

Happy New Year..2011

It's hard to believe that it is really 2011, but it really is! So....., here is how we spent this New Year's Eve. I have to share that as long as I have lived in NY as well as NYC, I have never been in Times Square for New Years Eve!! I was always content to watch it on TV from the comfort of my home. Well, this time we were actually present to see a sparkling replica of New York's Times Square Ball drop in the little City of McAllen, TX. We saw an advertisement in the local paper for it and decided to go, and the weather turned out perfect for the event. The city is named after it's Scottish Founder, John McAllen, who donated land for the establishment of a rail line in 1904. It is nicknamed The City of Palms, as there are 40 different varieties of Palms lining it's streets. McAllen, which is on the same latitude as Fort Lauderdale, FL, enjoys the same subtropical climate.

New Year's Eve we ate dinner at a local restaurant before going down town. We were very impressed with how well organized this event was. We parked at the convention center as directed, where big busses were waiting to take us down town, free of charge. Our only mistake was arriving too early, as there was no place to sit down except on the curbs and an outdoor temporary bar. So guess what, we bought two \$5.00 beers and sat there, waiting for things to begin. This was obviously a family event, with much cheering, clapping, singing and dancing in the streets. At the stroke of midnight, the ball landed, cheers went up, and everyone around offered hugs. This marked the beginning of the laser show and the continuation of the New Years celebration. We headed home, but not before stopping at Denny's for some breakfast.

The remainder of the month was very laid back for some of us. Anne and I battled an annoying cold for more than two weeks early in the month, which finally dissipated by the 20th. Bob and Henry kept coming up with 'make work' projects to keep them busy with their 'man toys'. There were also various Valley Events going on to give us some entertainment. We took some time to visit local events like, *The International Travel Show, The Health Expo and The All Valley RV Show*. Henry and Anne took their coach to San Antonio for the Trailer Live Conference, between the 20th and the 28th. Since we all decided to stay in the Valley until the end of February, it just didn't make any sense for us to go north and then turn around and come right back. We were very comfortable and warm here too.

Abe & Donna along with us, introduced Henry & Anne to everyone's favorite 'hamburger place'. They could not believe it! Although the picture does not due it justice, there has to be close to a pound of meat in that burger!! This place is on a side street, no name, no advertising, and is open from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM or until the meat is gone. It is run by a local lawyer, who does this on his lunch hour. Local people start lining up at 10:30 AM. It is unbelievable!



Then there is the Monte Cristo Golf and Country Club, where we are staying. Each Wednesday and Friday, there is entertainment in a very comfortable, laid back atmosphere, where we just enjoy sitting, listening to Red Lemon's country music with a beer or a glass of wine. He plays from 6:30 PM to 10:00 PM. Their are people there from the home owner's association and the two RV parks. Some food is available during certain times during the day for the golfers, home owners and rv people.

While Henry & Anne were at their conference, Bob upgraded his computer with new equipment and I inherited his old computer. Needless to say, this was a big job and involved a couple of all nighters for Bob to get the transfer of information done. He is done now and we are 'happy campers'!

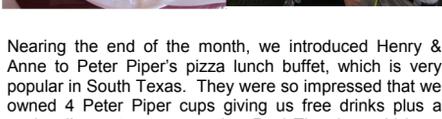
Congratulations to Lana!!!

Well, I know this is the middle of the academic year for most college students, but for our beloved granddaughter, Lana, it marks the completion of her College Education!!!! She stayed focused and worked hard for her 3.8 grade point average!!! An outstanding job!!!! Her major concentration was Information Systems with a minor concentration in Cyber Security. We now pray she can get a job and that it is in the field of her choice. I feel confident she will make a significant contribution in whatever she decides to do. We haven't seen her in person since we left her at St. Johns' University in the beginning of her freshman year. We have been in constant contact with her throughout these past four and a half years via the internet and phone and look forward to seeing her again soon!! She is loved much!!!!

Now back to South Texas and the rest of January 2011. We visited a 400 couple, Gerald and Marylin Cherry who 'came off the road' while we were here. They sold their coach and bought a mobile home in 'Bit of Heaven RV Park'. We were glad we were close by so they could share this event with us. We wish them much happiness in their new home.

Winter Texans have their favorite 'hang outs' so the following is a tale of two such places. One old time favorite was 'Pepe's' on the Rio Grand in Mission, TX. Well it is no more, as it was destroyed by flood waters, sometime last year. This place really thrived in the Winter when the snow birds are here. They had a food menu, drinks and live entertainment most of the week. We drove down as far as we could go with the car, then Henry and Bob walked down to take a look on foot. They reported much damage, tons of mud and collapsed structure. Anne and I decided not to go, and watched the Boarder Patrol driving back and forth on the levy. We parked by a public picnic area and a chapel. The chapel, 'La Lomita', is on the registry of historical places, and dates back to the mid 1800s involving the Oblate Fathers. I have a feeling the chapel has survived more than one flood. Then we all got an invitation to ride the Monte Cristo Motor Coach, which is literally a rolling advertisement. The trip was to Rancho El Charco, Restaurant and Ranch in La Joya, TX. It is situated on the shores of a good sized lake. As it turned out, we drove our cars, but sat with Red and the group when they got there after us. It was Sunday and it filled up quickly by midday. The weather was perfect and we sat outside on the patio. There was live music and dancing as well. It was a nice way to spend an afternoon. When we left we decided to check out a local taco place we heard was in the area. It was local alright, as we were the only non Spanish speaking people there!! So, what did Henry do? He called his son-in-law, Enrique in Elkhart and had him talk to the waitress in Spanish so we could finish ordering our food!!! Unbelievable!!!!!!! I am sure they are still talking about us!!!

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Nearing the end of the month, we introduced Henry & Anne to Peter Piper's pizza lunch buffet, which is very popular in South Texas. They were so impressed that we owned 4 Peter Piper cups giving us free drinks plus a senior discount on our meals. Paul Thrash would have been proud of us too. We seem to be seeing a great deal of Best Buy lately!!!! Henry & Anne got a new computer too, which has my Bob occupied with that as well, as we move into the month of February.....