

COWBOY LAWYERS

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 6, No. 1, May 1997

Editor: Sunny Miller

V-6 Cattle Drive

By Sunny Miller

Jack and "Z" Varian have been buying up land, acre by acre, ever since they graduated from college in San Luis Obispo. Their V-6 Ranch now meanders over 20,000 rolling acres in Parkfield, California, the "earthquake capital of the world." It also spans two counties -- Fresno and Monterey.

When we arrived in October for the V-6 cattle drive, the hills were a pale yellow-brown and the San Andreas was slumbering nicely. Jack and "Z" worked us into things gradual-like. "Z" fixed us up with mounts and then led a bunch of us out, ostensibly to round up cattle. Everyone could tell that "Z" was watching to see which of us knew what side of the horse to get on and who was about to topple off. Luckily, not one of us fell off completely. Later, while lurching under the trees, we were greeted by a pack of twenty or so dogs, almost all black and white border collies. Some of us may have wondered why the Varians had let the canine population get so far out of control. We found out why later.

After lunch, we got a good look at a day in the life of the steak we eat. This particular day was branding and cutting day for three cute calves, two of whom had the misfortune to be male. The Varian family gave demonstrations on how to rope the calves, and then it was our turn. Brad Miller, Eric Kunkel and others threw the rope with pretty good success. Everyone then got busy branding the calves. There was also ear notching, antibiotic shooting and the ever-popular castrating. Wilkie and Becky Cheong, Jack Denove, Lynne Miller, Trey and Christina



Robertson, Gary Ruttenberg, and others did a scrupulously thorough job, reminiscent of the closing scene of *Braveheart*.

Fully satisfied with our cowboy skills, the Varians got us all mounted up and led us up into the hills. By this time, the sun was sinking lower on the horizon, turning the yellow fields bronze and making tall shadows of our horses. After a short ride, we arrived at the campsite, nestled in a grove of trees. We were soon warming ourselves around a roaring fire, eating a hearty homemade meal and trading tales of our afternoon adventures.

The next day we split into three groups for a long day of cattle herding. One group took the hills, one the valleys, and one the middle ground. The idea was to

ride out far beyond the cattle, then turn and drive them back in the general direction of camp.

The problem was that this hilly country is scored by ravines and gorges, and craggy drop-offs. You can ride a long way just to go a few feet as the crow flies. And, likely as not, when you get there, the cattle will go the wrong way.

Except for one thing. Remember those dogs? It turns out there were barely enough of them. With voice commands and arm signals, Jack, "Z" and the other hands sent them hundreds of yards away, down into steep ravines, and instructed them to retrieve straggling cows. Furiously barking and running back and forth, the dogs succeeded where we would have failed.

Thanks to the dogs, we got the

COWBOY LAWYERS



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Out With The Old And In With The New

8th Annual President's Dinner Was A Stompin' Success!

The 8th Annual President's Dinner stomped off to a great time on February 1, 1997, at Rancho Calamigos. There was fine dining on well-grilled steak and salmon (boy was that salmon well-grilled ... maybe it was supposed to be that blackened stuff from New Orleans).

Scott Haith bid adios, turning over the presidential reins to Walter Leighton. A tear came to the eyes of many when Scott was presented with a beautiful water color of his mare, Sunny. "We sure as hell weren't cryin' about seeing your picture Scott." Sunny

has carried Scott on many a ride and she's getting up there just a tad in years. Even Tom Borsari's eyes welled up just a little when Scott thanked everyone for the beautiful rendition of Sunny created by Marylou Slinkard, a real fine western artist who lives up near Tom and Dana.

Speaking of the Borsaris, they were there dancin' up a storm, although Dana took a short break to stand tall next to the Duke. Your writer also noticed Tamia Hope shaking a leg with Bob Lorbeer out on that dance floor. The Northern contingent made a good showing with Bob, Ann Rubenstein and Jonathan Zerlin getting a three-way prize for travelling the farthest for dinner. (I guess you just can't get good blackened salmon in Sacramento.)

Bob and Peggy Luty were havin' a good ol' time entertaining the crowd with a joke a minute. Mike "Buckle No. 150" Martindill kept trying to convince someone that 150 really was meant to be 15.0.

Speakin' of buckles, Mary Bennett passed out some new ones. Welcome to Beth Altman, Chris Rolin, Richard Heller, Mike Petrie, Gary Dordick, Don Forgey, Eric Kunkel and Bill Daniels.

Scott Haith's daughter gets your writer's personal thanks for those fancy name tags. Too bad we didn't know that names would be blazin' on our chests. We could have enjoyed the view on Kanan Road instead of studying up on names in the directory.

Wilkie announced the rides for the year -- promising good times for all those who attend. After-dinner cigars were provided by Bud Katzman, and the party wound down to the sultry sounds of "My Heros Have Always Been Cowboys."

See ya'll next year.

Congratulations to Judge
Judy Chirlin on being
named Outstanding Trial
Jurist. Look for an article
on the awards ceremony in
the next edition of the
Newsletter.

cattle moving in the general direction we wanted. Then we had to join the three herds into one. This took some doing, as it was sometimes necessary to push the herds through narrow spaces between hills and watering holes.

One of those muddy watering holes gave Brad Miller a chance to show off when one of his cows was found hip deep in the mud. Brad and some of the Varians got ropes around the cow and "Z's" daughter waded in to pry the cow out of the muck. It was kind of like a scene from Bonanza with Brad starring as Little Joe.

We finally got the herd together, just as a Public Television crew arrived to film an episode of California Heartland. Cowboy lawyers hammed it up for the cameras big time, waving their hats and yelling at the indifferent beasts.

You can't talk about the V-6 without a word about the horses. These are not ordinary rental horses. The one I rode won \$25,000 or more in prize money, a trailer, enough saddles and ribbons to fill it and a bunch of championships in a western horse

show event I'd never heard of before, but which involved running fast and sliding to a stop.

Back at camp, there was more great food and tall tales. The TV crew interviewed some of us around the fire. The Varians made a lot of the Cowboy Lawyers proud by saying how surprised they were at how much energy we all had left after so many hours in the saddle.

We finally got to bed, got up and did it all over again. The end of the week-end found us back at the main ranch packing up our sleeping bags and saddles and hitting the road.

It was my favorite Cowboy Lawyers ride so far, and that says a lot.

Hoss Tradin'

Lookin' for a horse ... or just tired of paying feed bills. Here's your chance. We'll place advertising for equines, equine paraphernalia, such as trailers, saddles, barns ... just about anything you want to sell or advertise ... within the limits of Potter Stewart's admonition that "we know it when we see it." Write Sunny or Gretchen to place your ad. Caveat emptor - CLA does not warrant or endorse any item offered for sale.

Talent Scouts Needed

As many of you know, Ron and Charlotte Nybakken have hung up their egg beaters and retired. It's not all that easy to find a caterer who wants to follow a bunch of dusty Cowboy Lawyers over pot-holes and through scrub brush to a campground which may or may not have flush toilets. So far, we've been having luck trying local caterers, restaurants and just plain nice folks who'll feed us. But we still need to find someone near Big Bear for Heart Bar. If anyone knows of someone who might replace (impossible!) Ron and Charlotte, please let a board member know.

Why do Cowboy Lawyers sleep with one eye open?



It's the Cowgirls!

Something For Everyone On The 1997 Ride Schedule

By Wilkie Cheong

This year your Ride Committee has another great year of ridin' and partyin' planned. It's getting tougher and tougher each year to locate new and different locations that are also suitable for a group of our size to ride and party, but we do our best! Our schedule this year includes visits to a few new (for us) places as well as some old favorites.

Kicking off the year was a day ride at the Happy Camp Park in Moorpark. The ride was great, the weather cooperated, the chow was delicious, and everyone had a great time.

By the time you read this, we will have had our second "day ride" at the Rancho Paso Bravo, owned and operated by Cowboy Lawyer John Rowell and film director Martha Coolidge (look for the July release of her new movie, "Out to Sea," starring Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau and Dyan Cannon). In addition to breathtaking views, participants were treated to a western "luau" and were able to check out some of the finest Paso Finos around. Some of the Cowboy Lawyers even got the chance to ride these South American beauties and to experience them first hand.

Our annual Memorial Day Ride was held at the Rollin N Ranch near Wrightwood, which is owned by another Cowboy Lawyer, Rollin Rauschl. The ranch had all the amenities that we spoiled cowpokes have come to expect along with spectacular riding in the beautiful Angeles National Forest, gourmet meals whipped up by Rollin's wife Sarah Jo and a mini-rodeo. When you see Scott, ask him just how many ribbons he took home!

Summer means beach weather, so where else do you go in August but to Montana de Oro State Park? This location is a perennial favorite, and offers riding in the hills or

along the beautiful beach or in the surf (but only if your horse is willing!), and cool weather in the dog days of summer. This will be our annual "Econo Ride" but excellent lodging and restaurants are also available in nearby Baywood Park for those of you who may have doubts about the California Camp portable shower.

On September 25-28, we will revisit Heart Bar Horse Camp, located amidst the gorgeous pines of the San Bernardino National Forest. We received rave reviews from all who attended our previous ride at this site a few years back. If you enjoy riding in secluded mountain pine forests, this is your kinda' place.

On October 25, we will hold a day ride at the ranch of still another Cowboy Lawyer, Jake De Van. Jake has been bugging us for years to check out his ranch in Somis, so we're gonna give him a chance to show us what he's got.

Our final ride of the year will be on November 22 at either Point Mugu or Malibu Creek State Park, depending on how Point Mugu has recovered from the fire and resultant mud slides a few years back. Either location is beautiful and should be a whole lotta' fun.

Keep in mind that if you don't own a horse, rental horses are always available for all the rides. Besides the beautiful scenery, the great food, and time to bond with your horse, each ride presents a great opportunity to shoot the breeze with your fellow Cowboy Lawyers (an unwritten rule is that legal talk is forbidden). There's no excuse for not participating.

On a related note, most of you may be aware that Ron and Charlotte Nybakken have finally decided to call it quits. For eight years, they always made themselves available to cater a Cowboy Lawyers ride, wherever and whenever needed. Who can forget sitting around the campfire at Heart Bar listening to Ron read cowboy poetry by flashlight. They will be sorely missed.

1997 Ride And Event Schedule

February 1
8th Annual President's
Dinner Dance
Calamigos Ranch

March 22
Happy Camp
Moorpark, Calif.

April 27
Rancho Paso Bravo
Agua Dulce
Angeles National Forest

May 25-26
Rollin N Ranch
Wrightwood, Calif.

August 8-10
Montana de Oro
Morro Bay, Calif.

September 25-28
Heart Bar
San Bernardino National
Forest

October 25
Jake De Van's Ranch
Somis, Calif.

November 22
Malibu Creek or
Point Mugu

Reducing Our Herd

Contact Jeff or Karen Zinder concerning our personal riding horses which are up for sale, including buckskin foxtrotter - pinto foxtrotter - paint quarterhorse - and walking horses. Call 805-298-9735.

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Rollin,' Rollin,' Rollin,' Keep Those Presses Rollin'

Many moons have come and gone. Hale Bopp has faded from the skies. But nary a word from your First Amendment pals. Back by popular demand, the CLA press is in action again with a new format, new editor and new publisher. Hope you like it ... if you don't ... call Dan Simon or the Daily Journal to complain.

This Edition's Highlights

V-6 Ride

Three days of cow punching at the V-6 ranch provided Cowboy Lawyer Sunny Miller with some tall tales of ranch life.

Jaime's Ramblings

Sitting at the Armadillo Cafe, Jim "Jaime" Nichols muses on life, horses and the Cowboy Lawyers.

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