



## Dear Friends.

Those of you who have been on our mailing list for some time will no doubt notice the change in format, and we hope you like it. We decided that there was always so much we wanted to share with you, that perhaps sending an expanded form of this newsletter twice a year might be better than sending a short version three times a year. This new format has another attraction - it's not all written by one person - as you will see, several of the staff are contributors, and we hope to be able to rope in many more as the months go by. And perhaps some guests, too?? Let us know what you think - we like to hear from you!

To follow the usual pattern, let me first get you up to speed on our weather. July and August were most disappointing, to the extent that we had only about 3 inches of rain, and most of it in little bits of 20/100 of an inch - hardly enough to settle the dust. Gerry began panicking and decided that he had to sell off about 100 cows - a drastic cut! However, on the evening of the day we gathered them, it began to rain and it rained in little showers off and on for three days, so that the grass immediately greened up, along with Gerry's disposition. So the cattle hauled to the sale shrank from the original one hundred to 19 cows that really had to go anyway, rain or no rain, and about 52 calves, who also were due to be sold. Saved by the bell! No doubt by the time this finally goes to the printer the situation will have changed some more, and, if you really desire news of us and our rain woes, check the web page newsletter - updated weekly!

And now to Grapevine news... We are now firmly in the 21st century as far as the office is concerned. Not only have we installed a networking system for all the computers, but, lacking a DSL capability, we are now getting a satellite hook-up for the internet connection, and, wonder of

wonders! we have a live reservations system on the web page. This means that, should you want to make a reservation in the middle of the night, you don't have to wait till morning, or leave a message on an archaic answering machine, but .... do it online!!! Exactly how the west was once, eh? Still, I think you would agree that, while most of us have a lot of nostalgia for the good old days, and many of us think we would rather have lived a hundred years ago, we probably wouldn't. I mean, just consider - no headache pills to speak of, no water cooled drills at the dentist, and if your hip went out for whatever reason, you were a cripple for the rest of your days. I guess that, with all its drawbacks, there is a lot to be said for modern times after all!

What I would really like would be to live then, with secretly hidden modern conveniences of now. Just imagine - there you are, bopping around on horseback, bouncing in a stage coach, boiling water to wash your neck, laundering your clothes by beating them on a rock in the creek, heating up your iron on the stove .... but secretly popping your Tylenol, substituting nylon for cotton, and traveling via truck and trailer to within a stone's throw of your destination, then arriving on horseback, griping .... "Oh what a long trip that was!!!" I guess the downside would be that if they caught you, you'd be hanged as a witch!

But I am maundering. To get back to the facts, we are now modernized, albeit with a few more headaches than before. The Buffalo Room even has a computer in the phone booth, so you can check your e-mail - both hidden from sight, only available to you if you must have them!

More news - we are reinstating the Cavalry Days program, and, depending on how popular it is, we will offer it again during the winter months. Come and live a day in the

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life of a cavalryman, down to the uniform and patrol duty, and again, be happy that you live in this century! The experience offers real McClellan saddles (after which you will never again complain that your western saddle is hard!) and copies of Civil War vintage woolen uniforms - which is why we offer this program only during the cooler months. And then, when you consider that the cavalry rode their horses for only a certain portion of each hour and spent the rest of the time slogging on foot alongside the horse in order to save him for moments of dire need (like being chased by the Apaches!), you may appreciate the automobile.

However, in spite of some of the hardships of living real history, the experience is really fun, especially if you are a history buff. We had a Cavalry patrol here last fall, and it was a colorful and moving experience. I found the sound of Taps singularly haunting, echoing back from the canyon walls as the light slowly faded, and seeing the tents and the cavalrymen by a flickering campfire made it almost a time warp experience. It reminded me of a long ago ride I had at the ruins of old Fort Bowie, when, riding to the Fort



alone (on a horse called Ghost!) along a deserted trail, on a hot and still September noon, I came across a real Apache wickieup, with smelly cowhides thrown across a hitch

rail; for a moment I thought I had slipped back a hundred years. It turned out to be a remnant of recently held Fort Bowie Days, but it sure gave me a turn!

My cow Clementine, the one who had bull calf Winston last year, has produced another bull baby. This one is quite different, to say the least. Firstly, he is reddish brown, with black stripy undertones, so that he will probably color out as brindle. As Clementine is all black and as all our



bulls are also solid black, he must be throw back to some red Brangus ancestor. Secondly, he was a born bull, from the moment he hit the

ground - chunky, big boned, compact, muscled, and very self-confident. From day two he began butting people and generally acting like big stuff. It's a little worrisome that he might retain that aggressiveness when he weighs close to a ton, but hopefully he will mellow a little.

And Clementine of the cunning ways, is still at it. She, Augustus and adopted calf Speedy Gonzales have the run of the barn yard all day, and are free to graze on our front lawn, down the drive, around the corrals and in many places where there is plenty of grass for one cow and two tiny calves. However, Clem wants more than



that. She desires to go into the Cochise Pasture, which she knows connects the cattle ranch headquarters with the Grapevine. She knows, too, that if she gets into the Grape-

vine, a mere mile and a half away, she has access to a veritable smorgasbord of hay in the hay barn, one side of which is open to the drive. We had caught her there several times, and finally closed the gate. It took her only one day to figure out that if she followed the ranch road a bit further, she could come up the Grapevine front drive, all the way to the barn and the hay stack, and feast. So we began closing the gate at our end of Cochise Pasture, just before the road descends into the canyon to our house. The other day I came home around 3 pm, as usual, and, knowing that it was almost feeding time (after which she is penned up for the night), I left the gate open. Danny told me later, laughing, that as soon as Clem saw me drive in, she gave the car a thoughtful look, and immediately set off at a long trot up the hill towards the gate. She knew there was a good chance I left it open, and that she could get into the Cochise and further, before we caught up with her. Danny and I were both impressed - that is reasoning beyond a doubt! I'd better be careful, or she'll be behind my desk and I'll be out grazing. So if you get a letter beginning "Moo, moo, dear friends," you'll know what happened!

As for other news - we have had a slight revision of our rates, which some of you may find interesting. We have reduced the single rate to a more user friendly amount, and

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also reduced the additional person rate, so that it will really pay to use the casitas in a multiple occupancy mode. Most of the casitas sleep up to five people comfortably, and sharing will benefit everyone. Check out the new rates on the web page, ([www.gcranch.com](http://www.gcranch.com)) or phone Bonnie, and she will be happy to mail them to you.

The droughty conditions of this year led us also to undertake another piece of construction which is only possible in a very dry year, and that is the cleaning out of the small lake behind the house. During normal summer monsoons, the fast moving water brings in lots of sand from the upper washes, and the lake silts up to the degree that it becomes enormous, stretching way back into the canyon. This is quite nice, but unfortunately, in this dry air the large surface area results in much evaporation, which means we lose water faster than we should. As the lake hadn't been empty since it was first dammed up, some 50 years ago, it seemed like a good idea to clean it out now that it is dry - and hope that it will rain again sometime in our lifetime!

Accordingly, two humongous pieces of machinery costing a king's ransom per hour attacked the empty bottom, and dredged up huge mountains of mud which they piled up along the shore. At first it looked to me a bit like World War 2 trenches, but now that we had got that bit of rain, the grass has begun to grow on the humps, and it's beginning to look a bit more natural.

And now Gerry has another project. Those of you who have been reading these missives for some time might remember that the original idea behind my getting some goats was to clear out some of his pastures. Goats are browsers, and they nibble on trees and shrubs, those being disliked by ranchers because they take the water away from grass, needed for cattle. Of course, after the goats took up residence with us, it became obvious that, unless I was going to change my occupation, give up Grapevine and become a full time goat herder, it wasn't going to work. The reason is that the goats didn't read the same book as Gerry, and, far from staying in the one spot and grubbing out what they are supposed to grub out, they prefer drifting from one choice tid-bit to another, and, left unattended, before long would be in Tombstone.

So we got a large Anatolian Shepherd dog in the shape of Sasha (aka Moose), but she, caring only about protecting and not about corralling, didn't do the job either - she just drifted with them - and besides, she regards me as



more valuable property than the goats, and prefers being driven in my air-conditioned car to my air-conditioned office, and lazing her day away watching me work - so that didn't fly.

Gerry abandoned the project, but the goats remained, my friends for life, and they became my stress re-



lief. I take them for daily walks - or should I say they take me for daily walks - and there is nothing so relaxing as sitting somewhere under a bush, watching those busy little

mouths nibbling away. And there is another delightful side to goats. They want nothing from you. They don't want to be petted constantly, like my Mollie the Border Collie, they don't want to sit on me like Sasha the Moose, they don't want their belly scratched like my horse Comanche, they don't want their 15 acres of hide curry-combed like my cow Clementine - they just don't want anything of me. They are contented with nibbling on the bushes, butting each other, bleating a bit here and there - and ... just being. In this they are perfectly delightful. How many creatures do you know, I ask you, who want nothing, but nothing of you? Who want nothing of Life but just .... to be. There's a lesson there for the rest of us, I think.

But anyway, back to the original goat saga. Now, after several years of this mutual delight, Gerry has suddenly woken up to the fact that one of his little pastures where we water the vacationing horses is being wasted, in that it is totally overgrown with catclaw, mesquite and other forms of unnecessary vegetable life, and he decided to fence it. The plan is that the goats can live there all day long, eat the bushes, fertilize the grounds and magically

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transform it into a lush little pasture, of which he will be proud, and into which he can then introduce some form of revenue producing animal, like a cow. That is the plan. And even as we speak, there are two men out there building fence at great cost, making this dream possible. A t great cost because goats, as I told you already, don't want to stay in the one place. They want to wander far and wide. Therefore the fence has to be a 4 ft. high field fence of goat proof mesh, topped off by a strand of barbed wire. In order to construct this fence, it is first necessary to take out the existing old fence, which appears to date to around 1920, judging by the old cedar posts painstakingly dug into the hard ground - built before T posts were invented, perhaps? And before it can be taken out, it has first to be brushed out, i.e. all the shrubs, brush and prickly mesquites which have overgrown it in the last 80 years have to be cut back, so the old can go out and the new can come in. As none of us have the time, he employed a fence building crew, who are really earning their money, and are probably wondering right now why they took the job on in the first place.

But I can see already that when it's done, those goats had by gosh better eat that shrub up, or we will be in danger of eating goat stew for the next few months! The other day he said to me "That goat fence of yours is costing me a pretty penny!" "That goat fence of MINE!" I said, "You mean that pasture



fence of YOURS!  
" It may finish up the way my sister in law once told me some calves of hers did. She bought them from the dairy as babies, and raised them. When they were small and got sickly and constantly looked for a place to die, her husband referred to them as "your calves". When they got a bit bigger and no longer sickened and looked as if they had some interest in life after all, they became "our calves" and when they were a robust 300 lb. ready for

sale, they graduated to being "my calves". A mazing logic ranchers have, eh? Anyway, I'll keep you posted on the Great Goat Project of 2002!

And, as this newsletter is a joined project with others, I'll hand over to someone else now. As I said at the beginning, I hope you enjoy this format, and perhaps, that you may even contribute??

Take care, God bless and come see us!

## Eve and Gerry Searle and all of us at Grapevine

### A Grapevine Recipe

#### Grapevine Salsa for Large Groups.

6 lb., crushed tomatoes, canned

5 c. green onions, chopped

12 jalapenos, chopped fine

1/2 c jalapeno juice

1 T salt,

1 T oregano

5 T cilantro, fresh, chopped

4 tsp cumin

1 1/2 T . garlic powder.

Mix all ingredients together. Let stand for 24 hours for best results. 40 servings.

### September Thoughts of You

Blue skies, wide open spaces, fresh air, beautiful faces.

A beautiful lake, a fishing pole, a picnic basket and away we go.

But not today, maybe tomorrow....

Tomorrow will come, I know that's true.

But until it does

I'll just sit and think about you,

Blue skies and green pines.

Debra Jones

Staff

(Debra's poem won the National Poetry Association first prize in 1995, 2nd place in 1996, and third in 1997

So many guests have asked me how Grapevine began, so I thought I would share with you the following story of.....

## WE COME TO GRAPEVINE

Gerry and I had never intended to have a guest ranch - it happened the way most of life happens, by chance and quite unplanned.

In the early eighties Grapevine was a remote canyon at the end of 7 miles of dirt road, a part of the Searle Ranch belonging to Gerry's brother Ron and his wife Marilyn, who mostly used it as a horse pasture where they turned out horses who needed a rest from ranching.

The front gate opened onto a winding narrow road which trailed its way through a grassy meadow, up a slight incline, round several bends, crossed a wash and ended at a comical little house which looked like a mushroom sitting all alone in a clearing.

The house had been built some 30 years earlier by an artist, who had intended it as a vacation get-away, planning eventually to live there full time. His wife's illness forced him to sell it to Ron, whose cattle ranch surrounded it. Why he built the house the way he did was always a mystery to us - possibly he had intended to add to it, but in its present incarnation it was certainly sadly lacking.

It was a little, square looking two story building, with one large room downstairs, divided into a sitting area and a kitchen area separated by a dinette counter; a staircase led upstairs to two small rooms and the tiniest of bathrooms, and in front, on top of what was the sitting room below, was a large deck, whose only *raison d'être* was a sweeping view of the valley, with the majestic Chiricahua Mountains towering on the horizon 40 miles to the east.

About 20 ft to the south of the house was another one room building, which the artist had built as his studio, and which the ranch had been utilizing as a tack room. Beyond that was a small corral.

Ron and Marilyn had, from time to time, rented the house to various people, and one of these had whimsically constructed a small pond with a rockery and a water fall in front of the house. The same man had, with great enthusi-

asm and less talent, built a yard fence which consisted of brick pillars with wooden rails in between. Unfortunately, his knowledge of masonry was scant, and by the time we moved in, the cement was crumbling and whole sections of the brick had moved off center, so it presented a somewhat derelict appearance.

The space between the two buildings was overgrown by range grass, and the fenced off backyard consisted of more grass with a sprinkling of majestic old oak trees and stands of mesquite and manzanita bushes.

In spite of human efforts to improve it, Grapevine had remained enchanting. To the south of the house, a wide meadow covered with wildflowers ran slightly uphill towards the mountainside, and the road, which more or less ended at the house, continued as a narrow trail up the canyon to the back fence.

I remember, the first time I saw Grapevine, standing there in the silence of the mountains, hearing only the slight rustle of the wind in the trees and the gurgling of the creek in the gorge below, and thinking, this must be what Heaven is like.

We bought the place, moved in, and, because we both immensely enjoy building, enthusiastically began adding to the house. We built a large country kitchen, as well as a porch and a car port, and converted the original kitchen into a dining room. The area between the house and the studio was cemented, forming a split level patio, which we roofed with a trellis, making a shady ramada. The little studio, with the addition of a bathroom, became a guest house for visiting friends.

It was fun .... and then, all too soon, it was over. We sat and looked at each other and said: Now what? We were both too young to retire; we had just bailed out of a cattle operation, and, as this was the early eighties, and cattle prices were at historic lows with interest rates around 18%, the idea of returning into the cattle business didn't appeal. Besides that, we didn't have enough land - Grapevine at that time was just 80 acres, and in Arizona it takes an average of 60 acres per cow for year round grazing.

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We considered what to do. I had ideas - lots of them, but the trouble was that Gerry, a died-in-the-wool cowboy and rancher, thought everything was fine as long as it was a cow.

"How about raising llamas?" I ventured, having just read about the lucrative market for these useful animals.

"What? Llamas? What an idea! NO!" said Gerry.

"What about rabbits?"

"Not only no, but HE LL no!"

What about sheep, goats, worms..... No, no, no. We were at a standstill.

About this time Marilyn, visiting one day, said: You should run a sort of guide service and take Tucson people riding in this country - they must get so tired of riding in the washes, and it's so beautiful here.

Well, maybe - a good way to fill in the time while we decide what we *really* want to do, we said to each other. We set about putting up some posters, made a few phone calls, and it appeared that people were interested.

There was one snag that worried me a little. People coming to ride, hauling their horses in horse trailers, wouldn't be bringing kitchens - so, how would they eat? We were 7 miles from nowhere. We talked about this for a while, I quite vehemently, because cooking's not my thing. But help was at hand.

We had a friend called Ginger, who was not only a great cook, but also a gifted story teller. She could tell jokes better than any professional comedian, and what's more, she could tell them one after another and almost without pausing. It now appeared that she needed part time work and would be more than willing to take on the job of weekend cook for the riders.

Great! We booked a few rides, people came with their horses, we took them riding, Ginger grilled huge, succulent steaks, every one of them cooked to order over a mesquite fire - and things appeared to be on a roll.....

Until one day, when I received two telephone calls. One was from a man who introduced himself as being from the Forest Service. He said he had seen one of our posters advertising a ride in the National Forest part of the Dragoon Mountains, and, if that was so, we needed an Outfitter's Permit. It was no big deal, he said, just come into the

office and fill out papers and pay the fee and you will be official outfitters.

The second call was from a lady who identified herself as being from the Cochise County Health Service.

"You're cooking for these people", she stated accusingly, although she evidently already knew the answer. I admitted that yes, we did cook for them.

"So you're really a restaurant...." she said. I was a little flattered. A restaurant?! Really? A little bashfully, I admitted that yes, it could be said that we were a restaurant.

"Well, then", she said triumphantly, "you need a Health Food License!"

A Health Food License! The thought had never even occurred to us. What was it, anyway?

"Ah, so give us one, I said, how much is it?" I thought, really, these people! Probably cost us \$10 and for nothing!

"Well", said Officialdom at the other end of the phone, "it's not quite that simple", and went on to enlighten me as to the wondrous ways of government.

It now appeared that whereas we could cook in our kitchen and feed the meals prepared therein to ourselves, our aged parents and our infant children, and not only survive, but thrive, nevertheless, the moment we charged someone a single penny for the food prepared in the same kitchen, they would immediately succumb to many horrid diseases like salmonella, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis - and, for all I knew, housemaid's knee as well.

"So, what do we have to do?" I asked faintly, already knowing it wasn't going to be simple.

It wasn't. We needed, it appeared, not only money for a license, but first, major improvements in the form of a separate kitchen, with either a commercial, sanitizing dishwasher (cost \$2,000 and up) - or four sinks.

"Four sinks? Why four?"

It turned out that while anywhere else in the world, three are sufficient, Cochise County desired four. One for washing hands, one for washing dishes, one for rinsing dishes and one for sanitizing dishes.

"And one more thing", said the Voice, "you also need to have public toilets, a men's *and* a ladies. *And* they

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need to have those seats with the front cut out. I'll be by to inspect when you call and say you're ready", and hung up.

I reeled away from the telephone. Separate kitchen! Toilet! And what seats with the front cut out? and why? I might add that the answer to the last question still evades me, after many years and many queries addressed to people who should know, but don't.

I told Gerry, and we decided that this was a bit much, and that perhaps we should shelve the idea of trail rides and take up something simpler and more financially rewarding like goat herding - preferably somewhere far away from the Cochise County Health Service, like Nepal.

Then one fateful morning I drove to the post office, and stopped by the notice board advertising local events and sales. As I scanned the For Sale notices, I sud-



denly came to one that said: 10x20 ft. building for sale, \$400. \$400! That didn't seem too much! And apparently it was movable. So why not buy it, move it to Grapevine,

install 4 sinks and shut up these tiresome people.

I ran the idea by Gerry, and he thought we should go and see it. It was about 40 miles from Grapevine, but we found it easily. It was not much more than a large crate, 10x20 ft, as advertised, built of wood, with a flat roof, like the top of a box.

Gerry thought it would work. Ah - but there was a snag. We had to get it home.

We hired a man with a flatbed trailer and a boom truck. With only minor mishaps the building was hoisted on the trailer and inched its way up the narrow road to our canyon.

Before we had got it settled in place, Gerry said: "We can't put it just on the ground like that, the floor will rot out. We'll have to build some sort of foundation for it, out of railroad ties, and while we're at it, I think we should pour a slab out front, make a terrace, so people can sit out there and eat their meals.... and we can have dances and....

actually", he went on, "we should also roof it, so that people are out of the sun in the summer". It was early April, and the high desert sun was beginning to burn.

We built the foundation for the shed, poured a deck and put wooden railings around its edge, and roofed it.

Of course, the famous washrooms with their holey seats had to be installed as well, and so, with one thing and another, by the time we had finished, it resembled a government project - the cost had escalated somewhat.

It was no longer \$400 - it was \$14,000.

## Eve and Gerry Searle and all of us at Grapevine

### And Some Guest Quotes....

We get a lot of mail from our guests - so we thought to share with you a couple we received recently.

Dear Grapevine Staff,

Just a note to let you all know what a great time we had with week we visited the ranch.

We have visited other Ranches over the past 20 plus years, and have not found the quality of staff we encountered at the Grapevine. The friendliness and professionalism we experienced from each of you will always be remembered.

We hope to see each of you again next year. Thank you all for a wonderful vacation.

Sincerely, R&B

Dear Friends,

..... Every day, I think about the view of the mountains and the clear nights full of stars. Enjoy the treasure you have.

Thanks again for your wonderful hospitality and friendship, We enjoyed every minute of our Grapevine Experience.

Sincerely,

P&P



Grapevine Canyon Guest Ranch  
PO Box 302  
Pearce, A Z 85625



Grapevine Canyon Ranch / PO Box 302 Pearce A Z 85625  
520-826-3185 / Reservations: 1-800-245-9202  
Fax: 520-826-3636  
Visit us on the web at [www.gcranch.com](http://www.gcranch.com)  
Or email us at [info@gcranch.com](mailto:info@gcranch.com)

