

**Manzanillo**

# SUN

August 2010

*Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine*

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**"Hummingbird"**  
by Howard Platt

Photo contest prize  
donated by Monkeys Chicken



# The Big White Bird!

By Howard Platt



My birding guides advise me that size is very difficult to judge, especially at a distance, and is not a good measure by which to identify birds. They are right, of course, and they know a lot more than I do about birding. That said, if you see a really tall white bird, long neck and long legs, standing in the lagoon waiting for some unsuspecting fish to swim by, then you are watching a great egret. They are a member of the heron family and, with the exception of the occasional great blue heron that you may see, they are the largest wading bird on the pacific coast of Mexico.

They have been called many other things over the past few hundred years, among the names are American egret, common egret, great white egret, and angel bird. I can see reasons for all of the names, and for the changes. The bird is found around the world, so "American" is too restrictive. Hunting for feathers and plumes for ladies dresses and hats reduced the American population by 95%, so it became uncommon in America - delete "common egret". The all-white version of the great blue heron is larger, so great white egret is inappropriate. Young egrets are aggressive towards one another in the nest, and stronger siblings often kill their weaker kin so that not all survive to fledge in two to three weeks. Hard to call them angel birds after that behavior!

One of the oldest organizations formed to help protect the environment is the Audubon Society. Although Audubon himself killed thousands of birds in his attempt to identify and classify them, the society was formed to help protect birds from being killed for

their feathers. The great egret was adopted as a symbol of the society, and the partial recovery of the population is a mark of its success. Today, the threat is habitat loss, particularly because the bird nests in colonies which are vulnerable to the ravages of hurricanes or man-made causes.

You are likely to see great egrets in most of the coastal lagoon of Pacific Mexico, or even along streams, tidal flats, and occasionally an open field. They catch their prey by stalking along, very slowly, or more often by standing still for long periods, waiting for it to come within range.

They have an extremely flexible neck. They can wrap their head close to their bodies, as they do in flight, or strike out at a passing fish with lightning agility. Fish are number one on the menu, but great egrets also eat lizards, mice, or other small animals. So the bottom line is, if it is big white bird, it is probably a great egret,



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## BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES

By Tommy Clarkson

Surrounded on three sides by what my buddy Buzz calls the Snoopy Loop - inasmuch as Charles Schultz, the creator of that popular cartoon strip once owned all of the property around it - and the highway whose bayside shoulder drops almost immediately onto the Santiago Bay's beach, is a mangrove . . . and much, much more!

Howard, another of my "traverser of the wilds" pals, recently joined me on a trek to try to catch a glimpse of the large, but elusive, - often called - salt water crocodile I've occasionally, but very carefully, observed from a safe distance. (On this excursion our efforts to find the *Crocodylus acutus*, with which I was familiar, were to prove unsuccessful, but our other sightings more than made up for it!)

So, mid morning, properly bedecked with industrial strength camera gear - but in our zeal forgetting the mosquito repellent - off we took!

Now as theoretical physics were so much child's play to Einstein, so birds seem to be to mild-mannered, Dr. Platt, my traveling amigo. Though he'll say nay, believe me, he knows his ornithology - impressively so!

After parking my truck on the side of the "Loop", off we trudged, into "deep the interior". And but a few moments into our journey, he enthusiastically pointed out a Yellow Crown Night Heron which, interestingly was originally was endemic to Bermuda but, following the arrival of humankind, became extinct there. Apparently aware of the fate of his Caribbean cousins, the one we saw kept a respectable distance from us.

Next up flew a brightly, yellow breasted, type of flycatcher called a Great Kiskadee - fun to say and equally fun to see! And then hot on his tiny bird heels, and true to that which is said of them as to their preferring "weedy edges and second growth near stands of tall cane," we spied a White Collared Seed Eater. . . and we'd but barely begun, being only 100 yards or so "in the bush!"

I'd hardly been able to draw from Howard a few words about his time spent as a doctor in the British military

when the high-pitched twittering trill, "tree-e-e-e-e-e-e" announced the nearby presence of a Tropical King Bird. And sure enough, there he was, watching us while observing his other surroundings from one of the higher branches of a nearby tree.

And then, quicker than a bird burp, "Look, a Great Tailed Grackle . . . and over there, a rather elusive - and bird antisocial - Green Heron!" This latter character was showy - in a classical bird sort of way - with his glossy, greenish-black cap, greenish back and wings of grey-black that turned into a green/blue, and chestnut colored neck boasting a slender white stripe down the front, atop his grey underparts and short yellow legs.



So you immigrated to Canada where you practiced medicine for 32 years," I inquired. His response was cut short by our sighting of a Russet Backed Thrush followed fast by our glimpse of the seed eating songbird, a Grayish Saltator.

And then, as if to know we sought an aerial respite from the avian world, what I have heard colloquially called a Parachute Butterfly - but perhaps more correctly called by lepidopterists a White Morpho - merrily flip flopped its way in front of us, sitting briefly on a small twig.

Perhaps miffed at what he perceived as our fickle nature, a Great Egret (what a few folks call a Great White Heron) made his presence known with a croaking "cuk cuk cuk" as he slowly floated past with his characteristic flight mode of retracted neck.

And then, but a few moments later we spied – what has to be a classic of a name – a Magnificent Frigate Bird! This long-winged, fork-tailed seabird, which is found mainly in the tropical oceans, was formerly known as ‘Man O’ War’ because of its habit of catching and shaking other birds so as to steal their food. I tucked my breakfast bar into my pocket, just in case!

Three times, over the course of our adventure, we carefully stepped over a black, broad and seemingly endless ribbon of ants that busily crossed our path driven by who knows what commands through what means to some certainly most focused end.

But the birds were up and not below.

Next on our mangrove tramp we saw a purely Western Mexican bird, a Golden Cheeked Woodpecker. Howard likes the call to “Cheeky Bird” and I must admit that his call sounded rather like “*cheekity*” to me!

Then away from the marshy mangrove pond we moved, up the hill further. Swift, lithe lizards regularly scurried past as we came upon a roadway, built some years ago and long since abandoned. Replete with infrastructure access points, this clearly had been someone’s dream now gone to seed, weed and ruin.

Floating over us, seemingly sensing our advanced years and clearly eyeing us as a potential dinner, a Bald Headed Vulture accompanied us for no short distance.

Eventually, disgusted by our apparent good health, he floated noiselessly away.

Then once again, butterflies commanded our attention as several small but pretty ones flitted about us, but would not hold still long enough for identification!

Then through the branches we glimpsed the spectacularly colorful, Orange Breasted. Bunting. Spectacular, you say? With a darkish lime-green crown atop his head melded to a bright, azure-blue back coat with a broad and full yellowish-orange breast shading on his belly, he was just that! Now that’s a bird for any to enjoy watching!

He was a good culmination for our sojourn on this day. For at that moment B&B were to prevail – present “Bugs” from the weeds around us and a cold “beer” awaiting us upon our return home . . . but with the firm awareness that more adventures lay ahead in the weeks ahead!

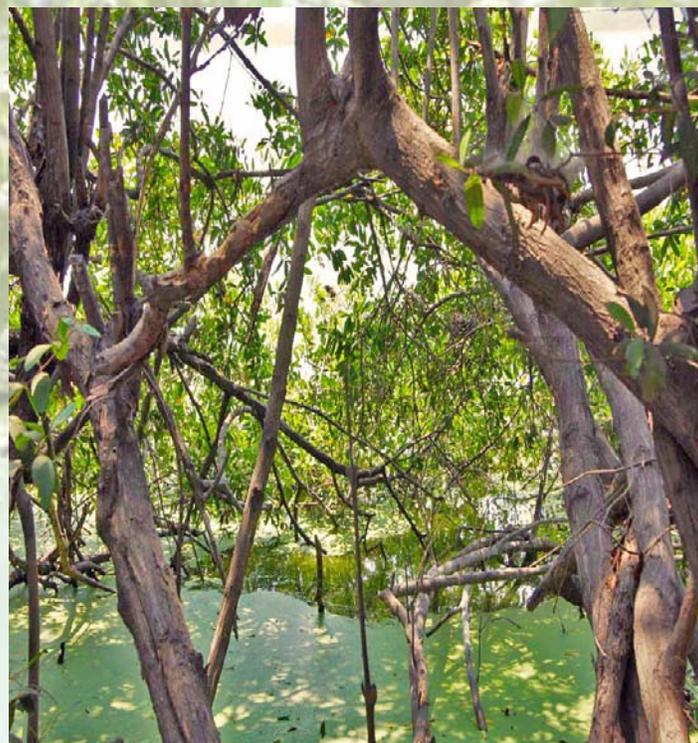


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# The Palm Reader

Tommy Clarkson

... discusses some basics in starting a tropical garden

The lush and colorful vegetation which abounds in west coastal Mexico is mind bogglingly beautiful. Around here we have a vast, highly diverse and simply sumptuous array of plants, flora and trees from which to choose. Perhaps the biggest inhibitor to fully realizing one's own personal Garden of Eden may be the amount of space with which one has to work!

And great fringe benefits? You bet! Beyond the colors, shades, hues and fragrances, once established, your jungle oasis will present all manner of new friends such as vibrantly active hummingbirds, flipping, flopping butterflies and bees busily pollinating your flowers.

But before grabbing your shovel, rake and hose, let's establish some parameters and objectives for this project, such as: What is the look you wish to achieve? What is your desired time frame for achieving an end result? What's your budget? How much upkeep and maintenance are you prepared to commit to this project?

There are four basic – and rather obvious - factors in creating and maintaining a beautiful garden. They are: sun, water, soil and food (fertilizer). The most important is that first one – the sun. Now, most tropical plants require lots of sunlight – “well, duh Tommy, no kidding!” Of course, this varies from plant to plant, but as a rule of thumb we should say that they need a minimum of six hours of direct sunlight each day – week-ends and holidays included!

*Dos* - watering – be it natural rain or through irrigation, *es muy importante!* You try standing in the direct, hot sun a minimum of six hours a day and see if you don't get a bit parched and dry! But beyond determining the proper amount of water, does the soil allow moisture to pass through it or does it hold it in a muddy mess around your plants' root feet? Often overlooked, good drainage is as important as that third component, the composition of the soil itself.

And lastly, it's important that you do a plant by plant analysis regarding fertilization and spraying for pest and diseases. As in all worthwhile endeavors, before proceeding, get informed. Borrow a book from the library, look for resources on-line, talk to a nurseryman, ask me – but, one way or another, find out.

Don't just assume sun, soil and water is all your garden needs. Treat these plants like your children. Do so and they'll mature well as a result of the care you gave them during their formative and growing years! Heck, I know of no few plant life that has given more enjoyment - and turned out better - than some folk's kids!

Now, in my opinion – which may be worth just about as much as you've paid for it - there are several, pretty much, “gotta' have” plants for a tropical garden. I have written about all of these in my column “Planting Roots in Mexico” or, in case you missed any of them let me know and I can e-mail you a copy.

This list could easily go into the hundreds but I've endeavored to select a good sampling in the form of a basic dozen made up of four each tropical flowers, plants and palms. Please simply consider it as a possible starting point for an easy to establish and maintain tropical garden. These are as follows:

- **Bougainvillea** - Nearly year around, awash with breathtaking color, these hardy plants can act as trellis climbing vines, brightly colored bushes or mid-sized trees, as well as acting as a great natural fence! Regular trimming and pruning is imperative.
- **Hibiscus** - I've heard them called “the tropical garden's blooming workhorse.” Available in a variety of colors, some have 9-12 inch plate-sized, crepe-like blooms. While they last but one day, often there are several on the plant at any given time.
- **Heleconia** - There are scores of varieties of this stunningly beautiful flower. Magnificent in the wild or mood-settingly appropriate when cut and arranged in a vase indoors, these are some very special and spectacular flowers!
- **Bird of Paradise** - Virtually unparalleled, it is the quintessential tropical flower and a cousin to the Heliconia, Traveller's Palms and Banana trees. Suffice it to say, it will provide an exotic and delightful addition of rich allure to your little corner of heaven.
- **Elephant Ears** - Incorporate these stout, fast growing, clumping herbs as the verdant backdrop

of lower tier flora beneath the palms. Their floppy, arrowhead shaped leaves, growing up to six feet in length fairly scream "Tropics. Here. Now!"

- **Banana Plants** - Now surely this has "appeal!" There are various varieties of assorted sizes. All grow fast and give an instant "jungle feel" to your landscape plus the benefit of providing you with fun, nutritious bunches fresh, nutritious bananas!
- **Pineapple** - Like the banana, how fun is it to harvest and serve pineapples that you have grown yourself to visitors from "up north"! Super easy to plant and maintain, you may wish to have several - in various stages of maturity - around your garden
- **Sago Palm** - Actually not a palm, these beauties are in fact a cycad. However, their attractiveness - though somewhat slow growing - is guaranteed to turn heads. They can be enjoyed either potted or strategically placed with other foliage in your garden.
- **Foxtail Palm** - The most costly of this lot but well worth it! Originally from northeastern Australia, they are rather new to the Americas. But these magnificent, mid-sized, self cleaning palms always generate comments of praise and admiration.
- **Ruffled Fan Palm** - This little guy prefers shade but will provide that necessary counter point of natural beauty to taller palms. Its dark green, bright and shiny, undivided, notch-edged, circular leaves beg to be admired up close and personal.
- **Pygmy Date Palm** - Small of stature, slow growing, but easy to care for and visually quite pleasing with its graceful, delicate, dark grey-green, pinnate, crown of gently arched leaves, singularly or grouped, this is a great accent palm.
- **Coconut Palm** - Ahhh, the venerable and ubiquitous coconut! Easy to find, plant and the virtual symbol of all that is tropical. Every home should have one! For the smaller gardens I would suggest one of the shorter hybrids like the Golden Coconut.

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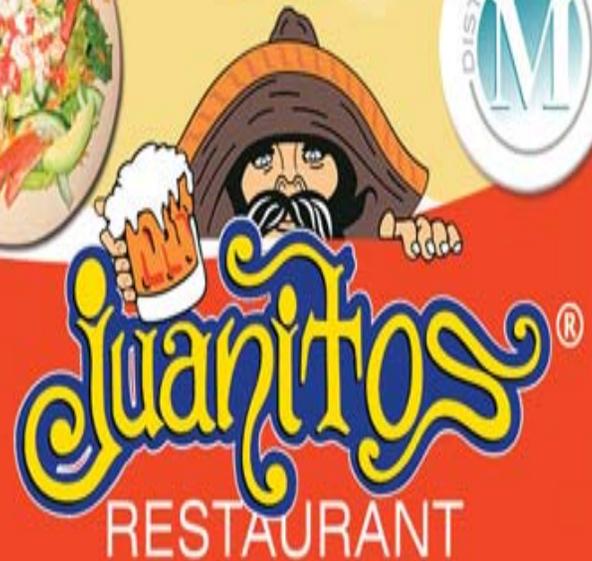
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# Napoleon, Maximilian, and Benito Juarez

## Two Emperors and a President

David Fitzpatrick

### Part II: The Empire

From a European point of view, Napoleon had made an inspired choice in selecting Maximilian to be Emperor of Mexico: the Habsburg dynasty was singularly well equipped to provide a candidate for this sort of power grab. Beginning in the Middle Ages as a small provincial dukedom in Switzerland, the Habsburgs had managed a phenomenal expansion, largely through a long series of astute marriages which brought them new territories with every generation. By the sixteenth century the Habsburgs ruled Austria and most of south-eastern Europe. In addition, the Habsburg Emperor of Austria was almost always elected to be Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (modern day Germany).

The most brilliant marriage in their history came in 1496 when Philip I, Austrian Emperor and Duke of Burgundy married Juana \* of Castille, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Their son, Charles V, was Emperor of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Holy Roman Emperor, and King of Spain. After Charles, there were two royal branches of the Habsburg family: one in Vienna and one in Madrid. Charles diligently acquired all the linguistic skills required by his various responsibilities, once famously remarking: "I speak Latin to God, Spanish to men, French to women, and German to my horse!"

By the nineteenth century, the Habsburgs had cousins in virtually every royal family in Europe. In 700 years, no Habsburg ever forgot the age-old motto of their House: *Bellum gerant alii, tu felix Austria, nube!* (Let the others wage war; but you, happy Austria, marry!)

The prestige of the house of Habsburg and the multiplicity of their family connections greatly facilitated the installation of Maximilian on the throne of Mexico. Many European powers, which might have opposed such a blatant power grab, acquiesced when close relations were involved. Even America which could, and perhaps should have invoked the Monroe Doctrine<sup>1</sup> was silent at first. In 1862, President Lincoln had other things to worry about. Following the departure of the British and Spanish, Napoleon mounted an invasion in force of the East Coast and interior of Mexico. His troops advanced steadily towards the capital over a period of several months. Their one great setback was the battle of

<sup>1</sup> The « Monroe Doctrine », promulgated by President James Monroe (1817 – 1825) holds that the Americas are the sphere of influence of the United States. Other powers, particularly European powers, should be prevented, by force if necessary, from expanding into the Western Hemisphere.

Emperor Napoleon III of France



Cameroon where 62 members of the famous *Légion Étrangère* were set Maximilian's wife, Carlotta moreover, was another important element in the equation... She was a princess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a small German dynasty which had also profited mightily from strategic marriages: her father was King Leopold of the Belgians. King Ferdinand of Portugal was her first cousin, as was the British Queen Victoria.

\* \* \* \*

bases seemed to have been covered to ensure the cooperation, or at least acquiescence, of the great European powers. But what of Mexico? Far less effort had been deployed to encourage the support of the political forces and the public most directly concerned.

Emperor Maximilian I of Mexico



There was a strong conservative element in the Mexican population, particularly among the rich and powerful who exercised an almost feudal power over the common people and the *peons* (rural peasants who lived at a bare subsistence level). The conservatives were entirely in favour of a monarchy and, at first, they strongly supported the new Emperor. . Moreover, they were mindful of the long period when their ancestors were ruled by the Spanish Habsburgs. When Maximilian, uncertain of the attitude of the Mexican public, hesitated to accept the throne, they collected a large number of signatures on a petition requesting him to come to Mexico.

But the forces of Republicanism were also very strong. President Juarez never recognized the new Monarchy and continued a "Government in exile" in the state of Chihuahua. Military resistance to the new regime never ceased and a low-level civil war simmered throughout the period of Maximilian's "reign".



Maximilian attempted upon numerous occasions to make peace with Juarez and the Republicans, but without success.

The new Emperor's character was, perhaps, ill-suited to governing a turbulent country in the midst of a civil war. A man of great honour and decency, he had little aptitude for politics, no understanding of administration or finance and was disastrously naive in the face of the intrigues that frequently surround a royal court.

In contrast to his notoriously reactionary brother, the Emperor of Austria, Maximilian was imbued with the liberal, progressive ideas circulating in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. He was resolved to bring Mexico out of semi-feudalism and into the modern age. Above all, he wanted to alleviate the desperate plight of the *peons*.

Though a laudable political objective, this represented a tactical error. The Emperor's progressive attitude rapidly alienated the right wing which was his natural constituency. At the same time, he could never ingratiate himself with the left, which opposed the whole idea of a monarchy. He therefore found himself politically

isolated almost from the moment of his arrival.

A further error concerned Napoleon III. Maximilian was almost entirely dependent upon the French military for the survival of his regime. In return, Napoleon demanded that the sparsely populated state of Sonora on the Pacific Coast be formally ceded to France. Although, it would clearly have been expedient to accede to this demand, Maximilian, faithful to his oath of office, refused. This deprived the French of any real stake in Mexico and later on, when their attention turned to new problems developing in Europe, they had no incentive to continue their support for Maximilian..

Within a very short time, the bright optimism that characterized the arrival of the new Emperor had dissolved into clouds of political and military menace. The achievement of his mission, which had seemed so promising only a few months before, soon became very doubtful.

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# The Streets of Manzanillo



Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

lessons with help from her sister. She also learned and wrote a few short poems in the Nahuatl language. This was not the child you wanted asking you “why”.

Raised by her maternal grandfather her reputation as a rebel started early by doing things forbidden for girls during that period. Juana used to hide in an area of the chapel reading books from her grandfather's adjoining library. She was sent to Mexico City to live with relatives. There she asked for parental permission to disguise as a male so she could enter the University. Permission denied; she continued studies on her own.

Juana appeared before the Vice-regal Court and a new viceroy sent from Spain. She was well liked and asked to serve as a companion to the Viceroy's wife, Maria Leonor Carreto, called “Laura” in Juana's poems. Wishing to test Juana, the viceroy brought in several legal scholars, philosophers, poets and theologians. Juana had to answer difficult questions impromptu and explain complex scientific and literary subjects. Her performance impressed all present and increased her reputation. Her literary work began to gain fame in Mexico.

Juana decided to become a nun as a way for her to legitimately continue her studies. On 14<sup>th</sup> August 1667, she entered a Carmelite convent but it was far too stiff and austere for her. She moved to the order of Jerome at the monastery of Santa Paula and on 24 February 1669 took her final vows and became Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Totally intrigued by paintings with that “thing” around her neck caused serious internet research producing articles regarding her as an early feminist pioneer. She had stated the case for women's equality before it ever had a name or a following. She wrote about freedom and a woman's right to respect as a human being. She wrote “Hombres Necios” (foolish men) and criticized social standards of her day. She saw hypocrisy in the public condemnation of prostitutes by men that privately paid them for services. “Who sins more, she who sins for pay? Or he who pays for sin?”

Juana wrote a romantic comedy about a brother and sister entangled in webs of love and jealousy. Her writings and thoughts expressed out loud were considered dangerous by the Church. Anyone challenging current social values could be branded as a heretic. At that time the church silenced critics by false accusations, property seizure, exile and even imprisonment, torture or murder. Juana had support in powerful Spanish court mentors and she was widely read in Spain where they called her “the Tenth Muse”.

What about that “thing” around her neck? High resolution photos were enlarged to get a better look at the actual image. That same image is reproduced everywhere, including a statue of her in Spain. The painting was done in

## Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695)

Terry Sovil

This street in Manzanillo is near the Country Club in El Jabalí. Sor (Sister) Juana (say “wanna”) Inés de La Cruz lived from 1648 or 51 to 1695. She has a face you see regularly! Look at a 200 peso bill where her face and quill are shown beside works of Poesias Liricas (lyric poetry) for which she is well known. She was at the very beginning of Mexican Literature and is known for her writing.

Juana was a precocious child born on 12 November 1651 or on 17 April 1648 depending on your source. Her birth date is probably questionable since she was born as the illegitimate daughter of a Mexican Creole mother and a Spanish soldier at a time when bloodlines meant everything for class and status.

She was gifted, characterized as a rebel, and by the tender age of three had learned to read and write. She understood numbers by age five and composed a poem by age eight. By age thirteen she was teaching Latin and had mastered Greek logic. It is said that she learned Latin on her own in just 20

1772 by Andrés de Islas 77 years after her death and was based on an earlier portrait by Juan de Miranda.

Several accounts claim that Juana and the Viceroy's wife, Maria Leonor Carreto, were lovers. A modern independent film, "I, The Worst of All" shows them exchanging a kiss. Many accounts claim the Viceroy's wife gave Juana a miniature portrait of herself that she always wore around her neck. One internet photo of the painting with annotations came up. That description says it is an "escudo de monja" or a nun's shield. Painted on copper they depict a religious scene important to the person wearing it. According to the annotation this image depicts the "Angel Gabriel telling Mary she would give birth to Jesus". Is the image around her neck in the painting an accurate representation or was some censoring done by an artist?

Little is known about Juana's last few years. It is known that the church moved to discredit her and she seems to have either decided to be silent rather than risk further censure or was forced to be silent. There is no hard evidence of her renouncing her writing or themes but there are some that support her agreement to self-humiliation. She did sell her beloved extensive library of over 4,000 books and her scientific instruments. Only a few of her writings remain, including a "Complete Works" that were saved by the Viceroy's wife. She died in a plague that swept her convent and city on the morning of April 17, 1665.



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**BOOKS**

As a child, Sor Juana taught herself by reading books in her grandfather's library. As an adult, she amassed a book collection of her own, seen here and in many other portraits. The poem on view is thought to be one of her compositions.

**QUILL**

Sor Juana, known as "the Tenth Muse," was a prolific writer during most of her convent years and composed a vast body of plays and poetry, both religious and secular. Her secular musings angered the church hierarchy, however, and she gave up writing in 1693 under pressure from her superiors.

**EXPLANATION**

The leyenda, or biographical text in the corner, written in an older form of Spanish, describes the highlights of Sor Juana's life. It mentions her knowledge of the arts, sciences and various languages and her fame as a member of the choir, as well as the date on which she took her vows in 1669. While the text confirms those achievements, so do the items the artist chose to depict—books, quill, full nun's habit — which create "an allusion to all parts of her life," Mr. Oettinger said.



**SETTING**

The books and writing tables here suggest what historical documents confirm: convent life could be quite comfortable. The nuns in the Convent of St. Jerome had multilevel apartments complete with hot water, servants and a parlor to entertain guests for intellectual discussions. Parting curtains in the background, often in a contrasting color of red or green, were common in the portraiture of the period.

**HABIT**

Sor Juana is shown in the Hieronymite habit worn by the Order of St. Jerome, which she joined in 1669 after three months with the stricter Carmelite order. The habit consisted of a white tunic under a flowing scapular in a color varied by region. Nuns in Mexico City wore blue or black scapulars over the tunic, while in other areas the color ranged from crimson to an orange-brown.

**NUN'S SHIELD**

The viewer's eye is drawn from the face to the nun's shield, known in Spanish as an escudo de monja, around the neck. Such shields, typically painted on copper, depicted a religious scene of spiritual significance to the wearer. Scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary were popular; Sor Juana's depicts the Annunciation, when the Angel Gabriel informed Mary that she would give birth to Jesus.

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# The Port of Manzanillo

## Part 2

By Terry Sovil

Last issue we learned about port operations and how an individual port terminal is setup. This month we'll look more at infrastructure and Mexico's Ports. Next issue we'll wrap up with information on our port, current projects and futures.

Mexico has few "natural harbors" along its 11,000 kilometers of coastline. The two large bays of Manzanillo fall between Banderas Bay in Puerto Vallarta and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. All of these were formed when parts of the Sierra Madre del Sur mountain range fell into the sea. A natural bay easily becomes a natural harbor or port.

Mexico has 75 maritime ports and 9 river ports. Living in Manzanillo we always want to think of our port as "The Port". That usually translates to the "largest Port". There are a variety of factors used to measure a port. How large physically (hectares or acres)? How much traffic? What volume of cargo? The fact of the matter is, on the world market, most all of the "top 5" are in Asia. Even ports like Los Angeles / Long Beach, CA, are not in the top ten.

### Top 5 by Cargo Volume:

1. Shanghai, China
2. Singapore, Singapore
3. Rotterdam, Netherlands
4. Ningbo, China
5. Guangzhou, China

### Top 5 by Container Traffic

1. Singapore, Singapore
2. Hong Kong, China
3. Shanghai, China
4. Shenzhen, China
5. Busan, South Korea

Manzanillo is a favored port due to its strategic location. It was the third port created by the Spaniards in the Pacific. Ships were built here using the local "manzanilla" trees. The countries that share the Pacific Basin with Manzanillo/Mexico are the United States, Canada, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia. Manzanillo's catchment area (the area from which we attract customers) includes 17 states of Mexico: Aguascalientes, Coahuila, Colima, Distrito Federal, Durango, Estado de Mexico, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, San Luis Potosi, Michoacan, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo Leon, Queretaro, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas. Together these areas represent 42% of the population and generate 60% of the GDP.

Manzanillo has links to more than 74 destinations and is served by 32 different shipping lines. The five largest ports--Tampico, Veracruz, Guaymas, Mazatlán, and Manzanillo--handled 80 percent of Mexico's ocean freight.



Lic. Francisco Llamas González

I was able to spend time with Lic. Francisco Llamas González of API to learn about the port. API is the Administración Portuaria Integral de Manzanillo or Port Administration of Manzanillo. It is a federal government entity that was created in December 1993 and started operations in February 1994. API was given a 50 year concession to carry out administration, promotion, building, developing and maintaining infrastructure for the Port of Manzanillo. This was done to increase the quality of service in the shipping sector and enhance Mexico's exports. Other nearby ports included in concession management include Acapulco and Lázaro Cárdenas.

Having a great physical location isn't of much use without good infrastructure. The port has access to our main highway, 200, and most trucks and trains are able to depart the port quickly and easily. Fully 80% of the port traffic is via truck with the rest via rail. Manzanillo has double stack train services on fixed routes with the principal cities of Mexico.



Look at the map of the NASCO SuperCorridor for a perspective on shipping from Manzanillo to the USA and Canada via truck and rail. Having never seen the routes laid out like this I was a bit surprised. The NASCO SuperCorridor cuts right through the central USA with highways to Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Montreal and Toronto and even Duluth Minnesota make the map.



TEUs, discussed in the last article, for Manzanillo have increased from 63,800 in 1994 to 1,409,780 in 2008! This puts Manzanillo at #1 for "containerized cargo" in Mexico but 7<sup>th</sup> among major port terminals of Latin America. Manzanillo is fourth for agribulks, fifth for cars, fifth for mineral bulks and seventh for general cargo. Manzanillo is not well-equipped for handling liquid products (petroleum). The Port of Manzanillo is also a Type 1 port, based on volume and expertise in handling sensitive cargoes. This is one of Mexico's most important Customs operations. Other ports such as Veracruz handles general cargo, especially cargo headed for Mexico City. The Port of Tampico handles petroleum



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# Casa Talk by Patty Clarkson

## The Homes of Manzanillo Casa Ola Brisa ~ Tommy and Patty Clarkson

*“Let’s Chat.... “Let’s Chat.... unlike some of the more glamorous, pre-planned and well architected homes in Manzanillo I was pretty much reborn, with protracted labor pains! I’m not apologizing for how I turned out, you understand, because I am really quite proud of the new me as I bask in the beautiful view of the Santiago Bay and almost always feel the ocean or mountain breezes caressing my walls.”*

My owner’s neighbor, John Corey, of Juanito’s Restaurant fame, suggested the name that is perfect for me. Ola Brisa ~ since I do enjoy both the vista of the ocean waves and a wide array of beautiful palm trees (more on that later) and, of course, the wonderful breezes.”

“My family, Tommy and Patty are also unlike most couples that retire in Mexico after long careers in usually one field. They have worn several work hats and lived in many parts the world. I heard Patty say that in ten years they had moved nine times. Is that crazy or what?

They finally hung up the traditional “work yoke” in late 2006 after returning from a tour in Iraq where they actually lived in a shipping container. Before that they lived on a 1.2 square mile island in the Kwajalein Atoll (2,000 miles past Hawaii). Prior to that little adventure they lived in New Jersey aboard the Lighthouse Lady, their 42’ Carver power boat. Tommy and

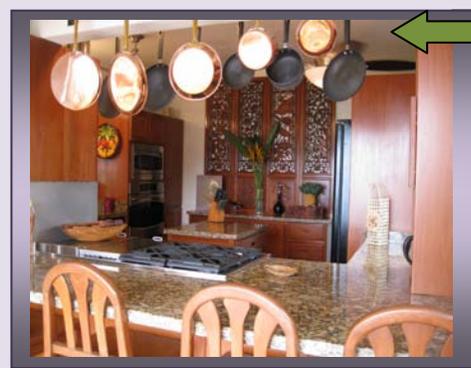
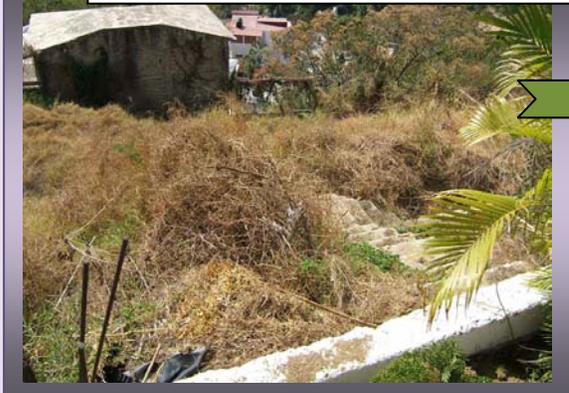
Patty had originally planned to settle in the Puerto Vallarta area but, thank goodness, they found me and gave me a whole new “look” and in only three years.”

“The one feature that makes me so very special is my garden. I would make a humble bet there is not another garden that could match mine, perhaps in all of the state of Colima. Tommy, the” palm guy” had a vision and has made it come true with rare and exotic palms, plants and flora from all over the world. His “babies” are so pampered and have grown beyond my, or anyone else’s, wildest expectations!”

“But enough chatting, I think that my story is best told simply with pictures. And please remember that they bought me in early 2007 and then they spent eight months away from me in New Orleans helping in the post Hurricane Katrina efforts (oh yes – living in a hotel suite – so by now I’m looking very roomy to them.”



"No matter how I got here or what the Clarksons' had to do to find me....we're a good match."





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## Time Shares, Origins, Problems, Joys, other Options?

When first researching information on this sometimes touchy subject, I was astonished to learn that this way of providing inexpensive holiday accommodations originated in Switzerland in the 1960's. A Ski resort developer in the French Alps, experiencing lagging business, devised the idea of "Don't buy a Holiday, Buy the Hotel". Enormously successful, this method of marketing was jumped upon very rapidly by large hotel chains as another way of generating business in the unstable and depressed industry at the time. Since then it has grown rapidly in Europe, North America and Latin America as an excellent way of seeing the world while still, experiencing the comforts of home.

Most time shares have been apartments of varying sizes, which owners of the share can enjoy for the length of time purchased, usually by the week but often longer. Obviously a fee is set by the managing body for doing this. The original concept of sharing the ownership of rooms, apartments and similar have now been joined by the time sharing of planes, ships, boats, barges and now I read, handbags!

One big asset being that although the purchaser buys into one set of properties it can be exchanged for another elsewhere for the same length of time. Almost anything that is expensive and only required occasionally can be shared in various ways by a number of

individuals or companies. Thus, theoretically at least, providing what is needed at the precise time that the part ways by a number of individuals or companies. Thus, theoretically at least, providing what is needed at the precise time that the part owner needs it but being used in the same manner by owner number 2 or so on, when not required by owner number 1.

Over the 52 weeks each condo available has to be split into 52 shares, usually with one week being set aside for re-furbishing. Monies also have to be included for replacement of larger items whilst smaller items broken or lost by individual owners must be replaced by them prior to leaving or fairly heavy damage charges will be assessed. Each owner upon arriving for their week must check all contents and report anything unsatisfactory immediately or will be held responsible themselves. Naturally, there are many pitfalls and strong Government rules and regulations are set in place in most countries now to regulate and prevent unscrupulous developers taking total advantage. That is not to say that the path of investigating and purchasing such properties is not fraught with difficulties, in many cases it is and also in many cases the occasional trickery used to entice the



unsuspecting prey can leave very bad tastes of the industry.

Most of us have from time to time been invited to a dinner, coffee meeting or weekend retreat, with the lure of prizes, free accommodations or even just coffee and Danish if we will just listen to the information spiel which is absolutely free and "absolutely no purchase is necessary".

The "Hard sell" then begins with enticing facts and figures and the closure of which is that this offer is only being given this one time and you must decide immediately or lose the opportunity of a lifetime. Many friends have told of asking for time to consider, which has been refused and the next salesperson moves in because, "We don't think you understand just what a good thing we are offering you." Others have fallen for the tactics and been eventually thrilled with their purchase. They have been able to go to different resorts in different countries and are well pleased with the purchase. But one purchase is not always enough for some of these wily salespeople. "Come to our free breakfast and we'll tell you of all the new plans for this wonderful location!"

One owner who had bought a share for himself & his wife, along with shares for each their three adult children was pressured intensely by salespeople at their resort in Puerto Vallarta to buy yet more, which they would guarantee to rent out for him. The pressure was so bad that eventually his wife went to the General Manager and threatened to take them to court if her husband, a very sick man, had any ensuing health problems to deal with after the barrage of sales attacks. Naturally, management were appalled that such a thing could be considered as they were only looking out for the patron's best interests. But the attacks did stop and he was able to enjoy the balance of his two week holiday in peace.

Puerto Vallarta must be one of the hot beds of the industry and many people coming to Mexico are horrified at the hundreds of salesmen lurking in every doorway in every street and calling to passers by like hookers on a rampage. Thank goodness, City Council in Manzanillo has put a strong rein on those tactics in Manzanillo as locals and visitors are not pestered continually in the same manner.

That is not to say time share is not here and available, it is, but just not thrust in the face type selling procedures. In many circumstances, the selling has been done in cities up north and there are very many condominium buildings that are almost entirely owned by people from the same State or Province.

There are other forms of joint ownership such as Fractional Ownership or Business Ownership which are slightly different and will be covered in future articles on owning holiday property in Mexico.

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## Why live the Ex-pat life??

By Diana Stevens

What is your dream? Do you hanker after golden beaches or the social whirl among like-minded friends? Perhaps you seek a quite rural existence and quality time with your partner. Have you and the partner parted ways and you are on the hunt again - an exotic venue can lead to romantic adventures.

People become ex-pats for a multitude of reasons many of which may be hidden deep in the subconscious. The conscious ones are easy - "Snowbirds" know only too well what they are escaping. Canadians and Minnesotans can hardly be blamed for taking off for Mexico (especially Manzanillo) when they reach a turning point in their career. On Europe, Brits of all ages and backgrounds stream to southern France, Spain and Tuscany where they encounter Dutch, Germans and Scandinavians all bent on the same quest - to escape the dark six hour days of winter.

Before burning boats do your homework. Mexico may seem cheap but do you really want to live like the Mexicans? Do you want to sweep your own patch of sidewalk or never go to a really good restaurant again?

Is wine part of your life? These things are expensive Look Health Care. There, Mexico has a miracle on offer compared with prices north of the border. Brits, spoiled by the National Health Service, are disturbed to find they have to take out insurance to cover 30% of their expenses if they move to France. That done, they get the best service in the world,.

Many ex-pats genuinely love the country of their choice and long to go local. They learn to cook exotic dishes; make friends with the neighbors even across chasms of age or education and even consider citizenship. They may have excellent relations with their community - there are even a few Brits who have been elected "maire" of their village - but all this hinges on a reasonable mastery of the language. This means that more than tourist vocabulary is necessary. Without this you remain a frustrated guest in a foreign land.

And do you really want to live in an ex-pat ghetto? Spain's Costa Brava is famed for its fish and chip shops and brawling lager louts, if that is what you want! In Mexico's Ajijic prices are in simple dollars



rather than the complicated peso where you have to be able to multiply! Only gradually do the newcomers take in that they are paying the same prices as back home. If, as many Brits have done, you plan to renovate property, are you going to use expensive local talent - it costs a fortune in France - or an artisan you can understand and who works on the "black", uses U.K. techniques and materials and makes you thoroughly unpopular with the surrounding community. The alternative is to do all the dirty work yourself.

Often the lure of another country is the lower value put on housing. If in retirement one can live in a more comfortable, bigger or more characterful house why not jump a border or two? Check the price of renovation and build this into your budget. Anglo-Saxons rate their real estate very highly - thus eventually bringing about the "crunch". The Frenchman has always made his "cuisine" his priority and I don't mean his kitchen. Whatever his plumbing, lack of hot water and fifty year old decoration he insisted on eating well. Forty years ago British food was nothing to write home about. Now with vastly improved living standards the two countries are on a par.

People choose to emigrate at turning points in their lives. Retirement or redundancy make a new beginning possible. The generation of "early retirees" from the U.K. is now a thing of the past. Many of these are now well established in their renovated farmhouses in the Dordogne or S.W. France having built a new life-style for themselves. The barn that came with the house has been transformed into "gites" or holiday accommodation and a steady flow of returning punters has comfortably augmented the pension.

Thousands of Brits have been charmed by the run down properties in France. They found old stone-built "maisons de maitre", presbyteries, water or wind mills, barns and even chateaux going for a song. French families, no longer running into twelve children as they had when these places were built, now preferred a simple, dull, easily kept modern house. They were happy to sell their inheritance to some foreign

crackpot who then proceeded to return it to its original glory. Ten years later the French were pleased and impressed that their heritage was being preserved and those who could joined in the fun

And what can go wrong? Grandchildren can pull you home, you may fall seriously ill and exchange rates can change. Brits who came to France fifteen years ago are stuck between a rock and a hard place. The value of their pensions and capital has fallen by a third with the high Euro, their "gites" lie empty and they need to go home but can't sell. The stiff upper lip says it all: "Well, it's a nice place to be imprisoned"!

Anyone who goes further than dreaming about the ex-pat life, weighs up the pros and the cons and takes the plunge is out of the ordinary. It takes imagination, courage and enterprise but the reward is worth it.



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## THIS MONTH FROM MEXPERIENCE

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### Mexico Weather and Climates Summary

**Coasts:** Hot and humid; can be subject to hurricanes during hurricane season (see below for details).

**Inland at Altitude:** Warm, Spring like year-round, although it can become cooler during December thru March.

**Hottest Months:** The hottest months are April & May in the South, and July to September on Pacific Coast (Including Baja), and extremely hot in the Yucatan May to September.

**Coollest Months:** Vary by region, but generally December, January, February; the Yucatan can still experience hot weather even in the coolest months.

**Rainy Season in Mexico:** Mexico's Rainy season runs from May to September (sometimes extends to October) each year. Most regions south of the Tropic of Cancer (near Mazatlan) are affected. Rain storms usually arrive in the late afternoon accompanied by thunder and lightning, creating torrential downpours before passing and leaving the evenings dry and cooled off.

**Hurricane Season in Mexico:** June, July, August, September, October (sometimes extends into November): Can affect weather on the Yucatan Peninsula, (e.g. Cancun), as well as weather on Mexico's Pacific coast, from Baja California southwards.

### Detailed Weather Charts for Mexico

The BBC has launched detailed weather charts for Mexico, including satellite images, temperatures, pressure maps and forecasts for 32 cities across Mexico. See: [BBC Weather \(Mexico\)](#)

### Climates by Region in Mexico

#### Northern Mexico

Northern Mexico is a desert region, and as such has hot dry weather, although cooler months can experience temperatures that drop to freezing at night. Away from coastal areas, the weather in Mexico's northern states in low-lying areas is hot and dry, in elevated areas (like Guadalajara) the temperature is mild all year-round.



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## Central Mexico

Inland Central Mexico will be warm or hot (and dry) during the day, although evenings can get cool, so pack a pull-over that you can use in the early mornings and nights when the difference in extremes of temperature can be felt quite acutely, especially in the winter months.



## Yucatan Peninsula

Hot and humid, especially June thru August. During these months, expect the days to be swelteringly hot, with monsoon-like downpours of rain in the early evening (they usually pass within a short time and leave the night dry and cooler). Hurricane season (June-October, sometimes extends into November) usually brings wetter weather and makes weather forecasting less accurate. The high season in this part of Mexico is December-May as these are the months with the most comfortable and driest weather.



## Southern Mexico

In Mexico's southern region (which includes Mexico City), the climate will be similar to that in Central Mexico, but remember to keep in mind that elevated areas (like Mexico City) will be cooler and more temperate. The climate gets distinctly hotter and more humid as you travel deeper into the south / southeast and the Yucatan Peninsula.



## Baja California Peninsula

The stretch of land immediately south of California USA is Baja California ('Baja' means 'Lower'), and the weather here can be divided into two distinct categories: hot deserts and cool near the oceans. Rainy days are rare outside of the 'rainy season' during September, which is why many golfers come here to play.



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# We all have met 'em. . .

(The following is a slightly embellished and bit fictionalized account of an almost real event!) by Tommy Clarkson

. . . it may be a brother-in-law, next door neighbor or that particularly irritating high school bully badly who has gone badly to seed.

You know the kind - those guys (and occasional woman) who, no matter what you say, are the "I can top that" sort!

Yesterday while flying home, trapped at an altitude of 39,000 feet, one sat next to me. Our (dare I call it such) conversation went somewhat like as follows:

As, finally, our plane began its race down the strip toward take-off, I once again struggled to find some sort of common area of interest so I mentioned how we had renovated our home and gardens.

He said that he, as well not long ago, had undertaken such having converted an old anthracite coal mine in West Virginia into a 40,000 square foot home, including an Olympic sized swimming pool, Jai-Alai court and airplane landing strip capable of taking 767 size crafts.

With calluses forming on my inner ears, undaunted, I bravely "stayed the course" on this topic saying how we had textured an accent wall in our family room and how nice it looked.

Amazingly, brief for him, he told me how – while repeatedly riding a carbon based unicycle from end to end – he had overseen the rehabilitation and rebuilding of the Great Wall of China.

In a window seat, squashed against the fuselage with his corpulence well lapped over in my space, with great effort I crossed my legs. So doing, I noticed my new, ragged seamed Crocs shoes that I enjoy so much and mentioned the fact.

Archly he intoned how he had his own shoes from leather that he personally tanned from the belly skin of virginal dromedaries fed only sweet aphelia grown by irrigation of spring water in farthest reaches of southeastern Egypt.

All but speechless – by this time, a common experience - I endeavored to return to more basic topics saying that I was heading home after a pleasant visit with friends in Oklahoma.

He puffed out his chest and said he was heading south to hike the Andes, scuba dive the deepest part of Lake Titicaca, then canoe off the Strait of Magellan, followed with a visit to see his Godson

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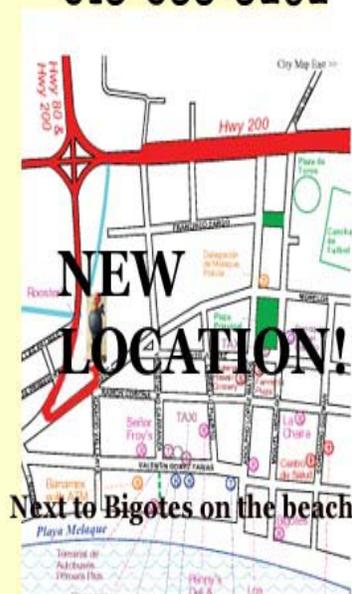
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OK, I thought, keep it simple. So I told him how I had an old Nissan pick up that got nearly twenty miles per gallon.

With a contemptuous snort, he said he had converted his Ferrari to run on tap water, his Lamborghini to purr along at well over 200 miles per hour stoked only by the juice drawn from lawn clippings and his Testarossa to substantially exceed factory expectations powered only by table scraps.

Failing miserably in the automotive arena, I thought perhaps talk of spouses might be a good thing. So, I mentioned how my Patty was a good cook, fun golfer, superlative poker player and my best friend.

He said that his had been a Nobel Prize nominee for her research in replacing the ozone depletion with a soy substitute, was the actual brain behind Emeril, his TV cooking show and his restaurants, and was the personal tutor and coach to Phil Ivey, Daniel Negreanu, Jamie Gold and Peter Eastgate of the World Series of Poker.

Turning to look out the window while I attempted to digest all of that, I finally turned back and meekly mentioned how I had briefly met and shook hand with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

He then proceeded to tell me how, several weeks ago, he had leg wrestled with Pope Benedict XVI, thrown knife mumblety-peg with President Obama last week on the Whitehouse lawn and, not long ago while she was home during Congressional Recess, has skinny dipped with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. (Candidly, I found none of those mental images appealing in any manner!)

Hurriedly, I leapt into what I thought to be the most common of topics – yard work – saying how I dreaded the drudgery of mowing grass.

He said that such was no longer a chore for him as he combined that work with his daily fitness regime, employing a personally created technique of karate to trim hedges, lop off tree limbs and ensure the grass was evenly shorn.

Once more, finding myself at a loss of words, I eventually stammered out that I was heading home to Mexico where I enjoyed our sub-tropical flora.

To this he responded that he had created a new species cross, genetically altered, hybrid “vegimal” that was a cross between a rabbit, caterpillar and an apple that hopped off the tree, shed its skin jumped into the harvest bins ready for processing.

**Did I mention that, inasmuch as we had been but airborne fifteen minutes, it was a long, long flight?**

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# THIS 'N' THAT

by Vivian Molick

“Be a coffee-drinking individual - espresso yourself! ~Author Unknown”



Coffee is a widely consumed beverage prepared from the roasted seeds commonly called "beans" of the coffee plant. The popularity of coffee products has a universal appeal to people of different income levels, ethnicities, and religions. While many of us enjoy it each morning, we know very little about coffee facts – like where a coffee bean comes from.

Coffee was first consumed as early as the 9th century, when it appeared in the highlands of Ethiopia. According to legend, shepherds were the first to observe the influence of the caffeine in coffee beans when, after their goats consumed some wild coffee berries in the pasture, the goats appeared to "dance" and have an increased level of energy. The goat herders tasted the berries and found that they had more energy as well! At first the berries were eaten, as the coffee bean was considered a food. Ethiopian tribesmen would mix the coffee berries with animal fat, roll them into balls, and eat them on their nomadic journeys. From Ethiopia, it spread to Egypt and Yemen, and by the 15th century had reached Persia, Turkey, northern Africa, and then Italy. From there it spread to the rest of Europe and the Americas.

Coffee is grown in over fifty-three countries worldwide, all of them located near the equator between the tropic of Cancer and Capricorn. Brazil is the largest coffee producing region, with around 30% of total world output of coffee. Many varieties of the coffee plant exist, but only two are commonly cultivated: the Arabica, and the Robusta. The Arabica is considered to be the best quality because of its smooth taste and aromatic qualities, but can only be grown above an altitude of 2000 feet, while the Robusta can grow below. In one year, the average yield from a single tree is approximately one roasted pound of coffee. Coffee cherries usually contain two beans, except for the single pea berry anomaly. The pea berry is considered the 'caviar' of coffees in some regions, while other regions discard the pea berry as below-grade product. It takes three to five years for a coffee tree to reach maturity and has a lifespan of about 50 to 70 years. The coffee berries turn from yellow to orange and then bright red,



6 - 8 months after flowering. When it is in bloom, the coffee tree is covered with 30,000 white flowers which begin to develop into fruit after 24 - 36 hours. A coffee tree can flower eight times in any one year - depending on rainfall.

Coffee berries and their seeds undergo multi-step processing before they become the roasted coffee most Western consumers are familiar. First, coffee berries are picked, generally by hand. Then, the flesh of the berry is removed and the seeds are fermented. When the fermentation is finished the beans are washed with fresh water to remove the fermentation residue. Finally the seeds are dried and sorted.

The next step in the process is the roasting of the green coffee. The roasting process has a considerable degree of influence on the taste of the final product by changing the coffee bean both physically and chemically. During roasting, caramelization occurs as the intense heat breaks down starches in the bean, changing them to simple sugars which begin to brown, adding color to the bean. As the bean roasts, aromatic oils, acids and caffeine weaken, changing the flavor. When the internal temperature of the bean reaches 205°C (400°F) other oils start to develop, one being caffeol, which is largely responsible for coffee's aroma and flavor. A small amount of chaff is produced during roasting from the skin left on the bean after processing. Chaff is usually removed, though a small amount is added to dark roast coffees to soak up oils on the beans. Decaffeination may also be part of the processing that coffee seeds undergo. Decaffeination is often done by processing companies, and the extracted caffeine is usually sold to the pharmaceutical industry. One kilogram of roasted coffee requires 4,000 - 5,000 coffee beans.

Today, coffee is one of the world's most important primary commodities; being the second most traded product in the world after petroleum. It is predicted that in 2010 production will rise to 7 million tons per year, with the coffee market earning nearly sixty billion dollars annually.



Currently, drinking coffee everyday is the hobby/addiction of many people. However you like your coffee, whether it is espresso, cappuccino, latte, freshly ground or even instant - it should be noted that coffee is known today as one of the most prevalent types of beverage consumed around the world, being the world's second most popular drink after water. Coffee is the leading source of caffeine consumption in the United States, with US coffee drinkers consuming approximately 3.1 cups per day on average.

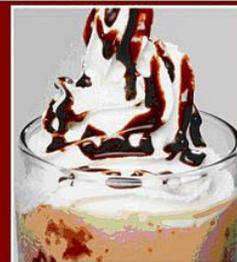
Of the one hundred million US daily coffee drinkers, thirty million drink specialty beverages such as lattes, cappuccinos, and mochas. The average price for these espresso drinks is nearly twice that of a regular brewed cup of coffee. As the consumption of these specialty drinks rises (as it does each year), more and more coffee shops are sprouting up throughout the United States. It has been projected that there will be 50,000+ coffee shops nationwide this year (2010).

Coffeehouses have historically been a popular meeting place for revolutionaries and political debate. In France, the revolutionists began discussion of the bourgeoisie in Parisian coffeehouses; the founding fathers of the United States formed their national policies in coffeehouses. The Boston Tea Party of 1773 convened in a coffeehouse. Some of the world's most powerful businesses, including Lloyds of London and the New York Stock Exchange, started life as coffee houses.

**"Forever: Time it takes to brew the first pot of coffee in the morning. ~Author Unknown"**



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# We Are What we Eat

by Tommy Clarkson

There once was a sixty-five year old man who refused to think that he was that age. He was 190 pounds, e'rrrr, or so, and he liked to eat. He was not – shall we say – intolerant of alcohol consumption. And years as a jogger had left him with tender knees so he no longer exercised like he once had. He was not unlike many of us.

One day his doctor suggested that he go to Hospital Bernadette in Guadalajara to take a stress test. He, being better patient than health buff and fitness aficionado, said, "OK." So off on the ETN bus he and his wife went for a day trip to the metropolis in which they always got lost when driving.

Two - not one – English speaking and clearly highly trained young (almost everyone seems young when a person is 65) briefed the gentleman patient on that which he was to do, "hooked him up" to some electronic devices to monitor his heart, pulse, oxygenation levels, and maybe even to determine his level of sex stamina for all he knew!)

Perhaps contrary to what might have seemed the correct conduct, while he undertook the thirty minute or so test, his wife stepped outside, sat on the hospital steps and had a beer and a cigarette. (Good and careful attention to the temple of one's body appears to run in the family!)

Starting out slow – with an initial blood pressure of 121/90, it increased with each increasingly difficult level. Soon he was furiously pumping away on the stationary bicycle but barely broke into a sweat. But once the test was completed his blood pressure returned to 121/90 within three minutes and the prognosis verbally given – he was in great shape for a man of 65.

Chest puffed and ego great he strode the 25 feet to where his wife now awaited him and boasted, "If I'd only had on my running shoes I could have really smoked 'em! I'm in great shape and the doctors said that I did fantastic."

Then he had a heart attack!



85% blockage of the left ventricle pulmonary artery. Virtually no blood flow in or going to some rather important areas.

Not a good situation and certainly not a pleasant feeling one.

But as luck would have it this was the hospital of Dr. Segio Najar Lopez, one of the foremost cardio-vascular surgeons in Mexico. As a result, within mere moments our heart attack man found himself well attended by full surgical crew in the OR.

Calm, assured and clearly confident in the task which lay - literally - before him, via the carotid artery, entered near the groin, (did I say "Ouch") the surgeon deftly inserted an ultra new, Class IV (still not yet available in the US) stent.

Upon completion of the non-evasive surgery his wife was allowed in and presented our man with the most beautiful tearful eyed smile he had ever recalled seeing. And then, within an hour of commencement of the procedure, he was back in a well appointed (much

nicer than a lot of motel/hotels stayed in over the years) private room.

While being attended by nurses and directed to rest, he drowsed briefly as his spouse – like he, having not eaten all day – ran downstairs to the drugstore next door and loaded up on healthy nuggets such as *Sabritas papas fritas con sol* (yes, you interpreted that correctly, a 100 gram bag of potato chips with salt) and a carton of assorted chocolate covered cookies. . . we'll just not mention the nutritional information printed on the box.

Upon her return he hungrily leered at her junk food booty. She, ever the caring, considerate and loving one, graciously shared same with him. Carefully and gently, one after another, she gently lifted to his trembling lips wonderful, greasy chips and shamelessly slavered chocolate cookies into the waiting maw of his mouth. Finally sated, they remembered the doctor's explicit

written instructions for him post surgery and decided to read them. Yes, there right after "Recommendations after percutaneous coronary intervention" was a sort of mention to avoid saturated fats which raise the "bad cholesterol" as are found in it "fried foods" such potato chips and sweets made with "lard, butter or tropical oils" – weren't at least a couple of those in that small "ingredients" panel on that box of cookies?

A couple of pages away were some of the "Risk factors for cardiovascular health." H'mmmm. High blood pressure? Check. Sedentary lifestyle? Pretty much. Diet high in trans fats, saturated fats and cholesterol? Well, based on the just described snack . . . Overweight? Hey, cut a fellow a bit of slack already!

But, in less than 18 hours he was pronounced fit for travel and headed home . . . though, admittedly, giving pause along the way to a few of his eating habits!



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## WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

By Linda Breun

Hungry? Have you ever been REALLY hungry and not had enough money to feed yourself or your family? Here in Manzanillo and the surrounding area there are such families too numerous to mention.. So what do they do? How do they feed their children? Do they send them to school hungry? Do they send them out on the streets to raise money for the family? Nada! Enter Banco de Alimentos Manzanillo, I.A.P.. In English that is translated as the Food Bank. Located in Tapeixtles, a Manzanillo district just east of the Port, the Food Bank helps feed these families. Only in operation since January 2010, the original goal was to feed 500 families, by June 2010 they had passed their goal and are now feeding 506 families in 27 colonias. Each week a delivery is made to the colonias and in turn packages given to needy families each of whom is required to pay ten per cent of the value of the food they receive. By doing this the self esteem of the family is upheld and it in turn helps keep the Food Bank operating.

The Food Bank employs 5 full time people. One of these is in charge of getting donations from where ever it can be found. The rest of the employees go through the various donations of the week and sort them into bags for distribution.

Where do they get the food to do this? By donations from many sources such as Tuny, Soriana, Wal Mart, LaLa, and contributions from groups like Manzamigos. They are sorely in need of a truck to deliver the food to these families but next year they can ask for grants from Sedesol and Monte de Piedad with which proceeds they will be able to buy the truck.

On Friday, July 9, Manzamigos A.C. was invited by the director of the Food Bank, Jose Luis Moreno, to help distribute food to fifteen families in La Cima, a small village on the other side of El Colomo. Several members of Manzamigos and Mujeres Amigas took advantage of the opportunity and went along to see what it was all about. In addition to food for the families, several soccer balls were donated for children. To see their eyes light up was a treat in and of itself. As the mothers of these families were receiving the food bins, the children wasted no time in playing with their new balls.



Manzamigos & Mujer Amigas

October 16th is International Day for the Hungry (or World Food Day). On this day the Food Bank teams up with the military to go around the neighborhoods in Manzanillo soliciting food donations. In December, there is to be a special dinner planned, where an invited priest will hold a religious ceremony.

Any help or donations are very much appreciated. The Food Bank has a website: [www.AMBA.org.mx](http://www.AMBA.org.mx). Their address is San Juan Bosco No. 48 Col. Primavera Tapeixtles and the phone number is (314) 336 6722.





# IN THE NEWS!!

[www.manzanillosun.com](http://www.manzanillosun.com)

Freda Rumford

There has been a great deal of press in recent weeks, expounding the extremely dangerous situation rapidly developing in Mexico as President Calderon and his army try to stamp out or bring under control the immense drug trade and hugely profitable drug lords.

It has been said by some economists, that should the drug trade ever be extinguished, the damage to the Mexican economy would be such that it could not recover for years if ever. So much money is being poured into all facets of this dark industry that almost no-one living in the country can fail to be touched in one way or the other. Even those of us who have never touched, seen or smelled any sort of drug except medicinal, in some way or form are impacted by this enormous trade. Every single commodity bought, sold, traded or given has, somewhere along the line been touched even if only transported by people using dirty money to pay for gas.

President Calderon in his determination to get rid of the gangs and their increasing spider webs has called in the army and specially trained narcotic agents to parade constantly through the streets, even of Manzanillo and to be extremely prominent in the northern states and border towns.

Two weeks ago the press in several northern papers wrote of a huge sting which happened in the small sleepy and hitherto very safe state of Colima, along the toll road to Manzanillo to be even more precise. In this battle which took place in daytime, between the army, police and targeted drug dealers, several people were left dead (the guys wearing the black hats) and more were taken into custody. This was not a haphazard happenstance but a well planned trap set and made.

We would be extremely naïve and rather foolish to believe that because it isn't in our face it isn't here but those of us living in Manzanillo for many months of the year profess to feel and be safer here than in any other place we can think of. We can walk anywhere, even at night and not feel threatened.

Northern cities which we have left in search of sun and warmth are riddled with gang wars and everyday we hear of people, often innocent bystanders or children, being injured or killed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Let us not fool ourselves and think it couldn't happen to us people, it can and unless we keep vigilant and aware of our surroundings we are in as much danger as the next one.

We have just learned that President Calderon is transferring 21, 000 troops including families from Lazaro Cardenas to Manzanillo. This is on top of the already promised 12,000 marines and families that we have been expecting for the past 2 years.

We have all heard that Lazaro Cardenas is not a nice town and extremely dangerous, so why would they come here and not stay to quell problems there? Is it because we have been so quiet for so long these nasty fellows feel that they have a haven here? No, it is because of the great importance that the Port of Manzanillo plays in the continuing wealth of not only Manzanillo, and Colima but in the rest of Mexico. The last Harbour Master has been recently imprisoned for both a connection and for looking the other way.

Ships are coming to this port from all over the world and the Port must be kept safe at all times. Not only that, the newly promised tourist development from Manzanillo north to the Grand Bay Hotel and from Tomatlan down to Melaque is going to be bringing many newcomers to Mexico who most certainly would not come if this area became a hot bed of crime and pestilence.

We can all rest assured that our Eden here in Manzanillo, even though we have to leave occasionally and go out into the big bad outside world, will continue to be protected and made to feel safe by our welcoming hosts. Manzanillo is very unique in the type of people encountered

here. The modern day Colimense is continuing the centuries old tradition of hospitality and welcome that it has held since the days of the conquistador and beyond.

So take a deep breath, smell the wonderful sea air and enjoy your stay for as long as you are lucky enough to be here. Manzanillo is as safe as ever and the local people will have nothing different.

Should you travel to or from here in Colima by car or truck and encounter difficulties or get into unsafe situations, we have been advised by Civil Defence, TelCel & Telmex in Manzanillo that the telephone number 066 is the National Emergency number ((the equivalent of 911). 040 is the number for international directory assistance and an English speaking person will very likely be available to help also but this is not an emergency line. Make sure that you are fully aware of where you are at all times so that this can be conveyed to the emergency operators who probably do not speak English but will recognize place names. It is a good idea to have copies of all information pertaining to your vehicle in the event you be carjacked, kept along with copies of all other personal papers in a safe place.

*Since this article was written, just a week or so ago, more problems have arisen with the army versus the cartels and both Federal Police and army are holding more check stops. Be prepared.*

*All foreign cash currency transactions have been halted except for Inter Cam and Banco Azteca, who will accept minimal daily cash exchanges. All Banks and Money exchanges will accept checks (which can be traded) with acceptable ID, generally a passport. The ATM is now the accepted and best way of acquiring money. This will continual until further notice.*

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Compiled by Darcy Reed

## MONTHLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

### Mujeres Amigas Luncheons

When: First Wednesday of each month  
Where: El Caribe Restaurant, Las Brisas  
Time: 1.00 p.m.  
Contact: Candy King 044-314-103-0406  
[candyk@coldwellbankerbienesraices.com](mailto:candyk@coldwellbankerbienesraices.com)

## WEEKLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

### Thirsty Thursdays – Manzamigos

When: To be announced each week  
When: 6.00 p.m.  
Contact: Jack Akers [jack@manzamigos.com](mailto:jack@manzamigos.com)  
To join Manzamigos: Nathan Peach  
[manzmbr@gmail.com](mailto:manzmbr@gmail.com)

## August 2010

The August 4th Mujeres Amigas speaker for the August meeting is Lic. Marcos Virgen. Lic. Virgen is a specialist in labor law. If you have full time workers, this is a luncheon not to be missed.

### Ha Ha's??

#### Wooden Leg Insurance

A man and his wife moved back home to Newfoundland, from Toronto. The wife had a wooden leg and to insure it in Ontario was \$2000.00 a year!  
Back in Newfoundland, they went to an Insurance agency to see how much it would cost to insure the artificial leg. The agent looked it up and said, '\$39.00.'

The husband was shocked and asked why it was so cheap in Newfoundland to insure, when in Ontario it was \$2000.00! The agent turned his computer screen and said, 'Well, here it is on the screen, it says: "Any wooden structure, with a sprinkler system over it is \$39.00."

Gotta love the newfies!

### Bracelet

A woman sees a beautiful bracelet in the window of a jewellery shop and decides that she wants it, but she doesn't have enough money to buy it.  
Then she has an idea. She goes into the shop and asks if they will hold/save the bracelet for her if she pays a small deposit. The jeweller says that for a deposit of \$50 he will hold the bracelet for her for up to four weeks.  
Then he asks her, "When will you come to collect and pay for the bracelet?"  
The woman replies, "My husband will come in and pay for the bracelet as soon as he does something unforgivable.

Probably this weekend!"

### Mas Ha-Ha's?

This is a bilingual English/Spanish joke-- especially good for a class of native Spanish speakers. It also illustrates an important grammatical difference between languages (genders of nouns).

An Englishman went to Spain on a fishing trip. He hired a Spanish guide to help him find the best fishing spots. Since the Englishman was learning Spanish, he asked the guide to speak to him in Spanish and to correct any mistakes of usage. They were hiking on a mountain trail when a very large, purple and blue fly crossed their path. The Englishmen pointed at the insect with his fishing rod, and said, "Mira el mosca!" The guide, sensing a teaching opportunity, replied, "No, señor, 'la mosca'... es femenina."

The Englishman looked at him, then back at the fly, and then said, "Good heavens... you must have incredibly good eyesight."

A very drunk man comes out of the bar and sees another very drunk man.

He looks up in the sky and says, "Is that the sun or the moon?"

The other drunk man answers, "I don't know. I'm a stranger here myself."



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# Manzanillo's Hidden Culinary Delights

## SKOL Bar & Grill – Las Brisas

Terry Sovil

Upon hearing the name I immediately thought "SKOAL"; which is the English version of the Danish, Norwegian, Swedish word "SKOL" which means a toast. I've made several trips for one of the best burgers in town in a pleasant atmosphere.

SKOL is owned by John & Uziel. Frequently staffed by English speaking Lalo, also known as "Edward", I call him: "The Hamburger God". These are big burgers, fully one-third pound, done up on a charcoal grill to your order.

SOL beer on tap includes light and dark. The dark is reminiscent of the amber beers from back home so it is a favorite choice. They also serve wine and have a full bar. Tuesdays is two for one margaritas or vampiros.

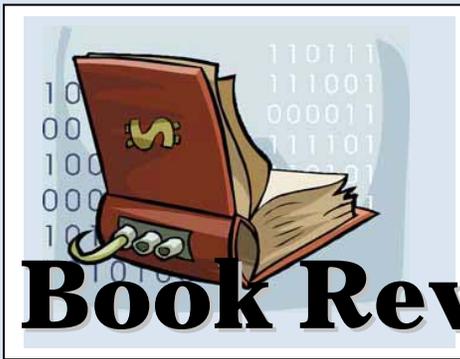
Menu selection is small, but delicious. I haven't been able to move past the burgers to try the ribs or wings but I'm sure they are equally as good. Fries (chips) included. Check out their menu at: <http://skolbar.webs.com/productpage.htm> You will be pleased to see their pricing and find you can have two burgers, two beers and walk away for under \$150 pesos. You will walk away with a smile on your face feeling FULL.

You may be invited to write on their walls. Have something clever in mind before you get there. The walls are full of posters -- Frank Sinatra, Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Laurel and Hardy -- plus writing on the walls by visitors. Some comments are thought provoking, some just funny. The music is varied and I generally enjoy what they play on audio or video. Last trip I watched video clips of Santana, Toto and Paul McCartney in live concerts.

How to do you get to SKOL? Take Madrid Blvd. heading towards Las Brisas. After you pass the big turn-about with the sailing ship keep to the far right lateral. You'll come to a light with a Kiosko on the immediate right. Go through the light and past Costenos coffee shop. You'll come to another light and SKOL will be about half-block farther on the right. If you have ever been to see Dr. Navarro for eyes he is "across the street" from SKOL.

Secret: Edward's mother runs the little paper/craft shop two doors down. She sells brownies. Really good brownies! I haven't had a chance to order one of her pies but they start with a cookie crust, fruit, cream cheese, and more fruit. Selections include strawberry, banana and mango! SKOL! Try it, you'll love it.





# Book Review

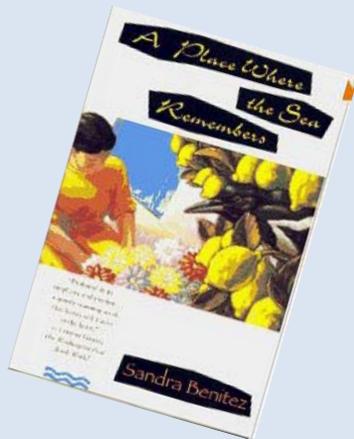
'Book Review' is a column in which we invite people to review a book they have enjoyed. Please send all submissions to [freda@manzanillosun.com](mailto:freda@manzanillosun.com)

## "A Place Where the Sea Remembers"

Author: Sandra Benitez

Reviewed By Diana Stevans

Set in a fictional Santiago near a fictional Manzanillo in the 1980's these stories could be true here today. We read of a tight-knit village community over several years, meeting a panorama of living characters Sandra Benitez who is of Puerto Rican and Midwestern descent, grew up in Mexico, El Salvador and Missouri.



She loves and feels with warm-hearted people everywhere and enjoys their impetuosity and lack of logic. She understands poverty - where people and relationships are more important than possessions and the few possessions are simple found objects - shells, feathers, stones, clay, wood or herbs.

The stories are loosely held together by the character of Remedios, the elderly healer, to whom many have poured out their hearts. Grounded in the four elements she is "the one who knows". We meet a flower seller and her salad-maker husband, her sister, the hotel chambermaid, whose dream is to go North, a birdman, a photographer, the teacher and the midwife. Simple people at high emotional points in their lives. Benitez writes of birth and death, marriage and family feuds, joy and tragedy. She writes not with logic but with love.

## Letters to the editor

If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to [freda@manzanillosun.com](mailto:freda@manzanillosun.com)

I WAS enjoying car trips up and down and across Mexico. It truly is some of the most beautiful country in the world. At least of the world I've seen. So I'm maddened that all this drug fuss has taken the fun away. Looking in rear view mirrors constantly and trying to identify potential 'trouble zones' doesn't make driving around relaxing. Maybe just by being in the country and enjoying the many benefits, we all condone to some degree that which we condemn. RC

*This month we say "Adios y vaya con dios" to Diana Stewart who is heading back to France with her husband, Bob, in September to joining Nick, Nuly and their family who are moving to Andorra. We were so lucky that Diana found time in her busy schedule to contribute articles to us on the various animal groups in Manzanillo and also some Book Reviews. All of us at Manzanillo Sun wish them many happy days in their new home.*

*We welcome Vivian Molick as a new writer who is scribbling away while she is back in Minnesota. There are more articles to come from her in the next few months and she is getting a head start. This month's "Coffee" is a very interesting piece. I didn't know coffee had been so versatile.*

*New contributor, David Fitzpatrick has submitted part II of his story of the ill fated Emperor Maximilian and Tommy Clarkson has started a couple of new series.*

*This should be a good issue and we hope you enjoy it.*  
**Freda**

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## From T's GALLEY at SCHOONERS RESTAURANT

### Flan de Café



#### Ingredients

3/4 cup sugar  
4 large eggs  
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk  
1 (12-ounce) can fat free evaporated milk  
2 tablespoons coffee-flavored liqueur (recommended:  
Kahlua)  
Mexican chocolate shavings and cocoa powder, garnish

#### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.  
In a small saucepan, cook the sugar over medium heat until it starts to melt. Lower the heat and cook until caramelized to a golden brown. (Do not stir or touch the sugar, but swirl the pan to melt evenly.)

Pour into a metal flan mold or 9-inch cake pan. Turn the dish and swirl to evenly coat the bottom. Let caramel cool and harden.

Place the dish in a larger roasting pan and add hot water to come halfway up the sides of the baking dish. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the condensed and evaporated milks and Kahlua and whisk well to blend. Pour into the prepared pan. Bake until set and just firm in the center but still jiggles slightly, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate until well chilled, at least 2 hours.

To serve, run a thin sharp knife around the rim of the flan. Place a platter or large plate on top of the flan and gently flip over so the plate is on the bottom. Lift away the mold. Garnish with powdered cocoa and top with Mexican chocolate shavings.