

HOW I SPENT MY BIRTHDAY

And Other Tales of Woe

I actually almost forgot about it, until I was rambling around the house trying to start my day, and I happened to think, “What day is today? I think it might be my birthday.” Sure enough; a quick check of the old watch-er-roo indicated digitally that it was the proper day. Swell; doesn’t feel any different. I don’t feel any different. I still *feel* like I should be in my 30s, and I still *act* like I’m about 12. Or 10. But, I digress.

It was a bright and warm fall day. A day that should strike fear in the hearts of horse-owners with horses out on pasture after a few days of chilly, rainy fall weather. I checked my emails, so as to stay in touch with my peeps, you know. And there it was: all those peeps blasting out Happy Birthday wishes, and going on and on about how *old* I’m getting. Yeah, yeah; 12 isn’t old, you goofballs.

I went shopping: spent money at D&B Supply. But, as I bounded up to the check-out counter, I proudly announced that it was my birthday! did I get a discount?!? Sure, the young whipper-snapper obliged. Actually it was a Tuesday, so giving me the Senior Discount was no big thing. Thanks, Deary. (all old people call young people Deary).

I went shopping at WinCo: spent a bunch of money, mostly on cat food. ‘Nuf said.

Came home, cleaned corals, loaded up the manure spreader and spread manure on the pasture. Yippee. A friend came over with her little 2 year old daughter and we went around and looked at all the ‘farm animals’. And they didn’t even bring a present!! Jeez, what are birthdays coming to?

Then I got down to business. Rounded up all of what I’d need to install an automatic waterer out between two pastures. Except I never get everything rounded up, so I had to make 6 or 8 trips back to the barn for everything else. It was a long and tedious task, and when I got it all hooked up, I had water just fine, but when I turned on the power, it kept popping the GFI. Dammitohell. Now what. Turn the power off and deal with it tomorrow. Oh- this fits in with my birthday, because my sister and bro-in-law had come over on a prior weekend and poured the concrete pad for the waterer to sit on. That was a good birthday present.

Alright, time to do chores and wind down for the day. Feed the baby cows, *sort* of clean a couple horse sheaths. Uck! That is SO gross; THAT is a job for another day. ‘Nuf said about that, too. Get the little guys (little-guy horses) in from the pasture. Man, they are not in a rush to leave that green grass today; must taste really good. (refer back to “it was a bright and warm fall day. A day that should strike

fear.....”) Gave them a slice of hay although they’d been eating all day, just to reward them for coming (sauntering lazily) in, when I called.

As I did the rest of the chores, I noticed that one little guy was acting a little peculiar. He was lying down, then he was back up. His eyes aren’t very bright and shiny. He pawed, laid back down. Aha! The little poop is trying to colic. He has a sensitive stomach, and does this occasionally. Off to the house to get the Banamine. 10cc’s of liquid Banamine down the hatch at 6:05. Walk him for a few minutes. That usually fixes him right up. Coming back to the coral with the one guy, I see that the other guy is now lying down. What!? Are you kidding me, you TOO?? 10cc’s of Banamine down HIS hatch at 6:45. There, you guys, get over it.

I go into the house and start to fix my chicken pot pie—my *birthday dinner*, for Pete’s sake!!!—slow baked in the oven @ 400 degrees for an hour, none of that microwaving for 10 minutes stuff for me. But, I decide against taking all that time for a chicken pot pie, and opt for a bag of Garlic Chicken and vegetables, microwaved for 10 minutes, so I could keep checking on my little guys. Put it in the microwave, go check the horses. Down again. Walk him down the drive way and back. Put him back in the coral, go in and finish microwaving supper. Check on the guys. Ach!! This can’t be happening. At 8:00 I call the vet, before it gets any later and I get him out of bed in the middle of the night. I give him a run-down of what’s transpiring, what I’m doing for them, and ask what else I should do. He says he’d better come out and treat them. Yip-pee.

He comes out, sticks the old plastic tube up their nose, and we can hear the gas burbling and escaping. Little Guy’s heart rate is 60!! What’s a normal heart rate for a horse, Janine? Uhhhh, I can’t remember. 40 is normal. 60 is enormously elevated. Like, headed for surgery elevated. It’s elevated from the pain he’s in, plus we do a fecal sand test from one of the piles of poop he has conveniently deposited, and in a handful of poop there is a TON of sand in it. Okay, maybe only $\frac{1}{2}$ a ton in that handful. Way, way too much. The other guy only has, like, $\frac{1}{4}$ of a ton in his little bitty handful. So we are dealing with gas colic AND sand colic. Those are my words, not the vet’s official determination. But it is WAAAY serious, like, sink the Titanic, serious.

So, to make a long story longer, at 11:30 on my birthday (!) I finally finish walking them four times an hour for two hours after the vet leaves: walk 5 minutes, rest 10 minutes; walk 5 minutes..... Somewhere in a combination of those 10 minute rest sessions I manage to finish microwaving and eating my birthday dinner. I think I finally finished eating it about 10:30. Then an hour more of the walking routine, and I finally get to bed about midnight. But the little boys are much happier now that the gas is gone and they’re all pumped full of water, mineral oil and Epsom salts. I got up to check them about 2:00, and they were both standing there peacefully, looking at me, wondering why the hell I’m up at THAT hour. But, of course by then it wasn’t my birthday, so it didn’t count.

This morning they are doing just fine. I still feel like I should be 30-- only a little more tired after a wild-and-crazy birthday. It sure was nice of Dr. Hardy and Dani to come spend my birthday with me. And I'm sure THEY will give me a birthday present; I'll probably get it in a little white window envelope in the mail tomorrow. Nice.

Birthdays just aren't what they used to be. No presents. No birthday cake. I can't even go Trick-or-Treating, and us 10 year olds LOVE to go trick-or-treating!! Oh well. Today's another day. I gotta go check on the little guys and clean corals.

p.s. I'll tell you all about colic and sand colic another time. You'll love that story too.