

## Sharpshooter From Monroe

# 'Buffalo Gal' Trophy Winner With Muzzle-Loader

By IRENE DAUGHERTY

Register-Guard Correspondent

MONROE—The "Buffalo Gal from Oregon" was the name given Vernetta McCallum by the spectators and entrants of the California Championship Muzzle-Loading Matches held recently at Fresno, Calif.

Vernetta, who has been shooting the muzzle-loading rifles for only three years, brought home four trophies from the Fresno meet which listed 50 events and 79 regis-

tered shooters from Washington, Oregon and California.

Even more important than the trophies she won, was the honor of being the only female shooter, to have ever scored a perfect score of 50 points in any event since the matches began 13 years ago.

The perfect score was shot in the 50-yard "Buffalo" match in which the shooter sits on the ground and shoots over two crossed sticks at a buffalo target.

"My nearest and most determined competitor in the buffalo event, which had about 40 entries, was a man who had won the event regularly for the past few years. He was so determined not to be beaten in this event, especially by a woman, he re-entered 28 times but still couldn't beat my three scores of 49x, 48xx and 50xx."

The top three scores in this event are tallied for a total score. Vernetta shot only three times for her score of 147-5x. The tired fellow with the 28 used targets finished second with 146-3x, followed by the male half of the McCallum entry, husband Harold with a score of 146-1x. (The x following the score signifies a 'dead center' hit in the bull's eye).

Other trophies Mrs. McCallum won were second place in the 100-yard bench rest (men and women), fourth place in the 50-yard bench rest (men and women) and second place in the 25-yard off-hand Annie Oakley event for women only.

The McCallums, along with four other members of the McKenzie Black Powder Club of Eugene, of which they have been members for six years, and two members of the Multnomah Club from Portland, were the first Oregonians ever to enter the California State Championships. Seven of the eight Oregonians brought home trophies.

"Buffalo Gal" shoots a 10-pound muzzle loading rifle made by I. Flayesman some 122 years ago. She also has mastered the art of loading her rifle which, she assures, is far different than merely putting a shell in the chamber of a modern rifle.

"The weight of the rifle may seem to be the big problem in shooting but, believe me, it's the length of these muzzle-loaders that make them difficult to shoot." (Her rifle measures 4 feet 5 inches, just slightly shorter than her height of 5 feet 2 inches).

One example she gives on the problem of the rifle's length is in the Annie Oakley event in which the entrant stands and shoots off-hand—or without a gun rest. "I got the first two or three shots off alright but after that, instead of concentrating on the target, just keeping the rifle barrel in the air seemed to be the task at hand."

"The stocks on the old guns are too long for people with short arms like me to stand and shoot for any period of time without a gun rest. However, to cut off the stock would destroy the antique value of the gun," she said.

Although she doesn't claim to be perfect, the old saying of "practice makes perfect" doesn't seem to apply in her case. She says that husband Harold, who has won several awards in shooting matches, sights in all the rifles before a tournament and she's lucky to get in even a few hours of practice before a match.

In each of the three years that she's been shooting she has won awards. Some of these include the Women's High Point Trophy in the 1961 West Coast Championships, Multnomah Muzzle Club men's and women's trophies in 1960 and '61, awards in the Vancouver Muzzle Loading Shoot in 1960 and '61 and numerous awards in the McKenzie Black Powder Club including the 1961 ladies' trophy.

The McCallums operate a furniture and gun store in Monroe and have a collection of about 500 different guns. The collection includes about 20 muzzle-loaders, a military collection and the only complete collection of lever-action Winchester in the United States. The Winchester collection dates back to the founding of the company in 1886.

Besides helping in the store and winning trophies, Vernetta is also raising a family. Their four children include Sylvia and Rodney who attend Monroe schools, Yvonne, a senior at Oregon College of Education at Monmouth and an older son Michael and a grandson of Monmouth.



## Close Shots

Mrs. Harold McCallum poses with her target that won the 50-yard "Buffalo" match in a recent California tournament. The target shows her five shots in the "ten" ring, with two of the shots inside the X circle, or bull's eye. She became the only woman to ever shoot a perfect score of 50 points in this event of the tourney.



## Long Barrel

"Buffalo Gal" Vernetta McCallum sights down the long barrel of her 10-pound muzzle loading rifle that was made over 100 years ago. She and husband Harold are members of the McKenzie Black Powder Club of Eugene, which is planning a shoot July 14-15 that is expected to attract entries from Washington and California, as well as Oregon.



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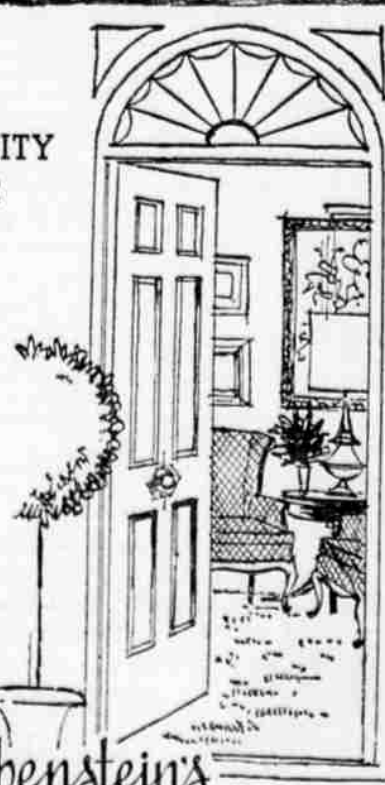
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