

## 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



The Rainy Season and Her Gifts

*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 500 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)

Issue No. 99

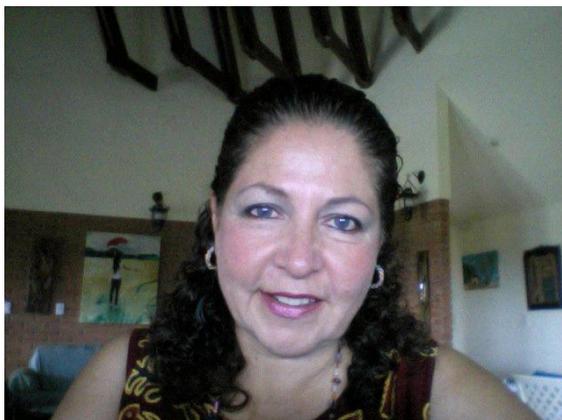
March 23, 2013

### In This Issue:

Marietta Arce --Publisher's Note	p. 3
Community Bulletin Board	p. 4
Artist's Mural Celebrates Costa Rica	p. 8
Ralph Carlson - Solar Energy	p. 9
Paul Furlong - Mayan Honduras Tour Part II	p. 10
BudBudJones - It's a dog's life, really!	p. 15
Shannon Farley - Day Trip To Manuel Antonio	p. 17
Dennis Easters - Home Sweet Home	p. 21
Quebrada Matias Restoration Project	p. 24
Judy Timson - Chili Cook-Off A Success	p. 26
Forest Gerdes - Vignettes from Costa Rica	p. 28
Art Gallery	p. 29
Listing of Blogs of Interest	p. 33
Classified Ads and	p. 34
<b>Display Advertising</b>	
Advertising rates and policies	p. 39



## Publisher's Note



It was wonderful to return home from New York in the daytime last month and see the gorgeous mountains from the air. Our pilot's spectacular landing made it impossible to pinpoint the exact moment when the massive tires touched the tarmac. All of us were delighted to arrive at our final destination.

I consider myself somewhat of an expert in what it might feel like to come to Costa Rica for the first time. No matter how many times I've returned, my heart still skips a beat and I inhale deeply in gratitude for being safely back at home.

My excitement on this return was echoed by an energetic, well-behaved child as she remarked repeatedly: "Costa Rica, Mommy, we're in Costa Rica!" She couldn't wait to get off the plane and run into her grandmother's waiting arms. It was a very touching scene because of the child's complete surrender to her emotions in the moment. I was jealous that age has made me curb (for the most part) my impulse to behave similarly.

During our lifetime, we have all been subjected to the stifling lecture environment, the interminable town hall meetings, the ineffective business conferences, and the boring book. I am sure you all agree that our Atenas Today contributors entertain us issue after issue. I am aware of my incredible advantage in being the first to read and see the wonderful essays and artwork.

This issue is coming to you a little bit late in the day because I wanted to print the amount that the fundraiser at the Hogar de Ancianos raised earlier today. Thanks to each and every one of you who came and participated. We raised over **300,000 colones** and had a great time doing it. I am proud and happy that we enjoy the benefit of generous residents and visitors in Atenas today and every day!

Happy reading!

Marietta Arce  
marietta.arce@gmail





## 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.

March 25<sup>th</sup> – Begins Holy Week, many government institutions closed or have special hours.

March 25<sup>th</sup> Sunset – Passover Begins

March 30<sup>th</sup> – reception/unveiling of Arnie Charnick Mural (see article page 8)

March 31<sup>st</sup> - Happy Easter!

March 31<sup>st</sup> , April 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> Buddhist Book Discussion at Roca Verde. (SEE FLYER)

April 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> - **Recycling** in Atenas from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Plaza in front of the Central School, near the volleyball court.– Recycling of aluminum, metal, plastic, paper, cardboard and tetrapak - NO ELECTRONICS, STYROFOAM or EGG CARTONS Please rinse and separate your recyclables before dropping them off. Thank you.

March 27<sup>th</sup>, (Please confirm with Sara or Kay 2446-0664) and

April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>

*Atenas Wednesday Women*  
informal get together at Kay's Gringo Postres  
every Wednesday afternoon at 12.30 PM

March 26<sup>th</sup>, -- Atenas Bridge Club meets at Don Yayo's Restaurant

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

March 30<sup>th</sup> – Chautauqua in Puriscal (See Flyers Attached)

April 5<sup>th</sup> – Solar Presentation – 2 p.m. (See article page 9)

April 9<sup>th</sup> - 3 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Kay's Gringo Postres. Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

April 10<sup>th</sup> - Writer's Club meets at Colinas del Sol, at Noon. Contact L. Michael Rusin @ [crcaseyboy@gmail.com](mailto:crcaseyboy@gmail.com) (2451-8063) for more information. Please confirm.

April 12<sup>th</sup> – April 16<sup>th</sup> – ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT AT HOGAR DE ANCIANOS

April 15<sup>th</sup> - PLEIN AIR - Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or [janyatsko@ice.co.cr](mailto:janyatsko@ice.co.cr) to find out where the next activity will be held.

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CLIMATE FAIR AND OXCART PARADE



## Buddhist Book Discussion

\*\*\*\*\*

**Every Sunday**

**Meditation (optional) 1:00pm**

**Book Discussion 1:30pm**

**218 Roca Verde, Atenas**

A gathering for those interested  
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings.

**ALL ARE WELCOME,**

from non-Buddhists to experienced Buddhist  
practitioners, whether you have read the book or not.  
Current book: "The Art of Happiness" by the Dalai Lama

Please telephone or email  
for directions or information:  
Adrienne and Richard Baksa  
2446-8509, 8355-0294  
adriennebaksa@me.com  
rbaksa@mac.com

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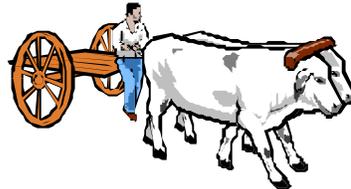


**Invites you to Save the Dates for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual (Best) Climate Fair**

**April 26<sup>th</sup> Noon – Activities begin in Central Park of Atenas**

**April 27<sup>th</sup> – Entertainment, food, music all day in Central Park.**

**Family-oriented, alcohol free.**



**April 28<sup>th</sup> – Traditional Oxcart Parade**

**Begins at the National Monument to the Oxcart Driver in Los Angeles.**

**This year's Grand Marshal: Manuel Obregon, Minister of Culture.**

**For information or to participate please write to:**

**atenas.catuca@gmail.com**

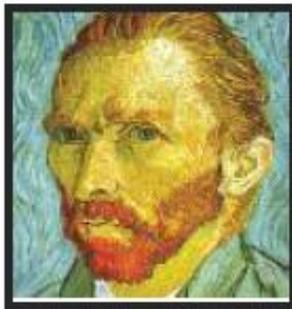
You're Invited to a **Tropical ChautauQua** Sat., March 30th

A CELEBRATION OF ART, CREATIVITY, VINCENT VAN GOGH, HIS BROTHER THEO, AND ALL THINGS FRENCH (AND DUTCH)

SATURDAY, 30 MARCH, 2013 • PART I... NOON TO 3:30 PM (LUNCH & PRESENTATIONS)

PART II: 4PM TILL LATER (READINGS, DISCUSSIONS & DINNER) YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND EITHER OR BOTH

AT THE FINCA OF ROLANDO Y CATHERINE (SLOTH CREEK) :: PURISCAL, COSTA RICA



We would like to extend a Special Invitation to You and Your Friends to come and enjoy our Tropical ChautauQua: an Afternoon of Food, Art, Conversation, Edification, and Fun in Celebration of the Birthday of **Vincent van Gogh**.

Please bring a PotLuck Dish or Dessert to Share and any Special Imbibements You Enjoy. (French or FrenchEsque Foods... if Possible, but not absolutely necessary). ALSO, If Possible, bring a Lawn Chair or 2.



We will have plenty of Fruit Drinks, Hors d'oeuvres, and various other delectables... and of course plenty of Food for Thought.

During the event there will be informal Presentations and Speakers, ranging from an Audio-Visual presentation of: *A Quick History of Modern Art; A Biography of Vincent van Gogh, A mock Art Gallery of Van Gogh's Works; A theatrical presentation of, An Inquest into the Murder of Vincent van Gogh... and much more.*

*Let Us Know if You Would Like to Speak, Perform, or do a Presentation. Both Impromptu or Prepared are Welcomed*

**WHO?** EVERYONE IS INVITED (JUST BRING A FOOD DISH TO SHARE:: FRENCH OR, FRENCHESQUE :: WHICH OF COURSE INCLUDES: FRENCH FRIES, FRENCH DRESSING, ETC. C'EST LE VIE...) :: BRING A CHAIR OR 2 IF YOU CAN.

**WHAT?** A TROPICAL CHAUTAUQUA: VINCENT VAN GOGH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**WHEN?** SATURDAY, 30 MARCH 2013 (PART I : NOON TO 3:30PM (LUNCH & PRESENTATIONS) & PART II :: 4:00 TILL LATER) (DICUSSIONS, READINGS, & POTLUCK DINNER)

**WHERE?** AT THE FINCA OF ROLAND Y CATHERINE PURISCAL, COSTA RICA (SLOTH CREEK) 8.5 KM FROM CENTRO

**WHY?** CAUSE IT WILL BE FUN, EDIFYING, AND DELICIOUS.

**HOW?** CAR, BUS, PLANE. THERE'S A BUS FROM PURISCAL THAT STOPS IN FRONT OF THE FINCA. (SEE BELOW)

**RSVP?** IF YOU WANT... BUT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO. BUT, IF YOU'D LIKE TO SPEAK OR GIVE A PRESENTATION LET ME KNOW

GIVE US A CALL OR EMAIL FOR MORE DETAILS, QUESTIONS, CONCERNS...

2416-0893 :: 2416-2154 ROLANDO@ZENWEST.COM

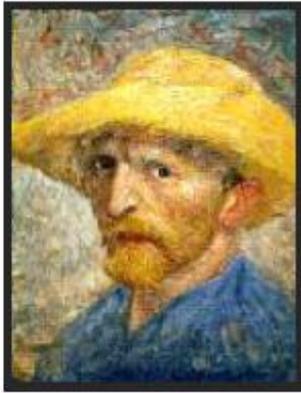
From San José: Directo Buses leave from Coca Cola to Pursical every half hour or less.

From Santiago de Puriscal: Bus Parada to Desamparaditos and Llano Grande at the bottom of the hill on the same street as the Taxi Parada and Park. Avenida 2.

CAR: Our Finca is about 8.5 km from Puriscal. 1.8 kilometers past Desamparaditos. Take the Taxi Parada Street in Puriscal North, Down the Hill Through Carit. Bear Left in Desamparaditos at the Church. We are mile more (1.8km.)

The Finca is right in front of the Llano Grande - Picagres forks in the road. There will be Flags etc.

DETAILS AND SECRET PLANS BELOW... pura vida



We're still in the planning stages for Our **Presentations :: Tropical ChautauqQua**, so if you have any ideas, suggestions, input, or would like to Participate, please let us know...

As for the itinerary: Thus far we are tentatively planning a Two-Tiered Event: Everyone is Welcome to Attend Either or Both.

**1.** First, a more Structured Event from 12 Noon until about 3:30 PM (PotLuck Lunch & Presentations)

Beginning with Appetizers, from about 12 Noon until 12:30; PotLuck Lunch (FrenchEsque) from 12:30 until 1:30; followed by Our Audio-Visual Presentations (Each about 25 minutes or less); then Dessert and Coffee, followed by the remaining Presentations, and Performances until about 3:30 PM, or so.



**2.** For those who just can't get enough van Gogh Art and Discussion, or Can't make the earlier event.

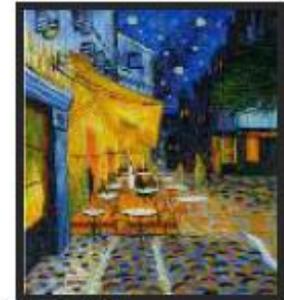
We will have a Second more Casual and FreeForm (but Not Less FOCUSED) event Beginning around 4pm, or so. (Informal Discussion, Readings, PotLuck Dinner)

We are planning an Evening of readings from Vincent's letter to his brother Theo, Conversations on Art, Creativity, those who support Art and those who Detract from Artists, and the appreciation of Art and Life in General.

**Also**, if anyone that would care to give a Prepared or Impromptu presentation, talk, or performance... this is another opportunity...

Of course, we encourage Cocktails and Wine, (Bring your favorite libation. **If you happen to have Absinthe and would like to share?** We have the spoon and sugar)

We'll have Dinner around 6pm... **For those who couldn't make the Lunchtime Venue please bring a PotLuck dish to share for Dinner.**



So far... Here's some ideas of our Presentations and Theatrics...

- Audio-visual Biographical presentation and discussion on Van Gogh's Life and Art.
- A talk on van Gogh's transition of palette colors from Northern Europe to the Southern Light.
- Readings from the beautiful and insightful Letters from Vincent to his brother Theo.
- A mock Gallery of Vincent van Gogh's major art works.
- A theatrical presentation: An Inquest into the Murder of Vincent van Gogh.
- French (FrenchEsque) Food... and Musique.
- ??? Your input? Anyone have interest in giving a Presentation, a Short-Talk, or Other other... Please let us know...



**The theme of our Tropical ChautauQua is Art, Vincent and Theo, and all things French.**

For the ambitious Chefs, We are hoping some of you will bring some French culinary treats to add to the menu... or, at least French-esque... French fries? French Dressing... Yes... it all works.

**SATURDAY, March 30.... Save the Date... EVERYONE WELCOME... PotLuck**

## Atenas Property Site of Renowned Artist's Mural Celebrating Costa Rica

When Walter and Carol Wengrowich relocated to Atenas from Calgary, Canada they found the perfect site to build their dream home in the mountains of Barrio Jesus. A lovely property with a waterfall running through it, they named their new home Casa del Rio. The couple had their work cut out for them, though, as they gut rehabbed the existing casa & casita, and broke through surrounding rock to install a pool and rancho. A year of ongoing renovations later, they rented their casita to former New York City artist Gail Schilke, with whom they became fast friends. When Gail's amigo from NYC Arnie Charnick, a renowned muralist in the States, arrived from his stay in Nicaragua to visit, Gail suggested the artist consider painting a mural on the empty wall/fence bordering the Wengrowich property. Negotiations between her landlords and Charnick ensued, and Charnick was offered a commission to take on the job.

Arnie Charnick, whose work has been featured in *The New Yorker* and *New York* magazines, is the creator of iconic murals in New York City, Provincetown, MA, and his work is part of many private collections and commissions worldwide. This mural, however, Charnick designed to celebrate the bountiful natural beauty of Costa Rica, particularly the orchids that anchor each of the 5 walls of the mural. Charnick has spent many years traveling in Central America, and his experience was quickly reflected in the design. This project will be completed 1 month after its inception 3/1, and a reception/unveiling will be held on Saturday, March 30, 2-6pm at the Wengrowich's home. For more information, please contact Walter Wengrowich at [wwengrow@hotmail.com](mailto:wwengrow@hotmail.com) or Gail Schilke at [gaze08@gmail.com](mailto:gaze08@gmail.com)



## Solar – Getting the most from our wonderful Atenas Sunshine



*by Ralph Carlson*

I am hosting a presentation /workshop on April 5 at 2:00 pm at the Linda Vista Bar and Restaurant in Alto del Monte, Atenas – on the road to Jaco about 6 miles west of Atenas Central. The actual presenters will be Pierre Lambot from Purasol, a company specializing in solar domestic hot water and solar electric and Maurice Hamel, from our own Dr. Piscina in Atenas, speaking on solar swimming pool heating. I have also invited representatives from ICE to answer question on the grid-tied systems. I am putting this together simply because I think there are many people in the Atenas area that can really benefit from using more solar. I think the presentations will be short allowing time for questions and quotes. I expect the presentations, question period and site visitation to be finished by 4 or 4:30. The presentations, and any handouts, will be made in English and Spanish depending on the audience.

A little background: I am a retired school teacher from the Seattle area living in Alto del Monte, Atenas.

I have recently installed a solar voltaic system on my house to (hopefully) eliminate my monthly ICE bill. This new addition is to complement the solar hot water systems already in place for heating my domestic water and swimming pool/spa. Solar heating for the pool and house has always been very cost effective but solar electric was expensive with an expected payback of 18-20 years – hardly reasonable. But several things have happened in the past two years to change this picture. First, the price on solar panels has dropped by 50% in the past five years. Second, the Costa Rica government has stopped charging the 13% tax on all solar products and third, the ICE grid tied system eliminates the need for batteries which have always been a major cost of the system. Not to mention the ever increasing rates for electricity. These things taken together have reduced the system payback from 18-20 years to 7-8 years. In fact, I expect a return of 10-12% on my solar system investment over the next 8 years followed by many years of free electricity regardless of increasing ICE rates.

I have selected the Linda Vista Bar Restaurant for the location of the workshop because my house is just a short walk away and the participants will be able to view all three solar systems in operation. Also, drinks and bocas will be available during the presentations. Bring a copy of your latest bill from ICE to the workshop.

For planning purposes, I would like to know how many of you plan to attend, so please drop me a line, also with any questions, to my email at: [ralph\\_carlson@earthlink.net](mailto:ralph_carlson@earthlink.net) or give me a call at 8779-2344



## Ed Caspers famous and endearing Mayan, Honduras Tour

Paul Furlong

Continued...

*"I pulled a trusty chisel from my tool kit while Ed found a three pound rock. Ready to make the hole, I took a peek at this poor Indian's face. Dark with doubt, unhappy with the prognosis, he nodded.... WHAM! Wham, wham, wham! The corner of my chisel began to make a triangle sized hole. The engine was still running and began to breathe a little easier. Three or four more licks and he had a nice little gash there. He twisted the gas, and the engine began to rise in RPM. Smiles all around, Whack whack whack....the gash got bigger and the engine sounded right purty. Whiiiiing! whiiiiing! whiiiiing!!! said the little motor... Our friend thanked us profusely and like the Lone Ranger and Tonto, we mounted up and rode off into that hot sultry desert day."*

Sometime later we stopped for gas and a snack. Presently, we saw our freshly redeemed rider go by, hunched into the wind, poncho flaying in the breeze. Gassed and watered, we settled back on the highway and soon passed our native *Don Quixote*. I waved and gave him the thumbs up in a kind of questioning way...back came a thumbs up; affirming things were good in moto-landia. Ed and I congratulated each other many times that night. I'll have to buy my own helmet cam...



At last we arrived in Copan, Honduras. It was only a few miles to Guatemala now but we'd decided to make Copan our northernmost point. When we next rode our bikes, we'd be going south again, and home.



**This is how almost everything is carried.**

We had time on Ed's tour. This was a two week ride and it left us room to spend extra nights if we liked. I think we spent three days there. Ed needed every moment and took massages for his neck when he could. It was on the second day that we went to see the ruins.

Copan is one of the largest of Mayan sites, and surely one of the best and most preserved. I took twenty or thirty pictures but even the best of them only show a kind of reflection of what was something very different indeed. We had a guide who spoke very good English and was knowledgeable about Mayan history. Many white-eyes

believed they were here one historical moment, and poof, gone another.



**This indigenous woman spoke through her heart. She taught herself English, and made friends with us.**

Foolish white-eyes, our guide has always been Mayan; she never left. Left only as in “changed into indigenous people,” by the way; no one in the Americas likes the term “Indian,” being fully aware they aren’t from India. The history of how they fell into disorder and lost their way is worth listening to. After all, what will they say about us in a generation or two?

She took our pictures and explained to us the meaning of the Lempira, which is what they call the money there. “Lempira” was a wise and noble king. When the Spaniards came, he fought them to a standstill.



**Ed and me**

But conquistadors only want to conquer, so they invited Lempira to visit

under a flag of truce, but when talks wound down and he wouldn’t sell his people out, they murdered him. Later, Ed and I rode through the town of **Gracias Lempira**...or Thank You Lempira (for fighting those devils to the end).

This next photo is of a Stadium where games were played for the gods. Eight years ago I was told that Royalty played, aiming a sort of ball up to hit a vertical kind of plate. They could only use hips, elbows and ...oh...I forget but no hands or knees or heads...to get a score. It was a great honor to win. Such an honor was not wasted,



**Grisly sport field; and the picture that is on the 100 Lempira note**

and the winners were sent to see God right away. There were clever ways of separating the head from the body and pedestals to drain the blood as the person of honor worked to keep his lips moving in prayer as long after decapitation as possible. The good news was in the magic mushrooms they ingested so that God, in his infinite humor, could understand them. I was disappointed to learn that experts now say it was prisoners, not royalty who spilt their blood and spoke to God. No mushrooms either I suppose.

Most of the statues and pyramids we saw were far too serious for a couple guys on bikes. Still this one took my fancy.



**The Mambo in more serious times...**

Then there were the underground pyramids. What is above is also below. And they built it below, yes, the pyramids. It cost a little extra but it was worth it just to see. Here's one of the many. I figure if I only show you one or two, you'll take my tour to see the rest.



**Down in the pyramid, where life doesn't go on.**

Back at the hotel, time was still on our side, but I knew we needed to head south and get some beach time. Ed felt better about his neck and wanted to take it slow and enjoy the ride. This is the point where we decided to eliminate the loop to San Pedro Sula. It was out of the way and a boring highway to boot. So we got out and down the road as far as La Entrada and hooked a hard right. From here, I must say, we had an adventuresome trip with no real idea where we were going except south and

generally headed to each new pueblo... Gracias Lempira, ran out of paved road and I wondered if we'd be all right up there in the mountains and if we'd find gas enough to keep the fire alive.

What looked like a short ride on the map was not so short and there were forks in the road with no signs! I took my chances and asked the few people I found. Damn the cost, I've ordered a helmet cam so days like this won't be lost again. Hot, dusty and tired, we arrived in La Esperanza, a poor but sweet little town with a history I can only imagine. We were told the best hotels were outside the pueblo, so we rode to La Paz, where they told us our best bet was Comayagua on the Pan American Highway. Late and dark, we found a room that was just okay. There we spent a quiet night and rested like the dead.

The next morning, we breakfasted in a modern, well equipped and exceedingly well guarded supermarket; the best restaurant in town, and decided to make a mission of getting back to Nicaragua for some R&R. This long story shortened as the miles clicked by on the Pan Am highway. We spent the night again in Danli, crossed into Nicaragua and kept honking till we came upon a good hotel in Esteli. Here we enjoyed high speed internet and a good night's sleep.



**The view is tremendous from a volcano**

Up in the morning and down into lowland desert heat; buffeted in blustering, blistering wind, we hunched down on our gas tanks and made the miles. I knew Ed was suffering but he hung in there. We took breaks, but we *rode* and it seemed like we'd never get to La Masaya volcano, but you know, we did. That great hole in the earth called by some, a number ten in the world of volcanoes.



**The Gash that killed Elvis**

I got us lost of course, but you know, people can *point* you to a volcano. I'm afraid my pictures don't do it justice but that's yet another reason for you to take my tour. There are funny stories from friends about rocks being lobbed out of the creator onto tour buses in the parking lot; and signs that say to spend no more than twenty minutes in the gas, and leave! During this twenty minutes, if the wind is right...or wrong, you can smell sulfur and it's easy to believe the devil is down there mixing up a batch just for you.



**The Yin Yang of Volcanoes; beauty in subtle and violent extremes**



**A good place for a Cross**

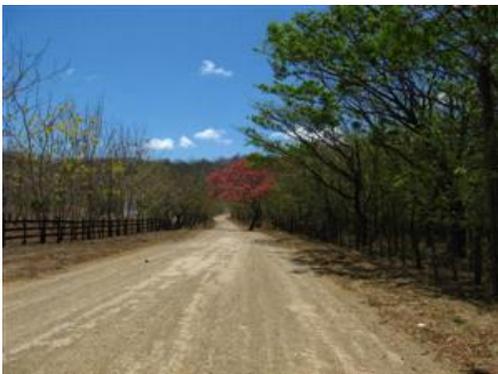
But I figure a motorcycle is a small target and sulfur ...well, as often as I go there, the odds are in my favor. Is it deep? Find a good size rock and work your arm up so you can get it into the center. Now listen, hear anything? I didn't ether.



**On my tippy toes, I'd come up to a third of this pitched rock**

People gravitate to volcanoes; they live as close to the base as they can, tempting fate and whatever karma brought them there. Central America pushed off the ocean floor some five million years ago. Pretty young compared to say, the Appalachian Mountains. Young indeed, complete with zits popping up with gaseous regularity, a land still in the making. Living here is interesting, and rewarding, you should see...

We rode on to Granada, another ex-capital of Nicaragua. Many Gringos live in Granada, a town very much like old Seville with its narrow streets and large church in the square. There are grand hotels and old family homes lining the streets. There are always a few three day'ers who come up from Costa Rica to get their passport stamped, spend seventy two hours there and go home for another three months. Beats flying to the states and the expenses incurred. Plus, Nicaragua has that Voodoo Commie thing going on. I know this isn't the place, but really, I don't see any difference between one government in control over another. Sitting with Paul (other Paul) in his hotel, we watched a bunch of Gringo tourist kids posturing with a soldier's AK47 for photo ops. You too, can get your pictures taken. It's safe, don't be a sissy...come out and play.



How you gonna know...if you don't go...?



Eco Travel is alive and well in Central America

I believe this is the last photo I took before heading for the Costa Rican border and home. Ed was burning from the sun and we kept to the shadows as best we could. Still, I needed this picture of a boat near the sea and all that blue sky above...



The last Picture

fuzzlong@gmail.com

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



**Stories from Mr. BudBud, Primero Perro of Lighthouse Animal Rescue. They were written 8 years ago when he first came to Costa Rica for a house sitting job.**

**6-20-2004**

**Hola!!! All**

**Well I didn't write last night because I was pretty tired and Dad stayed on the computer pretty late.**

**We rode around all day looking at property. Didn't see any spiders but saw some really pretty views from the mountains.**

**Then we went to Grecia to eat. You all know how much Mom hates to cook!! LOL!!!**

**It was like always. The kids came running to pet the perro and I did my "good dog" routine.**

**We went to town again today cause Dad wanted Mom to buy some of those jeans that all the pretty girls here wear.**

**He still thinks Mom is a teenager. LOL!!!**

**They are called "hip huggers."**

**Mom says they keep falling off her butt. LOL!!!**

**She bought some pretty ones though with dolphins around the hip band.**

**Mom says you can't call it a waist band because it doesn't come anywhere near her waist.**

**Anyway they are very pretty.**

**OH!!! And a friend of the owners of the house we are sitting called this morning and wanted to bring a group of people to see this house.**

**They arrived in a tour bus. There were 6 couples and the man who was showing them around. His name is George.**

**They oohed and aaahed over the house and then we all stood around talking for a while.**

**This one guy was telling us that he had heard that one time there was a ship load of coffee leaving from Costa Rica and it sank!!! He said they salvaged the ship and recovered the coffee.**

**BUT!!!!!! When they tested the coffee it didn't have any caffeine!!!!**

**The salt water had "neutralized " it.**

**They prepared the coffee anyway and sold it to a "new" market.**

**People who wanted caffeine free coffee.**

**They called it "Sanka!" You know...because the ship "sank-a."**

**Get it????**

**Mom says she remembers Sanka but she never knew that story!!**

**We don't know how true the story is but it made for interesting listening!!!**

**We met some of the street dogs today.**

**They were taking a break in the shade beside a store.**

**They aren't at all aggressive and pay no attention to me in my stroller.**

**Mom really wants to get started spaying and neutering.**

**We see a LOT of girl dogs who have puppies. You can tell because they have droopy baby bottles.**

**When we got home from looking at property and eating supper a lady came to the house to give Mom a manicure and a pedicure!! Mom NEVER had that done back home!! She is the sister of Enid, our tica friend who comes to clean the floors.**

**They brought their human puppies with them so I had my paws full trying to keep them from running amuck! BOY!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Human puppies are a LOT louder than dog puppies.**

**The lady was VERY pretty and she painted little flowers on Mom's fingers and toes!!!!!! It looks REALLY neat!!!!!!**

**Mom was floored when she paid the lady. It cost 1,000 colones.**

**That is about \$2.50 in American money.**

**The pretty lady is going to come back every week to do Mom's nails.**

**We are still having fun but I really miss my fuzzbutt buddies back home.**

**Anyway.....I will write more tomorrow.**

**Tailwags to everyone!!!!!!**

**BudBud the "human puppy" sitter.**

# Day Trip to Manuel Antonio: Top 10 Water Adventures



*By Shannon Farley*

Dazzling white sandy beaches backed by tropical rainforest, shimmering blue-green water, fresh ocean breezes, and a diverse array of wildlife – **Manuel Antonio** is one of Costa Rica’s most popular beach destinations. Only 2 hours from Atenas, it’s a great day trip to feel like you’ve gone on vacation. Or, stay overnight and really make it a holiday! The Quepos/Manuel Antonio area offers everything from top beaches to lush rainforest, abundant wildlife, wild rivers, mangrove estuaries and the famous **Manuel Antonio National Park**.



The pristine sparkling waters of the Pacific Ocean along this stretch of Costa Rican coastline make for an enormous “playground” of nature and adventure activities. So too do the big, wild rivers of the nearby Savegre and Naranjo, and the mysterious tangled mangrove waterways of the Damas Island Estuary.

Here’s a **top 10 list for water adventures** to enjoy in the **Manuel Antonio** area.

## River and Estuary Adventures

### Whitewater Rafting



Costa Rica offers some of the world's best whitewater rafting on beautiful, wild rivers that flow through spectacular tropical wilderness. In the Manuel Antonio area, the **Naranjo River** and **Savegre River** both fit this bill perfectly. The Savegre River features **class 2-3 rapids** surrounded by lush vegetation, and is perfect for beginners and families. Outfitter **H2O**

**Adventures** (<http://www.h2ocr.com> / 2777-4092) even offers a **river tubing adventure** on a **class 1-2 section** of the Savegre River. The Naranjo River is bigger and bolder, with fun and exciting **class 3-4 rapids**; the El Chorro section is a **solid class 4** run through a tight gorge. H2O Adventures, a franchise of the famous company Rios Tropicales in Costa Rica, is one of the best whitewater rafting companies in Quepos/Manuel Antonio.

## Mangrove Estuary Kayaking

The **Damas Island Estuary**, just 15 minutes from Manuel Antonio, is a completely different world where the ocean's salt water meets the fresh waters of the Damas River, creating a tidal lagoon and forest of interlacing aerial roots of mangrove trees. In easy **sit-on-top ocean kayaks**, **H2O**



**Adventures** (<http://www.h2ocr.com> / 2777-4092) will take you paddling through the calm labyrinth waterways. A wealth of animal and bird life live in the estuary, such as mangrove wrens, swallows, shore birds, crocodiles, "Sally light foot" crabs, boa constrictors, silky anteaters and white-faced monkeys.

## Ocean Adventures

### Catamaran Sailing & Snorkeling



See dolphins, sea turtles, manta rays, sea birds, and maybe even a passing migrating humpback whale while you cruise along the Manuel Antonio Marine Preserve on a sleek and comfortable sailing catamaran. **Planet Dolphin** (<http://www.planetdolphin.com/> / 2777-1647) is the longest-running operator of **catamaran tours** in Manuel Antonio. They offer **two tours daily**, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, on three different catamarans ranging in size from 37 feet to 70 feet-long. All boats are equipped with U.S.

Coast Guard-approved life preservers, marine radio, stereo system, snorkel equipment, and are led by bilingual staff. During the tour, you will anchor in the protected Biesanz Bay for snorkeling around some coral reef. Planet Dolphin provides all you need for snorkeling gear, and you'll also be served lunch (or dinner) of fresh fruits, grilled fish brochettes, pasta salad, and drinks. During the tour, drinks and snacks are unlimited and included!

### Jet Ski Tour

Cruise out on the ocean on individual wave runners along the Manuel Antonio National Park coastline. You'll ride around small islands and spot marine life up close. **Jungle Coast Jet Ski Tours** (<http://www.junglecoastjets.com/> / 2777-7547) uses easy-to-use Yamaha and Honda wave runners on their 2-hour tour, which they offer 3 times a day. You can jump off and swim at any time and even do a bit of snorkeling.



### Scuba Diving & Snorkeling



The underwater world off of Manuel Antonio is full of volcanic formations and a multitude of colorful tropical fish – perfect for exploring while scuba diving. Quepos/Manuel Antonio is home to the only **5-star PADI scuba diving center** on Costa Rica's Central Pacific Coast. **Oceans Unlimited** (<http://www.oceansunlimitedcr.com> / 2777-3171) offers guided dive and snorkeling trips, PADI dive courses, introductory resort courses and Nitrox. Certified divers or first-time divers are welcome; Oceans Unlimited professional instructors and dive crew are fully certified.

There are many opportunities for snorkeling in Manuel Antonio. Whether you take a tour, or simply slip on a mask and float right off the National Park's beaches, you're bound to see plenty of tropical fish, rock formations, crustaceans, mollusks, etc. Many tours, like the catamaran sailing, Jet Ski and scuba diving, include snorkeling. Or Oceans Unlimited offers guided snorkeling trips.

## Sea Kayaking

Enjoy a scenic paddling tour of the Manuel Antonio coastline. Outfitter **H2O Adventures** uses easy sit-on-top ocean kayaks that fit one or two persons. Guides are bilingual and are trained in water and ocean safety.



## Sailing



This tour on the beautiful **sailboat "Perla Azul" (Blue Pearl)** (<http://www.sailingtourmanuelantonio.com/description.html> / 2777-2516) takes you through the serene, crystal-clear waters of Quepos and Manuel Antonio. The nice thing about sailing is no motor noises that may frighten off marine animals you want to observe. Morning tours look for marine life, and the afternoon tours include watching Manuel Antonio's spectacular sunsets.

## Sportfishing

Quepos/Manuel Antonio is one of Costa Rica's hot spots for world-class sportfishing. Catch and release marlin, sailfish, Mahi Mahi (Dorado), Wahoo, tuna and roosterfish year round. **Tropical Waters Sport Fishing** (<http://www.quepostropicalwaterssportfishing.com/> / 2777-7314) offers half-day, three-quarter, and full-day charters, as well as customized multi-day trips, for both offshore and inshore fishing. Offshore fishing is normally done 20 to 40 miles out in blue water. Tropical Waters always uses circle hooks for "Catch and Release" fishing.



## Surfing



Manuel Antonio's waves cater more to beginner and moderate surfers; however, with a good swell, the local breaks can be fun for all levels of surfers. Rent boards and take surf lessons with **Manuel Antonio Surf School** (<https://www.facebook.com/MASSCostaRica>), a fully insured surf school with bilingual instructors who are trained in water safety, first aid, and the International Surfing Association.

## Parasailing

While parasailing is technically an aerial adventure, this popular Manuel Antonio activity takes off from the beach while being towed by a boat and flies you over the ocean. You'll get a bird's-eye view of the stunning Manuel Antonio coastline from 600 feet up in the air above the blue Pacific. On the **Aguas Azules tour**, you can fly alone or in tandem with one or two other persons. **Aguas Azules** (<http://costaicaparasailing.com/> / 2777-9192) is fully licensed and insured with an impeccable safety record. Their website says parasailing is so easy, that anyone from age 3 to 80 can do it.



## An alternative place to stay in the Manuel Antonio area

**Portasol** (<http://www.portasol.cr/en/> / 2787-5018 / 2787-5020), a sustainable community located near Manuel Antonio by Matapalo Beach, offers impressive properties in the rainforest with ocean views. Three spectacular vacation homes are available for rent, along with bungalows built on high stilts that simulate tree houses with decorative wrap-around verandas. Enjoy private trails through the jungle to rivers and waterfalls with natural pools. Portasol has for sale scenic mountain lots, ranging in size from 2 to 10 acres, equipped with electricity, water, gravel roads and at least one building site.



## HOME SWEET HOME....HOW YOUR HOME CAN RISE UP TO MEET YOU.



by Dennis Easters [easters3@msn.com](mailto:easters3@msn.com)

After almost 20 years in the real estate business, 7 of which have been in Costa Rica, there is no doubt in my mind that your home, no matter how humble or grand, should rise up to meet you. For me, my home is my sanctuary. It is a sacred space, a place where I can retreat from the outside world. I can recharge and revitalize in surroundings that I have created just for me and my family. However, more than anything else it's a place where I enjoy just "being".

In our real estate business, we are selling a lifestyle and dream of what most people believe Costa Rica to be. Most home buyers who come to Costa Rica already have a vision of what they want their home to look like once they make their dreams a reality. If you are moving thousands of miles away from "home" to a different country that has a different culture, language and lifestyle then it is vital that your new space and surroundings are comfortable and everything that you dreamed that they would be.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS-** My great-grandma Murphy always said that a person could live in a tar paper shack but if they kept a nice yard it made the house. To this day I agree with my grandmother and think that landscape is the first and most important impression your home makes. In modern day terms, it's called curb appeal. Costa Rica is a lush, tropical, paradise and almost everything grows easily and to Jurassic proportions. Plant material is inexpensive and labor very affordable. Take an afternoon and drive to a local "vivero" and you will see just how many plants a few hundred dollars will buy and the transformation it will make to your home. Something as simple as a potted plant on each side of your front door makes a huge impression. It feels warm and inviting without costing an arm and a leg.

**OUTDOOR LIVING-** One of the most important aspects to consider when living in Costa Rica is lifestyle. With a year round moderate climate and stunning scenery most people tend to spend 80% of their time outdoors. Outdoor living spaces such as over sized porches, terraces and ranchos are a must to fully soak up your surroundings. It is very common to have an outdoor living room, dining room and kitchen that are as large or larger than their indoor counterparts. Having comfortable, overstuffed outdoor living room furniture along with a rocking chair and hammock slung between two columns is an enjoyable way to lounge around on a lazy afternoon. Throw in a ceiling fan, an outdoor rug, colorful throw pillows and a few potted plants and you have just created a

space fit for a king. If this space has an incredible view, swimming pool or fire element close by, I guarantee most of your guest will choose to be outdoors enjoying the openness and freedom the natural surroundings offers.

**INDOOR LIVING SPACES-** In Costa Rica it is quite acceptable to have smaller indoor living spaces especially if you have spacious outdoor living areas. Keep you indoor space clean and simple. If you have a tight space, add mirrors on walls opposing large windows or glass doors to reflect the outdoors. By bringing the outdoors “in” you will instantly double your sense of space. Bring in native woods with some of your furniture choices. The craftsmanship of Costa Rican furniture makers is unmatched and very affordable. Personally I love color, BIG color, but in splashes. For example, in every room I like to choose an accent wall that will be the focal point of the room and paint it a color. The other three walls will be a nice neutral that brings the space together. Bring your family and personality into the space with a few strategically placed photographs, mementos from your travels or special trinkets that you have been given or collected over the years for an added homey touch.

**THE MASTER BEDROOM-** My bedroom is my space. No one is welcome unless I have invited them to come in. It is my opinion that your bedroom should be the most intimate space in your home. In my case, no televisions allowed. My philosophy is that the bedroom is for rest and relaxation, so I want the space to feel like a 5 star hotel. Just enough decor and furnishings to feel warm, but not so much that it feels cluttered. Luxurious bedding is a must. I think a minimum of a 600 thread count Egyptian cotton sheet is a luxury that everyone should treat themselves to. Adding a few extra layers to your bedding with an additional blanket, extra pillows and decorative throw pillows make you feel as if you have just checked into the Ritz. I personally I think that having 4-6 pillows and 3-4 throw pillows on a bed makes a dramatic impact. If I have had a long, hard day beating the pavement, I know that when I go to bed at night, I will sleep like an angel. I am an avid reader. If possible I always like to have a reading corner in my bedroom that is well lit and comfortable where I can curl up with a good book.

Your master bath should be equally as impressive. Living in the tropics an outdoor shower is a real luxury. With a little care, you can create an indoor/outdoor shower that is integrated into your garden but completely private. Keep things simple and don't over crowd the space. Quality bath towels and a nice bath robe add to the spa feeling at home.

**THE GUEST BEDROOM-** You always want your guests to feel at home. Make sure your guest room is as inviting as the master, but on a smaller scale. I was brought up to believe that you always put out your best for your guests. As with your master bedroom, nice bedding and bath towels are a must. A nice touch for your guest room is a hotel style luggage rack so that your guest can easily access their clothing. Equally impressive is having a nice set of towels laid out for you guest with individual soaps. It's the little details that will make you a memorable host.

**FRESH FLOWERS-** Nothing will convey the tropical lifestyle more than fresh cut flowers or live potted plants throughout your home. A vase or urn of freshly cut flowers or greenery from the garden is the easiest and most economical way to transform a space. Every room in your house should have a special place for flowers and potted plants. Most tropical cut flowers will last a minimum of one week if you change the water every other day. There are many species of palms in Costa Rica that make easy to care for house plants. Everyone thinks you need to have a perfectly arranged vase of flowers as a center piece. This is simply not true. I have a big vase that stands about 30" tall for my dinning room table. More times than not it has 3-4 large philodendron leaves stuck in it. We have received more compliments on this arrangement than any other in our home. Why? It's simple and makes a big statement.

**LOCAL FLAVOR-** When decorating your new space, don't forget the local flavor. Find things from the culture and surroundings that you can incorporate into your home. For example, a pair of rocking chairs from Sarchi that are handcrafted of local hardwoods with hand tooled leather seats make a perfect seating area on your front porch. Another craftsman in Orotina takes beautiful slabs of Guanacaste wood and creates furniture pieces that are works of art. Find a unique piece of wood and have it mounted on the wall behind your bed, creating a one of a kind head board. In Atenas we have a local artist who paints beautiful rural scenes with a technique that makes you think it is a photograph. One large statement piece in the living area or a bedroom adds just the right amount of local flavor and is a simple way of inviting the community to be part of your home.

Having a stunning home that rises up to meet you does not have to be expensive or a daunting task, nor do you need to have a 10,000 square foot mansion. In my life I have experienced small 1,000 square foot spaces that were far more intimate and luxurious than some the mansions I have had the privilege to visit. It's the simple things that make all the difference like a boldly painted accent wall, a vase of fresh flowers or greenery, one piece of furniture that makes a statement or luxurious linens for your bed. If nothing else, have a large platter of fresh tropical fruits as the centerpiece of your dinning room table or kitchen island. Taking into account your new found tropical lifestyle and with a little attention to detail, your home in paradise will always rise to meet you and your guest each and every time you enter the front door.





Diagnosis of the socio-economic context and environmental impacts of Quebrada Matias was completed this summer.

## The Quebrada Matías Restoration Project: a mirror of our attitudes towards the environment

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Quebrada Matías is a small creek that crosses Atenas along 16 km. It joins the Río Cacao after traversing four distinctive communities (Roca Verde, Brasil, Los Olivos and Los Angeles) in an area spanning 4.3 km<sup>2</sup>. Following the initiative of Hugo Valerio (president of ADECA, the Association for the Conservation of Nature) the Center for Sustainable Development Studies joined forces with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Health, the Municipality, and the National Technical University to implement a 3-year stream restoration project. Last summer, our Center carried out two field projects to complete the socio-economic and environmental diagnosis of Quebrada Matias. Two of our professors, Alvaro Salas (economist) and Achim Häger (natural resources manager), along with students and interns, jumped into the muddy waters to analyze the socio-economic profile of these communities, describe their level of awareness regarding the stream conditions, and map and identify major sources of impacts. Previous to field work, the Center participated in a stream clean-up mission along with other organizations. This experience was an

eye-opener for all participants. The level of solid waste found in the stream was beyond expectation. We found whole pieces of furniture, metal scrap and tires. The type of garbage dumped into the stream was perplexing to say the least. The research showed that high levels of income were not related to the level of awareness on the stream, or the level of importance given to it. Humble communities such as Los Olivos, interact more closely with the stream and gave it greater importance. The data showed increasing urbanization around the stream, with pastures, coffee and crops being replaced by urban areas right on the stream margins. Soil quality is heavily impacted, not to mention the heavy discharges from sewage. This state of affairs reflects our attitudes towards the environment: ignorance, convenience, oblivion. We cannot expect that our actions go unnoticed since we all have significant impacts that do not stop by living quietly behind closed doors. We need to get involved and take action, and most importantly, know about our immediate impacts and

correct them. If we have chosen Costa Rica as our home, this country deserves better. Many of the communities showed lack of knowledge regarding these serious environmental impacts, and many considered the stream as something totally distant from their reality. There are major challenges to participate in the local recycling program due to lack of transportation as well as incentives to recycle. The private sector needs to get involved and create incentives for local communities to adopt their streams. What to do now? First of all, a. respect the stream margin, stop any more construction there, b. Implement simple technological alternatives to treat sewage and gray waters, such as constructed wetlands, c. Get involved in the recycling program, organize your neighbors and collect the recycling. What is not recycled may end up in the stream. It is time to chip in and not to wait for others to solve our problems.

Dr. Gerardo Avalos  
Director  
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**This article first appeared in SFS publication Cedrela September 2012. It appears in *Atenas Today* with permission from SFS.**

## Biophysical assessment of the Quebrada Matias watershed, Atenas

Achim Häger, Professor of Natural Resource Management, ([ahaeger@fieldstudies.org](mailto:ahaeger@fieldstudies.org))

The management of solid waste and waste water remain major challenges for sustainable development in Costa Rica, along with the absence of adequate land use planning. Decentralized, bottom-up initiatives are critical to improving watershed management where government authorities fail to meet their responsibilities. The CSDS is participating in a local initiative for the ecological restoration of the Quebrada Matias watershed. The initiative gathers representatives from government agencies, the municipality of Atenas, environmental organizations, community members and educational institutions.

The Matias stream is a small semi-rural watershed (4.3 km<sup>2</sup>), located within the Tárcoles River basin, which contains Costa Rica's major urban areas and half of the country's population. This study represents the initial step (diagnostic phase) of a 3-year action plan to restore this micro-watershed. We aimed to provide maps and indicators to describe the current condition and land use dynamics of the watershed. For this purpose, we conducted field inventories and compiled remote sensing imagery and other spatial data sources, e.g. cadaster maps from the Atenas municipality, for GIS analyses.

The watershed is affected by numerous problems. Its functioning is threatened most severely by the discharge of sewage and solid waste near urban areas (Figure 1). Land use change is dynamic and lacks planning which represents a major threat in the immediate future. Urban area has increased by 300% since 1989 and already covers a quarter of the watershed area. Accordingly, land cover by impervious surface areas has increased from 4.8 to 7.4% within the same period, which leads to measurable effects on the storm flow runoff of the Matias stream, according to a simplified hydrological model. Furthermore, we detected indicators for soil erosion and degradation associated with cattle ranching, roads and construction activity. The extent of pastures has decreased dramatically from over 50% in 1989 to less than 5% of the total area. Cattle pastures have been replaced by pasture with trees, urban development and forest. Forest cover approximately doubled from 8 to 16% of the total area since 1989. Overall the watershed condition was classified as "functioning at risk" by USDA standards.

It can be assumed that the Quebrada Matias watershed is representative for land use dynamics and environmental issues in the Western Central Valley. Development in this area has arrived at a crossroads where critical ecosystem services and overall quality of life might significantly decrease if no measures are taken to ensure sustainable growth by adequate land use planning, the application of effective regulations and increased efforts towards environmental education and cooperation with communities.

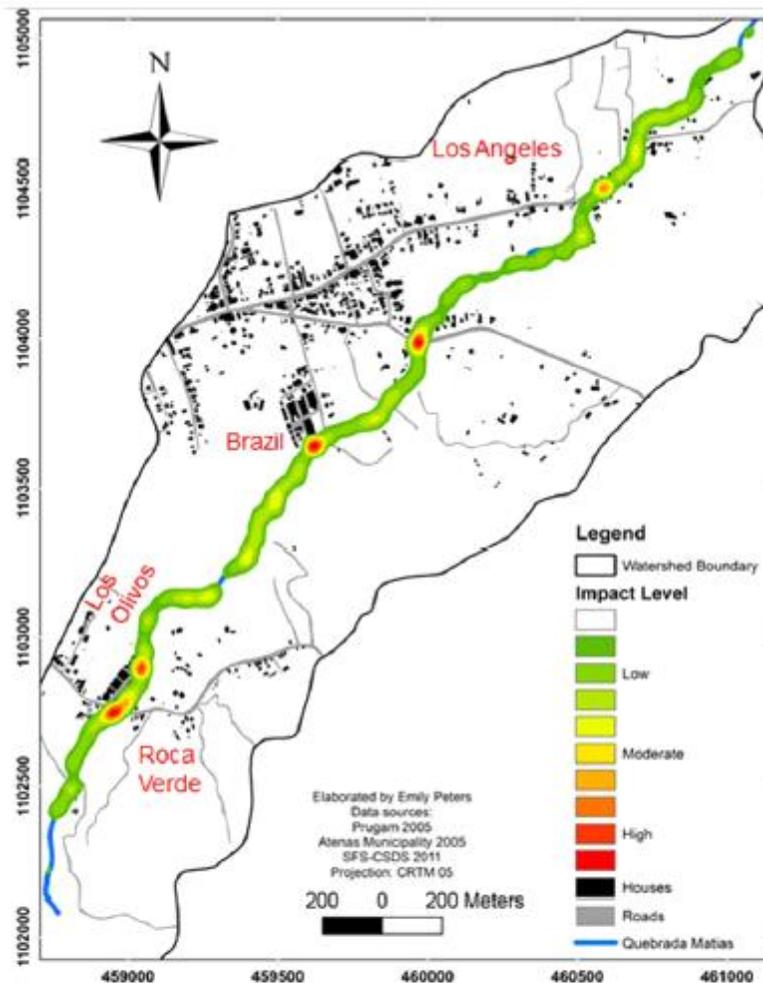


Figure 1. Condition of the Matias stream, based on an indicator that integrates impacts from pollution sources, soil degradation and vegetation condition, based on field survey data from August 2012.

If you would like to contact us, write to us at: Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Sostenible, Apartado 150-4013 Atenas, Alajuela, Costa Rica. TEL. 506. 2446-5558

**This article first appeared in SFS publication Cedrela September 2012.  
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## Chili Rocks for Hogar de Vida!

**SAVE THE DATE:** Sunday, February 9, 2014 – Next Year's Chili Cook Off

OKAY! It's time to spill the beans on the results of the Sixth Annual Atenas Charity Chili Cook Off. If you haven't heard, it was a HUGE success with outstanding results! This year's event raised a whopping \$20,000 for Hogar de Vida – a local children's home here in Atenas that is making a difference one child at a time.



Hogar de Vida Celebrates and Thanks the Chili Cook Off Committee for a Job Well Done!

The Chili Cook Off Committee recently presented the check for \$20,000 to Hogar de Vida at a "thank you" celebration hosted by Hogar! And the cool thing – the proceeds raised was going toward a security wall on their premises to better serve the safety of the children that live there. Below you can see that they actually began construction on this wall the day after the Chili Cook Off.



The Day AFTER the Chili Cook Off – construction began for Hogar de Vida's new security wall!

Okay, who won Top Honors at this year's Chili Cook Off? There were twenty-five teams that participated and all were vying for a top ranking. Congratulations to the following winners:

First Place – Jalapenos

Second Place – Maria's Texas Chili

Third Place – South of the "South of the Border"

Fourth Place – Costa Rica Chicas

Fifth Place – Sperone

Sixth Place – Vamos Gourmet Catering and International Cuisine

Vegetarian – Chesapeake Chili Champs

Showmanship First Place – Roca Caliente

Showmanship Honorable Mention – Jalapenos

Showmanship Honorable Mention – Hot Meat

People's Choice – eMi (Engineering Ministries International)

This year we established a "Coins for Kids" program where people started saving their coins prior to the Cook Off and brought it with them to donate to the kids. With only having this in place for about two weeks, over \$200 was raised for this purpose. So....the challenge is to begin this program early – YES, now – and begin to add your coins to a container at home and save it up. Then, come event day, you can bring it with you and let's see if we can raise over \$1000 next year in the "Coins for Kids" program.

As mentioned last month, this event was successful because of the partnerships established in this community (sponsors, chili teams, chili judges, volunteers, and attendees) – and on behalf of the Chili Cook Off Committee and Hogar de Vida, we bow and say "thank you all".

Get ready for next year - Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – we promise it will be another great day!

## VIGNETTES FROM COSTA RICA



*by Forest Gerdes*  
*wm\_forest@yahoo.com*

### **Number One**

Parking alongside the Atenas Plaza, I see a traveling man, worldly goods in three bags deposited on the cement bench near a payphone. Probably just got off a bus. He is talking on the phone, leaves the receiver dangling to walk over, no hurry, and ask if he can borrow a pen. Muscular, middle aged but still lean, shirt cut off to show his arms. This man has done a lot of work on fincas, and he is proud of having done it. Strong vaquero face, tan, intensely sad eyes. I wonder if I will get my pen back, he takes so long, but after he finishes writing his directions, he returns to where I sit waiting in the car. As he returns my pen, he tells me what I have guessed. He is a finca worker of some experience. I ask if he is Nicaraguan. Not wondering at my question, as there are so many from that country here looking for work, he proudly asserts that he is Tico. He can ride, he says, and knows cafe. He has all his gear in the bags he points to, and is looking for a new place to work. Do I have a finca? Almost makes me wish I did, as I feel immediately like hiring this worthy orphaned man for the rest of his working days. For several weeks I can't get him out of my mind, wondering why he lost his place in life, and where he will end up.

### **Number Two**

Seeing good fruit hanging from a pick up along the road, I stop very near to consider it, without leaving the car. I see a hand of the most flavorful kind of bananas, and because they are already ripe, ask to buy half. The hand is broken in half, the larger half is passed through the window. The price is right, but I offer a little less, and the offer is accepted after the veteran vendor praises their flavor. Next, I see that he has some golden ripe papayas of a nice small size. Again, after some discussion of price and handing back and forth of the heavy fruit, a lovely one is mine. The vendor introduces me to "His woman", who wears a silver saint's medal, dangling in and out of her flowered blouse. And though he would like to tell me his life story, I just shake his grizzled hand, and tell him I must head for home. At breakfast the following day, I discover that all he said about the bananas and papaya is true. Never had better! Wonder if I will see his pickup again?

### **Number Three**

Just before Christmas, a typically hefty looking Tico working man stands in the supermarket check out line ahead of me. He has two small boys with him. One is in the cart, one running loose. Both are well behaved. The young dad is not smiling, but not stem, just tired after his day; perhaps with a head full of thoughts. The older boy runs off to check out some toy trucks on a shelf, some way away. He is obviously well cared for, clean haircut, dressed in matching orange shorts and socks. After paying with his Banco de Costa Rico card, dad looks around for his eldest and calls out, "Santi! Vamos!". The boy comes skipping, promptly and happily to his Papa. I wonder, Which truck is Santi hoping another Santy will bring? Why is his tired daddy grocery shopping and taking care of the boys alone tonight? I hope he gets some help from mom soon.

## **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.



**"The Girl Next Door"**  
**16" x 20"**  
**Oil on Linen**

Al Alexander  
*jeanandal@gmail.com*



Yellow Nosed Tiger

**Jocelyn Farquhar, Squibbles Designs**  
jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com



Jocelyn giving her commissioned piece to Karen titled "Waterfall and Volcano"



Larry Felder  
"Three-Toed Sloth"

8" x 10" oil on canvas, 2013

Email: [larry@feldergallery.com](mailto:larry@feldergallery.com)

Blog: [www.larryfelderart.blogspot.com](http://www.larryfelderart.blogspot.com)

Portfolio: [www.larryfelder.weebly.com](http://www.larryfelder.weebly.com)

Gallery: [www.feldergallery.com](http://www.feldergallery.com)



**Isn't She Lovely?**

**Acrylic on Watercolor Paper**

Dragonfly Animal Portraits

[www.dianamiskell.com](http://www.dianamiskell.com)

<http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>



Crystal Springs Falls, by Jeanita Ives of Ives Images  
Currently on exhibit at Antaños Restaurant in Atenas



**Gender Crossing**  
48" x 48"  
Acrylic on Board  
Harriet Sheppard  
hweyman@hotmail.com

## For the bloggers...



We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest to our 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.

Biolley Buzz	<a href="http://bcrcoffee.com">bcrcoffee.com</a>
Claudia Leon	<a href="http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/">http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/</a> <a href="http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/">http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/</a>
Costa Rica: Sisters in Transition (Judy & Roxi)	<a href="http://costaricasistersintransition.blogspot.com">http://costaricasistersintransition.blogspot.com</a>
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica Diane Miskell Dovile Vaigauskaite	<a href="http://delapuravida.com">delapuravida.com</a> <a href="http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com">http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com</a> <a href="http://www.powerofindividual.org">www.powerofindividual.org</a>
Fabulista De Costa Rica Fred Ball	<a href="http://fabulista DECR.blogspot.com">fabulista DECR.blogspot.com</a> <a href="http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/">http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/</a>
G. Martin Lively Going Like Sixty	<a href="http://fishinginandaroundcostarica.blogspot.com">fishinginandaroundcostarica.blogspot.com</a> <a href="http://goinglikesixty.com">goinglikesixty.com</a>
Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	<a href="http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/">http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/</a>
Lois and Jim Craft	<a href="http://adventurecraft.blogspot.com">adventurecraft.blogspot.com</a>
Marietta Arce Mi Chunche	<a href="http://marisundays.wordpress.com">http://marisundays.wordpress.com</a> <a href="http://michunche.com">michunche.com</a>
Nadine Hays Pisani New Life in Costa Rica	<a href="http://happierthanabillionaire.com">happierthanabillionaire.com</a> <a href="http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/">http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/</a>
Paul Furlong Paul Furlong motorcycle blog	<a href="http://shootright.blogspot.com/">http://shootright.blogspot.com/</a> <a href="http://eyeneo.com/">http://eyeneo.com/</a>
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The Real Costa Rica The Very Worst Missionary The View From Here	<a href="http://blog.therealcostarica.com">blog.therealcostarica.com</a> <a href="http://theveryworstmissionary.com">theveryworstmissionary.com</a> <a href="http://theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com">theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com</a>

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- No cages...your pet will be a guest in our home.
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- If you prefer that your dog be kept in a secure outdoor area, we offer large covered runs.
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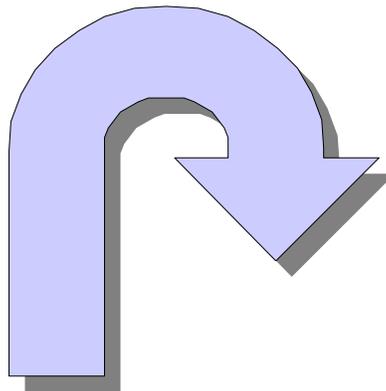
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**Specific Property Type:** Single family home  
**Listing Status:** Active  
**Price (US\$):** \$159,900  
**Geographic Area:** Atenas and Alajuela areas  
**Property City:** Atenas  
**Neighborhood:** San Isidro  
**Meters Squared or Hectares:** 1276.19meters  
**Lot Size (sq. Ft.) - Farm Acreage:** 1/4 acre+  
**Year Built:** 2008  
**Construction (sq. ft.):** 1,800  
**Bedrooms:** 2  
**Full Baths:** 2

**Phone Lines:** 1



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### **Job Requirements:**

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