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Guatemala's English-language Magazine
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December 2008
Year 17, No. 10

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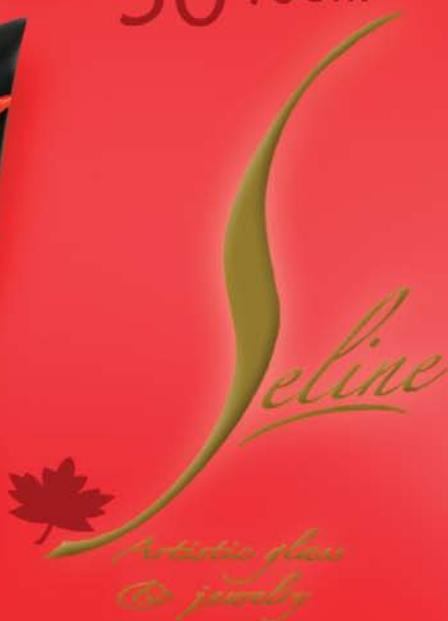
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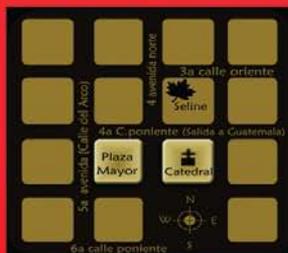


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A large background image showing a serene landscape with a blue lake in the foreground and green mountains in the distance under a clear sky.

A small inset image showing a modern security guard post with a sign that reads "SEGURIDAD" and a guard standing nearby.

A small inset image showing a group of people playing basketball on an outdoor court.

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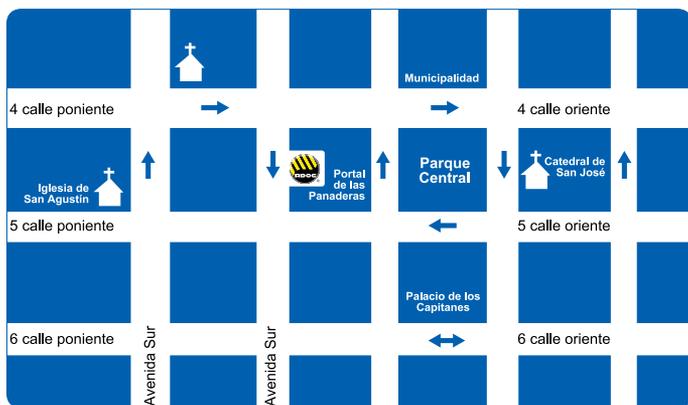
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14

14 People and Projects
 Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala
Providing training and resources to the Mayan people of northwest Guatemala



16

16 Mystery at Tak'alik Ab'aj
 Archaeologists recently discovered ancient altars, monuments and an unprecedented stone sculpture at the Mayan ruin near Retalhuleu.



36

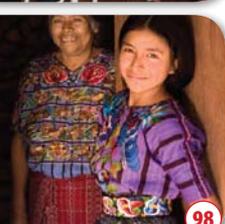
18 Book Release: ISTMO
 Featuring stunning photography of Central America by Ange Bourda, to debut in January 2009



70

19 Profile: Bette van Lunteren
 Dancer and Choreographer
by Joy Houston

20 DATEBOOK » December
 Guide to culture and upcoming events



98

36 Sensuous Guatemala:
 Holiday Mélange *by Ken Veronda*

56 Tax Matters *by Steven Pittser*
 Santa vs Tax Planning

62 Christmas Music from Renaissance Antigua *by Dieter Lehnhoff, Ph.D.*

64 The Night Before Navidad
 Spanglish version

70 NGO Networking
by John Barrie

80 The Gift of Giving *by Dr. Karmen Guevara*

98 People and Projects
 Cojolya Association celebrates 25 years supporting women weavers
by Amanda Flayer



118

118 Cricket in El Salvador

Deadline for January » Dec. 10

REGIONS

- 28 Guatemala City
- 48 La Antigua
- 95 Lake Atitlán
- 100 Quetzaltenango
- 102 Monterrico/Pacific Coast
- 104 Cobán / Retalhuleu
- 105 Tecpán
- 106 Río Dulce
- 107 El Petén

DEPARTMENTS

- 12 From the Publishers
- GUATEMALA CITY**
- 28 Services/Shopping
- 33 Dining
- 39 Lodging
- LA ANTIGUA**
- 48 Services/Shopping
- 54 Spanish Schools
- 58 Dining
- 78 Lodging

SECTIONS

- 42 Health
- 46 Vet Q&A
- 90 Travel
- 108 Classifieds
- 110 10 Top Picks in DVDs
- 112 Real Estate

118 El Salvador

126 Advertiser Index

ON THE COVER



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X I  A N

TIME FURNITURE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS

Our thanks to Rudy Girón, Revue's own art director and graphic designer, for adding so much holiday cheer on the cover and inside this month's edition with his photographs.

We are introducing a new series: People and Projects, and for December we'd like to tell you about *Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala*, *NGO Networking* and the *Cojolya Association*.

The Mystery at Tak'alik Ab'aj is about the discovery of an unprecedented stone sculpture that, as in the case of all archaeological finds, provides some answers but provokes even more questions.

The soon-to-be-released book *ISTMO* is a gorgeous hard-cover volume featuring stunning aerial views of Central America by internationally acclaimed photographer Ange Bourda in collaboration with Rubén Najera, María Isabel Quezada and Evelina González de Herrera. It will debut in Guatemala in January 2009.

Our People Profile is the lovely ballerina *Bette van Lunteren* who choreographed the upcoming staged production of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," performed by local children and members of the National Ballet of Guatemala. See DateBook for more information about this performance along with many other scheduled activities including art shows, musical concerts, theater, film presentations, workshops and a special *Holiday Calendar*.

Our seasonal offering includes *Sensuous Guatemala: Holiday Mélange*, *Christmas Music from Renaissance Antigua*, *The Night Before Navidad* and *The Gift of Giving*.

Reminder to photographers: the January 2009 Revue will be our 8th Annual Photography Issue. We are accepting submissions only until December 10.

We wish you all Happy Holidays and a very Prosperous New Year. —*JBT*

REVUE

Guatemala's English-language Magazine

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as well as locations in El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize.

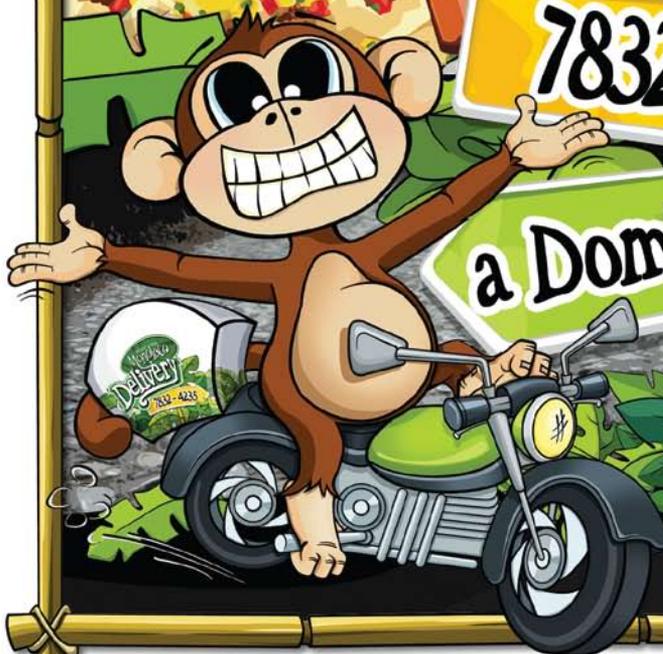
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PEOPLE and PROJECTS



Students learn dental hygiene skills in the village of San Juan Tutlac through one of the Adopt-a-Village vocational programs.



The Mayan Center, a residential high school being built on a mountaintop in the rainforest of north-west Guatemala, will serve two dozen villages.

Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala

Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala partners with Mayan villages in the remote northwest corner of the country, where there are virtually no public services, secondary schools or other aid organizations providing consistent support. At the urging of village leaders, AAV focuses primarily on orphans and the children of widows who have few resources to support their families

Mission: To empower the Mayan people of northwest Guatemala by providing training and resources so they may develop improved education, health, and economic conditions in their communities.

Past Achievements: AAV has completed more than 60 major projects, including building nine primary schools, and providing support for middle schools serving a dozen villages. AAV also has built water systems and roads and run health programs.

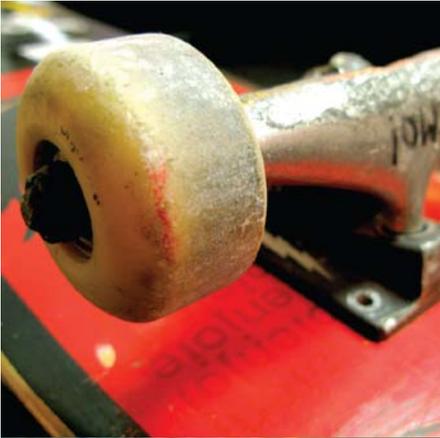
Current Projects: AAV's current focus is completing the Mayan Center, a unique residential high school that will make advanced education available to the children of two dozen surrounding villages. The school curriculum and schedule have been designed so that students will be able to continue to help support their families while they are in school. Students will learn vocational skills such as animal husbandry, dentistry and carpentry in addition to the traditional academic subjects and Mayan culture.

Wish List: Sponsorships and financial support: Scholarships for Mayan Center students; funds for food, clothing and medical help for widows and orphans.

Other Assistance: Volunteer carpenters, general contractors, and cabinet makers. 📍

To learn more and view a video of the organization, visit www.adoptavillage.com or email: guatvillage@aol.com.

I don't think you ever stop giving. I really don't. I think it's an on-going process. And it's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life. —Oprah Winfrey



ARTIKLE

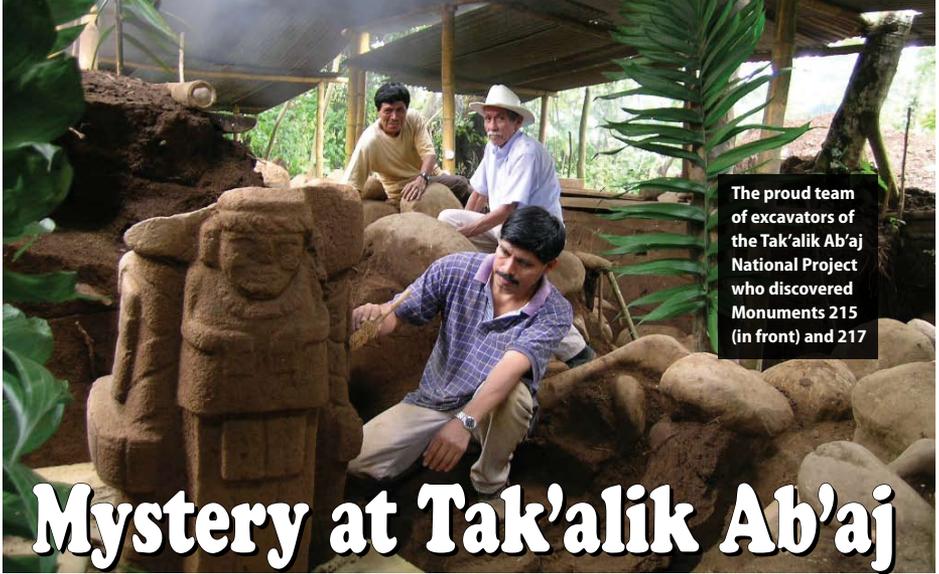
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Mystery at Tak'alik Ab'aj

“Standing Stones” site yields unprecedented sculpture

Archaeologists recently discovered ancient altars, monuments and an unprecedented stone sculpture at a 2.5-square-mile Mayan ruin near Retalhuleu in southwestern Guatemala.

Representing both Olmec and Maya cultures, the Tak'alik Ab'aj (Standing Stones) site was inhabited for nearly 1,700 years, starting roughly in 1000 BC, and was a key trading center with ancient merchants traveling from present-day El Salvador and Mexico. Since excavations began in the late 1800s, more than 250 buildings and monuments have been uncovered.

Archaeologists Christa Schieber de Lavarreda and Miguel Orrego Corzo, from the Guatemala Ministry of Culture and Sports, have in recent years been leading an excavation that has produced a stream of important discoveries, including evidence of one of the earliest royal burials ever found in an important Mayan site. In March 2008, the team unearthed Altar 48, the monument to the birth of Mayan culture. In June and August, additional monuments (215 and 217) were discovered.

Both sculptures of monuments 215 and 217 had been purposely damaged, with the pieces integrated as constructive elements in the wall. Archaeologists verified that the two sculptures had been linked, forming a single monumental sculpture carved on all four sides.

At a recent press conference, de Lavarreda and Orrego said the mysterious, enigmatic sculpture, known as “The Carrier of the Ancestor of Tak'alik Ab'aj,” is an unprecedented find. The sculpture presents an imposing character, decorated with insignias of power with certain Olmec characteristics. “The monument is unique and represents a great challenge for archaeologists,” de Lavarreda and Orrego said.

“Something very surprising is that this character is carrying a small human figure on his back. This small human figure has the position of his arms on his chest and hands folded down, and very straight legs, similar to those infants who are often found in the lap of the Olmec jade figures. These infant figures have been interpreted by some archaeologists as divine beings or ancestors. The quality of the volume and

complete form of the sculpture conveys the formal concepts of Olmec art sculpture; however, this sculpture seems strange,” they reported.

“The character is standing on the capital of a column of rectangular sides. The capital was carved in the shape of the head of a monster bat. This form of representation of the monster bat with Mayan features is found with a certain analogy a few decades later in other classic Maya cities, as in Quirigua and Copán. In Quirigua and Copán the steles have the monster of the earth Cauac on the base on which the rulers are standing.

“It is important to note that the small figure on the back of the standing character is literally joined by an extended cloth or skirt to the head of the bat. It is evident that the intention of the sculptor of this figure was to communicate the importance of the union of the carrier of the ancestor with the monster bat.”

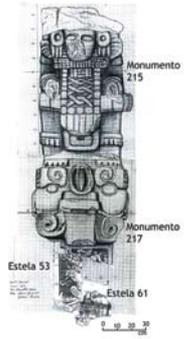
Schieber de Lavarreda and Orrego said this sculpture raises many questions:

- Why is the character carrying a small figure on his back?
- Who is the character and who is the little creature?
- Why is this character standing on a bat?
- Why is the sculptural style of the character different than that of the bat?
- What message did the sculpture transmit?
- Why was this sculpture destroyed and its pieces then included in the structure of the wall?
- Where had this sculpture been standing so it could be seen from all four sides?

It is known that the fragments of such enigmatic sculptures were placed into the buildings during the second part of the Late Pre-Classic Period ...continued on page 38



The imposing character of Monument 215, the alter having been lifted carefully by the crew into upright position



“Reconstructing” with photographs and carefully executed drawings of the imposing character (Monument 215) standing on top of the monster bat “capital” of the column-sculpture (Monument 217). The fragments of Stele 53 and 61 fitted with the remains of the column, thus recovering more of the ancient texts at its sides. All together it makes a monumental column-sculpture of at least 2.30m in height, and in every sense a historic landmark at the ancient city Tak’alik Ab’aj.



The monster bat head lifted into upright position. On the top of the head are the remains of the feet of the personage of Monument 215, which originally had been standing on the “capital” of monster bat head of the column-sculpture.

ISTMO

“ISTMO” Featuring unique views of Central America

With stunning aerials by internationally acclaimed photographer Ange Bourda, a new book featuring unique views of Central American sights, including volcanoes, beaches and rainforests, will debut in Guatemala in January 2009.

Titled *ISTMO* (Isthmus), the colorful hard-cover book contains 160 remarkable photos by Bourda, a widely published French photographer who considers Guatemala his adoptive home. In his own words, the accomplishment of this book has meant “the discovery of the extraordinary and unique region, with resources never before available and presented across revealing images that impose and confirm the height and depth of a Central America that is revealed as a new world in the dawn.”

The book reflects Central America as a region, integrated geographically, culturally and economically, in which all of its countries share a united future throughout their similarities.

The objective is to show a new vision of the region, including its natural, material and spiritual richness, and to give the isthmus an international relevance never seen before. The visual creativity and rich writing form the pillars of this exquisite work.

In addition to Bourda’s photography, the book contains narrative written by Rubén

Nájera, an award-winning Guatemalan writer whose work has been published in Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba and France. María Isabel Quezada designed the book; Quezada, a graduate of Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, handled design and graphical production of several coffee-table books. Evelina González de Herrera was in charge of general coordination and executive production.

The book contains five chapters:

1. At Dawn: introduces the reader to the adventure of the book.
2. The Great Perspective: presents great sights from the isthmus itself.
3. Memoirs of Fire: photographs inspired by volcanoes in the region.
4. Between Two Seas: photos of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, rivers and lakes.
5. Inhabiting the Earth: how people have developed the earth in order to subsist.

Proceeds from *ISTMO* benefits the *Compañero en Salud*, an NGO which helps bring health and medical care to people in extreme poverty in Guatemala. Since its beginning in 2004, *Compañero en Salud* has helped over 20,000 patients receive medical treatment. The publication was made possible in part by TACA airlines. 

For more information contact Evelina González or Yazmín de Pérez at: 2366-1872 or 5460-8666 or email: yazymau@hotmail.com.

Bette van Lunteren

by Joy Houston photo by Jack Houston



Ballerina Bette van Lunteren danced her way from her home in Holland to the heart of La Antigua Guatemala. She graduated from the Theater Dance Department of the School of Arts in Amsterdam and taught Dutch school children for six years. Her program was one of interactive expression on a one-day theme, group by group, eventually laced together into a production to be enjoyed by parents at the end of the day.

Bette's education in ballet, modern and jazz dance led her to explore the five rhythms in meditative dance—flow, staccato, chaos, lyric and silence—like movements of a symphony. Not surprisingly, she was intrigued when introduced to the Mayan calendar, with its marking of time according to nature. Always ready for new adventure, she decided to learn more. "I'd never heard of Guatemala," she admits. But, noting on the calendar that Guatemala was in the middle, "It sounded so safe!" So in 2003 she packed herself up, planning a stay of four months.

"Here I connected with nature. I climbed volcanoes and rafted in rivers. The signs and numbers of the calendar became less important, and I let go of the whole thing for a few years." She was content with a job, enjoying her new experience. "Then I took on another challenge. I was ready to get back to the dancing. And I decided I wanted to work with children again."

Currently Bette's focus is on choreography of the upcoming production of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, which includes local children as well as members of the National Ballet of Guatemala, and La Antigua musician Arturo Rosales, who was influential in her job change.

How long will ballerina Bette stay in La Antigua? "I live here," she answers firmly. "Holland is to visit. I feel good here because of the balance with nature." 

How the Grinch Stole Christmas, written and adapted for ballet by Johnny Long, choreographed by ballerina Bette van Lunteren, will be performed at 4 p.m. on **December 11** in the auditorium of Asociación Nuestros Ahijados, #106 on the road to San Felipe. The production by Dorotea, Johnny and musician Arturo Rosales features local children and members of the National Ballet of Guatemala. "Who knows?" says Johnny. "Like the British Christmas pantomime tradition that developed in the 19th century, with narration, songs, humor and audience participation, this has the possibility of becoming an annual event."



Donation, Q40 adults, children admitted FREE! Also, limited FREE transportation leaves at 3:30pm from La Antigua central park, opposite the cathedral, and returns after the performance.



DECEMBER Guide to culture & upcoming events Compiled by Mercedes Mejicanos

1 Mon., though Thurs., 4th, 9am-2pm — (Spanish) WORKSHOP: *Tecnología, producción y simbolismo en la lírica prehispánica* with Alejandro Pastrana from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México. Q200/Q100 students with carnet. Museo Popol Vuh (tel: 2338-7836) Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 6a calle final, z. 10, **Guatemala City.**

1 Mon., through Wed., 17th, 6pm — (Spanish) FILMS: Several short films presented as part of the *Mirando al Sur* series. Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española (tel: 7832-1276) 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, **La Antigua.**

2 Tues., 5:30pm — (English) Tuesday evening NGO TOPIC & GUEST SPEAKER: *Pedal Power Technology: An alternate source of energy in Guatemala* with Carlos Marroquín who has worked for nine years with Maya Pedal, encouraging rural development by introducing bicycle/machines to facilitate daily life and economic development. Donation Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919) 7a av. sur #8, **La Antigua.**

2 Tues., 7:30pm — MUSIC: Handel's *Messiah*, musical director Debby Lyttle, with more than 100 volunteer voices and a 30-strong orchestra featuring top soloists from Guatemala and the U.S. Q50 & Q150, Q200 for reserved seating. Gran Sala Efraín Recinos, Centro Cultural Miguel Ángel Asturias, 24 calle 3-81, z. 1, **Guatemala City;** **3 Wed., 7:30pm** — second performance, seating Q200 at the Casa Santo Domingo, **La Antigua.** ▼



4 Thurs., through Sat., 6th, 9am-4pm — CHRISTMAS BAZAAR: New and traditional weavings, arts and crafts by artists from all over Guatemala offering some unique and creative gifts. Indigo Artes Textiles (tel: 7888-7487) inside Centro Cultural La Azotea, **Jocotenango.**

4 Thurs., 6pm — (Spanish w/English subtitles) FILM: *El amor en los tiempos de cólera* (Love in the Time of Cholera). Q15. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037) 5a calle poniente #15, **La Antigua.**

4 Thurs., 7pm — MUSIC: Spanish rock concert with Mario San Miguel & El Ejército del Amor 2008. Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española (tel: 7832-1276) 6a av. norte, between 3a y 4a calle poniente, **La Antigua.**

4 Thurs., 8pm — (Spanish) THEATER: *Silencio Bodecker & Neander*. Q150 to Q400. Gran Sala Efraín Recinos (tel: 5998-4757) Centro Cultural Miguel Ángel Asturias, 24 calle 3-81, z. 1, **Guatemala City.**



6 Sat., 5pm — ART: Inauguration of *Mirando al Sur*, featuring artistic expressions by Central American artists. Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española (tel: 7832-1276) 6a av. norte between 3a y 4a calle p., **La Antigua.**

Please submit your DATEBOOK entry for the JAN. 2009 edition of the REVUE by Wed., December 10



6 Sat., & Sat 13th, 5pm — BALLET: *El Cascanueces* (The Nutcracker) presented by the Ballet Nacional de Guatemala. Q10, Q30, Q50. Gran Sala Efraín Recinos (tel: 2253-3118) Centro Cultural Miguel Ángel Asturias, 24 calle 3-81, z. 1, **Guatemala City**.

6 Sat., — OPENING: Celebrate the official opening of the Isla Verde Lakefront Restaurant and Lounge. Email for an invitation, hotel@islaverdeatitlan.com. Isla Verde Lakefront Restaurant and Lounge (tel: 5760-2648), **Santa Cruz, Lake Atitlán**.

7 Sun., 2pm — PARADE: A celebration in honor of the Virgen de Concepción with a parade of floats (a convite), that leaves the cathedral and travels through the town of **Ciudad Vieja, Sacatepéquez** (5 km. from La Antigua).

7 Sun., 6pm — A pre-CHRISTMAS CUSTOM: *Quema del diablo* (Burn the Devil) a tradition that eliminates evil spirits and clears the way for Christmas celebrations. Fuente de las Delicias, 4a calle oriente, 2 blocks past 1a av. norte, **La Antigua**.

8 Mon., 4pm — PROCESSION: *Rezado*, a procession of the Virgen de Concepción with fireworks and folkloric dances and dramas performed throughout the route. **Ciudad Vieja, Sacatepéquez**.

8 Mon., through Fri., 12th, 9am-4pm — WORKSHOP: *The Magic of Color*, learn how to dye wool, silk and animal fibers, using 100% natural processes with the native plants of Guatemala. Indigo Artes Textiles (tel: 7888-7487) inside Centro Cultural La Azotea, **Jocotenango**.

8 Mon., though Jan. 15 — ART: *Personajes místicos* by Guatemalan artist Rigoberto Mejía Gómez. Vanguardia Galería de Arte (tel: 4144-2983) 3a calle 6-23, z. 2, **Quetzaltenango**. ▼



9 Tues., 10-5pm — (English/Spanish) NETWORKING: For NGOs and private projects, offering a place for people who have or are working on projects to present and share ideas. Everyone is welcome; tea and snacks. Stuardo's Place (tel: 7832-3160) Calle Chipilapa #9-A, **La Antigua**.

Revue is not responsible for event cancellations or date/time changes.

9 Tues., 5:30pm — (English) Tuesday evening NGO TOPIC & GUEST SPEAKER: *A Road Map for Successful Social Entrepreneurship* with As Green As It Gets, a non-profit organization supporting coffee farmers, artisans and other small producers from disadvantaged communities in Guatemala. Donation Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919) 7a av. sur #8, **La Antigua**.

10 Wed., 5pm

— ART:
Inauguration of *Primo-Natura*, paintings by Marcela Ramazzini. Galería Panza Verde (tel: 7832-2925) 5a av. sur #19, **La Antigua**.



10 Wed., & Thurs., 11th, 8pm — MUSIC:
A Christmas concert by the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional. Q50 & Q30. Tickets available at 5a calle 3-25, z. 1 (tel: 2253-9023). Sala Efraín Recinos del Centro Cultural Miguel Ángel Asturias, 24 calle 3-81, z. 1, **Guatemala City**. ▼



11 Thurs., 4pm — POSADA NAVIDEÑA: Celebrate and participate in a Guatemalan posada, with the participation of the story teller Huguette, afterwards refreshments including punch and typical dishes. Donation Q10 p/p. Museo Ixchel (tel: 2361-8081) 6a calle final, z. 10, Centro Cultural Universidad Francisco Marroquín, **Guatemala City**.

11 Thurs., 4pm — THEATER: A balletic presentation for all ages, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, written and adapted for ballet by Johnny Long, choreographed by ballerina Bette van Lunteren. (See related article on page 19). This production by Dorotea, Johnny Long and musician Arturo Rosales features local children and members of the National Ballet of Guatemala. Donation, Q40 adults, children admitted FREE!! Also, limited FREE transportation leaves at 3:30pm from the central park, opposite the cathedral and returns after the performance. The auditorium of the Asociación Nuestros Ahijados #106 on the road to San Felipe, **La Antigua**.



11 Thurs., 6pm — (English) FILM: *Babel*, directed by Alejandro González (US). Q15. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037) 5a calle poniente #15, **La Antigua**.

12 Fri., — CUSTOM: *Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe*, throughout the country non-indigenous and indigenous children dress in typical clothing, paying homage to Juan Diego of Mexico and the Virgin of Guadalupe. One such procession begins at La Merced Church, **La Antigua**. ▼



12 Fri., 7pm — EXPO: *Proyecto Guatemala*, a series depicting street projects that epitomizes the theme *Mirando al Sur*. Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española (tel: 7832-1276) 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, **La Antigua**.

PHOTO BY RUDY GIRON/WWW.RUDYGIRON.COM

Please submit your DATEBOOK entry for the JAN. 2009 edition of the REVUE by Wed., December 10

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12 Fri., 8pm — CELEBRATION: Estudio 35 2nd anniversary party with live music, songs in English from the 80s and 90s, lots of beer and lots of fun; also their famous pizza 2x1 all month. Estudio 35, Calle del Arco #35, *La Antigua*.



13 Sat., 3-11pm — MUSIC: *Festival Eucalipto*, seven Guatemalan bands playing reggae, progressive rock, fusion, Guatemalan music, etc. For more information visit www.festivaleucalipto.org. Q45. Boulevard Hospital Militar Los Fresnos, z. 16, *Guatemala City*.




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The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. —Aristotle

Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures. —Henry Ward Beecher

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13 Sat., 7pm — ART: *A cucucho y otros juegos de zipotes* with paintings and drawings by Salvadoran artist Renato Melgar. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037) *La Antigua*. ▼



15 Mon., 5pm — MAYAN CEREMONY: Presentation of an authentic Mayan ceremony. La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468) 5a calle poniente #15-C, *La Antigua*.

16 Tues., 5pm — (English) Tuesday evening LECTURE: *Life in Guatemala: Brief History and Current Conditions* with Sue Patterson, a retired U.S. foreign service officer living in La Antigua, founder of WINGS, a non-profit dedicated to reproductive health and family planning. Donation Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919) 7a av. sur #8, *La Antigua*.

17 Wed., 9am, 2pm — WORKSHOP: *Basket Weaving*, make your own basket using all kinds of natural fibers of your choice. Indigo Artes Textiles (tel: 7888-7487) inside Centro Cultural La Azotea, *Jocotenango*.

17 Wed., 6pm — (Spanish, w/English subtitles) FILM: *La Historia Oficial*, directed by Luis Puenzo (Argentina). Free. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037) 5a calle poniente #15, *La Antigua*.

19 Fri., 10am-12:30pm & 2-4pm — WORKSHOP: *Decorating with Yoyos*, learn a historic technique using fabric yoyos to make placemats, pillows, vests, bags and lampshades. Bring a pen and good scissors. Instructions and fabric included. Indigo Artes Textiles (tel: 7888-7487) inside Centro Cultural La Azotea, *Jocotenango*.

19 Fri., 8pm & Sat., 20th, 7pm — MUSIC: *Tangopasión* by Manuel Antonio (vocals), Vinicio Quezada (piano) and Edgar Ávila (accordion). Q75, includes beverage. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037) 5a calle poniente #15, *La Antigua*.



20 Sat., 5pm — DANCE: Los Niños de Bendición from San Antonio Aguas Calientes present traditional folk dances; donations help to pay for school expenses. La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468) 5a calle poniente #5-C, *La Antigua*.

20 Sat., through Jan., 10 — PHOTOGRAPHY: *Retrato(s) de Mujer(es)*. Galería de arte de la Alianza Francesa (tel: 2440-2102) 5a calle 10-55, z. 13, *Guatemala City*.

20 Sat., 5pm — MUSIC: Christmas concert to benefit Jóvenes con Espíritu Libre, Proyecto Joel. Q75 includes a refreshment. Centro Luterano, 1a av. norte #35, *La Antigua*.

21 Sun., sundown — CELEBRATION: *Chanukah, the Festival of Lights*, a happy and joyous festivity. On this day the first candle on the menorah is lit. Small gifts are given to family and friends on each day of Chanukah; **22nd** — the feast of Chanukah; **29th** — The last candle is lit, symbolizing the ancient flask of oil that miraculously lasted for eight days.



23 Tues., 5:30pm — Tuesday evening NGO TOPIC & GUEST SPEAKER: *Juvenile Violence: Gangs in Guatemala*, Juan Carlos talks about working to eradicate violence through education, crime prevention plans and many other projects. Donation Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919) 7a av. sur #8, *La Antigua*.



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LIVE MUSIC

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

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31 Wed., 8pm — NEW YEAR'S PARTY: Live music, surprises and lots of fun. Estudio 35, Calle del Arco #35, *La Antigua*.

5 Fri., 5pm — Piano recital by students from Proyecto Cultural El Stitio, directed by Ricardo Carranza. Q30. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037) 5a calle poniente #15, *La Antigua*.



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Tuesdays, 7:30pm — Malcolm will blow you away with some classics and his infamous tequila song. Free.

Wednesdays, 7:30pm — *Open Mike Night* hosted by Juan-Jo and friends. A complimentary drink for all performers. Free.

Thursdays & Fridays, 7:30pm — Guest musicians.

Saturdays, 7:30pm — La Casa de Kello gets the party going with a mixture of original music, Latino beats, blues and popular Western music.



Sundays, 7:30pm — La Raiz-Luis, Juan-Jo & Choko, great improvised classics. Free.

La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468)

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Mondays, 7:30pm — Kenny Molina hosts *Open Mike*. Free.

Tuesdays, 7:30pm — Ramiro plays trova Cubana. Free.

Wednesdays-Sundays, 7:30pm — Sol Latino plays Andean music (pan flutes). Free. ▼



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24 Wed., noon — CHRISTMAS: Last minute holiday preparations, gift wrapping, cooking, many traveling home for the festivities; **10pm** — the start of midnight mass, *Misa de Gallo*; **Midnight** — fireworks, families and friends gather to celebrate the birth of Christ and Peace on Earth; **26th** — Banks and businesses open.

25 Thurs. — CHRISTMAS DAY: Traditionally a quiet day, with the exception of firecrackers and *bombas* booming at noon.

27 Sat., 9am-4pm — WORKSHOP: *Felt Making*, learn this fabulous technique of making woolen products with felt and then dye them with natural dyes. Indigo Artes Textiles (tel: 7888-7487) inside Centro Cultural La Azotea, *Jocotenango*.

31 Wed., — NEW YEAR'S PARTIES: Everywhere! Including Estudio 35; live music, surprises and lots of fun. Calle del Arco #35, *La Antigua*.

PHOTO BY RUDY GIRON/WWW.RUDYGIRON.COM



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DATEBOOK continues on page 30



"El secreto" by William Kalwick Jr.

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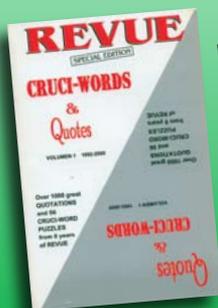
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THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

Daily, ART: *Pensamiento y movimiento*, a three-artist showing by Guatemalan ceramic sculptors María Girón, Alejandro Leal and Arturo Maldonado. These artists join their talents with one theme in mind: to show through their sculpture the intricate relationship between mind and movements as seen in dancing and walking. La Antigua Galería de Arte (tel: 7832-2124) 4a calle oriente #15, **La Antigua**. ▼



Through Wed., 24th — ART: *En la tierra del color* by Guatemalan artist Francisco García. Galería el Túnel (tel: 2367-3266) Plaza Obelisco 16 calle 1-01, z. 10, **Guatemala City**. ▼►



Mondays, 7pm — DHARMA FLICKS: **1st**-*Ram Dass, A Change of Heart*; **8th**-*Ram Dass, Fierce Grace*; **15th**-*Ram Dass, Conscious Again Dialogues*. Free. Mesón Panza Verde (tel: 7832-2925) 5a av. sur #19, **La Antigua**.

Tuesdays, 6pm — (English) SLIDE SHOW: *Antigua: Behind the Walls* by Elizabeth Bell. Q30 benefits educational programs. *No show on Dec. 9 & 16. Fussion Restaurant, 1a calle poniente #9, **La Antigua**.

Thursdays, 8pm — DOCUMENTARY NIGHT: **4th**-*Volcanoes, Nature's Inferno*; **11th**-*Secrets of the Maya Underworld*; **18th**-*Ancient Apocalypse, the Maya Collapse*. Q20, incl. a beer or pot of tea. Santa Cruz Cinema (tel: 5760-2648) Hotel Isla Verde, **Santa Cruz, Lake Atitlán**.

Saturdays, 2pm — SPORTS: La Antigua Rugby Club training. Everyone welcome to join, men, women, beginners through advanced. Q10. www.rugby.com.gt/antigua. **La Antigua**.

Sundays, 6:30pm (English) — SUNDAY ART FLICKS: **7th**-*How Art Made the World, part I*; **14th**-*How Art Made the World, part II*. Q15. Mesón Panza Verde (tel: 7832-2925) 5a av. sur #19, **La Antigua**.

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Holiday Calendar

PHOTOS BY RUDY GIRÓN/WWW.RUDYGIRON.COM



All year long he hides under the bed or in the junk piled up in the corner, casting misfortune or worse on helpless mortals. But on Monday, **December 7, at 6 p.m. sharp**, the devil gets his comeuppance, as he is tossed out of the house along with the trash and set ablaze in the *Quema del Diablo* (Burning the Devil), a tradition in many Guatemalan towns that literally sparks the beginning of the Christmas season. —Juan Carlos Ordóñez

December 7 & 8: Celebrations honoring the *Virgen de Concepción* featuring elaborate celebrations in Ciudad Vieja with a parade and a procession, fireworks and folkloric dances and dramas. Traditional food sold includes *estofado* and *ichintal en pulique*, which is the root of the güisquil plant cooked in slices and flavored with a tomato and onion sauce, cilantro and apazote. The favorite dessert on this holiday is crab apples (manzanillas) prepared “en dulce.”

December 8 is also the official day for setting up *nacimientos* (nativity scenes) which is a strong family tradition in Guatemala that requires skill and a lot of patience. The scene includes Mary,



Joseph and the figuring of the baby Jesus (who is covered up until the 25th). Also shepherds, a mule, an ox, sheep and three late-arriving ‘Wise Kings’ are waiting for the event. The finishing touch, an aromatic chamomile ring, creates the wonderful scent of a typical Guatemalan nativity. Nativities will not be put away until February 2 when the traditional Christmas season comes to an end. —Desirée de Ceballos & Karla Ceballos (Casa de Artes)

On **December 12**, the *Virgen de Guadalupe* is celebrated throughout the country. Many children dress in indigenous clothing and participate in parades and church blessings. One such procession begins at the La Merced Church in La Antigua Guatemala.

December 15 marks the beginning of nightly *Posadas* in a reenactment of the journey to Bethlehem. Pilgrims accompany Mary and Joseph, singing carols, beating



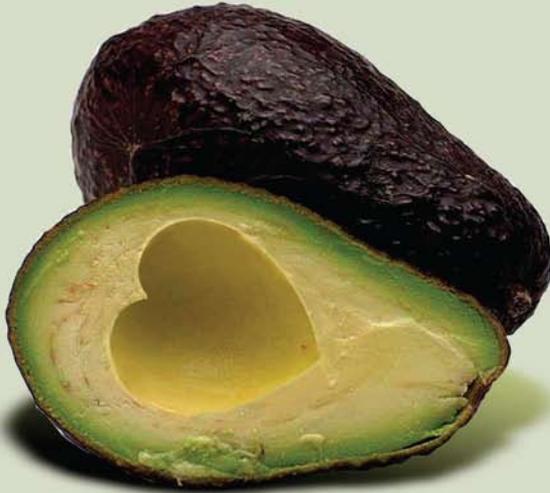
turtle shell drums and playing other typical Guatemalan instruments. They knock on doors seeking shelter but are turned away until they reach a designated home, where everyone is invited inside. As the holy couple is bedded down in solemn ceremony, the pilgrims scramble for refreshments. The journey continues to another house the next night, for a total of nine nights.

On the **24th of December** many are doing last minute Christmas shopping, visiting friends and catching buses bound for home. At **10pm** midnight Mass (*Misa de Gallo*) begins, celebrating the birth of Jesus. When the **25th** arrives, prayers, fireworks, good wishes, and traditional food are shared and enjoyed throughout the night. Christmas day is a quiet time with the exception of more fireworks at noon.



The traditional **Christmas Eve dinner** is *tamales* and of course fruit punch of papaya, pineapple, crab apple, prunes, raisins, cinnamon, clove and shredded coconut, served hot or cold when friends or family come to call. Hot chocolate is another holiday treat, as are buñuelos, fried puff pastry fritters in syrup made of molasses or brown sugar, anise and cinnamon.

January 1: Wishing one and all a very Happy New Year 2009!!



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Christmas Punch

- 1 pineapple, cubed
- 1 papaya, cubed
- 1 coconut, grated
- 4 ounces raisins
- 4 ounces prunes
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ½ pound sugar



Put one gallon of water in a pot and add the cinnamon. When the water begins to boil, add all the other ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Serves 20.

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Sensuous Guatemala: Holiday Mélange

Red and green are the traditional holiday colors around the world, including Guatemala. Here, however, sight is not the only sense involved in the year-end celebrations. Pungent odors and delightful tastes combine with vivid colors and sweet sounds in a multi-sensory holiday mixture. Bells ring with special joy, carolers sing, marimbas play the music of the season throughout the Highlands and down to the beaches along both coasts.

Red, intense holiday red, glows from clusters of poinsettia plants in homes and on the streets, in elegant newly woven blouses worn by proud indigenous ladies and in bougainvillea spilling from gardens over bright white walls. Deep glowing red shines, too, from garlands of chilies, contributing their snap and crackle as they roast on grills and their sharp taste to holiday foods. Red skies at sunset are matched by red flames in fireplaces that also contribute pungent odor from the smoke curling above homes.

Green pine needles scattered on freshly swept red tile floors give a rich odor that can almost be tasted as walkers crush them while shopping and partying. Green hillsides of the Highlands clean and bright as another rainy season closes, gives more of the rich pine smells and earthy odors from green corn fields. Green banana leaves wrap sweet red fruit stuffing in tamales,

and green garlands hang on doorways and drape across church altars.

But holidays here aren't just reds and greens. Gold is in nativity scenes, often woven of straw and gold tones gleam from corncobs on glowing red coals. Browns in the hillsides are mirrored in cups of hot chocolate offered singers visiting doorways during *posadas* and brown beans of coffee emerge from the red berries beginning to be picked in December.

Yellow flowers in the fields are matched by yellow, cream and golden butters, cakes and cookies on dining tables and by yellow ripened bananas, finger-sized and rich in flavor.

Blue, of course, is not only the color of Guatemala's flag, but also that of the skies most days of the year, and of the Pacific shores and the Caribbean breakers, with their salty tang and taste. Blue in the deep lakes, reflecting purple peaks of volcanoes, turns purple at dusk, the color of penitents' robes in holiday processions. Blue is strong all year throughout Central America, yet blue tones seem especially vivid in the bright sunlight of this season. And, of course, there is orange, on a rind of citrus and in a glass of juice; there are grays, in charcoals and in the curling incense; always there are rainbows of colors in the ever-blooming roses and occasionally a rainbow arching across the skies as a brief shower freshens the air in a holiday-time rich for all the senses. ❧



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An unhappy wife was complaining about her husband spending all his free time in a bar, so one night he took her along with him. "What'll you have?" he asked.
"Oh, I don't know. The same as you I suppose," she replied.
So, the husband ordered a couple of Jack Daniel's and threw his down in one shot.
His wife watched him, then took a sip from her glass and immediately spat it out.
"Yuck, that's TERRIBLE!" she spluttered. "I don't know how you can drink this stuff!"
"Well, there you go," cried the husband. "And you think I'm out enjoying myself every night!"



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The small human figure—is it the representation of the ancestor?—carried at the back of the personage of Monument 215.

Because so many archaeological sites are yet to be excavated and studied, it is predicted that the established concepts about Mayan history will change substantially over the next 20 years.

Mystery at Tak'alik Ab'aj cont. from page 17

(200 BC to 150 AD), which is when the early Mayan culture was flourishing. Therefore, this sculpture must have been carved before this time, de Lavarreda and Orrego said.

The archaeologists said it could have been carved at or just before the start of the early Mayan era, in the transition of Tak'alik Ab'aj from the Olmec era to the Mayan era.

“Could it be that the early Mayan sculptor wanted to invoke the preceding Olmec culture as ancestors, as it later appears in the Mayan steles, where the ancestors are depicted watching from the heavens to protect and legitimize the power of the ruler represented below?” de Lavarreda and Orrego asked.

According to the latest opinions of the

world's most famous Mayan archaeology experts, there is so much about the Mayan civilization that is not yet known, so many archaeological sites that are yet to be excavated and studied, that they predict that the established concepts about Mayan history will change substantially over the next 20 years. In Guatemala alone, most of the archaeological sites that are considered Mayan have not yet been excavated. Vast geographical areas full of Mayan cities and monuments are still covered by earth and jungle.

“We think that this is actually good news,” de Lavarreda and Orrego said. “In the past looting and ransacking of unprotected archaeological sites in remote areas presented a serious problem, a heavy loss to the cultural heritage of Guatemala. Maybe now, with more responsible archaeological institutions and a new perspective of archaeology, the undiscovered sites present a unique opportunity to preserve the cultural heritage of Guatemala and make new exciting discoveries about the ancient Mayas and their mysteries.” 

With the collaboration of Barbara Schieber/ Editor, *The Guatemala Times*, this article is based on *New Maya Olmec Archeological Find in Guatemala* published in October 2008 on www.guatemala-times.com and the authorization by Christa Schieber de Lavarreda and Miguel Orrego Corzo, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Head Office of Cultural and Natural Heritage, Tak'alik Ab'aj National Project, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK TAK'ALIK AB'AJ El Asintal, Retalhuleu, Guatemala.

Editor note: In the mid-1960s, a North American archaeologist named this site Ab'aj Tak'alik, using Spanish word order—but grammatically incorrect in Quiché. Several years ago the Ministry of Culture and Sports officially switched the order of the words to Tak'alik Ab'aj, which in Quiché means “Standing Stones.”

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—Steve Nash

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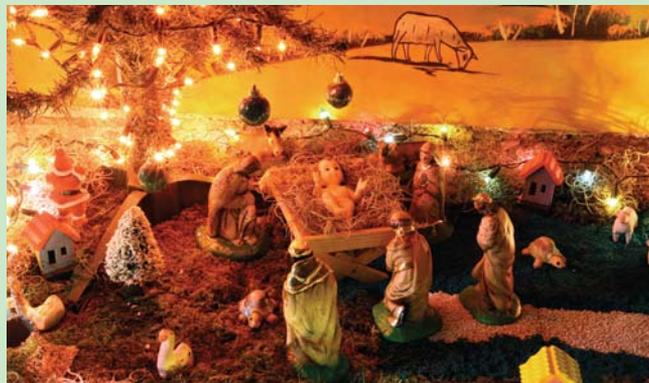
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Nacimientos (Nativity Scenes)

While Santa Claus and Christmas trees may be symbols of the Christmas season, *nacimientos* (nativity scenes) are a Christmas custom the world over.

Saint Francis of Assisi built the first one in 1223 after returning from a trip to Bethlehem. It quickly became a tradition and spread throughout the Catholic world, which included Spain. The Spanish brought the custom to Guatemala.

Depicting the legendary scene where Christ was born, Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus



hold court in the center of the action. However, the supporting cast isn't limited to an ox and burro anymore. From volcanoes to palm trees, Guatemalans have combined imagination and environment to make this tradition their own.

PHOTO: CÉSAR TIAN/REVUE



Spitters, Scratchers and Snappers

Pet Q's & A's by Cynthia Burski, DVM

Desensitizing Firecracker Phobia

The sounds of the holiday season also includes the booming and rat-a-tat-tat, ear-splitting echoing of fireworks and firecrackers that terrifies many dogs.

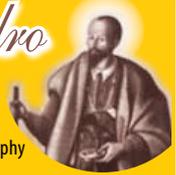
It is definitely a myth that dogs will eventually outgrow a fear of the sound of firecrackers, thunder or other loud noises. Phobias are intense fear responses that are out of proportion to the real threat of the situation. Although there is value in knowing what originally caused a particular phobia, fortunately this information is not necessary to treat it. Gradual exposure, desensitization and counter-conditioning have been used successfully.

Try to expose your dog to the stimulus

without evoking fear. For example, first by hearing a single firecracker set off at a long distance, say 100 yards or so. You then progressively, but gradually, bring the one firecracker nearer without evoking fear. The next step is to start over at 100 yards with two firecrackers and to repeat the process with increasing numbers of firecrackers. Each time your pet hears the firecracker(s) without showing fear reaction, give him a food reward and praise him. Each session should be about 40 minutes long and can be repeated daily or even twice daily if all is going well. If a fear response is evoked at any level, back up and start again. ---

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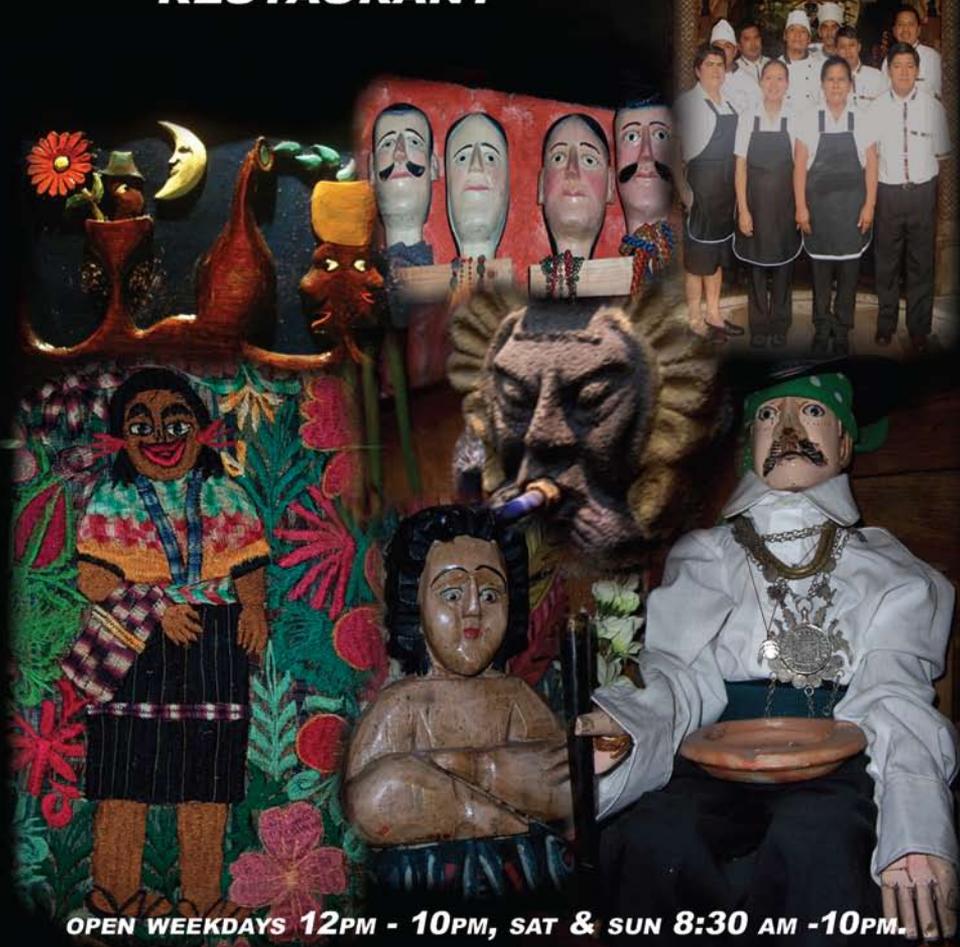


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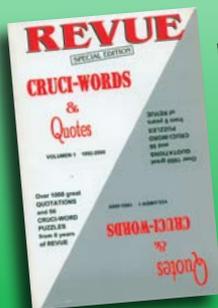
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A family of mice were surprised by a big cat. Father Mouse jumped up and said, "Bow-wow!" The cat ran away.

"What was that, Father?" asked Baby Mouse. "Well, son, that's why it's important to learn a second language."



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Santa vs Tax Planning

End of the year tax reducing ideas

Getting in the Christmas spirit and year-end tax planning mixes like oil and water. Who wants to think about taxes, you ask, when it's time for Santa Claus and candy canes.

It may surprise you to know that because of his investment in a fir tree farm in Montana some years back, Santa is a non-resident alien (for U. S. tax purposes) and does some tax planning in December himself. Seriously, for a lot of people, a little time spent at the end of the year concerning taxes can save a load of money in taxes not owed.

Some of the things that can be done at the end of the year to reduce taxes:

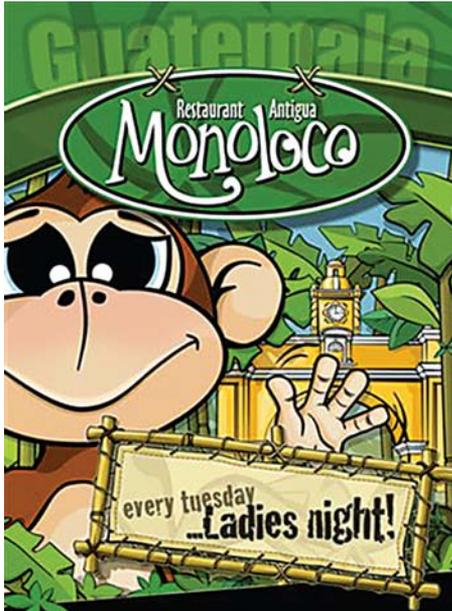
1. Start an IRA (from earned income); the maximum this year is \$5,000 (and another \$5,000 for your spouse). If you are age 50 or older the max is \$6,000 (and \$6,000 for your spouse). Even if you can't afford to tie up the money for a long period of time, you can "cash out" the IRA after you file (which creates a taxable event for 2009, of course) and with possible tax planning in 2009, cover the cash-out with deductions or the possibility of lower income in 2009. In the meantime, you have created a \$5,000 deduction in 2008 (\$10,000 with a spouse). This strategy is particularly effective if it puts you in a lower tax bracket this year, but not in 2009. There is an old rule in tax planning: Always delay paying taxes as long as legally possible.

2. Turn that new hobby you started this year into a business, especially if there is a first-year loss, as there is in most new businesses. Be aware that the IRS states that if a business isn't profitable in three years out of five that it can deem it a hobby. Also be aware that the IRS lost its case in federal court when it tried to enforce that rule. The court did not agree with that concept, stating that we all have the right to attempt to succeed at business as long as we like; that notwithstanding, I once worked with a couple who each had a separate business. It just happened to turn out, purely by circumstance, that while he had over \$20,000 in losses each of the first two years, she made a slight profit both of those years (\$10 the first year and \$28 the second year). Then her business took a bad turn and lost over \$55,000 over the next two years while his turned around a bit and showed a \$19 and \$36 profit. The fifth year, he made a profit of \$16 while she made a profit of \$119. The end result was the IRS rule was satisfied (even though legally, it did not have to be) and the couple racked up net deductions in excess of \$95,000 over the five years. Most of the losses were items they might have purchased anyway (but would not have been deductible without a business) or involved travel costs that they deemed were business related and therefore deductible. Everything was covered with the proper receipts and bookkeeping (which I highly recommend). All was accomplished with proper tax planning. ...continued on page 117



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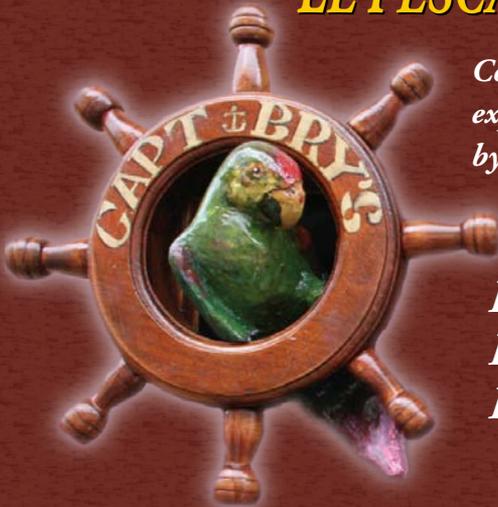
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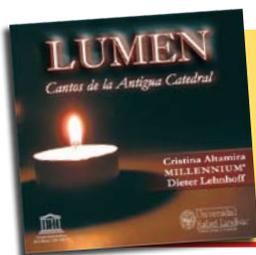


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by Dieter Lehnhoff, Ph.D.

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he had the organ builders construct for the cathedral. This choir sang in alternation with the Gregorian chant of the clergy during the numerous liturgies held in the cathedral and the churches of the beautiful city.

By 1570, the chapel master was Hernando Franco (1532-85), a Spanish musician trained at Salamanca. His duties were to conduct the choir at daily practices and liturgies, to teach the choirboys and to provide church music whenever it was needed. By 1574 Franco left for New Spain, where he was appointed chapel master of the Mexico City ...continued on page 105

More Fabulous Fruit



Carambola

For two decades the exotic carambola only appeared in the U.S. as a component of holiday fruit baskets. These days you'll find them in all the better Stateside grocery stores. Also known as star fruit because of its shape when sliced crosswise, this oddity once grew only in Sri Lanka and the Moluccas. Perhaps a millennium ago it was transplanted to Southeast Asia, where it has been heavily cultivated ever since. There is more than one variety, but in Central America you'll find small, tart versions that locals eat fresh or blended in licuados (aka a "smoothie"). In other countries the carambola is sold canned in syrup like peaches or marinated in honey then jarred as preserves. If you eat your carambola fresh, check the skin first — if the ribs are brownish, trim those parts off to give a sweeter taste. If you decide to cook with carambolas, you'll find they make a good substitute for apples in recipes.

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T was the night before Christmas and all through the casa,



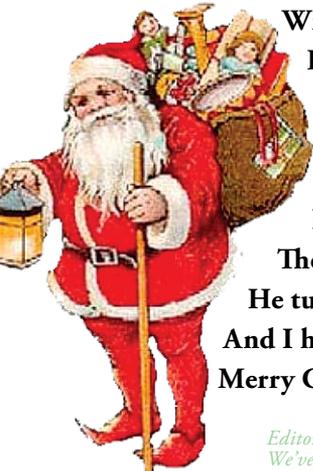
Not a creature was stirring ¡Caramba! ¿Qué pasa?
Los niños were tucked away in their camas,
Some in long underwear, some in pijamas,
While hanging the stockings with mucho cuidado,
In hopes that old Santa would feel obligado,
To bring all children, both buenos and malos,
A nice batch of dulces and other regalos.



Outside in the yard there arose un gran grito,
and I jumped to my feet like a frightened cabrito.
I ran to the window and looked out afuera,
And who in the world do you think that it era?
Saint Nick in a sleigh and a big red sombrero,
Came dashing along like a loco bombero.
And pulling his sleigh instead of venados,
Were eight little burros approaching volando.



I watched as they came and this quaint little hombre,
Was shouting and whistling and calling by nombre:
“Ay Pancho, ay Pepe, ay Cuco, ay Beto,
ay Chato, ay Chopo, Maruco, y Nieto!”
Then standing erect with his hands on his pecho,
He flew to the top of our very own techo,



With his round little belly like a bowl of jalea,
He struggled to squeeze down our old chimenea.
Then huffing and puffing at last in our sala,
With soot smeared all over his red suit de gala,
He filled all the stockings with lively regalos,
None for the niños that had been very malos.
Then chuckling aloud, seeming very contento,
He turned like a flash and was gone como el viento,
And I heard him exclaim, y ¡esto es verdad!
Merry Christmas to all, ¡y Feliz Navidad!



Editor's note: Nobody seems to know for sure who wrote this Spanglish version of the poem. We've re-printed it a few times over the years, and still find it amusing.



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NGO Networking

How the Antigua Network helps connect organizations productively through presentations and one-on-one contacts

by John Barrie

Another successful meeting of the Antigua Network was held recently in the spacious surroundings of La Peña del Sol Latino in downtown La Antigua Guatemala. The Network is the brain-child of Judy Sadlier and Gene Budinger, two active U.S. retirees who came to Guatemala in 2004. Judy and Gene both have a background in sales and say they “love to connect people.”

The Network has been active since Spring 2005, when it first convened under the title of the Community Forum. It describes itself as “an informal network of organizations and individuals in Guatemala and outside the country who work to improve the living conditions, health, education, and economics of others in Guatemala.” The principal aim of the Network is simple: to bring together locally operating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and interested individuals, with the goal of fostering cooperation between them and of increasing awareness among them of what other individuals and organizations are doing throughout the country. Simply put, Gene and Judy believe that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts,” and that this kind of coordination

has many payoffs in improving the services for the poor of Guatemala.

Through the Network, organizations that require resources or knowledge can connect with those who are able to provide these things. Organizations that require volunteer assistance or materials find this connection very useful; in one instance, people organizing libraries found others who were able to supply books. Fruitful exchanges of knowledge and experience increase effectiveness and efficiency in the myriad practical tasks facing anyone working in these fields: Knowing what has been done, and what has worked best in any particular area, can be invaluable to any endeavor starting out or branching into something new. In Judy’s words: “People don’t have to reinvent the wheel.”

The Network meets in Antigua three or four times a year. Participants are generally a mix of older, more established organizations such as Wings (which promotes reproductive health, family planning, youth reproductive health education and cervical cancer screening) and the Reicken Foundation (which works to establish community libraries in Central America), and newer organizations and individuals desiring to publicize their activities and link with others working in the same or similar fields. The latest meeting on Nov. 6 had more attendees representing newer and lesser-known endeavors and organizations, which Judy and Gene found heartening as it indicated a fresh pool of talent and enthusiasm to supplement the more-established participants. ...continued on following page



The Network is the brain-child of Judy Sadlier and Gene Budinger

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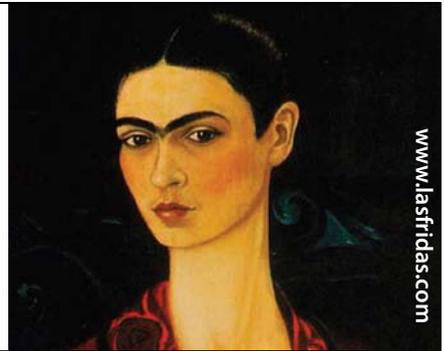
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Instead of loving your enemies, treat your friends a little better. —David Spade

The gist of New Year's Day is: Try again. —Frank Crane

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Several participants gave short presentations about their activities and outlined how others could assist them. The range of these activities demonstrated the diversity of efforts that are ongoing across Guatemala, and the potential that exists within the Network for bringing together people and organizations that may not otherwise come into contact. The following is a selection of the contributions.

ASSADE

Founder Marie-Elena and colleague nurse Emily outlined the work of ASSADE, which provides medical care to very poor indigenous people in the town of San Andrés Itzapa, in the municipality of Chimaltenango. ASSADE operates a health center that sees 500 patients a month, 60% of whom are children. The town has a malnutrition rate of 65% among children, and many families cannot afford to pay the nominal Q3 charge for treatment (which is waived when this is the case). ASSADE can benefit from many kinds of assistance, from monetary donations to donations of medicine and medical supplies, to the help of volunteer medical staff. Even children's toys for the upcoming holidays are welcome as part of ASSADE's wide-ranging efforts to improve life in the town.

Partner for Surgery

In the words of co-founder Linda Peterson, Partner for Surgery exists to be a "bridge between volunteer surgical teams that come to Guatemala and the poor they serve." Formally founded four years ago by two Virginians, the organization has a strong presence in Alta Verapaz and now operates in San Juan Sacatepéquez, where it has a "beautiful clinic" but needs medical teams to work there. In the future, the organization hopes to train local people to carry out many of the

medical services for which they now rely on outside volunteers to provide.

Namaste

Nelly Zambrano described how her organization assists Guatemalans in the economic and business spheres. Namaste, an NGO based in San Francisco, California, and working in three locations in Guatemala, provides microfinance loans, business management education and vocational training to small businesspeople, especially women. A critical part of this training is carried out by experts in the particular business area—these experts are what Namaste needs most at the moment.

Progresa

Martha Duggan spoke about Progresa, a Quaker-based organization that provides scholarships and loans for poor students to go to university, usually supplying a combination of a scholarship and zero-interest loan to each student. Progresa helped 110 students in 2008, and accepts over 95% of qualified applicants. The organization is moving toward a community-service-in-lieu-of-repayment scheme to further reduce the financial burden on its students.

Iglesia del Camino

Antigua-based church Iglesia del Camino can offer logistical help to other endeavors in the form of short-term mission teams from the U.S. who are available to carry out a range of activities, from medical provision to construction. The church also operates a hotel that can provide services in the form of food, transport and accommodation.

Encountour

Andrew Steinberg from Encountour spoke about his recently formed organization, which aims to ...continued on following page

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Networking cont. from previous page

help people from the U.S. volunteer in Guatemala, and is primarily aimed at college students. Encountour is looking for established projects that need volunteers to assist them.

As Green As It Gets

As Green As It Gets was founded by Franklin Voorhees in 2005 to help small farmers and artisans in Guatemala do business in an environmentally sustainable way. The organization is another microfinance provider and helps with business development and finding markets for its clients' products. Many of these clients are coffee farmers on the slopes of the Volcán de Agua. The organization helps them to find markets for their coffee directly and thus realize a much larger share of the retail sales price. As Green As It Gets is looking for monetary donations and volunteers.

From the brief outlines given above of some of the organizations attending the Network meeting, we can see the possibilities for co-operation and synergy that exist between those with the common aim of helping the less fortunate of Guatemala. When this snapshot is expanded to cover the wide range of NGOs and individuals working throughout the country, it is clear that the potential for the Antigua Network and similar organizations, including the monthly networking group at Stuardo's Place, to make "the whole more than the sum of its parts" is great. Judy and Gene's efforts are a valuable contribution in the efforts to make Guatemala a better place for all.

For more information about the Antigua Network and its many participants, email: dulcitainantigua@gmail.com. For monthly NGO activities and gatherings, refer to the December DateBook.

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Sharing is sometimes more demanding than giving. —Mary Catherine Bateson

The giving is the hardest part; what does it cost to add a smile? —Jean de la Bruyere



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The Gift of Giving

by Dr. Karmen Guevara
HOLISTIC PSYCHOTHERAPIST

Since the beginning of time, giving gifts has been an important part of human interaction. Gifts help to define our relationships and to strengthen bonds with family and friends. The list of occasions for gifts is long—birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, Valentine’s day, Mother’s/Father’s day, Bar Mitzvahs, Christmas, weddings...! Anxiety runs high—the “having to;” is it enough; will it be appreciated; and the pressure of reciprocity. There’s even a phenomenon called “gift fatigue.” We’ve come a long way from the time when the Romans exchanged gifts of evergreen branches and cakes to symbolize prosperity and sweetness.

The significance of giving a gift has been lost in a consumer-driven culture. The value of a gift extends beyond a gold box with a glittering bow. **To give of oneself, when it’s least expected and without ties, is a true gift.** The greater the personal cost to give, the greater the value of the gift. In some cultures, the prosperity in a tribe was measured not by how much a family had, but how much they gave away. Kahil Gibran said, “Generosity is giving more than you can.”

It’s in our nature to give. If we listen to our heart, we can feel the nudge to share—to give gifts like being fully present and listening or with kind words of encouragement or offering a helping hand to a stranger. What matters most is what Mother Teresa described as “the condition of our heart when we give.”

When we give generously we are enriched, and our spirit is replenished. It has been said that there is no distinction between the one who gives, the one who receives and the gift itself. Every day look for opportunities to give. Remember, every time you smile you give someone a rose, and if you smile with your eyes as well, you give them two more roses! 🌹

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A member of the Cojolya Association weaves colorful textiles on a backstrap loom



Accessories from the Stained Glass Collection, created by association members

Preserving Traditions

Cojolya Association celebrates 25 years supporting women weavers in Santiago Atitlán by Amanda Flayer

Santiago Atitlán, a bustling indigenous village in the Guatemalan Highlands, has been celebrated by locals and tourists alike for its preservation of backstrap-loom weaving and the traditions surrounding it. An ancient art, backstrap loom weaving is recorded in the artifacts of the Maya. The Goddess Ixchel, archetypal Maya weaver, weaves the cosmos on her backstrap loom. For more than 2,000 years, the skilled hands of Maya weavers have transformed threads into textiles—traditions which women have passed down from generation to generation.

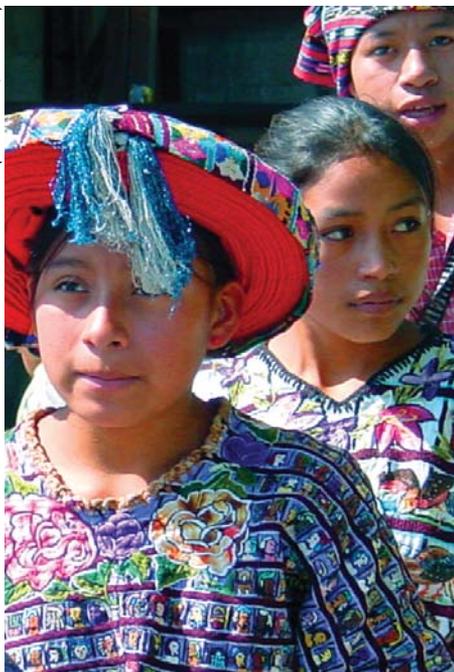
This said, Santiago is neither timeless nor immune from change. Founded in 1983, the Cojolya Association of Maya Women Weavers, a non-profit organization, has been dedicated for the past 25 years to preserving backstrap loom weaving.

In the late 1970s Cojolya co-founder and seasoned designer Candis Krummel, an American living in Santiago Atitlán, became aware of the growing threats to backstrap-loom weaving. Conditions such as discrimi-

nation, economic pressures and Western acculturation have increasingly threatened the very existence of this ancient art.

With the help of a local Maya counterpart, Antonio Ramírez, Candis organized the Cojolya Association of Maya Women Weavers to enable local skilled artists to make a living wage by producing their magnificent textiles. Nearly a quarter century later, both Candis and Antonio remain passionately dedicated to the Cojolya association. For Antonio, his greatest satisfaction throughout Cojolya's 25-year existence has been "seeing many local women earn a sufficient working wage to raise their families out of poverty." Beaming, he adds, "Cojolya is now a sustainable business operation."

As a member of the Fair Trade Organization, the Cojolya association strives to be responsive to the needs of the approximately 70 weavers, knotters, jaspé makers, warpers and tailors who craft the Cojolya products. Weavers are provided with threads and looms, design services and assistance with the development of ...continued on page 116



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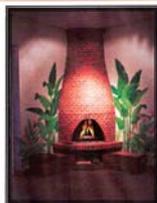
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Renaissance Antigua cont. from page 62

Cathedral. Music in Guatemala was then put in charge of Juan de Gamboa, a singer with a fine bass voice.

The last years of the century brought renewed brilliance, when composer Pedro Bermúdez (1558-1605) arrived to work at the Guatemala Cathedral. Bermúdez was one of the most prolific composers of Spanish America: he composed a collection of Vesper hymns for the entire year, plus two Masses, passion music, a series of invitatories for Christmas Matins services and numerous motets. By 1598 he was joined by Gaspar Fernández (1566-1629), an organist and composer who also compiled a collection of manuscript choir books. When Bermúdez left for Puebla de los Ángeles in New Spain in 1604, lured by a doubled salary, Fernández stayed in charge of music at the Guatemala Cathedral. However, the elder musician died soon after arriving in Puebla, and Fernández as the most capable master in the area was invited to succeed him. He accepted, holding the position of chapel master in Puebla for the remaining 24 years of his life.

In Guatemala, the music contained in the choir books assembled by Fernández was sung year-round until the high Baroque, when other great composers such as Manuel de Quiroz and Rafael Antonio Castellanos were chapel masters. The music provided by the Renaissance masters, Franco, Bermúdez and Fernández, never lost its appeal and only had to be shelved when the great earthquake of 1773 brought enormous changes to the people of Santiago. When the capital was moved to its present day location by King Charles III's orders, new churches were built. The ancient heavy choirbooks were repaired and recopied, being used only for services of great solemnity. They were shelved again during the 19th century, waiting to be rescued by scholars only in the latter part of the 20th century.

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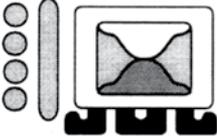
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AA OPEN MEETINGS IN ENGLISH IN ANTIGUA: Sun. Discussion 1-2pm (2a avenida sur #34), Mon. 6-7pm Discussion & Thurs. 6-7pm Step/Big Book (Doña Luisa's Restaurant 2nd floor, 4a calle oriente #12). [www.lakeatitlanaa.org](http://www.antiguaguatemala.laa.org) and www.lakeatitlanaa.org

HELP NEEDED! Our autistic children die due to lack of clinical resources & education. Help us in getting equipment for the clinic of tomography, neurology and encephalography. If you wish to volunteer or donate, please call 5470-1536, 5915-3982 or info@spanishforlove.org www.spanishforlove.org

CLUB ROTARIO: Meets every Wednesday 8pm at Porta Hotel Antigua. (Last Wed. of the month, please call Alma). Tel: 7832-7600.

THE LIGHT OF GOD IS IN EVERYONE: Join us for silent meeting in the manner of Friends (Quakers) on the first Sundays of the month. Contacts: 7832-5653, 7849-5970 mardugan@earthlink.net, progresar@hughes.net

PANAJACHEL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP: Lake Atitlán's English-language church meets Sundays, 9am at member house-holds. Visitors welcome! More info. 7762-1581 (Wayne)

ST. MARKS ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICE IN ENGLISH. Sundays 11:30am. Chapel of Obras Sociales del Hermano Pedro, corner 6a calle y 3a av., La Antigua. Tel: 5293-1076, 5492-5707.

ATTENTION ALL U.S. CITIZENS in or around Antigua, please visit USAntigua.org for updated travel advisories, emergency information and local contacts. For more info please email warden@USAntigua.org

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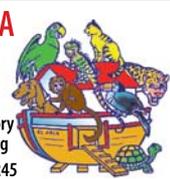
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- 1» The Family Stone
- 2» Love Actually
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- 4» The Polar Express
- 5» Home Alone 2: Lost in NY

RENTALS

- TOP 10 CHRISTMAS FOR DECEMBER***
- 6» Under the Tuscan Sun
 - 7» Harold and Maude
 - 8» Elf
 - 9» The Santa Clause 2
 - 10» Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas

JENNYSTAR PRESENTS
 «See page 53»

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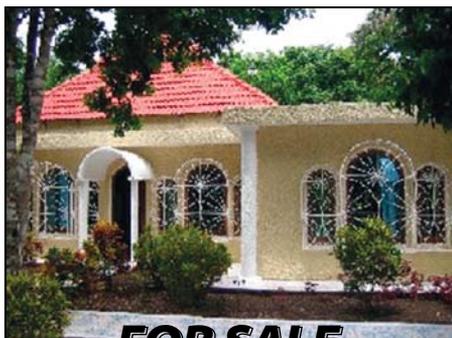
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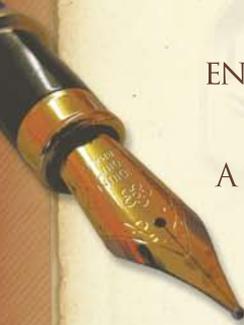
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Pocket on a string from the Ociana Collection

Cojolya Association cont. from page 98

infrastructures and markets. After selecting her material, a weaver returns to her home to create her textile as part of her daily routine, in the tradition of her grandmothers. “They weave for a few hours, then cook for their family, weave a little more, then change the baby,” notes Candis.

The intricate nature of this process ensures that each product is truly one of a kind. Hence, without disturbing her traditional way of life, a weaver can use her textile heritage to provide an income for herself and her family in a community where there may be no other opportunity for employment.

Cojolya weavers use traditional techniques and designs to produce modern women’s accessories, bags, hats and scarves. The Cojolya association also weaves accessories for the home, including bed scarves, throws, pillows and kitchen décor. The designs are true to their Maya roots yet



Cojolya weavers María Tiney, María Sosof and Concepción Queju demonstrate the backstrap loom weaving process.



Shopping bag from the Mayan Plaid Milano Collection



contemporary in their rich colors and textures, allowing preservation of traditional techniques while also opening doors to the export market. The appeal of Cojolya products stems from their representation of a lost connection between maker and user, an intrinsically human exchange that was a common bond before mass production and mass marketing.

The Cojolya textiles reflect the weavers’ love—their care, their attention, their soul—and this has made them desirable to customers who yearn for authenticity, genuineness and inspiration. In addition, Cojolya products appeal to the socially conscious, as they reflect and reinforce the rich cultural traditions of Guatemalan artisans and simultaneously promote international social justice through the practice of fair trade. Candis states, “These women are artists and deserve to be paid like artists.”

Not only providing economic opportunities to women weavers, Cojolya has also aided them socially. After the 2005 mudslide which devastated Santiago, Cojolya provided 10 houses for their weavers, giving them the seeds of hope for a new beginning. In addition, Cojolya donates \$1 for every \$40 of sales to the Santiago Onil Stove project, which offers improved wood-burning stoves to the families of Santiago. The Onil stove uses only 30 percent of the wood required to cook on an open fire or other type of wood-fired cook stove. Not only are women saving money on fire wood, they are also reducing the rate of deforestation, which is denuding the mountains surrounding Lake Atilán. **R**

In celebration of 25 years of sustainability, Cojolya’s Market Place has just been launched. For the first time, Cojolya textile accessories can be ordered and purchased on line. For more information about the Cojolya Association or to purchase its one-of-a-kind products, visit www.cojolya.org

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Tax Matters cont. from page 56

3. For those couples where one is a U.S. citizen and the other is a non-resident alien (for U.S. tax purposes), there is the decision to be made as to whether to choose to treat the non-resident spouse as a U.S. resident. If you make this choice, you and your spouse are treated for income tax purposes as residents of the U.S. for your entire tax year. Whether to make this choice or not would depend on your individual circumstances (refer to IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens). As one example, if the non-resident spouse were subject to the 30% tax on fixed or determinable income, it might be wise to make the election described above.

4. Converting an IRA (or a part of an IRA) to a Roth IRA (this subject was discussed in the September issue of *Revue*). This decision must be made by December 31. However, if later on you feel you made the wrong decision (more income than you expected showed up in the

forms you receive in January and February), you can change it back to an IRA with no tax consequences. That is called a recharacterization and can be done on or before April 15 of the year following the year of conversion (October 15 if you file for an extension).

Once again, I will end my writing with a quote, this time from the late Louis D. Brandeis, U.S. Supreme Court Justice: "Where I live in Alexandria, Virginia, near the Supreme Court building, there is a toll bridge across the Potomac River. When in a rush I pay the toll and get home early. However, I usually drive outside the downtown section of the city and cross the Potomac on a free bridge. If I went over the toll bridge and through the toll without paying, I would be guilty of tax evasion. However, if I go the extra mile and drive outside the city of Washington to the free bridge, I am using a legitimate, logical and suitable method of tax avoidance. *And, I am providing a useful social service as well.*" (The italics are mine.) ◀



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Cricket in El Salvador

The second-most popular sport in the world, cricket was seen by some for many decades as a sport played mainly by the British and their former colonies. In this part of the world it's been best known as "the sport that is a bit like baseball," but that's changing. Cricket's new stronghold is Asia, and its latest form is being promoted on our doorstep in the Caribbean.

In El Salvador cricket is in its fourth season with a small but competitive league which plays from September through June in the nation's capital. So much progress has been made that there is now a national team, which has already competed in two international tournaments and in March 2008 recorded its first victory over neighboring Nicaragua. El Salvador Cricket President Andrew Murgatroyd says, "The progress has been amazing. Once Salvadorans get the idea of the basic rules, they quickly improve."

Cricket is growing throughout Central America with two international competitions each year: the Easter Cup and the Central American Championship. In addition to El Salvador there are leagues and national teams from Mexico, Costa Rica and the two most powerful cricketing nations of the region—Belize and Panama. Nicaragua sometimes participates, too.

The most encouraging fact for El Salvador is that in all international games, the national team has had a Salvadoran majority of players. Some of the opposing teams cannot say the same. El Salvador Cricket's goal is to have Salvadorans, young and old from all across the country, play the sport.

El Salvador Cricket has been awarded the privilege of hosting Central America's second Easter Cup, which because of scheduling clashes will be Dec. 13-14 at the British School in San Salvador. For more information see www.elsalvadorcricket.net. 



National El Salvador Cricket team



El Salvador Cricket



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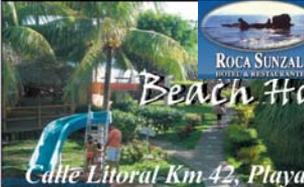
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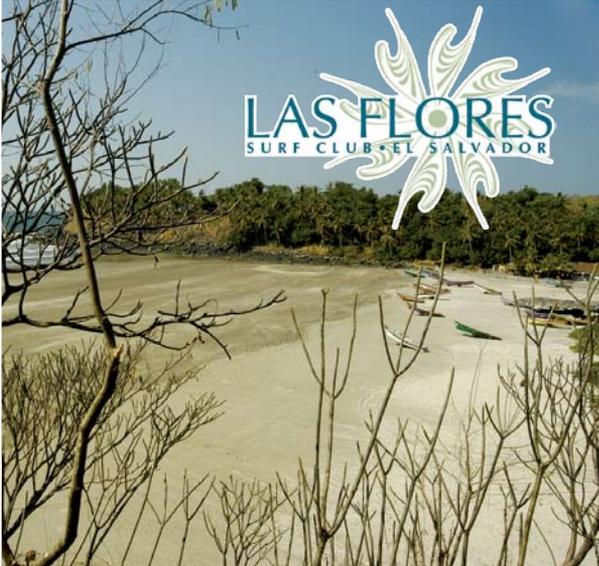
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Salvadoran barista championship dominated by women

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Flor de Maria Góchez, from Viva Espresso, won first place and will represent El Salvador at the 10th World Barista Championship in Atlanta (USA) next year. The second and third place winners were Cristina Flores, also from Viva Espresso, and Ana Benítez from Esso On the Run. Fourth place went to Belinda Cruz from La Tartaleta, followed by Claudia Vanegas from Esso On the Run. Sixth place went to Ali-

cia Peñado, also from La Tartaleta. This year, all six finalists were women, something never seen during a regional competition.

The event was held under the license from the World Barista Championship (WBC). International judges included Roukiat Delrue and José Arreola from WBC; Ken Olson, editor-in-chief of Barista Magazine; Lizz Hudson from Stumptown Coffee; Ryan Brown from Ritual Coffee; and Stephen Morrissey, from Square Mile Coffee and 2008 World Barista Champion.

Events like this help the Salvadoran coffee council to increase the recognition of Salvadoran coffee in domestic and international markets, while celebrating talent and coffee culture that characterizes El Salvador.

For more information see www.consejocafe.org/baristas/

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ADVERTISER INDEX

GUATEMALA

LODGING

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Apartamentos Las Torres | 39 |
| Armadillo Suites | 41 |
| Dai Nonni Hostel | 40 |
| El Otelito | 39 |
| Hostal Hermano Pedro | 41 |
| Hostal Los Volcanes | 41 |
| Hostal de Don Pedro | 40 |
| Hostal Miraflores | 40 |
| Hotel Casa Blanca | 39 |
| Hotel Casa de los Nazarenos | 41 |
| Hotel Fortuna Royal | 41 |
| Hotel Hollywood Plaza | 41 |
| Hotel Villa Toscana | 41 |
| Mariana's Petite Hotel | 41 |
| NovoHostal | 41 |
| Primavera Suites | 39 |

ANTIGUA

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Casa Encantada | 119 |
| Casa Familia Ovalle | 83 |
| Casa Madeleine | 85 |
| Casa Rustica | 87 |
| Cissus Hotel | 84 |
| El Convento Boutique Hotel | 89 |
| El Mesón de María | 81 |
| Hostal Las Marías | 86 |
| Hostal San Nicolás | 87 |
| Hostel 5 | 82 |
| Hotel Aurora | 79 |
| Hotel Casa Azul | 85 |
| Hotel Casa Concepción | 84 |
| Hotel Casa de las Fuentes | 82 |
| Hotel Casa Noble | 83 |
| Hotel El Carmen | 83 |
| Hotel La Real Plaza | 83 |
| Hotel La Sin Ventura | 79 |
| Hotel La Tatuana | 87 |
| Hotel Las Camélias Inn | 84 |
| Hotel Mesón del Valle | 87 |
| Hotel Mesón Panza Verde | 80 |
| Hotel Palacio Chico | 86 |
| Hotel Panchoy | 87 |
| Hotel San Jorge | 81 |
| Hotel San Vicente | 84 |
| Hotel Santa Catalina | 78 |
| Hotel Un Paseo por La Antigua | 88 |
| Hotel Vista Real | 86 |
| La Casa de Maco | 84 |
| La Reunion Antigua Golf Resort | 1 |
| Posada Asjemenou | 79 |
| Posada de Don Rodrigo | 88 |
| Posada del Angel | 89 |
| Posada El Antaño | 87 |
| Posada El Ensueño | 87 |
| Stuardo's Place | 83 |
| The Cloister | 82 |
| Villa de Antaño | 84 |

RÍO DULCE

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Bruno's | 106 |
| Hacienda Tijax | 106 |
| Hotel Catamaran | 106 |

COBÁN

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Casa del Bosque | 104 |
| Hotel Posada Don Antonio | 104 |
| La Posada | 104 |
| Park Hotel | 104 |
| Posada de Don Pedro | 104 |

LODGING

ATITLÁN

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| El Aguacatal | 96 |
| Hotel Casa Rosa | 95 |
| Hotel Dos Mundos (Pana) | 97 |
| Hotel El Chaparral | 96 |
| Hotel FONDA del Sol (Pana) | 97 |
| Hotel Islaverde | 95 |
| Hotel Primavera | 97 |
| Jenna's Bed and Breakfast | 95 |
| Hotel Rancho Grande Inn | 97 |
| Hotel Real Santander | 96 |
| Posada de Don Rodrigo | 99 |
| Posada de Santiago (Santiago) | 95 |
| Posada San Simon | 96 |
| San Sebastian Hotel | 96 |

EL PETÉN

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Hostal Hermano Pedro | 107 |
| Finca Ixobel (Poptún) | 106 |
| Gucumatz | 107 |
| Hotel Ecológico y Rest. Mon ami | 107 |
| La Casa de Don David | 106 |

MONTECERRICO / PACIFIC COAST

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Asociación Ola Verde | 103 |
| Atelie del Mar | 102 |
| Cafe Del Sol | 102 |
| Casa Monterrico | 103 |
| Don Carlos Beach | 102 |
| Hotel Dos Mundos | 103 |
| Hotel Honolulu | 102 |
| Hotel La Isleta de Gaia | 102 |
| Hotel Pez de Oro | 102 |
| Johnny's Place | 103 |
| Playa Quilombo Eco-Hotel | 102 |

QUETZALTENANGO

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Casa San Bartolomé | 100 |
| Dicap Residence | 101 |
| Hostal Don Diego | 101 |
| Hotel Modelo | 101 |
| Hostal Doña Mercedes | 100 |
| Hostal 7 Orejas | 100 |

TECPÁN

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Casa Xara / Molino Helvetia | 105 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|

RETALHULEU

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Hotel Posada de Don José | 104 |
|--------------------------------|-----|

RESTAURANTS / BARS

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Arrin Cuan | 33 |
| Café Saul | 7 |
| Café De Fiori | 35 |
| Cheers | 35 |
| Edoya | 35 |
| Kloster | 37 |
| La Bandeja | 35 |
| La Catapeña | 34 |
| Pecorinos Ristorante | 37 |
| Pizzeria Vesuvio | 34 |
| Productos y Servicios | 34 |
| Restaurante Altuna | 37 |
| Trovajazz | 35 |
| Viva Fridas | 35 |
| William Shakespeare Pub | 35 |

RESTAURANTS / BARS

ANTIGUA

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Bistrot Cinq | 61 |
| Café Asjemenou | 60 |
| Café Condesa / Express | 69 |
| Café Panchoy | 69 |
| Café Sky | 76 |
| Caffè Mediterraneo | 76 |
| Captain Bry's | 59 |
| Casa Escobar | 58 |
| Chocotenango | 76 |
| Christophe Pizza | 71 |
| Cine-Lounge La Sin Ventura | 77 |
| Cookies, Etc | 68 |
| Degusta Antigua | 60 |
| Doña Luisa Xicotencatl | 66 |
| El Pelicano Dorado | 60 |
| El Peroleto | 68 |
| El Sabor del Tiempo | 75 |
| El Sereno | 58 |
| El Viejo Café | 73 |
| Estudio 35 | 6 |
| Filadelfia Restaurant | 67 |
| Gaia | 73 |
| Kabuki | 76 |
| Korea House | 60 |
| La Casbah | 75 |
| La Chamiza Wine | 74 |
| La Cocina | 76 |
| La Cueva de Panza Verde | 60 |
| La Cueva de Urquizú | 68 |
| La Escudilla | 73 |
| La FONDA de la Calle Real | 77 |
| La Peña del Sol Latino | 63 |
| Las Antorchas | 73 |
| Las Palmas | 48 |
| L'Espresso Café | 75 |
| Mesón Panza Verde | 65 |
| Monoloco | 57 |
| Nicolas | 71 |
| Ni Fu Ni Fa | 71 |
| Nokiate | 61 |
| Personajes | 69 |
| Rainbow Café | 59 |
| Restaurante Las Mil Flores | 63 |
| The Bagel Barn | inside cover |
| Tienda Delicio, S.A. (Deli) | 66 |
| Toscana la Mia Terra | 76 |
| Viva Fridas | 71 |
| Welten Restaurant | 65 |
| Wiener | 73 |

ATITLÁN

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Cafe Bombay | 96 |
| Circus Bar | 97 |
| Restaurante Lazaronis | 8 |
| Restaurante Ricassoli | 8 |
| Terraza Choi | 99 |

QUETZALTENANGO

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Bazar del Café | 100 |
| Chocolatería Doña Pancha | 100 |
| Shai Long | 101 |
| Giuseppe's Gourmet Pizza | 101 |

TECPÁN

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Restaurante Chichoy | 105 |
| Restaurante El Pedregal | 105 |
| Restaurante Katok | 105 |
| Kape Paulinos | 105 |



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ADVERTISER INDEX

HEALTH SERVICES

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Centro Dental Multimedia | 42 |
| Clinica Dental | 43 |
| Dr. Milton Solis | 45 |
| Ejecutivo Spa | 44 |
| Kawil Spa | 28 |
| Nova Aesthetics | 45 |
| Pediatrics: Dr. & Dra. Hernandez | 44 |
| Vision Integral | 45 |

ANTIGUA

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Antigua's Gym | 43 |
| Casa Madeleine Spa | 47 |
| Centro de Equinoterapia Kej | 44 |
| Centro Visual G & G | 43 |
| Clinicas Ovalle | 51 |
| Clinica Veterinaria El Arca | 109 |
| Dental Care | 44 |
| Dermatologist Dr. Samayoa | 43 |
| DDS Jorge de la Cruz | 44 |
| Dra. Victoria Recinos de Molina | 43 |
| Gail Terzuola | 44 |
| Holistic Psychotherapy | 44 |
| Holistic Therapy | 44 |
| Hospital Privado Hermano Pedro | 47 |
| House of Health Sta. Lucia | 43 |
| Le Visage Cosmetology | 50 |
| Love Therapy | 47 |
| Mayan Spa | 79 |
| Meyko's | 47 |
| Optyma Vision y Moda | 42 |
| Soleil Spa | 45 |
| Techniscan | 47 |

TRAVEL / TOURS

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Excursiones Spross | 90 |
| Trans Galgos | 90 |

ANTIGUA

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Aventuras Mayas | 90 |
| Filadelfia Coffee Adventure | 67 |
| Fish Guatemala (Parlama) | 93 |
| I.R.C. Travel | 90 |
| Lax Travel | 91 |
| Litegua | 91 |
| Mundo Guatemala | 91 |
| Rainbow Travel | 93 |
| Sinfronteras | 91 |
| Sport Fishing, Rods and Reels | 94 |
| Tabarini Rent a Car | 52 |
| Turansa | 90 |
| Voyageur Tours | 104 |

MISC.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Eternal Spring | 96 |
| Hedman Alas | 94 |
| Parque Ixpanpajul | 107 |
| Rancho Carrillo | 4 |
| Roger's Tours | 91 |
| San Sebastian Tours | 96 |
| Santander Travel Agency | 96 |
| Transportes Turisticos Atitrans | 90 |
| Zonas Turisticas | 96 |

SERVICES

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Angel Fire Kennels | 109 |
| Daniel Chang Photography | 68 |
| Figuepartes | 28 |
| Hairways | 31 |
| Immigration Services | 109 |
| Lapstec | 31 |
| Renta Autos de Guatemala | 53 |
| Solucion Web | 128 |
| Translations | 109 |
| Union Church | 29 |

ANTIGUA

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Bella Spa | 43 |
| Bello Capello | 55 |
| Club Ecuestre La Ronda | 50 |
| Detalles Laundry | 50 |
| Eris | 50 |
| Funky Monkey | 57 |
| JennyStar DVD Rentals | 53 |
| Karla Hair Stylist | 57 |
| Skin Deep | 55 |
| Valle de Flores | 50 |
| Wings | 111 |

QUETZALTENANGO

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| North & South Bookstore | 101 |
| Eureka Spanish School | 101 |
| Galilea Spa | 100 |

SHOPS

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Asian Tropics | 31 |
| Bernina (Sewing Center) | 28 |
| Camas Siesta | 29 |
| Colección 21 | 27 |
| Geminis Bookstore | 31 |
| In Nola (Textiles) | 28 |
| Jungle Skate Shop | 15 |
| Lin-Canola, S.A. | 28 |
| Muebles Xian | 11 |
| Super Verduras | 34 |
| Vivero Botanik, S.A. | 29 |



EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Police: 120 Fire: 122
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 Voluntarios: 7832-0234
www.bomberosvoluntarios.org

*If you don't want to work,
 you have to work
 to earn enough money
 so that you won't have
 to work. —Ogden Nash*

SHOPS

ANTIGUA

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| ADOC | 9 |
| Antigua Furniture | 54 |
| Biobanic | 6 |
| Bravo | 55 |
| Casa de los Gigantes | 55 |
| Casa Del Tejido | 50 |
| Casa Gomez Ovalle | 52 |
| Colibri | 57 |
| El Mástil | 5 |
| El Patio Antiques | 51 |
| El Prisma | 50 |
| Hamlin & White Books | 57 |
| Isaias Joyeria | 50 |
| Joyeria del Angel | back cover |
| La Casa del Conde (books, etc) | 50 |
| Pietra | 50 |
| Ritual | 51 |
| Santa Chivita | 51 |
| Seline | 3 |
| Un Poco de Todo (books, etc) | 109 |
| Vivero La Escalonia | 77 |

SCHOOLS

ANTIGUA

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Antigua Cooking School | 53 |
| Christian Spanish Academy | 49 |
| Fuego Maya Golf Academy | 8 |
| La Union | 54 |
| Spanish Language Center | 54 |

QUETZALTENANGO

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Casa Xelajú | 100 |
| La Democracia Spanish School | 100 |
| Pop Wuj Spanish School | 100 |
| Unlew Tinimit Spanish School | 100 |

REAL ESTATE

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Antigua Real Estate | 113 |
| Casa Colonial Bazar Comercial | 2 |
| Cantares del Lago | 4 |
| Carstens S.A. | 112 |
| Casa Nova | 113 |
| EDB | 113 |
| Hacienda del Comendador | 115 |
| LoRento.net | 113 |
| REMAX Colonial | 113 |

CULTURAL

GUATEMALA CITY

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Eje Galeria de Arte | 23 |
| El Attico | 23 |
| Galeria de Arte El Tunel | 23 |
| Museo Ixchel | 23 |
| Museo Popol Vuh | 27 |

ANTIGUA

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Galeria Museo Centro Popular | 23 |
| La Antigua Galeria de Arte | 27 |
| La Galeria Panza Verde | 26 |

ATITLÁN

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Galeria Juan Francisco Guzmán | 23 |
|-------------------------------|----|

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 tomorrow you worried about yesterday.*



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