



NOW WHAT?

"So, I Was Talking to My Buddy Jack"

Bad Weather Can be Good News

Rancher Down

JUST SAYING!

Since I have now sold the company and do not write their newsletter any longer, I have decided to do a personal newsletter, once in a while, just for the fun of writing and as means of getting out general information Linda and I and our friends have found helpful and maybe even humorous. After discussions with friends at a recent gathering, the name "The Crapper Chronicles" seemed to be a favorite. Wine was, however, involved; but for now that will be the name.

It's now winter so I was thinking I would start out this Chronicles with a story I wrote a few years ago when Linda and I had been down in St Paul for a few days.

This is the sixth newsletter of my retirement years. I am archiving all newsletters on my website at www.TompkinsPublishing.com.



"So I Was Talking to My Buddy Jack"

Jack and I were out walking late the other afternoon and I noticed there were very few garbage cans out. Being it was Wednesday right after the 1st of the year and Wednesday was garbage pickup day, I had put our cans out and had noticed I was the only one on the block who had done so. I told Jack "I guess I missed the 'no garbage pickup today' memo." Well, anyway, to continue the story, about this time four coyotes ran across the road right in front of us. They seemed to be hunting for something. A little later on the walk another coyote came around a fence and almost ran into us. He too seemed to be looking for something. Since Jack had barked at him and the coyote had looked our way, I asked Jack if he had any information. Jack reported that the coyotes were looking for the usual Wednesday garbage smorgasbord and they had not gotten the memo either. The head coyote had communicated to Jack "Bummer; no steak bones tonight, I guess it's going to be rabbit again!"

Bad Weather Can be Good News

As I am writing this issue of Crapper is see on the East Coast they are experiencing snow, sleet, and unusually cold temperatures. Of course the Weather Channel and the media are calling it a headline grabbing Bomb Cyclone. I see in New York it is +22 degrees with 22 mph winds giving a chill factor of 9 degrees. Gee, this weather is making headlines all up and down the east coast. It is of course a catastrophe of major proportions? I guess it is all in what you are used to. Last week it was -24 degrees in North Dakota with high winds giving chill factors well over -45 below. Of course it was not even mentioned on the national news and business went on as per normal. Oh well, at least the mosquitoes weren't out. More good news was maybe the weather had something to do with our state NOT being invaded this year by a bunch of out of state paid thugs 'protesting' our pipelines. Lucky us: I see the revenue for our pipelines is bringing in around six million dollars per month of much needed revenue to our state. No doubt we can thank our new president for getting the previously stonewalled project finished. As has been reported before, the only of our state's Washington delegation that even bothered to show up during the protest (which cost our state well over \$30,000,000) was the good Senator Heitcamp, who it was reported at the time, expressed her support of the protesters??? Whatever!

Rancher Down - *This is a true story that is a bit long but is so worth telling and re telling, I thought that since it is still winter we should include it. Hope you enjoy it.*

North Dakota is a land of extremes. In the summer she can have beautiful long eighteen hour days of endless sunshine, with clear skies which produce stunning vistas of green grain and grass. But at other times she can produce some of the most violent and dangerous weather on earth. In the early spring and fall the weather can be extremely nice or extremely horrible; probably all in the same day and in the late fall and early spring these freak storms can turn into deadly blizzards.

The fall of 2005 had very good weather. The harvests had been bountiful, the cattle were fattening up for winter, the late summer days had been long and warm. Although folks down on the gulf coast were having

hurricane after hurricane our weather in the Dakotas had been wonderful. However, finally one of those big bad low fronts laden with moisture came rushing up into the Dakotas and when the warm wet clouds met our dry cool plains it produced one of these blizzards. As usual the storm started out with dark angry rain clouds and wind. The problem was it was warm up in the clouds and cool on the ground so as the rain came down it became freezing rain. It stuck to trees, power lines, and highways; locking everything in its beautiful, but deadly grip. What had started out as a minor storm became in a few hours a full blown blizzard. Furthermore, it was early in October which is way too early for such a storm. As is usual with this type of blizzard, it came fast with lots of wind, freezing rain turning to wet snow, and virtually no warning as to how severe it was going to be.

In the next few days North and South Dakota were blasted with over 24" of snow, high winds and low temperatures for several days. It was a deadly combination. In blizzards such as this visibility is reduced to zero and these storms are as dangerous to man and beast as any weather on the planet. Before it had blown itself out the weight of ice from this storm had broken down thousands of trees, and hundreds of miles of power lines. The over two feet of snow that fell in two days had highways blocked with drifts of snow that in places were up to 15 feet deep. Even in the north country where we are used to bad weather, there is simply no way any utility company can plan for storms and problems of this magnitude and the downed power lines left many people without power for days.

Luckily this northern tier of our country is peopled by hardy souls descended from the early settlers. As is usual in these times people work together to be sure everyone is taken care of. Schools are shut down, neighbors look after neighbors people pitch into help, and the serious business of survival becomes the most important business of all. Folks who were without power fired up generators if they had them, got portable heaters going and got the wood stoves started. Convoys were sent out to rescue stranded motorists, stranded people got to know new friends, and most people simply hunkered down and waited for the storm to pass.

However, for the ranchers in the north-country these early blizzards pose a special problem. The reason for this is that with icy winds and snow blowing across the prairie, the cattle, in an attempt to get out of the bitter cold wind, will drift, sometimes for miles, in the swirling, choking snow. They will push through fences and anything else in their way till either the storm ends, they find shelter, or they become buried under the huge drifts and die; sometimes by the hundreds. Since during the storm there is nothing the ranchers can do but hope, it is a super tense and wearing time for people in the cattle business. In the storm of 10/7/05 the winds were high, visibility was zero, the snow was deep and the cattle drifted.

In two days the main part of the storm finally blew itself out. However, temperatures were still in the teens and with the winds gusting 15 to 20 mph causing chill factors to be well below zero. Frost bite and hypothermia are very real risks in weather such as this but to the ranchers south of Berthold in north central North Dakota it was time to get together with neighbors and find out where the cattle were, find out if they were alive, what kind of shape they were in. At times like this ranchers are focused, intense, and moving as fast as nature and time will allow. In a few hours they had gotten together a group of ranchers with horses, four wheelers, and four wheel drive pickups and were headed off over the frozen ground to find the cow herds.

Luck was to be with the ranchers this day. After bucking snow for the several miles to the main yard of the Yuly Ranch, they found the Quarter Circle Lazy Y herd had drifted into corrals around the main ranch yard and were safe. The Myers Ranch herd however was no where to be found. Splitting up into three search teams Darwin Myers headed to the Southeast on his four wheeler, his father Dutch Myers and neighbor Bob Oguryck headed straight east on horses, while Gail Yuly and neighboring rancher Darwyn Kleven got on their four wheelers and headed south west in search of the missing cattle. Soon after leaving the ranch yard Gail and Darwyn found a trail of torn up fences; following this they were able to locate the missing cattle a few more miles to the south. The Myers herd had finally stopped on the lee side of some very large hills in some heavy brush by the shore of a large Alkali lake. Other than being hungry, bunched up and bellowing for food, they were in pretty good shape. The only task was to move the 75 cow-calf pairs the several miles north.

It had been a busy morning it was now 10:30 a.m. and the work was just starting. Pushing over, through and around the huge drifts with their four wheelers Gail and Darwyn soon had the 150 cattle moving along a ridgeline that was relatively clear of snow, towards the ranch several miles to the north. The plan was that they would move the cattle up to the north ranch and since all the neighbors were on hand to help they would vaccinate the calves when they got them safely in the corrals located there. Of course as is usual with moving cattle, even when your hands are freezing, your face is turning numb from the cold and you want to be in a hurry, you just let the cattle move along slowly. The goal is to get them headed in the right direction at a steady walk. Things had settled into a good steady pace when suddenly as will often happen, one old cow and her calf broke away from the herd. They plunged down through the deep snow off the ridge top, heading for the valley below. Turning around, Darwyn headed back on his four-wheeler to get them turned back towards the herd; leaving Gail to keep the main herd moving along the ridgeline.

When you are moving cattle you learn to have your head on a swivel and after a few minutes out of habit Gail looked back to see where Darwyn was. To her horror she could see Darwyn's four wheeler was overturned and it appeared he was pinned under it. Forgetting about the cattle Gail whipped her four-wheeler around; gunning the engine to get to the trapped rancher as quickly as possible.

What had happened was as Kleven and his machine tore after the cattle he was on a slanting downhill surface. Hidden under the loose snow was a deep rut worn from years of rain coming off the hill. When his downhill wheels fell into the rut the four wheeler flipped end over end. The startled rancher, was thrown ahead of the machine and as it cart wheeled, ending up spread-eagled in the snow. To make things worse, as it tumbled, the machine slammed down on him, the luggage rack crashing down on his face. The only reason he was alive at all was the soft snow had somewhat cushioned the blow of the falling machine. None the less his jaw was broken in several places his skull was crushed, and he was bleeding from multiple cuts and lacerations. The biggest problem was he was drowning in his own blood and could not move from the weight of the machine. If the four wheeler could not be gotten off his face and chest he had but minutes to live.

Gail: I could see the machine had overturned and Darwyn was pinned down by the luggage rack on the back of the machine. At first I could see no movement but as I got closer, to my horror, I could see him thrashing around like an animal in its death throes. I realized if I were to save him I had mere seconds to get him out from under that machine.

Darwyn: I couldn't breathe. I was drowning in my own blood and could feel the strength flow out of me. I had just had the thought "I'm going to die right here out in Yuly's pasture." When I heard the sound of Gail's four wheeler approaching. That minute or so it took her to get to me was the longest of my life. By the time she came up to me I was barely conscious.

The problem was the machine that was crushing Darwyn's face weighed over 500 pounds. Furthermore, the machine was facing downhill. Whoever lifted it off him would have to push the machine up and to one side to free his face. Gail Yuly tips the scales soaking wet at barely 110 pounds. Luckily for Darwyn that 110 pounds was a tough-as-nails, no-nonsense ranch woman.

The scene presented to her as she ran up to the accident was one out a horror movie. The force of the blow had literally torn Kleven's scalp and face away from his skull from the hairline at top center of his face down around his right eye down and around to the center of his jaw, completely around to the back of his head and a few more inches back up into his hairline. As is usual with head wounds blood was everywhere. The smell of death was on the air.

Gail: I ran up to the machine yelling Darwyn! Darwyn! But he gave no response other than a gurgling gasping noise. I could see he was getting weaker and I said to myself, "Lord, it's just you and me here." All I could think of was how heavy that machine was, but it was very obvious that Darwyn was almost gone. The snow was covered with blood.

Somehow carefully the diminutive woman braced herself with a foot on each side of the fallen rancher and giving a mighty heave lifted the heavy machine up and to one side; off of his face. With a mighty whoosh of air Darwyn was at last able to take a breath.

Gail: All I remember thinking at first after I got the four-wheeler off him was "My God where are his eyes?" Since Darwyn's face had been literally split from the concussion of the blow and there was blood everywhere both of his eye sockets were completely filled with blood. As luck would have it I had a clean paper towel in my pocket and I took that and sopped the blood out of his eyes so at least he could see. Darwyn's first words were a mumbled "My teeth, my teeth." I felt in his mouth and told him it looked like they were all there. Actually it was obvious to me he had far greater injuries and his teeth were the least of my concerns.

In fact Kleven's jaw was visibly broken in several places and teeth were hanging on by shreds of gum. With all the broken bone and blood Gail wasn't at all sure all his teeth were there but she knew it would help keep him calm in the face of his horrendous injuries if she told him the teeth looked ok.

Gail: My biggest concern was that I could see that the skin on the right side of his face was literally slipping down into the snow. His right ear was actually lying in the snow by his head. The ear was turning dark red and I remember thinking if it was torn off I could maybe pack it in snow and put it in my pocket so it could be reattached later. I didn't realize at first it was not severed only the skin around it was badly torn up. In the few minutes since I had lifted the machine off him I could see the skin on the entire right side of his face was literally slipping down and there was a gap of two inches from where it had been torn from the skin on the other side of his face. It was as if his face was literally falling off. I remember being angry that I had not worn my bandana that day since I could have used it to bind his face and keep the skin together. Luckily Darwyn had his own bandana on. I removed it and carefully tied it around his face to keep the skin from sliding down.

Darwin: I remember asking Gail several times about my teeth and she told me it looked like they were all still there. Then I tried to get up and she told me in no certain terms to stay right where I was. "You know, when Gail talks to you like that you do what you're told."

The rancher at first tried to get up but Gail commanded him to stay down. Although Gail is not a big person when she tells you to do something in that tone of voice you do it. Doctors later told Kleven that Gail's keeping him calm and not letting him thrash around probably helped him to not go in shock and reduced the bleeding. However, at the time he was far from safe and his ordeal was certainly not over for the day. Somehow he had to be gotten to the hospital and soon or he would bleed to death.

After getting his wounds tied up as best she could Gail got back on her four-wheeler and headed out to go get help. After a 20 minute ride she saw Dutch Myers and Bob Oguryck sitting their horses on a nearby hilltop waiting for the cattle to arrive. Running up to them she shouted "Darwyn's hurt real bad!" She then told them where to find him and as they rode to the ranch to get a four wheel drive pickup she headed back to the scene of the accident to do what she could to stabilize Kleven and try and keep him conscious until help arrived. It was only when she got back to the scene of the accident that Gail noticed her dog Lucy; her Blue Healer cow dog, had been keeping Darwyn company the entire time she had been gone. Snuggling close to the injured man the dog had not moved until help arrived.

What Gail had forgotten when she had told Dutch Myers of the accident was that when Darwyn Kleven and Darwin Myers are together she usually refers to Darwyn Kleven as 'Kleven'. When she rode up to Darwin Myer's dad Dutch Myers and yelled "Darwyn is hurt real bad!!!" she had forgotten this. Therefore, since she had used the name Darwyn and not Kleven, Dutch had assumed it was his son Darwin who was badly injured. His heart was racing as they arrived at the ranch. Seeing his son's wife Kim he yelled "Darwyns hurt" "Climb the hill so you can reach a cell tower, and call for an ambulance!" Kim also thought it was her husband who was injured and was so upset she had difficulty even telling the ambulance people where to come. Dutch and Bob quickly put the horses in the corral and jumped into the four wheel drive pickup to go get Darwyn. Cutting across the pasture to get the vehicle to Kleven was no small task as the drifts were deep and any low lying areas were impassable with snow. Finally by cutting through fences and bucking the drifts they got to the downed rancher. It was only when he arrived at the accident site that the crusty old rancher realized it was not his son who was so badly injured but Darwyn Kleven. After they had loaded Kleven in the truck and were ready to go; with tears in his eyes Dutch turned to Gail and asked, "Now, will you please go and find my Darwin?"

Still not aware as to how bad he really was injured the still conscious Kleven took off his own coat before they put him into the pickup mumbling "Ain't nobody going to cut up my new Carhart jacket!" Then Dutch, Oguryck and Kleven headed off in the truck to the ranch and a

connection with the ambulance which was on the way. It was only when they arrived at the ranch that Darwin Myers's wife Kim too was made aware that it was not her husband but Darwyn Kleven who was injured. However, her husband was still not to be found either.

They soon located the ambulance on a side road and Kleven was on his way to the hospital. Along the way due to massive blood loss his blood pressure began to drop and he was given transfusions to keep him alive until they arrived in the Minot hospital. His wife Laurel is one of the ER nurses at the Minot hospital and she was there when the ambulance arrived. As doctors were cleaning him up and prepping him for surgery Kleven said "I don't know why everyone is so excited." "Gail said I would only need a couple of stitches." It appears this was a small little lie as in the many hours of surgery in which doctors had to literally reattach his face to his skull; doctors told him they had stopped counting stitches after 250.

After coming out of surgery a nurse remarked to Kleven that he would be eating from a straw for the next six weeks. Kleven, who loves to eat a good steak exclaimed, "And I missed dinner today too!" Aside from the stitches Kleven has several new steel plates holding his jaw together, the front of his skull had to actually be pushed back out and he had other dents and scratches to many to mention. He is back wearing his good Carhart jacket, is again eating steak, and says he is alive due to the quick thinking and calm actions of his fellow ranchers: Especially one Gail Yuly. For her part, and in her own unassuming way, Gail simply told Darwyn apparently the good Lord decided it wasn't his time to go.

The day of the accident, as the pickup drove away taking Kleven to the ambulance, once again, Gail headed out into the cold wind on her four wheeler; cow dog Lucy following close behind, to find Darwin Myers. After a time she saw some cows in the distance that were not being herded and figured out Myers had to be close by. Hoping to hear his machine's engine noise she and Lucy stopped on a hill to listen. It was then she heard a whistle, looking to the east she could see Myers standing on top of his machine which had become stuck in the snow at the bottom of an old buffalo wallow in the pasture. The two of them got the machine unstuck and went over to the scene of Kleven's accident, and since his machine was still on its top they righted it. As they stood looking over the scene of the accident Darwin Myers turned to Gail and said, "Well, now what should we do?" Practical ranchers both, they decided that since Darwyn was on the way to the hospital and they still had plenty of help around the ranch, they would round up the remaining cattle, get them vaccinated and be done with the job. In the remaining hours before the early North Dakota sunset they accomplished just that.

On the plains of Dakota blizzards happen, once in a while someone gets hurt, but usually Phil Cantori from the Weather Channel doesn't show up, as a rule Geraldo Rivera doesn't move in, the main news networks don't take much notice and the work goes on. Come to think of it? I guess we probably like it that way.



Thanks for reading Crapper and remember, we have our families, our friends, our health, and time.....the rest is smoke and mirrors!!!! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours from me, Linda, Jack the terrier!!!

THE CRAPPER MUSE

Horses in Snow

North Dakota is a place
Of Nature's extremes;
It's never complacent,
Or so it would seem.

It scares us and thrills us,
As all of us know;
And yesterday it did me
With the "Horses in Snow."

On the prairie a blizzard
Is an everyday thing,
But the big and scary ones
Come in the spring.

They can frighten or kill you
Or awe you, I know,
As they did to me yesterday
With the "Horses in Snow."

So the wind whistled and whined,
And the snow swirled round.
The tractor was lurching
Over hard-frozen ground.

I was busy at work,
Getting the horses some hay,
When to my utter amazement,
They started to play.

They pranced and they strutted,
Then bucked at a run,
Kicking and snorting
Like kids having fun.

Around me they danced
In the whistling blow;
In sight, then invisible
Were the "Horses in Snow."

It was almost like dreaming
As the snow whirled round,
And my spirits were lifted
At their happy "snort" sound.

And the blizzard didn't scare me;
I was lucky, you know,
To be a small part
Of the "Horses in Snow."

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