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LOCAL NEWS

Mexico plans to expand program to untangle sea lions...experts successfully sedated and operated on three sea lions to remove fishing lines that had threatened to strangle the marine mammals. The country's office for environmental protection said the program has now successfully operated on a total of seven sea lions in the area around the island of Espiritu Santo near the Baja California resort of La Paz. They are sedated with acoustically monitored darts, anesthesia and special procedures to allow the animals to be immediately returned to the wild. The fishing lines often cut deeply into the sea lions' necks. The office said it is training personnel from the states of Sonora and Baja California to extend the program to other areas.

Americans Are Eating More Seafood...they ate an average of 15.5 lb. of seafood in 2015, nearly 1 lb more than in 2014 according to a new government report. The amount is still shy of the 8 ounces or more per week...which amounts to 26 lbs. per year...that the government recommends.

Epidurals May Reduce Risk of Postpartum Depression...a new study presented at the American Society for Anesthesiologists' annual meeting found that the more pain relief a woman experienced during birth, the more likely she was to rank lower on the depression scale six weeks postpartum.

U.S. Economy's Recent Rapid Growth...its 3rd Quarter's 2.9% was the fastest growth rate in two years. That's the good news. The not-so-good news is that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates before the end of 2016, what it will cost Americans to borrow money.

Hugo Torres Honored With Eponymous Calle

Written by Ron Raposa

Señor Torres in front of the legendary hotel that helped put our city on the map...

on the street that will now forever carry his name.

The man who led the effort to make Rosarito a city, twice served as its mayor and was instrumental in making it an internationally famous tourist attraction recently had a major thoroughfare named in his honor The event occurred at 11am on Tuesday, Nov. 29 on Boulevard Benito Juarez, directly across the street from the welcome arch of Mr. Torres' iconic Rosarito Beach Hotel. That's when the street formerly known as Magnolia became forever known as Calle Hugo Torres .

See page 04

Interconnectivity

Life is a mystery. How we somehow find our mortal coils intertwined with others is perhaps the most mysterious conundrum of all. The tri-partite tale that follows is just one example but since it involves this protagonist and two other souls and how we are mostly, inadvertantly, connected, sit back and enjoy the labrynthspiel.

See page 04

Luma Mufleh and her 'Fugees, her story and the team that led to her being nominated for this year's CNN Hero's Award.

'El Jefe,' the dream come true for a couple whose lives were forever changed by the magic of Baja.

The Long and Winding Road: When Tony Met Sharon

The two protagonists in this action adventure took differing paths to their lifelong partnership. Their story is unique yet will ring true with many of our readers who know that what is meant to be somehow finds its way to fruition regardless of the obstacles of time and place.

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FOR A MAP AND DIRECTIONS

Baja Virtuosos Join Forces for Hall of Fame Concert

Written by Rick Kreiser

Individually, Alex DePue and Miguel De Hoyos have wowed audiences around the world. Together, they produce an unparalleled sound.

The duo recently showcased their virtuosic playing — including jazz, blues, rock, classical, swing, flamenco — in a Guitar Masters concert at the Bakersfield (CA) Music Hall of Fame.

Monterrey, Mexico native De Hoyos and Ohio native DePue met nearly a decade ago when DePue asked if he could sit in during De Hoyos' regular gig at a Rosarito Beach nightspot. De Hoyos was understandably dubious."Many people ask to sit in with me, but most of them are not very good. Alex was different."DePue said the magic between them was obvious two measures into that first jam session.

"Many of the arrangements we play are still intact from the way we did them our first time through, so our process is very organic. We create a sound unlike any other musical ensemble I've come across. People can expect to hear a lot of material they already know, but they have never heard it presented in the way we perform it. Imagine 'Hotel California,' 'Black Magic Woman' or 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' with a traditional Mexican groove and Latin-sounding accompaniment and a twisted, rocked-out violin on top of it. It's tremendous fun for both the audience and us," said DePue, who played Carnegie Hall at age 14

and has toured with rock guitar hero Steve Vai.

While the arrangements DePue-De Hoyos present may be unique, it's clear the duo is grounded in solid technique and musical training.A classically trained violinist and a competition-level fiddler since the age of 7, DePue has won just about every title there is to win, including national fiddle champion. He is also a member of The DePue Brothers Band with his three violin-playing siblings, frequently recording soundtracks for NFL Films. While DePue's own musical road has led him into the world of fiddling, rock and Latin rhythms, similar training launched his three brothers into more traditionally classical music careers; one is the concertmaster of the Indianapolis Symphony, another is in the first violin section of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and his oldest sibling is the concertmaster of the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra.

De Pue, who has mastered several instruments, joined Vai for a 2007 tour that took him across North and South America, and Europe, culminating in the award-winning concert video, "Where the Wild Things Are." When Vai went looking for a violinist to join the band, he had almost given up when De Pue showed up to audition."I went through the typical 'metal players' who just wanted to shred but couldn't read a note of music, and the 'classical' folks read music very well, but didn't have any rock sensibility at all," said Vai. "Then, Alex came in the room and tore it up! I mean, he's got the right balance of everything ... and he can play the impossible stuff, too."

"We were really looking forward to visiting Bakersfield again," DePue said in a recent phone interview. "Miguel and I played a community concert series there early last year, and several years ago I played the Crystal Palace when I was touring with Chris Cagle. I remember being so proud of my 'Porter Waggoner-style' bejeweled outfit!" For his part, Miguel De Hoyos has been a celebrated composer, performer, and recording artist. After relocating to Rosarito Beach in 1996, De Hoyos began to be influenced by American pop music through Chet Atkins and Les Paul. Combining these new sounds with his traditional Mexican/Spanish guitar style, De Hoyos was soon recognized as an innovator with a unique approach to the guitar. An overwhelming guitarist to watch, De Hoyos' humble and gracious demeanor is at odds with his epic playing, largely influenced by flamenco stylings. Miraculously, he has never taken a formal music lesson. Like DePue, he was taught by his father at a young age.

In addition to their individual appearances, the duo was invited to Rio de Janeiro this past summer in association with the Olympics to participate in the global launch for the ArtsGames, an organization with plans to bring the Arts back into the international spotlight once again, and become realized as official Olympic sports.

— Rick Kreiser is founder of the Guitar Masters concert series

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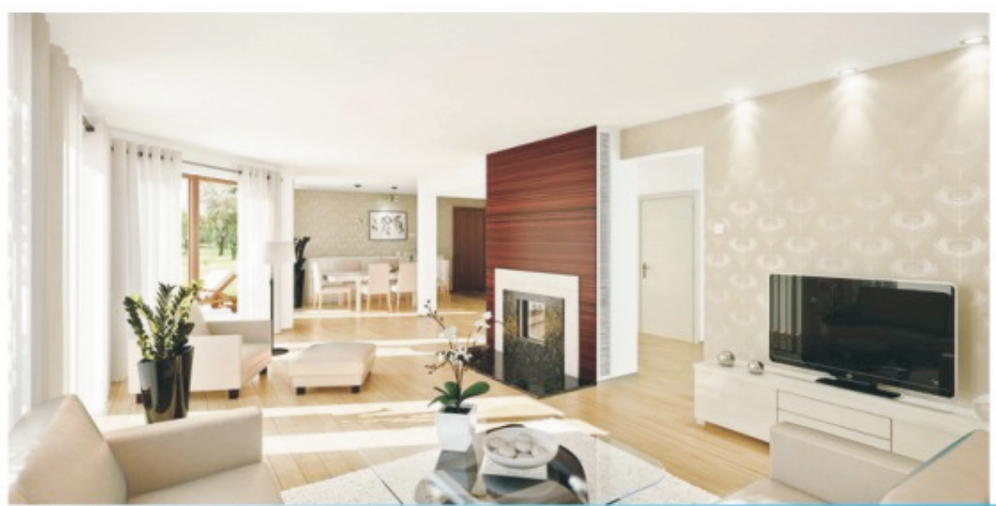

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The Legend of Elden Kidd: America's Most Creative People Smuggler *part 2*

These days, Elden is still an impressively large man, thick-necked and bear-pawed. I first met him in a pancake house in Riverside, California. He had his second wife and her two kids with him, his pride and joy. He didn't walk so much as surge and shamble. Even though he's 62, it's not hard to imagine that he'd once shepherded scores of people across the border, becoming a legend in a time and place now long gone. He'd created dozens of routes and perfected an endless array of ploys, cover stories, costumes, and props—all products of a profoundly devious and clever mind.

A lot has changed since Elden prowled the border—though, to listen to Donald Trump, you'd never know it. A cornerstone of his campaign for the presidency is to build a wall to save America, and so, naturally, he doesn't mention that much of it—some 700 once porous miles—is already sealed off. Nor does he mention that more Mexicans leave the U.S. today than enter it. Today, the wild and untamed border—an unruly netherworld where hordes of Mexicans pour into our country—exists mostly in Trump's mind.

But once upon a time, before 9/11, in an era that now seems innocent and free, the border was a stranger, more chaotic place. And in those days, Elden felt fireproof. He had married at 22, and he and his wife settled in Riverside, and began having babies. Providing for his family was Elden's high holy cause, his "earthly mission," as he says, a calling that made him feel both invincible and free to do whatever it took, however risky, underhanded, or illegal.

Then, as now, the politics of the border—the legalities of immigration—didn't much concern him. This was about making money. If Elden had a flag, it would be for his family. He was an adventurer, a restless, ready soul. Human smuggling married so many parts of his personality—his athleticism, his wiliness, the rebellious prankster and the defender of the underdog. As his ex-wife says, with both appreciation and pain, "he's the freest man I know."

Back when Elden first started, hundreds of people would storm the stretch of border near Tijuana every night, swarming the outmanned Border Patrol agents stationed there. "It was as simple as ducking under a fence in those days," Elden says. Some nights, all it took was Elden hanging out near the Tijuana River with a rubber raft; when immigrants reached the water, he would ferry them across at $25 a head.

Sometimes Elden would be joined by his buddy Tim Burraston, a surfer and carpenter he'd met while leading white-water-rafting trips in the U.S. and Mexico, along the Guatemalan border. When the river was running full, the two were in their glory. The going price for taking someone all the way from Tijuana to Los Angeles was only $250. "A thousand-dollar night

In their 'careers,'Elden Kidd and Tim Burraston (right) ferried scores of illegals cross the Mexico-U.S. border

was a home run," Tim recalls.

Things would change when, in 1994, President Bill Clinton launched Operation Gatekeeper, intensifying security on the most heavily trafficked section of the border—the six westernmost miles. Reassigned agents flooded the area, armed with infrared telescopes and encrypted radios. Lines of double fencing were built and high-powered stadium lighting installed. Crossing the border became a lot more difficult, but being a smuggler became a lot more lucrative. Elden began to charge $1,800 a head for Mexicans and $5,000 for Chinese immigrants, a riskier bunch to take across because they were undocumented on both sides of the border. (But children always traveled for free; nothing made Elden happier than ferrying a child or a baby.)

As the preferred crossing routes shifted away from the heavily policed sections of the border and toward much more treacherous terrain, many more immigrants began to die during the passage. And although no one ever died on Elden's watch, the routes demanded more complex—and inventive—schemes. Case in point: One Christmas Eve, he crossed six young men over the border and into California, dressed them in Santa Claus suits he had purchased at Big Lots, gave them bicycles, then sent them north, through an area often patrolled by border police. Or during pheasant-hunting season? He put them in hunting vests and handed out BB guns.

Of course, avoiding the cops altogether was always preferable, and for this, Elden figured he could use a little intel. So, one day he approached an agent in Yuma, Arizona, introduced himself as a Boy Scouts leader, and said he was bringing a bunch of scouts camping there next weekend and he knew the boys would love to be able to tune in to the agents' activities and cheer them on. Would the agent be kind enough to share the call signs they used on their radios? Sure. After that, Elden could easily listen in, and if cops spotted him heading into Mexico ("Looks like we got a guy on a taco run…"), he would turn around, hunker down, and try again later.

If elusiveness failed him, he resorted to quick thinking. Once, when Elden was discovered by Mexican police, he let the cops chase him into the bottom of Smuggler's Gulch, where he promptly clutched his chest and fell to the ground. Four cops labored to drag him out of the 180-foot-deep canyon—270 pounds of dead weight—and then when they reached the high ground, Elden leapt to his feet and took off down the slope again. The officers were just too exhausted to follow.

"October 11 1994. To my great misfortune my life has changed completely. I'm being held against my will in the Federal Prison in Toluca Mexico…. My heart is broken. I feel as if I am already dead and this place is my tomb." That is how Elden's prison journal began. At the time, he had no way of knowing that he was facing a two-year ordeal that would make him harder, humbler, quicker with his fists—and, ultimately, a much better criminal.

Elden was arrested for smuggling in Toluca, 40 miles west of Mexico City—he wasn't moving people, a crime he had committed many times, but rather marijuana, which police found hidden beneath the floorboards of a motor home he was driving. He'd been hired by a wealthy Mexican-American mango grower to drive the motor home down into south-central Mexico for a large family gathering, take a few days off while they partied, and then drive the motor home back to the States. This was the third such trip Elden had taken for the man. He claims he had no idea he was being used as a mule. "Back then I was still a serious Mormon, and marijuana was the devil," he says.

After his arrest, Elden was transported to a prison in central Mexico called Almoloya de Juárez. Elden's cell block contained 250 men; he was the only American.

At first, Elden had no interest in friends or alliances; he didn't belong here. He had only one aim: to survive this hell until he could find a way out. "I dream of escape every night, but there is no way. 10 guard towers manned by two men each with rifles. High grey walls topped by spools of razor wire. Doors, gates, bars... May God help me and my family."

The mornings were god-awful. He woke to the sounds of phlegmy coughing, water sloshing in buckets, mops clanking, the first garbled cries and shouts of a language not his own. Twice a day, he was fed from a barrel filled with rice and beans or some unidentifiable stew. "This was a rough day. The food was horrible. Horse teeth in the soup pot," he wrote that October. He quickly began to lose weight.

Other prisoners tormented Elden, throwing rocks or bread rolls at him when he was in the yard. "Got in a short fight with a guy who attacked me with a heavy pipe. Put him down instantly." Elden spent hours outdoors in a distant corner of the yard, reading and watching the sky. He noted snowy egrets and kestrels, flycatchers and blackbirds. And he tried to forget the headaches, colds, hives, and badly abscessed tooth that plagued him. His skin became gray.

Still, he jogged in the yard and lifted buckets of water, buckets of rocks. He easily won a prison-wide arm-wrestling contest. By the spring, some prisoners were glomming on to him for protection: An old man who was too afraid to walk the yard alone. A young Zapatista who had his shoes stolen. (Elden retrieved them.) A humble Indian who was getting kicked around.

But after 18 months inside, Elden had lost his faith in God. Writing to his still devout wife, he asked her not to judge him too harshly. "My plan is to love you as much as you let me. I can never be the same though. To be the money making machine I was…running Mexicans through the sewer river and freezing waves or back-to-back river trips, it's over. When my freedom finally comes I won't waste even one hour doing anything I don't want to do. I need to enjoy nature…see my parents, play with the kids, catch a fish…. There's no bitterness against God. I just will let God do as he please and I will do what I can to be a good person."

To be continued

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From Front Page

Hugo Torres Honored with Eponymous Calle in Rosarito Tourist District Ceremony

The community and media were invited to the ceremony near the entrance of the tourist district of downtown Rosarito Beach, a city that attracts about a million visitors a year, many from the United States as well as Mexico. "I'm very thankful for this honor," Mr. Torres said, "and especially grateful to my family, friends, officials and everyone else who helped me achieve it. Rosarito has been my life's work, and it's gratifying that a part of it will carry my name forward into the future."

Mr. Torres moved to this region from Mexico City in 1943 at the age of 7 to live with his aunt, Maria Luisa Chabert, and her husband, Manual Barbachano, owners of the Rosarito Beach Hotel. He assumed operation of the facility in 1966. He retired this year as its president, although he remains active there. The hotel began operations in 1925 as a 12-room hunting lodge and continued to expand, hosting global royalty and Hollywood stars including Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, Gregory Peck, John Wayne, Rita Hayworth and a galaxy of others during the '40s and '50s. Under Mr. Torres' direction, the hostelry expanded from 50 rooms to 500, including 271 deluxe suites (also offered for sale) in its 17-story Pacifico Tower, which opened in 2008. The self-contained resort is the largest and best-known beachfront hotel in Baja. In 2012, Robert Redford stayed in a suite at the Rosarito Beach Hotel & Resort during the filming of "All Is Lost" at nearby Baja Studios. Then known as Fox Studios, that facility was built in 1996 for the filming of "Titanic," during Mr. Torres first term as mayor. It has since been the locale for many other blockbuster films.

As the Rosarito Beach Hotel & Resort grew, so too did the surrounding Rosarito region.

Mr. Torres led the 12-year effort that resulted in Rosarito becoming Baja's fifth city in 1995 --- before then it was part of Tijuana --- enabling it to use tax revenue generated here for city improvements. He was named the city's first mayor that year and was elected to a second three-.year term a decade later.During his second term, he reformed and restructured the city police department, strived to eliminate corruption and worked closely to assist the city's large expatriate community. The prestigious Tijuana newspaper Zeta named him its Man of the Year in 2008.

Mr. Torres has been a leader in developing Rosarito business, tourism and on bi-national relations. He currently serves as chairman of the Baja Image Committee, a private-public partnership that works to promote and improve the region. He is married to Rosa Maria Ramirez with whom he has five children: Hugo, Gustavo, Laura, Rosy and Daniel, all of whom are active in government, community service or business ventures.

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From Front Page...

Interconnectivity

Hank Woolard grew up in rural Georgia, the eldest son of Methodist parents, and was enamored with serving his country from his early days attending military school. He retired many years later as a much decorated Lieutenant-Colonel in the United States Air Force and returned to the state of his birth.

His wife and children have lived a life of service to others and they continue along that path to this very day. Helping those less fortunate who hail from far-flung parts of the globe to find a home in our land of plenty has always been a major item on his life's agenda.

Luma Mufleh was born in the middle-eastern country of Jordan. Her affluent Muslim parents, originally natives of Syria, could afford to send her to college in the United States. Besides being an exceptional student, she was also a fine athlete. Her story, as it relates to the others, actually began in the nineteen hills of the ancient city of Amman where she grew up and where she learned to love the game of soccer that would create so much joy and, ultimately, a bit of a ruckus years later in a little town in Georgia, half a world away.

As the writer of this story, I tell you truthfully that I grew up in a Pennsylvania coal mining town, the son of Jewish parents, who was obese, legally blind in one eye, and stuttered uncontrollably. My father's profession (manager of a chain of retail stores) caused him to be away traveling each and every week. My mother had the unenviable task of raising my younger brother and me until the 'reinforcements' arrived on Friday evening. It was an inauspicious beginning to what promised to be a challenging life but fate found a way of intervening in all three of the character's lives briefly profiled in the paragraphs you've just read.

Fast forward several decades in your correspondent's life. Somehow I survived and actually inexplicably prospered, thanks in large part to the efforts of my amazing wife. After a career in business and education, intertwined with sporting pursuits on a collegiate playing and coaching level, we took a trip to visit her brother and his family in her home state. He had read a book I had written about my experiences which had, unbelievably, won an international award and he wanted me to meet a fellow coach that he had befriended while we were visiting. Prior to our journey, he had requested a copy of my book for his friend, and , in return, he sent me a copy of the award-winning book written about her.

Everything soon came together when my brother-in-law Hank introduced me to Luma during last year's trip to suburban Atlanta. We spent the better part of two days talking about what we shared, and recently, it got even better. Luma was nominated as a CNN Hero for her efforts with her refugee soccer team in the quintessential small town of Clarkston, Georgia.

To learn more about her amazing exploits, we recommend that you read 'Outcast's United' written by the New York Times journalist Warren St. John and click on to the CNN Heros website (for a succinct biographical sketch about this modern day heroine) at: The 2016 Top 10 CNN Heroes.

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From Front Page...

The Long and Winding Road: When Tony Met Sharon

Sharon Prieto was born in 1970 and raised in California's populous Inland Empire. She graduated from the California State University in San Bernardino with a B.A. in Psychology and spent the next fifteen years working with that city's Trinity Children and Family Services organization.

Tony Pasten was born in 1968 in the southern-most Mexican state of Chiapas and, at the age of nine, moved to the Central California Coastal city of Lost Hills. He attended high school and ran cross country for Wasco High School, made popular through the Kevin Costner film, "McFarland U.S.A.

Sharon connected initially with Tony in 2003 through the efforts of her brother Lupe after Tony moved to Los Angeles to reconnect with his biological father. In one of those quirky twists-of-fate that consistently amaze and astound, Tony's cousin (a friend of Sharon's brother), lived in San Diego and was having problems with a house he had owned in our Primo Tapia area for four years. Tony agreed to move to Baja to help secure the property.

To occupy his free time south-of-the-border, he sold clothes and other sundry items at the local venerable Saturday Flea Market. Sharon even provided him with other products to sell (perhaps a harbinger of things to come) including Pampers!

Four short months later (November 11th, 2008, to be exact), Tony decided to open up a retail store which was initially capitalized at $3000 U.S.D. He remembers the local county officials telling him "you can get your business license later." The store's original manager, who was out of a job when the business closed, helped Tony to get the landlady to relent and rent them the location for a reasonable sum. The iconic name they chose for the new establishment had an interesting back story as well. Tony, also an accomplished dancer in his younger days, had performed The Rain Dance with his Chumash Indian friends in San Luis Obispo and he decided to borrow the Spanish title for 'The Boss' (El Jefe) as the name of the new venture. Sharon was not initially involved financially in the enterprise although she sold pastries there. The clientele was predominantly Mexican so the products were aimed at that specific market segment.

Tony remembers sitting outside the store reading one day (business was slow back in 2008) and since passers by didn't know he was Mexican, hearing them say "what a dumb-ass that guy is, opening another store here in these tough times." That first year was an educational experience for him. in many ways. Although his mother and Sharon helped to restock the store, his sole employee, the former manager, was silently making the business a unilateral success. Sales had begun to boom, but the R.O.I for the owner was non-existent until Tony began to observe the shrinking inventory was producing no tangible income. Soon after he terminated his 'silent partner', less than one month later, the business turned a healthy profit. As he put it, "everyday was a great day." By August of 2010, he was able to obtain a small loan from the local bank and, shortly thereafter, Sharon became a partner in the business.

In January of 2011, they moved all of their inventory out of the original 18' x 35' space and expanded the store by a factor of three. Originally, as was previously mentioned, the store's clientele was predominantly Mexican but as more Americans (from Baja Mar, Calafia, and La Mision) started to shop at 'El Jefe,' more inventory was brought in to cater to the foreign resident's needs.

Sometimes the best business deals are the ones that are not consummated. When the sole gas station in the area at that time closed due to business license issues, the adjacent store (Magey's) owned by Bruny Borja (who was feuding with her father), was put up for lease. It was 'offered' to Tony and Sharon for the exorbitant rental of $1500 USD per month. The deal was not consummated but, propitiously, the mail boxes for foreign residents were removed from Magey's by Mail Boxes Etc and placed in 'El Jefe's' neighboring location. Almost overnight, the makeup of their business became U.S.-centric.

Installing an A.T.M. seemed like a good idea, too, but the local purveyors of these devices were not interested. The partners decided to see if they could find an interested participant in the states and their contact with Steven Levine, a major supplier of A.T.M.'s based in Los Angeles, (they later found out that he was one of the largest in the world), proved to be the answer. In the beginning, Levine required 'El Jefe' to self-fund the A.T.M, but they soon became one his largest south-of-the -border outlets in terms of foot traffic and actual usage.

In December of 2011, Sharon became pregnant with the couple's son, Anthony, who was born on July 19th, 2012. In December they bought their first home in the beautiful community of Descanso. Their first business location continues to be patronized by a majority of foreign residents and no doubt the combination of convenient mail boxes, the handy A.T.M., the English-speaking staff, the stocking of U.S. branded products, and the interest in bringing in special orders (even providing home delivery in the Descanso area) has helped to grow their business exponentially.

In 2013, the Director of Retail Sales for the Mexican brewing giant, Tecate, gave Sharon and Tony some ominous news. The OXXO chain was going to open multiple stores in the Primo Tapia area. In the past, wherever they had opened. he told them, the local small retail merchants were quickly put out of business. Rumors of 'El Jefe's impending demise were greatly exaggerated as six months later their sales were greater than ever and plans for their expansion to multiple outlets began to be implemented. As the Tecate executive so succinctly put it, "OXXO found itself up against a monster of a competitor." Originally, the county wouldn't give 'El Jefe' a permit to sell beer but Tecate helped them get one when they were permitted to share the couple's plans to open a second Primo Tapia location catering specifically to the local Mexican residents. As Tony put it, "El Jefe would have all the bells and whistles for all of our area's potential customers."

Their second store , which opened on September 20th, 2013, in the location which was originally 'Escondida,' carried food and beverage products aimed at the local residents. In August, 2015, store #3 was opened in the Santini area, built on similar expansion plans...Mexican product lines in a convenient location next to the Primo Tapia county buildings & taxi stands. Local families planning celebrations like quinceañeras could find everything they needed in these one stop, one shop, locations.

What's coming next from this charismatic couple? Stay tuned! The road to their success has been long and winding but it appears to be far from completed.

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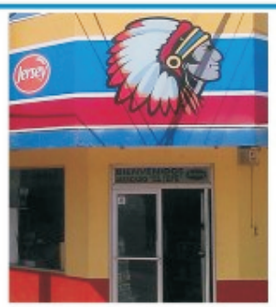

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Our Lady of Guadalupe to Be Taken to Trump's "Wall"

Written by the Editorial Staff of Mexico's Herald Tribune

The Roman Catholic archbishop of the Mexican border city of Tijuana said that he would take the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to where U.S. President-elect Donald Trump intends to build a wall and beg the Virgin Mary to "intercede before God to protect all migrants."

The faithful will gather at the Santa Maria del Mar parish in the Playas de Tijuana district to pray at the Mercy Hour and then will march as pilgrims with the image to the U.S.-Mexico border, Archbishop Francisco Moreno said..

At the place where Trump has pledged he will build a wall to stem illegal immigration to the United States, the archbishop will bless the image and will lead a Mass supplicating God to intervene through the Virgin Mary to protect migrants – both those going to the neighboring country and those who have been or will be deported."The pilgrimage seeks to build a bridge of peace, love and mercy with the Lady of Guadalupe so that migrant men and women may be blessed in their difficult circumstances," he said.

Referring to Trump's vow to immediately deport up to 3 million undocumented migrants with criminal records, Moreno said that the incoming government's decision must be respected and that he hoped the U.S. election works out well for that country and the entire world."The United States is a country with a preeminent role among nations," Moreno said, adding that people of faith "should pray to ask God to enlighten this president-elect so he can make the right decisions."

Some of Trump's campaign promises may have been rash, according to the archbishop, who said the new occupant of the White House will "realize that it is not possible to do everything just as he proposed."He said there was no need to generate alarm but people "should express our disagreement" and call for dignified and humane treatment of all migrants in the United States, "who contribute greatly" to the construction, identity and prosperity of that country."We're calmly assimilating those statements, and we think they're still not concrete facts," the archbishop said."This will have to be a process, and I hope that (those policies) will become diluted along the way and will not become a reality. Hopefully, Mr. Trump will understand how valuable the migrant presence in the United States is," he concluded.

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Daytripping to Tijuana with Turista Libre

If you're heading to San Diego, Calif., make time for a daytrip to Tijuana and go beyond the tourist traps with food, drink and entertainment.

Written by Jennifer Bain for The Toronto Star

It's a 35-minute, 12-stop trolley ride from downtown San Diego, Calif., to the Mexican border. Minutes later, depending on the border lineups, you're in the land of zonkeys, Donald Trump piñatas and Caesar salads, experiencing craft beer in a parking garage, a market right out of central casting, and a food truck park that screams Portland.Pretty wild.Tourists are starting to return to Tijuana. Even better, San Diego is now promoting itself as a bi-nation destination.

See, this city had once been a cheap tourist mecca — some say the original Vegas — until a rash of drug trade-fuelled murders in the late 2000s scared people away. Word spread that Tijuana was dirty, gross, unsafe and not worth the hassle once everyone needed passports.Derrik Chin, an American journalist turned Tijuana tour operator, is helping change people's minds about the Baja California region of Mexico. He created Turista Libre ("free tourists") about six years ago to help "liberated tourists explore a city that was built to be a tourist trap."I spent a day with him and four San Diego-area women — Terry Price, Colleen Frazier, Gail Frazier and Suzanne St. Clair. They hadn't been to "TJ" in years and their husbands have been apprehensive. Price, a hospital radiology worker, figured hooking up with Turista Libre would ease everyone's concerns.

Chin met us at the San Ysidro trolley station in the U.S., walked us over the border (the busiest one in the western hemisphere) and whisked us on to his "chariot of the people," a former U.S. school bus, with driver Pilar Monterrosas. (The trolley, by the way, is part of a fast, efficient, light-rail system). He insists on walking people over the border instead of driving them. "Some people see it as an inconvenience. I think walking out of one country and into another is part of the experience."

After setting us straight on the city's name — it's Ti-juana not Ti-a-juana — Chin gave us a "grab bag" of suggestions and let us set the agenda.We explored **Mercado Hidalgo** first, sampling tamales, fresh cheese, spiced mango candies and chicharrones at the chaotic collection of 80-odd shops, giggling at Donald Trump piñatas and donkey milk soap and buying papalote de cuerda (string kites).

Then we headed to the famous Avenida Revolucion tourist strip to make a pilgrimage to what's billed as the birthplace of the Caesar salad. Italian immigrant Caesar Cardini opened **Caesar's Restaurant** in the 1920s during prohibition and introduced the salad a few years later. Had it been inspired by something in Italy? Nobody knows for sure.The iconic salad is made tableside. We watched a server make the dressing in a large wooden bowl, mixing ground anchovies, Dijon, minced garlic, Worcestershire sauce, freshly ground black pepper, a briefly coddled egg yolk, olive oil and parmesan, and then drizzle it over whole romaine leaves, which apparently hold their flavour better than chopped ones."Three pieces of romaine lettuce and you hear angels singing," enthused Colleen Frazier.

Steps from Avenida Revolucion we wandered into the fifth floor of a parking garage and had a flight of craft beer in **Norte Brewing Co.** The beers have cheeky names, like Escort, 4Play and Penthouse because the space used to be a strip club, and there's a great, thoroughly urban, view of the U.S."Tijuana and especially north Mexican cities are cities of experiences, not so much historical sites or monuments," Chin explained. "Here it's about sampling things and trying things and experiencing things."

You must experience a **Tijuana zonkey.** It's a cheesy tourist tradition to pose for a photo with a zonkey by sitting on a Wild West-style wagon wearing silly sombreros and holding mock shotguns.Tourists started getting their pictures taken with donkeys more than a century ago (the oldest known photo dates to 1914), but the animal washed out in black-and-white photos. Someone decided to paint zebra stripes on donkeys, and the zonkey was born around 1955. We found one of Tijuana's nine remaining zonkeys — Monica — across from Caesar's. Ernesto Alonso

When you're told to take a "trolley" from San Diego to the Mexican border to go to Tijuana, it's actually part of a modern and fast light rail system

Silvas, a former machete salesman, uses hair dye to paint her stripes once a month. It costs about 10 bucks to have your photo taken and printed."Years ago they made more money," said Silvas. "Now it's more or less to get by. It's the same price but before there were more tourists."The zonkeys live together in a corral several blocks away, he said.

After our frivolous zonkey fun, Chin took us to the coast to see the surreal **United States/Mexico Border Fence** in the Playas de Tijuana neighbourhood. The galvanized metal fence is about 5.5 metres high and juts 90 metres into the Pacific Ocean."This is one of my favourite spots in the city despite the heavy vibe," said Chin.We hear about Children's Day, the annual day when an area of the fence is opened so a few people can embrace family members who live in the U.S. At Friendship Park, families who don't have the right papers to cross the border properly can visit through the fence during set hours every weekend.

We ponder this over tamarind paletas (popsicles) and head downtown to **Telefonica Gastro Park.** The permanent food truck park is filled with young chefs making everything from tacos and ramen to espresso and sausage sandwiches. It draws everyone from politicians and locals to tourists. It has been a long time since "true Americans" have come to Tijuana, said director Antonio Gamboa and general manager Enrique Jimenez Valdez ("Ejival"), whose family has long owned the land. "To us, Telefonica is a place to be proud of here in Tijuana."

To Chin, who lives in Tijuana, the city's old tourism model of raunchy times and cheap shopping is dead. He is keen for the underrated city to move forward, especially by promoting its food and drink.His tours are "like training wheels for Tijuana." His hope is that people who open their eyes and hearts to a city like Tijuana will take the idea "everywhere."

Jennifer Bain was hosted by the San Diego Tourism Authority, which didn't review or approve this story.

When you go

Do this trip: Turista Libre (turistalibre.com) has an array of public treks you can join in Tijuana for $30 to $65 (U.S.), as well as private tours that start at $100 (U.S.) per person for groups of two to 10, depending on the itinerary.

Get around: Use a mix of walking, public transit, Uber and taxis.

Stay: In San Diego, I stayed at Hotel Indigo San Diego Gaslamp Quarter, hotelinsd.com, a pet-friendly, LEED-certified hotel with a great rooftop bar. In La Jolla, I stayed at the Pantai Inn (pantaiinn.com), a Balinese-inspired seaside inn with beautiful gardens and outdoor firepit.

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Meet the Bartender: Irving Gonzalez

He's the winner of the first bi-national cocktail competition and part of a growing, cross-border bartender collaboration

Written By Kelly Davis

It was an invitation I couldn't turn down: judging a bi-national cocktail competition in Tijuana on Election Night. It seemed oddly appropriate: By the end of the night, we'd either be celebrating or commiserating, and at least there would be good booze.

Held at Tijuana's World Trade Center, the event was the first time bartenders from both sides of the border met in competition. From San Diego: Michele Willard (Urbn/Basic), Andrew Cordero (Noble Experiment), Mark Broadfoot (Galaxy Taco), and Stephen Kurpinsky (George's at the Cove). From Tijuana: Kevin Maldonado (Nortico), Fernando Villalobos (Oryx Capital), Irving Gonzalez (Plaza Bar / Westgate Hotel), and Sergio Arturo Gonzalez (Bar 20 / Mision 19).

It was a friendly competition. Tijuana's cocktail scene is new, but growing, and with it, a regional spirit of camaraderie and collaboration between the two cities. Though, after last Tuesday, when Tijuana bartenders took first and second place, the city earned some serious craft-cocktail cred and bragging rights over San Diego.

All the cocktails were great—any of them could end up on a menu. But, Gonzalez—who lives in Tijuana and works at the Westgate Hotel's Plaza Bar—turned in two stellar, memorable cocktails. For the first, he took vodka and infused it with ginger, grapefruit, turmeric, and coconut oil. To that he added kaffir lime syrup and some cream. For the second round, which required the top-four finishers (Broadfoot, Willard, Gonzalez, and Villalobos) to make a cocktail using cherry tomatoes, he turned out an on-the-fly savory mezcal cocktail that included muddled green onions, grapefruit, celery bitters, and a touch of Aperol.

I'd met Gonzalez last March, when he participated in a competition using Old Harbor's Ampersand coffee liqueur. He was still very new to bartending at that point and told me he felt a little out of place. Knowing that, it's so impressive to see how much he's grown in less than a year, both in skills and confidence.

Unfortunately, you won't find him at the Plaza Bar until mid-December. His work visa expired and he's going through the long process of renewing it. But he's eager to get back to bartending—and, hopefully, he'll put his winning cocktails on the Plaza Bar's menu.

Where did you get your start?

When I was 16 years old, my dad gave me a cocktail book. He said, "If you're going to be drinking, I'd rather you be drinking here instead of going out." It was a huge book with all these cool, classic cocktails. I remember there was a cocktail named Tijuana. It was tequila, rum, orange juice, lime juice, lemon juice, and just a splash of soda—and grenadine, just to add some color. I was amazed with the cocktail because it was [called] Tijuana, right? So, I started making it in my house. It was really bad. But it was strong, so everyone was, like, this is amazing. After that, a couple of friends would invite me to their parties. I started making Sex on the Beach. I started making a lot of cocktails with blue Curaçao. They started paying me, like, 100 pesos to [bartend]. It was my dream job—I'm, like, OK, I'm going to parties and making cocktails. That was the start.

Then I went to culinary school to try to become a chef. I worked in a couple of kitchens in Ensenada, but I didn't feel that love for the job. I loved creating things and I loved to be part of the process, but I like to talk with people. I want to hear opinions. And when you're in a kitchen, the only things you see are walls and the kitchen staff. I didn't enjoy that. But when you're in the bar… every single day different [customers] come in. You get to hear some stories, tell some stories.

I worked at an oyster bar in Ensenada. It was crazy—every single day it was packed. So, you had a lot of people asking for shots, a lot of mojitos. After that, I went to [Valle de Guadalupe], to the wine country, and everything changed. I went to an interview at Encuentro and it was Chef Flor Franco and Frankie [Thaheld from Snake Oil Cocktail Co.]. I was amazed—they talked about the idea of using things from Baja. I remember one cocktail, it was ancho chile, carrot juice, and mezcal. The garnish was a piece of smoked pork belly. I was amazed. Frankie was telling me all these ideas that he had. He wanted to do some raspados, which is crushed ice and you put some flavor on it and then the spirit. That's when I met Stephen Kurpinsky, who was consulting with Frankie. He came up with the idea of mango and chile de arbol—a super-spicy raspado with some vodka. We were having fun there. After that I found the job here.

The cocktails you made last Tuesday were so good. There was this level of sophistication. That savory cocktail….

When Ruffo Ibarra [the event's emcee and chef at Tijuana restaurant Oryx Capital] said the ingredient was going to be cherry tomato, I was, like, I don't know what to do, but at least I made it to the final round. I went to the back of the stage and saw some green onions and asked, "Is anyone using green onions?" No? Let's do it. I was thinking about an Old Fashioned, because I love Old Fashioneds. Then you've got the flavor of the cherry tomato, which is really sweet, but it's so powerful, so let's give it a kick. I always carry with me my bitters, always.

I saw you had that bitters travel kit. I have the same one.

And I brought my smoke gun also, because it's kind of like my newest toy. I said, let's muddle everything and some grapefruit instead of lemon or lime juice. For the green onion, I used just the tail. There was a great selection of mezcal from Mark [Broadfoot], so I decided to use mezcal, and it was great—it added an oaky, smokey flavor to the cocktail.

So, you've never made this cocktail before and you've got five minutes to do it. Are you thinking, "I think this is going to work?" Or are you thinking, "I know this is going to work?"

It was more, I think this is going to work out. I know the flavors. I don't like to follow recipes. Even when I was muddling everything, I don't know if you saw my face…. Then I tried it, and it was good. I didn't expect that combination to work so well, but I really enjoyed it. That's the thing about the process of creating cocktails. It's just fun—it's experimental. And if it's not working, let's start again.

When you want to try new techniques or new flavors, are you looking to Baja for inspiration?

It's more about books. I have a couple of books. Liquid Intelligence, that's one. Drunken Botanist. For techniques, I look more at what people are doing here in the states…. Right now the cocktail scene in Mexico, in Baja, is not that big.

That was going to be my next question: how would you describe the cocktail scene in Baja?

It's just a baby right now against two big monsters, which is wine and beer. The wine in Baja is great—I love it—and the beer as well. Right now, "mixologist" is a new, trendy word in Baja. So if you're doing a bar, you need to put mixologist on it. It doesn't matter if you're doing a mojito.

I enjoy drinking everything—wine, beer, and cocktails. But if I see someone doing cocktails, I go there. Let's see, what do you have? OK, you've got this Old Fashioned with some peppers on it. Let me try it. It's going to be 200 pesos [roughly $10]. But, most people don't like that. [They think], "Why do I need to pay 200 pesos versus a beer that's $2 or wine that's $3?"

But is it a good Old Fashioned?

Sometimes, yes. Sometimes, it's like, "This is really an Old Fashioned?" Oryx Capital and Nortico—that's amazing cocktails. I don't know a better place than those two. Fernando [Villalobos] and Kevin [de Leon] are doing an amazing job and I love the cocktails there. But there was another place that just opened, [advertising] "mezcal and mixology." OK, I like both things, so let's give it a try. They did a martini with mezcal that was gross; they were doing a couple things that just didn't make any sense. They didn't think about the menu that well. Lemon juice and lime juice in plastic bottles. They didn't care about the details and, in my opinion, details are the important thing. You need to be conscientious about the ingredients. You've got Mercado Hildago, which is a huge market and you can find amazing things there. Give it a try, go for it, bring some ingredients and play with them at your bar. Maybe the people here in Baja, they don't care. But there are people looking at Baja and when you see a huge sign that says "mezcal and mixology," you're going to want to try it. And when you try it and it's gross, it's, like, "I'll never come back and I'll never trust a Baja mixologist." And that's the thing we're dealing with.

If you want to do it, do it good. I think it's a huge opportunity right now. Mexico City already has Tales of the Cocktail. Why not Baja? Why can't we have a huge collaboration?

Do you ever feel like maybe you should be focusing your attention on Tijuana and not working up here in San Diego?

Yes. In the beginning I was so amazed that I had the job here. Then I realized that I had the opportunity to be involved in San Diego and Tijuana as well. That's what I'm trying to do. I'm not going to say I'm trying to bring everyone together, but I'm trying to bring things from both worlds. That's the thing we need to do—people from San Diego and Baja, we need to share. Everyone is so amazing. Everyone has huge talent. And they have their own style and we can combine that.

IRVING GONZALEZ IS THE WINNER OF THE 1ST BI-NATIONAL COCKTAIL COMPETITION IN TIJUANA AND PART OF A GROWING CROSS-BORDER BARTENDING COLLABORATION

You can come up with a regional style.

It could be a new style of cocktails. Bring everything together and create something fun and wave that flag. There's a competition in New York, there's a competition in Mexico City—let's bring a team from both sides of the border and represent this cocktail movement that we're creating.

Other cities get so much attention. I wonder if turning it into a San Diego / Tijuana region, that's the thing that gets people looking over here in terms of cocktails?

We've got our own thing. If we can combine that, it'll be a really, really good thing. I really have my hopes high on that. In the competition, in the final round, everyone was sharing things. That's the idea—bring everyone together.

Is there any new spirit or new liqueur that you've come across lately that you're really excited to work with?

Right now, it's Sotol and Bacanora. I've never done cocktails with those spirits before.

When I was in Mexico City, one of my dreams was to make pulque [fermented agave juice]. I love pulque. I would love to try to do that and play with tepaches [a spiced, fermented drink made from pineapple rinds], and things like that.

What is the strangest request you've ever gotten from a customer?

When I was in Ensenada working at a craft beer bar, five or six girls came in. They said, "We love beer. Do you know how to make good cocktails with beer?" I said, "I can try." So, I started making some samples. They were trying it and thought they were good. I was, like, "OK, so, what do you want?" They asked, "You can do pitchers?" I said, "Definitely. For sure." They said, "You've got Clamato? You've got a stout? Give us three pitchers of that." I was [mixing the stout and Clamato] with pain in my heart—sorry, beer. After that, they asked for glasses with some salt on the rim. It was, like, "Really?"

Fill in the blank: I wish people would stop ordering and instead order Piña Coladas without alcohol. I can totally give you that if you're in Cancun or Hawaii. Here I would rather make a daiquiri and maybe go crazy with some flavors instead of doing a Piña Colada with or without alcohol.

On your night off, where are you and what are you drinking?

When I'm in Mexico, I like to go to a place called La Plaza, which is like a tiny shopping mall that has a lot of tasting rooms. If I'm there, I'm drinking Insurgente's black IPA. I love it. When I'm here, I'd be at The Lion's Share drinking a Sazerac. I love Sazeracs.

The Spooky Science of Shark Mummies

Written by Diana LaScala-Gruenewald

John O'Sullivan, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Director of Collections, was in Mexico on a mission. A young white shark equipped with an electronic tag had traveled over 650 nautical miles south from its release point in Monterey Bay, and the tag had popped off somewhere along the central coast of Baja California. The tag contained a complete data set documenting the shark's movements and physiology since its release, and John aimed to recover it.

Instead his guide, a local fisherman, led John to a shark graveyard.

A GRISLY GRIMACE

Sometimes, commercial and sport fishermen accidentally ensnare juvenile white sharks off the coasts of California and Mexico. But locals in some communities consider it bad luck to discard the unmarketable parts, such as the heads, back into the ocean. Instead, they deposit these shark parts at dump sites in the Mexican desert.

In central Baja, just north of Guerrero Negro, John and a team of local Mexicans encountered hundreds of shark heads, in various stages of decay. Some were fresh; others were rotting. Some had skin that was dry and well-preserved—in other words, mummified—in this arid location.

Many of us would turn away from that gruesome sight. But John and his colleagues looked into the mouths of the shark-head mummies and saw an opportunity.

White sharks—unlike makos, blue sharks, and other Eastern Pacific relatives—have serrations on both their top and bottom teeth. White shark jaws are also wider and broader than other sharks' jaws. And, in comparison with the state of the sharks' mummified flesh, the teeth in the shark graveyard were not noticeably damaged, and stood out starkly against the leathered hides.

"White sharks have very unique dentition," John says, "so I could identify their heads without DNA."

Laid out flat on a blanket to be catalogued, the razor-sharp rows of white shark teeth seemed to grimace back at the researchers.

John never found that satellite tag he was looking for on the rugged Baja coastline back in the early 2000s. But he did collect about 35 white shark heads—and he already had plans for those specimens.

On the Pacific coast of northern Baja, the phone rang inside the home of Oscar Sosa Nishizaki, a research colleague of John's who works at the Center for Scientific Research and Higher Education at Ensenada (CICESE).

"John said 'Hey Oscar, I have a present for you,'" Oscar recalls. "I went and picked it up at a nearby gas station. It was an ice chest full of stinky shark heads."

TO PROTECT A PREDATOR

The Aquarium's researchers, together with colleagues from Stanford University, Aquatic Research Consultants, and California State University-Long Beach, have been tracking young white sharks—using a combination of electronic tracking tags and fin identification—since 2002. They've discovered that sharks between 1 and 5 years old travel up and down the Eastern Pacific coast, exploring as far north as Alaska and as far south as Baja California Sur, including the Gulf of California in Mexico.

The data they've collected is critical to white shark conservation. Under the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List, white sharks are recognized as a species "vulnerable" to exploitation. And since 2004, white sharks have been included on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The CITES listing for white sharks helps regulate the trade of white shark body parts, including fins, jaws and teeth. It recognizes that while white sharks are not near extinction, increased trade could threaten their populations. White sharks are not listed as an endangered or threatened species in the U.S. under the federal Endangered Species Act, but off the coast of California, white sharks have been protected since 1994. This means that under authority of California Fish and Wildlife, white sharks may not be purposely caught or killed.

The Aquarium and our colleagues in Mexico are part of an international collaboration to protect these threatened animals. To protect them effectively, we need to understand where and how far they travel.

But there are some white shark mysteries that even tracking data can't crack. John and Oscar teamed up with two more researchers—Píndaro Díaz-Jaimes of the University of Mexico, Mexico City; and Carol Reeb, a fisheries geneticist, marine biologist and research associate at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station—to take a closer look at the genes in those mummified white shark heads.

Commercial fisherman/guide Roberto Ocana displays a mummified white shark head

ON THE DNA TRAIL

Tagging studies have made it clear: White sharks are international travelers that need protection across borders. But researchers were dogged by a nagging question: Are the white sharks off the coasts of California and Mexico one sub-population, or two?

Experts have historically assumed all the white sharks of the Eastern Pacific are close relatives. Because researchers don't know where white sharks give birth and where their mothers come from, it's possible that sharks found in Mexico could be genetically distinct from those found in California.

Adult white sharks from Mexico and central California travel to the same offshore locations each spring. But a 2010 paper, published by Carol Reeb and Sal Jorgensen, the Aquarium's senior white shark researcher, demonstrated that sharks off Central California tend to repeatedly come back to their original neighborhoods. Similarly, sharks tagged in Mexico tend to return to Mexico. Were they two different sub-populations? The answer could be important for white shark conservation.

"If you're trying to protect white sharks, and your whole view is that they're all from a single population, your management strategy might go down one path," John explains. "If it turns out that there are sub-populations with different breeding males and females, within the borders of two different countries, you might need to manage their overall protection in a different way."

TIME-TRAVELING CORPSES

The mummified shark heads offered a lead. Returning to the dump site, Oscar gathered almost 50 more putrid, decaying heads. Then he sent samples of tissue and teeth to Píndaro's team in Mexico City. The tissue was too rotten, and contaminated by other shark species in the dump sites, to be useful. Not so the teeth. After Píndaro dissolved away the enamel, he was able to access the clean, soft dentine inside—and from there, he extracted the DNA.

Researchers compared genetic codes from the mummified heads with DNA from central Californian adult sharks collected by Sal's team. They found that the samples were genetically indistinguishable, suggesting sharks in California and Mexico represent a single population.

The shark-mummy study is a breakthrough on several fronts. First, the ability to extract DNA from mummified shark heads allows researchers to track genetic diversity in shark populations. If the diversity declines over time, that may indicate overfishing or other threats.

Second, they can now apply the same DNA extraction technique to other kinds of preserved samples.

"When you get a fresh sample, you're looking at an animal that's alive now," Sal says. "But when you sample a mummy, you're looking at genetic material from the past. This opens the door to sample things like museum collections. It allows us to sample across time."

White sharks, it turns out, have quite the afterlife.

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Mexico's maquiladoras brace for change

Written by Sandra Dibble

With the road ahead uncertain, leaders of Mexico's booming maquiladora industry are emphasizing as never before their sector's close integration to the U.S. economy as they prepare to make their case to the incoming administration of Donald Trump.The president-elect's campaign criticism of the North American Free Trade Agreement was a running theme during a recent two-day gathering in Tijuana of hundreds of industry members from across Mexico.The annual convention of the country's main maquiladora association took place at the Baja California Center, a convention facility at the border of Rosarito Beach and Tijuana. Participants pondered topics such as teamwork, tax policy, new trends in logistics and innovations in manufacturing. But both in public presentations and hallway conversations, questions prevailed on how best to interact with an incoming president who denounced NAFTA and U.S. companies that manufacture overseas.

"The game of relationships with the United States is about to change," said Federico Serrano Bañuelos, president of the National Council of the Maquiladora Industry and Export Manufacturing, known as INDEX. "We must look for natural allies among the beneficiaries of NAFTA, among our corporate leaders and among the large American community that depends on cross-border commerce."More than 22 years after the signing of NAFTA, Mexico has grown into a manufacturing powerhouse, and the export-oriented plants known as maquiladoras have played a key role in this evolution. Sectors such as the automotive industry, aerospace, medical devices, electronics, have helped carry maquiladoras into a new era, with increasingly sophisticated processes, and complex supply chains.

"I think that manufacturing in Mexico is at its best moment, we are at the highest levels of productivity," said Emilio Cadena, a Monterrey-based consultant for foreign companies that establish manufacturing plants in Mexico. With Trump's victory, "the only thing we have is some uncertainty as to the new rules of the game, but other than that, nothing has changed," he said. Cadena and other industry proponents argue that Mexico's growth has not come at the cost of the U.S. manufacturing sector, as Trump has claimed. "We believe that we are part of the solution for companies in the U.S. to grow," Cadena said. That view got support from two former high-ranking U.S. government officials who served Republican and Democratic administrations

"We must not be fearful of this," said Rosario Marin, the Mexican-born Treasurer of the United States under former President George W. Bush. "Our reaction must be very measured," said Marin, a Republican who said she voted for Hillary Clinton."It's just too early to know what is going to happen," said Michael Camuñez, an Assistant Secretary of Commerce in the Obama Administration, and currently a private consultant. "Despite the need to be vigilant and prepare for the worst, we should be open for the possibility that in the end, things between U.S. and Mexico could, ironically, improve."From globalization to the internet, much has changed since NAFTA's passage, and re-negotiation and updating of the trilateral treaty with the United States, Mexico and Canada need not be detrimental to the industry, Camuñez said.Both the Canadian and Mexican governments have said they are open to the possibility, and "there's a plausible scenario where NAFTA 2.0 emerges better and stronger that what we have now. But that will require a steady hand, deep engagement by industry and the right combination of backbone and flexibility," he said.

Today, close to 2.7 million people are employed across Mexico in the country's maquiladoras, the name for export-oriented manufacturing plants that import materials duty-free and benefit from the lower labor costs in Mexico. Tijuana is one of the country's most important centers, with more then 206,000 people employed in some 600 plants. The recovery of the U.S. economy, the depreciation of the peso, and a flurry of new investments in the industry have given a new boost to the industry, especially in the country's northern border regions.

"We're on a roll," said Cristina Hermosillo, President of the Tijuana Economic Development Corporation. "We're practically on top of the curve again." The vacancy rate for industrial space is under three percent, she said, and "the problem right now is getting more land, building faster."Luis Hernández, President of INDEX in Tijuana, said there are some 8,000 vacancies at all levels in the city's plants, and to help fill those slots, the industry this month launched a pilot program aimed at hiring U.S. deportees.

This year's maquiladora convention, held for the first time in Tijuana, brought leaders of the industry representing diverse regions regions across Mexico, including Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo and Ciudad Juárez on the Texas border to central areas such as San Luis Potosí, Queretaro, Guanajuato and Guadalajara to the southern states of Campeche and Yucatán. Participants at the conference pointed out that many of their parts are produced in the United States, and any effort to limit Mexican imports would also impact on the companies north of the border.

No one spoke of any immediate impact of the results of U.S. presidential election. "Up until now, we don't see that there are going to be changes in investments or transfers of projects," said Luis Aguirre Lang, vice president of government relations in Mexico for Sanmina, a California-based electronics contract manufacturing company that employs 15,000 people in 12 plants in different cities in Mexico.Sanmina has prepared different courses of action based on the issues and statements made during Trump's campaign, Aguirre said "but we are also noting a change in the messages of the president-elect, and we think they are much more aligned with the maintenance of our plans."

Fortress or apartment building in Tijuana?

Written by Phillip Molnar

Aguascalientes 3917 apartments in Tijuana. Front of apartment building.

Jorge Ramos has not personally experienced a lot of the crime plaguing Tijuana this year, but that doesn't mean he doesn't think about it. The 25-year-old entrepreneur, owner of the Das Cortez coffee shop in the Hipódromo section of the city, said the safety elements of Tijuana's newest apartment building, Aguascalientes 3917, are part of the reason he decided to move there with two friends in August. Yet, that was just one factor. The apartment building is turning heads in Tijuana because of its ultra-modern features, while looking like a mix between a Soviet-era government building, submarine and an American prison. "There's nothing like this in Tijuana," Ramos said during a recent interview.

Aguascalientes 3917 took four years to build and cost at least $3 million for 21 apartments. Rent is $1,000 a month for two-bedroom units that range from 1,593 to 1,732-square-feet, and $1,500 for three-bedrooms that range from 1,614 to 2,561-square-feet. It was 100 percent occupied in roughly a month, said Tijuana leasing agency Probien.

One of its most distinctive features is red submarine-looking doors constructed on site. The massive doors for each apartment have antique-style maritime portholes to see who is knocking or ringing at the door. It also has two deadbolt locks and an additional metal bar to push into place for additional security.

The entrance to the complex is a brick and steel barrier with guards. A metal fence is raised to allow residents in. Metal spikes, an updated version of the broken glass used for security on Tijuana walls, cover the roof, walls and anywhere else crooks might find themselves. There's also plenty of security cameras to catch any nefarious activity.

Apartment units have an industrial feel on the inside, with floors made of concrete and steel used heavily throughout.

The complex was the vision of owner Angel Fernandez, who declined to be interviewed for this article. Probien said the San Diego man is a frequent international traveler who took inspiration from various things he saw on his travels. It's hard to say exactly where he picked up his ideas, but some of the more colorful elements include barn doors leading to a toilet, exposed brick walls with steel coat racks sticking out, pipes painted bright yellow, blue and red, as well as tile covered seats in the showers.

"This building is like reading a book or starting a new journey," said Edilia Peña, marketing manager at Probien. She said 80 percent of renters at the complex are young couples without children. Some work in San Diego County, but others are business owners in Tijuana. She estimated the average age of residents at Aguascalientes 3917 to be a range of 28 to 38 years old.

Peña said the design attracts renters that are more open to new concepts, as well as added security.

Construction manger Pablo Padilla said there were roughly 60 workers on site during the busiest building times. He said the most difficult part was the construction of a nearly 50-foot retaining wall on the property's south side that buttress homes in the Chapultepec neighborhood where the complex is located.Two distinctive beams, with metal spikes on top, connect from the complex to the retaining wall.

There is limited access to data on Tijuana's average rent, but Aguascalientes 3917 is clearly high for the border town. On Craigslist, two-bedroom houses can be rented for as little as $350 a month, but they aren't new construction and don't have nearly the same security features. Rents for new condominium buildings can run as high as $1,300.

In September, the average rent in San Diego County was $1,743 a month and $2,303 a month for anything built in the last seven years, said MarketPointe Realty Advisors. The average two-bedroom in the county was going for $1,821 a month and was 971-square-feet, nearly half the size of Aguascalientes 3917's two bedroom-units.

Probien said the property was not marketed toward Americans, although its nothing new that San Diegans often seek lower rent in Tijuana. Anyone interested in renting there might have to wait for a while — the current tenants signed 12-month leases.

LOCAL NEWS LOCAL NEWS LOCAL NEWS

Dental Checkups Can Help Prevent Pneumonia...people who never go to the dentist had an 86% greater risk of pneumonia than those who get twice-yearly checkups, according to a study presented at a forum of the Infectious Diseases Society of America and other groups, based on 2013 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey data. The authors suggest that regular cleanings reduce bad bacteria.

Global Wildlife Populations Shrink...the World Wildlife Fund said in a new report that populations of mammals, birds and fish dropped by a whopping 58% from 1970 to 2012 because of human activity. The organization forecast that the world could lose more than two-thirds of its current wildlife populations by 2020.