

CLUBS

Rip 'N' Sew works for Navajo Nation

Patrick Gary, from Arizona's Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission, visited Rip 'N' Sew Club this month.

His stop was twofold — to educate the Sun City West club about the mission and school in Rock Point and to load his car with all the items the club's Sewing from the Heart members made or collected for members of the Navajo Nation, especially the children.

Rock Point is an especially impoverished area of the Navajo Nation, the largest Native American reservation in the United States. The community was a farming area historically, but now with no water except from deep wells, there is no farming, Gary said. There also are no jobs, he added. Outside of the village, homes lack electricity and indoor water: Wood heats many homes.

"They (residents of the



Sewing from the Heart members work year-round making items for the Navajo Nation. From left are Pat Thomas, Maryanne Edens, Walita Mroz, Helen Grant, Pam Ramult, Marilyn Zenz, Mariam Clish, Jean Hackbert, Marsha Smith, Mary Ann Lewton and Marianna Gajewska. A handful of other members could not attend. Some of the items they made are on the table in front of them. (Submitted photo)

Rock Point area) count on Phoenix for donations," Gary said.

That's where Sewing from the Heart comes in. Members sew year-round for the Navajo Nation.

Marilyn Zenz coordinates Sewing from the Heart projects with co-leader Laurie Hoover. Zenz listed what the

group sent with Gary — 60 pillowcases, 23 girls stretch tops and leggings, 21 boys stretch T-shirts and jogger pants, 25 children's flannel pajama bottoms and long-sleeved T-shirts to match, 58 knitted winter hats, one scarf, 25 school notebooks, 10 packages of lined writing paper, 10 boxes of pen-

cils and gently used children and adult clothing.

The mission's 40 schoolchildren will present their annual Christmas program Thursday, Dec. 15. Afterwards, Gary said "It's Christmas for the kids" as Sewing from the Heart's items are distributed.

Gary told Rip 'N' Sew members to keep doing

what they are doing for Rock Point, and, if possible, include more clothing, especially cold weather garb.

The 70-year-old mission, which sits along U.S. Highway 191 in far north-east Arizona, is a project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Gary said he and wife, Molly, came to the mission in July because she had long desired to finish her teaching career at the mission school. The live in an apartment building provided for mission workers.

"Molly says that in 25 years of teaching, she has never met a sweeter bunch of kids," he said.

The couple will move out next summer.

Once they depart, Gary said, mission workers and teachers will all be members of the Navajo Nation. This has been a longtime plan for the mission.