

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

THE SINGLE-SHOT .22

The .22 today is largely seen as a great plinker and small game round, and there is merit to saying so. It truly isn't overly powerful compared to the ever widening lineup of cartridges available to us nowadays. But this wasn't always the prevailing wisdom.

I happen to know of several families which would've doubtlessly went down under for the want of food if not for their family .22 rifle. During the Depression most folks used the even more anemic .22 short for rabbits, birds and squirrels since cash money was scarce as hen's teeth. These rifles were mostly cheap, single-shot bolt actions and could use the short, long and long rifle ammunition choices.

Learning the fundamentals of good shooting such as trigger squeeze, breath control, sight picture and making every shot count has always been the bailiwick of the single-shot .22 rifle. There are no quick follow up shots to cover a poorly or hastily placed first



shot. Practice, therefore, is more meaningful as the temptation and ability to just burn through shells is removed. In a time where .22 bullets are expensive and rare to find, this is certainly another redeeming feature.

Accurate as the day is long, these rifles were also known to have served as close range deer rifles in a pinch, which the Depression certainly was that. A .22 is duly illegal to use these days for such employ, and poaching is partly to blame for our declining deer herds. I don't wish to celebrate their use in these regards lest I encourage anyone to try to do so, but merely to admire another aspect of the usefulness of a well-placed 35- to 40-grain bullet in the desperate feeding of families back when. Jack O'Connor, long time editor at Outdoor Life magazine, even spoke of doing so on one of his Southwest forays back in the 1930s. Of such he said that only head shots at extremely close range were advisable. Then there are the tales

of using .22s to hunt pigs in the Southwest, bears in the North or African game.

We have to draw the line somewhere. For every story where such eyebrow-raising feats were successfully pulled off, there are doubtlessly an overwhelming majority of others where things didn't go so well. However, there are plenty of good things a single-shot .22 is qualified to do. If you're lucky enough to have one, cherish it. Keep it clean and in good repair, pass it down if you can.

The .22 rifle in the accompanying picture belonged to my great-grandfather and will go to my son Andy when the time comes. That will be five generations of use. Lord willing it will last another five generations after my son. Long live family tradition!

Are you a single-shot fan? Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

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



Contributed photo

This single-shot .22 rifle belonged to columnist Dale Valade's great-grandfather and will go to his son Andy when the time comes.

SENIOR Outlook

Chester's

Prairie City Seniors

Rose Coombs



We thank Tootie Cernazanu for being the sponsor of our entree. It was a super-duper meal! Baked chicken, baked potatoes, sea-foam salad, and raspberry surprise. As Lawrence Welk would

say, it is "Wonderful, wonderful!" And if you were following the menu, you might say – but, but. Yes, there were some changes made. Instead of sweet potato fires, we had baked potatoes. (Would you believe that head cook Pam washed the potatoes in the dishwasher? How creative!) I was looking forward to the pecan bars, but the raspberry surprise by assistant cook Laura was delicious too! And I know that we will have brownies next week because I saw the packages of mic in the kitchen! Hooray, hooray! We had 47 meals go out the door, thanks to Carlos and Tom who made the home deliveries and Ginger and Carla who did the pick-up deliveries, and Pam who got all the names checked off in their proper place. Thanks to all who help do this good work.

The snow barely got off the ground and here come the tulips and daffodils, poppies and narcissus. Then we got more snow. But it didn't stay long. At one point this winter, the snow measuring board on top of Dixie said 7 feet! Yeah! So we can really start planning the garden now. Even though it will be 2 months until the ground warms up enough to plant. One can always dream.

I was going to have a lovely day doing all the things that were on the calendar: Bible study, senior dinner, counseling, prayer meeting. But, "The best laid plans of mice and men do oft go astray." Got up with a horrible sore throat and as the day wore on, I could not talk above a whisper. So instead of all those nice things I had planned to do, I made an appointment with the doctor! Rats. Phooey. Piffle. Just remember that all things work together for good. Just because I don't know the reason does not mean that it is a bad thing. And that's hard for us independent humans to believe, right?

Found this quote in a book about the Kennedy assassination, referring to the people who worked on the case: "The experts had trained themselves out of their common sense." Now think about that for awhile! That's what us ol' fogies keep saying. People have lost their common sense. How did that happen? Where did it go? What can we do to get it back?

On a less serious note, here are some sayings I've seen on t-shirts: #1 Handyman's Rule: cut it to fit, neat into place. #2 Keep Calm and Carry Duct Tape.

1 Corinthians 15:33, 34 "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning;..."

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