



Ho ... Ho Ho.... Merry Llama Christmas!!

OK ... Let's get down and dirty ... or as I say let's get down to Llama Basics. I've been TOLD this year's Christmas Letter CAN NOT be longer than 2 pages long. Wait a darn llama minute ... I've been doing this now for at least 7 years and never ... NEVER EVER ... has it been less than 4 pages. How the heck can I express to you what happens here at the ranch in anything less. I've been told I'm verbose ... whatever the heck that means? Well ... we'll just see. I'm the Wayfaring's editor (Titcomb Basin 7th Wayfarer) and I'll be doing things the way "I" want to do them!!!!

With that "coming-out" let's get down to Llama Basics ... life on Wayfaring Traveler Ranch hasn't been half bad ... there has been enough

snow and rain in the mountains to fill-up all 3 reservoirs that store our water. Mike did a good job keeping the pastures green for us, and now, that we're in the hay field, food is plentiful. Speaking of Mike ... he was here all summer it seemed except for 2 weeks at the beginning. He said he flew some 20 hrs (not his plane) to a place he called Singapore. He went there for Civil Air Patrol stuff that occupies a lot of his life. Something called International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE). He took 2 Cadet Majors over there for 2 weeks. They did a lot of stuff ... going to museums, getting helicopter rides, firing M16's, shopping, and other cultural stuff. He was glad to finally go because in 2009 they had to cancel the trip because of the swine flu scare. Mike even got a chance to see his pseudo-daughter Nichaja, who lives in Bangkok, Thailand. She flew down to meet him and together they spent a day's worth of shopping for BJ just to get something called "suck-up points" for Mike. Somebody will have to explain to me what that all means.



"I" got to be in the Cody Stampede Parade this year!!! All the other llamas told me this was a BIG thing, but I wasn't all that impressed. We all just walked 3 miles down the center of Cody with our packs on. I guess we did OK because we were good enough to get 2nd place and \$200.



Oh yaaaahhh, we've got 2 more DOGS on the ranch. They came here in February. They were kind-a small when they came and NOW ... they're as BIG as Koncho!! Their names are **Sasha & Torin**. I've been told their ancestry has Saint Bernard & Husky traits. They think they are hot-stuff now by



chasing us around. Torin is the boldest. He really got me mad one day and nipped my back leg. I just reacted and kicked him pretty hard. Now he leaves me alone.

Hey there, this is **Mike**. Life in 2010 ain't half bad. Still substitute teaching in 3 school districts, still a volunteer fireman for Burlington, still do Search & Rescue for Park County, still the cheapest labor for the ranch, still handle the Search & Rescue for WY Civil Air Patrol and still BJ's biggest pain-in-the-butt. I did take on another "paying" job by signing-up with a private wildland fire crew "Dragon Fighters". Had to do a physical test of traveling 3 miles in 45 minutes with a 45 lb pack. Did it in 35 minutes. Thank God my thighs are still strong. I'm the oldest in the crew of 4. The boss is 4 years younger, another crewman 3 yrs younger, then the "pup"; we call him, who is just a mere 30. However, this was a rather wet year and we never got called out.

Getting old ain't no fun. Had a problem with my left hand going numb back in January. Saw a Neurologist ... a thousand dollars later ... don't read in bed on my left side. Daaaaahhhh.

As Titcomb said I was home this summer. I did take a 2 week trip to Singapore for the IACE program with CAP. The flight both ways was really tough. Couldn't sleep on the plane. Titcomb did a good job of briefly explaining what happened. What he doesn't know is 3 days before leaving to come home, I came down with a bad cold. After dopping up with drugs I was feeling better the next morning.

Showered, went back to the room, sat down on my bed, bent over to put my socks on and then extreme pain racked my back. Went to the only Chiropractor in Singapore to shift my pelvis back. Missed a bunch of cool stuff with the cadets. Was able to move around without too much pain the next day shopping with Nichaja. I think Titcomb's "need-to-know" about "suck-up" points will have to be put on the back burner.

So, while BJ spent 3 weeks at her sister's place in Virginia, I stayed home. I got to do all the haying by myself, cutting, racking, baling, & bucking bales. BJ was NOT feeling one bit sorry for me. Not many visitors came to the ranch, so my hosting abilities were minimal.

I did spend 1 week with BJ at a Wing CAP Encampment for cadets. I took on my usual role as TACO along with my cohort Lt Col Herbie Llama; BJ was my Camp Commander. At the time I was a Lt Col and BJ a mere Major. Her requirements for promotion to Lt Col came through. So I processed the paperwork and while at the Encampment's banquet had our Wing Commander, Col Skrabut, along with the WY Military's Dept's big cheese, Col Reiner, switched her epaulets to a silver leaf. Now we are the same rank again and the cadets address us as either LTC Carlson ma'am or sir.

BJ here, not much else to say as things are basically the same as last year – work, Civil Air Patrol, gardening and trying to keep up with 2 puppies. Our garden lasted well into the fall – we actually had nice weather until mid-November. Of course by Thanksgiving we had snow, below zero temps and wind chills and it felt like arctic conditions. I had to break out the down jacket and sorrels already – bummer. We are hoping to travel to Wisconsin for Christmas to see Mike's sister and family in Ellsworth before heading to Lake Park, MN to see my sister. We hope to visit some others if everything works out OK. We are hoping for good traveling weather and plan to take the pups in our little Aveo. It ought to be interesting. We took them to Arizona in April but they were a lot smaller then. They are good travelers though so we should be fine.



missed

Then **Misha** the cat is not with us. She was over 25 yrs old. Now 2-Socks is the only cat on the ranch.



I'm back again!!! (Titcomb) Mike says "... I'm like a bad habit". We had one llama pass away on us this year. **Lilly of the Valley** just wasn't moving one day this fall. She was our matron-dom here at the ranch. She was the mom to Maggie, Sensay-Su, and Stroud Peak. She was just 15 years old and will be sorely



I started this letter back around the 1st of Nov. Since then some major stuff happened. Mike's sister Sandy Cordes died on 26 Nov 2010. She had breast cancer surgery the 1st part of Nov, then went and had some chemo, whatever that is. I guess the 2nd time she had this chemo stuff she didn't feel too good. Mike says Sandy called her daughter Joyce to come and take her to the hospital on Thanksgiving Day in the morning. Mike got a call that afternoon about her condition. Then the next morning lights came on in the house about 4:30am; that rarely happens. Turns out Mike got the call Sandy had past-on. So BJ & Mike worked on plans to head back to MN/WI. They took the two puppies with them and left Josie & Koncho, us llamas and the horses to fend for ourselves.



We were OK in the hay field. The dogs and cat, 2-Socks, had a girl checking on them.

Sandy was born 23 May 1936, so that makes her 74 yrs old. She had her family, husband Dennis, kids Dennis John Jr., Bill, Jean, Paul, Pat, Lorrie, and the twins Joyce & Janice, the grand kids and great grand kids there also for the funeral. This makes Mike the soul remaining Carlson. The black/white picture is of the Carlson family in 1972.

Our Sainly Saint Bernard: **Koncho**, hasn't been the same since his sister, Meko died 2 yrs ago. He hasn't walked to well for about a year now. BUT, since the puppies come onto the ranch he seems to be a lot better, acting like a BIG brother to them. Well on Sunday, Dec 5th, we were in the hay field when we heard a human female cry out. It was the girl that was looking after the dogs & cat while BJ & Mike were gone. We ran up and saw Koncho lying outside of the dog house where we saw him the night before. She was crying a lot. Koncho wasn't mov'in. We sniffed him and figured he wasn't alive. At age 11+ he was a pretty good dog. He and Meko kept us llamas in check when we would have our disagreements with each other.



On a better note ... four llamas got to go on a pack trip this summer up in the Beartooth Wilderness; Howard K, Senara, Osborn, & Spunky. They went up there in Sept. Seems they got rained on, snowed on, and got real cold. Mike had to make a special trip up there to retrieve them. None of the other llamas want to talk about the trip and Mike hasn't said word one about it to us. Wowwww ... I get to be an investigative reporter!! Maybe I'll have something juicy for next year's Christmas Letter.

Time to go. I know I was told to keep it to two pages but you got to admit 3 pages is still a 25% reduction!!! So..... from us llamas: **Maggie, Tymico, White Knight, Dark Rain, Seneca, Turret, Nichaja, Titapa, Granite Peak, Stroud Peak, Mt. Osborn, Sinara, Esparado, Klondike, Sensay-Su, Bola, Groucho, Spunky, Howard K, Coco Man, Shasta, Bridger, Zorac, Chinar Wing, Breeze Boy, Torrey Creek, Jenny, Zasu, Sir Rado, Magnus, Mandarin Chocolate, Ethan, and Tenacious**
 From that small dog **Josie**, and the two new puppies **Torin & Sasha**
 From the lean/mean **2-Socks**.

From the *GONZO* duo: **Thunder and Lightening**, and that **Cheyenne**
And, can't forget those **Lt Col's Mike and BJ** who keep this menagerie together.

Last but not least, from the BESTest editor WTR has ever had: Me!!!! ... Titcomb Basin 7th Wayfarer
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See ya'll guys.