

February Not Quite Like You Remembered It

For the majority of my life living in the States, I absolutely loathed February. This is indeed my personal bias, but I'll state my arguments anyway. Being a New Englander, it is very cold and raw in February. It just makes the winter too long. March brings the possibility of an early round or two of golf, but February just has to be endured. For sports fans, February is also a complete wasteland. Oh yes, there is the Super Bowl, but that use to be at the end of January until they made it the first Sunday of February to allow for extended play-off games. Still, after the Super Bowl there is nothing of import (except perhaps badminton games) until college basketball's March Madness. February is so far away from the beginning of the school year or graduations. And who would ever get married in February. They put Valentine's Day in February to trick us into believing it has some worth. Besides all that, February is just strange as a month. It doesn't have enough days, and then its days correspond to March's days exactly, like Groundhog Day only extended. Then there's leap year that messes everybody up. I guess the only thing February has going for it is primaries and caucuses for the political junkies in an election year like this one. I've never been much of a political junkie. February has just always been difficult to get over.

2016 FEBRUARY						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29					

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But here in Honduras, February is a completely different experience. It is the end of school vacation, school begins on February first. Because the Christmas season is overly extended here, it is also the end of the Christmas season (I don't think they have yet taken down the crèche in the central plaza in La Esperanza). We are now already in the heart of the dry season and summer is beginning. Yes, summer! The days will get drier and hotter, much hotter. With school in session, sports get really serious, especially fútbol (sorry, soccer), kids in full force running up and down the fields. Here, February is anything but boring. It is an amusement park ride and everyone is jumping on.



Ever Bonilla and Angela McCaskill on the radio

Many of those who are jumping on the February roller coaster are the Shoulder to Shoulder mission trip participants. Whether it is because February is such a grueling month in the States, or because February rocks in Honduras, we have seven brigades scheduled in this all too short of a month, even with the extra, leap year day. One-hundred-three otherwise unknown gringos will come and leave their mark

upon the soil of Intibucá over the next 29 days. This is great! This is exciting! We are so much looking forward to it. But at the same time, it means an incredible amount of planning and work.



- **Brown/Wingate** is once again going to their clinic in Guachpilincito. They have so many participants, twenty-six, that they have decided to do it in shifts over the course of three weeks. They are also planning on more patient educational days and more professional training days. Our Honduran medical professionals are really looking forward to sharing practice protocols with Brown/Wingate’s team.
- **Virginia Commonwealth University and Fairfield Family Practice Centers** are once again housing themselves at their clinic in Pinares. They serve some of the poorest and most isolated people in the Frontera. We appreciate their long standing commitment.
- For the first time ever, Shoulder to Shoulder is hosting **Unidad Hospitalaria Móvil Latinoamérica or Latin America Mobile Hospital Unit**. They will be providing general and proctologic surgeries for many of our people in the Frontera as well as from La Esperanza. They will be at the hospital in La Esperanza. We are incredibly proud of this new mission and hope that it will be the beginning of a very meaningful relationship.
- **Mountain Area Health Education Center** will return to Camasca with a small contingent of travellers to complete a study and to offer some assistance at the health center there, as well as at our bilingual school.
- **Johns Hopkins** is coming to Santa Lucia once again after a year’s hiatus. It will be a small brigade, but we are pleased and honored to receive them.
- **Larry Tepe and a small dental brigade** will see patients at the clinic in Concepción.
- We will complete the month with a mega brigade from **Cleveland Clinic and Christ Church** of thirty-three people descending upon the small town of Camasca. I’m certain they will be a force to reckon with.



So for all of you that will be sitting around your house feeling sorry for yourselves as the month of February drags on and on, we invite you to think about coming to Honduras. It’s the place to be this February.