

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

When February ends

Grab some tissues. This one is going to be a tear-jerker. Five years ago, I lost a childhood friend and hunting partner, Andy Starr. We had known each other for 20 years. Having grown up in the same small town, we attended school together, participated in athletics and spent a lot of our free time in the outdoors together.

In his family, there were four boys. Andy was the oldest, and he and I were the same age. The summer I turned 9, we moved to Spray, a small community in Wheeler County. From my first day of fourth grade on, Andy and I were best friends. The memories I could share here could go on and on, but due to space constraints I shall share but a few.

It was an experience shooting a coyote with his favorite .30-06 rifle that ultimately led me to search for and buy my own. Each spring, we would hunt turkeys together. In the summer, we would hunt varmints, go fishing and, in the fall, join up for a deer, bear or elk hunting. Andy liked to

save the fall hunts, as did I, to be with his family. We often talked politics, football, reloading, shooting, hunting and fishing. Andy was very knowledgeable on these subjects and many others besides.

It was early in 2013 when he got married to his lovely wife, Trinity. They were to start their greatest adventure together. Only a few months later, he called to tell me that he had been sick and that doctors had found a mass in his gastrointestinal area. Optimistic as always, he began treatments forthwith. All that year as his health began to deteriorate, his attitude remained positive. He was scared, and who wouldn't be with the thought of cashing in your chips hanging constantly overhead. Still, he never gave up hope.

I went to see him only once, as I was living several hours away in Idaho at the time. If I had known it was the last time I would see him, I would've spent more time



Contributed photo

Columnist Dale Valade and friend Andy Starr pose with a spike elk circa 2009. Starr passed away in February 2014.

with him that day, and many more days besides. Isn't that the misery of it, though: You don't know what you've got until it's gone.

Then it's too late. His hair was thin from the treatments, and he had lost weight from not being able to keep much down. Stal-

wart to the end, it was February of 2014, one day short of their first anniversary, when Andy passed away. He was 29 years old. He never got to meet his daughter, and she never will get to meet him.

The heavens wept the day we planted his mortal tabernacle. Many spoke at his funeral, myself included. What do you say on behalf of someone that meant so much, and how do you sum up a lifetime of memories in a few minutes? Andy told me once that "none of us is promised tomorrow." I've thought about that sagacious oration many times. All I can say is do the things that count. Make those memories. They're all we have of each other once we are called to glory. So to paraphrase the words of Green Day, "Wake me up when February ends."

I will never forget you, Andy. Feedback? Please shoot us an email at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com.

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

SENIOR

Outlook

Chester's

Prairie City Seniors

Rose Coombs

We want to express our thankfulness to those intrepid diners who made their way through the snowstorm to come to the hall for a hot meal; you are to be congratulated for your bravery. We postponed the board meeting and Crish cancelled her tai chi class too. That's the way things go in the far, far west. But, we are also very thankful for the snow! We are also grateful that it is not like the big storms that have been blowing through the Midwest and Eastern parts of our great country. This we can handle; I'm very grateful that the electricity hasn't been off; God is good, right?

Juan Rubio led the flag salute and Jack Retherford asked the blessing, and Carlos and Jay did the home deliveries. We had 43 names on the registration book this week! Juan was also the winner of the gift certificate toward a meal donated by Chuck's Little Diner.

The table that went first today has two purple hearts on it. Today, Feb. 27, is February birthday recognition day; so, if your birthday is in February, come and put your name in the pot. You could win the special birthday gift donated by Huffman's Market.

Our meal today was chicken chili, rice, creamed corn, a choice of a

sourdough, wheat or sesame – or was it poppy seed – bun. The dessert was peanut butter cookies; warmed you up inside and out.

We have a new assistant cook in the person of Barbara Dole. She has a person shadowing her for work-study, Lacy May-Philips. We welcome these new faces to our hall.

Even the Blue Mountain Care Center was brave and brought Marilyn Randall and Gordon Sindt over, courtesy of Lorna and Krystin.

Joel came and got the baseboards put back on in the kitchen so I had no excuse to not get started on the "spring cleaning." So I did; it took two days, but I got the laundry room/back porch done. I even defrosted the little freezer! I found a wasp in the bottom of it... hmmm. Anyway, I didn't find anything that I had lost, which is a good thing, I guess. Found some items that could go somewhere else, though. So, one room down and five to go (not including the attic; that's a job for later in the year when the temperature is a lot warmer).

As I was waiting for the pinochle players to come, I did some shelving in the library. My goodness; what a great place to get some fine reading material! I was amazed at the variety! There's no reason to sit idle and stare out the window when the library has such abundant selections. It is a scientific fact that when you read the mine improves; so come and get a bagful. . .

2 Corinthians 3:2,3 "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody... written not with ink... (or) on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts."

John Day Seniors

Dusty Harris

Holy winter!! I'm beginning to think the groundhog lied... these winter storms are brutal. I'd like to thank OTEC for fixing the blackout on Monday morning so quickly; you guys are such a blessing. On Feb. 18 our greeters were Everett, Gregg and Bonnie; always a pleasure working with you guys. There were 37 regular and 36 frozen meals delivered by David Gill and Rodney – looks like no one wants to go out in these conditions. Thank you guys for courageously braving these harsh conditions to deliver meals. For our President's Day lunch we had chicken a la king, fruit cocktail, a relish tray and amazing cinnamon rolls for dessert. Volunteers from the First Christian Church served our dinner and boy-oh-boy was it delicious! The Len's Drug gift card was won by Nancy Elliott and the free dinners were won by Jan; congratulations ladies!

On Feb. 21 our greeters were Jeanette and Gregg Starr. There were 51 total meals delivered by Shermayne Boethin and David Gill. This time, our meal was served by volunteers from the United Methodist Church; it is so nice seeing all of you who are so willing to help! Our meal was donated by Buzz and Margaret Glass; thank you so much, dinner was very good! The

meal consisted of beef pot roast with roasted potatoes and carrots, pan gravy, homemade bread and peach almond cobbler for dessert. Free meals donated by the senior center were won by Toddy Stovell and Joe Phippen won the dinners donated by Valley View Assisted Living. We had some special door prize items this week; the guys were wearing scarves home; Kim Ausstaud and Tony Cupalso took home a bear that was stuffed; and Barb Polaback, Floyd and Everett took home plaques! Thanks to all who were able to help with this week's door prizes.

A bit of news, we are honored to have a new cook who is working alongside Shay! Marchelle is an amazing cook who makes our desserts all from scratch as well as items like bread, cinnamon rolls and great salads! Sorry it took so long to tell everyone how amazing you are and how much we appreciate all your hard work.

We live in a wonderful community; some of the residents donate many things to help with hospital items, book and puzzles! Our newest donors were Bob and Bryon, who donated western pocket books, and Roy, who donated political books. One final thank you to everyone who cares so much about our senior center and who do so much to help every week; you all are such a gift to us, God bless you.

James 1:17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Monument Seniors

Soo Yuhawa

How glorious it is to have all this snow! Wow, woke up Sunday morning with at least a foot of snow higher than the previous day; praise our mighty God for His grace! Yes, we were walking in snow that came up to my knees. It's the perfect kind of snow to make snowmen, igloos, forts, and, of course, snowballs. I just love that my kids are enjoying their childhood out here and get to play with snow.

Our greeters at the table were Bodean Andersen, Linda Blakeslee and Kristi Guimont. Bodean led us in the flag salute, made the announcements, and prayed the blessing over our meal, and Linda and Kristi collected and counted the money and checked in the guests.

According to the books, we had 52 guests present and five takeouts. Some of the guests that we had were Mike Andersen from California (he is the oldest son of Bodean), Dick and Pam Wanous from Spray, and Sharon Livingston from Long Creek.

I have some very, very sad news if you haven't heard already; Joanie Howell has passed away. We pray for her family. They lost their grandpa last year and their aunt very recently. May the Lord comfort them and give them strength at this time.

Judy Harris had thank you cards from the Quilts of Valor and Sleep In

Heavenly Peace organizations. They were so grateful for all the quilts and blankets that were made and donated to these organizations.

We want to recognize and thank Doug Sweek for his generous donation of a new Singer sewing machine to our little sewing group. He did much research to purchase just the right little and perfect machine. May the Lord bless him for his thoughtfulness!

The winners of the free meal tickets went to Bob Blakeslee and Yvonne Baughman, and Ed Falls won the Len's Drug gift card. We thank everyone for all their generous support.

Well, Jill had her babies. Unfortunately, none of them made it. I was expecting her to have maybe around three? She actually had four! She had them between the time I saw her in the morning and the afternoon. They were just too small and I think so many overwhelmed her; I found one still in its sac. One was alive and I tried to bring it into the house and warm it up and fed it some milk but it was just too weak; it did not make it.

Sigh... oh well. I have never heard of a goat having four kids. Poor Jill, having to carry so many babies, my goodness; I am sure she will be having more in the future. I just hope it won't be so many like this. She seems to be doing well, but she did cry and was looking for her babies for a couple of days, but she is ok now. Dolly and Bonnie will be having their babies in May. That will be a much better scenario, I'm sure. It will be nice and warm.

Isaiah 65:24 "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, And while they are speaking, I will hear."

We give you a reason to smile!

Dr. Norm DeJong, DDS MPH PC

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