

## Caesar and I Ride to His New Home



On New Year's Day, I moved my horse, Caesar, to his new home, Walkin' N Circles Ranch. And we rode over . . . 18 degrees, snow on the ground, wind blowing and we rode over. He had been at the ranch before he was adopted. My co-owners moved and I wanted him closer, so now he's mine and I needed to move him. It's not a long ride, 45 minutes to an hour, but here's why it was a very big deal.

I grew up in farming and ranching, but had been away from all things horse-related for a good 30 years. When I started volunteering at the ranch 2-1/2 years ago, I couldn't have saddled a horse by myself. I never would have been able to ride a horse out alone, away from the place he knew, across open fields and down a well-traveled road to a new place. Caesar and I not only accomplished this on New Year's Day but we had a great ride in the process! I was so proud of that horse. There were no other animals left where he was. He was clearly worried but followed my lead and didn't even argue with me, not once. He *trusted* me to get him where he needed to be.

Many people and several horses deserve credit for the fact that I was able to do this: our ranch founders and manager, the women I ride with, trainers that I've watched and studied, other volunteers who ride at the ranch. Our classes at the

ranch have helped a lot. Opportunities to ride different horses in other locations, including the 45-mile Lincoln County Pony Express ride last year, gave me more practice. John and Colleen Novotny, who also love Caesar, taught me a great deal about riding him. A few farriers along the way have provided excellent coaching that helped me build confidence. I am grateful to all of them and it all started because I wanted to volunteer some time at a horse ranch . . . how lucky is that?!

I learn every day that I work at the ranch, from people and horses. The more involved I am, the more I learn. Importantly, Caesar teaches me something every single time we ride. I expect this will continue as long as we're partners. And we *are* partners, always trying to better understand each other. I try to be a good leader and when he challenges that, I know that he's just doing his job ... making sure that I can keep him safe.

So, if you see me looking a little full of myself for a while, you'll know why. And if Caesar looks a little full of himself . . . well, he always looks that way actually.

But that's just who he is. All hail Caesar.

Cheri Tillman-Anderson

*I am fairly certain that  
given a Cape, a good Horse  
and a nice tiara, I could save the world.*