

## Magic in the Air---Never a Dull Day

The past few days in FEB it has been windy here. So you would think from a horseman or horses' point of view, kind of boring. But that has just not been the case. Everyday the horses have done something amazing, funny, or just strange.

For instance, today, it was really windy so I decided to leave 2 horses in stalls, 3 horses in the front part of the barn, and 5 horses in the normal portion of the horse barn. This way more horses can get inside and out of the wind should they choose to do so. When I left the barn this morning, all the horses seemed happy with this set up. Some horses like having their own stalls and some prefer to be loose so they can "run away" should a "monster" develop from the wind storm and try and eat them.

I went up to the house. I decided since I had bookkeeping to do and homework from school, it would be a good day to do house work. (I hate housework but I hate homework worse!!!) I stayed busy for several hours, cleaning, putting junk away, mending gloves and doing floors. Finally I took a break and looked outside to see the horses all playing. Slowly, I came to the slow realization that I had too many horses both in the pasture AND out-front!!! I had to look harder and sure enough, one horse I had left in the pasture was now out front with the three original horses, napping in the sun and the two horses I had left in stalls were out in the field playing!!! Now wait a minute, have my horses learn how to become Houdini and be able to escape their bonds? Each of the three horses who had escaped where in different type of enclosures with different types of locking devices.

Well curiosity got the better of me so I had to brave the cold and go find out what had happened. Just like with magic, when the truth becomes known, it was not so amazing after all!!! (Well just a little bit).

So how was it done? We will break this down to individual horses and show how team work was used to get the horses into the wrong pastures but where they wanted to be.

Horse Number 1--- Bandit, a number one trouble maker on the place, but all heart. He had to have started all the movement by squeezing through the wall where the water tank usually sits. Since I don't need every stall to have water and run my electric bill up with electric heaters, I had pulled the 55 gal tank out of the hole between the two stalls. I had moved the tank so the young horse, Cinch could not unwrapping the insulation from around the tank (He really likes to do this). Cinch and Bandit make a good pair of hoodlums. Bandit must have gotten down, almost to his knees and squeezed through the hole into the second stall where Hammer was at. Both stalls have runs attached. Hammer's stall is set up so we can open it and he can be released back into the pasture when he finished eating. After Bandit squeezed into Hammer's stall, they both must have gone outside and pushed on the panels that would open the gate and let them escape.

Now here comes horse number 3, Catlin. She is real good at opening gaits and sometimes will push the gates shut after her so the other horses can't get out too. She kind of likes to go out by herself to get the best sun spots. Since she is bottom of the pecking order, the only way to get the best spots is to make sure the other horses can't get out. Catlin must have seen Hammer and Bandit escape. She then proceeded to go into the stall and check out the gate leading into the hall of the Barn. Much to her surprise, the gate did not have the safety chain on that would have prevented the gate from being open by a horse. Hammer is not a gate opener so I had left the chain off. Catlin found the not double locked gate, opened it, came out and pushed the gate shut behind her, even pushed the latch shut. Now she probably misses the fact she does not have a thumb so was upset when she couldn't get the safety chain on too but she did what she could. Next she went out front, found the perfect sunny place in the front pasture and went to sleep.

A few days later, still in FEB however, the horses had finished their round bale. So Roy and I decided to roll out a new one. The temps were still in the negatives and it was windy. All the horses except Dreamin were in feed stalls. Dreamin had the feed box in the horse lot so when we went to roll the bale in, she was there to help us. First she tested the hay. It must have passed for she acted like it was pretty good. Then Dreamin got between Roy and I and helped push the bale out over the lot to the location where I like to feed it inside the feeder. We got the bale all set up and started back to the barn. Dreamin said in it was too scary to stay out there by herself so she had to follow us back to the barn. Now we are only talking about 25 or 50 ft but that was just too scary for a horse on her own!!!

Now it takes my horses about a week to eat a round bale. I feed Timothy and supplement the round bale with a bale of Brome. (Yes my horses are very spoiled). Last night, the round feeder was completely empty. I decided to place a square bale of timothy in the feeder and still feed a little brome. The round feeder keeps the horses from standing, pooping or otherwise wasting hay that don't want to eat right then. This morning when I went out, I discover not only had the horses not cleaned up all the square bale of timothy in the feeder, they had pushed the feeder to the side so they could sleep in the hay!!! Sneaky horses!! Thankfully they had not destroyed the hay so today; they were able to clean the hay up. It's warmer now, so obviously they don't need as much to stay warm!!!

Well that's all for this story. Hope you enjoyed it. Deb