

Hunt tales: Outdoor conquests on display

Story & photos
by Cheryl Hoefler

First buck, biggest fish, youngest hunter – they're all on Ace's wall

A picture is worth a thousand words.

If that saying is true, then the photos on the walls at Nydam's Ace Hardware tell volumes about local hunting conquests.

The photos, posted along both sides of the doorway in the rear of the store – and now overflowing onto any available empty wall space in the backroom – run the spectrum. Locals and visitors, men and women, kids and older folks bring in photographic tales of their fishing, hunting and other outdoor ventures, both in Grant County and outside the area.

At the current rough estimate, there are about 300 or so photos.

Store manager Darren Pettyjohn said the collection began in the mid-70s in his father-in-law, John Nydam's, Coast-to-Coast Hardware Store, which was next to Len's Drug in downtown John Day. A few friends started bringing in their post-hunt photos to show off their trophy catches, and soon others began doing likewise.

In 1995, when Coast-to-Coast moved to its present spot at 652 W. Main St. – later becoming Ace Hardware – the photos made the move too.

Among the earliest entries is one of Dave Traylor, of John Day, with a rather impressive-looking buck, and another from 1967, of Bill Gienger – whose granddaughter Linda Roether, works at Ace – showing off his buck with a couple of horses and a dog alongside.

There's a photo of young-at-heart hunter Chris Berry, who, at age 88, bagged herself a nice elk. Pettyjohn's own mother, Mary Ann Pettyjohn, is on the wall too, hoisting a pair of 17- and 19-inch catfish.

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Not all the photos are of hunting and fishing exploits. A strip of baseball cards of local ballplayer Aaron Mathews is among the mix. Pettyjohn and childhood pal Kerry Smith made the cut too – though they are showing off muscles, not critters, in a shot from 1970.

So, the next time you're in Ace, check out the hunting photo showcase in the back of the store – and consider adding your own chapter to the compilation of hunting tales.

And if you still don't have a story of your own to share, remember – hunting season is right around the bend.

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A photo on Ace's hunt wall from 1967 shows Bill Gienger, his team and a prize buck after a successful hunting adventure.



Dave Traylor of John Day was one of the first contributions to the hunt wall at Ace Hardware in John Day.