

## Jerry's Dolan Springs

The author Jerry Evans lived in Dolan Springs for five years, while he wrote his story in the book *Chemical and Electrical Hypersensitivity – A Sufferer's Memoir*. The following are some of his personal impressions about living in Dolan Springs:

*Dolan Springs was a world apart. It was a place where one could buy a modest home on a one-acre lot with mountain views, and only pay about \$30,000 for it. But it was far away from everything.*

*It was a place that had attracted a lot of people on a modest income: a lot of retired blue-collar workers, people with various disabilities and people who just wanted to be left alone.*

*Dolan was a place where one could bring in an old travel trailer to live in and then slowly build a house around it with whatever one could scrounge for materials. There were no building inspectors; they would first start coming up there in 2007.*

*About fifteen hundred people lived in Dolan and the surrounding area. The downtown was a dusty desert town, with a two-lane country road going through it, the one paved road in the area. The nearest traffic light was in Kingman, thirty-five miles away. The town was so small that people sometimes only specified the last four digits of their phone number. Every number in the valley started with (928)-767.*

*There was a grocery store, a small library, a bank, a number of tiny rustic shops that came and went, and four bars. The bars were doing well; not much else to do there.*

*There were also five churches, which all kept a respectful distance from Dolan. One was a fundamentalist church down the street from me. It had been painted pink by mistake, but now everybody simply called it The Pink Church and they kept the color.*

*The typical Dolanite was past their prime, chain smoked and often cheerfully ignorant of even the most basic things, in the way people are when all their learning comes from watching popular television.*

*There were, of course, exceptions. The little library had an active group of supporters, who held book sales and other activities, for example. The only non-*

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*EI friend I ever had was a retired miner, who lived up in the hills a mile from my house, at the end of a road even UPS refused to traverse. He had no electricity, no refrigerator, and heated his rustic house with kerosene. He was reclusive but well read, so we could have wide-ranging discussions when I hiked over there.*

*Another non-EI I enjoyed talking to was a local mechanic, who had a little shop. He just enjoyed pattering around with older cars, with lots of friends stopping by to hang out. One of his hobbies was building desert buggies; little two-seat vehicles made of steel pipes, four wheels and a vintage Volkswagen engine hanging out the back. An old beer keg as gas tank, no windshield, doors or lights. He knew how to live.*

*There were very few young people. They tended to run off as soon as they could, as there were no opportunities for jobs. The military was a common way to get out, and this little town had no less than three veterans' organizations.*

*Down the street was a guy who had converted their lot into a junkyard, where he tried to make a living recycling metals and a few odds and ends. A hard way to make a living; it always amazed me that they had enough to eat. Eventually he gave up and got a job.*

*Another neighbor accused me of sneaking around their mobile home at night. Well, he had heard something at night, and I was the only guy he ever saw walking around, so it had to be me. He told me that he had taken his gun and shot a bullet right through the thin walls, but didn't hit anything. It was probably an innocent cow, which we occasionally had roaming around at night.*

*It was almost entirely white people who lived in Dolan, though there was one Native American who lived further down the hill. He had a Hogan ceremonial hut next to his house, and sometimes I could hear him greet the setting sun with his ceremonial rattles and joyful shouts.*

*Despite all the little warts, I liked living in Dolan. Some of the other EIs hated it, but I liked it. The air was clean and the views were fabulous right out the window. The people were friendly. I was often offered a ride when people saw me out hiking around — walking was so unusual that people in my neighborhood called me “the guy who walks.”*

*If my car had had a breakdown, it would surprise me if it took more than five or ten minutes before a friendly guy in a pickup truck would stop and offer help. I once saw a delivery truck break down in my neighborhood and it only took a few*

*minutes before one of my neighbors was on the spot with his tool chest and got the problem taken care of.*

*There was a barber shop down near the highway between Kingman and Las Vegas. It was a father-and-son outfit. The son would cheerfully do house calls for people who were disabled and could not come to their place. He only charged four dollars extra for a house call — he could have doubled his entire price and I would have paid it, but that is not the Dolan way.*

*The little grocery store in town, called “Double D” for some reason, refrained from using pesticides in their store solely because they knew it was harmful to the local EIs. The local bank was also very accommodating, cheerfully so, in fact. Even though they only saw me twice a year, they knew who I was.*

*The people of Dolan Springs might not be very educated or sophisticated, but they were real people. What you saw was what they were, none of the pretensions of so many self-absorbed city people. There wasn't any of the “my car is bigger than yours” or desperate attempts to live beyond their means in order to impress the neighbors.*

The above is excerpted from *Chemical and Electrical Hypersensitivity: A Sufferer's Memoir* © 2010 Jerry Evans by permission of McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com)