

TO HELL WITH HAPPY HOLIDAYS- MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

Well we kicked off the Holidays with our annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the Double Rafter and all of the family was present and accounted for. It made for a great afternoon other than the football game. Trent, Tyler, Krayton's son in-law Tim and myself are die hard Cowboy fans, while Dad, Blaine and his son Will, are Denver fans. It made for a very quiet football game as nobody really wanted to offend anyone else and ruin the day. Regardless, it was a good game to watch even if it took a little more wine than normal to get through. One thing for sure is that when the hillbillies get together you never know what is going to show up. Krayton was on call so he brought a dog he was treating with him so he could come. The dog had gotten into some rat poison and the people noticed 48 hours later that the dog seemed sick. They said he was fine 3 hours after digesting it so they assumed the dog was fine. So the dog was in a traveling cage hooked up to IV's next to the dinning room table. However, he was completely out of it but Krayton felt the prognosis was good.

Mom was insistent that no one was going to bring anything for the dinner so she told us to bring wine. Now mother never told us that she had told everyone else the same thing. All of us thought it was our responsibility to bring the wine for the dinner. We had about 18 bottles of wine with dinner. That was one happy turkey crowd!!

RANCH NEWS: We shipped the first 280 steers on the 28 of September and then had to head to the mountain to gather the remaining cattle that we had left from the September gather. The first group we shipped came in about 40 lbs light which makes the buyer smile from ear to ear, as my loss is his gain. Since they were under contract my hands were tied. We had a great gather on the clean up ride, other than Mother Nature dumped 14 inches of snow on us. We shipped those cattle on the 16th of October and were about 15 pounds light on that bunch. The one pot load of heifers we had, hit their weight right on the money. After we shipped, I spent the next week riding lots of country down here in the valley and have managed to pick up all but one animal. That is really amazing when you figure how far we travel with these cattle over the course of the summer. It also shows how helpful all of your efforts are during the course of the summer. I still have this little bunch of yearlings left here and am trying to get them sold but the problem is that I don't have a full pot load so most buyers aren't interested because the freight costs are the same for a partial load as a full load. It's not like freight has become a cheap item with the cost of fuel doing what it has done.

During the clean up ride I had the pleasure of riding my brand new saddle. It was a shame the weather was so bad because that new saddle looked used pretty fast. I asked Chris how his wife Clair managed to build a saddle that didn't have any squeak to it, as all the other new saddles I have ever ridden or been around you can hear them squeaking from at least a quarter mile away. I guess Clair hot oils the saddle three times before she puts it together. Anyway, I'm really proud to be riding an Ellsworth. When I turned 40 my parents bought me a custom made hat, my chaps are custom made by Clair Ellsworth and so is my saddle. The one thing I have learned is that the quality in custom made equipment is incredible. If you have ever noticed, my hat never blows off unless the

horse bucks me off. What a shame that a custom made saddle doesn't keep my butt in the saddle when a horse blows!!

COW WHISPERER : No Sh__ this really happened to me!! I was a young man of 22 spending my time running the cow side of the ranch operation doing anything that involved 4 legs that either mooed, neighed, or barked. It was April and calving season had been going on for about 6 weeks and my sense of humor had vanished along with the sleep that I hadn't been getting. On top of that we were losing some calves for no reason that we could figure out. The stress of losing calves was mounting so that all you did was grunt to each other because to say anything meant you might bite at the same time. Krayton was in vet school and came home for spring break and discovered what it was that had been killing calves for the past three years. The calves would die anywhere from 3 days old to 45 days old. There was a vaccination for this disorder but since we were already calving and the cows would need two boosters to generate any immunity it wouldn't do the calves any good that would be born in the next two weeks or the calves that were already born. So the vet said the next best thing was to vaccinate each calf upon birth. (Since we were already tagging and banding each calf when they were born it just meant one more thing to do to those day old calves). Now carrying my tagging tool, tags, elastrator, and cheerios I didn't have enough pockets for additional medicine and syringes so I put everything in my purse (yes I said purse and if I hear anything about it you will draw a circle with me) Now the process is really very simple, you walk up behind the day old calf who is still a little wobbly when they walk, and depending on gender you grab either the right back leg or the left back leg and flip the animal down. By kneeling down on his rib cage you can hold the animal, thus freeing up your hands to tag, castrate, and give the calf a shot. It sounds pretty simple, except for one thing, that's 1200 pounds of mad momma cow wanting to get into your pants. Now as a male that is every guys dream to have a female want to get into his pants. Now let me tell you, it's not what it's all cracked up to be. Now as you are down on this calf, she is blowing snot in your face, pawing up all kinds of earth, and bellowing like a banshee. Generally, you can look them in the eye and tell if they are serious or just bluffing. When I say look them in the eye it is generally at about 24 inches. The thing to remember is that if she is serious, you always want to keep the calf between you and her. She generally won't hit you out of fear of hitting her own baby. That's true about 96.377% of the time. This story is about the other 3.623%. I was tagging a bunch of two year old heifer calves on a nice warm sunny afternoon enjoying the sun and thinking how nice it would be to just lay down and sleep. Generally, because two year old heifers are new at motherhood, they are also less likely to hit you than a cow. I grabbed this one calf, put him down on the ground, dropped onto him and started to reach for my purse. This cow didn't exhibit any of the normal bovine behavior, she didn't paw the dirt, blow snot, or bellow, she just put her head up, and came at me. Now as she is charging up to me I look into her eyes and all I see is red and hatred. I pick up the calf, throw it at her and run the other direction. She stopped as soon as her calf hit her in the face. With my short sense of humor and knowing that I needed to get the calf processed, I went over to the apple orchard and found a good hard apple stick about as big around as a baseball bat and decided Momma and I were going to come to an understanding and when it was over she was going to have a little respect for man. I marched back to her and she is standing over here calf

with her head defiantly high looking me in the eye. The thought went through my mind, you are bluffing you old hide! Learn from the Master!! With the bat over my shoulder I stood my ground as she charged, and swung for the bridge of her nose as she got within 3 feet of me at about 90 MPH. Wood splintered and disintegrated into the air as it hit the bridge of her nose,***** and she never broke stride. She hit me and knocked me up in the air. While I was in the air, I was turning knowing that if I didn't hit the ground running I was going to be a trophy on her wall. She was right in my hip pocket for about 20 yards when she decided I was far enough away from her baby. It's amazing how fast you can be when you have a little incentive!! We named this cow "The cow that wore tennis shoes" because she would never give warnings like pawing or bellowing, she would just raise her head as high as she could lift it, stare at you, then charge!

FAMILY HISTORY: I think this is a rather unique little story and it really sums up my families bloodlines. I think our family tree might have been a weeping willow! When Alice's great grandfather came to Sheridan he spent the first winter staying at the Historic Sheridan Inn which is where Buffalo Bill also happened to be staying at the time. Alice's great grandfather was known to love to play a little game of chance and considered himself a better than adequate player. Just before coming west his wife had died and left him \$80,000.00. By the time springtime rolled around he had managed to lose his entire inheritance to (you guessed it) Buffalo Bill. Alice's great grandfather was definitely rancher material.

CREW NEWS: There really isn't much to report as everyone is doing fine. I got a call the other night from Randy Barney and he had taken his kids out to Badger Creek to go bird hunting for the day and had managed to drive off into one of those big draws, and without any chains, couldn't drive out of there. There was about 8 inches of snow on the ground so all he could do was throw snow and slide back down to the bottom. (Badger Creek is where we run our steers in the spring until we get to the mountain.) I hauled a load of horses out there that day to turn out for the winter, and was on top of the ridge, while Randy was in the bottom. In order for me to haul the load out there I had the pickup chained up on all 4 tires and just barely made it pulling the trailer with 7 horses in it. Had I known Randy was there I could have really taunted him. Anyway, the next day Randy and I drove out there and we walked off into the bottom of the draw with the chains over our shoulders, chained up and drove out of there. Randy felt stupid for driving off in there and of course I couldn't resist the chance to point out the obvious. The really funny part is the fact that Randy's 9 year old reminded him several times on the way out that they didn't have chains. Of course making the best of a bad situation Randy told the kids to grab their guns and they would hunt on their way out. After walking for about 4 miles in the snow, Randy's oldest son showed up to rescue them. Randy said the kids had a blast but I haven't talked to the kids yet!

CATTLE DRIVE CHANGES:

The price of fuel has been a major disappointment to me and I'm sure likewise to yourselves. The price of airfare has jumped as well, as have a lot of goods and products due to Katrina and the high cost of freight. I don't want it to effect what we do since I have most of you trained up to be good help now. With that in mind we are changing our entire fee package. I think most of you will like it. We hope it will make sense to you

but if you have any questions please feel free to call. First off, we are going to discontinue our 6th trip as a free one but have built the savings into our present structure. Everyone who has booked already for next year rest assured that the down will be applied against the new prices, not the old ones.

NEW PRICES: JUNE, JULY & AUG	single booking	\$1835.00
	2-5 people	1685.00
	6-10 people	1655.00
	11 and up	1600.00

SEPT CATTLE DRIVE:	single booking	\$1935.00
	2-5 people	1785.00
	6-10 people	1755.00
	11 and up	1700.00

***Single repeat bookings still receive a 10% discount

All other repeat guests receive a 5% discount

Additional 3% discount for early registration by Feb 1, 2006(contingent on receiving down)

Additional 2% discount for registrations paid in full by Feb 1, 2006 (check or cash only)

CLEAN UP RIDE: OCT 1-6 2006	1450.00
------------------------------------	----------------

PACK TRIPS****BRAND NEW***** 4 DAYS 3 NIGHTS	785.00
---	---------------

Only available on non cattle drive weeks (min of 2 or we reserve the right to cancel)

(This has been set up to help the kids through college so tips are greatly appreciated on this)

: (Brendon, Trent, Tyler, and Chelsie will be running this program.)

CATTLE DRIVE FACT: It takes one guest to just pay the charges from the credit card company.

I hope this season of joy and blessings find all of you in good health and surrounded by family and the love of the Lord! I look forward to seeing or hearing from you in the future. We will have a booth at the Pennsylvania World Horse Expo the end of February. So if any of you are in the neighborhood stop by and we can jaw awhile.

We will be going to Omaha again this Christmas, if we can get away from here. Every Christmas we ask ourselves if this will be our last Christmas with all of us together, so we view it as a very special time. The 4 wheel drive is out of the suburban and hopefully they will have it fixed before we are planning on leaving. We have had a lot of cold the last two weeks with several nights of 20 below. These days of highs in the single digits with a 20 mph wind sure make me look forward to the heat of the summer. We have had so much wind the snow is all in piles, generally anywhere I want to drive. We have a 6 foot drift in our yard on the West side of the house. However, if the weather doesn't change I won't be going to Omaha as the cattle could care less if it's Christmas. Trent got home from college yesterday and Brendon comes home Monday. He and Erin are taking a couple of days coming home and doing some Christmas shopping on the way home. I do have to laugh, he is as much fun to take Christmas shopping as I am. I would rather ride a bucking horse than do Christmas shopping. At least with a bucking horse you know you've got half a chance. Brendon has the videos

from last summer and hopefully will be bringing them home with him as I haven't seen any of them. There is nothing more joyful at Christmas than to sit around the fireplace with a glass of egg nog and watch the summer's videos. It always brings a smile to my lips as it brings back all of the summers highlights, and yes, you are all my summers highlights. **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

DANA AND FAMILY