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Mencken's



S.D. ON THE Q.T.

The News You Won't Find Anywhere Else

MI\$\$ION TERRITORY

Mexican Church-Conversion Plan Seeks to Replace the Poor-Box with One-Armed Bandits

"El Casino Real?"

GIFT SHOP AT THE MISSION SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ, SAN DIEGO (AP) — In a move that is almost certain to place additional strain on the already tense relations between the United States and Mexico, Mexican president Felipe Calderón today announced a plan to convert California's historic mission churches to reservation-style gaming establishments, with all profits going directly to his country's government.

"For centuries," said Calderón, "people have gambled their immortal souls that the Catholic Church was the surest path to salvation. By comparison, blackjack, roulette, and slot machines are a much more modest bet — and a lot more fun as well! We look forward to providing the citizens of California — indeed, of the entire United States — with quality gaming in a stunningly beautiful environment. None of your Las Vegas-style fakery here, people — ersatz pyramids and make-believe city skylines and the like. No, we're offering the real deal, and we're on a 'mission' to become America's number one gambling destination!"

He then introduced the casino chain's new mascot: Our Lady of Luck, an image of a woman styled after the Virgin of Guadalupe, but standing on a pile of gold instead of a crescent moon.

The plan is based on a heretofore-ignored codicil to the Protocol of Queretaro, which was added to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the document that brought much of the American Southwest under the



"The Lord loves a cheerful bettor!"

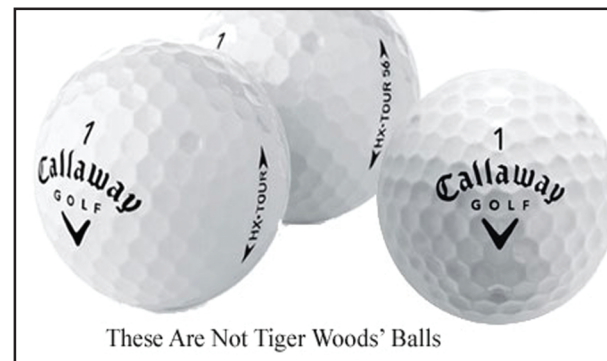
control of the United States. U.S. envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico Nathan Clifford signed the Protocol in 1848 and apparently raised no objection to allowing "the diverse Missions established by the servants of the Roman Catholic Church throughout Alta California" to be excluded from the treaty's claims. When the new Mexican constitution of 1917 put Church property at the disposal of the state, the California missions became a de facto property of the Mexican government, and the transfer of the "Mexican Missions in California" was never formally revoked.

Ironically, says San Diego State history professor Paula De Vos, a persistent rumor has circulated among historians that Clifford allowed the codicil as the result of a lost bet during a poker game with a member of the Mexican Catholic hierarchy.

Numerous groups have already spoken out against the plan, including cash-strapped California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, activist group Catholics Opposed to Desecra-

tion (COD), and the Mission San Diego choir. President Obama has thus far remained silent, pending an assessment from his advisers. (Rumors that Vice President Biden has spent the past week playing craps in Mexico City have so far gone unconfirmed.)

But San Diego bishop Robert Brom, whose diocese contains both the Mission San Diego and the Mission San Luis Rey de Francia in Oceanside, was sanguine. "We will certainly miss Mission San Diego, but to be honest, the Catholic Church has bigger problems to worry about these days than monuments to its past. Besides," he noted, "the parishioners at San Luis Rey don't even worship in the old church anymore. It's a museum, a place where folks drag their kids to learn the history of a failed experiment. Frankly, I'm delighted to think of all the people who will get to experience the beauty offered by the Church for the first time as a result of this repurposing. And as for the gambling — you ever been in a Catholic church where they didn't play bingo?"



These Are Not Tiger Woods' Balls

A sample from Callaway's upcoming ad campaign

Callaway: "Tiger Woods Doesn't Play with Callaway."

Golf manufacturer emphasizes distance from tarnished star

CARLSBAD — Local company Callaway Golf was delighted by the bump in business brought on by Tiger Woods's return to golf last spring — the company's stock jumped 1.5 percent on the strength of Woods's announcement alone. But as sponsors such as Gatorade, AT&T, and Accenture have ended their associations with Woods, Callaway has decided to launch an ad campaign based

on the fact that they never had a relationship with Woods in the first place. "Tiger Woods may have sullied the game of golf and brought distress to a host of companies that sought to benefit from the heat of his fame," said company marketing director Brad Hanson. "But not Callaway. We take great pride in not being the brand of Tiger Woods, and we want the whole world to know it."

WHO PLAYS WHO

SAN DIEGO CHEF EDITION



Patton Oswalt was the voice of Ratatouille, an animated rat who showed us that a fine chef could spring up from the sewer.



Patrick Ponsaty was the chef at Bernard'O, an animated cook who showed us that a fine restaurant could spring up in a suburban shopping center.



Rowan Atkinson played Mr. Bean, a comedic character who confirmed the American notion that Englishmen are buffoonish twits.



Jean Michel Diot cooks at Tapenade, a La Jolla restaurant that confirms the American notion that Frenchmen are snail-eating gourmands.



Melissa Etheridge got cancer, now eats "closer-to-the-ground foods" to fuel her "body and spirit."



Deborah Scott got Island Prime, now serves "closer-to-the-water foods" to accompany fanciful spirits.