

## 2017 Early August OR

### **Sunday Aug 6<sup>th</sup>:**

We picked about a dozen guests up in Sheridan at 3 different motels and would stop at Bear Lodge to pick up all the remaining guests. On the Open Range trips, any of those that drive, generally spend the night before the trips start at Bear Lodge and we pick them up there, as it is on the way to Cow Camp. This allows for them a more relaxed morning and one more day to get acclimated to the higher elevation.

It looked like rain as the fog rolled in and out all day but it never did precipitate. The temperature like the fog, rolled up and down by about 10 degrees all day long. On the way up the mountain in the bus, I cautioned people to keep hydrated as the high cool elevations can really cause some severe headaches and breathing difficulties, especially for smokers who are past their mid 60's unless they are already acclimated to those types of elevations. We did the standard and after camp orientation, we turned them over to our clinician Chris Ellsworth. After lunch and completion of the horsemanship clinic, we took off on a trail ride. I noticed at lunch that Mickey Haalman did not eat anything. We made a loop up above camp and came up through Lake Creek that took about 2 hours. In route, Betty Rolling came off her horse and since I was in the lead and not the drag, I really don't know what happened, other than Betty said she was just fine. As near as I could tell, the horse jumped a little spring and Betty just forgot to come down with the horse and decided to come down on her own. At dinner that evening I noticed again that Mickey was sitting by himself and didn't eat any dinner. About dark our medical staff came to me saying that Mickey was having trouble breathing. We immediately took him off the mountain to the hospital where he spent the night. That night back around the campfire we had the White Bag nominations and many time repeat guest Teresa Cooney was the grand prize winner. Seems when she had lunch, she forgot to take the wrapper off of her slice of cheese on her hamburger. Now she is from the liberal state of Oregon, so we decided she was really into recycling.

### **Monday Aug 7<sup>th</sup>:**

This morning we woke to clear blue skies which meant the skies had cleared overnight, which means the temperature dropped rather severely. My guess, it was probably about 28 degrees, which had many people freezing all night long with their summer sleeping bags. The wide eyes and frizzed hair in the morning, is a dead giveaway that they did not have a good night.

We rode out of camp that morning and split into several different groups to go gather different areas. We always describe the circles so that people can make their choice, as to which circle they want to ride. Alice and Brian gathered Dayton Gulch and kicked their gather into the Lick Creek drainage. This was the shortest circle and those that were a little unsure of themselves went with them. I headed to Elk Draw in the Little Horn and Taylor gathered yearlings and kicked them back to Sardine Lake. Those that came with me had the longest ride of the day, but we also knew we would not have a lot of cattle. We had lunch at the woven wire fence on the way back and my group split into another group at that point. I was planning on riding the high circle under the rims. About 6 riders went with me. We only got about ¼ of the way to where I was headed when we picked up the first bunch of cattle. I knew that forcing them up the mountain to where I was wanting to ride, was not the best choice so we

headed up country with our little group hoping to overtake the group ahead of us and leave them with their bunch. At one point as we are headed up country some of the cattle dived into a small timber patch and my grand niece, plowed right in behind them, determined that they were not going to give her the slip. I came around the corner just at that moment, to see Clara getting up out of the dust and when she saw me, her first words were "I said dismount". If she had yelled dismount, it can be called an intentional get off, as long as it is yelled before hitting the ground, giving you immunity from the White Bags. Now to me, what she claimed was a yelled dismount, sounded more like a chocking chicken. I had given orders that regardless of what happens we would all meet again in Dayton Gulch. After trailing our little bunch about 3/4 of a mile, it became apparent that we would not catch the group ahead of us. I decided at that point to split our group again. I instructed Clara to take the group onto Dayton Gulch and meet us there. About half of the group stayed with Clara and the cattle, and the others came with me to go ride the rough country under the rims.

Once up under the rims I immediately found some cattle so the swing back had been worth it. The cattle at first decided to see if they could give us the slip, but the determination of my bunch, stayed after them and we got them off the high bench and back down on the main trail.

Once we arrived at Dayton Gulch, Clara and here group were there waiting just like I had instructed. However, there was no sign of the group that had been ahead of us. We sat and waited about 30 minutes, when I decided the best thing to do was send Clara and the people onto camp and I would swing back in a big loop and see if I could find any tracks. After making a big loop and not coming up with anybody, I decided they had gone onto camp. The fear is, do we have everybody or are we short someone. I rode into camp around 6:30 to find that everyone was present and accounted for.

That evening around the fire, Deb Casey got nominated and won the white bags. Deb was one of those who came to the fire this morning who had spent the night freezing. She had a blanket wrapped around her and over her head and looked more like a bag lady than a cowboy. The more she talked, the worse it got for her. She stated that her house had been built by PHIZER but by the time people were done telling the story, her house had been built by VIAGRA which lead to all kinds of questions of what type of pharmaceutical work did Deb actually do? Tonight was another clear cold crisp night, but it was probably about 36 degrees which made it much more pleasant for people.

### **Tuesday Aug 8<sup>th</sup>:**

We gathered the herd and worked the yearlings off and trailed them to back to the Bear Trap pasture. We were having lots of respiratory issues with the calves so we roped and doctored about 8 calves. As we gathered today, one of our cooks had decided she wanted to ride and gather cattle. She was having a blast and when several people her age took off at a gallop, she did to. Gracie does not have a lot of experience on a horse and as the horse went faster she started listing to one side. Pretty soon gravity took over and she looked like a missile hitting the ground. Dirt flew, she rolled and then just laid there. After about 30 seconds I saw her pick her head and look around and then laid it back on the ground, with her lungs desperately searching for oxygen. You would think that would have been enough to cement her with the White Bags that night, but that was not to be the case. Again, Deb Casey won the white bags. Seems shortly after daylight she headed to the porta potties to take care of nature. The bag lady staggered to the potties and gave a quick tug on one of the doors. It didn't budge,

she assumed it was just stuck, so she really jerked on it, only to find that someone inside was as shocked as she was. Yep, high elevations and little sleep will make you do all kinds of weird things!

### **Wednesday Aug 9<sup>th</sup>:**

It was a clear warm night of about 45 degrees. We Wyomingites thought it was a perfect night for sleeping, however the southern climate guests still thought it was cold. It was obvious that a few of them had been a little lite on the sleep side of the ledger. Walter Riopel got on his horse after breakfast and rode out with the group. After about 100 yards one of the wranglers asked Walter if he was really going to ride in his bedroom slippers all day? I am not sure Walter was awake enough to feel sheepish or not. We gathered the herd and held them at Lick Creek to doctor 6 more sick calves and cut out a few animals that we had missed the previous day. People sat on their horses or got off and ate their lunch while we doctored. Once we were done doctoring we hollered for people to mount up. Walter feeling rather sheepish about his morning's bedroom slippers, was the first to jump up and get on his horse. Now Walter is a big man and he swung right on up, and right off the other side without the horse so much as moving. He hit the ground with a thud and several feeble grunts, as he rolled to a stop. Several people came over to help, along with our medical person. I could tell by people's movements, we weren't dealing with any life threatening injuries, so we waited a few minutes for Walter to regain his breath and determine where the pain was coming from. The bedroom slipper bandit had decided he had cowboied enough for one day, so we got him back on and they headed to camp, at a very slow non-jarring gait or as slow as a gait that is possible on the mountain.

Once they had cleared the area, we got the cattle up and stated them up the trail to Lake Creek. We only had about 3 miles to go, but it is all uphill and through timber the whole way. Trying to keep cows and calves from deciding to go back to where they last sucked in the timber is a real challenge. Once cattle reach the timber they are smart enough to use the trees as a shield to be able to escape. Our goal is to hope that when we get to the top, we still have 90% of the calves. Once on top, we just sit on the cattle for about 45 minutes and let cow and calf find one another again. Of course since we always spill some there are some that have to go back. However, since it is not very far that they have to back and with their built in GPS systems, they find one another so we will bring them back up tomorrow.

That night around the fire I don't really think there is any reason to go into who won the White Bags. It was Walter by about 10 lengths.

### **Thursday Aug 10<sup>th</sup>:**

We split a couple different directions today. Jake took a group and headed to the open face above the Little Horn as it seems one of our guests had lost her slicker somewhere there, when they had ridden through two day ago. It was my understanding that Candice Wiltse had lost her slicker as Chad Earwood talked about it numerous times to most anyone that would listen. "I hear Candice lost her slicker and is rather upset about it". We decided that we ought to slip back there and see if we could by chance find it. Sure enough, they rode right to it. However, when we got to Bear Lodge that evening we found out that all week long, Chad had been running a scam on everyone, as it was actually his

slicker that had been missing all week long. However, when nominations came up and Chad was nominated, Candice defended Chad for 20 minutes and when she was finished talking, no one had any idea what she had said, or why, as it seemed to go in a circle and never end. Candice has a career in politics if she want's one that is for sure! The winner of the drawing to take the white bags home was none other than Walter Riopel. Well that trip is a wrap and it was sure a great bunch of people to spend the week with. It was one of the coldest early August Open Range trips we have ever had when you consider there wasn't any moisture with it. We want to thank all of you for joining the Double Rafter family!

Dana