



## COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Regular customers of Daylight Donuts gather every morning for coffee, doughnuts and conversation.

KIMBERLY RYAN/NEWS-SUN

*They meet for coffee, sweets and conversation*

MICHELLE A. FOX  
NEWS-SUN

They call themselves the coffee group. Eight friends and members of St. Helena Catholic Church get together at Daylight Donuts nearly every morning after church for coffee, doughnuts and conversation.

"We are here nearly every morning," said Josie Cruz.

No topic is off limits at the table, and this particular Monday morning the focus was on the Academy Awards ceremony and snow in Michigan.

"We come here to avoid shoveling snow," said Leo Shields. "When it snows here, you can get a chair and watch it melt."

Shields, his wife, Cindy, and Ed and Gwen Brice are affectionately called snowbirds by the rest of the group. Both couples hail from states much farther north from New Mexico. The Shields spend part of their year living in Michigan and the Brices hail from Minnesota.

"We settled in Hobbs after our truck broke down here," Cindy said.

The couple had been living in Las Cruces and having trouble with their pickup truck. After numerous breakdowns and numerous mechanics baffled as to what was wrong with the vehicles, they decided to drive the truck until it wouldn't go any farther.

"We made it from Las Cruces to the Wal-Mart parking lot in Hobbs," Cindy said.

While their truck was in the shop, the couple contacted a real estate agent and bought a house. In fact, the Shields bought two houses. Four years later the Shields still spend winters in Hobbs. And when they get homesick before May, they just look at the Weather Channel.

"We know what is going on up there, we just look at Channel 32," Leo said. "I know we have busted pipes at home."

If you sit with the coffee group — made up of JoAnn Maher, Mike Stewart, Henry Aguilar, the Shields, the Brices and Cruz — long enough, the sounds of two or three different conversations can get overwhelming, but they have their own system on how to rein in the group.

"If everybody starts talking at once, we call time-out," Cruz said.

One thing you will not find among the topics of conversation is gossip.

"We talk about friends and family," Leo said. "But no gossip; it is all true."

The coffee group has been having their morning meetings at Daylight Donuts for 15 years. They even have hooks on the wall for their Daylight Donuts coffee mugs.

You can find the coffee group at Daylight Donuts every day except Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

"We spend so much time here," Cruz said.

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