

# THE NOGAL JOURNALS

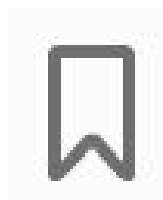
*Volume Eleven*



**BELLE, THUNDER, SPANKY, LULU  
AND  
MATTHEW MIDGETT**

## Volume 11 - Part 2 of 3

Please use the BOOKMARKS TOOL:



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



The early morning started out bright and sunny. By 10 the clouds had built up over the mountain. By noon, we figured we better try for a little ride before the afternoon rains began.

*Thunder knew what was coming, so he kept us at a quick pace.*



*Right behind our house, we found some neighbors out for a stroll.*





*A napping elk didn't even bother to get up as we passed.*





*As we drew closer, they took their time crossing our trail.*



*It's always impressive to see a patriarch like this.*



## 2016-08-29 - *Caught*

Page 4 of 15

*When the way was clear, we continued on - with Nogal Peak looking benevolently down on us.*



*Then, all of a sudden, the sky opened up! Belle HATES to get her hair wet (see her ears laid back?)*





*It was a real downpour. We tried hiding under a tree.*



*No good. "Uh, this isn't working . . ."*



## 2016-08-29 - *Caught*

Page 6 of 15

*So we decided to make a run for it. Full speed ahead!*







*Lulu was having a blast!*





. . . *but I think Thunder had the best time of all.*





*Closer to home, the rain began to slacken and we slowed our pace.*



*Spanky even took some time for grass angel.*



*We were trotting along when . . .*





*There they were again.*



*The whole herd - watched over by a protective big bull. How would he view our intrusion?*





*Thunder had the right idea.*



*Suddenly, we were all just grazing together.*





*Closer and closer.*



*They accepted our presence - the wary moms and babies, too!*





*Even the big guy ignored us.*



*We spent some time enjoying each other's company, before walking the short distance to our gate.*





*By the time we got home, the sun was out.*



Our encounters with wildlife neighbors, living free and beautiful, are a very special privilege. Sure are glad we could share this one with you.

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-08-29 – *Now It Can Be Told*

Page 1 of 6

Late Friday afternoon I received a torrent of urgent emails and calls. The beloved "wild horses of Ruidoso", enjoyed by locals and tourists alike for years, had been captured and taken away!

*These photos of wild herd members, courtesy of David Tremblay.*







A property owner had trapped about a dozen members of the herd, including some young foals, in her pasture, and had called authorities. She complained that the horses were a nuisance, and the once-free horses were loaded into trailers and taken into custody, transported to a holding facility 200 miles away. The herd's stallion was not caught, and spent the next day's screaming frantically for his family.

In an extraordinary public response, the entire community seemed to be mobilized overnight. There was an email and phone campaign to everyone from the local Livestock Board, to senators and the Governor. Email accounts were overloaded; voice mails filled to capacity. A first-time-ever "honk to save the horses" rally was organized for Sunday afternoon. Hundreds turned out in support of returning the horses.











All this seemed to happen overnight - because it DID!

. . . but there were troubling aspects to the situation. Although the horse herd has been in Ruidoso for as long as anyone can remember, there were questions as to their legal status. Are they "estrays", or strayed domestic animals? Or does their presence here for generations provide ample evidence that they should be considered wild (as the "Wild Horses" signs on our highway would indicate) and protected accordingly?

*This handmade sign appeared on Saturday.*



The outcry from concerned folks from near and far was astonishing. A quickly-created Facebook page (Bring Ruidoso's Horses Back) had 5,000 likes in less than 48 hours. More than \$20,000 was raised just as quickly on GoFundMe, to support legal expenses. EVERYONE seemed concerned about the horses' welfare.

Then the Livestock Board announced that the captive horses would be auctioned off, starting Monday. Supporters were outraged. More calls, more emails, and a town hall meeting was set for Monday evening.

Several hundred anxious horse lovers attended the meeting with trepidation; this promised to become a bureaucratic nightmare. Moments before the meeting began, organizers got word. Astonishingly, our voices were heard. The horses will be returned! None are to be auctioned. They will be remanded to local custody (at a location where the stallion will hopefully reunite with them). And though they will be confined, they will be cared for by folks who love them, as the legislation is reviewed. Hopefully, these wild horses of Ruidoso will ultimately be returned to the freedom most of us believe is rightfully theirs. At the announcement, the entire audience rose to its feet as one - a tremendous cheer of relief filled the auditorium. There were few dry eyes.

The effort will continue. The horses (which State veterinarians deemed "extremely healthy" at capture) will have to be brought back. Volunteers will need to care for them until they can be (hopefully) released. And their legal status as wild will have to be permanently established. All of which will take time, effort and money. But the will of the people has been heard. And the horses have been given a voice at last.

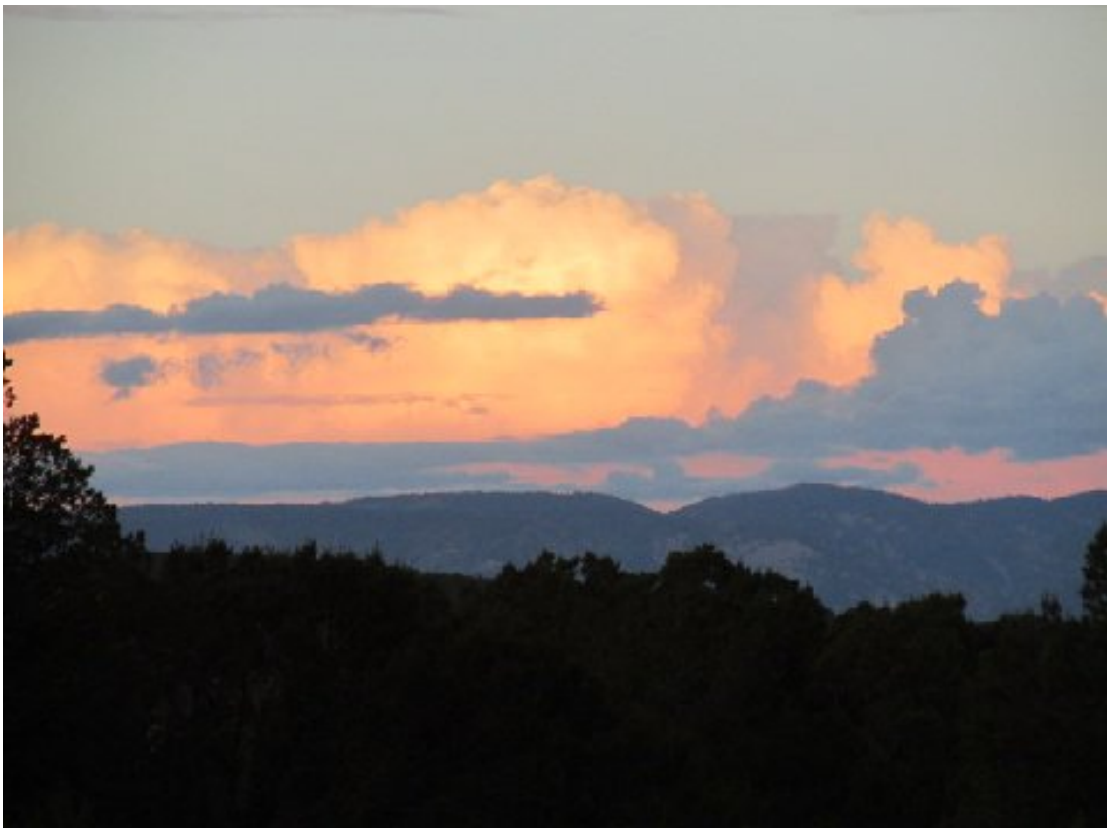
MM



## 2016-08-29 - *Sunset*

Page 1 of 3

The monsoon continues strong a little longer this year, providing welcome rain and dramatic sunsets.









"What is life? It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset." *Chief Crowfoot, 1890*

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



It's still raining off and on . . . so we take our rides between showers.

*The rain makes for some green vistas around home . . .*



*. . . and good grazing.*













*"I wish I enjoyed the grass as much as they do. Why don't we ever come across a meadow with hamburger patties?"*





*Lots of flowers everywhere.*







*When we got home from this ride, Nacho and her new bambinos were visiting. She has brought them around after dark, but this was their first daylight appearance at the house.*





## 2016-09-02 – *The New Bambinos*

Page 7 of 8

*They are still a little wary.*



*Sure are cute.*



*After their little visit, they trotted off with mom. "See 'ya later!"*



MM



## 2016-09-04 – *Ranch Mudeo*

Page 1 of 4

Lulu and I attended the ninth annual Lincoln County Cowboy Crisis Fund benefit ranch rodeo. Immediately prior to the rodeo, monsoon rains swept through the fairgrounds arena, creating a soupy mess for the competitors. Undaunted, teams from six local ranches competed in what was laughingly termed a "Mudeo".

*Unlike professional rodeos, during a ranch rodeo teams perform typical ranch cowboy tasks such as rounding up strays and "doctoring" calves.*



*As the rodeo began, the clouds cleared and the sun shone brightly.*



*The benediction prayer.*





*Due to the sudden rain, the arena was a little challenging . . .*





*Following the rodeo, there was a brisket supper, auction, and dance, with all proceeds benefiting the Cowboy Crisis Fund. The Fund was established by local cowboys to help Lincoln County citizens in need. More than \$35,000 has been raised and distributed by the Fund during the past eight years.*

*MM*



Summer begins to fade into autumn. The mornings are clear and bright.



*I'm still mowing . . . and mowing . . . and mowing.*



## 2016-09-05 – *Second Spring*

Page 2 of 10

*But the monsoon clouds still form many noontimes. Unusual this late in the season.*



*So, we watch and see what happens. When it is clear on the mountain, we take advantage.*





*We sure will miss the green when it goes . . . "to every season".*



*The extra rain has brought out some seldom-seen things in the forest, like this big orange fungus (?)*





*And some flowers we usually associate with early summer.*



*Still plenty of running water along the trails.*





*It looks pretty good - let's keep climbing.*



*Lulu enjoys Argentina Spring.*





## 2016-09-05 – Second Spring

*The wood fence is to keep cattle out of the spring.*



*Wow. Still lots of wildflowers, late in the season.*











*Thunder kinda looks like a unicorn in this one.*



*And those meadows look like a high-country golf course.*



*Headed home at dusk.*



Thanks for coming along on a "second spring" ride.

MM



## 2016-09-06 – *Easy On The Eyes*

Page 1 of 7

This late summer offers us unusually green vistas, interesting skies, and pleasant temps. Let's take advantage of the opportunity and enjoy a nice easy ride, okay?





## 2016-09-06 – *Easy On The Eyes*

Page 2 of 7

*Belle and Spanky have a little talk. "Isn't this beautiful, Spanky?" "Not as beautiful as you, Belle."  
"SIGH".*



*"Hmmm . . . he is awfully nice."*





*"But I love my Thunder."*



*Lulu leads the shadow horses.*





*Some of these arroyos contain gold mines of flowers.*



*Daylight fading.*



*Peaceful grazing before heading home.*







Nice and easy does it. Thanks for coming along.  
MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



On our way back from town, we stopped for a quick little ride under stormy skies.





"Ahhh . . ."





*"A little mud is good for the soul."*



*"Really? When I do that I have to take a bath."*



*Racing up a rocky slope.*



*Another one.*





*Trotting on home.*



*Meanwhile, back at the ranch the babies were visiting.*





*Mom and big daddy, too.*





*Unusual view of this buck, showing the "velvet" on his developing antlers.*



*Family mealtime.*





*The twins with mom.*





*A final "awww".*



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-09-11 – *Green Grows The Last Grass of Summer*

Page 1 of 4

There is just the slightest sense of fall around the corner. The sun is a little less brilliant; the sky a little bluer. But thanks to late monsoon rains, the grass is still green.

*The summer daisies are still in bloom.*









*In the distance, the horses enjoy their grazing.*





... and we have a new baby.





## 2016-09-11 – September Song

Page 1 of 6

*"Oh it's a long, long while,  
from May to December.  
And the days grow short,  
when you reach September.  
These precious days,  
I'll spend with you."*

September Song, Weill/Anderson

Have you noticed? The days are a little shorter now. We find ourselves ending afternoon rides after the sun has set.

*Looks like there is plenty of time for a nice long ride.*



## 2016-09-11 – September Song

Page 2 of 6

*... and the trail ahead beckons as always.*



*Oh, what tales this old tree might tell. Of Kit Carson, and Billy the Kid. The great Geronimo, and Susan McSween, "the cattle queen of New Mexico". And now three horses and a dog, passing quietly by.*







*Trotting along, as the shadows lengthen.*



*Nogal Peak, in the far right distance.*





## 2016-09-11 – *September Song*

Page 5 of 6

*A little faster, now.*



## 2016-09-11 – *September Song*

Page 6 of 6

*Back just in time.*



These precious days, we'll spend with you.

MM



Nacho is a very good mom.



*She brings the twins by for snacks and a visit (I think the one on the right is a little girl; the other one a baby buck).*







*Nacho is a vigilant mom - always alert.*





*Awww . . . look at the little feet.*



*They are curious about everything.*











That's awww-bout it!  
MM



## 2016-09-15 – *Many Hands Do Good Work*

Page 1 of 4

The court has ordered our band of local wild horses out of government holding pens in Santa Fe - and back to Alto, the area from which they were removed nearly a month ago. But there are stipulations. Local supporters scrambled to locate a suitable situation for them (they must be quarantined for 21 days, behind double fences, in case they carry any diseases back from the holding pens . . .). They must be kept together (which is a very good thing), and they cannot be released into their previous range at this time.

A 10-acre property was donated for the duration of the quarantine. Its metal pens are not designed for the little foals that will be returning with their moms. Additional fencing must be installed to protect them. A dedicated group gathered the past couple of days to get the work done. To be honest, we are more sincere than talented!

*We are still getting unusually-late monsoon rains. Clouds hang heavy over home.*



## 2016-09-15 – *Many Hands Do Good Work*

Page 2 of 4

*At the donated property, volunteers of every age pitched in. It felt like an old-fashioned barn raising.*



*Stainless steel fencing is being placed over the pipe-and-cable corrals, to keep little ones from possibly squeezing out.*





## 2016-09-15 – *Many Hands Do Good Work*

Page 3 of 4

*It is difficult, heavy work. Everyone pitches in.*



*We became more efficient as we went on.*





## 2016-09-15 – *Many Hands Do Good Work*

Page 4 of 4

*This is the "twister brigade" tying the new fence to the pipes. You can't see it in the photo, but it had started to rain.*



*We worked through the rain, and even hail. Inspired by the knowledge that our horses are coming home.*



We hope the horses will be released and returned on Monday, so all must be ready. During their quarantine, the courts will be considering their future. MM



## 2016-09-17 – *Ghost Riders*

Page 1 of 8

About an hour out of Santa Fe, in northern New Mexico, Ghost Ranch is the legendary former home of artist Georgia O'Keefe ("the mother of American modernism"). Today the spectacular red-rock country ranch is run as an event center and retreat. It also features a popular riding stable, which sometimes arranges special rides out of the area. We were contacted by them, and asked if there was any good riding around here. Well . . . Many ideas were discussed, and they decided Ranchman's Camp sounded best for their needs (limited time, and riders of varying experience), and they asked us to lead the ride.

*They picked a beautiful day for it. There were about a dozen riders in all. We parked their trailers on a natural meadow that looked like a mowed lawn. It was a good start.*



## 2016-09-17 – *Ghost Riders*

Page 2 of 8

*My horses are very familiar with the area, but we don't generally ride with big groups, and I wasn't sure how they would react. Thunder took the lead, and it soon became apparent that he, Belle and Spanky were the hosts of this ride.*



*If the other riders had any reservations about riding with "loose" horses, they were soon reassured. "You mean Thunder LEADS on his own?" was the most common comment.*





## 2016-09-17 – Ghost Riders

Page 3 of 8

*My horses all stayed together, kept a steady and comfortable pace, and in every way were good hosts. Lulu trotted politely along. I was very proud of them.*



*The other riders were indeed experienced, and a pleasure to ride with.*



## 2016-09-17 – *Ghost Riders*

Page 4 of 8

*They enjoyed our area's green grass and open spaces.*







*The riders said they wanted to do some bushwhacking cross country, and Thunder was happy to oblige - steering us right on course back to the trailers.*







*At camp, he and Spanky left the other horses alone, but made friends among the human guests.*





## 2016-09-17 – Ghost Riders

Page 7 of 8

*Ghost Ranch provided "apres ride snacks" . . . French wine and gourmet cheeses, smoked oysters, etc., served on china.*



## 2016-09-17 – *Ghost Riders*

Page 8 of 8

*Lulu wondered why WE don't do this after our rides . . .*



It was a splendid ride with wonderful companions.  
Glad you came along, too!  
MM



We often leave doors open during the day, for fresh air and so that the cats and Lulu can come in and out. This morning, when I came in from feeding the horses, I found a roadrunner in the kitchen! I don't think the cats brought it in - there were none around, and the bird was just fine. I grabbed the bird and took it outside, where it calmly trotted off.



*The roadrunner is New Mexico's state bird (under the name of "chaparral bird").*



Beep-beep! Ah, New Mexico.

MM



## 2016-09-19 – *Not Quite Autumn*

Page 1 of 11

This time of the year, Mother Nature seems to pause. The green grass, the wildflowers, the flowing streams - for a little while, summer holds on until mellowing into autumn.







*On our way to the old apple orchard.*







*The last of the summer flowers begin their song.*







*Spanky enjoys every season in the same way.*





## 2016-09-19 – *Not Quite Autumn*

Page 5 of 11

*The shadows are getting longer now.*



*Busy Lulu.*





*The wild elderberries are ripe.*



*Go, Thunder!*





*A joyful Lulu, right behind.*



*Time for a drink of cool water.*





## 2016-09-19 – *Not Quite Autumn*

Page 9 of 11

*At the old apple orchard. There is something more satisfying about eating an apple, picked from the higher limbs, while on horseback.*



*Come on, Thunder, we gotta go.*











MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-09-21 – *Mountain Reverie – Part One*

Page 1 of 6

The mountain rises to the sky above us; and when we ride there our spirits can soar.



*The trails are nearly invisible in the wild growth this summer's monsoon rains have brought.*







*Little brooks dot the hills.*





*Elderberries hang heavy and ripe.*



*The trail begins to open into leafy shade.*









*On the welcoming shoulder of Nogal Peak.*



*Taking it all in.*



*Full of joy.*





## 2016-09-22 – *Mountain Reverie* – Part Two

Page 1 of 10

Horses love a view. Maybe it's because in the wild they are prey animals - their best defense is to run away from danger, so they are instinctively on the lookout.





*Lulu keeps an eye on things, too.*









## 2016-09-22 – *Mountain Reverie – Part Two*

Page 4 of 10

*We all appreciate this perspective.*



*This photo says a lot. A beautiful day, good companions.*





*Yup. We don't take this for granted, do we Lulu? "Nope!"*



*Thunder has great affection for Lulu - he often nuzzles her to express it.*



*The pleasure of wide-open spaces.*



*Headed toward Nogal Peak . . .*







*. . . and then a race down.*









*Whew! A cool drink back at the trailer.*



*Have no idea what these things are, but they sure are interesting looking.*



That's a ride on the mountain - thanks for coming along!

MM



Gee, they are still cute.





*The usual crowd.*







*I dunno, this one has kind of a kangaroo face.*



*First year buck.*





GOTTA ITCH!





*"Whaddaya mean, 'big ears'?"*





*"Eat your vegetables."*



*"Okay, mom!"*









*Nacho and boy-twin.*





MM



Often, the simple rides are the most satisfying.

*This was just a quick ride near Fort Stanton. Lulu appears to be "on point" . . . in fact, she is not.*



*Late season rains have created a giant salad bar for the horses.*



## 2016-09-24 – Simple Green

Page 2 of 9

*There were a couple of very rocky sections on this trail (I wince when I hear their hooves hitting stones), but much of it was soft and easy.*



*Lulu had lagged behind some. If you look carefully, you will see her racing to catch up. She does love being with her horses.*





*They really are natural tourists. We all enjoy exploring together.*



*"Come on. Let's look over here!"*



*A "between the ears" view.*



*This looks like a two-track road, but actually they are parallel cow paths.*







*Some more wild flowers have begun popping up.*





*"I think I might just give these a try. Hmmm . . . tasty."*



*"Ahhh . . . a snack and a roll. Life is good."*







*Exceptionally tall ponderosa pines.*





*Cozy little valley.*







A simple ride, but a good one. Thanks for coming along!  
MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-09-27 – *Family Time*

Page 1 of 7

The days are shorter - but the air is still warm, and the grass still green.

*The sky still has a summer-like drift of clouds.*





*Here come Spanky and Lulu.*





## 2016-09-27 – *Family Time*

Page 3 of 7

*Thunder does a pretty trot among the pinons and junipers . . .*



*. . . joined by Spanky.*





*Another little valley beckons.*





*And a shadowed arroyo.*



*Toward home, together.*



*Family time before leaving.*





## 2016-09-27 – *Family Time*

Page 7 of 7

*On the road to the ranch, an old friend pauses - he recognizes us. We wish him well as hunting season begins.*



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-09-28 – Quick Trip

Page 1 of 4

Lulu and I made a quick trip to Pecos, NM – which lies in a beautiful mountain valley about 30 miles southeast of Santa Fe.

*Along the way we enjoyed miles and miles of yellow fields, covered in brilliant turpentine bush.*



*These hardy plants are found all over rural North America and Australia. Even on a cloudy day, they brighten the landscape this time of year.*



## 2016-09-28 – Quick Trip

Page 2 of 4

*Cattle don't seem keen on the colorful plants, which are not the source of actual turpentine - the solvent oil is distilled from the resin of live pine trees.*



*The area around Pecos is beautiful - mostly forested, with dramatic mesas.*





## 2016-09-28 – Quick Trip

Page 3 of 4

*Pecos National Historical Park contains some of the Southwest's most important ancient pueblo and mission ruins. The pueblo was established in the early 1400's at the junction of several important trade routes. At its peak, the stone buildings housed more than 2,000 inhabitants in a complex four stories high. The first Christian church was completed in 1625 by Spanish Franciscans. It was destroyed by Indians during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.*



*These ruins are from the later, more modest church erected on the same site in 1717. The former ranch land surrounding the ruins was donated to the Park Service by film star Greer Garson, and her husband (they also helped design, and privately funded the construction of the visitor center), who lived in the area for many years.*



*It seems odd to think that this isolated spot was a thriving society long before the colonists formed the United States. Today it remains a haunting reminder of times and cultures long past.*





## 2016-10-01 – *Car Show*

Page 1 of 9

Lulu and I polished up the old '64 Buick, and joined a big car show in Ruidoso.





## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 2 of 9

*The annual show benefits lots of local charities. There were nearly 300 vehicles, and more than 1,000 spectators! Folks come from far and wide.*



*As usual, Lulu found new friends.*





## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 3 of 9

*There was some serious horsepower on display. Here is a big block 572 cu. in. Chevy.*



*This fuel-injected engine puts out more than 600 horse power!*





## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

*Some of the engine compartments are cleaner than many kitchens.*





## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 5 of 9

*Some people go all out.*



*Although it was a beautiful day - this being New Mexico, it began to cloud up.*



## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 6 of 9

*And get darker . . .*



*Sure enough - it began to rain!*





## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 7 of 9

*Up went the top for about half an hour, 'til the rain passed - then back down again.*



*The judges came by, and stuck this on our windshield.*



## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 8 of 9

*On our way to the awards presentation.*



*Seems we won one of the more interesting awards.*





## 2016-10-01 – Car Show

Page 9 of 9

*The "Drive-In Date Night" favorite car trophy . . . known as the "hottest back seat award".*



Oh, my!  
MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-10-01 – *The Young'ins*

Page 1 of 2

Just some shots of the fawns today . . .

*They sure grow up fast.*



*Nacho's twins.*



*Yup . . . that's another "awwww".*





## 2016-10-05 – *Just A Little Touch Of Autumn*

Page 1 of 11

The mountain is still mostly green . . . but there is a definite feeling of fall in the air. And a few plants are showing off - dressing in their autumn finery ahead of the rest.

*You wouldn't know it was autumn by the looks of this.*



*Still more summer-like.*





## 2016-10-05 – *Just A Little Touch Of Autumn*

Page 2 of 11

*Still green here . . .*





*Ah . . . but there is a tell-tale yellow hue to the aspens and the meadow grass.*



*The ferns are still green. Our first frost will change that.*



*But, wait . . .*











*Yup - fall leaves.*





*The entire spectrum - from summer green to autumnal red.*



*Mother nature has touched these trees with her golden hand.*







*A lone show off.*





*Still a few hold-out wildflowers . . .*



*. . . and these colorful berries.*









*A snack before heading home.*



MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-010-06 – *Peepeing Tom*

Page 1 of 1

Looked out my bathroom window this morning after a shower, and someone was looking in!



*(He doesn't appear to like what he saw!)*

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-10-06 – *Running Free*

Page 1 of 8

The horses had their fall season vaccinations, and we took a little ride in the cattle country near Capitan Gap.

*Open range - much of the green summer grass has begun to dry out . . .*



*. . . but the horses know where to find the good stuff in low-lying spots.*



## 2016-10-06 – *Running Free*

Page 2 of 8

*"Yummy" sez Belle.*



*Just trot'in along.*







*A beautiful mixture of prairie grasses wave in the breeze.*



*Cool drink at Gyp Spring tank.*



*On our way back, their mood changed from relaxed to playful. If you look carefully, you will see Spanky and Thunder in the center of the photo - running fast and challenging Belle and I (and Lulu, too) to catch up.*





## 2016-10-06 – *Running Free*

Page 5 of 8

*They stopped to graze, and we sneaked up on them . . .*



*. . . but they caught sight of us, and took off in our direction like lightning bolts.*



## 2016-10-06 – *Running Free*

Page 6 of 8

*"Clinically", his ring bone should not allow Spanky to run like this . . . but here he comes, ahead of speedy Thunder!*



*Running free! Thunder joyfully kicks it.*





## 2016-10-06 – *Running Free*

Page 7 of 8

*Spanky does, too. We're off!*



*I'm clinging to Belle's mane, camera wobbling in my other hand, as we race along with them . . . but they are too fast for us.*



## 2016-10-06 – *Running Free*

Page 8 of 8

*I still find it remarkable that they choose to run to the trailer and patiently wait for us (and not just keep going all the way to Texas!).*



What a thrill to see them run like that. Happy to share it with you.

MM



## 2016-10-07 – Searching For Autumn

Page 1 of 14

The changing of leaf color in the fall is the result of a complicated combination of conditions - no two seasons are the same. So far this year, we have not had the cold temperatures associated with brilliant colors. But the change is still visible along nearby Pennsylvania Trail.

*At the trail head, Belle is alert for fall foliage ("Where is it? Everything's still green", she frets).*



## 2016-10-07 – Searching For Autumn

Page 2 of 14

*"Yeah, where are the fall leaves?" wonders Lulu.*



*Galloping through the wooded forest.*





## 2016-10-07 – Searching For Autumn

Page 3 of 14

*Soon we are riding silently on a bed of fallen gold.*















*Lulu leads the way through a kaleidoscope of color.*







*Ah ha! A brilliant red maple.*









*A very pretty trail.*

















Hope this puts you in the mood for pumpkin pie and hot apple cider!  
MM



## 2016-10-09 – *Dark Skies*

Page 1 of 4

Our monsoon weather continues to linger just a little longer - we had a terrific rainstorm overnight. This morning it was sunny and bright, but by the afternoon clouds had built up once again.

*We took a quick ride behind the house, mindful of the ominous skies.*



*Lulu now blends in completely with the autumn grass (she is nearly invisible on the trail in front of Thunder).*



*Looks more like a summer sky.*





## 2016-10-09 – *Dark Skies*

Page 3 of 4

*By the time we looped around and headed home, the clouds hung heavy - with rain coming down close by.*



*Thunder sped us up - "Come on, let's get going!"*



## 2016-10-09 – *Dark Skies*

Page 4 of 4

*They raced into the barn as the sky opened and the rain poured down.*



*Odd - even in the rain, there was a pink sunset (remember the old adage "Red sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky at dawning, sailor take warning."?)*





## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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Legendary Ghost Ranch, about 90 minutes' northwest of Santa Fe, is best known as the former home of artist Georgia O'Keefe (but she never owned it). The name came from its earliest use as a hideout for cattle rustlers. They created the rumor that the beautiful valley was haunted in order to dissuade folks from entering their illegal domain. Part of a former Spanish Land Grant (1766), the ranch totaling about 21,000 acres (bigger than the island of Manhattan) was eventually won in a poker game by a cowboy, who gave it to his wife "for safe keeping". She turned it into an early dude ranch, which hosted luminaries like Charles Lindbergh (who photographed it from the air, and landed his plane on what is now an alfalfa field), and conductor Leopold Stokowski. Georgia O'Keefe, at that time a renowned New York artist, came for a visit in 1934, was enchanted by the magnificent setting, and essentially never left. The ranch was purchased in 1935 by Nature Magazine publisher Arthur Pack, who eventually sold seven acres and a house to O'Keefe (she nagged him until he relented). In 1955 Pack gifted the ranch to the Presbyterian Church, which has run it as a retreat and study center ever since. As a private property, public horseback riding is not allowed - so we were delighted to be invited by their head wrangler to come and ride the historic ranch.

*Leaving our mountain on a beautiful fall day, for the six-hour drive to Ghost Ranch.*



## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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*We stopped briefly in Santa Fe, where the horses enjoyed a quiet break on the lawn of the old courthouse near the plaza.*



*Scenery along the way.*





## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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*Nearing Abiquiu (pronounced ab-eh-que) - that's the Chama River, flowing below.*



*Our first view of the famous red rocks of Abiquiu, a few miles from Ghost Ranch. Belle wondered if we were back in Sedona - "No, we're still in New Mexico", I told her. "Oh, that's nice", she said.*





*We arrive.*





## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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*Many movies have been filmed at the ranch; this log cabin was created as a set for "City Slickers" in 1991.*



*The view from the ranch headquarters.*



## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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*Lulu and I stayed in the old adobe bunkhouse from the dude ranch days. It was close to the horses in a corral nearby.*



*These buildings date back to the 1920's.*





## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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*Our view was of Pedernal, the flat-topped mountain which was O'Keeffe's favorite subject. "It's my private mountain", she frequently said. "God told me if I painted it often enough, I could have it."*



*First ride - a private one with head wrangler and friend Jeff Kennedy. After the long journey, Thunder finds some nice soft sand.*



*"Ahhh".*



*He falls right in behind Jeff.*





## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part One

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*The cottonwoods are turning their autumn gold.*







*Running water is always a gift in dry New Mexico.*







*Belle takes in the views.*



*Ghost Ranch - for as far as the eye can see.*





*Abiquiu Lake reflects the cloud-dappled sky which O'Keefe loved so much.*



More to come . . .

MM



FOLLOWED  
DREAM  
RANCH



## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part Two

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Continuing our rides at Ghost Ranch . . .



*Thunder and Spanky seemed to enjoy having Jeff show them around. "Hmmm. We don't have many of those trees where we live . . ."*





*The beauty of northern New Mexico, so different from our part of the state.*





## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part Two

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*Ghost Ranch is the world-renowned location of some of North America's most important paleontology digs; the state's official dinosaur - the 205 million years old *Coelophysis raptor* - was discovered here among the ancient lake beds-turned-bluffs.*



## 2016-10-16 – *Ghost Ranch – Part Two*

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*Cottonwoods line the Chama River, near Abiquiu.*







*Continuing traditions going back to dude ranch days, Jeff and his fellow wranglers guide organized trail rides throughout the ranch. Megan gets things ready at the corral.*



## 2016-10-16 – Ghost Ranch – Part Two

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*Joining on one, I had my first ride on a mule. Not bad (don't tell Belle)!*







*Georgia O'Keeffe's home, "Rancho de los Burros", with Pedernal Mountain in the distance. About her seven acres, O'Keeffe said, "I wanted enough land to keep a horse - all Arthur (Pack) would sell me was enough for my sewer!"*



*What she called her "backyard".*



*These sandstone cliffs are the subject of many of her paintings.*







(Even) more to come . . .

MM

End of Journal 11 - Part 2 of 3

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