

## **JULY 07 TRIP REPORT**

Every trip has lots unexpected events and adventure to deal with. Some of them are created by mother nature, the cattle, or most generally the guests. (especially the return people) Well this particular individual has surfaced more than once by some unusual event. Generally every time he comes there is something newsworthy that he seems to be involved in. Of course he didn't let us down this time either. Now Russ is about a 4 or 5 repeat offender which made this all the more hilarious. If you read last years trip report you will note that he arrived in Sheridan and couldn't remember what motel he had made reservations at, so he tried to call me and see if he could quietly coax that information out of me. Well this year it was just as funny. He booked the wrong week for the trip. I guess if he would like, he could go on his own cattle drive by himself. Of course there wouldn't have been any cooks, no cattle to trail and no pack animals to carry his stuff. But then if you know Russ he probably would have had just as much fun. It's needless to say who won the white bags the first night.

Once we had everyone located in their canvas hotel for the week we went to the arena to start the horsemanship clinic. Much to our dismay we didn't have to make one horse change. It's a rarity that this happens.

MONDAY AM: We had breakfast and got a good early jump on the cattle but it was still a slow 12 miles to the Rocky Bottom. The yearlings walked well but the calves just couldn't see any reason to hurry. The drags got to the river about 1:30pm a good hour and half later than we had hoped for. We swallowed a quick lunch then corralled the cattle because we had to implant the yearlings. While we were eating lunch we all sat by as the horse that Rhonda Martz was riding wandered by. Of course we all wondered if she would notice. I'm not really sure why cowboys think it's so funny when someone else gets left afoot. It's probably because we have all been left afoot sometime and had to walk many miles back to camp. Naturally she was nominated that night but we had two others who got nominated. Jake Kerns and Kristin Flemming both got nominated for having their cell phones go off. Nothing like ruining the serenity and the mood of a cattle drive by having a cell phone ring and bring you back to civilization. Did I mention that I can fix that problem for you if you will just loan me your cell phone!!!!

TUESDAY AM: Breakfast at 3:30 am so that we could get a good jump on the day. Yup that's right, it is before daylight. You can't get the day done when your burning daylight. We tried something new this year and instead of sending the cooks up the canyon we sent them over the top. I believe the cooks really liked this change because it was less stress on them. You have all heard about cranky camp cooks, well let me assure you since I am married to one that it's not a rumor. If the cooks ain't happy ain't no body happy. When we got over to the forty to gather the cattle and get started up the trail we were short one horse. It was discovered that somebody in the night had driven through and didn't bother to shut the gate. We were short a few yearlings and one horse. Now we suggested a stick horse but Stan was sure he would go lame before getting to the top. We sent a couple cowboys out and within 30 minutes we had found the missing animals. The trip up the canyon went very very well especially when you consider how slow the day before had been. Now we trail for about 3 miles up the canyon till we hit the single file trail. We then work the herd and send a small bunch up the canyon at a time since it is a single file

trail. Once one group is cut out a bunch of riders will take off with them and the next group of riders will come to the front and sit in the gate until we are ready to cut the next bunch. We generally wait 10-15 minutes between bunches. We waited and then started to cut the next bunch but they wouldn't go through the gate because Chase was still sitting in it. Now the problem was that he had his headphones on and was completely oblivious to what was going on around him as he was shucking and jiving to the beat of the music. I'm sure this never happened on the Chisolm trail!! I'm sure his horse wondered what all the movement was about. Once we got his attention all went well. I was sure Chase would win the white bags that evening but was shocked to learn that we had another real strong nomination and in the vote, she just edged out Chase. Rebecca Craig made the bold statement that if she were attacked by a wolf she could kill it by taking her stiletto heels and poking his eyes out. Did I ever mention how much we enjoy doing this. We learn so much!! No wonder the wolves attack Moose and leave humans alone. Everyone did a great job all day and we had the cattle at Robinson Crossing about 3:00pm. A full 2 hours earlier than I had expected.

#### WEDNESDAY:

Wednesday is Fry Bread day and everyone enjoyed the slower pace of the beautiful day we had before us. After breakfast we caught our horse and gathered up the cattle and headed up country with them. We had a relatively short day since we only had about 3-4 miles to go with the cattle. As expected Elk Draw gave us trouble again as none of the cattle had any desire to take the new trail. They all wanted to take the old trail but it was blown in with timber. The old native cows were insistent that they could get through on the old trail. We finally had to get off and go after them afoot. They would finally get themselves timbered in and would stand and stare at you as you climbed over the logs to get around them and bring them back. Once we reached the destination we took a swing over to Leaky Mountain and then to Emerald Hot Springs for a quick swim. There were several swimmers and shouts of glee as they splashed in the emerald green water. We did have a first as Rebecca Craig decided to shave her legs while she was there. I bet that didn't happen with the trail herds of the 1800's. That night around the fire Al Kanshaw won the white bags for wearing his spurs upside down.

#### THURSDAY:

We gathered the cattle and headed to Sardine Lake. I figured we would get back into camp around 5:00pm. I was pleasantly surprised to find that when we got to the first fence and got a tally that we had all the cattle that we had had the day before. That doesn't happen very often on the mountain. We only had one little mishap as we were trailing cattle to the top. We were crossing a bog hole with the herd and as Georgette Taylor viewed the mud and heard the sucking sounds of the mud, as animals slogged through it, she decided to give her horse his head and let him decide where he wanted to cross it. Big mistake because Fox took one look at where the dry ground was and of course it was under the pine tree along the edge of the bog hole. Fox was sure that he could make one jump and land on the dry ground. Now it would have worked if the bottom branches on the tree would have been 4 foot higher off the ground. Fox jumped and landed on the dry ground but the branches managed to shoot Georgette right out the back of the saddle. She landed on her backside and with that Texas drawl said "damn that hurts". Once the pain passed she was fine and she whipped and spurred her donkey all day long behind that bunch of 4 legged hamburgers. After lunch we came to No 1

resevoir and Mike Martz rode his horse out in the middle to let him have fresh water when a terrible itch came over Gunner. Gunner started to roll and Mike did his best to stay on the high side of the horse but both were covered with mud and water before it was over. Most of us were laughing so hard that we weren't any help at all. I was very concerned that a game warden would come by because I was sure Mike didn't have life vests, or a life raft on his boat. Mike won the white bags that night and somehow no one was shocked.

#### FRIDAY:

Friday morning before daylight I got up and went to the kitchen to light the lanterns for the cooks. It was just barely daylight. There were a couple of horses that we hadn't tied the night before and I figured once I had the lanterns lit I would go catch them. I walked out to where I had heard them chomping on grass about 30 minutes before I had gotten up. I walked over there and the horses were gone. With the flashlight I could see track heading up the Kerns-Joslyn trail. Since we had come down that trail the day before there shouldn't have been any tracks headed up. My heart sank because it was possible that it would take all day to find the horses. Just at sunrise I topped out on top and started looking for horses. I headed to the end of the park where the jeep trail goes through. I got off my horse and walked up and down the jeep road for about 100yds looking for fresh horse tracks in the dust headed south. I couldn't find any which was good new for me. I started back tracking looking for horses or any sign of horses. Now generally that time of day, everything is out grazing and enjoying the cool of the morning. As I rode along looking for fresh tracks out of the side of my eye I saw something standing in the trees. When I looked there were two horses standing 20 yds away as quiet as could be in the timber. I caught them and then started looking for other signs of more horses but didn't find any. I then grabbed the two renegades and headed to camp. I rode into camp about 7:30am feeling greatly relieved that we had all horses. Everyone else had been busy and camp was just about closed up. We rode out of camp at 8:15am. Everyone was looking forward to a shower then the rodeo that night followed by the street dance. That evening there were about 5000 people at the street dance and it was sure nice to be old enough to not stay out all night.

Mike Martz won the white bags that night which was 2 nights in a row but who is counting. Turns out Mike didn't know that there were facilities for the men so he was sneaking over and using the women's facilities.

I can't thank everyone enough for their hard work for the week and giving us a chance to get to know you. We certainly enjoy the experience and had a great week getting to torture you.

