



# El Amigo

## FRIENDS OF TAXCO

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January 2019

### The History of Michoacán

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Seal of Michoacán

Every winter, Michoacán plays host to thousands of North America's monarch butterflies. Residents and tourists alike also enjoy Michoacán's festive Day of the Dead celebration and visits to the Parícutin volcano, which became active in 1943.

#### Early History

Numerous indigenous groups have inhabited the Michoacán area during the past 6,000 years. These groups predominantly settled in the basin of the Chapala and Cuitzeo rivers and include the Nahuas, Otomies and Matlazincas. The most dominant group in the region was the Purihépechans (also known as the Tarascans). However, because the tribe lacked a written language, much of their origin and early history are unknown. Tribal stories, legends and customs were passed down through oral traditions, many of which have been lost.

The ancient Purihépecha inhabitants were farmers and fishermen. They settled in present-day Michoacán around the 11th century A.D. By 1324 A.D., they had become the dominant force in western Mexico. Their first capital city, Pátzcuaro, was situated on the shores of Lake Pátzcuaro, Mexico's highest lake. Later, they relocated their capital to Tzintzuntzan, about 15 kilometers (9 miles) north of Pátzcuaro, where they lived peacefully until the Spaniards arrived in the early 16th century.

#### Middle History

In April 1519, Hernán Cortés arrived on the east coast of Mexico near present-day Veracruz. As he and his army made their way westward from the Gulf Coast, Cortés met with leaders of the various Indian tribes, aligning himself with the Totonacs, the Tlaxcalans, the Otomí and Cholulans. Cortés arrived in Tenochtitlán (the site of present-day Mexico City) in November 1519 with a huge army of both Spanish and native warriors. After conquering Tenochtitlán in 1521, Cortés entered Michoacán and convinced King Tangoxoán to allow Spanish soldiers to enter Tzintzuntzan unopposed. The primary mission of the Spaniards was to find gold and silver in Tangoxoán's mountainous kingdom, and upon its discovery in western Michoacán, foreigners poured into the area. Tarascans were soon forced to labor in the mines and support the colonist's efforts. As was the case throughout much of Mexico during this time, the indigenous populations soon found themselves victimized by Spanish masters who saw them as simply a means to an end.

In 1524, King Tangoxoán visited Mexico City and was baptized with the Christian name of Francisco. Later, he asked the bishop to send Catholic priests to Michoacán. In 1525, six Franciscan missionaries, led by Fray Martín de Jesús de la Coruña, arrived in Tzintzuntzan. In 1526, they built a large Franciscan monastery and a convent. After destroying the Tarascans' temples, they quarried pink stone from the surrounding mountains and built their own missions.

## The History of Michoacán Cont.

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In 1528, Spanish attorney Nuño Guzman de Beltran was appointed to take control of the region. Guzman, a ruthless leader who treated the natives cruelly, was excommunicated by the church in 1529. Fearing the loss of his military standing as well, Guzman fled to Michoacán where he brutally tortured and killed Tangoxoán in 1530. Fearing for their lives, most of Tarascan population fled to the mountains of Michoacán. Don Vasco de Quiroga, Bishop-elect of Michoacán in 1533, played an important role in ameliorating the physical and moral damage inflicted by Guzmán on the state of Michoacán. Over the next three centuries, Michoacán maintained a predominantly agrarian economy, and its population tripled from approximately 300,000 to around 900,000.

### **Recent History**

Around 1810, the independence movement began in Mexico. Mexican priest and revolutionary Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla captured the Michoacán capital of Morelia, where he was appointed governor and declared the end of slavery. Like most of Mexico in the 19th century, Michoacán was plagued by political instability. Taking office after the death of President Benito Juárez, Porfirio Díaz initiated a long period of liberal authoritarian rule known as Porfiriato. Although Díaz brought peace to the country, his policies favored Spanish and wealthy over the indigenous populations and the working class.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 again turned the state into a battleground. Several revolutionary leaders fought for land reform in Michoacán, supported by thousands of landless peasants who clamored for more rights and the fair distribution of land. Michoacán had limited involvement in major revolutionary activity. Attacks by insurgent mobs, country-wide banditry, drought and devastating epidemics ravaged the state during this time. Lázaro Cárdenas, one of the most important Mexican presidents of the 20th century, was a native of Michoacán. He took office in 1934, adopted land reforms and gave millions of peasants the right to farm on communal (shared) lands. Cárdenas also nationalized the country's oil companies. This provided the government with money for education, health care and public services.

### **Michoacan Today**

Michoacán, which is Mexico's largest supplier of avocados, also ranks third in the production of chickpeas and lemons and fourth in sesame and sorghum crops. Sugarcane, corn and wheat are also important staples, as are fruits such as mangoes, strawberries, papaya and limes. Livestock production is another source of revenue for the state, with pork, beef and poultry being chief commodities. The state is also known for its production of milk, eggs, honey and beeswax. The lumber and fishing industries also provide significant income for the state.

Michoacán's tourist industry owes much of its success to butterflies. Every year between the months of October and March, approximately 20 million monarch butterflies migrate to Michoacán from all over North America, traveling up to 3,000 kilometers (1,864 miles) to spend the winter in the mountains. When the monarchs arrive, they cover so many surfaces that the color of the forest appears to change from green to orange and black, a phenomenon that attracts tourists from all over the world.

### **Facts & Figures**

**Capital:** Morelia

**Major Cities (population):** Morelia (684,145) Uruapan (279,229) Zamora (170,748) Lázaro Cárdenas (162,997) Zitácuaro (136,491)

**Size/Area:** 23,202 square miles

**Population:** 3,966,073 (2005 Census)

**Year of statehood:** 1824



Parícutín Volcano (at Left) is the youngest volcano in the world. Erupting from a cornfield in February 1943, the volcano has been called one of the seven natural wonders of the world. When it erupted, two villages, San Salvador Parícutín and San Juan Parangaricutiro were buried beneath the lava, leaving only the church tower at San Juan visible.

## **President's Article - November**

Happy New Year to Every one of the Friends of Taxco! What a great group and tremendous hearts and souls that have given over the past year and for some special people that have given for over the last many years. I have been so lucky to have been involved with this special group. I am thankful for all of the Past officers and their knowledge and wisdom that will continue to help make our group a very special group for many children and adults alike in Taxco and in the United States!



Bruce Troe

Barbara led us this last year and left some big shoes for me to try to fill, but knowing that we have people like Randy our Liaison and editor of the incredible newsletter; and Linda our treasurer and Taxco gift coordinator that give so much of their time, wisdom and hospitality; Bobbie, our Communications Secretary and Publicity chair, Jo who organized the Adult Exchange and Midge who works tirelessly on the Ways and Means Committee and each of these three form the corps of so many ideas to help us finance gifts to our Friends in Taxco's educational system; Ana and her meticulous work as Secretary; and how can we forget the hours and product donated by our Bill Harmon in the Commissary, and others like Mary with the Culture and Education, Reina Hospitality, Ceci with membership and Laura providing picture books and decorations.

I missed so many people and even so many things that the above have given through their homes, hospitality and mostly the huge hearts for our Friends of Taxco. I may be President, but certainly could not accomplish anything without the leadership and guidance of all the knowledgeable people that are part of the group. The best thing is that we continue to move on with new ideas by building on old ideas and traditions and adding new members with new ideas and friendships that will grow and help our Friends of Taxco. I am extremely humbled by all of you. Sincerely, Bruce

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## **FOT Members Attend Mexico President's Inauguration**



President Obrador

On December 1st the new President of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, was inaugurated at the Legislative Chambers in Mexico City. Two of our members, Randy and Linda Lewis, attended the inauguration and then were able to visit our brothers and sisters in Taxco.

They arrived in Mexico City on the Thursday before the inauguration, then on Friday night attended the Cocktail Party held at the Franz Meyer Museum for the invitees and their guests. Around 200 Americans were there and it was reported to be the largest number of Americans ever to attend a Mexican Presidential inauguration ceremony. Saturday morning started with the inauguration in the San Lazaro Legislative Palace at 11:00 AM, followed by the Presidents luncheon for over 600 in the National Palace in the center of Mexico City at 2:45 PM. That evening they attended the Presidential Dinner held in the Casa de la Bola Museum.

Monday morning Linda and Randy packed up and headed to Taxco. They were graciously picked up by Enrique Quaas, and on the way to Taxco stopped in Cuernavaca for a fantastic lunch. Arriving in Taxco around 4:00 PM, the Lewis' visited the Santa Prisca Church to view the reconstruction following the earthquake of September 2017. The church will return to its former glory in approximately one more year. Tuesday afternoon the Taxco Sister City group provided a luncheon for Randy and Linda at 2:00 PM that was attended by nearly all of the members of their group. It was a wonderful event held at Alvera's home. The two were graciously hosted in the home of Manuel and Tony Carbajal who returned them to Mexico City following their visit.



Come Join Us

# FOT General Meeting

*February 17th - 1:00 PM*



Canoga Park Women's Club  
7401 Jordan Ave.



Luncheon - \$12.00 per person

## Special Program

Travels to Mexico City for the

**Inauguration of Presidente Obrador**



## **Installation of Our New President**

At the home of Bobbie Strelow, during the Holiday Party on December 2nd, our outgoing President Barbara White held a swearing in ceremony for our 2019 President Bruce Troe. Bruce devoted his time and efforts to the Friends of Taxco as the Vice President during 2018 and did a terrific job! We are blessed to have his enthusiastic and high spirited personality as our leader during this next year. He and his Board of Directors have many wonderful things planned for 2019. Bruce was unable to be at the November General Meeting for the installation of the other Officers because he was in Taxco visiting with our brothers and sisters there.

Bruce is a retired teacher having spent over 30 years instructing. Much of the time he was at Lawrence Junior High School. His background will certainly assist us with the Taxco Gift Program as we make annual donations to the educational needs of our Sister City Taxco. Since our organization is recognized as being a non-profit 501 (c) 3, we are able to accept tax free donations from the public and our membership. Annually, the members of our sister city group in Taxco recommend one or more projects in the greater Taxco el Viejo area so our Board of Directors can choose which one(s) to provide funding for. The expertise Bruce brings to the table will assist us in prioritizing which project(s) we choose.



## **2019 Adult Visitation To Taxco**



Barbara White

Our Canoga Park members this year will be visiting Taxco on June 7-16, 2019. I would request that each members coming fly on the Aero Mexico early morning flight to arrive into the Mexico City airport closer to noon so that our Taxco hosts will easily gather us up and whisk us off to Taxco.



A Bit of Trivia for you.....

We love to call ourselves Americans. When travelling in Europe we use this word and everyone knows we come from the USA. When you are in Mexico, and say you are an American, the Mexicans may say that they are Americans too. After all we all live in North America. It is more correct to say that you are from the United States. "Yo soy de los Estados Unidos."

Hope you can join us for a wonderful visit this year!

Call me if you are interested.

**Barb White (818) 347-2136 [rushandbarbwhite@gmail.com](mailto:rushandbarbwhite@gmail.com)**

**Join Us As We Celebrate**



# 75 Years of Oklahoma



**January 19<sup>th</sup> - 6:00 PM**

*At the Home of Randy & Linda Lewis  
21305 Chase St.*



**Home Made Dinner - With Wine Parings**

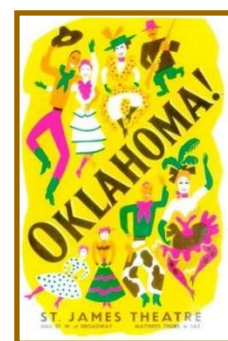
Appetizers - Butternut Squash Soup - Swiss Steak

Mashed Potatoes - Vegetable - Dessert

***\$20.00 per person***

**RSVP: Bobbie Strelow**

**bobbiejoann2@gmail.com - (818) 388-7801**



## **Calendar of Events 2019**

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>January 19</b><br>\$20.00  | <b>Celebrating 75 Years of Oklahoma Dinner - 6:00 PM</b><br>Lewis Home - 21305 Chase St. |
| <b>January 27</b>             | <b>Board Meeting - 10:00 AM - No Brunch</b><br>Strelow Home - 20939 Lanark St.           |
| <b>February 17</b><br>\$12.00 | <b>General Meeting - 1:00 PM Luncheon</b><br>Canoga Park Women's Club - 7401 Jordan Ave. |
| <b>February 24</b>            | <b>Board Meeting - 10:00 AM</b><br>Location TBD  |
| <b>March 16</b>               | <b>Monthly Fund Raiser</b><br>TBD  |
| <b>March 30</b>               | <b>Board Meeting - 10:00 AM Brunch</b><br>TBD  |



**FRIENDS OF TAXCO**

contact information

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