

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.

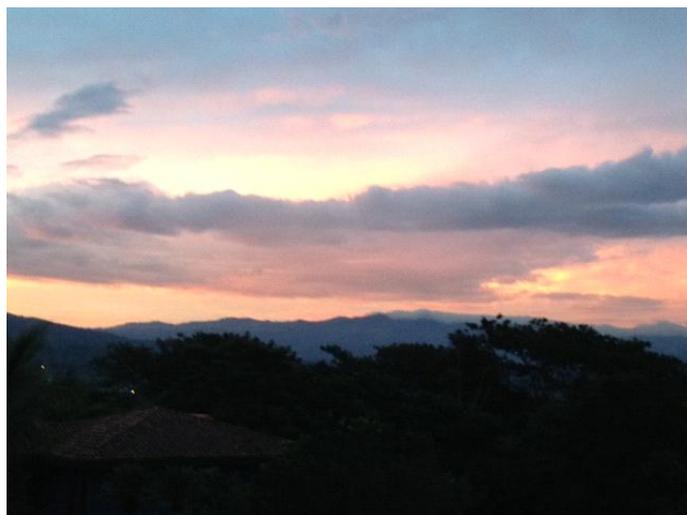
When in “Full Screen” view, left click to advance to the next page, or right click to go back a page.

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.

ATENAS TODAY



Nature's Palette, Los Angeles Atenas August 9, 2016

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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.

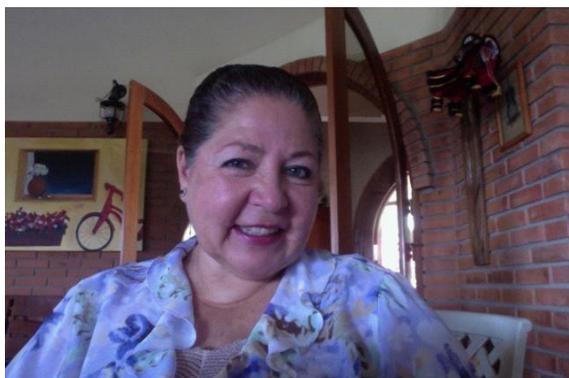


DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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



In typical New York fashion, the days have been hot, hazy and humid. I am once again enjoying watching our neighbors in Queens rejoice in that last bit of summer with their friends, families and outdoor grills! I feel a little guilty that I will soon return to my lush green paradise and can look forward to months of temperate weather.

Our daughter has just begun her senior year in college and has chosen to live away from campus. It will be a grand adventure, a new routine which will certainly allow her to mature very quickly.

Although I often wonder how our children remember the little town they grew up in, I don't ask because I know how difficult it is to compare two equally loved, but totally different, places. I know that many of you understand exactly what I mean. There are pros and cons to living anywhere.

Lots of things are going on in Atenas during the month of August. I am sorry that I will be missing the Art Show that will be held at Colinas del Sol on August 27th & 28th. These talented individuals have spent many months working on the art that they will exhibit and I hope you don't pass up the opportunity to be part of this amazing endeavor.

On September 18th, the 4th Annual MTB activity will be held to raise funds for our Hogar de Ancianos and I will be back in town for that. Details are included in the flyer in this issue. I know many of our readers are also fans of this sport and I hope you will participate for a chance to win one of the many great prizes available.

As in the past, this month's contributors had to rush their items to me and I am indebted to them for their continued support of the publication. I have mentioned recently that our town is undergoing many changes; one constant though is that every season brings us newcomers who have talents and ideas they want to share in Atenas, today and every day!

Happy reading!

Marietta Arce
[marietta.arce@gmail](mailto: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.

August 24th – Costa Rica celebrates National Parks Day

August 27th & 28th – Atenas Artists Exhibit at Colinas del Sol, profiles and details in this month's issue (see flyer this section)

September 14th – Traditional lantern parade the eve of Independence day Celebrations

September 15th – Costa Rica celebrates 195 years of Independence

September 18th – IV Classic Mountain Bike Event to raise funds for Hogar de Ancianos (see flyer)

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

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

Every Thursday (5-6 p.m.) and Saturday (10-11 a.m.) – The Feldenkrais Method (somatic education method) taught at Colinas del Sol (see flyer this section). For more details, contact Rúbia Santos at: rssantos13@gmail.com

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 Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

Second and Fourth Sunday of each month: 10 a.m. in the Catholic Church in San Jose Sur, mass in English said by Father José Brennan Aedth.

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 11:00 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

ART IN ATENAS

The Gordon Salter Memorial Art Show

where: Hotel Colinas del Sol, Calle Boqueron, Atenas
600m east of H.S. Gym, 100m east of Roca Verde gate. 2446-4244 2446-5803
info@hotelcolinasdelsol.com www.hotelcolinasdelsol.com

Saturday
Aug. 27
2 - 7 pm



Sunday
Aug. 28
2 - 5 pm



Hotel Colinas del Sol - Bar & Restaurant open

UNFOLD YOURSELF,
COME TO STAND
THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD

CONNECTING THROUGH THE SKELETAL PATH
CONSCIOUSNESS, FLEXIBILITY, BALANCE
MOVE BETTER. FEEL BETTER!!!



Hotel Colinas del Sol, Atenas, CR

Thursdays 5pm-6pm

Saturdays 10am-11am

Guided Lessons with Rubia Santos, GCFP

*Spinal Chain, Flexion and Extension, Knees to Elbows, Rolling
to Sit, and more...*

€ 3,000.00

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL RUBIA SANTOS AT rssantos13@gmail.com

4ta Recreativa

HOGAR de Ancianos Atenas

18 set. 2016

Asistencia mecánica, mejores y nuevas rutas (35-27-22 Km)
Grandiosas Rifas 2 pantallas 32", 2 bicicletas, muchos premios más.
Camiseta de ciclismo ó T-Shirt a los primeros 750 inscritos
Inflables, deliciosas comidas, actividades para niños
PARQUEO GRATIS

mejor que nunca

más info: 2446-5224



Recreativa MTB Hogar de Ancianos Atenas



CUENTAS

**Asociación Benéfica Hogar
de Ancianos Hortensia Rodríguez
Sandoval de Bolaños**

Cédula jurídica

3002045482



Banco Nacional de Costa Rica

CTA. CORRIENTE: 100-1-021-002655-4

CTA CLIENTE: 15102110010026559



Banco de Costa Rica

CTA. CORRIENTE: 302-0001013-8

CTA CLIENTE: 15201302000101386



Envía el Comprobante

6209-9797

Más información al tel.: 2446-8665

10,000 Colones Registration includes a cycling or tee shirt (for the first 750 registered), Aid Stations, one of the most beautiful courses anywhere, and post race refreshments!

The Cartago Express Brings Weary Pilgrims Back to San José *by Michael Miller*



The most important religious site in Central America, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, in Cartago, Costa Rica, is one of the most beautiful cathedrals outside of Europe.

August 2nd is the official day when faithful Catholics of Costa Rica (and nearby countries) journey by the hundreds of thousands, to the city of Cartago, about 15 miles to the east of San José. They go to visit the Basilica de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles (Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels).

In reality, the faithful have been making the pilgrimage to Cartago all week long. For the past few days, you could see groups of hearty walkers heading east to the Basilica.



Tens of thousands of pilgrims of all ages walked through the night from Downtown San José to Cartago to pray at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels.

Last night (August 1st), taking advantage of the cool evening air, there were tens of thousands of people walking along Avenida Segunda out of San José toward San Pedro; young people, old people, a great many families, some of them with children in strollers. The crowds were so heavy that police in cars and on motorcycles restricted the traffic to the lanes away from the walkers, who spilled out from the sidewalks onto the street.

The faithful believe that by visiting the Basilica this week, and especially by walking, their prayers for sick members of their families will be answered. It was on this day, in the 1600's, that a little black statue of the Blessed Virgin was found in the woods near Cartago. The Basilica was built where the statue was discovered, and it is now considered the most important religious site in Central America.



Every half hour, the Cartago Express off-loads hundreds of returning passengers at the Atlantic Train Station in Downtown San José.



Dozens of taxis line up to await the next train-load of pilgrims returning to Downtown San José from Cartago.

Whether you are a believer or not, The Basilica in Cartago is stunning. It is the most beautiful cathedral I have seen outside of Europe. And the crowds it attracts during this time of year are mind boggling. Over a million people (about 20 percent of the population of Costa Rica) will have visited and prayed there during this week.



An inside view of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, where a million people will come to pray for their loved ones this week.

Today, the weary travelers are returning to San José. Many will come back by train or by bus. At the Atlantic Train Station this morning, 10-car trains (the Cartago Express) were arriving from Cartago every half hour packed with the returning pilgrims. Train station officials said that the train service from Cartago would continue until noon today (August 2nd).



Passengers from Cartago scramble for taxis, or load onto city buses to continue their journey home.

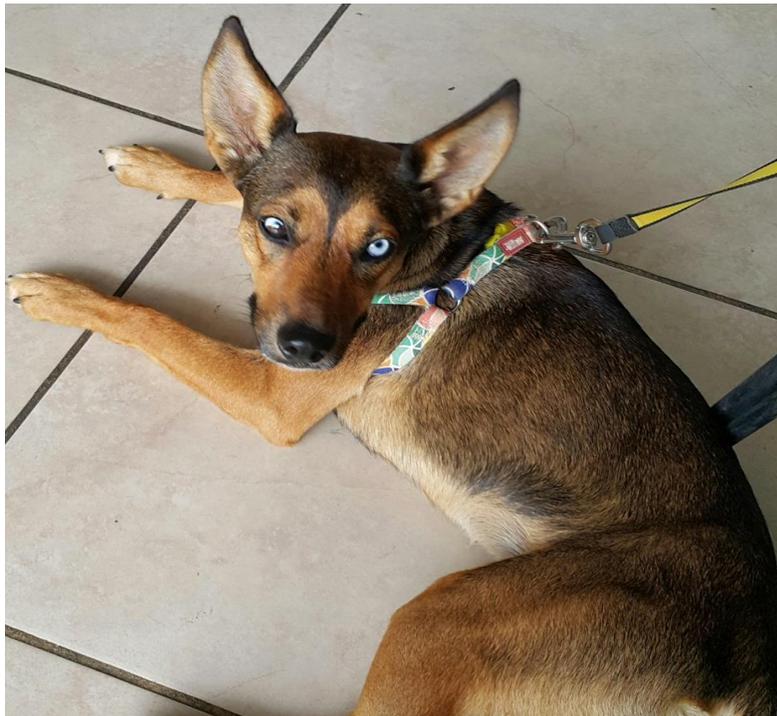
Michael Miller is the author of the only guide book that focuses on Downtown San José, Costa Rica, titled: [*The Real San José.*](#)

DOG OF THE MONTH



Fundación Ateniense de Ayuda a Animales Abandonados
Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals
Cedula Juridica # 3-006-542026
ATENAS de Alajuela - COSTA RICA

LINDA



Linda is a lovable, neutered female, family dog. She wants a forever family to care and love her. She has had her shots and is ready to be a watch dog preferably with a fenced yard.

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM NEW LOCATION.

Stop by the Atenas Municipal Building next to the Fire Station 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.

FOSTER CARE NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to open their homes and hearts and provide foster care for the many animals, adult dogs, puppies and mothers with puppies that are waiting to be adopted. Animales Atenas provides all vet care and food.

If you are not able to provide foster care we offer many options for volunteering.

Dora Telephone 8855-9822 President Es
Sylvia 8868-1386 Secretary Es, En, Deutch
AnimalesAtenasCR@AOL.com

PLANTS FOR SALE

Plants are available to purchase on Friday mornings with payment in donations to ANIMALESATENAS.

Order plants of your choice by emailing kenyakiwis@yahoo.com

The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show Slated
August 27 – 28, 2016



By Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com

The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show will take place on Saturday and Sunday, August 27-28, 2016, in Hotel Colinas Del Sol, Calle Boqueron, Atenas (600 meters east of the high school gym, 100 meters east of Roca Verde gate.) Hours on Saturday are from 2 pm to 7 pm and on Sunday from 2 pm to 5 pm.

Gordon, to whom the show is dedicated, was in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the early sixties where artists displayed and sold their work in the town square. His widow, Sharon, says, "Gordon had an artist's appreciation of color and talent though he never painted. He loved the medium and purchased art even when he couldn't afford to. He was able to sometimes work out payment plans so he could put art in our home. Because of his love for art, he always chose to support and promote these talented artists by encouraging others to purchase their work."

After moving to Atenas and meeting many talented painters, Gordon told his wife that Atenas reminded him of Santa Fe before it became commercial. "He had the vision to invite these artists to our home and to organize an Atenas Art Show in 2013 so that others in our community would realize what amazing art they could purchase locally." Sharon said that Gordon's dream was to put Atenas on the map as being the Art Center of Costa Rica. "Needless to say, the huge turnout for the show held two years ago gave Gordon so much happiness. He was thrilled when the artists would sell their work and never gave up on the idea to hold another exhibit and reach out to more people. He loved and believed in the people he met here and wanted to bring people together to experience appreciation of talent and supporting each other."

Sharon is thrilled that his legacy is being carried forward with the Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show. In thanking the organizers and artists, she says, "You all fill me with love and gratitude for your generosity of time, hard work and talent to honor my wonderful husband."

Atenas Today profiled four of the seven exhibiting artists, Diana F. Miskell, Julie Hawkins, Jan Yatsko, and Jocelyn Farquhar in July. The remaining artists are Al Alexander, Harriet Shepherd and Sheila Nelson.

Harriet Shepherd
hweyman@gmail.com



"I always wanted to paint as a child," says Harriet Sheppard, "but I could never color within the lines." Harriet, in all aspects of her life, resists coloring within the lines.

Encouraged by her mother who was an interior designer and who had a knack for picking colors and placement of objects, Harriet attended Georgia State University and gained a Masters in Art degree. Her formal educators didn't approve of realistic painting. Abstraction better fit Harriet's personality and artistry, becoming a preferred genre for her.

"Abstraction is a natural process," says Harriet. "I admire people who understand abstraction who have never painted."

Focusing on one singular thing is not a part of Harriet's genetic template. After gaining her degree, she worked "hundreds of job," and had a first marriage to a fictional writer who wrote a novel inside a chicken coop. Eventually, she settled on being an administrative assistant to her second husband, Richard, who owned a business of manufacturing fabric awnings. "He and his partner were male pigs," says Harriet jokingly. "He finally got fed up with me and fired me." Suddenly she was free to devote 100 per cent of her time to her art using the studio Richard built by dividing their living room. He constructed frames and travelled with her to numerous art fairs in the Atlanta area where they lived. In 2006, after retiring, they moved to Costa Rica.

Harriet admires early childhood when there is no restriction in creativity. "That is a time before adults critique and dictate the boundaries. It is a time before reason and the rational take over." She appreciates and admires the complete lack of self-consciousness in Jocelyn Farquhar's style of painting. Jocelyn is one of the painters who will be exhibiting in the upcoming art fare.

A self-described "commitment-phobe," Harriet is naturally tense about creating the body of work she wishes to show at the Art Show. "There nothing more intense than a deadline to shake up an artist and make them paint."

Harriet loses time, a day evolving into dusk, as she paints, alone and without distractions. Her process of using oils, acrylics and house paint is made more painstaking by her eventual critique of what she assumed was a finished product. Just a month ago she resolved to switch from painting abstracts to landscapes for the show, resulting in a series of faithful renditions of

Nature. Something was missing in each canvas, she decided, so she added cartoon characters. The outcome is both surprising and as Art Show patrons will observe, like Harriet, quirky.

February 19, 2016, Harriet's husband Richard died on the same day as Gordon Balter, the namesake for the art show. Harriet attributes her painting as a lifesaver, saying, "I am grateful to have the impetus to work. I am also grateful for Gordon's commitment to art and his ongoing support of the efforts of Atenas artists. Last but not least, I will always be grateful for Richard's undying attempts at understanding me and the way he jumped into my world bolstering my aspirations."

Sheila Nelson



"I call myself an accidental artist," Sheila Nelson says. "It never occurred to me that this is what I would be doing. My sister who had formal art training was the artist in our family."

As a vocational case worker with developed mentally delayed high school students in Northern California, Sheila would doodle when she was on the phone. "My supervisor, Nancy Glenn, who was an artist, would look at my scribbles and say, 'You need to paint.' One day she brought brushes, paints and supplies to my house in Northern California. I've been painting ever since."

Four years ago, when she moved to Costa Rica, she took art lessons from Larry Felder who has since moved back to the United States. Though the lessons only lasted for six months, Sheila credits him with helping her expand from solely doing water colors into oil painting. His meticulous style of painting, required in his specialty of painting water scenes with reflections, inspired her, although she says, "I'm more painterly than Larry whose paintings look like photos. I will never paint as perfectly as he, but he taught me so much."

For the Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show, Sheila will showcase both her watercolors and some recently created oils, all framed. She considers herself fortunate to have a framer as a neighbor, David Mallette.

Oil paintings of magnified flowers are her forte, the size and scope reminiscent of Georgia O'Keefe. There is a side view of huge hibiscus displaying its stamen and pistil, reaching out from the petal and on to the stem. The varied face of a purple and pink orchid reclines lazily amid its foliage. The tiny details of each flower spills over each canvas. "I do flowers," she says, "because at art shows that is what draws me."

Although she has painted from memory, she prefers to work from a photograph. She has painted birds and is working on a blue mot mot that may not be ready for the show. Some paintings take as long as six months to complete.

She was a last minute entry in the art show held two years ago after Sharon Balter suggested to her husband and organizer of the event, Gordon, that Sheila be included among the artists. That show that was a precursor for the upcoming show was successful for Sheila, although she admits that she is surprised at what sells and what does not. "Gordon was a wonderful coordinator and worked hard to promote the show. It had a huge turnout," Sheila recalls.

Sheila draws her inspiration from Costa Rica, her home for the past four years. "There is unending beauty to capture here," she says. "I go outside and see so many interesting things. Even after all this time, I still see new things."

Al Alexander

<http://www.alalexanderartist.com>



Al Alexander's work has been purchased and displayed in the United States and Europe as murals, oil and water colors. His paintings appear on a White House calendar and in a Viet Nam commemorative calendar as well as over 40 murals displayed in the Epcot Center Hotel, designed by architect Michael Graves. He executed a floor for Woody Allen; once sold a painting to Malcolm Forbes, and one of his works was the subject of a Jeopardy question.

"Any success I have is due to her," Al says, pointing to his wife of thirty three years, Jean Kennedy-Alexander.

Jean humorously concurs, saying, "Al is reluctant to brag about his work. I have to brag for him."

"I always liked to draw," says Al, who displayed his talent in childhood and was encouraged by his mother. After receiving an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, he was drafted in 1967, serving in Vietnam from April, 1968 to April, 1969. He earned a Master of Arts in painting at Long Island University in New York in 1973.

As an unknown, he admits it wasn't easy getting started. But Al's career got a jumpstart when an eccentric British art dealer, Nicholas Treadwell, sold some of Al's paintings in London and in Europe, inviting him to join other artists to live and to paint in his 52 room mansion, Denne Hill near Canterbury, England. So, in 1978, Al resided and worked in the manor while exhibiting with the Nicholas Treadwell Gallery in London that sold many of his pieces.

His fine attention to detail resulted in a job with the U.S. Army at their Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey where he illustrated weapons to be used in presentations for engineers. All of his work reflects a thorough eye from the planning stage until execution. "I don't like surprises," says Al.

After moving to New Jersey in 1986, Al's portfolio captured the attention of the General Telephone & Electronic Data System who commissioned him to do his first mural. While most muralists paint directly on the wall, Al uses a method of painting on a removable canvas that is attached to the wall with water-based glue so that the mural can be removed. More murals followed. As project manager, he executed dozens of murals for the Epcot Center hotels, The Swan and The Dolphin. In 1996, he did a mural for the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital that depicted nostalgic scenes as if looking through a window at cars and buildings from the fifties.

One of his most remarkable projects was for the Daughters of Israel Geriatric Center in West Orange, New Jersey. Subscribers and patrons individually commissioned over fifty scenes reminiscent of their family life, memories and businesses for residents to recall. For instance, a man rescued by Oskar Schindler commissioned a mural taken from a photo of himself and his family with Steven Spielberg under a movie marquee for *Shindler's List*.

In 1998, Al had the honor of being chosen as the New Jersey artist to do a painting for the White House Historical Society's 2000 Commemorative Calendar. Each artist was picked from one of the original 13 states. Al meticulously researched photos of Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt from Hyde Park, New York, using his skills in portrait painting to show them in the 1940's having a casual tête-à-tête in the White House's Blue Room. The portrait was so popular that it became the January start of the calendar. Later, it was used in a Jeopardy television show, asking contestants the location of the conversation depicted between the two world leaders.

Both Jean and Al worked for Woody Allen, Jean as a landscape artist for his rooftop garden and Al on a floor mural. Like his movie persona, Woody Allen had difficulty deciding and sticking with a decision. As a result, Al found himself completely redoing a floor mural when Allen changed his mind again before leaving for Venice to do a movie.

In 2006, Al and Jean retired and moved to Costa Rica, buying a property with a cabin that was Al's studio until his growing collection of art required a larger space. He now uses a larger studio on the property to execute ocean scenes, sunsets, portraits and Boyero parades. One of Al's more humorous commissions was to design art for the bathroom doors at Balcón del Café in Atenas to distinguish the genders.



For the art show, Al will rely on Jean to help him select which pieces to display from his tropical collection, train series, portraits of locals, land and seascapes as well as some new vibrant water colors. Jean admiringly wanders around the studio, saying, "It is time to exchange some of the pictures in the house for some of these." Life in the Alexander house is a moveable art feast.



Remembering Gordon Balter

PLACES AND FACES

La Fortuna Waterfall



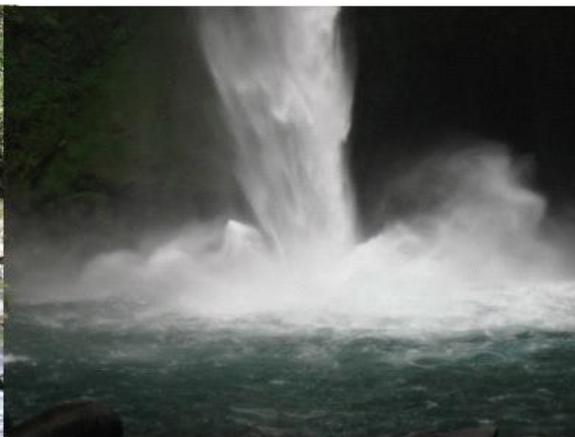
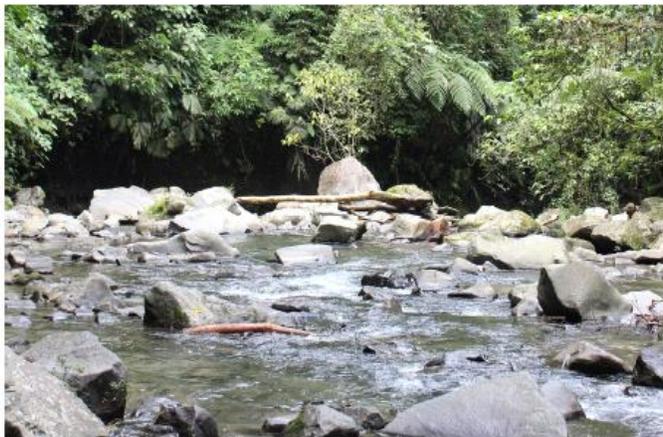
Do you want to get a real contact with nature in a place where the running water dominates the environment? Well, the place for you is La Fortuna Waterfall. La Fortuna is located approximately two hours and thirty minutes from San José.

La Fortuna waterfall is one of the most visited waterfalls in Costa Rica. It is visited by 100,000 people a year, according to its website.

A local non-profit association administers the waterfall. The entrance fee is \$10, with all proceeds being reinvested into local conservation efforts. In fact, now the trail down to the river is almost finished with well-built stairs making it a smoother way down.

The waterfall drops about 70-75 meters and is located at the base of the dormant Chato volcano. Located just 6 km outside the town of La Fortuna, this stunning waterfall provides visitors with a wonderful place to swim and relax. It is fed by the Arenal River, which travels through the rain forest in the Arenal Mountain range until it plunges over the cliff, forming this waterfall.

A hike down a long set of stairs to the waterfall and back up to the entrance/exit is required, although well worth the trip for most. It takes about 20 minutes to go down. There are several view points, so you better go slowly and take the time to observe the various trees, flowers and plants, listen to the many insects and birds and take in all the beauty of nature.



Information taken from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zarcen>

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted here with permission from ILE Post where it appeared in the July 2016 issue. If you would like to see the complete issue or back issues from this wonderful institution (UTN Alajuela) please visit their website: <http://www.utn.ac.cr/ile/swf/>

Is it worth it to Believe in God?

By Konrad Esquivel

Only that which is real can certify itself as real. It doesn't need the approval of that which is temporary, transient or an illusion (you and me). So, it really doesn't matter how many ideas of God there are.

I worked as a Christian missionary for more than 20 years. God was my most important goal, and Love, in all its shades and colors, was my practical way of life. Yet, I was wholly framed by my concepts, which at the same time framed God. I was very strict with my perspective. One day while taking a shower I felt a divine challenge: "Take away all your frames, ideas and concepts and believe in nothing. Whatever is true and divine will be revealed to you unaffected. Don't be afraid." As time went by I was able to let go and, in an awesome and organic way, find out that only Source/Consciousness can certify truth.

We are just a conscious identity with ego structure that believes its own stories, concepts and searches to transcend separation from Oneness. But, Oneness is already everything there is. The idea and feeling of separation is part of Oneness, (so) we are also Oneness.

I guess we need a change of perspective. A change of perspective is an art that involves what we call spiritual awakening and we can start by opening our hearts to see life through the eyes of God. Our problem then resides in that, for the great majority, God is just a concept. Is it worth it to believe in that God? If it's an idea, or a hereditary concept and dogma that you are afraid to drop, then it is not worth it to believe in God. If you believe in God just hoping that someday It will bless you then you are missing the point. If Source to you is not a real liberating experience then you are disconnected from It. If your connection with whatever you consider Divine Source to be doesn't meld you, change you, empower you, break you, mold you, then It is not worth it. If It doesn't become a real authentic experience, then it's all BS – a lie.

We are wonderfully created. We can love deeply, so deeply that we eventually meld into Presence. We are amazing. We can inquire seriously within to experience stillness, inner silence, and connection. We may even someday see, as presence beholds its manifested creation, a change of perspective. Let's take advantage of the opportunity of being alive to shed all the layers and let the light shine.

Let us not be afraid to find within us that which is the Real Thing. The Real Thing is unaffected either by our belief (or not) because it's beyond our ability to understand it (or not). If something you believe needs to be defended, then it is probably the ego.

May we allow grace to do its work.

May love and peace flow freely.

May our perspective be that Consciousness is Presence.



By Shannon Farley

From coffee to commerce: The story of CoopeAtenas

August 2016 is time for big celebrations in Atenas, Costa Rica, including the town's 148th birthday on Aug. 7, and the 47th anniversary of Atenas' oldest and largest business, CoopeAtenas, on Aug. 10.

For more than two centuries, coffee production has played a central role in Atenas. The town's history and development is solidly founded on coffee.

Before CoopeAtenas began in 1969, farmers in the principal Atenas coffee-growing neighborhoods of San Isidro, Morazán, Estanquillos, and San Jose Norte used to have to transport their coffee beans over rustic roads to Palmares to process and be sold, which became unprofitable. Then a group of 92 coffee producers in Atenas joined together to create their own company. Wishing to democratically run their business with mutual support, fairness, and equal share in all profits, CoopeAtenas R.L. was founded as a cooperative on Aug. 10, 1969.



Nowadays, there are 1,250 coffee growers participating in CoopeAtenas, mostly families from the Atenas area, with 250 associates from nearby Puriscal and Turubares. Warm sun and cool ocean breezes filtering through the green mountains nurture 2,158 tons (40,000 quintals) of coffee produced on average annually by CoopeAtenas growers. All of it passes through the CoopeAtenas processing plant in San Isidro where the cooperative proudly holds the international certifications of Fair Trade, UTZ, the ISO 14001 for environmental standards, and C.A.F.E practices by Starbucks.

While 85% of the coffee beans from CoopeAtenas are sold to the USA, Canada and Europe to brands like Starbucks, Green Mountain Coffee, Serengeti, and Royal Coffee, of the 15% that remain in Costa Rica, 4% are the brands known locally as Atenas coffee: La Villa, El Ateneo and Villa Diamante.

More than Coffee: Community Development and Growth in Atenas

Now in 2016, CoopeAtenas has progressed to include a supermarket, gas station, automotive center, liquor store, and a hardware and agricultural supply store. As a pillar in the Atenas economy, the cooperative provides employment for 175 residents and regularly gives social assistance to the community.



Coffee farming, however, is no longer the cooperative's principal economic activity due to unstable world coffee prices and urban development. "Coffee is the blood and heart of this company, but it is not the main economic activity anymore," said CoopeAtenas General Manager, Juan Carlos Alvarez.

The big, beautiful, modern CoopeAtenas Supermarket in town is CoopeAtenas' top producer, followed by the gas station. In 2012, the supermarket more than tripled in size and moved to its present location below the gas station and automotive center from Highway 3. It is now the largest in town with great diversity in products, paying special attention to items requested by the international population, like organic and gluten-free products, said Alvarez. Priority is given to locally-sourced fruits and vegetables, meats and dairy products (including goat milk and goat cheese), and baked goods, he added.



The supermarket keeps client survey forms near the front of the store (or you can ask at the check-out stands) for people to give their recommendations on products CoopeAtenas should or should not stock.

Generosity and Support in Our Community

From the annual revenues generated by their business activities, CoopeAtenas gives back to the community an average of \$100,000 in financial support to schools, community halls, sports teams, neighborhoods in the coffee-producing areas, the Hogar de Ancianos, Red Cross, and police station, said Alvarez. He noted that the cooperative recently donated the uniforms to the boys' and girls' volleyball teams from Atenas; and they helped build a playground in the Alto Naranjo community. CoopeAtenas employees also get involved with organized trash pick-ups around town and planting trees for reforestation.

CoopeAtenas has started an important project to protect the water resources of Atenas. They are buying land in the higher parts of the San Isidro neighborhood near natural springs to reforest and safeguard. Starting two years ago, so far about 50 acres of land have been purchased. "We want to reforest these areas to be producing water for the community," said Alvarez.

For nearly five decades, CoopeAtenas has been a driving force in the development of Atenas, Costa Rica, dedicated to bettering the quality of life for its residents. Reflecting Atenas' core values of solidarity, equality, and social responsibility, CoopeAtenas continues its role as a passionate community leader into the future.



“Retirement Capital”—How to Get it, Grow it and Keep It



by Suzanne Shaffer
artsourcesuzanne@gmail.com

As a young girl growing up in the early 60's in the rolling hills of upstate New York, the cow pasture in the neighborhood was my retreat, my opportunity for exploration and my very own canvas and storyboard on which my friends and I created numerous stories and untold daring adventures. We exercised our creativity at will, only restricted by our imaginations. It was easy to invent games, have tuna can “races” in the creek and to gather under “rainbow,” the huge fallen tree where we built our fort and could hide from the farmer, or his fierce looking bull, neither of which was a pleasant sight.

Ultimately, it was not the farmer or that steer that interrupted our play world. It was life. John Lennon is credited with saying, “Life happens when you're busy making other plans.” As with each of us, life happened and before we knew it, we were swept up in a world full of activities, responsibilities, accountabilities, challenges and opportunities. Life was on! We were on board and the train had left the station.

Through the years after college, managing a career, raising a family and otherwise participating in the experience of aging, evolving and now in my early 60's, I have reached a point where I have begun to not only envision my next life chapter, but to also design and create it. This next life chapter has traditionally been called retirement; defined as that time in life when you can leave the working world, the children are grown and you can now focus on what you want.

Most of us have been preparing our entire adult lifetimes for this moment in time where our work, career and raising a family years transition and morph into our *golden* years; a time where we choose how to spend our days. A time when we decide on how and where to live our lives, and what activities are going to occupy our attention and commitment. *We finally* get to choose. We are now the master of our destiny. Now what?

When people hear the term, “retirement capital”, they typically think about money, financial stability and ensuring that finances are sufficient to cover the expenses of living beyond one's primary income-earning years. While this is certainly extremely important, retirement capital can also be about each of us and how we invest in ourselves. What could be a more important investment?

In listening and talking to my friends about retirement, they are living everything but a traditional retirement. In fact, as is the case with most things touched by the “baby boom” generation, we are redefining retirement in our own unique ways. There are many themes that surface, and one is that there is a common desire to transition from a life of career identification and material acquisition to one of greater simplicity, focused more on finding meaning and purpose—meaningful relationships, purposeful activities and intentional living.

It takes a creative spirit to age well. On our journey into elderhood, we need to exercise our creative juices more than ever. The road ahead is full of unknowns and will be comprised of new opportunities and challenges. Our ability to approach our lives *consciously* and *creatively* will make a big difference in how we experience living. It may, in fact, be a key component in not just surviving, but enthusiastically thriving.

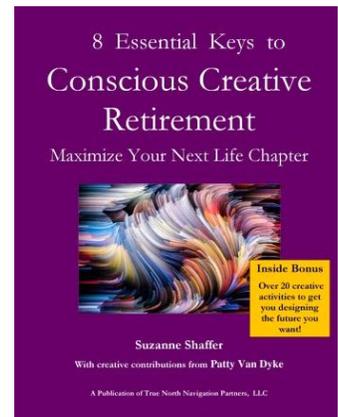
People often associate creativity with being talented in an artistic way. They assume that if they can't paint, draw, play an instrument, sculpt, write poetry, etc. they didn't get the creative “gene.” This just isn't true. Creativity encompasses far more than artistic talent. Creativity is innate within each of us and, for it to flourish, we just need to give it a gentle nudge in order to see its benefits.

What are the benefits of engaging your creativity? Well, for starters, neuroscientific research is finding that developing our creativity is of significant value to our mental and physical health as we age (e.g. stress reduction, cognitive health, greater resistance to disease and infection). Staying active and engaged in *creative self-expression* also keeps us from developing “old age mentality.” With all the changes that aging brings, creativity helps us adapt to new situations and is essential to effective problem-solving in daily life.

Sure, puzzles and brain teasers keep the brain active, but how do we begin to use our creativity to have more meaningful relationships, find our comfort zone in our community, or experience a sense of fulfillment at the end of each day?

I believe the creative journey starts by listening to the whisper or the roar from inside you that may be calling you toward action. Take a class, volunteer, join a group. Try something new. Do something that will enrich and enhance your life. When you are engaged in a creative environment, with like-minded people, there is a “spill-over” effect. Creative thinking and problem-solving will start to spill over into those other areas of your life that may benefit from creative action!

My husband and I will be visiting Costa Rica in September and October and will be spending a good portion of our time in the central valley. We are very interested in meeting others and learning about life in Costa Rica. We have found in our travels, as I know you have, that meeting others and listening to their stories and life experiences is always one of the highlights of any trip.



If you are curious about how to grow your own creativity, and are interested in learning some specific techniques to apply to this chapter of your life, a great place to start is with the new E book, *Conscious Creative Retirement: 8 Essential Keys to Maximize Your Next Life Chapter*. It is available at consciouscreativeretirement.com or on Amazon [Kindle Version](#)

I am also organizing a 2-day workshop in the Atenas area in mid- October, (tentatively during the week of October 18th, exact dates and venue to be determined) that is focused on very specific activities, based on the 8 essential keys described in the book. The workshop is designed to get participants excited and engaged in their creative self-expression, and to assist them in designing their future with intention and purpose. Before finalizing the logistics, venue, etc. I would like to determine if there is a sufficient level of interest. If this sounds intriguing to you and you would like to learn more, please email me about your interest, and I will provide you with more specific details. My email is artsourcesuzanne@gmail.com. Attendance will be limited to between 10 and 20 participants. Please let me know as soon as possible should you have potential interest.

Suzanne Shaffer is a professional watercolor artist and Clinical Art Therapist, living in Asheville, North Carolina. She and her husband are excited to visit Costa Rica for several weeks this fall, armed with her paints and his camera! Suzanne has taught numerous classes and workshops to seniors in various community settings, and is a signature member of the Watercolor Society of North Carolina. To view her artwork and to learn more about her, please visit: <http://www.mypaintingclasstoday.com>

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.

Hola Everybody!!!

I just had to send this quick note to tell you all about the critter we found tonight.

Mom was coming through the foyer and saw me stop to look at something on the floor!

She stopped to look too and guess what it was!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

A BIG ol' spider!!!!!!

Mom says "Awwww...It is a baby tarantula!!!!!!

Dad says "It's UGLY. Get it OUT of the house!!!

Mom says "They are not poisonous."

Dad says "It's UGLY. Get it out of the house!!!

Mom says "Get me a box or something to catch it with."

Dad says "It's UGLY. Get it out of the house!!!"

(Dad REALLY hates spiders!! LOL!!!)

But Mom won and Dad went and got a container. He even dropped it over the spider!!!

Mom got it up and put it in a jar so she could look at it.

What do you guys think? Cute?

BudBud the spider spotter.



A Bird Watching Contest!



by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com

It is hard for me to pinpoint the exact day I discovered I had no interest in pursuing a career in public service or in the mental health field. It might have been the day I was having a conversation with my mother (a social worker specializing in family therapy) and she spoke of her frustration that despite all her efforts to provide her clients with guidance, activities and medication, she saw little improvement. Even so, she encouraged me to think about becoming a psychiatrist because she felt I had many traits that would serve me well in that area. I disagreed and focused on a business path instead.

When I was growing up, my parents enjoyed participating in community programs and they were very active in founding a block association in our Brooklyn neighborhood. It is quite likely that living in that environment allowed me to see first hand that improvements (small and large) in communities are often only possible when the residents become truly involved in the issues.

I saw my parents as committed, hard-working, cheerful and optimistic. I believe that their example of social conscience made it impossible for me to ignore requests made to me when we first moved to our small town of Atenas. Without ever seeking to be a public employee or an elected official, I once found myself serving (pro-bono) on several committees because of my inability to set clear and strong boundaries and "just say NO!"

Everything changes, however, and I have scaled back quite a bit. At present, I am only on the Board of Directors of the Hogar de Ancianos, a truly noble Senior Citizen residence that I am proud to serve.

Back in 2011, while I was on one of the aforementioned committees, I had the opportunity to talk with a young man from England whose fiancée was completing a semester at one of our universities. He told me he was almost finished with his own Environmental Studies and was very interested in observing birds.

Several years before this conversation took place, I had developed a fascination with ornithology, although in my case we can only honestly call it occasional, amateur birdwatching! When our young visitor mentioned his interest, I was prompted to offer him the opportunity to help me in compiling a list of species that could be found at the Municipal Forest (Bosque Municipal) which we were trying to

protect, rehabilitate and turn into a viable ecotourism destination for the benefit of our town and the delight of our tourists. I had a vision of tucked-away cabins, zip lines and places to stop for refreshments in the future.

Our visitor was eager to get started. He met me in the center of town before 5 a.m. each morning for two weeks. I would drive him to the forest where he would spend a few hours observing and writing down his findings. In the days he was here, he wrote that he observed 17 species of birds, 1 walking stick, 1 squirrel, many leaf cutting ants and the Postman. I admit I got a chuckle out of that one!

In the years since the young man was here, I have encountered many serious and amateur birders right here in Atenas. I am always pleased when they are at the right spot to see the toucans and colorful manakins that visit our area. It is wonderful to be able to recognize a call (from the oropendolas for example) and point them in the right direction. I am in awe of the dozens of different species I recognize without ever having properly studied the guidebooks. The knowledge has come to me by being exposed to generous birders who like to pass on their findings.

Last month, I read an article in *La Nación* which claimed that on average 100 bird species can be observed in one day in Costa Rica. It went on to say that a full 30% of visitors to our country are "birders". In addition to all that, there is a contest going on right now which seeks the "birder of the year" – the

person who registers the greatest number of species.

The contest is open to nationals and foreigners and the winner will receive a trophy and the opportunity to stay in one of the three best bird-watching hotels for a week. I am going to get my binoculars out and see how many I can register, just for fun!



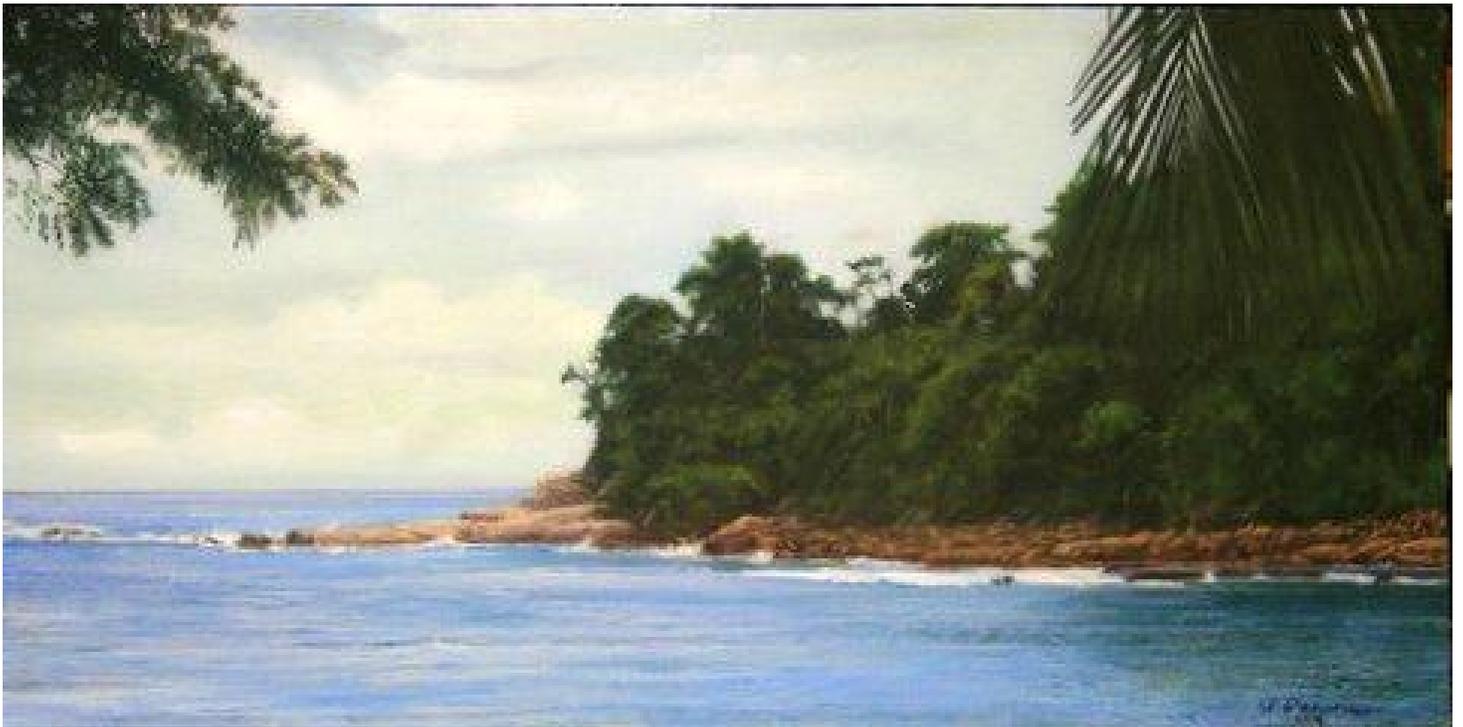
male long-tailed manakin (Wikipedia)

I am not sure whether there is a specific personality trait that makes people bird watchers. I find it an enjoyable hobby because when I am into it, it forces me to set aside time early to go outside. I love to record sightings which I can later analyze for trends. It is hard to explain, really, but watching the birds around me fills me with a great sense of peace, like all is well with the world. In a way, it is good for *my* mental health.

If you would like more information about this contest, visit www.birdwatchingincostarica.com for details and rules. The deadline for observing the birds is December 31, 2016 and the entries must be sent in by January 20, 2017. The winner will be announced shortly thereafter.

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.



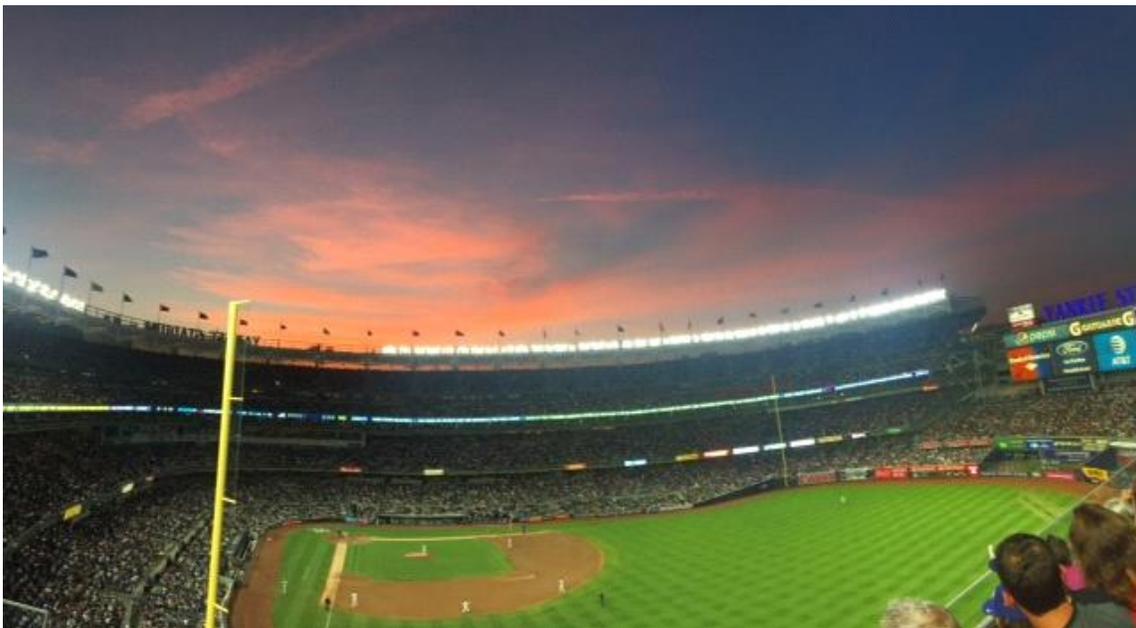
**Manuel Antonio View
11" x 22"
Oil on Linen**

Artist's Statement: I loved the lush green of the jungle rushing to meet the blue of the sea.

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

**The Boys of Summer
Subway Series at Yankee Stadium
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Photographs taken with iPhone6 by Dana Schlieman



Final Score: Mets 4, Yankees 1

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.**

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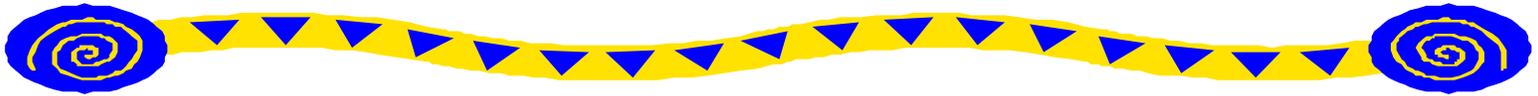


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Diana F. Miskell

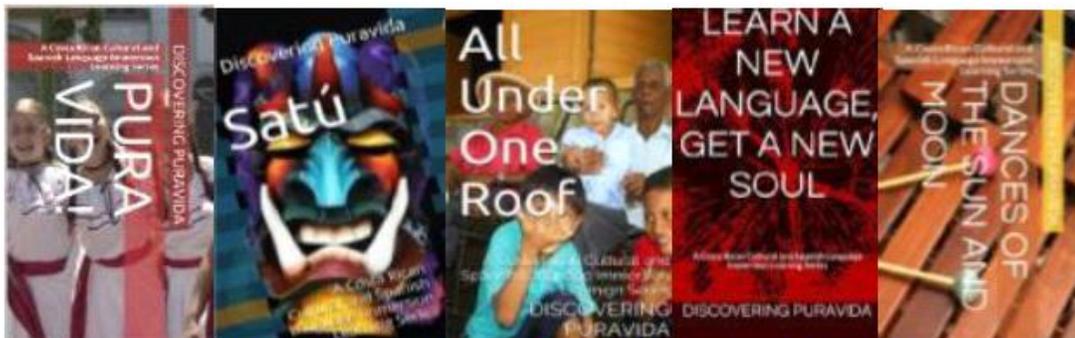
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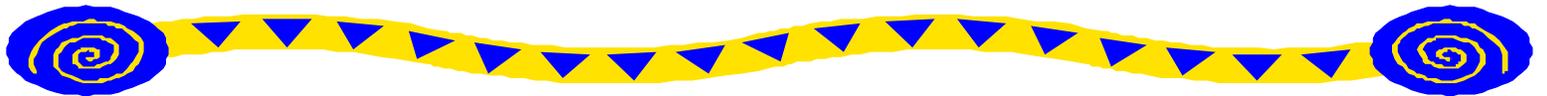
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