

Memory: Six-day trip to celebrate Mary Carmen's 70th birthday and the muralists.

by Dick Davis

This is the first time in years I did not write a journal while on a trip...and darn, I can't rely on my chronology of memory. I'm following my camera takes...and they are not complete.

I've reviewed the photos, 431, one-by-one...actually too many digital takes and the camera took many doubles, why? I'll be editing for the best and reduce the total to maybe 50 max, already down to 171.

Arrived Wednesday, March 26th, evening, met Thad at the Mexico City airport, lugging a surprise gift, boxed, for Mary Carmen. Took a \$200, 3-hour, taxi ride to Zacatlan, stored the gift, in my hotel room, paid for 6 nights at the Hotel Casa Grande, less than the taxi ride.... not much less, but less, then walked Thad to MC's where he was her guest. I always stay at the Hotel Casa Grande, breakfast any time after 7:30 a.m.

We socialized for an hour and MC insisted on driving me back to Hotel Casa Grande as the hour was late. Actually, she's not afraid of muggers, but that I might trip and fall in the dark on the irregular surfaced sidewalks and street.

Thursday March 27th. Morning, first stop, after leisurely breakfast, visit current, in-progress project located three miles from town center, the outer perimeter wall of the small Our Lady of the Candelaria Church. The artists will also muralize the church alcove, where the paintings are currently flaking. We are considering asking permission to muralize the church itself.

Measuring the size!

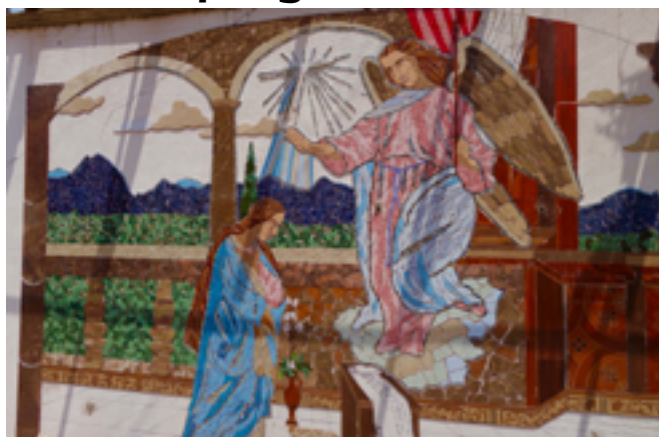


Photos on next page: Murals in-progress at Our Lady of the Candelaria and Rafa Olvera's mosaic "paintings" for home decorations, which are for sale at the Linda Vista Workshop #1.

Interior



Walls in progress



Mosaic muralist at work:



Rafa's Red Riding hood



Owls



Lady with Hat



Catrina: Day of the Dead



Thadd and I checked out Linda Vista walkway, first of a number of walks, took photos of Homage to Mexican States, all 32 represented with traditional dancers in state costumes and Homage to International Visitors. Mary Carmen, when meeting a visitor from abroad, who came to see the murals, (this is due to Smartphones) asked them to write down their name and country. There are more than 30 countries now to be represented, each in national costume, if possible. USA represented by Statue of Liberty, Mary Carmen's sister is the face of Liberty as she has adult children living in Georgia.

Homage to Mexican States, dancers



Thadd and I walked to the Zacatlán Cemetery-Pantheon and located Mary Carmen's family sepulchre, before joining with Mary Carmen at Mirador restaurant and an evening with friends.



Friday March 28, 2025 Mary Carmen's 70th Birthday.... what a gala, lasting 11 hours!

If Mary Carmen wasn't dancing, singing as a duet with the professional singer and the mariachis, opening presents, then singing karaoke with all the words printed on a big screen, she was socially mixing with her guests... and going strong at 11 p.m., when the karaoke guy unplugged his equipment.

The setting: Rancho: Under a great tent.... 106 guests, the max.



One of many table settings



Mary Carmen with brother Clemente



Party started at noon with mass at the Rancho's chapel, built by Mary Carmen's father.



Small chapel, overflow outdoors, communion.



Party, guests, music, dance, food, gifts, more party, flowers, enough for various funerals, opening and displaying presents, singing, individual, duets, trios, karaoke.... lasting till 11 p.m., final thanks and greetings, all is nearly quiet at 11:15 p.m. A long, day's celebration into night.

Thadd, Mary Carmen and Gabe



Son Oswaldo, MC, sister Hermes, son Rafa



Granddaughter



Brother



Sister



Guests



Flower display, one of many.



Yessi Villa, singer, sweet soprano.



Surprise gift from Julie Ressler, presented by Thadd, Julie's son



A relative takes the mike.



Mary Carmen takes over the mariachis



Trios



Mary Carmen and Abraham



MC and Beto



Mary Carmen and Hermes



Family



Gifts, partial



Hat Trade



Tequila



Toasting



Birthday cake....2 candles, make 1 SEVENTY



Toasting Late night karaoke trio



Clemente, explaining the replica of the Ankiythera Mechanism, a replica he built.



Home at last. Zoom call with Julie, artist, who painted Mary Carmen and Friends, which now decorates Mary Carmen's living room wall.



**End of Gala
Saturday March 29, 2025**

Time to take a long city walk and run the, "Oh, Senor Davis por favor, foto," mural route. My longtime friend, former Business Consul, San Francisco, now retired, living in Mexico, invited to the gala, now invited to lunch and spent the day with us: MC, Thad, Gabe and myself.

Mary Carmen took her singing lesson early afternoon, we had refreshments at restaurant Casa Fernandez, socialized, dinner at Cafe del Zaguan. MC joined her voice teacher on stage and local comic joined us, kind of:

Bernardo snapped photo.



Sunday March 30, 2025

We drove, Mary Carmen, Thadd, Gabe and I, Mary Carmen at the wheel, to the Our Lady of Candelaria church for Sunday Mass, but no priest today, so back to town, MC to mass. After mass, MC says, "Priest asked, 'Where's Señor Davis?' I'm being tracked!"

Refreshments, roof top cafe. And a quiet day until dinner at El Balcon, which cantilevers over the gorge.... quite a site, would not want to feel an earthquake looking down a thousand feet!

Roof Top Café



El Balcón, dessert, Bananas Flambé



Monday April 31, 2025

A long day...we drove to Popotohuilco, so Thadd could visit Miguel Guerrero's community and see the San Miguel Chapel, mosaic art by Miguel.

Before reaching Popotohuilco, we found members of the community, working together clearing the road, we stopped, chatted and took a picture. Thadd on far right.



Community Chapel: San Miguel



Hand on church bell rope



Miguel 's house



Dick, Miguel's daughter, M and Thadd



Long drive, circle route, beautiful scenery, harsh living conditions unless you're born to it, steep ravines, subsistence farming, corn, beans, squash, chickens, hogs, sheep.

Mary Carmen took us to see Taller #2, workshop,a full operation, artists working on commissions for private parties, towns and cities. We're preserving others' histories with long lasting mosaics!

Next: Photos by Thadd

Taller/ Workshop #2



Would the real Dick Davis please raise your arm?



Thadd and Gabe stayed with Mary Carmen. He's cooking breakfast. During walks with Thadd, I learned more about food, herb, recipes, plants from various cultures, and mixed drinks than I ever did dining out.



The End