February 2024

The Big Sky and Aggieland Report

Tips, Thoughts, Trivia, and Fun

Brought To You by Big Sky Internet Design and Aggieland Website Design

Tom's Thoughts >>>

The Moving Adventure – Getting Settled In!

Hectic does not even begin to describe the last couple of months!

I spoke about us moving in the last newsletter. Well since that time, we finished the selling, buying, moving process. All very exciting!

Then we went on a **3-Generational Christmas Cruise**. It was fantastic. Carrie's parents, Maxine and Gerald, her brother Michael and his two teenagers, Jonas and Eve, Carrie and me and our two adult 'kids', Jake and Jessica. We had a wonderful time on Holland America's newest ship, **Rotterdam**. The ship is less than 3000 people, so not crazy big, which was great. The number of multi-generational families on the cruise was truly heartwarming. **Grandkids hanging out with the grandparents, was awesome to see!**

Then not to be outdone, we got home on Friday the 29th of December and one week later, Friday the 5th, we are back on a plane to **Montego Bay, Jamaica** for 10 days. Carrie earned her 3rd Founders Club, **ALL EXPENSES PAID** trip, just by building her **Xyngular** business. **Freaking sweet deal!**
Been a crazy two months!

Til March! Tom

Ka-Ching!

Last June, we began the Affiliate Partner 250 Program. For those of you not familiar with it, it is a referral program to **REWARD** our clients who refer **friends and family**, or anyone for that matter, and they become clients.

This was started after a very enlightening client survey we sent out and found out that clients were quite happy with the service we offer. It made sense to let our **biggest fans** brag about us to their friends. We all know that **word-of-mouth is by far the best advertising there is**. In fact, those folks that are referred are 50% - 70% more likely to become clients.

(Is there a lesson in there for your business?)

Our program not only pays out **$250** for each referral that becomes a client, but it also pays out a bonus of **$500** for each 5 referrals. Well, we were sitting at 4 referals for a while and the 5th came in so here we go!

Kayla Jones, from the Colorado Classic Stallion Auction became the 5th client with a referral! So, she received a check for $250.

Now the fun part! We have 5 clients that referred clients that got a shot at the $500 Sweepstakes:

Kayla Jones: ColoradoClassicStallions.com
Bridget Brandon: TheEquineExpert.com
Jared Meyer: JaredMeyerPerformanceHorses.com
Jim Dunham: DunhamExpertWitness.com
Sarah McKibben: MozuanMcKibben.com

To keep things on the level, I put **all 5 names into a Random Name Wheel of Fortune** and drew **LIVE** on the Big Sky Internet Design Facebook page! Congratulations to

Kayla Jones!

Winner of the $500 Referral Sweepstakes

The AffiliatePartner250 Program!

We have Rewarded **FIVE** Clients a total of $1750 as of 1/30/2024!
Yep, No Joke!

1. For every Client Referral, you get an entry in the **$500 Sweepstakes**. The $500 will be drawn after every 5th Payout!

2. The next way to earn the **$500 CASH** is after every 5th Client Referral you earn, you will get **$500 in CASH**. *That is $1750 CASH in your Pocket!*

Cyber Security is Serious!

We have chatted about using 2 factor authentication for Facebook and other security advice with the ever-increasing threat of **Cyber Attacks**. Over the last 3-4 months the **blocked** hacking attempts that are hitting our firewall have increased quite a bit. We are taking our own advice now and are taking many, many measures to **tighten the security** of ALL of our client's websites.
What does that mean to you?

Enhanced security on the login areas of your website with **reCAPTCHA** (are you a person?), **encrypted** file uploads, **encrypted** passwords with much **stricter requirements** which all make it tougher for a hacker to get in, even if they have your password! Plus, many **programming** updates, **webserver** enhancements and many, many other behind the scenes changes.
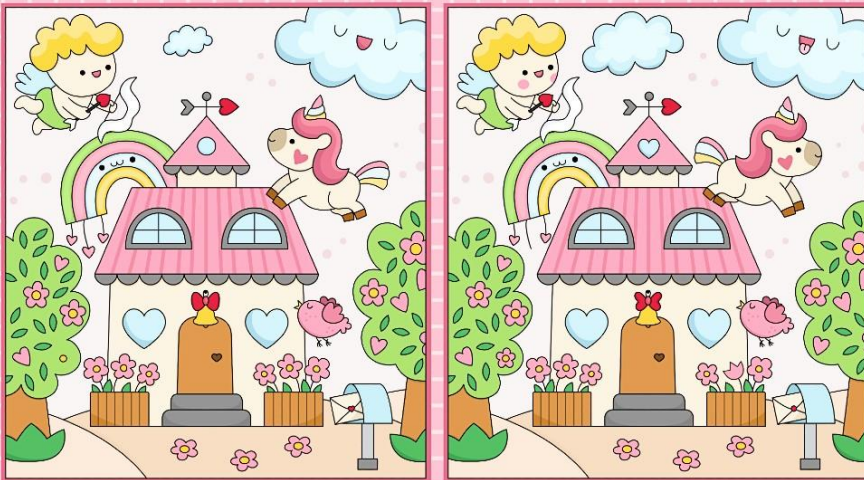
Speaking of our webserver, while it has been extremely reliable, and we have upgraded it many times, it has come to migrate to a **new webserver**. This process will be as **transparent** to you and your website visitors as possible. This new webserver will be **faster**, more **security** built in and we will be putting a **hardware firewall** in front of it as well. We take your website security very seriously.

What can you do to keep yourself safe? First and foremost, **ALWAYS** let Windows and your browser update themselves as needed. Security patches are released continually. It goes without saying to have **anti-virus** on your computer and your phone! **The most painful part, CHANGE your passwords OFTEN and KEEP THEM SAFE!**

Christmas Cruise & Jamaica

FIND 10 DIFFERENCES

2023 Family Christmas Cruise
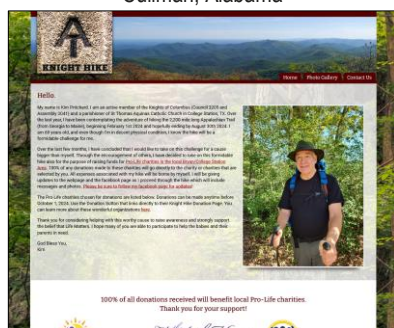(Michael, Mom, Dad, Eve, Jonas, JT, Carrie, Jess, Tom)

New Client Spotlight – Welcome!

Rasco Cattle Company
RascoCattleCo.com
Cullman, Alabama

The Cattlemen's Connection
TheCattlemensConnection.com
Cullman, Alabama

Knight Hike Fundraiser
KnightHike.com
Bryan, Texas

Stallion Service Auctions

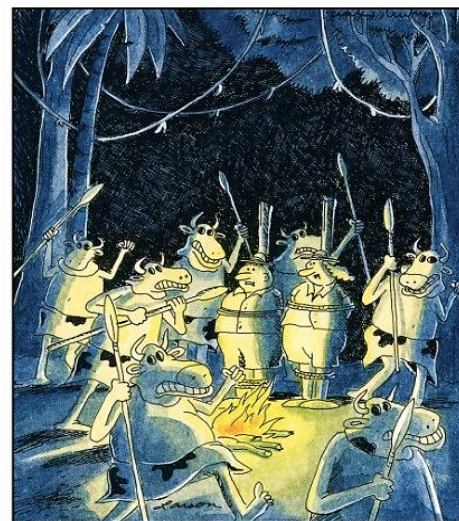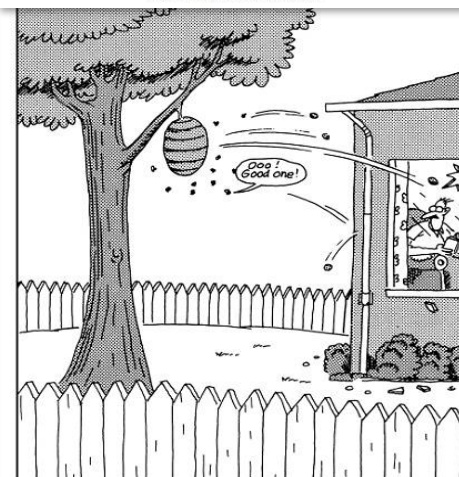|	
NSBA	10/1 – 6/24
Women's Prof Rodeo	10/10 – 11/30
Southern Cutting Fut.	11/1 – 1/31
NYCHA	11/17 – 12/13
Cascade Cow Cutters	12/1 – 1/10
TQHA (Race)	12/1 – 1/11
Cowboy State	12/1 – 1/27
Heritage Days	12/1 – 1/31
Speedhorse	12/1 – 2/5
National Stock Horse	12/4 – 2/8
QH Racing Assn. of Indiana	12/8 – 1/14
NRCHA	12/11 – 1/10
Alberta RCHA	12/15 – 1/15
LAQH Breeders	12/15 – 1/19
OKQH Racing	12/15 – 1/26
Triple Crown 100	12/15 – 1/31
UTQH Racing	12/16 – 1/6
Colorado Classic	1/1 – 1/20
VGBRA Incentive	1/2 -2/3
PCCHA	1/3 – 1/17
Augusta Futurity	1/5 – 1/19
TQHA (Barrels)	1/8 – 2/9
SW Desert Classic	1/15 – 2/15
*Lucky 7 Bonus	1/21 – 2/20
*American Connemara	1/27 – 2/25

Current As of 1/30/2024
* = New Clients!

**To view all the auctions
AND Pick out your Stallions for
2024, please check out:**

StallionAuctionsOnline.com!

Email and Online Forms

I have spoken in the past about how the difficulty level of sending email from online forms has continually **increased**. Well, Google and Yahoo are stepping it up about **10 notches.** They are making it even more difficult to send email in general and even more so with online forms.

Why? **Online hacking, phishing, identity theft, scams** and so much more all coming through email (text messages too, but that is another story).

While it sounds simple to just say '**Don't click on suspicious looking links'**, it is not nearly that easy anymore. Especially with **Artificial Intelligence** in the mix now.

This is why we have **upgraded** many of our online forms to use Formstack Forms. Formstack is form building software that we have used since 2010 and a **leader in the field**. It is great for regular contact forms as well as very sophisticated online entry forms and questionnaires.

What are we doing about this? We will be **reviewing** all our client's websites over the next month or so and offer you options regarding online forms on your website. The options will be to remove the form entirely or upgrade to a Formstack form instead.

PLEASE NOTE! CHANGE OF ADDRESS!

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Where do I Send My Website Updates?
Send your email to **Debbie** at
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Newsletter Archives:
BigSkyInternetDesign.com/Newsletters