

Manzanillo

December 2011

SUN

Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine

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*Cover Photo courtesy of
Chelsea Curran*

Manzanillo Sun wishes you a Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year



A Northerner's Christmas in Mexico

It seemed very strange on our first year in Manzanillo to have Christmas in Mexico.

We had spent many such years in the cold of Canada, where we looked out on the snow filled streets with snowmen on guard in front gardens and real "frostickles" hanging from the eaves. There, freshly cut Christmas trees were readily available at Boy Scout stands or "Cut your own trees" available by permits in selected forestry sites, so it was very strange that in the Mexico heat, with brilliant sunshine glistening on waves rolling onto sandy beaches, to see the pathetic old trees for sale in the supermarkets losing their needles by the handful. Nevertheless, happy youngsters with beaming faces proudly hauled their balding tree to the family car decorating in time for Christmas Eve dinner.

Even more plastic trees were available everywhere and much less likely to explode into flames. The shops, full of decorations from the end of October, by mid December were all on sale for more than 50% discount. In fact, although we had decided not to decorate our small rented pad, it was impossible to resist buying a small tree that was constructed like a broomstick and all the baubles and lights for less than \$25 (we had chanced upon a 95% discount at a new Wal-mart in Colima). We still have that tree 10 years later but this will probably be its last year as the connection wires have rusted beyond repair.

Many of the ceramic Christmas scenes, elves and Santas by the dozen, have been coming into the stores in later years but goodness know where they can be displayed in the tiny houses in which most Mexicans reside. They seem to be very expensive to me but weekly, the stock is diminishing.

The toy sections in stores are piled high with baby dolls, Barbies, puzzles, cars & trucks. Many of the toys incredibly expensive with cheap plastic facsimiles found in the markets or the discount store "Waldos". Naturally, the latter don't last too long but at least the

kids have something that Santa brought.

Several organisations, very aware that Christmas is not available to the poorer families, hold a Christmas party for children in poorer neighbour hoods. Santa is in attendance with his helpers and maybe the Three Kings who visit Jesus on the 6th January each year.

Christmas dinner is usually at about 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve, after the family has been to church. Not many families have turkey and ham as is usual in the northern countries, but probably tamales, pozole (chicken or pork soup with hominy corn), and bacalao (salt cod) are on the menu. After the dinner children usually get just one gift, the rest waiting until 3 Kings Day on 6th January before they are distributed.

The foreign population stick to their special day as 25th December and although some restaurants are open, the price

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for the turkey dinner seem to be a bit out of line with (occasionally) prices of 450 pesos per person being the rule.

Most people seem to prefer having a pot luck supper with friends. Everyone chipping in for the price of the turkey and ham and then bringing a side dish to share. This works very well in most instances and it is surprising how all of us who maybe not have met previously, can meld into a family for at least the one evening.

If gifts are given, it is usually just one gift that is exchanged in a lottery like process, usually much merriment surrounds this part of the evening, especially when someone receives something totally inappropriate. I well remember one year, when a young lad got a very saucy pair of lacy panties and was totally horrified. Fortunately with the laughter surrounding the gift, he entered into the spirit and was able to exchange his gift for something more suitable but not so memorable.

We can now get turkeys readily; hams are creeping into the stores selection gradually, along with cranberries and yams. Luxuries like "Brussels sprouts" (a childhood horror that I now enjoy), may not materialise until well after Christmas. It is really surprising when something that is needed is actually found on the shelves, word goes around very quickly. Having a "Sam's Club" in Colima has helped us find our own assortment of treats associated with Christmas and it is surprising how inventive people can become. Suitcases travelling south have a medley of goodies within. Spices that we are used to using are not readily available as the Mexican flavours and tastes do not run to sage and onion stuffing or the like.

Regardless that time honored traditions are not always possible, it has become very easy to become adaptable and discover new Christmas likes such as Apple salad and the Stollen like cakes that materialise at 6th night (3 Kings day) and contain small plastic babies that mean the finders must host a taco party in February.

With friends abounding in this community, it is very easy to have a wonderful Christmas away from loved ones whom we always toast during the evening. Merry Christmas to all, wherever you may be in this festive season.



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Christmas in Manzanillo

By

Suzanne A. Marshall

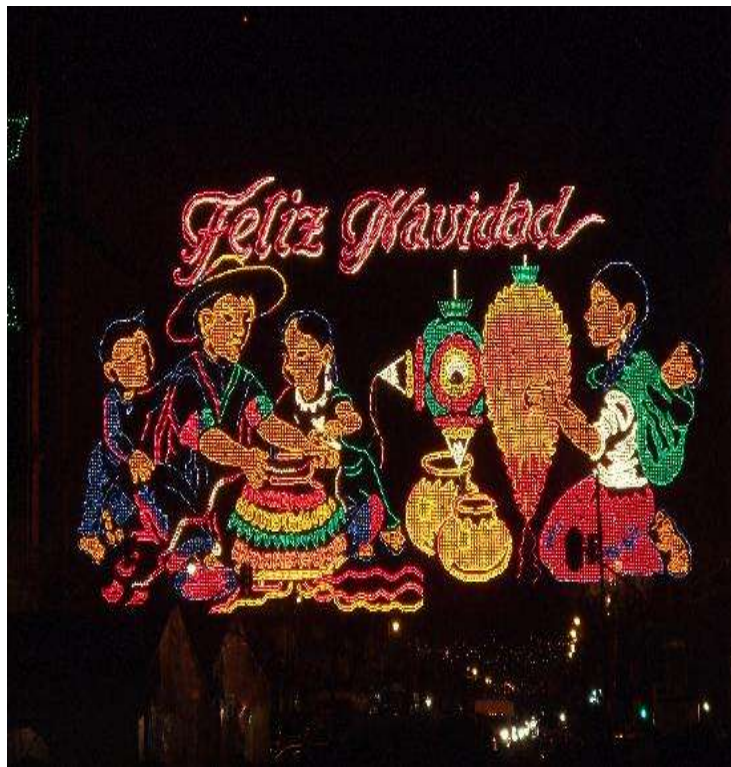
Well I've finally reached a point in my life where I have learned to treasure moments and days one at a time because I know how fortunate I am to live each one of them and am also aware that the future is now and I will not live forever. When you're young you cannot be here as it usually takes a large piece of a lifetime to achieve this frame of mind. There is no exact formula for when this occurs and everyone who arrives at this place has done so in each their own way. And so it follows that festivities like Christmas need no longer be in a specific location or be celebrated in a certain way. I will enjoy whatever life is providing and be so much more aware of what's going on around me.

Now, I enjoy the excitement of hoards of children anticipating Santa Claus while looking at toys in the stores and I watch mom or dad take notice of what captures the most attention.

Manzanillo is filled with young families and beautiful little children who seem to go with mom and dad everywhere. I anticipate the beautiful music and carols that I've heard all my life and indeed sung so many times with choirs and family (though now I'm hearing many of them in Spanish). It's the most wonderful comforting feeling in spite of the fact that my parents are now gone, and the family nucleus shrinks. It's the familiarity and wonderful memories that give so much comfort.

My children have moved to faraway places and I suppose it could be a sad thing to some but I know they are happy and well and making their own memories. And in this day and age there are so many communication tools that bridge the gaps of geographic challenges. This year I will speak to my kids and extended family, face-to-face via Internet tools and enjoy seeing the expression and body language that goes with heartfelt wishes and so much love. It really is like almost being there!

Christmas in Manzanillo is definitely different considering the palm trees, tropical weather and gorgeous beaches. But yes, it's still Christmas for me, even though wildly different. Children are still excited about Santa's arrival, you even see him on the odd rooftop. They must be amazed at the long journey he takes from the North Pole; friends and family still get together, attend services, enjoy special food and



meals and most of all it does seem to bring people together in an indescribable way whether they are families or strangers. I think I have become somewhat of a voyeur and I'm 'lovin' it!

Recently, I met a new friend from Mexico who dreams of experiencing a real 'white' Christmas. And of course Christmas in Canada can be spellbindingly beautiful on a sunny crisp day with a new blanket of snow and a fire crackling in a nearby fireplace. And of course this is very familiar to me having spent my entire life there. But isn't that just the way life is? Longing for new experiences and seeing for yourself what is portrayed in postcards, movies, television and stories. And yet, no matter where you are the most important feeling is the sharing and the memories that you have made or are busy making. I can just imagine the lifetime memory many of our visitors to Manzanillo will have who are staying at one of the fabulous resorts and have come from other countries. It'll probably feel a bit weird but special none the less. They will also be the envy of those left behind in some cold climate!!

So I spoke with one of my Mexican neighbors about the way in which they will celebrate Christmas. They live in Guadalajara and retreat to Manzanillo at every opportunity. Of course Mexico is a very 'catholic' based population and beautiful cathedrals and shrines are to be found anywhere you go. Thus Christmas being the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ is a huge holiday and time for family. From what I gather, minus the



snow and cold weather, things are very similar. Families, friends, grandparents, aunts and uncles gather for special meals, Santa leaves gifts for the children and the celebration of a Catholic mass is attended by the devoted. Some of the traditional food is different but apparently many do like to roast turkeys as well. The stores everywhere are packed with special goodies and toys and the entire population is a beehive of activity. Poinsettias can be seen everywhere and as is becoming my new tradition I will purchase several and place them in the terrace planter along with the vines, bougainvillea and other assorted flowers. We plan to roast a little turkey complete with all the trimmings and sit back and enjoy all the memories we've made and of course count our blessings.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas. Many of you will travel home for the occasion and others will be celebrating much like ourselves. Enjoy the season and we will see many of you in the New Year!

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I Truly Give Thanks

Cheryl Weaver

OK, so the beautiful Christmas Tree is up and lit and the first thing you see when you walk into "Comercial Mexicana Plaza" and the stores are brimming with decorations, reminding us that **Thanksgiving** is just around the corner! Having come from 27 years in the mountains before moving here last January, it is quite an adjustment to welcome this holiday with palm trees, balmy trade winds, and a suntan instead of trees ablaze with Fall color, the crackle of that first fire in the hearth, and the frosty chill in the air that says winter is coming.

Be as it may, I look around me and think of how marvellously **THANKFUL** I am to be here. Most every morning I wake up to a glorious sunshine day, an expanse of ocean that humbles me, and the morning sounds of a productive and hard-working EMPLOYED society. My home is very different from what I left but very much me and I'd just as soon stay in all day as go out. The company I keep are good people who accept me as I am (though they're entitled to their opinion) and more interested in smiling with me than considering what they can get out of me. Alone time is a given, is respected and cherished. I appreciate the seat offered to me on a crowded bus by a smiling teenager who really means it; the taxi driver who doesn't increase his fare to stop at Kiosko so I can use the ATM; the clerk who bends over (when I can't) to retrieve the paper I failed to notice I had dropped; the harried bus driver who patiently explains, in slow simple Spanish, directions to the nearest "Papeleria" -- basically, a kind, personal society to be living in.

I chalk up my good health to the years of living right before I got here, but the fresh vegetables, meat without preservatives, and the diversity of foods I have added to my diet insure that I'll be around a little longer. I like that. Cooking is a culinary adventure. I delight that no two days are the same, and that to "wing it" much of the time is a luxury I've never had. I enjoy so many choices of how to spend my time -- places to go, things to do, people to see. It is so refreshing to be glad to be alive, sincerely grateful for each mundane day. How many times did I feel that way back in the States?

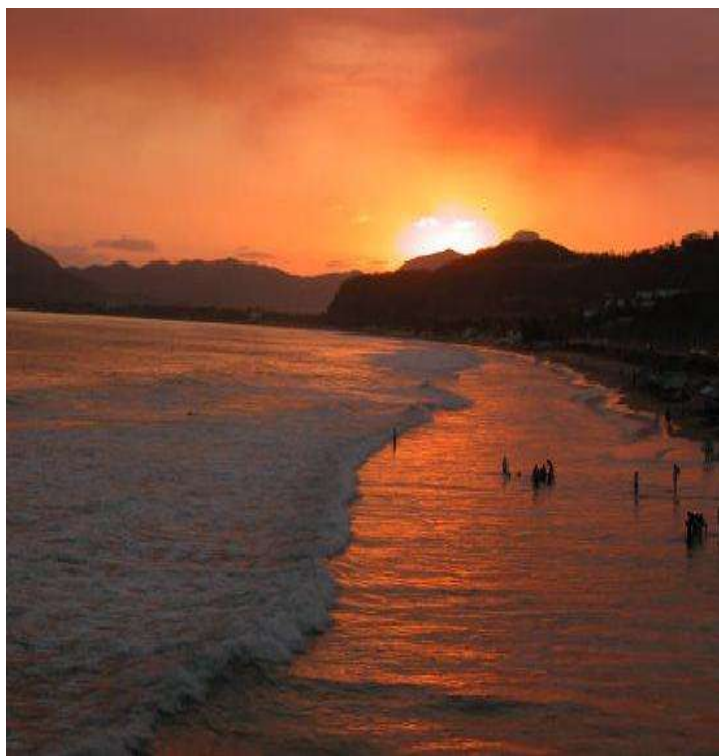
Doing without many times has had one of three effects: Either I get resourceful, stop and evaluate if it's that important, or end up with a whole new appreciation for something I probably took for granted in my former life. The latter takes some of the sting out of some unpleasant things left behind (and we all remember those!), the first



is good exercise, and focusing on what is important puts priorities in order. That is not to say I do not miss fresh cranberries in planning Christmas dinner with all the trimmings but it means I can make do just as well with a new recipe calling for canned ones and I doubt it will ruin the meal.

Years ago, I had planned on being a Snowbird -- live in the mountains July - November and here in Manzanillo December thru June. I would have it all.....well, "Best laid plans...." as they say.....and what destiny brought me is living here full time. But I have decided that I have the best of what life has to offer where I ended up and I am deeply grateful that by God's Good Graces I have an opportunity to enjoy Mexico as my home and My Adventure. I regret nothing about moving here. Yes, I have ups and downs, small victories and disappointments, good days and bad. But I would have those no matter where I lived. Back in the States, bad times resonated and like ripples in a pond, seemed to echo over days and weeks, and I struggled to face each day with a fresh outlook, ending the day with the uplifting "Film at 11:00" news Broadcast. Here, most of the time, the next day "wipes the slate clean" with a new chance to enjoy being alive.

Mexican people can teach us much about putting things behind us and looking to the future for what will make us happy. God knows their history has taught them how to do this. They celebrate Thanksgiving here, every day.




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TOO HOT TO COOK

ENGLISH CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

Serve with whipped cream, rum butter or custard

FOR TWO PUDDINGS

8 oz Shredded Suet (preferred) or grated hard butter
1 Heaped Tablespoon Mixed Spice
1/2 Teaspoon Grated Nutmeg
1/2 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
4 oz A/P Flour
16 oz Soft Brown Sugar
8 oz White Breadcrumbs (from a stale loaf works better)
8 oz Sultanas (Light Raisins)
8 oz Raisins
20 oz Currents
2 oz Almonds (Blanched, Skinned And Chopped)
2 oz each of Mixed Peel - Finely Chopped Red Cherries - whole Candied Citron Peel. Grated Rind Of 1 Orange and 1 Lemon
1 Apple, Peeled and Cored and Finely Chopped
4 Eggs beaten
1/2 cup of wine
1/2 cup dark beer (stout preferably)
4 Tablespoons Dark Rum

METHOD

MAKE AHEAD SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS if possible, as puddings develop more flavor with time. If unused the second pudding can be kept in a cool place until following year and then steamed as described for second cooking.

Put Suet, Flour, Breadcrumbs, spices and sugar in a bowl stirring in one at a time. Gradually mix in the fruit, peel and nuts followed by apple, orange and lemon peel. In another bowl beat eggs then add the rum, wine and beer. Add liquids to the fruit mixture and stir hard. Using hands is ideal. If needed a little more beer can be added to make a good dropping consistency, (should fall from the spoon when tapped sharply against the bowl). Cover bowl with a cloth and leave overnight.

First cooking

Next day, grease 2 pudding basins and pack mixture into them right to the top. Cover each basin with grease proof paper and then tie a cloth with string around the rims of the



bowls. Steam each pudding for at least 8 hours in a steamer pot over boiling water or directly in a large saucepan with water only $\frac{3}{4}$ up the side of the basin, check water occasionally to ensure the it does not boil away adding more boiling water as needed. When cooked and cooled, replace paper & pudding cloths.

Second cooking

Store in a cool dry place and when required, steam for several hours in the same manner as above.

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By Karen Trom

How NOT to be Santa this Christmas

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
 and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
 He had a broad face and a little round belly,
 that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.

---excerpt from CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE,
'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Being called Santa is generally a good thing. He's loved by children all over the world, songs and books are written about him, many of us have Santa decorations in our homes, and he works really hard just one day out of the year. But...Santa could use some advice about his health if he is going to continue delivering toys. If you are the one delivering the goods at your house, you will want to pay attention as well.

- 1- Lose the pipe and all other tobacco products. Smoking and tobacco use are the number one causes of disease and premature death in the United States. Your family needs you to be around for many more holidays. It's time to kick the habit.
- 2- A round belly that shakes like a bowl full of jelly is a nice rhyme, but it can be detrimental to your well being. Deep belly fat is especially dangerous and can lead to liver problems, insulin resistance, and heart attacks.

While the holiday season might not be the ideal time to change your habits, it is a great time to reflect. Look at how many people love you and depend on you. Enjoy the fun

times with your friends and family. What would Christmas be like for them if you weren't there or were physically unable to participate in the festivities?

You are never too old (or too young) to start taking care of yourself. Get enough sleep, don't overeat, watch your alcohol, and move around to burn off some of those extra calories you are bound to take in. Your goal should be 30 minutes of exercise a day above and beyond your usual activities.

You can run, walk, bowl, dance, golf - **anything** that gets your heart pumping!



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THIS 'N' THAT

Renewing IMSS

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TIPS

After you pay at the bank, stop and have a copy made of the page stamped "Paid" by the bank, before returning to the IMSS office for your final paperwork, as IMSS needs a copy (you keep the original). There is a place across the street from the IMSS offices where you can have copies made for 1 peso.

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Robert Hill

Did you know ???

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The targets in both skeet and trap shooting, commonly called 'clay pigeons', are actually made from tar and pitch.

November 19, 1999 was the last date before January 1, 3111 where all the digits in the date are odd.

There are 2,598,960 possible hands in a five-card poker game.

It takes a week to make a jelly bean.

Sliced bread was patented by Mrs. P. Ride, a mother of five, on April 1, 1954.

... and there you have it... for a while, anyhow!

Vivian Molick

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE WINTER SEASON MANZANILLO

DECEMBER

December 10 – Saturday ANNUAL CHRISTMAS
POTLUCK PARTY

Where: Condominios Pelicanos

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Cost: 100 pesos

Contact: Lydia Bevaart 334-0002

lydiabevaart@yahoo.ca

Bring your own beverage and a dish to share. Tickets available at the door. Live music. Please RSVP to Lydia so she can arrange rental of tables and chairs.

Any leftover monies will be donated to the Senior's home.

December 11 – Sunday - PATA DOG JOG WALK-A-THON

Where: Santiago Peninsula

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Contact: Stan Burnett stan@patamanzanillo.com

JANUARY

January 13 – Friday AN EVENING OF HOPE

Details to be announced.

An evening of good food, fun, fellowship in support of community charitable projects.

January 20 – Friday CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELITOS 14TH
ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER

Where: Pavilion on Valle Las Garzas

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Contact: Marge Tyler maggiet19@earthlink.net

Janice Morgan

janicebmorgan@comcast.net

(questions, offer to help, donations)

Liz Dillard lizbobby@ymail.com

(tickets)

Carolyn Larson cal@cwlars.com

(donate or help with silent auction)

If you would like to help or donate something, please contact Marge Tyler.

January 21 – Saturday CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELITOS OPEN
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February 14 – Tuesday 29TH ANNUAL SANTIAGO
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Where: Tesoro Hotel

Time: 6:00 p.m. – Silent Auction

7:00 p.m. – Dinner

Contact: Susan Hess, Benefit Chair 335-1885

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February 26 – Sunday 10th ANNUAL VIDA DEL MAR ART
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Where: Main office at Vida del Mar

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Cost: No entrance fee

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MARCH

March 7 – Wednesday 5TH ANNUAL CASA HOGAR LOS
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Where: Isla de Navidad

Time:

Contact: Jack Babcock

jackbabcock@comcast.net

Details to follow

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Friday, December 2nd - EFREN GONZALEZ reception 4 to 8 pm

Friday January 6th - ELIZABETH SKELSEY -reception 4 to 8 pm

Friday, February 10th - GAIL SIBLEY reception 4 to 8 pm

Friday, March 9th - GIL GONZALEZ reception 4 to 8 pm

To have your events advertised please contact Glenan
at the email address below.

Calendar of Events - Manzanillo

calendarofevents.zlo@gmail.com

ALL Events maybe listed for free on [Manzanillo Sun E-Classifieds](http://www.ManzanilloSun.com). Churches, Schools, Meetings, special Occasions, Any community notice etc. Under the heading Community Ads. The ads automatically expire, so there are no old ads. Go to www.ManzanilloSun.com, click on Classifieds or the advertisement for E-Classifieds. Your junk maybe another persons treasure. ITS FREE!



Information concerning Labor Laws in Mexico

The following information was sent to us by a good friend. It is a good idea for everyone who is hiring a Mexican worker for any reason to be aware of these laws. If hiring through a contractor, we believe that the contractor is then responsible for his workers welfare but it wouldn't hurt to check that they are indeed his workers.

The labor laws for the Republic of Mexico vary for each type of employee, and each type of employer. Unfortunately, very few of us who hire maids and gardeners, hire them according to the law. We hire them all "under the table" so to speak.

The reason for this article is due to the increasing amount of labor claims against employers. We want to help protect you from these claims by providing information that everyone should follow. Since most of us hire domestic help, and are private individuals, we will advise on those circumstances.

First and foremost, write a contract between you and the employee. List the days you expect them to work, and how many hours they are expected to work in a day. Also include what you will be paying that individual per day,

and on which day you will pay them. You must list all of their duties you expect of them as well, in detail. Make the contract for one year, renewing it yearly. Always have the employee sign a receipt for his or her pay.

Bonuses and Vacation

By law an employee can only work 40 hours a week and no more than 8 hours per day. Employees are also entitled to a Christmas bonus and vacation. For part-time help these times and amounts are voluntary. A good guideline for a Christmas bonus is to give them the equivalent of 2 weeks pay. For example, if your employee works 15 hours a week at 240 pesos per week, give them a 480 peso bonus. Remember to have them sign for it, and to also have the Christmas bonus mentioned in the employment contract.

Full-time employment has set rules for domestic help. Christmas bonus is equivalent to 15 days pay. For vacations, an employee is entitled to 6 paid days off for the first year, and 2 days more per year for every extra year worked. On the fifth year an additional 2 days is also added making 4 days added for the particular year.

Statutory Holidays

Full-time employees are entitled to have statutory



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holidays off with pay, unless they fall on said employees days off, such as weekends. If the employee works on a statutory holiday, said employee will be paid double time. Part-time employees are entitled to have the day off with pay as well, as long as the holiday falls on a day that the employee would normally work. Double time is paid if the employee works the holiday.

Severance

Severance pay is only paid to an employee that the employer lets go. If the employee quits or retires, no severance is paid to that employee. Make sure the employee signs a letter stating that they quit on their own.

An employee who has been fired or laid off, for whatever reason, is due severance. The employee is entitled to 3 months salary plus 20 days for every year worked, proportional vacation pay, and proportional Christmas bonus. Once this payment is made, make sure to have them sign off in agreement.

We know many people at Lakeside who have excellent relationships with their domestic help, but labor cases seem to be on the rise. If you are hiring someone new who was not recommended by someone, or if you just want to protect yourself, make sure you know what the rules are for your given situation.

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NEW DIRECTOR FOR RED CROSS IN MANZANILLO

By Robert Hill

The State *Delegado* for Cruz Roja (Red Cross) and *El Presidente Municipal*, Nabor Ochoa, announced in September that Reyna Garcia has been named the new Director of the Red Cross in Manzanillo, replacing an American named Bonnie Sumlin, who was terminated.

Reyna met with the Board of Directors of Manzamigos on November 22, to outline her plans for this important job, and to seek their support. The Board indicated that now, with this change in leadership, Manzamigos would be able to fully support the work of the Red Cross and to offer help wherever possible. Reyna assured them of complete accountability, and that every peso of all donations to the Red Cross will be accounted for. She also promised that she would not be making personal solicitations for donations at the airport, cruise ship terminals, and other public venues, as did her predecessor. She will be reaching out to the Manzanillo business community and civic organizations for their support of this vital service to both the local and foreign communities. In this regard, Reyna has asked for an opportunity to present the needs of the Red Cross to the full membership of Manzamigos, at one of their Thirsty Thursday events in the near future.

Reyna is well known to just about everyone in the foreign community, as the smiling and popular waitress at Juanito's restaurant, and she celebrates 30 years of service there in 2012. As a young woman she was trained and served as a registered nurse in the Mexican Navy for 13 years, before going to work for her brother-in-law, John Corey, at Juanito's (John's wife, Esperanza is Reyna's sister). The military training and experience she received in medical traumas will serve her well in this new post, heading an agency dealing almost exclusively with traumatic medical incidents. Reyna was married to a man who was a graduate of the national police academy, attaining the rank of Captain, and who served as the head of the Santiago police department. In the disastrous earthquake of 1995, he went into one of the local beach hotels attempting to rescue guests who were trapped inside. Tragically, the hotel collapsed on him and he was killed. Reyna was left to raise their 4 babies and very young children alone, with the tips she received at Juanito's. To her very great credit, 3 of those children have now graduated from the university and the 4th migrated legally to the U.S. If you have not met her, stop by Juanito's any evening, except Tuesday, to say hello.



It is important to recognize that the Red Cross in Mexico is dramatically different than in the U.S. or Canada, where millions of dollars are available for disaster relief from the effects of floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc. Likewise, the International Red Cross, with millions of dollars at its disposal, focuses almost exclusively on disaster relief in various parts of the world. In Mexico, while the Red Cross organizations in various cities does participate in the *distribution* of disaster relief funds from Federal, State, Municipal and private sources, they have few, if any, funds available for these purposes. Rather, the primary focus of the Red Cross in Mexico is for the provision of ambulance and rescue services for any and all medical emergencies. These include auto accidents, heart attacks, swimming incidents, and any other situation where emergency medical services and ambulance transportation is required. Anyone who calls the 065 emergency number (like 911 in the U.S.) is connected to the Red Cross. All of the ambulance drivers are trained paramedics, and the assistants who accompany them in the ambulances are also trained in giving emergency life saving treatment en route to the hospital.

Every year in the month of May, two weeks are designated for authorized volunteers to collect donations to the Red Cross. You will see them at major intersections, at the autopista toll booths, and at other locations, with their white donation boxes with a red cross on the side. This is the *only* time of the year when donations are requested from the public, and it is the major fundraising event for the Red Cross units in cities all over Mexico. Last year, about \$700,000 pesos (about US \$ 56,000) was raised for the Manzanillo Red Cross by this event, far short of the total needed. Reyna explained that her expenses include maintenance of a fleet of 3 ambulances and one rescue unit (gasoline, tires, repairs, etc.), bandages and other medical supplies, office electricity/telephones/2-way radios, office supplies, and payments to ambulance drivers. The drivers

are paid only a very small amount, so that much of their time is donated. A charge is made of \$250 pesos (US \$20) for transporting a patient to a Manzanillo hospital, or \$3,000 pesos (US \$240) to a hospital in Colima, if necessary. Reyna emphasizes that these charges are not based on the *ability to pay* and that she will authorize ambulance services based on *need* rather than on affordability. In other words, a poor person from one of the *colonias* will have the same opportunity for an ambulance as a more affluent one from Club Santiago.

In addition to the ongoing expenses of the Red Cross, Reyna is making a special appeal for donations from the foreign community, in order to purchase at least one piece of equipment called the *Jaws Of Life*. This is a hydraulically operated tool used to pry apart badly wrecked cars in order to remove the victims inside, and is commonly available in every rescue unit in the U.S. and Canada. Frequently, valuable time is lost trying to open the doors of a crushed vehicle using hand tools, or by trying to pull a victim out through a small opening, causing further injury.

Finally, Reyna hopes that the foreign community will be generous in supporting the work of the Red Cross, and urges you to remember that.... *The life you help save could be your own!*



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Fish Life of Manzanillo

By Terry Sovil

Moorish Idol

A rival for one of the title "Most beautiful fish in the Manzanillo area" is the Moorish Idol from the family of the same name. Moorish Idols range in depth from 10-150'. They are common in the southwestern Sea of Cortez and Mainland Pacific to Panama. They like rocky boulder-strewn areas and walls. They are either solitary or move in pairs but sometimes form large schools. They ignore divers but swim quickly and will move away when approached. The best bet is to wait quietly in a concealed position near their course of travel or approach very slowly. You may recognize Moorish Idols from the movie Finding Nemo played by the character 'Gill'.

Moorish Idols have a very distinctive shape and their coloring makes them easy to spot. They have a large dorsal fin that ends in a thread-like tip, a long snout and three bold black bands over their eye, rear body and on their tail. They grow from 4-6" with a maximum of 9".



Pacific Highhat

The Pacific Highhat has narrow dark borders on their dorsal, anal and tail fins. During their intermediate stage they have three wide black stripes that go right down and onto their tail. They are similar to the Rock Croaker except for this center stripe. Juveniles have a black bar that extends from their first dorsal fin across their body and onto their ventral fin.

Pacific Highhat's are in the family of Drums & Croakers. They live in depths from 10' to 100'. Adults have a dark brown and coppery sheen; similar to a Rock Croaker with dark charcoal with a purplish sheen. Intermediate fish have white with narrow black strips. Juveniles have a translucent to yellow with black strip through eye to tail. They form small groups or are solitary inhabiting rocky and coral reefs, lurking in the shadows of recesses, caves and under ledges. They are wary of divers but can be approached in a slow, non-threatening manner. They range in size from 4 to 8" with a maximum of 11". Their family is Angelfishes and their transition from juvenile to adult is equally as colorful and beautiful. They have a distinct white bar behind their pectoral fin, a yellow tail and bright blue bands with a dark blue body with yellow to orange markings on dorsal and anal fins. There is a "crown" of light blue spots on their forehead whilst the juvenile has yellow to orange head and fins with wide dark eye bar and a dark body with bright blue bands. They grow from 6-12" with a maximum of 15".



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Pacific Leopard Flounder

The Pacific Leopard Flounder is a flatfish lying on its right side. The distance between their eyes is equal to the diameter of the eye. Sporting shades of brown with white to bluish and ring markings these fish can pale or darken rapidly to match the bottom. They can be found on the East Pacific Coast from Baja to Panama and as far as Peru. Usually solitary, they inhabit sandy bottoms and rocky, boulder and gravel-strewn slopes. When swimming they move with a wave-like motion.

Pacific Leopard Flounders are from the family of Flatfish. They have shades of brown with white to bluish spots and ring markings.



Pacific Mutton Hamlet

The Pacific Mutton Hamlet ranges in depths from 15-100'. They can be seen from the Sea of Cortez to Panama. They are solitary fish and inhabit reefs and rocky, boulder-strewn slopes where they rest on the bottom, often in the shade.

This is a colorful spotted fish that goes from a juvenile phase to adult going through a reddish phase which can make them look like a different type of fish altogether. They have numerous small, whitish blotches and spots with a bright red iris, a dark pupil that is often green. The juvenile has white spots over their head, body and fins except pectoral and ventral. In the reddish phase they are a mottled reddish brown with black specks. During the reddish phase they appear yellow at depth (light is absorbed with reds disappearing first) but are a mottled red. These fish grow from 4-7" with a maximum of 10".



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Manzanillo, Through the Eyes of a Newbie



It is strange but true, that after living in a foreign place for a few years, it becomes no longer foreign and things that were so different originally become every day or common place occurrences.

When we moved from England to Canada many years ago, I was almost overcome at times that a country with the same language could seem and be so very different. I wrote regularly to my family, several page long letters describing what I was seeing and explaining the differences but after a while, the letters started getting shorter and eventually, I really found it tough to know which was the old and which was the new. In fact upon returning to England on holiday, I actually felt more of a foreigner. I really no longer know which spelling is English and which Canadian or American (different again in many instances) nor do I know which words belong to which item; which is a bonnet and which is a hood for instance? I do know a tire from a tyre and a lift from an elevator though.

Now, move south to Mexico and it becomes even more confusing because of the language barrier but at least here I know that I don't know, the language. That is one hurdle down but just the same, after a while, everything originally so very foreign and different, again becomes familiar and we forget what wonders we are seeing and how wonderful it is to have a thunderstorm rather than a whiteout!

That is where having visitors can become such a joy and a gift to us. In taking them around to see the town of Manzanillo and surrounds, we can plan what to go and see instead of wondering what an earth there is to do today. Instead of my staying indoors and writing for hours, how much more fun it was to go to Roosters in Melaque or to Antonio's or Don Andres Ranch in Manzanillo for breakfast.

For several days whilst my friend was here, I actually managed to get to the beach, sit and relax whilst getting some long needed sun tanning in at the Oasis Beach Club or at La Audencia Beach. We were able to watch the Mexican



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families at play and lay back and enjoy a cerveza or two, something I had not made time for in almost a year.

So where else is there to go and have fun in Manzanillo? This is not a tourist haven like Cancun or even Puerto Vallarta but we have several sets of tiangis markets; several places that we can shop for the different and actual "Hecho in Mexico" items to take home. Wonderful tablecloths in the brilliant check patterns which wash like a dream; exquisite embroidered linens, dresses and blouses from Oaxaca; pottery either brightly painted or the beautiful Talavera dinnerware with dishes in all shapes and sizes. There is pewter ware, silver with or without gemstones; papier-mâché people, or beautifully strange wooden animal figurines; and let us not forget the blankets and hammocks. So much is available (and made in Mexico) to take home to those not lucky enough to make the journey south or just as a remembrance of a great holiday.

I took Fred downtown on Monday where we had lunch at the Colonial Hotel; to play Wizard at La Huerta on Tuesday afternoon; to a Thanksgiving dinner at a friend's house on Thursday; to learn Bridge on Friday; to learn Spanish on Saturday, out to dinner at different restaurants each other night all of which were thoroughly enjoyed and

appreciated. Whether it were Toscana for a lovely well prepared and served dinner or to Captain's Fish & Chips where we went three times to try his specials and where I had and enjoyed the blackened fish twice. Margaritas available everywhere were marvellous as were piña coladas and cerveza. There is nothing so enjoyable as an ice cold beer on a hot afternoon.

The biggest joy of all were the comments that came-unprompted; never had he felt so comfortable, enjoyed meeting so many delightful people, felt so completely safe and surprise-surprise, on the orderliness of the Mexican roads and drivers!! He should have been here when the roads were being redone for the past few months!!

He left earlier than originally planned so that he could look around Puerto Vallarta but not before he was asking questions about holiday accommodation options and the promise that one day he would return. There was insufficient time to visit Colima, La Manzanilla to see the crocodiles, walk the beach and have lunch at Jolanda's; to Minatitlan to the water park and slides or to Cuyutlan to see the baby turtles (and perhaps be lucky enough to be able to release some of the little critters), those treats are for next time.



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La Piccolo Piazza... a taste of Italy

By Jim Evans

On one of our almost daily trips down the beach for lunch at El Tablao, a delightful experience in itself, Pascal the owner told us about his new restaurant located on the Boulevard De La Madrid... an Italian Restaurant. We immediately agreed to have dinner there the following Friday.

La piccolo Piazza is located between the Bar Felix and Casino Soliel on the Blvd de La Madrid, frente(across from) La Caverna, It features an outdoor deck lighted using overhead strings of small white lights, creating a truly romantic Italian feel... in fact difficult for this writer not to imagine he was actually dining under the stars in a "Restaurante" in Tuscany, Venice or any of the myriad of beach towns along the Mediterranean.. they sampled their selections.

The large inside dining room is tastefully decorated and features two crossed "xistera" or "cesta-punta" (wicker basket gloves) used by Pascal when he was a professional "Pelota Vasca" (Jai-Alai) player mounted on the wall inside entrance. There is ample seating for large parties, including booths and tastefully decorated tables.

Laura and Pascal, long time Manzanillo restaurateurs, greet customers as if they are family and truly make everyone feel welcome.. both have an ease and style that makes you feel a part of their family... The staff, Pepe, Miguel and Maurice is personable, cordial and very attentive.. English is spoken and the innate Mexican hospitality is ever present.

Piccola Piazza features a full bar of fine wines and other spirits, the menu is varied including a full range of delicious looking and sounding Appetizers, Salads, Main Courses, Fish, Shrimp, Pastas, Pizzas and Calzoni and of course Desserts...

Our first visit we ordered Seafood linguine and lasagna, both were excellent, but it was on our second visit that we encountered a huge surprise. We were treated to the culinary expertise and magic of the Maestro himself... Pascal, the owner and renowned Chef was to prepare our repast...



We decided that the three of us would order different dishes and taste each one; Father Bill settled on "Rosemarino Tenderloin Pork Loin" (Loin of Pork with a tasty Rosemary sauce; \$128 psos) while Mike selected "Piccola Piazza Chicken" (Breast of Chicken, filled with pepperoni,

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mozzarella cheese, served with a vegetable sauce). (\$138 pesos); and I opted for the Lasagna (Filled with beef, tomato & Italian spices.. \$110 pesos). Our food arrived and we set to savouring the various flavours and their respective combinations...

I could go into detail about every delicious bite and morsel, but suffice to say we were sated and quite happy with our choices... each dish received an excellent rating from all three of us. We were also served an excellent aperitif.

I even polled the party of three hungry gentlemen at the next table as to the taste, quality and presentation of their Pizza, rave notices on all three counts.. and they couldn't finish it all...

Read enough... then go try it ...La piccolo Piazza is open every night at 6p.m. you won't be disappointed...

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