



Feliz Navidad

Gran Escape #72 (Kino Bay, MX)

21 de diciembre de 2008

Estimados amigos,

Saludos de Bahía de Kino, Sonora, Mexico.

As you can see, we did indeed, make it to our **Western Horizons RV Resort in Kino Bay, Mexico**. The drive from **Yuma**, Arizona was quite long as we took the long way, crossing the border at **Sonoyta** in order to avoid crossing at Nogales. You may recall that we were nervous about Nogales because of the war between the police and the drug lords. Twenty-two killings in about two weeks ought to make anyone with sense nervous. So, we left Yuma on December 15 and drove straight through to **Organ Pipe National Monument** where we met our RV friends, **Jim and Peggy**. Early on the morning of December 17, both of our motorhomes headed for Mexico. Crossing the border at Sonoyta is extremely easy and fast, but not as safe as we had expected. Some days before, the bad guys had driven by a Mexican cafe and sprayed 500 rounds through the front window at police having breakfast. Two officers and a waitress were killed. We went through the border easily and just kept driving. We had no intention of stopping until we were at least 100 miles south of the border. All of the problems in Mexico seem to be confined to the border towns.

Our plan was to make it to our RV park in one day. That turned out to be a bad plan. We crossed the border at 8 a.m. and did not make it to Kino Bay until about 4:30. Then, thanks to a road construction detour, we got lost and it took us another 15 minutes to get through **Old Kino** and 15 minutes more to get through **New Kino**. We finally found the dirt road leading from New Kino to the Western Horizons park. The park instructions say that if you haven't arrived at the turn-off by 4 in the afternoon, then give up and continue on the next day. They lock the gates at the park at 5:30 and the road is so bad it takes 1-1/2 hours to drive the 12 miles. Well, we didn't believe it could really be that bad, but on the other hand, we were exhausted and there was a convenient little RV park right at the junction. So we pulled into **El Cactus RV Park** and spent the night. Now that was a really good decision. Yep, the next day it really did take 1-1/2 hours to drive 12 miles of rutted, wash board, dirt road. And, the first gate you come to is 2.2 miles from the RV park so finding it locked would be very, very bad.



Our motorhome on a good section of the bad road from New Kino to the WHR RV park.

Let's back up and deal with the basics. Where is Kino Bay? It's on the mainland side of the **Sea of Cortez**, located 68 miles west of **Hermosillo**. It is a village of approximately 5,000 people and has one of the most beautiful beaches in the state of Sonora. Eight miles of white sand beach, good fishing, and a relaxed atmosphere, make Kino Bay an interesting vacation spot.

On the map below, you can see Hermosillo (red star) directly below Nogales via Mexico Hwy 15. So, if you are going to Kino Bay via Tucson, then Nogales is the most straightforward route. On the other hand, if you're coming from Yuma, it makes more sense to take U.S. I-8 to Gila Bend and then go south on U.S. Hwy 85 to Sonoyta. From Sonoyta, take Mexico Hwy 2 to Santa Ana and then pick up Hwy 15 south. Someday, it may make sense to pick up Hwy 2 directly from Yuma, but not now. Hwy 2 along the border is a white knuckle event in a motorhome. The road is narrow with very few places to turn off and has 18 wheel Mexican trucks coming the other way at very high speeds. There is often no more than two inches of clearance between the motorhome mirrors and the truck mirrors. Quite a challenge with a closing speed of 130 miles per hour.



Map of Sonora, Mexico.

In a motorhome, how long does it take to get to WHR Kino Bay? Going back, we will allow two days from the park to the Sonoyta border crossing, another day to get to Yuma, and another day to get to Palm Springs. Three brutal days to get down and four long days to get home.



Beach at Kino Bay with Tiburón Island in the background.

The next basic question is, is it worth the trip? It's probably a little too soon to know. We like to go to Mexico to experience the Mexican climate, culture, people, and food. Here at Western Horizons Kino Bay, we certainly have the climate. We are clearly in a Mexican desert on a bluff above the very beautiful Sea of Cortez. But it doesn't feel like Mexico. We are isolated from town by a difficult road through the mountains. We are parked with about 40 other Canadian and American RVers. There are no Mexicans here. No restaurants, no bars, no shops, and very few vendors. It feels more like the middle of nowhere in Arizona except for the Sea of Cortez. Most of the folks here absolutely love the place and come back for months at a time every year. They have been very hospitable and clearly want to share their love of this unique location.

A couple of nights ago, one of the old timers here stopped by and asked if we'd like to go into town with them for dinner. We said, "sure." So, **John and Jan** with a large 4 door truck, picked up us, plus Jim and Peggy, and two trucks headed for town. Both drivers had made the trip hundreds of times and knew every turn, bump, and rut. They averaged about 40 miles per hour over the same road that held our motorhomes down to around 8 miles per hour. It felt more like an off road race than a trip to dinner. But hey, we got to town in 15 minutes; alive. Dinner at **Pancho's House** was a rather casual event in an old house. The food was very good and very inexpensive. Donna and I had chimichangas and beans, and we brought our own beer since Pancho has no liquor license. Chips, salsa, and guacamole were also provided. Our total bill was 36 pesos. At the local exchange rate of 12 pesos per dollar, that means our dinners were \$1.50 each. Yay team! Now that felt like rural Mexico.

Now we'd like to make another trip to town and go out to an upscale restaurant on the beach at New Kino. We also want to find the harbor at Old Kino and buy a kilo or two of shrimp. In the meantime, we will experience everything the park has to offer.



Peg and Jim's motorhome in the foreground, Chuck and Donna's in the background.

The park is quite large, and at the moment, only has about 25% occupancy. It has 30 amp power with voltage that tends to be on the high side. Because every drop of water is trucked to the park from town, we are hooked up to metered water and entitled to use 75 liters per day, which turns out to be plenty. We can easily get along on half that much. Five gallon bottled drinking water is available for purchase in the office. We drain our grey water into a small pipe at the site. We think it just goes into the sand. Once a week, a truck comes by and pumps out the black tanks.



The pool and hot tub at the RV park.

Right next to the pool is a thatched roof building that is the clubhouse. It's rather nice, has a kitchen, and television.



WHR Kino Bay clubhouse.

The first night that we arrived in the park, there was a very nice potluck dinner with the RVers and some of the villagers and their children. The village women supplied a huge quantity of paella, which is a Mexican dish composed primarily of fish, sausage, and rice. The park and the RV community supplied a gift for every Mexican child delivered by Papa Noel (Santa Claus.) It was quite lovely and the small children were thrilled.



Papa Noel and a few of the Mexican children from Old Kino.



This child was a lot more interested in his candy cane than his gift.

Communications:

Our ability to communicate with our friends is quite limited at the moment. Our cell phones do not work here, nor can we get the Internet via our satellite dish. So our only link to the outside world is via very slow park WiFi. The park's WiFi is slow enough that we cannot use any of our Internet voice tools such as Skype or MagicJack to call anyone. If the park WiFi goes down, we will immediately leave and head back to Arizona.

Travel Plans:

We are expecting to leave the Kino Bay park on Jan. 2 and arrive at **Pilot Knob RV Resort** on the evening of Jan. 4. Jan. 5 we expect to work with our friends, **Fred and Cheryl**, and on the 6th we will go back to **Desert Pools RV Resort** in the town of **Desert Hot Springs**, near Palm Springs.

Until next time, home is where we park it.

Carlos y Doña

