

East Capers Magazine



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Publication from Asociación de Artes Supporting Schools of the East Cape



Photo by Julie Shipman

Festival de Artes in La Ribera- The Original East Cape Art Festival

By: Chris Courtright

Asociación de Artes is going full speed ahead with preparations for this year's **Festival de Artes in La Ribera** and it is going to be another great festival – surpassing last year's festival!!! In 2026, we have started our new tradition of celebrating our festival on the second Sunday of March, this year landing on **March 8th** from 10 – 4. **Festival de Artes**, in its 31st year, finally has found a signature logo – our cat hopping a ride with its fishy friend! Thanks to this great picture by LB artist, Mary Naylor, FdA has a signature logo and when you see it, it means **Festival de Artes!!!**

If you did not make it to last year's festival, you missed a great festival! Never fear, you have a chance to see what you missed on March 8, 2026! Our new home in La Ribera is located at the community plaza right at the City offices, next to the stadium. The grounds are concrete, so it is much nicer for mobility challenged guests, and there is plenty of parking all

around the site. The building has a natural raised area where our stage is located, so no need to look around and over heads to see the entertainment. There is lots of covered seating to enjoy the entertainment, a bite to eat or drink, and rest from shopping at all our great vendors, while enjoying our entertainment on the stage.

We have stepped up our attractions by adding a classic car show and new for this year, a motorcycle show! Motor enthusiasts will have a great time looking at all the rides! So, now we can truly say there is

Continued On Page 3

Asociacion de Artes Presents
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Contributions Can Be Made to the Asociación de Artes

The Asociación de Artes del Mar de Cortez A.C., Los Barriles, B.C. Sur, Mexico is a legal Asociación Civil Mexican corporation not affiliated with any other organization, association, club or business.

Volunteers Needed!

The Asociación de Artes needs volunteers to help support their programs that bring the arts to the local communities and the schools.

To learn more about these programs, visit: www.eastcapearts.com. If you would like to volunteer, send an email to: eastcapearts@gmail.com.

Call for Articles

East Capers is looking for fiction and non-fiction about our region and items that affect our residents. If you are interested in submitting articles, recipes, stories or your personal experiences in Baja, email your 1,000-words or less article to:

eastcapersmagazine@gmail.com

Thank You!

This publication is possible with the help of the board members of the Asociación de Artes and members of the community.



Newsletter Email Address

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The opinions expressed within the articles in East Capers are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Asociación de Artes del Mar de Cortez A.C.

Festival de Artes Continued From Page 1

something for everyone to enjoy!! Want to show your car? See our website for car show details.

Festival de Artes is an invitation only art show ensuring the finest regional artists with their hand made one-of-a-kind designs featuring mediums of acrylic, oil and water-color paintings, sculpture and photography, furniture, jewelry, clothing, gifts, wood crafts, pottery and copper, packaged specialty foods, leather goods, home dec, sewn creations, and so much more. Our food vendors, from area restaurants, will be featuring regional foods and all your favorite things to eat and of course delicious desserts! Our drinks bar is second to none and will feature Pacific Brew hand crafted beer on tap, Rancho La Venta wines, and *Asociación de Artes* margaritas, domestic beers along with pop, water and our delicious Jamaica. As we remind everyone, our drinks are a fundraiser, so drink up! I can almost hear the “ice crackling on the margaritas and the froth of the craft beers!!!”

This year you will find our expanded entertainment, sponsored by C&G Builders, Baja Properties, Mango Bakery and El Toro y La Luna, featuring Mexican traditional folkloric entertainment from 10am – 4pm! We will have groups not only from La Paz and La Ribera, but semiprofessional dance troupes from San Jose del Cabo! We will also have a few additional surprises thrown in the mix of things too! You can come at 10 and be entertained until 4. Don't worry, we will take short

breaks so you can shop!!!

Asociación de Artes (AdA) and our donation team have been collecting all the things you need and want, so you will have the opportunity to bid on some great silent auctions and yes, our HUGE raffle baskets will be there too! Our silent auctions have mini vacations, boating adventures, horse rides, dinners, shopping, adventures and lots of pamper yourself things! Our raffle tickets are only

\$100 pesos each with discounts for buying more and you could win baskets worth hundreds of dollars that are full of great things and lots of gift certificates for the things you are going to buy anyways – so why not buy them from us and help the schools!??

The number one reason not to miss the **Festival de Artes** is that it is the major fundraiser for **Asociación de Artes** that allows us to support 20+ schools in the East Cape area. What do we do to support the schools? Well, let me educate you!! We buy supplies like pencils, crayons and paper, sporting goods, furniture, books, art supplies, office supplies and computers, printers and technology. Then there are the repairs that the schools need like AC units, restroom and lunch room repairs, lighting and electrical, kitchen repairs, fencing, roof repairs, concrete repairs, updating computer labs, soccer goals – basically whatever the school needs. We ask the directors of each school what their needs are and do everything that is within our ability to do. Our mission statement is “*To help make the educational experience the best it can be*”. You know how important a good educational foundation is to ensure a happy, hopeful, successful and healthy future. Doors are opened to educated individuals, so let's all make sure our East Cape community has educated children that grow up to be educated and successful citizens.

We depend on everyone out there coming out to enjoy the festival and then eating, buying drinks, raffle tickets and bidding on silent auctions and supporting our vendors! As the saying goes, “*it takes a village*”, and this East Cape area village needs you to support us and the mission!!!

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Songwriters Return To Raise Money For The East Cape Scholarship Fund

By: John Plotkin

Do not miss the big concert at Hotel Palmas de Cortez on March 7, 2026. Songwriters from Nashville's Combustion Music return to Los Barriles for the fourth year to raise money for the East Cape Guild Scholarship Fund. Returning artists include Chis Farren, Chris DeStefano, Payton Smith and Jessica Farren with new performers Austin Goodloe, Sean Chambers and Melissa Mitchell. Also performing will be local favorites Ted Matzen and Carl Schwitzer.

The Saturday night concert Hotel Palmas de Cortez is an unique, not to miss event. This event has sold out for the past 3 years so buy your tickets early. The visiting artists travel to Los Barriles to perform their songs which have topped charts as performed by well-known artists such as Carrie Underwood, Luke Bryan, Miranda Lambert, Jason Aldean, the Backstreet Boys, Rascal Flatts and others. There is no substitute, however, for hearing the songs performed by the original artists, who are amazing musicians.

Tickets to the Concert are on sale at Homes and Land of

Baja and at the Saturday Market. Ticket prices are \$100/1,800 pesos premium tickets (first five rows) and \$60/1,100 pesos for general admission. Food and drink will be available for purchase at the event. Doors will open at 5pm with opening acts starting at 5:30.

The singers will also perform at a VIP dinner on Friday, March 6th at Hotel Spa Buena Vista. Award winning chef Charles Vollmar (from San Miguel de Allende) together with Spa Buena Vista's outstanding chefs will provide an outstanding meal. The VIP dinner is sold-out. If interested in joining the wait-list for the VIP dinner please contact Guild President, Kim Plotkin at kaplotkin@aol.com. The VIP dinner provides a smaller, more intimate experience with the songwriters and is a truly magical evening of food, drink, and entertainment.



This is the East Cape Guild's biggest fundraising event every year and every dollar/peso earned goes to the East Cape Guild Scholarship Fund which this year is funding education for 192 high school students and 80 college students. The Guild enters its 30th year and is the oldest non-profit organization on the East Cape having funded almost 4,000 scholarships. The Guild has enabled high performing students from economically challenged families to achieve their dreams; becoming doctors, engineers, business owners, builders and even town mayors. Join the East Cape Guild in helping the children of the East Cape and enjoy an evening of great music performed by outstanding original artists!

Cannot make the concert but want more information or want to sponsor a student or donate to the scholarship fund? Please visit the Guild's website at www.EastCapeGuild.com. Tax deductible donations can also be made by donating to the International Community Foundation, at www.icfdn.org, and direct your donation to the East Cape Guild.



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Throughout 2026, we continue working with a strong commitment to delivering high-quality medical services to our community. Along this path, we have built a solid team of specialists that strengthens our comprehensive care and expands our ability to respond to patient needs. We currently provide access to specialists in cardiology, ophthalmology, internal medicine, dermatology, orthopedics, pain management, and other key areas. This allows the community to obtain diagnostic studies and medical care without the need for long-distance travel outside the region. This multidisciplinary approach supports coordinated, continuous, and patient-centered care.

Our services also include medical aesthetic procedures and minimally invasive surgeries, performed by trained professionals under strict safety standards, offering options that contribute to patient well-being and quality of life.

The dental clinic is a key component of this integrated care model. Our dental team includes oral surgeon Samir Ganelon, Verónica Tuchmann, and our newest dentist, Gabriela Ovalle, who provide care focused on prevention, early identification, and patient guidance in oral health. In addition, the clinic is equipped with state-of-the-art dental CT scan technology, enabling precise and detailed imaging that supports accurate clinical assessment.

To further expand access to dental care, we are planning to extend dental services to Saturdays, making it easier for more patients to receive care at times that fit their schedules.

The laboratory department plays an essential role by delivering reliable clinical testing that supports medical decision-making and ongoing patient care. In addition, the clinic has the capacity to stabilize patients during urgent situations, providing initial medical support while coordinating, when necessary, ambulance transfers to the appropriate hospital, ensuring safe and seamless continuity of care.



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None of this would be possible without the support of donations and the generosity of individuals, organizations, and partners who believe in our mission. Each contribution has strengthened our infrastructure, expanded available services, and brought specialized medical care closer to those who need it most.

With this continued support, we are steadily enhancing our facilities, equipment, and operational capacity, reaffirming our commitment to building a more accessible, compassionate, and sustainable healthcare system for the community.



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The Story Of Room 8

Author Unknown – via Explore Historic California

A stray cat walked into a classroom in 1952—and attended school for the next 16 years. It was autumn at Elysian Heights Elementary School in Los Angeles. A teacher was in the middle of a lesson when a thin, hungry tabby cat walked through the door, settled calmly in the center of the classroom, and began grooming himself. The students were delighted. The teacher was bemused. They gave the cat a little milk. The cat spent the day attending class with perfect dignity. When school ended, he stood up and left. The next day, he came back. And the day after that. It became clear: this cat had enrolled himself into school! The students named him Room 8—after the classroom he'd first entered. Over the next 16 years, Room 8 would become one of the most famous cats in America.

THE SCHOOL CAT

Room 8 quickly established his routine. He arrived each morning, attended classes, napped in sunny spots, allowed students to pet him, and departed each afternoon. Among students, no privilege was more coveted than "the one who feeds the cat" or "the one who gets to move the sleeping cat to a better spot." Room 8 had impeccable classroom manners. He never disrupted lessons. He seemed to understand when to be quiet. He attended reading time, math lessons, art projects—a silent, furry observer of elementary education. And every year, when yearbook photos were taken, Room 8 sat proudly in the center of the class photo—in the place of honor.

If you flip through Elysian Heights yearbooks from 1952 to 1968, nearly every class photo features Room 8, looking dignified and vaguely smug, as though he knew exactly how special he was.

THE LEGEND GROWS

By the early 1960s, Room 8's fame had spread beyond the school. In 1962, LOOK magazine—one of the biggest publications in America—ran a feature story about him. The article called him "the most famous cat in America." Fan mail began arriving. Hundreds of letters from around the country, addressed to "Room 8, Elysian Heights Elementary School, Los Angeles, California." Children wrote to him. Adults wrote to

him. People sent gifts—toys, treats, letters expressing their love for this cat who'd chosen to attend school. Room 8 had become a celebrity. Guitarist Leo Kottke would later discover the story and compose an instrumental piece titled "Room 8" in his honor—a gentle, contemplative melody that captured the cat's quiet dignity.

THE DECLINING YEARS

By 1963, Room 8 was aging. He got into a fight and was injured. In 1964, he developed pneumonia and became seriously ill. One of the teachers, Virginia Finley, offered him something he'd never had: a real home. She lived in a house directly across the street from the school. Room 8 began spending nights at her house and days at school—a perfect arrangement for a cat who'd spent over a decade as

Continued On Page 8!!!

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Room 8 Continued From Page 7

an independent wanderer. When he felt well, he'd walk across the street to school himself each morning. As he grew weaker, teachers and students would carry him between the two buildings—ensuring he could still attend class even when his legs wouldn't carry him. Room 8 had given them 16 years. They weren't going to abandon him now.

THE END

On August 11, 1968, Room 8 died peacefully. He was approximately 21 or 22 years old—ancient for a cat, especially one who'd spent years as a stray before adopting Elysian Heights.

The Los Angeles Times ran a three-column obituary. Not a brief notice. A real obituary. On the front page. The headline read: "Room 8, Famous Feline, Dies at School." The obituary detailed his 16-year tenure, his fame, his dignified manner, and the love thousands of students had for him. It treated his death with the seriousness usually reserved for important civic figures.

Because that's what Room 8 had been: an important civic figure. A beloved member of the community. A cat who'd touched thousands of lives simply by showing up and being present.

Room 8 was buried with honors. Students mourned him. Teachers mourned him. People across the country who'd

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followed his story mourned him.

THE LEGACY

What made Room 8 so special? He was just a stray cat who walked into a school. But he represented something deeper: Belonging. Room 8 had no home, no family, no obvious purpose. He was alone in the world. Then he walked into a classroom, and suddenly he had hundreds of families. Thousands of children who loved him, took care of him, made him part of their daily lives.

He went from nameless stray to beloved institution—not because anyone planned it, but because a community recognized that sometimes the best things happen when you simply make room for unexpected guests. Every child who attended Elysian Heights from 1952 to 1968 has a Room 8 story. He's in their yearbooks. He's in their memories. He's part of their childhood. In 2006, author Beverly Mason Cleary wrote a children's book about him: Room 8: The True Story of the School Cat, ensuring new generations would know about the tabby who enrolled himself in elementary school.

THE LESSON

Room 8's story reminds us that:

Sometimes the best education isn't in textbooks—it's in learning to care for something fragile.

Sometimes the most memorable classmates have four legs and fur.

Sometimes belonging doesn't require permission—just showing up and being yourself.

And sometimes, the most dignified response to a stray cat walking into your classroom is simply this:

"Welcome. You can stay."

Room 8 showed up for 16 years. Attended Elysian Heights Elementary School, 1952-1968

Room 8 taught children about kindness, responsibility, and unconditional acceptance. He proved that sometimes family isn't who you're born to—it's who lets you stay.



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The Origin Of Los Barriles's Name

By: Joanne Hyslop

One of the most significant stories in Los Barriles' history is that of visiting pirates and The Pirate Tree. Most of us have heard the story of pirate ships that anchored in Bahia de Palmas in the early 1800s. Legend has it that one time, during a hurricane, a pirate crew needed to remove excess weight for the safety of their ship and brought barrels of gold treasure ashore. They were buried just offshore to be retrieved later. This story has special significance since the original name of the village (Las Palmas) was later changed to Los Barriles.

To mark the place of the burial, a carving of the pirate's ship was made on a sturdy Palo San Juan tree standing on a beach berm near the water. Martin Verdugo, a member of one of the founding families of Los Barriles, reports that the Pirate Tree was situated on the Verdugo family property just north of where the R.V. Park stands today. He heard the story of the pirates and the carving on the Pirate Tree from his grandfather when he was a young boy. "It is assumed", Martin Verdugo recalls, "that the ship was wrecked during the storm. Neither the ship nor any of its crew was ever found. The barrels are still buried, if the story is true."



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The Old Road Remembered

By: Dennis Riley—From 2006 East Capers Magazine

Dennis Riley was a well known business person (PayDennis) and personality in Los Barriles for many years. He raised his family here and was very involved in the community and a great friend to many. He passed away on Jan 1, 2026. He will be missed by all!! Here is one of his stories of old Baja:

I came down the Baja peninsula for the first time in 1964. I was 21 years old and just out of the Navy. My mother and stepfather were with me. My stepfather, whose name was Jonny Mitre, was involved in the original Palmas de Cortéz property. He had leased the property in 1959 and developed a small seven room fishing hotel called, the Bahía de la Palmas Lodge. My mother and I planned to help him run the business. After a few years, my stepfather turned the lodge over to another operator. He and a business partner then made plans to develop a hotel at Punta Pescadero.

We had to bring building materials and supplies down from the U.S. while we were building Punta Pescadero. First, we had to cut a road north from San Bartolo arroyo so we could get to the site. During this time, I made two trips from the border to Los Barriles on the Old Road. The first trip we

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truck for the Old Road. The truck had balloon tires on the back, which could accommodate the center ridge in the road. When we came to the top of the Cuesta Infierno east of Volcán Tres Virgenes, we had to stop at the top and look down the steep incline to see if anyone was coming up. Since we had the right of way going down, we could proceed if it was clear. But, we never saw more than two or three cars on the road anyway so we never had to wait. My stepfather and his partner opened Hotel Punta Pescadero in 1968.

In some parts, the old road was paved. But, most of the 1000 mile trip was on rocky dirt road. Back then, it took about two and a half weeks to get from Tijuana to East Cape, depending on the weather. One year we came down in August during the rainy season and the trip took 31 days. The road was flooded between Santa Rosalia and Loreto, so we had to make our way through the mountain roads to Mision San Javier and the two Comondo communities to hook up with the road going to Insurgentes and Consitution. Another time we were close to El Arco on the way to Vozcanio when a sway bar broke on the truck. We had to wait for another car going north so we could go to Guerrero Negro to fix the part. It took 2 days to get there and one day back.

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Road To Nowhere Bike Rules

By: Bill Osborne

There are multiple bicycle riding opportunities in Los Barillos. Essentially, there are two types of riders in this little town. Many riders prefer to ride trails on mountain bikes, while others, like myself are content to ride on paved roads. This article is directed to those of us who ride the roads. In this set of riders, there are two subsets: those who ride e-bikes and those who ride without any motorized assist. When I first came to Baja, I never considered an e-bike, but father time has reminded me that my 78-year old knees need some help climbing hills, so several years ago, I elected to purchase a bike that could help me climb the steeper hills on the Road to Nowhere.

The entire trip on the Road to Nowhere which connects Los Barillos with El Cardonal is about 18 miles, making the round trip 36 miles. There are several groups in town that ride about 11 miles one way to a large monument off the road and then return home. More about the route later, but first there are some basic rules that apply to anyone who rides here. There are several right of way rules that are non-negotiable. Along the road, riders will encounter cows. These gentle giants have the right of way at all times! One of my friends in town decided to test the rule. The final score was cow one, bike rider zero. He recovered to ride

again, but never challenged another cow.

There are two places along the road where goats can appear on the road. Like the cows, they always have the right of way. In the case of cows, for the most part they travel in small groups and willingly move out of the way of cars and bikes. Goats can be another matter. On the way up the hill from town to Elephant Tree, there is a large herd of goats that likes to cross the road from time to time. When more than fifty goats hit the road, they may or may not yield to a bicycle rider. The solution is simple; wait for a car to act as an NFL blocking line. My technique is to tailgate the blocking car. So far, this strategy always works.

Because the road is used by cars and trucks, rear view mirrors are a must-have accessory. Most vehicles are considerate of bike riders. Some license plated cars are more polite than others. I am happy to say that Washington State-plated cars are the most bike-friendly. There are some other state cars that are not as courteous. I will leave it up to you to determine your own list. One thing to be aware of is there are a lot of ATV's out there. Most of them are good, but there are others who are not so good. When I hear any vehicle approaching, I keep alert to avoid problems. Better to err on the side of caution.

The ride for me begins at Martin Verdugos Beach Resort. The first 0.6 miles takes you through town and to La Casita restaurant. Riding through town demands your full attention as traffic can get tight if cars are parked on the street and traffic is going both directions. Once you pass La Casita, the road straightens out leading towards Playa Norte. At about 1.95 miles, the road makes a 90 degree turn to the left and a moderate climb begins. At 3.7 miles, you will pass Elephant Tree. For the next mile and a half, the climb gets steeper. The summit is at the 5.25 mile mark. At that point quite a few riders pull over for a rest and a water break.

The next mile and a half is downhill all the way. The pavement is smooth and free of animals, so it is easy to let your bike go very fast. Be careful not to exceed the speed which keeps you under control. The bottom of the decline is 6.75 miles from Verdugo's. For the next 0.8 miles, the road climbs to another summit at the 7.55 mile mark. The next 1.2 miles is downhill. Once again, it is free of animals and vehicle traffic is generally light. The road continues past Calle Concha, a point where some riders get off and head for the beach. The road continues with a series of ups and downs and takes you to a large monument on the right side of the road, approximately 11 miles from the starting point. Many riders pull over at the monument, hydrate and plan their next course of action. This is a good time to monitor your battery. Some of the time, I turn around and head home. If you choose to continue, the road climbs and descends for the next few miles. Some riders I know have continued the ride to El Cardonal. Due to battery considerations, I have never made the complete ride.

The return trip is the reverse of the outbound ride. For the

Continued On Page 14



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Road To Nowhere Continued From Page 12

first 4 miles the road has its ups and downs. At that point, the last major climb begins. For the next mile and a half plus, the road climbs to the summit you reached on the ride out of town. Once there, it is all downhill to Playa Norte. Be aware that as the road flattens out, that's where a huge herd of goats live. If they take to the road, be patient and wait for a car to act as your blocking escort. One of the funny things is there is one goat that has a bell. I always get a laugh out of them!

Back in town, be careful regarding traffic. The ride for me ends at Verdugos. One last piece of advice in travel planning is to start early in the day for two reasons. One, traffic is lighter early in the day, and secondly, the temperature is lower making the ride more comfortable. I look forward to seeing you on the Road to Nowhere soon. I like this ride and hopefully, you will enjoy it too!



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Crescent Moon Project: Excerpts from a Recent Interview

By: Erika Yasmin Meraz and Betsy Fox

What is the Crescent Moon Project and why did it start?

Crescent Moon Project gives kids in Los Barriles free art classes. It started because our founder, Priscilla Durán, grew up here and wanted kids—especially after she became a mom—to have more creative opportunities than she did. Because Los Barriles is a small community, access to free art and enrichment programs is limited.

Why does free access to art matter in this community?

We live in a place with a lot of tourism; often locals are 'spectators' of beauty, our art center allows children to be creators, gives them a voice to tell their own story and culture through the works they create, giving them a sense of belonging and local pride.

In an area where there is a lot of poverty, art is usually seen as a luxury. Since our program is free, we eliminate the economic barrier, so a child's talent is not dependent on their parents' pocket. Art ceases to be a privilege and becomes a right.

We offer a safe haven for children and young people. Young people are channeling their energy into something productive and healing. It makes a huge difference. Art helps kids learn how to think, notice, and see the world differently. And here, there just aren't many free after-school activities, so families are incredibly grateful.

We also bring in professional artists through our Artist Collective, which has been powerful. Recently, a dad who was doing work at a house. When asked if he had children, he pulled out his phone to show a picture of his daughter painting on the mural the kids recently did with a Mexican artist from Cabo. You could just see how proud he was—it honestly almost made us cry.

What impact does it have on families?

Parents seem so happy knowing that their child is in an environment that enhances their self-esteem. When a family sees their child's art being donated as a way of paying the rent of our



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Continued On Page 16

family portraits • mini sessions • events • lifestyle • action

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Crescent Moon Continued From Page 15

Art Studio or to support the project to remain open. the impact is profound, the child stops being someone who 'just draws' to become someone who actively contributes to their community. This changes the family's perception of the future and the capabilities of their children.

We held our first family event this Fall. We were shocked to hear how much the parents value our program. I mean, sure, we knew they seemed happy but to see parent after parent stand up in a group and speak about the program, it just gave us goosebumps.

What kind of changes do you see in kids over time?
This surprised us. We thought we were just teaching art, but we heard from parents—and even a local fifth-grade teacher—that something else was happening. Kids are showing more focus, confidence, creativity, and persistence. The teacher told us he can usually tell which kids are in Crescent Moon Project just by how they approach their work and handle materials. That was a powerful moment for us.

3 areas where we have documented change:

Trust:

Some of the kids were really shy when they started with us, afraid of making mistakes or "what will others say".

Now, we see young people who defend their ideas and show their work with pride.

Discipline:

At first, kids had difficulty concentrating or got quickly frustrated. Now, they can focus and show patience and understanding that making mistakes is part of the creative process.

Social Skills:

Children had limited interaction with one another at first in the Studio. It's amazing now to see teamwork and kids showing empathy when seeing the art of others. The biggest change is to see how they go from being "receivers" to "collaborators." The fact that the center is maintained with the sale of their art teaches them entrepreneurship and their own value, all this to develop a "Community Sustainability", the children create value that returns to the community to keep the space.

What's the best way people can support you right now?

The simplest answer is direct donations. That's what helps us keep offering this free art program. We also have fun fundraisers that double as community events—like our Ornaments & Margarita Nights and our Annual Fundraiser—mark your calendars for March 28. We also keep an Amazon wish list for supplies, and the easiest place to find everything is on Facebook at Crescent Moon Project – Art for Children. We couldn't offer this program without the generous support of the community!

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Bone Fitness

By: Sefi Held

The medical profession refers to Osteoporosis as “the **silent thief**” because so many people are not aware of their bone health until a break occurs at the ribs, wrist, spine, hip or humerus - the usual sites for osteoporotic fractures. Although low trauma fractures have also resulted in lifting something too heavy, or even coughing or sneezing.

It is easy to assume that osteoporosis is something to think about only after menopause or to older people. In truth, bone health begins shifting much earlier than most of us expect and long before we pay attention to it. However, this disease can strike at any age!

You cannot feel your bones becoming thinner or sense your density decreasing. For many, the first indication is a fracture, sometimes from a minor fall or an everyday movement that should not have caused harm. According to the **International Osteoporosis Foundation**, one in three women and one in five men over the age of 50 will experience an osteoporotic fracture in their lifetime but this disease can strike at any age! These stats highlight an important point in building awareness early and taking small, proactive steps to support bone health to make a meaningful difference for everyone.

Early Prevention Builds Strong Bones for Life. We reach our peak bone density between ages 25 and 30 - after that point, bone density slowly begins to decline for both males and females. Between ages 30 and 50, the loss is subtle but progressive, and by the time most people consider themselves old enough to worry about bone health, their bones have already been changing for years. That’s why it is important to think about our bone health earlier in life when the body is developing bone mass. Physical activity plays a significant role in determining how much bone you accumulate before reaching your peak. The more bone wealth you build early, the more protected you will be against osteopenia or osteoporosis.

Sedentary lifestyles accelerate bone loss and movement of any kind helps your bones remain healthy, resilient, and functional. Strong bones are built through consistent, everyday habits such as:

Weight-Bearing Exercises: Low impact movements, dancing, stair climbing, and hiking encourage the bones to adapt to impact by becoming stronger.

Balance Training: Balance means being able to stay upright or in control of body movement. A recent research summary identified lack of balance as a big contributor to falls as we get older. Look for classes offering: Anticipatory control — adjusting balance to do a task. For instance, if you are playing catch, can you adjust your balance if you see the ball coming out of your reach? Dynamic stability — balance while in motion. For instance, can you walk heel to toe along a curb? Functional stability limits — challenging your balance. For instance, how far can you reach for



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something before losing your balance? Reactive control — balance when there is an unexpected obstacle or event. For instance, can you regain your balance if you step on a wet spot on the floor?

Resistance Training: Strength training helps build the muscle that surrounds, protects, and supports the bone. The stronger the muscles, the more stress they place on the bones, stimulating bone growth and density.

Nutrition That Supports Bone Formation: Calcium-rich foods, vitamin D, and adequate protein provide the essential materials bones need. Sunlight, fortified foods, and nutritious meals play an important role.

Because osteoporosis also comes with clear guidelines on movements that should be avoided if you have participants with this disease, instructors must understand how to modify exercises safely and effectively and due to the increase in this disease among the over 50 population, I have chosen to become certified in order to help participants in my movement classes move safely. It will be a long, challenging course that I will finish this summer and hope to share with my East Cape community in the Fall.



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Building a Bridge For Young Adults

By: Jo Dibblee

"Look—there they are," I said to my husband when we spotted the New Creation Kids booth and the children at Festival de Artes in Los Barriles nearly ten years ago. I'd heard about New Creation Kids and all of the wonderful things this foster home had been doing for children for many years.

That was the day my life changed. That was the moment I claimed my purpose. What began as a simple idea became a resounding YES—and the non-profit Team Humanity Baja was born.

That day, I met Sam—and so many other children—and everything shifted. I was sitting on the grass with the kids, my goofy pup beside me, when Sam looked straight into my eyes. She reached up, and I assumed she wanted me to remove my sunglasses. Instead, she leaned forward and gently kissed my cheek. I wasn't ready for that. She was just a baby.

In that instant, my heart and my mind collided. What had just happened? I took a deep breath, stood up quickly, and excused myself, saying I needed the restroom—so my tears wouldn't fall in front of her.

From that moment on, we committed ourselves to supporting the children of New Creation Kids foster home in La Paz. Together—with the children, Alma, Roberto, and our and team—we have grown stronger through shared purpose love.

Sam is growing up fast—too fast, as children always seem to when you care deeply. When these kids turn 18, they age out of the system, and that reality has always haunted me. Sam arrived as a tiny baby. What will happen when she turns 18? This is the



only home she has ever known. The other children and the caregivers at New Creation Kids are her family.

Sadly, we've seen what can happen. Some young people who aged out before support systems were in place fell into dangerous—even deadly—situations. Lately, I've been thinking about one boy in particular. When Team Humanity Baja first began, he arrived at the home as a teenager, already carrying trauma no child should endure. We hoped he'd emotionally receive what he needed before turning 18. He was surrounded by so much goodness and support. Unfortunately, he didn't. And when he aged out, he returned to the streets.

If you have children of your own who have navigated this transition into adulthood, you understand how challenging it can be. In Canada and the United States, foster youth also age out—but there are programs and resources available to help them transition.

In Mexico, when foster children become young adults, they are largely on their own. And there are people who prey on that vulnerability—offering quick money and the illusion of an easy life. These individuals are not helpers; they are predators. For the past three years, we've been working toward a solution: transition housing for young adults aged 18 to 21. Our vision is a safe, supportive space where these young people can live on-site with the only family they know while working or attending post-secondary school. They will contribute a small amount toward room and board, learning responsibility, independence, and self-reliance in a protected environment.

In late December, we received an extraordinarily generous donation. On January 3rd, we met with the contractor.

Phase One officially began on January 6th.

Thanks to your support, we have raised enough to launch the project. While additional funds are needed to complete the next two phases, we are deeply grateful and incredibly hopeful. New

Continued On Page 20

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Building A Bridge Continued From Page 26

Creation Kids has been serving children for 25 years. This ambitious—and essential—addition is long overdue. And Team Humanity Baja is happy to help.

Right now, you have the power to change the trajectory of a child's life. These remarkable young people have endured hardships that would overwhelm most adults—abandonment, neglect, and a world that too often looked away. With your help, we can offer more than shelter. We can show them they are seen, valued, and worthy of a future filled with possibility.

Imagine a world where every child knows safety, love, and opportunity. Your gift—no matter the size—is not just a donation. It's a lifeline. It tells these children they are not forgotten. It gives them a place to belong, an education to pursue, and hope for something better than what they've known.

Your generosity will echo through their lives, shaping their futures and inspiring others to do the same. Please don't let them face tomorrow alone. Stand with us. Together, we can break the cycle and build something truly beautiful.

And building transition housing for these young adults is the bridge toward a bright future!

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For updates join us on Facebook <https://web.facebook.com/groups/teamhumanitybaja/>

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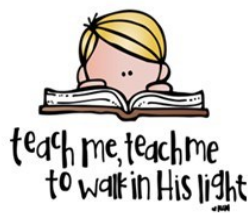
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Colossians 3: 12—14

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13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.



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Baja Shakespeare Presents: *The Little Baja Mermaid*

By: Sheryl Segal

It's the most wonderful time of the year in Baja! The sun is shining, the Sea of Cortez is full of kites and fishers, the courts are full of pickleballers and it's Baja Shakespeare season! This year we are performing *The Little Baja Mermaid*, a Baja adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale.

And since it's January, the cast and crew are in full swing preparing for our seven performances. Here's a peek behind the scenes...

It takes an inordinate amount of time, patience, effort, and energy to bring a show to our audience. Our stage builders have ingeniously designed a stage that fits together like a jigsaw puzzle. They assemble the main stage in less than a day and then, over the following weeks, add the details that make everything work for our actors and musicians. Once the stage is up, the set designers and painters create our backdrop. Our beautiful sets "wow" the audience and cast alike!

While all of this is happening, our costume crew is hard at

Baja Shakespeare Presents

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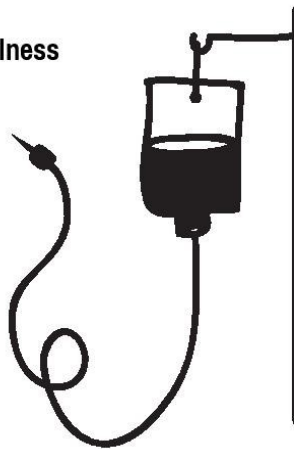
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work. This team buys fabric, sews, and constructs costumes and headpieces, creating onstage illusions with their amazing work. At the same time, our properties team is making all the necessary props, and our lighting crew is busy learning how to use our brand-new lights! Thanks to our amazing supporters, we were able to upgrade our lighting system with effects designed to transport audiences under the sea. Meanwhile, our makeup artists are trying out their ideas, the band is learning lots of new songs, tickets are being sold, and the list goes on. Oh—and we also have several rehearsals and music practices each week! So if you're wondering why some of your friends and neighbors haven't been around lately, now you know. We hope you'll come see us perform.

The Little Baja Mermaid opens for seven performances in the convention center at Hotel Palmas de Cortez on February 20.

Show dates are February 20, 21, and 22 (Sunday matinee), and February 25, 26, 27, and 28. Evening performances begin at 7:00 pm, and the Sunday matinee begins at 1:30 pm. Doors open 30 minutes before the show.

Tickets are available at Homes & Land of Baja (Monday–Friday, 10:00 am–4:00 pm; Saturday, 10:00 am–2:00 pm). Tickets are 500 pesos or \$25 USD.

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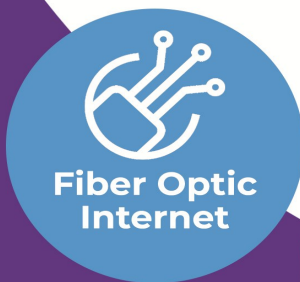
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Community Libraries – Dreams Can Become A Reality

By: Chris Courtright

As a young person and even now, one of my great pleasures was when it was time to go to the library to exchange the books I read for new ones. Through the books, I traveled all over the world, lived as a teenager in different eras and had adventures only a book could bring. Borrowing books was never an issue as I lived in one of the many places in the world where libraries are all over and there is one in every town – even really small ones.

But that is not so here in Mexico. Books are expensive and if a town has a library, it is literally created by the local citizens – I call them book angels.

El Cardonal has one such book angel – Rose Barker. She, through her own funds, is collecting books and setting up a mobile library in El Cardonal. The reception from the community was so great, she is working to expand to other marginalized communities that otherwise would not have access to books and activities.

Right now, Rose has secured 30 tubs of books to start these other libraries. But there are other needs to make this a reality. First a small trailer is needed to haul books, gas money to haul the trailer around and then books are needed. [Spanish](#)

[language books](#) **ONLY** for adults, children, educational books, picture books for toddlers, pre-teens and any books that would help the readers learn English. And also, more book angels to help her with the project is greatly needed too. Plastic totes too are needed.

Most stores sell books, so you could buy some and get them to Rose. If you want to donate funds for her to buy the books, that works. Amazon has Spanish language books so you could make your guests bring books when the come. If you have a trailer, would you be willing to donate or sell for a great price. Does not have to be an enclosed trailer (but it would be nice).

If reading is important to you, please reach out and help Rose bring the joy of reading to other communities. The children know how to read, but it will only improve when they have access to books so they can exercise that skill – no difference than becoming a great ball player, you need practice.

You can reach Rose at
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She can give you more
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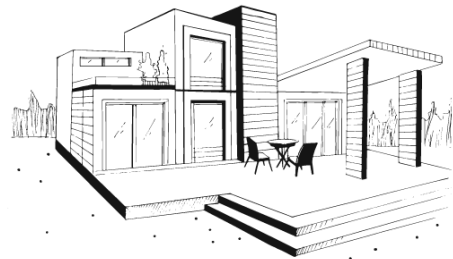


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Trust Isn't Built with Flyers

By: Adam Greenberg with Leaders2Give

It wasn't what we planned to hear. But it's what we needed to learn.

Last fall, we held a community webinar about the John Gullo Home for Children. Families, partners, and neighbors joined us online to learn about what had happened in the year since the doors first opened—what we've faced, what we've learned, and where we're going next.

But it was the unscripted moment that left the biggest mark.

A woman named Maria Madrigal-Discua raised her hand to speak. She'd grown up in a situation where her family (like many in Baja California Sur) could have benefitted from a place like this. Her words were full of emotion when she said: *"Having been there in those shoes, I wish that you guys had been there for my family."*

And then she told us what we needed to hear:

Families don't want to give up their children. And sometimes, even saying the words "children's home" can bring up fear. Fear that their children might be taken. Fear that asking for help could lead to separation. Fear that a government agency might get involved and they won't get their kids back.

It's not that people don't appreciate the idea. They just don't trust it yet. That's what Maria helped us understand.

Roberto and Alma Osuna, founders of New Creation Kids in La Paz, affirmed the same thing when they visited the home in El Cardonal. They've been doing this work for more than 20 years, and they know how slow and fragile the process of trust-building can be.

People don't trust institutions. They trust people. "Trust is built face to face," Alma said. "It takes time, but it's the only way."

It turns out that some of the very things we thought would help, like explaining that families would be referred by institutions or sharing the protocols we follow, can actually make families feel less trusting and less safe.

So, we're shifting our approach.

We still need pamphlets. We still have a website. But we're learning that real understanding happens through personal connection in homes, clinics, and in conversations between friends and neighbors.

This year, we're expanding our grassroots outreach efforts, building bridges with families and communities all across Baja California Sur. And we're meeting people where they are through relationships, not presentations.

In January, Facility Director Belén Meza Sandez and Assistant Director Sara María Esparza Lucero began visiting informal settlements and underserved communities across the region. These visits were made possible through community contacts, not institutions.

In one community, a mother of four named Ángeles gathered about 40 women and 50 children to hear about the home. Belén and Sara shared their personal stories, offered gently used clothing from El Cardonal, and spoke about the support the home can offer during times of medical difficulty.

In another community, a long-time ally named Yovana invited neighbors to hear the same message. Yovana even shared her own experience, reflecting on how much she would have benefited from this type of support when she needed it years ago. She now serves as a trusted point of contact for future families.

In Conquista Agraria, the local subdelegate, Leticia Curiel Valle, helped organize another gathering. She already knew Belén's long-standing community work and assured families that they could trust the message. The team distributed clothing and reconnected with a mother named Yazmín. Yazmín had once been on the verge of placing her children in the home while undergoing surgery, but at the last moment, the procedure became outpatient. The team reminded her that their support still stands, and in doing so, reinforced that the offer of care doesn't disappear when circumstances change. That message of consistency and commitment helped build further credibility with the families who were listening.

At the Nueva Creación Children's Food Program in Los Cabos, an initiative that provides hot meals several times a week to families in one of the most underserved neighborhoods, Belén and Sara arrived with food, flyers, and stories about the mission of the home. They also connected with local leaders who committed to helping identify families in need of

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Trust Continued From Page 26

temporary support during a medical situation.

These moments may seem small—but they're exactly how trust begins.

If you'd like to hear Maria's story for yourself, or learn more about the home, please visit leaders2give.org.

We also invite you to help us spread the word. If you have Mexican friends, neighbors, or coworkers, please share the purpose of this home with them—not just in case they need it, but also so they can share it in their own communities. And if you'd like to help facilitate a meeting, whether it's a group conversation or a simple introduction, we'd be most grateful.



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The Best Ride Ever

By: Gordon Blackie

Every year a group of ATV enthusiasts get together to prepare a ride to share their joy of off-roading with the wider community of East Cape.

If the summer rains have been heavy, sections of back country trails will have been washed out and will need repair. On occasions fallen trees will need to be moved aside and prickly bushes will need to be clipped back.

Every year a theme is chosen and puzzles are compiled to add to the enjoyment. Music, dancing, hula hoops, raffles, and bean bag challenges are added, along with refreshment stations. All together a couple of dozen folk assist in making this a successful day.

The ride is promoted as 'The most fun you'll ever have with your ATV.' This could well be true as the most frequent comment by riders after this year's ride was 'The best ride ever.'

This event raises money for the Feeding the Hungry Charity. This charity provides assistance to those most in need in our community by supplying them with vouchers that can be exchanged for food.

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Friends Supporting Families Launches New Website on January 1, 2026

By: Robin Neal

Friends Supporting Families is excited to welcome the New Year with the launch of our brand-new website on January 1, 2026. www.fsflosbarriles.com

The new site is designed to better connect our community, share our mission, and highlight the many ways supporters can get involved in helping local families in need.

Our website will serve as a central hub for information about who we are, what we do, and how community support directly impacts families in the Los Barriles area. Visitors will be able to learn about our programs, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and the creative fundraising efforts that help us provide monthly food assistance to families who need it most.

As we begin 2026, Friends Supporting Families has a full calendar of events where you can find us, support our cause, and meet the volunteers and artists who make our work possible:

- Weekly Saturday Market Booth – Join us every Saturday at the local market, where we sell handcrafted beaded items and other artwork. Every purchase directly supports our food program.

- Artist Studio Tour – We are proud to be part of this creative community event, showcasing local artists while raising funds for families in need.
- Baja Shakespeare Cookie Concession – Enjoy a sweet treat while supporting a great cause at Baja Shakespeare performances, where we will be running the cookie concession.
- Festival de Artes in La Ribera – Find Friends Supporting Families at this vibrant art show, celebrating creativity while giving back to the community.

Our new website will also feature stories from our volunteers, updates on the families we serve, and easy ways to donate or get involved. Transparency, compassion, and community remain at the heart of everything we do, and the website reflects those values.

We invite everyone to visit our new website at www.fsflosbarriles.com and to continue supporting Friends Supporting Families throughout the year. Together, through creativity, generosity, and community spirit, we can make a meaningful difference for local families.

For updates, event details, and more, be sure to explore the new site and follow us throughout the season. We look forward to seeing you in 2026!



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Introducing Achiote

By: Renée Lagloire, M.A. Anthropology

In Mexico's Yucatán, there are whole stalls in the public markets dedicated to seasoning pastes named *recados*. Basic to that region's cuisine, *recados* are rubbed on foods prior to cooking. *Recado* shops feature dozens of different combinations of ingredients. The three most common *recados* are the Rojo (Red), the Bistec (Steak), and the Negro (Black). While basic ingredients make up each of these *recados*, there are as many variations as there are cooks.

Outside of the Yucatán, and by far the most commonly used across Mexico is the *Recado Rojo*. Most commonly referred to as *Achiote* or *Pasta de Achiote* throughout Mexico, this *recado* typically is a mix of annatto seeds that are ground with vinegar, oregano, cinnamon, allspice, clove, cumin, black pepper, salt, and garlic.

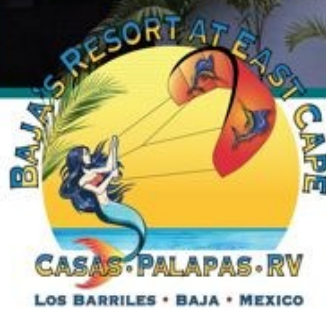
The annatto seed is rich in carotenoid pigments, turning other foods it touches to varying shades ranging from yellow to red brick colors. For this reason, it's been called the poor man's saffron. In modern times, the annatto seeds are commonly used as a coloring agent in manufactured butter, cheese, and popped corn, while the pulp surrounding the seeds is used in the making of dyes.

In more ancient times, the annatto seed was used as a body paint, as well as a seasoning. The leaves of *Bixa orellana*, the small tree that produces these seeds, were also used in traditional medicine throughout the tropical areas of Mexico and Central America. *Achiote*, the processed seeds of the tree, derives its name from "achiotl" in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec people who were in power when the Spaniard conquered Mexico.

While most often bought in brick-red colored bars in Mexican grocery stores, *achiote* paste can also be made by cooking and soaking the annatto seeds overnight, grinding them and adding other

ingredients. The *achiote* paste can be rubbed directly on meat, but more often is mixed with lime juice and is used as a marinade for meat or fish which is then grilled, barbecued, broiled or baked. *Achiote* is also used as a seasoning in a variety of foods. The taste of *achiote* in cooked foods is earthy and delicious. This garlicky yellow rice recipe is a great way to start experimenting with *achiote*, go for it!

Continued on Page 32



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Achiote Continued From Page 31

Garlicky Yellow Rice - Arroz Amarillo con Ajo

The garlicky achiote paste:

- 2 tablespoons *achiote* paste
- 2 teaspoons allspice
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano, preferable Mexican
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled (if doing without mortar and pestle, chop finely)

Combine the *achiote* paste, allspice, pepper, oregano, vinegar in a small bowl and mix well to create a smooth paste.

Dribble in and work in enough water (usually about a tablespoon or 2) to give it all the consistency of a thick but spreadable paste. You will need 1/4 cup of this *achiote* paste. Store the rest in the refrigerator for other uses.



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The Rice:

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups rice, preferably medium grain
- 2 small white onions, finely chopped
- 3 1/2 cups chicken broth or water
- 2 tsp salt
- 4 medium carrots, chopped into 1/4-inch dice
- 2 cups fresh green beans cut into 1/4 inch pieces, or fresh peas
- Chopped cilantro, for garnish

In a 2-quart, heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat and add the rice and onion. Cook, stirring regularly and scraping up any sticky bits from the bottom of the pan, until the rice is chalky looking and the onion is soft, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, heat the broth and the 1/4 cup of *achiote* paste, along with 2 tsp. salt. Whisk the broth mixture well, then add to the hot rice pan.

Add the carrots and the green beans or peas. Stir once, scrape down any rice kernels clinging to the side of the pan, cover and cook over medium-low for 15 minutes.

Uncover and bite into a grain of rice: It should be nearly cooked through. If the rice is just about ready, turn off the heat, re-cover, and let stand for 5-10 minutes longer to complete the cooking.

Fluff the rice, scoop it into a warm serving dish, sprinkle with cilantro and serve.

Club Rotario Los Barriles: Serving Our Community, Building Our Future

By: Linda Snider, 2025-2026 President

Club Rotario Los Barriles is a dedicated group of neighbors, friends, and community leaders united by a shared mission: Service Above Self. Rooted in the heart of our community, the club works year-round to improve quality of life, support local families, and invest in projects that create lasting, positive impact for Los Barriles and surrounding areas. Through collaboration, fellowship, and a strong spirit of volunteerism, Club Rotario Los Barriles addresses real community needs. From health and education to youth development and infrastructure, Rotarians are proud to turn compassion into action—always working hand in hand with local organizations, businesses, and government partners.

Looking ahead, Club Rotario Los Barriles has an exciting calendar of service projects and community events.

In February we will be doing our annual Fountain Clean-up project and you will see us at the Baja Shakespeare production of *The Little Baja Mermaid*. In March, the club will host children's health screenings across East Cape, helping ensure local children receive important preventive care and early attention to health needs, with partners East Cape Medical Center and Nevada City Rotary Club. Supporting the well-being of our youngest community members remains a top priority.

One of the club's most anticipated events is an upcoming fundraiser to support the El Ancon Sports Complex solar electric project. This initiative will help provide sustainable, renewable energy for the complex and will be carried out in conjunction with the La Paz Municipality's commitment to complete the soccer and baseball fields. The fundraiser will also serve as a festive kickoff to local Semana Santa celebrations, bringing the community together for a great cause while supporting a major investment in youth sports and community infrastructure.

Family-focused traditions also continue this spring. Club Rotario Los Barriles will once again host its annual

Children's Day pancake feed at the Cancha with the help of the Delegation and Crescent Moon Non-profit, organize the spring carnival parade with the DIF celebrating the joy and energy of our local children. These events reflect Rotary's belief that strong communities are built by supporting and celebrating families.

Spring time we will also sponsor a dedication ceremony for our capital improvements to the library & playground. We hope you can join us in celebrating this gift to the community (thanks to your generous donations) along with the Delegation. We will be inviting BC Canada Rotary Clubs to participate as they donated funds to help see this project through. And we join forces with the Delegation & DIF by donating gifts for the community Mother's Day celebration

During the summer months, Rotarians will be actively involved in Adult Health Screenings & Blood Drive, partnering with East Cape Home Health. And of course, Curso de Verano, volunteering their

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Club Rotario Continued From Page 33

time to support the swim program, helping children stay active, safe, and confident in the water. In addition, the club will provide materials for the Los Barriles Library and DIF programs, reinforcing its ongoing commitment to education and youth development.

Club Rotario Los Barriles is also proud to partner with Boys & Girls Club San José, extending programming and opportunities to children at El Campamento. These partnerships strengthen community ties and ensure more children have access to positive, enriching experiences.

Through every project and partnership, Club Rotario Los Barriles remains focused on building a healthier, more connected, and more resilient community. With the support of our members, volunteers, donors, and neighbors, Rotary continues to make a meaningful difference—today and for generations to come.

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Paul's One-Liners

By: Paul LaGloire

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If I had my life to live over, I'd start it in a mansion in Beverly Hills.

Money talks in a language that the poor cannot hear.

A humorist is a jokester with a Merrill Lynch investment account.

Monies that don't pour on the poor will enrich the rich.

A shot of booze helps to accept and an aspirin to endure.

We get used to everything, even to what we'll never accept.

Curiosity has more nosiness than inquisitiveness.

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