



CULTURALLY SPEAKING

The monthly newsletter of the Earth Cultures Project of Educational Communications

April 2011

MESSAGE FROM NANCY PEARLMAN



NICARAGUA

In late February and early March I spent a few days in Nicaragua to discover the beauty of this Central American nation. While I've travelled all over the world to over ninety countries, this region of the globe was still on my list to see. And there is much to see and do in this area. I was impressed with our guide Julio Flores, with Oro Travel, who was extremely knowledgeable about every facet of Nicaragua and so helpful to each of the requests from my fellow travellers. Naturally I wanted to see both cultural and natural historic places and I was not disappointed.

On top of the Masaya Volcano, I met a Canadian geologist who informed me that seeing this particular volcano ranked in his top five in the world. You could see the fumes and smell them too, so the visitor was advised not to spend a lot of time at the top. On the other hand, the Mombacho Volcano had short one-hour trails to the top or four-hour hikes around the rim and in the cloud forest. Along the way the special park rangers point out the flora and fauna. As usual, naturalists can see the animals before the uneducated visitor. I would have totally missed the sloth, which, of course, being a sloth wasn't moving but just hanging in the tree but he (or was it a she) was so well camouflaged. The views were fantastic. Driving up toward the volcano we stopped at a coffee plantation to enjoy truly fresh-brewed coffee. I only wish I had time for the zip line. In fact, there were many zip line options but we had a schedule to keep so we got a flavor of what was offered and will have to return.

Three of our accommodations were special. In the historic, lovely Colonial town of Granada was the historic Hotel Plaza Colon. In Granada we took a horse-drawn carriage for our city tour and got to climb up the bell tower of La Merced Church. Jicaro Island Ecolodge on a private island in Lake Nicaragua was practically all ours. With about eight bungalows, each with a view of the Lake filling up the entire island, we had peace and quiet to enjoy gourmet food and a massage. Outside of the beach town of San Juan del Sur, we stayed at Morgan's Rock Hacienda & Ecolodge. You might have seen the stunning white private beach in the TV series "Survivor." I loved jogging back and forth on it for an hour or so. This very sustainable lodge has private bungalows variously placed on the hillside for privacy, beach views, and luxurious relaxation. Again, our stay was too short to take advantage of the outdoor adventures from horseback riding to fishing to coffee plantation visits. One can simply relax or engage in many activities while eating local, organic, home-grown food.

While the capital city of Managua has not been restored since the 1972 earthquake, seeing the ruins of the old presidential palace and cathedral and enjoying the views of the crater of Lake Tiscapa makes a city tour historically worthwhile. Stops along our journey allowed us to meet first-hand, in their home workshops, ceramic makers and other artisans. Oro Travel even arranged a "home" dinner for us in one of the classic haciendas. My biggest disappointment was that the opportunities to see a lot of folk dancing just didn't materialize. I bought a beautiful full skirt and blouse in the traditional style with colorful embroidery along with a CD of the folk music and a DVD of the dancing,

with dance instructions. I'll be ready to join the performers on my return trip.

Oro Travel can individualize a trip to suit your interests and needs. You can reach them at www.oroctravel.com, information@oroctravel.com Calle Corral #205, Granada, Nicaragua +505 2552 4568

*Nancy Pearlman, Executive Director
Educational Communications*



KOKKINA - PASXALINA AVGA

Late Easter Saturday night, after church services, Greeks will celebrate with feasting and an odd game. We've all seen colorful Easter eggs, but theirs are solid red! The game is to use an egg to crack someone else's egg without breaking your own. If your egg outlasts your friend's eggs, you will have good luck throughout the year! The color and the breaking of the eggs represents the breaking open of the tomb at the Resurrection. So dye some Pasxalina Avga red and have fun with them!



*contributed by
Preston Ashbourne*



WORDS FROM LIANA'S WORLD

Contributed by
Liana Hovhannessian

The love for shoes has been in my blood since I was born. Anyone who knows me knows this addiction of mine and if they do not, well, it won't take long until they do. Not only do I like shoes you wear on a regular basis, I am fascinated by shoes from all over the world, new and old, traditional and nontraditional. For the next four newsletters I will share with you the knowledge of unusual, creative, bizarre, and glamorous shoes that have caught my eye.

I am going to start off in Holland and France where one of their trademark shoes has captured the world's attention.

You may know these shoes by the name of Clogs. The French call them Sabots while the Dutch call them Klompen. Originally created all by hand, the French clogs are made out of wood and leather while the Dutch only use wood to

make theirs. Clogs were created over four hundred years ago and were first used by peasants. The main types of wood Clogs were formed out of were alder, willow, and poplar woods. The more ornately painted clogs were used for social events and church, unlike the plain ones which were used for working.

People such as farmers, fishermen, and factory workers all once wore these unique shoes for very important purposes. First was for protection and second for comfort. Clogs can protect a worker from mud, and any hard objects that might go right through a regular soft shoe. Clogs are also practical because they can be worn in the wintertime and summertime, the perfect universal shoes.

Klompen are a part of certain Dutch customs. One of these customs involves the young Dutch men wearing the Clogs with intricate carvings and paints on them to show off their wealth. The more elaborate the clogs become, the more wealth the men have to boast about. Originally Clogs were hand-painted but today they are also decorated with premade templates that are glued on. Or you may notice beautiful carvings in the wood which make the clogs very eye-catching. The artwork painted on the tops of Clogs can run from simple strokes to tedious and sophisticated pictures. I have a miniature pair that is painted all in blue with colorful flowers, a windmill on each Clog with farmland in the background. Windmills are a very popular design to find on the tops of Klompen.

If you ever go to see Dutch folk-dancing,



most likely the dancers will be wearing Klompen. Since Clogs are made of wood, it makes it easy for dancers to create extra fun sounds with the music by tapping their toes and heels together, and stamping their

feet on the floor. Usually, so that dancers can move more easily, the Klompen have ash wood soles with the upper part cut lower near the ankle. Sometimes you will even see a strap across the top part of the foot to keep the shoes from sliding off.

Clogs have transformed in their look over the years but have always kept the reputation of being comfortable. Speaking from experience, these distinctive types of shoes are exceptionally comfy, fun to dance in, art you can wear, and shoes that I suggest everyone try on at least once!

(Next month you will get to read about traditional women's Chinese shoes that were once used to show off a painful form of beauty.)

SOME UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ANITA AND THE YANKS



Anita and the Yanks broke into the celtic rock music scene in 2008 and have built an impressive fan base in and around the Los Angeles area. They are currently in Ireland touring with the Young Dubliners. They'll be back in the states soon to play on the following dates:

April 8 9-12 pm at Gallaghers
300 Pacific Coast Highway

Huntington Beach

Apr 29 7-10 pm at Novel Cafe
1713 E Colorado Blvd, Pasadena

www.anitaandtheyanks.com

ASSIEH LAMORA



Assieh was born and raised in Iran. She started her Flamenco dance training at early age in Los Angeles and later in

Spain at Amor de Dios Flamenco Dance Academy in Madrid with master teachers like; La Tati, Ciro, Carmela Greco, La Truco, Manolete and in Sevilla at Manolo Marin Dance Academy. She has also studied under private training of Angelita Vargas and Pepa Montes. She dances every **Friday, Saturday and Sunday** at:

El Cid

4212 Sunset Bl, Los Angeles
(323) 668-0318

Support the Arts & Education!

upcoming events continued on next page

SOME UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

(continued from previous page)

JOHN BILEZIKJIAN



John Bilezikjian is "America's Oud Virtuoso". Mr. Bilezikjian may be the most prominent Oudist of his generation. He is a master Oudist who has elevated this instrument to the concert stage as well as continues to perform as a folk musician. He has performed for some 51 years on this ancient eleven stringed Persian fretless instrument dating back some 2,000 years. The Oud is performed with an eagle's quill.

Weekly Performance Schedule

First Tuesday of the Month

Casablanca Restaurant
6030 Paseo del Norte
Carlsbad, CA. 92008
(760) 603-9672
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Belly Dancing and Folk Dancing

First, Second and Fourth Wednesday of the month

Tonya's Original Belly Dance Showcase
Khoury's Restaurant
110 N. Marina Dr.
Long Beach, CA. 90803
(in Alamitos Bay Landing) Long Beach Marina 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Belly Dancing and Folk Dancing,
Tony and Atlantis (562) 598-6800

Every other month, 3rd Thursday

Claire de Lune Coffee Lounge
2906 University Ave.
North Park, San Diego, CA
(619) 688-9845 8:00 pm-11:00 pm
with featured and guest belly dancers

<http://dantzrecords.com>

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY TAMBURITZANS



Coming to So Cal in May, America's longest-running multicultural song and dance company, the Duquesne University Tamburitans is a unique ensemble of talented young folk artists dedicated to the performance and preservation of the music, songs, and dances of Eastern Europe and neighboring folk cultures.

Check out their website for Southern California dates and locations.
www.duq.edu/tamburitans

GYPSY FOLK ENSEMBLE



The Gypsy Folk Ensemble is an ethnic and folk dance performing company based in Los Angeles, California which was formed in 1978 to preserve, perform and teach traditional folk dances from countries around the world.

Library Shows in April & May Free! and open to the public

Apr 14 "One World, Many Stories"
Burbank Public Library **POSTPONED**
110 N. Glenoaks Bl, Burbank 91502

Apr 28 "One World, Many Stories"
Buena Vista Library – 7 pm
300 N. Buena Vista St, Burbank 91505

May 4 "Cinco de Mayo Celebration"
Chet Holifield Library – 5pm
1060 S. Greenwood Ave
Montebello 90640

May 5 "Cinco de Mayo Celebration"
West LA Regional Library – 4:15pm
11360 Santa Monica Bl, LA 90025

May 28 "Echoes of Polynesia"
Claremont Library – 2pm
208 N. Harvard Ave, Claremont 91711
www.gypsyfolkensemble.com

LINKS OF INTEREST

MUSEUMS

Bowers Museum
<http://www.bowers.org>

Craft & Folk Art Museum
<http://www.cafam.org>

Metropolitan Museum of Art
(search the database for works of art, costumes & more)
http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/

Museum of Latin American Art
<http://www.molaa.org>

Pacific Asia Museum
<http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org>

ONGOING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA

**Current Cultural Happenings
Around Los Angeles**
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/caltechfolkdance>

Olvera Street in Los Angeles
<http://olvera-street.com>

Folkworks (click on "calendar")
<http://www.folkworks.org/>

FOLK DANCE & FOLK MUSIC INFORMATION

Dick Oakes' Folk Dance Pages
<http://www.phantomranch.net/folkdanc/folkdanc.htm>

Folkways (ethnic music)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/index.aspx>

ARTS AND CULTURES

**Smithsonian Magazine
Arts & Cultures**
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture>

**Smithsonian Center for Folklife and
Cultural Heritage**
<http://www.folklife.si.edu/>

Educational Communications is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. This is the monthly newsletter of Earth Cultures, one of Educational Communications' many projects which focuses on "Education through the Arts." Volunteers and donations are always appreciated.

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