

Dear Friends and Relatives,

Greetings from **Redding**, California.

We are back at **Green Acres RV Park** in Redding doing our third tour of duty as park hosts. It's nice to be settled down for awhile in familiar surroundings. Redding and the park are spectacularly beautiful this time of year. The trees are fully leafed out, the flowers are blooming, and the lawns are beautiful. We believe that this is the nicest and most economical park in Redding. If you'd like to visit here, the park phone number is (800) 891-6777.



Waterfall and Koi pond at Green Acres RV Park.

Well, we are still playing catch up with this newsletter, so let's take a look at some of the places we have been between Columbus, New Mexico and Redding.

Silver City, New Mexico.

While we were in Deming, New Mexico, we decided to take a one day motorcycle ride up into the mountains to see Silver City, New Mexico. We went there to visit the old section of town which has lots of interesting mining history. Silver City is located in the southwestern corner of the state of New Mexico, and is often called the gateway to the Gila Wilderness. At 5900 feet, Silver City has a mild climate with 14-15" of rain and 8-12" of snow per year. Silver City is a multicultural town of 10,500 and features outdoor activities, a thriving arts community and Historic Downtown, as well as a university and regional medical center. Silver City is close to several metropolitan areas -- Las Cruces, NM (110 miles), El Paso, TX (150 miles), Tucson, AZ (200 miles), and Albuquerque, NM (285 miles). If you're near Silver City, we recommend it as a day trip. The main street

of Old Town has a must visit gelato ice cream store.

Pinos Altos, New Mexico.

Just a few miles above Silver City and on the way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings, is the small, charming town of Pinos Altos. We liked it a lot and could easily imagine living there. If you're going to see the Gila Cliff Dwellings (and you should) via Silver City, then drop in and see Pinos Altos which is only a half block out of your way.



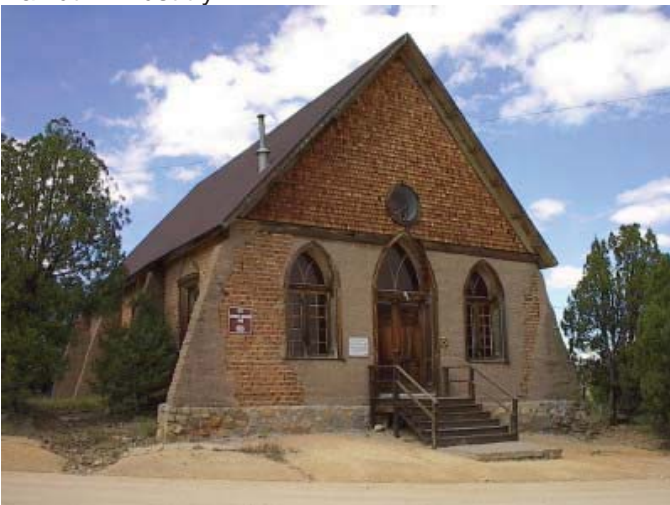
Pinos Altos Museum.

The historical museum is from the 1860s. It is housed in a log cabin that once served as the first school house in Grant County, and the museum houses a great collection of mining artifacts and historic memorabilia.



Pinos Altos Ice Cream Parlor.

Located on the corner of the town's only main intersection, the Pinos Altos Ice Cream Parlor and Cafe also houses the Post Office and a gift shop. It is the very heart of this historic gold-mining town. Open Mondays through Saturdays from 10:00 am through 6:00 pm, the Ice Cream Parlor and Cafe offers delicious home-made cakes, brownies and cookies. You've never had better sweets or ice cream! Ten ice cream flavors are offered year round, including a fantastic black walnut. A must try!



Hearst Church, Pinos Altos.

Featured in many "ghost town" books, the Hearst Church is a popular stopping place for tourists. It was dedicated on May 18, 1898. The building construction was financed by contributions from Pinos Altos residents, along with a sizable donation from Mrs. Phoebe Hearst. Mrs. Hearst was the widow of U. S. Senator George Hearst of California. Her son was newspaper publisher **William Randolph Hearst**. Prior to going to California, Senator George Hearst was successful in the mining industry in Pinos Altos. Out of gratitude for the wealth which the Hearsts derived from the Pinos Altos mines, Mrs. Hearst contributed generously to the church building, with the stipulation that the church contain a reading room for use by the miners. This was accomplished by using curtains to separate the reading room from the sanctuary. Of particular interest are the stained glass windows, the high wooden ceiling and the beam construction. On exhibit is an antique glass-sided hearse, used in Las Cruces from 1902 to 1912. It is said to have been **used at the funeral of Pat Garrett, the sheriff who shot Billy the Kid**.

City of Rocks State Park, New Mexico.

At least fifty thousand people a year visit southeast New Mexico's City of Rocks State Park, located about mid-way between Deming and Silver City. The exotic collection of volcanic "art," set in the middle of a grass plain, was formed by a huge explosion called the Kneeling Nun eruption about thirty four million years ago.



City of Rocks State Park.

This is a small state park, but very unique. It has a few RV spaces and some incredibly nice tent camping spots in and among the rocks. The climate is basically high desert at about 5,200 feet. If you're traveling between Deming and Silver City, don't miss the City of Rocks as it is only a few miles off the highway.

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument.

After our one day motorcycle trip to Silver City, Pinos Altos, and City of Rocks, we returned to the Escapees RV park in Deming. Happily, we got to know **Bob and Macey** who had a four passenger pickup and wanted to see Gila Cliff Dwellings. We were delighted to go with them as it would have been a long and difficult trip on our small motorcycle. The four of us left Deming early in the morning and headed for Silver City for breakfast. After breakfast, we headed for Gila Cliff Dwellings. The cliff dwellings are only about 44 miles from Silver City via state highway 15. Hey, that couldn't take more than an hour, could it? Wrong! Better allow 2 to 2-1/2 hours. The road is beautiful, but very narrow and very winding.



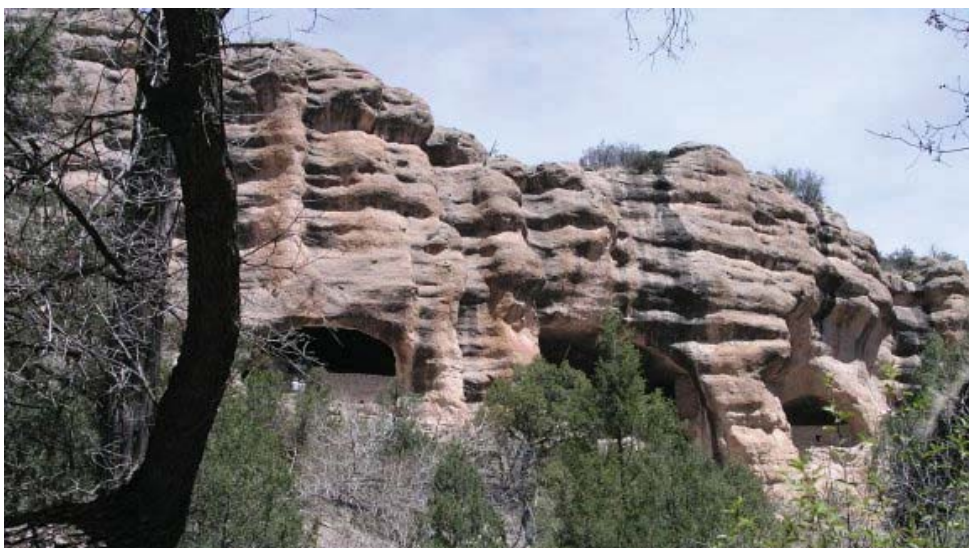
Chuck and Donna on the way to Gila Cliff Dwellings.

The picture above is Chuck and Donna at one of the beautiful overlooks along highway 15 heading toward Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. The road goes down through beautiful wooded valleys, up to high peaks and back down into the valleys. Just getting to Gila Cliff Dwellings is an adventure in itself. This remote area is home to the endangered and protected Mexican Grey Wolf. Only about the size of a small German Shepherd, you would be very lucky to see one of these elusive creatures in the wild.

The monument lies at the edge of the Gila Wilderness, the nation's first designated wilderness area. This designation means that the wilderness character of the area will not be altered by the intrusion of roads or other evidence of human presence. The monument includes a Visitors Center and a Contact Station (at the entry to the dwellings themselves).

The park offers a glimpses of the homes and lives of the **Mogollon Indians** who lived there from the late 1270s through the early 1300s. The surroundings probably look today very much like they did when the cliff dwellings were inhabited. Archeologists have identified 46 rooms at the Gila Cliff Dwellings.

If you have the chance, don't miss the Cliff Dwellings. It is an extremely interesting day. We were in total awe upon seeing these very elaborate, hand built structures on the side of a cliff.



First view of the Cliff Dwellings as you hike up a very narrow canyon.

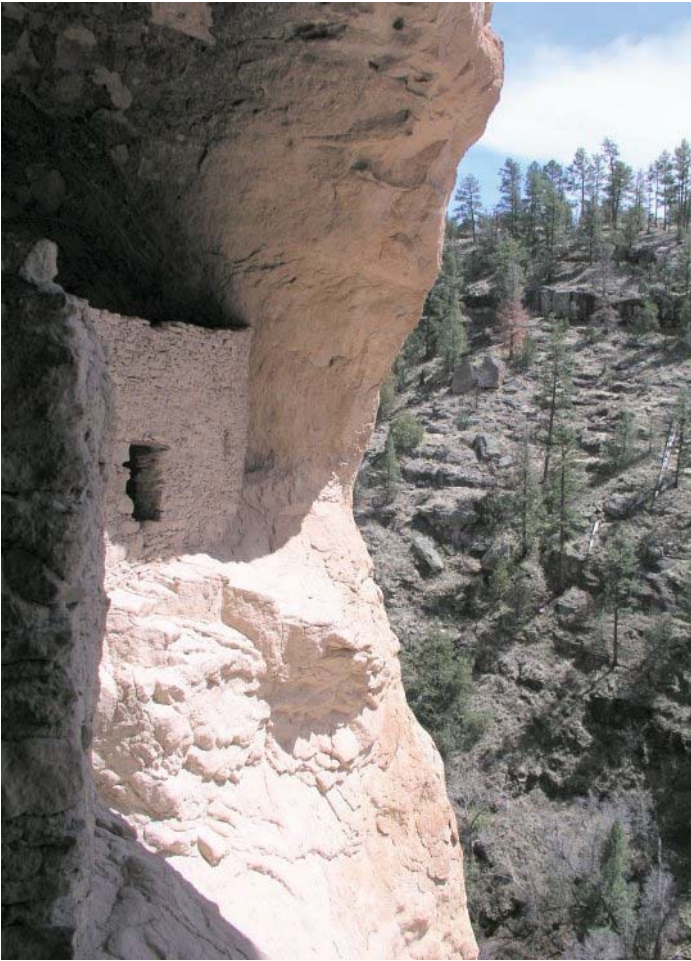
To see the Cliff Dwellings, you must hike a one mile loop trail from the parking lot. It doesn't sound like much, but it will take you at least an hour. Bring water and wear good shoes. Remember that you are hiking at an elevation of about 5,700 feet.



One of the larger rooms.



View looking out at the narrow access canyon.



One of the smaller rooms.

The Cliff Dwellings are about 180 feet above the canyon floor. There are seven natural caves in the cliff and five of them contain rooms that were built with walls of flat stones mortared together with mud. Probably not more than 10 to 15 families lived in the cliff dwellings at any one time, and the rooms were used for about one generation. No one knows why these people left or where they went.



Chuck and Macey.

It was a very pleasant surprise to learn that we could actually go into the rooms and climb up and down the access ladders. All in all, it was an interesting, informative, and awe inspiring day. If you're afraid of heights, the narrow trail along the side of the cliff is particularly awe inspiring. When you visit the Cliff Dwellings, bring a picnic lunch and lots of water.

The four of us left the cliff dwellings and took an alternate route back to Deming so that we could see the **Mimbres Valley**. It was a long day of driving and hiking and we topped it off with a good dinner at the **Rancher's Grill** in Deming. Sore legs and vivid memories were the highlights of the next day.

Until next time, home is where you park it.

Chuck & Donna
(530) 524-5020