

Profile: A Texas CAS Family
Shalako Joe, SASS # 24746; Badlands Ben, SASS # 24747,
More Ammo, SASS # 24745, and Tally Book, SASS # 24744

By Abilene, SASS # 27489

I would like to introduce you to Shalako Joe, the EOT 2002 Overall Champion, and his family, the Hamptons of Lampasas, Texas. 19-year-old Joe, attending his first EOT, beat Australian 2nd place finisher Patrick McCarty, SASS # 32447, by a single rank point. Folks, it doesn't get any closer than that! Joe's younger brother Ben, now 17, came in 2nd at EOT in the Junior Boys category, 15th overall. Their father is Tally Book, and their mother is More Ammo (initials MA - hmm?). While we central Texans are familiar with the Hampton family, the rest of the country may be wondering where these kids came from.

Let's go back to the beginning. The family lives way out in the country. You have to cross 5 cattle guards and 3 low water crossings to get to their house! They have been home-schooled by their mom, More Ammo (Penne Hampton), and they work with their dad, Tally Book (Ronnie Hampton), in the family tax preparation business. The boys started by shooting 4H. These are target shooting competitions using a .22 rifle from standing, kneeling, and prone positions. They did well, but the competitions only occurred once a year, and Joe says it was "kinda boring".

Five years ago, when the boys were age 12 and 14, friends invited the family to a private cowboy shoot at a place outside of Lampasas called the Guinea Feather. They had some .22 pistols and a .22 Winchester, a Ruger Blackhawk, a 30-30 Winchester, and an old shotgun. This was the first time they had heard of CAS, and of course they thought it was great. This is where they learned that there were clubs that did this on a regular basis.

They got some gear together and went to their first regular CAS match at the Texican Rangers near Fredericksburg. But they got lost on the way! Arriving after the shooting had started, they were not allowed to shoot but they went from stage to stage watching the match, and they knew they were hooked! The next match they made was with the Travis County Regulators in Austin, with whom they finally shot their first real match.

They started with inexpensive leather, and it soon became obvious that outfitting the entire family with good leather would be very expensive. So the folks bought some leather-working tools one Christmas, and since then everyone is wearing homemade leather. Joe favors a high-ride rig with a crossdraw. He does not holster the crossdraw gun with his weak hand while drawing the strong side like some folks, but uses his strong hand for all drawing and holstering. Ben likes a buscadero rig with two strong side holsters. They both have made shotshell belts that hold the shells in pairs.

We've all heard it said that a top shooter can use anyone's guns and probably still win, and that is true. But everyone still wants to know what the champs use! Both boys use

SS .357 Vaqueros with 5 1/2" barrels, shooting .38 Specials. They use Clays powder, Double A Limited bullets, and Starline brass. Bullets are 160 grain for the rifles and 130 gr. for pistol, loaded on a Dillon 550. Joe loads for himself and Tally Book, and Ben loads for himself and More Ammo. Each of them has had one Vaquero tuned up by Lonnie Ammann (El Valdez, SASS #27171) in Hearne, TX. They did their own action work on their other pistols, and on Joe's Marlin Cowboy rifle and IGA SxS 12 Gauge. Ben shoots a '73 rifle and a '97 12 Gauge. By the way, Joe loads that SxS with his strong hand, which is a bit unusual.

Living in the country has advantages, like a practice range out in the pasture. Joe and Ben practice once or twice a month and believe that practicing together helps them to improve more than solo practice due to the competition, plus they help each other out with suggestions. They also believe it is important to practice with a timer, so they can tell if various new techniques are a help or a hindrance. Joe says he likes to watch all the shooters at the club matches as well, because even some average shooters may have some technique that can give him ideas on how to improve. They both did a lot of practice in the past with drawing, dry firing, and gun handling to get to the point where they are today, but they don't do it that much now.

The reason their folks wanted to home school the boys was because they thought that it was the best way to instill Christian values. The boys feel like it has been a good thing for them, plus they like that they are done with their schooling by noon! Joe just graduated and plans to go to college to become a CPA. Some of us heard stories that the Hamptons do not have a television. Well, they do. But since a storm blew down their antenna some years back, they only use the TV for watching movies with the VCR, and they figure they aren't missing much by not watching broadcast TV. The boys like the old westerns and their favorites are Roy Rogers and John Wayne. Instead of watching TV, the family likes to spend time reading books. Now I do know for a fact that the boys stayed up until the very wee hours watching TV in their motel room in Fredericksburg when we working the Tin Star Open, haha!

These days, they make it to about a dozen monthly club matches per year, plus another half dozen annual matches. They are members of the Alamo Area Moderators and the Tin Star Texans and sometimes shoot with the Texican Rangers. The shooting schedule really takes a back seat during tax season (January through April). In fact, they only made one match plus a couple of practice sessions in the pasture in the month before EOT. Tally Book was stricken with a heart virus in the fall of 2001 (he is recovering nicely) so the boys had to work especially hard during this past tax season.

When asked what their goals were at their first EOT, Joe said that his goal was to make the top 5. Ben's goal was to make the top 25 and to "beat the girl" (Holy Terror, SASS #15362 of course), and he did, but just barely! When Joe got his 3rd miss on the 3rd day, he thought he was probably out of the top running, but he kept giving it his best. His misses were on the longer stages, so it didn't hurt him as much as it would have on shorter stages. They really liked the EOT shooting schedule which gave them plenty of free time each day. They also liked that the pistol targets were generally bigger and

closer than the ones they are used to shooting in Texas. And to give an idea of how down-to-earth these kids are, there were several reports of them helping out with posse duties when it was not their turn to work. Doesn't surprise me a bit, as they are always pitching in to help any way they can at the monthly matches.

Shalako Joe is on a roll lately. Since EOT, he successfully defended his Texas State Rifle Association championship title at Roundup 2002 held by the Lone Star Frontier Shooting Club, and then he won Hell on Wheels in Wyoming. Ben was the TSRA and Texas SASS Junior champion in 2001, but now that he turned 17 he is competing directly with Joe again. It is great fun to shoot with and watch these kids in the monthly matches, and watching them compete with each other. At the Tin Star Open in June, Ben beat Joe in the fastest-pistol side match with a 4.96 second run for ten hits from leather (5 falling plates and then 5 on a single target). Ben has gotten a lot of mileage out of that in the ribbing he gives his older brother. Joe just shakes his head and lets Ben have his fun.