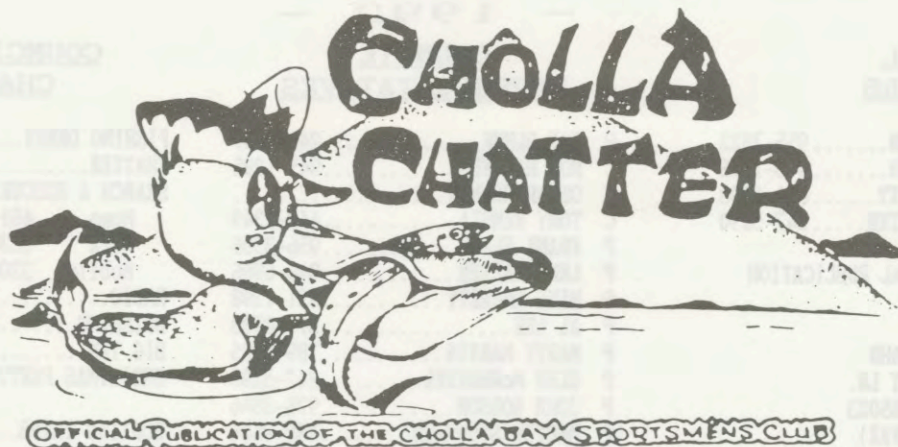




Volume 35, No. 8

August, 1992

1992 Summer Campout

August 6-9



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

06-09...CBSC Campout
18.....CHATTER Articles Due

SEPTEMBER

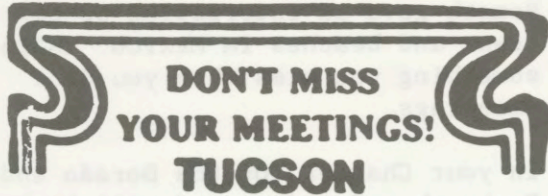
07.....Labor Day
11.....CHOLLA Chapter Meeting
11.....TUCSON Chapter Meeting
12.....PHOENIX Chapter Meeting
18.....CHATTER Articles Due

OCTOBER

13.....CHOLLA Chapter Meeting
13.....TUCSON Chapter Meeting
14.....PHOENIX Chapter Meeting
18.....CHATTER Articles Due
31.....Halloween

NOVEMBER

10.....CHOLLA Chapter Meeting
10.....TUCSON Chapter Meeting
11.....PHOENIX Chapter Meeting
13.....4 X 4 Trip - Devil's Hwy
18.....CHATTER Articles Due
26.....Thanksgiving



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PHOENIX CHAPTER GENERAL MEETING

By: Marie MacGill

We did not have a very large crowd at our July 8th meeting that opened at 8:00 pm. We didn't have much zing in our introductions what with the last two days of hot weather we were all zinged out.

Thanks to Ray Butler we have a new Editor. I don't have any details at this time. I am sure Ray would appreciate all of the help he can get

President Marty Martin turned the meeting over to Vice President Frank Flynn and he did a great job Thank you Frank,

Marilyn Robson was saved from the reading of the minutes when Bill MacGill suggested we dispense with the reading of the minutes.

Von Frazier said we had 702 voting and 114 sponsors with a total of 816 members as the last of the month.

Will some one please volunteer to be the membership chairman?? The Treasurer's report was dispensed with. Sick Bay reported Paul Vanover is not feeling well again. Please take take care and get well soon, Paul.

I talked to Fran Johnson and she said Dr Tom Johnson's burns are coming right along and he is back to work full time, so if you want to get rid of your aches and creaking back see Dr. Tom Johnson. I know I have been there.

Ship's store was buldging with goodies and at very reasonable prices. Clive Jordan of Search and rescue said there were about 468 boats out last month.

We are reminded not to forget the summer campout 6 9 of August. Lew said you can go on Thursday and return on Tuesday if you need an extra day to get ready to drive home. He said all of the Cholla Chapters are welcome to go, so hop in your buggy and head for the pines

Thanks to our guest Dennis White and to Ray and Shirley Hemphill for bringing their Grandson Michael. He is a very enjoyable person

Newt Grefenso told me that Monique Hampton is now a member. Thanks Monique for joining us.

Fred Nemeth gave an interesting speech about the towns and beaches in Mexico. There is always something you miss when you dont attend our meetings.

Watch in your Chatter for the Dorado and Sail Fish Derby that I understand will be held in August or September. That should give you a good fight.

The Christmas Raffle was won by Kim Talapa Third prize went to Monique Hampton a Uno Game second prize was won by Marie MacGill a beach towel.

First prize went to Von Frazier a life Jacket

As you know we will not have an August meeting. Its a long time from July until September and we will miss seeing your smiling faces, so please take care. Keep cool and have dandy summer, and let us see you in September on the 9th.

Until then, GOD BLESS!

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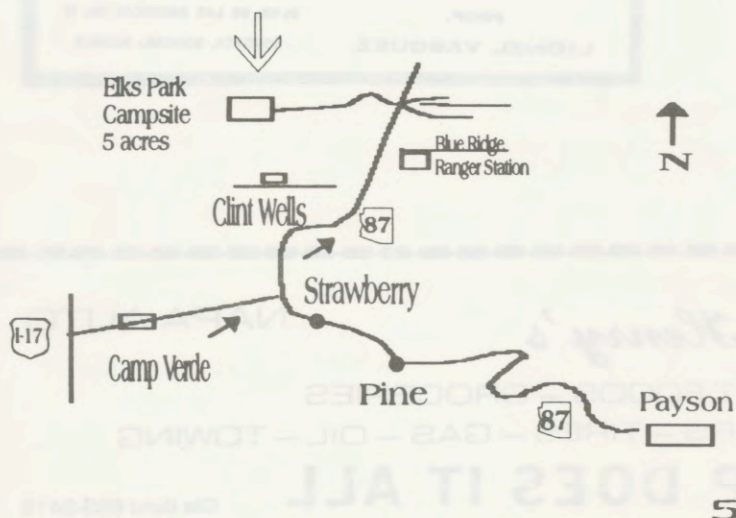
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Sea of Cortez is in peril

The following is Part I of a three-part series on the future of the Sea of Cortez, which has been impacted by non-management. This first installment by WON Baja Editor Fred Hocht deals with the abuses the sea has endured, while Parts II and III offer projections of how the sea's incredible fishery can be saved.

By **FRED HOCTOR**
WON Staff Writer

The Sea of Cortez is dying, the victim of commercial greed and huge increases in human population, and hope for Baja as the world's last bastion of all-year big game fishing is fading fast.

Once plentiful species like turtles, sharks, totuava, shrimp and manta rays are already virtually absent in many parts of the gulf, and dozens of other "sport" species are at serious risk. Forage fish like sardines and anchovies, too, are threatened. So are the great whales, many of which live year around in the Cortez.

Warnings by Mexican scientists like Enriquetta Velarde, head of the biology department at the University of Mexico (UNAM), outlining the need for long-range research programs and accelerated conservation, went unheeded for years by the Mexican government.

Now, only a miracle can save the "world's mightiest fish trap," say some U.S. scientists, who insist on remaining anonymous for fear of losing their privilege of conducting further research in the gulf.

But the miracle may have already arrived.

Captain Jacques Cousteau has entered the Sea of Cortez equation in a big way, embarking on the construction of a permanent oceanographic research center at Puerto Vallarta with the blessing of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

Although Cousteau is considered more of a showman than a serious scientist by most oceanographers, few discount the importance of his work in popularizing the importance of our seas and mobilizing ocean conservation programs.

Cousteau is not a stranger to the Sea of Cortez. He has made several expeditions in the gulf, and his most recent visit several years ago resulted in a ringing condemnation of the abhorrent practices of gulf shrimpers, who shovel tons of immature fish over the side in their attempts to sort out smaller and smaller catches of shrimp.

Cousteau's new Puerto Vallarta operation is ostensibly dedicated to finding ways of rescuing a small population of Cortez porpoises called *vaquitas* from extinction, but we suspect that more is at stake.

We think that Cousteau's grander mission is to save the Sea of Cortez.

One important clue to Cousteau's plan is that he chose a base site that is more than 900 miles away from the sea's only population of *vaquitas*. The rare mammals have been found only in the farthest northern reaches of the sea, in an area north of a line running from Puertocitos on the Baja Peninsula to Puerto Penasco on the Mexican mainland, yet the Cousteau project is located 300 miles south of the entrance to the sea.

According to a reliable source in the Cousteau party, La Paz was Cousteau's first choice for the project site, but letters to officials there went unanswered, an astonishing lapse in hospitality.

The selection of La Paz as the site of the Cousteau research center could have meant millions of dollars to the economy of Baja, not to mention substantial prestige which could have focused worldwide attention on Baja as a

sportfishing center.

In any case, the political efficacy of Cousteau's final site choice seems clear to us.

Being so far away from the sea itself, and supposedly concerned only with a small population of porpoises, Cousteau would seem to pose little threat to the self interests of commercial fishing cooperatives and petty politicians (up and down both coasts of the Sea of Cortez) who are currently engaged in squeezing the last drop of life out of that precious body of water.

It is our guess that Mexican politicians simply did not want Cousteau permanently located in La Paz where he could get a first-hand look at the shenanigans and corruption which have gone on in the Cortez fishing industry for years.

In reality, Cousteau poses a real threat to those who would continue the indiscriminate destruction of the Cortez. In order to get to the northern site of the *vaquita* population, his research vessels will have to pass through the entire length of the sea, offering stellar opportunities for observation.

With Cousteau's stature and media access, the murder of the Mar de Cortez could become exposed to the world as the northern hemisphere equivalent of the rain forest issue in the Amazon Basin. The revelations could leave a lot of eggs on a lot of faces.

How far gone is the Sea of Cortez?

We don't know *exactly*, but we do know it is very sick, and Cousteau will undoubtedly produce the x-rays.

Until now, oceanographic research in the sea by foreign scientists who have the know-how and equipment to gather valid

Hope for Baja as the world's last bastion of all-year big game fishing is fading fast.

Mexico looks at shrimpers...

data has never been encouraged. At times, such research has been overtly prohibited. And if Mexico itself has gathered any reliable data on indigenous fish populations, the results have been kept quiet.

Until now, the only measure we have had to go by is the general opinion of sportfishermen and commercial fishermen that fish populations in the gulf have deteriorated "badly" over the last 40 years. There have been no facts and figures, but "remember-when" stories are rampant up and down the gulf.

The tiny, happy-faced *vaquita* represents a near-perfect subject for public sympathy. A beautiful little animal, it is being regularly strangled to death by gill nets. Only discovered to be a distinct species in the late '50s, its total extinction has been predicted within the next 10 years.

In the meantime, major commercial fisheries have collapsed one by one in the gulf, and now the largest fishery of all, the shrimp industry, is in serious financial trouble because of overfishing.

In a last-ditch move, shrimping in the Upper Gulf has been terminated by presidential decree. Hundreds of boats are out of business, many repossessed to rust away at dockside. According to observers at San Felipe, Guaymas and Mazatlan, at least half of the 1500-boat gulf shrimp fleet sits idle most of the time.

And according to Moises Zazueta Gastelum, delegate for PESCA in Guaymas, the value of the upper gulf fishery has dropped 50 percent in "recent years?" We have found no argument from anyone that the value had already decreased by more than 50 percent before 1980. Our guess is that the latter number is considerably higher than 50 percent.

In point of fact, based on our own experience in the gulf over four decades, we suspect that indigenous gulf fish populations, in the upper Cortez at least, are now less than 10 percent of what they were in 1952.

We have talked to shrimpers at San Felipe and fishermen at Puer-tocitos, Willard Bay, Calamajue, L.A. Bay and El Refugio within the past year who concur.

They are desperate.

Time and again we hear the

*The value of the
upper gulf fishery
has dropped 50
percent*

same story we heard three years ago from the camp foreman at El Refugio on the north end of Isla La Guarda — "We can no longer make a living here. We have hardly anything to eat. Our families are hungry. We have no money. We are still fishing for the little that is left because we have no place else to go."

Many of these fishermen yearn for the old sailing *canoas* of the sea gypsies because they can no longer afford gasoline for their outboards.

And the disaster is not limited to the upper gulf. Commercial pangeros in every fish camp on both sides of the gulf all the way to the Cape and Mazatlan are feeling the pinch. Native fishermen at Isla Espiritu Santu, who once made a living on sharks, and then turned to fishing for manta rays when the sharks were fished out, are now decrying the disappearance of the rays.

"There is nothing left for us," Juan Tamaya, an old shark fisherman at La Paz, told me recently. "We are dead."

Is there a solution for revitalizing the Sea of Cortez? Can the thousands of pangeros now out of work, or working at bare subsistence levels, be saved? Can sport-fishing in the upper reaches of the Cortez return to the days of glory?

We think there is a way, and we will present our 10-year plan next week in part 2 of this article.

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Look for more details in the September Chatter.

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THE POLICE DID AN EXCELLENT JOB OF CONTROLLING THE FIREWORKS IN CHOLLA BAY. PERHAPS SOME OF THE CREDIT GOES TO THEIR ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THE VHF RADIO GIVING INSTRUCTIONS ON LIMITED AREAS AND HOURS. PEOPLE SEEMED TO COOPERATE WHICH MADE FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY FOR EVERYONE.

DUE TO THE EXTRA RAINFALL WE HAD THIS PAST SPRING THE WEEDS HAVE REALLY TAKEN OVER SOME OF THE YARDS IN CHOLLA BAY. NOW THESE WEEDS HAVE DRIED UP AND IN SOME CASES ARE ACTUALLY A FIRE HAZARD. WE ADVISE YOU TO CHECK YOUR LOT AND FREE IT OF THESE WEEDS FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION AND THAT OF YOUR NEIGHBOR. IT WILL ALSO HELP TO BEAUTIFY CHOLLA WHICH IS ONE OF OUR GOALS FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR AND THE YEARS TO COME.

AUGUST ISN'T A REAL EXCITING MONTH FOR THIS AREA DUE TO THE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND AUGUST HAS NO SPECIAL HOLIDAYS TO GIVE WORKING FOLKS EXTRA DAYS OFF. HOWEVER, FOR THE DIEHARDS WHO DO COME ON DOWN THEY RECEIVE MANY REWARDS SUCH AS TERRIFIC TIDES FOR SHELL COLLECTING, CRABING AND ALL WATER SPORTS. THE SPORT FISH, ESPECIALLY SAILFISH AND DORADO, ARE HERE FOR THE CATCHING. SOME FISHERMEN ARE NOW REPORTING THEY ARE CATCHING SPECIES THEY HAVEN'T SEEN IN THIS AREA FOR YEARS. ONE MORE THING WE CAN CHALK UP TO THE 'EL NINO'. A BIT OF HEAT CERTAINLY DOESN'T STOP THE YOUNG ONES. THEY ARE OUT SPLASHING IN THE WATER AND BUILDING SAND CASTLES ON THE BEACH. AFTER ALL THIS IS THEIR TIME OF THE YEAR..NO SCHOOL.

WE ARE SORRY TO READ DIANE STURHAHN IS GIVING UP THE JOB AS EDITOR OF THE CHOLLA CHATTER. WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK HER FOR THE EXCELLENT JOB SHE DID GETTING OUR COMPANY LETTER IN PRINT EACH MONTH. SHE WAS VERY PATIENT WITH US AS THERE WERE TIMES WE BARELY MADE THE DEADLINE. ONE TIME THE FAX MACHINE WASN'T WORKING LIKE IT SHOULD AND DIANE HAD TO RETYPE THE WHOLE ARTICLE. THANKS TO YOU TOO, MARTIN, WE KNOW YOU HAD TO SACRIFICE A LOT OF YOUR PRIME TIME WITH DIANE SO SHE COULD DO SUCH A GOOD JOB. WE'LL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING BOTH OF YOU IN CHOLLA BAY DURING THOSE SCHOOL BREAKS DIANE WILL BE HAVING..PLUS A FEW TIMES EXTRA WHEN SHE FEELS LIKE PLAYING HOOKY.

THE MANAGEMENT

EDITOR'S NOTES

Diane Sturhahn

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who called about taking over the Chatter. We do have a new editor, Ray Buttler. Next month the Chatter will be co-edited by Ray and myself. After that, I know each and every one of you will as supportive of him as you have been of me.

I want to thank everyone for their help in putting the Chatter out every month. My unsung heros: John and Marilyn Robson for the generous use of their office for assembling the Chatter; Von Frazier for setting up the mailing labels on a data base; Sara McWhorter for working on the advertising; Marty and Arlene Martin for taking the Chatter to Scottsdale every month for mailing; all of the above plus Lou Frazier, Glen McWhorter, Connie & John Norsworthy, Paul & Joan Vanover, Roy & Shirley Haenfler for helping put the Chatter together each month. All of you who have contributed your time by submitting articles to be shared with the rest of the membership, for without you, there would be no newsletter. Most of all I want to thank my husband Martin for all of his help, support, and understanding.



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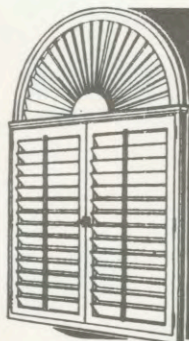
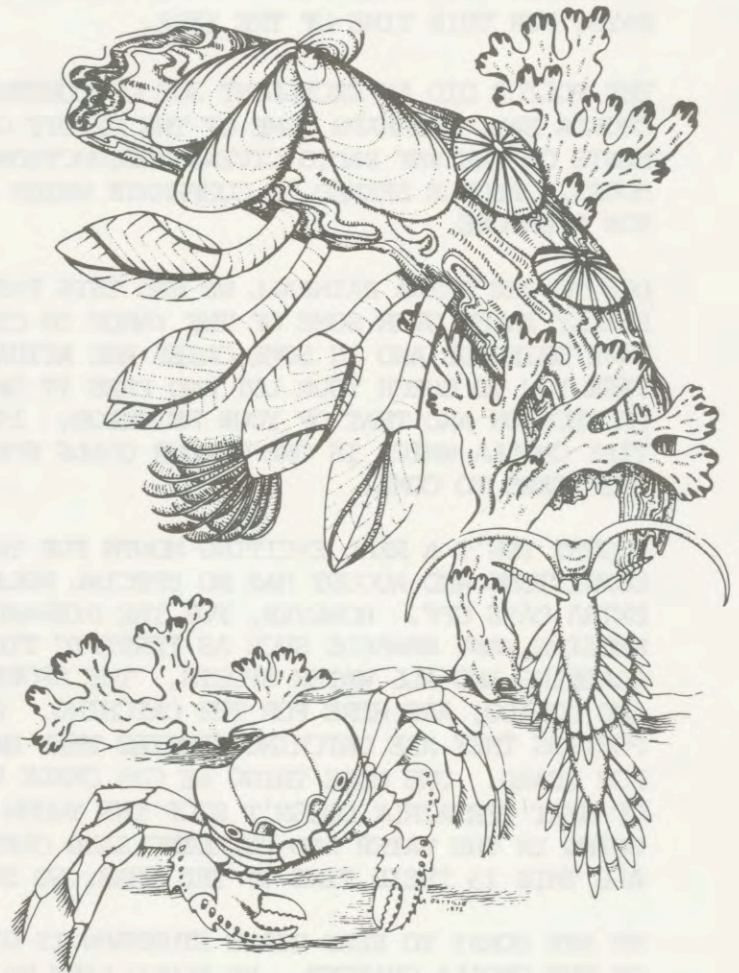
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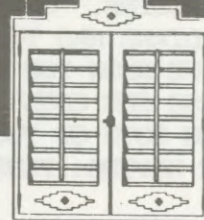
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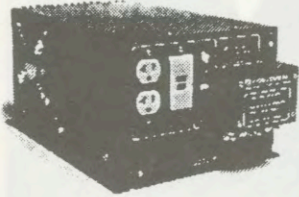


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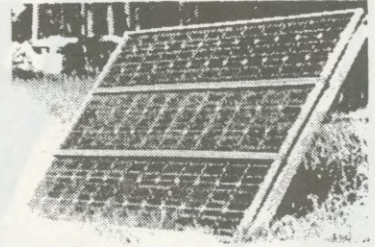
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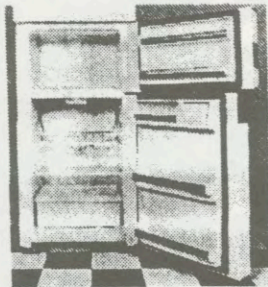


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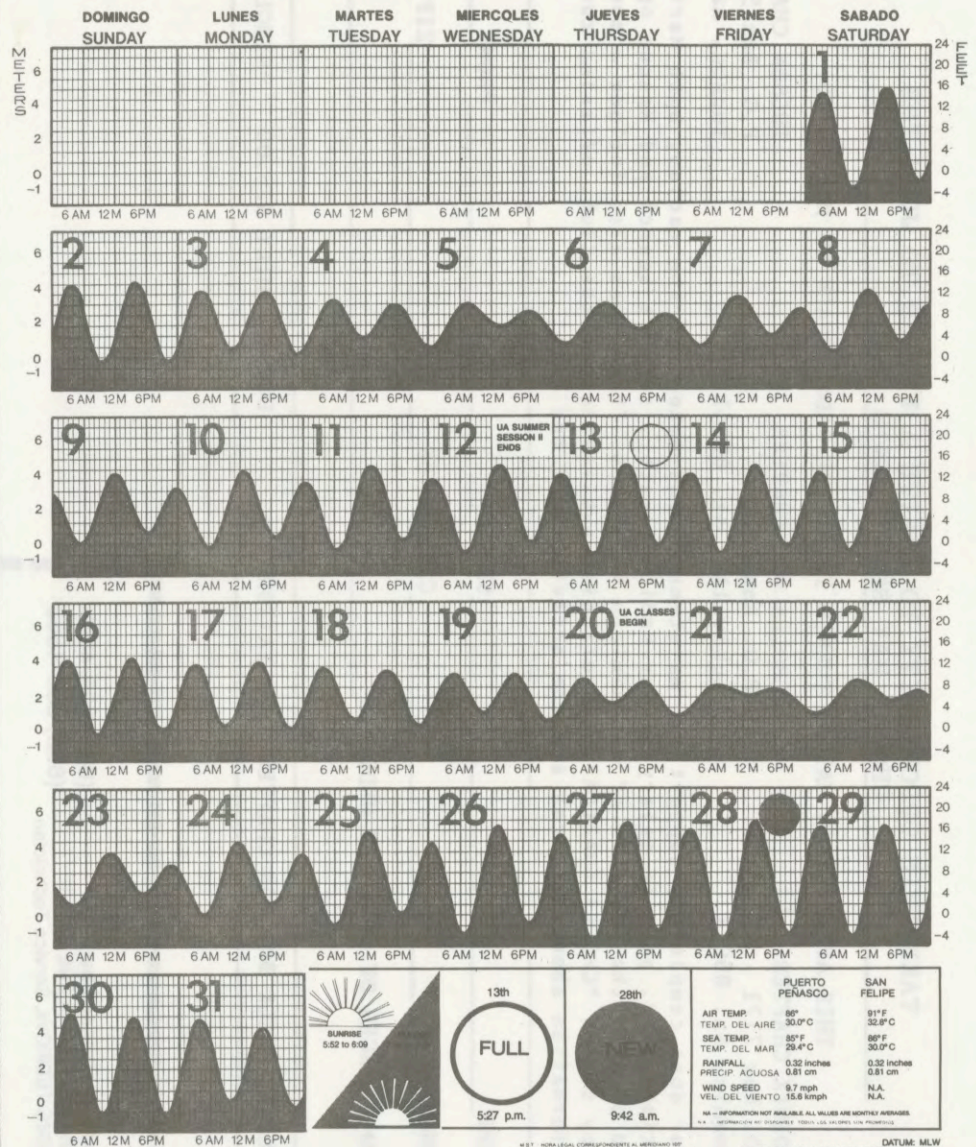
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