A SHININ’ TIME AT THE 2021 JOE WALKER RENDEZVOUS

By Hopi

For a year now Buckskinners in the Arizona Powder Horn Clan as with others skinners across the land have been waiting for an opportunity to rendezvous again with people of like-mind. We finally got our chance with the 2021 Joe Walker Rendezvous held on April 26-28, 2021, at a new location near the historic town of Ashfork, Arizona.

The weatherman had called for wet snowy weather on the opening day of the event, but I would not be deterred as I drove down a muddy road to the rendezvous site. As I drove on through alternating rain and snow, I finally reached the site and what a sight it was. I entered a beautiful juniper forest with white canvas shelters already up with buckskin clad mountain men and women going about their morning chores. I soon located a campsite that would provide me and my two dogs Buzz and Blue with good shelter from the snow, rain, sleet, and hail. My camp was nestled in a tight grove of junipers. I tied my oilskin tarp between two trees with a log at its back and another log in front of the tarp which would make for a good seat next to my fire.

An added benefit to my camp was that built into the log that laid along the back of my shelter was a pack-rat nest. Before pitching camp, I checked it closely to make sure I didn’t have any unwanted company. Luckily, it was vacant and appeared so for some time. This nest was an added benefit because it provided dry tinder and kindlin’ that I would need to start my fires while the wood was soaked, a real lifesaver when you need it. A warm comfortable ground-bed made of a wool blanket, two sheep skins and two warm dogs made for two comfortable nights.

I woke to a clear, bright, and sunny morning, for the storm had past and after a good breakfast of eggs and bacon (the dogs eat all the bacon) I went visiting with all the folks I hadn’t seen for some time. It was great to remember good times and tell stories, all true of course. There was also the usual rifle, pistol, bow and arrow, hawk, and knife competitions. The Saturday night pot-luck ended the day.

It was an opportunity to give Belgian Dave “No Height” a hard time. As it turns out both No Height and I were high jumpers in our youth. My best jump was 5’10” and his was only 7’4 1/2”, a world class jump. But the big difference between our best heights was that I did mine using the straddle method into a sawdust pit and No Height used the Fosbury Flop method into a soft sissy foam pit.

I felt that No Heights method and pit he used added at least two feet to his jump, therefore my best jump was superior to his, so we had a jump off in front of the whole clan. The starting height was about two feet. No Height cleared it easy on his first jump, now it was my turn and I missed not even being able to get off the ground. Oh well at least I got beat by a World Class jumper!!!

There is one last thing that I would like to say to those tough, brave, hell for leather, devil be dammed, MOUNTAIN MEN who, after hearing that it might rain and snow chose not to attend the rendezvous. You’all missed a Shinin’ Time.