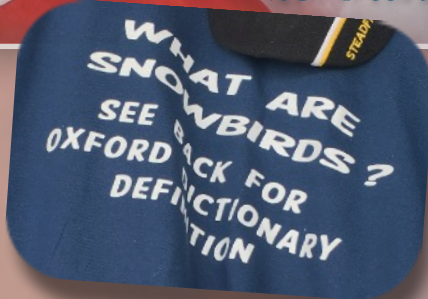


## SNOWBIRDS OUR WINTER MONTH IN THE DESERT

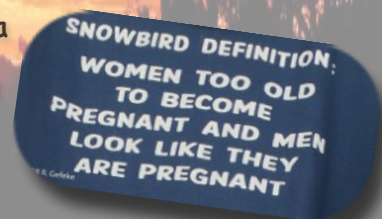


"Snowbird" is the North American term for a person who comes from the northern parts of the United States and Canada and watches friends and family shoveling snow or draining floodwater out of basements, while wearing t-shirt and shorts and drinking margaritas! Some areas are between December and March firmly in the hands of those migratory birds. Several areas in Florida, Texas and Arizona have huge camping areas that appear seasonally and then disappear in the spring.

Quartzsite, located in southwestern Arizona, is referred as a "white city", because from a bird's eye view, thousands of motorhomes in winter cover the landscape in white. In summer, at temperatures well over 110 F, everything is gone and the town resembles more than a ghost town.



We are talking about more than 35,000 caravans and mobile homes at any given day that spend the winter months of December to March in this desert town! People come from all walks of life: poor and rich, young and old, Canadians, Americans, Europeans ... Well, and Beth, Rudy and Noah. For years, friends had told us about this "happening" - but we always refused. Our ALFA Club, which we had so much fun with at the Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, offered a rally in the desert this year. Party, technical support and more party were promised. Once again dry camping for 12 days without water, electricity and sewage? Well, at least we are not alone and party always sounds like fun!





Not every Snowbird is prepared to sacrifice comfort in this Arizona desert. For those mostly financially independent clients there are also campsites or extra residential areas:



out of our budget



sweet



our first camper, back in 1984



VW Beatle 4x4





*photo by Drew Miller*

The surrounding area of Quartzsite is public land. The terrain is flat and has solid ground - important for our 15to motorhomes !! There are a few miles away water points and a sewage dump. Also, the garbage is picked up at collection points. Some campers spend months out here. You only pay \$40 for 14 days. That should be enough for us.



*photo by Drew Miller*



*photo by Drew Miller*

In addition to individual vehicles, families and friends, groups of individual manufacturers brands, Canadians, jeep and off-road enthusiasts or participants of guided RV tours from Germany meet here every year! Highlight are two weeks at the end of January, when the city is bursting: The annual minerals, gemstone and motorhome fair determines the daily routine. More than 1800 dealers are trying to sell you things that you did not know, that you do not need and that you have no money for. From a \$ 690,000 motorhome to LED toilet bowl lighting activated by a acoustic sensor!! We went several times and spend a lot!!!! It was real fun and we loved it!





Our site a few miles outside the city. With a total of 44 other ALFA's and some other brands we spent almost 14 days in the Sonora desert.





Photo by David R Volker







An important part of those 14 days was the daily exchange of views on technical issues. Everyone helped everyone. Sometimes with tips and advice, sometimes with direct technical assistance. So, our white Berta was equipped in no time with her first solar cells. My dear friend Dale just set them up right away! I think, the best bottle of tequila I ever invested! Thank you Dale! In general, the helpfulness among each other was simply phenomenal. With usual hourly wages of over \$ 150 in motor home workshops around the US, such meetings are simply priceless. I learned a lot and saved money. And what is better than investing that in Tequila?



Breakfast, happy hour and supper/dinner were usually taken together around the large fireplace. When 80 campers from 3 nations come together, there are simply fantastic buffets, drinks and cocktails. Once again, Beate and I got to meet great people from all parts of North America. In the future, we will have attractive points of contact in the USA and Canada. And Germans will take this advantage. Be sure and beware!







No commercial campground offers so much breathtaking nature as a site in the middle of the wilderness. This is our world that we just love! Thanks to the new solar system, we will now more often go "dry" into nature.







Idea & Photo by David R Volker

The highlight was the inauguration of a quartz logotype, that in the future, as we all hope, will be able to see and identify on Google Earth.







Of course, Surprise is always on our itinerary while in Arizona. Jeannie, Detlef and Schatzi are now part of our family. Once again we enjoyed their grandiose hospitality. In addition to the obligatory sausages-making-sessions and our joint cooking orgies, we did a few joint tours in the surrounding area, went to the cinema and an open air concert.



Thanks for those nice days!





What a gift  
to be grandpa & grandma!



Lillien



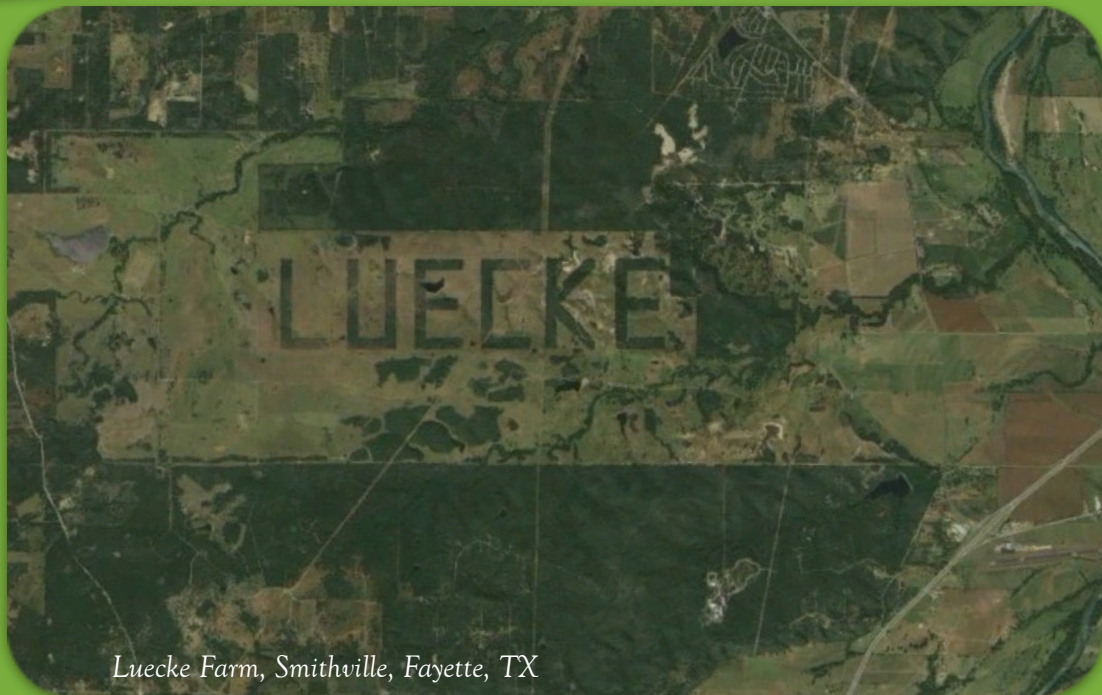


## first days in January

That we have a preference to stay in state parks is certainly no secret. Only there we are in the middle of nature, have plenty of space and are mostly completely undisturbed. As far as possible, we use such places for our stops. But winter this year has really caught the south of the US. So we had to experience daytime freeze for a couple of days in the south of Luisiana!



We had not booked that way.  
So - back down to Arizona!



*Luecke Farm, Smithville, Fayette, TX*

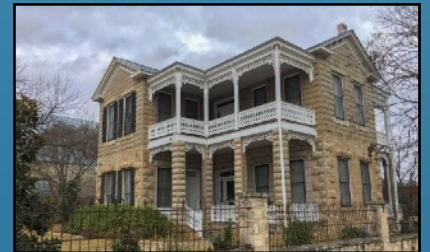
On our way back to Texas we passed the Luecke Farm. To be seen only from the air: the last name of the local landowner Jimmie Luecke. Biggest signature of the world with 3 miles length !!! (Since everything in Texas is indeed bigger.) Originally created out of simple egocentrism, the huge "gap" in the eastern Texas forest proved to be very useful, even unintentional, since NASA has been using the lettering to adjust their cameras ever since! BTW: LUECKE means "gap" in German!





## Fredericksburg, Texas

For Beth and me Fredericksburg is the gem in the Hill Country and therefore on our return from Mississippi we had to stop for a few days.







Congratulations

By far the youngest guest in our motorhome was **Lea Josephin** when she visited us just 3 days young together with her proud brother and parents!



great evening with Elia, Ingo and Ricky

Visit  
EL PASO



part of our family: Renate und Heinz



Already for the third time we happen to meet this couple from Vermont by accident!  
What a small world! Finally we trade  
E-mail and phone numbers!



Also, by coincidence, we find that good friends live only a few miles from our route away. How wonderful when you are be  
greeted warmly and treated royally.  
RV'er are just great people.



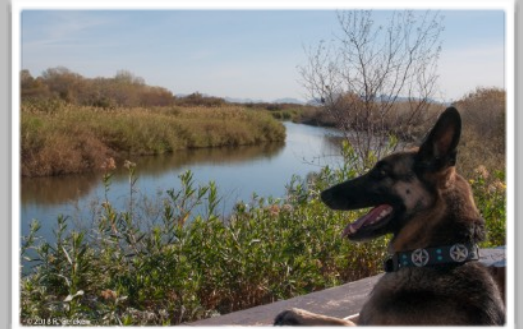
Oh yes, we bought a new car. Our Jeep WRANGLER has been loyal to us for 7 years, taking us to breathtaking places and was a real experience especially when "topless". Over the years however, the lack of space and the high running noise has become uncomfortable for us. When friend Heinz offered us his jeep LIBERTY, we did not wait. Also a 4x4, we enjoy the comfort of a closed vehicle, the lower consumption and the second row of seats.



For a few weeks we have been in Yuma, southwest Arizona. We have a parking space on a vacant private lot, which we share with another ALFA owner. Water, electricity, sewage and postal address for Amazon & Co. for little money. Hurray-we love it! The weather is just great with 55° - 85° F during the day and always blue sky. There is so much to see and do in the surrounding area that we think we can spend the next winter here. Let's see, if we find a nice spot for us.



Colorado River, Yuma, Arizona



Only a small amount of water makes it down the Colorado to Yuma. Hard to believe that about 100 years ago, steamboats from San Francisco arrived here via Mexico. For example Fort Bliss in Texas was supplied with provisions, ammunition and cloth from here! Now, thanks to the precious water, lettuce heads grow year-round up to the horizon.





To get from San Diego to Yuma and Phoenix in 1915, you had to cross the high Imperial sand dunes on wooden planks for about 6 miles. Even today, parts of this road are visible.



Yuma  
ARIZONA



we love old cars



and sunsets





We join the 10,000 tourists who visit the nearby border village Los Algodones every day. Approximately 400 dentists' practices, 200 opticians and countless pharmacies are wooing for the favor of the North American clientele, who pay more than 75% less here than at home. Dentist next to dentist – just awesome. In between, of course, stalls selling tacos, souvenirs and leather goods. We also need medication: without a prescription I get the same tablets 75% cheaper than in the US! I used to get candy in the pharmacy 50 years ago as a thank you. Today, the pharmacist gave me two Viagra !! She must knew well that tomorrow we have our 34th wedding anniversary! Viva Mexico!





We will unsettle Arizona and Southern California until mid-April. Then we plan to spend the month of May in Colorado and Nebraska before returning to the beloved Black Hills of South Dakota at the beginning of June. At the end of summer, we may want to tackle the east coast. But as always with us: everything is in jello!

Have a good time, stay healthy and enjoy every day!

[gefeke@freenet.de](mailto:gefeke@freenet.de)

(915) 667 - 0501 or (915) 667 - 0595

[Facebook](#)

Whatsapp

[skype](#)

That's it for today.

We are 942 days on the road.

*See Ya*

*Rüdiger, Beth and Noah*

