

Don't be fooled by scammers

If it looks too good to be true, it is not true. If an online contact warns you are in danger, but can pay to avoid the problem, it is not true. Beware.

It sounds like simple advice, but even after law enforcement agencies and media have sounded the alarm, people are still falling for scams. Please don't.

We take no pleasure in writing news stories from local police logs about our neighbors who have been duped out of money they can ill afford to lose.

As technology takes a central part of our daily lives, more and more criminal charlatans are finding creative ways to bilk people of their savings. Scammers will claim to be local law enforcement with a warrant for a person's arrest, then an offer to accept money to avoid it happening. Scammers will claim to be grandchildren, asking for bail money from an international jail. Scammers will claim to be prospective employers eager to send a large signing bonus, then ask for a portion of it back. Scammers will pose as authority and familial figures of all kinds to build trust.

They're all scams, however plausible they sound. The mere mention of the Internal Revenue Service causes otherwise rational people to be duped by scammers. The federal agency in charge of collecting your taxes doesn't initiate contact via social media or email. Its real agents don't ask for payments to anyone other than the United States Treasury. Its website at irs.gov has a detailed page describing scams and how to avoid them. It makes for chilling reading.

- Some tips to recognize and defeat fraud:
- Government agencies typically already know your basic personal information;
 - Agencies are unlikely to call to announce a coming arrest and never seek money through prepaid debit cards like Green Dot;
 - If you haven't participated in

a contest, you probably don't win anything — and you certainly don't want to pay a fee (or "taxes") to receive it.

Frankly, it's best to avoid sending money over the internet or phone when possible, unless you are sure you are dealing with a bona fide vendor.

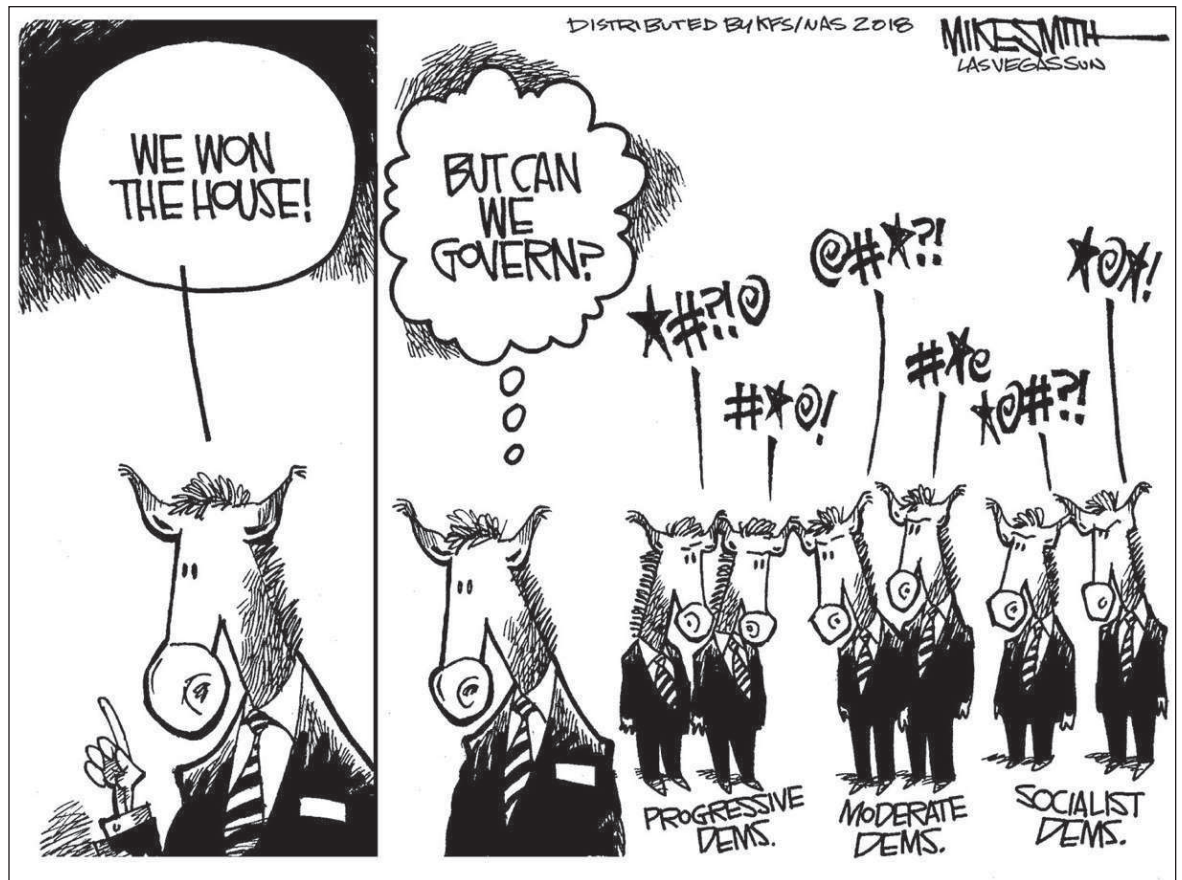
Phone and email scammers often access personal information through social media accounts to seem credible during conversations. They are skilled at building long-term rapport with potential targets. This often happens through online dating sites, where the scammers work patiently to create a plausible "relationship" with their targets, then ask for money to bail them out of a fictional predicament.

Your social media accounts are ripe for sharing information that scammers and identity thieves can use. Those online posts where friends ask you to share the name of your first pet or where you met your spouse may appear harmless fun. But those are the same questions financial institutions ask you when they set up security questions to access your online accounts. Would you post these private secrets on the bathroom wall at a truck stop along Interstate 84? Sharing those details on Facebook is the online equivalent.

The most sickening aspect is that elderly people — who grew up in a more trusting age — are so vulnerable to scams. Many don't have the same familiarity with technology as younger people whose entire lives have been lived in the personal computer or smartphone age.

These days, a scam caller can be anywhere in the world, because software exists to indicate that the number they are calling from is in your area code. Because of embarrassment, victims can be shy about reporting they've been scammed. Don't.

If you suspect you are being scammed, call your local law enforcement agency with your suspicions before handing over any money.



SHOOTING THE BREEZE



Contributed photo

A revolver and a semi-automatic .22 pistol.

The .22 handgun

By Dale Valade

For the Blue Mountain Eagle

When I was but a wee lad, my family would gather each fall for the annual sight-in of their various hunting rifles. I would pick up their empty brass cartridge cases and dream of the day I would have my own big time thunderstick. Uncle Mick had a Ruger Single Six .22 handgun that he seemed to always bring along just for me to plink around with. He never cut me loose with it alone, but with close personal supervision, I was allowed to shoot a few rounds at a tin can to get some practice in. I was hooked.

In the years since then, I have owned several handguns in many different calibers. The most fun and possibly useful of those have all been in .22 LR caliber. Allow me to make my case.

First of all, a funny fact about handguns is that they will teach you your mistakes as a rifleman, for every little mistake is amplified by the absence of several pounds of long barrel and a stock. I know several expert riflemen that couldn't hit the proverbial barn's broadside where it comes to handguns. It truly is a discipline unto itself. Just as most shooters start with a .22 rifle to learn the fundamentals of rifle

shooting, it's only logical to do so when starting out with a handgun. Low recoil and cheap ammunition make for more practice; more practice makes a better marksman. Ammunition can be purchased nearly anywhere and in a legion of different styles tailored to the various needs and uses thereof.

Secondly, from a purely utilitarian point of view, one cannot beat a .22 handgun. With quality ammunition, accuracy is superb and adequately powerful for use on small game. The handiness of a small-bore pistol lends to its ease of carry, and a handgun on your hip in rattlesnake, badger and coyote country serves much more good than a rifle back at the truck. When grouse season opens up, you could bring along a .22 handgun for when you find yourself in need of camp meat. And a .22 isn't exactly bupkes in defense of one's self against two-legged varmints either.

I am not suggesting that it is perfect for bears and the like, far from it. The .22 Long Rifle cartridge has its limitations. As your skill with a handgun grows, it's only logical to upgrade as needed or desired. To hunt big or dangerous game with any handgun can be very ill-advised, in my humble opinion. Yet, if I was

forced to do so, a .22 handgun would likely be the last one I would choose. My .22 handguns see employ only within the confines of their proper bailiwick.

I am partial to the models with 6-inch barrels. Even though they are a bit more awkward for convenient carry than the 4-inch barrel models, they tend to balance better for both offhand and field positions. Although the quality of certain discontinued models such as the Colt Woodsman or High Standard Sport King is tough to beat, the Ruger Mark III and Browning Buckmark are fine products. Though a good revolver will suffice, I have come to prefer the feel, accuracy and, admittedly, the magazine capacity and fast follow-up shots of the autoloaders over the various "wheel guns," although I have owned and used both extensively with great results.

If you're considering a handgun purchase for whatever reason, I strongly advise you look into a quality .22-caliber handgun. Besides being extremely useful, they're a barrel of fun.

Have a favorite .22 pistol you like to brag on? Write me at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com and tell it how it is!

Dale Valade is a local country gent with a deep love for handloading, hunting and shooting.



Dale Valade

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hate decals have no place

To the Editor:

The man who shot up the Jewish Synagogue had a van covered with

hate decals. One of them being Hillary in the crosshairs.

We live north of Mt. Vernon. I am so disgusted that every time we drive into John Day we have to look at this large hate sign about Hillary

Clinton.

I hope it doesn't invite some "crazy" to do something stupid. I thought hate signs were illegal.

Elberta Miller
Mt. Vernon

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.
- **Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.
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