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EAGLE FEATHER RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

VOL II, NO. 10, OCTOBER, 2009

Welcome, Willkommen, Bienvenue, Bienvenidos, Benvenuto. Welcome to our October issue. There are some 80,000 or more American retirees living in Mexico. Where do they get their health care? How much does it cost? What are the limits and deductibles? IMSS or the Mexican Social Security Institute is Mexico's government run medical plan. It runs 1,507 clinics and 264 hospitals across Mexico and foreigners living here legally are welcome to enroll. The annual membership ranges from \$95. for someone under age 19 to \$250 for seniors over 60. Most live in beautiful San Miguel de Allende or Guadalajara. "They take good care of us," said Jessica Moyal, 59 o Hollywood, Florida. Jemmy Miller, a retired contractor of Shawano, Wisconsin declares "We're pretty much in Mexico now because we can't afford health care in the states." IMSS is a no frills system similar to an HMO. There are no televisions or in room phones. On non medical tasks, family members help out in bathing. But the medical care does not cost a dime after paying the annual fee. It is a health care plan with no limits, no deductibles, free medicines, tests, X-rays, eyeglasses, even dental work—all for a flat fee of \$250 or less a year. Actually, Mexico does not want to be overrun by bargain-hunting foreigners. In this system, patients are assigned a primary care physician and given a passport-size ID booklet that includes records of appointments. The doctor can refer patients to specialists, a bigger hospital or specialty hospitals in cities like Guadalajara or Mexico City. Bob Story, 75, of St. Louis, had prostate-reduction surgery at an IMSS hospital in Mazatlan (Place of the deer in Aztec Nahuatl) and discovered that the only requirement asked of him was to bring his own pillow. It was a small price to pay, he said, for surgery that would have cost thousands of dollars back home. He concluded by saying: "I would say it's better than any health plan I've had in the States." In 2007, Ron Miller got appendicitis and emergency surgery at the local IMSS hospital. He was in the hospital for about a week and had a double room to himself. The food was good, the nurses were attentive, and doctors stopped by three or four times a day to check on him. At the end of it all, there was no bill, just an entry in the ID booklet. In Mexico, IMSS is only one of several public health systems. Each has its own network of hospitals and

clinics. It was founded in 1943 and is funded by a combination of payroll deductions, employer contributions and government funds. It also covers 50.8 million workers.

American Heart Association Guidelines: Americans are swallowing a whopping 22 teaspoons of sugar a day. Most of the added sugar comes from soft drinks and candy—or 355 calories for the equivalent of two cans of soda or a chocolate bar. Women should be getting no more than 6 teaspoons a day or 100 calories and men, 9 teaspoons or 150 calories a day. Sugars are added to about everything in the shelves of your grocery store. Read the labels. An 8 ounce of fruit-flavored yogurt has about 6 teaspoons of added sugar; 8 ounces of low-fat chocolate milk has about 4 teaspoons; a cup of frosted whole grain cereal has about 3 teaspoons. The biggest culprits are soft drinks, followed by candy, cakes, cookies and pies. Just one 12 ounce soft drink will put most women over the recommended daily limit. Unfortunately, the government does not require labels to differentiate added sugars from naturally occurring sugars. Look for the culprits of corn syrup, fructose, dextrose, molasses or evaporated cane sugars. There were no limits set for children who are increasing in obesity at an alarming rate. It is a fact that boys age 14 to 18 consume 34 teaspoons of added sugar a day. Eat natural sweet fruits instead of processed corn syrup candy. Exercise and lose some calories. Walking three miles a day could consume some 288 calories or 18 teaspoons of added sugar.

SECULAR JEWISH CULTURE: If you are interested in learning about secular Jewish culture, we are adding to our Ancient culture Series a piece that covers many aspects of Jewish culture e.g. **Secular Jewish culture** embraces several related phenomena; above all, it is the [culture](#) of [secular](#) communities of [Jewish](#) people, but it can also include the cultural contributions of individuals who identify as secular Jews, or even those of religious Jews working in cultural areas not generally considered to be connected to [religion](#). The word *secular* in **secular Jewish culture**, therefore, refers *not* to the type of Jew but rather to the type of culture. For example, religiously observant [Orthodox Jews](#) who write literature and music or produce films with non-religious themes are participating in secular Jewish culture, even if they are not secular themselves. However, the [Jewish people](#) is an [ethnoreligious](#) community rather than solely a religious grouping, while religiously, [Judaism](#) guides its adherents in both practice and belief so that it has been called not only a religion, but also a "way of life". This makes it difficult to draw a clear distinction between the cultural production of members of the Jewish people, and culture that is specifically Jewish. Furthermore, not all individuals or all cultural phenomena can be easily classified as either "secular" or "religious", a distinction native to European Enlightenment thinking and foreign to most of the history of non-European Jews. Throughout history, in eras and places as diverse as the ancient [Hellenic](#) world, in [Europe](#) before and after the [Age of Enlightenment](#), in [Islamic Spain and Portugal](#), in [North Africa](#) and the [Middle East](#), in [India](#) and [China](#), and in the contemporary [United States](#) and [Israel](#), Jewish communities have seen the development of cultural phenomena that are in some sense characteristically Jewish without being at all specifically religious. Some factors in this come from within Judaism, others from the interaction of Jews with others around them, and others from

the inner social and cultural dynamics of the community, as opposed to religion itself. This phenomenon has led to considerably different Jewish cultures unique to their own communities, each as authentically Jewish as the next.

Aquaculture: A New Trend: By the end of this year, half of the fish and shellfish we consume will be raised by humans rather than caught in the wild. Currently, imports comprise of 80% of fish and shellfish that Americans eat each day. There are problems associated with farm fishing. There are health issues associated with the feed and conditions of fish farms. In aquaculture there are issues associated with the impact to the environment and seafood supply. It could threaten to wipe out the forage fish that lie at the bottom of the ocean's food chain and potentially contaminate parts of the sea. Still, the demand by global urbanization is increasing rapidly. In 1970, farmed fish accounted for 6.3% of global seafood supply. By 2007 it stood at 44.7% by one study while another has it at 50% within a few months. As demand increases so does the world's seascape as well. Vessels now venture to the Antarctic Ocean to catch the tiny krill that have sustained penguins and seals there for millenia, and poles strung with farmed oysters and seaweed jut out of Japan's once pristine Mastushima Bay. In China, traditional agricultural plots are being replaced by fish farms according to Karen Seto of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Sciences. Senior scientist Mike Beck of the Nature Conservancy said some Chinese bays are so crammed with net pens that they are no longer navigable. In Washington state's Puget Sound, there is concern about farmed fish parasites affecting the wild stock. In Maine, the average age for traditional fisherman is 57 while those requesting farm fishing permits average 33 years of age. In these farms catfish, trout and tilapia dominate the production but such niche products as oysters with regional appellations and sustainably raised shrimp and caviar now bring a premium in the United States. What are some of the environmental challenges that fish farming poses? There is one fundamental quandary: one needs to feed many small fish to bigger fish to produce those that consumers crave. Did you know that up to 33% of the world's fish catch is landed just to produce the fish oil and fish meal that fish, poultry and pig farming operations demand, depleting stocks of forage fish such as anchovies, sardines and menhaden. In 1995 it took slightly more of one kilogram of wild fish to produce one kilogram of farmed fish. By 2007, it was taking about two thirds of a kilogram for the same result. Then there is the chain reaction affecting other species. In the Peruvian waters, anchovetta stocks were decimated in the 1970's and again in the 1990's and the result was the area's seabird population crashing. The government then moved to guarantee at least 5 million tons of anchovies remain in the sea to sustain the ecosystem. Rep. Lois Capps, D-Calif, sits on the House Natural Resources Committee and plans to introduce legislation to help establish a national aquaculture policy. We hope that it can come up with an alternative that breaks the connection between aquaculture and wild fishing of forage fish. It needs to be comprehensive and environmentally responsible.

Happy and Insightful Reading,

Arnoldo Carlos Vento, Ph.D