

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Cattle Ranching as Seniors

As you can see in the featured photo, I am holding the welcome to Medicare book. The year 2023 is my 65th birthday. I received this lovely, and quite helpful, book in the mail on our daughter's 40th birthday, which is why I am dressed to party. We were on our way off the ranch to meet up with our only child to start her day of celebrating. Somehow it simply seemed like a "Kodak moment," a phrase I suspect only fellow seniors know the meaning of.

My husband received his welcome to Medicare book two years earlier. This is certainly a season where we both raise questions we have never asked before.

These include questions about how much longer we will be able to continue our cattle ranching operation. We definitely feel like we have entered a new season of big changes. Yet, we are unsure, or dare I say we are not in agreement about, when some of the big changes should happen.

So we continue with our day-to-day responsibilities of caring for our cattle that honestly leaves little time to daydream about much else.

I suppose I could say neither of us want to be rushed or pressured into making dramatic changes to the life we have shared with each other for well over four decades. Yet life feels significantly shorter than it did when we first married. I cannot stop myself from wanting certain changes and experiences as soon as possible. Someday feels like it should be now or at least very soon.



Annette Bridges is determined to fill her life with joy, laughter, and sassiness. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

Cattle ranching is not a profession that someone retires from suddenly one day. After all, this business involves more than our

two lives.

We have a herd of beautiful bovines that have been born and raised here, and many here now

have been here for more than two decades. Certainly, if and when we reach the decision to retire from this lifestyle, great care and consideration will be given to our cattle.

I shared this special photograph on social media saying this is what happens when you have a daughter turning 40. I was almost 25 when she was born. I received many sweet comments complimenting my outfit.

My responses emphasized my belief that if I am going to be a senior, I am going to be a sassy-dressed senior.

When I struggle with the idea of entering my senior season, I reflect on my mamma's senior years. She was almost my age when she married for the fourth time to a man she would be married to for 30 years.

She did more traveling during these years than any other time in her younger life.

If I learned anything from my mamma's life, one important lesson must surely be that you do not stop living or enjoying life just because of your older age, or you may struggle with more health challenges than you did in your youth. She did not allow her aches and pains to slow her down much or for long.

Although we may be unsure about how much longer we will be cattle ranchers, I am determined that whatever I do with the rest of my life it will be with as much joy, laughter and sassiness as I can muster up, and I thank my mamma for showing me how. 