

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

PLAYING WITH FIRE

It's been one heck of a year so far, and it's only June. Like you, I've been doing whatever it takes to keep the bills paid and the family fed. For us "essential workers," life has been especially hectic the last couple of months.

Many have had to take multiple sanitation measures for their own personal safety. Before, the sight of someone wearing pantyhose over their head in public may have been cause for alarm. Now it just means they can't find the proper PPE.

And don't get me started on toilet paper. There may be a niche market for corn husks and mullin leaves down the road. All joking aside, it helps to have a sense of humor, and I can't wait to go camping, fishing and hunting again.

Besides being an amazing source of stress relief, there is just something about the reverent sounds of nature that calls to our souls. Whether it's the babbling brook or rushing river, the taste of a Dutch



From left, columnist Dale Valade uses a leaf blower to breathe life into a campfire at elk camp last fall with Walter Shaldoujah, Rick Valade and Jim Parson.

Contributed photo

oven meal or crackling campfire camaraderie, many are the blessings to be had when we get away from it all.

Due to the relatively mild winter and wet spring, we need to be extra careful in our

goings about this summer. The winged insects and parasites have had a banner year and are out in force. The rattlesnakes are always a concern, but other snakes which are natural predators to the

western diamondback will also be out. Make sure you don't shoot the wrong reptile.

Each year many folks drown for lack of education or safety measures taken in and around sources of water. Our 10-month-old son was blessed with a very curious soul, and as such, we must watch him like hawks to insure his continual safety. For this I wish to add, be extra careful for the sake of both children and the elderly. A moment of inconvenience taken to double check on them may save you a lifetime of misery endured. This also goes when dealing with fire.

Every year wildfires become a part of our lives here in Grant County and the surrounding areas. Some of these are the result of acts of nature, such as lightning or spontaneous combustion. Many however are the result of ignorance or poor habits. Shooting tannerite explosives or tracer ammunition into

combustible backstops can be to blame. So too can failure to properly manage and extinguish your burn barrels or campfires. Be aware of and observe any fire restrictions; these are in place for good reason. Always take along a shovel and a few extra gallons of water to properly mop up your campfire. Rekindles happen. I've seen fire "sleep" in the ground for weeks even months before a dry, gusty summer wind coaxes them back to life in the arid, yellow grass.

Being alive is fun. Don't let harm come to yourself or others because of failure to think ahead. We live in the greatest place on earth, let's keep it that way!

Any tips for safety during your summer outdoors activities? Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

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



Dale Valade

SENIOR Outlook Chester's

Prairie City Seniors

Rose Coombs



As I write this, it has been exactly 3 months since spring began. Can you remember what was going on? The weather was cool and clear and the first Sunday after spring began, we started live-streaming our church service. And we are still doing it! Now here comes summer! I am so glad that we are not confined to the house. We can get outside and get our daily dose of vitamin D and go to the barber/beauty shops. My diary says that I went to the store on March 25 and there were no eggs, bread, or TP. Thank goodness that problem has been solved.

If you listen to the radio at 7:30 each morning, you can hear what the various senior centers are preparing for the meal that particular day. And then you come to pick up your meal and it is not what was advertised. Hmmm. What happened? Usually, what happened is that we were donated some perishable supplies, so the cooks changed the menu to take advantage of the donations. If the donation is freezable, it will be stored and used later. The menu does have a notation that it is subject to change. All that to say, thank you to Greg Star and Thomas Harris who have donated food and containers to freeze some. If we ever run out plastic bags to carry the takeout containers we now have a good supply of paper bags as a donation. We appreciate any and all donations – money, food or supplies. Thank you very much.

Back to the altered meal for this week: we had tacos and all the fixings, refried beans, sweet stir-fried veggies

and strawberry shortcake for dessert. The fixings for the tacos included hamburger, lettuce, tomatoes, shredded cheese with sour cream and hot sauce. The veggies included broccoli, peas, carrots and some other things I didn't recognize in a sweet sauce. In addition to the taco shell, there were corn chips to be had also. So how many vegetables did you count there? And of course onions and peppers in the hamburger... all topped off with the vegetable strawberry. Or is it a fruit? Anyway, it was all good. We had several new names among the 53 on the registration book. Next week's dessert will be birthday cake!

I put some cucumbers and tomatoes in containers since I ran out of room in the garden. Some containers are more drainable than others, I guess. Had to tip a couple of them over and let the abundant rain water pour out. So started on a project to remove the bulbs in the iris bed and put the un-drainable container items there. The bed has been there a long time without being thinned and culled, so it is hard digging – even after all that rain! There are two different colors in all 10 feet of the bed and there happened to be a place where those two were side by side, so I put a piece of flagging around their adjacent stems to mark them. Maybe I'll put them in the container! We're still working on ideas for the deer fence. Have seen several majestic ones that people have installed. Usually in a place that has not been dredged in the past... The old-timer mantra: Make do with what you have.

I Peter 4:10 "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

John Day Seniors

Dusty Harris



I have news!! I don't know your name. I'm ready to sit down with friends and have a wonderful lunch and draw names

for door prizes and, yes, the silent auction. Wow, I saw one of the auction pieces and thought: *I need to bid on that!!* I thought about making up stories to fit if we were there but names slip my mind. Aren't you glad I remember by person? I do miss you all.

HAPPY BELATED FATHERS DAY

June Meals

June 22: Baked chicken, cornbread dressing, veggies, and rhubarb-berry crumble.

June 25 lunch will be: Seafood pasta alfredo, veggies, garlic bread, and peach pecan cake.

June 29: Hamburgers, potato salad, and s'mores whoopie pies.

Stay safe and enjoy your week.

Monument Seniors

Soo Yukawa



We had a wonderful meal cooked by Terry Cade and Carrie Jewell which was BBQ beef sandwiches, french fries, pasta salad,

and cake for dessert. There were 54 meals that were picked up. Kristi Guimont did the paperwork. Jan Ensign and Bob Cockrell collected and counted the money. Abbieanna Osborne delivered the meals to the waiting patrons in their cars.

Well, it looks like the weather is going to be really hot and dry. We seem to have extreme weather fluctuations here, it is either cold and wet or hot and very dry. I would like the cooler weather but my garden would prefer the hot. It is a paradox.

I have like 20 straightneck yellow zucchini growing! I think I might put them in individual cups and give them away to whomever wants them. I planted like four or five of them and I think that is plenty for our family. I will have to try and remember in the future not to plant so many. I planted the whole packet to insure that I would have enough plants that would make it, well now I know, they are fine. Ha.

It appears that I have 3 clusters of volunteers tomato plants. When I say cluster, I mean like twenty in a cluster. Yes, crazy right? The only thing is, I don't really remember what kind of tomatoes were in those spots. I

think one of them was a Roma tomato and the others were heirloom cherry tomato clusters. I relocated and planted three of them, we shall see what becomes of them. Maybe I will separate those plants and put them in individual cups and leave them at the senior center for Tuesday lunch if anyone wants tomato or zucchini plants. I just might do that, hopefully I will have time to report them.

I canned a bunch of strawberry rhubarb jam a few days ago. It was a very long process. The first batch, I burned it a little and had to pick those burnt parts out. Lesson learned, don't put the sugar in until it is almost all cooked down so the sugar won't burn at the bottom of the pot. The second and third batch turned out much better. I ended up canning about 35 pint jars of strawberry rhubarb jam. I purposely did not put in too much sugar so they are a little on the tart side. The first time I made strawberry jam, it was too sweet! It was awful. Well, we live and learn from our mistakes.

My dwarf pak choi went to seed. They have lots of pretty little yellow flowers and the bugs are going crazy over them. As soon as I collect those seeds, I will pull the old plants out and put a little more fresh old chicken poop dirt and plant some more pak choi. I bought the bulk seed pack so I have plenty to plant and enjoy. Maybe be able to plant three times this season.

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7 "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens. A time to rend, and a time to sew; A time to keep silence, and a time to speak."

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