

de Stolfe Journal *Candid*, July

Unless noted, all text and photos
by RG de Stolfe

July 2012

Published by RG de Stolfe, Publisher

Major Move Prompts Many Changes

The *de Stolfe Journal* was a family-type newsletter that I started in March 1984. (Okay, more of a newsletter about me and my interests!) The issues were irregular and topics broad. I did the last issue in the late 1990s when I still lived in Flagstaff, Arizona. In 2001, I moved from Flagstaff to Lubbock, Texas, where I lived for about 11 years, the longest I lived in any one city since leaving Miami, Florida! (I lived there for 16 years.) I have once again moved, but this time to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where I am living with my dad. (Dad moved

here over 5 years ago.) This move is not for any specific length of time nor for any specific permanence.

Over the years, many people have asked how am I doing, what am I doing, even where am I! Apparently, news about me is sparse and information lacking, even with my own parents! Therefore, I decided to start this detachment of the *de Stolfe Journal* to keep my friends and family at least somewhat informed of the things going on in my life. I hope you like this newsletter!



RG de Stolfe

With Moving Comes Conflict

With moving comes conflict. The conflict isn't about arguing or fighting. It's an internal conflict of the transition from settlement to all out of whack! That is the point I faced once I decided on the inevitable move from where I was to where I now am. The past several months have been utterly amazing, depressing, miracle working, angry, and peaceful. Confused? I know I sure was! This move was prompted

by the extended lack of finances, which by the way, has nothing to do with the United States' current financial crisis. It has absolutely nothing to do with it!

For a long time, I needed a major change, a shift if you will, from what wasn't ever working right to something completely different. I can honestly say that at the moment, many things are

much better than they were! I still have much to take care of, but much is already better. I have many people to thank for their help over the past three months, some having done far above and beyond what I could ever have asked or expected!

See page 4 for a list of people I give double honor for their help!



Early morning Monday, June 4, 2012 near Des Moines, New Mexico.
I left Lubbock late afternoon on Sunday and could not drive any further!
This is a rather nice rest stop along Highway 87.

Inside this issue:

Major Move Prompts Many Changes	1
With Moving Comes Conflict	1
Relaxing Trip to Tyler, Texas	2
Catfish, Dragons, and Gators, Oh My!	2
Las Vegas, Muy Loco!	3
Colorado Springs Forest Fires	3
Column of Honor	4
Blessed Heart Ranch	4
Top Hand Graphics	4
New Favorite Shows	5
Back Page Literature: Cowhunters...	6

Relaxing Trip to Tyler, Texas

In mid to later May, I spent the weekend among friends on an East Texas getaway. I started out going to Cisco to meet up with my friend Matt. We then travelled to Tyler to meet up with his twin brother Milton. While there, we did a variety of activities, but the main part of the trip was to spend a night on Lake Palestine. The next day, we met up with Matt's and Milton's other brother and dad. We first visited the Texas Parks and Wildlife's Texas

Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens. (More info and photos in below story.) Later, we rented a cabin on Lake Palestine. While there, some fished for catfish, some canoed, and I spent some time taking photos of a region in Texas I have not been to. The weekend was fun and relaxing and a major blessing before leaving Texas! As I've said to some, it's like a last Texas hurrah!



Cabin right on Lake Palestine.



River off the lake around the camp grounds.



Sunset on Lake Palestine looking from cabin.



Fishing on Lake Palestine just outside the cabin.

Catfish, Dragons, and Gators, Oh My!

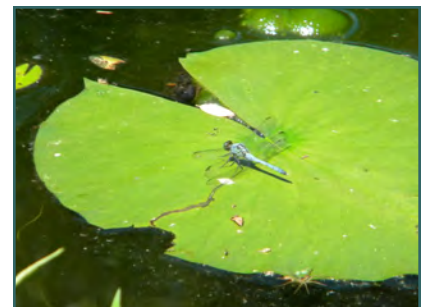
The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, Texas is a neat place to visit to learn about fish. They have a tram tour of the hatchery ponds and also have a path to walk through some woods with different educational stops. The main part of the center is like a museum talking about fish and fish habitats. In one area, you can hand feed catfish, and they nearly grab the food from your hand! They are little pellets out of a candy machine.



Very hungry catfish!



Nice gator, friendly gator...



Blue dragon fly on lily pad on pond.



Scuba diver talking about the fish in the tank to the kids.

Las Vegas, Muy Loco!

In late April, I drove up to Colorado Springs to travel again with dad to Las Vegas for a convention that dad goes to in recent years. This convention is CinemaCon, which covers theatre technology and concessions. The cutting edge of viewing technology in image and in sound will blow you away! The image is sharper and cleaner and the sound more intricate! In addition, the 3D

technology is far better than the red/blue concept of the past. Side note: theatres in the United States will be all digital by next year. That means no more film.

The convention was the reason for the trip, but the scenery of the drive through northern Colorado (I-70), Utah (I-15), Arizona, and Nevada was spectacular! Here are a selection of photos from the drive.

Top right: Iconic sign on The Strip of Las Vegas Boulevard
 Bottom left: Northern Colorado along I-70
 Bottom middle: Central Utah, along I-70 in the early morning
 Bottom Right: Central Utah, along I-70



Taken by Robert A. de Stolfe with my camera



Colorado Springs Forest Fires

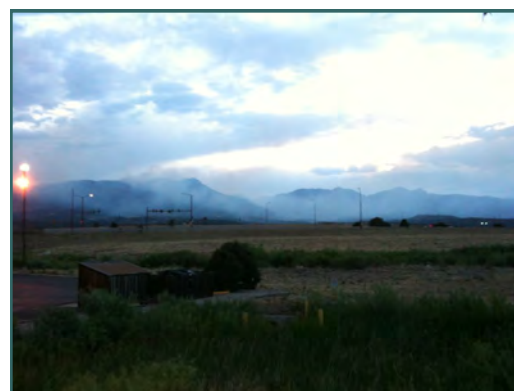
Just in case any of you wondered, the forest fires here in Colorado Springs of late June and early July were well over on the west side of town, far away from where I live! But unfortunately, some were not spared and have literally lost everything! Please continue to pray for those who need direction of what to do next. As of last hearing, the fires were just about fully contained, but that still means the fires are there. Please also pray for the firemen who have dedicated so much time, energy, and resources to battle the blazes!



Left: Map of Northwest Colorado Springs showing the total burn area at one point. My house is not even on the map-further to the east.

Top right: Fire raging in north end of Colorado Springs.

Bottom right: What's left of the Flying W Ranch, a long time, popular dude ranch resort in Colorado Springs.



Google Maps

Column of Honor

I have many people to thank who have helped me in some way with my move from Lubbock to Colorado Springs! The following people I give double honor for their selfless giving! (In no particular order)

- Matt & Sarah Horner
and the Horner family**
- David & Jennifer Taylor**
- David Conklin**
- Jim & Marsha Pfluger**
- Ted & Jan Currington**
- Mom & Dad**
- Chris & Kim Guay**
- Justin Hendon**
- Glynnis Kelley**
- Jill Craft**
- Dana Cunningham**
- All of West Texas Church
at the Barn**
- Praise and Worship Team
at WTCB**



Glynnis Kelley

In May, I had a surprise of a "goodbye" dinner with some folks from church, who were also part of my Singles Group. We ate at On The Border and had a good ole time of food, fellowship and feast, even after the server dropped all our food!
L to R: Justin, Jill, Dana, Glynnis, and me.

Blessed Heart Ranch

The Blessed Heart Ranch is a thought I started a few years ago.

This brand, the Rafter Heart, is registered in Lubbock County.

Stay tuned for this is a future development!



Blessed Heart Ranch

Top Hand Graphics

I started Top Hand Graphics a year ago in 2011 after my job ended. Ever since I closed Creative Cowboy in 2010 as a regular business, I still wanted to have another business of some sort. After some thought and decision making, I went with a strength, graphic design.



<http://www.tophandgraphics.com>
<http://www.facebook.com/TopHandGraphics>



Find me on Facebook!
<http://www.facebook.com/rg.destolfe>

RG de Stolfe

4542 Del Verde Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80918
806.470.5867
rgdestolfe@yahoo.com

New Favorite Shows

I rarely watch TV except for This Old House and some other home improvement type shows. But in recent weeks, I have discovered two programs that I have liked. They are very different, but both are pretty cool.



Dallas is the "next generation" of the Ewing family feud of the original series that ended 20 years ago.



TNT: <http://www.dallastnt.com/series/dallas>



A&E: <http://www.aetv.com/longmire>

Longmire

Longmire is "a contemporary crime thriller set in Big Sky country, based on the Walt Longmire Mystery novels by Craig Johnson. The series stars Australian actor Robert Taylor as Walt Longmire, the charismatic, dedicated and unflappable sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming."

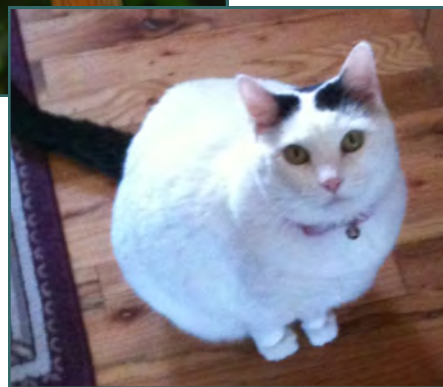


Taken by Gary with my iPhone

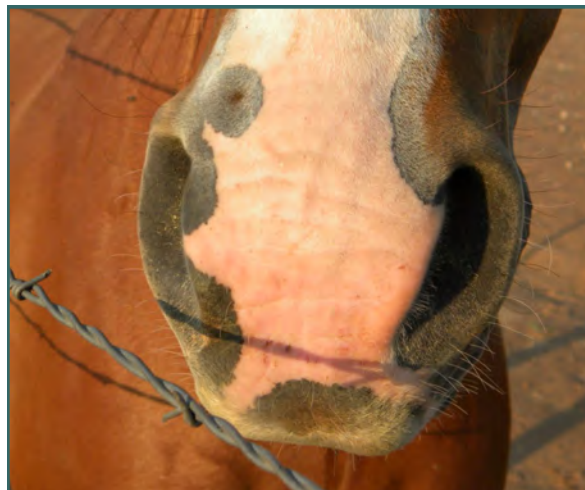
Thanks in part to a neighbor, I started out with a job that turned into steady work! Here's the proof for any of you who think I never do any work! :-)



What I can see outside my bedroom window.



And who sometimes looks out the same window is Dad's kitty cat, Panda.



Nothing like a horse nose in the early morning!

BACK PAGE LITERATURE

This is an article I wrote in 2011 that was published in the Ranch Record magazine, winter 2012 issue.

Cowhunters in the Palmetto

Edward Smith King described Florida as where "odorous and health-giving ocean winds [blow]..." and that it is the "home of the palmetto, cabbage palm, live oak, ... Spanish moss, the ambitious mangrove, ... orange, ... [sea]grape, and cocoanut." In Florida lies a concealed past, a treasure of a ranching history that can rival most anywhere in the American West. This is a story about conquistadors and tourists, wars and progression, romanticism and fact. This is a story of Florida ranching.

Juan Ponce de León came to a "new" land he thought was an island. He named it *La Florida*, the Flowery Land. When he returned to *La Florida* in 1521, he brought with him some horses and a small herd of Andalusian cattle. Other expeditions came, along with settlers and missionaries, and founded San Agustín (St. Augustine) in 1565. The Franciscan missionaries would teach the local Indians the European ways of farming, cattle raising, weaving, carpentry, and the ways of God. Into the 1600s, the *La Chua* prairie (Alachua prairie, near Gainesville) developed into a prospering cattle industry, where vaqueros drove the cattle to St. Augustine by crossing the St. Johns River on flatboats to provide fresh meat and hides for tanning to export.

By the 1700s, the winds of change blew viciously. With English and French colonies surrounding Florida, Spain was under pressure to hold on to its territories. In 1702 and 1704, a series of raids by James Moore massacred the coastal missions with other raids later ravaging the leftover missions. In addition, the Alachua cattle industry buckled from cattle rustling by Indians and the English, leaving the ranches wild and the residual cattle undomesticated. Spain joined with the French during the French and Indian War. However, that proved to be a disastrous decision for in 1763, the British overtook Spain's possession of Havana and gained control of Florida. Afterwards, England agreed to return Havana to Spain in exchange for keeping Florida.

With England in control, they separated their new possession into two colonies: East Florida, with the Apalachicola River as the boundary, and West Florida, with the Mississippi River as the boundary. For twenty years, the British ruled and developed these colonies. West Florida focused on fur trading, barrel production, and mari-

time supplying, while East Florida focused on agricultural expansion. As the British settled in, the people brought with them their shorthorn cattle, which could survive the Florida climate. These cattle would eventually mix with the surviving Andalusian cattle to create a piney woods breed. During the American Revolution, the Florida colonies stayed loyal to the British. However, Spain would regain control of all of Florida by 1783, only to ultimately trade the possession (along with the Spanish debt) in 1821 to the United States in exchange for relinquishing all claims to Spanish Texas.

Once the Florida territory became a U.S. state in 1845, rapid economic growth during the antebellum years established Florida as a cattle powerhouse. A lucrative trade started when Cuba—lacking meat from various revolutions for independence—would pay gold for Florida cattle. Therefore, cattle from all over the state were driven to Punta Rassa (near Fort Myers) and loaded onto steam ships bound for Cuba. During the "Battle of Northern Aggression" (as some call the Civil War), cattlemen risked encountering Union forces because this trade so profitable. During the Battle of Olustee in 1864, (the only battle fought in Florida), the Federals intended to cut off the Confederacy's supply of beef and pork and to acquire a source of supplies. After six plus hours of waning fighting, the Confederates were victor. After the war, the gold gained from the cattle trade with Cuba helped pull Florida out of the economic slump. In addition, Florida's agriculture redirected from cotton to timber, citrus, winter vegetables, tourism, and cattle raising, of which prospered in Alachua, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Orange, and Polk counties.

Florida was an open range state where the cattle roamed freely. The cowboys, often called cow hunters, rode for miles and spent copious hours through the open plains, the palmetto prairies, the hammocks, and the rivers in search of all the cattle. An 18-hour day of solid riding, except for stops to eat, was normal. These cow hunters relied on their "cracker ponies" or "marsh ponies" (descending from Spanish rancheros) and their herd dogs to push along the cattle. In addition, they used long whips that would never actually touch the cattle, but only make the loud crack to keep them moving. In addition, the whip made a



good means of communication in the palmetto prairies for the cowboys could hear the crack many miles away. At the end of a cattle drive, "the cowmen would take their pay in gold, drink Cuban rum at fifty cents a gallon, and let off steam by firing their revolvers through the floors of their barracks."

Frederick Remington observed Florida cowboys as "wild-looking individuals whose hanging hair and drooping hats and generally bedraggled appearance would remind you at once of the Spanish moss which hangs so quietly and helplessly to the limbs of the oaks out in the swamps..." Harriet Beecher Stowe described the Florida setting in *Palmetto Leaves* as "a piece of embroidery... one side all tag-rag and thrums... and the other side showing flowers and arabesques and brilliant coloring." Among this paradise and ubiquitous paradox, was a local culture referred to as Florida crackers. The origin of the term "cracker" is somewhat obscure in that several acceptable theories exist. One theory states that "lower class whites" got the name from the sound of cracking corn, a staple of their diet. Another theory states that the term "cracker" is an English corruption of the Spanish word *cuacero*, meaning Quaker. However, the most sticking theory of the origin of the term is from the sound of a cracking whip. Abbie M. Brooks described the Florida cracker as wearing "a broad-brimmed hat, braided from palmetto, a brown-jean coat and breeches, a deer-skin vest with the fur left on, and a pair of stout, useful cow-skin boots..."

Into the twentieth century, the established cattle industry continued to prosper. In 1950, Florida had 550 registered herds of beef cattle, totaling one million animals, and ranked twelfth in the nation and first in the southeast. In total cattle, Florida was twenty-third in the nation and fourth in the southeast. However, the free-range era started to close because of the nomadic livestock in the developing cities. Despite the strong tradition of Florida's open range, Governor Fuller Warren pushed through an effective fencing bill for state roads in 1949, then for county roads in 1952. Automobile owners could then drive with relief, and homeowners knew their homes were safe from the wandering cattle.