

Forty-Five Years of Community and Connection Rovers Roost:



Years after Kay and Joe Peterson founded the Escapees RV Club in 1978, they set out for the Arizona desert with another dream. A growing community of RVers, they envisioned a unique place where like-minded travelers could gather, support one another and build lasting connections.

That dream began in Casa Grande, Arizona, when 100 RVers from across the country each contributed \$100 to help purchase 10 acres of land. The property was modest, containing a pole barn and a dump station but it held tremendous potential. In 1981, the purchase

was complete and work began in 1982 creating a different kind of RV park. Built entirely by volunteers, the project became a true labor of love. As construction progressed, the community found creative and humorous ways to raise money. One fundraiser gave members an opportunity to buy chances to win the honor of the “first flush” when the new bathrooms were finally completed.

Through hard work and shared purpose, volunteers established a place that became central to the culture of long-term RV living and the growing Escapees community. Rovers Roost hosted the first Escapade at the first SKP Co-Op. Kay and Joe came to Arizona with a vision of building more than a campground—they wanted a community. The first lots were assigned by lottery drawing, and several fortunate RVers became the first leaseholders.

Rovers Roost SKP Co-Op became the first campground in the Escapees system of parks and continues today as



a thriving 55+ Co-Op community. The Petersons were among those who believed the RV movement needed a physical home base: an affordable and welcoming place where members could gather, spend the winter, maintain their rigs and help one another with repairs and advice. Their philosophy centered on the core principles of caring and sharing. Casa Grande proved to be an ideal location. Positioned midway between Phoenix and Tucson, it offers mild winters, accessible services, healthcare and a welcoming local community, all important ingredients for seasonal RV living.

Rovers Roost continues to reflect Escapees values of self-reliance, community and advocacy. As one of the earliest communities of full-time RVers, it provides a place where members can share ideas such as mail forwarding, vehicle modifications and residency and voting issues—important considerations for a grow-



ing population of nomadic citizens. Today, perhaps more than ever, our community continues to welcome newcomers and fellow travelers.

Becoming a leaseholder means more than securing a space. It means becoming a part of a community. Campers are invited to participate in all activities. Leaseholders comprise committees, and the self-governing spirit that continues to shape Rovers Roost.

Rovers Roost SKP Co-Op will celebrate its 45th anniversary in February 2027 as part of our annual fundraising event. More information will be shared on our website (<http://roversroost.com>) and in a future edition of *Escapees* magazine. The dream continues as we celebrate 45 years and honor the volunteers that make it all possible.

Cathryne Richards #27144 and Jacque Martin #144423: Photos By: Myrna Hansen (in the 1980s)