

NUMBER EIGHT

WINTER 2013

THE NUMBER ONE MAGAZINE IN CABO

FREE

Land's End

CABO SAN LUCAS-SAN JOSE

TODOS SANTOS-CABO PULMO



Looking For Paradise

By Alan Hermosillo

IN THIS ISSUE

**SURFING THE SUPERMOON
IN SAN JOSE**

Serge Dedina

TLAXCALA THE TINY

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From The Editor



The season that is about to arrive makes me think about this wonderful place we live at.



Cabo is great all year round, even with the extremely warm summers and those three hour long storms that seem to flood every single street in town. But as soon as October arrives, it's like if somebody turned off a very annoying noise that was filling the ambience; suddenly everything gets quieter and nicer. You drive with your car windows down and you start thinking about all those things that make you feel younger, happier, and free.



I remember very well my first October in Cabo, at that time I didn't have a car so used to walk a lot, to the office, to home back from work, to my friend's homes. I actually preferred to walk. I worked very close to the San Jose airport and sometimes when I finished work earlier on Fridays I simply started walking towards downtown San Jose, many times I did get amazed for those simple things that I would see on my way there.



I remember vividly one of those occasions; it was an afternoon when I was walking from La Jolla to what is nowadays 'la Mega'. There weren't many cars in the highway at that time of the day and I was looking up to the homes at the hill. A 'morning glory' plant caught my eye, it covered the wall of a nearby garden with its yellow flowers, then a car passed by and with the noise and the wind, all the little flowers escaped flying as small butterflies just to end up an instant later at another garden right next to them.



For me, that's the hidden treasure of Los Cabos, invisible for many but always there for the ones who have learned to watch carefully.

Roger L.

WELCOME TO

THE NUMBER ONE MAGAZINE IN CABO *Land's End*



CABO SAN LUCAS-SAN JOSE DEL CABO-TODOS SANTOS-CABO PULMO

Land's End is a free magazine dedicated to all the people who loves to read timeless stories about Baja and Mexico.

This is not a real estate or classified publishing and will never be.

Consider yourself part of this adventure... Enjoy!

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The Cover

What a cover we have for this number!

Right in the middle of nowhere a beautiful redhead woman hesitates about her path. She's heading to the end of the Baja, to the spot where the Land Ends and the ocean begins, but sometimes, when you are in the middle of the desert, you must think it twice before you decide if you or your vehicle are capable of making it. Either is fuel or will; do you have enough? Do you have what it takes to make it to the end?

Like every single time since we started this publication. Our artist leaves us with a mind full of stories with just one shot.

Roger L.

Land's End

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LETTERS

Hello from Mexico city friends,
and congratulations for the
magazine!!

Fabiola Flores
Mexico City

Hi Fabiola, we were in Mexico
City very recently, It's really
beautiful, we are working on an
article to promote one or two
places, there are so many.
Please keep in touch!

ED.

That place is so beautiful I will
love to go there and spent some
time with my family greetings to
the best magazine of Cabo.

Michelle Martinez

You are right Michelle, it's a
beautiful place, If you have
some pictures of other places of
la Baja that you would like to
share, send them to us. We will
be glad to publish them.

E.D.

looking forward to seeing the
next issue of Land's End!!

Debra Kelly.

Hello Debra, We how you are
very well and we look forward
to your next collaboration in
the magazine!!

E.D.

Hello, I'm from Yucatan Mexico
and I did pick up your magazine a
few days ago, It's great!! I hope I
can still be in contact with your
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m And please do!! We love to
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Debbie Pratt.

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published in the magazine, I am a
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keeping a record on the beautiful
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Michael Steiner

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By Serge Dedina
serge@wildcoast.net

Let's dawn patrol tomorrow morning," I told my son Daniel, 15, as we watched sets pound Zippers and The Rock as the sun set behind us and the super moon rose over the ocean.

We were in San Jose del Cabo to attend a wedding during the same weekend as the Los Cabos Open of Surf. The pro contest that drew some of the world's finest surfers from around the globe meant lineups throughout southern Baja were full of talented surfers.

"Since surfers party hard in Cabo, most aren't awake at the crack of dawn."

Since surfers party hard in Cabo, most aren't awake at the crack of dawn. So dawn patrolling was our only way to escape the aggressive crowds.

The next day Daniel and I slipped into the ocean at 5:30 in the morning. We could see sets hitting the reefs. With the supermoon illuminating the lineup, I spotted many rocks sticking out of the water I wish I hadn't been able to see.

Surfing the SUPERMOON In San Jose

Unfortunately we didn't realize that the super high tide the night before was followed by a very low tide the following morning. As we navigated the boils and rocks in the lineup, our dawn patrol was looking more and more like a bad idea.

After we reached the outside Daniel quickly caught a head-high wave. He kicked out at the last minute to avoid an inside exposed rock.

"It's pretty sketchy out here," said Daniel, who wasn't happy about being woken up so early.

"But think of all the street cred you'll have by being able to tell everyone about your low-tide nighttime session at the Rock in overhead waves," I replied.

"As we paddled south the sun began to emerge in the eastern sky along with dreaded southeasterly winds."

Daniel wasn't convinced.

After we both caught a few set waves he said, "It is way too shallow out here. Let's paddle down to Zippers."

Zippers, once a Trestles like wave that is still the epicenter of the Cabo surf scene, has been vastly reduced in scope due to the loss of sand from its once large beach.

Adjacent development projects with their intrusive seawalls and what many surfers believe is the loss of sand from the San Jose Estuary due to the presence of a marina there, has turned what was the Queen of the Cabo Coast into a hit or miss wave at best.



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As we paddled south the sun began to emerge in the eastern sky along with dreaded southeasterly winds. After catching a few bumpy rights and saying hello to shark researcher and La Jolla surfer David “Dovi” Kacev and his friends (also there for the wedding), we paddled in.

Daniel returned to our condo and promptly fell asleep.

Later that morning the wind died and The Rock fired. And pretty much everyone stayed away due to wind and the fact that they had apparently partied until dawn.

“Daniel returned to our condo and promptly fell asleep.”

So Daniel and I paddled out and caught tons of waves with almost no crowd. We finally scored in San Jose.

Up until the wedding, we had spent a few days out on the East Cape, sampling a variety of no-name spots that are rarely surfed but offered up clean, fun waves.

We were often joined on the beach by the East Cape burros who silently observe the surfers and take siestas under the palm palapas that line the beaches.

At one spot we spent the afternoon sharing waves with Garrett Parkes and Matt Banting, two Australian pros in town for the Cabo Open.



“We’ve never even surfed out here on the East Cape before,” said Garrett.

Daniel and I shared rippable 2-4’ rights with traveling Aussie pros who gave Daniel a clinic in modern aerial and power surfing. What more could a grom ask for?

Daniel was elated.

“Those guys really know how to ride these waves,” he said.

Indeed they did. -SD

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A Land's End Special Article

By Rebecca McCallie
casasuenos2000@yahoo.com

I am what they call a 'local' being lucky enough to live in Mexico, in Cabo San Lucas for the last twenty one years. Ever since September 11, 2001, I have struggled with the indignities of going through security at airports any time I fly. I have gotten used to removing my coat, sweater, shoes, my make up (in its darling Ziploc bag), and my lap top.

I am a three bin person, but I have seen five binners. I hate being in line behind them. I am always ready to "assume the position" so that I can be "wanded". Gee, what fun travel has become. Add to the security issues the recent airline restrictions on luggage and it almost is becoming a state where one should travel naked...boy that would fix them...as my mother always told me, "be careful what you wish for."

Of course having to clear customs and security every time you leave and go visit your family or go on a vacation is fun in triplicate. The suspicion level is so high between countries that it feels like I might be detained or arrested at any moment by either country for bringing something across the border I shouldn't, like a cookie. I don't even wrap my families presents anymore.

I live in fear of answering a question incorrectly. Every time my husband Bill and I go through customs together to enter the United States I have to work with him while we're in line to help him memorize our U.S. address and zip code. Since we live in Mexico most of the year and use my daughter Jessica's address in Vancouver, Washington as our U.S. mailing address, and I pay all our bills on line, he never has a clue what our address is and definitely doesn't know the zip code.

With a bead of sweat on his forehead, mumbling numbers over and over under his breath he shuffles forward when it is his turn..."98682.. no..98683...9868398683..." and then of course they don't ask "that" question, but you can tell that every little piece of casual conversation has a purpose

I flew straight from work one time in my work clothes and going through customs in Los Angeles the custom's agent said "you're not dressed like you just came back from a vacation in Cabo", and without thinking I said "no, I just came from work". Immediately the custom's agent said "you work in MEXICO?" I mumbled something about giving seminars at The Westin and he let me pass.

I always think of the clever thing to say afterwards like "I'm a sex therapist who has just returned from a mission helping sunburned tourist women through their vacation sex issues with their drunk fat husbands" or something to that effect. I have working papers, I am in Mexico legally, may do anything I want, and can travel back and forth freely, but there is a subliminal caution flag in my head that tells me to keep my business to myself and not invite questions about what I do or where I do it to a custom's agent.

You never know what they may think of to detain someone if they're in a bad mood and I just want to collect my luggage and make my connecting flight.

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Before “9/11” I smuggled lots of things in and out of Mexico. Once when we lived in Hawaii and I had flown to Cabo to go to court on our house title, again, (see chapter entitled “never buy property in Mexico”) Bill asked me to bring him back his collection of Cuban cigars which he had stored in our closet.

I knew this was illegal but Cuban cigars have become one of those things that cigar smokers tell each other that it doesn’t really count, it’s a stupid embargo that should have been lifted years ago, and I personally think the forbidden element has added vastly to the appeal of Cuban cigars. So with very little trepidation I began to ponder how I would get through customs with about 50 Cuban cigars. My friend and neighbor Lynne had made me a long cloth bag to keep my plastic grocery bags in for reuse and my little eye lighted on it hanging in my laundry room as I was scanning around my kitchen for smuggling vessels.

I took each cigar and put it in a small Ziploc bag with a damp cotton ball, lined them all up in a long row inside the plastic bag saver tube and tied the whole thing around my waist like some kind of fallen and non bullet filled bandelero. I put on a big over shirt and sailed through customs. I didn’t even flinch and felt like a latter day Mata Hari smuggling secrets out of Germany. My husband was amazed and thrilled that I had had the nerve to do it, and I was happy to have my plastic bag saver thing to put to use in our house in Hawaii. I wanted to write to “Dear Heloise” to share this new found double use for my storage bag, but I didn’t.

Before there were nice big grocery stores in Cabo like Costco, Home Depot, and Walmart (I don’t care how many tourists think these stores have “ruined” the appeal of Cabo, we locals adore having stores) we would put an ice chest in the back of the ‘ole Suburban and drive two hours north to La Paz for groceries. We could get “real” produce in La Paz, not the wizened three carrots, one dead tomato, and wilted lettuce of our little “tiendas” in Cabo.

We could get American butter, sour cream, and milk, and if we were very lucky we could find American flour and maybe once a year chocolate chips.

Every few months we would fly to San Diego for shopping and supplies and it was like going to Toys R Us to walk through a big, bright, shiny American grocery store. Every time we went I would lose track of my husband and find him in a trance staring at all the pretty wrapped meat at the hundred foot long meat counter or staring raptly at all the boxes and containers in the medicine aisle

“You can buy ten different kinds of Aspirin here!” he would tell me in amazement. I would have to take him by the arm and lead him to the checkout counter where the check out person would always ask me “what ARE you having for dinner?” as she would scan my eclectic array of food items. I would just smile and nod. Again, it would have taken way too much energy to explain that we lived in a small little town at the tip of the Baja peninsula and that we couldn’t get any ingredients for meals other than Mexican beans, tortillas, and rice, and that it had been six months since I had been able to buy wild rice, wine, American flour, chocolate chips, diet coke, Coors Light, Cous Cous, lasagna noodles, mint jelly, spices of any kind, baking chocolate, and lemons. I think everything I brought back into Mexico was legal except for the lemons.

No one in any country lets you bring produce in and out I’ve found. There is one check point when driving the Baja you cross from South to North or vice versa where the agents confiscate all your fruit. The whole area is always strewn with orange peels and apple cores and banana skins and the check point agents are always sprawled on the pavement or slumped against the wall looking slightly green from eating too much fruit.

My first smuggling thus began in bringing lemons back to Cabo. We had all the limes we could eat in Cabo, but sadly not a single lemon and sometimes you just wanted lemon, not lime. I dreamt about lemons and looked sadly at my recipes for lemon meringue pie and just knew it wouldn’t be the same with limes. I would put all my precious supplies including the lemons in my suitcase and cover everything with underwear. I had learned early on if you don’t want Mexican customs to look through your suitcase put women’s underwear on top, even better, feminine hygiene products, and they’ll never touch them. It was some kind of a cultural taboo and disrespectful. We also learned to put anything you wanted to keep private in a back pack, brief case, or purse, it was also rude to look in those. It was funny because those items were always the first place U.S. customs would look.

Coming into Mexico we learned if you wanted something to be searched put it in a bin or a box, they are especially suspicious of cardboard boxes and always make you stand back so they can go through this highly dangerous container in which you have of course put guns, blocks of money, drugs (who brings drugs into Mexico?), and a \$10,000 computer system so that they can charge you duty.



I almost feel badly for them after all the hoopla, they always look so disappointed when your box turns out just to have ordinary household items in it. Last time I brought in a Tupperware bin full of bits from our Hawaii storage and they had a dog sniff the bin, we all had to "step away from the bin" and with great ceremony they peeled the tape of the bin and looked inside. I would have given anything to have had a rubber snake pop out of a can or something else entertaining greet them, but all they got for their efforts were my husband's old hiking boots dyed forever with red dirt from Kauai, some old pictures, newspaper clippings I had saved, an old tin bucket I used to keep outside on the patio for cigarette butts, and a dog eared copy of the Hawaii State real estate manual that I saved in case we ever want to go through the brain damage again of becoming licensed real estate agents in the State of Hawaii. I was disappointed myself in the pathetic contents of my Tupperware bin and wondered what I had been thinking to pay extra luggage charges and go through grueling travel, customs, and airport security to bring back such stupid stuff.

Since "9/11" it's just no fun to smuggle anymore. Everything you bring is checked every which way in or out of any airport, and it's hard to keep up with the list of things you can or cannot travel with. And yes, I am glad that there is security and that we are doing everything we can to protect our traveling citizens from acts of terrorism, but you know what I mean, some of the thinking behind what goes and what gets confiscated is a bit oddly thought out shall we say. I was on an airplane on this last trip and watched a woman crocheting a beautiful scarf

I complimented her on her work and asked her how she got her crochet needles on the airplane. "Oh they let you travel with crochet and knitting needles now" she said, "it's no big deal". I obviously didn't get that memo and my crochet hooks were safely ensconced in my checked luggage so that the project I would have loved to have been working on for my beloved little baby grand daughter while I flew would be finished, if I'm lucky, before she turns ten years old.

When the security tightening program first happened after "9/11", I would always look in the confiscated items bin as I would shuffle slowly through the line in security and was often perplexed by the assortment of articles people had to give up. Finger nail scissors a plenty, as well as lots of finger and toe nail clippers...we all know how dangerous they are...you could be clipped to death in a matter of weeks. Don't you agree that knitting needles could do the job in seconds flat? Maybe knitter's have taken the Hippocratic Oath to "do no harm" and are above suspicion...I just pray that I am not on the same plane as the knitter who finally loses it and goes "postal". The strangest items I ever saw in the confiscated items bin were forks, lots of forks, and I have always puzzled over this. Who travels with their own fork? Is it a hygiene concern, or is it a "I hate plastic" concern? I feel that way about plastic wine glasses and have been known to travel with a real wine glass but that's weird and another story. I don't know but I've seen a lot of them in the bin so it's not just one person out there with a fork fetish.

Soon there will be body scanners installed at all the airports. At that time the remnants of my smuggling career will finally come to a halt. Until then, I will continue to put my bic lighter in my bra and my \$30 dollar bottle of hand cream that I forgot to pack in my checked luggage, in my pocket. Please don't tell the terrorists that non metal items secreted on your person don't set off the security alarms. I will continue to put my Orchid starts and Dahlia bulbs down the front of my pants and march straight through security. My husband will continue to pat himself down for loose change, pocket knife, wallet, remove his watch and belt, and do, as was humorously described to him last time he flew by the one TSA agent with a sense of humor; "The Airport Macarena." -RM

Tennis anyone?

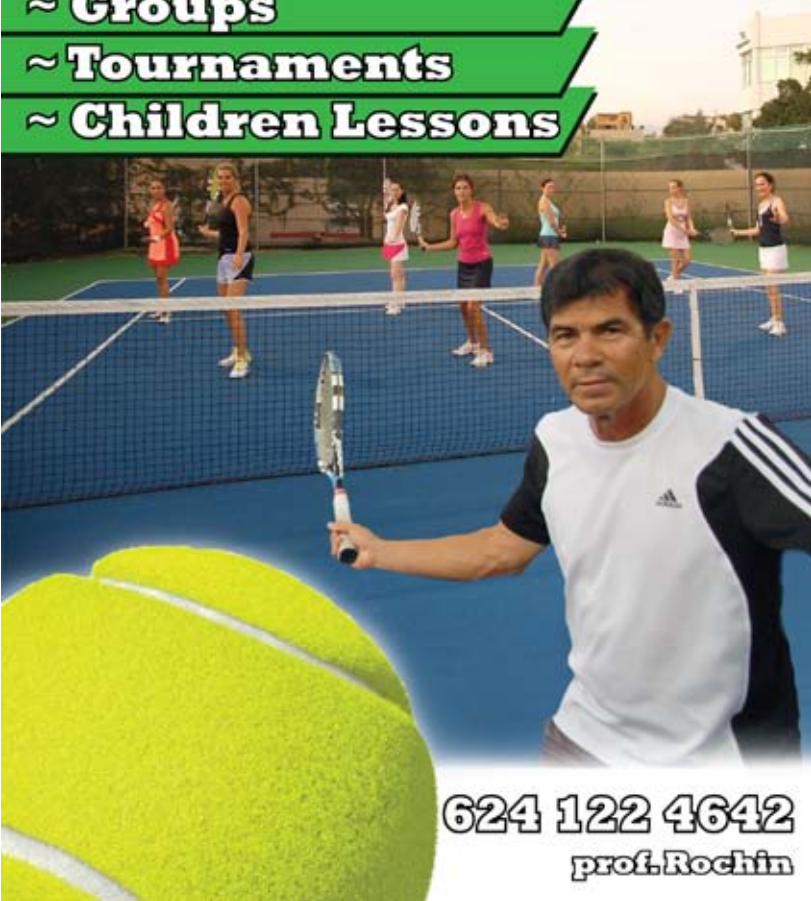
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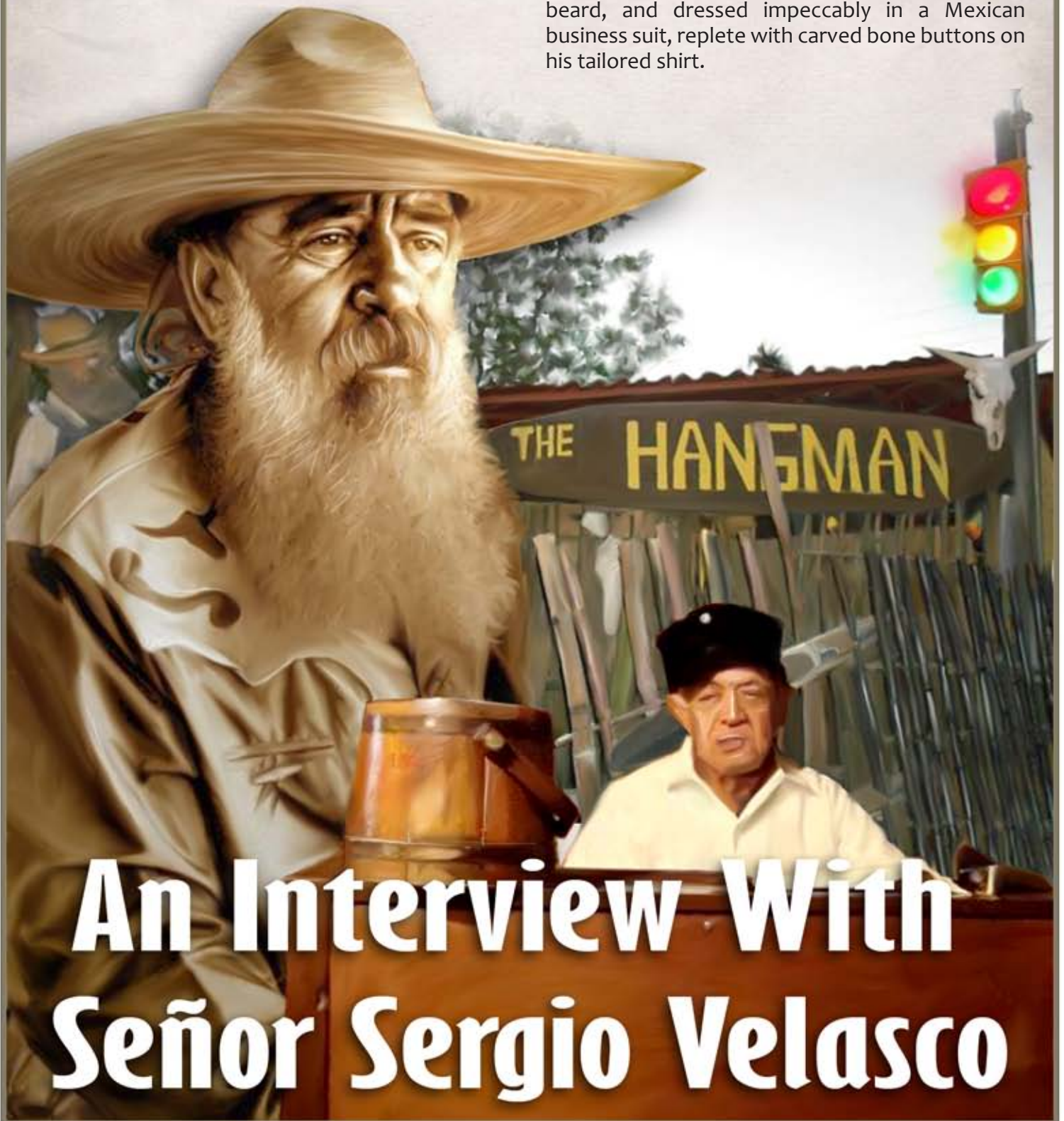


WHOYUNO

By Jane Lillico
janelillico@gmail.com

Many visitors to Los Cabos have heard of the legendary Hangman's Restaurant. But most haven't heard the story behind this historic eatery in San Jose del Cabo. I've often wondered how the restaurant got its name, and who started it.

I recently had the good fortune to meet Sergio Velasco Lagos ~ a delightful soft-spoken man in his 60's, with sparkling eyes, a long white beard, and dressed impeccably in a Mexican business suit, replete with carved bone buttons on his tailored shirt.



An Interview With Señor Sergio Velasco

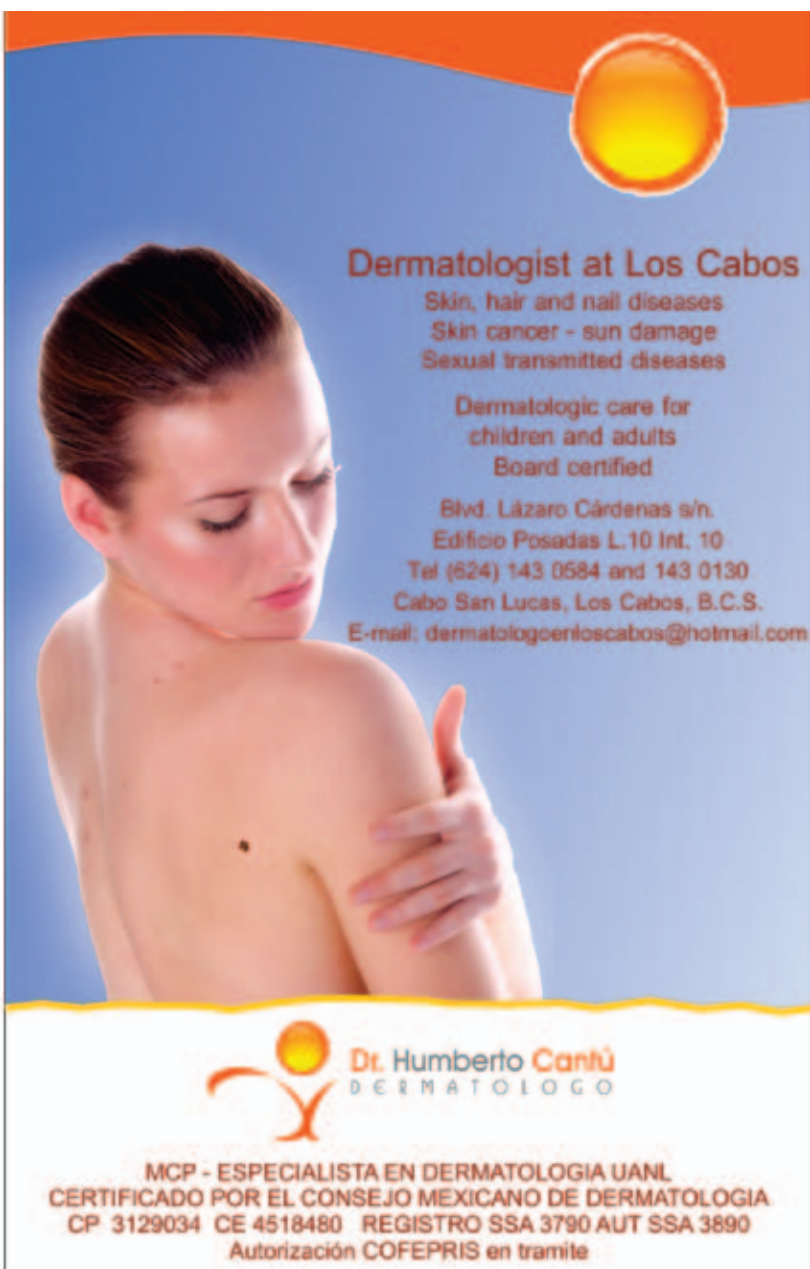
A decade or so after his grandfather had fled from Spain to Mexico as a refugee during the Spanish Civil War, Sergio was born in Tamazula, Jalisco on July 2, 1949, into a family of three children, two boys and a girl, and spent his early childhood in his birthplace. When he was seven years old, his grandfather passed away, and Sergio's family moved to Veracruz, where he remained until high school. He became interested in music while attending high school in Guadalajara, and learned to play the guitar, which would become one of his life's great passions.

At age 27 Sergio married his other great passion ~ Marta Helena, and soon after, he was invited to La Paz (the capital of Baja California Sur) in 1976 to play in a modern music group. He fell in love with La Paz, and the magic of Baja, and decided to return to Jalisco, fetch his wife, and bring her back to La Paz. The couple settled there, and Sergio continued his music, but he needed a 'patron', a job to earn money for the family he and Marta were about to create. He worked hard at the Los Arcos Hotel in the storage area, often till very late at night. On those nights after working long hours, Sergio was tired and hungry, but could find only a hotdog cart to buy food at such a late hour. This problem sparked an idea of a way to fix this problem, and Sergio talked with Marta Helena about opening a taco business.

His good friend Saul Dochmann Melgar helped him open 'Sergio's Tacos' Carreta (mobile taco cart). Sergio had solved his late night eating dilemma, along with many other very happy residents of La Paz!

"He and Marta Helena began their family with a son, Sergio in 1980."

Unfortunately his father passed away in Mexico City when Sergio was in his early twenties, which was a sad and difficult time, But Sergio says that his most challenging times have been caused by storms. Hurricane Paul in 1975, and Hurricane Lisa in 1977, caused hard times and much damage for everyone, but Sergio stayed on in La Paz, remembering those storms as the worst moments of his life. But they were times where his strength was fortified by need, and the end result taught him lessons about construction, storm preparation, and how to keep his business running despite adversities. He and Marta Helena began their family with a son, Sergio in 1980. But the following year, when Marta Helena was pregnant with their second child, her father wanted them to return to Tamazula, so he could be closer to his daughter and grandchildren.



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To keep them close by, Marta's father offered the couple a piece of land which had belonged to her godfather. This land had a colourful but dark history, because during the Mexican revolution in 1910-1918 it was used to execute people by hanging. Sergio and Marta expanded their family in Tamazula with two daughters, Eva and Susie in 1981 and '82 respectively.

But life on Baja beckoned again, and the following year he and Marta Helena decided to return to La Paz. The history of the land they had lived on for a short time had had a strong impact on Sergio, because he decided to rename his restaurant, El Meson del Ahorcado (The house of the hangman). Shortly after their return to La Paz, their fourth child Alejandra was born. Sergio and Marta Helena's family was complete!

El Meson del Ahorcado thrived in La Paz, until the late 90's when the popularity of La Paz waned, and Los Cabos began its climb to stardom. Sergio junior visited San Jose del Cabo, and returned to tell his father how things were booming at the southernmost tip of the state. So, another move for the Hangman ~ Sergio moved his restaurant to the Chamizal district of San Jose, and the rest is history!

Sergio has chosen a life where he loves his work, and his work truly is his life. His priorities have always been to keep a strong family bond, and to instill in his children, a strong work ethic. All of his children have taken part in the restaurant, and helped in whatever way they could while getting their respective educations. His mother remained a constant in his life, moving to Baja, and living close by until her death in 2011.

He prides himself on the loyalty of his many friends and customers, and considers this one of his greatest achievements. He has experienced a multitude of happy moments in his 65 years, due to his positive attitude and sheer determination to be happy. All in all, Sergio is a very happy man, content to work six days a week at his popular restaurant, greeting his many friends, and overseeing the operation which will eventually be taken over by Sergio junior. He cherishes his many friendships, spawned by getting to know his customers and clients. He is proud to call legendary waterman Mike Doyle, Iron Chef Mario Patelli, Cuban singer Oscar Chavez, along with Punk Rock icon Iggy Pop, as his friends, along with a long list of less famous but wonderful people.

Sergio is a lucky man.... it doesn't seem like work when you're doing what you love! He only stays away from the restaurant on Mondays, and on those days likes to explore Baja's East Cape up to Los Barriles, where he hunts down antiques and ancient tools, gadgets, sewing machines, cameras, etc. No guns or other weapons! He loves to spend time repairing these treasures in his limited free time. When you visit Hangman's, you will see evidence of his passion for antiquities! Sergio believes that the varied climates, terrain, wonderful people, architecture and history unique to Mexico, has made it a paradise he never wants to leave. He is content to stay here, with no aspirations to travel further afield, or need of seeing the rest of the world. Sergio's world is Mexico, his family, his friends, and his delightful, history filled restaurant, El Meson del Ahorcado.

I so enjoyed meeting Sergio and talking to him about his interesting life. Thanks to Bruno Lojero, for assisting with my Español! If you haven't yet experienced Hangman's, please come out and have dinner some evening soon! -JL



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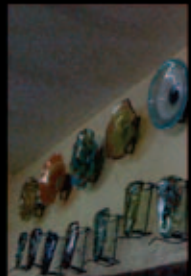


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By Rodrigo Remolina
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Among the cities of Mexico, Tlaxcala is a persistent and significant presence. So has been since long ago, at least from six centuries back, as this region of central Mexico, was an independent republic, resisting the Aztecs for a hundred years of wars, and in certain ways, also resisting the violence of the Spanish conquest via its skillful politicians and diplomats. In contraposition to its historic relevance, its territory is today the smallest state in Mexico, and its capital as well the tiniest, a strange case compared to the huge metropolitan areas that are forming in Mexico and worldwide in once peaceful towns and cities.

“But then came the Aztecs, with their amazing armies and politicians”

But we were saying first that Tlaxcala is persistent and significant in Mexican history. Its founders, people from the North who migrated South, as did the Aztecs, and who spoke the same language, Náhuatl, established four capitals – Ocotelulco, Quahuixtlán, Tizatlán and Tepeticpac, which worked as a confederation for some issues but kept some autonomy for others. Its position, in a high valley between central Mexico and the Gulf coast, brought commerce and prosperity to the city, and the vicinity of Cholula, an ancient sacred city, just 30 kilometers away, led great prestige to the region.



But then came the Aztecs, with their amazing armies and politicians, and their fondness for commerce with both coasts and their exotic products. And Tlaxcala laid in the middle. For years they tried to convince and/or dominate by the force Tlaxcala, and till the Spaniards came, they never succeeded. In fact, the rivalry of Tlaxcala and Tenochtitlan was a key point for the Spanish success, as the tiny Republic of Tlaxcala, as they called the region, provided valuable support in the form of information, supplies and soldiers for the invasion of the imperial capital, which ended victoriously for the Europeans and their allies, on August 13, 1521, after a strenuous siege.

For this reason, for many people in Mexico, Tlaxcala is a synonym of treason. In favor of Tlaxcala, deepest knowledge of history reveals clearly their reasons. Mexico as we know it today didn't exist, and its territory was a mosaic of dozens of independent "countries" we would say today. From Mexico City to Veracruz, we would have to cross five or six nations, rivals most of the time, some of them even spoke different languages. But for many of them, including Tlaxcala, the Spaniards were just another nation in the game, one that gave them the opportunity to get rid of the ones who have harassed them for so much time, the Aztecs from Tenochtitlan, today's Mexico City.

Located just 95 kilometers east of Mexico City (in a straight line), Tlaxcala is today the least populated capital of the smallest state in the country, representing just 0.2% of the country's surface, with some 90,000 inhabitants in the entire municipio, founded in the middle of the four pre-hispanic capitals under the guide of the first Franciscan friars to arrive to continental America. Today, this tiny capital remains much like it has been during the last centuries, full of history, and sharing with us, eyes of the XXI Century, a view of how Mexican cities looked like, let's say, at least, a century ago. For me, an inhabitant of a metropolitan area of 19 million people, Tlaxcala is an oasis, a place where your soul and senses are sure to recover from urban stress, a city to be walked at a slow pace.

Like many of the 16th Century cities of Mexico, Tlaxcala was traced in a high valley, one of the most scenic in Mexico, as it is surrounded by the three tallest, snow-capped volcanoes of Mexico: Citlaltépetl or Orizaba Peak (to the east), Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl (to the west), as well as the 5th tallest, the sacred Malinche or Matlacueitl ("She in the green skirt" to the south), and far away the 8th, the Cofre de Perote (to the northeast). The city was organized in a grid of streets at 160 meters from one another (200 "varas castellanas"), which start curving just some blocks from the central plaza, as they start climbing low hills to the south and east, and following the contours of the Zahuapan river to the north and west.





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To start visiting the city, a good option is the central square, one of the prettiest of Mexico, shaded by ancient ash trees, full of squirrels, and surrounded by ancient buildings, among which is one of the few surviving civil government buildings from the 16th Century. Its façade is full with imaginative arches decorated with huge stone flowers that could have escaped from a prehispanic building or, better said, which surely were carved by a stone mason born before the Spanish came. Don't miss a visit to the interior, as the walls are covered by splendid murals by master Desiderio Hernandez Xochitiotzin, showing scenes from the history of Tlaxcala, before and after the Spanish conquest. Around the central square are several fine restaurants and shops, sheltered in arched passages or portales, which are worth a visit. In some of them you will find some fine dishes of local culinary tradition, such as huauzontles, small branches of amaranth plant mixed with cheese, covered in egg whites and fried in a dark chili sauce, accompanied with pulque, the ancient prehispanic alcoholic beverage, fermented from agave juices, and which brought prosperity to Tlaxcala as late as the 1950's, when thousands of hectares were still dedicated to planting agaves and dozens of haciendas processed its juices.

“Around the plaza other beauties await, all at walking distance, as Tlaxcala is an ideal city for walking. The church of San José, the city's cathedral, stands to the northwest, with its exuberant white baroque façade...”

Around the plaza other beauties await, all at walking distance, as Tlaxcala is an ideal city for walking. The church of San José, the city's cathedral, stands to the northwest, with its exuberant white baroque façade, contrasting with the red bricks of its walls and blue tiles of its many cupolas. To the northwest, the Xicoténcatl Theater, built in glamorous “fin de siècle” architecture, is still a cultural highlight in town. A recent addition to the scene, the MAT (Tlaxcala Art Museum) presents itinerant modern painting and sculpture exhibitions, contrasting with the historical atmosphere of the city's center.

Walking diagonally from the plaza, but now to the southeast, you will find another square, smaller than the main, surrounded by fine arts and crafts stores, pulque and traditional food restaurants, and the new Museo de la Memoria, in which, if you read Spanish, could learn in a detailed way, the history of the city and its sons, which helped the conquistadores in the establishment of the early cities in North of Mexico and Southern United States, pacifying local Indian populations and mixing with them (may you, good reader, have Tlaxcaltec ancestors?). Interesting in this museum, apart from its pieces and information, is its architecture, which adds contemporary elements, such as the main door and the windows and balconies, which reinterpret the classical elements of the city with contemporary techniques and materials.

From an angle of this second plaza I have described, starts a monumental ramp, paved in cobblestones and cantera, and lined with huge centennial ash trees 500 years old. It takes us to a monumental triple arch, flanked by a robust bell tower, and finally opens to a huge esplanade, the atrium of one of the first Franciscan monasteries in Mexico, dedicated to the Ascension of Our Lady. The buildings we now see are not the ones built just after the Conquest, which were modest and built fast to start with the conversion of the Indians to Christian subjects of King Charles V. Even though, the monastical buildings of Tlaxcala are pretty old, -





- and of particular significance among the – fortunately- many buildings still preserved from that century.

The huge atrium or frontal platform, which can congregate maybe 10 or 12 thousand people, offers beautiful sights of the city's center and surroundings, especially interesting is the Plaza de Toros, the Bull Ring, ironically situated just at the feet of the church, some ten meters below. Inside the church, one of the oldest colonial wood ceilings in Mexico is still in place, with huge decorated beams crossing the span of the nave, shining here and there with octagonal golden stars of Moorish inspiration. Contrasting with this richness, the rest of the church's architecture is plain and serene, typical of the first colonial buildings in Mexico, but as the importance of the city was maintained for at least most of the 16th Century, when nearby Puebla was just beginning to grow, a lot of art in the form of paintings, sculptures and altar pieces was added during the following centuries, thus presenting a large array of styles and contrasting forms in a single building.

The adjacent monastery houses the Regional Museum of Tlaxcala, and offers a large selection of art from the early civilizations that occupied the area, to the history of the city and the monastery itself.


For some months it will be closed due to restoration of the monument. If all this was not enough, take one of the double stairs facing the Bull Ring (west side of the atrium), next to two of the processional chapels of the atrium, and you will find one of the most original Capillas in Mexico, with an hexagonal plan and vault, and open by three sides through beautiful and expressive arches, to another ramp, now descendent, that will take you back to the city's everyday life. If you still have time, you may return to the atrium, walk to its southern gate and climb the huge and scenic stairs to your left to the Capilla del Vecino, or Neighbor's Chapel, which offers a splendid view and beautiful baroque details inside.

At this point, you may be thinking that much writing has been done about “The Tiny”, which may be materializing in your mind not as tiny. To add to this impression, I have reserved the pearl of the city for closing this note, which by no means covers all the attractions of this small but beautiful and historic town. One kilometer to the northeast of the main square, still at a walking distance, over a low hill, lies the exuberant Santuario de Ocotlan, house of a famous and miraculous apparition of Virgin Mary. The building, from the 18th Century, is covered entirely by white plaster baroque estipite columns, which under the bright sunlight of Tlaxcala, produce a magnificent lights and shadows puzzle. The façade is flanked by two elegant and slim towers, with a red brick base and the same elegant and vibrant white columns rising, and sometimes mixing, with the fluffy clouds of the city’s sky.

The interior offers a similarly rich look, but this time in a golden dress. Huge paintings line up the nave, and as you get closer to the altar, gold starts covering everything, until there is no free space in walls and vaults without its richness, both material and visual. The warm light of this area surrounds –and sometimes overwhelms- the visitor, but as you get accustomed to it, you start recognizing the structure and geometrical richness of this wonderful piece of baroque art of the Americas. If lucky enough, you may encounter the “backstage” Virgin’s Chamber or Camarín, located just behind the altar, in an octagonal space, which adding some blue, yellow and other colorful accents to the golden curls, produces a magnificent and joyful effect in the spirit. In the center of the space, a huge, one piece, wooden table, supported by eight monkeys (apparently a lucky charm of pre-hispanic origin) is designed for the Virgin to change clothes in occasion of a fiesta or a special religious commemoration.

Outside the tiny city, the richness of Tlaxcala, the tiny state, expands in many forms: archaeology, with the magnificent paintings of Cacaxtla, amazingly painted 12 centuries ago in Maya style, beautiful traditional towns such as Huamantla, with the typical Pamplona-style bull run in mid august, magnificent churches such as Panotla and Tepeyanco, and natural wonders such as the firefly forests of Nanacamilpa and Tlaxco, to the north. But for now, we are running out of ink and space, as Tlaxcala, the tiny, filled it all with its beauty and history, good luck it is not bigger! -RR






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It was during the 50's, that this kind of cinema was popular in Los Cabos area. The reunion spot was a patio property of Mr. Federico 'Coco' Sandoval, right on Cabo San Lucas Avenue. There was a billiard room and a cantina, a small ballroom and at the very end, the patio. The access was on a narrow alley, next to what is now the restaurant 'Mi Casa'.

In this patio they would install 'the screen' which was basically a white piece of cloth. The guys in charge of setting everything up were Celestina 'Cele' Lara, who was also the cashier, and Chintololo, who would operate the projectors.

Cele used to stay at my grandmother's house, and Chintololo with Mrs. Carmen Ojeda de Ruiz. They both visited town from time to time to project some films, I remember the first one I ever saw as a child was 'Saint Genevieve of Brabant'; isn't it funny you never forget things like these?

With the time, the cinema relocated to what is now the 'Miguel Lomelí Theater'.

It was around that time that Mr. Leoncio Carrasco arrived in town, he owned a few old projectors and after an arrangement with the principal of the school 'Naciones Unidas', the first official movie theater was born.

The operation was pretty much the same as in the old mobile cinema, setting up the screen, the projectors, etc; but what about the chairs? Well, everyone had to bring their own; it was a parade of families with flashlights in hand, walking the dark streets carrying their chairs.

Mr. Carrasco decided to name it 'Cine Mary' and hired some young men from town as his employees, they were Gregorio Martinez Guillins, Jesús Rosas Martinez, Ernesto Peralta Marrón and Vicente Gonzalez, and all of them are grandparents nowadays by the way.

Back then you could tell they were showing a new film that night because they played some music really LOUD, most of times it was the 'Vals del Recuerdo'. They started with the music around 7 P.M, then they announced the movie and continued with more music which could be heard all around the neighborhoods of La Planta, La Cruz, El Tecolote, El Médano and of course, Pueblo Nuevo.

They always gave a reasonable time, about an hour and a half, to get ready; when you heard 'La Marcha de Zacatecas', it was the time to hurry up because that was the last piece of music before the movie started.

The school eventually showed some mercy on the people (who always got there exhausted carrying their chairs) by finally allowing them to use the school ones. Mr. Carrasco later extended the business to the towns of Miraflores and Santiago, taking his employees with him of course.

When Mr. Carrasco moved out of town, it was Ernesto Peralta, one of his former employees who continued with the business. He installed his own cinema, which was pretty much the same as the old one, but at least this one had its own chairs and solid walls of brick and concrete. Turns out that it wasn't such a good business, so he decided turn the place into small commercial locals for rent, which are still located on Cabo San Lucas Avenue and 5 de Mayo.

The cinema story continued when a new General Manager for the Hotel Palmilla arrived, Mr. Cándido García, a business man and a visionary. He bought a vacant lot on Matamoros Street and built a place with local materials, very ad hoc and named it 'Cine Safari', of course, with the first rain of the season also came the end of the Cine Safari before it's opening, that place turned into a huge pile of debris and broken illusions overnight.

A little time passed by, and then Mr. Cándido associated with Mr. Ricardo Araoz 'El Richard', and after an investment of 35'000 pesos, the Cine Safari was reborn. After that, Ricardo was known as 'Richard el del cine' (Richard from the cinema), a nickname he couldn't escape ever again.

Once, I had the chance to interview Mr. Ricardo Araoz, he was very happy when he remembered those times and told me:

The Cine Safari helped me to learn a lot about Cabo San Lucas and its people. Back in those days, Mr. Cándido García, manager of the Hotel Palmilla, had built a cinema, but during a little storm in the summer of 1972, the whole place collapsed before they could even open for the first time.

It was a very simple construction, one of the walls (for the screen) was built on solid brick, but the others were made of simple reed (local construction material), there was a small room used for storage, restrooms in the lower part, and on the second level there was a space for the electric transformer needed for the projector.

On the outside there was a small palapa that worked as a box office, there was also a space for the cafeteria that also worked as a social club because whenever we were showing a new film, the customers would stay longer chatting with the employees Pepis, Paula and Vichina, who happened to know everything about everyone in town. These ladies were great people which helped to turn this humble building into a real cinema, the Cine Safari.

The beginning.

Cándido would run back and forth, daily, from the Hotel Palmilla to the Hotel Camino Real (now Hotel Hacienda). Back then Cabo San Lucas was a small town that started at the Hotel Hacienda, so small that you could see it all from there. I asked him what would happen now with that movie theater, and he answered 'We'll build it back from scratch'. I had been told

before that here things sometimes are like this; but you must start again.

A few days later I was indeed surprised when he called me with a proposal to become partners in the movie theater.

I had recently arrived from Mexico City, and I didn't make a lot of money on my job as an administrator for the Aquatic Center of the Hotel Camino Real. I called my father and asked him for \$35'000 pesos, which was the cost that the architect Hugo Espinosa had calculated for rebuilding the place, of course this time it would be with solid materials. My father came to see me, he met Cándido García and his wife Linda Arjona, and he liked the proposal, I think maybe it was because he was worried about his son, who had left home to pursue his own life, and on the other side, in this beautiful place there was no radio or TV, so he

thought a movie theater would be a good investment.

He gave me the loan, and the new Cine Safari was reborn. Can you imagine what came next? It didn't even have a concrete floor, it was actually an earthen dusty floor. It didn't have a roof either, so we could show movies only at night. I used to work during the day at the Hotel Camino Real, in the afternoon I recorded a tape with the publicity and my good friend 'Vichina' Zumaya Sánchez would drive around town with a huge speaker installed on a car. Paula and Pepis Ceseña made the popcorn, prepared the coffee and set up the candy store; they also helped Pedro Martinez (who was also the bartender at the Hotel Mar de Cortez) and Manolo Salgado (the telegraph operator) to set up the projectors to have the show that night.



If you only knew the kind of problems we had during those shows! Mostly when the dogs would fight each other, they turned all the place into a dusty cloud and it was impossible to watch the movie, we had to stop everything and take them out (back then the population in town was tiny, everybody knew each other, and they took their dogs with them everywhere, so we couldn't refuse them the entrance, otherwise, we wouldn't have had any customers!). Every single movie night, we prayed that just for that one time the dogs would behave.

During the cold windy nights, the people would come to the movies with blankets and heavy jackets; even though the movie theater was the furthest building in town, we never had any incident, no one was ever robbed and we never had any problems with drunken people fighting, anything, and those were wonderful days!

For me, the best part was that I got to know practically all of the people in Cabo San Lucas and a lot of people from San José del Cabo. Just imagine, running the only movie theater in town, everybody knew me and accepted me as 'Richard el del cine'. The word 'chilango' wasn't used here yet, and by that time I had started working at the Fish Packing Plant, I was in charge of the payroll, and part of my job was to give the pay checks to the wives of the fishermen who were away in the ships of the company, so that helped everybody to know me by that nickname.

I was very lucky to be well received and accepted by the people, they always showed me good will and true friendship. That made me fall in love with this beautiful paradise of unique beaches and tranquility as I had never experienced before, and most important, with the people, the really nice people who knew me from the Plant and the cinema. They always treated me as if I was one of their own, in fact I never felt I had employees, for me we really good friends having fun working together at the Cine Safari.

I also had the opportunity to meet the people who directed the 'Movie Theater Union' in La Paz. They only had 3 movie theaters but they already had a Union!

“ I remember that the prices were:
Adults \$4 pesos, Children \$2 pesos.”

They made me hire a minimum of 5 employees, and those five were: Manolo and Pedro in the projectors, Pepis and Paula at the box office and my good friend Vichina at the lobby who checked the tickets they forced me to give to every patron. I remember that the prices were: Adults \$4 pesos, Children \$2 pesos.

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If only you knew how demanding were the authorities with the prices! I think the only time I ever felt unwanted here in Cabo San Lucas was whenever I had to deal with the authorities. I assume everything started because they wanted me to donate 20 cents from each ticket I sold, to the DIF (Social Security Institution in Mexico),

I told them I would be delighted to do so, but they had to come themselves to collect. I thought it wasn't fair they wouldn't allow me to charge more but they still demanded money without doing absolutely anything! Maybe it was my mistake, but back then I was just a young man with a strong sense of justice, totally inexperienced in political matters.

“For a short period of time, I could get the people from the Union in La Paz to let me borrow the films they had for Fridays and Saturdays, so I showed them Thursdays and Saturdays.”

To obtain the films, I had to go to Mazatlan to make the list of the ones I wanted to show for the next two or three months. They gave me a long list of titles, but I wouldn't know what was the plot, or the starring actors. They didn't provide me with any posters either, i.e. a film could be named 'The other revenge' but I

had no way to know what was the plot about, so I announced it as a gangsters thriller and on the opening night, it turned out to be a war film; at least people never walked out of the movie for such an insignificant reason, as I told you before, we didn't have TV, or radio, not even phones! For me that was like heaven.

For a short period of time, I could get the people from the Union in La Paz to let me borrow the films they had for Fridays and Saturdays, so I showed them Thursdays and Saturdays. That's how we managed to show in Cabo San Lucas the Mexican films that were doing really well, such as 'Tívoli', 'Las Ficheras', 'Bellas de noche', 'El Papillón' and many others that were a success on its day. That was a time where creativity and friendship made living in this paradise just a bit more entertaining.

Someone I must give thanks for everything is Captain Sebastian Romo, who in that time was the senior partner and manager of the only airline operating in the south of Baja. First of all because he never charged me anything for transporting the films, even when the little airplane was already full, he never left any of those films behind, and for those who know what is like to fly on those little planes and landing on dirt airstrips will agree with me that it was really a big deal.

However, all this effort, came to an end with the arrival of the 'gypsies' which were the dear Costich family, whom to be honest, brought better equipment than the one I had. Since they were a big family, they could cover more terrain, and given that they could install in any vacant lot closer to town, (and the fact that I was never allowed to increase the price of the tickets) I had to finish this dream, the Cine Safari.

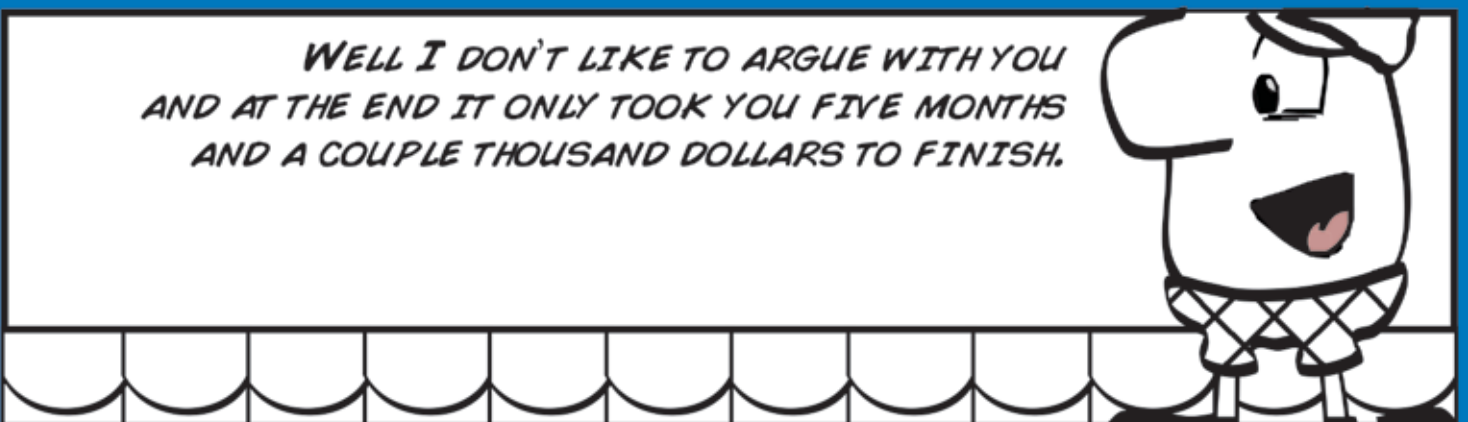
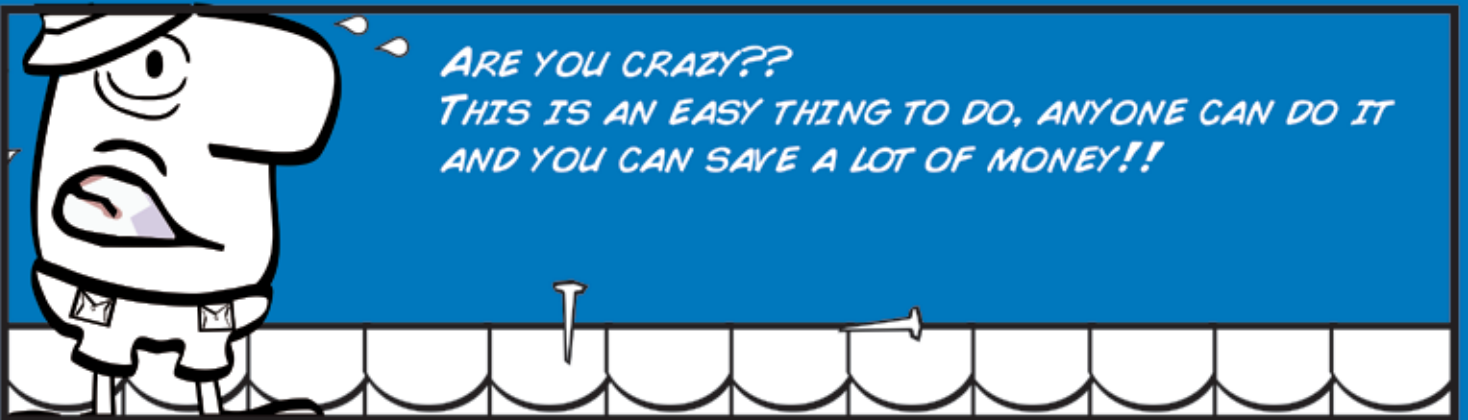
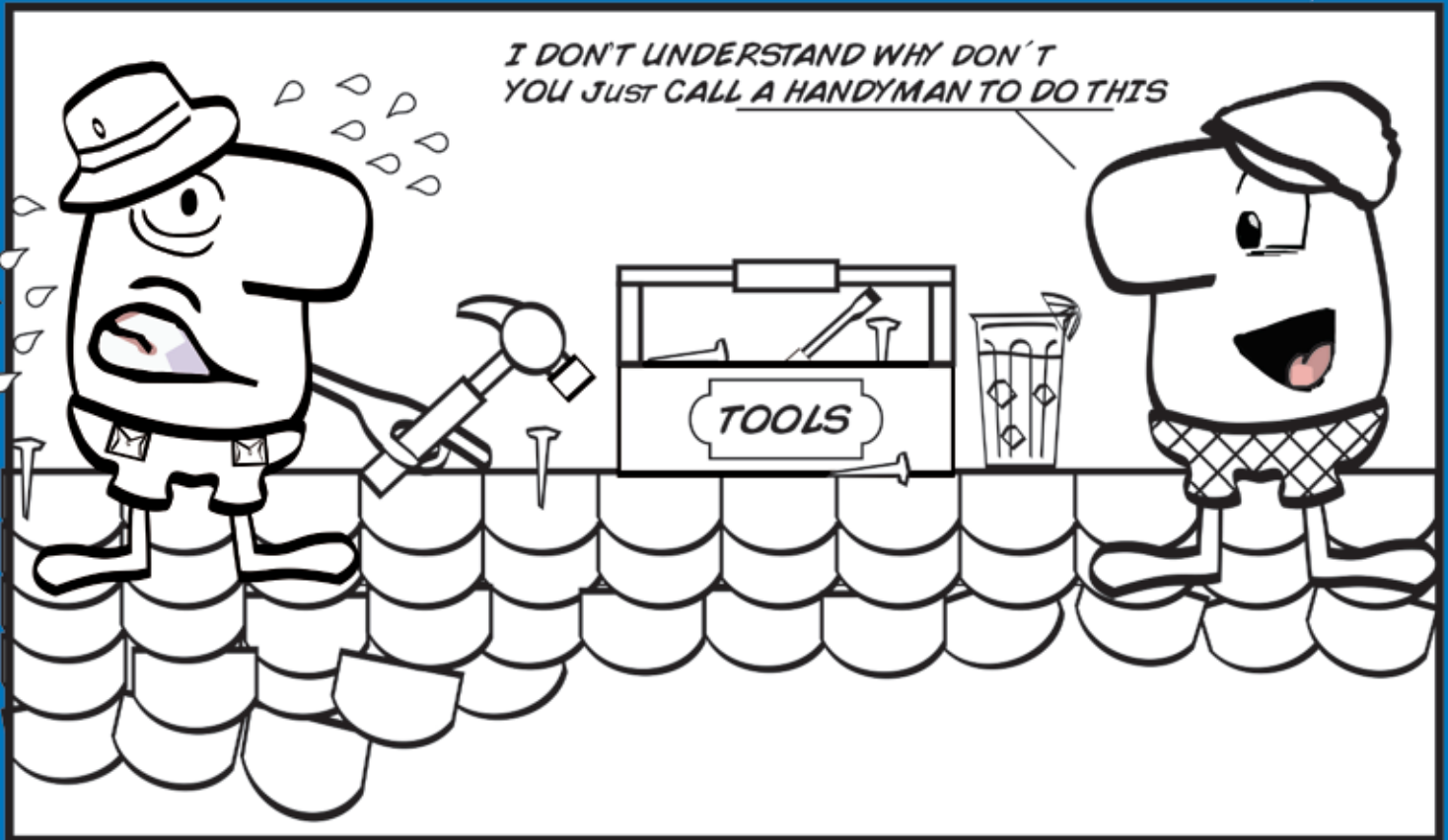
No hard feelings, thanks to that I got to know the charming people of Baja California Sur, I can only be grateful because they received me with wide open arms.

This is how this adventure ended, and the interview with Mr. Araoz, and it was this way how the 'Sala 2000' of the Costich family opened, when they finally settled down with their numerous family here in Cabo. -FW



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