

THE GRAN PACIFICA WAVE

NEWS FROM THE EDGE OF THE SEA

JULY 2015

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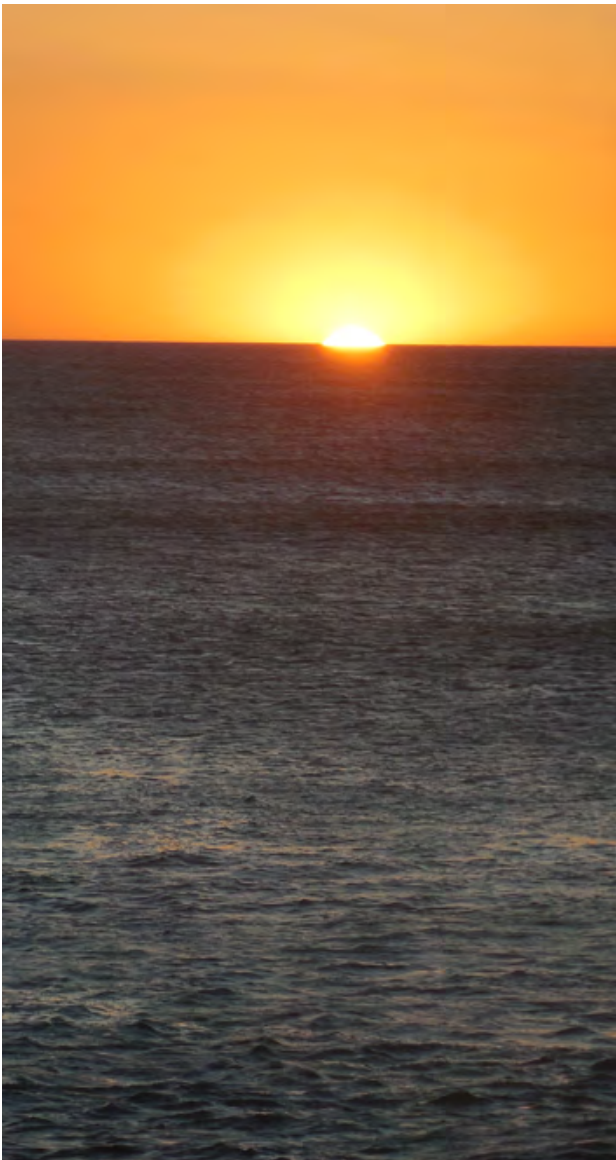
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Issue #5

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

CHERYL NICHOLAS



Welcome to the fifth issue of The Gran Pacifica Wave. We are proud to present consistent features and stories reflecting the positive activities at Gran Pacifica Resort.

In this issue, you will find an article from Mike Cobb, CEO of ECI Development and Gran Pacifica. Also, note the profile on Roslyn Parker, creator of the organization "Travel to Do Good," which organizes travel with groups of various volunteers all over the country educating populations and providing help where needed.

An offshoot of the Nicaraguan Shoe project initiated by Karl Ohrman, homeowner at Gran Pacifica and ECI shareholder, is the Pen Pal Project begun by Jessica Wolfe. She writes about her experience of the first delivery of letters to the children of the Santa Barbara Community.

There is an article about Nicaraguan culture and what travelers new to the country can learn about traveling in the city. Also included is a feature article on hand and body language used in Nicaragua, many of which are valuable to avoid confusion or in avoiding offending someone. Some are simply fun to know facts.

Happenings for this issue contains many events and activities that have happened or are planned to occur, such as more benevolent groups arriving at Gran Pacifica to help our surrounding villages. A new resident has arrived in the form of a brand new baby named Levi Kai Nguyen.

And, there is a special little feature that could gain you a complimentary cocktail of your choice at the Sea Salt Restaurant.

It is gratifying to see the contagion and spread of goodwill by residents and guests of Gran Pacifica. Thank you for all for your support, and I am looking forward to more submissions from you, our readers.



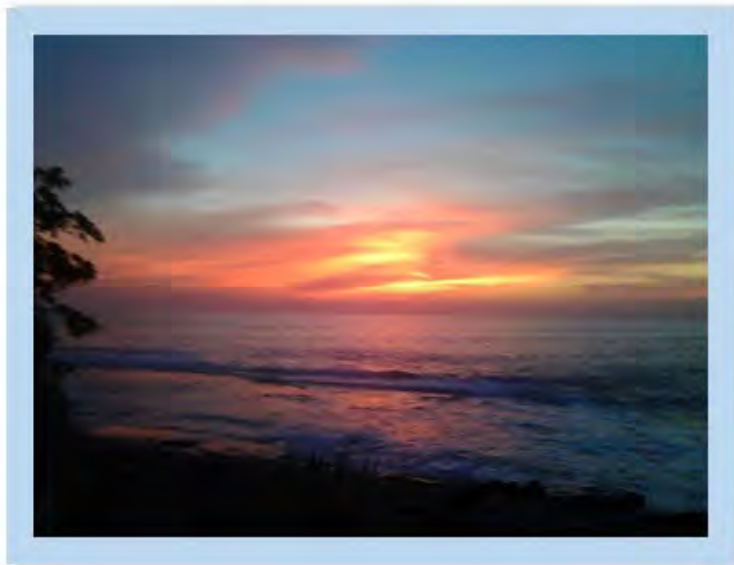
And, an added note: There are a few copies of Voodoo Bayou left in the Surf Shop at Gran Pacifica. It is also available on Amazon. Click on the link below for more information.

In darker shades of Thelma and Louise, Shannon and Tamanca are pursued through the bayous and swamps of Louisiana by a dirty cop and his goons for drug money Tamanca stole. They then become the pursuers after a Voodoo Ceremony where the Voodoo Goddess, Erzulie guides and protects them.

Erzulie, however, is also a flirt and causes Shannon difficulties with a man she does not want to be attracted to ... the detective who arrested her for murdering her own father. Shannon is haunted by gaps in her memory that return to her in cascading explosions of shock and terror. Ride along in the muddy roads of Voodoo Bayou and share with them the terror of finding Tamantha's lover's gruesome murder, and the capture and torture of their pursuers in Tamantha's Cajun uncles' bayou shack deep in Voodoo Bayou.

http://www.amazon.com/Voodoo-Bayou-Cheryl-Nicholas/dp/1503015955/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1437757959&sr=8-1&keywords=voodoo+bayou

Until next we meet again
Cheryl Nicholas, Editor.



I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

—Etienne de Grellet
Quaker Missionary

PROFILE: ROSLYN PARKER

Here at Gran Pacifica Resort, I had the immense pleasure of meeting Roslyn Parker, head of Travel to Do Good, the organization where she and her group of volunteers travel to countries around the world to help with the needs of residents in various communities.

Roslyn's first project at Gran Pacifica was assisting Jessica Wolfe, intern at ECI Development and Gran Pacifica, in distributing pen pal letters to several children from Santa Barbara school, just outside the gates of Gran Pacifica. Her eyes sparkled when she spoke of the joy she saw in the faces of the children and their mothers to whom they handed the letters. Jessica began the project through communication with Karl Ohrman from Pennsylvania, who was featured in the third issue of The Gran Pacifica Wave. He and his wife collected and delivered over 5,000 pairs of shoes to Nicaraguan school children



Roslyn blends her love for travel and her passion for serving others through the creation and management of life-changing opportunities for individuals and groups who need help. She describes her dedication and commitment in volunteerism, of which a large component is education, as part of her personal journey in giving back to those less fortunate.

Roslyn's philanthropic journey began with a trip to the Dominican Republic 25 years ago. This was her first international trip and she found great joy connecting with people from different cultures. She enjoyed talking with them and was very curious to know what their life was like. She saw, first-hand, how different their life was compared to her own. A dawning within her wanted to bridge that gap, but she wasn't sure how to do that. She continued to talk with the locals and felt the least she and her group could do was purchase souvenirs from them to give a little bit back. She knew she would come back one day and perhaps share a part of herself in a way that could impact in a positive way the lives of these impoverished people.

Years later, she discovered that there was an entire industry dedicated to travel volunteerism. Her first volunteer travel experience included education and was with Airline Ambassadors, a U.S. based nonprofit organization committed to helping children. Ironically, her first trip was to the Dominican Republic, the very place that had sparked her own commitment a quarter of a century earlier.



Originally from Norfolk Virginia, Ms. Parker says her father was her role model and she learned from him the value of living a life of purpose and the importance of giving back. Divorced, with an adult son who lives in Dallas and an adult daughter who lives in New York, Roslyn resides in Houston, Texas. Her parents are deceased and her extended family lives in Virginia.

Ms. Parker has arranged volunteer trips including education travel programs in the Caribbean, Central America, and Africa. Some of her projects have been developing an art program in South Africa named the “Clothesline Project” for victims of domestic violence, organizing domestic violence educational workshops in the Dominican Republic, various art programs for schools in Peru, and conducting teen empowerment educational workshops in Jamaica. She also organized a community room makeover along with a Christmas event for a girls’ home in Jamaica, delivery of aid to nonprofit organizations in Jamaica, Dominican Republic and South Africa, and educational programs for university students in Ghana. Roslyn’s son, Steven and daughter, Sherie have participated with her in projects with two orphanages in South Africa.



Her travels have taken her around the globe as she works with nonprofit organizations world-wide, including Airline Ambassadors. Her special interest is in educational programs that impact women and children. Ms. Parker said, after her visit to Nicaragua and Gran Pacifica, “Once again I am on the road and very excited to explore Nicaragua voluntourism opportunities. Two years ago while on a family vacation, I had the opportunity to visit Managua, Esteli, Leon, and Corn Island. I found Nicaragua to be an affordable destination where the people were warm and friendly. The destination also offered something for everyone; a blend of water sports, beaches, history, culture and ecotourism. As fate would have it, on our return flight home, I met Kent Payne, Director of Sales with Gran Pacifica, an oceanfront golf resort community of rentals, customized and ready-to-buy homes and condos, 90 minutes outside of Managua, Nicaragua.

While speaking with Kent, he shared with me the vision of the Gran Pacifica project. I also learned that at the very heart of this organization is a corporate culture of giving back with every employee engaged in the process. We had been challenged to find a solid volunteer travel partner in Nicaragua and so this connection was perfect. It was easy to see that this could possibly be a good fit for our volunteer travel/voluntourism initiatives.

Additionally, I was introduced to Patrick Hiebert, one of the principals of Gran Pacifica. In addition to that role, he is the founder of Help Them Help Themselves, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing healthcare and education to children in Central America. They work with other nonprofit partners and volunteers from around the world, and have built two new schools in the local community just outside of Gran Pacifica.

It is their philosophy and commitment to enriching the lives of others that makes these entities the perfect corporate and nonprofit partners for our travel to do good/voluntourism initiatives here. It certainly makes my life easier when I work with individuals and organizations that get it.

There are many ways to travel to do good:

- Distribute Aid/Donation of personal hygiene products, backpacks, school supplies and shoes.
- Lead sports clinics/also donation of sports equipment.
- Doctors, nurses and other medical personnel participating in medical missions.
- Teach English as a second language.
- Painting and light construction.”

Roslyn will return with a group of medical professionals in November to conduct a health screening clinic for the communities just outside the gates of Gran Pacifica Resort.

Gran Pacifica has found another gem in Roslyn Parker. We must nurture and polish this opportunity of yet, another dedicated person who can add to the quality of life of Gran Pacifica’s surrounding villages.

For more information on Ms. Parker’s organization and her good works, click the links below.

www.traveltodogood.com

<https://www.facebook.com/traveltodogood>



FEATURE:NICA CULTURE

■ CHERYL NICHOLAS

A friend and I were on a “girls” day trip to Managua, and while walking through the mall I spotted an American shoe store and made a bee line, excited because I was familiar with the store and needed some shoes. I found the section for walking shoes and spotted a pair I liked. Just as I reached for one of the shoes for a closer look, a Nicaraguan lady pushed in front of me and stood, looking at the shelf of shoes, blocking my view and my reach. I was irritated at what I perceived as rudeness and reached around the woman, grabbing the box of shoes.

On our way home, I told my friend about the rude lady.

“Oh, that wasn’t rude to her,” she said. She went on to explain to me that Americans are raised to be aware of everyone around them and are more concerned about personal space. Nicaraguans are not raised that way and pay no attention if they move in front of someone or block someone’s passage.

While driving through town, stopping for traffic most times will result in the car surrounded by men wanting to wash the windshield. On the main roads, children and women walk up and down the street selling various items, such as sunglasses and cell phone cases as well as water and juice.



Many of the women on the street or in the markets carry their wares on their heads, as huge plastic bags of cashews or large platters of ready to eat food. Many of the children and younger men can be very pushy if the window of your car is open. The first time I saw this, I realized they wouldn’t take no for an answer. That is correct If you engage them, they will continue to beg you to purchase what they are selling. The windshield washers are especially persistent

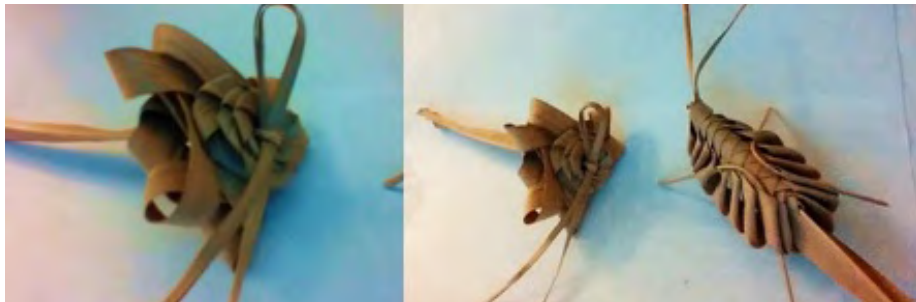
and will wash your windshield anyway. If you are a Gringo, you will be irritated, but will feel obligated to give the guy a few Córdobas. If you are Nicaraguan or have lived in Nicaragua for a time, you will extend your index finger and wave it back and forth to stop them or let them know their window washing is futile. If they continue, you are not obligated in any way to pay them anything.

On my first couple trips to town, I felt I should 'give' but that feeling soon evaporated when I realized I couldn't 'give' to everyone who came up to the window, or I would never get where I was going and would be out of Córdoba when I got there.

Within any society are opportunists. Many times children will come to your car with nothing to sell but will extend their hands for Córdoba, looking at you with mournful brown eyes. It was difficult for me to not give them something. One day I reached out and dropped a few Cordoba coins into a small brown hand. Like bees to pollen, we were immediately surrounded. The friend who was with me explained that these are the children exploited by their parents and, if you give them anything, the car will immediately be engulfed with children begging you for money.



On a trip to Masaya to the outdoor market, several children followed the tourists around with cute figures of flowers, grasshoppers and birds they'd made with bamboo. I was very impressed with the creativity and have them displayed in my home.



These children have their operation well planned. At one point, a little girl of about ten years came up to me, expressed I was "Bonita," and dropped two of the figures over my shoulder so I would catch them. She indicated they were "free," but followed me all the way to the car and stood there with the woeful brown eyes. How could I resist? I gave her a few Córdoba, then quickly climbed into the car before I was surrounded by more children with more figurines and more big brown mournful eyes.

This isn't to say street vendors are thieves or out to cheat you. It is part of the Nicaraguan culture and economy. On the positive side, it is very convenient after shopping, then driving in the heat, to see a Nicaraguan man in the street carrying small plastic bags of very cold water or juice, or a plastic bag full of slices of juicy mangos. They don't crowd around your car, but are quick to catch your eye or to see a slight wave of a hand and bring to you a cold bag of water for a couple Córdoba. You learn, my friend explained, who has the coldest water and the juiciest fruit.



In the market, children, men and women carry their wares, usually cheap plastic toys or small items such as flashlights, key chains, etc. When sitting at one of the food areas, you are a captive audience and they often will not leave your table and continue to beg you to purchase. The key is to ignore them after you tell them no. In America, where street vendors are accepted only at outdoor events such as concerts and festivals, the street and market vendors would be chased off with rude words. To a Gringo, it may feel rude to ignore someone standing at your table speaking to you, but if you don't want what they are selling, the key is to not engage. If you do purchase something, be prepared to ignore the group that will then surround your table.

PEN PALS

JESSICA WOLFE

Here I was, taking Roslyn Parker, CEO of Travel to do Good, on a Nicaraguan adventure, to deliver pen pal letters to the children and teachers to a community just outside Gran Pacifica. Riding in the back seat, I peeked down at the stack of letters bouncing softly in my palms, admiring their colorful, stickered facades. As I traced the young handwriting with my eyes, a jolting alarm shot through my mind like an electric shock and my gut tightened with the realization that I had doomed our trip before it ever truly began. Underneath the students' names and addresses where they should have said Santa Rita Community, they instead said Santa Barbara Community. I had brought the wrong letters!



It was early Saturday morning at Gran Pacifica, and the birds had begun their melodic symphony for those awake to hear it. My oldest and closest friend, Colleen Fugate, was accompanying Roslyn, Osman, tour guide for Gran Pacifica Resort, and me as we picked up a local teacher, Alberto Aburto, on our way to deliver letters to students in the Santa Rita Community... or so we thought.

The letter delivery program branched out of the Shoes for Nicaragua project put in place by the Pittsburgh Rotary and Karl Ohrman, property owner and investor at Gran Pacifica Resort. The students at Hance Elementary in Pittsburgh had helped to collect shoes and became particularly passionate about the project. This passion inspired them to spend a few classes in their final days of school writing letters and sending video messages to students in the Villa el Carmen area.



This big letter delivery had been much anticipated by students and teachers, both in Nicaragua and in the States. When I first received the letters, I tucked them away, like presents, anticipating with much excitement the morning when they would be opened. Now, for a group of those letters, that day was upon us.

After picking up Alberto at the Santa Rita bus stop, I described to him the mistake. A big smile lit up his eyes when he saw the letters. He explained that while he lives in Santa Rita, he is a teacher and the school director at the Santa Barbara School, a more impoverished community that's about 15 minutes away, down a maze of back roads. The road to the Santa Barbara School is rugged. We drove up hills, traversed dirt mounds, maneuvered past cows, and even moved very close and parallel to a ravine.

I felt sufficiently lost when Alberto let us know we had arrived at the first home. The student here lives the farthest away from the school—from everything, really. Just two days before we arrived, Alberto explained, the local church built a well for their home. The residents of the community must walk several kilometers to reach a source of water.



When the family saw Alberto approach, they calmed the barking dogs and welcomed us into their home. Alberto introduced our team from Gran Pacifica as having a letter for their 3rd grade daughter, Katya. When Katya heard this, she eagerly accepted the envelope. I watched her as she felt the smooth surface of the envelope where her name was inscribed in purple pen. I wondered if this was the first piece of mail she had ever received.

While the seal had been doubly fortified with scotch tape, she moved her fingers so carefully to remove it that the envelope was completely in tact after she carefully peeled it open.

A letter, pictures and stickers tumbled out of the envelope. Katya's Pittsburgh pen pal had included shots of her family in front of a snow capped mountain, a big golden retriever dog, and her younger brothers. Katya smiled as we translated the letter for her. She, too, had dogs and brothers, though she had never seen snow.

After watching Katya gaze at the photos, my friend Colleen taught Katya how to use her camera so that she could capture the story of her own family to pass along. She giggled as she went around snapping photographs of her horse, parrot, mother, and brothers. Roslyn quickly moved around the home and befriended Katya's younger sisters. She spoke to them in broken Spanish as they laughed and played.



I was caught up in watching all of the happiness around me, pondering how transformative little gestures could be, and how something as simple as a letter could open up a home and bring a group of strangers together.



I was caught up in watching all of the happiness around me, pondering how transformative little gestures could be, and how something as simple as a letter could open up a home and bring a group of strangers together.

For the next three to four hours, we walked from house to house in the Santa Barbara Community. Everywhere we went, the moment families saw Alberto, we were greeted with smiles and kindness. Alberto explained that the Santa Barbara school is in much worse condition than many of the other schools in the community; there are no windows or doors, and there is no regular English education, which limits the career options his students will be able to pursue.

Alberto explained to us that his students walk to school every day, most from several kilometers away. Since the community is so inaccessible during the rainy season, Alberto also trudges to and from the school from his community. I imagined what this walk must be like for this dedicated man.

After we dropped Alberto back off in Santa Rita, we hurried home to beat an incoming storm. We pulled into the property just as raindrops began to hit the windshield, marveling at the great luck and timing we'd had throughout the day. Who would have known that taking those rugged, less traveled back roads would end up being the best course for our morning; who would have known bringing the wrong envelopes would mean letters winding up in the right hands.

FEATURE: SAY WHAT...?

CHERYL NICHOLAS



Not too long after I had arrived at Gran Pacifica Resort, I was walking with my Labrador/shepherd, Cee Cee, and saw unusual looking growths hanging from a tree. Long, dark brown, and slightly curved, I couldn't imagine what they might be. I picked one and showed it to one of the ground workers. He called it a 'fistula,' and looked at his coworker with a funny grin. His coworker bent slightly and moved his hand behind him, using a pulling type motion from his behind outward.

"Diarrhea!" I laughed. At the time, I thought it was a spontaneous way for them to communicate to me, since they spoke no English. It is actually a very common gesture used frequently because diarrhea is a common condition in the country.

Nicaraguans do not point with their finger as other cultures do. They will pucker their lips like in preparation for a kiss, and point with them. In fact, pointing and wiggling the finger can be interpreted as a sign of aggression.



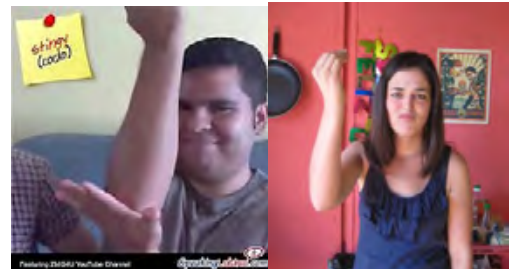
If you want to beckon someone to you, do not use your index finger to beckon or you will most probably find yourself face to face with someone to whom you have solicited for sex. Use all your fingers pointing downward and wave them. Avoid pointing and wiggling your index finger up and down, like your mother or grandmother would do to scold you. Many Nicas consider this a sign of aggression or willingness to fight.



The elbow smack means that you're flat broke, or stingy. Use this when someone asks you for money. To do the elbow smack effectively, put your forearm parallel to your body and use your other hand to smack your elbow repeatedly.



The belly scratch is an indicator to a friend that you're just messing with him or her. When you use the belly scratch make sure to lean back and lift your shirt slightly while making long scratch marks on your stomach.



If you are waiting for a bus and it is full of people hanging out the windows and packed like sardines, the driver may open the door, put his thumb together with his fingers together and push them away hard from his face, then leave. You have been told the bus is too full.



While traveling on a bus, standing in the aisles, watch the elder *senoras*. If there is a thief or pickpocket nearby, they will warn you by holding their hand in a slicing position and quickly moving their fingers one by one to touch their palms. It happens very quickly, so be aware and watch your pockets and bags!

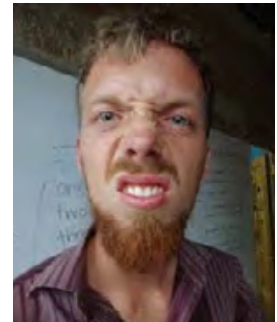
It would be difficult to find a foreigner to Nicaragua who doesn't know what it means when someone extends the index finger and runs the other index finger down it repeatedly. It is the "shame on you" gesture. In Nicaragua, it is asking for the bill. The movement down the index finger is quicker than the "shame on you."

Useful when you are in a noisy, crowded bar and want to tell your friends you are going home is to put out one hand with palm up, slap your other hand on it with palm up as well. Then, slide the top hand down in the direction of your body.



When someone is inviting you to come eat, it is actually the gesture Americans use to beckon someone.

A wrinkled nose says, "I don't know what the heck you are talking about!"



HAPPENINGS

Exciting things are happening at Gran Pacifica Resort these days. Besides the large number of properties sold and many new houses being built, many folks have jumped into volunteerism and helping our surrounding villages.

From planting gardens, building wells and schools, to teaching children English, the good works are growing and attracting more and more organizations and individuals to join in improving the life of local families in Gran Pacifica's surrounding communities.

And, there is plenty of room for playing.



Adiak Barahona, head of marketing at Gran Pacifica, brought his Salsa dancing group to the resort for a day of food, fun and various antics. The Sea Salt Restaurant served a buffet while beverages of all kinds were enjoyed from iced coolers brought by the partiers. The picnic proved very successful with music, dancing, drinks and antics such as building a human tower. As the afternoon wore on, much laughter was heard sailing from the Rancho Palapa and pool.



We have a brand new resident at Gran Pacifica Resort! I mean REALLY brand new. Rachel and Dinh Nguyen announced the birth of their son, Levi Kai Nguyen, entering the world on Friday July 10, at 6:53 am. Daddy says, "We are smitten." Congratulations, Rachel and Dinh. We can't wait to meet Levi in November!



LEVI KAI NGUYEN

July 10, 2015

Roslyn Parker, developer of "Travel to Do Good," a volunteer organization, and Jessica Wolfe, ECI Development and Gran Pacifica intern, walked up and down the dirt road outside the gates of the resort delivering pen pal letters to students and teachers of Santa Barbara School. See Ms. Parker's profile in this issue for more details on her organization.

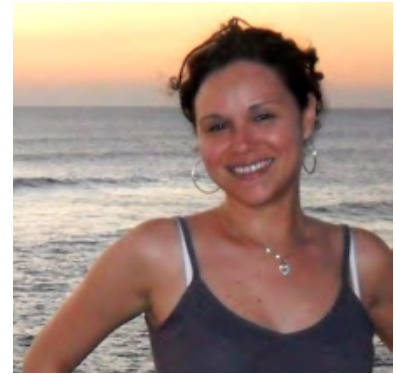


August 9th through 12th, the Miss Mundo competitors will be visiting Gran Pacifica, participating in a Boot camp. It will be filmed with plans for television viewing.

Giovanna Velasquez, Property Manager of Gran Pacifica will change her status to On Site Property Manager as she takes up residence in the model home.

Saturday, August 22 brings 90-100 persons from the corporate group Federal-Mogul Motor Parts. Besides a day on the beach and relaxing by the pool, they will have exclusive use of the facilities from 11am-4pm on that day.

Research is in the works regarding access to first aid and first response medical treatment for guests and residents at Gran Pacifica Resort.



The second week of November, over 70 medical professionals from the volunteer organization, "Operation Walk Winnipeg" from Canada will arrive at Gran Pacifica Resort for a day of play, then a trip to Managua for a week to perform orthopedic knee surgeries at the Roberto Calderón Hospital. This is the fourth year the group has come to provide this service for people who have not been able to afford surgery and, in many cases, have been unable to walk for years. Click on the video link below to see the great work they have done in Nicaragua.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/multimedia/video/features/operation-walk-nicaragua-184386431.html>

In addition to this wonderful service, the group is bringing backpacks, school supplies and a couple used computers to the children of our adopted community, El Jícaro, featured in the last issue of The Gran Pacifica Wave.



Recognition must be given to Jo-Anne Stoltz, resident of Gran Pacifica, for her contribution in this group's presence as well their donations.

COAT OF ARMS

What is it?

Have a complimentary cocktail on Sea Salt Restaurant at Gran Pacifica Resort.

The Granada Coat of Arms pictured below has something about it that has no real significance to Nicaragua.

Bring a digital or hard copy to the Sea Salt Restaurant with the correct answer, leave your email or cell phone number and receive a complimentary cocktail of your choice!



JULY FESTIVITIES

MIKE COBB



Dear Property Owners,

As Fourth of July festivities wind down, and people return to their normal routines, it really becomes clear how special that “routine” is at Gran Pacifica. We have had a ton of surfers spending their July at the property, and I think the residents have enjoyed the extra company. Speaking of 4th of July festivities, Patrick Hiebert hosted a great holiday celebration that weekend, combining Canada Day and the celebration of US Independence. What better holidays to enjoy in a place like Gran Pacifica, than those celebrating independence and self-determination. That’s why many of us are here, after all. We wanted to live life on our own terms, and have the time to appreciate the beauty in life. All in all, it was a wonderful celebration that brought a lot of people together.

Not only that, but Sunday July 19th was Nicaragua’s celebration of the end of its revolution, and many families chose to spend the weekend away from the bustle of Managua to enjoy the tranquility at Gran Pacifica. It’s great to hear kids playing in the pool, and see them strolling the beach with their parents. Those are great memories, being made right here at our village on the sea.

Many of you may have noticed a lot more people spending their days at Gran Pacifica lately regardless of the holidays. That is certainly the case, as July has been one of our busiest months at the hotel, ever. This is a great sign that Gran Pacifica is putting itself on the vacation map, and that folks are feeling good about their finances. The beautiful beachfront community that is a home away from home for so many of us, is getting the attention we always knew it deserved.

Several new homes have also begun construction, and the Casita Village construction is moving along quickly. We are always excited to welcome new residents and visitors, and it’s really amazing how many more houses are built at Gran Pacifica than just a few years ago. Surrounded by their green foliage and many impeccable gardens, the houses one passes on the way to the hotel are simply beautiful.

Speaking of beautiful, Gran Pacifica hosted Miss Universe Canada, her runners-up, and Miss Mundo Nicaragua this month, and Miss Mundo will be returning this August to film a reality show right here! They’re in the country to deliver over \$120,000 in donations to Operation Smile, which provides free dental care to underprivileged children. It really is important work, and Gran Pacifica is always eager to help charity and service efforts in the country. We are currently conducting a book drive, and have been making substantial repairs to public spaces outside the resort.

The resort itself is actually in the process of attaining an extra ½ Star in its rating. As some of you may have noticed, there’s some new workout equipment in the Surf Shop. It is available for anyone to use, and is enough to move Gran Pacifica up in the online hotel ratings. Pretty cool stuff. I always look forward to hearing from property owners, and I hope many of you have the chance to make it down to Nicaragua this summer. It may be “low season,” but it certainly doesn’t feel that way to me.

Until next time,

Mike Cobb