

DOUBLE RAFTER NEWS # 11

Since it's been a while since I've sent out a newsletter we are going to cover a rather large time frame so just bear with me. In today's newsletter we are going to cover the March blizzard, the flood in June, Brendon and Erin's wedding, (and what I learned as a cowboy about weddings and women). The Guardians of the Range and next years cattle drives, the Guardians Range fee, and any thing else I want to talk about, it is my newsletter!! We will also cover a brand new venue "**COWBOY CAMP**". And of course there will be a section on crew news.

CREW NEWS: Jake Kerns has taken up saddle bronc riding. Sounds like a nice quiet hobby for someone who still has all their teeth and original parts. Jake enrolled in bronc riding school in Kaycee and so far has only had to spit the dirt out of his mouth and shake out his shorts a couple of times. He has managed to ride most of the bucking horses, however here on the Double Rafter it is horses 3, and Jake 0. The first event happened during the July Cattle Drive as we were putting the horses up for the night. Jake jumped on the first horse bareback and started chasing the other horses down to the hitch line. Now it's about a half mile from where they started to the hitch line. Jake did real well for the first 20 yards before the bouncing of the bareback horse managed to plant him in a gopher mound. Of course, all of his good natured cousins managed to laugh out loud since none of them wanted to be the only one to eat gopher. I believe all total there were 3 other cousins who hit the ground. Anyway, horse 1 and Jake 0. The second time we were riding out of Rock Cabin Park to Bear Trap to meet the bus that was to take us to the valley. Jake's horse jumped a boggy spot in the swamp and when Jake came down he was sitting in front of the saddle horn on his horses neck. Horses 2 and Jake 0. The third time David brought Jake and a friend of his too Lake Creek to camp for a few days. They decided to go riding one evening so they ran the horses in and caught a couple of ponies. The first evening all went well. The next morning they decided to do some more riding. They caught one horse that they had ridden the evening before and Jake decided to ride something else. He looked the horses over and was sure he recognized a grey mare we call Ginger. He caught her, saddled up and led her out of the corral. All was fine and dandy except it wasn't Ginger. Now had it been Ginger I wouldn't be writing this. Anyway, Jake crawls on and Spotted Owl dives for the timber. When she comes out of the timber, Jake looks like he has been sliding down a gravel road on his face. Once she is out of the timber and has room to do something, she blows. Horses 3 and Jake 0. X-Rays showed Jake was just fine other than a few bruises to go with the missing hide on his face. Such is the life of a bronc rider.

It was about 3 days before the June cattle drive and it was terribly hot and we had had a rather long several days trying to get the camp set up at Rock Cabin Park. Trent and a college buddy of his "Will" were sitting on the porch having a cold beer. As they had one, then two and were complaining about the heat they noticed Maverik lying in the shade panting away. Trent mentioned to Will that he was sure Maverik was terribly hot in that heavy coat. They commented how good that cold beer tasted and how the poor dog couldn't enjoy the simple pleasure of life called beer. Well when they got to 4 or 5 beers they decided Maverik needed a haircut. Trent went and got the clippers and well, the rest is history. Yep, you might be a redneck if you have 4 or 5 beers and want to give the dog a haircut! Once they were finished Maverik was almost embarrassed by it. They

clipped him so short he actually got sunburned. We are 60 days from the haircut and he now has about 1 inch of hair.

The problem we had setting up Rock Cabin Park was the wet heavy snow we had in late March and all the strong wind, there were trees down everywhere. When we got into the Little Horn Cabin, Trent went on ahead to knock any tree's out of the way on the trail. He took the chainsaw anticipating 3 or 4 trees. When Trent, Meg and Alice got to the first timber patch and Trent saw hundreds of downed trees he sent Alice and Meg back to camp and said, "send muscle". Trent, Taylor and Sam Barney cut trees off the trail from noon to 6:30 that evening and hadn't even made it to Elk Draw yet. When Trent rode in he was exhibiting signs of hypothermia. He was so exhausted he had nothing left. It was hot out, yet we had to put two coats on him to get him to stop chilling. He was so tired it took two hands to hold a cup of hot coffee! The scary part was that we were now a day behind on our plan and hadn't even gotten into Rock Cabin Park yet. That was the 17th of June, we had the first trip coming in a little over a week. Brendon went down the next morning with the saw and finished cutting out the trail into Rock Cabin. We got into Rock Cabin around noon. A full 24 hours later than planned. The next day Trent rode down to check the trail out of Robinson Crossing and sure enough it was just as bad. Trent spent the entire day just cutting the trail down to the river. That's about a half mile. It's no wonder, when they got home and had a few beers that the dog got a haircut.

Alice won the Wyoming History Teacher of the year award for grades K-12 which now has her qualified for the National History Teacher competition. She has been rather embarrassed by all of the attention but it is nice to have someone else know what I've known all along. Alice is one of those gifted teachers. Teachers are born, they are not made. We all know people with there doctorate in education that couldn't teach a dog to sit, but they do meet all the standards of a superior teacher and are setting the guidelines for education today. If they want to improve the quality of education get the teachers back in the classroom and do away with the department of education.

MARCH BLIZZARD: Well it's been a lot of years since we had a serious northern blizzard blow in. Actually, the last serious one was in 1984 when we had 56 inches of snow on the level the 26th of April, but then that's not what this story is about. This storm hit the 28th of March and dumped 30-40 inches of snow. I can't say on the level because it blew so hard all of the snow was in piles 6-8 ft deep. They were calling for this storm, so I started hauling hay in close to the cattle, so I would have something to feed them if I couldn't get to my haystack which is a couple miles from the house and where the cattle were. The storm hit about 6 hours earlier than expected and was as severe as they were calling for. They let school out about 2 hours after it started and sent everyone home. I came in for lunch and discovered that the electricity had already gone out. Alice wasn't home yet from school because like always, there is some student who they couldn't get a hold of their parents and for some reason they don't like it when you leave kids at school and go home yourself. Anyway she and Taylor pulled in about 1:00pm. As soon as Taylor walked in the door I said, "go get your winter clothes on" because we are headed out to get firewood. The house had already cooled off 10-15 degrees since morning. With visibility very limited we headed out with the 4 wheel drive tractor to get firewood. Because of all the snow in February, then it had warmed up, the draws all had a couple of feet of water in them covered over with snow. When you would drive into one of those draws and the mud and slush would come up around the

axle of the tractor I would hold my breath because I knew if the tractor got stuck I had major problems. With the snow piling up we went down into a cottonwood patch and cut a bucket load of firewood and headed back to the house. We left everything in 10 ft lengths because as bad as the storm was I knew if we took the time to cut the wood up, the storm was going to ground us sooner than later. We hauled in the first load and Taylor was dismayed when I said we were headed out to get another. You should have seen his mouth drop when I said we were going after a fourth. He was sure I had lost my marbles. Four days later he was sure glad we had cut as much as we had. All we had for heat was the fireplace, but it really wasn't that much different than cow camp. No water, electricity, or heat. One of the reasons the Old Timers got up when it was daylight and went to bed when it got dark was because it was too much work to cut extra firewood to burn at night and use for light. A house at 50 degrees is really not that bad. We got to where smoky tasting oatmeal was acceptable and discovered that it takes about 5 gallons of snow to make ½ gallon of water. Once you had melted about 20 gallons of snow you could flush the toilet one time. I really had one of the most enjoyable days I have had in a long time, sitting by the fire, putting wood on it and watching the blizzard outside. It was blowing and snowing so hard that there was no sense to try and feed any cattle. The cattle had all gone to shelter and would be waiting this storm out just like us. The day it broke we tried to feed the cattle and did get them fed but it took 7 and ½ hours to feed 6 bales of hay. I buried the 4 wheel drive tractor 20 yards outside of the barn and spent 2 hours shoveling wet heavy snow getting it out. We had a battery operated radio and they said there was no way they were going to get the interstates opened for at least another day, so just sit tight and count your blessings. We knew that until they got the interstate opened we weren't going to have electricity. Four days after the storm they finally got the roads opened and our electricity back on. At the 4 day point the stuff in the deep freeze were starting to get soft so I was glad to have the electricity back. There was lots of livestock killed in the storm as a lot of people were busy calving. Most everything born out in the hills during the storm perished as well. There were some cattle that were killed in an avalanche, but we got lucky and only lost one yearling. We didn't find all the cattle for several days as some of them were drifted in somewhere and couldn't get out until we dug them out. It was a memorable experience and I wish everyone who had been on last September's trip (06) was here to enjoy this one with me also. It seems like I just get people trained to deal with a blizzard and they leave!

GUARDIANS OF THE RANGE: Well most of you know I'm on the board of a group called Guardians of the Range. Our immediate dealings are with the Forest Service and the BLM. What drives them is the legal terrorist called environmentalist. Our job is to try and bring some common sense to the emotional world of environmentalism. This is no small challenge. The terrorist are well funded with donations from those who they have managed to stir the strings of emotion. I mean it's really tough to argue with the question "Don't you want clean water?" I mean have you stopped beating your wife yet, how do you answer that one, same thing. If all we had to do, was deal with the local FS or BLM we could fund ourselves with just our membership. But as anyone knows this monster is huge. The battle goes way beyond our little sleepy agriculture communities. However, our little agriculture communities are in danger of disappearing if we don't stand up now and be counted. When we go by the wayside for political gain, a very genuine piece of our culture goes with it. It will

never be recovered. This battle over public lands is so much larger than just grazing. As long as we have the right to continue grazing, everyone else who uses public lands, can rest assured that they too will be able to continue to use these public lands. There are so many uses at risk such as hunting, hiking, camping, cross country skiing, snow machining, fishing, viewing of wildlife, horseback riding, firewood cutting, picnicking, grazing and logging and many more. They will shut us down, one user group at a time until all you will be able to do is look at the pictures. Talking to a friend from Georgia, he says they are running into the same thing there except there isn't any grazing. They are trying to close down horse trails. Don't make any mistake about this, it's about control and good vs. evil. In our efforts to battle this takeover, of our rights, the Guardians have established an endowment fund with the Wyoming Community Foundation. The fund will be named after our recently deceased Senator Craig Thomas who just lost his battle with Leukemia. This fund will give us the ability to counter this movement with common sense and science and not emotion!! This battle isn't going to be won in the near future, this is a long term battle. So if anyone would like to give to this endowment to help us maintain our culture and the freedom for others we would gladly accept your generous gift. This is the first year of working towards this endowment. Our plans for the first year are to establish a \$250,000.00 endowment. This first year and only this year we are asking to take 10% right off the top for general operation but the rest will go in the permanent endowment.

Now the \$20.00 per person Guardian Range Fee that I am charging, starting next year will go directly to the Guardians for the day to day operation in our battle with the environmentalist and the liberal judges that are giving the power to the environmentalist. So when you come as a guest, you are not only helping in this fight to preserve a piece of the American West, but also the freedoms of people all across this great country.

BRENDON AND ERIN'S WEDDING: They had planned on holding the wedding ceremony on the campsite where we pitch camp for the cattle drives. They had planned the wedding for June 2nd knowing that on Pass Creek the weather could be a little iffy that time of year. June 2nd turned out to be an absolutely gorgeous day with perfect weather. It was the 30th of May and the 1st of June that weren't very nice. Everything went according to plan until the 1st. Starting on the 30th of May we had 3 inches of rain in 9 hours and 12 inches of fresh wet heavy snow on the mountain. When the storm broke the night of the 30th we awoke to massive floods. The camp spot where the wedding was to be held was completely under water. Brendon and built log benches for pews and many of them were weighing in excess of 200 lbs. They were all pushed together in a log jam together. Retrieving them for the wedding was out of the question. The creek in front of Mom and Dad's house which is normally about 10yds wide was 80 yds wide. The edge of the creek was flowing right up to the big cottonwood trees in the front lawn. With 200 people coming, the basement had 2 foot of water in it and of course the pump is down there and was under water, which meant it had to be shut off which meant no water to flush toilets. I wasn't sure that telling 200 people in wedding attire to go out behind the barn was appropriate and my to be daughter in law informed me it wasn't an option. Anyway, the 3 holer we use on the cattle drives came to the rescue. Now we had retired it three years ago but it's amazing what a little motivation like a wedding can do. With the front yard flowing lots of water, I suggested we float the bride in, like on a Viking ship, but was informed that was the burial ritual of the Vikings and

that wasn't the image we wanted for a wedding. (Sometimes the similarities are scary.) Well, so far I was 0 for 2 on my ideas being accepted. It's a good thing my folks have a big yard because we managed to move everything to another spot on the yard and ended up having a beautiful wedding. I have to tip my hat to my daughter in-law Erin. All of this water flooding the site they had been working and planning on, for over a year was all under water, and she took it all in stride and never even got ruffled. I'm proud to have her as part of the family. Life pitches you lots of curveballs and you better learn how to deal with it and move on.

WHAT A WYOMING COWBOY LEARNED ABOUT WOMEN AND

WEDDINGS: Since Alice and I were hosting the rehearsal dinner at our place and the wedding was going to be at the Double Rafter, I knew there was going to be a lot of pressure to have both places spit polished, but I never knew the spit had to be polished. There is nothing like hosting rehearsal and a wedding to bring the differences between a man and woman to the surface. Yep, I learned all kinds of things about the opposite sex and I didn't even get a government grant to do it. That in itself, puts me in a rather unique place. Well anyway let me go on and explain my higher plane of learning and let me say the curve was rather steep. Let me first explain, this is not an attack on my wife but rather a showing, of the differences between the sexes.

I have come to the conclusion that when a female hits puberty they are indoctrinated into a secret women's society that only they have access, and understanding to. I am convinced they have a secret web site that must list all of the things they have done wrong in life, such as not having color coordinated soaps with the towels, or toilet paper that doesn't match the décor of the rest of the bathroom. Apparently women can go to this site and observe how big of a screw up their host really is. Obviously, it is every woman's responsibility to report these mistakes on the ladies only web site. The last thing I would ever want to know is the password to this website. The things I would discover would be frightening!! I have discovered what the secret women's organization PEO means though and will share that with you. It is so simple, **P**eople for **E**thical treatment of **O**ffspring. This must create great conversation when the ladies get together, to do whatever ladies get together to do.

This color coordination thing creates a real problem for most men, especially me. I remember the first time I flew to Omaha NE to meet my future in-laws and it took me 20 minutes to find the color coordinated light switch so that I could go to bed. I felt like James Bond looking for a hidden switch.

There is another purpose to this web site and that is to teach women how to talk to a man, so that he is completely confused as to what was just said. Let me give you some examples of women speak that I have personally encountered, and I would welcome any feedback from any of you guys that have figured out just what was said. The first one was "Go to the linen closet and get out the good towels". Talk about leaving me speechless, I didn't have a clue as to what differentiates a good towel from a bad towel. Now during the rehearsal period and wedding time we had funny little soaps in the bathroom and the package they came in said essence of Holland. Now while I was trying to read between the lines, I thought maybe that meant we had towels that had pictures of tulips on them. I was wrong on both counts. As I was standing in the bathroom linen closet pondering which fate was worse, grabbing one set of towels and chance being told they were the wrong ones or going and saying, I am completely clueless as to which ones

are the good towels, I noticed a funny shaped glass vase with funny colored marbles in it. Now since all the marbles are the same size and color I couldn't come up with a reasonable explanation. I really didn't think my wife had just come up with an overwhelming desire to play marbles, but then I didn't know what was on this secret web site either. As my wife noticed me eyeing the funny colored marbles, she said the salmon colored marbles go with the good towels. I really don't know why she just didn't say it in the first place "The good towels are the after birth pink ones". I would have known immediately which ones we were talking about. Let me give you a few other examples of female speak that I don't have the nerve to honestly answer. These all occurred during the week prior to the wedding.

Do you want to fold this laundry? How fair of a question is that?

You really aren't going to wear that are you? ~~Just put it on to see if it still fits!

Taylor has a game at 4:45. Does that mean I am to pick him up or you are picking him up or am I to go to his game, or do we have another conflict that I am unaware of.

You are such a guy! ~~ I hope that's not a surprise after 25 years of marriage.

The royal WE~~~ We need to mop the floor, We need to vacuum the downstairs. We need to wash the walls. I did figure out that we is really You! Maybe there is hope for me yet. By the same token, not understanding this secret language has led to 25 years of marital bliss.

I read in the paper that the cake was a Red Velvet Cake. What the hell flavor is that? I just can't imagine putting a little frosting on Red Velvet and serving it, even if you are a guy. The only thing that I am completely convinced of is that I don't ever want to know where this secret women' society is or there web address!!!

NEXT YEARS DOUBLE RAFTER PLANS:

COWBOY CAMP: We are offering a brand new venue next year. Chris Ellsworth has teamed up with us and we are going to offer a week long trip, that will consist of horsemanship with Chris in the mornings and then in the afternoons we will go work cattle. All aspects of handling cattle by horse will be covered. If you have ever wanted to take up team penning, this is a must! You must learn to **THINK LIKE A COW!!** You can bring your own horse, or us one of ours. No where else can you get this type of activity in a 70,000 acre arena at 9,000 feet. At the end of the week we will take an overnight pack trip to Rock Cabin Park where we will take in Leaky Mountain and Emerald Hot Springs. For those who think the cattle drives might be to intense, this trip could be just perfect. We will offer this twice during the summer. One will be a ladies only and the other an adults only. I wouldn't wait to long to make decisions on this because we are limiting this to 15 people so that we can make sure everyone gets the individual attention they need to improve their skills. These trips will start the 28th of July and the 11th of Aug. Go to the web site for more information. We had great success on the cattle drives this year and if the bookings to date are any indication next year will be a sellout also. We have bookings for every trip already, with the July trip being full and the June trip is just about full. So if you want a spot you better get booked. Well, I'm going to end this and go shoe some more horses. Since I sort of threw this together I'll make you a deal, If you don't comment on the writing, I won't comment on your riding! Take care and God Bless!!

Dana

