

# Rocky Mountain Country Coachers Newsletter



## Presidents Message

Rocky Mountain Country Coachers have had another great year with more fun and interesting rallies that have provided a social and educational experience for our members. I am so impressed with all the work that our rally hosts put into making each event a chance to explore the area, to learn about the history (The Arizona Inn and the Capital in Helena), hear how businesses were started (Pistachio Nut farm & Salman Ranch), plus experience fun moments such as picking raspberries and climbing the White Sands together.

Heartfelt thanks to all our rally hosts throughout the year whose special efforts have enriched our travels.

The nominations for the 2009-2010 board has changed from those announced at the Trinity Site business meeting. See the article in this newsletter for an updated slate of officers. RMCC appreciates those who have volunteered to lead our group.

May your holidays be very special. See you in Tucson to continue the fun.

## **FUTURE RMCC RALLIES**

2009

- March 21- 23      Old Pueblo Rally VI – Beaudry RV Resort, Tucson, AZ
- March 23 – 27      Tombstone Territories Rally – Tombstone Territories  
RV Park, Huachuca City, AZ
- June 1 – 5          RV Park (TBA), Williams, AZ
- August 19 – 23      CCI West Coast Class Reunion – Linn County Fair &  
Expo Center, Albany, OR
- September 9 – 12   Mountain Views RV Park, Creede, CO  
(Note: This park is at 9000 ft altitude, great golfing!)

### **Old Pueblo Rally VI March 21 – 23, 2009**

RMCC will begin its sixth year at a short rally of two days at Beaudry RV Resorts in Tucson, Arizona. The main event of the rally will be a Bunch and Annual Meeting at the Tucson Botanical Gardens on Saturday. On Sunday we will depart for Tombstone Territories RV Park in Huachuca City, Arizona for another rally.

## **Tombstone Territories Rally**

### **March 23 – 27, 2009**

Huachuca City is 65 miles southeast of Tucson in the old Wild West country. John and June Masters are planning a fun filled four days exploring the Old West in Cochise County. Come learn things you have not know before about the old mining town of Bisbee, maybe four-wheel tour of ghost towns in the area, birding t Ramsey Canyon or Fort Huachuca (the oldest still functioning base/intelligence center) and see a Wild West show including dinner in Tombstone. Kartchner Caverns is within easy driving distance for those who have not had an opportunity to visit the newest Arizona State Park; prior reservations are recommended, but not essential. The theme of the rally will be the old Wild, Wild West. One evening to set the mood the gents will dress as sneaky, crooked and low-life gamblers and the ladies will dress as dance hall girls. Other activities are in the planning stage. Wear you vests and boas!

## **Nominees for RMCC Officers**

The nominating committee presents the following slate for RMCC officers for 2009-2011.

President -	Tanna Flomer
Vice President-	Betty Woods
Treasurer -	George Anderson
Secretary -	Margita Clark

## **Alamogordo Contests**

By  
Reggie Knight

Since Alamogordo is home of the Holloman AFB and close to White Sands Testing Grounds, I decided to go with the aeronautical theme for the contests. The gentlemen were given identical plans and paper to fold and fly a spy plane. The plane that flew the farthest ahead would be the winner. Maybe because there was a slight breeze, some planes didn't fly very far, hardly even five feet and some even went behind the flight operator. Mike Butler's plane flew straight and the farthest and it appeared that the front was weighted, but when I picked it up there was no foreign object on the plane, so I had to declare him the winner. Someone else had taped a quarter and a dime under the plane and I earned \$.35 that evening.

Another evening during Happy Hour, the men launched foam cardboard gliders. Again the breeze interfered with flight and many gliders landed behind or at the feet of the launchers. The winner, Mike Stokes, who has aeronautical training, stood with his back to the finish line and launched the glider over his head. He used his head for more than a hat rack!

The ladies were not left out. At the beginning of the rally they were handed a kit of materials to make a mobile of six gliders. Ed and Jean's daughter, Cindy, and granddaughter, Jenna, did the judging and the winner was Alta Daniels. The wind destroyed the mobiles, but the gliders were flying.

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## **TRINITY SITE RALLY**

### **Boot Hill RV Park - Alamogordo, NM**

It finally happened! We finally had a rally in Alamogordo in conjunction with the opening of the Trinity Site. Ed and Jean Grabman have been planning for this rally for years and their son-in-law and daughter built a campground large enough in capacity and site length to meet RMCC's needs. Alamogordo began as a railroad town in June 1898 and was a "planned community" with wide thoroughfares and irrigation ditches. The building of what is now Holloman Air Force Base in 1942 started the rapid growth of the city and today the Base is Alamogordo's major employer. Jean and Ed and Betty and Lyndol Wilcox kept us busy for the four days that we were in Alamogordo.

A trip to **White Sands National Monument** is less than 30 minutes from the Boot Hill RV Park in the mountain-ringed Tularosa Basin Valley. From afar the area looks as if it covered with snow, but the fields of white sand dunes are composed of gypsum crystals that cover an area of 275 square miles. The U.S. Army explored the area in 1849 and the Mescalero Apache tribe was living in the area at that time. President Herbert Hoover created the Monument in 1933 and it was dedicated and opened on April 29, 1934 and the Visitors' Center was completed in 1938. The Monument is completely surrounded by military installations and there has been an uneasy relationship with the military and the Monument. Errant missiles often fell on Monument property in some cases destroying visitor areas. Today, when tests are conducted on the missile range, US Route 70 and the Monument are closed for safety reasons.

The sand at White Sands is not ordinary beach sand, which is silica dioxide, but gypsum, which is a water-soluble chemical compound. Normally, rain would dissolve gypsum and carry it to the sea, but since the Tularosa Basin has no outlet to the sea, the rain either sinks into the ground or forms shallow pools which dry out and leave gypsum in a crystalline form, selenite, on the surface. Weathering and erosion eventually break the crystals into sand-size grains that are carried away by the prevailing winds forming white dunes. Unlike dunes of silicon based sand crystals, gypsum does not readily convert the sun's energy into heat and thus the surface can be walked on safely with bare feet, even in the hottest summer months. The Monument has a well-supplied gift shop where many of us found something that we had to have.

Some of us had time to visit **Eagle Ranch Pistachio Groves**. The family farm is owned and operated by George and Marianne Schweers. George had grown up in rural Nebraska and his goal after retiring from the Air Force at Holloman was to return to agriculture. At about that time, Harvey Widner was studying desert crops and planted 400 pistachio trees and two years later sold his property and trees to the Schweers. Iran is the largest producer of pistachios and 99% of the pistachios grown in the U.S. are grown in California. The Schweers' goal was to grow gourmet pistachios and theirs were the first grove in New Mexico and now they are the largest producers in New Mexico. Today the farm has 12,000 trees and 12,000 grapevines have been planted to diversify into wines. We had a taste of their pistachios that were in our "goodie bag".

A few of us visited **Holloman Air Force Base** where we were given a tour of the base. Holloman was designed by and for the British Royal Air Force and is unique in that it has three take-off strips in a triangular design. Holloman had been a center of space research

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long before rocketry; space was being explored by balloons. Remember the strange sites over Roswell, NM ? – Testing of high altitude balloons. Some fell to the ground the military denied any knowledge of them. Holloman AFB is home to the 49<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, which flies and maintains the F117-A, the Stealth fighter. It soon will be one of the homes the Air Force's latest fighter, the F-22 Raptor. The Wing is host for the German Flying Training Center, which trains the German AF in the Tornado jet aircraft. There are about 2,000 Germans living in Alamogordo and the German government and the local school board have built a school for the German children. The reason why Germany and other European countries train at Holloman and other USAF bases in this country is because there is very little air space in Europe for military flight training. The Italian AF was supposed to train there also, but they never showed up. Holloman is also the location of the 46<sup>th</sup> Test Group, which tests many Department of Defense latest technologies from radar to weapon systems.

Finally, the day came that we have been waiting for, the first Saturday in October when the Trinity Site would be open to the public. We carpoled to the Tularosa High School parking lot from where we were escorted to the Site. There were over 100 cars at the high school and several tour buses were at the Site when we arrived. During the day, there were more than 1000 people touring the Site where the first atomic bomb was exploded and visited the ranch house where the scientist assembled the plutonium core. The test occurred in the White Sands Missile Range at 5:29:45 a.m. Mountain War Time on July 16, 1945. This event ushered the world into the atomic era. Two bombs had been developed – one using uranium and the other plutonium. The plutonium design was more complex and testing was essential. The bomb was hoisted onto a 100-foot tower that vaporized during the explosion. The event almost didn't happen because the night before the scheduled test time there was a wind and thundershower in the area and the scientists didn't know what effect the wind and rain would have on the wiring mechanism. One of Bill Knight's college instructors sat on the tower platform the entire night before the test to keep the wiring protected from the wind and rain. The blast produce a flash of light that could be seen 250 miles away, a roar heard 50 miles away and a mushroom cloud that rose 40,000 ft. When the military was later asked what happened, they told the civilians that there was an ammunition explosion. Today a small obelisk marks the spot where the tower was located. The blast vaporized the tower and melted desert sand and turned it into a green glassy substance called Trinitite. The Atomic Energy Commission has taken most of the Trinitite away, but there are signs warning visitors not to remove any green glassy substance from the area. A few of our rally members tried to leave the Site before the specified time and were chased down by the MP's and requested to return to the Site's parking lot. When we did leave, the military escorted us to the exit gate and we were on our own, thank goodness for GPS. It was well worth the wait of five years!!

It was a busy rally! Jean, Ed, Betty and Lyndol knocked themselves out making sure that we have many activities to keep us busy, great evening entertainment and delicious food. A few days before the rally, the contracted caterer cancelled his services. Our hosts worked miracles by contacting the catering service of the local hospital and the female chef worked her miracles. She graduated from culinary arts school in Rhode Island and enjoys the TV program "Hell's Kitchen". She prepared us full breakfasts and epicurean dinners. We left the rally with full bellies and warm wishes for safe travels.

## Trinity Site Hosts

Ed and Jean Grabman were born in Michigan, Ed in Rochester and Jean in Detroit. They met and graduated from Michigan State University. Ed's father was a finishing carpenter and his mother was a schoolteacher. Jean's parents came from Germany and her father was a tool and die maker and her mother was a housewife. Ed served in the United States Air Force as an officer/fighter pilot for almost 21 years. When they got married in June 1960, they lived in Big Spring, Texas. Living the military life meant a lot of moving. After Big Spring, they headed to Glendale, AZ followed by Las Vegas, NV, England for four years, Phoenix for 6 ½ years, Germany for four years and to Alamogordo, NM where Ed retired from the Air Force. He continued flying fighters for a civilian company on contract to the Air Force. Ed's most interesting job was as General's Aide in Viet Nam flying onto and off Navy ship decks. Now we know why Ed is so relaxed behind the wheel of his RV. Jean enjoyed being a US census taker for the Feds. They started camping as soon as their son and daughter were out of diapers in a pop-up tent trailer in 1966. When in Germany, they upgraded to a travel trailer, but the real camping challenge came when they returned to the States and lived in a slide-in camper on a pick-up truck while looking for a house. In that camper for three weeks, lived Ed, Jean, two teenagers, three large dogs and a cat! After that experience, their next RV was a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel followed by motor homes. They plan to keep their Allure for the rest of their camping experience. Their son is following in Ed's vapor trail by being a test pilot. We met their daughter, Cindy, as owner of the Boot Hill RV Park. Ed and Jean have four grandchildren, three boys and a girl. Ed had carpal tunnel surgery after the rally and we wish him a rapid recovery.

# Mountain High Rally

## Pendaries RV Park, Rociada, New Mexico

We gathered in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, but some of us doubted if we would ever find the rally campground, but then we saw Country Coaches in Las Vegas and we knew that we were headed in the right direction. The weather was clear and cool and once we settled in we greeted our friends with hugs and kisses (we're a friendly group) and became acquainted with the park. There was a covered pavilion where we had Happy Hour and gathered to talk and a clubhouse where we had our meals. The meals were prepared by a few of the permanent summer residents of the park and our hosts who consisted of Carol and Tom Anderson, Betty and Rod Woods and Dan Durham. You should have seen Dan flip pancakes! James Beard couldn't have done it as well.

One morning we visited **Montezuma Castle**, which is now one of the campuses of the United World College (UWC). The hot springs near the main building were used for centuries for their natural healing waters and Native American Indians used the area as a neutral territory to discuss tribal disputes. After the initial land grant in 1841, the Army purchased the land in 1846 and built a hospital. The structure was sold and converted into the Adobe Hotel in 1862. The Santa Fe Railroad bought the property in 1882 and built the original wooden Montezuma Hotel. In 1884 that building burned to the ground and a second Montezuma Hotel was built in 1885 and burned down four month later. (Strange) Again the hotel was rebuilt and reopened as the Phoenix Hotel in 1886, but failed financially and closed in 1893. In 1913 the former hotel was donated to the YMCA, but they never used it, therefore the buildings were sold to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1920 and used for the Montezuma Baptist College from 1922 to 1930. In 1936 the Roman Catholic Church purchased the property as housing to train Jesuit priests from Mexico. The seminary continued until 1972.

The Armand Hammar Foundation purchased the property in 1981 to establish a UWC in the United States. There are twelve other UWC schools around the world. The school opened in 1982 and Prince Charles, Elizabeth's son, president of the UWC, attended the event. Currently Queen Noor of Jordon is President and Nelson Mandela in Honorary President. The mission of the school according to UWC literature is "UWC makes

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education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and sustainable force.”

Our rally members divided into groups and each group had two students take them on a limited tour of the first floor and tell us about the school. Students come from 73 countries and the enrollment at this campus is 70 – 90 students. The aim is to have an equal number of males and females, but there are usually more females. The school is the equivalent of the last two years of high school. The cost is \$50,000 per student per year, but each student is charged \$20,000 and most of that is covered by scholarships. Many go on to college and when we asked if the students go back to their native country to work for the betterment of their country, we were told that many prefer to stay in this country, work and send money back to their native country. Not only do the students have classroom work they are required to participate in humanitarian activities. The young lady leading our group came from Barbados and spent her Easter vacation in Mexico border towns providing water, food and clothing for people preparing to cross the border illegally into the U.S.A.

Another morning our group drove to **Salman Ranch** in Mora, NM where a family member of the current owners gave us a tour of the buildings. She met us in front of the inactive San Rafael Mission Church, which was built by the priests from Lamy, France and is unique with its French Gothic windows. In the past one of the owners must have been German because over the entrance to the church is a design that is found on many Pennsylvania Dutch barns.

The history of Salman Ranch dates back to the territorial days of New Mexico. In the early 1800's the Governor of the New Mexico Territory granted 32,000 acres to Vincente Romero. Today the area is known as the La Cueva Historic District. The Big House, the Mission Church, the Grist Mill and the Mercantile Building were completed by the early 1860. The Big House is a beautiful 8,000 sq ft adobe hacienda which members of the current family still inhabit. The walls of the house are at least 18 inches thick. The bell that was rung to warn the early settlers of Indian raids is still hanging on the west side of the building.

The Mercantile Building now houses the Salman Ranch Store where fresh raspberries and vegetable (in season) are sold along with gourmet food items, dried flowers and Salman Ranch mementos. The public is allowed to

pick raspberries for a price and you can see Betty Woods and Ann Sanders picking raspberries on the RMCC's website.

In 1881 Vincente Romero died and his son started selling off his father's holdings. In 1942 Colonel William Salman asked his wife and friend to find a ranch where he could move his young family after the war. They purchased land at La Cueva and by 1950 Colonel Salman has purchased all 32,000 acres that was the Romero Land Grant in the early 1800's.

Our group had a picnic lunch on the grounds and treated ourselves to raspberry sundaes. The tour of the land and buildings gave us a better idea of the history of the area.

On the last night of the rally, we carpooled into Las Vegas for dinner at the historic **Plaza Hotel**. The hotel is located on the Old Town Plaza and has been a gathering place and watering hole for locals and visitors, including outlaws, since 1882. The town was an important stop along the Santa Fe Trail and later for the railroads. Before dinner we were given a tour of a hotel suite, but the resident ghost wasn't in the rooms that we toured. This male ghost only "appears" to women, he's not dumb. After a delicious dinner we headed back to the campground. A car or two "overshot the runway" and found themselves on a dirt road miles from the campground, but they made it back for breakfast the next morning.

We had two days to travel south to Alamogordo for the Trinity Site Rally and some of us stayed in Pendaries, others went to Ruidoso, Albuquerque, Santa Fe and some drove directly to Alamogordo.

## Golf in Pendaries and Alamogordo

by  
Mike Cocci

If you have never played golf at 8000 feet above sea level you are missing out on the greatest ego trip in the game. All of a sudden you are hitting the ball like Tiger Woods with drives of 300 yards and 150 yard wedge shots and with beautiful meadows, towering trees and lush green fairways and greens. About 12 of us ventured into the mountain atmosphere of Pendaries Golf Club to test our skills. Once we adjusted our game to the extra yardage, we were getting on our shots and the rest of our skills kicked in and several pars and birdies were recorded on the scorecards. There were a couple of disruptions as off road vehicles traversed the golf club using the dirt trails to get into the higher meadows and mountains roads. The course had several challenging holes with blind doglegs and saddles (hills) to circumvent and the problem of selecting the correct club. But, all in all it was a fantastic experience and beautiful venue for golf.

There was no specific golf event planned at the Trinity Rally. However, several of us managed to sneak in a morning or afternoon of golf at the local municipal facility. As every golfer knows, each course provides its own unique challenges. At Alamogordo we came back to reality as shot making and club selection were more in line with our regular game. With the total course distance about the same as Pendaries, we found that we needed to adjust our club selection to make up the loss in yardage at lower altitude. Water proved to be the nemesis on this course as flat fairways lead to hidden coves and ponds that circled the greens. Without any local course knowledge, these surprised several of us on both the front and back nines. As all of us golfers know, a bad day of golf is better than a good day at work. And, no one ever has a bad day on the golf course.

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## **Mountain High Rally Hosts**

The hosts for this rally had to do more than just plan, organize, direct, make the arrangements, remain within budget and hope everyone has a good time, they also had to cook and serve. Pendaries is a bit in the woods and far from any catering service so our hosts and other permanent residents prepared and served the food, and everything was delicious. The hosts were Carol and Tom Anderson, Betty and Rod Woods and Dan Durham.

Dan was born and raised in the Southwest as the youngest of nine children, the result of five marriages. Living on an Oklahoma cotton farm during his teen years was an incentive for him to seek a better way of life. He moved to New Mexico where he worked a few years before being drafted into the Army and served in Germany for two years and that was a great experience for him. After fulfilling his military obligation, he attended the University of Mexico and worked for an electrical engineering company where he became a partner after his graduation. Later he joined an electrical contracting company and helped develop it into a turnkey construction company offering a wide spectrum of engineering services/construction as well as land development. He enjoyed his work every day because he found construction rewarding and it was a fun way to make a good living. He married a lovely lady, Gail, and had two great children, a son and daughter, who each have a son and daughter. Gail and he bought their first motor home in 1978 to complement their boating activities at Elephant Butte Lake and the Albuquerque Boat Club. Gail passed away in 1998 and during the past ten years, Dan has visited all of the lower 48 and parts of Canada and Mexico – any excuse to be traveling in his motor home, east of the Mississippi river one year and west of it the next year. Sounds like a great idea!

Betty Woods' parents came from Germany through Ellis Island and Betty was born in Nyack, NY, while Rod's ancestors came from England and have been in this country for many generations. Rod was born in San Luis Obispo, CA and graduated from Cal Poly with a degree in Electronic Engineering. After Rod served in the Air Force, he entered the business world and along the way he had a very interesting position at Honeywell as Vice President. Currently, he is writing custom software for service industries and is the webmaster for RMCC. Betty studied Business Education at the University of Arizona and owned an air conditioning and

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heating business for ten years. When they first got married, they lived in Santa Maria, CA and throughout the years they have called home in Pismo Beach, CA; Minneapolis, MN; Phoenix; Doylestown, PA and currently live in Scottsdale where they are close to their three sons' families who live within five miles of them. Many of us know of the tragic loss of their daughter a few years ago. Gardening, hiking and anything outdoors are Betty's favorite pastimes. Rod enjoys golf, hunting and working with his Arabian horses. They started RV'ing in 1972 in a camper on a pick-up. Their favorite RV parks are Crown Villa, Bend, OR and Outdoor Resorts in Las Vegas, NV and Newport, OR.

## **WORMS, MAGGOTS AND BUGS**

by  
Reggie Knight

These were a few of the items that turned up in the scavenger bags that were not on the list for the scavenger hunt in Pendaries. For the hunt, we were required to find items such as clover, yellow and purple flowers, pinecones, mushrooms and other stuff. For items that couldn't be removed or fit into the scavenger bags such as flag poles, bird baths, bird houses and such, numbers were provided near the item to provide verification that the participant found the item. These items were scattered throughout the campground and we all got exercise. Some members looked alone and others formed coveys to search. While ensuring that all items were in the scavenger bags, I got disgusted with the smell of fermenting mushrooms and the feel of slimy worms, disgusting maggots and creepy bugs on my hand. I decided the only way I could determine the winner and maintain my sanity was to put all the names of the participants in a hat and pick one. The winners were Gary Hobbs and Margaret Chipman and the contents of the scavenger bags were sent back to nature.

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**Tom and Carol Anderson** were born on the opposite sides of the country. Tom was born in Pittsburgh, PA, moved to Greenflat, PA, the Philadelphia area and Silver Spring, MD. His mother was a homemaker and his father was a house builder and later an appraiser. Tom attended the University of Maryland and graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Carol was born during a World War II blackout in San Diego. She spent her early years traveling with her family from one Naval assignment to another. They finally settled in Chula Vista, CA. Her mother was a homemaker and her father was a Diesel Engineer. On scholarships she attended California Western University and graduated with double majors in Early Childhood Education and English. She worked on her Master's at various colleges in the West and taught primarily in elementary education schools. Tom was hired by Sandia National Labs after college and moved to Albuquerque, NM. After working there for several years, he started Integrated Systems in 1975. For over 25 years he manufactured and sold Infrared Cameras, which were used for industrial purposes and later in firefighting. Tom has had a love affair with flying for years and has a Bonanza single engine aircraft; even Carol got into flying. Carol's hobbies are painting, carving, sketching and anything that has to do with kids and critters. She has been a docent at the Rio Grande Zoo for the past 15 years. Her current passion is being a volunteer and board member of Talking Talons, a bird of prey rescue center and nationally acclaimed educational program for kids at risk. Another cause close to her heart is Chemo Angels, a buddy support program for those suffering from cancer and enduring Chemotherapy treatment. Also she has taken up wood burning of gourds, which she brought to the Tucson Rally. Carol and Tom raised two children and were caretakers for a house full of pets. They currently have seven grandchildren. Both Tom and Carol are members of The Rotary Club of the Southwest. Boating has always been a favorite family activity, but they have been spending less time in their boat and more time in their RV. They started RV'ing in 2000 with a Winnebago, but in 2001 they took delivery of a Country Coach Affinity. Since then they have had a 2005 and 2007 Affinity, which they say is their last. (Heard that before!) Their top priority is spoiling their grandchildren and are very proud of the excellent job that they are doing.

## The Latest News About The Raus

Well, there is some good news and then there is some not-so-good news about Yvonne and Don Rau. The really good news is that Yvonne had her breast cancer surgery and is now cancer free! She will be undergoing some radiation therapy starting the first week in November. This is a 5 days per week regimen which will last for about 6 weeks and will be done in Longview, Washington. The radiation therapy is strictly preventive in nature. We sure don't want any returns of that nastiness.

As for the not-so-good-news: it seems that Don couldn't let Yvonne get ahead of him with the cancer business. Therefore, Don is undergoing test after test to determine whether or not he has pancreatic cancer. Tests have disclosed that there is a growth in his pancreas and there is some loose fluids sloshing around in his abdomen. What isn't totally clear is the condition of the growth. Is it benign, is it precancerous, is it cancerous? Don will be tested via an endoscopic ultrasound procedure to determine which applies, and then Dr Shepherd will do whatever is most appropriate to remove the growth. The good news here is this growth was found fairly early and hopefully before it has started spreading.

Yvonne and I will appreciate your prayers. We both are looking forward to getting together with you folks at the Old Pueblo Rally after the first of the new year.

For your information we will probably not get back down to Arizona until after the first of the year 2009.

### An update on Don and Yvonne Rau

Don was diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer and has begun Chemotherapy in Portland, OR. They will remain in Washington for treatments.

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