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JUNE 2008

THE FRONTERA ISSUE



THE BORDER OVER & BACK

Tales from an in-between place



Rites of passage, from Tijuana to Nogales > 12 Fear in a border town newsroom > 31

What's Inside



Tecate

THE MEXICAN ORIGINS OF THE ROYAL SPA TREATMENT

11



HYPERBORDER

ARCHITECT FERNANDO ROMERO ON THE CROSSED-OVER, LIVED-IN, BUILT-UP BOUNDARY BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE US

8

Fashion

MEXICALI-BORN DESIGNER ROGELIO VELASCO DRESSES HOLLYWOOD – BUT HASN'T FORGOTTEN WHERE HE CAME FROM

10



High Notes

FLAUTIST ELENA DURAN'S BORDER TOUR

21

Spanglish

TÚ SAY, I DIGO, NOSOTROS SAY

22



Nacho Genius

MORE THAN A BALLPARK FAVORITE

18



Norteña

POLKA AND RANCHERA, UNITED

20

4 INBOX

IMX Letter A Terrible Beauty

5 INVOICES

Dan Lund The ever-shifting line

6 NEWS & NOTES

Oral histories.
The rainy season.
Fighting lost causes

24-26 TRANSITIONS

Health Sheep cell injections

Security Corner

Avoiding a kidnapping

The Fixer Replace your passport

28-29 REAL ESTATE

Market Meter: Rocky Point

30 INSIDE MEDI@

An Update on the Drug War

THE GUIDE

SUMMER
SETS
G1

Download it at
www.insidemex.com

Storytellers

THIS MONTH'S
CONTRIBUTORS



A million sides to the border >12

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Best dressed >10

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The must-have norteña collection >20

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INBOX

FROM INSIDE MÉXICO

Where Countries Collide

*We beat the drum slowly and played the fife lowly
And bitterly wept as we carried him along.
For we all loved our comrade, so brave, young and handsome
We all loved our comrade although he done wrong.*

VERSE FROM THE TRADITIONAL BALLAD, "THE STREETS OF LAREDO",
FIRST WRITTEN IN 1876 BY FRANCIS HENRY MAYNARD.

Borders are never simple places.

A précis of Cormac McCarthy's powerful border novel, *Blood Meridian*, warns that the book is "not for the faint-hearted." Set in the liminal, shifting border space of late 1840s Texas-Mexico, shocking violence is a mundane reality in McCarthy's depiction of "the borderland between knowledge and power, between progress and dehumanization, between history and myth, and most importantly, between physical violence and the violence of language."

What isn't on this list, but is certainly present in McCarthy's book, is beauty. A sunset spills across the desert. A saguaro cactus stands tall against a blue sky. Beauty in the presence of violence destabilizes our desire to place things in neat categories. But, as both novelists and Hollywood know, threatening and alluring together make a powerful combination. Levi Bridges, who wrote this month's cover story, leads us to the magnetism of, as he writes, "the point where America...physically collides with another nation." It's a violent description, but one full of movement and a strong dash of possibility.

The idea behind this issue was to pry open the subject of the border between Mexico and the United States, to humanize it, and to reveal it as a place where creation happens:

Spanglish and nachos, *norteña* music, and dreams of bridges.

Those things are all here. Nancy Flores makes our mouths water with childhood memories of warm flour tortillas and *barbacoa de res*. Professor Ilan Stavans tells us why Spanglish will never die. And Mexican-American flautist Elena Du-



ran finds both inspiration and a certain familiar comfort in the *chicano* borderland where the pot bubbles, but identities don't melt all the way down.

Try as we might, we couldn't avoid the drugs, the violence, and the paralyzing fear of what architect Fernando Romero has called a "hyperborder", this space between countries that holds 14 million people in constant motion. Ana Maria Prado shows us

what it feels like to be a journalist in Nuevo Laredo when the *narcos* come into the newsroom. José Fernandez warns against throw-up-your-hands apathy, and Dan Lund takes the long view, reminding us that borders don't stop shifting.

Knowledge. Power. Progress. Dehumanization. History. Myth. Language.

We've tried to get them all in here, along with a touch of beauty.

Aran Shetterly

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Border: from frontier to barrier to a line on a map

BY Dan Lund

Borders in North America have always been ambiguous lines—whether on a map or on the ground. Throughout the first 120 years of the United States' independent history, borders were the edge of a moving frontier, a kind of marker for where to start moving forward again.

For the next eighty years they were midway lines in borderland areas defining trade, culture, and language. In the last several decades, and especially since 9/11, US borders have become protective barriers whose imperfections haunt public policy and whose character poisons political culture.

Both Mexico and Canada have lived with these ambiguous American lines. The celebrated War of Independence and the awkward War of 1812 threatened to redraw the northern border with Canada. In the expansive 1840s, some US interests were manifestly more interested in the northwest than the southwest. Alternative maps of the period show the fantasy project of extending the US to include all of Vancouver Island, a great deal of British Columbia, and even beyond.

The US in its salad days was as pragmatic as it was expansive, and the southwest came to be seen as the greater prize—and Mexico as the weaker point of resistance. The 49th parallel border was agreed to with the British, and then Texas, California, and everything in between was secured from a defeated Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Canada's complex historical relationship with Great Britain served it well during the long period of US expansion: Mexico had no such patron. The loss of the northern territories (now the American southwest) was like a painful wound for Mexico, and the new border like a deep scar.

There is a mocking notion, cultivated particularly among many US political types, that the Mexicans "just can't forget" the Mexican-American War, and that it makes them look back and not forward.

Actually, I think that Mexicans (ordinary and elite) try not to forget the Mexican-American War just so they can continue to look forward clearly and without illusions.

Similarly, any trip through the American south and mid-Atlantic region will turn up battleground tours and reenactments so elaborate that visiting Mexicans, Canadians, and Europeans shake their heads in amazement at how the Civil War—or the War Between the States, or the War of the Southern Secession—still has a hold on the American historical imagination.

The border that most immigrants arriving in the US crossed from 1820 to 1970 was the Atlantic Ocean, a great natural border and a

very different matter than a line on a map. The five largest groups of immigrants arrived on that route from Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Austria-Hungary.

The sixth largest group came from Canada, mostly across the land border. Interestingly, in that early 150-year period more than twice as many Canadians crossed the northern border as immigrants to the US than did Mexicans crossing the southern border. The great period of emigration from Mexico began in 1970.

The modern Mexican immigration began in a more benign international context of increasing North American integration with a "globalist character," palpable long before globalism became a common term. The border crossing turned difficult in the 1980s, dangerous in the 1990s, and downright fatal in this post 9/11 age of terrorism.

How do ordinary people see borders? Qualitative research over the past twenty years gives us a good feel, though admittedly many of the images people describe seem to come as much from remembered films as remembered travels.

For the tourist, the border experience is somewhere between high adventure and low-level annoyance, depending on the graciousness of the crossing. For the student and young traveler, the border confirms a leaving of home that is crucial to finding an identity of one's own.

For the legal worker, the border is a shift in opportunities. For the illegal worker, the border is a frightening rite of passage that leaves its mark for the rest of one's life. For everyone, the border becomes a space in their imagination.

My imagination cannot shake the images of Robert Frost in "Mending Wall." When he hears his neighbor say that "good fences make good neighbors" in springtime, he poses the question: "Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder Why do they make good neighbors?"

Then, he examines the fundamental mystery of the question:

"Something there is that does not love a wall,
That wants it down..."

Looking back over the long haul of human history we know that borders do not exist forever, or even for very long in relative terms. What does last is the restlessness of people, the long, long migration of us all.

Ever since we as a species came out of Africa, we have been crossing and re-crossing many thousands of natural boundaries and national borders. And we will keep on doing so, as many readers of *Inside México* can attest from their own life experience.

Dan Lund is the president of the MUND Group, a Mexico City-based public opinion and market research firm. Their website is www.mundgroup.com.

Coming in December
Inside México's

25 Expats
You'll Want
to Know

HELP US CHOOSE

Nominate a powerbroker, a coworker, the local sage, a rambler who tells the best stories. Someone who inspires you. And tell us why we should profile them. They can be any age, live anywhere in Mexico and be from anywhere in the world.

Email: Editor@insidemex.com

iOye!

Inside México Listens In

"Around here, if someone commits a crime, they are jailed, no matter who they are."

Officer Sinar Gomez after a donkey was arrested in Tuxtla Guiterrez, Chiapas for assault and battery.
www.cnn.com, May 20, 2008

"The attack on Millan has taken it to another level. It is a signal to Calderon that these groups are very capable of reaching out and killing who they want to, where they want to."

Fred Burton, an analyst for the US-based private intelligence firm Stratfor, on the killing of Edgar Millan Gomez, Mexican federal police chief, in the capital earlier this month.
www.reuters.com, May 20, 2008

"That was a little door we still had open. But they are closing it, and now we don't know what we will do."

Juan Luna, a 39-year-old bricklayer from Guanajuato state, was heading to Oklahoma when US migration police caught him in the desert.
www.iht.com, May 1, 2008.

"It's almost like a military fight. I don't think that generally the American public has any sense of the level of violence that occurs on the border."

Jayson Ahern, deputy commissioner of US Customs and Border Protection.
www.statesman.com, May 19, 2008.

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INTERNATIONAL SHARING LIFE STORIES DAY

Inside México and the American Benevolent Society co-hosted a workshop for International Sharing Life Stories Day. More than one hundred organizations in more than twenty countries observed the May 16 event, which kicked off Inside México's Story Archive project, documenting the oral histories of expats. We present an excerpt from May 16:



Photos by Julio C. González



BARBARA FRANCO

My story and philosophy is that of saying "yes." I don't really recommend cross cultural/country marriages because they are very hard and have dimensions beyond any comprehension. Yet my marriage is the most important thing about being in Mexico and the most important (external) thing in my life.

If patience is life's lesson, then Mexico is truly the place

to learn. Learn the language, never stop laughing or chuckling. Go everywhere and do everything you can.

My experience with Mexicans is one of great admiration and respect, of joy in the simplest of things and of profound faith. For me, my most touching memories revolve around how Mexicans see, honor, and venerate their God, Guadalupe, the Saints, fiestas, and even every day.

THE RAINY SEASON

By Fran Schiavo

If you live in San Miguel de Allende you get sunshine almost every day. And you get the rainy season—roughly June to October. It's glorious, everyone assured us. The hillsides are lush green and overpowered by wildflowers. One long-time resident further promised, "it never rains at an inconvenient time."

I was running errands when caught in my first San Miguel rain. A pouring rain, the sky an immense bucket. I didn't know so much moisture could be airborne. I ducked into the nearest store. So did the rest of the town. Everything stops during a rainstorm—appointments delayed with no need for explanation. We're all tucked away someplace.

My refuge, a clothing store, is filled with wet, laughing people, an instant of shared camaraderie among strangers.

It lasts less than an hour, and then the time has come for our clothing store party to split into individuals going their separate ways. The hour away from errands was an event, an in-the-moment adventure, a sight-seeing experience. I get it. It was not an inconvenience.

CARLOS MONSIVAIS SAYS "YES" TO 70

By Susannah Glusker

The occasion was Carlos Monsiváis' 70th birthday. He is without a doubt Mexico's most distinguished activist, writer, and collector of Mexican books, photographs, and cultural trivia. UAM (The Autonomous University of Mexico City) honored him with an unusual award: *Doctorado Honoris Causa Perdida*, roughly translated as an Honorary Doctorate of Lost Causes.

The scene was a jam-packed auditorium full of young students and old friends. The students set the tone with a short play that dealt with current social and political situations, such as the unsolved deaths of women in Ciudad Juárez and the cases of clergy involved in sexual molestations. Monsiváis followed with a typically ironic presentation on the consequences of just "saying no!" It was the right culmination to a week of round table presentations honoring Monsiváis. Take some time to sample the humor at the "Estanquillo" (Mom and Pop shop) Museum on Isabel La Católica and Madero in the Centro Histórico.

Inside México welcomes News & Notes submissions from around the country. Please email contributions to Catherine Dunn: editor@insidemex.com.

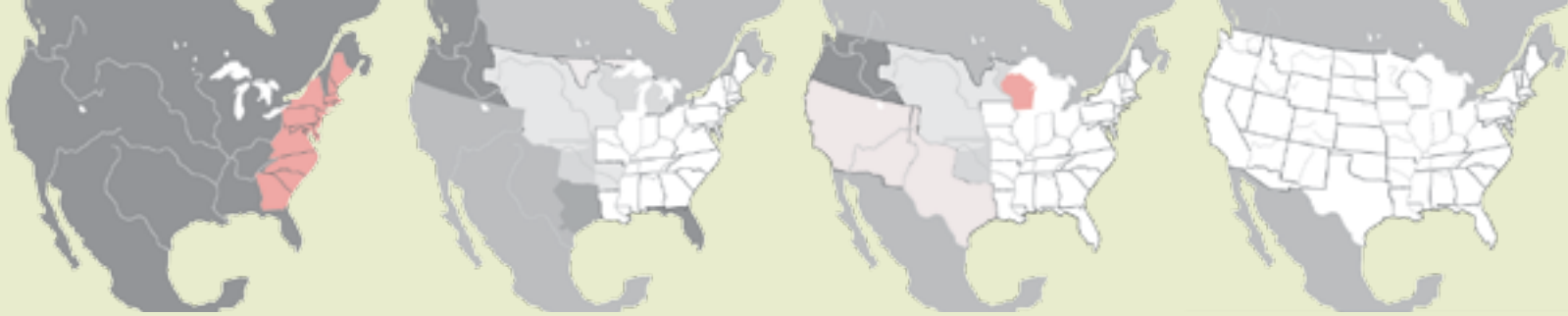
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The Life & Times of the Border

Excerpted from *Hyperborder: The Contemporary U.S. – Mexico Border and Its Future*, courtesy Princeton Architectural Press



1776 1820-1840 1848 2006

DEFINITION OF US AND MEXICO BORDERS

KEY EVENTS IN US–MEXICO RELATIONS

<p>The Changing Border and Independence from England and Spain</p> <p>North America = Spain + France + England</p>	<p>The 13 English colonies declare independence from Great Britain on July 4th, 1776.</p>	<p>The US buys Louisiana from the French in what becomes known as “the Louisiana Purchase.”</p>	<p>“Adam-Onís treaty” establishes the US–Mexico boundary between Spain and the United States.</p>	<p>Mexico wins independence from Spain. Mexico permits Stephen F. Austin to start the colonization of Texas.</p>	<p>Mexican War</p> <p>By 1848 the war had ended and most of the Mexican state had been ceded to the United States under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.</p>	<p>Gadsden Purchase: 29,000 square miles of land is sold by Mexico to the US for the price of \$10 million.</p>
1763	1776	1803	1819	1821	1848	1853
<p>American Civil War</p>	<p>Chinese Exclusion Act implemented in the US leading railroad companies to search for alternative sources of cheap labor. Mexicans are increasingly recruited.</p>	<p>Mexican Americans work for the railroads. Copper mining continues to lure people to Arizona, driving more Mexican Americans from their lands.</p>	<p>Migration and the World Wars</p> <p>First World War Period 1900–1929 Copper mines active in Arizona, 1900 Border Patrol established, 1904 Mexican Revolution, 1910 Peak immigration to the US, 1924</p>	<p>Meeting between president Porfirio Díaz and William H. Taft marks the first official meeting between US and Mexican presidents. It is also the first time an American president officially visited a foreign country.</p>	<p>President Wilson orders US troops to invade Mexico to prevent a large arms convoy from reaching Mexican General Victoriano Huerta’s army.</p>	
1861–1865	1883	1890	1900–1929	1909	1914	
<p>The Zimmerman telegram, a document petitioning Mexico to join Germany in World War I, is intercepted by US In the telegram Germany offers to orchestrate the return of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to Mexico, but the telegram never arrives in Mexico.</p>	<p>During the US economic crisis of the Great Depression, 400,000 Mexicans are deported.</p>	<p>President Roosevelt introduces the Good Neighbor Policy which holds that there should be “no armed intervention by any foreign power in the Western hemisphere.”</p>	<p>Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas expropriates 16 foreign-owned oil companies in a move to nationalize Mexico’s oil reserves.</p>	<p>World War II</p> <p>1942 Bracero Program allows Mexicans to work temporarily in the US</p>	<p>The German submarine U-160 sinks Mexico’s petroleum ship, the Faja de Oro, off the coast of Key West in Florida on its voyage from Philadelphia to Tampico. Two more ships are also targeted and Mexico decides to enter World War II as a US ally.</p>	<p>Political Control of Immigration</p> <p>Postwar era and the “Baby Boom.”</p> <p>Soldiers return from the war and there is less demand for Mexican workers.</p>
1917	1929	1934	1938	1939–1945	1942	1945–1964
<p>The Bracero Program ends and “Operation Wetback” is introduced, resulting in the deportation of 3.8 million people of Mexican heritage.</p>	<p>Border industrialization program.</p> <p>US companies appear along the Mexican border</p> <p>Maquiladora program</p> <p>Cheap Mexican labor available</p>	<p>President Johnson and President Díaz Ordaz meet and resolve a long-standing issue when the US agrees to forfeit El Chamizal to Mexico. The Chamizal dispute was a boundary conflict over 600 acres of land near El Paso, Texas, between the bed of the Rio Grande (as it was surveyed in 1952) and the present channel of the river.</p>	<p>The Mexican economy grows at an average annual rate of 6.7% in real terms, which is its highest growth rate in history. Jimmy Carter is the last president to visit Mexico until Bill Clinton moves to the White House.</p>	<p>The classification “Hispanic” shows up for the first time on the US census.</p>	<p>The La Paz Agreement is signed. It is the first environmental treaty between the two nations.</p>	<p>Mexico and the US sign an agreement on bilateral subsidies and countervailing duties.</p>
1964	1965	1967	1971–1981	1980	1983	1985
<p>Mexico joins the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). US immigration policy turns restrictionist with the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). However, the Act also includes an act of amnesty: Undocumented immigrants who entered before 1982 benefit from it.</p>	<p>The two governments sign a bilateral framework agreement for trade and investment.</p>	<p>The Age of NAFTA</p> <p>The Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) goes into effect.</p>	<p>NAFTA begins and the Mexican peso collapses. The border sees a massive increase in its population. President Bill Clinton uses a strict approach to limit illegal immigration in his re-election campaign in order to sway large electoral states, such as California and Texas. Under Clinton’s direction the Border Patrol is bolstered. US Operation Gatekeeper is introduced and a corrugated steel fence is erected.</p>	<p>The US Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act authorizes the construction of a triple fence along the border between San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico, as well as other migration-related initiatives.</p>	<p>Clinton becomes the first president to visit Mexico since Jimmy Carter in 1979. He promises Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo to avoid “mass deportations” under US immigration policy</p>	
1986	1987	1989	1994	1996	1997	
<p>Bill Clinton signs a declaration with Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo committing their nations for the first time to devise a joint strategy for combating the trafficking of drugs.</p>	<p>At a meeting on September 6 between President Vicente Fox and President George W. Bush, Fox pledges to help improve security along the US–Mexico border. Bush states that US–Mexico relations would remain a priority during his administration. Five days later the terrorist attacks of September 11 made the war on terrorism the greatest priority of Bush’s administration.</p>	<p>Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, President Bush, and President Fox meet in Monterrey and launch the Security and Prosperity Partnership in order to help focus private investment on less developed regions of Mexico. A “Smart Border” initiative to improve border security and speed up the two-way flow of people and goods across the border is implemented.</p>	<p>Both Bush and Fox discuss issues ranging from free trade to border control, noting close cooperation between their countries. Bush praises the Border Partnership Agreement in which Mexico and the US are using technology to create safer and more effective borders. The new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) visa for professionals is introduced.</p>	<p>Immigration reform becomes a hot topic in the United States. Major objectives include: securing borders, creating a temporary worker program, dealing with the undocumented immigrants in the US, making it easier for employers to verify legal status of employees, and honoring the American tradition of being an immigrant nation. On May 15, 2006, Bush sends the National Guard to the border.</p>		
1998	2001	2002	2004	2006		

By way of the Border

The bottom lines from
the dividing line

Sources:
Hyperborder and www.elpasoinfo.com

408,185

KILOMETERS SQUARED
area of US-Mexico border,
making it bigger than the countries
of Spain, Sweden and Iraq.

14

SETS
of sister cities
span the border

14

MILLION
population of
the US-Mexico
borderlands

2.2

MILLION combined population
of El Paso and Cd. Juárez,
making it the largest bi-national
urban area in the world

Middle Ground

THE HYPERBORDER
STRADDLES TWO NATIONS,
BUT IS A WORLD APART

BY CATHERINE DUNN

About seven years ago there were plans to build a bridge that would connect Ciudad Juárez and El Paso. This would be different from the four international crossings already fastening these cities together: part cultural center, part museum—an homage to the migratory experience that defines these cities. The award-winning architecture firm LAR was approached to design the project.

When the attacks of September 11 abruptly changed the US-Mexico agenda, the bridge was shelved. Fernando Romero, LAR's chief architect and founder, decided to proceed with a different kind of blueprint. He and a team of researchers set out to examine the conditions that make the US-Mexico *frontera* what it is. The result is the book *Hyperborder: The Contemporary U.S.-Mexico Border and Its Future* (Princeton Architectural Press).

Charting the evolution of the US-Mexico map from 1776 onward, situating the border in the context of other international divisions—Israel/Palestine, Russia/Ukraine, and France/Switzerland/Germany—Romero systematically builds his case for the term “hyperborder.” The name describes a line that stretches 3,141 kilometers, shoulders more than one million crossings daily, and is home to 14 million people who live within one hundred kilometers of the line. It is a space between two countries that is larger than many countries.

“Mexico is the only developing nation that shares a common border with a major world power, and this condition has significant migratory implications,” he writes.

Romero spends a significant amount of time on the economics that drive workers



BOTH A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE, AND CULTURAL MUSEUM, this proposed structure would sit right on the border between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.



NIGHT LIGHTS. The US-Mexico Border.

away from Mexico, where the average annual wage is \$6,000 USD, and toward the United States, where it is \$40,000 USD. The hyperborder isn't just the number of crossings: the region has exploded in urban sprawl, consumption of natural resources, pollution, and criminality. It is crisscrossed by trade routes and shaped by the ever-increasing security on the US side.

Some 12.5 million people—90 percent of the borderlands population—live in the regions' fourteen sets of sister cities, from Tijuana-San Diego to Brownsville-Matamoros. The level of interdependence is staggering, from shared firemen and ambulances to the formation of the fifth-largest economic region in the world between California and Baja California.

Sitting in his industrial-style Mexico City studio, Romero explains:

“[The border] has grown as development

grows, without any planning. It grows according to the forces that interact in the middle and obligate it to evolve in a forced manner... The flow of migration has been restrained by constructing bars, the flow of migration has been restrained with patrols ... but it has not been slowed down through healthy planning.

Everything that has been done is a patchwork solution. We make a little bridge here, resolve the little water problem there. There's not a global vision in the region.”

As border cities continue to draw Mexicans from the countryside, the regional population is expected to reach 24 million by 2020. Water and energy use will continue to rise, “and the limited supplies of both... will likely stall or prevent development very soon,” Romero says. The Tijuana-San Diego region will require 20 percent more water by 2010 than in 1996. Meanwhile “local pollution caused by traffic congestion in the sister

\$23.53

BILLION
of USD in remittances
sent to Mexico

12

PERCENT
of border residents
do not have safe
drinking water

19

PERCENT
of the US border
population lives in
poverty



Photos courtesy of Princeton Architectural Press



OFTEN GUIDED BY COYOTE, nearly half a million undocumented Mexicans head north attempting to cross to the US—every year

cities and border crossing points, as well as toxic waste and other pollutants produced by the *maquiladoras* cause a host of environmental health problems like skin cancer, respiratory illnesses, and cardiovascular diseases, that “disproportionately affect” border residents.

The story Romero tells through graphs, charts, and analysis is of a world apart, where local communities meld in an international zone (Ciudad Juárez and El Paso make the largest bi-national urban center in the world). The needs are distinct, but the region lacks both the political and cash capital for major infrastructure. “The ideal scenario is that there be a joint vision, shared between the federal government and the state government... It has to come from above.”

State resources can’t cover the myriad facets of shared infrastructure—from

parks and bridges to industrial zones and waste treatment plants—and employment: “everything that implies a better quality of life,” Romero says. Bi-national regional planning hasn’t topped either country’s agenda and as a result the border “has become something negative, it has become the region with the highest indices of criminality, a region where *narcotráfico* has turned it into an unstable region in social terms.”

The unstable aspects of the border—drugs, crime, migrant deaths, and an impermanent population of people waiting to cross—contrast with the security measures the US has adopted in its War on Terror. With more than a touch of irony, Romero asks: “Could security issues make it the next North-South Korean border? Or will bi-national accords shape it into an integrated, fluid region like that of the borders between France, Switzerland, and Germany?”

The book explores solutions through education (more than 60 percent of Mexican immigrants to the US are high school drop-outs), job creation in Mexico’s formal economy, and development of renewable energy sources such as solar power in the Mojave Desert. Holistic planning, he suggests, could drastically alter the nature of the hyperborder—for the better:

“By focusing on improving quality of life at the border through city plans... high immigration rates to the US could be greatly reduced. Temporary migrants that make the Mexican side of the border their home while waiting to cross the border would be given the opportunity to stay in a city that provides them with the necessary resources to live the quality of life that they hope the prosperity of the US will bring ... a border that would offer open parks, low pollution rates, formal work, and affordable housing and lifestyles would provide a handsome alternative for many—including those who are not considering migration as an option.”

Still, Romero believes there must be a recognition that migration will not stop, and that both countries, starting with the US, must make development plans that take this into account. He doesn’t see that happening soon. The US is focused on presidential elections, while Mexico is absorbed in petroleum reform, and will then look toward its bicentennial in 2010. “The bi-national agenda has been put in a drawer, literally,” he says.

For now the bridge-museum between El Paso and Juárez remains a model of what could be, but exists only on paper: page 278 of Romero’s book. *jcMx*



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Spring Collection

The latest gowns from Mexicali export Rogelio Velasco.



BY MICHAEL PARKER-STAINBACK

Velasco Couture founder Rogelio Velasco has traveled far from his childhood in northern Mexico. Today, his stunning dresses sell for upwards of \$12,000 USD in his Manhattan *atelier* and at toney retailers like Barney's. They're worn by celebrities and socialites like Janet Jackson, Tribeca Film Fest director Jane Rosenthal, Elisabeth Johnson (of Johnson & Johnson), and actress América Ferrara. A recent Velasco smash was Meryl Streep's 2006 Academy Awards gown, which got her on *People* magazine's best-dressed list: before Velasco, her outfits were routinely labeled dowdy and sexless.

He lives the *fashionista* good life: awards shows, first-class travel, and rooms full of breathtaking models. The best part might be that he's still just unfamous enough to live untrammelled by too much hype—gadding about New York with non-celebrity friends and sticking with the cozy East Village apartment he loved when he was “nobody.”

It all began in Baja California. Rogelio is the thirteenth of sixteen children, born in 1960 to a traditional Mexicali family. Mom was a mom and Dad ran the company that brought *garrafones* for drinking water to the region in burro-drawn wagons.

The sewing began in the 1970s. One of his sisters was attempting to fashion some “designer jeans,” when Rogelio, then 13, asked to give it a shot. He hasn't stopped designing since, and at 18 he was doing his own fashion shows (a line of rather brief swimwear was a hit). He became *the* designer to Mexicali's grandees, who called on him for everything from gala formalwear to first communion frocks. Commissions also included that most Mexican of fashions, the *quinceañera* dress, the “haute couture” moment almost every Mexican girl experiences no matter how humble her background.

With a degree in civil engineering—good for cantilevering a strapless or hanging crinolines—Rogelio

From BAJA to BARNEY'S

CONTEMPLATING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN MEXICALI AND MANHATTAN WITH *COUTURIER* ROGELIO VELASCO



studied fashion design in the Dominican Republic and hit New York in 1986. After years as right-hand man to Isaac Mizrahi during that designer's glory days (a long-haired Rogelio is everywhere in the Mizrahi documentary *Unzipped*), he started Velasco Couture in 2003.

In the Mexicali Rogelio remembers, people looked north. “If you lived on the border in the 70s and 80s, you had a special passport”—long since eliminated—“and crossed back and forth with no hassles. No one locked their doors or worried about drug cartels.”

Was it difficult being the Mexicali boy with a talent for dressmaking? Characteristically sanguine, Rogelio

says no. *Machistas* bullied the “artistic” kids with the usual epithets and aggressions, but the designer remembers that after dark many of those same toughs would come looking for less typically macho tenderness.

Rogelio's mother never demanded explanations or confessions; she seemed simply to understand. “She would have all my friends to the house and cook for them,” he recalls. “Everyone was welcome and everyone was equal.” In those days the “gang” included transsexuals, lots of dancers, and even some really sweet straight kids. In Mexicali, glamour and entertainment trumped moral punctilio.

While Velasco remembers his hometown with fondness, he says it's a *long*

way from Baja to Barney's. “Mexicali women also demanded a lot more sex and color in their clothes,” he chuckles. When I suggest that a Manhattan socialite carries a bit of quinceañera on her back when she wears Velasco to her brilliant event, he denies it. “My tastes have changed—refined—unrecognizably. And you won't find the study and craftsmanship I put into my work at the local dressmaker's.” He disavows nothing, but his taste and technique have moved beyond the bikinis and bridesmaid dresses of twenty-five years ago.

Upon reflection, he does say the work in Mexicali helps him today. His early days as dressmaker to its grand *señoras*—no less demanding or interested in social triumph than New Yorkers—attuned him to the imperatives, both spoken and unarticulated, of his clients. Understanding these nuances, Velasco creates the dress *he* knows is right for the woman. “But the client walks away certain she was always in control,” he says, grinning good-naturedly.

Life on the border has always been provisional, raffish, and informal. Having grown up where social distinctions were less rigid than they are in Mexico City (in Mexicali family and servants ate at the same table, for instance), he feels no need to preen or sneer. “You have to respect everyone,” he says, “from the poorest immigrant seamstress to Queen Rania of Jordan (one of Velasco's customers).” In a milieu known for megalomania, jealousy, and just plain bitchiness, Rogelio never mentions rivals or enemies.

And he remains patiently polite when pressed on the quinceañera influence. How can you get away from Mexico's eye-popping bridal shop culture? In next season's dresses, how about more sequins, or feathers, or a less subdued palette? Maybe matching parasols...

“There's *absolutely nothing* wrong with feathers or sequins or color. You just have to know how to use them,” he replies.

He says nothing about the parasols. *¡cMx*

Michael Parker-Stainback can be reached at michael.parker3@yahoo.com.mx.

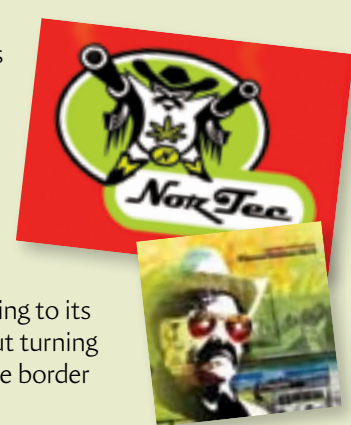
The Nortec Collective

Out of the ashes of Tijuana's drug wars and cultural chaos comes a rising star, the Nortec Collective, filling dance floors across the world with their special Tijuana blend of *norteco* music and techno.



The Nortec Collective was started around 2001 and is currently comprised of seven musicians going by the names Panoptica, Terrestre, Bostich, Fussible, PlanktonMan, Hiperboreal and Colorofila. They refuse to call themselves a band or a group, but instead describe their collective as a series of compilations created in and about Tijuana. The idea is that Nortec shouldn't belong to just one person, but to everybody who wants to experiment with *norteco* culture and mix it with something different.

Nortec transcends music and the Nortec Collective, going beyond to become its own genre encompassing music, art, and literature in Tijuana. According to its founders, it's about turning the madness of the border into art.



TECATE

Where it all BEGAN

THE WELLSPRING OF THE MODERN SPA

BY JIMM BUDD

Tecate—just south of the California line—may be famous for beer, but it should be better known as the place where the health and fitness movement was born. Tecate's Rancho La Puerta introduced the world to organic health food, exercising with music, herbal wraps, and the search for new lifestyles.

Rancho La Puerta gave a new meaning to the word "spa," which dictionaries still list as a spring from which burbles supposedly health-giving mineral waters. These days most think of spas as exclusive resorts where the flesh is toned, kilos are shed, and the mind refreshed.

All this began at Tecate's lush Rancho La Puerta, set amid cactus and bougainvillea in the shadow of Mount Kuchuma.

In 1940, Edmond Szekely, a Hungarian holding a commission in the Romanian army, moved into an adobe hovel five kilometers south of the U.S. border, because even with a fresh New York-born bride he feared the Americans might deport him. The year was 1940, and the Old World was engulfed in a war that would soon spread to the New: Romania was an ally of Nazi Germany.

There in Tecate, Szekely founded the Essene School, the health camp that became Rancho La Puerta. Guests (disciples, really) tumbled in. He charged \$17.50 USD a week: disciples had to supply their own tents. There was no plumbing or electricity, neither gym nor pool, but there was a mountain for climbing, a river for swimming, goats for milk and cheese, and the first organic vegetable garden in Baja California.

Disciples breakfasted on whole-grain bread spread with wild sage



honey, washed down with goat's milk. Lunch might be a tomato with goat cheese, while legumes, an ear of corn, or a baked potato made up dinner. Today such a regime is known to the fitness-obsessed as "spa cuisine."

Those first followers of Szekely's books helped set the tables and wash the dishes. They chopped firewood, worked the garden, and tended the goats. In silent meditation, they greeted the Morning Star and the evening stars. Days were exhausting: nights, minus electricity, made for sleeping.

While her husband experimented with theories involving hydrotherapy and herbal wraps, Deborah Szekely originated rhythmic exercising to music and relaxing in a whirlpool bath after a massage. Edmond's popular hydrotherapy and herbal wraps eased soreness caused by unaccustomed exercise.

US test pilots were the first non-disciples to discover the Essene School. "During the Second World War we had a steady stream," Deborah Szekely was to recall. "Young men who would eat and drink too much but had to hold their weight down if they were to keep on flying."

Before long, the ranch was discovered by Hollywood. Film stars heard

what was being done for the pilots and beat a path to Tecate. The people who ran Rancho La Puerta (the Education Ministry demanded Szekely stop calling it a school) might be a little crazy, stars whispered to starlets, but the ranch was a wonderful place to lose weight.

True, it was somewhat primitive, but Deborah Szekely sought to make the ranch more comfortable, attractive, and profitable. The "professor," as guests dubbed her husband, was not opposed. More guests and money meant more opportunity to spread his gospel.

While the movie people were pleased that the ranch was moving upscale, those on top of the pyramid petitioned for a place closer to the studios. Aging movie queens wanted to rejuvenate away from prying eyes, in a smaller, more intimate, more exclusive—and if need be, more expensive—establishment.

In 1958, Deborah Szekely opened the Golden Door, north of San Diego. In its early days only funds from La Puerta kept The Door from bankruptcy, but it became a rousing success, starting a trend that continues to flourish today. *jMb*

Jimm Budd can be reached at jimm@jimbudd.com.

The Fence

In January the Department of Homeland Security announced plans for a \$2 billion budget for the Secure Border Initiative that includes the fence.

Sources:
<http://www.miamiherald.com/>
www.nytimes.com
<http://www.ibwc.state.gov>

670

MILES

planned length of
fence being built by
the Department of
Homeland Security.

370

MILES

constructed so
far.

\$70

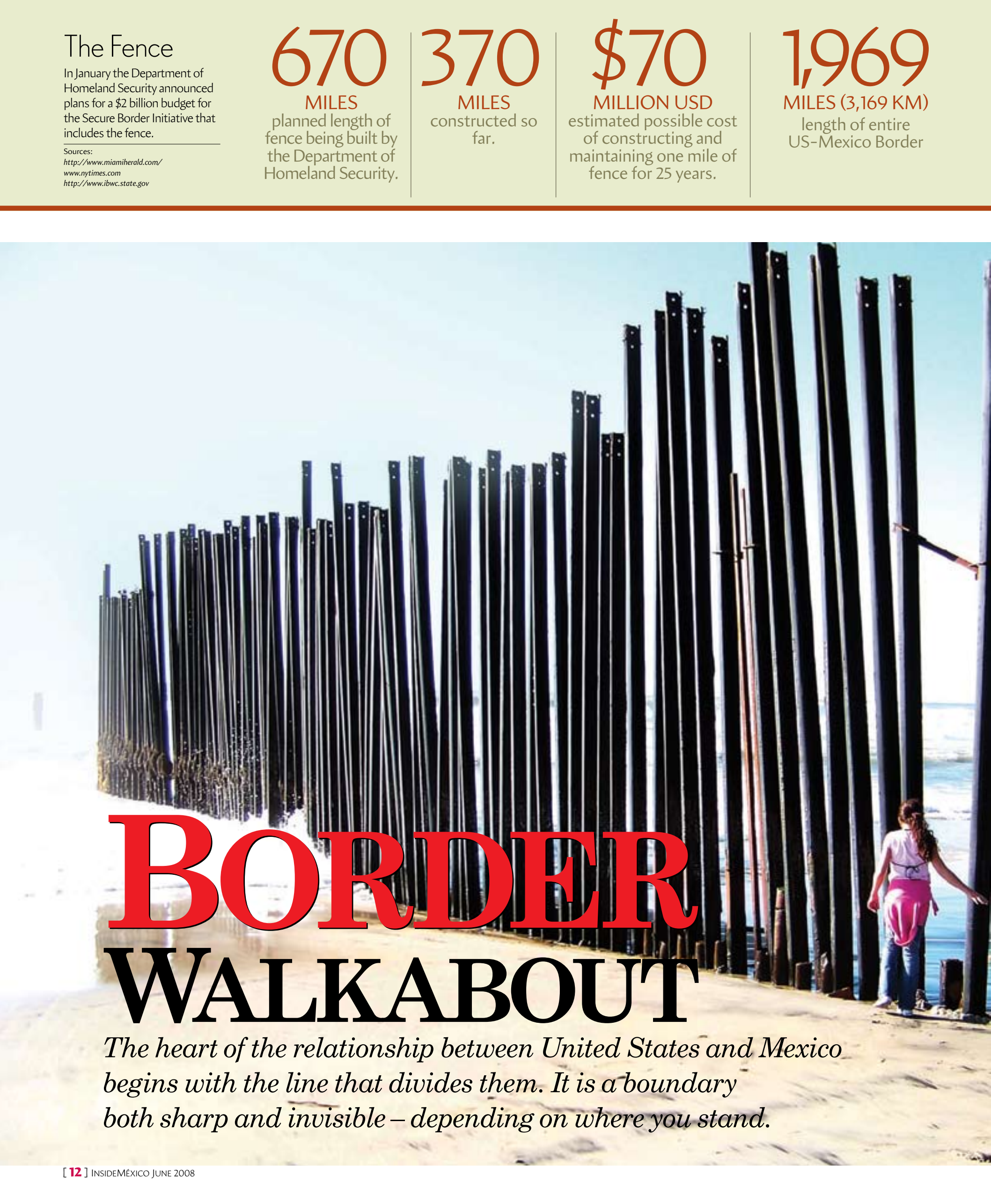
MILLION USD

estimated possible cost
of constructing and
maintaining one mile of
fence for 25 years.

1,969

MILES (3,169 KM)

length of entire
US-Mexico Border



BORDER WALKABOUT

The heart of the relationship between United States and Mexico begins with the line that divides them. It is a boundary both sharp and invisible – depending on where you stand.

"Yes, you can get over it; yes, you can get under it. But it is a useful tool that makes it more difficult for people to cross. It is one of a number of tools we have, and you've got to use all of the tools,"

Michael Cherkoff, Secretary of Homeland Security, told the New York Times.

The BORDER FILM PROJECT

This project distributes disposable cameras to undocumented migrants crossing into the US through the desert and to Minuteman Project volunteers at observation points in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and California.

To date, the project has received:

- 38 cameras from migrants
- 35 cameras from Minutemen
- Nearly 2,000 photos in total

Photos can be viewed at:
www.borderfilmproject.com



THE TIJUANA-SAN DIEGO BORDER.

As I round the corner towards the bridge over the Tijuana River, two cops yell at me to stop. I pick up my pace, gripping my passport and money inside my pockets with sweaty palms.

They yell again and I start running.

Looking back, I see them pursuing me.

I surrender. The officers slam me against a building, hands in the air. The contents of my pockets disappear into their hands for inspection.

"Why did you run? Are you carrying drugs?" asks the larger cop in broken English.

"No," I reply. "I had heard that many Tijuana cops extort foreigners. So when you asked me to stop, I ran."

"Listen," he says, "there are some bad people in Tijuana, but you need to remember that not everyone is bad police."

They let me go, the contents of my backpack in complete disarray after their hasty search, and I continue towards California.

The early morning sunlight shines on the twelve-foot high steel wall between San Diego and Tijuana.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY LEVI BRIDGES

MORE THAN JUST A LINE

For better or worse, Tijuana and San Diego are in a complex, co-dependent relationship that dates back to a simpler time. Early in the 19th century the two cities were both part of Mexico and Tijuana was a peaceful ranching village.

The Mexican-American War, which ended in 1848, would change the destinies of both cities, as well as countless towns, from the west coast to the southwest, which suddenly became part of a different country.

"Today, many southern Californians who live near large Latino communities do not realize that many people of Mexican descent have been US citizens for generations. The border passed over them," explains Andrea Skorepa, CEO of Casa Familiar, a non-profit organization that works with Latino communities in San Diego County.

Following the war, Tijuana grew relative to nearby California's booming economy. Prohibition drew tourists to Tijuana's cabarets and bars, and the population expanded in response to American spending on both sides of the border.

Today, Tijuana is home to 1.5 million people and is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Drove of immigrants from throughout Mexico arrive daily, seeking work in *maquiladora* factories on the Mexican side or as legal day laborers in the US, or looking to attempt to cross the border in hopes of joining America's increasing illegal workforce.

As the police let me go, I cross the bridge over the Tijuana River, a murky stream of water flowing from Mexico into a sewage treatment plant in California, and take my place in the sprawling line of people waiting at the busiest overland border crossing in the world.

This is the point where America, that dominating entity that hovers at the nucleus of world affairs, physically collides with another nation.

An hour later, I get my brief interview with a US customs official and pass through a metal detector into the home of the brave.

The visual effect of passing from Tijuana into California is like cleaning a dusty window; suddenly the world seems healthy, flawless, and more efficient.

Stepping onto the Blue Line trolley headed towards downtown San Diego, away from Tijuana's smog-billowing bus system, evokes a marvelous sense of convenience. As the train glides away, views of Tijuana's crowded hillsides give way to neat American suburbs.

Days in north Mexico leave you dazzled when you rediscover the existence of glitzy American shopping malls, immaculate sidewalks, and the palm-lined avenues of downtown San Diego.

Crossing back into Mexico that afternoon, I pass through a turnstile gate. Nobody asks me to wait in line or even to show identification.



Real life *Bordertown*

The border is a magnet for workers in the *maquiladoras*, the factories that assemble products for duty-free export to the US. The industry employs more than one million Mexicans; a great number of the workers are young women. According to Amnesty International, some 400 women have been murdered, and in many cases, raped, in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua since 1993. Almost none of the crimes has been solved.

In the 2007 film *Bordertown*, Jennifer Lopez plays a reporter from Chicago whose editor sends her on assignment to Ciudad Juárez to investigate the circumstances of the hundreds of deaths and disappearances. Antonio Banderas plays a local newspaper editor who teams with her in the investigation.

The film was not released in theatres in the US, but debuted in Mexico last month as *Verdades que matan*. While promoting the film's release here, Director



▪ **IT'S ALWAYS RUSH HOUR** at the border crossing between Tijuana and San Diego.

CITY OF IMMIGRANTS

"The best way of understanding the border is simply to remember that it is composed of a wide variety of people, each with their own hopes and dreams, which often come in conflict with an international boundary," says Dr. Norma Iglesias, Professor of Chicano Studies at San Diego State University.

This statement rings true after visiting one of Tijuana's shelters that offer aid to both migrants en route to the US and deportees.

Under the roof of the migrant shelter, one hears both the thick Chilango accent of Mexico City and the relaxed southern California drawl spoken by Mexicans who grew up in LA.

Despite their different origins, migrants remain united in the ways their lives have been complicated by a border which was once more of an abstract concept, but in some places has become a wall whose existence limits the mobility of residents on both sides.

My first visit to a shelter took me past lines of unemployed men sitting lackadaisically along the streets deep within the crowded *barrio* of Tijuana's Colonia Postal.

Feeling vulnerable, I too experienced a sense of sanctuary as Mari Galván, director

of the Casa Madre Asunta, an all-women's migrant shelter, welcomed me into a new, modern building that stood in stark contrast with the sprawl of tin-roofed houses built on foundations of rubber tires.

"The situation in Tijuana has changed recently," Galván explains. "Ten years ago most of the women who arrived here were waiting to cross into the US, now the majority who come have been deported."

She opens her record book to demonstrate, the names scrolling down the page. Isabela: deported, Maria: deported, Andrea: deported, Martina: deported.

Outside Galván's office, the names become faces, individual people who have risked everything to cross the border.

"I lived in the US for fifteen years," says Inés Ferrera, a 27-year-old mother of six originally from Puebla. "Last week, my husband and I were gathering cardboard outside a restaurant to sell to a recycling center. A policeman stopped and accused us of robbery, then arrested us. At the police station, they asked me where I was born and I said Mexico. They deported us both. I think my kids are staying with my sister now. I'm not sure how I'm going to cross back," she says, holding back tears.

Next to Inés are two young women, one whose journey to the US is just beginning

and another whose time there has been interrupted.

"I'm going to the US with *coyotes* [people smugglers] to meet my mom and go to a good university," says Estefani Guadalupe, a bright 16-year-old who traveled to Tijuana from Mexico City with her aunt.

"I crossed with coyotes sixteen years ago," explains Elizabeth, a 25-year-old also from Puebla, sitting to Estefani's right. "We moved to LA, I learned English, graduated high school, and had just finished two years of college. Then I was deported. I'm not sure I'll be able to cross back."

Outside Madre Asunta, a recent deportee named Alberto, originally from Cuernavaca, leads me to the Casa San Juan Diego, a shelter on the outskirts of Tijuana for both men and women that provides temporary assistance for migrants and the homeless.

"The police in Tijuana treat the dogs better than us," he says as we walk along a busy highway. "I was deported into Tijuana carrying just \$350 USD; the police here took everything and threw me into jail my first day back in Mexico."

A haggard assortment of down-and-out people, cast in the autumnal light of the setting sun, greets us at the shelter's entrance.

"You've got to know what time of day the cops come by. They will throw you in jail for anything," explains Gabriel, a former LA gang member who did nine years in a California State Penitentiary before he was deported.

In the distance, we saw police officers throw two disheveled men into a truck.

As the shelter's doors open for the night, a flow of men poured forth from the shadows of nearby buildings and the embankment of the Tijuana River.

"My parents brought me illegally into the US when I was a baby," says Antonio, a former resident of Los Angeles, while slurping soup with a famished intensity. "I never became a naturalized citizen, and at the age of 33, US Immigration officials sent me to Mexico with nothing, not even money to call my family to tell them what happened. I was alone and my Spanish was horrible. Can you imagine what it's like to be thrown into a country you don't even know?" he asks.

Outside the shelters, my light skin and blonde hair broadcast my nationality to Tijuana residents. Deportees flock to me. Some beg for food, others simply want to speak English.

Their stories blur together.

Gregory Nava (who also directed *Selena*) told the newspaper *Excelsior* that he received death threats during filming. Amnesty International and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jose Ramos-Horta presented Jennifer Lopez with its "Artists for Amnesty" award at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2007.

Lopez and Amnesty International raise awareness of these cases through the website www.amnestyusa.org/bordertown/.



- **LEFT:** A highway billboard unwittingly sums up many Mexicans' view of what lies beyond the border fence snaking across the countryside.
- **ABOVE:** Border crossing gridlock offers business opportunities.

Some had spent just a few months in the US, but many had left behind houses, jobs, spouses, and children. These had assimilated to US culture and now found themselves in a foreign world that was supposed to be theirs.

"Mexico is dirty and there are no opportunities here. I don't know this place. This isn't my country," said one deportee named Luis.

My last day in Tijuana, I went to the beach. Standing with your back to the sea, one looks back at the steel fence cascading down the mountains into the frothy ocean. Mexican couples hold hands and point at the looming buildings of downtown San Diego.

From the shore, I watched several mischievous children squeeze through a hole in the fence, momentarily walking into the US, placing their feet abroad as if stepping gingerly into tepid bathwater.

Helicopters from the nearby Border Patrol facility circled in the sky.

BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS

From the Pacific Ocean, the US-Mexican border stretches nearly 2,000 miles through vast tracts of desert and along the Rio Grande to the Gulf coast.

Once, this stretch of mainly non-arable land was considered worthless, but today foreign investors have built factories in north

Mexico, employing cheap labor and converting this former no-man's land into a valuable region for both Mexico and the US.

Following Clinton-era security measures that sought to push illegal immigration away from cities to more remote areas, where in theory it would be more easily controlled, the desert regions of north Mexico have today become the primary routes for drug and human trafficking to the US.

The heaviest traffic passes through the Sonora desert into southern Arizona. Every day the stakes are raised on crossing the border into the US. Coyotes can now charge more than \$3,000 USD a head to ensure safe passage over the border. Since 1994 4,745 deaths of Mexican nationals have been recorded as they tried to cross into the US, more than the number of US soldiers killed in the current Iraq war.

"Recently, we've started finding dead bodies further away from the road," says Reverend Robin Hoover, founder of Humane Borders, a non-profit organization based in Tucson, Arizona that provides assistance to migrants, "meaning that increased border security has pushed people further into the desert and into more dangerous conditions. There are a lot of ups and downs in desert terrain, and a mere twisted ankle can be a death sentence."

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Drugs, Crime & Violence

The month of May saw a spate of killings of both senior-level law enforcement officials and the son of the country's most wanted man:

SAÚL PEÑA, shot and killed May 6, Ciudad Juárez, *Chihuahua*
Was about to be named one of the border city's five police commanders

ROBERT VELASCO BRAVO, shot and killed May 1, *Mexico City*
Was police director of organized criminal investigations

EDGAR MILLÁN GÓMEZ, shot and killed May 8, *Mexico City*
As federal chief of police, was the highest-ranking law enforcement officer in Mexico. He had organized the arrest of Sinaloa Cartel leader Alfredo Beltrán Leyva in January.

JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ, shot and killed May 19, Parral, *Chihuahua*
Was head of criminal investigations for southern Chihuahua

EDGAR GUZMAN BELTRAN, shot and killed May 8, *Culiacán*
Was the son of Sinaloa Cartel leader and most wanted man Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán.



▪ **DECEPTIVE BEAUTY:** The Sonoran Desert can be deadly for migrants crossing the border. Arizona-based *No Más Muertes* provides drinking water along the route.

INTRUDERS IN THE DUST

East of Highway 2 lies Altar, Mexico, which has doubled in size since becoming the main jumping off point for migrants stealing by foot into the US.

Much like the infamous city to its west, Altar too was once a quiet ranching town, nestled amidst swaths of the Saguaro cactuses which still dominate the Sonora desert horizon.

In Altar, everything the street vendors sell is black—clothing, backpacks, bandanas—so migrants will be less visible at night.

Outside of town, one dirt road leads 110 kilometers straight north to the Arizona border.

On any afternoon, hundreds of tired

dark-clad men, women, and children can be seen packed like sardines into truck beds, heading towards the border where they will begin their trip into the US, either solo or with coyotes, many on foot.

Some will never make it, but those that do will step into southern Arizona, an area which has been converted into a virtual police state, where Border Patrol officers attempt to control a socio-economic immigration issue with surveillance and interrogation.

The combined presence of Border Patrol and the increasing number of illegal immigrants passing through the backyards of US citizens has eroded the quality of life for border residents on the US side. This problem is exacerbated because many

border residents are descended from Mexicans who became Americans 150 years ago when the border moved south, or from immigrant ancestors who crossed generations ago, making the job of identifying Mexicans from Americans a tricky business.

Thousands of people enter the US illegally each day, but the vast majority will pass through two great expanses of land just north of Altar.

The first is Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, a 330,000-acre National Park straddling thirty-one miles of the Mexican-US border and protecting one of the world's most important and fragile desert ecosystems.

Organ Pipe has become such a hot spot for smugglers and migrants that over two-thirds of the Park is now closed to the public, and the National Parks Conservation Association has called Organ Pipe "the most dangerous National Park in the US."

That said, people have been migrating through this area for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Organ Pipe's Chief of Interpretation, Andy Fisher, sees migration trends within the Park as an extension of history.

"People have been moving through this area since the first humans arrived in Sonora," she says. "There are many historic trails in Organ Pipe made by people who originally migrated north from the Sea of Cortez on trade routes."

Those times remain just where they began: in the past.

The descendants of those ancient peoples who once freely roamed through the Sonora desert can be found adjacent to Organ Pipe on the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation, the other popular route for undocumented migrants travelling north of Altar.

There, a tribe of 25,000 people lives on 2.8 million acres of desert land on the second largest Indian Reservation in the US.

The presence of the border has perhaps influenced the Tohono O'odham as much as anyone; in 1853 the border was redrawn, cutting the Indian Nation in two and leaving many tribal members in Mexico, while moving others to the United States. This fissure created extended families that bridge the borderland.

Until post 9-11 security measures were implemented, O'odham people living in Mexico were able to cross the border freely, using tribal ID cards as identification. New US border security measures separate some Mexican O'odham from family members in the US and deprive them of medical treatment not available in Mexico's remote Sonora region.

Numbers, numbers...

Sources:
Congressional Research Services,
"Mexico's Drug Cartels,"
• www.fas.org/
• www.economist.com/
• www.stratfor.com/
• <http://www.news.com.au>
• <http://www.reuters.com/>

- **73 PERCENT** jump in price in Methamphetamines from January – September, 2007
- **44 PERCENT** price increase for cocaine during the same period
- **34** drug-related killings on May 20 in Mexico
- **230** people killed in drug-related violence in Ciudad Juárez during 2008 as of early May
- **2,500** estimated number of drug-related murders in 2007 in Mexico
- **90 PERCENT** of cocaine entering the US transits Mexico (State Department Estimate)
- **\$13.6 - \$48.4 BILLION USD**, estimated annual range of wholesale illicit drug sale earnings in the US
- **1,300** people killed in drug-related violence so far in 2008 in Mexico
- **25,000** troops and federal police dispatched by Calderón since 2006 to fight drug cartels
- **1** US Border Patrol agent killed in 2008 by suspected drug smugglers

"Now, we are not sure how people on the Mexican side will cross," says Tohono O'odham member Yolanda Garcia. "Many of those people do not have the money to get passports, or they were born at home with midwives and never received birth certificates, making it difficult to prove their true nationality."

Lying just north of Altar, the 75-mile border separating the Mexican and US sides of the Tohono O'odham Nation shapes everyday life in other ways too; an estimated 1,500 undocumented Mexicans cross the border into the Nation everyday, complicating the lives of those living in the US.

"I never used to lock my doors," says Louie Johnson, a tribal elder. "But our house has been broken into three times now by hungry migrants looking for food. I understand most migrants are good people put in a desperate situation, but this is an invasion of our privacy."

On my way to the Reservation, I crossed into the US late at night, arriving in Lukeville, Arizona, a town consisting of little more than a convenience store.

Stranded, I asked a grumpy customs agent where I could find a safe place to camp.

"Don't go out in that desert," he cautioned, "there's a lot of illegal activity."

"Can I pitch a tent near here?" I asked.

"Listen, son," he said, "this is government property. You must leave as soon as you exit the building."

"Welcome home," I thought.

With no better option, I camped next to the Department of Homeland Security office.

The searchlights of a helicopter combing the desert floor for migrants woke me just as I was nodding off.

On the Reservation's edge, at a diner in Why, Arizona, a waitress said, "I have illegals on my property day and night. They cut my fences and my horses get out. Or they turn on my hoses to get water and leave them running."

"Sometimes, I think they're vindictive," she added.

Entering the impoverished Tohono O'odham Reservation for the first time, I stared at dilapidated trailer communities sprawling over the hillsides around junked cars and the stray dogs meandering through the streets. I wondered if I had made a wrong turn south and was back in Mexico.

Like the landscape that is indistinguishable on either side of the border, the concerns of American citizens on the Reservation mirrored those of the Tijuana deportees.

"There's a virtual war between border



patrol and drug smugglers happening on our tribal lands, and we're caught in the middle of it," said the pastor of a Baptist church.

In both countries, a sense of fear and concerns for the instability of the status quo permeated the words of border residents.

"I picked up a guy hitchhiking who I thought was from the Res," a tribe member named Leon explained. "He was very quiet. Later, we were pulled over by Border Patrol and I found out he was an illegal immigrant. They interrogated me for hours. I'm lucky I didn't go to jail."

Incidents like these have left many tribal members fearful of the Border Patrol that is charged with the very difficult task of identifying illegal immigrants from O'odham Americans.

"My grandfather and I were pulled over by Border Patrol one day," says Verlon Jose, Chairman of the Tohono O'odham Legislative Council, "and they asked us for our documents. My grandfather is deaf, so he made no action. I told them, 'I'm sorry, he can't hear you.' And they said, 'Yeah right, we've heard that one before, get out of the car.'"

Jose worries that many people who wield less influence than he won't go to law enforcement when they need help because they fear harassment by the Border Patrol.

"I want to personally tell Secretary [of Homeland Security Michael] Chertoff what life on the southern districts of our Nation is like," he said. "How you can hear gunshots and strangers passing by your house at night. How the homes of impoverished people are broken into and our beautiful tribal lands we've inhabited for five hundred years are covered in trash left by migrants."

"These problems we're experiencing on the Nation right now won't go away until America stops wanting drugs and cheap labor," he said.

▪ **VOLUNTEERS from Grupos Beta, dedicated to mitigating the death toll among border crossers.**

THE BEAUTIFUL FRONTERA PODEROSA

The border is an obstacle as well as a bridge.

It creates an entirely unique Borderlands culture composed of diverse historical influences that transcend current international boundaries. In a schoolroom on the Tohono O'odham Nation, children who make up one of the last vestiges of Native culture in the United States sign their last names as Garcia or Ramirez and sing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The border divides the same people and cultures it brings together. It's a place where deportees in Tijuana make international phone calls to lovers, breathlessly whispering "Honey, I miss you."

In recent years, the border has become more of a barrier and less of a bridge. It is the physical point where the developed and developing worlds meet and where joblessness, discrimination, violence, and crime can be seen in stark relief. These issues might be solved sooner if the two nations saw their proximity as an opportunity to work together instead of to build more barriers.

Moving through the Borderlands reveals what a powerful entity the border has become; a formality conceived at the end of a war that continues to foment war. As I observe the Mexican soldiers charged with battling drug cartels, just south of their US counterparts responsible for keeping immigrants out of a country that depends upon them, it is hard to remember that the border is a man-made creation, not a strange creature responsive only to violent forces.

The border is powerful.

It changes those who cross from one side to the other, turning a hard working father into a beggar, a college student into a day laborer, a day laborer into a college student, an American into a Mexican, and vice versa.

The definitions and the possibilities change, depending on which way you are going.

Even as it blurs identities, the border itself is ephemeral and shape-shifting; it is at once a cold steel barrier separating families, a lazy river flowing along the Texas plains, and an invisible line hovering in the resplendence of the desert sun, unwavering in an afternoon breeze. *jcMx*

Levi Bridges wrote about the history and urban life of Ciudad Nezahualcóytl in the October 2007 issue of Inside México. He can be reached at ebbanflow@yahoo.com.



Abrazos for Washington

The month of May saw a spate of killings of both senior-level law enforcement officials and the son of the country's most wanted man:

Every February four children—two from the US and two from Mexico—meet in the middle of the Lincoln-Juarez International Bridge, which links the cities of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas and Laredo, Texas. Dressed in American colonial outfits and traditional Mexican dress, they walk toward each other before stopping to exchange symbolic (if slightly awkward) hugs atop the red-car-

peted bridge.

The embrace is a hallmark of the George Washington Birthday Celebration, a tradition in Laredo since 1898. After the children's inaugural greeting, a slew of dignitaries from both countries follow their lead to hug and exchange flags. About 400,000 people attend the month-long festivities that follow.



Growing up, there was nothing better than waking up on a Sunday morning to the smell of *barbacoa de res*, flour tortillas, and all the spicy trimmings. It's what Sunday mornings were meant for in my hometown on the Texas-Mexico border.

As a kid, I ate northern Mexican food in south Texas—a fuzzy food line considering Texas belonged to Mexico until 1836.

Biting into the succulent, tender, and warm *barbacoa* taco for breakfast, I never thought about how much Tex or Mex was in my childhood comfort food—until I moved to Mexico City. Here chips and salsa were replaced by slices of French bread, corn tortillas stamped out any hint of the familiar flour ones my mom would make, and Chilango quesadillas had no cheese.

So why are the cuisines so different, and what exactly is Tex-Mex food? Isn't it supposed to be a fusion derived from Mexican food? Or is it just American-friendly Mexican food? Nobody seems to have just one answer.

When food guru and former Mexico City resident Diana Kennedy's book *The Cuisines of Mexico* hit bookstores in 1972, for better or worse it changed Tex-Mex food forever. Kennedy dismissed "mixed plates" and for the first time argued that Americans were not eating authentic Mexican food. The term "Tex-Mex" became an insult, synonymous with a bastardized version of interior Mexican food.

But other food experts, like Robb Walsh, author of *The Tex-Mex Cookbook: A History in Recipes and Photos*, write that Tex-Mex food should not be thought of as Mexican food or Texan food, but instead as "America's oldest regional cuisine."

Walsh explains why in a Houston Press article, "*Brave Nuevo World*." First, he states that the staple Tex-Mex ingredients like ground beef, yellow cheese, and flour are all American. "And second, because Mexicans insist that it has nothing to do with their cuisine."

Before Kennedy's book, people used the term "Tex-Mex" to refer to the Texas-Mexican Railway chartered in 1875. The railroad linked the port of Corpus Christi, Texas, to Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas. News-

Border Crossing cuisine

TEX-MEX: A BRIEF HISTORY OF A CUISINE COUPLING

BY NANCY FLORES



Photo: www.sxc.hu

papers abbreviated railroad names when printing schedules and soon the train became known as the Tex. Mex. The word was later hyphenated in the 1920s and also used to describe native Texans of Mexican descent.

During the mid-1800s, railroads changed cooking in Texas. Mexican cooks, hired on Texas ranches to feed hungry cowboys, began using the new-

ly available American ingredients like lard, bacon, and flour to create a new twist on familiar foods. Tex-Mex food depends heavily on beef because of Texas' cattle culture. The traditional goat and lamb *barbacoas* of the Mexican interior were cooked in the same style in Texas, but with the familiar and readily available beef. To satisfy American tastes, salsas looked more

like tomato sauce, and chili gravy was topped on enchiladas.

It was the early blandness of Tex-Mex food that Kennedy attacked. As a result, Tex-Mex food has undergone massive evolutions, changing as the American palate becomes more willing to take culinary risks. Today Tex-Mex has become more daring, with dishes like spinach and artichoke enchiladas, lobster tacos, and veggie chorizo.

A love for all things Tex-Mex has begun popping up in eateries everywhere from Bangkok to Budapest. The unique cuisine reached international popularity with dishes like nachos, fajitas, and breakfast tacos because they were seen as adventurous and exotic.

It was only after Tex-Mex food's success abroad that some Texas restaurateurs began reclaiming the term Tex-Mex and advertising their food that way.

In 1992, Texas native Joe Draker bought a well-known Austin home-style restaurant called Maudie's Café. He decided to change the menu to Tex-Mex food and advertise it as such. Their website slogan says, "Welcome to Tex-Mex Heaven."

Draker understands that restaurants serving *nouveau* Tex-Mex want to distance themselves from the label, but says he is proud of Maudie's product because "it's what we grew up on."

"Tex-Mex is old school," Draker said in a phone interview. "And it's the beginning of all fusions. Families have traditions in Texas to go out to eat together at their favorite Tex-Mex place and those traditions die hard."

Though the Tex-Mex craze has been felt around the globe, it still hasn't been embraced in Mexico City. Few Tex-Mex options are available in the DF outside of chains like Carlos 'n' Charlie's and Chili's.

Even though in Mexico City you can find every Mexican cuisine from Yucatecan to Oaxacan, sometimes this border girl still craves the flavors of homemade flour tortillas and Sunday morning beef *barbacoa*. *¡Mx*

Nancy Flores wrote about the potential of rainwater collection in the May 2008 issue of *Inside México*. She can be reached at nancyflores15@yahoo.com.



Jalapeño Festival

The Jalapeño Festival closes the fiestas for Washington's birthday. The main event, of course, is the jalapeño chile eating competition. The rule is simple: eat as many as you can in fifteen minutes. This year's winner, Patrick "Deep Dish" Bertoletti of Chicago, broke the previous record of 141 jalapeños, raising the bar to 266.

On the web:
Washington's Birthday Celebration Association, www.wbcalaredo.org



NACHO's specials

BY NANCY FLORES

To find the birthplace of the nacho, you must travel to the border.

The legend of the nacho begins across from Eagle Pass, Texas, in the border city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila. The details of how this tasty treat gained international fame are blurry, but one thing is certain: Thanks to a man named Ignacio "Nacho" Anaya Sr., Tex-Mex food has never been so scrumptious.

The creation of the nacho occurred one night during the World War II era at a Piedras Negras restaurant called the Victory Club, where Anaya worked as head waiter and cook. In the 1940s the Victory Club was a hot spot for upper-class Mexicans, Texans, and US Army pilots who trained at a nearby Eagle Pass airfield, according to a history

of the nacho by border historians Michael J. Ritchie, Sr. and David L. Carrillo.

Anaya's son, Ignacio Anaya Jr., told border newspapers that a woman named Mamie Finan, who was hosting a Victory Club dinner for the wives of military officials, asked Anaya Sr. if he could whip up a unique appetizer before the meal.

Anaya Sr. went into the kitchen, looked in his pantry, and began frying up some corn tortillas. He covered them with yellow cheese and added slices of jalapeños on top. He put the tortillas into the oven to melt the cheese and then served it to the women. Legend has it that Finan began calling the new creation "Nacho's Specials," a reference to

the chef's Mexican nickname.

Anaya Sr. later became manager of El Moderno Restaurant, also in Piedras Negras, and took his simple but popular recipe there. He went on to open his own restaurant, which closed its doors seven years after his death in 1975.

The tragedy behind the nacho's origins is that despite Anaya Sr.'s fame on the border, his idea was never patented and he never received the true credit he deserved.

When a regular customer asked Anaya Sr., a father of nine children, why he wouldn't patent the idea, he responded, "¿Por qué? It is only an appetizer to keep my customers happy and well-fed," according to Ritchie and Carrillo.

In 1961, Anaya Jr. spoke to lawyers about the possibility of a patent, but by then the snack had spread across the globe and the original nacho had been transformed with the addition of guacamole, beans, sour cream, chicken, and other ingredients. The Anaya family never profited from the snack beloved by millions. ¡Mx



Did you know?

- Today, Piedras Negras, Coahuila hosts the annual Festival Internacional del Nacho on the second weekend in October. You can find everything from shrimp to caviar nachos. You can also participate in the popular "biggest nacho of the world" contest, an event registered in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.
- The first "ballpark nachos" were served in 1977 in Arlington Stadium, home of the Texas Rangers.
- El Moderno Restaurant on Highway 57 in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, serves Anaya's original nachos as well as other variations. The restaurant even offers a shuttle from hotels across the border in Eagle Pass, Texas.



Photos by Juan Manuel Prado

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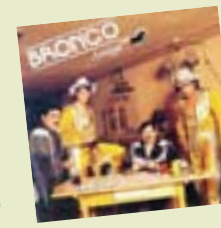
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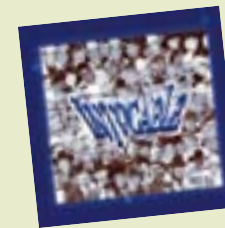
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"4 DÉCADAS DE ÉXITOS",
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"CONTIGO",
Intocable

Sounds from the Northern Frontier

BY JHOVANNI RAGA

In the space where the United States blurs into Mexico, the chords of the accordion and the *bajosexto* (a kind of twelve-string guitar) mix to create the typical sound of the borderlands region: *música nortea*.

Boots, jeans, leather belt, a plaid or *lisa* shirt, and of course a sombrero: these are the perfect complement for the fans of these rhythms. They cut circles at public dances, private fiestas, or in the intimacy of the home, turning on the radio and tuning into one of the dozens of stations dedicated to nortea programming.

Even though *fronterizos* on both sides of the border surrender to the love of these sounds, the music's origins are little known. Nortea dates back to the colonial period and the popularity of the violin, but after Independence the genre lost none of its favor.

The use of the accordion and the *bajosexto* in *música nortea* is owed to Czech migrants who arrived in the borderlands during the second half of the 19th century bringing with them polkas and other

dances. The new sound was adopted by other musicians in the region and mixed with the roots of *música ranchera*.

This sound began to be known as "*música nortea*" for the geographic location where it was created. After the Mexican Revolution, it boomed with the *corridos*—songs capturing and reflecting in their lyrics political and social crises in both countries. It was during the mid-20th century that its commercial exploitation increased considerably.

Many confuse *música nortea* with Tejano music; even though there are many who mix the genres, the latter shows strong influence from country and jazz music from north of the border.

As culture joins the rush to globalization, music has grown commodified and genres come and go. Nortea defends its place and earns popularity as it is exported to the world. As the style evolves, it attracts more and more fans and becomes all but indispensable at celebrations and parties. *¡Mx*

Jhovanni Raga is a freelance contributor to cultural magazines and books. He can be reached at jhio.raga@gmail.com.





Photo by Shauna Leff

Elena duran and Michael Emerson

Voices

To learn more about *Flautas sin Fronteras* and Elena Duran go to www.elenaduran.com.

Playing on the border is a life-time project. It's about perception. It's about acceptance. It's about having the spirit to go for something more.

Elena Duran

PLAYING Across the Border

Elena Duran grew up speaking “Spanglish” in her family’s East Oakland, California home. She attended Oakland’s public schools and then Mills College. From there she went on to become one of the world’s great flautists, studying with the likes of James Galway. Her British husband, Michael Emerson, a former president of RCA Records, is also her manager. The couple relocated to Mexico City and has developed a program called “*Flautas sin Fronteras* (Flutes without Borders).” The idea won the support of both countries’ governments and has been promoted by the Mexican Foreign Ministry, the US Embassy in Mexico, and the (US) President’s Committee for Arts and Culture. Elena describes her program of concerts on both sides of the Mexican-American border as a “lifetime project.” *Inside México* sat down with Elena and Michael to talk about this program, the border, and identity.

INSIDE MÉXICO: *How did Flautas sin Fronteras get started?*

ELENA DURAN: We were in a nice hotel in Coahuila. I said, ‘I’m sick about the bad news about the border.’ And Michael said, ‘Why don’t you do something about it?’

MICHAEL EMERSON: So we decided that we would do concerts along the border.

ELENA: We go where people are living and dying. We’ve played in orphanages, in old age homes, in schools, concert halls, and even a bank in Eagle Pass. At the bank, we were concerned that we weren’t going to play for the people we wanted to play for, but it was a marvelous group that included community organizers and people who don’t usually go into a bank.

When I played at a university in Brownsville, the American consul from Matamoros and the Mexican consul from Brownsville were both there. It was the first time they’d been together. I thought, ‘Why am I in this university?’ Well, it’s a place where Americans and Mexicans could come together.

MICHAEL: What we discovered was that neither Washington nor Mexico City understands the frontera. It’s a third nationality. First of all you have to recognize that this third country exists. The drug runners and the immigrants are just moving through it.

ELENA: Not every family aspires to cross the border. Where I’m going [in this project, in her music, and as a person] is more about borders. Economic, political, psychological.

I’ve never said I was American. Always Mexican-American. Hyphenated. I’ve always been a brown definition. I’m a *Chicana*. Some say that’s too militant sounding. But when I’m [on the border], I’m just Lupita eating her *palomitas* with her grandmother in Oakland.

MICHAEL: The first time Elena came to Mexico was for Christmas in 1976. Both her parents were born in Mexico, but left when they were two. We were invited to Christmas with a Mexican musician friend.

ELENA: It was really luck to have Christmas with him but it wasn’t a real Mexican Christmas like we had back in Oakland. It was more European. [When people left Mexico] they took with them the customs and treasured those things and kept them sacred. I know about the culture, the food, the music, the film. I feel more Mexican than Mexicans.

I hope that in 2010, when Mexico celebrates its 200th birthday, it will include recognition of chicanos and their contribution to the cultures of both countries. There should be a separate fund to support border culture that comes from both Mexico and the US, and recognizes the mythical land of the chicanos. We all have to work really hard [for this to happen].

MICHAEL: We never expected [*Flautas sin Fronteras*] to be personally enriching, but it is.

ELENA: We can all be who we want to be. That’s your choice. ¡CMx



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Spelling Test

Study up with this primer on how English plus Spanish equals *Spanglish*.

SPANGLISH

Parquear el carro
Chores
Marqueta
Taípear
Vacunar la carpeta
El rufo del bildin

ENGLISH

To park the car
Shorts
Market
To type
To vacuum the carpet
The roof of the building

SPANISH

Aparcar el coche
Pantalones cortos
Mercado
Escribir a máquina
Apirar la alfombra
El techo del edificio

SPANGLISH

Lonche
Brecas
Imeil
Chequear
Aiscrim
Bipear
Faxear

ENGLISH

Lunch
Brakes
E-mail
To check
Ice cream
To call on a beeper/
to beep.
To fax.

SPANISH

Almuerzo
Frenos
Correo electrónico
Verifiar/Comprobar
Helado
Llamar al bíper
Enviar por fax

SPEAKING *La Jerga Loca*

EXPLORING SPANGLISH, THE GROWING LENGUA OF LOS UNAITED ESTEITS

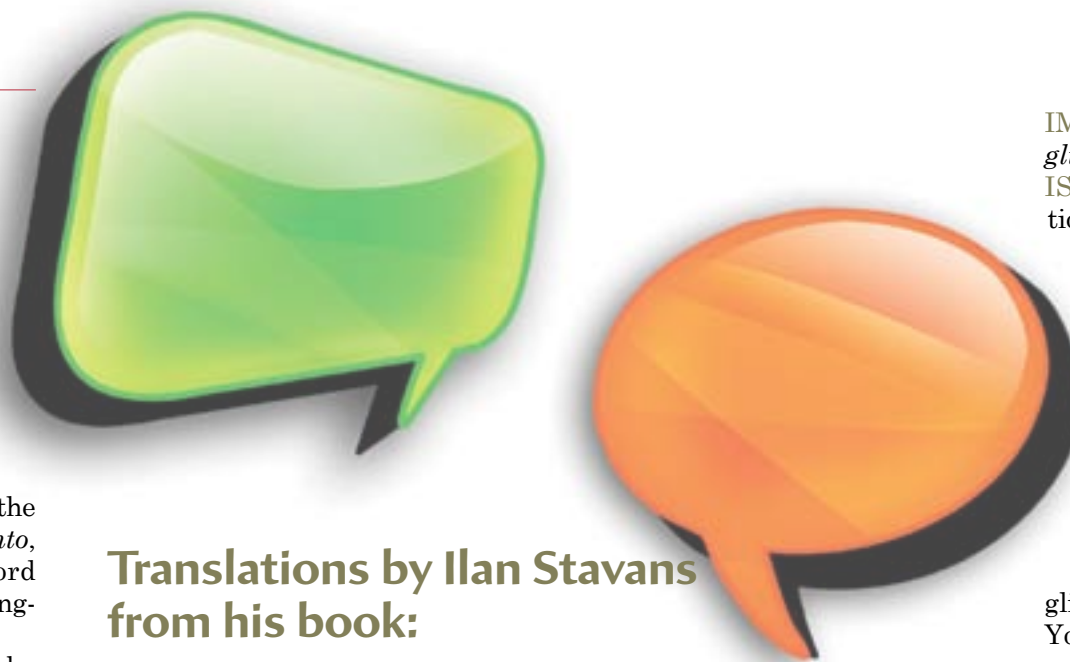
BY ANDREAS SJÖBLOM

Spanglish is a hybrid, a hodgepodge of English and Spanish words and phrases leaping between languages. Sometimes entirely new words are created. Which words or phrases get absorbed into Spanglish may seem arbitrary but is often decided by efficiency, or the lack of an adequate equivalent expression in the other language. For example, in Mexican Spanish the word for parking is *estacionamiento*, a slightly more complicated word than the English word, so in Spanglish, it changes to *parquir*.

The origins of Spanglish can be traced back to 1848, when the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed and over half of Mexico became part of the US. Suddenly, 80,000 Mexicans found themselves living north of the border. These new Mexican-Americans used Spanish at home, but needed to speak English for business or other public errands. This struggle between English and Spanish eventually led to the birth of the melting pot we call Spanglish.

Spanglish has always been heavily criticized by intellectuals on both sides of the border, such as Mexican writer Octavio Paz, who once famously said it was "neither good, nor bad, but abominable." Today, the hybrid language is gaining legitimacy, as a growing number of companies, politicians, writers, and musicians are using it. Hallmark, for instance, has started selling Spanglish greeting cards, and Toyota recently came out with a Spanglish TV commercial for a new model.

For a closer examination of the phenomenon, we talked to Ilan Stavans, Professor of Latin American and La-



Translations by Ilan Stavans from his book:

- **Walt Whitman** – Hoyas de Grass: "Sudenmente fuera Ael air estéril y drowsy, el lair de los esclavos como un lightning Europa dio an paso pa'lante."
- **Mark Twain** – Huck-leberry Finn: "Yo no sabe de mi sin you leer un book by the nombre of The Aventuras of Tom Sawyer, pero eso ain't no matter."
- **Robert Frost** – El Gift Derecho: "La tierra was ours antes que nosotros were de la tierra. It was nuestra tierra más de cien anos pátrás ..."

tino culture at Amherst College and author of the linguistic study and dictionary *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language*.

INSIDE MÉXICO: Ilan, how would you define *Spanglish*?

ILAN STAVANS: I believe Spanglish is the marriage and divorce of two languages that have been at each other for 150 years, but also the encounter of two civilizations. It's not purely a linguistic phenomenon, but a form of *mestizaje*, both cultural and linguistic, that shows that Latinos in the United States are part Latin American, part North American, but neither one or the other. A Spanglish speaker not only speaks Spanglish, but thinks, dreams, and acts in Span-

glish. It's very much a statement of being, in an existential way.

IM: So where is *Spanglish* today?

IS: Today Spanglish is very cool, very attractive, and very hot. It used to be a form of alienation and marginalization, but today it's being embraced by companies and corporations, by major sponsors and by television. Now there are textbooks for Spanglish courses, there are entire radio stations that use Spanglish and no other language. A lot of rap, hip-hop, and salsa music is only in Spanglish, and some of the groups and musicians are not even Latinos. They use Spanglish to reach a wider market. And politicians are also using Spanglish.

IM: What about the future of *Spanglish*?

IS: When compared to other transitional immigrant mixed languages, like the mix of German and English by German immigrants to the US, or Yiddish and English by Jewish immigrants, or Italian and English by Italian immigrants, all of which existed for about twenty to thirty years and then disappeared when English became the dominant language within that immigrant community, Spanglish seems not to be disappearing. Younger people use it, older people use it, and the middle aged are using it in a way that they have never used mixed languages in the past.

IM: What separates *Spanglish* from other mixed languages that have disappeared?

IS: Spanglish has gone beyond that border, and is a portable, mobile language. You might still be thinking in border terms, but you are living in Chicago or in Minnesota. So you don't have to be in Tijuana or Juarez to be a Spanglish speaker. Spanglish is, unlike the other mixed languages, a language of immigration and of acculturation. It's not based in a particular border town, or a particular border region, like *Franglais* in the border towns of France and England, or *Portunhol* on the border of Venezuela and Brazil. And so what the media often says, that Spanglish is a recent phenomenon that has evolved because of recent immigration and that will disappear as soon as immigration stops, is a fallacy. First of all, it's not recent, and secondly, I don't think immigration will stop, no matter how tall the wall between Mexico and United States is.

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- La Lorena
- Mani e Pedi
- The Yoga Center
- Fussion Estilistas

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- Cafébrería El Pendulo
- Entrevinos
- Restaurante Spuntino
- Italian Coffee Polanco
- Isote
- Villa María
- Tori Tori
- Lox
- Artemis
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- Riedel Wine Bar
- Hotel Nikko
- Hotel Presidente Intcontinental
- Hotel J. W. Marriott
- Hotel W
- Hotel Residencia Polanco
- Hotel Fiesta Americana • Gran Chapultepec
- Hotel Camino Real
- Restaurant Via Tasso
- Thai Gardens
- Casa Castelar

Condesa

- American Legion
- Universidad La Salle
- Librería Rosario
- Castellanos
- Cafébrería El Pendulo
- Conejoblanco
- Condesa D.F.
- Orquídeas
- The Village Café
- Barracuda Dinner
- La Buena Tierra
- Café La Gloria
- Black Horse
- Bistro Mosaico
- Malafama
- Artefacto
- Flo-Productos Orgánicos
- El Milagrito
- Rojo Bistrol
- Frutos Prohibidos y otros Placeres

Santa Fe

- The Anglo
- Hotel Camino Real Santa Fe
- Cafébrería El Pendulo

- Sheraton Suites Santa Fe
- Bistrot Mosaico
- Brassica Restaurant
- Antonella
- Restaurant And Bakery
- Café La Selva
- La Buena Tierra

Reforma Corredor

- Fonart
- Hotel Melia
- Hotel Embassy
- Hotel Sheraton, Maria Isabel
- Hotel Gran Marquis
- Hotel Four Seasons
- Hotel Fiesta Americana Reforma
- Hotel Casa González
- Coyoacan, San Angel, Sur
- UNAM – CEPE/CU
- Cafeteria La Selva
- Bazaar del Sábado

Roma

- Alliant International University
- Casa Lamm
- Café de Carlo
- La Truffe
- El Café de Nuestra Tierra
- Tierra de Vinos
- Interlomas
- City Market
- Casa del Libro
- La Leyenda de la Cueva
- Cumaná

Centro

- Hotel Camino Real
- Aeropuerto
- Italian Coffee Aeropuerto Cd. de México
- Gran Hotel Cd. de Mexico
- Hotel Holiday Inn Zocalo
- Museo de Arte Popular
- Hotel Sheraton Centro Histórico
- Hotel Fiesta Inn Centro Histórico
- Museo de San Carlos

Napoles, Del Valle, Insurgentes Sur

- Hotel Holiday Inn Trade Center
- Suites Batia
- Italian Coffee Company
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- Italian Coffee Xola

Tlalpan Pedregal Sur

- El Colegio de México
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HOPE CELLS

ROUNDING UP A MIRACLE CURE,
OR JUST GETTING ROPED IN?

TEXT AND PHOTO
BY JOHN DICKERSON

It's 6 am and 76-year-old Gwen Wheeler is waiting in a line with twenty other patients for her annual stem cell injection.

"I see a notable difference after [the injections]," Wheeler says of the shots she buys for her rheumatoid arthritis. At \$1,000 USD a pop, Dr. Jose Diaz Barboza, a Cuban-trained Mexican doctor, has been shooting Wheeler with "stem cells" for three years now. "I'd been trying different medications in the US. When I heard about the cells, I thought they sounded good."

Wheeler is one of a growing number of ailing Americans making their way to Algodones, Mexico, in search of a medical miracle. They line up on a street dotted with abandoned cars and stray dogs, waiting hours to pay for "stem-cell therapy."

As the international scientific community ponders the safety, ethics, and logistics of stem cell therapy, Dr. Diaz is offering miracle cures.

Every morning [at least] ten patients are waiting outside. Most are repeat customers. Diaz doesn't take appointments [but] refuses to let anyone buy their way forward in the waiting line. The moneyless Mexican widow ahead will be seen first, no matter how many fat billfolds try to pry her out of line.

The Healed

Bill Thompson, 62, of Oklahoma, is visiting Dr. Diaz for his fifth time

in as many years. Standing six-foot-four, Thompson speaks softly through a deep baritone voice... as he sneaks candy to a five-year-old Mexican boy waiting with his mom. About ten years ago Thompson came down with a cold. He ended up in an ambulance [and] learned his cold was actually COPD, or chronic emphysema. American doctors can only offer asthma inhalers.

Jerry Armstrong, 67, has come all the way from Idaho and has been under Diaz's care for three years. Armstrong says the healing from his COPD is simply indisputable. "Doctors in the States say this is (expletive)," he says, "but it works."

"I think my stem cells come from sheep," Armstrong adds. "...After the stem cell shots, I hardly need my inhaler. We were told I'd have to be put on oxygen right before we came down here. It's been three years, and I'm still not on oxygen."

The Healer

Dr. Diaz, 46, has thick dark hair, dark skin and compassionate eyes. Today he's worked thirteen hours and will see four more patients before calling it a night.

Bill Thompson, like most COPD patients, will have a vial of sheep or horse lung cells injected into his chest cavity. "There is a difference between stem cell therapy and live cell therapy," Diaz says privately. In the waiting room, patients believe they're getting "stem cells."

Live cell therapy shoots cells from



corresponding animal organs into humans. [It is] generally disregarded by the medical community because the human immune system detects and attacks the foreign cells before they can begin healing. Patients from Europe to Mexico have died from viral and bacterial infections after live animal cell therapies.

Regardless, Diaz's patients are happy and, in their opinion, healthier than they ever were under the [care] of conventional U.S. doctors. "If your story is negative publicity, don't you dare put my name with it. Dr. Diaz has only done good things for people," Mickey Martinez, a Yuma resident, shouts.

Diaz does inject human stem cells into some patients, usually fetal stem cells from umbilical cords or placentas. Earlier today he fired a blood-red syringe of umbilical

cord cells into a patient suffering from kidney failure. The patient can't find a transplant and figures the alternative shot at health is well worth the risk. Diaz hopes the cord-blood cells will morph into new kidney cells, but he has no clinical proof they will. [Instead] he sports a binder of printed Internet articles about stem cells, mostly reports of promising trial applications.

Crossing the Line

In La Jolla, California, stem cell biologist Dr. Evan Snyder, of the Burnham Institute, is anything but happy to hear an Algodones doctor is offering "stem cell therapy." Snyder has heard of stem cell therapy scams from Tijuana to Ukraine.

"...The biggest giveaway is how does he administer the stem cells and where, and what diseases he

"After the stem cell shots, I hardly need my inhaler. We were told I'd have to be put on oxygen right before we came down here. It's been three years, and I'm still not on oxygen."

**Jerry
Armstrong,
67**

**DR. JOSE DIAZ
BARBOZA** offers
animal cell
injections to his
patients.

Photo courtesy of Times Publications

claims to treat," Dr. Snyder says. "If he puts them into the belly, under the skin, into the blood vessels, it's all bull," he says.

These are the ways Diaz administers his cells, even the authentic cord-blood stem cells. Dr. Snyder says it's impossible for cord-blood cells to turn into kidney, though he can't rule out that they could produce some unknown positive effect.

Embryonic stem cells are the ones researchers hope will one day cure paralysis and Parkinson's. Snyder says no one in the world is clinically injecting them yet. Diaz later acknowledges this, confirming he only injects less-promising cord-blood, adult, and animal cells.

But out in the waiting room, Diaz's patients seem to think they're getting the same kind of cells they've heard about in media reports. Em-

bryonic stem cells offer untapped and unknown potency. They are as dangerous as they are powerful... An untreated embryonic cell injected into the brain could grow into bone just as likely as into brain. "This is the goal of present day stem cell research," Snyder says.

In his office, Diaz points to studies in the US, including one at the Arizona Heart Institute, in which American doctors are clinically experimenting with cord-blood cells in limited treatments for certain organ conditions. "They're already doing this in the U.S.," Diaz says.

"I'm willing to go on the record, and say the guy's not legitimate," Snyder says of Diaz. "It's a bunch of quackery at best and larceny at worst. It's a real scam in order to finagle money out of desperate people and prey on their vulnerability."

Could Everyone Be Wrong?

Dr. Snyder attributes Diaz's apparent success [to the] placebo effect: "Anyone who's followed Parkinson's has seen some of the fetal cell studies where even some who thought they were receiving fetal tissue and didn't healed just as well as the ones who did."

Much of Diaz's quick-healing results can also be traced to [treatments] deemed out-of-bounds in the US. For example, the "stem cells" Diaz shoots into Gwen Wheeler's arthritic wrists are actually Synvisc. [FDA-approved] for knees only, Diaz injects the drug all over the bodies of his rheumatoid arthritic patients.

Dr. Snyder says there's no chance umbilical cord cells could grow into anything but blood-derived cells. In other words, no new kidney or lungs can form from direct "stem cell" injections.

"It is conceivable that some of these cell types have some impact..." Snyder says. "[but] if they are simply injected into the organ directly, they will not survive and hence are useless."

He cautions that, "If it's a legitimate clinical trial, it's paid for by a company or the government. If it's a bona-fide treatment, your insurance will pay. You shouldn't ever have to write a check."

Diaz's happy patients could be benefiting from placebo effect or from dangerous alternative treatments. They could also be risking deadly infection. Nonetheless, the line of the hopeful will be waiting at his front door tomorrow morning. *jMx*

This story was originally published October 2006. To read more from Times Publications visit www.timespublications.com.



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Avoiding Passport PANIC

BY JONATHAN JUCKER

Whether you are a long-term resident, seasoned traveler, or visiting Mexico for a week in the sun, few things are as frightening as a lost passport. The idea conjures up visions of being stranded like Tom Hanks in *The Terminal*.

Remember to keep your passport safe. Make photocopies to carry: it's safer and will make getting a replacement easier.

In November 2007 I asked the Canadian Embassy in Polanco to renew my passport: it didn't expire until June 2008, but if you are entering or re-entering Mexico with only a few months remaining, you can expect a hassle. Immigration officers may not permit you to enter at all.

Two weeks after applying, I got an email from Oscar, the Consular Assistant, advising me that my new passport was ready.

Remember, your embassy is here to help—that's their job! We called the US, British, Canadian, and Australian Embassies to find out what their citizens should expect from their countries' best and brightest diplomats.

Procedures are similar everywhere: fill out the appropriate forms, provide ID and photos, and pay a fee (see sidebar for details): your old passport will be returned, canceled. Each country has its quirks, however.

United States of America

Americans used to dealing with bureaucracy have long ago abandoned hope of speaking with an actual person. The Embassy in Mexico City is no

different: if you press the keys to select passport services you will make good friends with a computerized voice. Try hitting "0" for the operator.

You can arrive unannounced at the Embassy to report a lost or stolen passport; when renewing you need to make an appointment. Email your completed forms (see sidebar) and contact info to MexicoCitypassport@state.gov. Those living around the country can arrange this through local consulates (see <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/eng/edirectory.html>).

United Kingdom

The British Embassy's process is straightforward—if you live in the DF. Otherwise, head to FedEx or book bus tickets, because it's the only place where renewals are processed. The Consulate in Cancún, however, can issue single-use emergency passports.

Canada

Canada has the most complicated rules around. The nit-picky requirements for passport photographs (<http://www.ppt.gc.ca/cdn/photos.aspx?lang=eng>) require that your head be a certain size and the lighting perfect. Also, no smiling please! It confuses scanning devices that can't comprehend our human emotions.

Then there's the Guarantor requirement. Back home, any passport-bearing citizen who has known you for two years can vouch for you, but our overseas diplomats aren't as trusting. Here, your Guarantor must belong to a professional organization, like a dentist or police officer. In the event that you aren't good pals with the cops directing traffic around the *Ángel*, you can complete a "Declaration in lieu of Guarantor" in front of a Consul, who will vouch for you—for \$50 CAD.

Australia

Australians also need an upstanding citizen to vouch for them. The list of acceptable professions is longer (how close are you with your pharmacist?) and they need only have known you a year.

Australia introduces new forms on July 1, 2008; old ones are good until September 30.

One can renew by mail or in person at the Australian Embassy in Mexico City. If your passport is lost or stolen, or you're applying for your first as an adult, you must appear in person.

USA

Cost: \$97 USD (adults), \$82 USD (under 16)
Forms needed: DS-11, DS-64 (lost or stolen)
Wait time: 3 weeks
Website: <http://travel.state.gov/passport>

UK

Cost: \$2620 pesos (adult) \$1670 pesos (under 16)
Forms needed: C1 (adult), C2 (under 16), LS01 (lost or stolen)
Wait time: 10 business days
Website: <http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/mexico>

Canada

Cost: \$100 CAD (adult), \$30 CAD (under 16), \$25 CAD (under 3)
Forms needed: PPTC 040 (adult), PPTC 042 (under 16), PPTC 203 (lost or stolen)
Wait time: 20 business days
Website: <http://www.ppt.gc.ca>

Australia

Cost: \$1927 pesos (adult), \$964 pesos (under 18)
Forms needed: Australian Passport Renewal Application
Wait time: 10 business days
Website: <http://www.mexico.embassy.gov.au>

NOTE: Requirements change often, so check with your embassy for up-to-date info.

Lost passports

All embassies want a police report if your passport has been stolen, and if you lose more than one expect increased scrutiny. While everyone issues emergency documents in 48 hours or less, the applicant needs to demonstrate a real need, such as a family emergency or an inability to change travel plans.

Smart safety advice from one of Mexico's leading authorities

by Mario González-Román

Kidnappings in Perspective

The Express Kidnapping

Foreigners are generally not targeted for kidnappings that involve ransom demands. More likely, both for foreigners and many Mexicans, is the quick "snatch and grab" kidnapping that leaves your pockets and bank accounts empty. You have probably heard of the "express kidnapping," a form of robbery that is on the rise in Mexico City. People most risk falling victim to this crime when hailing an unauthorized or "pirate" taxi cab on the street. Once you are inside one of these taxis, you can be taken anywhere, and no one will know where you are. The most common outcome of the express kidnapping is that your credit card balance or bank account will be emptied. It's simple: the criminals want your valuables—credit cards, cash, jewelry, cellular phones—quickly. In most cases, once they empty your accounts and take your possessions, they will release you.

You can go a long way toward avoiding this situation by using the authorized taxis lined up at sitios (taxi stands) throughout the city. Better yet, request a secure taxi over the phone. (I recommend the city-wide service ServiTaxi; you can reserve by telephone at 5516 6020 or on their website, www.servitaxis.com.mx). This way your whereabouts are known by the taxi company. Also, if taking a taxi at night, call a friend to inform them of your location and report the number of the taxi painted on the doors.

A Tragic History

Take express kidnappings seriously; they can end badly. Due to a lack of quality police investigations or a trusted police presence, the number of kidnappings taking place in Mexico is not decreasing. In one instance, a kidnapped girl was murdered after her father paid the negotiated ransom. When the police were of no help, the father had to hire private investigators to track down the criminals and have them arrested.

Drugs and the Increase in Violence

Since 9/11, drugs destined for the United States are no longer making it across the border as successfully as they did in the past. As a result, *narcomenudeo* (street drug pushing) is now common in Mexico City, Guadalajara, Hermosillo, Monterrey, and other large cities. High and out-of-control kidnappers are believed to be responsible for many of the violent kidnappings. Another part of this problem is the lack of control of firearms, most of which come into Mexico illegally from the US. The combination of drugs and firearms make the kidnapping problem particularly volatile. If we add unemployment, economic problems, rivalries among drug cartels, and corruption to the mix, it becomes apparent that Mexico has a public safety problem that needs to be brought under control.

Mario González-Román, a retired Foreign Service National Security Advisor to the United States Embassy, is currently a private Security Consultant, columnist at www.securitycornermexico.com

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Nayarit

- Buenas

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- Chapala
- Puerto Vallarta

Sinaloa

- Mazatlán (Sabalo)

Sonora

- Puerto Peñasco

Quintana Roo

- Playa del Carmen

Mexico City

- Lomas de Chapultepec
- 620 Montes Urales
- Col. Lomas de Chapultepec
- Zip Code 11000, Mexico, D.F.



Photo www.sxc.hu

INSIDE MÉXICO TALKS WITH **Heidi Wosak**

Puerto Peñasco ROCKY POINT

A STONE'S THROW FROM THE US

Heidi Wosak is the director general and designated broker for Century 21 Sun & Sand in Puerto Peñasco.

INSIDE MÉXICO: *What percentage of your clients are Americans, Mexicans, Canadians, and Europeans?*

HEIDI WOSAK: Approximately 75, 10, 10, and 5 percent [respectively].

IM: *Are they buying second homes, or a primary place of residence?*

HW: Secondary homes.

IM: *What price range are they looking in?*

HW: \$200,000-\$800,000.

IM: *What kind of amenities are they requesting?*

HW: Pools, ocean views, property management, and parking, specifically garages.

IM: *What draws your clients to Puerto Peñasco?*

HW: Ease of access driving from the USA. [It's] only 3.5 hours from Tucson or Phoenix. Many Americans live here full time, and many locals speak English.

IM: *What distinguishes the area from other coastal communities in Mexico?*

HW: [It's the] newest tourist destination in Mexico, and the Fonatur Marina (part of the Nautical Ladder of the Sea of Cortez) is in place. [It offers] clean beaches and proximity to the USA. A new international airport is due to open in early 2009.

The new coastal highway starting from El Golfo de Santa Clara (located on the northeastern edge of the Sea of Cortez) and connecting all the way to Guaymas is under construction and



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nearing completion in the northern stretches, from El Golfo to Puerto Lobos.

IM: *Do your clients feel like they're moving to a foreign country? Or is there a strong English-speaking presence that makes them feel more "at home"?*

HW: [It's] close to the USA with many English speaking residents, Mexican and foreign.

IM: *Is access to medical care a consideration in their decision to move to Puerto Peñasco?*

HW: Yes, especially for retirees. New private hospitals are investing here. A new "One Stop Medical Clinic" is in operation, offering health service packages starting as low as \$700 for the year for unlimited consultations. They have an in-house pharmacy and some of the newest equipment available to treat or diagnose.

IM: *What other major lifestyle considerations do your clients take into account when purchasing in Puerto Peñasco?*

HW: What is there to do? We have three golf courses, two of which are Jack Nicklaus-designed. [There are] fishing charters, scuba, and snorkeling, [as well as] active groups in the community [such as] the Red Hat Society for ladies and the South of the Border Singles Group. The American Legion has Post #15 here and meets monthly.

IM: *Has the Puerto Peñasco market been affected by the real estate turmoil in the US?*

HW: Yes. Last year it dropped 49 percent.

IM: *What is your forecast for home prices in Puerto Peñasco for the rest of 2008?*

HW: Prices here have leveled off to what we feel will be the lowest ever. During 2003-2005 properties here appreciated from 15-100 percent.

IM: *Is there any particular area in Puerto Peñasco that you think represents a "bargain" for buyers from the US looking to buy there?*

HW: Sandy Beach and Las Conchas are the two areas that experienced phenomenal growth over the past eight years, both in construction and appreciation. [They] differ in that one is a resort beach while the other is a residential community.

These are the two preferred areas and as such, most of the growth and construction has occurred there. With increased inventory available on the market today this is where you will find sellers more motivated to move the property off the market and recoup their investment. *icMx*

Email Heidi Wosak at heidewosak@century21penasco.

Lower Priced:

Los Claveles is a patio home community consisting of thirty-three houses, each with its own two-car garage. The houses come complete with A/C and heat, and stove, refrigerator, microwave, dishwasher, and washer/dryer. Prices start in the low \$100,000s and developer financing is available. 2 or 3 bedroom options, with a second floor option on select units.



Middle Priced:

1) Lindavista Ocean View Condominiums

Lindavista is an ocean view gated condominium complex, located within Las Conchas Resort Development offering 1 and 2 bedroom condos for sale or rent, delivering during summer 2008. Complex features ample parking, a grand pool with palapa, swim up "Aqua bar", BBQ area, fitness center, and wireless Internet.

Facilities for on-site property management and 24-hour security are available, as well as individual storage units that are large enough for an SUV. Interior amenities include ceramic tile, granite countertops, stainless sinks, imported marble features, double-



glazed windows, sliding doors, solid wood doors, Moen fixtures, and pre-wiring for phone, Internet, and cable. Prices start at \$163,900 for a 1 bedroom and \$249,900 for a 2 bedroom.

2) Bella Vista Homes

Bella Vista Homes, Sandy Beach's newest residential community, offers well-appointed homes and condominiums, affordably priced from \$139,000 to \$269,000. This gated and secure residential community surrounds a glistening pool, fitness and fun center, large patio adorned with a palapa, sitting area, BBQ, and beautiful ocean and golf course views.

Featured home and condominiums include 2-4 bedroom floor plans and 2-3 bedroom condominium models. The respected local builder knows what you want in a home or condominium: quality, functionality, and affordability. Bella Vista offers just that with close



proximity to beaches, shopping, and restaurants. Golf is right across the street.

Higher-priced:

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Backyard War

Turning a blind eye to drugs comes at a higher price than accepting the Merida Plan petty cash

BY JOSÉ FERNÁNDEZ RAMOS

When it comes to the war on drugs, Mexico historically antes up the death while the US contributes cash and an endless supply of users. Not anymore. The death toll on the Mexican side is notorious because of the overt violence, but a growing number of US teens are dying from overdoses or from involvement in criminal activity related to the drug trade.

It is commonplace in the political rhetoric for officials to say that the drug problem should be shared by both neighbors. Getting a handle on the problem may be complex, but it requires immediate action.

Since December 2006, when the

current Mexican administration launched the strongest ever attack on the cartels, the battleground gets uglier every day. Often the daily death toll surpasses that of the Iraq war.

In general terms, Mexico has been doing its homework. The cartels' finances, daily operations, and their links to government and police have all been disrupted. But a period of relative peace ended when the alliance between the various cartels fell apart. Now it's like the Wild West out there.

Rival cartels are targeting each other with heavy weaponry in broad daylight. High-ranking police chiefs are no longer safe, even when escorted by squads of bodyguards. In border towns, citizens

live in fear, knowing that movie-like shootouts could turn them into collateral damage.

The Mexican strategy still needs work on high-level government and police corruption, human rights abuses, and the implementation of educational reforms that could help prevent the loss of an entire generation to illegal substances.

Even the president's security was recently in doubt when information on potential drug-related risks was not delivered. Why did neither the Mexican nor the US media address this issue? It remains a mystery.

The US for its part is too busy, with its war for oil in the Middle East, its economic downturn, and a riveting presidential primary run, to place Mexico higher on the agenda.

Ambassador Tony Garza did a great job recently of lobbying decision makers in Congress to obtain financial aid for Mexico's war on drugs. However, less than a third of the proposed \$1.5 billion USD under Plan Merida has been approved. There are so many conditions attached to the money, particularly with respect to human

rights, corruption, and the rule of law, that some in the Mexican administration believe the country would do better using its own money instead of accepting the "intromission-included petty cash" from the US.

Some cynical observers on both sides of the border actually welcome the recent crime wave. "Let the drug traffickers kill each other," they say. But it's a two-way street with a lot of intersections that lead to innocent families in both countries. The matter should not be taken lightly.

Other political issues in Mexico are also interfering with the drug war. The current debate on energy reform may be important in the short term, but nothing should prevent the experts from sitting together and developing a common strategy against the cartels, corruption, and drug use.

We have experienced terrorist-like attacks and seen weaponry previously reserved for wars between armies. What are we waiting for? Missiles? *icMx*

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Caught in the Crossfire

BY Ana Ma. Prado

I hadn't been in Nuevo Laredo thirty minutes when I ran into yellow tape. The street roiled with onlookers, patrol cars, flashing lights, and sirens.

I was there for a job interview. After working at a Mexico City newspaper for seven years, an opening on the border had caught my eye: Art Director for a prestigious independent newspaper. That was all I knew about the place.

Five minutes after encountering that disturbing scene, I arrived at the editorial offices and learned that police had been fired on with assault rifles in three different parts of the city. The result: six dead. No one said it, but everyone knew. It was organized crime.

I had never been so close to a crime that serious, but in Nuevo Laredo the newsroom was calm. In my experience with breaking news, editors and reporters were always running around, making phone calls and planning the story. Not here.

It would take me a while longer to realize that here these incidents were common, or as they prefer to say, "quotidian."

During the job interview they kept asking me if I really wanted to live there. "This is a dangerous city – are you sure?"

Of course I was sure. Dangerous city? The DF is a dangerous city, and besides, I was just a designer. I wasn't going to mess with anyone. I took the job and moved to Nuevo Laredo in October 2004.

Until then, I didn't know what it was like to live in fear.

Six months before I arrived, the paper's editor-in-chief had been assassinated and the newspaper was going through an internal crisis. Circulation was falling, in large part because readers were tired of reading bad news.

My arrival coincided with that of the army, which had been instructed to patrol the city. There are no words to describe how I felt the first time that a military convoy passed me on the street, except to say it was paralyzing. I never got used to their presence, but I learned to live with it.

During my time there, the lack of security was the theme of every editorial meeting, and the headline almost every day. There were days when I wished that no one would be killed just so that I could leave work on time.

As in every city where organized crime has cast its net, infiltrating the police and the government, and above all corralling the population into an ever-present state of fear, the freedom of citizens and the freedom of the press are the principal victims.

When the new editor-in-chief arrived, I was

promoted from Director of Art and Design to deputy editor of the entire paper. I knew that the position carried a little more risk, and I asked them not to change my job title on the masthead. The less visible, the better.

My trial by fire in the new job was a shoot-out in the Colonia Campestre. A house was left riddled by bullets. Hundreds of AK47 cases were strewn about and traces of blood stained the street. Some reports indicated that the shoot-out lasted half an hour.

Panic set in. The streets of Nuevo Laredo emptied within minutes of the event. No civilians were injured—physically: the ensuing psychosis was profound. For the newspaper, this was the news. The next day's headline read: "Fear and Confusion." We were simply trying to describe how we all felt.

Unfortunately, the editor resigned a short time later and I, for safety reasons, asked to be reassigned to a different area.

Things got worse. The threats against my colleagues increased and at the beginning of February two armed men entered the newsroom shooting, and tossed a grenade. One reporter was injured. Their mission was simply to sow fear—even more fear than already existed.

More people resigned. The army guarded the newspaper offices. And, since the investigation into the event didn't allow "tampering with evidence" we had to go to work in offices "adorned" with bullet holes.

That was enough yellow tape for me. At the end of the month, I returned to the DF. But the border left its mark on me. They say that once you've drunk from the Rio Bravo you're destined to return. I have only been back once, but I know I am bound to Nuevo Laredo. I carry the images and the stories of a city once busy with life, now silenced by those "really bad guys." I will always remember the whisper of the deserted streets late at night when I left the newsroom.

As an editor in Nuevo Laredo, I learned to say things without saying them, to shout through pursed lips. Above all, I learned that journalism practiced in fear is impossible.

Nuevo Laredo will never go away. I see it every time the violence of organized crime breaks out. And I hope to find it in every city where the people reclaim their right to enjoy their city. *jMx*

Ana Ma. Prado has worked as a coordinator, editor, and art director at newspapers including *Reforma*, *Excelsior*, and *El Mañana*. She has directed coverage of the Cannes film festival, as well as the intricacies of border life.



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