



Contributed photo

"Sixguns by Keith" taught the author, shown here, the fundamentals of good handgun shooting.

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

The fine art of handgun shooting

Most folks who have done any shooting have heard the name Elmer Keith. Besides his famous long-range handgun feats and wildcat cartridges, he was a well-known author. After reading his book "Sixguns by Keith" care of a childhood mentor of mine, I became quite intrigued with the fine art of handgun shooting.

by pressing it into my palm with the pads of my fingers rather than wrapping my fingers tightly around it. Then, just as I do with a rifle, to squeeze the trigger with the padee of my trigger finger rather than with the fold of the first knuckle. This not only helped me to master a proper trigger squeeze but to greatly increase hit percentages.



Dale Valade

Although Keith preferred his .44 and .45 big bores, a .22 became my favorite handgun cartridge early on for many reasons. Keith was a hunting guide and as such needed a handgun capable of dispatching everything, come what may. I needed something with cheap ammo, affording more practice; low recoil so I could refine the fundamental skills needed; and a trajectory flat enough to require little holdover for practical shooting ranges. Keith may have been able to shoot five or six football fields away with his sixguns, but believe me, even as a teen I had no such delusions of grandeur.

Quickly I learned that whatever shooting mistakes we make with a rifle are amplified 10 times with a handgun. Breath control, sight picture and trigger squeeze must be optimal with each shot. Trigger squeeze can prove to be the most difficult of all as we already have our fingers wrapped tightly around a grip. As such it's natural as we tighten one finger to tighten the others simultaneously and, in effect, pull our shots wide. With practice I learned to grip the handle of the gun

Most rifle shooters I know have learned to make use of whatever field rests that present themselves. A stump or rock, a tree branch or fencepost, or their pack can all be used to steady their aim. Yet most handgunners I see, regardless of skill level, tend to shoot off-hand, unsupported. Sometimes offhand is all we can do, but early on I learned, again from Keith's writings, that taking a proper rest can be the difference between a hit and a miss. The same informal rests we use with rifles can be employed for use with handguns.

As I've gradually mastered larger and more powerful handguns over the years, I often revert back to Keith's sage advice upon the subject. To fully glean as much of Old Elmer's knowledge as possible, find a copy of "Sixguns by Keith" and beg whoever owns it to sell it to you for whatever price they name. If you aim to be better than average with a handgun, you'll need expert advice.

Are you a handgunner? Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

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

Prospector passion

Grant Union's new mascot brings infectious enthusiasm to the sidelines

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Grant Union High School's sporting events are not unlike others across the country.

You'll see the crowd, the band, the school administrators and the students all rooting for the hometown team.

But, this year, Grant Union added another element that brings them all together:

A school mascot. He's known as "John Prospector," a name Grant Union's students came up with at the beginning of the school year, according to RC Huerta, Grant School District No. 3's engagement coordinator and Grant Union High School's boys basketball coach.

Huerta said the students chose "John" to honor hunter and fur trapper John Day, after whom the school's town is named.

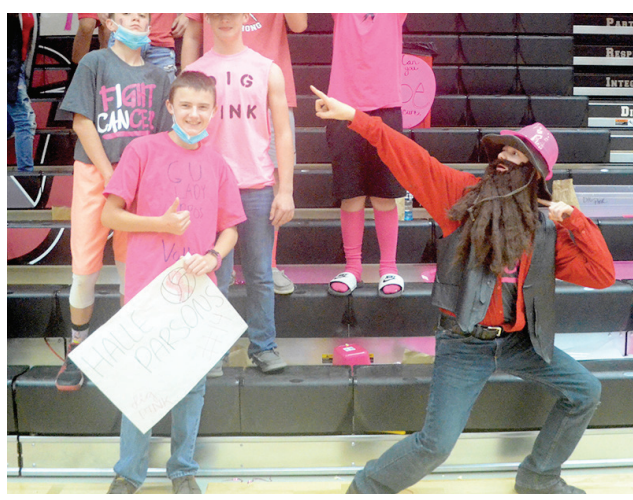
Under the fake beard and old cowboy hat, seventh-grader Colton Lyman twirled his pickaxe and whipped up the crowds at fall sporting events this year.

Lyman is an aspiring comedian with an innate ability to entertain people and a genuine desire to make sure everyone is having a good time, said Huerta, who was a mascot and spirit commissioner during his own high school years.

A schoolwide effort, Prospector John's costume came together with donations from Grant Union teachers J.J. Collier and Rick Callahan, Huerta said.

The fake beard, Huerta said, came from an old Halloween costume he had at home while the old cowboy hat was one he retired long ago.

"Boom! Prospector John



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Colton Lyman, right, busts a move during Grant Union's "Dig Pink" volleyball game on Oct. 2. Lyman, a seventh-grader, dressed up as school mascot John Prospector at home football and volleyball games during Grant Union's fall sports season this year.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Colton Lyman, a Grant Union Junior/Senior High School seventh-grader, gets into character as John Prospector. Lyman is the school's first mascot.

was born," Huerta said. Lyman, who is a cousin of Huerta's wife, Jessie, moved to the county a little over a year ago.

Lyman had missed out on opportunities to get involved in school activities when he was younger, Huerta said, so it was important to him and his wife that the young man take advantage of those opportunities while he's living in Grant County, be it sports, student government or the school band.

"We want to give him a good foundation to grow up to be a successful adult, just like I do with all my other kids," Huerta said. "He's our cousin, but he's like a kid to us, and we really enjoy having him."

When he's not performing as the school's mascot at Grant Union sporting events, Lyman plays saxophone in the school band and serves as Grant Union's seventh-grade vice president. And, starting later this month, the 13-year-old will give wrestling a go.

Lyman said Jessie's brother, Ultimate Fighting Championship competitor Eddie "Short Fuse" Herman, was his inspiration for signing up for the wrestling team this year.

Lyman, who dove into the role of Prospector John with both enthusiasm and the steadfast commitment

of a Method actor to stay in character as the gold rush-themed mascot for the entirety of games, admits that he was a little nervous before his first game.

"I was a bit anxious," he said. "The first time dressing down, looking like a goofball running around in front of the whole crowd, I was a bit anxious."

Soon enough, Lyman said, getting and staying in character became second nature.

"More games passed by and it just became a natural thing, and I really like it now," he said. "Now, dressing down and looking like a goofball running around is nothing for me."

Huerta pointed out that Lyman studied other mascots to prepare the night before his first time dressing as John Prospector for a Lady Pro volleyball game.

Huerta said Lyman was nervous, but remained open to Huerta's pointers, though he really didn't need much prompting. He said Lyman began jogging around the gym and greeting fans at the door before he knew it.

Both the football and volleyball teams loved having Lyman on the sidelines, according to Huerta.

The volleyball team appreciated Lyman so much throughout their season (which ended in a fourth-place finish at the state



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Colton Lyman's energy and enthusiasm are infectious.

tournament) that they presented the seventh-grader with a \$50 gift certificate to Timbers Bistro.

Lyman said he was taken by surprise when he showed up early for one of the team's final home games to change into his John Prospector costume and was called into the lunchroom by the volleyball team, where they handed him the gift certificate and thanked him for getting the crowds pumped at every home game.

"I really appreciated it," Lyman said. "It was super cool, and they did really good this year."

When reflecting on Lyman's growth this year, Huerta gushes with pride.

"I'm just proud to be raising such good young men and women," Huerta said. "It just makes me super happy to see him out there enjoying himself and having a good time."

Patriot Plumbing American Standard
Sinks & Toilets,
Delta Faucets,
Brandford White,
Water Heaters
245 N. Canyon Blvd., Canyon City
541-575-2144 • Mon.-Fri. 8am-4:30pm

Serving Grant County for 50 years!
Chester's Thriftway
Proud of being Locally Owned & Operated - 541-575-1899

Bank of Eastern Oregon
"CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF YOUR HOMETOWN"
John Day 541-575-1862 • 200 W. Main
Prairie City 541-820-3321 • 178 NW Front St.

Eastern Oregon Realty Jerry Franklin
GRI, ABR, SRES
Broker/Owner
160 E. Main • John Day, OR 97845
Office: 541-575-2121
Home: 541-820-3721
JFranklin@easternoregonrealty.net
www.easternoregonrealty.net

Blue Mountain Hospital District
Quality Healthcare Close to Home
170 Ford Rd., John Day, OR 97845 • 541-575-1311

Virginia McMillan, DDS PC
IMMEDIATE DENTAL COMFORT
LONG TERM VALUE
541-575-0550

PIONEER FEED & FARM SUPPLY
60561 HWY 26,
John Day, Oregon 97845
541-575-0023

The Outpost
Breakfast
Lunch & Dinner
201 W. Main
541-575-0250

Hello Grant County,
With our first snow now, it really is beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Christmas trees are everywhere and Grant County is shining! The countdown has begun. when you read this, only 16 more days till Christmas.
This time of year we really try to focus on one of our most favorite mottos - "Shop Local." Please support our local businesses whenever you can. They support our schools and other events year around.

Santa will be at the Grant County Fairgrounds on Saturday, December 11th from 4:00 to 5:30 PM. Bring the Kids and drive thru and see him. The county tree lighting will happen at 5:00 PM and the City of John Day will have kids crafts in the Pavilion.

The Truckers' Light Parade will take place at 6:00 PM. A lot of effort goes into this event every year, so be sure to come out and support the participants as they "Light up the Night." We will have an open house at the Chamber office with fire pits, treats and hot cocoa and cider.

During this Christmas season, I realize how fortunate I am to live in such a beautiful place where folks help each other when times are tough and pull together in spite differences in points of view.

The Carrie Young Memorial and the Tree of Giving are just two examples of how we help each other. Both are well supported by our county, and both help people who live here and need a helping hand. We appreciate all of you who work so hard on these amazing programs.

In closing, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Stay Well,
Tammy Bremner
Executive Director

Eds PROPANE
541-575-0804
OIL
541-575-1348
243 N. Canyon City Blvd.,
Canyon City, Oregon
Ed Staub & Sons

• etc •
A UNIQUE BOUTIQUE FEATURING LOCAL ARTISANS FROM GRANT COUNTY
133 W. Main, John Day, OR
541-620-2638 • etc.handmade@yahoo.com

Solutions
Certified Public Accountants
101 NE 1st Ave. John Day, Oregon 97845
541-575-2717

SUBWAY
eat fresh.
121 S. Canyon Blvd.
John Day • 541-575-0782

Duke Warner Realty
Dayville, Oregon
"Your professional Real Estate choice in Grant County"
www.dukewarnerrealtyofeasternoregon.com
Lori Hickerson Principal Broker, GRI Office: 541-932-2617
Sally Knowles Broker, GRI Office: 541-932-4493
Babette Larson Broker, GRI Office: 541-987-2363

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!
161 E. Main, John Day • 541-575-0632
True Value
HARDWARE

LEN'S DRUG 541-575-0629
120 E. Main, John Day
www.lensdrug.com
We're here when you need us!

DAYVILLE MERC
207 W. Franklin Ave, Dayville
Cold Drinks • Groceries • Snacks
Gifts • Friendly Services
541-987-2133

DGDriscoll's BOOKS!
SALE! SALE! SALE!
Tom Clancy
Hardcovers: just \$1 each
paperbacks: 3 for \$1
One week only Dec 8-15
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat; 10 til 6
248-719-2122
In Canyon City just across from the post office

A MAN WAKES UP in the morning after sleeping on... an advertised bed, in advertised pajamas.
He will bathe in an ADVERTISED TUB, shave with an ADVERTISED RAZOR, have a breakfast of ADVERTISED JUICE, cereal and toast, toasted in an ADVERTISED TOASTER, put on ADVERTISED CLOTHES and glance at his ADVERTISED WATCH. He'll ride to work in his ADVERTISED CAR, sit at an ADVERTISED DESK and write with an ADVERTISED PEN. Yet this person hesitates to advertise, saying that advertising doesn't pay. Finally, when his non-advertised business is going under, HE'LL ADVERTISE IT FOR SALE.
Then it's too late.
AND THEY SAY ADVERTISING DOESN'T WORK? DON'T MAKE THIS SAME MISTAKE
Advertising is an investment, not an expense. Think about it!
Blue Mountain Eagle
MyEagleNews.com
Don't get left behind, call today! Kim Kell 541-575-0710