

January, 2000

Newsletter News: Thanks to everyone who wrote to me after the last newsletter. It's fun to have some feedback, and some actual news to report!

Whirling Disease: Several people asked about "whirling disease," and what the current status is. There was a **lot** of information about it on the internet, specifically on the Montana University System Water page. Highlights of the Montana Water Report to Congress, 1998-99 Research Findings, Whirling Disease Initiative, dated Dec. 30, 1999, informs me that while the disease cannot be eradicated, hope exists for containment, and they'll be focusing next year on experimental management, and testing some of the more promising strategies, while continuing support for basic research on the disease. I didn't find much about the specific impact on the Madison in our area, but found a news article in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, July 27th, 1999, that whirling disease is spreading and has been confirmed in two new locations in the Yellowstone River as well as in the Gallatin near Logan, and the East Gallatin near the Riverside Country Club. The article says that the disease was first detected in Montana in the Madison River, where it has affected trout populations, though fishing guides say the fishing is still good. I realize I'm not giving you a very comprehensive report, but if you're interested, the internet is full of information. Also, if any of our members can give us information more pertinent to our particular area, please let me know and I'll include it next time.

Hardy's On-The-Scene Report: Weather: Snow season started in late November and by Dec. 13th Jack and Jeanne had moved their cars to the highway, because the weather dictated snowmobile and cross-country skiing only. After having mostly 20 to 50 degree temps in November, December dropped to 0-20 with more snow. In fact right before Christmas a storm dropped 18+ inches, so they had a beautiful white Christmas. I'm jealous! January has been similar to December, except for a 3-day warm spell (33-38 degrees during the day, and 24-28 at night), which turned the snow to mush, then the temperature dropped to 9 degrees, so now everything's ice. Jeanne says the sunrises and sunsets can be gorgeous over the white landscape, and clear nights with a full moon are "awesome!" I'm double-jealous!

Animals/Birds: "As usual, herds of Elk have been migrating across the Ranch headed towards Wall Creek. There always seems to be a moose or two hanging out around the \$3 Bridge area. Have only seen a few deer. We often see fox and coyotes. Our bird sanctuary has only been home for our year-round residents – Chickadees, Downey and Hairy Woodpeckers and occasionally Gray Jays."

Local: Several families have visited their property here to enjoy the winter and the snow. Jack and Jeanne and some close friends had a special New Years Eve: They went by snowmobile to the Saddlehorn Restaurant at Cliff Lake Lodge, and had a great time ringing in the New Year! Jeanne says Jack was quite ill during December, and was in bed for 10 days. For somebody as active as Jack, I'm sure that was a trial. He is still trying to gain his strength back, but it's been slow. I know I speak for everyone when I wish him a speedy and complete recovery. Jack and Jeanne are still enjoying their dogs, who just turned two (with ice cream and cake). She says they still haven't reached the "magic age," and "continue to chew up their beds, turn gopher holes into large caves, and try to relocate the woodpile." We dog owners can identify with that! I am still waiting for our dog to reach that "magic age..."

Real Estate: I heard from Donna Lathe that their lot #128 is for sale, price negotiable. They have an abundance of aspen and fir, a nice slope and magnificent view. They do not have a well or electricity, but the lot was perked and has exceptionally deep and rich topsoil.

Cathy Stilmacher says their lot #133 is for sale for \$38,900, and she adds that it does have power.

Keith and Pam Hooley have divided their lot #34 into two 10-acre parcels, one is sold, the other for sale.

The owners did not indicate whether any of these are currently listed with realtors. If you know anyone who wants a lot in Madison River Ranch, or you want to increase your "holdings," check these out.

Letters to the Editor: Any time I get letters or emails and the writer indicates I may use them, I'll try to include them, at least in part, and will edit and paraphrase where necessary:

Letter from Michael and Kim Carpenter by email, Lot #40:

"First, I want to remind everyone about the services we all enjoy compliments of our Association board, especially the efforts of John Legler. He seems tireless in his efforts on behalf of the Ranch, and has presided over some fairly acrimonious debates. One issue that we feel strongly about is keeping the gates locked. We're aware there are differences of opinion about this, but until we agree upon an equitable solution, we believe for individuals to ignore our covenants and other agreements because they're inconvenient is a bad precedent."

Thanks for the comments. Keep those letters and emails coming, and if you want me to consider them for inclusion in the next newsletter, please so indicate.

Ranch Recipes:

Firehouse Chicken Enchiladas

Recipe from Kenneth Buckley who was a finalist in a Dallas Fire Dept. Cook and Ladder contest sponsored by Tabasco. Thanks Kenneth!

2 whole chickens
 2 cans Old El Paso enchilada sauce (hot or mild)
 2 cans cream of chicken soup
 2 cans chopped green chiles
 1 medium onion, chopped
 2 T. Tabasco
 ½ lb. Sliced mushrooms, lightly sauteed in fresh garlic and butter
 Salt and pepper to taste
 1 lb. Monterey Jack cheese, grated
 1 lb. mild Cheddar cheese, grated
 30 corn tortillas
 4 flour tortillas

Remove skin from chickens, clean out and rinse well. Boil for approximately 1 hour, or until done. Save broth. Let chickens cool, remove bones and chop meat.

In a 5 or 6 qt. pot, mix enchilada sauce, cream of chicken soup, chiles, onion, Tabasco, mushrooms, and 1 cup of reserved broth. Heat on low for 35 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Mix Monterey Jack and Cheddar cheeses together in a bowl.

In a medium skillet, soften each corn tortilla in a mixture of oil and Tabasco sauce. Drain well. In two large baking dishes, layer sauce, corn tortillas and cheese, then corn tortillas, sauce and cheese. When half full, include two flour tortillas with more layers of corn tortillas, sauce and cheese. Finish the top with cheese. Bake at 350 30-40 minutes and enjoy!

Thought for the day: "In the depths of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer." Albert Camus

I think I've got most of the email addresses for those of you who want to receive their newsletter by email, but if you get this through the mail and want me to email it next time, please let me know.

That's it for this time. Thanks to all of you who wrote to me after the last newsletter. Your participation and comments help a lot, plus it's just fun to hear from you! Please keep in touch, and I will do my best to get the next Newsletter out later in the Spring. As usual, thanks to Jeanne and Jack Hardy for their very newsy report that helps us all "be" in Montana even when we're not!

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