



THE DESERT 411

Dietrich Family Newsletter



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

So many events have happened in the past few weeks making it all seem surreal. Our family was finally united in early June of this year and we've been truly blessed. Though this newsletter is actually a class project it creates an opportunity to share some news with our family and friends. The layout and contents of this experiment are extremely primitive but hopefully a laugh or two will result from the reading. This is quite a departure for me so here goes nothing.

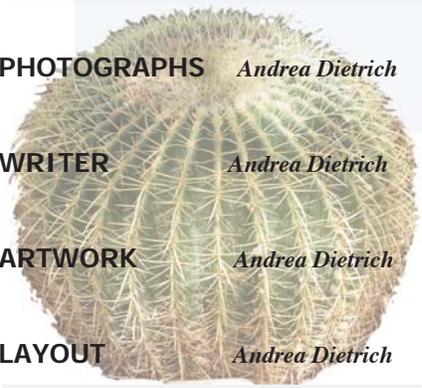
I found a great variety of desert plants and discovered that pistachio trees were included on the list of desert friendly vegetation. My knowledge of desert plants is still very limited but I'm glad to know that desert wildlife need not be void of color. In fact, one of my favorite discoveries was the "Red Bird-of-Paradise" (pictured). This amazing flaming flower is a member of the pea family and apparently not related to the tropical Bird-of-Paradise. I imagine I will incorporate this lovely flaming plant in my grand yard plan.

FAMILY HAPPENINGS

This will be the first summer that Sam will spend almost entirely with his dad. Sam seems to be taking it in stride and of course it is the toughest on mom (figures). Sam has had several trips this summer including the favorite YMCA camp Lakewood where I've heard he has learned to play of all things, Cricket. Other favorite activities were riflery, archery and general goofing off. Joe has been trying his hand at landscaping and doubling as both designer and laborer. Work has begun on a retaining wall in the backyard with plans for a patio and lattice style shade cover. Joe has hinted that I am to become the horticulturalist in this project. Having no experience with desert plants I suspect I am the wrong man for the job but after a visit to the Las Vegas water district's public gardens,



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A NEW ADDITION TO THE FAMILY

After extensive research and careful consideration we now welcome “Scout” the Welsh Terrier to our humble family. Our furry family member was born



on June 13th this year to a breeder located in (no kidding) Licking, Missouri. She will grow to a mighty 20ish pounds and has already proved to be a mighty spirit.

She enjoys following us around chewing on things. We have agreed she closely resembles an Ewok, the furry characters featured in one of the Star Wars episodes. Though far from a guard dog she manages to bark at the grass with enthusiasm. She enjoys running and changing her direction without cause or forethought. We have read “Puppies For Dummies” and feel no better prepared to parent this odd little furry thing. We have decided we are going to make up our own training until she’s older and past help. We have decided that Scout registers a 10 on the cute meter. This will be our first puppy and it’s like we just had a baby. Potty training is the primary goal right now. We have a lot to learn about rearing puppies but we’ve already consulted the internet on various topics and are glad to see to postings from other people just as clueless as we are.



OUR FIRST VISITORS

We have had our first visitors from St. Louis. Rich and Amy Kim visited Las Vegas on a mission to move here. Both had successful job interviews and are now looking for a suitable house. While in town we took them on the short tour of the town. Rich’s favorite was the poker room at Binion’s Horse Shoe.



Amy is a registered nurse and Rich interviewed with a State Farm agent to become part of their full time staff. We will be glad to welcome them to the city when they make the move official next month. While they were in town we all decided to ride some of the thrill rides at the stratosphere casino. We were thrilled with the “Big Shot” but more like terrified with the so called “Insanity” ride. At a staggering 866 feet above the ground the ride slowly rolled out and off the edge of the tower and began to spin. At top spin the seats tilted a sickening 70 degrees downward so the rider could get a full view of the tower below and contemplate the full effect of a fall at that height. Joe took that opportunity to inform us all of the so called “Jesus Bolt”, the large bolt located in the epicenter of the ride. Our eyes were riveted to this important bolt for much of the ride. Thanks a lot Joe!



A MOVING EXPERIENCE

It's one thing to be excited about moving to a new city. It's quite another to actually move. There are people who by their very nature are accumulators. Simply put, these people "accumulate" stuff faster than other people. I am a recovering accumulator, though it's shameful to admit. So for me, moving seemed to be the great behemoth. The sorting of the junk took several weeks. We are truly grateful for the grunt labor we received from our good friends, Warren Stemme, The Felderwerth clan and the McIntyre clan. We could not have made it through the move without their selfless help and thoughtfulness. With sore muscles and stinky armpits eventually all eighty boxes or so that was a two bedroom condo were expertly packed onto our rented Penske truck and stacked like so many sardines. Though lacking in sufficient horsepower to pull the mighty load, our trusty Penske kept a slow and steady pace. Did I mention slow? As a non-truck driver, I've had very little patience for professional truckers that clog up the roads and slow things down. The irony of the situation was apparent as the truckers passed us with a looks of pity and veiled humor. Not far into our trip we stopped to get some chow at a local eatery. Along the route we found a place called "Missouri Hick" and thought it would be an appropriate parting gesture. We had our lunch atop piggy place mats and noticed the signs on the washroom doors read His'n and Hers'n. Our route took us through Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and then finally Nevada.

Passing through Oklahoma, we contemplated a highway billboard. It advertised a free 72 oz. steak offered to anyone who could eat that same size steak within an hour. It takes a special kind of person to meet that challenge. However it begs the question, would there be appetite left for the free steak? Making our way through Texas we noticed it to be flat. Flat, flat, flat. Texans should really consider buying a hill or something.



(Pictured: Sam at the Petrified Forest)

Nearing the end of our trip we decided to take a quick detour through the Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona. The park rangers eyed our truck carefully fearing we might make off with their "rocks". I guess a moving truck is not often seen there as a tourist vehicle. And certainly the large yellow truck was just a tad obvious in contrast to the subtle painted desert setting. The whole moving experience was very enlightening and soul awakening. I learned a valuable lesson. The next time I move, I'll set all my stuff on fire and just buy new stuff.



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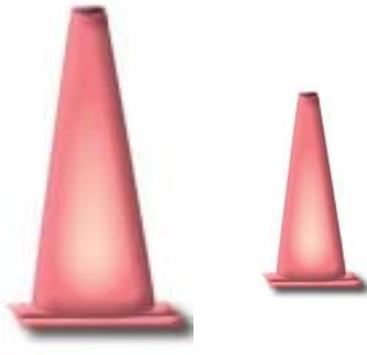
YEAH... BUT IT'S A DRY HEAT

If we happen to forget that we live in the desert we merely need to walk outside to confirm the fact. We have definitely reached the hottest days of the summer and this week we reached a record cooking temperature of 119 degrees. That means that a couple days left out in the sun and we should be ready to serve. Sensibly, families wait until after the sun goes down to play in the park and walk their dogs. It's a strange heat conscious society here. Even the local news stations make up names for things like "Car-momitor" measurements. This faux-instrument apparently measures the temperature inside the average viewer's car. Thank heaven for air conditioning!



THE WESTWARD EXPANSION.

Well folks, it's official. Like Sam and myself folks are moving to Las Vegas. Until they put up the "No Vacancy" sign I guess they'll keep coming. Estimates are that eight thousand people move to Clark County each month. With all of the people comes the continuous construction. Houses, roads, stores and gas stations are popping up over night. The state tree is now officially the orange construction cone, which apparently is growing out of control. It's wise to beware this tree. It doesn't always stay in the same place nor does it pick particularly logical places to grow. It seems to flourish without watering despite the summer heat.



So many homes are being built that one wonders if there are enough people to occupy them. Actually, there's been such a huge demand for new homes that some developers have set up lotteries for prospective homebuyers. They enter their names to see who will get what home where. Construction on the interchange of highway 95 and interstate 215 out near us has been underway for approximately the last two years and is estimated to be completed in 2007. This will be a big relief to us when it's finally completed.

THE ROAD AHEAD



We are excited about what lies ahead for our family. Joe is being courted by another engineering company, I am blessed with the opportunity to take some classes in graphic computer arts and Sam will be starting a new chapter as a student in Middle school.

I'm having a lot of fun playing around with the graphics software and hope to start a business here. Our family will be taking a trip to Hawaii at the end of August (a first for me) and we are all looking forward to that.

I am slowly getting to know the roads around here and I'm starting to feel more at home every day.

It will take some time to sort through all of the moving boxes and junk but we are pacing ourselves and taking it all in stride.

We miss our friends and Family in St. Louis but we hope they will visit us soon.

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