

HONDURAS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2009



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Cindy Burgess - Honduras This Week

Guilmer Tun, a bird guide from Mexico, leads a group of watchers around the environs surrounding Lake Yojoa in search of native (and perhaps elusive) bird species of Honduras as part of the first Mesoamerican Bird Festival.

First bird festival lures the faithful to Lake Yojoa

Cindy Burgess

Honduras This Week

LAKE YOJOA - "Got a creeper," exclaimed William Davis, as he trained his binoculars on the upper branches of a pine tree draped with moss. "That's the first one I've seen."

Six other pairs of binoculars

immediately swung in his direction, the people holding them scrambling to catch a glimpse of the small bird.

"Did you get the becard? The brown-headed becard?" asked the group's guide, Guilmer Tun, a few minutes later.

An elderly woman shook her head in disappointment.

Becards, creepers, turquoise-browed motmots, crimson-colored

tanagers, pygmy owls - these were just a few of the species sighted during the first annual Mesoamerican Birding Festival at Lake Yojoa from February 23-26.

The area surrounding Lake Yojoa is home to more than 400 species of birds and a wide variety of habitats, making it a prime location for bird watching.

At 89 square kilometers, Lake

Yojoa is the largest natural lake in Honduras. It's located about 80 kilometers south of San Pedro Sula and is sandwiched between two mountainous national parks - Cerro Azul Meamber to the east and Santa Barbara to the west.

The ecosystems here range from vast wetlands to mid-elevation tropical forest to cloud forest - all home to an astonishing variety of

birds.

"The motmots are unbelievable, and to see four species of orioles in one day?" Davis shook his head and smiled. "It's phenomenal. It's at least as good as I had hoped."

Davis and his wife Mary traveled from Atlanta, Georgia to be a part of this inaugural birding

BIRD FESTIVAL cont on page 5

EDITORIAL

Apocalypse Now

The movie was directed by Francis Ford Coppola (genius filmmaker of the independent San Francisco group) in 1979. The script is based on the Heart of Darkness, the novel by Joseph Conrad set in Africa at the end of 19th century, although transposed to the time of the U.S. invasion of Vietnam. It won two Oscars, for best cinematography and sound, and garnered six other nominations, for best picture, director, supporting actor (Robert Duvall), script adaptation, art direction, and film editing. It also won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival that year, the festival's highest award.

The sound engineering was extraordinary, and in conjunction with the superb editing, the viewer is lost in a vision of the horror of war and the aesthetically surreal.

'Apocalypso,' directed by Mel Gibson in 2006, is based in Mayan pre-Hispanic America. The Mayan civilization was one amazed and obsessed by time, and they studied the passing of time with great devotion and accuracy. They considered it cyclical rather than linear. In the 'Dresden Codex,' an ancient Mayan book from the 11th or 12th century, some scholars have interpreted texts prophesying the end of time. The Mayans identified December 21, 2012, as the end of a galactic cycle, or the beginning of a new one.

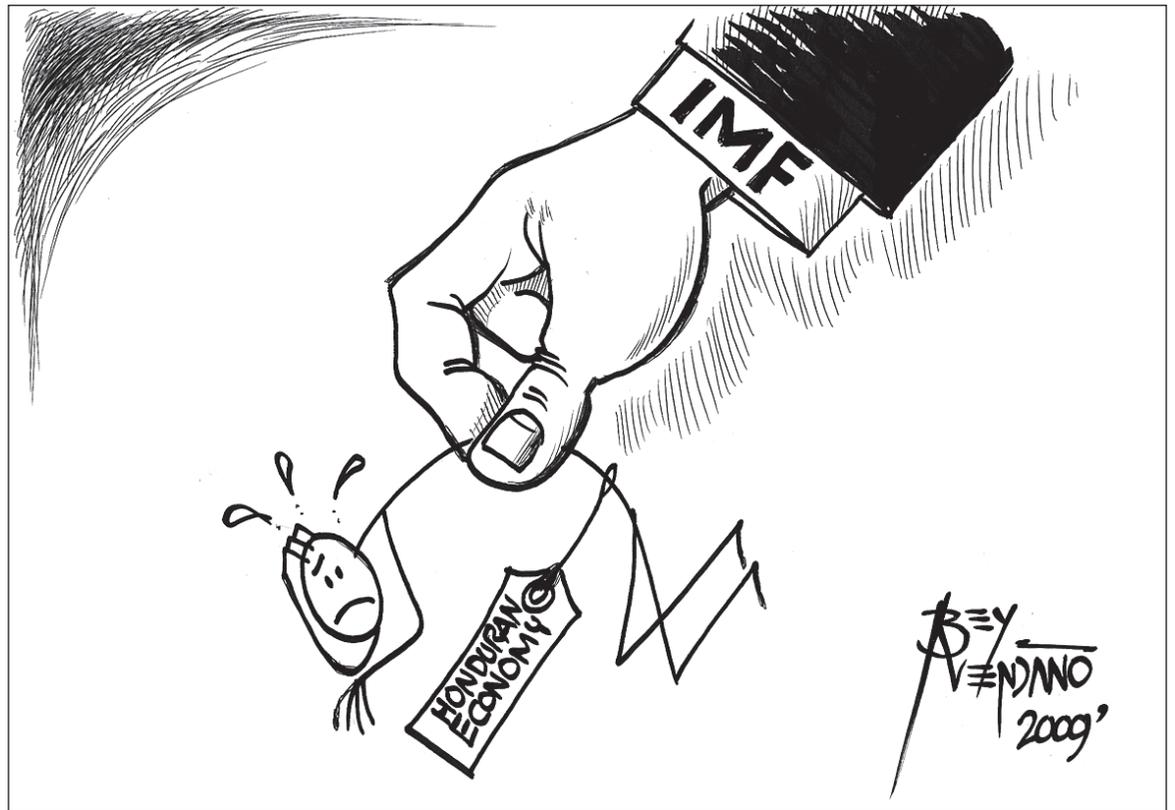
The word 'apocalypse' can also be translated as 'revelation,' which is also the name of the last book of the bible. It narrates the last days of the current system of things, and proclaims an imminent change in the human existence. It is symbolic and was written much in keeping with the book of the prophet Daniel of the Old Testament.

Many are obsessed with trying to decipher the prophecies of Nostradamus, or studying occult codes in sacred books - they are fixated on seeing into the future. Personally, we find much wisdom in the words, "That which has been is what will be; that which is done is what will be done. And there is nothing new under the sun; is there anything of which it may be said, 'See, this is new?' It has already been in ancient times before us." Ecclesiastes 1:9,10.

The Mayans predicted the dehumanization and the degradation of man. The word apocalypse is synonymous with revelation, knowledge and enlightenment that says to the wise that a change comes and when it does, perhaps not everyone will be prepared.

If we live our lives with humanity and wisdom and virtues of eternal beauty, no catastrophic change will eliminate the cosmos.

OPINION



LETTERS

(The following is in response to a letter to the editor in the Feb. 21 edition of HTW):

Dear Cathy Moses,

As a health care professional, I would love to answer all your questions about the North American medical missions that come to Honduras but I probably can't, or at least I'll try. Remember that Honduras is a third world country and technology is many ways is

lacking for a sum of different challenging medical cases which are not met. The Medical missions offer a great deal of opportunities to these cases, many because of equipment or material which are brought with them and used for these patients. I agree that follow up for any kind of medical treatment is essential for an adequate outcome, so the first answer is YES they do get a follow-up from the local and qualified doctors and nurses who are trained in examining surgical

wounds, taking blood pressure, checking blood sugar, etc. The US medical teams come once a year, so I really don't know if any of them establish a patient-physician relationship during the other 365 days when they are not around. Or if the local doctors, inform them during the year or on their next visit on the outcomes of the cases. Sorry couldn't answer that one. The bottom line is that the results of any and all foreign medical mission are always a success and I am 120% positive that they have a second home here in Honduras. But don't forget that the biggest team is made up of nationals and foreigners working together as generous and willing enough human beings who really love their profession and care for these needy people.

Sincerely,

Robert Gernat, Honduras Medical Center

Via email



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Printed by Talleres de Impresión de PUBLYNESA, Honduras

CENTRAL AMERICA

An Ides of March Election Looms in El Salvador

James W. Bodden

Honduras This Week

The Ides of March have historically represented a day of portent, of disseminating augurs, of unfolding political plots; the date's fate as a dangerous setting for risk and threat was sedimented in ancient Rome by the sequence of events that lead up to the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.

On March 15, El Salvador will hold one of its most significant presidential elections since the end of civil war in 1992. Polls, the modern political prophecies, bode well for El Salvador's leftist opposition party, the FMLN front (Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front), who for the first time in the Central American country's democratic history has a strong opportunity to unseat the conservative national governing party, ARENA (National Republican Alliance). The possibility of an FMLN victory has set off a wave of concern amongst the international community, untrusting of the untested, leftist opposition. As the Ides of March approach, the future of El Salvador's traditional alliances and the shifting political leanings of the region as a whole hang in the balance of this central Latin American election.

The candidates from the two major political blocs have been



Mauricio Funes, center, is El Salvador's left-leaning FMLN party's candidate for president in that country's upcoming national elections.

drawn into a tightening race, which has toughened the rhetoric and attacks on both sides of the campaign. The leftist FMLN, a former guerilla organization, has nominated as its presidential candidate, Mauricio Funes, a former journalist, espousing a center-left political philosophy and a message of change. His vice-presidential running mate is former guerilla commander and current congressman, Salvador Sanchez Ceren. The governing ARENA

party candidate is Rodrigo Avila, former head of the National Civil Police, who has attempted to distance himself from the ruling government, emphasizing social policies and deemphasizing his security experience. ARENA's vice-presidential running mate is Arturo Zablah, a businessman who has been critical of the government's economic policies.

On January 18, El Salvador held municipal and legislative elections that resulted in major gains for

the FMLN. A recent joint report on the Salvadorian election by the North American Congress on Latin America, the news magazine 'Upside Down World' and the NGO the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, titled "The 2009 El Salvador Elections Between Crisis and Change" analyzes the results of the January poll, concluding, "The results of the January 18 elections bode well for the FMLN ahead of the March presidential election. After a tense

day of voting, the FMLN declared itself the 'leading political force' in the country..."

The major issue on Salvadorian voters' minds is the economy. According to the "Between Crisis and Change" report, "The economy has become the primary issue in the 2009 presidential elections, as a majority of families suffer due to high costs of food and basic services combined with soaring unemployment rates. According to polls, over 35% of Salvadorans said the economy is the main problem confronting the country..."

Mauricio Funes has been able to galvanize the electorate with a commanding message for change; his call has resonated throughout the country and has attracted voters not usually comfortable voting for the FMLN, formerly a violent insurgent outfit. The ruling ARENA party has had control over the presidency since before the end of the civil war; its long-standing stewardship of the state has become its most vulnerable weakness. Years of accumulated resentment and dissatisfaction with government in general may ultimately drive the electorate to force the sitting government out. The "Between Crisis and Change" joint report evidences the success of the 'change campaign,' "The elec-

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NATIONAL

Government needs to consider Monetary Fund agreement

Shiona Blackie

Honduras This week

The Honduran Council of Private Business (COHEP) has urged the government to receive the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "with seriousness", and sign an agreement with the organisation to help buffer the impact of the world financial crisis. Amílcar Bulnes, president of Cohep, is of the opinion that such a move would be "healthy" for the Honduran government.

Contrary to President Zelaya's position on the issue, Bulnes believes that signing the IMF agreement would be a positive step for the economic cabinet, and would demonstrate a wish to "put finances in order, attend to programs of development, combat poverty, and generate employment".

He also endorsed the creation of an announced anti-crisis plan. "We think it is an initiative that we have to support. The govern-



ment on their own cannot take the country forward, no government in the world can do it on their own, it needs the co-operation of all sectors".

Ex-minister Luis Cosenza reiterated this message, stating that an IMF agreement may be the only available resource to Honduras, and "without it, the government will not have investment, unemployment will continue, poverty will increase, and infrastructure will remain unimproved."

Bulnes remarked that now is the time to open a dialogue, display unity, and adopt "intelligent

measures" mindful of the current global reality, expressing concern that Honduras will be taking a step backwards rather than forwards if the government don't take the initiative on this issue. Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador have already signed agreements with the IMF.

The COHEP president added, "It is never too late, we must commence now. The vulnerable situation of Honduras is a given - there was a raise in the minimum wage out of context and we are feeling that. The same authorities that executed it recognize this, conceding that out of 1,000 businesses, 300 don't pay it."

Cosenza commented that the government is trying to sweep things under the carpet, "and make it appear to the public that there are no problems. We are going to have problems more serious than we already have... We are sending the wrong message in a moment when we need to join and confront the situation."



DARE TO THINK!

Problem # 31

Lengthening a Chain

There are five strands of chains, with three links each and you want to make one whole chain of fifteen links. What is the minimum amount of links that have to be opened and closed for this to be achieved?

Answer to Problem # 30

1. $44 + 44 + 4 + 4 + 4 = 100$
2. $(444-44)/4$
3. $\left(\frac{4-4}{4}\right)^{\sqrt{4}}$

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NATIONAL

BIRD FESTIVAL: Watchers flock to Lake Yojoa to catch a glimpse

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festival. Upwards of 60 other people attended, including bird guides from Puerto Rico, Mexico and Nicaragua.

The festival was organized by the Mesoamerican Tourism Alliance as a way to elevate interest in bird watching in Mesoamerica, which includes southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The event is also aimed at increasing sustainable tourism and creating employment.

“One of the biggest problems we have is good guides – particularly bilingual guides,” said

Mark Willuhn, the director of the Mesoamerican Tourism Alliance. “For birding that’s even more important because it’s specialized.”

To help tackle this problem, the festival was preceded by a five-day intensive training course for bird guides. Participants spent time in the classroom and in the field, learning how to identify different species by sight and sound, and by their English names.

Among the guides was Guilmer Tun, who came down from Merida, Mexico. He’s been leading bird watching tours in the Yucatan peninsula for the past four years.

Tun said Lake Yojoa has a

distinct advantage because its rich bird habitats are very close to infrastructure such as highways and hotels.

“Sometimes we have to travel four hours to different spots to find certain species,” he said.

Planning is now underway for the next Mesoamerican Birding Festival, which will be held in 2011. Three countries are vying to host the event – Guatemala, Belize and Nicaragua. The winner will be announced at the end of March.

If the example Honduras has set is any indication, the next host will have a lot to live up to.

“We’re ecstatic, frankly,” said Willuhn, when asked how the inaugural festival went. “I’m very, very happy with it.”



Cindy Burgess-Honduras This Week

A hummingbird known as the green-breasted mango is seen here through the lens of a telescope.



Cindy Burgess-Honduras This Week

Bird watching has become an increasingly popular past-time and has attracted devoted followers.



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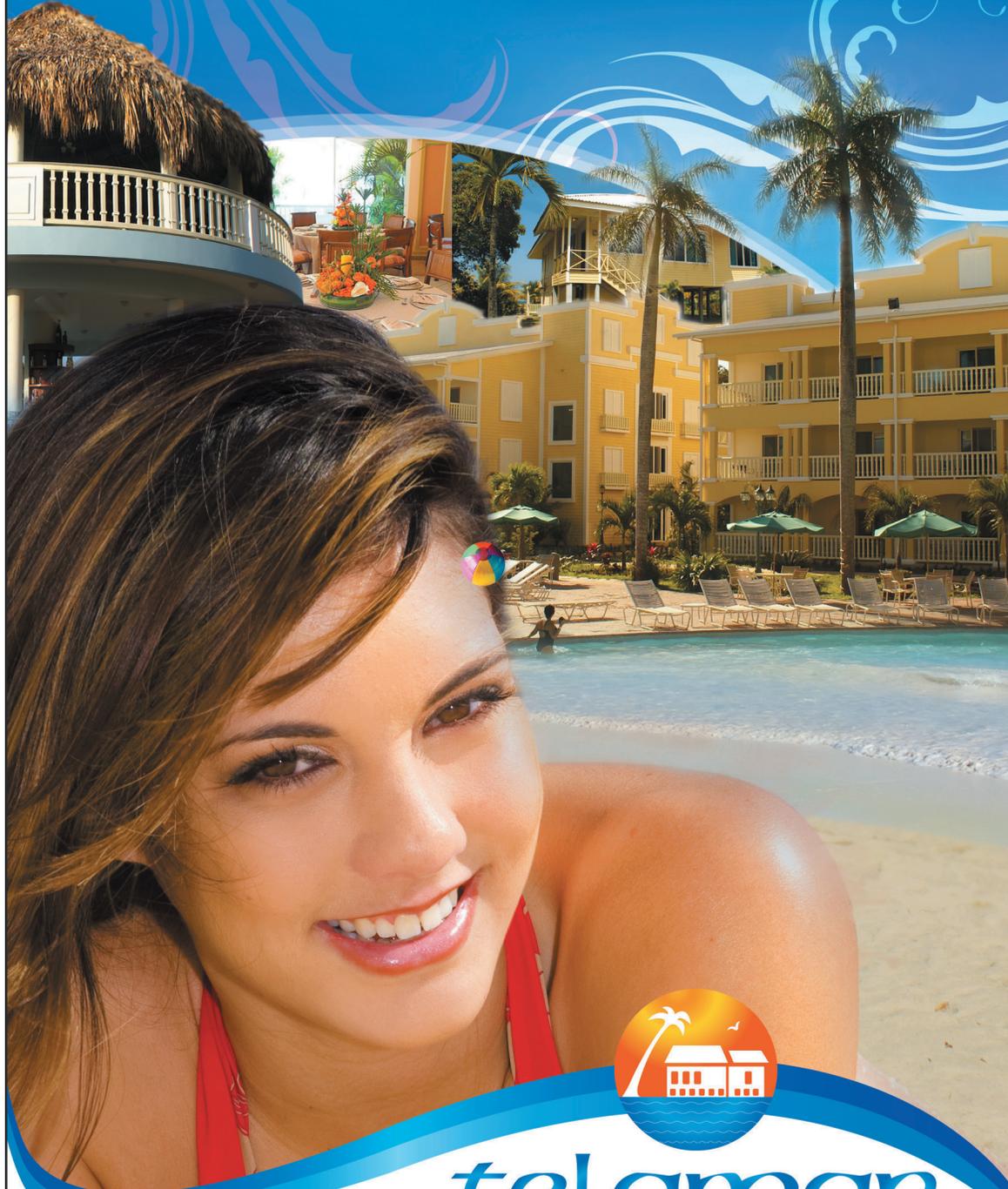
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CENTRAL AMERICA

ELECTIONS: El Salvador voters poised to elect left-leaning FMLN presidential candidate

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tion has increasingly come down to which ticket represents the best opportunity for "change." This has put ARENA, as the incumbent party, on the defensive. The FMLN's campaign slogan "Hope is born; change is coming" seeks to highlight ARENA's failed policies and the need for a new political direction."

One of the most interesting political dramas of the presidential campaign has been the inclusion of the socialist dogmatist and Venezuelan head of state, Hugo Chavez Frias, into the national debate. Conservative leaning organizations, both national and international, have launched attack campaigns linking Mr. Chavez with the FMLN's candidate Mauricio Funes. The report and the think tank 'Council on Hemispheric Affairs' have made public statements calling the allegations both unfounded and dirty campaigning. But analysts admit the campaign might be working, as ARENA has narrowed Funes' double digit lead into a close contest. The Conservative campaign has focused on the possible influence Hugo Chavez will hold over an FMLN government. The report states, "The campaign against the FMLN orchestrated by right wing organizations notoriously led by the El Salvador branch of Fuerza Solidaria (United Force)... [have participated in the campaign through]... its activities [which] include using print and television ads to defame the FMLN presidential formula... to link the FMLN to Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and claiming an FLN victory would make El Salvador and enemy of the United States."

The Chavez connection is not devoid of some credit. The Venezuelan revolutionary has openly supported and privately financed leftist political movements across Latin America in an attempt to increase his country's regional influence. Mr. Chavez has direct ties with key FMLN public officials and the open sympathies of many party activists. The Venezuelan PetroCaribe program, which offers preferential oil prices to its members, is currently pumping oil into FMLN controlled municipalities. In February 2008, U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Michael McConnell, addressed his nation's senate to inform that a plan existed for, "Chavez to provide generous campaign funding to the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador in its bid to secure the presidency in the 2009 election."

And then there is the urban legend that circulates around diplomatic circles. It is whispered in confidence, usually treated as gossip, and then followed by a chuckle. Supposedly, at the inaugu-

ration ceremony of the left-leaning Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom, Mr. Chavez decided on doing some one-on-one diplomacy at the event. He wrote a note intended for El Salvador's President, the conservative, Antonio Saca. The note was passed on to the Salvadoran head of state; it was more of a warning: 'I have you surrounded.'

The geopolitical implications of an FMLN victory could sediment the Latin American leftist, populist trend, potentially altering the country's traditional diplomatic alliances and strengthen the influence of ideological, regional political blocs. The Chavez dominated ALBA bloc, a leftist commonwealth of mostly poor Latin American countries fueled by cheap Venezuelan oil, is poised to become the central diplomatic, economic and political axis for Central America and the Caribbean. Nicaragua, Honduras, Cuba and the Dominican Republic are full members of the organization, El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti benefit from membership in Petro Caribe. If El Salvador would join the Venezuelan alliance, ALBA's regional supremacy would be unquestionable.

Mr. Funes has so far rejected the notion of joining the ALBA alliance, according to the "Between Crisis and Change" report, "Although Funes has rejected the possibility of joining ALBA and has signaled his intention for El Salvador to remain a part of CAFTA, the Salvadoran social movement and the FMLN will certainly pressure him to reconsider these stances. But if he wins the elections, it's possible that he will warm to Chavez and others..."

If Mr. Funes is elected to the presidency there are serious concerns that his moderate campaign message will be at odds with the way he will be able to govern, surrounded by the more leftist leadership of his political party. His ascendancy as head of state will not be a lonely one; he will be accompanied by all sectors of this power-deprived political party, including the far left.

The report concludes that this election could signify a significant geopolitical alteration in Central America and its international relations, "Long a country plagued by foreign intervention, mainly by the United States, El Salvador faces a formidable host of countries trying to spread their influence in Latin America, particularly, Brazil and Venezuela, but also China, Russia and other emerging powers. This would be the first time the firmly right-wing ARENA is forced to transfer power since its one party rule began in 1989, when the civil war was still raging. An FMLN win would be a seismic political shift for El Salvador, and Latin America."

◀ Tourism / Environment / Development / Community ▶



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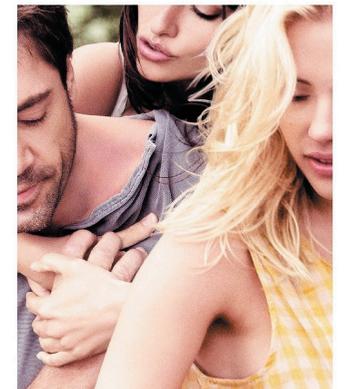
■ see page 8



Gourmet food and high-speed internet: Both add up to make Roatan better

see page 9

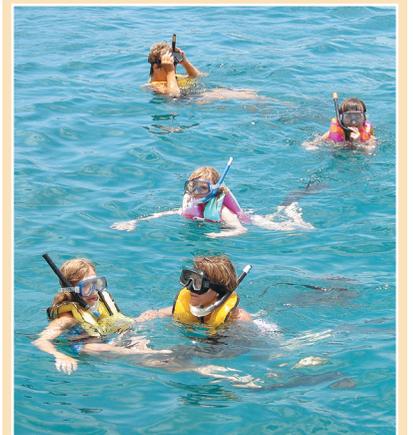
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Movie Reviews: 'Seven Pounds' and 'Vicky Christina Barcelona'

see page 10



Why not get the whole family snorkeling?

see page 11

Island Green



My part, your part, our world (Or how to reduce your footprint part I)

Ian Drysdale
The Islander

"But, everything is going to hell in a bucket...so what's the point?" Reefs are dying, global warming, climate change, depleting ozone layer, air pollution, noise pollution, TV pollution. The list is long, long, long, and getting longer. But let's not despair: here's what we can do as individuals can have a HUGE effect on our surroundings.

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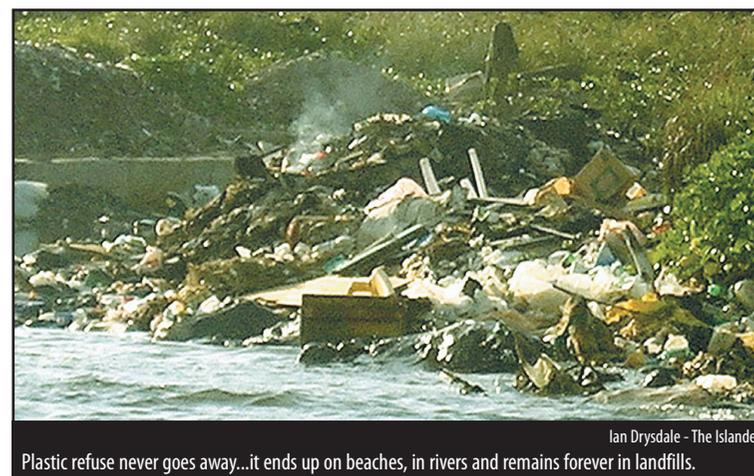
door neighbor has plugged his 40 foot freezer to that outlet that neither of you knew even existed.

2. Turn the water off: while you brush your teeth, while you shave, while you gargle, while you shampoo, while you rinse, while you soap up. Just these few, done every day will greatly reduce your consumption. Here are a few facts, from a book written in Honduras(!):

- Brushing teeth with open faucet: 10 gallons.
- Brushing teeth with closed faucet: 0.5 gallons.
- Shaving with open faucet: 15 gallons.
- Shaving with closed faucet: 1 gallon.

Now you do the math of how much water you will be saving per day, per week, per month, per year.

3. Turn it off! The fan, the light, the AC unit, the TV, the Christmas tree! Just by turning off lights and other electrical units you are not (really) using will make a big difference in your electric bill. SO, if for example your children do not like to sleep in complete darkness, you use a nightlight... but get them an



Ian Drysdale - The Islander
Plastic refuse never goes away...it ends up on beaches, in rivers and remains forever in landfills.

energy efficient night light. They use LEDs and not incandescent bulbs, so, one, you reduce the risk of fire, two, you reduce the risk of your children burning their fingers by touching a hot bulb, and, three, you save money. It makes perfect sense in a perfect world.

4. Buy large. Yes, buy the large packs of the things you use the most, like toilet paper, toothpaste, breakfast cereal, dishwashing soap, laundry detergent,

sugar, salt, hot sauce. By buying in bulk, you reduce the creation of trash; you reduce the amount of times you need to go shopping, which means you reduce your gasoline/diesel consumption. Our landfills worldwide are getting full; our trash is ending up in rivers, lakes, and oceans (and parks, and streets, and gutters, and...). So every bit of trash you DON'T produce does not end up in the landfill.

5. Glass is class. Forget about plas-

tic, forget about disposable drinks, and forget about plastic cups! We used to look after those heavy, returnable 2 liter carbonated drink containers... whatever happened to them? They are still around, but it is now much easier to get plastic, but plastic is not good for Mother Earth, because that same plastic bottle you drank out of today will be around when your great-grandchildren are meeting their grandchild! And I don't mean being reused, it will be floating around the Caribbean ocean, it will be hidden behind a plant in Central Park, not decomposing. Glass comes from silica sand; glass can be sanitized and reused innumerable times.

So, no more excuses, do your part, I will do mine, and we will all chip in and make this planet a livable one for ourselves and our offspring.

Coming at you in your next edition: what you can do in your office and in your car.

Ian is the owner/operator of Luna Environmental Consultants in West End, Roatan. He can be reached at iandrysdale@gmail.com

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THE ISLANDER

Island Development



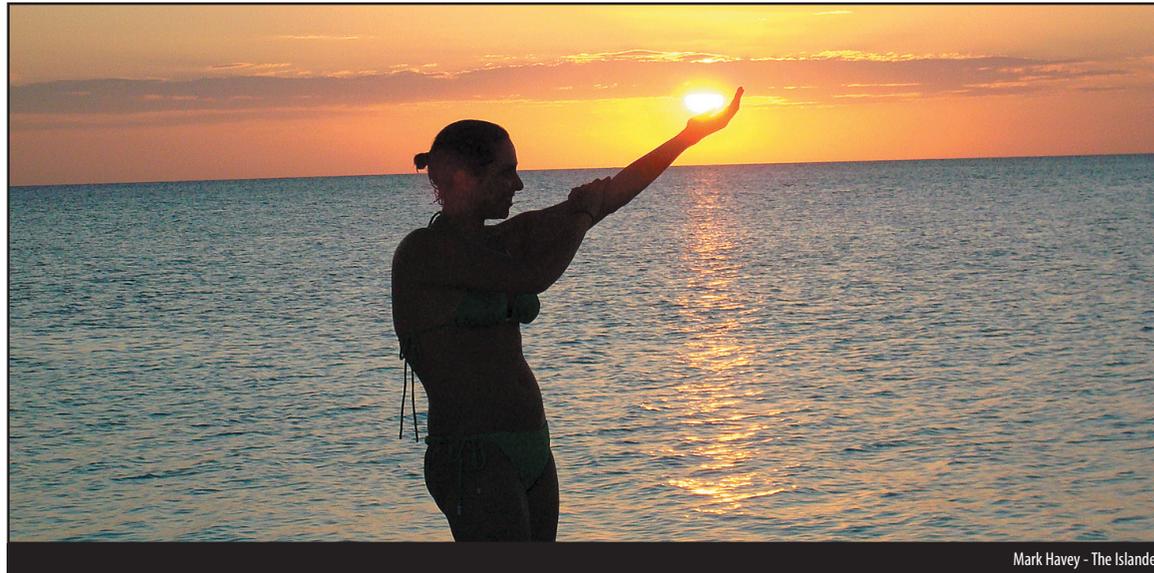
Gourmet food and high-speed internet: Both add up to make Roatan better

Mark Havey
The Islander

A couple of establishments that have opened over the last few years have raised the bar here on the island in terms of availability of items or just improving on the quality of what is available. Better internet communications has also facilitated island development.

Not so many years ago, the availability of decent imported cheeses and meats was extremely limited. Over time, both Warrens and Eldon's began to carry some cheeses and meats that were either from the U.S. or Europe, but over all the pickings were fairly slim in terms of variety and assortment. Then, in May of 2006 two places opened their doors and it changed the food situation completely here on the island.

One of the places is Mangiamo Deli in the West Bay Mall. Danielle Gentilcore, who owned and ran Twisted Toucan for many years and enjoyed quite a success there, decided she was going to have a deli style restaurant and grocery store. She bought 2 units at the mall and opened up to great fanfare. Her menu was an immediate hit among the resident expats. She imported excellent cheeses, meats, oysters, scallops, salmon, and food items from all over the world and became the premiere retail outlet



Mark Havey - The Islander

for these types of foods on the island. She even divided her shelving of items according to the different countries from where the food originated. Her selection of Asian food goods was among the best on the island and such items as pickled ginger, seaweed wraps, wasabi, and Vietnamese hot sauce just to mention a few, were plentiful. Soon there was always a line at lunch time getting sandwiches from their multi-item menu.

Around this same time, Alba foods opened their doors and not only opened a deli at Gibson Bight right

off the main road, where they sold a variety of imported meats, cheeses and other food items, but also began supplying restaurants and resorts with imported food items, such as steaks, seafood, etc. The impact was felt immediately with signs all over the island of different restaurants featuring imported meats or seafood. Alba Foods, along with Sherry and Butch's Bulk Gourmet and Doug Thorkelsons' House of Meats became the main suppliers of good meats and imported products here on the island. These, in my opinion, are the major players

in this niche market here on Roatan today.

The impact and success of these establishments are evidenced today by the fact that all of these places are still in business and successful. The Mangiamo Deli recently changed hands and was purchased by Frank Wilders and Samir Chirinos, who plan to take things at Mangiamo to the next level. It will be interesting and exciting to watch that take place over time.

Now you may ask yourself what does this have to do with Island devel-

opment? The reality of the matter is that it has very much to do with it. Without services such as these in place to support the expansion of island development in general, it would be a much different place today.

The same can be said for internet communications here on the island. In the beginning of 2002 there was no high speed internet to speak of. Today that is not the case. Much credit can and should be given to Mitch Cummins, owner of Paradise Computers, who tirelessly worked with the ISP's to provide a high speed environment. He was not the first to attempt to do this, but through perseverance, he is the one who ultimately prevailed.

This dramatically impacted the real estate market and development in general here. Potential investors could now stay "in touch" online. Prior to that, connectivity with the internet was via modem and trust me, that was no fun at all and was viewed as simply unacceptable by many potential investors in their assessment of the infrastructure of Roatan.

So as you can see, Island development is subject to and impacted by the contributions of a variety of people and businesses.

Mark is the owner-broker of Roatan Life real estate on Roatan. He can be reached at mark@roatanlife.

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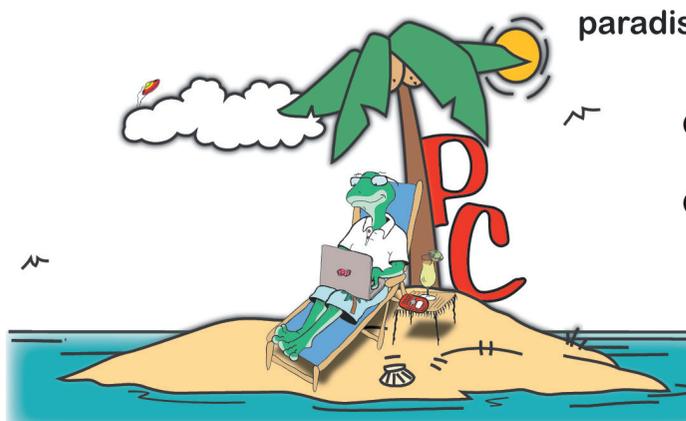
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COMING SOON

The **CINEMANIAC** Reviews

Todd Ellertson
 The Islander

As is the case with 'smaller movies,' I saw two this past week that are now both available on DVD and are being shown in Honduran cinemas. They are vastly different in both subject matter and ultimately one is far more satisfying than the other.

The less satisfying of the two, but not a huge disappointment, is Will Smith's latest foray into his serious side: "Seven Pounds." Except for when he bravely (and successfully) portrayed Muhammad Ali in 2001, Smith has two genres in which he dabbles: blockbuster 'event' movies (see 'Hancock,' and 'I Robot' to name two of many) and quieter 'message' movies like 'The Pursuit of Happyness' from 2006.

'Seven Pounds' falls into the 'quiet' category, though I might put it in the 'slow' category. Smith plays Ben who has chosen seven people who each, in their very different way, need help. Why Ben decides to help them would be a plot spoiler, but he his reasons are fully revealed by the end of the movie. Getting to that point is the slow part in that trying to figure out exactly why he is driven to help them tried my nerves. That said, it is an ambitious and often pleasing tale of sacrifice and redemption.

Smith plays the Everyman here with brooding understatement, much more so than some of his bombastic (but box office gold) turns in his event movies. Rosario Dawson plays one of his objects of benevolence and his romantic interest; the two have an

easy-going chemistry between them. Less can be said about his relationship with Ezra (Woody Harrelson), a blind man who also makes the list of seven.

Though the movie breaks no new ground, it is engaging and pointedly emotional...I just wish it had moved a little more quickly.

'Vicky Christina Barcelona' is the better of the two films for my money, but I am a Woody Allen fan and his latest doesn't disappoint. The premise seems a little thin at the beginning: two young Americans spend a summer in Spain and set upon a romantic, entwined adventure.

They meet a flamboyant artist (Javier Bardem) and his beautiful but loony ex-wife (Penelope Cruz). Vicky (Rebecca Hall) is straight-laced, a little uptight and about to be married. Cristina (Scarlett Johansson) is a sexually adventurous free spirit. When they all become amorously entangled, the results are both hilarious and harrowing.

Cruz deserved her Oscar for Best Supporting Actress: her portrayal of crazy Maria Elena could have been over-the-top with histrionics and, well, craziness. But Cruz's gentle touch and nuance humanize an otherwise easily-caricatured role.

With a glorious Barcelona as its backdrop, 'Vicky Christina Barcelona' allows the poet of Manhattan, Woody Allen, to show off his well-spoken, low-level neurotics in a slower-paced, European setting. The script is pitch-perfect, his actors superb and the end result is a wholly satisfying experience.

Island Tourism



Why not get the whole family snorkeling?

Todd Ellertson
The Islander

If you're planning on coming to Roatan for a family getaway and you've never snorkeled...now is the time to give this relatively easy and inexpensive water sport some consideration. I've snorkeled in the Florida Keys, St. John, USVI and Roatan and I can assure you - Roatan is superior in that its underwater world is part of the Mesoamerican Reef, the world's second largest.

Here is why snorkeling is a win/win for 'quality family time': the necessary equipment consists of a mask, a snorkel and swim fins (which can be rented for almost nothing at a number of rental stands on West Bay beach), learning is easy if you've got a group of fairly proficient swimmers, it's good exercise and the experience will provide colorful, exciting memories for everyone.

For first-time snorkelers, get your 'feet wet' by practicing in shallow water first. It takes some acclimation to get used to the mask and the snorkel. Spending ample time in shallow water will create confidence when venturing into deeper water. I would suggest also that no one snorkel alone...one or more 'snorkel buddies' is simply a good, safe practice. Clearing the snorkel and mask of water (some masks will leak from corrosion from



Snorkeling is a family-friendly vacation activity that gets everyone in the water, the equipment is cheap and the memories...priceless!

sea salt) is easy, but learning how to do it before advancing to deeper water is a good idea. And if your mask does leak, be a good sport and tell the vendor that it leaks and exchange it for another one. Good vendors will replace the mask.

Once you and your fellow snorkel-

ers have mastered using the mask, snorkel and swim fins on your feet in concert, it's time to find the reef! On a sunny day, you will likely see other snorkelers gathering like a school of sharks above a particularly colorful spot on the reef...swim to them! And of course, don't forget to watch what's

under you while you get there...sometimes little surprises happen before you get to the reef. On my way to a reef in St. John, I spotted a huge sea turtle and a manta ray! Nothing topped that once I got to the reef!

Camera technology has improved exponentially in the last decade, mak-

ing it easier and more affordable to use waterproof, underwater cameras. I think there are even disposable ones available...did I really see that? Good snorkeling photos are impressive when showing Grandma (and some jealous friends) images of your recent trip to Roatan.

An important thing to keep in mind is the delicate ecosystem that exists in and around coral reefs. The good thing about snorkeling is that it is mostly a just-below-the-surface experience, that is, it keeps feet and hands off the reef. One step on a coral bed can do some damage...so look and don't touch. There is enough scientific evidence that proves how valuable coral reefs are to underwater plant and marine life as well as what it provides the shore in terms of protection from pounding surf.

It's time to finally take the plunge and get your duffs off the beach and into the water. Discover a new world beneath the waves...you'll be amazed at the colorful schools of fish, tiny, graceful seahorses, brilliantly colored coral, sea anenomes and starfish. Don't think that you can't snorkel - it's easy, cheap and something you'll talk about long after your island tan has faded! Take the plunge!

For more information on snorkeling, here's a great website: www.snorkeling.info.com.



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All About Roatan

— Don Pearly —



WELCOME TO 'THE ISLANDER'

'The Islander' would be the beautiful new 8 page addition to 'Honduras This Week.' Finally - some much deserved recognition. We have been telling the world how Roatan is the gem of Honduras, the Center of the Universe and the best place to be, if you must be somewhere.

And now our own personalized section features columnists living in the islands, writing about environmental issues, community activities, development and tourism. They all have cameras with them and we will finally see ourselves highlighted in each issue of the paper.

This will be unique in that all of the ads will be Roatan based advertisers meaning, an almost one on one, face to face with the residents, allowing the businesses to really show and tell their services.

And now, a message from Mark Twain who said "If I only had one dollar left, I would spend it on advertising." Or was that William Randolph Hearst? Anyway, give it a try; we need to keep active until the trickle down from the States gets a lot greener - right now it is not all that pretty.

MESOTHELIOMA

Have you noticed the world-wide TV search for mesothelioma victims or their spouses or children or their grandchildren or friends of their children's children? It seems if you have it, you are entitled to money forever. Even being near someone who might have been near someone with it may in fact be entitled to something good.

What is mesothelioma? The dictionary says, and I do not quote: "Latin-Meso, meaning, a high standard of living for attorneys." It is the legal/medical way of saying "asbestos poisoning...the lawyer's best friend." This situation is even more lucrative for attorneys than tobacco claims, Social Security claim denials or the old stand-by, whip-lash.

The other industry keeping TV stations in business during these rough times is the AARP, the group that provides additional insurance coverage for Medicare holders. Over and over on every channel they appear, telling us they approve all these plans that cost older people more money than they have.

PICKING ON LAWYERS (cont'd)
(Actual court transcripts)

ATTORNEY: What was the first thing your husband said to you that morning?
WITNESS: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"
ATTORNEY: And why did that upset you?
WITNESS: My name is Susan!

ATTORNEY: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?
WITNESS: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

ATTORNEY: The youngest son, the twenty-year-old, how old is he?
WITNESS: He's twenty, much like your IQ.

ATTORNEY: How was your first marriage terminated?
WITNESS: By death.
ATTORNEY: And by whose death was it terminated?
WITNESS: Take a guess.

ATTORNEY: Can you describe the individual?
WITNESS: He was about medium height and had a beard.
ATTORNEY: Was this a male or a female?
WITNESS: Unless the circus was in town, I'm going with male.

ATTORNEY: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?
WITNESS: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

And the best for last:

ATTORNEY: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?
WITNESS: No.
ATTORNEY: Did you check for blood pressure?
WITNESS: No.
ATTORNEY: Did you check for breathing?
WITNESS: No.
ATTORNEY: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?
WITNESS: No.
ATTORNEY: How can you be so sure, Doctor?
WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.
ATTORNEY: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?
WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.

ANYONE HUNGRY?

The Bocca Restaurant Café located in the West Bay Colonial Suites facility has announced an all you can eat buffet for a mere \$ 5.00. And as if that were not thrilling enough they will also include a cocktail.

Don Pearly can be reached at donpearly7@aol.com.

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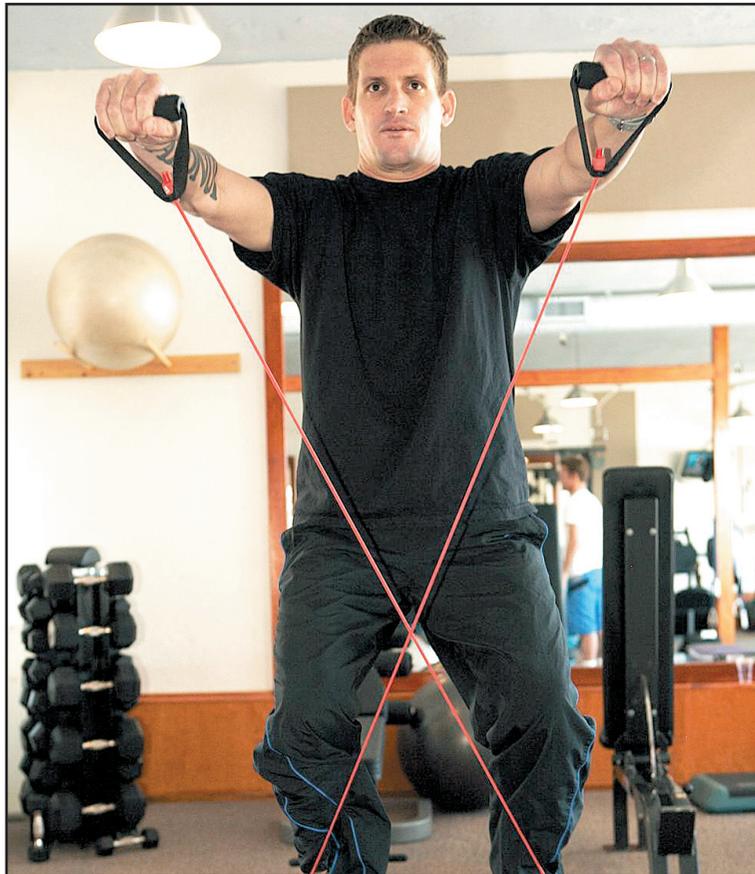
Ivonne van Leest

Sport Physical Therapist

Every single day I try to explain to my athletes why core exercises are so important. I get a swimmer who focuses on his pectorals and his glutei, a soccer player mostly on his quadriceps and a tennis player on his biceps and triceps. They all think that in their specific sport those are the most important muscles and they'll think that that's where their power comes from.

Then we get the patients who have had a debilitating stroke, are paraplegic, have Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis. They all focus on walking and they'll think that the legs are the most important to exercise - even their therapists most of the time are focusing on the legs.

Well people, let me set this straight - they are all wrong. We'll have to understand a little bit more about where our power comes from and where the movements originate. When we understand this and exercise the right



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CORE continued on page 14

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HEALTH

CORE TRAINING: More than just abdominals

con't from page 13

way, we'll also have less injury.

It all comes from the trunk and that's what core exercises are all about: providing stability, strength and coordination to the trunk. So, "core" doesn't only refer to the abdominals, which is a mistake made by a lot of people. It is a combination of all the abdominals, back muscles, lateral trunk flexors, serratus anterior, rhomboids; even the abductors and adductors of the hip play a role.

To perform better, whether we are high performance athletes or patients with mobility issues, the above-mentioned diseases or patients recuperating from surgery or other injuries, it all comes back to the right balance and good core exercises.

Let's first talk a bit about balance. We all favor our right or left hand, arm or leg. The first thing we have to do is balance between right and left. We cannot have stronger muscles on one side than on the other side, so it is important to try to exercise, especially in the beginning, separately with the left and right sides. That's one of the reasons I highly recommend using free weights: you have to watch strength and coordination to make the correct movement.

Then we have to balance between front and back. We see a lot of people focus on the muscle groups in front and forget about the back. So when you train your pectoralis (pecs) in front, you'll have to also train the rhomboids and trapezius in the back to keep the balance. To best treat and/or prevent chronic injuries, strength and flexibility are optimized when attention is paid to both the muscle groups in the front of the body and the back.

When a soccer player deals with a chronic injury in the pelvis and upper legs, it's usually because the hamstrings (in back) aren't in proper balance with the strength of the quadriceps (in front).

Balance is also essential between the upper and lower body. You've seen them at the gym: Guys with awesome upper body development and chicken legs on the bottom. I've also seen body builders with big upper and lower body muscles, but they aren't able to stand on one leg and balance for a minute. Again, this can be rectified by attention and time spent on core exercise training.

Just remember this basic rule: if you work something in front,

work something in the back. Also remember to work the lower body. The quadriceps, glutes and calves all need time and attention in the gym.

If that is all correct, then we have to make sure that all muscles have perfect coordination together. We do that with balance and coordination exercises, which can be as simple as standing on one leg and as difficult as balancing with your elbows on an exercise ball and lifting one leg at a time or one arm and stay in a perfect, straight line.

Coming back to the force and strength we need in our extremities, remember that every single movement of the extremities starts with movement in our trunk. It's like initiating a golf swing: it starts in the trunk and the arms follow through. And to make it all a bit more complicated, we'll have to balance this with endurance: muscle strength, coordination and flexibility are not enough if we don't combine it all with endurance.

For some it might sound complicated, for some it might even sound like a foreign language, but is based on the following concept. When we engage in sports, whether professional or recreational, or when we need to recuperate after an injury, or just want to be in better shape, make sure to find somebody who knows what this is all about.

Too many times I see people doing all this effort month after month, without having any idea what they are doing and eventually stopping because they don't see the results they want or continue with injury after injury. Of course, it is always better to do some kind of exercise than no exercise at all. But it will give so much more satisfaction if you see that you have more energy, lose the weight you want to lose, fit into your clothes, and have fewer injuries. Elderly people, especially those who have had a fracture after a fall, should do core exercises.

They can be done at all fitness levels and at any age.

Proper attention to and instruction on how to perform quality core exercises leads to better balance, more strength and self-confidence. All you need is a couple of weeks of good instruction and you'll see the results and you'll then be able to continue on your own at home or at the gym.

Any questions, don't hesitate to contact me: ivleest@yahoo.com

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Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Tegucigalpa



Bekanntmachung für Deutsche zur Wahl zum Europäischen Parlament

Am 7. Juni 2009 findet die Wahl der Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland statt.

Deutsche, die außerhalb der Bundesrepublik Deutschland leben und im Bundesgebiet keine Wohnung mehr innehaben, können bei Vorliegen der sonstigen wahlrechtlichen Voraussetzungen an der Wahl teilnehmen. Für ihre Wahlteilnahme ist u. a. Voraussetzung, dass sie

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- 1.2 in anderen Gebieten leben und vor ihrem Fortzug nach dem 23. Mai 1949 aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland¹⁾ mindestens drei Monate ununterbrochen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland¹⁾ gewohnt oder sich dort sonst gewöhnlich aufgehalten haben;
2. in ein Wählerverzeichnis in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland eingetragen sind. Diese **Eintragung erfolgt nur auf Antrag. Der Antrag ist auf einem Formblatt zu stellen; er soll bald nach dieser Bekanntmachung abgesandt werden.** Einem Antrag, der erst am 18. Mai 2009 oder später bei der zuständigen Gemeindebehörde eingeht, kann nicht mehr entsprochen werden (§ 17 Abs. 1 der Europawahlordnung).

Antragsvordrucke (Formblätter) sowie informierende Merkblätter können bei

- den diplomatischen und berufskonsularischen Vertretungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,
- dem Bundeswahlleiter, Statistisches Bundesamt, Zweigstelle Bonn, Postfach 170377, 53029 BONN, GERMANY
- den Kreis- und Stadtwahlleitern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

angefordert werden.

Weitere Auskünfte erteilen die Botschaften und berufskonsularischen Vertretungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Tegucigalpa, den 27.02.2009

**Deutsche Botschaft Tegucigalpa,
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Callejón Siria
Col. Lomas del Guijarro
Apartado Postal 3145
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Bekanntmachung für Deutsche zur Wahl zum Deutschen Bundestag

Am 27. September 2009 findet die Wahl zum Deutschen Bundestag statt.

Deutsche, die außerhalb der Bundesrepublik Deutschland leben und im Bundesgebiet keine Wohnung mehr innehaben, können bei Vorliegen der sonstigen wahlrechtlichen Voraussetzungen an der Wahl teilnehmen. Für ihre Wahlteilnahme ist u. a. Voraussetzung, dass sie

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VOLUNTEERISM

The Limits of Paternalism

Marco Cáceres
projecthonduras.com

A recent airing of the daily TV talk show 'Frente a Frente' featured three members of the Honduran Congress and a psychiatrist. The topic of the program was the growing violence in Honduras, notably the rising incidence of kidnappings and murders. At one point during the show, host Renato Álvarez posed the question, "What can the government do for us to help us deal with the threat of violence in Honduras?" Mr. Álvarez posed the question to all four of his guests. Not one of the politicians had a reasonable or even thoughtful answer. In fact, it was as if the very question caught them off guard... which was strange, given the topic of the program.

One of the "diputados" offered that we should pray more and strengthen our religious faith. He said that the cause of this new, seemingly unrestrained violence in the country is due to the decaying morality of Honduran society. Another of the diputados talked about her fears and the fact that now the violence is also aimed at women and children. But nobody offered even a glimpse of a strategy.

Part of the problem was that Mr. Álvarez posed the wrong question. The host allowed himself to fall into the all-too-common trap of assuming that it is the government that holds the answers to Honduras' social problems. The correct question from Mr. Álvarez should have been, "What can we, the citizens of Honduras, do to

interest of its protected figures.

This paternalistic kind of a relationship hasn't really worked well in Honduras because it creates dependency on Honduras' public institutions and thus apathy on the part of the population at large. Furthermore, according to the psychiatrist, the kind of paternalism that has developed in Honduras is a limited one which has the government mainly just doling out money, but very little in the way of follow-up on attention and engagement.

This would be akin to a parent showing up once a week to pay an allowance to the children and then disappearing during the rest of the week to let the kids raise, nurture, and fend for themselves.

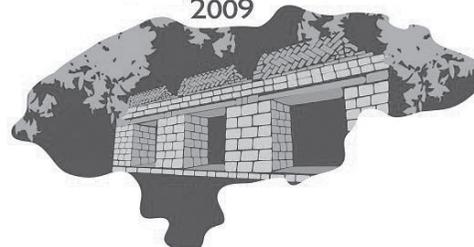
So long as paternalism thrives in Honduras, in any form, the Honduran people will not even allow themselves to consider the possibility that they have it within themselves to change their country. And so when government leaders arrive at a point where they have inadequate or no answers to certain problems that plague Honduras, then what you are left with is a country where everyone is staring at each other, shrugging their shoulders and shaking their heads, wondering... "What do we do now?"

The answer is to mobilize that part of Honduran society that has not yet been lulled to sleep by the disease of paternalism... the country's youth.

Honduras must ask, inspire, and guide its future leaders to begin leading now, rather than assume they are not ready because they are too young. The reality is that the youth can do no worse than have the adults. Mobilizing the youth of Honduras to change the country will be the focus of the 10th annual Conference on Honduras in Copán Ruinas during September 24-26, 2009.

For information about the conference, see <http://www.projecthonduras.com/conference>.

X Conferencia sobre
HONDURAS
Copán Ruinas, 24-26 de septiembre
2009



address the problem of violence in the country? What can we do to assist the government?"

The psychiatrist on the show actually hit it on the head when he commented that he thought the single-most biggest problem in Honduras is that the relationship between the government and the people is one based almost exclusively on paternalism... that of a parental figure who is wiser, stronger and acts in the best

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Former Irish Prime Minister offers insight into Ireland's economic growth

Patrick Ahern

Honduras This Week

Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland from 1997 to 2008, who engineered the incredible economic growth of Ireland during those years told a COHEP event on February 19 that quality education was the single most important factor in the success of the "Celtic Tiger." Excellence in education is worth any sacrifice he added. Ahern previously served as Ireland's Minister of Finance and of Labor beginning in 1987. He had a hand in guiding the country from being the poorest country in Europe to the second richest one over a twenty year span.

As prime minister of a country of only 4.2 million people, he increased the educational budget by 300%, hired 9,000 new teachers and reduced the number of children per classroom. Now, 60% of those in the 20 to 35 year old bracket have a university degree. An educated work force attracts foreign investment which creates jobs he added. From 1997 to 2008 jobs grew from 1.2 million to well over 2 million.

Ahern cited many other factors leading to the "Irish economic miracle." He credits "dialogue and social consensus" with getting the economy started on its rise. As Minister of Labor he was able to unite all sectors (business, labor, NGOs, farmers etc.) around a three year plan called "Program of National Recovery." Government expenditures were cut by five per cent and wages were cut as well. However tax cuts were given to workers to maintain their purchasing power. In those three years, business income increased

about five per cent per year. By the fifth year the economy started to benefit from capital investments of profits and the number of jobs started to grow. Unemployment stood at 18% and eventually fell to 3.5%.

Ireland taxed 65% of the income of the very wealthy, businesses 52%. As a result of reforms introduced by Ahern, the highest bracket for individual income is now 41% and the business tax is down to 12.5%. Capital gains taxes were cut from 40% to 20%. All of this attracted businesses such as Dell, Hewlett Packard, Bell Labs and Abbot Laboratories to move to Ireland.

Bureaucratic red tape was cut drastically, infrastructure was greatly improved and Ireland became known as a streamlined and user-friendly place to invest and do business. Local businesses grew and many multinational corporations moved their headquarters to Ireland.

Ahern stressed the need for making serious long-term plans and sticking to it. Don't make a plan unless you are going to implement it, he advised and added that all of the stakeholders (business, labor, government, civil society etc.) must honor their commitments. The government participation in the national dialogue should be limited to civil servants and not political appointees. Growth will only come with sustained effort over time. The former prime minister said he participated in the formulation of two ten year plans. Every three years the plans are re-negotiated. Between serving in cabinet positions and time as Prime Minister he was deeply involved in six of the

three-year plans.

The Irish government assisted small businesses with marketing overseas, research and development as well as credit. There was a rise in growth and productivity. Joining the Common Market forced Ireland to modernize and become more competitive.

The poor economic situation from at least the 1849 potato famine has meant there were mass migrations out of the country to Australia, New Zealand and North America. Ireland today has only 4.2 million people, yet in the US alone there are 36 million inhabitants of Irish descent. The economic boom has reversed the trend to leave. In fact, people, especially from Poland and the Baltic states are coming to Ireland in search of jobs.

Ahern practiced what he preached during his three-day visit to Honduras. True to his model for social dialogue among all sectors, he met with university rectors, business leaders, the cardinal, the government, and both major political parties as well as union leaders. He said that he would not be presumptuous enough to tell Honduras how to run its affairs, only that some of the lessons learned in Ireland could be applied to Honduras. A few of those lessons include:

Seriously reform and take control of the abysmal public school system in Honduras to produce young workers who are capable, willing and schooled in modern technology and work ethic.

- Teachers need to teach and truly care about the welfare of their students.

- Modernize and streamline the bureaucratic system to make it

easier and more efficient to do business in Honduras.

- Reduce the government budget by cutting waste, corruption and abuse.

- Have a serious social dialogue to reach the consensus that all sectors will need to sacrifice to spur real economic growth and opportunity for all.

- The rich need to pay their taxes and invest in productive ways to create more jobs instead of purchasing gas guzzling Humvees, Cadillac Escalades, Land Cruisers and McMansions.

- Politicians need to give up their dispensas and legislate for the good of Honduras, not their political parties or selfish personal or business interests.

- Government workers need to be more productive and honest.

- Infrastructure of all types needs to be improved to make business more efficient and to attract foreign investment.



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Yellow House: 1 floor, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, large living room, large dining room, TV room, studio, ceramic kitchen, porch, basket ball court. Mahogany beams, doors, cabinets. Unfurnished.

White House: son's dormitory, then 2 room apt., kitchenette, and bath.

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•Triunfo de la Cruz, Tela, Atlantida, beach property, area: 5,820.36 square feet, 126 feet of beach front. Price \$130,000.

•East End, Guanaja, Bay Islands, 84.25 acres with approximately 2,788 feet of beach front. Coral reefs in front of property, \$60,000 per acre.

•Guanaja, Bay Islands, 10 acres with river, house, next to a hotel. Price: \$85,000 per acre.

•Tela, Atlantida, beach 100 meters away from beach, two story house, swimming pool, 3 bedrooms, price \$190,000.

•Piedra Pintada, La Ceiba, Atlantida, two beach houses with three bedrooms. Price: \$85,000.

•Piedra Pintada, La Ceiba, Atlantida, two properties of 32.8 x 65.6 feet of beach front. Price:\$16,000 per property.

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•Balfate, Colon, 4 terrains of beach front of 65.6 x 65.6 feet, \$25,000 each one.

•Tela, Atlantida 68.8 acres in Tela, beach, mountain and plain terrain, 34.4 acres (plain) and 34.4 acres (mountains), excellent for building a hotel resort. Price \$58,140 per acre.

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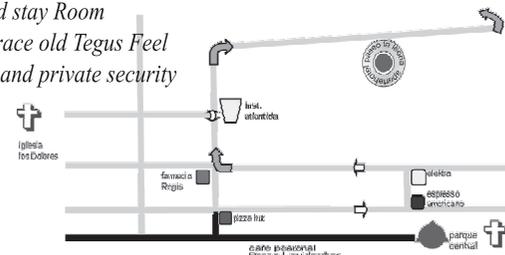
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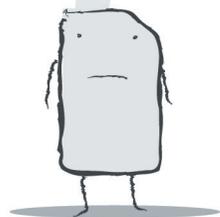


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