

I'm not totally new to the Southwest. I moved to Pen's guest house in Santa Fe when I retired from my job as the Managing Editor of a trade magazine in D.C. That was about five years ago. It wasn't a hard transition for me mainly because I had completely fallen in love with the Southwest, and Pen has been my best friend since I was fourteen. And I had lived in D.C. for all of my adult life, so embracing a change wasn't something I had to think about.

It was a good decision five years ago. Santa Fe is great. The landscape begs to be noticed and appreciated. There are plenty of free activities. But it is crowded. And young. It didn't take long for me to feel old--in the way. I saw myself as simple compared to the deeply conscious and spiritually advanced. So one night during the pandemic, Pen and I decided we should collect ten friends together and start a community someplace more affordable than Santa Fe. Someplace simpler. Someplace warmer.

Long story short, we got in a car and drove around the West until we landed in an area outside of Tucson. Pen bought a large parcel of land surrounded by mountains, hills, and desert. We spent the next 2 years on Zoom with mostly Pen's friends, plotting and planning. The more we drank, the more reasonable the whole thing sounded. We were going to join forces, form a community, and take care of each other. "It's my dream," each of us pronounced at one point or another during these calls. (Are they still called calls?)

The end result? Five of us actually followed through and we are all living together in a small ranch house with an attached bunk house. A barn near the house is stacked full of our miscellaneous crap.

What could possibly go wrong? You're about to find out. I hope you will follow me in this queer gathering place online.