

July 2013 Open Range Trip Report

Sunday July 21st

The guest arrived at camp around 11:00am. This trip was already starting out with some strange quirks and we didn't even have people off the bus yet! The best thing about the problems is the fact that we didn't have anything to do with it, yet! On Saturday, English guest Jayne Grantham called from Denver saying she wasn't having any trouble getting to Sheridan as all the flights had been on time except for one tiny glitch. For some reason all of her luggage was still in England. We told her we would pick her up at the airport when she arrived and take her around to various stores to get the items she would need, so Alice and Cathryn met her at the airport and around town they went. It was great for the merchants of Sheridan but not so great for Jayne.

However, we still had one little issue to resolve and that was getting Jayne's luggage picked up two days later and getting it to cow camp so she would at least have clean clothes to leave in.

That evening the phone rang again and of course it was another stressed guest from across the pond. Michala Bandier from Sweden, called from the Denver airport and left a desperate plea on my answering machine to please call her back. When I got in that evening I called her back and like a lot of airlines do, they apparently had over booked and bumped her. They promised they would get her to Sheridan the following evening. The only problem with that was that we were picking people up that morning not that evening. As Michala was standing at the counter wondering what to do another family came up to the counter and were informed they had been bumped also. This family decided to rent a car and just drive the 7 hours to Buffalo, Wy instead of waiting for a flight the

next day. Michala, overhearing this conversation approached them and asked if she by chance could catch a ride with them. All she really knew was that they were headed to Wyoming and so was she. This is about the time I managed to get ahold of her. After telling me the scenario I assured her we would get it worked out and not to fret. About that same time, in the back of my mind a bell went off. A guest on one of our trips was planning on spending the night before the trip at the Historic Occidental hotel in Buffalo, then driving on over to Sheridan the next morning. I explained this to Michala and told her I would look up which trip this gentleman was on and see if there was a chance. Sure enough this gentleman was on the same trip. Talk about good luck! I call RJ and explained the situation to him and he said he would be glad to give Michala a ride to Sheridan in the morning. I called Michala and told her the good news. I should have been in Las Vegas at that time because our luck was running. Turn's out the family she was hitching a ride with was also staying at the Occidental. She called the Occidental but they didn't have any rooms available for that night, but she didn't really care at this point. She was at least going to make the trip. Can you imagine flying to a strange country and being faced with this? Just before Michala left Denver she called the Occidental back on a whim and asked if by chance they had any cancellations for the night. She was overjoyed when they said they had and would hold a room for her. I believe Michala and her adopted family arrived into Buffalo Wy. about 1:30AM. I can proudly say we do much better than the airlines!!

One other little side note on this trip. This was the oldest group by far that we had ever taken. The oldest was 73 and the youngest was 12 with the average age slightly above 60.

Chris Ellsworth did the horsemanship clinic and we did a trail ride that afternoon to get people sort of settled in. Poor Jayne, who's luggage was still in England did not feel well when we got back in from the ride.

She went to her tent and went to bed. We think she got dehydrated is all it was because she was much better the next morning.

Monday July 22nd:

The day certainly started off with some bumps and bruises. Will headed out to jingle the horses. After he had been gone about 10 minutes Bob told Tianna to get her horse and go help Will. Tianna walked over to her horse, spurs jingling, cinched him up and crawled on. The horse took one step and then headed for the sky. Tianna not really expecting this was caught off guard and it got ugly pretty fast. About jump 3, she came flying out of the saddle and came down in a pile. I was standing about 30 yards away and saw the horse kick out behind just as Tianna hit the ground behind him. From my angle it appeared he had kicked Tianna in the face. We went racing over to do what we could do. Tianna had the wind knocked out of her and blood running down her chin from a nasty gash on her chin. She wasn't exactly coherent at this particular moment. Laurel held her as we encouraged her to breath. She finally started to breath but had a lot of pain in her chest and of course her chin was throbbing. We didn't know if she had broken ribs or sternum so we loaded her in a vehicle and Laurel headed to the hospital with her. Will brought the horse in and we started the day hoping we had had enough excitement for one week. Turns out Tianna took a dozen stitches in her chin and had bruised her sternum. It turned out Tianna was very lucky.

Trent and Taylor took all the guests and headed to Bear Trap that morning to gather one herd of cows and push them back to Sardine Lake. From there they would swing on down to Rock Cabin Park and catch up with all of us, who were packing into camp. Jayne was feeling much better but decided to go with the pack crew that day so she could get fully recovered, so as to make the rest of the week. We arrived at the Little Horn cow camp to pack the mules and head to Rock Cabin. We had two pickup loads of goods that needed to be packed into Rock Cabin Park on the Mules. We loaded the first 6 mules and sent Alice and some of the crew on

into camp. I stayed behind to finish packing the remaining mules. The pack string arrived into Rock Cabin around 4:30 pm, hot tired and crabby. It was a very hot day and we still had a lot to do. Heat exhaustion is very serious and trying to get the cooks to slow down enough to avoid it, is always a problem. Now remember, that head cook Laurel, had taken Tianna to the hospital that morning so she wasn't with us, so we were short one main cog of the operation.

About 6:00pm the cowboys rode into camp. People were exhausted but completely exhilarated with their day. It had been a long, hot, challenging and completely delightful day! Seems Gene won the white bags that evening. He was so exhausted at lunch that he decided to take a little snooze and catch up on some much needed rest. He didn't see a good tree to tie too, so he tied the lead rope to his leg and fell asleep.

Tuesday July 23rd:

Dana & Bob headed out with the pack string to get the last of the needed items for camp that hadn't made it in the day before. Trent and Taylor took the rest and headed to Leaky Mountain to show people the falls and a swim in Emerald Hot Springs. They then dropped down to Robinson Crossing and gathered cattle on their way back to camp that afternoon.

We had several nominations for the white bags that evening and since I wasn't there to witness these events, I get to put my own interpretation on it. When Jaxson dived into the ice warm waters of Emerald Hot Springs it was stated he looked more like a beached whale than a diver. Will got nominated as his saddle fell off as he was riding along. Now as a crew member, that certainly is embarrassing. However, the winner of the white bags was none other than liberal Ron Evans for his impersonation of a conservative white pastor! Now I can honestly say, I am completely clueless as to what exactly took place or exactly what preaching Ron was doing too the group in my absence. I have pondered

and pondered to come up with something and can confess I am at a loss. Then again, who can ever understand the thinking of a liberal.

Wednesday July 24th:

Trent and Taylor and all the guests started gathering the cattle in the Little Horn Parks and trailed them up country, past the Green Cabin and on into Dayton Gulch. This group of cattle had the yearling heifers and the cows that had the calves that were too young to walk to the mountain when we came with the first herd. Consequently, with the young pairs it was a rather slow day but the weather and scenery were fantastic. They got a count on the cattle and it showed they might have found most of them. Seems we were out just a few.

Dana and the pack crew, broke down camp and packed the mules and headed back to the Little Horn where the pickup was, so we could get back to camp and have dinner ready that evening when the cowboys would arrive. I had Will, Jess and Robert run the horses and mules back to the Lake Creek Camp from the Little Horn Camp. A distance of about 10 miles from the horse pasture in the Little Horn to the corrals at Lake Creek. Like everything you do on the mountain, you know there will be a glitch at some point in time during the day, you can just count on it. We pulled up to the Little Horn meadows with the pickup and extra passengers and were transferring stuff into other vehicles to take back to the Lake Creek Camp when the horse string showed up. The group of young cowboys trailing them were setting way to fast a pace, but I think they were lost in the excitement of the high speed chase in the rough country. I thought there was a chance they would actually beat us back to camp.

When we arrived at Lake Creek with the luggage none of the horse had shown up yet which was fine. I went to pitching tents as I heard the thundering of hooves and looked up to see 2 riders, not 4 and about 1/3 of the horses. The horses thundered on past me into the corral. I slid the

poles shut on the horses as Will came riding up, I could tell he was in a lot of pain. He sort of fell, poured himself off the right side of Mickey and ran on into the tree's holding his side and sat down. About then, Cathryn showed up, saying they had gotten split up and she didn't know where any of the other riders or horses had gone too. Will was still over in the timber double over in pain. Several of the cooks had gone over to see if he was alright and were busy mothering him. He said he was fine, but it was obvious he was still in a lot of pain. I waited until all the women had left, walked over and asked if his family jewels were still intact. He replied yes, but that wasn't what was hurting. Seems the horse had started around a tree going to his right, then changed his mind at the last moment and went around the tree to the left. Seems Will sort of split the distance between the two and hit the tree. This all took place at a rather high rate of speed. Not exactly the glamorous cowboy life most people imagine. Cathryn didn't know where anyone else had gone and said she would go back and look. I vetoed this, as I figured the best thing to do was give them all some time to show up, since no one really knew where anyone else had gone. About 30 minutes later another rider showed up with the rest of the horses, but he hadn't seen anything of the 4th cowboy. One thing to remember all 4 of these crew members were brand new to the country this year. So when I asked them where had they last seen one another, they really couldn't tell me. The tree with the busted stump doesn't really cut it on the mountain filled with a million trees. The 4th cowboy wandered in about 10 minutes later and no one was worse for the wear.

The cowboys came in around 5:00pm and were chattering like a bunch of squirrels scolding a coyote. They had had a great day and been very successful in their venture. That night around the fire, Sue got nominated for asking Taylor a question about why we had a bull in with the heifers. We of course thought it was rather self explanatory, but since I'm not from the city maybe they do things different than we do here in the west. Taylor thought maybe the question had more to do with gestation so he tried to explain this to her. As the conversation came to an end, we

started wondering about Bob's role (her husband) as she explained that maybe she had the wrong bull in the delivery room. It was a conversation that never was completely straightened out. However, there was much laughter around the fire because of it. It was a strange night of nominations as Michala actually won the white bags for lifting her legs on RJ. Again there was much laughter as we were not sure exactly what RJ had done to warrant such an action. Especially since RJ was the one who gave Michala a ride from Buffalo to Sheridan.

Thursday July 25th:

When the cowboys had trailed the herd into Dayton Gulch the day before, they had a couple sick calves, but both Taylor and Trent were out of medicine. So we all headed out and gathered the herd back up that had been dropped the day before and roped and doctored about 6 calves. After the calves had been doctored we dropped the cattle and Trent, Taylor and the crew of cowboy guests headed to the Bear Trap pasture to start gathering cattle there and trailing them to the Lick Creek pasture. This particular group of guests were absolutely delightful to be around, as they just kept you laughing all the time. If the Republican Pastor wasn't lecturing us, Sue was asking about the Birds and Bee's, so it kept absolutely everyone entertained.

That evening when the white bag nominations started up, we again had some hysterical nominations. Sue won the white bags for making the comment that having Bob (her husband) in the delivery room had not made the delivery process go any faster. All I can say is Sue is one of the most genuine people I have ever met, and her innocence certainly makes for good times. Now, before you get to thinking Sue was a one of a kind, her husband also got nominated that evening for the white bags but did not win. Seems Bob saddled the wrong horse that morning. Now that is a pretty common occurrence and I will say to people that are not around livestock a lot they all pretty much look the same. But in Bob's case, he rode Dudley all week long. Now Dudley is a coal black gelding about 15.3

hands with absolutely not one white mark on him anywhere. On the last morning Bob saddled what he thought was Dudley but it was Badger. Now Badger is about 15 hands tall, sorrel gelding with a white blaze the full length of his nose and two white socks. Now wonder Sue didn't have the right bull in with the heifers. The bull was out chasing the cats!

I want to thank all of you as it was an incredibly enjoyable week with all of you. Everyone laughed from the moment they arrived until they were loaded on the bus and on their way back to the airport.

The Cow Boss