

December, 2005

Edited by Martha Crawley

From the President's Corner

by Jeanne Loughrey

Those of you who have started or finished building and have telephones have probably received a letter from the Madison County Planning Office regarding your official 911 address. They received their original information from the telephone company obtaining mailing addresses. In the future, when sewer permits are applied for and after a small period of time, those owners will also receive a letter with their 911 address. Those owners that receive their mail in the mail boxes at the bottom of the road may receive in the very near future another letter with a new number. According to the Planning Office there was an error in the GPS calculations of some of these. In either event I'm encouraging all of you who have been assigned numbers to get them posted at the end of your driveways by next spring. Thanks.

Memo from Martha:

Season's Greetings to everyone! I usually try to get a newsletter out by September, but it didn't work that way this year.

Dave and I finally built our house this summer. What a blast! Dave retired in June (we were actually in Montana most of May and came back to Seattle in June for his last flight), then he spent the entire summer putting on his tool belt every morning and helping our contractor build our dream house. Some days I think "help" was stretching it a little, but Kenny Evans of B & E Construction was patient and good natured. They did a great job, and now that it's finished, we can't wait to get back over there!

A "wildlife high point" for me was seeing the red fox that was around all summer. I even got to watch it at pretty close range, hunting mice in our meadow one afternoon. I walk around in that meadow all the time and never see a mouse, but the fox found 5 or 6 in the space of 10 or 15 minutes! We also saw wolves, coyotes, bald eagles, deer, elk, a moose mama and her baby, and lots of big predatory birds.

As always, it was really fun seeing our friends and neighbors, both old and new, while we were there. We look forward to seeing you again next summer!

Passing:

We said goodbye to a good friend of the ranch this summer. Barclay VanDoren passed away after a short battle with cancer. Bill and Sandra Hoolan were close neighbors and friends, and Bill writes: "Barclay and Janet have made the ranch their home for the past several years. He loved Montana, especially fishing and enjoying the beautiful mountain scenery from his deck. Barclay was very involved in the workings of the ranch as well as starting the 'good book' of recommended contractors and doing the real estate articles for the newspaper. His latest project was working to get the ranch roads open in the winters so everyone could have the opportunity to enjoy it year round."

Barclay started right out pitching in to help as soon as they joined the homeowner's association, and will be sorely missed. I know I speak for all in extending our deepest sympathy to Janet and their family.

Thought for the day:

“All things bright and beautiful,/All creatures great and small,/All things wise and wonderful,/The Lord God made them all.” Cecil Frances Alexander

Ranch Recipes

This is a recipe I found on epicurious.com, my new favorite website. I tried it the other day and it was delicious, quick, and easy. My Costco has Tilapia filets frozen, which makes this especially easy, since you can have the fish on hand.

Mountain High Pan-Seared Tilapia with Chile Lime Butter

For chile lime butter:

½ stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter, softened
1 T. finely chopped shallot
1 t. finely grated fresh lime zest
2 t. fresh lime juice
1 t. minced fresh Thai or Serrano chile
½ t. salt

Stir ingredients together in a bowl. Can be made day ahead and refrigerated, covered. Bring to room temperature before using.

Prepare fish:

Pat fish dry and sprinkle with salt. Heat 1 T. oil in a 12-inch skillet until just smoking, then sauté fish, turning once, until golden and just cooked through, 4-5 minutes. Top each serving with a dollop of the lime butter.

Fishing With Mike Wells

The Slump

Over the last several years my fishing success had me pretty well convinced that I had finally arrived in the Big League. Heck, last year I used the same point & dropper fly rig almost exclusively from late May into October. The old adage “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” was my guiding principal & I was counting coup on amazing numbers of great fish.

Sometime this spring, the bubble that encased my ideal fishing world developed a small leak & by late summer was nearly as deflated as my ego. Had I unknowingly hooked myself in the head on a back cast, puncturing my skull, causing my fishing brains to leak out & float downstream like one of those accidentally liberated strike indicators I frequently see drifting away?

I was there opening day. After almost four months of no fishing pressure, the trout in our area are usually fired up & ready to play the game. Stepping onto the fisher’s mound, I was a bit rusty but felt I quickly regained the subtle nuances in my delivery that had me reeling ‘em in last season. Inexplicably, this spring’s trout team wasn’t going for my pitches. After a week of disappointing results, which included a few near shut-outs, I left scratching my noggin (& all the other itchy parts us athletes like to scratch) wondering if someone had changed the strike zone.

My next turn in the rotation came in late June & early July. This is when the bug action really gets going around here & with any luck the esteemed Salmon Flies will grace you with their presence. I was excited by the possibilities. The bitter fishing memories of my last turn on the mound had all but faded or been rationalized into the deep, dark recesses of my mind. That was just ‘Spring Training’, it was too wet, too cold, too cloudy, too dry, too warm, too clear, the guy at the dam kept messing with the flow, I didn’t scratch the

right itches, etc.. Another two weeks of throwing what I thought was my best stuff (enduring a couple more near shut-outs) & my confidence was crumbling. If I didn't get it together they might ship me back to the Minor League. Visions of long, dusty, bus trips to towns not on maps, eating road kill & sleeping in rest stops were weighing on my mind. It was time for some serious introspection & analysis.

Granted there were multiple distractions going on outside the game: the Annual Ranch Association Meeting with the attendant meetings & wild parties that precede & follow it; my Dad came to visit to re-instill my fear of me becoming him some day; my 16 year old truck died, leaving me stranded & at the mercy of local used car salesmen. But I have bought whole heartedly in to the current pace of society & being a multi-tasking maniac, I should be able to cover all these side shows & catch fish too! I approached the game as I always had. Treated the opposition with respect. Brought the same physical skills & mental toughness I'd developed over my long career. Yet I wasn't performing up to expectations. I wished I had some actual game films to review rather than the bourbon soaked mental snapshots in my memory.

By the middle of the late summer trip I knew I was really off my game & the early fall excursion sealed the deal. Last season's catch rate of 30-50 fish a day dropped by 2/3. Now, I have had up & down days, which on certain trips have become a poor week, but I have never had a consistently bad year. What was going on? I was struggling, at a loss for reasonable explanations or satisfactory responses. Wandering the sidelines, mumbling incoherently to myself, repeatedly inspecting my fully festooned fly patch (which at some point this year has had every fly I own on it) & probably drooling a bit, the light bulb suddenly went on above my head. I was in a slump.

Any of you fishing doctors out there have a remedy? Heck, I'll even consider surgery if it's not too invasive & I can keep most my body parts.

mikewells52@comcast.net

Hoolan's Report

MONTANA GREETINGS. Having done articles for the newsletters on "Winters on the Ranch" it occurred to me perhaps some owners had not spent much time here even in the summers and may enjoy hearing what it is like for us who are able to enjoy Montana during this time.

Typically the snow starts melting off the roads in March and by April most of the roads are open. During this time of year the elk migrate through the ranch on their way back to Yellowstone Park. For the first time since Sandra and I have lived here full time, we noticed a small group stayed long enough last spring for some of them to have their calves on the ranch. It was a treat for those who returned early enough this spring to be able to see them.

As transition is made from the "usual" winter locals, moose, elk, and deer, to our actual neighbors, the conversation becomes much better! When summer finally gets here and we start meeting our friends and neighbors again, we notice they all have that twinkle in their eye, you know the one, you've thought about Montana so many times during winter and finally it happened, you're back on the ranch.

Summer weather here is almost perfect, lots of sunny days, temps mostly in the 70/80's. The ducks, geese and raptors back on the river also enjoy it. The deer and the antelope have their kids, everywhere you look you see a fawn or two.

MRR is busy during the summers. It seems more owners are able to enjoy more and more time here. A lucky time for all!

Fishing seems to dominate the activities, the \$3 bridge and our common area are usually bustling. All are excited to be enjoying the great fishing, especially intensified during the hatches. Looking up and down the river, fishermen are enjoying their piece of "heaven" all times of the day and night.

The weeks around July 4th seem to be the busiest, weather and fishing are usually great with lots of area activities. Ennis is a hot spot during this time, with rodeos on both the 3rd and 4th, as well as a Parade on the 4th.

It seems in early September you feel a slight change in the air, the fishermen are fewer and fewer on the river, and there are fewer of your neighbors on the road. By late Sept. the aspens are turning yellow and the wild grasses are brown. The local deer have moved in the yards now for the only green grass. The Osprey born during the spring are on the river trying to catch fish on their own, not yet nearly as good as their parents. By the end of October the ranch is pretty empty again. The snows start again in November and the winter is usually back in full force in December. Christmas on the ranch is a most special time.

**To the many new property owners, welcome! You are surrounded by friends, yet to be met. We are lucky to have Martha Crawley, as the newsletter editor and publisher for many years now. Our paper encompasses a variety of articles ranging from recipes to real estate to which company drills the best water wells. If you have interest in previous issues please let us know. Regards, Bill Hoolan 406-682-4334

Aw, shucks.

From Our Neighbors:

From Donald Raether: I have a couple of things our neighbors on the ranch might find interesting:

1. I was informed by my fellow ranch neighbor and friend, Chet Schendel, (grandfathered in on our ranch with his 4 acres and cabin) about an insurance company that most local ranchers use. He told me that they were having trouble getting policies and rates that they would be satisfied with so they got together and started their own company. He said that any Montana land owner should be able to be covered by them. The name of the company is BIG SKY Farm Mutual Insurance Co. They can be contacted at P.O. Box 53 Bozeman, MT 59771-0053, phone 406-586-9034. I have been insured by them for a number of years and they are very low priced and never quibbled about what the ranch property looks like or where it is located.

2. As you have probably noticed, I have an 8,000 gallon fiberglass tank on my property. I was going to bury it under a house if I built one to store water. As our lot 31 is now for sale, if anyone is interested in the tank it is for sale for what I paid for it, \$1,000. It is "as is," as I don't know exactly what the tank was used for. I bought it from a rural fire department. I can be reached at the following numbers: MO phone 417-779-1305 MN phone 218-729-7472 . Donald Raether

Etc.:

Gene Welch is now on the board, and will be finishing Barclay Van Doren's term.

Real Estate, etc.

Would anyone like to volunteer to keep us up-to-date on ranch real estate? It would involve becoming acquainted with a local realtor who could tell you what has sold recently and for how much, or any other interesting real estate information affecting the ranch. It could all be done by phone/email, and I could find a realtor for you, if you don't know one.

Thanks to Bill Hoolan and Mike Wells for their excellent contributions. As always, please send or email me any questions, or anything you think would be of interest to your neighbors, whether it's family news, recipes, reports from the ranch, stuff for sale, letters to the editor, etc. I really enjoy hearing from you! By the way, don't any of you cook? I'll bet somebody, somewhere, has a recipe the rest of us would love. Share it!

Martha Crawley<
12712 471st Ave. S.E.
North Bend, WA 98045
Email: marthacrawley@comcast.net
Phone: (425) 831-7982

Addendum:

To: Our wonderful neighbors on Madison River Ranch

From: Janet Van Doren

MRR Secretary Barclay Van Doren died July 11, 2005, at home on the Ranch. He had a rare and aggressive form of cancer, Burkitts. He became ill suddenly on April 8th and entered the hospital the next day in Denver (he and I were there visiting our children). Barclay was transferred to the Rocky Mountain Cancer Center at Presbyterian St. Lukes where he remained until the end of June. When the doctors told him there was nothing more they could do, it was Barclay's wish to come home and see his mountains and his river once again. Bill Hoolan and John Clark flew to Denver to bring Barclay and Janet home on June 30th. The pilot circled the ranch twice so Barclay got to see his beloved home and surroundings from the air. Several neighbors heard the plane buzz the ranch and knew, "Barclay is coming home." Karen and Gene Welch and Sandra Hoolan were waiting at the Ennis airport and cheered when the plane door opened.

The days passed too quickly, of course, but Barclay enjoyed visiting with friends and family and watching eagles, both golden and bald, and a deer and her fawn out the window. He was so glad to have the windows open and smell our clean Montana air. He truly loved the Madison River Ranch and appreciated your thinking of him and sending prayers, cards and flowers.

He was cremated and his ashes are buried above the Madison near where his graveside service was held on Pronghorn Trail on July 17th.

Barclay began vacationing in Montana in the 80's where, just as for many of you, Yellowstone Park and its environs was the drawing card for the whole family. We liked to hike and ride horses, but always it was the fishing which brought us back longer and longer each year. Barclay's favorite spot was Three Dollar Bridge. Our daughter was young then and I can remember playing in the Missouri Flats village with her and her dolls and wondering what life was like for the people who lived there, never dreaming some day we would live in their shadow! Barclay and I felt like we were so lucky to retire to life on the Madison River Ranch.

As you probably know he was Chairman and Chief Judge of the Energy Board of Contract Appeals which meant he heard cases between the government and contractors working on government projects. He also served in the USAF for 25 years, mostly in the reserves as Staff Judge Advocate of Air Training Command and Tactical Air Command. He and I were married 42 years and had two children, Clay and Cary, and three grandchildren, Madison, Caelen and

Hayden -- all live in Denver. Barclay graduated from Darien (Connecticut) High School, Harvard University and The University of Michigan Law School.

Friends have placed commemorative bricks at the Veterans Memorial in Ennis and the History Museum in West Yellowstone, but Barclay's heart is right here at Madison River Ranch with his neighbors and friends.