

## Fun with bows and arrows

By JIM HUCKABAY Contributing Columnist

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A week from tonight, two of my outdoor heroes will be down the Yakima River at Canyon River Lodge. The two days following that — next weekend — archery nuts and bow hunters will be half a mile further down the Canyon participating in a steep and tough field experience known as The Mutton Buster 3-D Shoot.

Friday evening at 6 p.m., two-time Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation world champion elk caller Joel Turner will be teaching you all you need to know to communicate with bull elk during the coming mating fest in the woods. Joe Rotter, a partner in the Red's Fly Shop/Canyon River Lodge operation along the Yakima, is one of the key guys bringing Joel back to Paradise. Both these men were geography majors and outdoor nuts during my tenure in that department at Central, and both have gone on to become personal heroes by creating great outdoor-oriented careers based on their passions and smarts.

Saturday and Sunday events will start at 7 a.m. at the range downriver from Friday night's Lodge elk calling event. Over these two field days — laid out to get bow hunters in the spirit of the upcoming seasons — archers will be challenged in many of the ways such hunting challenges us to shoot accurately under demanding conditions. The shoot costs \$25 a day (\$40 for both days) and \$10 for youngsters. There will also be several raffles and shooting games, with opportunities to win some great gear ranging up to a Bowtech Carbon Icon bow. Sponsors of the event and various prizes include Red's, the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club, Sitka and Tyler O'Brion's Archery Brothers (the new archery shop housed in the Brothers N Arms store on Vantage Highway).

The whole conversation about life-size 3-D targets and practicing firing arrows from above, below, behind and other angles never considered by a normal mind, got my head spinning.

For a decade or so, a while back, I lived and breathed bow hunting. I made a life-size antelope buck decoy/target. It was realistic enough to bring several bucks up close over several years of hunting on buddy Roy Enter's ranch in Colorado's San Luis Valley. (Roy insisted they were drawn by a curiosity about how such an ugly buck would dare stand in their territories...)

Max Tallent and I hunted Merriam's gobblers with bows for a few years. Calling in a big turkey gobbler from half a mile to 60 feet remains a high point in my outdoor life, and I will always treasure one of my greatest trophies from that hunt — one tail feather neatly clipped by a razor-sharp broadhead.

One bitter-cold morning in a tree stand along the South Platte River in northeast Colorado, I finally caught up with a white-tail buck. As I climbed carefully down through the hoar frost, I looked up at the tree next to me. Glowing in the first rays of the sun, in that frost-coated tree, were half a dozen rooster pheasants.

Max and I and old friend Fred Glover once had a great adventure on the George River in northern Quebec Province, chasing caribou bulls.

We brought home some of the best eating ever, but what I remember most is balancing in muskeg and willows and letting the arrow shoot itself as a huge bull trotted by at 10 yards.

Until I made the decision to give up the bow, I also found great joy chasing elk, muleys and carp.

I like how Tyler O'Brion describes his passion for bow hunting, shooting and his shop. "Challenging myself is what drives me. My degree in Occupational Safety and Health has my mind continuously thinking: 'Caution; you sure this is safe, what's the Risk?' With archery, I can drop my guard and push my limits mentally and physically. I've always felt at peace in the outdoors. Nature is a place where you are you; there is no outside pressure to be someone you're not. (There is just no faking your way into harvesting a 400 class bull elk.) The outdoors is beauty, mystery, and the adventure of not knowing what's lurking around the next turn. Archery is more than a sport; it's a passion for constant improvement and challenge. I want Archery Brothers to be a place where the community can come dive in and explore the adventure of archery, ask questions, learn and purchase good quality equipment. I want fellow archers to feel confident that when they need something, our shop will be there."

Find out more about Tyler and Archery Brothers at [archerybrothers509@gmail.com](mailto:archerybrothers509@gmail.com) or on Facebook. Find out more about next weekend's Mutton Buster 3-D Shoot from Tyler or from Joe Rotter at [joe@redsflyshop.com](mailto:joe@redsflyshop.com).

This will be an adventure.

*Jim Huckabay is retired from the Department of Geography at Central. His "WILD WINDS and Other Tales of Growing Up in the Outdoor West," is available online and at bookstores. Contact Jim and join in discussions at [www.insidetheoutdoors.com](http://www.insidetheoutdoors.com).*

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