

# News letter 2010



January, 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010

## Double C Ranch + Cariboo Country Inn Horsefly Lake, Canada

Dear Friends

I know, I know, I am WAY late with our newsletter and apologize for it. What can I say,.....life just got in the way of writing.

We hope you all had a fantastic Christmas and we would like to wish you only THE BEST for 2011.

We had a great Christmas with Kim and Felix both coming home. Felix had to work on the 24<sup>th</sup> so we had to slightly postpone the celebrations. Kim, Josh, Stephan and I went out on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> to get our Christmas tree. It was a beauty and of course once again far too large for our tiny dining-room. After some cutting we managed to fit it in and were just finished decorating it when Felix showed up in time for some appetizers. After that it was games, some great food and finally presents. For New Year's Eve Stephan and I went with some friends to the Great Cariboo Ball in Williams Lake. It was a semiformal affair and simply grand, with six different bands playing and great, great food. We were home at 3:00 AM and it took us all day January 1<sup>st</sup> to recover. BUT it was worth it.

2010 was a rather sad year and I for one am glad it is over.

It started great with friends talking us into going to Mexico. We had one week's time to get ready! Everything worked out and so we flew for one absolutely exciting week to the Mayan Riviera. We stayed in a beautiful apartment right on the beach, explored the area with our little car, went swimming, snorkeling, sightseeing and my favorite part, explored an underground river. It was fabulous and we came home relaxed and suntanned to a Cariboo with rapidly melting snow.



By the end of January all the snow was gone and it was unusually warm. Around the beginning of May the cold came back and kept us waiting for warmer, hotter weather until almost the beginning of June. In the summer we once again had massive wildfires everywhere in the interior of BC. It was so extremely dry that huge areas in the Chilcotin but also in the Cariboo started burning and quickly got out of hand. Lots of people had to evacuate and at one time parts of Williams Lake were under

evacuation alert as well. On Horsefly Lake we only had two small fires that luckily got under control pretty quickly. But for about three weeks we couldn't see across the lake because of all the smoke from the big fires around us. It was scary and hard to breath. Of course it wasn't very good for Resort business either and we had quite a few people leaving earlier or not even showing up. Who can blame them? Towards the end of August cooler weather and some rain arrived, helping to get those fires under control. On the positive side, I don't think any houses got lost and I heard that those burned areas will be great for mushroom picking in the spring. Morels seem to love and thrive in burned ground and I am looking forward to going mushroom hunting this spring.

Like every year our cows were calving in March and April. We had reduced our herd quite a bit, but the cow mommas we kept calved without a problem. It is always a lot of fun to go check on them and see how the calves play with each other and sometimes race our car, trying very hard to be faster. One morning in early April I took the dogs and drove up to the ranch hayfields where we kept the calves with their mothers. I unloaded the dogs and started walking up the field when I noticed quite far off three wolves circling a cow with her calf. I yelled at them in the hope they would run off, but instead they turned around and came running towards me. Quickly, I put the dogs on their leashes and unpacked my bear spray, walking backward towards my car. It didn't take the wolves long to be right there with me trying to circle me, showing me their teeth, while Myka barked her head off and Max showed them his teeth, growling and raising his hackles. Man they were beautiful, three fully grown black wolves. Well, I didn't feel like leaving it at that so I sprayed them with the bear spray,.....and thank God it helped. As soon as I sprayed they moved from about as close as 5 meters back to about 15 meters but still followed me all the way back to the truck. I was so happy once I successfully loaded the dogs but at the same time I was so very angry. I got into the car and chased those damn wolves across the fields,.....very quickly they were gone into the bush and I couldn't see them anymore. I went home and called Stephan, who at that time was in Switzerland, two of our neighbors, our friend Merv in 100 Mile House and the Conservation Officer. Chad, one of our neighbors, drove out to the cows right away making sure the wolves wouldn't come back, Merv drove all the way from 100 Mile House and patrolled our ranch for the next two nights and Shane, another neighbor and I patrolled the fields afterwards. This time I always carried a gun plus the bear spray just in case. I tell you I felt like Annie Oakley.

I was glad once Stephan got back home but of course everything was back to normal by then. The calves grew like weeds and the cows seemed happy. Then sometime in June most of them went on a

“walk-a-bout” with our neighbor’s bull. He had decided to visit our cows and in the process had ripped down the fence. Once he left some of our ladies and their calves went with him, just to return in the fall once the food got scarce out there. They are a funny crew. They came home very fat and happy and we were able to sell some of them for a decent price later on. Due to the extremely hot and dry conditions, Stephan decided not to make any hay this summer, which in turn enabled us to graze the cows until well into December. They were out there digging through the snow for grass, looking very healthy, but are now enjoying being fed every other day.



In June Kim graduated from University with a degree in Animal Biology. For this occasion the grandmas flew to Vancouver where I picked them up. We spent three days getting to Kamloops, exploring Vancouver and Kelowna on the way. After Kim’s Convocation they came home with us to Horsefly for ten more days. Kim had a heck of a time finding a job as an Animal Biologist and worked as a server in Kamloops for a while. She quickly discovered that this was not a job she liked and decided that in the fall she would travel around Europe for 2 months with her boyfriend Josh. But in August she got offered a very nice job at the BC Cattlemen’s Association for a year and decided to take it. She likes her job and is happy to be finally earning some money, using her weekends to go skiing or hiking.

After working for a company in Abbotsford for a while, dismantling heavy machinery, Felix finally got his dream job at Bob Cat Country in Abbotsford sometime in the summer. He loves it there and was already sent once to Calgary to the Bob Cat School. At the moment he is in Kamloops doing his 4<sup>th</sup> year schooling as a Heavy Duty Mechanic. Keep your fingers crossed. His final exam is on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Due to the fact that it took so long for him to find a school he now has enough hours, which means he will be done. DONE!



In July Max, our Bernese Mountain dog, and I went to an agility weekend course in Williams Lake. It was a blast. Since Max wasn’t fully grown yet, we were in the group with the tiniest dogs. Max was hilarious, trying to play with his tiny friends which were all scared of him, until he figured out that if he lay down they would actually pay attention to him. He also did quite an impressive job with the agility, was not afraid of



anything and loved the dog walk. He would be high up stopping in the middle of the dog walk, checking out his surroundings, making sure everybody was watching him. He also started to be quite a help to Myka, moving cattle around and learning pretty quickly what works and what doesn’t. Once in a while he has a slip-up and all he wants to do is have fun chasing cows, but he listens pretty well and absolutely hates to be in trouble. I guess you can tell we absolutely love him.

Then in September it was my turn to visit family in Switzerland. I spent some time with my Mom as well as with Stephan’s parents, got to know Stephan’s three little nephews, took trips all over Switzerland, visited friends, had great, great food and went to visit Dad about every other day. I was back at home for only two weeks when I received the sad news that my Dad, who had battled Dementia for the last five years, was finally able to die. I got a flight the next day back to Switzerland, where I stayed with mom, helping with all the paperwork and organizing the funeral. Even though part

of me is happy that Dad could finally find peace, it is so hard to lose a loved one. He loved it here in Horsefly and spent many hours helping Stephan at the ranch, watching wildlife from the ranch house and cooking his famous chili on an open fire.

After I got home from Switzerland we took it a bit slower, I had to recover from some ailments and now we are ready for a new, hopefully much better year.

**Take care  
and  
enjoy everyday as  
much as you can**

**The Schlaepfers**