

**“There are no wrong turns,
only unexpected paths.”**
~Mark Nepo~

When life sets your trail on a roller coaster the best you can do is, hang on tight and just catch your breath at each descent! I want to give an update to everyone that has been so kind and caring after Mercedes' editorial reached our readership in January regarding Jim's health. I want you to know that your kind words, e-mails, cards and calls have meant so much to us all. In early January Jim entered the hospital to have a procedure to provide him medicine directly to his heart, unfortunately during this process his body contracted a staph infection that left him fighting for his life, like everything he has triumphed over he managed once again to pull through. After what has been a long recovery, at this writing he is still at the hospital and will remain there as he has moved significantly up on the heart transplant list since being admitted earlier this month. Now we wait and hope that he will soon have a heart to come to his rescue. If the wait lasts longer than what his heart specialists feel as too long, he will undergo a procedure in which he will receive a heart pump; an amazing device which will assist his heart as he waits for a new one. At first this was his doctors' plan but as of the last 24 hours this plan has changed and we are excited that he is next on the list for the heart that fits him and his blood type. No matter what, new heart or the heart pump, both are going to make him feel better than he has felt in years and I am excited to have my husband feeling better.

I also want to take a moment and thank the family of David Stoecklein for their kind words on the tribute paid in last month's January issue to David's memory. We had comments and calls pour in from all over the United States on the tributes to both David and Grant Gerber, two western heroes that can't be replaced. This month's issue also contains a very poignant story about a young man that overcame numerous obstacles following an accident, and went on to inspire others. The word Wagyu is becoming more and more a part of our language when we think about high quality meat, but there is another side to that story and it is red and goes by the breed name Akaushi. Both Wagyu and Akaushi cattle are proving to be great crosses and many ranchers are taking note, you won't want to miss "Japanese Cattle: The Benefits". Not to be outdone, Hooter chimes in with some humor on the side and a must read this month is Wes Ishmael's Riding the Gap "Planning the Likely Future", these words of wisdom are guidelines for the future.

I hope that when this issue reaches your mailbox that you're either planning a special evening or just spent one with someone special (depending on the US Postal service) since we are in the month of celebrating everything romantic. Also take some down time to enjoy this issue to inspire and shed a little wisdom here and there, and I would also like to encourage you to take some time from your trail to stop and appreciate the "small normal" that are sprinkled throughout your days. This last month has made me realize how I took those normal everyday things that really mean so much for granted, with Jim away for almost a month now in the hospital, I miss the normal in our days. It is the familiar trail that we rest in the saddle, and find the harmony to take on the day. Happy Hearts and Trails.....

