The Extreme Sailing Series came to Cabo last week. Despite getting its first race win ever, the Mexican team placed second to last in the overall competition. The US team did even worse, coming in last place every day of the competition.

Banking Gets A Little Easier At Bancomer
Just don’t do your banking on payday

Has anyone noticed how many people are lined up at the Bancomer lately? It’s because they are remodeling the main branch next to the Cheduari supermarket. The remodel job is supposed to be completed in March. Yeah, right. Until this bank is back up and running, you can expect longer lines at the three other branches in Cabo, which have already been remodeled.

Part of the remodel project includes a change in the way the tellers process customers. Bancomer has improved their service by implementing a number system and bringing in chairs. It’s about time they got rid of that preferential line that was supposed to be for pregnant woman or the handicapped but was never enforced. Some people who thought they were better than the rest of us would get in the preferential line so they wouldn’t have to wait. The new system is fairer for everyone, and the line for the tellers moves much faster with the new number system. A tip off that all is not skittles and beer at the bank is they are bringing in chairs for customers to use while waiting. Better they should speed up service.

Unfortunately, you still have to wait up to hours to see a bank...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

How's The State Of The City?
According to the mayor’s state of the city address, just fine. Read this and see if you agree

Arturo de la Rosa, the mayor of Los Cabos, just celebrated two years in office. He commemorated the occasion with a “state of the city” speech touting what he’s achieved during his time in office. Here’s the breakdown:

The local police department was given an overhaul, starting with a bigger public security budget. At more than $15 million USD, which is double the last administration’s budget, it’s...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Is the mayor saying here, “Please be convinced the city is doing as well as I say it is.”
In my 24 years at this job, I have had employees come and go. Most of them have left some kind of impression on me, some of the good variety, some of the not so good, but nobody has affected me like Sparky, who worked on the team for, I don’t know, about four or five years maybe. Sparky as she was just fired from a Gringa-owned real estate company. She was all weepy and angry at the same time, as she was accused of stealing. This tiny old Mexican senora appealed to me, I think, because she reminded me of my auntie who pitched in to raise me. Tiny, old, excitable, and always in a flurry of action. Not getting anything done, mind you, just a circular flurry of action.

In Mexico it’s difficult to get a job after the age of 40, and she was well past that. I took a chance on her, even putting her in charge of collecting cash. I knew her former employer and guessed she only wanted to get rid of the old girl without paying her severance. I think I was right. Because Sparky handled thousands of dollars for me and there was never a penny misplaced.

But she was her own spirit. As we entered the age of computers, she stubbornly refused to learn. I honestly think she would toss a wrench into the computer when nobody was looking so she didn’t have to deal with it that day.

Her job was to take invoices around to our advertisers, get them to sign it, then the next week go ‘round again to collect. Yes, that’s the way it works in Mexico, the land that doesn’t see a need for a workable post office.

We kept telling her not to take her dogs with her on her rounds, and when we caught her at it, we would take that account away from her (she worked on commission). She kept sneaking the damn dogs along anyway and then complaining about her missing clients.

She was also told not to smoke around her clients, and that didn’t sink in either. One day she was at Pancho’s restaurant, back in the day. Mary Bragg owned it. Mary told her to put out her cigarette. Sparky stepped outside while she waited for her check, and kept right on smoking. When Mary saw that, she came storming out of her office, shouting for her to put the cigarette out. Sparky shot back that she was Mexican, this was a Mexican sidewalk, and by God she could smoke on it. Yeah, we heard that story from Mary, who was not amused but was tolerant.

One year, Sparky was chosen to be a poll watcher. This was a woman who had never bothered to vote in her life, and was terrified of the job. I encouraged her to do it, as I wanted her to write a story about her experience and I thought it would broaden her horizons as well. After she picked up her materials, she brought them to the office. I didn’t know what was in the box so I walked over and opened it. I immediately dropped it back on the floor. Voting ballots in a newspaper office? Owned by a foreigner? No! Sullen at my being unreasonable, she took it home, where, she said, her dogs would likely eat the whole shebang. Her story about working the election, which I had to worm out of her, turned out to be a big hit.

She spoke English, which she learned as a bartender on Medano Beach, back when there were only a couple of bars there. She could write in English, but badly, and it was obvious that she learned her English from uneducated people. I could never break her of using the word ain’t and that’s just the start of her mistakes. She saw no need to learn past tense, she would just put “ed” on the end of any verb and call it a day. Written, spoken, swineled. Occasionally she would accidently hit the jackpot, as in learned. Occasionally she would accidently hit the jackpot, as in learned. She could write in English, but badly, and it was obvious that she learned her English from uneducated people. I could never break her of using the word ain’t and that’s just the start of her mistakes. She saw no need to learn past tense, she would just put “ed” on the end of any verb and call it a day. Written, spoken, swineled. Occasionally she would accidently hit the jackpot, as in learned. Occasionally she would accidently hit the jackpot, as in learned. Still, she was understandable and when she wrote, it was very cute. I wish I could find something she wrote, but I can’t, as we don’t file stories that way. You would enjoy it, as our readers at the time did.

Like all Mexicans of that vintage, Sparky had a fear of bosses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
Playing Santa

More than 12,000 gifts for needy families arrived in Cabo last week, thanks to the “Bring a gift in your suitcase!” cry the Solmar Foundation gave to its guests last month. That would be the Solmar resort on the Pacific side of Cabo, headed by Dinorah De Haro. Many of the donors went along to help deliver the gifts.

Bike paths coming soon

A project spearheaded by Seth Vázquez, owner of the Jungle Bar, is taking shape. Three bike paths will be up and running in the near future, according to Vazquez. The two-wheel routes are part of the city’s projects to promote cycling and healthy habits.

The project is not state funded, but is being supported by a large group of Cabo citizens who want to make it happen. They will paint bicycle signs along the road from Cabo to San Jose, starting at Cabo’s downtown Amelia Wilkes plaza. The goal is to eventually create bike paths in downtown San Jose and going towards the Los Cabos mountain area as well.

Several government officials – at least the necessary ones – are all for the program and, despite the lack of funds, have agreed to give it the green light.

More tourist assistance

CAT/TAC, the tourist assistance center, that new two story building on the Cabo marina between this rag’s locally famous worldwide headquarters and the dolphin center, is adding a new service for our tourists. And it’s a big one.

CAT/TAC now has a free ER, manned by doctors and nurses from the state health department. It is available for both foreign tourists and local foreign residents. Mexicans, you’re out of luck.

In other medical news...

The Letty Coppel Foundation, which is backed by the Pueblo Bonito Group, has invested nearly $250,000 USD in a mobile medical unit that’s equipped to perform mammograms, Pap smears, and basic dental and medical treatments. The unit will go out to needy, rural areas of Los Cabos.

The foundation donated a similar unit to the city of Mazatlan, which gives medical attention to more than 3,600 people a year. The funding comes from time share owners of the Pueblo Bonito resort chain. A small donation is tacked onto their bill.

Scary thought

Fearing the arrival of Uber in Los Cabos, the taxi cartel’s leader, Luis Gonzalez, met with the Los Cabos

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
Redlight/greenlight

You know that button you have to push when you enter the country? The one that flashes either red or green and, if red, you’re pulled over so they can paw through the undies in your suitcase? Well, that will soon be a thing of the past. The pawing through, not the undies.

Also eliminated will be customs declaration forms. Might as well, since everyone lies on those anyway. Are you really going to say you’re bringing in three computers because they cost about 30% more here? Probably not.

At airports, baggage will now be inspected by x-ray scanners. No hiding the undies or the extra contraband from those.

Authorities say the new procedures, which are standard practice internationally, will make arriving here easier. You will never know you were being screened, and that’s the point.

Phones getting easier
The need to dial 01, 044 and 045 will all disappear by 2019 and using the phone here will be like using the phone back home. We will all be using 10 digits, and no prefixes will be required.

The prefixes being phased out include the 01 entered before long-distance calls or non-geographical numbers (think 1-800 numbers), and 044 and 045, which are used to make local and long-distance calls to a mobile phone from a landline. The problem was, you never knew if you were trying to call a cell or a land line, making every call a guess.

A call from abroad to a mobile number here will not need the number 1 before the area code. Not knowing they had to do that always drove people nuts. And not knowing you were being screened, well, since everyone lies on those anyway. Shocking? Is anyone still shocked by the corruption?

The government has said telecommunications service providers have more than a year and a half before the new system swings into place, so no whining about making the adjustments.

Sacrificial lamb
With President Pena Nieto’s numbers in the dumpster, there isn’t much chance his party, the PRI, is going to be elected next year. Jose Antonio Meade, come on down!

Jose is seeking the presidential nomination for the PRI.

“I wish him the best of luck,” Peña Nieto said.

The PRI will hold a national convention of about 19,000 people to choose who will run.

Crappy report
A Supreme Court judge has given his opinion on what’s wrong with Mexico, citing crappy education, the crappy design of political institutions and “shocking corruption” as problems that continue to plague the country. Shocking? Is anyone still shocked by the corruption?

He also cited, as further items that are holding Mexico back, the lack of opportunity for generations of young people, the lack of decent working conditions, the high levels of unemployment.

Authorities need to stop “exercising their power in a way that is despotic, capricious without any limits, brakes, counterweights or accountability.” More crap.

Pay raise!
25 million Mexicans are getting a pay raise next week. From $4.25 to $4.70 a day. That is minimum wage here. The 10% raise is good news for 24.7 million Mexicans who work either one or two minimum wage jobs.

Cheap labor has attracted American companies to Mexico for decades. The Economic Policy Institute estimates about 800,000 U.S. jobs were lost to Mexico...
We Have A Hyperbaric Chamber In San Jose!

NFL athletes, the entire Cubbies team, Michael Phelps, Tiger Woods, and Lance Armstrong all use it to gain an optimum health advantage. Why not you?

A hyperbaric chamber is a cocoon-like apparatus that you crawl into and get comfy cozy for an hour or two. Under pressure, it cranks up the oxygen concentration in the chamber, and pushes that concentrated oxygen throughout your body. This concentrated oxygen, (100% oxygen), goes into any organs that may need a little pick me up, and even into your brain. The normal concentration of oxygen in your system is only about 20%.

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 made 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 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.

So, if you would like a complimentary session in the hyperbaric chamber, call Cathy Dammann at Spa Cielo in San Jose. 624 105 2209. Go to www.spa-cielo-cabo.com.
executive. Keep in mind that if you want to deposit a check, it must be signed by an executive first and then you can proceed to the teller. This process still needs to be improved. As in done away with.

If you go to the smallest Bancomer branch, next to Shizue and Cafe Cabo on Lazaro Cardenas, the girl who mans, (women) the door is good about getting things moving. Tell her that you need the check authorized and she will take it directly to the executive to get it signed immediately. This branch is also the least crowded (probably because there is only one parking spot).

Lines out the door, a common sight at Mexican banks. The worst time to visit the bank is on payday, which is on the 15th and at the end of the month. It's not uncommon to see 20 or more people lined up at the ATMs waiting to pull out money. (They are on direct deposit from their employer). The best time to go is before payday because nobody has any money, so who needs a bank?

And if banks seem crowded now, just remember that just more than 50% of adult Mexicans do not even have a bank account.

Nafta was supposed to fix the banks, because one of the clauses in the document mandated that foreign companies could now own banks in Mexico. But, although most of the banks are now owned by foreign companies, they are still managed and staffed by under educated locals.

HOW’S THE STATE OF THE...
continued from page 1

the department’s biggest budget yet. De la Rosa also reported that all police officers were evaluated in an effort to weed out the bad cops and ensure only trustworthy candidates were hired. The Navy has also stepped up to the plate, evaluating, hiring and training 400 officers in Mexico City who will be shipped over to Los Cabos.

New police cars, uniforms, tactical equipment and breathalyzers for drunk drivers were also purchased for the depart-ment, and the officers’ salaries were raised (to try and avoid the lure of bribes). The temporarily assigned gendarme officers will stay in Los Cabos for the rest of Arturo de la Rosa’s term. Navy headquarters are being augmented for 250 agents who will stay permanently.

Road rehabilitation was also one of De la Rosa’s priorities. The city purchased 29 pieces of heavy tactical equipment and breathalyzers for drunk drivers which pumped water 24 hours a day without anyone paying a centavo for it, were shut down. And two water wells will soon be restored, bringing 100 liters of water per second to everyone. A new desalination plant is also in the works in an effort to put a stop to water shortages within the next year. Yes, we’re buying the new desal plant from the same Spanish company that can’t get the first one to run reliably.

Community development is another one of De la Rosa’s focuses, and more than $1 million is being allocated for the construction of a center for the inclusion and development of otherwise deprived populations.

BANKING GETS A LITTLE... continued from page 1
Get More Than Gas At Orsan
You can work your way towards a new cooler next time you fill up

BY CATHY WATKINS

Many of the Pemex gas stations in Cabo and along the four-lane to San Jose are now Orsan stations. Just look for the red O along with the Pemex name. The employees now wear green T-shirts and caps sporting the red O as well.

The Orsan gas stations offer a gas rewards card. Points are earned when you fill up with $200 pesos (about $11 USD) or more worth of gas. The reward card must be presented before filling up.

The amount of points you earn depends on the type of gasoline you purchase. Magna (green) gasoline earns 1.5 points per liter, Premium (red) gasoline earns 2.0 points per liter, and diesel earns 0.5 points per liter. Your points expire at the end of December every year, so use ‘em or lose ‘em.

There are a bunch of useful items you can get when you redeem your points. The item that costs the most points is a soft-sided cooler for 6,950 points. Other items include: an 18-piece toolkit for 4,670 points; a beach umbrella for 4,680 points; a foldable outdoor chair for 4,070 points; jumper cables for 2,420 points; and a large thermal mug for 1,170 points. For $50 pesos you can get a $50 peso (around 3 bucks) gas credit, and 800 points can get you a movie ticket. Almost all of the items are red and sport the Orsan name.

If you don’t have enough points, you can pay between $20 and $100 pesos (roughly $1 to $5.50 USD) to claim your reward. For example, with 4,770 points plus $100 pesos, you can get that soft-sided cooler.

As a new perk, Orsan gives out prizes in other ways besides reward points. When they first opened in the spring, they raffled off a car and other big items like TVs to introduce themselves. Raffle tickets were given out with gasoline purchases. We all missed out on that one.

Orsan also was a major sponsor of a dorado, tuna, and wahoo fishing tournament on November 25th and 26th with a purse of $22,000 USD that was split among the top three winners, and it only cost $195 to enter. You can go up to the office occasionally to see what’s posted and keep your eyes open for future Orsan events.

And the next time you need gasoline, be sure to ask the attendant to give you an Orsan rewards card before filling up. Dar me un tarjeta, por favor.

Does anyone remember getting Green Stamps at the gas station back in the 50s? Mind you, I heard about it from my mom, I’m not old enough to remember. However, I will allow that my job was to lick the back of the stamps and stick them in the booklets S&H Green Stamps provided. That’s how my family got our hi fi record player. No, not wifi, hi fi. High fidelity, which was anything but good fidelity.

Orsan also has a new 15% discount for Baja & Sonora Only. A 10% Multi-Car Discount. GREAT Rates & SUPERB Coverage!

We Have a New 15% Discount for Baja & Sonora Only.
A 10% Multi-Car Discount.
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Most Mexicans don’t treat their employees well, let alone fairly, which makes them very humble and fearful, not a good mix with me, as I am always being jokey, as she would call it. Her neck would be on a swivel, looking from me to her manager, David Flores, almost whenever I said anything, wanting verification that I was just being jokey again. Usually I was, as she was so fun to tease. Maybe I regret some of that teasing now.

But the joke was on me, as she taught me one huge life lesson I have never forgotten but I learned too late for her. Like nearly every Mexican, she resisted paying taxes, because they all believe their money is stolen by politicians. So she talked me into paying her under the table. When she started getting sick several years ago, she had no national health insurance. Lucky for her, Mexico recently inaugurated a program for people like her, but the program is funded even less than the national health insurance program and the result is an endless wait in lines, which is hard on sick people. This put a financial strain on her family to pay cash for her care, and her family works for me, both daughter and granddaughter.

As I watched as the cigarettes started eating away at her, I swore I would never allow another employee to talk me out of paying taxes and earning their benefits, and I haven’t. That is her legacy to the employees of the Gringo Gazette who have come after her.

Here’s how she got her name: I was frustrated with her again. I don’t even remember what over now. I yelled at her, “How many times do I have to tell you this?” She gave me the usual deer caught in the headlights look and stammered out, “The doctor told me not to think too hard because it might cause sparks to go off in my head.” Behind me I heard David Flores suck in his breath, not knowing how I was going to react to this. I didn’t know what to say. It’s just one of those Mexican moments that you don’t quite know how to respond to. Finally, I burst out laughing, and she was Sparky until the day she died.

I will never forget Sparky. She is an important part of my Mexican experience and I treasure memories of her.

QUE PASA IN CABO?... continued from page 3

Leisure’s top hotel list this year, Las Ventanas is ranked number 87, a far cry from the number 17 position the One & Only Palmilla used to hold.

The Palma has disappeared from the list of the best resorts in Mexico. You didn’t notice? Shame on you.

Back in 2003, Edward Stein- er resigned as director of the Las Ventanas al Paraíso resort, after six years of managing it and getting it ranked as the best resort in Mexico and one of the best of the world. He was hired to run the One & Only Palmilla. Which, by the way, my boss thinks is the most ridiculous name on the planet.

At the time, Stein-er said “In two years, the One & Only Palmilla will be the best in the country, and one of the best in the world.” In 2006, the resort was recognized by Condé Nast Traveler as “The Best Resort in Latin America” and Travel & Leisure named it the “Best Hotel in Mexico.” By the end of 2011, the resort had been named the “Best Hotel in Mexico” seven times and was ranked number 17 in the world. Suffering from cancer, Stein-er passed away in early 2013. And now, almost six years later, the One & Only Palmilla’s reputation is in the dumpster. It didn’t even make “Travel & Leisure’s top hotel list this year, Las Ventanas is ranked number 87, a far cry from the number 17 position the One & Only Palmilla used to hold. It didn’t even make “Travel &
Learning Center Opens In Todos Santos
And a famous Mexican author cut the ribbon for the new library

BY ANDREW STACK

After several years of planning and almost a year of construction, the new Palapa Learning Center in Todos Santos has officially opened. The inaugural school year started in August with classes of 7th and 8th graders. The learning center was funded by the Palapa Society, a charity started and run by good hearted expats who raise money to provide better education for local children.

The center’s recent grand opening included a weekend full of events, including a panel discussion, a dinner and the ribbon cutting of the center’s library. All of these events revolved around Elena Poniatowska, for whom the library is named after. She’s a French-born Mexican journalist and author who has been hailed as “Mexico’s grande dame of letters,” and one of the country’s most important authors. Her story itself has all the makings of a best-selling novel: international intrigue, war and royalty.

Her father was a descendant of the last king of Poland. Her mother’s family escaped to France after the Mexican government seized their land during the agrarian reforms of the 1930s. Elena was born in post World War I Paris. Then the Nazis invaded France and Elena’s mother became an ambulance driver for the Allies. Her father joined his French countrymen to continue fighting. In 1943, when Elena was just 10, her mother decided enough was enough and sailed with her daughters back to Mexico.

Elena began her writing career at age 18 as a journalist for the Mexican newspaper Excélsior, doing interviews and society columns. Despite the lack of opportunity for women at the time, from the 1950s to the 1970s she evolved to writing about social and political issues in newspapers and books, both fiction and non-fiction. Her most famous work is “Massacre in Mexico,” about the 1968 killing of 43 students in Mexico City who were protesting government corruption.

Given her background, it seemed fitting to not only name the new library after her, but also have her as the honored guest at the learning center’s grand opening. “Wouldn’t it be incredible if this region’s next generation of architects, scientists, writers, poets, leaders come from the Palapa school?” asked Dave Higgin, one of the learning center’s benefactors. “This is our hope and our goal.”

To help achieve this goal, the Palapa Society gives scholarships to help students cover the cost of tuition, books, uniforms, and supplies. Almost 600 students have benefitted from these scholarships since the Palapa Society started the program in 2003.

And the learning center itself is a demonstration of the society’s commitment to providing Todos Santos kids with a better education. The new school, which will eventually grow to include 9th through 12th grades, will offer students a rigorous Mexican government-certified curricu- lum, which will help them go on to college.

As for Elena, she’s happy to be a small part of the learning center and the effect it will have on students’ futures. “I’m very touched by people’s interest. I think it’s a wonderful thing,” she says. “I’m very excited that Americans come to Mexico and feel they should give back.”

To learn more about the Palapa Society and the learning center, visit www.palapasociety.org.
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NORMAN ESTATES
AT RANCHO SAN LUCAS

“HAVING TRAVELED AND LIVED ALL OVER THE GLOBE, I CAN SAY WITH CONVICTION THAT NORMAN ESTATES AT RANCHO SAN LUCAS IS UNLIKE ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD AND I INVITE YOU TO COME DISCOVER WHAT MAKES IT SO SPECIAL.”

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Salmar
China and India have faced similar problems, but delivery people there accept cash payments, not an option in Mexico because of the nation’s sky-high rates of assaults and robberies.

The retail market here is estimated at $168 billion, but only around 10% of that total is online. Meanwhile, up to half of those online purchases are paid for in cash when picking up the item.

Horses going hungry: Horses in Guadalajara are going hungry because their driver/owners haven’t worked for two weeks and don’t have the hay to feed them. Or whatever they eat.

The local government is phasing out horse-drawn carriages in favor of electric vehicles so 100 horses that previously pulled carriages in the tourism sector — along with scores of drivers — have been left jobless. A bank account has been set up to receive donations to help feed the animals. The general secretary of the local carriage drivers’ union says the drivers will start a hunger strike to demand they be allowed to clippity clop through the streets again. Well, that seems only fair. If the horses go hungry, so should the drivers.

Donations to help feed the horses can be made to the Banco Azteca account 959 613 446 488 73.

People care about journalists: Maybe not our readers, but some people. Nearly 40 Mexican media organizations have announced they are going into cahoots to combat a wave of killing reporters all over the country, including at least nine this year.

The initiative calls for establishing communication with national and international human rights groups. The organizations also agreed to launch an awareness campaign aimed at Mexican society.

“The battle will only work if society understands that, with each killing of a journalist, they lose more of their right to know what’s going on in the country,” the agreement’s text said.

In a statement, they called journalist killings “a crisis in Mexico for over a decade” and urged the government to devote resources to support measures of protection.

Yikes, I think this reporter will stay underground in my cat suit. I stay under the radar this way, and the look becomes me.

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Retail market here is estimated at $168 billion, but only 10% of that total is online. Meanwhile, up to half of those online purchases are paid for in cash when picking up the item.

In a statement, they called journalist killings “a crisis in Mexico for over a decade” and urged the government to devote resources to support measures of protection.
handicapped people, which will help 1,200 people a year. It will be the first of its kind to be built in the state.

De la Rosa is also investing in a brand new, latest generation ambulance for each of the delegations in Los Cabos. And speaking of medical equipment, a mobile unit has been purchased to give medical appointments, mammograms, bone density diagnosis, pap smears and dental consultation (although, as we reported in pap smears and dental consultations, bone density diagnosis, and speaking in the state.

Every week a different movie, sometimes in English, and different guest artists. Spanish. Free.

TODOS SANTOS

LA POZA December 5. Tuesday. 7:30 pm. Vagabond Movie Club. Lucifer. (2014). On his downfall from Heaven to Hell, Lucifer passes through the earthly paradise, a village in Mexico, and start playing with its citizens’ lives. English with Spanish subtitles. Free.


LUNA AZUL THEATER. Located at The Other Side December 22. Friday. Through The Sun. A solstice celebration combining ancient and modern myths, weaving a story of our origins through the four ages of the earth, air, water and sun. English and Spanish. Tickets now available at Casita Anita (next to Derek’s Sushi). RSVP for dinner. Kids two for the price of one. More info: luzazulmichajala@yahoo.com, or www.lunazul.com.

CAS A 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 de Las Cafeñeras, 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 9 to 11 and 14 to 17. 7:00 p.m. Bullets Over Baja Shakespeare. A musical spoof on Woody Allen’s comedy. English. Tickets $20 USD, available at Baja Homes & Land or Galeria Los Angeles. More info: 624-141-0314 or nanatemben@gmail.com.
Shortcuts Can End Badly
Follow the rules in buying real estate, you’ll be glad you did

BY CHERYL T. MILLER

Interestingly enough many foreigners believe that Mexico is still the wild-wild-west and does not have the sophistication to regulate land and buildings, as is the case in their home countries and cities. They try to get away with things that end up later to be a true nightmare. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Not only does Mexico, including, La Paz and Los Cabos counties, have zoning codes, they also have building codes, in addition to tax codes that govern the deductibility of the investment you make in your property. And many lots are also found within condominium regimes with another level of rules and regulations regarding design and construction from that community’s Home Owner’s Association.

Building here in the Baja can be an awesome adventure yielding the home of your dreams at a fraction of the cost of what you can do in your home area... but that dream home can become a nightmare if you do not familiarize yourself with the local laws, codes and regulations.

Before you purchase, familiarize yourself with the specific zoning for the lot you are interested in purchasing:

For instance, in some zones you are allowed only one story. Or you are allowed a certain size footprint on the ground and a maximum square meters of construction on the lot. Is it enough? You may also discover that the zone changes across the street, allowing for commercial uses... is that OK with you? Are there zone changes expected by application or the city in the near future? This type of due diligence can be specified, with a date for completion, as a contingency of the sale in your offer.

Familiarize yourself with the Community’s Design Guidelines:

Each planned community who has lots for sale will also have a set of rules, regulations or guidelines that are an added level of specific restrictions and approvals you must adhere to. They may specify acceptable areas in which you may build on the lot, the maximum height and the number of stories you are allowed, the style of architecture and the colors and materials allowed. It is always a good idea to read these regulations prior to making an offer.

Building Codes and Permits:

YES, you will need a permit. Unless you are building a wooden shed of less than 20 square mts in size...you need to pull a permit. If you do not pull that permit, you a) be shut down, fined and still have to pay for and obtain a permit, b) when you sell, you absolutely need to do the process with fines (about 11% of the costs of the property at the time of the rectification) prior to the closing, or c) sell as vacant land and take a huge loss. Most buyers won’t accept the lack of legal construction and shouldn’t, as it just passes the issue and fees onto to them and you cannot charge for the illegal construction.

To search all of the listings available in the MLS, visit: www.mlsinbajasur.com

Beachfront Development Opportunity

Ideally located adjacent to the new Four Seasons Costa Palmas Marina and Golf Resort, offering over 900 meters (3,000 feet) of sandy, swimmable beach frontage and 170 acres. Only 45 minutes from the Los Cabos International Airport at the heart of the new East Cape boom surrounding the Four Seasons. Hotel, residential and commercial uses. $25 million.

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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Believe it or not, Los Cabos actually has a pretty sophisticated system now of aerial photos to catch people that have not pulled permits or reported accurately their square meters of construction. So sneaking one by is getting much more difficult, and in the end, is a loss for you in any re-sale you may want to do.

You will find that building codes are pretty similar to those found up north (any of the Unified Building Codes) as far as fire and life safety is concerned. Things like ceiling heights, door heights, escape windows and ventilation in bedrooms and living areas...these are pretty much the same. Differences occur in structural values, but your Mexican engineer and architect are familiar with those.

Pulling a permit here in Baja, although it has become more difficult in the past years, is still much faster, easier and cheaper than your home state/country. Unless you are doing something that requires a zone change, an unfamiliar building system, or asking for entitlements, you will find it to be quite fast and reasonable.

In some cases, clearing the land prior to construction may be required. This too, requires a separate permit. Your architect can arrange to get the appropriate permits for you. They gener-
Tax Consequences Of Renting Your Casa
The good, the Bad, and the ugly

BY DON D. NELSON

Rental of your property in Mexico part time can result in the following US tax consequences on your US tax return:

1. If you rent it for fewer than 14 days per year you do not have to report it on your US tax return. You still for US tax purposes treat it the same as a personal residence or second home and within the limits prescribed for those types of property get to deduct your mortgage interest and property taxes.

2. If you personally use your Mexico property more than 14 days or 10% of the number of days it is rented, for US tax purposes it is still considered your personal residence or second home. You can deduct expenses allocable to the rental up to the amount of rental income, but you cannot deduct losses.

3. When you rent out your house more than 14 days you become a landlord in the eyes of the IRS. You must report your rental income but can deduct expenses up to the limit previously stated.

4. If you limit your personal use to 14 days or 10% of the time the property is rented, it is considered a business. You can deduct all of your expenses, depreciate the property on your tax return, if that results in a net loss and may be able to deduct up to $25,000 of such a loss against your other income (subject to limits measured by the amount of your other income).

5. If you do have to pay taxes on the rental income in Mexico, you can either deduct those taxes or claim as a tax credit against the tax shown due for the rental on your US federal tax return. Most US states do not allow this tax credit.

Remember, that your rental income may also be subject to taxation by the Mexico tax authorities, Failure to pay the Mexico taxes can have severe consequences. Go http://rentaltaxmexico.com/ to learn more about that tax obligation. The Hacienda has been known to look on the internet to find local Mexican properties that are being rented out for which no Mexican taxes are being paid.

Don D. Nelson is a US Tax Attorney who has been assisting clients in Baja with their US International and Expatriate tax matters for over 18 years. He lives in Los Cabos part of the time. He can be reached by email at dnelson@gmail.com and by US phone at 949-480-1235. Learn more at his website at www.taxmeless.com.

Agent Profile
Samantha "Sam" Ross

After a successful 30-year career as a business owner and an IT professional in Canada and the Middle East, Sam recently relocated to Cabo with her fella where they built their beautiful Cabo dream home and adopted a fur baby lila.

After settling in, she decided to pursue a career as a real estate agent; which allows her to share her passion of making your Cabo dream a reality. She is committed to high standards, ethics and dedication to deliver high quality service to her customers!

As your Century 21 real estate representative, finding you that perfect home, or that perfect buyer for your home is her top priority!

Contact Samantha at samantha@c21cabo.com, cell: 624-129-7975, toll free from US & Canada: 832-648-9747.

By Don D. Nelson

What you need to get a permit:

You will need to hire a Mexican architect and/or Structural engineer. Many architects are also licensed in Structural Engineering and vice versa. Many are not. The Structural Engineer needs to be registered with the Municipality in which the work will take place. A basic full set of plans here in Mexico for a home, includes a site plan, floor plans, elevations (referencing site grades), a couple of sections, electrical and plumbing drawings. Your site plan should be developed with a site survey, if appropriate.

If you want your home arch---

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Continued On Page 16
Tips To Selling Your Property

BY CONNIE MEYERHOFF

In the course of meeting with your listing agent, preparing your property for sale and working through the process of selling your property you should be aware of these seven tips to help you work as a team with your Realtor. You should know that it takes a team effort to sell a property, once you sign the listing agreement it doesn’t mean you can sit back and relax and watch the show. Be involved and enjoy the process even though it may be stressful at times.

1._listing Price

You have asked your listing agent to view your property and provide you with a comparative market analysis (CMA) so that you can get the best price and hope to sell in the quickest time period. Why then after reviewing the information and listening to your agent who should be educating you about the current market you still feel that your home is valued far above the recommended low to high value for the list price? While your Realtor wants to sell your house and may agree to take the listing since you want to “try” a higher price point and you have agreed that if it doesn’t work you know you will have to reduce price. Fear of leaving money on the table can be one of the seller’s biggest hurdles. A buyer may not catch that your home is overpriced but what really happens is other agents may not show your home at all and if one buyer will use your property and its high price to make another property look much better to their buyer. In the Los Cabos market which is seasonal you have spent precious time listed too high and may have to wait until next season when buyers will be back in town. Another mistake in over pricing is not recognizing that the market is down as buyers have not paid for the property or what you have into the construction or upgrades. DON’T OVER PRICE

2. STOP HIDING THINGS FROM YOUR REALTOR

While you may worry that flaws might not be caught by the buyer they can eventually come back to bite. Don’t keep your homes flaws a secret because you don’t want it to hurt your price. A property inspection as part of the buyer due diligence process will bring it out and you’ll end up paying for it later. Touch up your cabinets from wear and tear, replace the gate that doesn’t close properly, replace or repair the window blind that won’t roll up properly, fix your leaking faucet, have that scratched up front door replaced. You might be used to it but to the buyer it will look like there are many “expensive” things to fix. Go ahead and share the good the bad and the ugly details with your Realtor. They can advise you what should be fixed now and what might bring potential problems

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Closing Costs In Mexico Explained

BY CONNIE MEYERHOFF

CLOSING COST EXAMPLE: A $1,000,000 property purchase with a new 50 YEAR TRUST DEED

Application & Permit Fee: $300.00
Foreign Investment Registration: $700.00
Appraisal Fee: $250.00
Title Insurance: $700.00 (this fee is optional)
Notary Fee: $1,000.00
Acquisition Tax: $2,000.00
Public Registration: $325.00
Certificate - No Liens: $35.00
Certificate - Property Tax: $700.00
Fiduciary Acceptance Fee: $440.00 (may depend on the trust bank)
Fiduciary First Annual Fee: $440.00 (may depend on the trust bank)
Closing Company Fees: $1,800.00 (to $2500 this fee varies depending on the closing company chosen by the buyer) 
IVA: $198.00
Telephones, Courier, Misc: $150.00
Total Cost: $109,263.00 (property purchase and buyer closing fees)

Other fees that apply are the Escrow fee which opens the account for where the buyers funds will hold until closing date, this fee depends on the closing company but averages about $750 us dollars. This fee would be referenced in the buyer’s offer to purchase contract.

The Notary fee is based on the purchase price typically 1% but has a cap limit at $2,000,000 which means the notary cannot charge anymore than the fee $2,000 on property purchaser in a higher price point. There may also be a reverse capital gain assessed. This happens when the appraiser performs the requisite municipal tax appraisal to determine accurate cost basis of the property from the assessment of both the acquisition tax and the future property tax payments. This is not a commercial appraisal and does not meet or provide a comparative market information analysis.

What you see in the examples above are the standard fees applied to a cash purchase (no financing involved)

By Connie Meyerhoff. Agent with Enger Volkers Snell Real Estate. Call Connie at 480-393-0639 or write her at cmeyerhoff@snellrealestate.com

Cabo San Lucas Featured Property

Villas de Mexico

Only in Las Villas de Mexico you can enjoy all the luxury, sophistication and comfort of the most exclusive developments in Los Cabos, but at a lower price. Las Villas de Mexico is a new concept in luxury residential real estate developments. Located within Club Campestre and only 10 minutes from the international airport in San Jose del Cabo.

Las Villas de Mexico has been built in a double-gated, high-security community of beautiful residences, offering a resort lifestyle with full ownership. Richly appointed with premium-quality construction, Las Villas de Mexico offers stunning views, plus a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course and a private beach club – all with special privileges and amenities.

For more information contact Martin Posch of Windermere Los Cabos, Office – +52(624) 147-5857, Cellular – +52(624) 147-5857 or martinposch@windermere.com.
Real Estate And Education On A Global Basis
And where Mexico stands

BY JOHN K. GLAAB, CIPS

The Mexican Association of Real Estate Professionals (AMPI) is one of 89 organized associations having a formal relationship with the National Association of Realtors. AMPI members have access to a plethora of NAR designations.

The National Association of Realtors’ is America’s largest trade association, representing 1.2 million members, including NAR’s institutes, societies, and councils, involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

NAR and its affiliated institutes, societies, and councils provide a wide-range of programs and services that help members increase their skills, proficiency, and knowledge. Designations and certifications acknowledge experience and expertise in various real estate sectors are awarded by NAR and each affiliated group upon completion of required courses.

November was a great month for Certified International Property Specialists (CIPS) Designees. At the CIPS breakfast held at the Realtors Annual Conference and Expo, 500 Designees received their pins and certificates. The ceremony was held in the ballroom at the Chicago Marriott. Participating in the ceremony were the CIPS Instructors who formed a receiving line to greet the new designees. There are now over 3,500 designees spread around the globe. To earn the prestigious CIPS designation, Designees received their pins and each affiliated group upon completion of the ceremony were the Chicago Marriott. Participating in the ceremony were the CIPS Instructors who formed a receiving line to greet the new designees. There are now over 3,500 designees around the globe.

Many of our Los Cabos/La Paz MLS BCS Realtors are NAR members or CIPS realtors.

About the author: John Glaab is a founding member of AMPI Los Cabos. He is an active international member of NAR and is a member of Associated Realty of the Americas (AREA) John was the first Realtor on Baja California Sure too earn the prestigious Certified International Property Specialist Designation.

Further information: john.glaab@settlement-co.com.

SHORTCUTS CAN END BADLY...
continued from page 14

Design and engineering are a large part of the construction process, but the most critical part of the project is to develop the design, that is fine, but your architect will need to team up with a local Architect and Engineer to develop the “working drawings” as they must be in Spanish and in the metric system, as well as signed by a locally registered professional.

In addition to your engineer/architect, a Director of the Work (Director de la Obra) is required. This person has a special higher designation than your architect/engineer and is legally and financially responsible for the project. Should anything go wrong or fail, they are held responsible. They must also be registered in each county. They are supposed to check the drawings and the engineering and oversee the work from the standpoint of public safety and quality of construction. There is an additional fee for this oversight, but it is required for buildings over a certain square meters (pretty much any home falls into this category).

Of course, a fee for the permit is paid based on the estimated value of construction that your architect submits with the application for the permit. Although there is a maximum guideline the Municipality allows, it is always best to submit the real value rather than to minimize the costs during the permit stages. Why? Because the value of your manifestation is based on your permit value. Manifestation is the value given to your construction after completion for tax purposes. But it is not just your yearly taxes that are involved, it is also the value you are allowed to deduct against capital gains when you sell. Unless you or have facturas for every dime of the improvements, the only way to increase the manifested value is to do a “re-evaluation” through various means before selling, which can be costly. So, don’t go cheap on your permitted value... A few hundred dollars now in permit costs, can save you thousands of dollars later in capital gains taxes.

FACTURAS: And one more time, all costs of goods, materials and services for you construction should be factured by an OFFICIAL factura in your name with the address of your property. Should the costs of your construction exceed the permit amount all of those facturas will yield a higher capital gains deduction and potentially save you thousands of dollars when you sell! Take the extra time to get the facturas...it will save you a heartache in the end.

Building in Baja can be exciting and rewarding... but as everywhere, the greatest rewards come to those that educate themselves to what is required of them!

By Cheryl T. Miller, Broker of Baja Realty and Investment, Architect. Contact Cheryl at 624-122-2690 or by writing info@losforsaleinbaja.com. 14 years experience in the Baja, serving all types of properties, and a land specialist.

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By John Glaab, a local architect, a Director of the Work (Director de la Obra) is required. This person has a special higher designation than your architect/engineer and is legally and financially responsible for the project. Should anything go wrong or fail, they are held responsible. They must also be registered in each county. They are supposed to check the drawings and the engineering and oversee the work from the standpoint of public safety and quality of construction. There is an additional fee for this oversight, but it is required for buildings over a certain square meters (pretty much any home falls into this category).
To Rent Or To Buy

Here’s an honest assessment

BY NATALIE EVANIEW

I don’t know about you but I’ve always believed that real estate is a great investment. What other investment allows you to build equity and provides a roof over your head at the same time? And, let’s not forget to mention the income (ROI) potential if you decide to become a landlord!

So, you have decided you are going to live in Mexico and the Baja is where you want to be. Expat living, here you come. Now, you are faced with an important decision... should I rent or should I buy?

From my own personal experiences, I would strongly suggest that you rent first to make sure that you want to stay here and that the expat life in the Baja is for you. There may be some familiar customs here in Mexico and yet there are many different ones that you may not be used.

For instance paying bills here is very different. Banking here is also very different. Some of the food that we are used to back home is not available here, or may be difficult to find. And let’s not forget to mention the language. Spanish is the dominant language here and if you don’t have at least the basics or a good handle on the Spanish language you are going to run into some frustrations. It amazes me that so many people here do not speak English. I think this is because I come from a country that English is the dominant language and it’s hard to believe that not everybody speaks English. Therefore, I am very determined to learn Spanish and I practice Duolingo every day. So, what it boils down to is it is up to you, as only you can decide if the lifestyle here is the one for you.

Ok, so you are considering a rental and thinking that a one year lease sounds like a long time. Believe me, time flies here in paradise! Before you know it, that one year you thought was going to be an eternity has come and gone. Ask anyone who’s been here more than a year and they will more than likely tell you that they can’t believe how fast time goes. What if you buy? Will you live in the property full time or enjoy your home on a part time basis? How long do you plan on holding onto this property? Are your goals long or short term?

When considering what type of home to rent or buy, there are many different questions you should ask yourself. Do you want a house with a yard? Do you want a Condo? What is your budget? What location do you want to live in? In Cabo? On the Corridor? In San Jose? Do you want a view? Furnished or Unfurnished? How many bedrooms? How many bathrooms? What is your goal move in date? What age of a home? Brand new or gently lived in? Do you need pet friendly? Family Neighborhood? Gated Community? Amenities and Clubhouse? Oh, and what about parking? What other things are important to you in your life and lifestyle?

Then comes the search... where do you start? Do you commit to an agent who can help you, or do you try to do this on your own? You can save yourself a lot of stress and frustration choosing one good agent to work with. Most agents here cooperate with one another and work from one pool of inventory. Remember, there is no cost to you to work with an agent when you’re buying a property or a tenant renting. So the next question I ask you is: If the service of an agent helping you to buy or rent a home is free, why wouldn’t you pick one and work with that agent? If that agent is good they will spend a lot of time and energy in helping you find the right home. Please remember, the agent does not get paid a salary and the commission is only paid when you purchase or rent a property for most of us agents this is our only stream of income. Please do not use multiple agents, as no one likes to be used as a free taxi or to work for nada (nothing). You wouldn’t work with multiple lawyers or accountants right? If you would like my help with renting, buying, or both and are ready to commit to a good Agent who will work very hard for you in the Los Cabos Area, please send me an email: info@NatalieEvaniew.com

Natalie Evaniew - Owner of Paradise Rentals and Real Estate Advisor - Portus

Cabo San Lucas has been my full time home since September 2015. I have served clients in real estate with buying and selling for over 12 years! I am a property owner and Expat here in Mexico; Paradise is my home sweet home!
TIPS TO SELLING YOUR... continued from page 15

during the negotiating process. FIX YOUR FLAWS

3. YOUR DECOR MAY NOT BE HELPING YOU SELL YOUR HOME

It’s important to know that even though you are living in your home while it is listed for sale the buyer must be able to visualize themselves there not you. You don’t have to pay for expensive home staging but you will want to de-clutter all rooms and remove personal items. Put away family photos, go through your closets and storage area’s and tidy them up. Put away the items that you will be taking with you. You’ll be moving soon so start packing now. Keep all surfaces cleaned it can make a even a small space look larger. LESS IS MORE WHEN IT COMES TO HOME DECOR

4. CLEAN YOUR HOME BEFORE ITS SHOWN

Do sellers really not clean their house before a showing? Yes! You want to present your home at its absolute best. Kitchens and bathrooms are where its noticed the most. Dust your furniture, clean and vacuum floors. Make your bed. Clean up the bathroom and put away personal items. Find someone to pet sit and ensure that the home is free of pet odors. Nothing kills a sale like that one. Put your dirty laundry away. Sweep your front walk or drive. Ensure what is going to be seen first when a buyer walks in will leave them with a good first impression. CLEANLINESS COUNTS

5. BE PATIENT WITH THE PROCESS

Real estate data shows that most homes are on the market an average of two months. These stats are for the US or Canadian markets and in some cases homes may be selling there in less time. "NOTE" These stats do not apply to the Mexico or Los Cabos Market place. The Real Estate Market in Los Cabos is much more fickle. It is a vacation ownership market and stat’s show that the average vacation property buyer visits the area up to 7 times before making a purchase. In your home state or province buyers are typically looking at property on the weekends or after work on week days and there is mortgage financing. In the Los Cabos market the buyer may be visiting the area once a year and mixing that time with their vacation days. This means they may have to return on several trips, taking the process from it’s initial “I am not buying I am just investigating to see what I can get for my dollar” to “putting the hard work to work and getting all the ducks in row” preparing for when the buyer is ready to place an offer and pay cash for the property. (No financing in our neck of the woods). While we know you wish your home would fly off the shelf the instant it hits the market in Los Cabos that is not often the case. A price drop also does not mean a flurry of buyers should know receiving an offer is your Realtor can use it to your advantage. When choosing "Have there been any offers on this property ?" Your Realtor can use that to fight for you in the transaction and negotiation process not for all the other parties involved. When presented with a “low ball” offer and you feel insulted, you should know receiving an offer is a good thing and even if you choose not to accept it, it can be used to your advantage. When a buyer or agent asks at the showing “Have there been any offers on this property ?” Your Realtor then can answer with Truth "Yes, continued on page 19

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 3PM - 6PM

2) Tuesday, December 12th, 3pm - 6pm Villa Land’ s End – Calle de Los Ninos, Pedregal, 7 bedrooms, 7,900 sq. ft. oceanfront, sweeping pacific views, #17-860, $6,500,000, Janet +521 624 141 6726, Joni +521 24 168 3715 & Jason +521 624 129 9492

3) Thursday, December 14th, 11am-1pm Casa Luna Azul, Pedregal, MLS 17-1953 Set on a lush corner lot, this one-level 4 bedroom home is perfect for indoor outdoor living. Kristin 624 191 7634

4) Thursday, December 14th, 12pm - 3pm Las Terrazas del Mar #1, Rancho Cerro Colorado, San Jose del Cabo, 3 bds 3 baths, ocean views furnished, #17-2127, $390,000, Janet +521 624 141 6726

5) Friday, December 15th 8am-12pm Casa Fox, 31 Callejon Alegria, Pedregal, Cabo San Lucas, MLS 14-2127 Chance to win 4 hour yacht cruise for 10 (Price Terms at Property) Cindy 303/656-3293 or 624 128 7906

6) Monday, December 18th, 3pm - 6pm Casa del Laberinto, Calleta - Palmilla, 4 bd, plus casita - ocean views, #16-1426, $2,650,000, Janet +521 624 141 6726

7) Monday, December 18th, 3pm - 6pm, Casa Alegria, Oceano Baja - Palmilla, 5,400 sq. ft. ocean views, #16-2428, $1,995,000, Janet +521 624 141 6726 & Joni +521 24 168 3715

8) Wednesday, December 20th 8am-12pm Casa Fox, 31 Callejon Alegria, Pedregal, Cabo San Lucas, MLS 14-2127 Chance to win 4 hour yacht cruise for 10 (Price Terms at Property) Cindy 303/656-3293 or 624 128 7906

9) Friday, December 22nd, 3pm - 6pm, Encanto B-302, El Encanto de la Laguna, oceanview penthouse – great price, #17-356, $985,000, Janet +521 624 141 6726 & Mau +521 624 122 5536

SOLDS

1) Villa 5 Maranata, Cabo San Lucas, MLS# 17-1196 3/2.5 Beautifully updated home! $199,000 N. Matthews / LastRock Real Estate and B. Leddy / Callimaya

2) San Charbel #1101, CSL-Centro, MLS 16-98, V. Sarve / Vansirius Real Estate and R. Willhite / Cabo Linda Real Estate, $140,000.00 USD

3) Casa Mexicana #15, El Tezal East, MLS 16-2300, J. Feinstein & Rebeca Curiel / Coldwell Banker and J. Gamier / Cabo Linda Real Estate, $300,000.00 USD


5) Loma Linda 402, Loma Linda, $200,000 USD, MLS #17-773. Magnificent ocean and estuary views. C. Meyerhoff-Engel & Völkers Snell RE / S. Dale- Baja Properties

6) Homesite 38 Oasis Palmilla, Palmilla $403,000 USD, MLS #17-2077 Each homesite ensures unobstructed mountain, golf course and/or ocean views. T. Swanzy-Engel & Völkers Snell RE / T. Swanzy-Engel & Völkers Snell RE

7) Las Colinas 6, Cabo del Sol $275,000 USD, MLS #16-1918 The Lot has an elevated position with a Southwest exposure providing beautiful blue water, golf and mountain views T. Snell-Engel & Völkers Snell RE / P. Diaz De Rivera-ODR Real Estate

8) Villa 5, Hacienda Beach Club & Residences, #16-820, experience the ultimate in Cabo beachfront living, $4,500,000, B.Mucino – The Agency Los Cabos.

9) Fundadores Homesite 26, Puerto Los Cabos, #16-2167, This luxury homesite backs onto the Greg Norman ocean golf hole #7, $750,000, C.Siegen - DreamHomes, J.Jensen -The Agency Los Cabos

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REAL ESTATE SECTION

DO NOT SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Remember that your Realtor is your representative. It is their job to fight for you in the transaction and negotiation process not for all the other parties involved. When presented with a “low ball” offer and you feel insulted, you should know receiving an offer is a good thing and even if you choose not to accept it, it can be used to your advantage. When a buyer or agent asks at the showing “Have there been any offers on this property ?” Your Realtor can answer with Truth "Yes, continued on page 19
Buying Or Selling Real Estate In Baja California Sur?

We’ve got you covered.

When buying or selling real estate in Baja California Sur, look for the MLS symbol & enlist an MLS agent.

Buying real estate in a foreign country is unlike any experience you may have had in your home country or state in Mexico. There are simply different laws, procedures and safe guards here in Baja California Sur.

Did you know that over 300 real estate professionals have organized in Baja California Sur to insure your success in dealing with Mexican real estate? We started in 1991.

We now call ourselves MLS BCS, and we operate a Multiple Listing Service statewide in Baja California Sur with over 3000 available properties. We cover Los Cabos, Los Barriles, Todos Santos, La Paz and Loreto. Any affiliate Broker or Agent can help you locate available inventory anywhere in the state, and can quickly connect you with the properties and agents in the area of interest.

WHY USE AN MLS BCS AGENT?

Our MLS BCS agents and brokers subscribe to the strictest set of local Operating Policies and Procedures in the Country. These OPP's are the result of hammering out 41 years of dealings with Mexican Real Estate Professionals (AMPI), and subscribes to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics of the National Association of Realtors in the USA.

In order to assure a safe and secure investment in Baja California Sur please be sure to work exclusively with an MLS agent. If for any reason you are not fully satisfied with their service you may inform theMLS at admin@mlsbcsmexico.com.

TIPS TO SELLING YOUR...

continued from page 18

but none high enough yet to take it! I know it is a highly emotional process and often times frustrating but your Realtor is not the one writing the low ball offer it is their job to present all offers and help in the negotiating process. YOUR REALTOR IS ALWAYS IN YOUR CORNER.

7. A REMODEL MAY NOT BE A BIG PAY OFF

You have put a lot of hard earned money, time and effort in to remodeling or upgrading your home. When the market is hot Realtors are more likely to give home renovations more value hoping the market stays hot and the buyer will pay the price. In a cool market Realtors put less value on high dollar projects because they are concerned whether the house will sell in any state remodelled or not. A homes upgrades may not increase the overall value. Remodel for your market place and don’t “over build” for your area and neighborhood. It’s not always a good thing to be the most expensive home on the block. Take a look at your neighboring homes. What may be important in one area of town or in another state/province may not be important to the type of people who will buy in your neighborhood. HOME OWNERS NEED TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE FACT THAT RENOVATIONS TYPICALLY WON’T PAY THEM BACK IN FULL.

IT’S SAFE AND IT’S EASY.

Let me help you find your piece of paradise.

By Connie Meyerhoff, Agent with Enger Volkers Senll Real Estate. Contact Connie at 480-393-0639 or write her at c.meyerhoff@senllrealestate.com.
New firetrucks needed

A week ago, another fire struck the palm tree forest in Todos Santos. The only fire truck has no functioning headlamps and ran out of diesel. Oh, and the water truck has no battery and the ambulances have no fuel. Good grief.

The department has three firetrucks, but one truck's brakes are on the fritz, and the other one doesn't have headlights or diesel. Oh, and the water truck has no battery and the ambulances have no fuel. Good grief.

Some big-hearted citizens can help them. You don't even need to give cash, just the diesel and the truck parts. You'll be glad you gave if your hacienda ever goes up in smoke.

Concert series returns

The Tropic of Cancer Concert Series is coming back to Todos Santos, January 11 to 21, and will be hosted by the rock n’ roll band Cordovas. The series brings local and national bands together for two weekends of music and art, and proceeds go to the local fire department. Let’s hope for high ticket sales, because the fire department obviously needs all the help they can get right now.

There are 23 bands and singers in the lineup, including Joan Osborne, Nortec Collective and La Santa Cecilia, a Mexican band that has been to Todos Santos before and always packs the house.

Single and multi-day tickets are available, as well as VIP packages. For additional information and tickets, look up: www.tropicofcancercertseries.mx/

That was quick? The new concrete that was poured along the malecon in La Paz had to be ripped up, as it started showing cracks here and there. The city forced the contractor to redo the job.

Of course, this will delay the completion date of the malecon project. But the head of the city’s urban planning agency insists the job will be finished by the end of this year. Uh huh, sure.

The project includes eliminating electric and telephone poles, and installing new sewage pipes and a sprinkler system to water the plants along the way, all underground.

Alcohol sales limited

The La Paz city government has decided to reduce the number of hours for alcohol sales. Previously, liquor licenses allowed bars and restaurants to stay open until midnight. They could pay for “overtime” which let them stay open later. Restaurants could get two additional hours, until 2:00 a.m., and bars got four additional hours, until 4:00 a.m.

With the new regulations, restaurants will now only get one hour of overtime and bars will get two. The new ordinance is aimed at reducing violent crimes in La Paz. Well, we’ll see how that goes. Most of the violent crime is drug related, not alcohol induced.
Blanca Pedrin, A Local Known For Getting Things Done

We have a number of Mexican leaders, but not a lot are women

BY JIM KEARNS

Blanca Pedrin was born in 1957 in Cabo San Lucas. One of nine children, her family has been living in Los Cabos for five generations. She's best known as the builder and owner of El Encanto Inn and Suites in San Jose, and a major force behind the Thursday night Art Walk and Music Mexico Tuesdays in downtown San Jose. She has a passion for her city, her culture and the children of Los Cabos. She also was a fierce force for getting the San Jose Art District prepped with underground utilities and cobblestone streets.

Q. How did the Art Walk get started?

A. Around 2003, Dana Lieb, Sabrina Leer and I were hanging out and we were bored. At the time, the three of us each owned an art gallery. So we said, why not make up a flyer for the three galleries and we can also serve people a little tequila or wine? It went very well, and people wanted us to keep on doing it, so that started the Art Walk where we welcome visitors to the Art District every Thursday night. First three galleries, then seven and now 14. And from 2008 to 2010 we did an overhaul of the Art District, painting, lighting and cleaning, to make it more of a Mexican cultural experience.

Q. What new projects are going on now?

A. Well, now we have Music Mexico Tuesdays, with the streets closed and stages are built so various Mexican groups and bands play. The special night allows people to walk around, sing, dance, relax and have a good time. We are trying to make it a complete cultural musical experience.

This year we also had a Day of the Dead Festival, with a huge stage in the middle of a four way intersection and more than 20 altars that were built by the students of San Jose. The students also dressed up as skeletons and La Katrinas and did an awesome job. The kids even cleaned the area when the event was over.

More than 2,000 people

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26
Monday to Saturday. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Rancher’s market in Todos Santos. Featuring homemade products from rural areas. Artisanal cheeses, organic chicken and eggs, liqueurs and virgin honey, as well as handicrafts such as furniture made with regional woods, leather goods and clay pottery all made by ranchers’ hands. The Mercado (market). Todos Santos on Calle Morelos between Rangel and Cuauhtemoc inside the San Diego Feed Store.

Every Monday. 8:30 am. Pickleball in San Jose. Contact ron@unbarton.com.

Every Tuesday. 8:00 am. Ro- tary Club at the Sheraton Hacienda del Mar resort. In the Chapel. RSVP: 172-0009 or 172-0010

Every Tuesday. 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Bike MACs used bookstore and thrift shop. El Chamizal (Paseo de Los Marines Street, almost on the corner of Calle Goleta) in San Jose. Runs through until April.

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

Every Tuesday. 6:00 pm. Mu- sic Mexico Tuesdays. Downtown San Jose. Live music, mariachi band, and artisans.

Every Wednesday. 7:00 am to 12:30 pm. The Organic Market at Pedregal. Fresh, organic produce, coffee, fish, seafood, eggs, whole lambs (Little Bo Peep!). pigs (Porky? Is that you?) handicrafts, plus breakfast and lunch at Penny Lane’s Café.

Every Wednesday. 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. At La Esquina in Todos Santos. Organic eggs, honey, locally made jewelry and beauty products, traditional baskets and more! Info: marinamdelmar@gmail.com, facebook.com/laesquinas.

Every Wednesday. 7:30 to 8:30 pm. Bike ride in San Jose. Free if you bring your own bike, or rent from Sportiva bike store.

Every Tuesday. 6:00 pm. Yoga and Meditation at the Playa Grande Resort, above the Sports Bar, Cabo San Lucas.

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

Every Thursday. 8:00 am. Ro- tary 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 Maco Raspado (Vegetarian restaurant). On the road to the Hacienda Beach Resort (behind the Puerto Paraiso mall), across from the Marina Fiesta hotel.

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Every Friday. 5:00 to 9:00 pm. Farmer’s market at the Shop- pes at Palmilla. Information: 624-144-6999, www.theshoppe- satpalmita.com. Runs through April.

Every Friday. 5:00 to 11:00 pm. Mexican Friday. Live music and special promotions. At El Merkado, the Koral Center in Cerro Colorado.

Every Saturday. 7:00 am to 12:30 pm. The Organic Market at Pedregal. Fresh, organic produce, coffee, fish, seafood, eggs, whole lambs, (Little Bo Peep!) pigs, (Porky? Is that you?) handicrafts, plus breakfast and lunch at Penny Lane’s Café.

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

Every Saturday. All day. The granddaddy of all markets. If in addition 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.sanjomoe. 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. theranchikidz@yahoo.com, Todos Santos, Spanish.

Every Saturday. 6:00 pm. Trivia Night, Todos Santos Brewing. English and Spanish with short rounds and prizes available each round. Álvaro Obregón (between Militar & Rangel). Facebook @ TodosSantosBrewing. Ph 612 1452023 or email info@todos- santosbrewing.mx.

Every Sunday. 8:00 am. Ro- tary Club at the Agave Restaurant. 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Talleres y Menus at La Paz Organic Market. Postal Park, Constitucion and Madero streets. Free.

Every Thursday. 5:00 to 11:00 pm. After Office. Live music and special promotions. At El Merkado, the Koral Center in Cerro 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 To- matoes, ladies’ social group. All women who aspire to be a tomato are welcome. Email loscabostomatoes@gmail.com for more information.

Every Friday. 6:00 pm. Trivia Night, Todos Santos Brewing. English and Spanish with short rounds and prizes available each round. Álvaro Obregón (between Militar & Rangel). Facebook @ TodosSantosBrewing. Ph 612 1452023 or email info@todos- santosbrewing.mx.

Every Tuesday. 6:00 pm. Art classes at the Palapa (Cerro Colorado).

Every Sunday. 12:00 to 8:00 pm. “Vino Con Elena,” a unique event in Todos Santos, Mexico. It is a wine bar on the beach with a unique menu, selective wines and a beautiful star filled Baja sky, live music, and a beautiful beach environment. The granddaddy of all market’s in Todos Santos. In addition 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 Sunday. 12:00 to 4:00 pm. Sunday in the park. Secured dog park. Open to the public. Providing a safe location to enjoy your dog off leash. Visit www. cabok9corral.com for information.

December 14, Thursday. 5:30 pm. The Padriño Children’s Foundation fundraiser. At the Home of Steve and Sheila Jagen- ten. Todos Santos. Padriño pro- vides medical care for disadvan- taged children in Todos Santos. and the surrounding rural areas. Includes dinner, drinks, silent auction and music. 100 tickets at $100 USD per person will be available on October 15. Email Nancy at nnaigle@att.net.

January 15-19, 10th Annual Los Cabos Pro-Am. At the Sher- ron Hacienda del Mar Golf & Spa Resort. For more information or to request a printed invitation please contact: Barry Fleming at barry@proamevents.com, (843) 384-5342 or visit proamevents.com/los-cabos-mx/

January 27-February 3. Todos Santos Writers Workshop. Seven days of workshops, seminars and fiesta for writers at all levels. More info: www.todos- santoswritersworkshop.com

February 6-10. 7:00 pm. Las Estrellas and Hotel Casa Tota present Kitchen Witches, a play by Caroline Smith. Tickets $15 USD. Visit facebook.com/LasEstrellasDeTodosSantos for details.

March 9-11 & 14-17. 7:00 pm. Bullets Over Baja Shakes- speare, a musical spoof on Woody Allen’s comedy. Venue to be announced. Tickets $20 at Baja Homes & Land or Galeria phone. For details, facebook.com/pages/Baja-Shakespeare/220397878011557.

To get your event listed here, email the details to david@ gringogazette.com. There is no charge. And, if an event we list here does not go off as stated, please don’t shoot the messenger, this is Mexico, and every event is, well, fluid.
What’s That Giant Star Shaped Building In La Paz?

It’s pretty important to children with disabilities

BY KELLY KAY

From the outside, the giant orange building, located in La Posada hotel by the beach in La Paz, kind of looks like a starfish. You might not guess that it's actually a state of the art pediatric facility. It's the Centro de Rehabilitación e Inclusión Infantil Teletón (the Telethon Childhood Rehabilitation and Inclusion Center), also known as CRIT BCS.

CRIT is a private, non-profit rehabilitation system that operates in 22 locations across Mexico. It was started by the Teleton (telethon, like the Jerry Lewis telethons) Foundation, which has been operating for the last 24 years and has built the largest rehabilitation system in the world. Their mission is to empower and improve the quality of life for families affected by disabilities, cancer and autism.

CRIT opened in La Paz in November 2010, the 17th facility opened by the foundation. It is a pediatric facility serving children from birth until age 18. To date, CRIT has provided support for more than 2,000 families in Baja California Sur, with the program accepting 750 families at a time. They keep a wait list as well.

Before CRIT, access to services, care, and equipment did not exist for people with disabilities. The need for this facility is so great that families from all over the state make long commutes to the center every week from places like Cabo and Loreto, sometimes multiple times a week.

The program's approach is holistic and customized, meaning that their support plans are tailored to each family and take things like social integration, emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical health into consideration. The children aren't "treated" as an individual or by an individual, but rather supported with the help of professionals with varying expertise and, most importantly, their family.

Educating and integrating family members into the process is a pivotal part of the support plans. Elisa Gomez Fong, the director of public relations, pointed Continued on Page 27
Fish Report

BY CARY GRAHAM

Cabo San Lucas

Reports of good action on striped marlin are coming in from the Pacific side, with multiple fish per boat being the rule. In the direction of Sea of Cortez, the billfish action was limited, with just a few single strippers and black marlin hanging around.

Cabo Climate: It's been clear and sunny with average daytime temps at 81.8 degrees and nights at 69.8. The humidity ratio has averaged 63 percent. Overall, it has been excellent weather for fishing in all the various hot spot areas.

Sea Conditions: The Finger Bank down to the Golden Gate Bank and southerly across the Jaime Banks, and then southerly down across the 1000 Fathom Curve, have been at 80 to 81 degrees. Cabo False and Fathom Curve, have been at 80 southerly down across the 1000 Bank, although not in any significant numbers. Anglers were fortunate to land one. Sizes ranged up to 45 pounds. With water temperatures still warm, we anticipate having more wahoo activity throughout the month. Dorado were found scattered in the same area as were the tuna and wahoo, though numbers were very limited, and most of these fish were under 10 pounds with a rare larger specimen in the mix.

As water temperatures are slowly cooling, we see more sierra showing up closer to shore, along with a few nicer fish to over five pounds and some of the more elusive Island jacks. Off the bottom structure we saw a little more production of amberjack, barracuda, triggerfish, leopard grouper (cabrailla) and at least one nice 28 pound yellowtail was landed. Quite a few white skipjack were mixed in with the schools of yellowfin tuna and a few of the Eastern Pacific bonito.

East Cape

Warmer than usual 83-degree water greeted Rancho anglers. However, we’re in overtime and the clock is definitely ticking. Cooler days ahead, amigos.

Lots of good sardina have been biting, with virtually all gamefish being taken on live bait. All of the boats limited on dorado and tuna and most were home by noon. Those that targeted billfish were rewarded with striped marlin. All of them were taken either on the way to Los Frailes or on the way back. Caballito dropped back in the pattern worked best. The tuna were caught just south of Los Frailes. Chummed sardina brought hungry fish to the top, mostly football-sized to a little bigger. Great for filling the cooler!

The dorado were mixed in with the tuna. It was easy to pick and choose. Lots of smaller fish were released, with the biggest being in the mid 20s. This is always a good time to snag roosterfish. Good-sized gallo still are providing lots of sport. The lighthouse beaches and marina are offering the best action. Even the breezy days produced fish, but all agree we are on borrowed time. Sea temps are dropping.

La Paz

In between bouts of winds, it hasn’t been too bad, but not many folks are fishing. The forecasts are calling for some very strong double-digit winds. However, for the folks who did go out, the best fishing has been from Muertos Bay where it’s a bit more protected and the fish are closer. Given the time of year and winter conditions increasing, surprisingly the fishing isn’t bad. In fact, there are still some nice dorado hanging out and some of them are larger than the ones we were getting during the regular season. There are also some billfish hanging out and scattered tuna here and there.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Fish Killers Of The Week

Cal Sheets, Fallbrook, California, along with skipper Banaga, caught a nice stringer of wahoo recently. Photo: Gordo Bank Pangas
Dear Santa, We’ve Been Very Good. For Dogs

BAMBOO
Bamboo is a 2 to 3 year old male who’s been neutered, has his shots and is ready for a good home. He’s a large dog but is very sweet and gets along well with other dogs. He’s also good with kids. He’s been patiently waiting to be adopting – won’t you put an end to his waiting?

STORM
This sweetie is a small female who is approximately 7 to 8 years old. She has been through hell and back. Storm was found in a garbage area, mixed in with the trash and left to die. She’s currently in a foster home and has been thriving. She is very sweet and calm, gets along with all dogs and is good with kids. Wouldn’t she make a great addition to your family?

Mexican cuisine is known for its vibrant and earthy colors, and romeritos are no exception. Romeritos are a type of weed called “quédie,” which translates to “edible herb or vegetable.” They look very similar to rosemary, but are more tender, odorless and taste a lot like baby spinach, and can be prepared similarly. Juicy and stringy, romeritos are most often served during the holidays in various dishes.

Romeritos are known as sacred herbs in Mexico. This native ingredient is one of the main dishes in Mexican Christmas dinners, prepared with mole, nopales (cacti leaves), potatoes and shrimp patties, all combined to make a revoltijo, meaning mixture.

During prehispanic times, romeritos were a highly valued ingredient by the Aztecs in central Mexico, and still are. When the Spaniards came though, romeritos were frowned upon since they grew everywhere -sideroads, corn fields - just like any weed. The Spanish didn’t find it appealing to eat something so… primitive. Romerito consumption dropped drastically because it wasn’t “cool” anymore.

Native Mexicans fasted around the same time that Christmas came around. One of the traditional ways of sacrificing for the gods was to not eat red meat, which translated to many vegetable, seafood and dishes. When the Spaniards came to town, bringing all sorts of new ingredients with them (like potatoes), the revoltijo was born, at least according to one theory.

In another theory, the story goes that in the Soledad temple, the Mother Superior announced to the nuns that the convent was going through extreme economic hardship and they had to cut corners wherever they could. The nuns got creative with the goal of using everything they had in the pantry so they wouldn’t have to buy anything else for dinner. That day, everything they found went into the pot: romeritos, potatoes, nopales and who knows whatever else found its way in there. From this mixture, revoltijo was born. When the nuns tasted their experiment, they praised the Lord for how good it had turned out and decided to share the recipe with whoever wanted it. The recipe quickly travelled the country. Little did the nuns know; this dish would become a staple of Christmas dinners across the country, being one of the most (if not THE most) iconic meals to exchange expensive gifts over.

There are many ways of preparing romeritos and, as with all Mexican dishes, the ingredients vary from region to region. The northern states tend to be heavy on the spice, and the southern states are heavy on the sweet. Around Xochimilco, a lake in Mexico City, the recipe was traditionally made with mosquito eggs, which have a seafood flavor. Don’t worry; we’re not making it with those. The recipe I’m about to give you is the most neutral I found, so enjoy!

Ingredients:
- 10 ounces of cleaned, boiled and dried romeritos
- 3 ounces of dried shrimp, toasted
- 3 ounces of fresh cheese, crumbled
- 5 ounces of cooked white rice
- 8 eggs
- 4 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1 clove garlic
- 3 cups of mole (store bought is fine, I recommend the Doña Maria brand’s poblano flavor)
- vegetable oil, enough for preparing the eggs
- 6 cups of cooked potatoes, cut into bite sized pieces
- 5 ounces of cooked white rice (optional, see instructions below)
- Salt to taste

Preparation:
Prepare the eggs. Separate the whites from yolks and beat until fluffy, like a salsa. Make little patties or meatballs. You can usually find them already de-boned, but are more tender, odorless and look very similar to rosemary, but are more tender, odorless and look very similar to rosemary, but are more tender, odorless and taste a lot like baby spinach, and can be prepared similarly. Juicy and stringy, romeritos are most often served during the holidays in various dishes.

Romeritos are the veggie-looking things in this dish. They look like rosemary but taste like baby spinach.

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The maritime agency, has been given almost $725,000 to keep up the good work.

Government workers also benefited from this administration, with 100 percent of them working with a social security number, which is reportedly the first time this has ever happened. And the huge debt (more than $24 million) left by the last mayor has been paid off by De la Rosa’s administration. 4,700 new hotel rooms are under construction in Los Cabos, which de la Rosas says is a sign that the government has inspired trust from the tourism sector. (Although the Hotel Ass, is screaming bloody murder and making threats for a better security force for the community). And finally, the unemployment rate in the country. And the huge debt (more than $24 million) left by the last mayor has been paid off by De la Rosa’s administration.

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Yes, Mayor de la Rosa is very pleased. He has announced he is running for the same office again at the end of his current term.

continued from page 12

Q. What do you think can be done to make Los Cabos safer?
A. I think we need to raise our employment rate in the country.

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WHAT'S THAT GIANT STAR... continued from page 23
FISH REPORT...
continued from page 24

Besides the winds, the biggest issue is getting live bait, as the waters get colder and the waves batter the areas where we catch the schools of sardina. We’re relying on lures and dead bait like calamari which will become more prevalent as we head into winter. Still, it’s nice to get warm-water species this late in the season.

Inshore, there’s jack crevalle, small cabrilla, sierra, bonito and snapper for the light tackle folks which are always a lot of fun.

Cabo San Lucas
Tracy Ehrenberg www.piscesportfishing.com
Larry Edwards www.cabosanlucas.com

COOKING LIKE A MEXICAN...
continued from page 25

Romeritos are great for feeding large crowds on a budget. They also taste great on bread, especially bolillo, and even better when reheated the next day.

more sewage treatment plants that are high quality and produce no odor.

Q. How did El Encanto get started?
A. Well, as you know, I was born in Cabo and was fortunate enough to know and work for Bud Parr when I was young. I went to work as a salesperson in his office in Beverly Hills booking clients to come to his hotel in Cabo. After 20 years of working and saving my money, I came back to Cabo. In 1998, I used my money to buy the house and property that I grew up in. I decided to build some apartments on the property, but about halfway through the construction I decided to be more like Bud Parr and changed the apartments to a hotel. I wanted the hotel to be built in the old Mexican hacienda style, surrounded by lush vegetation and beautiful flora. I built the main building in 2001 and the church, organic deli, and the swimming pool in 2002. We now have 28 rooms and 22 employees.

Q. Do you have any advice for someone who wants to get into the hotel business?
A. Know what you are doing and love it.

BLUE AND SPA
continued from page 26

The short answer: Plenty

Spa Cielo has for all of its 12 years in San Jose, been forward thinking in cutting edge preservation of youth and good looks. But now owner/manager Cathy Dammann is branching into the use of recent developments in DNA technology to guide us into being as healthy and feeling as good as she has made us look.

She can guide you into how to run your DNA, and the doctor who heads her program, Dr. Joseph Dib, reviews your entire DNA report with you, interpreting it for you so you know what you’ve got cooking in your genes.

But the value in knowing your DNA is, oftentimes the doctor can get into a gene that has run amuck compensate for it. It is a little scary to peek into the future and see your potentially gravely ill self, but wouldn’t it be worth that fright if it can be fixed? Or even if it can’t be fixed today, to know that technology is coming at us so fast, that it will probably be fixable in a few years, and that you will watch for that development?

You owe it to yourself to run your DNA now. Your future self, and your loved ones, will thank you.

Call Cathy Dammann at Spa Cielo in San Jose. 624 105 2209.
Go to www.spa-cielo-cabo.com

Q. If I gave you $60,000 USD to open a business, what kind of business would it be?
A. I would use the money to start a cultural center for children. It would teach children to be artists, sculptors and writers and to be proud of their culture. It would have restaurants that would sell traditional Mexican food and be open to the public. That money would be used to keep the center going.

Q. What do you do in your free time?
A. Go to the beach and travel to places like San Miguel de Allende. Outside Mexico, I love Italy.
Book Report

BY JEANNINE PEREZ


This type of fiction has every necessary element to be a favorite kind of read. It's about Mexico and it's a mystery, with danger lurking everywhere, with the action beginning on the first pages. The hero is a pilot (Grant), who becomes a sometimes reluctant hero. He has a beautiful gal for romantic interest, there's a good dose of ancient Mexican history, some descriptions of archeology digs, and of course, a priceless artifact that may fall into the wrong hands. What more can a reader want?

Add locales that are already familiar to me, a romance that's heating up, and the wonderful history and mysteries of ancient pre-Mayan cultures, and you know why I like this story. When I read the back cover, I was hooked, and that was before I even opened the book. The author tells us this is a work of fiction, but he also states that most of the vignettes found in the second half of the book are true. These vignettes are found in the section entitled "Archaeological Footnotes Paper: The Pre-Christian World."

Maps are included in the front and back of the book, and the inevitable bad guys bringing life threatening danger, give readers a real sense of being present with the characters, and even becoming participants in this adventure.

"The words of wisdom, on page 389, (beginning when Grant and Alex pull happiness from calamity and hard choices), was a gem. "(happiness)... is a feeling, not a situation. The minute we look for happiness anywhere other than our own thoughts, we’re lost...Happiness is an emotional response to the way we are thinking..." Pretty simple but wise philosophy (you must read the whole page to really get it all)."

An adventure filled plot, interesting characters, and always present dangerous situations, (one crises immediately leading to another), made me think that if this were made into a mystery movie, (similar to Raiders of the Lost Ark), Harrison Ford would be the best choice for the main part (well, maybe if he were a little younger)! I’m not quite sure which female star could best play Alex, his romantic interest, but her character is an interesting and exotic mix. The action in this book is ongoing, with each danger flowing into the next, the mystery deepening, and the book is full of crises and problems to the very end. I think you will enjoy this book. It is available from the author, or at my book store, El Caballo Blanco, in Loreto. It’s a good read!

The author, Terry Neal, is a local Cabo man, originally from Portland Oregon. He’s a middle aged widow with about a dozen kids, lives here now, and runs a catamaran business, Island Cat. The boat takes tourists on short trips up the Sea of Cortez, and in whale shark season, (underway now), to see the whale sharks in La Paz Bay.

He has a few books, OK, a whole bunch, in his office in Plaza La Danza, a few doors down from the Dairy Queen. But he can more often be found at his nearby office, a Tiki bar on the waterfront. He is there every day for lunch. It’s fun to read a book by someone you know, and about a country you know. So get one.

You can call Terry at 624 128 5666 info@islandcatbaja.com. Buy him a drink and swing a deal on a surprisingly good book. Surprising because you never guess what talents your drinking buddies have hidden from you.

Examples of how CRIT provides support for the whole family.

The Teleton Foundation operates on donations. The average cost to fund one child is more than $19,000 USD per year. This includes funding the staff, supplying necessary equipment, and providing access to various amenities and operations of the center. These expenses are kept transparent and regularly published for donors to remain aware of. Although its programs are not welfare based, CRIT tries to make it accessible to all families by making fees income based. Donations are always welcome, but especially this year since CRIT BCS was not able to host its annual fundraiser. The 2018 Telethon fundraiser will be held in March and you can find details on their Facebook page, facebook.com/Crit.BCS.

If you are interested in donating, volunteering, or simply learning more about the facility, you can contact Elisa to schedule a tour of the facility. You can reach her at (612) 175-0960 or egomez@teleton-bcs.org.mx.

A Furry Christmas Gift

LUKE

Several weeks ago there was some excitement at the humane society with two pugs in residence. Naturally, the cutest one was adopted, there’s just one, and I am an old, one-eyed pug. I am grateful there is a humane society where people can take us pets that aren’t beautiful anymore. It’s probably crazy to ask, but, could I be the one for you? What I lack in beauty I make up for in character... Plus, you can always buy me an eye patch and dress me up like a pirate.

EDITH

So you’ve spotted me in my circle of trust. Most humans can’t see me when I am in here, only those who have the gift of intuition and intelligence. You will note I am in circle alone, being the only feline... with this level of IQ and. Since it takes one to know one, you will already know exactly what to do next.

www.loscaboshumanesociety.com
WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!
No one can do everything, but EVERYONE can do something!
I originally came to Los Cabos from Canada for a six month internship working on urban agriculture research for the city planning commission. About halfway through my internship, I started to fall in love with this place and realized that I didn’t want to leave when my six months were over.

About nine months after I moved here, I stumbled upon a teaching job at a private bilingual school. I have been working at this school as an English and environmental education teacher for nine months now and have had many interesting (both good interesting and bad interesting) experiences as I integrated myself into the system.

I’m not going to lie, starting at the school was like being thrown to the wolves. I began without any formal training and wasn’t given any once I started my job. I don’t know if this is because there was no one available to train me or because they were confident that I could figure out what I was doing. Which I did, for the most part.

Elementary school was a breeze; the kids were calm and patient with me. My secondary school students, on the other hand, were quite a handful. In their defense, these students had had a rough year. By the time I started in April, I was their fourth teacher of the school year. It almost felt like a test, as if they were trying to see how far they could push me. (Of course, this doesn’t include the time I spend preparing my lessons before and after school.)

To me, a five day work week is normal but for many people here it is quite a privilege. To be completely honest, I don’t think I could ever work six days a week because I value my free time so much.

I also don’t get paid enough to put in six days a week. Teaching isn’t known for its high paying salary, and especially so here in Mexico. When I got the job I was offered about $665 USD a month, and the director mentioned that “This is a good salary for an English teacher here.” Not having anything to compare it to, and being desperate for work, I accepted the offer.

In terms of living, I managed to find an apartment that only takes about a third of my monthly wage. In addition to cost of living, starting a new school year is a completely different ball game. The kids came back refreshed from the summer break, ready to learn (most of the time) and with completely different behavior towards me. Now, a “bad day” for me typically means that my classes are interrupted for some sort of dance performance that the students are working on, which happens way more often than you would believe; holidays consume far too much class time. It also bothers me when punctuality isn’t respected by my students (and colleagues), and when I don’t get my normal break hours because we don’t hire substitute teachers.

This year, I was also asked to teach and prepare a curriculum on environmental education. I’ve always wanted to do this, but I never expected to have just five short weeks to prepare a year-long curriculum for six groups of students. To be honest, I still haven’t finished my curriculum and continue to plan week by week. So far, this hasn’t been an issue for my supervisors, who don’t seem to be worried about what I’m doing as long as the teaching gets done. In some ways, it’s nice to have so much freedom, but I also wouldn’t mind a bit more oversight and guidance.

Something interesting, and honestly quite shocking, to me about work life here is that most people work six days a week. I have so many friends who tell me how lucky I am because I only work five days a week and finish my day by 3:00 p.m. (Of course, this doesn’t include the time I spend preparing my lessons before and after school.)

I supplement my income with other side jobs (including writing for the Gringo Gazette) and now make enough to live comfortably, but it’s taken a major adjustment of my spending habits. I am not alone in this. The majority of my colleagues have to work two to three jobs in order to get by. And taking into consideration that I am a single woman without children, without a car, and renting an apartment. Imagine if the tables were turned and I had children to feed or a car and house payment to make. I think I would have to get a fourth job, to be completely honest. Suffice to say, this job is not for the uncommitted or undedicated. You have to love what you’re doing, and be patient and able to go with the flow. But if you can get there, it’s worth it. Every day I fall more in love with my students as I see them maturing, learning, and becoming the best version of themselves.

I shop mainly at Walmart (due to proximity) for my food, and I take the bus to work as I can’t afford to buy a car just yet.

For the Gringo Gazette (and now other side jobs (including writing) for the uncommitted or undedicated. You have to love what you’re doing, and be patient and able to go with the flow. But if you can get there, it’s worth it. Every day I fall more in love with my students as I see them maturing, learning, and becoming the best version of themselves. You have to love what you’re doing, and be patient and able to go with the flow. But if you can get there, it’s worth it. Every day I fall more in love with my students as I see them maturing, learning, and becoming the best version of themselves.

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**ByName Kotter**

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**Low Pay, Big Rewards**

What it’s like being a teacher in Los Cabos

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**By Name Kotter**

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Ask a Mexican

This week we asked: Now that Uber is in La Paz, there’s speculation that the ride sharing app will make its way to Cabo. What do you think about this? Would you use it? Do you think it’s fair to the taxi drivers?

Leonel Martinez, 31, barmen
Uber is a necessity now. Local transport is both inefficient and insufficient. The fairest thing would be to decrease rates and have better cars, because the transportation available now is obsolete. Buses are old except for the purple ones. Transportation drivers are part of the problem but are also the solution. If they don’t want Uber here then they should step up their game, both buses and taxis.

Victor Torres, 25, runner
It’s convenient for Uber to come to Cabo, because taxis here have very high rates and not all taxis are accessible. Sometimes they can’t stop anywhere, only where their areas are or they get fined. Uber is more convenient because it comes to exactly where you want and leaves you at your front door. I do think it’s fair because from the marina the taxi charge about $10 USD, from Abolengo, $8, and from Squid Roe, $5. Why should I have to walk around to get a different price within a few blocks? I think Uber fares would be in a price range between all of them.

Carlos Morales, 38, delivery driver
I wouldn’t use it because once you get in, you can’t change routes until you get to the destination. If taxi drivers don’t want Uber to come, then they should lower their rates.

Maria Mena, 36, cook
I think on one hand, it’s good because we lack transportation variety. On the other hand, drivers will lose clients. Big taxis don’t take us workers to dangerous neighborhoods, so it’s quite difficult to work downtown and live uptown. The good taxi drivers can focus on tourists and Uber can be for locals.

Josue Martinez, 63, retired
Uber would be a great alternative but, sadly, taxi drivers won’t allow it. They’re a mafia that is deeply associated with the government and there’s no way they will let anything interfere with their earnings. If there was a case though, where Uber was let in here, it would be great for the locals since it would be cheaper and they could use their earnings for something else.

Luis Mendoza, 23, coach
I don’t think it’s fair at all. People say taxis are too expensive, but they are big vehicles that spend a lot of money on gas and gas is very expensive in Cabo. Also, I think that there are way too many things happening in Cabo, which is turning it into just another city just like the mainland cities. We need to take a step back and keep our land as intact as we can as far as traditions go, even taxi’s.

Cabo Marina Gets A Facelift

These guys are part of a 25-man team working on the Cabo marina renovations. They were out pouring concrete in front of Aqua Salada and Sancho’s recently, as they worked their way down from in front of Solomon’s. They work under the hot sun from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for a whopping $25 USD a day. All of the workers have been living in Cabo for a while, coming from the mainland back when the construction boom was first beginning.

The concrete they were pouring, alternating sections of gray and orange, is replacing the old cobblestone, which was porous, held dirt, and was unattractive.

API, the holding company that manages the Cabo marina, says the new floor project is going to cost half a million bucks. They also said the expected completion date was December 15, but, surprise, surprise, they’re behind schedule. Part of the problem was this section right here; workers had to tear up and then re-pour some of the concrete when they realized they had forgotten to install some electrical cables under it. Oops.

It can’t be finished too soon for the merchants, as first it was several long days of rat-a-tat-tat as the old stuff was torn up, then days of being cut off as the new cement was drying.
Every year Who's Who in Luxury Real Estate™ honors members for their success and dedication with the Luxury Real Estate Awards. These prestigious awards recognize companies and individuals for excellence in their category and overall dedication to the industry. Engel & Völkers Snell Real Estate were nominated in five impressive categories, and last week took home the award for Best Lifestyle/Branding Video.

The winning video only further supports the destination of Los Cabos as a top worldwide enchanting location to vacation, invest, and retire. Marketing and promoting some of the most exquisite real estate listings in the world, Engel and Völkers Snell Real Estate are dedicated to marketing excellence and continue to raise the bar each and every time for top leadership and service in the luxury real estate industry.

ABOUT WHO’S WHO IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

In 2015, Engel & Völkers Snell Real Estate was exclusively selected to join Who’s Who in Luxury Real Estate™ as a Member on the Board of Regents based on their leadership and long-standing success in the Baja California Sur, Mexico market. A worldwide collection of top brokers representing the finest luxury properties across the globe, Who’s Who in Luxury Real Estate has been leading the real estate industry since 1986.