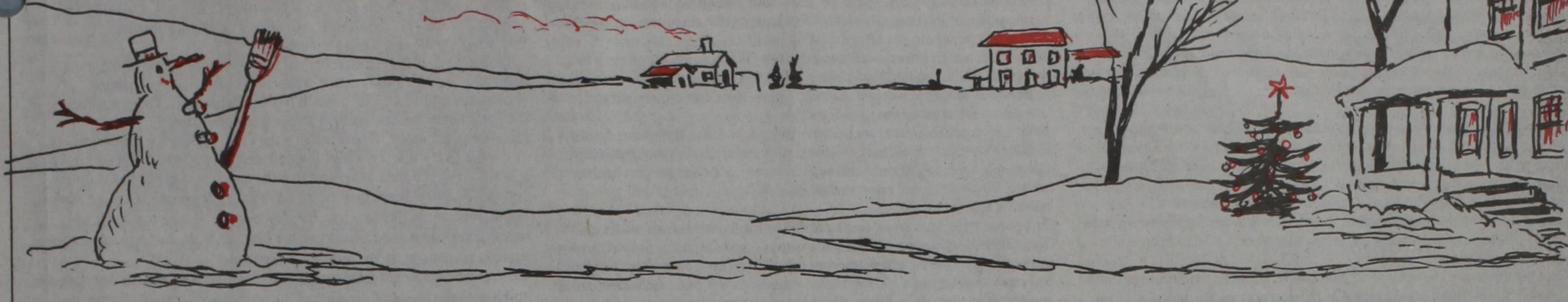


# el Editor

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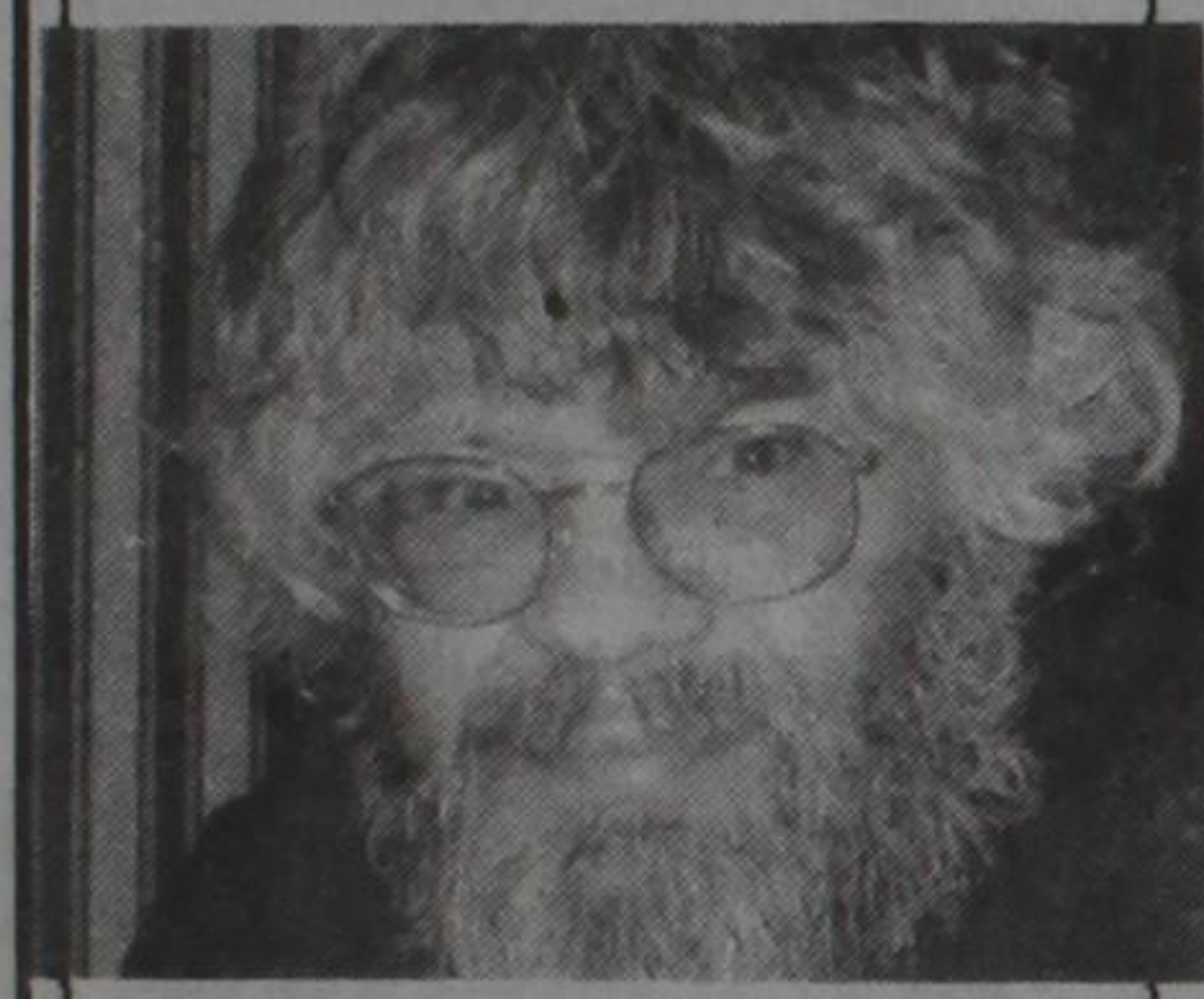


# Feliz Navidad!

Merry Christmas



## Comentarios by Bidal Agüero



Dear Pancho Clos, I am probably joining a long list of people that are asking for peace this year. I can't really imagine anyone that wouldn't

Of course there are probably a few that don't really want peace. I think those few would include all the big businesses that make their money making weapons. And probably those few would include people that think that war is a game so that big boys can kick the hell out of little boys. Those would probably include people that think that one religion is better than another or that one nation should be superior than others.

I would think that there wouldn't be to many of those. Unfortunately it seems that those people are the ones in charge now since there is a war going on that seems to have no reason other than big boys kicking the hell out of big boys.

Unfortunately there are other people that suffer in wars, many of them children. I guess I should be specific and say that I am especially asking for peace for the children.

Besides peace there a lot of other things I could ask for but most people would probably say that they are trivial. You know things like food and shelter for the homeless, more jobs for those that don't have work and maybe a few homes for families who don't have homes.

These things I am asking for affect the whole world but there are a few things here locally that I might ask for like a little more consideration from the "powers that be."

I'm sure you know who those are and I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. A lot of people are mad about what happened here in Lubbock last week and it's getting down to people calling each other racists and prejudiced. Nobody is talking to each other and it seems that no one is listening. I guess the "powers that be" don't really care. That's why I say that maybe you can bring us a little or consideration this Christmas.

This space that I have to write in is not enough room for me to ask for some more specific things. Like maybe a little more time to go fishing or a new brain so I won't have to think so hard when I have to write this column. Anyway, have a good time delivering gifts this year and watch for the stray UFOs.

Contact Bidal at: [eleditor@llano.net](mailto:eleditor@llano.net)

## El espíritu siempre vivo de las Posadas

# Una tradición navideña con un mensaje religioso y social que perdura en el tiempo

(por Lucero Amador)

"En el nombre del cielo os pido posada pues no puede andar mi esposa amada", es una de las estrofas que con gran júbilo se escuchan cada año en la casa del matrimonio Escobedo, en Tustin Ranch, en el condado de Orange.

Desde que Javier y Adria se casaron, hace cinco años, decidieron no perder una de las tradiciones más celebradas en sus familias, ambas de origen mexicano: las Posadas.

"Cuando éramos novios íbamos a lugares diferentes, pero cuando nos casamos decidimos reunir en casa a nuestros amigos y familiares y celebrar una posada", comentó Javier de 28 años de edad.

Los Escobedo sólo festejan una de las nueve Posadas que son por tradición, pero dicen realizarla "un poco" diferente a lo que marca la costumbre mexicana.

"Realmente lo hemos desvirtuado", comenta Javier, "porque no rezamos el rosario y la letanía, pero paseamos los peregrinos, cantamos, usamos las velitas, las lucecitas de bengala, pedimos la posada y rompemos la piñata".

Y luego, agrega, "ofrecemos la cena, los dulces y se hace el convivio familiar, y los niños lo disfrutan mucho. Además, aunque no sea con todos los rezos, queremos que nuestros hijos conozcan esta celebración y que la quieran tanto como nosotros", expresa Javier, padre de dos hijos.

"Mi esposa es María es Reina del cielo y madre va a ser del Divino Verbo".

Las Posadas, fiestas tradicionales de fin de año, se celebran en México desde hace 398 años, según una investigación hecha por la Universidad de Guadalajara.

Las celebraciones se realizan del 16 al 24 de diciembre, etapa que representa simbólicamente el peregrinar de José y María a su salida de Nazaret.

De acuerdo con la investigación, antes de la colonización los indígenas mexicanos celebraban en la época invernal el advenimiento de Huitzilopochtli, dios de la guerra, este festejo de acuerdo al calendario juliano, coincidía con la práctica

europaea de celebrar la Navidad.

Probablemente los religiosos agustinos, según señala el estudio, fueron quienes promovieron la sustitución de personajes en estas festividades en su tarea de evangelización. Desaparecieron a Huitzilopochtli pero mantuvieron la celebración durante la misma época, aunque con características diferentes.

En 1587 fray Diego de Soria obtuvo del papa Sixto V la autorización para que en la Nueva España se realizaran las llamadas misas "de aguinaldo", las que obviamente, se realizaban en los atrios de las iglesias.

Entre estas misas se intercaban pasajes y escenas de la Navidad, y como atractivo se cantaban villancicos y cantos populares.

La tradición de las misas de "aguinaldo" perdió fuerza un periodo, aunque luego recobraron popularidad.

Las Posadas no fueron en sus inicios como las conocemos ahora. De las misas de aguinaldo en los atrios de las iglesias, pasaron a formar parte del ritual familiar y del barrio en el siglo XVIII.

Esta transición, del templo al pueblo, se dio con el interés de que más gente tuviera acceso y participación en estas celebraciones, y es como se han ido transformando de acuerdo a sus posibilidades y a sus propias características culturales.

Conforme pasó el tiempo, a las Posadas se fueron agregando diversos elementos, como ofrecer a los asistentes alimentos que variaban en cada región, el baile y la petición de aguinaldo (dulces) a cargo de grupos de niños y jóvenes.

Los nueve días de Posadas representan el viaje de nueve días que María y José hicieron hacia Belén. Las Posadas se inician con el rezo del rosario y entre cada misterio se entonan cantos navideños y villancicos.

Luego se continúa con la procesión encabezada por los peregrinos, que son imágenes que carga la gente.

Los participantes acompañan a los peregrinos con velas encendidas, luces de bengala, cantando letanías, hasta llegar a la puerta donde se pide la



posada. Ahi, mientras una parte de la gente se queda fuera y otra adentro, se cantan los versos para pedir posada. Al terminar se abre la puerta y se les da el paso a los peregrinos.

"Entren santos peregrinos, peregrinos reciban este rincón. Que aunque pobre la morada, la morada os la doy de corazón".

En la parroquia de Misión Dolores, localizada en el área de Boyle Heights en el Este de Los Angeles, las posadas se realizan desde hace varias décadas.

Aquí, aunque se sigue el ritual, las posadas tienen el rostro social que la comunidad vive día con día.

"Mientras rezamos, vamos caminando por varias zonas de la comunidad y entre cada misterio pedimos por la paz, la justicia y porque termine la violencia en nuestros barrios", comenta Claudia Martiñón, organizadora comunitaria de Misión Dolores.

Dos niños, que representan a la Virgen María y a José, recorren las calles seguidos de más de cien personas que se dan cita en el lugar. Según Martiñón, luego llegan a dos casas y en la tercera es donde se les da posada.

"Es una manera de unir a la comunidad, de transmitirles una tradición a los niños y de orar para que

en nuestros barrios se termine con la violencia", expresa Martiñón.

En algunos de los misterios, algunas familias dan su testimonio del sufrimiento de haber perdido un hijo como consecuencia de tiroteos entre pandillas, del joven que se perdió por su adicción a las drogas o del que está en una cárcel tratando de cambiar su vida.

Martiñón, quien tiene nueve años participando en las posadas, dice que hay una buena participación de la comunidad.

"Varias familias se juntan para dar la posada, unas dan tamales, pozole o cualquier platillo que quieren compartir", comenta.

Luego se rompe la piñata y se reparten los dulces entre los niños. Las Posadas son sin duda un buen pretexto para compartir un grato momento con la familia y la comunidad.

Sabía que... \* La piñata es un complemento indispensable en las posadas.

\* La de siete picos, en la cultura católica, simboliza los siete pecados capitales.

\* Los dulces que se colocan en su interior representan la gracia de Dios. La venda en los ojos encarna la fe y el palo, a Dios, los que vociferan representan a la Iglesia Católica.

# Letters and, Opinions Gonzalez's or Garcia' Need Not Apply?

As someone who was born and raised in Lubbock and as a member of Lubbock's Hispanic community, by now, I should be used to my second class status that has been assigned to Lubbock's Hispanic community by the powers that be and the folks that rule this city. I should be used to the decisions that have a direct impact on the Hispanic community that are routinely made by the varied political entities like the city council, school board, and county commission, without concern for how the community feels.

I should be used to the same institutions continuously portraying us as a group to be courted and paid attention to only on holidays like Cinco de Mayo, or El Diez y Seis de Septiembre or when it comes to soliciting Hispanic votes at local election time. I should be used to reading about our community only when the local chamber decides to host a luncheon to name these entities and individuals that run them as corporate partners of the year, these very same institutions that tend to keep our community voiceless.

But somehow I'm not used to it! Maybe I lived away from Lubbock for too long? To say that I am surprised at the outcome of the decision of the city council to not name Tommy Gonzalez city manager on a permanent basis would not be accurate. After all, one of the first articles I wrote detailed how I felt that Mr. Gonzalez would not be selected. That was back in May. Even though I wasn't surprised, it still felt like a slap in the face. It felt like that cold water that comes out of your shower in the morning, you know its cold and you know it's coming, but it still takes your breath away when it hits you.

There are so many questions and angles to explore on this issue that it would take up more room than I have here. But let me try and address just a few of the issues as I see them.

First and foremost, the search process was nothing more than an exercise in futility, a dog and pony show if you will. It was nothing short of a waste of time, effort and taxpayer's money. It amazes me that Mayor McDougal can say that the search committee did an excellent job, and that the candidates presented to the council were all qualified. If the candidates were all qualified, and the search committee did such a wonderful job, then why did the council not select one of the applicants presented to them. What about the suggestions from citizens from the city's website? Were there any? Did they mean anything in the process? Has anybody bothered to interview the committee members to see how they feel? Evidently not!

I guess council members have forgotten that they represent all the citizens of Lubbock and not their own agendas and biases. A question I would ask the mayor and the rest of the council is, if you didn't have any intention of making an offer to Mr. Gonzalez, why did the council lead him on and make

him think that he had a chance? Why force him and his family to participate in the council's dog and pony show, and give them false hope, when the majority of the council had already decided that there was no way in Hades that he would get the job? Why pay \$18,000 to a search firm from another state, Washington, (I guess a firm from Washington would know better what this city needs more than a local search firm would huh?) and then not follow their recommendations?

Again, just some of the questions that we'll never get an answer to, because this council and the mayor do not answer to a segment of this city that traditionally doesn't make political donations, are not CEO's of the local companies, or are not part of their circle of influence, and most importantly do not look like them.

And we won't get any answers from the local mainstream media either. The editorial in Sunday's local paper made it a point to tell us that the city council had made the correct decision, and that some candidates might have not applied since Mr. Gonzalez was an insider and could have had an inside track on the job. That's nonsense! Any candidate worth his/her salt would have applied regardless of the competition. And if they didn't, maybe they don't deserve to be considered? But then again what are we to expect from a publication that leads with a story about Michael Jackson the morning after this story broke. I guess that's what you call investigative journalism!

As for getting these questions answered on the local news stations, forget it! They think that a 30 minute program on Sunday morning where these issues are not even discussed is all the coverage the Hispanic community needs. The best we can hope for is that maybe they'll find time to sandwich issues important to the Hispanic community somewhere between their tired weather reports, important stories like the low game attendance at Tech basketball games and those "keep you on the edge of your seat stories" about Lubbock drivers speeding on city streets. Uh, thank you very much, but I already know that Lubbock drivers speed.

So, at the end of the day, what are we left with? A young man who has been left reaching for that dangling carrot that has been dangled in front of him for the past nine months so that he could do the city council's dirty work: like lay off all those LP&L employees. And in the end resign from a place where he has invested 10 years of his life. We are left with a councilman who up until this Sunday was the mayor pro tem, but who has weakened his position by resigning his post.

We are left with a city that is paying 3 different people for the city manager's position. There's Bob Cass who is getting paid his severance package, there's Mr. Gonzalez who will get a severance package, and then there's Quincy White, the new acting city manager.

Then there's the \$18,000 paid to the search firm along with all the other costs associated with the search such as travel expenses. I wouldn't be surprised if the 18K didn't turn into almost twice that amount. But, what are the real damages here?

In talking to different members of this community, one of the most damaging aspects of this is that whatever confidence the Hispanic community had in the city council has been shattered. There is a feeling in the community that the council's vote was dominated by racial considerations. Whether that's the case, I guess we'll never know.

It's not likely that any council member will ever admit whether it was or it wasn't. But it's hard to believe that the decision was not based on the "unspoken, hush, hush, qualifications" that some people place the utmost importance on. In this case, we have a young man who was born and raised here. Got a good education, his Masters from the local university, is serving his country in the military, has worked for the same employer for over 10 years, (which is rare these days), and is still not, quote unquote, "qualified" or experienced enough for the position. Not qualified? Isn't it the role of an employer, in this case the city, to develop people's skills and prepare them for future assignments?

Doesn't the city have an HR department that plays a role in developing people's managerial skills? What ever happened to those old fashioned values like rewarding an employee for their hard work and effort and longevity? Whatever happened to equal opportunity? What ever happened to fairness? Whatever happened to loyalty?

What makes this more difficult is that whatever relationship and trust that existed between the Hispanic community and the city council has been broken. The community sees what has happened to Mr. Gonzalez, it sees that if an educated and experienced man who has followed the path laid out by the majority does not stand a chance to be selected, then what is left for those of us who do not come close to having Mr. Gonzalez's credentials? The janitor's job?

The city council has missed a golden opportunity to show Lubbock's Hispanic community that the city has progressed from the days of "last hired, first fired" It has missed an opportunity to show the rest of the citizens that it doesn't matter if your name is Gonzalez or McDougal that you will be treated fairly and that it's time to let go of past feelings that are based in hatred and ignorance. It has missed an opportunity to have a city manager that could have served as a role model for a lot of Hispanic youth that hasn't quite figured out that education does pay off. But most importantly, and sadly enough, it has perpetuated the idea that if your last name is not Smith, Jones, or Washington, you need not apply.  
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Merry Christmas!  
¡Feliz Navidad!  
from your friends at  
**EL EDITOR**  
Lubbock-Midland-  
Odessa  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!  
2004

## Latino Mobilizing

I will help with the public protest and I will even organize and lead in any capacity. I had originally spoken with about 100 students to assist in such a project when Tommy was facing the potential of not even making it to the top three.

The time for Latino mobilizing is now. If we don't take a stand we will not see progress.

Don't know if you heard about the recent denial to TTU Law Professor Frank Lopez, who was not granted tenure? He faced many of the same trials as Tommy but on a less attention scale. He is one of the most requested and liked professors from by law students. He has been a feather in TTU's cap, and now this? As such he has recently resigned and will be leaving Lubbock.

When I explained to him that due to the adversity I was receiving in the job search and that I myself was considering leaving, he said that because of Lubbock's unwillingness to change it was going to lose all of its up and coming Hispanic and future potential leaders. And now there is Tommy....

I had hoped that Lubbock would change, embrace this difference, and that opportunities would become available despite our sir name and our ethnicity. I recall as a young girl how hearing that a college education was my ticket to any job and that people would respect this achievement. Who knew that race was the deciding factor. When we compete and we come in with skill, experience and a degree does that make us competitive at City Hall? No! Leadership roles are based on race, passiveness, your relation to the "In crowd" people. As such the only ticket for me is to Washington, D.C. where I will be working for NCLR, a national organization!

I thought I could make a difference, my family and I chose to stay here and further the path established by individuals such as yourself. I truly felt that it was going to be easier for us. Now I realize that Lubbock is not ready to change.

At this point I have nothing to loose, I leave in February, so let's act now.

God Bless,  
Christy Martinez

## There You Go Again

City Council:

There you Guys go again spending more money on a search for a "qualify person" for a City Manager. What's the use of working your way up the chain if some outsider is going to get the job when it an in house person should be named the head person of his department. I'm glad Texas Tech no longer practice this method with all their job openings of course this might let the good ol' boy in.

Tommy Gonzales has all them years behind him and during as interim City Manager he has made some popular and unpopular changes. He has eliminated duplicate services. I think he should be given a change for at least four years with at least some kind of evaluation time period (three strikes and you're out).

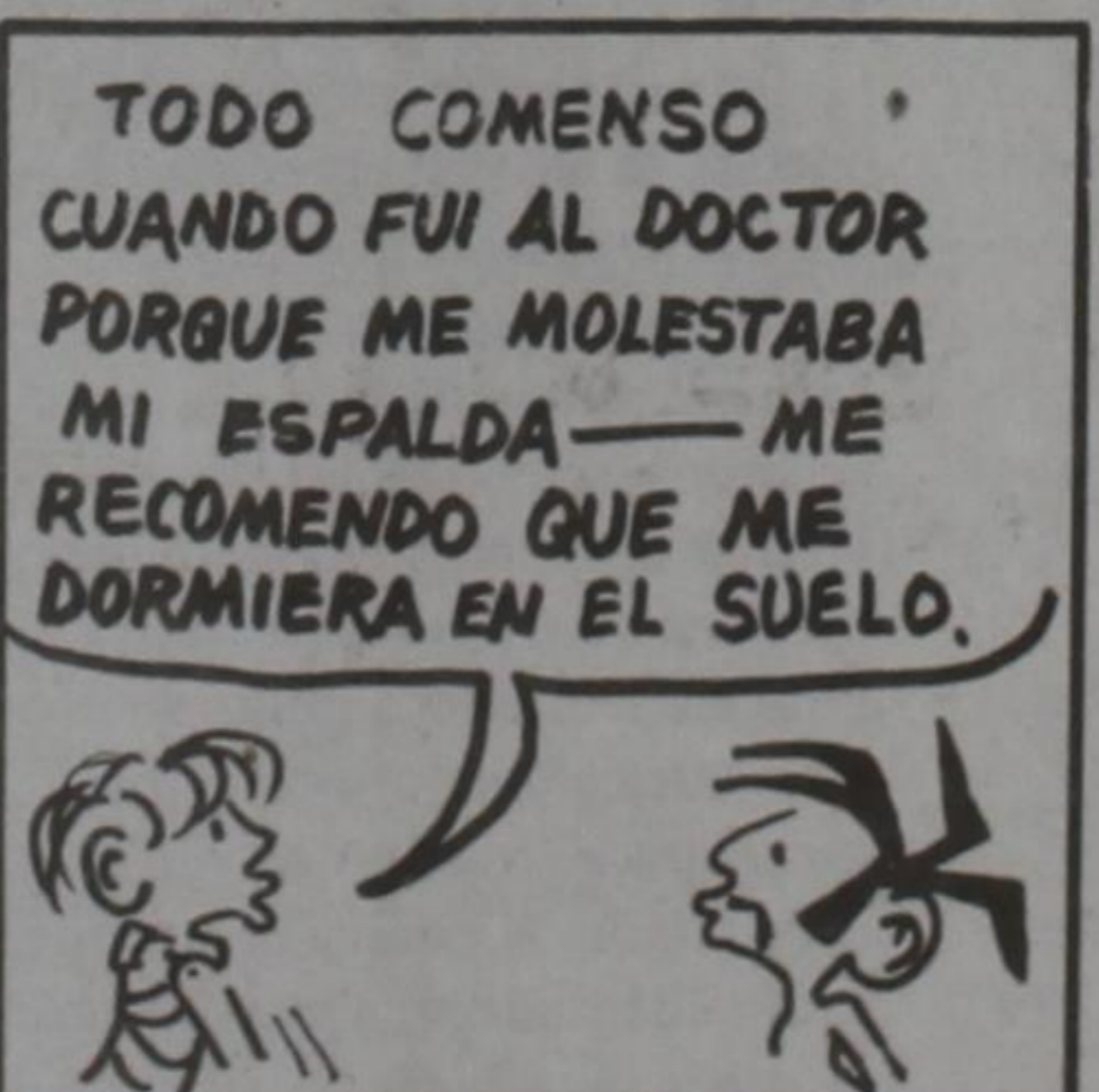
There are some city ordinance that you all have pass and the majority of the public think they're silly. Like the canopy ordinance. Will this reduce the number of vendors putting up their own canopy or will that increase the city booth rental for the 4th on Broadway and other such activities? If a canopy fall and injury a person(s) then let the canopy owner be sued.

A USAF hospital commander wanted to have his hospital carpeted at a time when no other hospital in the world was carpet. He knew if he took it to a committee they would have make a pro and con study. So he decided to go ahead and have the hospital carpet. He figured if the public liked it and there was no serious problems well then it was worth it and if it failed he would pull it out and accept the blame and responsibility for his action..

Bottom line give Tommy a chance or make it an elected position.

Tom Wells, -- Ret. USAF & TTU

## ¡Feliz Navidad!



# El Secreto del Sastre

O la verdadera Historia de Santa Claus  
Extracto del libro: Sucedió una Navidad

Pocas personas se fijaban en aquel viejo apesadumbrado y solitario. Klaus y su mujer se habían trasladado a Finlandia huyendo de la guerra y de los trastornos que azotaban su país. Allí, con el paso del tiempo, él llegó a ser un próspero sastre, hasta que cierto año se desató una terrible epidemia de gripe que se llevó a su esposa y sus hijos. Desde entonces, la vida había perdido sentido para él. Ya no era el hombre dichoso y feliz de antes. Se pasaba los días deambulando por las calles de Helsinki, y en la noche iba a parar a su frío taller, donde se dejaba caer pesadamente en un catre, una de las pocas pertenencias que le quedaban. Ya no se dedicaba a la sastrería. Aunque quisiera no hubiera podido, pues había vendido todos sus objetos de valor o los había canjeado para abastecerse de combustible y alimentos. Con ropa andrajosa, la cabeza gacha y arastrando los pies, vagaba por la ciudad. Sus cabellos y barba canos lucían revueltos y enmarañados. ¡Sus antiguos amigos difícilmente lo reconocían!

Siempre que su esposa Gertrudis y sus hijos miraban desde el Cielo, se les ensombrecía el corazón. Ella acudía con frecuencia ante el trono de Dios para implorar por el bienestar de su marido. El Padre eterno siempre la consolaba.

—En el momento preciso —le decía—, un rayo de luz y nuevas esperanzas traspasarán el denso manto de nubes que envuelve la vida de Klaus.

Dios entonces permitía que Gertrudis se aproximase a su esposo. Desde la esfera invisible del espíritu, ella le susurraba al pobre Klaus palabras de amor y aliento.

Pasaban los días, y él no mejoraba. Gertrudis se convenció de que su amado esposo había llegado ya al punto de la desesperación. Así, llena de tristeza, se presentó una vez más delante de Dios. En esa ocasión el Señor del universo le anunció:

—¡Ha llegado la hora! Tu esposo está a punto de olvidar sus penas y concentrarse más bien en aliviar las necesidades ajenas. Apenas lo haga, Yo obraré el milagro.

Era invierno, y como de costumbre el frío era crudo en Helsinki. El sol no se asomaba más que por unas horas. Al abrigo de radiantes lumbres, los artesanos realizaban sus oficios dentro de

sus talleres. Las mujeres no se apartaban del cálido ambiente de la cocina, salvo para alguna fugaz visita a la tienda de viveres. Sólo los niños se aventuraban a más de unas pocas manzanas de su casa. Vivieran donde vivieran, nunca se les hacía lejos caminar hasta el Paseo de los Niños, lugar donde los más renombrados jugueteros de la ciudad practicaban sus artes. Una leyenda popular aseguraba que santos y ángeles de extraordinarias dotes transmitían ideas a los jugueteros. En la larga hilera de vitrinas que flanqueaban el Paseo de los Niños se exhibían toda suerte de artefactos y muñecos que recreaban los ojos de los chiquillos y hacían volar su imaginación.

Si bien a Klaus le encantaban los niños, siempre que se detenía a verlos jugar o a mirar los juguetes expuestos en los escaparates lo atormentaba el recuerdo de sus hijos. Se le partía el corazón y le rodaban lágrimas por las mejillas.

Un día notó a un chiquillo de ropas casi tan desastradas como las suyas contemplando inmóvil los juguetes de una de las vitrinas. La mirada de desesperanza y desilusión impresa en el rostro de la criatura delataba sus pensamientos: «¡Nunca sabré lo que es tener en mis manos uno de estos lindos juguetes!»

Klaus empezó a sollozar. Por primera vez en mucho tiempo, no lloraba por sí mismo. Se sentía triste por aquel niño y otros cientos como él.

La imagen del pequeño se le quedó grabada en la mente. Casi sin pensar adónde lo llevaban sus pies, terminó en un pequeño barranco en las afueras de la ciudad, un vertedero en el que la gente arrojaba basura y trastos viejos. Por un inexplicable motivo, cierta alegría y esperanza se apoderaron de él. ¿Cuánto tiempo hacía que no tenía un sentimiento así?

Una muñeca que alguien acababa de botar yacía hecha pedazos sobre uno de los montículos de basura que la nieve aún no había tapado. Klaus se agachó y recogió los pedazos.

—¡Júntalos, Klaus —le susurró Gertrudis al corazón.

Sin saber por qué, recompuso la muñeca. ¿Sería su imaginación, o la muñeca de verdad abrió los ojos y lo miró como lo haría un ser vivo? «¡Gracias por devolverme la vida!», pareció decirle.

Él la miró sonriente y contestó

en voz alta:

—¡Es un placer!  
Aunque no había nadie por ahí, se sintió ridículo y tiró nuevamente la muñeca en la pila de desechos.

Enseguida lo invadió una profunda tristeza.

Volvió a recoger la muñeca, y una vez más sintió un golpe de felicidad. «¡Qué extraño!», pensó.

De otra pila de basura sacó un osito sin brazos.

¡Qué bello sería que estos juguetes rotos pudieran repararse y distribuirse entre los niños de familias pobres! ¡Qué alegría sentirían todos! —pensó—. Pero, ¿qué puedo hacer para materializar ese sueño? No soy más que un viejo pesaroso... Además, ¡no tengo herramientas, agujas, hilo ni género con qué coser!

Una voz del Cielo le sugirió: ¡Para Dios nada es imposible! Cuando Él te indica un plan, te ayuda a llevarlo a cabo. Mira a tu alrededor.

Sin entender aún lo que ocurría, con una mirada circular Klaus se fijó en los restos y desechos esparcidos por el lugar. De pronto sus ojos se detuvieron en una maltrecha caja de madera. No parecía servir para nada, mas cuando abrió la tapa, ¡se llevó una sorpresa mayúscula!

Estaba repleta de útiles y herramientas, ¡precisamente las que le harían falta para realizar aquel trabajo! Es cierto que se veían viejas y algo oxidadas, pero con un buen restregón y un afilado, quedarían como nuevas. En un compartimiento de la caja encontró un juego de costura con agujas de varios tamaños e hilos de colores.

¡Menudo hallazgo! —se dijo, en el mismo instante en que una nueva idea iba tomando forma en su cabeza—. ¿Y si...? ¿Y si recolecto todos los juguetes rotos que encuentre, los arreglo y los reparto como regalos de Navidad entre los niños pobres?

En el Cielo, Gertrudis y todos los que la ayudaban en tan original misión dieron brincos de alegría. ¡Lo prometido por Dios se estaba haciendo realidad!

Klaus no desaprovechó un solo minuto. Los siguientes días le dedicó a juntar juguetes rotos. También puso especial atención en averiguar o preguntar discretamente dónde vivía cada uno de los niños necesitados de la ciudad. Anotó esos datos en una libretita. Posteriormente pasó muchos días reparando, co-

siendo, pegando y rellenando juguetes. Tan absorto estaba en su tarea que a menudo se olvidaba de comer.

En pocos días será Navidad —no cesaba de pensar—, y los niños de familias pobres querrán tener juguetes. ¡Cómo deseo que sean felices!

Cada vez trabajaba más arduamente, hasta altas horas de la noche, cuando ya los dedos le dolían, la vista se le nublaba y quedaba rendido de sueño en su silla. A la primera luz, madrugaba y continuaba su obra de amor.

Interiormente se sentía muy bien. Por fin, la víspera de Navidad ¡concluyó su tarea! Todos los niños que tenía anotados en su libreta recibirían un regalo. En el suelo de su taller había siete grandes sacos llenos de hermosos juguetes, todos revividos por las manos gastadas del anciano sastre.

Pero ¿cómo haré para llevárselos a los niños? —se preguntó—. No deben pensar que son regalos míos, pues ciertamente son presentes que Dios les envía con el más puro amor.

—Disfrázate y llévase los esta noche —le susurró Gertrudis. Así hizo.

La Nochebuena se presentó fría y tempestuosa. Poco antes de la medianoche, puso los sacos de juguetes en un trineo bien grande que antes empleaba para llevar a sus hijos de una parte a otra. Era una de sus últimas posesiones. El cargamento de juguetes era pesado, y tuvo que hacer mucha fuerza para tirar de él en la nieve. Fue de calle en calle, dejando uno o varios paquetes a la puerta de cada casa donde vivía una familia pobre. Cada paquete contenía un juguete para un niño de la casa, y con cada juguete iba una notita que decía:  
Un regalo de amor de papito Dios.

La paz al fin se instaló en el corazón de Klaus.

La mañana del día de Navidad, una feliz sorpresa aguardaba a los menesterosos de la ciudad. Algunos dieron gracias a Dios por lo que a su juicio era un milagro. Otros no sabían qué pensar, pero les agradó ver felices a sus hijos. Otros dijeron haber visto a un anciano cubierto de nieve repartiendo los paquetes. Y otros más manifestaron que un misterioso trineo cargado de grandes sacos había rondado por la ciudad. La noticia corrió de boca en boca y fue abultándose hasta que se rumoreó que ¡el trineo iba tirado por renos, y había descendido del Cielo!

En fin, buena parte de la leyenda era verdad. Quien repartió los regalos fue un anciano cubierto de nieve, y los llevaba en

un trineo cargado de sacos. También se podría decir que indirectamente vinieron del Cielo, ya que fue Dios quien le inspiró la idea.

Klaus pasó el año siguiente reuniendo y arreglando juguetes rotos sin ser advertido. ¡Qué dicha le produjo aquella empresa!

Cuando volvió la Nochebuena, una vez más hizo su ronda secreta por la ciudad para entregar regalos a todos los niños pobres. A la madrugada, en una hora muy tranquila, agotado por el esfuerzo que le demandó su singular misión, el anciano pasó a mejor vida. La mayoría de la gente de la ciudad ni siquiera se percató de ello. Klaus se reconcilió con su mujer y sus hijos, y todo el Cielo lo celebró.

—Fue extraordinario lo que hiciste —le dijo Dios—, pero no has terminado. Es preciso que todos los niños conozcan Mi amor.

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# SANTA'S SECRET WISH

On Christmas Eve,  
a young boy with light in his eyes,  
Looked deep into Santa's, to Santa's surprise,  
And said as he nestled on Santa's broad knee,  
"I want your secret, tell it to me."

He leaned up & whispered in Santa's good ear,  
"How do you do it, year after year?"  
"I want to know how, as you travel about,  
Giving gifts here & there, you never run out.

How is it, dear Santa, that in your pack of toys,  
You have plenty for all of the world's girls & boys?  
Stays so full, never empties as you make your way  
From rooftop to rooftop, to homes large & small,

From nation to nation, reaching them all?  
And Santa smiled kindly & said to the boy,  
"Don't ask me hard questions,  
Don't you want a toy?"

But the child shook his head, and Santa could see  
That he needed the answer. "Now listen to me,"  
He told the small boy with the light in his eyes,  
"My secret will make you sadder & wise.

"The truth is that my sack is magic. Inside  
It holds millions of toys for my Christmas Eve ride.  
But although I do visit each girl & each boy  
I don't always leave them a gaily wrapped toy.

Some homes are hungry, some homes are sad.  
Some homes are desperate, some homes are bad.  
Some homes are broken, & children there grieve.  
Those homes I visit, but what should I leave?

"My sleigh is filled with the happiest stuff,  
But for homes where despair lives,  
toys aren't enough.  
So I tiptoe in, kiss each girl & boy,  
And pray with them that they'll be given the joy

Of the spirit of Christmas, the spirit that lives  
In the heart of the dear child who gets not,  
but gives.

Oh only God hears me & answers my prayer,  
When I visit next year, what I will find there

Are homes filled with peace,  
and with giving, and love  
And boys and girls gifted with light from above.  
It's a very hard task, my smart little brother,  
To give toys to some,  
and to give prayers to others.

But the prayers are the best gifts,  
the best gifts indeed,  
For God has a way of meeting each need.  
"That's part of the answer.  
The rest, my dear youth,  
Is that my sack is magic, And that is the truth.

In my sack I carry on Christmas Eve day  
More love than a Santa could e'er give away.  
The sack never empties of love, or of joys  
'Cause inside it are prayers, and hopes.  
Not just toys.

The more that I give, the fuller it seems,  
Because giving is my way of fulfilling dreams.  
"And do you know something?  
You've got a sack, too.  
It's as magic as mine, and it's inside of you.

It never gets empty, it's full from the start.  
It's the centre of lights, and of love. It's your heart.  
And if on this Christmas you want to help me,  
Don't be so concerned with your gifts  
'neath your tree.

Open that sack, call your heart, & share  
Your joy, your friendship, your wealth, your care."  
The light in the small boy's eyes was glowing.  
"Thanks for the secret. I've got to be going."

"Wait, little boy," said Santa "don't go.  
Will you share? Will you help?  
Will you use what you know?"  
And just for a moment the small boy stood still,  
Touched his heart with his small hand & whispered,

"I will."

Author Unknown



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Cuando llega la Navidad, parece que el mundo entero cumple años.

En todas las casas los chicos y los grandes preparan la fiesta: algunos arman un pesebre con un niño pequeño, otros también decoran un árbol con luces y estrellas. Las calles, las casas y los negocios suelen decorarse y brillan con luces y guirnaldas.

Nos suceden cosas muy hermosas en Navidad, recibimos tarjetas de grandes amigos, celebramos en familia, decoramos el árbol (generalmente un pino) y toda nuestra casa.

Además, nos visita Papá Noel!

¡!

Veamos algunos significados de lo que hacemos para esa época.

Las puertas de las casas se adornan con una corona de Navidad que simboliza la esperanza.

Durante la cena se encienden velitas que simbolizan la luz de Cristo que entró en nuestras vidas, usamos vajilla y decoración navideña (manteles y servilletas) y comemos cosas riquisimas.

Decoramos con muérdago, que es una planta con frutos rojos que trae buena suerte y, supuestamente, se dice que las parejas que se besan debajo de él seguirán enamoradas para siempre.

Comemos pan dulce, que se dice que fue inventado en Milán cuando un duque quería una comida especial para la Navidad y a uno de sus cocineros se le ocurrió agregar frutas secas al pan, lo llamo "panettone" y así nació el riquísimo y famoso "Pan Dulce".

Armamos el Belén (pesebre), que fue montado por primera vez por San Francisco de Asis con personas y animales de verdad y que nos recuerda cómo fue el nacimiento de Jesús. Nos reunimos con nuestros seres más queridos y compartimos un momento dichoso.

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# Visits with the Ghosts of Christmas

By Elisa A. Martinez

Yesterday we made tamales. It was a good day. We worked, laughed and chatted all day, remembering all those ladies who did just this before us. I was exhausted but happy when I finally sat down to watch the afternoon news.

We worked in my terracotta brown kitchen surrounded by all the photographs of Jorge Negrete, Pedro Armendáriz, Emiliano Zapata and Analissa in her mariachi outfit, as well as the many tin and wooden crosses and *santos* I've brought from my many trips to Mexico.

It's a good kitchen, full of little pieces from the past. It brings a smile to my face and fills my head with good memories. On this occasion, we used the large plates and spoons that my mother had in her restaurant. This year I

decided to make the tamales early so that Christmas wouldn't be so hectic.

Now I'm all set and already everybody's coming in to enjoy the steamy bundles of corn dough filled with pork and red chile, cheese and green chile, as well as the sweet ones full of raisins, pecans and anise.

We've exchanged good conversation and enjoyed them with hot coffee. It seems that eating tamales at Christmas lends itself to rehashing memories of times gone by. The years have been good.

Christmas has come again, and the air is filled with good smells and the music of the season. The adrenaline is pumping at breakneck speed as we begin to prepare for another *navidad* full of family and tradition.

My friend Tolina helped me with this year's tamales. She

lives in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. We celebrated the first day of the Posadas on Dec. 16. Nine days of prayer and feasting that end on Christmas Eve.

She gathered her family around and together they made hundreds of tamales and large pots of rice and beans. They had their *Posada* and Christmas *reliquia*. In the late afternoon when they finished with their religious obligations they opened their door to any and all who came to share their food.

That is what *reliquia* means. Word spreads quickly and family and neighbors bring their containers to be filled with the good food cooked on that day for the *reliquia*. They won't turn anyone away. People line up for blocks bundled from the cold and wait for the "gift" of food at the house with the strings of twinkling colored lights flap-

ping in the wind. With great joy they wish each other *Feliz Navidad*. They're hard-working people with very little money, but they manage to keep the age-old traditions alive.

*Costumbres* -- traditions that bring us together as *familia* -- family giving, receiving and sharing.

These rituals keep us connected with each other and with our ghosts as they mingle still among us, while we continue what they taught us. In doing so we teach our little ones to carry on the traditions so that when we join this "family of ghosts" we too will be remembered.

I wish you a happy *tamalada*. Merry Christmas!

¡Feliz Navidad!  
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# Christmas In Mexico

The first thing to know about celebrating Christmas in Mexico is that most everybody takes off the last two weeks in December - to party, spend more time with the family, visit with old friends, even make new friends. One of the biggest fiestas of the year - in small towns, big cities, the beach resorts, everywhere - Christmas in Mexico is celebrated in a variety of ways. A common denominator is the *posada*, a recreation of Mary (on donkey) and Joseph searching for a "room at the inn." Accompanying them is a choir of small children who knock on doors asking for lodging for the weary couple. By previous arrangement, there are no takers.

The procession, which takes place during the 12 days before Christmas, moves along, growing in numbers until it reaches the church, where mass is held. After the service, the children get to enjoy a festive *piñata* party.

Even though variations of this tableaux are repeated throughout the country, you can expect to find some regional differences, which makes a Mexican Christmas not only a cross-cultural mix, but a varied and interesting experience. Year after year. Region after region.

For example, in the Ajijic area, a "riviera resort community" suburb of Mexico City, in the little village of San Antonio, the *posada* is a most moving and spiritual experience. Same for Taxco and Querétaro. Catch the event in these areas if you can. Also in Querétaro, there's a huge parade on December 23.

In the town of Cajititlán (near Guadalajara), as in many other places in the Hispanic world, they celebrate the holidays on Three Kings Day (Epiphany), which falls on January 6th. In fact, this was the traditional time to celebrate the gift-giving aspect of Christmas throughout Mexico. But in most parts of the country, the holiday now coincides with the day of celebration north-of-the-border: December 25. Many children now expect gifts on both days.

The ritual often begins in the afternoon or at dinner time when the family shares a *rosca* or two (a *rosca* is a sweet, ring-shaped loaf with a ceramic *muñeca* (doll) representing the Christ child baked inside). Unlike a cracker-jack box where the winner takes all, whoever is unlucky enough to get the doll has to throw a party on February 2 (Día de Candelaria) for all the others present.

In this case, the "winner", who has to foot the time and expense, is often the loser. (Note: on the afternoon of Día de Candelaria, dancers gather for a performance in the churchyard. Sometimes as many as six different dance groups perform at the same time. The dancers are divided among those portraying Christians and Moors, each competing for the most attention. Other groups are represented as well. In small towns where this festival is held, there's also a special market on that day.) The party itself usually includes some favorite dish spiced with a zesty regional *molé* sauce.

The *fiesta* for the Virgin de la Soledad, the patron saint of Oaxaca, December 16-18, signals the beginning of the *navidad* festivities. The highlight, again, is the *posada*, held at a different church each night from December 18-24. On December 23, the annual *Noche de los Rábanos* takes place. This is a very festive time when booths are set up along the length and breadth of the *zócalo*. The focal point of each booth is an exhibit of hand-carved, giant radishes. Most often, these sculptures carry a religious theme. But this is not necessarily so. The subject could be comical, a scene from a bull-fight or anything that strikes the fancy of the sculptor. On *Nochebuena*, processions from various churches fan out to the *zócalo*. There are also colorfully-decorated floats, music, traditional dancing, and *piñata* prizes. The crowning glory of this *fiesta* is a mammoth fireworks display.

On Christmas Eve, in Santiago Tuxtla (Veracruz), everybody assembles in the *zócalo* for an evening of dancing the *huanpango* to the accompaniment of a *jarocho* band.

In Quiroga (Michoacán), villagers present Nativity plays (*Pastorelas*) at churches on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day.

Even the capital México City, takes on a festive air with the famed *zócalo* (or sometimes called the Plaza de la Constitución) ablaze with a sea of colorful lights festooning this ancient square. The festival of lights goes on throughout the Christmas/New Year's period. In addition, there's a colorful flag-raising/lowering ceremony every morning and afternoon during the holidays. The rest of the city is similarly decorated. And, of course, traditional services are held in the city's many churches.

# Visitas con los Espiritus de la Navidad

Por Elisa A. Martinez

Ayer hicimos tamales. Fue un día lleno de gusto. Trabajamos, nos reímos y charlamos todo el día recordando a todas aquellas mujeres especiales que afanaron igual que lo hacíamos nosotras. Ya para cuando me senté a ver el noticiario de la tarde estaba rendida, pero muy satisfecha.

Trabajamos en mi cocina de color café barro rodeadas por las fotos de Jorge

Negrete, Pedro Armendáriz, Emiliano Zapata y de Analissa luciendo su traje de mariachi y de muchas crucecitas y santos de lámina y madera que hecoleccionado en mis viajes a México.

Es un cuarto acogedor y está lleno de muchos pedacitos del pasado.

Para esta ocasión usamos también las ollas grandes y las cucharas que usaba mi mamá en su restaurante. Este año decidí hacer los tamales con mucho tiempo para evitar las carreras durante los días navideños.

Ya están listos y ya todos han empezado a llegar para comerse los bultitos calentitos de

masa rellenos de carne de puerco con chile colorado, rajadas de chile verde con queso y los dulces con pasas, nueces y anís.

Los hemos disfrutado con cafechito caliente y mucha plática nostálgica.

Es raro, pero cuando nos sentamos a comer estos tamalitos siempre terminamos con acordarnos de navidades pasadas. Nos han tratado bien los años.

Ha llegado de nuevo la navidad y la casa se llena de olores sabrosos y de música navideña. Parece que surge más el ánimo y con gran energía hacemos los preparativos necesarios. Este año me ayudó mi amiga Tolina a hacer los tamales. Ella vive en Cd.

Juárez, Chihuahua. Este día 16 fue el primer día de las Posadas. El novenario de oraciones y fiestas ya comenzó. Se reunió toda su familia e hicieron cientos de tamales y cocieron copiosas ollas de sopa de arroz y frijoles para su *reliquia*. Ya cuando se cumplieron las devociones de la Posada abrieron las puertas de su

casa para recibir a todos los que llegarán a compartir de la gran comida.

Esto es lo que significa una "reliquia". Se desparaman las voces y empieza a llegar toda la gente con sus recipientes para recibir el "regalo" de la *reliquia*. A todos se les sirve. Nadie se va sin comida. Se forma la línea larga de gente bien abrigada contra el frío y esperan llegar a la puerta de la casa aluzada con focos de muchos colores que bailan con el aire. Con voces de gusto dan las gracias y se desean *Feliz Navidad*. Es una familia humilde pero con un corazón lleno y así mantienen su tradición.

Las costumbres unen a la familia cuando se da, se recibe y cuando compartimos. Estos ritos nos ligan unos con los otros y con los espíritus de nuestros seres queridos que allí se mueven con nosotros mientras que seguimos como ellos nos enseñaron. Al mismo tiempo nosotros seguimos pasando a los niños esas tradiciones de las que

nosotros también compartiremos cuando seamos parte de ese mundo espiritual. De esa manera nunca seremos olvidados.

A todos les deseo una buena *tamalada*. ¡Feliz Navidad!

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Feliz Navidad



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# Cuento de Navidad

Era la noche de Navidad. Un ángel se apareció a una familia rica y le dijo a la dueña de la casa:

- Te traigo una buena noticia: esta noche el Señor Jesús vendrá a visitar tu casa.

La señora quedó entusiasmada: Nunca había creído posible que en su casa sucediese este milagro. Trató de preparar una cena excelente para recibir a Jesús. Encargó pollos, conservas y vino importados.

De repente sonó el timbre. Era una mujer mal vestida, de rostro sufrido, con el vientre hinchado por un embarazo muy adelantado.

- Señora, ¿no tendría algún trabajo para darme?

Estoy embarazada y tengo mucha necesidad del trabajo.

- ¿Pero esta es hora de molestar? Vuelva otro día, respondió la dueña de la casa. Ahora estoy ocupada con la cena para una importante visita.

Poco después, un hombre, sucio de grasa, llamó a la puerta.

- Señora, mi camión se ha arruinado aquí en la esquina.

¿Por casualidad no tendría usted una caja de herramientas que me pueda prestar?

La señora, ocupada como estaba limpiando los vasos de cristal y los platos de porcelana, se irritó mucho:

- ¿Usted piensa que mi casa es un taller mecánico? ¿Dónde se ha visto importunar a la gente así?

Por favor, no ensucie mi entrada con esos pies inmundos.

La anfitriona siguió preparando la cena: abrió latas de

caviar, puso champaña en el refrigerador, escogió de la bodega los mejores vino, preparó unos coctelitos.

Mientras tanto alguien afuera batió las palmas. Será que ahora llega Jesús, pensó ella emocionada y con el corazón acelerado fue a abrir la puerta. Pero no era Jesús.

Era un niño harapiento de la calle.

- Señora, deme un plato de comida.

- ¿Cómo te voy a dar comida si todavía no hemos cenado? Vuélveme mañana, porque esta noche estoy muy atareada.

Al final, la cena estaba ya lista. Toda la familia emocionada esperaba la ilustre visita.

Sin embargo, pasaban las horas y Jesús no parecía. Cansados de esperar empezaron a tomar los coctelitos, que al poco tiempo comenzaron a hacer efecto en los estómagos vacíos y el sueño hizo olvidar los pollos y los platos preparados.

A la mañana siguiente, al despertar, la señora se encontró con gran espanto frente a un ángel.

- ¿Un ángel puede mentir? Gritó ella. Lo preparé todo con esmero, aguardé toda la noche y Jesús no apareció. ¿Por qué me hizo esta broma?

- No fui yo quien menté, fue usted la que no tuvo ojos para ver, dijo ángel.

Jesús estuvo aquí tres veces, en la persona de la mujer embarazada, en la persona del camionero y en el niño hambriento.

Pero usted no fue capaz de reconocerlo y de acogerlo.

# Las cosas de Navidad son simples y nos alegran la vida!

## Los Reyes Magos

Se acerca un nuevo 6 de enero. A preparar el pasto y el agua para recibir a los camellos. Acuérdate de preparar los zapatitos para recibir los regalos que vuelven los Reyes Magos.

Cuenta la leyenda que cuando Jesús nació en Belén, tres Reyes Magos de oriente, llamados Melchor, Gaspar y Baltasar, montados en elegantes camellos y guiados por una estrella muy brillante que habían visto en su lejana tierra llegaron al lugar donde nació Jesús.

Felizmente llegaron al lugar donde se posó y allí encontraron a Jesús en brazos de María. Los magos se llenaron de alegría al verlo y postrándose rindieron homenaje y le regalaron oro, incienso y mirra.

La tradición sigue repitiéndose y los reyes siguen visitando a todos los niños de buen corazón como tú llevándoles regalitos y recordándonos que existe el niño Jesús en nuestro corazón.

El Último Arbol de Navidad.

Esa noche vi a un camionero aproximarse lleno de arboles de navidad, el conductor un hombre maduro, los puso al centro de la plaza y comenzo a venderlos.

Les colgo algunas luces, y clavé un letrero con un clavo "Arboles Frescos de Navidad" decía en Rojo "Se venden Arboles Frescos de Navidad".

El se sirvió chocolate caliente, de un termo aun humeante, y los copos de nieve comenzaron a caer, mientras un carro familiar se acercó hacia el y paro.

Una mama, un papa y un pequeño niño, que no podría tener mas de tres años, salto del coche y comenzo a buscar el arbol de navidad perfecto.

El pequeño revisaba las hileras de arboles de arriba a abajo, su nariz oliendo el aire; "¡Huele a navidad mama!" "¡Huele a Navidad, en todo este lugar!"

"¡Tomemos el arbol mas grande que podamos, un arbol que mida diez Kilometros de alto, un arbol que atravieze nuestro techo, Un arbol que toque el cielo!"

Un arbol tan grande, que cuando lo vea Santa Claus, se detenga y diga:

"Ese es el mejor arbol de Navidad que he visto en esta noche!"

Parecio como si vieran a todos los arboles, por lo menos tres millones de veces, y papa los agarro, los volteo y hasta olio, para encontrar el Arbol perfecto de Navidad.

Lo he encontrado mama, el arbol que mas me gusta de todos, tiene una pequeña parte pelona, pero la volteamos hacia la pared y listo.

Pondremos el Angel de la Abu-

ela Rosita, Hasta arriba, en esa punta tan lejana. ¿Podemos Comprarlos?, ¿Por favor mama, por favor! ¿Podemos Comprarlos Hoy?

"¿Les puedo ofrecer un poco de Chocolate?", pregunto el hombre que era dueño del lote, y diciendo esto destapo el termo, "Esto realmente les calentara"

El sirvió el chocolate caliente, en tres vasos de papel pequeños, brindaron "Por la Navidad" y se bebieron todo el chocolate.

¿Este es el que quieres? - Pregunto el hombre de los arboles, -¡Este es el mejor pino de todo el lugar-

Pejo el muchacho se veia triste "Dice mi papa que ese precio No puede pagar"

Entonces Feliz Navidad, dijo el hombre quien envolvió el arbol para llevar, Es tuyo por solo una promesa, deberas de respetar siempre la Navidad.

En la víspera de Navidad, cuando te vayas a dormir, debes doblar tus manos y orar, prométemelo de verdad, para mantener la dicha en Navidad.

Ahora ve a casa, que este aire helado esta tornando tus cachetes en rosado, y pídele a tu papa, que abra el tronco, y le de al arbol un poco de agua.

Y así siguió toda la noche, el hombre de los arboles vendiendo y dando arbol tras arbol tras ar-

bol. Hasta la última persona que vino a comprar, hasta la última persona con la que brindó en pequeños vasos de papel.

Que prometió la promesa, de alegría en su corazón, y cantando villancicos, se perdió en la obscuridad.

Y entonces termino, solo un arbol quedaba en soledad; Pero quedaba nadie mas en el pueblo para darle un Hogar.

El Hombre se puso un Abrigo rojo y un sombrero, y arrastro el Último Arbol de Navidad hasta un bosque cercano.

Dejo el arbol cerca de un arroyo, en el frío, para que las criaturas sin casa del bosque, pudieran usarlo ese invierno.

El sonrió mientras se quitaba, algo de nieve de su barba, cuando de lo espeso del monte un venado apareció.

El sin asustarse le acarició la cabeza a ese enorme venado y dijo:

"Parece que hemos comenzado la Navidad Otra Vez"

Hay muchos kilometros por recorrer, y aun mucho hacer, así que vamos amigo, vayamos a casa, para mañana de nuevo comenzar.

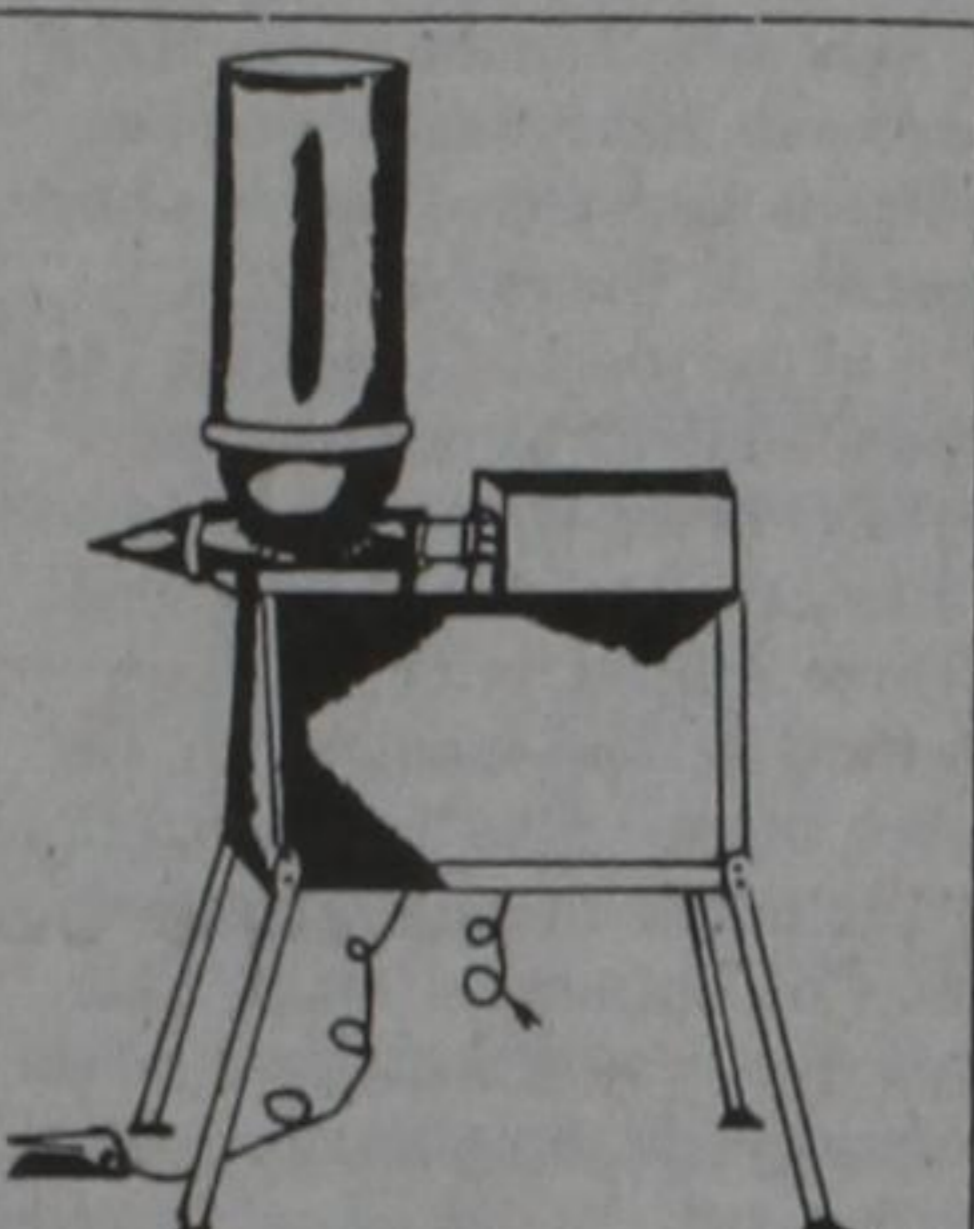
El miro al cielo y se oyeron unos cascabeles sonar, y en ese momento el hombre desapareció.



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Invented by  
FRANK GARCIA

La información más correcta del trabajo que hace este Tamolino, en el trabajo de los tamales; es que se pueden hacer hasta 100 docenas de tamales en dos horas y media. esto es, una persona al Tamolino, y dos poniendo carne y envolviendo. El Tamolino es eléctrico. Y lo que hace es poner la masa en la hoja, o sea embarrar. Que es el más trabajo en la labor de los tamales. Y lo hace tan rápido, como la persona pueda mover sus manos al usarlo. La masa ya sale plana, y se controla por un pedal de pie, como al modo de una máquina de coser, portátil. Es pequeño de tamaño pero grande en poder. Mide 12 pulgadas de ancho, por 24 de largo y 33 de alto, y pesa 48 libras. No es algo nuevo, ya por varios años se está usando por varias personas que hacen tamales y dicen estar satisfechas. Los más que están usando este tamolino, son las iglesias, y luego también algunos negocios; como también personas individuales. para esta fecha, más de 72 tamaleros lo están usando; y 72 tamaleros no pueden estar equivocados. Y también usted puede decir lo mismo al saber que con este tamolino, ahora es un placer el hacer tamales, y no un trabajo fastidioso. Se desarma de las partes más importantes para lavarlo. Todo está hecho para ahorrar tiempo y dinero. Anímese, y llame a la hora indicada.



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# El Origen De Las Pastorelas

The Náhuatl people used to represent plays enacting important historical events and stories taken from real life. Missionaries incorporated this custom to the Christian holidays, so during the nine days of the Posadas many pastorelas were performed on stage. These pastorelas are dramatic pieces that represent the trip of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary to register themselves in the Roman census taking place in those days, or the hardships they suffered while looking in vain for lodging. The roles in these pastorelas included, besides Joseph and Mary, shepherds and shepherdesses (pastores, hence the name, pastorelas), sheep, burros, and perhaps a little devil or two.

These pastorelas played an important part in the evangelization of the colonies. Franciscans and Augustines, among others, used these representations to accompany the religious activities of the day, making the festivities more attractive and colourful. As it was, this custom was preserved and is still cherished among the Mexican people, a people who love family traditions and vivid fiestas.

It is said that Marco Polo brought with him the idea of piñatas: vessels adorned with color paper, that in China, were broken by hitting them with sticks to commemorate Springtime. Italians adapted the action to symbolize the victory of Good over Evil. In Lent they made piñatas with seven colored paper points, each one representing a capital sin. The stick that broke these sins played the part of Christian faith.

In Mexico the piñata assumed this meaning and then some others. One of them: It is the devil that holds in his belly all that is good in this world, just as the olla inside the piñata is filled with fruit like mandarin, orange and sugar cane; candy and gifts. The stick (Christian faith), put to good use by the girl or boy who strikes at the piñata (the hard work of women and men in this world), breaks the treasure's chest for the benefit of all.

The piñata is firmly tied to a rope, and then hung from a pole or the branch of a tree. Someone holds the other end of the rope, pulling the piñata up and down to make it a more elusive target. It is customary to let the youngest children start the hitting and then to give the opportunity to the grown-ups. The little ones will be able to see the moving piñata when they try to hit it, while the elders take their turn later, eyes covered with a handkerchief or shawl.

While the hitter is doing his or her best to break the piñata, people surrounding the action sing in a chorus,

*Dale, dale, dale,  
no pierdas el tino;  
porque si lo pierdes,  
pierdes el camino.  
Hit it, hit it, hit it,  
don't lose aim;  
because if you lose it,  
you will lose your way.*



Eventually someone, able or lucky enough to accomplish the task, will break the olla inside the piñata. Fruit, candy and gifts fall to the floor, for everybody to rush to gather whatever they can from the scattered goodies.

After piñatas, dinner is served. Tamales with atole, and crunchy buñuelos for desserts. Hot ponche will help to warm the cold winter evening. For the children, ponche made from seasonal fruits, like tejocote, guava, plum, mandarin, orange, or prune, sweetened with piloncillo (a brown sugar), and perfumed with cinnamon sticks or vanilla. For the grown-ups, the same ponche, but with piquete (sting), which is a bit of rum or tequila added to the potion to make it happier. There are as many ponche recipes as there are grannies in Mexico. In Colima, for instance, they prepare a delicious concoction made of milk, sugar, orange leaves and vanilla, grated coconut and a drop of rum.

When the Posada is about to end, every guest receives a small gift, or aguinaldo, usually a package containing cookies, dried and fresh fruit, and colación (assorted and colourful candies). Now is the time to sing villancicos, carols that talk about the good news given to the shepherds by the angels, that our Savior was born. A very old tradition calls for everybody to gather in front of the nacimiento

(the nativity scene) to sing villancicos to the newborn child.

Traditional nacimientos picture the birth of Jesus. It seems that Saint Francis of Assisi was the first one to come out with the idea of representing with figures the scene in the stable of Bethlehem. That first nacimiento was placed inside a cave in Greccio, Italy, in 1223, to later become a well established tradition in that country.

The excellence of Mexican artisans helped in a significant way to the development of this custom in our country. A typical nacimiento shows Jesus in a crib, with the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph at His side. Inside the portal (porch), which can take the form of a cave, a stone house or a cabin, there are several animals surrounding the Holy persons: burros, oxen, sheep, cows, horses. Additional personalities who take part are shepherds, angels, pilgrims, and the Kings from the East who came to adore Him. The star they followed to Bethlehem always crowns the nacimiento, giving it light and color.

Soon we will enjoy our first Posadas down here.

These traditions are alive and well in Mexico, thank God, in spite of the noise and hurried pace of our so called modern life.

This is a time for joy. This is a time for children. And as I

watch them play and sing and have fun, I know I will remember my own childhood. I will remember those who are now gone, and I will think about the future.

Funny that events that occurred so many years ago bring us to think about the future. The only answer to this apparent paradox is, Hope. Hope in the future, hope in this Mexico that I love and which suffers so much. Hope in this world full of injustice, misery and pain. But a world that holds the promise of the Divine Child who wanted to come here to become one of us, to show us how precious human life is. To give us hope in ourselves.

And to teach us to live with yet another paradox: that the only way to save ourselves, is to think and act not on behalf of our own selves, but on behalf of those around us.



**Happy Holidays!  
Feliz Navidad!**

# Feliz Navidad

By: Luis Dumois

In those days a decree from Emperor Augustus was issued, ordering a census for the entire world. [...] Everybody had to be registered, each one in his city. Also Joseph, who came from the lineage of David, came up from the city of Nazareth, in Galilee, to the city of David, named Bethlehem, in Judea, to register himself and his wife Mary, who was pregnant. Being there, the time for birth arrived, and she gave birth to her first born son; she wrapped him in nappies and put him in a crib, because they did not find a place in the inn.

Luke, 2:2-7

Soon we will enjoy our first Posadas for this year in Mexico. Las Posadas are fiestas that begin on the 16th and end on the 24th of December. In Mexico, during this period, there are many Posadas every evening.

Invited -and as usual, some non invited- guests arrive at the house where the Posada will take place, always in the evening. A group goes outside the house, with lighted candles and papers with the words of the verses to ask for Posada. They sing,

*En el nombre del Cielo  
os pido posada,  
pues no puede andar  
mi esposa amada.  
In the name of Heaven  
I ask you for lodging,  
because She cannot walk,  
my beloved wife.*

The group inside answers, also singing,

*Aquí no es mesón;  
sigan adelante.  
Yo no puedo abrir,  
no sea algún tunante.  
This is no inn,  
keep on going.  
I won't open the door,  
in case you are a truant.*

Many verses are sung in this fashion, with those outside asking for a place to spend the night and the people inside the house

saying, no way, until those inside "discover" who are the personalities freezing outside. Then they open the door and let the pilgrims enter. In the very traditional Posadas, a girl is dressed as the Virgin Mary, while a boy represents Saint Joseph. In some cases even a burro is present, for the Virgin to mount. Sometimes, those outside carry images of the Holy persons with them.

When they open the door to let those outside enter, they sing,

*Entren, Santos Peregrinos,  
reciban este rincón;  
no de esta pobre morada,  
si no de mi corazón.  
Enter, Holy Pilgrims,  
accept this dwelling;  
not of this humble house,  
but of my heart.*

During the rest of the party we break piñatas, there are villancicos -Christmas carols- in the air and we eat the traditional things: buñuelos (very thin fried pastries covered with sugar), colación (a mixture of different candies), tamales, and ponche, fruit punch.

This beautiful tradition of the Posadas comes from the times of the Colonial period, but it is interesting to note that before the Conquest the Aztecs celebrated every year the arrival of the god Huitzilopochtli, between the 7th and the 26th of December. Under the Spanish domination, Catholic priests incorporated some days of the ancient tradition to a new set of religious festivities.

One of those first Christian festivities in Mexico were Aguinaldo -Christmas presents- masses. After Holy Mass, piñatas were broken, people sang villancicos and they watched the performing of pastorelas. There were nacimientos (depictions of the birth of Jesus Christ) on display for everybody to visit and admire.

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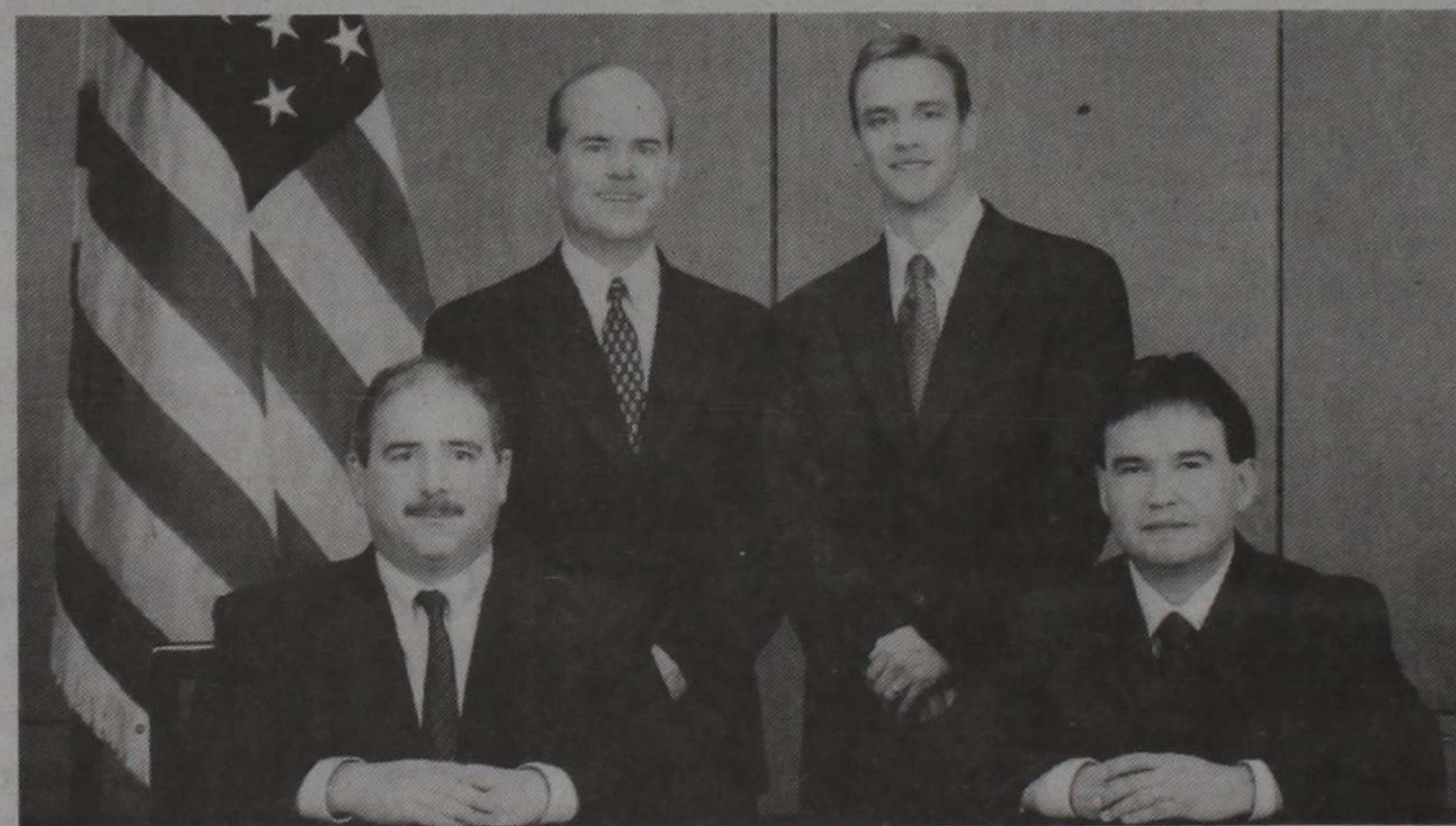
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# Making Merry in Mexico to the "Christmas in Mexico" Index

By Dale Hoyt Palfrey  
(Dale Hoyt Palfrey is a freelance writer, translator, interpreter and public relations consultant based in Ajijic, Jalisco. Her moth-eaten parka, mittens and longjohns have remained packed away for the 20-plus sunny Christmases she has celebrated in Mexico.)

Dreaming of a white Christmas? If you're spending December in Mexico, forget it! The closest you'll come to frosty is to reminisce on winter wonderlands while sipping an icy Margarita. You can expect the holiday season south of the border to be as warm and colorful as a tropical garden. And you'll discover a delightful array of seasonal traditions that make celebrating Navidad (Christmas) in Mexico a unique and unforgettable experience.

**LAS POSADAS**  
Christmas festivities begin with Las Posadas, nine consecutive days of candlelight processions and lively parties starting December 16.

In villages and urban neighborhoods throughout Mexico youngsters gather each afternoon to reenact the holy family's quest for lodging in Bethlehem. The procession is headed by a diminutive Virgen Maria, often perched on a live burro, led by an equally tiny San José. They are followed by other children portraying angels, the Santos Reyes (Three Kings), and a host of pastores y pastoras (shepherds and shepherdesses), all usually decked out in colorful handmade costumes and carrying brightly decorated báculos (walking staffs) or faroles (paper lanterns).

The parade of Santos Peregrinos (Holy Pilgrims) stops at a designated house to sing a traditional litany (Link to words & music) by which the Holy Family requests shelter for the night and those waiting behind the closed door turn them away. They proceed to a second home where the scene is repeated. At the third stop the pilgrims are told that while there is no room in the posada (inn), they are welcome to take refuge in the stable. The doors are flung open and all are invited to enter.

This is an active way of teaching children the story of the Nativity, but the chief attraction is the merrymaking that follows, above all the chance to engage in the ruthless smashing of piñatas and a mad scramble for the shower of fruits, sugar cane, peanuts and candies released from within.

**LAS PASTORELAS**  
Pastorelas (Shepherds Plays) are staged throughout the holiday season by both amateur and professional groups. These traditional, often improvised, theatrical presentations date back to Mexico's Colonial period when Roman Catholic missionaries wooed converts and taught doctrine through dramatizations of Biblical stories.

The light, humor-filled Pastorelas tell of the shepherds' adoration of the Christ Child. First they are visited in the fields by an angel who announces the holy birth. As the shepherds attempt to

follow the great star leading them to Bethlehem they are plagued by a series of evils and misadventures provoked by the Devil. But in the proverbial all's-well-that-ends-well finale, good triumphs over evil and the shepherd's reach their intended destination.

**EL NACIMIENTO**  
In most Mexican homes the principal holiday adornment is el Nacimiento (Nativity scene). The focal point, naturally, is a stable where clay or plaster figurines of the Holy Family are sheltered. The scene may be further populated by an angel, Los Reyes Magos (the Magi), the ox and the ass, shepherds and their flocks, and assorted other people and livestock. It is not unusual to also find the forces of evil represented by a serpent and a grotesque Lucifer lurking in the shadows. The figures may be simply positioned in a bed of heno (Spanish moss), or scattered throughout an elaborate landscape.

A major masterpiece may occupy an entire room, often near the front of the house for convenient viewing by neighbors and passersby. The creation of the basic landscape begins with papel roca (paper painted in earth tones) draped over tables, taped onto boxes, crushed and shaped to form a multi-leveled, natural looking terrain that frequently includes a series of hills and dales, a cellophane waterfall, a mirror pond, artificial trees, cacti, palm trees, and little houses set to form an entire village scene. Colored sawdust and a variety of natural mosses may be spread out as ground cover before the addition of strings of Christmas lights and the assorted human and animal figures. The scene will not be completed until Christmas Eve when the newborn Baby Jesus is finally laid in the manger bed.

Nowadays a decorated Christmas tree may be incorporated in the Nacimiento or set up elsewhere in the home. As purchase of a natural pine represents a luxury commodity to most Mexican families, the typical arbolito (little tree) is often an artificial one, a bare branch cut from a copal tree (Bursera microphylla) or some type of shrub collected from the countryside.

**NOCHE BUENA**  
Holiday festivities culminate on Noche Buena (Christmas Eve) with the celebration of a late-night Misa de Gallo (Rooster's Mass). Afterwards families head home for a traditional Christmas supper which may feature a simple fare of homemade tamales and atole (corn gruel) or other regional dishes. A more exotic feast might include bacalao a la vizcaína (Biscayan cod) and revoltijo de mereritos (wild greens in mole sauce). Roast turkey, ham or suckling pig are other popular menu items for those who can afford it. Ponche (a hot fruit punch), sidra (sparkling cider) or other spirits are served for the holiday brindis (toast). The evening is rounded out with the opening of gifts and, for the children, piñatas and luces de Belen (sparklers). As these happy family gatherings generally last into the wee hours, December 25th is set aside as a day to rest and enjoy that universal holiday bonus -- el recalentado (leftovers).

Incidentally, Santa Claus and the clatter of reindeer hooves on the roof do not generally figure in the scheme of Navidad. A Mexican youngster's holiday wishlist is directed instead to el Niño Dios (the Holy Child) for Christmas Eve and the Reyes Magos (Magi) for Three Kings Day.

**LA FLOR DE NOCHE BUENA**  
Its Latin name is Euphorbia Pulcherrima. Its Mexican monikers include the ancient Nahuatl term Cuitlaxochitl (star flower), along with Catarina (Catherine), Flor de Pastor (Shepherd's Flower) and, most commonly, Flor de Noche Buena (Christmas Eve Flower).

In the English-speaking world this illustrious holiday bloom is called the Poinsettia, named after Dr. Joel R. Poinsett, a U.S. diplomat who served as Minister to Mexico in the 1820's. Like many newcomers to Mexico, he was no doubt enthralled by the sight of the gargantuan shrubs covered in mid-winter with brilliant vermilion blossoms. After experimenting with various methods of propagation, he returned home to Charleston, South Carolina with enough cuttings to begin the cultivation of these stunning plants in northern climes.

The bright petals of the poinsettia are not really flowers, but bracts or leaves that surround the true blossom, a rather inconspicuous cluster of yellow florets. The bracts may be solid creamy white, salmon pink or

scarlet, variegated or double blooms.

Among pre-Hispanic tribes of ancient Mexico, the Cuitlaxochitl was more than just a pretty face. The blood-red bracts were often placed on the chests of those suffering afflictions of the heart to help stimulate circulation. They were sometimes crushed to a pulp to be used as a poultice for the treatment of skin infections.

A note of good cheer to those more inclined to be couch potatoes than gardeners: Modern-day Mexicans enjoy still another form of Noche Buena-- a rich, dark, bock-like beer distributed only during the holiday season.

**LOS SANTOS INOCENTES**  
December 28, Day of the Holy Innocents, is a religious commemoration of King Herod's ordering the slaughter of all male infants in his kingdom, intended to include the Christ Child. In Mexico it is celebrated as day akin to April Fool's, an occasion for jokes and pranks. The usual tactic is to approach a friend and ask to borrow cash or some object of value. If fooled by the ploy, the victim may be given a candy or silly gift in return, along with much joking and

name calling. So beware or you may find yourself titled Fool Saint for a day!

**LOS REYES MAGOS**  
The Christmas season continues unabated in Mexico through Epiphany, which is called Día de los Reyes (Three Kings Day). Echoing the arrival in Bethlehem of Wise Men bearing gifts for the baby Jesus, children throughout Mexico anxiously await waking up January 6 to find toys and gifts left by the Reyes Magos (Magi). In some regions it is customary to leave out shoes where treasures may be deposited by the visiting Wise Men.

A special treat served one this day is the Rosca de Reyes--a crown-shaped sweet bread decorated with jewel-like candied fruits. Tiny figures of babies are hidden in the dough before baking. There is much excitement as each partaker cuts his or her own slice, for whoever gets a piece containing a baby is obliged to host another party on or before Candlemas, February 2, when Mexico's holiday season finally comes to an end.

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## Pancho Clos Says Mil Gracias Y Feliz Navidad!

All of the Christmas photos were provided by John P. Cervantez. Special thanks for his service Cervantez would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas! Also, would like to say thank you for all the parties, quincenaras, public, and general opportunities that have requested his services. ¡Mil Gracias! Feliz Navidad!!

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**BEYONDfaith**  
Homecare & Rehab, LLC  
A step above ... A step beyond ...  
believing that love makes the healing difference.

**WHAT EXACTLY IS HOME CARE?**  
Home care includes a broad range of health and social services which are provided in the home to individuals who are chronically ill, disabled or recovering from an illness or injury. The agency which coordinates and provides the various services is usually known as a "home health agency".

A home health agency provides "skilled services". These include nursing, social services, physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech/swallowing therapy. Respiratory therapy may also be available.

Non skilled services are provided to help you enjoy life at home as much as possible. These services include help with bathing, dressing and eating, as well as light housekeeping.

**BEYONDfaith Home Care & Rehab** includes all these services and more. We go

"A step above ... A step beyond ..."

to provide comprehensive home health care which focuses on rehabilitation and education for the patient, caregiver and family.

We would appreciate being invited to your home to be your home care agency.

**WHAT ARE THE MEDICARE HOME CARE REQUIREMENTS?**  
In order to be eligible for home care:

- <> Patient must be homebound (See below)
- <> Care is medically necessary
- <> Care is part-time or intermittent (Usually less than 35 hours per week)
- <> The patient requires at least one skilled professional service (nurse, physical therapist, speech therapist, etc.)
- <> Care is provided by a Medicare certified home care agency
- <> Care is provided under a physician's plan of care
- <> Services are delivered in the patient's primary place of residence.

**MEDICARE HOMEBOUND STATUS CRITERIA**

- <> Leaving the home would require "considerable and taxing effort".
- <> Patient can leave home only for infrequent, short absences. (For example, medical or hairdresser appointments, attendance at Medical model adult day care)
- <> A person may be temporarily homebound while recovering from surgery, serious illness or trauma.

**BEYONDfaith**  
Homecare & Rehab, LLC  
Serving you in 2 locations

Garland, Texas  
(972) 203-8200, Toll Free (800) 477-8015

Lubbock, Texas  
(806) 798-5683, Toll Free (866) 621-5683 (LOVE)