Alumni Spotlight: Andy Day

Andy Day attended Humbolt Elementary School, Blue Mountain Junior High School, and Grant Union High School, graduating in 1976, celebrating fifty years this summer. He shared a few memories with us about growing up in Grant County with two older brothers and a younger sister. His dad was a manager at California-Pacific Utilities Company, who provided electric services to Eastern Oregon, and his mom worked for the Oregon Department of Human Resources in the Child Protective Services office.

The Day family lived on Humbolt Street in Canyon City, across from the school, until 5th-grade when they moved to Second Street in John Day. “People took care of each other. Every parent on the street kept tabs on each other’s kids. Back then, the kids were pushed out of the house to go play after school and we weren't expected home until the street lights came on.” Neighborhood kids spent their time riding bikes up and down the street (and at one time or another sneaking bikes up to ride on the school roof), squirrel hunting, or hiking up to the airport to explore. He fondly remembers camping overnight up on airport hill, investigating old mines, and using pine needles as torches. “Nobody got hurt. We didn’t break the law, but we stretched it quite a bit!” Day remembers when the school was heated with coal. He said the kids liked to pick up small pieces of coal off the ground after a delivery as though it was treasure.

His yearbook credits Day as active in Search and Rescue, Letterman Club, Work Study, Football, Golf, Wrestling, Baseball, and Intramural Basketball. He played outside linebacker, graduating with a shoulder injury and a scar across the bridge of his nose from a helmet that was too big. He laughs and adds, “We made do with what we had!”

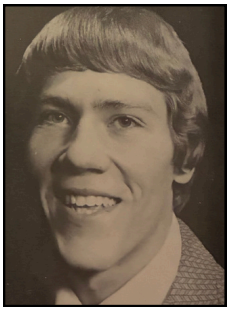
Day’s favorite teachers included Pete Baucum, who taught Biology and Conservation, and Don Jones, who taught Citizenship and Clusters, as well as coaching football. “I didn’t really like school, but if I had to be there, Baucum's class was where I wanted to be. I just wanted to be working and hunting, but looking back now I wish I had taken it more seriously.” Day explained that students had to be present in their afternoon classes in order to play sports, so it wasn’t unusual for him to take off in the morning for a squirrel hunt, returning in time to get to school at lunch. By his senior year, Day took his last few classes and left school for a work study position at Lou’s Tire Center, where he spent his time retreading tires.

After graduation, Day worked for the Forest Service a few years before taking a job in the Public Works Department for the City of John Day, then the City of Mount Vernon. After twelve years in public works, Day enrolled in the Trades Program at Boise State University, attending classes and apprenticing for a plumber in Boise, traveling home to visit his family on the weekends. He started Andy’s Plumbing and Sports in 1998, finding his own unique way of combining his plumbing business and his passion for hunting and archery. On his retirement in 2020, he handed the business off to his son-in-law Bob Cobb, rebranding the business Patriot Plumbing and Gear.

Day has continued leading the 4-H Archery and Shotgun club, who he had shared his knowledge with for over 20 years. “Four times I’ve had a student Robin Hood an arrow!” he exclaimed, sharing that when a student is able to perfectly hit one arrow already in the target with another arrow, he bought them a dozen arrows. He also reloads shotgun shells and makes sure students have the right equipment for what they need.

Day’s retirement has been busy with hunting, fishing, golf, playing cards, and traveling with his wife Maxine. One of the highlights has been taking their grandchildren on a trip when they turn fifteen, making special memories with each of them.





Pictured Above: Andy and Maxine Day with Andy’s daughters: Shanley and Bob Cobb with Bobby, Garret, Noah, and Cooper of John Day, Oregon; and Samantha and Ben Phillips with Lucy and Asher of Nampa, Idaho.

Also pictured: Day’s senior yearbook picture, along with his team football and baseball photos.



