

## JUNE 27, 2004 TRIP REPORT

SUNDAY JUNE 27<sup>th</sup> As the big yellow school bus pulled into the ranch with the first group of guest for the year, little did they know the education that they were about to get. With 14 beginners on the trip I knew that Advil would get a work out before the week was over. Once introductions were made and the guest had set up their house keeping we headed to arena where the horses stood waiting to start the horsemanship clinic. Clinician, Chris Ellsworth started the clinic with proper saddling techniques and showing them the proper movements around a horse so that the horse wouldn't feel threatened. The morning was spent teaching them what to expect on the trail and how to deal with. As the morning wore on you could see the people start to relax and make huge strides forward. Laura Lee Humphrey made huge strides forward as she admitted to having a real fear of horses from an accident she had had when she was 5 years old. The importance of helping one another with your horse was stressed as we would encounter obstacles such as logs and downed trees that would have to be crossed. After lunch we headed back to the arena to start the cattle handling seminar. Handling cattle is a skill and art, you have to look at them and read their body language. When you do that they will always tell you what they are going to do before they do it. In order to handle cattle properly you have to THINK LIKE A COW! When people mutter you stupid cow is what that really means is "that cow just out smarted me because I didn't read her body language and THINK LIKE A COW". When you add the fact that you have people who are just learning horse skills and have to THINK LIKE A COW all at the same time it becomes a rather complicated process. However, as I reflect back on the summers trips the people did learn a lot and were starting to think like a cow by the end of the week. Both the Horsemanship and cattle handling seminar were very productive from my point of view.

That evening around the fire it was time for our ritual of the WHITE SADDLE BAG award. Now whoever has the biggest screw up of the day has the honor of carrying the bags the next day. Sometimes the first day is the hardest to get a nomination as people don't know one another well and so are a little tentative. However, this group wasn't at all this way. The group sang out almost immediately that they felt Brian Estrem had won the bags hands down. I would have to agree! During the horsemanship clinic that morning either Brians horse wasn't listening or Brian was singing to his horse because his horse decided to lay down and take a little nap. The only problem was that Brian was still on him. Maybe, Brian had been teaching him tricks all morning and when he said roll over the horse did. The only real problem was that Brian had forgotten to get off first and soon realized that at some point in the trick he would be on the bottom. After the White Bag nomination we had a little discussion on cell phones then it was to bed because the next day was an early one.

MONDAY JUNE 28 Breakfast was served at 5:00 sharp. As most people were excited about the upcoming day most were up and rearing to go. As we were waiting around the fire for the cooks to holler breakfast, Ruth McGarvey came up to the fire and I asked her how she had slept. She replied that she hadn't. Then she went on to explain that she had a couple of cracked ribs so it was real hard to lie down. Now since I

have had the pleasure of broken ribs I can honestly tell you they are no fun. You can't lay down and if you do you can't get up, or roll over, or jump, or bend over to tie your shoes, or pull your underwear on, or put your pants on, and a jacket can be rather difficult. But seriously there not to bad if you just don't move!! As we gathered cattle that morning I was really concerned about Ruth but she go along pretty well. She is not a whiner or complainer and being married to Jim is bound to make anyone tough. The cattle move right along that morning and we were into the ranch sometime around noon. After a quick lunch and nap we headed to the arena to start our branding seminar. We certainly stirred up a lot of dust that afternoon. Other than the cowboys couldn't catch anything the seminar went just fine and everyone that wanted to have the chance to put an iron on some of the cattle. From the guest point of view it went very well. From the cattle point of view it's one thing they would have just as soon not done.

That night around the fire Leticia won the WHITE SADDLE BAGS for losing the same coat several times during the day as well as several other items. She put up a valiant defense but Jerry Spence she isn't.

TUESDAY JUNE 29 Again breakfast was at 5:00 sharp and people weren't as quick to the fire this morning. As we have to break camp down and pack it this morning everyone on the crew is busy scurrying around getting things ready for the move. The morning went just fine as the yearlings walked right along and again we were at the Rocky Bottom around 1:00pm. After a short rest people decided to meander down to the Little Horn River for a quick dip to wash the trail dust off. It is usually a quick dip because it's not known for it's warm soothing waters. I guarantee you that water makes you know you're alive. After coming back to camp it was discovered that we had a little visitor in the brush patch next to the cook tent. A small rattlesnake had decided to get out of the sun and had taken up residency in the brush patch to get out of the sun. No one seemed interested in changing the dinner menu to fresh rattlesnake; however several of the crew was sure they could put the rattlesnake to use. Now my wife being a teacher gave several of our younger crew members the dreaded teacher look and the point was made without a word being said. That night around the fire Dan Johanneck won the WHITE SADDLE BAGS. Shelly didn't waste any time getting him nominated. It seems as they road into camp, Dan got off and was leading his horse and his horse started rubbing on him. Dan leaned backed, cocked a huge right hand and threatened the horse with a bloody nose if he didn't stop. When you still have 3 days on the trail most cowboys don't threaten their taxi.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 30 Up the canyon we headed with the cattle and it had every indication of being a hot slow day. As the sun rises and starts shining into the canyon it starts reflecting off the rocks and the temperature quickly reaches the uncomfortable stage. As the yearlings didn't have a clue as to where we were headed or why they could see no reason to hurry. As we neared the switchbacks I mentioned to Tim who was riding drag with me that you certainly wanted to keep looking up above you because cattle would occasionally knock a rock off and down it will come. We rounded the second corner and were giving the cattle a chance to string out and catch their breath one of them knocked a football sized rock off and it rolled right behind my horse and right in front of Tim's. Now Houdini being not the bravest horse in the world spun around in the middle of the trail and down he went. It was a perfect John Kerry imitation, turn and run like hell!! Now that evening around the fire when it was time for

the white bag nomination Tim decided to nominate Dana because he had dropped a candy bar on the trail. Now I saw the candy bar fall and got off and picked it up but to Tim in his demented state of mind he thought it was a perfect nomination. One thing is certain, when the Burlington Northern goes by sometimes innocent people get run over. Choo Choo!!

THURSDAY JULY 1            We let people sleep in this morning and had breakfast around 9:00. The Indian Fry Bread breakfast is always a real popular meal and with the sun shining off the red rims it's a great day to stand around the fire and have another cup of coffee and get to visit with people. After breakfast we saddled our horses and went out and gathered the cattle and trailed them up country another 1000 feet higher then headed to Leaky Mountain and Emerald Hot Springs for a swim. After the swim we discovered that you could have full moon in the middle of the day. That night we had several good nominations around the fire. We had the full moon nomination, and David Barklow for being kind to his horse (he loosened the cinch at camp then led his horse to the other end to unsaddle and the saddle slipped under his belly and the horse went ballistic and kicked the saddle the rest of the way off) and Stephen Duvall for losing his glasses 3 times along the trail for the day. Stephen Duvall won. Several people offered to keep his glasses for him and mail them home to him so that he would be sure and have them when he got home.

FRIDAY JULY 2            Daniel Johanneck had to catch an early flight back that day so he and several crew members rode out shortly after daybreak. I'm sure after his evening of chasing deer he was exhausted. After all he never did catch one. It was deer 45, Daniel 0. They stopped at Bear Lodge to let him catch a shower because we were sure he smelled and would never get through airport security. As he came out of the shower he tossed his shoes into the garbage because he claimed they smelled. Really he wore them out chasing deer. The rest of us packed up and headed out and had lunch at Dayton Gulch. After lunch it was discovered that Stephen Duvall had put his saddle on backwards that morning and ridden it all day that way and never knew it. Tim won the WHITE SADDLE BAGS that night for his trick riding. Isn't it funny how a funny nomination on Wed can come back and bite you on Friday. (In cowboy lingo Tim fell off) At the banquet that night Wayne Grove won the drawing to take the White Bags home with him. I will get them in the mail to you shortly Wayne. Laura Lee Humphrey won the cowboy trivia game for the Double Rafter Buckle. The Wyoming Natural Grass award went to the following: Brian Estrem, Letecia, and Tim. Kerry McGarvey won the Top Hand award and also taught the crew the Tush Push. I had totally forgotten that part of it until I overheard my 13 year old offering to teach his fellow classmates the Tush Push. Gee thanks Kerry!! At least in a conservative school he didn't get kicked out of school for it. I would really like to thank everyone who came and sweated along side of us and made the trip a huge success.