**Christmas Bonus!**
It's the law here

**BY ALEJANDRA BORBOLLA**

If you’re an employer in Mexico, here’s something you should know about: aguinaldo. Think of it as a Christmas bonus for your employees.

Mexican work laws established it as a right to all employees back in 1970. All employees must receive their aguinaldo, which is 15 days of regular pay.

Sounds good, until you do the math. A Mexican worker who earns the minimum wage of $4.18 USD a day (which is the national average, it’s a tad bit higher here in Cabo), would get $62.70 as a bonus. However, just like in the US, few people work for minimum wage. Average wage is about $700 a month. So, average aguinaldo is about $350, a welcome addition.

In some companies, however, money is not the only type of aguinaldo. Workers might also receive a food basket, which is seen (by some) as a more personal way to thank workers.

Some foreigners who own businesses in Mexico might not think they actually have to pay the aguinaldo, but they should know that there is a fine for not providing their employees their aguinaldo. Workers might also receive a food basket, which is seen (by some) as a more personal way to thank workers.

**Do You Have Locals On Your Christmas List?**
Most of us care to remember them but don’t know how. So listen up

**BY CARRIE DUNCAN**

Nearly all foreigners who spend much time here notice the sometimes ragamuffin kids running around. We wonder if they are truly in need or if that’s just the way it is here, and they are fine. Then there are all the thousands of kids in the barrio that we know are there but who we can’t see. Do they truly need our help, and which ones? Do we just pack up a bunch of toys and drive out to the barrio and toss them out at kids we see? Don’t laugh, many good-hearted people do just that.

Here is a more organized and helpful way to remember local children at this time of the year. These organizations have been professionally vetted, and the organizations themselves have vetted the families they help.

What ever happened to just walking around and meeting folks in need? Well, first off there is the language barrier, as those in need seldom speak English. These are people who are poorly educated. Then there is the cultural barrier, how do you offer help? Cash? That always seems a bit crass in every culture. You give your teenage nephew cash because you can’t understand him. Same thing here.

Here’s how you can be a big help, in ways that actually save lives.

The Los Cabos Children’s Foundation is one of those well vetted, experienced charities that assist with the needs of the community full time, and have been for many years. They have a small core of paid staff and a huge network of volunteers who are counted on to raise money for the health programs that the Mexican government does not cover.

The LCCF has been instrumental in creating the Pediatric CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 5**
New Pemex coming And hopefully it will cut down on the number of car wrecks on the fourlane. The intersection at the Pemex gas station in Cerro Colorado, out on the tourist corridor, has been the site of numerous wrecks, as vehicles pull out of the gas station into traffic. Or they can imagine that wasn’t Pemex’s idea, as they now have two facilities and are pumping the same amount of fuel.

Installing a stoplight there would also make things easier, but that won’t be happening. The fourlane is a federal highway and, for whatever reason, car wrecks happen there every year. Locals are beating their heads into a wall just trying to get speed signs alongside the highway. They want stopes, but unless they go out there in the middle of the night with a bucket of asphalt, that’s not going to happen, either.

More construction planned But it’s the good kind of construction. According to FOIS, a trust fund for social infrastructure development, a four-phase project to build a new park in Cabo will begin in January.

The loooong park will run along Constituyentes Avenue, commonly called the Bordo, which is the street that runs from the fourlane and curves around to the road to Todos Santos. The park will have children’s playgrounds, pet areas, bathrooms (very important), 60 benches, more than 100 trees, ramps for the handicapped and maybe, just maybe, an area for skateboarders. All of these areas will be lit by 105 light low-consumption, eco-friendly light poles. Yee gods, can you imagine those restrooms about one week after they’re opened?

The first phase of construction will go from the currently unfinished toll road overpass to the intersection across from the Red Cross building. It should be finished sometime in May.

Traffic alert! Speaking of the toll road overpass, which is at the head of Leona Vicario street, it should be open by the time you are reading this fish wrap, according to Alvaro Ramirez, director of urban planning for the city. Operative word being should.

Another traffic alert! Work to repave the asphalt on the fourlane, which has caused so many headaches and traffic jams just outside of Cabo, between Cabo and the Punta Ballena area, has been resumed. The feds say work will continue until the entire fourlane, all the way from Cabo to San Jose, has been repaved. Watch out, slow down and take extra time if you are driving the fourlane.

Taxes going down Kind of. Every year, the Los Cabos city government gets generous with property owners, in the form of property tax discounts.

To get these discounts, you have to pay your taxes early in the year. You’ll get a 20% discount if you pay in January, 15% in February and 10% in March. But property owners can only take advantage of this discount if they are current with their 2017 and earlier properties. No skipping years allowed.

The whales are here! Program, the annual commission of protected natural areas, reminded us that whale watching season began officially on December 15th and will last until mid-May.

As we well-informed readers might know, whales travel from Alaska to Baja California Sur (more than 7,000 miles) every winter, making babies along the way. These babies are born down here, from Magdalena Bay to the Ojo de Liebre lagoon (which we say makes them Mexicans, even though they spend most of the year up in Alaska).

The whales are attracted to our shallow lagoons and warm waters. Their arrival is followed by thousands of tourists who venture out to see them, pet them and take selfies with them. Last year, 1,140 adult whales made the trek, with 711 baby whales born down here. We’ll CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
Does anyone still smoke?

Yes, smoking rates in Mexico increased over the past five years despite campaigns, initiatives and laws to discourage it, a national survey reveals. And not even to mention the horrible pictures the industry is required to print on the packages.

The average number of cigarettes an individual smoked per day also increased. Of 15 million Mexicans who smoke, close to 11 million are men. On average, smokers spend 282 pesos (US $14.80) per month on their habit, the survey said. A package of 20 cigarettes generally costs around 50 pesos (US $2.60).

Although laws banning smoking in public places went into effect in 2008, it doesn't seem to have done the trick. The widespread flouting of a 25-year-old law designed to prevent the sale of single cigarettes also makes smoking more financially accessible.

More than 70% of those polled said that they supported raising tax on tobacco products and the survey determined that while three out of every 10 smokers were aware of services to help them quit smoking, but only 4% had used them.

With the highest proportion of smokers found in the 18-24 age bracket, reducing smoking levels doesn't seem to be in the cards.

Drivers tests coming

Sometimes we have driver’s tests here, and sometimes they hand out the license like it’s peppermint at Halloween. But no evidence of actually being able to operate a motor vehicle or knowledge of road rules is required in many parts of Mexico, including the chaotic streets of Mexico City.

Although a new law went into force last year requiring an exam, the Mexico City government abolished the driving exams in September without any explanation.

Now, starting in March, all new drivers in the entire country will be required to take mandatory driver exams before licenses are issued. In Mexico City, prior to sitting the exam, new drivers will also have to attend driving schools.

Where are we going to put all the workers who will staff those new rooms? And, by the way, we have two marinas, both full, and three beaches with the federal Blue Flag certification. (meaning all the needles have been picked up and the bathrooms cleaned).
What Is Fonatur And What Are They Doing For Us?

They still keep busy after all these years

BY JIM KEARNS

Fonatur is an acronym for a federal agency created decades ago to develop sunny beachy areas of Mexico as tourist spots. Fonatur went into a likely area (like Los Cabos) and buy up all the land along the coast. They installed roads, sewers, electricity and potable water delivery systems, then sell off chunks to developers. That’s how these large developments like Palmilla and Cabo del Sol were started. And the Cabo marina.

Nowadays, almost all their land is developed, but like any bureaucracy they refuse to die. So they putter around taking care of some of that original infrastructure, which by now is pretty prone to crumble. They are not known as Mexico’s most efficient government agency and they get pretty beat up by their critics.

Raoul Chollet Rochin is the regional director of Fonatur. He was born and raised in La Paz. After graduating from law school, he spent a brief time in Connecticut before returning to Mexico and working in Monterrey. In 2005, he returned to La Paz and started his own law firm, becoming the lawyer for Casa Dorada, Palmilla and many other resorts and businesses. In 2013, he was offered the job with Fonatur.

Raoul Chollet Rochin, the regional director of Fonatur, says water treatment plants are one of the biggest problems for San Jose.

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Q. What is the yearly budget for Los Cabos and for Loreto?
A. $17 million USD for Los Cabos and $17 million USD for Loreto. Although Los Cabos has received $52 million for storm assistance since January of 2014, for damage from Hurricane Odile and Hurricane Lidia, etc.

Q. What are some of the biggest projects happening in San Jose right now?
A. Well, we are replacing all the city sewer and water pipes because the old pipes were made of asbestos. This is a hazard to the general population. We are completely redoing Mijares Boulevard, including widening the sidewalks, installing bike paths, redoing the streets in a cobblestone style and adding palm trees to the boulevard.

We will be taking away some street parking to make way for about three miles of bike paths that will run throughout the city. The bike paths will be finished by the end of January 2018.

Q. What is the biggest problem facing San Jose?
A. Well, the water treatment plants always have the most complaints. We have two plants, the one in San Jose run by Fonatur and the one in Sonoreña, the later funded by the Gringo golf community of Querencia in return

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
New Hospital Coming

A new Hospiten hospital is under construction in front of Walmart, right along the fourlane.

The new medical center will be equipped with hospital 18 rooms, six intensive therapy rooms, two operating rooms, 10 emergency cubicles (basically a bed with a privacy curtain around it), 11 clinics and a delivery room. There will also be a hemodynamics room - we looked it up for you, that’s where they monitor the amount of blood flowing in a patient - and a radio diagnostic area that will include an MRI machine, a 3D-4D ultrasound, and x-ray and laboratory services.

The price tag for all this is a cool $30 million USD. The building is expected to be completed this month (fat chance), but the facility won’t be open until the later part of 2018.

The hospital company is from Spain and has hospitals in Puerto Vallarta, Cancun and San Jose.

These days everybody wants to look beautiful. As 78 million “baby boomers” approach retirement, age is beginning to show. But with the fast pace of today’s aging society, people now want that fresh look without spending weeks of painful recovery. A rejuvenation vacation is the solution. Spa Cielo Laser, Wellness and Weight Loss Center named “2009 Best Medical Spa”, is located in San Jose del Cabo, and has built its business over the past 10 years here in Los Cabos to meet those vacationer desires.

“People want to look better, but they don’t want to give up their routine or their daily lives or vacation” said Cathy Dammann, Medical Aesthetics Practitioner and Owner of Spa Cielo Laser, Wellness and Weight Loss Center. “The public is demanding transformation with little pain or downtime!”

Mothers and fathers have been here for years, and the program is run by good reason. The HydraFacial™ was even featured in InStyle magazine in 2009 as the “hottest celebrity pre-bridal facial”. All the notoriety is with good reason. The HydraFacial is the only system to vacuum extract; wet- microderm and vortexte infuse serums, following a computerized customized treatment plan based on the individual’s skin type and needs. “It is truly amazing!” exclaims Cathy.

On the other end of the spectrum, Spa Cielo offers fractionized CO2 laser treatments, named “#1 in Anti-aging Skin Rejuvenation” by WebMD, which offers a superior solution for rejuvenating and resurfacing the skin. The fractional laser can be used effectively to treat fine lines, wrinkles, acne, stretch marks, acne and burn scars, skin pigmentation, discoloration, sun damage, precancerous as well as benign lesions and uneven skin texture. This is the only laser treatment at Spa Cielo that requires any downtime, typically less than 5 days.

All of the other laser treatments at Spa Cielo, including TITAN™, the non-surgical facelift recipient of the Aesthetic Medicine A ward for “Best Customer Experience and Satisfaction” can be performed the day before a media or public relations event. Lifestyle Lift Now Available at Spa Cielo.

Spa Cielo offers a complimentary VISIA™ computerized complexion analysis, which allows a customized treatment plan for efficient rejuvenation in shortest amount of time. Make your time here a rejuvenation vacation. Call 624-105-2209 to schedule your complimentary VISIA™.

Cathy Dammann is a Medical Aesthetics Practitioner and has certifications in Aesthetics, and Light and Laser Therapies. She is a member of the International Association for Physicians in Aesthetic Medicine and the recent recipient of the 2012 “Successful Women of the Baja” by Baja Traveler magazine. She has been numerous appearances on talk shows including Oprah. Spa Cielo’s physicians and staff are trained and certified in United States and Mexico and are bilingual. Spa Cielo Laser and Wellness Center holds a five star rating and received the 2013-2017 Award of Excellence from Trip Advisor and has the experience you look for in a laser medical spa, with 10 years in Los Cabos area, 14,000 patients and over 70,000 procedures performed, Spa Cielo is your answer to skin and body rejuvenation.

Lifestyle Lift Now Available at Spa Cielo.
Cruising Is Big Business In Cabo
Even without a deep water pier

BY ALEJANDRA BORBOLLA

Cabo has hosted about 15 cruises this December, which meant many dollars for API, the port administration. This year saw a total of 147 arrivals, totaling 303,781 passengers. How cruises work is a very complicated business, so I’ll break it down for you. You do the math.

This year, cruise ships brought 303,781 passengers to Cabo. API, the port administration, charges just under $2 USD for each passenger that steps off the boat. You do the math.

I would like to first make a note on how interesting cruise ships really are. Did you know, a ship is called a she because there is always a great deal of bustle around her, there is usually a gang of men about, it takes a lot of paint to keep her pretty, it is not the initial expense that breaks you but the upkeep, she can be all decked out, it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly, and without a man at the helm, she is absolutely uncontrollable. She shows her topsides, hides her bottom and, when coming into port, always heads for the buoys.

OK, enough with the jokes. It’s a growing trend that instead of moving into a home, retired people have found a delightful alternative—they become permanent or semi-permanent residents on cruise ships. The cost is comparable, but in many ways, the amenities are superior. Linens are changed daily, the food is sumptuous and plentiful, there are a bunch of activities, 24/7 medical care is readily available, and of course, there are constant visits to wonderful locations. There are drawbacks, such as a lack of permanent friendship and proximity to family, but at least you can mope around while enjoying a cocktail on deck. No, we don’t get those type of cruisers here, because almost all our ships originate in L.A. and take a week to go to Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta and Cabo, then zoom up the coast back to L.A. It’s just an endless circle.

One of the downsides for our cruise travelers is there’s no cruise pier in Cabo, so all ships must anchor and tender passengers to the port. That means extra time getting to and from the ship. Even odder is the fact that some ships only stop here for half-day visits, which means that actual on-land time can be extremely limited (although excursion providers usually time their tours to meet the needs of cruisers). However, other ships spend two days in Cabo, allowing passengers to stay out until 9 p.m. before the ship maneuvers offshore to open casinos.

The average cruise ships that come to Cabo hold from 700 to 3,841 passengers, which API charges a little under two dollars a head to come ashore. The total earnings are about $61,408 from passengers directly. The tendering and taxes charged per passenger are about $135 more, give or take depending on the cruise line.

Let’s say the ship anchors in Cabo’s bay. The cost is on average $65 per person, much of that absorbed by the cost of the cruise, but some is assessed to the people as “port fees.”

Fun fact: ships can drop sewage freely if they are five miles away from shore, although most modern ships don’t. Eeww. How would you like to be a fish that gets that dumped on you?
to the math for you: That means 429 whales are slacking off. The whale experts are telling us to expect more than 1,500 adult whales this winter, which means more baby whales too. And, more slackers of course.

Hotel owner dies

Pablo Sanchez Navarro passed away last week, reportedly of a heart attack. He was 33. Pablo built the El Ganzo Hotel in San Jose, the boutique hotel that’s known for its underground recording studio and bringing in artists having an underground record company. He was 33. Pablo built the El Ganzo Hotel in San Jose, the boutique hotel that’s known for its underground recording studio and bringing in artists having an underground record company.

The bad news is, the new resort will be another all-inclusive, which is killing businesses in downtown Cabo and San Jose. Sigh.

Biggest complaints in Cabo?

According to Oscar Manriquez, head of CAT/TAC, the tourist assistance center that sits on the Cabo marina right next to this rag’s worldwide corporate assistance center that sits on the Cabo marina right next to this rag’s worldwide corporate headquarters, they get the most complaints about private hospitals, ambulances owned by those hospitals, and timeshare sales. No olvidar! That’s Mexi speak for “Don’t forget!” and this time we’re talking about the 2017 Todos Santos 5K, presented by the Palapa Society. That’s less than three miles, so get your butt off that couch and run! Or walk, that’s OK too.

The annual 5K is scheduled for Saturday, December 30 and will go through the streets of Todos Santos and the otro lado (the other side), beginning and ending in the town plaza. All proceeds benefit the Palapa Society of Todos Santos, a charity started and run by good hearted expats who raise money to provide better education for local children.

Early sign up for the race begins on Wednesday, December 27th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at La Esquina (during their farmer’s market) and Friday, December 29th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in front of Cafelix. The entry fee is about $10 USD for adults and $8 for students.

For more information on the race, visit the Palapa Society website at www.palapasociety.org or email them at events@palapasociety.org.

It’s Mardi Gras time! Well, not now, but we got your attention, didn’t we? La Paz, our state’s capital city, has set the dates for next year’s carnival fiestas, which will run from February 8 to 13. These parties will cost us taxpayers a tad under 900 grand.

Actually, the cost will only be some $116,000, as the rest will be paid by the state (well, taxpayers too), and sponsors like beer companies, Coca Cola, etc.

There will be food and beer booths, as well as live music every night. The well known (to us Mexicans, anyway) group Jenny and the Mexicats will perform on Monday, February 12. Will I see you there? It is still undecided if it will take place along the malecon, as is the tradition, or in a different area since the malecon is cur...

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GRINGO Gazette
December 25th, 2017

Que Pasa in Cabo?

continued from page 2

everal other developments in the San Jose area.

Waldorf Astoria does Cabo Not yet, but soon. Currently owned by the Hilton hotel chain, Waldorf Astoria is planning to build a resort in Los Cabos, along with four more throughout Mexico.

The bad news is, the new resort will be another all-inclusive, which is killing businesses in downtown Cabo and San Jose. Sigh.

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Continued from page 21
Art District Gets New Gallery

Check it out during the next Art Walk

BY CALEB HOOGLAND

A new art gallery has opened in San José’s Art District, one that’s owned and operated by the very artists whose works hang on the walls. Galería Cabo8 is the work of a group of Los Cabos artists who call themselves the Cabo 8. These artists include Hugo Aguilar, Alberto Padilla, Edgar Zamora, Fernando Nafarrete, Leo de Albarracin, Mamancatte, Marco Bejarano and Piero Milani. The gallery opened a few months ago but just recently celebrated its official grand opening.

Galería Cabo8 is the newest gallery to open in San José’s Art District.

The galleries of Cabo 8 each have his or her own artistic style, which brings a certain level of diversity to their gallery. You’ll see everything from paintings (in several different styles, ranging from realism to modernist), sculpture and photography.

If you stop by the gallery (located on Alvaro Obregon Street), you’ll have the chance to talk to at least one of the Cabo 8 members. Each of the artists takes turns manning the gallery, but you can often find more than one artist there at a time. They are very eager and more than willing to talk about their art and the mission of Cabo 8.

Ensuring the quality of their art is one of the main priorities of the Cabo 8 members. They believe art should be more than just finishing a painting and hoping someone buys it, which is why Hugo, the group’s founder, is motivated to inspire others to care more deeply about art.

The members of Cabo 8 are more than just business partners, they are also very good friends, which is one of the main reasons for the cohesion within the group. Each artist brings something different to the gallery, as they come from different parts of the world, including Mexico, Bolivia and Italy. Currently, all eight members are full time Los Cabos residents and full time artists (meaning they make their living exclusively from their works of art). Their pieces range in price from about $1,000 to $10,000 USD.

As a way to give back to the community, the group donates 15% of its sales to charity. Last year, they gave roughly $1,100 to Casa Hogar. This year the group wants to give back to local families on a more personal level, and is working on a charitable project that should be ready to give by the end of this season. You can get updates on this project, and the gallery, by following their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/caboeight.

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Go to page 28

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Coffee For A Good Cause
New shop is first step in protecting wildlife

BY CALEB HOOGLAND

Coffee with a cause is the focal point of the new 3R coffee and ice cream shop in San Jose. 3R stands for rescue, rehabilitation and release, which sums up the goal of the shop, as most of the proceeds from the shop, which is located next to the Corsica gallery on Alvaro Obregon Street, will go saving marine wildlife in Baja California Sur.

3R is currently working with the Rescue and Release Organization, a nonprofit here in Mexico; both are run by the same group of people. The four colleagues who own 3R and Rescue and Release – Jamie and Nora Bernal and their friends Cristian Sanchez and Ricky Rebolledo – have worked in environmental and marine conservation their entire careers and have been involved in conservation efforts here in Los Cabos for quite some time.

The Rescue and Release group has two main goals. The first is to educate others on the importance of preserving the environment and wildlife. Nora is the expert in the education department and for the past two years has organized workshops in local public schools. She says there is a major need for making young kids aware of environmental deterioration. These short workshops, which are geared mainly to kindergarteners and elementary students, focus on such subjects as how to save energy, taking care of natural resources and recycling.

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AT RANCHO SAN LUCAS

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THE WORLD AND I INVITE YOU TO COME DISCOVER WHAT MAKES IT SO SPECIAL.”
— Greg Norman

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Developed by Solmar
La Paz Has Pop-Up Stores For Christmas

Makes for quick work to buy interesting gifts

BY KELLY KAY

Not many years in the past, maybe 15 or so, people living in Cabo would trek up the windy two lane highway to La Paz to do their Christmas shopping. Many women would car pool, as it was such an arduous day. Now, with the four lane built, it’s an easy day trip, and with the new big box stores in Cabo, not even necessary.

We’re talking back in the days before Los Cabos had Costco, Walmart, City Club, or even a decent grocery store. Heck, we didn’t even have Home Depot back then. La Paz was our only hope for Christmas gifts that would satisfy.

And just because we live in a tropical desert climate doesn’t mean our communities don’t change with the seasons. At this time of year locals are no longer hiding indoors through the heat of the day, waiting until the sun goes down to “walk” through the space and experience it first hand. Money Back Guarantee.

Innovations (which is actually celebrated on December 28th) is Mexico’s version of April Fool’s Day, so be prepared for pranks. And don’t believe all the headlines in the papers, the newspapers purvey into the holiday too.

And we can’t forget Carnival, the biggest party in the city. It will take place February 8th to 13th, and the malecon will be filled with live music, dancing, food, games and the like. Let’s just hope the slow and steady construction on the malecon will have come to an end by then. In case it isn’t. Authorities are already scouting alternative locations for Carnival this year. 

WHAT’S GOING ON IN THIS... continued from page 3

with children getting out of school well after dark. Is anyone no, how are we gonna get our stuff home? Bring a cloth bag, Bunky. Or hold everything in your arms. Just as is happening in the States, (we don’t know about Canada), some cities in Mexico are outlawing plastic bags as being harmful for the environment. No, Los Cabos has not been hit with bag requirements, and we’re betting that as usual, we’re going to be dead last to embrace this, but heads up, it is coming.

Here comes Amazon. Amazon.com doubled its sales to become the biggest internet retailer in Mexico this year, helping to grow the country’s ecommerce market by a third, the world’s largest online retailer will generate $500 million in Mexican sales this year. Online sales still account for slightly over 3 percent of all retail sales in Mexico. Online sales are nearly 12 percent in the United States.

Argentina’s MercadoLibre was second, and in third place was Wal-Mart de Mexico with

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A good place to start your giving program is the umbrella organization called the FONATUR and... continued from page 4

WHAT IS THE FONATUR AND... continued from page 4

for 30 years of water for their golf course. The San Jose plant can handle 250 liters of water per second and the Sonoreña plant can handle 150 liters of water per second. The problem with the Sonoreña plant is that currently it only handles 75 liters per second because there are not more people feeding into it. The San Jose plant, at peak time, handles as much as 500 liters per second, which means the process has to be sped up. This contributes to the odor in the air, as the water is released before it is squeaky clean.

The San Jose plant would like to use the 75 liters per second that the Sonoreña plant does not use. The effluent from the Sonoreña can use the extra water for its golf course or sell the extra treated water to farmers, etc. But the two plants are not connected and don't have pumps from one to the other. That has to be funded by Conagua (the national water commission) and the federal government.

We would really like to expand the San Jose plant but that is contingent on funding by the federal government. We are making some ecological advances at the plants by switching the chlorine gas we use to treat the sewage to more environmentally safe compounds.

Q. That’s all fine for San Jose, but what is Fonatur doing for Cabo San Lucas?

A. Fonatur has a separate office on the marina called Port Fonatur. Both the San Jose and Cabo offices used to be under one director, but in 2008, Mexico City decided they wanted more power over Fonatur. So, the port office reports directly to Mexico City and not to the delegate in San Jose. Fonatur maintenance, which is like a separate division of Fonatur, is taking care of the main harbor of Cabo and also supervising the construction of the new walkway along the marina. They are also installing more street lights on Leona Vicario, from the toll road down to the Puerto Paraiso mall.

Now that Fonatur’s mandate has changed from development to maintenance, we still keep busy.

DO YOU HAVE LOCALS ON...

continued from page 5

of the program with new families replacing them. At any one time they are usually offering aid to about 35 families a cycle. $80.00 U.S. a month helps feed a family of four to six people for a month. You can give online at ligamaco.org and it is U.S. tax deductible. While you’re at their website check out all the other programs they offer. My favorite is their help in keeping these kids in school. The kids just need a little money for uniforms and books, or so they aren’t drafted as free child care for younger siblings. They are watched by this program and must keep their grades up.

There are dozens of well organized, well run, honest and caring charities in Southern Baja. The foreign community contributes millions and millions of dollars every year, but Christmas is an especially wonderful time to contribute, no matter how small.

These people turn your dollars into warm clothes, medicine, education, the list is almost endless. A good place to start your giving program is the umbrella organization called the FONATUR and...

continued from page 26

Calendar of Performing Arts

CABO SAN LUCAS

CULTURAL PAVILION

Every Thursday. 7:00 pm. Pavilion’s Movie Club. A different movie every Thursday. Sometimes in English, sometimes other languages with Spanish subtitles. Free.


January 11. Thursday. 7:00 pm. Pavilion’s Movie Club. Mexican Short Films Collection. Some of them in Spanish, some others without sound or words. Free.

January 18. Thursday. 7:00 pm. Pavilion’s Movie Club. Mexican Short Films Collection. Some of them in Spanish, some others without sound or words. Free.

January 25. Thursday. 7:00 pm. Pavilion’s Movie Club. Special movie presentation with an actor on site. Film to be announced. Spanish. Free.


LEON COTA PLAZA Next to Red Cross and Delegation buildings.

Every Sunday. 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Every two weeks, four hours of Plaza Arte workshops with live music, dance, and different guest artists. Spanish. Free.

Every Wednesday. 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Danzon Afternoons. Traditional Mexican romantic dance. Everyone is invited to dance. Spanish. Free.

LA RANA VEGANA Playa Migrino St. up from Miguel A. Herrera St. Turn right 2 blocks before the gas station (Pueblo Bonito Sunset area).

Every Wednesday. 8:30 pm. Vagabond Movie Club presents a different Artsy movie in the original languages with Spanish subtitles. Short films and art videos before the movie. Free.

CABO MARINA

Every Saturday. 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Arts exhibits, live music, children’s workshops. Free entrance. At the Cabo marina, next to Solomon’s Landing restaurant. Spanish with some help in English. Free.

SAN JOSE

KORAL CENTER/EL MERCADO Kilometer 24.5 on Highway 1

Every Wednesday. 5:00 to 10:00 pm. Art Day. Art, paintings, books, live music. Spanish and English. Free.

LA DOLCE VILLA Behind the Mega supermarket in San Jose Every Sunday. 6:30 pm. Kids Movie Club. Different movies for the rug rats. Spanish without subtitles.

Every Thursday. 7:30 pm. Vagabond Movie Club. Every week a different movie, sometimes in English, sometimes in different languages always with Spanish subtitles.

PLAZA EL PESCADOR Every Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. 6:00 to 10:00 pm. Art Fair. Food sampling and wine tasting at the restaurants and shops in the mall. Live music and local artists showcasing their work. Across from the Cabo Azul resort in the hotel zone. Free.

PLAZA MIJARES Main plaza downtown. The PlazArte Program will continue during renovations, next to the modern library.

Every Saturday. 6:00 to 10:00 pm. PlazArte. Four hours of arts workshops, music, dance show and family fun. Spanish. Free.

Every Sunday. 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Danzon Afternoons. Traditional Mexican romantic dance. Everyone is invited to dance. Spanish. Free.

TODOS SANTOS

CASA TOTA HOTEL

January 11 to 21. Thursday through Sunday. Tropic of Cancer Concert Series. Featuring La Santa Cecilia, Bostich + Fussible of Nortec Collective, Joan Osborne, Denise Carlos of Las Cafeteras, La Victoria, The Autumn Defense and more, performing at multiple venues throughout town. Proceeds to benefit the local firemen. VIP tickets are available, including reserved tables, at tropicalconcertseries.mx.

February 6 to 10. Tuesday to Saturday. 7:00 p.m. Kitchen Witches by Caroline Smith, presented by Las Estrellas de Todos. Tickets $15 USD. English. More info: facebook.com/LasEstrellasDeTodosSantos/

March 7 to 11. Festival De Cine Todos Santos need volunteers. Film lovers, designers, computer and video geniuses, musicians, artists, choreographers, and more. Kick off of the Volunteer Event will be December 18, but If you like to be part of the Quinceañera edition as a Volunteer ask Edith Salva tierra, edith.salvatierra98@gmail.com, 612-198-1826.

The FCTS is a community art work. English and Spanish.

March 9 11 & 14-17. 7:00 pm. Matinee is 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 11th. The Baja Shake Up, a musical spoof on Woody Allen’s comedy Bullets Over Broadway. All shows at the Hotel Buena Vista Beach Resort’s Convention Center. Tickets are $20 at Baja Homes & Land or Galeria Los Angeles. Will call, 624-141-0314 or email nanatemben@gmail.com. For all details, facebook.com/pages/Baja Shakespeare/220397878011557.

Community Reading Lounges

At AMELIA WILKES PLAZA Main plaza downtown CSL. Every Saturday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Herman Ita de Yasbela Reading club has a different book to read and comment. Saturday evening starting April 7. Book donations are welcome. More info and special activities with Nixania email: todossomoseotro@gmail.com Free.

At PLAZA COTA. From Monday to Friday. From 7:00 am to 9:00 pm. Reading club. Books available to all. Lazarro Cardenas one block before to the main park in Cabo San Lucas. Spanish and some in English. Free.

At HOLLYDANCE CAFE. Leona Viciario St. And 12 de Octubre St, 2nd Floor, downtown Cabo. Every Tuesday from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. Trotamundos Reading Club. Spanish mostly. More info and special activities on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/saladecturatrotamundos/timeline

At KINESIS GYM. El Camizal barrio near the Convention Center.

From Monday to Friday. 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. La Maroma Reading club. Books available. More info and special activities on Facebook: facebook.com/Sala-de-lecctura-La-Mar%C3%A9sima-Kinesis-Fabuladda-69103979760803/timeline.

At LA CIRCO. Librotega Reading Club. From Monday to Friday. From 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Book donations are available and circus drama style reading on Thursdays at 7:00 pm. More info with Sara Flores on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LaCirco-5778907353733/timeline
What’s New In Los Cabos?

Costa Palmas, a new luxury resort in Los Cabos, is a collaboration between Irongate and Four Seasons hotels and resorts.

BY LEEROY JARVIS

One of the world’s leading luxury hotel companies, the Four Season Hotels and Resorts, together with Irongate, a real estate development company, announced their construction plans for one of the most prestigious areas of Mexico: Los Cabos. The plan is to open up a luxury resort, as well as private residences along the beautiful beaches on the eastern shore of the Baja Peninsula by 2018. The new Four Season Los Cabos Resort at Costa Palmas is going to be within the exclusive Costa Palmas resort community - the plan is to build a private marina with a private two-mile beach stretch and a members-only yacht club.

The luxury real estate company Irongate has had a vision for this area for quite some time and are pleased to announce this newly designed agreement with the Four Season Hotels and Resorts. According to the President and CEO of Four Season, J. Allen Smith, the goal is to develop the region to a worldwide recognized luxury destination. Los Cabos is already known as a hot tourist destination, with a preference for the highly luxurious and extravagantly lush travel. The plans show a beautiful resort, consisting of several buildings, including private residences and villas along the oceanfront of Baja’s East Cape. In addition to the exorbitantly homes, the area will offer wedding facilities, areas for indoor or outdoor events, and five-star restaurants alongside infinity pools overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

For the golf lovers, the resort is planning an 18-hole Robert Trent Jones II signature golf course, not without its opulent spas and state of the art fitness facilities. The golf playground will connect to the yacht club and the marina, which will accommodate up to 200 yachts with lengths of up to 250 feet. Adjacent to the marina, a new marina village will offer additional gourmet food and extensive shopping facilities, as well as artisanal boutiques and music and art.

According to Jason Grosfeld, real estate pioneer and founder of the company Irongate, the entire Four Season Resort Los Cabos will be created for those looking to discover a fresh and new approach to resort design and lifestyle. It is set to be constructed on Costa Palmas, a two-mile stretch of coastline with safe swimmable beaches and an international marina.

The East Cape of Los Cabos, bordered by the Sea of Cortez, is the perfect destination for all watersport lovers. The crystal clear water brings perfect conditions for snorkeling and diving as well as for more physically demanding activities like sport fishing, windsurfing, and kitesurfing. The mountains of Sierra de Laguna, one of the most beautiful and least explored areas of Los Cabos, is the perfect place for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. If it is possible for you to be bored with endless water and mountain activities, try exploring the nearby waterfalls and relaxing in freshwater pools and hot springs available to you in this all-inclusive destination of activities.

The new resort in Los Cabos at Costa Palma will be Four Seasons’ third project within Mexico - the company owns properties in Punta Mita and Mexico City. The new resort will not only expand the Four Seasons Hotel chain, it will add value to their name by offering a destination their existing resorts in the Maldives, Seychelles, Bora Bora, Koh Samui, and Hawaii. This destination plan is a huge effort between a variety of companies such as Vita Inc., Guarin Glass Architects, Humberto Artigas Architects and with interior design by TAL Studio.

The 1000 acre resort is scheduled to open next year, located only 45 minutes from the Los Cabos International Airport. By LeeRoy Jarvis Broker, Cabo Cribs Real Estate. Contact him for more information 1-310-860-5063 Vintage. 011-521-624-164-2607 Mexico Cell or email him at: leeryo@cabocribs.com.
What Happens After The Sale Closes

Yes, there’s more

By Connie Meyerhoff

When you close on a Mexican real estate transaction you do not receive your executed trust deed that same day if you attended the closing in person or by proxy. Within the weeks following the close date the notary will be sending the executed trust deed to register the deed and property in the buyer(s) names at the public registry and property tax office. The requisite sale and acquire taxes (2% of the purchase price) will be paid for seller and buyer. Within approximately two weeks of payment of the buyers acquisition tax the notary may issue (upon request) a non-registered non certified copy of the trust deed so that the buyer may use it to transfer utilities, memberships etc. into their name.

 LIST OF DOCUMENTS PROVIDED AFTER THE CLOSE

BUYER DOCS
1. Copies of all prorated expense
2. Certified translation of the registered Trust Deed and Certified copy of Registered Trust Deed
3. Summary of important parts of the Trust Deed. Such as the Tax ID number. Amount of Trust payment fee to be made each year and when, Legal description of the property etc.
4. Final statement and escrow disbursement and any applicable refund if the escrow account was over funded.
5. Closing receipts for the Notary fee’s, Trust fee’s, Acquisition tax paid.
6. Buyers documents will be forward in hard copy and digital copy to the closing agency / attorney and the buyer will be contacted to determine how the buyer would like to receive their documents. For pick up or sent by courier.

SELLER DOCS
1. Statement of sellers expenses with receipts of payment.
2. Receipt for Capital Gains Taxes paid and a letter of payment of the CGT (ISR) or exemption of taxes.

WHAT HAPPENS IF AT A LATER DATE I LOSE MY DOCUMENTS OR CAN NOT FIND THEM
It is possible to obtain a copy of the Trust Deed from the Public Registry Department for a fee. It may take up to 60 to 90 days if it means someone there must look through documents by hand as they were previously stored. The Public Registry and Property Tax office only just began computerizing their system to match Trust Deeds with Property Tax information in approximately 2014. This means when you go in to pay your property taxes you bring a copy of your Trust Deed along with ID, address, email and phone number to be registered into the system. If you have not already done this you will be asked to.

Larry Perry

Larry is an agent for Cabo 4 Sale. He is a father of 2 and grandfather to 7, who moved to Cabo with his wife Judy and their pooh Gioia (Joya), after retiring from 40 years of managing crews in the petro-chemical industry. Originally from Dallas, Texas the couple visited Cabo last year, decided to make a 5 year retirement plan, that soon became a 6 month plan and they haven’t looked back!

After purchasing a home and a lot in the Los Cabos area, Larry thought selling real estate would be a great part-time job. Due to his positive attitude, outgoing personality, his attention to client satisfaction and his free property management services (on qualified properties) part-time quickly became full time and Larry has become a sought after agent in the Los Cabos area!

Whether you are looking to buy or sell contact Larry and find out for yourself why he is making such a great name for himself and Cabo4Sale! larry@ cabo4sale.com, cell: 624-138-8765, Toll Free from US & Canada: 888-738-8882.

Larry Perry

US & Canada: 888-738-8882.

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Buying A Timeshare?

Five red flags to watch for

BY JORGE M. CONDE, ESQ. AND GABRIEL DIXON, ESQ.

Timeshare also known as “Vacation Ownership” is basically where you buy the right to spend a certain period of time (typically a week or more) at a specific hotel resort in exchange for an initial buy-in amount plus an annual maintenance fee.

The sale of timeshare in Mexico is regulated by the Federal Consumer Law, which requires specific provisions to be included in all timeshare agreements which protect the consumer. To ensure the above, all timeshare providers must register their timeshare agreement before the Consumer Protection Agency (PROFECO) and prove that they can provide said services. When buying a timeshare always look for the registration number on the timeshare contract.

Despite the efforts to regulate the timeshare industry, there are many unregulated “timeshare providers” operating in Los Cabos, looking to make a quick buck by defrauding their clients. Here are 5 red flags to watch out for before purchasing a timeshare.

1. Timeshare Contracts without registration. – By law, all timeshare agreements MUST be registered before the Federal Consumer Agency. Before signing your timeshare agreement look for the registration number on the contract. If there’s no registration number on the contract, be careful as you are dealing with an unregulated provider who may not be able to perform its obligations in the future or even worse, might be trying to scam you. To verify that your provider is registered visit: https://burocomercial. profeco.gob.mx

2. Sales Outside the Resort. - All timeshare sales and presentations need to be within the Resort. If someone is trying to sell you a timeshare outside of the actual resort, it’s probably a scam or an unregulated timeshare provider, watch out assurance programs for an additional dollar amount. This is a sales technique used to make customers feel like purchasing their timeshare is an investment which down the road they can get out of and make some money while at it. Beware of any timeshare provider offering these kinds of programs from other companies as they are usually shell companies (with no assets). Have all your additional agreements in writing and signed by the sales representative.

3. Cancelling your timeshare - Remember that by law, you are entitled to cancel the timeshare agreement and ask for your money back within 5 business days after signing the purchase contract. To cancel the timeshare and get your money back, deliver a termination notice letter to the timeshare provider requesting reimbursements of any amounts paid (have them sign receipt thereof). Some providers can make it difficult and usually try to convince you to keep the timeshare (in an aggressive way) or tell you that penalties will apply. If this is your case, make sure that you send the termination notice letter within 5 business days to the timeshare provider at the address provided in the timeshare agreement through the Mexican Postal Service. For legal purposes, the letter is deemed delivered to the provider on the date it is deposited in the mail. The timeshare provider should reimburse any charge on your credit card within the following 15 days. Make sure to keep a notice of receipt in case of any future claims.

It’s always advisable to review the comments of other members or previous buyers online. Use your better judgment and trust your instincts before buying a timeshare. If you have any questions or comments do not hesitate to contact us.

Happy Holidays to all and Best Wishes for 2018!

We wish you good times, health and success. Thank you for your business and your support. We look forward to serving you for many more years.

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What does it really mean? Literally translated, fractional is defined as ‘comprising a part or parts of a unit’ and ownership is defined by ‘legal right of possession’.

A common misconception is that fractional ownership is the same as timeshare, which is a concept by which multiple parties bought the right of use for the same unit or villa within a resort property setting. Los Cabos has only a few fractional ownership properties and a large number of timeshare properties.

In Mexico the difference between timeshare and fractional ownership is right-of-use for a certain time period, versus ownership via a deed, or via a fideicomiso (vehicle of legally defined ownership with the potential of trading the right-to-use property at a given resort. The right-to-use option is for a set period of time, which will someday expire with no equity and no ownership to resell. On the other hand, if deeded ownership with the potential of earning equity is a prerequisite to your investing in a vacation villa, the distinction of buying timeshare versus fractional ownership is critical. True fractional ownership is a real estate purchase that can carry title insurance and typically take 60 days to close and at the end of the escrowed process you will have a fideicomiso to someday resell in a transfer of rights to another buyer or opt to pass on to your chosen beneficiaries.

The fractional ownership concept makes a lot of sense for many people because it provides all the benefits of owning a beachfront vacation home of the highest quality, with zero hassles. Actually, the headaches of second-home ownership are replaced with services and amenities provided by these fine resorts.

For example, Esperanza owners may enjoy deeded fractions in two, four, six or eight week increments. These weeks may also be used by their family, friends, or perhaps valued employees, or donated for charitable purposes. Owners may release their weeks back to the resort to rent, and like many fractional residence properties, owners may also enjoy trading their weeks to other resorts within a specific similar collection of properties.

As an example, for as little as $100,000 Esperanza owners may trade with similar, like-minded Clubs in their portfolio such as, Italy, various resorts in Colorado, Napa Valley, Hawaii, Florida, Oregon and more. They may also enjoy Esperanza’s amenities at no extra charge; such activities include: yoga; SUP yoga; pilates; spin; TRX; and Zumba classes. Tennis and mountain bikes are also free for the asking. Owners may enjoy a complimentary cooking class with the Esperanza executive chef. And, at the end of the week, you can simply leave your personal things behind in your Esperanza storage, which will be waiting for you upon your next visit.

Other fractional properties in Los Cabos include Villas de la Estancia, Esperanza and the Westin. Ask your MLS BCS sales agent to show you these options. In practicality, and as is the case with Esperanza Resort, it is created for those looking for an intimate and exclusive resort...

Continued on page 17
Third Annual Real Estate Conference in La Paz

Here is what the industry is doing for their clientele

BY JOHN K. GLAAB, CIPS

The Baja California Sur Real Estate Association (ASPI) recently staged its third annual conference in a Paz. The theme, “Invest in Paradise” attracted over 300 attendees including a dozen or so from Los Cabos. The Congreso covered two days starting with an “Ice Breaker” reception on Friday night. It was under the stars at the Costa Baja Resort and Spa beside the Bay of La Paz. In addition to Secretary of Economic Development for B.C.S. and the heads of several municipal departments such as the Public Registry of Property and the Property Tax office in La Paz five members of the Executive Council of the Mexican Real Estate Professional Association traveled from various cities. Carlos Bucheli Derat was recognized as an industry pioneer. He was one of the first real estate Brokers in the state and the Founder of AMPI La Paz. Rodrigo de Rios de Luna, Secretary of Economy, Environment and Human Resources for B.C.S. congratulated the real estate industry for its role in promoting the state. He said, "Our state was the leader of Mexican economic growth for the third Quarter of 2017. The growth rate of 14.6% outpaced all other states. Much of this resulted from growth in tourism and real estate development."

One of the more popular sessions during the day was a panel on real estate law in Mexico. The panel member from Sonora reported the Economic Development web site lists not only those in the industry who are licensed, but a list of authorized instructors. The representative from Guadalajara reported that there are many ladrones (Crooks) selling real estate and the law helps detect them. Karen de Anda, ABR Past President of ASPI La Paz, moderated the panel. She stressed the need to have an education requirement in the law and the need for those doing in the tourism zones to have access to international education as an aid for dealing with foreigners. for brokers and Agents in the tourism zones of Mexico. She said, “Linda Neil of The Settlement Company® is able to teach course presented by the National Association of Realtors®”. One panel member advised against having the government control real estate education. “We have an education council”, he said.

Salvador Sacal, Vice President of the International Real Estate Federation (FISBCI) for the Americas made a presentation, “Selling Yourself.” Before commencing his speech, he commented on the law in his place of work, (Mexico City) and the possible pitfalls that need to be considered.

Victor Granados, President of AMPI La Paz officiated at the Closing Ceremony.

About the author:
John Glaab is a Certified International Property Specialist. He is Vice President, International Marketing for Mexico’s The Settlement Company®. John was named International Real Estate Member of the Year by NAR in 2012. He is a member of Associated Realty of the Americas. Contact John.glaab@settlementco.com.

FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP...
continued from page 16

experience with an inspiring beachfront location at a fraction of the price of a multi million dollar beachfront home. Again, timeshare has its advantages for a large percentage of the population, and happy vacationers at such resorts are abundant. However, if deeded ownership and real equity is a must, ask your agent or salesperson if the property they represent or are selling, offers individual fideicomisos and/or if purchasing title insurance is an option. Therein lies the crux of the long-lived debate of fractional ownership versus timeshare.

Happy house hunting!
Roof Maintenance
A big expense, so don’t screw it up

BY GARY KAUFMAN

Repairing or replacing your roof can be expensive. Spending a few minutes every six months looking closely at your roof can help you identify roof maintenance opportunities that will help prevent costly repairs later.

Roof maintenance: What to look for
It’s critical that you inspect your roof every spring and fall. The three most common types of roofs found here in the Los Cabos Area are:
1. Flat roofs with a water proof membrane
2. Flat roofs with a torch down material
3. Tiled roofs

Water proof membrane roofs are a Liquid roofing application of a monolithic, fully bonded, liquid based coating to a roof. The coating cures to form a rubber-like elastomeric waterproof membrane, capable of stretching and returning to its original shape without damage. Such coating systems are usually reinforced with additional materials like fiberglass cloth to provide additional strength. The coatings can be applied over the most traditional roofing material found here in Mexico which is concrete.

To inspect a flat roof with water proof membrane, walk the roof and look for areas where the membrane is blistered or peeling. Occasionally a fiberglass fabric is applied along with the water proof membrane so check to see that the fabric is not ripped or deteriorating. If you find any areas of concern call a Roofing Contractor.

Torch down roofing is a type of roofing that consists of levels of modified bitumen—similar to asphalt—heat-adhered to layers of fiberglass. Used only for flat or nearly-flat roofs, torch down roofing is an excellent means of preventing moisture build-up and if properly installed will last for years. It’s critical that you inspect a torch down roof walk the roof and inspect all torched seams to see if they are deteriorating or peeling. If you find any areas of concern call a Roofing Contractor.

Tiled roofs are covered with clay tiles which come in various colors and some tiles are stronger than others. You have to be especially careful to walk a tilled roof. Try and spread your weight between two tiles and once you can walk on the ridge beam or “caballete” you can walk a little easier as these tiles are usually cemented in. Inspect the entire tilled roof area looking for cracked, loose or missing tiles. If you find any problems call a Roofing Contractor.

Other roof maintenance issues
• The most common problem I encounter on my roof inspections is the amount of debris on the roof and especially in front of the roof drains:
  - Sweep or blow off excess debris on the roof. Sticks, leaves, palm branches, golf balls and other debris can damage shingles, cause algae to grow and eventually clog the roof drains.
  - Trim any branches that are hanging over the roof to prevent damage.
  - Especially inspect and clean in front of all roof drains.


Making Medical Tourism Boom
Here is what’s behind it

BY THE SETTLEMENT COMPANY

Healthcare services are feeling the effects of globalization. Medical tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world today. It is a booming sector for various reasons. The increase in the sector has opened up a plethora of business opportunities for foreigners to invest in Mexico. Instead of vacations in exotic places, foreigners are arriving in Mexico for medical treatment and to buy prescription drugs at a lower cost than in Canada and the U.S. The states of Baja California, Quintana Roo and Yucatan are receiving great economic benefits from medical tourism. In Los Cabos, the new Hospital H has its own laboratory and the medical staff, many from Mexico City area for the most part bi-lingual.

The arrival of the hospital has created a mini boom. On one side a new Hampton Inn and Suites is now open and a place for patients and families to stay with great views of the water. In front of the hospital the new Koral Center features boutique shopping, a food court and a “wellness center.” There is also a gourmet restaurant in the Center.

For more information: info@settlement-co.com
What’s Happening At Your Favorite Restaurants?

Get in the swing at Baja Cantina

BY CHUCK WAGON

Swing away! Baja Cantina has some new additions: eight swings that face the marina. We’re very excited about this development because, really, the only thing more fun than having a cocktail is having a cocktail while you’re swinging. Might as well get that head swirling. And if you have the kiddos along, it’s fun for them to swing while they eat their dinner. What the hell, you don’t have to clean up the mess.

We wish more places in Cabo had swings. Cachet Beach Club, which is on Medano in front of Cabo Villas, has some, and so does Scabo, a newer place that’s popped up across from Cabo Wabo. There might be a couple other places with swings that we haven’t swung in yet, but considering how many bars we have in Cabo, we think the swing to bar ratio could be much higher. Maybe they think we drink too much and fear the worst? Baja Cantina used to be the in spot for the Cabo Gringo crowd. Then the wait staff went on a rampage and chased them all away. The joke was on them, though, because business dropped off so much that most of them left on their own, which means they didn’t get their severance. Service is now back to as good as you’re going to get in Cabo, which is pretty so-so.

Speaking of service... Why is the service in Cabo barely adequate? Because there is little training, and even less supervision, so the wait staff goes on a rampage and chased them all away. Then the service in Cabo barely got in Cabo, which is pretty so-so.

In many hotels, the tips earned by the workers are spread three ways: the hotel takes a third, the union takes a third, and the entire staff splits the final third. The only thing that’s going to change this system and insure Jose hustles your tacos to the table before they go cold, is wage pressure. We might get that as these big resorts on the fourlane pressure. We might get that as these big resorts on the fourlane pressure. We might get that as these big resorts on the fourlane pressure.

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Do It Yourself Art Projects

Paint parties are back at Pez Gordo Gallery

BY STEPHANIE MCGLASHAN

Have you ever wondered if you could be the next Grandma Moses? Or maybe you just like the idea of putting brush to canvas and seeing what comes out, masterpiece or otherwise. Either way, the Pez Gordo Gallery can help you unleash your inner artist.

With the start of high season, the gallery has begun their weekly paint parties again. Every Monday, the gallery hosts instructor-led group art classes. Each class has a different theme and uses various techniques and materials, so you can choose your class based on what type of art you like best.

And keep in mind, no experience - or talent - is required. In fact, the instructors love to have different levels of skill in their classes. (Because what fun would it be for them if everyone was really good?) What they care about most is that you have fun and can take home a piece of art you are proud of. If it turns out you’re not a budding Grandma Moses, you can always hang it in the garage.

One fun thing about the paint parties is that they are BYOB (bring your own booze) and BYOF (bring your own food). There are several restaurants and a deli in the same strip center, and you are welcome to order in food to snack and drink as you create your masterpieces. We recommend the drinking part if you’re feeling especially self-conscious about your lack of artistic talent; nothing like some wine to get your creative juices flowing. Or to make you not care if you think you’re not making the grade.

The paint parties cost $70 USD per person and run for about three hours. For your money, you get a canvas with a pre-sketched drawing to facilitate your work, step by step instructions to complete the piece of art, all the materials needed, and you get to take the canvas home.

What is interesting about this method of getting a canvas is that Pez Gordo makes creating a work of art as easy as possible. It’s not quite paint-by-numbers, but Pez Gordo gives Relief without Surgery!

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Day Trippin’ On The East Cape?
Destination: The Crossroads Country Club and Hotel Vidasoul.

Sitting on a beautiful and quiet stretch of East Cape beachfront, this Urban Modern Hotel and restaurant will captivate you. Perfectly located between world class surf breaks, Punta Perfecta, Nine Palms and Shipwrecks, and The National Marine Park in Cabo Pulmo, one of the last living coral reefs in the world.

Our restaurant opens for breakfast, lunch and dinner was voted the best restaurant on the East Cape. The food is a combination of traditional Mexican recipes with an Italian flair. Our Chef Edilberto Lauro Bernal is in the kitchen all day whipping up focaccia bread to die for, pastries, and fantastic food combinations.

He has a great deal of passion and creativity.

We are taking reservations for Posadas, Christmas Dinners and New Year’s Eve dinners. Stamina, our favorite Reggae and Rock ‘n Roll band will be playing on New Year’s Eve starting at 8:00 p.m.

We cater to groups, off-road, bicycle tours, photo shoots, commercials, conferences, weddings, and retreats.

For information, find us at Hotel Vidasoul on Facebook, www.vidasoul.com for reservations, read our reviews on TripAdvisor. Call us at 624-142-1165 or US 1-626-840-0485, Mexican cell 624 154-6966. What’s up too. Info@vidasoul.com.

It’s not quite paint-by-numbers, but Pez Gordo makes creating a work of art as easy as possible.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT
$260 million in projected online sales.

Amazon, which formally launched in Mexico two years ago, made a push to expand its customer base in October by introducing a cash payments system, as most Mexicans still don’t have credit cards.

You know better, right? The fake news phenomenon has turned up with a story about mass murder on the beaches of Cancún.

“More than 50 lifeless bodies of children and adults found on the coast of Cancún,” screamed the headline published last week on a Spanish language website called Más Viral No Hay, “There’s None More Viral.”

Photographs of what looked like dead bodies strewn on the sand accompanied the text with two Mexican soldiers appearing in one image.

But the color of the sand and sea didn’t match the famous hues of the Mexican Caribbean and the soldiers appeared to have been Photoshopped into the image.

But more than 80,000 Facebook page shares went around. Turns out the photographs were in fact staged on a beach, but one that is in Spain, and taken as part of a project completed by two journalists to draw attention to the plight of migrants who have drowned at sea. Volunteers played the part of the alleged victims.

The newspaper El Universal tracked some Facebook pages and sites responsible for the fake news story to a woman in Mazatlán. There might have been political or economic motives, or it was just a stupid way to get page views.
or rent from Sportia bike store. Form up at Plaza del Pescador in San Jose, across from the Royal Solaris hotel at 7:15 pm. Call (624)130-7159 or email infospotia.com for information.

Every Wednesday. 5:00 to 6:00 pm. Art classes at the Palapa Society campus in Todos Santos. Every Wednesday. Classes are free to children ages 6 and up, class size is limited to 16 students.

Every Wednesday. 5:00 to 6:00 pm. “Vino Con Elena,” a weekly book club featuring the works of author Elena Ponia-towska. At Los Adobes restaurant in Todos Santos.

First Thursday. 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. YoReciclo sets up tents to receive clear glass bottles, metals, plastics (except Styro-foam), thick cardboard, computer equipment (except monitors), small home appliances (except TV’s of all kinds), cellphones and accessories, edible vegetable oil, ink cartridges and toners of HP, Samsung and Xerox only, please. In San Jose at Centenario corner with Ildefonso Green. In Cabo San Lucas at the parking lot of the baseball stadium. Email info@yoreciclo.org.mx for more information.

Every Thursday. 8:00 am. Rotary Club breakfast. At the Playa Grande Resort, above the Sports Bar, Cabo San Lucas.

Every Thursday. 12:00 to 8:00 pm. Artisans Market at Meco Raspado (Vegetarian restaurant). On the road to the Hacienda Beach Resort (behind the Puerto Paraiso mall), across from the Marina Fiesta hotel.

Every Thursday. 5:00 to 11:00 pm. After Office. Live music and special promotions. At El Merkado, the Koral Center in Cerrro Colorado.

Every Thursday. 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Art Walk. Visit different galleries; many serve free wine. Art district in downtown San Jose.

Every other Thursday. You guess which one. Los Cabos Tomatoes, ladies’ social group. All women who aspire to be a tomato are welcome. Email loscabostomatoes@gmail.com for more information.

Every Friday. 6:00 am to 12:30 pm. La Paz organic market. Postal Park, Constitution and Madero streets. Free.

Every Saturday. 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. La Paz organic market. Postal Park, Constitution and Madero streets.

Every Saturday. 10:00 am to 1:30 pm. The Or- ganic Market at Pedregal. Fresh, organic produce, coffee, fish, seafood, eggs, whole lambs, (Little Bo Peep!), pigs, (Por- ky? Is that you?) handicrafts, plus breakfast and lunch at Penny Lane’s Café.

Every Saturday and Sunday. 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. La Paz organic market. Postal Park, Con- stitution and Madero streets. Free.

Every Saturday. All day. The grandaddy of all markets. In ad- dition to organic produce, there are handicrafts, books, critters to adopt, food to eat and who knows what. Behind the town of San Jose. Go to their website and study the map: www.sanjomo.com

Every Saturday. 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Children’s library open. Story tellers at 10:30 and 12:30. Looking for gently used books, por- theranchkidz@yahoo.com, To- dos Santos. Spanish.

Every Sunday. 6:00 pm. Sunday Sessions Live Music. To- dos Santos Brewing. Enjoy the beautiful star filled Baja sky, live acoustic music, fabulous hand- made craft beers and delicious food. Álvaro Obregón street (be- tween Militar & Rangel). Face- book @TodosSantosBrewing for more information, 612-145-2023 or email info@todos santosbrewing.mx

Every Sunday. 7:00 pm. La Paz or- ganic market. Postal Park, Constitution and Madero streets. Free.

Every Thursday. From 10 – 2 p.m. at La Esquina (during their farmer’s market) and Friday, December 29th from 10 – 2 p.m. in front of Cafe Felix. For more information, visit www.palapasociety.org.

January 5-19. 10th Annual Los Cabos Pre- Am. At the Sheraton Hacienda del Mar Golf & Spa Resort. For more information or to request a printed invitation please contact: Barry Flemming at barry@proamevents.com, (843) 384-5342 or visit proamevents. com/los-cabos-mx/

February 7-13. La Paz Carnival celebration. Location TBA. There will be food and beer booths around, as well as live music every night.

March 9-14. 15-17. 7:00 p.m. Matinee is 1:30 p.m. on Sun- day, Dec. 11th. The Baja Shake Up, a musical spoof on Woody Allen's comedy Bullets Over Broadway. All shows at the Hotel Buena Vista Beach Resort’s Convention Center. Tickets are $20 at Baja Homes & Land or Galería Vista Beach. Will call, 624-141-0324. Email santpalmilla.com. For all details, face- book.com/pages/Baja-Shake- squeare/220397878011557

To get your event listed here, email the details to dave@ gringozagette.com. There is no charge. And, if an event we list here does not go off when stated, please don’t shoot the messenger, this is Mexico, and every event is, well, fluid.
Dealing With Your Electric Bill
That’s a challenge here

BY REDDY KILOWAT

One of the more confusing aspects of living in Mexico is understanding the CFE bill. (For all you non-residents, that’s the electric bill.) Residential accounts in Baja California Sur must keep their annual usage below a monthly average of 850 kilowatt hours (kWh), or they will be put into the dreaded DAC tarifa (rate) category because rates here are in tiers. Tiers of your own making.

DAC is an acronym for “domestico de alto consumo” (meaning “high consumption domestic service”). It is the rate assigned to users that have consumed more than 10,200 kWh of electricity in a 12 month period. If your CFE bill has DAC marked in the tarifa box instead of 1C, it means that instead of paying a reasonably tiered electricity rate of between $0.7 to $2.8 pesos per kWh (which is roughly four to 15 cents USD), you are required to pay a much higher flat rate of $4.5 pesos (23 cents) per kWh. You are required to pay this rate until your average electricity usage gets below 850 kWh/month. (Note: Rates change periodically and are slightly higher in the summer when you really need their electricity.)

If you’re like my family, dad is the “Energy Ogre,” as he’s the one solely responsible for paying the bill and, sadly, no one else seems to care about higher electricity rates. As a veteran of the ongoing struggle to avoid being DAC’d, I’ve developed some strategies over the years to win the battle against my CFE bill:

**Know your enemy** The air conditioner mini split, the typical air conditioning unit found in the majority of residential construction in Los Cabos, is the single largest contributor to your energy consumption. (If you have a pool – big mistake. You’re already likely in the DAC zone and you can’t be helped unless you can live with the green scum caused by keeping your filter pump turned off. Sorry.)

Learn the sound of the AC.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27
Cabo San Lucas

The billfish catching has slowed down recently due to variable water temperature changes. Considerable cloudy conditions over the entire area plus windy conditions have caused a port closure day. The yellowfin tuna being caught were mostly in the 50 to 55 pound range in any directions, although the port was closed for a day or two due to windy conditions.

Cabo Climate: Daytime temps averaged 78.1 degrees with nights at 66.1 degrees. The average humidity ratio has been at 69.1%. It has been mostly cloudy at Land’s End. The yellowfin tuna were mostly a ‘time of day’ bite in the areas near Cabo Falso and on the bank close to the Gray Rock area, Cabeza de Ballena.

Best Fishing Areas: There have been no regular hot spots for the billfish action, as billfish has been scattered about recently. Two of the billfish were caught and released in the Migrino area and the tuna were mostly ‘time of day’ bite in the areas near Cabo Falso and on the bank close to the Gray Rock area, Cabeza de Ballena.

Best Bait/Lures: Live bait drifting was best for the yellowfin tuna and most of the dorado were taken on a mixture of artificials and rigged bait. The sierra were mostly taken on small shiny spoons and feathers in tight to the beaches.

Puerto Los Cabos

This is now late in the season for warmer water gamefish such as yellowfin tuna, dorado and wahoo, although the sea temps still remain in the 70s. The wahoo action has slowed way down, with only a handful of these fish being landed recently.

Dorado showed up in greater numbers. It’s still varying from day to day, although many anglers have been able to catch their two-fish limit. Most of these fish were in the 5 to 15 pound range with an occasional fish at 20 pounds. Remember to release juvenile female dorado whenever you have the opportunity; this is beneficial for the future fishery.

in order to maintain sustainable numbers.

Yellowfin tuna were one of the more common fish being caught on most days, though numbers were fewer. Tuna were being found off the Arches near Cabo, to Santa Maria, Palmilla, Punta Gorda, La Fortuna and Iman Bank.

Sardina were slightly harder to find in recent days, with Palmilla Point being the area where the schooling baitfish were being netted. These were definitely needed for a chance at catching the yellowfin, as very few were striking on squid strips or on trolled lures. Sizes of the tuna averaged 10 to 15 pounds, though a few larger ones up to 40 pounds were caught on the Iman Bank. Mixed in with the schools of yellowfin tuna were white skipjack. They were bit smaller than most of the tuna but good eating, not like the black skipjack which are normally only used for cut bait.

Some early sierra are coming in near shore grounds, though no big quantities yet. Also, there were handfulls of smaller roosterfish caught.

Bottom fishing produced a variety off the shallower rock piles, with wind being a factor farther to the north. Leopard grouper, pompano, island jack, bonito, yellow snapper, barred pargo and triggerfish were caught in limited numbers. Using sardina and chunk bait produced, but not many on lures at this time.

East Cape

Much to the windsurfers’ delight, the North Winds have already made their presence known. Before the winds roared in, there were still a few billfish and yellowfin tuna along with a wahoo or two. For the sportfishing gang, it’s the time of year to take one day off. There has been no wind in the morning.

Winter has been settling in as air temps bounce between a low of 59 and high of 74 degrees, along with about the same 74 degree sea temperature.

La Paz

It’s a good time for snowbirds to enjoy some beach time or shopping or hanging out in a restaurant watching the ocean because it wasn’t the greatest.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30
When you think of some of Mexico’s most iconic dishes—tacones, enchiladas, frijoles—chances are, there’s cheese involved. Get your mind out of the bowl of gooey Tex-Mex queso dip. When I say cheese, I’m talking about the many varieties of fresh white Mexican cheeses. They tend to taste more like milk than butter or cream, and range in texture from soft to firm; you can even grill some of them. Crumbled, grated, sliced or melted, the cheeses in Mexican dishes give salty, tangy flavors and offset some of the heat from chiles and spices.

For this recipe, however, cheese is the star of the dish. This cheese soup was born in the old ranches of south California, Mexico, where ranchers had to make the most of what they had available, even cheese that had gone hard. Back in the day, food was scarce on ranches, since they were far away from each other and sometimes cattle taught the natives how to make cheese from milk. Of course, the techniques were adapted to the Mexican palette, which is what gave birth to the vast selection of Mexican cheeses.

Mexican cheeses are not quite as standardized since some, like panela cheese, are made from pasteurized milk and others, like Chihuahua cheese, are made from unprocessed milk. Mexican cheeses have had a hard time as far as international commercialization goes because of the lack of pasteurization in the milk. Those who have not been blessed with a Mexican stomach find them quite hard to digest.

Chihuahua cheese is named after the Mexican state that is home to the large Mennonite population who created it. It is also called queso menonita. The original version is semi hard with very small holes. This version is sold covered in cloth and paraffin wax. The taste varies from a cheddar-like sharpness to mild, and is a pale yellow rather than white. Today, this cheese is made all over Mexico and is popular as a commercially produced cheese.

Ingredients:
7 ounces of Chihuahua cheese
1 large potato, peeled
½ onion finely chopped
1 garlic clove
Salt and pepper
3 tomatoes
1 poblano pepper
½ cup of water
1/2 spoonful of olive oil
A pinch of oregano

Procedure:
1. Boil the potatoes, peel and cut into thin slices. Set aside.
2. In a pot, cook onion and garlic until soft, then add a pinch of oregano. Remove garlic once it has scented the onions. Add poblano pepper.
3. Add the potatoes to the pot, cook for two minutes and add in the tomato puree, along with a cup of water. Bring to a boil.
4. Cook until potatoes are soft. Add cheese cubes.
5. Make sure the cheese softens and the potatoes are cooked. Check for saltiness since the cheese can become quite salty.
6. Once cheese is soft and the salt is right, remove from heat and cover with a lid. It is important that the cheese softens but does not melt.

Serve with some tortillas on the side and add a couple of drops of lime juice to taste.

Cheese is good in all forms, including this traditional Mexican cheese soup.
You can give right online. Tax deductable

So does channeling money to people through these organizations make giving less personal? Yes, I’ll give you that. But your alternative is running up to some Mexican on the street and pressing something into their hand. That can be insulting, unwanted, and unneeded, you just don’t know. So I urge you to take the professional but less personal route to giving this season.

But if you are inspired to get more involved, volunteer at these charities; every one of them needs extra happy hands all year round, you don’t need Spanish, and you can get to know the people you helped at Christmas time.

DO YOU HAVE LOCALS ON...
continued from page 12

WHAT’S HAPPENING YOUR...
continued from page 19

Lucas very recently. Although the partners eventually split, the kitchen staff has remained the same, as does the food.

The menu varies, to please everyone's tastes, from mango pineapple ceviche to Sushi, sashimis, great salads, and this food snob faves: Seabass au tequila, scallops covered in orange liqueur sauce, Brazilian beef – a 16 oz. Rib eye marinated in fine herbs and coffee with a Jack Daniels’ based - sauce - and more. Good selection of beers, wines and full bar.

Located on 5 de Mayo street between Hidalgo and Guerrero. A tad hard to find, but here’s some pointers: take Hidalgo street up from Cabo’s main drag. One block past the Amelia Wilkes park you will see an OXXO store – turn right, and La Casita is on your right. Or, drive down Matamoros street (the one that ends at the Palmas de Cortes hotel), and just one block before, turn right. There you are. Small parking lot on the side, but there’s usually room to park in the street. Try it. Open for lunch and dinner.

Facebook: La Casita restaurant & sushi bar Cabo San Lucas. Phone: 624 105 1210.

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Questions? Call the office in Cabo at 14 30865. U.S. number is 562 714 6735

Next Deadline is Tuesday, January 2nd

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December 25th, 2017

GRINGO Gazette									

Take a look...

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In a decade, I’ve only been DAC’d three times. However, once over the 850kWh/month
What Happens When Your Mexican Home Is Destroyed

Yes! Yes! Sign Me Up!

I never thought I would write about this, but I must. Recent disasters raise a very real scenario: your home in Mexico is destroyed.

The taxman comes as you receive insurance money for the loss of the house. US tax law considers this to be an “involuntary” conversion. Like some type of “forced” sale.

Is the settlement taxable? If the home was your principal residence, and you lived in it long enough, you might be eligible for the optional exclusion of gain on the sale of principal residences, just as if you had sold it (up to $500k married, $250k single).

That exclusion is the same one people use when they normally sell their homes.

If you have gain in excess of the maximum exclusion (or for some reason the exclusion does not apply to you) it might be either taxable right away or it can be postponed. It all depends on what you do.

If you acquire replacement property within a specific period of time, gain on these situations may be postponed to the day you eventually sell it. Generally, that clock to acquire the replacement starts the day you get the insurance check. The two-year clock stops on the second anniversary of that tax year. Replacement property must be of a type similar to the one being replaced. Houses in foreign locations are not similar to those in the US, so plan accordingly.

Disaster areas proclaimed by the US President often get longer (three, four or five year) replacement periods, but those are, as you may expect, only in the US. A Mexican disaster area would not benefit, leaving you with the default two-year period.

Mexico recently issued special decrees providing relief connected to the recent earthquakes. Aside from extensions of time to pay taxes, it also provides for an immediate deduction of amounts spent in the acquisition of new, fixed assets in affected areas, so long as the acquisitions are done by March 31, 2018, net of insurance payments received for destroyed properties.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31
Book Report

BY JEANNINE PEREZ

Beginning Again in a Foreign Land is a book consisting of quite deep interviews of American women who are living alone in and around Todos Santos. These women have given us their deepest feelings, thoughts, and conclusions of life alone in a foreign land. Most of them do not even speak Spanish, and yet they muddle on, and actually muddle quite well. The ladies are all more than 50, and some are way more than 50.

Our guide on this journey of alternative retirement is Virginia Mazzetti, who prefers to be known as Moonstone. The name pegs her as an old hippie, and that would be correct. She raised a family in Washington state, not a known habitat of the type, but Moonstone has never gone by anyone's expectations. She is, however, a good writer and draws us into the conversation she has with each of her 20 friends. “Conversation with friends” is more accurate than “interviews”. Moonstone makes it easy for the reader to feel involved with each woman's experience in building a life here, most of them far from town, and many quite isolated.

The only thing these divorces and widows seem to have in common is their age and their spirit. Some have been caught by Moonstone on a rather tough day and they're feeling the pressure. Yes, there is pressure among the peace of the solitude. Living in the desert is not easy, there is always something that needs fixing. Fiddling with their various types of housing is an everyday adventure, one that none of the ladies can deal with other than to call for help.

They are so creative and positive in building and maintaining their various living arrangements, and Moonstone does such a good job of presenting their challenges and responses to those problems, that we are sad when the chapter ends and we can't chat more with that woman. That makes one wonder why we don't reach out to more people living an alternate lifestyle, and chat them up ourselves.

We get to know why and when they arrived; Most are here to live more frugally. They arrived about retirement age and after they raised a family. Some adult children are supportive, some not so much, and we get details of how that plays out.

These women, most of whom live off the grid, struggle just to get the lights on and the water.
FISH REPORT...
continued from page 24

The strong winds that plagued firefighters in Southern California with Santa Ana ferocity blew the Baja Peninsula and Sea of Cortez as well. Borders don’t stop winds! These winds had enough strength to kick up waves, chop and big swells, even in the normal calm waters inside La Paz Bay.

So, the window of opportunity for any fishing lately was limited to either hearty (crazy) souls who probably got beat up out there. However, there’s still fish out there.

Not much fishing north of town because the winds are

CLARITA
She’s a small, four-month-old pit/lab mix that we’ve nicknamed Clara. The poor girl was beaten by her owner and left for dead. She was covered in bruises and very weak when we found her. A month later, she’s recovered fairly well and is a happy pup (just look at that smile). She’s ready to start the new year with a new, loving family.

JACKIE
This sweetie is a Baja transplant, originally from San Quintin, just three hours from the U.S. border. We were able to bring her down to San Jose in October, and she has made an amazing recovery after just two months of love from her foster family: Jackie is an older dog, between seven to nine years old, and is missing a few teeth. If you’re looking for a gentle, loving companion, she is the perfect match.

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Ask a Mexican

A recent study from the World Health Organization found that obesity among adults in Mexico has more than doubled in the last 40 years. Alarmed, the organization is recommending that Mexico restrict junk food advertising targeting young audiences, increase the tax on soft drinks to 20%, and consider increasing the tax on food of low nutritional value.

This week we asked: Do you think these measures will help? If not, what do you think will?

Kevin Alcocer, 17, assistant
I think it will help because then lunch money won’t be enough for kids to buy as much junk food as they are used to, hopefully. I think that better snacks with better nutritional value should be marketed just as well as junk food is, so they are more appealing and maybe then kids will eat them more.

Claudia Guzman, 33, cook
Sadly, I don’t think it will help, because you will buy it even if it costs more. For example, people who smoke did not care about the price increase. My baby is just two years old, and I plan on making sure he is well educated as far as snacks and food goes. Sometimes it’s not easy, since junk food is readily available and much faster to eat compared to a healthy snack, let’s say a carrot. You have to peel it and slice it and that takes more effort.

Maria, 21, cook
I don’t think it will help fight obesity. We know junk food is bad for us but we are addicted. I personally do not eat much junk food but I do drink a lot of soda. Education is the only way to change it.

Joey Cerven, 33, entertainer
I heard about the tax increase, but I am not sure it will help. If we want our kids to stop eating junk food, we have to teach our kids it’s not good for them. I don’t have kids but I strongly believe that things are changed at home.

Ernesto Olvera, 50, security chief
I sure hope it helps, but I think the better measure would be to encourage kids not only to eat well, but also to exercise. My wife and I have taught our kids to eat properly, and they have never really liked junk food anyway.

Luis Martin, 19, cook
I think it’s a good idea; this way kids will avoid eating junk food. But I think we as parents are the ones who have to teach them that it is harmful for their bodies and can stop their development.

The lesson here: a disaster may unleash the built in gain on your home (or other capital assets), at the worst possible time. There is some relief from the sale, but you must know what to do. I pray you never have to resort to needing this relief. Stay safe out there.

Orlando Gotay is a Californian licensed tax attorney (with a Master of Laws in Taxation) admitted to practice before the IRS, the U.S. Tax Court and other taxing agencies. His love of things Mexican has led him to devote part of his practice to the tax matters of U.S. expats in Mexico. He can be reached at tax@orlandogotay.com or Facebook: GotayTaxLawyer.

How To Dial Toll Free #’s

Mexico blocks toll free calls to the United States, which is frustrating to us, as most of our banks, credit card companies, and large businesses only provide us with toll free numbers. But we have a work around.

Just dial 001 and then substitute these numbers:

- to call an 800 number, change the 800 to 880
- to call an 866 number, change the 866 to 883
- to call an 877 number, change the 877 to 882
- to call an 888 number, change the 888 to 881
- to call an 880 number, change the 880 to 889

Best to talk fast because these numbers are not toll free. And yeah, we know any business that deals in toll frees doesn’t have a live person answering the phone, so good luck with making it a speedy call.

Beginning Again in a Foreign Land: Todos Santos and Pescadero, Baja California Sur is the full title. You can get it at Amazon, a paperback with a colorful cover delivered to you is $12 or download it for $5. A good read.
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