

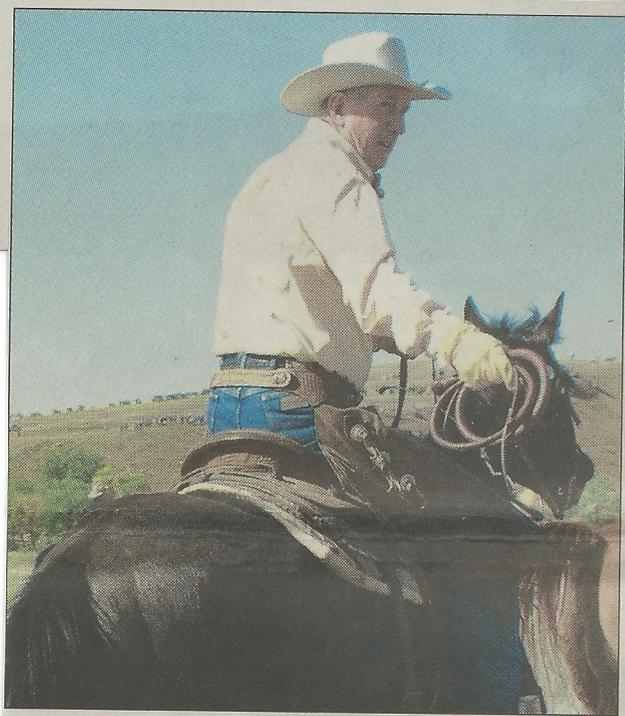


Photos by Sandy Rhoden/MCTT correspondent

left, and Dean Wink trail the buffalo during the Buffalo Roundup on Sept. 26 near Custer.



Dean, left, and Joan, head to position on a hill their mentor between. At right, Dean Wink s out the territory and nicates with fellow rid-



Larry Rhoden warms up with his horse, Derby, at the Buffalo Roundup.

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LOCAL

Howes couple rides in Buffalo Roundup

By Sandy Rhoden
MCTT correspondent

At age 67, Dean and Joan Wink are an inspiration. The couple proved their Western worth during the annual Buffalo Roundup on Sept. 26. The Winks - Dean is a District 29 state representative - and fellow District 29 legislator and rancher Sen. Larry Rhoden, R-Union Center, were among 59 hand-picked riders chosen to round up 1,200 head of buffalo.

They were told during orientation the day before the roundup that this was not a leisure ride, and it is not for an inexperienced rider.

Dean Wink said there were challenges. "I was surprised with how challenging for the horses the terrain was, with granite outcroppings and lots of rocks to maneuver around and over on the steep slopes," he said. "One of our horses had been raised in that country and was comfortable with it, but the other one took it a bit slower."

Joan Wink said, "Part of our ranch is in the Cheyenne River breaks, so we have steep hills, but we do not have hills with so many rocks. As a child, I rode on our ranch, and since I have retired, I have been able to ride more. We have great horses, and it is the horse, which makes the rider."

Joan Wink is a breast cancer survivor. She said she didn't expect to see her 63rd birthday, so being well enough to participate in the round up at 67 had her excited. Her zest for life has not held her back.

"Nothing in my life is routine," she said.

Taking part in the buffalo roundup was a great opportunity and challenge. She said the best thing about the round up was finishing in the saddle.

The Winks, who live and ranch northwest of Howes, have led interesting lives.

"I've had an opportunity during my life to work in several areas and have enjoyed them all, but ranching has been what I call my career," said Dean Wink.

The couple lived in Philadelphia from 1966 to 1969, where Dean Wink was a defensive end and defensive tackle for the Philadelphia Eagles.

"The first year, I didn't get called up; years two and three, I did and played in enough games to earn credit toward a retirement pension. My last year, I injured both shoulders and decided the good Lord was trying to direct me into another career."

He became the defensive coordinator for the football team and taught physical education at Yankton College. In the following years, he moved into the role of dean of students, and dean of admissions. He decided that working in an office was not for him, so he and Joan moved to Arizona and began ranching. Except for four years spent in California, the couple has been in the cattle industry since then.

Joan Wink taught at California State University, Stanislaus. Missing the ranch life, Dean returned to it in 1994, and Joan commuted from California. She retired from CSU in 2007,

but continues to teach online. Joan writes, gives presentations and keynote speeches, and consults with school districts. She has authored four editions of one book and co-authored two others.

"Apparently, I have failed retirement," said Joan Wink.