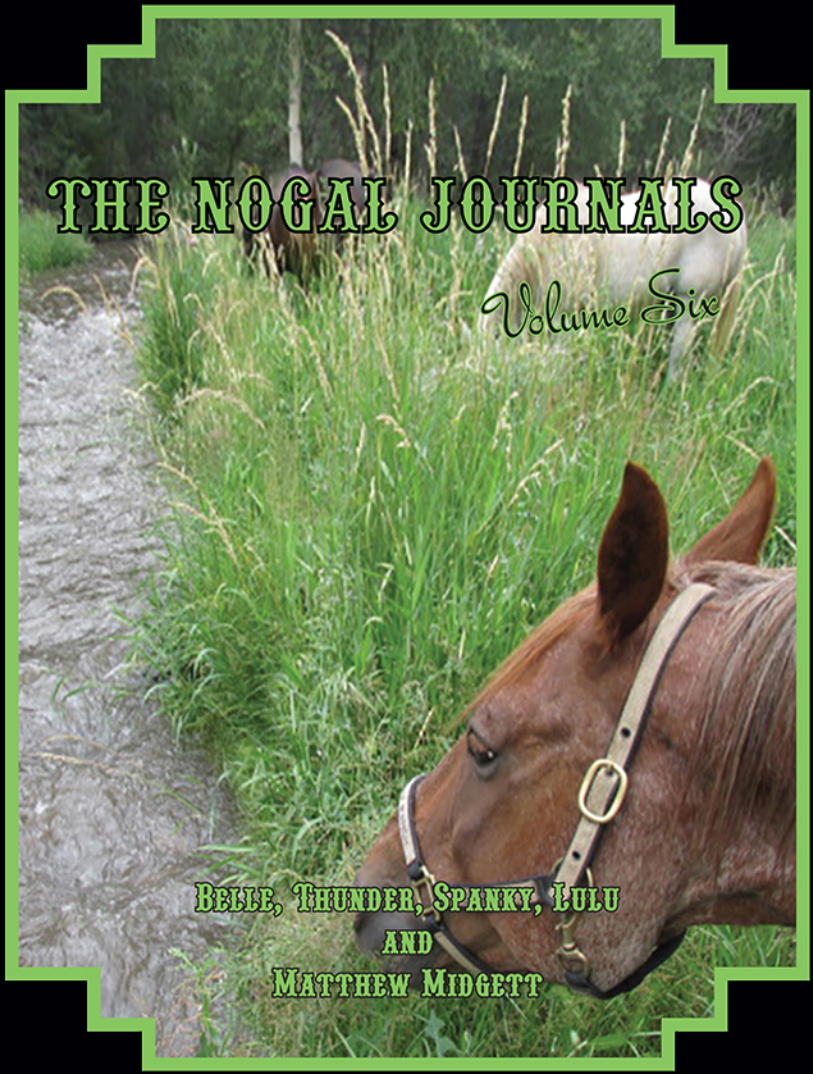
THE NOGAL JOURNALS
Volume Six
Belle, Thunder, Spanky, Lulu
and
Matthew Midgett

THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume VI

Part 1 of 3

With sincere gratitude
to Randy Clarke-Ianiero and Clem Ianiero-Clarke
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made this publication possible.

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2014-07-03 – ***River Crossing***

About this time of year, the high water coming from Colorado starts to drop - and Dacodah asks for my horses to help find the best ways across the Rio Grande for his rides.

Lulu waits in the shallow water. Spanky wants one more bite of grass before his swim

. . . taking our time, looking for holes and quicksand.

At first, Lulu wasn't too keen on all that water (in fact, Dacodah brought her across on his saddle); then I walked her into the river, staying in the shallows and praising her all the while.

After that, she was fine with it!

Most of the soft sand is along the shoreline.

2014-07-03 – ***River Crossing***

Nice work if you can get it!!!

(Thanks for the photos, Jenny and Jill!)

MM

2014-07-03 – ***St. Joseph Apache Mission Blessing***

More than 20 years went into the building of St. Joseph Apache Mission near Ruidoso. Father Albert Braun was a young Franciscan friar working on the reservation, when he was called to service as an Army Chaplain in 1918. He was changed by the horrors of WWI, and came home determined to build a church like those he had seen destroyed all over Europe.

He received permission to build a church at the Mescalero Mission, but was given no funding. With $100 left from his Army pay, and a free railroad pass, Father Albert went to Philadelphia to see noted architect William Stanton. Inspired by the dream, Stanton drew up the plans as a gift. In 1920, volunteers began to dig the foundation, which is seven feet deep, and construction was underway. All materials were native to the area. Stone was quarried nearby during the winter, and hauled in the spring; timber came from the local forests; even the lime for mortar was burned in pits near the mission.

The stone church is enormous - 64 feet wide, 131 feet long, and 80 feet to the roof peak. The bell tower is 103 feet high; an astonishing undertaking in this rural area.

"Apache Christ"

. . . but by 2000, the church was in danger of being condemned and demolished. Chunks of concrete and stone fell near worshipers. Birds, bats, and the New Mexico wind came freely into the sanctuary. The mortar between the massive blocks of stone had badly deteriorated over the years and needed to be replaced, but the church could not afford professional restoration.

A creative solution was found. A grassroots effort began to create a hands-on job training program - restoring the church and educating local workers to become skilled craftspeople to help preserve this and other sites across the Southwest. Fundraising was slow, and the work tedious. In 2014, it was finally done.

A celebration was in order!

The Mission remains an active parish church with about 385 parish families, and it attracts thousands of visitors from around the world. It also serves as a monument to the veterans of WWI and WWII.

This blessing of the restored church was a local affair.

There was communal dancing to drummers. Like everything else about the Mission, very different cultures manage to blend together.

As with all Apache celebrations, meals are prepared by volunteers, and offered without charge to all who are present. Stew, fry bread, vegetable casserole - all made with ingredients grown on the reservation, and made in a ceremonial outdoor kitchen.

This was not a tourist event. It was a very special occasion for the members of the tribe. The restored church was blessed by holy leaders, and Apache "Mountain Spirit" Dancers. Photography is not generally allowed at such occasions, but I was given permission. I kept a very respectful distance.

The building was blessed in a special ritual. Dancers approached each of the four sides, chanting with movements centuries old.

Later, the dancing moved to a community area in front of the church. The celebration went into the night, and continued until dawn.

This, too, is America.
Happy 4th of July!
MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

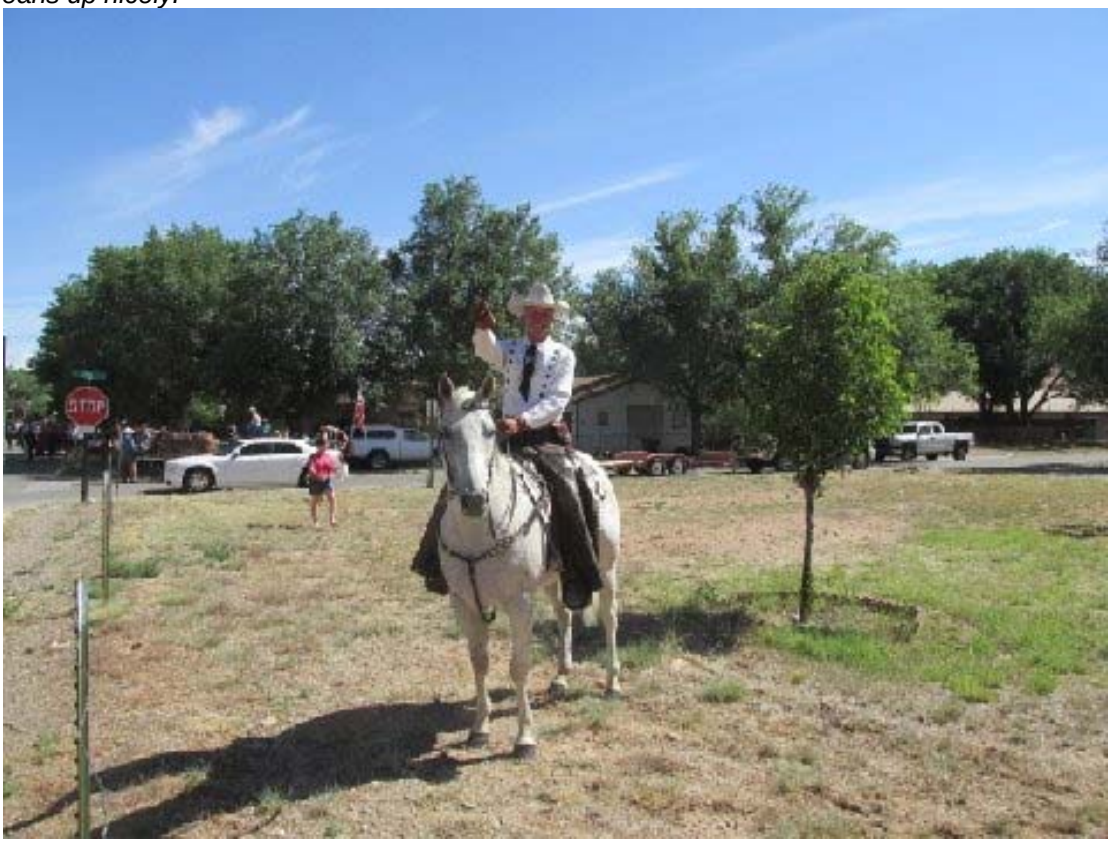
2014-07-07 – ***Fourth Of July Weekend***

The Fourth of July weekend was a busy time in this rural community. It coincides with the annual Smokey Bear Stampede three-day rodeo. Thunder and I were invited to join in the rodeo parade.

First, Thunder had a fun run and roll in the mud - before his bath.

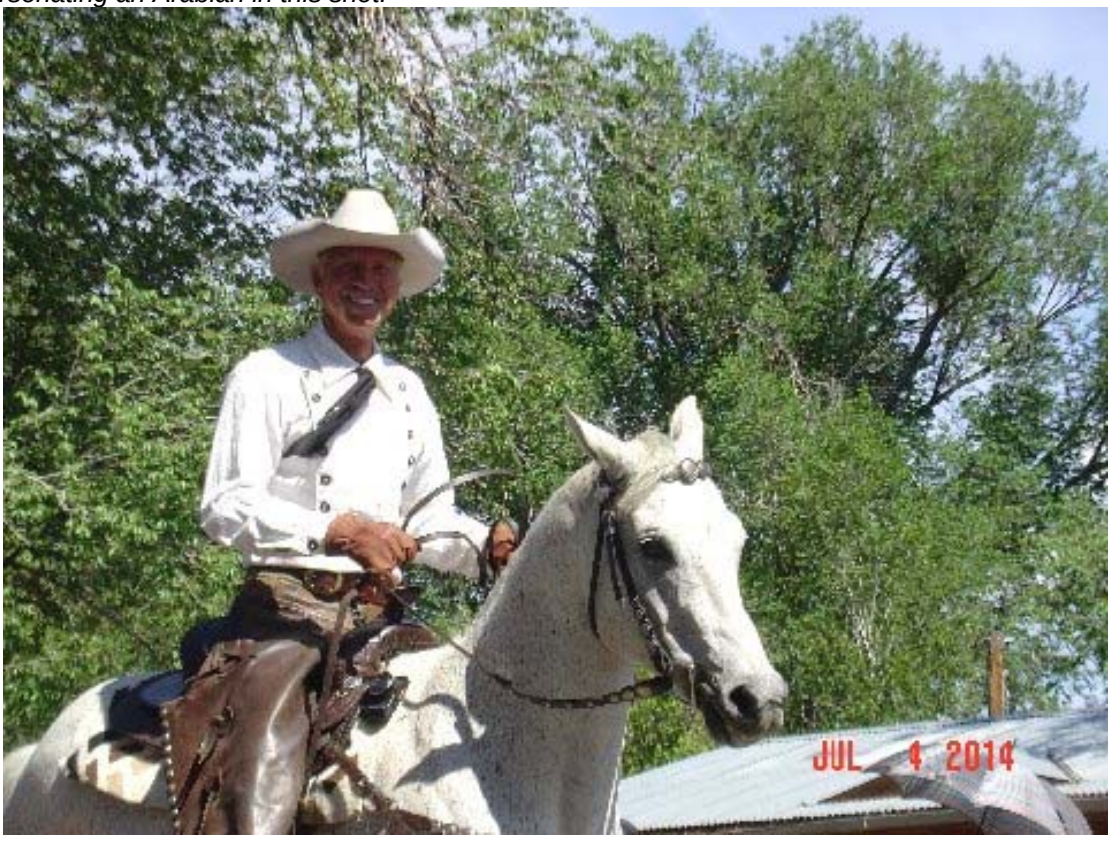
"Come'on Spanky, I have to get ready now . . ."

He cleans up nicely.



Here is a shot by Caroline McCoy - Thanks, Caroline!

. . . and by Mike Blackburn - thanks Mike! Thunder is an American Quarter Horse - but he seems to be impersonating an Arabian in this shot.



It's been a while since Thunder was in a parade. He wasn't so sure about these little burros, hitched to a miniature stage coach, but he did just fine. I was very proud of him!

He contemplated the snacks at the library bake sale, "Do you have any, uh, carrot cake?"

He looks pleased with himself. "Hey, that was fun!"

After the parade, there was a ranch rodeo, with teams of contestants from local ranches.

If you look closely, you can see that the lead horse has all four feet off the ground!

SUPPLY

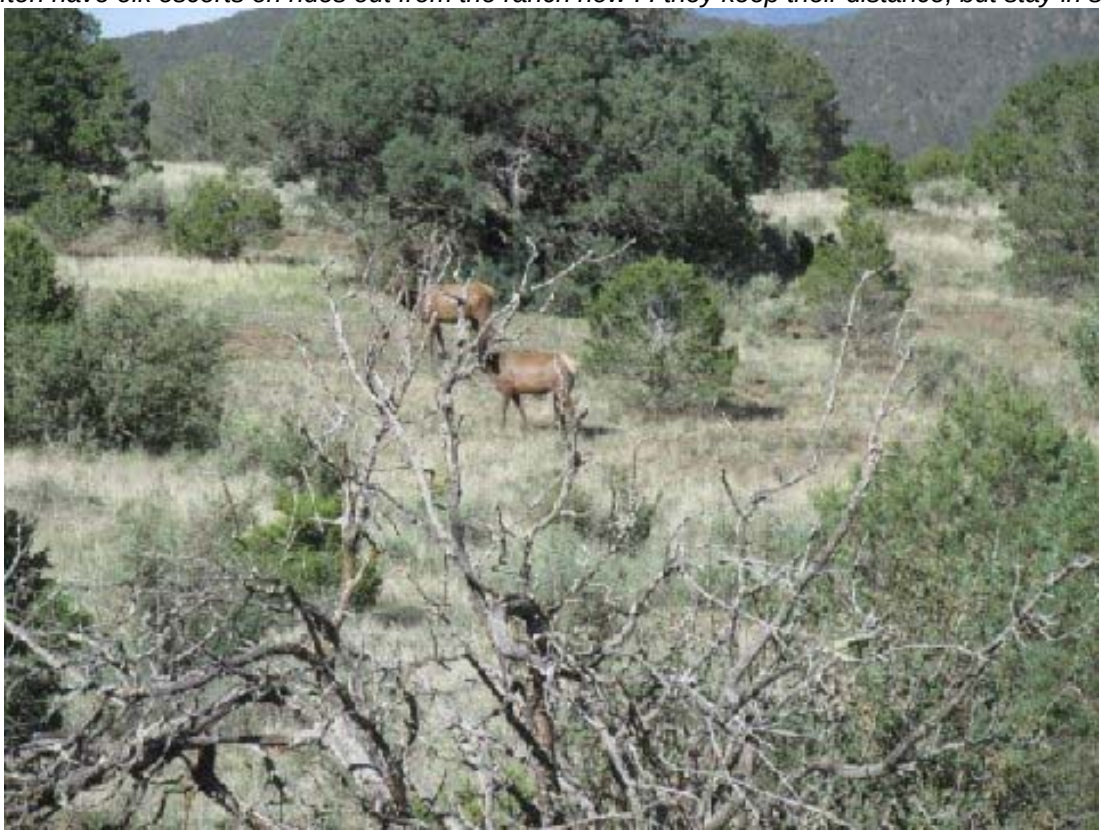
Lulu enjoyed the crowd . . . and visa versa.

It was a small-town, patriotic, and very American celebration of Independence Day. Thanks for coming along!
MM

2014-07-08 – ***The Rendezvous Spot***

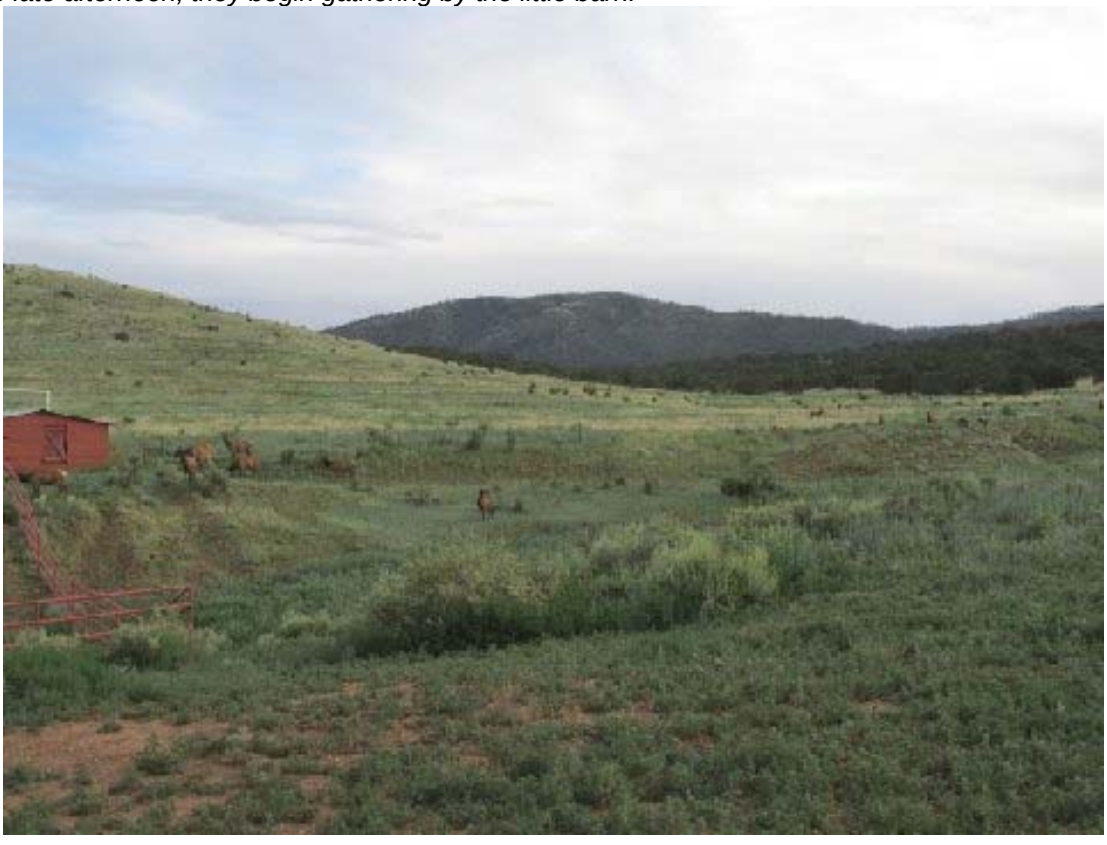
I guess the local elk have accepted us. They are more and more visible - especially at the ranch - very unusual elk behavior.

We often have elk escorts on rides out from the ranch now . . they keep their distance, but stay in sight.



They have lots to eat around here.

In the late afternoon, they begin gathering by the little barn.



This is very special - to have "friends" drop by like this . . .

They seem curious about me, and what I am up to around the place.

I was working inside the barn, and they chose to graze just outside.

"Hey Gladys, is that a water tank over there? I'm getting thirsty"
"Don't talk with your mouth full."

Rest time . . . (This is the same cow with the split left ear that was so curious of me earlier. We recognize each other!)

. . . and a lazy snack!

You've seen this tree in countless sunset photos. Notice how they seem to be interested in what the weird two-legged animal is doing . . .

Ever wonder how a 1600 pound animal gets over a fence? No problem! Like a big spring.

They just pass right by as I do my evening chores!

A bull with developing antlers strikes a pose.

Not be outdone, at the same time the deer bucks were having a snack by the house . . .

. . . hosted by Onyx! "Well, you seemed so busy with the elk, and these guys were hungry . . ."

Can't take any of this for granted. Thanks for letting me share with you.
MM

2014-07-10 – ***Another Village***

Okay. So it was about 7:30 pm. The sun had quietly slid behind the mountain. I decided to wash my truck (I do it more often than most; a habit I picked up in California). As I backed the noisy diesel truck out of the garage, something caught my eye.

There they were - some elk over in the distance near the little barn.

More kept coming. My activities didn't seem to bother them. They were everywhere! Long trains of what looked like families, slowing ambling my direction.

It's getting dark. My camera struggles to capture these views, adjusting to the waning light and having to sacrifice the beautiful cumulous clouds and moon in the sky.

This time, there were lots of moms with babies.

The young ones make constant, plaintive whining sounds.

These two little ones still have their "fawn" white spots - only days old!

More and more kept arriving. My simple camera could not capture the whole panorama. I stopped counting at 70! There must have been close to 100.

Remarkably, they accepted my presence (and that of my horses, who were grazing with some of them) with no fuss. As dusk fell, some of them came right down to the water tank as I was feeding my guys . . . They seemed to wonder what was on the menu!

These are just a few yards away from me. I stayed with them long after my camera was unable to function in the moonlight.

It was a terrific experience, and a thoughtful reminder that ours (humans) is not the only society on this planet. MM

2014-07-13 – ***Fort Stanton LIVE!***

It was that time again - Fort Stanton's annual "LIVE!" living history weekend. We had great weather for it (Whew! It rained today!)

The whole "family" went along to help set up on Friday. I was very proud of my horses and Lulu - they just fit right in, stayed around, and seemed to enjoy watching all the activity.

Spanky checks out a chuck wagon. "Got carrots?????"

This poor guy kept being distracted while trying to assemble his table . . . "Why don't you just eat off the ground, like we do? Much simpler."

"Phooey! Someone has been dunking in this thing - I can taste Coppertone!"

Early the next morning, Belle was on the job. This year, Belle was the ONLY horse participating. She felt an extra responsibility. I believe I can safely say she was the most photographed horse in the country that day! Very patient girl.

She got to carry her new 1858 - 31-star flag.

These photos are by David Tremblay - thanks, Dave!

Belle even handled the cannon fire . . .

. . . and ladies in hoop skirts.

I don't know who had more fun; the record crowd (nearly 2,000 people) or Belle!

End of a big day. Tired, but happy.

Honestly, it was a wonderful event, and we were happy to be part of it, but I think the best time was when we took a little break from all the activity and just sat together on the river's edge for a few minutes, listening to the water ripple by. Just Lulu, Belle and me.

MM

2014-07-15 – ***Arroyos Of The Ancients***

About halfway between the ranch and the Rio Grande, is a forgotten gravel byway through the New Mexican high desert.

This is an old route to pueblan ruins.

On a warm and beautiful summer evening, under a sky that Byron might have described, we enjoyed a very peaceful ride.

Down into the ancient arroyos we went, soft red sand silencing our steps.

In my imagination, I could hear the distant tom-tom of Indian drums.

Spanky is lost in his own thoughts; do the wise minds of horses connect to another time? The only sound was the screech of a red-tailed hawk, soaring above us.

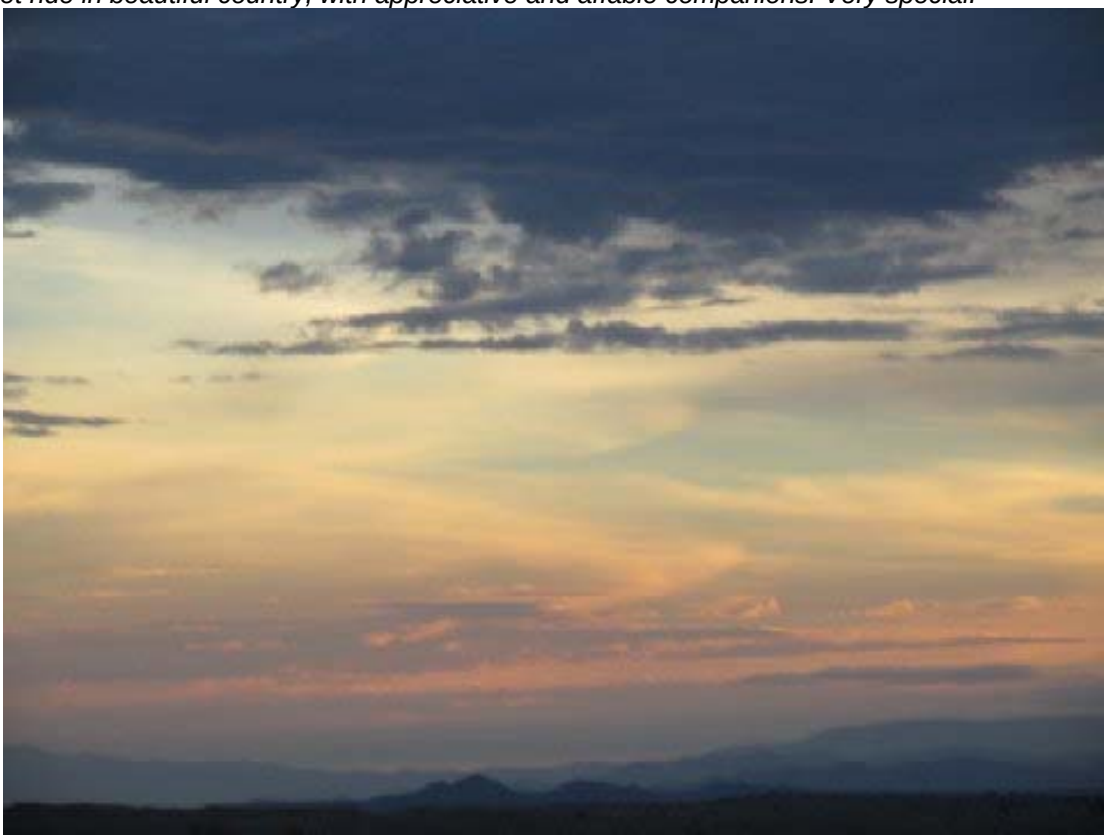
We seemed to be drawn along these meandering routes - carved by eons of floodwaters. Did Geronimo once pass this way?

We came upon a natural green marble ramp; nature's handicapped access!

Headed home through the open country. Not a sound.

Lulu stalks the tall grass at twilight.

A quiet ride in beautiful country, with appreciative and affable companions. Very special.



Nice to share with you!
MM

2014-07-15 – ***Back Yard Ride***

It rained yesterday and this morning, but by late today, the skies looked promising for a little ride out our gate.

Lulu leads the way. She loves late-day rides. More likely to see bunnies on the trail!

There are lots of these flowers now - I don't know what they are, they look like sweet peas, but have no scent.

Spanky lags behind, but soon catches up. Dacodah's shoeing has gotten him back on track!

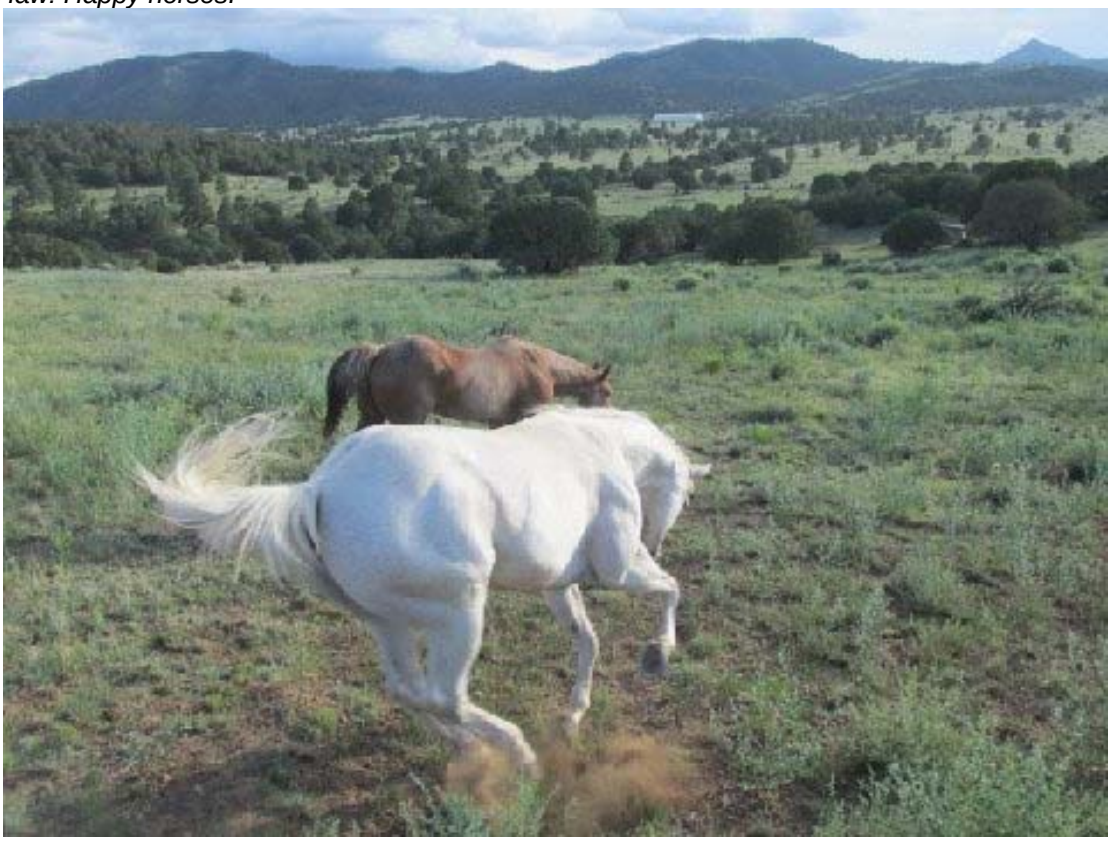
He runs after Lulu.

Thunder takes off! A white blur across the hillside.

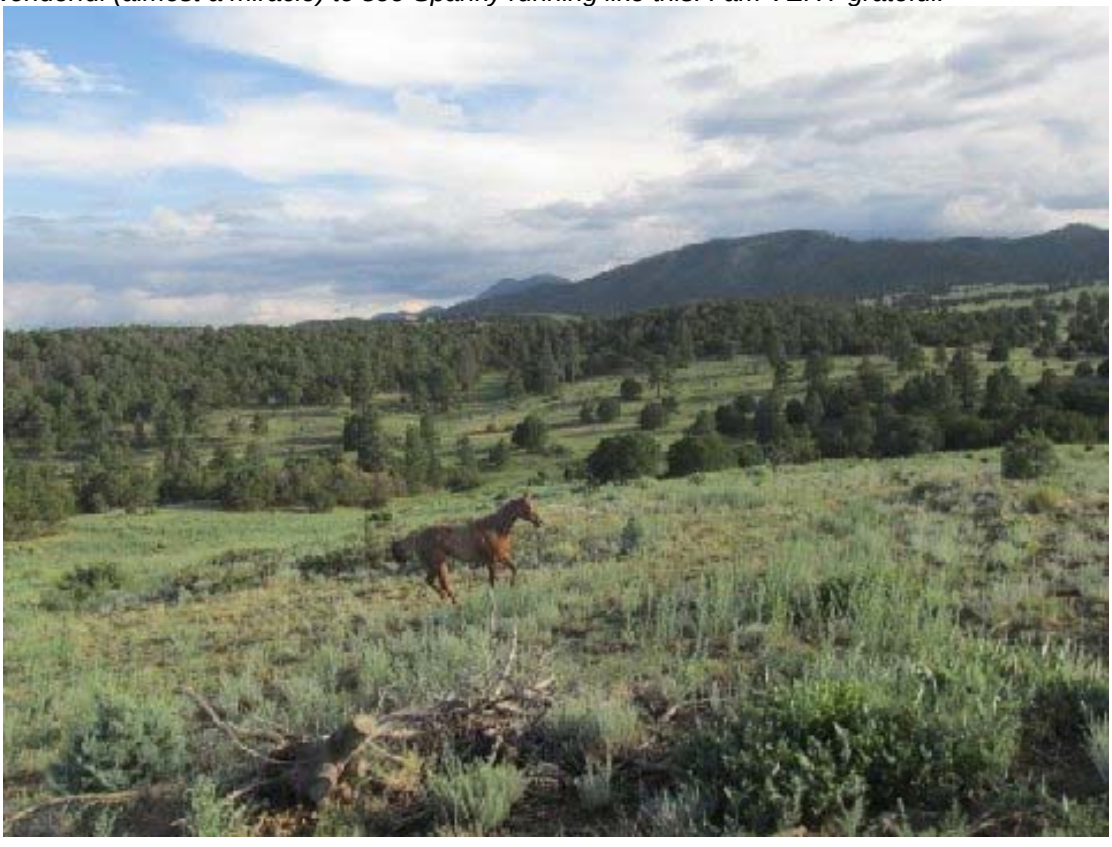
. . . then waits patiently for us.

He and Spanky were in the mood to run. I clung to Belle, and off we went.

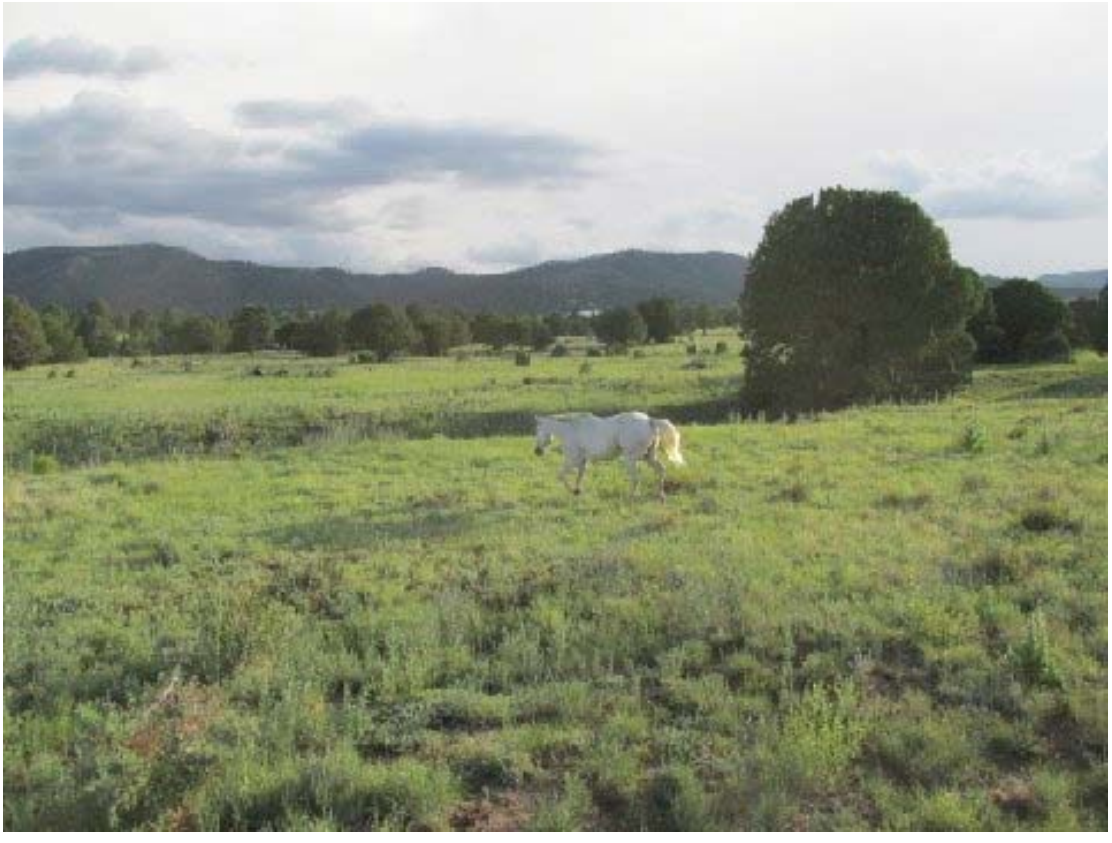
Yee Haw! Happy horses.



It is wonderful (almost a miracle) to see Spanky running like this! I am VERY grateful.



He is having a wonderful time.



. . . the clouds above home.

MM

2014-07-20 – ***A Mother's Love***

Just about every morning, "mom elk" comes to our place for some grazing, but first, she nurses her little calf, and then instructs it to stay put. It finds a place out of sight, and waits for her return. Better behaved than most human kids!

The baby just finished nursing.

Mom has no trouble hopping over the fence (it's still too high for the calf to cross).

Off for a late breakfast . . . and, I suspect, a visit with friends in the forest. "You wouldn't believe what my little dickens did last night . . ."

Baby watches her go, before bedding down in the shade (and safety) of a tree until she returns.

Speaking of "mother love" . . . Mommy Cat and her son Wilcox . . .

MM

2014-07-20 – ***Sundown Reunion***

Just now, I was sitting on the veranda watching the twilight sky, when I saw mom elk return (I guess she was gone all day - I'm not sure). The little one came out of its hiding place and joyfully ran to greet mom! It was wonderful to watch.

Mom looks around for her baby.

It ran at full speed to greet her. "I'm here! I'm here! Welcome home, Mom. What's for dinner??? "Mom keeps an eye on me - she must think I'm okay.

Dinner time!

Happy together.

It is enlightening to see nature's creatures behave with understanding and compassion.
MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2014-07-21 – ***Elk Again***

I try not to be repetitious . . . but the daily elk visits are pretty special, I think. Take this evening . . .

It rained earlier, but now the skies have cleared, and here they come (in the distance).

I don't like to say anything . . . but I think she may be . . . expecting . . .

. . . and this one, too! . . . "Hey! All I eat is salad!!!"

It was dinner time, and I went looking for the horses. The elk pretty much ignored me.

Here they are, grazing with some elk along Cherry Creek.

"Say good-bye to your friends, and come and eat!" (As a kid, that's what my mom used to say to me on summer evenings.)

Out of the herd, mom elk came home with us, to feed her little one.

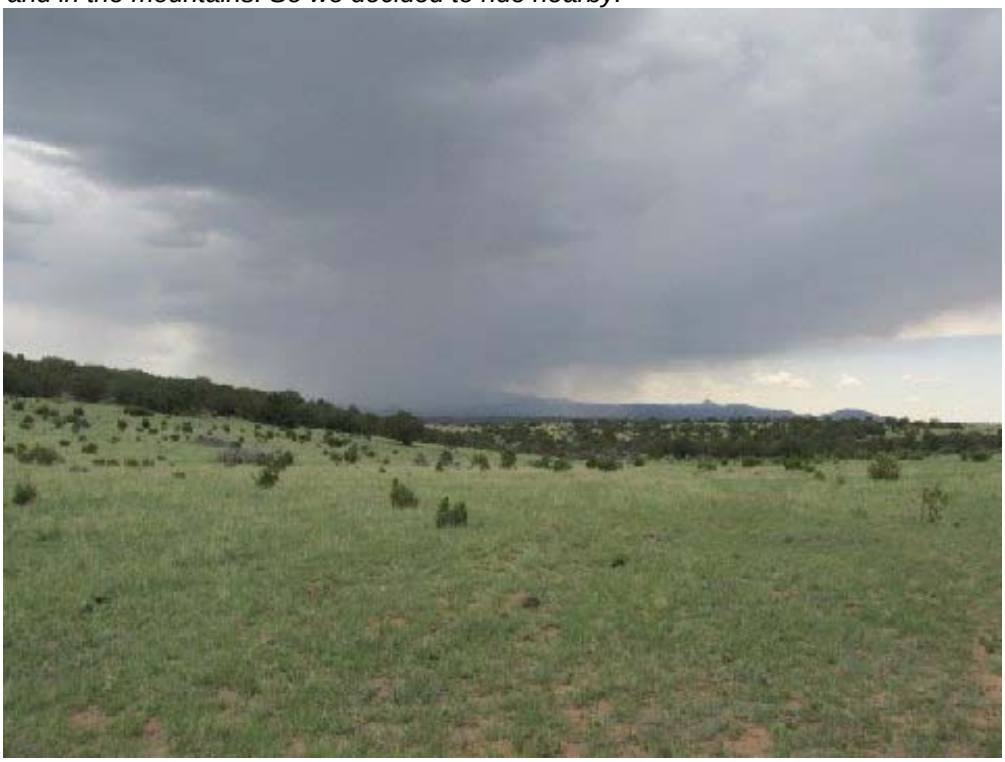
She brought a lady-friend along for company.

Well, that's it from here this evening!
MM

2014-07-22 – ***Cowboy Club Med***

This time of the year, we just go with the flow . . . the monsoon flow . . . which brings cool cloudy afternoons and welcome rain. We had to be in Capitan for some errands, then figured afterwards we would ride up the mountain near home. It was clear and sunny when we left the ranch.

. . . but when we were ready to leave Capitan ("Birthplace of Smokey Bear"), it looked pretty wet back at the ranch and in the mountains. So we decided to ride nearby.



This little pronghorn greeted us near Capitan Gap; something about his big eyes makes him look like an alien!

Threatening clouds moving in.

Rain over Capitan Gap.

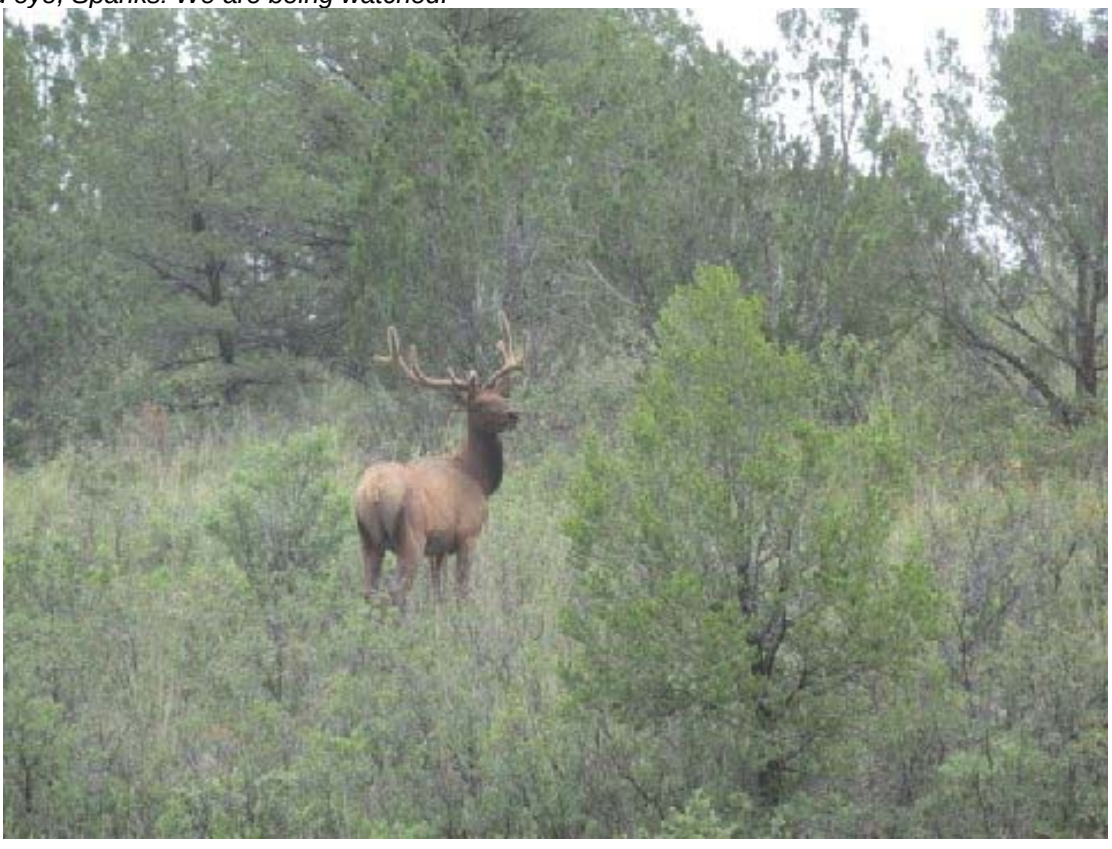
The rain only got to within about a 1/4 mile of us; we could smell it (and the temperature dropped), but we stayed dry.

In the cool air, Spanky kicks up his heels a little.

Horse traffic jam.

Oh-oh. Spanky spots something in the forest.

Good eye, Spanks! We are being watched.



This bull elk with antlers in "velvet" tagged along with us for about 20 minutes, before silently disappearing over the ridge.

Thunder races towards a drink of water.

Solar panels are replacing many of these wonderful old windmills on ranches across the west.

WHAT THE HECK? We are in the middle of nowhere, and someone has constructed a nice new wood deck around an old water tank!

A Cowboy Club Med! Belle checks it out. "Let's go for a dip! Gee, I wish I had thought to bring my new bikini".

She enjoys a cool drink directly from a well tap. "A beer would be nice right about now . . .".

Great ride - ready to go home.

As always, thanks for coming along!
MM

2014-07-25 – ***Monsoon Season***

Most people around here prefer fall, with its cool days and changing colors, but I like our summer monsoon season. This is typical of many days:

11:00 am; cloudless and 78 degrees.

Noon; clouds building and 81 degrees.

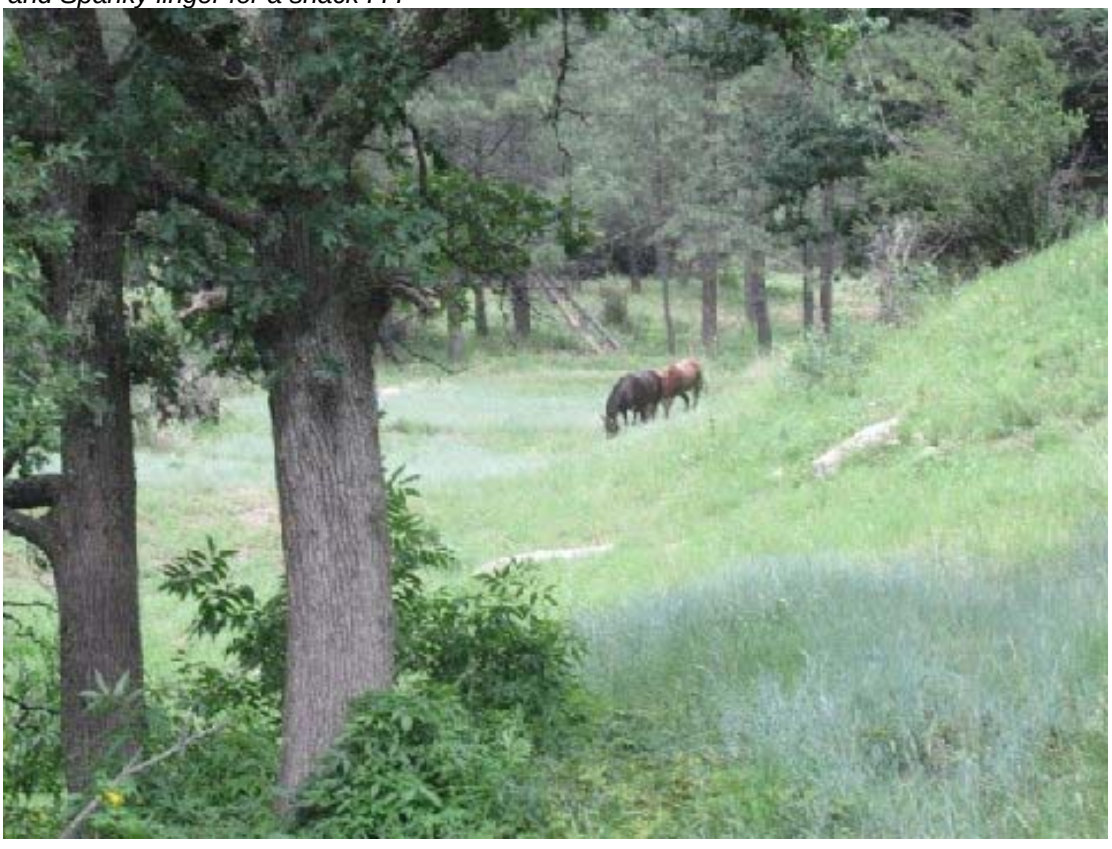
12:30; thunder and lightning. Wilcox knows what's coming!

1:00 pm; the deluge and 64 degrees!

Baby elk and its two moms don't seem to mind!

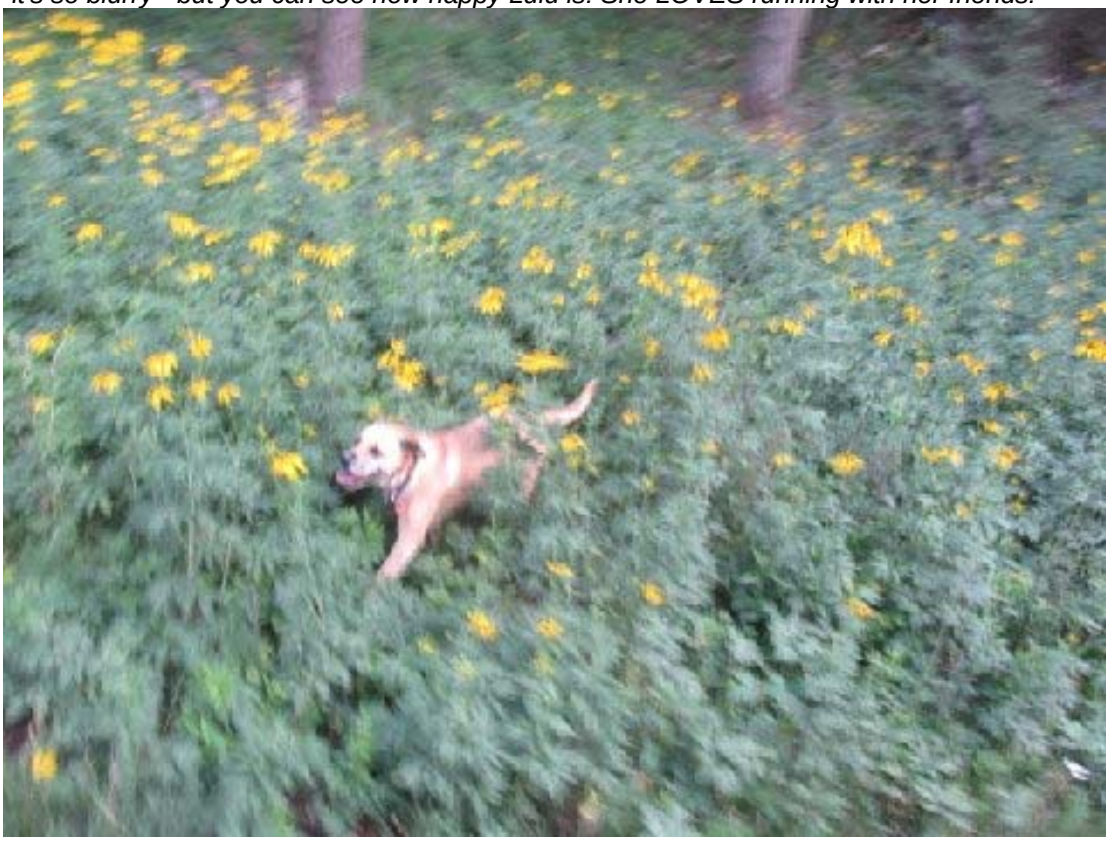
As the skies clear in the afternoon, we head for the Bonito Valley .A country road through the aspens.

Belle and Spanky linger for a snack . . .



. . . and then hurry to catch up. What impresses me, is that the horses are willing to keep moving instead of staying put to graze on all this grass.

Sorry it's so blurry - but you can see how happy Lulu is! She LOVES running with her friends!

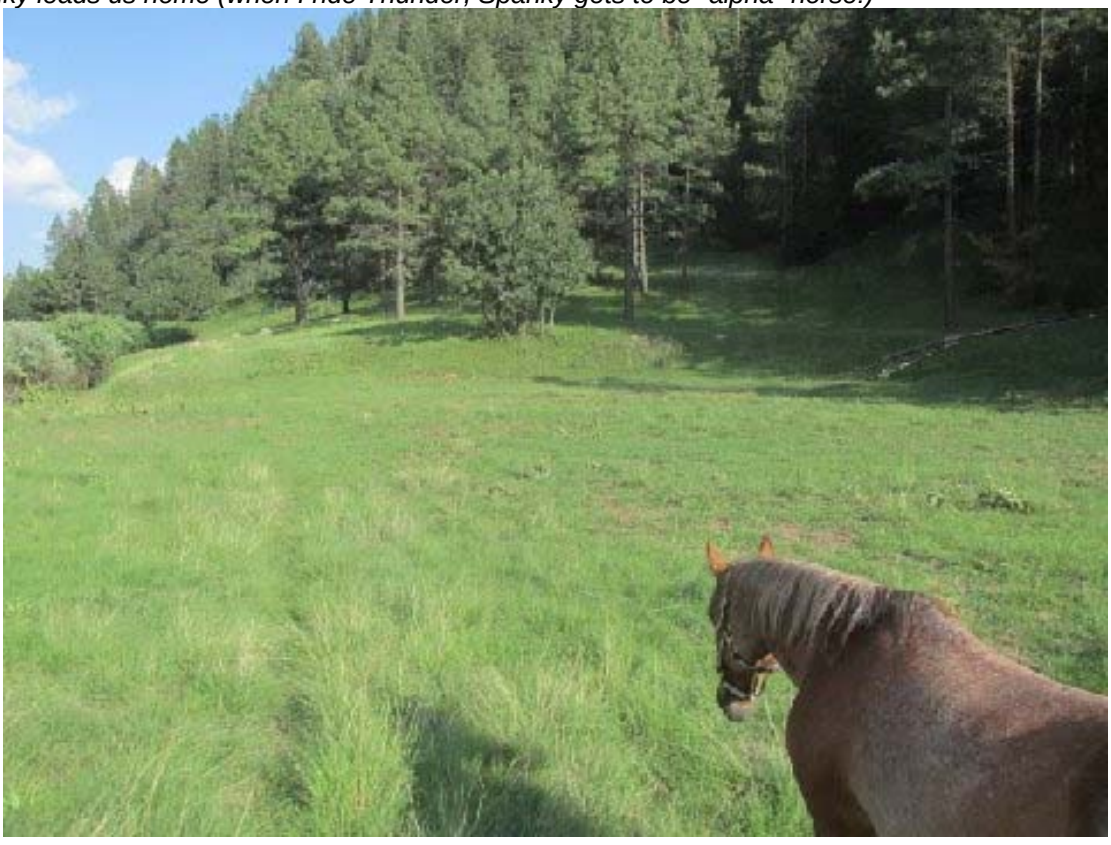


Thunder spots a cow.

Belle finds some genuine clover. A real treat!

Here comes Belle. "Gee, you guys missed some more clover over there!"

Spanky leads us home (when I ride Thunder, Spanky gets to be "alpha" horse!)



This season sure makes for some pretty sunsets!

MM

2014-07-31 – ***Summer Days***

Down in the Rio Grande Valley near Dacodah's, summer days can be hot, but if you catch it when the breezes are gently wafting the scent of Russian olive blooms through the clean, fresh air, it can be wonderful. We joined one of his groups for a ride on such a day.

Thunder leads the ride.

. . . and gets a treat from Dacodah, high on an open ridge.

Summer makes the desert seem more intense and timeless.

Family outing.

Lulu finds a shady spot for a rest (look closely, under the rock).

Thunder and Spanky always seem to enjoy the view.

After the ride, they wait patiently for treats.

Back home in the mountains, this time of year is cool and green. Overheated Texans think it is paradise. Yesterday was feed store day - have to make sure it isn't likely to rain on the hay coming home!

The elk seem to be hanging around more.

They ignore the metal deer on the driveway.

New Mexico sure is a land of contrasts!
MM

2014-08-03 – ***Dodging Rain***

We have had significant rain lately (more than 5 inches last week). No one is complaining!

We were fortunate that the rain spared us during a recent big tour at Fort Stanton.

Belle has become more and more patient. She obviously enjoys this!

After the tour, we went for a ride on the new trails recently installed by AmeriCore "Ecoservant" volunteers.

They added about 2.5 miles of soft, sandy, rock free trails.

The trails lead from the parade ground, to the old, military-era cemetery . . .

. . . and then around the former tuberculosis hospital-era golf course (once used by patients and staff). Thunder checks out a stone tee box.

This tee has a very nice view.

Another tee along the way.

It's odd to find these things out in the middle of nowhere! We used to run across them on our rides, and suggested that other people might enjoy seeing them, too. Hope you did!
MM

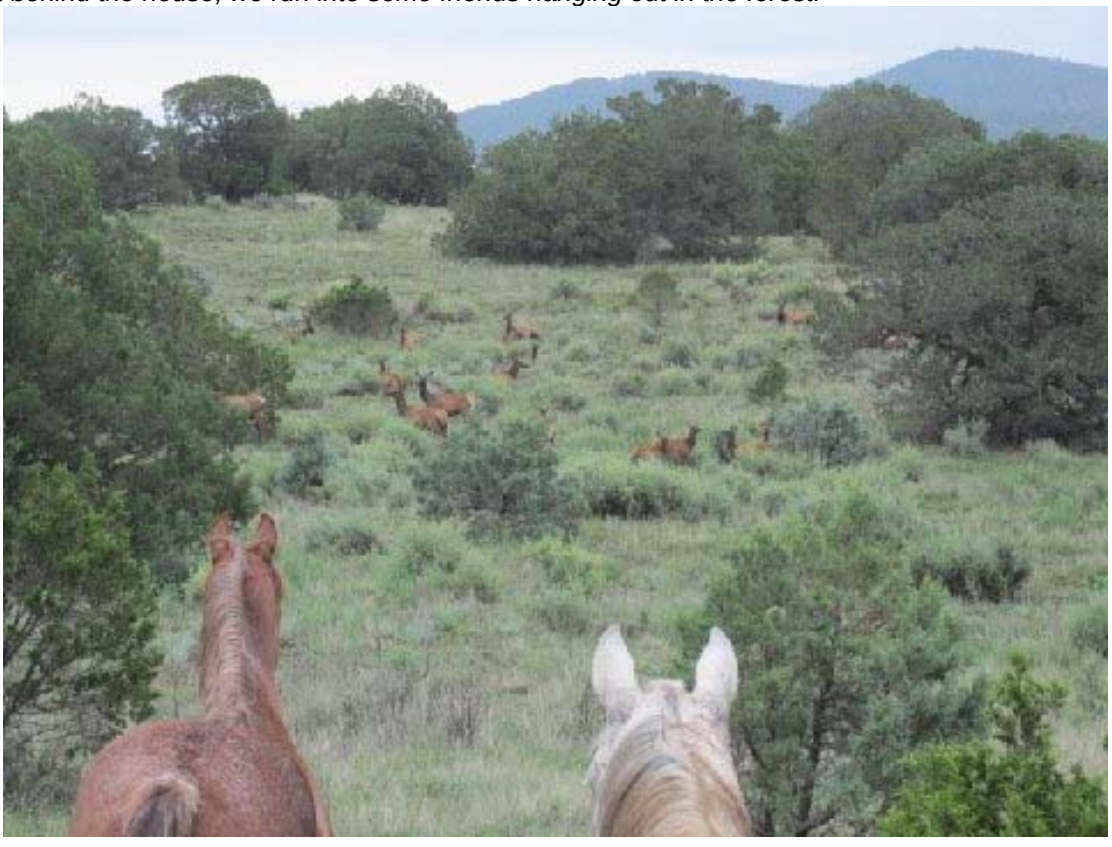
2014-08-03 – ***Friends In The Forest***

The recent rains have made us more creative with our riding. It's nice to just go out the back gate and not worry about trailering through the mud!

"Hey, Lulu, want to go for a ride?"
"Will my hair get wet?"
"No, I don't think it will rain again until we get back."
"Then okay!"

Out the gate we go.

Right behind the house, we run into some friends hanging out in the forest.



"Hi!"
"Hi!"

They're so used to us, some don't even bother to get up!

These two young bulls are just developing their antlers for the season.

"Come'on Spanky, we gotta go now"

"Gee, they have some interesting gossip. Did you hear about the deer who . . . "

Back on the (muddy) trail.

The rain has brought out some more wild flowers.

By the time we got back home, the herd had moved there to greet us (if you look closely, you can see one casually walking across the cattle guard on our driveway).

From the house.

"Hey! Can you tell I'm not a statue?"

"Yes, Erik, we can see your big butt!"

"You think you are so funny . . . "

MM

2014-08-04 – ***Old Lincoln Days***

Lincoln, New Mexico is considered the most authentic old west town in the country. Just a tiny village, it has changed very little since the lawless days of Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett. It still has just one main street - the one President Rutherford B. Hayes called "The most dangerous street in America".

Every year they hold the oldest, continuously-performed pageant in the nation, "The Last Escape of Billy the Kid", with a cast made up entirely of locals - many of whom come from generations of performers, and they have a parade. During the past few years, Belle has become the sort of *de facto* mascot - carrying the American flag.

. . . .but first, I had to get up at dawn to feed everyone. Since it was cold and raining, Wilcox and Lulu thought this was a stupid idea.

The elk were having their breakfast (in the rain), too.

They were just hanging out. You can see some of them watching me. I wonder what they think . . .

Business as usual.

The horses had a sort of "breakfast in bed" . . .

Cozy, looking out the barn door at the rain, but Belle and I had work to do!

Fortunately, the rain had stopped in Lincoln by the time we got there. "Yeah, well, I could still be in bed."

Folks really get into this!

After the parade, it has become our custom to hang out near the Torreon (defensive tower built in 1850), for photos.

We even got to meet Billy the Kid!

This really is an unusual place!
MM

2014-08-05 – ***An In Between Ride***

Another little ride between rains!

This curious guy looks a little lopsided!

Lulu leads the way.

Still pretty wet . . .

Another curious one.

Can you spot Lulu?

She practically needs a periscope!

Here she comes again. Lulu likes to check things out along the perimeter as we ride. She certainly gets her exercise.

Spanky ponders which grass to try next.

I've never seen a black butterfly before . . .

A peaceful shot of Thunder.

They really do like to run. Sorry about the blurriness . . . we are at full gallop!

The wild horses of Nogal!

Supper time.

MM

2014-08-06 – ***He Knew***

It looked like a good chance to take a ride between rains. We hadn't visited the Ranchman's Camp area for a while, so . . .

"Hey, Spanky, doesn't he see those big dark clouds coming our way?"

"Maybe we should hurry."

All the cattle tanks are full.

Getting darker . . .

It's raining all around Nogal Peak in the distance.

A tandem roll in the grass.

Suddenly, Thunder wanted us to turn around and go back. Very unusual behavior for him - he likes to GO! He actually turned Spanky as though he was working cattle.

I had a sense I should listen to him, and we lit out for the trailer. It was a fast ride all the way!

Thunder was right. We no sooner got them loaded, and . . .

Smart horse!

MM

PS

A surprise arrived . . .

Caroline sent this sepia "out of the past" shot from Sunday's parade . . .

2014-08-08 – ***Tall Grass***

Old Timers talk wistfully about the days when grass "grew as high as a horse's belly" around here. Well . . .

It's happened again this year!

Horses are tall. That's a LOT of grass!

So much for Belle's diet! "What! It's just salad!"

Lulu has to burrow through and find some open spots.

The rivers and creeks are running high.

2014-08-08 – ***Tall Grass***

It impresses me that the horses are willing to leave such abundance . . . and cross a noisy wooden bridge on their own.

It's green at the ranch, too.

Seems like I am ALWAYS mowing!

Baby elk have lots to eat - below a "super" moon and rainbow.

2014-08-08 – ***Tall Grass***

After all these years, Nacho still stops by for her evening apples!

Fall will come, and then winter. All the green will be gone. That's okay. Sure is nice now, though!
MM

2014-08-11 – ***Summertime Tours***

The Fort now receives requests specifically asking for Belle to conduct tours. Fortunately, she is happy to oblige!

Of course, her family usually joins her. Gee, do they look like they are ready to go?

We've had some interesting skies lately.

Belle's been lucky - it hasn't rained on any of her tours.

Lulu always enjoys greeting guests on the museum porch.

While Belle and Lulu are at work, Thunder and Spanky stay close by - following the tour as it proceeds around the parade ground. They have the whole thing figured out!

After most tours, we bid the visitors good-bye, and go for a quiet ride down near the river.

We had some big thundershowers during the night (I hadn't expected it, so raced out to put the horses in the barn at 1:00 am), and the water coming out of the mountains is still heavy with silt.

Lulu contemplates the best way to cross.

Across the river, we visited the ruined WWII German internment camp.

This former recreation hall was built by the Germans themselves.

What a shame it has been allowed to deteriorate beyond repair . . .

Headed home, past long-abandoned staff housing.

MM

2014-08-14 – ***Wilcox and Mom***

All these cats are affectionate with each other (although Buddy and Smarty Pants have a true love/hate relationship; they are ALWAYS together, yet give each other the evil eye . . .)

However, Wilcox and his mom seem to have a special bond.

\

2014-08-14 – ***Wilcox and Mom***

MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2014-08-15 – ***Smug Mountain***

Can a mountain be "smug"? Nogal Peak looks down on the ranch from its perch at 9957 ft. As the rains have come, we watched it get greener and greener each day, enticing us like the mythical Bali Hai in South Pacific - "Come to me, come to me . . ."

. . . but every time we planned to ride up there, menacing clouds formed, warning us away. "Ha! Ha!" said the mountain. "Try to get to me".

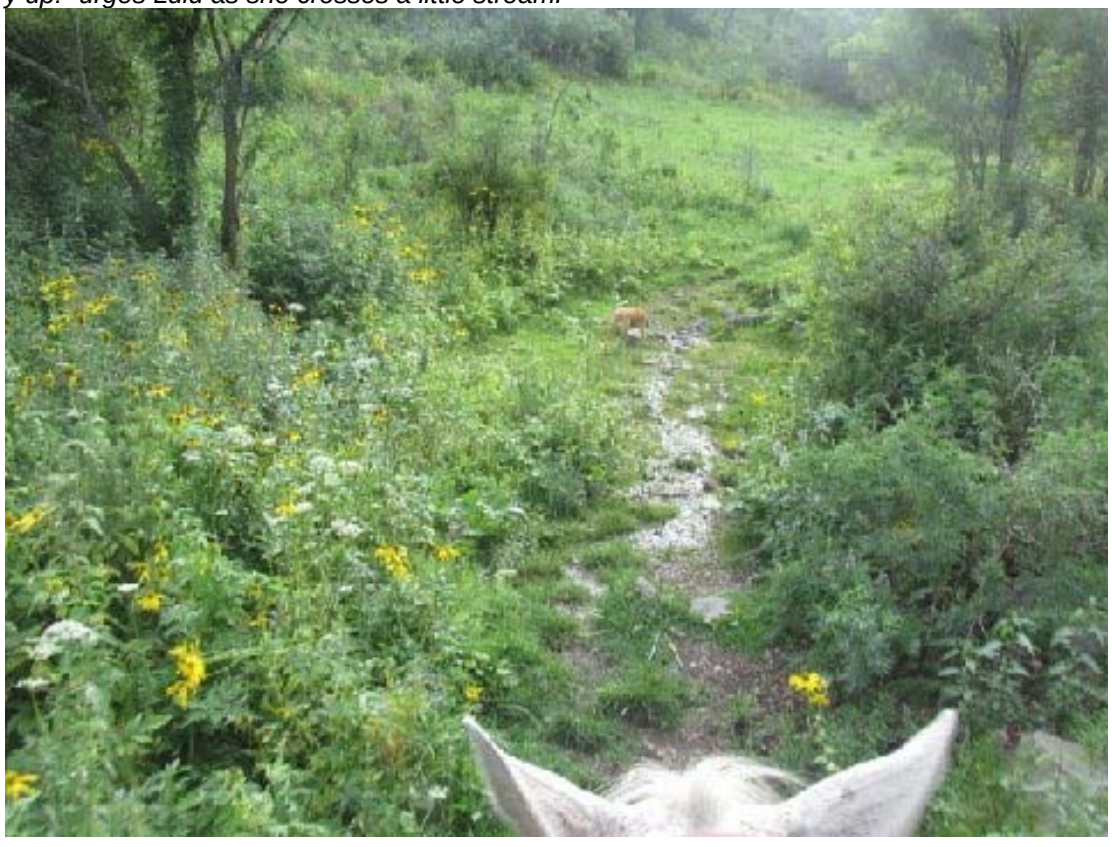
Yesterday, there were marauding thunderstorms in every direction, but the skies above the peak were teasingly clear. Should we chance it? Well . . . let's go! The road was dry (it can become a mud wrestler's dream in the rain.)

Getting closer, but so are the clouds.

The trail head is through those trees. Beyond, the peak watches us, amused . . .

"Follow the yellow (sunflower) road!" The trail is nearly overgrown.

"Hurry up!" urges Lulu as she crosses a little stream.



Spanky makes a bottleneck as we climb through a fern-y meadow.

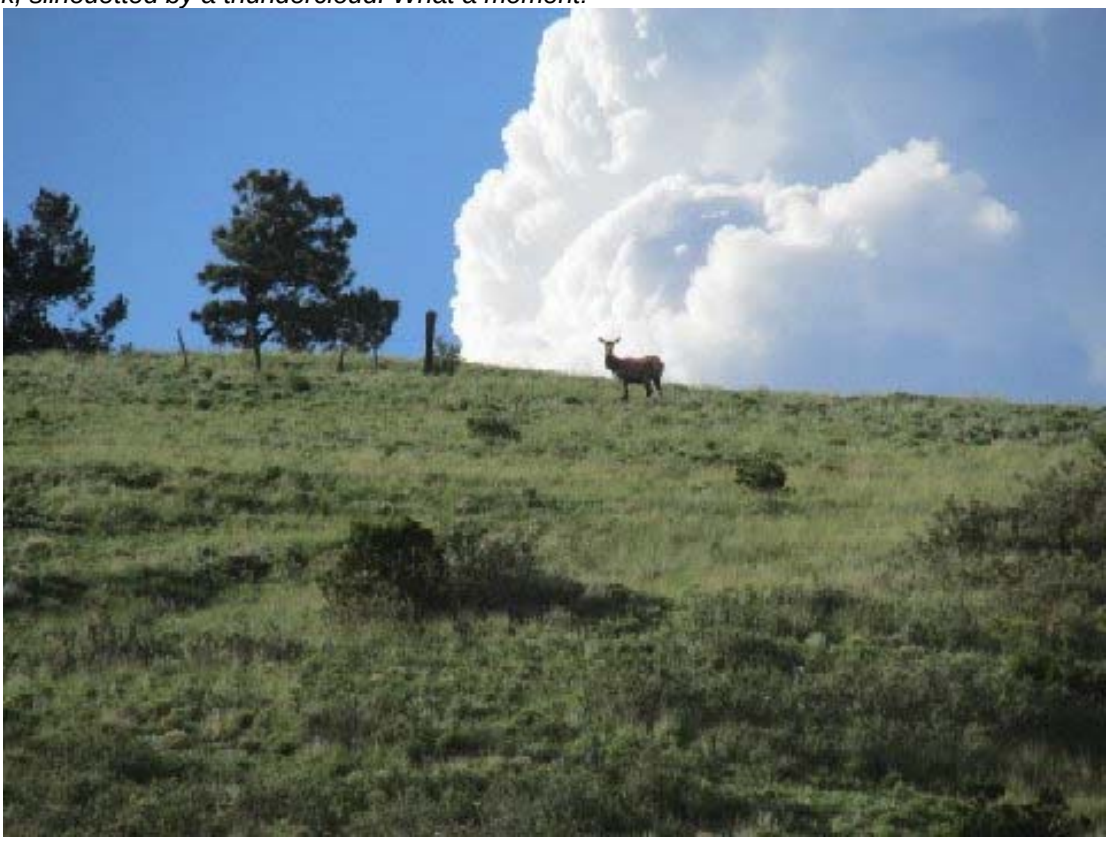
The storm rises behind us. We can hear the thunder.

It looks for all the world like a tornado could suddenly dagger down from the clouds.

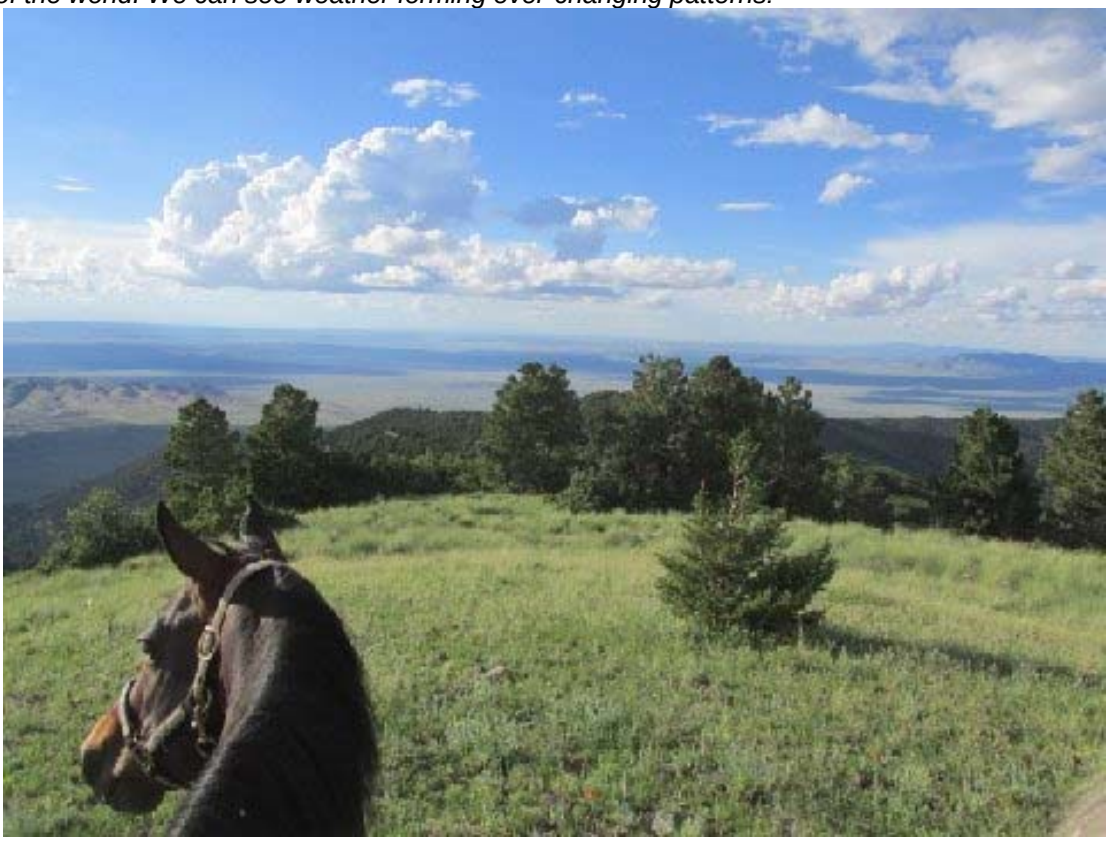
Another one ahead of us! But we keep climbing.

WHAT'S THAT? We get closer . . .

An elk, silhouetted by a thundercloud. What a moment!



Top of the world. We can see weather forming ever-changing patterns!



"Psst, Thunder - he's getting awfully sappy about this ride."

. . . and there it is. The peak! Cattle grazing in a meadow, close to heaven (Belle is right - I am sappy about this!)

Spanky takes a break in alpine splendor.

They discuss our trip so far. "This is so cool up here!" "Yeah . . . but those clouds . . ."

We head up to the mountain top. It's challenging going, especially for Lulu. Can you see here snaking through the tufted grass?

Ha! Ha! We made it!

. . . but the storms are forming nearer and nearer.
You can see a white curtain of rain falling in the distance . . .

While overhead . . .

We skedaddle home, triumphant.

Whew! That was a fast-paced, beautiful, and glorious ride. Very glad to share it with you! Maybe the mountain won't be quite so smug, now . . . MM

2014-08-15 - *We Did It! Thank YOU From the Alto Horse Herd*

"Herd advocates and representatives of the New Mexico Livestock Board shook hands and walked away with what both sides hope is a new system of cooperation and understanding that will lead to ensuring the safety of the horse herd. One improvement already initiated as a result of the Alto 'incident' is the ability to sign up for an email notification by the Board when stray livestock is acquired by the state agency." *Ruidoso News Friday, August 15, 2014*

There is little doubt that this prompt response and progress would not have happened without the attention to the issue brought by the petition - signed by more than 4,000 people. Thank you!
Sincerely,
MM0

Newest Filly

Herd Stallion

Herd Stallion

New Filly

Sleeping on hay

Lynda Maire Blaney
WHOA! Wild Horses of Alto-Save the Herd!
http://wildhorsesofalto.blogspot.com
saveherdalto@gmail.com

2014-08-18 – ***An Ounce Of Prevention***

Horses' hooves are very complex, and considering the size and weight of a horse, surprisingly delicate. All my horses wear shoes to provide correction and protection from rocks and such on the trail. I try always to carry a rubber "boot" to fit over a hoof in case a shoe is lost (to help protect the foot from damage). I call it our "spare tire". The weather has become more predicable (we are still getting some monsoon rains, but less frequently), which is allowing more riding in the mountains above the ranch.

Off we go! Thunder looks back, to make sure we didn't forget anything.

The streams are really flowing!

It was nice to find the horse campground empty - and very green!

"Let's go!"

Lulu has a spring in her step, as she leads us along.

Pausing for a snack.

There are lots of flowers now. I understand these are a type of primrose . . .

Water all along the way.

More snacking.

Even Lulu enjoys a little fresh grass (I am limiting the horses' pasture time at home, so that they don't get too much of the nutrient-rich summer grass).

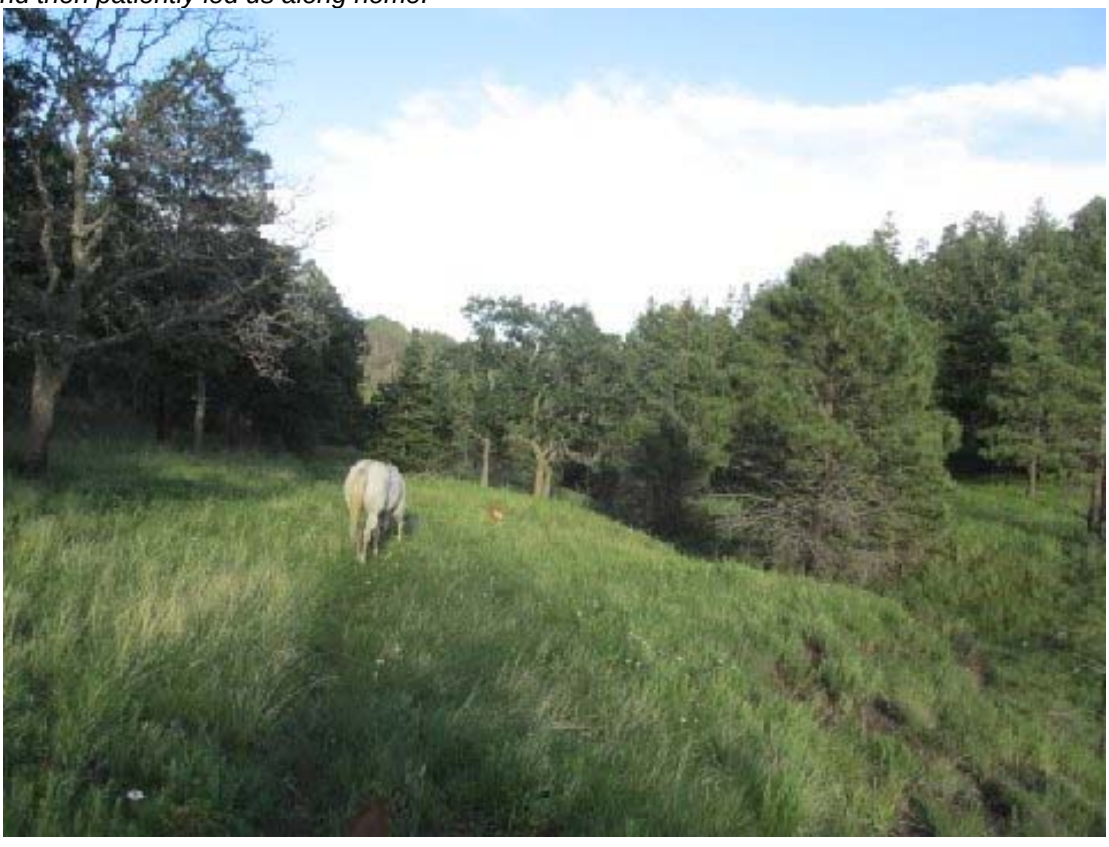
Lulu pauses to wait for us.

It was getting late. As we reached the turn-around point of this ride, I had a funny feeling about Spanky -- just a "sixth sense" thing (I am especially protective of him because of his ring bone). Sure enough, his left front shoe was a little loose. Nothing serious, but it was a long way back, and I sure didn't want him to lose it along the way (and possibly damage the hoof in the process). So, we stopped to put on the rubber boot. I think he knew it was a good idea, because he tolerated it without any fuss. He will wear it until he gets new shoes on Wednesday.

To keep him from running (and possibly losing the boot and/or the shoe), I used one of my reins as a lead rope to guide him along behind Belle and me. He followed very well, and Belle didn't seem to notice that she now had just one rein! Good horse. Of course, none of this kept Thunder and Lulu from having fun, chasing around in a meadow.

. . . but, to their credit, they always stopped and waited for the slow pokes.

. . . and then patiently led us along home.



The leisurely pace helped us to better appreciate the beauty around us.

MM

2014-08-19 – ***Kids Klub Photo Contest***

A few weeks ago, Belle and I were asked to give a tour to young members (ages 4-14) of a summer church "kid's camera camp"; Nikon donated a number of cameras to a local church, so that the young members of their congregation could spend wholesome time during the school break, visiting - and photographing - local people and places.

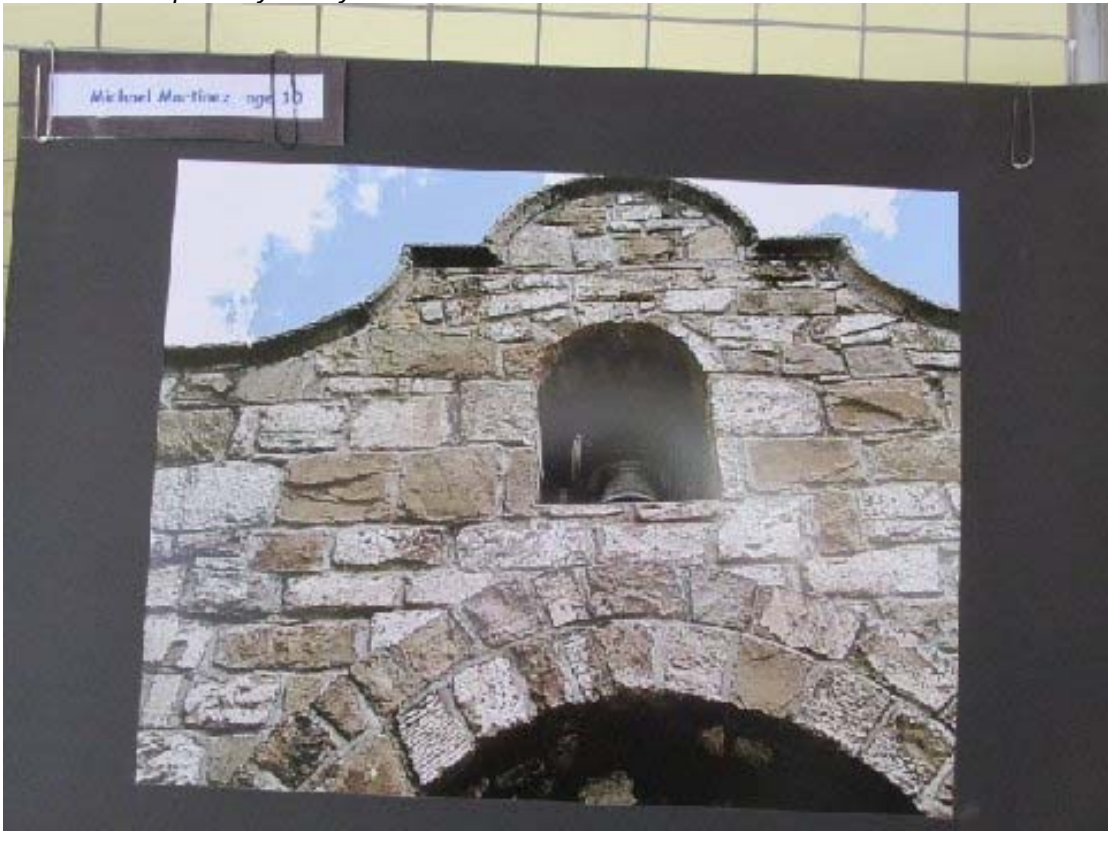
We found out today *(thanks, Linda!)* that the children's photos have been placed in a competition, and the finalists will be judged next Friday. We went to have a look.

It was a nice day for a drive.

2014-08-19 – ***Kids Klub Photo Contest***

The project was sponsored by a non-denominational church at Ruidoso Downs Racetrack (which mostly serves the seasonal workers, trainers, jockeys, and their families). The exhibit was set up in the chapel's lobby.

Photos included subjects all over Lincoln County; and a few featured the tour of Fort Stanton. This one of the Fort's old chapel is by a 10-year-old.



Nice shot!

A "selfie" includes Belle in the background.

In another entry, Belle greets the kids - and deals with pint-sized paparazzi on the Museum porch!

Lulu hams it up. She had a great time with the kids.

This is a pretty remarkable shot . . . by a FOUR-YEAR-OLD!

These young people have a lot of talent - and much to be proud of. I applaud Nikon and the church for their creative and educational summer program.
MM

End of Volume 6 - Part 1 of 3

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