

The long ride

ersachs, sums it up perfectly saying, “We have been very blessed with my dad and his vision in how he can leave his footprint somewhere. He can read and understand and execute on how to impact peoples’ lives.”

Keith actually started Ride the Range back in 2008. The first year, he, along with a few others, cycled 450 miles through Wyoming to raise funds and awareness for the local hospital and nursing home in Wheatland. Since then, he and various other cyclists have ridden thousands of miles through the beautiful landscapes of several states, every penny raised going to help others.

In 2017, Ride the Range evolved to what it is today, thanks to a catalytic experience.

In that year, Havelly had the opportunity to attend the Wyoming Women’s Antelope Hunt, and her life was forever changed, or rather, she discovered it again.

The Wyoming Women’s Antelope Hunt is an event of the Wyoming Women’s Foundation held each October in Ucross. According to their website, it was founded in 2013 “as an opportunity for mentoring and developing camaraderie between women. Teaching women to hunt can help them feed their families nutritious food and fulfills WYWF’s mission of investing in the economic self-sufficiency of women.”

Keith, knowing a little about the hunt, suggested Havelly apply for it. Although she wasn’t initially keen on the idea, she followed through on her dad’s intuition. She was later notified her application was not only accepted, but that she would also be attending on a scholarship. What she and the rest of her family soon realized is that this hunt is something very unique.

“It inspired me to live my life again,” Bauersachs commented, through emotion and tears that even now, five years later, are still very fresh. “When my parents came for the banquet after the hunt, they said they could see a change in me. That my eyes looked different.”

Many women who take part in the hunt find a life-long passion for not only hunting, but also bringing more women into its fold. The pulse of the experience, the people and testimonies and newly bright eyes filled with a re-discovered purpose, is something they want to stay close to and also cast out to others, increasing its vibrations of healing and sisterhood and empowerment.

The scholarship, which allowed Havelly to attend, was funded by a very influential supporter of the hunt and a fierce advocate of empowering women, Shelley Simonton. Havelly was the first recipient of that scholarship, which was established only a month prior to Shelley passing away.

Although she never got the opportunity to meet Shelley, Havelly being chosen as the recipient of that scholarship was clearly predestined.

Once the experience left its healing mark on her life, which was immediately noticed by her dad, there was no stopping the ripple effect.

“My dad, knowing how impactful the hunt was for me,



Courtesy photo
Lucie Holt (from left), Keith Geis, Anne Brickman and Brad Guse take a moment before last year’s ride, which took place in Wisconsin.

really wanted to bring it full circle and provide scholarships for other women to go,” Bauersachs explained.

Keith quickly got the rest of the family on board. They clearly knew what they wanted to help provide, and how they wanted to do it, the only thing to decide was who they were going to help provide it for.

In talking with a close friend, a decorated Vietnam Veteran, Keith was moved by the desire to help veterans, specifically women. He expressed through palpable emotion and respect, “We decided that women veterans were the individuals that we wanted to focus on and provide them some of the same opportunities that I saw with my daughter. Some of the same changes in their mental and emotional well-being.”

Havelly added, “We also took Shelley’s inspiration, in knowing that she set up that scholarship fund to impact lives and to push something she knew was very, very special and could change people’s lives, and wanted to provide it to others who would not have the opportunity to go, otherwise.”

In 2019, the first year of riding specifically for this new cause, the family was hoping to raise \$10,000. They brought in over double that. This year, the fourth, they are extremely close to hitting a total over \$100,000. When that happens, the ultimate goal is to put it into an endowment, ensuring that scholarships for the hunt will continue on forever.

Sally Pruiett, a veteran and first recipient of the Ride the Range to Empower Women Veteran’s scholarship, offered this all-telling sentiment of what it meant to her. “Growing up in a family that didn’t hunt, I didn’t know the first thing about guns or hunting. This is true for a lot of women, even in Wyoming. I jumped at the chance to learn those skills in 2020 when the application for Wyoming Women’s Foundation Antelope Hunt dropped into my e-mail. When I got the call from First Lady Jenny Gordon

congratulating me for being chosen, I didn’t comprehend the honor of being the first recipient of this scholarship. As a veteran leaving the military, I felt a distinct lack of brotherhood and sisterhood gained through testing our mettle under strenuous circumstances. I found that family again at the hunt. The women I met come from a variety of backgrounds, but share a love of the outdoors and desire to learn this time-honored skill. We bonded in a way I’d only experienced in the Army. I’m so grateful for being chosen for this scholarship and wish good hunting to the future veteran hunters who follow. Each year as I apply for tags, I reach out to these wonderful women as we reminisce and plan for the new challenge.”

One of the most rewarding parts, for Geis, has been seeing his grandchildren become more involved. This year will be his first not riding with the group, but rather slowly passing the baton, letting his vision and purpose grow with the next generation. He knows the extremely valuable lessons they are learning, being placed in the position where they can do something for someone else.

Lucie and Lilli have been involved in many aspects of the ride behind the scenes, but have recently expressed interest in taking on a bigger role. A lot of that has been fueled by getting to attend the banquet each year at the conclusion of the hunt, and hearing the women talk about the experience, the affect so raw in their emotions. It’s infectious.

This is Lucie’s second year riding. “I knew I could do more. I’m able-bodied and didn’t feel like I was doing enough. So, I told them I wanted to bike. It was my idea. I think Pops was thinking about it too, but I went to them and said I want to do it all the way this time.”

Allowing their 17-year-old granddaughter to ride was a decision not taken lightly. This wasn’t just a Sunday afternoon bike ride, it was a grueling and dangerous feat of endur-

ance, even for experienced and trained cyclists. The riders risk exhaustion, semi-trucks roaring by, pot holes, extreme sun exposure, and dehydration.

Ultimately, Lucie was not to be turned down. Watching her Pops do the ride so many times in the past and knowing what the hunt meant to her mom and other amazing women, resulted in her determination to take the leap. She tested her limits, both physically and mentally, and pedaled until she couldn’t anymore. With every mile, her teenage heart grew bigger, grasping that she was part of something truly meaningful. To say her Pops was proud, doesn’t even begin to describe it.

This year, her sister Lilli is excited, yet a little nervous to join in as well. “Lucie and my dad are doing it, so I knew I could do it too,” she expressed sincerely.

The girls’ dad, Tom, has been part of the ride before, when the girls were very young, so to now ride through five national parks with them, as teenagers, is something very special.

His wife, Stephanie Holt, designed T-shirts promoting the ride, which are being sold at Hometown Apparel, adding to the funds going to the scholarship endowment. The t-shirts include a quote by Leland Christensen, a man known to be the voice of the antelope hunt, who passed away unexpectedly in December. “You’ve got today, live it!” “The ride wouldn’t have happened without their help and support,” Havelly commented, of Tom and Stephanie’s partnership and dedication.

Laramie Peak Motors of Wheatland is also donating a transit wagon, for Havelly, Stephanie and Lane to use, following the riders. The community support from both Wheatland and Douglas has been tremendous, they said.

Donations to the ride can be made on their website: www.ridetherangecycling.org

“It’s been a very, very rewarding endeavor and very satisfying to see young women come and participate in the event and go away with a whole new vision and perspective,” Keith affirmed, with a humble and knowing nod.

Legion to host Memorial Day event

The American Legion Samuel Mares Post No. 8 will hold their annual Memorial Day ceremony Monday, May 30 at 7 a.m., at the Douglas Park Cemetery.

The public is invited to attend the program which will include the raising of the flag, recitation of the

Pledge of Allegiance, and the reading of the names of Converse County Veterans lost in 2022.

A full breakfast will follow at the Legion Post for \$10/plate.

For more information please call Donald York at 307-359-0764.



Clifford J. Smith photo
Jason Marcus puts roofing paper on the top of one of the three outhouses before shingling it and finishing it off with some paint.

Cleaning up

water.

The OEOCC is an organization motivated to helping Converse County. Organizers said they want to expand trail opportunities throughout as well as provide some activities for everyone to come and partake in.

One of these activities is a revival of the Ride, Row, Run event during Jackalope Days, which due to time constraints won’t be hosted until 2023. The bike ride will give away to a kayak float and finish with a run.

The group is also in the works of reviving the Hunter’s Safety course in Douglas. They just need to schedule

when and where as they seem to have found a willing teacher in Matt Huizenga, who is the Hunter Safety instructor from Glenrock.

To keep posted on events be sure to follow their Facebook page Outdoor Enthusiast Of Converse County, or show up to their next meeting at the LaBonte Bar on June 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Sadly, they said, the Glendo Lake Trail Race will be cancelled due to a lack of resources but there are other things to come such as an archery range cleanup day as well as a summer solstice hike at Two Moon Campground in Glendo at 5:30 p.m. June 21.

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EARLY DEADLINES

The Douglas Budget has Early Deadlines for the Memorial Day holiday (May 30th)

All LEGAL NOTICES and CLASSIFIEDS must be turned in by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 26th, 2022

ADS and NEWS must be turned in by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 27th, 2022

for the June 1st issue of the Douglas Budget.

The Douglas Budget office will be **CLOSED Monday, May 30th**