

Submitted by Donna Quick

## **MULE DEFEATS 32 HORSES IN EXTREME TRAIL CHALLENGE**

At the recent Wild Deuce Working Mountain Horse Competition and Select Sale at Kingman, Alberta, southeast of Edmonton, Russ Shandro and his mule Ruger won both the open and overall competitions. They completed a course of 16 very difficult natural and manmade obstacles within the 12 minutes allowed.

Russ and Ruger won the open competition, held on Friday, September 28, against 22 horses. The 9 horses in the select sale completed the same course on Saturday. Russ emerged as the overall winner since his point score remained the highest. One of the judges for the event was original *Mantracker* Terry Grant. Russ received a substantial cash award and two belt buckles.

The top-quality all-around using and trail horses were auctioned on Sunday. The average price was \$10,400, with the highest selling horses going for \$17,500, \$15,000, and \$14,000. These figures make Ruger's win even more impressive.

The trail course included crossing a bog and a bridge. Riders also had to back partway up a steep creek bed. Another obstacle consisted of side-passing over to a covered wagon, climbing inside and removing a water jug without touching the ground, remounting from the wagon, and carrying the jug back to "camp." Probably the most difficult test was to put on a long slicker, gallop to an overturned canoe, dismount and pull out a heavy dummy, throw the dummy over the horse, ride to the covered wagon and place the dummy inside.

Ruger is a 14-year-old john mule. Russ lives near Vegreville, Alberta, and is a member of the Alberta Donkey and Mule Club. He and Ruger compete in shows, mounted shooting, and an annual mule race. In 2009, Russ and Ruger placed third in the Open Competition at the Wild Deuce event, and in 2011 his wife Heather won the buckle riding her 12-year-old mare Ginger.



