

A couple of days before the Clean Up Ride I had received a phone call from Chiara wanting to know what type of vehicle I would be picking them up in. She explained that they had been doing some serious shopping. I couldn't imagine that we wouldn't have room for everything with two vehicles and only 7 people to pick up. We did have room, but if you had added one item such as an apple, I'm sure I would have had to stop and buy heavier shocks for the pickup. It was obvious that the four guests from Italy had been trying to salvage our economy all by themselves.

The first shock of the week was when I picked them up at the motel and I was expecting 4 women and it turned out to be 2 men and 2 women. The second shock, was when I discovered that 3 of them didn't speak any English at all. However, I will say Chiara spoke excellent English and was very easy to converse with. The third shock was when I wasn't sure if we could get all of their luggage in the back of the pickup. Of course my mind was already running ahead, I was wondering if we could get the 3 remaining guests and their luggage into the suburban because there certainly wasn't room in the pickup!

After getting them loaded we headed to the Sheridan Center where we were going to pickup the 3 remaining guests, and have lunch before taking off to the top of the hill. That's when the 4th shock of the week took place. The 4 guests from Italy thought they would be staying in cabins at night. I didn't think I could cut some pine boughs and throw them on the tent and call it a cabin would actually work even with the language barrier. To say I was a little concerned would be a little bit of an understatement. I thought, well this week is going to be a shock for all of us I do believe. On the way up the mountain, I quizzed Chiara pretty hard about the skill level of her other 3 partners. She assured me they were all excellent riders. I certainly hoped so, because I didn't think I would have time to tell Chiara to tell them they were about to die! Once settled into their tents we headed to the horses to get saddled and do a afternoon gather of Lake Creek. As we saddled, it became apparent that the 4 guests from Italy were all very experienced horseman. They all adjusted their saddles and bridals without any guidance from us. As we rode out of camp, I let out a big sigh of relief as it was obvious all 7 guests were very competent. We had a good gather that afternoon and the weeks weather looked great. It was amazing but the weather all week long was in the 70's with clear blue sunny skies. It was much warmer and drier than the Sept Cattle Drive.

SUNDAY:

We rode Lick Creek and Dayton Gulch and picked up 118 head of cattle. We soon discovered that we picked up 55 yearlings that we had missed in that same pasture on the September Cattle Drive. You always wonder how you can miss that many cattle but we have done that more than once. I do think one of the reasons we had such a great gather on the Clean Up Ride was due to the Italians. All of our cattle are strictly English speaking and the strange chatter attracted them like flies. Once gathered we headed down country with the herd to drop them at the woven wire fence in the Little Horn. We had the herd down to the Green Cabin when Trent looked to the west and saw a little

bunch of cattle on the other side of the canyon. He hollered for Steve Sessa (one of our Florida guests) to come and help him get them gathered up. Steve took off with Trent at a trot down the mountain side. We're not really sure what happened after that. We think that Steve decided to show Trent, a trick sliding dismount. He did manage to get out the OH SHIT just right, but the rest of the dismount was not one to proud of. After wiping the mud off, Steve crawled back in the saddle and Trent giggled about it all day long and most of the rest of the week.

MONDAY:

We loaded up the pack string this morning and Craig, Meg, and myself headed to the Little Horn with the pack string and a checker board and checkers. We have never had to pack a checker board before. Lucky, the Italian Stallion loved checkers and beat everyone who played him, except me. I didn't play him! Trent and the guests headed to Bear Trap to reride that country. The group split up several times looking for cattle. Amy Eithreim had been on 4 different trips with us so we felt pretty comfortable that she knew the country pretty well. Up to a certain point in the day everything went as planned. They split up one time and when Trent got to where he was supposed to meet them they weren't there. He waited patiently for a while then anxiety starts to take over and you figure you better go look. He left his group and told them to stay there until he got back. When Amy got to the spot that she thought she was to meet the rest of the group, she and the Italians waited patiently. However, the Italians didn't think they were in the right spot either, but decided to trust the experienced Christopher Columbus, er I mean Amy. After sitting for over an hour Trent showed up. Now Christopher was only off by 3 miles from where she was supposed to be. I could let Amy off easy here, but what fun would that be. We called her Christopher the rest of the week. In her defense she was still in the Big Horn Mountains though.

TUESDAY:

We rode through the neighbors herd of cattle and picked up 23 of our yearlings. We were starting to get a pretty good gather. After lunch we headed back up country and rerode East Burn and brought the herd down country and kicked them below Elk draw. I was amazed at how a little Italian settled the yearlings down. They are so used to being cursed at in English that when you have Christopher Columbus leading, and the Italians bringing up the drag you have an unbeatable combination. It went very smooth. We got back into camp a little earlier than I had expected, but I new we had a big day ahead of us tomorrow.

WEDNESDAY:

Trent, Christopher, Rob, Steve and the Italian brigade headed out to gather cattle and head down the canyon. Craig, Meg, and Myself loaded the pack mules, closed up the camp and headed down the valley. It was absolutely gorgeous out. We were all tying coats on the back of our saddles as we rode down the canyon. We had a very peaceful easy ride down the canyon. With 30 cows in the group to act as leads down the canyon Trent was in total shock how easy the day was. When the cattle got to Strawberry corner instead of climbing to the rims like they normally do, they followed the cows around the corner and on down they canyon they came. The cowboys dropped the herd on the Rocky Bottom, and headed to the Rafter for dinner. By the time we dropped the herd we had gathered over 165 head of cattle. The week had been extremely successful. We all had time to sit and have a drink before dinner. It was a really great day.

THURSDAY:

After breakfast we headed to the Rocky Bottom, caught our horses and gathered the herd. We only had 12 miles to go before the trip was completed. The cattle walked great until the last 3 miles. By then everything they have been through for the week begins to catch up with them. The cattle were walking slower and the Italians were talking slower. I wonder if there is a correlation. Once the herd was home we turned the horses out. At this point you always wonder how many of these horses realize they are done until next summer. After turning the horses out we decided to meet everyone in town for dinner. It was a great and successful trip and I just wish I could say I got to know some Italian during the week but my linguistic skills are pretty close to my computer skills. Thanks to all!