

2018 Copy Ranch Roundup



Be honest. You didn't really expect to get this in 2018 did you?

In the time-honored tradition of the St. Ours family, here's the Year in Review, late as always. There's something different about it this year, though. I've stopped stressing about it being late and have just accepted it as the way things are. Who knew there were actually **perks to becoming an old fart!**



It's been a quiet year, and I'm grateful since I'm not a fan of adrenaline. Lynne and I went to Rockaway Beach in spring, and in fall made our annual pilgrimage to

Walla Walla with our besty Joan. Lynne always manages to line up the neatest rentals despite us having 5 or so dogs, but I don't know how unless it's another facet of her "weather witch" abilities. Then in May we tried out Antlers Guard Station cabin in eastern Oregon and liked it so much we'll go back there again this spring.

It has all the requisites for a great dog cabin—a perimeter fence, a dog-safe creek a short walk away, very little traffic, not too far away, and parking for a truck and horse trailer. (With 2 people and 5 dogs in the truck there's no room for camping gear!) Plus, it offers a few bonuses including propane appliances so Lynne can cook

delicious gourmet meals.

I enjoy rockhounding, mostly for easy-to-find stuff like petrified wood, jasper and agates. I live in the Gem State, after all. Scouring the pebble beaches along the creek by the cabin I didn't have much luck. Then one day I was walking out of the newly built outhouse and found some awesome pieces in the excavated dirt. Thereafter I spent an inordinate amount of time bent over circling the outhouse, and it had nothing to do with Lynne's aforementioned cooking.



We also got acquainted with the local wildlife including a packrat who for some reason decided to leap to his death into the dogs' water bucket, a flock of vultures who handled waste removal regarding said packrat, and a demented doe who charged us and the dogs like Kung Fun Panda when we apparently got too close to her hidden fawn. (We dubbed her Tai Kwan Doe.)



In August Andy came out for some fishing and horseback riding, which was awesome despite the searing temperatures, and Dusty got to strut his stuff.

I also forced Andy to go with me to the Western Idaho State Fair, something I'm sure he'll never let me live down. We went the last night of the fair and sat in a traffic jam for literally HOURS, adding fairs to the list of things he won't ever allow me to be in charge of along with rodeos, since every time I buy rodeo tickets for us something goes wrong.



I did get to see a celebrity though. A local kids' horse camp recently bought a zebra colt named Stripes. He sure is cute!

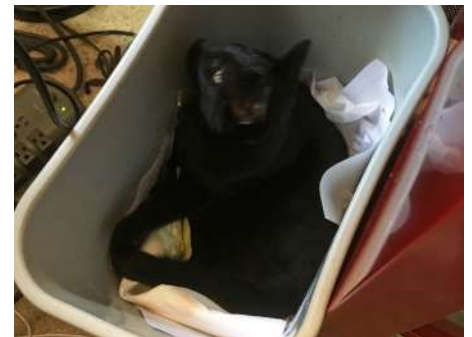
where's waldo?

The big news this year was the addition of two new family members to head up our foster dog cat-training program. Juno (black and white girl) and Jasper (all-black boy) were put through dog-familiarization boot camp by canine drill sergeant Tate. Both kittens have already demonstrated amazing dog management abilities, from aloof

disinterest (Juno) to ninja-caliber camouflage and ambush capabilities (Jasper). Their fearlessness when it comes to interacting with foster dogs makes me proud and a little bit nervous. You can see Jasper in action with a foster dog here:

<https://vimeo.com/304527267>

Jasper the ninja cat activates stealth mode and vanishes.



Kitty Kurtains

Of course, we had to make a few alterations to accommodate kittens flying around the house. The first casualty was my curtains, so I ordered new ones that hang just out of kitten range. They look silly but they discourage toenails, the dogs can look out and in, and they keep the sun out of my eyes while letting in sunbeams (aka cat traps).



Birds of a Feather

The barn owls and hawks are still here along with other bird life including an abundance of quail, a few pheasants, some highly annoying flickers who keep trying to peck through my metal roof, and wild turkeys who occasionally roost in my trees and gobble their way around the neighborhood. Then there was Amelia.

One day I happened to



look out the window

and notice a mother quail trying to round up her large brood by my well window, and she was really fretting. I went out to find 3 of the babies stuck down in the window, so I fished them out and shooed them away hoping they'd reunite. Well, they did. Except for Amelia, who like her namesake went the wrong direction and ended up back in the well window.

I tried to reunite her with the flock but it didn't take, as she informed me the next morning by peeping loudly right next to the house. So I ended up hauling her all the way into Boise to the bird rescue. I also rescued a baby bunny from the well window this spring, something I think I'm going to regret as it's full grown now and I suspect it's batting its eyelashes at all the neighboring bunnies.

Tate the Great

Tate and I continue to participate in canine nose work. The classes are fun and we've become friends with several of the other regulars. We competed in two more trials, with Tate bringing home a bunch of ribbons and really making his mommy proud. I'm actually proud of both of us, what with me being such a non-competitive introvert. How introverted am I? I actually joined a Meetup group called "Introverts Who Aren't Total Hermits"... but I haven't gone to any meetings. Does that mean I'm a hermit?



The Wonder of Woo-woo

I'm pretty much a skeptic when it comes to New Age woo-woo stuff, with a few exceptions. I've seen results from flower essences, certain essential oils and homeopathic remedies. I've even come to believe in dowsing rods, something my water well maintenance people use all the time to find pipes and electrical conduits. So I bought myself a pair of good copper ones to use when I can't find something.

Laugh if you will, but when I absolutely could not find a book I knew I owned and was about to order another on Amazon (at \$40, ouch), I got out my dowsing rods in a last-ditch attempt to find the dang thing. The rods led me downstairs into my store room and crossed when I held them over a giant bag of puzzles, which turned out to be sitting on a large storage bin I'd totally forgotten about. Moving stuff aside I opened the bin, which was full of stuff we'd taken on vacation several months before. There, under several other books and games, was the missing book. Woo woo? Woo hoo!

Bangs 'n' Butts

I tried growing out my bangs this winter, really I did. They're down to the bottom of my nose now, meaning I can't put them behind my ears, can't brush them back into a ponytail, they just hang there like the velvet curtains at the Egyptian Theater pulled back to display a feature presentation of wrinkles and poke me in the eye whenever the wind blows.



When I'm scooping dog poo out of the yard I need a hand to hold the hair out of my eyes, a hand for the rake, and a hand for the dustpan. Oh,

and a hand to throw Tate's ball. How do people with long hair do it? Next time I see my hair guy we'll be making some adjustments.

I actually met my ridiculously high medical deductible this year thanks to my boob and the medical community's overabundance of caution (it was nothing). Which meant that the remainder of the year was SHOPPING SPREE time when it came to all that recommended medical stuff I'd been putting off. Like a colonoscopy.

When you buy a pickup truck with that bright shiny new paint job the bed looks so pretty, but when you start using the pickup the bed turns into a mess of scraped paint and dents. They sell something called a Rhino lining that coats the bed and protects it from abuse. Some of that would have come in handy!

The Usual Suspects

My neighbor Mary Kay finally got a reliable horse so we had some fun rides, aside from the one that saw me landing on my keister after some ducks unexpectedly flew up out of the canal and spooked

Kai. Fortunately it turns out I bounce pretty good for an old broad.

I continue to foster dogs, which can be rewarding, challenging and sometimes puzzling. One dog, Madison, developed toy kleptomania after her spay surgery due



to an overabundance of maternal hormones. She brought so many dog toys into her crate you could hardly see her—she's the black blob in the back.

I play Gertie the piano whenever I can (badly) which puts the dogs to sleep and makes the kittens run downstairs and hide. And I stare out the window at my beautiful view, kittens draped around my neck, and contemplate just how lucky I am to live this life.

I hope you have much to be grateful for and that the new year blesses you in all ways.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!