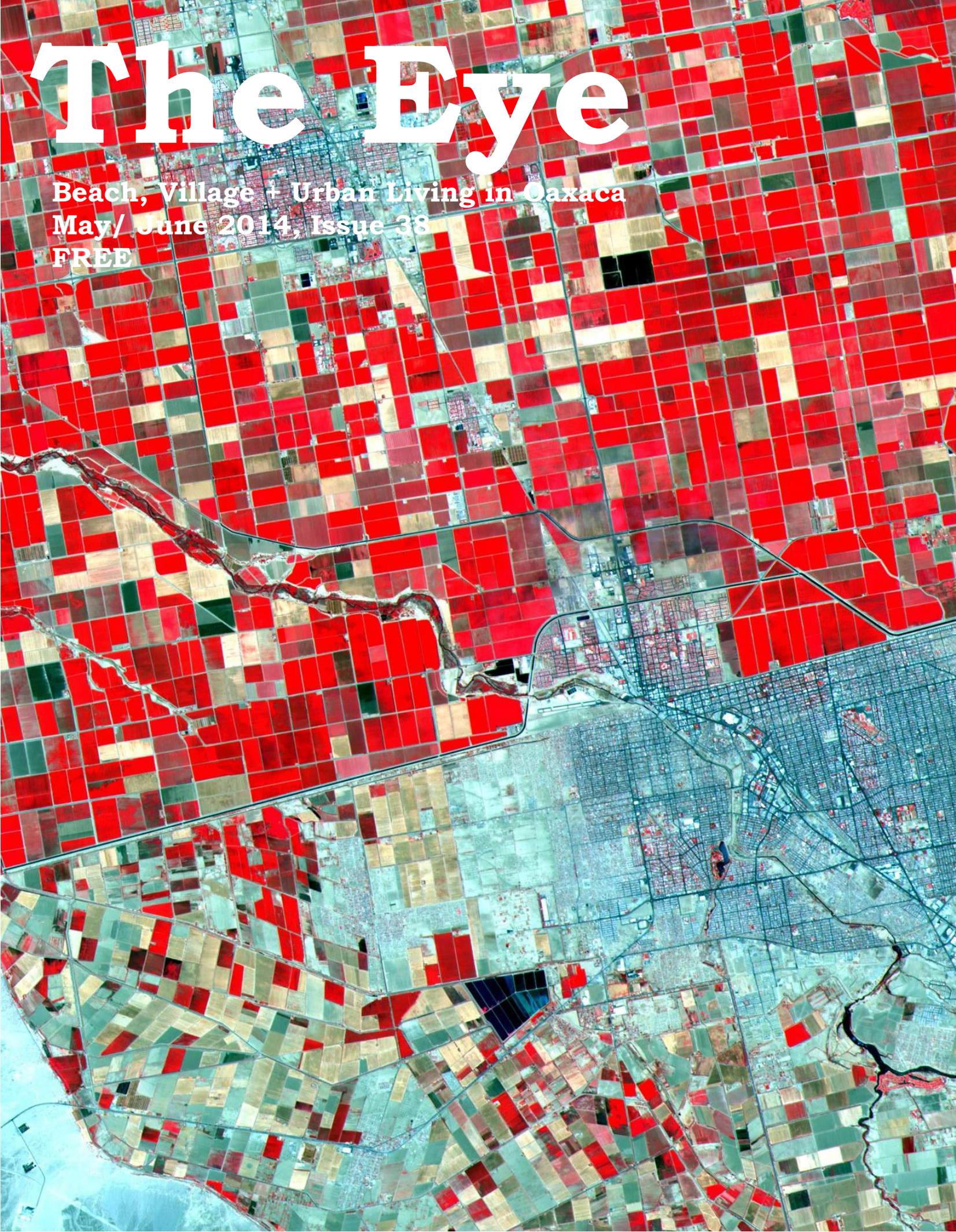


# The Eye

An aerial photograph of a vast agricultural landscape in Oaxaca, Mexico. The land is divided into a dense grid of small, rectangular plots, each painted in a different color, creating a vibrant mosaic of reds, yellows, greens, and blues. A winding river flows through the center of the landscape. In the lower right corner, a city with a clear grid street pattern is visible, contrasting with the organic shapes of the agricultural plots.

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May/ June 2014, Issue 38

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## About the Cover

This May 19, 2000 sub-scene of the US-Mexico border in California, covers an area of 24 by 30 km. The combination of visible and near infrared bands displays vegetation in red. The border town of Mexicali-Calexico spans the border in the middle of the image; El Centro, California is in the upper left. The dramatic difference in land use patterns between the US and Mexico is highlighted by the lush, regularly gridded agricultural fields of the US, and the more barren fields of Mexico. The Imperial Valley of California is one of the major fruit and vegetable producers for the US, watered by canals fed from the Colorado River. The image is centered at 32.7 degrees north latitude, 115.5 degrees west longitude.

Please give credit for these images to: NASA/GSFC/METI/Japan Space Systems, and U.S./Japan ASTER Science Team

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# Editor's Letter

**One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.**  
**Plato**

"The personal is political" is a phrase that was tossed around freely in my women's studies circles during university. Made popular by Carol Hanisch's essay of the same name, it examined how women gaining greater consciousness in their lives affected the political landscape. Hanisch noted that "political refers to any power relationships, not just those of government or elected officials."

Applying this idea to my life has helped shape my interactions- seeing my experiences as a woman, not as only my experience, but as a comment about the experience of being a woman in general. This same principal can be applied to the experiences of immigrants, men, seniors, Mexicans, Canadians etc. What does our individual experience say about our collective experiences?

I recently attended a meeting in the community where I live, ironically it was held the day after International Women's Day. The room was mostly filled with men- about 130 by the sign up sheet, and less than 10 women. I had gained admittance to this meeting by being 'husbandless' and therefore counting as head of my own household. When I arrived at the meeting there was some controversy about the presence of a woman whose husband could not attend and so she had come in his place. Hearing some of the men from my community say things like "we don't want women here" was disheartening. Several women and children stood by the windows outside the town hall listening as those in charge went down the agenda. I recounted this story recently while out for dinner after someone at our table stated that they believe women have attained equality. While women have come a long way in recent generations, the overall climate for women's equality is still developing in most of the world.

This issue our writers explored politics, from Canada's visa regulations for Mexicans, to the history of the US-Mexico border, to the system of *usos y costumbres* still used in many communities in the state of Oaxaca.

Being political doesn't have to mean going to marches, protests or binging on news channels to be informed. It means being open to having your voice heard, knowing that your experience has validity and that each of us has the right to be heard and play a role in how our lives are governed.

See you next month,

Jane

The Eye is a monthly all-English magazine that is distributed throughout the state of Oaxaca. It can be found for FREE at hotels, restaurants and community hot spots.

Should you wish to receive copies, advertise or submit some writing or photography please send us an email. We welcome fiction and non-fiction.

This magazine is made possible by the advertisers so please thank them when you use their services.

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**Opinions and words are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Eye.**

**We welcome submissions and input.**

**To get involved send us an email.**

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In Oaxaca City The Eye is now available at  
Amate Books.



# Canada's Visa Requirement for Mexicans Lingers Despite Critics

*Alvin Starkman, M.A., J.D.*

It's been almost five years since the Government of Canada imposed a visa requirement on Mexicans wishing to visit the country for either business or pleasure. Despite opening more visa application centers and providing for a more streamlined turnaround process, criticism persists. Every year, the country continues to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in travel, tourism and related revenue. Its reputation abroad, especially in Mexico, suffers as well.

This opinion is based upon having reviewed Citizenship and Immigration Canada's own evaluation report, a Whitepaper by the National Roundtable on Travel and Tourism, and a University of Calgary study, all published in 2012; and an article written for [www.panamericanworld.com](http://www.panamericanworld.com), in December 2013. In July, 2015, Toronto hosts the Pan Am / Parapan Am Games. Without relaxing the current legislation or at minimum the implementation regulations, it is suggested that revenue projections for The Games will not be realized. The buzz could very well be more about Canada's policy towards Mexico and tourism than The Games themselves.

Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, every foreign national travelling to Canada must obtain a temporary resident visa before arriving, apart from where an exception is granted to citizens of selected countries. Mexico *had* been one such nation. Then on July 13, 2009, a visa requirement was announced for visitors arriving from Mexico. It was based on concerns over abuse of the refugee claims process resulting from a Canadian system which needed fixing.

Immediately after announcing the change, highest government officials assured Mexico that the problem was with a fragile and ineffective Canadian immigration asylum claim procedure, and not Mexicans. The explanation was in response to a shocked and offended Mexican government and public, especially in the absence of advance notice or formal consultation.

True, the institution of the visa requirement for Mexican nationals was effective at reducing the number of asylum claims from an all-time high of 9,527 in 2008, to 1,221 in 2010. But at what cost?

In 1950, Canada stood second in the top 15 countries in the world for global international arrivals. In 2010, it ranked last! And between 2000 and 2010, compared with the top 42 destinations in the world, Canada fell to last place for growth in international arrivals, from 19.6 million in 2000, to 16.1 million in 2010. While international travel has grown exponentially on a global scale, travel to Canada has decreased.

While large tourism source countries like the UK, France, Germany and Australia exempt a visa requirement for Mexicans, Canada does not. It has been stated that emerging markets like Brazil, China, India and Mexico are the "power players of the future," and that accordingly, visas and visa processes are becoming much more important as a determinant of destination competitiveness. It has been estimated that Mexico is slated to increase its long haul outbound travel by 65% in the decade ending 2020.

So where are Mexicans likely to vacation; Canada, or Australia and European destinations? In 2010, Canada conducted an internally led comparison study of visa application processes and requirements, between Canada and other source countries competing for tourism. The study concluded that Canada collected more information than other countries reviewed (the US, the UK, France and Australia) and had the highest number of information fields on its form required to be completed by applicants. Furthermore it found that the information requested varied between different Canadian visa offices, suggesting inconsistency, or at worst the possibility of significant inappropriate subjectivity factoring into the decision to accept or reject a visa application. To be fair, Canada asked a similar number of security questions as other countries and requested a similar number of supporting documents.

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The same study acknowledged that the number of Mexican travelers to Canada dropped considerably since the removal of the visa exemption, no surprise. What is perhaps more significant is the broader implication; in general when a visa exemption is removed, the bilateral relationship and politics between the two countries is negatively impacted.

Finally, the study included an interview process regarding the Mexico visa requirement. Interviewees noted that the removal of the visa exemption created a negative impact on the travel of bona fide visitors to Canada, and negative feelings towards Canada. It has been suggested that the current visa structure acts as an obstacle to trade, preventing tourism from fully achieving its potential to generate significantly greater export revenue and jobs for Canada.

Statistics Canada has published figures indicating potential lost tourism revenue of \$340 million because of the Mexican visa requirement. That number has been critically evaluated in light of the cost saving of not having to pay for bogus refugee claims (figures vary depending on the parameters of the study used, but they tend to mirror the savings). However, given the foregoing impact on export revenue and jobs, the true adverse economic impact for Canada cannot be accurately measured. Nevertheless, a study by Deloitte using Statistics Canada data does suggest that a 1% increase in visitors to Canada would generate an increase of \$817 million in Canadian exports, given the strong link between inbound Canadian tourism and Canadian exports.

Vancouver Sun columnist Don Cayo wrote: "Rather than focus on drug enforcement or fix a dysfunctional refugee claim process, Canada chose visas. It's the easy way out. It's also the costly way for everybody, except the bureaucrats who are paid to push paper."

Those same bureaucrats will no doubt laud the success of the 2015 Pan Am / Parapan Am Games, regardless of the ultimate outcome. But the loss of potential long-term revenue for Canada as a consequence of the Mexican visa requirement will likely not receive the attention it deserves.

*Alvin Starkman operates Mezcal Educational Excursions of Oaxaca, and assists his wife Arlene with Casa Machaya Oaxaca Bed & Breakfast, and Chef Pilar Cabrera with Oaxaca Culinary Tours.*



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# Lifeguard Training

By George Hurchalla

Just before *Semana Santa* began, the Huatulco Fire Department got a most timely visit from a great friend, Hawaii lifeguard Rick Williams. Two years ago during one of his annual visits to surf in the area that he has been visiting for the past decade, Williams trained the firemen - most of whom also serve as lifeguards at Huatulco beaches - in rescue techniques at Playa Chahue. They also spent a day up at the village of Coyula training the local residents in CPR and lifesaving techniques, as they have no lifeguards or medical help to depend on there. This time around Williams brought a much appreciated gift for the lifeguards, in the form of an 11 foot long, inflatable professional surf rescue board. The board is manufactured by the C4 Waterman company, based in Hawaii.

Williams is a member of a club called the North Shore Lifeguard Association, which contributed the rescue board, and is a 34 year lifeguard on the North Shore of Oahu. He has been called out many times to rescue people in some of the most dangerous surf on the planet, as he is a lifeguard at the fabled surf break Pipeline. Over his career Williams has rescued over 600 people.



On April 10, Williams spent a few hours at Playa Chahue training the lifeguards in rescue techniques utilizing the board. The board allows lifeguards much faster access to victims further from shore, and makes it easier to rescue unconscious victims. With multiple straps built into the deck of the board, it also allows multiple victims to hold on to the rescue board at the same time. As the Huatulco zone features very few beaches with breaking surf, and more with rapid drop offs and rip current problems like Chahue, the lifeguards here have had very little opportunity to learn surf rescue methods. They welcomed the opportunity to learn new skills, and participated eagerly in the exercise. While training them, Williams reiterated a statement he made two years ago.

"If the work I do here results in the saving of a single life, it will have been completely worth it."

Williams was pleased to hear through a friend last year that the firemen had saved swimmers in trouble at Playa Chahue, and in a radio interview the local firemen credited their ability to do so to their "friend from Hawaii" who taught them the rescue skills. The past training has already paid off. Previous to working with the Huatulco lifeguards, Williams brought equipment from the North Shore Lifeguard Association to Puerto Escondido to donate to the lifeguards there. These days the Puerto Escondido lifeguards are regarded as some of the finest in Mexico, having to regularly challenge the treacherous surf of Zicatela, and are well equipped and well trained. Two years ago, his friend Rolando from the Tlayudas Arely restaurant in Crucecita suggested that Williams offer some of his expertise to the Huatulco lifeguards, who were much more in need of training and equipment. Williams has thoroughly enjoyed working with the Huatulco firemen and has made a whole new group of friends.



"They're picking it up really quickly," Williams observed proudly as one lifeguard after another took turns on the board on April 10, rescuing mock drowning victims. "I'm happy with their progress."

Municipal President Dario Pacheco Venegas arrived in mid-morning to watch a demonstration of the new skills, and on behalf of Huatulco presented Williams with a certificate of appreciation for his donation and training efforts in the community.

"Huatulco has many beautiful and calm beaches," stated Pacheco Venegas, "but also beaches with strong swell like Chahue, Tangolunda, and Bocana, and they are dangerous when people aren't cautious and don't know how to swim well. We hope they (the North Shore Lifeguards) can continue with their support, and they will always be welcome."

Williams spent a few more hours with the lifeguards on April 13 at Chahue, practicing multiple rescues, and was even more impressed how quickly they were taking to the new board.

"I can't say enough about these guys. They're a tremendous group and have already become like family to me. They're unsung heroes of this community."

The Huatulco firemen don't get much government support and rely largely on donations and fundraising to buy equipment. Civil Protection director Fernando Alderete Blas expressed his heartfelt thanks to Williams for his donation and the work with his men, as it is rare for them to encounter this level of support from outsiders to Huatulco.



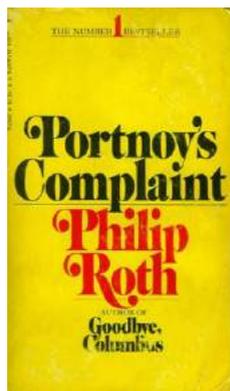
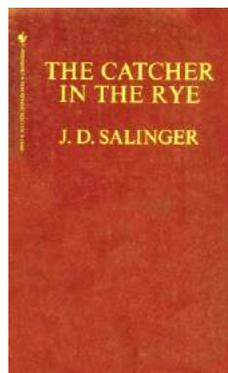
The Bomberos station is located on Blvd. Benito Juarez beside the Red Cross and the post office.

# Recent Classics About Youth: What Goes On In Those Minds?

By Carole Reedy

It's ironic that recently published books can already be viewed as "classics." Yet there are some books and writers destined for this path. From the start, serious readers and some critics knew that ***Portnoy's Complaint*** (Philip Roth, 1969) and ***Catcher in the Rye*** (J.D. Salinger, 1951) would be read well into the future by millions of people, young and old alike. Both books look into the nest of confusion that is a young man's mind. Both were controversial, too, not only in the eyes of critics, but also to those in education, the church, and everyday homes. Even friends disagreed.

After its publication in 1951, *Catcher in the Rye* rose to the cherished number one spot on the New York Times best-seller list. But from 1961 to 1982 this was the most censored book in high schools and libraries across the US. One teacher was fired for assigning it in his classroom (though he was reinstated after taking his case to court). Paradoxically, in 1981 Salinger's classic was not only the most censored book but also the second most frequently taught book in US public schools.



*Portnoy's Complaint* put Philip Roth on the map of literary greats with its 1969 publication. The novel became an instant hit, and *The New Yorker* named it "one of the dirtiest books ever published." Many libraries in the US banned the book because of its detailed discussion of masturbation and other explicit language. Roth was also condemned by many fellow Jews. In 2009, the *Guardian* published an article in honor on the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday of the novel, summing up its success by saying, "So despite reaching 40, that milestone of respectability, *Portnoy's Complaint* is still a master class

in how to get beneath the skin of sexuality. Has any other novel managed it quite so well?"

Even today, as in the '60s, the names Alexander Portnoy and Holden Caulfield bring a smile of recognition to the faces of readers new and old. If you haven't read these two books, treat yourself. You can find inexpensive copies in used bookstores and on Amazon.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, writers are still telling stories about the confused years of youth. This month we're recommending five recently published books by award-winning writers that are certain to win more cherished literary prizes, which will enable them to make a comfortable living in a profession that denies many skillful this achievement, bringing us many hours of pleasurable reading.

**The Eye 8**

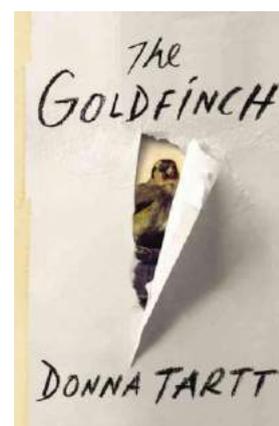
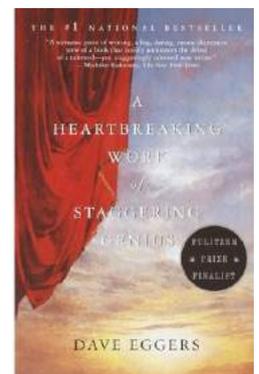
Paul Auster, one of the most distinguished and loved writers of the past 30 years, in a recent interview on BBC talked about the daily life of a writer. Although it may seem glamorous to those of us who admire the art, Auster puts it in perspective: "Who would want to spend their days shut in a room with just a typewriter?" It's a lonely existence. And yet, many writers still pound away on the manual typewriters they've owned since the 1960s, Auster and Woody Allen among them.

These best-sellers tell us stories of youth by delving into the young minds of the protagonists as they experience the tragedies and joys of living.

## ***A Heartbreaking Story of Staggering Genius*, by Dave Eggers**

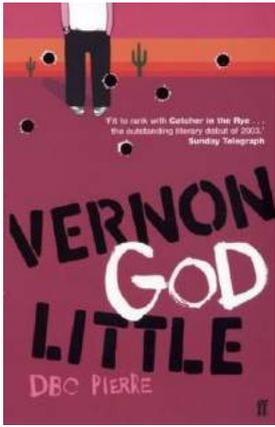
Yes, that's the title, not the description. But the title does describe the book, which indeed is a staggering work of genius. Eggers has given us a variety of insightful, important, and funny books over the past 15 years that address relevant topics (*What is the What*, *Zeitoun*, *A Hologram for a King*, and most recently *The Circle*), but this is the one that stands out, perhaps because it's his story, his life, his heartache, his experience.

When Eggers was 21 he lost both his parents to cancer in the space of two months and was left to care for his seven-year-old brother. He takes you into his mind and his thought processes, justifying his decisions and actions. Eggers is entertaining and even funny despite his pain, new responsibility, and fears. In the first 100 pages he describes the deaths of his parents, followed by a chronicle of the new life that was thrust upon him. Eggers is clever, starting the book with chapters entitled "Rules and Suggestions for Enjoyment of This Book" and "Incomplete Guide to Symbols and Metaphors."



## ***The Goldfinch*, by Donna Tartt**

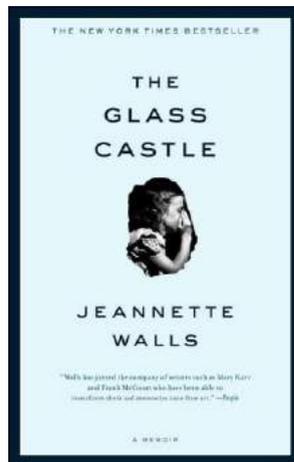
Tartt is the author of three novels (*The Secret History*, *The Little Friend* and *The Goldfinch*), with 10 years passing between the publication of each. These are all big books, well-researched and entertaining. *The Goldfinch* tells the story of a young boy who loses his mother suddenly. At the same time he inadvertently steals a valuable piece of art from a museum. Once again, an author takes us on a mental and physical journey following tragic experiences. This is one of the best-selling books of 2014. And though it's quite a tome, it's hard to put down.



**Vernon God Little, by DBC Pierre**  
 Born in Australia and presently living in London, DBC Pierre was raised in Mexico, and it is this culture he loves and with which he identifies. His 2003 Booker Prize-winning novel is filled with the color and warmth found only south of the US border. Much of the novel takes place in Texas, where the teenaged protagonist gets caught up in the frenzied accusations following a school shooting. *Vernon God Little* is bittersweet, funny, and filled with the colloquial language of youth, which enhances the satirical point of view of life in a small town in Texas. The portrait of Vernon's mother and her friends is both amusing and pathetic. At one point Vernon escapes Texas for Mexico, a country where, as Pierre says, "one looks destiny and death head-on and laughs."

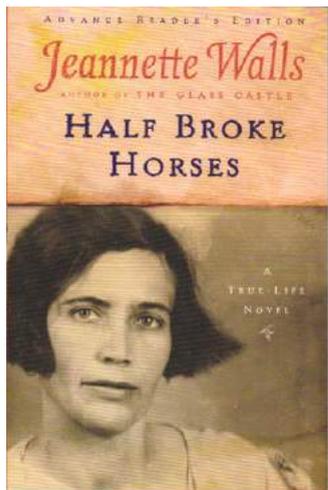
**The Glass Castle, by Jeannette Walls**

I read this book assuming it was a novel. To my shock, at the end I realized it was a true story about the author's life. What's astonishing is that such a childhood could produce a successful journalist and prize-winning writer who leads what most of us view as a normal life, apparently undamaged. Walls and her siblings were taught by their parents to be independent, to take care of themselves, and to be strong. Their parents did this by leaving the children to fend for themselves, the adults working only sporadically and moving ("skedaddling" in the words of her father) often. At times the parents seem smart and creative--the mother an artist, the father an alcoholic with spurts of brilliance. But they don't care for their children, to the point of not seeking medical care for broken bones and burns or providing enough food. The children ultimately take care not only of themselves, but their parents too. Walls has an excellent story-telling technique, making this an enjoyable, if heart-wrenching, read.



**Half-Broke Horses, by Jeannette Walls**

Another memoir by Walls, but this time about her grandmother. This marvelous tale takes place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Arizona and New Mexico. Walls originally intended to write about her mother, but then found the life of her grandmother more interesting. Just to give you a glimpse, one chapter relates the grandmother's journey at the ripe age of 15 which took her 500 miles by horseback unaccompanied. She was one strong, practical woman and a grand women's libber at an early age. Through her ups and downs she kept a positive attitude, able to release her defeats and begin new adventures. Truly a role model for us all.



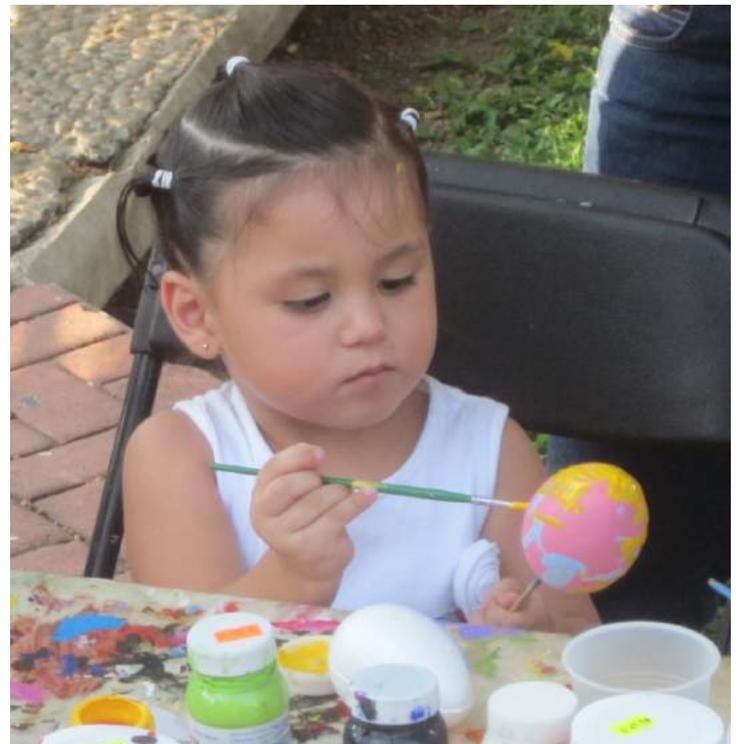
# Bacaanda Foundation Welcomes Spring with First Annual Easter Egg Hunt

By Deborah Van Hoewyk

**P**ainting eggs! Hunting for eggs! Artisan eggs for sale! And then there was an huge dancing rabbit leading a drum band! Prizes for finding the most eggs, prizes for finding the fewest eggs!

On Friday, April 4, the Bacaanda Foundation held an Easter egg hunt for area school children in the central park in Santa Cruz Huatulco. The event benefited the Foundation's Rural Schools Project—to participate, you had to buy a packet of school materials that were then donated to children in the rural schools.

The Rural School Project supports building, repairing, and expanding programming in 31 rural schools in the *municipios* of Santiago Xanica and Santa Maria Huatulco.



# Summer's Here! Outdoor Fun In Mexico City

By Carole Reedy

A visit to Mexico City is a grand experience any time of the year, exciting and culturally satisfying. But our summer is a long one and offers unique opportunities for outdoor activities. The sun is hot, the sky is blue, and the city sizzles. Come on down!

## Culture Fair

The sixth annual *Feria de Culturas Amigas 2014* overtakes the *Zócalo* from May 17 to June 1. From 11 am to 8 pm daily the unique, creative booths will show off the culture, history, gastronomy, and artisan crafts of more than 80 countries. Taste local cuisines (everything from meaty gyros from Greece to yummy noodles from Vietnam), purchase crafts, enjoy dance and music, and talk with natives who have travelled many miles to visit our city and country. This fair is a lot of fun. To avoid huge crowds, go during the week. Other years the fair has been held on *Paseo de Reforma* between *Insurgentes* and the Diana sculpture, which created complex traffic problems, so the switch to the *Zócalo* should be a good move. Go hungry, as the food is great, and take some extra pesos to buy a ring from Russia or a beautiful bag from Thailand.



## Al Fresco Dining

The most delightful outdoor terrace is at the restaurant *El Mayor*, which overlooks the prehispanic *Templo Mayor* and the *Zócalo*. Located at *Republica de Argentina* 15, it's on the corner of that street and Justo Sierra, second floor (look for the *Librería Porrúa* on the first floor). The view is spectacular and the food a Mexican fusion. Offered are a good variety of pasta dishes, soups, salads, appetizers including duck tacos, and main dishes. Next to the restaurant is a cafeteria if you just want to stop for a drink. Open from 9:00 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Saturday and 10:00 am to 6:30 pm on Sundays (yes, there's an excellent breakfast menu too), this is an ideal place to stop to rest and rejuvenate while touring the cathedral, National Palace, *Templo Mayor*, and *Zócalo*.

## Xochimilco

Best-known for the *trajineras* (gondolas decorated with flowers or bright paint) that travel the canals of this prehispanic community, *Xochimilco* was an independent settlement until the 20th century, now a part of the city south of *Coyoacán*. It is characterized by a system of canals over which the *trajineras* float, carrying tourists and locals alike. These canals remain from the vast lake and canal system that covered most parts of the Valley of Mexico, the main form of transportation in prehispanic times.



Sunday is the big day for locals to take their families to *Xochimilco*, so it's more crowded than during the week. You can buy food, drinks, and even plants from other *trajineras* traveling along the canals, and there are even tables and chairs provided on the *trajineras*. Request a tour from one to four hours in length. To get there on public transport, take the Metro to *Taxqueña* station, and then hop on the *tren ligero*.

## Baseball Fans

Don't miss this! From April to August, Mexico City's team, the *Diablos Rojos*, thrill fans with their fine base running, hitting, and pitching. They play at *Foro Sol*, located near the airport. Metro Stations *Velódromo* and *Ciudad Deportiva* are a few short blocks from the stadium, or you can always take a taxi. Most games begin at 7:30 pm Tuesdays through Sundays, but check the *Diablo's* website ([diablos.com.mx](http://diablos.com.mx)) for the schedule to be sure they're at home. The Mexican League is a fine one, with many players who began or ended their careers in the big leagues up north. Best of all, it doesn't cost an arm and a leg to take the family. The most expensive ticket is 70 pesos, about \$6 US, and every seat is a good one. Instead of a traditional hot dog, enjoy the ever popular *tacos de cochinita pibil* (35 pesos for three tacos, about \$3 US). Then sit back with your food and a beer and enjoy the shenanigans of the *Diablos'* mascot Rocco. PLAY BALL!



## Plaza Jacinto

Only on Saturdays! You need lots of energy for this day, a bombardment of color, texture, music, and conviviality and an array of sights, smells, and sensations. As you approach the plaza, look for the plethora of easel artists in a small park and as you walk on the cobblestone streets past a beautiful building don't miss the small shops on the street. On the other side of the building yet another park is filled with artists and artisans. There is street food, plus restaurants and cantinas serving beer and food surround the building. Once inside, don't miss the *Bazaar Sábado*, one of the most famous artisan markets in Latin America. Here you will find original crafts and their creators, eager to share with you their techniques and expertise. The bazaar covers two floors, so don't miss the upstairs, especially to see the *huípiles*. There's also an outdoor restaurant inside the *Bazaar Sábado* which serves a delicious buffet of Mexican delicacies.



Music is everywhere, and each new Saturday seems more festive than the last. While in the area you may want to visit Diego Rivera's studio, close to the bazaar. If you're feeling even more energetic, stroll over to *Coyoacán* (or grab a taxi for a short ride) to see Frida's Blue House and the Trotsky museum. The *Viveros de Coyoacán* are close by for those who want to get away from the crowds and stroll, run, or jog through the grand park, filled with trees and vegetation. The *Plaza Jacinto* is located in *colonia San Ángel* on *Revolución* and *Avenida de la Paz*, just a few short blocks from Metrobus stop *La Bombilla*.

# Mamey

By Kary Vannice

The mamey doesn't look much like a fruit. From the outside it resembles a small, ancient cracked leather football. It's outer surface more like bark than peel. As a matter of fact, its exterior is so hard, you couldn't *peel* it if you tried. You'll need a knife to get into its soft, slimy, salmon colored flesh. If it weren't for the sweet flavor of this fruit, it would remind you a lot of an avocado, once you've cut it open.

And, speaking of its sweet flavor, it is wholly unique and extremely difficult to describe. Failing miserably at coming up with a sufficient description myself, I turned to the all-knowing internet. It seems I am not the only who has struggled to articulate this delicate flavor, but I did find two descriptions that came close. The first, likened it to a sweet potato flavoured with dates. The second, said it tasted like a combination of sweet potato, pumpkin and cherry underscored by hints of honey and vanilla.

With that flavor palate in mind, it is easy to see why one of the choice ways to eat the mamey is in a milkshake! But, it has also been traditionally made into jams, baked into sweet breads, turned into yummy puddings and even added to traditional flan to give it a delicate, earthy flavor.

If your not convinced to try this high-fiber Mexican fruit based on flavor alone, then maybe its nutritional value will tip the scales for you. A one-cup serving of mamey is packed with more than 60% of your daily value of both vitamin C and B6. You will also get vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, and B5 from munching on mamey. Add to that several essential minerals including zinc, iron, phosphorus, manganese, and believe it or not, copper. Its texture may seem rich and creamy, but surprisingly mamey is low in both calories and fat, but as a bonus also contains protein!



Its nutritional value makes mamey a super food for lowering cholesterol, high blood pressure and maintaining cardiovascular health. And, because it is high in both soluble and insoluble fiber it helps promote weight loss. While the insoluble fiber takes up space in the stomach, making you feel fuller, the soluble fiber slows down your digestion; a one-two punch against putting on the pounds.

But, for me, more interesting than what mamey can do for you inside your body, is what it can do for you outside your body. Here in Mexico, the large, shiny brown seed at the center of the mamey is used to produce long, shiny brown hair and lashes. Once the seed is extracted from the fruit, it can be dried and the hard exterior ground into a powder that women apply to their hair and eyelashes to promote long and healthy growth. In other Central American countries the natives have been known to extract the oil from the seed and also use it as a hair growth tonic.

So, the next time you find that strange football-like fruit hiding, unappealingly, among the other bright and colourful fruits at the market, take a chance and take it home. If it doesn't appeal to you as a food, at least you may get the benefits of healthy hair and long lashes!



## Vegan Almond-Mamey Smoothie

8 ounces almond milk  
1 large mamey, peeled and deseeded  
1 banana, peeled  
4 to 6 ounces of filtered water or coconut water

Start by adding the liquid to your blender, followed by the soft fruit. Blend on high for 30 seconds or until the smoothie is creamy.

## Almond Milk

Fresh, homemade almond milk is a easy to make from scratch. This homemade almond milk recipe is a completely raw food recipe, a real raw treat! Use your homemade almond milk in smoothies or shakes, soups and other raw food dishes. If you like homemade almond milk, you might also want to try a homemade cashew milk recipe or another dairy substitute.

Ingredients:

1 cup raw almonds  
water for soaking nuts  
3 cups water  
2 dates (optional)  
½ tsp vanilla (optional)

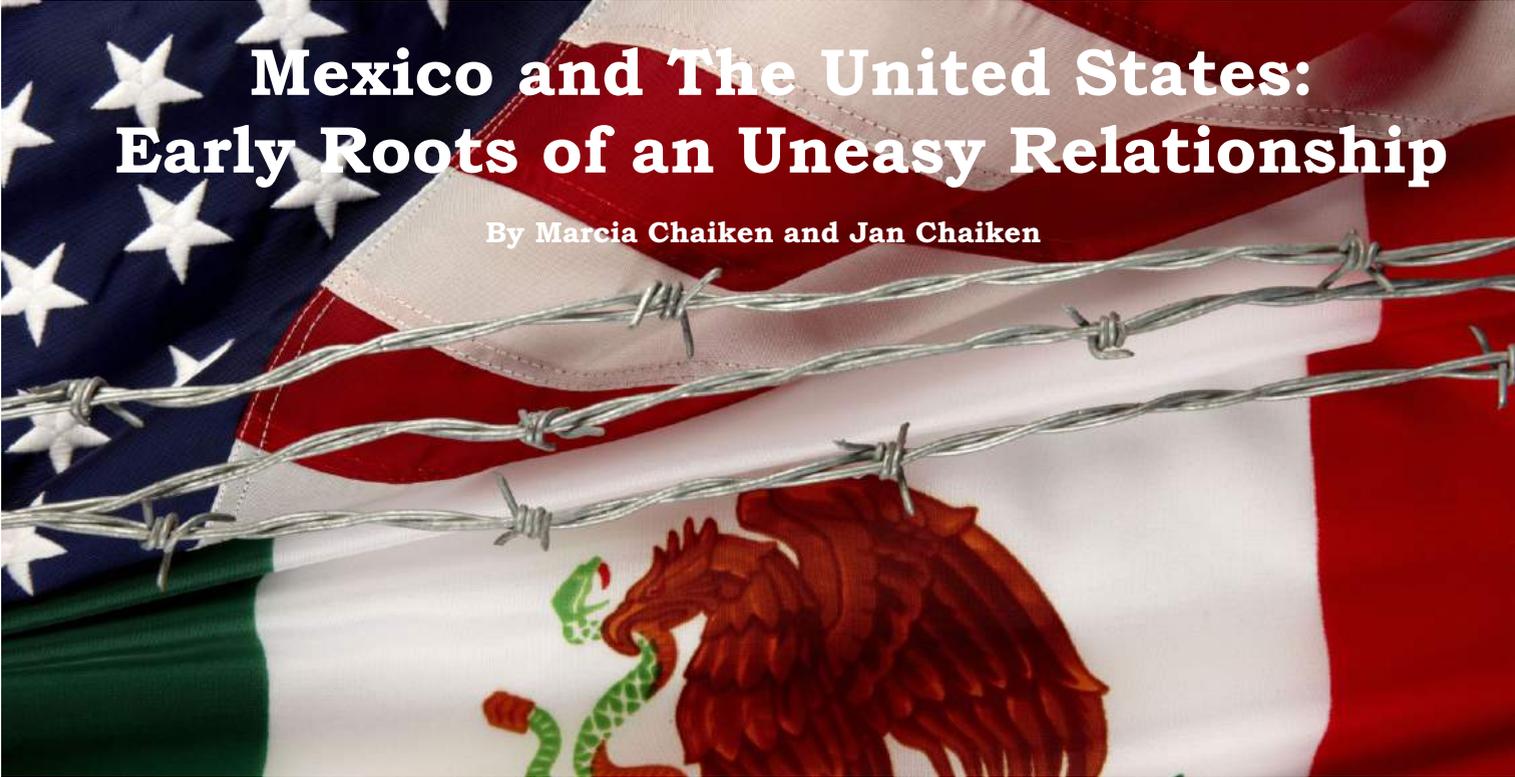
Preparation:

Soak the almonds in water overnight or for at least 6 hours.

Drain the water from the almonds and discard. Blend the 3 cups of water, almonds and dates until well blended and almost smooth.

Strain the blended almond mixture using a cheesecloth or other strainer.

Homemade raw almond milk will keep well in the refrigerator for three or four days.



# Mexico and The United States: Early Roots of an Uneasy Relationship

By Marcia Chaiken and Jan Chaiken

**A**nyone who crosses the border between the United States and Mexico knows it can be quite a hassle. The contrast with travel in Europe is striking. Once you clear immigration and customs in any one of the almost 30 countries that belong to the European Union, you can travel between member nations and territories without further ado. But traveling to or from Mexico, by car or plane, entails long lines for immigration and paper-wasting documentation. Luggage is sniffed, searched, and often torn apart. The bureaucratic requirements for bringing a car to Mexico, or keeping it here, can be a nightmare.

In some of the border states in the U.S., widespread hostility to Mexicans has resulted in laws and practices that make the mere appearance of being Hispanic into a presumption of illegal entry. Even the Obama administration, which says it favors relaxing barriers to immigration, has been compelled to respond to this fervor with a doubling in the size of the Border Patrol and substantial investments in security infrastructure along the border with Mexico – even setting a goal of 100% aerial surveillance of the entire southwest border. This high level of hassle, suspicion, and budgetary expense has deep roots in the early history of relationships between the U.S. and Mexico.

From the time that Mexico won independence from Spain and became a Republic in 1824 until World War II, there were only brief periods of neighborly cooperation. Just prior to the revolution that led to Mexico's independence, the U.S. had been negotiating with Spain over the details of the border between the U.S. and "New Spain." The result was an 1819 a treaty signed by U.S. President Adams and Foreign Minister Onís of Spain -- it defined the Louisiana Territory and Florida as part of the U.S. while Spain retained California, New Mexico (including present day Nevada, Utah, Arizona and parts of Colorado and Wyoming), and Texas west of the Sabine River. The treaty was ultimately ratified by the U.S. and the Republic of Mexico in 1831 with the added provision that the Oregon Territory belonged to the U.S. However, the provisions of the treaty were never really accepted by the residents of the southern territories, who responded with waves of migration to take control of land they felt was rightfully theirs.

By four years later, in 1835, Texas had become a hotspot of controversy. The westward trek of U.S. citizens into Texas was seen as a threat by the Mexican government, and the president of Mexico began imposing heavy customs duties on immigrants. He also declared slavery illegal, so as to discourage movement of slave owners into Texas. The immigrants from the U.S. revolted and won the initial battles against Mexican troops. Optimism was high among the revolutionary troops, and on March 2, 1836, they declared Texas an independent republic. The tide was briefly turned at the battle of the Alamo -- Mexican troops surrounded this rebel fortress and attacked on March 6, 1836. Losses on both sides were horrendous; hundreds of Mexican troops were killed, and ultimately virtually all the Texans in the Alamo were killed. Under the leadership of General Sam Houston, the Republic of Texas ultimately won the war, but the cry "Remember the Alamo" became a harsh reminder of attitudes toward Mexico, and remains so to this day.

The Republic of Texas was annexed by the U.S. in 1845 as part of the doctrine of manifest destiny, an imperialistic slogan promoted by President Polk, it meant that all of North America was rightly going to be part of the United States. Although many people in the north thought that the hidden agenda of manifest destiny was to subjugate, if not outright enslave, the nonwhite population, Polk used a brief incident between U.S. and Mexican troops in Texas as an excuse to declare war on Mexico in 1846. The war raged off and on for two years with 10 major battles, all decisively won by U.S. troops under the direction of generals who later became famous during the U.S. civil war-- including both Lee and Grant. The war with Mexico ended in 1848 with the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, which gave major territory to the U.S. and essentially established much of the current border. The final adjustment to the present day border was made in 1853, when Mexico territory north of the Rio Grande was purchased from the Mexican government for 10 million dollars so that a railroad could be constructed between California and El Paso, Texas.

Although the treaties provided land grants and civil rights to Mexican citizens living in the former Mexican territories, these terms were rapidly abrogated, and many Mexicans not only were forced off their lands but also were not allowed to vote in the U.S.



Over the next few decades the European invasion in Mexico and the Civil War in the United States so occupied both countries that there was little interaction of note. The US was concerned that France's attempt to establish Mexico as part of the French Empire was a threat to U.S. security, and, in fact, France was pleased with the havoc created by the war between the states of the U.S. Soon after the Civil War ended, President Buchanan and the U.S. Congress vigorously urged France to leave Mexico, which helped Benito Juarez and his troops regain control over Mexico in 1867.

Perhaps ironically in the light of present day U.S. immigration policy, the exclusion of immigrants from China in 1882 led to a need in the U.S. for railroad workers from south of the border. A vigorous and successful attempt to recruit workers from Mexico to fill these positions resulted in over 16,000 Mexicans providing 60% of the U.S. railroad workforce by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The rapprochement between the U.S. and Mexico came to an abrupt end in 1910 with the advent of the Mexican Revolution. The fighting, especially the battles near the border, resulted in almost one million Mexicans fleeing to the U.S. The U.S. sent troops to the border in 1911 ostensibly to prevent fighting from spilling over into the U.S. Then in 1914 after Mexican President Francisco Madero was deposed in a coup by General Victoriano Huerta and Huerta's troops arrested several American soldiers in a Gulf of Mexico port, President Wilson sent marines to invade and occupy the port of Veracruz in retaliation. Anti-American riots erupted throughout Mexico.

Relations went from bad to worse in 1916 when Pancho Villa led his troops across the border, attacking and partially burning a city in New Mexico. In response, President Wilson sent troops across the border into Mexico in a failed attempt to search out Pancho Villa. The U.S. troops remained in Mexico for the better part of a year.

U.S.-Mexico affairs pretty much hit rock bottom in 1917 when Germany sent a telegram to the Mexican government proposing an alliance to fight together and defeat the U.S. The telegram was intercepted, leading to a very strong anti-Mexico reaction in the U.S. and precipitating U.S. entry into World War I to fight against Germany. Mexico never paid attention to the telegram and stayed out of the war.

Between World War I and World War II, the Mexican government was in a constant state of flux. The U.S., using a tactic which is commonly applied in political hotspots to the present day, provided arms to favored leaders such as Álvaro Obregón. Relations began normalizing in 1934, when the Mexican government stabilized under President Lázaro Cárdenas. He was supported in Mexico by the military and organizations of workers and peasants, and in the U.S. by the Democratic party. President Roosevelt solidified the warming relationship with his "Good Neighbor Policy," spelling out that the U.S. would not intervene in the affairs of Latin America, and he announced various agreements involving mutual assistance and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico.

While Mexico and the U.S. governments continue to have periodic major disagreements, relations have never deteriorated to the levels of enmity experienced up to 1917. Still, the U.S. attitude can still be summarized by the often-quoted line of the poet Robert Frost, "good fences make good neighbors," and we all experience elements of this in our hassles at the border. No matter how relations between the two governments improve, as long as Texans and other U.S. southerners still proclaim "Remember the Alamo," the overall climate is not likely to change dramatically. Yet, we and many of our friends would point to the first line of the same Frost poem, "Something about me doesn't love a wall."

# Governing Oaxaca: The frontier between the traditional and the modern

By Deborah Van Hoewyk

However we think of ourselves—expats, gringos, visitors, tourists—when we want to straighten out our visas, taxes, or license plates, we've all brushed up against the Mexican and Oaxacan governments, their laws and their bewildering array of agencies. Some of us hire lawyers, some of us flounder through on our own, but when we come out on the other side we still wonder whether we got it right—are those license plates for real or are they *fraudulentos*?

Unless you've gone off to get your INAPAM senior discount card, though, you probably haven't encountered the government that actually makes the most difference in your daily life—the *municipio* (roughly equivalent to counties in the U.S. and eastern provinces in Canada). Article 115 of the Mexican Constitution, written in 1917 during the Revolution, establishes the “free Municipality as the basis of . . . territorial division and political and administrative organization,” with no governing bodies between the *municipios* and the state government.

## The complicated government of Oaxaca

The arrangement of government in Oaxaca is arguably the most complex in Mexico. Currently, the state is divided into 570 *municipios*, close to a quarter of the 2,442 *municipios* in the entire country.

Each *municipio* has its own *cabecera municipal*, or head city, as the seat of local government. Huatulco is in the *municipio* headed by Santa María Huatulco, Puerto Ángel is in the *municipio* of San Pedro Pochutla, Puerto Escondido is in San Pedro Mixtepec, and Oaxaca de Juárez is the head city of its own *municipio*.

Why does Oaxaca have more than twice as many *municipios* as any other state? Location, location, location! Mexico's middle states are mountainous, and Oaxaca is probably the most rugged of all—three mountain ranges fold together in the *complejo Oaxaqueño*: the Sierra Madre de Oaxaca comes east from Pico de Orizaba, the Sierra Madre del Sur runs along the coast, and the Sierra Atravesada comes westward out of Chiapas. Mountainous = isolation, which established *de facto municipios* long before the Spanish ever arrived. The Spanish found this local level of government convenient and continued it, often sticking a “sanctified” name before the indigenous name, as in Santa María Huatulco, San Felipe Lachillo, Santiago Xanica, etc.

In addition to officially codifying the *municipio* form of local government, the 1917 Constitution acknowledged the role played by indigenous peoples in building an independent Mexico. Of course, that didn't prevent the central government from trying to stamp out indigeneity in the service of a unified national identity—it took 75 years, and increasing agitation by indigenous groups in the 1970s and 1980s, before the 1992 Constitution officially recognized that Mexico was “pluricultural.”

## The coming of official indigenous government

Not soon enough for the Zapatistas next door in Chiapas, though. In 1994, the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN), or the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, launched itself with opposition to the signing of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and demands for better conditions for indigenous peoples and preservation of traditional communal



Oaxacan Mountain Village



Above: Voting in a meeting in San Agustín Loxicha and San Mateo Piñas, Pochutla



Right: Book on village rights in Oaxaca



Peaceful march of Zapatistas in 2012

land systems (*ejidos*), not to mention an end to government abuse of human rights and general corruption. While the Zapatista movement and the government response is a long story in itself, certain EZLN actions had far-reaching indirect consequences that affected local government in Mexico—especially in Oaxaca. The EZLN instituted a parallel government that favored indigenous people, allowed *campesinos* to expropriate land, and took over the government of 38 Chiapan towns.

In the 1990s, as the Zapatista movement continued its demands for indigenous empowerment and autonomy, and as the long-time dominant PRI party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) started losing power, Oaxaca started making changes in municipal election codes. Even though Oaxaca remained a PRI stronghold until the mid 2000s, municipal governments were given the freedom to run local political processes without officially including national political parties. *Municipios* could choose new, place-specific electoral systems, and nearly three quarters of them—418 of the 570—did so. The jury is still out on why the state of Oaxaca promoted municipal election reform. Did it truly stem from the desire to support indigenous organization and autonomy? Or was it an effort to preserve PRI power in the face of new parties on the way up?

**Usos y costumbres: Government of, by, and for the people**  
Whatever the forces that allowed *municipios* to choose government with or without political parties, the change gave rise to the form of local government called *usos y costumbres*, with amendments to the Oaxacan constitution in the mid to late 1990s, presaging a 2001 amendment to the Mexican constitution. This state-level support, combined with geographic and historical factors, makes Oaxaca the “home” of local autonomous government in Latin America. It appears in a few other Mexican states—Sonora allows it for its Yaqui reservation (*zona indigena*), about a third of Chiapas' *municipios* (38 of 118) have instituted it, and Tlaxcala held its first elections via *usos y costumbres* in 2012; it also appears in Guatemala, Bolivia, and Colombia.

And how does governing by *usos y costumbres* work? It starts, of course, with the *municipio* framework created in the 1917 Constitution, and whether a given *municipio* has chosen to govern itself by *usos y costumbres*; of the *municipios* mentioned above, San Pedro Pochutla, San Pedro Mixtepec, and Oaxaca de Juárez are governed by *usos y costumbres*, while Santa María Huatulco uses the party system.

The government is divided into departments, which are thought of as the positions occupied by community members—a person's obligation to serve the community at some point in time is called a *cargo*, and the *cargos* can vary by *municipio* depending on what's needed. The free labor a person gives to execute his *cargo* is called *tequio* (only rarely are women selected to fulfill a *cargo*). On average, by the time he is sixty, a man will have been obligated to serve 15 years in performing *cargos*.

For example, if you lived in the town of Zimatán in the *Municipio* of Santiago Astata, you would be governed by 15 *cargos*. Administrative positions include the Municipal President, Trustee (the *sindico*, whose responsibilities differ by *municipio*), Treasurer, and Secretary. There are three directors (*regidores*) of municipal functions—education, building projects (*obras*), and agriculture (*hacienda*). There is a municipal judge, a municipal *comandante*, the municipal police, and *topiles*, younger people who handle community security, rather like auxiliary police or a community watch committee. There are four committees: Heads of households, drinking water, school facilities, and the church.

Many *municipios* host two assemblies to establish regulations, an assembly of *Comuneros* and an assembly of

*ciudadanos*, with the *comuneros* managing community resources and the citizens handling civic issues. Santiago Astata has a single *Asamblea General Comunitaria*.

### **Usos y costumbres—How well does it work?**

Santiago Astata is on record as requiring women to complete *cargos*: “The women in this community have the obligation to provide services and can discharge community or municipal *cargos*.” Who knows how well this works in practice, but it's progress in equality: many *municipios* do not allow women to participate fully, which is tantamount to saying they are not full citizens of the community. Several academic studies have found that women participate in local government in the 152 *municipios* that govern by political party at twice the rate they participate in the 418 *municipios* with *usos y costumbres* government, and that nearly 20% of these *municipios* do not allow women to vote, let alone serve in a *cargo* position.

Allowing women in Santiago Astata to discharge “municipal” as well as community *cargos* indicates that even *municipios* run according to *usos y costumbres* must account for and connect with state and national political structures, and party affiliation inevitably underlies many candidates for local office. Because the outcome of *usos y costumbres* is seen in local elections, political maneuvering between elections sometimes has the effect of switching a *municipio* back and forth from one form of government to the other. Moreover, it is possible, if a *municipio* does not “behave” the way the formal government might like, it can find itself with parallel government structures—one with officials set up by the state and one with office holders put in place by the community.

This is the case with Santiago Xanica, a *municipio* northeast of Santa María Huatulco that has been active in indigenous resistance movements since the late 1990s. Xanica has its own indigenous rights organization, CODEDI (*Comité por la defensa de los derechos indigenas*), whose members are extremely active in the state-level indigenous rights organization APPO (*Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca*). These activities apparently alerted the PRI to the need to establish stronger controls, which produced a tense situation with open armed hostilities and allegedly trumped-up jail sentences. Although some of the power conflicts have lessened in intensity, there is new conflict about the state's diversion of Xanica's natural resources, including and especially the waters of the Copalita River, to serve Huatulco's tourism needs. Xanica seems in line for parallel governments for some time to come.

Santiago Astata also establishes penalties for not completing one's *cargo*, which highlights a major problem with the system. Many Mexicans leave cash-strapped rural villages to work outside the country, usually in the U.S.; they send part of their income back to their hometowns in the form of remittances, usually to their families although sometimes to village projects.

If that hometown is governed by *usos y costumbres*, migrants are often called back to perform their *cargos*, which has led to people paying others to the necessary *tequio* to fulfill the *cargo*. In turn, this leads *municipios* to increase the number of functions that require *tequio* as a way of raising additional money for the *municipio*, or of getting more work done at no expense. Reporter Sam Quinones of the *Los Angeles Times* reported in 2012 on conflict in Santa Ana del Valle, a weaving town outside the capital, between migrants who believe that individual and collective economic fortunes would be better served by changing the system, and residents who believe it if the system were changed, “It would be to lose a part of what it means to be Zapotec.” (You can read the full article at <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/nov/20/local/la-me-oaxaca-jobs-20121121>.)

# Juicios Orales (Oral Trials): A long awaited major reform to Mexico's judicial system

By Julie Etra

The judicial system of Mexico is undergoing some dramatic changes. Up until March 2014 judges decided trials and relied almost exclusively on written briefs. The perception within and outside Mexico has been that that the accused was commonly considered guilty, with the briefs being the only other major mechanism to determine otherwise. Finally, on March 4, 2014, the federal government of Mexico initiated the new Code of Criminal Procedures, signed by President Enrique Peña Nieto.

This overhaul of the legal system, pending since June of 2008, replaces 33 current codes- one federal and 32 local, and is valid across the entire nation, instead of the former system(s) where justice was meted out inconsistently due to conflicts between federal and local codes. The former system also lent itself to easily disguised corruption, with power and decision making controlled by one judge.

“Of the 33 codes in the country we will now have a unique code, which will be valid throughout the national territory. All criminal proceedings will be conducted under the same rules, strengthening the robustness of our rule of law.” Said President Enrique Peña Nieto . The changes will take place gradually with full implementation by June 2016, replacing the current system supported by often unsubstantiated documents with a system based on open testimony. It will be conducted in public, with the obvious increase in transparency. Currently only three states (Chihuahua, México, and Morelos) have fully implemented the reforms and more than half of the states are still in the planning phase. Implementation is a challenging educational process for police, judges, prosecutors, and other public servants, and represents a major cultural shift. A considerable number of cases may be resolved by agreement between the parties, without going to trial, helping to reduce costs, processing times, and a congested prison system. This increased efficiency will allow the state to concentrate on the more serious cases.

Hearings will be public, unless the judge considers the process to be risky to the defendant or their accuser. Officials are required to insure that at all times that the defendant knows his or her rights.



## Juicio Oral

REFORMA PROCESAL PENAL DE OAXACA



Governor Gabino Cue Monteagudo speaking about penal reform in Oaxaca.



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# May

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- Kahlil Gibran

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #ADD8E6; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> On the Riviera</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #FFDAB9; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> Oaxaca City						



The Ambulante film festival returns for the fourth time to Puerto Escondido. From May 2-4 it will offer a select program of 10 films, Mexican and foreign, including a special program for children.

En Parque El Idilio, Playa Zicatela, Cinemar y Club de Playa Villasol.

**Cinco de Mayo** is a celebration held on May 5th. It is celebrated in the United States and in Mexico, primarily in the state of Puebla, where the holiday is called El Día de la Batalla de Puebla.

The Battle of Puebla was important for at least two reasons. First, although considerably outnumbered, the Mexicans defeated a much better-equipped French army. Second, since the Battle of Puebla, no country in the Americas has subsequently been invaded by any other European military force



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Photo of Arrocito beach with Cosmo Ocean Bar and render of Cosmo Residences

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