

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. 111

March 23, 2014



Bird of Paradise Flower
Ives Images Photo Art
ivesjg@mac.com

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.

Compositions from back issues are archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, www.atenascatuca.com. Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.



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DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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

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

Publisher's Note



The first time I heard the term March Madness was probably in the late 1970's when I was working in an office with a dozen enthusiastic (mostly male) basketball fanatics. I could never quite grasp the strange phenomenon these ordinarily Walter Mitty types were gripped by during the second half of March. Talk of odds, and percentages and champions made it almost impossible to concentrate on the shipping schedules and other mundane tasks of our days. I was always secretly happy when things settled back to normal and we could once again get some real work done!

We are in a sort of March madness right here in Atenas these days. Our local Boys and Girls Volleyball teams have brought us Gold and Silver medals respectively in this year's National Games. Atenas continues to deserve the reputation for excellence in volleyball year after year. Congratulations to everyone who made it possible: the players, their families and of course, their coaches.



Atenas Boys Volleyball, Gold Medal *



Atenas Girls Volleyball, Silver Medal *

Easter will be celebrated on April 20th. Please check schedules so that you are not surprised by the closing of your favorite places in observation of Holy Week. This is also a good time to check on the rubber boots, umbrellas and the seeds for planting before too long!

Atenas Today has just celebrated its seventh year! I am indebted to our readers and contributors for continuing to grant the publication an important place as part of the ever-increasing expat and tico community in Atenas Today and every day.

Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail

* Photos courtesy of Atenas Voleibol FB Page



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

This space is available for posting community activities for the following weeks. Please provide information about your activity or event to atenastoday@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

March 28-31 Fund Raising activities at the Hogar de Ancianos beginning noon

March 29th – Horse Parade (Cabalgata) to benefit Hogar de Ancianos

(see flyers around town) 5 p.m.

April 11th – Juan Santamaria day, holiday

April 17, 18th Holy Thursday, Good Friday most banks, businesses closed

April 20th – Easter Sunday

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

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

Third Tuesday of every month: PLEIN AIR ART GROUP. Art activities as varied as the members. Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or janyatsko@gmail.com

Every Wednesday: (Please confirm with Sara or Kay 2446-0664)

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

Second Wednesday of every month: Writer's Club meets at Colinas del Sol, at Noon. Contact L. Michael Rusin @ crcaseyboy@gmail.com (2451-8063) for more information. Please confirm.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED RECYCLING HAS BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THE TIME BEING. WE EXPECT FULL DETAILS (WITHIN TWO WEEKS) OF AN UPCOMING RECYCLING PLAN WHICH IS BEING FINALIZED NOW. IN THE MEANTIME, TETRAPAK (ONLY) ITEMS, WASHED, FLATTENED, ETC. CAN BE BROUGHT TO THE CENTRAL SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS (7 A.M. TO 2 P.M.) THANK YOU.



Buddhist Book Discussion

Every Sunday

Meditation (optional) 1:30pm

Book Discussion 2:00pm

218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings.

ALL ARE WELCOME,

from non-Buddhists to
experienced Buddhist practitioners

If you wish to know what book we're currently reading,
or if you need directions or any other information,
please feel free to telephone or email:

Adrienne and Richard Baksa
2446-8509
adriennebaksa@me.com
rbaksa@mac.com



ATENAS NEW COMMUNITY (associated with the Tico church, Iglesia Bíblica de Atenas)
[facebook.com/groups/145046998883605](https://www.facebook.com/groups/145046998883605)



DESCRIPTION: Atenas New Community is non-denominational with a diverse congregation - Messianic Jews, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Methodists, Catholics, Southern Baptists, etc. The focus is on Jesus Christ and the Bible, not on esoteric and divisive theological differences.

SERVICES:

Tuesday - 6pm - Bible study in English.

Wednesday - 6pm - English worship service

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

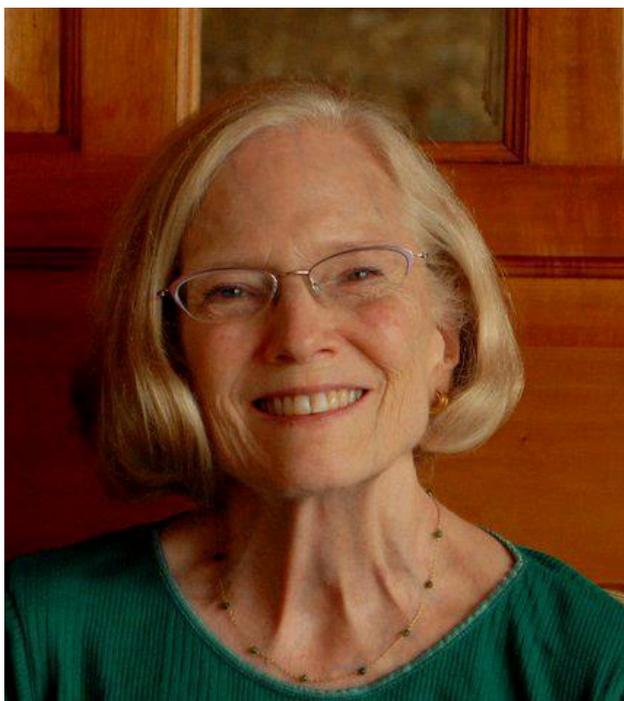
ENGLISH PASTOR: Steve Lucas - <https://www.facebook.com/steve.lucas> • 8764-8960

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

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

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

A Pura Vida Story



By Jean Lively
jilively.cr@gmail.com

This afternoon, as I sat at my computer, I had all my doors and windows open, enjoying the perfect Atenas weather when a black hornet wasp (or whatever the name of the beastly insect is) started flying around!

I had been informed about their nasty stings so I promptly located a flyswatter and unsuccessfully swatted at it.

Since it was not happy with me, I decided to leave the room before I was attacked. I moved into the kitchen, closing my bedroom door behind me.

I looked up at my kitchen light fixture and there was a mound of them enjoying the warmth, I guess.

I decided it was safer with just one so I immediately returned to my bedroom closing the door behind me...

Then I picked up my telephone and called my neighbors for HELP!

They arrived, promptly with RAID™ and the crisis ended!

Only in Atenas!



Bing.com royalty-free image!

Good Deeds Day at MultiFrio



by Atenas Today Staff Writer

On Sunday, March 9th, the 7th annual Good Deeds Day was celebrated globally. Shari Arison, businesswoman and philanthropist, initiated the idea, which was then launched and organized by Ruach Tova (NGO), a part of The Ted Arison Family Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Arison Group in 2007. Ms. Arison's belief that the circles of goodness grow in the world as people think good, speak good and do good have led to the increase in participants from a modest 7000 in 2007 to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide in 2014. Costa Rica joined the celebration for the first time this year.

Much closer to home, on March 7th, Salo Ponchner, co-owner and General Manager of MultiFrio (Sabana Larga, Atenas) invited a group of 35 students and their teachers from the Liceo Santa Gertrudis in Grecia to visit their installations and participate in a motivational lecture on Entrepreneurship, followed by refreshments and a tour of the company.



Students of Liceo Santa Gertrudis with Mr. Ponchner



Illustrating Elements of Entrepreneurship

The aim of Mr. Ponchner's lecture (delivered almost entirely in English) was to stimulate the minds of these young people so that they will begin to think about their future endeavors in a different way. The key elements needed to create and sustain a successful business were covered in an inspiring and entertaining manner. The students undoubtedly received valuable information that might not have been accessible to them elsewhere without investing a small fortune. Similar workshops have been offered to the Colegio Técnico Profesional de Atenas and the Santa Eulalia Colegio Técnico. MultiFrio has also participated in industrial and scientific fairs at the Colegio Técnico as jury, mentor and provider of workshops on mechanical metal.



Students enjoying a well-deserved break!



May 2013 Tour to Colegio Técnico



March 2014 Tour to Liceo Santa Gertrudis

MultiFrio's arrival in Atenas in early 2010 has been very positive for the county. The company's high-performance standards and determination to make a difference locally has been noticeable and very encouraging. MultiFrio has been an active participant in many local events and was a major sponsor in the 7th Annual Chili Cook-Off that raised an important amount of money for the Hogar de Vida Orphanage in Atenas. Mr. Ponchner was part of the Organizational Committee for the Chili Cook-Off, created videos in Spanish for the web and Facebook pages, and was instrumental in signing up tico sponsors and participants. Thanks to MultiFrio's massive media campaign, Channel 7 and the magazine *Apetito* were also able to attend and report on the event.

We look forward to hearing more about MultiFrio's commitment to the community and hope that other companies will follow their example.

For more information on Good Deeds Day, visit: <http://gdd.goodnet.org/>

For more information on MultiFrio, visit: <http://www.multifrio.com>

and <https://www.facebook.com/Multifrio>



Starship Enterprise; your Commander has left the ship

Paul Furlong

Kenny Kaye finally crapped out. Jewish, pushy and absolutely outrageous when it suited him, “The Commander” could hold his own in a room full of wise guys. Jersey raises these people, I don’t know, something in the air I guess. Kenny’s greatest fear, other than getting caught, was not being remembered. So this is a eulogy of sorts for the life of a man none of you knew, or maybe didn’t wanna know. We did wild things together; him for the money and to be a man; me for the fun. I’ll leave it to the General Hospital crowd to debate this week if they think our lives were worth living.

Born to a small Jewish artists’ community just outside of Trenton, New Jersey, Kenny took over his father’s slumlord business at a young age. By the time I met him most of his buildings were abandoned for taxes. He’d turned his interest to motorcycles, which is how we met; I had a motorcycle shop in another town a few miles away.

Kenny offended me the first time he came to my shop; he was short and fat like Danny DeVito; nervy, right?

“Why couldn’t you fix my bike right now, the sun is up, it’s springtime already!”

“How much would you charge me for this and what would it cost for me to do some-other damn thing?” But bikes tend to bring people together and as the years went by, we became friends.

We all have stories about Kenny. Some are just slices of life that have no special meaning except for the moment. One time he and I with Charlene on the back were riding home from Daytona and stopped at a small breakfast place somewhere in Georgia. It was cold. Soon as we got in the door, Kenny started in with his New Jersey Jew shtick right there in the Bible belt as we struggled out of our gear. You never knew where he was going when he started this stuff and dancing around on one leg trying to pull off my riding pants was not a good starting point if racing to the bike was our next move. But Kenny was on a roll, standing there with his arms spread like Al Jolson, he endeared himself to the waitresses and truck drivers and their wives. Soon the whole restaurant was a stage and everyone was a player. Char and I just smiled and nodded. Char loved Kenny, all my girlfriends did. The women in his romantic life generally sang the song of “he done me wrong,” but the women who were just friends adored him. I believe Kenny headed west after that breakfast and Char and I camped wherever we stopped and took our time heading home into that bitter cold March.

Kenny moved down to Virginia in the seventies and bought some land. Naturally he had a slumlord trailer court and a used car lot specializing in 30-second warranties; after all, he had an image to keep up. One time I was running a job for my brother at the water works in Short Hills. Kenny was low bidder on the painting and brought up his own crew from Virginia. They were a barefoot, rag tag lot but they did a good job. It was tough work, painting a special epoxy in these small claustrophobic tunnels around the bottom of the tanks. One night I got a call; Kenny, driving his ramshackle Chevy pickup, had done a U turn in a very respectable part of town. The cops found a couple ounces of coke and a shopping bag full of money behind the seat. It was the bust of the century. Suddenly my brother’s on the horn wanting to know why the job is stopped. I’m on the phone with Kenny’s attorney and the deal is not only do we want him sprung, we want him *and his crew* sprung now! There was work to do! So Kenny’s lawyer just told the judge the truth. The coke was personal stash for he and his workers and the cash was to pay suppliers because he was from out of town and had not established credit. Next day he was in the tunnels kvetching and moaning about his health and the New Jersey cops.

Then there was the time he asked me to do him a favor; to pick up a Cherokee Indian friend of his from prison, they were letting him out, don’t know why but if Kenny is to be believed (ha!), this guy was in for murder and had killed two guys while doing time. Supposedly he had helped Kenny in some important way. I didn’t ask. Kenny told me anyway but I’m not going to tell you. The interesting part of the story is, here I am in a serious New Jersey prison with a jaded bunch of rough cops, but at every point where I have to present a new set of papers, the cop reads the computer screen, nudges his partner, who stares in disbelief. By the time I’d stuffed this ten foot Injin into my truck, I HATED Kenny Kaye. Naturally the first thing this monster wanted was a drink. Oh, yeah, I’ve had wild Indians in my truck before. I made

excuses about being late and dropped him off as soon as I could. He'd been nice and polite, most psychopaths are, but when I'd seen the back of him, I breathed a sigh of relief.

Another time we were painting Merry Go Round clothing stores in the malls all over the Northeast. Kenny paid well enough to keep a crew and I was on board at the time. We'd come in at night after the unions left and could paint a store and be gone before morning. It was tough work and sometimes we worked with tough people. One night we clashed with a different crew, I don't remember if they were electricians or mud men but I became aware of trouble when Kenny raised his voice with their boss. Then the boss got loud on Kenny. The rest of us were planning our next move when suddenly it got right down to Kenny and this guy facing each other. Kenny's going,

"Come on, let's go, I ain't afraid of you, come-on," to the guy and the guy is right there, not backing down at all. There was static in the air and it got deadly quiet. Right or wrong wasn't the issue, nor was it the money or the job; they were facing off in front of their crews. Just as I thought it was about to pop, the other guy said,

"Okay, we'll come back when you're done," and slowly the blood began to return to our extremities. A general relaxing took place in the Merry Go Round store that night. I had always wondered if Kenny was just incredibly full of it or if, down in the boiler room, there was enough steam to be the man he made such a deal about. To his credit, the other guy did the right thing. Neither of them would ever run a crew again for Merry Go Round, and the men would have lost the income they signed on for. That night, all of us in that stinky little hotel room, smoked and laughed and felt good about the Commander, proud to be a member of his crew.

The last time I saw Kenny we fought. He was doing his Kenny shtick and I was doing my goyim thing, whatever that is, I have no idea what it looks like from the outside. He went off in a huff; I was huffed too. Like kids we didn't talk. Like grown-ups, we didn't talk even longer. I got a call from a mutual friend who told me Kenny wasn't faking it anymore, this time he was really dying. He took my call as if we'd just had a laugh an hour ago. So we talked on and off for about a year. It tapered off again, wasn't much to say, he was dying and the words that could be said had already been said. Just the other day I felt like I should give him a call, got distracted, and forgot. Next morning I get the news. Oy vey.

Sidebar: Digital, electronic and dispersed, aging modern man rates his relevance by those still able to push out an email. Lately I get mail from younger friends who feel the need to check up on me. Otherwise, how would they know when to start grieving? One day the beep just stops.

“...haven’t heard from ‘ol Vern in a while, in fact he didn’t answer my last email. Suppose he’s dead? Wonder if that Norton Commando is still in his shed?”

Expats have it even worse. We lose our family and friends in big lumps unless we spend our lives on Facebook. Or our friends here suddenly pack up and head home, tired of a culture they don’t understand or a language they’ll never master. New people come to fill the empty houses. A subculture of expats develops; those who stuck it out and became part of the Tico culture around them. Soon enough they’re accepted by Tico friends, where coming into the world and leaving it are family affairs. Babies are always welcome and when people die they are mourned and buried in the town cemetery.

I didn’t realize how far adrift we’d come until I was invited by my friend Willy to attend his mother’s funeral. Gaby and I sat with the family that night in the family house. The casket was there in the living room and this huge rambling family gathered and filled every part of the house and yard all the way down into the street and beyond. It was an honor to be there. Willy made a point of telling me his mother loved flowers.

I arrived late the next day at the funeral without flowers having raced all the way from Alajuela. No one seemed to notice. The casket was in a small above ground crypt. Men began to brick up the sides. During this time, Willy began to pass flowers that people gave to him into the crypt. I was ashamed not to have any to give him. I watched, enraptured by the kindness and humility of the people as they passed their flowers one at a time until the last brick was in place. Then there was stillness in the crowd, one woman said a prayer in a low voice that could still be heard by everyone there. When she was done, everyone faced this noble woman who cared for them all those years; and began to applaud her. This woman, married at thirteen or fourteen years old and who had 21 children, 17 that lived and were there, with their children and their children’s children, giving thanks for their lives and the example she set in her community.

This morning with my first coffee, finger hovering over the “Send” button on this story, it occurs to me how, as we bail out of our own culture in droves, we might question our need to sow our seeds in Latin America. Why would we think our Christianity is bigger, better or faster acting than the well-oiled and functioning one; already Christian, that’s been living here for centuries?

fuzzlong@gmail.com

7/19/2004

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



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

Hola!!! Y'all!!

Sorry I have not written in the past few days. We've been REALLY busy looking for a place to rent. The house we thought we were going to get turned out to be too expensive.

BUT!!!! We think we might be going to rent Rosa's house!!!!

**It is the really big one with the HUGE yard that looks like a park. It has lot's of pretty plants and trees
Dogs LOVE trees. Especially boy dogs!!**

We went to get milk shakes again the other day but I got really nervous and we had to go to the park to drink them.

I kept remembering that the last time we were in the milk shake place the town had that celebration about the soccer game and made all that loud noise.

Now Pop's ice cream place is not my favorite place anymore. Us dogs are pretty sensitive to things like that and we don't forget.

Anyway, now we get our shakes and go to the park.

We saw a really pretty waterfall on the side of the road the other day and stopped to take pictures.

Then we went to a really fancy restaurant and had
CHICKEN SPAGHETTI!!!!!!
REALLY!!!!!!
It was spaghetti but it had chicken instead of meat
sauce!!! It was **GOOD!!!!!!**

Mom and Dad are shopping for some furniture in case
they decide to do the deed and live here for a year.
We went to one of the furniture stores where they make
the furniture just like you want it.

OH!!!!!! Here is the BEST news!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Miryana, the little girl down the road who has the
little dog, "Nana" who had six puppies, came to the
house the other day to talk to Mom.
She was very excited and happy!!!
She had a hard time telling Mom what she was so
excited about because she does not speak english but
Mom finally figured it out!
Mom had been explaining to her about there being too
many dogs and not enough homes. She must have
understood what Mom was telling her because what she
was so excited and happy about was.....
her family is going to keep the little white and black
female puppy, "Pinta," for their own.

AND!!

They are going to have Nana and Pinta **SPAYED!!!!!!!!!!**

Miryana was **SOOOOOOO** thrilled to be able to tell Mom
"No mas buppies!!!!!"
Which, in Miryana language means "No more
puppies!!!!!"
Isn't that great????????????????

She is a real cutie. She brought Mom another gift
today. A picture of her.

Will try to write more tomorrow. I am pretty tired
from all the house hunting!!

Tailwags to EVERYONE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
BudBud the tree lover



Meet the sloths on Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast

By Shannon Farley

Their cute, lovable, masked furry faces seem to smile beatifically. In a country full of exotic wildlife, sloths are one of the most well-known animals, and one of the most asked about by visiting tourists.

A great way to see these extraordinary and fascinating animals up close is at the Sloth Sanctuary of Costa Rica (<http://www.slothsanctuary.com/>). Located just south of Limon, in the small town of Penhurst on the Caribbean Coast, the Sloth Sanctuary of Costa Rica rescues, protects and rehabilitates sloths, besides studying and researching the extraordinary mammals. The Sloth Sanctuary was featured on the popular TV show, Animal Planet's "Meet the Sloths" at the end of last year.



Three-fingered Sloth & baby

The Sloth Sanctuary is a fun and easy half-day tour when visiting Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast. From Puerto Viejo, the Sloth Sanctuary is 35 km north; from Cahuita it is 11 km. They are open to the public Tuesday through Sunday (closed Monday) starting at 8:00 a.m.



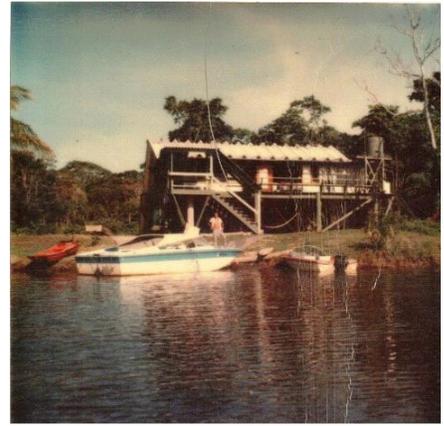
Buttercup the Sloth

The "Buttercup Tours" – named after the sloth that changed the lives of Sanctuary owners Judy Avey-Arroyo and Luis Arroyo forever – begin every hour on the hour; the last tour is at 2:00 p.m. (<http://www.slothsanctuary.com/sloth-tours/buttercup-tour/>) On the two-hour tour, you will learn about sloths, meet some of the resident adult sloths and see the babies. It includes a one-hour, guided small boat ride through the bayous of the Estrella River Delta where you may see wild sloths, monkeys and other rainforest wildlife.

The founders – Judy originally from Alaska and Luis from Costa Rica – bought land on the very-wild and remote Caribbean Coast in the early 1970s. They had their 320 acres along the Estrella River, 30km south of the port city of Limón, officially declared a "Privately-owned Biological Reserve" in 1975. They built a small home and intended to enjoy nature.

The devastating 1991 Limon 7.6 earthquake changed everything. The couple rebuilt their home and added a small hotel. As the story goes on their website, “They never intended on devoting their lives to the elusive and threatened (sloths). Then, they met Buttercup. Shortly after the inauguration of the hotel, three young neighbor girls brought them a wee surprise – an orphaned three-fingered baby sloth.”

They ended up raising Buttercup themselves; then local residents started bringing them orphaned or injured sloths, and by 1997, the Arroyos gave in and became an authorized sloth rescue center. Today, the 21-year-old Buttercup, a sweet-faced three-fingered sloth, greets visitors to the sanctuary from her perch in a wicker hanging basket-chair.



The Arroyo's first “dream summer home”
Penshurst, Limon circa 1979



Two-fingered Sloth

Since Buttercup, the Arroyos have rescued over 500 of Costa Rica's two species of sloths: the Three-fingered sloth (*Bradypus variegates*) and Two-fingered sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*). Of those, 149 are permanent residents at the sanctuary, some are infants in incubators, and more than 100 sloths of both species have been rehabilitated and returned to the wild. Sloths are frequently referred to as “three-toed” or “two-toed”, but all sloths have three toes on their hind legs; the difference is found in the number of fingers on their front legs.

What's the difference between the two types of sloths besides their fingers? The Three-fingered sloth is the most well-known with its dark gray-brown face, white forehead and raccoon-like bands on its eyes; this sloth is slightly smaller than its cousin and eats only leaves. The Two-fingered sloth is larger, more active, and eats leaves, buds, flowers and fruit. It is champagne to dark brown in color with a light brown or blond face and brown eye rings; its hairless muzzle-like snout is longer and wider than the Three-fingered sloth, but it doesn't have a small tail like the other.



Sloth babies are the cutest!

Where to stay on the Caribbean Coast

There are six rooms at the Sleep with the Sloths Hotel at the Sanctuary.

Or, you can stay at one of the finest upscale hotels in the Puerto Viejo area, Hotel Le Caméléon (<http://www.lecameleonhotel.com/>). The hotel is located directly across the main road from the beautiful golden sand beach of Playa Codes, and has its own private beach club.

THE MOUNTAIN ANGEL OF ATENAS....



by Dennis Easters easters3@msn.com

Have you ever encountered someone just in passing or with whom you have had a brief encounter that left an indelible impression on your soul? For me, the question would not be so strange if I were asking about a family member, friend, or mentor. I am talking about someone who is a complete stranger - one who you don't even know his or her name. It is possible that you have not even had a conversation with this person. This has happened to me a few times so far in my life and these experiences have marked me and left me with memories that I can never forget.

The first experience of this sort that I can remember happened about 15 years ago in Tampa, Florida. I was in West Tampa at an architectural salvage yard looking for a door and some trim work that I needed to complete a historic home restoration. The salvage yard was huge and seemed abandoned, except for the man behind the counter of the antique shop that it was connected to. As I was fumbling around, getting dirty and looking for my treasures, I saw something out of the corner of my eye that caught my attention. It was an old, beat up, termite eaten, upright piano.

Having learned to play the piano by ear from my granny, I wandered over, found a stump that I used as a stool, and sat down. I began picking out an old tune that my granny had taught me called 'South'.

I was getting my groove on when out of nowhere a tall, skinny, old, black lady wandered up to the piano and asked me if she could play. She was stunning in a 'frozen in time' kind of way. She was a ghostly image out of the old South, dressed in denim overalls, white undershirt, and tattered black work boots. Her hair was long and mostly grey and wiry. She had it wrapped in two buns on the backside of her head in sort of a Princess Leia style. Her face was soft and kind with deep-set eyes, high cheekbones, thin lips, and a pronounced jaw line. Even though she was old, thin, and dressed like a field hand, she had a soft grace and elegance about her.

I obliged and offered her my stump at the piano. I wanted to ask her if she would play something soulful for me, but I felt like a small child standing before God and I could not find the words to ask. I stood up; she took the stump, plucked at a few keys and tested the pedals. Once she was ready, she began to play and hum in a low, deep voice. All I can tell you is that there was a spirit and energy there in that moment that still makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up when I think about it.

She played a few old slave songs like 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' and a vibrant, New Orleans jazz rendition of 'When the Saints Go Marching In'. She tickled the ivories of that old 'seen better days' piano with her long, thin fingers as she maneuvered the pedals with her right foot and kept time with her left, tapping out the rhythm on the gravel floor.

She sang in a low, gruff, emotional voice that only comes with age and life experience. I could feel she was not just singing the words but that she really felt them, reliving parts of her life through the songs. When she finished, I thanked her for lifting my spirit and feeding my soul.

I went on with my search for materials and she vanished. I returned to the salvage yard several times, trying to find my soul sister, but no one seemed to know who I was talking about. Without a name, my search was in vain.

Another such woman lives here in Atenas, Costa Rica. From the first time I saw her, her image was burned into my mind. To this day, I feel an overwhelming joy inside me when I see her, but I really cannot explain why. She makes me smile. I refer to her as the 'These Old Bones' woman or my 'Mountain Angel', a reference to two of my favorite songs written by Dolly Parton.

Mountain Angel is of a very small stature and frame. She is all of 5 feet tall and if she weighs a hundred pounds wet, it would be a miracle. Looking at her, her face is like a road map of her life, deeply marked and wrinkled by the

intense Costa Rican sun. Her skin looks like fine, hand tooled leather that has been slowly worn by the elements.

She has long, curly, black and grey hair that she wears down but always covered by a scarf. She has one or two dresses that she changes from time to time, often accessorized with a belt fashioned out of an old piece of red cloth or strips from a croaker sack. Her feet look hard and calloused from years of walking the hills of Atenas, completely barefooted.

Mountain Angel is in her own little world, carrying on full conversations with herself while walking around Atenas. Anyone passing her on the street would automatically say she was a crazy woman. The truth is I am not sure she is any crazier than you or me. As I go about my daily errands, I have seen Mountain Angel fence side, talking with neighbors in what looks like to be a logical manner. All the locals in town seem to know her and no one speaks poorly of her, only referring to her with terms of endearment.

I don't know much about her other than that she lived with her parents until they died and she now lives alone. Mountain Angel still lives in the old house where she grew up. Most people refer to her house as a 'shack'. Someone said that the local Catholic church wanted to give her a new house, but she refused, saying she had a home, but there were others who were not so lucky. Mountain Angel allegedly told the priest that as she already had a home, it would better to give the new house to someone who did not have one.

I guess the moral of this story, if there is one, is to never judge a book by its cover. Anyone, at anytime, can cross your path even if ever so briefly and leave a lasting impression. Their energy can strike a chord within you that will leave you smiling and cherishing the experience for the rest of your life. So far, two strangers in the form of old ladies, from different cultures and countries have touched my life in a profound way. I can't wait to see who else crosses my path and leaves me just a little more 'enlightened'. Stay tuned, for I am going to find out the true story behind Atenas' very own 'Mountain Angel'.



Mountain Angel Carmelina

When I see Mountain Angel, the words of Dolly Parton's 'These Old Bones', play in my head:

"These old bones will tell your story
 These old bones will never lie
 These old bones will tell you surely
 What you can't see with your eye
 These old bones, I shake and rattle
 These old bones, I toss and roll
 And it's all in where they scatter
 Tells you what the future holds

Oh, she lived up on the mountain
 Eleven miles or so from town
 With a one-eyed cat named Wink,
 A billy goat and a blue tick hound
 Her graying hair was braided
 And wrapped around her head
 And her dress was long and faded
 And her home a rusty shed

In a little pouch of burlap
 Tied with a piece of twine
 There were bones all shapes and sizes
 Gathered through the course of time
 She'd throw them out before you
 She swore that she could see
 The present, past and future
 She could ready your destiny

Everybody knew about her
 Came to get their fortune read
 Concerning health and wealth and
 power
 Who to love and when to wed
 Well, I just like helpin' people
 I'm just glad that I could help
 Why, I know everybody's secrets
 But I keep it to myself

These old bones will tell your story
 These old bones will never lie
 These old bones will tell you surely
 What you can't see with your eye
 These old bones, I shake and rattle
 These old bones, I toss and roll
 And it's all in where they scatter
 Tells you what the future holds

Some called her witchy woman
 Some said she was insane
 Some said she was a prophet
 Still everybody came
 Just because a body's different
 Well, that don't make 'em mad
 Well, they've crucified a many
 For the special gifts they've had

I had often heard about her,
Dreamed about her now and then
For I, too, was clairvoyant,
Came about when I was ten
I was fascinated with her
And the things I'd heard about
And I knew some day I'd meet her,
And one day it came about

Well, I know'd that you 'uz a'comin'
I could feel it in my bones
These old bones have also told me
That I won't be here for long
Did you know that you 'uz adopted?
Did you know you once't was mine?
But the county took you from me,
Said I wasn't right in mind

But I just know'd I had to see you
'Fore these bones was laid to rest
So I conjured up a message
It must'a worked, I guess
This gift runs in the family
I know you also know
And I passed this gift on to you
These old bones, they're just for show

These old bones will tell your story
These old bones will never lie
These old bones will tell you surely
How to live and when you'll die
These old bones, I shake and rattle
These old bones, I toss and roll
And it's all in where they scatter
Tells you what the future holds

I held her hand while she was dyin'
And with the funeral through
I headed on back up the mountain
For Billy, Wink and Blue
And that little pouch of burlap
With those bones so worn and old
She give me somethin' special
Now every time I throw

These old bones will tell your story
These old bones will never lie
These old bones will tell you surely
What you can't see with your eye
These old bones, I shake and rattle
These old bones, I toss and roll
And it's all in how they scatter
Tells you what the future holds

Now I can't tell you what you want to
hear
I just tell you what I see
It's these old bones a'talkin'
Blame it on them"

These Old Bones

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpaKaMC9eg>

Mountain Angel

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNFAInxdxZw>

Fun After Fifty



By Carole Connolly-Shaw
caroleconnolly@gmail.com

Anxiety set in on April 9th, the day after my forty-ninth birthday some years ago. The dreaded big five-oh! was chasing my stilettos. When the big day finally arrived on time in April, I must have used up all my anxiety along the way. Lightning didn't strike; I didn't turn into a wrinkled old hag, and I felt just the same as I did before I reached the half-century mark.

Friends and family gathered at our favorite spot in Santa Cruz, California, the "Crow's Nest" to celebrate my 50th birthday. The celebration was joyous culminating in my favorite cake of all time; "Princess Cake"; the lavender one with the pink rose, of course!

Never again did I give any energy to the number of birthdays I celebrated. There is plenty of fun to be had after fifty!

Recently, I went on a bus tour to Bocas del Toro, Panama. The fastest way to this series of islands is by plane; it's only a one-hour flight. However, the drawback is the price. Yikes! \$948.52 for two people, not including hotel. We had heard about a bus trip to Bocas that was much cheaper, but takes longer. The bus is sounding better; as long as you have the time.

Bus it, we did. We booked a tour right in Atenas at Agencia de Viajes Premier, through our local travel agent Roberth Naranjo. He recommended a package tour. For less than \$300 per person, we rode a luxury bus, were escorted smoothly through the border procedures, escorted to a water taxi that took us to Isla Colon, the main island in Bocas del Toro. From the dock in the center of town, we were only steps from the quaint hotel, Hotel Cristina, our home for the next three nights.

The price of the package included day tours to fabulous spots such as Starfish Beach where we spent the day viewing hundreds of huge starfish easily viewed with the naked eye, close to shore, while our hosts prepared a barbeque feast, opened the bar, and cranked up the music.

Little did we know when we boarded the bus in the dark at 5:00 A.M. the previous day that we would become honorary members of the tico group celebrating their annual outing! We did notice on the very first bus stop, breakfast in a local café, that we were the only gringos, and most of the other passengers seemed to know each other. We also noticed that we were the senior citizens of the group; well, at least *I* noticed. *They* respectfully ignored us! It wasn't until they heard us speaking Spanish to the tour guide that they started warming up.

About an hour into the afternoon, after we all had seen the starfish, bought our sarongs, necklaces, and Bocas del Toro coconut oil from the local vendors, that we got into some serious tequila drinking. I think the ticos were surprised to see the two gringos partaking of everything just the same as they were. Smiles turned to laughter; shyness turned to camaraderie, and the next thing you knew, we were all doing the bachata on the sand! Well, mostly the women were dancing while the men enjoyed the entertainment watching the women.

The lines of language, culture and skin color blurred. We exchanged stories. We shared a day in the life; a day in the sun. I learned about the small town most of



the group came from – an agricultural community outside of the Poas Volcano. They described a life to me that many of the expat community in Costa Rica are seeking. They spoke of the fincas (farms),

the dairies, the vegetables they grow. They invited me to visit.

More importantly, they promised me a T-shirt. This is not just a T-shirt; this is an invitation to the sisterhood. I am honored!



I was ageless that day. I choose to be ageless every day. You can have fun over fifty, sixty, seventy or eighty. It's a state of mind and a matter of choice.

Choose fun today! And if you are past the fifty mark, add a little extra spice!

The "Duster" means I'm home!



*by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com*

When I was around 20, I decided that after I celebrated my 40th birthday, I would give myself permission to buy and wear 'dusters' around the house. 40, I reasoned, was 'old enough' to wear those matronly frocks without anyone being critical about it. A day after my 40th birthday, I went out and purchased the prettiest ones I could find and wore them to relax after a long day's work.

A day after my 50th birthday, I decided that long caftans would now be my fashion statement at home and I promptly acquired a colorful supply which is my 'at home' uniform in the evening.

Our children have grown up with a Mom who gets completely dressed to the shoes and wears a bit of make-up every single day. Getting fully dressed in the morning has always been my habit and it became especially important when we made the decision to home

school our children. They were expected to shower and dress just as they would if they were going out to school. I found that it made a big difference in the way they approached their work and I am glad we enforced the rule.

As our children got older, I began to devote more time to community activities that meant spending many hours outside the home, sometimes with the children, other times alone. Whenever I was 'finished' for the day, I went into my bedroom and changed into my frock without really giving it much thought.

One afternoon, I was in the kitchen getting ready to make some muffins. My young daughter came to me and wrapped her arms around me. "I'm glad you're staying home, Mom," she said. I was puzzled (and pleased) and asked her how she knew I was staying home. "Because you changed into your housecoat!" she answered triumphantly.



Children are extremely observant; we must remember that.

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 Angus Coast
Oil on Canvas

Al Alexander

jeanandal@gmail.com

Artist's Statement: It's the rugged coast of Scotland north of Edinburgh. A causeway jutting out into the North Sea providing protection for the moored fishing boats. The drama of the crashing waves against the huge rocks, the distant clouds, and the boats tethered to their moorings was what I wanted to capture in this painting.



**“Bella”
Watercolor and Graphite**

Diana F. Miskell

Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com

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

Artist’s Statement: This watercolor and graphite work was inspired by a photograph courtesy of Diane Reid. I guess I liked the way “Bella” was eyeing the photographer!

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. **Please advise if you find that some blogs no longer exist.**

Biolley Buzz	bcrcoffee.com
Carole Connolly	http://carolejeanscostaricacapers.com
Claudia Leon	http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/ http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/
Costa Rica: Sisters in Transition (Judy & Roxi)	http://costaricasistersintransition.blogspot.com
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica	delapuravida.com
Dennis Easters/Pure Life Development	http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog
Diane Miskell	http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com
Fabulista De Costa Rica	fabulistadecr.blogspot.com (leaving Costa Rica soon)
Fred Ball	http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/
G. Martin Lively	fishinginandaroundcostarica.blogspot.com
Going Like Sixty	http://goinglikesixty.com
Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/
Lois and Jim Craft	adventurecraft.blogspot.com (seems to be inactive)
Marietta Arce	http://marisundays.wordpress.com
Mi Chunché	michunche.com
Nadine Hays Pisani	happierthanabillionaire.com
New Life in Costa Rica	http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/
Paul Furlong	http://shootingcr.wordpress.com/
Paul Furlong motorcycle blog	http://eyeneo.com/
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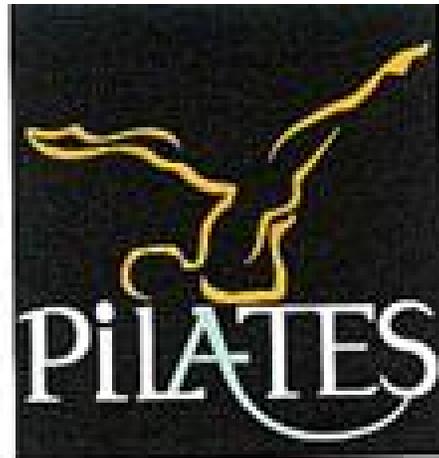
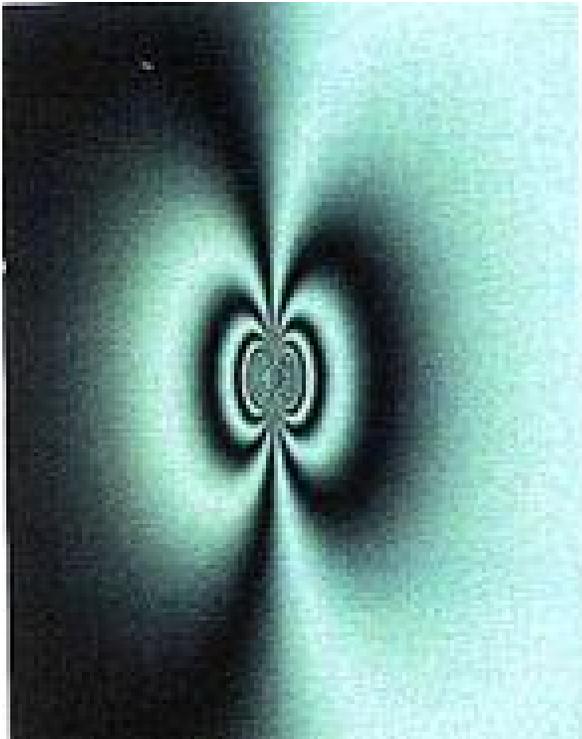
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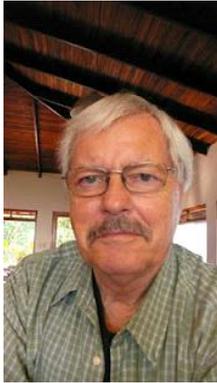
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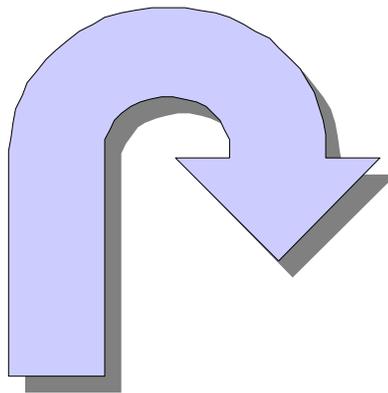
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