

W.W.O.O.F. vol. 2

Disaster Strikes!

And now for today's deep thought...

"You know, you lose your bridge, you lose your garden, but it could be worse."

-Carol Barker LeResche





All was well out at the ranch. I spent the weekdays weeding, which is a job that never ends! Fridays were reserved for picking and washing veggies to go to market on Saturday in town. Carol and Bob thought this was the best year since they had begun the garden.



"If you ever go temporarily insane, don't shoot somebody, like a lot of people do. Instead, try to get some weeding done, because you'd really be surprised." -Jack Handy

This is Carol and Mona at the market. Mona is a science teacher out here, and she also has an organic garden just down the road.



Sheridan Rodeo Parade

The Sheridan Rodeo is an annual event that takes in town. I didn't make it to the actual rodeo, but I did get to see the parade, and now you can see it too...

These are a few of the parade highlights according to Stacie:

- #1: Miss Wyoming riding on the horse instead of the red convertible.
- #2: The Drum and Bugle Corps. dressed in the uniform of Custer's 7th Calvary, lead by overly tan, blonde, white ladies dressed in squaw outfits.
"Do you see the irony here?" asked Bob.
- #3: The mechanical bull float
- #4: The Shriners on horseback? They ride in little cars where I come from.
- #5: Crazy cowboy man on motorcycle with loud gun-was he supposed to be in the parade, or a local who took a wrong turn?
- #6: The red hat club ladies in coconut bikini tops and grass skirts
- #7: Freckles for mayor!



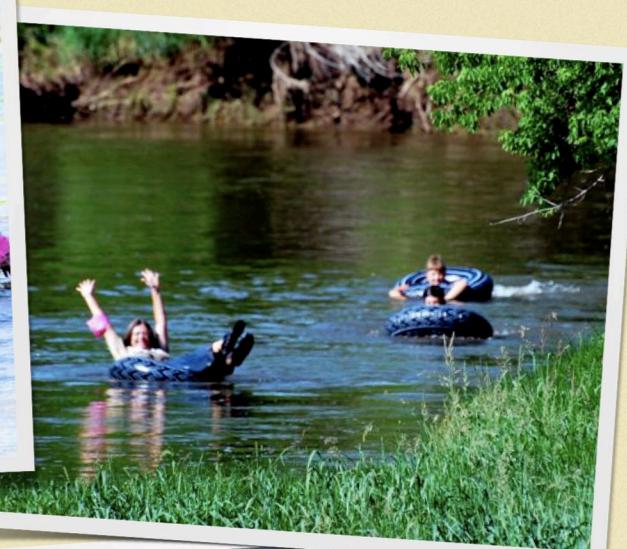
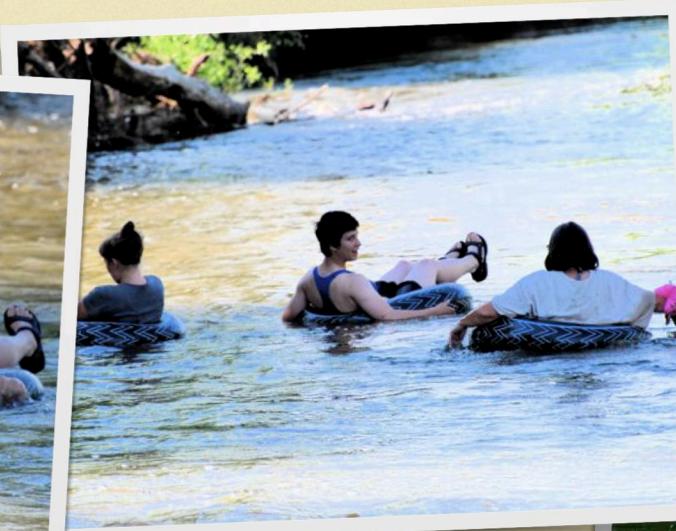


Hydrographic Survey

Bob and Carol's daughter, Cam, came to visit from Alaska and we decided to take a break from the garden and cool off in the creek. Cam is a hard core Alaskan who fights wild fires and is currently studying moose. She showed me pictures of her gathering fecal samples from a moose. She explained they had to know which animal the samples came from, and there's only one way to know for sure. Can you guess what that means???

Fortunately for you, I don't have any pictures of the moose samples, so instead you see Carol in her water wings, the bottle of wine we passed around before jumping into the creek, and lots of floating. It was a blast.





Disaster Strikes

These prairie storms mean business! We saw the storm coming in, felt the wind pick up, but were not prepared for the 15 minutes of non-stop hail that was dumped on us! I have never seen hail like this before. It covered the ground as if it had snowed-and stayed there until the next morning. The hail dimpled all the cars in sight, and left a family of wild turkeys dead in the yard.







Well, As You could probably guess the hail did a number on the garden. Here is the garden after the storm. While looking at the devastation, the most beautiful sunset spread across the sky as if nothing had happened. Did mother nature take a wrong turn? You would think she liked organic growth!



“Sometimes Mother Nature decides to throw a curve ball”
-Charles Bronson



That day I found a real love for the sage grass. After these plants were pelted with hail balls, they filled with air with THE most amazing scent I have ever smelled. It was so wonderful that it made me sad, knowing that there was no way for me to capture and remember it in its full essence.



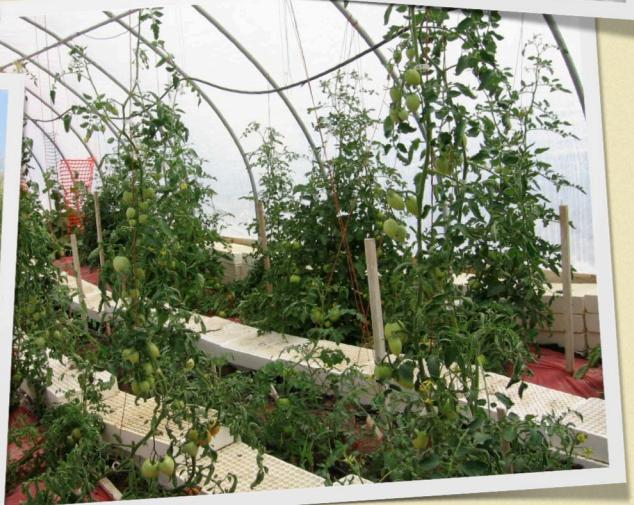
After the fact, Carol suggested I could have tried to capture the scent of the sage in a ketchup bottle the way my dad used to do with his farts. Next time I guess...

Mona's Garden

Carol is hopeful that some of the veggies will make a comeback this year yet. Things are looking good for the potatoes, leeks, lettuce, cilantro, carrots, beets, and MAYBE the tomatoes (cross your fingers), but in the meantime we've been going over to Mona's garden.

The fun thing about Mona's is that the garden is across the creek, and there isn't a bridge. This means walking across, or taking the mule (not the animal)-unless it gets stuck! The other day Carol and I pulled up to the creek to see Mona and her "woofers" sitting in the middle of the creek with the stalled mule. I guess the creek was just a bit high that day.

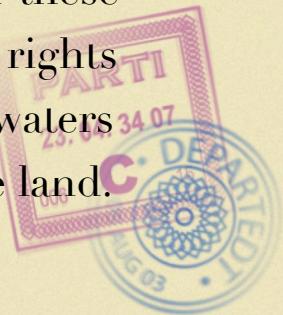




Slow Down You Sons-A-Bitches...

Reads a sign that we pass on the way to Mona's garden. It's intended for the coal bed methane trucks driving to their drilling sites past people's homes and land. There is a sense of openness and purity out here as the cattle and horses graze over acres and acres of hillside, the cattle are moved to their next pasture by ranchers on horseback, and the plants grow in clean soil-without any concern for lead levels as in Chicago. Sandhill Crane, Pelicans, Wild Turkeys, Blue Heron, White-Tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Snapping Turtles, and a zillion other birds and animals that Bob and Carol can name at a glance are a part of the daily landscape on the ranch.

At the same time, oil drilling, coal plants, and coal-bed methane drilling are all a part of the local consciousness, with people on all sides of the issues. It certainly makes you examine your own energy consumption to see the tug-o-war over these vast spaces. Warren Buffet's folks are knocking on doors seeking the water rights (for coal plants) from the same creek that irrigates the organic gardens and waters the cattle. As you can see, there's a valid concern for wanting to protect the land. Wind farm, anyone???









This is how we drive back to the ranch. The cattle have been moved to their new pasture, which happens to be the land that the ranch road runs through. We usually have to wait about 10 minutes on the road while the whole herd moves so we can pass. In the meantime, we're surrounded by them!



This is the bull following and sniffing the truck. I wanted to get out to take pictures, but Carol thought it was a bad idea because he had his "dingle-thing" out.

At the Two-Bit pawn shop I found some good belt buckles, and a musician . He said he was often mistaken for Johnny Cash when he was younger, and played a few tunes. My favorite was the song he wrote that he called his "Browsing Song" about the time a guy came tried to pawn his false teeth-A true story!



Two-Bit Pawn Shop

He said this was one of his favorite Johnny Cash songs because he remembered moving with the mattress on top of the car when he was a kid too...

*It rained all the way to Cincinnati
With our mattress on top of the car
Us kids were eatin' crackers and baloney
And papa kept on drivin' never stopped once at a bar*

*Then mama started talkin' about Jesus
And how our lives could be from now on
While papa bought a used tire in Columbus
Mama rocked the baby till all his tears were gone*

*She said your papa is a good man and don't you kids forget it
The whiskey's tryin' to ruin him but I know the Lord won't let it
Then we sang Amazing Grace and Bringing In The Sheaves
Rock of ages rock of ages cleft for me*

*I guess we should have known papa never could quit drinking
The whiskey had too much about hold on him
But he loved us and he did the best he could
And everytime the world would fall all around us
Mama packed everything we owned into some old car
And started out for some new town*

She said your papa is a good man...





Apparently he has raised a family of musicians because his sons, who own the pawn shop, invited us to see their band play at the HF Bar Dude Ranch. We couldn't turn down the invitation, especially since Carol went to high school with one of them.



<http://www.hfbar.com/>

More to come...



