



E-MAGAZINE

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Comments, brickbats and bouquets on our featured articles are always welcome. Individual writers or authors may also be reached via the following:

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Submissions for possible inclusion in the magazine, please send to the editor by $20^{\rm th}$ of each month.

We are always looking for writers or ideas on what you would like us to write about in the magazine. Preferred subjects are concerning Manzanillo or Mexico.

All articles should be 1000 words or less or may be serialised. 500-750 words if accompanied by photos (.jpg)

Pictures appropriate for the article are welcome.

CASA SE RENTA



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E-MAGAZINE

¹/₄ Page:

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PAINTING CLASSES WITH ROBERT HILL - 2013-2014

Following is a proposed schedule of classes for this season with locations, hours and start dates:

Las Brisas - <u>Tuesdays</u> from 9:30 AM to 12 Noon - In front of the Bahia Deli

Tentative starting date November 12 – depending on signups

Our old location is no longer available but the owners of the Bahia Deli have invited us to use the space between their store and the sidewalk. It is shady there in the AM and I think it will work out well. It seems impossible to find a location with adequate lighting for an evening class, as before, but natural light is better anyway.

La Pergola Restaurant – <u>Wednesdays</u> from 3:30 to 6:00 PM

Tentative starting date November 13 – depending on signups

By the pool, as before. Nice location with good lighting and shade in the late afternoon.

El Faro Condos - Thursdays from 9:30 AM to 12 Noon

Tentative starting date November 14 – depending on signups

At the top of the hill above the Las Hadas crucero – Great place to paint in the Clubhouse, with good lighting and shade.

It would be a big help if you will let me know ASAP as to which location/day you are interested in, and an approximate date when you will be here, so that I can arrange to have enough tables, chairs and easels available. If you have a table top easel, that would be a big help, especially at the El Faro location. The cost is the same - \$100 pesos per class. Please be on the lookout for good photos of subjects you would like to paint. We will be working in oils, acrylics or watercolours. If anyone needs a list of materials, please e-mail me and I will send you a list, as painting materials are easier to find in the US and Canada.

I realize that people will be arriving in Manzanillo at different times, between November and January, so the classes are usually small in November, but I would like to get started then, for those who are here early.

Robert Hill

mayfordhill@hotmail.com

NOVEMBER 2013

CALENDAR OF EVENTS MANZANILLO

November 18-21 - Monday to Thursday PATA STERILIZATION CLINIC

Where: Club Leones, Manzanillo Centro

Time:

Contact: <u>stan@patamanzanillo.com</u>

DECEMBER

December 8 - Sunday PATA DOG JOG

Where: Santiago Peninsula

Time:

Contact: <u>stan@patamanzanillo.com</u>

IANUARY

<u>January 31 - Friday</u> CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELITOS FUNDRAISER 2014

"Changing Lives, One Child at a Time"
Where: Pavilion at the fairgrounds
Time: 5:30 pm - Silent Auction

7:00 pm - Dinner

Cost:

Contact: Marge Tyler maggiet19@earthlink.net
Janice Morgan janice Morgan maggiet19@earthlink.net

FEBRUARY

<u>February 5 - 8 - Wednesday to Saturday</u> EFREN GONZALEZ 4 DAY OIL PAINTING WORKSHOP

Where: To be announced

Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Cost: 3800 pesos

Contact: Reservations accepted

immediately brigitteyc@aol.com

All painting supplies are included in cost

<u>February 13 - Thursday</u> SANTIAGO FOUNDATION LUNCHEON & STYLE SHOW

"Hats Off to Valentines"

Where: El Oasis Time: 1:00 pm Cost: 500 pesos

Contact:Tickets - Bobbie Stehbens 335-0850

Deanna Slack 335-0008

February 19 - Wednesday LIBORIO ESPINOZA CHILDREN'S ORPHANAGE FUNDRAISER

"An Evening at the Copacabana"

Contact:Kenda Farnsworth <u>farnsworth55@msn.com</u>

Entertainment by David Weber.

Reservations taken now for full tables. Book early for best seats. Looking for items to be donated for auction.









Triangle Palm,

Dypsis decaryi (Sometimes cited as Neodypsis decaryi)

Family: Arecacea

(Also called a Three Cornered or Three-sided Palm)

The Triangle Palm is a member of a large and amazingly diverse genus of which there are 140 species - many of which are critically endangered. In fact, in its natural habitat, this particular and highly unique species is definitely threatened by over harvesting.

A solitary trunked, ornamental palm, it originated in the small area which is a very narrow strip of not particularly good soil, of approximately "twenty kilometers" in between the humid rain forest of the southeast and the dry spiny forest of southwestern Madagascar. Some sources say that they also grow naturally on nearby islands.

With *Dypsis* being the genus moniker, the epithet *decaryi* comes from the name of the gentleman who first collected specimens of this palm – Raymond Decary.

Growing at a moderate rate, in its natural habitat, it has been recorded at a height of nearly thirteen meters, however as a domesticated palm its average height is seven to eight meters. It has feather like leaf bases arranged in three distinct and quite precise, planes which - in a blinding flash of the obvious - provide the impetus for its common name!

Many assert that it has no "true" crownshaft, but the tightly overlapped and bulging leaf bases forming a stocky triangle certainly resembles one!



Originally from Madagascar, the Triangle Palm is unique indeed

As the palm matures, owners have been surprised when, ultimately - below the pinnate fronds with their bluish-green leaflets - a "traditional" round palm trunk forms. This upright, brownish to gray, trunk is smooth and from nine to thirteen inches in diameter and is marked by the rings of former fronds.

The fronds hold themselves stiffly erect and droop only at their tips. It is quite common for rather spectacular, filamentous extensions (long threads) or "reins" to hang down from the large leaves. These provide an attractive "fountain like sweep" of grayish leaves perhaps if at all possible - best presented in front of a dark green background such as the Leu Botanical Gardens in Orlando, Florida.

The approximate twenty, meticulously arranged, pinnate leaves are two and one half to three meters in length. They are comprised of 100-200 pointed leaflets that stretch nearly upright from the triangular trunk. They gracefully arch, in a V shape, about a meter from their tips and spread from three to seven meters. The leaf stalks grow to be covered with a brownish-red hairs or "fur" similar to its delightful cousin the Teddy Bear or Red Neck Palm.



Suffice it to say, no few aspects of this species, including its striking silhouette, make the Triangle Palm a real head turner!

Blooming all year, on the branched inflorescense (the flower stalk), separate male and female flowers grow side by side. Coming from the lower leaves yellow and green flowers branch out from which, later, fruit produces. The seed and other parts of the plants are poisonous if ingested – so, vegetarian or not, don't gnaw on this beauty nor its fruit!

Definitely, bold in appearance, this outside palm seems to prefer full sun but can do well in partial shade. Water regularly but exercise good judgment and be careful to not over water as like many palms it doesn't care to have its roots standing long in water. Given a choice, it would like somewhat sandy soil. Keep an eye out for mealy bugs, scale and mites and feed quarterly with a water soluble fertilizer.

Should, for whatever reason, you wish to grow more of these palms, their flowers are unisexual and, hence, single plants are quite capable of providing you with oval, greenish-yellow to white fruits. Each holds one seed. These are generally quite fertile and should germinate within a month or two of planting.

At Ola Brisa Gardens our Triangle Palm may be found situated close to its Teddy Bear Palm kin, at the lower end of the International Terrace.

Not dissimilar to some of my friends who watch their sodium intact, the Triangle Palm has low tolerance for salt . . . so don't plant them too close to the beach. It also has a tendency toward potassium deficiency and is susceptible to that scourge of no few varieties of palm trees, lethal yellowing.

When planting, bear in mind its three dimensional aspects that can, somewhat easily dominate the landscape . . . so, if at all possible, plant where its form can be most fully appreciated.

To read previous issues of "Planting Roots in Mexico", Tommy's Tips", other tropical gardening information, or to learn more about Ola Brisa Gardens, please visit: www.olabrisagardens.com.



Below the pinnate fronds, with their bluish-green leaflets, a "traditional", round palm trunk forms.









Nearly ripe and ready!



Starfruit, Averrhoa carambola Also called: Carambola

In the jargon of my youth, the juicy, tropical Starfruit are cool! They have a very unique (Well, duh, star-shaped) appearance, are crisp in texture and have a sweet, slightly tangy flavor which stems from the fact that seldom do they have more than four percent sugar content which — obviously lends to the nice tart, sour undertone to is juicy flavor.

Some folks have compared their taste to a blend of papaya, orange, and grapefruit, while others say, "No, it's comparable to a mix of pineapple and lemon". Yet others assert that it tastes like a combination of apple and grape! Well, if you've not yet tried one, I guess you'll just have to make that determination for yourself!

Now cultivated throughout the Southern U.S. Caribbean and Latin America, the Star fruit is native to the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern China, India and Sri Lanka.

If you've the space in your yard or garden, this is a fun, small to medium sized fruit tree to have. They will grow – depending on the variety – to between 12 to 33 feet tall (six to ten meters) and spreading up to 20-25 feet (six to 7.6 meters) in diameter. An evergreen, its leaves are compound six to twelve inches long (15 to 30 cm) that are arranged alternately on branches. Each leaf has five to twelve green leaflets 0.5 to 3.5 inches long (1.5 to 9 cm) and 0.4 to 1.8 inches wide (1 to 4.5 cm). The tree's flowers are generally borne on panicles on twigs, or smallish branches. They are small (3/8 inch or 1 cm in diameter) and pink to lavender in color with five petals





While not too particular about their soil type (though they will grow faster and produce more fruit if rooted in more organic material) they do enjoy a balanced liquid fertilizer four to five times a year or a slow release granular fertilizer several times during the growing season.

They like/need regular watering and want to be planted in a location where they can bask in full sun all day and will grow best in a location that is sheltered from the wind. And, obviously, they need good drainage and – like most of us - detest having sustained, wet feet.

Mulching helps retain soil moisture, reduces weed problems and improves the soil near the surface. Place mulch is a two to six inch (5-15 cm) layer keeping it eight to twelve inches (20-30 cm) from the trunk

Their fruits are about 2 to 6 inches (5.1 to 15 cm) in length and ovate to ellipsoid in shape. They usually have five prominent longitudinal ridges, but might have as little as four or as many as eight. Its skin is thin, smooth, and waxy. The flesh is a translucent yellow in color. Each fruit can have 10 to 12 flat light brown seeds about 0.25 to 0.5 in (0.64 to 1.3 cm) in width that are enclosed in gelatinous aril (a fleshy seed cover)

The Starfruit may also be used in cooking. In Southeast Asia, they are often stewed in cloves and sugar and sometimes with apples while in China, they are cooked with fish. In Australia, they may be cooked as a vegetable, pickled, or made into jams, whereas in Jamaica they are sometimes dried. Unripe and sour fruits can be mixed with other chopped spices to make relishes, eaten after being dipped in or sprinkled with rock salt or cooked together with shrimp. The juice from this fruit can be incorporated into iced drinks, blended into a sherbet, used as a seasoning or simply bottled for drinking.

Research has found this fruit to be rich in antioxidants, potassium, and vitamin C while low in sugar and sodium. And, (Self, take note!) with only 30 calories per fruit plus lots of fiber, star fruit is a great choice for anyone needing to lose weight. Also, in that they are full of antioxidants and flavonoids they're generally reported to be very healthful.

Now, that having been said, there are two main types of *Averrhoa carambola*, the small sour/tart type and

the larger sweet ones. The former have a higher oxalic acid content – about which there is conflicted discussion regarding its possible impediment of the absorption of calcium in the human body and harmfulness to individuals suffering with kidney problems. (I leave this to you to research and determine on your own. But for me, I like and often enjoy Starfruit!)



A few of the flowers linger on.



Even the trunk of the Starfruit Tree is a bit different!





Suddenly Retired

Suzanne A. Marshall

Four years ago I finally decided that if I didn't stop working soon I would be shortening my life. Phantom chest pains, insomnia, adrenal fatigue were all taking their toll. It didn't help that I was a certified and diagnosed 'over achiever'. At the time I thought that was ridiculous but now I can safely say I definitely lean in the direction of 'anal retentive' another not so nice way to put it. (Laugh track-please)

The stresses of an executives life on the treadmill and the never ending rounds of nonsense repeated regularly by newly empowered committee members or board members on a fresh management cycle or brand new graduates out to set the world on fire and be part of meaningful change came at me one time too many. I didn't feel financially ready, but do most of us? And besides, what's the point of being financially 'ready' if you're going to drop dead before you enjoy it? And that was it. I stopped.

Thankfully, a little perspective has allowed me to understand that I was a burned out, frazzled mess with a real need to be motionless, quiet and introspective for a while.

Who was I when I wasn't charging down the highway on my daily commute, putting up with idiotic drivers and road construction, being assailed by staff needing direction or getting meetings together or writing policies or dodging political interference from many sources? Then I would be dragging my butt home on automatic pilot, (sometimes I barely remembered the drive) throwing a meal together (and maybe a load in the laundry) catching the news, falling into bed and then rising the next morning to start all over again. Many of you will no doubt relate.

Of course this is a much abbreviated summary of my working life after 44 years on that treadmill, most of which I am proud of and feel was a meaningful career. I was also a mom, took care of my aging parent and never allowed myself to even think about it all. Automaton is a word that comes to mind. But one day you just hit the wall and you know you just can't keep going that way. Perhaps it's a kind of built in barometer that says the weathers changing and you'd best batten down the hatches.

As we live in a small village lake resort area outside the metropolis, the first thing that struck me was the incredible quiet. With no city noises or humming power

lines to camouflage the sounds of nature, I began to hear all of the subtle things going on around me. The endless chirping of birds, wind in the trees and even the sounds of children walking to school giggling and laughing. (No this is not where the angels show up and start playing harps), I was actually alive and noticing these things for the first time in many years.

My first impulse was to spoil myself with a true luxury. Reading. I love reading and there was never enough time or energy to really dig into my novels and classics which were collecting dust and just waiting for my retirement.

But first, the biggest treat of all. I would get up when I woke up, put on a pot of coffee, grab the morning newspaper, then head back upstairs to read the paper in bed from cover- to- cover, with my steaming brew. Absolute heaven!



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I did this, for literally months. Why let guilt get in the way? I was now retired and I could do anything I wanted and this was something I had jokingly talked about for a long time. Sometimes I'd even make toast and bring it back to bed with me half-way through the morning. And yes, I do have a husband, who thankfully didn't seem to mind. Since he works from a home office (thankfully located over the garage) he was usually buried in his computer most of the day anyway. This gave me the rule of my household 'kingdom' so to speak.

Here I should add that my husband and I had thrown all caution to the wind and bought our little dream condo on the beach in Manzanillo a year earlier. When we took possession, we literally had a couple of hours on the terrace and headed home to our jobs and commitments. The next year we managed to stay for six weeks and this was no small temptation regarding retirement either. So I seriously suspect that a subliminal force was pushing from behind as our big dream was to spend 6 months in Manzanillo each year.

In the meantime, I needed to get on with life in Canada for the summer and fall and had finally finished the morning paper gluttony and decided I should probably begin to do something more tangible. This began the 'WHIRLING DERVISH' phase of my new life.

I had so many things to do that I had never had time for. Shockingly however, I felt myself quite unhinged by the huge void of time previously occupied by my work. Like a skydiver without a parachute or a jockey without a horse. I was well trained for many things but not for 'freelancing' so to speak. I had lost all structure and I didn't know where to begin!

So I sat down and in my well-trained time management persona, began to make lists of all the projects I wanted to do. These included such things as closet clean ups, yard work, painting and so on. Then I tried to dig in, but this was all new territory for me. It sounds easy but I found myself going in complete circles. I'd start something, run to get the broom or hammer and find myself distracted by something else. I'd be standing in a room asking myself 'what am I doing here?' Sound familiar? By the end of the day I hadn't really finished anything I started. I now understood the importance of structure and simple plans. But I have to confess that it took me a year or two to finally figure out that I had to relax, stick to one objective a day and be flexible. Slow down, take your time and stay on task.

I can totally relate when people say they don't know what they will do when they retire. Hang in there, the time starts to fill in and eventually you begin to wonder how you ever managed to juggle everything in your life before, because you are so 'busy' now. But for the most part, I think I've learned to enjoy the simpler side of life, appreciate the things around me and be ever so grateful for family and friends.

Now I can sit and listen to life, spend time with recollection, have company for dinner during the week and leave the weekends to the throngs. Think about weekday matinees at the movies and grocery shopping off hours when there are no line-ups. It's a rite of passage and we've earned it. Color me happily retired. By the time this article is published we will be in Manzanillo soaking up the sun and ocean breezes and thinking we are the luckiest people on the planet.







THE ART OF BECOMING A GYPSY

Freda Rumford

I camped under canvas for many years in my youth and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was fun, free and easy. Plus in some instances, I could go without a shower for a weekend and truly commune with the smell of nature. My parents had joined the Camping Club of Great Britain and every week we went to a different area and farmer field's where we erected tents in the most orderly fashion, with all pegs being equidistant and all guy lines totally orderly. It was almost a military type of forming a campsite but my father and I were the winners on more than one occasion. We could erect a large 'Bukta Ridge Tent' with its huge and heavy flysheet in less than three minutes.

The outside of the tent also had to be maintained in perfect military order and "lat tents" (privies) dug to the required depth and distance from the tents. It was quite an ordeal but one that was done with a certain amount of pride of accomplishment that stood the test of time as my husband and I much later also took our young and growing family on two and three week excursions each year plus occasional weekends when we could get away.



Our old Bukta was all white heavy canvas and had higher sides but I could not find a photo of one. This is of similar ilk.

The huge and old "Bukta" was given to me by my parents who had bought themselves a beautiful French "Marichel" tent with two rooms and in a beautiful shade of blue. It was a frame tent and a brand new design for those in the Camping Club.



A Marichel tent. Ours was similar but all shades of blue. We used that Bukta tent for many years until we left England for Canada in the mid sixties in fact. At that time my parents asked for it back so that they could give it to my brother for his use. Then, surprisingly, presented us with the beautiful Marichel model which was much lighter to transport. This, our now Canadian family used on holidays each year in the Okanagan. Unfortunately one of our sons borrowed it one year and didn't return it after his holiday. Later, when it was needed again, we found it stored in an old trunk outside of his house where it had simply rotted away. Replacing it was an absolute impossibility. So, sadly, we decided that our camping days were now officially over. We then lived with our memories of excited children fishing at 5 a.m. in the morning in Lake Kalamalka, in the Okanagan valley of B.C.

We had rented camp trailers for both sets of elderly parents to go camping in our favourite spot in Vernon, Okanagan but only once had we used a camp trailer for ourselves. We much preferred the idea of tenting and sleeping on air mattresses under our double sleeping bags. It amazed my mother-in-law that I could cook complex meals for seven people on a simple camp stove.

Many years later we found ourselves living in a tiny bungalow in Manzanillo. After a while, we realised that all of those years tenting had given us life lessons of how to live in confined spaces with minimal equipment. Considering that I am a kitchen gadget freak, it really was a lesson well learned. Many of the things that I was so used to using, gradually worked their way down to Mexico in our ever over loaded car and now are piled in boxes as we recently had to downsize again.



Sea Breeze
Now I have
swung around
180 degrees as
we recently
ended up buying
an older, but well
looked after
thirty three foot
Sea Breeze motor

home, with a few creaking joints to match our own. Two long trips have been made in this vehicle and we have enjoyed it immensely. The jury is still out on whether we would have been better off with a truck and fifth wheel and we







are listening to other folk's opinions regularly. Eventually I expect we will make a decision as to which would suit us better. But perhaps we will rent this one out as it behaves so well.

In the mean time we have visited California three times as well as to Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. So far we haven't ventured into Mexico because of time constraints so are just living on other people's experiences which have mainly been very positive. The two best spots where we have stayed have been in California and the most unfriendly place for rovers is Phoenix!

In a couple of months we will perhaps venture into the Baja California but the current price of gas is a little prohibitive for constant touring. It seems better to have our car on a dolly and park the RV in a central and suitable spot then use the car for shopping an exploring. The Safeway and Chevron piece of marketing at the moment has been most helpful as we have had considerable reductions in gas prices at several places. When a fill up is often well in excess of \$200 those odd few dollars off at least buy a cup of coffee or two to help us on our way. Both of us had fifty fits to see gas marked at \$4.99 a gallon at one gas station but gasp though we

may the gas was still required at that unfortunate moment.

In thinking about camping in Mexico many more plans have to be made. There is a book available for camping in Mexico and we have heard that camping is good on the Baja as many more people who are used to that way of life venture there. Camping is really not the Mexican way of life. It is more usual for families to get together and purchase vacation homes and go to the same place year after year as a Time Share. While that certainly has its merit, most vacationers from the northern climes, like visiting different places before selecting the few that gave them more pleasure to return to.

Near to Manzanillo, there are two RV sites in Melaque. One is well run with toilets, showers and modern conveniences; the other just provides a shovel for digging holes. There is a large camp site at Boca de Iguana up the coast a little way, but they have resident crocodiles which do like the taste of dog! As we just have cats at the moment, perhaps this would be OK. Kirby is making sounds as though he could come to like baked or fricasseed crocodiles but I think a little more studying is required before we venture that way.





Mictecacihuatl

(pronounced 'Meek-teka-see-wahdl'or 'Meek-teka-kee-wadl')

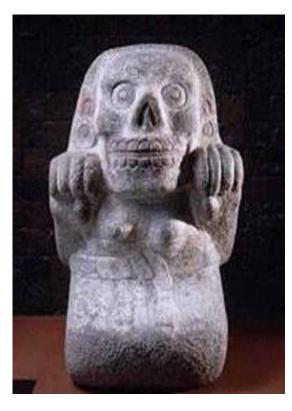
This Aztec Goddess is known as "the Lady of the Dead" or the Queen of "Mictlan". She was the caretaker of the bones of the dead. The holiday to celebrate the Goddess by the pre-Hispanic peoples of the land now known as Mexico, lasted a month. When the Spanish conquistadors and Franciscan monks began the religious change of the native people of the newly discovered lands, the long celebration was changed to the first two days of November to coincide with the Roman Catholic Holidays of *All Saints Day* and *All Souls Day*. (Encyclopedia Britannica)



These figurines known as Catrinas are typical of "Day of the Dead" art.

In Mexico and other Latin American countries, the $1^{\rm st}$ November is dedicated to the children who have died and $2^{\rm nd}$ November to the adults. On these days, family members go to the cemetery taking a wreath as a gift and possibly a picnic. They sit beside the grave and tell the dead loved one, what has happened in the past year within the family and other important matters; the joys, the sadness's, and the hopes for the future.









Between Books Presenta:



Oftenda por la cultura y la paz, entre muertos, vivos y libros

Del 1 al 2 de noviembre de las 680 de la tarde a las 11 de la modre

PROGRAMA:

VIERNES:

- 1-Aperturade of renda
- 2-Maratón de textos
- 3-Apertura de la puerta del Micilan (tra-
- dición mexicana
- 4-Showdelacatrina
- 5-Micrófomo abierto para calaveras
- 6-Velar
- 7- ^aPintatu calaverita^p Actividad para minos de 0 a 100 años

SÁBADO8

- 11-Repetition de actos del día vierres
- 2-Aportación de las calaveras de los miños
- 8-GerredelapuertadelMicilan

Con la participación especial de Cristina Michaus como "CATRINA" (Actriz de la película "El tigre de Santa Julia" y ganadora del Ariel) y el maestro Kayocolimot-Pahtekatl.



Wen a celebrar la verdadera tradición MIEXICANA del día de MIUIERTOS!



Avenida Independencia #27, Col. Santiago, Tel. 3369263, Nextel: 62*12*80191

(English translation) by Prfra. Martha Martinez

An offering of culture and peace, among the living, the dead, and books

November 1 and 2 from 6:30P.M. to 11 P.M.

Program:

Friday

- . Opening of the offering
- 2. Text Marathon
- 3. Opening of the door of the Mictlan (Mexican tradition)
- 4. Show of the Catrina
- 5. Microphone available for the calaveras
- 6. Wake

7. "Paint your Calaverita" Activity for children from 0-100 years of age

Saturday

- . 1. Repetition of Friday's activities
- 2. 2. Contribution of the children's calaveras
- 3. 3. Closing of the door of the Mictlan

With the special participation of Cristina Michaus as the "Catrina" (Actress from the movie "El Tigre de Santa Julia" and winner of the "Ariel" award) and the maestro Kayocoliot-Pahtekatl

Come and celebrate a truly Mexican tradition for the Dia de Muertos

AT THE MOVIESSuzanne A. Marshall

GRAVITY

Directed By: Alfonso Cuaron

Starring: Sandra Bullock, George Clooney

I saw this movie in the ultimate theatre, IMAX 3D, so it was really in my 'face' as I floated in space with the cast and saw the universe and earth from a most magnificent perspective. That alone is worth the price of admission. How they shot this movie and created the no-gravity effects and environment is absolutely mind-boggling and completely believable.

If you want to see something unusual in a movie plot and location, this is definitely the movie for you. As to the realism the only people who could possibly know, would be the astronauts who have been there themselves. As for me,

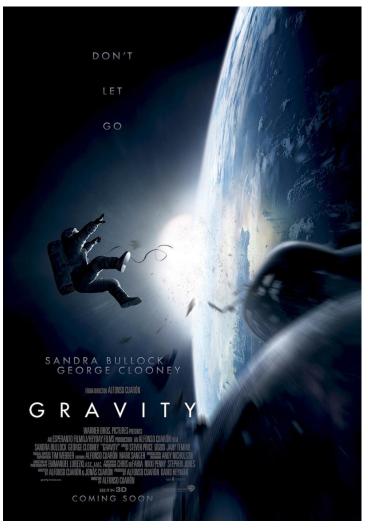
this movie is an antidote to any plans for a career as an astronaut. I've definitely changed my mind about what a thrill it would be and when I win the lotto I no longer wish to be one of the first people to board a space shuttle for a joy ride or a trip to another planet.

This movie really does hold your attention for the full 90 minutes and the performances were very strong. Personally I found the script a bit 'fluffy' in spots particularly for Clooney who's dialogue was just a bit too cavalier for the situation (sorry George). Nonetheless, this is a must see movie. The ratings are obviously supported by the fact that the viewing audiences love it.

IMDb, the online movie rating site, currently rates this movie at 8.6/10 stars based on 93,000 viewers.

The metascore is 96/100. The movie is rated as PG-13. Enjoy!









Pan de Muerto

This bread is slightly sweet and used on the altars of loved ones during "Day of the Dead" festivities. The dough is formed into bone-like shapes to decorate the top of the loaf before baking it.

Prep Time: 3 hours Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 3 hours, 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 1/4 cup water
- 6 cups flour
- 2 packets dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons whole anise seed
- 2 tablespoons orange zest
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 4 large eggs
- Glaze (see below)

Preparation:

Bring all ingredients to room temperature (except for the water which should be very warm) before beginning. In a large bowl, mix together butter, sugar, anise, salt and 1/2 cup of the flour. In a seperate bowl combine the eggs and the water. Add the egg/water mixture to the first mixture and add in another 1/2 cup of the flour. Add in the yeast and another 1/2 cup of flour. Continue to add the flour 1 cup at a time until a dough forms.

Knead on a floured surface for about 1 minute. Cover with a slightly damp dishcloth and let rise in a warm area for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Bring out dough and punch it down. Remove about 1/4 of it and use it to make bone shapes to drape across the loaf (see below.) Or divide the dough into smaller pieces to create other bone shapes. Let the shaped dough rise for 1 more hour.

Bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 minutes for smaller loaves and up to 45 minutes for larger loaves.





GLAZES(After glaze is applied you may decorate with additional colored sugar.)

- Bring to a boil- 3/4 cup sugar and 1/2 cup fresh orange juice. Brush on bread and then sift some additional sugar over the top.
- Mix 3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate and 1/3 cup sugar with 2 egg whites. Brush on bread during the last 10 minutes of cooking.
- Bring to a boil- 1/4 cup piloncillo, 1/4 cup sugar, 2/3 cup cranberry juice and 2 tablespoons orange zest. Brush on bread after bread has cooled.

BONES: The most common bone decorations are very simple. Sometimes it's just a matter of forming ball shapes and pressing them into the loaf in a line. You could also take a piece of dough, roll it into a long cylinder and place a ball at each end. You can get much more detailed if you like, but even a slighly "knobby" looking loaf will get the idea across.

Recipe from About Food, Mexican Food http://mexicanfood.about.com



Tech ramblings from Señior Tech

Tweet, Tweet, I don't see any Birds!

Everyone is talking about social media; but what is it? Facebook, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest are some of the best known social media sites. They all want you to come to their sites and stay there.



Why? Because you, or rather your data is worth money to them. I'll borrow a quote I read online recently: 'If you're not paying for it; you are the product'. All these companies make their money from advertisers who are their customers, your data

is the product they sell.

It is hard to resist the free services offered, such as watching cats playing a piano on YouTube, or staying in touch with family and friends on Facebook. So really what difference does it make if they (social media websites), make money off my privacy when they offer great services for free?

There are other considerations with sharing your private data. The biggest consideration in my opinion, is security. All sites have a privacy policy, which you should review to see what information they collect and what they do with it. These policies change, so you will have to be vigilant. Privacy policies are required by law, but these sites can be anywhere in the world, so the laws of the

country they are registered in will prevail.



Okay, enough boring stuff! Each site allows you to set the information others see in their Privacy Settings. But as I said, these sites sometimes change their policies. For instance my wife Señiora Notsotechie, had set her Facebook

postings to be read by friends and family only. A few years back, Facebook changed their privacy policy and my wife started getting emails from people she had not heard from for years, including suppliers. Facebook had gone to Microsoft Outlook on her computer and sent messages to all her contacts. The outcry from millions of Facebook's users made them change their policy back, and their founder apologized. Google has also had to beg forgiveness from their "products" (the people using Google Services) on a number of occasions for stepping over the privacy line.

My privacy is set so only the people I want to see my posts, see them. I never allow 'anyone can see' as one of my settings. I am not here to tell you what settings you should set, you are adult and can determine what information you want others to see.

I mentioned Security; there are scammers that scour social media sites for users that leave their posts open for all to read. But why would these posts interest these nefarious individuals? An example: someone leaves a post that they are going on a vacation, their "friend list" shows all their friends and family, their profile shows their age, and city. If they are out of the country, Grandma gets a muffled call from someone claiming to be their grandchild, and then the caller is someone claiming to be an official saying they need a couple of thousand dollars so their children can fly home. They will ask that the grandparent use a money transfer, and of course, once sent their money is gone. Or if the scammer is in the same city, they know where they can go burgle a house or apartment in safety. So what may seem to be innocent comments can translate to opportunities for crooks.

Some tools social media sites use to track you on the internet are the "Like" buttons. Once you "Like" a product or service or whatever, a tracking cookie is set to follow your movements online, even if you leave the site you set the "Like". Another trick employed is a checkbox that says keep me logged in. It does not matter how many times you uncheck that box, the sites recheck it the next time you login. The reason they want you to stay logged in to their sites is to let them track your movements online.



The privacy issue? Since you do not know who the search engine company has as customers, do you want your insurance company to know that you are searching for information on Diabetes? Over five years ago, an American newscaster was able to track a person to their home by following their online searches. I was surprised to find (or really, not find) any references to that story searching for identity found from search or a number of other permutations. I did however find interesting reading on Wikipedia, search for "Criticism of Google".



But read this only if you really want to know, sometimes ignorance is bliss.

It is unfair to single out Google and Facebook, I

believe that all social media sites use these methods to monetize their operations. After all who wants to be a millionaire, when they could be a billionaire.

So the next time you are on Twitter and you think you hear a tweet, it maybe because they are watching your online activities like a hawk.

If you have a topic you would like covered, or require further information on this topic, please contact me at techguv@senortech.ca.



Photos courtesy freedigitalphotos.net











(Many who visit Ola Brisa Gardens have commented that they would enjoy seeing the more "non-touristy" side of Mexico.
With that in mind "Sight and Sites" was created. To learn more about these fun – and very unique - eco/adventure trips please visit www.olabrisagardens.com)

If you're the sort who enjoys plants, nurseries and greenhouses than this may just be the perfect trek for you!

We head east out of Manzanillo on the old, scenic highway to Colima. It may take a bit longer but the sights are delightful and well worth the additional thirty minutes or so. En-route we enjoy coffee, fresh baked *pan dulce* and the Mexican countryside.

In about an hour, following assorted twists, turns, ups and down, we arrive at the small, roadside, *Flor del Disierto* vivero owned by Laura and Teresa Barajas Perez. They've never met a cactus they didn't like! Hence – in the area's vivero market - they've gone about



At Flor del Disierto vivero, they've never met a cactus they didn't like!



They are "sticklers" for organization in how their cacti and succulents are presented!

endeavoring to fill that particular niche through an excellent selection of cactus and succulents. One can but only marvel at the variety they've on display. In fact, if I remember correctly, my much admired Starfish Flower Plant and Red Dragon Flower on our Crossroads Terrace – both succulents – originated from there!



Teresa explained to me the difference between these two varieties of small agaves and variants that I have in our gardens



manzanillo Suviv

Then, but less than a quarter mile down the road, we stop at the one hectare site of *Rey Leon*, operated by Teresa Machuca Gonzalez. When last there, one of her staff, Alecia, graciously helped me pick out - and then carefully tied and wrapped it for travel - a wonderful, multi-colored, Caricature Plant that will, ultimately grow to three meters or more in height.



No formal English Garden had more color than this!

With me, at the time, was Nathan of Aquatic Sports and Adventures - my buddy whose superlative eye for photography provide the accompanying pictures - who often joins me on my various treks. Barely upon arriving, he noticed a wonderful purple leafed, stemmed and flowered Jamaica - pronounced "huh-mike-ah" - that also, absolutely, insisted on coming along home with us! (A great, refreshing, local drink is made through steeping the dried flowers of this Hibiscus relative, by the way.)



At Rey Leon - one of my regular vivero "haunts" - Nathan noticed this purple leafed, stemmed and flowered Jamaica



A bougainvillea, seen "up close and personal" is a sight to behold!



One of many covered areas, Vivero Massangena is one of the larger in the area - with a variety to match its size!

Then we drive another fifteen minutes or so to the seven hectare *Vivero Massangena* where Hector Torres is the boss. During my most recent visit there, my pal Reo helped me locate and acquire a small Swiss Cheese Vine, another variety of upright Elephant Ear and six Russelias – also called Firecracker Plants or Fountain Bushes. This is not a small operation and enjoying it all entails no little walking about. One can get confused and turned around here with all of the greenhouse structures and large sections of outdoor plantings but we made it back to the vehicle safely!



Here are large quantities of two of the three varieties of the Madagascar Dragon Plant we have flourishing at Ola Brisa Gardens





The flowers on this Queen Sirikit Mussaenda are a real attention getter

Then we endeavored to get everyone thoroughly lost on various country roads, as we took numerous turns by, around and over an aqueduct providing fresh water for the area's farmers, before arriving at Ruben Cabrera



Rose and salmon colored Crown of Thorns - as well as other varieties - are aplenty at Viveros Tropicales de Colima

Silva's Viveros Tropicales de Colima. Not as large as where we've just been but somewhere in his operation I always seem to find a plant or two that I have not previously found elsewhere. The last time – with the help of slender and petite Claudia - it was two, very different, varieties of Euphorbia which are related to the Crown of Thorns and that I still have not been able to successfully identify!



The beautiful bloom of the Desert rose belies the sap of the plants great toxicity



... yet another variety of the delightful, but deadly, Desert Rose.

Our last *vivero* stop (perhaps another scenic twenty minute drive to Coquimatlan) was at the largest – the twenty hectares of *Vivero Valles Verde*. The Director of this substantive enterprise is Leon Machuca Gonzalez. But be forewarned, seeing each and every plant here would take days!



Have on your walking shoes at the 20 hectare Vivero Valles Verde.

Much to my delight, when last there, I found an Acalypha for the one that, several months ago, had sadly passed to the Great Greenhouse in the Sky and for which I had looked extensively and unsuccessfully for a replacement. (But I prefer the other names this unique plant goes by: Red Hot Cat's Tail, Beefsteak Plant, Fire Dragon Plant, or Copper Leaf.)



One of my favorite foliage plants, one of the many Croton cultivars!





I was so delighted to find this Red Hot cat's Tail as mine had passed on to the Great Greenhouse in the Sky.

By this time there was a consensus that lunch was in order. So, at the rather remote and rustic Restaurant "El Chino", we had a unique treat – fresh water prawn . . . grown right there! While Chino and his wife prepared our lunch, tall and attractive Aurora took our drink orders and brought us delightful snacks to take a bit of the edge off our hunger.

Then, the day successfully filled with memories of new plant varieties, via picturesque back roads, along the river, through valleys and by native greenery we returned via a different route, to Manzanillo.

One might say that this day "planted" the idea for similar further such adventures!



Chino shows one of the fresh water prawn soon to be lunch!

photography by Nathan Peach

Next month a walk in the Sierra Madres Occidental Mountains viewing wild orchids!



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The Day of The Dead

By Kirby Vickery

The following is a brief extract of a treatise published in September 1995 by Alejandro Melchor. His entire paper is a lot more than can ever be put here but in honor of this month containing the Day of The Dead what better way to convey the start of that by having him tell it:

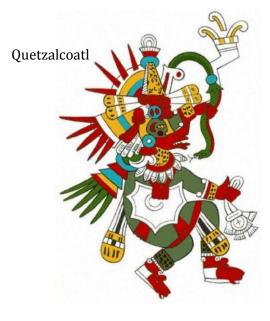
Heir to the Toltec civilizations, the Aztec dominated the center of Mexico with their military and magical might. They rose from an impoverished nomad tribe to a wealthy civilization thanks to the will of their leaders and an understanding of the nature of the Tellurian. From the fabled Aztlan, they followed the guidance of the Wyld Runners, a Garou tribe that led them from the north and delivered them to the Lake of Texcoco, where Huitzilopochtli (Left-Handed Hummingbird), a powerful Celestine, gave them the sign he had promised: the Eagle and the Snake, fighting over the nopal on a small island. The Aztec settled and prospered, and eventually they engulfed the neighboring city states and became the power they were when the Spaniards found them.



The Celestines

Closely tied to the history of Mexico are four children of Gaia, or Coatlicue (Skirt of Snakes) as she was called, four Incarna who rose in power to the point of claiming the title of Celestines themselves.

The first of these Celestines is Quetzalcoatl (Feathered or Winged Serpent), who was worshipped by many Balam in the Mayan region under the name of Kukulkan. He moved his influence to the north, were he was embraced by the toltecs and had two temples in Teotihuacan (City of Gods), the one directly consecrated to him, and the one to his other name: Ehecatl, god of the Wind.



Now, the magi in Mexico were always associated with the gods, and were revered priests. The Tradition that served Quetzalcoatl in Teotihuacan was named the White Brotherhood. They were adept in the Spheres of Mind and Spirit; some replacing the last with Forces. They were mainly scholars and priests, with teaching as their main concern, as dictated by their lord Quetzalcoatl, who manifested in this Realm and possesed the body of one of his worshippers. By the name of Ce Acatl Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl (Our Lord 1-reed Feathered Serpent) he ruled the toltecs in the city of Tula, and soon gained the friendship of a pack of Wendigo Garou, who abandoned their tribe to become the first members of the Ehecatl Tribe.

In the legend of the Five Suns, it's stated that the first Sun was Tezcatlipoca (Smoking-Mirror), and, when he was brought down by his brother Quetzalcoatl, he unleashed his revenge in the form of thousands of



jaguars, for this great cat is akin to him, and thus were born the Nahual, were jaguars whose allegiance is to the Smoking-Mirror. The Nahual, as their lord, were great sorcerers and thieves, and helped Tezcatlipoca overthrow Quetzalcoatl from his seat of power. To do so, Tezcatlipoca gave many mages the command of the Sphere of Entropy and Spirit, and so the Nightspawn Tradition was born.

When Topiltzin saw his kingdom fall into disgrace, he fled south to the Mayan regions, stopping at a small monastery, where he left several members of the White Brotherhood to keep half of his Sign, a powerful Talisman in the shape of a shell, taking the other half to the Guardian of the Mayan Traditions.

The Toltec civilization dwindled and died, and the Mexica tribe, later to be called Aztecs, arrived and took power, taking much of their mythology from Toltecan stock, which also contained bits of the Mayan knowledge.

The Celestine Hutzilopochtli was a warrior, prone to frenzy, and the legends told that he expelled his sister,

the Moon, Coyolxauhqui (Rattles-in-her-face), from the Great Temple. This symbolized that the Aztec shunned the Moon religion and embraced the Sun religion that Huitzilopochtli represented. This caused an estrangement with the Wyld Runners, who nevertheless had Kinfolk with the Aztec and remained in contact.

Oblivious to his brothers' squabbles was the Celestine Tlaloc, the god of Rain and Fertility, he had grown in power steadily albeit slowly. He had been one of the Suns in the legend, and, when brought down by Tezcatlipoca, had flooded the land. Now, he exists quietly, with a number of Jagglings and Gafflings called the Tlaloque.

A pack of Uktena, while traveling south, encountered the tlaloque and, as they liked the land and found it rich in magic, abandoned their tribe in favor of the Rain god, and became the Tlaloque Tribe.

Tlaloc was served by his own Tradition of Magi, who took the name of Sorcerers of the Quiet Gladness, the surname of their god. These mages managed the Spheres of Life and Forces, and were healers and benefactors of their peoples.





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The Mictlan

Despues del eclipse de sangre ya casi ni gente somos.
Aqui donde llueve tierra los signos estan rotos
Xolotl bajo al infierno en forma de perro.
Solo quedan las casas y los indios colgados en el viento encendido.

After the eclipse of blood we are nearly not even people. Here where soil rains the seals are broken.

Xolotl descended to hell in the shape of dog.
Only the houses are left and the indians hanging in the lit wind.

Jorge Reyes, "A la izquierda del colibri"

The Nahuatl Realm of the Dead, the Mictlan gave the perfect name to the largest organization of vampires in the New World. No one knows for certain how they came to be; when confronted with another Kindred, a Mictlan vampire will scoff over a mention of Caine. The Mictlan believe themselves children of the lords of Mictlan: Mictlantecuhtli and Mictlacihuatl (often called Mictecacihuatl). Whatever the truth may be, the Mictlan are vampires in every sense of the word, although their blood has a strange taste to diablerists.

The Mictlan was divided into several Calpullis, each of them consecrated to one of the gods and ruled by a Tlatoani. The Council of Tlatoanis is ruled by Mictlaxochitl, the oldest vampire in Mexico. Mictlaxochitl claims to be carnal daughter as well as Childe of Mictlacihuatl, who is now in the Mictlan besides her husband, their father. The most powerful Calpullis are Mictlantecuhtli and its ruler Mictlaxochitl; Huitzilopochtli and its namesake ruler; Tezcatlipoca and its ruler Ocelotl; Tlaloc and its ruler Chalchiutlicue; and Quetzalcoatl and its ruler Topiltzin. Lesser Calpullis include Tlazolteotl, Xolotl, Camaxtle, and Xipe Totec.

The Mictlan has its own discipline, mandatory to all of its members; some of the Calpullis have developed their own Disciplines or mirror those of the European Kindred.

Less politically minded than their European counterparts, Mictlan vampires believed in cosmic balance, taking their role as predators of humanity with pride. A Mictlan vampire is proud of her nature, not prone to much angst like the Camarilla and able to ride the frenzy like one of the Sabbat. The Mictlan was more concerned in keeping the food supply as well as the worship to the gods they represented than in political influence and internal strife.



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