

Oscar

Ken Kalish

June 20, 2013

Friends:

In some of my past posts I have mentioned Oscar, my very special rescued llama. He is the meanest thing on four legs, hates being haltered, loves to cuddle, and is fearless in the face of everything but snakes. Today, Oscar turned in a stellar piece of work.

A member of the church community where Lila plays organ mentioned to me that a neighbor brought over some cattle to his farm: five cows, one bull, and four calves. That same day one of the calves disappeared, and the farmer mentioned that to me over a game of pinochle. I offered to take Oscar to his farm to see what Oscar could figure out. After two days of "Yeah, sure," he finally agreed to having Oscar visit. Today was the day.

Oscar has been around cattle for 11 of his 13 years. He can circle a herd and put it exactly where he wants it in minutes, and so he did today. These cattle had never seen a llama, and the Alpha cow and a two-year-old bull didn't like it at all that Oscar was calling the shots. Oscar screamed once and the contest of wills was over. Then he and I went into the woods to see what we could find.

It took Oscar less than 15 minutes to find the first bone pile. When Oscar began to circle one small copse of birch he began his fighting calls. He was screaming, spitting on every bit of brush and peeing in places where the bear scent was particularly strong. The farmer was astounded. When I put Oscar back in the trailer John said he will never forget the sound of Oscar's challenge and chase calls. Neither John nor I saw a bear, but Oscar chased something large with fat feet out of some dense brush and ran it a quarter of a mile to a state highway where it took to water and disappeared.

We gave Oscar an extra pack of Doublemint gum for his excellent work.

Try as I might, I cannot understand why people abuse these magnificent animals.

Ken