

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

Issue No. 120

December 23, 2014



December Toucan
Photograph: Judy Timson

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

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



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DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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

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

Publisher's Note



Welcome to the last 2014 issue of *Atenas Today*. It has been a fast-paced, powerful and revitalizing year, although I also met with challenges, which included the loss of people dear to me.

I am excited about 2015! I feel immensely pleased and thankful for our growing list of contributors in the form of artists and columnists. After each month's publication, subscription requests increase. This positive feedback confirms my belief that most of us want to be connected to a community (even a digital one) rather than just be living in a place we don't feel part of.

The days that follow will be filled with fun activities for all of us. Although I don't miss the cold weather, I do become nostalgic when I remember walking the streets of New York and looking at the lavishly decorated trees and store window displays while enjoying the aroma of the chestnuts roasting in a vendor's cart in Manhattan. Luckily for me, I can ask my children to venture out and take lots of pictures!



Bing.com royalty free picture of Chestnut vendor in New York

The early part of December brought the Festival of Lights to Atenas for the 7th time. It was a terrific display of talent, music and fireworks, which I was very happy to witness up close. Su Espacio's Angel party brought gifts and happiness to over 300 children; the Friends of Animales of Atenas hosted their first annual Christmas Fiesta to raise funds to help our furry friends; and the women of AMASIA held a workshop on making tamales, which was instructive, and lots of fun. The new gas station in Rio Grande has finally opened, providing residents and visitors another option during the coming high season. It has been a very busy year!

A special thank you to all the advertisers and to you, our loyal readers. It is a pleasure to serve you in Atenas, today and every day.

Happy Holidays and all the best for 2015!

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 24th – Christmas Eve, most businesses and banks close early.

Atenas New Community (in conjunction with Iglesia Bíblica) will hold their 2nd annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service at 5:30pm on Wednesday, December 24. Come one, come all for an evening of Scripture and carols in both English and Spanish as we celebrate and remember this history changing event. Iglesia Bíblica is located at the flashing light on HWY 3

December 25th – Christmas Day – Merry Christmas Everybody! – National Holiday

December 26th – Boxing Day Observed by Canada and Commonwealth Nations

December 26th – Kwanzaa begins, ends January 1st

December 31st – New Year's Eve – businesses close early

January 1st, 2015 – Happy New Year – National Holiday

January 6th – Three Kings Day – Epiphany – Marks the end of Christmas

January 19th – Martin Luther King Day is Observed in U.S.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

Every Tuesday: Atenas Bridge Club meets at Don Yayo's Restaurant . 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

Every Wednesday: At noon (Please confirm with Michele Clutter 2446-0664)

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

Second Wednesday of each month: The Costa Rica Writers Group meets at noon at Colinas del Sol Hotel in Boqueron. For more details contact Larry Rusin at crcaseyboy@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:

Tuesday - 6pm - Bible study in English.

Wednesday - 6pm - English worship service

1st Sunday of each month - an English translator is provided for the 9:00am Spanish worship service (after 1st Sunday service many of the ex-pats gather at Don Yayo's to eat lunch together.)

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

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

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

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

Atenas Yoga Center




Improve balance, strength and flexibility. Reduce physical and mental stress. Join our weekly classes at Atenas Yoga center and make yoga part of your healthy lifestyle.

Classes are for all levels. BEGINNERS are WELCOME at any class!!

Class Schedule

Mondays	9:00 AM – 10:15 AM	Hatha Yoga with Leah
Tuesdays	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Hatha/Vinyasa Flow with Anna
Tuesdays	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Therapeutic Yoga with Anna
Tuesdays	6:00 PM – 7:15 PM	Hatha/Vinyasa Flow with Clara*
Wednesday	9:00 AM – 10:15 AM	Hatha Yoga with Leah
Wednesday	4:00 AM – 5:15 AM	Men's Yoga with Leah
Thursday	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Hatha/Vinyasa Flow with Anna
Thursday	6:00 PM – 7:15 PM	Hatha/Vinyasa Flow with Clara*
Saturdays	8:00 AM – 9:15 AM	Hatha/Vinyasa Flow with Anna

Hotel Colinas Del Sol is located in Atenas centro, about 100 meters after the main entrance of the Roca Verde neighborhood, on the left. We are in the salón de eventos



* Class taught in Spanish.

All classes are 3000 colones or US\$6

Mats can be rented for 500 colones or US\$1 Please wear loose and comfortable clothing

We also offer private sessions. Contact Us: 8660-8921 • 2446-3150 • 8928-5497

classes@atenasyoga.com www.atenasyoga.com

Atenas Yoga Center

Leah MacLauchlan
Yoga Instructor

Contact Us: 2446 3170
nomosno21@gmail.com



Atenas Yoga Center

Anna Hunt | Yoga Instructor

Contact Us: 8338 9968
classes@atenasyoga.com



TAMELA HEDSTROM

LATIN GRAMMY NOMINEE

Performing
February 8, 2015
7:00p.m
at the Atenas Chili
Fiesta- Sabana Larga

VIP- \$10,000

General- \$8,000

Atenas Ticket Sales Locations:

- Optica Centro Visual
- Kay's Gringo Postres
- Su Espacio



TAMELA HEDSTROM

NOMINADA DE LOS LATIN GRAMMY

EN CONCIERTO

DOMINGO 08 DE FEBRERO

7:00pm | SALÓN DE EVENTOS
SABANA LARGA, ATENAS
www.atenaschilifiesta.com





Carta de Navidad

Dear Friends and Family Near and Far,

I'm staring out my kitchen window, eyes full of Costa Rican Christmas - I see Doña Betty's Portal reaching from the outskirts of Bethlehem to a lonely manger under the brightest star on the horizon. I see Pasada Navidad flowers growing into the blue above the casita across the lane, puffs of white cloud and a toucan calling for a mate in the wind. It's hot. The palm trees are full of purple berries. There are no Christmas trees here on my street, Quintas don Pepe, in Santa Eulalia. No Christmas trees, no snow or dark, dark green. We're a long way from Kansas, Toto!

Pero sin embargo, it is clearly the season of sharing, of giving, of Christmas! Neighbors bringing tamales. Envelopes with cash trading hands. And it's the season of Christmas letters! Our Atenas Chili Fiesta Family wants to shout out to old friends and new - Merry Christmas! - Happy New Year! - and see what this year has brought!

Last year's Chili Cook-Off on the first Sunday after the Super Bowl 2014, had over 2000 paid attendees between 11 - 4, and raised over \$30,000. With this money we were able to support Hogar de Vida in almost finishing the secure fence around their beautiful property and installing an electric gate. I was saddened when Helen Smith of Hogar told me about the robberies of computer equipment and building supplies that have occurred over the past several years at Hogar. We are very glad to have made contributions that protect the safety of all 35 kids and their Tias. This has been a several year project for the Chili Cook-Off.

And while there may be a little bit of the security wall waiting to be finished, we will be raising money this year for a new administrative/regulatory wrinkle facing our local children's home in 2015. PANI (the children's organization in Costa Rica) requires

building codes. That's the most important item on their Christmas wish list. Then any remaining monies collected from the ACF 2015 will be used to complete the security fence that was almost completed in 2014.

The 2014 Chili Cook-Off at Romavista had a wonderful "Ladies Who Lunch" flavor, a warm afternoon at the local country club feel. Kids splashing in the pool sounds in the background, hamburgers grilling while we stood in long lines, white tablecloths and guys in Hawaiian shirts. This year, in our new location at Sabana Larga, we are attempting something new & grand, something more akin to a State Fair or a Tope.

This year we are having a *Celebration*:

A Celebration is an active state, an act of expressing reverence or appreciation ... a Celebration is a confrontation, giving attention to the transcendent meaning of one's actions"

- the Wisdom of Heschel (Happy Chanukah!)

We Chili Fiesta planners approach next year's Fiesta having put our attention to the transcendent meaning of the Chili Fiesta; honoring values of charity and community. We want to grow them both in our hearts and across all of Atenas. So we've moved our party to Sabana Larga, a bigger venue with room for all of us at once. Room for all of our community to participate in our Chili Cook-Off contest and listen to live music outside while kids get their hair braided and faces painted, horses dance and ponies give rides. Room for several restaurants as well as food stands, a beer garden, a Chocolate Casita, and maybe sausages on sticks (please implore Marcial!). A FOOD TRUCK with ribs! Room for lots of Multi-Culti entertainment, including:

- Universidad Técnica Nacional students perform with lassos
- Don Alberto with two styles of equine performance, the Spanish High Step & Free Rein
- The **Mamón-Chinos** play Classic Rock
- **The Sugarland Brass Company** plays Cab Calloway, Louis Prima & Louis Armstrong tunes mashed up with some Latin rhythms
- **VocesDuo**, musicians Lorenzo & Jonathan Vargas from Atenas
- Country Line Dance & Latin Dance lessons
- BINGO! With really cool PRIZES!

Yes! This is going to be big fun! And in the evening, for the first time, we are throwing a special concert, like an "after-hours" show almost. The concert features **Tamela Hedstrom**, a bilingual singer born in Sweden who grew up here in Costa Rica. She has been nominated for a Latin Grammy for her song "¡**Acércate!**" recorded with **Son de Tikizia**, also of CR. Her exposure to a variety of international cultures has clearly shaped her music, which combines elements of Latin, pop, soul, and funk. She will bring her band and have the joint jumpin' and us all out of our seats and bouncing onto the

dance floor! Tickets went on sale the 12th of December, but you can still buy them in Atenas at Kay's, El Balcón and Optica Centro Visual, at Jalapeños in Alajuela, and Uncle Earl's Fine Meats in Escazu. Are we holding any tickets back for same day sales on site? Yo no se.



So come and join us the first Sunday after the Super Bowl, February 8th, 2015. We are All About the Kids! And we are more deeply all about Charity and Community. Come join us!

If you'd like to volunteer, contact Dina Duffy by email dinad54@gmail.com. Because we are taking on so much, we can use your help! And because we are throwing a giant *Celebration*, please encourage ALL your neighbors to come. We are so looking forward to celebrating together!

With ALL good wishes for you and yours,

Bonnie
& the Atenas Chili Fiesta team

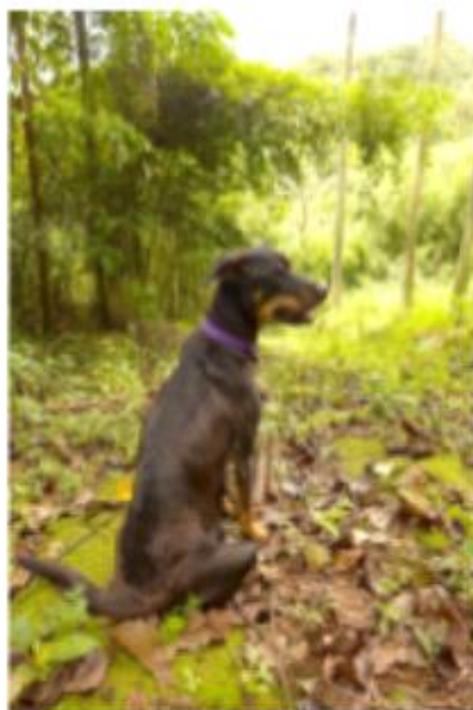


DOG AND CAT OF THE MONTH



Fundación Animales de Atenas e Animales Abandonados
Animals Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals
Calle Puntilla # 4-106-542026
ATENAS de Requena - COSTA RICA

DEAR NEGRA



Negra is a mid sized Doberman mix. This female of 2-3 years of age was roaming around the Chinese Dam Project in Balsilla-a popular location to dump unwanted pets ...Obviously it annoyed her irresponsible original owners when she was pregnant, because they chose to get rid of their 'problem'. With the help of a Chinese worker, she gave birth in the street to 9 adorable puppies. After a short time she and her new-born babies were unwelcome and in danger to be 'eliminated.' The worker and a Tica cook on site sought help from us-and, by a miracle, an excellent foster place was found for all 10! Of them together. All of Negra's puppies are already adopted into good homes. Now is Negra's turn-meantime spayed-to get a new home.

Since the foreign foster family moves on soon, a solution must be found as soon as possible-maybe even a new foster place, if no loving forever family shows up soon. Negra is a very quiet, affectionate and gentle dog. However she is alert and reports strangers, but she remembers people she has already met and greets them kindly. A fantastic dog-and yet our emergency! Anyone out there who has a heart for our dear Negra? PLEASE!!

SOCIAL ELIOT

Eliot is a male cat, about 10 months old and already neutered. Poor Eliot has already suffered a lot of pain in his young life. He was found severely injured in Barrio Fatima. It seems a heartless sick two legged creature—we should not overburden the words 'human' or 'person'

In this case inflicted injuries with scissors or a knife. Entirely traumatized by this aggression as he was, a compassionate woman picked him up and brought him to Dora. In the meantime, he has become a very social little guy, who gets along well with other cats and dogs and has regained confidence into humans. He now needs a family or person that is worthy of his trust and makes him forget his past. Is it YOU?



ANIMALES ATENAS FOSTER PROGRAM

702 spayed or neutered animals last year

300 animals adopted

Atenas does not have a shelter for the many homeless and abandoned pets in the Atenas area. Animales Atenas is seeking foster homes for kittens, puppies and adult dogs. The foster program focuses on providing temporary housing for the many animals in need! Foster volunteers open their homes and hearts to animals requiring extra attention and care, including those who are too young for adoption, require socialization and or need medical care. Animales Atenas provides all vet care costs. Donations of food, treats, toys and litter are available free to foster parents. All foster parents are invited to showcase their animals on Friday mornings and other events. The foundation always needs supporters and volunteers to assist with transportation, for example bringing and picking-up animals to/from the vet, new homes and moving donated items to our weekly sale next to Pali Grocery.

www.AnimalesAtenas.com and Facebook-[Animales Atenas](#)-provide our internet presence and photos of adoptable pets.

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

Sylvia [Snix](#), Myrna Kastner

TOAD (BUFO) POISONING

When people see their pet obviously distressed, they commonly think their pet is snake bitten. Since our hairy friends can not talk, here is the difference between a toad poisoning and snake envenomation.

Commonly, pit-viper bites show some kind of swelling and often one or two visible punctures showing some drops of blood in the area. The pet will be in obvious pain, maybe limping if the bite is on the leg. This is because of the hemotoxic properties. Generally speaking the effects of snake bite can last several days. While the neurotoxic properties of toad poison (assuming the animal survives) is actually short lived and breaks down in about 2 to 5 hours. However, if they have ingested a lot of toad poison, they can die very quickly.

You won't see any visible swelling or bloody puncture wounds. A cat (and this is actually rare in cats because they do not tend to bite the toad as readily as a dog, they tend to swat them with their paws, which seldom irritates the toad to excrete the poison). The dog will foam at the mouth visibly or only slightly. Vomiting is next as they ingest the poison. The hind limbs may show some paralysis and trembling and become rigid. They drop to the ground and lose the ability to walk. They may lose control of the bowels and bladder as the paralysis advances. The final stage which can end in death; teeth clinched together as well as convulsions and cardiac arrest. If the dog got a large dose of the milky substance this can take place rapidly.

As soon as possible remove the substance from the teeth and gums with a wet cloth of soda water or water. Tilt the dogs head down so fluids can run out of the mouth. Take care not to allow fluids down the throat. Scrub the tongue, teeth, tongue and inside the cheeks. Rinse with soda water if available. A simple rinse of the mouth will not do the trick.

Go to a veterinarian immediately. Keep the pet cool

SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF TOAD ENCOUNTER:

1. Toads are nocturnal, and so are many pit-vipers, though it is not unheard of for a dog to dig a toad up from its sleeping place during the day. Minimize your pets activities outside at night.
2. When you see large toads go out with a flashlight at night and gather them up then transport them to a lake off your property.

BY: Gloria Dempsey, zoologist, Nuevo Arenal, Costa Rica

gdemzool@yahoo.com The following books are in English and Spanish

Author of 'HOW TO KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY IN COSTA RICA '

'HOW TO RECOGNIZE VENOMOUS SNAKES OF COSTA RICA'

EMAIL kastnerm@hotmail.com for a copy

- DORA TEL.8855-9822 PRESIDENT (ESPAÑOL)
- SYLVIA TEL.8868-1386 SECRETARY(ES,EN,DEUTSCH)
- ANIMALESATENASCR@AOL.COM
- EDDIE TEL 8308-8485 VOLUNTEER (ES,EN)
- EDQT13@GMAIL.COM

I WANT CHICKENS

by Harriet Sheppard hweyman@gmail.com

Ok..... Please answer the following questions. Do you have a coop? Nope. Do you have some sort of roosting situation? Nope. Do you KNOW anything about chickens? Not really. Do you have dogs? Yeeess.. Well then.....

One day I drove home and there just beyond the impossible hairpin-curve that leads toward my house, was a rooster scrounging about in the yard of my neighbor, a very close neighbor. Novice that I was, even I could tell this rooster had been ousted from another chicken family as he was short, thin, and had a gaping bald spot on his head.

I was thrilled.

I raced home and put out chicken food, well a bit of left-over casserole of some sort. I don't believe it had chicken in it. I put a little water in a pie tin and placed it at the end of a path trodden by many small human feet, hoping he would find his way up to my house. The next day I checked his food supply and saw to my horror that it had been consumed by ants. (I've only lived in Costa Rica for 8 years, what did I expect?)

But I was patient. Whenever I saw him as I passed in the car, I would slow down to creeping and say quietly, "hola gallo, hola". He would pause for a millisecond then run in the opposite direction, screaming in a most blood curdling manner.

Time passed. Every once in a while I'd hear scratching and a sort of underwater gurgle in the bushes. I would stand dead still, then sneak Indian-like close to the bushes for a peek. Oh goodness, he was there in my yard. He was in my yard!

Somewhere I had heard that chickens eat eggshells. I had plenty of those so I crumpled one up and put it near his bush and left it for the day. To no avail.... The next obvious thing was bread, all birds like bread. That worked. Now I know that he likes ½ piece of bread, no more, no less, lovingly pulled into small pieces by me. He likes me to watch him eat so I observed that he seemed to choke it down. That concerned me.

My husband suggested rice, raw rice. He said they like seeds, it's a seed. Jackpot. That brown rice disappeared in a minute.

Several weeks later I heard *two* chicken noises. He had found a wife. I presumed she had made a quick regrettable decision, because he started coming up to my front door on a regular basis.

My neighbor says the rooster's wife is sitting on eggs as we speak. I'm sure she has banned him, probably seeking divorce, as every morning at 5 am he is waddling to and fro at my front door and calling for food with that lovely voice of his.

Now I'm an expert on roosters, as I am able to closely observe those in the middle of my pot-holed road which must be traveled at negative- one mile an hour. I have learned for a fact that my rooster has the most ungodly screech of them all. I'm sure his former human family was delighted to see him go.

I love him.

So there you have it. No roosting place, no coop and for some reason the dogs tolerate him. I think they are scared you-know what of him. Am I lucky or what?

Wonder what I should name him?





Tryin' to make it real II

Paul Furlong

*“Church on Sunday sleep and nod
Tryin' to duck the wrath of God
Preachers fillin' us with fright
They all tryin' to teach us what they think is right
They really got to be some kind of nut
I can't use it
Tryin' to make it real compared to what..”*

Les McCann & Eddie Harris

“The art of living... is neither careless drifting on the one hand nor fearful clinging to the past on the other. It consists in being sensitive to each moment, in regarding it as utterly new and unique, in having the mind open and wholly receptive.” Alan Watts

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Ln4xWxvo9Q

It was hot driving. A searing wind from the west whistled through our windows and parched us. We wore cutoff jeans, flip-flops and passed jugs of water that we drank and poured over our heads in an enduring fantasy of grit and road kill. This was our first day on the road together as a team. We'd left the house clean, hugged Billy one last time, and pushed “D” for Drive; we were on the road again. As traffic thinned, conversation tapered off as our excitement

vanished into wind and engine noise; the clock had stopped ticking in that high mountain desert and we were now in the *now*, I suppose in some ways, another way to say real.

Presently we came to a small gaggle of cars off to the right; I needed a break and pulled over. Stretching from the car, we saw a swimming hole with a gushing waterfall about thirty feet up coming right out the center of a huge rock bluff. Kids were swimming in the cool water below and a few families talked around their cars in the bits of shade there was. This was a true oasis; no county signs or color coordinated garbage cans; just as natural as it must have been at the end of the ice age 10,000 years ago. Interstate 25 passing by here was no accident I'm sure, and had little to do with Eisenhower's national highway system; no, some Indian scout must have found this oasis thousands of years ago and marked the trail.

Numb from the road, I sat in the sand; transfixed by the force of water crashing down from this large hole in the side of the mountain.

Suddenly a boy shot out from the hole! Not trusting myself, I watched a second and third kid, all arms and legs pumping, one by one, they were driven under by the waterfall and surfaced seconds later from the froth coughing and laughing. I had to see; asked Bonny to watch the hole! And picked my way, barefoot; up a path that stopped at a river running right into the tunnel that I presumed came out the other side. Couldn't have been two, right? I studied it. It was fast and slippery and I could see no way to ease in. Really, only way I could figure was to jump feet first and hold my breath. I'd seen the kids, right? So I took a few deep breaths and threw myself into the hole and was instantly bouncing through the slick rock. Then falling and swimming up, even before I hit the surface.

My father¹ raced all his life. When he noticed I was bent the same way, he suggested that I take only calculated risks; good advice from a man who learned the hard way.

Manitou Springs was just a name on a map to us and had no significance to its proximity to Pikes Peak. Later this would become important. We'd made Colorado and it was late afternoon and we were hungry. I swear we didn't eat in those days; I don't remember a time when we actually sat down for dinner though I'm sure we must have. There was never any money; we just ate to keep moving and put gas in the car. At the same time, I don't remember worrying about it, sitting here at my computer I'm amazed at how free we were back then.

“...compared to what?”

We'd landed in a touristy part of town, and there were shops with souvenirs and boutique stores. The sidewalks were clean and well starched police kept a sharp eye on us. We met a young man in a leg cast and I offered to paint it for him. He seemed distracted by Bonny somehow and absently said he'd love it. Bonny smiled her sweet wholesome smile and I ran to the car for my paints. We made a little circle on the sidewalk and I started to sketch something out. I hadn't gotten very far when a well starched arm suggested we move on. Not one's to give up a queen for a pawn; we exchanged apologetic smiles and found a place to park the Dart for an overnight stay. We rummaged through the car and filled my back pack with canned goods for the night and headed up a dirt road across the street. We came upon an overhang and settled under it to eat. We lit a small fire, heated some beans and passed a can of apple sauce with a spoon. Afterwards I rolled some cigarettes from my can and we relaxed, smoking around the fire with the last of Bonny's apricot brandy.

“Life exists only at this very moment, and in this moment it is infinite and eternal, for the present moment is infinitely small; before we can measure it, it has gone, and yet it exists forever....” Alan Watts (1915 - 1973)

I guess we could have curled up in our bags and gone to sleep right there, but I thought we might climb to the top for a view. Making our own trail, we climbed loose rock, sometimes near vertical inclines, backpack tugging on my shoulders with each of us handing things up to each other as we ascended this hill named Pikes Peak. Loose footing caused a few near calamities but we helped each other along until the “top” had lost its luster. We came upon an outcropping of large rocks with room to step without falling. Charley, moved with a deep bass rhythm that was always there; laid his bag along a smooth crooked stretch and Bonny and I climbed up onto a huge bolder that looked solid enough and offered a view. I suppose with the trip and the climb, (she'd saved my life once by catching my outstretched hand), and our no-pressure nearness made us friends; so it seemed only natural to make love that night under the stars.

One doesn't just drive to Denver. It begins like tributaries off a river, each one going its own way of condos, strip malls and winking lights as far as we could see. We'd come looking for work and found a phone booth at a convenience store with a book of yellow pages. Cross

referencing with our map, we found headings under topless bars, motorcycle shops, and music stores on or near Colfax Ave.

But not before we did our laundry! It was late when we came upon an all-night laundromat. I stealthily pulled the car close to the entrance and we piled out with bags of road burnt clothes. Dryers lined the walls and washers made a two row island. We read Hollywood gossip magazines while our clothes agitated for a dirt free existence. Then the only thing left were the clothes on our backs and with the dryers still sucking quarters, we took turns bathing in the lady's room while the others hid naked behind the center aisle.

It was good to be clean. We slept in the car and the next morning found Colfax Ave and a dancing job for Bonny. She would work to 2:00 a.m. five days a week.

I had with me a copy of Cycle Magazine.² They'd done six pages on my last race bike and the conversion of it into a café racer. Cycle came out in June and was still fresh in my pocket when I stopped at the 4 Season's Honda dealership and asked to see the owner. I introduced myself, apologized for my appearance and showed him the magazine. I asked him for a simple job setting up new bikes and explained that I needed to work at night because my girlfriend was a dancer and didn't finish till 2:00 a.m. This seemed reasonable to him and he gave me the keys to the warehouse a few blocks from where Bonny was working.

This was a time of transformation. Charley panhandled and became distant. There was never a romance between him and Bonny but since we'd become a couple he just drifted in and out. Bonny and I began sleeping on lawns. I closed the warehouse a little before 2:00 a.m. and walked down to meet Bonny. Lawyers and businessmen alternated their attention between those they were talking to and well-endowed women who mixed at the bar between dances. I'd give Bonny the high sign and wait in the ally. In the cool clear morning, we'd take our bags from the car and find a quiet row house lawn to spread them. It became a ritual of peeling her pasties in the wee hours; and to sing the quiet song that we sang... at every opportunity.

To be continued...

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¹ "Father," is my birth father; loved as much for his faults as for his gifts. "Dad," is my sweet step-dad, who taught me consistency by example.

² <http://kawtriple.com/mraxl/articles/h1r/h1r2.htm>

7 Things to Think About When Building In Costa Rica



by Dennis Easters easters3@msn.com

Over the past few months I have heard many people complaining about their construction projects coming in over budget. In most of these cases, the blame was being laid on the architect, contractor, or project manager. However, if you look closely at the reality of building a custom home in Costa Rica or elsewhere, you realize that custom projects will almost always cost more than you expect. It comes as a shock to most, but all those 'little' changes and upgrades add up fast!

After consulting with several 'experts' on the matter, I compiled a list of things one needs to think about when building their dream home in paradise.



1. If you have a specific or limited budget, then a custom build may not be a good option for you. Look for a pre-existing home within your budget. If the home you are going to purchase requires renovations to suit your needs, make sure you understand the costs involved prior to purchase and how they fit into your budget.
2. It is important to select a builder with whom you can communicate clearly. Ask for references. Be sure you have and understand the written contract for construction, what is included and what is not. Make sure that you can meet the payment terms and schedule in a timely fashion. Payments should be made in 'draws', not with everything being paid up front.
3. The written contract should reflect both the fixed costs and those costs that can fluctuate during the building process. Have a clear understanding of what costs are subject to change. For example, in Costa Rica, building materials can

fluctuate as much as 15% (or more) in any given year. Also, change orders have consequences. More times than not, if you change your mind about a product or have unused materials, they are non-returnable/non-refundable in Costa Rica.

4. Your builder may offer selections of hardware, cabinetry, wood, countertops, lighting, and ceiling fans, etc. Ask and understand what is included in the contracted price and what is considered an upgrade.

5. Know thyself. As a new home goes vertical, you will get many ideas for items not in the original contract. Maybe a pool or Jacuzzi starts to sound appealing. Adding a garage or carport may come to mind. There will also be the temptation to upgrade the finishes in a kitchen and baths. All are possible but will add significantly to the construction costs. It is imperative that you ask your builder about these costs prior to committing to them so that you can make a realistic decision within the confines of your budget.

6. Please keep in mind that your builder has hired a number of skilled workers who are counting on being paid for their work on a weekly basis while building your new home. Make sure you can meet the payment schedule agreed upon with your builder. If for any reason you cannot be timely with your payments, you need to let your builder know at once. Be prepared for construction to stop until you can meet your commitment. Does your contract include a penalty for not meeting your payment schedule?

7. Do not be a royal pain in the backside during the construction process. Visiting the site is permissible, but do not get in the way of the workers, or ask them questions as they are following a daily work plan. Direct any and all questions to your builder, project manager or architect. The chain of command is very important in assuring a quality end product. Please keep in mind that almost any change is possible, but all changes mean more time and often more materials will be required. Ultimately, more time and materials equate to more money spent.

Building your dream home does not have to be a nightmare. It can be quite a pleasant experience. I have been involved in construction for over 20 years, both in Florida and Costa Rica. In all those years, my projects have always come in over budget. It is a reality that comes with building your dream. When I get a quote for a project, I always tack on an additional 20% so that I can come close to the reality of what the bottom line will be ahead of time. Remember the reason you are coming to Costa Rica. Breathe deeply and enjoy the 'pura vida'!



Fun After Fifty!



By Carole Connolly

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Oooooommmmmmm!!!! Yes, Ms. Fidgety went to a yoga retreat. After about three "Oms" I was feeling the vibrations. In fact I was feeling them so strongly, I was about to spring from my mat and start doing the "Hokey Pokey"! I peeked through my closed eyes through the bottom of my lashes and saw the rest of the group, some of whom were *real* yogis and decided against it.

I had been invited to join the weekend retreat by my dear friend, Lynn when I had casually asked what she had up her sleeve for her upcoming birthday. She enthusiastically replied, "Yoga Retreat Weekend with Leah. It's my birthday and you're coming!"

Oh boy! I thought. Yoga? A whole weekend of yoga? Lynn read my mind, “Oh don’t worry, you know us - there will be plenty of party time in between sessions. The Rivera suite will be hospitality central.”

I knew about half the group from Atenas through the occasional yoga classes I attended. The beautiful and elegant Anna, was the assistant yoga instructor to lovely Leah, the yoga teacher with the lovely British accent and soothing voice. Both ladies provide a warm, inviting atmosphere in which even novice yogis, like myself, can reach a comfortable level of participation.

I packed up my yoga attire and a pair of party shoes and off we went to parts unknown. All I knew was the lodge was located somewhere in the hills south of Jacó. I had complete faith in the driver to get us there and I was enjoying *not* being in charge! I sat quietly in the back seat furiously making notes of ideas that were ricocheting in my brain regarding recent developments in my life; drastic changes were happening! I guess I really needed this retreat.

After turning off the main highway, we bumped along the dirt road leading to the lodge. I heard something about forty-five minutes... forty-five minutes? On *this* road? Say it isn’t so. One of the other passengers had a printout of the directions with a photo of the logo of the retreat spot; Macaw Lodge had a colorful sign with brilliant colored birds... well yeah, macaws (lapas). The signs were easy to spot, well placed, and thank goodness, plentiful.

After forty-four minutes of bumping along the heavily rutted road in our private van, I was getting irritated; what had I gotten myself into? Just then, we turned into a driveway and I was immediately washed with a powerful feeling of peace. The giant Fan Palms seemed to absorb my anxiety. I stopped worrying about my friends on the chartered bus we had passed at the beginning of the dirt road. It was packed to capacity with the luggage strapped to the roof and covered with sheets of plastic. As we passed them I had visions of all twenty-two of them pushing the bus up the hill. Somehow, the palms sent me a message, *Don’t worry. They will make it.* Hmmm, this yoga stuff was already working!

As we entered the Macaw Lodge, we were greeted by the general manager, Graven, and his assistant, Natalia – both of whom proved to be extraordinary in their knowledge, competence, and willingness to ensure our needs were not only met, but exceeded.

There is so much to tell about this hand-crafted Inn, I can only scratch the surface. Please go to: <http://www.macawlodge.com/> for a full description of this unique and magnificent haven. It is truly self-sustaining. The furniture in the lodge was made from wood harvested on the grounds, all meals were prepared from food grown on the property, and the most impressive polished rock that looked like marble floors and showers were created from their very own quarry. The owner and creator of this eco-lodge, Pablo Gordienko, said half-jokingly, “It would have been cheaper to go to the hardware store!”

Ah, but the beauty of it all. He is clearly dedicated to his project, and showed our group around with love and pride in his heart. I learned more in that two hour tour than in a whole semester of college biology. And to think, twenty-five years ago it was pasture land; today it looks like a story-book magical land, and he continues to improve it.

Leah, an accomplished yoga instructor, moved to Atenas twelve years ago and studied yoga instruction at the world renowned Nosara Yoga Institute, before finding her calling at the Macaw Lodge. She led us in morning and late afternoon sessions on the gorgeous polished wood

yoga platform. Her opening prayer asking us to allow our spirits to – well, I don't remember exactly what she asked our spirits to do, but whatever it was, I was deeply touched and moved to quiet tears. I closed my eyes and focused on, um, nothing. Somewhere along the line, I was told that if you saw purple, that was the highest state of being. I must have skipped some steps because, yes, folks! I saw purple. Maybe it's like the *green flash* just after sunset. I see it often and other people never see it.

On the second day of the retreat, we were all in a proper state of tranquility. We shared some nice wine with dinner, marveled at the home-grown food, discussed the loveliness of it all, and compared different methods of preparing quinoa. Then it happened! After dinner the birthday cake came out as well as the fire-water and the boom-box.

Half of the group retired for the evening; the other half went wild!



Yogis Gone Wild!

We were gently asked to leave the main lodge, so we traipsed up the hill, and I do mean HILL, to Casa Rivera, a cabin set apart from the main lodge. While it's true that not everybody in this photo is over fifty, nobody was counting that night. We danced on the balcony, sang along with the music, and were oblivious to the gardener's casita located just a few meters behind the party cabin. Luckily the bamboo posts held the balcony up, nobody fell over the railing and when the booze ran out, we all made it back to our quarters.

I was amazed at the next day's morning yoga session – *everybody* showed up. Leah, being the ever-aware and sensitive individual, started us out with an extended posture called "shavasana" also known as the "corpse" pose, for which I was grateful.



Carole Jean practicing Shavasana

As I was making my way down the path to class, Lynn sneaked up behind me and whispered, "What are you wearing?"

"My yoga outfit." I looked puzzled.

She laughed and said, "Some yoga outfit! You look like a cheerleader."

Ha! Well let's bring some spice to this yoga party! After all, I'm over fifty, so I can add a little extra spice! And you can do the same. Just do it!

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



Stories from Mr. BudBud, Primero Perro of Lighthouse Animal Rescue. They were written 10 years ago when he first came to Costa Rica for a house sitting job.

8/9/2004

Hola!!! Y'all,

We are all heading out tomorrow for Dominical!!! Mom says it is a really pretty place on the coast where a lot of the surfers go!! Also there is some property there that they want to look at.

They stayed there last year in a really pretty resort called Villas Rio Mar. Rio means river and mar means ocean. The resort is located where the river meets the ocean. Mom says there is a lot of wildlife there to see.

Mom says she has to drive over this AWFUL road on the way there cause they want Uncle Lance and Aunt Joan to see the coast. Dad says that stretch of road is ONLY four or five miles long but Mom says it seems more like five thousand miles long. She says you can average about 12 miles per hour on it. Mom HATES to go slow!!!!

She says we won't come back that way though. She absolutely refuses to drive that road twice in one year!! LOL!!!

She says we will come back over the "MOUNTAIN OF DEATH!!! Now that sounds exciting!!! Aunt Joan says she is going to take a sedative before we leave there!! LOL!!!!

Anyway, I will try to write from there but don't know if I will be able to find a place to hook up to the internet. If not, I will write when we get back here to Grecia!!

**Hasta Luego Y'all!!
BudBud the wildlife hunter!!!**

Welcoming 2015!



by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com

2013 proved to be a difficult year for me. I spent most of the year recovering from a tiny fracture in my humerus that caused me a great deal of pain, limited my movements and made me very aware of how much I take for granted regarding my health.

During 2013, our youngest child (daughter) and we were undergoing the challenging and stressful college admission process. It seems like a long time ago, that trip on the roller coaster, and I am grateful for all the wisdom and advice we received. The time has gone quickly, and our daughter has just finished her first semester of sophomore year successfully.

In 2014, I made several trips to New York, mostly to spend time with our children who are now all living there. I am amazed to see how quickly our younger two adapted to the daily grind that is New York, especially when compared with a very quiet existence they had for over a decade in Atenas.

It remains a mystery whether they will ever come back to Costa Rica to live, but I am happy that they at least have had the experience of living in this tiny jewel, and can always return if they choose to.

The last time I travelled to New York, I went with a bit of a heavy heart because I had just lost a cousin and another dear member of our family was very ill in the hospital. I remembered them both each day, saying silent prayers and cherishing the time we were able to spend together when they were healthy.

I have always been a communicator. If someone doesn't know what is on my mind, it is usually because they are not listening! On that last trip to New York, though, I began to doubt whether I had properly communicated my affection to my children. I felt my cousin's passing deeply and I was unwilling to let any more time slip by before I talked to my kids about what a gift they have been in my life.

I decided that I would make a point of setting aside some time to talk to them. One day when we were together and relaxing around the television, I began to reminisce about their childhood and all the things that we used to do. My kids were trying to watch a movie and I kept interrupting with my heartfelt emotional offerings. Suddenly, my daughter stopped the movie, looked over at her siblings and asked me: "Mom, are you dying or something?"

Her response was so spontaneous and unexpected that I burst into laughter which I could not control for a long time. When I finally caught my breath, I replied: "I suppose I will die eventually, but right now, I am feeling more alive than ever! Now get back to your movie!"

I welcome the opportunity to experience the challenges and gifts of 2015! Happy New Year to us all.

The Atenas Today Art Gallery

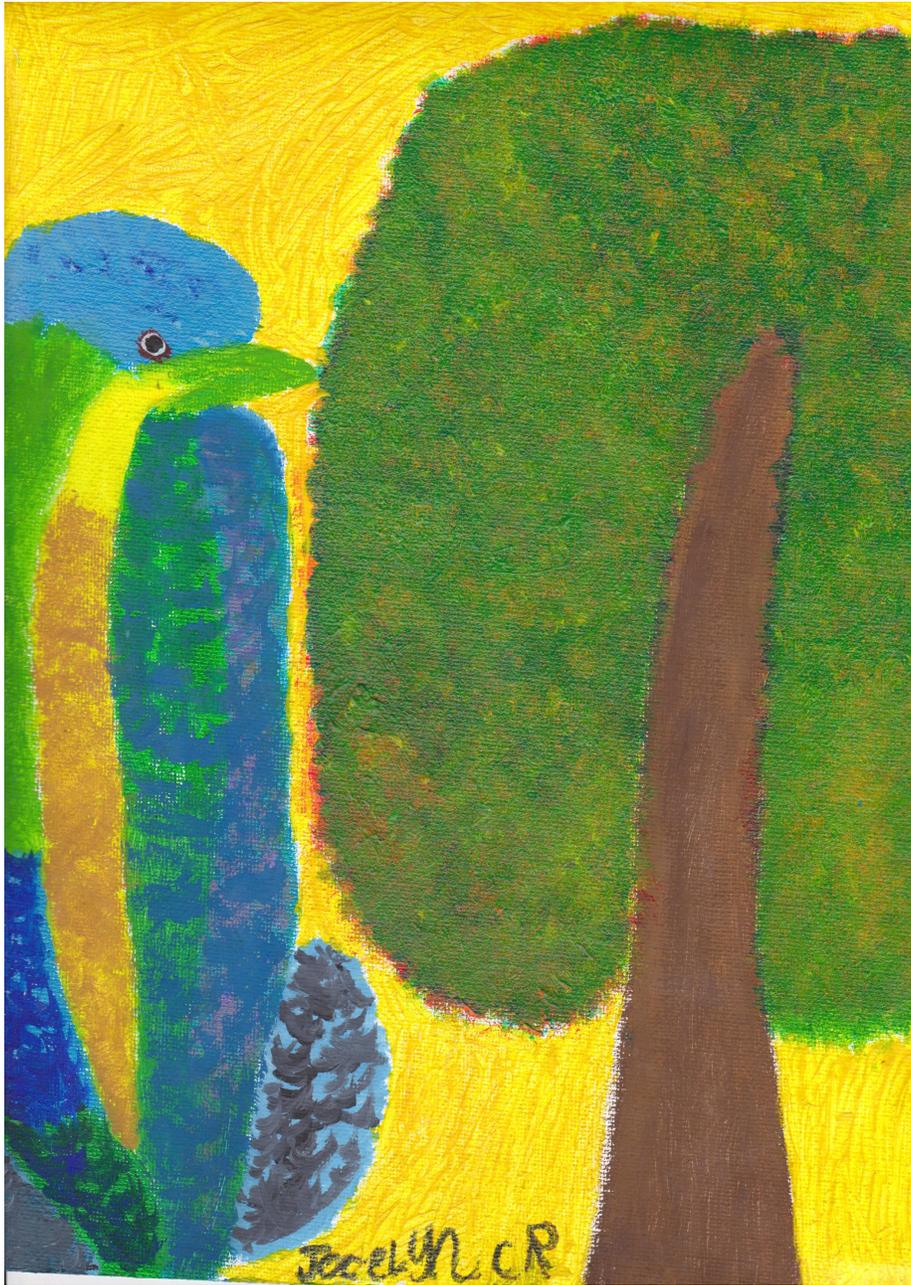
The Art Gallery is a regular feature of Atenas Today. Local artists are encouraged to submit photographs of their works to be included in the gallery, and to send a new picture each month. The artists may be contacted via the email addresses shown.



Boys and Their Toys
13" x 15"
Oil on Canvas

Al Alexander
jeanandal@gmail.com

Artist's Statement: I took a series of photos at an aviation show in N.J. and based this little still life on one of them. In spite of my title it is a very serious event.



Bird and Tree

Jocelyn Farquhar

Jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com



"D.o.g."
Acrylic on canvas
18" X 24"

Diana F. Miskell

Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com

Costa Rica Blog: <http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>



Expanded View from Pete's Garden

By: Peter S.

Mixed Media on Board Unframed

26"X 27"

Contact: gbalter@gmail.com
8803-7167



Pete's Driftwood Christmas Tree (with white lights)
by: Peter S.

39" tall X 38" @ base

Contact: gbalter@gmail.com
8803-7167

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.**

Biolley Buzz
Bunky Bartlett

bcrcoffee.com
<http://www.bestofcostarica.org>

Carole Connolly
Claudia Leon

<http://carolejeanscostaricacapers.com>
<http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/>
<http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/>

De La Pura Vida Costa Rica
Dennis Easters/Pure Life Development
Diane Miskell

delapuravida.com
<http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog>
<http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>

Fred Ball

<http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/>

Going Like Sixty

<http://goinglikesixty.com>

Julie and Rick in Costa Rica

<http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/>

Marietta Arce
Mi Chunche

<http://marisundays.wordpress.com>
michunche.com

Nadine Hays Pisani
New Life in Costa Rica

happierthanabillionaire.com
http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/

Paul Furlong motorcycle blog

<http://eyeneo.com/>

Pura Vida Mommy

puravidamommy.blogspot.com

Rubiatica

rubiatica.blogspot.com

Shannon Farley
Somewhere In Costa Rica
Su Espacio

<http://enchanting-costarica.com/>
<http://somerwhereincostarica.com>
<http://www.suespacioatenas.blogspot.com/>

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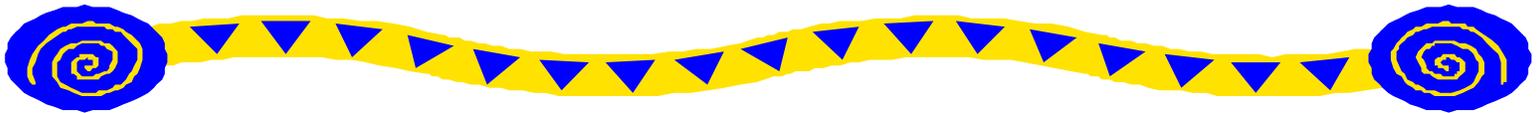
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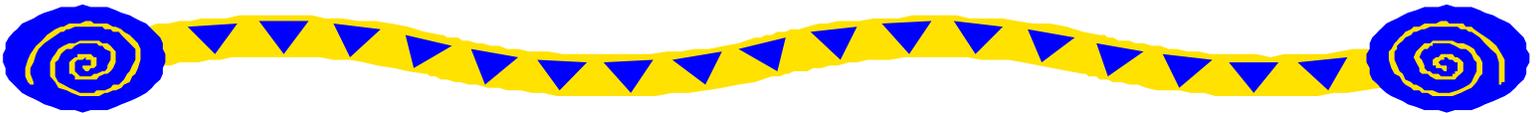
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