



The Reel west newsletter

I spent the night in Albuquerque, then headed up The Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway, HWY 14 to Santa Fe. I was not really impressed with the views until I hit Cerrillo Hills. I wish I had the time and weather for hiking because there looked to be several interesting trails.

Day 17
Sunday
April 17th

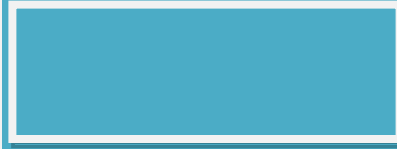
Albuquerque, NM
to
Taos, NM

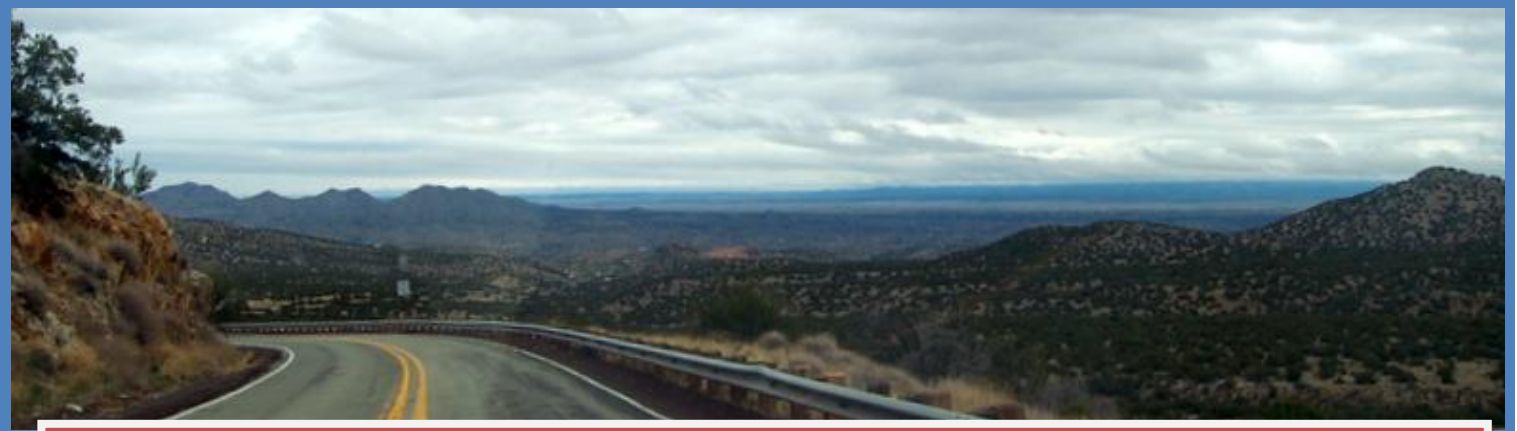
Weather

High Temp: 40+
Low Temp: TBD
Conditions: Snow, rain, snow



I expected a little more roadside shopping opportunities. Maybe because it was Sunday I did not find much open.





I cropped this photo a little too much to show how this home is actually perched on the top of a hill. Almost every building in and around Santa Fe is less than three stories high.



This is the Cerrillo Hills area I mentioned above.



The house below had its own unique artwork throughout the front yard. Like a lot of artwork, I have no idea what concept the artist is trying to get across.





Somebody call a Paleontologist, we're under attack!!

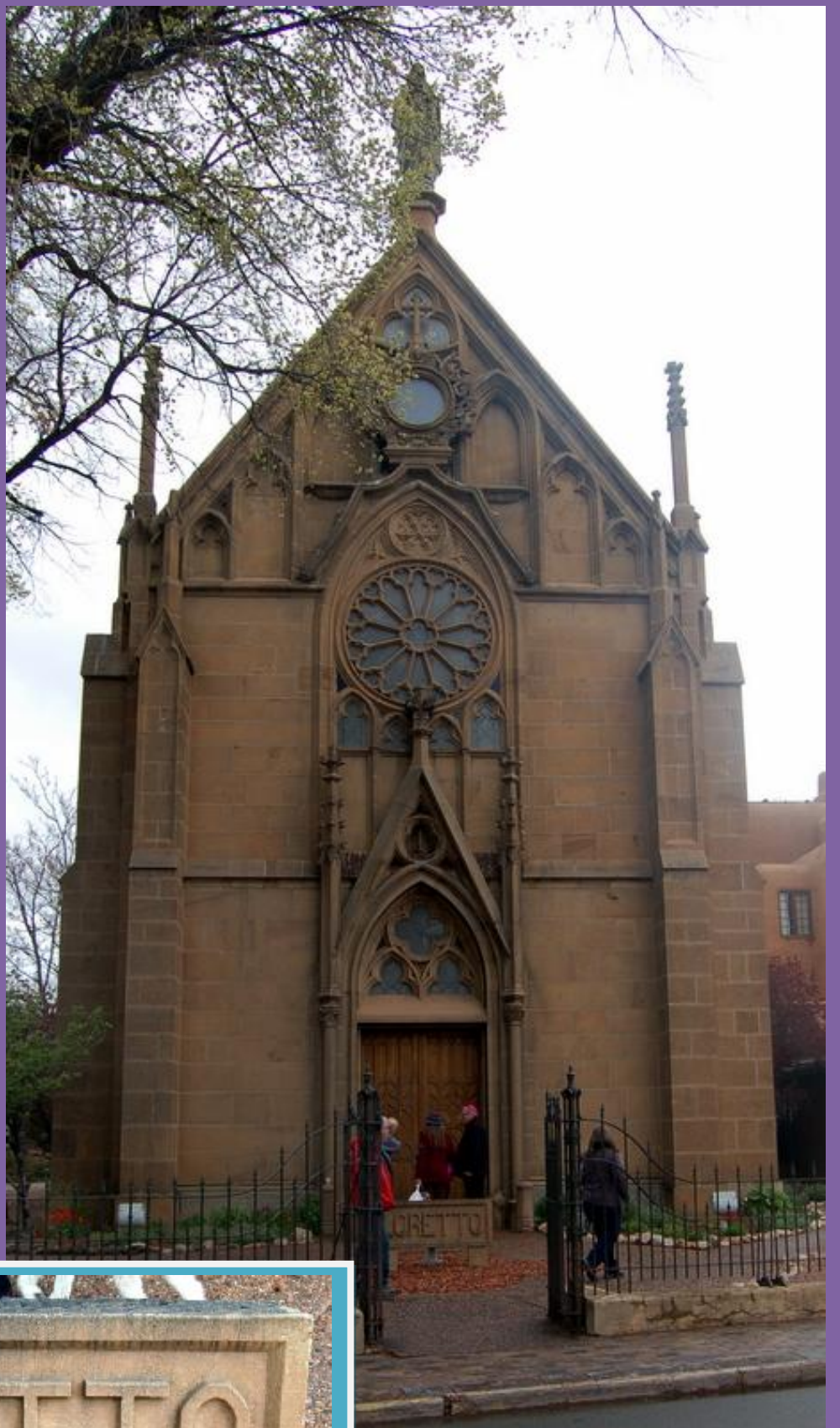
Back on Route 66?? I knew I should have made that left turn at Albuquerque.



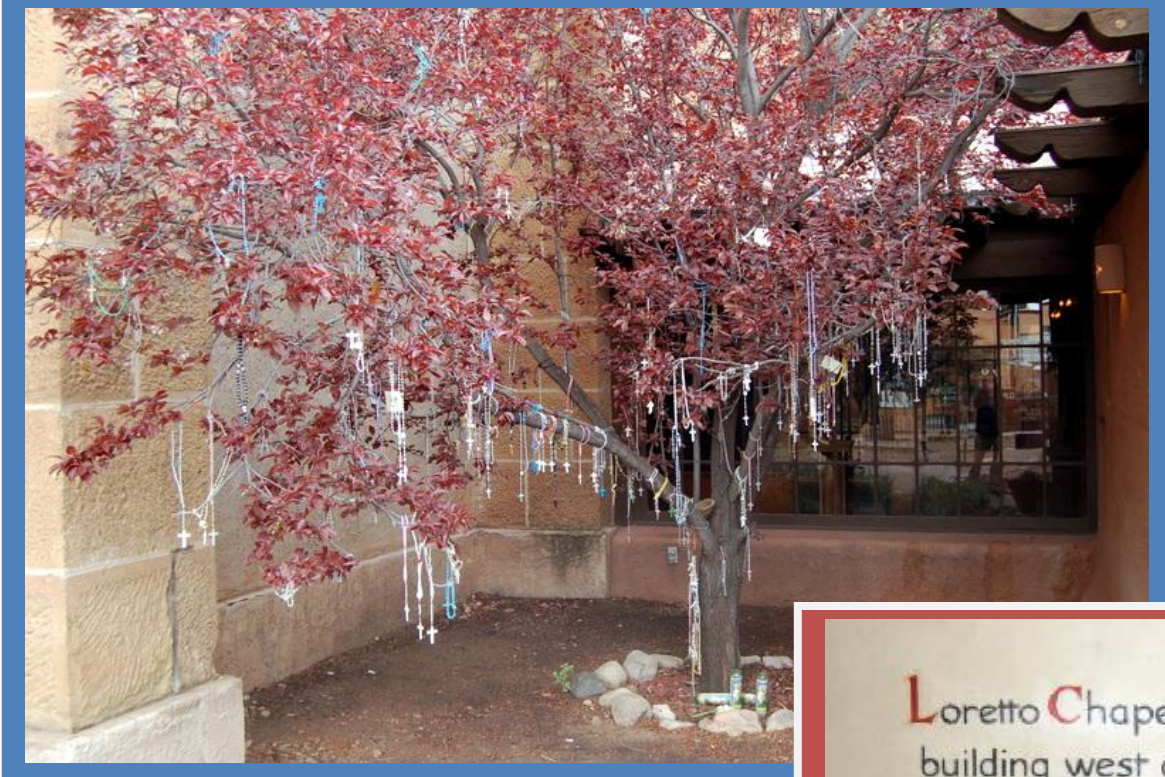
Right is the Loretto Chapel, home of the 'Miraculous Staircase'.

When the Loretto Chapel was completed in 1878, there was no way to access the choir loft twenty-two feet above. Carpenters were called in to address the problem, but they all concluded access to the loft would have to be via ladder as a staircase would interfere with the interior space of the small Chapel.

Continued further below.....



It took a little searching, but I found that, year after year, people from around the world who come to the city of Santa Fe and decide to visit the chapel and say a pray inside on the rosary, then put their rosary in this tree just outside the entrance.



....continued here...

Legend says that to find a solution to the seating problem, the Sisters of the Chapel made a novena to St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters. On the ninth and final day of prayer, a man appeared at the Chapel with a donkey and a toolbox looking for work. Months later, the elegant circular staircase was completed, and the carpenter disappeared without pay or thanks. After searching for the man (an ad even ran in the local newspaper) and finding no trace of him, some concluded that he was St. Joseph himself, having come in answer to the sisters' prayers.

The stairway's carpenter, whoever he was, built a magnificent structure. The design was innovative for the time and some of the design considerations still perplex experts today.

Loretto Chapel, the first Gothic building west of the Mississippi, was patterned after Sainte Chapelle in Paris, and built at the request of Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy between 1873 & 1878.

The Chapel is best known for its choir loft staircase, called Miraculous due to its two complete spirals without center or side supports (defying engineering logic) and due to the legend of its construction.



The staircase has two 360 degree turns and no visible means of support. Also, it is said that the staircase was built without nails—only wooden pegs. Questions also surround the number of stair risers relative to the height of the choir loft and about the types of wood and other materials used in the stairway's construction.

Over the years many have flocked to the Loretto Chapel to see the Miraculous Staircase. The staircase has been the subject of many articles, TV specials, and movies including "Unsolved Mysteries" and the television movie titled "The Staircase."



I remember reading about this staircase when I was in my teens. Since I have always had an interest in architecture, and wanted to be an architect, I always hoped I would be able to see, in person, this staircase. So this trip has now fulfilled another lifelong dream. Every dent in the bucket list is a plus.

Below – As I strolled through the Plaza and surrounding streets of Santa Fe, I took the photos below.





Above – Sculptures everywhere, even on the roof.

Native Americans show their wares along the Plaza.

Below – Overview of the Plaza. The pic to the left is from the left side of the Plaza below.



After walking around the Plaza and surrounding streets I headed north to Taos. There are two different routes to Taos, The High Road and The Rio Grande. Since HWY 75 connects them about half way through, I plan to do half of each.

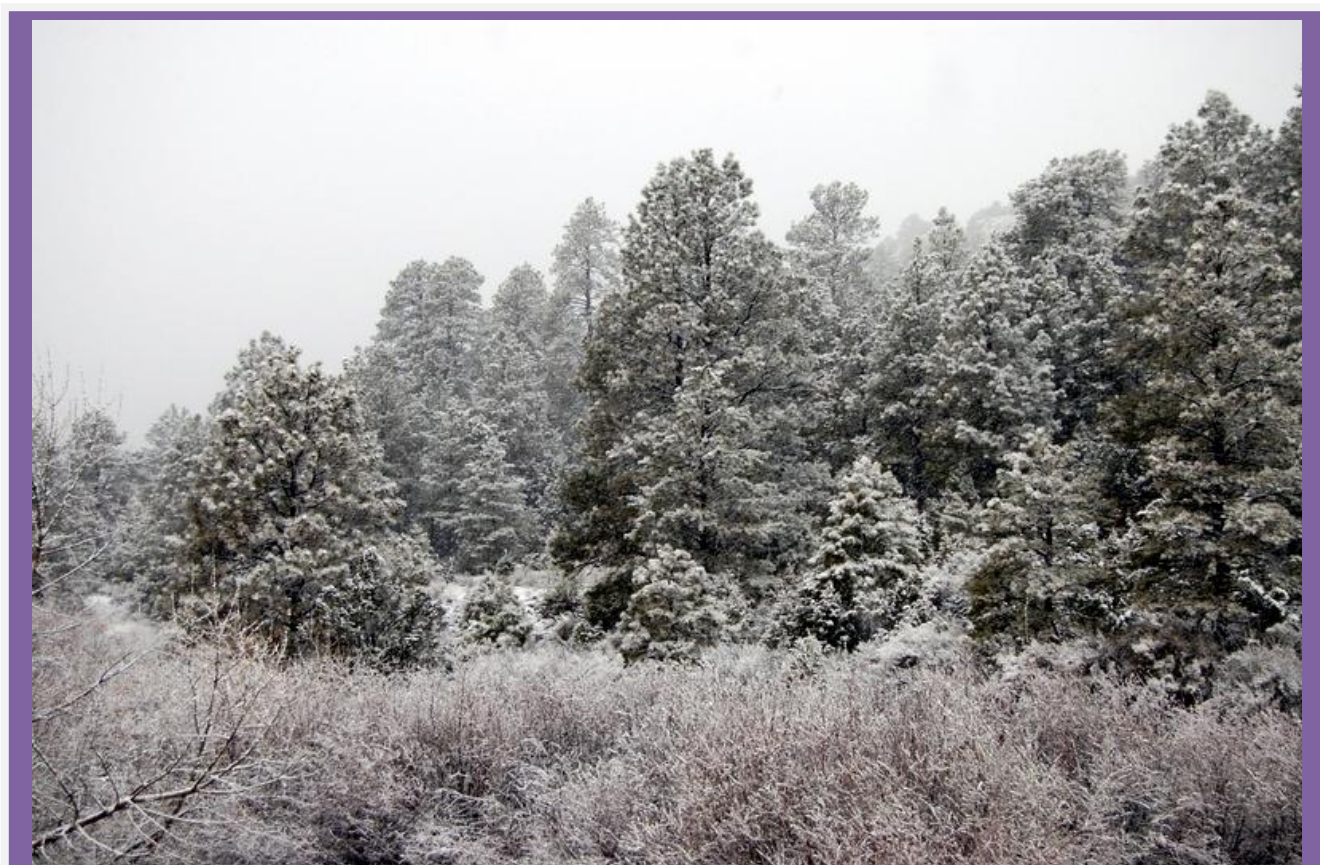
Enjoy the photos from the drive below.

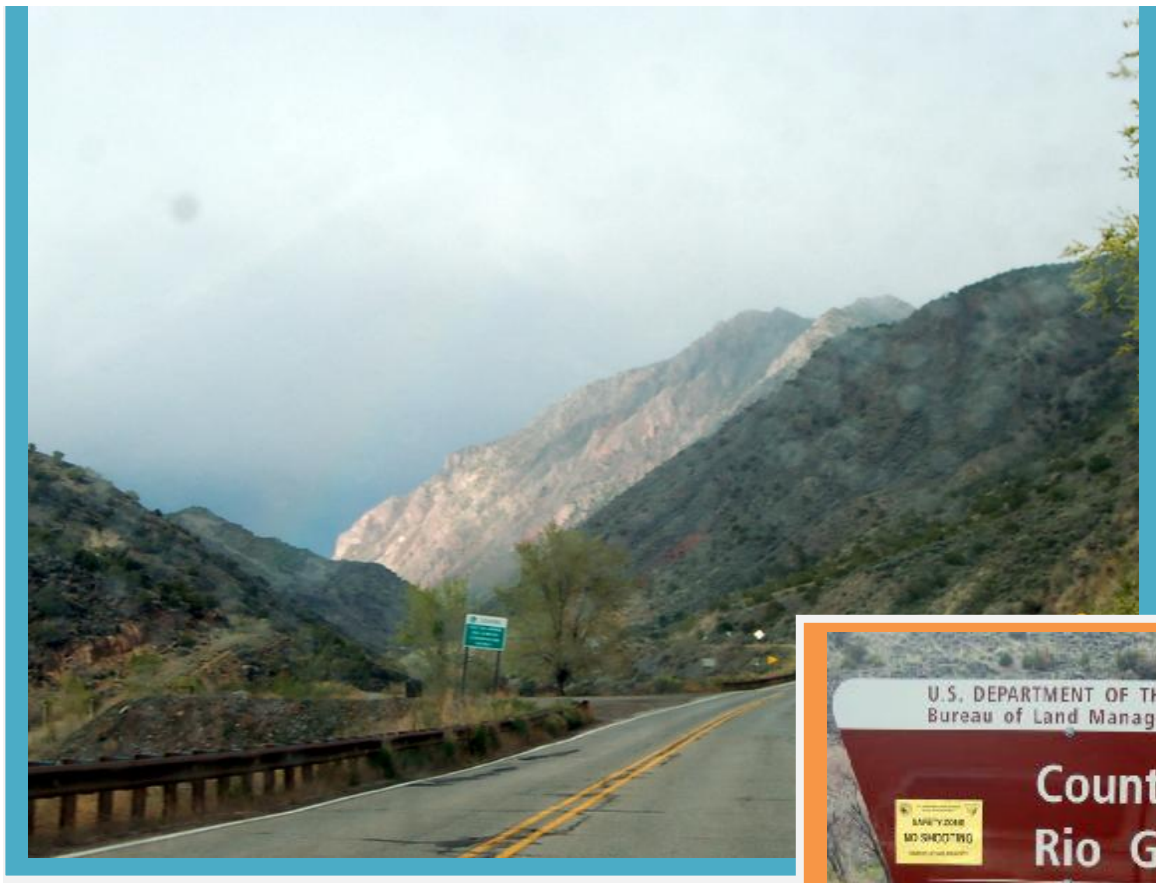


I stopped to visit Camel Rock. Really looks like a camel doesn't it.

I started out with the High Road, and snow.







After I left the high road, and shortly after I turned on the Rio Grande Road, I snapped the picture above while driving. You can see the turnout on the left ahead where the sign was placed. I drove down to a boat launch and took the picture to the right. You can just see the rainbow. As I took several more pictures, I got the one below.





Suitable for framing?

The Visitor Center? Closed, of course.



It's hard to take my eyes off that photo up there. I ate dinner in Espanola before hitting the High Road. Found a place named Freddy's Steakburger. Very similar to Culver's in meat and custard. Felt right at home. Found a hotel in Taos and settled in. Tomorrow is a lot more scenery as I drive The Enchanted Circle.

Good Night,

Ace

