



# SASS® MEMBER BULLETIN

## Member News

## THE SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY Important News for our Members

A few of SASS' own members have recently stated, "What does SASS do for me?", "What does SASS do as a "parent" organization... and even the statement "We don't need SASS to play Cowboy Action Shooting™"...

While the latter statement may be true in the short term, it wouldn't remain so for long without SASS® - and Cowboy Action Shooting™ wouldn't be the recognizable or respected discipline it is today in the Shooting Sports and Firearms Industry if it weren't for the direct efforts of the Single Action Shooting Society®.

At this critical time in our organization, I think it is important to illustrate what your membership in SASS means on a global scale- and list just some of the achievements SASS has championed on your behalf over the years. While being humble is an admirable quality, I think it is time to outline some of SASS' accomplishments.

SASS® membership means different things to different people, and membership in SASS has both tangible and intangible benefits. In many ways, those intangible benefits outweigh the tangible benefits of a registered alias, a shooters badge, and member discounts.

Did you know?

- ❖ Colt SAA's and their clones would be illegal in California if not for the direct efforts of SASS on your behalf.
- ❖ Without SASS, members in California would only be able to have rifles that are limited to hold 10 rounds only.
- ❖ SASS represents its members interests to protect gun rights:
  - Testified before the California Senate Judiciary Committee on Firearms related legislation
  - Testified before the California House Public Safety Committee on Firearms related legislation
  - Testified before the United Nations General Assembly on the Treaty for Regulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (currently titled The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT))
- ❖ Today's wide variety and availability of Single Action Revolvers and Lever Action rifles is directly attributable to SASS and its success as an organization.
- ❖ SASS created and still creates and maintains a visible market that influences manufacturers.
  - Ruger Vaqueros
  - Marlin Rifles without a "micro-grooved" barrel
  - There would never have been a need or desire for a .38 bullet weighing less than 158 gr.
  - SASS members would have a difficult time finding competent gunsmiths to work on their guns (there were only a very small handful in the early 80s)
  - Winchester quit putting the cannalure in their .45 LC brass and made it a smooth walled case so it would last longer.

- ❖ The quality and design of those firearms is immensely superior to those of yore- and while that's largely due to the efforts of Boyd Davis (EMF) and Val Forgett (Navy Arms), their efforts would've been fruitless without the visible market that is the SASS Organization of members.
- ❖ Many retail giants in the industry (Midway, Dillon, Cabela's, and Brownell's) stock and market Cowboy Action Shooting accessories, parts, etc. – a direct result of SASS' influence.
- ❖ Internationally, many countries are signing on to the UN Arms Trade Treaty. Those countries will be expected to conform to the mandates of the treaty. SASS stands as the organization that invokes protection to ensure that SASS members and affiliated clubs are protected by definition- meaning their guns are protected.
  - SASS membership affords members in many foreign countries to possess firearms that they otherwise could not legally own.
- ❖ SASS has had a profound effect on the way firearms and the shooting sports are viewed by many, including the press. Men, women and children dressed in 1890s clothing, shooting old time firearms presents an aura of FUN. That in turn has influenced other shooting sports, which have adopted the public approach of "shooting is a FUN, SAFE, pastime." Even the National Shooting Sports Foundation advertises their First Shots program with an emphasis on FUN.
- ❖ SASS has been a member of the National Shooting Sports Foundation since its inception, and has helped develop many of their range programs.

Today we are seeing many of our traditions, much of our history, and many of our core values denigrated, devalued, and in some cases, simply erased. SASS stands for and promotes the preservation of those valued elements. If you think not, ask yourself why you like your SASS pard. Why do we all say you'll "come for the shooting, but stay for the people"?

It is our mission to ensure SASS continues for many, many years. Not the least of reasons is our ability to pass on the history, the values, the camaraderie and good will exhibited in our game. SASS has worked diligently to provide a sport and an organization that your entire family can enjoy together. Steeped in core values you and every member of SASS teach the young ones by example. The core qualities of free men and a free nation should not be allowed to die. Every single SASS member should be introducing friends, family, and neighbors to SASS and influencing them to join. There is strength in numbers, and the larger we are the stronger and more influential we are. Every member should swell with pride to be part of SASS.

## SASS MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Single Action Shooting Society® takes great pride in providing the highest quality product and services to our members- and has for over 30 years. Price increases are a fact of life at certain points in the economic cycle; and while nobody likes them, no one company can stem the tide.

SASS® and its members operate by a certain code; something we refer to as “The Cowboy Way”. In the spirit of full disclosure to our members, it is with this code in mind that I address your concerns regarding the membership rate increases- with honesty.

SASS® is a business, and that business has been struggling through the dismal economy for some time now. As a multi-faceted organization, our expense streams are extensive; and many of those expense streams have been sustained for over 30 years without a counter income stream to cover them. The result has been a thorough depletion of membership revenue to cover the costs associated with club affiliation and sanctioning fulfillment items.

SASS® tackles consistent challenges regarding membership recruitment and retention, governing and sanctioning fulfillment, club affiliations, industry partnerships, value and quality of products and services, employees, legal issues, licensing and fees, and insurance.

The fact of the matter is, SASS® is faced with a steady decline in revenue and rising numbers in the cost of doing business. Despite valiant efforts to reduce expenses across the board without compromising the quality of our products and services, SASS® still faced significant financial shortfalls. The decision to increase membership dues, along with the introduction of a club affiliation fee and the recent implementation of a per-shooter sanctioning fee isn't about profitability, it is about sustainability.

### **SASS' transition to a Non-Profit Corporation**

As previously stated, SASS® is in the process of transitioning to a Non-Profit Corporation. You may have also caught the term “Not-for-profit” corporation in a few instances. Since both terms have been in use, it makes sense to ask “what is the difference between a nonprofit and a not-for-profit?”. In a technical sense, it's probably correct to say there is no significant difference between the two terms. State "nonprofit" or "not-for-profit" corporation statutes sometimes use both terms side by side to suggest they are synonymous. The IRS does make one distinction though. In some publications, the IRS explains that for them "not-for-profit" refers to an activity, for example, a hobby (like shooting). In contrast, "nonprofit" refers to an organization established for purposes other than profit-making. Note: nonprofit does not necessarily mean "charitable." SASS® is consulting with business attorneys on retainer to ensure the transition is successful. It has yet to be determined which of these two designations SASS will best be categorized as. I apologize if my exchange of the two terms has caused any confusion.

A lion's share of the work associated with the transition to Non-Profit has been to “sharpen our pencils” and clean out all the corners of the corporation. A detailed examination and evaluation of all aspects of the business has been and is being conducted. It is this scrupulous investigation that has brought to the surface multiple concerns regarding the services and related revenue and expenses.

The transition is in progress. The process is lengthy and tedious to ensure that SASS is positioned for success.

### **SASS Membership**

SASS is a membership organization at its core. Annual SASS Members are the lifeblood of the organization, and annual SASS Membership has been in a steady decline for years. Added to that, historically membership revenue has been utilized to cover costs of other SASS expense streams; ie: Club affiliation support and sanctioning services- services that had been undervalued and offered at no charge for over 30 years- essentially depleting membership resources and leading to the organization's inability to grow the benefits of the membership program.

Member Stats (as of 8.25.2015)

Membership Type- Description- Total #

Annual – Active Annual, renewing annually members: 19867

Corporate- Corporate members:7

Endowment- Non- renewable, no revenue impact:97

Life- Non-renewable, no revenue impact: 7568

Patron- Non- renewable, no revenue impact: 53

Military- Membership “on hold” while on deployment: 9

Inactive- Inactive members: 67750

Invalid- SASS #'s marked as invalid; skipped #'s that were not issued:41

None- “None” is a classification for members who do not want to be contacted by SASS:3328

Deceased- Deceased SASS members (upon notification to SASS HQ, the members profile type is marked as deceased:1768

Unknown- Variance in un-issued SASS numbers:2722

TOTAL 103210

### **The Cowboy Chronicle**

The Cowboy Chronicle ceased being offered in a printed format after April 2014. SASS management anguished over the decision for months; but with the publication losing approximately \$24K a month due to a significant drop in advertising revenue, we were faced with few options. 2015 has reflected an upward trend in the economy and print media market for publications, leading to SASS' optimism regarding the re-launch of The Cowboy Chronicle as a quarterly publication in January 2016. The upward trend is promising, and gives us hope for the re-launch to be successful. However, hope doesn't pay the printing and mailing costs. A secondary reasoning for the increase in membership rates is to help cover these costs. Printing and mailing costs are estimated at \$30K per issue.

### **SASS Sanctioning Fees**

Lovingly referred to as the “SASS fee” or a “SASS tax” by many of our members, SASS Sanctioning fees were implemented in 2013 for SASS

Sanctioned State Championship matches. Regional Championships were brought into the structure in 2014, and 2015 includes the Divisional Championships. Sanctioning of a shooting match by the parent organization ensures the event will meet the highest standard of safety and consistency- and by hosting a sanctioned event you communicate that to your customers/members. The implementation of sanctioning fees beginning in 2013 was a necessity in order for SASS® to continue to provide the highest level of quality support, awards, and prizes to these host clubs without continuing to deplete declining membership revenue in order to do so.

**SASS Club Affiliation**

Club affiliation and the benefits and support it entails is another SASS expense stream that has historically been absorbed by dwindling membership revenue. Upon detailed evaluation of the expenses associated with this service, it became clear that it could no longer be offered at no charge to the club. Consequently, the recent incorporation of an annual SASS Club affiliation fee was announced. The collection of the nominal associated fee takes some of the pressure off of the already weakened membership revenue and can begin to rely on some of its own revenue to maintain and grow the SASS Club affiliation program and support packages.

**SASS Membership Pricing History & Future**

Initial reactions may be that the increase of \$20 per year per member translates as extreme. But considering that membership rates have remained untouched for 10 years, the increase translates into a \$2 increase per year over 10 years that happened to come at once, despite our best efforts to do everything in our power to keep rates down.

A financial analysis of our membership revenue and expenses reflected the immediate need for a \$16 increase to cover basic membership expenses. The determination of a rate increase of \$20 per member is in preparation of investing that additional \$4 per member back into the Membership program; elevating the quality of membership materials and expanding member benefits.

The implementation of sanctioning and club affiliation fees to cover their own expense streams takes a significant amount of pressure off the membership revenue long term. These elements help to reduce the possibility of increases to the SASS membership pricing well into the future.

**Accountability**

SASS® ranks stewardship of funds at the highest of priorities. Yes, there have been some gambles in the past that didn't have the anticipated result. For example, in 2005, large amounts of SASS money was spent on a TV series "Cowboy Action Shooter"; that was a resounding "flop". Along the way some advertising and membership campaigns have been a bust.

SASS® pays its employees a fair wage, and provides health coverage. There are no exorbitant salaries or bonuses. When SASS® relocated its World Headquarters to Edgewood, New Mexico in 2009, the total staff at the facility dropped from 15 to 5.

Revenue is expended with the upmost care; to ensure SASS' good standing in the industry, cover operational costs, and provide the highest level of quality in goods and services to its members.

**Junior Memberships**

Junior Memberships in SASS® will not be raised. To the contrary, Junior Memberships will be discounted further and the age range classification for a "Junior" is now expanded.

New Junior Memberships: \$25

Junior Membership Renewals: \$5/annually

Age: 18 years of age and younger (previously 16 years)

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We cannot do this without you. Despite our efforts to "right the ship" and position SASS in a manner that will ensure its future for generations to come- if we do not have the support and confidence of our members... we simply will not make it.

The mission statement of SASS®, circa 1987, is "To Preserve and Promote the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™". It is that common goal and activity that ties us all together and forms the SASS membership organization. Our mission is supported by our members who surround it joined by a common interest to honor and celebrate the traditions of the Old West. We have not lost sight of that mission. SASS® has led the charge in the Shooting Sports Industry; setting the gold standard for safety and consistency in shooting competitions worldwide.

It is my sincere hope that every SASS member is proud to be a part of this fantastic organization and that each of you are willing to stand with us during this crucial transitional time. Together, and only together, we can ensure SASS' viability for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

In 2004, the owners of SASS independently purchased a 480 acre property in Torrance County. The property was not acquired utilizing SASS funds; rather- the investors laid out their own personal funds and credit worthiness.

The property was christened Founders Ranch in honor of those who founded SASS- and Founders Ranch, LLC was formed. Founders Ranch is currently owned by 3 of the original investors from 2004; Don Ormand, Harper Creigh, and Brad Myers. Past investors have either been or are currently being "bought out" of Founders Ranch, LLC- and NOT with SASS funds. This topic is Founders Ranch, LLC business and I am not at liberty to offer further details.

I can however, discuss SASS' role in Founders Ranch. Founders Ranch is leased to and operated by The Single Action Shooting Society®, and as such, SASS® pays Founders Ranch a monthly lease amount.

Admittedly, from 2004 until 2009, Founders Ranch was a wasted resource with limited revenue generated to benefit SASS and its members. Founders Ranch hosted several SASS events annually, including END of TRAIL, saving SASS® thousands of dollars in rental fees in comparison to renting Raahauges Range in Norco California. With SASS HQ and primary personnel still in California, one of the big contributing factors to SASS relocating its Headquarters office was to better manage and develop the resource that is Founders Ranch.

Since SASS Headquarters local availability to aid in the operations of Founders Ranch, the property has evolved to include:

1. Founders Ranch Shotgun Sports Club
2. Facility & Property Rentals
3. Outdoor Events
4. Founders Ranch Equestrian Center
5. World Class Outdoor Shooting Range

While the operations listed above are expense streams; they are also revenue streams. Progressively growing the operating business at Founders Ranch over the past 5 years, including the addition of the Founders Ranch Shotgun Sports Club, has led to Founders Ranch's increasing self-sustainability and growth. Founders Ranch is a veritable gold mine, and operated successfully by SASS, will be a jewel in the crown of the SASS membership for many years to come. Operations at Founders Ranch do not take away from SASS Membership; they enhance it.

The confusion here, and the expressed disdain over Founders Ranch by some SASS members seems to be that the owners of Founders Ranch happen to be some of the same founders and owners of SASS.

I ask you, if that ownership element were to be removed, and Founders Ranch viewed as a beautiful piece of property that SASS is leasing on a 99 year lease in order to build and offer a world class shooting facility and venue to its membership.... Would the membership of SASS have the same negativity toward Founders Ranch? Or, rather- would the viewpoint immediately lean toward the positive- that SASS is working to provide a fantastic resource to its members.

In April of 2013, SASS' operation of Founders Ranch came under serious scrutiny following our application for a special use district for Founders Ranch in order to expand operations. There were challenges to our Conditional Use Permit and our introduction of the Shotgun Sports Club. Ultimately, this resulted in a small group of our neighbors filing a lawsuit against SASS. Let me be clear; the lawsuit is against the Single Action Shooting Society. The claim of the lawsuit was for Public Nuisance, Private Nuisance, and Injunctive relief.

After years of preparation, legal struggles, and facing a mountain of legal defense fees; SASS' motion for a Summary Judgement went before the court on July 23, 2015. The court granted Summary Judgement (dismissal) of two of the three claims- Public Nuisance and Injunctive Relief. The plaintiff's Private nuisance claim was upheld, and the trial took place on August 10, 11, and 12, 2015. At the close of the trial on August 12, the Judge in the case stated she would render her decision in writing in 7-10 business days. As of this date, August 27, 2015, we have not yet received the decision.

### Open Door

With the events of late, there have been countless questions poised that surround "What does SASS do for us"? (Be it in exchange for membership dues and/or club affiliation fees). I've been communicating with several members as well who have sent me lists of suggestions; and most of those suggestions we are already doing and our members and clubs just aren't aware of the benefits and resources that are at their disposal as members and affiliated clubs.

With that being said, I'd like to open the floor up to you- our members and ask...

- 1- members: What would you like to see SASS do for you?
- 2- SASS Affiliated Clubs: What support or services would you like to receive from SASS?

Thank you in advance for your feedback; it is invaluable. Every SASS member plays a crucial role in the ongoing success and growth of the Single Action Shooting Society®. I thank you for your continued support and membership.

Please send communication to:

Single Action Shooting Society®  
Attn: Misty Moonshine  
215 Cowboy Way  
Edgewood, NM 87015

[misty@sassnet.com](mailto:misty@sassnet.com)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Misty Moonshine  
Chief Executive Officer  
Proud SASS Member, Patron #83232