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Subject: Postcard

This day started months ago, in the planning phase, as a hike up Cerro Grande. But we wanted a map and some more information about it so we went to the White Rock Visitor Center yesterday afternoon and talked to Bob. Bob said "That's a lot of elevation and you'll be breathing hard". Duh. "How about Coyote Call or Ski Trail or La Jara? They're short and flat. Go to the Valles Caldera and they will have a map and information on all the hikes". OK, Bob, that's what we were after.

Valles Caldera is an immense field of grass surrounded by, and interspersed with, stone peaks of pine and aspen, and this morning we were at the Valles Caldera Visitor Center when it opened. We talked to Sue. Sue said: "I never heard of, or hiked, Cerro Grande or Coyote Call or Ski Trail. And I never heard of Bob. But La Jara is right outside this Visitor Center and it's short and flat!" "OK Sue", we sez, "What else do you have?" Ah, thinking, pondering, she came up with "Garitta - it's at the north end of the caldera, which is about 12 miles across, and you get beautiful views as you ascend the peak. Of course I've never hiked it." We do love expert knowledge.

Sue told us she'd give us a backcountry permit to hike Garitta. And if we didn't show up later in the day don't worry, they'd find us. Suitably reassured we said we'd go. Then she said "You aren't Longmire fans, are you?"

Longmire fans drop immediately to the postscript. Everyone else continue reading.



Caldera – a grassy, piney place.



And occasionally aspen-y.



The drive: bumpy and dusty.



And occasionally aspen-y.



Garitta: grassy and piney and not aspen-y and there were no good views, as someone who had actually done it would know. Sue. We're talking to you.



But even a grassy, piney, not aspen-y hike will have its redeeming features.



But next time we're just going to do the Cerro Grande. Bob. We're talking to you.

D&S

PS – And we said “Longmire? Yeah, we watch it. Why”. And Sue said “The show films all of Sheriff Longmire’s cabin scenes right up the road, and you’re going to go right past it. You have to stop.” Which of course we did. Then she said “I love those folks!!! The first time they filmed here, Lou Diamond Phillips was the first one on site. I said to myself ‘Don’t act like a fool’ and when I saw him I said ‘nice to meet you... CAN I PLEASE TAKE YOUR PICTURE??’ and he hugged me in my photo!!” and so on, and so on until we could take no more. But sure as shootin’, there it was.



The Cabin.



The View from the porch.



The Barrel by the porch.



Don't worry, I authorized her.

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