

Nancy's News
April 2016

My gosh, it's time to at least get started on my letter to you. We had a wonderful rally in Yuma (more on that later) and came home to start loading the RV with all the necessary items from the house. It seems all we have done this year is "pack something" to "go somewhere". However, there is so much I want to tell you about that I decided I had better get going before I forget most of it.

The rally, oh my gosh, we were so busy. We had a Border Patrol seminar and I had to leave it early so felt bad about that. I'm sure Thom will fill you in on the most important things but there are a few things I want to tell you. I want to share about the progress that is going on. There were 150,000 arrests in the nation for illegal crossings in 2005 and that number was down to 6,000 in 2012. The reason given was the technology cameras, radar, more people working the area (even National Guard) support, being proactive, etc. and the fence. The Yuma Sector has 126 miles of fence itself. (I'm not sure but I'm willing to bet the US paid for that!) Many deaths in crossing are because the people do not understand the effect of heat and they are so desperate to get here. (That's one reason why we should be rehydrating here too.)

One tour took us to the Yuma Territorial Prison. WOW! If you saw it in a movie, you would think it was fake as it is so drastic. It was erected in 1876 on a bluff on the Colorado River and was a prison until 1920 when it was closed. The adobe walls, which no longer stand, were 8 feet thick at the base and 5 feet thick at the

top. At full capacity it confined 400 prisoners. Most cells are only 8' by 10' and bedded 6 people . Some cells only housed one person. All walls were two feet thick. The floor was gravel and dirt. They only had a pail to relieve themselves in. The fleas were terrible. No talking was allowed other than in the lunch room. Bad behavior was rewarded with the "dark room". That was a 10' by 12' (or so) hole dug out of the mountain, having to pass through another small room to even get there and the door closed behind them. Dark! Again, it was filth. They were in there for two to three days, up to three weeks. Everything was basically outside with no reprieve from the Arizona heat. If you were in there once (and if you did get out), I would guess you would tow the line so you wouldn't have to go back. I almost forgot to tell you, we went on this city tour on a bus which didn't have working air conditioner and the temperature was 90 degrees plus that day. Not good but out of anybodies control.

We also had the opportunity to visit a working Medjool date farm. Medjool dates are one of three big, soft dates they grow there and are considered prime, mostly being sent to Australia. These trees are the most beautiful palm tree ever (in my opinion). The work has to be the most intensive farming there is. There is no down time. The Rogers family cleared the land and planted 300 trees in the original planting in 1990. Today they have over 8000 trees, with more to be planted from the off shoots that grow around the base of the trees. The workers gather the pollen from the male palms and apply it by hand to the female trees. Soon they have to thin the dates so they will grow to the size wanted. Then they have to apply a separator ring to the stems of dates to give them more room to grow. In August, cotton bags are wrapped around the dates to protect them from birds and bugs, dust and the elements. Harvesting starts in September. Date palms also

have heavy thorns on the leaves that have to be removed just so they can get to the dates. Yes, it's a hard job and remember, there are 8000 trees. A mature tree produces 300 pounds of dates per year. Each tree requires 180 gallons of water a day which is pumped from an aquifer. Above all, we were told to remember how good they are for us and that they taste so good. We had samples of a spread that was oh so good.

There was so much more going on but I won't go into all of it. It was just one heck of a good rally. We brought in \$1500. for our charities and I want to thank everyone who had anything to do with that. You should have seen our very own Thom Feit hawk the crowd. I spied a wonderful basket from California with three bottles of wine, crackers, cheese, a wine stopper, chocolates, and would you believe it even had two cork coastitems were called. Grant started to yell at me "They just called your number". It was my California basket. I had won! I was so excited ... and still am. It was a very good rally.

Our club donated four \$25 WalMart gift certificates. They were put into two separate envelopes of \$50 each. I have received a thank you note which I want to share with you. Just a note to say thank you so much to Chapter 309 for donating the WalMart gift certificates. My husband won one and I won the other. I'm sure these will come in handy as the season here in Denver gets started. Thanks again, Bill and Dena Nielson
I hope if you won something you will take the time to write a thank you too.

Now then, before I forget, I want to remind you of future activities.

- The Eastern International Rally, Du Quoin, IL, July 17 - 23,

2016 with early parking on the 15th and 26th.

- The AZ/NM State Rally, Wickenburg, AZ, October 25 - 29, 2016
- Our Christmas outing will be at Distant Drums in Camp Verde, AZ Dec. 6 - 9, 2016
- with early parking on the 5th.
- Quartzsite dry camp out will be January 15 - 19 followed by Rice Ranch in downtown Quartzsite January 20 - 25th
- Our breakfast will continue the first Tuesday of the months, Jan. through Mar. The time is 9:30 at Coco's Bakery and Restaurant in Phoenix.

Now then, Thom has given us a challenge and I know we are up to it. He is having a Chili Cookoff while we are at the state rally in Wickenburg in October. I know Chapter 309 has some great cooks so please contact me if you have a favorite chili recipe. There are so many. There is a red chili, and a chicken chili and a green chili stew that we love. Lets do it! **Please contact me**. We also want items to decorate the table. I have a couple Mexican table covers. Does anyone have any hats, neat baskets etc.? I want to show those other guys just how good we are. Let's work together on this. I know we can do it!

From Mesa we headed to Albuquerque, NM and spent a couple days with Don and Pat Lange. Such fun, they are always such good tour guides. My favorite this trip was driving up the mountain while it was snowing. The snow covered trees were awesome. However, we got afraid as the

temperatures were getting colder and we decided to turn around before things got icy from the snow. We ended up in a delightful Mexican restaurant. It is always fun just spending time with them. Then we went to St. Joseph, MO to visit a lady whose husband died this year. He was the guy who always said Grant was the son whom he never had. That was sort of sad but it was good seeing his spouse who has always been special to us. One time when we visited with them, they took us to Jesse James house. That is where Jesse was murdered while he was straightening a picture on the wall. The bullet hole is in the wall. We also went to see where the Pony Express began. That is an interesting museum too. Anyway, the following day we drove down to Liberty, MO to meet up with a couple we used to work with ... and we played a lot too as their lake home was right around the bend from ours. Too much time had passed since we saw each other last. Both of us had lost a child and poor Joe now has Parkinson. We were always so close and too much time had passed. We have to keep in better touch with our friend's gang. They are all too precious. Of course we stopped at my mothers too. My mom and siblings live in Iowa and it's right on the way home. It's always good seeing her. She will be 99 in a few weeks so you can understand why our time together is so special. And then to Minnesota; the wind has blown, it continues to get colder each day and the rain hasn't stopped. Gosh it's good to be home!