

Manzanillo

December 2010

SUN

Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine

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Cover Photo courtesy of
Ian Rumford



A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

All of us at the Sun wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and Holiday season.

We are now starting our second year of the Sun E-Magazine. This venture has been greeted warmly by you, our readers and we hope that we continue to interest, advise and humour you for yet another year.

If you have any suggestions for what you would like us to report upon, please send us your ideas, even better, we warmly welcome suitable articles for inclusion in our magazine.

Should you be interested in submitting an article, please send an outline to the editor for presentation to our advisory board. We would appreciate hearing about the happenings in Melaque, Barra de Navidad and surrounding areas by someone who is familiar with the area. Although we visit often, it is better to have a local person give the news and views.

The coming season is supposed to be a good tourist year for Mexico despite the bad press it has been receiving internationally. We sincerely hope that all of you who join us here, enjoy the warmth of not only the sun but that of the people who live in Manzanillo and the Costa Alegre. This is a magical place to live, come realise your dreams with us.

Freda Rumford,
Editor
Manzanillo Sun E-Magazine

A RISING STAR

Mariana Dominguez Alvarez-Buylla, the daughter of Drs. Blanca and Mauricio, won **FIRST PLACE** in the Concurso Nacional de Piano which is held every two years in Cuernavaca. There were 17 participants and after they named the six finalists, Mariana was the only girl and was, also, the youngest. She played five separate and different pieces from Mexican composers as well as the traditional European classicists. For the many who have seen her in concert the last few years during the winter season of Bellas Artes del Pacifico will remember her passion at performance. We are all very proud to watch this fourteen-year-old young woman start on what promises to be an extremely fulfilling and adventurous career.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 2010

5th - Sunday, at 8 am, PATA Manzanillo will hold their annual 5K Dog Jog on the Santiago Peninsula
[Friends_of_PATA_Manzanillo@mail.vresp.com]

11th - Saturday -
ARA ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR AND BAKE SALE

Where: Walmart Parking Lot
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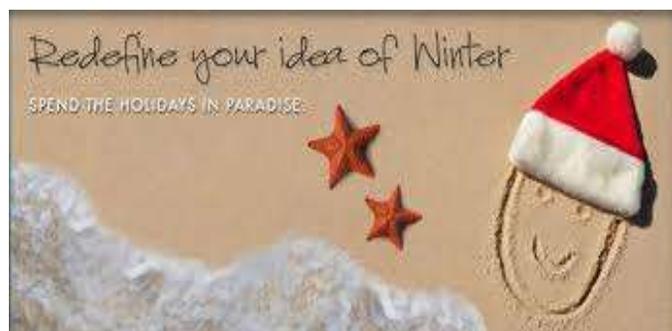
11th - Saturday Mujeres Amigas/Manzamigos Christmas Get together at Condominios Pelicanos. RSVP required contact Lydia Bevaart at 334- 0002 or lydiabevaart@yahoo.ca

24th Friday Manzamigos Children's Party to help or contribute candies for the children, contact Linda Breun: manzamigo1@manzamigos.com

25th - Saturday -
NAVIDAD - For all who celebrate the Christmas Official holiday.
The following restaurants will have Christmas dinner.
Oasis, La Pergola, Schooners
Information will be posted on the Web site when available.

31st - Friday - NEW YEAR'S EVE -

In previous years this information has been compiled by Darcy Reed. This years the huge job of collating all the going's on in Manzanillo is being taken over by Glenna Palidwor who can be reached at: glennapalidwor@yahoo.ca





IN THE NEWS!!

www.manzanillosun.com

Dengue Vaccine Race heats up with Big Human Test

By Eliza Barclay

The race to develop a vaccine against dengue fever may be getting a little closer to the finish line. The dengue virus, little known in the United States, is endemic to most countries in the tropics thanks to the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which thrives in pools of standing water.

But if you've ever had the illness, you're unlikely to forget it. Sometimes called "bonebreak fever", dengue is excruciating with raging fevers accompanied by severe headaches, nausea, and a rash. Years of work on a vaccine appear to be paying off. French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi-Aventis is putting its experimental vaccine into the kind of large clinical test that can produce the evidence needed to gain regulatory approval. This comes on the heels of what it claims were several successful smaller trials in Asia and Latin America. The latest study, being conducted in Australia, is expected to take two years to finish.

The World Health Organization estimates that 2.5 billion people worldwide are at risk of getting dengue, and most of them are in Asia and Latin America. But it's also on the rise in Florida and Texas; Key West has reported 57 cases in the last two years. And on Thursday, Miami-Dade County health officials had ominous news of their own: confirmation of the first "locally acquired" case there. At this stage, the dengue vaccine race lacks some of the unexpected twists and bitter rivalries of the polio more vaccine race, but it's gotten steadily



A man helps his dengue fever stricken daughter in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In June, Honduran authorities declared a state of emergency due to the high rate of dengue cases reported around the country.

interesting as more heavy hitters take the field.

Aside from Sanofi, GlaxoSmithKline is conducting trials in Thailand, the United States, and Puerto Rico, while the U.S. government threw its hat into the ring with an announcement in August from the National Institutes of Health that it would start its own tests. And don't underestimate dark horse Brazil: it's Instituto Butantan, best known for a snake farm where researchers milk snakes to make anti-venoms, is now running its own trials with the NIH strains.

Every year there are 250,000 to 500,000 cases of severe cases of dengue and more than 20,000 deaths, typically from the worst permutation of the disease called dengue hemorrhagic fever, according to the World Health Organization. There is no treatment for any version of it. Most of the vaccines in trials right now are tetravalent, meaning that they aim to protect against all four dengue viruses, or serotypes. Safety concerns about tetravalents had slowed down the race, but Sanofi's dengue honcho Jean Lang tells Shots

that its results in proof-of-concept studies showed the vaccine is "safe and well-tolerated" and that it produced a solid immune response against all four types of dengue viruses after three doses.

George Washington University's Dr. Peter Hotez, who is president of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, says the spread of dengue in middle-income countries like Singapore and Brazil had added a lot of urgency. "It's a pleasant surprise that dengue has now piqued the interest of two large pharmaceutical companies," he says. Does Hotez see take a gander at a possible winner? No. "There really could be multiple victors," he said.

www.npr.org/blogs/health



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Poinsettias

Tommy Clarkson

Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*

Family: **Euphorbiaceae**

(Also called: **Atatürk flower**)

For many throughout the Americas, this brightly colored plant is synonymous with the year end holidays. Named after Joel R. Poensett, the first US Ambassador to Mexico, it was he who introduced it to the United States in 1828 during a return trip home.

For many throughout the Americas, this brightly colored plant is synonymous with the year end holidays. Named after Joel R. Poensett, the first US Ambassador to Mexico, it was he who introduced it to the United States in 1828 during a return trip home.

In Mexico it is called Noche Buena originating from a several centuries old legend. Supposedly, on Christmas Eve, a little girl named Pepita was sad as she had no gift for the Christ Child. As she walked to church, she gathered weeds along the road that she thought were pretty. Upon arriving at the church, as she approached the altar, a miracle was said to happen when the weeds blossomed into brilliant flowers. These came to be called Flores de Noche Buena (Flowers of the Holy Night).

In the wild, Poinsettias are found in some of Mexico's hot, seasonally dry forests as well as in its deciduous tropical forests along the entire Pacific coast all the way down to Guatemala. With functional purposes years ago, the Aztecs used the plant to produce red dye and as an antipyretic medication – reducing bodily temperatures during fevers.

Now, through hybridization there are over 100 varieties. Their colors range beyond the traditional, red, pink, cream and white plants to pastel yellow, orange, pale green, or marbled and dramatic bi-color variants. What many think are flowers are, in fact, colored bracts or leaves. The actual flowers are grouped within the small yellow structures in the center of each leaf bunch and are called *cyathia*.

Grown outdoors, it is easily capable of growing up to 8 - 10 feet outdoors. However, without bi-monthly pruning it can become quite "leggy" and lose its attractiveness.



For quite some time poinsettias have gotten a bum rap with claims that they are poisonous. In fact, human or pet ingestion of them is probably no different than that of eating any other common houseplant – an upset stomach. Extensive testing has proven that they are not toxic or unsafe to have in one's house or even being put into compost piles. Now, that having been said, these plants exude a milky sap to which some people might be sensitive and which could, in some cases cause an itchy rash. Accordingly, I'd recommend that one be careful to not rub one's eyes after touching these plants.

For potted poinsettias there are four important factors: Light, heat, water and humidity. They prefer an optimum of indirect sunlight. So if kept inside they won't like a window with a northern exposure! To maintain the longest blooming period possible, they like the 65 -75 temperature range and care not a whit for extreme shifts in temperature. Cold drafts – or allowing the leaves to touch a cold window – will cause leaf injury. Water when the potting soil feels dry and until it drains from the bottom, but do not let the plant sit in water. Lastly, as tropical plants, understandably, they prefer humid environs.

And, there are many on-line sites on keeping potted holiday poinsettias alive year around



Merry Christmas and a **Happy New Year** to all my friends, family and loyal readers, from Patty and Tommy Clarkson

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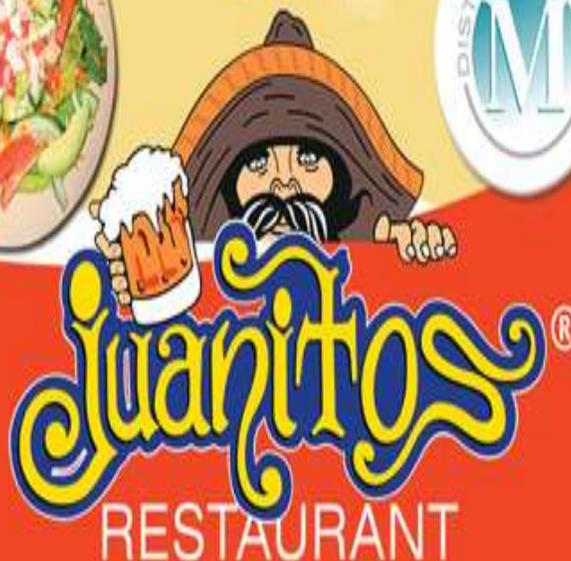
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A Duck for the Tropics

The Black-bellied Whistling-duck

By Howard Platt

They say that if it walks like a duck and talks like a duck then it must be a duck. But what if it doesn't? What if it struts around like a goose, whistles like a traffic cop, pairs up like a swan, and nests in trees? Can it still be a duck? Well it can, if it is a black-bellied whistling duck. Sometimes called the black-bellied tree duck. They are native to the tropical areas of South and Central America but can be found all the way into the southern United States.

Standing tall on long pink legs, with a red beak, gray face and neck, prominent white ring around its eye, a rich brown crest on the top of its head reaching down the back of its neck and a very dark belly you are unlikely to confuse it with any other bird. Its long neck and upright stance make it look more like a goose than a duck, and it does waddle like a goose when it is on the ground. The ability to walk easily is a great help as it often spends time in open fields away from water. You may see a whole flock in a corn field after the harvest, collecting whatever grain was dropped. Though in spite of their dry-land abilities they do prefer wetlands, such a freshwater pond, shallow lakes, marshes and coastal wetlands.

It may come as quite a surprise to see a group of these ducks roosting high in a palm or other large tree, but it is quite common. You may often see one standing on a post, or other local high point, as it stands guard while the others feed. If you try sneaking up on the ducks the lookout is almost certain to spot you, and then it gives its noisy whistling call to warn the flock. The surprise might come when you see a group roosting high in a tree!

Unlike most ducks they tend to pair up for life. They usually breed close to water, even if it is only a temporary pool in the rainy season. Nesting in hollows in trees helps avoid the problem of a ground-based nests flooding in the rains, but it does mean that when only a



(Dendrocygna autumnalis)





couple of days old the young must follow their parents and leap out from a nest high in a tree into the unknown world below. Luckily they can take the long fall and are able to feed themselves at this early age.

These duck do not follow long migrations, but do move locally to follow their favorite foods. - aquatic plants, grass, grain, insects, and mollusks, and if you see them in flight you will notice the broad white patches on their wings.

Perhaps whistling ducks do not meet my standard concept of a duck, but this is Mexico, in the tropics, and their numbers are increasing, so they have to be doing lots of things right! Now, if only I can learn to adapt so well



These wonderful photographs were taken by Howard Platt, and all shots were taken around Manzanillo

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Breakfast Places in Manzanillo

Key:
I – International
M – Mexican
B – Buffet
S – Sunday
D – Daily
A – A la Carte

Best Western Brisas del Mar (Las Brisas) I M D

- Every day this hotel in Las Brisas offers a pretty hearty buffet. Good location, right on the beach although parking currently, due to the road improvements make parking somewhat of a nightmare.

mostly Mexican dishes but also fruits and cereals, changes every week. Open for breakfast and other meals also Wed -Sat

Bricios (Las Brisas) M D A

- This is a new venue for breakfast but so far everyone has been most pleased with the offerings and service.

Dolphin Cove (Rest. Paraiso) I M D A

- Situated on the Dolphin Cove Bay on Ave Tesoro this restaurant is difficult to get down to for any but the most agile. Whilst service and food is reasonable it is not sufficiently outstanding to make the journey worthwhile. The beach road has been cut off for traffic which the biggest problem. Great place to see the sunsets with a cocktail.

Candiles (DT. Colonial Hotel) I M D A

- The restaurant has just been down sized and has lost some of it's splendour, in the oldest hotel in Manzanillo, but the food is still good, reliable and reasonably priced. Great place to stop when shopping down town. They still have Paella on Fridays,

Don Andres Ranch (Las Garzas) M SB

- This restaurant in an idyllic setting has had a checkered career over the past few years. Now back in the hands of Don Andres, he is determined to return the restaurant to its previous high quality, Also open for lunch and dinner. Check new hours with your waiter.

Camino Real (Salagua) I M SB D A

- This hotel is tucked around the corner behind La Pergola. Hard to find but the setting is lovely. Reviews from this restaurant are very mixed as quality of both food and service is not consistent. One day it is wonderful, while another it is not worth making the effort to go there. Familiar wait-persons have appeared and disappeared, so they quite possibly have some problems to sort through. This could be a great place for a special occasion, so far, not so.

El Caballito (Next to El Fogon) I M D A

- A personal favourite, the service here is always good despite being an extremely busy restaurant with both families and businessmen. The food is excellent, reasonably priced and the selections wide and good. It is possible to order extra potatoes for breakfast with no beans if that is your preference. The chef will also do a little tailoring to your meal (such as adding a little extra cheese) so that it is not a cookie cutter meal.

Chipotle (Las Hadas corner) I M D A

- This previously great place for breakfast is, unfortunately going downhill and quality of both food and service is not always up to standard. The situation on the corner is far from perfect as the buses find it a great place to blow exhaust fumes. Hopefully they will improve quickly.

El Caribe Las Brisas I M D A SB

- Martin usually opens for the winter season for breakfast and occasionally on Sundays with a buffet but this can vary.

Country Club (By old toll road) I M SB A Wed – Sat

- This location is extremely hard to find which is possibly why when everywhere else in town is going crazy, this is a serene setting. The sunday buffet is very reasonably priced, has

El Marinero, Hotel Marbella I M D A SB

- Good food well presented. Sunday Buffet Brunch with mostly Mexican fare. Reasonably priced. Easy parking on hotel lot.





Juanitos (Santiago) I M D A

- Another favourite place. The food here is always the same good consistent quality. The service is good and friendly and prices reasonable. At Juanitos, you always know what you are going to get. It can be annoying to have to line up for breakfast, especially on Sundays or holiday weekends but the line moves fast.

La Kaminata (Brisas Crucero) M D A

- New to the Manzanillo culinary scene, the meals here have been pronounced excellent by several people. Unfortunately on the day we chose to go for breakfast, so did the rest of Manzanillo and the meal and service was lacking. It is very promising however and we will give it another shot. Whether this becomes another favourite remains to be seen.

La Pergola, (Salagua) I D A SB

- Being the restaurant for a small business mans hotel, they are open every day for breakfast from 7 a.m. till 1 p. m and every first and third Sunday for Buffet Brunch. The food under the guidance from Chef Wolfgang is usually good to excellent but if a large crowd arrives, be prepared for a wait at the brunch table.

La Posada (Brisas) I D A

- This has been a Manzanillo favourite for years although a very well kept secret. At one time they were open only to guests of the Posada and a favoured few but are now open for breakfast to the public. Most who have eaten there regularly pronounce it wonderful and the only place to have breakfast.

Palma Real (Across from La Boquita) I M D A

- This is our friend Dennis's favourite place. The food is good, service fantastic and friendly and the prices reasonable. It is an awful journey to get there as the road winds round below Vida del Mar and is often riddled with potholes but it is also possible to park on the sand bar at La Boquita and walk over the bridge. Everyone should try this place at least once.

Roca del Mar (Next to Hotellito) I M D A

- This is a nice little restaurant where I had the best cheese & spinach omelette ever. The menu is small but varied and the prices and service reasonable.

Beware of the sweet rolls they offer at breakfast time, they are delicious but are a la carte which is a surprise on the bill. The setting is lovely, right on the beach but, unfortunately, this is a place one forgets is there.

Key:
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Simplemente Deli (By Office Depot) I M D A

- International deli foods with a Mexican flavour, we have enjoyed the Molletes here, which are toasted buns with beans and cheese topping, then we request fried eggs (Huevos estrellados) and bacon on top! Wonderful!! They do have other selections also. Word has it that the coffee is not brilliant but it is constant refills, rare here. Service is good and the prices reasonable.

Schooners (Santiago Hill) I S A

- We are currently waiting for information as to whether this popular restaurant will be open for breakfast on Sundays only. Last year it was just great and we especially enjoyed the Eggs Benedict which "T" laboured over to perfect. Good food, good service good people. Another family favourite.

Tesoro Hotel, Karmina Palace, Las Hadas I M D B

- All are typically large hotels with an inclusive price for buffet, quite expensive by comparison but great for a special occasion. There is a large assortment of foods to choose from. Outside of winter season could be chiefly Mexican dishes.

VIPS (Walmart) I M D A

- We have only had a sandwich here which was of dubious quality but welcome any reviews.

Out of Town Restaurants Next Page





OUT OF TOWN

We have been advised that there are 42 restaurants in Melaque & Barra offering breakfast! We have only sampled a few.

Roosters (Melaque) | M D A

- This is an all time favourite restaurant of ours with owners Joyce and Gary Pittman meeting, greeting and making everyone comfortable. The menu is typically Canadian with some International (their famous Belgian waffles) Eggs Benedict on the weekends and eggs and bacon WITH HASHBROWNS. They are now on the beach at their 4th location and let us hope this is to be the last move they have to do. Definitely this should be on everyone "must go to" list. Opening a second location in Barra de Navidad.

Maya (Melaque) | D? A

- We have heard great things about Maya but every time we have attempted to go they have been closed. So we cannot give you opening hours at all. This one is a wonderful "mystery" restaurant.

Ramons (Barra de Navidad) | M D A

- We found this restaurant by accident when the Barra de Navidad Hotel one was closed one time. We were greeted by "Nacho" of Ramons calling out to us "Eggs, bacon, hash browns and coffee?" and that is exactly what we had. We have returned many times since and although it has been said that the kitchen needs a clean up, but we have had great food here. Breakfast anytime of day!

Barra de Navidad Hotel opposite Ramon's | M D A

- Good when they are open which cannot be guaranteed, but no matter, Ramon's is always there!

La Guacamayas Restaurant Bar - Hotel María Isabel Colima

Arguably one of the best buffet in the state of Colima served daily 7am-12noon, could probably boast 100+ items, eggs and omelettes cooked to order. Fresh Juices, and wait-staff that most of them speak English.

Breakfast items

What they are and how to order

Bacon	Tocino
Eggs	Huevos
• scrambled	revueltos (usually the bacon or sausage are in the scramble, if wanted separately order "tocino seperado, por favor")
• fried	estrellado
• over easy	huevos mas facil (generally not known here)
• poached	poche or escafaldos only available at Roosters or Schooners
• boiled	los huevos cocidos
• hard boiled	huevos duros
• soft boiled	pasados por agua huevos
Ham	Jamon
Hotcakes	Pancakes
Sausage	Chorizo or Salchicha (desayuno)
Hash Browns	Papas Croquetas
Toast	Pan Tostado
Chilaquiles	Taco chips with salsa and sometimes eggs or chicken
Huevos Divorciados	Two Eggs, each egg is in either a green or a red sauce.
Huevos Mexicano	Fried eggs on a tortilla covered with salsa
Huevos Rancheros	Very similar to the above.
Machaca	jerky can be meat or fish
Molletes	toasted bun with beans and grilled cheese on top
Or	
Sweet Molletes	- toasted bun with butter and sugar (sometimes a little honey)

Also served at breakfast time are beef tips, chicken, pork, beef tongue and enchiladas. There are many specialty dishes at restaurants as well as many regional favorites, for explanations or just not sure, ask your waiter/waitress.

There are very many more places for breakfast which are not listed above, including the taco stands which are a favourite of our Mexican hosts. Several other places such as Starbucks have minimal offerings but are not what we consider "breakfast". Should you have any other favourites to suggest to our reader, we would be pleased to know.





Comings and Goings... Linda Brun

This is a new column for Manzanillo Sun. It is my hope that we have many more arrivals to report to you than we have departures.

The **Bahia Deli** in Santiago is now carrying fresh donuts.

There is a new dress shop in the **Manzanillo Plaza** in the space formally occupied by the silver shop that is carrying large sizes. I checked and large to the Mexicans is not the same as large to Americans or Canadians, but still, they have some very nice things.

If you are looking for Tupperware you can ask Bricio at his sidewalk restaurant in Las Brisas near the crucero. His wife has a good inventory in their home near the restaurant.

The construction of the new casino at the site of the former Nautilus is progressing. No official words yet as to the opening date.

Sam's Club - rumors continue to fly about the opening of a Sam's Club in Manzanillo. The large tract of land behind KFC and across from the IMSS hospital in Salagua has been cleared, so maybe? Also we are told it is to be near the Camp Verde School! Pick a rumor

If you are looking for baking soda it can be found in **Wal-Mart** in the pharmacy among the digestion aids also in Commercial in with cleaning products.

The **furniture store across from CFE** has some interesting pieces made from roots; trees, flower stands, etc.

One of the waiters at **Palma Real**, Saul, sells hand made bolsas (bags and purses). Made by his wife, they are hand embroidered with ribbon, come in various sizes and would make a really nice Christmas gift.

With the Christmas season now upon us you can find Christmas decorations and other items at **Wal-Mart, Soriana, Commercial Mexicana, Waldo's** and many of the little neighborhood stores.

New in Manzanillo!

"Caroli Helados", swirls, frappes, and ice cream. All made from fresh fruit and yogurt, ice cream, or a combination of the two and made to order. 100% natural and suitable for diabetics using fresh fruit; mango, strawberry, peach, guayaba (guava), kiwi, raspberry, pineapple, and papaya. They also have wonderful smoothies and frapuccinos. Their ice cream parlour is located across from **KFC** on the back side of **"Kiosko"** on the outside. I had raspberry ice cream and it was very good although seeming more like a gelato. I would go back again.

If there is something you are looking for and cannot find it, send me an email and if I don't know where to find it, I will investigate. My email is lbgringa@gmail.com.

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- Marilyn** \$60 with mushrooms, american cheese and bacon
- James Dean** \$55 with white cheese and our home made bbq sauce
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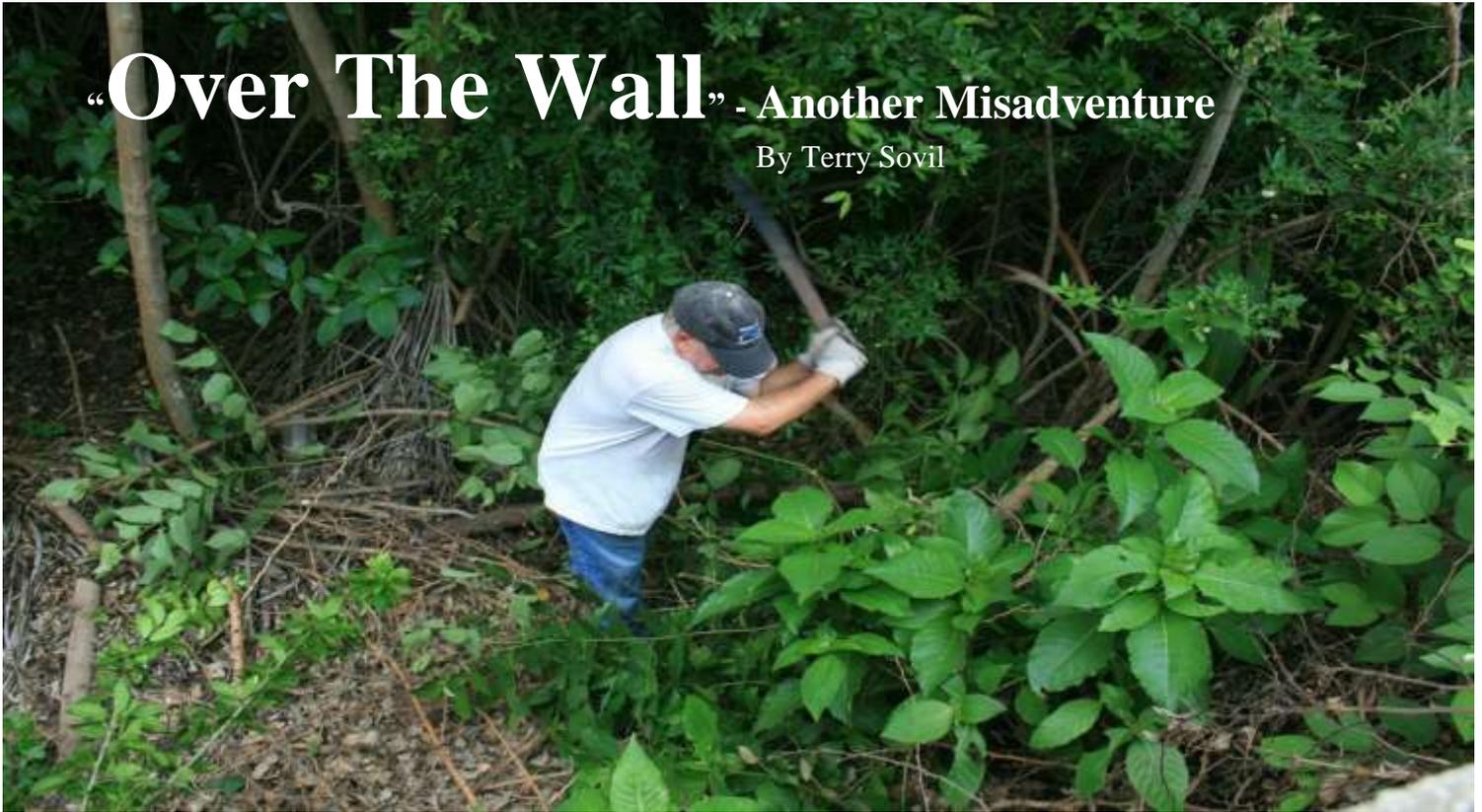
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“Over The Wall” - Another Misadventure

By Terry Sovil



We used to have jungle on two sides but now it's mostly jungle in the rear. I convinced myself that all this growth right up to and over the wall contributed to unwanted visitors such as scorpions, feral cats and raccoons. I worry about everything so it's pretty easy for me to indentify a problem.

Unfortunately, brought up in Northern Minnesota, I was never introduced to the concept of hiring someone. So I'm a DIY (Do It Yourself) type. In Minnesota if you get stuck in the snow and break an axle you simply get your chainsaw out of the trunk, cut down a tree, replace the axle and continue on. Sure we carried a chainsaw, a big shovel, kitty litter, candles, candy bars, jumper cables, a pan to melt snow for water, a tow chain and a pencil because the ink in a pen will freeze. You just keep going, you don't call anyone!

More than intimidated my courage faltered after finding two large snake skins in the yard. Maybe I could hire someone, you know, just to provide moral support? Ricardo manicures our palm trees and he wouldn't go back there. Instead he stood like a ninja atop the wall and with two machetes whirling while I went in on the ground.

Dressed in a t-shirt, long pants, black dot gloves and heavy boots I waded in, chainsaw screaming and trees and branches falling everywhere. A sharp pain. The

attacker flew off. Wasp! Not just any wasp, one of those wasps". These man killers are easily 1.5-2 inches long. For metric people that's pretty close to 1 meter. If you are not into metric, but fish, that's close to two feet. It stung me at the base of my right thumb.

Dizzy, the affect of a sting by a "drunken wasp", feeling intoxicated the pain passed. All was fine until the third day when my right hand looked like it was a boxing glove. The doctor gave me a prescription and advised it wouldn't have gone away on its own.

Six months pass and my courage returns and so does the brush. Three parts fool and one part brave I had to go "over the wall" again! Alone this time. I sharpened the chain on the saw. I sharpened the machetes and cut my finger wide open on one of the blades. Blood is everywhere, but like Jesse "the Body" Ventura "I ain't got time to bleed". A sane person may have given up but armed with two machetes, heavy boots, t-shirt, heavy sweatshirt with zipper and hood with drawstrings, heavy boots, leather gloves tucked under the sleeves and a new weapon I went in.

I suddenly noticed wasps everywhere. My heart was pounding. The hood wasn't completed closed. STING! The left cheek takes a hit. I grab my long



distance wasp spray, take aim and push the button shooting a stream of spray 20 feet right into the nests. It's hard to handle with the leather gloves on. The wasps fall. I set the can down and start working again. More wasps!
 I see 15-20 of them coming in for a strafing run. I push the button and take them out in a clump. I shake the can and realize my ammo is almost gone. Then I spot two more nests!
 Carefully I circle and get into a good position. **SPRAY!** With the remaining contents of the can I take out the nests. **STING!** I'm hit in my right bicep through the heavy sweatshirt and my t-shirt. I don't give up. I trip with my foot caught in a stump and twist my leg almost falling chest first onto a thin, sharp tree trunk. Now my knee is out. A swing and a miss! Fortunately it's the flat part of the blade that hits my leg. I retreat a short distance to let them contemplate their fate.

Left over pills from my first encounter let me self-medicate my two stings. My knee hurts and I'm



The right hand, the effects of the drunken wasp

limping. But I still had time to get to the bank since my debit card stopped working. Somehow I entered the PIN wrong and now it's locked. Again!!



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Moving the Borders

Part 2: The Count-Down to War

David Fitzpatrick

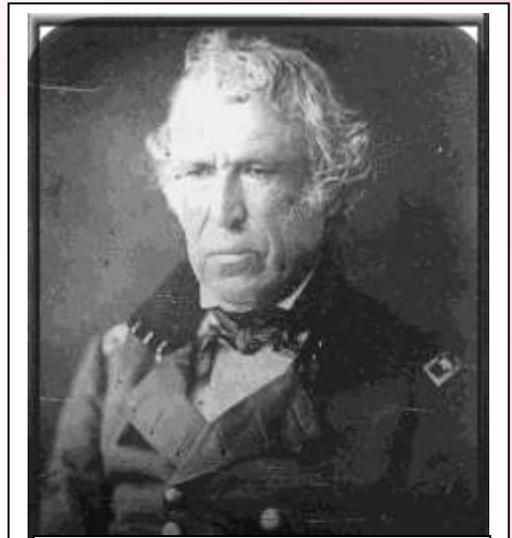
In the mid 1840s, Mexico was experiencing a period of political turbulence. At one point, the bitter rivalries between factions verged on civil war. In a series of revolving-chair government changes, there were four presidents in a period of one year. Added to the political instability were the perpetual fiscal problems and the inability of the central government to pay its debts.

The full gravity of Mexico's problems was beginning to be known to the international community and the vultures were circling. Britain and France were taking a greedy interest. The British foreign minister of the time, the highly predatory Earl of Palmerston, was an unapologetic imperialist, constantly ready to assert British power anywhere in the world. His ambassador in Mexico wrote to him, urging him to: "establish an English population in the magnificent Territory of Upper California.....(It is) by all means desirable ... that California, once ceasing to belong to Mexico, should not fall into the hands of any power but England ...". This was the kind of talk Lord Palmerston liked to hear and concrete action might well have followed, but before the message reached him in London, the ministry had changed and a "Little England" government was in power.

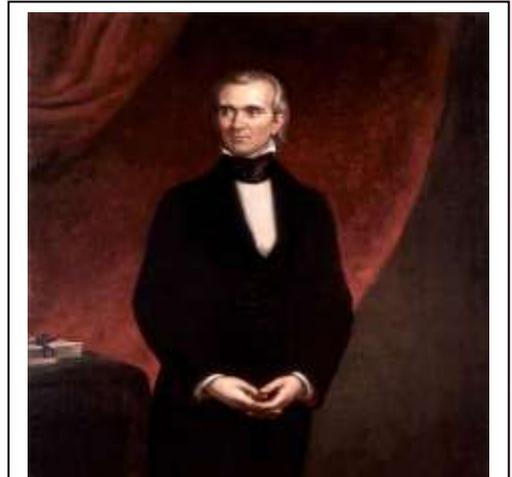
In Washington, as early as 1841, President John Tyler (1841 - 1845) proposed an agreement whereby America would look the other way while Britain captured the port of San Francisco, in return for which, the Oregon Territory would be extended north to the 54:40 parallel of latitude. This arrangement would have given the Canadian Province of British Columbia to the United States as far north as about Prince Rupert.

In March 1845, a new President, James Polk, took office. With the arrival of Polk, American expansionism once more took center stage. He was determined to extend the frontiers of the U.S. to the Pacific and realized that if he did not act quickly, Britain and France might beat him to the draw. He therefore undertook a series of ventures aiming to annex, conquer, colonize, purchase, or otherwise acquire various Mexican territories. Failing that, he intended, at the very least, to provoke the Mexican government into war.

Polk's opening salvo came in June 1845 when he announced his policy with regard to Texas. He meant to work towards the annexation of Texas (which was still an independent republic) to the United States as soon as possible. This required a considerable amount of delicate negotiation with the American Government as a large number of



General Zachary Taylor, U.S. Commander during the Mexican-American War and later President of the United States (1849 - 1850)



James K. Polk, President of the United States (1845 - 1849)



The Earl of Palmerston



northern Whigs were opposed to Western expansionism in general and the annexation of Texas in particular. They feared that the Southern slave-owning states would seek to absorb parts of Mexico and admit them to the U.S. as slave states.

Polk declared himself ready to defend Texas against Mexican "aggression", even though it was not yet a part of the United States. He therefore sent General Zachary Taylor with a significant military force to the banks of the Nueces River, considered at the time to be the border between Texas and the rest of Mexico.

At the same time, he instructed the American naval squadron in the Pacific to be ready to seize California ports at once if Mexico declared war on the United States.

In November 1845, he sent John Slidell as a secret ambassador to the Mexican Government authorized to offer \$25,000,000 to purchase California and the territory of Santa Fe de Nuevo Mexico, a very large area comprising several present-day U.S. states. Slidell was also sanctioned to forgive over \$3,000,000 in debts owed by the Mexican Government to U.S. citizens. The Slidell embassy provoked increased dissension inside the Mexican power structure, some factions being ready to negotiate, while others cried "treason". José Joaquin de Herrera, the Mexican president of the moment, was forced to resign when he was perceived as being too ready to listen to American demands.

On December 29, 1845, Polk finally achieved his key objective: after a long and bitter debate, the U.S. Congress formally admitted Texas as the 28th State of the Union. This represented a major provocation to the Mexican Government which still regarded Texas as a rebellious province which would one day be re-assimilated into Mexico. They had frequently warned that the annexation of Texas would constitute a *casus belli*. Mexico therefore immediately severed relations with the United States.

While Congress was debating, John Fremont, officially an explorer commissioned by the U.S. Government, proceeded with a small army

through the Salinas Valley to Santa Cruz on the California coast. When questioned by Mexican authorities, he explained that he was looking for a beach-side residence for his mother. Sceptical, and alarmed by the size and military hardware of Fremont's party, they ordered him to leave. But instead, he built a fortress, flying the American flag, and indicated his firm determination to annex California to the United States. It was only upon the intervention of Thomas Larkin, the U.S. Consul in Monterey, who was not a war enthusiast, that Fremont agreed to leave the territory. But he returned the following year in time to be present for California's declaration of independence from Mexico.

Early in 1846, General Zachary Taylor who had been camped beside the Nueces River, received orders from President Polk to advance to the banks of the Rio Grande, some 150 miles to the south. As Mexico regarded the Nueces River as the border, the military occupation of the corridor between the Nueces and the Rio Grande was a substantial violation of Mexican territory and sovereignty. In Mexican eyes, it was the gravest provocation to date. It was becoming clearer every day that war was now inevitable.

As so often happens in tense international situations, the final catalyst was a minor incident of apparently little importance. On April 25, 1846, a small detachment of U.S. soldiers patrolling in the disputed corridor between the two rivers, was set upon by a force of 2,000 Mexican cavalry. There was a small skirmish lasting only a few minutes, but sixteen American soldiers were killed. This was the *casus belli* that President Polk was looking for. He did not miss his opportunity. Two weeks later, in an inflammatory message to Congress, he stated that: "Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil".

For Congress, there was only one possible reaction to such an incident: On May 13, 1846, two days after the President's message, the United States formally declared war on Mexico. Ten days later, President Paredes issued a statement on behalf of the Mexican Government which constituted, to all practical purposes, a declaration of war. It was not until July 7, 1846, that the Mexican Congress officially declared war on the United States.

Next Month: The War



The Streets of Manzanillo

Terry

JOSEFA ORTÍZ DE DOMÍNGUEZ



de las Vizcainas, she both graduated and married Miguel Dominguez in 1791. They went to live in Querétaro, where her husband was assigned his duties. Querétaro was a major site for the Independence movement and Josefa was in the right place to fulfill her role in history. Josefa was of pure Spanish ancestry but like many of the Creole elite she despised the Spaniards born in Spain who displayed a very arrogant attitude toward the creoles. Her anti-Spanish attitude also came from her involvement in literary societies. It was the custom in that day for privileged creoles to organize such societies. They smuggled in works by Voltaire, Rousseau and Descartes, which were banned by the Church, and held lively discussions. These literary societies soon became political societies. The most important was in Querétaro.

The Magistrate's Wife 1768-1829

- **Born:** 28 September 1768
- **Birthplace:** Morelia, Mexico
- **Died:** 02 March 1829
- **Place of Death:** Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico
- **Best Known As:** Heroine of the Independence of Mexico



Doña Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez is considered the "Heroine of the Independence of Mexico". She was born in Morelia (then called Valladolid) Michoacán on September 8th, 1768 and died at age 61 in Mexico City on March 2nd, 1829. The Spanish appointed *Corregidores* (magistrates or "correctors") who were scattered

throughout the Spanish domains including Mexico. Miguel Domínguez was a Magistrate in Querétaro but our story isn't about him, the Corregidor, but his wife, the Corregidora. She was the person "in charge" and she was able to change the course of history.

Both her parents, Juan José Ortiz and Manuela Girón de Ortiz, died shortly after her birth. Josefa was brought up by an older sister. Educated at the reputable Colegio

They underestimated Josefa and using sympathizers that were all over town she was able to get the word to all of the hidden rebel leaders and they all escaped to initiate the uprising against Spain. Josefa paid a price for her patriotism. She was betrayed by a Captain Arias and arrested on September 13, 1810. Josefa was confined to the Santa Clara convent in Querétaro and then transferred to Mexico City for trial. She was defended by her husband but found guilty and confined to the convent of Santa Teresa. She was so outspoken about her captors that they transferred her to another nunnery, Santa Catalina de Siena, where discipline was stricter. She was not released until 1821 when the Independence War ended.

While Josefa opposed European imperialism and though defiant of Spanish royal authority was still proud of her Spanish blood. She condemned Guadalupe Victoria, Mexico's first president, when he expelled all Spaniards from Mexico. She refused any remuneration for her support of the independence movement.

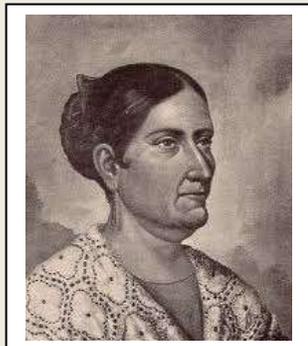
At the age of 61 Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez died



in 1829. . Sadly she did not live to see the new Independence Government draft a New Constitution at Querétaro on February 5th, 1917 and then proclaim Querétaro a Mexican State. She was first buried at Santa Catalina but her remains were later shipped to her home city of Querétaro. Josefa is honored in Mexico City with a statue and in 1969 a Twenty Peso bill was printed in her honor.



Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez had an independent spirit. She influenced her husband to support the cause and thus was able to alert key rebels to escape certain capture. She hated all types of oppression. She is as much a hero in the struggle for independence as any male. She is remembered as "La Corregidora", "The Magistrates Wife".



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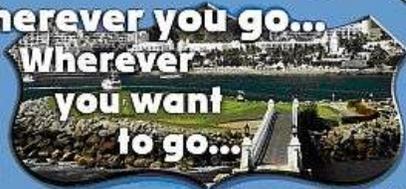
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CHRISTMAS COMES THIS TIME EACH YEAR

Terry Sovil

The Beach Boys sang "Christmas Comes This Time Each Year". Listen for it the next time you're in Wal-Mart. **Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead)** festivities are over. Mid-November the stores are pulling out all stops. Christmas trees, ornaments and foods are appearing. Are there Mexican Christmas traditions? Well, Virginia, is there a Santa Claus? There are many Mexican traditions! Let's mention a few and see if we can all get in the mood.

Posadas

Posadas run the nine days before Christmas, the 16th to the 24th. This is a re-enactment of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter in Bethlehem. The group, the Santos Peregrinos (Holy Pilgrims) goes to two designated homes seeking a place to stay. They are turned away but at the third are told there is no room inside but they may stay in the stable. They are given entrance and the posada - a fiesta - is held. This occurs each afternoon headed by a young child acting as Mary, Virgen María, often on a live burro. Others may follow portraying angels, the Three Kings or a host of pastores y pastoras (shepherds and shepherdesses).

Nacimientos (Nativity Scenes)

Christmas Trees are gaining in popularity but for now the Nativity scenes are more common. There are public displays presented in yards and some folk art nativity scenes. Usually set up on December 16, the baby Jesus is put in place on December 24th. The three kings are added January 5th. Usually made of clay or plaster the central point is a stable where the family is sheltered. There are also shepherds, sheep and oxen. Some are very elaborate and occupy an entire room. You may spot a progressive Nativity scene with a Christmas tree.

Nochebuena (Christmas Eve)

The last posada is held on this day. Many attend a midnight mass (Misa de Gallo or Rooster's Mass) then have traditional dinners with families. The fare is often simple homemade tamales or regional dishes but can include roast turkey, ham or suckling pig for those that can afford it. A hot fruit punch (ponche) is served or a sparkling cider (sidra) for the holiday toast (brindis). Gifts are not usually given but are becoming more common. Since these parties go late into the night Christmas Day is usually quiet with leftovers (el



recalentado). With no Santa Claus, Christmas wishes go to the el Niño Dios (the Holy Child) for Christmas Eve and the Reyes Magos (Magi) for Three Kings Day.

Poinsettias: La Flor de Noche Buena

The *Flor de Noche Buena* (Christmas Eve Flower) is grown in Mexico. It has become a common flower for Christmas in many parts of the world. Who doesn't like beautiful mid-winter flowers? The petals are not really the flowers but simply colorful leaves that surround the true blossom, a cluster of yellow florets. The petals come in a variety of colors. For non-gardeners there is a form of Noche Buena which is a rich, dark, bock-like beer found only during the holidays!





Los Santos Inocentes (Holy Innocents)

Celebrated December 28th, this is a reminder of King Herod's order to kill all male infants intended to include the Christ Child. In Mexico, this day is similar to April Fool's day. Watch out for potential jokes and pranks or you may be the "Fool Saint" for the day.

Año Nuevo (New Year)

New Year's Eve is a late-night dinner with families. Those who want to party go out afterwards. There may be fireworks over the bay so keep an eye out for the display.

Dia de Reyes (The Three Kings: Los Reyes Magos)

January 6 is Día de Reyes or "Kings Day". Gifts are exchanged much as the three wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus. Some children receive gifts on both Christmas and King's Day. Rosca de Reyes, special sweet bread shaped like a wreath, is shared. Cut your own piece and you may find a miniature baby Jesus. If you do you are supposed to host a party on February 2nd serving tamales!



Dia de la Candelaria (Candlemas)

February 2nd marks the end of the Christmas season. People dress their Niños Dios and take them to church to be blessed. Afterwards enjoy tamales from the person that got the baby Jesus in their piece of Rosca de Reyes bread on January 6, Three Kings Day.

Feliz Navidad!



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Bienes Raices // Real Estate

ALL IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT BUYING REAL ESTATE IN MANZANILLO

Written with the help, input and expertise of some of Manzanillo's finest realtors

You have been on holiday to Manzanillo on several occasions, love it and wonder, is it possible to buy a place here for yourself? The answer is that it is most definitely within the realms of reality and we will explain the circumstances to the best of our ability and with the help of our many professional friends.

In Mexico, the known factors in buying a home or property in ones own countries are being replaced not only with different rules, such as those surrounding foreign ownership but in dealing with a major purchase in a different language. How to find a good Real Estate Agent in the first place? Ask others who have purchased, who they have used and whom they would recommend or check the listings on the Manzanillo Sun's website. When choosing an agent initially, ask if they work with other agents and company listings, or solely promote their own listings.

The best advice we can offer is to be aware that it is more important to ask a question, than be in a situation you are quite unprepared for. There is not a blueprint for this process as every single situation and purchase is different. Just take it slow and easy because making the ultimate leap into ownership in Mexico cannot be hurried. Throughout the process the most important thing is to be patient. Make sure that if something is not understood, the Real Estate Agent answers your questions, which should be many. Patience! Patience! Patience!

AFFORD TO BUY – YES OR NO

Manzanillo has something to offer everyone, regardless of the size of pocket book or the desired lifestyle. There are many lovely homes available in small pockets around golf courses and just off the beach which are generally at lower prices than those in the hills with panoramic vistas or on the beach with the proximity of the largest swimming pool available anywhere! There are some lovely homes tucked away in unexpected places which could suit you to a tee!

So the quick answer is – **yes** - it's affordable.

Manzanillo has been not overbuilt like Puerto Vallarta or Los Cabos and prices asked are nowhere near those in these locations. Real estate prices in Manzanillo are at a



vast array of levels and there is absolutely something for everyone. Ask your agent to show you around town or to suggest areas that you might like to visit on your own. But always keep in mind that properties located on the beach, or with great views, or reasonable access to the beach, good location for ease of shopping, restaurants, bus routes etc, will be higher priced than those in other slightly less convenient locations. Above all, be flexible, surprises can quite literally be just around the corner.

Prices of properties are all over the spectrum with condos going for \$95,000. USD for a one bedroom unit, to \$335,000.USD for a fantastic 3 large bedrooms, 2 1/2 bath, 2700 plus sq. ft., 2nd floor condo, recently renovated with upgraded furniture and on the beach. There are properties in an exclusive, gated, secure community where the starting range of homes is \$555,000, USD and more reasonably priced homes on a golf course for about

\$200,000 + USD. Lovely homes on with large gardens within a Mexican community* can be anywhere from \$100,000 USD.

** We must say here that Mexican communities should not be discounted as they are generally good and safe with the inhabitants welcoming, neighborly & very helpful. Most people have good tales to tell.*

foreigner buying property in Mexico at the given address where your offer has been accepted. Fideo Comiso's are required on all property purchased by foreigners within the 50 km limit of the beach.

There are numerous other fees involved in closing, such as registering title at Land Titles, Municipal Hall, traveling to the Fiduciary Bank, sales taxes, photocopies, etc. and lastly, the Notario fees which are based by percentage on the value of the purchase. These fees will be in the neighborhood of \$5,000 USD for property under the value of \$100,000 or if your purchase is \$250,000 (as an example) then approximately \$12,500 USD would be the closing costs.



Also remember, as financing is now available in Mexico, should you decide to finance your purchase in whole or in part, there will be not only added time (minimum 30 to 45 days) for closing but additional costs will also incur.

If retirement is not immediate, why not consider buying a lot and building your dream home 3, 4 or more years down

the road. Taxes on bare land are not a major factor in Manzanillo. For example, in the development known as Peninsula de Juluapan (Las Lomas del Mar) lots with nice views can be purchased for as little as \$35,000 USD. A number of lots (approx. 700m to 800m are available under the \$50,000.00 USD. with property taxes being about \$150/year. The taxes are figured on a table used by Catastro (a Government agency) and it depends on the value placed on the property.

There are many excellent architects available locally, who know the area and what is required by local laws for safety and security for both a building and its inhabitants. Many are bilingual but if not, there are people around who are glad to act as interpreter for a small fee. A builder usually charges \$50.00 to \$90.00 per sq. ft. depending on the finishes. Land has been a good investment in Manzanillo but prices, again, depend on location. Do realize that with the planned expansion of the Costa Alegre (Puerto Vallarta to Manzanillo) these can be much higher in the not too distant future.

CLOSING COST A CONSIDERATION

In Mexico, unlike in Canada or the USA, closing costs are a major expense. It is important to know that all real estate transactions **must** go through a NOTARIO PUBLICO (very similar to a magistrate). The Notario is required by law to do the applications and registrations for a BANK TRUST or Fideo Comiso. Firstly, there is the need to apply for a permit or First Permission. This will cost approximately \$1100 USD payable immediately upon application. This is where the owner is registered as a foreigner buying property in Mexico at the given address where the offer has been accepted.

Fideo Comiso Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mexico prohibits foreign ownership of real property located within 30 miles (50km) of any coastline or 60 miles (100km) of either border. This is referred to as the "Prohibited Zone."

NB: It is absolutely not recommended that purchasers make a private contract with a Mexican friend listed as owner, as in case of disagreements, the property could be lost by the actual purchaser.

There are numerous other fees involved in closing, such as registering title at Land Titles, Municipal Hall, traveling to the Fiduciary Bank, sales taxes, photocopies, etc. and lastly, the Notario fees which are based by percentage on the value of the purchase. These fees will be in the neighborhood of \$5,000 USD for property under the value of \$100,000 or if your purchase is \$250,000 (as an example) then approximately \$12,500 USD would be the closing costs.

There are several mortgage lenders for financing in Mexico. Rates will vary with an average of 6.75% to 8% depending on credit score and amount of loan. Most will lend 75% of the purchase price. Be aware that should you decide to finance your purchase in whole or in part, it will be not only to add time for closing (minimum 30 to 45 days) but also additional costs.

Questions you may not know to ask and which the realtor must check on your behalf;

- * Are **Predials** paid every year.
- * Ensure there is no lien on the property and it is "**Libre de gravamen**"
- * If the property is registered in "**Registro Publico de la Propiedad**" and can be proved thus with a **FOLIO REAL** number.
- * Read the "**Escrituras**" before making a firm deal and ask to see the owner's identification papers to ensure that it is in the correct name.
- * Go to the "**Municipio**" and ask if the property is registered in the same name
- * Be sure you buy land which actually exists: That means the registration in "**CATASTRO**" is in the same name and location and that the land is legally registered in "**CATASTRO**"

Should you decide to buy without a realtor it can be risky and all of the above must be checked prior to handing over any monies or trouble could ensue. Beware of friendly persons or "quick new FRIENDS". Trust only a person you know and who will tell you the true facts.

In future articles we will examine the options of (1) renting your newly purchased property, (2) money that can be made by flipping and (3) do I have to live in a development?

Manzanillo Sun thanks the following agents for providing the information for this article:

In alphabetical order they are:

Candy King, Owner Realtor for **Coldwell Banker, Colimar**
candyk@coldwellbankermanzanillo.com (314) 334-2000
Toll free: 1-866-724-3313

Gail & Margarita Abbott, Owner Realtors, **Abbott Realty**
sales@abbott-realestate.com (314) 334-7460
cell: 044-(314) 338-2431

Gerry Szakacs, Broker/Owner of **Realty Executives Mexican Bay.**
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- 3/4 teaspoon salt
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- 1 Tablespoon milk
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups (9 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips**

*melt the butter if you prefer chewier textured cookies
**increase to 2 cups (12 ounces) if you like a lot of chips in each cookie (this will also increase the overall sweetness of the cookies)

Recipe Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Sift together the flour, salt, and baking soda, set aside.
3. Using a mixer; cream together the butter, milk, brown sugar, and white sugar until thoroughly blended.
4. Add in the egg, the egg yolk, and vanilla and mix until well blended and smooth (about 1 minute).
5. Slowly blend in the flour mixture and mix until just combined. Do not overbeat.
6. Add the chocolate chips, and mix until they are evenly distributed throughout the batter (about 30 seconds).
7. Drop by rounded 2 Tablespoons (use a cookie scoop or combine 2 Tablespoons of dough into a rounded drop) onto the prepared cookie sheet, about 2 inches apart. Repeat until all dough is used.
8. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes in the preheated oven. The cookies should have golden brown edges and soft centers.
9. Remove from oven, and let cool on baking sheet for 1 minute. Transfer to a wire rack, and let cool completely.



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MORNING CLASSES with Robert Hill will be added this season in **Club Santiago**. Annie Poole is organizing these classes for Robert, which will be held 2 days a week from 9 to 11:30 AM. There may be a few spots left, so if you are interested, please contact Annie at animac60@hotmail.com

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If you take digital photos but aren't always sure of yourself or your camera than this course is for you! If are thinking about buying a camera but not sure which one this course can help. Digital photography has displaced most film cameras and it is still expanding. It is versatile, fun, instant and easier than ever! If you

think it sounds difficult or technical it really isn't. We will cover the basics of digital photography in very simple terms. Learn about setting up your camera, taking the photo, inspecting it, making modifications to it, getting it off the camera, storing it and sharing it with friends and family.

The photo course consists of using the various types of cameras, capabilities, basic shooting techniques, storing, naming, sorting, basic photo management, some photo edits.

Dates: [based on demand? Scheduled if anyone contacts me?]

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Cost: \$300 pesos

Terry Sovil 314 334 6394 or terry@terrydotcom.com

For full information and syllabus

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- 3 CPR (Primary Care + AED Intro) \$45 USD 4hrs

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The self-defense course will include more practical things on avoiding situations, contact avoidance and could include some physical things as well plus introduce some Spanish phrases for calling for help.

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MEX-ECOTOURS

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online learning applications. Shockwave Player displays

web content that has been created by Adobe Director. Again, this also has a free version to view Shockwave files at Adobe's site (<http://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>).

Adobe also has programs for developers to use HTML, JavaScript, Adobe Flash Professional software, and ActionScript to build web applications that run as stand-alone client applications without the constraints of a browser. They also have programs for photo editing, like; PhotoShop (a full-fledged version of a program for photo editing that has unending capabilities and a very high learning curve) and the condensed version as PhotoShop Elements photo editing program (it also has boundless capabilities and a slightly lower learning curve... this author can only get through learning the 'Elements' version and Adobe seems to come out with a newer version of that before I can fully learn the version I've got).

As you can see, there are many descriptions of the word 'Adobe'. I have only covered a small portion of possibilities here, including the programs that most of us have probably heard of but may not have understood what they did. Hopefully, you now have a clearer idea/vision of what these different programs of Adobe do and how some of these pertain to your Internet browsing experience.

- Note: All or most of the free versions of the players/reader are usually already installed on all newer computers. Most web sites that would use any of these programs would also likely provide a link to Adobe's website to download them if they detect that you don't have it on your system (which you would be able to tell because you would not be able to open any of these files). If you do not already have them installed on your computer, you can also use the links provided above.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." – Benjamin Franklin



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Terry Sovil

Environmental advocates at PADI, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors, created a foundation called Project A.W.A.R.E. in 1989. The purpose of this new group was to help conserve underwater environments through education, advocacy and action. Thus Project AWARE, Aquatic World Awareness Responsibility & Education, was born. PADI remains a key partner and their partnership encourages divers and dive professionals worldwide.

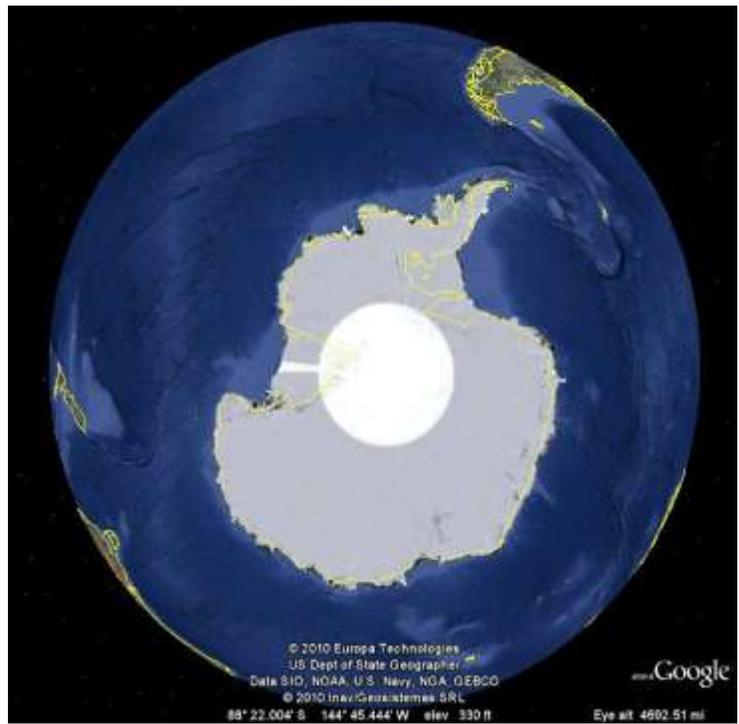
Project AWARE Foundation is a registered nonprofit organization with offices in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland and Japan. These offices and interested divers, snorkelers and concerned citizens combine efforts to conserve aquatic resources in more than 180 countries and territories of the world. These combined efforts reach more than one million people a year!

Working in partnership with divers and water enthusiasts such activities include:

- Underwater Cleanups and Marine Debris Prevention
- Coral Reef Conservation, Monitoring and Data Collection Shark Education, Reporting and Conservation
- Improved Management Policies and Marine Protection Efforts
- Environmental Training for Divers and Education Programs for Kids

People who dive notice differences in the water condition, reef and bottom health. They make natural ambassadors for the preservation of the dive sites and location that they love and treasure. I have seen this personally in Manzanillo. I have had conversations with many people at Club de Yates who have been coming to Manzanillo for years, up to 30 years for one couple, and treasure that little cove for the rich diversity of life it offers to snorkelers and divers. It is the best shore dive in Manzanillo and one of the best dive sites in general.

Most of our natural forests, beaches, waters and parks are under constant stress from visitors, overuse and often simply being "loved to death". The oceans are a constant factor and are what make planet Earth THE WATER PLANET. We learned in school about five oceans and various seas but in fact there is only one. See the photo of the Antarctic and you will quickly see that our water is one big ocean.



The oceans account for 362 million square kilometers (141+ million square miles). They cover about 70% of the earth. The Pacific Ocean is 25% larger than ALL the earth's land surfaces. The average combined temperature of all oceans and seas is a bone-chilling 3.5 degrees C or 38.3



degrees F. Fortunately, Manzanillo sees a much narrower range of about 65-86 degrees F (18.3 to 30 degrees C). The oceans account for 97% of our total water supply but realize that less than 1% of that is fresh water!

The deep ocean is nearly a biological desert. Open ocean makes up 90% of the world's marine region but produces less than 1% of the fish caught. Coastal zones are the richest fisheries, 90%, and also the areas where man and nature collide with pollution and overuse and natural disasters.

Our oceans and seas are used by all nations but most of the area is outside national borders which provide a freedom to access with no legal or moral responsibilities. Marine pollution is just one of the factors we care about along with overfishing, coastal areas and coral reefs. Oceans suffer from chemical pollutants, 18.9 TRILLION litres/5 TRILLION gallons of toxic waste per year. That number excludes oil pollution. Solid wastes, including plastics (see previous article on The Pacific Gyre) also contribute to a decline in overall health.

World fisheries are in a sad state. If you are like me you love shrimp. But eating shrimp makes me sad to think that for every kilogram/2.2 pounds of shrimp consumed 4.2 kilograms/9.25 pounds of fish are discarded as by-catch (untargeted species). Shrimp trawlers discard 80-90% of their hauls! This is often true of the fishing industry in general. When catches start to get smaller, fishermen often start to use more damaging methods to harvest fish. 39 countries are **dependent** on fish for protein in their diet.

While so many of the facts and figures are gloom and doom there are bright spots and some solutions that are being tried. If we are each conscious of the things we do, what we discard, how we choose to consume we can make a difference. And being so close to such undersea beauty I take it all very seriously.

If you are interested in learning more about our waters and reefs seek out a PADI dive facility and enroll in a Project AWARE class. Two do not require any diving but are simply classroom presentations.

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Crocodile Tears

By: Tommy Clarkson

Still struggling with “retirement inactivity”, the other day I decided to enjoy another of my exploratory walks around our nearby mangrove. So casting keen and open eyes up in the trees and out in the water for tropical birds, not ten minutes into the overgrowth I was startled to hear a low, rumbling, croak nearby but a bit below me, “So, what are you doing down here in the Grove”?

Turning and – as they say – nearly jumping out of my skin as I realized that I was a scant twelve feet or so from a pointy snouted, thick and rugged skinned throwback to the dinosaurs . . . or what some folks around here call a Salt Water Crocodile.

Mid my reflex driven leap up from the brackish water edge – a jump that may have well exceeded most collegiate track and field records - it hit me, “I speak crocodile . . . or at least understand it! (Some may recall that I also recently learned that I speak fairly passable Hummingbirdese,)

Then, more or less ensconced on the proverbial “high ground”, some thirty feet away with several mangrove branches and small buses between us, I endeavored to recover from my somewhat bad form and strove to articulate a response.

“Well, sir . . . you are a sir, correct,” I politely ask. “Of course,” he impatiently snort-retorted – in a voice that sounded surprisingly like a lion’s roar, “do I look like a broad?” Taken aback by the growlish ferocity of his voice and recognizing political correctness was, obviously, not a crocodile priority, I hurriedly strove to cover my apparent gaffe, “No sir, you are

most obviously all male!”

Apparently somewhat placated, he splashed his long and bulky long tail in a guttural manner, sounding as if he had a dry or sore throat, he harrumphed, “Well, that’s more like it.”

Seeking to further mollify him I respectfully inquired, “Forgive my lack of awareness but inasmuch as I grew up in the land locked Midwest of the United States, I’m a bit unsure. What sort of – somehow I remembering the Latin name from, high school biology, a crossword puzzle or some not-so-wasted time watching Jeopardy - *crocodilus* are you?”

He seemed pleased to have been asked and began to explain “*Actually, there seems to be some confusion around here on that point very point. Basically, there are three varieties of us crocs here in Mexico. There’s the Crocodylus moreletii that’s a more modest sized fellow – perhaps up to three meters in length – that live in the fresh waters along the Gulf of Mexico. Because of similarities to them, they were long confused with the Cuban and American Crocodile. For all intents and purposes, they’re found only in the southernmost parts of eastern Mexico.*”

Intrigued, I leaned against the tree I’d earlier nearly climbed as he continued, “Then ya’ got the *Caiman crocodilus*. ‘Caiman’, yo’ know, is a Spanish term for alligator or any Crocodilia. And these guys inhabit freshwater streams, marshes and swamps from southern Mexico, through Central America into northern Argentina. They’re somewhat unique,” he said begrudgingly, “as they have a limited ability to change their color. Generally speaking, they are found only in the southernmost parts of Mexico.”



And then there's the largest and handsomest," and with that last word he slyly winked, "the *Crocodylus acutus* - the American Saltwater (or South American) Crocodile. Our snouts are relatively narrower and more elongated than that of the moreletii. The largest and most widespread of the crocodiles of the Americas is the 'acutus' calling their home along the Atlantic coast, from Guatemala north to the southern tip of Florida. On the Pacific coast we've got family ranging from central Mexico down as far as Venezuela, Equador and Peru.

With a bit of a braggadocios tone he went on, "Being salt water tolerant, we're a flexible lot and reside in an array of watery locations including freshwater lakes, rivers and reservoirs and then in brackish coastal habitats - such as this mangrove - in tidal estuaries, coastal lagoons and every once in a while one of us will be found out at sea . . . that's how we came to inhabit a number of Caribbean and Pacific islands!"

While our average length is around 3 ½ meters, I had a cousin who was over seven meters in horizontal height! (That's apparently crocodile) He was larger than those slimey kin of ours over in the Nile that Hollywood's made everyone so afraid of," he finished, somewhat defensively.

Drawn into the conversation with this rather worldly wise fellow I inquired, "Is it true that crocodiles are more closely related to birds and dinosaurs than to most other animals that are classified as reptiles?"

"Yes indeed," he croakily boasted, "and let me tell you some other crocodilius factoids you might not know."

One, *Crocodylus* is derived from the Greek *krokodeilos* and means literally 'pebble worm', which I gotta' say," he mumbled with a bit of a huff, "doesn't seem altogether all that complimentary."

Two, the land speed record - set by a pal of mine from Down Under, an Australian Freshwater Crocodile - is 17 km/hor around 11 mph)." With a sly grin he asked, "how fast did you say you could run?" (I remembered somewhere reading that a normal, fit human could run right at 12 mph. H'mmm, 65 years old, overweight, and but questionably normal . . . better just keep my distance!)

Three, our average age is around 70 years, but there's some of us who hang in there until around the century mark and my great, great uncle, who lived in

a zoo in Russia was around 130 years old when he croaked," Whereupon he broke into what I could only surmise was crocodile guffaws as he appreciated his own joke.

Four, our embryos do not have sex chromosomes and, as a result, unlike humans, our sex is not determined genetically

but rather by temperature. Us guys come to be around 31.6 °C and females are produced at either slightly lower or higher temperatures. We bulls are sort of special, you know," he chauvinistically asserted.

Five, the force of our bite is more than 5,000 pounds per square inch compared to just 335 pounds per square inch by a Rottweiler which, by the way, makes a most tasty snack." (It was at this point that I sensed a darker side of this rather primal looking character - something I'd forgotten as I'd been drawn into the conversation.)

At this point I realized he had slowly been ootching closer and closer to me and if a crocodile could lick his lips I'd swear he did it about then. So, while still endeavoring to maintain proper crocodile civility and courtesy, I turned rather quickly and said, "You know, I just remembered something I have to do. Nice talking to you. Take care," and off I rushed . . . at, if I judge correctly, sufficiently over 12 mph!

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Paraprosdokian sentences

(A figure of speech that uses an unexpected ending to a sentence or phrase.)

Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on the list.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.

We never really grow up; we only learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right - only who is left.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

The early bird might get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

Evening news is where they begin with 'Good evening', and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.

How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?

Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.

I thought I wanted a career, turns out I just wanted pay checks.

A bank is a place that will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.

Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says "If an emergency, notify:" I put "DOCTOR".

I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.

I saw a woman wearing a sweat shirt with "Guess" on it...so I said "Implants?"



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Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.

Why do Americans choose from just two people to run for president and 50 for Miss America ?

Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

The voices in my head may not be real, but they have some good ideas!

Always borrow money from a pessimist. He won't expect it back.

A diplomat is someone who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you will look forward to the trip.

Hospitality: making your guests feel like they're at home, even if you wish they were.

Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.

I discovered I scream the same way whether I'm about to be devoured by a great white shark or if a piece of seaweed touches my foot.

Some cause happiness wherever they go. Others whenever they go.

There's a fine line between cuddling and holding someone down so they can't get away.

I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure.

I always take life with a grain of salt, plus a slice of lemon, and a shot of tequila.

When tempted to fight fire with fire, remember that the Fire Department usually uses water.

You're never too old to learn something stupid.

To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit on the target.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

Some people hear voices. Some see invisible people. Others have no imagination whatsoever.

A bus is a vehicle that runs twice as fast when you are after it as when you are in it.

If you are supposed to learn from your mistakes, why do some people have more than one child?

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine .



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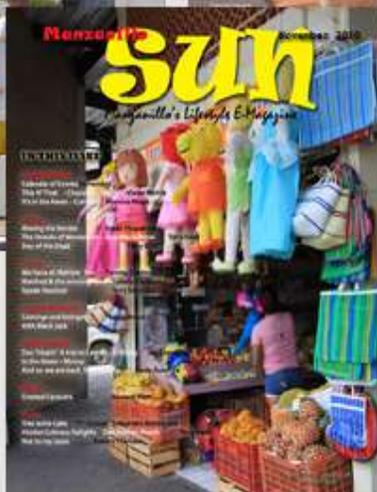
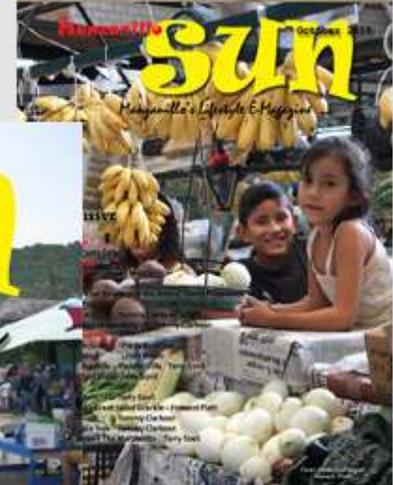
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