

WinkWorld September - October 2008

Prairie Pedagogy: Our Boy, Bailey

Bailey, like many other children, started kindergarten this fall. As we will see, Bailey, like all children, is unique and brings a unique context to his first day of school. I plan to follow Bailey, his learning, and his life in the coming issues of WinkWorld. Who knows what we will learn from this 5 year old? Here is Bailey off to his first day of school.

[Bailey heading to school](#)

[Bailey and Classmates](#)

More Prairie Pedagogy: Gillette and Wright, Wyoming

I have been fortunate in the last couple of months to do some work with ESL/bilingual and mainstream classroom teachers in Gillette and Wright, Wyoming. During all of those years of commuting from Turlock to Howes (1534 m.), the land between Gillette and Wright has always been one of my favorite parts of the trip. I love to see the buffalo of the Durham Ranch. Today, there must have been 1000 head of buffalo cows, calves, and bulls close to the fence.

[See the buffalo](#)

When I arrived at one of the Wright schools, I heard myself referred to me as "the California lady." Little do they know that I have been stopping at their little roadside park for years, so that Ginny (my Labrador) could get out and run and play. Clean bathrooms, too. I sort of consider Wright one of ~my~ towns, along with several other places: Lovelock, NV has great coffee; Castle Rock, WY has a huge rock to climb; and I love the rest stop just West of Spearfish.

I find the pedagogy of Wyoming very liberating; the teachers in these two towns seem so free to use their expertise to teach; pedagogy is not as controlled as in some other states. In addition, they basically are only serving two language groups: English and Spanish. We can do this. I wonder how the Mexican families handle the Wyoming winters. I remember that the Medicine Bow and Elk Mountain winters were a real challenge for me in the mid-1970s.

During my first trip to the Gillette, I stayed in a rather dreary motel, which was right next door to the Mustang Motel in the industrial part of town. Our motel was filled with big,



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Linda M. Hasselstr...



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burly oil field workers, who all drove those huge, dirty pickup trucks. My Lil Red Chile (Saturn Vue) looked a bit out of place.. During the next trip over there, I'm going to try to find something with a bit of grass and perhaps even a few other women travelers.

Notes from The Real World: The Ripple Effect on Ranchers

October 9, 2008

Wall Street is a long way from Lemmon, SD but its impact is reverberating down to small town America. Ranchers are nervous about higher credit requirements and interest rates. Witness what happened last week in a little town 100 miles north of here, Lemmon, SD.

3000 calves were consigned to be sold at the Lemmon sale barn, and only 400 actually arrived to be sold. Wall Street was too unstable, and the ranchers simply stayed home with their calves, and waited to see what was going to happen. This reflects the total annual income for many of those ranchers who had consigned, as many ranchers are paid only once a year, when they receive the annual check from the sale of their calves. That alone is terrifying to this long-time salaried person. The ranchers now have two choices: (a) to take the calves to market now and suffer a loss, or (b) feed the calves until spring if they are able get credit to buy feed and pay the mortgage.

In a little town like Lemmon, the consequences of this small auction continues the ripple effect: less fuel is sold at the local gas stations; fewer meals are sold at the local restaurants, fewer tips are collected; fewer groceries are sold; and fewer truckers are needed. When a sale barn is the center of the local economy, the entire town will suffer. Hopefully, soon there will be more confidence in, not only the financial markets, but also the livestock markets, and these ranchers will be able to sell their calves.