

THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume Five



BELLE, THUNDER, SPANKY, LULU
AND
MATTHEW MIDGETT

THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume V

Part 1 of 3

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made this publication possible.

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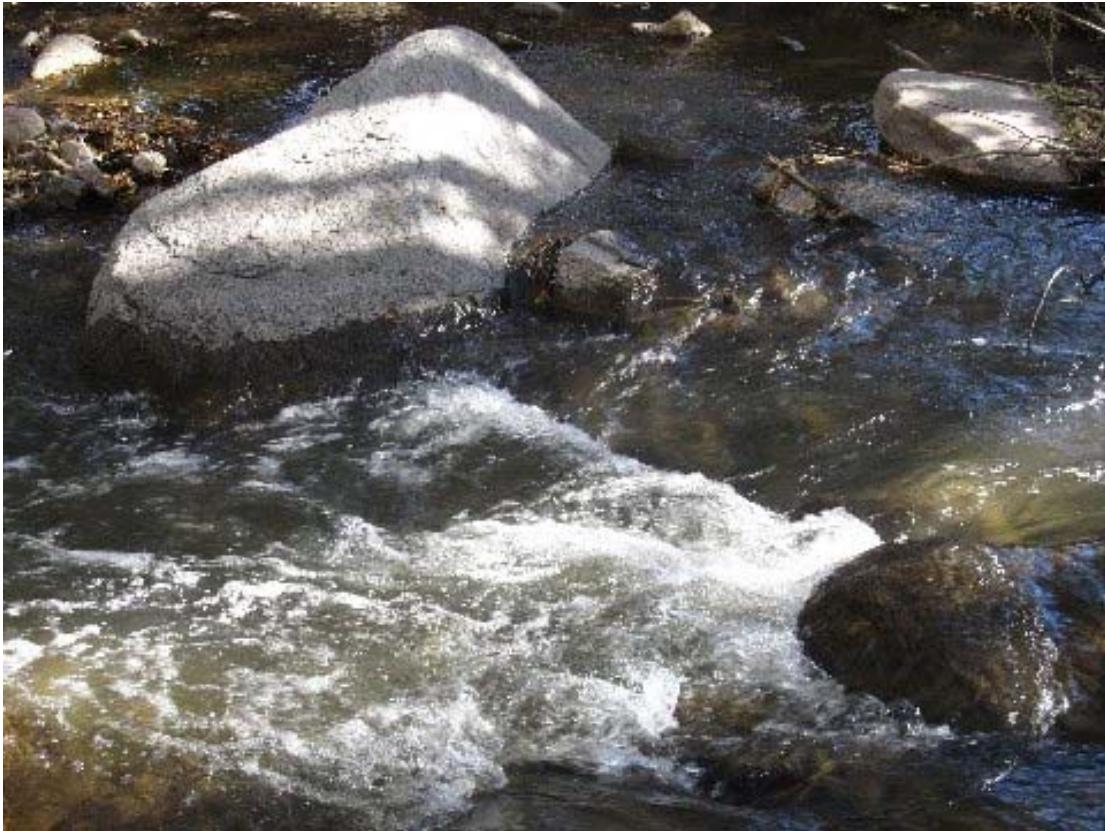


for your active TABLE OF CONTENTS
(located on the far upper right corner of the
window).

Bonito Canyon is a convenient place to ride on a beautiful fall afternoon.

Still lots of water coming down from the mountain.



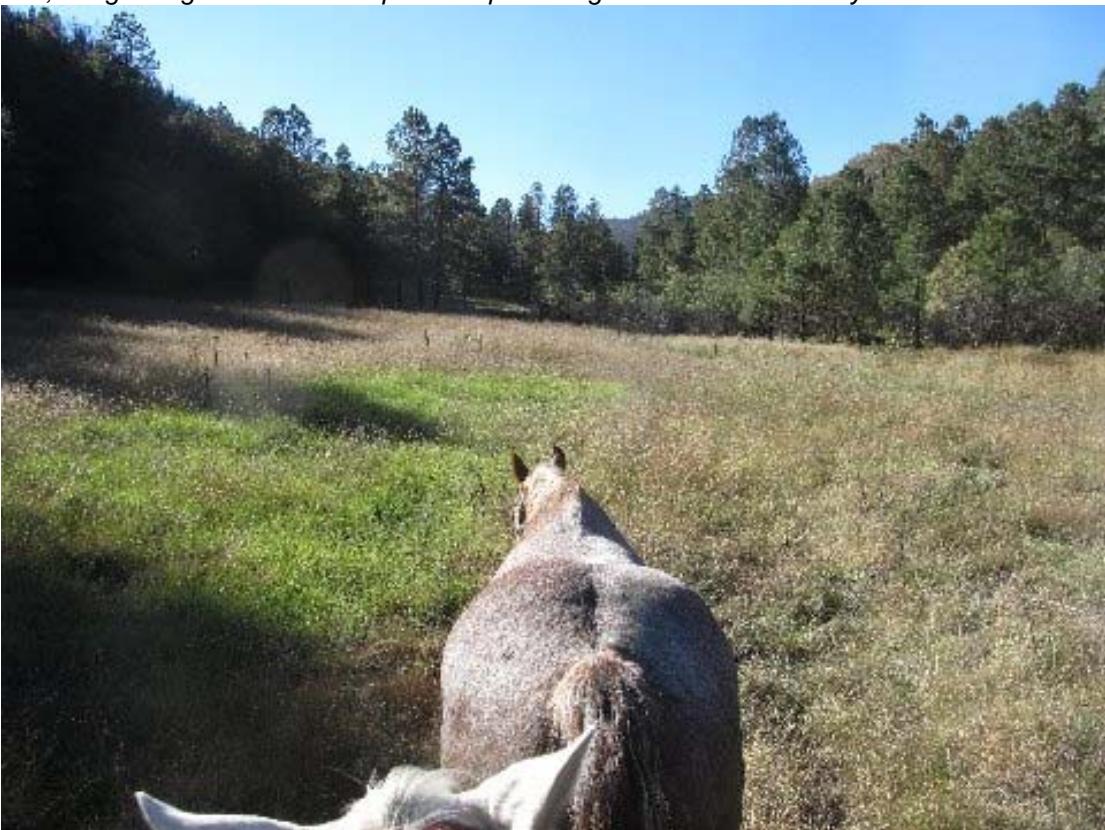


Even the side streams are flowing.





In places, the green grass has developed tall spikes of golden seeds for next year.



... and the aspens are starting to turn.



We rode all the way up the canyon, to the horse campground, before heading back.



On the way, we passed several camps of outfitters (professional hunting guides). We didn't expect to see all the pack horses and mules tied to high lines; I was concerned that my guys might want to go over and say "hi" (especially the social Belle) - fortunately, they stayed with me, and we just passed the others by. But these mules were sure curious. What a racket they make!



We didn't get home until after dark. Our friends were waiting . . . "Hey! It's past our apple time!"



Surprisingly, the flash didn't bother them at all.



2013-10-11 – *Off Capitan Gap Road*

We continue to find new places to ride nearby. After the horses had their fall vaccinations, we headed out of Capitan on the old Gap Road.



We have been in this area before (that's the Gap in the distance), but never gone in this direction. Spanky checks it out.



We parked near some old stock pens. Not as many cattle here nowadays.



Starting out on an old cattle road.



become a terrific scout.



Open country in every direction.



Thunder lets me know he spotted something unusual.



It's a horned toad. There used to be lots of these - even in California. They seem much less common now.



I think he may have found another one.



There once was a windmill here; now the old tank is filled with rainwater.





Road buddies.



This time, they spot a pronghorn ahead.



. . . and a herd of elk, led by a fine bull (on the right). Unusual for this time of day.



Back to the trailer; work to do at home.



Fall has begun.



Deep in Nogal Canyon, the Pennsylvania Trail's maple trees have begun to turn. I have neighbors who remember coming up here as children and tapping them for syrup.





Portions of this trail are devilishly steep and rocky. Spanky and Belle take their time.



2013-10-16 – *Autumn Leaves*

Other parts are smooth as a garden path.

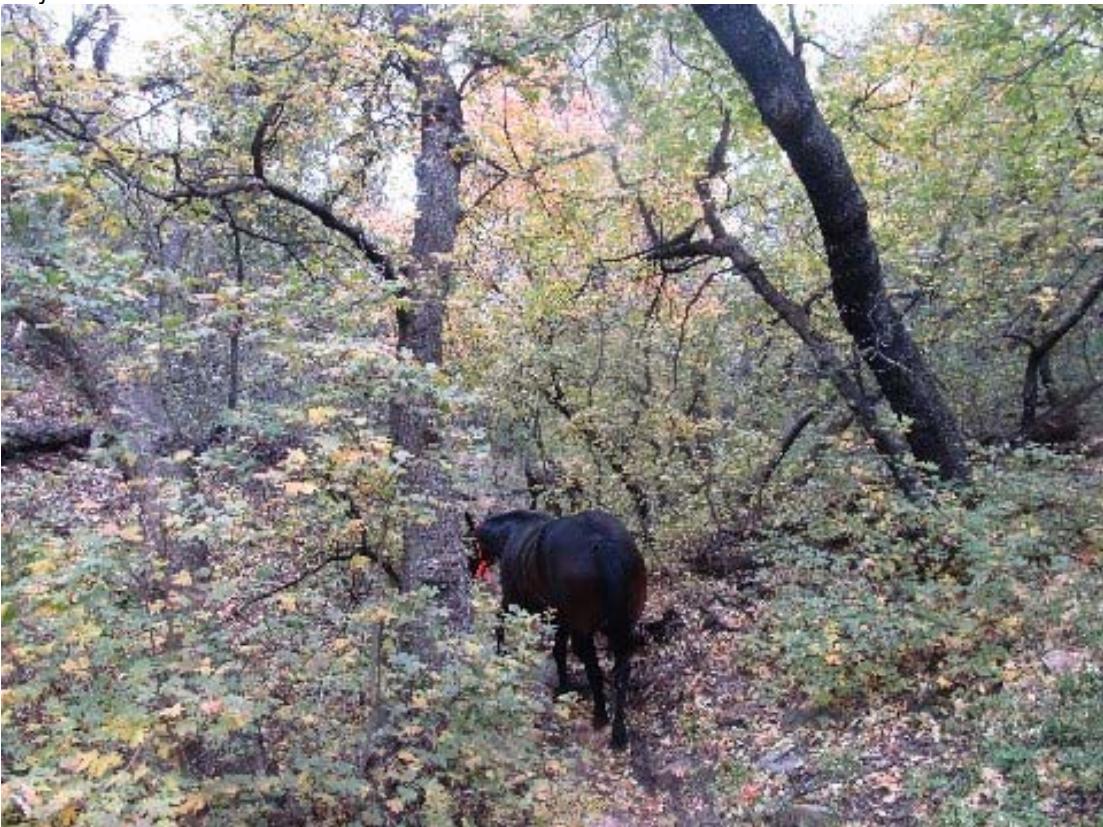


We climb more than 1,000 feet in elevation, over a distance of less than 2 miles.





Headed home through more maples. By now, there is very little light on the canyon floor; my photos don't do justice to the vibrant colors.





Belle finds a way around an obstacle across the trail.



2013-10-16 – *Autumn Leaves*

Spanky steps carefully over. It's great to watch them figure things out.



Another sign of fall - the bucks are losing the last of the "velvet" off their antlers. A strip of it hangs across this one's nose . . .



2013-10-16 – *Autumn Leaves*

... and dangles behind an ear. He doesn't look too pleased about it.



Enjoying an autumn snack.



MM

2013-10-17 – *Aspen Trees*

Aspen trees are considered to be the largest organisms on earth - their root systems can extend for many hundreds of feet in all directions, and though the trees above ground usually live from 40 to 150 years, the root colony can live for centuries; one aspen grove in Utah is estimated to be 80,000 years old! Aspen and maple groves make for beautiful riding this time of year.

Bonito Canyon has some beautiful stands of aspens.



There is even a trail named after them. We checked it out today.



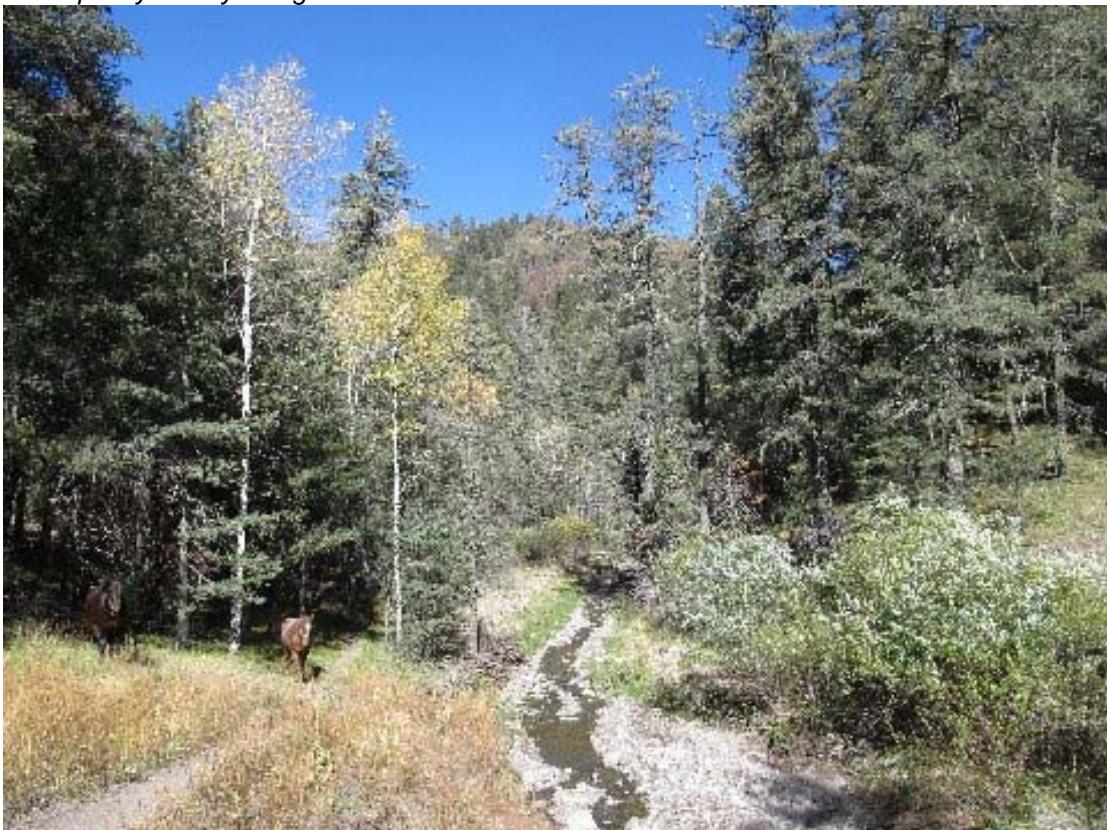


There's still plenty of water in the streams.





Belle and Spanky mosey along above a little creek.



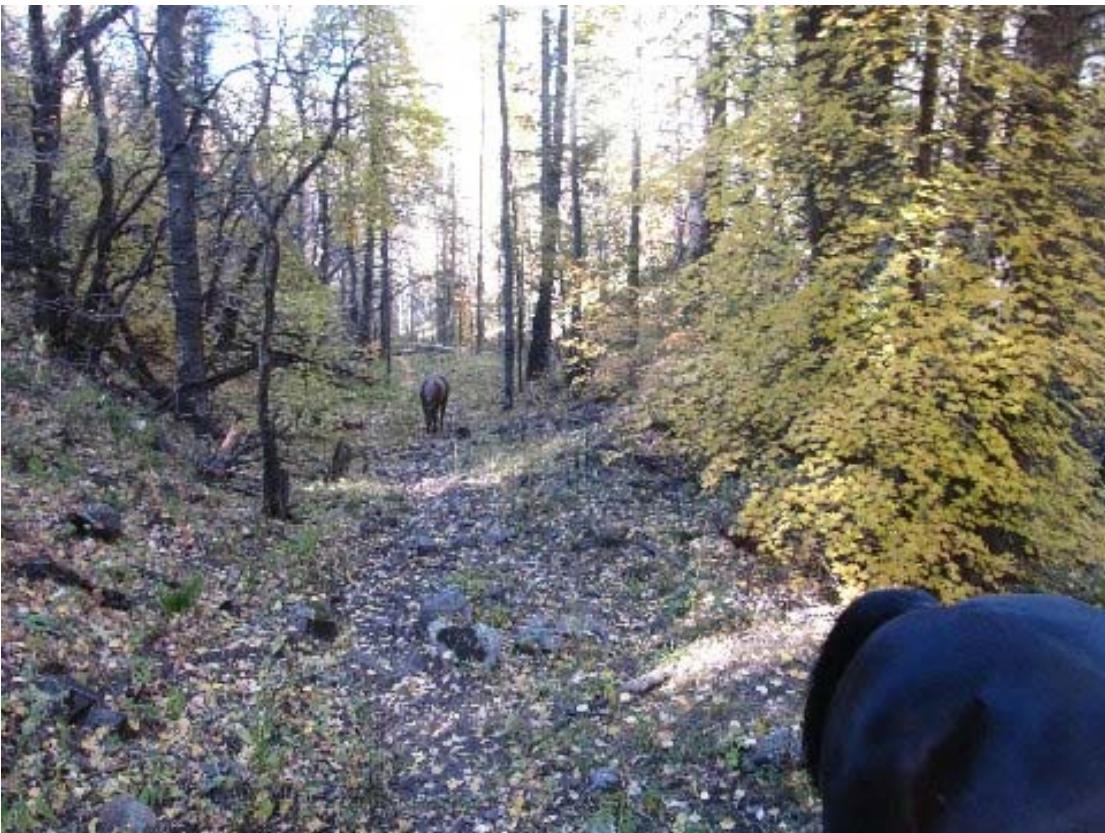


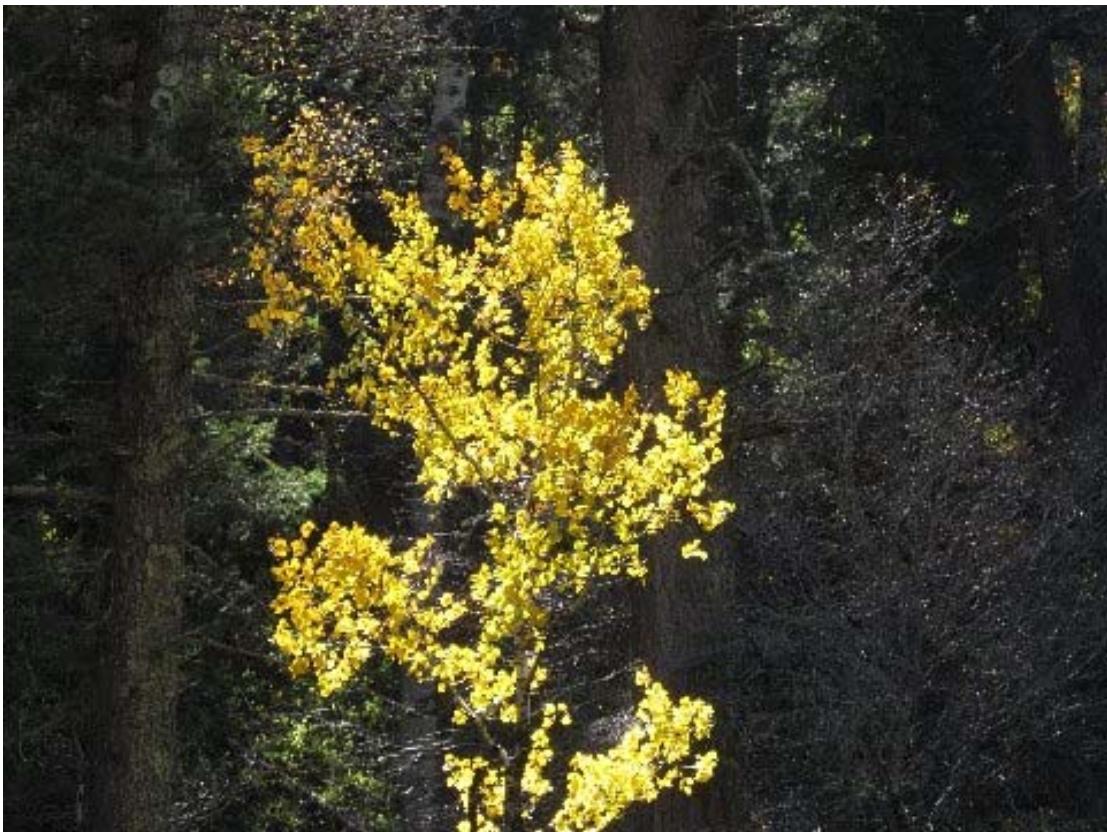
In some places, there were so many leaves on the ground we could barely make out the trail.



2013-10-17 – *Aspen Trees*

Aspen groves, with their deep shadows and gently fluttering leaves, are peaceful places.





2013-10-22 – *Irick The Mustang*

Page 1 of 4

Dacodah has adopted a little mustang, named Irick. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) treatment of mustangs is controversial at best (read what the Doris Day Animal League - which I support - has to say about it here:

http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/wild_horses) . . . but once the horses have been removed from the wild, good homes need to be found for them. Irick has found one.

I spent several hours with Irick, who has only been out of the wild for a few weeks. For some reason, he tolerated my hat easily; in fact, it seemed to provide a bond between us. He LIKED wearing it!



2013-10-22 – *Irick The Mustang*

He was very wary at first, and turned his back to me as a defensive maneuver (it was helpful that he didn't want to kick). But soon he began to trust. It surprised me that he allowed me to pick up his feet.



Note that I am steadying him - but not actually controlling him. Yes . . . I am kissing him on the nose . . .



2013-10-22 – *Irick The Mustang*

Eventually I put my jacket over him, to get him used to something on his back (I also leaned my weight on him). Here I am offering him a carrot; mustangs are not generally keen on "treats".



Oh, yeah . . . he is adorable.



I'm trying VERY hard not to get too attached!



Thanks, Dacodah, for a very special experience!

MM

2013-10-25 – **Cowgirl Camp**

Every year, Dacodah hosts a "Cowgirl Camp", with rides, clinics, special instruction, and chuck wagon meals for the ladies. Someone suggested that it might be fun to include men this year ("someone to dance with after dinner . . ."), so we were invited to join them . . .

He picked a great weekend for it - the weather was perfect. We had good-sized groups for every ride.



As usual, I rode Belle, and Thunder and Spanky led the way.



2013-10-25 – *Cowgirl Camp*

Since this was a "clinic" ride, there was plenty of technical stuff.



Beautiful country.



Spanky leads the way through a narrow spot.



The arroyos are still bright with wildflowers.



Spanky looks into the void . . .



2013-10-25 – *Cowgirl Camp*

. . . and Belle stands on the brink, as the other riders contemplate the run up. It was fun to watch riders of all abilities tackle something like this.



2013-10-25 – *Cowgirl Camp*

Thunder was genuinely concerned when one of our companion dogs picked up a thorn in his paw. He is a very thoughtful horse.



The chuck wagon-style meals were delicious . . . especially after a full day in the saddle!



Some amazing formations in San Lorenzo Canyon.



The weekend was another great success - even with us guys tagging along.



I want to share a little story with you. As you know, Thunder and Spanky lead these rides, at liberty. They take their role as scouts very seriously, and try to anticipate our route. Sometimes we make a move they don't expect, and they have to correct their course - it's usually a minor thing (they now follow hand signals or a whistle from me). But during one ride this weekend, I was sweating bullets - we were all going up an arroyo, when Dacodah decided to take a trail up unto a ridge, and Thunder and Spanky continued up the canyon, probably figuring we would all come out at the same spot. We didn't. As I rode farther away from them, I couldn't see where they were, and I knew they couldn't see us, either. I began to worry. But I didn't want to ask 25 other riders to wait while I found my horses. We kept going. Finally, I was genuinely concerned. This hadn't happened before. They have always caught up with us faster than this. The group stopped at a place with good visibility over the arroyos, and we spotted Thunder and Spanky on a hillside about a mile or two away! They had doubled back, and when we weren't around, I am convinced that Thunder went up that hill to better look for us (smart boy - most horses would have returned to the trailers). I asked the group to yell Thunder's name in unison, and he heard us. He and Spanky came barreling across the badlands at full tilt. I wish I had video of that! And they both stayed real close, the rest of the weekend.

MM

2013-10-27 – *Ranchmen's Romp*

After chores, we decided to take an afternoon ride nearby, and the Ranchmen's Camp area seemed like a good choice. For whatever reason, the horses were especially energetic. Even Belle did some running and bucking!

Although we have had some good rains recently, and the temps are still mild (no hard frost yet), the seasons have changed; the green grass is quickly turning to gold.



There's plenty of water in the stock tanks (most of the cattle have already been shipped out for the winter).





This old tree is an inspiration . . .

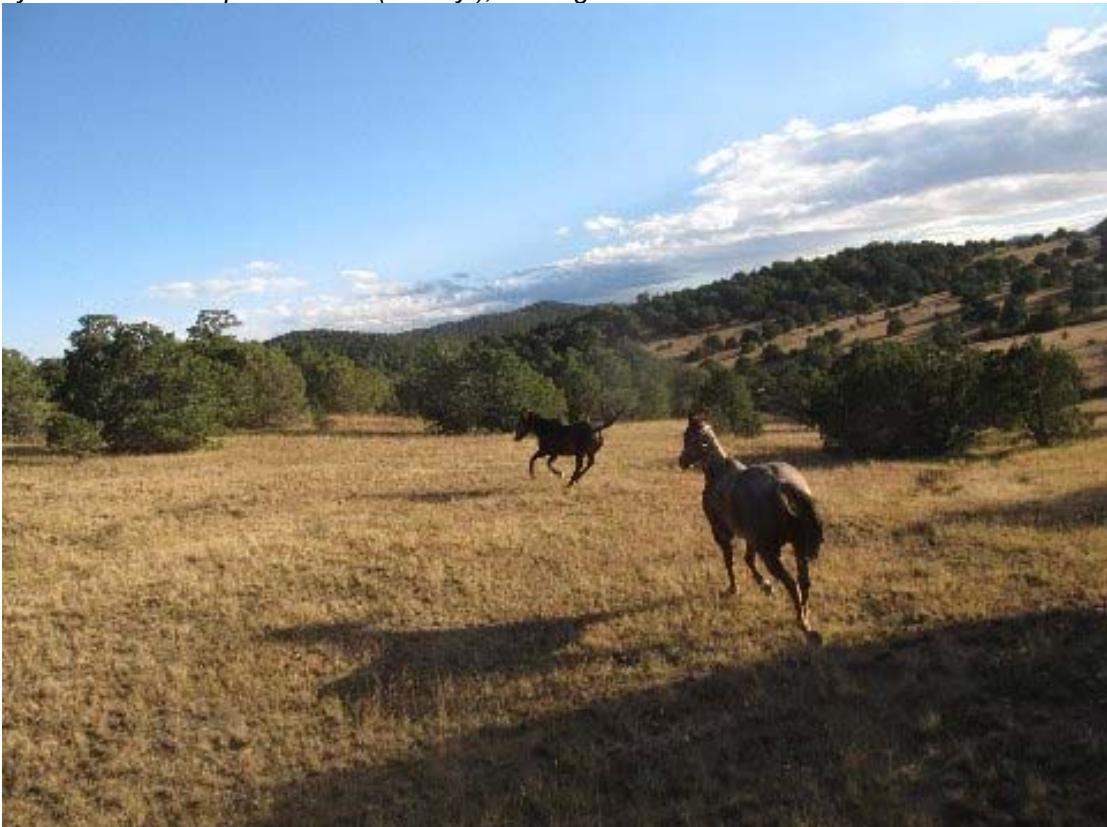


2013-10-27 – *Ranchmen's Romp*

. . . just look at how it has weathered time and adversity . . . and though bent, it still stands tall.



Spanky and Belle kick up their heels (literally!), running in circles around Thunder and me.







"Whew! That's too much effort!"



2013-10-27 – *Ranchmen's Romp*

At home, Onyx and Scooter cuddle (no effort at all) - it's hard to tell where one ends and the other begins!



MM

2013-11-01 – *Location Scouting*

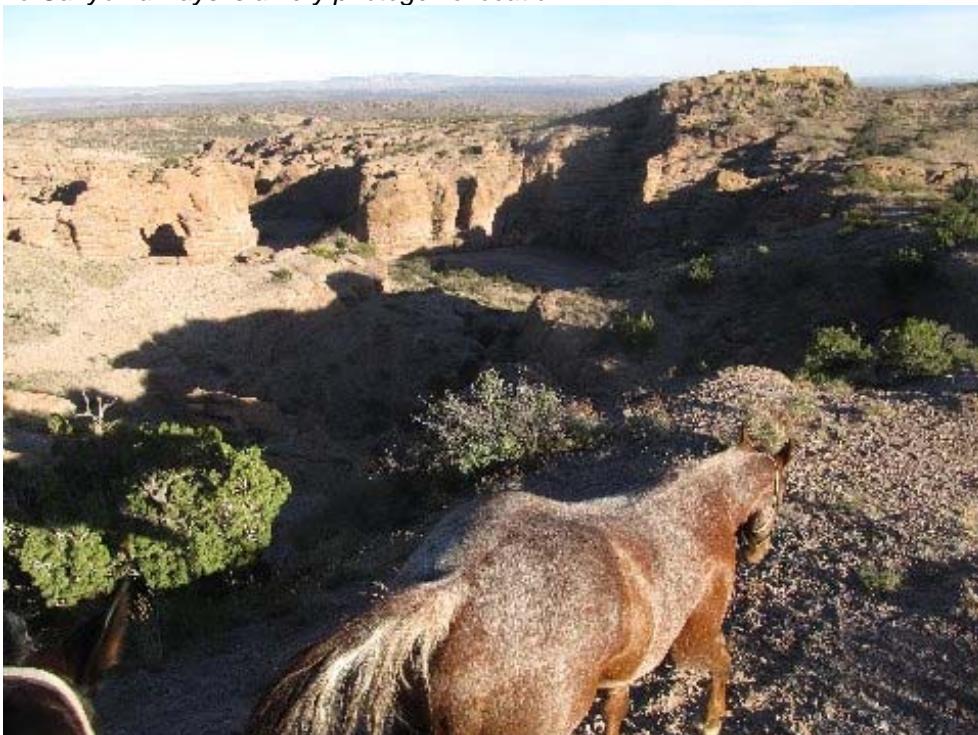
Dacodah and his Acacia Riding Adventures (ARA) have been selected for inclusion in the national "The Official Best of New Mexico" promotion. This means ARA will be featured on "The Official Best of" web site, and in commercials to be aired on the Discovery Channel, etc.

A professional crew will shoot footage for the web site and commercials next weekend, so a group of us spent a couple of days scouting good locations.

Too bad the Rio Grande has too much water to ride in now - sure is pretty in its fall colors!



San Lorenzo Canyon always is a very photogenic location.



Belle gets a "bird's eye" view.



We're not kidding - it's a loooong way down! (You can spot us - Thunder's white coat stands out - on top of the cliff.)





Everyone was busy discussing photo options . . .



It's hard to go wrong out here.



Thunder waits patiently for us to move on . . .



Finding the right spots frequently took us off the trail . . .



. . . but we sure had fun doing it.



Thanks for coming along!



MM

2013-11-02 – *Range Ride*

Of all the places we ride, maybe the open cattle range is the most peaceful. I suppose this is what people think of as "New Mexico".

There's nothing special about it. Folks on the highway probably hope to get through it as quickly as possible . . . but to me, if you stop and breathe it in, this land is special indeed. Open spaces, a big sky, and mountains dancing across the horizon.



We just meander.



2013-11-02 – *Range Ride*

These washes are big rivers . . . briefly, after summer monsoons in the mountains.



2013-11-02 – *Range Ride*

When we come to a dry arroyo, it is a minor challenge to find a good crossing.



It's comforting to know that in this world (which sometimes seems to be out of control) such places still exist.



Spanky spotted a pronghorn - too far away for my camera. He just stood like this for the longest time, thinking about it. The horses see things that we don't.



At home this morning, a new mama brings her baby by for an introduction.



Why do we only say "peace be with you" in church?



Peace be with you.

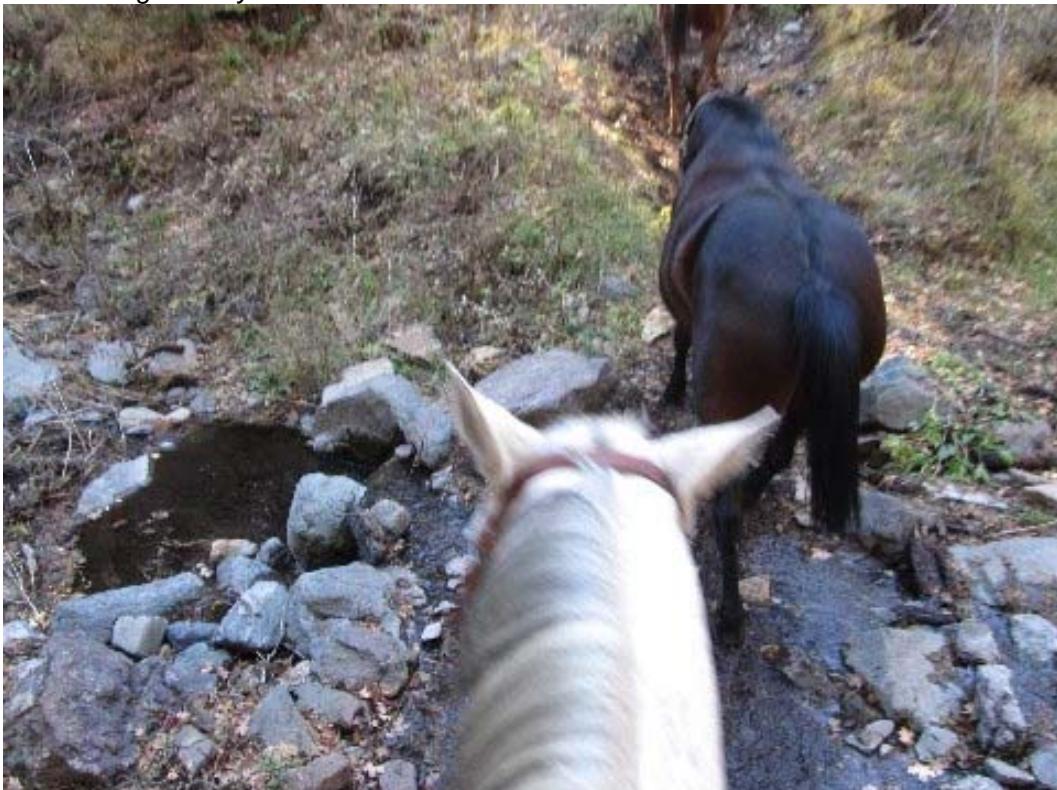
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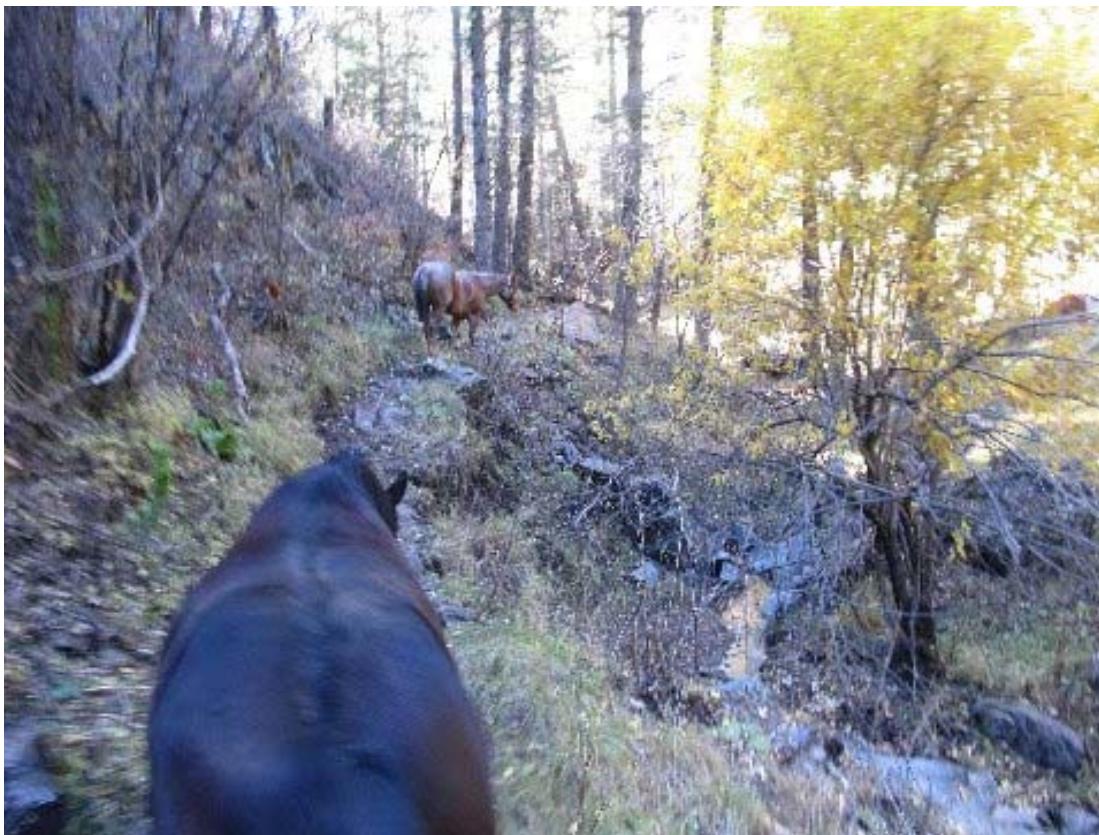
We have had a very mild fall (we might get our first hard frost tonight), but we know winter is coming to the mountain. When the trails in the high country get icy, it is too dangerous for the horses. So we are taking lots of rides up there now.

Still some fall color on the trail . . .



. . . and water along the way.





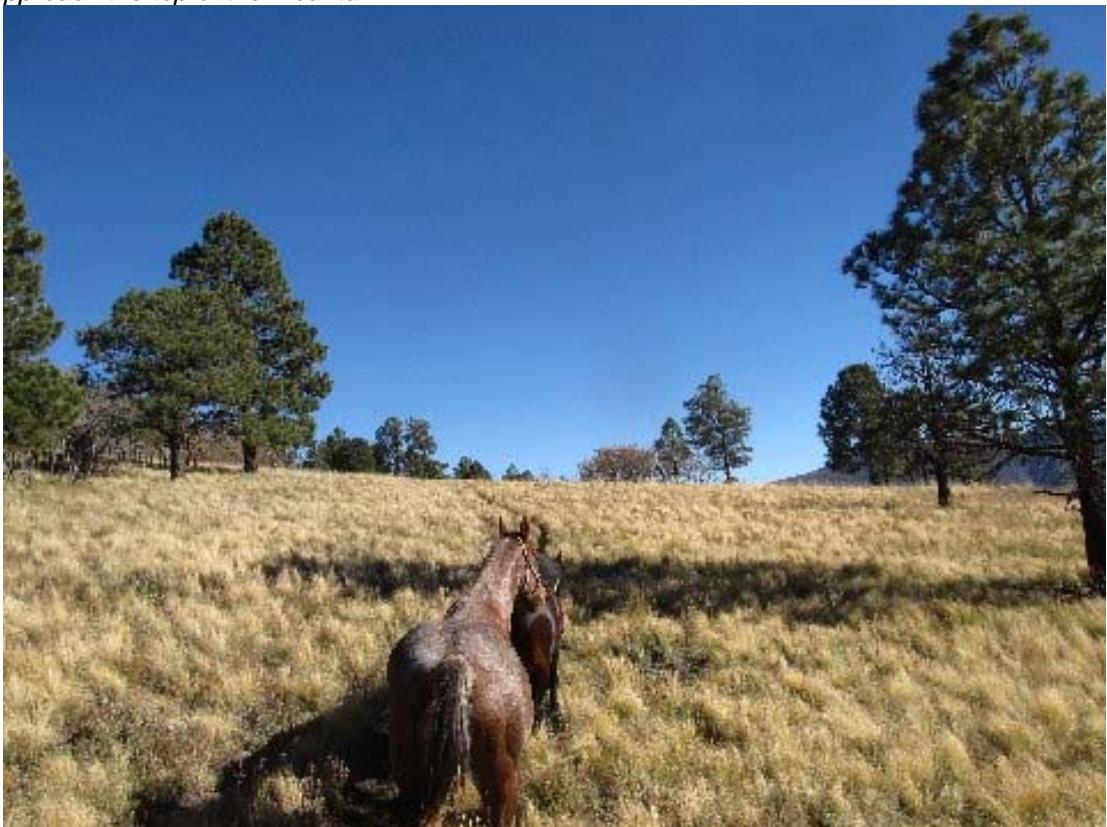
Spanky checks to make sure Thunder and I are coming along; they do this for each other.



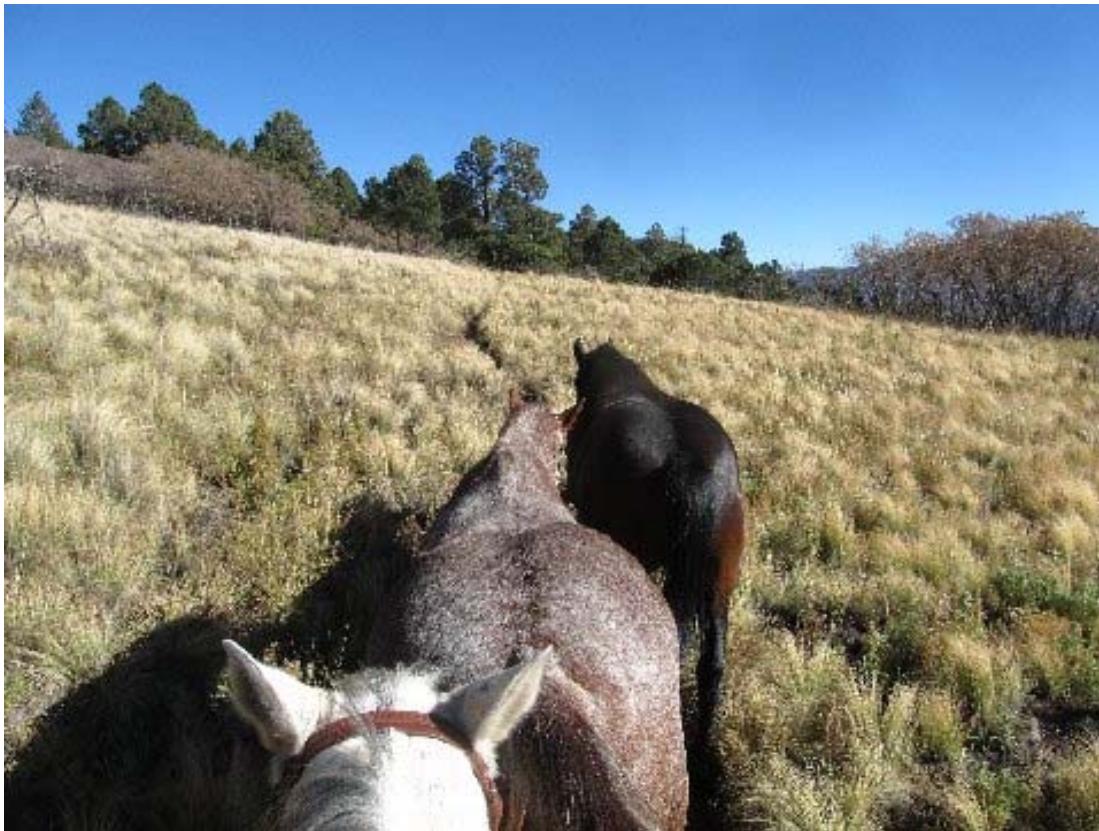
Belle enjoys some green grass - her own salad bar.



We approach the top of the mountain.



Horses in formation.



Belle finds a soft spot to roll . . .



... *Spanky* thinks that's a good idea!



Thunder is stuck with me on his back. "Come on and play, *Thunder*!" "Naw. Later."





Sure is pretty up here!



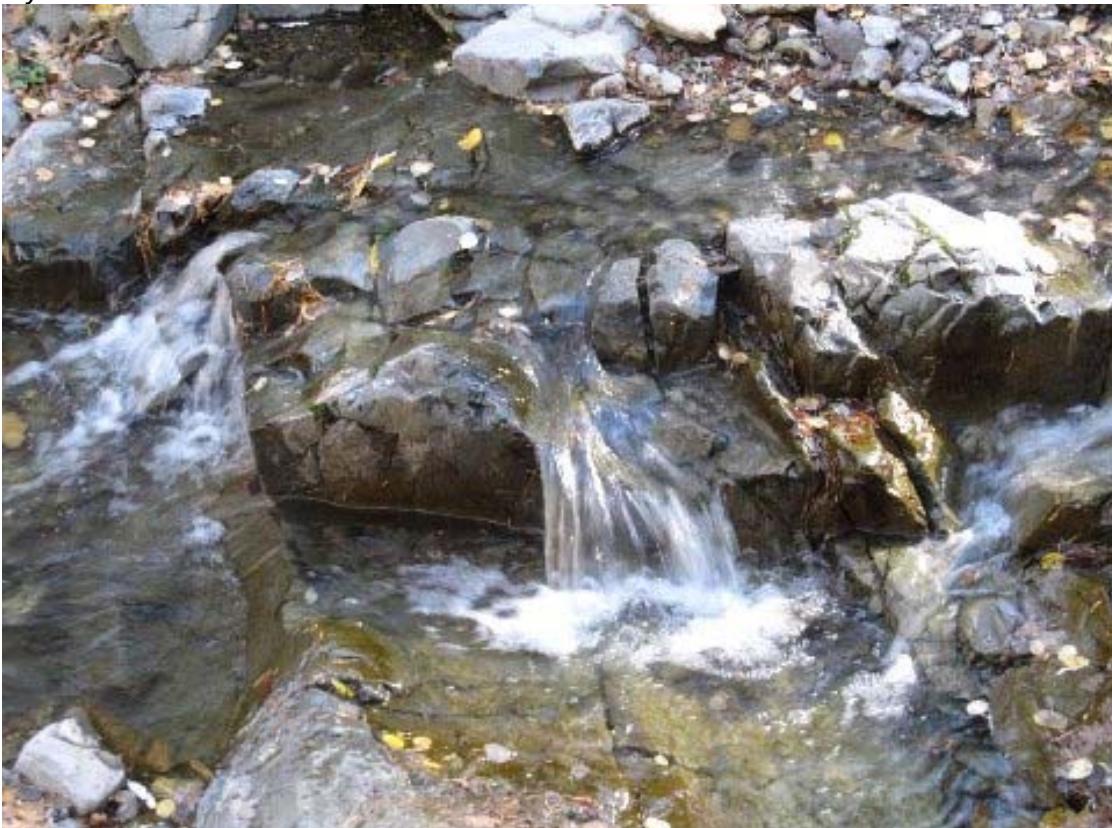
Thanks for coming along!
MM

We are enjoying a mild fall - and riding the high country while we still can.

Sorry about the blurry photo, but I wanted you to see the stream and the old mine up here (on the other side of Thunder).



An "arty" shot of water.

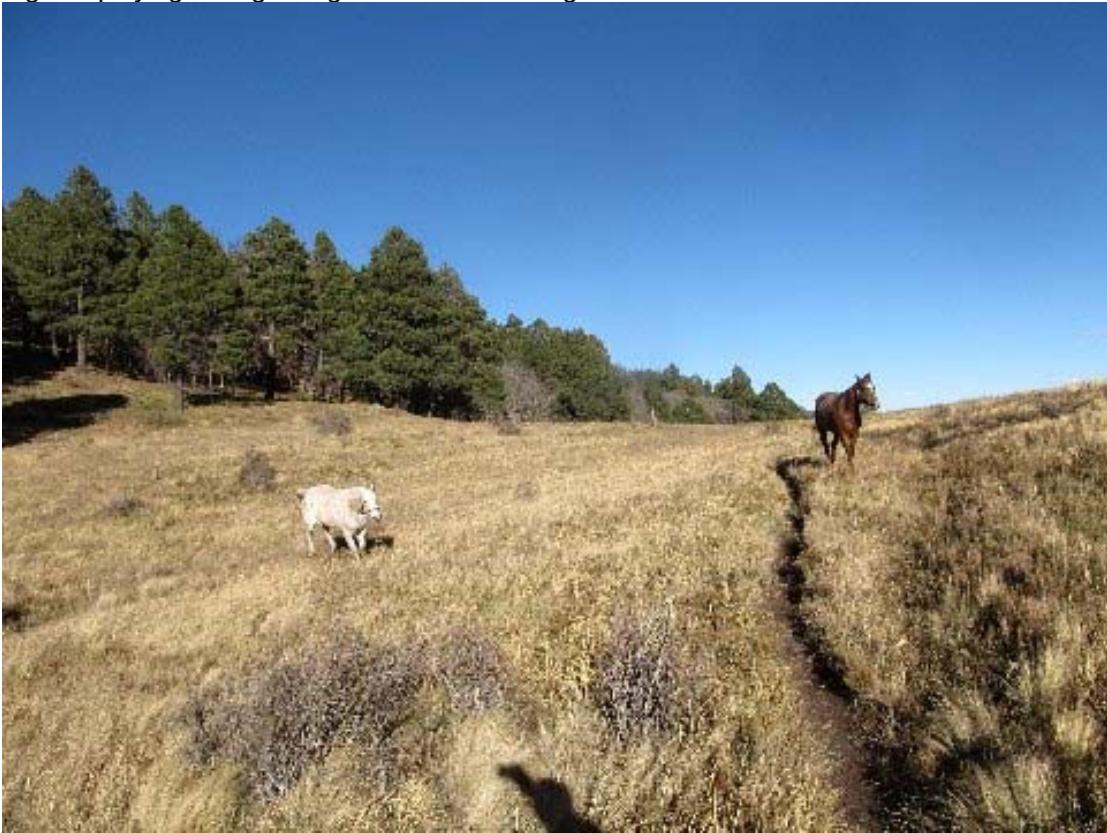


2013-11-08 – *Before Winter*

This trail has several sections of hard rock patches. Thunder noted them, and on the way back down, he managed to find ways around them for us; he thought ahead!



Running and playing. The green grass has turned to gold.



Another "arty" one . . . actually, we are galloping at full tilt!





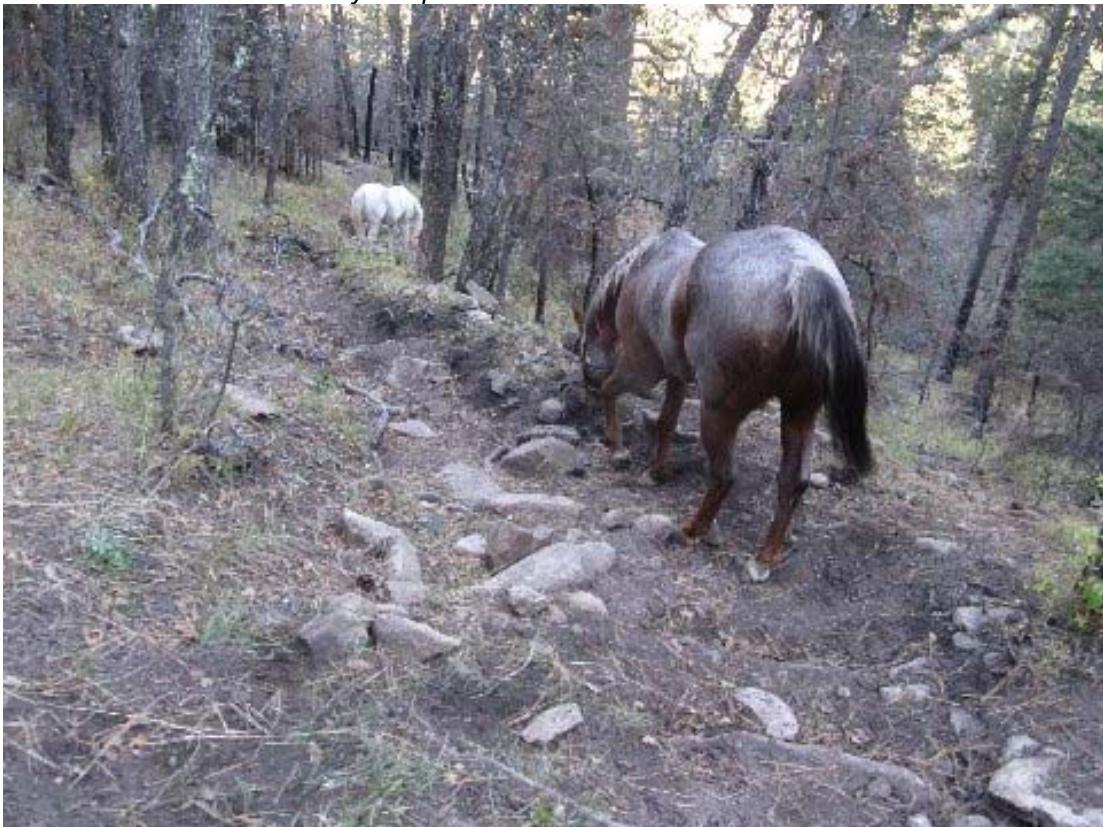
The peace of the forest.



Views out over the Valley of Fires Recreation Area, far below.



Part of the trail down is murderously steep and ROCKY. We take our time.



A sentry on our driveway. This young elk was curious of us (and maybe baffled by the horses in their fly masks). We had to wait to pass.



MM

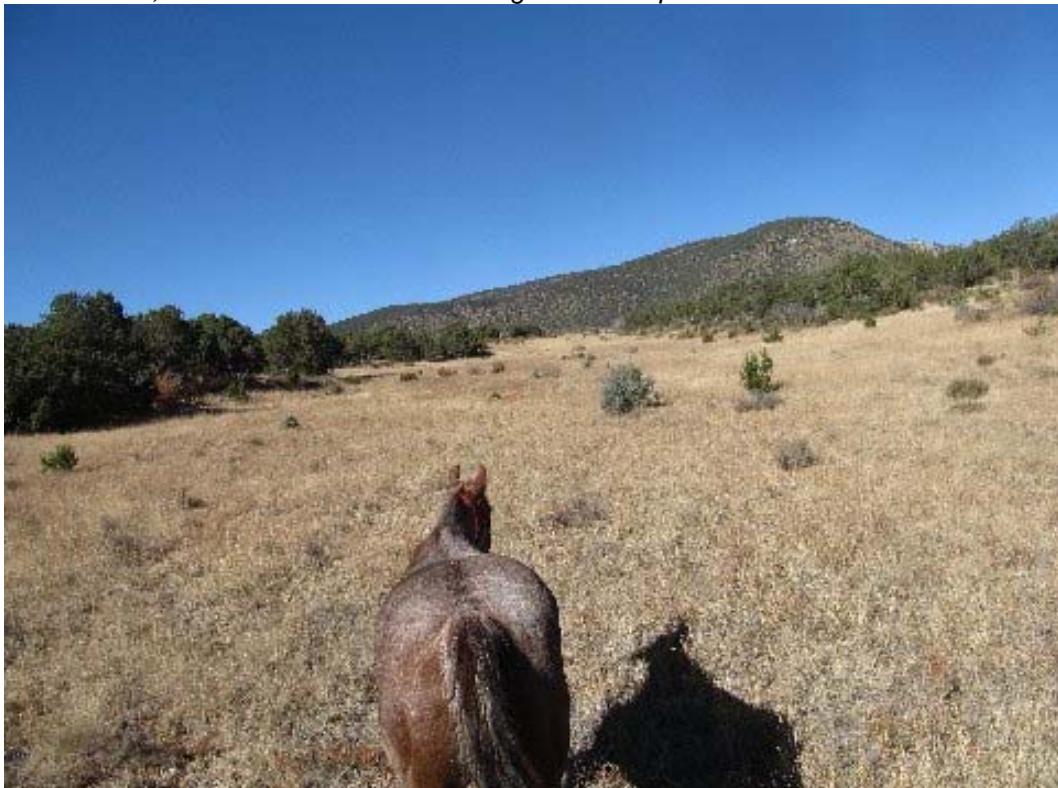
2013-11-14 – *Wide Open Spaces*

The area near Capitan Gap is convenient and offers good riding year round; this time we tried going in a different direction. Sometimes (as in life), just taking a left instead of a right can open up a new vista.

There are still some Black Angus cattle out here. One watches Spanky saunter by.



As in the mountains, the meadows have turned to gold in anticipation of winter.



Yup . . . wide open spaces!



Belle takes the lead, and speeds things up. It's a great place to run! That's Sierra Blanca in the distance (with Nogal peak's distinctive "pyramid" on the right).



We stop for a drink at a cattle tank (I will NOT be swimming in this one!)



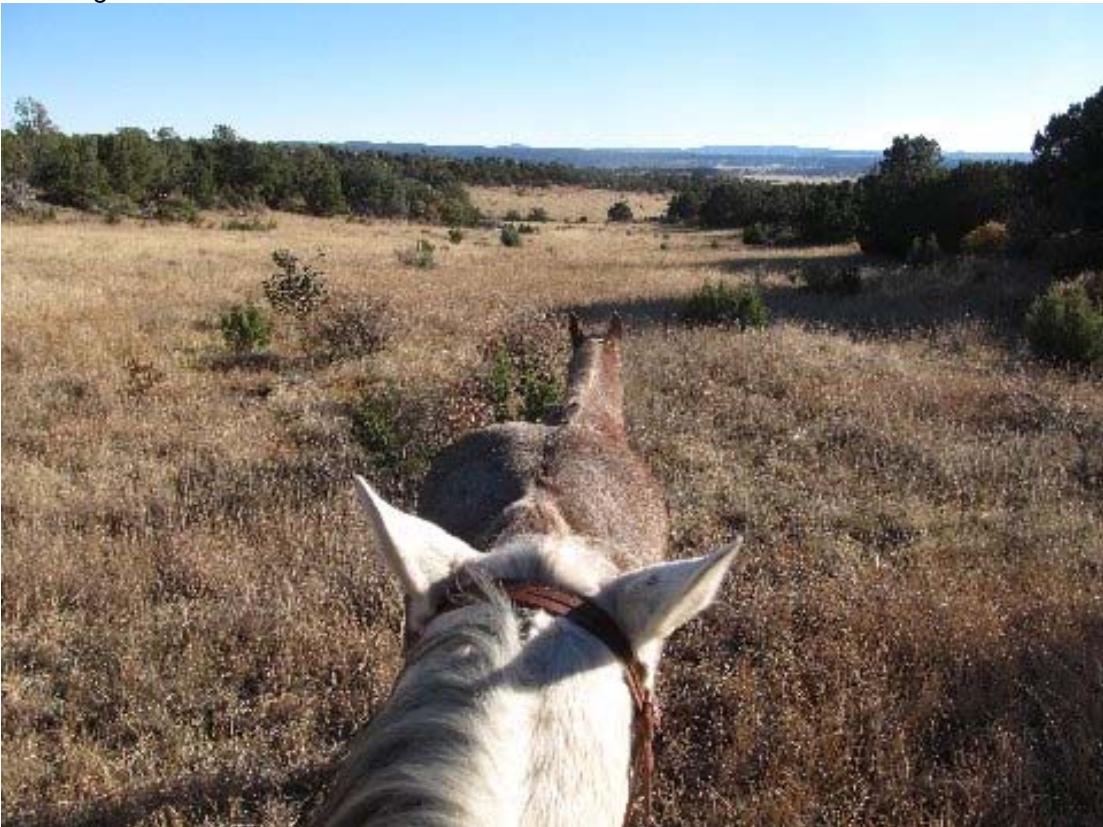
We head for the rocky piedmont ahead.



The Capitan Mountains loom in the distance. They are one of the nation's few east/west ranges (nearly all mountains in North America are oriented north/south).



While heading home . . .



2013-11-14 – *Wide Open Spaces*

. . . this group of bull elk ran right across in front of us, then stopped to check us out before disappearing into the scrub





A friend shared one of our riding journals with the folks at the [EQUITREKKING](http://www.equitrekking.com) web site. They have what they call a "Fifty State Trail Riding Project"; which will feature best-of trails in all fifty states. Our ride on the Argentina Trail was selected for inclusion; here is a link to it:

<http://www.equitrekking.com/articles/entry/horse-riding-new-mexico-argentina-trail-loop/>

It's nice to share some of New Mexico's "enchantment" with other riders from around the country.

MM

2013-11-15 – *White Sands Images*

On the day of Dacodah's video shoot at White Sands National Monument, Thunder and I arrived early . . . to play!

Thunder wonders where his comrades are (citing a leash law, the new park superintendent says Belle and Spanky can't be allowed to run free . . .).



Yes, the sand is white!





Is Thunder smiling? He was a very good boy.



2013-11-15 – *White Sands Images*

Crystal McDonald shared these shots (thanks, Crystal!) of Thunder and me at play.





. . . and later, our group, during the video shoot . . . (this photo deserves some great music!)



MM

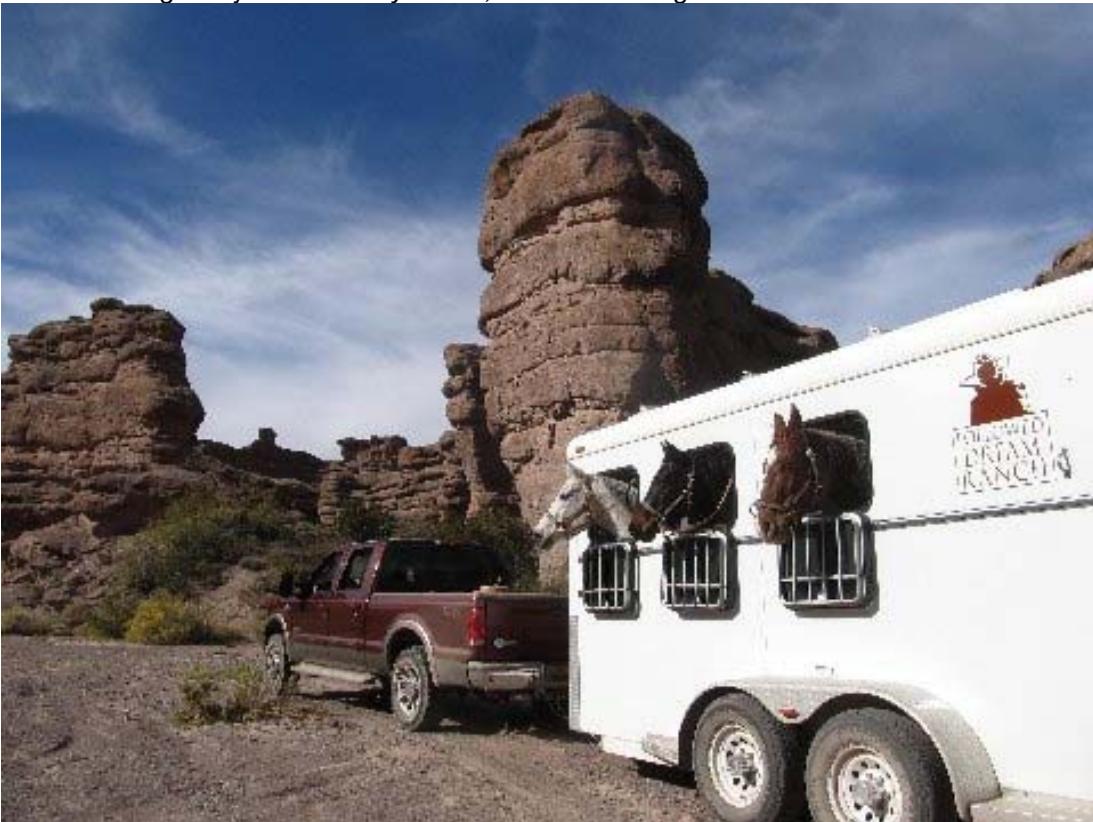
2013-11-18 – *Filming At San Lorenzo*

On the second day of filming for Dacodah's television spot, we returned to San Lorenzo Canyon. Coordinating 20+ riders is a *production!*

This was just part of the group. What a backdrop!



My horses were eager to join them. Says Belle, "Where do we get our hair done?"



On the trail.



2013-11-18 – *Filming At San Lorenzo*

Belle thought she was the director! "Okay, now, give me everything you've got!"



Ann Marie is an endearing young woman, who rides at all speeds with her little poodle, "Dixie" across her saddle.





Dacodah has his close up.

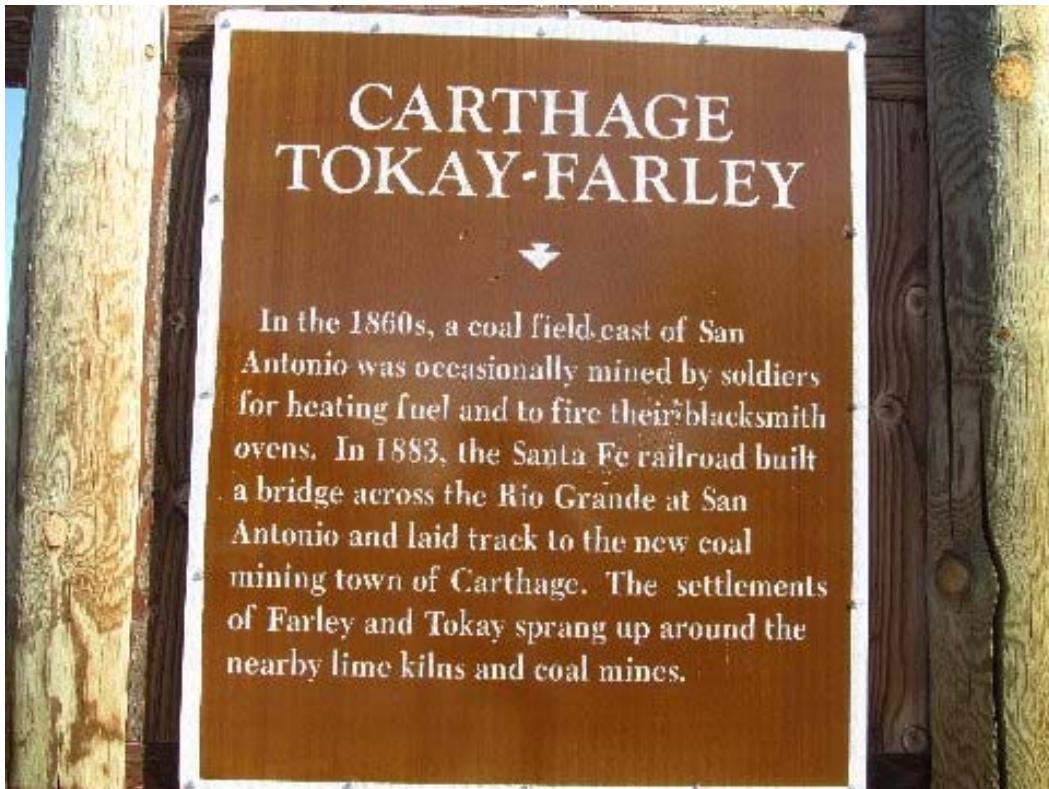


It's always remarkable how much time and effort it takes, for just a few minutes of footage!

MM

About halfway between the ranch and Dacodah's, we pass a metal gate and an unused dirt road off lonely Hwy 380. I wondered where it led; but the gate has a big chain on it and I figured it was locked.

Nearby is this historic marker.



It sounded interesting. Could the old road lead to . . . Carthage? The chain on the gate turned out to be unlocked. We ventured down the weed-strewn path, and came to an old cemetery.



2013-11-19 – *Carthage New Mexico*

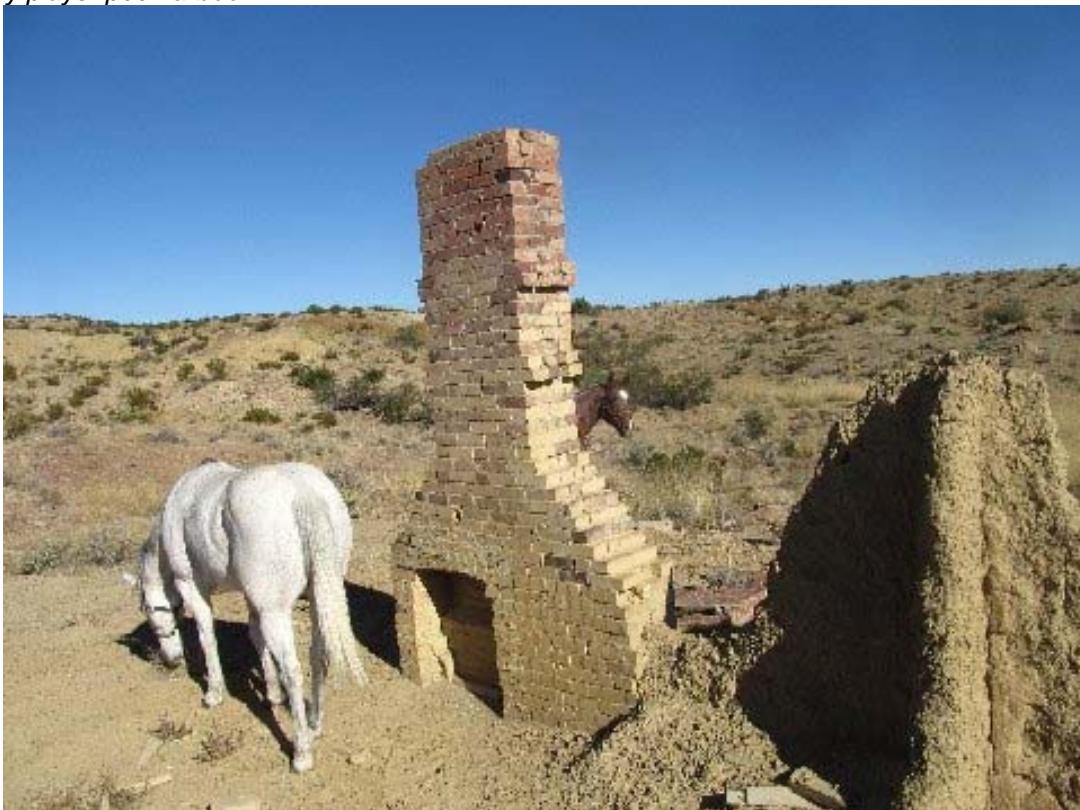
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The horses and I were curious. Where did these people come from? Could they be former inhabitants of Carthage? When I say the horses were "curious", I mean they were - they looked over the cemetery, and searched out other clues. At times like this, it really is like being with like-minded friends - and I am!

We spotted some ruins in the distance.



Spanky plays "peek-a-boo".



We discovered a terrific, deep, and narrow arroyo. It is about a mile long - a Disneyland ride for horses!



There were artifacts everywhere - old glass, spatter ware cook pots, pottery. It was like the Titanic's debris field - in the desert. We left everything as we found it (even an ornate iron headboard . . . tempting . . .)



A lonely herd of cattle were curious.



We stumbled on a hidden spring . . .



... and more ruins. In fact we found evidence of several large communities.



Here is the reason for all the remains - coal!



2013-11-19 – Carthage New Mexico

In the early 1860's, soldiers from Fort Stanton (and other forts in the region, like Craig and Selden) hauled the surface coal back for fireplaces and blacksmithing. Eventually, a spur of the railroad was brought in from Socorro, and a bridge built over the mighty Rio Grande. In 1896, a dirt-poor couple staked a claim on a coal mine here, developing it into the Carthage Coal Company. Their names were August and Mary Hilton. The mine financed their son Conrad's idea for a hotel in nearby San Antonio. Yep . . . the Hilton Hotels began with a black hill in New Mexico!

By 1925, oil was replacing coal as the preferred fuel - making Texas rich - and the railroad pulled out. As so often happened, the entire town was disassembled and hauled away. After wandering around for hours, we followed some friendly cows back to the trailer.



"Oh. Were you gone (yawn)? Welcome home".



It was an interesting find, and yet another glimpse into New Mexico's exciting past. Thanks for coming along!

MM

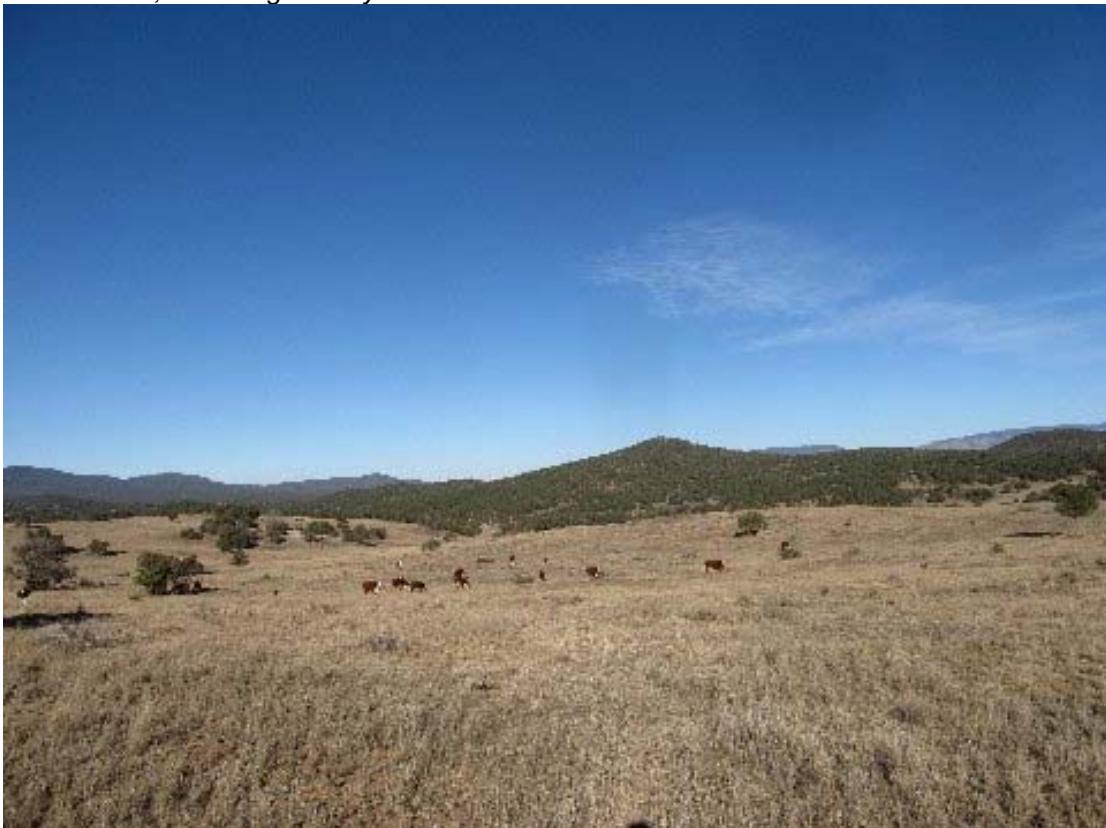
2013-11-21 – *A Little Snow On The Mountains*

Page 1 of 4

Although the weather has been mild at the ranch, a mountain storm came through and left some snow on Sierra Blanca - good news for the skiers!



Near Fort Stanton, it was a good day for a ride.



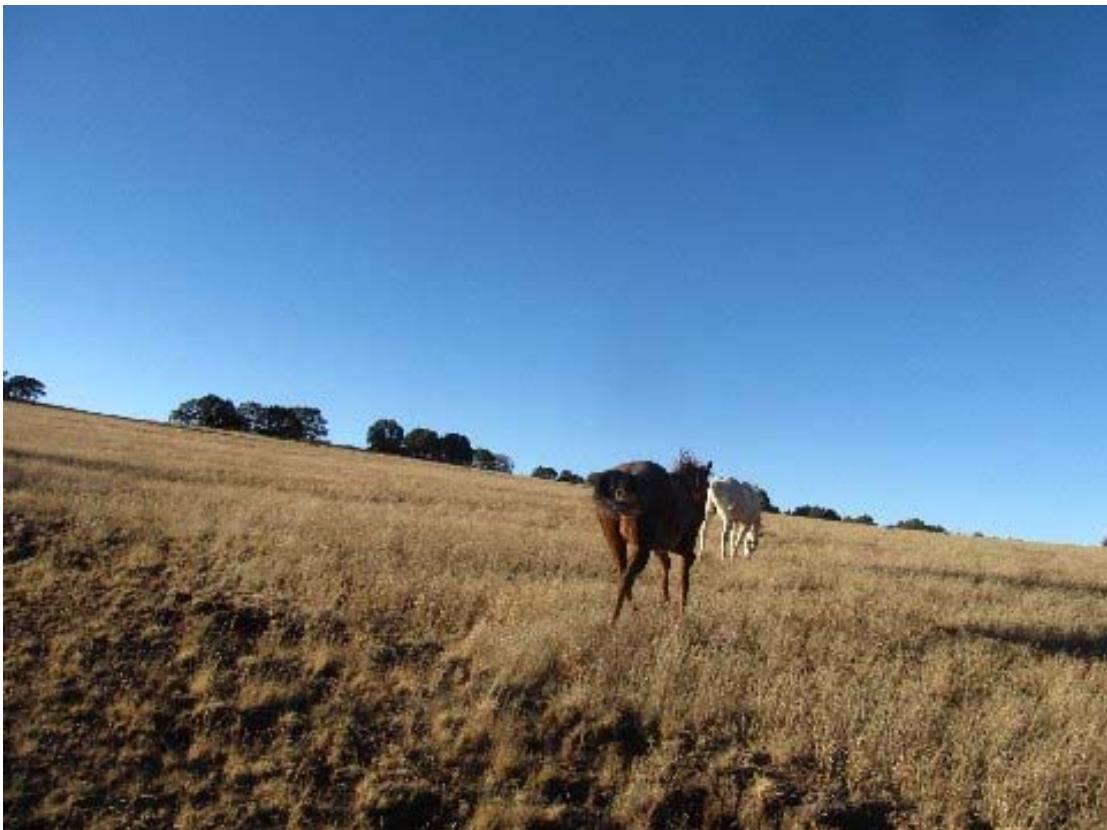
2013-11-21 – *A Little Snow On The Mountains*

Page 2 of 4

If you look closely, the bright orange ribbon (still hunting season) is flapping in Thunder's right eye. I was surprised that he tolerated that, until I took care of the problem.



A little drink along the way . . .



2013-11-21 – *A Little Snow On The Mountains*

Those snow-covered mountains are in the distance; but warm and dry here!



MM

It's fun to watch the various deer families interact.

Nacho seems to have had enough apples for the time being!



Moms with their kids. "My Junior is just like his father . . . just wait 'til he gets his antlers!"



A new fawn joins us. Such little feet.



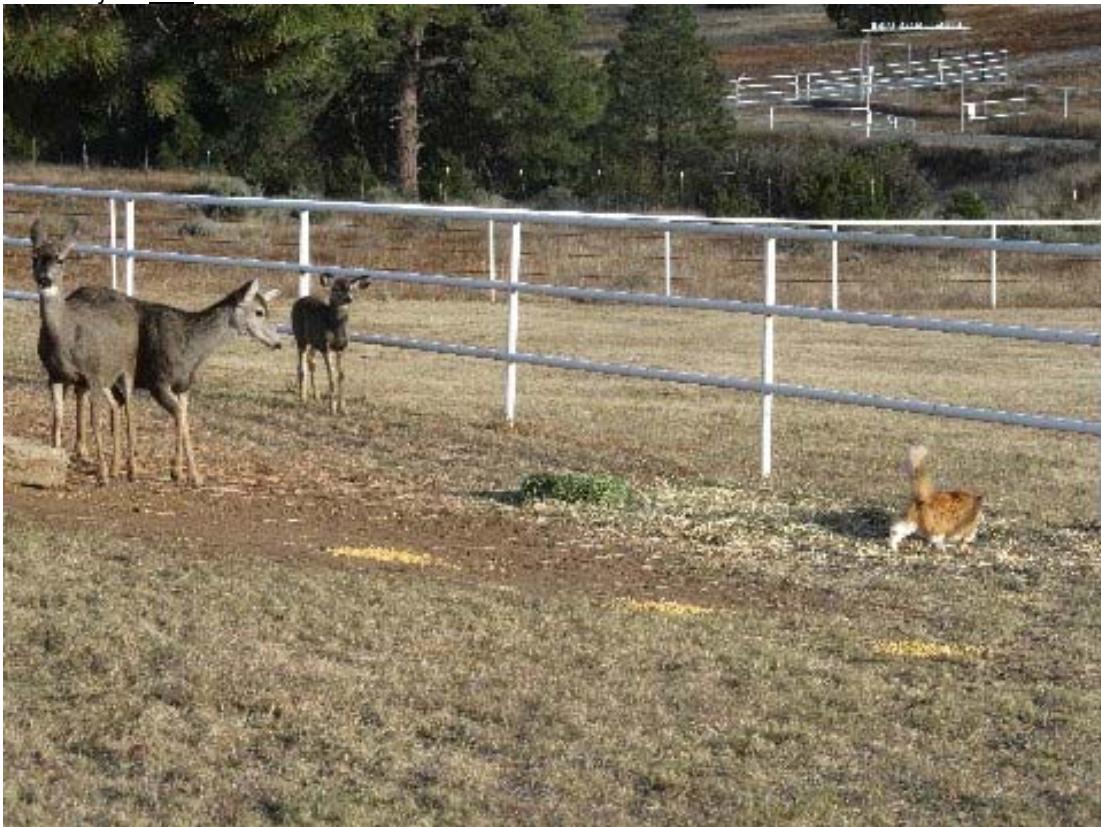
This one tried the water tank for the first time - and scared himself!



Childhood friends.



Mommie Cat just had to check it out . . .



The interest is mutual!





MM

2013-11-25 – *Storm Com'in*

Page 1 of 4

The weather service predicted an unusually early, big and cold storm on the way. We thought we better get a ride in before it arrived!

Maybe Thunder sensed the storm's approach (horses do); everyone seemed to go faster than usual.



Spanky stopped for a snack.



2013-11-25 – **Storm Com'in**

Belle found some fresh watercress in a little stream. A real treat!



Here comes the storm. One thing about New Mexico, you don't have to wait long for the weather to change!



We bushwhacked our way home.



Onyx and Wilcox on storm watch in the apple tree.



We made it home before . . .



MM

2013-11-26 – *Oh! Snow!*

The big storm arrived. The first snow of the season (and this one was unusually early) is always special.



2013-11-26 – *Oh! Snow!*

The horses were comfortable in the barn during the snow - but they couldn't wait to get out and play!



Of course, Spanky had to make horse snow angels!



We took a long ride, an advantage of having the gate into the forest so close - no trailering! It was so quiet, the silence hurt my ears.



On the way back, Thunder suddenly stopped dead in his tracks - I knew why. Elk, just behind the house.



I think these cats are unusual . . .



It is beautiful, but it won't last (we will be in the 50's on Thanksgiving Day).



MM

2013-11-27 – *Many Thanks*

Thanksgiving is special. It is (or should be) a universal occasion of appreciation.

This was two days ago, during our snow.



Whee!



The deer don't seem to mind the snow . . . "Got apples?"





A clearing sky . . .



The elk came for a visit.





Today, the snow is nearly gone and the deer dropped in for a morning snack.



The little twins are still with mom, but growing up!



So much to be thankful for.
Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours!

From All of Us at Followed Dream Ranch

2013-12-01 – *Thanksgiving Ride*

Our Thanksgiving Day ride was peaceful and reflective - there is so much for which to be grateful.

It was a beautiful autumn day on the mountain.



2013-12-01 – *Thanksgiving Ride*

In the distance, Sierra Blanca Peak sports some early snow.



Clear going here . . .

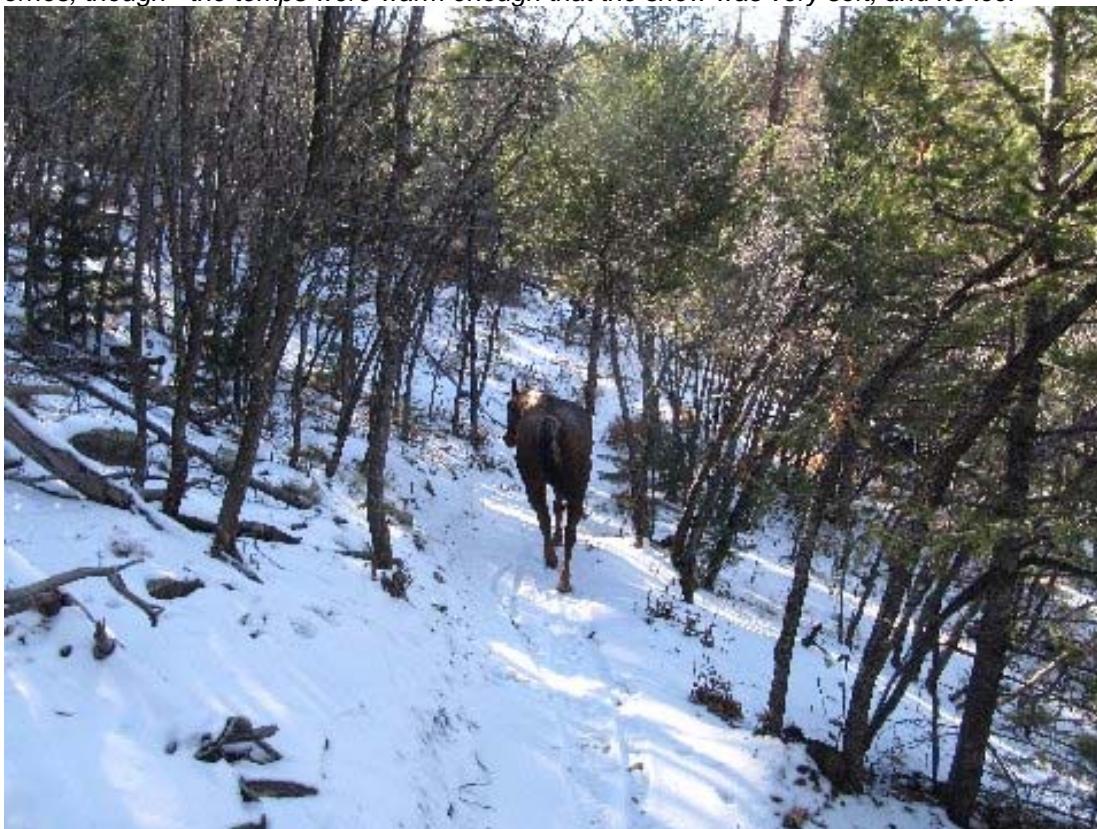


2013-12-01 – *Thanksgiving Ride*

. . . but as we came around to the north-facing slope . . .



No worries, though - the temps were warm enough that the snow was very soft, and no ice.



2013-12-01 – *Thanksgiving Ride*

We came across some after-turkey-dinner hikers. The horses made new friends.



2013-12-01 – *Thanksgiving Ride*

I like this shot of Thunder. A peaceful day.



2013-12-01 – *Thanksgiving Ride*

Went to a real cattleman's wedding on Saturday. They even served the traditional groom's cake - in the shape of an armadillo! Despite appearances, it was delicious (red velvet cake inside . . .)!



That's life in these parts.

MM

Just north of the Sacramento Mountains, near the old train town of Carrizozo, a big cattle ranch has been subdivided into "ranchettes". Called "Valle del Sol", their real estate ads have occupied the back cover of New Mexico magazine every month for years. We pass Valle del Sol frequently, and ponder that despite the ads, not much seems to be going on. We had a couple of hours, and thought we would have a look and maybe a ride.

This valley can be windy, but on our visit the weather was perfect for a ride.



The mountain views are beautiful.



... but the terrain is challenging in an odd way; there are large patches of mounded grass which hide the Swiss cheese effect of burrowing mammals. Lots of hidden gopher holes. We take our time.



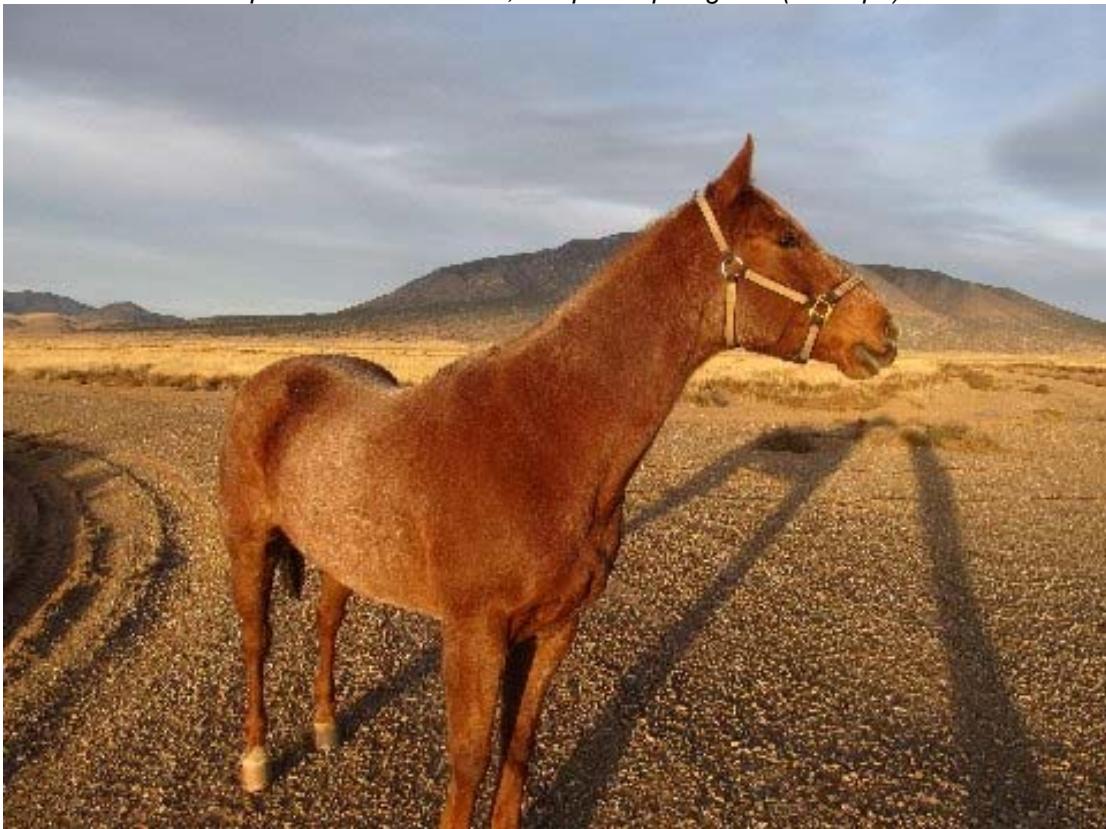
Thunder catches up.



Here comes Spanky, after snacking along the way.



Back on one of the development's access roads, he spots a pronghorn (antelope) . . .



"Hmmm . . ."



There is a beauty here. . . but over time there will be more houses and fences. Nice to have explored it now.





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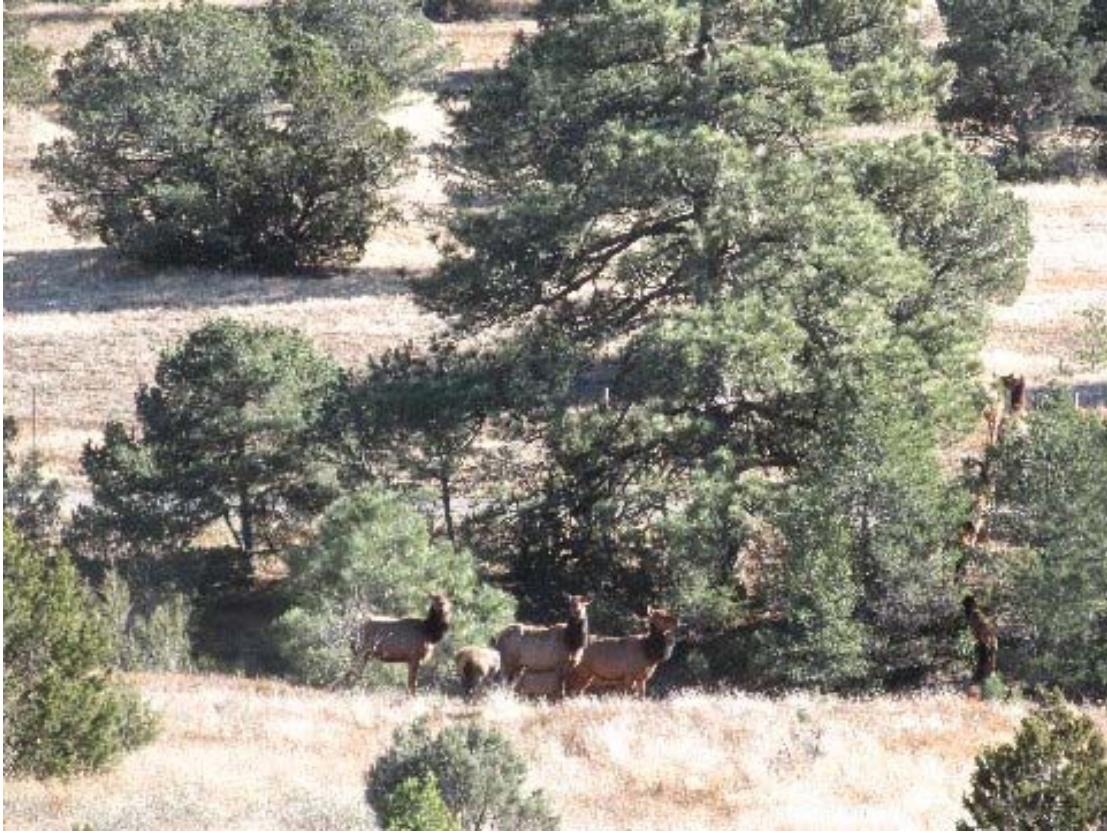
2013-12-05 – *Elk At Home*

Elk are elusive, so it is especially exciting to have them come for a visit in the daytime!

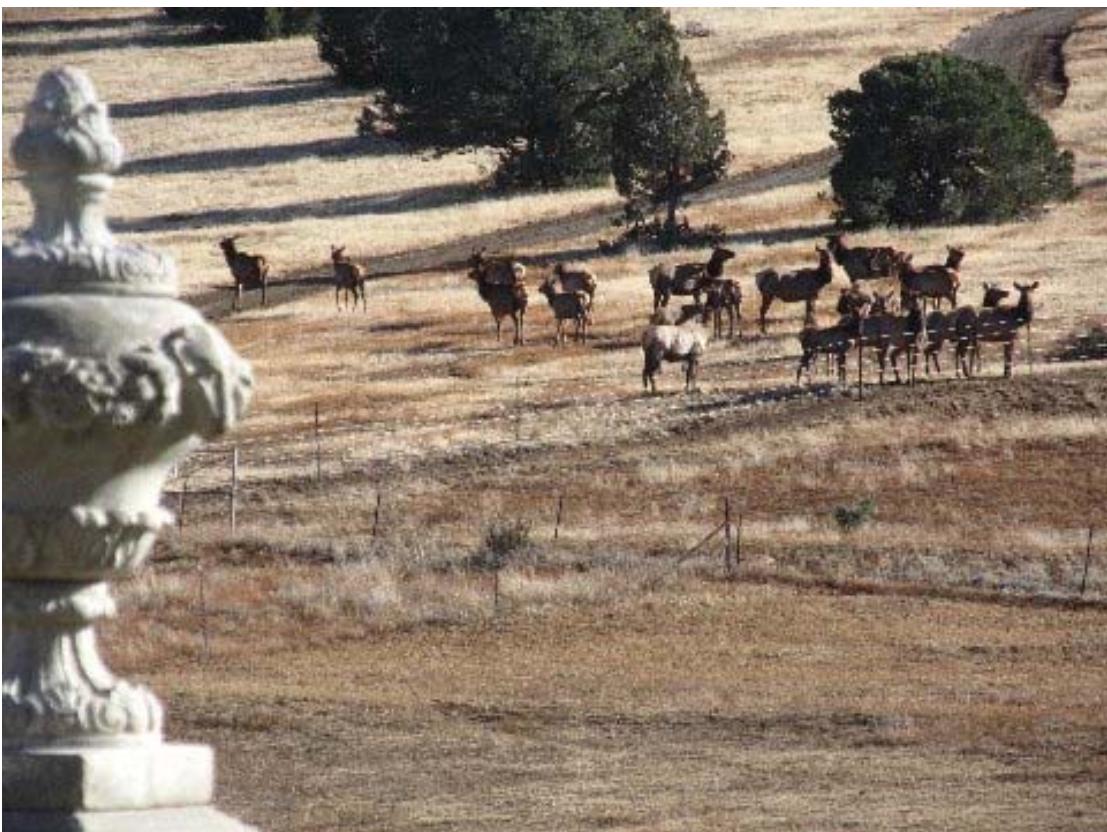
These two spot me. They don't seem too concerned.



Here come some more.



That's a pretty big crowd!





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2013-12-06 – *Acacia Riding Adventures Infomercial*

Dacodah's two-minute infomercial is now available on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1fNtdb9MN4&feature=youtu.be>

I bet you recognize a couple of the horses!

Getting ready to film at San Lorenzo.



At White Sands.



"Fun Fact": On June 15th, 1878, Eadweard Muybridge, financed by millionaire industrialist Leland Stanford, used multiple cameras to capture 24 images of Stanford's Thoroughbred mare running (Stanford had made a big-money bet with some of his cronies, that all four of horses' hooves were sometimes completely in the air when running). The resulting "film" proved for the first time that horses DO lift all four feet completely off the ground at a gait (and Muybridge's film is considered to be the first known motion picture exhibition).

Our friend Crystal did it with just one beautiful shot. Look again - Thunder is floating. Thanks, Crystal!

MM

Riding near Bonito Lake is always great, but the early snow made it special.

Tough cat: at home, Wilcox goes for a drink . . .



. . . but his favorite "bowl" is (mostly) frozen. No matter, he eats some of the snow on top!



Thunder checks out the feed room, "What do you want to do after breakfast? Hope we get to go to the lake!"



As the day warmed up, the snow softened.



We head past the lake. On the sunny side, much of the snow is already gone.



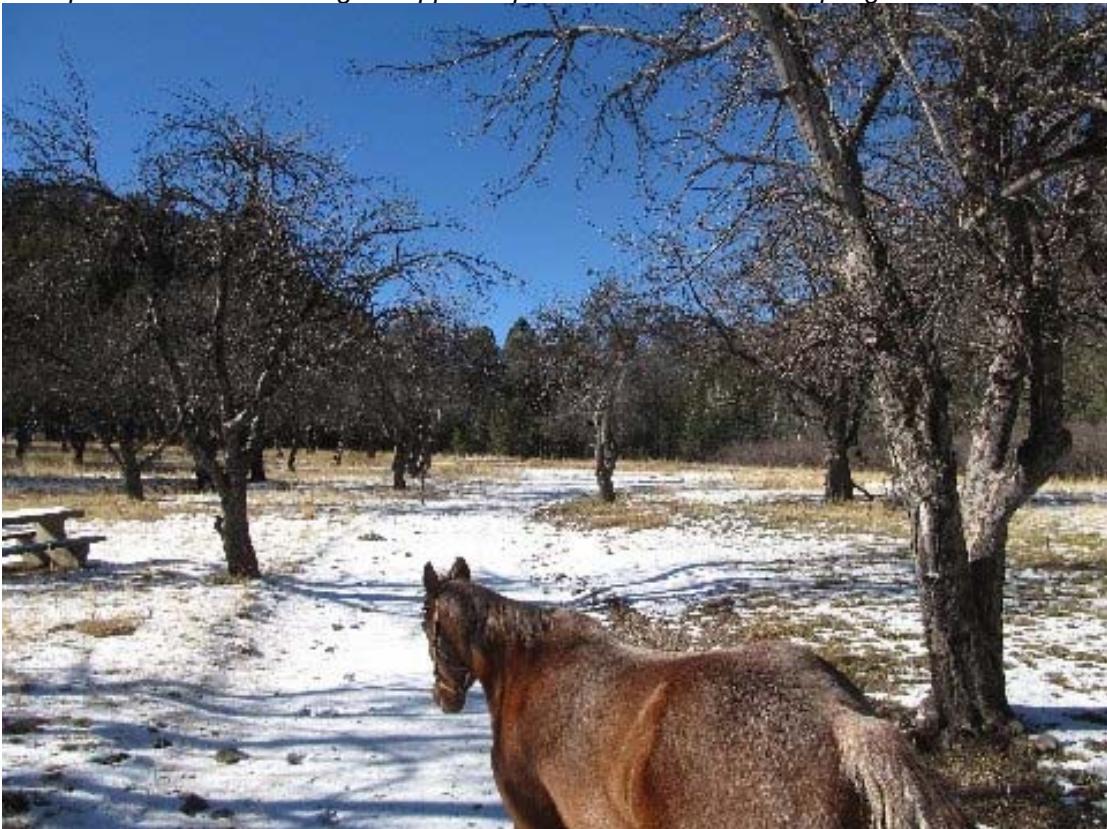
Melting snow swells the streams.



"You go first." "No, you go first."



This cold spell should make for a good apple crop in the old orchard next spring.



Aspens and snow on the shady side.



Of course . . .



A road out of Currier & Ives.



Surprisingly, they found some fresh green watercress along the stream. Yum! A special treat this time of year.



Thanks for coming along (it wasn't as cold as it looks)!

MM

2013-12-11 – *Freezing Fog*

Last week, as the record cold front blasted past us to Texas, it left behind an unusual phenomenon . . . freezing fog! It lasted only a day, but turned everything into a mystical winter wonderland. I'd never seen anything like it.





All gone now.



MM



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2013-12-16 – 'Tis The Season

This is one of Belle's favorite times of the year.

We were asked to carry the flag in Capitan Library's annual Santa Claus parade.



Belle got a treat from Santa!



... and met a new little friend on his first Christmas.



She was curious about this tiny guy . . .



... and said hi to friends she has met in other parades.



2013-12-16 – 'Tis The Season

Belle won Best Santa Parade Entry! On behalf of the Garrison, she donated the \$100 prize money back to the library for new acquisitions (she suggested they purchase "Black Beauty"). She tolerated that darned hat very well.



In celebration, someone offered her some apple cider. You can see her response . . . "Ick! How could anyone do THAT to a nice juicy apple?"



'Tis the season!

MM



As part of our living history program, members of the Fort Stanton Garrison held a traditional period-dress Christmas dinner as it might have been in 1858. Candles and lanterns provided the only illumination. Menu items, contributed by the guests, featured recipes from the era. Our entertainment included ceremonial toasts, and singing of classic carols of the time. During the middle of it all, with the fireplace glowing and the polite conversation, we really could have been back in time.

Earlier in the day, Belle checks out the preparations. She knows the proper way to do things.



2013-12-22 – A Really Old-Fashioned Christmas



The evening provided an historic feel.





There was a jolly mood.





It really felt like Christmas!
MM

This is our "see-saw" season. Snow one day; bright and dry the next.



After a snow, the kids enjoy an ice-cold drink! (Says Belle, I wish hot cocoa was good for horses ... sigh"



2013-12-23 – *Holiday Wishes*

While this buck prefers the tank up by the house.



2013-12-23 – *Holiday Wishes*

*"Hey, Thunder, why does Spanky always have to make snow angels?"
"I dunno. Every time I do it, my ears freeze."*



One of the cats was doing something silly. The deer find them interesting. That's how it is around here!



2013-12-23 – *Holiday Wishes*

Page 4 of 4

All of us at Followed Dream Ranch wish You and Yours a joyous holiday season and a terrific New Year ahead!



MM

2013-12-31 – *Along The Rio Bonito*

Another year is ending (and a new one full of promise about to begin). It has been a pleasure to share rides and thoughts with you!

This time of year can be sparkling clear.



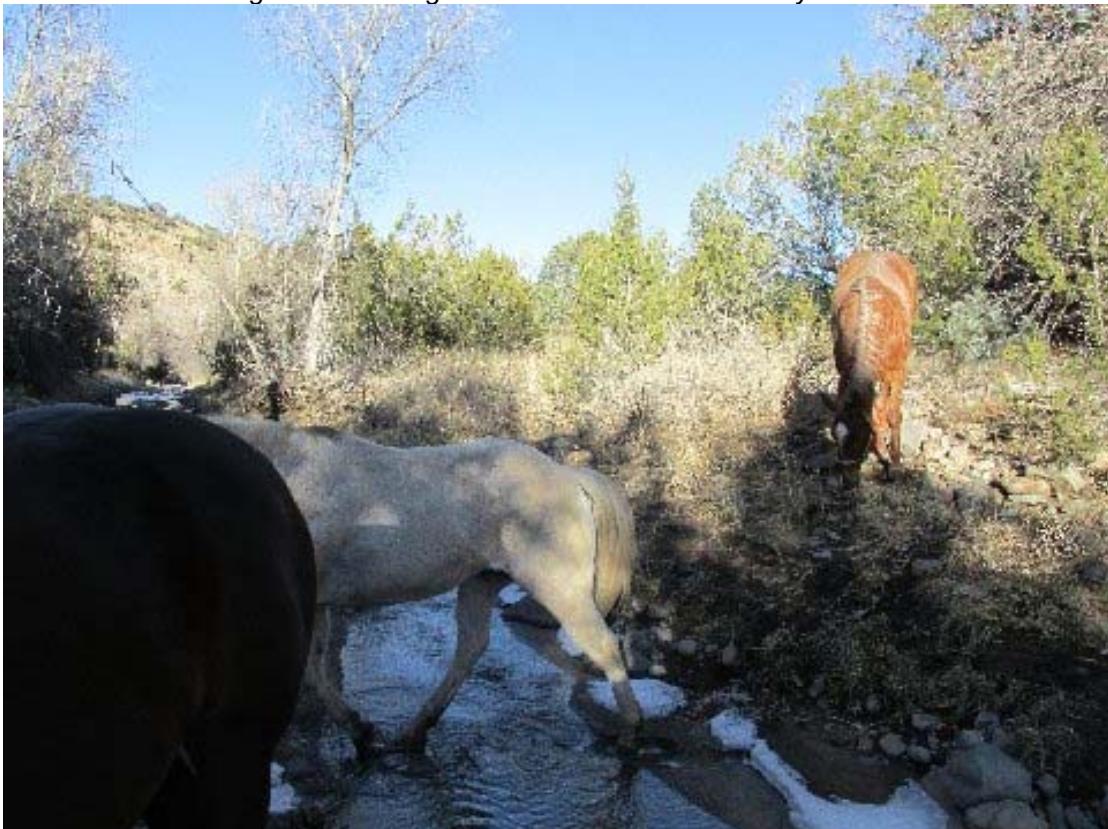
Off we go, to the Rio Bonito on one of the last rides of the year. Let 2014 lead us into possibility . . .



... and freedom ...



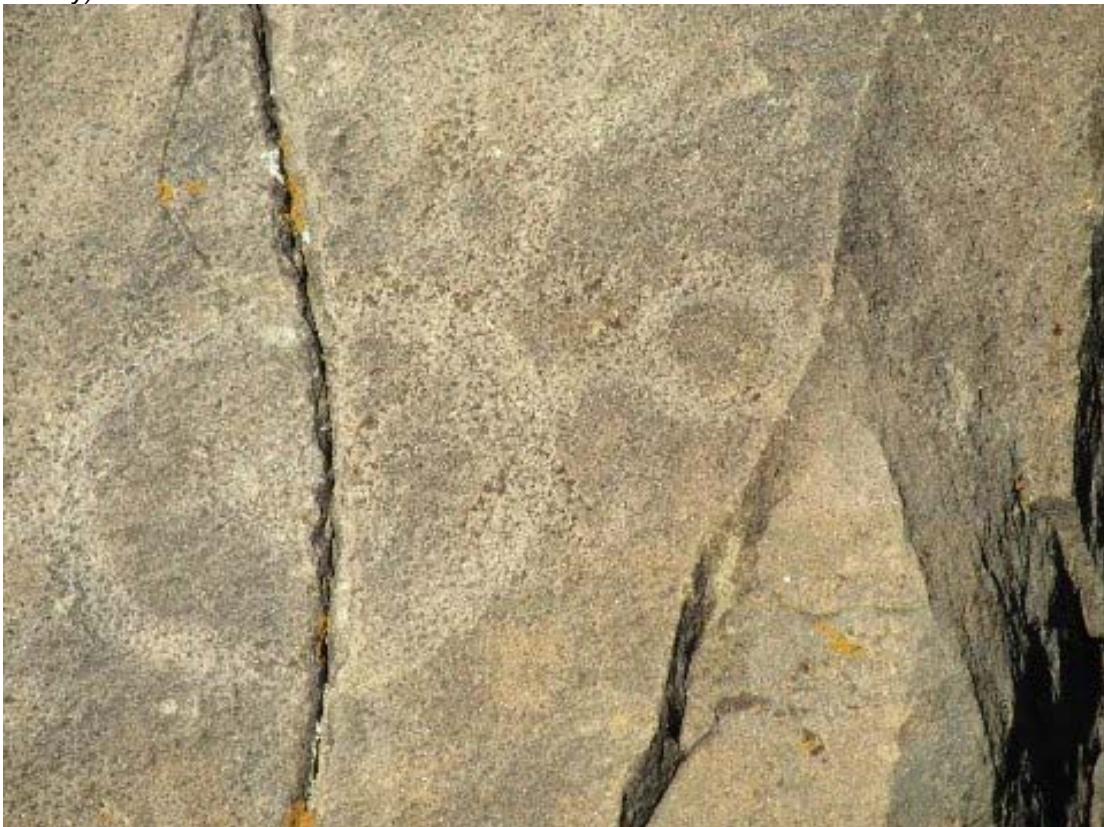
May the inevitable challenges be not too great! And all of us comforted by loved ones.



May we honor the past (this is petroglyph rock, with carvings centuries old) . . .



. . . and use our imagination to appreciate the past and visualize the future. (This ancient art still inspires our curiosity).



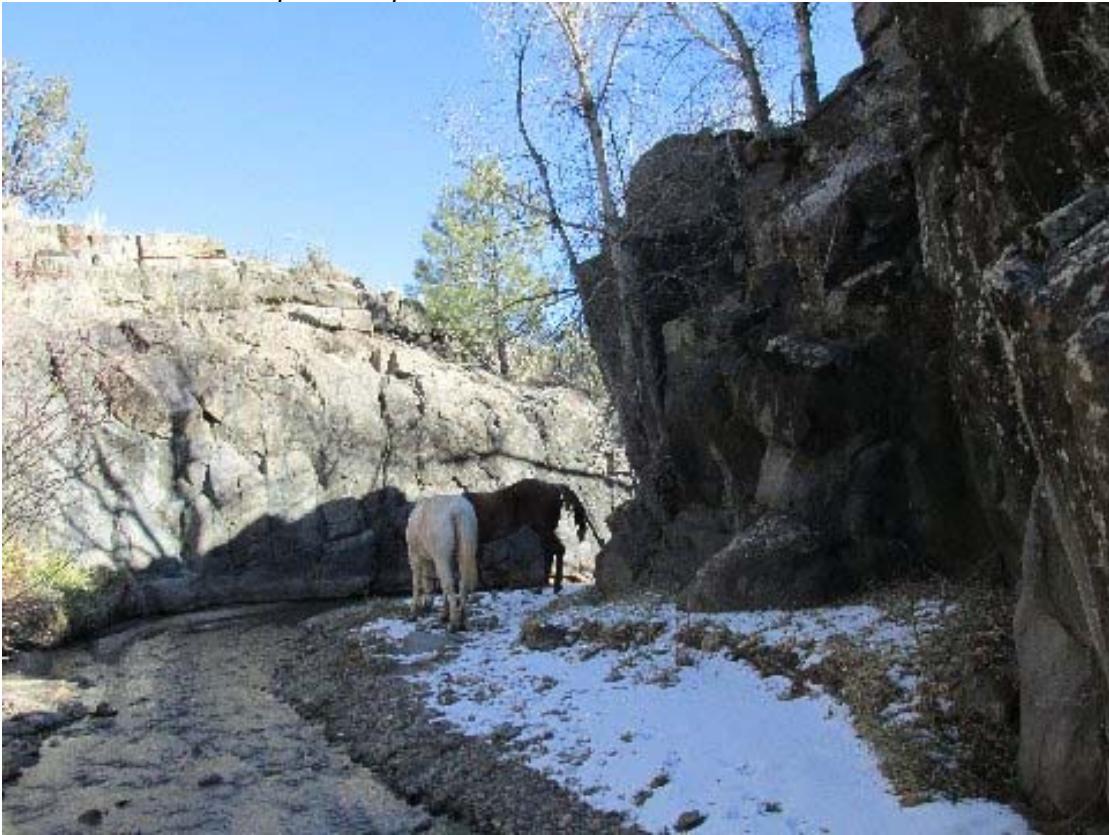
Let's have fun this year! (Ruins of a 1880's brewery and saloon.)



Let's explore new things just around the corner, with an open heart.



... and find shelter and companionship.



Let compassion flow over us - and from us.



... and let there be peace.



Wishing you and yours love, health, happiness and prosperity in the New Year!
Belle, Thunder, Spanky and MM

2014-01-03 – *Happy Ending – Great Beginning*

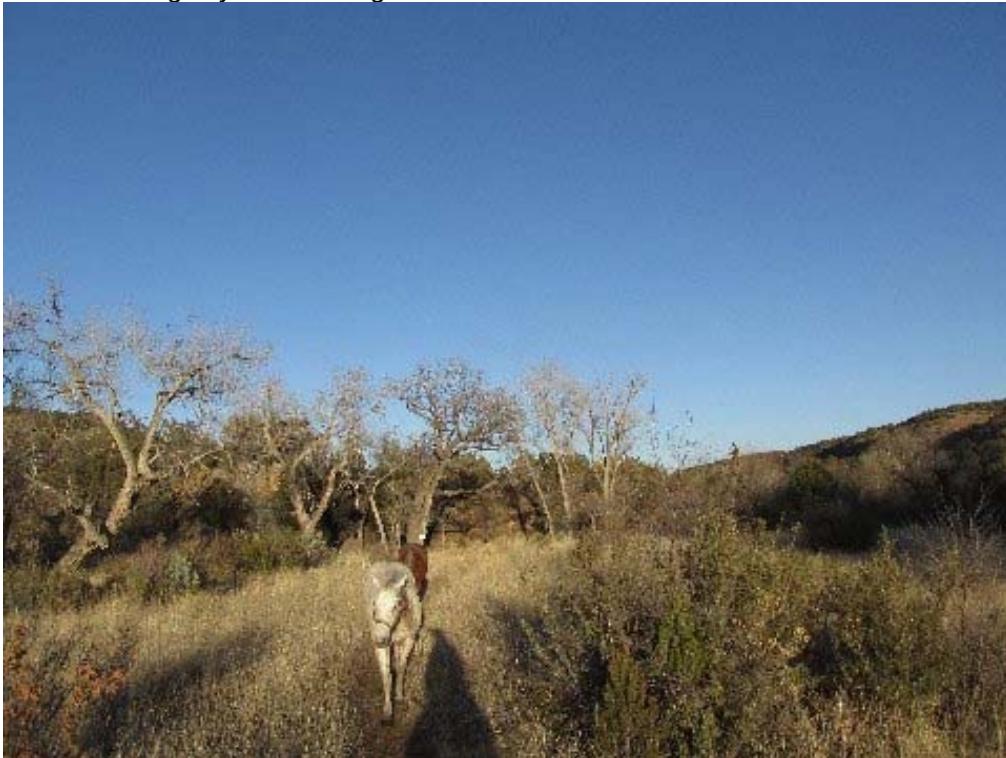
The call came in last Friday. An 18-year-old bay (brown) Arabian horse named "Pasha" had thrown its rider near Fort Stanton. The saddle had slid under the horse's belly, and it had spooked and run off (the rider was taken to a nearby hospital, where he was treated for bruising and released). Could we help? The trailer was loaded and we were on our way in minutes. We joined several others in the search - but we were the only ones on horseback.

My horses know this area very well; and yet there is always much that has not been explored. We rode up the river and down canyons. We searched high and low. The idea was that my loose horses would naturally attract the attention of the lost horse; his curiosity would likely bring him to us. Others searched on foot and in vehicles. There was no sign of Pasha anywhere.

Spanky blends into the scenery - only a couple of yards from me. This is rugged country.



Tired horses after a long day of searching.



When we returned home, very disappointed, on Friday evening, I got on the phone. I contacted dozens of key people and organized a proper and extensive search on Saturday. This was not a lost person; the usual agencies were not prepared to look for a horse. Even White Mountain Search and Rescue considered it "unofficial". But a number of organizations and riding groups agreed to join in. After speaking with Pasha's owner, I kept analyzing what the horse might have done. We applied it to the terrain, and typical horse behavior. The search went on all day.

Fellow members of White Mountain Search and rescue prepare to join the search on Saturday.



2014-01-03 – *Happy Ending – Great Beginning*

Lincoln County Sheriff's Posse members (and friends), Jeanne and Sam Case, and Christy George.



My horses knew this ride was different. They were more alert. Surely they would spot Pasha. We kept looking.



2014-01-03 – *Happy Ending – Great Beginning*

Page 4 of 6

The search continued all day. Someone was sure they heard a horse whinny in the distance. We raced to see . . . but found nothing. As daylight waned, so did our spirits. WHERE could Pasha be? Fewer people were available on Sunday. But we kept looking. Another day ended with no sign of the horse.



In any multi-day search, there is a danger of become obsessed with the subject (human or horse). I kept considering all the possibilities. Was Pasha trapped in dense trees? Did he, like the stories we hear about cats and dogs, head home to Roswell (about 70 miles to the east?) Was he alive? On Monday, many people had to return to work. There were far fewer available for the search. My horses, though tired, kept gamely on.



2014-01-03 – *Happy Ending – Great Beginning*

Page 5 of 6

Tuesday, Pasha had been missing for five days. His owner, back home, held out little hope. We kept looking. At 11:00 pm an email came through. Pasha had been found!!!! But it was a cruel, inexplicable email "hoax". Pasha was still lost.

Wednesday, and a new year, I rationalized. Naturally, there were some areas we had missed, and hopefully, Pasha was moving around - he might still be found. We went back again. Was this a "search and rescue obsession"?

Thursday, despite the efforts of dozens of people and horses, no sign of Pasha had been seen in eight days. Did someone manage to rustle him? Was he still alive? I knew my horses were tired, but I loaded them into the trailer one more time.

As were leaving, my cell phone rang. A voice said, "Joe Arcure (a local photographer) was hiking in a remote canyon, and says he sees a horse with a saddle hanging under it. Can you come?" I unloaded the horses in record time and raced to the location with an empty trailer, just in case. It HAD to be Pasha . . . didn't it? (That email hoax had made me cautious).

It was! Pasha was alive! Several other searchers got word and convened on the scene. That's Joe, the one who spotted Pasha, holding the lead rope (he wasn't even looking for him!). There were smiles and tears of joy (yes, mine, too). Pasha was found in a very rugged canyon, standing in dense brush, saddle still hanging, with his tack tangled.



2014-01-03 – *Happy Ending – Great Beginning*

Page 6 of 6

Remarkably, Pasha was in good shape; no visible signs of trauma. After notifying the owner, I took Pasha to my vet for an exam. She agreed - he was fine! (Although the hanging saddle had made his back muscles very sore - he won't be ride-able for about a month).



Pasha spent the rest of the day at my place, waiting for his owner to fetch him home. To me, it looked as though he was thanking my guys for looking for him - and not giving up.



The owner calls it a "miracle" - and maybe he is right. Pasha had somehow eluded detection for more than a week. Smart horse, he had managed, even with the handicap of the hanging saddle, bridle, halter and bit, to find food and water. He is a very special horse; although I had only been with him a short while, it was difficult to see him leave. I pray he is rewarded for his heroism.

What a great way to start a new year!

MM

2014-01-04 – *Back To The Canyon*

Searching eight days in the often rugged hills near Fort Stanton was hard on the horse's shoes - Thunder finally lost one on Friday. An unshod hoof is vulnerable to damage and wear. All the horses are due for new shoes on Monday . . . but I didn't want Thunder to wait that long. So we trailered to Dacodah's for a quick repair. Thunder got a new shoe. And, of course, we all got an outing in the beautiful and peaceful San Lorenzo Canyon. It was nice to ride without our eyes bugging out, looking for Pasha!

It was a beautiful day for a ride.



Dacodah's group.





The exercise keeps them in shape!



Spanky in mid-stride over loose terrain.



(Note the shadows in the distance).



Thanks for coming on a relaxed ride!

MM

2014-01-05 – *Thunder Rocks!*

Dacodah captured this image of Thunder during our Friday ride, and I want to share it with you.



Nice job, Dacodah!

MM



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When Cody, my beloved black Lab, passed away many years ago, I vowed that I would not get another dog until one came to me. Over the years, several have; but I have found (other) good homes for them.

Now, let me tell you what happened with Lulu.

When I was visiting Dacodah about a month ago, a "stray" dog attached herself to me as though she was mine. She rode with the horses, staying by my side. She waited outside Dacodah's house for me to come out. She jumped into the back of my pick up. It was uncanny. I asked Dacodah about Lulu's story, and he explained that her owner was working out of state, and was only home two days a month - Lulu had to fend for herself; he had been looking for a home for her. Because of her unusual behavior, I couldn't get Lulu off my mind. Dacodah said I should take her home. Lulu obviously agreed.

On Friday of last week, I took the horses to Dacodah's so that he could replace Thunder's lost shoe; afterward, we went for a five hour ride, and Lulu came along just as before. When we loaded up to come home, she gave me "that" look. Again, Dacodah said I should adopt her.

We were back at Dacodah's on Sunday, and again Lulu behaved like she was mine. Never on a leash, she followed my directions to the "t". Yesterday I discovered a nail in one of my trailer tires. Lulu went with me to the repair shop, where the mechanic complimented me on "my" dog's behavior. He was surprised to learn that she was not mine. Without a leash or even collar, she did exactly as I asked of her, sitting at my feet, not wandering, etc. I had Lulu with me when we caught up with the group to go riding before heading home. Lulu came along on the trail. Even my horses like her. When we got back from the ride, she was at my truck, by the passenger door, waiting to get in. That did it. She sat quietly all the way home, getting out to relieve herself when I stopped as usual for the horses to do the same. It was as though she had done this dozens of times before. When we got home, she went right into the house as though she lived there. No sniffing around. No fuss of any kind. She went directly into my bedroom and lay down. Although she was friendly, she didn't bother the cats - old Scooter took an instant liking to her, and they slept all night next to each other on the bed.

"Take me home?"



Along the trail.



Lulu



My co-pilot going home.



2014-01-08 – *Introducing Lulu!*

Lulu and Scooter - 30 minutes after arriving at the house last night.



This morning, I took Scooter to the vet for a checkup. Lulu went along and got a clean bill of health - and a rabies shot. Here they are on the way to the vet.



... and on the way home.



Later, she jumped into the old truck and helped the workers at the feed store. When I went in to pay, she stayed right at my leg, sitting at my feet while I paid.



2014-01-08 – *Introducing Lulu!*

Late this afternoon, our first ride out of the ranch. She seemed to know just where to go.



Lulu needed a home. It'll take some adjustment, but I guess Lulu is now part of the family - as she seems truly meant to be! She has touched our hearts. MM

We've been getting to know Lulu (it seems like she arrived knowing all about us!)

She already shares some breakfast sweet feed with the horses each morning. She also likes avocado, carrots and zucchini (!).



She's just not sure about those iron deer . . . "Why don't they move or somethi'n?"



She is an official greeter at the Fort Stanton Museum.



Lulu is great on rides. She stays right with us, and seems to especially like Thunder. Here they are running full out. (Spanky gives her an occasional arrogant look - he figures there is finally someone further down the pecking order!)



... alongside Belle.



Lulu really likes the lawn! I'm not certain she had seen one before. She runs rolls and frolics on it.



She is winning the cats over, one by one.



Yup. Looks like Lulu is home!



MM

End of Journal 5 - Part 1 of 3

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