



# Manzanillo SUN

March 2018

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine



Around Town  
Manzanillo Living  
Nature's Wonders  
Mighty Nature  
Manzanillo Port  
Technology  
Culture  
At the Movies  
Finance  
RV Travel  
Recipe  
Learn Spanish  
Path to Citizenship

A day's work...fishing in Manzanillo  
photo by Kirby Vickery

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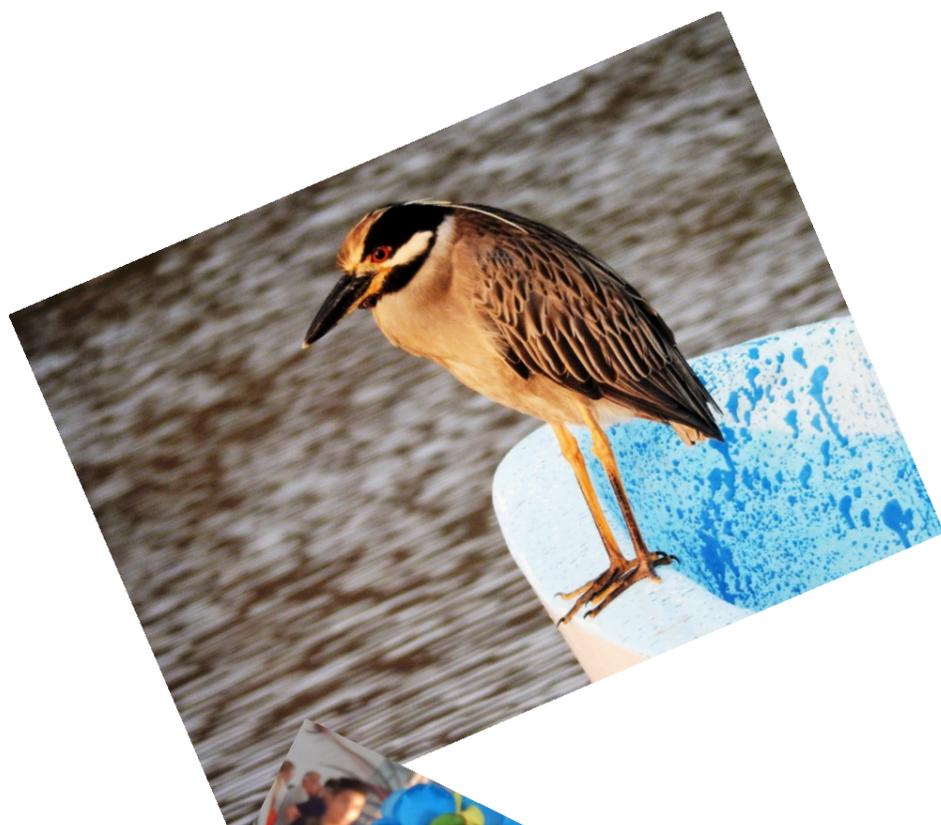
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E-MAGAZINE

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To send submissions for possible inclusion in the magazine, please send to the editor by 15th of each month. We are always looking for writers or ideas on what you would like us to see as topics for the magazine.

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

ADVERTISING

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## A Troubled Bridge Over Water

story and photos by John Chalmers

I remember well the first time I heard the great song by Simon and Garfunkel, "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Here in Mexico, where my wife, Linda, and I escape Alberta's winter, the song came to mind with the experience we have had, not with a bridge over troubled water, but rather, with a troubled bridge over water!

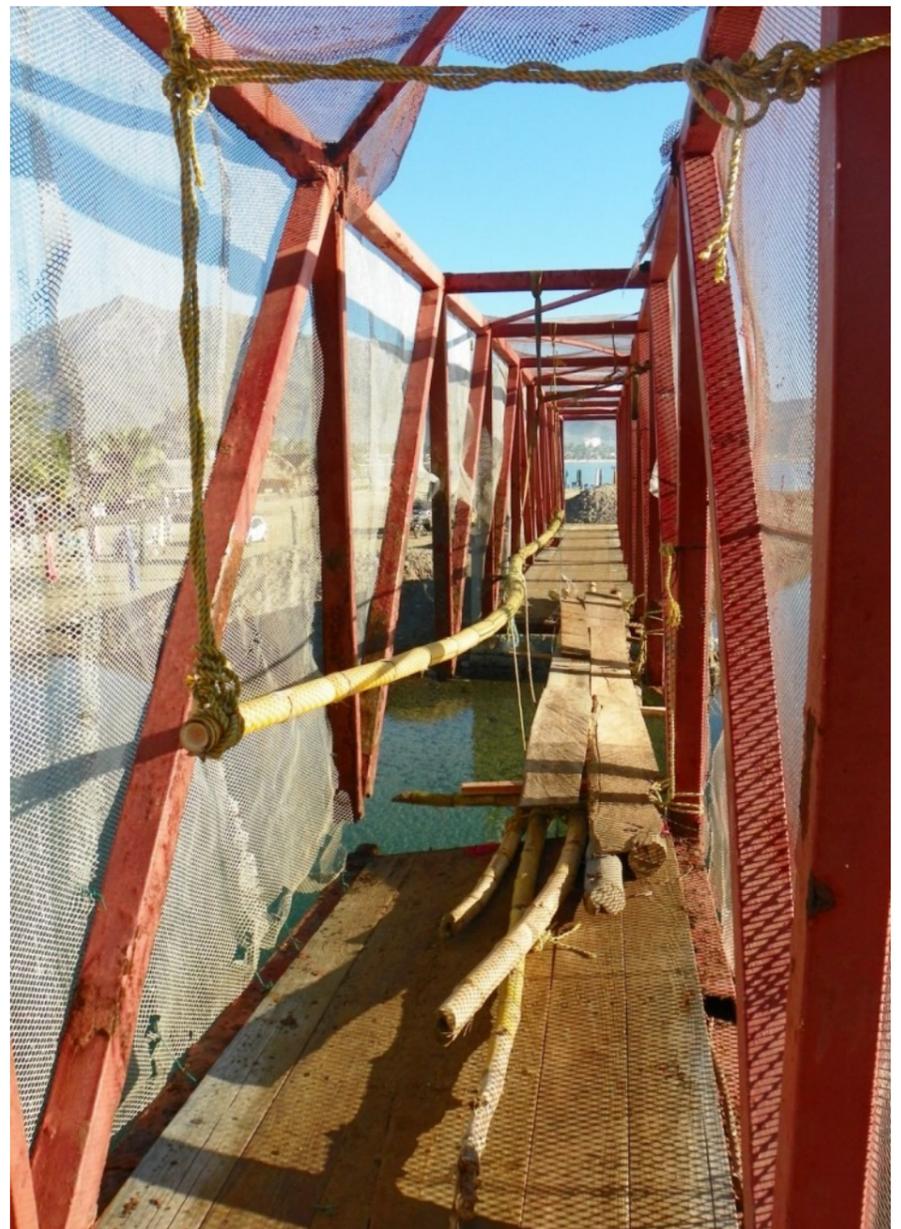
Thirteen years ago, we began staying at Vida del Mar to escape winter at home in Alberta. To walk to the beach at La Boquita, we crossed a rickety wooden bridge of posts and boards from Palma Real, across the inlet, to the lagoon behind the beach. I called it The Bridge of Death, but purely for dramatic effect! I admit that crossing it was not perilous, just a minor adventure!



The author's wife, Linda Chalmers, seen on "The Bridge of Death" in 2007

The wooden Bridge of Death was replaced a few years ago by a sturdy steel bridge that was wider, safer, and high enough to allow the passage of fishing boats beneath it. Alas, the new bridge lasted only a few years before the climate took its toll and the bridge began to disintegrate, rusted in places as if it some steel beams had been cut. In early 2017, the beams and the wooden deck area began to collapse. Improvised repairs with poles, bamboo, planks and rope allowed passage for those who dared to cross, but it was much riskier than the old Bridge of Death, and ultimately passage became impossible.

For those of us who hike the road regularly from Vida del Mar to Palma Real, then across the bridge to stroll the beach, to walk beside the lagoon or to hike the road behind La Boquita, our trek ended at the bridge. But the story has a happy ending! In late 2017, a new bridge was installed. Of course, there is a



Improvised repairs on the previous bridge as the deck collapsed made passage risky

cost attached. The bridge was made possible due to a 50-50 cost sharing agreement between the City of Manzanillo and the Palma Real Condominium Association. Palma Real has contributed 192,385 pesos towards the cost.

As the bridge is used by owners, renters and visitors from both sides of the bridge, many of us felt we should help with costs. The bridge adds greatly to our enjoyment of life here. The Palma Real board of directors has asked that owners in the Club Santiago area and the Juluapan Peninsula – which includes Vida del Mar and adjacent areas – area each contribute 64,000 pesos. So far, donations from Vida del Mar and other areas on the peninsula have totalled less than 49,000 pesos. Much less has been received from the other side of the bridge.

The bridge supports us, and we can support it! The new bridge is an asset for all in the area. For those who would like to contribute to a very worthwhile cause, I encourage your donations. The bridge enhances the value of Vida del Mar and Palma Real by providing access to La Boquita. You can donate your pesos

...Troubled Bridge Over Water

As the steel beams collapsed, and the wooden deck disintegrated, passage became impossible



at the Vida del Mar office. Indicate "Bridge Fund" with your donation and provide your name and e-mail address.

For those not familiar with Vida del Mar, the development is reached from the turnoff from Highway 200 near the pedestrian overpass at El Naranjo. The office is four kilometers down the paved road from the highway. Staff in the office will accept your donation and provide a receipt. You will also receive acknowledgement and a receipt from Palma Real.

Even though the new bridge has been in place for only about four months, rust spots can already be seen in some places. Donations for the bridge could facilitate the painting of the bridge with rust-inhibiting paint to help ensure that the bridge is protected from corrosion. Even though the bridge is in excellent condition at present, access to the steps on the bridge side is susceptible to erosion caused by rain or storms and in need of reinforcement. But one improvement has already been made. On February 22, new and better steps to the bridge

The bridge makes access possible to and from the La Boquita beach to enjoy the beautiful area



were built at the beach access. Anyone donating to our fine new bridge can suggest a name! The suggestions will be submitted to all donors and then voted upon. Please help soon!



Access to the beach to and from the road that leads from the Palma Real development is possible again due to installation of the new bridge

The new bridge, which has a concrete deck, makes it possible again to walk from Vida del Mar and Palma Real to the beach, to Club Santiago, the Oasis restaurant and the Beach Club, or to continue along just to enjoy the view. Likewise, there is now access from Club Santiago and the beach to visit the restaurant at Palma Real or to enjoy the scenic road from there to Vida del Mar. For me, personally, the new bridge has added greatly to my morning walk from Vida del Mar to the beach and the lagoon where I always take a camera to photograph the many types of birds to be seen there.

... more pics follow

...Troubled Bridge Over Water



Built for pedestrians, but high enough for boats to pass under, the new bridge is an asset for the area around the lagoon and the beach



Functional and attractive, the new bridge adds to enjoyment of the area by those who use it



Financial support can help prevent damage by coating the bridge with rust-inhibiting paint



Two birds often seen in the lagoon, now easily accessible with the new bridge, are the marbled godwit at rear and the reddish egret, which dances with wings outspread when fishing

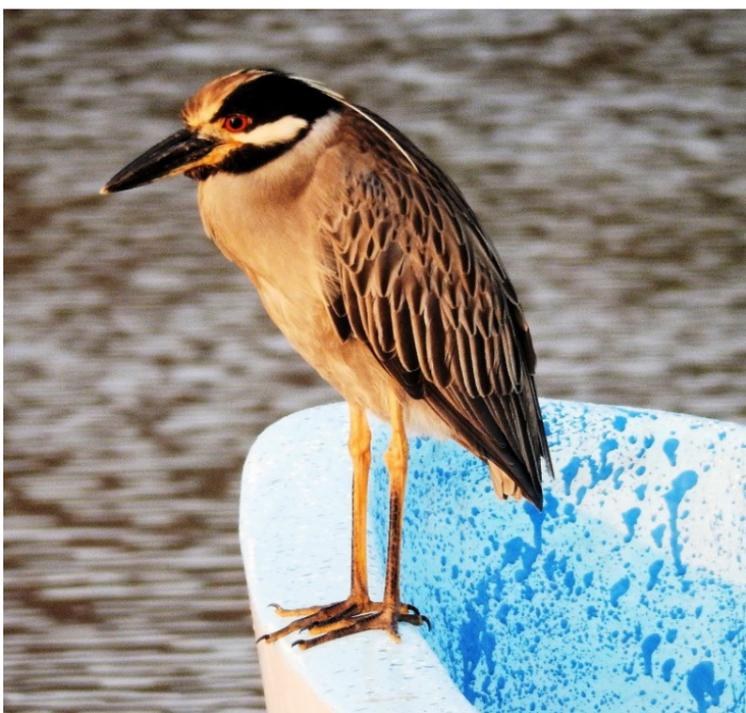


The beautiful snowy egret, seen regularly at the beach and the lagoon, is one of many birds that inhabit the area, easier to reach with the new bridge

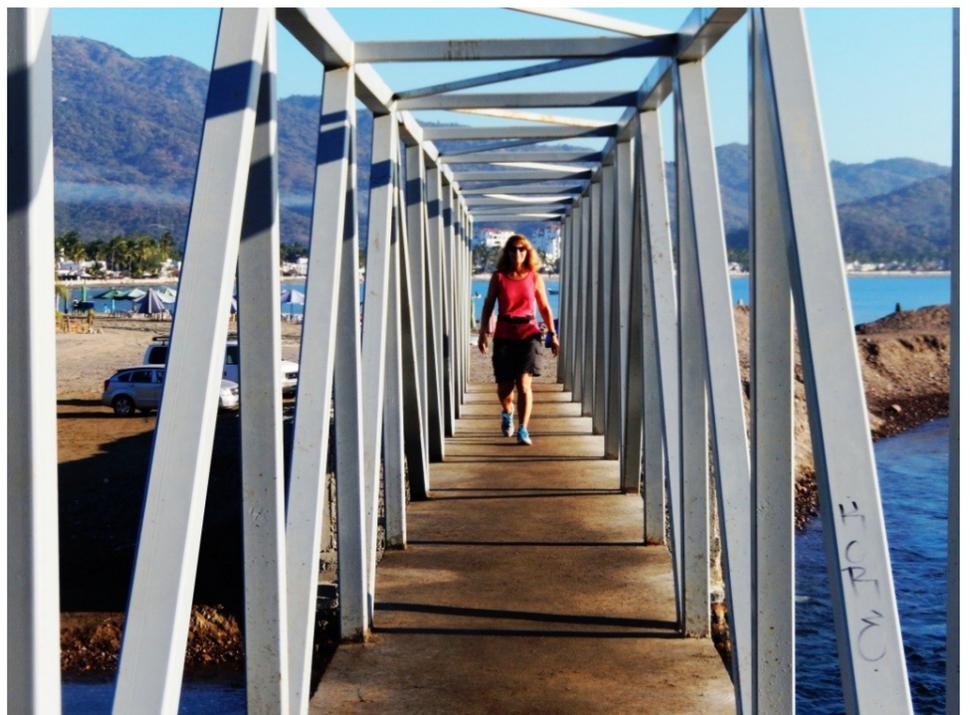
...Troubled Bridge Over Water



The new bridge is a great improvement and an asset worth protecting and preserving



The beautiful yellow-crowned night heron, frequently seen at the lagoon, will usually pose patiently for photographs



Donations to support the bridge will contribute to its lasting use and enjoyment

Writer/photographer Chalmers sees the new bridge as a fine asset for the community, well worth supporting by donations



...Troubled Bridge Over Water

New steps on the bridge



you can reach John at [john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com](mailto:john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com)

## Mardi Gras Manzanillo Style

by Kirby Vickery

I first started going to parades in El Paso Texas, growing up. Sometimes we would freeze trying to have a good time. I have seen the Rose Bowl Parade, Macy's parade in New York where they spend a fortune on every float to make sure you can't see the wheels nor the driver and everything is covered in something full of glitter or flowers. I participated in El Cajon, California's Mother Goose parade in a heavily modified Cadillac Convertible pulling a six-foot model of an F-16 mounted on a crepe-papered utility trailer. The guy driving the car was a friend who called himself Captain Sticky. A "four hundred and twenty-seven-pound, caped crusader against the godless communists in skin tight leotards."

In each of these parades, the crowds were kept back from the street by barricades and armed police, at least one every few feet along the parade path. I went to the Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans the year after Camille hit. You know those silver and gold chocolate covered coins you see them throwing from the floats in vast amounts? Reach down to get just one and you'll have three fingers broken in six locations before you can yank it back. Sometimes it got so crowded you had to wait until the guy next to you exhaled so you could inhale. The parade can be only described as, 'gaudy.'

At the other end of things, I watched my granddaughter play her horn in the Coupeville High School Marching Band. In this parade, there were more people in it than watching. There was no law enforcement anywhere. As a matter of fact, one of a band member's parents got so enthused she got up and started marching down the street in front of the band. Oh yeah, the floats were all crepe-decorated farm wagons, some



with the hay still in them, and all pulled by someone's freshly washed tractor (mostly).

Manzanillo is a rapidly growing Latin city with all of the growing pains everyone has. They have taken it upon themselves to put a wonderful foot forward in the celebration of Mardi Gras. With its size and investiture, it produces a fairly short parade that is definitely loud if not just as colorful. There were no marching bands. There were several Mariachi bands on the floats, but most had DJ's playing loud (and I do mean loud) music that the people on the floats and behind them could dance to.

All the floats were temporarily decorated flatbed trailers, towed by some of the cleanest and largest long-haul tractors I've ever seen, the cabs of which were filled with kids riding in a parade and blowing its air horn. While the women in Rio and in New Orleans are scantily dressed enough to be stared at, the women here had a wider age range and all were covered well enough. I saw a go-go girl whose age was still in the single digits who had just lost her two front teeth while the lady gyrating next to her carried too much weight and had to be helped to rearrange her blond wig to cover all of her grey. I asked another during her break, while she was petting my puppy, how old she was and she told me she was fourteen and that most of the dancers were members of dancing schools or clubs.

One young man on the first float took my heart away. He had muscles on muscles on muscles and was down along the edge of his float/trailer picking up little children and having his picture taken with them, one right after another. He did a little 'frug' with what appeared to be a thirteen-year-old. While I was watching, a fourteen-year-old ran by me with a cell phone in her hand. She melted when he saw her and invited her up on the float for a picture. I reached out and grabbed the camera and got two pictures, one of them cheek to cheek with his massive arm wrapped around her and another of her being kissed on her forehead as he lowered her to the ground. What he missed was her swooning into some of her girlfriends' arms as he was being driven away and she showed the pictures to them. He just loved kids and was a go-go dancer.

I spotted a typical family of three when they arrived the first day early. Their little girl was about six or seven and could have

...Mardi Gras Manzanillo Style

been an attitude problem. Ah, this is Mexico and I watched as dad played with her while it was getting dark. She got some food and a soft drink from mom and they bought her some Minnie Mouse ears that lit up in different bright colors. You could see the devotion in her manner and face toward her parents. Another young person of about twelve or thirteen had been given a cute, albeit cheap, toy that gets shot up into the air with a thick rubber band. Then it swirls and twirls coming down while being all lit up with a couple of very bright mini lights.

He wasn't the only child or grown-up with this toy. There were several others near him. They were all doing the same thing. Launching these things up in the air, watching them fall while glittering all the way. Most of the kids would race over and try to catch them. Having four lanes of empty road gave them the area to operate in. My boy was the only one that never once caught his. I'm thinking glasses.



The crowds were heavy but courteous. Instead of being held tight against their parents, kids of all ages were running and screaming all over the place. Everyone gave way to them. Everyone enjoyed the parades and the whole time you could hear laughter and see smiles on just about everyone.

If you're in or near Manzanillo next year about this time, I highly recommend you attend this parade, if not for the parade then just to experience these marvelous people.



*you can reach Kirby Vickers at [kirby.vickers@manzanillosun.com](mailto:kirby.vickers@manzanillosun.com)*



by Tommy Clarkson

**Pepperface** *Peperomia obtusifolia*

Family: *Peperaceae*

Also known as: *Baby Rubber Plant, Jade Plant, Blunt-leaved Peperomia, Marble Peperomia, Florida Peperomia or American Rubber Plant*

Thriving worldwide throughout the tropics, there are around 1,000 different herbaceous species in the *Peperomia* genus. Yet, even with this large of a group, it is often difficult to distinguish one from another because they all have quite tiny flowers that lack petals and sepals.

The Pepperface is indigenous to Mexico, the northern jungles of South America and the overall Caribbean area. They can be reasonably well-identified by their fleshy, obovate-to-elliptic or nearly round, dark-green leaves - though there are delightful variegated varieties. These glabrous ("hairless or smooth") - my pal's shiny pate comes to mind - leaves are one and a quarter to four inches (3.18 - 10.16 cm) in length. Overall, these succulents grow to about sixteen inches (40.64 cm) tall.

*Peperomia obtusifolia* comes in one of two configurations: As a low, shrubby sort of creeping groundcover, or as an epiphyte. Ours is the former. For the ensuing well-organized and succinct description, I am most appreciative for the *Floridata Plant Encyclopedia*. "It has vine-like elongated stems with leaves rising six to nine inches [15.24 - 22.86 cm] above the soil or branch sur-



The Pepperface has attractive fleshy, obovate to elliptic, or nearly round, dark green leaves

face. Both stems and leaves are thick and fleshy with a smooth waxy surface. The long stalked, round-to-obovate leaves are dark green, in wild forms, but often variegated in cultivated forms, and are borne alternately. They are sometimes notched at the tips. The minute greenish-white flowers are tightly packed on slender two-to-four inch [5.08 - 10.16 cm] vertical spikes carried on hairy, erect stems. The tiny smooth oval fruits develop, while partially embedded in the spike, with their hooked beaks protruding from it.

Early Florida botanists confused this species with Spatulate Peperomia [*Peperomia magnoliifolia*], which usually grows as an epiphyte high in the branches of live oak trees in upland tropical hardwood forests."

I might add how its leaves are cupped and leathery; they are colored, in some plants, a deep purplish-green; its stems being

...Pepperface



It is indigenous to Mexico, the northern jungles of South America and the Caribbean area

slightly purple; and how those white flower spikes - which appear between late spring and early autumn - grow up to eight inches (20.32 cm).

Pepperface prefers life in a light, highly organic soil made yet more perfect with the addition of lots of chipped bark, peat moss or coconut coir (shredded husk fibers). When feeding them, sparingly employ a weak foliar spray. Too much fertilizer will result in soft, untypical growth and, as a result, eventually the plant will collapse. Furthermore, I'd encourage you to avoid granular fertilizers as these can burn their tender leaves. From a care, upkeep and maintenance standpoint, also be aware that they're susceptible to numerous plant diseases as well as - if you've them in your area - slugs and snails.

As to their preferred living locale, outdoors they'll grow best in filtered light or medium shade whereas, for indoor plants, an east window might be their best location. High humidity and moist soil are on their "like to have" list, while wet feet are not. So, drench the soil around them when the surface gets dry. During the cooler times, when your plant is not actively growing, hold off a little longer.

The Pepperface is well suited for a life indoors, be it a hot and steamy greenhouse or a rather pedestrian home on a window-

sill with only indirect light. Additionally, its tolerance for muggy conditions makes it a great selection for a bottle garden. But, beyond all of that, it gets the plant equivalent of the *Better Housekeeping Seal of Approval* in that it is a "clean air house-plant" which removes formaldehyde from indoor air. Outside, it's a good selection as ground-cover for placement in tropical shade locales or atriums. Though, not a tough sort, it won't well handle foot traffic, so choose its home location carefully.



Outdoors, the Pepperface (*Peperomia obtusifolia*) will grow best in filtered light or medium shade, whereas for indoor plants, an east window might be their best location

Most easily propagated by division, Pepperface will also grow from stem or leaf cuttings. But if seeking something slightly different, might I suggest one of the following *Peperomia obtusifolia* variants: 'Alba' - a variegated form with pale lemon-yellow when young, leaves that deepen in color with age; 'Albomarginata' - a variegated form with silvery white borders on gray-green leaves; 'Variegata' and *Peperomia obtusifolia* 'Greengold' - both variegated forms with patches of cream or yellow; and 'Minima' which is a dwarf form of *P. obtusifolia*.

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at [tommy@manzanillosun.com](mailto:tommy@manzanillosun.com)

## The new book is ready!

You can now order Volume II of "The Civilized Jungle"

Who doesn't enjoy tropical palms, bright jungle flowers and a mango margarita?

Well, in the words of that smooth crooner of the late 70's - Meatloaf - "Two out of three ain't bad." (And, actually, the last one can easily be realized by a personal trip to Ola Brisa Gardens!)

But of the former two, if unable to be here in person, what better way to vicariously bask in our balmy environs - no matter where one might be this winter - than through graphic word pictures and great photography?

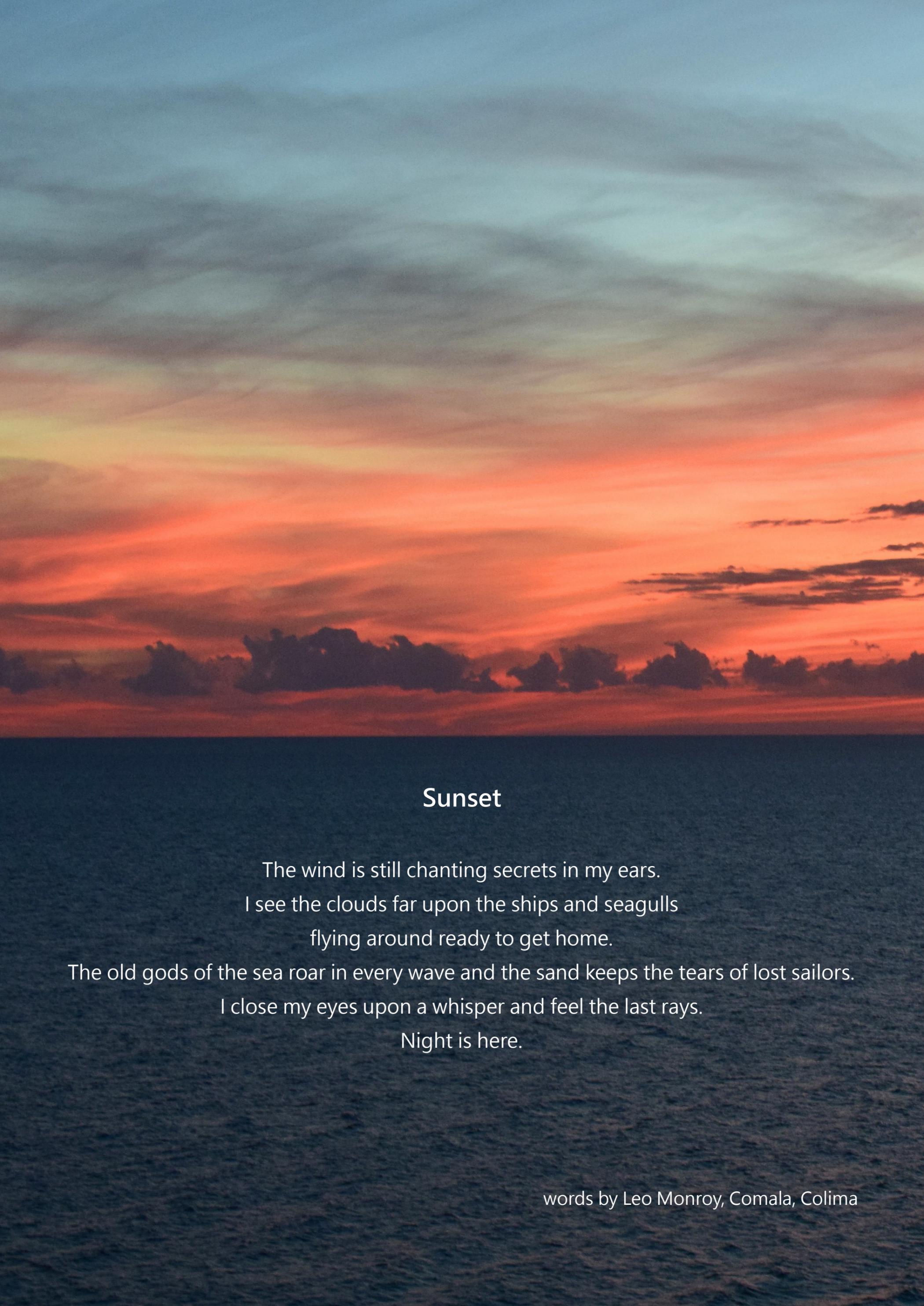
This is a fast and easy way to order Volumes I and II of our award winning book series "The Civilized Jungle".

We have created a small web site, [Planting Tropical Roots](#) that will provide more details about the series, a page dedicated to your purchase options, a short author's bio and our contact information. The site is simple and easy (like us)!

Enjoy. (And we look forward to your physical visit here at Ola Brisa Gardens!)

Tommy and Patty Clarkson





## Sunset

The wind is still chanting secrets in my ears.  
I see the clouds far upon the ships and seagulls  
flying around ready to get home.

The old gods of the sea roar in every wave and the sand keeps the tears of lost sailors.

I close my eyes upon a whisper and feel the last rays.

Night is here.

words by Leo Monroy, Comala, Colima

Port of Manzanillo in 2018

by Terry Sovil

1971 was a turning point for the Port of Manzanillo. A new administration was introduced, smoothing relationships between workers and management/owners. The National Commission for Port Coordination was put in charge of worker assignments, assuring work was completed on schedule, obtaining equipment and increasing handling speed. It has operated for over 100 years, 24 hours a day, without a labor suspension. Items such as consumer goods, agricultural products and exports to the USA, Canada, Guatemala, Columbia, Chile, Japan, China, India, and Malaysia are handled. Exports are to 145 destinations around the world!

The port is overseen by the Integral Port Administration (API) headed by Juan Carlos Córdoba Estrada who is the Planning Manager. The huge expansion has been promoted by the Ministry of Communications and Transports (SCT) since 2013. Primary is the development of Cuyutlán Lagoon area. They want to maintain their spot as #1 commercial port nationally. The port closed 2016 with 2.5 million TEUs (twenty foot equivalent units, containers are either 20 or 40 feet / 6 or 12.2 meters long) and 25 million tons of cargo that was imported or exported.

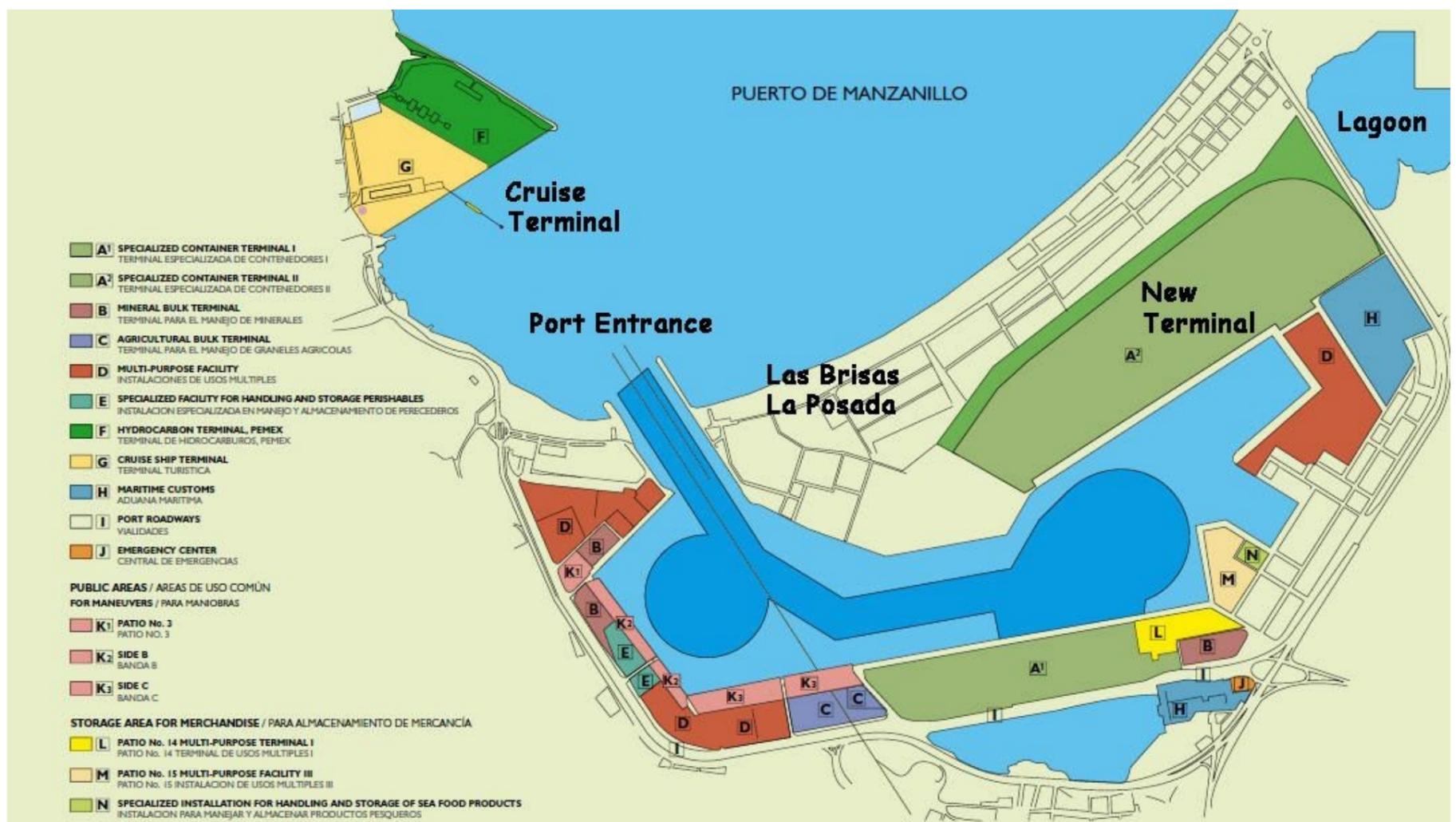
This makes the port #1 nationwide. But mixed with the good is the lack of space to grow. So, they are working on expanding the facility to complement their "Port without Papers",

quick handling of incoming and departing vessels and goods. The SCT granted 1,461 hectares (14,610,000 sq meters / 5.65 sq miles) of terminal 2 space in the Cuyutlán lagoon. Environmental studies are still being done and the overall cost will run up to 6 billion pesos. This will double incoming and outgoing traffic.

Port without Papers is a new computerized process to speed billing, payments and permits with any mobile device 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

"Quality Label" program coordinates with the port community to manage perishables in less than 36 hours, docking in less than 2 hours, departures in less than 1.5 hours, visit of authorities in less than an hour and visits of authorities for departures in less than 30 minutes. The Port of Manzanillo scored well in Contained Cargo movement and is #1 nationwide (Mexico), #5 in Latin America and #64 worldwide.

Manzanillo is a clean port, recognized in 2016 by the API as the only port in Mexico where all 23 terminals participate under the Certificate of Clean Industry. The port works under the United Nations Global Compacts, has national and international certifications (ISO 9001 – Quality Management) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management).





**The 14 terminals in the Port**

COMPANY	SURFACE (M2)	USE
1. PEMEX <u>Refinación</u>	27,933.29	Hydrocarbons Terminal
2. Operadora de la Cuenca del Pacífico, S.A. de C.V. (OCUPA)	85,477.37	Multipurpose Installation I
3. Terminal Internacional de Manzanillo, S.A. de C.V. (TIMSA)	84,956.90	Multipurpose Installation II
4. Cementos de México, S.A. de C.V. (CEMEX)	12,545.18	Cement
5. Cementos <u>Apasco</u> , S.A. de C.V.	17,440.35	Cement
6. <u>Corporación Multimodal</u>	8,915.14	Refrigerated Products
7. <u>Comercializadora La Junta</u>	35,090.88	Agricultural Bulk
8. <u>Granelera Manzanillo</u>	10,844.06	Agricultural Bulk
9. SSA de México, S.A. de C.V.	259,422.79	Container Terminal
10. <u>Exploración de Yeso</u> (USG)	25,051.20	Mineral Bulk (GYPSUM)
11. Frigorífico de Manzanillo, S.A. de C.V.	16,426.00	Refrigerated Products
12. <u>Marítima y Servicios</u> (MARFRIGO)	2,200.00	Fish Freezing Chambers
13. Gobierno del Estado de Colima ( <u>Tourist Terminal</u> )	22,666.70	Cruise Ship Terminal
14. Servicios <u>Terremar</u>	373.52 & 419.223	Scales and Weighing



The current port area consists of 437 hectares (1.7 sq miles / 4.37 sq km) which includes water areas, docks and storage. Currently it has 19 berths (14 commercial, 3 for hydrocarbons and 2 for cruise ships). The port has the following navigational areas:

1. Port Access Channel or the entry to the port. 600 meters / 1968 feet and a depth of 16 meters / 52 feet.
2. Northern Turning Basin allowing for docking positions up to 300 meters / 985 feet in length and 32 meters / 105 feet wide, with a depth of 16 meters / 52 feet.
3. Southern Turning Basin allowing for ships up to 300 meters / 985 feet in length and 28 meters / 92 feet wide, with a depth of up to 16 meters / 52 feet.

The Navigation Channel, with a depth of 16 meters / 52 feet, allows it to handle the new Panamax ships that carry 12-14,000 TEU's. This means 30,000,000 tons of cargo annually. Panamax ships are large, with a length of 950 feet / 289.6 m, beam (width) of 106 feet / 32.31m and draft (how deep the hull is in the water) of 39.5 feet / 12.04 m. With a draft that large, the depth of the port and entrance channel is important! The new port addition in the lagoon will make the port about four times larger, increase capacity and help the maritime commerce in the Pacific basin.

The port currently works with 23 shipping lines including Maersk, Hapag-Lloyd and NYK. Working with 17 states in Mexico, the port has an influence on 65% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 55% of the country's population. There are freezers in the fishing terminal with storage of up to 3,500 tons of products. The Specialized Terminal for Containers (TEC) has a capacity of up to three ships at a time with up to 120 boxes per ship per hour. There are three grain silos with 7,000 tons each and a refrigerated warehouse for perishables with capacity of up to 3,000 tons.

Port of Manzanillo, a world-class port.

DOWNLOAD YOUR OWN [PORT HANDBOOK AT THIS LINK](#)

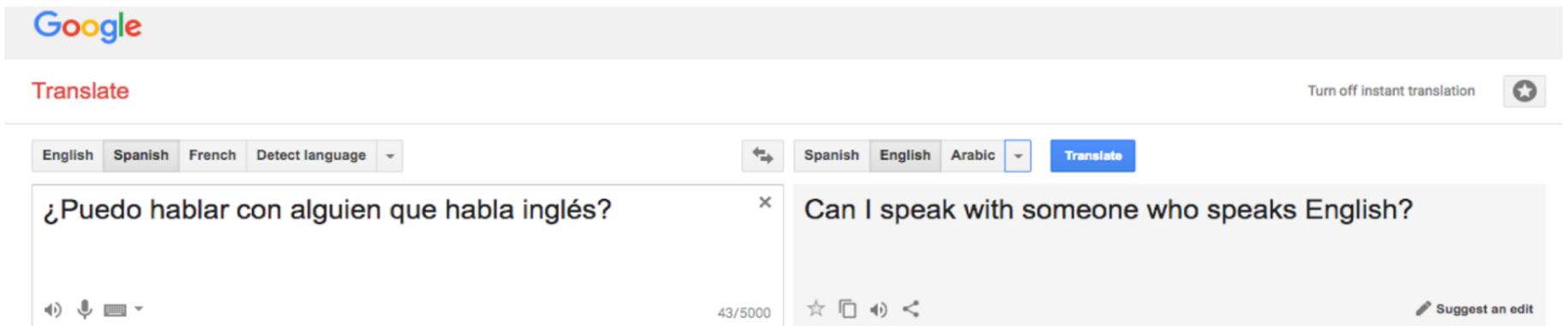
*you can reach Terry Sovil at [terry@manzanillosun.com](mailto:terry@manzanillosun.com)*



## ¿Puedo hablar con alguien que habla inglés?

by Señor Tech

The below was done using Google translate, but there are numerous translation sites online, including ones from Microsoft



When travelling in Spanish speaking countries, “¿Puedo hablar con alguien que habla inglés?” is a natural question. But since the advent of smartphones and ‘always on internet’, anyone with one of these devices has the ability to communicate with anyone, in virtually any language.

Type in a phrase in English, choose the target language and within milliseconds, an understandable translation is generated. In the eleven years since the introduction of truly functional smartphones were introduced, the translation algorithms have improved to the point where the translations are over 90% accurate. And these translations improve daily with the help of crowd-sourced corrections. Soon, the translations will be seamless and 99.9% accurate.

There are apps for both Android and iOS devices available. The screenshot below is from my iPhone. By pressing the microphone button and speaking, the app translations to the target language and not only displays the text, but speaks the translation. You can also point your phone’s camera at text, using the app, and it will translate what it sees.

So you can throw out those old translation books and use your phone as a pocket translator.



Below is the Google Translate computer desktop version

The following languages are supported in Google Translate.<sup>[5]</sup>

- |                |                    |                   |                  |                |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Afrikaans   | 22. English        | 42. Igbo          | 63. Maltese      | 83. Slovak     |
| 2. Albanian    | (American)         | 43. Indonesian    | 64. Maori        | 84. Slovenian  |
| 3. Amharic     | 23. Esperanto      | 44. Irish         | 65. Marathi      | 85. Somali     |
| 4. Arabic      | 24. Estonian       | 45. Italian       | 66. Mongolian    | 86. Spanish    |
| 5. Armenian    | 25. Filipino       | 46. Japanese      | 67. Nepali       | 87. Sundanese  |
| 6. Azerbaijani | 26. Finnish        | 47. Javanese      | 68. Norwegian    | 88. Swahili    |
| 7. Basque      | 27. French         | 48. Kannada       | (Bokmål)         | 89. Swedish    |
| 8. Belarusian  | 28. Frisian        | 49. Kazakh        | 69. Pashto       | 90. Tajik      |
| 9. Bengali     | 29. Galician       | 50. Khmer         | 70. Persian      | 91. Tamil      |
| 10. Bosnian    | 30. Georgian       | 51. Korean        | 71. Polish       | 92. Telugu     |
| 11. Bulgarian  | 31. German         | 52. Kurdish       | 72. Portuguese   | 93. Thai       |
| 12. Burmese    | 32. Greek          | 53. Kyrgyz        | 73. Punjabi      | 94. Turkish    |
| 13. Catalan    | 33. Gujarati       | 54. Lao           | 74. Romanian     | 95. Ukrainian  |
| 14. Cebuano    | 34. Haitian Creole | 55. Latin         | 75. Russian      | 96. Urdu       |
| 15. Chichewa   | 35. Hausa          | 56. Latvian       | 76. Samoan       | 97. Uzbek      |
| 16. Chinese    | 36. Hawaiian       | 57. Lithuanian    | 77. Scots Gaelic | 98. Vietnamese |
| 17. Corsican   | 37. Hebrew         | 58. Luxembourgish | 78. Serbian      | 99. Welsh      |
| 18. Croatian   | 38. Hindi          | 59. Macedonian    | 79. Sesotho      | 100. Xhosa     |
| 19. Czech      | 39. Hmong          | 60. Malagasy      | 80. Shona        | 101. Yiddish   |
| 20. Danish     | 40. Hungarian      | 61. Malay         | 81. Sindhi       | 102. Yoruba    |
| 21. Dutch      | 41. Icelandic      | 62. Malayalam     | 82. Sinhala      | 103. Zulu      |

Este es el Traductor de Google para iPhone de Apple. Hablo por el micrófono y se traduce para mí y habla a The Listener.



if you have questions or suggestions about future technology topics, email [seniortech@manzanillosun.com](mailto:seniortech@manzanillosun.com)



by Tommy Clarkson

### Striped Dracaena, *Dracaena*

Family: *Agavaceae*

Also known as: *Dragon Tree*

*Dracaena* is the Greek word for "female dragon." In turn, the thickened sap of this plant, supposedly, resembles dragon's blood. (However, in that it's been some time since I last slew a dragon and, quite honestly, with all the roaring, flapping of scaly wings and searing fire breath, I have but scant recollection of exactly what its blood looked like.)

But first, let's discuss the approximately forty varieties of this interesting genus. It is comprised of a variable lot ranging from small, primarily herbaceous perennials to large, woody palms or tree-like plants - all from the Old World. They do share the commonality of sword-shaped, often stalkless leaves. As a rule, these usually grow in a spiral from the stem top of the trunk.

Native to tropical West Africa, they (*the Striped Dracaena not the earlier-discussed dragon*) look and respond best to shadier environs. Hence they work very well indoors.

Additionally, regarding such usage—according to NSA researchers - this is a great plant for cleaning the air when used as an indoor specimen.... *but, I suspect, finding their little tiny, air-purification, vacuum cleaners hidden beneath their leaves is rather difficult!*

There are at least seven sub-species, with two main varieties of this plant, generally available to the public: 'Warneckii' which features stiff, striped leaves of gray, green, or white, as well as several popular cultivars, including 'Lemon Lime'; 'Janet Craig' which has solid green, flexible leaves; and the smaller 'Janet Craig Compacta'.

Used in such capacity since at least the mid-19th century, it makes a most striking houseplant. It has a woody, straight, cylindrical trunk and attractive leaves growing to between thirty-nine and over forty-seven inches (99.06 - 119.38 cm). Reaching to fifteen feet or more, it looks much like its kin, the Corn Plant (*Dracaena fragrans*). Its tiny - red on the outside, white within - flowers are in linear panicles (branched, elongated inflorescences of stalked leaves). It can be propagated by tip cuttings with its principal pests and diseases including mites, thrips, and chewing insects, while having a sensitivity to leaf spot diseases.

As to the best care for *Dracaena deremensis*, what follows might be a good beginning:

Water the Striped Dracaena thoroughly with a garden hose after the top two to two-and-a-half inches (6.35 cm) of soil becomes dry. This will allow the moistened foliage to dry before nightfall, preventing fungal diseases. If your plant's leaf tips turn brown and dry, mist its foliage lightly once per week - always in the morning.

They like their food supplements so, every two or three weeks, add one teaspoon of 10-10-10 nitrogen-phosphorous-potassium water -soluble fertilizer to one gallon of water, stir-

This specimen - also called a Striped Dracaena - is actually a *Dracaena fragrans* 'Warneckii'



...Dracaena

ring until the fertilizer dissolves completely. Pour the solution onto the soil surrounding the Striped Dracaena at an approximate rate of 1/4 gallon per 2 1/2 square feet.

Being quite drought tolerant, it prefers a more organic-based home but can handle a rather wide variety of soil types. However, it would appreciate it if you'd spread mulch, one inch (2.54 cm) deep, around the plant. Cover the ground starting four inches (10.16 cm) away from the plant's main stem, ending about a foot (30.48 cm) past the outermost tips of its leaves. Don't allow the mulch to touch the plant's stem as this could, potentially, cause rotting problems.



There are at least seven sub-species - all going by the same name - available to the general public

Cut off any yellow/brown, dead or dried out foliage making each cut one-quarter of an inch (.64 cm) above the point where the leaf meets the stem. Prune the plant in this manner every three to four weeks to maintain a healthy appearance and remove dead tissue that can attract insects. In case you're wondering or someone asks you, leaves/tip browning can be caused by underwatering, lack of humidity, too much direct sun, or - if water is chlorinated and used directly from the tap.

Cats that eat the leaves of the Striped Dracaena may mope about, lose their appetite, get sick and vomit - sometimes even with blood. (*The physiological effect of this plant's consumption by Musk Ox, Tasmanian Devils and Wombats, however, does not seem clearly researched and validated for some reason!*) However, it may all be a moot point in that the *Dracaena deremensis* is not usually lethal and symptoms should disappear in 12 to 24 hours.

So all's well that ends well!



The *Dracaena* genus is comprised of a variable lot ranging from small, primarily herbaceous perennials to large, woody palms or tree-like plants

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## Dancing Around the World in Mexico

story and photos by John Chalmers

Four months after their second successful Canadian tour in four years, the ballet folklórico dancers of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA) returned to the stage for an entirely new and colorful presentation of dance from six countries.

The occasion for the debut performance of the new program was the annual benefit dinner and auction held on Thursday, January 25 at the Manzanillo open air pavilion, the Casino de la Feria, to raise funds that support CHLA. Presently housing some 75 young people from 3 to 23 years of age, it provides a residential home that offers education in a supportive and nurturing environment.



Welcoming guests and posing for photos at the January 25 dinner event left to right, wearing costumes representative of the state of Guerrero

A special feature of the complete program at Casa Hogar Los Angelitos is the opportunity for its residents to participate in an Expressive Arts program. The ballet folklórico dance component is popular with all the children. "Any of them can participate if they want to," says founder Nancy Nystrom. "They don't have to audition to participate, but they have to be prepared for the discipline it takes and attend practice and rehearsals, and stay in school." Nancy points out that the ballet folklórico has benefits beyond learning to dance. She says, "This type of program gives young people a sense of confidence, self discipline and focus that enables them to be successful in other educational endeavors." The full participation of all children is an obvious indicator of the program's popularity and success!

Instead of a purely Mexican display of traditional dances, the January 25 event began with an array of Mexican dances, then continued with fancy footwork from five more countries. Over 60 items were available for bidding in a silent auction before dinner and, when guests were seated, the dance numbers alternated with items in the live auction that opened the wallets and purses of generous bidders.

A dance from Columbia brought by African slaves in the 1700s was followed by a Greek dance to well-known music from the



Dressed in costumes of Michoacan state and mingling with guests are Maria, age 9 at left and Alison, 8, both young residents of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos

movie, Zorba the Greek, a tune known by all. From Spain came the Flamenco, with its swirling skirts and a change of pace followed with a Parisienne waltz from France. Final performance brought the footwork of Irish dancing to the stage.

The new dances required new costumes as well as the dancers having to learn new steps. Their mastery of new numbers and the precision with which they were performed are a credit to their hard work and rehearsals. Likewise, credit is due to the dedicated and skillful instructors, Ballet Folklórico Los Angelitos director Gisela Marisol González and assistant director Jorge Rodrigo Meza.

Providing a safe and loving environment for youngsters who come from homes unable to support and raise them, from broken, abusive or unsafe situations, or for children who are orphans, Casa Hogar Los Angelitos has been serving the Manzanillo area since its foundation in 1995 as a non-profit operation. Following the Thursday fund raising dinner and auction, an open house at the residential facility in Salahua welcomed guests. Speaking to the assembled visitors, Nancy Nystrom and staff members described the work done by CHLA and recounted some of the success stories of young people who have grown up there.

A dance program of three numbers – the Parisienne waltz, the Greek dance and the Irish number – concluded the formal program. A pozole dinner was then served to appreciative visitors who gained an understanding of the community service provided by Casa Hogar Los Angelitos. For dessert, special cake was served to celebrate the Quinceañera, the fifteenth birthday of two girls, Gaby and Bianca, who had reached that important milestone in the life of Hispanic girls.

Although the Canadian tour to five cities in Alberta in 2017 was hard work on a busy schedule, participants had time for special

...Dancing Around the World in Mexico



In pre-Hispanic costumes for the opening number of the dance performance are Gonzalo, left, and Miguel

events of their own that broadened their understanding of Canada and other cultures, as well as sharing their traditions with their hosts. One highlight was visiting the Royal Tyrrell Museum near Drumheller, Alberta, an hour and a half from Calgary. The splendid museum is one of the world's top dinosaur museums, located in the province where dinosaur discoveries have been abundant.

Another special occasion was dinner at the New Asian Village Restaurant in Sherwood Park, adjacent to Alberta's capital city, Edmonton. The kids enjoyed a special dinner of Indian food, then had opportunity to learn some steps of Asian dancing from Ashley Kumar of the South Asian Arts Movement Society. While participation in the ballet folklórico program and performing on tour add to the education of children at CHLA, support for learning does not end with graduation from high school.

Casa Hogar is now seeing success of children who have lived there and continue with post-secondary education. Three are now college graduates, one more will graduate this summer, and five others are studying at university. "It is exciting to have children dreaming about college!" says Melanie Kolb. "Donations to Casa Hogar Los Angelitos and The Children's Foundation cover all costs for students to attend university or trade school. We do not receive any help through scholarships, but rely totally on the generous hearts of our donors."

To learn more, and to support Casa Hogar and invest in the education of deserving young people, visit the web site of the parent organization, The Children's Foundation International, based in Loveland, Colorado. See: <https://www.tcfcares.org>.

... more pics follow

Ready to perform in traditional dress for the dazzling Mexican opening number are members of the Ballet Folklórico Los Angelitos



...Dancing Around the World in Mexico



Close to 400 guests at the benefit evening at the Casino de la Feria enjoyed dinner, great entertainment and a splendid sunset



Beautiful costumes for both male and female dancers are an integral part of traditional Mexican dances



Sombreros, spectacular swirling skirts and synchronized speedy footwork characterize some of the fast-moving dances in the program



The Greek dance began with only three dancers on stage, then moved to a whirling conclusion with all participants in a dramatic finish

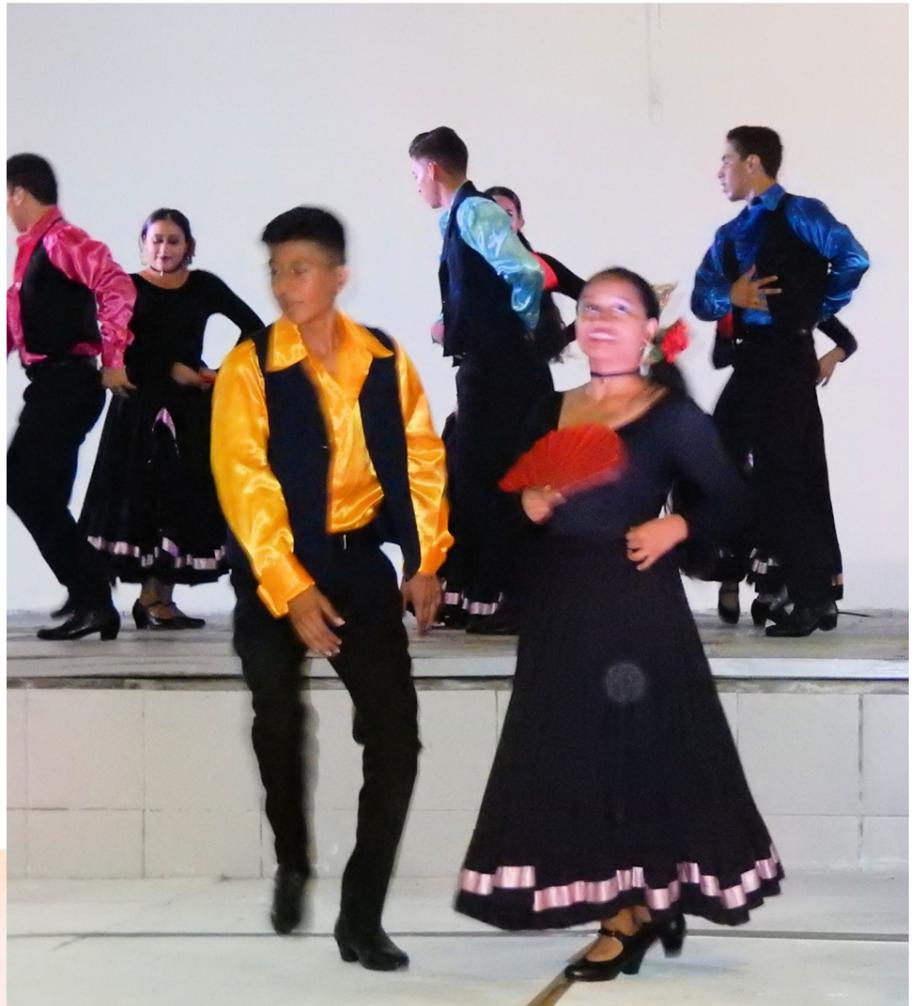


The conclusion of the opening number of the Mexican revue brought all performers to the stage at the benefit evening with the waving of the Mexican flag and enthusiastic response from the dinner guests

...Dancing Around the World in Mexico



At the start of the Spanish dance presentation, these girls strike a dramatic pose as the music begins



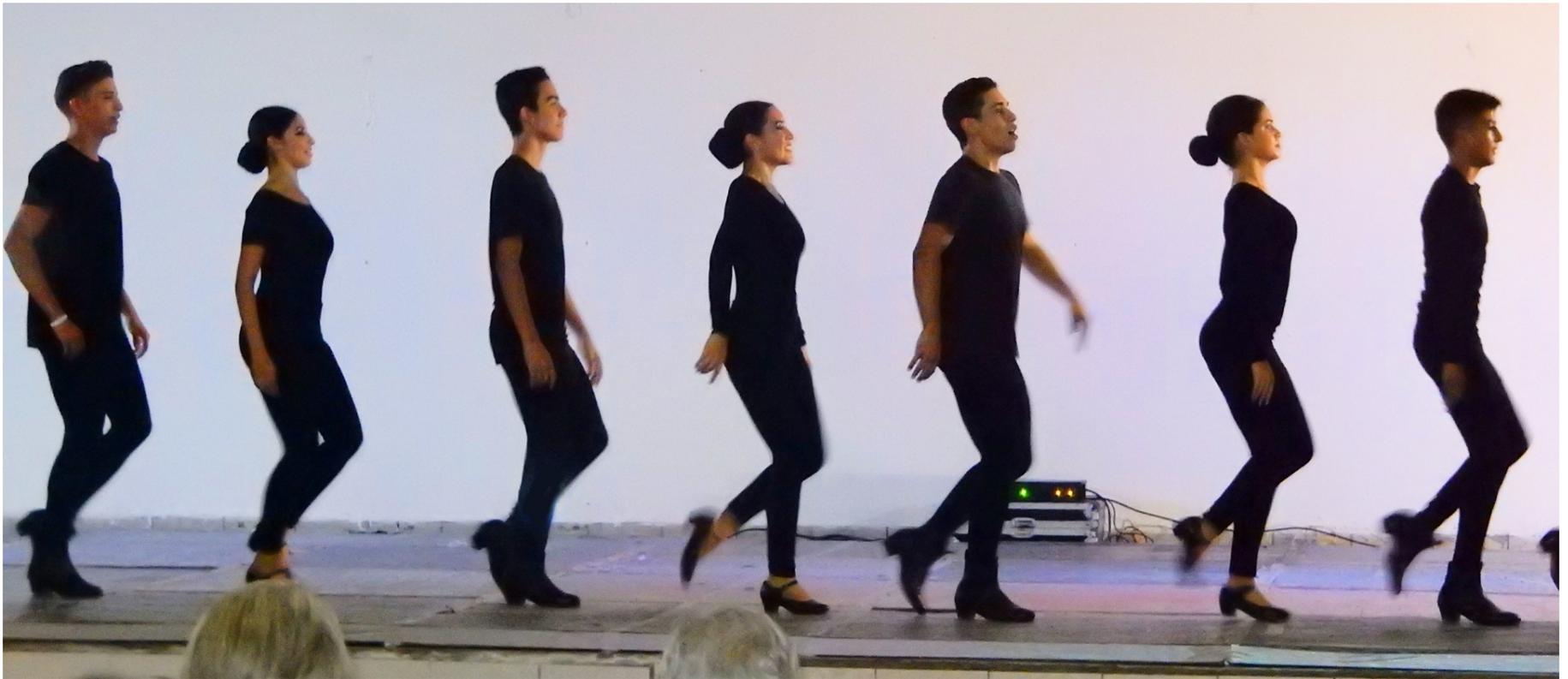
A taste of Spain was given to the audience with a flamenco performance by dancers of the Ballet Folklórico Los Angeles



Ball gowns for the girls and formal dress for the boys were appropriate attire for the graceful and elegant Parisienne waltz



...Dancing Around the World in Mexico



Symmetry, sizing and steps were all part of the Irish dance, the concluding number at the benefit dinner



Dressed for their final number of the evening, an Irish dance, the performers take their bows for an enthusiastic and appreciative audience

Following the dance presentation and live auction components of the evening, M.C. Brian Wiesinger introduced three dancers and Nancy Nystrom who spoke about the history and success of CHLA



...Dancing Around the World in Mexico



At left is Kelley Sura, one of five members of the board of the CHLA parent organization, The Children's Foundation International, who were present at the open house. At right is Julio, who will graduate from high school this year and plans to study International Business at university in Colima, starting in the fall .



Seen at the open house event at Casa Hogar Los Angelitos are resident children Christian and Joanna with CHLA founder Nancy Nystrom and writer John Chalmers



Guests and supporters at the CHLA open house were treated to a dance performance and dinner

The first performance at the open house event was the Parisienne waltz, reminiscent of a high school graduation prom



...Dancing Around the World in Mexico



A success story from CHLA is Andres Birrueta at right, educated through CHLA and now a university graduate. At left is Melanie Kolb, General Administrator for The Children's Foundation International in Loveland, Colorado. At center is Emilia Carbajal, psychologist for the Healing Journey Program at CHLA

On the open air stage at Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, the dance to the movie music of Zorba the Greek was a hand-clapping performance to the delight of the audience



The open house at CHLA on January 27 was well attended by guests and supporters, having an opportunity to meet with staff and students at the home



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**At the Movies**

by Suzanne A. Marshall

**The Greatest Showman**

**Starring:** Hugh Jackman, Zack Efron, Michelle Williams, Rebecca Ferguson, Zendaya  
**Director:** Michael Gracey

The Greatest Showman is a musical drama inspired by the reputedly true story of P.T. Barnum, said to have given birth to the art of live show business. The movie's theme song 'This is for me' won the Golden Globe award for the best original song. It was also nominated for best motion picture, musical or comedy as well as best actor.

If you are a fan of musicals and show business you will really enjoy this production. The music and lyrics are wonderful, as is Hugh Jackman as an actor and singer. The story tells of an impoverished young man with big dreams who marries his childhood sweetheart. He initially launches into fulfilling his dreams with a popular wax museum of oddities. Following a drastic fire that destroys the venue, he soon transforms his dreams and imagination into live performances featuring the unique, extraordinary and peculiar acts by performers who help to bring the shows into great worldwide successes and make P.T. Barnum very wealthy.

IMDB rating is 8/10 based on 49,000 viewer votes



*you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at [suzanne@manzanillosun.com](mailto:suzanne@manzanillosun.com)*




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## How to Adjust for Today's Higher Interest Rates

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

Recent months have brought a number of personal finance changes, including a rise in interest rates that will affect some of the terms for borrowing money and accessing credit.

In December 2017, the US Federal Reserve increased its key interest rate by 25 basis points, marking the fifth increase in the rate since December 2015. More hikes are expected.

One of the best tips for handling rising interest rates is to move away from adjustable-interest-rate debt in the form of credit cards, home equity lines of credit and mortgages.

Most credit cards, for example, have a rate directly tied to the federal funds rate, so the 25-basis-point increase will hurt those with credit-card debt. Those with this type of debt may want to consider transferring balances to a credit card with a low (or 0%) introductory rate, and work toward paying down the balance permanently.

You also may want to consider refinancing if you have an adjustable-rate mortgage. Adjustable mortgage rates may not rise as quickly as credit card rates, but fixed mortgage rates are still relatively low—around 4%—so it may make sense to switch.

Home equity lines of credit with adjustable rates often reset quickly to a higher rate, but they generally can be converted into a home equity loan with a fixed rate.

Situations differ, so discuss your personal financial circumstances and goals with your advisor before making these changes. He or she can offer you options for making the most of interest rate hikes.

Note: *This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide financial advice for your particular situation.*

Yann Kostic, MBA and Tom Zachystal, CFP, are Presidents of their respective Assets Management firms, both US-Registered Investment Advisors (RIA). Tom is the San Francisco Financial Planners' Association President. Tom and Yann cater to US expats in Mexico and worldwide. Comments, questions or to request his newsletter, "News you can use" contact him at [yannk@atlantisgrp.com](mailto:yannk@atlantisgrp.com), in the US at (321) 574-1 529 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613.



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## Costa Esmeralda

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

January 8-11, 2016 (Days 2-5)

Day 2 and we were very excited about our first full day on our Mexican Adventure. We left at 8:00 am for Costa Esmeralda in the state of Veracruz, only 325 km (200 miles) away but still a long drive on Hwy 180. Definitely great scenery, although not so great roads, particularly near the end of the driving day.

Early on, when we thought we had successfully bypassed Tam-



RV caravan on Hwy 180 bound for Costa Esmeralda

pico, stopped for our first break, a local taxi driver flagged us down, convinced we needed to follow him and avoid any trouble. We agreed, and in turn had a great tour of urban Tampico. José Maria was paid well for his work and we were on our way to continue our journey. This was a long day and we gave up the lead to Bruce and Marian as we had to stop and put on a trailer safety chain that had fallen off.

The only other major centre we had to navigate was Tuxpan,

Toll Hwy 180



Taxi escort through Tampico suburbs

which we did handily. Every RV carried the Church's Mexico Camping book, a GPS, the newest edition of the Guía Roji Map Book and a Mexico Map, and we often used all of them to keep us on track.

We arrived at Costa Esmeralda late and found a spot for the group to rest while Rafael, Eileen and Dan scoped out a campground. With over a dozen to choose from, in an 11 km stretch, some looked closed, some looked better than others, we finally settled on Sun Beach Trailer Park Camping at KM 85.7, ocean side. Very reasonably priced at \$170 pesos per day (\$9 USD), it had descent showers, unheated pools, ungrounded electricity, a great ocean view and lovely campground. This worked well for our group.

We had planned to stay here 3 nights, which became 4 after a highway blockade arose to protest the deplorable state of the road. In hindsight, we should have stayed only 2 nights, missed the blockade and spent the time further south. Even though we were well past the Tropic of Cancer, the ocean was cold and uninviting, the weather generally on the cool side and really not much to see locally.

We did play some Bocce, celebrated Roland's Birthday and hit some local shops. In short, we made our own fun and entertainment, enjoying the company of friends. We could see this is likely a happening place in the summer, likely loaded up with locals. Since the troubles and bad press about the Mexican border and Tamaulipas, we could see that this may have been

...Costa Esmeralda



Tuxpan

a Snowbird RV destination location in the past, but those days were long gone.

**More about Costa Esmeralda (Emerald Coast)**

Costa Esmeralda covers 55 km (32 mi) of coastline along the Gulf of Mexico, north of Veracruz, to the mouth of the Rio Tecolutla, near the town of Tecolutla. Its clean, wide beaches and calm waters are popular with beachgoers and fishermen alike. Here, Highway 180 is lined with small restaurants and stands selling fresh pineapples, oranges, and cheese. It's also peppered with campgrounds and hotels taking advantage of the amazing beachfront. This area is also popular with the kiteboarding community, at only about a five-hour drive from Mexico City. The UNESCO World Heritage site of El Tajin is nearby which was the archeological site or ceremonial center of the Totonacs.

The Tecolutla River is the main drainage of the historical and cultural region of Totonacapan. It is principally fed by



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four rivers that rise in the Sierra Norte de Puebla: from north to south. They are the Necaxa, the Lajajalpan (or Laxaxalpan), the

Tecuntepec and the Apulco. These rivers converge in the municipality of Espinal, Veracruz, and from here the Tecolutla flows about 100 kilometres (62 mi) east through the coastal plain and the municipalities of Papantla and Gutiérrez Zamora to its mouth at the town of Tecolutla on the Gulf of Mexico.

On its south bank, the Tecolutla receives the Joloapan River near Paso del Correo, and the Chichicatzapan River via the Ostiones estuary near its mouth. The furthest source of the Te-



Tuxpan from the bridge

colutla is the Arroyo Zapata, located 20 kilometres (12 mi) north of Huamantla, Tlaxcala at an elevation of 3,500 metres (11,500 ft).

The first important hydroelectric facilities in Mexico were built in the Tecolutla watershed on the Necaxa River. Nevertheless, the Tecolutla is considered one of the most well-preserved rivers in the state of Veracruz and its floodplains are agriculturally productive. Vanilla may have been first cultivated by the To-



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tonac in this area and has been an important part of their culture for centuries.

**Tecolutla** is a town and municipality located on the Tecolutla River on the eastern coast of the state of Veracruz in Mexico. It has the closest beaches to Mexico City, and much of its economy is based on tourism, as it is only a four- or five-hour drive from the capital. It is the northern end of a tourist corridor, along the Gulf of Mexico called the "Emerald Coast," which extends down to the city of Veracruz. Tecolutla's biggest attraction is its natural settings of wetlands with estuaries, canals and mangroves associated with the river. The town is known for the "Tecolutla Monster,"—probably a dead whale—that was washed

ashore in 1969. Its remains are kept at the Marine Museum. The name Tecolutla means "place of the tecolotes or owls."

#### **Tecolutla History**

Tecolutla started as a pre-Hispanic settlement that had been dominated by a number of other peoples. The Tecolutla River was discovered by Juan de Guijalva in 1518, three years before the Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire. The Colonial period for this area began in 1522, with the first Spanish settling here. This caused violent confrontations between the Spanish and the local people at first but eventually led to a mixing of the native

[Sun Beach oceanside entrance](#)



...Costa Esmeralda

and the European, in culture, flora, fauna and economic activities. The old pagan ritual centers here were abandoned and have become archeological zones.

In 1787, a major conflict over agricultural resources broke out when the native peoples and two Spaniards, Juan de Vidal and Joaquin Suarez, over ownership of lands in Tecolutla and surrounding areas bordering the Tecolutla River. Much of this land had been inhabited by native peoples with no formal title.

In 1810, the Mexican War of Independence began, with Serafin Olarte leading local efforts. In 1813, the ports of Tecolutla and Nautla are taken by insurgents and used to bring in arms. In 1814, the insurgents were driven out by the royalist army under Juan Navajero. In 1824, the state of Veracruz was created and Tecolutla became a community under the jurisdiction of the Papantla province. In 1825, the commercial port was constructed, which was blocked by the French during the Pastry War in 1838.

In 1847, the US frigate, Gemanten, anchored itself in Tecolutla as part of the initial phases of the invasion of Mexico during the Mexican-American War. In 1857, sixty Italian families settled here as part of an agreement between the Mexican and Italian governments to promote immigration to Mexico. In 1866, Tecolutla was occupied by imperial forces under Maximilian, five



Sun Beach campground with pool

days after they took Papantla. The municipality was created in 1879, combining the parishes of Tecolutla, De Cristo and Boca de Lima, and the community of Tecolutla was elevated to the status of town in 1882.

In 1942, two ships, the Tuxpan and the Choapas, were torpedoed while in the port of Tecolutla. Although never proven, the United States is the likely suspect as the Mexicans were closely aligned politically with the Germans in WW II.

Major flooding of the Tecolutla in October 1999 caused widespread damage in the town, including washing away a number of homes and businesses. Most of this damage has now been

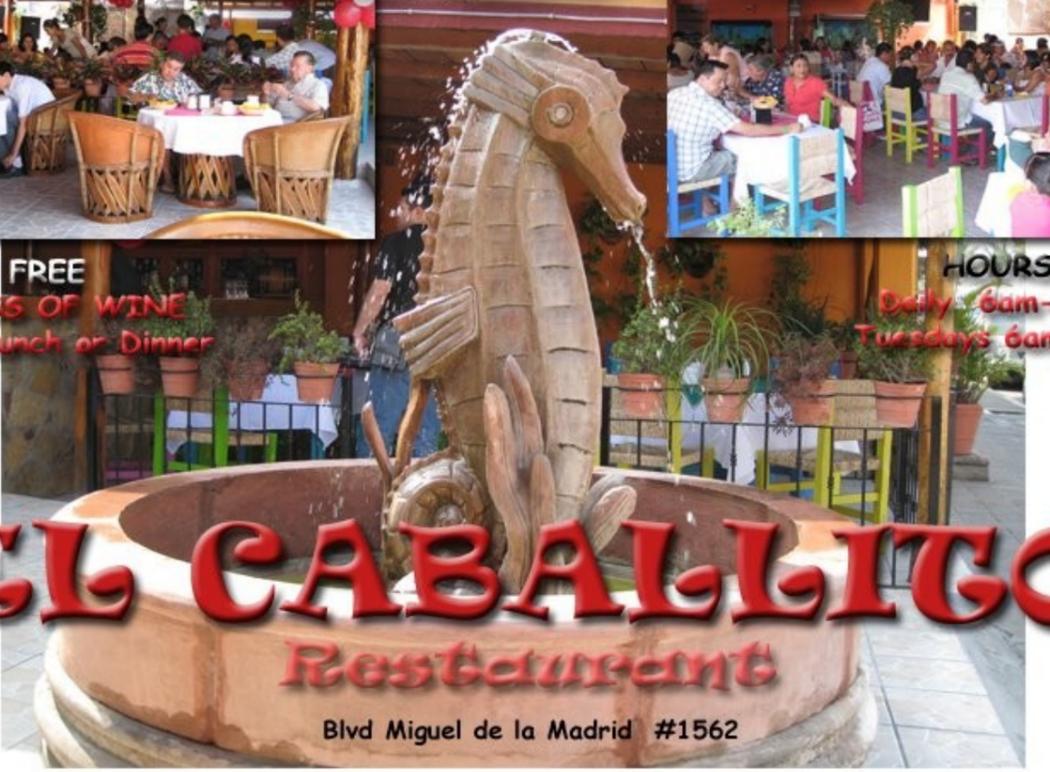
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...Costa Esmeralda



Hwy 180 in the tropics

repaired and many reconstructed roads and bridges are better than before. Tecolutla suffered another natural disaster August 27, 2007 when the eye of Hurricane Dean came ashore here. The intensity of the winds and rain led Civil Protection to issue a red alert for the region. The storm knocked out power as rivers and streams overflowed, closing down much of the infrastructure such as banks, roads and gas stations. It also forced 15,000 people into shelters in the tourist areas of this part of Veracruz state.

The most important and growing economic activity in the zone is tourism. Tecolutla has the closest beaches to Mexico City. The town has about 15 km of beaches which face directly onto the Gulf of Mexico. (The municipality has a total of 40 km.) These beaches generally have gentle waves and warm water, except during storms called "nortes." These are strong cold fronts that come down from the north along Mexico's Atlantic coast between December and February and can cause sudden drops in temperature and winds. That was our experience in January. This fickle weather keeps Tecolutla and many other Gulf coast communities from becoming major resort areas like

Great road, little traffic, Hwy 180 libre



Cancun.

The oldest hotel is the Hotel Tecolutla, built in 1949, which has been preserved in its period. It used to be the only sizable building in town but, since the turn of the 21st century, numerous hotels have been developed. They generally cater to budget travelers from Mexico City, also attracting travelers from Xalapa, the state capital. This tourism is mainly concentrated during peak seasons, such as Christmas and Easter holidays and special events such as the annual fishing tournament. During the rest of the year, it is fairly empty.

The beaches of the town of Tecolutla divide into North and South beaches, each with their own hotel zones, restaurants and camping areas. Both offer boat rides and bicycle paths. At the South Beach, where breakwaters protect the mouth of the Tecolutla River, there are also beachside cabins. Docks serve boat rides up the river, as well as fishing expeditions on the river and in the Gulf. A type of boat often used to navigate



Oranges at a roadside stand

around the estuaries is called a panguita, which looks like a very long canoe.

**Tecolutla's biggest attraction is its geography and climate.**

Situated on the Veracruz coast, Tecolutla has estuaries, canals and mangroves. These estuaries are at the mouth of the Tecolutla River, which flows through the states of Puebla and Veracruz. The river is 7,950 km long. It is surrounded by the Sierra de Huachinango to the east and the Sierra de Zocapoxtla to the south. The river is fed by summer rains in the lower elevation and by year-round rains in the higher elevations. The river passes by a number of cities and towns such as Cuetzalan, Zacapoxtla, Zapotitlan, Huauchinango, Tajin, Tecuantepec, El

...Costa Esmeralda



Near Tuxpan

Espinal, Papantla, Gutierrez Zamora, Cazonas, Coatzintla, Chumatlan, Poza Rica, then finally to Tecolutla at its mouth. These estuaries have abundant vegetation and aquatic and semi-aquatic wildlife such as crabs, lobsters, red snapper, shad, white and black herons and in the mangroves, two species of alligator.

There are three estuaries that are visited most. The first is called Del Silencio, which has about five km of navigable waters and is filled with mangroves. The name comes from the relative lack of sound, except for the buzzing of insects, and water dripping from trees. The second is called De la Cruz, with very clear waters, 25 km of navigable waters in which sea bass can be fished in season. The third is called Del Naranjo and is the largest, with 40 km of navigable waters and is bordered by ranches and orange groves. There is also an abundance of wild birds such as ibis, cormorants, parrots, guinea fowl, eagles, falcons,

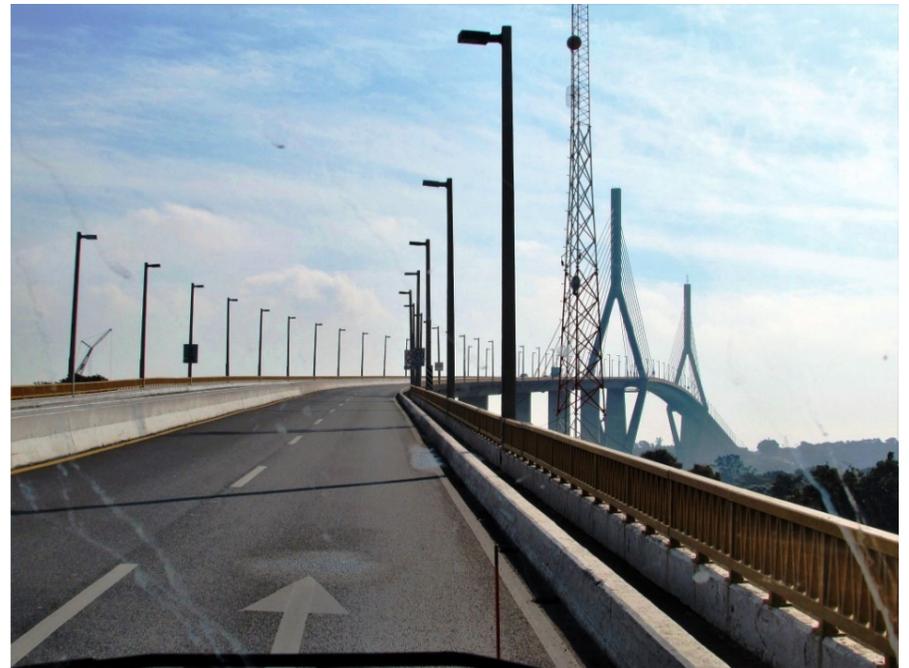
Roadside monument along Hwy 180



storks and others.

### The Tecolutla "Monster"

In the Marine Museum, there are bones and photographs from 3 or even 4 mixed, uncompleted sperm whales of the species *Physeter macrocephalus* (Linneus, 1758). These are represented as a single animal called the Tecolutla monster. This legend



Nice bridge on the way to Tuxpan

comes from an unreported stranding of a cetacean and its appearance after being cut off, burned, rotted and transported to Tecolutla's beach. At first, it was falsely identified as a narwhal, but other people thought that the carcass was from a fin whale (*Balaenoptera* sp.), or another whale. However, the lack of an immediate and certain identification of the animal, and the loss of the original material, makes the cetacean unidentifiable. Few fin whale specimens are found in the Gulf of Mexico. The stranding of whales has been recorded on Mexico's Atlantic coast. A whale arrived as far south as Quintana Roo (extreme southern Mexico). In Tecolutla itself, a sperm whale body washed up in 1976 and a pilot whale body in 1991.

The descriptions of the dead creature vary because of imagination and ignorance, therefore the popular name is "monster". Some people found the animal looks like a giant worm, or with fibers hanging like a mane, or with either "wool" or armor plating, or both, or with a gigantic beak or bone-like fang sticking out of its head. The weight of the carcass was estimated between 24 and 35 tons, measuring 22 m long and 2 m wide. It was also rumored that an unknown Biology Institute of California wanted to buy the creature, also believing it to be prehistoric.

...Costa Esmeralda

The carcass arrived to the Palmar Susana's beach between Tecolutla and Nautla. It was found by locals who kept its existence secret at first. It took 14 hours to get the animal out of the water and to raise it onto shore. It was thought that money could be made from the "ivory" of its bones and they began to



Yummy plantains for Roland's birthday

cut it apart on the beach. Eventually, they informed the municipal president of Tecolutla, César Guerrero, that it was a crashed plane. A volunteer rescue party was organized but what they found was an enormous head, with the rest of the creature partially buried.

They decided to bring the carcass to the town of Tecolutla, using a truck with a fifteen-meter platform borrowed from Mexican state oil company (PEMEX). It was placed on beach in front of the lighthouse, and photographs were taken. Word of the discovery and mystery of the washed-up creature spread, and many people came to see the carcass. Burial of the creature was recommended, which was decomposing rapidly, but the mayor of Tecolutla refused, and kept it as a tourist attraction in spite of the odor.

The Marine Museum was reopened in 1997, after being closed

Tuxpan oil and drilling ships



for a number of years. Besides the bones of the "monster", there are also paintings of the monster in the museum. Despite this, few nowadays in Tecolutla know about the monster. Most witnesses from those times have moved away or have died. There are no local newspapers in Tecolutla and the nearest publication in Poza Rica did not keep papers from the time period. The city government does not have records, and only a few photographs survive.



Tampico



Costa Esmeralda beach

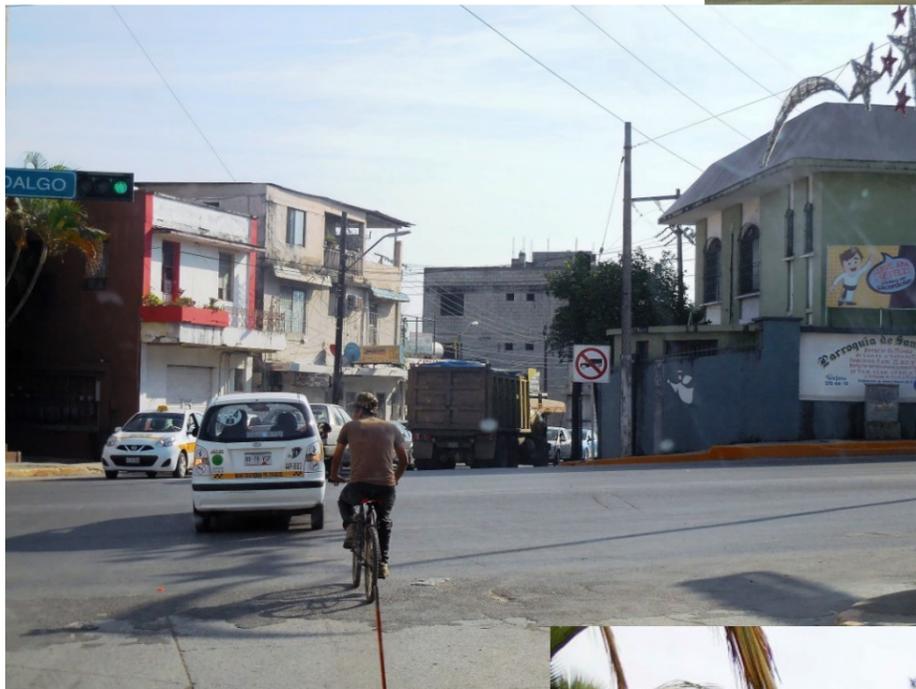
... more pics follow

...Costa Esmeralda



Bocce at the beach

Taking a break on Hwy 180 heading to Costa Esmeralda



Following the taxi through Tampico

The group enjoys Bocce



...Costa Esmeralda

Kelly sorting out the Bocce balls



Mike and Dan hanging out



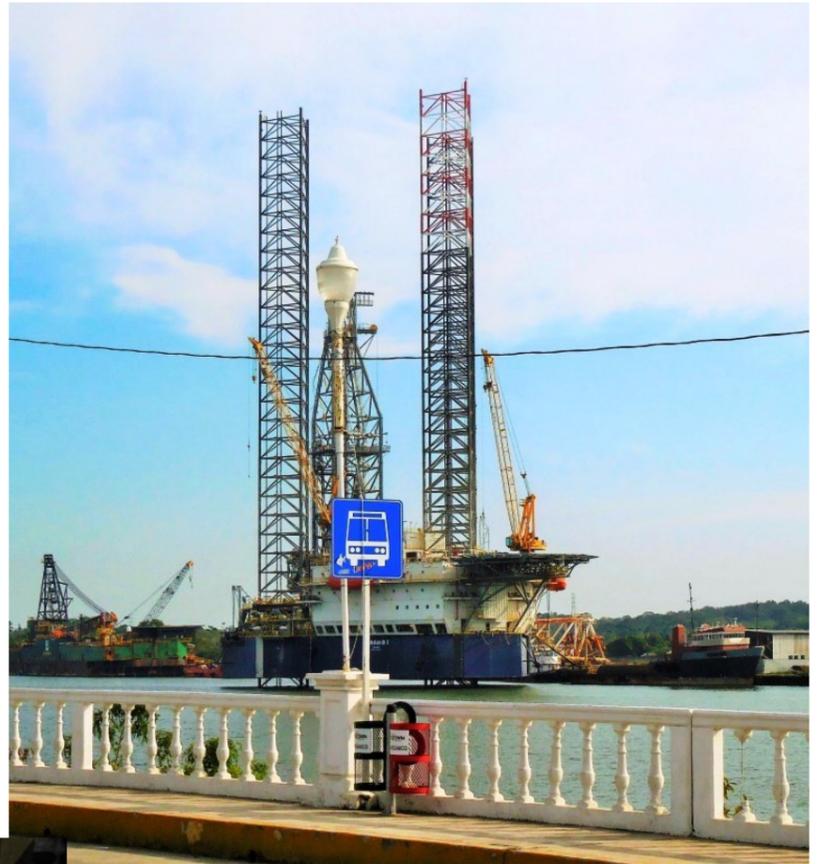
Mike modeling a swim suit



...Costa Esmeralda



Picking up a few things in Monte Gordo



Oil rig in Tuxpan



Celebrating Roland's birthday

Sun Beach Bocce



...Costa Esmeralda

Sun Beach campground



Sunrise



Submitted by Dan and Lisa Goy  
Owners of Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours  
Experiences from our 90-day Mexico RV Tour: January 7-April 5, 2016  
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## Salsa de Molcajete

Yield - 6 servings (serving size: 1/4 cup)

This is archetypal salsa, made from tomatoes, green chiles, cilantro, and lime. But more than a mere mix of ingredients, salsa de molcajete uses centuries-old techniques to combine flavors, bringing out the best of each.

### Ingredients

- 6 plum tomatoes (about 1 pound)
- 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 2 jalapeño peppers
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



### How to Make It

Step 1

Preheat broiler.

Step 2

Place the tomatoes, garlic, and jalapeños on a foil-lined baking sheet. Broil 16 minutes, turning after after 8 minutes. Cool and peel tomatoes and garlic. Combine the garlic and peppers in a molcajete, mortar, or bowl; pound with a pestle or the back of a spoon to form a paste. Add tomatoes, and coarsely crush using the pestle or spoon. Combine the tomato mixture, cilantro, and remaining ingredients in a small bowl.

### Chef's Notes

Roasting tomatoes gives them a sweet and complex taste; rinsing onion under cold water makes it crisp; and crushing roasted garlic and chiles in a mortar releases their full flavor.

Though it's typically done in a molcajete (Mexican lava rock mortar), you can also make this salsa using a marble mortar and pestle (as we did).

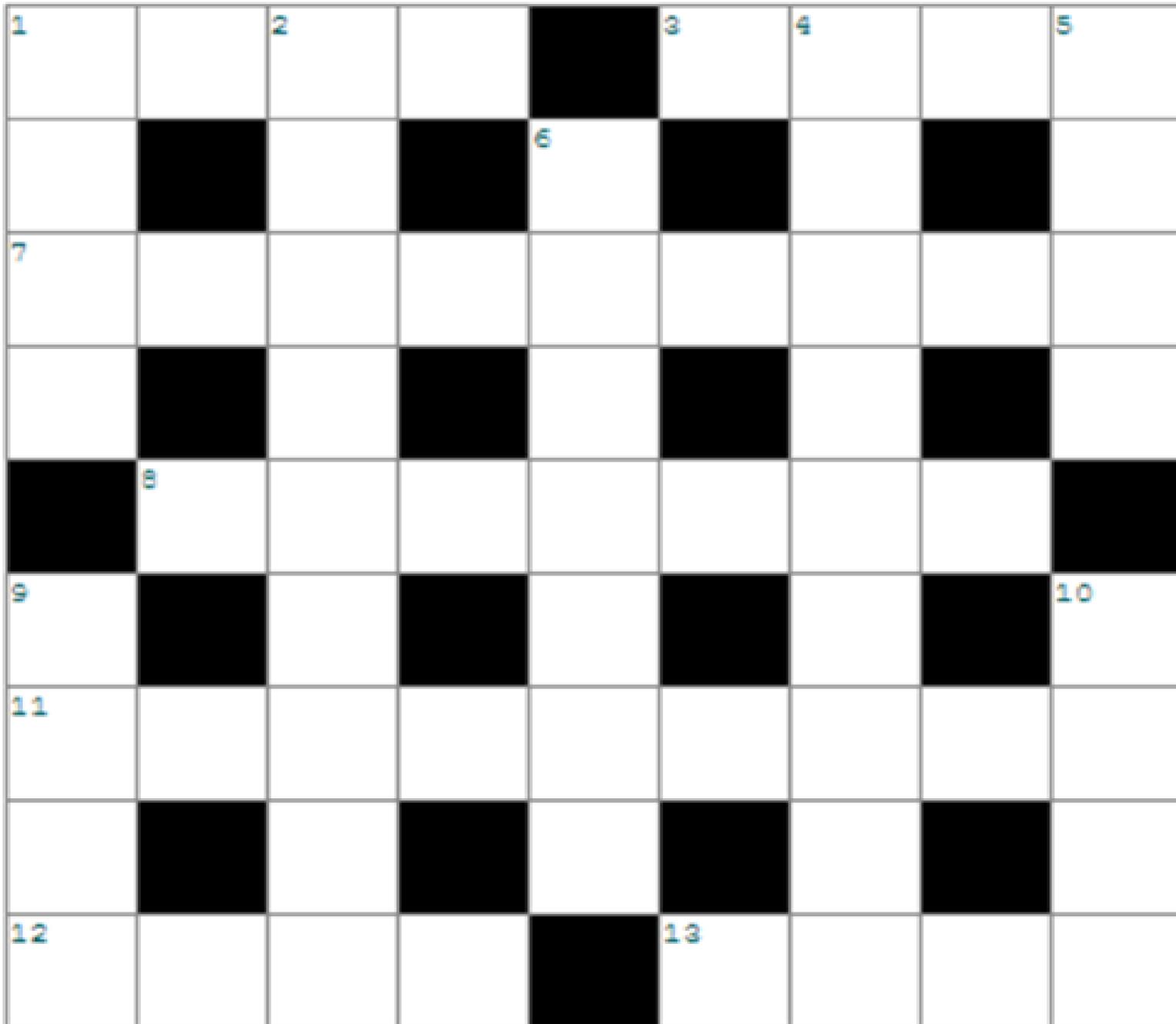
Finely chopping the garlic and chile in a food processor then adding the tomatoes and pulsing the mixture until everything is coarsely pureed will yield great-tasting results as well.

Recipe and image from myrecipes.com



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



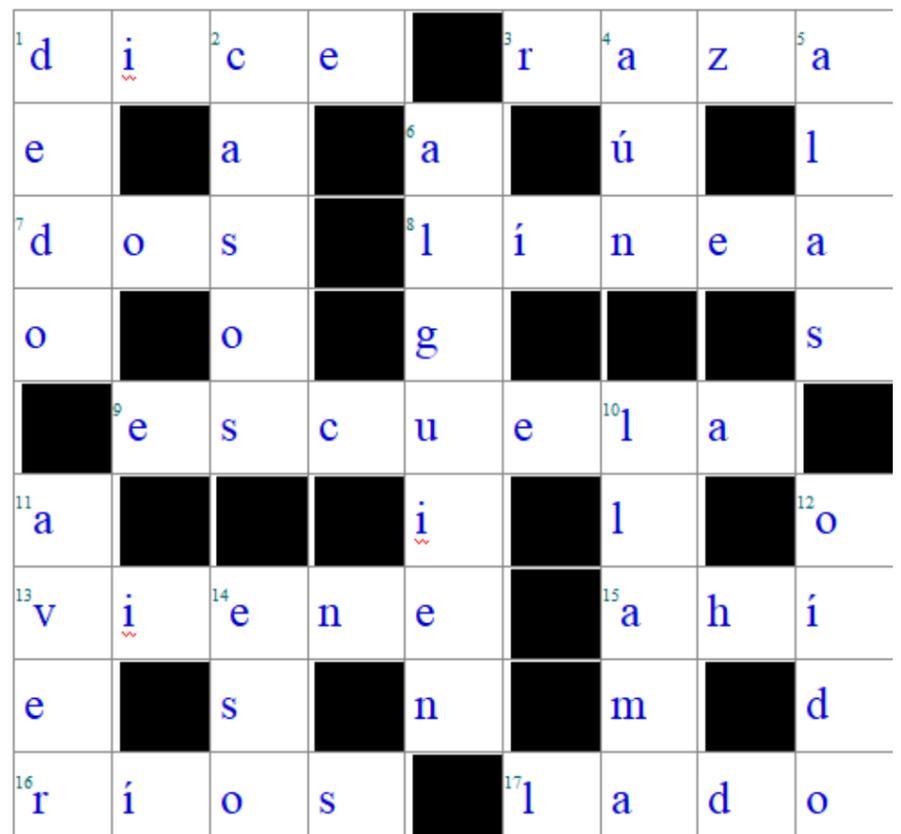
Across

- 1 (you/usted) look at, watch, purpose, object
- 3 bath, bathroom
- 7 to find out, discover
- 8 dear, darling
- 11 to respond, answer
- 12 age
- 13 three

Last month's crossword solution:

Down

- 1 mode, manner
- 2 reply, response, answer
- 4 around
- 5 other, another
- 6 bodies
- 9 (you/usted) believe, think (he, she) believes, thinks
- 10 after, behind



lexisrex.com

### Silver in New Spain

from the Path to Citizenship series

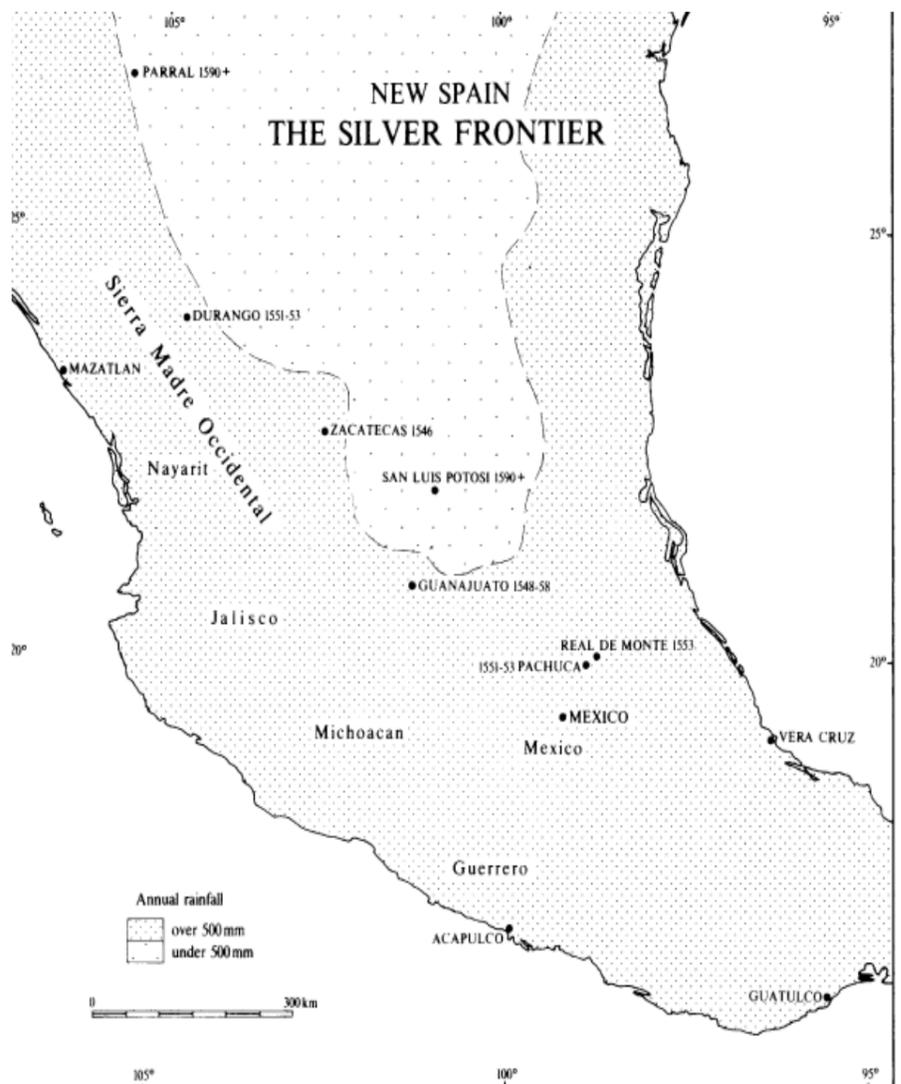


New Spain was a colonial territory of the Spanish Empire in the New World north of the Isthmus of Panama. It was established following the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire in 1521, and following additional conquests, it was made a viceroyalty in 1535. The first of four viceroyalties Spain created in the Americas, it comprised Mexico, Central America, much of the Southwestern and Central United States, and Spanish Florida as well as the Philippines, Mariana and Caroline Islands.

After 1535, the colony was governed by the Viceroy of New Spain, an appointed minister of the King of Spain, who ruled as monarch over the colony from its capital, Mexico City. New Spain lost parts of its territory to other European powers and independence, but the core area remained under Spanish control until 1821, when it achieved independence as the Mexican Empire – when the latter dissolved, it became modern Mexico and Central America.

New Spain developed highly regional divisions, reflecting the impact of climate, topography, indigenous populations, and mineral resources. The areas of central and southern Mexico had dense indigenous populations with complex social, politi-

cal, and economic organization. The northern area of Mexico, a region of nomadic and semi-nomadic indigenous populations, was not generally conducive to dense settlements, but the discovery of silver in Zacatecas in the 1540s drew settlement there to exploit the mines.



Silver mining not only became the engine of the economy of New Spain, but vastly enriched Spain and transformed the global economy. New Spain was the New World terminus of the Philippine trade, making the viceroyalty a vital link between Spain's New World empire and its Asian empire.

Source: first image, Greg Sill, article, Wikipedia, second image, author unknown

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

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