

## SHOOTING THE BREEZE

# Lighten your load with a good mountain rifle

In my gun library, each firearm has unique features which provide me with the full spectrum of both employment and enjoyment. I think of it as a tool set, each member of which has specific purposes to accomplish the task at hand. A couple of years back I noticed a slight hole in my arsenal: I lacked a proper mountain rifle.

Now this can mean several things to several different people. Any rifle you lug up the mountainside could be considered a mountain rifle, so pardon me if our definitions vary. Ideally — to me — it should have a quality lightweight synthetic stock, impervious to extreme weather. As big a fan of gorgeous walnut stocks as I am, they are simply too heavy to qualify. I prefer a sporter contour barrel no longer than 24 inches. In some calibers, 20-22 inches may well be preferable.

For me, a mountain rifle should be chambered in something relatively light of recoil as the finished product should weigh no more than approximately 7.5 pounds. That arbitrarily eliminates anything "Magnum" unless it also has

a muzzle brake. Whichever caliber you choose should depend upon the game you plan to pursue. Most of my steep country hunts are in the pursuit of mule deer. One of my favorite deer hunting cartridges is the oft-mentioned .25-06 Remington. Other popular choices would include the 6.5 Creedmoor, .270 Winchester, and 7mm-08 Remington.

Being as I already owned an accurate Remington Model 700, I decided to modify this rifle until arriving at the desired ideal mountain rifle. The Remington 700 is easily modified with a plethora of available aftermarket products to choose from.

Firstly, a Bell and Carlson drop-in synthetic stock was located online and purchased forthwith; a good friend glass bedded it for me.

Next came an aluminum trigger guard and floor plate assembly as well as Talley aluminum scope rings. These are simple and rugged, integrating both the mount and the bottom half of the scope ring into a single piece.

I then mounted a Leupold VX-2 3-9x40mm scope with long-range



Dale Valade/Contributed Photo

The lightweight rifle is a perfect companion in rugged, vertical mule deer country.

duplex reticle into the Talley rings.

Finally, I installed a Timney 510v2 Elite Hunter replacement trigger set at 3 pounds. Timney makes an excellent drop-in trigger, requiring very minimal effort to install. They also went through the trouble of modifying the infamous Walker/Remington factory trigger design to eliminate those well-storied accidental discharges.

Even though this rifle is much

safer and lighter to carry than it used to be, I didn't lose anything in the accuracy department. Upon trying some new handloads featuring the excellent Hornady 117 grain Interlock BTSP and Ramshot Hunter, I was pleased to see it shoot sub-MOA groups at 100 yards. Additional tests at longer ranges will no doubt prove conclusive as long as the "nut behind the bolt" doesn't wiggle loose.

The Hornady Interlock is a relatively thin-jacketed bullet, but I have enjoyed much success with it on deer-sized game and for the price they are very hard to beat. The second most endearing feature about the Ramshot Hunter is that it seems to be, at least for now, relatively easy to acquire.

Putting together a mountain rifle has been a fun project, and I highly recommend the undertaking. The best thing about any custom rig is the only person it needs to please is yourself. Therefore the options are literally endless, and that is the very best part.

Your back will thank you when you have that much less weight in gear to haul around this grand old country in pursuit of your favorite game animal. I don't have a crystal ball, but I might see a blacktail deer hunt in my future!

Do you own a mountain rifle? Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com and check us out on Facebook!

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

## SENIOR Outlook Chester's

### Prairie City Seniors

Rose Coombs



I do believe fall has fallen. Had to turn on the little heater in the office/studio so I could be comfortable typing this missive. The house heating stove has been turned on, too, this last week. Yes, the season

has definitely changed. But no frost on the cantaloupes yet! Derril keeps saying, "Aren't they ready?" I just keep irrigating.

But we had cantaloupe today! Thanks to some leftovers from the Cycle Oregon people, we each had a serving of cantaloupe and watermelon. Hooray! Thanks, whoever you are. Along with that we enjoyed chicken and rice bake, a green salad, and tapioca pudding for dessert. Good and tasty meal for this change of season day. Our sponsor for this day was Chester's Markets. The table that got to go first through the serving line semi-answered this question: What do Mexican people call the avocado? They answered guacamole. The answer is alligator pear.

Don't know what that is in Spanish, but now you know. Our fun fact was this: Avocados are classified as berries with a large seed. I guess so! Del led the flag salute and Tom asked the blessing. Famous birthdays include H. G. Wells and Stephen King. Now there's another unique pair! The quote for the day: "Birthdays are good for you. Government statistics show that the people who have the most birthdays live the longest." Amen! We started a new door prize

drawing today — a free meal. Nancy Mooser was the first winner and it was the first time that she and hubby had been able to come this year! How about that!

The Eastern Oregon Council for Independent Living brought a box full of little baggies to give away. The bags contained a pen, hand sanitizer, and COVID test kit. The bag also contained lots of info about their programs.

Our volunteers today included Mary, Gwynne, Carla, Tom, Chris, Theresa, and Pam. Thanks, everybody.

The cement block has sprouted a sign and seating for the People Mover bus stop. I tried out the seats. Not too bad. Someday I may have to try out the bus!

In Prairie City, we used to have the Grant Co. Mercantile (a hardware store), the Prairie City Dept. Store (dry goods, clothing, shoes), Prairie Drug (pharmacy) and four service stations (Shell, Texaco, Cenex and Chevron). Those were the good old days! There was even a Trailways bus stop at the hotel. And do you remember your mailbox combination? Or your school locker combination? Or your phone number before touch-tone dialing? These all went by the wayside. So why do I still get calls from someone who wants to talk about septic tank "helper" when I keep telling them it has been 10 years since I needed their product?! They are not keeping up-to-date lists.

*Ecc. 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. 2 Tim. 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season. Col. 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.*

### John Day Seniors

Elsie Huskey



The week of Sept. 18-23 was a traumatic week for my household. A medical emergency and a disaster with the freezer thawing out and juices and blueberry juice everywhere. It took me two days with my painful back

to get it all cleaned and ready for the new freezer to arrive on Friday morning. God is testing me to see how I will respond to trauma in my life. I feel like I did well. The pain in my hips was the worst of it all.

On Monday, Sept. 19, 15 in-house diners came to the desk. Carol Roe and Janet Binger greeted them and made sure they got their names in the daily drawing and were registered. When we sign in (register), the state takes the information and knows we are active and they fund us accordingly, which helps us continue supporting the community.

Janet did the announcements. Even though she was nervous about it, she did well. Thank you, Janet. Janice Kuhlman, Gloria Kulis's sister, led the flag salute.

The servers were from the Living Word Church: Carolyn Stout and Carol Claire. Thanks, ladies, we sure appreciate your help with lunch, your smiles and attentiveness to all the needs of the meal. It was really nice to get to chat a bit with you as well. We dined on ham, navy bean soup, carrots, cornbread, and cherry cobbler. One gentleman ate his cobbler first and said he always has dessert first and then the meal becomes the dessert. Most of us don't have room for dessert if we eat our meal first. Quite a theory and very interesting.

Forty-nine fresh meals and 33 frozen meals were delivered to some who cannot come join us. The names of the drivers did not get on this information sheet. I am so sorry, because those that deliver are very special people. I am sure you all know who you are, so thank you all for your service to our community.

Today's meal was sponsored by Katie Hoffman who is with the veteran services office, so we want to say thank you Katie and the veteran services office for our lunch today.

An abundance of veggies were on the back table provided by Chris Bucholtz (not sure of that spelling, sorry). They looked so good, and it was obvious they came right from the garden. Thanks for sharing these veggies with all of us.

On Thursday, Oct. 6, Pacific Source is sponsoring the lunch for all attendees. They will have updated information about their insurance policies and will answer any questions you may have, right after lunch. Corine Smaer of Cycle Oregon made a significant food donation,

### Monument Seniors

Soo Yukawa



Did you know that we just had the first day of fall roll past us this past week? Crazy, right? Not too long ago, we were all dying from the heat. You can feel it already approaching, the winter is just around the corner. I can smell the coolness, too.

Well, this fall weather is just in time to help us celebrate the Buckaroo Fall Festival. Things are abuzz around here in Monument. Yes, many preparations are being made for our upcoming event. I will tell you all about the festivities for those who missed it.

I laid down some fresh straw in the goat shed along with some peppermint oil. Good thing because we had a little rainstorm come through, and goats hate to get wet. The peppermint oil is making the shed smell oh so lovely now. For how long, that I don't know. Ha.

I am going to be putting the billygoats with the girls soon. This will give me baby kids that will be born sometime between March and April. I know I will have bottle baby goats and so will have to prepare mentally for that kind of responsibility.

It's funny, but Belle still thinks of me as her mama because she still follows me everywhere I go when I go into the goat pen. She has lost all her baby fat and now looks like an adult goat. No more little fat cheeks on her, either. She is cute. She does not seem to be as bratty as she was when she was little.

I am hoping to breed her to either Remi or Yoshi. We will see what kind of babies she will have, and hopefully she will let me milk her!

*Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

but that is all we were told. Corine, thank you for this donation that will help our cooks prepare great food.

Please remember to bring in all your pull tabs from vegetable and fruit cans and sodas. They will go to the Ronald McDonald House to assist them in doing the great things they do for people in need.

Bill Baucum won the Len's Card and Kay Cotham won the free meal. Congratulations, you two.

Some lunch-goers come a bit early to have time to chat with others. That is my favorite part of the day.

We are starting to see some new faces. COVID sure interrupted everyone's lives for almost three years, so it is difficult to get back to normal. A great time is had by folks who come to lunch at our center. Come join us and find out for yourself. Where else can you get a meal for less than \$12?

Darlene Nodine and Carol Roe were at the desk on Thursday, Sept. 22, to greet 33 in-house diners and made sure everyone was registered and their names were in the drawing. These ladies have been so faithful and done a great job while we go through the trials of returning to normal. Thank you, Darlene and Carol.

Darlene did the announcements. Mya Ennis volunteered to lead the flag salute. Thanks, Mya. Father Christy asked the blessing and even started off in a little hymn. I thought it was very nice. Thank you, Father Christy. The servers today were from St. Elizabeth Catholic Church. The names didn't get on the list, but they were superb. One lady brought her three young children. They had made butterflies from coffee filters they painted and tied in the middle with pipe cleaners and passed them out to the lunch attendees. So cute. Thank you, kids. I also saw them make a money donation at the desk. So sweet. We dined on meatballs and gravy, real mashed potatoes, peas with cute little onions in them, and cheesecake brownies. The meal was sponsored by Chester's Market. Thank you, Chester's, for lunch.

Forty-nine fresh meals were delivered and the names of the ones who delivered did not get on the list. Sorry, but thank you so much for your service to those who need us.

The evening of Thursday the 22nd was the first day of fall. Fall is the comforting season. A favorite of many.

Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living brought gift bags to share with all of us. They included a box with two COVID tests and information on their organization. Thank you.

News of Alva Conley's passing came as a shock to many of us. It is always sad to lose people we have known a long time.

Rennie won the Thriftway card and Mike Johnston won the free meal. Hope I spelled that right this time.

*Colossians 4:5 & 6 Walk in wisdom toward them who are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

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