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Hello guys and gals!

Did any of you ever have an ant farm growing up? On the topmost layer everything looks quiet and tranquil. But look a little lower through the glass and there's a whole other world of activity going on! Such is how the ranch seems right now. Yes, the lodge is quiet. Most of the horses have been out to pasture all week. The earth around the ranch seems altogether more still.

But just below the surface, there's a lot of work going on!

Randy continues to work with fence crews and lease owners. There have been mountains to climb and long drives back and forth to town. The only time I see him anymore is first thing in the morning, when he checks the clock to make sure I've made it in on time.

Chris and Nathan spent the first half of the week cutting, splitting and stocking firewood. There won't be anyone who will be able to complain that they're cold with as much fuel as they loaded us up with!

The second half of the week, Nathan and Chris, as well as Willy, Nolan and Josh headed out to the East section of our grazing allotment to set posts for the fence to be strung



across. They dug through rock and hard packed dirt in some pretty steep spots. Josh said that he's never had a boss that's worked as hard as Randy and that Randy damn-near outworked him!

Randy, Josh and Willy will be continuing the fence work into next week. Randy wants to "make hay while the sun's still shining."

We've had bouts of snow nearly every day this week but with the added rain and the temps still above 30 degrees in the daytime, not much is sticking yet.

Dori and Stephanie cooked lunch each day for us and Dori took a few hours each day to do some DEEP cleaning around the lodge. I think she's just finished up with the kitchen.

I've been getting a head start on all of the year-end duties here in the office. There have been thousands of photos to sort through and categorize, as



well as lot of filing and storing. When Dori, Stephanie and I were not working on other projects, we would make it out to the arena to ride with our good friend Janet, and with Roby who was Janet's personal horsemanship coach this week.

One thing that really started to hit home for me this week was the idea of riding with a "feel." As we progress in our horsemanship, we say that we gain more arrows in our quiver. Arrows are skills, solutions, ideas. Incorporating these arrows of knowledge in a way that is fitting for the horse is where the feel comes in.

The interesting thing about feel is that it is one thing that cannot be taught or bought or derived from talent alone. It is not enough to have a burning desire or an irrepressible "want-to." What it takes is what we usually have the least of—time and persistence.

I think we tend to put time limits not only on our horses (expecting the animal to "get" something in an afternoon or a week or a month,) but we also put time limits on ourselves (i.e.,

"I should have figured this out by now!")

I was talking about this last night and I found it easy to think about in terms of numbers. So, say I give my phone number and ask you to call me later, but the numbers are out of order. Those 7 numbers could be put together in hundreds of ways, but if you didn't put them together just right, you would never be able to reach me on the phone. Even if every digit was in place save for 1, it would take some time to figure out. So you might have a lot of arrows, but getting them to where they're working for you pretty consistently—that's the part of feel that can take years and years to learn.

And with that I'll close for this week. We're getting the trailers all packed up for the trip for Whitefish tomorrow. Hopefully we'll see some of you at the clinic! --Des

P.S. Thanks Miriam for taking such beautiful pictures this week!

