

## 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. 78

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*ATENAS TODAY is a free English language newsletter for the residents and potential residents of Atenas, Costa Rica. It contains informative articles and creative compositions submitted by our readers, and is distributed via email approximately once a month to over 400 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Marietta Arce at [atenastoday@gmail.com](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com).*

*Compositions from back issues are archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, [www.atenascatuca.com](http://www.atenascatuca.com). Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.*



## 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](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com)

## Publisher's Note



Memorial Day in the United States is a day when the men and women who have lost their lives serving the country are honored and remembered. The day is celebrated with parades, picnics and other activities that remind us of the sacrifices made by others in the past so that we can enjoy our freedom today.

In recent decades, Memorial Day has also become the 'official' start of summer, the day when public and private pools all over the country are declared 'open'. Children are giddy with excitement as they finish up the school year and look ahead to days full of much or nothing to do.

For many of us living here in Atenas, having a pool in our backyard is the culmination of a dream we held since childhood. However, the dream can quickly turn nightmarish if our pool's color or chemistry alerts us that something is wrong, especially during seasonal changes.

In this edition, we are delighted to welcome Dra. Piscina as a regular contributor to our magazine; dispensing tips and advice to keep our pools in great shape no matter what the climate sends our way.

Sonia Holguin from Dermalife Spa shares her recommendations in our Health and Beauty section and we welcome suggestions on topics of interest in this area.

We include the first of several interviews with CoopeAtenas' General Manager, Juan Carlos Alvarez Ulate whose days are busy with the ambitious project of remodeling and restructuring the store in order to fulfill the demands of permanent local residents and visitors of Atenas.

Dennis Easters from Pure Life Development has written an informative and entertaining article on building 'green' in Costa Rica. We hope it will encourage people to consider this alternative.

Your feedback is appreciated as it enables us to continue to bring you articles you enjoy and find useful in Atenas today and everyday!

Happy Reading!

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## More on the Big Question



*by Fred Macdonald*

### *A review of The Language of God, by Francis Collins*

Last month I wrote an essay called "Fred's Theory of Everything" (a tongue in cheek title if there ever was one), in which I expressed my skepticism about the existence of a God in the Christian sense. A relative and scientist whom I greatly respect suggested I read a book called *The Language of God*, by Dr. Francis Collins. Even though more scientists consider themselves atheists than non-scientists (35% versus 10%), there are still many super intelligent scientists who are religious. Francis Collins is one of them, and his beliefs are sincere and well founded.

Doctor Francis Collins directed the Human Genome Project, which in 2003 succeeded in describing the sequence of the 3.1 billion letters in the human DNA code, and in defining and mapping the 20,000 to 25,000 protein-coding genes, arrayed across 24 chromosomes, that make up the human genome. He is certainly highly qualified to discuss

current science as it relates to questions of human life.

Collins's book is well written and very personal. It describes how as a scientist he came to believe in the Christian God, and shows how such a belief is totally compatible with modern science. In fact the general purpose of the book seems to be to debunk the idea that science and religion have conflicting world views, and to encourage "intellectuals" who think they are atheists to take another look. He seeks to prove that "atheism is the least rational world view."

After basically ignoring questions of spirituality and religion until he was in his late twenties, Collins approached the subject like a scientist, reading and studying. From the outset he rejected the literal interpretation of the Bible, which is clearly incompatible with science. Many pages are devoted to a discussion of evolution, and how his work in genetics confirmed work in other fields and affirmed the Theory of Evolution in every respect.

To Collins the key question is whether a "Creator" exists, and he sees no problem in the Creator using evolution as the tool

for developing life. As for the evidence pointing to a “Creator” he lists the following:

1. The existence of what C.S. Lewis called the “moral law”, the facts that humans sometimes act out of pure altruism, and that the basic differences between right and wrong are agreed on in all cultures (the “eternal verities”)
2. The overwhelming evidence that our universe began at a finite moment in time with the big bang, and nature could not have created itself.
3. The fact the laws of nature are finely tuned to permit the universe to exist (the rate of expansion after the big bang, the critical value of the strong nuclear force, the asymmetry between matter and anti-matter, etc.). There are 15 constants like the speed of light that have values that allow for our very improbable universe
4. The non-intuitive effectiveness of mathematics in describing a “grand design”.
5. The fact that humans over the ages have wished for and believed in a creator god, and in nature whenever something is desired, the means to fulfill that desire does exist.

Having become convinced that a Creator exists outside of the universe, Collins then tackles the question of whether this Creator cares about us humans, or are we just a highly evolved animal. Did the Creator “wind up the clock” and walk away, or is He a “Personal God” who watches over us.

The “logic” that “stunned” Collins and led him to believe that the Creator was indeed a Christian-type God came again from C.S. Lewis. Lewis argued that the Moral Law was unique to humans and was not an evolutionary byproduct, but instead was God’s way of showing himself to us. A god who would do that had to be a god who cared and wanted us to have a relationship with him.

What about all the other trappings of Christianity? Did God send Jesus, his son, to “die for our sins” before he was resurrected from the dead? Does God intervene in the world in the form of miracles? These are the issues where I had expected Collins to balk, because they are the ones most incompatible with science. But in the end he swallows the whole enchilada.

Collins endorses the following rationale from C.S. Lewis: “...our human nature which can suffer and die was amalgamated with God’s nature in one person (Jesus)...that person could help us. He could surrender his will, and suffer and die, because He was a man... You and I can go through this process only if God does it in us; but God can do it only if He becomes man.”

What are we agnostics and atheists to make of the arguments from this imminent scientist? He is obviously very sincere in his belief, and he has shown that science and non-fundamentalist Christianity are not incompatible. It would be comforting to abandon our doubts and go along with him.

However, as my father told me when I as a fourteen year old I questioned the teachings of the church I was forced to

attend every Sunday, religion is a “feeling”, and cannot be arrived at solely through reason. I too have read C.S. Lewis’s “Mere Christianity” and been impressed with his intellectual analysis, but in the end I did not have the “feeling” to help me get over my skepticism that the existence of a “Moral Law” was strong evidence of a Creator God.

The question for me is whether qualities like altruism and love can be explained by evolution, like all other human characteristics. Collins dismisses this possibility in one long paragraph. He says that altruistic behavior often goes unobserved, and therefore cannot have any evolutionary benefit to the practitioner. Furthermore, it cannot be a trait that benefits an individual by benefiting his group because evolutionary “selection operates on the individual, not the population.”

On the contrary, it appears to me that altruistic, self-sacrificing behavior can have a very positive effect on the propagation of the genes of the practitioner. Societies admire altruistic people, which can give them an advantage in mate selection and social position. The fact that individuals sometimes do altruistic things in private merely means that they enjoy the “good feeling” that evolution has attached to the practice. In any case, true altruism is a rarity in a world where self interest predominates.

A similar analysis pertains to the question of why humans seem to have an inherent knowledge of “right and wrong”. The rules of morality are essential for the social group to prosper, and the more successful the group the better the chances for the progeny. I don’t see why evolutionary selection that benefits the group and therefore its members cannot be transmitted through the genes of individuals.

All of this leaves me where I started, an agnostic unable to account for the existence of the mathematically harmonious universe, but also unable to ascribe it to a Creator God. I have to be content with being a part of the “ocean” that will continue to exist after my “wave” has crashed on the beach.

# The Sensational Soursop (Guanábana)



by Elizabeth González

The **soursop** (or guanábana as it is more commonly known) is in season right now in Costa Rica. I passed one by the other day and recalled the fun we used to have when I was a child. We would use our hands to separate the sections and eat them to our hearts' content while we sat under the shade of a tree on the farm. Nothing can quite compare to the memory of childhood but eating a guanábana or drinking a smoothie made from one is still a treat I look forward to.

The **soursop** (*Annona muricata*) grows on a broadleaf flowering evergreen tree native to Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America, as well as some countries in sub-Saharan Africa which lie within the tropics.

**Soursop** fruit skin is green with pointed projections and the inside pulp is white and covered with a cone-shaped, inedible glossy seed. The fruit will feel soft when ripe and has a sweet and sour taste that is fragrant and can be eaten directly or made into a juice with water or milk. Sherbets are also a popular dessert and many adventurous chefs today are always experimenting new ways to pair up its distinctive flavor.

The flavor is difficult to describe but has been said to resemble a combination of strawberry, pineapple and sour citrus with coconut 'notes'. The only way to know for sure is to try one yourself. I can almost guarantee that you will become a fan.

Don't worry if the fruit's skin has developed some dark spots. Those parts can be discarded if the rest of the fruit is in good shape. It is important, however, not to eat the fruit if it has become dry as it can pose a health risk at that late stage.

Nutritionally, soursop is high in carbohydrates, particularly fructose. It also contains significant amounts of vitamin C, vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, and vitamin B<sub>2</sub>. The fruit, seeds, and leaves have a number of herbal medicinal uses among indigenous peoples of regions where the plant is common but caution is recommended prior to any use to treat disease.



## Soursop Beverage

2 pounds ripe guanábanas  
2 cups water  
¾ cup sugar  
Ice

Cut guanabanas in two, lengthwise. Core and remove pulp and seed.

In a large saucepan, mash pulp and seeds with 1 cup of the water.

Press through a sieve. Place pulp and seeds back into the saucepan and repeat above adding the water gradually until all the pulp has been removed from the seeds.

Add the sugar, mix and set in the refrigerator in a **glass** pitcher or container. Serve chilled with ice!

## REFERENCES

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soursop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soursop)

[www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/soursop](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/soursop)

Aboy Valldejuli, Carmen, *Puerto Rican Cookery*

## Soursop Sherbet

3 pounds ripe guanábanas  
3 cups water  
2 ½ cups sugar

Cut guanábanas in two, lengthwise. Core and remove pulp and seeds.

In a large saucepan, mash pulp and seeds with 1 cup of the water.

Strain through a sieve. Put pulp and seeds back into the saucepan and repeat the process until all the pulp has been removed from the seeds.

Add the sugar, mix, and freeze until firm in the freezer. Enjoy!



## Atenas Today Interviews

**Mr. Juan Carlos Álvarez Ulate**  
**General Manager**



**This interview is the first of several which will be conducted in the next few months. CoopeAtenas is undergoing extensive remodeling and we are happy to provide our readers with the most current information on the progress. We thank Mr. Alvarez and all the staff at CoopeAtenas for their generosity and cooperation in making these interviews possible.**

**AT: Please describe how and why the cooperative was founded in 1969.**

**JCA:** The cooperative was founded to satisfy the need to process and market coffee more favorably and fairly, because the foreign beneficiaries were not providing good conditions or benefits to the farmers of Atenas. The growers began to realize the importance of organizing for their common welfare.

In the fifties there was only a very small coffee mill with little processing power and limited technology (Beneficio Roland Rojas), leaving many farmers with no opportunity to market their product in their county.

One of the principal proponents of cooperatives and CoopeAtenas RL was Father Luis Villegas, a visionary and optimistic priest who advised the coffee farmers to create an Organized Central Committee on December 15, 1968. The priest's ideas, the needs of the farmers and the aforementioned committee eventually resulted in the creation of

COOPERATIVA AGROPECUARIA INDUSTRIAL Y DE SERVICIOS MULTIPLES DE ATENAS R.L. on August 10, 1969 with a total of 93 members.

**AT: Why did the founders decide for cooperativism?**

**JCA:** The main reason was the fair marketing of their product (coffee) together with the values (mutual aid, responsibility, equality, democracy, equity, solidarity, honesty, transparency and social responsibility) and cooperative principles (open and voluntary membership, economic participation members, autonomy, education, etc.) which proved very attractive.

**AT: How many people or families began this cooperative?**

**JCA:** The 'movement' began with 65 producers, however when the cooperative was formed there were 93 members which grew over time. Today, we have more than 1200 coffee-producing associates.

**AT: Where did growers sell their product before the cooperative existed?**

**JCA:** The coffee was sold to outsiders who visited the county during the harvest (the Peters, RL CoopeAlajuela, etc.) or to Beneficio Palmares (the original name of this mill is unknown). It is important to note that the coffee had to be transported by oxcart to Palmares in all kinds of inclement weather, especially during the rainy season (winter).

**AT: When did CoopeAtenas begin to participate in the competitions that validate the quality of the coffee?**

**JCA:** The first competition of great importance nationally and internationally were HARVEST GOLD in 2006. Our coffee brand VILLA DIAMANTE took first place (November 14, 2006) and is now competing in "Cup of Excellence" with batches of special coffee.

**AT: When did exporting in large quantities begin?**

**JCA:** Coopeatenas R.L.'s coffee began to be exported directly this year (2011), with a total of about 6000 quintals, but our coffee is also sold to large companies that export on their own. Our coffee goes to famous Starbucks stores through the sale to important clients nationally or sold to companies that process for sale in the domestic market.

**AT: When were you certified for ISO 14001 and Fair Trade compliance?**

**JCA:** The international standard that governs us as a profitable cooperative concerned with reducing environmental impact is **ISO14001** which we obtained in 2001. The **Fair Trade** certification was granted on September 28, 2010 after a long formal process which began in 2006. The certification of any company or economic activity provides an assurance of dignity and respect for human rights and the environment.

Other certifications we have received are the **UTZ Certified** which we obtained in 2000. This certification is given to a small group of our producers who grow 100% environmentally-friendly, quality coffee. **C.A.F.E. P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S.** is similar to the previous certification with respect to the environment and human rights and we have been registered in the program since 2005. "Good Agricultural Practices" is the certification from Starbucks Coffee. In 2004, we obtained the national certification for quality from the Specialty Coffee Association of Costa Rica. This association provides superior quality coffee to demanding customers.

**AT: How does the community benefit from CoopeAtenas?**

**JCA:** A cooperative is an autonomous organization of persons united voluntarily to improve the wealth and well-being, not only of those who are members, but also the community where it is based

CoopeAtenas seeks to address the economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations of the county and uses the company (employment, consumption, fair trade, education, credit opportunities, etc.) to do so.

CoopeAtenas R.L. has great impact on Atenas and influences the social and economic development; **it is a source of employment, contributes with taxes and donates** by earmarking reserves for education and social welfare among others. We **improve roads in the community, support education** with partnerships we have with INA (National Institute of Learning) and promote **health** with annual fairs.

Because our company has several commercial divisions, the consumer can choose from products at different prices that will satisfy the majority of needs and tastes. Our secure and well-appointed location translates into an additional benefit for our community.

**AT: How does one arrange to visit the plant and learn about coffee processing?**

**JCA:** The first step is to contact Management who will grant approval. After the approval is given, the Plant Administrator coordinates the date. The tour takes place with all the appropriate safety and security

measures to prevent accidents. It concludes with a coffee tasting. Call 2446-5141 and inform them of your interest to take the tour at the mill so your call will be directed properly. You can also send a fax (2446-5261) or email ([coopeatenas@ice.co.cr](mailto:coopeatenas@ice.co.cr)). The cost for this guided visit is \$15.00/person.

**AT: How can one become a member of CoopeAtenas?**

**JCA:** Although CoopeAtenas is a cooperative with multiple services, its principal product is coffee. Therefore, the main requirement to become a member is to be a coffee producer and meeting the following criteria

- Be at least 15 years old
- Deliver a one time payment as social capital of two bushels of mature conventional coffee which will be credited at the final price during the previous harvest. (A debit account is created and the amounts will be reduced from the payment of coffee harvested.)
  - Fill out an application form and attach the required documentation (deed, identification card, etc.)
  - Agronomist's inspection of the farm.
  - Attendance in a course on cooperativism which is imparted by CoopeAtenas.
  - If the property does not belong to the prospective member then a rental contract or agreement with the owner for a minimum of seven years must be presented. (We will supply a sample of this document for reference.)

**AT: Is there anything else you would like our readers to know?**

**JCA:** Other benefits that CoopeAtenas gives its members include:

- Technical asístanse
- Group insurance
- Mutual Funds
- Coffee Credit
- Social Capital Savings

## Learning from geckos.



By Theresa Fulton

Recently we had a tiny visitor in our Atenas home – the smallest gecko I had ever seen (see photo). The adorable perfection of its tiny limbs inspired the scientist in me to do a little research; for starters, I wondered if this was its full-size or if it was a baby. From what I discovered this was probably a common house gecko, which can indeed be as small as 1.6cm (.6 inch), about the size of our gecko (although other gecko species can be as big as 2 feet long!).

Geckos are lizards in the family Gekkonidae, and are the only type of lizard that use vocalizations – chirping sounds – in social interactions. They are definitely good to have around the house, as they eat insects, including mosquitoes. There are over 1000 species of geckos. In addition to their vocalizations, they can be differentiated from other lizards by a few traits such as their eyelids (geckos don't have them, only a transparent membrane), skin (lizard skin is more dry and scaly), and feet (lizards have claws, while most geckos have large sticky pads).

Their sticky toe pads make it possible for them to climb up walls and run across ceilings. How this is possible has been the subject of much scientific research, resulting in many publications in high-quality journals such as *Nature* and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that are all about geckos' feet! It turns out that geckos have millions of teensy adhesive foot hairs (seta) on each toe. These hairs are incredibly strong. Scientists at Berkeley and Stanford are studying this in detail, and already working with engineers to try to replicate these hairs and possibly create tiny robots that can walk up walls and across ceilings too!

A number of geckos have another neat ability called autotomy; they are able to drop off a limb, usually their tail, and grow a new one. Dropping off body parts is apparently an effective method of distracting a predator, and being able to regenerate those lost body parts is even handier!

Regeneration of the correct limb occurs because of blastemal cells, which have "position identity" memory – so an arm doesn't grow

where a tail was. Scientific studies have found that the genes involved in this regeneration ability are related to those expressed in embryonic stem cells (cells that are “unprogrammed” and have the ability to become any type of cell), implying that somehow the gecko’s cells can revert to a more primitive, embryonic state. The mechanism of regeneration is being studied closely as it would be helpful if humans could do this too. Think of it - organs removed due to cancer, amputation, blindness, nerve damage, Alzheimer’s, aging – really an endless list of possibilities. Trials are in progress right now for spinal injury patients.

Some geckos also have the ability to spray feces at their attackers, but perhaps this has less direct implications to human health... In any case, when you see little geckos running across your walls, thank them for eating your mosquitoes and all they contribute towards human medical science.

Further reading:  
How Geckos Stick to Walls  
<http://geckolab.lclark.edu/dept/geckostory.html>

Scientific American “Contest inspires regeneration research”  
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=contest-inspires-limb-regeneration>

Wikipedia: Gecko  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gecko>



Here’s our little gecko, smaller than the cord of our juicer!



The Gold Dust day gecko (image from Wikipedia)

## Health and Beauty Advice

by Sonia Holguin Muñoz

To combat the presence of dryness and flaking of the body during the rainy season (winter), all we need is to devote a little more time to our skin cleansing routine. The main reason that the skin is affected during the winter is the fact that Costa Rica's weather has more moisture for six months of the year. Oily skin benefits with this climate change because it does not sweat as much as in summer, while normal to dry skin suffers with the rain.

All skin types, however, should be moisturized during this season. Using a moisturizing cream is one of the most important steps for the face in the winter. Moisturizers protect and keep the pores from dilating. This allows the skin to retain natural fluid preventing the skin from becoming dehydrated.

It is preferable to change bath soap to cleansing cream because soap eliminates the hydro-lipidic mantle (skin surface) for 24 hours and this is the layer that protects the skin from viruses. The most important aspects during the winter are daily moisturizing and cleansing at bedtime.

It is recommended that dry skin be cleansed and moisturized daily. Oily skin should be cleansed twice a day and a facial toner in spray form should be used at noon for touch ups. People with combination skin should also cleanse, moisturize and apply facial toner.

Most allergic rashes experienced by people in the winter are caused by the increase of viruses during the season combined with unprotected skin and not by seasonal allergies.

Here are some simple recipes for each skin type that will help keep your skin looking and feeling great this winter:

### *Combination Skin*

1 Green Apple  
2 tablespoons honey  
3 tablespoons milk.

Peel the apple and put all ingredients in a blender to form a paste, apply on face, leave for 15 minutes and wash with water.

### *Dry Skin*

1 Avocado  
1 egg yolk

Mash the avocado, add egg yolks until a dough is made. Place on the face and leave 25 minutes. Remove.

### *Oily Skin*

Medium peeled cucumber  
1 tablespoon powdered milk

1 egg white Place all ingredients in a blender. Place on the face for 10 minutes and remove.

### *“Nutri-masque”*

1 ripe banana  
1 teaspoon honey  
3 drops of lemon.

Puree the ingredients, leave on face for 15 minutes and remove.



**Dermalife**  
spa

**Terapeuta Fisica**  
Sonia Holguin Munoz

Escuela de Cosmetología Atenas

- Control de acondicionamiento físico
- Masajes
- Tratamientos faciales y corporales
- Depilación

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# POOL TIPS



*From Dra. Piscina*

Don't let your pool frustrate you. With a few tips from Dra Piscina you can learn to easily master your pool, have less frustration and save hundreds of dollars.

This month's tip concerns ALKALINITY. This is the first thing you must balance before adding any chemicals or chlorine. Alkalinity remains relatively stable until you add more water. In the dry months we add water to our pools due to evaporation. This water comes from various sources. Depending on where you live, it may be acidic or alkaline, thus blending with your pool water and throwing your total alkalinity level off.

We are now entering the rainy season; this will also affect your pool's alkalinity. The rain in Costa Rica can be very caustic due to the volcanic emissions. So we recommend you test your alkalinity level every two months. How do you test your alkalinity? Lamotte test strips are the least expensive and fastest way; Or a Lamotte electronic digital test kit, yes more expensive, but very accurate.

## Eco Products in Costa Rica: Living the “Green Dream”



*by Dennis Easters*

Almost everyone comes to Costa Rica with a dream. Those dreams can be of the lazy, sand swept beach life with a margarita in hand, or a jungle getaway, a pair of rockers on a balcony with views of the Central Valley. My dream in particular was to have both, enjoy this Costa Rica paradise, and to discover what living in Costa Rica was all about. Having 16 years experience in residential Historic Restorations, the itch soon began to do something fresh and new, but what? In a country as lush and green as Costa Rica, one cannot help but be enveloped and caught up in the idea of how to preserve such natural beauty and at the same time live in it, with it, leaving as little impact on the environment as possible. DREAM FOUND! ECO CONSTRUCTION was my new passion.

In the past 10 years eco products and building materials have gained popularity around the world. Today more and more homeowners are opting for energy efficient home designs, appliances, doors, windows, and roofing materials. Green building products have become more available and their costs have become competitive with traditional building supplies. Often times the upfront expenditures can be justified by long term savings in energy or maintenance costs. Believe it or not, building Green in Costa Rica not only is possible, it is relatively easy and you will be doing your part to help keep Costa Rica GREEN.

The key to being “eco”, “green” or “sustainable” is the access and availability of products in your area. For example, using sustainable wood products such as TEAK, MELINA, or POCHOTE is very easy as these woods, which are grown on large plantations here in Costa Rica, support the local economy, and make quality finished product. Bamboo is also an interesting product that is gaining in popularity for its strength, durability, and sustainability. I have outlined below many of the resources that we have discovered here in Costa Rica and that we will be using in our new ECO DEVELOPMENTS, La Antigua del Valle, and Las Brisas del Valle located in Atenas, Costa Rica. Our dream for now and the future is that we can encourage others to follow suit and help make a difference in the world. Just using a few of these products in the building process will make all the difference in keeping Costa Rica green.

### **Wood Products**

Costa Rica offers some amazing exotic woods. However, with cutting and development, many of the native varieties are now protected and can only be used in limited amounts or with permission. Costa Rica began cultivating some very beautiful wood that is a great alternative to the more exotic species. The idea is to buy local. Find out what is being cultivated in your area and support your local community. In addition, most doors, cabinets, and furniture products are locally produced by local craftsmen who are

master craftsmen. Here are a few woods we like to use:

**TEAK-** Teak is a great all around wood. It is not a hardwood, but is not too soft either. It is easy to work with, does not tend to warp, and has beautiful color and tones, ranging from light to dark blond. It is very common to see teak beams used for vaulted ceilings, as post on porches, and in the building of kitchen and bathroom cabinets, or furniture.

**MELINA-** Melina is a softer white wood (much like fir) that has become very popular in construction for framing, cabinet and furniture making, doors, and trim work. It is easy to work with and can be painted or stained to the color that you want, resulting in a beautiful finished product.

**POCHOTE-** Pochote is a native wood here in Costa Rica that in recent years has been cultivated for use in construction. It is a versatile wood that offers a beautiful reddish brown color. It is very commonly used in the Guanacaste area of Costa Rica.

### **Roofing Materials**

**SPANISH TILE-** For hundreds of years in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and most Latin America countries traditional barrel tiles have been used as roof coverings. These tiles are made of clay and water, formed and then oven fired to create a hard durable surface that, if maintained, lasts for years and creates a patina that gives your home an amazing look. We found a company here in Esparza, Costa Rica, Productos Caribe S.A., that has been making quality tile roofs and other clay products since 1936. A trip through their factory takes you back to the way things have been done for centuries. Our tour with Don Alexander was educational to say the least. Made from only water and clay, then fired in natural wood burning ovens, the same way they have been made for centuries. No artificial ingredients for sure. Trivia? Do you know why the tiles are shaped the way they are? In the old days the makers used their legs (between their knees and thighs) as molds, creating the "barrel" shape, with one end wider than the other. Check out their site at: <http://productoscaribe.com/>

**RECYCLED PLASTIC ROOFS-** Recycling plastics, woods and other materials has become a great way of building green. There are some

great new products on the market that look like traditional Spanish tile roofs that are made from recycled plastic. They come in various color options and are lighter weight than traditional tile roofs. We like EKOROOFs at [www.ekoroof.com](http://www.ekoroof.com), located in San Jose.

### **Solar Products-**

**SOLAR PANELS-** Technology changes at the blink of an eye and solar technology is no exception. Most new solar panels only require daylight, not direct sunlight to provide energy. Solar options include solar hot water heaters, heating systems for pools, and panels that provide electricity for your entire home. Costs vary but water heating systems can start at around \$1500, and entire electrical systems from \$10,000.00. The idea of living off the grid is closer than you ever thought, and everyday more affordable. For the latest solar products in Costa Rica, check out [www.solarcostarica.com](http://www.solarcostarica.com), located in Santa Ana, Costa Rica.

### **Recycling Water Systems**

**GRAY WATER RECYCLING-** Reducing the amount of water we use is an excellent way to protect and conserve the natural beauty that abounds in Costa Rica. Simple systems that can be installed to recycle gray water (from sinks and showers) to use to flush your toilets can save up to 30% of your annual water consumption. Combine that with a low flow toilet and you can increase that number to close to 40%. Not only are you helping to keep Costa Rica green, but you will be saving the "green" too! Check out the latest products at: [www.bracsystems.com](http://www.bracsystems.com)

### **Other products**

**STUCCO-** Many paint companies in Costa Rica now produce high-quality stucco products for interior and exterior use. These products are offered in various colors, which are often from natural sources, and eliminate the need for repainting or maintenance. The costs are very similar to paint when using a good quality paint product. Consult with your local hardware store or LANCO Paints at [www.lancopaints.com](http://www.lancopaints.com).

**LOW FLOW TOILETS-** Low water use toilets can reduce your water consumption by 10-15%. New technology with pressurized flushing systems offers a great alternative for the less efficient traditional models.

**NATURAL STONE-** Not only is natural stone beautiful but it is very ecological and creates a long lasting durable surface. Some of the more popular uses are as floor coverings, countertops and backsplash, showers, decorative walls, and driveways. There are many options in Costa Rica including river rock, piedra bruta, flagstone, and sandstone.

**HANDMADE PRODUCTS-** A great find in Santa Ana, Costa Rica is Cerámica Las Palomas. At Las Palomas they make all their products from start to finish. Some of the many beautiful products include handmade and hand painted: light fixtures, bathroom sinks, decorative tiles, plates, flower pots, and other decorative objects. The artists at Las Palomas are from the local School of Bellas Artes and do exquisite work. Luis is doing our bathroom sinks and the owner of Las Palomas, Paul Leon Deschang says that Luis is one of the best artists they have. Contact them at 2282-7001.

**TRADITIONAL TILE FLOORS-** For the traditional clay tile floors (Sattillo tile in Mexico) we go back to Esparza, Costa Rica to Productos Caribe S.A. where everything is made the same way it has been for generations. Clay, water, and wood fired to perfection. Visit them at <http://productoscaribe.com>

**IRON WORK-** Throughout Costa Rica you can still find blacksmiths who create beautiful artwork out of iron and other metals. Manolo, a native Spaniard, creates spectacular light fixtures, gates, decorative bars and garden pieces. In many parts of the world, this is a dying art but for now, it is alive and well in Atenas, Costa Rica.

**REFORESTATION-** The main attraction in Costa Rica is its abundance of nature, flora and fauna. To attract the fauna, you need the flora. Investigate your area and find out what the native trees and plants are and get busy! There is a great program through the UNA-Universidad Nacional, where a study of your property can be performed and native trees suggested and actually planted! Contact them at: [www.una.ac.cr](http://www.una.ac.cr) or call 2277-3315 and ask for the Instituto de Investigación y Servicios Forestal.

Everyday new and exciting products come to the marketplace that make building eco a reality. One thing we should not forget is to look to the past in our search because many of the products of days gone by are just as "green" and can offer true character and warmth to your home. In addition buying products locally and using local craftsmen helps sustain the community as a whole. Sustainability is not just about products and things, it is about life. We would love to hear from others who have found eco, green, sustainable, and artisan products throughout Costa Rica.

## 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.



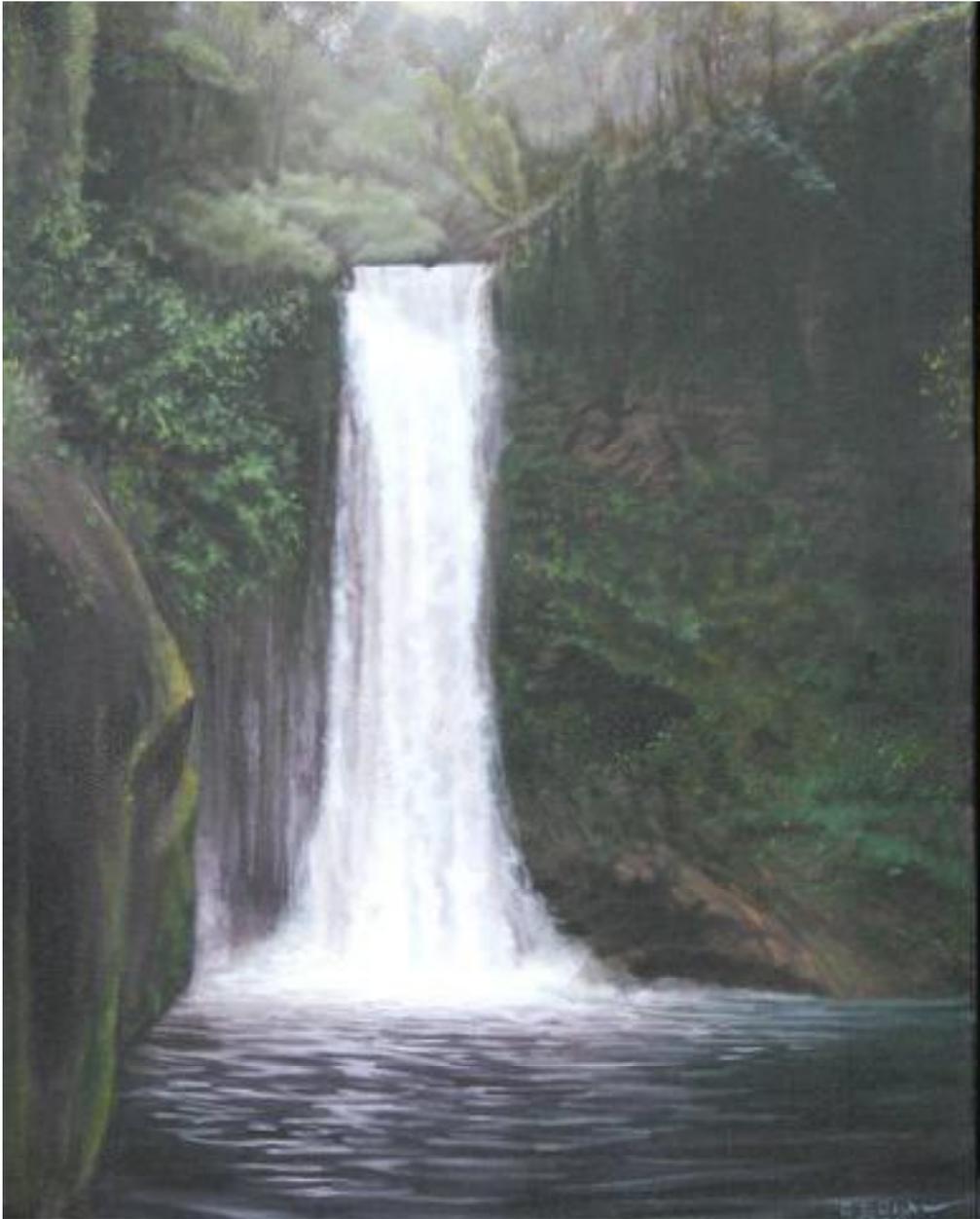
Mi Mascota, Before

Evelyn Levtchenko  
*levtchenko.art@gmx.eu*



Mi Mascota, After

Evelyn Levtchenko  
[levtchenko.art@gmx.eu](mailto:levtchenko.art@gmx.eu)



La Paz Waterfall  
Al Alexander  
*jeanandal@gmail.com*



Watermelon Stand, Friday Market

Alice Constantine  
[www.aliceartworks.com](http://www.aliceartworks.com)

# GET OUT OF TOWN!!!

## La Paz Waterfall Gardens



Two and a half years ago a strong earthquake in Cinchona devastated that community and made La Paz Waterfall Gardens an impossible place to reach as well. Today, the Cinchona community has been relocated, thanks largely to the generosity and solidarity of the Costa Rican people who raised much of the money needed to rebuild.

La Paz Waterfall Gardens, a spectacular, privately-owned park is open again and ready for your visit. Its beautiful gardens are located on the slopes of the Poas Volcano. You will have a magical experience as you find yourself in the cloud forest and rain forest. You will see butterflies, hummingbirds, and of course, the 5 spectacular waterfalls that spray you if you lean into them.

The website ([www.waterfallgardens.com](http://www.waterfallgardens.com)) is very thorough and has all the information you need to plan your trip. Don't forget your rain gear!

## The Question of Money



by Marietta Arce

I recently overheard a conversation between a father and his young daughter while they were shopping for a toy. The child was looking for the perfect object to purchase and apparently found it in a rather expensive set of rollerblades that were shiny and beckoning her. Her father widened his eyes in surprise and told his daughter apologetically that the article was beyond his current cash flow.

His daughter did not see this as an obstacle and helpfully suggested they stop at the cash machine near the store and withdraw the necessary funds to buy the skates. Her father chuckled as he told her that getting money out of the cash machine was not as simple as it seemed to her; he first had to put the money in his bank account before he could withdraw it. He went on to explain that he had to work many hours to earn the money to deposit in the bank for later withdrawal.

The child remained unconvinced and unwavering and I was very disappointed that I had to leave the store before the exchange came to its conclusion. The end of that story will be a mystery forever to me but I was glad to have been privy to a conversation that prompted some deep thinking about the subject of money.

When I was growing up, money was never *really* discussed in an open manner in my family. It seemed to me that it was a source of anxiety for my parents who worked hard to provide us with the basic necessities of life. We their children, complained when they couldn't afford the latest fashions and felt deprived because we had to share so many things.

I had a close friend whose family's budget was tighter than ours and (with seven siblings) they even had to share beds. We never had to do that and eventually we each had our own room. Even so, I always felt the pressure to grow up and start bringing something to the table besides my appetite! I looked for ways to contribute to the family budget, something that was taken for granted in our family.

I began baby sitting when I was a young teenager. My modest 'income' allowed me to purchase coveted items like record albums and makeup and I began to understand all about earning, saving and spending. My problem all too frequently, however, was that I held on to my money like a miser and rather than feel pleasure when I purchased something I really wanted, I felt guilty because others around me (who didn't work or didn't save) couldn't do likewise.

The fact that I attended a religious school where the nuns preached poverty and generosity at the same time did not help me clarify the ambiguous feelings I already had. I remember being apologetic if I had managed to make it through the week with money left over from my allowance and yet I was proud of myself for exactly the same reason.

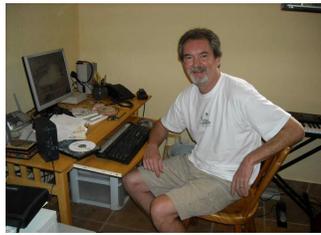
My mother was criticized by her siblings because they thought she was materialistic and ambitious. She countered that poverty was no friend of hers and that a rich man with a generous heart could do more for the needy than a poor man with a generous heart and only good intentions as his currency. I remember admiring my mother for the clarity of her feelings but again, I was reluctant to be thought of as materialistic and ambitious!

I have recently become aware that my attitude towards money has been undergoing a transformation almost without my realizing it. I find that I no longer feel guilty for working hard getting paid and spending my money with a certain amount of freedom. There was a time when I felt an obligation to give away my money to anyone who approached me on the street. I am no longer gripped by that guilt and I feel grateful that I am able to step aside and see that I am not responsible for everyone and everything in the world around me; I don't remember when I applied for **that** job!

Accepting responsibility for only myself and my actions (and yes, to a certain extent I do still feel responsible for my children's actions) has been a very liberating sensation. I cannot guarantee that I will feel this way permanently but awareness is the key to real change which I hope is what has been happening to me in a subtle manner over the last few years.

## TECH TALK

by Gordon Klatt



I've written several times in this column about the importance of backing up your computer hard drive. External USB hard drives are inexpensive, and there is software that automates the backup process. Windows PCs and Macs come with backup and restore programs, and most external drives include similar utilities. So implementing a backup strategy is neither expensive nor difficult.

Keeping your files organized will facilitate your backup process. In Windows XP, store your files in the 'My Documents' folder or sub-folders 'My Pictures', 'My Music', and 'My Videos'. In Windows 7, files should be located in the 'Libraries' sub-folders. Macs have similarly named folders. It's easier when files are in one place rather than scattered all over your hard drive.

There are two methods to backup your system. An 'image' backup is used to restore your entire hard drive, programs and data, to another drive, helpful if your hard drive fails. The entire image is restored, you cannot restore individual files. A 'file' backup can also backup your entire drive, or just selected files, and is helpful if you need to later restore a specific file or files. The resulting backup files from either method are compressed and only accessible using the restore utility.

How often you should backup your system depends on how much and often it changes. I would recommend initially performing an image backup, and a file backup of important data. This can take quite a long time the first time it's done. Subsequent backups need not include the image backup, and file backups will be much quicker as they only need to include changes made since the previous backup. An image backup should be repeated if you make changes to the system, not the data.

If you've got important stuff on your computer, imagine that it's gone. It happens. Computer are stolen, hard drives fail. Back it up!

## SyncToy 2.1

I'm using a different method to safeguard my digital photographs. In addition to using a backup program, I use a utility that synchronizes two folders. SyncToy is part of a free suite of utilities from Microsoft. Here's how it works.

Photos are stored on my computer in the C:\Users\Gordon\Pictures folder. I copied the contents of this folder to a folder on my external drive, F:\Pictures. I then ran SyncToy. You specify the folders you want to work with, and then choose to either 'synchronize' or 'echo' the folders. Synchronize will update the folders in two directions, changes made to either folder will be made to the other. I chose echo, which updates the folders in one direction. Since at this point the folders were identical no changes were made. But now when I add new photos to my computer, running SyncToy will copy these additions quickly to my external drive. And since I add new photos fairly often, it's easier to run SyncToy than performing a file backup. Download SyncToy 2.1 here. For Windows XP, Vista, and 7.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?familyid=c26efa36-98e0-4ee9-a7c5-98d0592d8c52&displaylang=en>

DirSync Pro is another free utility that does the same thing. Available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. Download it here.

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

So what can you do if your hard drive fails and you haven't been backing up your data? Hard drives fail for two reasons. They suffer either a mechanical failure or physical failure of the disk surface. A mechanical failure can occur quickly and is usually catastrophic, data recovery is difficult and expensive. A physical failure can occur gradually, and data can usually be recovered. The older the drive, the greater the chance it will fail. Periodically run a check of your hard drive to spot trouble before it's too late. It's much more cost effective to replace an old drive while it's still working than after it fails.

If you have a question, comment, or suggestion for a future column, you can contact me at [gtklatt@live.com](mailto:gtklatt@live.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](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

June 22<sup>nd</sup> Local Cooking; RSVP Liena de Jong ([lienareina@gmail.com](mailto:lienareina@gmail.com))

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

June 25<sup>th</sup> CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS in Santa Ana (See flyer attached)

July 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS in Grecia (See flyer attached)

July 6<sup>th</sup> - RECYCLING CAMPAIGN CENTRAL PARK OF ATENAS 9A.M. - 5 P.M.

July 7<sup>th</sup> - Sewing at Hogar de Vida; 9:15 a.m. Contacts [MargMacik@hotmail.com](mailto:MargMacik@hotmail.com)  
or 2446-3223, cr 8989-0765, Helen Smith at the Hogar 2446-6212

July 12<sup>th</sup> - Local Writer's Group meeting at Kay's Gringo Postres at noon  
For more information, contact Larry Rusin at 2451-8063. Bring material  
you have written so you can share with the group.

July 16<sup>th</sup> - YOGA + CREATIVITY RETREAT (See flyer attached)

July 17<sup>th</sup> -  CENTRAL PARK OF ATENAS - REUNION OF ATENIENSES  
LIVING IN OR OUT OF ATENAS - ACTIVITIES BEGIN AT 9 A.M.

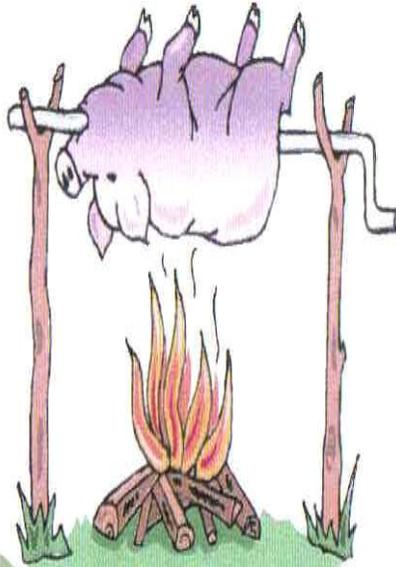


July 29<sup>th</sup> - BENEFIT ART EXHIBIT AT ROMAVISTA, BARRIO MERCEDES  
FOR THERAPY ROOM AT THE CLINICA DEL DOLOR (HOSPICE)  
TICKETS ARE 10,000 COLONES AND INCLUDE DINNER, MUSIC  
AND COMPLIMENTARY CORKAGE. TICKETS ON SALE AT BALCON  
DEL CAFÉ, ROMA CENTER.

# CANADA DAY 2011

Come join the Party and Pig Roast!

Great food and a cash bar, swimming, beautiful ponds and trails, and a Silent Auction for the benefit of the school communities supported by the Asociación Caritativa Canadiense.



Enjoy the the band Bedrock led by Canadian singer Nancy Wallace performing all your favourite songs both new and old; country, rock and blues, you name it.

**Menu:** Pig Roast, BBQ Chicken, Salads, Bread, Dessert, Ice Tea & Coffee

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 10AM TO 3PM  
ZAMORA ESTATE IN SANTA ANA

Advanced tickets only. Before June 22, please.

**\$20 per person**

ARCR -2233-8068

or at

Out of Bounds-2288-6762

IN ATENAS:

RON - 2446-0936





# INDEPENDENCE DAY FIESTA!



JULY 3, 2011  
11:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.



## PRESS RELEASE

### Media Contact

Sheron Bloom, 2444-7861, [azbelle72@gmail.com](mailto:azbelle72@gmail.com)

## **American Independence Day will be celebrated in Grecia with an international and charitable twist**

*Ex-Pats to share Independence Day celebrations with their neighbors*

Grecia (June 5, 2011) – An old-fashioned, down-home, foot-stompin' style of Independence Day Fiesta is planned by a group of Ex-Pats with their Costa Rican neighbors, to celebrate the US national holiday and raise funds for a local charity. A day of food, fun and games for the whole family will be held from 11 am to 4 pm on Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Quinta Real Recreation Centre at San Francisco de Grecia. All nationalities and ages are invited to share in the fun!

“Our good fortune is well-known,” said Sheron Bloom, organizer of the Independence Day celebration. “We love the USA and also our new lives in Costa Rica. It is the perfect opportunity to share with our neighbors and, at the same time, help some who are in need.”

The day's activities will feature sack races, 3-legged races, swimming, music, volleyball, soccer, Karaoke, a Raffle, Silent Auction and Used Book Sale, along with vendors of traditional American fare: hot dogs, hamburgers, salads, cookies, brownies, soft drinks, beer. *Zafiro* from Grecia will present a show of latest fashions. Ample free parking is provided.

Admission at the door will be ₡1500 adult, ₡500 children. A map to Quinta Real is found at [http://www.webquintareal.com/croquis\\_de\\_lugar.html](http://www.webquintareal.com/croquis_de_lugar.html)

Contributions to the Silent Auction are welcome - art works, jewelry, games, services, restaurant dinners, hotel or B&B accommodation and more. To donate, please contact Kathy Tarble at [ktarble@gmail.com](mailto:ktarble@gmail.com) or 2444-0638 prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

For drop-off of used books or further information regarding the festivities, please contact Sheron Bloom at 2444-7861 or [azbelle72@gmail.com](mailto:azbelle72@gmail.com).

Beneficiary of funds raised at this first annual Independence Day event will be the *Asociación de Amigos Griegos Hoy por Ti (Friends of Grecia Association – For You Today!)* whose goal is to assist members of the community who have ‘fallen through the cracks’ and need a helping hand.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=211808075501897>



# Yoga + Creativity

## One-day retreats in Atenas

July 16: Personal Symbols and Mandalas

What are your three personal symbols?

Find out what they are and how they can be used to awaken a greater understanding of yourself and of your world around you.

**Yoga.** Participants will go on a guided meditative walk to Leah's yoga studio set among the trees, birds and sky. One immediately feels the calming properties of nature. After breath work and a 20 minute relaxation body scan, Leah will direct you through a series of yoga postures that form the five universal symbols found around the world and the symbols you will be working with in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the workshop. We continue our preparation for the afternoon creativity session through chanting, opening our chakras and focusing on their symbols and colors. Three hours.

One hour lunch break. Participants and workshop leaders will bring a pot luck vegetarian dish to share. Workshop leaders will provide refreshments.

**Creativity.** Jan will take you through a fun exercise to determine your personal symbols and how they are a way of seeing your present and future experiences of change and future growth. The five universal symbols will lead us into world cultural stories, more symbolism, color and finally your own mandala. In Sanskrit mandala means "whole world" and creating one is a simple and powerful way to become aware of and empowered by your three personal symbols. The class will close with the creation of a large nature-inspired mandala with input from all of the workshop participants. Three hours.

**Instructors:** Leah Maclauchlan, certified yoga instructor, and artist, Jan Yatsko have combined their respective expertise's to create a series of three meditative one day workshops full of rich layers of experience that are so intertwined that a person cannot appreciate the one activity without the other. The workshops are designed to accommodate a wide range of abilities that also include group interaction as well as individual achievement.

**Cost:** 25,000 colones for two workshops for a total of 6 hours of indulgence

**Contact:** Jan Yatsko 2446-0970 or email: [janyatsko@ice.co.cr](mailto:janyatsko@ice.co.cr)

Leah Maclauchlan (after June 15) 2446-3150 or email: [nomosno21@gmail.com](mailto:nomosno21@gmail.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.**

Biolley Buzz	<a href="http://bcrcoffee.com">bcrcoffee.com</a>
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica	<a href="http://delapuravida.com">delapuravida.com</a>
Fabulista De Costa Rica	<a href="http://fabulistadecr.blogspot.com">fabulistadecr.blogspot.com</a>
The Very Worst Missionary	<a href="http://theveryworstmissionary.com">theveryworstmissionary.com</a>
Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	<a href="http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/">http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/</a>
Mi Chunche	<a href="http://michunche.com">michunche.com</a>
New Life in Costa Rica	<a href="http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/">http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/</a>
Pura Vida Mommy	<a href="http://puravidamommy.blogspot.com">puravidamommy.blogspot.com</a>
Rubiatica	<a href="http://rubiatica.blogspot.com">rubiatica.blogspot.com</a>
Somewhere In Costa Rica	<a href="http://somerwhereincostarica.com">http://somerwhereincostarica.com</a>
The Real Costa Rica	<a href="http://blog.therealcostarica.com">blog.therealcostarica.com</a>
The View From Here	<a href="http://theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com">theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com</a>
Going Like Sixty	<a href="http://goinglikesixty.com">goinglikesixty.com</a>
Lois and Jim Craft	<a href="http://adventurecraft.blogspot.com">adventurecraft.blogspot.com</a>

## Atenas Today

Issue Number 78



Peacock (2+ years old)

\$400.00 or best offer for the pair.

## Classified Advertising

June 20, 2011

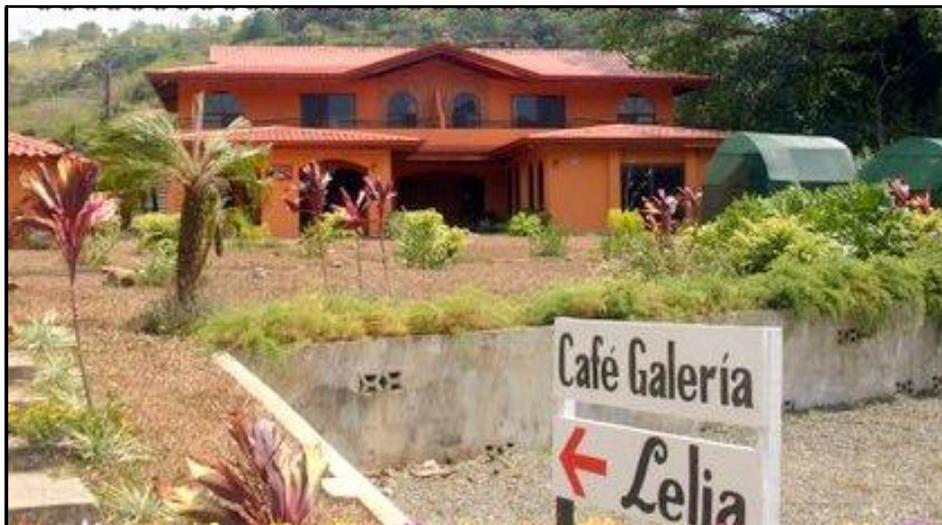


and Peahen (3+ years old) for sale.  
She has had chicks

**ALSO:** 3 meter satellite dish with receiver and remote for Dish Network.  
\$900.00, negotiable.

Alex Brown 2446-3133; email: andbrown2@gmail.com

## Café Galería Lelia



Sabana Larga, Entrada a Vista Atenas/Entrance to Vista Atenas  
Abierto martes a domingo de 11 A.M. a 7 P.M.  
Open Tuesday to Sunday from 11 A.M. to 7 P.M.  
Reservaciones/Reservations: 2446-6469

## Atenas Today Advertising Rates and Policies

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 \$50 per insertion; full page ads are \$100 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.**