

Merry Christmas 2022!

I hope you are enjoying the best this season has to offer, despite the continuing challenges from the ongoing pandemic. We really cannot complain too much about the supply issues, restrictions and other problems associated with the pandemic. Living on a ranch has rewarded us with plenty of things to keep us occupied and in most cases, with food, heat and supplies as needed. We have weathered the last 2+ years very well, despite wildfires and Perry's serious illness in the Fall of 2020. I am so very grateful to be living where we are!

It has been a wonderful year with no major setbacks. We continue to enjoy a great lifestyle between the ranch and our house at Green Lake. Sit back, grab a bevvie and hopefully be entertained by our news!

After a very cold spring, we had spectacular summer weather. It allowed me to finish a project that I have been wanting and needing for all of my adult life – a greenhouse! I used a 10' x 20' carport frame and reinforced it with 1 x 3" wood slats. Perry helped by sawing heavy logs to make a sturdy base to which I attached the carport frame. We used our own supply of sand (from a "secret" location on the ranch) and gravel to make up a nice, dry and level floor. Because of time restraints, I used around 30 250 L cattle lick tubs for the plant pots. They worked so well I might not build planter boxes as originally planned! The cost of all the metal fasteners, zipper doors, screws and wood came to less than \$200. And needless to say, this greenhouse paid for itself this summer and fall! We grew corn, tomatoes, green peppers, beans, squash, zucchini, onions, herbs and even a few extra potatoes. The greenhouse not only allowed us to grow plants we normally cannot grow given our high altitude (about 4,000 ft elevation) and relatively high latitude (almost 52 degrees north), it also extended our growing season by at least 6 to 8 weeks. I can't wait until next year to see what else we can grow when we add the spring months to the growing season! I will definitely need to expand the compost pile – thank goodness I have a horse who unintentionally contributes!



I can't think of a better way to weather the pandemic (other than fishing) – with the best view in the world, between a horse's ears!

Although the summer and autumn weather at the ranch was amazing, our hay lease didn't quite get as much of the hot, dry weather we did. Our hay lease is around an hour's drive north of us. The difference in climate is sometimes stunning! Our hay fields were flooded due to a pesky beaver in the spring and the flooding continued throughout the summer due to very erratic weather patterns. There would be 3 or 4 days of nice, hot weather, following by severe thunderstorms and heavy rainfall. Alas, I wasn't able to start haying until early September and I only managed to put up about 50 acres of hay. The fields were eventually dry enough and the weather finally cooperated, but the trails through the forest to reach some of the fields didn't dry up enough to allow any heavy loads. We wouldn't have been able to haul the bales out! Thankfully, we managed to get enough hay for ourselves and a little bit to sell, which will hopefully take the bite out of the extremely high diesel prices this year – ouch!

I have ALWAYS wanted my own greenhouse! I managed to get it finished by late June.



We managed to get out fishing a few times during the summer and fall, but the high cost of fuel was so prohibitive. Both Perry and I mainly stayed close to home. There are a few fish in the freezer though! Ice fishing season has started, but so far I've only been out twice (due to fuel prices) and have had no luck (due to Mother Nature, I suppose!).

With Perry mainly doing small projects around the ranch, I did manage to get a bit more work done on our Green Lake home. With the roofing project completed, I

needed to finish sanding, priming and painting all the arches and trim around the roof. It turned out pretty well, in my humble opinion. The picture is of the back entrance.

Next year, we plan to get all the hand railing done on the main deck and the upper balcony. With our chainsaw mill, we hope to put up live edge railing, which should really add to the uniqueness of the house.

I still need to put something on the dormer facing the lake. Our original plan was to install cultured stone, but the price has skyrocketed during the pandemic. I'm working on an interesting experiment this winter for exterior cladding. We will see if this is successful next year!

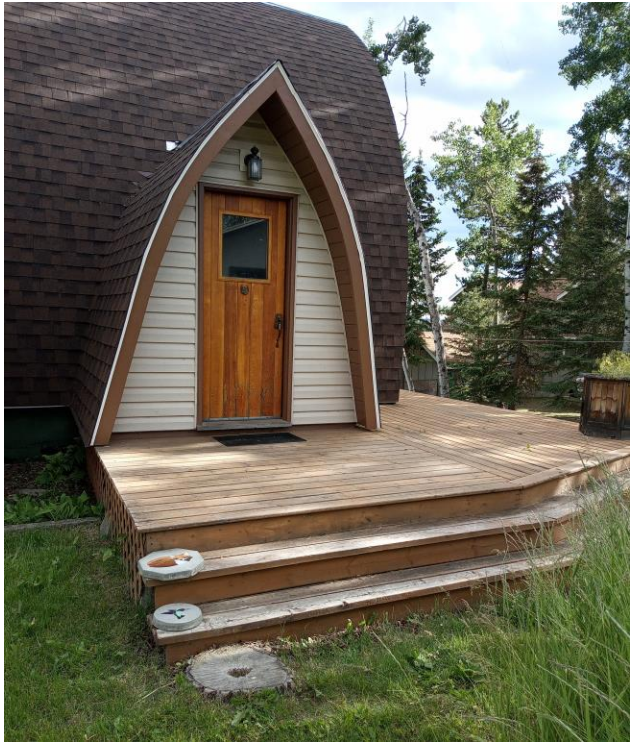
All of our animals continue to thrive. Even dear old Miss Vicky, who is approaching 16 years old still has a spring to her step and a lively personality. She loves her daily morning walk with Perry to the end of the driveway. She orders everyone around at the start of the walk, telling them to "hurry up and quit horsing around"! It's quite hysterical to watch.

I'm still enjoying riding my horse and get out whenever I can. He is so much fun to be with and loves to go out for a nice trail ride. He is naturally so well behaved, despite not getting ridden as much as I would like!

We are keeping the cattle herd to around two dozen cows. This size of herd is still very manageable for us, especially with Guy, our Border Collie helping when needed. He has turned out to be a decent working dog, though he still needs reminders to not get them running at freight train speeds directly towards me!

Our own health has been okay, though we are reminded daily that we are NOT spring chickens! All of the hard labour with reroofing a gothic arch A-frame took its toll on my back. I ruptured a disk at the sacro-iliac joint last fall. The roofing was completed by then, but it was time to bring in firewood. I quickly learned that my back can no longer tolerate chain-sawing logs on the ground! Needless to say, I had to take a step back for a few weeks and allow Perry to do most of the chores. Thank goodness his health allowed this! And since then, I've been extremely cautious with any bending/lifting. I use the sawbuck I built when Perry was sick to cut up logs into firewood. It is a back-saver as well as a time-saver as I can cut 3 or 4 logs at once.

Perry continued to build strength and energy last year, but I think his improvements have levelled off. He finds it frustrating that there are things he can no longer do or, can still do but take 4 or 5 times as long to do. However, he is nearly 79 years old; most people have slowed down by that age, right?



I do hope you have a wonderful, restful Christmas holiday and all the best in health and happiness for you in 2023.

Much love and hugs to y'all,

Laura, Perry, Vicky, Midge, Guy, Chico the barn cat and Buddy the horse!

Here is one of our Mama's with a newborn calf in early March. Very cute! →

I just love this photo of the dogs! I'm sure they are saying "why aren't your feet in these snowshoes already?" ←

