



2025 Chief Whitetail Dinner: Saturday, May 24, 2025; Lakeview, Oregon:

Pictured From Left to Right: PCWT Bill Cannon #72, Floyd Davidson #84, Dave Ortwein #70, John Cham #86, Dugan Caffrey #85, Spud Sperb #82, Ron Wilkie #78, Richard Card #73, Bill Miller #77, Randy Utley #83, and CWT Jim (Mudballs) Blair

Lakeview Hosts Over a Decade of the Order's Greatest

Dinner Honors Current Chief Whitetail Jim Blair

By Grand Historian
Patrick Twitchell

There are not many things greater than approaching Lakeview on a beautiful sunny May Saturday. The grass is green and chock-full of wildflowers thanks to many Spring rain showers. The journey to the great honorary dinner was graced by many of our four-legged horned brethren in the fields. Such a fortuitous omen could not be discounted lightly.

The Lakeview Elks was the scene for several generations of Antelopers to gather and share in stories of life, the Mountain, and anticipation of the upcoming Trek. Board of Control President and Exalted Ruler of the Lodge Greg Campbell and family were hard at work making sure everything went off without a hitch. As one ventured further into the Lodge, around the corner, one was greeted with a lush watering hole. Our two legged short-horned brethren are well acquainted to this time-honored tradition. Conversations flowed, along with a few tall tales, as members reconnected as if no time had passed. It was here, that one could find tonight's main attraction, one Chief Whitetail Jim Blair entertaining all comers.

Chief Whitetail Jim Blair, Lakeview born and raised, seemed right at home on the barstool greeting all that were in attendance. Jim has had the Order in his blood since the day he was born. His father, John Blair, Past Chief Whitetail #23, was torn about missing the Trek in 48', but that was when Jim decided it was time to make his grand entrance to the world. Luckily for John, after Jim was born and safely in the nursery, Jim's mother didn't have much use for him for the next couple of days, and suggested he should make for the mountain. Knowing his young son was in capable hands, John heeded the call and made for the Mountain.

As Jim grew up in Lakeview, met his wife in high school, graduated from Oregon Tech, and pursued a career in engineering that led him to our nation's capital as a lobbyist and finally to Denver Colorado. His talents as a lobbyist would come in handy later in the evening's program.

As dinner approached, 10 Past Chief Whitetails, families, and BOC officers found open seats. Ceremonies opened with the pledge and introductions of all those in attendance. Much like a Dean Martin roast of old, the Past Chief Whitetails shared words for and about Jim. As the good-natured words sank in, Grand Orator Steve Frazier drove the lively program with words about Jim, the Order, and several almost-safe-for-work stories. With the audience well primed, Jim took the stage and shared his vision for the Order moving forward.

“If you don’t have a presence online, you don’t exist”
- Chief Whitetail Jim Blair

There is no doubt that Jim wants the Order to thrive in the coming years and pitched some ideas for bringing the Order into at least the 20th century with a foundation website that would provide a public face for the foundation and its conservation work. Also, he shared ideas for member retention as we move forward into the always uncertain future.

As the night began to wind down, it was clear everyone in attendance was energized for the future of the Order and the Trek ahead. Heck, even the wives in the room seemed excited to support their husband's July disappearing acts. This Trek, the 88th, will be unlike any in our long history, but hundreds of Pronghorns of the Order of the Antelope will ensure it remains one of the last, best hopes for the preservation of the Pronghorn antelope and the preservation of the spirit of the men in attendance. See you gentleman on the Mountain.