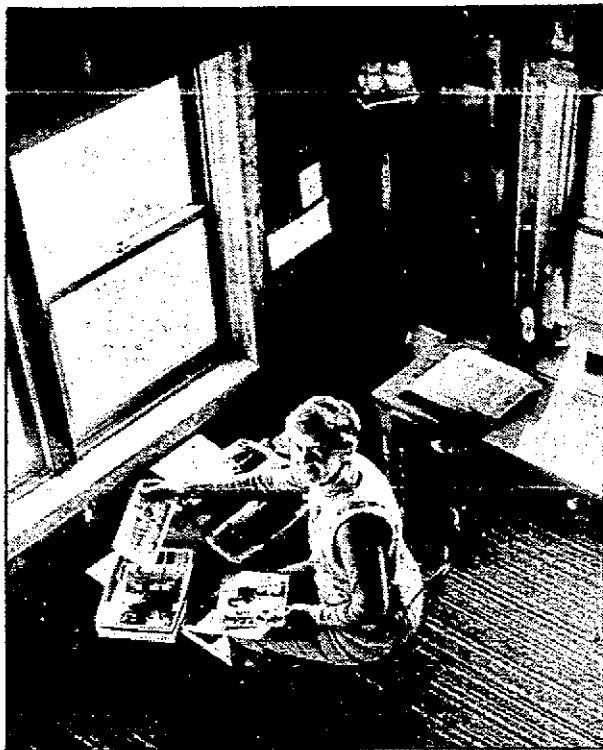


# Ponderosa

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John F. has run the ranch since 1979.



Jean Sieben Baucus (left) researches her latest book and John J. Baucus looks over a stockyard at Sieben Ranch.

For many of the hands as well as the Sieben family, ranching is the only life they've ever known. John Hilt, for example, has been the Sieben Ranch foreman for nearly 30 years, and worked as a ranch hand there for 20 years prior to becoming foreman.

"It does get to be a way of life, but it's different than any other kind of business," Baucus said. "You can move a business to another location, but you can't move the land. You're tied to it. Sometimes you can get locked into it and end up going broke. That's happened to a lot of ranchers lately."

Jean Sieben Baucus agreed, and said the biggest myth about ranchers is that they make a lot of money.

"Ranchers used to make a lot of money before taxes, when there was still the open range," she said. "But the value of land has increased so much with inflation, and when you're borrowing on the value of that land the payments can get to be more than you can handle. I don't know how a young person starting out now could make it in ranching with today's prices."

Baucus added that the price of labor has also jumped

in recent years, along with the cost of buying and maintaining machinery that is only used for a short time each year.

In the long run, however, Baucus said machinery has made ranching much more cost efficient. Jobs such as irrigation and haying that used to take weeks or months can now be done in a matter of days with one machine and a fraction of the manpower.

"But you can't very well use a machine to herd the sheep or cattle," he said. "There will always be a human element involved in ranching."

Although mechanization has done much to modernize ranching, the actual process of raising and marketing livestock has remained virtually unchanged for generations. Breeding still takes place in the late fall, with lambing following in the spring. The sheep are still herded from the summer and winter ranges by shepherders who live a relatively solitary life in tiny quonset-style wagons that are just large enough for a bed, storage bench and fold-down table.

**B**ut the pressures of today's world are threatening the once simple life of a sheep rancher and his land. While prices for wool and lamb have remained fairly constant in recent years, the cost of raising the sheep has risen sharply.

"The worst part of ranching is the business part — trying to figure out how to get the most for the product in today's market," Baucus said.

"My grandfather used to keep all his business records in his vest pocket. Now John and our son John spend hours doing bookwork and filling out forms, and the tax laws have gotten so complicated we need an accountant to do them now," Mrs. Baucus said.

The younger Baucus and his wife Nina are continuing to modernize the ranch while still preserving its traditions. As John takes farming-related computer courses in Great Falls, his wife is perfecting her wool spinning technique on a wooden spinning wheel.

"We're lucky that one person in the family wanted to take over," said Mrs. Baucus, whose other son Max is

one of Montana's U.S. Senators and whose daughter lives in California with her family. "Many family ranches have broken up because no one wanted to carry on the business."

Without the daily responsibilities of the ranch to worry about, John and Jean Baucus have been able to spend more time traveling, and Mrs. Baucus has devoted more attention to her writing career. She is currently working on her fourth book dealing with various historical aspects of the Helena area.

The Baucuses are now able to better see and appreciate the rewards of their life on the land. As they survey the vast mountains and rich land that surrounds their wood frame ranch house, they become quiet, almost respectful.

"There's a real healthy element in a life that is close to nature," Baucus said. "It's nice to see the changes in the land and the new animals in the spring. You get a lot more enjoyment from the land than watching an automobile being built. You're not making more money, but you're getting more satisfaction."



Ranch hands gather for the noon meal.

## Early to bed, early to rise

Breakfast at the Sieben Ranch is at 6 a.m., but long before that the smell of hotcakes drifts through the kitchen of Mabel "Lou" Murphy, who has been the ranch cook for nearly 10 years.

"You wouldn't believe some of the stories I've heard men tell in that dining room over the years," she said. "I've been writing them down in a notebook, and someday I'm going to take some time off, go someplace quiet and write a book about them."

Mrs. Murphy prepares three hot meals a day for the 3 to 15 hands who live and work at the ranch. They are summoned to the table by the ringing of an old school bell outside the kitchen.

On the day we visited Mrs. Murphy's kitchen, it was nearly lunchtime. A large pot of baked beans was simmering on the institutional-size stove. Two cakes were waiting to be iced, and a ham was in the oven.

"And of course, you've got to have cornbread with this meal," she smiled.

The men were sure to be hungry today. They had been working since daybreak at a process called wool blinding, where the wool covering the sheep's face is

shaved so it can see. One by one the sheep are herded into a small trailer where the crew picks one up, turns it onto its back and shaves its face.

The size of the ranch crew varies with the season and the jobs needing to be done. The peak work load comes during the spring lambing time, when as many as 150 lambs are born each day. During lambing, 10 to 15 men live at the ranch fulltime in the long wooden bunkhouse across from the kitchen.

Three men are currently living in the bunkhouse — two large connecting rooms heated by two wood stoves. Each man has a corner of the room that he calls home, furnished with a bed and storage chest.

The bunkhouse has served generations of Sieben Ranch hands, and on the day we visited only the stereo and speakers above one man's bed reminded us that we had not taken a step back in time.

Because every day on the ranch is different, there is no such thing as a "typical day." Depending on the season, the chores might include haying, fencing, feeding or general repairs, and work usually lasts until the supper bell rings at 6 p.m. Then it's time for another meat and potatoes meal, and some of that famous story telling.

## Film helps protect children from sexual abuse

NEW YORK — "My Dad's O.K.," said 10-year-old Maureen, "but he does things..."

"What do you mean?" asked her best friend, Jeannie, as they lounged in the sunny park near Maureen's home.

"Well," Maureen said, "he comes in and pretends to tuck me in at night — but he doesn't. He puts his hands under the covers."

"Tell him you don't like it, to go away," Jeannie said. "I can't," Maureen replied. "It's a secret. I promised not to tell."

"But it's really HIS secret, not yours," Jeannie said thoughtfully.

The conversation, about a subject that is real enough in the lives of many children, is the fictional dialogue in a new film intended to be shown to children to help protect them from sexual abuse by family members and adult acquaintances.

The 13-minute film, "No More Secrets," was produced under a grant from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. It is distributed with an instructional guide that includes a vocabulary for discussing sexual abuse with children and information on prevention skills and child-protective community resources.

"No More Secrets" was made by a film company in New York with advice from programs for the prevention of sexual abuse in Minneapolis, Indiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Washington State. The movie, intended for children 7 years old and older, is being sold to school systems, parents' groups, community mental-

health centers and rape-prevention organizations.

"I think it's an excellent film that deals very simply with a problem that children need to be made aware of," said Dr. Vincent J. Fontana, medical director of the New York Foundling Hospital's Center for Parent and Child Development and chairman of the Mayor's Task Force on Child Abuse. "It's part of the new awareness about child sexual abuse that appears to be surfacing. The subject of child sexual abuse is just about where child abuse was 25 years ago. Now people are beginning to bring it out and face it, rather than hide it or keep it a secret."

Mel Warren, assistant director of the New York City Board of Education's division of curriculum instruction, said the film had recently been tested in parent workshops in city public schools. "The reaction from parents around the city was very good," he said, "and we thought the film was done extremely well. It deals explicitly but in a nonthreatening way with a very difficult subject."

Warren said his office planned to use the film in its family-life and sex-education curriculums. "Until now, we really didn't have any materials to deal with the problem," he said.

The film uses live-action and animated sequences to deal with three situations of abuse: an older brother who harasses his younger sister when she undresses, a man who molests his 10-year-old nephew under the pretext of wrestling with him and another man who molests his daughter.

The children in the film demonstrate ways to say no to adults who touch them in ways that make them uncomfortable, and the film urges children to confide in an adult who will believe them and protect them when they tell about an abusive incident. Children are informed that they are not to blame for such victimization.

The movie's producer, Oralee Wachter, said that a film presentation was useful in getting such messages across, not just because it is easy to teach children visually but also because parents and educators often feel embarrassment in dealing with the subject themselves. "We tried to deal with the most common kinds of abusive situations in a way that would not be alarming or offensive to children or their parents," said Mrs. Wachter, who heads O.D.N. Productions in New York.

Research studies have found that only a third of reported cases of child molestation are committed by strangers; two-thirds involve close family members, other relatives, neighbors or caretakers such as baby sitters or those who teach or work with children. Boys are victimized as well as girls. The studies have also found that although child molestation can be a violent crime, coercion, manipulation and bribery are used more frequently than force.



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