

THE GRAN PACIFICA WAVE

NEWS FROM THE EDGE OF THE SEA

AUGUST 2015



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

CHERYL NICHOLAS



Welcome to The Gran Pacifica Wave's sixth issue. In this issue, you will find a profile on Julie Burke, who has visited Gran Pacifica several times. There is also an introduction by Pat Younis, acting president of the Property Owner's Association, of Giovanna Velasquez, Gran Pacifica's On-Site Property Manager. Giovanna's profile lets property owners know who she is and what she does.

There is also an article congratulating Nicaragua on her independence from Spain, gained September 15, 1821. Within that article is a description of some of the celebrations that occur beginning the first day of September. The symbolization of the Nicaraguan national flag is described as well.

The Happenings section describes events having occurred at the resort. Don't miss the update on El Jícaro, our adopted community.

And, there is a short article on a few Nicaraguan superstitions.

Enjoy!

Cheryl Nicholas

SALUDOS DE BICARAGUA



On September 15, 1821, the leaders of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, which included the territories from Costa Rica to what is now the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, released the Act of Independence, which was recognized by the Spanish crown, and gained the independence of Nicaragua from Spain. The history of Nicaragua's journey to independence came in stages, and demonstrates the resiliency of the Nicaraguan people.

After gaining freedom from Spanish rule, Nicaragua and all the other regions in Central America joined the Mexican Empire, which lasted only a few years. The small countries then formed the Federation of Central American States, which lasted only a short time due to the conflicting power interests of the leaders of each province.

Nicaragua gained true independence on April 30, 1838, but was not free from political upheaval. Granada and León maintained continuous conflict, León being liberal and Granada conservative. This conflict between the people of the two factions created a weakness that was then targeted by a mercenary army from North America. Headed by William Walker and joined by the conservatives, the mercenaries stabilized the military in Nicaragua. William Walker then decided to take control of the country and declared himself president, planning to annex the region to the United States.

In 1856, the conflicting groups in Nicaragua united against William Walker, and the Central American Armies started a national war that ended with the historical battle at Hacienda San Jacinto.



Hacienda San Jacinto Memorial

The North American troops far outnumbered the Nicaraguans in both men and arms. At a cattle ranch a couple kilometers from Managua, a small group of men, charged with slowing the North American assault, waited for the mercenaries, and the battle began. When the violence intensified, the Nicaraguans lost their positions. Some of the men went to an enclosure on a hill within the farm and set all the horses free. When the invading army heard the thunder of horses' hoofs, they thought Nicaraguan reinforcements had arrived and the invading troops fled.



Another historical event during this battle came from Nicaraguan Sergeant Andrés Castro. He was losing his position, and his arms were jammed. When a mercenary soldier crossed a trench, Castro threw a rock at the soldier. It hit him so violently, it killed him. A mural at the museum at Hacienda San Jacinto depicts the scene. Coincidentally, this battle took place on September 14, one day before the independence celebration.

On September 1 every year, the country becomes awash in blue and white. Schools and institutions begin the celebration of Nicaragua's independence by reading the historical document drafted in 1821. Blue and white flags fly from homes, schools and businesses. The celebrations are named to be patrimonial,

Parades of marching soldiers, dancing señoritas and señores, musicians and Nicaraguan food fill the streets.



During this month, a burning torch travels through Central America from Guatemala to Costa Rica, traveling by the feet of the people and passing from hand to hand in each of the countries. The torch arrives at Las Manos on the Honduras border on September 11, and that morning is exchanged between the Ministers of Education from Honduras and Nicaragua. The torch then journeys through the country over the Pan-American Highway. The best students of each municipality run with the torch no more than 100 meters, handing it off to other running students. The total run is 387 kilometers (about 240 miles), and runners number as high as eight thousand.



NICARAGUA'S NATIONAL FLAG

The Nicaraguan National Flag symbolizes the cohesion Nicaragua has gained through the struggle of its people for independence.



The two blue sections represent the two bodies of water that frame Central America, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The white section between them represents the land that connects the two bodies of water.



The emblem in the center of the country's flag, between the two oceans, is of an equilateral triangle, representing unity. The five volcanoes represent the five countries of Central America, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica. The rainbow and the sun, in the form of the Cap of Liberty, represent national freedom. The rays radiating over the volcanoes symbolize Nicaragua's bright future. This flag was officially adopted in 1971.

NEWS FROM GRAN PACIFICA PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

PAT YOUNIS

THE GPPOA HAS ARRIVED AT GRAN PACIFICA!

During the last several weeks, a change has been taking place at Gran Pacifica. Did you notice activity at the Model House and wonder what was going on? Did you notice that on a recent weekend there was a truck followed by cars parked along the boulevard? They were all piled high with boxes and office equipment and stacks of hangers with clothes? Have you noticed lights coming from the Model House late into the evening and early in the morning?

GREET GIOVANNA VELASQUEZ!

Your New Full-Time On-Site Property Manager

Gran Pacifica Property Owners Association is open for business at Gran Pacifica!

Drop by the Model House (located along the main boulevard)

Office hours: 9 to 5, Monday through Friday

Or call Giovanna to set a time. She can be reached at +505 5839-3378

We are so pleased that we can put the difficulties of the past behind us with this sweet and long-planned moment! After the sudden and fractious departure of Roger Keeling and Milagro del Mar from Gran Pacifica late last September, Patrick Hiebert arrived immediately thereafter to salvage all possible. Since then, Patrick, along with the able assistance of Angela Smetana, has done an exhausting and amazing job of managing the Gran Pacifica common areas and resort operations. In truth, though, Patrick and Angela had help. Cooperation and collaboration came from staff members and maintenance personnel, the Gran Pacifica Resort corporate office, the GPPOA and, most of all, property owners who kept the faith! We are so grateful to each and every person who played a role in righting the listing ship, now surging ahead with sails unfurled.

Then, in mid-May, the time arrived: management duties transitioned back to GPR which immediately appointed GPPOA as the on-site manager. A key component of the transition was the relocation of Giovanna from the GPR Managua corporate office to Gran Pacifica. The goal was realized a few weeks ago when Giovanna moved from both her home and her office in Managua to Gran Pacifica.

Over the next month or so, we ask your patience. We will be settling in. There are many details in a major relocation, and we will be addressing them all. We anticipate that we will be completely up and running by mid- September. Watch for our Open House celebration! Stay tuned!

RESIDENT PROFILE: GIOVANNA VELASQUEZ



A delightful new resident to Gran Pacifica Resort is Giovanna Velasquez. She has moved onto the property as Onsite Property Manager for the Property Owners' Association. Giovanna has been with Gran Pacifica for nine years, and says it is no longer a 'job' to her. It is her career. In 2011, after working for Mike Cobb, CEO of ECI Development and Gran Pacifica Resort, as his administrative manager for five years, she was asked to become the Property Owners' Association's Administrative Manager. Then, 2015 brought her into a whole new adventure as Onsite Property Manager.

Giovanna says she has always dreamed of living by the sea. At almost 37, she didn't think it would happen so soon!

Giovanna and her family lived in the States during the counter-revolution in the mid-eighties, then returned to their country in 1991.

Born in Managua, she has an older brother and sister. Her mother, a retired social worker, and her father, a retired lawyer, have been married for 30 years.

Giovanna speaks very highly of both of her parents. She says her mother is a very kind person and has always been ready to help anyone at any time. Her father, she says, taught her to always do what is right. Her interest in poetry was inspired by him. She expresses a great deal of respect for his having to start over from scratch three times, and for always being "a protector."

Giovanna's aspirations? She says she wants to stay with Gran Pacifica "forever," and she attends a full day every Saturday at the University of Central America studying to be a lawyer. As a single mother bringing up her son, Juan, now 15 years old, she became passionate about how the law can and cannot help children. She had to wait until she'd worked a few years to acquire funds in order to begin law school.

Giovanna is also passionate about her work, and is looking forward to getting to know all the property owners who live on the property full or part time. She is eager to help owners with issues, including legal questions that, if she doesn't know a particular answer, she will research so that she can pass on the information.

"I love customer service. I do lots of things," she said. She says she enjoys reading, poetry and likes to laugh and to cry. She explained herself by saying she doesn't like science fiction, but likes to watch movies and shows that are human and make her laugh and/or make her cry.

We have another gem, here, at Gran Pacifica Resort.

Welcome home, Giovanna!

For further information on Giovanna's activities or questions regarding the Property Owners' Association, contact: gvelasquez@granpacificacom

GUEST PROFILE: JULIE BURKE

JO-ANNE STOLTZ



Julie Burke, a regular visitor to Gran Pacifica, talks about her introduction and involvement in Nicaragua, and reflects on the past year.

Her husband, affectionately known to her as Matty, knew Larry and Maryellen Giles from the chilly surf of New Hampshire. The couple convinced him to visit Nicaragua for a surf vacation, so he and his buddies started vacationing nearby seven years ago. Julie stayed behind thinking there would be nothing for her to do, and feeling the accommodations would be too rustic.

Julie visited three years later while Matty was on one of his surf trips, and after having discovered that they could travel and volunteer together, her girls followed a few months later.

Maryellen suggested that they spend their time at Gran Pacifica, where they would enjoy most of the comforts they do at home. Also, knowing that Julie and her girls would need things to do while here, Maryellen suggested Julie collect baseball gear to give to the local baseball teams. As many know, Nicaraguan people are passionate about baseball, although many teams lack the necessary equipment.

On their first trip, the Burkes brought a few baseball gloves, bats, hats and balls to the children in the community of California, which made the little ball players jump for joy. Julie and her girls were inspired by the excitement and gratitude shown by the children, and founded the nonprofit organization, Double Play Gear. Since then, she and her family have been able to send enough equipment to supply whole teams in several villages, allowing any child who wants to play to join a team. They absolutely love watching the little league games. Julie says it brings them joy to see the kids in teams, playing ball together rather than causing mischief.

Their visits to Gran Pacifica Resort have allowed the Burkes to make many local friends. Local surfer Mark Randall connected them to Casa Esperanza, the orphanage in nearby Los Cedros. Julie was greatly inspired and has raised enough money for the orphanage to acquire and install iron bars for the windows and protection for the doors, improving the security and safety of the children. They were even able to afford a playground cover for the children, twenty-five chickens, pigs, and food for the animals!

In 2014, they spent two months volunteering at Casa Esperanza. During that time, Julie got to know one child in particular, named Belén. The family fell in love with her. Julie inquired about adopting Belén, but was told the little girl would be difficult to adopt because her documents were not in order. Julie knew she could provide a good life for Belén, and persisted through talking to friends and the people at the orphanage. After a few months, Belén became their foster child. After four months of fostering Belén and waiting for court and abandonment documents to be completed, Belén became their legal daughter. Belén finishes off their family of five perfectly, and the family just celebrated their first year together.

Julie, Matt and family will be back on property later this year, with baseball gear and school supplies in tow.

If you would like to know more about Julie and her family's fund raising activities, visit, [Double Play Gear Nicaragua](#) on their Facebook page.

If you would like to know more about volunteer activities or living at Gran Pacifica, contact Jo-Anne at joanne.stoltz@gmail.com

SUPERSTITIONS, MYTHS AND BELIEFS

Every culture has its superstitions, wives' tales and various beliefs. Most of us know not to step on a crack or we will break our mother's back. Care must be taken with a mirror because if you break one, you are set for seven years of bad luck. Don't forget to toss salt over your left shoulder if you spill some or bad luck will follow. Drop a fork at dinner? Company is coming.

Here are a few from Nicaragua:

During an eclipse, a pregnant woman won't go outside because her child will be born with a birth mark of some sort.



Wiping a baby's mouth with the seam of a virgin's skirt will stop him from drooling.

Breast milk of a first-time mother will cure eye infections, but the baby must be a boy.

A clove of garlic stuck in the ear will relieve an earache.

A piece of red thread on a baby's forehead will cure the hiccups.



The bark of an Hombre Tree is a cure-all, even cancer, it is said.

Pineapples are poisonous if eaten after 5 PM.

To get your baby to walk, rub duck fat on the bottom of his or her feet.

If you take a shower when you are hot and sweaty, you will drown because water will go through your skin and into your lungs.



There are people who can change into monkey-like creatures and jump around on your roof, but they cannot hurt you if you wear your t-shirt inside out.

Don't drink something cold after eating warm bread, or you'll get diarrhea.

Don't sit under a Tamarindo tree when sick, or you will get sicker, because these trees have cool winds that blow off of them.



Many women refuse to iron in the kitchen for fear of death if the refrigerator is opened due to "grippe mortal."

For someone who is sick, pregnant or has a new open wound to go to a funeral or pass within a block of a viewing, is very dangerous.

Never, ever iron in front of a mirror.

Never look in the eyes of a strange man who knocks on the door. He will hypnotize you and make you bring him things like money or your computer.

HAPPENINGS

Angela Smetana has been graced with the gathering of her whole family. Her parents, Mike and Cindie Smetana, just retired and they plan to visit with Angela, her sister, Julia, Osmond, Kaiden and Mikah, Julia's partner, until mid-September. Then they are off to Hawaii for a few months!



Congratulations, folks, in reaching your dream. Enjoy your time with family and your future adventures!!

Angela stays busy with office business, and she put a lot of effort into planning an event for the Federal Mogul Auto Parts Corporation. The group celebrated their Costa Rica employees with a fun time at Gran Pacifica Resort on August 22nd and 23rd. It was a catered event, and many employees of the corporation received awards.

August 9th through the 12th saw the resort filled with lovely ladies. The Miss Mundo competitors spent several days with a film crew, filming for seven hours of television airtime and having many fun hours at the pool and on the beach. The program begins airing Sunday September 13th at 7:00PM CST on Nicaragua's Channel 2.



A few upcoming items regarding the restaurant:

There is another wedding planned for the 5th of September.

Nicaragua Independence Day holidays are September 14th and 15th. A long weekend of fun is expected at the resort.

New chairs are expected at the restaurant within a few weeks.

Free English classes are being given to employees once a week for two hours.

Plans for the Health Fair organized by the non-profit organization Travel to Do Good are in the works and have gained the interest of property owners and guests of Gran Pacifica who are in the medical profession.

El Jícaro Update

Our adopted community, El Jícaro, has had more activities from guests and residents. Operation Walk Winnipeg, the group coming to perform knee surgeries in Managua, is bringing backpacks, school supplies, and a couple of used computers.

Guests and potential property owners at Gran Pacifica, Alisa and David Ren Alison, visited El Jícaro. The couple is from Las Vegas, and David is a magician who has a show there. Everyone had great fun while he entertained the children with magic. See the video below.

Guest, Julie Burke, brought baseball equipment and jerseys for all the children at the school. Jo-Anne Stoltz, Maryellen Torrisi and her daughter, Taylor, all delivered the goodies. The children were filled with excitement to see all the gloves, balls and caps. They especially liked the shiny new blue jerseys and matching blue caps. Julie started a nonprofit organization to help with baseball gear and other things the children need. See Julie's profile in this issue.



Jo-Anne Stoltz has been out to the community helping the children with their library cards and the books. She went out with Julie Burke and spent an afternoon reading to the children.

Fresh paint was applied to the new building with running water for showers and a big sink.



These children are so grateful for every little thing and extend their gratitude through their art work at the school.



Word has spread and more items are on their way from generous visitors and residents. Dinh Nguyen is bringing a wheelchair for the lady with Parkinson's, and anything else useful he can manage to bring with him on the plane. The group from Canada coming in November, Operation Walk Winnipeg, is bringing a couple used laptops as well as book bags and school supplies for each child.

A new friend arrived last week and Jo-Anne Stoltz and I took him to visit the community. Osmar Osario is the brother-in-law of the administrative assistant for Dr. Erik Bohm, who heads Operation Walk Winnipeg. He wanted to see El Jícaro and has plans to contribute to the village. We are excited to have this very bright, spirited man join the efforts. We're very excited to have the Winnipeg group come to Gran Pacifica for the fourth year running with their plans to provide knee surgeries to the local people.

It is exciting to see the contagion of doing good works. Thank you Gran Pacifica, Operation Walk Winnipeg, Dinh Nguyen, Jo-Anne Stoltz, Mark Randall, Bob Price, Maryellen Torrisi, Julie Burke, Dr. Ellen Roose, and others who have contributed to improving the lives of the people of this village.

LETTER FROM THE CEO



MIKE COBB

Dear Property Owners,

I hope you have enjoyed this latest issue of The Gran Pacifica Wave. August was an exciting month for Gran Pacifica, and it was great to see so many new and familiar faces getting involved in the community. From residents' and guests' continued involvement with El Jícaro, to new property owner Jim Reno joining residents and employees in painting a community home, to Roslyn Parker's planned Health Fair, giving season is in full swing at Gran Pacifica. I firmly believe that Gran Pacifica will benefit by improving the lives of those in our surrounding communities. This can be through increased services, feelings of goodwill, and more qualified workers to be a part of Gran Pacifica's continuing expansion. I always knew that I wanted the company to give back in a substantial way, but what is most impressive to me is the way that guests and residents have come together to help with our initiatives, and also started their own very successful programs.

There is a saying making its way around that goes, "If you think you're too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito in the room." This short line says volumes about what individuals with an idea can accomplish with a little perseverance. A lot of people thought I was crazy to try building a town by the sea in Nicaragua. How could it possibly work?

My answer? Community. I knew that was what I wanted to build, and believed that if I did, I would soon be joined by other like-minded individuals. And I was. We went from being a couple of individuals with a shared vision to a small, active group. And then it got bigger, and bigger. Now, there is a village on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua where there were once empty fields. Not only that, but our village counts among its assets a popular hotel, a gourmet restaurant, a golf course, and so much more. Gran Pacifica has truly begun to live out the vision I had for it at the beginning. Some of you have joined our community recently. I say, "Welcome." Some of you have been part of this great journey from the start, and I can tell you, it has been great to count you among my friends and colleagues.

As Gran Pacifica continues to increase in popularity, both in Nicaragua and abroad, I look forward to many more new faces and community members. Speaking of our popularity in Nicaragua, I'd like to offer congratulations to Giovanni Rodriguez, the General Manager of our restaurant and hospitality services. Giovanni worked tirelessly over the summer to foster our relationship with Miss Mundo Nicaragua, and his hard work has culminated in unprecedented airtime for Gran Pacifica on Nicaraguan television. I am very excited to see the effect this great publicity will have for both our day-to-day and our property sales at Gran Pacifica. The broadcast will be on Sunday nights at 7:00pm CST, on Nicaragua's Channel 2.

I am thrilled to carry August's excitement forward into September, and glad to be able to share it with you, our property owners and shareholders. It takes all of us to make the Gran Pacifica community what it is, and I look forward to working with you well into the future. Please, reach out to me with any questions or suggestions you may have. I know The Wave is always looking for submissions as well, if you would like to tell your story.

Until Next Time,

Mike Cobb