**A Poker Shoot in Bremerton**

by Mike Moran

 “Looks like I won’t need to clean my fork now” said Bill Daly as he looked down and realized that it had been licked clean by one of the two dogs hanging around the fire. We were just finishing up a wonderful pot luck lunch under the gazebo at the Poulsbo Sportsmen’s Club, were the Bremerton Brigade holds their monthly shoots on the first Sunday of the month. However, this was the second Sunday as they will adjust the date if the Seahawks are playing. Regardless of the date, everyone was well fed and had a good time.

 Never having visited with the Bremerton Brigade I got to the site a little early. Wally McKendry was there to open the gate and between the two of us, we got a nice fire going in the gazebo. I would like to tell you that it was made with flint and steel, but I didn’t bring that with me, so a Bic lighter and some Starbucks napkins had to suffice. As the flames grew so did the crowd, and soon there was quite a gathering. Boyd Phillips took me on a tour of the facilities, showing me the range areas, cook shack, and how things are laid out for their rendezvous.

 At 9:30 we gathered for the safety briefing and the firing order. Gene DuVall laid out the course, which was focused on four target, each of which had cards stapled face down to it. The object was to shoot one card from each target, then see what your poker hand was. In order to keep things in order, each target had cards from only one suit. This meant you had only a four card hand. Of course, if you missed a card, you might have only a three or a two card hand. But a pair can beat an ace high hand, so anything might happen. In addition to the cards, Gene gathered up all the leftover vegetables from his garden and had them set out on the range, as well as a line of empty cans.

 Shooting started with some practice shots at some of the stations along the trail walk as we made our way down to the covered range area. I was introduced to the “Nuts and Bolts” target, as well as some of the others. It’s a good thing we took these practice shots, and I discovered that I needed the practice. No scores for this area, just “braggin’ rights”. Once at the range area we broke into small groups and started shooting, stopping every now and then to retrieve our cards. There was no scoring on the cans or veggies, and most people had fun making salad. A few shots were taken at the long range buffalo target.

 After the shooting was done, there was a bit of a break as some of the Brigade folks were finishing up some work party projects. When we all gathered up again, the cards were compared to see who had the best hand. Prizes that day were all food related, except for a hand made wooden box given to the best hand. If you haven’t shot at Bremerton before, I recommend you go.