

Greetings from Earp. Part 2 of 2.

Greetings from **Earp**, California, and the very beautiful **Emerald Cove RV Resort** on the Colorado River.

This is the second half of our letter from Earp, California. We left San Felipe, Baja, Mexico and headed back to the U.S.

We crossed the border into the United States at **San Luis Rio Colorado**. Once again, it was fairly miserable experience. Going into Mexico is really easy and pleasant. The Mexican border police are very pleasant and wave you through very quickly. Deeper into Mexico, you will encounter the Federales (Mexican soldiers) at various checkpoints. No, they are not teenagers carrying submachine guns. They are young, just as our soldiers are, and in a group of six or twelve, there will be only one with an old rifle and he may or may not have any ammunition. In general, they are polite and courteous and easy to get along with. Getting back into the U.S., you can expect long lines, poor directions, and very narrow lanes. If you're driving a motorhome, you will certainly be pulled out of line and detained while the border guards call for an agricultural inspector. You will be ordered out of your motorhome and guarded by one or two armed Border Patrol agents who will keep you out of your home while an agricultural inspector searches your rig. (The Mexicans would never expect to be left alone in your coach.) Generally, you can expect the Ag people to confiscate something. This time they took our small Christmas cactus which was about to bloom. We have had the cactus for five years and it had crossed the border before.

As you wait for hours, the first set of signs say that RVs should get into lanes 3 and 4. But since the lanes aren't numbered this isn't much help. As you get closer to the crossing, the second set of signs say RVs can only be in lanes 3, 4, and 6. But at this point, the lanes are still not numbered so good luck. As we came around a blind corner we found ourselves in lane 4. Hot damn! No thanks to the border officials, but we happen to be in one of the correct lanes. That's a good thing because it would be almost impossible to change lanes. As we get very close to the inspection station in lane 4, we realize that it is so narrow we may not fit. **Narrow and diabolical**. When it is your turn to enter the inspection area, you have to go over a speed bump and on each side of the speed bump is a tall steel pole. We crept up to the bump with Donna hanging out a right hand window and Chuck hanging out the left. Donna got us as close to the right as possible and our right hand mirror cleared by about half an inch. Chuck didn't think the left hand mirror would clear. But, thanks to the darn speed bump, you have to gas it enough to get over the bump and sure enough, we hit the left hand mirror. This is not a rare occasion. Jerry hit the side of his coach the same way. It happens many times every single day. We complained to the border inspector. He told us that lane 6 was 18 inches wider and we should have been in that lane. Easy for him to say. There is absolutely nothing to let you know that lane 6 is wider and there is no way to know where lane 6 is located until it's too late. **Are U.S. border officials really this stupid or is this their way of discouraging travel to Mexico?**

We rolled into **Yuma** rather late in the day so we parked at the first available place we saw which happened to be **Cocopah Indian Casino**. All in all, not a bad stop. Free dry camping and a darn good fish buffet for dinner. The next morning, we took the motorhome to the Indian parking lot at the border crossing into **Los Algodones**, Mexico. We walked across the border on Sunday and showed Diana the town. For those of you who have never been to Algodones, it is a Mexican town unlike any other. There are hundreds of dentists, doctors, optometrists, drug stores, and liquor stores. Hundreds of old U.S. citizens walk across the border daily to get low cost medical

treatment and to buy very low cost prescription drugs. You can buy almost any prescription drug in Algodones without a prescription. The prices are so low that you can't help but wonder what's going on in our country. Very often, you can buy the U.S. name brand, the Mexican name brand, or the Mexican generic. It's not unusual for the Mexican generic to be 1/10th or less the cost of the U.S. branded product. It is illegal to bring these drugs back across the border, but probably 90 percent of the old people have taken the pills out of the box and hidden them on their person. **Our drug prices are so high in the U.S. that otherwise law abiding citizens are willing to become criminals and risk arrest.**



The purple liquor store in Algodones.

But there is a problem with going to Algodones, and once again, it's the U.S. border officials. The Border Patrol is everywhere around Algodones and Yuma. Their 4 wheel drive trucks are all around the river, all around any possible place to cross from Mexico, in the hills with binoculars searching for illegal aliens and constantly overhead with their helicopters. The sheer numbers and the quality of their equipment is very impressive. Apparently, the U.S. will spend almost any amount to capture Mexicans trying to sneak into the U.S. Well, okay, we don't have a problem with this. On the other hand, you will never find more than two officials at the crossing where Americans walk back in to the U.S. The fact that there is a line of old people four abreast and stretching out more than a mile doesn't seem to bother our officials one bit. We have old people standing in line for more than three hours. Many can't stand it and some are actually collapsing. The Mexican authorities are concerned and immediately provide wheelchairs for the Americans that collapse. The U.S. border officials appear not to care. The room you go through has plenty of space for four to six desks. However, they never have more than two on duty and sometimes only one. Once again, **are U.S. border officials really this stupid or is this their way of discouraging travel to Mexico?** The Mexicans believe it is deliberate and so do we!



A small sample of people lined up to cross back into the U.S.

Yuma, Arizona is a very popular winter location for old people. They want the warm weather and they want to shop for medicine in Algodones. Low cost dentistry is the second big reason to visit Algodones. There are both poor and excellent dentists in Algodones. Some have marvelous offices and state of the art equipment, and others have rather shabby surroundings. Some are much more expensive than others, but all are very cheap compared to the U.S. and for sure, you are not going to wait weeks for an appointment. In general, you don't need an appointment. Just walk in and they will squeeze you in somehow.

After a day of shopping in Algodones, we hopped in the motorhome and moved it to **Paradise Indian Casino** also in Yuma. Paradise also has free parking, but a lot more of it than Cocopah, and plenty of room to park without removing our trailer. The food at Paradise is cheap and plentiful, but not very good. The next morning we put Diana in a cab and she headed for the airport. We missed her immediately. What a great gal to travel with. Very helpful, very considerate, and game for anything. Well the fun and games had to end. Now it was time for us to get serious about getting dental work done in Algodones.

On our second try, we found a dental office with very skilled dentists and very low prices. We both got examined the same day we walked in. The examination was thorough and free. If they need x-rays, they were also free. They found that Chuck had an abscessed rear molar with a lot of bone loss. Apparently, this has been the source of on again, off again intense pain that our U.S. dentist couldn't locate. Their root canal specialist felt the tooth couldn't be saved and recommended extraction. Chuck opted for the extraction which was painless and cost \$25. They also recommended that Chuck have several front teeth capped at \$140 per crown. Chuck opted to just replace a loose filling in a front tooth. No problems and very nice work with the filling matching his teeth perfectly. The total cost was \$35. Donna has had a tooth that was originally cracked in half and marginally patched up by our U.S. dentist who said there wasn't enough tooth left to do a crown. The Mexican dentist said no problem, we will imbed a post next to the tooth and put a crown over the post and the half tooth. They did the whole job in three days for a total cost of \$185 and it looks very nice. It's not hard to see why so many people walk across the border to get medical attention in Algodones. We are pleased to strongly recommend the dental group that did our work:

Sani Dental Group <http://www.sanidentalgroup.cjb.net/> They are a competent, caring, low cost, family organization with their own dental laboratory.

On January 19, we headed for the big annual RV show in **Quartzsite**, Arizona. What fun that was. We dry camped within walking distance of the show with our Redding, California RV friends, **Jerry and Judy**, and also with our United Kingdom friends, **Dave and Isobel**. In addition, we were able to hook up with **Robert and Natalia** from Chico, California, and **Earl and Virginia** from Sonora, California. The Quartzsite show has a strange magic to it. No matter what your intentions, you buy stuff in Quartzsite. You will find bargains for things that you didn't know existed and didn't know you needed. It's very addictive, much like shopping in Mexico. The little town has less than 4,000 residents but approximately 1.5 million show up in RVs for the winter shows. There are rigs camped out in the desert for 20 miles in all directions!



The main tent at the show can be a little crowded the first few days.



This is a very small sample of the RVs visiting the annual Quartzsite RV show.

At the show last year, we looked at and drooled over, a large automatic satellite dish for our roof (Motosat Datastorm F2) that would allow us to get on the Internet from almost anywhere in North America. With the proper software, it would also allow us to have telephone service. Wow, we could travel wherever we wanted and still do business. It seemed almost perfect except for the cost: \$9,000 installed and \$200 a month service charge. We thought, well maybe some day, and so we have been saving room on the roof. This year, we found that prices have dropped \$1,000 and then we found a guy who would install it for \$7,200. Well, that was tempting except for the fact that we didn't have \$7,200. Nevertheless, we invited him to come out where we were camped and look at our motorhome to see if it was at all possible. Sure enough, his truck showed up after work on Sunday and after crawling around on our roof making careful measurements, he concluded that it could be done and that we had just barely enough room. Yeah we had an extra half inch on each end and about one inch on each side. Sure enough, he said he could do it almost immediately at night after the show closed. We 'fessed up that we didn't have that much money, but he wasn't deterred as he said he could arrange great financing. We said, yeah sure, show us. Well, his girlfriend did the financing and she was sitting out in his truck. She came in, used our computer, went online and arranged a \$10,000 line of credit. Oh my gosh. Fifteen minutes later we purchased our dream satellite dish with no money down. These two were really good. It was a lot like going to a timeshare presentation. **Now we can work from almost anywhere in North America!**



Motosat Datastorm F2 on the roof.

This newsletter is coming to you literally from space. We send our information up to a synchronous, stationary, orbiting satellite and then the satellite beams it down to a conventional Internet provider who forwards it on to you in the normal way. We don't need a phone line for any part of it. If we have a clear shot at the southern sky we can get online at speeds way above what we used to have via cell phone or aircard. We believe we have the perfect hardware for our needs, but we still don't know enough to be sure that we have the right software and the right Internet provider. As a side benefit, it's easy to find our motorhome in a park. When the dish is up, it's huge. It's more than three feet in diameter and sticks up about four feet above the roof. During the day, our motorhome looks like a NASA space station. When the unit is turned on, the dish is illuminated by six blue led lights. Hey, we're really easy to find at night. We are the motorhome with the big blue moon. Happily, the whole thing is only 12 inches high when it's down. Talk about convenience. We push one button and it lifts itself up, turns around, and automatically finds the satellite. Push another button and it folds up and stows itself ready for travel. There won't be any more toys on the roof for us. With two air conditioners, two vents, one skylight, an automatic satellite dome for TV, a regular TV antenna, six solar panels, and this monster dish, the roof is full. But now it's time to move on.

On February 7, we leave the beauty of the Colorado River and move to Gila Bend, Arizona. We're going to spend four days with a couple hundred other 2-way satellite users. Hopefully, we'll meet some people who know a lot more about Internet from space than we do.

It's time to sign off. This travelogue is getting much too long and our income tax preparation and life insurance annuity businesses are in full swing and need our attention.

If you want fast and professional income tax preparation right now, call us today.

If you would like to learn more about protecting and preserving your assets, while earning 8 to 12%, tax deferred, with liquidity, and superb safety, call us today. We educate, we don't sell. We are rapidly becoming known as, "The Safe Money People."

So, until next time, home is where you park it.

Chuck & Donna Cole
(530) 524-5020