

NATURES TALES

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Happy New Year!

Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas are behind us, and now we start a brand new year. For some, one year just rolls around into the next. For others, it is a time to reflect on the old year and make all kinds of resolutions for the New Year. For us at Natures reflecting on 2008 brings many emotions. It was an exciting year with many changes being made to the resort, most of which were met with enthusiastic approval, and one of which was given a thumbs down by the majority of our members. However, it was generally an upbeat time of learning and listening and growing by both the members and the owners of Natures.

The down side of 2008 was being hit by Hurricane Dolly, but even that had a more positive impact than a negative one. Although we lost our fence and many of our trees were either blown over or damaged, the bright side was that we and our members suffered no major structural damage and nobody was hurt. But the true highlight of the hurricane was the love and caring shown, as well as the help and assistance given to Natures by the members. What a wonderful, exceptional Natures family we have! The owners would like to thank everyone for their concern, prayers and help during this time.

The amazing part of 2008 was that, not just during Hurricane Dolly, but throughout the whole year Natures has been blessed by the wonderful volunteering spirit that abounds here. It is this attitude that makes Natures a special place, and we thank everyone for the many things that you have done to improve the park.

Looking ahead, 2009 promises to be another exciting year. The Fun Association

has done an awesome job of providing activities and entertainment for the 2008/09 season, and they are already looking ahead to the 2009/10 season.

The owners of Natures Resort extend their best wishes to all the Natures family for peace, happiness and good health in 2009.

Christmas at Natures!

Natures takes on a special atmosphere over the Holidays. With the help of volunteers, the clubhouse is decorated at the beginning of December. This year we had Santa and his reindeer in bright, flashing lights. Green garlands adorned with red bows circled the interior walls, huge icicles hung from the chandelier and massive snowflakes caught the sunlight and sparkled in all the windows. A total of six Christmas trees completed the Clubhouse decorations. A seventh tree was placed in the library, and even the office had a garland with lights hanging around the door. With the stage set for the holidays, let the festivities begin!

It is no surprise that the caring Natures' members' first Christmas activity was to sponsor a needy family in the area to make sure that they too could enjoy a festive holiday season.

Next came our gift exchange, and that was when all the love and caring flew out of the window! Although the evening started with a few sing-along Christmas songs which gave everyone a warm, fuzzy feeling, when the gifts were opened and the gift stealing began no mercy was shown. It was an exciting, fun filled evening for everyone.

The day before Christmas Rene and Marie baked and iced the traditional Yuletide Log, and the Canadians had their Christmas Eve Celebration.

Christmas Dinner was a blast. Each table had to 'sing for their supper' before being allowed to come up to the serving counter. A very novel idea which proved to be great fun!

A huge 'Thank You' goes to everyone who helped to make this such a wonderful Christmas: John and Pat who went around the park singing Christmas Carols; the Secret Santa who has everyone guessing who he/she is; all the people who helped our needy family; those who decorated the clubhouse, who arranged and helped with the gift exchange, who hosted or helped with the Christmas dinner and everyone who decorated their lots to make the whole park look like Christmas! YOU made the difference!

January Special Events

Additional details on the January events as well as the sign up sheets are available on the bulletin board in the clubhouse.

- 1st 12 noon New Year Brunch**
Biscuits & Gravy will be provided by Karen and Mike. Please bring a dish to share. Sign up required.
- 5th 8:30 a.m. Woman's Breakfast.** Meet at the gate
- 5th 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. NR Blood Drive.**
Sign up for the appointment time of your choice. Thank you gifts – Free T Shirt and Cholesterol test.
- 6th 10 a.m. La Mexico.** There will be a talk in the clubhouse on tours and trips to Mexico. This will be very interesting for those who enjoy sightseeing but need ideas on where to go.
- 6th 5:00 p.m. Tailgate party & 7:30 p.m. Killer Bee Hockey.** This is a great way to get better seats at lower prices! Sign

up required. Questions: See Ken - Site 56.

- 11th 6:30 p.m. January Birthday & Anniversary Celebration.** Join us for birthday cake and ice cream in the clubhouse.
- 13th 8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast.** Meet at the gate.
- 17th 9:00 a.m. Members Meeting.** Please attend this important meeting. Learn about the events being planned for your entertainment. Free Coffee and Donuts
- 17th 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Dance with Rene Davis as Elvis.**
- 22nd 5:00 p.m. Spaghetti Dinner by Dave and Evie.** Sign up required.
- 24th 7 to 10 p.m. Dance with String Tim and Sharon.**
- 26th Deadline for signup and payment for CRP and AED class on February 3rd.**
- 31st Games Au Naturel at Sandpipers.**

Weekly Activities.

Aerobics:

8:00 a.m. Clubhouse Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Bicycle Rides:

9:00 a.m. Thursday. Meet at the gate. Must wear a helmet.

Billiards:

6:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Sunday.

Bingo:

6:15 p.m. Clubhouse Sunday (except second Sunday of the month)

Bowling:

9:00 a.m. Friday at the Flamingo Bowling Lanes in McAllen.

Campfire:

5:00 p.m. Friday. Bring your own hotdogs, drinks etc.

Conversational French/English

3:00 p.m. Tuesday. Clubhouse

Conversational Spanish

3:00 p.m. Wednesday. Clubhouse

Craft Time:

1:00 p.m. Friday

Euchre:

6:30 p.m. Monday

Dominoes:

6:30 p.m. Wednesday (Mexican Train)

Karaoke Jam Session:

Noon to 2 p.m. Site 59. Tuesdays

Koffee Klatch:

9:30 a.m. Site 100. Wednesday. Bring your coffee cup.

Men's Breakfast:

8:00 a.m. Every other Tuesday. Sign up required.

Petanque:

2:00 p.m. Every day.

Poker:

6:30 p.m. Tuesday

Shuffleboard:

10:00 a.m. Tuesday

Soup & Salad:

5:00 p.m. Monday. Sign up required.

Trivial Pursuit:

6:00 p.m. Thursday

Volleyball:

Check impromptu board

Water Aerobics:

9:30 a.m. Monday and Wednesday.

Western Dance Lessons:

7:00 p.m. Wednesday

Tidbits from Speckles!

Everyone is saying "Happy New Year!" I'm not sure what that means. For me every day is a "Happy New Day" which means a new opportunity to catch mice so that they don't get into your homes. I love my job! But while I'm out catching mice and other critters, I get to see and hear what is going on around the park.

- With both kitchen ovens going full blast, you should have seen all the cookies and cakes that were baked for Christmas. Everything smelled yummy!
- What a sight! The gate opened and in came a truck with ugly wooden sideboards loaded to the gills. It even had chair legs sticking out the top. I thought some Hillbillies were moving into Natures, but it was only Bill and Misty!
- Speaking of Bill, it appears that he needs driving lessons or else he was really trying to load a streetlight into the recycle trailer. The streetlight should be in the hospital. It is suffering a broken arm and a couple of broken glass thingies.
- All that hammering and banging you heard in November was Bill S building a patio roof as a surprise for Bill and Misty. It WAS a surprise! They almost fell off their hillbilly truck when they saw it!
- Joyce, Site 15 is home again and doing really well. I see her taking walks around the park and Doug is smiling again!
- You should have seen all the warm and fuzzy clothing during a few cool days in December. Some must have thought it

was cold. No one had as nice a fur coat as I do though.

- Sue – Site 69 is doing much better with her arm yet she is still not completely mobile with her arm swing. At least Stan does not look injured - yet.
- I know who the secret Santa at Natures is, but I'm not telling!
- At last Vern and Sue got their concrete on Site 42 poured, but they wouldn't let me leave a paw print either.
- I really, really miss Connie and hope that she will soon be allowed to come home soon. Richard looks so sad all the time. He misses her too. Everybody does.
- Dave & Evie's house, Site 83 looks great after being pressure washed and water sealed.

C'est tous! It's not purrrfect, but I'm trying to learn French.



WILD, WONDERFUL SAFARI

On Thursday afternoon, November 20th, forty-two NR members gathered at the gate, ready for adventure. Their destination was Rancho el Charco.

The ranch is located on the outskirts of La Joya, about a 45 minute drive west of Natures. The 150 acre ranch, purchased in 1995 by Mark Pittman and his wife Happy Arellano, is dedicated to conservation, education and the protection of the native Texas habitat.

Mule-drawn covered wagons carry visitors along rough paths through thorn scrub and mesquite trees. Perhaps this is what early pioneers to Texas faced long ago when it was still a part of Mexico!

But this small part of the public lands of Old Reynosa has now been transformed into a peaceful park. Visitors, special events and photographers are invited to make use of the Capilla San Marcos with its lovely waterfall and swinging bridge. The Gran Palapa and the Amigo Hut offer accommodations for small group events.

White tailed deer, buffalo, antelope, gemsbok and long horn cattle wander about the ranch. Birds and butterflies of all types delight the visitor and a "tree walk" of native Texas species provides an introduction to several types now almost extinct.

The restaurant, the Boca Paila, offers both Mexican and American food, and a view over seventy-five acre Lake Walker. The lakeside view is especially lovely at sunset, which is when the eager explorers from Natures arrived. Their numbers – and the size of their appetites – nearly overwhelmed the kitchen. The supply of food on the buffet table ran out before all were served. Those who had to wait for their meal were compensated with free drinks, and we discovered that ours was the largest group Rancho el Charco had yet served!

Despite such minor inconveniences, most of the brave souls from Natures who ventured out on this "wilderness adventure" enjoyed themselves. Some might even provide additional future business for Rancho el Charco. If you'd like more information about it, check out their Web site at www.ranchoelcharco.com.