

HONDURAS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2009



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Retrospective of
Honduran painter
opens at MIN

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of European
recognition

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Cindy Burgess - Honduras This Week

Lola, a two-year old Staffordshire terrier, undergoes surgery to repair a gaping neck wound she got during a fight. World Vets, a non-profit organization out of Washington state in the U.S., have also spayed and neutered dogs on Roatan to control population.

Veterinarians on Roatan save beloved pets

Cindy Burgess
Honduras This Week

COXEN HOLE – Lola was out cold.

The two-year-old Staffordshire terrier lay on her side, a three-inch-long gash in her neck gaping wide.

"I've trimmed out all the dead tissue," said Dr. Jerry Brown, a

veterinarian from Washington State, as he prepared to stitch the wound closed.

Half an hour later Lola was in the recovery room, the surgery to repair the fight injury to her neck a success.

Lola was one of hundreds of dogs and cats that were treated in Roatan last week – free of charge

– by a team from World Vets.

The Washington-based non-profit organization held a three-day clinic at Roatan Bilingual School (ENBIR) in Coxen Hole from March 17-19. Five veterinarians and eleven veterinary students, licensed technicians and volunteers treated everything from broken limbs and cuts to skin problems and

flea infestations.

They also spayed and neutered dozens of pets in an attempt to reduce the number of stray dogs and cats on the island.

"People are putting poison out to get rid of the dogs," said Dr. Cathy King, the executive director and founder of World Vets. "We're trying to help manage that popula-

tion in a humane way, so they're not just multiplying out of control."

This is the second year in a row that a team from World Vets has visited Roatan. Each trip costs about \$15,000, with most of the funds coming from donations and trip fees paid by the volunteers.

Last year, the group treated

VETS cont on page 3

EDITORIAL

The Inconvenient Fourth Box

The executive branch has proposed the installation of a fourth ballot box in the elections set for the last Sunday of November, 2009. The proposal is to consult the electorate about changes and revisions to the Constitution of the Republic, by means of the creation of a National Constituent Assembly. The devices of the plebiscite and the referendum can provide a platform for consultation, but the Constitution established that a secondary law must be developed for the implementation of these devices, and this law still does not exist.

At this current juncture, we observe three important moments. Firstly, we have to make a list of themes to consider. Secondly, we must discuss whether these themes merit a popular consultation. There needs to be an extensive debate, with active participation from political parties, the different professional groups, churches, and civil society organizations. If it is concluded that it is a summons to the constituent to take action, we have to consider a third moment - whether the new constitution would bring about substantial juridical improvements.

A new constitutional framework will not solve all of our problems - that would be a utopia. We need responsibility and sincerity at the level of both the governors and the governed.

What is concerning is that time is not on our side - the elections are in November but the traditional summons to the parties is going to be in May. Suddenly there will be

campaigns to convince the public that May will be upon us and that Congress has to quickly pass the secondary law for the implementation of the consultation.

The constitution is the soul of a country. We cannot be naïve; it is not to say that the public should fear the consultation, but that we must be responsible and objective. We need to be conscious that experts in propaganda and political image will try to sell the idea of the reform as the better way.

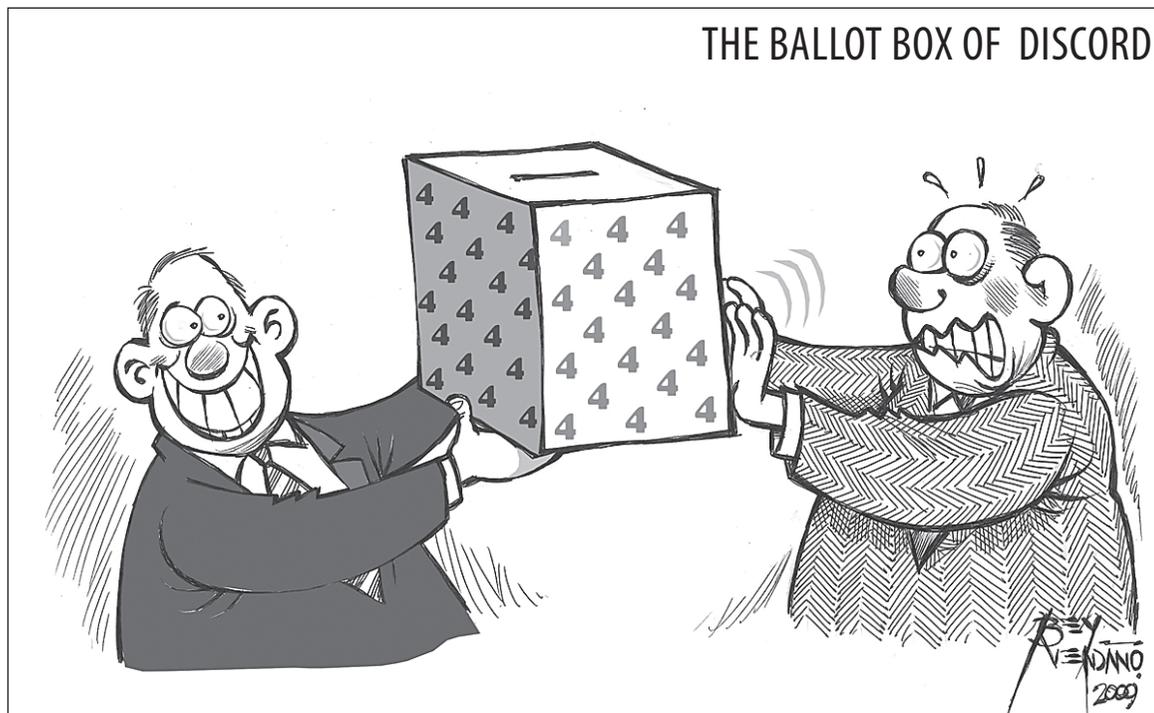
A nationalist politician commented that president Zelaya is within his rights to propose initiatives, but on the cusp of this electoral moment, people stating these kinds of views as if they want him to stay in power causes uncertainty.

One of the articles which could be considered fatal for this country would be that to allow the re-election of the president. We believe in the continuity of government policies and actions, but not in that of the individuals of party leadership. The current Honduran governors have demonstrated abusive and dishonest conduct. We are not prepared to have a re-election.

It is most disagreeable to watch how they publicly present the prospective politicians for the next elections, when they are making a subtle but open maneuver to jump from power to power. With this they oppress the development of democratic political thought, and negate the capacity of new groups to assume positions in the leadership of this country.

OPINION

THE BALLOT BOX OF DISCORD



LETTERS

In response to Ivonne van Leest's "Health Matters" column in the March 7 HTW:

By far one of the best fitness articles I've read in a while. I've

been working on my core for the last few months and did not fully understand exactly what muscle groups were involved. Like many, I thought it was just Abs and back, not realizing there are other

muscles in the hips and upper back that needed attention as well. Thanks for the explanation.

Monica via
www.hondurasthisweek.com

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Honduras This Week
PO Box 1312
Tegucigalpa, Honduras



E-mail:
hontweek@multidata.hn
www.hondurasthisweek.com
Tel: 239-3654 239-0285
Fax: 232-2300

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HONDURAS THIS WEEK

Founding Editor 1949-2006

Mario Gutiérrez Minera

Publisher/General Manager

Mario Gutiérrez Pacheco
hontweek@multidata.hn

Administration Manager

Andrea Gutiérrez Pacheco
hontweekadmon@multidata.hn

Subscriptions, Dare to Think and Cultural Events Editor

Rosibel Pacheco de Gutiérrez
rosipache@yahoo.com.mx

Online Publisher

Stanley Marrder (Houston)
stan@marrder.com

Graphic Design and Video

Santos Ortiz Banegas
produccioneshwt@gmail.com

Office

Angela Molina

Managing Editor

Todd Ellertson
nursetodd@gmail.com

National Correspondent

Alvaro Morales Molina

Contributors

Bruce Starr, James Bodden, Patrick Ahern,
Manfredo Martinez, Aida Sabonge Jackson,
Emily Moberly, José Eduardo Atala, Federico Rosa,
Mark Havey, Ian Drysdale, Shiona Blackie

Bay Island Correspondent

Don Pearly

Copan Correspondent

Howard Rosenzweig

Advertisement

Ernesto Lopéz,
hontweekmercadeo@multidata.hn

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Col Payaqui Frente al Instituto San Miguel #7 Casa 3644 P.O. Box 1323, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Telephones (504) 239-3654, 239-0285 - Fax (504) 232-2300 hontweek@multidata.hn

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NATIONAL



Cindy Burgess - Honduras This Week

A veterinary volunteer cradles a chihuahua following a surgical procedure.



Cindy Burgess - Honduras This Week

A German shepherd recovers from surgery. The volunteers also included educational components during their trip to Roatan, including population control.

VETS: 500 animals to be treated on Roatan

con't from page 1

more than 350 dogs and cats on the island. This year, they expected that number to top 500.

"I think it's great, it's awesome," said Ken Dickens, as he waited in line with Penny, a seven-month-old German Shepherd. The West End resident had brought his pet to the clinic to be vaccinated and spayed.

After taking a brief medical history, a team member led Penny to a scale to be weighed. Then she was off to pre-op to be shaved and prepped for surgery. Dickens was told he could come back in four or five hours to pick her up.

Inside the treatment room - set up in the school's biology lab - the vets and volunteers worked at a feverish pace. On one side of the room, a Chihuahua was being anesthetized for surgery. On the other side, a black and white cat was in the process of being neutered. At a table in between, Dr. Brown was working on Lola, an assistant

holding up a head lamp to help light the area.

"In my surgery suite at home, I would have two big halogen lights shining on this," he said with a smile. "This teaches you tolerance and improvisation."

The mission also included an educational component, aimed at raising awareness of animal cruelty and the importance of spaying and neutering.

The veterinarians visited every class at ENBIR, handing out bilingual literature from the Humane Society and talking to the students about caring for their animals.

"We're trying to start with the younger generation," said Sandra Segarich, a Roatan resident and local coordinator for World Vets. "Hopefully we'll get people that care for their animals and grow up believing that they need to be spayed and neutered and get their vaccinations."

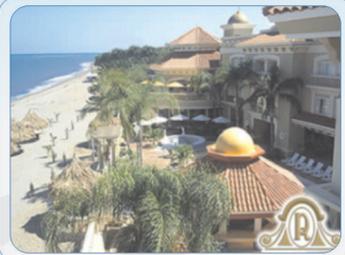


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ARTS & CULTURE

Felipe Burchard: Retrospective of Honduran painter opens at MIN

Todd Ellertson

Honduras This Week

The woman in the painting is gaunt and sickly, but has an ethereal quality that transcends her illness. 'An Angel with AIDS' ('Un Ángel con SIDA') is the aptly titled painting and series of works currently on display at the Museum of National Identity (MIN) in

Tegucigalpa. The series is part of a retrospective of Honduran painter Felipe Burchard.

Burchard, a native of Olanchito, has seen his work exhibited throughout the world for the past 40 years, in galleries in the U.S., Europe, Central and South America. He was on hand for the opening of the exhibition on Wednesday night, March 18 and



Todd Ellertson/Honduras This Week
'El Magico,' oil on canvas, Felipe Burchard.

was witness to some of his most expensive paintings selling quickly.

"Burchard usually doesn't put his paintings up for sale - I was thrilled and shocked to be able to buy one of his paintings," exclaimed a still trembling-from-excitement Roberto, a Burchard aficionado.

The gala began in the main floor lobby, with an introduction by museum curators, a slide show presentation of Burchard and finally, an invitation to gathered patrons to view the two galleries of his work upstairs.

Those who attended were treated to paintings, drawings, an elaborately painted animal skull, painted gourds and, interestingly, a painted canvas lounge chair. The

main exhibition, 'An Angel with AIDS,' was in a second gallery, featuring the afore-mentioned painting of a sickly woman. The exhibit, a series of paintings and drawings with an AIDS theme, was inspired by a photo in 'El Heraldo' (a Tegucigalpa daily newspaper) back in late 1995. The picture was of a woman of New Guinea, who was on the brink of death from AIDS complications.

Burchard described the picture as a woman, "who was either dying or already dead, but looked more like an angel, returning to the universe, with infinite grace, who's arms seemed to be embracing both life and death in the same instant."

The two rooms of work were an interesting contrast in Burchard's style as it has progressed throughout four decades. Earlier work, from the late 60's and early 70's, have the characteristic psychedelic flavor of the period while more contemporary pieces, while still abstract, take on a more whimsical feel, as in the Napoleon-inspired painted gourd.

The exhibition runs from March 18 through May 19 at the Museum of National Identity in Tegucigalpa, located downtown in Barrio Abajo. Hours are Tues.-Sat. from 9 am to 5 pm, Sun. from 10 am to 4 pm. The museum is closed on Mondays. Phone: 238-7412/7395.



Todd Ellertson/Honduras This Week
Burchard's exhibit includes elaborately painted gourds, including one of Napoleon Bonaparte.

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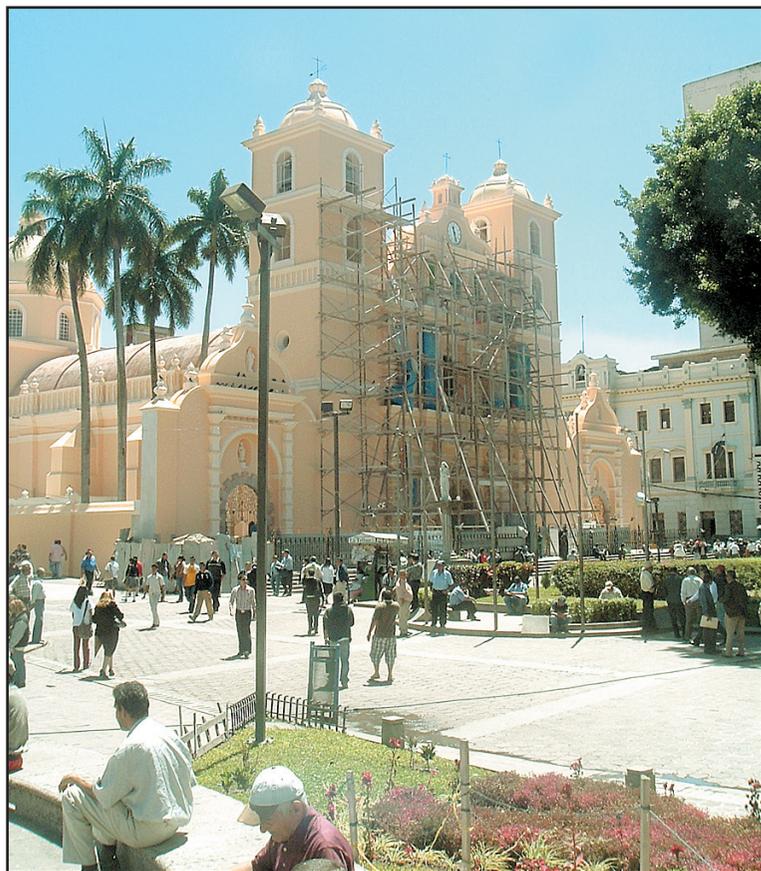
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NATIONAL



Shiona Blackie/Honduras This Week

Painting and renovation nears completion on the Central Cathedral in downtown Tegucigalpa.

Cathedral restoration can only be the beginning

Shiona Blackie

Honduras This Week

The restoration of the Tegucigalpa Cathedral that began almost three years ago is now in its final stages, with the painting and reparation of the historic building's façade on the verge of completion.

Built in the 18th century, the Cathedral is celebrated as one of the finest examples of Central American colonial baroque style, and houses an invaluable set of frescos by the most renowned painter of the colonial era in Honduras, Tegucigalpa native José Miguel Gomes. The building is also home to an antique Guatemalan timepiece, recently brought back to life by specialist Antonio Cerón as part of the restoration project.

Many factors contributed to the decline of the Cathedral's structure over the centuries. An earthquake in 1823 caused considerable damage; the roots of plants and trees from the surrounding gardens had intruded into the base of the construction; air and moisture seeping into cracks and fissures had set in motion a process of considerable decay. Thus, the Catholic Church, the Honduran Institute of History and Anthropology (IHAH), and the Central District Municipal Mayoralty (AMDC) decided it was time to act and co-operated to begin the renovation, and raise funds with the help of the local community.

Despite this community involvement, however, the project has not been without its controversies, the

main one surrounding the choice of color for the Cathedral's exterior. For centuries the building has been white, as in the Catholic tradition, but during some of the initial renovation processes a different color was uncovered at the bottom of the layers of paint, a soft peach shade, and it was speculated that this may in fact have been the color of the original paintwork. "A study was made and on the basis of this the painting was begun as thus," said architect Mauricio Flores, co-ordinator of the IHAH conservation unit. He admitted the possibility, however, that the color uncovered may have been the result of a process of oxidization.

It had been rumored that some members of the Catholic community had expressed revulsion at this alternative choice of color, feeling that it goes against the reticent traditions of their faith. But speaking to the public in the central plaza, it seemed the majority were very much in favor of the new, cheerful shade. "It is better now," said Ondina Izaguirre, visiting the park with her family. Sandra Andino, a self-professed proud Catholic, stated her love for the new color - "me encanta!" - and could not praise the renovation work enough. Matthew Duff, who has lived and worked in the city for some time, declared it to be "a hundred times better than before," its previous state having been "embarrassing" to show to visitors.

Despite the positive views of the Cathedral's new look however,

CATHEDRAL cont on page 11



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NATIONAL

“Lawyer of the Poor” killers brought to justice - but what about the intellectual authors?

Patrick Ahern

Honduras this Week

Dionisio Diaz Garcia, a lawyer suing security companies for benefits for guards, was murdered on December 4, 2006 by two men on a motorcycle as he was driving to the Supreme Court.

Diaz worked with Asociacion para una Sociedad Mas Justa (ASJ) and was involved in difficult cases, especially against Delta Security Service and its subsidiary SETECH. ASJ and Diaz had received several telephone threats. Dionisio Diaz was known as “the lawyer of the poor.” He left a widow and one son.

More than two years later on February 27, 2009, Ramon Eusebio Solis Zelaya and Cesar Daniel Amador Estrada were convicted of murder by a three-judge panel that began hearing the case on February 18. Of the 15 lawyers assassinated in the last few years, the Diaz case is the first in which there are convictions. Both assassins were former employees of the security company SETECH, giving further credence that he was ordered killed for his work in protecting the workers of that same company.

Cesar Amador was a member of the Assaults Unit of the Investigative Police (DGIC) at the

time of his arrest on January 31, 2008. Ramon Solis was working for a private security firm in La Ceiba when he was arrested that same day, more than a year prior to the trial. Both men face 20 to 30 years in prison when the sentence is handed down later this month.

Oral arguments in a trial are relatively new in Honduras. Two protected witnesses identified the two men on trial. Ramon Solis was the trigger man and Cesar Amador was driving the motorcycle they used to pull alongside the victim on the Blvd. Fuerzas Armadas near the Teletón. The witness testimonies and other evidence such as finding the victim's phone number and the address of the ASJ office in the suspect's apartment was enough for Judge Mario Rolando Diaz to hand down the guilty verdict on behalf of the other two judges.

If there had not been pressure put on the system by forces inside and outside of Honduras, it is doubtful that the killers would have brought to trial and convicted. Amnesty International generated letters and protests around the world. Donors and friends of ASJ in the U.S. put serious pressure on the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Embassy and the Honduran government to vigorously pursue this case. The chief prosecutor in

the case, Gernam Enamorado, said, “(This)...is a personal triumph for me and for the Ministerio Publico, but most of all for national justice.”

In a press release after the verdict, ASJ said, “Ramon Solis and Cesar Amador were simply acting out the will of other, more powerful people who preferred to farm out their “dirty work.” These “intellectual authors” of the murder must also be brought to justice in order to fully do justice for Dionisio, and to show Honduras that paying others to kill will be no more tolerated than murdering people oneself.”

Despite danger to its employees, ASJ (www.asjhonduras.org) continues to work on vital justice issue, including advocating for mistreated and under paid cleaning workers and security guards. It's Proyecto Gideon has seven legal aid offices in poor neighborhoods of Tegucigalpa. These offices also provide psychological counseling to individuals and couples experiencing difficulties. They also work with urban communities around the country trying to obtain legal titles to their land. ASJ publishes an online newspaper in Spanish: www.revistazo.com

The verdict is a real step forward, but until the intellectual author(s) are convicted, justice is only partially served.



Problem # 32 A Distinct Ball

Napoleon has eight balls of iron, identical in appearance. Nevertheless, one weighs 10 grams less than any of the other balls. Using a two plated balanced – and weighing only twice-Napoleon tied to find that lightweight ball. What was his procedure?

Answer to Problem #31 Lengthening a Chain

Upon first inspection, it seems four links need to be opened, but only three links, of the same stretch of chain, need to be opened. These would then be used to join the three loose ends of the remaining four stretches of chain.

We received correct answers from:
Octavio Duarte, Tegucigalpa (Problem # 31)
Ivonne Acosta (Problem # 30)

Think you know the answer? Please submit your best guess to:
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Week Review

Garifunas protest in La Ceiba

On March 10, a party of Garifuna blocked the Tela-La Ceiba road, protesting to the government that an agreement with the community signed by President Zelaya in 2006, including a promise of funds for sanitation, has never been fulfilled.

They also demanded the cancellation of a tourism development in Tela Bay, claiming it will destroy the natural resources that the people there depend upon.

Representative Miriam Miranda claimed that they have been to Tegucigalpa and received no answer. She called on the President to solve the problem.

Presidential candidates discuss anti-crisis measures

On March 17, nominees for this November's general election made a presentation to the National Congress regarding their thoughts on means of combating the effects of the global economic downturn.

Liberal candidate Elvin Santos called for public works projects to alleviate unemployment and help improve the country's infrastructure simultaneously, and suggested to relocate employable workers available for work abroad.

National candidate Porfirio 'Pepe' Lobo Sosa proposed a plan to immediately subsidize the poorest families, and stressed the importance of financing agriculture, not only as a means to food security, but because it makes up such a huge percentage of the national product.

Both commented on the necessity of supporting small business.

Electricity talks

Members of the National Association of Industries (ANDI) will meet with Rixi Moncada, head of the National Electricity Company (ENEE), to discuss the price and supply of electricity. Businesses have complained that cuts in energy prices announced in January have not been reflected in their bills. ANDI president, Adolfo Facussé, expressed hope that the talks would result in prices coming to reflect the current price of oil.

On a separate note, the Energy and Environment Alliance with Central America (AEA) is in the process of approving 68 renewable energy projects that will be funded with the help of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE). The announcement was made to coincide with this week's forum in Managua, Nicaragua, to discuss alternative energy problems and solutions in the region. Thirty-four percent of Honduras' electricity

currently comes from renewable sources, AEA representative Markku Nurmi believing there potential for much more.

A third of businesses not paying minimum wage

Thirty-two percent of businesses are still not paying the new minimum wage decreed by the government, said the Inspector General of the employment ministry. Out of 1,069 businesses inspected in the last 40 days, 333 are not paying.

Offending businesses were given three days to submit an explanation or correct the violation. Inspector Janeth Borgán hopes that the threat of Supreme Court action will increase compliance.

Colombian president visits Honduras

Colombian President Álvaro Uribe met with President Zelaya this week in a move to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, with the message that the left-right argument is outdated and all need to co-operate to fight crime and achieve social cohesion. Mr. Uribe stressed that a combination of security measures and addressing the causes of poverty, along with strong political will, are required to combat violence in Central America, and, in particular, international drug-trafficking.

The two leaders also signed an agreement to co-operate in the bio-fuels industry, giving a boost to the Honduran agriculture sector and to the drive for renewable energy.



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Bonacca, Guanaja's main population center, is navigated by man-made canals. More than half of Guanaja's 11,000 people live in Bonacca which is located on its own cay off of Guanaja.

Cindy Burgess/The Islander

BONACCA – Freedom

Cindy Burgess
The Islander

That seems to be the very definition of life on the island of Guanaja, according to the people who live there.

"You're kind of like in the olden world. No one to bother you," said Richard Arlo Hyde Wood, a long-time resident. "It gives you a lot of freedom that you don't have in the city."

Hyde commented from the comfort of his lush garden, where he sat on a swing and took in the view of Guanaja from across the

channel.

Hyde owns and lives next to the Texaco filling station in Bonacca, which is located on a small cay off the island's east coast. More than half of Guanaja's 11,000 residents live here, crowded together in colorful houses built on stilts and surrounded by narrow walkways, alleys and man-made canals.

There are no roads, and therefore no cars. People get around on foot or in motorboats, which they maneuver through town by way of the many canals. Services are few, but include a bank, a post office and several grocery stores, hotels

and restaurants.

It's been said that Bonacca is as densely populated as Hong Kong. But for all its noise and congestion, the town is still a safe place to stay. "You don't have to worry any hour," said Sandra de Alcantara. "You don't have to be afraid or scared of nothing."

De Alcantara should know. She's lived in Guanaja for all but two of her 53 years. She currently drives a water taxi, ferrying people to the airport or to resorts and beaches on the main island.

And it's the main island of Guanaja that is the central attrac-

tion for tourists.

The easternmost of the Bay Islands, Guanaja is about 18 kilometers long and six kilometers wide. Aside from a few tiny settlements, an airstrip and a handful of resorts, much of the island is uninhabited and covered by Caribbean pine. In fact, 90 per cent of the land has been declared a national forest reserve.

Those forests took a real beating in 1998 during Hurricane Mitch.

"All of this was just bare sticks, no green leaves, nothing," recalled de Alcantara, as she waved a hand at the hillsides surrounding the

airport. "Everything was parched, totally parched."

Eleven years later, the hills in this area are still stripped bare of all but the smallest vegetation. Elsewhere though, the forests are lush and healthy, and home to a variety of birds and secluded waterfalls.

Guanaja is also a marine park. The island and its 15 or so cays are surrounded by a vibrant coral reef, which makes for spectacular diving and snorkeling. There are more than 35 dive sites, ranging from volcanic caverns and tunnels to dramatic drop-offs and ship-

■ see page 9



Roatan Bruce

— Bruce Starr —

First Lady Xiomara Zelaya announces plans for new Roatan hospital

The island of Roatan has had a long time need for an additional hospital that can handle many more people than the downtown Coxen Hole hospital. Airlines such as American have stated they would not or could not come to Roatan if it did not have an up-to-date hospital that could handle many people in case of an accident.

It appears like that time has finally come. Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, First Lady of Honduras, came to the island on Friday, March 14 to announce the building of a new General Hospital in Dixon Cove near Vegas Electric. Closer to the mid-section of the island in Dixon Cove, this location may also become the home to other equally impressive projects for Roatan such as a professional ball field and a high school.

Here is what the First Lady had to say about the project:

Xiomara Castro de Zelaya: I came here specially to announce the project of the hospital to be built here on Roatan. This hospital will not only be able to serve the needs of the people of the island, but all the visitors and tourists that will be coming to the island in the future.

Roatan Bruce: Can you give me more details concerning the hospital?

Xiomara Castro de Zelaya: When the hospital is completed, it will have first class facilities. There will be a surgery room, it will have the ability to do x-rays and fulfill all the other needs that the island will have. We have received a lot of help to make this project happen. The government will be using the funds gained by the forgiving of

the Cerna debt. The central government makes the commitment to provide the needs to have this be a successful hospital.

Roatan Bruce: Can you tell me about when the hospital might be completed?

Xiomara Castro de Zelaya: After we receive the title of the land, we will be presenting the paperwork to the Central American Development Bank. In two weeks, they will receive and review this paperwork.

It will go to the Secretaries of Finance and Health. All the rules and needs showing how the hospital will be fully equipped inside and out will be established. We expect that by May or June of this year, we will begin the construction of the hospital. In November or December of this year, we expect that the first phase of the construc-

tion, the outpatient service for the island, to be completed.

One thing needs to be clear: all the financial resources for the construction of the hospital are close at hand. 18 million dollars are already available for the project.

A Sad Good-bye to the National Tourist Police Chief

Jaime Barahona, the Bay Islands National Tourist Police Chief for the last five years, has been re-assigned. This honored and respected officer was well liked for his commitment and desire to keep all tourists safe on the island. He took the time to get to know many of the business owners, not just on West Bay Beach and West End, but on many other parts of the island.

Speaking just some English when he came to the island, his English improved enough to make

it possible for tourists to call when there was a problem twenty-four hours a day and speak to a law enforcement officer who understood English.

Many thanks to Jaime Barahona for all the great work he did while on the island. He will be missed. Readers will still be able to contact him anytime you need him in Tegucigalpa. He is being replaced by a top tourist law enforcement officer who appears just as determined and qualified to continue the work Barahona has done in the past.

"Roatan" Bruce Starr is the host of The Roatan Bruce Show on The Wave 101.1 FM, from 9 am to 1 pm, Monday to Friday. Please e-mail him at roatanbruce@yahoo.com, or Skype or Yahoo messenger him at Roatanbruce. Visit his website at roatanbruce.com.

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Staff and Contributors

Publisher: Mario E. Gutiérrez

Editor: Todd Ellertson

Graphic Design: Santos Ortiz Banegas

Contributors: Ian Drysdale, Marc Havey, Cindy Burgess, Don Pearly, Roatan Bruce

Please submit your comments, critics and suggestions to hontweek@multidata.hn

THE ISLANDER



Cindy Burgess/The Islander
Diving and deserted, pristine beaches are luring more and more tourists to the quiet island of Guanaja.

GUANAJA: Privacy easy to come by on island

con't from page 7

wrecks.

The diving and deserted white sand beaches are proving to be a powerful attraction to sun-seeking tourists from the United States, Canada and Europe.

"It's really what we were looking for – a place that's not crowded," said Doris Gaa of Saarland, Germany. "You have a beach for your own to snorkel."

Her sister Yvonne Lampel was quick to agree.

"Here, we go out with the dive master – us two – and that's it. It's like a private dive," she marveled.

While tourism is not as big as Guanaja's main industry, shrimp and lobster fishing, it's growing

all the time. And the proof is in the air.

Two new air services have taken to the skies in the past month or so. On February 7, Guanaja Air started flying direct between Roatan and Guanaja. In the past, travelers wanting to go from one island to the other have had to fly through La Ceiba first.

Rollins Air has just started offering direct flights of its own to tie in with Conquest Vacations, Delta and Continental flights into Roatan.

If these two companies are any indication, the sky's the limit for Guanaja's tourism industry in years to come.

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Island Development



What's your definition of paradise?

Mark Havey
The Islander

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Everyone has a slightly different version or dream of their own particular paradise and how it should look and feel. Some people wait their whole life to be able to have the solitude and remoteness mentioned in the previous paragraph and who's to say that's not a valid description of paradise? It's all very subjective, isn't it? As a realtor, I can take five different people to see any given piece of property or any given house and I will get five completely different reactions and opinions. It's a lot like art, food, or music: it's subject to interpretation.

That's part of what makes Roatan a great choice. As it turns out, due to the way Roatan has developed over the years, potential investors have more options and choices than ever before. With

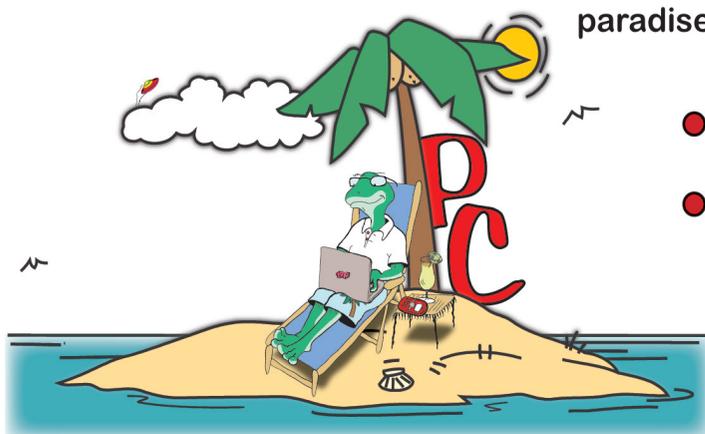
the diversity of the different parts of the island, it is very difficult to not find something that fits your own unique image of paradise.

A couple of years ago I stayed at Paya Bay and when I was sitting on their very secluded beach, enjoying a beautiful day and the lovely pristine waters of the North shore, it felt like I was in a completely different place or a different island. The same can be said for going to one of the keyholes on the South shore and spending a quiet afternoon, snorkeling or reading a book on the small white sandy beaches that some of these keyholes offer. It never ceases to amaze me that there are so many faces and facets to this island.

Another unique setting can be found at Playa Miguel on Coco View Landing just past Fantasy Island. These generous lots extend from the white sandy beach front all the way back to the lagoon in the rear. It's almost surreal how private and beautiful this whole setting is. With the constant breeze of the South shore and the noise of the waves, it creates its own ambience.

When considering Roatan as a possible investment location, it should be kept in mind that almost any scenario of paradise can be realized here. Though development in some areas has slowed a bit, overall, the island continues on its course to be one of the best real estate values in the Caribbean. Don't take my word for it. Come and see for yourself.

Comments, critiques or questions? Email me at mark@roatan-life.com.



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NATIONAL



Shiona Blackie/Honduras This Week

Extensive scaffolding covers the front of the Cathedral as it undergoes renovation and a paint job.

CATHEDRAL: New color gets mixed reviews

con't from page 5

most locals don't hold out hope for resultant benefits to tourism. Local taxi driver, Lenin Mendoza, said "No one will come just because of the Cathedral. Nobody asks 'take me to the Cathedral.'" Common sentiments were that the rest of Parque Central needs to be improved too – the garden areas are neglected, whilst the fountain languishes grimy and waterless.

Rony Agorro and Óscar Serrano, relaxing there in the afternoon sun, highlighted the ugliness of the arcade that stands, detached and purposeless, in the northwest corner. The consensus among the public was that first-and-foremost the security presence needs to be extended beyond the plaza and into the rest of the central district if they want people to visit and spend money there.

English teacher, Alicia White-Herchenhan, says "I don't take a lot of money [into El Centro] for fear of being pick-pocketed." There were various suggestions for additional improvements, from musical events to demolishing run-down office blocks. Mrs. White-Herchenhan also noted the lack of café culture in Tegucigalpa, something which thrives in the plazas of many other Latin American cities. "Having an outdoor café where one could sit and relax" would be a tremendous boost to Parque Central, the city boasting the weather for it after all.

The Cathedral project is part of a wider initiative by the AMDC to improve tourism in the capital

and surrounding region over the coming years. The current absence of a tourist information centre in Tegucigalpa stands it in poor stead against other Central American locations, thus there are plans to open a tourism office next April in the currently listless arcade in the plaza, where maps and information will be provided to visitors by qualified guides. Some action has already been taken with the placing of plaques to mark places of historical significance – 193 so far – and provide information about 18 of the most important city monuments, such as the Presidential House, the National Art Gallery, and the Manuel Bonilla Theatre. This process is to follow in Comoyaguela, and consequently in the surrounding villages of Santa Lucia, Valle de Ángeles, and San Juancito as part of a project being called 'Proyecto Real de Minas', with the aim of creating a 'tourist corridor' through the historic mining region.

If this plan is to be a success, those at its helm need to listen to the thoughts and opinions of both visitors to the city and the 'capitalinos' themselves – the people who experience the city as it is on a day-to-day basis. One just needs to look around El Centro to see that there is history in Tegucigalpa and that there is potential – and also that there is dirt, crime and neglect. Hopefully the restoration of the Cathedral will be the first step in a succession of improvements to come.



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NATIONAL



Respect...or fear?

Those are two words I'm not able to separate anymore since I've been living in Honduras. Before they seemed so far apart and had completely different meanings, but here they seemed to be connected.

Let's start with something that's become part of our daily lives: kidnapping, murder, robbery and fraud are all over the front pages of the newspapers. People have no respect for other people's lives, possessions or freedom. And for that reason, a lot of us live a life in fear every single day.

Many studies have been done to find out what makes a community a world of no respect and fear. I've heard them mention single mother's households, sometimes even blaming the mothers. Which makes me wonder - what about the absent fathers? Or they mention violent homes. But not all criminals come from single mothers or violent households. Think about the white collar criminals, often people without that kind of unusual history. So again I'll come back to what I wrote a couple of weeks ago; it all comes back to education - and not the kind found only in a university.

We'll have to educate everybody about respect, starting with our children, teaching them about the real values in life. We should teach them that a title before a name doesn't automatically mean instant respect. The same goes for the amount of money in a bank account. There is a lot of confusion in this country about that.

Let's first explain something about titles. People seem to be so focused on their title. It's almost a crime to address somebody by their first name. It takes a while to get to know people in this country by name, because they are all addressed as lawyer, doctor, bachelor, professor or master in science.

I remember teaching in Holland at the university where everybody called me "Ivonne," which seemed (and was!) completely normal. Then later, at the university here, everybody was kind of surprised when I told my students that they could address me by my first name. Other teachers were thinking that students wouldn't respect me. Respect doesn't come with the name or title, respect comes with attitude. It's easy to respect somebody when treated respectfully by that person. We should teach our children that from a young age.

I'm neither a psychologist nor an anthropologist but I've seen too many people saying 'yes' to other people, not out of respect but out of fear: the employee to their boss, out of fear to be fired if disagreeing or claiming their rights, the student to their teachers out of fear of getting a lower grade, a child to a parent out of fear of being hit or grounded.

Why can't we create a community where people respect each other? Respect for other people is not something related just to beliefs or religion. We shouldn't respect other people out of fear of what God, Allah or Buddha will do to us. We should respect our neighbors because they are other human beings, and respect them regardless of race, color, religion or education.

People here wouldn't believe it when I tell them that a good plumber in Holland earns about the same or sometimes more per hour than a doctor, and people respect them for a job well done. The respect isn't in the title but in the quality of the work. Perhaps we should start thinking of other types of titles: for those who respect others, we can distinguish them as Mr. or Mrs. Nice, Honest, Respectful, Helping Hand or Hard Worker and those who are disrespectful, we can call them Mr. or Mrs. Crook, Thief, Killer of Fraud. It seems like a joke, but think about it a bit.

The whole title and respect thing might also be the reason that everybody is screaming that they have the right to study at the university, because we know that in this country without a title, you don't exist. And if there is no title, then we better steal from others because at least people will respect us because of our bank account. That often is the reason one can never find a good plumber, electrician or mechanic because not many people want to acquire these skills; sometimes a school doesn't even exist to study those professions. But yet we have thousands of lawyers and doctors.

Something has to change in our

behavior to transform our community where human beings can live next to each other and respect each other. Years back you left your door open; nobody would walk in and steal from you. Now we live inside our walls, doors locked and bolted and iron gates to protect us, in our own prisons. How far are we going to let this society go down the road of fear before we finally say "enough?" I don't know, but it seems to me that we are very close to reaching our limits.

My solution? Start every single day with the intention of respecting other people...smile, be nice, have an open mind, try to make a difference, count all your blessings, be positive. Try it for just one day and see what a difference it makes. And the next day? Well, try it again...for just one day.

All together those "one days" can make the difference, but only if everybody gives it a try. And as far I'm concerned, I'd rather just be called 'Ivonne.' And those who respect me personally and or professionally will get the same respect back - it's never a title that demands my respect, it's always the person behind it.

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

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SPORTS

Victor 'Muma' Bernardez: In search of European recognition

Thomas Debrouwer

Honduras This Week

The dream of any soccer player is to be signed by a top European team and to play in the Champions League, the most prestigious of all soccer team competitions. Some Honduran players, like David Suazo, have proven that the dream is possible through hard work and persistence. But for many others, the road to European fame is a long and bumpy one.

By joining RSC Anderlecht at the dawn of 2009, Honduran star Victor 'Muma' Bernardez has come closer to his dreams and has taken another step in his already rich career. We met the player in his new hometown of Brussels. He told HTW about his first impressions of his new environment, his new team and his career ambitions.

During six seasons, Muma has worn the shirt of Motagua, winning two league championships and representing his country 38 times in international tournaments. Moreover, his relationship with a former Miss Honduras didn't hurt his popularity and made him one of the tabloids' favorite personalities. For all these reasons, it is legitimate to question his choice of dropping his golden life in Honduras in favor of the rudeness of the Belgian championship. "It is worth a try," claims Muma. "Moving to Europe was an opportunity and it would have been a shame not to seize it."

From the outset, Bernardez releases the pressure from his shoulders by noting that, even in the event his Belgian experience would turn into a failure, he would still have learned and wouldn't have any regrets. "When I left La Ceiba to play in the capital city," he explains, "I decided to take my



Victor 'Muma' Bernardez is pinning hopes on his European success with his new Belgian team.

chances despite the opposition of my family. It was a risk, but people have seen what has resulted from my choice."

While asking why he opted for a club he wasn't familiar with

instead of accepting an offer from LA Galaxy, the team of David Beckham, Muma argues that "the level of the Belgian championship is high. The players are strong and technical. The training is also

harder compared to Motagua – two practices, three hours a day." This gives him the opportunity to improve through training with his new teammates.

Moreover, playing for a team that has won the national league 29 times and that regularly qualifies for the Champion League constitutes an open window to the rest of Europe. His efforts won't have been in vain if he receives the chance to play against top European teams like Manchester United or his personal favorite, Barcelona.

Muma has signed a contract that binds him to the best club of Brussels for a six-month trial period, with the possibility of a three-season contract. The test period, ending in March, is no time to waste, but "enough to convince the staff to keep me on the team," Muma says. And no effort is superfluous to gain his place on the pitch. Convinced that his hard work will pay off, Muma arrives at the training one and a half hours before the rest of the team and practices the accuracy of his free-kicks, his secret weapon.

Another objective is to keep performing with the national team. And to do so, Muma has to play regularly for Anderlecht and prove that he's still one of the best Honduran defenders. He is indeed convinced that his Honduran team has a chance to finish amongst the top two of the final group and win its ticket to South Africa, despite an initial loss to Costa Rica.

Bernardez made his debut for Anderlecht in January during the

first fixture after the winter-break. He played for 90 minutes in front of 25,000 spectators.

Though they lost the game, Muma had a promising debut and his play was praised in the Belgian press. However, after that first game, the starting central defender was back after recovering from an injury, putting Muma on the bench for a few games.

The situation is delicate for Muma who, in addition to being completely unknown to the fans, does not speak the language and has to get used to local customs. Belgians do not share the same passion for soccer as Hondurans and they are more distant vis-à-vis newcomers. But Muma faces the initial difficulties philosophically: "This is a new beginning for me, I've come to a new club," he explains, "and other defenders take precedence over me right now, even if they are not better." He does appreciate the familial atmosphere of the club and the proximity to the fans.

Since then, things have changed for the better for Muma. In mid-February, he delivered his first Anderlecht goal to help his team recover from a two-goal deficit against Mons. The goal has drawn the attention of the media and the public and underlines how he can be useful for the team.

Anderlecht is now in first place in the league, which means Muma has a chance to qualify for next year's Champions League - another good reason for him to hold on to his European dream.

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Tegucigalpa MDC Tel (504) 238-1751, FAX:(504) 238-3752

E-mail: aparthotelcopanteg@gmail.com or aptoescopanteg@gmail.com

House for Rent

Located in Colonia San Ignacio, nice environment, closed neighborhood, garden, 3 bedrooms, main room has Jacuzzi, 2 car garage, terrace. Call Copira (504) 239-4007, 9565-0663, 9990-3745. Price \$1400.00 (negotiable) E-mail: copira2002@yahoo.com

Also in san Ignacio beautiful house, 6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 car garage, hot water, studio, 2 telephone lines. Price \$1,300 (negotiable)

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For Sale

Beautiful 3,500 sq. ft. beachfront. Fenced lot in Santa Fe, 25 min west of Trujillo. Lot is close to the beautiful blue waters of the Caribbean. It has electric and water available. The price is right! Only \$18,000 U.S. It is close to a quiet little village of Santa Fe and lovely mountain views. Don't miss this opportunity to own a "piece of paradise. For this proce! Please contact

Belinda Linton
www.hondurasislandsandbeaches.com
cell:0-11-504-9906-9818

For Sale

Rural Property,, lovely rustic house in safe countryside.

12 acres on the old road from Tegucigalpa to Olancho, 4.6 kms south of Talanga, mature coffee plantation, mature pine and oak forest, permanent creek runs through property, fence around property. Lovely rustic adobe house, one floor, wood ceiling, shingle and corrugated tin roof. Entrance, living-dining room, stone chimney, kitchen, two bedrooms, one complete bathroom, clay-brick terrace, open garage. Electricity and street lighting, well on property, community water.

Additions: Annex bedroom with complete bath, 3 storage rooms (bodegas). 1 Mt3 water cistern, 3M3 water tank, 2 septic tanks, roofed/fenced chicken coup, large garden, pulping and drying facilities for coffee.Ideal opportunity for converting into rural B&B retreat. Call 776 6326 or cellphone 98991770- Construction area: House: 116.26 m2; Services: 16.58 m2; Storage: 42.37 m2; Garage 25.20 m2: Total: 200.41

Property for Sale in Tatumbala

Located in rural area, 10,777.71 varas cuadradas. Access by paved road. Call 776-6326 or 9899 1770

Santa Lucia: Just 20 minutes from Tegus on the road to Valley of Angles, live in a near perfect climate year round day time high temps 70 with very low humidity. This is a small, friendly, and safe place to live.

This property is approximately 3 acres with one large house, 3 apartments and one small house. There is plenty of parking space for cars. In total there are 15 bedrooms 9 bath rooms 5 kitchens and one storage building with bathroom.

The large house has 6 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms large living room, fireplace with high ceilings. Large kitchen and a huge covered patio overlooking Tegus. The apartments are 1- 3 bedroom 2 bath and 2 -2 bedroom 1 bath, there is also a small house with 2 bedroom and 1 bath. All buildings are in good condition ready to move in. there is city water and we also have a 20,000 water storage facility.

There are 18 building lots in addition to the houses and apartments that have been platted and surveyed. All lots have fantastic views of the city.

This is a great property for developers, church retreat or mission compound. Great buy at \$499,000 the lots alone are worth the entire price. Call George US.# 336-506-7503 cell 321-624-3894 honduras call Lucio 3354-9657.

Coffe Farm in Olancho

Mountain property 20 kilometers from San Francisco de la Paz, area of 220 acres, 43 with high altitude coffe plantation, 103 acres with pastures and the rest with forest.

Assume laon with bank of \$30,000 payable in five years at 10% per year and the rest in cash to make a total price of US \$90,000.

See pictures at www.coffeefarm.synthasite.com If interested please call at (504) 9952-7504 or email: srpenergy@yahoo.com

Price Reduction/ Best Offer For Sale by Owner

Located in Siguatepeque, Honduras Central America 2 1/2 manzanas, a modern, beautiful home that has approx. 2,500 sq. ft. in it, has fabulous view of mountains from porch and patio, spring like weather all year long, bananas, coffee, oranges, various fruits, flowers. Very beautiful and secure area.

Will sell home with all or part of the property. House with the 110 ft x 110 ft walled in area around the house and flower garden, and designated property outside the wall or \$300,000.00 for all. Price negotiable. Only serious buyers need to call or email.

E-mail for ohtos of the house: maryronhonduras@yahoo.com or call: 011-504-9666-1885

Beautiful Property for Sale

8.7 manzanas. 4800 ft. above sea level; pastures, pines, coffee, water all year; two watersheds, pumping station, water storage 4,000 gallons. ONE FAMILY LIVED HERE 30 YEARS.

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2nd HOUSE: Porch, large living room, large dining room, small TV room, breakfast room, study; 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large kitchen, laundry court, basketball court doubles as parking. Mahogany doors and exposed beams.

3rd HOUSE: 2 room apartment, kitchenette, full bath.

Masters Kitchen: large entertainment area, bar, tables seat 20-24 for dinner; circular fireplace for grill, rotisserie; fryer, griddle, charcoal oven; cool room, chest freezer, stove, refrigerator, many cooking items, some glassware. Always used for private events.

Other buildings: tool shed, guardhouse, kennels, pump house.

DEVELOPMENT: Boarding school, church retreat, rehab center, club, B & B, others.

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PHONE: (504) 224-4223. Give full name, and phone. We will contact you for visit, to present owners. Only serious buyers need to call. No further details by phone. Thank you. E-mail: emre30252@yahoo.com

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For sale in the North Coast of Honduras
-Porvenir, Atlantida, beach properties, 65.6 feet of beach front and 270.6 feet deep, total area 17,744.80 square feet, price \$2.80 per square feet.

-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.

-Granadita, La Ceiba, Atlantida, beach front house with two bedrooms, terrace, swimming pool, price: \$240,000.

-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.

-Trujillo, Colon, 423.4468 acres of beach, rivers, mountain and plain terrain, appropriate for a tourist hotel resort, price: \$600,000 negotiable.

-La Ceiba, Atlantida, mountain property of 115.24 acres, beautiful view of the sea and city, has a river. Price \$220,000.

-Pollitlye Bay, Roatan, Bay Islands, 10 acres with beach, plain terrain and mountains, 6 acres plain domain \$45,000 per acre and 4 acres with possession \$40,000 per acre.

-La Ceiba, Atantida, residential project Wendy, two brand new houses, three bedrooms, dining room, living room, kitchen, laundry room, ceramic floors, fine finishes, with garage \$55,000 without garage \$50,000. Close to the national university and airport Goloson. 10 minutes away from the city.

-La Ceiba, Atlantida, located in Jardines del Este, house with three bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, paved roads, garage (2 cars), completely new. \$50,000.

More houses, terrains, and beach properties at www.realestatehappyland.com

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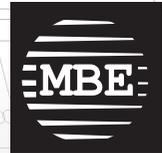
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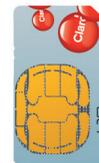
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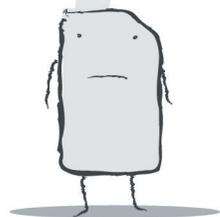


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