

HOW TO READ ATENAS TODAY

Many of the pages in Atenas Today are in two column format, and the default “view” in the *Adobe Reader* will present these pages in a large size that requires you to scroll up and down to read the whole page.

By changing the “view” to “**Full Screen**” you can fit the page to your screen and avoid the scrolling.

When in “Full Screen” view, left click to advance to the next page, or right click to go back a page.

If the text is too small for your taste, push the “escape” key to exit the “Full Screen” mode, and change the “zoom” level to get the size you want.

THE NEW YELLOW PAGES

Don’t forget to download and save the latest version of the Yellow Pages. Many new businesses have been listed. This section will help you find the goods and services you need.

April 23, 2016

ATENAS TODAY



Plumeria/Frangipani last bloom of the "Summe'r"

ATENAS TODAY is a free English language newsletter for the residents and potential residents of Atenas, Costa Rica. It contains informative articles and creative compositions submitted by our readers, and is distributed via email approximately once a month to over 600 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Marietta Arce at atenastoday@gmail.com.

Compositions from back issues are now archived on scomari.com / Atenas Today.



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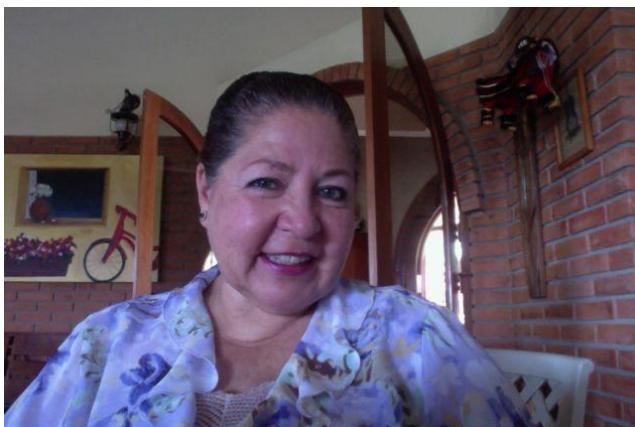


DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

New names and numbers have been added to the directory. With each issue Atenas Today subscribers will receive an updated file containing the names and contact information of people who have chosen to be listed. Simply download the PDF file attached to this Atenas Today email and print it or save it on your computer.

If your name is on the list without contact information, it is because you are a subscriber to the newsletter, but have **not authorized the publication of your email address or other information**. To add or correct data please send an email to atenastoday@gmail.com

Publisher's Note



April is usually a very busy time in our small town and this year is no exception. As I gather all the material to prepare this issue, I am also focused on packing my suitcases for another trip to New York! I am hoping to catch the beautiful, colorful tulips and I am also looking forward to celebrating Mother's Day with our children. When I return in May, the weather in Atenas will surely have changed and I expect to see the lush, green paradise the rainy season provides.

We recently celebrated the Cattle Auction and Hogar de Ancianos' fundraising efforts which had spectacular participation. Thanks to all of you who joined us for these fun events. The Climate Fair and Oxcart parade are happening now with FLASHBACK making their debut this evening. Get out and support your favorite musicians and artisans who make this yearly festival possible.

After many delays, Atenas Centro is finally getting street signs. The efforts of Banco Nacional, The Municipality of Atenas, and the Development Association of Santa Eulalia made it possible for a group of persons with disabilities to transform 70,000 plastic bottles

(600 ml each) into the wood-like material that will beautify the town and allow visitors and residents know where they are standing! The project cost 9,700,000 colones and yielded 52 street signs and posts.



March 2007 brought us the first issue of this publication. Back then, Fred Macdonald's idea was to provide information to the expat residents and would-be residents of Atenas so that they could be "in the know" of things going in their new community.

In the years since 2007, we have seen lots of people come and go. The reasons mentioned for leaving are homesickness, health issues or grandchildren beckoning. The reasons for arriving include a desire for warmer climate, adventure, or to experience a different culture. Many things have changed with the newsletter as well. The one thing that has not changed is our endeavor to keep you entertained and informed about what is happening in Atenas Today and every day.

Happy reading!

Marietta Arce

marietta.arce@gmail.com



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

This space is available for posting community activities for the following weeks. Please provide information about your activity or event to atenastoday@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

April 22th-24th Climate Fair Central park – see flyer attached

April 24th – Oxcart Parade around the streets and park of Atenas

May 1st – International Labor Day celebrated in Costa Rica

May 1st – Newly-elected Mayor Wilberth Aguilar Gatgens takes possession of his office
in Atenas for the period 2016-2020

May 6th, May 13th, May 20th – 3-day trips to Estacion Las Tortugas (see flyer this section)

May 8th – Mother's Day celebrated in many countries

May 12th – International Nurses Day!

May 30th – Memorial Day observed in the U.S.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Every Sunday: Buddhist Book Discussion at Roca Verde (See Flyer this section)

Every Monday: Meditation #10 Roca Verde (Barb Moss), Gate opens at 8:30 a.m. closes
at 9:00 a.m. Free and welcoming of men and women. Practice consists
of a 20-minute silent meditation, followed by a dharma talk via You
Tube Tara Brach of the Insight Meditation Society in the States.

Every Tuesday, Wednesday & Sunday Atenas New Community (See Flyer)

First Wednesday of each month – Recycling near CoopetransAtenas Bus
Depot

Second Monday of every month: 4 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation
meeting at Antaños Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more
information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

Every Tuesday: Atenas Bridge Club meets at Don Yayo's
Restaurant. 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

Every Wednesday: At 11:30 a.m. (Please confirm with Michele Clutter 2446-0664)

Atenas Wednesday Women
informal get togethers at Kay's Gringo Postres

Third Thursday: 11:00 a.m. Costa Rica Writer's Group meets at Henry's Beach Bar near
Multiplaza, Escazu, lunch follows at around 1 p.m.
Contact : Bob Brashears at bbrashears0@gmail.com



Buddhist Book Discussion

Every Sunday

Meditation (optional) 1:30pm

Book Discussion 2:00pm

218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings

ALL ARE WELCOME !

If you wish to know what book we're currently reading,
or if you need directions or any other information,
please feel free to telephone or e-mail:

Adrienne and Richard Baksa

2446-8509

adriennebaksa@me.com

rbaksa@me.com



ATENAS NEW COMMUNITY (associated with the Tico church, Iglesia Bíblica de Atenas)
facebook.com/groups/145046998883605

DESCRIPTION: Atenas New Community is non-denominational with a diverse congregation - Messianic Jews, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Methodists, Catholics, Southern Baptists, etc. The focus is on Jesus Christ and the Bible, not on esoteric and divisive theological differences.

SERVICES: Tuesdays - 6pm - Bible study in English. Wednesdays - 6pm - English worship First Sunday of each month - An English translator is provided for the 9:00am Spanish worship services. (After the service many of the ex-pats gather at a designated home for a potluck lunch. Just ask any ex-pat before or after worship for the particulars.)

ENGLISH PASTOR: Steve Lucas - <https://facebook.com/steve.lucas> • 8764-8960

TICO PASTOR: Oldemar Artavia - <https://facebook.com/olde mar.artavia>

ADDITIONAL CONTACT: Judy Hickman • 2446-4791 • judy@proslink.com

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

"Estacion Las Tortugas" has been established on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. Stanley Rodriguez Mendez the founder and his extended family have toiled for more than twenty years to help save the "Leatherback Sea Turtle" from extinction. Fewer than 10% worldwide remain, all in the past twenty-five years! His project is extraordinarily successful.

Julie and Paul Wagner have been taking small groups there for the past nine years. Proceeds go to assist this important natural resource for both Costa Rica and the world.

Three-day trips leave from Atenas (central church park) at 8:00am and return by 4:00pm Sunday as follows:

May 6th, (three spaces available)
May 13th (seven spaces available)
May 20th. (eight spaces available)

Fee is \$200. (all inclusive) "Turtle Talk", housing, food, transport, guides and canal tour second day.

Guaranteed to see and work with Leatherback Sea Turtles.

Julie and Paul
(506) 2446-3069



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fc/Leatherback_sea_turtle_Ti nglar%2C_USVI_%285839996547%29.jpg

Feria del Clima ATENAS 2016

22, 23 y 24 de abril
Parque de
Atenas



Monumento al Boyero - Atenas

CÁMARA DE TURISMO Y COMERCIO DE ATENAS

VIERNES 22 DE ABRIL, 2016

- 12:00 m.d. * Apertura de la FERIA con la Bienvenida a los participantes: Pequeños Artesanos, Comerciantes, Comida Criolla, Música y Bailes de parte de Grupos Atenienses y Organizaciones Comunales, entre otros.
- 12:00 m.d a 1:00 p.m. Música de Cabina. / 1:00 p.m. a 3:00 p.m. Música de Marimba, patrocinado por el ALMACÉN GOLLO.
- 2:00 p.m. a 3:00 p.m. Cimarrona con Disfraces, patrocinado por IMPORTADORA MONGE.
- 3:00 p.m. a 5:00 p.m. Presentación del Charro Brenes y su Hija. / 5:00 p.m. a 6:00 p.m. Música de Cabina.
- 6:00 p.m. a 7:00 p.m. Presentación del Grupo Musical KCT 90.
- 7:00 p.m. a 10:00 p.m. Presentación del Grupo Musical Hermanos Ramírez, patrocinado por COOPEATENAS R.L.

SÁBADO 23 DE ABRIL, 2016

- 9:00 a.m. Presentación de Grupos Musicales, Culturales, Artesanía, Ricas Comidas Criollas, entre otros.
- 9:00 a.m. a 1:00 p.m. Música de Cabina.
- 1:00 p.m. a 3:00 p.m. Música de Marimba, patrocinado por el ALMACÉN GOLLO.
- 2:00 p.m. a 3:00 p.m. Presentación de la Cimarrona con Disfraces, patrocinado por IMPORTADORA MONGE.
- 3:00 p.m. a 4:00 p.m. Presentación de la Escuela de Música, Profesor: Rafael Ángel Fonseca Espinoza.
- 4:00 p.m. a 5:00 p.m. Presentación de Baile Zumba, patrocinado por TALLER AUTOFIX, Enderezado y Pintura de Grecia.
- 5:00 p.m. a 6:00 p.m. Presentación Musical con Saxofón, por parte del Sr. Álvaro Espinoza Mena, patrocinado por COOPETRANSATENAS R.L. / 6:00 p.m. a 7:00 p.m. Misa (Silencio en el Parque). / 7:00 p.m. a 10:00 p.m. Concierto con el Grupo Musical FLASHBACK, participación de Hermanos Extranjeros, que viven en el Cantón de Atenas, patrocinado por ROES.

DOMINGO 24 DE ABRIL, 2016

- 9:00 a.m. a 10:00 a.m. Misa (Silencio) / 10:00 a.m. a 11:00 a.m. Presentación de Baile Zumba, patrocinado por TALLER AUTOFIX, Enderezado y Pintura de Grecia. / 11:00 a.m. Presentación del Grupo LOS ZANQUEROS, patrocinado por ALMACÉN GOLLO. Desfile de Boyeros organizado por la ASOCIACIÓN DE BOYEROS DE ATENAS.
- 12:00 m.d. a 1:00 p.m. Presentación del Grupo Musical EVER MORTH. / 1:00 p.m. a 2:00 p.m. Música de Cabina.
- 2:00 p.m. a 3:00 p.m. Presentación del Grupo Musical y Retajillas "Los Pisucas del Folklore".
- 3:00 p.m. a 5:00 p.m. Música de Marimba, patrocinado por ALMACÉN GOLLO. / 3:00 p.m. a 4:00 p.m. Música de Cabina.
- 4:00 p.m. a 5:00 p.m. Presentación del cantautor Ateniense: Oscar Espinoza R. con temas de su autoría, patrocinado por el ICE. 5:00 p.m. a 6:00 p.m. Presentación del Saxofonista Sr. Álvaro Espinoza Mena, patrocinado por COOPETRANSATENAS R.L. / 6:00 p.m. a 7:00 p.m. Misa (Silencio en el Parque). / 7:00 p.m. a 10:00 p.m. Concierto con el Grupo Musical VOZES DUO, patrocinado por la MUNICIPALIDAD DE ATENAS.

Imprenta Ateniana Teléf.: (606) 244-6775



Se invita a la comunidad Ateniense y
lugares circunvecinos a compartir un fin
de semana en ambiente Sano y Familiar
¡VENGAN A DISFRUTAR CON NOSOTROS!



EDITORIAL

Mad Max Fury Road In Costa Rica

by Eric Herrera (ILE Professor)



For those who are not familiar with the term Mad Max, this is the name of futuristic movie in which gasoline is scarce and monopolized and car gangs try to eliminate each other while insanely driving at high speeds in a no-rule highway. The panorama, at a lower scale, seems to describe what Costa Rica is experiencing today.

According to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) data published in May 2014 Road Traffic Accidents Deaths in Costa Rica reached 627 or 3.57% of total deaths, and it is ranked number 9 among the top causes of death in our country.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines an accident as an event that is not planned or intended: an event that occurs by chance. However, when you see low education in road safety culture, the road users' 'irresponsible behavior, profound lack of respect and, in many cases, stupidity, it is difficult to categorize some catastrophic events as accidents.

To name but a few examples:

- a) Most drivers either forget to use their turn signals before they make a turn, or might have their signal turned on and decide not to turn.
- b) If there is a traffic jam, many drivers create new lanes on the street, so if the street has two lanes, to see three or four lanes is something normal.
- c) In some places there is a center turn lane (a lane in the middle that is supposed to be used only for those turning). Many drivers make of this lane their own fast lane, and of course the follow the crowd culture makes it more terrible. (Belén-Santa Ana Radial)
- d) We cannot generalize, but taxi and bus drivers can do what they want, for them the sky is the limit. There is a special mention for truck drivers. They are Titans, a category above all.
- e) Fire bugs and motorcyclists play around cars and, depending on the place you live, helmets are optional.

- f) Drinking and driving is allowed as long as you are not caught.

This kind of behavior, together with the lack of appropriate infrastructure for the number of vehicles, makes drivers handle high levels of stress that add to the already chaotic situation the last ingredient to turn roads into battle fields, in which the law of the jungle prevails.

The Train or Inmortal Joe

To make things worse, a new protagonist has come on the scene, the train. For years, Costa Ricans who have to commute from one province to another have dreamed about traveling by train. This means of transportation represents for many no traffic, punctuality, and comfort, or at least that is what people expect. However, the train has become a daily star in news programs for its constant participation in fatal accidents. So far in 2016 there have been around 20 collisions between vehicles and trains, according to the railway – the Instituto Costarricense de Ferrocarriles (INCOFER). Thankfully the trains in Costa Rica do not speed; they are more like a tram; otherwise, the number of victims will be amazing. One of the last tragedies happened in Siquirres, March 11th. On hearing the loud sound of the train, a truck driver decided to stop at the rail crossing and the train, carrying a load of steel, hit the trailer, dragged it for several meters, turning it on its side and hitting a young girl (she died) and her pregnant mother, waiting at the corner for the train to pass.

What is happening to us? Is saving one or two minutes more important than a person's life? Government but especially each individual should reflect about this terrible war we are living on our roads. There should be more punitive ways for those who violate the law, more highway patrol officers, more programs to educate people to become responsible drivers, and above all campaigns to raise public awareness about tolerance. **Let's keep our MAD MAX inside.**

Friendship Library News

April, 2016



Photograph: Eyleen Vargas La Nación

One hundred forty-eight. We have added 148 books to the library this month. Ordinarily, I process books throughout the month and don't keep exact counts but this month they piled up while we were away and I have been on a marathon classification and processing spree. A few have been put on the "New Arrivals" cart, but most are awaiting delivery to the library.

Among the new arrivals are 42 novels, 23 books of nonfiction, 49 books for kids, 8 books in French, 9 in Spanish, and 8 in Dutch. I know that doesn't add up to 148, but some are already in the library.

Fans of **biography** will find three new and interesting possibilities. "A Beautiful Mind" (Bio Nas) by Sylvia Nasar is the biography of John Nash, winner of the Nobel Prize for Mathematics. It is a beautifully told, terrifyingly true story of brilliance, madness and the power of unconditional love.

Equally compelling (but without the love story) is the biography "Steve Jobs" (Bio Job) by Walter Isaacson. It is a journey into another brilliant mind that holds its own kinds of demons.

Another interesting biography we have added this month is of the Canadian writer and poet Gwendolyn MacEwen. The title is "Shadow Maker" (Bio Mac) and it's a well-told story of a gifted writer with a troubled and beautiful soul.

Several **nonfiction** titles were added that cover a variety of topics:

- "A Guide to the Coral Reefs of the Caribbean" (NF 9)
- A *readable* book about randomness and probability "The Drunkard's Walk" (NF 5)
- "How Brains Think" (NF 5), a book about brains, how they evolved, and how they work

- A painfully beautiful book about the American Indians entitled "Touch the Earth: Self-Portrait of Indian Existence" (NF 9)
- And if the reader is up for a truly disturbing book about "alternative parenting", I recommend Jeanette Wall's "The Glass Castle" (NF 3). The story is told by one of four siblings raised by a brilliant but alcoholic father and an often totally self-absorbed artist mother.

Some fine new **fiction** has arrived as well. To quote my in-house reviewer and voracious reader: "Man, this is some really good sh*t." Particularly notable is multiple-awards winning "The Orenda" by Joseph Boyden. It is a story of 17th century North America, the Huron, the Iroquois and a Jesuit missionary, a "story of blood and hope, suspicion and trust, hatred and love: a saga nearly four hundred years old—and now a timeless work of literature."

Wilbur Smith is the master of **historical fiction** (and popular with many of our readers) and we now have his most recent historical adventure, "Golden Lion" (F Smi).

Canadian author Ursula Pflug has apparently visited here recently and kindly donated a copy of her book "Motion Sickness: a Flash Novel" (F Pfl). The novel consists of 55 chapters of exactly 500 words to tell the story of a young single woman finding her way in the world.

The **books for children** have been donated mostly by the mother of five beautiful and well-read daughters. From "The Velveteen Rabbit" to Limony Snicket's "Series of Unfortunate Events", there is variety here to keep the young ones reading good stuff for a long time.

Among the books in **Spanish** are several of the Harry Potter books, a classic by Pearl Buck, and "La Bastarda de Estambul" by Elif Shafak. Whoever is donating the book in **French** is clearly a serious reader and is sharing some really good stuff. We're thinking some construction of new shelving is in our near future to accommodate this new collection. For now, those books are on the second shelf of the New Arrivals cart.

Happy reading.

-Linda Ledbetter, librarian

DOG OF THE MONTH



Fundación Ateniense de Ayuda a Animales Abandonados
Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals
Cedula Jurídica # 3-006-542026

ATENAS de Alajuela - COSTA RICA

THERAPY DOGS



SAN VICENTE DE PAUL HOSPITAL HEREDIA, COSTA RICA

A group of trained dogs are now officially part of medical treatment for young patients at San Vicente de Paul hospital, Heredia.

The four-legged therapy began as an experiment in 2012, but good results led to the signing of an agreement for an official canine program.

Golden and Labrador retrievers visit children once a week for an hour bringing happy dog love and a touch of furry TLC.

Hospital doctors found that therapies with trained dogs provide many benefits for patients including mood improvement that reduces stress, anxiety and blood pressure. The dogs belong to the nongovernmental organization Dejando huella (Spanish for 'making an impression'.)

A group of 10 professionals including psychologists, occupational therapists and veterinarians conduct their training and work at the hospital. Therapy takes place in a special hospital room called the cuarto de las sonrisas, or room of smiles, a play area for children. Therapist also bring dogs to bedridden kids.

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM

Stop by the vacant lot next to Pali Grocery on Friday mornings to see the animals and good quality used clothing and household items. Donated items are needed and can be left at Kay's or at our Friday mornings location.

Sylvia Spix, Myrna Kastner

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Drivers

Friday morning set-up

Friday morning helpers

Computer and Facebook Tech

Bilingual telephone answering/scheduling

On-line auction-computer tech

Dora tele 8855-9822

doritrebol@yahoo.com

Sylvia 8869-1386-Es, En, Deutch

animalesatenasscr@AOL.co

Galería Namu, One of the Great Treasures of Downtown San José



by Michael Miller

Galería Namu, one block behind the Holiday Inn tower, is the premier gallery for tribal and folk art, in Costa Rica.

"I opened this gallery in 1998 because I loved folk art." said Aisling French, the owner of Galería Namu, a Downtown San José landmark. "I knew next to nothing about Costa Rica's indigenous tribes or indigenous art."

Standing in the middle of Galería Namu, surrounded by hundreds of amazing pieces of art, and listening to Aisling talk to visitors today, it is obvious that she has learned volumes in the last 18 years. And it is also obvious that she loves what she does.

Within a few minutes, Aisling gives visitors an overview of the 8 indigenous tribes of Costa Rica, and a couple of tribes from neighboring Central American countries. All those tribes have unique artistic traditions, and all of them are represented at Galería Namu.



These shelves exhibit traditional women's pottery from the Lenca tribe from Honduras. The paintings on the wall are folk art from the campesinas (the farming women) from the Arenal Volcano region, in Costa Rica.

Galería Namu is quite simply, one of the great treasures of Downtown San José. (The name "Namu" comes from the Bribri word for the jaguar, a sacred animal to many of the tribes.) The Galería is located immediately behind the Holiday Inn tower, in historic

Barrio Amon. This small, and bursting-at-the-seams, shop is the premier destination for anyone looking for Costa Rican tribal or folk art.

Aisling points out that this is the only shop in all of Costa Rica where art work from all the indigenous tribes, as well as folk art, is available under one roof.



Owner of Galería Namu, Aisling French, and her son, Conall French, both have an encyclopedic knowledge of Costa Rica's tribal and folk art.

Aisling French, the gregarious founder and owner of the gallery, is a long-time resident of Costa Rica, originally from Ireland by way of Canada and the U. S. She tells us that many people come into the gallery "just to look," and that is fine with her. "I love to talk about the art here, and quite honestly, I love to teach."

Aisling's second-in-command is Conall French, her son. Conall has studied anthropology and has lived with the Wounaans and other indigenous tribes. He has a background in fine arts and museum studies, and has been instrumental in directing the Galeria's focus to include art from the region's native tribes.



Brilliantly colored balsa-wood masks grab your attention as soon as you enter Galería Namu. These masks are the signature work of the Brunca Tribe from the highlands of southern Costa Rica.

As you enter Galería Namu, you will be overwhelmed by the tremendous variety of art objects available. The first things that will capture your attention are the brilliantly colored balsa-wood masks that are the signature art pieces of the Brunca tribe from the highlands of southern Costa Rica. Some of these balsa-wood masks are gentle-looking decorative pieces featuring birds, frogs and flowers that the Brunca tribesmen find in the tropical forests.



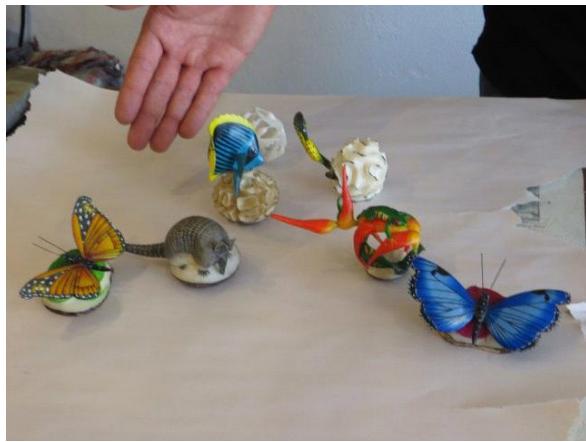
Some of the Brunca masks are designed to be scary looking.

In addition, you will also see more ferocious ceremonial masks, designed to scare the daylights out of you, that might include images of snakes and demons. Some of these ceremonial masks have actually been used in the tribe's annual Dance of the Little Devils, and are prized by collectors.



Woven plates, bowls and baskets, some of them collector's items, are from the Wounaan Tribe of Panama. They are representative of a highly skilled weaving tradition that has been passed down for generations.

Another popular display are the woven plates and baskets from the Wounaan Tribe of Panama. These fine pieces are the results of an ancient weaving tradition, passed down through the generations of this remote rainforest people. The artists use split palm fronds, some of which are dyed with the colors derived from native fruits. The gifted weavers incorporate geometric designs and images of local flora and fauna.



A selection of rainforest images carved from the tagua nut, also known as "vegetable ivory."

Perhaps the most exquisite collection in the Galería are the carved "tagua nuts." These nuts, sometimes as big as softballs, come from a palm tree that grows from Central America to the Amazon basin. The tagua nut is dried and polished and becomes as hard and white as elephant ivory. (Sometimes these nuts are referred to as "vegetable ivory.")

Once hardened, the tagua nuts can be sculpted and painted with natural dyes. In the hands of the talented Wounaan artists, they create an astonishing variety of finished pieces depicting the birds, the flowers, the butterflies, the monkeys, the frogs and other plants and animals of the jungle.



This exceptional looking pottery is from the Chorotega native group from the Guanacaste region of Costa Rica. The pieces are kiln-fired and polished to give it a glossy finish.

Visitors to Costa Rica, and expats who live here, often look for gifts or souvenirs that represent a bit of the beauty of the country. You can wander into a souvenir shop and find everything from beach towels to coffee mugs to shot glasses. Many of these items are mass-produced in the Far East.

There is nothing wrong with these items, but if you want something that is actually from Costa Rica, and truly representative of the history, the culture and the beauty of Costa Rica, you should visit Galería Namu.

And Aisling is quick to point out two facts that she considers very important: First, when you buy something from Galería Namu, you can be assured that it is authentic. Aisling and Conall buy each of these pieces directly from the artists of each of the

indigenous tribes, and they provide buyers with written (and often photographic) documentation of the authenticity of each piece.

Second, the Galería practices "Fair Trade" with the artists. That means that the Galería pays the native artists directly for each work of art, and they pay for it up front. "We don't take things on consignment," says Aisling. "We buy them. We pay the artist when we pick the pieces."

Fair Trade is obviously a good deal for the artists. And many will point out that it is "the right thing to do." But it also provides a big advantage for the Galería: The best artists know that they will be treated fairly, that they will not be cheated, and they reserve their best work for Galería Namu.



These decorative globes are made from the Jicaras, a fruit similar to a gourd. They are painted or etched and used for carrying water.

Perhaps the best reason to visit Galería Namu is that you will learn a great deal about this beautiful country. Both Aisling and Conall are always pleased to show off their Galería. They have both developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the tribes and their art, and the traditions behind each of the pieces.

You can start by visiting their website. Click here: galerianamu.com

To visit Galería Namu in person, you will find it on Avenida 7 and Calle 5. That puts it directly behind the Holiday Inn tower in Downtown San José. The Galería is open Monday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and on Sundays during the high season.

No compensation was asked for, nor was any received, in exchange for writing this article.

Michael Miller is the author of the first and only guide book that focuses on Downtown San José, titled: *The Real San José*. Paperback copies are available at the ARCR Office and at Galería Namu. An electronic version is available on Amazon/Kindle.

Atenas: El Mejor Clima del Mundo?



by Mary Martin Mason

marymason1946@gmail.com

In debates about global warming, climate change, and the energy future of our planet, an individual's worldview affects how they interpret the science. In other words, individuals tend to shape their factual beliefs to fit how they already see the world that they inhabit. This is particularly true of foreigners living in Costa Rica if they encounter anything negative about the country or community in which they have chosen to live.

The label of *El Mejor Clima del Mundo* has become a line drawn in the sand for both Atenas residents and non-residents. Just recently, a Facebook debate was posted about whether some local businesses are purposely reporting a shortened distance from the airport to Atenas. Responses cited Mapquest, Google maps and actual experiences. Predictably, the topic veered away to a much larger debate... whether Atenas could live up to its reputation of having The Best Climate in the World.

Atenas has become synonymous with its famous tagline, much like years past the ad campaigns of "Just Do It" still evokes Nike and "Melt in your Mouth, Not in your Hands" conjures up M&Ms. Travel around the country and mention the town, and the response inevitably is, "Oh, you live in the best climate in the world." *El Mejor Clima del Mundo* is shouted from Atenas buses, is the name of a café, and appears on signs in local businesses. It has become a point of pride for both ticos and gringos as well as a sticking point for skeptics.

Staunch defenders attribute *National Geographic* as "the" source of Atenas' claim to its optimal climate. *National Geographic* is so universally accepted that it is frequently cited, as in a *Tico Times* April 1, 2015 commentary "Atenas: The World's Best Climate Explored," on the Atenas website <http://costarica.com/atenas/>, and even in guidebooks such as Fodor's *Exploring Costa Rica*. A diligent search of the *National Geographic* online archives reveals that the nationally respected foundation and magazine never made such an assertion. While the magazine has featured articles about Costa Rican ants, frogs, crocodiles and one July 1981 article, "Costa Rica Steers a Middle Course," Atenas does not exist in the expansive *National Geographic* archives that date back to 1888.

Teresa Bejarano, a professional in tourism (*Turismologa*) who is now pensioned, recalls how a marketing committee was formed more than 30 years ago, comprised of the

public and private sector and led by the Department of Marketing and the National Chamber of Tourism, CANATUR. Among the tasks of the committee was to create a promotional campaign that highlighted the uniqueness of various communities. While the idea was discussed to assign slogans to each province or region, ultimately it was the residents that decided what to call themselves.

Teresa, who was the Marketing Director of ICT at the time, met with representatives of Atenas. She says, "What is certain is that this group of businessmen from the Atenas area in conjunction with the municipality designed and gave Atenas the catchphrase of the best climate in the world." She adds, "To my knowledge there was no study that designated it as such." She recalls that the slogan was unveiled during an agricultural fair and quickly spread to be on posters, banners and in marketing materials.



Teresa thinks it is very Costa Rican to assign labels to cities, an effort that required both head and heart. Heredia became The City of Flowers, Puntarenas - The Pearl of the Pacific, San Ramon -The City of Poets, Grecia - The Cleanest City, Alajuela - The City of Mangoes, and Palmares -The Place to Make Friends. Of all the slogans, El Mejor Clima del Mundo has perhaps become the one most associated with its town.

Before the naysayers shout, "See, I told you so," there is evidence that Atenas has historically garnered world attention for its climate. The respected and top ranking Central American School of Livestock (ECAG) began after the British Government added its technical and financial assistance based on studies of the canton. The school became the National Technical University (UTN) in 2008. British researchers chose Atenas after searching for an area that best represented Central America agriculturally. Today UTN teaches food technology, nature tourism management, animal production, forestry and wildlife, and veterinary care.

Academic articles about Atenas praise its location above sea level, the amount of sun and rainfall, and the winds that produce a healthy climate. Medical journals often recommend healthy climates such as Atenas for those having heart conditions, bronchitis, arthritis or rheumatism. Plants and humans flourish in the alchemy of factors that attract foreigners, some to get away from the freezing climates of their homelands.

Jodie Cook reversed that trend, migrating to Atenas to escape the torrid Tennessee summers that aggravated her Graves Disease, an immune system disorder resulting from the overproduction of thyroid hormones. She says, “The heat of the Tennessee summers was unbearable with 90-100 average temperatures. I had a boat and horses. We kept several fans going in the barn 24-7 to try to keep the horses cool. They would be soaked with sweat from just standing still. The lake offered some relief until you stopped the boat, and then you nearly fainted from the heat.”

After considering a move to Canada, a plan that would have exchanged heat for cold, Jodie and her husband, Jack Crook, decided on Costa Rica. “Atenas is perfect...not in town, which I find a bit too hot, but my home which at a 3000 foot elevation allows me to go outside with my dogs and enjoy the fresh air. I even sleep with a blanket at night. I have found the perfect climate for me. The best in the world.”



Research done by two meteorologists in 2011 examined precipitation, temperatures, humidity, average sunshine and wind patterns in Atenas, going back as far as 1952, whenever records were available. The report, translated from Spanish, concludes, “From December to the end of March, there are predominate moderate trade winds, northeast and southeast, which hinder the development of connective systems and the incursion of Pacific winds. When this happens, there is a pleasant condition in Atenas. Skies are generally clear. There is fresh air, and the temperature drops before sunrise in March and April. Northeast trade winds no longer (make) inroads into the valley with large velocities due to the weakening and moving towards the northern hemisphere.”

Town matriarch, Elba Margarita Alvarado Conejo, speaks of the temperature drop before sunrise as *madrugada*. In Spanish, *madrugada* means early morning, a literal translation that undermines its importance to the climate of Atenas. Elba describes it at a time before daylight when in some months, the temperature drops enough to require wrapping yourself in a blanket. She points out that the *madrugada* phenomena is unique to Atenas and is not found in Orotina or other towns. That temperature drop enhances the growth and flavor of some fruits and vegetables, particularly mangoes, sugar cane and oranges. The more moderate temperatures are a pleasant change for humans as well.

Seventy-three year old Doña Elba moved to Atenas when she was a year old from La Garita where she was born. She describes a time in her youth when foreigners and nationals, following their doctors' orders, came to Atenas during the dry season to remedy heart conditions, asthma and other health ailments. Those were the days before Atenas had accommodations, services or even hotels, so the visitors had to privately rent houses and find lodging with family or friends.

Tour guide and lifetime resident, Carlos Prado lives in the center of Atenas. At 53, he has been recording the temperature daily for 40 years as a hobby and as an avid interest. He attributes Atenas' climate to its location at the end of the Central Valley. "We are high, 700 meters above sea level, a nice altitude." Although it can get hot in the dry season, Carlos points to the relief from winds that, depending on the time of year, originate from different parts of the country. "The winds keep Atenas' humidity in check," says Carlos. "While there are changes from season to season, the changes are not too radical and the level of humidity is not high."

Carlos has noted that Atenas, like many regions of the world, is getting hotter. "This is due to the forests being cut down and to new construction and of course, to El Niño. All of these are having a bad impact," says Carlos ruefully.

According to *The Tico Times*, El Niño is currently causing higher temperatures, a phenomenon that will continue through May. The Central Valley temps are predicted to range between 32-36° C (89-97° F.)

The center of Atenas is noticeably hotter than Vista Atenas, Roca Verde, Pica Flora and other gated communities that perch in the mountains to offer vistas and cooler temperatures. Ticos accept rather than complain about the temperatures, older ones taking a siesta and families eating their meals al fresco in front of their houses. Ex-pats tend to favor more elevated living where each upward curve appreciably lowers the temperature.

Already there is a new scientific study called biometeorology where atmospheric scientists are studying how weather impacts animals, plants and humans. Among their findings is that weather, particularly changing pressure systems, can adversely affect blood pressure, in some cases causing dire consequences. As proof, follow the next online blog where some unsuspecting, perspiring person will ask, "Where the heck did Atenas get the title of Best Climate in the World?" If some of the responses cause a spike in blood pressure, close your eyes and go to your happy place. Chances are that wherever that is geographically, it does not offer anything close to the Best Climate in the World.

#

Thanks to Tammy Rodriguez for her help in translating some of those interviewed for this article.

The Gift of Loss

By Konrad Esquivel

I have a dear friend that asked me, "how do you deal with loss? I lost a friendship, and I don't know how to get over it."

I told her I would write her back soon, but I didn't. I couldn't. I didn't know what to say.

We all go through loss. It is an intrinsic part of life. We have something and it then passes, changes, moves on.

It's not necessary to explain it, because it is so familiar. As soon as somebody mentions the issue of loss, we all can relate. We feel and remember. Something gets triggered inside. But the interesting thing is, we not all can relate to the solution for loss in the same easy way. Some of us are still trying to get over losses long ago – a death, a relationship, a home, our freedom. Yet, for others the same loss that we struggle with is a cinch and they go through it with flying colors.

What is the secret? Why is it easier to heal from a loss while other times it is more difficult? Why do we chew upon some issues for longer periods of time, and how do we stop feeling bad about it? As my friend asked, "how do I get over it"?

Once I was going through a tough and deep loss, and I told my psychologist that I had so much anxiety. After she learned how recent it all was she said, "that is good. You are supposed to be anxious about this loss. Anxiety at this moment is normal. It would be weird if you were not anxious." I thought this was worth sharing, yet the question remains. How do I get over it?

I don't know the answer to that one, and all I can tell my friend is, "I wish you peace."

I don't know how she can get her peace back, but I know that she can. We all can. It is part of our maturity, and spiritual path as humans, and many have gone before us and have done it! They have forgiven others that have taken precious things - jobs, homes, relatives and relationships - away from them. They have also forgiven themselves for whatever mistakes they did that ended in losses. They have also made peace with life for dealing strong blows below the belt. They have found their peace, and they had to do what they had to do and succeeded, because they wanted their peace more than that which they lost.

I wish we all had a reset button. Something like "In case of loss, press the GET OVER IT button"! That would be so cool but, we must also admit that through these experiences of loss, we get tremendous, powerful and deep lessons for life. We learn how to deal with a broken heart. We learn to put priorities in place. We mature and often end with a different perspective on life. This different perspective is worth having. When we are centered, grounded and awakened, we are more detached from judging the issues of life as "for me or against me". It is just life as it is.

Do we like loss? No. Do we like being more mature and awakened? Surely, yes. One of my favorite quotes that came to me during a difficult time is, "LIFE GIVES YOU AT THIS MOMENT EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED TO GO DEEPER".

Yes, I wish I could help you and make you feel better, but I can't help you awaken into peace more than I can digest the food that you ate. It is a personal enterprise.

Yet, I can assure you that we can go through loss and be at peace while learning what we need to learn and continue living the experience in full color. There is no running away, no fighting with the issue.

I'm a peace therapist and I have seen lots of people overcome loss over and over again. We all have what it takes. It is within and we may attract help from different sources, but it all comes from within. It's real. We all are much stronger than what we think, so go ahead and do what is needed to find inner peace. Forgive, accept, and go into humble and genuine gratitude.

Please don't close up. Do not fear. You don't deserve that.

Love again and believe again. Live in full color. Let this suffering work for the goodness of it all. Don't throw away this precious opportunity to go into deeper consciousness.

Change your perspective. It's all a gift.

It's A Dogs Life...REALLY!!



Stories from Mr. BudBud, Primero Perro of Lighthouse Animal Rescue.

They were written 11 years ago when he first came to Costa Rica for a house sitting job

4-4-2005

Hola Y'all!!!!

The last time I talked to you guys I was telling you about how Mom was making me do that "take turns" thing.

It really had my tail drooping because I just did NOT think it was right!!! Sooooooooo ...I sat Mom down and had a real heart to heart talk with her.

She had gotten a few e-mails from you guys saying that she should re-think her decision so she was sort of in the right mood.

She even got one from my human brother in Tennessee!! (he's ALWAYS got my back!)

He told her that I should not have to do the "take turns" thing because I am the head of the pack. (I'm not sure what a "pack" is but it sounded good to me! ANYTHING to keep me from having to "take turns.")

Anyway, after I had my heart to heart talk with Mom she told Dad that they had to make some changes on the "taking turns" thing.

GUESS WHAT!!!!!!!

THEY GAVE ME A TITLE!!!!

I am now **PRIMERO PERRO**!!!!!!

That means "First Dog".....sort of like First Lady in the states!!!!

Mom told me that DUTIES come with the title.

I thought she was talking about going #2 in the yard but she said, "No BudBud. D-u-t-i-e-s...not d-o-o-d-i-e-s"

Sounded pretty much the same to me! Oh well...on with my story.

It is my DUTY to go along every time and take one of my brothers or sisters with me.

I am to teach them exactly how to behave when we are greeting people, eating in restaurants, shopping in stores, and all that stuff.

I have to teach Bunny not to hog the ice cream.

I have to teach Krystal to be more gentle with her big feet and to move her big butt over so there is room for two.

I have to teach Andre' not to jump out of the stroller when we go to

the park and he spots somebody with food.
I have to teach Delilah and Princess Joy how to relax and not barf in my car.

Mom says I don't have to teach prissy butt Juliette ANYTHING!! She is such a LADY she would NEVER misbehave.

Now that's a LOT for a PRIMERO PERRO to have to accomplish but I think I am capable of doing it.
Mom says I'd better or it's back to the old "taking turns" thing for me!!

Mom and Dad went to look at property the other day. When they returned to the property owner's house they got invited in.
Mom LOVED their house!! It is over a hundred years old!! The man's grandfather built it! The windows have the old type shutters on them.

Rainy season is early this year. It usually does not start until May. This year it started at the end of March!!!
Rainy season does not mean it rains ALL the time. We usually get a good shower each afternoon and maybe, a few times, it will rain all day or all night.

Tonight Mom took us all in Dad's room and told us to get up on the bed so she could take pictures to send you. She promised us a GREENIE if we behaved ourselves and posed pretty.
Well we would NEVER want to miss out on greenies so we all sat really still for the picture.

Then Mom took pictures of us all doing some SERIOUS greenie chewing on HER bed. Now she has all these slimy, green spots all over the sheets.
Oh well.....she loves us anyway.

Well.....bye for now. Got to make my rounds and make sure everybody is being good.
Tailwags from BudBud the PRIMERO PERRO!!!!!!!!!

Old Havana: Through my lens!



by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com

In October 2015, our daughter was invited to apply for a film/video elective (Cuba Through the Lens) at her school that included a week in Cuba in March 2016. When she asked us our opinion about whether she should consider it, we gave her an enthusiastic YES as our reply!

I had always wanted to visit Cuba and asked whether I could tag along. My plan (to fly to Miami and travel with the group from there) was discouraged by the API (Academic Programs International) coordinator because the students' itinerary was packed with activities and they would be working with Cuban film/video counterparts rather than on the vacation I was planning for myself.

Undaunted by this information, I arranged to fly from Costa Rica to Cuba with a cousin. With persistence (and a copy of their itinerary!) I knew we would find a way to explore Old Havana (where we stayed) and also connect with my daughter and her group.

Our adventure began as soon as we boarded the bus that would take us to small airplane at Juan Santamaría!



Although I had read a bit about our destination, and felt confident that speaking Spanish would be all I needed, I admit I was overwhelmed by Cuba the minute we arrived at customs. We had to have our picture taken, answer some questions and navigate the arrivals hall which was very intimidating because so many things seemed to be going on at once.

We eventually connected with our luggage and found our taxi driver/hostel owner, Juan Miguel, who was waiting for us as promised in the midst of the chaos. The first thing that struck me once outside was the flatness of the landscape, so different from ours.

The ride from the airport was lively with Juan Miguel driving on Boyeros Avenue and pointing out important landmarks with such national pride it encouraged my natural curiosity and I asked him lots of questions.



Boyeros Avenue Wikipedia photo

Since it was still daylight when we arrived at the hostel, we dropped off our small suitcases and Juan Miguel gave us some ideas about where to go to have some dinner. He also wanted to make sure we had some bottled water and guided us to the local shops. After unsuccessfully visiting 5 stores (which included lots of walking) for the precious liquid, we agreed that we would boil the water and continued making plans for dinner. When we arrived at the suggested (and trendy) restaurant we were told we had a 30-minute wait!



Great Theatre of Havana

By that time I was too exhausted from all the walking and told my cousin we should take a taxi back to the hostel. I changed my shoes, we rested a bit and then ventured out again. We consulted my daughter's itinerary and saw that her group was going to visit El Morro Castle at 7 p.m. It was already after 8 p.m. but we quickly found a taxi and arrived at El Morro just minutes before the 9 p.m. cannon firing ceremony. I don't really know how I expected to find my child in a crowd of at least one thousand people, but a minute or two before we gave up, my cousin spotted her and it became a joyous reunion.



El Morro Castle Wikipedia photo

We spent an hour together and then left each other comforted by the fact that we at least had had a chance to connect in person. My cousin and I took a taxi back and ended up having a very late and expensive dinner near our hostel. We experienced much that first day and felt that we had done our must sees: my daughter and El Morro Castle, a successful day!

The next morning found us rested and adventurous. We were concerned that we had no way of communicating with our loved ones in Costa Rica so we decided to investigate our options. We learned quickly that while modern technology is coming to Cuba, it is not quite there yet!

We arrived at the local phone company where after a long wait (sitting in chairs just like in CR!) we purchased a permanent telephone line complete with SIM card. The whole process was an eye-opening experience in which we were able to savor what I think are probably the “last days” of Old Havana!

After making our calls home, we ate lunch at the trendy restaurant we missed the night before. We discovered that lunchtime was a perfect time to eat there and did so a few times: the food was tasty, the portions generous and the atmosphere was delightful. Live music entertained us while we dined.



Typical Old Havana Street and transport

Old Havana is a fascinating place. Many of the fine houses that were left by owners fleeing to the U.S. in the 1960's are crumbling, but steady improvements are beginning to recapture their beauty. Our hostel was once an impressive mansion and our hosts



The green building was our home

(and current owners) are working constantly to improve and restore it.

When we first planned our trip back in October, we had no idea that Barack Obama and his family would be traveling to Cuba at around the same time. Although his trip didn't really affect ours, I was interested in hearing people's impressions of this important visit, especially since he was expected to walk through the very area in which we were staying.



Classic cars parked near the Capitolio

Some rejoiced because the visit meant that much-needed paving in their neighborhoods would take place, just like when Pope Francis went. Others lamented that they would not be able to work (no work=no pay) or walk the streets of their own town for a few days.



Paving for Obama's Visit

All in all though, the visit was eagerly anticipated and there is a sense of optimism about what the future holds, especially among young people. Most people admit that almost everyone in Old Havana has a relative in the U.S. whose success has provided them with the money they need to live above the poverty line. Although there is growing prosperity in Havana many people still live in poverty and must work two or three jobs to make ends meet.



More serious paving near the Capitolio



Transporting a tree for Obama's visit



Welcoming Obama!



Airing your laundry in public

Walking around Havana is like stepping into the past. Classic cars cruise the streets. Huge billboards are non-existent and limited technology forces people to interact with each other.



Taxi for hire displaying a USA Flag



Current fashion trend in leggings!



Neighborhood police making the rounds



Havana Cathedral at Cathedral Square



MSC Opera docks three days a week in Cuba



Souvenirs still made in Cuba



A free Wi-Fi Hot Spot if you can connect!



Just 2 CUC for a picture!

We had an excellent time in Havana and I am happy that we went during this time of transition. I felt very safe and welcome. I know that I will return to explore more of this exotic, unique island that has much to offer.

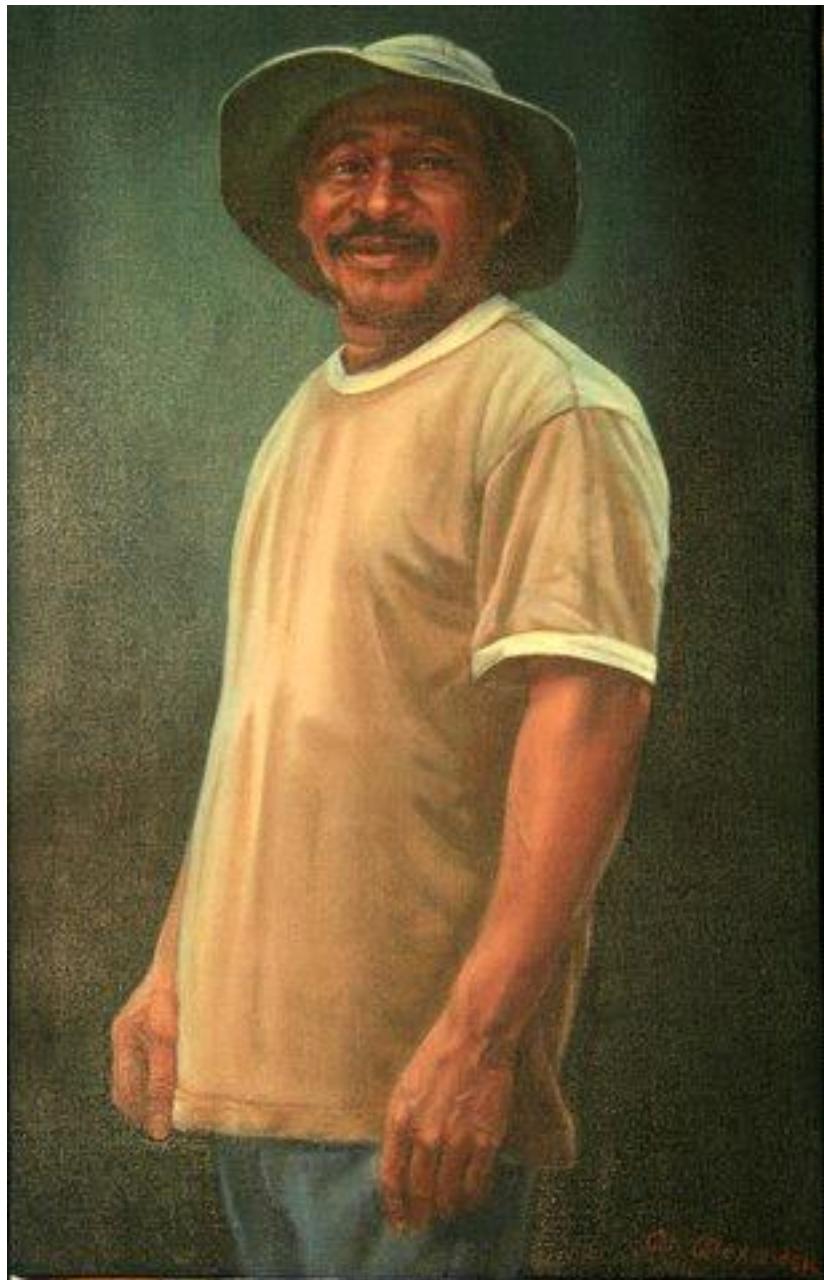
Although rapid modernization has the potential to impact the culture, I am hopeful that the national pride people feel for their customs and traditions will allow them to preserve and share most of them while they embrace the positive things that can come of the new reality.

In a future article, I will write about the Retazos Theatre and director and choreographer Isabel Bustos who was gracious enough to let me interview her for *Atenas Today* despite her demanding schedule.

Unless otherwise noted, all pictures are my own.

The Atenas Today Art Gallery

The Art Gallery is a regular feature of Atenas Today. Local artists are encouraged to submit photographs of their works to be included in the gallery, and to send a new picture each month. The artists may be contacted via the email addresses shown.



Marciel
16" x 20"
Oil on Linen

Al Alexander
email: jeanandal@gmail.com
website: www.alalexanderartist.com



Title: Big Boy
Acrylic on Canvas

Artist's Statement: I took this photo in Cloverdale, British Columbia. There was a field of Hereford cattle, bulls I think, and they all gave me the evil eye while I tried to take a photo!

Diana F. Miskell
Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com
Costa Rica Blog: www.dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com



Tom Duffy

**Photograph of an April sunset
Tom Duffy**

tom@duffyportraits.com

**Photographer's Statement: Continuing on my series of Fabulous Skies
in Costa Rica, a few nights ago this view
opened up in front of me, and I had to
capture it with my camera. I love the
interplay between the earth and the sky.
It is my parting gift to Atenas.**

Editor's Note: We wish Tom, Dina and Dixie a great life in their new home in Bradenton, Florida. We thank you all for the contributions you made to your town while you lived here. We will all miss you.

For the bloggers...



We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest to our readers. By providing this information, we are not endorsing or accepting responsibility for any content found therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share. These are alphabetized for your easy reference. **Please advise if you find that some blogs no longer exist.**

Bolley Buzz Bunky Bartlett	bcrcoffee.com http://www.bestofcostarica.org
Carole Connolly Claudia Leon	http://carolejeanscostaricacapers.com http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/ http://straightline-cmk1.blogspot.com/ http://costaricadecisionprocess.blogspot.com/
Charlie Doggett	
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica Dennis Easter/Pure Life Development Diane Miskell	delapuravida.com http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com
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Issue Number 136

April 23, 2016



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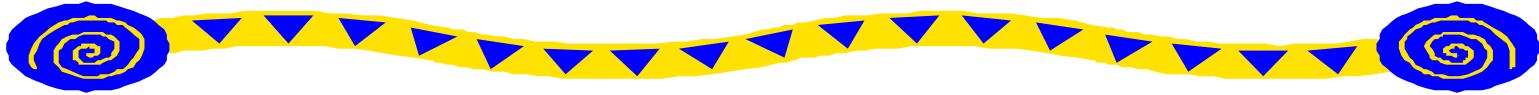


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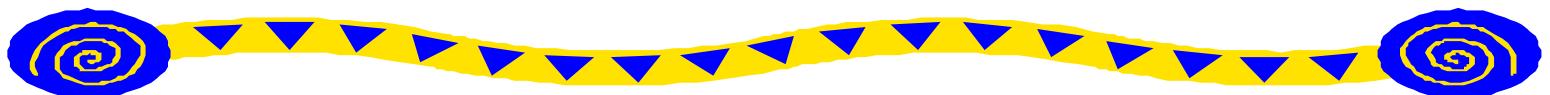
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- Shop with you (or for you) for the freshest and finest ingredients.
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- Package and store your meals in your refrigerator and/or freezer. He will leave your kitchen clean and filled with lovely aromas.
- Provide cooking/buying lessons for your staff if you wish this service
- Cater your next event
- And whatever else your dining mind comes up with!

Osmin can be reached at 6017-8614 or by email: ozzychef@live.com



Available as an e-book on Amazon on the following link:

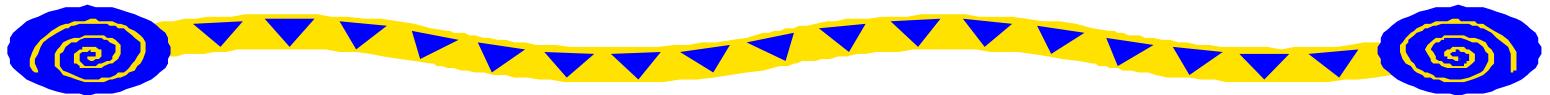
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