

DESERT BLOOMS

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Life is full of surprises. We cross the border two or three times a week, passing “inspection” as we leave the U.S. and as we enter Mexico. The U.S. checkpoint entails questions about whether we have “money in excess of \$10,000”



or any weapons. Occasionally they ask to see our passports, which always seems odd to us since we’re leaving the U.S. When

we approach the Mexican customs area there is a random red light or green light to determine whether the car is inspected. Most of the time we get the green light and we proceed on to our destination but occasionally they check to see what we’re bringing into the country. They rarely find fault with the baby food, diapers and cleaning supplies that we’re carrying.

The return trip to the U.S. can take anywhere from 45 minutes to five hours, depending on the line at the port of entry. There is no inspection leaving Mexico but each car entering the U.S. and every passenger is scrutinized. A few weeks ago on a Tuesday afternoon our car was singled out for a “secondary inspection”. Somehow the car triggered a detector for radioactive materials. We were questioned several times about whether any of us had recently undergone medical procedures with radiation. No. Then we were directed to drive the car through a big X-ray scanner. Negative. Then two agents came out with Geiger counters that they ran over the car by hand. Negative. Finally, with no explanation, they said “Go.” We went!



Saturday after we had celebrated “Dia de los Niños” (Kids Day) the agent at the U.S. port of entry asked the usual, “What was the purpose of your visit to Mexico?” and we replied as usual, “We have a center for children with special needs.” He asked the usual follow-up question, “What are you bringing back from Mexico today?” and we replied as usual, “Just empty containers from lunch.” Then came the surprise. “Do you always take them lunch?” Well, yes, we take pureed food for the kids who have difficulty chewing and swallowing. Our standard fare is mixed vegetables with pasta and a fruit smoothie. And we are always in charge of bringing dessert! The agent had a big smile on his face as he said, “Wait a minute! I’ve got a coupon for some Krispie Kreme donuts, buy-one-get-one-free.” He disappeared into the booth for a few moments and returned with a small card. “I would give you the money to buy the donuts but I’m not allowed. In fact, I want to explain to the next agent what I’m doing so none of us get in trouble.” He went to the neighboring inspection booth, showing the Krispie Kreme card and gesturing at us. We thanked him for the gift and said we’d use it for several upcoming celebrations. He thanked us for our service to the kids and waved us through.



Monce’s eighth birthday and Mothers Day were delicious at Proyecto Santo Niño. Two dozen glazed and another two dozen assorted “specialty” donuts were shared with gusto. We explained the special dessert, compliments of a kind U.S. customs agent, to the wonderment of the mothers who, like us, don’t usually have that experience of “la migra” at the border. Life is full of surprises!