

KEEPER OF THE MEMORY

DECEMBER 2007

RIBERAS DEL PILAR, JALISCO, MX

Peace
For
Earth



Riberas del Pilar - Saludos desde México soleado querida familia y amigos. Como predijo el año pasado, siguen desplazándose de Sur, esta vez al sur de la frontera.

Oops, let's start again - Greetings from sunny Mexico dear family, friends and others (you know who you are). As predicted last year I continue to move south, this time south of the border, about 700 miles south of Laredo in the State of Jalisco, Mexico on Lake Chapala, specifically Riberas del Pilar. We're in the mountains at 5,000' 35 miles south of Guadalajara and about 3 hours from the Pacific coast.

The last chapter of my life spanned some 30 years, I arrived in Chicago Nov 5, 1977 and 6 days later I met Chris while trying to get past her to the buyer at Blue Cross to sell him some film. I never did sell them any film I don't think, but you know the rest. That chapter closed on Sept 21, 2007 when I signed the papers selling our home in Lakeway that we had built and loved for 22 years. I've left pics out on the site for any of you who didn't see the final décor at time of sale www.360west.com

The last year was difficult in many ways, dealing with the sorting and packing and then the listing and tense months until the sale. Then the last few days were totally frantic, I thought I'd pretty much packed everything – boy was I wrong. Friend George came over the last day and I ran him off once, but he came back and insisted and bless him as I'd never have made it without him.

I bought a Jeep Liberty SUV (yes, my life has changed) and a covered trailer to take to MX and stored the Lincoln and a huge amount of "stuff" in Marble Falls. During the final days of packing and storing I got a bit panicky as the trailer was filling fast. I started cutting back on boxes going to MX and of course that ultimately led to me having enough towels and linens here in MX for a lifetime and no check books or some other technology items etc. that I really need. Having not moving for 22 years I forgot how it works.

I flew to Denver to see Mom for a couple of days, then to Guadalajara to find a house. Everyone said there's no way you can do that in a day in MX – they don't know me when I'm motivated. Turns out I found a great place not at all in the area I expected to be, but really much more convenient, so the Lord truly does take care of fools and lost sheep (you guess which I relate to) like me.

I was concerned about Max and 3 days in the car so the first day when I picked him up from the Vet they gave him a kitty Valium and the poor little guy was totally zoned out, even his eyes were goofy. I felt sorry for him and so the next day I didn't give him anything. He decided to ride in "cargo" under my seat. When we'd start out in the morning he'd go down here (even though I'd flattened out the back with lots of room for him) and when we got to where we were going each night he'd come out, so he traveled better than me in some respects.

The blog I started last year at www.oneblueflower.com has become active with all the new adventures I'm finding here along with pics as I wander, so I'd encourage you to take a peek and hopefully get a chuckle from some of the adventures of Steve & Max SOB (south of the border).

The house is nice and I have an extra bedroom for anyone wanting to visit, a pool for anyone wanting to swim, a piano (no, I don't play, but you can), a pool table (I sort of play). I'm exploring the area, the restaurants and Guadalajara –GDL which is a whole other world as you'll see in the blog.

I rented for 6 months and the owners were talking about selling, but almost immediately I realized what a deal I'd found



and asked to stay another year, they said they'd consider it in Jan. so I'm hopeful I'll be able to stay. There is also a small casita near the front gate, a lady from Canada is spending the winter there, but I said if I can stay I might be interested in renting that as well so I'll have room for those of you wanting to sample paradise first hand, or as they say "land of eternal Spring". **Plenty of pics on the blog under "New Casa in MX"**.



In other news; - In July Keisha and family went to her husband Doug's family reunion in Chicago and on their return flight stopped in Dallas for about 3 hours. She asked if I could make it up to see the kids - I told her I could crawl that far to see them. At the last minute Nick, the oldest, had to cancel as he was up for a promotion to manager, so I didn't get to meet him, but the rest of the family and I had a great time riding the tram around the airport, eating lunch and getting to know each other, it was a great time.

Mom is still doing great at 92 living in Denver and my visit to her in Sept was long overdue and too short to be sure, but we had a time to talk and enjoy being together.

Time passes; - It's 3 years now since losing Chris and some days it's easier and some days it's not. Even though I'm no longer in our house with all the memories and unfulfilled dreams, her presence is always with me. As I explore new places one of my first thoughts is always what she would say if she was there with me. I'll tell you this, she'd have a great time with the shopping and decorating and walking in the village would take time as she'd have to pet every dog and horse we came to, but that was Chris.

Max is Max; He's doing fine and settling in to his new domain. At first the tile floors were a bit intimidating as he'd slip when playing, but he's finally accepted that as fun and likes to chase his mice and slide into the area rugs and rumple them, so I'm constantly stopping to straighten them as I walk through the house. He has a new feline friend from La Casa Nostra next door (it's a retirement home). We call her OW (orange & white) like the one in TX, she's a bit shy, but has figured out the feeding schedule and is coming regularly so guess we have an outside cat as well.





Address/Phone number change; - Most of you probably already have my new address from my Email update, but for those who don't, here's the skinny, mail to:

**Steve Brown
5802 Bob Bullock C1
318C-125
Laredo, TX 78045**



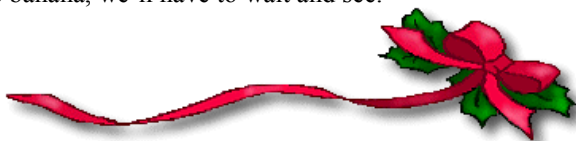
This is a PO Box in Laredo used by many of us gringos to get mail more direct than the Mexican postal system? Twice a week they haul the mail down to San Luis Petosi, sort it out and bring it on down to my box here which is at the local pool supply place (I'm not kidding). So, it takes a bit longer to get here, but it works. Outgoing is a bit easier – The Lake Chapala Society (or local geezer hangout for old American & Canadian expats) has a mail box and you just drop it in and the next person going North takes the sack and drops it in the nearest postal box NOB (North of border) and generally there's someone going every few days, so all in all it's a more casual approach to life, and isn't that what this part of life is about?

The phone remains the same, it's an Internet service and so is still a local call for my old neighbors and I call the States as a LD call. It works well and totally confuses the telemarketers when I tell them I'm in MX – I love it!

And Email remains the same or through the blog at the private email there.



Max took this pic Thanksgiving Day out on the back deck looking over the pool toward the lake. The tree at the left edge is my "ice cream tree" – you have to read the blog to know what that is. I also have grapefruit, tangerine, lime, orange and avocado trees and maybe banana, we'll have to wait and see.



Blessings to One and All from Mexico

Snippets:

A man of 87 years, short, very well-presented, who takes great care in his appearance, is moving into an old people's home today.

His wife of 70 has recently died, and he is now obliged to leave his home.

After waiting several hours in the retirement home lobby, he gently smiles as he is told that his room is ready.

As he slowly walks to the elevator, using his cane, I describe his small room to him, including the sheet hung at the window which serves as a curtain.

- "I like it very much", he says, with the enthusiasm of an 8 year old boy who has just been given a new puppy.

- "Sir, you haven't even seen the room yet, hang on a moment, we are almost there."

"That has nothing to do with it", he replies.

"Happiness is something I choose in advance. Whether or not I like the room does not depend on the furniture, or the decor – rather it depends on how I decide to see it."

"It is already decided in my mind that I like my room. It is a decision I take every morning when I wake up."

"I can choose. I can spend my day in bed enumerating all the difficulties that I have with the parts of my body that no longer work very well, or I can get up and give thanks to heaven for those parts that are still in working order."

"Every day is a gift, and as long as I can open my eyes, I will focus on the new day, and all the happy memories that I have built up during my life."

"Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw in later life what you have deposited along the way."

So, my advice to you is to deposit all the happiness you can in your bank account of memories.

Thank you for your part in filling my account with happy memories, which I am still continuing to fill...

Remember these simple guidelines for happiness.

- Free your heart from hate
- Free your mind from worry
- Live simple
- Give more
- Expect less

....it is the way we touch each other with simple truths that spread goodness in the world.

(Chris deposited 27 years of memories in my account that will last me a lifetime – no matter how long that may be)