



Blue-footed booby resting on
the shipwreck off La Boquita
in Santiago Bay
By Teresa Vandekerckhove

In this issue

Colours of Mexico series

by Suzanne A. Marshall
Manzanillo, a Welcoming
Cruise Ship Destination...1

Nature's Wonders series I Planted Roots in Mexico series *by Tommy Clarkson*

African Mask...3
Christmas Cactus...6

Finance series *by Yann Kostic*

Are we Jeopardizing our Retirement,
Decade by Decade?...5

Local Stories *by Terry Sovil*

The Ship S.S. Golden Gate...8

History and Mythology series *by Kirby Vickery*

Aztec Celebrations...11

At the Movies series *by Suzanne A. Marshall*

Passengers...10
The Infiltrator...13

Technology series *by Señor Tech*

"Please sir, may I have more wifi"...14

RV Travel series *by Dan and Lisa Goy of Baja Amigos*

San Miguel de Allende...16

Recipe

Ponche...22

Spanish Skills

Crossword...24

Path to Citizenship (P2C)

Maize....25

Tommy's Tummy series

by Tommy Clarkson
Jack's Bistro....26





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Article submissions:

- Preferred subjects are Manzanillo and Mexico
- All articles should be 1000 words or less or may be serialized or 500-750 words if accompanied by photos
- Pictures are welcome
- Comments, letters to the editor, articles, photos and advertisements are always welcome

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Manzanillo, a Welcoming Cruise Ship Destination

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Having the benefit of a few cruises under my aging 'belt' now, I'm able to say with certainty, and some experience, that the port of Manzanillo is truly a beauty. It's only in the past few years that tourism in Manzanillo has reached out to the cruise industry. I believe that the area has much to offer as an itinerary stop for the various cruise ship lines. I say this with conviction having just completed an exciting and very interesting cruise through Asian ports from Hong Kong to Singapore. Previous to that, I experienced the Caribbean, so I've seen a few ports now and taken many sojourns off the vessels to explore the surrounding sites, cultures and history.



Portside Da Nang Vietnam

I don't take this privilege lightly, believe me. But, on this last trip, it struck me how the port of Manzanillo is as stunningly beautiful as any I have seen. In fact, in a couple of ports of call on this last cruise, we were actually docked amidst tankers and cranes busy loading and unloading the vessels. Quite a sight I have to say, but lacking a little romance for me. Nonetheless, we scooted out of these areas via excursion tours and enjoyed many of the sites awaiting us.



Manzanillo port - malecón

The cruise ships that enter the Bay of Manzanillo are welcomed by the lush green mountainous terrains and vast beaches of the port. The colorful homes and buildings climbing the hills offer perspective and beauty to the lifestyles here. For cruise lines, the Manzanillo bay offers docking that is separate from the shipping industry areas and where cruisers can leave the ship and walk onto the waiting promenade or *malecón*, complete with its giant blue sailfish, dancing fountains, park areas with benches and the small fishing vessels bobbing on the sea while moored to the various docks. Across the square of El Centro await the numerous shops and restaurants and more that carry on up the back streets as far as the eye can see.

These are perfect places for cruisers who just want to walk about and meander slowly through the sites. It's notable how authentic the areas are and there is an opportunity here to enjoy the Mexican life without too much influence from the North American cultures. But you will still find many people who speak a little English and restaurants that offer bilingual menus. It's true that Manzanillo is Mexico's busiest shipping port so you do see, and are aware of, a great deal of shipping industry in the port area.

A little way down from El Centro, freighters, tankers and various ships of trade enter and leave the bay with great frequency. It's actually an interesting site to see and to comprehend the incredible commerce that shipping provides for goods and products from around the world. Tourists who choose to take excursions will see the immensity of this site as they pass by on their way for various adventures. And if the excursions are for a full-day adventure before the cruise ship departs, there are many

(Continued on page 2)

(Manzanillo, a Welcoming Cruise Ship Destination - Continued from page 1)

surrounding sites to see within a 90-minute distance.



Manzanillo's emblematic sailfish

In the immediate area, you can enjoy such things as the iguana sanctuary, take a fishing charter out for a few hours and try your luck at snagging a marlin. Local tour guides will take you scuba diving and snorkeling or to visit local beaches and attractions. There is a nature camp that offers zip lining, just to name a few.

Within 90 minutes lies the Colima state capital of Colima. On the way one can view the Volcán de Fuego (an active volcano



Carnival Spirit in Manzanillo

to this day) or continue on to visit the city's museums, historical buildings or the nearby magic zone of the town of Comala (a designated world heritage site). These are just a few suggestions among so many more that can be found on the internet when visiting the beautiful port city of Manzanillo and the state of Colima. I suggest you or your cruise guides research the top ten things to do in Manzanillo and likewise for the state of Colima. Making choices could be difficult.



El Centro de Manzanillo

Many of us who have chosen Manzanillo as our home still marvel at its beautiful location and port and are still discovering so many of the wonderful areas to experience here and in Mexico. What a beautiful site it is to sit on our terrace and see the majestic white cruise ships parked in our bay, knowing those aboard are enjoying a glimpse of what we will never take for granted. It's quite simply a paradise!



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by Tommy Clarkson

African Mask, *Alocasia amazonica*

Family: *Araceae*

Also known as: Amazon Elephant's Ear, Green Velvet, Jewel Alocasia, Alocasia Alligator, Amazon Lily, African Black Shield Plant, Alocasia Polly (or Poly) Hilo's Beauty Elephant Ear and I know a Mexican gardener who calls them Vampire's Ear!

I have thought that this uniquely-dramatic tropical beauty, with its striking, two-tone leaves, might better be named the "Alias Plant" as it is called by so many different names. And beyond that, there is no little debate about its creation – exactly who hybridized it. But by most accounts it appears to be a hybrid of the Southeast Asian *Alocasia longiloba* and *Alocasia sanderian* and seems to have emerged in the public's awareness in the 1950's.

From here on I will endeavor to be a bit more exact – such as the fact that we know this highly-attractive plant is, in fact, a hybrid family member of the 78 species in the genus *Alocasia* which is comprised of broad-leaved rhizomatous or tuberous perennials – perhaps best known for the Calla Lily and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

As a rule, its magnificent, arrow shaped leaves are 30.5 cm (12") to 61 cm (24") long and 15 cm (6") to 30 cm (11") wide. These generally reach a height of 61 cm (2'), though I've heard of them being - but have not seen them myself - between three and four feet tall.

These striking – deep dark, roughly-serrated, green through dark purple to nearly jet black – heart-shaped, leaves are marked by boldly prominent, whitish or light green veins and are deeply scalloped along their margins.



The striking leaves of this specimen are elongated, heart-shaped and marked by boldly prominent, light green veins that are deeply scalloped along their margins

These leaves are scalloped on the edges. Surrounding those primary-lateral veins are very light-colored zones and some clones have an intriguing network of silver veinlets that run between the primary lateral veins.

The underside is, more often than not, a matte purple in color. As a rule, each main trunk will only produce four to five leaves at a time and as a new leaf grows, it sheds an older one. Whichever of these compositions you may come across, rest assured that it is an attractive plant and will be a great addition to your garden family.

(Continued on page 4)

(African Mask — Continued from page 3)

The green-colored petiole is around 38 cm (15") with a dullish-brown variegation in its lower half. The corms (short swollen underground stem base) are white with a tint of pale pink.



With a large green Anthurium behind, Sago Palm on its right side, ferns (off camera) to the left, and Rose Moss creeping towards its potted feet, mine loves the indirect sun it gets through the combination of King Alexander palm and banana fronds above along their margins

While appreciating high humidity (low humidity can cause leaf dieback), these guys like bright, indirect light, preferring about 60% shade. Does that sound a bit confusing? Well, simply remember that they don't like strong, direct sunlight. Another protective measure to take is that they need shelter from the wind.

As do most of the *Alocosias*, they have no small appreciation for *agua*. But allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings then give it a good, thorough drink. Ensure they are planted in well-draining - properly aerated, rich, potting soil. (That "well draining" part is worth repeating as too much standing moisture can cause crown rot. If you encounter a problem, chances are that this is the problem.)

If used as an indoor plant, keep an eye out for spider mites – or scale if the plant is stressed.

During the warmer summertime, feed once a month with a balanced, soluble plant food. And in order to have the best presentation, cut away dead and dying leaves and wipe the healthy, attractive ones off every now and again to enjoy the full majesty of their beauty.

By whatever name you decide to call them, they will make a wonderful addition to your garden.



And if the African Mask turns its leaves away from you, you'll see their lovely, matte purple, behinds!

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Are We Jeopardizing our Retirement Decade by Decade?

by Yann Kostic

Every life stage brings new financial mistakes that could jeopardize retirement. Here's what to guard against as you move through the decades:

Twenties

Not investing. Unfortunately, many individuals who are just starting their careers fail to invest or avoid taking considered risks when they're in a position to absorb them. One idea: target-date fund options start out with riskier allocations that gradually become more conservative.

Thirties

Overwhelmed. The 30s is the decade of big commitments, such as getting married, having children and settling down. However wonderful, these commitments can lead to unaffordable mortgages and credit-card debt. Focus on living within your means.

Forties

Misjudging expenses. In their 40s, many are halfway through their working lives, but still face major expenses, such as significant home repairs and kids' college costs. Avoid withdrawing from retirement accounts early, and work to pay off the mortgage.

Fifties

Failing to catch up. When they reach their 50s, many people realize they haven't saved enough for retirement. According to current life expectancy statistics, the retirement phase can last forty or more years. Many also may have lifestyles that aren't sustainable in retirement. This decade is the time to plan ahead - decide how you want to live, how much money you'll need and how to obtain it.

Sixties and beyond

Not getting help. As assets grow, so often do the complexities. Some individuals may need additional help planning and executing those plans. Your advisor, who is up to date and who also knows your situation, can give you that support.

Yann Kostic is an Investment Advisor (RIA) and Money Manager with Atlantis Wealth Management. Yann specializes in retirees (or soon to be), self-reliant women and expats in Mexico. Atlantis Wealth Management has relationships with international custodians allowing multiple foreign currencies in a single account. Yann splits his time between the Lake Chapala area, Manzanillo and Central Florida. Comments, questions or to request his newsletter, "News you can use" contact him at yannk@atlantisgrp.com, in the US at (321) 574-1521 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613



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by Tommy Clarkson

Christmas Cactus, *Zygocactus truncate*

Family: *Cactaceae*

Also known as: Holiday Cactus, Thanksgiving Cactus or Crab Cactus

This rather interesting plant may be seen identified as *Epiphyllum truncatum* - its original name in 1812. Then it was moved to the genus *Zygocactus*. However, recently it was officially transferred to the genus *Schlumbergera*. Don't worry if you've already forgotten all of that – just remember that it's called a Christmas Cactus!



No this is not it's normal location! I couldn't get a good shot of the entire plant where it was hanging.

These tropical cacti - that bloom around the holidays - originated in the Brazilian mountains around Rio de Janeiro. It has a doppelganger (look alike) and, as a result, one has to look,

very, very closely when endeavoring to identify this as *Zygocactus* – or is that *Schlumbergera - truncata* as opposed to the highly similar in appearance, *Schlumbergera russelliana*. Yet - while "a rose is a rose" - several of my somewhat-dependable, secondary resources say that this is a *Schlumbergera bridgesii*. Is your mind now thoroughly muddled by what its name is and by what it might be called? Mine is and I'm the nimrod striving to research and write about it!



Healthy - and most interesting looking - leaves, huh?

On their own, out "*in the bush*", as it were (or is), Christmas cactus is an epiphyte. Accordingly, it grows naturally on tree trunks or where fallen leaves and plant debris have deteriorated in Nature's compost pile, to make up the bulk of its soil. So when trying to domesticate one "in captivity" with a home in a pot, it should be in well-draining and aerated soil which allows its roots to breathe. (Remember that it should be repotted every three years, in spring.)

Commercially available potting or garden soil that retains a high degree of moisture will suffocate its roots, often resulting in root rot and, ultimately, your plant's demise. The simple key to watering the Christmas Cactus is this: Keep the top one inch (2.54 cm) of soil moist at all times, but never allow the soil to become water-logged. It has dietary needs as well. Beyond regular fertilization, they like magnesium. This can be provided through a mixture of one teaspoon Epsom Salts to one gallon of water, given to your plant monthly, from early spring through early fall, two weeks after its regular fertilization.

By way of identifying – at least broadly – your Christmas Cactus

(Continued on page 7)

(Christmas Cactus — Continued from page 6)

from similar kin, first note its small, flat stem segments. These are roundish with minor serrations on both sides. They will flower from their segment ends. Perhaps the more easily-identifiable ones have neon-pink, pollen-bearing stamen which (in addition to their preference to bloom in December) is the Cactus's primary, defining feature. Its strangely-attractive blooms are tube-shaped and have a "double flower" appearance. The "outer flower" is formed by its shorter leaves that curl back near the flower's base with the "inner flower" being formed up the flower a bit, near the stamen. (In addition to pink, there are also red and purple species.)



Its strangely attractive blooms are tube-shaped and have a "double flower" appearance.

The key to successfully growing this plant is to remember that it is a tropical cactus and, as a result, not at all like its desert-dwelling relation. Beyond that, as with all manner of plants, light, soil, temperature and water are the primary factors affecting your Christmas Cactus. No more than an African Violet, Bat Flower Plant or a Rabbit's Foot Calathea, it can't just be stuck anywhere and expected to grow! The most common problems encountered are when folks place them in a location with too much heat and light and, also, don't provide them with enough water.

Cuttings are the best manner of propagation. Simply cut off a three segment section of its stem tips, allow to dry for three or four days and then place them at least one inch (2.54 cm) deep in the earlier-described soil.



Our pal Steven has a beautiful white species.

For the purists who just have to ensure their Christmas Cactus blooms during the Holiday season, there are several things should be done.

- (1) Allow the plant a resting period from February through March. If possible, place it in a locale where the temperature is approximately 55°F (12.7°C). Also, water it less.
- (2) Put your Christmas Cactus in a dark room every night for twelve to fourteen hours during the fall season.
- (3) To ensure the best flowering results, pinch off any plant segments less than one-quarter of an inch (.64 cm) long in early September.
- (4) During its pre-flowering period, from October to November, the plant's soil should be kept fairly dry - until the flowers bud, and then resume its normal life.

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The Ship S.S. Golden Gate

by Terry Sovil

At 2:30 pm on Monday July 21, 1862, one of the fastest steamers on the West Coast left San Francisco bound for Panama. The boat was the S.S. Golden Gate. She set a record for the trip of 11 days and four hours, averaging a speed of 12 knots (13mph/22kph).

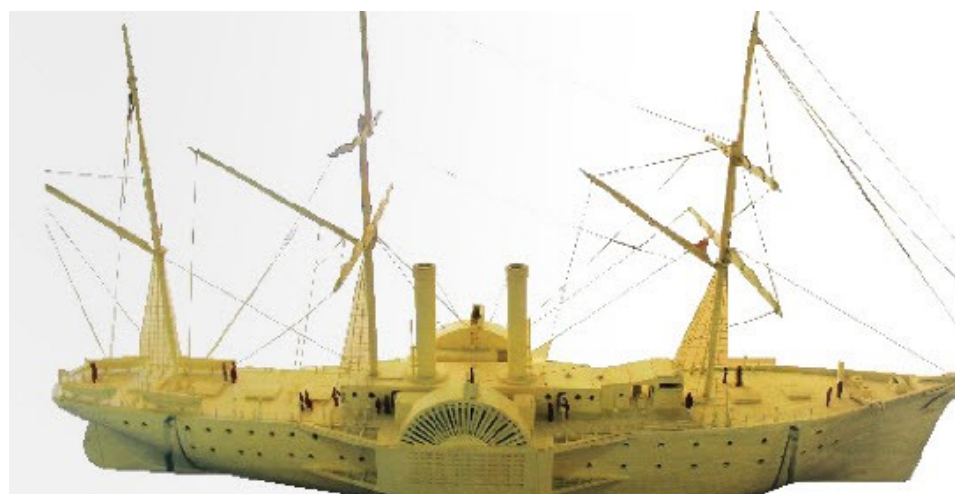
The builder was William H. Webb, New York. Keel laid July 1, 1850. At top speed, it needed 60 tons of coal a day! She was a wooden side-wheel steamer, 3 decks, 3 masts, 2,067 tons, 269 foot length x 40 feet wide (90.2m x 12.2m) Her paddle wheel diameter was 33 feet 6 inches (10.2m) and she had a draft of 10 feet 2 inches/3m or 13 feet 8 inches/4m loaded. The owner was the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.

The ship departed with 95 cabin and 147 first and second-class passengers (242 souls), as well as 96 men as a crew (338 souls total) on a ship that could handle 760 passengers. She also had an immense treasure of US\$ 1,400,000.00 in Wells Fargo \$50 gold coins plus what passengers carried or had stored with the purser.

The Golden Gate was 15 miles offshore, just west of Manzanillo, when a fire started in the floor between the engine room and the kitchen. It was about 4:45pm. Everyone was sitting down to eat when the Captain was interrupted with news of the fire. It was beyond what he imagined. With only 15 miles to shore they decided to run to the safety of the beach. Both Capt. W.H. Hudson and R.H. Pearson went to the scene of the fire. Pearson took command of the firefighting and Hudson commanding the ship. The two captains were on-board because the regular commander, Pearson, was heading east on vacation, so Hudson had command.

The first and second-class passengers were ordered forward but the steerage passengers, in the rear, with the wind and motion pushing the flames to the rear, would be trapped. Fire soon made it impossible for the captain to communicate with the engine room and W. Waddell, the chief engineer. It was Pearson who knew that the engine crew was trapped, so he broke down the bulkhead in the after-freight room to rescue his chief engineer and at least a dozen crewmen.

The ship was equipped with pumps for firefighting, with several lifeboats, and with more than enough life preservers for the people aboard. Life boats were launched but at 5:15 pm the



ship was still 3-4 miles (5.5k) from shore and flames were now coming from the engine room hatch.

As the engines roared, and drove the boat toward shore, it pushed the flames from mid-ship to the rear of the ship. The fire spread quickly and engulfed the ship in flames. Survivors were forced to jump overboard to face the surf and the waves rather than the flames. Many were too weak from exertion and/or burns and they never made it to shore. Those that jumped from the front of the boat stood the chance of being pulled through and around the paddle wheels

People were in a panic. Many had checked their gold in the purser's office. Many were demanding to get it back, which the purser could not do in an emergency. Most were using special money belts as coins were still the currency. Some went over the side with them on and sunk to the bottom. Some just threw them on the deck. The deck was littered with belts and coins, from several eyewitness accounts. The flames were bringing down rigging that had been treated with tar so hot tar was falling everywhere. People were being burned by ash and cinders.

At 5:30 pm, the ship had run aground about 300 yards offshore in heavy surf at what is now called Playa de Oro. Captains Hudson and Pearson were the last to leave the ship. The foremast and the upper deck caved in to the fire at this time, but still the engines kept working. Hudson and Pearson tore off their clothing, then hung from the bowsprit, awaiting a chance to jump and not be crushed by the 2,000-ton ship rolling in the surf.

A couple of the life boats caught up with the ship once it had grounded a distance from shore. After rowing around the ship they could find no more people. They searched farther offshore and found 5 or 6 floating on boards and timbers.

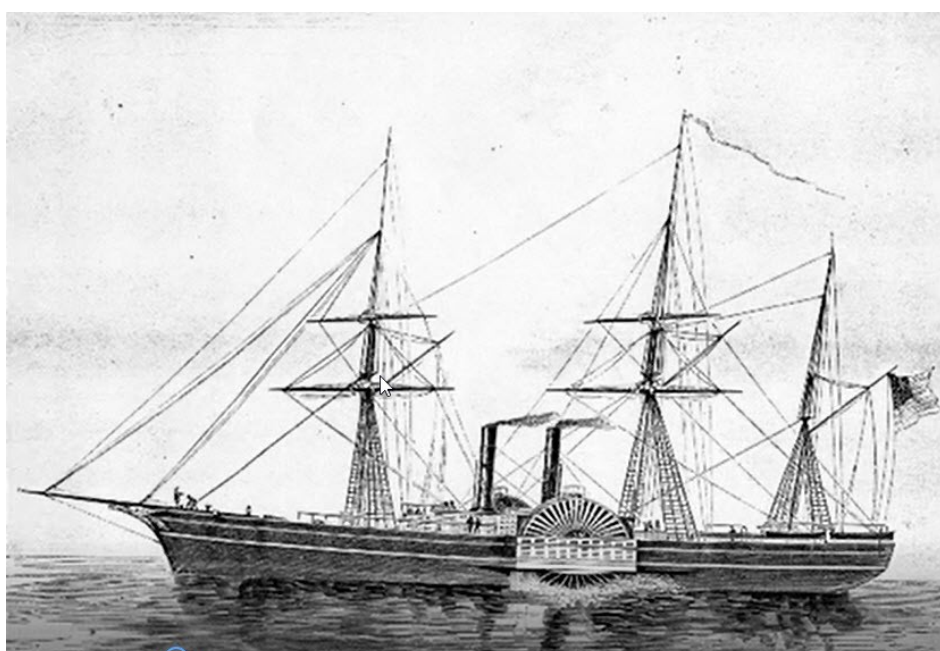
(Continued on page 9)

(S.S. Golden Gate — Continued from page 8)



The wreck came 154 years ago on Sunday evening, July 27, 1862. When assistance arrived, it was found that 72 of the passengers and 62 (134) of the crew survived. In all, 204 of 338 perished or were missing. The ship itself was destroyed by flames and the pounding seas. The dead were buried at the beach, including at least four women.

On the afternoon of the 28th, the Manzanillo customs boat picked up two of the survivors from the group. It was another day before the steamer St. Louis managed to rescue the balance of the survivors, most of whom went back to San Francisco on the St. Louis (except a few of the Golden Gate crew).



Another 23 were missing from a lifeboat commanded by James Scott, the ship's 3rd officer. They drifted about 80 miles to the south of Manzanillo and didn't reach San Francisco until Aug. 18, when the steamer Orizaba brought them to the city.

What about the gold? The beach Playa de Oro was named for the gold that went down with the ship. The bulk of the gold was recovered from the storage area and returned to Wells Fargo in 1863. But searches for the purser's office and that safe went on until the safe was found and lifted from the wreckage in 2003.

CEDAM, founded in 1967, the Conservation, Ecology, Diving, Archaeology and Museums, is dedicated to the preservation and conservation of the marine environment. Using their archaeological approach, they mapped the wreck site and then dug through 9 feet of sand to find the purser's office and recover the safe. Playa de Oro has treacherous currents and waves and the wreck, as big as it is, has been covered with sand. Claims are that the beach, or shoreline, is being filled with more and more sand so eventually you may be able to dig for the wreck! Many adventurers and metal detector fans still work the beach area looking for coins and gold.

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Passengers

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt and Michael Sheen
Director: Morten Tyldum

"A spacecraft traveling to a distant colony planet and transporting thousands of people has a malfunction in its sleep chambers. As a result, two passengers are awakened 90 years early."

The movie is billed as an adventure, drama, romance and, of course, it's science fiction. It's a popular genre these days, so I've decided to go with the flow and see a select few. We watched this movie in the wonderful new Cinepolis theatre in Manzanillo and thoroughly enjoyed the comforts provided.

This production is filled with visual beauty out in the universe which I never tire of seeing. But it's more of a human drama story that doesn't lean on a lot of action and explosive effects that we see so much of in other films. If you can imagine being alone and lost in space with no hope for salvation, you get the gist of this story. As it winds through the efforts of the awakened subjects, trying to find a way to deal with returning to dormancy in the sleep chambers, we explore the spacecraft and all its special accommodations. This includes bars, dining rooms, living quarters and operational areas. I found this pretty interesting. All the amenities are there for the taking. The only thing missing is humanity.

So, of course, the story moves into the growing relationship between the subjects and how they cope with the situation and each other. I enjoyed this movie and felt that the performances were realistic and well done.

The IMDB rating is 7/10 based on about 13,000 viewers.



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Aztec Celebrations

by Kirby Vickery

Although the Aztecs didn't have Christmas, New Years (as we know it), Kwanza or any other modern or ancient 'old world' holidays and festivals that fell into, not only December, but the entire Western year, they had plenty of their own and I thought that we could rummage through a few of them to show that their spiritual and societal celebrations were not all full of blood and sacrifice, although some were at the beck and call of the Priest Class.

The first of three rain festivals for Tlaloc, their Rain God, was celebrated at the beginning of what we call February, which was the beginning of their agricultural year. There would be a priest or shaman to carry out the religious rituals which were designed to encourage rainfall. What type of rituals, you may ask? Please remember that the Aztec people believed that they were at the mercy of their gods, all of whom doted on a steady supply of sacrifice.

The second rain festival was offered to Tlaloc, as well as all the lesser rain gods, in March, once flowers had begun to bloom. The significance was as it is worldwide today, a celebration of the rebirth of life.

A third Aztec rain festival was celebrated in autumn, in order to again encourage rainfall. At the third rain festival, Aztec people formed shapes of small mountains and images of the god, Tlaloc, as he was thought to live on a high mountain.

Cuauhtémoc was the last emperor of the Aztecs, whose memory is honoured every year during a celebration held in front of his statue on Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City in August.

In this Aztec festival, the story of his life is told, detailing the struggle against the Spaniards, both in native Indian languages and in Spanish, while Conchero dancers perform their world-famous dances, wearing feathered headdresses trimmed with mirrors and beads.

They carry with them images of Jesus Christ and many saints to represent the blending of Aztec and Spanish cultures. Most of these Conchero groups consist of 50 or more dancers, each performing in his own rhythm and to his own accompaniment. The pace of the dance performance rises gradually until it reaches a sudden climax, which is followed by a moment of silence.

Chichén Itzá



(Aztec Celebrations - Continued from page 11)

The Emperor Cuauhtémoc, in his words, is honoured for his "Bold and intimate acceptance of death".



Concheros and ancient dance

The Aztec calendar divided the year into 18 months of 20 days each, plus a five-day "unlucky" period. The Aztecs also knew a ritualistic period of 260 days, made up of 13 months with 20 named days in each. When one cycle was superimposed on the other, a "century" of 52 years resulted.

At the end of each of these 52-year cycles, the Aztecs were scared that the world would come to an end, therefore the most impressive and important of all festivals was held in these periods. Known as the New Fire Ceremony, this Aztec festival involved the putting out of the old altar fire and the lighting of a new one, as a symbol of the new cycle of life, represented by the dawning of the new era.

On the day of the New Fire Ceremony, all the fires in the Valley of Mexico were extinguished before sundown. Great masses of Aztec people journeyed from out of Mexico City to a temple several miles away on the Hill of the Star. On this hill, the priests lingered, waiting for a celestial sign coming from any direction as the firmament of the stars could be observed quite well from this spot. The sign would signify whether the world would end or whether a new cycle would begin.

The essence of this ritual was realized when the constellation, known as the Pleiades, passed the zenith, enabling life to go on as it had. (The Pleiades is a cluster of proto stars which is hard to look at straight on. There are seven of them, also known as The Seven Sisters, of which five can be seen with the naked eye. They have also become the symbol of the Subaru Automobile Company.) Had it failed to do so, the sun, the stars and other celestial bodies would change into ferocious beasts that would descend to the earth and devour all the Aztecs. Then an earthquake would finish the destruction. In each year, once a favorable interpretation of the celestial signal was made, burning torch-light were carried by runners all through the valley to rekindle the fires in each house.

This led to the New Fire Ceremony Morning at Chalmita, celebrated on the 280th day of the Aztec year, at end of 14th month, called the Quecholli Festival.

Mixcoatl, also known as the Cloud Serpent, was the Aztec deity of the chase, possessing the features of a deer or rabbit. He was associated with the morning star. One of the four creators of the world, he set a fire from sticks, enabling the creation of humans.

The Vernal Equinox was celebrated at the Chichén Itzá Festival on the 21st of March. In each year, on the Vernal Equinox, a beam of sunlight, as it hits the great El Castillo pyramid, brings into life a shadowy form that creates the illusion of a huge serpent slithering down its side. The Aztecs held that this serpent was the feathered snake god, Quetzalcoatl.

The festival of Xipe Totec at El Castillo Pyramid at Chichén Itzá celebrates the war-god wearing a human skin. His festival, known as Tlacaxipehualiztli, was held in March.

Aztec warriors took the festival of Xipe Totec for an excellent opportunity to mimic the god himself. Slaughtering their prisoners of war, also cutting their hearts out, they removed their skins and wore them for the entire 20-day month. They would fight mock battles, after which they would dispose of the rotting skins of the slaughtered in caves or holes in the ground.



Xipe Totec festival

Festival of Xilonen was a celebration honouring the goddess of maize. It was celebrated for eight days, beginning on the 22nd of June. Xilonen, also known as Chicomecoatl, just like other Aztec gods, demanded human sacrifice during her ceremonies to sustain her interest in favor of the people. Every night, unmarried girls, wearing their hair long and loose, representing their unmarried status, carried young green corn in offering to the goddess in a procession to her temple. A slave girl was picked to represent the goddess herself and dressed up in a fashion to resemble her and on the last night she was sacrificed in a ceremony for Xilonen.

you can reach Kirby Vickery at kirby@manzanillosun.com

The Infiltrator

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Starring: Bryan Cranston, Diane Kruger, John Leguizamo, Benjamin Bratt, Amy Ryan

Director: Brad Furman

"A US customs official uncovers a money-laundering scheme involving Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar."

I didn't realize until later that this movie is actually a biography and also billed as a crime/drama. It's an engrossing, nail-biting depiction of the true story about an undercover sting operation. No one could have played it better than Bryan Cranston.

It wouldn't surprise me if he received an award nomination for this character depiction. But the movie is well acted by all the actors and I found the time just flew by for this 2 hour plus feature.

It's an intricate tale of crime, friendships and personalities that sometimes seems almost normal when families come together to socialize and dine together. It's a great watch, filled with tension and nuance.

The IMDB rating is 7.1/10 based on an estimated 30,000 viewers.



you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at suzanne@manzanillosun.com

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"Please sir, may I have more" excerpt Oliver Twist...

"more wifi"

by Señor Tech

If you have ever had the occasion to enjoy a cruise experience, you may recall the abundance of wonderful edible delights available. Food is available 24 hours from room service, the buffet stations on the Lido deck, the main dining rooms and the exclusive concierge restaurants. My wife and I recently disembarked from a cruise in the Orient.

Our trek started with a two-night stay in Honk Kong prior to embarking the MS Volendam. Our hotel had a magnificent view of the Hong Kong harbour, and a smartphone was in our room for our use while we were guests of the hotel. Using Google maps on the phone, we could navigate to the interesting sites within the city and easily find our way back to our hotel.

We boarded the ship and our first day was a sea day as we sailed to Halong Bay in Vietnam. The cruise director mentioned that the most-often requested "where is the closest toilet?" has been replaced by "where is the nearest wifi?". Internet onboard cruise ships is expensive and painfully slow. Uploading a photo to Facebook could cost over \$5.00 USD or more depending on the size of the photo.

My wife and I both have unlocked cellphones (not tied a to a cell provider); this allows us to use any SIM cards (these are little circuit cards used by cell providers to communicate with their networks). By the time we reached Danang, Vietnam, my wife was anxious to email our status to friends and family. We made our way past the 50 or so taxi drivers wanting to give us a tour of the local points of interest and dodged the numerous scooters to find a vendor selling cellular data services.



We walked two blocks and there was a small store with an older Vietnamese gentleman. I asked if he had travellers' SIM cards with data available and he answered to the affirmative. 9 gigabytes of data for \$5.00 USD. We had him install one in

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(Continued on page 15)

(More wifi - Continued from page 14)

each of our phones. We then decided to go enjoy a Vietnamese coffee (quite delicious) and update our Facebook pages. The internet speed was 40 Mbps upload and 40 Mbps Download. I called my sister in Penticton on Skype and the call quality was excellent. We were now able to text, use Google maps, and even use our phones as wifi hotspots to share the data. We then hired a taxi to give us a tour of the ancient city of Hoi-an which was not affected by the Vietnamese conflict.

I purchased a new SIM card in Cambodia, another in Thailand and one in Singapore. The cost varied by country but they all were under \$10.00 USD. The data usually expires within 30 days, but for most people this is fine. You can also top up the data using your credit card.

This is an excellent way to get internet services on your phone travelling to other countries. Most US and Canadian cell providers offer roaming packages, but not as cheaply as what we experienced. If you are considering visiting another country and you wish to swap out your SIM card for one from a local provider; ensure your phone is unlocked (if you are under a contract, you may be charged an unlock fee – if your contract is fulfilled and you are persuasive, you can have the fee waived).

Installation of a SIM card is usually done by the vendor. They will install the new SIM card and return your original SIM card. Test for service and pay.



This was certainly more economical than the shipboard internet which was \$250.00 USD for 1000 minutes or \$0.75 USD per minute a la carte.

In Mexico, SIM cards can be purchased at any of the cellular phone stores. Telcel offers SIM cards in the following data configurations; 1gb data \$200 pesos, 2gb data \$300 pesos and 4gb data for \$500 pesos. The data is good for 30 days from activation. 1gb of data should satisfy most users as hotels and restaurants offer free wifi.

if you have questions or suggestions about future technology topics, email seniortech@manzanillosun.com



San Miguel de Allende

By Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

San Miguel de Allende - Day 71 to 73 (March 17-19, 2016)

Thursday morning was sad as we said goodbye to 3 couples who had started our Mexican Adventure with us; Bruce and Marian, Rafael and Eileen and Grant and Anita. Eileen's mom had fallen and broken her hip, Marian's mom had been diagnosed with a terminal illness so the decision was made to cut short the Mexican Adventure and head home. The three couples had travelled together from BC to meet everyone in Texas and so they decided to leave the tour the same way. They were off early heading for Guadalajara. We left later in the morning on Hwy 57. Heading for San Miguel de Allende from Queretaro, this was a relatively short drive.



First look at San Miguel de Allende

We arrived before lunch and stayed at the San Ramón RV Park and Hotel. This was a great campground at \$300 pesos per day, very clean, lots of grass, a pool, wifi that worked well and, as a bonus, the public bus stopped out front of where we were staying with only a 12-minute ride into town. We had expected our friends, Robert and Jomi to be there but they already left for the Pacific coast. After taking the public bus into town, we hopped on a tourist trolley around town and did lots of walking as well.



Allende in the zocalo

Having learned about a community event, we were lucky enough to catch a children's parade the next day and a wedding in the main square that evening. There is just so much to see and do, it is hard to know where to start. During our short stay, we returned to the main square (zocalo) a couple of times and visited the Art Centre which had been a textile mill.



Statue of Allende

Eating out for lunch and dinner was routine during our stay in San Miguel, the food always good and reasonably-priced. The restaurants always so "San Miguel" in their décor, appearance and cultural fit (perhaps not the best description). Although our stay was brief, our experience told us that returning would be inevitable. This was one of our favourite stops.



We always meet interesting folks on the road

(Continued on page 17)

(San Miguel de Allende — Continued from page 16)



Art Museo and Exhibition

The day before we left, the Mexico City RV Club showed up at the campground. Apparently, they have been a club for many years and travel around different parts of Mexico for rallies and get together just like back home in Canada and the US. There were about 15 RVs in total, mostly travel trailers. We also met Mike and Terri Church (Rolling Homes Press) at the campground before we left. They were traveling with a small group of friends and had been a couple of days behind us on tour for a few weeks. It was good to catch up with them. We thought we may see them again next season on Baja.



Children's parade and market



The day we left San Miguel de Allende heading for Guanajuato, we first stopped into Dolores Hidalgo to check out the pottery shops. We had never seen anything like this, wow.



Cute kids in the parade

San Miguel de Allende has been written about extensively and it appears we are continuing that tradition. We really cannot say enough about the museums, markets, restaurants, theaters and just the beautiful layout of the town itself. Today's city really got started in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when the town began to attract artists and writers.



The city took on a Bohemian quality in the 1960s and 1970s as counterculture hippies moved in. The city and nearby sanctuary were declared a World Heritage Site when UNESCO met in Quebec, Canada in July 2008. It was chosen, both for its well-preserved Baroque colonial architecture and layout, as well as its role in the Mexican War of Independence. The area that was inscribed includes 64 blocks of the historic center and the sanctuary of Atotonilco with the title of "Villa Protectora de San Miguel el Grande y el Santuario de Jesus Nazareno de Ato-

(Continued on page 18)

(San Miguel de Allende — Continued from page 17)

tonilco."

San Miguel de Allende (Spanish pronunciation: [san mi'ɣel de a'lende]) is a city and municipality located in the far eastern part of the state of Guanajuato, in central Mexico. It is part of the macroregion of Bajío. It is 274 km (170 mi) from Mexico City and 97 km (60 mi) from the state capital of Guanajuato. Historically, the town is important as being the birthplace of Ignacio Allende, whose surname was added to the town's name in 1826, as well as the first municipality declared independent of Spanish rule by the nascent insurgent army during the Mexican War of Independence.



Gang at the campground restaurant

The city has been known by various names since the Spanish founded the settlement. It was called Izcuinapan by the indigenous peoples. The Spanish originally called it San Miguel el Grande and sometimes San Miguel de los Chichimecas. San Miguel refers to the founder of the city, Father Juan de San Miguel. The name of the town was changed in 1826 to San Miguel de Allende in order to honor Ignacio Allende, who was born here. The surrounding municipality is officially called Allende, both seat and municipality are called San Miguel (de Allende). The municipality has a coat of arms that was designed by a group called Amigos de San Miguel, but it has not been officially recognized.

Before the arrival of the Spanish in the early 16th century, there had been an indigenous settlement at Izcuinapan (place of dogs). A small chapel was built and a village started near the indigenous village by Juan de San Miguel. He decided to dedicate the Spanish town to the Archangel Michael. However, the arrival and colonization provoked the locals. The Chichimecas began attacking Spanish travelers in the area and, in 1551, the Guamare people attacked the village proper. This and continu-

ous water supply problems caused the original location to be abandoned and moved.



Great San Miguel restaurant



Independence Hero

The village was officially re-established in 1555 by Juan de San Miguel's successor, Bernardo Cossin and indigenous leader Fernando de Tapia. It was re-founded both as a mission and as a military outpost. The new site was just northwest of the old one at a place with two fresh water springs (called Batan and Izcu-

(Continued on page 19)

(San Miguel de Allende - Continued from page 18)

inapan) and with terrain better suited for defense. The two springs supplied all of the town's water until the 1970s. Today, this second site is occupied by the Santa Escuela Church, which colloquially became known as the "old parish" by the 18th century.



Janice, Mike and Kelly



La Parroquia de San Miguel

By the mid 16th century, silver had been discovered in Zacatecas and a major road between this area and Mexico City passed through San Miguel. Indigenous attacks on caravans

continued and San Miguel became an important military and commercial site. To quell these attacks, as well as rebellions against Spanish rule, the viceroy in Mexico City granted lands and cattle to a number of Spanish to have them settle the area. He also gave indigenous groups limited self rule and excused them from taxation. The location of the town would make the town a melting pot as Spanish, indigenous peoples and later Criollos would exchange cultural influences.



La Parroquia de San Miguel

Eventually, major roads would connect the town with the mining communities in San Luis Potosí as well as Zacatecas and the rest of the state of Guanajuato. Serving travelers' needs and providing supplies to mining camps made the town rich. One particular industry was textiles. Locals claim that the serape was invented here.



Lisa inside one of the many plazas

By the mid 18th century, the city reached its height, when most of its large mansions, palaces and religious buildings were constructed. Most still remain. The town was also home to the area's wealthy hacienda owners. At that time, it was one of the

(Continued on page 20)

(San Miguel de Allende - Continued from page 19)

most important and prosperous settlements in New Spain with a population reaching 30,000. In comparison, in the mid 18th century, Boston had a population of only 16,000 and New York 25,000. The town's apogee came during the transition period between Baroque and Neoclassical architecture and many of the mansions and churches have both influences. Mansions are larger than normal for a settlement of this size.



Lots of bird cages here

The Historic Center

At the entrance of the city are statues of Ignacio Allende, Juan Aldama, Miguel Hidalgo and Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez, with one of the Archangel Michael in the center. While the outlying areas of the town and municipality have changed over time, the historic center remains much as it was 250 years ago. The layout of the center of the city is mostly a straight grid, which was favored by the Spanish during colonial times. However, due to the terrain, many roads are not straight.



Lots to see in this town



No RVs on this San Miguel street

There are no parking meters, no traffic signals and no fast food restaurants. These roads are lined with colonial-era homes and churches. With a few exceptions, the architecture is domestic rather than monumental, with well-tended courtyards and rich architectural details. The houses have solid walls against the sidewalks, painted in various colors, many with bougainvillea vines falling down the outside and the occasional iron-grated window. Many of the larger structures have large front doors which used to be used by horses and carriages.



One of the many shopping alleys in San Miguel de Allende

La Parroquia de San Miguel Arcángel, the current parish church of San Miguel, is unique in Mexico and the emblem of the town. It has a Neo-gothic façade with two tall towers that can be seen from most parts of town and one of the most photographed churches in Mexico. The church was built in the 17th century with a traditional Mexican façade. The current Gothic façade was constructed in 1880 by Zeferino Gutiérrez, who was an indigenous bricklayer and self-taught architect. It is said that Gutiérrez's inspiration came from postcards and lithographs of

(Continued on page 21)

(San Miguel de Allende - Continued from page 20)

Gothic churches in Europe; however, the interpretation is his own and is more a work of imagination than a faithful reconstruction.

However you get to San Miguel de Allende, RV, Bus, Plane or Automobile you should make the journey and spend some time here. We will be back.



San Miguel de Allende plaza



San Miguel shops



Submitted by Dan and Lisa Goy

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Ponche

The traditional Mexican holiday drink

Ponche is a warm tropical-fruit punch. It's traditionally imbibed in Mexico during Christmastime. Vendors sell it at night near the sidewalk Christmas markets. It's also served with buñuelos during the posadas. No one seems to know exactly how and why Mexican ponche materialized. In general, historians seem to agree that the punch concept originated in India, where English sailors took a liking to it and brought to Europe. The Spaniards (or the French?) must have carried the tradition to Mexico. Today, the base of Mexican ponche comprises piloncillo, a dark-brown unrefined cane sugar, mixed with water and cinnamon sticks. To that, you can add pretty much any winter fruits you want: apples, oranges, guavas, tejocotes. The latter two are key. Tejocotes are small, speckled orange fruits with an apple-pear taste, and their soft flesh turns almost creamy while soaking in the ponche. Guavas lend just the right amount of tang and citrusy perfume. The smell of guavas cooking with cinnamon and sugar is intoxicating. Someday someone's going to make a million dollars selling it to Williams-Sonoma as an air freshener.

In addition to the fresh fruit, ponche can contain prunes, raisins, tamarind, walnuts. Some folks add hibiscus flowers, which gives the ponche a pretty burgundy color. Ponche isn't an exact science. Everything simmers together until the fruit is tender, and the dried fruits become plump, sugar-swollen nuggets. If you are like me, you will hover over the pan and give yourself a ponche facial, letting that sweet, spicy steam envelope your face.

Ponche has a lot of ingredients, but it requires minimal chop-

ping. If you have a helper, the whole thing can be on the stove within 20 minutes. If you like -- and we do, in our house -- a little nip of brandy, rum or tequila, feel free to add it in. Just make sure to serve the cups with a spoon, so everyone can dig into their boozy (or not) fruits.



Ponche Adapted from Fany Gerson's My Sweet Mexico Makes about 3 1/2 quarts Note: You shouldn't feel wedded to any ponche recipe, as the ratios can be tweaked for your specific tastes.

Fany's version includes tamarind, raisins and prunes, but I found the original quantities to be a little too tangy, so I lessened them and added more water. In the future, I may leave out the prunes all together.

If you don't have piloncillo, you can substitute brown sugar. If you can't find sugar cane, just leave it out. The amount of water depends on how thick you like your ponche. Once the fruit starts to cook, the mixture will thicken -- feel free to add more

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(Continued on page 23)

(Ponche - Continued from page 22)

water to thin it out. Ponche also reheats beautifully on the stove, thinned with a little water. It will keep in the fridge in an air-tight container for at least a week.

To cut piloncillo: Grab the thick end of cone and slice with a knife. It'll require some force on your end, but it should work. (The piloncillo should not be so hard that you can't cut it.) You could also try scraping it along a box grater. Don't put the cone in the food processor, or it might break your machine!



Ingredients

- 2 1/2 to 3 quarts water
- 2 cinnamon sticks, about 6 inches long
- 8 ounces tejocotes, left whole
- 6 guavas, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 mild-flavored apples (not Granny Smith), peeled, cored and cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 four-inch pieces of sugar cane, peeled and cut into thin strips
- 1/2 cup pitted prunes, halved lengthwise

- 1/2 cup dark raisins
- 5 long tamarind pods, peeled and seeded, or three table-spoons of tamarind pulp without seeds
- 6 to 8 ounces piloncillo or dark brown sugar (this equals about one average cone)
- Rum, brandy or tequila (optional)

Directions

Bring water and cinnamon sticks to a boil in a large pot. Add the tejocotes and lower the flame. Cook over a slow, rolling boil until the tejocotes are soft, about five minutes.

Remove the fruit from the pot, let cool and then peel the skin off with your fingers. (It should come off easily.) Cut the tejocotes in half, and remove and discard the seeds. Once they've been peeled and de-seeded, place the tejocotes back into your pot of cinnamon-water and add the remaining ponche ingredients.

Stir to combine and let simmer for at least 30 minutes. If you're adding alcohol, pour it into the pot right before serving time.

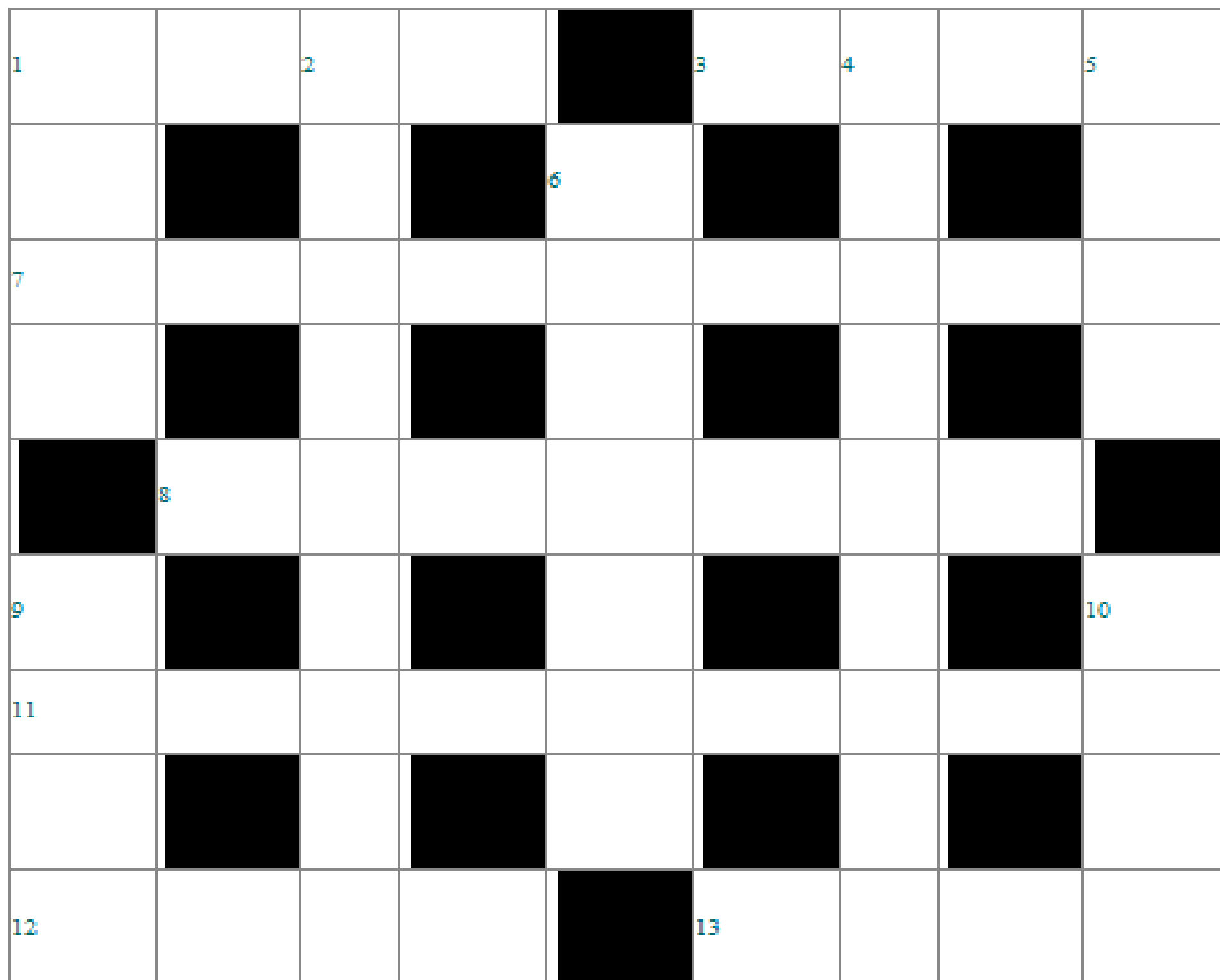
To serve the ponche, remove the cinnamon sticks and ladle directly into mugs, making sure to include the chunks of cooked fruit. The strips of sugar cane can be served directly into the cup, to suck on after you're finished drinking.

source: themijachronicles.com by Lesley Téllez - worth a look!



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



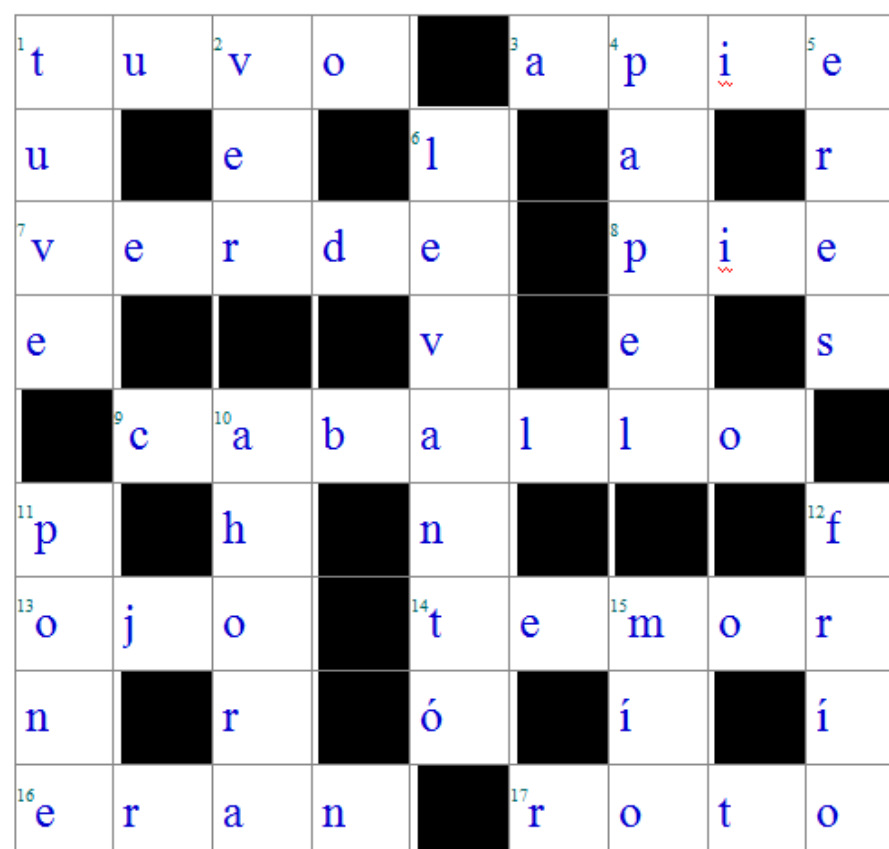
Across

- 1 wall, first-person present indicative of murar
- 3 (I) do
- 7 necessary
- 8 instead of (2,3,2)
- 11 memories
- 12 (you/usted) will be (he, she) will be
- 13 weapon

Down

- 1 hand
- 2 to recognize
- 4 around
- 5 smell, scent
- 6 you
- 9 three
- 10 I mean, that is to say (1,3)

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

Maize

from the Path to Citizenship series

Guilá Naquitz Cave in Oaxaca, Mexico is the site of early domestication of several food crops, including teosinte (an ancestor of maize).



Aztec cultivation of maize

Most historians believe maize was domesticated in the Tehuacan Valley of Mexico. Recent research modified this view somewhat; scholars now indicate the adjacent Balsas River Valley of south-central Mexico as the center of domestication.

The Olmec and Mayans cultivated maize in numerous varieties throughout Mesoamerica, cooked, ground or processed through nixtamalization.

Beginning about 2500 BC, the crop spread through much of the Americas. The region developed a trade network based on surplus and varieties of maize crops.

After European contact with the Americas in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, explorers and traders carried maize back to Europe and introduced it to other countries. Maize spread to the rest of the world because of its ability to grow in diverse climates.

Sugar-rich varieties called sweet corn are usually grown for human consumption as kernels, while field corn varieties are used for animal feed, various corn-based human food uses (including grinding into cornmeal or masa, pressing into corn oil, and fermentation and distillation into alcoholic beverages like bourbon whiskey), and as chemical feedstocks.



source: Wikipedia.org

To see more about this article series, visit us at [Path to Citizenship \(P2C\) online](http://Path to Citizenship (P2C) online)



JACK'S BISTRO

Tommy's Tummy - restaurant review series

by Tommy Clarkson

Over the last few months, a few folks have inquired as to why I'd not recently written about any of Manzanillo's new, remodeled or relocated eateries. In keeping with my self-imposed promise to say nothing negative regarding anyone's edible offerings, prices, presentational appearance, size of portions or regarding the establishment itself, the simple reality is that none have done much in "tripping our culinary trigger" beyond normalcy.

That is until we recently had the opportunity to eat at Jack's Bistro. Now this restaurant is worthy of a great deal of favorable talk!



Quail eggs on a Bed of Spinach.
YUM! Need I say more?

The ambiance is small, cozy and friendly; Its soft-spoken, bespectacled owner from the Netherlands, Jack Kuis, deservedly, is renowned for his service among the foremost, world class, culinary ranks; And, the freshly-prepared dishes – definitely different from the offerings of other local restaurant fare in the area – is simply superlative, yet moderately-priced.

In conversation with him, one realizes that, from early on, Jack seemed destined for the field of fine food. His first job was that of working in the kitchen for the great-grandmother of the King of Holland! Later on, following three years of formal culinary arts schooling, he served in increasingly-responsible positions through several five star hotel/restaurants in such exotic locales as Aruba and St. Martins, culminating at the Princess Hotel in Acapulco, where he served as the Executive Chef and Director of Food and Beverage.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner offerings at Jack's Bistro are all delightfully unique. As to the former, we'll simply say, check for a most savory array of great ways to start off your day! Mid-day and evening selections are also unique and delectable! But three of his delicious "starter" offerings are Crepes with crab meat, glazed with hollandaise sauce or filled with spinach and Portobello mushrooms covered with cheese sauce, Crema de Cilantro and Potage of fresh coriander. Now those one won't find just anywhere around here!



For breakfast, who'd have ever have thought something with the word "divorce" in it could be such a pleasant experience!

Or, what of "something light"? That might be his chicken tacos baked in green sauce and cheese, poblano chiles filled with spinach, Portobellos and cheese, or Tallarines Alfredo de la Casa – noodles in cream sauce with mushrooms, chicken, parsley, bacon and parmesan cheese. "Excelente"!

Jack's main dishes are no less cosmopolitan. Three examples of these are filet of sole with peaches, chicken breast topped with chile strips and onions with a Poblano cheese sauce or Texas style grilled smoky pork ribs - all served with wonderful, Rosemary potatoes (no, that's not Ms. Clooney's maiden name!) and freshly-prepared vegetables.

His desserts are an entirely different taste treat world, be they Mexican sweet crepes, Tarta Copa Melba, a mini apple pie topped with ice cream, nuts, raisins, cinnamon and whipped cream or – and you can't believe how delectable this is – Jack's sweet and sour special. To try it is to understand!

Beyond one of the best arrays of fine dining available in Man-

(Continued on page 27)

(Jack's Bistro - Continued from page 26)



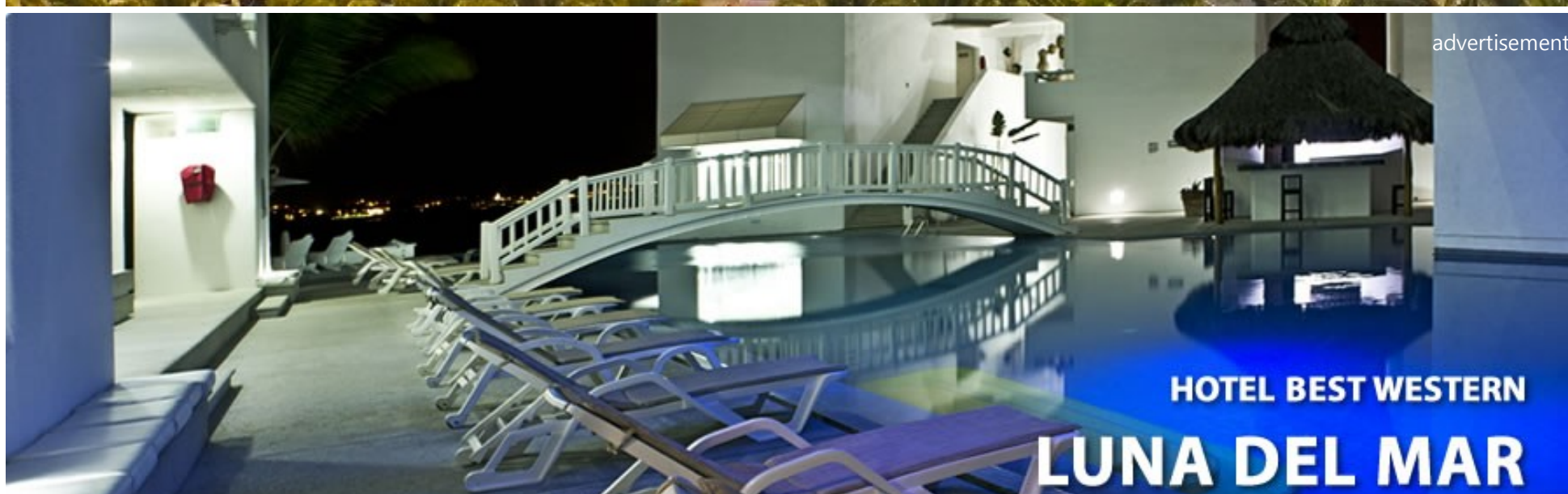
Lunch-wise, Sole de Ray with Peaches topped with Hollandaise Sauce brings new meaning to being a "Sole Man"!



Spare ribs with pineapple - a delight!

Manzanillo, he offers a number of "Specials for Jack's Friends" - such a creation of your own menu with a one day notice and holiday family specials - which are listed on small placards at each table.

Located directly south, across the street from Wings Army, Jack's Bistro is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner - 9:00 am to 9:00 pm.



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