

A DOUBLE RAFTER MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

As the weather turns colder and we get a dusting of snow on the ground, my thoughts always turn to the many blessings we have to be thankful for as we enter the Christmas season. As the ranch work slows down slightly, I get a chance to sit and quietly read the trip reports and reflect. I am always amazed at the great number of people this great **WORLD** has in it. As we get the chance to know these people, we come to realize that the cattle drives are truly a blessing. Last year we had many people from the states but several foreign countries as well. We had them from Norway, Holland, Germany, and England and of course Massachusetts (any state that continues to reelect Ted Kennedy can't be part of the US)! We thank all of you, as you have not only touched our lives, but our hearts as well. Your willingness to try something new and even continue to smile and laugh when things got a little rough shows the spirit that you have within you. When I run through the guest lists of each trip it brings back memories that I am truly thankful to have. You people have helped mold my life and family into something that is unique and enjoyable. I am truly blessed to be able to share our little piece of the world with you. You have helped my kids grow up, (aged my horses) and I'm sure confused more than one cow, it has all worked out for the betterment of all us here in Wyoming.

THANK YOU FOR THE BLESSING!

Family News:

There really isn't a lot to report which is good because that means everyone's health is good. Everyone is busy with school including myself as I have done a lot of subbing since we got the cattle shipped in October. We have had decent moisture in the valley this fall but we haven't really had any snow on the mountain. I doubt if there is 6 inches on the level anywhere. I think you could probably drive into camp still. Of course I don't plan on doing that unless someone sees a yearling up there. We are planning on going to Omaha for Christmas; also I am planning on making the World Horse Expo in Pennsylvania the 21st of February. We are looking forward to seeing many of you again this year and are gearing up for the upcoming summer. I'm trying 6 new horses right now and they appear to be gentle enough but they certainly need some polish and some work on their ground manners. Cowboy Camp is going to be a real hoot so if you want to try something new we still have some room. We will have a new mess tent, showers, and better outhouse facilities. I think down the road it will have our highest guest return rate.

SPEAK LOUDLY, PROUDLY AND RIDE A FAST HORSE.

I hope none of you thought you were going to get through a newsletter without me lecturing on the woes of this world. Since I never do it in person and only in the newsletter (that's a feeble attempt at a joke). Those that know me won't be surprised at my proclaiming **MERRY CHRISTMAS** instead of happy holidays. Happy Holidays may be politically correct but then when have I ever worried about being politically correct. Let me define Happy Holidays by a rancher's point of view and let me say I can't see where it has anything to do with the birth of the Christ child.

A happy holiday is when the cattle drive season is over, and you know that the people had a great time and you had the privilege of spending a week with some of the finest people on this earth.

A happy holiday is when the last yearling is loaded on the truck and is someone else's problem from now on.

A happy holiday is when you have time to stop ranch work and go do something as a family. (Alice says she actually hopes this happens one day).

A happy holiday is when it's 30 below and the wind is screaming and you can't see 20 yards ahead of you, but you are sitting in the kitchen having another cup of coffee.

A happy holiday is any day on the mountain, and the sky is just starting to turn pink and you stop for 10 minutes to watch the arrival of another glorious day.

A happy holiday is when you have 12,000 lbs of cattle in the trailer and a tire blows and you have enough oil in the 12 ton jack to lift the trailer.

A happy holiday is when you get pulled over doing 28 in a school zone because you were thinking about the circle you need to make on the mountain and they just give you a warning.

A happy holiday is when you get off your horse and sit in the grass for a few minutes just to watch the day go by.

A happy holiday is when the bucking horse you are riding quits bucking and you are still astride him.

A happy holiday is going somewhere and not leaving anyone a phone number where they can reach you.

A happy holiday is not having to start feeding cattle until after the first of February

A happy holiday is having your dog save your life by attacking that mean mother cow that has you down on the ground and is going to stomp a hole in you.

A happy holiday is when the kids go to school the day after Halloween and forget to hide their candy.

A happy holiday is any time the family gets together just to be together.

A happy holiday is any day the federal government isn't working.

A happy holiday is any day you get to do what you enjoy doing even if it's work

A happy holiday is when you put the last shoe on the 33 head of horses you have been shoeing.

A happy holiday is not having to share your camp with a Grizzly Bear.

A happy holiday is any day any of your kids graduate from anything.

A happy holiday is having it dry on the week of the cattle drives.

A happy holiday is keeping your fingers out of your dally when roping.

A happy holiday is no c-sections on Easter.

MERRY CHRISTMAS has everything to do with the birth of Christ, the forgiveness of sins and my right to proudly proclaim my faith in Jesus Christ. Regardless of which religion you might or might not practice you owe me the same respect I owe you. The right to believe publicly in my faith and if this offends you~~~get over it!!! Just one other little note for those non believers. A mathematician just figured out statistically what the chances were for all the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the birth of Jesus Christ to come true. Mathematically they were 1 in 83 billion. Reflect on that a while.

I am going to attach a work of art done of the Little Horn Rim by one of our past guests from Canada, Stuart Arnett. The original photo was taken during that first brutal September snow storm we had 3 years ago. He has prints for sale and also the original. You can contact me if you are interested or you can contact: stuart@stuartarnett.com One of the nicest things about this is he is going to donate 40% of the sale proceeds to the Guardians of the Range. So if you purchase one you are also insuring our basic rights of freedom which comes back to the whole theme of this letter **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!**

“COWBOY COOKIN”

SADDLE BLANKET WAFFLES

Since I do all the breakfast cookin around our outfit I thought I would share a little tip about “COWBOY COOKIN”. First off it is cookin not cooking and the second biggest trick to “COWBOY COOKING” is that you never ever measure anything. How many times on the trail do you think I had such items as mixers, and measuring spoons? Well after you start carrying those items with you, and they start clanking in your saddle bags, and the horse you are riding decides that maybe the devil is after him, you come to the conclusion that the cookin, using the TLAR method is the only way to go. (That Looks About Right). Besides using the TLAR method always gives you the excuse that it tastes that way because you didn’t measure anything. TLAR is also the way it is done in prison according to Martha Stewart. Anyway some of the best waffles you will ever have, are made this way. Somewhere between one and two cups of flour, one to two teaspoons of baking powder, somewhere in the neighborhood of 3 tablespoons of sugar then thoroughly to mix. Then add a couple of cackle berries, a couple cap fulls of cookin oil and about whatever looks like about a cup or a little more of sour cream. Now the warmer the sour cream the better. Mix and then cook and eat. I think you will be surprised at how well sweet and sour saddle blanket waffles turn out. Of course if you want a variety, you can cook them on the griddle, and call them pancakes or put them in muffin tins and call them muffins. Since you don’t measure anything they will always taste different, so know one will really ever know. If you don’t care for them for breakfast, here is one other little tip. Go put 8 hours in the saddle and when you come in for your evening meal you add strawberries, whip cream and call it strawberry short cake. It works!!! **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND MAY GOD BLESS!**

Dana

