



Contributed Photo

The author finally got his first tom.

SHOOTING THE BREEZE Perseverance pays off for unlucky turkey hunter

I have mentioned before that I'm not the world's greatest turkey hunter.

My luck wasn't any better this year, but I finally managed to wear them down.

Opening day found us wading through 6 inches of snow. I was sure we were wasting our time until I got an answer to my call that was way too close. We were caught out in the open with, as they say, our pants down. Of course the hens ran right up to us while the tom held back. And of course the hens busted us.

We got permission to hunt some private ground and had turkeys coming to our call when a tom snuck in on us from behind without a sound. He figured out something was up and ran off, spooking the others we were bringing in.

We tried an ambush on the way to a roost tree. The turkeys walked by just out of shotgun range. We tried catching them as they came down from the roost. They flew over the ridge. I spent a couple of days hunting in some new country without so much as a gobbler.

I took a break to go cut some firewood and ran into a couple of guys out hunting. They told me their group had killed seven. That was a blow to my ego, for sure.

One morning it was raining and I got a late start. The turkeys were right where

I thought they would be, almost. Only about 100 yards on the wrong side of the

fence. I tried my best to sound like a love-starved hen, but I couldn't sweet-talk them into coming my way.

Determined to get it right, the next day I was set up well before first light.

As the sky started to turn gray, the toms started to sound off and I realized I had set up in the wrong spot. I belly-crawled out to my decoy and repositioned as quietly as I could.

The turkeys started coming down out of the roost about 100 yards away and at first looked like they were going to ignore me altogether. Then two toms started my way all fanned out. It was such a cool sight to see as they strutted around in the field.

When they closed to 20 yards, I slowly aimed my Mossburg 12 gauge and unleashed a 3-inch No. 4, and my tom dropped on the spot. Not really sure what had happened, the other turkeys milled around for a while.

I just sat there enjoying the moment. I had to work pretty hard for my tom, but in the end, it was a great experience.

Share your favorite hunts with us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com.

Rod Carpenter is a husband, father, and a huntin' fool.



Rod Carpenter

Summer sports schedule released

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A partnership between the Blue Mountain Hospital, Community Counseling Solutions, Community Health Improvement Coalition and John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation will be hosting sports events for Grant County residents throughout the summer.

The Go Outside Cam-

paign will be hosting the following events:

- Yoga in the Park @ Canyon City Park, every Thursday at 6 p.m. from July 14 to Sept. 29
- Walk and Dine with the Doc @ Seventh Street Sports Complex, Northeast Seventh Street, John Day, every second Tuesday in July, August and September at 5:30 p.m.
- Family movie nights, Saturday nights at dusk on July 9, July 23, Aug. 6 and

Aug. 20 @ Grant Union football field, 911 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day

- Cornhole tournament at the Grant County Fair, Saturday, Aug. 13, time TBA
- Kickball Slip-n-Slide Tournament on Saturday, July 23, time and location TBA

Parks and Rec is also hosting summer youth outdoor soccer. The program starts in August and runs for five weeks through the first part of September. Ages are kin-

dergarten through sixth grade with co-ed teams. Teams are divided into three age groups: kindergarten and first grade, second and third grade, and fourth through sixth grade. Practices are held Monday through Thursday with games occurring throughout the season.

For more information, contact the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation Department at 541-575-0110.

Beauty, without the bugs

By JAYSON JACOBY

I trust mosquitoes. I don't like mosquitoes, but I trust them.

The bloodsucking bugs, though capable of driving a person to the verge of temporary madness with their incessant insectile buzzing and biting, are nothing if not reliable.

This is particularly so in the alpine country of Northeastern Oregon.

Along about the time the snow is either gone or down to grainy drifts the approximate consistency of sno-cones — generally from late June through early August, depending on the elevation — the arrival of the mosquitoes is as predictable as the blooming of the lupine and the paintbrush.

I have come to accept swatting and itching as the physical toll, along with the lung-straining challenge of steep terrain, required for entry to such spectacular places.

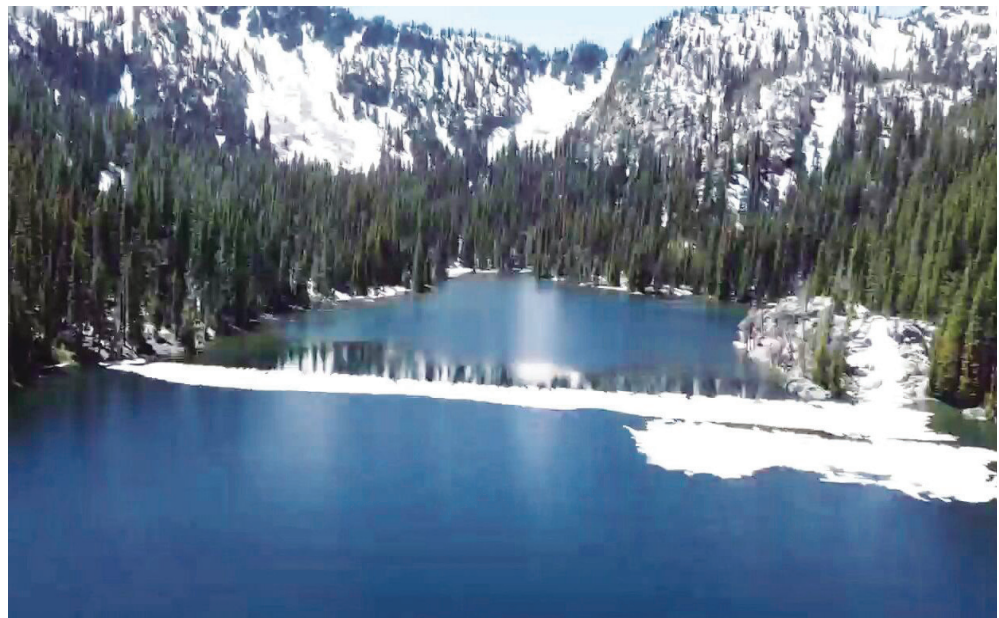
As such, I especially treasure trips when my worries about mosquitoes turn out to be unfounded.

So it was on June 26 when my family trudged up the steep road, and then the even steeper trail, that lead to Van Patten Lake in the Elkhorns.

Notwithstanding those punishing grades, Van Patten is much more accessible than most lakes in the range.

The round trip is a mere three miles, and the trailhead is just off the paved highway about three miles below, and east of, Anthony Lakes.

Yet although Van Patten is



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

This image taken by a drone shows an ice bridge across Van Patten Lake, in the Elkhorn Mountains northwest of Baker City, on June 26, 2022.

easier to get to than, say, Rock Creek, Summit and Red Mountain lakes, it yields nothing, in general grandeur, to those pools, which require either a torturous drive and a longer walk.

Or both, in the case of Rock Creek Lake.

In common with many lakes in the Elkhorns and Wallows, Van Patten occupies a basin gouged in the bedrock (granitic, in this case) by an Ice Age glacier. At about 16.5 acres, Van Patten is the fifth-largest lake in the Elkhorns, behind Rock Creek (24 acres), Anthony (22), Pine Creek Reservoir (18) and Summit (17).

Van Patten isn't always quite so big, however. Some of its flow is diverted each summer for irrigation, and by late summer the lake is noticeably shrunken.

But in late June it's about as full as it gets.

And about as deeply blue as water can be — that inimitable

shade peculiar to cold, crystalline lakes at high elevations.

My experience with mosquitoes at Van Patten is a long one, marked by much muttering (occasionally profane) and frenzied flailing of arms more commonly associated with seizures.

My wife, Lisa, recalls, with the sort of hyperacuity reserved for especially unpleasant episodes, a visit many years ago when the bugs seemed destined to craft nests in her hair.

It's a buggy place. I had, therefore, forgotten to put repellent in my pack.

Lisa, fortunately, had not. I wasn't certain that mosquitoes would be swarming.

My previous encounters, so far as I can remember, all happened in July, the peak month, generally speaking, for alpine mosquitoes.

There was no shortage of insects, to be sure, as we climbed toward the lake. And each time a tiny dark speck whizzed past my face I winced slightly, anticipating the telltale dental drill whining.

It did not happen.

The DEET-enriched spray can remained in Lisa's pack.

We hiked a short way along the northern shore of the lake, which is shaped rather like a lance, much longer than it is across.

The ice was nearly gone but there was a curious bridge of white spanning the lake near its west end. I piloted our

drone on a brief flight, and it captured some intriguing photos of the ice bridge, which was riddled on its edges with fissures that reminded me of a river delta.

It was a brilliant day, and pleasantly warm even at 7,400 feet. There was a breeze, though, and as always seems to be the case in such elevated places, it was refreshing, nothing like the dog's breath of a summer wind on a scorching day in the valley.

Our kids, Max and Olivia, waded in the frigid water. I knelt on a granitic boulder and splashed a couple palmfuls of water on my forehead. My hands went numb almost immediately.

Lisa and I reminisced about our previous, infested, hikes to Van Patten. We agreed that although today was ideal, it almost certainly would be quite a different experience in a week or two.

We had no doubt that even in that sylvan setting, among the contorted whitebark pines and slender subalpine firs and the little rock gardens that landscapers strive to mimic, the bugs lurked, languid in the moisture trickling from the drifts.

Waiting to be roused from their long dormancy beneath the snow, ready to wreak havoc in their insatiable pursuit of blood.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.

DGDriscoll's BOOKS !

P is for:
James Patterson,
Belva Plain,
or Mario Puzo.

Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat; 10 til 6
248-719-2122
In Canyon City just across from the post office

Your Rural Family Health Clinic

Grant County HEALTH Department
528 E. Main, St. E., John Day

Monday - Thursday 7am - 6pm
Friday 8am - 5pm

Appointments available

Call and schedule your appointment today!
TOLL FREE 888-443-9104
or 541-575-0429

Services Provided:

- Primary Care
- Acute Care
- Women's Health Exams
- Men and Children Exams
- Immunizations
- Family Planning
- Contraception
- Pregnancy Testing & Referrals
- HIV Testing & Referrals
- Caecoon
- WIC
- High Risk Infants
- Maternity Case Management

Grant County Health Department does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

TOM CHRISTENSEN CONSTRUCTION

(541) 410-0557 • (541) 575-0192
CCB# 106077

REMODELS • NEW CONSTRUCTION • POLE BUILDINGS
CONCRETE EXCAVATION • SHEET ROCK • SIDING
ROOFING • FENCES • DECKS • TELESCOPING FORKLIFT SERVICES

JOHN ROEHM CONSTRUCTION, INC.
General Contractor
LICENSED AND BONDED
RESIDENTIAL
CCB # 217672

EXPERIENCED, QUALITY, AFFORDABLE

SPECIALIZING IN:
MANUFACTURED HOUSING
EXCAVATION WORK
SITE CLEANUP & DEMOLITION
DRIVEWAYS

SERVING EASTERN OREGON
PHONE: 503-341-1796
EMAIL: ROEHMJOHN66@GMAIL.COM

CANYON CREEK Clinic

Shawna Clark, DNP, FNP
541-575-1263

235 S. Canyon Blvd. John Day, Oregon 97845

Accepting new Patients! Go to:
www.canyoncreekclinic.com

dish BRING EVERYTHING YOU LOVE TOGETHER!

Blazing Fast Internet! ADD TO YOUR PACKAGE FOR ONLY \$19.99/mo. *where available

2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE \$69.99 MO. for 12 Mos. America's Top 120 Package 190 CHANNELS Including Local Channels!

CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card Promo Code: DISH100
1-866-373-9175 Offer ends 7/31/22.

AT&T internet

FEEL THE SPEED, EVEN AT PEAK TIMES.

- Get strong, fast Wi-Fi to work and play throughout your home.*
- No annual contract.
- Power multiple devices at once—everyone can enjoy their own screen.
- Over 99% reliability.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL DIRECTV DEALER
888-486-0359

Smart security. Professionally installed. Protection starts with prevention.

Get FREE Professional Installation and Four FREE Months of Monitoring Service* Use Promo Code 4FREE

CALL NOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR SYSTEM 844-894-8790

vivint

Leaf Filter GUTTER PROTECTION

BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE

EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!

15% OFF & 10% OFF
VOIDS ENTER PURCHASE & WE INSTALL YEAR-ROUND!

FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET! FROM CODE 385

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE 1-855-536-8838

Prepare for Power Outages & Save Money

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!

ACT NOW TO RECEIVE A \$300 SPECIAL OFFER! | (844) 989-2328

*Offer value when purchased at retail. Solar panels sold separately.

Prepare for power outages today

WITH A HOME STANDBY GENERATOR

\$0 MONEY DOWN + LOW MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTIONS

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE CALL NOW BEFORE THE NEXT POWER OUTAGE (877) 557-1912

FREE 7-Year Extended Warranty* A \$695 Value!