

**Free**

# Oaxaca Times

Oaxaca's English Tourist Newspaper

Vol. 1 No. 12

Oaxaca, Oax.

December 1989



A complete nativity scene of radishes flowers.

## DECEMBER A REALLY SPARKLING MONTH IN OAXACA

For all Oaxacans, December is a month of festivals and parties and we look forward to all the colorful pagentry and traditions which make Oaxaca so unique.

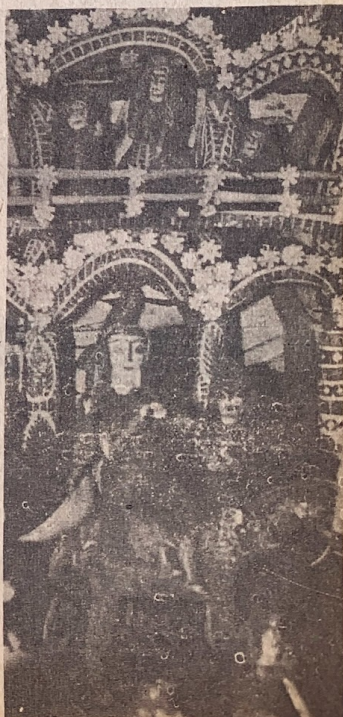
We begin the festivities on Dec 8th with the celebration of the Virgen de la Concepcion. Religious services will be held at the cathedral and private parties will be given for all women named Concepcion(Conchita) to celebrate their Saint's Day. On Dec 12th, the Virgen of Guadalupe is honored. The day before, the 11th, many Catholic children, dressed in typical regional costumes will assemble in front of the cathedral at 8:00 a.m.

The Posadas begin on the 16th. This is the traditional reen-

actment of Joseph and Mary seeking refuge for the imminent birth of Jesus. These parties are usually given by families living on the same street(block parties). Half the people stay locked in the house and the others stay outside singing to gain entrance.

Once the doors are opened and the "pilgrims" are admitted the party begins. Pinatas are broken and tostadas, tamales and fruit punch are served. These parties are held at a different house each night from Dec16-24. Dec 18th is the day of the Virgen de Soledad, the patron saint of Oaxaca. Vendors arrive from all over the state to sell their wares around the church and there will be a fabulous display of fireworks.

Dec 23rd is Noche de Rabanos (Night of the Radishes). Booths are set up around the zocalo for the display and sale of radishes sculpted into fascinating shapes, including complete nativity scenes. Corn husks are also transformed into all kinds of Christmas figures. To avoid hours of waiting, it is best to arrive at the zocalo before 6 p.m. The Governor and a panel of judges will award prizes. On Christmas Eve, Dec 24th, a big parade of floats with Christmas themes will wind through the streets and around the zocalo accompanied by music and fireworks. Each church has it's float which is paid for by a padrino or sponsor. The sponsor also serves tamales, atole and sweets to the participants at his home after the parade. Most families prepare a big Christmas dinner at home featuring turkey or ham and tamales. Christmas Day is normally quiet with families attending mass. New Year's Eve is also traditionally a family affair with dinner served at midnight.

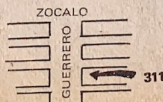


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# FIRST DEPRESSIONS OF PUERTO ESCONDIDO



The main business district, which is closed to traffic, is frankly, very honky tonk. Both sides of the street are lined with shops and restaurants, so you really can't see the water which is just as well as the beach here is littered and not particularly inviting. The merchandise for sale is not of high quality, though some of the restaurant/bars looked interesting.

I returned downtown in the evening and found the main drag clogged with people of all types i.e. has-been hippies, surfers, locals and hordes of young people of all nationalities. I was dismayed to see several groups of 20 or more sitting on the sidewalks drinking beer and booze out of bottles. Drugs seem to be available. I didn't feel comfortable nor did my Mexican friends from Monterrey who were also first time visitors. On the other hand, the beaches are beautiful, especially Bacocho, Carrizalillo, Puerto Angelito and Zicatela to mention a few. Lovely white sand free of pebbles and shells and lovely clear, clean water.

Maybe I'm just a negative old crank. Perhaps I should dye my hair blond, go to a tanning salon buy a tank top, turn on and give the town another look with a different perspective. today.

Before visiting Puerto Escondido for the first time, I had read numerous articles about it in travel magazines and newspapers most of which gave such glowing reports as: "Unspoiled Paradise", "Just Like Pto. Vallarta 30 Yrs Ago", "Surfers Dream". Did I like it? Yes and No. The 40 min. plane trip on an Aerovias Oaxaquenas F27 is very pleasant and since it's a prop aircraft it flies slow and low enough that you really can enjoy the scenery; the valley, the mountains and the sea. I booked a room at the Fiesta Mexicana Hotel which is only a short distance from the airport. A modern 2-story, rambling

structure, it is ideally situated on a bluff overlooking the ocean above Bacocho Beach, which by itself is worth the trip. The hotel is nicely landscaped, has a nice pool and an open-air thatched roof restaurant. Also a discoteque (I thought discowas dead whatever happened to donnasummer?).

It's HOT, well we're in the tropics and like most coastal towns it's breezy and comfortable out of the sun, and at night it's great. Puerto, as it's called here, runs down a hill to the ocean and is divided in half by the coastal highway, the upper half being mostly residential and the lower half commercial. There is a variety of accommodations in all price ranges.

Oaxaca's Only tourist publication  
Published monthly as cultural extension  
of

INSTITUTO DE COMUNICACION Y  
CULTURA A.C.

And  
PRESIDENT PUBLISHER  
L.A. EYOLANDA GARCIA C.

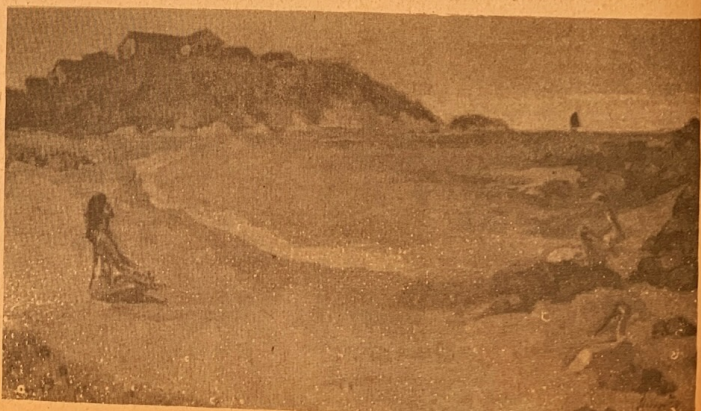
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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!  
The Oaxaca Times celebrates its first birthday this month. We give a toast and many thanks to all the subscribers and readers who supported us during our first year of trials and errors. We will do our best to improve during 1990. A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!



# PASS THE MOLE MA

Do you like liver? Pigs feet? Limburger cheese? How about kidneys in mustard sauce? Most people crinkle up their noses and say "yuk!" Unfortunately much the same reaction is given when the subject of mole comes up; "You mean that nasty black sauce which looks like axle grease?" or "I understand it's made from chocolate". Let's set the record straight. There are many different kinds of mole:

**Green Mole (mole verde)** is a kind of soup/stew combination and is served in a soup bowl. It's usually combined with pork and white beans and the sauce contains green chiles, green tomatos, garlic, spearmint, cumin and onion, etc. This is also used as a filling for empanadas.

**Yellow mole (mole amarillo)** has the same consistency as the green and can contain pork chicken or beef. This sauce combines chiles, cilantro, tomatos, garlic, oregano, and cloves among other things. Sometimes whole green beans and diced chayote are added. This is also used as a filling for empanadas.

**Chichilo** is a reddish yellow mole made with beef and is also soup/stew like. A variety of chiles (pasilla, negro, etc.) tomato, toasted chile seeds, toasted tortilla, cloves, cinnamon and garlic make up the sauce.

**Red Mole (mole colorado)** is more of a stew (guisado) and can be prepared with chicken, pork or beef. This sauce also contains chiles, tomato, garlic, cloves, oregano and other spices and sesame seed.



**Black Mole (mole negro)** is probably the best known and feared of all the moles. It is made with pride and served on all festive occasions. The recipes vary and every cook has his own favorite.

Served with poached turkey or chicken, this is a blend of chiles, tomato, sesame seed, raisins, almonds, oregano, cloves and ever so little unsweetened chocolate.

Black mole can also be purchased in bulk at the market for those too busy or lazy to make their own.

All moles are traditionally accompanied by rice and tortillas.

You don't know what you're missing when you turn up your gringo nose at mole, nectar of the Aztecs. Buen Provecho!

## Bienvenidos amigos

Welcome, reader, to the OAXACA, TIMES Oaxaca, is a beautiful, clean, colonial city with friendly people and a nearly perfect climate. OAXACA TIMES aims to provide you, the English-speaking visitor, with valuable information which will enhance and enrich your stay. Write, call (6-34-43), or come by our office (Guerrero 311) with your tips and recommendations about Oaxaca. Our office is 2 1/2 blocks east of the Zocalo at the Institute of Communication and culture, A.C. Come by and get acquainted. But, above all, enjoy our beautiful Oaxaca.

Yolanda Garcia C.  
Publisher

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# WEDDING IN PINOTEPA



Santiago Pinotepa Nacional is a fairly large, sleepy backwater town inland on the highway between Puerto Escondido and Acapulco and usually not a stop over point for tourists. The 140 kilometer, 2nd class bus trip from Pto. Escondido takes about 3 hrs due to several stops along the way. The scenery is both tropical and in some spots very arid. The wedding reception to which I was invited was held at La Posta, sort of the country club of the area. A huge rectangular open-air thatched roof palapa-type structure was ringed by large banquet tables covered with white tablecloths and enough room was left in the center to form a dance floor with a bandstand at one end. The interior was decorated with garlands of greenery and white flowers. A monstrous multi-tiered white wedding cake was also on display next to the head table. Bottles of brandy, plastic glasses, Pepsi, mineral water and buckets of ice were placed

on each table. Festivities got underway in the early afternoon. The local band played the music typical of this region and the guests danced and danced with much handkerchief waving and foot stamping. It was very entertaining and also like it was choreographed in advance. There must have been at least 400 people present. Waiters scurried around serving barbacoa, chicken mole and rice and replenishing the drink supply. Many of the women present were very elegantly dressed in silk and satin, but with the heat and the frenzied dancing they soon wilted. This continued for hours. Many fell asleep at their tables due to the brandy. The bride and bridegroom held up remarkably well under the circumstances. I was honored to have been invited and had a wonderful time! I'm also very happy that I didn't have to pay the bill. tod

## THINKING OF RENTING?

Many people who visit Oaxaca enjoy it so much they return for longer visits. Hotel rooms can be confining and expensive for long periods of time and there are decently furnished apartments available that can be rented by the week or month.

Listings can be found in the classified section of the local newspapers, in the Oaxaca Times and on the bulletin board of the American Lending Library on Alcalá St. Usually a contract must be signed and a deposit paid. Because of inflation and the uncertainty of the times you will notice that many rents are quoted in dollars. The peso, not the dollar is legal tender in Mexico and landlords cannot require you to pay rent in dollars. They may quote in dollars but you pay the equivalent in pesos. Be sure you understand what you are signing! Are utilities included? Weekly maid service? Will I get my entire deposit returned? I know of one greedy landlady who considers the deposit somekind of gift from heaven and will make up all sorts of excuses not to return it. If you feel you are being cheated or taken advantage of, contact us and we will tell you who to see. tod

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en gelukkig nieuwjaar

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a happy new year

joyeux Noël et heureuse  
nouvelle année

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*The Oaxaca Times*



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