



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Golfers pose at a tournament fundraiser for Thadd's Place, a grief center planned in John Day, Saturday.

Thadd's Place tees off

Fundraiser supports grief center to be opened in John Day

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Nearly 75 people competed in the Thadd's Place golf tournament at the John Day Golf Course Saturday and then hit the drive-through dinner by donation in the Chester's Thriftway parking lot to celebrate the eventual opening of the grief center.

Named in honor of Thaddeus Cowan Thompson who died of cancer last year at the age of 39, organizers and those closest to Cowan Thompson said it was an emotional day.

"I've been able to laugh with people today," Tirza Shaffer, Cowan Thompson's sister, said. "We've been crying. It's been wonderful."

Shaffer said the goal was to bring awareness to Thadd's Place, a nonprofit grief center, which will rely on community and volunteer support.

"We want to get walls up in this building," Shaffer said. "We want to be able to make it operational so people have somewhere to go so they don't have to grieve alone."

Shaffer said the focus of the day was to get the program



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Alana Shaffer, left, and Jordan Ross atop a banner with the Thadd's Place design at the ninth hole of the John Day Golf Course during a fundraiser tournament. The Thadd's Place design was chosen by Thaddeus Cowan Thompson's son Nathaniel.

"off the ground and running."

She said the grief center is continuing the legacy of her brother.

Thadd's Place board member Jan Curtis said she was not sure how much money the event brought in exactly, but she said there were 18 teams at \$500 each, which brought in \$9,000.

She said the 50/50 raffle ticket sales brought in \$600.

She said there were over nine sponsors at \$100 each, and other businesses — local and from out of town — donated as well.

Curtis is a teacher and she said she has helped her students through the grief process and she also lost her husband two years ago. Additionally, she said she golfed in tournaments with her husband frequently and that it

was something that was very important to her.

Curtis said the top three teams were Andy, Bo and Ken Ellison and Andy Radinovich, who shot a 58; Brad Armstrong, Mitch Saul, Colt Carpenter and Alex Finlayson, who shot a 60; and Matt Curtis, Kellen McMullen, Shane Schiemer and Rick Ramirez, who shot a 63.

SHOOTING THE BREEZE The .45-70 Government

Walt Gentis or Mike Browning or Jim Sproul ought to be writing this article. The experience those gentlemen have in hunting and long-range shooting with rifles chambered for this 147-year old cartridge far exceeds that of my own.

There are many other names we could add to that list and from right here in Grant County. Nevertheless, I will attempt to pen more than a cheechako's effort for your reading pleasure!

Realizing the future lay in self-contained cartridges, the U.S. Army Ordnance Department began looking for replacements for the various muzzleloaders that were issued to the troops in the War between the States. Converting the Springfield front stuffers via a curious design known as the trapdoor saved Uncle Sam (read "taxpayers") a lot of money versus adopting one of the Henry or Spencer repeating designs. Government brass apparently kept our boys in blue to single-shot rifles to spare them from wasting too much ammo. I'm sure that infantry and cavalry alike at Little Big Horn et. al. appreciated that decision.

The first trapdoor rifles were chambered in .50-70, but in 1873 the .45-70 made its debut. Christian Sharps and Philo Remington wasted no time chambering their Falling Block and Rolling Block single shot rifles for the new government round. Frontiersmen, especially buffalo hunters, enjoyed the accuracy and long-range power offered by these rifles.

In 1881, Marlin became the first firearms company to offer the .45-70 in a lever-action repeating rifle. The Browning-designed 1886 Winchester came five years later. A 405-grain bullet became the standard, although lighter 300-grain



Contributed photo
The .45-70 Government.



Dale Valade

bullets see use as well as heavier 500-plus-grain bullets. Although it's not always been a top-10 seller, the .45-70 in a lever gun or single shot has gained and maintained a fan base ever since. It is especially popular up north where they grow much bigger species of deer and bear. Today the .45-70 is debatably more popular than ever and sees use on all manner of game worldwide.

My own experience with this grand old cartridge has been limited to ringing steel and punching paper. While I have yet to successfully take a big game animal with it, I've fired both original and replica Sharps 1874 single shots, Marlin 1895 and Winchester 1886 lever guns and the unique vintage 1878 Remington-Keene bolt-action repeater. I did, however, shoot the head off of an angry rattlesnake with a borrowed 1886 Winchester. It was the only gun we had handy, so bumblebee met bazooka. The aforementioned Mister Gentis however has taken 13 elk with 13 shots using his .45-70! That's a pretty impressive track record in itself.

While there are many faster-moving choices out there, you could do a lot worse than the quintessential, nearly sesquicentennial big bore .45-70! Like they say, the older the violin, the sweeter the music.

Are you a .45-70 fan? Write to us at shootingthebreezeme@gmail.com!

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

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