Welcome To Mexico !

By Victoria Schmidt

Mysteries of Mexico

Many things mystify me about Mexico. I'm not talking about the Maya, the Native Indian population, pyramids or canyons. Marketing in the larger stores in Mexico mystifies me. I was shopping while a Dolly Parton song was piped in over the speaker system. Attempting to buy a notebook computer I stood in the midst of the electronics department. Every single TV in sight was plugged in and playing a program. Not the same program. That would be too – coordinated.

There's a movie on one TV, a music video on another, and many others were playing an animated cartoon. The device I'm interested in is open for display with a price tag. Is it turned on? No. Plugged in? No. Are there any signs that tell me more about it? Well, yes, but it was woefully incomplete. But a nice employee goes and gets the power cord and boots it up so we can inspect it and see what kind of programs are preloaded.

When the decision is made to purchase the device, I'm instructed to take a small piece of paper with the product code on it to the cash register and pay for it. I do this. I then take my receipt to the electronic department, where they look at the receipt and dispatch a clerk to outer Mongolia returning about 10 minutes later with the notebook. She instructs me to take it to the security guard, who makes a note on his clipboard. Can I leave? Nope. I'm then instructed to walk across the entire store to a service counter.

The service counter is a hub of various activities, with only one clerk. She's exchanging light bulbs, and other products being returned, and storing bags for shoppers. Taking customers in no apparent order, I watched and waited my turn. She seemed confused when I ask for my warranty. I watch as she is interrupted by the telephone, customers, and clerks and I wait.

Thirty-five minutes, two clerks and a manager later, I'm walking out of the store with a stamp on the back of my receipt…and a promise they will email my warranty at some future date when they figure out why their repeated attempts to get their computer to print it out have failed.

It mystifies me that they can take something as simple as making a purchase, and have it take over an hour and a half.

Other things mystify me. I'd really like to know where my Telecable bill is. Sometimes we get it, sometimes we don't. Where I volunteer…we haven't received the bill since May. But the service will get turned off the day after the bill was due. In our new home, I always get the CFE bill…in our old house… I never saw one. Where are those bills going?

These are important matters, because whenever I go to do something official, or semi-official…I need to supply a copy of my utility bill. Need to open a bank account? Bring in your passport, visa,…and your utility bill. Would someone please explain to me why a copy of a utility bill in my landlord's name proves where I live?

The love of paper is a prerequisite of dealing with the Mexican government. I've learned to carry copies of all sorts of documents with me whenever I interact with an official department of the government, because I know that they will ask for a copy of my ID, passport, visa, lease,

utility bill…sometimes birth and marriage certificates, usually a tiny photo and lots of pesos. And whenever I think I've got everything I need… I find out the government has just changed their requirements.