

Sheriff foils bank robbery and saves the day

BY MICHAEL JOHNSTONE
Staff writer

RED RIVER — At four hours past the stroke of high noon, tension slowly spreads across the wild west town of Red River.

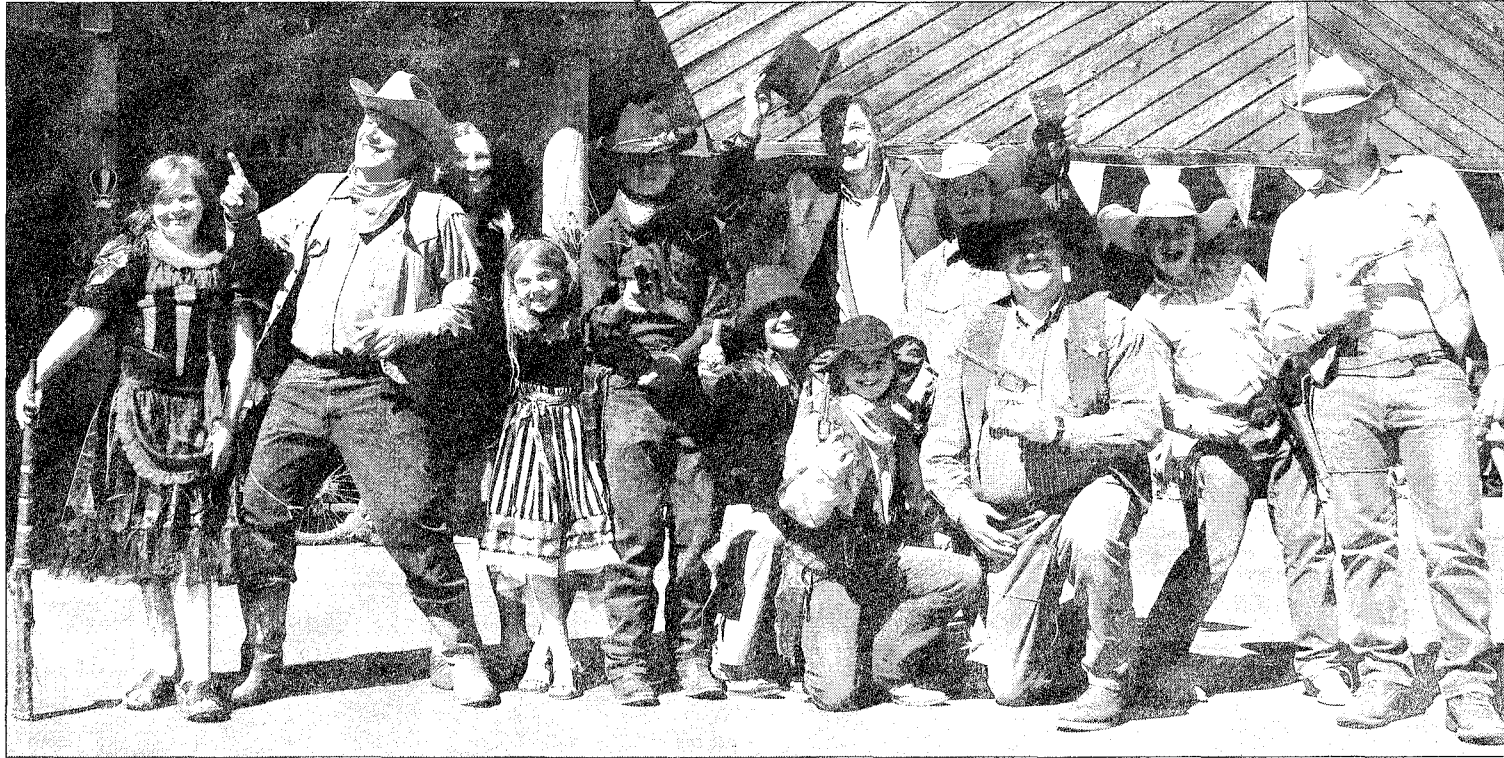
Children and dogs became silent, slowly heading for the shade offered by buildings and parents. Townsfolk nervously spoke to trusted neighbors and friends of the return of the notorious Wild Bill.

Suddenly, without warning, the whispers were shattered from the hearty welcoming by Red River's undertaker and general physician, known as Doc. Carrying the good book in one hand and a good bottle in the other, it was clear that this was a man who could be trusted under any circumstance.

Even more suddenly, with even less warning, the sounds of gunshots echoed across Frye's Old Town from the bank to the saloon. Wild Bill was back in town, his grizzled ruffians striding loyally by his side, guns blazing.

The townsfolk then relaxed as the sassy saloon girls burst out into the street, causing Wild Bill and his outlaws to holster their firearms. Calm was now close at hand.

Exiting the saloon doors, sultry Anna Belle produced not a welcoming beverage for Wild Bill, but instead a loaded shotgun. "Wild Bill, you ARE going to marry me, or else," she demanded with authority. Terror once again filled the dusty streets.



CHRONICLE PHOTO BY MICHAEL JOHNSTONE

Performers in Frye's Old Town's shootout pause for a moment to offer the audience a chance to take photographs, Thursday (July 16).

This was just the beginning of a series of unusual events in downtown Red River which included not only a shotgun wedding, but a bank robbery, a jailbreak, a little bit of good, a whole bunch of bad, and enough ugly for the whole territory, with the exception of the saloon gals.

The Red River shoot-outs are back!

Frye's history

The shoot-outs take place every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 4 p.m. throughout the summer next to town hall

in the parking lot of Frye's Old Town.

The tradition was started by Garrett Frye in the 1960s, when the shoot-outs were a daily occurrence. "Garrett was the originator, he came up with the idea as a way to draw people to his store," Paulette Kiker, owner of Frye's Old Town and portrayer of Silly, a bad guy in training, said.

The Saturday showing begins with Tina Martinez of the Taos Pueblo leading a session of Native American dancing. The same family has been involved with the dancing since the 1960s, with the older relatives passing

on the tradition to younger generations.

"I do need to thank Frank Venaglia (the helpful Doc), Dave Stevenson (the bad Wild Bill) and Steve Hilyar (the good Sheriff) for donating their time and talent," Kiker said. Rachel King, Hannah Stevenson, Chase Kiker, Tanner Scott, Dallas Kiker, Montgomery Gano and many other locals are also involved in the production.

"It's free, the kids love it and it's a Red River tradition," she added.

This August the shoot-outs will have been running for fifty years.

Paulette invites everyone to help celebrate the event Saturday (Aug. 8) with cake and ice cream.

Y'all be good now

Following the performance, Doc offered to make all the youngsters deputy sheriffs. "Come on in and get a badge," he said. "Remember once you get your badge you are deputized and have the responsibility to be good for the rest of vacation." ■

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