

WinkWorld August - September 2006

Prairie Pedagogy:

This month I am sharing only **Prairie Pedagogy**, *What I Did During My Summer Vacation* and *Notes from the Real World*. Next month I promise to return to more about teaching and learning in the classroom.

Prairie Pedagogy: What I Did During My Summer Vacation

Week One

Wink and I drove 600 miles from Turlock to Boise to visit the Idaho Division of the Blue Family (<http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/1Bluefamily.jpg>). While we were there, we enjoyed the grands (<http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/2AustinGarrett.jpg>) and ate hamburgers, MMMMMMM, Beef. (<http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/3mmmbeef.jpg>), and, our new little Aggie. (<http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/4aggie.jpg>)

We left Idaho and drove through Montana, which is gorgeous with one big beautiful green valley after another. A Lear Jet sitting in a pasture on a landing strip caught our eye.

After driving another 1000 miles, we arrived to 118 degrees on the ranch in South Dakota; 2 days later, the high temperature was 70 degrees, land of infinite variety. The prairies are brown and burning. I'll never forget leaving Sturgis and heading out onto the prairies with a 180 degree view of smoky gray prairie skies. The drought is causing such grief, as dams and wells are drying up, leaving ranchers without water for cattle. The reason Prairie People talk so much about the weather is because the weather has primacy. It determines, not only each day's activities, but also the year's income.

Dean and the Drought in the Rapid City Journal

<http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/articles/2006/08/09/news/top/news02.txt>

Deer, antelope, grouse, bunnies, raccoons, porcupines, jackrabbits, birds come daily to drink from the dam south of the house. The two Great Blue Herons are my favorites. I love getting up early and watching the prairies slowly come to life as creatures cautiously come to drink. However, I did not like it when a skunk slowly ambled out from under the deck, directly below where I was sitting. Soon after he was gone, two female deer came right up to the deck; we simply stared at each other. A couple of days later, two buck deer with antlers walked up out of the creek in front of the house.

Soon, the Santa Fe Division of the Blue Family came to the ranch. We went for a picnic south of Howes where BopBop is building a truck washout.

(<http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/5Prairiepicnic.jpg>). I know that many of my colleagues think that I come to the ranch and lie around on the couch eating bon-bons. However, the truth is that ranch life has its own compelling rhythm of life. In addition, we try to keep the grands busy doing grand ranch activities.

Grands - playing on hay bales <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/6haybales.jpg>

Grands - cleaning the garage. <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/7Cleaningthegarage.jpg>

Grands - cleaning saddles <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/8Cleaningsaddles.jpg>
Grands - at the goat ropin' event. <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/9goatroping.jpg>
Wyatt driving Dan. <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/10WyattdrivingDan.jpg>
Luke driving Dan. <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/11Lukiedriving.jpg>
Wynn feeding horses. <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/12Wynnfeedinghorses.jpg>
Hats and Boots. <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/13hatsandboots.jpg>
Swimming in the Dam <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/14swimmingdam.jpg>
The Gumbo Girls <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/15GumboGirls.jpg> :Wynn got stuck in the gumbo near our little dam; Wyatt rescued her boots from the gumbo.
Our Prairie Princess <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/16PrairiePrincess.jpg>

Week Two

Prairie Fires, the Sturgis Harley-Davidson Rally, the Faith Stock Show, the Mobridge Relay-for-Life, Wynn's 7th birthday, and the 3 Lil New Mexicans' busy ranch life dominated this week.

Wink spent most of his time fighting local prairie fires, which were accompanied by the infamous prairie winds. The fire department consists of any able-bodied and willing person with a tank of water, a shovel, and/or burlap bag to beat down flames. One fire burned 30,000 acres, and planes came from the state department to drop water. At one point, 21 fire departments, from as far away as Rapid City and Sioux Falls, were roaring around the prairies. Highway 34 was closed to traffic, which was a great frustration to the hundreds of Harley riders, who had come from far-away states and were ~almost~ to the Rally. They were all turned back and filled up the local Howes Store.

<http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/articles/2006/08/14/news/top/news02.txt>

We went to a community pot-luck supper, with a wide variety of homemade foods. We decided that our favorites were the snicker salad and the oreo salad. Snicker salad is swirling mass of Cool Whip, maraschino cherries, and broken pieces of the snicker candy bars; Oreo salad is a blend of Cool whip, oreo cookies, and Mandarin oranges.

Prairie Sky <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/17PrairieSky.jpg>
Prairie Sky <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/18PrairieSky2.jpg>
Wynn and Bop-Bop off to fix water lines
<http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/19BopBopWynnwaterlines.jpg>
Hats and Horses <http://JoanWink.com/gifs2/20hatsandhorses.jpg>

Notes From the Real World

I am finished with chemo and just beginning several weeks of daily radiation. I'll also receive an infusion of Herceptin every 3 weeks for the next year. I'll begin the semester without any hair, and the doctors tell me that I'll have a full head of hair when the semester ends. It seems to me that we should be able to find some class project in the re-growth of my hair: compare/contract, predicting, estimating, charting. For activities, see www.JoanWink.com [Free to a Good Home](#).

Leaving the world of chemo and coming to the ranch felt a little like: Out of the frying pan and into the fire. As I am finishing this very short *WinkWorld*, I am sitting on our screened-in porch. As I look to the East, the sky is gray and heavy with rain; the sun has peaked out of a

cloud in the West, so a gorgeous rainbow is taking shape in the East. Somewhere on the Cheyenne Reservation, someone is being blessed with a wonderful rain. As I look to the South, I see a huge billow of dark smoke down in the Cheyenne River breaks. Wink's pickup flies up the lane, leaving a cloud of dust, as he roars away to fight yet another prairie fire. Once again, this rain missed us. I leave tomorrow for CA. My infamous 1534 mile compute begins again.

Happy new school year to us all. I am as excited for classes to begin, as I was when I started teaching 40 years ago at Great Valley High School in Malvern, PA.