THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume XIV

Part 2 of 3

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Please use the BOOKMARKS TOOL:

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

Lots more, hanging out (they just sort of "levitate" right over the fences).

2017-12-19 - *Passing Through*

Everyone is busy.

This one wondered what I was.

A little guy.

2017-12-19 - *Passing Through*

Nice to see - and to share!
MM

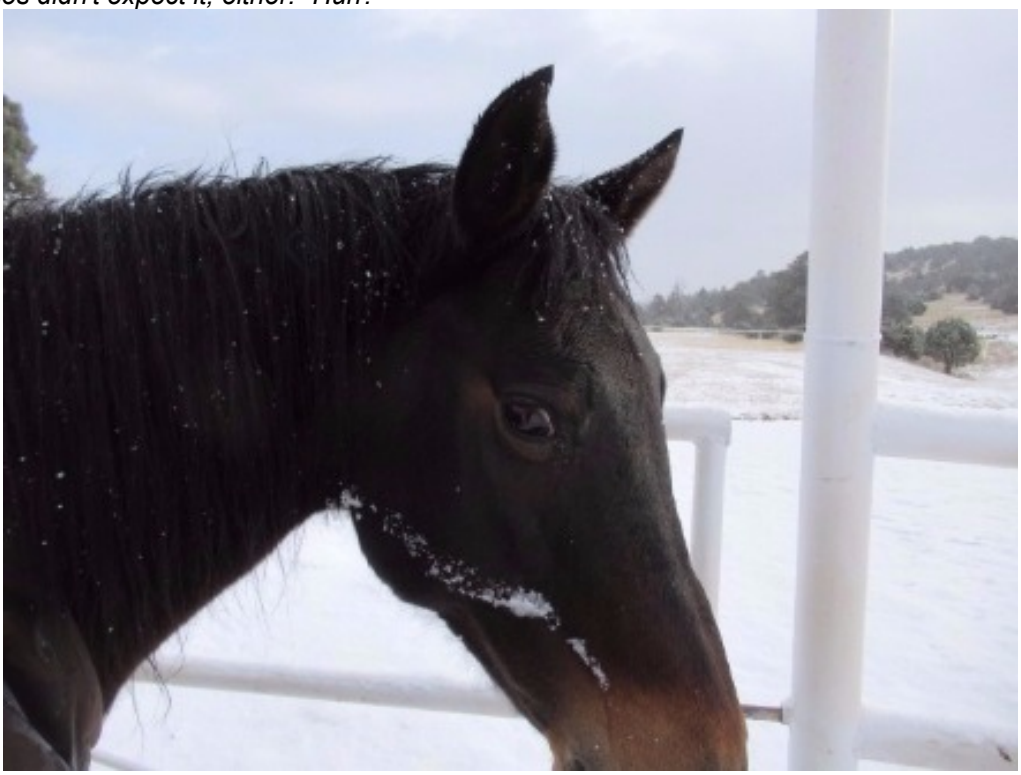
FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2017-12-22 - *(Nearly) A White Christmas*

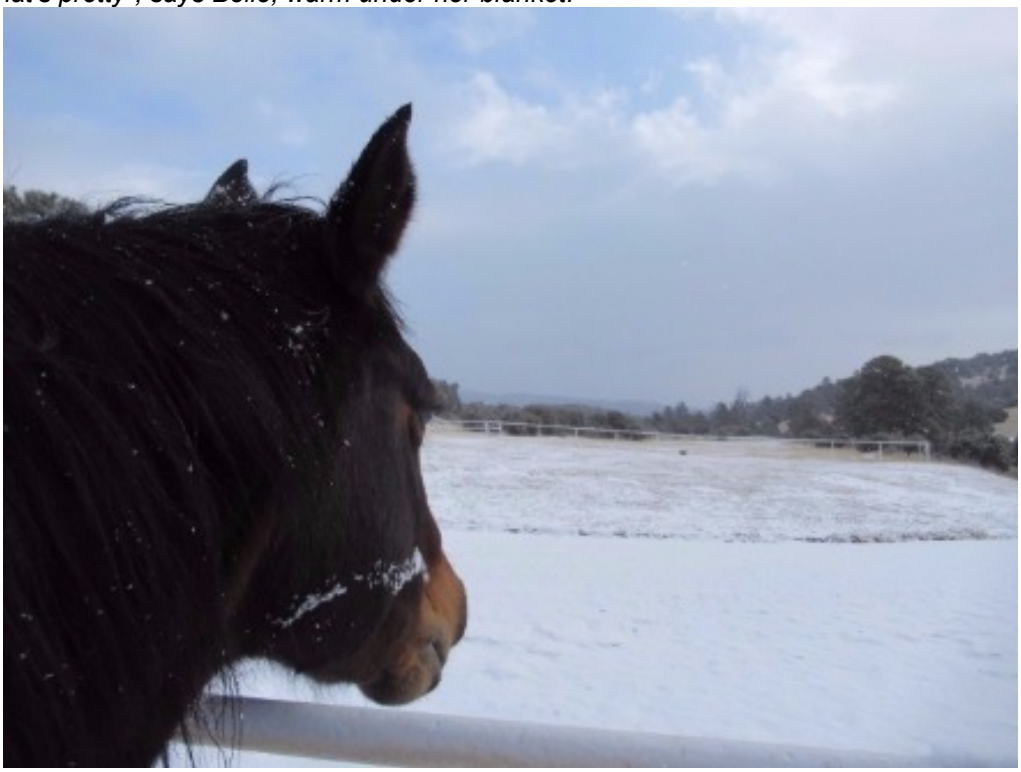
After weeks of unusually mild weather, this morning gave us a surprise!

2017-12-22 - *(Nearly) A White Christmas*

The horses didn't expect it, either. "Huh?"



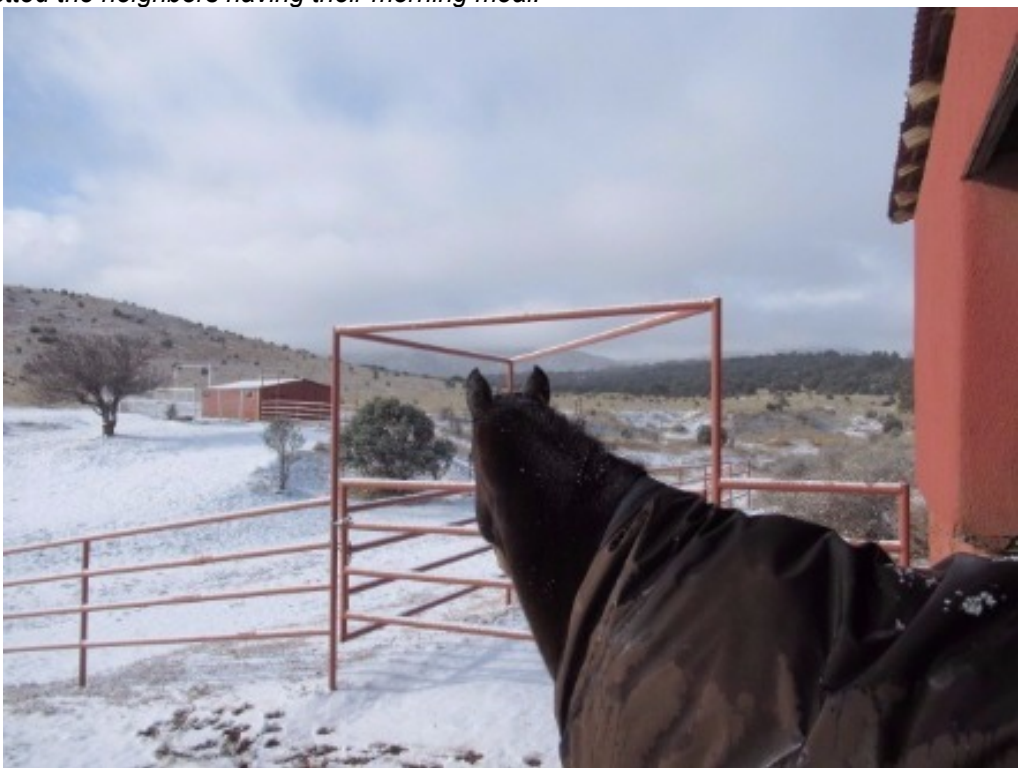
"Wow. That's pretty", says Belle, warm under her blanket.



2017-12-22 - *(Nearly) A White Christmas*

The boys were more interested in their breakfast. "When do we eat?"

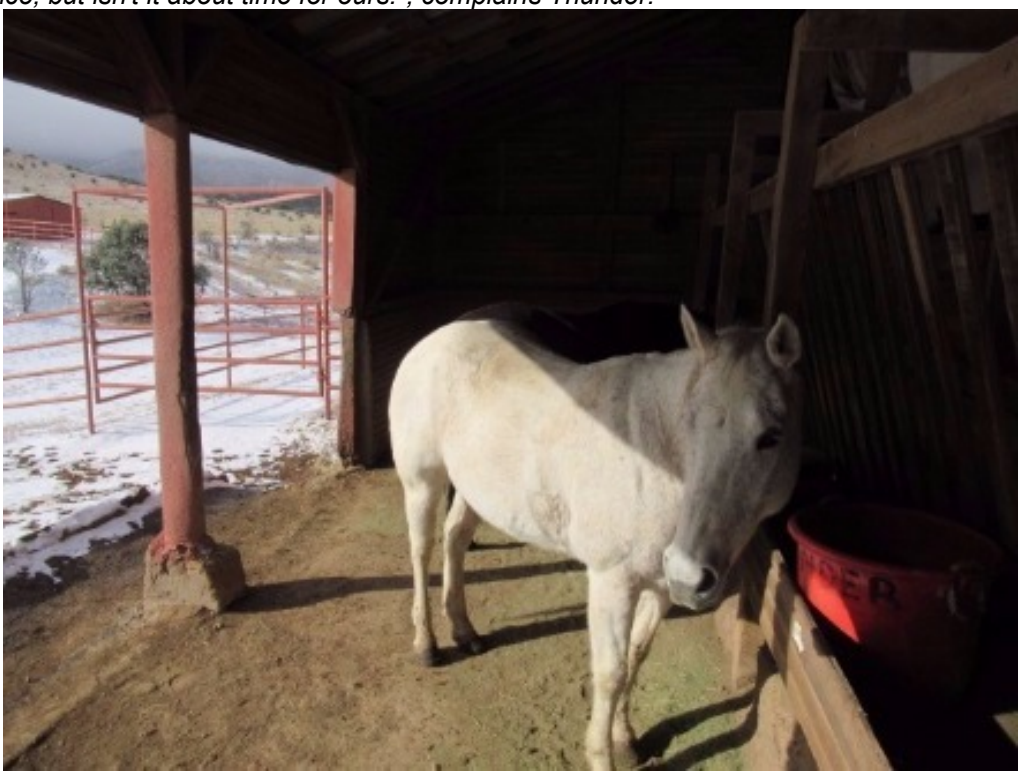
Belle spotted the neighbors having their morning meal.



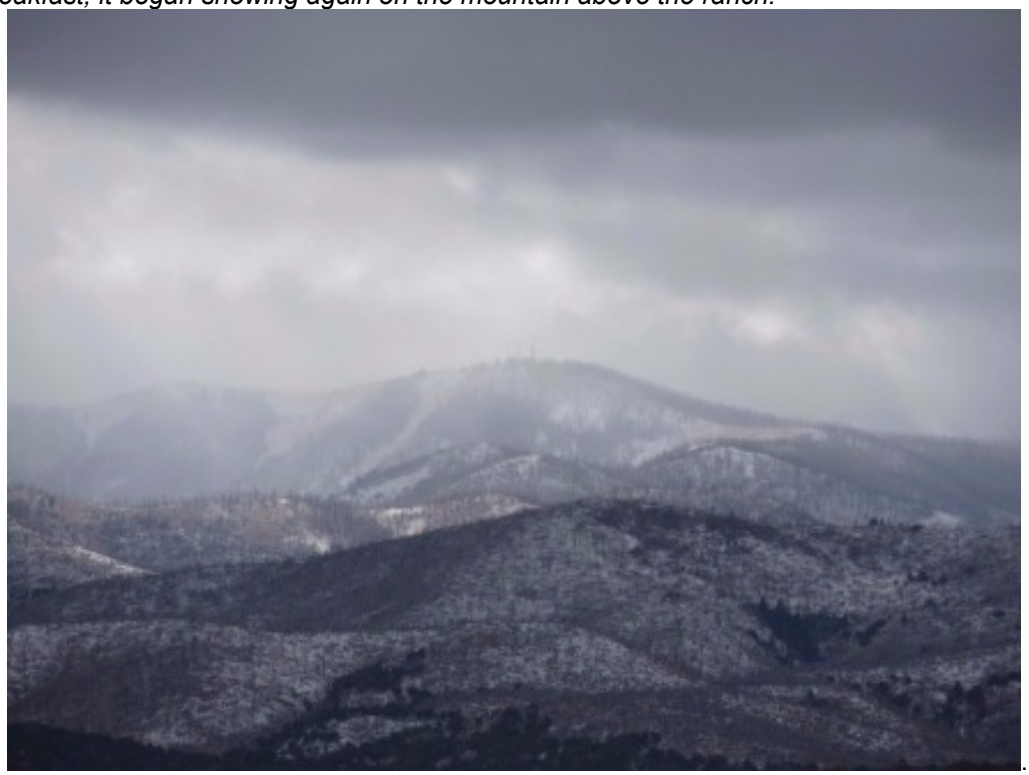
A pair of elk, grazing on the hillside, as snow continued to fall.

2017-12-22 - *(Nearly) A White Christmas*

"That's nice, but isn't it about time for ours!", complains Thunder.

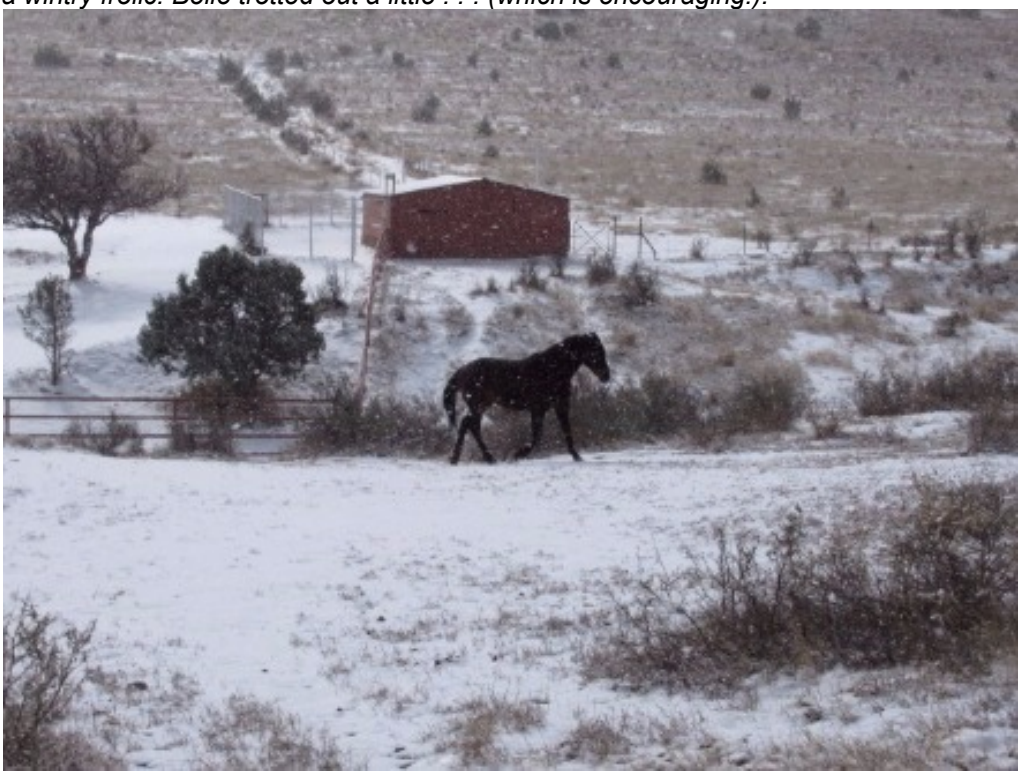


After breakfast, it began snowing again on the mountain above the ranch.



2017-12-22 - *(Nearly) A White Christmas*

Time for a wintry frolic. Belle trotted out a little . . . (which is encouraging!).



While the boys ran full out, as snow drifted gently down.

2017-12-22 - *(Nearly) A White Christmas*

Later in the afternoon, Lulu had her turn at some snow play (though it was disappearing fast under our bright sun).

We considered it our White Christmas.

MM

2017-12-28 - *A Little Bonding*

We don't do much "ground training" (working out of the saddle) with Thunder. It can be tricky. His past abuse makes him very sensitive - any correction can be interpreted by him as punishment. So we go easy. Still, working together is good bonding for us both.

On a beautiful and warm late December afternoon, we had to make a run to the feed store in Capitan (more deer corn . . .). On the way, a stop at the rodeo arena.

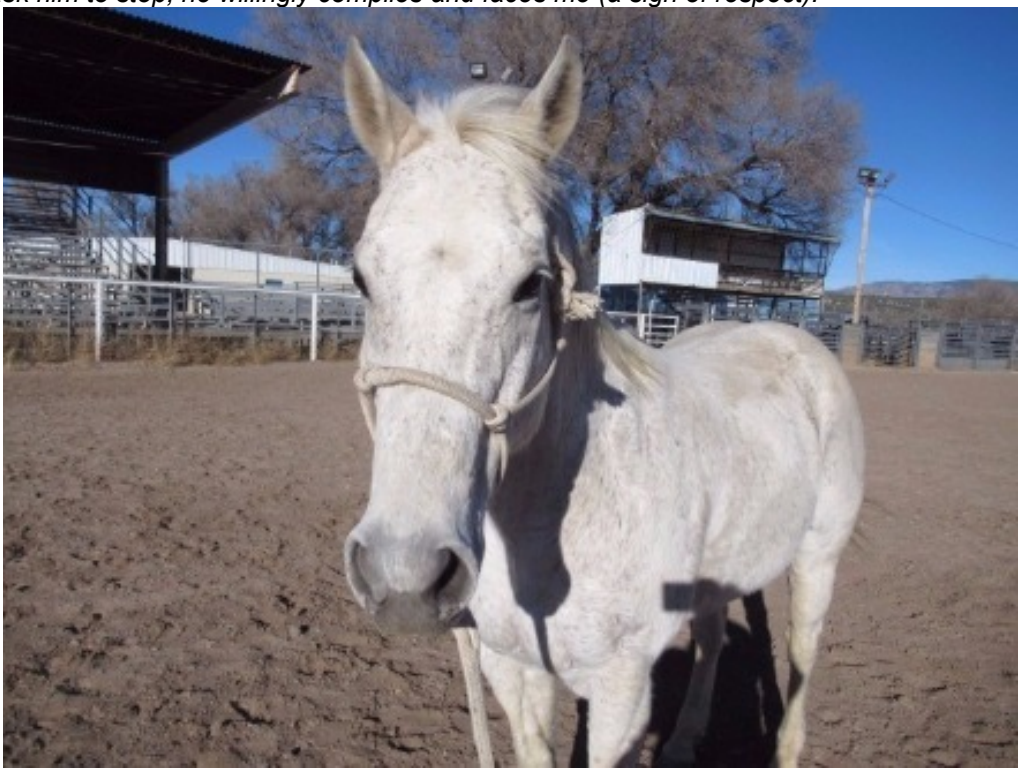
I give him a minute to check things out - and to stretch his legs.

Faster now, but he stays close.

Then a little roll in the warm sand. "Ahhhh . . ."

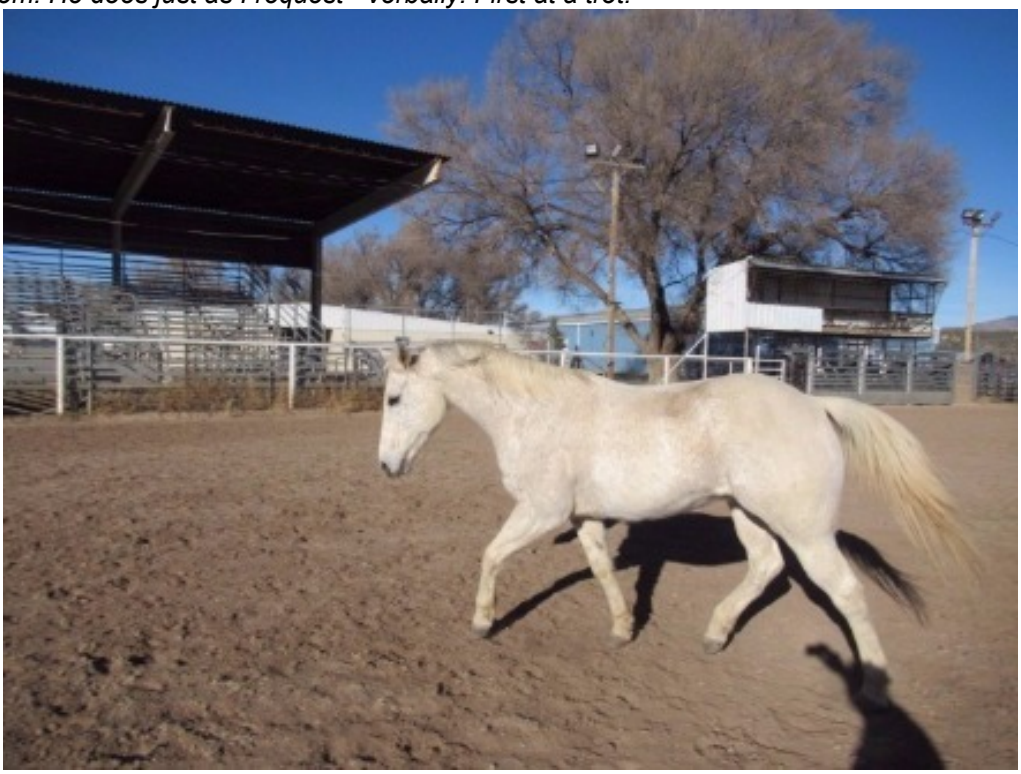
Now, to work. We put on a rope halter and lead. I ask him to make controlled circles around me. After countless miles on the trail, this confined exercise requires more concentrated discipline.

When I ask him to stop, he willingly complies and faces me (a sign of respect).



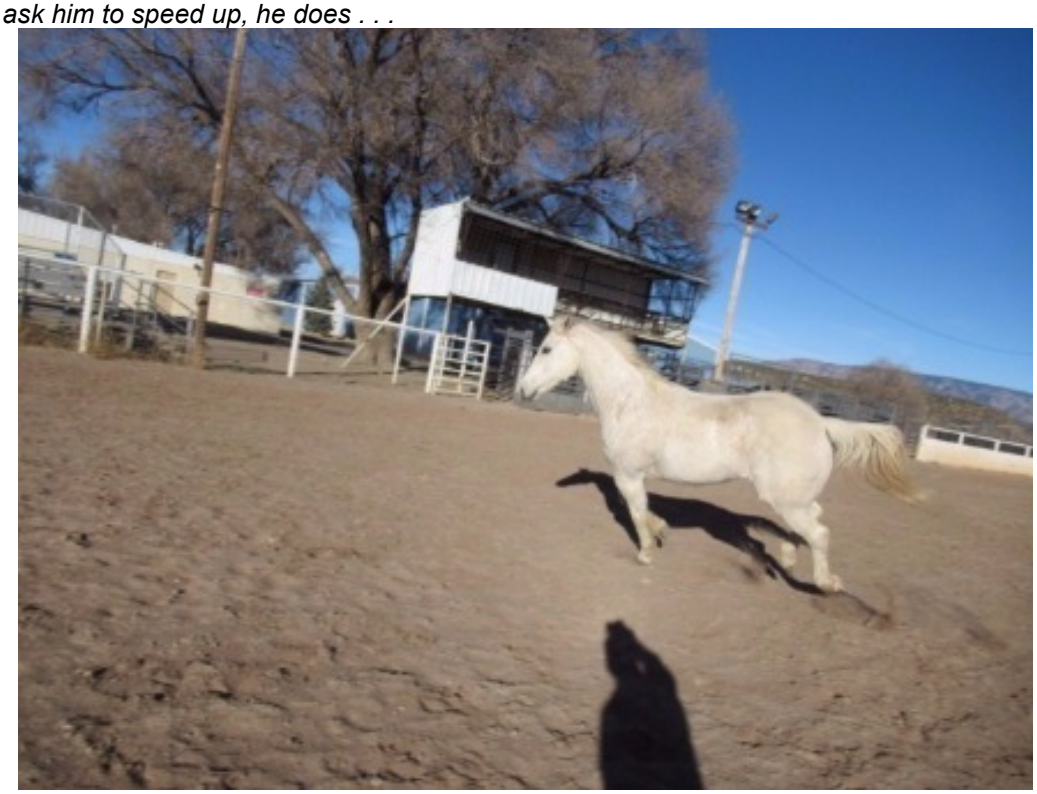
After completing several rotations (in both directions), we try it with no halter or lead rope - all on his own. In his expression, you can see the wheels turning - "Hmmm . . .". He has to think this out; to decide for himself to stay close and take my cues, instead of just running off. It reinforces my role as leader.

No problem. He does just as I request - verbally. First at a trot.



2017-12-28 - *A Little Bonding*

When I ask him to speed up, he does . . .



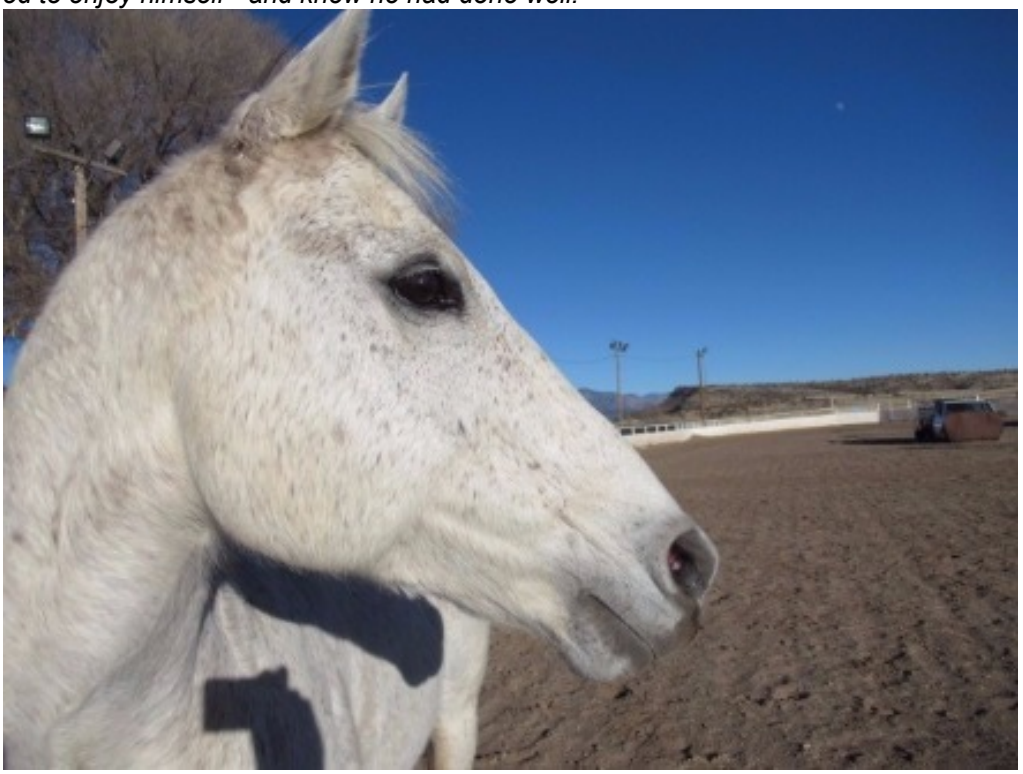
. . . while staying in the same radius. It is exciting to seem him respond like this.

2017-12-28 - *A Little Bonding*

We complete the "lesson" with lots of praise. Then he gets to play.

Now he can really open it up. All four feet off the ground!

He seemed to enjoy himself - and knew he had done well.



2017-12-28 - *A Little Bonding*

Back at home, the new crop of deer enjoyed their snacks, as they watched me unload the corn.

Like mother, like daughter.

2017-12-28 - *A Little Bonding*

This little guy resembles a burro!

MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2017-12-30 - *Summer In December*

It reached 68 degrees in Ruidoso today - a disappointment to the skiers, but a boon to the restaurants and boutiques in the little tourist village. The sidewalks were crammed with shoppers who had imagined themselves on the slopes this weekend.
Thunder, Lulu and I took advantage of the fine weather in our own way - a ride around Grindstone Lake (Belle got a new corrective shoe this morning . . . she is doing better!)

A dozen vehicles in the parking lot. This is considered crowded at the lake.

We left the "crowds" behind as we ascended a trail above the lake.

Lulu thought it felt a little too much like summer (we chose a trail with lots of shade).

We sure didn't have to worry about ice!

2017-12-30 - *Summer In December*

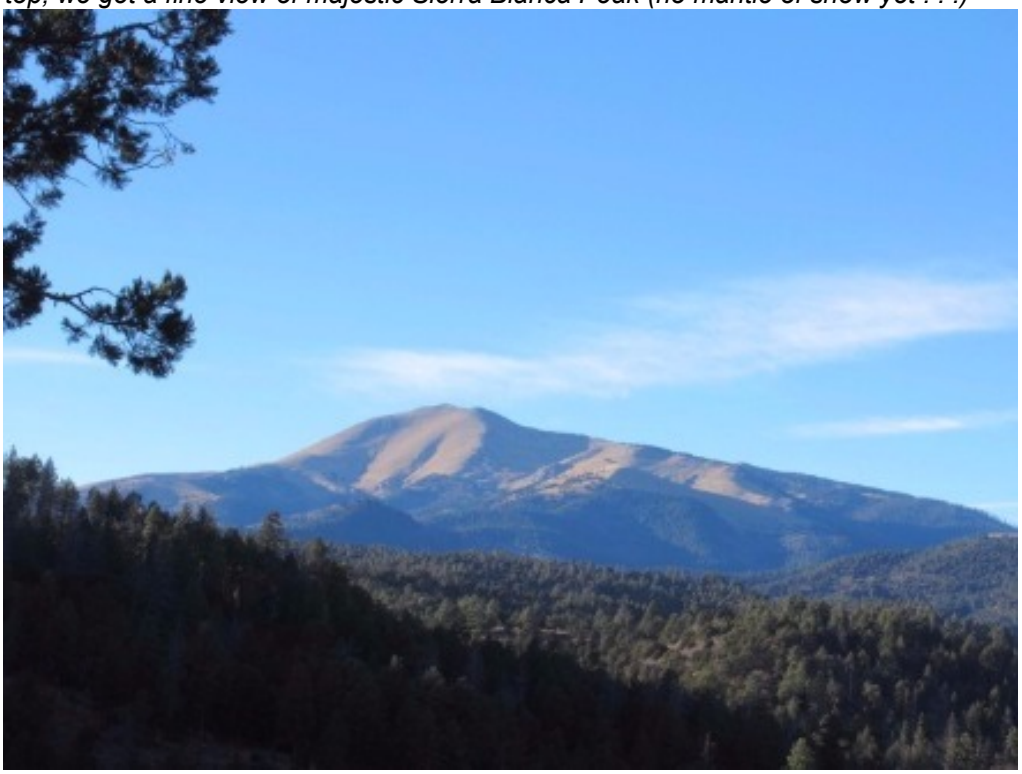
"Cowboy selfie"

We climbed into the tall pines.

Quiet and serene up here.

If you look closely, you will see a deer on the left - standing so still, he looks like a cardboard cutout.

Near the top, we get a fine view of majestic Sierra Blanca Peak (no mantle of snow yet . . .)



The mountain fades in the distance, as we ride on. This is a long loop trail.

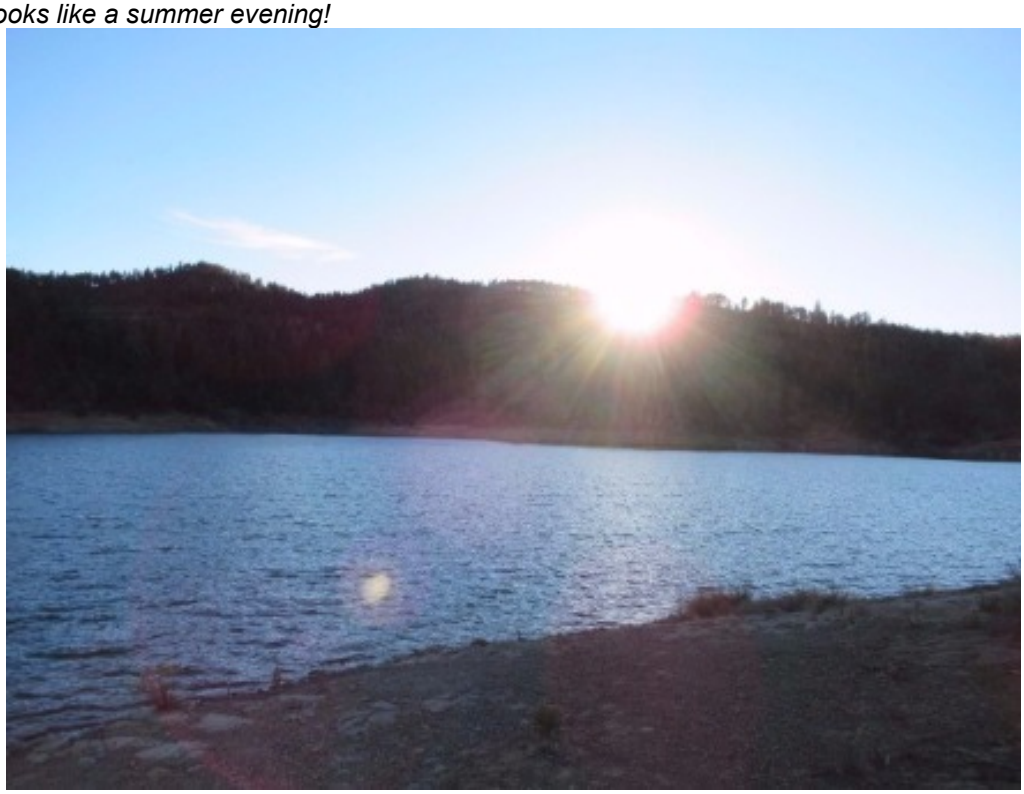
Back at the lake, a nice cool drink.

2017-12-30 - *Summer In December*

For Thunder, too.

2017-12-30 - *Summer In December*

It even looks like a summer evening!



Hard to complain about such fine weather, but . . . we do hope for some more snow.
MM

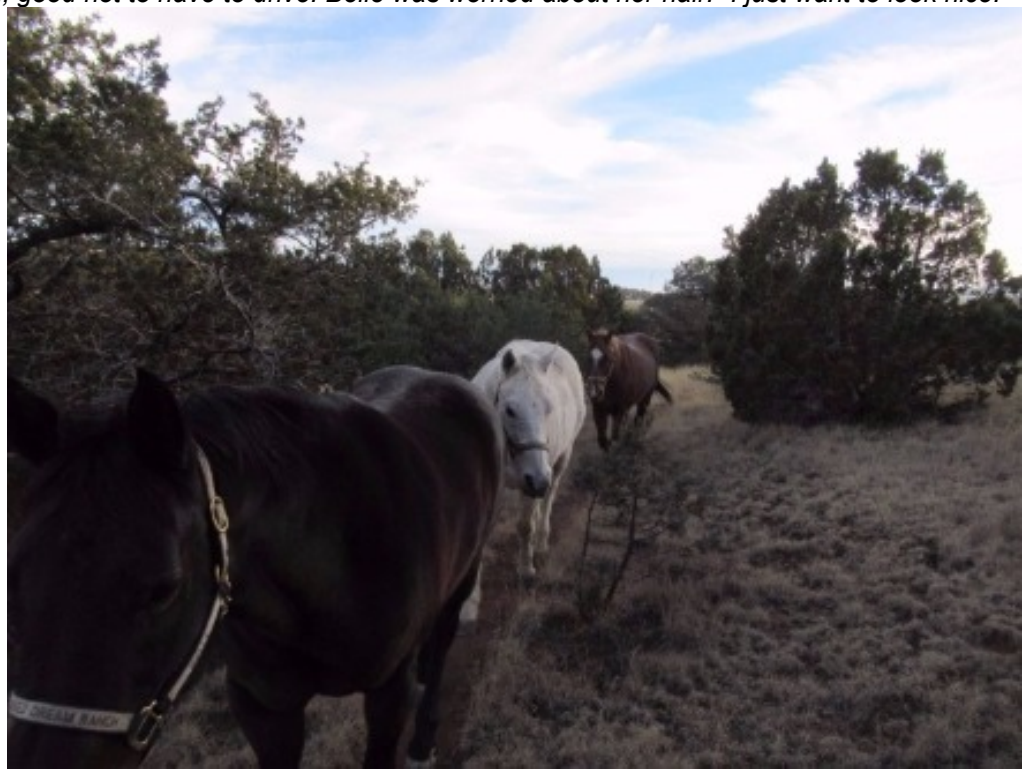
2017-12-31 - *A Real Wild New Year's Eve Party*

It's nice not to have to drive on New Year's Eve. So, we decided just to attend a couple of neighborhood parties.

Hey, kids! Come on! Better get ready for the party!

We simply went right out the back gate, into the forest.

As I said, good not to have to drive. Belle was worried about her hair. "I just want to look nice!"

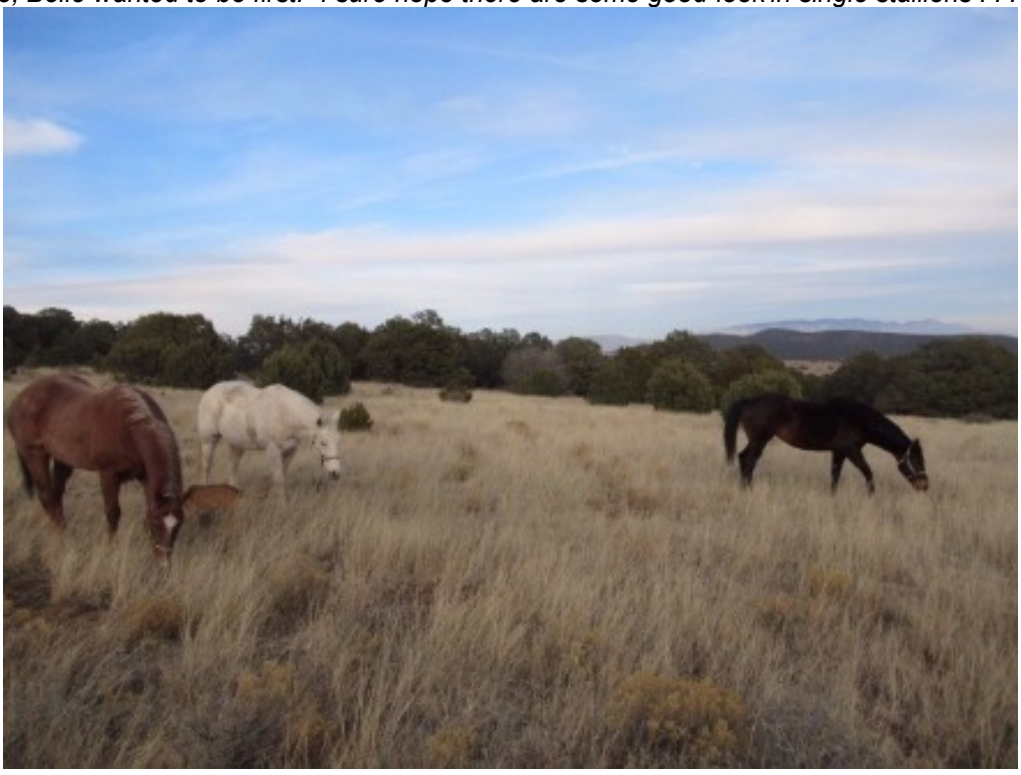


We stopped for a snack along the way. (You do notice that these horses are free to go wherever they want . . . no lead ropes . . .)

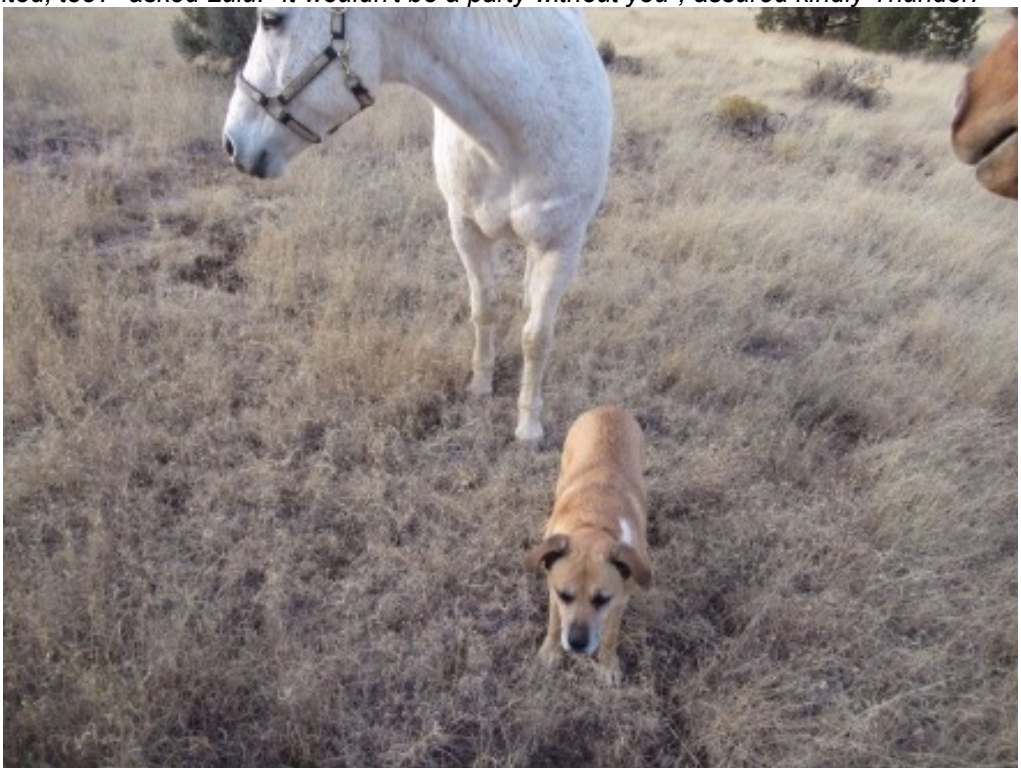
We could hear the party in the distance. "Let's go!", exclaimed Spanky.

So off they went.

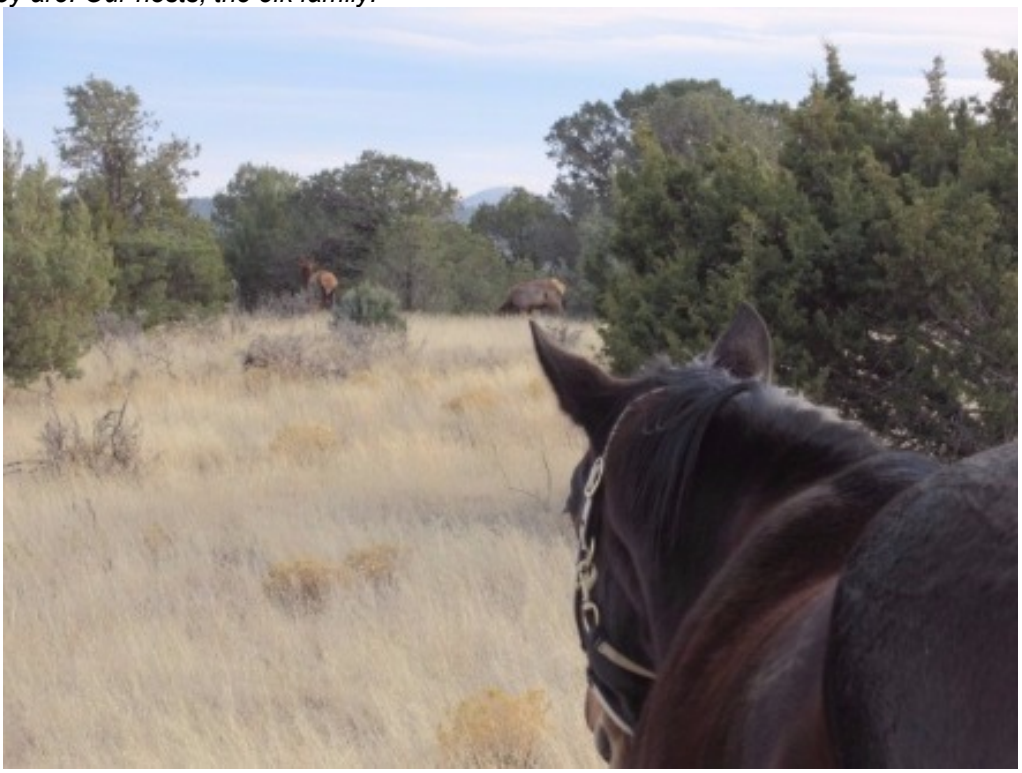
Of course, Belle wanted to be first. "I sure hope there are some good-look'in single stallions . . ."



"Am I invited, too?" asked Lulu. "It wouldn't be a party without you", assured kindly Thunder.



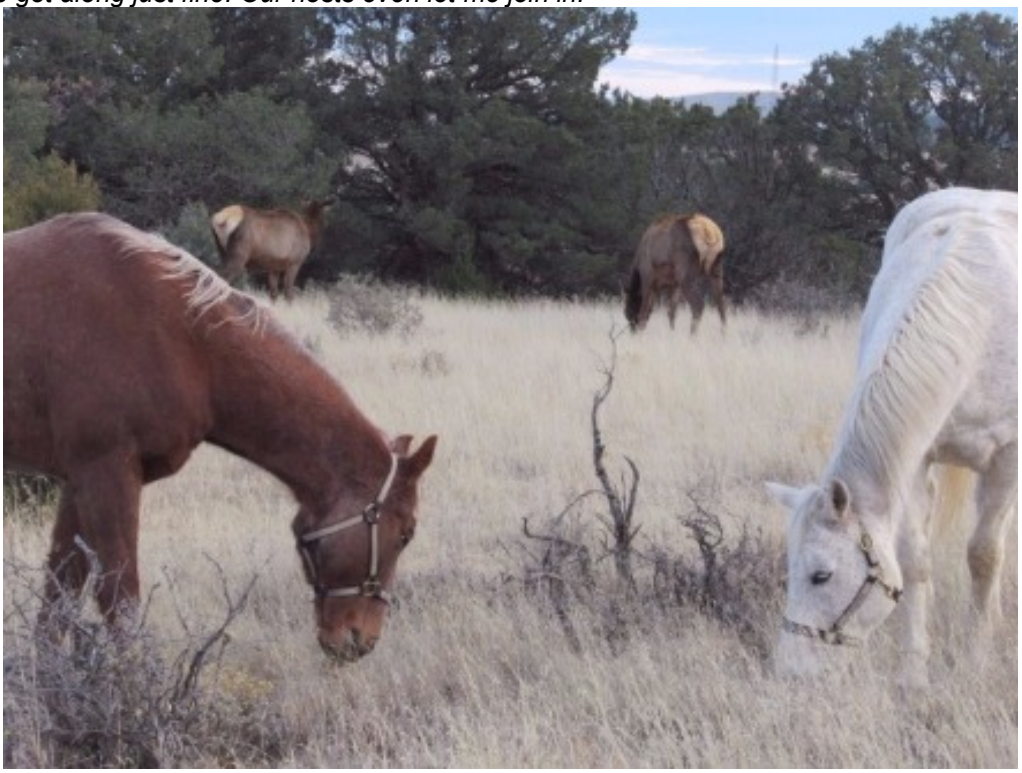
There they are. Our hosts, the elk family.



Spanky went right for the hors d'ouvres.

"Are you SURE we invited them?"

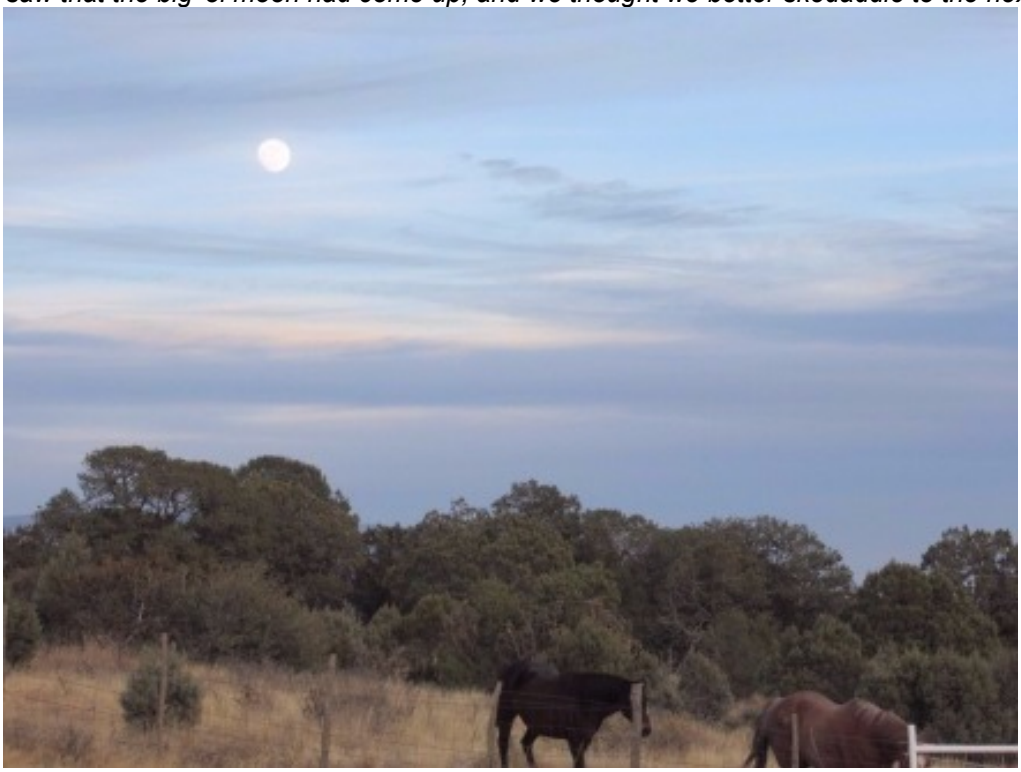
Everyone got along just fine. Our hosts even let me join in.



"I don't know about these guests - that one walks on only two legs . . ."

You know how friendly some horses get at parties . . ."Hey, Lulu, you smell nice." "Knock it off, Spanky!"

Then we saw that the big 'ol moon had come up, and we thought we better skedaddle to the next one.



Pretty, huh?

The other party was even closer - right in our own front yard! The guests were waiting when we got there.

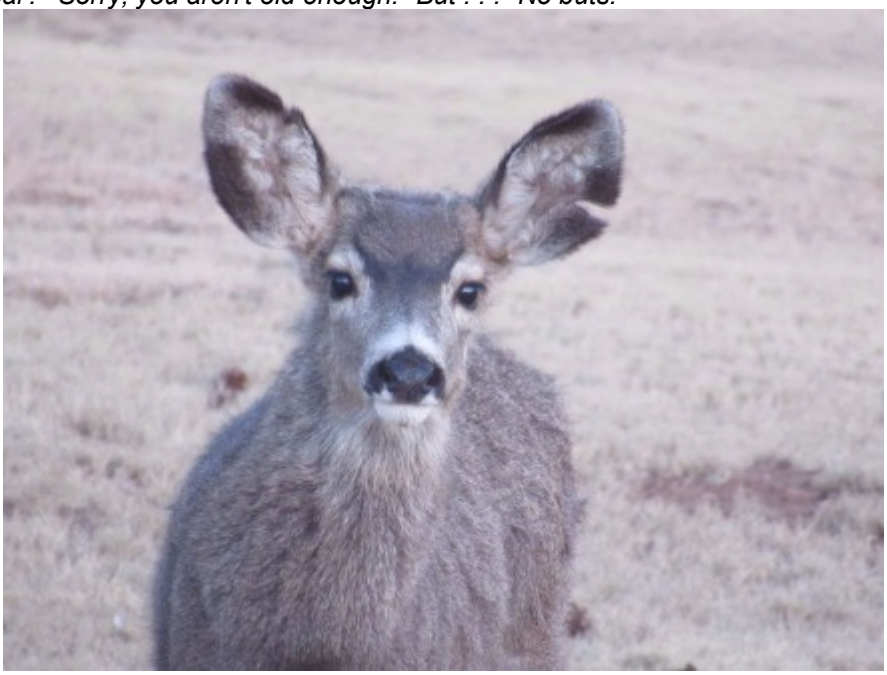
So, we hurried up and got the food out right away!

This crowd was much more lively than the conservative elk.

Deer are real party animals. "That trashy doe thinks she's God's gift to every buck in the forest!"

The corn is always popular.

"Where's the bar?" Sorry, you aren't old enough. "But . . ." No buts.

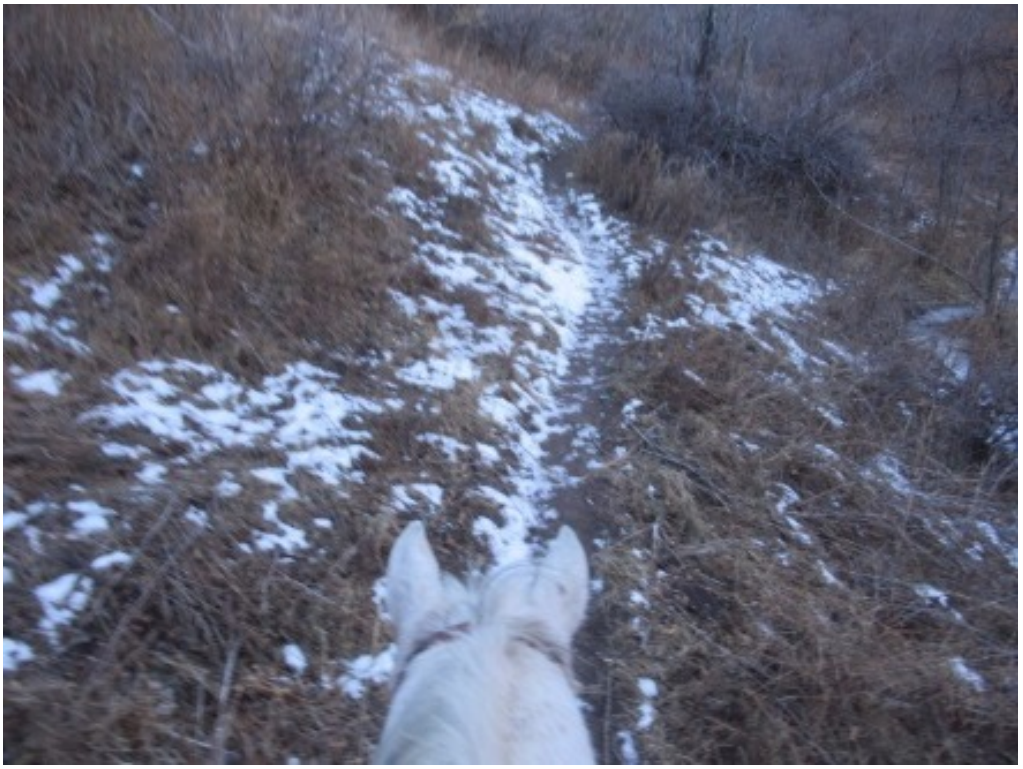


What a wonderful way to say goodbye to 2017! Wishing you a very healthy and Happy New Year!
MM

2018-01-01 - *Starting At The Top*

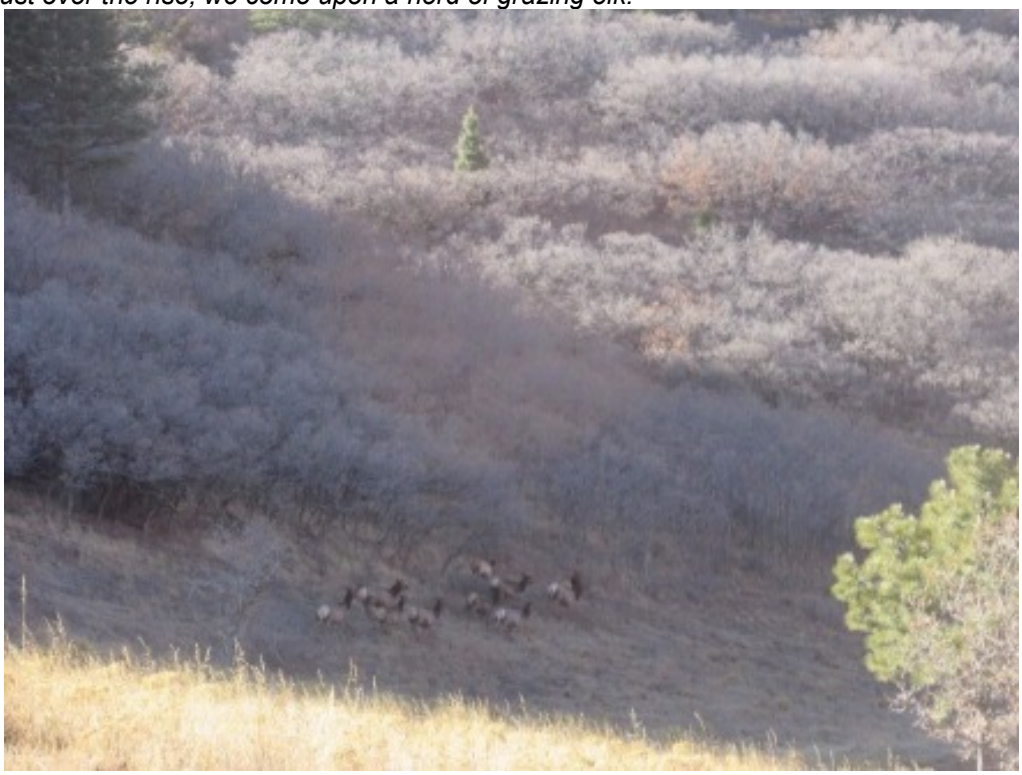
We took advantage of great weather, to begin the year at the top . . . of a mountain.

Just a little bit of snow in the shade - but no ice on the trail.



Sunshine ahead . . .

. . . and just over the rise, we come upon a herd of grazing elk.



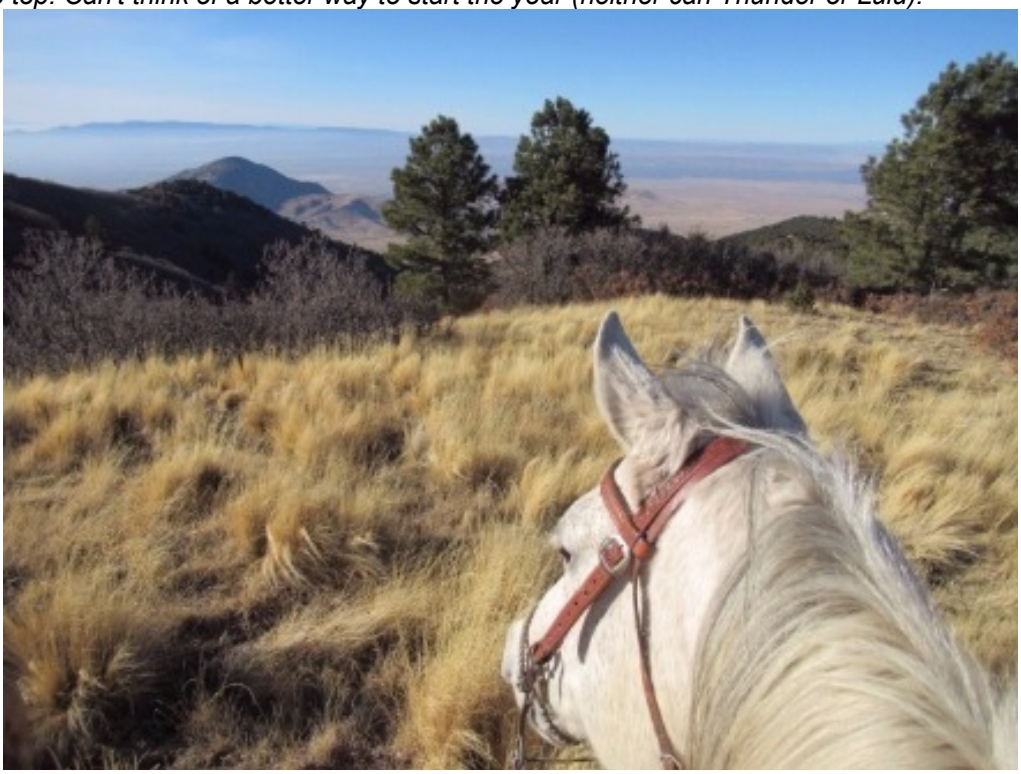
Gentleman Thunder lets Lulu go first. “After you . . . (just in case elk are carnivorous . . .)"

A little farther on, some more on the hill above us.

THAT'S where we are headed - the high country.

The majesty of this place kinda puts things in perspective.

Yup. The top. Can't think of a better way to start the year (neither can Thunder or Lulu).



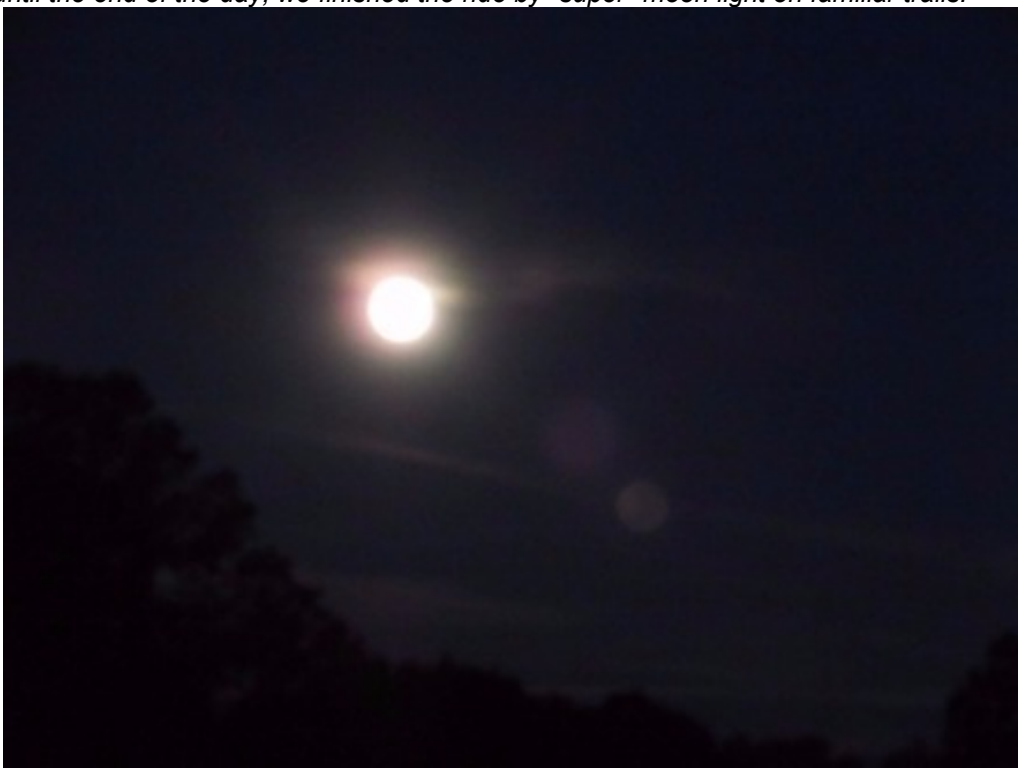
A beautiful world in every direction.

Happy just to take in the view together.

They genuinely like each other. Thunder gives Lulu a loving nuzzle.

This view seems like a painting. Shadows are growing.

Staying until the end of the day, we finished the ride by "super" moon light on familiar trails.

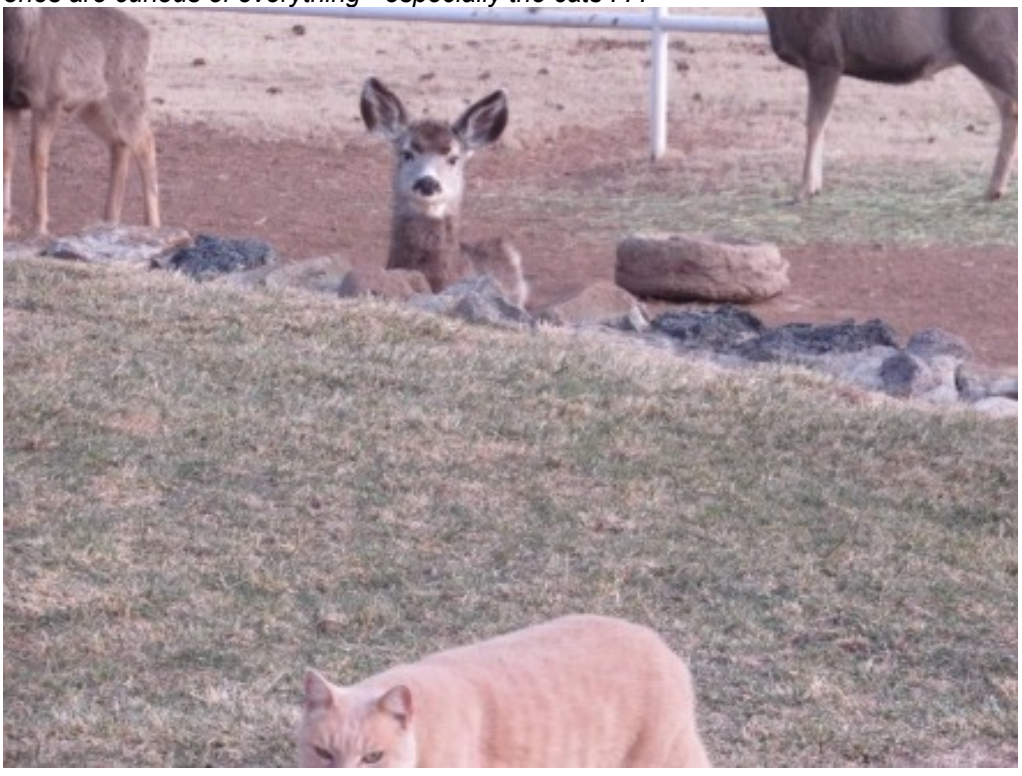


It was a very good start - thanks for coming along (and Happy New Year)!
MM

2018-01-03 - *Baby Faces*

It seems like we had a bumper crop of deer fawns - at least from the crowd that gathers here.

The little ones are curious of everything - especially the cats . . .



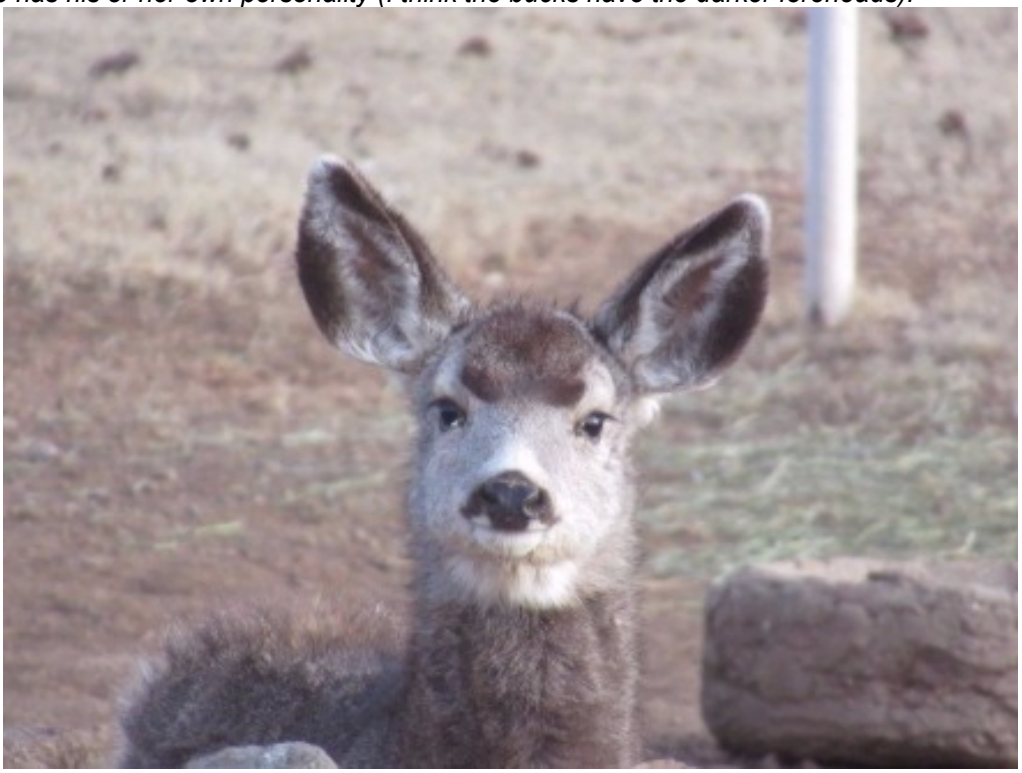
2018-01-03 - *Baby Faces*

. . . even bronze ones. "Oh, MO-OM!"

They sure are cute.

2018-01-03 - *Baby Faces*

Each one has his or her own personality (I think the bucks have the darker foreheads).



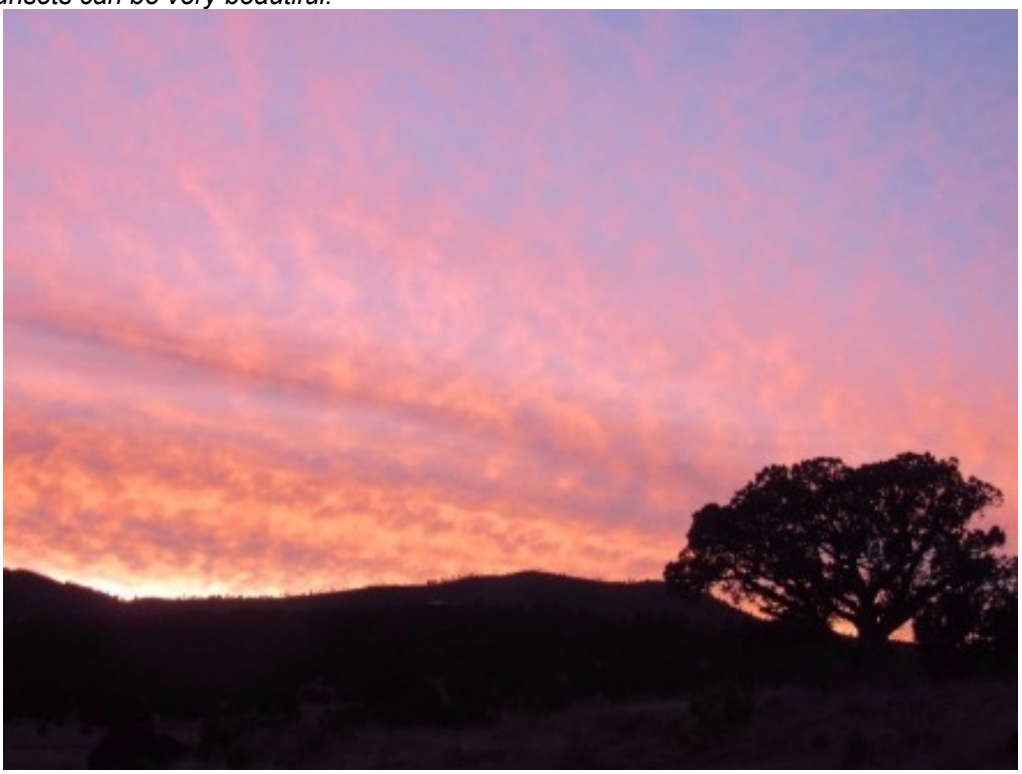
They always visit with the rest of the herd.

This time of year, they get to enjoy some alfalfa.

2018-01-03 - *Baby Faces*

The horses graze nearby (they know their supper is coming).

Winter sunsets can be very beautiful.



2018-01-03 - *Baby Faces*

That's Nogal Peak, silhouetted behind the "sunset tree".

THEN, in the growing darkness, the shy elk show up.

2018-01-03 - *Baby Faces*

It is a magical time of day.
MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2018-01-05 - *Until Winter Comes*

Our extraordinarily mild weather continues. We thought we would take advantage and explore Salazar Canyon - one of the most remote areas in Lincoln County, and the location of a very interesting historic camp.

The road turned out to be surprisingly good. This really is “back country".

Salazar Canyon is north of historic Lincoln town, and saw its share of outlaws and cattle rustlers during the Old West. A rushing creek runs through it.

The setting is beautiful, surrounded by mountains, and dotted with old-growth Ponderosas.

This was the location of one of the most interesting Depression-era camps - known at various times as Raton Ranch Camp, Baca Camp, and finally Capitan Camp. It began as a government Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, and quickly evolved into the country's first Unemployed Girl's Education Camp, for the benefit of girls who were members of "relief families" residing in rural areas where educational opportunities were limited (following this lead, six more of these camps were constructed across the nation in 1937, but this was the only one to run year-round). It continued for five years, until WWII intervened. In addition to standard education, the girls learned to make various craft products to sell, and produced all state flags for government and school facilities, providing the students with hope, encouragement, and much-needed cash. A very successful government program.

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, 32 Japanese-American railroad workers and their families were placed under house arrest (for their protection) and relocated from Clovis, NM to the abandoned Camp Capitan.

Following the war, the camp finally closed for good and the buildings were removed to other locations.

2018-01-05 - *Until Winter Comes*

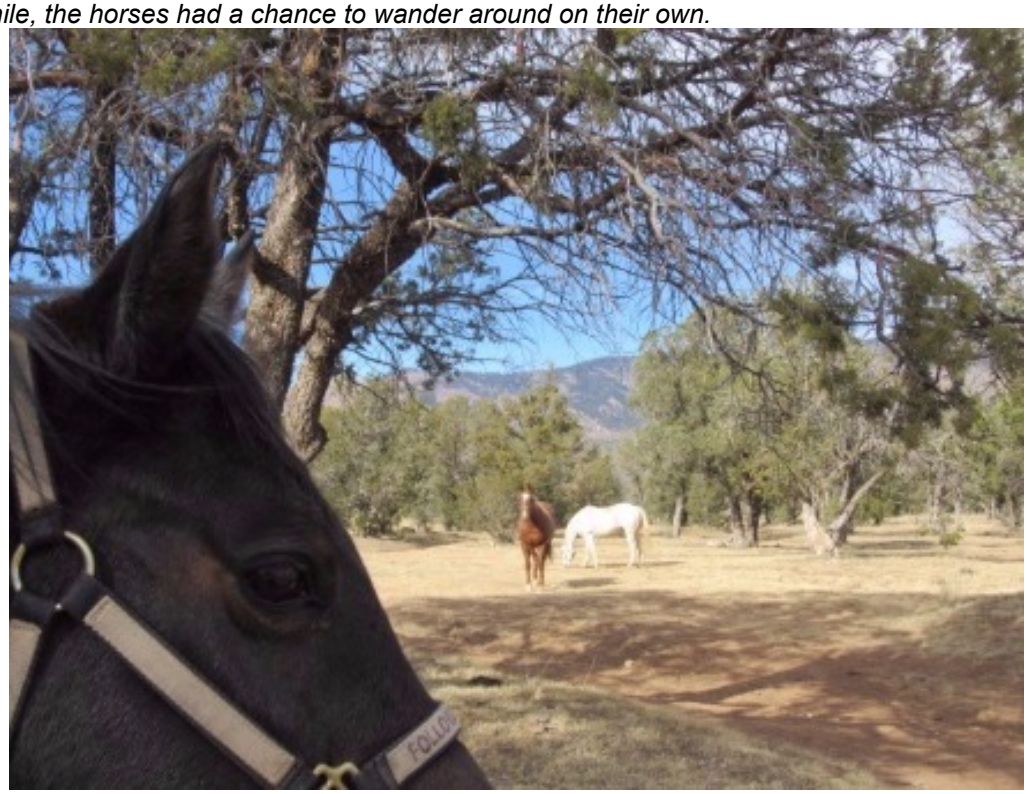
Today, remains of the camp include this grand stone fireplace.

Here's how it looked in the 1930's.

Lulu thought it would be cool to pose in a piece of history.

She also enjoyed part of my sandwich! "Yes, please . . ."

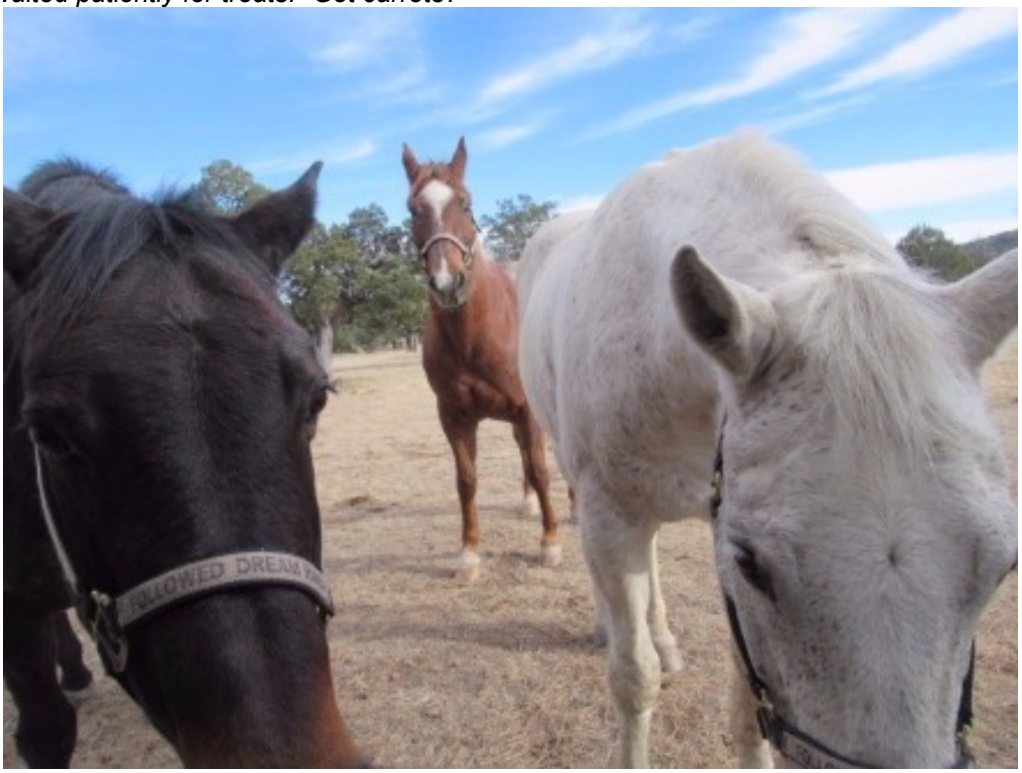
Meanwhile, the horses had a chance to wander around on their own.



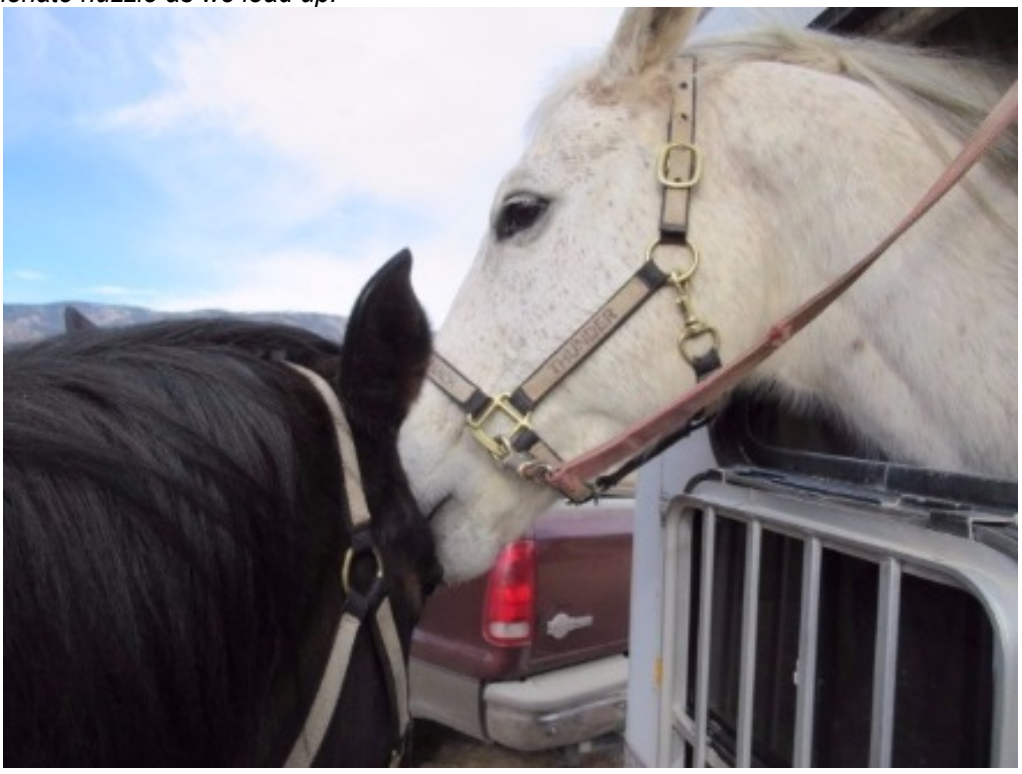
Nice to have loyal friends.

When it was time to leave, they cooperated.

. . . and waited patiently for treats. "Got carrots?"



An affectionate nuzzle as we load up.



The open road headed home.

It was a beautiful and interesting day - glad we could share it with you!
MM

2018-01-08 - *Trust*

Sometimes, the best rides are simple ones. A beautiful day, a serene setting near home, and very good companions.

Mills Canyon is only a couple of miles from the ranch - at the mouth of Bonito Canyon. Spanky and Thunder play (literally) hide & seek along the river.

"Ha! Ha! I see you!"

Belle manages to find a bit of green grass at the water's edge.

"Okay. That was fun. Now let's see what's over there . . ."

They fall in behind Belle and me. No fuss.

Simple beauty.

2018-01-08 - *Trust*

La Familia.

2018-01-08 - *Trust*

I used a "natural bridge" to cross over for a photo . . . Lulu watched with concern . . .

...and then bravely came along. "Ohhhh... I don't know about this..."

She (and her shadow), in the shot.

A single photo, expressing a deep bond.

Spanky joins in.

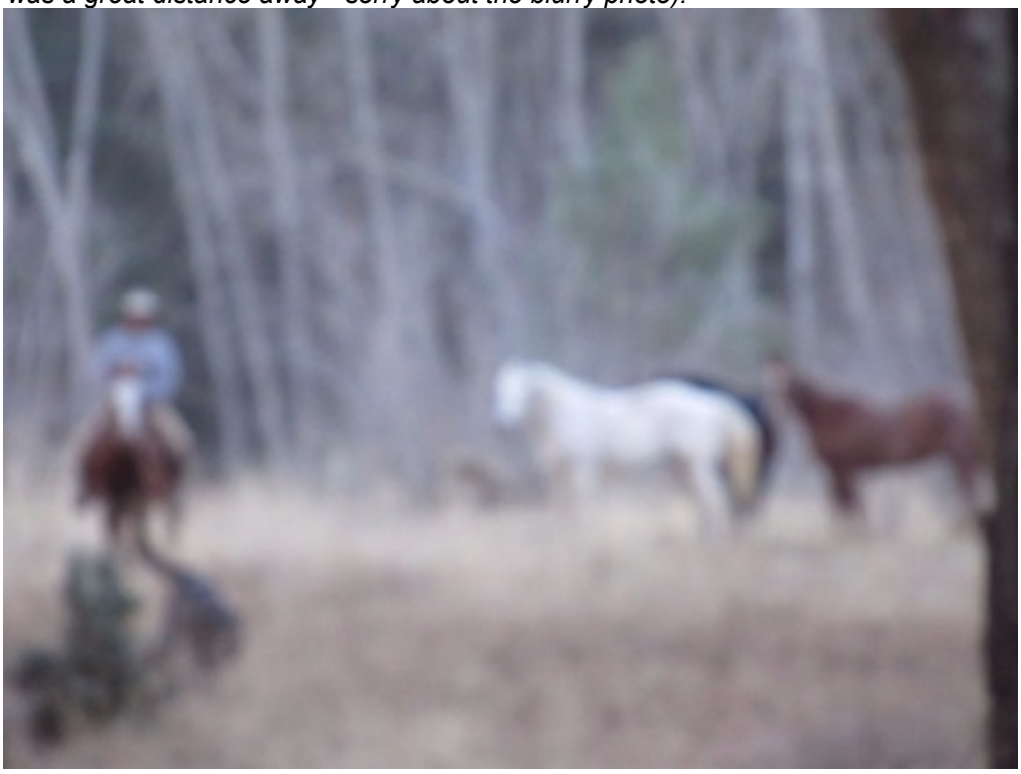
A true oddity. The ONLY ice or snow we found, is this strange piece - which resembles a horse's hoof emerging horizontally from a log, over the water . . . we take it as a sign of Belle's healing.

So grateful to have her with us.

We are in the middle of nowhere. I suddenly remembered seeing some wild turkey feathers along the way, and Lulu and I went back to collect them. I asked the horses to wait for me in this meadow - and they did . . .

2018-01-08 - *Trust*

. . . even when, unexpectedly, another horse and rider came by. They never moved. THAT was special to see. (I was a great distance away - sorry about the blurry photo).



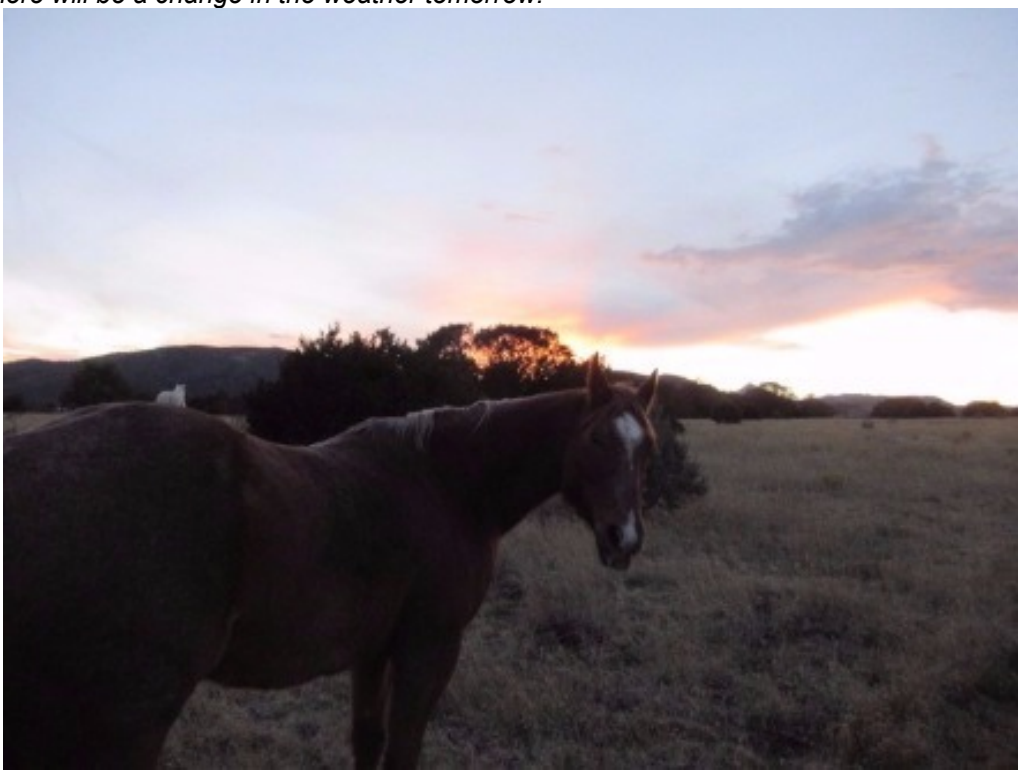
No constraints. Trust - it must be earned.
MM

2018-01-10 - *Snow Time At Last*

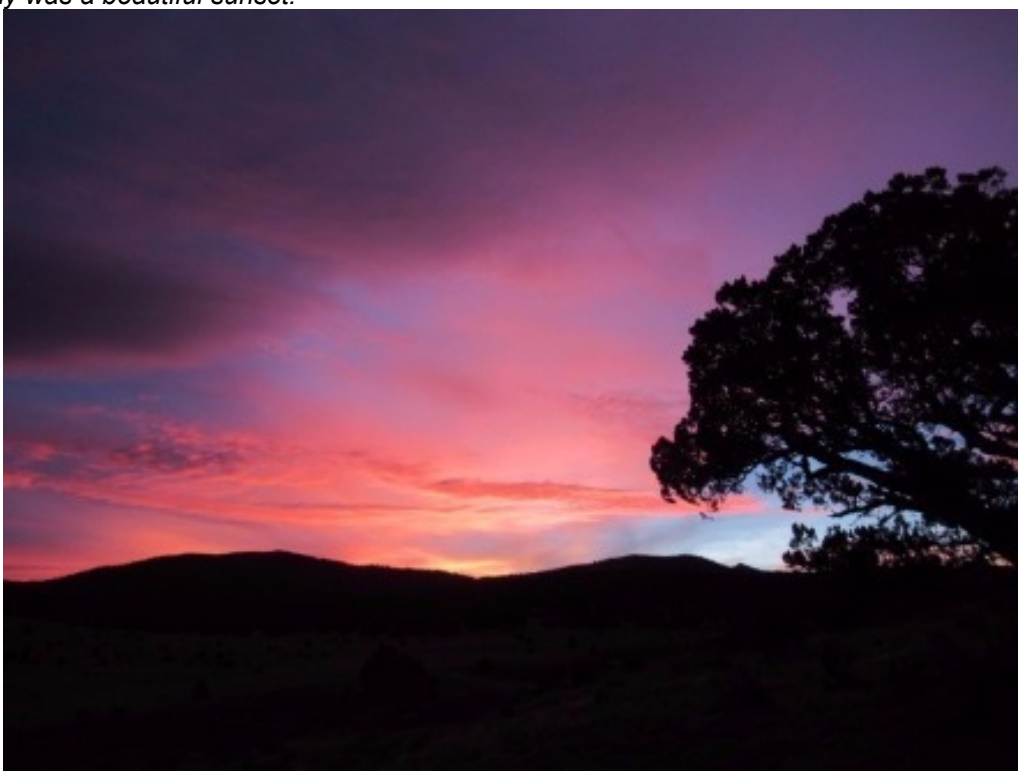
During yesterday's little afternoon walk in the forest, Spanky had a prediction.

"Hey, guys, see that sky?"

"I think there will be a change in the weather tomorrow!"



It certainly was a beautiful sunset.



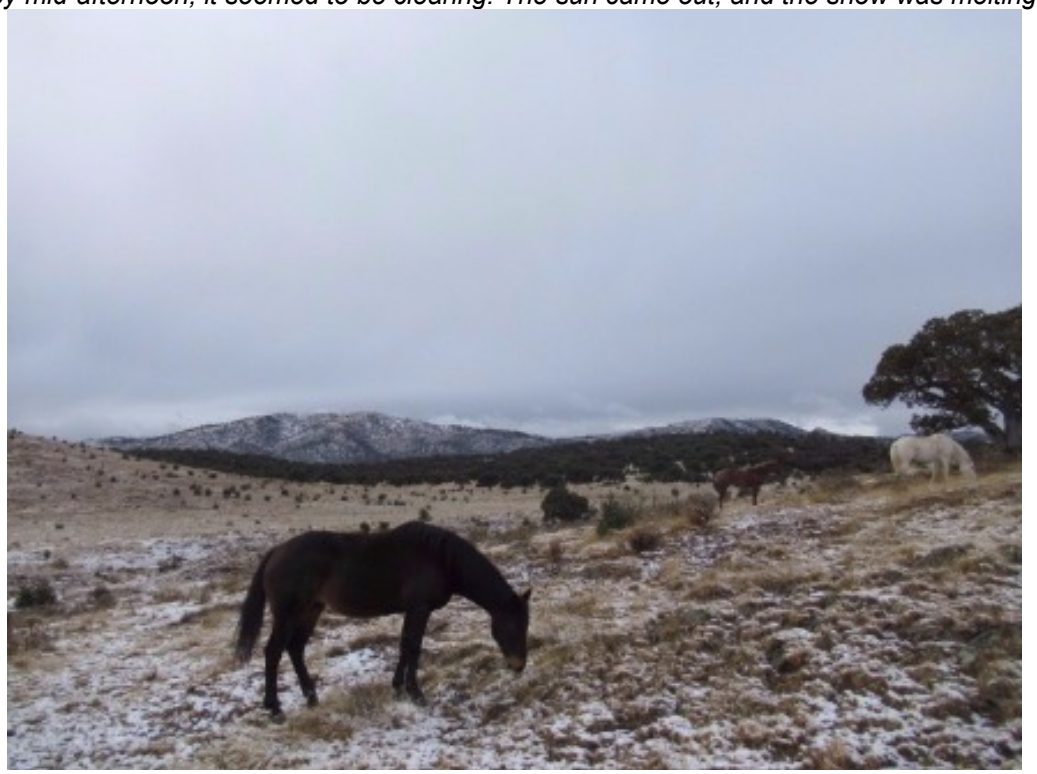
Sure enough - this morning we woke to a nice steady rain . . . which quickly changed to snow.

After breakfast, the horses preferred to hang out in the barn. Cozy.

2018-01-10 - *Snow Time At Last*

"I told you so . . ."

. . . but by mid-afternoon, it seemed to be clearing. The sun came out, and the snow was melting fast.



Then it returned - with a vengeance!

"What the???"

2018-01-10 - *Snow Time At Last*

"Tee hee! You have an icy tail, Spanky!"

"So do you, miss smarty-pants!". . ."Oh."

So, back in the barn they went.

By the end of the day, it looked to be clearing once again.

Guess we'll just have to wait and see what tomorrow brings (this being New Mexico) or maybe we should ask Spanky.
MM

2018-01-11 - *Sanctuary*

Yesterday's storm came and went quickly, leaving a white mantle on the mountains.

Nogal Peak.

The Sacramento Mountains.

Sierra Blanca, through the big window at the Inn of the Mountain Gods.

2018-01-11 - *Sanctuary*

The Sanctuary on the River is a beautiful day spa and wedding facility on the edge of the Ruidoso River, right in the middle of the town's tourist area. Today they had guests of another sort.

2018-01-11 - *Sanctuary*

A herd of elk decided they needed a day of beauty, I guess.

They seemed to be all over the place . . .

2018-01-11 - *Sanctuary*

. . . and very much at ease.

An unusual gathering!
MM

2018-01-13 - *The Old Corral*

Today, while out wandering . . .
. . . we came upon a place which reminded us of a great old song.

"Empty Saddles in the Old Corral" - The words ring true here.

2018-01-13 - *The Old Corral*

"There's something strange in the old corral.
There's a breeze, though the wind has died.
Though I'm alone in the old corral,
seems there is someone at my side."

"Empty saddles in the old corral,
where do ya ride tonight?
Are ya roundin' up the dogies,
the strays of long ago?
Are ya on the trail of buffalo?"

2018-01-13 - *The Old Corral*

"Empty saddles in the old corral,
where do ya ride tonight?
Are there rustlers on the border,
or a band of Navajo?
Are ya headin' for the Alamo?"

"Empty guns, covered with rust
where do ya talk tonight?
Empty boots covered with dust
where do ya walk tonight?"

2018-01-13 - *The Old Corral*

"Empty saddles in the old corral,
my tears would be dried tonight,
if you'll only say I'm lonely,
as ya carry my old pal,
empty saddles in the old corral."

2018-01-13 - *The Old Corral*

"There is no smoke, still the fires burn,
there's no song, still I hear guitars,
there is no dust, still the ghosts return
softly to vanish thru the bars."

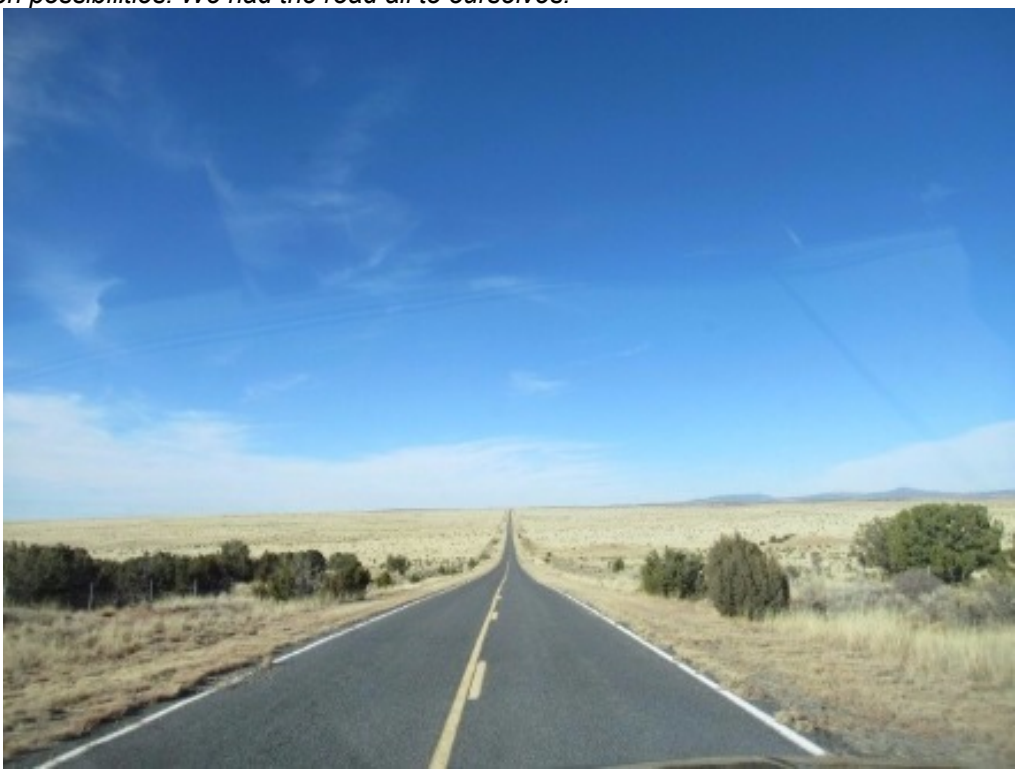
There's something strange in the old corral.
There's a breeze, though the wind has died.
Though I'm alone in the old corral,
seems there is someone at my side . . .

MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

Sixty-five degrees in mid-January? Gotta take advantage of that! So, the horses (with Lulu, of course) piled into the trailer. “Where we go'in, dad?" Hmmm . . . let's just hit the road.

Wide open possibilities. We had the road all to ourselves.



We passed this 1940's casualty . . .

. . . and these pronghorns (note that they are gingerly eating the dried fruit of the nasty cholla cactus!)

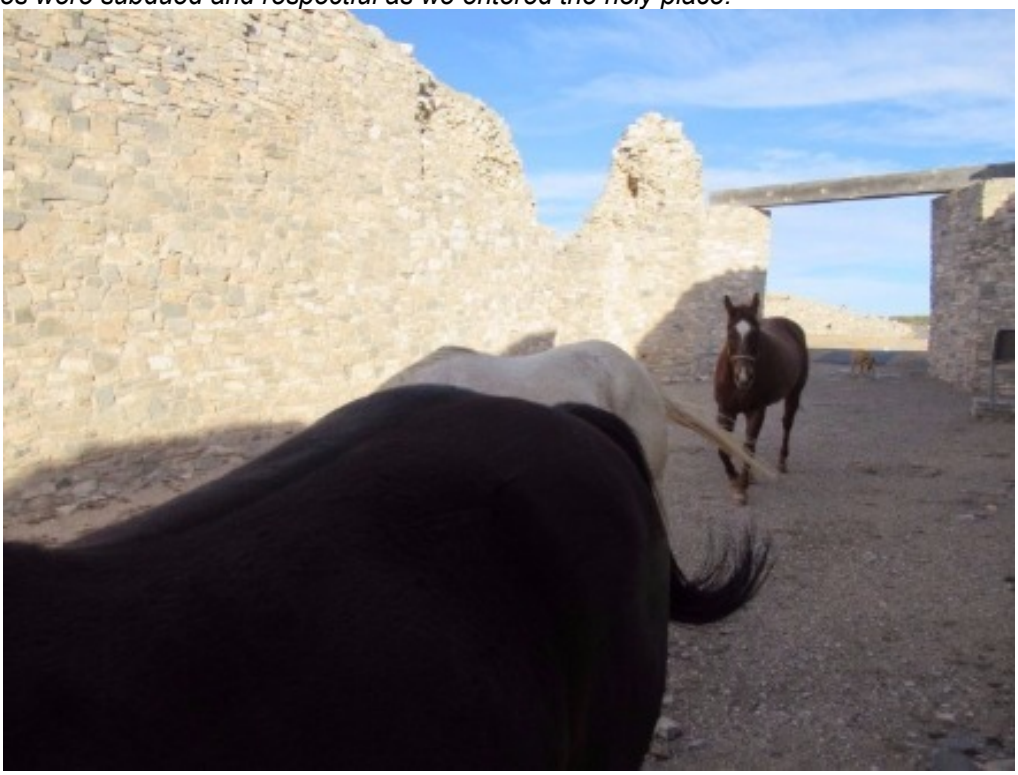
We ended up at the famously isolated Gran Quivira.

Gran Quivira is one of the most important ruins in all the southwest. Likely begun by indigenous peoples around 1300 A.D., much of this special place remains un-excavated in order to preserve it for future, and more advanced, discovery. Most prominent today is a 226-room apartment complex - and a later mission church - both constructed of native stone.

The sounds of a vibrant culture once echoed off these walls.

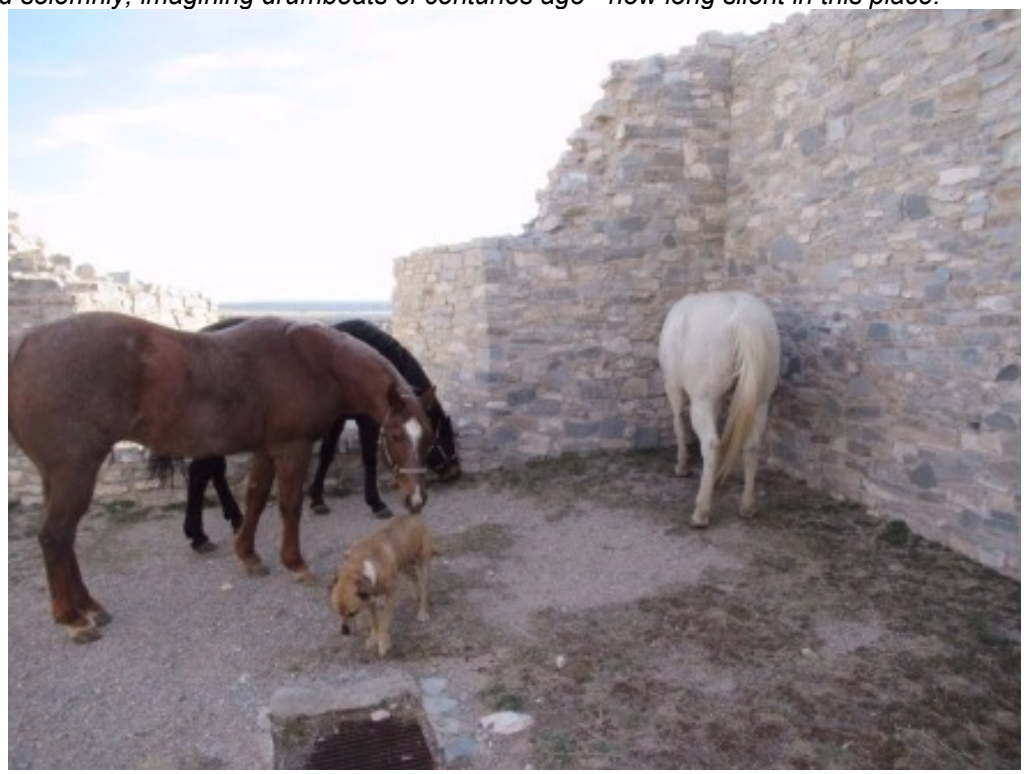
In their quest for gold, the Spanish arrived here about 1600 (20 years before Plymouth Rock), and the conversion of the pueblo to a Catholic mission began. By 1629 construction of the great stone church was completed. The immense thickness of the walls gave it permanence.

The horses were subdued and respectful as we entered the holy place.

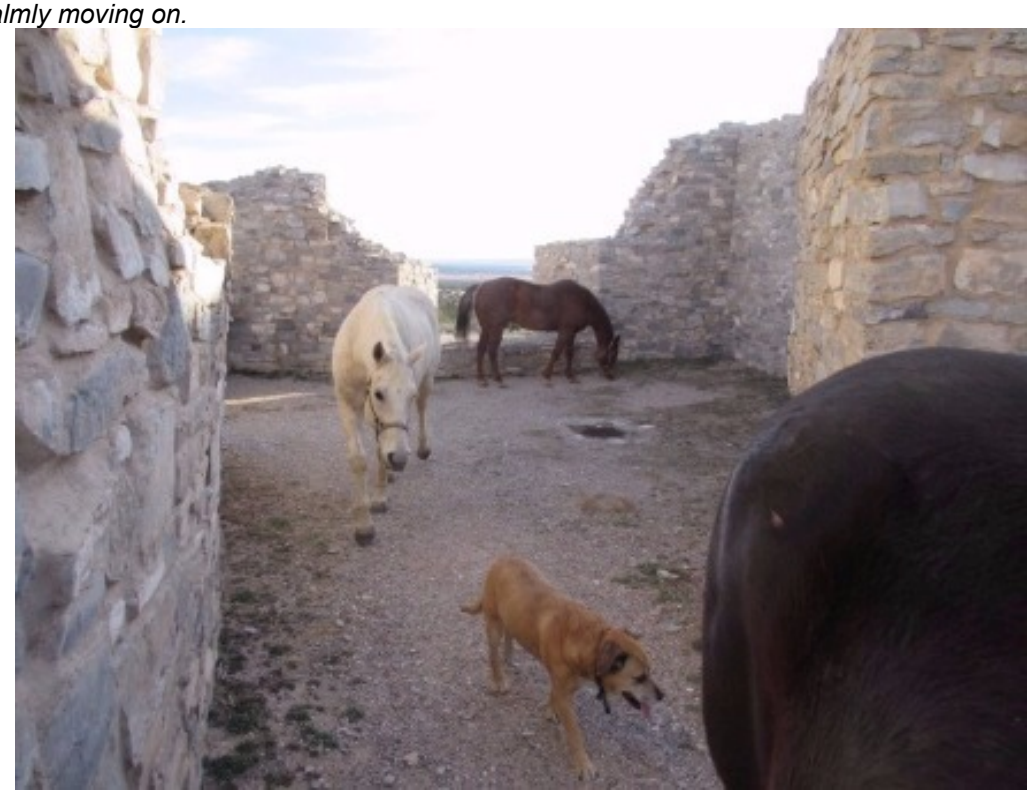


Not a sound. We were the only visitors.

We stood solemnly, imagining drumbeats of centuries ago - now long silent in this place.



Then calmly moving on.



There is a profound sense of human history in this isolated site. By 1672, a combination of European disease, drought, famine, and Apache raids led to the abandonment of Gran Quivira. It is now a National Monument.

Heading home in the late afternoon, we saw classic scenes of central New Mexico.

A mid-1920's truck sits forgotten . . .

. . . complete with its old flathead engine. How far away this country was back then.

Nearby, a late-30's sedan (apparently victim of a pre-war rollover) has kept it company through countless years.

More pronghorns!

The horses are always fascinated by these agile - and much faster - mammals.

. . . and visa-versa.

On the plains, a pair of well-fed wild horses.

I wonder what they thought of mine, seemingly "captive" in the trailer.

They would have no way of knowing (or even imagining) the experiences we enjoy, together on the road.

It's a different perspective, in the Land of Enchantment.

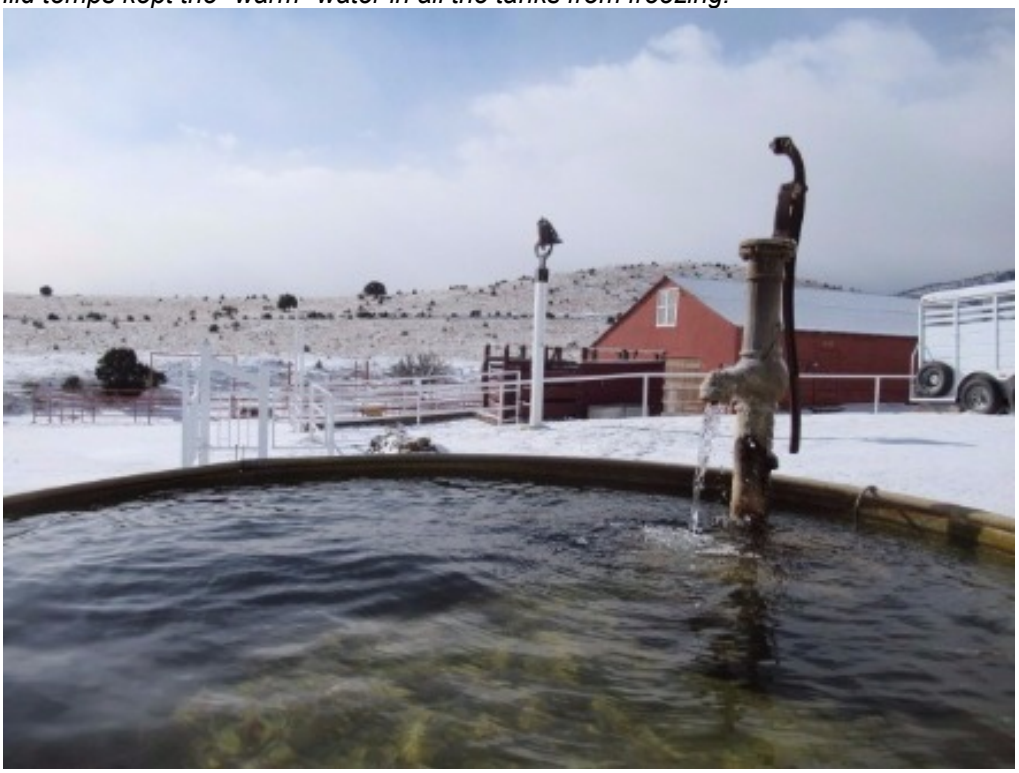
As always, grateful to share with you.
MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2018-01-22 - *Change of Scenery*

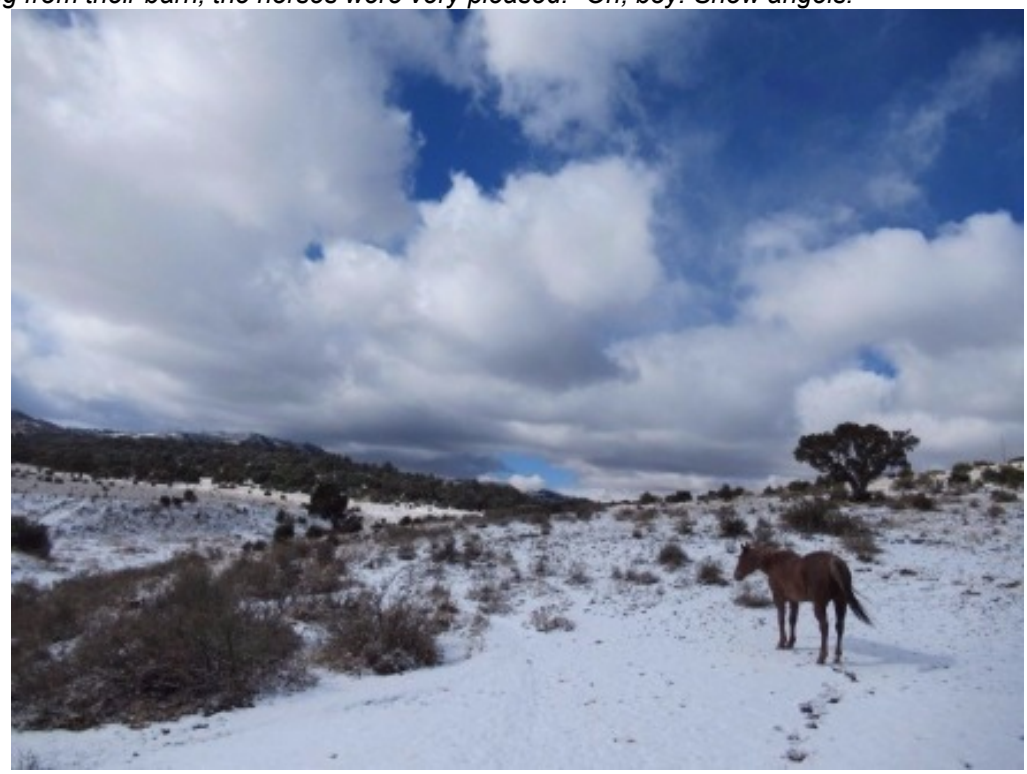
Saturday we were riding in 65 degrees.Then yesterday - well . . .

Recent mild temps kept the "warm" water in all the tanks from freezing.



2018-01-22 - *Change of Scenery*

Emerging from their barn, the horses were very pleased. "Oh, boy! Snow angels!"



"Yee Haw!"

The deer were happy to find their snacks in the snow.

Lulu and Spanky led us out the gate, and into the snowy forest.

It wasn't long before the Winter Olympics were on!

"Where're we going next?"

That a'way.

EVERYONE did snow angels.

(Snow) play time.

It's cool that with all this freedom, they stay "connected".

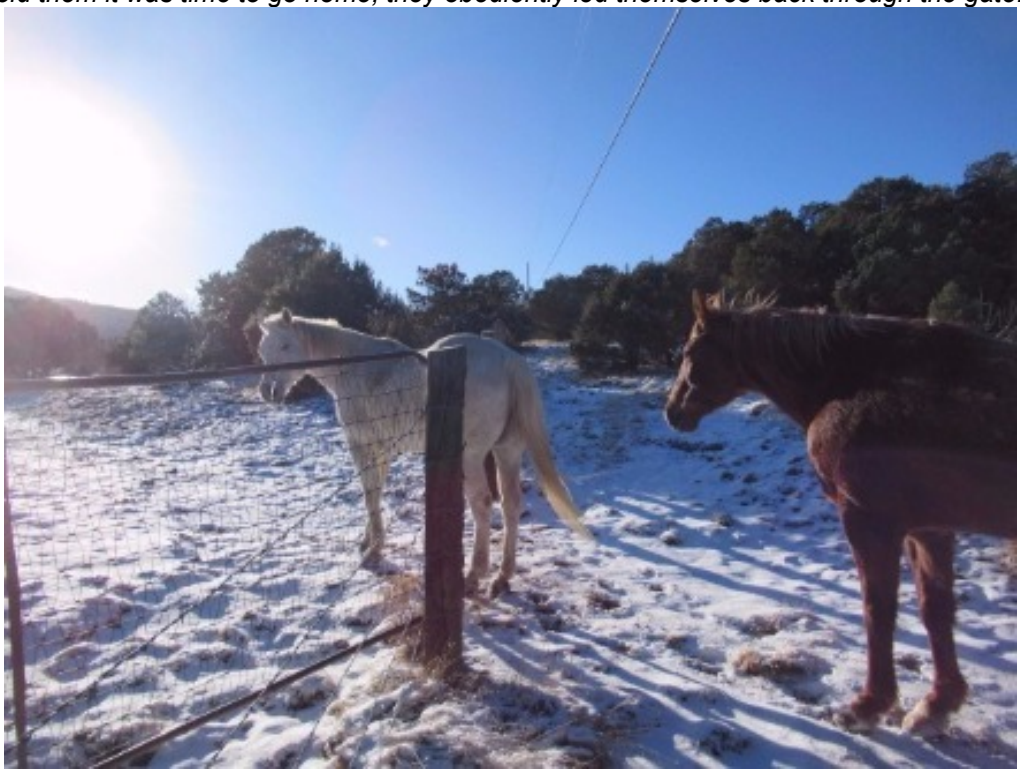
2018-01-22 - *Change of Scenery*

Lulu does not see the point of eating snow. "It makes my teeth hurt!"

"It's delicious! "Hawaiian ice!"

2018-01-22 - *Change of Scenery*

When I told them it was time to go home, they obediently led themselves back through the gate.



Meanwhile, waiting outside the kitchen window. "More, please".

Can't say "no" to that.

MM

2018-01-31 - *Familial Territory*

During the long months of Belle's recovery, we have adapted to circumstances. Riding less, we spend more time walking together - as a family. This has created even stronger bonds between us.

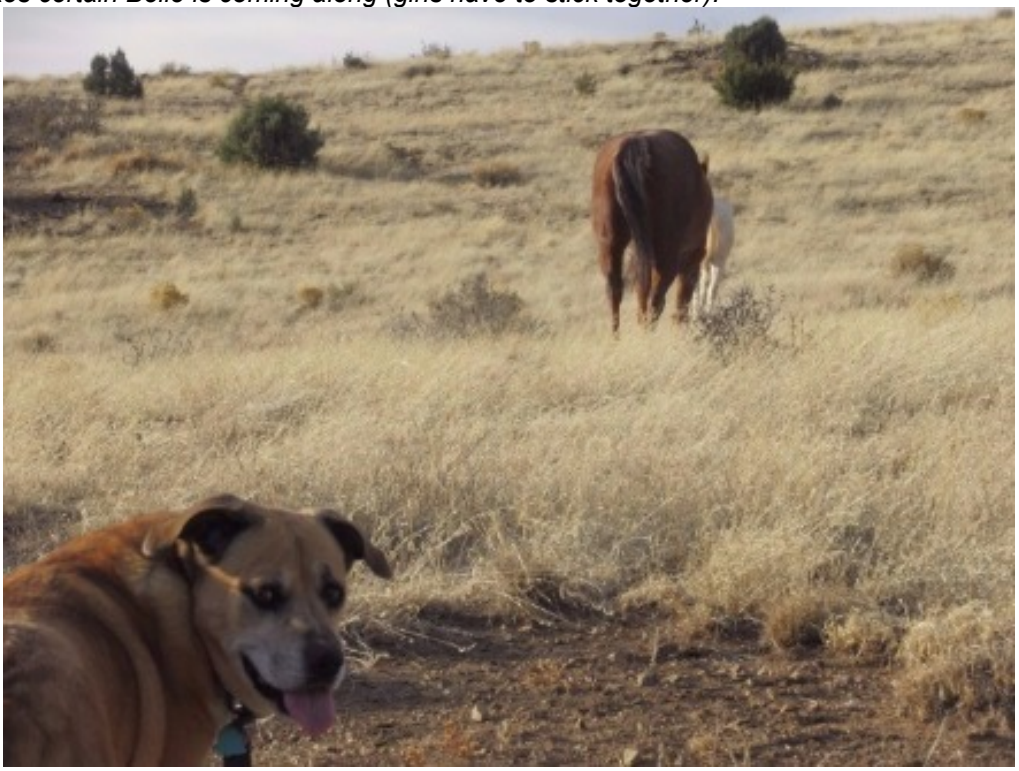
Leaving the ranch gate into the forest, Belle and I lead the procession.

Even in the warmest (and driest) winter anyone around here can remember, a little snow manages to persist in the most shaded areas.

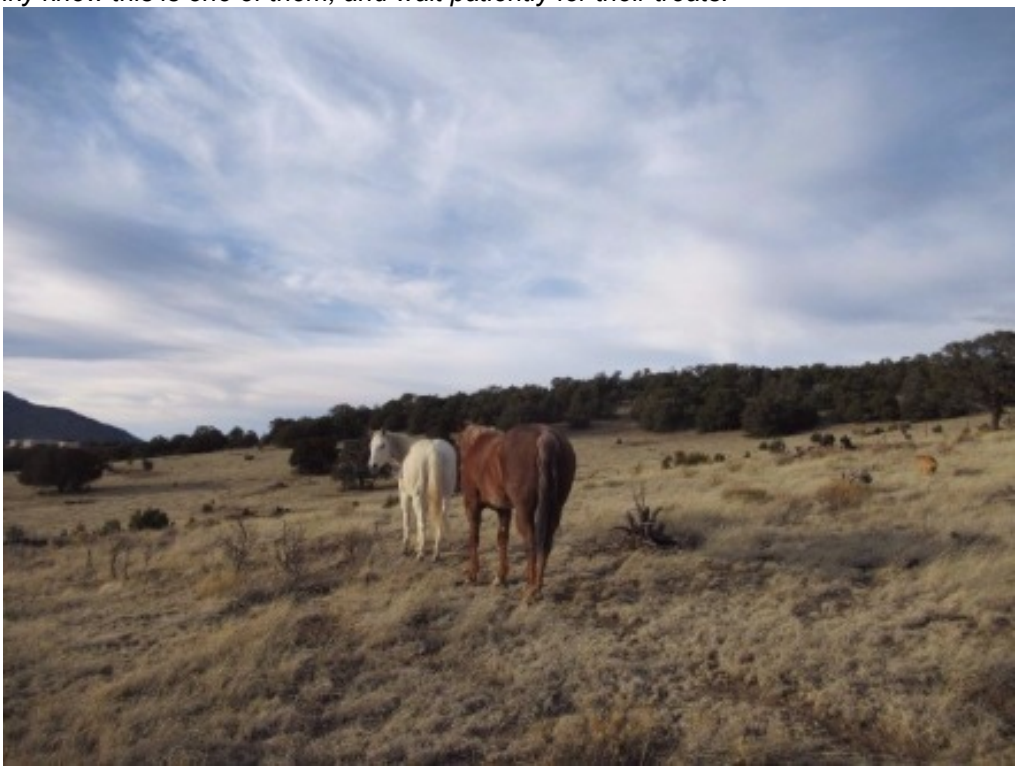
The horses enjoy an icy treat.

We set a comfortable pace - each of us free to manage our own speed. Still, they keep an eye on each other - and me - and no one gets left behind.

Lulu makes certain Belle is coming along (girls have to stick together).

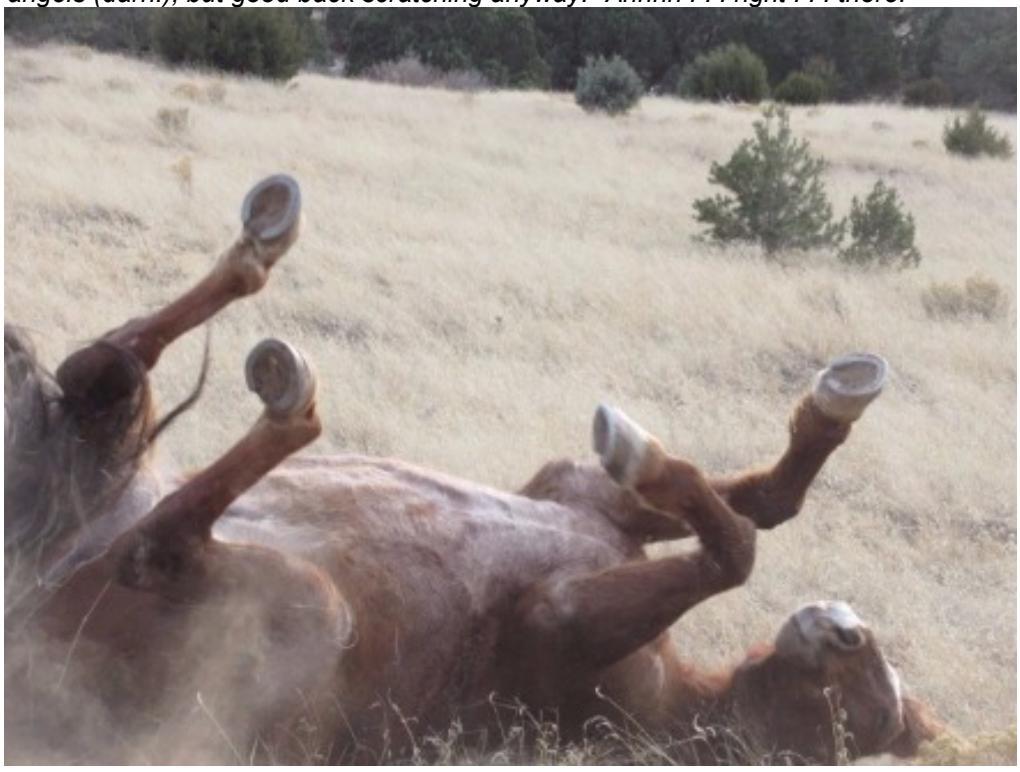


This is a very familiar route, and we have established informal "snack stops" along the way. Thunder and Spanky know this is one of them, and wait patiently for their treats.



Well, sort of patiently!

No snow angels (darn!), but good back scratching anyway. "Ahhhh . . . right . . . there!"



I hope you can feel the peace. Each one has complete freedom - and they choose to roam along together.

If anyone lags too much, the others give a friendly nudge (that's Thunder letting Lulu know she needs to mosey along . . .)

There are times when a little run is fun.

. . . but they seem aware of Belle's situation, and after a brief burst of speed, slow down as she catches up.

Lulu waits for a cue from Thunder . . . "Which way?"

. . . who strikes a typically-attentive pose . . .

. . . before continuing on into the forest, with loyal Lulu trotting right behind.

This isn't much of a photo - but it holds great significance. When we came to our favorite "running hill" (they all liked to race each other up it), Belle decided to try a little speed - testing herself. Not at her usual full gallop, but still, it marks progress.

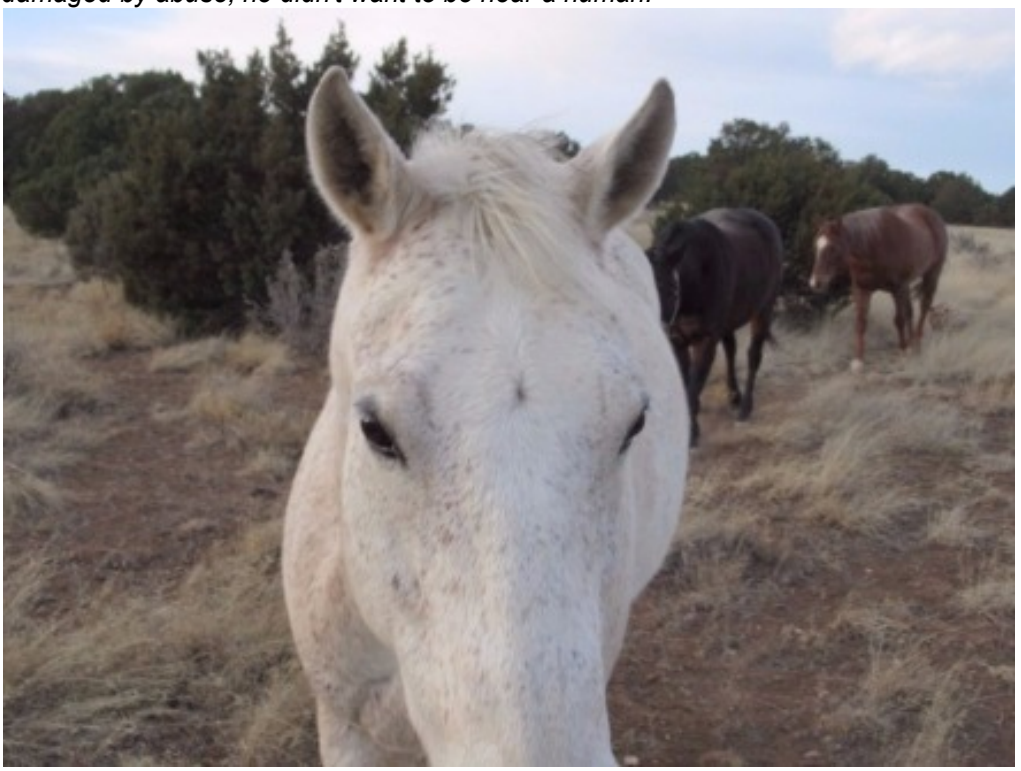
At the top, everyone slows down again.

2018-01-31 - *Familial Territory*

Then, something interesting. Spanky noticed I was behind, and stopped cold- asking me to move up in the herd.

He wanted me in the group.

Then, Thunder made it clear he wanted me to take the leader position - an honor in horse language (especially for an "alpha" like him). I have to remind myself that this is the horse who was once so mentally damaged by abuse, he didn't want to be near a human.



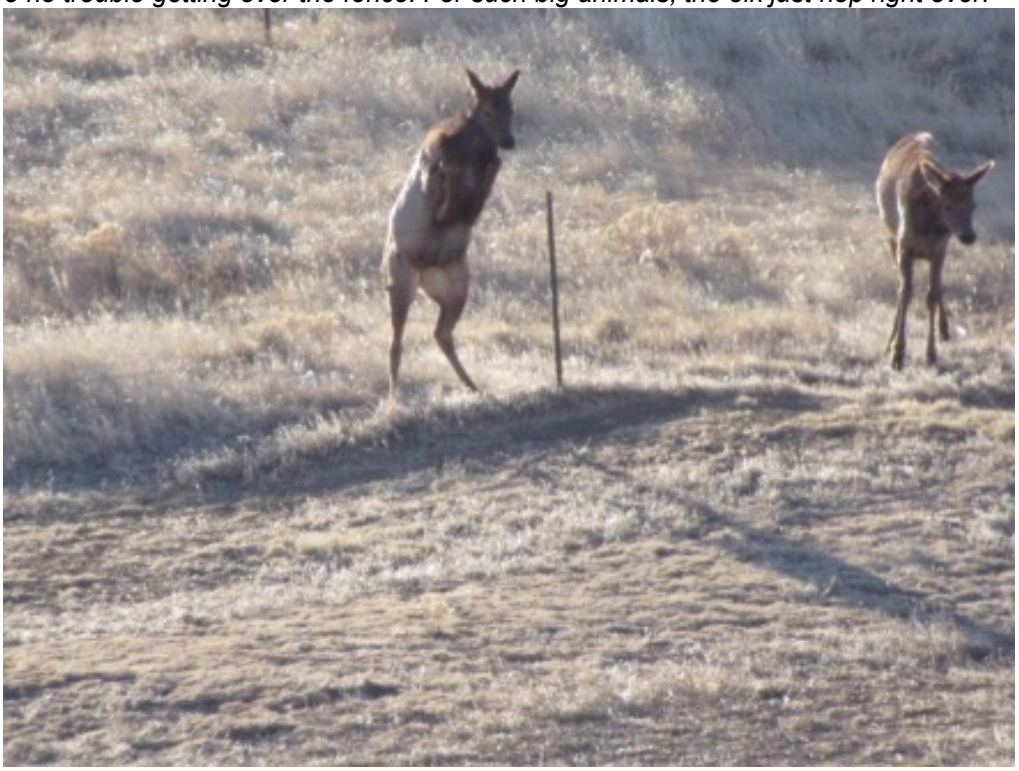
We arrived home under a "super" moon.

These family outings, casually wandering together, gives a chance to see - up close - just how connected they really are.
MM

2018-02-04 - *Coffee Klatch*

Belle invited her book club over for a visit this morning.

They have no trouble getting over the fence. For such big animals, the elk just hop right over.



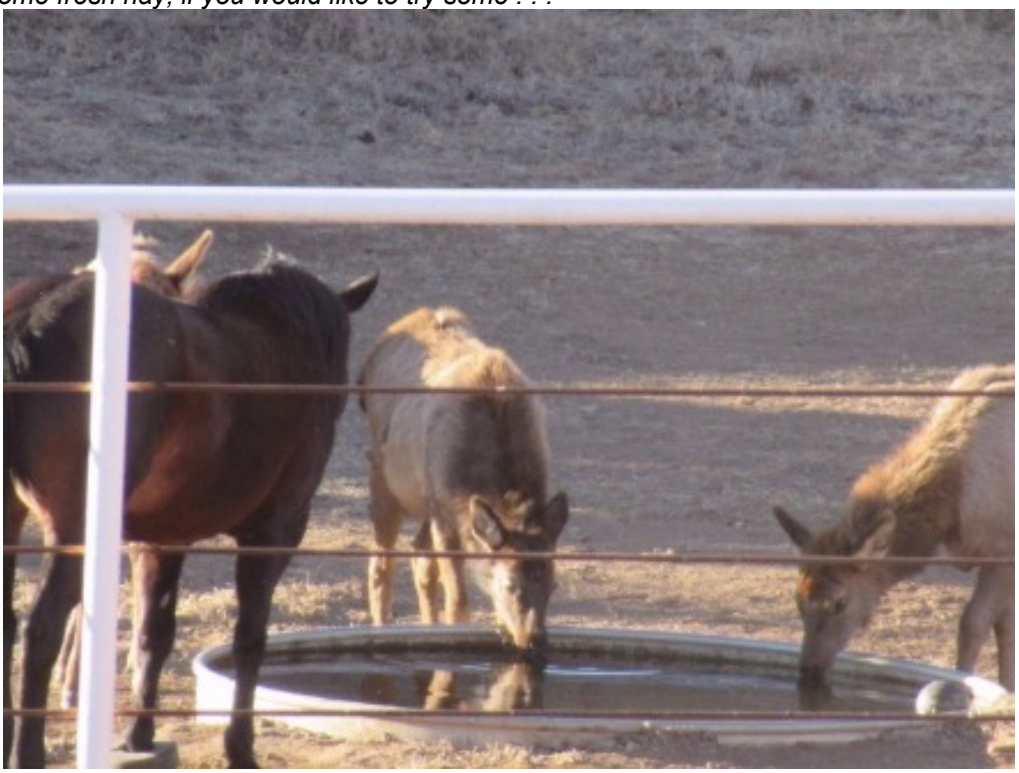
This one cheated and went under.

2018-02-04 - *Coffee Klatch*

Here they come.

Their gracious hostess greets them and offers refreshments.

"I have some fresh hay, if you would like to try some . . ."



They had a great discussion.

Of course, being separate species, there were differing opinions . . .

. . . but everyone got along.

Then Thunder thought he would liven things up a bit.

It didn't seem to bother Belle's guests much. They're used to his antics.

"Belle is lovely, and a wonderful hostess . . . but that husband of hers is sure a card . . . always showing off."

"Yeah, he's okay - and I did have a great time. That well water was delicious. What are we going to do for lunch?"

MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

Hey - you guys want to go to Grindstone Lake today? “You bet!"

Sure doesn't feel like winter around here.

2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

The lake took on a strange jade color, under the clear sky.

2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

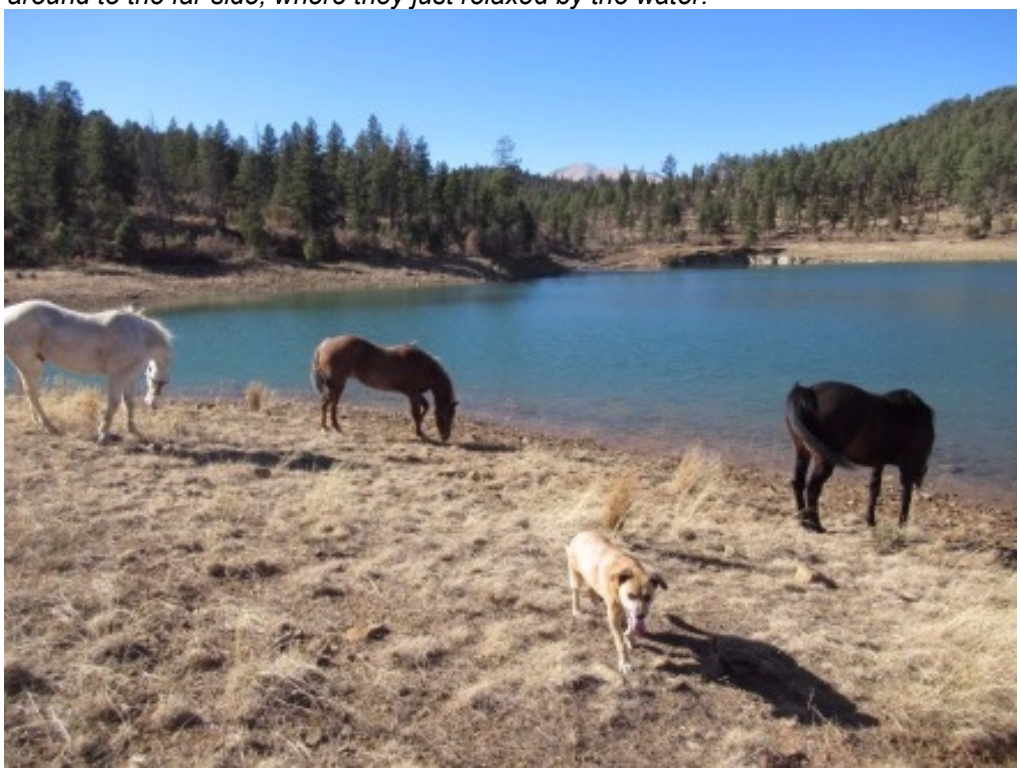
Up close, the water is crystal clear.

Spanky always finds a place for this!

2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

This is the most strenuous outing Belle has had. We take it easy, and she does okay.

We went around to the far side, where they just relaxed by the water.



2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

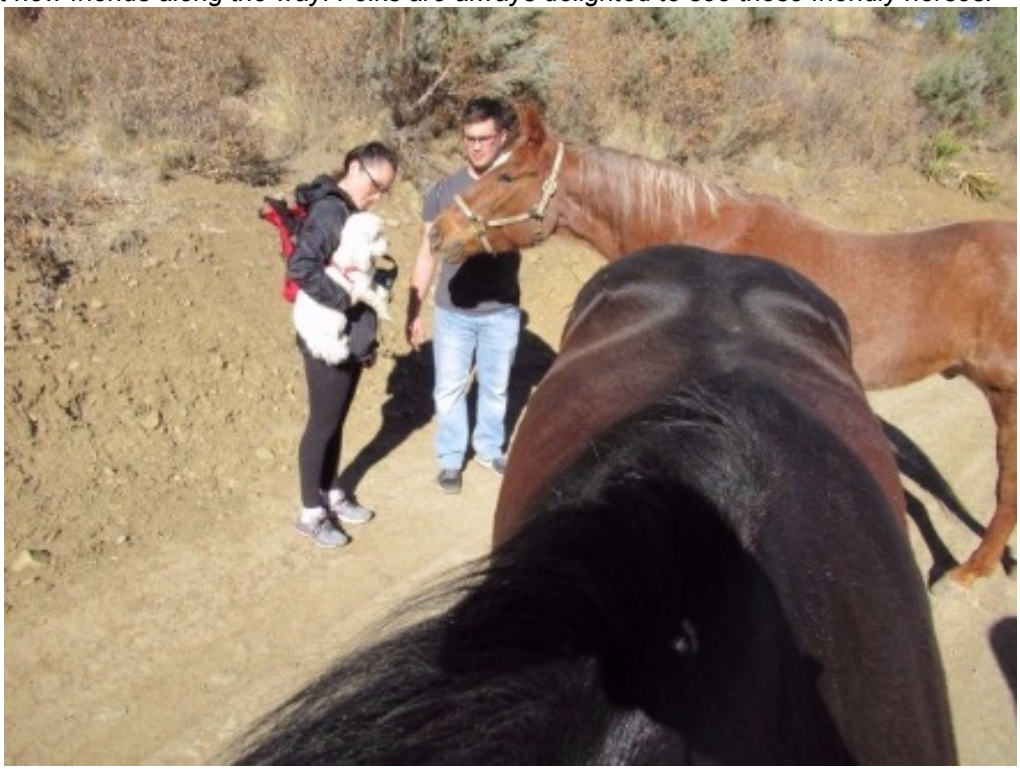
Thunder and Lulu share one of their special moments.

Happy horse.

2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

When we were ready to move on, I let them find their own way back. It was cool to see them figure it out. They waited for Lulu and I to catch up.

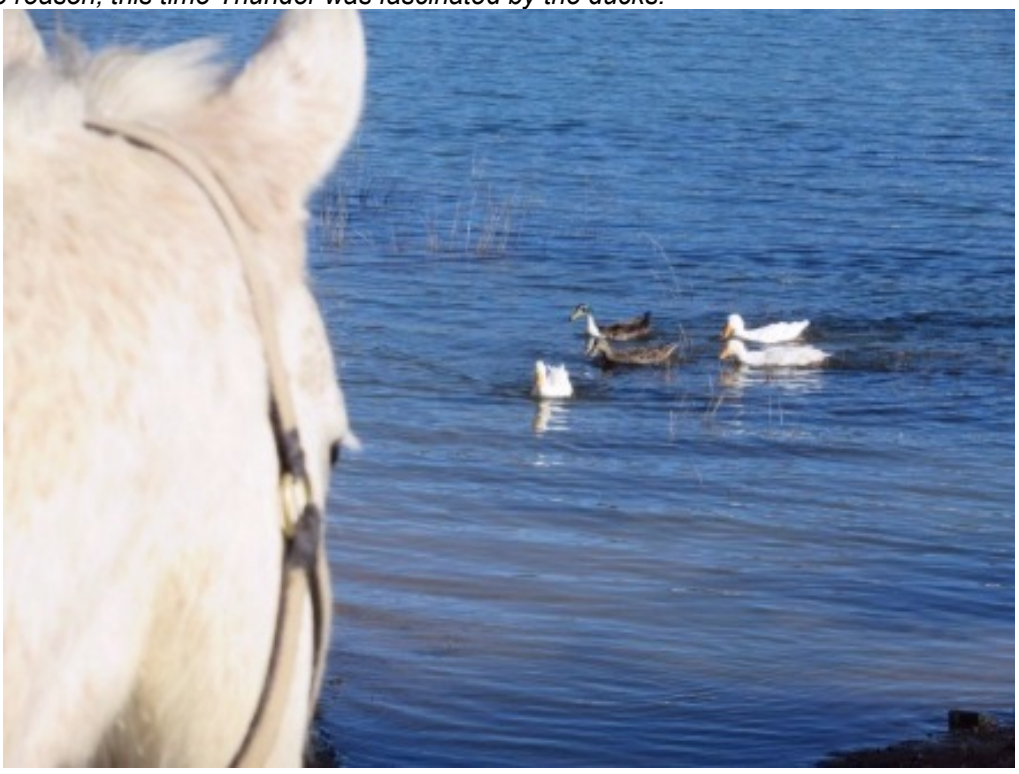
They met new friends along the way. Folks are always delighted to see these friendly horses!



2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

Goofy Spanky takes a rest on patient Belle's back.

For some reason, this time Thunder was fascinated by the ducks.



2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

2018-02-04 - *Lakeside Afternoon*

Sorry, Spanky, we gotta go. "But this day is perfect!" “I know . . .”

He's right - it was. Thanks for joining us!
MM

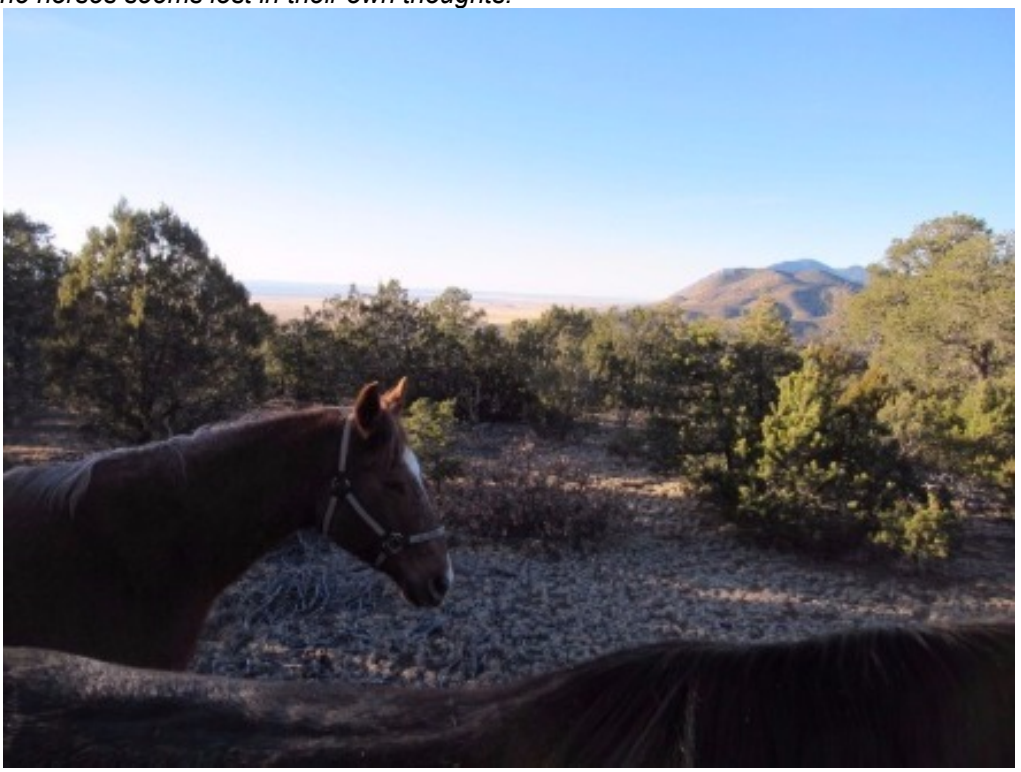
FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2018-02-07 - ***Quiet Ride***

This "non-winter" has created special times - clear skies and warm afternoons. One of our favorite places to enjoy them is Ranchman's Camp.

A high ridge over looks the valley around Carrizozo.

Each of the horses seems lost in their own thoughts.



Even the usually athletic Thunder slows to a crawl on this quiet ride.

Nice views from up here.

Thunder finally picks up his speed.

A little friendly competition.

Back to a walk.

On the trail home - the end of a quiet day.

MM

2018-02-08 - ***Some Snow***

We had a little snow at the ranch yesterday, so Thunder and I thought we would check out the conditions on Nogal Peak - before it had a chance to melt and refreeze into ice overnight.

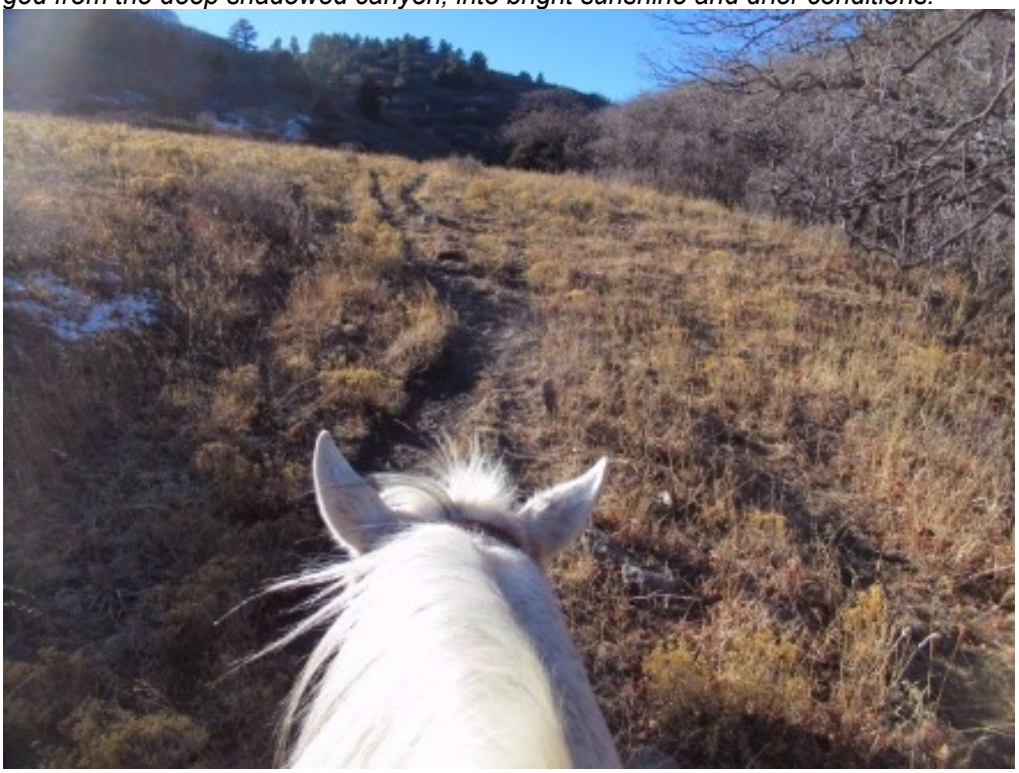
More snow than we expected in Nogal Canyon . . .

. . . but the road was mostly clear.

The lower trail is in shade this time of year.

Thunder didn't mind, and Lulu loves running in the snow (she's leading up ahead)!

We emerged from the deep shadowed canyon, into bright sunshine and drier conditions.



A light layer of snow clings to the peak above us.

A clear view from the top.

We sure love the high country! What a treat to be up here this time of year.

If you look closely, you will see snow deep in the mountain grass.

God's country.

We head back down as the sun sets. Lulu has a ball, scampering through the snow!

Thirsty girl has a nice cold drink.

I dismount, and let Thunder meander in the snow at his own pace.

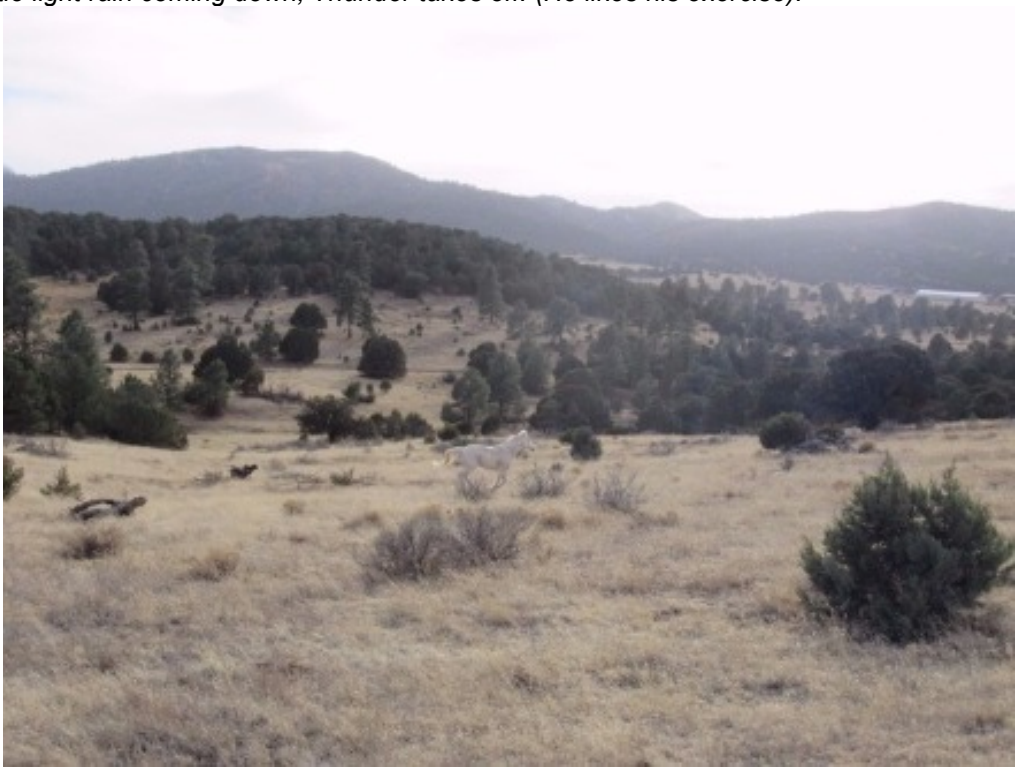
Sorry, honey, we gotta go home!

Nice to share a little winter with you!
MM

2018-02-17 - *One For the Books*

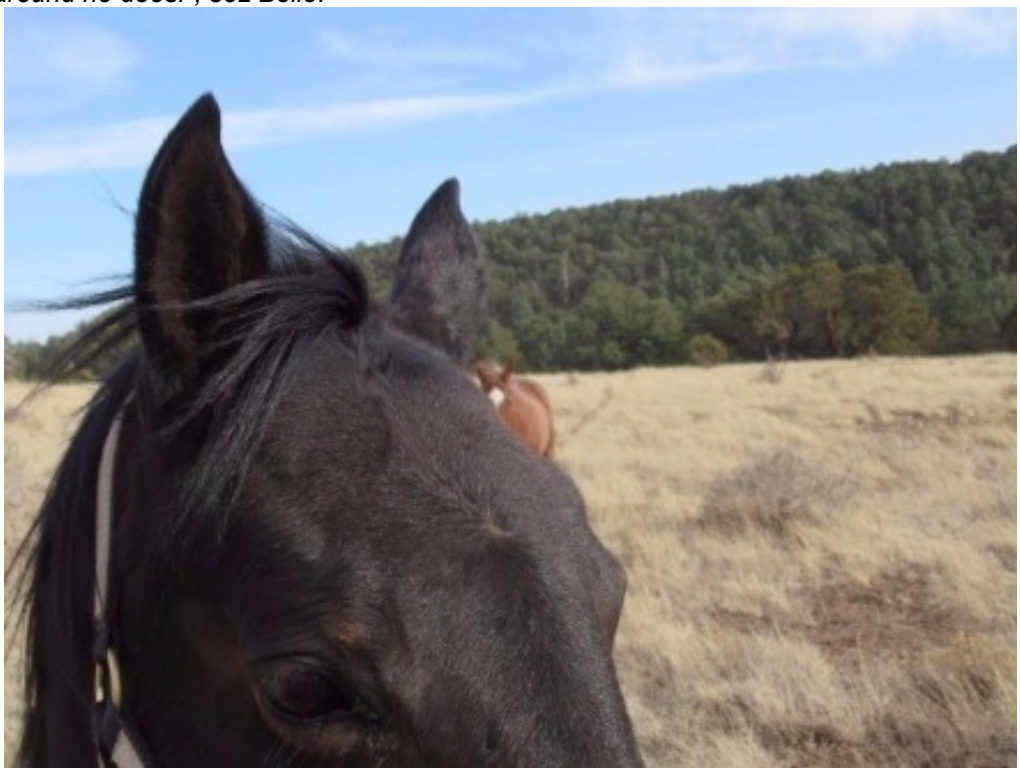
We've had lots of rain the last few days (improving what had been one of the driest winters on record), so rides have been short and "in between"!

With a little light rain coming down, Thunder takes off! (He likes his exercise).



Spanky and Belle keep an eye on him.

But he made a lazy circle and returned to us. We continued on our way. "That better be the ONLY running around he does!", sez Belle.



2018-02-17 - *One For the Books*

Last night the rain turned to snow - the wettest snow we have seen here. That's good news!

We reached a milestone. These email journals are compiled into "volumes" of about 600 pages each (!) and entered on the www.followeddreamranch.com website, where they can be accessed at any time. Feel like "going for ride"? - check it out! We just added a couple more volumes, bringing the total to an astonishing 14! That's a LOT of miles . . . and a lot of memories - as always, thanks for coming along!
MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part One*

Belle has progressed to the point where we wanted to (very gently) see how she would do with the added weight of a rider.

The trails east of old Lincoln town are flat and soft (and steeped in history - this is Billy the Kid's familiar route into town). First, a warm up walk. Belle finds some tasty dried thistles.

Thunder enjoys some, too.

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part One*

"Hey! Where's MY treat?", asks Spanky (don't worry - I carry a pocket full of treats - Spanky gets plenty.)

The family.

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part One*

Lulu's in a serious "on the trail to adventure" mood. "This is the Kid's territory."

Spanky opts for some alone time . . .

. . . and . . .

Rain and snow-melt upstream have muddied the swift-moving water.

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part One*

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part One*

We climb down for a look.

(To be continued)

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part Two*

A nice cool drink.

. . . and a wet, splashing game. Thanks, Spanky!

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part Two*

"What? I was just play'in!"

"Yeah. Right. Whatever. I'm outta here."

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part Two*

Then, the test. I climb aboard Belle for a brief ride. It's sure good to see the world from between her ears again!

Her boys stay respectfully behind. It wasn't much of a ride, but she did okay! We'll continue to take it easy for a while.

2018-02-25 - *Test Ride - Part Two*

At home, the deer were waiting.

This favorite big buck made it through another hunting season.

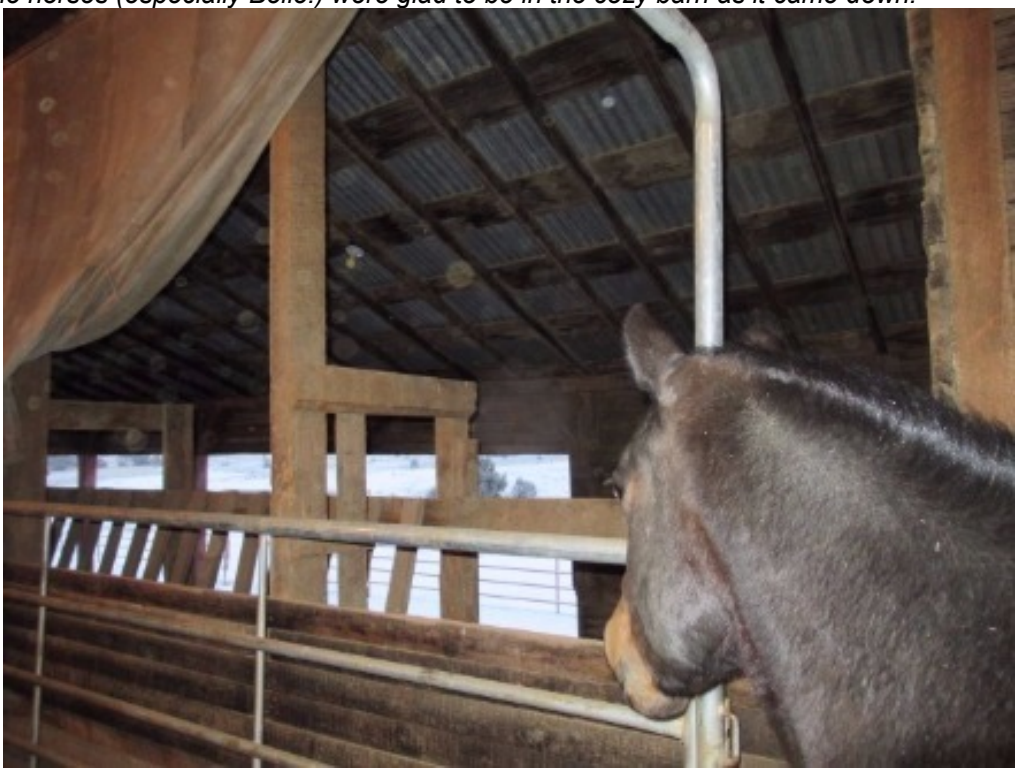
MM

2018-03-01 - *Mountain's Majesty*

We had a nice, gentle snowfall late yesterday.

It didn't seem to bother the deer . . .

. . . but the horses (especially Belle!) were glad to be in the cozy barn as it came down.



This morning dawned fresh and beautiful.

2018-03-01 - *Mountain's Majesty*

Majestic Sierra Blanca peak added more snow to her white mantle.

2018-03-01 - *Mountain's Majesty*

The peak, sacred to the Apaches, soars to nearly 12,000 ft. (the highest, southernmost point in the U.S.).

2018-03-01 - *Mountain’s Majesty*

"Where'd it all go?" wonders Wilcox later in the day, as the horses leisurely graze in the sun.

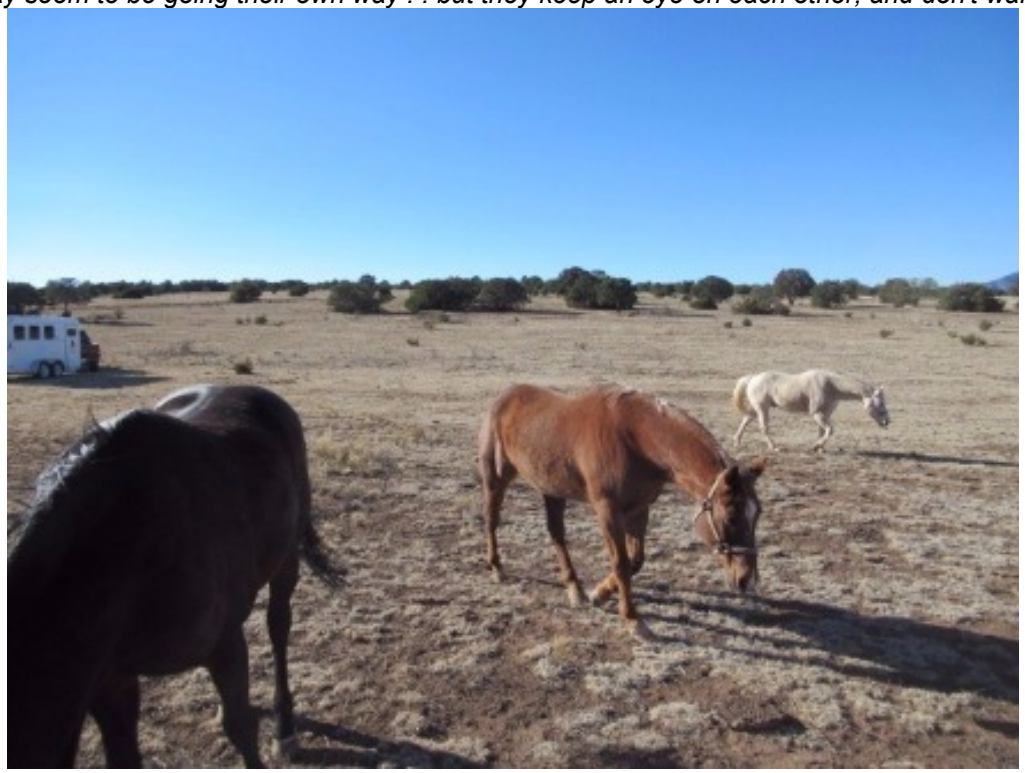
MM

FOLLOWED DREAM RANCH

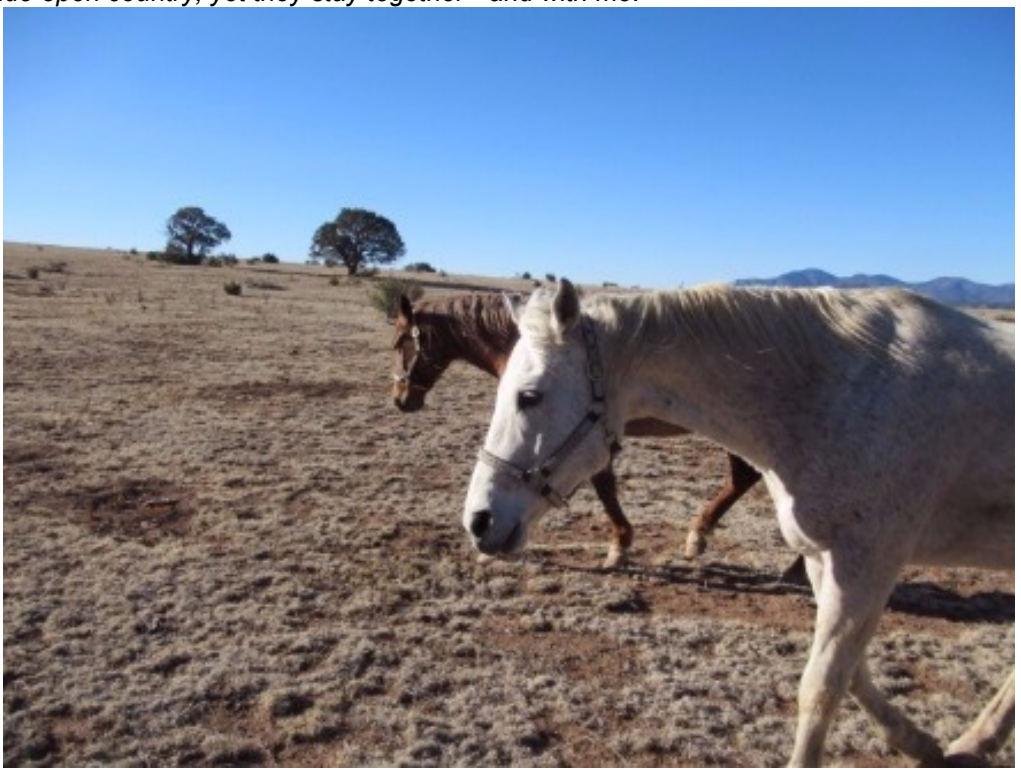
2018-03-04 - *Together*

Although she's much more sound, we're still taking it real easy with Belle for a while. Long (long!) walks as a family seem to strengthen her hoof, as well as their bonds.

Each may seem to be going their own way . . but they keep an eye on each other, and don't wander off.



This is wide open country, yet they stay together - and with me.



In the distance, snow still clings to the high peaks.

Spanky takes the challenging way down. Go Spanky!

2018-03-04 - *Together*

We move along as a group. Look ma, no lead ropes!

Spanky nuzzles up to his friend Lulu. She LOVES her horses.

2018-03-04 - *Together*

Thunder breaks out for a little speed, then returns to the fold as the rest of us march on.

2018-03-04 - *Together*

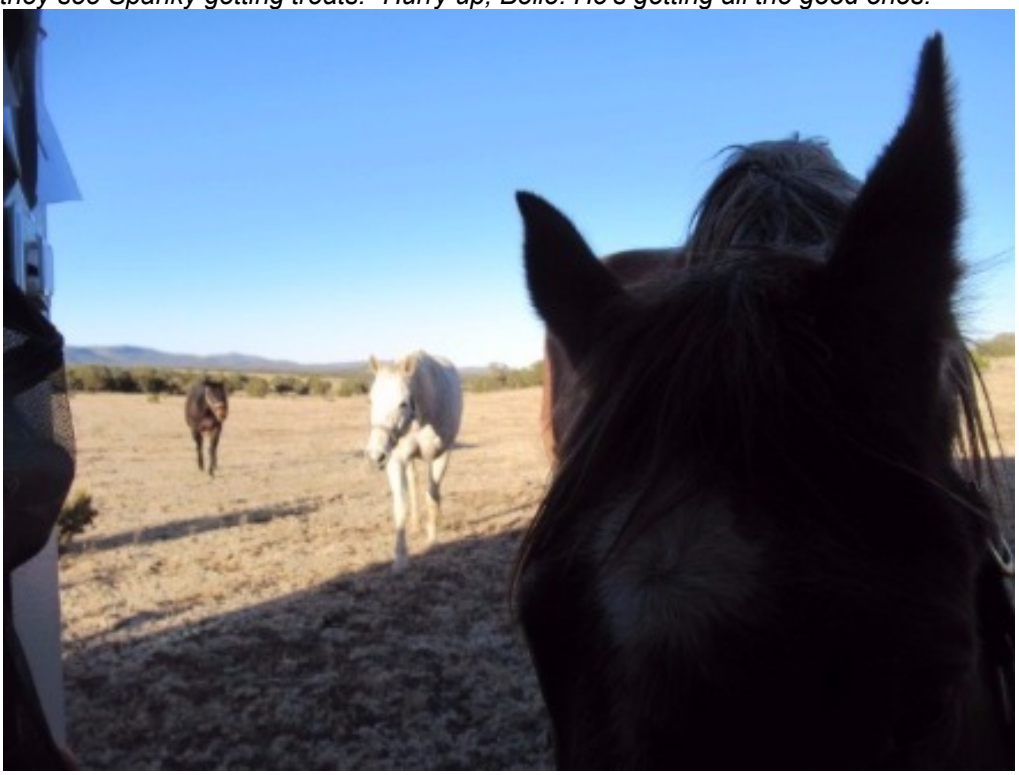
I allow plenty of snack stops. Why not? They move on when I ask them to.

Belle and Lulu follow me on a little detour.

Approaching the trailer, they lag a little . . .

2018-03-04 - *Together*

Until . . . they see Spanky getting treats! "Hurry up, Belle! He's getting all the good ones!"



Special companions make any outing . . . well . . . special. Thanks for coming along!
MM

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