



Dry Creek Ranch

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Merry Christmas 2012!

Well, here we go again with our annual Christmas newsletter. I hope this letter finds your own family healthy and happy as we approach yet another new year.

For us, we've had a pretty good year at Dry Creek Ranch. We had a fairly gentle winter and I ice-fished for the first time in over a decade! It was so wonderful to hike down to Crater Lake and very rewarding to catch lots of fish. Most were coarse fish, but the odd trout to bring home was the icing on the cake, so to speak. We went out several times last January and February during the frequent mild, sunny days.



We had a fairly dry Spring which meant early burning restrictions. We did as much clearing and clearing of the dead beetle-killed pine as we could before it ground to a halt in April. The summer was also ideal – fairly wet in May and June, which led to another bumper hay crop. We didn't cut as much hay and in fact, did not even touch one of our hay leases in Buffalo Creek as we still had lots of hay to sell from 2011!

The graduate work continues to turn at a snail's pace. Our initial attempts at getting funding for our last, huge project have so far been unsuccessful. We had a grant-writing "marathon" at the end of August and submitted 3 separate grant applications to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) and to the March of Dimes Foundation. We hope to hear something soon! I'm continuing to teach online courses at SFU which gives us a bit of income while waiting for project funding! I also won a couple of travel awards, which help with the costs of presenting at conferences (I went back to the Canadian Cardiovascular Congress again this October) and they also look good on a resume!

Perry continues to enjoy his "retirement" – it's not really retirement when there's ranch work to do! His days are always full, especially in the Fall when the hay equipment needs

to be winterized and there's 5 or 6 cords of firewood to put up. We heat and do the majority of cooking with wood, so we are grateful that Perry is so fit and healthy to bring in the wood. He built a log-splitter for one of our tractors, which certainly reduces the time and effort, but it is still a major chore each Fall.



Speaking of health, I turned 50 this year and I was fortunate enough to spend my birthday with Mom and Dad, as well as other family as I was in Ontario for a conference the week beforehand. It was a great birthday in that respect – it's been a decade since I've been able to spend my birthday with so many relatives. I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with my oldest brother Greg and family, as well as my youngest brother Randy and his family while in Ontario.

This winter so far has been fairly mild and dry with not much snow for skiing yet (I've only gone twice). It is the highlight of winter to ski every day I can, so the skis are by the back door waiting!

Well, I must get back to work here. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas holiday and have an eventful 2013 with good health and happiness.

Much love and hugs to y'all,

Laura, Perry, Vicki, Midge and Ashley



Haying under clear blue Cariboo skies