



In this picture, Bob took my picture attempting to befriend a mother burro and her baby in the Ghost Town of OATMAN, AZ

Well, we left Eugene, OR on 9/7 and had 10 days to get to Elephant Butte, NM. We made five stops on the way, managing to get in some sight seeing. These included Bakersfield, CA, Kingman, AZ, and Meteor Crater, AZ located off of I 40, (picture below). For Bob the 'must see' in Bakersfield was the Buck Owens' Crystal Palace. This is a Theatre, Restaurant, and Country/Western Museum, commemorating the Country Western Legend, Buck Owens. We enjoyed some entertainment over a Sunday Brunch, (picture below). We also stopped on the famous Route 66 town of Kingman, AZ which included a side trip to the Ghost Town of Oatman, seen above.

Although the ride was a bit hectic, we were glade to be able to spend the extra time with Henry and Ann in Oregon. We got to see what we wanted along the route to Elephant Butte. Of particular interest was the ghost town of Oatman. First of all it gave us the opportunity to drive the historic route 66 to get there. We drove the 25 miles from Kingman, AZ, which was very scenic. The road was hilly, narrow, and curvy. Before we arrived in town, we came around a sharp corner to find two wild burros in the middle of the road. These guys are decedents of burros who were owned by the miners in the early 1900's. When we arrived in town there were burros all over the place and they definitely had the right of way. Needless to say this town was quite a tourist attraction with staged 'gun fights', shops, and local saloons. After leaving Oatman, we continued on to Laughlin, NV, another 30 miles, before heading back to Kingman. We stopped for a bite to eat in Laughlin before heading back to Kingman, AZ. Before we knew it we were pulling into Lakeside RV Resort in Elephant Butte. As we pulled in, Jim, the Manager walked up to the coach with a smile on his face and said, "Sorry folks we have no room for you as we are expecting a rally to come



Crystal Palace



Meteor Crater

Albuquerque Balloon Festival!

Even though this event was actually in October, I put it here in September because I have gotten so far behind in my letters! This was a 'must do event' for Bob & I. This has got to be a top 10 event for me in my lifetime. We had a blast! Pictures just don't do it justice. You have to be there in person to see the *hundreds* of balloons inflate together, take off in large groups, glow together in the dark of evening, and pass each other in the sky at different altitudes (referred to as the Albuquerque box). The thousands of people attending get so excited with loud cheers as balloons rise with inflation and take off. In the evening people cheer again when the inflated balloons glow at the count of three from the announcers



This is a picture of our 400 friends Alice & John sitting on the roof of their fifth wheel, watching the balloons go by. Many people sat on the roofs of their rigs for a good view of the balloons

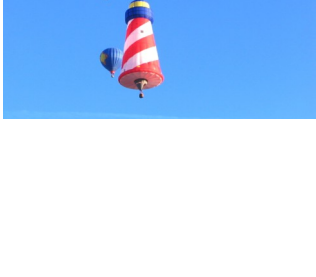
How is this for a **bottle of champagne?** Probably because of the shape, this balloon had a difficult time making any distance in the air. It came down very close to where our coach was.



These 3 pictures are of the FLIGHTHOUSE, piloted by Danny, who Bob got to know through his landings near the RV park. We then looked for him and the balloon during the early morning mass ascensions. Saturday morning Bob can be seen helping hold down the basket with the balloon fully inflated. Suddenly he was in the basket with the pilot!



You can imagine my surprise when I turned around to find him in the basket going UP...UP...AND...AWAY!!



HRRVC Chapter 400 Fall Rally

A highlight for this month was working with Bart & Debbie as co-hosts for the HRRVC 400 Rally. We spent almost 2 weeks together preparing for the rally which began 09/29. We had a great time working together. Members started pulling in early which made it even more fun, especially with two early birthdays, one for Debbie and one for Pete. Below are some rally pictures.....just warming up! It was one big party from this point on through the Albuquerque Balloon Festival.

Rally Happenings!



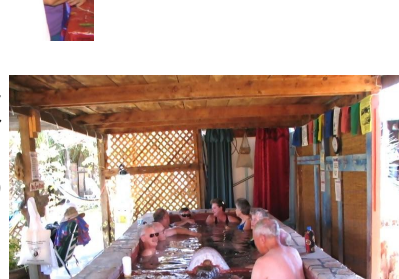
Almost every night John took on the job of starting a camp fire for everyone to enjoy. It became a nightly social event, with almost perfect weather conditions.

The El Camino Real International Heritage Center, built in 1990, commemorates the oldest trail in the US.



Lydia, owner of Cuchillo Creek Café is being inducted into the HRRVC 400 chapter of the Red Hat Society. Thanks Lydia for a great lunch and fun time at your café in Cuchillo, NM!

More than one good time was had at Riverbend Hot Springs in T or C. Located on a hill overlooking the Rio Grand River, we enjoyed the baths during one 4 o'clock and again in the dark of evening while watching the moon rise over the distant hills.



Fall Chapter 400 HRRVC Rally, continued

Well, this was the first time Bob & I hosted a 400 chapter rally and it was actually our co-hosts, Bart & Deby who volunteered our services. We joke about this but it really was fun working with them and doing the rally. The park managers, Jim & Lyn were outstanding people to work with, which made things so much easier. When we first started planning this event, Bob kept asking me if I was sure there would be enough to keep people busy and interested during the rally. I was the one doing most of the research on line. I had no doubt we would and I was concerned we would not have enough time. As it turned out, everyone loved the rally and really appreciated the work we put into it. One comment was that they felt they got a real taste of New Mexico.

Deby and I spent quite a bit of time going from business to business obtaining door prizes. Not only did we manage to get something for everyone, some of the door prizes were quite generous. One of the nice things that happened that doesn't show up in the rally brochure is that we had a camp fire almost every night. One of our members, John Duhe stepped up and took charge of this happening which became an event all by itself. People loved it! Then there was those little local discoveries, like CASA TACO, a little hole in the wall eatery around the corner that had the best New Mexican food around and so reasonable. No one will forget Bart and Bob's addiction to Sopapillas at the La Cocina Restaurant in T or C. This is a desert made of fried dough, which is puffed up and you eat it with honey. At La Cocina, they filled a whole plate.

Again on the subject of food, we got a tip that the best green chile cheeseburgers in the world could be found at the Owl Bar & Café in San Antonio, NM. Well, this was almost true as there were two café's across the street from each other and in competition for decades! They both were excellent, but we did vote for their competition! I guess it was lucky for us there were some things to see in this area, so we had an excuse! With Mr. Steve Green of Sierra County Tourism, as our guide, we had a great motorized tour of the Basque Del Apache Wildlife Refuge. This was educational as well as scenic. Earlier in the week, we visited El Camino Real Heritage Center, telling the story of the Royal Road from Mexico to Santa Fe, NM. We enjoyed it as much as anyone!