BAJA TIMES

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February 16-28, 2019 E-mail: bajatimes@yahoo.com WWW.BAJATIMES.COM

LOCAL & WORLD NEWS

Baja tourism officials promote areas outside of TJ...Baja Norte's Office of Tourism are in San Diego, trying to convince people that it's still safe to cross the border and spend time in Tijuana and the rest of the state, despite a recent spike of violent crimes in the city. "It's very safe to visit us," says Secretary of Tourism Oscar Escobedo, during a recent stop at ABC 10News. "I'm not downplaying what's happening," says Escobedo. "But it's outside the city." Escobedo and other officials from Tijuana have said the crimes are contained to people involved in the cartels and the drug trade, and not to tourists. Still, a perception among visitors to the region has taken hold that the city isn't safe.

To combat that perception and keep people crossing the border, tourism officials are promoting other areas. They're emphasizing cities like Rosarito and Ensenada. Escobedo also says the state has an emerging food scene, a great wine valley, hundreds of miles of beaches, hundreds of festivals and plenty of other activities that people can enjoy without fear. The message seems to be working. In 2018, a record 27 million people visited the region, spending around $6 billion.

The state also has a 24-hour hotline, 078, that visitors can call for information, directions, & assistance "Use common sense," says Escobedo. "Not just in Baja but wherever you travel."

Governor Updates Rail Travel in His State:.. Gavin Newsom announced in his first State of the State speech that he intends to scale back California's $77-billion bullet train project, saying that while the state has the capacity to complete the first leg in the Central Valley, extending the rail line to Southern California and the Bay Area would "cost too much and, respectfully, take too long."The Democratic governor supports finishing the controversial high-speed rail line between Bakersfield and Merced, and said it would invigorate the economy in California's midsection and reduce the region's air pollution. But because of the project's persistent cost overruns, mismanagement and delays, the grand vision of bullet trains whisking passengers from San Diego to San Francisco doesn't appear viable and will need to be reassessed, Newsom said. We can only hope that , to paraphrase the immortal words of Peter Parker, with the Governor's great power will come the achievement of great public works.

American Travelers Seek Cheaper Prescription Drugs In Mexico And Beyond

In Mexican border towns, big discount drugstores, as well as small pharmacies like this one, market their less expensive medicines to American tourists.

Written by Bram Sable-Smith for NPR

When Michelle Fenner signed up to run this year's Los Angeles Marathon, it got her thinking: Rosarito, Mexico, is only a 2 1/2-hour drive from LA. Why not take a trip across the border and buy some insulin for her son?"It's so easy to just go across the border," Fenner mused.

This idea had been in the back of Fenner's mind for a while. Her son was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes nine years ago, meaning he needs daily injections of insulin to stay alive. The list price of the modern generation of insulin in the U.S. has skyrocketed since then. On one trip to the pharmacy last year, Fenner was told that a three-month supply of insulin would cost her $3,700.That same supply would cost only about $600 in Mexico.

See page 04

Tijuana Poised for "Exponential Growth"

Many cross the border daily for work and collaboration between the two countries, core to the burgeoning transnational development. This easy movement is one of the key drivers for tech growth in the region.

Written by Bianca Wright

Situated just 18 miles from San Diego across one of the busiest land borders in the world, Tijuana has long been building its reputation as an attractive outsourcing destination. Almost 2.1 million people live in Mexico's sixth-largest city, many of whom are U.S citizens.

Lonnie McRorey, Co-Founder and CTO of Framework Science, believes that the outlook for the tech sector in Tijuana is one of exponential growth – unless the current U.S administration makes it more difficult for US citizens to live in Tijuana and for Tijuanans to go to work in San Diego every day. "Border politics is a double-edged sword in my opinion," McRorey says.

See page 08

The Joy of Being a Woman in Her 70s

Many of us have learned that happiness is both a skill and a choice.

Written by Mary Pipher for The New York Times

When I told my friends I was writing a book on older women like us, they immediately protested, "I am not old." What they meant was that they didn't act or feel like the cultural stereotypes of women their age. Old meant bossy, useless, unhappy and in the way. Our country's ideas about old women are so toxic that almost no one, no matter her age, will admit she is old.

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From front page...

American Travelers Seek Cheaper Prescription Drugs In Mexico And Beyond

So when she booked her trip to Los Angeles, Fenner says, "I decided we need to update our passports and go and get more insulin."Fenner is not the only one thinking like this. The U.S. government estimates that close to 1 million people in California alone cross to Mexico annually for health care, including to buy prescription drugs. And between 150,000 and 320,000 Americans list health care as a reason for traveling abroad each year. Cost savings is the most commonly cited reason.

'Right to Shop' legislation

In Utah last year, the Public Employee Health Plan took this idea to a new level with its voluntary Pharmacy Tourism Program. For certain PEHP members who use any of 13 costly prescription medications — including the popular arthritis drug Humira — the insurer will foot the bill to fly the patient and a companion to San Diego, then drive them to a hospital in Tijuana, Mexico, to pick up a 90-day supply of medicine."The average cost of an eligible drug in the US is over $4,500 per month and is 40-60% less in Mexico," PEHP Clinical Services Director Travis Tolley said in an announcement of the program last October.

The program was part of a Right to Shop bill championed by health care economist and Utah state representative Norm Thurston in 2018. Thurston says there is not yet enough data to know how much in savings the program provides; the first patients traveled to Tijuana in December, But, Thurston says, he expects that in the next six months, savings will likely be "in the ballpark of $1 million."

There are some questions about traveling abroad to buy prescription drugs, however. The first: Is it legal?According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, "in most circumstances, it is illegal for individuals to import drugs into the United States for personal use." But the agency's website does provide guidance about when it could be allowed. And the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's website has a whole section on traveling with medications in its "Know Before You Go" guide.

While the guidelines may still leave you with questions, Thurston says this sort of purchase for personal use is a widely established practice."When we talked to people about this, there has never been a single person who has been prosecuted for doing it. And it happens every day at every border crossing all over the country," Thurston says.

"The general understanding is you can bring up to a 90-day supply of a prescription from overseas, even though it's a technical violation," says Nathan Cortez, a law professor at Southern Methodist University. "My sense is the FDA does not want to worry about individuals going overseas and bringing back small amounts of prescriptions that last a few months," Cortez says, adding, "That doesn't mean the FDA couldn't change its mind at any point and start cracking down."

A second major concern that comes up in any discussion of medical tourism is about the quality of that imported medicine. According to the FDA, the reason it's mostly illegal to import drugs is because the agency "cannot ensure the safety and effectiveness" of those drugs. In 2017, the World Health Organization estimated that 10 percent of drugs in developing countries were either substandard or falsified.To address that problem, the Utah program sends its patients only to a designated, accredited Mexican hospital. Individual patients like Michelle Fenner are left to take their own precautions.

"You get a little nervous. You want to make sure that you have a reputable pharmacy," Fenner says. To get pharmacy recommendations, she has been consulting with friends and acquaintances who have purchased insulin in Mexico. She's calling those pharmacies now to make sure they have the type of insulin she wants to buy. When the marathon gets closer, she's planning to call ahead with her order.Fenner says the amount she's expecting to save on insulin could warrant multiple trips to Mexico every year.

Global savings

Fenner is just one of the growing number of activists online who are discussing the great lengths they go to — sometimes literally — to afford insulin. Lija Greenseid is another. Her daughter has Type 1 diabetes.Almost one year to the day after her daughter's diagnosis, Greenseid and her family were visiting Quebec City, Canada, in July 2014. Her daughter's blood sugar started spiking and Greenseid feared her insulin might have gone bad, so she went to a pharmacy. With no prescription and fearing that her daughter's life was on the line, Greenseid was prepared to pay a fortune.Instead the box of insulin pens that normally costs $700 in the U.S. was only around $65 or so."At that point I started tearing up. I could not believe how inexpensive it was and how easy it was," Greenseid says."I said to [the pharmacist], 'Do you have any idea what it's like to get insulin in the United States? It's just so much more expensive.' And he turned to me and said, 'Why would we want to make it difficult? You need insulin to live.' "

The more Greenseid traveled with her family, the more they realized how inexpensive insulin was everywhere except in the United States. In Nuremberg, Germany, she could get that $700 box of insulin pens for $73. The same box was $57 in Tel Aviv, Israel, $51 in Greece, $61 in Rome and $40 in Taiwan."We get so accustomed in the United States to thinking that health care has to be difficult and so expensive that people don't even consider the fact that it could be so much easier and less expensive in other places," Greenseid says. "In fact, that is the case in most countries."

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From Front Page...

The Joy of Being a Woman in Her 70s

In America, ageism is a bigger problem for women than aging. Our bodies and our sexuality are devalued, we are denigrated by mother-in-law jokes, and we're rendered invisible in the media. Yet, most of the women I know describe themselves as being in a vibrant and happy life stage. We are resilient and know how to thrive in the margins. Our happiness comes from self-knowledge, emotional intelligence and empathy for others.

Most of us don't miss the male gaze. It came with catcalls, harassment and unwanted attention. Instead, we feel free from the tyranny of worrying about our looks. For the first time since we were 10, we can feel relaxed about our appearance. We can wear yoga tights instead of nylons and bluejeans instead of business suits.

Yet, in this developmental stage, we are confronted by great challenges. We are unlikely to escape great sorrow for long. We all suffer, but not all of us grow. Those of us who grow do so by developing our moral imaginations and expanding our carrying capacities for pain and bliss. In fact, this pendulum between joy and despair is what makes old age catalytic for spiritual and emotional growth.

By our 70s, we've had decades to develop resilience. Many of us have learned that happiness is a skill and a choice. We don't need to look at our horoscopes to know how our day will go. We know how to create a good day.

We have learned to look every day for humor, love and beauty. We've acquired an aptitude for appreciating life. Gratitude is not a virtue but a survival skill, and our capacity for it grows with our suffering. That is why it is the least privileged, not the most, who excel in appreciating the smallest of offerings.

Many women flourish as we learn how to make everything workable. Yes, everything. As we walk out of a friend's funeral, we can smell wood smoke in the air and taste snowflakes on our tongues.

Our happiness is built by attitude and intention. Attitude is not everything, but it's almost everything. I visited the jazz great Jane Jarvis when she was old, crippled and living in a tiny apartment with a window facing a brick wall. I asked if she was happy and she replied, "I have everything I need to be happy right between my ears."

We may not have control, but we have choices. With intention and focused attention, we can always find a forward path. We discover what we are looking for. If we look for evidence of love in the universe, we will find it. If we seek beauty, it will spill into our lives any moment we wish. If we search for events to appreciate, we discover them to be abundant.

There is an amazing calculus in old age. As much is taken away, we find more to love and appreciate. We experience bliss on a regular basis. As one friend said: "When I was young I needed sexual ecstasy or a hike to the top of a mountain to experience bliss. Now I can feel it when I look at a caterpillar on my garden path."

Older women have learned the importance of reasonable expectations. We know that all our desires will not be fulfilled, that the world isn't organized around pleasing us and that others, especially our children, are not waiting for our opinions and judgments. We know that the joys and sorrows of life are as mixed together as salt and water in the sea. We don't expect perfection or even relief from suffering. A good book, a piece of homemade pie or a call from a friend can make us happy. As my aunt Grace, who lived in the Ozarks, put it, "I get what I want, but I know what to want."

We can be kinder to ourselves as well as more honest and authentic. Our people-pleasing selves soften their voices and our true selves speak more loudly and more often. We don't need to pretend to ourselves and others that we don't have needs. We can say no to anything we don't want to do. We can listen to our hearts and act in our own best interest. We are less angst-filled and more content, less driven and more able to live in the moment with all its lovely possibilities.

Many of us have a shelterbelt of good friends and long-term partners. There is a sweetness to 50-year-old friendships and marriages that can't be described in language. We know each other's vulnerabilities, flaws and gifts; we've had our battles royal and yet are grateful to be together. A word or a look can signal so much meaning. Lucky women are connected to a rich web of women friends. Those friends can be our emotional health insurance policies.

The only constant in our lives is change. But if we are growing in wisdom and empathy, we can take the long view. We've lived through seven decades of our country's history, from Truman to Trump. I knew my great-grandmother, and if I live long enough, will meet my great-grandchildren. I will have known seven generations of family. I see where I belong in a long line of Scotch-Irish ancestors. I am alive today only because thousands of generations of resilient *homo sapiens* managed to procreate and raise their children. I come from, we all come from, resilient stock, or we wouldn't be here.

By the time we are 70, we have all had more tragedy and more bliss in our lives than we could have foreseen. If we are wise, we realize that we are but one drop in the great river we call life and that it has been a miracle and a privilege to be alive.

Mary Pipher *is a clinical psychologist in Lincoln, Neb., and the author of the forthcoming "Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing as We Age."*

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LOCAL & WORLD NEWS

Eating Magma at a Volcano...when Asmael Salazar, his friends and family built TJ's *El Jardín Parque Gastronomica* they envisioned something a little different: a family food park that's like a barbeque in a backyard garden. It even has a playground. But a food park is only as good as the establishments cooking there. Salazar vetted each with a high-end chef's eye and a focus on sourcing quality ingredients. He also determined to achieve a diverse mix of cuisines and styles, and gave input on the menus. Perhaps *El Jardín's* most unusual spot is **Volcano**. Almost a cuisine unto itself, everything at Volcano is cooked, and not just served, in a *molcajete*, Mexico's granite take on the classic mortar (think *guacamole*). Volcano cooks proteins, vegetables and even cheese and sauces in the *mocajete* in an oven over high heat and brings the entire set-up to the table on a wooden cutting board. The one must-try dish at Volcano is the *Cielo, Mar y Tierra*, which features steak, chicken breast and a shrimp skewer with *nopales* (cactus), roast *chiles* and melted cheese. It is a profoundly rich and satisfying dish. For a spicier take on the same theme, try the Magma featuring smoky *chiltepin chiles* and a *salsa roja. Gozar!*

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"The Barcelona Legacy," a History of Soccer's Soul and Success

For Josep (Pep) Guardiola, the winningest soccer coach of the last decade, the most successful soccer tactics are simple: "Take the ball, pass the ball, take the ball, pass the ball." His team, Manchester City, won last season's English Premier League—where the dominant style of play is to kick and rush—with a record twenty-eight thousand passes, a hundred points, and five games to spare. This follows the passing records he broke during stints in Germany and Spain. He who controls the passing game, it would seem, controls the outcome.

In "The Barcelona Legacy," the soccer historian Jonathan Wilson goes as far back as the first international soccer game, between Scotland and England, in 1872, to trace the evolution of this playing style. It pops up as the Netherlands' mesmerizing "Total Football" of the 1974 World Cup, which was said to reflect the Dutch values of manipulating and conserving space; and a more recent variant is the "tiki-taka" of the F.C. Barcelona team, led by Guardiola, which won fourteen out of a possible nineteen trophies in four seasons.

The center of Wilson's narrative is set in the Catalonia of the nineteen-nineties, where a number of coaches and players (including the adolescent Guardiola) began to refine the Dutch style. In that Eden, the golden rule was that success flowed from the beauty of the game rather than from its results. Or as the Spanish coach Juan Manuel (Juanma) Lillo puts it, "The birth rate goes up. Is that enriching? No. But the process that led to that? Now that's enriching. Fulfillment comes from the process." Barcelona's success became an argument for the rule. But, just as Satan is the most engaging character in "Paradise Lost," the mischievous Portuguese coach José Mourinho, who was an assistant coach and friend to Guardiola in Catalonia, is the book's charming foil. Mourinho, who's achieved huge success coaching Chelsea, Inter Milan, and Real Madrid, has no regard for the golden rule: results are the only beauty he cares to behold. The dramatization of the rivalry between him and Guardiola—first in Spain and then in England—supplies a study of beauty and competition that complements Wilson's historical retelling and gives fans a keen, thrilling insight into the philosophy of the game.

—Anakwa Dwamena

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Ocean front private garden.
2 bd / 2 ½ ba ~ 2,000 sq. ft.
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Listed by Beba Cabello
beba@bajaopenhouse.net

Palacio del Mar
Amazing ocean view.
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$355,000
Listed by Miguel Sedano
rentinginmexico@gmail.com

From Front Page...

Tijuana Poised for "Exponential Growth"

Retaining a Transnational Spirit

Mexico-US relations have been under pressure as continued rhetoric from the Trump administration has focused on the building of a border wall, to be paid for by Mexico – something the Mexican government has consistently reiterated it will not do. Opponents have challenged the President's assertions.

Following the U.S President's State of the Union address on February 5, El Paso, Texas mayor Dee Margo, a Republican, wrote in a column for USA Today: "We in El Paso, Texas, are a community that transcends the border. While some are concerned about our proximity to Mexico, we choose to celebrate it. While others embrace building a wall, we remind them a fence already exists."

Similarly Andrea Guerrero, executive director of the community group Alliance San Diego, told the Guardian in December 2018 that "Tijuana and San Diego are one community, with one heart." This transnational spirit remains strong in places along the border. Despite this uncertainty, Tijuana remains poised for growth in the tech sector. Adriana Eguia Alaniz, Vice President of New Business at Vesta Industrial Real Estate, agrees, describing Tijauna's tech developments as "a growing sector with a lot of potential for success." Eguia is the former CEO of the Tijuana Economic Development Corporation and former Executive Director of the Cali Baja Bi-National Mega-Region.

More than 15 Los Angeles and San Diego start-ups have joined Framework Science as a result of the binational network. "It's amazing how quickly San Francisco companies can get down to San Diego and cross the border to take an Uber to their site operations. Tijuana is basically South South San Diego," McRorey says.

Sounding the Call for Tijuana Investment

Known initially for manufacturing and now for IT companies outsourcing their call center operations there, there are now a growing number of companies in Tijuana that are focusing on coding. Initiatives to draw companies in software, robotics and AI have sprung up, and, according to the San Diego Regional EDC, the rise of the innovation cluster and creation of incubators and new co-working spaces such as BitCenter and MindHub "foster the entrepreneurial spirit of locals."

High-tech companies are now looking to Tijuana as an attractive option. "Gaming companies, high-tech medical device companies and so on, are now based in Tijuana and are looking to grow in this city with a lot of potential," says Eguia. However, Tijuana needs to ensure that its benefits are visible to the world. "There's more to be done regarding positioning. People don't know all the things that can be done here. Even though talent is available, companies are also bringing people from the South of Mexico that sometimes makes for a slower recruitment process. There's no tech visa for Mexico, but the legislative process is running for Mexico to give the news for 2019," says Eguia.

McRorey adds: "Mexico also boasts the highest numbers of STEM graduates across the American continent! Tijuana's culture is binational by default, making it a hot spot for investments. Right now the real estate business and construction is booming."He explains that Tijuana is poised to be at the epicenter of transitional change as prime-country-city for cost-effective design/manufacturing and digital enterprise development outsourcing. "US companies are eyeing Mexico because of NAFTA and what it means for IP rights, and for the extreme proximity to the U.S," he says, adding that Tijuana's bi-cultural workforce makes it preferable to countries in Asia, for example.

The Need for Trusted Partners

He adds that Tijuana is primed for all types of outsourcing needs, from assembly and manufacturing to full product R&D. "Talent is drawn from Mexicali, Rosarito, Ensenada and Tecate; thus the wide geographical dispersion makes it the ideal city for this type of boom in the next 10 years," McRorey says. Mexico's president's agenda of lowering taxes and gasoline costs across the border with the US greatly incentivizes investments and business operational outsourcing opportunities.

Both agree that capitalizing on Tijuana's attractiveness requires local knowledge and a good partner. "You need a trusted partner on the ground that can navigate business infrastructure and people operations. It is best to move to Tijuana for a few weeks or months to build a network," McRorey says.

Eguia adds that you will need to be helped by an ecosystem expert or you can get lost to companies that may be not quality oriented. "There is also a lack of information if searching on the internet," she cautions.

Communion At The Border Wall In Tijuana:

What does it mean to worship in the middle of a wound?

Written by Alejandra Oliva

There's a spot at the edge of the continent where a wall plunges into the Pacific Ocean. The border wall between San Diego and Tijuana extends a good 50 feet out, far enough that you can see that if you tried to walk to its end, you'd end up past your depth. This portion of the wall has been there since the 1980s. If you drive east along it, farther into Tijuana proper, you'll start seeing portions of the wall that have only been there since October and are already beginning to rust in the sea air. This place where the border wall falls into the sea feels like the height of human folly—a literal line in the sand that's been defended to the death, the starting point of an empire.

I'm here at the wall, on the Tijuana side of the beach, at 1 p.m. on a Sunday. I walk up to it and think about stepping into the ocean, the waves up to my ankles, to rest my hands on the paint-clotted steel. There's a low mist hanging over the water, and just now the sun is beginning to cut into it. I'm in Tijuana because I've seen news reports about tear gas, people sleeping in tents, and parents being separated from their children. I'm here to help do something, but just what that is seems unclear to me.

This afternoon, though, I'm here for church. With the other volunteers, I climb up the beach to Friendship Park, past where deported veterans have painted their names on the wall next to murals and Bible verses, past food vendors and blaring boomboxes and dogs on walks.

In a lot of ways, it's an ordinary ecumenical church service. There are prayers, announcements, and a young guy with a guitar leading songs. In other ways, it isn't just another service. We're outside, where the wind whips everyone's hair and carries the sound out over the Pacific. And looming over us is the wall, some 20 feet tall. Through its slats and razor wire, we can see another group of people. Across the expanse of sandy no-man's land, we can hear another sermon, this one in English. On our side, we sing Spanish versions of the hymns I know from childhood, staring at a cross painted on the wall and a tableclothed card table set with bread and wine.

While church services sometimes feel to me like uneasy compromises between the human and the divine, the beauty of the eucharist feels uncomplicated. In sanctifying the regular, life-sustaining ritual of a meal, we call attention to a God who is present not only in this bread and this wine, at this gathering, but also everywhere in a world that's bright and buzzing with grace. Now, though, I wonder: What does it mean to call God down to a border wall, to worship in the middle of a wound?

I arrived in Tijuana earlier in the week, crossing the Chaparral footbridge with other volunteers every morning as the sun rose. I spent those days being with people as they waited to cross. I watched them as they learned about the rights we couldn't guarantee they'd get when they crossed the border, as they discovered that spouses would be separated and at least one parent would be separated from their children, as they navigated the complex calculus of a thousand unknowns. After that Sunday service I would spend another several days there, this time in pouring rain under an overpass, handing out garbage bags to keep suitcases and documents and children dry.

As we prepared people to cross over, we listened to them talk about "*el otro lado*" with burning intensity, even as they could only give vague answers about what it would look like and feel like, what they would do when they got there, and what would happen next. We prayed over people, blessing their journeys. I helped translate the prayers of clergy from English to Spanish: "*Que Dios les bendiga.*" We gathered to see off vanloads of people about to present themselves for asylum. We offered a few small comforts before they left—but all with the forced cheerfulness of a wake that's trying to be a party. Our language was that of crossing a border, but it was also the language of death.

That Sunday though, walking up to the border wall to receive communion, I felt like I was pinned to the center of everything. Between Mexico and the United States, between land and sea, between hard days and harder ones. Taking bread and wine in the shadow of the wall didn't resolve anything for me or make my faith any stronger. The grief and anger that I brought with me into the service only got heavier. The eucharist is a potent symbol of suffering turned into salvation, of the holiness of bodies, and of the strength of communities. But that afternoon, the reminder that God is present in our physical reality seemed cruel rather than hopeful.

Annie Dillard writes that "there is no less holiness at this time—as you are reading this—than there was on the day the Red Sea parted." But as the waves keep lapping up against the shore and the wall, people keep getting loaded into vans and taken into detention centers for wanting to be safe. They keep being fed into a system designed to humiliate and dehumanize them. We are not at the shores of the Red Sea, and this wall is stronger than Jericho's. It feels like all that's left here is the slow work of time and the waves, mechanical and unstoppable.

I Traveled Across 10 Countries For Asylum In The U.S. I Wound Up Living The 'Mexican Dream' Instead

Written By Ustin Pascal Dubouisson

Two years ago, when I was 23 years old, I traveled across 10 countries by bus, boat and foot to get from Brazil to the U.S.-Mexico border. At the time, I had the same goal as most migrants who arrive here: I wanted to get to the United States, in my case to join my mother and sister in Florida.

Two years later, I'm still here in Tijuana. Unexpectedly, I'm thriving, and I'm happy here in Mexico. I've got a job with an immigrant aid organization, and I'm applying for college.

When I began my journey, it seemed possible to get to the United States, with the Obama administration's moratorium on deporting Haitians back to their home country. But the policy changed as I was making my way to the U.S. border, planning to ask for asylum, and when I arrived, that door was closed.

When I first got to Tijuana, I couldn't wait to leave. The city seemed loud and chaotic, and I didn't speak a word of Spanish. I moved into a church-run shelter and needed money, so I got a job washing dishes at a restaurant, and then a different job at a tire factory. I applied to Mexican authorities for a humanitarian visa, and then was able to get a four-year work visa.

Two years later, I am still here, however, and I have made a life for myself. Sure, I want to visit my family in Florida at some point, but my goal is to be happy and stable here in Mexico. I'm an organizer for a group that offers language classes and social services to immigrants. I even published a book about my travels and experiences.

I know most people migrating to the U.S. have their minds set on the "American Dream," but I have come to realize there's a "Mexican Dream," too.

It's possible to work here, to study and nurture talents. Those doors are still open in Mexico for ambitious immigrants, and the costs aren't as great as they are in the U.S. There isn't as much pressure here from the government, from immigration authorities, from society. Yes, there's violence, prejudice and racism against migrants in Mexico, just like there is in the U.S.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not supporting the U.S. government's current immigration policy, and Mexico certainly doesn't have an open-door policy for all immigrants. But I have found that in Mexico there's more of a way forward for migrants. We have options here.

The United States might be the richest country in the world, but that doesn't mean life is automatically better there for migrants. Many Americans don't understand a lot of things about us or about what life is like in countries that are their close neighbors.

Most migrants don't want to leave their homes or families, but we do because of poverty and violence. We flee hunger, insecurity, a complete lack of educational opportunities. Mexicans, I have found, better understand this desperation. Whether or not they respect us, they get why Central Americans and Haitians have fled their countries.

Last week, I gave a talk at one of the shelters in Tijuana where hundreds of Central Americans have been staying since they began walking north in the fall. I explained to them my reasons for making a life here in Mexico and the process of getting started: applying for a visa, securing housing and finding a job.

The advice I gave to my Central American brothers and sisters was to have patience, but not passive patience. I urged them to continue to pursue getting to the United States if

Fruits and vegetables are displayed for sale at a Baja California market in downtown Tijuana

that was their goal, but not to wait at a shelter indefinitely. I suggested that they find jobs in Tijuana and move forward in life, and that they be open to making a life in Mexico rather than putting everything on hold in pursuit of a goal that may be unattainable.

Being a migrant is something to be proud of. While some view us as a problem, we need to see ourselves as we are: ambitious and determined people who left unbearable situations at home in pursuit of better lives. We need to be a team and support each other. Together we are stronger.

Ustin Pascal Dubouisson *is the author of the book, "Sobrevivientes" and works for the Espacio Migrante nongovernmental organization in Tijuana. He's originally from Port au Prince, Haiti.*

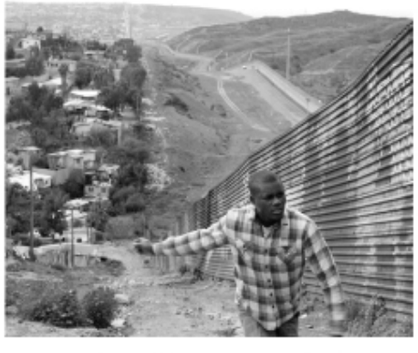
'Looking for Life' (Cheche lavi)': Film Review | Rotterdam 2019

Documentary on Caribbean Migrants in TJ Premiers at Prestigious Dutch Film Festival.

The plight of migrants is observed with poetic empathy in Sam Ellison's slow-burning debut Looking for Life (Cheche lavi), a behind-the-headlines chronicle of two Haitian friends in Tijuana patiently awaiting admission to the USA. Highly topical in its subject matter, the soulful, ruminative documentary premiered in a competitive sidebar at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and should prove a popular choice for programmers of non-fiction festivals and channels over the coming months — not least because the issues it touches upon are likely to remain pressingly controversial for the foreseeable future.

The New York City-based Ellison has worked on a range of high-profile productions in camera operator roles over the past few years, including Manchester by the Sea, Run All Night, Vox Lux and last month's Sundance hit Luce. He now steps into the directorial chair to deliver a low-key, small-scale, empathetic work of clear-eyed humanism, capturing the pains, frustrations and fleeting pleasures of those forced to depart their homelands by harsh economic and natural forces.

Introductory onscreen text spells out the background: Following the catastrophic



earthquake of December 2010, many young Haitians fled the devastation and sought work as laborers in Brazil in the run-up to the Olympics and World Cup. In 2016, rumors circulated that citizens of Haiti might get preferential treatment if seeking residency in the U.S. This resulted in many hundreds of such people heading to Tijuana (end-titles note that around still 3,000 remain there), including the film's twentysomething protagonists Robens and James.

The duo kill time on the streets of the Mexican city as they patiently anticipate their interviews with American officials, having traveled together all the way from Haiti through Brazil, Peru and Panama. Their bond of friendship, forged over years of shared hard knocks, seems to be a solid one. But this genial, laid-back bromance is ruptured just after the halfway mark when James is suddenly whisked into the American immigration system and cuts off all communication with his friend.

Ellison then alternates between the two men as they experience fluctuating fortunes, often victims of "cruel injustices" and geo-political upheavals. The election of Donald Trump in 2016 is inevitably a crucial turning-point: Looking for Life's latter half is haunted by the steady, symbolic transformation of the U.S.-Mexico border barrier from ramshackle-rusty, corrugated fencing into a high, mutely functional wall of concrete slabs.

The director-cinematographer's eye for telling visual detail enlivens the essentially static business of waiting around. After a soothing prologue shot at the Haitian seaside during an idyllic-looking dusk, Ellison (who also co-edits with Janis Vogel) moves fluently between the island and Tijuana. He unfussily conjures the atmosphere of each place, and the widescreen compositions are especially effective in magic-hour and nocturnal scenes. Ellison manages to find beauty in the quotidian — such as the pink glow of storefront neon illuminating a casual chat.

An over-reliance on Michael Beharie's score is the chief giveaway of his inexperience, the composer's mournful, elegiac tones contributing to the evocation of mood but also at times counter-productively competing with the dialogue. James and Robens' fragmentary conversations and comments — sometimes philosophical, sometimes humorous, always shot through with overlapping longings as their aspirations crumble in the face of tough realities — say all that needs to be said.

Production company: Sam Ellison
Director-screenwriter-cinematographer: Sam Ellison
Producers: Nora Mendis, Rachel Cantave, Kyle Martin, Abraham Avila
Editors: Sam Ellison, Janis Vogel
Composer: Michael Beharie
Venue: International Film Festival Rotterdam (Bright Future competition)
Sales: Sam Ellison (samellisonfilm.com)
In Haitian Creole, Spanish, English
74 minutes

Warming Up to Vegan *Pozole*

Written By Gustavo Arellano for New Yorker

***Pozole*, a Mexican hominy stew, is traditionally made with meat, but the vegan green *pozole* at *Alta Baja*, in California, is a hit.**

There is a café in Santa Ana, California, that specializes in foods from above and below the U.S.-Mexico border: Baja California wines and New Mexico-style beef jerky, corn bread made from blue maize and an array of *micheladas.* The owner's mother is an immigrant from northern Mexico, and her father is a descendent of the pilgrim William Bradford. Though the café, *Alta Baja* ("High Low"), is a reflection of her own background, she welcomes requests from customers and, occasionally, from her Mexican-American husband, who happens to be me. For a long time, I had only one. "Delilah," I'd implore her, "will you make *pozole*?"

Pozole is a hominy stew that's been eaten throughout Mexico since pre-Columbian times. When I was growing up, in Anaheim, California, in the nineteen-nineties, Sundays meant giant pots of pork *pozole* in my family's kitchen, the broth red and hot with puréed *guajillo chiles*. During the holidays, we cooked yard-tall vats of it outside my aunt's house, the better to serve all the cousins who visited. A big steaming bowl, copiously garnished—with shredded cabbage, diced onion, *serrano* pepper, a squeeze of lime, and a pinch of oregano, and with *tostadas* on the side for dunking—provided the best possible relief from hunger, cold, or a hangover.

No other vender in the food hall where *Alta Baja* operates sold *pozole*, I pointed out to Delilah. Mexicans in the area would surely flock to her for a fix. Delilah was skeptical. For many years, she was a vegetarian, so she never developed a particular fondness for *pozole*, which typically relies on pork or chicken for its rich flavor. She grew up in Irvine, California, the quintessential Orange County suburb, largely removed from traditional Mexican culture. I was the first person with a Mexican background she'd ever dated. My family immediately liked her but always joked that my wife could stand to be more *Mexicana*—and I agreed.

But Delilah has always found creative ways to express *Mexicanidad* on her own terms, and it was no different with *pozole*. One December weekend, my mom (with me serving as translator and taster) taught Delilah her recipe—how to cube the pork shoulder, how to skim away the scum that rises in the broth after the meat first comes to a boil. Mami explained that Delilah should cook the meat separately from the hominy, which turns the water it boils in a milky white.

Delilah's *pozole* débuted on New Year's Day, 2017, and it became a hit; she began serving it as a special on the last Sunday of each month. But some of *Alta Baja's* most loyal customers are vegans, and Delilah has always made sure to offer as many veggie-based menu items as possible. Now those regulars were watching meat eaters slurp up bowls of *pozole* each month and wanted to know what all the fuss was about. "We need to come up with a vegan *pozole*," Delilah said.

At first, the idea seemed preposterous to me. Meat is as fundamental to pozole as cheese is to a *quesadilla*. The earliest known reference to the stew is in a text by the sixteenth-century Spanish writer Bernardino de Sahagún, who described Aztec nobles enjoying a version made with the flesh of sacrificed captives during feast days. How could a dish with such brazenly carnivorous origins be any good without the unctuousness of animal fat?

Then again, in recent years, chefs have devised plant-based versions of other Mexican favorites, to widespread popularity among Latinx millennials. In Southern California alone, you can find *pan dulce* (Mexican sweet bread) made from palm oil and soy milk, meatless *carne asada* composed of perfectly grilled seitan and chili powder, and *carnitas* cooked with jackfruit, which has stringy flesh that replicates the texture of pork surprisingly well. Why not *pozole*, too?

I suggested to Delilah that she devise a vegan *pozole verde*, a chicken-based version of the stew, from the southern Mexican state of Guerrero. Unlike the rojo that I grew up with, with its torrent of fatty, spicy flavors, *verde* is lighter, more herbaceous, its spiciness tempered with juicy *tomatillos.*

Delilah was guided in her efforts by one of her *Alta Baja* staff members, Juana, a native of Guerrero. Juana learned to make *pozole* from her mother, who frequently sold it at fiestas in their town of *Teloloapán*. The version Juana and Delilah developed uses extra parsley in place of *hoja santa*, a large, fragrant leaf that is used in southern Mexican cuisine and can be difficult to find in the States. They also left out the *epazote*, the trademark herb in *pozole verde*, which imparts a strong flavor that some people find off-putting. "If we're going to sell it to Americanos, it should be easy for them to enjoy," Juana reasoned.

In place of meat, Delilah adds diced summer squash and whatever heirloom beans she has in stock—sometimes creamy *mayocoba*, sometimes earthy *ayocote*. The finished *pozole verde* is splendid—relishy and filling, with a light, complex heat from the addition of seven different varieties of *chili*. Best of all, it doesn't weigh you down the way *pozole rojo* does. Instead of showering it with condiments, I sometimes eat it plain, savoring the delicate flavors.

Delilah introduced her vegan *pozole* at *Alta Baja* about six months ago, and it's already popular. "I didn't think Americans would like it," Juana told me last month, as she and Delilah prepped the catering for a Christmas party for high-school teachers. They made a big batch of the vegan *pozole* and another of *pozole rojo*. At the party, the pot of green soup went fast, until only the red remained, eventually turning cold.

Vegan *Pozole Verde*

Serves 6

Ingredients

5 dried *pasilla chiles*
Boiling water (for rehydrating chiles)
1 large onion
2 green bell peppers
4 cloves garlic
3 large *tomatillos*
2 *jalapeño* peppers
1 *serrano* pepper
3 Anaheim, Hungarian, banana, or Italian peppers
1 cup *pepitas* (pumpkin seeds)
1 bunch parsley
1 tsp. salt (or to taste)
1 30-oz. can white hominy, drained
1 15-oz. can or 1 ½ cups cooked pinto or black beans, drained
1 zucchini or summer squash, cut into bite-size cubes

Garnish

Extra-virgin olive oil
2 avocados, sliced
1 cup finely shredded red cabbage
½ cup sliced *serrano* peppers
½ cup finely diced red onion
¼ cup dried oregano
3 limes, cut into quarters
4 radishes, thinly sliced or julienned
Tostadas or *tortilla* chips, for dunking

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Place *pasilla chiles* in a bowl. Cover with boiling water and let stand for five minutes, to rehydrate.

2. Cut onion and bell peppers in half. Place on sheet tray with garlic cloves, *tomatillos*, and fresh peppers. Roast until soft and beginning to brown, approximately 30 minutes. Remove the vegetables from the oven and let cool for ten minutes.

3. De-stem and de-seed the peppers and *pasilla chiles*. Remove *tomatillo* husks. Peel the garlic and onion. Place the *pasilla chiles*, roasted vegetables, *pepitas*, and parsley in a blender or food processor and pulse for a minute, until the mixture is coarse and relish-like.

4. Place the blended *pozole* paste into a medium-sized pot. Add water until the mixture attains a stew-like consistency. Season with salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes.

5. Add the hominy and beans and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the zucchini or squash and simmer for 1-2 more minutes, until the mixture is heated through but the squash remains crunchy.

6. Ladle *pozole* into bowls and top with a generous drizzle of olive oil and slices of avocado. Serve with plates of garnish and *tostadas* or *tortilla* chips on the side.

·***Gustavo Arellano*** *is the author of "Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America."*

Mexico Celebrates As '*Roma*' Grabs 10 Oscar Nominations

Written By Natalia Cano

Mexican actress Yalitza Aparicio speaks to the media outside her trailer near the US-Mexico border where she is taking part in a production, in Tijuana, Baja California state, Mexico, on January 22, 2019.

Mexicans celebrated Tuesday as *"Roma"* grabbed 10 Oscar nominations -- none more exuberantly than the film's breakout star, Yalitza Aparicio, who melted hearts and went viral with her ecstatic reaction to her best actress nomination. Aparicio, an indigenous schoolteacher with no acting experience who landed the part when she accompanied her sister to the audition, posted a video on Twitter of the moment she got the news.

Watching the announcements on a laptop in what appeared to be her hotel room in Tijuana -- where she had traveled for a photo shoot at the US-Mexican border fence -- Aparicio let out a scream when her name popped up, then pressed her hands to her face, choking back tears, in a gesture of pure joy no actress could feign.The video went viral, garnering tens of thousands of likes and countless replays on Mexican TV."I'm so happy. I was not expecting this news when I woke up so early today," Aparicio wrote.

Filmed in Spanish and the indigenous Mixtec language, set in Mexico City in the 1970s and filmed in black and white, "Roma" is not supposed to be the kind of movie that finds huge success in the United States -- especially not in the Mexico-bashing era of President Donald Trump.But Alfonso Cuaron's intimate portrait of his childhood and the two women who raised him -- his nanny, played by Aparicio, and his mother, played by best supporting actress nominee Marina de Tavira -- garnered the most Oscar nominations of any film this year, together with Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos's "The Favourite."

"Roma" scored several firsts in the process: first Spanish-language film nominated for best picture, and the first nominations for streaming giant Netflix in the directing, original screenplay, foreign language film and best picture categories, among others.For Mexico -- where the film triggered a national conversation on race, class and the traumas of the past -- the news was celebrated by figures from the president on down. Cuaron "is a first-rate filmmaker, a source of pride for Mexico. I congratulate him and all the actors and production team.... We should all see the film," said President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador -- admitting that he himself had not watched it yet.

'Viva Alfonso!'

"We're all happy! What can I say? It's been a very intense morning," said Eugenio Caballero, the production designer on *"Roma"* who famously recreated Cuaron's boyhood home and street in minute detail for the film."I'm so happy to see the nominations for Yalitza, Marina, Alfonso and the entire team," he told AFP.

Mexican filmmakers have racked up an impressive string of successes at the Academy Awards in recent years.The trio of Mexican directors known as the "Three *Amigos*" -- Cuaron, Guillermo del Toro and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu -- have won the best director award four of the past five years. Cuaron, who won in 2014 with "Gravity," now stands to make that five of the past six.

The Mexican film community was jubilant."VIVA ALFONSO!!" tweeted del Toro, whose film "The Shape of Water" won the most statuettes at last year's Oscars with four, including best picture and best director."I can't believe it!! I can't take the excitement," tweeted Gael Garcia Bernal, one of Mexico's best-known actors, who became a Hollywood heartthrob after starring in Cuaron's last Spanish-language film, "*Y Tu Mama Tambien*" (2001)."'Roma' is making history for Mexican film, on an international level," said the president of the Mexican Academy of Film Arts and Sciences, Ernesto Contreras.

Mexicans will no doubt be watching in droves when the Oscars ceremony is held on February 24."The great value of *'Roma,'* besides its visual beauty, lies in the questions it asks us as Mexicans, about who we are, where we come from and our shared wounds," said Maria Novaro, head of the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE).

—Agence France-Presse

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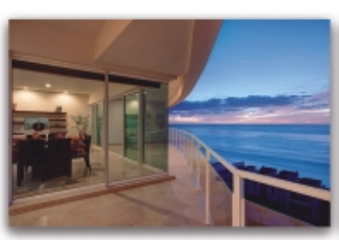

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