

Dear Friends,

Greetings once again from **Hart Ranch, Rapid City, South Dakota.**

We are still playing catch up with our newsletters, but we have a little extra time this week so maybe we will get caught up. At the moment, we are right in the middle of **Sturgis Bike Week** and there are Harleys behind every bush. They are in all the towns, all the highways, and all the back roads. Last weekend we took a trip to the town of **Medora** and **Teddy Roosevelt National Park** in **North Dakota**. Sure enough, they were there too. Within 200 miles of Sturgis there are motorcycles going in all directions. It was exciting at first, but now it's getting a little old. If you want to know more about the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, you can check out our Great Escape #83 dated August 13, 2009.

In this newsletter we want to talk about **Wild Bill Hickok Days** in the town of **Deadwood, South Dakota**. Deadwood is a fun old west gambling town any time, but Wild Bill Days are especially fun. Wild Bill's real name was James Butler Hickok. He was a fast draw gunfighter and absolutely fearless. He served as an army scout and was the marshall or sheriff in many old west towns. One year he was part of Bill Cody's (Buffalo Bill) Wild West Show.



Drinking in the streets.

During Wild Bill Days, you can drink beer in the streets provided it was in an official Wild Bill Days mug. The streets were blocked off and only pedestrians were allowed. A very festive atmosphere indeed. A university pole vault tournament was set up and went on most of the time. On another corner was a "**Dock Dogs**" contest. In this event, a dog runs the length of a dock and leaps out into the water. The dog is trying to catch and retrieve a floating toy that was thrown by his owner. The goal is to fly through the air for the greatest distance. What a hoot that was. Some of the dogs didn't want to jump at all and others flew like birds. The top dog was flying close to 30 feet and making a big splash.



Dock Dog in action.

Keep in mind that Deadwood is a very old and historic town. The picture below shows the location where **Jack McCall** was captured. McCall was the man who shot Wild Bill Hickok August 2, 1876, during a poker game. Bill's poker hand of a pair of black aces, a pair of black eights, and a jack of diamonds has become known as the "deadman's hand." Bill was sitting with his back to the door when he was shot in the back of the head. Let this be a lesson to all you modern gunfighters. Always sit with your back to the wall.



Capture site of Wild Bill's killer.

While you can't easily drive around Deadwood during Wild Bill Days, you can ride a delightful trolley that tours the entire area every 30 minutes. One dollar takes you anywhere you want to go. Well we wanted to go out to the rodeo grounds to see a fast draw contest.



Deadwood Trolley.



Black Hills Cowboy Fast Draw.

No, this wasn't a little fake shoot out on Main Street. This was the real deal, a very serious two day contest. Cowboy Fast Draw L.L.C., a National Organization with International membership, is one of the newest and oldest shooting sports today. It is a timed sport, using single action .45 caliber, western style six shooters (Stock, .45 Caliber single action "colt style" guns). Ammunition is wax bullets only. 1800s holsters and dress is encouraged.

Two contestants shoot side by side. A light in the center of their targets goes on and they draw. As they draw, they cock the gun with the thumb of the opposite hand. Sometimes they hit, sometimes they miss. If they both miss, it's a draw. If one hits and the other misses, the hit wins. If they both hit, the fastest is the winner. The winners go on to face new challengers and so it goes. We watched for a couple of hours and were absolutely fascinated.

All in all, it was a great day. We were accompanied by our friends, **Tim, Alan, and Debbie**. Chuck and Donna rode their bike, Tim rode his, and Alan and Debbie followed along in their car. It was a long day, but a great day and one we will always remember.

Until next time, home is where we park it.

Chuck & Donna
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