

# A 2004 Winter Holiday @ WTR And 5 year celebration @ the Ranch

As I sit at the computer, waiting for Titcomb to come in from the hayfield to type out his experiences at the ranch, I have a chance to reflect of what has been happening to BJ & I. August 9<sup>th</sup> celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being Wyomingites. BJ continues to bring in the major portion of the ranch's funding source, still at Eastside Elementary, in Cody, WY. She still bugs me with when she can retire. I'm still working with the horses and llamas, am the ranch's major cheap labor source, and substitute at 4 different school districts.



Both of us are Captains with the Civil Air Patrol organization.

BJ has accepted the position of Commander of the Cody Cadet Squadron and has charge of a core group of 12 cadets, while I get to help out when I get into town (40 miles away). Otherwise, I've got the logistic responsibilities of the Group function above four squadrons. Besides those financial endeavors CAP seems to take up most of our lives. BJ even surprised me at Valentines Day during a CAP activity.

BJ & I attend Search & Rescue (SAR) exercises with CAP, and oversee the cadets at these functions. Some how I've been conned into acquiring the administration qualifications at SAR's and get stuck at the base of operations doing paperwork. Occasionally I get out and fly a mission. We found that the unit was not able to support a ground unit because no one qualified under CAP regulations for the leadership position, so BJ & I took it upon ourselves to acquire those qualifications. We registered for a National Emergency Service Academy course during the 1<sup>st</sup> week in August at Camp Atterbury, IN, to become "Ground Team Leader" qualified.

We flew out east in trusty N5545R (our Cessna 172). It took us 3 days to get there. The 1<sup>st</sup> day was just great. We got up to 11,500 feet, and crossed over the mountains heading east. Gassed up in a small town in northern NE and headed for that day's destination of Pella, IA. While there we camped out "under-the-wing". The 2<sup>nd</sup> day was very foggy and then moved into thunderstorms along the proposed route to Atterbury. We decided to just stretch out at the Pella FBO and wait out the weather. By this time a lingering cold, lying in the weeds for the past week, hit me with full force. A trip into town during our down time got me the necessary



chemicals to cope. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the storms had moved off NE and opened a chance to finish the flight. We got up to 9,500 ft and had a great start, smooth air and no clouds. As we traveled further east clouds built up and we started maneuvering around them until BJ no longer could see the ground. Then I was ordered to get down. So we dropped down under the clouds and had a turbulent ride at 1,000 ft off the ground to Atterbury.

The school was to last 8 days. We were each assigned a barrack, BJ in the Sr. Women's billet, I in the Sr. Men's billet. I was the only one in a CAP Corporate blue BDU uniform in a sea of camouflage BDUs. The

class was composed of (10) adults. Fortunately, BJ & I were split-up into two different groups. Up at 0500,



stand in formation until 0545, breakfast, and in the classroom by 0630. A good portion of the week's activities was spent in the classroom watching Power Point presentations. We had opportunities to get out and have some fieldwork. Lunch at 1130 – 1200, more classroom activities until 1730, supper, then more class room activities from 1800 – 2130. Being out in the Midwest once again reminded us of why we are in Wyoming now. Temperatures were in the high 90's and the humidity matching. Sweat dripping off the whiskers while just sitting is no fun. By mid-week, just as we have our bivouac, a storm came through and the backside was cool for a couple of days. At the end of the week, we leaders' now had to take a group of Basic Ground Crew Members out on a mission. I had a good crew of seven, six cadets and one senior member. The instructors put us through a "Horshimarou" scenario (Remember the Star Trek movie?), where there is no way out of a losing situation.



James T. Kirk was able to alter the programming to make him the only one to beat the computer. I, on the other



hand, could not do that. With a lesson learned we went after a lost child scenario. My crew, and two other ground

crews ceremonies to get two patches to show our accomplishments.

After a week of not much sleep and hot weather BJ & I were beating the rising flood to get out of there. We scheduled our route to Austin, MN, to visit friends that day. Then another 5 days to visit my sister in Red Wing, MN,



friends in Afton, MN, and the property in ND. We finally headed to Sheridan, WY, for a CAP SAR Ex to apply our newly ordained authorities as Ground Crew Leaders. BJ gets to apply her newly learned skills while I get hooked into base operations. At least I was able to

schedule more interactions with ground and air crews; something not done too often in the past three years we've been in CAP.

Now it's November and we just returned from yet another CAP activity, a WY Wing Conference, in Cheyenne, WY, where BJ was awarded the distinction as the "Senior of the Year" award. She is standing between Col Morton, our WY Wing Commander on the left and Maj Gen Dwight Wheless, CAP's new national commander on the right. Could it be my waxing of words was able to help in getting the award? Maybe, but someone has to at least jog the minds of higher-ups of the huge amount of work those out in the trenches do.

Hold on a minute. The dogs are telling me that Titcomb is outside wanting to get at his portion of the Christmas letter.

**Hey there!!!! It's me Titcomb! I'm sorry I didn't get up here earlier so you wouldn't have to read about the boring lives of BJ & Mike.**

Titcomb!!! That's enough!!!!

**Oh, all right.**

**Yah know, as I get older, I seem to get smarter than Mike. It must be my llama years (it's kind-a-like a teenage human), and this schooling I'm gett'en. But now it's my turn to let you know the truth of what happens around here in my**



3<sup>rd</sup> edition of these Christmas News letters. Maybe that's what I should do for a career, editor of a publication, because Mike doesn't think I'm going to be a very good packing llama.

And, it was all because I just wasn't feel'en too good the day of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in Cody and Mike was a bit toooooo cranky because of a flat tire on the llama trailer on our way to Cody for the parade. It was really all his fault. The night before he got 10 of us together in kind-of a sneaky way. He tricked us into the small corral area with corn and got the girls to stay in the large corral area. He closed the gate on us and then called those that he wanted with the girls and moms. Suuuuuuure, the ones he called were bigger than me and pushed past me out the opening of the gate Mike was controlling. I saw him get the llama trailer ready with the pick-up. He seemed to have spent 2 hours trying to take a tire off the trailer. He must have been pretty mad because he was saying a lot of words I'm not supposed to say! By the time he fixed it, it was pretty dark out. He then came out to us and started putting halters on us. Being such small area it's hard to get away from him when he's doing this, but I managed to be the last one to be haltered and tried as hard as I could not to. It's surprising how 9 other llamas, in a small area, can get between me and him. Mike was also not too pleased with me when I spit at him when he tried clipping my nails.

The next morning, reeeecal early, I wasn't very much awake, Mike came out and started loading us into the llama trailer. He took the tuffer guys 1<sup>st</sup>, then us mellower guys next. I was the last to load. I looked at all those bodies in the trailer and saw there was no room and I said I wasn't gett'en in there!!! With all fours locked in place I held firm. After 10 minutes I won, sort-of. Mike tied me off, got 4 of the other guys out, put me in next then the other guys came in. Groucho is tooooo much of a goood llama. He does anything Mike asks. With the 4 of us in the back of the trailer, as tight as we could be, Mike tells Groucho to get in. Groucho just has too much bulk and weight and pushes us together even tighter. Mike closes the door and I'm hav'en a hard time breath'en. While on the highway to Cody I'm having trouble breathing. Smoke was com'en from the right side of the trailer and it started just shaking. Mike pulls us over to the side of the road and comes back and looks at the damage. He was saying some bad words, again, about the tire that he just replaced the previous night. For some reason he leaves us along side the road and stops a car and gets in leaving us all stuck in the trailer. I don't have a watch to tell time but saw how much the sun had moved and figured it was 40 minutes later that Mike returned with another guy in a pickup. As they were working at changing the tire I over heard what happened to Mike while he was gone. Seems he was able to get a car from Minnesota to stop and give him a lift back into Burlington. As Mike was talking to the two people he found that they were from Austin MN where Mike once taught Middle School humans. What was even stranger was that the boy passenger had him as a teacher for 8<sup>th</sup> grade drafting and metals. He now was in college taking up engineering. Strange, Huh? The guy that Mike came with helped finish gett'en the new tire on. Mike got in the pickup and tried starting the engine with no go. The battery was dead. The guy that helped Mike with the tire had some thing called jumper cables and they hooked them between the two cars.

After this we were traveling down the road again.

We had started out at 6:45am from the ranch and got to a parking spot, to unload for the parade, at 9:15am. The parade was suppose to start at 9:00am. To say the Mike was in a good mood, NOT!!! He got us out of the trailer and started grooming us. I'm sorry but I wasn't feeling to well after the trip and when he got to me I started spitting. Then he tried putting a



pack on me. I just said NO and kushed. Then I got a bit worried; Mike took the pack off me and placed it on Howard K, finished hooking everyone together, then came over to me. I thought I might see my life pass in front of me. Instead he loaded me back into the trailer, and left with everyone else. Hey, I'm alone. That's no fair!!! Let me tell you being alone is no fun!! Some time later they all return



and I'm feeling a bit better that their back. Mike takes the packs off and loads everyone into the trailer with me. As we're all packed together again I'm think'en where's BJ? As it turns out she was looking for us all the time before the start. Since we didn't show up she went with the CAP Cadets in the parade, and stayed with them. I found out later that BJ thought something real bad happened to us and she was glad to see Mike. They seem to hug for a loooooooong time.

The Cody parade is for two days. On the second day I was able to go with BJ & Mike and this time I was with the guys in the parade. What was really neat is that we got a 2<sup>nd</sup> place award for pack stock in the parade.

Got to tell you about the adventure Grouch & Harpo went on this past summer, but it could take too long so you might want to look at the 1<sup>st</sup> page of our website and catch-up on what they done. I can tell ya that they traveled in the van for 3,200 miles.

This has not a good year for BJ. Her father was not feeling to good for a while. She went to see her father & mother the 1<sup>st</sup> week of June with her other two sisters. They felt that their dad would not last much longer. Then by Oct 25<sup>th</sup> her older sister called and said the hospice people called her and said that their dad showed signs he wouldn't last much longer. BJ got tickets and left early morning on the 27<sup>th</sup>.



While she was going there her dad died. BJ seems all right. When she got back I overheard her talking to Mike about going back down to Florida over the Christmas time. When she was alone I went up to her and asked if I could go along with her and help out with her mom's being alone now. BJ thought it was a good idea, but she felt her mom might not like to have a llama in her house. Besides BJ said the airlines might find it kind of unusual to have a llama sit in a coach seat.



Ohhhhhh boy, I need to tell you about my 1<sup>st</sup> wool cut. You thought I was such a perfect llama at the parade, NOT, having BJ & Mike trim my wool was down right the worst thing that ever happened to me. You can see by the picture how much I enjoyed this. At least they didn't nick me with the shears like they did my mom Titapa. I guess there's a lot of my stomach remains on the door and walls of the barn that I spit up. But, I got to admit it wasn't too bad this summer with the hot weather.

From us guys (llamas) at the Wayfaring Traveler Llama Ranch

(Me) Titcomb	Maggie Tymico	Jenny	Tenacious	Mandarin Chocolate	
Dark Rain	Seneca	Turret	Nichaja	Stroud Peak	Titapa (my Mom)
Zasu	Mt. Osborn	Sinara	Radar	Esparado	Klondike
Ethan	Bola	White Knight	Coco Man	Bridger (my Dad)	Harpo
Groucho	Black Knight	Spunky	Magnus	Howard K	Sensay-Su
Zipper	Torrey Creek	Shasta	Marble	Chinar Wing	Breeze Boy
Granite Peak	Tony Llama	Zorac		Lilly of the Valley	

From the barking Hippos: Meiko and Konch

From the ranch manager Kalico and the ones that lay around all day Misha and Searcher. Hey !!! Mike just told me that Searcher just had her 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Whaoooo, she's the oldest one on the ranch besides BJ & Mike.

*From the GONZO duo: Thunder and Lightning, and that Cheyanne*

**Ohhhhhh yyyyyah, From the BIG Bird: Gertrude**



*And, can't forget Mike and BJ who are OK even though they try to get us to do their things*  
**See ya guys. Have a great Holiday season and think about coming out and see us. It's just me: Titcomb The BEST editor WTR has EVER had: Titcomb Basin 8<sup>th</sup> Wayfarer • Wayfaring Traveler Llama Ranch • PO Box 98, 1100 Lane 38 • Burlington, WY 82411-0098 • 307-762-3536 • E-mail: [wtr@tctwest.net](mailto:wtr@tctwest.net)**

From the two of us (BJ & Mike) that thought we'd NEVER be in uniform, have a joyous Christmas and a save but adventurous New Year for 2005. I wonder how much we'll have to be saving for Titcomb's college tuition? He'll have to be on more packing trips to earn \$\$\$\$\$. I don't think he's too good of a guard llama to make \$\$\$\$ that way.

Visit our website [www.tctwest.net/~wtr](http://www.tctwest.net/~wtr) and see much more of the insanity at the ranch. Bye!