instead, I created and hold the title of "Executive Director" or have also needed to be referred to as the CEO particularly in legal matters or documents. I've actually always considered myself more of a "caretaker" of something larger than anyone should ever have the right to own. My family knows this, just like many of my closest friends in our sport have come to realize. Not only am I passionate and love CFDA, but so do thousands of our members who rightly consider themselves as part of our CFDA Family. CFDA is more than a sport, it has become a lifestyle for so many. As both Alotta Lead and Jackie Daniels can attest, we've received many phone calls at CFDA Headquarters, where members have told us that Cowboy Fast Draw has literally saved their lives. So I ask, can you imagine what an awesome responsibility that is? Or, how can we ever let our members down?

## **What is Happening Now**

Alotta Lead and I after much thought and consideration wish to "Grant" CFDA to its membership! It's our sincerest hope that CFDA goes on for future generations to enjoy!!! However, we're not just "Riding Off Into the Sunset" any time soon. We want to make sure that CFDA develops its new course on the right path, so we are staying very involved for at least, God willing, the next four years, more on that shortly.....

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – I submitted to the State of Nevada documents to form ***Cowboy Fast Draw Association, Non-Profit Organization***, or (CFDA, NPO). The By-Laws are very detailed, it took several days to write and edit. I emailed a copy of these By-Laws in mid-February to our CFDA Regulator Posse for review, we got back some valuable comments and suggestions. These By-Laws will be published on the CFDA Website by the time this article is published for review of any member.

On the same day as above, documents were also filed to form Quick Cal's Gunslinger Emporium, a Nevada Corporation. This is a corporation that will continue to handle and sell the actual sporting products, such as, Timers, Guns, Holsters, Wax and CFDA Brass that our members depend on.

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, all of the assets, income, and liabilities associated with the management and administration of the sport of Cowboy Fast Draw will be transferred from Cowboy Fast Draw Association, LLC to Cowboy Fast Draw Association, Non-Profit Organization.

Also on January 1st, 2025, all income, assets, and liabilities associated with Cowboy Fast Draw sporting equipment will be transferred from Cowboy Fast Draw Association, LLC to Quick Cal's Gunslinger Emporium. A separate Gunslinger Emporium Website that our members use to acquire Cowboy Fast Draw products will be activated on or before this date. Cowboy Fast Draw Association, LLC will eventually be de-activated after all business is concluded.

### **Transitional Year**

It takes time to set up things like IRS docs, bank accounts, websites, payroll services, and budgets. These are currently being worked on, with the goal of all being up and running on or before January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Members should notice little difference over the next few years, since both organizations will still be run out of our current home office. The main difference will be that there will be two separate websites. The main CFDA Website will be very similar to what we have now, except there will be links for products members need that are to be sold by the Gunslinger Emporium. There will also be links on the Gunslinger Emporium directing customers to the CFDA Website for Membership & Club Services.

The main thing that will be noticeably different is that members will not be able to purchase items sold separately by both organizations in one transaction. You will have to order and pay memberships, affiliation or sanction fees, and logo items from the CFDA Website; likewise, CFDA Brass, wax, timers, guns, holsters, etc. on the Gunslinger Emporium Website. Phone orders will also be taken on separate order forms and charged separately, since it is important that all financial matters be handled separately.

### **How Will CFDA, Non-Profit Organization be Managed?**

While it's all laid out in the By-Laws, here's the short version. It's designed to operate much like a city government. Something that I happen to have a lot of personal experience with.

### **Beginning Initial Appointments**

As "Grantors" of the Cowboy Fast Draw Association, Non-Profit Organization, Alotta Lead & I reserve the right to appoint the first Board of Territorial Governors, who will in turn stand for election on schedule as stated in the By-Laws. I will serve as the first Chairman for a 4-Year Term, which will become an elected office in the Fall of 2028, for the term beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2029. At which time I may choose or choose not to run.

### **Chairman of the Board**

Instead of a Mayor, there is a Chairman of the Board. The Chairman is the CEO of the organization and will be eventually elected to a 4-Year Term by the entire adult general membership. The Chairman does not vote, except in the case of a tie. The Chairman may veto a vote of the Board of Territorial Governors, but the veto can be overridden by a vote of a super-majority of the Board.

The Chairman is the only member of the Board that can also serve as the Executive Director. The Chairman shall conduct all meetings of the Board and shall oversee that all policies, procedures, and decisions made by the Board are carried out. The Chairman or duly appointed representative shall have final authority over policy and rule interpretation at any CFDA event.

### **Board of Territorial Governors**

There are currently 8 Territories recognized in CFDA. Territorial Governors have a 2-Year Term. Please refer to the Territorial Map in the Gunslinger's Gazette, where all CFDA Territories are numbered. Each Territorial Governor is also a member of the Board of Director, also known as the Board of Territorial Governors.

The Grantors shall appoint the first Board of Territorial Governors. Odd numbered Territorial Governors shall be appointed to a one-year term, even numbered Territorial Governors to a two-year term, beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Territorial Governors shall stand for election in the Fall before their term expires, according to the By-Laws, wherein, the CFDA adult members of each territory shall elect a Territorial Governor to represent them.

The Board of Territorial Governors vote and make all policies, budget, and major business decisions of CFDA, Non-Profit Organization. They also Chair appointed committees as approved by the Board, and approve

all final rule changes, procedures, and drafts of rulebooks. They may re-align, add or reduce territories, based on membership numbers and club locations.

The Board shall also approve Marshal Muster agendas, minutes, and consider all discussions and straw poll votes at the annual U.S. Marshal's Muster.

The Board will vote annually to choose a Chairman Pro Tem, in the case that the Chairman of the Board is absent or cannot fulfill their duties.

### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director is appointed by the Chairman of the Board, with the advice and consent of the Board of Territorial Governors. The Chairman may also appoint themselves as Executive Director. This is similar to how various city governments work some are "Strong Mayor", which means the Mayor is also the City Manager, others are "Council-City Manager" forms which means the Mayor mainly runs meeting and is otherwise ceremonial.

The Executive Director runs the day-to-day business operations of the organization. They may hire whatever personnel as needed to manage membership services, accounting, etc. They are also an official spokesman for CFDA, unless otherwise directed by the Board. They also prepare or cause to be prepared an annual budget. All expenditures must be conducted within the budget, unless approved by the Board.

*If you wish to know more details, please read the **By-Laws** posted on the **CFDA Website**.*

## **Part Two – What I learned from Other Shooting Sports**

I began shooting Fast Draw in 1968 as a teenager, it was my "first-love" when it came to shooting sports. I've had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful and inspiring people in my 56+ years in shooting sports. I'm grateful to have learned so many things from them and the sports in which I participated, I applied many of them both to my business career and more importantly my family.

### **World Fast Draw Association (WFDA) 1968 - 1982**

My Father, Elmer Eilrich, had discovered Fast Draw while he and Mom spent their winter months around Tombstone, AZ. After watching the National Fast Draw Championships that were held there during the 1960's, he didn't think the sport existed back home in Chicago. Then, someone introduced him to Dick Plum, then President of the Chicago Colts Fast Draw Club. So, Dad joined the club and being an accomplished machinist, he built his own custom Fast Draw Guns. When I showed an interest, he invited me to come with him to the club to try it. The year was 1968 and I was hooked!

It opened up a whole new world to me, as it gave me the opportunity to travel. I was the only teenager in our club. They kept yelling at me, "**Slow Down Kid!**" But, I just kept practicing, learning and training my competitive mind. At age 19, I won my first Overall World Fast Draw Championship in 1972 in Mt. Vernon, TX, barely edging out Fast Draw Icon Stan Sweet.

I began hosting championships in the mid-70's in Las Vegas and other locations, some of the biggest ever held during those days. I also performed numerous Fast Draw shows. After dedicating over a dozen years to Fast Draw, I noticed that the World Fast Draw Association (WFDA) had a considerable decline in activity. It seemed no one wanted to put effort into clubs anymore, they just wanted to travel to the contests. Since it's hard to recruit new members without clubs, membership and attendance at contests declined. I just wanted to expand my love for shooting! So, I announced my first retirement from Fast Draw at the end of 1982 due to lack of contests to compete in.

### **International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) 1983 - 1991**

After trying several Shooting Sports I dedicated myself to pursuing the Practical & Action Pistol Shooting Circuit, which included a large range of action pistol sports. IPSC, Steel Challenge, NRA Action Pistol (Bianchi Cup), Soldier of Fortune (3-Gun Combat), Bowling Pin (2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Shoot), PPC, NRA Bullseye, etc. While I

can write on and on about all of the wonderful experiences I had, there is not room in this article to expand upon it, but if you're interested, you will be able to read that in a book I plan to finish next year.

In November of 1990, at 40,000 over the Pacific Ocean on the way back from the IPSC World Shoot Downunder in Adeliade, Australia as a member of the National USPSA Team, for which I still proudly display a Gold Medal, I made a decision. Nearing 40 years old and needing more time to spend with my family and business interests, I decided to return to Fast Draw. I had not only always felt that Fast Draw could be promoted to a higher level, but it had always remained close to my heart.

### **Back to WFDA 1992 - 1997**

I ran for and won the election for a two-year term in the office of Secretary of the World Fast Draw Association in 1992. After taking office and reviewing, I was shocked to learn it had diminished itself down to 108 members with 20 of them living in Japan, during the 80's. With the help and support of a lot of good folks, plus four more years as Chairman "We" re-built the WFDA back to just under 1,000 members, bigger than it had ever been. That's where I got to know Brad Hemmah very well, as we worked together re-building WFDA during the 90's.

Brad had joined WFDA during the late 80's and was the manager of the First Gold Hotel & Casino in Deadwood, SD and loved the sport. He used his considerable influence in Deadwood to promote and host the 1992 WFDA World Traditional Elimination Championship, and then went on to hold several more.

### **The Continuous Fast Draw Controversy**

Unfortunately, Fast Draw has always faced controversy since it was founded by Dee Woolem in 1955. There has always been an ongoing argument concerning speed vs accuracy. Some shooters want it to be more of a traditional hipshot draw (like seen in Hollywood western movies) with sizes and distances that represent a gunfight or duel. While others say, "The Name of the Game is Fast Draw" and will constantly politic and lobby for closer and larger targets, while pushing the limits of rules to gray areas in the quest of all out speed.

Dee Woolem, whom I've had the pleasure to meet about 30 years ago, is credited with being "The Father of Fast Draw." In his day, the sport he created was just that, Fast Draw. It was simply a clutch-driven clock-faced timer that had a start button mounted on a small box that was attached on top of an adjustable height stand. There was a speaker embedded on the side of the box that would pick-up a shot and cause the clock to stop and record a time. The Shooter would adjust the stand height to their liking, place their trigger finger on a button. However, the gun-hand had to start from a position 6" away the gun. There was no start signal, the Shooter drew and fired a primer or .22 blank when ready. It was also later referred to as "Self-Start". As long as the shot fired was not a "boot shot" it counted. Of course, there was not enough substance in such a competition to satisfy Shooters for too long, so they began to experiment with other timing systems and scoring formats.

There's just not enough room in this article to describe the decades of transitions and evolutions that took place, which is another reason I'm writing a book. In short, the sport developed with wax and blank ammo shooting an array of countless formats, targets and distances. But, it also became so inundated with feather-weight aluminum guns, fender rigs or bucket booted holsters that it has not only lost its ties to the Old West, but also any tie to anything might ever be seen in any credible Hollywood Movie or TV Western.

By 1997, it became apparent to me that no one could ever solve the conundrum it had boxed itself into, plus the politics had gotten just too ridiculous. In my opinion, the WFDA was just set on a destructive course. So, after finishing my commitment as Chairman, I left it once again. But, at least I did leave it in far better organizational and financial condition than it was when found it, in 1992. I hoped I was wrong.

### **Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) a.k.a. Cowboy Action Shooting 1998 - 2007**

I then went onto Cowboy Action Shooting (SASS), where I spent almost a decade. I built a 12-bay shooting range in Fernley, NV, founded the High Plains Drifters which became a 120+ member club, which is still there to this day. Plus, was the author the much-needed SASS Range Officer Course and served 9-years as Chairman of the SASS RO Committee. Even won a National Championship and numerous regional and state championships.

I really thought I would spend the rest of my shooting days mainly with SASS. I'm also honored to have been inducted into the SASS Hall of Fame in 2011.

### **Call from Brad Hemmah**

In 2002, I got a call from Brad Hemmah, he finally came to the same conclusion that I had about the WFDA. He explained what he intended to do and was seeking advice on a range of topics. What Brad carried out was nothing less than a reformation of the sport of Fast Draw, which we all know and love as CFDA. He was re-creating the sport into something based upon a set of principles that people could actually relate to. Even though still very heavily involved and committed to SASS, I took notice and interest in what he was doing. I was convinced that CFDA could not only bring Fast Draw back, but also could develop into a solid organization that could expand, grow and last.

**Note:** Sadly, the conclusion that both Brad and I had come to regarding the WFDA came true. I currently estimate based upon recent contest results that there may be less than 50 WFDA active members left on this continent. I have always hoped that they could succeed, mainly because of the decades of hard work and dedication that so many people had invested in the organization.

### **CFDA 2005 - Present**

In late 2005, Shoot Magazine and I submitted a partnership proposal to Brad. A few months later Brad called to turn down the proposal, but offered to sell it to me, and only to me, although Shoot Magazine did remain as my partner due to their promotional value as a popular magazine, but that changed a year or two later.

Brad said that he had work and career paths that he needed to pursue and could not dedicate the time he had hoped for CFDA. He said that due to my experience and contacts in other shooting sport and the shooting industry, I was the only person he could rely on to not allow the principles of Cowboy Fast Draw fail. He also was concerned over the liability involved with running the sport, and said he also respected my business experience to further organize and run CFDA in a businesslike manner. I accepted that commitment.

By the way, as long as I'm writing about Brad. I called him and had a long conversation with him a few months ago. He fully supports this transition which will keep CFDA going into the future.

### **What I've Learned from Other Shooting Sports**

My experience in other shooting disciplines have taught me many things. One of the most important things, is that when a sport loses its commitment to the Integrity of the Game for which it was created, it is destined to decline and perhaps eventually fail. It certainly happened to the old original Fast Draw. It has also happened to IPSC & SASS.

**For IPSC**, the sport slowly changed from the vision of its founder, Col. Jeff Cooper. He designed it to be based on truly tactical and concealable defensive weapons, but it evolved into all-out and very expensive competition race-guns. Their courses of fire became competitive assault courses, standard exercises that demanded pin-point accuracy disappeared, and scoring became factored in favor of competition over the reality of close-in Comstock Scoring. Perhaps IPSC took too long to implement a factory stock division, and lost a huge part of their prospective membership due to the development of a spin-off sport that emphasized tactics International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA).

But, on the other hand, I must really applaud IPSC for being the Indy 500 of innovation. Just like Indy, the quest for competitive modifications and innovations end up as great upgrades to factory-made models, that improve not only performance but safety.

**For SASS**, they kept making the targets bigger and the distances closer. Courses that used to require a degree of marksmanship to shoot clean, became a huge embarrassment if you didn't clean them. They allowed ammo to be loaded down so much that there was hardly any recoil. Bullets could hardly be heard hitting the steel plates or could hardly affect knock down targets. But, SASS has maintained a fun family sport and remains quite popular. CFDA considers it our sister-sport in many ways, because we both honor the romance and legend of the Old West.

## **My Commitment to CFDA**

I have sworn to myself and now to you, that I will never allow CFDA to lose the Integrity & Spirit of the Game we all love to play. It is designed to last and equalize the competition by balancing speed vs accuracy. I hope you all will join me in that pledge. In the words of Wyatt Earp, "Fast is fine, accuracy is final."

I've always felt it was important to contribute and support the various sports I've enjoyed. Whether it be forming or supporting existing clubs, or contributing management experience to national organizations. WFDA, USPSA/IPSC, Sierra Nevada Pistol League, High Plains Drifters Cowboy Action Club, SASS, Great Basin Gun Hawks and now CFDA, I have just always believed in giving back.

## **Part 3 - The Future for Cowboy Fast Draw Association, Non-Profit Organization**

Possibly the best example I can think of to describe what the future of CFDA is would be when at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention (1787), when the U.S. Constitution was finally ratified, a reporter asked Benjamin Franklin what they had created. He replied with just 7 words, "A republic if you can keep it."

It has been my experience that all clubs, organizations, and even governments begin with the best of intentions. Yet, I have witnessed so many of them collapse due to self-serving politics. Sometimes it's money, but mostly it's just a quest for what always turns out to be a temporary sense of power.

It is my sincere hope that CFDA, NPO will transcend self-serving politics, and just respect those who take on the responsibility of serving in office, just for the love of the game. However, we also must accept basic human nature, whenever there are more than two people involved in anything, there will always be some form of politics. It takes dedicated people to make any organization work. As long as we unite to pursue our common Mission and Goals of building CFDA, NPO to the standards that are set out on Page 4 in the 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of the CFDA Gunslinger's Guideline, we will be successful.

This organization has always relied on volunteers, we've been blessed by a number of dedicated members who donate their time and talents to the sport and organization that they love. CFDA must continue to rely on volunteers for so many things.

There will also be a certain amount of ongoing business that must be attended to as a day-to-day job. No one should ever be expected to hold such a continuous job without being paid a salary. There will also be some elected and appointed positions that will require some compensation and reimbursement. All of these matters will be determined and approved by the Board of Territorial Governors on behalf of the general membership.

CFDA, NPO will be a financially transparent organization. Everything worthwhile costs commitment, effort, money or a combination of all three. The key to success is to do our best to make sure that we as an organization that is based on a common goal will build everlasting value and benefits for all of our members to enjoy.

We cannot know who will manage CFDA, NPO a decade or two from now, we may not even know them yet. It could be some of the very kids that grew up or are in the process of growing up in CFDA right now, I hope so.

The important thing is that we have blazed a trail that actually began with what was learned between 1955 & 2002, when CFDA was founded by Brad. Then carried on until now by all contributed by building clubs, recruiting members and learning how to refine and innovate our methods for running major championships. We've worked together to define our rules. We are not done! We are just embarking on a new beginning! We are the CFDA Family that will soon elect our leaders from our membership. In a sense, "*A republic if you can keep it!*" **I for one, think together WE ALL CAN!**