

Arizona - Perfect Old Car Weather

By Lois Krupinsky

This last winter in Arizona was a busy time for us. We arrived on Thanksgiving, and after visiting with our family we immediately started refurbishing the second house we bought. We worked on the project full time and by the end of January had it back on the market. Unfortunately, it was at the end of the season in Arizona and even though we had it sold twice (both times the contract could not be completed), we will probably not sell it until we return to Arizona next fall.

Arizona has perfect old car weather. It's warm with virtually no rain. In fact, the Phoenix area was hit with a record setting drought - 145 days with no rain. Finally, it rained for a day or two, but they are still way below normal rainfall levels for the year.

We attended the Arizona Vintage Cruisers meeting every Tuesday, where breakfast and an informal meeting was followed by a cruise or activity. We enjoyed many of the tours including: a Christmas party with a gift game, Christmas carol sing-along, casino trip, dairy farm tour, junkyard tour, mining and mineral museum, copper mine tour, missile silo tour, Laughlin, NV overnight tour, and a 50s party. After most tours we stopped for lunch at a pre-planned restaurant. Eating is a prime old car activity, which sounds a lot like the Maryland clubs. We also toured an airplane museum where everyone took a bag of items to be shipped to our troops in Iraq. These were items such as socks, snacks, toiletries, etc. Everyone donated a lot of items to help support our troops.

During one of our Tuesday tours a huge rock hit the Mustang's windshield cracking the upper corner. It was quite scary since it hit on the passenger side right where I was sitting. For the first time in 30+ years we had to file a claim with J.C. Taylor Insurance. The windshield was replaced while John kept a watchful eye on the repair. All in all, we were lucky that the rock didn't come through the windshield and that there wasn't other damage to the car

Through the Vintage Cruisers, we have many friends at our home base of Fountain of the Sun. We gathered with them for a New Year's Eve Party, New Year's Day lunch, Sunday brunch and various dinners at members' homes. We always enjoy the clean-out-the-freezer parties when everyone gets ready to return to their home states.

In December, we also attended the Early Ford V-8 Arizona Chapter Christmas party. The party was well attended and

we met many of the members of Chapter 37. We also took part in our community Christmas parade. Everyone decorated their old car or golf cart and paraded through the community. Our grandchildren helped decorate our 1965 Mustang and shouted "Merry Christmas" to everyone along the parade route (*see the picture inset below*). Afterward, there were cookies to be enjoyed at the recreation building.

January is car auction month in Arizona. John attended all of them. There is the ICA, Silver, Kruse, R&M, Biltmore, and, of course, Barrett-Jackson. I went to the Barrett-Jackson auction one day only. I enjoy perusing the high-end vendors, tasting all the good food and watching the hype of the auction bidders. Cars at the Barrett-Jackson auction are always bid out-of-sight. This year's sales topped \$100 million. It's just a crazy atmosphere.

February we had visitors. Our son, Paul and his girlfriend Courtney came in from Boston. He enjoys playing golf on the many courses and they both like to escape the Northeast cold. Also, my Aunt and Uncle were in for a week. We did some sightseeing, took a trip to Sedona, and did a lot of eating out. On the way to Sedona, we visited a restaurant that is known for its homemade pies. They sell 40,000 pies per year. We enjoyed slices of pie for an after breakfast treat and bought several pies to take home.



In March our visitors were Bill and Josie O'Donnell, along with their dog

Max. It was great having them visit and we happened to have an old car get-together that evening, so Bill and Josie were able to meet many of our Arizona car friends. Of course, the hit of the party was Max and I think he enjoyed every pat he received. We also spent a weekend in Cottonwood with the V-8 Club. We had a caravan to Clyde and Gail Bangiola's beautiful home at the foot of a picturesque mountain. We attended a steam show, went to the Blazin R Ranch for dinner and a western show. Sunday, we were back at the Bangiolas for breakfast and a tour of their huge garage, then on to a friend's garage. It was a wonderful weekend.

Cruise-ins are every Friday and Saturday night. There is always an abundance of vehicles. The Saturday night of the Barrett-Jackson auction, the Scottsdale cruise-in had over 1,000 cars. Some arrived at 10 AM to pick their spot.

Add to the car activities visits with our family, sleep-overs and various activities with our grandchildren, swimming, picnics, sightseeing and traveling, and you can see that we had a very busy winter in Arizona. All too soon it came to an end and we said good-bye and headed home to Maryland. Of course, it's always good to return to our roots and to see those folks whom we had not seen since the previous fall.