



A 1999 Holiday Greeting to Everyone!!

Greeting from the Carlson household somewhere in the continental United States. The reason for this statement is for you to guess where we're living. Can you remember from the last Christmas letter where we resided? Let's see, it was one of those states that started with "W". If our US geography is right that has to be Wisconsin, West Virginia, Wyoming, or Washington. So, if you guessed WI you're right. The next question is, are we still in the

state that starts with "W"? Have the Carlson's moved east or west of Lake Michigan? If you know Michael at all, east is out of the question, it's too crowded. That leaves WA or WY. Here's a hint, John Colter was the first Caucasian person to visit this area. Another hint, a city in this state was named after a person who started a Wild West Show and traveled throughout the east and into Europe; his nickname came from killing a lot of buffalo. The last hint, this state doesn't have any state income tax.

Well, you may have guess by now that we traded in our WI cheese hats for cowboy hats. Yep, pardner, the Carlson's have moseyed out to the high plain basin of Burlington, Wyoming, about 1/2 way between Cody and Greybull. We like to describe it as being NESTLED between the Big Horn and Absaroka Mtns, even though they are several miles away. Yellowstone is about 90 miles to the west of us. We've up-rooted again to find our own "Shangri-La", and we've come dang close. We now own a ranch! Thousands and thousands of square feet (wish it was acres). Got a spread of 81 acres of pasture and hay fields, and it's all set up for..... can you believe it..... riding bulls!

Right now we have one bull and 11 head of cattle residing on the ranch. The bull will be sold in the spring and the cattle are owned by our neighbor and will probably be around until February or March. We won't mind having them



gone. They are rough on our fences and we are having to do toooooo many repairs. It keeps us in shape though. We are doing research right now in preparation for obtaining some llamas once the cattle and bulls are gone. We hope to use the llamas for packing in the mountains. It will be nice to have an animal to take some of the weight for us.

The reason we ended up out here is because Mike was searching the Internet looking for job possibilities after he resigned from his position in Brillion. While "surfing" he managed to find a speech job for BJ in Cody. BJ called the principal and received some information over the phone. It sounded like a good situation so we arranged to do an interview a week or so after school was out. We flew our plane out to Cody in about 3 days and stayed for a

week. The interview went well and BJ was offered a job the same day. We located a realtor and started searching for property. We decided that the decision to accept the job would depend on property and salary. The salary was negotiated and on the day after the interview we found our ranch. We knew the moment we drove onto the property that we were meant to have it. The owner really wanted us to have it too. All the financing worked out and by August 8 we had moved (hopefully for the last time) all of our possessions in one U-haul truck and the van. We had to start work four days later so it took us some time to get settled in. Between the time we left Cody and moved here Mike found a position in another town doing computer support, grant writing and teaching 2 computer classes. Unfortunately, the position never felt quite right to him so starting in mid-January he will become a retired "gentleman rancher", which has always been his dream. BJ will continue to work so we can pay off the mortgage and keep him in Power Bars and other things he like to eat.

We hope that people will come to visit us. It is so beautiful and peaceful out here. The days in the summer can get hot but we don't have the humidity like MN and WI. Also, it cools off nicely at night, which makes for good sleeping weather. We have a nice guesthouse for visitors and there is plenty to do around here – visit



Yellowstone, hike in the mountains, play around in the BLM land that abuts our property, or go see a rodeo in Cody.

If and when you visit be prepared to be greeted by a few hundred pounds of loveable canines. Against BJ's better judgment we now are the owners of 2 St. Bernard's, Meiko and Koncho. They were 3 months old at Thanksgiving and are very playful. We decided to get two so they could keep each other company and they do a good job of that. After the first of the year we will be adopting another adult Bernese/Chow mix dog that belongs to a teacher friend. He came for a visit earlier and seemed to like the place so our puppies will have a big brother, Tyson.

We need to wait until after Christmas because we're planning to drive back to MN and WI. Mike hopes to fly our plane back to WY and BJ will drive back with the puppies. All this in a small Neon, so fun times are ahead.

Next summer we hope to start an organic farming operation. Mike's winter project, a business plan, will determine the feasibility of the venture. We plan to start small and decide if we want to expand. Our summer will be taken up with farming but we always have time for visitors.

Our new address is P.O Box 98, 1100 Lane 38, Burlington WY 82411-0098. The phone number is 307-762-3536. BJ has an e-mail address active during the school year – bcarlson@park6.k12.wy.us

So long for this year - have a great new millennium. Hope to see or hear from you soon.