

# April, 2005

Edited by Martha Crawley

## From the President's Corner

by Jeanne Loughrey

Several events have happened on the Ranch this past year which have prompted the Board to take a hard look at the Codes, Covenants & Restrictions/ByLaws. Always when drafting the first CC&Rs/By-Laws it is impossible to look into the future and anticipate what will occur. Ours were formed in 1989. They were further amended in 1999.

We feel there are issues that need to be dealt with to preserve the value and continued enhancement of the stewardship of our land. Our goal is to protect the natural beauty, views and surroundings so far as is possible in connection with uses and buildings. We also want to keep enhancing the ranch for wildlife as this is part of the experience of owning a lot on the Ranch. This will be the main thrust of our annual meeting June 25th. I encourage all of you to attend this meeting and help us with this task."

You will be notified later with more details about the meeting.

Jeanne

## Memo from Martha:

Dave and I are starting our house this Spring. We are thrilled, excited, scared, etc. It will be a Neville Log Home, and the log package will be delivered in early June. Before that, the basement and foundation will have to be prepared, so there will be some digging, etc. as soon as they can get in there and do it. We'll be there from about the third week in May until mid-June, then back here so Dave can fly one more trip before he retires. Then he'll be back over for pretty much the rest of the summer, and I'll come over periodically. Please stop and see us!

### *Thought for the day:*

"I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once." From a delightful little book called "Furry Logic", by Jane Seabrook

## Ranch Recipes

### Out West Beef Marinade

½ cup soy sauce  
½ cup lemon juice  
¼ cup sesame oil  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
1 bay leaf  
½ teaspoon seasoned pepper  
1 clove garlic, crushed

Mix. Pour over beef (I've used it with flank steak and bottom round or "London Broil," with excellent results), marinate overnight. Cook on barbecue. Slice thinly across grain.

## Fishing With Mike Wells

March 20, 2005

Spring officially arrived today with what I hope is a preview of this season's weather pattern. It has been snowing steadily since dawn. Medium sized, juicy flakes full of moisture. The only complaint would be that it's not cold enough at this elevation for the snow to stick and build up. It's running off the roof, down through the gutters on the house like rain. There are no mountains today. The sky is a grayish white, ground length curtain obscuring everything above the horizon. All that is visible are the clumps of sage (that were buried under snow four weeks ago) and the dark forms of the trees. We will need a lot more of this to mitigate the effects of the extended drought here in Montana.

Yesterday we watched the local coyote hunt the meadow below and hillside around our house. It must have run off the red fox that had the area staked out in January. The coyote methodically stalked the meadow, padding lightly on the crusted snow, tilting its head from side to side to better hear its prey (coyotes and foxes can hear mice, voles and other rodents 18" below the snow). Sneaking up on something that aroused its interest the coyote suddenly lunged into the snow and flipped a mouse out with its forearms and front paws. Once on the surface the mouse ran around frantically and the coyote proceeded to play with it like a domestic cat would a toy! Bounding around cutting off escape paths, catching and tossing the mouse with its mouth or paws, laying down coyly til the mouse thought it was free and then repeating the process. I was mystified and a bit disappointed with this behavior, vocally admonishing the coyote to not play with its food. I guess the mouse wasn't on the shopping list or the coyote was practicing 'catch & release' hunting. After releasing the mouse, the coyote meandered to the top of the hill where something else drew its attention. Slowly creeping up to the selected spot the coyote rose up on its hind legs, launched itself vertically into the air and nose-dived shoulder deep into the snow with its head completely buried! After a few seconds of burrowing in the snow the coyote popped out with a large (8"-10") rodent which it dispatched in two crunches and swallowed nearly whole in two more.

#### 'Another Notch On The Rod'

As consciousness slowly but steadily intruded on my blissful stupor I awoke to sensations from times past. My body temperature had risen from 'warm & fuzzy' to 'get out of the sun now' during the course of my nap. I felt strangely similar to when I used to doze on the warm sand at the beach before 'they' discovered that your skin would fall off from such idle pursuits. The thermostat read 75 degrees but it had to be at least 15 degrees warmer on the couch with the sun blazing full force through the large, south facing windows. Outside the blanket of snow covering all but the trees and tallest sage glistened and sparkled, the shining mountains reflecting the glory of their seasonal crowns.

It had been cold this last week of January. With only a couple more days before the closure of our stretch of river til the third week in May I boldly decided to seize the moment and endeavor to put another notch on my rod. I have fished the Madison during every month of the year except January.

Not wanting to be deterred and not having an outdoor thermometer yet, I didn't even check the weather conditions online at the local web cam station. Shaking the heat and nap induced lethargy from my brain and body I pulled on my snowmobile clothes, slung my fishing vest on my back, strapped my fully set up rod to the side of the machine and was off. Giddy with anticipation, gliding over the snow I was entranced by the surrounding beauty and feeling of solitude. I guessed the outside temperature to be around 30 - 35 degrees, if it wasn't, then whatever it was would be warm enough for at least a couple fish.

At the main gate I ran into Dan Hanson and stopped to chat. His initial, quizzical look and subsequent, sideways grin gave away his opinion of my afternoon expedition. Being a local he has obviously seen the gamut of fish fever and follies.

Arriving at the common area I quickly parked, unpacked my rod and rushed to the river. The snow was thick and crunchy. Snowshoes would have been a better choice than 'muk-luks' and 'post-holing' to the river didn't go very fast. I guess I actually rushed at a very slow pace in spite of what my sweating torso and winded lungs indicated. I headed up from where the spring comes in to check the condition of the pelican carcass that appeared last fall. I had and still wondered how a pelican died within 5 feet of water. The carcass was now picked clean and had been moved around, leaving only skeleton with the beak/pouch dangling over the edge of the riverbank and one long wing awkwardly pointing to the sky. The tip of the beak in the flowing water made the head bob as though the pelican was still fishing. After checking it out for awhile I felt a minor case of the 'willies' creeping up my spine and opted to leave the weird scene for my favorite fishing holes downstream.

First cast and the combo black Copper John point fly with a gray midge larva dropper hesitated at the top of the drift. Strip striking with the slack line I was immediately connected to a chunky Brown. The fish seemed hyperactive for the time of year when subtle takes and quick fights are typical. After several strong runs and a couple jumps I brought the butter bellied beauty to hand, snapped a mental photo and let it go. That would be the last Brown of the afternoon but thankfully not the last fish. Over the next 2 hours I methodically worked down through several nice spots that could be fished from the bank. Rainbows came readily to the midge imitation from all the classic holding water. A gargantuan Whitefish unexpectedly took the Copper John at the top of a shallow slick behind a rock, made a hard dive to anchor itself to the bottom and worked my rod arm to near exhaustion by the time I eventually dredged it into the net. Of course with Whitefish the fun really begins when you try to unhook and release them. By the time I finished the juggling act and had unwrapped and unpinned it, the greasy giant had splashed half the river on me which made me more glad than ever that I was alone with no witnesses to my clumsiness. I did self-consciously glance around to confirm no one was rolling hysterically in the snow or secretly filming a blackmail video.

Drying off as best as possible in the weather the cold really started to settle into my bones so I headed back to the parking lot. Being a fishing junkie, I can't just walk along a river, I had to pick up a few more Rainbows on the way. Overall it was a memorable 3 hours fishing with a final tally of the 1 buttery Brown, 14+/- rocking Rainbows and that 1 nasty Whitefish!

Coupled with the solitude and sheer glorious beauty of the river on a bright, sunny winter day, I was overwhelmed by my good fortune. Firing up my valiant steed I rode up the hill into the sunset with dreams of basking on a sun drenched couch dancing in my head.

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## Hoolan's Winter Report

Montana Greetings,

Well, one more winter living on the ranch is behind us, our 5<sup>th</sup>. It is still fun!!

This winter was by far the easiest, less than half the normal snow and cold, but still enough for

some great cross country skiing and snowmobiling. We were able to drive to our home till Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> and on March 8<sup>th</sup> the county opened the main road to our gate. Not bad, only 2 months of snowmobile access.

It was easy going for the animals with so little snow cover, many never left the ranch all winter. It's hard not to feel sorry for them when you see them standing in the snow in sub-zero temperatures, but not this year, GOOD TIMES for all.

Many of our south facing hills were bare of snow, and that made for easy food gathering. Once again many elk, deer and a couple of moose made the ranch their winter home.

The birds have migrated back to raise their young along the river and again are squabbling over real estate. It is sometimes a noisy place! The bears are starting to come out of hibernation early. Hopefully they won't be as much trouble this year as last fall, when they decided to frequent the garages of property owners.

The elk herd in the Madison Valley is still increasing by great numbers. It is quite a sight to see thousands and thousands lining the roads on the way to Ennis. The wolves were thinning out the herds to a small degree, but our local wolf pack got in the bad habit of killing cows during the summer and last year the whole pack was killed for their misdeeds. Let's hope the next pack won't mess with the cattle.

As most of you know, we planted 1800 seedling trees throughout the ranch last spring, luck was with us, it rained several times during the summer. I am happy to say more than a thousand survived. According to the forest dept., trees that make it the first year on their own have a great chance for success.

The ranch grouse seem to be making an impressive comeback. Many property owners are seeing 2 to 3 times the past numbers. I have even seen 2 Sharptail grouse this past summer, the first time ever, but still no sightings of the historic Sage grouse.

As was done last year, I will have the roads graded early, as the snow melts, to take advantage of the ground moisture. This proved to be a good strategy last year. The board received many favorable comments on the roads holding up all summer, but as always, some risk is involved with grading too soon. Hopefully we will be as lucky this year.

Each year more and more of the owners are inquiring as to the possibility of having the roads open during the winter, allowing year round access. Problems have been arising for owners trying to obtain property fire insurance, due to the inaccessibility of the fire equipment. The rates are classified as the highest risk with the highest premiums, if you can even get insurance. Along with this concern, some owners are also finding that obtaining financing for building is only available at a higher rate, again due to the access. Give some thought to this issue, it can only get worse.

As always, best regards, and hope to see you all at the annual meeting.

## **Real Estate, etc.**

By Barclay VanDoren

Many thanks to Jill Garr [jgaar@3rivers.net](mailto:jgaar@3rivers.net) or (888) 592-5002 of Madison Valley Real Estate in Ennis for providing the following. I know everyone follows values closely.

Only a couple of properties are currently on our multiple listing service, Lot 31 listed at \$225,000., this property is fenced, has the septic in place, a 1,000 gal cistern and also a 3 car garage/storage building. Lot 26, is listed at 199,500. Both properties border Wade Lake

Looking through April 2004, nine properties sold in Madison River Ranches, with an average sold price of \$52,500. It's been an active real estate market in the upper Madison Valley. New listing prices continue to rise.

Moving on, **Wells** are our special topic for this Newsletter. For those contemplating a well I think I have some good stuff.

When I contracted for my well, I had no idea about choices and how to make intelligent decisions. Thanks to my General Contractor, who unlike most general contractors, was willing to assume the responsibility for drilling the well, I got a good well. Many owners are left to their own devices because they want to save the GC's fee or the GC does not want to be responsible for the well. Incidentally, the wells drilled thus far suggest a basin of water available at the same elevation across the ranch, which is good. However, there are pockets of volcanic ash which is not good.

After talking to a number of people and hearing further rumors, I decided to talk to Roy Hauser of Red Tiger (Wells) out of Manhattan. He has a good reputation for knowing the business and dealing square. He has drilled a number of wells on the Ranch. Nevertheless, an owner should know that the driller cannot know what is several hundred feet down and if he strikes granite or basalt or any other substance that slows the drilling rate down (like less than 20 feet per hour), the driller's contract will provide that billing will be on a rig/hour basis (around \$250). Hasn't happened often but it could happen. Roy said he hit a block of granite or basalt on Sun West last year.

First of all he recommends siting and drilling the well before any other expensive, immovable work is done – just in case. He suggests doing the well the season before you do your main construction if possible.

Prices are usually per foot (\$24/ft. to \$36 depending on what's included) and depend upon casing size and material, depth, and method of drilling. A typical 200 foot well would cost in the ballpark of \$8000 using under reaming. A 400 foot well, \$9800 using downhole hammer. A 700 foot well, \$18,000 using downhole hammer and steel.

Roy says there is no need for anything larger than 4" pipe for domestic use. A 4" pipe can handle anything from a 5 horse to a 15 horse pump, but there is almost never any need for anything larger than a 5 horse. Most pumps are reliable and good for 15 years depending upon abrasives in the water. He recommends all brass fitting and no galvanized. The only extras he recommends are a "cycle stop" and extra pressure tanks. I don't understand exactly what they do, but apparently each helps prevents pump wear from abrupt starts and stops.

The numbers and data I provide above are not guaranteed. Roy knows this stuff so well that it sometimes came too fast for me to pass along to you with clarity. In any event, this snapshot should give you much more information than I had.

On a positive note I was told that finding steady water in these drought years bodes well for future years which we can only hope are more "wet."

Good luck drilling and please let me know your experiences and the depth where you found water. Will add it to the MRR well "Good List."

**Thanks to Bill Hoolan, Mike Wells, and Barclay VanDoren for their excellent contributions. As always, please send or email me any questions or anything you think would be of interest to your neighbors, whether it's family news, recipes,**

**reports from the ranch, stuff for sale, letters to the editor, etc. I really enjoy hearing from you!**

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