If you’ve been meaning to find a little information on the region, but never quite got around to it, we hope that the following will help. Look at the map in this issue, you will note that PV (as the locals call it) is on the west coast of Mexico, in the middle of the Bay of Banderas, the largest bay in this country, that includes southern part of the state of Nayarit to the north and the northern part of Jalisco to the south. Thanks to its privileged location -sheltered by the Sierra Madre mountains- the Bay is well protected against the hurricanes spawned in the Pacific. Hurricane Kenna came close on October 25, 2002, but actually touched down in San Blas, Nayarit, some 200 miles north of PV. The town sits on the same parallel as the Hawaiian Islands, thus the similarities in the climate of the two destinations.

**AIRPORT:** 1,300 sq. kilometers

**POPULATION:** Approx. 325,000 inhabitants

**CLIMATE:** Tropical, humid, with an average of 300 sunny days per year. The temperature averages 28°C (82°F) and the rainy season extends from late June to early October.

**FAUNA:** Nearby Sierra Vallejo hosts a great variety of animal species such as iguana, guacamaya, deer, raccoon, etc.

**SANCTUARIES:** Bahia de Bandera encloses two Marine National Parks - Los Arcos and the Marieta Islands - where diving is allowed under certain circumstances but fishing of any kind is prohibited. Every year, the Bay receives the visit of the humpback whales, dolphins and manta rays in the winter. During the summer, sea turtles, a protected species, arrive to its shores to lay their eggs.

**ECONOMY:** Local economy is based mainly on tourism, construction and to a lesser degree, on agriculture, mainly tropical fruit such as mango, papaya, watermelon, pineapple, guanabana, cantaloupe and bananas.

**CURRENCY:** The Mexican Peso is the legal currency in Mexico although Canadian and American dollars are widely accepted.

**BUSES:** A system of urban buses with different routes. Current fare is $6.50 Pesos per ticket and passengers must purchase a new ticket every time they board another bus. There are no “transfers”.

**TAXIS:** There are set rates within defined zones of the town. Do not enter a taxi without agreeing on the price with the driver FIRST. If you are staying in a hotel, you may want to check the rates usually posted in the lobby. Also, if you know which restaurant you want to go, do not let the driver change your mind. Many restaurateurs pay commissions to taxi drivers and you may end up paying more than you should, in a second-rate establishment! There are 2 kinds of taxi cabs: those at the airport and the maritime port are usually vans that can only be boarded there. They have pre-fixed rates per passenger. City cabs are yellow cars that charge by the ride, not by passenger. When you ask to go downtown, many drivers let you off at the beginning of the area, near Hidalgo Park. However, your fare covers the ENTIRE central area, so why walk 10 to 15 blocks to the main plaza, the Church or the flea market? Pick up a free map, and insist on your full value from the driver! Note the number of your taxi in case of any problem, or if you forget something in the cab. Then your hotel or travel rep can help you check it out or lodge a complaint.

**TIME ZONE:** The entire State of Jalisco is on Central Time, as is the southern part of the State of Nayarit - from San Blas in the north through to the Ameca River, i.e.: San Blas, San Pancho, Sayulita, Punta Mita, La Cruz de Huanacaxtle, Bucerías, Nuevo Vallarta, etc.)

**TELEPHONE CALLS:** Always check on the cost of long distance calls from your hotel room. Some establishments charge as much as U.S. $7.00 per minute!

**CELL PHONES:** Most cellular phones from the U.S. and Canada may be programmed for local use, through Telcel and IUSAcell, the local carriers. To dial cell to cell, use the prefix 322, and most restaurants use purified water. On the other hand, most large hotels have their own purification equipment and most restaurants use purified water. If you want to be doubly sure, you can pick up purified bottled water just about anywhere.

**EXPORTING PETS:** Canadian and American tourists often fall in love with one of the many stray dogs and cats in Vallarta. Many would like to bring it back with them, but believe that the laws do not allow them to do so. Wrong. If you would like to bring a cat or a dog back home, call the local animal shelter for more info: 293-3690.

**LOCAL SIGHTSEEING:** A good beginning would be to take one of the City Tours offered by the local tour agencies. Before boarding, make sure you have a map and take note of the places you want to return to. Then venture off the beaten path. Explore a little. Go farther than the tour bus takes you. And don’t worry - this is a safe place.

**MONEY EXCHANGE:** Although you may have to wait in line for a few minutes, remember that the banks will give you a higher rate of exchange than the exchange booths (caja de cambio). Better yet, if you have a «bank card», withdraw funds from your account back home. Try to avoid exchanging money at your hotel. Traditionally, those offer the worst rates.

**WHAT TO DO:** Even if your all-inclusive hotel is everything you ever dreamed of, you should experience at least a little of all that Vallarta has to offer - it is truly a condensed version of all that is Mexican and existed before «Planned Tourist Resorts», such as Cancun, Los Cabos and Ixtapa, were developed. Millions have been spent to ensure that the original “small town” flavor is maintained downtown, in the Old Town and on the South Side.

**DRINKING WATER:** The false belief that a Mexican vacation must inevitably lead to an encounter with Moctezuma’s revenge is just that: false. For the 17th year in a row, Puerto Vallarta’s water has been awarded a certification of purity for human consumption. It is one of only two cities in Mexico that can boast of such accomplishment. True, the quality of the water tested at the purification plant varies greatly from what comes out of the tap at the other end. So do be careful. On the other hand, most large hotels have their own purification equipment and most restaurants use purified water. If you want to be doubly sure, you can pick up purified bottled water just about anywhere.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS:** Tipping is usually 10%-15% of the bill at restaurants and bars. Tip bellboys, taxis, waiters, maids, etc. depending on the service. Taking a siesta is a Mexican tradition. Some businesses and offices close from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., reopening until 7 p.m. or later. In restaurants, it is considered poor manners to present the check before it is requested, so when you’re ready to leave, ask «La cuenta, por favor» and your bill will be delivered to you.
Two years after the work began on the pier by Los Muertos beach, and an endless list of proposed completion dates, as well as different budgets, we are now told that it will be inaugurated before the end of the year.

Víctor Mijangos, General Director of Planning & Development of Destinations for the State of Jalisco’s Tourism Department, stated that an additional $20 Million Pesos will need to be added to the original $40 Million Pesos investment.

“I believe that we will close the year with this... we can already appreciate it from all around, a spectacular structure that is becoming a new attraction in Puerto Vallarta.”

In closing, Mijangos pointed out that the delays in completion of the project is due to natural elements … especially the tides that hampered the installation of the pillars.”

(Source: Brenda Montiel - prensaglobal.com)

PV Mayor Salvador Gonzalez checked out one of the biggest construction sites operating in the city, thanks to his administration: the twin tunnel on the Libramiento.

This tunnel is meant to ease traffic as it will result in two northbound lanes and two southbound ones for drivers who need to bypass the downtown area.

It is 490 meters (1608 feet) long, with a drainage system that will avoid the seepage of natural water accumulation above, as happens with the old tunnel. The same system was installed in the latter and results are obvious during the present rainy season – with no seepage there either.

In addition, the old tunnel was thoroughly checked out and the engineers claim that it is in perfect condition, though the lighting and ventilation systems will be improved.

(Source: Gerardo González – Vallarta Opina)
We Mexicans are well known to go through hard moments with a smile in our faces and a funny joke to share. “Septihambre” is not the exception, it is our word for septiembre (September). ‘Hambre’ means ‘hunger’ which represents very well the reality that this is the most difficult month of the year. Restaurants, hotels and all tourism services are at their highest vacancy rate. Families have used most of their savings to get through the previous low season months. Any money left is spent buying a few school supplies for their children to go back to school. This is the reason why each year we unite community members to support a critical project to help provide food for people in need, in a dignified way, while creating environment-friendly communities.

“Action for Food” exists due to the great concern of amazing groups and individuals that want to help families live a better life in clean communities. From September 1st to 30th, we are collecting food in 5 locations: the Vallarta Yacht Club in Nuevo Vallarta (next to Paradise Village Marina), The Bucerías Art Walk (62 Lázaro Cárdenas) in Bucerías, Octopus Garden Restaurant (6 Coral) and Philo’s Bar and Music Club (5 Delfín) in La Cruz de Huanacaxtle, and Casa Campesina (Otilio Montaño, PEACE headquarters).

Please help! Food items needed to support the Protectores are: dry beans in bags, dry rice in bags, box milk, pasta noodles, canned tuna, soup bouillon, tomato paste, toilet paper and cooking oil. This food package provides 10 meals with at a cost of only $70 pesos ($5 US aprox.).

If you would like to be part of this chain of positive social change but are out of town, you can go to our website www.peacemexico.org, click on the donate button and donate through Pay Pal, it takes less than 5 minutes.

For more information, please contact Cecilia Paredes at ceci@peacemexico.org

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.” - Hellen Keller
**About the pets...**

*by GRETCHEN DeWITT*

“*Ayuda A Los Animales*” (Help The Animals) is the free mobile spay/neuter program of PEACE. The clinics need funding and are the only solution to the enormous overpopulation of cats and dogs. Four thousand cats and dogs were sterilized in the area of the Bay of Banderas in 2011. To donate, please see www.peacemexico.org PEACE has tax-free status in the U.S., Mexico and Canada. www.peacemexico.org www.facebook.com/Peace.Mexico

**Clinics need Funding!** Cost to PEACE is estimated to be $2,268 per surgery week for 2012. For approximately 4,000 cats and dogs, breakdown is $26.07 U.S. Clinics also need volunteers, locations for our mobile unit and donations of vet and pet supplies plus used towels, sheets, kennels, collars and leashes.

**Donations:** $150 U.S. via PayPal from Rosemary Andersen, who donates this amount every month; $15,000 U.S. from Linda & Fred Marshall: “We are strong advocates of the mobile spay and neutering program/clinics conducted by PEACE and want to continue our financial support. We would like to make a $15,000 commitment to PEACE for the spay/neuter clinics - $5,000 of which we will provide now for use immediately and $10,000 in the form of a 2 for 1 matching grant. We’ll provide $2 for every $1 you raise for the clinics up to a total gift of $10,000, and we’ll provide those funds in five $2,000 increments as you receive donations. With this matching grant, you raise $5,000 and you’ll get $10,000 from us - so a $1 gift becomes a $3 donation for the clinics.”

If you were thinking of making a donation to the clinics, this is a perfect time to do so. Please help the animals in Puerto Vallarta. There are many sad stories here.

**Adoptions:** “Capo,” one of three puppies rescued from the street by Amelia Montez; two of the 3 black Lab mixes rescued from the Acopio by Anselmo de Anda. The third is now being fostered by Sofi Gonzalez, enabling Anselmo to take out three more dogs from the pound, a.k.a the Centro de Acopio. “Romeo,” a young black Lab mix covered in mange that had apparently been living on the road across from the prison in Ixtapa for months. Luis Becerra Machuca was the person who couldn’t leave him there. He treated Romeo for 3 months with meds & special baths and after being cured of the mange, Romeo was taken to the Colina free clinic for neutering. Romeo, sweet and newly beautiful, was adopted there. Thank you to Luis for taking the chance of finding a home for a dog that no one had wanted.

Sad sight: Eight tiny 2-week old puppies that were dumped in front of the Acopio. Six were adopted and the other two went to a foster home. The chances are excellent that their mother will be pregnant again in a few months, even though there are free clinics every day in the area of the Bay of Banderas.

Sad news: Another pregnant dog at the Acopio. Hopefully someone will take her out before she gives birth. The puppies have little chance of surviving the parvo and distemper viruses there. There is also a Pit Bull.

**Rescued & need adopting:** “Camila,” the large black female lab rescued from the Acopio and now in foster home with Sofi Gonzalez. She is very sweet and well behaved and is less than two years old. If interested, contact: sofiagnl@hotmail.com Photo attached

The four small young dogs rescued from the Acopio and in foster home with Anselmo. If interested, contact 299-0678.

**Need rescuing:** All the dogs and cats and the Centro de Acopio, the local pound. Open 8-3 Mon.-Fri., Tel.: 293-3690. For photos of lost & found animals and animals for adoption at the Acopio and in foster homes: “pv animal” page and “angeliCAT” page on FB. The dogs at the Acopio are at great risk.

The government truck from Guadalajara arrives twice monthly to take the dogs that have been at the pound the longest back to Guadalajara for mass electrocution. AngeliCAT has been removing all the kittens and cats from the Acopio. The dogs need saving.

**Sterilizations** – in San Vicente, Nay. – 19, plus pregnancies terminated for 1 dog with 7 fetuses, 1 dog with 2 fetuses, 2 cats with 5 fetuses each, and 1 cat with 4 fetuses.

In Mezcales, Nay. – 55. In San Jose, Nay. – 70, plus pregnancies terminated for 3 cats each carrying 4 fetuses, 1 cat carrying 1 fetus, 1 cat with 5 fetuses, and 1 dog with 8 fetuses. TOTAL: 26 births of unwanted animals prevented!

**Colina Clinic:** free spay / neuter clinic in PV - 429-B Basilio Badillo (between Jacarandas & Aguacate, inside Unique ATV Tours location). Open Sunday-Wednesday from 9 AM-2 PM. There is also a collection of rescued kittens, puppies and adult dogs there for adoption. This clinic cannot take more than approximately 10 dogs and cats a day. Contact Sabrina (for Spanish) at 044 322 779-2377 or Colette (English) 044 322 104-6609 - colinavp@hotmail.com No appointments. First come, first served.

**PEACE CLINIC INFORMATION**  
- To volunteer or for specific directions, please contact melissa@peacemexico.org Addresses and directions are usually not confirmed until Tuesday evening before scheduled clinic for that week. No food or water after midnight before bringing pets to clinic. Minimum age for sterilization for cats and dogs is 8 weeks. Please arrive early. Our limit is 25 animals a day. First come, first served. Times: 9 AM-2 PM Wed. to Fri. and 9 AM-12 noon on Sat. If lost en route, call Lalo at 044 322 141 103 or Colette at 044 322 779-2377 or Sabrina (for Spanish) at 044 322 104-6609 - colinavp@hotmail.com No appointments. First come, first served.

In PEACE and bliss,

Gretchen@peacemexico.org  
www.peacemexico.org  
www.gretchen-peace-and-pv.blogspot.com
In a nutshell, after Columbus discovered “America” the Spanish came to the continent to find riches in the “new land.” In 1521 Hernán Cortés showed up -like a flash mob- with about 500 Spanish soldiers and decided to attack and conquer the civilizations of Olmec, Teotihuacan, Maya and the Toltec. The powerful Aztecs were currently ruling Mesoamérica, so Hernán went after them first.

On August 13, 1521 the Spanish -in cahoots with many indigenous allies- raided the city/state of Tenochtitlan, the last of the Aztec empire to be conquered. It was done.

How did the Spanish get the indigenous population to help? Easy: life under Aztec rule was tough; the Spanish convinced the locals that their lives would be better under the Spanish than it was with the Aztecs. The indigenous population soon found that the Spanish made the Aztecs look like Maria Von Trapp. Essentially, the locals got duped, the Spaniards got the country, and the name was changed to Nueva España, (New Spain).

The following years were devastating for the local population. Between the workload of forced labor, poverty, and the epidemic causing diseases the Spanish introduced, the indigenous population was nearly decimated. What’s that mean? Well, let’s say a country’s indigenous population in the year 1500 is 20 million, and in 1800 it’s 1 million, just my opinion, but I’d say that qualifies as decimation.

So now it’s 1808, and time to introduce you to the middle, upper-middle class population called the Criollos. These cats were children of Spanish heritage, but born in “New Spain,” and they didn’t like the way things were going.

Meanwhile, Napoleon (yes, the guy with the complex) invaded Spain and made his brother, José, the King. José wasn’t the sharpest knife in the drawer, and this gave the Criollos the opportunity to stick their heads out the window and shout, “I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going to take it anymore!” Thus, began the plans for a big to-do, later to be named, “The Mexican War of Independence.”

Planning a revolution is no easy task, fortunately the Criollos were using Pinterest 0.0 and had pinned a few of their favorites. On board 1 was an outline of democracy, liberty and equality by French philosophers Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. On board 2 was The United States War of Independence. Not too shabby, I’d say. What’s on your Pinterest?

So they planned the revolution and set the date for Tuesday October 2, 1810. The invitations were about to be printed, when in early September something terrible happened; someone slipped. That’s right, the secret got out and soon everybody knew about it. Some say Mark Zuckerberg is to blame because he didn’t have the right filters in place, and that had they been using Google+ they’d never have had a problem; this is easily disputed, so I’ll stay out of it. The fact is, loose lips sink ships, and that’s what was about to happen to Mexico’s Independence.

Say you’re planning a revolution, and suddenly find out your permits will be revoked because of a technicality. What do you do? I’ll tell you, you get even smarter and start a private group, only inviting close, trustworthy friends. And that’s exactly what happened. No one is sure who started the group, but it included a bunch of really cool people, some you may know: Ignacio Allende and Doña Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez. And get this; they had a priest in their group! How many priests are in your groups? Yup, thought so… Okay, okay, relax I’ll tell you about the priest, his name was Father Miguel Hidalgo and from what I’ve ascertained, he was THE guy.

Why was Father Hidalgo the guy? When the news of the revolt got out the Criollos struggled with the notion of canceling the whole thing. Father Hidalgo and his peeps got together and decided to step things up and instead of cancelling, they’d kick the party off early.

Late on the night of September 15, 1810, Father Hidalgo and friends decided the moment had arrived. He and his peeps walked down to his church -yes his church, not someone else’s church; Father Hidalgo was the real deal - in the town of Dolores, and at 1:00 AM, in the early hours of September 16, he rang the heck out of the church bell, thus summoning the community.

So the whole town came down to see what was up, and that’s when Father Hidalgo gave a speech called El Grito de Dolores, and said some of the most powerful words spoken on this land:

Mexicans!
Long live the heroes that gave us the Fatherland!
Long live Hidalgo!
Long live Morelos!
Long live Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez!
Long live Allende!
Long live Aldama and Matamoros!
Long live National Independence!
Long Live Mexico! Long Live Mexico! Long Live Mexico!

Of course, that’s a paraphrase, it turns out the local stenographer was on vacation or something, and no one wrote down what Father Hidalgo actually said. As I understand it, “El Grito de Dolores” translates to either, “The Shout from (the town of) Dolores”, or “The Cry of Pain.” Take any meaning you want, that’s powerful stuff.

So that’s how it started. From there it took more than a decade, countless people dying, lives ruined, property destroyed, and much more. On September 28, 1821, Mexico enacted the Declaration of Independence of the Mexican Empire, and Spain was officially out.

Wait, you just said September 28th, not September 16th, what’s up with that?

Good question. On September 16, 1810 a spark was ignited. A spark based on a decision; a decision to be free, a freedom for future generations that was worth fighting, and even dying for. It was that courageous decision that prompted action. It was the initial “coming together” that allowed Mexico to pull it off. That’s what’s celebrated; courage, love of country, and alliance, it’s awesome, and it really is a big deal.
Those of you who are Facebook friends with P.V. Mirror and check in more or less regularly already know what kind of week we had: a very wet one. It rained, a lot. I know that some of the photos will be published in this issue, but there were so many, of so many areas of town!

According to our friend Angela Corelis who operates a mini weather station in town, from 5:35 to 7:45 p.m. on Tuesday, August 21st, 2.75 inches of rain fell for total squall of 3.46 inches! That’s nearly 9 cms for us Mexicans and Canucks, in a couple of hours! And then it started again the next evening, same thing except that this time the water in my patio rose much faster and once again, came perilously close to overflowing into the house. Not fun.

Angela also told us that the total rainfall last year to date was 24.76 inches while this year’s total to date was 50.41 inches. That’s more than double!

On Wednesday, it didn’t last quite as long (thank goodness!), giving the sewage / drainage system a little time to handle the overflow. But I will have to get a tube of silicone to seal the space under my patio doors …one of these days.

Getting back to the photos, I was astounded to see the photos of the floods at the Coastal University Center of the University of Guadalajara, especially considering that is an “official shelter” in case of emergency… The beautiful facilities out there were built on very low flat land and they’ve had problems there ever since, but nothing that I recall to compare with this time. Damages were estimated at $850 Million Pesos…

In any case, as I write this, my floors are dry, everything dried outside, and it’s been a beautiful sunny day, though now it looks like it’s gonna start raining again…

Good news: The folks at the Casa Gourmet, the shop so many of us have been waiting for to open, tell us that they expect to do so THIS SATURDAY! 130 Ignacio L. Vallarta, Local 4, in the Rivera Molino Plaza corner of Ignacio L Vallarta and Aquiles Serdan. Tel.: 222-1940. Email: casadelgourmet@hotmail.com …and they will be on Facebook soon too. The shop will be open Mon. to Sat., 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., and Sundays too, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.! Cash only for now (dollars accepted), major credit cards as of Monday. No tables or chairs outside, no sandwiches, coffees or drinks of any kind – yet. The official, “nice” opening will be in October.

Co-owner Gerardo Robles –who speaks English- tells us that the only refrigerated items available for now will be drinks.

More refrigerated items such as dairy won’t be available until some time next year, maybe sooner. They have a vast variety of products from the US, Canada, India, Asian countries, Italy and the UK, gluten-free items too. You could request your specialty items.

Friend Brenda Retzlaff sneaked a peek in the shop, she posted: “OMG. They have everything … starting with A: Altoids (at least 5 flavors) A&W Root beer, regular and diet, (a ton of other sodas) Bisquick, Candy (you name it) Cream of Wheat, different Doritos (i.e.: LOTS Of snacks from Newman’s Own, Kettle Chips, Sour Dough pretzels to Blue Corn Chips... Grits, Grape Nuts, Shredded Wheat, Taco Bell and Ortega Taco shells, Chow Mein noodles, Rice a Roni, tons of gravy/sloppy joe/seasoning packets... It also looks like they will have a large spice section, and they also have a ton of cleaning supplies.” All sounds really good to me.

In the meantime …I miss Vitea! It’s one of my favorite restaurants in PV and when I went by and saw the mess on that section of the Malecon, I couldn’t believe it. Turns out all the workers just up and left because they hadn’t been paid by their employers, contracted by the City, which in turn probably didn’t pay them. I can’t blame the workers, but what a mess they left there!

Until next time, well… what can I say? Stay dry, go out there and take in deep breaths when the rains stop, don’t forget your sun block in the daytime, take care and keep well.

Hasta luego. sheis@ymail.com
**Tidbits...**

La Cigale, everyone’s favorite authentic **French Bistro** in Puerto Vallarta, is opening a second venue …on Basilio Badillo! Yes, this town’s original “Restaurant Row”. The opening is expected in November, so keep your eyes open!

The original restaurant, located at 398 Hidalgo downtown, a block north of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, is scheduled to reopen in October with a brand new menu. Hopefully, our favorites will still be available...

Fiorios is a recent addition to our ever-growing culinary scene, having opened some six months ago just a few blocks north of La Cigale. Located at 536 Hidalgo, this is an Argentinean-Italian eatery offering fresh salads, yummy appetizers, homemade pastas galore, pizzas baked in an outdoor wood oven, authentic Argentinean Grill offering fine cuts of meat, a full bar and delightful desserts to satisfy any demanding palate. Enjoy indoor or outdoor dining, overlooking a charming quiet cobble stone street. Pets are also welcome on the outdoor patio! Fiorios is open Tuesday thru Saturday from 2 to 11 p.m. and Sundays from 5 to 11 p.m. Tel.: 222-1765.

The Pitt Bar & Grill is also a relatively new kid on the block. This restaurant, located at 419 Basilio Badillo in the Romantic Zone on the south side of town, offers a standard menu at truly reasonable prices and extremely generous portions, as well as Nick & Vince’s daily specials. Example: On Sundays, you can have 8 wings at 3 Pesos each, and 14-Peso beers. Their pasta dishes are great, their hamburgers fabulous, and there’s live music on Friday evenings. The Pitt is open for lunch and dinner, Tues. to Sun. Tel.: 223-0223. Check out their Facebook page at The Pitt Bar and Grill.

**There’s more to our history than just great flavors**

Sometimes we all need more than just chips, guacamole and margaritas. Archie’s Wok is your haven for bold and innovative flavors to get you out of that Mexican rut!

Since 1986, Archie’s Wok has been legendary in Banderas Bay for serving up original cuisine influenced by the exotic flavors of Thailand, China, and the Philippines. Archie’s helped establish the culinary foundation of Puerto Vallarta and continues to be one of the bay’s most beloved, longtime established restaurants.

It all began in 1976 when Archie was asked to become Hollywood director John Huston’s private chef at his personal retreat on Banderas Bay’s south shore. Only reachable by boat, Las Caletas (The Coves) was John Huston’s rustic jungle villa by the sea.

**The shopping adventure:** Hosting a party for John Huston’s celebrity guests in the jungle was always an adventure… a shopping adventure! First, off on a boat for 25 minutes north to the inlet called Boca de Tomatlán, then into the car for a 14-mile run to Vallarta. Next, Archie would scour all of the markets throughout the town finding only the freshest ingredients, and then the return trip before items spoiled in the tropical heat. Today, Archie’s family upholds his legacy of only using the freshest local ingredients at this tranquil Asian-inspired restaurant.

So when you finally say “no more tacos,” head on over to Archie’s Wok and discover a world of flavors. Named “Best Asian” in Vallarta for the past 7 years. Ask about their “gluten free” options. Open Monday through Saturday from 2 to 11 p.m. The ever-popular d’Rachael continues to perform classical and contemporary music on harp, flute & vocals each Friday and Saturday evenings from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Located in Vallarta’s South Side at 130 Francisca Rodriguez. You know the street, the one that meets the new pier. 222.0411. No reservations needed.
More Tidbits...

The famous Las Palomas restaurant on the Malecon, a Puerto Vallarta icon since 1979, is looking to sub-rent its space.

Frommer’s wrote the following about Las Palomas restaurant on the Malecon: “One of Puerto Vallarta’s first restaurants, this is the power-breakfast place of choice - and a popular hangout for everyone else throughout the day. Authentic in atmosphere and menu, it’s one of Puerto Vallarta’s few genuine Mexican restaurants. Breakfast is the best value. The staff pours mugs of steaming coffee spiced with cinnamon as soon as you’re seated. Try classic huevos rancheros or chilaquiles (tortilla strips, fried and topped with red or green spicy sauce, cream, and cheese, with fried eggs or shredded chicken). Lunch and dinner offer traditional Mexican specialties, such as chiles rellenos, enchiladas, fajitas, and carne asada. The best places for checking out the Malecon and watching the sunset while sipping an icy margarita are the spacious bar and the upstairs terrace.”

Vitea Oceanfront Bistro is closed, optimistically hoping to reopen on September 5th. The City has ripped up the beautiful southern section of the Malecon to “repair” it. However, as the workmen have not been paid, they up and left the week of August 13th and haven’t been seen since. The heavy machinery is sitting idle and there are huge mounds of debris all around, making it very difficult for pedestrians to walk around there.

And even if they do start working again, they still have to rip up the section directly in front of the restaurant once they finish the section nearest to the beach…

Chilled Avocado Soup with Lime & Jalapeño

3 limes
3 cups ice water
(should include pieces of ice)
3 ripe avocados,
peeled and pitted
1 clove garlic chopped
½ small jalapeno chili,
with seeds, chopped
1 tsp. coarse sea salt or kosher salt, plus additional to taste
2½ tblsps extra-virgin olive oil
1 large (8-inch) flour tortilla,
cut into 2 by ¼ inch strips
* Sour Cream (garnish)
* Chopped fresh cilantro (garnish)

Squeeze the juice from 2½ of the limes. Cut the remaining half lime into 4 wedges and reserve for garnish.

In a blender, combine 3 cups of ice water with the lime juice, avocados, garlic, jalapeno and salt. Blend until smooth. Chill the soup until ready to serve.

Heat the oil in a large skillet or sauté pan over a medium heat. Add the tortilla strips and fry until they are crunchy and golden brown, about 2 minutes. Drain the strips on paper towels and sprinkle with salt.

Spoon the soup into bowls. Place a dollop of sour cream in the center of each bowl, then top with tortilla strips. Garnish with fresh cilantro. Serve with lime wedges on the side.

Makes 4 servings.

(Source: “Fresh Food Fast” by Peter Berley)
BOSS & Jim

Congratulations to the publisher of The PV Mirror for making it to her 200th edition. Bravo! And also another thanks to her for defending me against an editorial comment made by someone named Jim who wrote, after complaining about other columns like the pet page, “…also, drop the movie review, not necessary for a small paper.”

First off what does the size of a newspaper have to do with whether or not it should publish a movie review column? This column also appears in The Mountain Messenger – the oldest continuing running weekly newspaper in California’s history, since 1853. Size? Usually about six pages. Movie theaters? Closest one to Downieville is over 45 miles away. However, the paper is also mailed out to every state in the union.

The editor there doesn’t feel the size of his paper means no movie review column. But Jim directed his tirade against a Puerto Vallarta paper. That town is hardly some sleepy pueblo. The population is over 350,000, and it has a few multiplex theaters serving those people, with all of them having some movies shown in English.

Now I agree most people who go on holiday to a place as beautiful as PV do not go to a movie, they go to the beach, or shopping or fine dining. But PV also has a huge contingency of ex-pats, plus another huge group of people, like myself, who are snowbirds – spending many months a year there. I love the sun and water, but a weekly movie is a nice break. Also, those people who only spend a short time here return home. And there – I would wager – many go to movies. So reading about a flick while basking on the beach can still help a person when they return home on whether or not to plunk down money to see something.

So lighten up, Jim, just because you don’t like pets or movies doesn’t mean most of the rest of the world hates them too. However, on the assumption that Jim likes television, this week I am going to discuss the Starz original series, BOSS. BOSS is about as hard hitting as it gets. The storyline takes place in Chicago – and Kelsey Grammer is the fictional mayor of that massive city. And yes – that is the same Kelsey who played the lovable customer at a Boston bar named Cheers and an even more lovable psychiatrist with a radio show in Seattle. The theme of his character in both of those extremely well accepted comedies was, “Physician, heal thyself.”

Mayor Tom Kane cannot heal himself. He is dying, but still clings to power with an iron fist that Adolph Hitler would have applauded. What Kelsey demonstrates – besides a Machiavellian streak, is that he is one fine actor. Gone is any semblance of likeability – basically no one likes him, yet all fear him: his wife, his daughter, his allies, his associates – even the people who help run the infamous political machine of that great city. Kane’s character is ruthless, mind bogglingly so. Watching this show is like watching two trains hurtling towards each other on a single track. You know they are going to crash, you know there will be death and destruction, but you can’t take your eyes away. Kane is as flawed as a human being can get – no integrity, no honor, no ethics, only one goal – remain in power and intimidate all who serve him.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy once wrote: “The art of compromise is like dividing up a cake so that all parties feel they got the biggest slice.” Mayor Tom Kane is more of the ilk of the Tea Party Members who refused to budge over raising the debt ceiling to the edge of lunacy – causing America’s credit rating to drop. This isn’t governing, this is madness. And that madness seems to be the allure of BOSS. I pray to God it isn’t emulated during this election period in America.

Plot – acting – dialog – cinematography, all excellent. It amazes me when something with this much quality can put out an hour show every week that compares to two-hour movies that take years to cobbble together.

Recommendation: If you get Starz, look for BOSS. Recommendation to Jim: buy a dog or cat.

Joe is an internationally published true crime writer and documentary filmmaker. You can send him comments or criticism at JoeMovieMadness@yahoo.com. Artwork by Bob Crabb.
We grew up where “Spring Cleaning” was always a custom, whether to paint the walls, turn the carpet, dust the books, rotate the art, or just to clean out the closets to help someone less fortunate. Summers in Mexico is when many people do the same, as it is the off season.

Some of our artists will be traveling to Europe, some are preparing for major US and European exhibitions. And we are making room for some, new and exciting young artists. We were also the generation of Layaway and Sear & Roebuck catalogue shopping. So yes, we also offer “layaway”. All discounts are for cash, personal check or Bank Transfer! We also have bank accounts in the USA and Canada to facilitate payment.

We welcomed in 2012: Brewster Brockmann, Ale Zamarripa, Kathleen Carrillo, Nina DiGiovanni, Sandra “Sam” Leonard, Andy Marcus, Victor Manuel Villarreal, Barbara Steinberg, Jose Ferrara, Carlos Cuevas, Carlos Monge (links to be updated soon).

We are enjoying a pleasant summer in Vallarta – wishing the same for all of you. We are currently “open by appointment”, but are always at the gallery, from 9 am till noon three days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). We will reopen our regular hours on October 1st.

We have spent the last few months updating the website and are 95% complete, so we are celebrating by having a Sale, from now until September 30, 2012.

http://www.galleriadante.com/Artists/Artists%20active/artists%20no%20thumbs.htm – All artists currently exhibiting in Galleria Dante are offering 20% off list prices. The items with an inventory number are listed on the price list. New works are currently listed by price as we change over our database.

Extra discounts are being offered by the following artists:


10 – 30% Estate Sale
20% on all works AND 25% on works older than 2012: Yvan Genest, Miguel angel del Campo, Luis Valui, Cherie Sibley, Alvaro Zardoni
25% - Edgar Martinez on all small florals
30% - Richard Baker, Hector Buigues, Andie Hathcote, Oscar Capeche & Consuelo

Galleria Dante is located at 269 Basilio Badillo, tels: 222-2477, Cell: 044 (322) 229-6648, from the US or Canada: 1 269 282-6865.

Sincerely,
Claire, Joe and Genna
www.galleriadante.com

Back by popular demand…

MEXICAN LOTERIA !!!

Join the fun starting at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, September 5, as we play Mexican LOTERIA – the Spanish version of Bingo. Win fabulous prizes, enter the 50/50 raffle … and improve your Spanish at the same time!

Our Loteria caller will be lovely local drag queen Beverly Fairfax. We’ll be in the air-conditioned upper level of Los Alcatraces restaurant in Fluvial (the bright yellow building on Calle Jesus Rodriguez Barba, right behind Costco).

It’s just one block from the Francisco Villa bus route, there’s lots of free parking, great food and drink…
Apple cider vinegar... Grandma’s remedies...

Vinegar is a wonderful organic tool that was discovered by accident 10,000 years ago when wine was accidentally allowed to ferment too long and turned sour.

Our household keeps 4 types of vinegar on hand, wine vinegar for cooking, apple cider for mouth washing and general health applications. And white vinegar for cleaning and laundry.

Vinegar can be made from many products, including beer, apples, berries, beets, corn, fruits, grains, honey, malt, maple syrup, melons, molasses, potatoes, rice, sorghum, and other foods containing sugar.

Not surprising, while apple cider vinegar has historically been prized for its health benefits, little research has been done to evaluate its therapeutic actions. However, lack of scientific studies is a common problem for many natural and alternative therapies.

My grandmother was a great abduct of apple cider vinegar, and always kept a batch in the store room... it was scary living stuff to a little kid. Grandma would use it with soda to clean her pots and pans, clean her teeth and take a bit in water for a sour stomach (?) Grandma always used rain water and apple cider vinegar on my hair as a conditioner... how sweet is that??

She sprayed her flower and herb gardens with it and swore it kept the bugs out. She would put a bit in the chickens’ water and said it made the eggs’ shells stronger. She made us kids bathe in it when we came back from the beach with sunburns. I still use it for sun burns.

Other Apple Cider Vinegar Cures

Here’s what they say... Apple cider vinegar might cure more ailments than any other folk remedy. Vinegar apparently provides at least some cures for allergies (including pet, food and environmental), sinus infections, acne, high cholesterol, flu, chronic fatigue, Candida, acid reflux, sore throats, contact dermatitis, arthritis, gout and the list goes on... It also brings a healthy, rosy glow to the complexion and can cure rough scaly skin. Apple cider vinegar is also wonderful for animals, including dogs, cats and horses. It helps with arthritic conditions, controls fleas, repels flies, and gives a beautiful shine to their coats.

What can account for apple cider vinegar’s health benefits?

Many who tout apple cider vinegar’s wide-ranging benefits claim its healing power comes from the abundance of nutrients that remain after the apples are fermented. However, standard nutritional analyses of apple cider vinegar have found it to be a surprisingly poor source of most nutrients. For example, the one milligram of calcium found in a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar does not come close to the 1,000 milligrams a typical adult needs each day.

It has also been claimed that soluble fiber in the vinegar, in the form of pectin, binds to cholesterol and helps carry it out of your body, thereby improving your lipid profile. However, apple cider vinegar contains no measurable pectin or any other fiber, for that matter.

Its magic can also not be traced to vitamin content. According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), apple cider vinegar has no measurable vitamin A, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, beta-carotene, or folate -- and it’s equally lacking in amino acids, lycopene, or any other nutritional elements.

Still, despite the fact that it’s devoid of many of the traditionally valued nutrients, evidence of apple cider vinegar’s health benefits has been witnessed for hundreds - maybe thousands -- of years. So, what can explain this mysteriously beneficial elixir?

It may be partially related to the fact that vinegar is a diluted acid, specifically acetic acid, which help to normalize your body’s pH. This likely improves nutrition, by optimizing your gut flora and helping eradicate pathogenic or disease-causing bacteria, and by serving as growth accelerators for beneficial bacteria that typically thrive in more acid environments. This is also one of the reasons why eating fermented foods is so important.

Apple cider vinegar for pets

Pet care is another area where vinegar can be a useful, non-toxic, all-natural tool.

Vinegar is a remedy with multiple uses for dogs including alleviating allergies and arthritis, and helping to provide the correct pH balance. You can give apple cider vinegar to any animal by simply adding it to the water.

If your dog has itchy skin, the beginnings of a hot spot, incessantly washes its feet, has smelly ears, or is picky about his food, an application of apple cider vinegar can help. For poor appetite, use it in the food at 1 tablespoon, two times a day for a 50 lb. dog. For itchy skin or the beginning hot spots, put apple cider vinegar into a spray bottle, part the hair and spray on. Any skin eruption will dry up in as soon as 24 hours and shaving the dog won’t be necessary – which is good because I never recommend that. If the skin is already broken, dilute apple cider vinegar with an equal amount of water and spray on.

Taken internally, apple cider vinegar is credited with maintaining the acid/alkaline balance of the digestive tract.

Another tip is if you have a dog that has clear, watery discharge from the eyes, a runny nose, or coughs with a liquid sound, use apple cider vinegar in his or her food. One teaspoon twice a day for a 50-lb dog will do the job.
After grooming sessions, use a few drops in dogs’ ears after cleaning them to avoid ear infections. Fleas, flies, ticks and bacteria, external parasites, ring worm, fungus, staphylococcus, streptococcus, pneumococcus, mange, etc. are unlikely to inhabit a dog whose system is acidic inside and out.

Should you ever experience any of these with your dog, bathe with a nice gentle herbal shampoo - one that you would use on your own hair - rinse thoroughly with vinegar, and then sponge on apple cider vinegar diluted with equal amounts of warm water. Allow your dog to drip dry. It is not necessary to use harsh chemicals for minor flea infestations. All fleas drown in soapy water and the apple cider vinegar rinse makes the skin too acidic for a re-infestation. If you are worried about picking up fleas when you take your dog away from home, keep some apple cider vinegar in a spray bottle, and spray your dog before you leave home and when you get back. For raw spots caused by excessive licking, use a few drops in water, and sponge the affected areas with apple cider vinegar.

**Horticultural uses for vinegar**

Any weeds that grow through the gravel can be sprayed and killed with a mix of 10% pickling vinegar mixed with 1 teaspoon liquid soap or you can use commercial organic herbicides. Vinegar sprays can also be used to kill weeds in the cracks in sidewalks and driveways. The best choice for herbicide use is 10% white vinegar made from grain alcohol. It should be used full strength. Avoid products that are made from 99% glacial acetic acid. This material is a petroleum derivative.

If your water is alkaline, add 1 tablespoon of 50-grain (5%) natural apple cider vinegar to each gallon of water to improve the quality of the water for potted plants and bedding. This doesn’t have to be done with every watering, though it wouldn’t hurt.

This technique is especially helpful when trying to grow acid-loving plants such as gardenias, azaleas, and dogwoods. A tablespoon of vinegar per gallon added to the sprayer when foliar feeding lawns, shrubs, flowers, and trees is also highly beneficial, especially where soil or water is alkaline. The other horticultural use for vinegar is in the watering can.

**Other uses for vinegar**

Last but not least, vinegar can be used to remove certain pesticides and bacteria from your fresh produce. Of course, you don’t need apple cider vinegar for this - any basic white vinegar will do. Just place your veggies or fruit in the solution, swish it around, and rinse thoroughly. Just don’t use this process on fragile fruits (like berries), since they could be damaged in the process or soak up too much vinegar through their porous skins.

Apple cider vinegar has also long been used as a natural hair care product. Its acidity is close to that of human hair; it’s a good conditioner and cleaning agent, as well as an effective germ killer. You can visit www.apple-cider-vinegar-benefits.com for information on how to make a vinegar hair rinse.

So... there ya go... looks like Grandma’s theory holds water…

**Krystal Frost is a long time resident of Puerto Vallarta.**

Graduate of University of Guadalajara, and specialized in cosmetic acupuncture at Bastyr University in Washington State. She is the owner of Body & Sol for over 15 years where she practices traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, massage therapy, yoga, meditation and nutritional counseling. She has created healing programs for individuals, retreats and spas. Questions and comments may be directed to organic-select@hotmail.com
The contemplation of living beings that inhabit the natural environment is like watching a musical masterpiece performed by a philharmonic orchestra where each element plays its role at a specifically established moment in time, without being better or worse than the other participants. If one of the elements is missing or fails in its role, the entire piece is ruined.

Every role played by every organism in the functioning of the natural environment is called an ecological niche and, like in a symphony orchestra, the absence or suppression of any participant can put the continuity of the entire ecosystem at risk.

In the Bay of Banderas region, there are two species that perform one of the most commendable functions in the natural environment, similar to the task accomplished by garbage collectors in cities: the elimination of waste.

Those species are easily identified by their ascending spiraling flights into the deep blue skies, an image often used in Hollywood to indicate death in movies about the Wild West. We are obviously referring to the black vulture (Coragyps atratus) and the turkey vulture (Cathartes aura). Both species are extensively distributed throughout the American continent, the vultures of the New World.

Their great wingspan, reaching up to 2.6 meters (over 8 feet) represents a major expense of energy at the moment of flight, and that is why they glide along the thermal currents that usually ascend in a circular pattern, allowing the birds to remain aloft for hours on end. Thus, they can scour the landscape in search of carrion and waste, although they sometimes also attack weakened animals, young or hurt, and they will also feed on fruit but they will only kill small healthy animals in extreme, extraordinary cases.

We know that the turkey vulture uses its highly developed sense of smell to detect the odor of carrion, a fact that enables it to locate its food faster than the black vulture that relies more on its sense of sight to the same ends.

With regard to the powerful sense of smell of the vulture, it should be noted that during the 30’s, a group of engineers from California had a problem with a gas leak in a 50-km. long pipe. They had noticed with great interest how turkey vultures would gather near certain points of the gas pipeline, attracted by that specific odor added to domestic natural gas (which is normally odorless and highly toxic).

Based on such observations, they conducted an experiment in which they increased the amount of the additive and attracted groups of birds to all the leak points along the pipeline, thus showing the engineers the exact points that needed repairs.

Both the black and the turkey vultures have a black plumage. What differentiate them in flight are the ash white wingtips of the former and the same color markings along the edges of the wings of the latter. Furthermore, the black vulture has a short, square tail.

On the other hand, the most distinctive feature of both species is the bald head. The turkey vulture’s is reddish, while the other’s is black. The reason for a bald head results from an aseptic necessity: vultures have to shove their heads right into the inner parts of decomposing bodies. A featherless head can easily and quickly be cleansed of fat and viscera, eliminating the risk of bacterial and fungal growth that could occur on feathers, resulting in infections and even the possible death of the bird.

For a long time, grain farmers systematically eliminated those birds because they believed them to be carriers of the anthrax and porcine cholera that infected their cattle, causing their death. Today, it has been proven that when scavengers eat decomposing matter, their digestive systems destroy such and other pathogenic agents, eliminating potential sources of wildlife infection from the environment. Thus the role of vultures within the circle of life goes much beyond the elimination of the cadavers of animals from vacant lots, garbage dumps and highways.

As we can see, from the largest mammal to the smallest insect, all creatures are worthy of our admiration, respect and care. This contributes to the maintenance of biological cycles in our natural environment.

Professor Fabio Cupul was born in the northern part of the Mexican state of Baja California. His university studies have qualified him in the fields of oceanography, biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics. He took part in the very first studies of El Salado Estuary in Vallarta and is the founder of the Cipactli Reptile sanctuary located a little north of Puerto Vallarta.

The Professor is a Permanent Member of SOMEDICYT, the prestigious Mexican Society for the Dissemination of Science and Techniques.
I am looking forward to meeting Denis at the train station in Avignon this Monday morning. He and I have been communicating via a business introduction by email. Today he will show me châteaux (castles) as part of his sale inventory. He and I want to discuss my American, Canadian and Mexican clients who may also be interested in French real estate.

My concern that I would find him at the train depot in Avignon is over when a round-faced man with a big smile is holding out a placard with my name on it. We get into the car, and Denis tells me he is learning English as a necessity in today’s business. I can’t compete with his French, so we settle on English, and he seems to be a quick learner.

Today we are going to Avignon, in the Rhone Valley. This valley became famous to Americans twenty years ago with the popular books and television series “A Year in Provence”.

Now many Americans and English travelers are here in August to hike, visit vineyards; enjoy the fruits, vegetables and flowers grown in this large valley ringed by the French and Swiss Alps.

Denis turns off the highway and soon we are in a very, very small village. Five city blocks of buildings comprise the medieval village: a church with clock tower, red tiled roof homes, and the centerpiece we are to see today, a home on the ruins of an ancient castle.

The owner was an architect who designed and oversaw the adaptation of a contemporary home inside the ancient walls. On different levels there are modern bedrooms and baths, a sleek kitchen, and an enormous living room with outstanding views of the valley and mountains. Over the circular fire pit, there is a large mosaic flue to draw the smoke. This artistic piece was created by an Italian artist who also designed a large mosaic sun dial in the swimming pool area. The unassuming wooden front door to the castle is accessed by a narrow bridge, and there is no clue of the unique home behind the door. Hikers passing by have no idea of the striking contrast we will see and enjoy once we are inside.

At this point, I don’t know how to compare prices, as this is the first “castle” for sale I have seen. My ears prick up when the man showing us around mentions that a client from Mexico City has rescheduled a second showing for the next day. When I tell him I live in Mexico also, he gets a puzzled look on his face. I am told the asking price is €2,750,000. (Euros), i.e. $3,446,420. USD.

Harriet Murray may be contacted at harriet@casasandvillas.com

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As we enter the most productive time of the year for monster trophy gamefish, we see the clientele is just not coming out to our world famous fishing grounds of Puerto Vallarta. The fish are out there, the conditions are just about perfect, the fishermen are not here. You can point fingers, you can make excuses, you can speculate, but you will find empty fishing grounds and boats putting people out fishing at desperate “going out of business” pricing. What does this mean to the general consumer looking to go fishing? Well, it means you can find a boat for just about any price you can imagine. For those who are in Marina Vallarta, the fishing has improved from the last couple of weeks. For those with the disposable income, world record sized fish are out there waiting for you. So, the question being put to you is this: “Can You Come Out and Play?”

The last few weeks I have talked about how the rains were just not doing their job. The trash line all but disappeared, bay water was mostly blue and the fish were sparse unless you were around Yelapa to Cabo Corrientes point at the south end of the bay. Well we’ve had a fair share of rain and the trash is flowing down the mountains. Now this may sound kinda nasty, but in reality this is where the fish are starting to return to the bay. Bait fish are feeding on the organic materials, drawing in larger fish and you get the drift.

Yellowfin Tuna holding their own, Marlin more abundant, Dorado still MIA!

Small Dorado, Skip Jack Tuna, Snapper and Needle fish are just chowing down on this fish version of fast food. Those looking for Skippies or Skip Jack Tuna are still in luck with them running in the 30-lb range from Los Animas increasing in size as you get closer to Cabo Corrientes or farther out in the bay. For bay fishing, this is a real treat with mostly dirty water now. The rain thing goes both ways. Those with some Mexican savvy know that the dirty water in front of the river mouths is a great place to hook into great tasting Robalo (Snook) and Snapper in the 30 to possibly 40-lb range. In Nuevo Vallarta, going upstream there a ways will produce some really large Robalo in the holes by the freeway pilings, but you did not hear that from me…

Sailfish are still on the fickle side. Not too many hanging around the Tres Marias Islands, but if you go just a little further south to El Moro they seem to be loving this area for some reason. Not exactly on the island, a mile or two off towards the south will produce some great action with abundant Sailfish, though not exactly jumping into the boat.

Around Punta Mita and Sayulita there have been some better signs of Dorado off the buoys, but they are still only around 25 to 35 lbs., if you’re lucky. Don’t know what happened to the Dorado this year, but if you’re like me, you notice they are arriving later and later in the year, they are smaller than you would expect and frankly these fish were always a “Day Saver” when it comes to getting clients fish. Something strange going on here and it doesn’t look like things will be improving in the years to come. Something to think about, something to care about… Sailfish are north of Sayulita and out about 10 to 15 miles off the points running in the 80-pound range which is decent for Sailfish, amigos.

Corbeteña has shown some signs of life where Yellowfin Tuna and Marlin are concerned. Mostly blue water with bait means the Yellowfin are having a hard time leaving the area and we can appreciate that for sure. We are still looking for the 200-lb plus sizes when it comes to Yellowfin.

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I don’t know what the deal is, but we are following three years straight of El Niño and El Niña years. So it may just need time to straighten itself out current wise. Rumor has it that Cabo is not having a great year either, but you should look up Cabo Reports to see what they’re saying there. Cubera Snappers still running in the 50-lb range, mid-sized Sailfish from 60 to just under 100 lbs. Rainbow runners, Amberjacks, Black Marlin in the 500 to 700-lb range, same for Blue Marlin. You may need to head southwest off The Rock to find fish, but this is normal. Live bait is working and the bite is happening anywhere from 9:30 on for the moment. Live bait is still king, especially Google Eyes, but lures will work well for Marlin and Sailfish. Colors are changing, but pink and purple are killing them for the moment.

El Banco is still hot and cold, one day you’re up, the next it’s dead. But this is fishing and if you are one of the lucky ones who are hitting the high spots, you have these fishing grounds to yourself and if anything of any size is hungry, you own the place. You can literally experience what it was like to fish our World Famous Fishing grounds as it must have been in the 50’s or even 60’s when Puerto Vallarta was only a locally known spot for huge fish. Same species here, Sails, Marlin, Cubera Snapper, roll the dice. For me, Corbeteña is the place to be for the time being with the best opportunities for coming in with Bucket List fish - if you remember the movie. Check the latest conditions before heading out for sure.

With hurricanes passing us, then hurricanes on the opposite coast from us in Cancun and Veracruz, the weather has been strange, not horrible, but cooler than normal which is being reflected in the fishing. The fish are out there, but they are moving more than I would expect and even if there is bait in the area, Marlin and Yellowfin Tuna are not exactly jumping in the boat either. When things get like this it is very, very important to have a captain with a full line of lures and equipment to make sure if there is a trick that needs to be done, the crew has the tools.

Another thing, as a safety reminder: many boats operating in Marina Vallarta are not using marine radios, many are using cell phones. This means they can’t hear the reports in the bay or farther out from other boats.

It also means they cannot call for an S.O.S. if there is an issue. They are supposed to have radios like this by law, but there you are. If the boat does not have a radio, do not pay this person, you are expecting basic safety equipment and this is the most basic piece!

Until next time, don’t forget to kiss your fish…

And don’t forget to visit Marina Vallarta with its 150 shops, restaurants and professional services. It’s Puerto Vallarta’s other Malecon and it’s largely ignored by tourists, what with no real promotion by the city. Why? Who knows, but it is how it is, amigos. With yachts, and the energy, you owe it to yourself to come down and see it!

22 million visitors with “deaf” ears came to Mexico last year, a record year for tourism even with the news. Find out more here and calm your fears amigo: http://theintelhub.com/2012/06/29/tourism-booms-in-mexico-as-crime-rises/

You can come be a “Fan” on Facebook here: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Master-Baiters-Sportfishing-Tackle/88817121325
Looking forward to meeting you online. Facebook Fans get special perks you won’t find in my reports.

Master Baiter’s has changed its location to a larger shop located on the boardwalk in Marina Vallarta, directly in front of Dock D in the shops behind the grassy area in the Puesta Del Sol complex, halfway between the Fajita Banana and Chappy’s bar, right next to the ATM. Map of location in Marina Vallarta: http://masterbaiters.com.mx/location/ Come in and say hello to Stan.

Facing the water, turn to your right and we’re down four doors or so from Las Palomas the Restaurant. Remember, at Master Baiter’s Sportfishing and Tackle, “We Won’t Jerk You Around!” If you have any questions on any subject regarding fishing or Puerto Vallarta, feel free to ask at my email: CatchFish@MasterBaiters.com.mx Web page: www.MasterBaiters.com.mx

The trade name Master Baiter’s ® Sportfishing and Tackle is protected under trade mark law and is the sole property of Stan Gabruk.
Windows 8... Finished baking!

This past week, Microsoft released the final version of Windows 8 to TechNet members (which yours truly is a part of). So, I thought I’d share my experience installing it and first impressions. Microsoft says Windows 8 is a reinventing of Windows from the ground up. Good or bad, I have to agree.

When you first boot into Windows 8, you’re asked if you want to use your Microsoft login (formerly your Windows Live login). If you say yes, you are dropped into the full-on Windows 8 experience, including full integration with Microsoft’s SkyDrive cloud storage service, social networking services, and simple access to the Microsoft Store. You can opt out of this, but then you end up with an enhanced (or crippled, depending on your point of view) Windows 7 experience.

After logging into Windows 8 with my Microsoft ID, my phone buzzed with an SMS confirmation message. I also received a similar message via email. Both asked me to give permission for the new system to access my SkyDrive folders. That little bit of extra security may help assuage some security fears. In the increasingly cloud-driven technology world, the line between security and convenience is becoming increasingly blurred.

After installing software, the Windows 8 user interface screen (previously called “Metro”) became cluttered with tiles. Tile sizes seem to vary and, while there may be some logic to the organization, it got cluttered quickly. Anyone who knows me, know I keep my desktop to minimal icons normally.

I say the main interface was previously called “Metro” because Microsoft had to back pedal on the name for the whole new look and feel of Windows 8. It seems at least the threat of litigation is indeed behind Microsoft suddenly dropping the Metro name and encouraging 3rd party developers to do the same - just weeks before full release!

Fingers are being pointed to giant German electronics retailer Metro AG, and with German courts being very trigger happy about blanket European bans on even weak grounds, I’m sure Microsoft is pretty eager not to jeopardize a smooth launch of their newest operating system.

By now, I’ve written about most of the apps that will come baked into Windows 8, but there is one late-comer: Bing. When you first launch the application, you’ll see a mostly blank screen, with just a search bar and an ever-changing background photo. As you type results, Bing will offer suggestions and if we do say so, the auto-completion feels pretty quick. From there, results will be displayed not in a linear order, but as tiles you can swipe through, from side to side.

Another new program in Windows 8 is the “People App”. In addition to scrolling through names in alphabetical order, you can link your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and view your notifications all on one page. You can also check out a “What’s New?” page to see what your friends are posting. Not sure I need to know that a friend in Atlanta made his “first” cappuccino at home - before getting to my email. This is an app I won’t be using much.

They say that a Windows 8-based PC is really a new kind of device, one that works from touch-only small screens through to large screens, with or without a keyboard and mouse.

Realistically, the new OS appears to have two completely separate interfaces - one, a traditional (and, on the surface of it, largely unchanged) Windows desktop and the other a new touch-based interface that borrows heavily from Windows Phone. The new (formerly Metro) interface is a start-screen based around large, colorful tiles linked to applications. It’s a general one click/touch to your favorite info, app or website.

One of the biggest user changes people will notice is the elimination of the “start” button we’ve all been clicking on since Windows ´95. I know many people will scream in unison to this change. We are creatures of habit. Change can be difficult to accept; on this point...time will tell.

Before you get too worried of being left behind, both Windows Vista and Windows 7 have minimum system requirements of a 1GHz processor and 1GB of RAM. I’d expect Windows 8 to happily run on any system that can run Windows 7.

So no worries of that shiny new computer you bought 6 months ago… It will work with the new Windows 8-if you choose to upgrade to it. No one is being left behind—even if you don’t have a touch screen yet!

The ‘fundamentals’ Microsoft is aiming for with Windows 8 include “a fast on/off experience, responsiveness, and a great level of reliability from the start”. I have to say, they seem to have accomplished VERY fast start-up/shutdown times.

Next week we’ll continue sorting through Windows 8 including the wheres and hows of getting the new operating system-if you’re so inclined.

That’s all my time for now. See you again in next week.

Until then, Remember… only safe Internet!

Ron can be found at CANMEX Computers. Sales, Repairs, Networking, Wi-Fi, Hardware upgrades, Graphic Design, Data Recovery, House-calls available. www.RonnieBravo.com, Cellular 044-322-157-0688 or just email to canmex@gmail.com
I was on a bike trip recently with four other guys, cycling several hours a day in Vermont. But every time we got to a long hill, one guy charged up ahead at breakneck speed, desperate to reach the top a minute before the others.

What was he so eager to experience? A breathtaking view? A chance to meditate alone?

No, just a few moments to scroll through his BlackBerry mail, check his last 85 emails and fire back some terse three-word answers with his thumbs - before we caught up to him. His BlackBerry-clutching figure was a comic sight for three days, silhouetted against every stunning hilltop view and field of wild flowers.

We laughed hysterically at our CrackBerry buddy, but we weren’t much better. We’d all brought our own cell phones, but none of them worked because we were in a remote area with terrible reception. So we kept borrowing his sophisticated gizmo to pick up our own email, confirm our next inn and check the hourly weather forecast.

This was only the tip of our technological addiction. Three guys had also brought computers with Wi-Fi that we all mainlined each morning at our tiny inns. Two guys had portable GPS devices that offered constant directions while cycling, to compare with our maps - and we debated our way at every turn.

Guy 1: The map says to turn right at the Fort road. This must be it coming up here.

Guy 2: No way! According to my GPS, the Fort turnoff is 1,537 metres ahead - after the third lane, the second barn, the 17th cow and the 4th rooster.

Guy 3: Nope - it’s the third rooster - my GPS shows one rooster just died.

I started the trip smirking at these “boy-toys” but ended up smitten. When it began to rain one afternoon and we were wet and hungry in the middle of nowhere, our GPS general pushed an emergency button on his machine that said “FOOD.”

His machine instantly flashed the distances to the seven nearest restaurants, pizzerias and grocery stores - with precise directions for getting there via main roads or backwood shortcuts.

It won’t be long before these devices provide onscreen “cyclist take-out” menus, so someone else with a GPS can deliver en route. As you pedal, a bike messenger will race up beside you holding a giant Domino box and say: Are you the guys who ordered the all-dressed veggie with no onions? No, we wanted the meatball-pepperoni-and-steak combo. Okay, the next delivery guy will be by with that soon - my order must be for some other cyclists 857 metres ahead.

Even in the most idyllic settings, our gadgets ruled. Two guys had “cycle computers” that measured precisely how many miles and metres we went. One guy kept announcing the exact number of minutes we’d actually been pedalling - versus resting, eating or debating directions. Then he’d calculate the calories we’d burned vs. the dinner we’d earned that night - though no matter how much we cycled, dinner always won.

I didn’t realize how weirdly wired we were until we met six mothers at one inn, doing a similar trip in very different fashion. To start with, they had a golden rule: no technology allowed - no GPS, computers, cell phones or gadgets of any kind. They didn’t want to be reached by the outside world, especially by husbands and kids asking if they should add fabric softener to the dishwasher.

How did the women keep tabs on the weather and nearby lunch spots? They said they didn’t - because they were super-organized. They never needed emergency FOOD because two women were in charge of making appetizers, sandwiches, drinks and brownies. They didn’t have debates over directions because another woman was in charge of navigation and no one argued.

They even had a designated mechanic to deal with bike problems. When one of our guys bent his chain, we BlackBerried the nearest bike shop for help.

What was the difference between the guys and the girls? Oh, about 100,000 years of evolution. The mothers were today’s version of the ancient female “gatherers” who collected and prepared food - and kept the campsite in order - while the men were off hunting.

Meanwhile, we guys were the pathetic remnants of those ancient hunters, but with no real weapons or skills. We’d been reduced to firing off BlackBerry messages, tracking our way by GPS and cornering our prey at the nearest roadside pizzeria. We’d become hunters of restaurants, hourly weather forecasts and the exact distance pedalled - while the women were gatherers of modern ingredients, like sliced prosciutto and jarred Dijon honey mustard.

At 9 p.m., the women said goodnight so they could wake up at 5 a.m. to make sandwiches, tune their bikes and carefully plan their schedule. We kept drinking until midnight, confident that if anything went wrong the next day, we could always BlackBerry our way out.

Josh Freed writes a humorous weekly column about everything from potholes to politics to the pigeons who’ve taken over his back balcony in Montreal. In both 2002 and 1997 he won the National Newspaper Award for best Canadian columnist, while a collection of his columns also won the Leacock Prize for humor. Between columns, Josh is an award-winning documentary-maker whose films have taken him from Mongolia and Russia to the North Pole. His “Merchandising Murder” won the World Medal for Investigative Reporting at the New York International TV Festival. He has also written several best-selling books. Josh is directionally-disabled, calligraphy-challenged and hair-impaired, as his regular readers know. But he believes that he who laughs, lasts. His e-mail address is joshfreed49@gmail.com

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Ongoing Events & More...

The Museum on the Isla Cuale is open Tues. to Sat., from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free admission. *****

Entrance to the Historical Naval Museum (right next to Los Arcos Amphitheater) is also free. *****

The famous Voladores de Papantla perform every afternoon on the Malecon.

- Mon., Tue., Fri. - 7 p.m. - Pre-Hispanic Dance - Parque Hidalgo
- Tues. & Thur. - 9:30 & 10 a.m. - Zumba in Paradise! - at the PCC *
- Wed. & Fri. - 1 p.m. - Beginners Spanish at the PCC *
- Wednesday, Sept 5. - 6 p.m. - Mexican Loteria - at Los Alcatraces, for PuRR Project (See Thursday - 6 to 7 p.m. - Municipal Band - the main square
- Thursday - 6 p.m. - Community Bible Study led by Pastor Randy Barr - at the PCC *
- Friday - 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. - PuRR Project Pet Adoptions - Plaza Marina
- Friday & Saturday - 11 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. - AngeliCat Pet Adoptions - at Plaza Caracol
- Saturday - Pet Adoptions - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Los Mangos Public Library (every 2nd Saturday - Market Co-Op - 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - at the PCC * - see ad in this issue
- Saturday - SPCA Pet Adoptions - 8 a.m. to 12 noon at Stadium entrance
- Sunday - 10:30 a.m. - Christian Worship in Paradise - at the PCC *
- Sunday - 6 to 7 p.m. - Municipal Band, 7 to 8 p.m. - Danzon Music - In the main square
- Sunday - 8 p.m. - Xiutla Dancers - at Los Arcos Amphitheater

* PCC = Paradise Community Center located at 127 Pulpito. Closed on Mondays. For information & reservations - Cell: (322) 133-7263

AT THE NEW BOUTIQUE THEATER - Please visit www.boutiquetheatre.ca for more info

AT TEATRO VALLARTA - For info: www.teatrovallarta.com Tel.: 222-4525/4517/4475.

N.B.: All events are subject to change without notice.
Non-Profit Charitable Organizations

For visitors to Puerto Vallarta who wish to do a good deed for the less privileged in our little paradise, this is a list of some of the many organizations that could benefit from such kind gestures.

Asilo San Juan Diego - home for the elderly - Contact: Lupita Sanchez Covarrubias Tel. 222-1257 or malupita88@hotmail.com or visit the website www.mexonline.com/asilosanjuandiego.htm

Asociación Down - The Foundation for assistance to persons with Down’s Syndrome - Contact Ana Catalina Eisenring at 224-9577.

Banderas Bay Women’s Shelter - Safe shelter to women & children victims of domestic violence. Enables women to become financially independent through jobs, education and non-interest micro loans, professional counseling for them & their children. www.compassionforthefamily.org

Becas Vallarta, A.C. – provides scholarships to approximately 300 high school and university students. Donations are tax-deductible in Mexico and the USA. Polly Vicars at (322) 223-1371 or Buri Gray at (322) 221-5285. Website: www.puerto-vallarta/amf

Casa Hogar – a shelter dedicated to improving the lives of orphaned, abandoned, disadvantaged or vulnerable children. - Contact: Luz Aurora Arredondo at 221-1908, Rita Millan (322) 141-6974. casamaximocornejo@gmail.com

Centro Comunitario SETAC-GLBT - provides essential services to the GLBT community, including physical & mental health treatment and referrals, education & recreation, free AA meetings, English classes, HIV testing and counseling. Paco Arjona 224-1974 or paco@setac.com.mx

Clinica de Rehabilitación Santa Barbara - Rehabilitation of the handicapped. Contact: Laura Lopez Portillo Rodriguez at 224-2754.

CompassionNet Impact - forms strategic partnerships & initiates programs that provide opportunities for people living in chronic poverty to transform their own lives. Bookmobile, homes, jobs creation, loans, English & computer classes, emergency food, medicine & clothing, etc. Tax-deductible in Canada & the U.S. Cell: (322) 133-7263. ric@4compassion.org

Cruz Roja (Red Cross) - handles hospital and emergency service in Vallarta. It is the only facility that is authorized to offer assistance to injured people on the street, transport them to their facility or other ones indicated by the injured person. Contact: 222-1533, 222-4973

Discapacitados de Vallarta, A.C. (DIVAC) association of handicapped individuals dedicated to helping one another. Contact: Ivan Applegate at 221-5153.

Grupo Ecológico de Puerto Vallarta - Contact R.C. Walker at 222-0897, e-mail: rc_walkermx@yahoo.com.mx

International Friendship Club (IFC) - Assists the people of Puerto Vallarta and environs. Donations are tax deductible in Mexico. Tel.: 222-5466 or email ifc@pv mexico.com Website: www.pv mexico.com/news/

Navy League - Helps in the transportation of donated supplies and equipment from the U.S. to Puerto Vallarta. Contacts: Jerry Lafferty at (322) 221-6156 or Jeff Miltenberger at navyleague@prodigy.net.mx

New Life Mexico - a British Charity working in Mexico. “Challenging Child Poverty with Health and Education Programmes”. Contact: Philippa.VernonPowell@facebook.com

Pasitos de Luz (Mamas Unidas por la Rehabilitación de sus Hijos) - substitute home for low income children with any type of handicap, offers rehabilitation services and special support to their families. 299-4146. www.pasitosdeluz.org

PEACE Mexico – Works on Protection, Education, Animal health (free mobile spay/neuter program for cats & dogs), Culture, Environment & economic development, with communities in the Bay of Banderas area and beyond. Tax deductible in Canada & the U.S. Gretchen@peacecmexico.org or www.peacemexico.org

Pro Biblioteca de Vallarta raises funds for Los Mangos Public Library. Tax-deductible receipts for Mexico and USA. Contacts: Ricardo Murrieta at 224-9966 or Jimmie Ellis at 222-1478.

Proyecto Pitillal, “Busca un Amigo” - association created by underprivileged mothers of paralyzed children who need society’s help. Tel.: 299-4495.

PuRR Project - a no-kill cat shelter with approx. 250 resident felines living in a natural environment, un-caged, kittens in the Kitten Nursery, on-site clinic with daily veterinarian services. www.purrproject.com

Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza Shelter for children. Contacts: Madre Mari at 222-7857 or Sudy Coy at 222-5765. Donations are tax-deductible in Canada and the U.S. www.ccs.hf.ca

The goal of Roma’s Kids - a registered corporation in Mexico is to educate the children of the Volcanes and surrounding area, to provide them with the skills necessary to become employable by the major industry here in Puerto Vallarta – tourism: math, English and computer programs a priority. 100% goes to the kids. www.kids.romamexico.com

SPCA PV – provides private vet costs for rescued animals, volunteers to create & maintain a data base of adoptions, to walk dogs at the foster home, Casita de Guadalupe, foster homes for dogs & cats, trap & release program for feral cats, etc. www.spcapv.com

Un Mañana Brillante (A Brighter Tomorrow) - partnership of Americans and Canadians to support the Colegio Mexico-Americano. Contact: Margi Baughman. Email: mach1@prodigy.net.mx or David Bender, email: dbender@prodigy.net.mx

Vallarta Botanical Gardens - Vision: to build Mexico’s greatest botanical garden in the highlands of Jalisco, Mexico. Research & education of plant life, city beautification programs, bird watching, etc. Donations to the Vallarta Botanical Gardens are tax deductible in the USA. Tel.: 223-6182 or email info@vallartabotanicalgardensac.org.