

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.

Issue No. 137

May 23, 2016

ATENAS TODAY



Splash of Nature's Color May 14, 2016
Photograph by Scott Schlieman

In This Issue:

Marietta Arce --Publisher's Note	p. 3
Community Bulletin Board	p. 4
Linda Ledbetter - Friendship Library News	p. 6
Animales Atenas - Dog of the Month	p. 8
Mary Martin Mason - Cathy Strachan Lindenberg	p. 11
Konrad Esquivel - Essence	p. 15
Shannon Farley - Rio Celeste	p. 16
BudBudJones - It's a dog's life, really!	p. 20
Marietta Arce - Isabel Bustos & Retazos Theater	p. 22
Art Gallery	p. 31
Listing of Blogs of Interest	p. 34
Classified Ads and Display Advertising	p. 35

Advertising rates and policies p. 43

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

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



DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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

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

Publisher's Note



I have just returned from almost one month in New York. The lush green landscape that I anticipated greeting me is a work in progress and I can already envision the vibrant colors of the many wonderful new flowers that will decorate Nature's canvas.

The year is rushing by us. We welcome the change in seasons in Atenas and with them people from different lands who have much to offer us if we take a moment to appreciate them. My trip home was amazingly effortless. It was good to be smiled at and greeted by SJO airport personnel in Alajuela who spent a few minutes commenting on the Turrialba volcano ash and asking me about my travels.

I sometimes forget how essential a sense of engagement is to my wellbeing regardless of where I find myself. I was very busy with multiple activities and friends in New York but I admit that the weather, often quite chilly, kept our senior-citizen neighbors from venturing outside so I was not able to catch up with them. The cold weather also discouraged me from tackling a couple of small outdoor projects that will have to wait for another visit later this summer.

Although I have spent the last few weeks away from home, the internet keeps me informed of important (and trivial) events that take place around "our" world. I knew I was missing the lighting inauguration on April 29th in the Atenas central park but I hope many of you were able to enjoy the entertainment that was available, including the music and fireworks. I was eager to visit the park after dark and I was able to do so last Thursday evening. It is incredibly different.

The lighting is a wonderful initiative and one that I trust will follow with some "park after dark" programs to foment community solidarity. It is heartwarming to see entire families out with their children enjoying whatever recreational activities can be organized in this newly-safe environment. I am certain that our new mayor and municipal board will capitalize on the positive changes the previous administration put in motion.

It is my sincere hope that all of you are as glad as I am to have chosen to be a part of Atenas today and every day.

Happy reading!

Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

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

May 28th – Central Valley Garden Club meeting in San Ramon. For details about the meeting or the garden club, email centralvalleygardenclub@gmail.com and/or debra.hammen@gmail.com

May 28th – Spay/Neuter Clinic at Escuela de Barrio Jesus. For info Dora @ 8855-9822 (Spanish) or Sylvia

May 30th – Memorial Day observed in the U.S.

June 9-11th – Yoga and Serenity Retreat at Macaw Lodge (see flyer Classifieds section)

June 19th – Father's Day celebrated worldwide

June 20st – Summer Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere!

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

Every Monday: Meditation #10 Roca Verde (Barb Moss), Gate opens at 8:30 a.m. closes at 9:00 a.m. Free and welcoming of men and women. Practice consists of a 20-minute silent meditation, followed by a dharma talk via YouTube Tara Brach of the Insight Meditation Society in the States.

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

First Wednesday of each month – Recycling near CoopetransAtenas Bus Depot

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. 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

Every Wednesday: At 11:00 a.m. (Please confirm with Michele Clutter 2446-0664)

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

Third Thursday: 11:00 a.m. Costa Rica Writer's Group meets at Henry's Beach Bar near Multiplaza, Escazu, lunch follows at around 1 p.m.
Contact : Bob Brashears at bbrashears0@gmail.com



Buddhist Book Discussion

Every Sunday
Meditation (optional) 1:30pm
Book Discussion 2:00pm
218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings
ALL ARE WELCOME !

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

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



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

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

SERVICES: Tuesdays - 6pm - Bible study in English. Wednesdays - 6pm - English worship
First Sunday of each month - An English translator is provided for the 9:00am Spanish worship services. (After the service many of the ex-pats gather at a designated home for a potluck lunch. Just ask any ex-pat before or after worship for the particulars.)

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

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

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

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

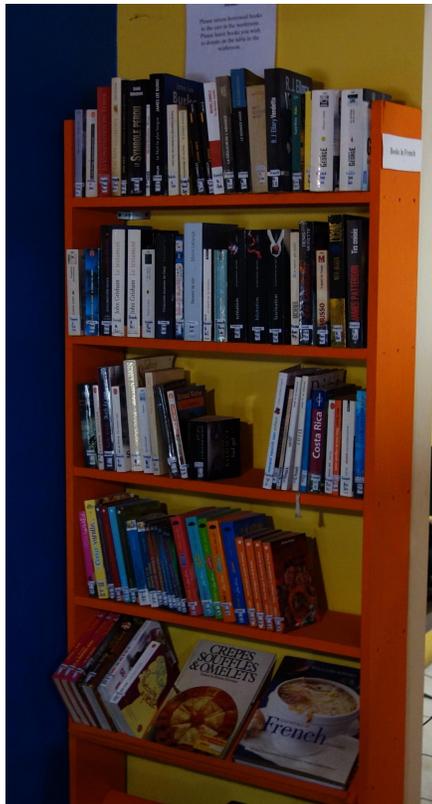
Friendship Library* News May, 2016



Photograph: Eyleen Vargas *La Nación*

Greetings, Dear Readers.

Donations to the library this month certainly represent the diversity of the community: books in French, books in Spanish, books for adult English readers, and books for older youth in English.



We did indeed have to build new shelving for books in French. We now have fiction and nonfiction books for adults as well as fiction and nonfiction books for youth.

And we learned a valuable carpentry trick in the process. If we had seen bottom shelves slanted for easy reading earlier, all of the shelving would be that way.

New books in Spanish include some really interesting things for older youth. Specifically, we now have the Harry Potter books in Spanish and books from the Chronicles of Narnia series by C.S. Lewis. English readers who are familiar with these books and wish to improve their Spanish might consider trying to read them. For adult readers, we have added "El Alquimista" by Paulo Coelho.

Older youth looking for popular books in English have a book bonanza awaiting them in the library. In the category of **vampire-themed fantasy**, we now have the complete "House of Night" series by P.D. Cast and Kristin Cast ("Marked", "Betrayed", "Chosen", "Untamed", "Haunted", "Tempted", "Burned", "Awakened", "Destined", "Hidden" and "Revealed"). In addition to their appeal to English speakers, these books might also be a good choice for local high school students. A lot of expats tutor local students in English and know that older students don't want to be seen with "kids" books.

We also added some more traditional books for older youth including stories of Sherlock Holmes, and the classics "The Three Musketeers" and "The Count of Monte Cristo".

Adult readers of English have several interesting new choices:

"Hunger Games" and "Catching Fire" by Suzanne Collins (F Col)

"Daughter of Fortune" by Isabel Allende (F All)

"They Deserved It" by Aaron Aalborg (F Aal) [This author lives in Grecia.]

"Bin Laden: the Man Who Declared War on America" (NF 9) - this traces the life and influences that turned a promising engineering student into a religious extremist.

"My Invented Country: A Nostalgic Journey Through Chile" by Isabel Allende (NF 8)

Finally, I have a request for books by Tony Hillerman. Most of ours have been loaned out and replacements would be appreciated.

Happy Reading.

-Linda Ledbetter, librarian

*Located in Restaurante La Carreta, 50 mts east of the Catholic church,
Atenas Central

DOG OF THE MONTH



BETTY BO



Betty is a happy mature loving female found abandoned and hungry. She is a loving animal and happily jumped into the car when she was found by a concerned animal lover. Betty had previously given birth to puppies which could not be found. She is well adjusted and will make a good watch dog as well as a fun pet.

VOLUNTEERS JULY 2 PLEASE

Join Animales Atenas for a fiesta July 2. It will be held at the Balneario de Cerro in Atenas from 11am until 4pm.

There will be live music, beer, wine, liquor, swimming, bingo, a dog parade, local food vendors as well as artisans. In addition a raffle prize worth over C200,000.

will be awarded at 3:30pm.

Volunteers are needed to work the bar, sell tickets at the gate, direct parking, help with the dog show and walking the dogs.

Volunteers for any amount of time or know someone who would like to assist email cathyeeldred@gmail.com

DORA TEL.8855-9822 PRESIDENT (ESPAÑOL)
SYLVIA TEL.8868-1386 SECRETARY(ES,EN,DEUTSCH)

ANIMALESATENASCR@AOL.COM

EDDIE TEL. 8308-8485 VOLUNTEER (ES,EN)

EDOT13@GMAIL.COM

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM

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

Sylvia Spix, Myrna Kastner

SPECIAL NEED- FOSTERING FOR PUPPIES

Foster puppy volunteers open their homes and hearts to animals that are too young for adoption. Many of these are nursing mothers with their puppies as well as puppies abandoned by the owners.

Animales Atenas provides all vet care as well as providing food, treats and toys free to foster parents.

Animales Atenas does not have a shelter for abandoned puppies.

If you are not able to foster and would like to help in some other way, we have other options for volunteering.

Cathy Strachan Lindenberg:
Saving Lives, One Youth at a Time



by Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com

In 1988, Cathy Strachan Lindenberg was a labor and delivery ward nurse in a Boston inner city public hospital. Among her patients were two new Latina mothers, one 14 and the other only 12. Maria and Lucy were having their first babies. The fathers had abandoned them, and both had been physically and emotionally abused and had IV drug and alcohol abuse. Cathy was shocked and appalled to see babies having babies, she made a vow: "This must be prevented! I am going to work on this for the rest of my life." Now 73, she continues to fulfill this promise through an international not-for-profit that she began in 2004 called TeenSmart International.

Today, over 34,000 youth in Central America have access to TeenSmart international services. Trained counselors provide an immediate response to an average of 300 to 500 situations weekly. Tracking of the program reveals that those completing the online courses report less depression and suicide ideation, and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors such as getting into fights and carrying a weapon to school. Those who are sexually active are more likely to use birth control.

Recently, the program was awarded the Carlos Slim Foundation's prize for Exceptional Health Institution in Latin America as well as a generous grant. After 10 years in operation, TeenSmart International is fulfilling Cathy's vow to ensure better futures for youth in Central America.

When Cathy speaks about TeenSmart, she grows animated as she does about a myriad of topics that spark her curiosity and passion. Whether she is lauding Stephen R. Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, a book that has helped guide her life and work, or describing her daughter's upcoming wedding in Texas that will culminate in family reunion of around 250, her blue eyes sparkle and her voice takes on

a quiet urgency. Equally articulate in Spanish and in English, she is a woman who describes herself as a global citizen. It is a title well earned.

Cathy was at the crossroads in 2002. Her husband, Marc Lindenberg, had died, an event that like the death of her father, she describes as the hardest times in her life. When she started to emerge on the other side of grieving, she imagined a future that entailed going back to Central America, specifically to Costa Rica, the country of her formative years. Moving back to the La Garita home that she had built with Marc required great resolve. "I sat in Seattle and visualized what I'd need to do to the house. I visualized the furnishings, friendships and work. I even thought of the type of mother I would be to my now grown children." Now was the time to fulfill her vow to Maria, Lucy and many other youth whose futures were in peril. First, though, she resorted to returning to the deep well that had nourished her childhood and her formative years, looking to the role models within her family.

A Values-Driven Family

In 1921, Cathy's grandparents, Harry and Susan Strachan, who were Presbyterian missionaries, moved from Argentina, where they had served for 18 years, to Costa Rica. Appalled by poor health conditions that included a high mortality rate for children as well as malnutrition, disease and neglect, the Strachans founded Clinica Biblica Hospital in San Jose to provide free medical service to the needy. Today, the hospital is the largest and most complete private hospital in the country. One third of the total profits of the Clinica Biblica Hospital are assigned to social project management. Her grandparents also started the Roblealto Child Care Association in 1932. Currently, Roblealto has three child care centers, one temporary shelter and alumni group for adolescents.

Cathy's grandparents were the first of five generations to establish roots in Costa Rica, a country that Cathy considers her homeland. "I had a wonderful family," says Cathy. "My parents were well-educated and service-oriented missionaries and taught us the values of social justice, kindness, generosity and compassion. I grew up bi-lingual and bi-cultural, and I learned to be equally comfortable in a private school and in a public school. I saw the huge disparities between the haves and the have-nots. That prepared me for the global work and global citizenship that has enriched my life."

Her family moved all over Costa Rica. At 13, she was sent to a private boarding school in Florida. Her mother was American, her father British, but born in Argentina in 1910. Of her father she says, "He was very Latin."

She recalls, "As a child, I had to work as I have done since I was 11, folding tracks in a publishing house, serving in a restaurant. In the summers when I was home from school, I worked in the outpatient department of a hospital. There is so much one can do, no matter when you are potted."

Her education was earned through scholarships. She received a nursing degree from Case Western Reserve, continuing on to Yale where she got two masters in Public Health and Maternal Care. Later she would earn her DrPH from John Hopkins in Public Health with an emphasis on Public Policy and Management.

Attending a seminar at Yale lead by two renown public health specialists, Dr. George A. Silver from the Kennedy Administration and Dr. Antonio Ordonez, a former Minister of Health from Colombia, inspired her to become one of the youngest professional employees of the World Health Organization (WHO). Her bilingual skills would serve her well in 14 different countries over the next six years. In Nicaragua, she was working for WHO when she met Marc Lindenberg in 1972.

Marc had gone to Nicaragua with the Quakers to help in a refugee camp where he worked with the Somoza government on a reconstruction plan for the city of Managua that had been ravaged by the 1972 earthquake. A specialist in political science and city planning, he was a welcome member of a think tank for then president, Anastasio Somoza. Cathy and Marc would marry in 1976 in Spokane, Washington. In 1982, Marc would become the dean of INCAE (**I**nstituto **C**entroamericano de **A**dministración de **E**mpresas), an international business school in Nicaragua that has been called the Harvard South. They had two children, a son Robbie, who has a consulting business in Nicaragua for non-profits, serving such groups as Fundacion Uno and Habitat for Humanity, and a daughter Anni who is a high school teacher, living in Austin, Texas, and who soon will marry a robotics engineer.

Cathy's Dream Launches

In 1988, Cathy began doing research as an academic nurse clinician about the magnitude and nature of early risky behaviors including the efficacy of existing preventive treatments. Instinctively, she knew that within each boy and girl was the answer, but reaching the target population and providing services to them seemed formidable.

An early computer user in 1976, long before the inception of the Internet Age, Cathy saw the Internet as the most viable way to do outreach. She enlisted 9 young people in 1998 to create a pilot website that was launched in 2000 in Seattle. The site, www.teensmart.net was published in both Spanish and English. TeenSmart International officially began as an NGO in 2004. Cathy says, "Although there was no silver bullet for these problems, we were sure that knowledge, skills and motivation were the keys to better decision making. We put the power of information, education, coaching and referral directly in the hands of the youth." Today this is a public use free youth health promotion site known as www.jovensalud.net.

Cathy is quick to point out facts about at-risk behaviors of Costa Rican youth that spike the annual health cost to \$5 billion. "Accidents are the number one cause of death in youth, and 50% of accidents and 30% of homicides are alcohol-related. 54% of health

expenditures are correlated to smoking, with 16% of boys and 13% of girls, ages 13 - 15, being smokers. More than 30% of pregnancies are of underage women. And obesity is on the rise, with 28% of women over 20 being overweight.”

Today, TeenSmart International provides life skills through digital health education to over 90 schools and youth organizations in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. More than 150 youth leaders and 50 volunteers participate, many of them graduates of the online program.

TeenSmart International is no longer the full time endeavor it once was for Cathy. Still, she estimates that she spends around 16 hours weekly. She reviews grants and always holds a strategic meeting before submitting a proposal to assure that the vision is clear. She says, “I’m good at vision and involving key people. I’m good at writing the first page, structuring and keeping it “simple/stupid.”

Today she is more an orchestra leader than an instrument player. She has always worked without compensation. “My compensation is a wonderful life,” she says. She goes on to say, “In giving, you receive.”

Having reaped the benefits of a purpose-filled life, Cathy encourages readers to donate time, resources and contributions to TeenSmart International, an organization that she regards with passion and devotion. “There are 7 million youth in Central America,” she says. “Our goal is to reach them all.”

To Donate to TeenSmart international log onto: www.teensmart.org

To learn more about TeenSmart International, an English overview is given at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1bZ-fv_AAY

To learn about volunteer opportunities and ways to get involved:
<http://www.teensmart.org/web/index.jsp?c=GetInvolved>

Could it be that sometimes words can be directed not to the structure and identity of who you think you are, but to the real essence behind your story? Or is it that the energy behind the words is sometimes recognized by the real essence of who we really are and then freedom happens?

Is Life something that happens to you?

Are you separate from Life?

Can we choose and control the flow of Life?

Flowing is not something we work hard at. It is happening with or without us. What we do is melt into it.

You are life... create freely

You are light... let it shine without filters

You are the answer... anchor to that inner certainty

You are love.... open your heart, let it heal

You are peace....



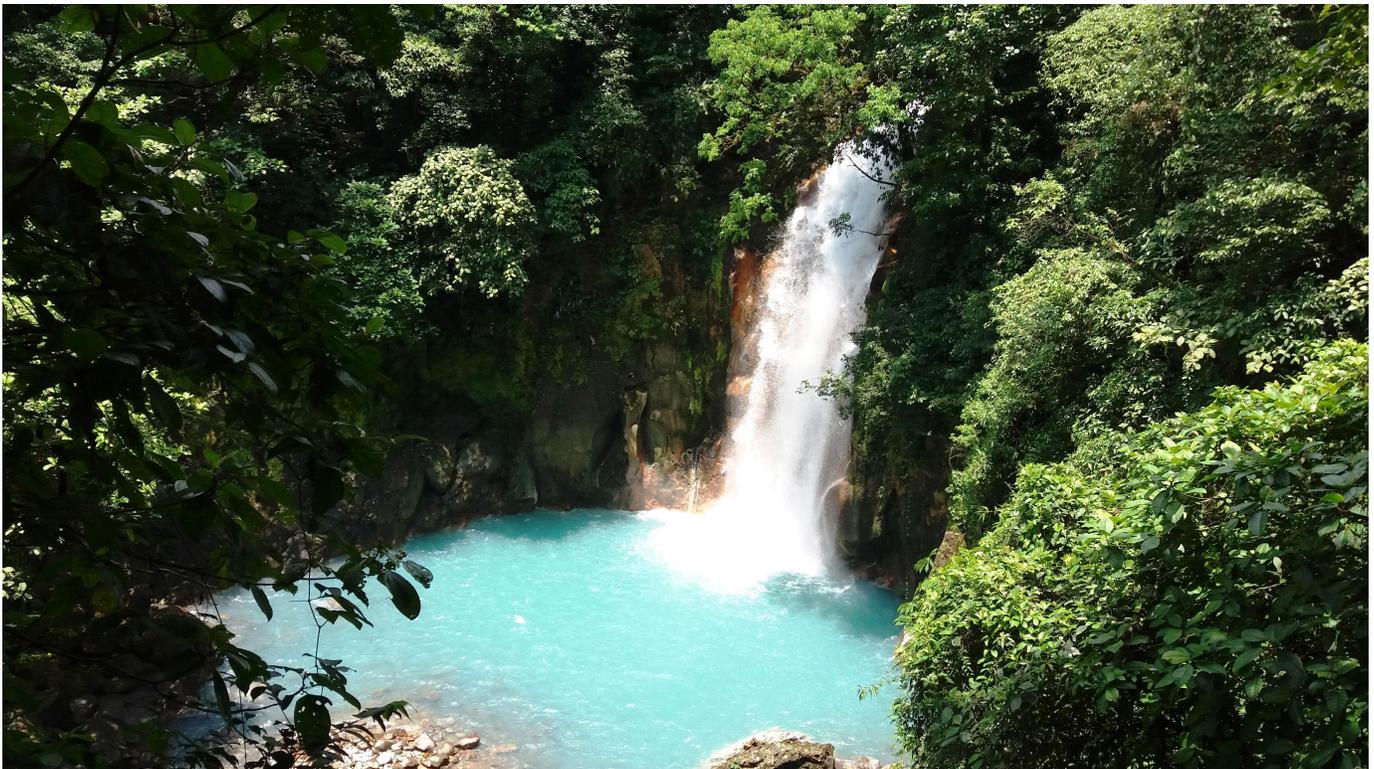
By Shannon Farley

Fun Weekend Trip: Rio Celeste

An indigenous legend tells that when God made the world, after he finished painting the sky a brilliant pastel blue, he washed his brushes in the beautiful Rio Celeste, coloring the river the same intense sky blue.

Rio Celeste, in the Tenorio Volcano National Park in northern Costa Rica, is a good destination for a fun 3 day trip from Atenas.

Rather than being a story, this is more of a “nuts and bolts” of what and where for a visit.



Rio Celeste / Tenorio Volcano National Park

<http://www.costarica-nationalparks.com/tenorionationalpark.html>

Tenorio Volcano National Park is located near the town of Bijagua (southwest of Upala by the Nicaraguan border). Getting there is easy via the Pan-American Highway to just past the town of Cañas, and then the very well paved Highway 6 to Bijagua. Driving time from Atenas to Bijagua is about 3 hours.

From Bijagua to the park entrance, it takes about 30 minutes because the gravel road is more like small boulders that you have to climb and navigate. Personally, I wouldn't attempt this drive without a high-clearance 4x4; we have a Terios BeGo and it did fine. Rangers at the park will give you a map and explain the rules of the park – don't go off the trails, no swimming anywhere in the river, don't bother wildlife, etc. There is an area to swim downriver

outside of the park, to which park guards can direct you. There is a small café at the park entrance. I recommend hiking in the national park first thing in the morning, getting there by 8:30 a.m.

The hike is moderately challenging, with steep ups and downs in places, and a couple of dodgy footbridges to cross. The surrounding forest is very pretty, and there is a great lookout spot to see the 6,286 foot (1,916 m) summit of Tenorio Volcano on cloudless days. We were told to do this – and I highly recommend it: walk the trail all the way to the end to the Teñidor, and then go to the waterfall on the way back. The reason is the steps down to the waterfall are many (150+) and steep, and you'll be tired after the return climb. If you go to the waterfall first, you will still have a hefty hike to the end and back.



The 100-foot (30m) waterfall and the Blue Lagoon are downriver from where the Río Celeste becomes blue (the end of the trail). At this point, called “El Teñidor,” which means “The Dyer” in English, two clear-water tributaries merge, passing over a visible white line on the river rocks and magically transforming into its distinctive turquoise-sky blue color.. “Scientists have come up with numerous theories as to where the Río Celeste gets its color. Most recently they have discovered that rocks at the bottom of the river have a mineral coating that includes silicon, oxygen, and aluminum. It is the size of these minerals, as well as the reflection of the sunlight, that gives the water its incredible hue,” taken from Anywhere Costa Rica.

Where to stay: Sueño Celeste B&B

<http://www.sueno-celeste.com/index.php>

Family owned by the very friendly and gracious husband-and-wife team, Daniel & Dominique, and their daughter, Maeve. Daniel and Dominique came to Costa Rica 20+ years ago from their home of Belgium, and worked in many different hotels around the country. Their experience shows in all of the little details that make their B&B really stand out in comfort and hospitality.

Six individual cabins are set in beautifully maintained gardens that attract plenty of birds, especially hummingbirds, and butterflies. There was even a sloth in one of their trees. Cabins are spacious and clean, with comfortable linens, plenty of pillows, and a very big bathroom with a walk-in shower and on-demand hot water. There are sitting chairs, a little table, and a coffeemaker with coffee and tea provided. The large covered patio out front has a little refrigerator (great for keeping water bottles and fruit cold), and a patio table with chairs. Everything has been thought about, including a hair dryer and washcloths in the bathroom. No TVs, thank God, so you don't have your neighbors blaring the set at all hours when you want to rest. There is a small community swimming pool to help cool off, and a hot tub (although it was so hot I could not imagine using it ever!).

From the peaceful property, you have views of Tenorio and also Miravalles volcanoes, rainforest and pastureland. It is very easily located right off Highway 6 leading into Bijagua; it is a 5-minute drive to town.



The best feature is the food! Breakfast, included with your stay, is hearty and marvelous, with different touches every day. We always started out with fresh tropical fruits, followed by our own little French press of coffee, and a plate of eggs with homemade bread, homemade jam, maybe a sausage, and homemade sweet breads. Delicious! You get to watch birds in the garden while you eat in the lovely, bright and cheery dining area. Dinners are available on

weeknights and I highly recommend them. We had a mouthwatering cut of filet mignon, cooked to perfection, with a red onion reduction, crisp vegetables, sweet potato puree, and a fresh salad with homemade dressing. Fantastic!

Daniel will fill you in on all there is to do in the area and give you maps; he even has copies of local restaurant menus. We recommend Pizza Barrigona if you go into town (the menu offers more than pizza).

Many other hotels are closer to the national park, but honestly, you are only going to go to the national park once and then the rest of the time you'll do other activities or want to go into town for meals, the supermarket, etc. Those other hotels are far away down a hard-to-drive road.

What else to do: Heliconias Lodge Hanging Bridges Trail

<http://www.heliconiaslodge.net/#!reserva/c1uhv>

I also recommend hiking the Hanging Bridges Trail at Heliconias Lodge, about 10 minutes outside of Bijagua (15 minutes from the hotel). Do this either early morning or late afternoon (depending on rain) for the best wildlife viewing opportunities.

This is a wonderful, easy nature walk on very well-maintained natural trails (about 1.5 hours if you go at a relaxed pace and really look around the forest). You will cross 3 very long and very high hanging bridges that are well-built and very safe. Excellent photo opportunities from all points crossing the bridges. One bridge is so long it meets a platform suspended around a large tree in the middle before continuing to the other side! The price is good for private trails (3,000 colones per person). You have more wildlife viewing opportunities here than in the national park!



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



Stories from Mr. BudBud, Primero Perro of Lighthouse Animal Rescue. They were written 11 years ago when he first came to Costa Rica for a house sitting job.

4-10-2005

Hola Y'all!!!

Mom has a flower that is growing right outside her window? It is starting to open up!! It is really strange looking and pretty!!! The bush it is growing on is just COVERED with blooms!! There are about twenty-five blooms Mom said!

Things are going better now that Mom and Dad have come to their senses and given me my title. We don't get to go EVERY time but we get to go at least three times a week.

Last Wednesday we went into town to have coffee with the other "ex-pats" in the park. Ex-pats means ex patriots who no longer live in their native country. Some are Americans, some are Germans, some are Canadians, some are Swedish, some are English, etc. They come from all over.

Miss Juliette went with me that day. She is REALLY a priss and SUCH a lady!! She ALWAYS behaves herself so I had a pretty easy time that day. Mom says Juliette kind of reminds you of an old fashioned southern belle. She even bats her eyelashes and rolls her eyes at me. When Mom "talks" for Juliette she has a REAL southern drawl.

Mom and Dad went with Enid to look at a casa that is for sale. It had some really pretty roses growing in the yard. They are strange colors!! Kind of white with red tips on the petals!!

They walked around and Mom took pics. Of course that little ham, Javiercito, was in MOST of them. Boy!!!! When he sees Mom with a camera he is always right in front of it!!!

They are still cutting the cane fields. The caña azucar, (sugar cane) pronounced cah-nyah ah-zoo-car is a BIG business here and there are THOUSANDS of acres of fields. The kids on bicycles will pedal up behind a cane wagon and hitch a ride by grabbing onto the cane sticking out the back. The trucks always go really slow so it is not very dangerous. Mom thinks it would be fun and says she would do it too if she had a bicycle!!!

Dad taught little Javiercito to arm wrestle!! He lets Javiercito win all the time though.

If you have been reading my e-mails for a long time you have heard of Miryana. She is the little girl whose dog had just had puppies the last time we were here. Mom vaccinated all the puppies and had the mama dog spayed as soon as the pups were weaned. Anyway, Mom went to Miryana's house for her birthday party yesterday. Mom says it was really fun. They played games and stuff, they ate lunch, and then Miryana's mom lit the candle on the birthday cake. They told Miryana to blow out the candle and then to take a bite off the edge of the cake!

Miryana did and, when she leaned over to take a bite of the cake, somebody PUSHED the back of her head!!! Her face went right into the side of the cake!!!!!! Miryana thought it was hilarious and so did everybody else!!!

Then they all played "AGUA BOL" which means water ball!!! They have LOTS of water balloons and they play pitch with them!!! Lots of people got really wet and they all had a GREAT time!!! Even Miryana's mom got soaked when she caught one high and it busted!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Tonight we went out to eat and I let Andre' come along. He is a little difficult sometimes because he just won't listen to me. If I tell him to sit still he will move. If I tell him to move he will sit still. Sheeeesh!!!!

Anyway, we went to El Rio in San Isidro. They have GREAT spaghetti Bolognese (spaghetti with meat sauce)....no..not bologna.

The waiter there treats us with REAL respect!! Mom and Dad always have the spaghetti stuff and Mom ordered "porción de pollo frito" for us!!

(That's a piece of fried chicken in Spanish.)

The waiter brought our food out FIRST!!!! BEFORE Mom and Dads!!!!

Now there is a waiter who has his priorities straight!!

When he brought our plate to the table he asked if we would like some agua. (water)

Mom told him "Si, por favor" which means "yes please."

He brought us agua in a little bitty pitcher and brought a plastic bowl to pour it in.

How classy can you get?????

Anyway...just wanted to update you all on the trials and tribulations of being a primero perro. It is difficult but it has its rewards!

Tailwags from Primero Perro BudBud

Atenas Today Interviews



**Isabel Bustos Romolereux
Founder and Choreographer of
Retazos Theater, Cuba**

On my recent trip to Cuba, I had the enormous good fortune to be part of the audience invited to watch a dance performance choreographed and directed by Isabel Bustos Romolereux. After the presentation, Ms. Bustos made herself available to the group of students I was with for a short Q&A session. Since the students and their guides were on a strict schedule, I asked if I might interview her for *Atenas Today* and she graciously accepted.

It is important to note that my visit to Cuba was just days before President Obama's and that many activities and places were affected by this visit. Ms. Bustos mentioned that Eusebio Leal, who is her friend and the director of the restoration program for Old Havana and its historical center (a UNESCO World Heritage site) was eagerly preparing a tour but that meant that many businesses would be closed for the next few days. This fact made this interview all the more special since she was very pressed for time but never made me feel rushed.

AT: Thank you so much for granting us this interview. We have many creative people in Atenas and I know that they are as eager to learn about your work here as I am. As a nondancer, I am fascinated by these performances. Can you tell us a bit about yourself and what led to the creation of this wonderful space?

IB: I am always eager to talk about the theater and what it means to me. I was a dancer when I was younger. I trained here in Cuba and later received a UNESCO scholarship to study choreography in Paris.



AT Staff in front of Retazos Theater

I started the Retazos (bits and pieces) Dance Theater in 1987 in my living room. I wanted to work on creating something different, something that could inspire young people to challenge their bodies and feel invigorated

despite the many hours they need to devote to their work, especially if they come to me after having had, for example, classic ballet training.

AT: That's an interesting observation. Is it difficult for a classically trained student to learn your technique?

IB: My intention, my goal, is to form a dancer with technical virtuosity but also one who is feeling and thinking and learning. I work with the student's emotions and want to get them to a place where they can express themselves freely. This is where the technique is important and why perhaps a new student can advance more quickly, because he/she does not have to "forget" the classical training previously learned.

AT: Where does your inspiration come from?

IB: I find inspiration is everything around me. As I like to say often we are surrounded by emotions, sensations, experiences, bits and pieces, life is always surprising us. I enjoy poets and poetry, painters. I think harmony is important and that Retazos has become a place where both young and old can develop their creativity as well as their imagination. I feel that it is a challenge that we, as an organization, have to meet.

AT: I've been noticing posters and information about an event called "Old Havana, City in Motion. What can you share with us about that?"

IB: First I have to say that it is incredible to look back and see how it has grown. Back in 1998 it began with just a handful of people who ran from house to house, from balcony to balcony, from garden to garden...two here, two there. The idea was to showcase the spectacular setting that the colonial sector of Havana provides. Now, the city becomes a huge stage that is invaded by dancers, not only from Cuba, but from abroad too. The artists perform traditional and contemporary dance and often the public gets involved too. There are workshops, exhibitions, and conferences. It is very spectacular and grows year after year.

(At this point, we are interrupted by someone who needs Ms. Bustos' attention because he is "not happy" with the tango. As a non-dancer who had just watched an incredible performance of the tango, I could not believe what I was hearing. When he left, I asked Ms. Bustos to enlighten me as to what was wrong. She laughed and answered that he was a lighting engineer and that he was not satisfied with the lighting on stage for the tango. She confessed she had done it and that since this was not her area of expertise, she wholeheartedly agreed with him and needed to conclude our interview.)

If you ever have a chance to visit Old Havana and can go to a performance in Retazos Theater, I highly recommend you do so.

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.



**"Lidieth"
16" x 20"
Oil on Linen**

Artist's Statement:

Lidieth is a neighbor, and a friend of ours. I got her to pose for a photo and did the painting shortly after.

Al Alexander
email: jeanandal@gmail.com
website: www.alalexanderartist.com



"Parade Ready"
16" x20"
acrylic on gallery wrapped canvas.

Artist's Statement: My own photo reference

Diana F. Miskell

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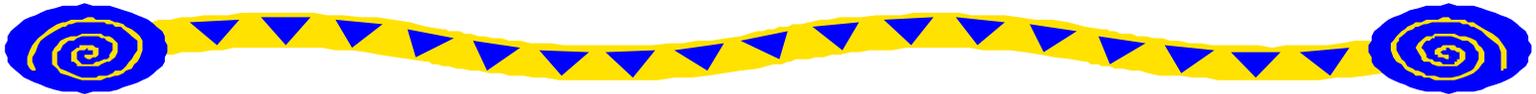


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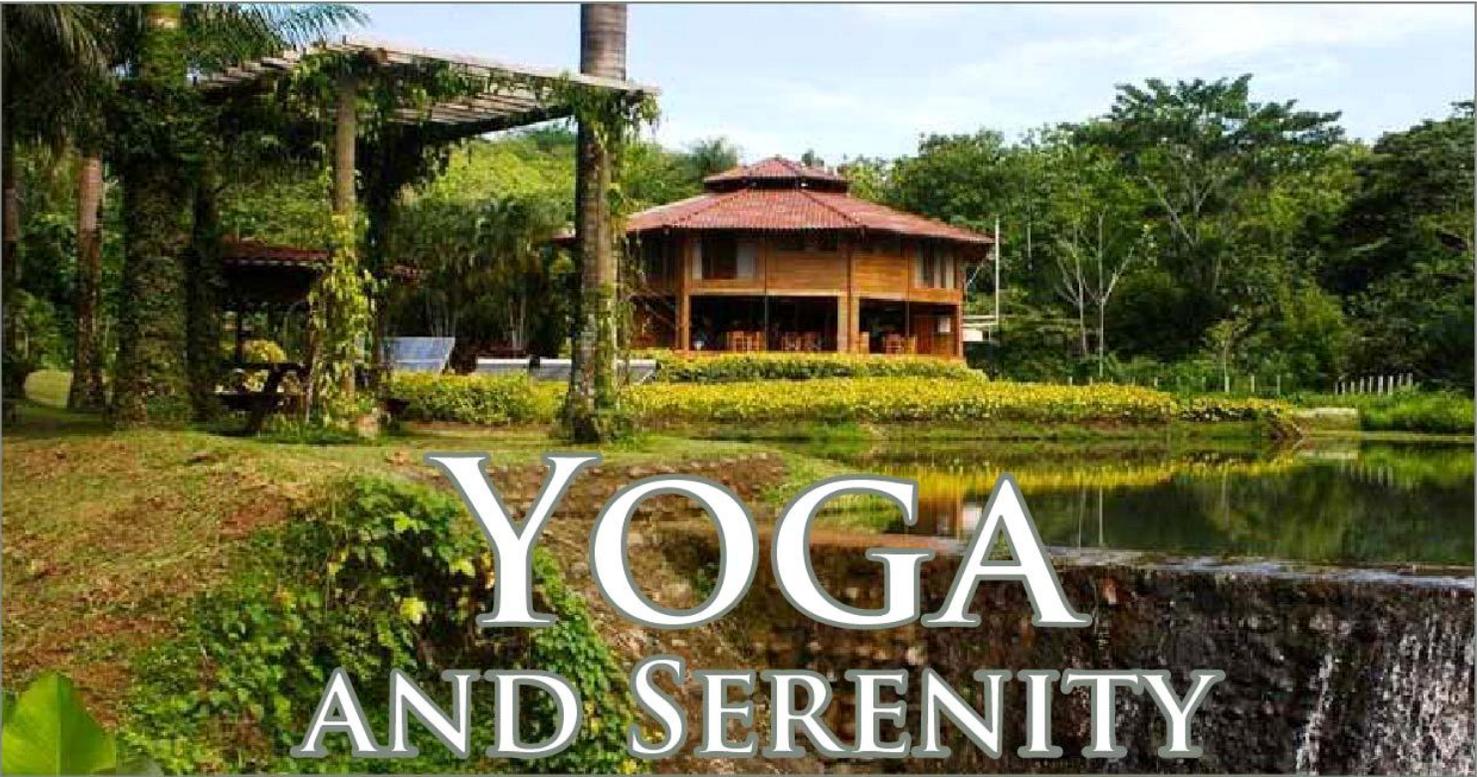


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Diana F. Miskell

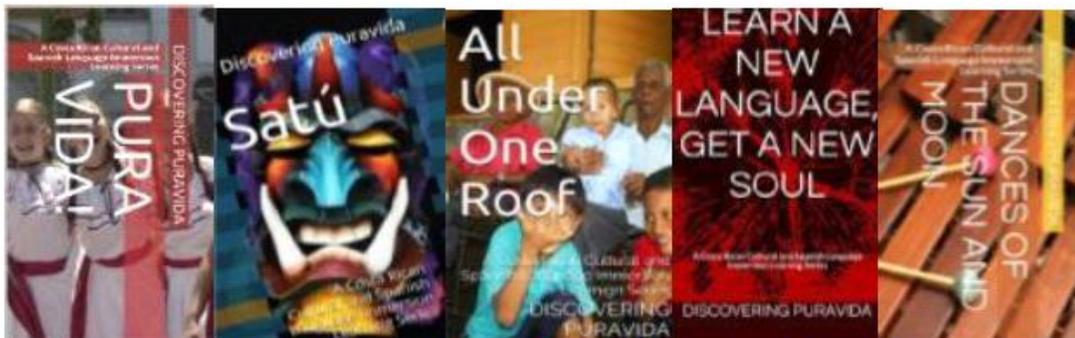
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