

## Season's Greetings, Feliz Navidad, Merry Christmas, Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia and Happy New Year

Our heartfelt best wishes for a joyous holiday season, continued good health and prosperity in the coming year. May your celebrations this time of year be with family and friends; let us rejoice in their company and fellowship; and let us all be thankful for the gift of life and freedom. Let us not forget the less fortunate who were victimized by the many forces of nature this past year. Lastly ... let us remember the men and women in our armed forces who serve throughout the world.

This past year continued to be agreeable to the two of us as we enjoy good health and a reasonable state of mind. The encroaching "advanced age" has not dampened our enthusiasm for an active life, although at times the accumulation of minor aches and pains and simple forgetfulness makes us realize that we are no longer spry youngsters. The old rooster (Ed) and the young chick (Dolores) still manage to eke out some activities that said, "we are not ready for the rocking chairs". Ed, the "youthful geezer", continues his thrice-weekly fitness club regimen; Dolores does her tai chi and country line dancing.

It has been six years (where has the time flown) since we started calling Las Cruces our home. We continue to develop many new friendships here and can rightfully say that our "former life" up North is but a distant memory. Other than a visit by our dear friends from Tucson, this past year we had no visitors from out of state (Arizona is considered a neighbor). We extended an invitation for two brothers to visit but their schedules did not permit. So ...it has been quiet here. Summer in New Mexico was hot and at times very rainy ... most since we moved here. We had no hurricanes, no tsunamis, no blizzards and no tornadoes paying us a visit for which we are thankful. We like it that way ... quiet & uncomplicated (some say boring).

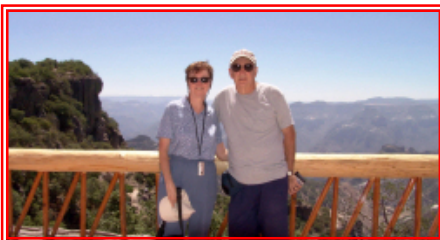
Of the many travel plans we had for this year a planned trip to Romania in late-April was canceled due to the death of our cousin Romeo Rozylowicz (Bucharest) on March 11. We did not wish to intrude on a period of mourning. We postponed our trip to later in the year. Romeo's death was particularly sad as we only located his family in the year 2000 through our genealogy research. We met him on two subsequent visits and delighted in welcoming him, his wife and 2 children, as well as another cousin (Aurelia) into our large extended family. He is missed by all and remains in our prayers.



Our wanderlust, or the itch in our feet, did not abate. We had to do something that said "adventure". We elected to head back to Europe ... to the Netherlands (Holland). Airfare was low; the season for tulips and hyacinths was in full glory and the potential for a 3-week, self-drive, border-to-border exploration was enticing. Doing our research beforehand, we departed in late-April. We spent 5 days in Amsterdam before heading into the interior. We saw enough windmills, manor houses, fortresses and canals in small villages to satisfy our curiosity. A visit to the North Sea, The Hague and City of Delft rounded out the sightseeing. The Gardens of Keukenhof was the magical moment where everything came together. Far and wide, tulips of every imaginable color and variety lay before us.



Hyacinths and daffodils greeted us at every turn. A photographer's dream trip this was ... one we will long remember, especially Queen's Day in Amsterdam (a big 2-day country-wide wild party).



No sooner did we return from Holland than friends here in Las Cruces proposed that we take on a short trip to the Copper Canyon (Barrancas del Cobre) in Chihuahua, Mexico. We would visit San Carlos and Bahia Kino on the Sea of Cortez. Never ones to shy away from an adventure, and as tired as we were, we agreed to go.



Our 2-SUV caravan left for the canyon (larger than our USA Grand Canyon) in late May. We spent 10 days exploring places that few tourists visit, seeing the local indigenous Indians up close and partaking of local food and drink (food was OK, rum and "cerveza" (beer) were great). Later, we tried deep-sea fishing, met with friends from Las Cruces that will move to San Carlos and, to top it off, swam in the Sea of Cortez. Good trip spent with good friends ... worth the added tiredness. But it was time to recoup our strength ... the summer was spent resting and recovering and intermingled with making upgrades to our house and property.

In September we embarked on the previously postponed trip to Romania for three-weeks of visiting family, going to a wedding and eco-touring. We spent time with cousin Romeo's family, catching up on family matters, and rekindling many fond memories of his life. We were fêted to wonderful ethnic home-cooked meals. This was a happy, but also somber, reunion. Cousins Ioana and Aurelia (and Nicu) made us feel welcomed and treated us, as is so typical in Eastern Europe, with warm and gracious hospitality. We took the opportunity to visit Romeo's graveside later in the trip.



After a brief stay in Bucharest we next spent a long weekend at the Mamaia Resort, Constanta on the Black Sea coast (right). We were invited to a Romanian wedding of a couple we met a few years ago.



The wedding (left) was a 2-day, non-stop celebration of a union, interlaced with eating and drinking of monumental proportions. We got to participate in street dancing, an Orthodox Church service, then finally an all-night reception ... an unbelievable experience. WOW !!!!



With no time to rest after the wedding we embarked (guided and driven by cousin Laurentiu) on a combined 2-week eco-tour of Romania before returning to Bucharest. First we explored the Danube Delta (right, a world heritage site) on the Black Sea. There, we also visited monasteries, Roman and Greek ruins, medieval fortresses, fishing villages, and caves (left). The delta boat tours were marvelous - informative and entertaining.



This was followed by a visit to the Iron Gates Natural Park on the Danube in southwestern Romania, visiting Czech mountain villages, more monasteries, a Roman Spa complex, and mid-sized cities with marvelous late-1800s architecture. Believe it, we also did some radio tracking of turtles for Laurentiu's University/EU research project. Our best sojourn to Romania to date. Romania has much to offer visitors ... a beautiful country.



Self guided (Laurentiu drove over 3,000 kilometers), we hiked and explored many not-so-typical attractions that very few foreigners' experience. We came back with many fond memories (8 DVDs worth). Weather was a big disappointment as it rained often and hard ... Romania suffered severe flooding in 2005 with heavy losses in farmland, roads and bridges. Still, on the days when the sun shone brightly it was eco-touring at its best. The two images here are of Dolores and Ed (left) and Dolores and cousin Laurentiu (right) on a Danube Gorge overlook.



After our return it was time to rest for the balance of 2005. As one gets older it takes longer to recover from jet lag and the frenetic pace of touring. Still, there is that nagging itch in our feet that reminds us of adventures to come. Stay tuned .....

Well, so much for the capsulated 2005 news from this corner of the Rozylowicz family. We consider ourselves fortunate to live in New Mexico. We are further blessed with continued good health and many wonderful friends. We miss any contacts with members of our extended (and often very busy) family that is spread all over the States, parts of Europe and in the military, but are pleased to know that all is well with them. Again, we wish all of you our best wishes for a peaceful and spiritual holiday. Please ... don't be a stranger; write, call or e-mail us at your convenience. Let us know what is happening in your family.

Love ... Dee and Ed