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*Please note:
All of the businesses advertising in this
issue of The Guide
were open when it was published.
However, many close May-October,
so be sure to call ahead
to confirm that
the one you are interested in
is open to serve you.*

The Guide will be back
with more current events, stories,
day-tripping tips,
& our famous proprietary **Street Maps**
in November 2006.

The Guide to Barra de Navidad

Melaque - San Patricio - Villa Obregon



INSIDE:

Carnaval in Barra by Nan Niemela
Day Tripping to Manzanillo by Peter Charles
Foreigners Helping Out by Lalo Telles

#4 February 2006

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The Guide
to Barra de Navidad
Melaque/San
Patricio/
Villa Obregon
(formerly La Guia)

The was the last issue
of the 2005-06 season.
Look for us again in November.

Carmelo Lodise,
Publisher

Calle Oceano Atlantico 56
Barra de Navidad
Jalisco 48987
(315) 355-8357
LaGuiaBarra@yahoo.com

**EMERGENCY
PHONE NUMBERS**

Medical Emergencies
There is no reliable ambulance service stationed in this area. Therefore, you have to get to one of these 24-hour clinics on your own:

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The Red Cross (Cruz Roja) in Cihautlan does provide ambulance service to this area:
01-333-825-2998

Police
Barra: 355-5399
Melaque: 355-5080

Note: this information is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

18th Carnival Costalegre Celebrations

By Nan Niemela
The Guide Contributor

Carnival Costalegre kicks off Feb. 24th with opening ceremonies in Barra de Navidad followed by bull riding at the Plaza de Toros and the grand opening parade starting at 5:00 pm in Cihuatlan. The parade passes through Aguacate, Jaluco and Melaque before terminating in Barra de Navidad. At 10:00 pm the Foreign Carnival Queen 2006 will be crowned on the Malecon.

From the 24th to the 28th the Fidel Kosonoy Celedon sports field in Barra will be the site of nightly events such as food stalls, local performances, the Miss Costalegre 2006 contest, target shooting, and a wheel barrow race.

Saturday the 25th a Fishing Tournament runs from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm. Registration will be held on Friday the 24th at 8:00 pm at the Lopez de Legazpi fishing cooperative on Veracruz in Barra, by the lagoon.

Carnival ends on Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday Feb. 28th with a Parade of floats starting in Jaluco at 4:00 pm, passing through Villa Obregon to Melaque and ending in Barra de Navidad. Later that evening Miss Costalegre 2006 will be crowned followed by the coronation dance.

There will also be nightly cock fights, Feb. 18th to the 27th and bull riding Feb. 23-27.

Post Office in Barra Closes

The post office in Barra de Navidad has now closed. Postman Juan continues to provide household mail delivery Monday to Friday. However, to mail packages, purchase stamps, pickup General Delivery mail and rent post boxes, Barra residents now need to use the post office in Melaque on Clemente Orozco or on the town square in Cihuatlan, catty-corner from the Church.

Changes to Electricity Billing

One of the most charming and aggravating local customs -- the pickup truck with a loadspeaker announcing that electricity bills are now due and payable on a street corner downtown in Barra -- has ended. CFE bills are now delivered to the address of record and can be paid at financial institutions such as banks and *cajas popular*. If you don't maintain an account with these institutions, be prepared to pay a small fee. Cash payments may also be made with no fees at the CFE offices located in Cihuatlan behind the main Church and in Manzanillo beside the Commercial Mexicana shopping mall.



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to the Malecon
Barra de Navidad

BARRA STORIES

Lots of Volunteer Opportunities Locally

By Eduardo "Lalo" Telles
The Guide Columnist

Want to help out while you're here? There are lots of options.

Over 120 well-heeled patrons gathered in La Manzanilla on a recent Saturday night to raise money for the local medical clinic. Held at a palatial residence under a nearly-full moon, the event raised roughly 13,000 pesos for the cash-strapped clinic, according to hostess Maryann Amiss.

"The needs at the clinic are so obvious," she said. Amiss, from Vancouver Island, has lived in La Manzanilla during the high season for four years.

The elbow-to-elbow crowd of mostly Americans and Canadians cheered as she introduced the clinic's new doctor, Jesus Martinez, who will do his residency in La Maz over the next 12 months. The clinic is open to all residents.

While the clinic is supplied minimally by the government, Amiss thought it necessary to fill up a suitcase with medical supplies on a recent trip from Canada. Unfortunately, they were confiscated by immigration officials.

Lee and Christine Yoast from Oregon and several other Americans are part of an informal group of volunteers who want to work with local authorities to improve the community.

"The most exciting thing we're involved with is the city's new plan to put a traditional *zocalo* in Barra's *jardin*, which is across from the ice factory be-

tween Av. Veracruz and Legazpi," said Lee. "The idea is to move the present monument to the Spanish expedition to the Philippines in 1564 out to the malecon, and make the *jardin* into a plaza like most towns in Mexico have."



Maryann Amiss introducing the town's new doctor at the Feb. 11 fundraiser at her home in La Manzanilla.

Lee said the local government in Cihuatlan has 300,000 pesos available for the project, if it starts quickly, and the hotel association in Barra will kick in another 300,000.

Donations from an informal network of local folks from Canada and the States will fund an automatic watering system for the *jardin*, according to Lee.

For more information, call Lee or Christine at 355-8392.

AYUDA, a group of locals and snow-birders, raises funds for the area's special needs school in Barra. They have several fundraising projects during the tourist season, including a party at Maya Restaurant, day trips to Punta Perula, and the big bash: a silent auction and street dance, held this year on Jan. 22.

See **Volunteering**, p. 25 8 9



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Melaque,
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on this page
(page 1/2)



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& Villa Obregon**
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DAYTRIPPING

MANZANILLO: An interesting big city

By Peter English
 The Guide Columnist

Manzanillo is a city about 45 miles southeast of Barra/Melaque on Rt. 200. When you pass the entrance to the ZLO airport, you're almost halfway there. The city is in the state of Colima, which begins with the river at the far edge of Cihuatlan.

The guidebooks say Manzanillo has about 100,000 people, but it seems larger and contains the area's only U.S.-style supermarkets: Commercial Mexicana and Soriana's. The town is also noted for its major resorts, including Las Hadas, the Karmina Palace, and Las Maevas. Boxcars from all over the world are stacked five or six deep in the city's large port.

The drive in gets more interesting when you reach the city's edge and the long pretty beaches of Bahia Santiago, where thousands of sunbathers gather with their picnic baskets and coolers every weekend. Be prepared to pay 200 pesos to sit at the tables and umbrellas of you're going to join them for more than a few minutes. Most resorts are just before or just beyond this bay.

Continue on following the signs to Centro until glimpses of what must be the world's largest sailfish can be seen on the horizon. It's sited in the town's main plaza, which overlooks the harbor, but the easiest parking can be found on either side of the



This statue of a sailfish on the town's plaza is perhaps ten stories tall and notes the area's famous sportfishing.

road a block before you reach the plaza. And there are other interesting things to see and do in and around the plaza, so it's best be on foot when you get there.

Central Manzanillo these days is mostly about shopping. The plaza area has undergone a modernization over the past few years to attract cruise ships and their passengers. Avenida Mexico is where both tourists and locals shop. The town's *zocalo* (a gazebo-sort of thing) is one of the most classic in Mexico.

See **Manzanillo**, p. 22



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MANZANILLO, from page 21

There are two historic places to enjoy a cold beverage after walking the hot streets. On the edge of the plaza is the renowned Bar Social, which hasn't changed a bit in forty years. Its overhead fans, Venetian blinds, and large circular bar with leather-covered booths spread against the walls evoke the ambience of a Humphrey Bogart movie set in the tropics. Reasonably priced drinks, served with several courses of free hors d'œuvres, or *una botana* as it's

called in Mexico, and the setting make the Bar Social a must visit.

The Hotel Colonial, just a block off the plaza, has a charming courtyard restaurant that features *paella* on Friday afternoons. Rooms, with balconies, are under \$40 USD double.

But if you're looking for a real seafood feast, you can't fool the locals. Check out Restaurant EI Camaron, which is on the right on the road back to Barra and cater-corner from the stoplight at the

See MANZANILLO, page 23 22 23

MANZANILLO, from page 22



exit to the Las Hadas Resort. This popular eatery is always busy and usually has live music featuring a singing guitarist. Shrimp cocktails and oysters on the half shell are a good beginning. Two outstanding entrees are the “Camarones Locos” and the

“Camarones Borachos.” If you can't decide between them, they will prepare a half order of each for you. Octopus *aficionados* will be very pleased with these dishes, also. After lunch enjoy a homemade dessert. Service at EI Camaron is very attentive and there's free parking just outside the entrance.
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Legazpi 154

Volunteering, from p. 8

& 23 at AVA's Restaurant in San Patricio.

"I think we'll collect nearly 160,000 pesos this year," said Steve Barnwell, the present chairman. "So a vote of thanks to everyone."

The funding goes primarily for infrastructure projects and teaching supplies at the school, but also recently covered an operation for a child with severe allergy problems. Plus, Barnwell said, the

AYUDA is starting to distribute funding to other area schools.

To help out, call Andy at 355-355-5421.

Other efforts are less public. For example, there are ten former Los Angeles firefighters who own homes locally. According to one of them, they have carried out several volunteer projects through the years, including rewiring one of the local schools.

So, pull up your sleeves and dig in. Or, just open your wallet.



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PEPE PADILLA

Remember:

All of these businesses were open when this issue of The Guide was published in February 2006. However, many close May-October, so be sure to call ahead to confirm it will be open to serve you.

And, The Guide will be back in November 2006.