

SEPTEMBER TRIP REPORT 2005

The day started off with a downer as we were hooking up the trailer that morning I got out the gas cans to fill up the generator and found out the generator wasn't in the supply trailer where it was supposed to have been put after the August trip. Apparently someone on the crew had unplugged the electrical cords that had been connected to it because they were in the trailer but had neglected to pick up the generator and put it in the trailer. The generator was brand new and had been used two days on the Aug trip. The rest of the trip it was cold enough we hadn't had to run the generator. Of course now one seems to know anything about it other than whoever found it is still smiling. I hope they rot in hell because we left the camp set up from the Aug trip to the Sept trip so anyway you look at it, it is stealing.

The day the guests arrived we had a pretty nice day at 9000 feet. The valley looked like it was all fogged in. It was a nice crisp 60 degrees and clear as could be. It seemed cold since we had been in the high 80's to 90's the whole week prior to the trip. The guests arrived around 4:00pm with nervous smiles from the first timers and hardy laughs and smiles from the repeat people. It always makes the new people nervous, because what are all these repeat people laughing at? As the week progresses they start to understand it themselves. We are just insane, it's just that simple!

That evening we had to celebrate the 50th birthday of two shaves following in the traditional cowboy and Indian ways. We made him a head dress out of plastic six pack containers and a loin cloth out of a coors cold pack. Then with a leg bone tied with horse hair to give him wisdom, strength, and also to snack on, we gave him his new Indian name. It is now officially Two Bare Cheeks!!! (We aren't sure if that is from shaving twice a day or when walking away from us we realized that he only had a loin cloth on in front!!)

SUNDAY SEPT 18. Our horsemanship clinic was first up and clinician Chris Ellsworth took right to it after a hardy breakfast. It had snowed just a little bit the night before mixed in with a little rain but not enough to really make much difference except to occasionally make your foot slip on the greasy top soil just enough to make you a little uncertain, just how good was the footing really! After lunch we broke up into 5 different groups and headed out to start riding outside circles to try and gather some of these nomadic steers. Blaine's group found 6 and Stan and Craig's group found 3 and did a really great job of trailing them home until Stan's dog showed up and ran all of them off into the timber. So now I have one steer by himself somewhere in Lake Creek and two others somewhere else. Stan won the WHITE BAGS that evening for his little trick.

MONDAY SEPT 19TH. We split 4 different directions this morning to gather and sort all of the cattle in Dayton Gulch and Lick Creek. It took about 4 hours to get all of the cattle gathered up then the sort started. We were wanting to cut out the steers that were under contract for the first delivery the 30th of September. After about 3 hours of cutting we had the job done. I'm sure from an eagles point of view it looked like an ant hill that a grizzly bear was digging in. Cattle were scurring this way and that with people chasing them all over the place, some in, some out, and some both ways! I know the horses were a little tired after the day was over. With all of the gopher holes and soft ground the horses really struggled at times but hey that's the cowboy way. That night around the fire George did his rendition of Tradition with the back ground chorus of Gino, Mary, and

Allen humming in the background. (I thought it was a bobcat mating yeowl!!) Then the nomination came and it was for Stan again because he forgot to wear the honored white bags that day as tradition has so dictated. Talk about breaking tradition!

TUESDAY SEPT 20. The crew started breaking down camp before daylight that morning because today we had to move to the next camp. Breakfast was at 6:30 am and as soon as the guests got up, ate breakfast, they too started helping tear down camp. We had the whole camp torn down and packed by 9:00am. That is a record. Chris and Jerry took off to gather cows and Dana, Stan and Craig drove the three outfits off the mountain to the Rocky Bottom to set up camp there so it would be ready when we arrived two days from now. Stan, Craig and Dana rode up the canyon when they were finished with the chain saw so to cut the trees out of the trail that had blown in sometime before the Aug trip. We arrived into camp sometime around 8:00pm (after dark) glad to see that the day had been successful for everyone. Hans won the WHITE BAGS that evening for wearing his Elmer Fudd hat. His defense was that it was the latest thing in cowboy winter attire. None of the cowboys came to his rescue though. (On a side note Hans was totally correct) however since there are no rules on the White Bags except rule #12, 13 and 13 b and c which can only be applied by the immediate ruling boss!!

WEDNESDAY SEPT 21ST. We delayed breakfast until 8:00 am to give people a chance to sleep a little later and give the cooks a chance to catch up. Remember the cooks have the most difficult job of all jobs. For an 8:00 breakfast they are up lighting coals by 5:30am to do the cooking with. For them that's sleeping in!!

After a breakfast of Indian Fry Bread we saddled and headed up country to ride more country that was reported to have some of our yearlings and also to do a reride of yesterday's circle. The weather was perfect and we got everything done and were back into camp around 5:00 pm. That night crew member Jerry Jones won the WHITE BAGS for losing his bullwhip somewhere in the underbrush. Now as luck would have it Susan Somerall found it but held it ransom until the appropriate time.

THURSDAY SEPT 22: The crew got up a little after 5:00 to start saddling pack mules and tearing the camp down. Today was the day we head out down the canyon and close up the Rock Cabin Park camp for the winter. Man oh man did everyone bust their humps to help us. We had the entire camp broken down and put away by 7:40 am. That is a record that will stand for some time. The trip down the canyon was very uneventful except for George. As his bunch of cattle came through the burn, the horse he was riding stepped on a slab rock and down over the edge he rolled. Now, George being sound physically (but not mentally) dived off, on the up hill side so that he could watch his horse roll over several times, get to his feet and scramble back up the 65% grade to the trail where George like any good cowboy, checks the cinch and jumps back on and down the trail they go. It's the new cowboy version of horse tipping, a great spectator sport. That night around the fire when the nominations were being thrown around it was reported that Barbara Lunsford had done something worthy of a nomination, but she wouldn't fess up and Craig Mead said he wasn't talking. LITTLE HORN GATE all over again. As the group was looking for blood they nominated Craig for the cover up. Barbara felt guilty that maybe Craig would get the bags so she threw herself on the mercy of the court and confessed that she had lost her lunch coming down the Beaver Slide. The feeding frenzy had started and nothing was going to deter this group from giving Craig Mead the White Bags.

FRIDAY SEPT 23RD: People saddled before breakfast so we could get an early jump on the cattle. The cowboys were out of camp by 8:15 am and on the road with the steers. Now everything had gone well all week so we new something was about to happen that would slow the day up. It was 9:00 and he had the camp busted down and packed. Blaine took off with a load of pack horses in the horse trailer and headed to the Rafter. The rest of the crew finished a bunch of little packing items that had to be taken care of. I sent the supply trailer to the Rafter and was going to have Daniel follow with the Chuck Wagon when we discovered the keys for the green and white diesel where in the nose cone of the horse trailer which Blaine had. We figured he would be back with 20 minutes so we just sat and waited. About an hour later a neighbor pulls in and said Blaine was half way to the Rafter when the wheel bearings went out on the trailer. Blaine borrowed a trailer but it would only hold 4 horses instead of 7 so that meant he had two trips just to get the 7 he had started out with home. I drove down to the disabled trailer, got the keys out of the nose cone, went back to the Rocky Bottom and drove the chuck wagon back to the Rafter where I unhooked Jerry Jones trailer and headed to the Rocky Bottom to get the last 7 horses. The cattle got in around 2:00pm and they had had a great day with lots of tired cattle and cowboys. The weather was perfect. That night Allen Bellefluer won the Double Rafter Belt Buckle and gave it to second place Hans Hannus. Allen had won one a couple of years earlier and felt that since he had heard most of the questions over the last couple of years that it wasn't fair for him to win another. It was on of the greatest class acts that I have ever seen. Since we seem to get most of the repeat people on the September trip I will have a brand new set of questions for next year. Barbara Lunsford won the White Bags that evening for leaving most of her belongings at the Rafter that day instead of taking them with her to the motel. Gino won the drawing for the White Bags and gets to take them home to hang on his wall. Until next time, I can't thank you people enough for all of your hard work and dedication for the week. May God Bless each and everyone of you. You are part of the family now whether you want to be or not.