



Mesa, Arizona



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Visiting Family

Once we decided to stay in Mesa through December, we were able to make more relaxed plans to visit with family in the area. Our first visit took place at *Old Country Buffet* where we all had a nice casual dinner together. Everyone looked great! Which *Old Country Buffet* was that, Larry?

Besides Larry & Janine, son Rob & Starley and family plus Jennifer and her girls were there. Bob & I were given an invitation to Thanksgiving dinner, which we gladly accepted. This is the first holiday we have ever spent with Larry and Jeannine so this was kind of special. This was a small dinner, with five of us. The fifth person was Connie, Jeannine's daughter, who provided some light interaction with her youthful presence. Connie is a college student and nice young woman.

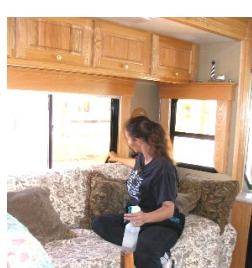
Then there was Rocco and Roxie! Let me tell you, no one is going to enter this house uninvited! Rocco weighs well over one hundred pounds and is quite vigilant of any unknown sights or sounds. I made sure I stayed on his good side. We had a delicious dinner, which Janine prepared as we talked together in the kitchen. Afterwards we relaxed and watched Thanksgiving day football. This is a nice ending to the month of November.



Maintenance!!

It's really amazing what they can do in the auto maintenance shop these days! Bob left for the dealer early in the morning one day and a couple of hours later he was back. It looked like our car but it was a different color, light khaki. But then I had slept in and was not quite awake yet! No, it isn't a new car he said, it is a used '07 with 8,000 miles on it. Well, welcome to *Ethel two or is it too!* Bob had gotten to the dealer early that morning and was wandering around the car lots and spotted this car. Then when he reviewed the service needed on Ethel one, he felt it might be wiser to just trade it in. Towing is hard on a car. So that is what we did. Then we had to fit it for the tow bar and of course it needed a different base plate. It had to be wired for the brake buddy too, both of which was done at a local motor home dealer. Then there was the *SmartTire*. This neat device will tell us the condition of all the tires while driving down the road. When Bob is driving the coach it reads the temp and air pressure in both the car and coach. Moving it over was quite time consuming. We were very impressed with the maintenance department at the Superstition Jeep Dealer.

Then there was the window tinting by *Mobile Window Tint*, a family run business. It really helps to keep the heat out of the motor home and car in warmer areas and provides some additional privacy. They were amused when Bob called them and said the tint fell off the car windows and would they redo them. They did a very nice job and we were glad we got it done



Our Chapter 400 Friends!



Shortly after we settled in and connected with our friends, we went on a hike together in the Tonto National Forest. Our hike was to the Tonto National Monument, the site of ancient cliff dwellings occupied in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. There are lower and upper cliffs. Most of the year access to the upper cliffs are available by appointment only. It just so happened that they had a weekend when the cliffs were open to the public. It was a rather strenuous hike and my knees were not happy! It was well worth the effort, though as I just love this stuff! These ancient peoples built their homes of adobe under the protective coverings of overhanging cliffs, high above the valley. I look around at the Saguaro Cactus dotting the landscape and realize that some of these grand old cactus were here at the same time as these ancient people. It is awesome!



The above pictures are of us on the trail and Bob and I in front of the cliff dwellings. Their was a Ranger at the top giving a short talk on the history of the dwellings. Artifacts found at the site could be viewed at the Visitor's Center. On our way up we had some great views of the Tonto Basin. Below is one of these pictures and one looking through the dwellings.



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The hike was just the beginning! We celebrated Angie's birthday at the Texas Roadhouse. This first picture is of that event. You might ask what the deal is with the saddle up above. If your friends take you to the *Texas Roadhouse* for your birthday, you are expected to sit on the saddle while the whole place sings Happy Birthday! Just ask Angie!

Then there was the invite to David & Barbara's home here in Mesa. They are past members, still friends and Barbara in particular is thrilled that we are all here in Mesa for the holidays! They invited us to their home for lunch one day and refused to let us bring anything. She did put us to work, however, when we arrived, making a fruit salad. Also at the lunch were two former 400 couples living in the Mesa area, Henry & Anna May Meyers and Claude & Marie Cupiss. Barbara also had a surprise guest, who turned out to be Ed and Laura Shuster, current chapter members. They have been in the area but busy working on a local church project, which takes up much of their time. Barbara really out did herself despite her recent surgery!

Then there are the many 4 O'clock socials, which these days are usually at Ironwood, where most members are located. We had a hamburger and hot dog cook out one day and Angie volunteered to make a couple of pumpkin pies on another day, which were scrumptious. Other activities include going to a local resort for some great taco salads, the local swap meet, an occasional invitation to a presentation or lecture. At one afternoon social, we were surprised by a visit from Lyle & Karen Prockish, who drove down in their car. Generally, people socialize with friends and neighbors. We may change our scenery but that usually changes the neighbors also, unless they move too! We are all getting ready for the holidays. Our Christmas gathering will be at Valle del Oro, nearby. We will all relocate over there in mid to late December to be closer together.

