

Full Season Ahead

Peggy A. Nelson, Vice President, International Friendship Club

Many of us took time over the last month with friends and family, some away from Vallarta, some here. Much to celebrate. Being alive. Being with people. Beauty. There were concerts, movies, parties, dinners, worship, practices, etc. Some of us relished the quiet.

In this new year, in this time of renewal and fresh starts, my mind is not only on the heavier subjects such as self-care, family, love, resolutions but, also, on enjoying the people, places and things that drew me to Vallarta in the first place. The mountains and the ocean. The pleasant winds. Breezes.

And then there are so many things to expand and enjoy. Top on my list are **Spanish classes** at the International Friendship Club (IFC), offered at four levels, with classes on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. This, for me, is an ongoing, never-ending project. I shall be intermediate for the rest of my life! But it is fun learning and I do progress even if only at a turtle's pace (not the teacher's fault!).

Music is also essential for my everyday life in Vallarta. Two events of note coming up. Much fun to be had at the IFC **High Tea**, where my favorite PV band, Media Luna, will be featured. This event will be held at Casita & Gardens on January 11. Get your tickets on-line at ifcvallarta.org before they sell out. I'm hoping to find the right hat!

In a special concert, **Broadway songstress, Deb Darr**, is performing at The Palm on Monday, January 15 at 4:00 pm, proceeds benefitting the 20-some charities supported by IFC. Tickets can be reserved by calling The Palm's box office at +52.322.222.0200 between 11 am and 11 pm. No online reservation or ticketing for this show. Chances are you may leave the show with a tear in your eye or a smile on your lips, or both. And, knowing you have helped support one of Puerto Vallarta's greatest charities.

To understand Mexico better, I eagerly anticipate **Dan Grippo's history lectures**. This year's lecture series begins on Friday, Jan. 12 at 10 am at the IFC Clubhouse. Dan has his doctorate in Mexican history. I find that his entertaining, deeply researched lectures deepen our connection to our adopted country. Tickets to this series may be purchased online at ifcvallarta.org.

For feeling great, few things beat **yoga, meditation, tai chi and art classes**. The IFC offers all these outlets. Ongoing yoga classes are 9-12:30 on Wednesdays at the IFC Clubhouse. Yoga and Meditation are Saturdays. Tai Chi on Mondays, 3-4 pm starting January 22. A 4-week sketching and painting workshop starts January 16. Tickets online at ifcvallarta.org.

On the purely social (and foodie) side of life, I will join the "**Dine Around**" on January 26. Hosted by Dave Westin, with a group of about 20, this dinner will be held at Trio in Centro. For more info, check out the IFC calendar at ifcvallarta.org/ifccalendar/ Sign up!

Behind each of these activities is an organization that supports educational and social service non-profits in the Vallarta area, the International Friendship Club. Non-members are welcome at all activities. Membership supports the operation of the Clubhouse and members are

entitled to discounts on some classes and at more than 30 bars, restaurants and other venues in Vallarta. The annual general membership meeting is Wednesday, January 17, at 5:00. Members will vote on the Executive slate for the next two years. If you are not already a member, dig a little deeper into Vallarta by considering membership, and perhaps even joining committees that review applications for financial support from various non-profits,

I would be remiss not to mention one of my favorite activities of the season, Home Tours sponsored by the IFC. Each week you and your friends can be transported to 3 or 4 one-of-a-kind homes and villas in the Vallarta area. Filled with design ideas, great art and views, these tours are rated in Trip Advisor among the top 10 tours in Vallarta. The engaging IFC volunteers who escort the tours are full of interesting facts about the Vallarta area and provide information about each home on the tour. Home Tours are prepaid via the IFC website, ifcvallarta.org, depart promptly from The Sea Monkey, on the Malecon, Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:30. Please check in by 10 am on the morning of your tour. Good mobility is required as several of these unique homes require a steep walk on cobblestone to access.

I am always amazed that these events are the work of volunteers, and support Vallarta non-profits. Full season ahead!