



Rozyłowicz



6750 Bright View Road ** Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005
Voice: 505.647.5834 ** FAX: 505.647.5835 ** e-mail: edward@rozyłowicz.com

Feliz Navidad - Feliz Año Nuevo y Buena Suerte from Dolores and Ed. Before we proceed, let us assure you that this newsletter is only the second and the LAST newsletter you will receive from us. Not that we don't like to write lengthy stories about our adventures here in the desert, but we feel that long, winded and interminable newsletters do not replace personal notes, card and even telephone calls. However, because of our retirement last year to the land of chips and salsa we felt that perhaps we could update you on our transition from being working stiffs to the re-settled nomads of the desert ... a sort of "state of the retirement". Have we been disappointed in our move here? Are we eating chile three times a day? Are we wearing serapes?

Where shall we begin? Well for one ... 2000 was a very good year for us. We will not tell you where we've been, what we've seen or done ... or any such thing ... we will discuss only on what we've experienced here in New Mexico and Las Cruces, our new home. Maybe when we're finished you might be inclined to come and visit us. **Warning -- when traveling in the New Mexico desert, carry plenty of water, snakebite kit and know a little (pokito) Spanish.**



(↑ Las Cruces at daybreak – February 2000) The American Southwest is a jewel of contrasts ... New Mexico is a paradise ... Las Cruces is the place. No matter what the pundits say about New Mexico being a backwater state (poverty, income level, medical), it is a wonderful and delightful place to retire to. Cost of living is below national average ... crime is no worse or better than anyplace else (Ed knows – he served 4-months on a jury, already). People are friendly (so many "excuse me", "thank you", "may I help you") that it took a while to understand that this is norm here. Nearly everything one needs for the



home is available here ... close and convenient. And the climate? Our spring is WINDY ... summer is HOT ... and the rest of the year is delightful. In a nutshell, it beats blizzards in the winter, deluges in the spring and summers that are hot and steamy. There ... we got that out of the way. On balance, we have not been disappointed in our decision. We have seen ... rattlesnakes (no) ... black widow spiders (yes) ... tarantulas (yes) ... scorpions (yes) ... and that's just in our house (we have it sprayed monthly). We even have a local chaparral (➔) bird (roadrunner) that visits us nearly daily. And the sunrises (above) and sunsets in this part of the world... they are breathtaking. Snow? Yes we do get some, but only on the mountains. The day after Christmas (1999) we greeted the morning with the Organ Mountains (←) offering up this view.



New Mexico is a place of open spaces ... lots of open spaces. You could drive for miles upon miles in the backcountry, seeing virtually no other car, with only the asphalt in front of you and views of creosote and mesquite bushes, cactus, cattle and mountains to either side. Some unsophisticated people call this boring and desolate ... we New Mexican call it solitude and serenity. After one has traveled some time on the byways of this vast state, this "openness" takes on a magical aura ... taking in and enjoying the many vistas that beckon you to "pull over". Trust us, the more time one spends in this open backcountry the more one wants to get away from the trappings of city living and savor the many natural offerings this state presents.

Still not convinced? Within 3 hours of Las Cruces there are enough leisure and "get away" spots to keep one busy for a full year. National forests, ghost and mining towns, national monuments, state parks, fishing, hiking, picnicking, etc. that if you took in one per week, at the end of the year you would still not visit them all. Opportunities abound in this "land of enchantment". And all of them are uncrowded, even in the peak of tourist season (winter). Our roads are excellent, even back county roads, and well maintained. By the way, when everyone else was paying up to \$2.10/gal for gas nationwide, here we paid no more than \$1.45/gal. What can be said, New Mexico is a bargain.

Las Cruces ... ah, what a city. By any definition it is a cosmopolitan city ... culture, education, leisure, dining, entertainment, it has it all. This is not a primitive outpost in the desert; it is a modern metropolis (2nd largest in state). With an educational center (New Mexico State University) we have many opportunities to attend sporting venues (football, basketball) with tickets readily available. The NMSU music department sponsors great concerts. The Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra is nationally renowned and puts on dazzling performances. The Pan Am Center hosts an annual Mariachi Conference and Concert ... wonderful show. We have film festivals (a recent film was in Mexican Mayan dialogue with English subtitles - superb), wine festivals (New Mexico wine is excellent - on par with California wines) and the Las Cruces Whole Enchilada Festival (building & eating the world's largest flat enchilada ➔). We have the State Fair and Rodeo nearby and a variety of theater and playhouse productions (musicals and well-known plays). We have libraries, cultural centers, arts centers, museums and galleries. In short ... we lack for nothing in Las Cruces. And if there is something that is not here ... El Paso is only a 48-mile drive down I-10. To date we have sampled all of the noted events and have not been disappointed.



As for shopping, people envision that we shop at the local "Trading Post", where foodstuffs are displayed in oak-barrels and meat has to be butchered and cooked the same day because of no refrigeration. No so. Whatever is available where you shop ... is practically available here. Our stores are modern,

numerous and the variety is wide. From large supermarkets to specialty shops to home centers to Sears, we have it all. We can't think of any store that you may have that we don't have. True, some items may not be available here but the local cuisine is more than adequate to make up that shortfall.

Las Cruces is growing. Fortunately for us it's growing on the eastern side (the business side) of the valley (we're on the western side). The infrastructure is expanding, roads and interchanges are modernized, sewer lines upgraded, roads repaved, beautification all over the place and construction prevalent. Within 10 years we foresee that Las Cruces will be a most modern city offering services and a lifestyle on the same level as any other modern American city.

Las Cruces is an easy city to navigate, allowing one to get to any place by a number of different routes. It took Dolores only a month or so to find all the stores in town and an easy way to get there. By now she knows every street, every intersection, every short cut that even a local would be hard pressed to know. Dolores learned what stores hold clearance sales, when and on what. She knows which stores have the best prices and the best selection.



As for our home ... well, a number of things have transpired since we moved in. As you may recall, our home was a new showcase home. But many things were left undone that we had to tackle. Very few things inside ... mostly exterior. The most significant work was on the landscaping. It took us four months, one landscape architect, three nurseries and four workers (not counting myself) to complete the project. We used over 215 tons of stone (example →), 600+ native plants, miles of weedblock (we do have weeds in the desert) and many yards of concrete. However, this project did reveal a few things to us ... sunburn and dehydration are serious concerns in the Southwest. Working from April through June we (carefully) obtained the nicest and deepest tan we've ever had ... (we were warned of the perils of the sun and how to



protect oneself - we followed that advice). Seeing everyone walk around with a container of bottled water is indicative of how seriously dehydration is taken. During our work outside over this four-month period it was not uncommon to drink 1½ to 3 gallons of water during the day. In the end, however, we are delighted with the results, and quite frankly, our home is even more of a showcase now (above-left).



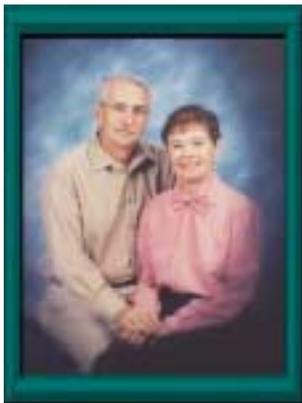
The one thing that we missed last year was not having the usual holiday's decorations ... those things that remind us of the joy of the season. Moving in the week before Christmas just did not put in into the right frame of mind to unpack and set up a Christmas tree. This year, we (Dolores) elected to go the whole nine-yards and spruce up the home (typical - Dolores thinks, Ed does). Seems sort of strange to decorate the tree, put up the decorations ... and the weather says 65-degrees ... and no snow - anywhere. But, we think we'll get used to it. Putting up luminaries always was something we wanted to do in Illinois, but the weather and trouble involved was getting in the way. Here in the Southwest, luminaries are as common as wreaths are back home. We (Dolores) elected to do the same ... and the results are striking - especially at night. Speaking of night ... we mentioned that our house is situated on a ridge on the western side of the city. Friends ... this is the view (→) we see every night, and the picture can't begin to do justice to the panorama.



Well, so much for our revelations. To date, retirement has been mostly a positive experience. Our choice of a community for relocation has been great - and is being reinforced by all the nice things we have experienced and continue to discover. Dolores has become accustomed to a regimen of shopping and visiting her mother at the assisted living center. When time allows and her mother doesn't know, we briefly escape into any number of local leisure activities ... to sample the culture and heritage of the Southwest. Las Cruces has become our playground.



For those of you who expected to read a litany of places we've been and things we've seen, don't despair, you can still get your fix here. We will not burden the rest of the folks by going into those details ... but you can visit our family website at www.rozylowicz.com and treat yourself to a travelogue of sorts. If you do, prepare yourself for an exposé of the Southwest. Only then would you be able to understand why we chose this corner of America to set roots.



As mentioned at the onset ... this is the **last** newsletter that we will send out. Some of you may be disappointed ... others relieved. But, that which we had to say has been said. We will continue to keep in touch with you and your family.

So to everyone, we extend the best of the holiday greetings ... a Merry Christmas and a Joyous and Prosperous New Year. We miss our family and friends back in Illinois and elsewhere. We think of you often and are consoled only by the fact that we can reach each other by telephone and brief notes and letters. Now that the turmoil of our relocation has been laid to rest ... we can devote ourselves to a slower-paced lifestyle and consider the many ways we can continue our contacts.

God bless you ... one and all.