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Hello everyone!

“Beneath this grumpy exterior, beats the heart of a dashing hero.” So says one of Randy’s favorite coffee cups, given to him by a guest of ours. Dori says that he has become a cat whisperer. Every time she comes home, both Booger and BBQ Kitty are cuddled up in Randy’s lap. Dori, who feeds them, cleans up after them and tries to love them said, “What am I? Chopped liver?”

Randy and Dori have spent the last few weeks working on their cabin. Dori is now getting to the fun part—decorating! She and Sue have also been updating and improving upon the gift shop inventory tracking. Dori has begun her yearly ordering of lots of fun new gift shop items that we’ll soon be blowing our paychecks on.

The boys have been doing all sorts of jobs around the place. We got about 15 inches of snow, so Chris spent a couple of days plowing all the roads and driveways. He even plowed walkways for us!

Nathan went through every building on the ranch, making sure we had working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in all the right spots and even in some extra places. That way we can make sure everything is up to speed before the start of the busy season.



Roby has been helping out where needed. He was kind enough to help JJ out and cleaned all of the animal heads in the lodge. He also kept a watchful eye on all of heat in the ranch buildings this week in particular. We had a couple of days where the temps didn’t get above -35 degrees!!! Right now it’s much warmer at -7.

When it gets that cold at the ranch, some things just stop. The livestock had to be fed, but just about





all of the other work done was done indoors. The horses had some time off to just sit and eat to their hearts content all day long. When the snow stopped and the cold crept in, so did the elk! They've finally made their way back to the meadows, working their way in with the horses to eat their hay.



It's nice to see them at last. Until this point we hadn't seen much of anything, save for a few deer and a higher than normal amount of lion tracks. In fact, the week before last, a little lion killed one of the ewes at Sue and Jerry's house, not 2 miles from the lodge. The lion was tracked down and destroyed the next day. He weighed only 28 pounds compared with the ewe who weighed over 100 pounds. It's amazing at what even a little lion is capable of.

One thing about Montana is that it's still very "wild" so to speak. We have wolves and mountain lions, bears and bobcats. It's not uncommon to see these animals out in these parts and when we do we're wary. The biggest problem comes when they start making easy sport out of livestock. It can quickly become a pattern, and a costly and dangerous one for the owner of the livestock.

So, we make sure to keep tabs on what enters the valley, keeping the state trappers and game wardens in the loop to insure that none of the predatory animals get too deep of a foothold in the area.

Chris, Roby and I would have been at the bottom of the food chain a couple of weeks ago. Somehow, we came up with the incredibly crazy idea of doing a 10 day water-only cleansing fast. And then we all decided to actually do it! Or...we tried to.

Roby and I went four days each...we needed our strength and I NEEDED to eat a piece of Randy's Black Magic Chocolate Birthday cake with peanut butter frosting. I ate a piece the day I broke the fast, and heard the cake calling to me on the day afterward. I ran downstairs and ate the last of it as Dori and Roby stood by in amusement. A couple hours later Randy gave me a call, "What the hell is this #*\$% about you eating all my cake!?!"



Chris won the contest. He went a full 6 days and lost around 15 pounds. He said he wanted to get back to his old wrestling weight and achieved it in that time span.

This is what happens when we don't have guests for a period of time. Things just start getting goofy.

Thank goodness that we've got 5 guests coming in tomorrow!

Have a great weekend everyone! --Des