

## WinkWorld December 2007

### Prairie Pedagogy

Wink Cattle Company's future is in good hands.

Wynn: <http://www.joanwink.com/gifs2/Wynn1107.jpg>

### Of Horses, Pheasants, Eagles, and Other Critters

December 3, 2007

7 degrees and about one inch of snow on the ground

No wind.

Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.

Sunset, 4:09 p.m.

Wink always tells me that if I don't get my work done, someone gets annoyed with me. However, if he doesn't get his work done, something dies. It indeed is true. Ranch days are filled with trying to keep critters alive, which involves starting tractors in the bitter cold, breaking ice so animals can get a drink of water, and the ever-present fixing of broken water lines, which are all buried below the frost line six feet underground. First, he has to get the back-hoe and dig down; next, find the broken line; repair it; let it dry, and then fill the hole and start the water running again. Each leak tends to consume every hour of daylight. All of this is done, with cows and calves waiting for their drink of water.

I am aware that many in CA think I am probably on the couch eating bon-bons, but ranch life has a compelling and demanding rhythm of its own.

I am re-reading the works of Kathleen Norris, who left the life of a New York City poet and author to return to her native prairies and live in a small town north of here. I believe that she now lives in Hawaii, but while she was in this state, she wrote: "I write on the Plains. I am indelibly an outsider, because I write and because I spent my formative years away. I am also an insider by virtue of family connections. I have a unique role here and try to respect its complexity" Norris, 1993, p. 86). She sees the prairies as a school of humility, and I assure you, that the daily grind of broken water pipes, hungry cattle and horses, and tractors, which are slow to start on dark cold mornings are central to the curriculum of that school.

The prairies are also filled with contradictions, and in the midst of daily challenges, there is beauty. One day last week, I saw a golden eagle and a mature bald eagle fly over the house. We now have gorgeous pheasants and grouse, which live near the house. We quietly put corn out and hope the eagles don't get them while they are eating. The large tomcat, we see slinking around in the bushes, is also a natural enemy of the pheasants and grouse.

In addition, we have a small herd of mares and their colts in the pasture on the hill south of the house. They have to come down a very steep hill every day to get their drink of water. From my writing desk, I wait patiently every afternoon for them to arrive and begin the negotiation of who gets to come down the hill first to enter the corral and go to the water tank.

The horses arrive about 4:00 p.m. and are silhouetted on the hill, with the setting sun at their

back. It is really breathtaking. When the stallion, Doc, is in the same pasture, he comes first and stands regally on the hill; then he slowly comes down and finally goes into the corral for his water. Within a few minutes the mares and colts appear on the horizon and begin their slow tentative walk down the hill. They are not allowed to drink until Doc is finished; he kicks and chases them off, if any one of them is bold enough or thirsty enough to try. Wink recently took Doc out of the pack, and all personalities and power had to be renegotiated. The matriarchal mare or "boss hoss" is a position, which has to be won and maintained by force, and at the present time, Josie and Sassy are fighting it out daily to see who is the fairest in the field. The other mares/colts are not allowed to enter the corral, nor even drink when they get there, until the lead mare has finished.

Our colts are my favorite, of course. One is sort of a mouse color, and we call her Minnie; one is a gorgeous sorrel, and we call her Ladybug; two are a similar color of light palomino or gray, depending on the day, and they do not yet have names; but my favorite is a gorgeous golden palomino colt, originally named Golden Boy, and finally shortened to simply Paul, after the other Golden Boy, Paul Hornung, a Green Bay Packer running back from years ago.

### **Welcome to the World**

Justin Michael  
Tripp Lane

### **Notes from the Real World**

Garrett (2) and Austin (5) come to help Grammie and BopBop:  
<http://www.joanwink.com/gifs2/BopGrammie-boys1107.jpg>

### **Garrett, the story begins**

Garrett's Literacy Development  
Story begins with Garrett, 1 year and 10 months  
12.3.07

### **August 2007**

#### **Garrett, 1 year and 10 months**

The Joy of Discovering Fire Daily  
Garrett is in love with letters. Every time he happens to see a letter, he is thrilled all over again. It is as if he discovers fire several times a day. He has various letter puzzles, magnetic letters, and letter books. He knows all letters and can point out or pick up any letters we happen to mention. However, it is far more than that: He chooses to play with his letters most of every day.

### **October 25, 2007**

#### **Garrett's 2nd birthday**

Garrett continues to be captivated by any and all letters, which makes a trip to the grocery store, the post office, the gas station a lengthy event, as he has to stop and say every letter, whenever he sees a word. Walking to the car takes a long time, as he is eye level with the license plates on cars and is thrilled to find his letters and say each one on each vehicle. The words "Visitor Parking" and "Handicap Parking" particularly slow up any trip.

### **November 30, 2007**

#### **Garrett age 2 years 1 month**

(His Mommy writes:) At naptime yesterday I asked Garrett to choose a book to read. He

picked out *Bob the Builder*, and I started to read the title.

"No, Garrett read," he told me emphatically.

"Okay" I said, "Garrett read to Mommy." So he climbed on my lap and held the book open to read.

"Garrett turn the page," he said as he opened it to the first page. "What happen on this page?" he asked.

"I don't know Garrett, what is happening on this page?" I replied. He proceeded to tell me what was happening based on the context. When he finished, he said "turn the page" and once he had turned the page, he said "What happen on this page?" And so it went through the 5 pages of the book. He then jumped down and chose another *Bob the Builder* book and did the same thing. We did this through all 3 *Bob the Builder* books.

### **Wyatt, the story continues**

Some of you have read in previous WinkWorld editions the continuing saga of Wyatt's literacy development.

September 2003, <http://www.joanwink.com/newsletter/2003/news0903-boxers.pdf>

December 2003, <http://www.joanwink.com/newsletter/2003/news1203-dawn.pdf>

January 2004, <http://www.joanwink.com/newsletter/2004/news0104-dawn.pdf>

March 2004, <http://www.joanwink.com/newsletter/2004/news0304-dawn.pdf>

January 2007, <http://www.joanwink.com/newsletter/2007/news0107.pdf>

Enjoy Dawn and Wyatt's new literacy adventure, December 2007,

<http://www.joanwink.com/newsletter/2007/DawnWyattBusted.pdf>