

Ranch News 7/19/08

NEWS FROM ONION CREEK RANCH



Riding High in Colorado

The trail curved through high firs and spruces, backlit by the bright Colorado blue sky punctuated with 100' high firs and spruces. I was riding at 11,000' on a good horse in the 3-county sized national forest called Uncompaghre, named after a Ute chief. Such an unwieldy name for so perfect a place. All morning I had been gazing at the snow-capped "fourteener" peaks of the San Juan Mountains as we rode through brilliant wildflower-studded meadows along the rushing East Fork of the Cimarron River. My horse Monty, a 20 year old black foxtrotter who had a sure step and a good mind for the mountains, was in the lead with a steady gait. He had packed and led many times through these high mountains-- he kept a sharp watch, ears pricked ahead but never spooking. Behind me were **Don Peterson** and daughter **Cathy**, my friends from Cave Creek, Arizona, and their cousin **Jay**, all experienced mountain riders. I was relaxed and happy when I felt Monty slow down and focus on a movement ahead of us in the shadows of the trees. Suddenly out came **Donny Peterson**, who had been hiking ahead of us, and he was walking fast -- with a 300 lb black bear sow behind him.

She was simply gorgeous. Her shiny black hair rippled and shimmered when she came out of the shadows and into the sun. Cathy put Soldier, her mule next to me.

"Get the bear spray," she commanded quickly. I was the one carrying it in my cante pack. I fumbled at the zippers while mesmerized by this creature's magnificence. Soldier, brave at only four years old, held his ground until Donny got to us; Monty held too. "Get close," Pete said. When the bear saw a clutch of riders, she stopped. She did not want trouble. Only to protect what we now saw: two little black cubs skinnying lickety split up a tall fir right on the trail. She grunted to them and they went higher, almost to 80 feet. She stood up, paws wide out and stared at us and weaved a bit, as if counting our heads to ascertain the danger.

Meanwhile I was still fumbling for the bear spray. Finally I felt it and jerked it out of the pouch; "Here!" I said breathlessly. Cathy glanced over - "That's the *Off, Lin.*" I'd handed her the green can of mosquito spray. I began to fumble again - my hands did not seem to be working as well as they usually did. By this time, the bear could have eaten us all and had dessert too. Finally I found the pepper spray and handed it to her. "Thanks," she said drily. Momma Bear now moved about 20' to the side behind some brush, and stood with her big paws perched up on a log, staring at us. We were going to have to ride between her and the tree where her babies perched, looking down at us with big eyes.

"Keep together," Pete said, and we began to inch forward in a cluster, our horses almost glued to each other. They seemed to know the drill. Monty edged forward first. Donny stayed inside our group. Jay's brave little white Arabian brought up the rear. We could not go off-trail, it was too dense. We walked carefully past the tree while all the time human and bear's eyes were locked. There was an unspoken agreement: we were each giving each other the space needed. She was a wise momma bear, holding her ground and letting the danger past, all the while emitting a low call to her cubs that meant *stay put*. And what Momma ordered, the cubs did.

After we passed and were down the trail, I breathed again. Jay pointed out my hands were shaking. No, they *weren't*, I retorted. But then I thought, I really had no memory. Hmm, perhaps that's why they couldn't operate a zipper. We told Donny how the sow was loping after him when she saw us -- what would have happened then if we'd not been there? Well, that's why people don't go hiking alone in the mountains in the most sparsely populated county in Colorado. Donny said the cubs had crossed in front of him and he'd gotten a quick photo of them when Momma came a-packin'.

Bear encounters in this part of Colorado are common for its residents, so frequent that the Montrose Division of Wildlife are trapping and relocating

them. The morning I arrived at the Peterson Cabin, high in the appropriately named Bear Claw subdivision, they had had three bears come into the yard, a boar and 2 youths, rooting under the cabin. Bears are curious and always looking for food and a cabin smells like food miles away. Pete is careful not to leave any bear attractants outside -- he even had to take down their hummingbird feeder because the bears went for the sweet liquid. Even so the bears had broke into their barn and ripped into the bags of horse feed and bran. Pete keeps a shotgun right by the door with rubber bullets the Wildlife Rangers gave him. He had to use it on the big boar's backside and to send him away from the cabin.



Columbine, Colorado State

Flower

My trip to Colorado was studded with images and memories like this. The snowfall had been heavy during the winter and so we still saw snow and the results of avalanches: crushed trees and even the Silver mine cabin downed. The lakes and rivers were full, and never never have I seen such a glorious brilliant presentation of wildflowers: lavender columbines, the state flower, yellow phlox and mules ears, purple lapin, pink fairy slippers, dandelions, yellow globe flower, white chickweed blooms and the beautiful wild rose -- all guarded by stately blue spruce and Douglas firs. Hummingbirds and "camp robbers" (gray jays) availed themselves of the lush bounty. Deer and elk ears sprouted from the high skunk cabbage, thinking they were hidden. It was enchanting.

Evenings Ellen, who has been married to Pete for 60 years, would effortlessly produce a five course hearty meal and we would sit and talk and laugh and tell stories. Pete, a hunting guide for 30 years, amongst his many other jobs and talents, regaled us with dramatic tales of storms and and horse falls and big game and deep snow and bears and a friend having a heart attack in the middle of the wilderness, of helicopter rescues, of helping others, of himself getting lost once and so much more. I didn't know who to congratulate more: Pete for surviving, or Ellen for quietly doing it with him.

The Peterson cabin is a rustic one room with porch and bathroom that Pete added. The loft sleeps eight or more. In the morning Pete lit a fire in the old iron stove and put coffee on. I would walk outside to drink in the crisp, clean air. The little chipmunks, ever busy, cheerful and present, ran onto the porch for peanuts.

It was a delightful time. It was inspiring. There was something about this wild area that was lofty and wild. I could feel the magnificence of the Universe here, and felt grateful to in it, right then, right there, at that time...



Uncompaghre photos:

UNCOMPAGHRE was the Ute Indian Chief of the Cimarron River area of Colorado between Gunnison and Montrose. We trailered the horses to the trail head of Uncompaghre National Forest (which covers 3 counties) and rode from 9,000 to 11,300 ' through this very remote, rugged, mountainous area of the San Juans. It was an experience I'll never forget.

Uncompaghre Wilderness, Col.
July 2008

[View photos](#)

Lakes Ride Photos:

This ride went straight from the house, through an alpine forest of aspens up to the lakes. It was my first ride on Monty, the Peterson's foxtrotter.

This album also shows the little town near Cimarron called Altmont. Going there we passed the field where *True Grit* was filmed with

Cimarron, Col. 7-08

John Wayne.

[View photos](#)

The Uncompahgre National Forest lies in the heart of American alpine country. It's a land of 14,000-foot peaks, fast-flowing creeks, alpine lakes, deep spruce forests, red rock gorges, and lots of black bears. It's also a land of gold.



Abandoned mine shafts and ghost towns dot the landscape, emblems of the Uncompahgre's Gold Rush past. Prospectors staked their claims in the 1800s and built up towns like Telluride that have since become popular vacation destinations. The roads built by the miners now serve as thoroughfares into the forest's vast backcountry. With 110 miles of trails and 102,000 acres, Uncompahgre has been called the Switzerland of America in celebration of its remarkable scenery of craggy, broken summits and the many precipitous peaks that populate the area -- Wetterhorn (14,015 feet) and Uncompahgre Peak as well as other well-known summits like Courthouse Mountain and Coxcomb Peak . The central portion of the area includes the many forks of the Cimarron River, which descent long, glacial valleys and are connected by an extensive network of trails. Wildlife includes elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion and bighorn sheep.

Come summer, the snows in the high country finally melt, and alpine meadows explode in a riotous display of red Indian paintbrush, columbine, and buttercups. As autumn descends, the aspen turn brilliant gold and elk bugle in the valleys.



Crested Butte, Colorado, July 08
<http://crestedbutte.org/>

Crested Butte photos:

From Cimarron, I drove to Crested Butte, a darling former mining town that nestles in the San Juans at 8,500 feet. The climate when I was there July 14-17 was simply perfect. Wildflower week had just ended-- the flowers were vibrant and stunning in color. CB is a charming, friendly, beautiful place. I stayed in friend Dan Weiss' house on the mountain side and rode both of his two fine Quarter Horses, Cochise and Hunter, grandsons of the great dun Studley I rode over the mountain from CB to Aspen some 18 years ago....

[View photos](#)

BUMPER STICKERS...





DID YOU KNOW...?

Q: Who was the First Woman to draw her own salary from the Federal Government?

A: **Clara Barton**, creator of the American Red Cross. (b:1821-d:1912)
Barton began voluntarily tending the wounded in the Civil War, which led to her truly monumental efforts in leading volunteers and obtaining and distributing supplies to wounded soldiers--and ultimately led her to organize the American Red Cross. She was quite remarkable: independent, strong of spirit and later, unmarried by choice, though she had no lack of lovers and suitors. Barely five feet tall, with a round face, high cheekbones, wide mouth, and beautiful, expressive dark-brown eyes, the Massachusetts born Barton had grown up 'more boy than girl,' ignored by her stern, unloving mother and taught to ride and shoot--she was a dead pistol shot--by her old, Indian-fighting father. Barton was attractive, athletic and could go long periods without sleep. She was described as stubborn, sensitive, caring, affectionate, patriotic, robust and kind. (from Roy Morris' book, *The Better Angel*, Oxford, 2000)

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The only thing one can give an artist is leisure in which to work. To give an artist leisure is actually to take part in his creation. -Ezra Pound, poet (1885-1972)

A LITTLE BIT OF TEXAS TEXAS WEBSITES!
<http://www.texasillcountrymall.com/jump.htm>

SINGING PUPPIES TO SLEEP

This is really a sweet video on Youtube. It's the timbre of his voice that soothes them... [YouTube - Lets see the Dog Whisperer do this!!](#)

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A wise man will make haste to forgive, because he knows the true value of time, and will not suffer it to pass away in unnecessary pain. -Samuel Johnson, lexicographer (1709-1784)

FOR SALE from Onion Creek Ranch

TWO GOOD THOROUGHBRED GELDINGS.

1. JJ - 6 yr old bay, good riding horse, easy going, 15.3hh, \$850.

2. TILLMAN - 4 yr old bay, good looking, rides, 15.1hh, \$850.

**Both are current on shots and coggins and registered Jockey Club.
Email for pix or call for more information.**

NEW BOOK

Mustang: The Saga of the Wild Horse in the American West by

Deanne Stillman

Get ready for the Extreme Mustang Makeover in Sept in Fort Worth by reading this book! www.amazon.com

The World's Shortest Psychiatrist Joke

A man walks into a psychiatrist's office wearing only underwear made of Saran Wrap. The psychiatrist says, "Well...I can clearly see your nuts."

CONGRATULATIONS

to our creative neighbors **Kate and James Mays** on the release of their new album! My favorites cuts are *Remedy* and *BO5*. (Hey, they ride too!)



Hear at

<http://www.vimeo.com/1341486>

Websites:

<http://www.mrandmrsdays.com/> or
www.myspace.com/mrandmrsdays

**Only enemies speak the truth; friends and lovers lie endlessly, caught in the web of duty. -
Stephen King, novelist (b. 1947)**

URGENT INFO ON TIRES

**Watch this video report by 20-20 to the end and Check Your Tires -
You may save your life or someone you know!**

[/Video/playerIndex?id=4826897](http://Video/playerIndex?id=4826897)

**My SUV has four legs, a mane and a tail...
and it doesn't guzzle gas!**

**Trail riders do it
in the woods...**

**Trail
Riding**

Digger the Clydesdale becomes Britain's Biggest Horse

By BETH HALE for the Daily Mail (England)

From his lofty position in the stable yard, Digger has become used to looking down on the world.

Indeed, he is so high and mighty that his handler Lisa McFarlane is finding it hard to chart his exact size.

Best estimates put the strapping Clydesdale at 19 hands and two inches (6ft 6in) on a par with Britain's biggest living horse. Here he is with his rider....

And at just four years old, Digger is the equivalent in equine terms to a teenager so there is still time for him to grow. (MORE at www.tuesdayshorse.com)

Just because an animal is large, it doesn't mean he doesn't want kindness; however big Tigger seems to be, remember that he wants as much kindness as Roo." - Winnie the Pooh



JOB AT THE

RUNNING R GUEST RANCH

"A PERMANENT POSITION working the front desk/guest relations is available about ten miles west of Bandera, in the Texas Hill Country. You are the woman, who knows how to represent our ranch via phone or email. You are flexible, confident in dealing with people and able to organize daily routines in the office, guest activities as well as check-in and out. But you are also willing to jump in wherever an additional hand is needed at the ranch. Since the office work is not always a full day of work some horse experience would be a plus. For more details, please email runningr@texas.net "

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"I'd rather be sorry for something I did, than for something I didn't." - Kris Kristofferson

BEST HEADLINE OF THE WEEK

"Toilet paper unwinds and rewinds during twister in Minnesota"



15-Year-Old Girl Wins 2008 Ride & Tie Championship

Sara Howard became the youngest person to win the Ride & Tie World Championship with her father, Jim, and their horse, Magic Sirocco.

Plumas County, Calif., July, 2008 -- **Sara Howard** of Applegate, Calif., became the youngest person ever to win the Ride & Tie World Championship June 21. She also enters the ranks of women who have won the overall event: There are only three female winners in the 38-year history of the sport. She and her partner rode their horse, Magic Sirocco, to his fourth Ride & Tie World Championship Best Condition award.

The sport of Ride & Tie combines trail running, endurance riding and strategy. The goal is to get all three team members--two humans and one horse--across a 20 to 100 mile cross-country course by alternating riding and running. Everyone starts out together. The rider, being faster, rides ahead and ties the horse to a tree and then continues down the trail on foot. The team member who started out on foot gets to the horse, unties, mounts up and rides past the runner, ties the horse... and this leapfrog continues the entire course. When, where and how a team exchanges riding for running is almost entirely up to each team to develop their own strategy.

“The virtue of achievement is victory over oneself. Those who know this can never know defeat.”

[Monty Roberts to Speak here at Healthy Horses Workshop](#)

The July 26 AAEP Healthy Horses Workshop in Austin, Texas, will feature seminars for horse owners and a morning session with clinician Monty

Roberts. The public is welcome to attend (there is a cost).
www.aaep.org/healthy_horses.htm.

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"Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

I hope you all have a great week, and remember --

Lin and the Ranch Poodles

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