



WHEN A CITY GIRL

goes country

By Annette Bridges

I am quite certain our ranch is not the only one suffering from the excessive spring rain this year. I am pretty sure my hubby is not the only rancher who gets so stressed, overwhelmed and frustrated during such times that the joy in his life gets sucked out of him.

To be honest with y'all, my husband's woes in troubled times have not always been something I could understand.

My childhood was not the easiest. At 10-years-old, everything dramatically changed. Following the divorce from my daddy that was the complete opposite of amicable, I might add, my mom and I set out in search of a new home and happiness, and my mamma was sure both were possible. She was so convincing to my 10-year-old self, that even though our life was in turmoil and uncertainty, I was happy and expectant as we traveled west from Georgia - although we had no idea how or where we would end up to make that new home for ourselves.

This is the very short version of the story of my road to Texas. I was taught to approach life with a glass half full point of view rather than the half empty perspective. Mamma always emphasized the importance of gratitude for what we had rather than what we didn't. During our journey to Texas and since, we both learned the merit found in cherishing each present moment and the benefit of an awareness and appreciation of all the good that surrounds you. These lessons have served me well, perhaps especially in the most difficult of times.



As Annette Bridges drove around the corner not far from the ranch, there stood a beautiful axis deer sharing some shade with a group of cows. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

This day was no different. I'm referring to the photo that is pictured with this column. I was having a low moment: another wave of grief and regret that still sweep over me from time to time since the passing of my dear mamma and 17-year-old dachshund at the end of last year.

Suddenly as I drove around the corner not far from our ranch, there stood a beautiful axis deer sharing some shade with a group of cows. I immediately stopped the car. After several minutes of relishing this sweet site, I snapped a photo. Just like that, as I trea-

sured the magic of seeing unlikely friends hanging out together, the spell of feeling sad was broken.

My journey with grief has been a long one. I lost two of my brothers in the three years prior to my mamma and dog's passing. The struggles with loss and regret have been the most difficult of my life. The miracle has been embracing the possibility of being happy while still feeling sad, of being able to laugh when only moments before you wanted to cry or of seeing what is good and beautiful in the midst of destruction and chaos.

I will tell my husband about my unexpected encounter when he comes in for dinner today, and I will share with him why this was such a powerful reminder for me. Take heart dear ranchers who feel the same overwhelm and frustration as my husband. All is not lost. Even if some crops are indeed destroyed, and I'm so sorry if that is the case, I still say no matter our sorrow, our losses, our challenges, we must find those reasons to be grateful, to be happy, to laugh and enjoy being with those we love and who are still with us. Indeed, I will say it again. All is not lost. ☺