

## Bob and Janet Schmitt named Mazatlán's Pacific Pearl Citizens of the Year 2008

### Pacific Pearl salutes couple's endeavors toward Mazatlán's citizens

By Michael J. Veselik  
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When Bob and Janet Schmitt first came to Mazatlán on vacation in the mid-1980s, little did they know that just over 20 years later they would be honored as Mazatlán's first Citizens of the Year.

When the Schmitts began coming to Mazatlán beyond annual vacations for half-a-year at a time, in the mid-1990s, it didn't take long before they were involved helping those in need.

The Schmitts asked something that has become typical of them, perhaps even their trademark over the years in Mazatlán with everyone they meet, "What more can we do to help?"

Here are some of the noteworthy examples of their commitment to helping the less fortunate:

By chance, for a few weeks in 1997, the Schmitts parked their recreational vehicle next to that of the founder of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund, who was preparing to host a barbecue for children in Mazatlán's orphanages on the beach in front of the R.V. park. When they learned of the event, they volunteered to help with the expenses. When

the fund was upgrading the kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms, and sewer line at Father Tovar's Home for Boy's, Hogar San Pablo, each week Janet would verify the work completed and authorize payment for the finished work. Her presence was invaluable in that project.

Back in 1997, Bob created and began hosting the first English-speaking radio program in Mazatlan. Bob offered news pertinent to Mazatlan's visitors and winter residents, travel tips and guest commentaries. Not surprisingly, the commentaries were devoted to how people could become involved with the local community and be helpful to those less fortunate than they.

They have been very active in the orphanages. The Schmitts have helped with remodels, bought books, helped with tuitions to college, organized parties, and have remained in contact with many "kids" long after they have become adults. They have organized the "Adopt-a-Child-for-Christmas" program since the late

1990's.

Twice a year Janet arranges for the Charities of Mazatlán meetings to be held, apprising each charity of the meeting date

homes that could be utilized, the ousted residents.

During that period, Bob wrote for La Vina's "Mazatlán Snapshot" Bob's piece shows the Schmitt's dedication to those in need, the principles by which they serve others and exemplifies why the Schmitts deserve to be the first Pacific Pearl Citizens of the Year:

*"During these days and weeks the Vineyard has done what the Vineyard does best! Showing the love of Christ thorough the actions of its people...that unconditional love that asks nothing in return! We believe that our role is one of support without intrusion ...one of extending*



Janet and Bob Schmitt

so that all charities know what the others are doing and lessening the chance for duplication of efforts. She always makes sure new charities and new people involved are invited.

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Mazatlán's founder, Pastor Fred Collom, arrived in Mazatlan in 1995. It wouldn't take long before he and the Schmitts would meet, forge a friendship and share their common goals of helping others. For several years now, from November through April, the Schmitts organize one of the weekly trips to Mazatlán's city dump to feed the hungry. While Bob conducts the tour on one bus, Janet conducts it on a second bus.

In 2007 when residents of Tres Palmas colonia were evicted from their homes without warning, La Vina church members, including the Schmitts, came to their rescue. They provided water, sleeping pads, transported chickens and anything from their former

*hands to the poor in Mazatlan. We will continue to do just that when and where we can in Loma Bonita, at the same time knowing that Christ's love for all will provide the people of Loma Bonita with what they need to remain optimistic, cheerful folks with a developing sense of community.*

*Through these experiences, we see God's light shining through adversity. We see that even when circumstances seem bleak, people bounce back with energy and positive actions. Praise be to God! And thank Him for putting us here in this place and time and giving us opportunities to be of service to others!"* – **Bob Schmitt**

Congratulations and thank you, Bob and Janet Schmitt for all you have done and continue to do for the good people and less fortunate in Mazatlán! We are proud to select you as the award's first recipients and name you "Pacific Pearl Citizens of the Year 2008!"