

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.

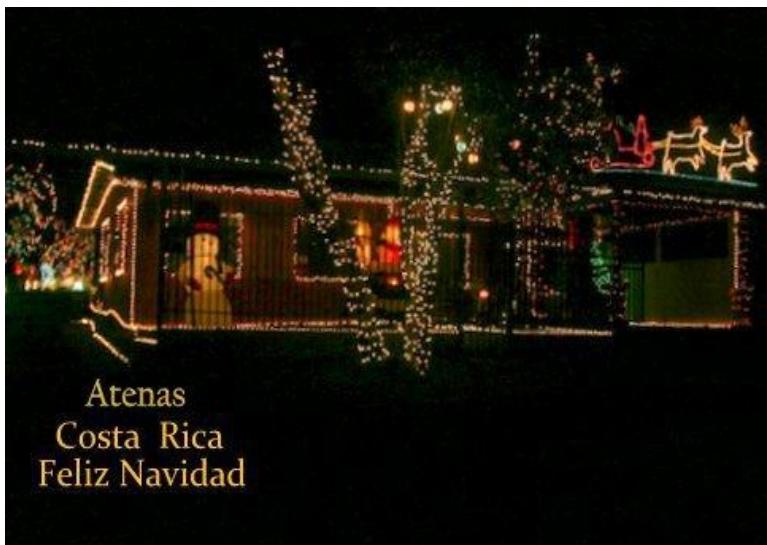
When in “Full Screen” view, left click to advance to the next page, or right click to go back a page.

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



**Picture of decorated home in Los Angeles
courtesy of Marina Zampieri 2011**

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 400 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 archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, www.atenascatuca.com. Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.

Issue No. 84

December 23, 2011

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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



I am writing this greeting on a perfectly typical December day in Atenas. The sun is shining and the gentle gusts besprinkle our lawn with colorful leaves that entertain and capture me as they descend in the breeze.

The end of the year approaches. You are no doubt getting ready to celebrate the holiday season. I am nostalgic at times; somewhat regretful of all the things I didn't accomplish this year. Most days, though, I am filled with enthusiasm for the family and friends I will see during the next several weeks. I am eager to learn about and share the new projects we are contemplating for 2012.

It was wonderful to put together this month's issue. I am constantly amazed by the marvelous contributions received from the artists and columnists who have become familiar to and appreciated by a growing number of readers each month.



My gratitude for their continued support increases with every issue. I would also like to express my thanks to every one of our readers who has taken the time to call, write or provide feedback on what we do.

I invite you to begin 2012 with a firm resolve to take the first step towards whatever goal you would like to reach during the year. Every project, large or small, begins with the first step.

Wherever the holidays find you this year, I wish you health, happiness and success, however you define it. We promise to do our part to continue to contribute to your enjoyment of Atenas, today and every day.

With warm Season's Greetings,

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.

December 25th - Merry Christmas to all

December 27th - Atenas Bridge Club meets at the new, renovated Don Yayo's Restaurant.
12:00, no partner required.

December 28th - (Please confirm with Sara and/or Kay)

Atenas Wednesday Women

informal get together at Kay's Gringo Postres
every Wednesday afternoon at 12:30 PM

January 1 2012 - Happy New Year and many blessings to all!

January 2 & 3rd – Recycling in the park from 9a.m. – 2 p.m. Please separate and rinse your recyclables. Thank you.

January 10th – 3 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Kay's Gringo Postres Please contact 2446-8397 / 2446-5343 / 2446-0568 for more information.

January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 – Atenas Bridge Club, noon, Don Yayo's Restaurant
no partner required. (Please confirm with John)

January 11th Writer's Club meets at Kay's Gringo Postres Contact L. Michael Rusin
[@crcaseyboy@gmail.com](mailto:crcaseyboy@gmail.com) (2451-9063) for more information.

January 16th - PLEIN AIR - A group of people with curious minds who meet the 3rd Monday of every month at a different location to explore and express their creativity through visual art and writing. Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or janyatsko@ice.co.cr to find out where we have been and where we are going.

February 12th – 5th Annual Chili Cook-Off; Visit atenaschilicookoff.com for more details.

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT www.atenaslife.com FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES.

Composting made easy



By Theresa Fulton
tf12@cornell.edu

I was out for a run the other day and it happened to be trash day. I was appalled to see many clear trash bags that were full of food – potatoes, loaves of bread, etc.! Food that, if tossed out back in compost pile, would contribute to nutrient-rich soil, but instead, sealed in a plastic bag, will now take up space in a landfill.

In a country where eco-tourism is big business, this really seems unacceptable. In addition to contributing to healthier soils, composting cuts down on trash that is sent to our overflowing landfills, and makes the remaining trash less desirable to dogs and rodents. Probably these residents feel that because they are in town they can't compost – not true! Although there are things you can do to make composting faster, even if you do nothing but throw it into a pile or old barrel, in these tropical temperatures, it will compost just fine with hardly any input from you. Even back in cold upstate NY, I only occasionally stir my pile with a pitchfork, and if I want some good soil for my flowerbed I'll turn the pile over to get the good soil underneath.

Seriously, that's all I do. Here, I do even less. I am the laziest composter on the planet, so if I can do it you can too!

Obviously you want to pick a spot that's not right next to your house (unless you have an old barrel with a lid), although I keep my pile within throwing distance so I can toss out moldy bread (did I mention I'm the laziest composter on the planet? I have been known to stand at the back door and throw stuff in the general direction of the compost pile). My dad once gave me one of those fancy composters that are a round barrel up off the ground, with a handle so you could turn the barrel to mix the compost – yeah, that was too much work. Sure, if your pile gets too mucky, it will help to add something dry (weeds, leaves etc.), and if it's too dry it will help to add something wet (leftovers, or just wet it down). It depends if you are really in a hurry for that nice fresh soil.

You can also get as involved with your compost pile as you like. I have memories of my dad's compost – he was a farmer so composting was serious business. He made a tall round container out of chicken wire, and every so often he would add a whole layer out of coffee grounds, and I was just tall enough to

stick my hands into a deep layer of warm coffee grounds. There are indoor composting systems you can buy that can be kept inside and you add worms. Not sure I'd sleep well thinking about worms crawling around in my kitchen, but hey, whatever works! And this, or community composting, are alternatives for people with no other space to compost.

The elementary school where we live in upstate NY (Dryden) just won a state award for their composting and recycling program. The elementary students oversee the waste separation process in the cafeterias, helping to remove and compost 103 tons of food waste and recycling 7.6 tons of beverage containers. Elementary kids!

I am sure you have read the news about the problem Costa Rica is having with landfills that are full, and of course no one wants one "in my backyard." A number of studies (see below) have estimated that over half of what goes to landfills could be recycled or composted, and I have been so happy to see the response in Atenas to the availability of recycling. Let's go one step further and decrease what we send to the landfills even more!

More information on composting the not-so-lazy way:

<http://www.composting101.com/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compost>

<http://www.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-030408-182336/unrestricted/DesigningEducationalMaterialsforCompostinginCostaRicanCommunity.pdf> (a rather long but very complete study of composting in Costa Rica)



The Chili Cook Off & The Hogar de Vida Orphanage*



by Patricia Diekroger

* or How to eat, drink, and be merry for a good cause!

A visit to the Hogar de Vida (Home of Life) Orphanage in Atenas is at once both inspiring and heart wrenching. Inspiring because of the obvious love and dedication with which the Tías (Aunties) and staff care for the children. Heart wrenching because of the knowledge that these beautiful children are here due to sad and disturbing reasons; abandonment, abuse, or neglect.

It was recently reported that child abuse cases at the National Children's Hospital increased by 600 percent from 2007 to 2010. With this disturbing trend the need for a loving, temporary home like Hogar de Vida can only grow. With that growth there will be an even greater need for support from the community. While Hogar does receive some financial support from government agencies, they also rely on donations from people like you and me. Our support helps to provide clothing, good food, school supplies, and the myriad other necessities required to care for the up to 35 children who are in residence. Please see their web site at www.homesoflife.org and look at their Facebook pages Group "We Love Hogar de Vida".

This past February over 500 people provided their support by attending the 4th Annual Atenas Chili Cook Off. We all had fun tasting some of the 14 pots of chili and voting for our favorites. Then we basked in the beautiful day, strolling the lovely grounds of the Quinta Romavista, while munching hot dogs and sipping a soda or a cold drink from the wine and beer garden. We joined the raffle, listened to live music, and enjoyed the company of family, friends, and neighbors. At the end of the day approximately \$3400 had been raised for the Hogar de Vida.

Feb 12, 2012 (please make note of the date now) will mark the celebration of the 5th Annual Atenas Chili Cook Off. With a projected 25 or more chili teams and more than 500 people expected to attend: we will make this the biggest and most successful cook-off yet.

There aren't many chances to have a fun day, eating good food in beautiful surroundings, while also making a difference in the lives of some deserving children. Please come, bring your family and tell your friends. Together, we can make a difference.

For more information please go to:

www.atenaschilicookoff.com

Founded by Kay & Tom Costello



<http://enlightenurmind.wordpress.com/costa-rica/orphanage-hogar-de-vida/>

Charity or Murder: let's think about the impact of hummingbird feeders



by Dr. Gerardo Avalos

Director

Center for Sustainable Development Studies

Who doesn't like to observe hummingbirds up close and personal? The easiest way to attract them (and by the way, to get amazing pictures) is through the use of hummingbird feeders. An increasing number of hummingbird enthusiasts maintain sugar-water hummingbird feeders on a permanent basis. The underlying reasons for establishing feeders range from pure curiosity to see these remarkable birds at a close range to the general belief that feeders benefit the hummingbirds. Feeders satisfy the human thrill of attracting birds that are often difficult to observe in high numbers under natural conditions. Although this practice is widespread, little is known of the consequences of the continuous use of commercial feeders on the biology of hummingbirds or for the reproductive success of their associated plants.

After studying hummingbird pollination systems for several years in the highlands of Costa Rica (at

Cerro de La Muerte, which literally means "The Mountain of Death") we determined that the use of artificial sugar-water feeders influences the quantity and composition of pollen loads of highland hummers. The pollen load consists of the types of different pollen a hummingbird could carry (and thus, how many plant species the hummingbird has visited). This is easily measured. The tricky part is to capture the hummingbird, which we do with mist nets. These are very fine nets that allow us to capture a hummingbird without harming the bird. Using a piece of Scotch tape rubbed against the throat, nape, and crown of the bird, collected pollen samples in this manner, put the tape on a microscope slide, and later identified the pollen using a microscope. By looking at the structure and size of pollen grains, we could easily match pollen with the plant species from which it came from.

continues...

At Cerro, we studied four species of hummingbirds: the Volcano (*Selasphorus flammula*), Fiery-throated (*Panterpe insignis*), Magnificent (*Eugenes fulgens*) and Green Violet-eared (*Colibri thalassinus*).

The most aggressive and territorial species at the site, the Fiery-throated Hummingbird, dominated the feeders during the dry season. During the wet season, feeder usage was more evenly distributed across species, with the exception of the Volcano Hummingbird, which was kicked to the last place in the dominance hierarchy. Pollen loads of hummingbirds captured near feeders were low in abundance (more than 50% out of 183 hummingbirds had zero or little pollen grains), and were low in species richness (96% of the hummingbirds had pollen from only one plant species). Pollen loads increased during the dry season coinciding with peaks in flower production, although the majority of captured hummingbirds carried no pollen. This shows that sugar-water feeders congregate hummingbirds drawing them away from flowers. The competitive and antagonistic pattern observed between feeders and

flowers shows that natural pollination system are being significantly altered by the use of feeders. Supplementing hummingbirds with food seems likely to interfere with pollination networks already stressed by many anthropogenic effects, including global warming.

If you have a hummingbird feeder at home, please don't use it on a permanent basis. It is fine to watch these birds at close range, but please, don't make them addict to cheap food. Plant a hummingbird garden, or even better, go out bird watching.



Fiery-throated Hummingbird at Cerro.**

****Editor's note:**

Picture may be distorted on some computers.

Biking Poás in the name of cancer

By Adam Williams
Tico Times staff **

On Feb. 25, Ed Smit hopes that hundreds of people will hop on bikes and ride to the top of the Poás volcano eight times.

He understands that the goal is lofty and that enticing people to bike up and down the 2,708-meter high volcano eight times on a Saturday morning might be a difficult sell.

But Smit is optimistic. He's seen thousands of riders, from novices to professionals, annually scale the 1,950-meter Alpe d'Huez, a famed French mountain in the central Alps, six times in a single day.

According to Smit, the motivation for the riders to brave the grueling trek up the L'Alpe d'Huez, which is often featured in the Tour de France, is the fight against cancer. For six years now, thousands of Dutch riders have ascended the mountain to raise money and awareness for cancer.

"Cancer is a disease that affects all of us," Smit said in an interview with The Tico Times. "Almost everyone has someone in their family or among their friends that has had cancer or is currently fighting it. The more money that can be raised for research and treatment, the larger the number of lives that will be saved."

The idea of biking up mountains for cancer was born in 2005, when Peter Kapitein, a Dutch man who'd competed in over 200 triathlons, was diagnosed. At age 44 and in excellent shape, Kapitein learned he had a cancerous mutation in his lymph nodes. He was told that, while the cancer could be treated, it would never completely go away.

After undergoing treatments that nearly killed him in 2005, Kapitein decided that his will to live would be fueled by his two young children.

"I was diagnosed in 2005 and had my first round of treatments. In 2006, the cancer returned," Kapitein said at a presentation at the Costa Rican Embassy in Holland

last month. "I realized the cancer would never go away, but decided that I could never ever quit. I have two children, and I'm determined to see them grow up."

Fueled by his motivation to "never ever quit", which he said sounds like a line from a "truly awful B movie", in 2006, Kapitein and 66 riders decided to ride Alpe d'Huez six times in a single day.

"His doctors told him that his fight against cancer could not be won, so he set out to do something that seemingly could not be done," Smit said. "He picked one of the most difficult mountains in the Tour de France and said 'the professionals climb it once, so we should climb it six times in one day.' He did so to show people what it was like to suffer with cancer every day. People that bike the mountain suffer that day so that they can empathize with cancer patients."

After the 2006 ride in France, in which 64 of the 66 riders completed the six trips up and down the mountain, Kapitein launched Inspire2Live, a charity organization aimed at raising funds for the fight against cancer or more specifically, to transform cancer from a lethal disease into a chronic disease within 10 years. The ride up Alpe d'Huez, which is known as Alpe d'HuZES, a Dutch play on words with the number six (zes), has become Holland's biggest charity foundation. In 2011, Inspire2Live's Alpe d'HuZes event earned over €20 million (over \$26 million) and had over 4,300 participants. In six years, Alpe d'HuZes has earned over \$80 million, dedicated almost entirely to cancer research.

The Birth of POCHO

As Inspire2Live has grown, so too have the events across the world. In 2012, Inspire2Live will hold eight international events to raise funds to fight cancer.

The first Inspire2Live event ever held outside of Europe will be in Costa Rica. The ascent up the Poás volcano eight

times has been dubbed POCHO or Po-8, a fusion of the words Poás and eight in Spanish, or *ocho*.

Smit and his girlfriend Renée Snijders are taking the reins to organize the POCHO event in Costa Rica. Smit, who is a Dutch citizen that has lived in Costa Rica nine years as an agronomist and runs his own company specializing in biological crop protection. Both he and Renee are active supporters of Inspire2Live and have accepted the challenge to help organizing the Costarican event.

"The event is spreading very fast in the Netherlands and has evolved from just a bike event to become a real movement," Snijders said. "It has grown a lot within Europe and we want to start shifting the movement outside of Europe. We intend to start small here but hope that the movement will catch on here as it has elsewhere."

To drum up support for POCHO, Renee and Ed have actively promoted the event at the Costa Rican Embassy the Netherlands, the Dutch Embassy in Costa Rica, the Costa Rican Institute of Sports and Recreation (ICODER), national cancer foundation Fundecancer, and several other government agencies. In November, the Costa Rican Embassy in The Hague, The Netherlands, hosted an event to announce the official POCHO kick-off.

"This initiative will bring together people living and working in The Netherlands and Costa Rica for a cause that is dear to all of us," said Jorge Urdina, the Costa Rican Ambassador to the Netherlands. "A cause like POCHO engages people in a common endeavor to put an end to suffering and improve the quality of life for those that suffer from cancer."

The fee for riders and walkers that participate in POCHO is \$100. Riders can bike individually or participate in teams or groups. Sponsors can also provide funds for riders or teams.

According to Smit, POCHO is a nationally registered foundation under the name 'Asociacion Deportiva PO-OCHO'. The long-term goal of POCHO is to generate enough funds to construct a shelter or residence for cancer patients in San José. The shelter, which will be volunteer-run, will provide a free stay for out of town patients that come to San José for treatment.

"The dream is to start our own building that will give people a place to come and sleep and eat and stay throughout their treatments," Snijders said. "Planning is for about 20 rooms, but raising that much money is still a medium-term goal that we hope can be accomplished within the next two years."

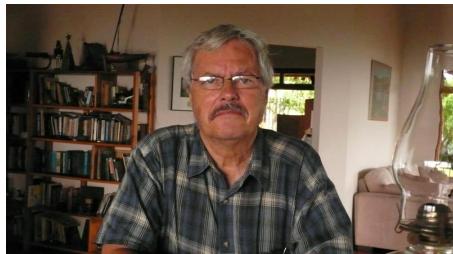
At the inaugural POCHO ride, Kapitein will visit Costa Rica for the first time to scale Poás eight times. The Calderón Guardia is forming a team, and hopefully a team of former Miss Costa Rica winners, headed by 2001 Miss Costa Rica winner Piarella Peralta, who lives in Holland, will climb the Poas. Piarella is one of the organizers of the POCHO.

On Feb. 26, a post-POCHO celebration will be held at the Jazz Café in Escazu. Costa Rican band "Son de Tiquicia" will play the event for free. The entrance fees will be fully donated to POCHO.

To participate in POCHO, prospective riders or walkers can visit www.po-8.org or call 2273-0981 (office) or 8841-8125 (cel Ed) or 8814-1323 (cel Loek) for more information.

****Editor's Note:**
This article is being
reprinted in Atenas Today with
expressed written permission from the
Tico Times and Adam Williams, the
staff writer. Loek van Mook is a
resident of Atenas.

Room for a View



by Paul Furlong
fuzzlong@gmail.com

Home Security III (Third in a four part series)

"He wishes he had never entered the funhouse. But he has. Then he wishes he were dead. But he's not. Therefore he will construct funhouses for others and be their secret operator -- though he would rather be among the lovers for whom funhouses are designed."

John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*

In the sport of Defensive Pistolcraft, there's a place called the "Funhouse." This is a carefully placed structure at a proper shooting range where all fire goes in a safe direction. It has doors, windows, stairs, and hallways...lots of holes... A contestant is given a "scenario," a whistle is blown, a stop watch is hit and the fun begins. As the shooter enters the house, he or she must take out paper targets as they move towards their objective to save the baby, the bathwater or whale. They'll be judged for speed, accuracy and tactical prowess. Also the subjective opinion of how a shooter clears a room, uses

cover, reloads or handles the unexpected... After all, it's a sport now.

Funhouses were originally designed for military and SWAT training. Our mission is the reverse... we live in the funhouse with our families, and will defend it. Bear this in mind as we move through the different rooms. Let's begin with elimination. Where don't we want Robin' Roachclip to come in?

Remember when we said to set up obstacles outside that will funnel trespassers into approaching from a few specific directions? As we walk around our houses dripping wine and turning lights on and off... there will be places where we'll sense a certain prickliness at the back of our necks, feel exposed with windows on three sides... nothing of substance to use for cover.¹ Let's listen to ourselves and not be caught there! Make sure doors to this area can't be kicked in and are always locked. A motion actuated light should go on outside as they reach the door. There should be a clear view from the road.

Are there other places we'd feel particularly disadvantaged? Let's get them covered. Is there a window we'd have to pass in front of that gives our intentions away? Test heavy curtains by lighting inside the house and dark outside. Can we be seen from outside? No? Good.

In your planning, you have directed Mr. Roachclip and company to a door that is locked, but not barred. You don't *want* them to break in here... or anywhere... but if they do, it should be where *you* choose.ⁱ

The light by the door for some reason is not working...Robin Roachclip stands in the dark catching his breath, working up his courage to kick in the door. His crew is adjusting their masks, nervously avoiding eye contact with one another. It was a terrifying trip from the gate. They want to go home...pride keeps them in place. Your quiet alarm sounded moments ago, police have been called, people in the house know a forced entry is about to happen, and take pre-determined positions. Roachclip is about to step into the most defendable part of your house...a hallway perhaps, or bathroomⁱⁱ

Hey, is there an upstairs? High ground has always been advantageous... In your house, if everyone slept upstairs, there most likely will be a stairway for armed intruders to climb... I say "armed intruders" to shatter the whimsical notion that a robbery is like a theft, let's say, of a laptop at a party or a purse off a chair.

If we're at the end of a hall, and they've come up the stairs... we have cover, opportunity and advantage over them... but what will we use to stop them? A kick, a stick...a duck an' a tuck, hit-'em in the head an' pray for luck? Mace in the face...race to the place... and what, hide in a stupid closet?ⁱⁱⁱ

It is this very moment we need to think about.^{iv}

If you haven't thought it out and made certain decisions beforehand, the one's you make under attack will be wrong.

Okay, your yard alone should have kept them out. You could have activated the external alarm and had a team of B52s over the house... You've done everything right, you're unattractive to rob... your house too visible, no place to hide outside and they can't see what you're doing inside. But life is funny... let's just pretend the dog's out drinking, the Geese took flight, or unlikely as it may seem, ICE has a "moment," and the lights go south.^v

...'Cause here come ugly Roachclip and his crew... masks, tattoos, fancy sneakers and guns drawn. The confidence they show is from their victims rolling over begging not to be hurt. Yes, rolling over and selling their dream homes to go back where they came from. Why would we do that?

With training, fear can quickly be toggled into anger, useful in a fight. The label on the switch? Indignation.

Alertness will give you warning; decisiveness will give you a proper course of action and if that course is counter attack, carry it out with everything you have. BE Angry! They're in YOUR HOUSE... what are they *doing* there?!

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Next month for Security IV, as we end this series, we'll summarize what we've discussed and stand back for a better view of our responsibility to ourselves our family and our neighbors.

For comments, declarations of love or poison pal letters, I can be reached at Fuzzlong@gmail.com

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ⁱ "Cover" is something bullet proof to hide behind. A concrete wall or column, a 3 inch Oak Table (on its side), 3 feet of water, a tree will stop a bullet. Sofas, chairs, wooden doors, car doors, or promises of love forevermore will not stop a bullet if it's a major caliber and sufficiently well aimed. History is full of exciting exceptions to these rules.

ⁱⁱ Moral and Legal Proviso: Never in this series will I recommend or imply unwarranted violence. You must feel that "your life is in mortal danger or of being maimed." This includes defense of family

and friends in your house or on your property. No electric or mechanical traps may be set that someone may step into, i.e. bear traps or lethal fencing. "Leading robbers to an area that allows you more defensive control" still leaves them alive and well until they show weapons or otherwise threaten violence. However, if this happens, proper response is to counterattack with all the violence you can bring to bear...

ⁱⁱⁱ Old time bathrooms were great. If alone, lock the door, jump in that old cast iron bulletproof tub and tell 'em to "take the damn TV, but if you come in here, I'm going to shoot!" This assumes you don't want your damn TV...

^{iv} A Gun is the only thing that will make most of us equal to armed robbers. A man or woman with training will survive four robbers with guns and no training. A 98 pound woman defending her home can be a terrible and decisive deterrent to armed robbery.

^v In fact, it was your decision to resist being a victim that got you here. This decision must be made in *advance and revisited often*. What's a camera or drug snorting dog going to do for you but cost money and get in the way of a good time?

^{vi} A good case for battery powered emergency lights that face in the direction Roachclip will be coming from, i.e., right in his eyes.

Cathy S. Lindenberg, longtime friend of the Atenas community, has submitted information on TeenSmart International/Joven Salud, an online free teen health promotion program for youth from 10 to 24, an important segment of our population. *Atenas Today* will seek to interview the Executive Director for a future article but in the meantime, we are publishing TeenSmart's information on what they are currently doing through public/private sector alliance. An ad for bilingual translators can be found in the Classified pages of this month's issue.-editor

Joven Salud/TeenSmart Initiative:

An online service that promotes adolescent health by harnessing the power of the Internet and cell phone technology

What is Joven Salud/TeenSmart? Joven Salud/TeenSmart is a bilingual (Spanish/English) interactive online service for youth 10 to 24 years of age, created to help adolescents develop the knowledge, skills and motivation to live healthier, more effective and satisfying lives. The underlying philosophy is one of self-care and self-empowerment. This service is being created through the efforts of a public-private alliance (see www.jovensalud.net).

Why is Joven Salud/TeenSmart needed?

Adolescence provides a window of opportunity to influence the development of life-long habits for healthy living. Six common risk behaviors contribute to 75% of the cost of illness and death among adolescents in Latin America and the United States. These behaviors are: self-inflicted or accidental injuries (accidents, violence, suicide, bullying); tobacco, alcohol and drug use; risky sexual behaviors (RSB) that lead to sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy; lack of physical exercise; and poor nutritional habits (CDC, UNICEF, WHO). For the most part, these behaviors are established during adolescence, persist into adulthood and are all theoretically preventable.

The financial and social costs associated with these behaviors, not only during adolescence but also later in life as adults, are staggering for governments and society. We believe that investments in programs to prevent high-risk behaviors in the early stages of an adolescent's development can provide human and economic benefits which far exceed the costs.

What are the key online services available?

1. *How healthy are you?* Brief interactive questionnaires (health, risk, and resilience profiles) that allow adolescents to identify specific risk and protective factors in their lives. Individual and aggregated results are available immediately.
2. *Virtual consultation:* Interactive professional consultation and referral email service that allow adolescents an opportunity to ask health questions and receive answers confidentially and anonymously.
3. *Health topics Encyclopedia.* Brief and factual health information of interest to young people and other carefully selected adolescent health-related internet links.

4. *Community Health Resource Directory:* Names addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses,

and websites of organizations and institutions that deliver health services or support to young people.

5. *Information Bulletin:* An announcement space for communicating events and information of special interest to adolescents.

6. *Inform Yourself/Help Yourself: Interactive E learning courses:* The 14-module course "Smart Choices! Smart Life!" is the foundation of the Interactive courses. It focuses directly on prevention of six risk behaviors and the development of life skills. Other courses emphasize leadership and/or specific areas such as violence prevention, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and teen pregnancy prevention.

The Joven Salud/TeenSmart educational materials and methods combine cutting edge health promotion science information with life skills training and practice. These materials and methods have been developed through a series of evidenced-based research studies and work with teenagers and young adults in community and school settings in Central America and in the United States. An online evaluation monitoring system permits continuous monitoring of use, satisfaction and tracks teens knowledge, attitudes and health behaviors to assure evidenced-based continuous improvement of best practices.

The Vision: Where will these services be available?

: Through a public/private sector alliance, our goal is to provide these online adolescent health promotion services for free to all teens, in all computer labs in schools, colleges and public libraries, internet cafés and on any computer with an Internet connection. These services will be supplemented and reinforced by cell phone technology. Initially the services will be available in Costa Rica with coverage extended incrementally to Nicaragua. Subsequently we plan to extend the service to the rest of Central America and ultimately the Americas.

Who is sponsoring this initiative? An international alliance of public and private sector partners including: **government organizations** such as the Ministries of Health and Social Security, Ministries of Public Education, Ministries of Science and Technology; **private sector partners** such as nonprofits focusing on health and education such as Fundación Omar Dengo (FOD), TeenSmart International (TSI), Fundación Uno, and Acción Social; as well as a **conglomerate of private businesses for social responsibility**, sponsored by the Asociación de Empresarios para el Desarrollo (AED), as well as **political and technical support** of WHO/PAHO and UNICEF and others.

What has been achieved to date? There are two service delivery models currently being used and tested. Both service delivery models permit continuous monitoring of use, satisfaction and outcomes, to assure evidence-based best practices. The first is an Institutional Service Delivery Model (ISDM). Over the last six years, TeenSmart International has collaborated with more than 25 youth development organizations in Nicaragua and Costa Rica (e.g., public schools and libraries, church and community-based youth organizations) to provide interactive adolescent health promotion services via the Internet, integrating these virtual methods and materials directly into existing curriculum and activities. This ISDM trains and uses adolescent and faculty leadership teams in each institution to schedule and monitor access to weekly computer time for each participating teen and reinforces teaching and learning with face-to-face classes.

The second delivery model is an Adolescent Market Driven Model (AMDM) that provides access to the online adolescent health promotion services for free to any youth between the ages of 10 to 24 with access to a networked computer. This model is currently being sponsored and made available in one province of Costa Rica (San Ramon) through a public-private partnership which engages community-based private and public sector organizations and leaders. Existing public schools' and local Internet Cafés' computer laboratories are made available to teens on the weekends and wireless access to the Internet is available in the local town church and plaza square. Teens learn about and use these free services through the support of community-based organizations and through viral distribution and word of mouth.

We are looking for development and financial partners to work with us in:

1. Expanding the reach of our services and making these services free of charge in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.
2. Taking best practices from Costa Rica and Nicaragua and expanding these services to the other countries of Central America and beyond.
3. Developing a financially sustainable delivery model that will make these services available and free to all teens.

In summary, we want to develop and implement a financially sustainable service delivery model that can scale up and make these evidenced-based adolescent health promotion services accessible to all youth between 10-24 years free of charge.

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clindenb@u.washington.edu

Results of Reader Poll: Name your favorite restaurant



The results of the poll conducted in October/November for our readers' favorite restaurants are in! Take a look and see if your favorite is included.

IN ATENAS:

FIRST PLACE : ANTAÑOS

SECOND PLACE: LA TROCHA DEL BOYERO

THIRD PLACE: LAS TRES HERMANAS

TIED FOR FOURTH: LA TRILLA, RANCHO GUANACASTE

ALSO MENTIONED: ALIDA'S, BALCON DEL CAFÉ, COLINAS DEL SOL, DON YAYO,
EL MEJOR CLIMA#2 (BY THE FLASHING LIGHT) LA CARRETA,
JALAPEÑOS, LA FIESTA DE LAS PUPUSAS,
TADEO BAR & RESTAURANT, TIO MANO

IN THE REGION

LA GALERIA, GRECIA **

LA CASA DEL VINO, LA GARITA

NELSON'S, GRECIA

JALAPEÑOS IN ALAJUELA

IN THE COUNTRY

SAN JOSE: GRANO DE ORO

ESCAZU: IL POMODORO

TARCOLES: COCODRILLO

ESTERILLAS: LOS ALMENDROS

MACHU PICHU

INKA GRILL

TIN JO

OLIO

** My mother-in-law, my husband and I went to the BCR in Grecia to renew her residence card. We stopped for lunch at La Galería prior to our appointment.

Although it is more expensive than some of the other restaurants listed here, the atmosphere, the service and the generous portions of the delicious food more than made up for it.

We will be returning and highly recommend it.

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.



Sun, Sky, Sea

Al Alexander
jeanandal@gmail.com



"Heading Out"

Acrylic done on watercolor paper

Dragonfly Animal Portraits
www.dianamiskell.com
<http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>



Sunset, Flamingo Beach

Alice Constantine

www.aliceartworks.com

Gerardo Avalos' Portraits.

I like portrait painting. Here is a sample of what I do using pastels and water colors. Hope you will enjoy them.



Tamales...



by Marietta Arce
marietta_arce@yahoo.com

For the last decade or so, I have been ordering my Christmas tamales from a neighbor. I would supply the extra ingredients that my mother's recipe called for (olives, prunes and garbanzos) and my neighbor would work her magic in the kitchen and deliver my tamales in time for my guests on Christmas Day.

Last year, my neighbor's daughter confided to me that her mother was turning down orders, finding herself too busy with just the amount she needed to make for their ever-growing family. I have to admit, her batter (masa) is unequaled and I found myself dreading a future without it!

I have been swamped this month with all kinds of social and community engagements. One major activity was working with the Municipality on the logistics of setting up the vendors in the park prior to the Festival of Lights: Atenas Se Ilumina. As often happens, emergencies and last-minute changes come up and I found myself running around most of that morning.

Anyone who has spent time with me knows that I become cranky and scattered (yes, more than usual!) when I am hungry. I suppose I gave off some signals because one of the vendors in the park offered me a tamale and coffee during my short stop at her stand. Since the last few years have found me eating only the tamales my neighbor made, I wasn't sure what to expect. In the end, hunger won out and I sat and gratefully ate what was offered to me.

The first bite tasted wonderful and as I eagerly consumed my 'snack', I began to contrast and compare. I began to ask many questions and my friend generously shared her tricks and suggestions when I unthinkingly boasted that I would be making my own tamales this season! I heard it before I knew I said it! At the time, (probably because my hunger was gone) I felt confident that this was an easy and manageable task. After all, cooking has always been enjoyable and Christmas cooking is something I look forward to.

I read recently that it takes 10,000 hours of doing anything to acquire expertise at whatever it is. Prior to attempting to make my own tamales, I had zero hours of doing it. The most I ever did was put one together with my mother (she made the batter) and my children, just so they could experience a fun activity. I paid scant attention to how my mother made her 'masa', but her tamales turned out pretty well and she was not the best cook on the planet, so how hard could it be, *really*?

Although I had enlisted my daughter's help with this project and she had agreed, an opportunity to spend the week at the beach was offered to her which naturally beat out making tamales. My husband helped out by cutting and cleaning the leaves, slicing the carrots and red peppers, and was very supportive of this first attempt. If he was secretly worried the project would fail, he did not let on and I am grateful for that.

My first batch of ten tamales was close to a disaster: I forgot to put in the meat and the batter was dense. My second batch was slightly better, the meat was in, the batter was lighter but my amateur tying resulted in some tamales opening during the boiling part! In addition, batter needed more seasonings. I never thought this was going to be so difficult.

I am embarrassed to admit I have searched for a fool-proof recipe on a Costa Rican cooking blog. Tomorrow, I will spend the day making tamales. I will not give up! However, I don't think I will be ready to market and distribute my particular line of tamales for some time to come. Costa Rican cooks: you have nothing to worry about!

Have a wonderful Holiday Season and Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2012!



TECH TALK

by Gordon Klatt

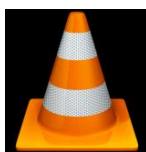
Created in 1991 by Adobe Systems, the Portable Document Format, or PDF, has

become the de facto standard for printable documents on the web as well as document distribution across platforms. All you need to view a .pdf document is Adobe's free Reader. But what about creating a .pdf document? Apple's OS X gives users the ability to create .pdf files via a print dialog, but the Windows OS does not provide for .pdf file creation. Windows users can only create .pdf files using an application, such as Microsoft Office, version 2007 and later, or OpenOffice.

Bullzip PDF Printer is a free application that creates .pdf documents from any Windows application that has a print option. It works by creating a virtual printer in the operating system that prints to a .pdf file instead of a printer. Last week I needed to send an Amazon.com invoice to JetBox, my package delivery service here in Costa Rica. I accessed the invoice at the Amazon web site, chose 'Print' in the browser menu, then selected 'Bullzip PDF Printer' as the printer in the print dialog box. Easy. To learn more, or to download Bullzip PDF Creator, click [here](http://www.bullzip.com/).

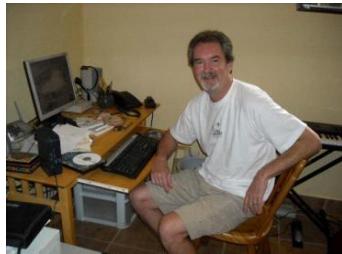
<http://www.bullzip.com/>

Apple's QuickTime player and Microsoft's Windows Media Player don't play all types of multimedia files, so the installation of additional players is often necessary. Want to play a .mov file on your PC, you'll need QuickTime. Real Media file? You'll need the Real Player. How about .mp4, .mpeg, .mkv, .avi, DivX?



VLC Player, from VideoLAN, is a free, open source, cross-platform media player that plays most multimedia files. It runs on Windows, Mac OS X, iOS, Android, and several Linux versions. You can download VLC Player [here](http://www.videolan.org/).

<http://www.videolan.org/>



I've been scanning and editing some old photos lately, and here are some programs that have been helpful.

VueScan, from Hamrick Software, helped breathe new life into my old Epson scanner. When I switched to Windows 7, I found my scanner wouldn't work because a new driver wasn't available from Epson. Luckily, I found VueScan, which in addition to being a great scanning program, has a number of drivers for older scanners. Features include OCR, multi-format output (.jpg, .pdf, .tif), batch photo processing, and multi-page scans. Available in Standard and Pro versions, \$39.95 and \$79.95. Windows, OS X, and Linux. You can download a trial version [here](http://www.hamrick.com/).

<http://www.hamrick.com/>

Adobe PhotoShop Elements 10 is a scaled down version of Adobe's hugely popular PhotoShop. Its user interface isn't quite as intimidating, but it still takes some time to learn some of the more advanced features. I've mostly been using the spot healing brush (great for eliminating dust and scratches, it can even repair a torn photo) which by itself is worth the \$79.95 price, and some of the basic enhancement tools. PhotoMerge creates HDR images from up to 10 auto-bracketed photos. You can learn more, and download a 30 day trial [here](http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-premiere-elements.html). Windows and OS X.

<http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-premiere-elements.html>

Topaz Laps has a series of image-editing plug-ins that function within Adobe PhotoShop and PhotoShop Elements. I'll be writing more about them in future editions of Atenas Today. If you'd like to learn about them now visit their web site.

<http://www.topazlabs.com/>

If you have a question, or suggestion for a future column, send me an email at gklatt@live.com.

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 therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share.

Bolley Buzz	bcrcoffee.com
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica	delapuravida.com
Fabulista De Costa Rica	fabulistadecr.blogspot.com
The Very Worst Missionary	theworstmissionary.com
Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/
Mi Chunche	michunche.com
New Life in Costa Rica	http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/
Pura Vida Mommy	puravidamommy.blogspot.com
Rubiatica	rubiatica.blogspot.com
Somewhere In Costa Rica	http://somewhereincostarica.com
The Real Costa Rica	blog.therealcostarica.com
The View From Here	theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com
Claudia Leon	http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/ http://straightline-cmk1.blogspot.com/
Going Like Sixty	goinglikesixty.com
Lois and Jim Craft	adventurecraft.blogspot.com
Dovile Vaigauskaite	www.powerofindividual.org
Diane Miskell	http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com
Marietta Arce	http://marisundays.wordpress.com

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For further information, contact Alice Constantine at 2446-3783 or aliceconstantine@live.com



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FEBRUARY 12, 2012



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A nonprofit organization that harnesses the power of the Internet to provide adolescent health education services to youth and family development organizations who seek to improve the health, education and well being of youth.

TeenSmart International Seeks Volunteer Translators

Job Requirements:

- Able to translate from English into Spanish or from Spanish into English
- Able to write well
- Access to computer and Internet services

Interested persons should contact clindenb@u.washington.edu or call for more information 8837 6478 or 2433 1023 in Costa Rica, Central America.

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Atenas Today is sent out monthly to over 400 email addresses of people who live or vacation in the Atenas area. Display ads up to half a page in size cost \$20 per insertion; full page ads are \$35 per insertion. Ads in the Atenas Today Yellow Pages cost \$5 per month for one column by one inch, and \$10 per month for one column by two inches.

Advertisers should send the copy via email to atenastoday@gmail.com, with pictures attached as separate files. We will compose the ad and send back a proof for approval. The deadline for material for that month's issue is the 15th of the month.

Payment can be made in any of the following ways:

- 1) deposit to BCR Account No. 962-0003149-6 Marietta Arce Valverde
- 2) deposit to Paypal account of Marietta Arce (marietta_arce@yahoo.com)
- 3) cash in envelope in PO Box 65 (Marietta Arce Valverde) in Atenas.

In all cases be sure to include your name and what the money is for.