

The Smoke Pole

Official Publication of
Grand Valley Cap'n Ballers™
Muzzle Loading Gun Club

Visit us at: -
www.gvcnb.org.

November 2025

Welcome to our newest member!

Kali Muller!!

A PATRIOT SPEAKS

It's not about the loudest voice –
It's about the one who tells
the truth and never gives up on
their freedom.
Unknown

GVC&B Club Officers 2025-2026

President: Jeff Terrell

Vice President: Larry Horrigan

Secretary: Ron Fernwalt

Treasurer: Chelsea Fox

Range Officer: Roger Pierce

Newsletter: Jackie Armstrong

Board Members (Year Elected-2 year position)

Dennis Priddy 2024

Bonnie Fernwalt 2024

Tom Verberg 2024

Leanne Pierce 2024

Neal Armstrong 2025

Dave Fox 2025

Drew Harrington 2025

50/50 WINNER

Dick Miller

ATTENDANCE WINNER

Ed Henson & Paul Thurmond

CONGRATULATIONS

Jeff's Journal

Sadly. We are getting very close to putting the wraps on another year of activities having just next month's Club Shoot and Meeting to go. Then we will continue to have a Club Shoot on the first weekend as usual, but we will have no business meetings until March. I'm just giving you a



heads-up now, well in advance I hope for your info. There will be more details coming in the December newsletter.

Right now, I'm going to go back a couple weeks to our second annual Squirrel Shoot. Last year we were very happy with our attendance, but we found we needed to make improvements to the Range and to our scoring system. Larry,

Dennis and Roger took care of Range issues and Eric, and I went back to our standard scoring method for this event.

We were very glad the changes were made because we had even more shooters than expected. Special thanks to the guys and to those who donated to the lunch supply at noon, it must have been good because we had absolutely nothing left. One more thank you to our shooters for being here to support us, we hope you had fun too. After all that's why we do these events friends and fun and of course \$\$\$\$\$. It's already in the schedule for next year.

The GVCnB planning committee met last week Tuesday to set up our calendar of events for 2026. Then the procedure is to review each of our Flyers and Programs to hopefully get the necessary information to you without any errors (we try to do that every year) or omissions. I'm crossing my fingers that next year we will be successful on the above. Esp. since we will then be having a second meeting for review and then publication, you can look for that early next year.

Continue...

That brings us up to last weekend at the Range. On Saturday morning (a very cold and wet one I might add) the last Table Shoot of the year was held with a dozen participants and I'm told one multiple winner, (Roger Pierce) and the rest still had fun trying to be first. Next year this shoot will become part of our Club Shoot weekends on Saturday morning, along with Archery (with a new start time of 10:00am) and Shotgun and then at 1pm Air- gun at that Range. New this year we will have two divisions, one for break barrels and one for PCP's. We hope that will encourage more participation for our shooters.

At the November Board Meeting most of our time was spent reviewing the proposed operating budget for 2026. Chelsea did an excellent job putting that together for us and with some really good input from everyone present we were able to arrive on what we believe will provide us with another financially successful year. That, will depend on each and every one of us on the team doing our part to work at and promote our events, we've done so in the past, I'm confident we will again. See you soon.

Jeff

PS. HAPPY THANKSGIVING EVERYONE!!

For sale

Traditions .45 cal. Percussion Rifle in Excellent Condition. Light colored maple stock, brass hardware. 42 in barrel. Price \$200.00.

Mossberg Model 500 12-gauge, Shotgun. Mossy Oak Pattern, 2 barrels 1 Turkey Choked Full and 1 Waterfowl w/4 screw -in tubes. Tru-glow sights and fixed fiber optic. Matching Sling. Fired only 5 times. Price \$500.00 Box of shells

Contact Jeff at 616 366-3404

Air Gun

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Novelty Archery-Men

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Novelty Archery-Women

- 1.
- 2.

On the Firing Line

Line Matches—

Men's 25yd Rifle 2-DEER

- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| 1. Dennis Priddy | 31 |
| 2. Larry Horrigan | 28 |
| 3. Ed Henson | 25 |

Men's 25yd Rifle bottles

- | | |
|-------------------|------|
| 1. Ed Henson | 30XX |
| 2. Hurt Nienhouse | 27 |
| 3. Larry Horrigan | 24X |

Men's 25yd 1/2 BULL

- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| 1. Ed Henson | 41 |
| 2. Dennis Priddy | 34 |
| 3. Kurt Nienhouse | 33 |

Men's 50yd

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 1. Bill Barnum | 35 |
| 2. Dennis Priddy | 29 |
| 3. | |

Men's 25yd Trade Gun

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 1. Dennis Priddy | 32 |
| 2. Ed Henson | 31 |
| 3. Tom Verberg | 27 |

Men's 50yd Trade Gun-

- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| 1. Ed Henson | 43 |
| 2. Larry Horrigan | 38 |
| 3. Dennis Priddy | 27 |

Men's 25yd Pistol-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Men's 50yd Pistol

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Women's 25yd Rifle Pie

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 1. Leanne Peirce | 31 |
| 2. Karen Barnum | 21 |
| 3. Jess Dort | 13 |

Women's 25yd Rifle 5 Bull

- | | |
|-----------------|----|
| 1. Karen Barnum | 16 |
| 2. Jess Dort | 9 |
| 3. | |

Women's 50yd Rifle

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 1. Leanne Pierce | 23 |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

Woods Walk-Flint

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1. Kurt Nienhouse | 120 |
| 2. | |

Woods Walk- Trade Gun

- | | |
|--------------|-----|
| 1. Ed Henson | 110 |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

Woods Walk Percussion/Silhouettes

- | | |
|--------------|----|
| 1. Jess Dort | 11 |
|--------------|----|

FROM THE SHOTGUN CRIB

We are winding down our season and we have done very well at shotgun. We have two events coming up that we have not done before and that is 5 Stand on Saturday November 8th and Saturday December 13th. We have had our guest ask for it a year ago so we are gonna do it.

We will have a campfire, coffee and cookies and a place for you to step in and get warm if needed.

A big thank you goes out to those that participated and those that helped run sporting clay's. You were the ones that made it successful. I have gotten a lot of Thank You's for what I do, well it is not what I do, it is what we do. You guy's and gal's are the ones. I'm just the AIC if something goes wrong.

Ron

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Be sure fill out the membership and camping form that is in the newsletter or pick one up from Ron at the December club meeting.

Please make sure you give us your current phone and email.

Dues and camping fees are due by January 31, 2026

Thank you for your cooperation

Remember those that are plugged in whether you're there or not, the price is \$2.00 per day excluding the weekend days of an event that you were charged for. I know for a fact that it is cheaper here than at home. This allows us to keep refrigerated food when we are enjoying the club every weekend.

THE GRAND VALLEY CAP N BALLERS AND MICHIGAN STATE CAMPING RULES

1. Each camper must keep his own campsite clean, neat and the grass cut.
2. There will be only one fixed fire pit on each campsite.
3. Use only existing cut wood or use dead fallen trees. No standing trees may be cut.
4. When the camping unit is not in use, it must be disconnected from utilities (electric and water) OR PAY THE \$2.00 ELECTRICAL FEE PER DAY. ANY GUEST CAMPING WITH THEIR UNIT IS REQUIRED TO PAY \$5.00/DAY FOR ELECTRICAL USE.
5. Additional electrical use, after the 20 days included in the annual fee, is to be paid for at the monthly meeting to Ron at shot gun and Jackie on the main campground

Thank you for your cooperation---The Campground Committee Ron, Jackie & Larry

GVCnB 2026 MEMBERSHIP AND CAMPSITE RENEWAL FEE

Annual dues and campsite fees are payable no later than January 31, 2026. Payment must be made to treasurer FOR \$150.00 FOR THE CAMP SITE AND \$50.00 MEMBERSHIP DUES either at any meeting or postmarked no later than January 31, 2026. Make checks payable to Grand Valley Cap N Ballers. Fill out ahead of time to avoid confusion. Thanks. This form must be completed with payment.

IF YOUR CHECK IS NOT POSTMARKED BY JANUARY 31, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND NEED TO START OVER AGAIN TO BECOME A MEMBER.

If you have a designated campsite and the fee is not paid ahead of time, FEE WILL BE DOUBLED AFTER JANUARY 31, 2026. If not paid within 30 days after January 31, the unit must be moved off club property, or it will be impounded by local law enforcement.

REMEMBER THAT ALL MEMBERS WHO HAVE CAMPING UNITS ON CLUB PROPERTY ARE EXPECTED TO CARRY INSURANCE ON THEIR UNITS OR ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DAMAGE THAT MAY OCCUR WHILE ON CLUB PROPERTY.

Please fill out the following in very clear and legible print and return to GVCNB, 16808 Peach Ridge, Kent City, Mi. 49330

Name _____
Spouse _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail Address _____

NMLRA Membership # _____
Dues \$50.00 _____
Campsite Fee \$150.00 _____
Total Submitted \$ _____ Group _____
Camping Area _____ or Lot Number _____
Membership Status Regular _____ Life _____
Year Joined GVCnB _____

THE GRAND VALLEY CAP N BALLERS AND MICHIGAN STATE CAMPING RULES

1. Each camper must keep his own campsite clean, neat and the grass cut.
2. There will be only one fixed fire pit on each campsite.
3. Use only existing cut wood or use dead fallen trees. No standing trees may be cut.
4. When the camping unit is not in use, it must be disconnected from utilities (electric and water) OR PAY THE \$2.00 ELECTRICAL FEE PER DAY. ANY GUEST CAMPING WITH THEIR UNIT IS REQUIRED TO PAY \$5.00/DAY FOR ELECTRICAL USE.
5. Additional electrical use, after the 20 days included in the annual fee, is to be paid for at the monthly meeting to Ron at shotgun and Jackie on the main campground

The \$150.00 a year camping fee reserves the campsite and includes 20 days of electric hookup without additional charges.

Anyone camping at Shotgun will pay the event fee, plus the additional current up charge for A/C use.

At major events, i.e.: Zimmerman, Spring Shoot, Family Rendezvous, Frontier Shoot, Ladies Fun Tyme at the Range, and October Fest/Meat Shoot, members are **REQUIRED** to pay the electrical charge for that event.

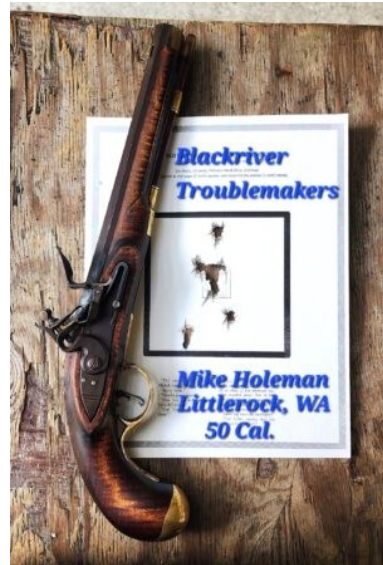
All members paying the event electrical fee will not have those days deducted against their 20-day limit.

After a registered reserved campsite member has surpassed the 20-day electrical use limit, those members will be charged a \$2.00 a day electrical fee when plugged in.

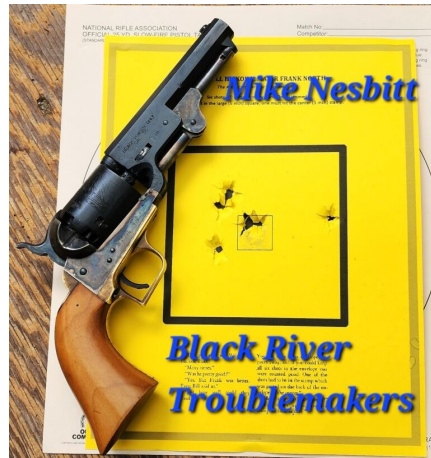
Signature _____ **REQUIRED**



*This year's Grand Champion, Ron Roberstson,
shot while using paper cartridges.*



*Mike Holeman, with three shots touching the stamp,
used his .50 caliber flintlock.*



*Nesbitt's target, with two shots going through the
stamp in the middle of the square*

*J. Stone, the ramrod of
these on-line shoot-outs.*



GUNSMOKE: CAP & BALL 'GUNFIGHTER SHOOT-OUT' CHALLENGE

By Mike Nesbitt | Contributing Editor

A new "shoot-out" has been added to the sport of shooting percussion black powder revolvers.

It is called the "Gunfighters Shoot-Out Challenge" and it is named that way because there is some reference made to Wild Bill Hickok and another shooter named Major Frank North. Everybody has heard about Hickok but Major North was a well-known shooter during the same era. Back in those days, in the 1860s and '70s, a good shot could keep his (or her) shots on a square 5 X 5-inch envelope while shooting from ten paces.

So, a 5 X 5-inch square became the target for today's Gunfighter Shoot-Out Challenge, along with a 1-inch square "postage stamp" in the middle of the larger square. The object of the challenge is to shoot six shots from a percussion revolver and keep all six shots within the 5-inch square with at least one shot hitting the 1-inch square. Those shots are fired offhand, with a one-hand hold, not timed, from a distance of 10 paces, more accurately stated as 10 yards or 30 feet. While that kind of good shooting is not impossible, it is a real challenge.

The way to learn more about this Gunfighter shoot-out is to hop on to the computer and look up the Cap & Ball Fanatic Channel Group on Facebook. There you'll find information on the shoot-out plus a lot more. The 'ramrod' of the outfit goes by the handle of J. Stone and he runs the shoot-out by email. Contact him and he will set you up with a target to copy along with the easy-to-follow rules. And, one of the best parts about this friendly competition, there are no entry fees or costs to participate.

J. Stone lives in Grand Rapids, Mich. He started shooting and collecting percussion revolvers because of his love for 19th Century history. That focusses on the Westward migration, Indian relations, and a good bit of our Civil War. He says all of that interest turned into creating shooting events with the guns of the era and gathering shooters who like those guns into some friendly competition. He started his Cap & Ball Fanatic Channel on Facebook and on the YouTube during the summer of 2023 because he was shooting almost all of the time and he has video experience. In his opinion, that channel has done better than he ever imagined. He says it isn't about making money; it is to encourage having fun, learning about history, and getting new shooters and historians involved.

Last year he had a playing card match, shot with percussion revolvers. If I had known about that, I would have joined in. But this year is different. I did get to join in for the 2025 Gunfighter shoot-out but I must apologize to you, because it is too late for you to join. With this story, I'm only reporting on the way the event was handled, how it was shot, and how much fun it was. On the good side, however, J. Stone says we'll be doing it again and the same target and rules might be used once more in 2026. We'll have to look on the Cap & Ball Fanatic Channel to find out for sure.

While I can't vouch for too many other shooters, I can talk about the group of shooters I do my shooting with. We are members of the Black River Troublemakers, at the Capitol City Rifle & Pistol Club near Olympia, Washington, and I've mentioned some of our activities before, along with the Black River Buffalo Runners, such as our Old West Centerfires Matches and our annual Buffalo Camp. What I'll say about this group now is how the shooters really turned out for this Gunfighter Shoot-Out Challenge, and at least two of our "gang" bought new percussion revolvers just to participate.

One of those guys, Mike Holeman, shot his target for the competition with a flintlock muzzleloading pistol. The rules for this game do say that a muzzleloader could be used. That target of Mike's was a good one but even he agrees that it just wasn't the same thing, so he bought a nice used and customized Uberti 1851 Navy model with a 5-inch barrel. The little bit of customizing included a new front sight, mounted in a small dovetail on the octagon barrel, new nipples from Slixprings, and the very nice ivory-like carved grips. Mike, of course, didn't use that gun in this year's shoot-out but he will use it for next year's plus a lot of shooting in between those yearly events.

Jerry Mayo also bought a .36 caliber Navy Model, an 1861 version this time. Now he's getting that gun all equipped with a new bullet mold, for .380" diameter round balls, plus a new set of stainless-steel nipples. We'll be hearing more about him and his six-gun after he does more shooting with it. Jerry didn't get his gun soon enough to participate in this year's Gunfighter Shoot-Out but he might be a top contender for next year's Challenge.

And more shooting will be easy to do because our group will be adding some cap & ball events to our own shooting contests. That's easy to do because we commonly hold a short, maybe five or ten shots, "after-match" to our more headline events. The first one of these is an after-match following our Lever-Gun match, where we shoot our lever action black powder rifles, mostly .44-40s. In this after-match, we'll be shooting at two paper targets, five shots each, with black powder revolvers. The reminder and invitation to this event does say, percussion revolvers preferred. To say that our group is embracing the cap & ball six-guns readily is putting it mildly, we're enjoying the shooting wildly...

One more of our shooters must be mentioned and that is Mike Moran. He has a .44 caliber version of the 1851 Colt style replica revolver that he'd bought more than a few years ago but had still never fired it. So, to join in the fun, he dug his .44 out of the closet, blew the dust off of it, then loaded it for his first time to shoot the gun. He loaded the chambers with 25 grains of GOEX 3Fg powder, then a .451" diameter ball, put grease over the bullets, capped the nipples and took his first shot. Just after the 'boom' of the gun, Mike turned to the rest of us wearing an obvious grin and said, "This .44 packs a wallop!!"

We enjoyed gathering together for practice and for shooting our Gunfighter Shoot-Out targets to be submitted for score. According to the match rules, published by J. Stone, we could shoot and submit as many targets as we wanted but we could shoot no more than six shots per target. Those are simply easy rules to live by and trying to get a good target, with all six shots hitting within the 5-inch square as well as hitting the "postage stamp" with one of those shots was certainly a lot of fun.

Other rules are just as easy to follow. The guns which are permitted for use are mainly percussion black powder revolvers or pistols from the pre-1870 era, originals or replicas. J. Stone goes on to say, those can include the so called "fantasy" guns such as the Sheriff's models and the .44 caliber Navy. By "fantasy" guns he means the versions of those guns which were never made in the 1860s and early '70s.

I must take a slight exception to his round-up of fantasy guns when I mention my own little .36 caliber 1851 Navy with the 5-inch barrel. In the book *A History of the Colt Revolver* (1940) there is a picture of an 1851 Model with a 4 3/4-inch barrel and that has an added note in the comments that it looks to have been factory made. If there was just one of them originally, that takes my replica out of the fantasy category, although we can quickly agree that a lot more short-barreled Navy Models are made as replicas than what were ever made in the old days.

My shooting with that short-barreled Navy Model went fairly well. I was getting close, but (as they used to say) no cigar. Then, toward the end of the time for the Shoot-Out, I tried one more target, printed on yellow as I like to do. With no time limit for the shooting, I'd fire a shot, then let my arm drop to give it a rest before bringing the gun up to take a following shot. That target held all six shots within the 5-inch square and two of those shots hit, side by side, in the 1-inch square postage stamp. To comply with the rules, that target was photographed with my gun (but not with me) and my name and organization were added to the picture before it was sent in for scoring and judging.

There are award categories for:

Top 5 places with all six in the 5-inch square and at least one hit in the stamp

Top 5 places with 5 hits in the 5-inch square with one hit in the stamp*

Top 5 places with four hits in the 5-inch square with one hit in the stamp*

*If none hit the stamp, tightest groups win.

J. Stone said, after the deadline had passed, that he had over 50 entries with almost 200 pictures of targets to sort through. That makes a jump of over 400% over last year's playing card shoot. He added how that was "really humbling and cool." He also said that they'd be giving out 20 awards for the match this year, so something was added to the list shown above.

The award ceremonies for this event took up 15 minutes on a YouTube video. A whole lot of folks were named in that show and I simply can't mention them all. The Grand Champion was Ron Roberstson from Alabama and his target was certainly a good one, shooting a replica of the 1861 Colt Navy in .36 caliber, using paper cartridges, and with all six shots within the 5-inch square as well as having four of those shots hitting the postage stamp. That's good shooting!

Tom Witt, from our group, did very well with his copy of the 1860 Colt Army .44, placing 16th in the Grand Championships, in the 2nd batch of Runner-Ups. Then Mike Holeman and I both received honorable mention in the Grand Championship class. That does provide us with bragging rights and it all adds to the fun.

The top five shooters (and maybe more) in each category receive frameable named certificates as testimony to their good shooting. In addition to that, they each receive a 2" X 3" Wild Bill Hickok sticker because his spirit is certainly behind the action for this cap & ball Gunfighter Shoot-Out.

Doing the shooting is simply a lot of fun. There is no entry fee, you just contact J. Stone, (either by visiting the Cap & Ball Fanatic Channel on Facebook, or watch for an announcement on Youtube, or just sending a note to J. Stone at capandballfanatic@gmail.com, request your target(s) which you can print, do your shooting as outlined, and submit your target(s) by email. I'm sure going to be watching because I want to do this again.

J. Stone has some good comments at the beginning of his on-line Shoot-Out. He simply says, "Safety first!! If you choose to participate, please practice all of the normal safety rules for firearms usage. And please consider using eye and ear protection." Those are very good points to start with.

GRAND VALLEY CAP M BALERS™



Our mission is to create, promote and encourage an interest in historical firearms; to preserve their histories, along with the crafts and traditions of our American heritage; to promote good fellowship and teach firearm safety; to purchase, hold and use the Club property, both real and personal for accomplishing these purposes, and to preserve our constitutional rights as to any and all acts permitted by the laws of the State of Michigan.

*GRAND VALLEY CAP n BALLERS
MUZZLE LOADING GUN CLUB™*