

Father and son capture elk calling titles

Grand Ronde members Bryan and Brayden Langley tops in hunting expertise

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

If genetic scientists ever want to hunt for an elk calling gene, they might want to contact Grand Ronde Tribal members Bryan and Brayden Langley.

The father-and-son team both won titles in the Oregon State Elk Calling Championships held March 29-30 in Canyonville.

Bryan, a Tribal education specialist, took first in the Professional Division representing Jones Calls of Springfield, and 9-year-old Brayden won the Youth Division.

For Bryan, 42, it marked the fourth consecutive time he has finished in the top three at the Oregon championships, having taken second in 2005, first in 2006 and third in 2007.

For Brayden, it was his first state title although he has taken first in an elk calling contest sponsored by Sportsman's Warehouse in 2006 and finished fifth at the World Elk Calling Championships held in 2007 in Reno, Nev.

For the Langleys, elk calling is part of a family tradition of hunting.

Bryan has been hunting since he was 9. His father, Dale, is a long-time hunter and member of the Tribe's Fish & Wildlife Committee. And Brayden says he enjoys hunting with his father.

For elk hunters, being able to replicate the guttural bugles of bull elk and squeaks, chirps and whines of cows and calves has more than the competitive benefits of cash awards, prizes and trophies.

During a hunt, bull calls can elicit responses from other bull elk, helping hunters locate them in the forest. In addition, being able to imitate a cow or calf can attract amorous bulls to a hunter's location.

But during competitions, elk



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal members Bryan Langley and his 9-year-old son Brayden both won titles in the Oregon State Elk Calling Championships held March 29-30 in Canyonville.

callers have one minute to perform bull calls for three judges who are sitting behind a screen, and then another 60 seconds to do their cow and calf calls.

Bryan uses a reed call and wiffle ball bat, which amplifies the call. "You get a lot of volume out of that," Bryan says.

Brayden uses a squeeze call.

At the state Elk Calling Championship, both Langleys came home with impressive first-place trophies, and Bryan received a \$300 prize.

Bryan says he is evenly talented in doing bull and cow/calf calls.

"I'm fairly decent at both," Bryan said. "I used to be better at cow/calf calls."

Brayden, on the other hand, says

he is better at bull calls.

Bryan says Brayden accompanied him to elk calling competitions and picked up the talent "rather quickly."

"It's difficult to learn," Bryan says.

"It took practice," Brayden says. "About a couple months."

Father and son Langley have a practice routine which, Bryan says, sometimes drives his wife, Rhonda, "nuts." When that occurs, they are usually banished to the garage to practice.

In addition, the other Langley children — Bryanna, 13, Kara, 11, and Moriah, 20 months — are also picking up the talent, or at least know what elk calls sound like.

Bryan said he is looking forward

to using his elk calling talents during the upcoming bow hunt, which begins the last weekend in August and runs through the last weekend in September.

Bryan said he mostly likes to bow hunt, as opposed to rifle hunting, and prefers elk meat to venison. He is a founding member of the Christian Bow Hunters of Northwest Oregon Association and has taken an elk every year for 14 consecutive years.

He said Brayden is now old enough to participate in the state's Mentor Hunting Program, which allows youths 9 to 13 years old to hunt with an adult and hunt off the adult's tag.

"I love doing it," Bryan says about hunting and being outdoors with his family. "It's a good, family bonding time."

"I like to call elk and the experience of shooting elk," Brayden says. "And it's fun hunting with my dad."

"Most people who bow hunt get into calling," Bryan says, in a necessary effort to get closer to the prey.

And, sometimes, one can be too good at imitating elk calls, especially during rifle season.

Bryan says he was out hunting once during rifle season, cow calling, when he heard a rustling behind him. He circled back around, thinking he might find an elk, only to discover that another hunter had heard his cow calls and likewise was hoping to come upon an elk.

And Bryan says with fatherly pride that he does not expect to remain the top elk caller in the Langley family for much longer.

"Brayden is very competitive," Bryan says. "He spends a lot of time practicing. It's not going to be too long before he is passing me up."

Brayden agrees. "I guess," he says, "if I keep practicing." ■

Employee Appreciation



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal employee and member Pearl Mekemson, second from left, hugs Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom during the employee recognition ceremony that was part of the All Employee Meeting on Friday, April 4. In the background, Tribal employee Tony Johnson, second from right, hugs Tribal Council member Jack Giffen Jr., as Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr., right, looks on.

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