

HOW TO READ ATENAS TODAY

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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.

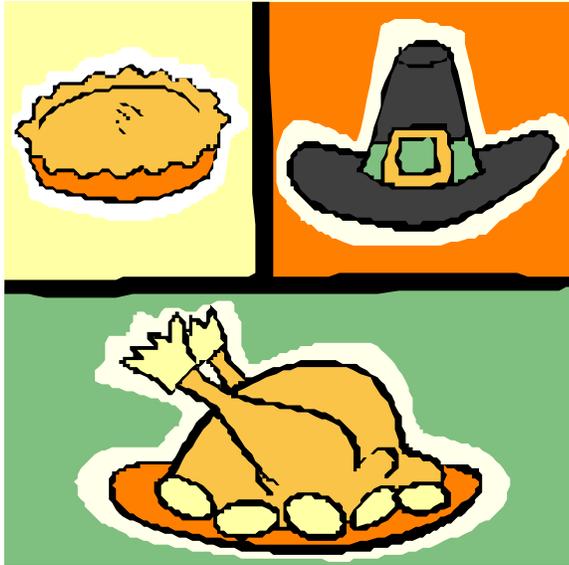
THE NEW YELLOW PAGES

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. 83

November 23, 2011



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

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.



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

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Publisher's Note



Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day in the United States. It is my favorite of all the holidays. I am, by nature, a very grateful person. I take nothing for granted and I am keenly aware of the many blessings I have.

Thanksgiving Day, though, is a day that I actually set aside to cook for and spend time with family and friends, remembering the wonderful events we have shared and looking forward to many more years together. I wish all of you a very happy holiday wherever it finds you.

We are all eagerly looking ahead to the many festivities and parties we will be attending in the coming weeks. This year has been a challenge on many levels for most of us, yet we will no doubt find ourselves completely immersed in the Holiday Season, purchasing or making special tokens for the loved ones on our list.

Tina Newton of Su Espacio still has some Angels on her Christmas tree that have not been 'adopted'. Tina and her Community Center, are wonderful resources for Atenas. I invite us all to help her reach her goal of gifting to each child. It will help us remember how special it is to live in Atenas, today and every day.

With many thanks,

Marietta Arce
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A Special Appeal to the guys of Atenas!



by Bek Kaiser
Bek321@me.com

Guys:

This past Monday I had one of my best days since coming to Costa Rica for the past 6 years.

Believe it or not it wasn't a day at the beach, or fishing, or just hanging out watching sports and having a few cold ones, all of which I do enjoy. Rather it was a day spent mowing grass at our own orphanage here in Atenas. Although it was hot and hard work for an old guy like me, I felt better at the end of the day than I've felt since I've been back in Costa Rica. That is, after a shower and yes, a cold one!

I know most, if not all of you, are familiar with our orphanage and have been involved in a number of ways throughout the years and I know that Tim and the entire staff are very grateful. Since I do most of my best thinking while mowing let me share some ideas with you if I may.

A men's movement called "Men's Fraternity" was started in my hometown of Little Rock Arkansas about 20 years ago. It started out with about 20 to 30 guys who were sensing something missing in their lives even if it was only the opportunity to gather with other guys to talk and share about their lives and the challenges facing men of all races, ages, married, unmarried, with or without kids, beliefs, pasts, and the list goes on and on.

That small number of men eventually grew to over 1,200 men meeting weekly at 6 o'clock in the morning. That has since grown to Men's Fraternity being represented in nearly every state as well as a number of other countries, the most recent being Honduras where Men's Fraternity was introduced in 2008 and has spread like wildfire.

The reason for the attraction? Men need to discover not only who they are, but even more important, they want and need to discover a purpose for their lives which reaches beyond themselves and even their own families.

Although that Men's Fraternity may come to Costa in the future what I'm thinking of is something on a much smaller scale but still challenging to us, as men, facing us right in our own community.

There's a saying that "we need the poor much more than they need us" I think this also applies to orphans, widows, and single mothers. I know personally that often when I'm doing something for someone else in need that I feel I'm getting much more out of it than I'm giving so I know and feel the above statement is true.

We, as authentic men, are challenged daily with the kind of life we are called to lead. Yes we are called to take care of ourselves and our families. But do we not also feel called to help those who truly need our help whether it be financial or time invested?

We are so fortunate to have Hogar De Vida right here in Atenas where all we have to do to make a difference is take the first step which I know many of you have already. However after spending as little time there as I have, it is apparent how great the needs are or another way to look at it is how simple the many needs are!

Mowing, weed whacking, raking, drainage improvements, food and supply contributions, pool service, painting, general repairs, etc. etc. The list is simple but it keeps on going.

So guys here's the challenge:

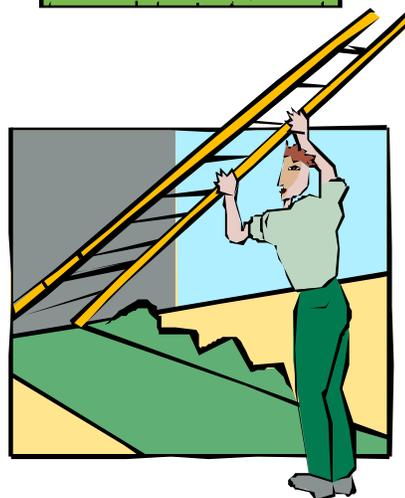
Every one of us has something to give, be it physical, financial, artistic, legal, architectural, engineering, or simply loving to be around kids. Whoever is interested in starting an authentic group of men committed to give a small but regular portion of their time, resources, or talent to a cause such as this please get back with me as soon as possible. Our plan will be to meet to come up with ideas and goals that we can commit to and that Tim, the staff, and the children can depend on. The orphanage needs us and we need the orphanage!

We can make a difference here and now!
Please join me
"STRENGTH and HONOR"
Thanks for your time, Bek
Cell:8941-0893

P.S. I have received about 12 good responses so far. I am scheduled to be at the orphanage every Monday when I am here.

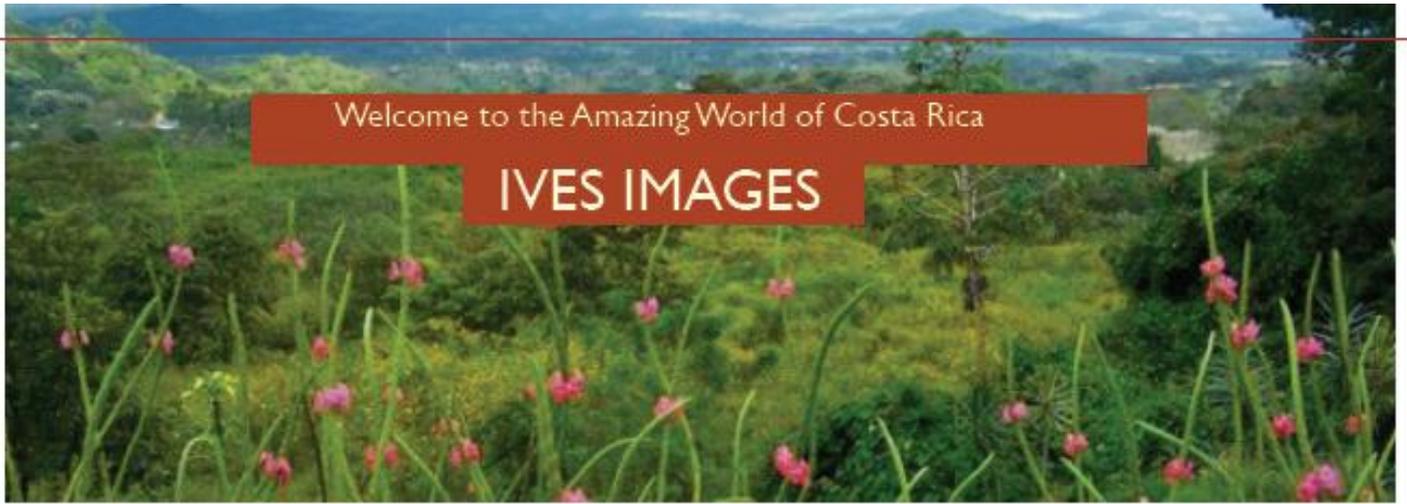
Since I will be going back to the states on 12/12 and returning here in the first week of February I would like to have some kind of get together for the guys when I return to start brainstorming on how we can make a difference in the children's lives as well as our own.

Since the Chili Cook-off is on Feb. 12th something shortly after that could be good timing for a meeting.



Welcome to the Amazing World of Costa Rica

IVES IMAGES

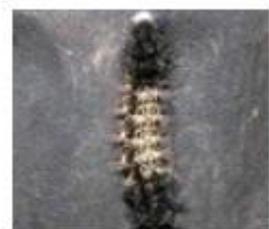


Another month has passed and we are starting to enjoy the sunshine again. The garden annuals are dying back as a result of the hotter, drier days, but I know they will soon be back as the seeds have wasted no time in sending forth small plants in every crack they can possibly take root. As you have probably guessed, our gardens are not prim and trim under constant attention of a gardener, but more akin to a natural jungle with minimal maintenance from our end. As a consequence we have quite a few wild visitors in a very small piece of land right in the middle of Atenas.



New visitors to our patio

We have added a hummingbird feeder to the branches of the mango tree that shades our front porch. A pair of hummers take turns getting their fill at the feeder. At first we thought they were Rufous-tailed, but on closer observation, we noted that the breast color was not green, but a rusty brown, which made it a closer match to the Cinnamon Hummingbird (Scientific name *Amazilia rutila* for the purest out there). The pair actively feeds all day long and seem willing to share the porch area with our dog, Blossom, and us.



Life cycle of the Starry Night Cracker Butterfly in Photos

In September we observed and photographed a caterpillar that was just turning into a chrysalis. Within a few blinks of an eye, the black and brown colored caterpillar, hanging upside down on a pot on our patio, appeared as if it were pulling a green sweater over itself from top to bottom changing into the chrysalis. In less than an hour the chrysalis had turned a dry leaf brown, added some green markings and a feather-like headdress. After a few weeks we discovered a *Hamadryas laodamia saupites*, female butterfly, more commonly known as a Starry Night Cracker. As you can see from the photos, it looked like 2 entirely different butterflies depending on whether you saw the top or the bottom of the wing.

ANSWERS FOR NAME THAT CRITTER NUMBERS

Here are the answers to last months Critter Quiz. I not only have given you the common name and the scientific name, but also some of the information I found in my various field guides so you can learn something about some of the butterflies that live in the Atenas area.

All photos taken by Jerome and Jeanita Ives of Ives Images Photo Art.



Rusty-tipped Page (*Siproetta epaphus*).

Relative of Malachite in Tropical Brushfoot family. Ranges from South Texas to Peru. Common in foothills of Central Valley. Adults seek nectar of *Croton*, *Lantana*, and *Impatiens* and will also feed on juices of rotten fruits, carrion and animal feces. Larval foodplant is *Acanthus* family. Males patrol high above the forests and feed on moisture from wet sand.



Thoas Swallowtail (*Heraclides thoas autodes*) Formerly *H. thoas* or *Papilio thoas*. May be confused with *H. cresphontes* which has only 3 yellow spots near outer margin of forewing while *H. atocles* has 4). In Costa Rica is usually found in moist, wet forests of Caribbean or south Pacific slope, but has been seen in Guanacaste. Range is Nicaragua to Brazil, sea level to 3900 ft. Prefers nectar of *Stachytarpheta* and *Lantana*. Males visit wet sand to sip moisture for salt which is incorporated into the sperm packet. Larval host plants include *Piper* species. Eggs are laid singly and hatch into caterpillars that look like bird droppings which is a very effective camouflage.



Mangrove Buckeye (*Junonia genoveva*)

Buckeyes in Brushfoot family. Forewing band can be pale to rich orange. Orange completely surrounds the large eyespot. Eyespots on lower hindwing are about same size. Common in Florida mangrove forests. Likes flowers and mud puddles where it gets minerals. There is another one called a Tropical Buckeye or *Junio evarete* but it doesn't have the bright orange around largest eyespot. Still researching this one as information on sub species unclear.



Banded Peacock (*Anartia fatima*)

Costa Rican name : Cocinera

In Tropical Brushfoot family. Most common Butterfly in Costa Rica and may be seen up to South Texas and down to Panama. Has many broods. Dark to light brown wings. Broad banding can be white to yellow. White forewing spots and 3-6 red hind wing markers. Lower tip of tail is angled. Most common butterfly in all areas of Costa Rica. Likes sunny areas and garden plants like *Lantana*, *Emilia* and *Cosmos*. Larva feed on *Acanthaceae* family.

NAME THAT CRITTER CONTEST

For any of the 4 photos on the left that you think you know a name, email your information and the critter's number to my email below. Good guesses are ok...We are learning together!

Email your answers to Jeanita at ivesjg@mac.com



Thanks to Cecilia Johnson for winning last month's contest. She got the most correct names!

If you haven't already read my story ,
[Letters From Earth: Banana Leaf Joy](http://fourstory.org/features/story/letters-from-earth-banana-leaf-joy),
you can open it at this site:

<http://fourstory.org/features/story/letters-from-earth-banana-leaf-joy>

I would appreciate it if you would let me know what you think of it by leaving me a comment at the bottom of the story.

The Atenas Library has some butterfly books on reserve you can use at the library. The internet is also a good source. Start with Tropical butterflies and I will give you a clue...3 of the 4 are in the Brushfoot family and the other one has probably taught you to be careful while working in the garden. Look under leaves that have been eaten recently and don't touch any critter that has warning lights on it or long fuzzy things.

Some of the guides I have been using include:

[Kaufman field Guide to Butterflies of North America](#)

[Butterflies, Moths, and Other Invertebrates of Costa Rica](#)

[Manual para el manejo de mariposarios](#), by Ramirez

COSTA RICA HEALTH CARE: A FAMILY'S FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE



by Dennis Easters easters3@msn.com

Back in 2007 when my family and I moved to Costa Rica, one of the big advantages we had heard about living in Costa Rica was the quality and affordability of health care. As fate would have it, our first week here in Atenas, we would test the system (I will get to that story in just a few minutes), and to say the least, it passed with flying colors. In the years that followed we have had extensive experience with both public (CAJA) and private health care, and could not be more pleased. As the word spread within our network of family and friends, many of our loved ones have traveled to Costa Rica to take advantage of the quality care that can be had for a fraction of the cost compared with that of the United States.

Our first Monday in Atenas started out at 5 a.m. when Gerardo woke me up with a long face. His jaw had fallen out of place and he was in pain. Have you ever seen the painting "The Scream" by Edvard Munch? That is what Gerardo looked like. I jumped out of bed and we headed down to the Linea Vital, a private clinic that provides 24 hour medical and ambulance service. The

quality of service was excellent but the doctor was unable to get Gerardo's stubborn jaw back into place. From there they sent us to the chiropractor's office, where Dr. Sache worked and worked trying to get the "mandíbula" to stretch so the jaw could go back into place. After much hard work and a few muscle relaxers, the stubborn jaw finally snapped back into place. While this was going on, I had to leave and pick my mother up for a routine cleaning at the dentist's office. After dropping her off, I took Gerardo home, and then returned to pick my mother up. To my surprise, outside the dentist's office, there was the Linea Vital ambulance, putting my mother inside.

As it turned out, my mother was having an adverse reaction to an antibiotic. My mother is a diabetic, and the dentist, taking precautions, gave her an antibiotic before the cleaning to prevent any infections. During the cleaning she started feeling light headed and became nauseous. Linea Vital was called and once inside the ambulance, anti nausea medicines were given and she was feeling better within minutes.

By this point I was stressed out and almost in a panic. I realized I had left my wallet at home and had no way to pay the doctors for my mother's or Gerardo's care. I explained the situation and was asked, "Why are you worrying about money when you have two sick people to take care of?" I was assured that I could stop by the appropriate offices during the coming week and pay the bills. I did that two days later and ended up paying \$40 total for the services provided to my mother and Gerardo.

In the years that followed, my mother and Gerardo would be giving the Costa Rican medical system lots of practice. Gerardo, being Tico, quickly joined the Caja. My mother continued as a private pay patient due to needing specialized care for her diabetes. We quickly found an amazing endocrinologist, Dr. Jose Jimenez Montero with offices at CIMA Hospital in Escazú. My mother has diabetic retinopathy, so having a good ophthalmologist was imperative. Dr. Adriana Van der Laat- Roche has proven to be a Godsend on more than one occasion. Diabetic retinopathy causes irregular veins to form in the eyes. These veins are weak and often burst, causing bleeds that impair vision due to the blood floating around behind the eye. Left untreated, it can cause damage to the eye and retina, and result in blindness. There are several treatments for this including laser, injections, and surgery. My mother had been treated back in Tampa, Florida with laser at a cost of \$1,600.00 per treatment. Here at CIMA the cost was less than \$800 for all the treatments needed to correct the problem. Dr. Van der Laat recently removed a cataract from my mother's left eye at a fraction of

the cost that we would have paid back in the U.S.

The year before last, dengue fever made its way back to Atenas. Several of our friends had come down with dengue, and everyone was nervous. One day Gerardo woke up and could not get out of bed. Being stubborn, he would not go to the doctor. A few days passed and he was not getting any better, actually worse. We begged and finally a week later, he went to see his family doctor at Hospital Mexico. It turned out he did have dengue, but in addition the enzymes in his liver were off. After many exams and blood tests it was discovered that Gerardo not only had dengue fever, but drug induced hepatitis, brought on by a combination of work out supplements and natural steroids. One other thing that was discovered was that Gerardo had high cholesterol, which is hereditary in his family. Within hours, and several IV's later, Gerardo was feeling much better and on his way to recovery. The treatment he received at Hospital Mexico was excellent, on par with any private care we have experienced anywhere in the world.

Unfortunately this would not be the last visit to the doctor. Having a long history of kidney problems (infections and stones), my mother developed a bad kidney infection. We found Dr. Fabian Fonseca Guzman, who practices at Hospital CIMA and Clínica Católica in San Jose. He quickly discovered that my mother had a 1.5 cm stone that was blocking the passage between the kidney and bladder. She was treated for the infection, and within a month underwent surgery to remove the stone. Things would not go so smoothly. Once

inside, Dr. Fonseca discovered the stone was imbedded, and the infection had not cleared up. He drained the kidney but was unable to safely remove the stone. Stints were put into place and drains to help get rid of the infection. At this point he was afraid she would lose her kidney. One month later, she was well and could have the stone removed. The kidney was working perfectly and all was well in paradise. Dr. Fonseca was not only amazing in treating my mother, but his compassion for her was beyond compare. He is a true example of what a doctor should be.

After all the emergency treatments had been taken care of, we finally had time to figure out what was causing my mother's back pain. It all started about 8 years ago just before my mother retired. She had been having lower back pain that was getting progressively worse. Back in Tampa, she had seen several doctors, all of whom tried treating the problem but no real diagnosis was given. After several rounds of nerve blocks, spinal injections, and 1.5 years of treatment with prednisone, my mother was not only worse, but had gained over 100 pounds, that were straining her small 4'10" frame. A close friend of ours, who lives in Costa Rica, recommended Dr. Javier G. Brenes, a neurosurgeon at Clinica Biblica in San Jose. My mother took all her previous records to her appointment with Dr. Brenes. Dr. Brenes started by taking an extensive history, then asking where the pain was located. Then he asked my mother to walk, and then lie down on the examination table so he could take a closer look. Within five minutes, before looking at my mother's previous exam reports, he knew what

the problem was. He diagnosed her with two bulging discs, spinal stenosis, and bone overgrowth on the joint facets. Dr. Brenes suggested an aggressive treatment that started immediately. The treatments he has prescribed are helping, but not a cure. To completely correct the problem she will eventually need surgery, but Dr. Brenes is very cautious with patients like my mother due to her diabetes.

At the moment, all is quiet on the medical front for our family. I have been very fortunate that in the last few years I have been very healthy and have not needed medical attention here in Costa Rica. Having had the medical experiences with my family, I know when that day comes; I will feel 100% confident in the treatment I will receive. The quality of care, compassion, and attention you receive from the medical industry here in Costa Rica, are on par with any other "developed" country in the world. I should dare say superior. If you have medical issues that are not covered by insurance in your home country, it would behoove you to check into treatments here in Costa Rica. You won't be disappointed.

Pura Vida,
Dennis

Gratitude



by Kathy Reyes

ranchodestino2@gmail.com

For those of us who grew up with the celebration of Thanksgiving as a part of our life, this is the time of the year when we may be thinking about how we can be thankful. I could certainly fill up pages with clichés about finding all the things that we have that make our life so much better than the lives of others. You've heard it all before. We can think about Gabby Gifford and her valiant struggle to recover from a gunshot to the head. We can pick up the newspaper or turn on the news and easily find some tragedy that far exceeds the burdens we struggle with. I certainly saw my share of hardship while there in Atenas. I came in contact daily with people who struggled to put food on their tables and clothes on their children. It's simply not hard to find someone who is far worse off than we.

What comes to mind for me, however, at this time in my life is a little different concept – the concept of gratitude rather than thankfulness. As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I am learning about “an attitude of gratitude.” This concept is one that is embraced by people in recovery as a lifeline for daily living. So I am going to share some of the experience, strength and hope I gained in this past year during my time in Atenas.

One of the things that brought me to Costa Rica was the people. There was something about the people that just drew me there. I didn't know what it was when I got there, but I certainly did get a sense of it during my time there. It is about values.

Perhaps I am naïve or did not spend enough time there to really know what I am talking about, but my sense is that Costa Rican people as a whole are happy people. They love each other, their country, and their lives. They look for ways to celebrate life. Tranquilo is an embraced attitude. Peace is highly valued.

I have just finished reading The New Earth by Eckhart Tolle. A profound book!!!! Tolle talks about peace in this way:

“You want peace. There is no one who does not want peace. Yet there is something else in you that wants the drama, wants the conflict. You may not be able to feel it at this moment. You may have to wait for a situation or even just a thought that triggers a reaction in you: someone accusing you of this or that, not acknowledging you, encroaching on your territory, questioning the way you do things, an argument about money Can you then feel the enormous surge of force moving through you, the fear, perhaps being masked by anger or hostility? Can you hear your own voice becoming harsh or shrill, or louder and a few octaves lower? Can you be aware of your mind racing to defend its position, justify, attack, blame? Can you feel that there is something in you that is at war, something that feels threatened and wants to survive at all cost, that needs the drama in order to assert its identity as the victorious character within that theatrical production? Can you feel there is

something in you that would rather be right than at peace?" I think Tolle has captured the essence of what keeps us from experiencing the "attitude of gratitude." One of the first words learned by an infant is "mine." We learn quickly to claim whatever falls into our hands and grasp it as tightly as we can. Our desire for things – material and emotional – drives our lives. So we end up one day looking at our house full of expensive things and worry about security systems and income and whatever we need to hold on to those things we have worked our whole life for.

I had a life-changing experience just before coming to Atenas. I was losing my house and was preparing for an estate sale to get rid of all the things I had worked so hard for all my life. I experienced an incredible sense of loss thinking I worked my whole life for these things and I was losing it all. In that state of despair, a new thought came to me. These were only things. None of them will matter when I am gone. What will matter is how I touched people.

I have been blessed to be in the helping professions all my life. I have had opportunities to make a difference in people's lives. I have been privileged to have people thank me for the difference I have made in their life. Suddenly I realized that was all that really mattered. That realization made it easier for me to let go. Since then I have been able to see the blessings that have come out of that experience and I am grateful for having gone through that experience.

While in Atenas, I had my share of drama and conflict as described by Tolle in the paragraph above. My first reaction was to "feel the enormous surge of force" moving through me to "defend my position, justify, attack, or blame." On several of those occasions, a dear Tica woman who was cleaning the house I was staying in would hear the fear, anger, and hostility in my tone of voice. She

could not understand my words, but she could sure hear the emotions. She would say to me, "Tranquilo, Kathy."

I became friends with that dear woman and her family. They welcomed me into their home and their lives in a very special way. Her children embraced me like a member of the family. They shared what they had with me – their food, their home, their love – without any pretention or expectation. They gave me gifts and expressed genuine sorrow when I left. They still communicate with me on Facebook. This family, with their "tranquilo" home and their "tranquilo" life, taught me about peace, love, and gratitude. And so I share what I learned from them with you.

I believe it is impossible to have thankfulness and gratitude without peace. "Tranquilo" must reside for the gratitude to manifest itself. Without peace we reside in conflict. So the first step to gratitude is to let go of resentments. Gratitude is different from thankfulness in that it permeates your being. It is an attitude not an act. Being thankful is a good thing, but the thankfulness needs to sink into your heart for it to become gratitude.

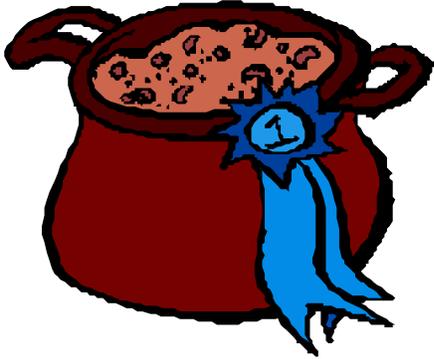
Consider this quote from [As Bill Sees It](#):

"I try to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know."

So I wish all of you a full and thankful heart this Thanksgiving season – one brimming with gratitude that results in an outpouring of love.

Kathy Reyes

And The Winner Is... (Or You Can't Win for Losing!)



by Patricia Diekroger

When we last met here the year was 1967. We were in Terlingua, Texas at the very first Chili Cook Off. We were about to find out the climactic conclusion as the judges began sampling the chili. We had been strolling the grounds, eating cowboy food, and listening to the band play. Then it was announced that the judging of the chili would begin.

H. Allen Smith, a northerner who had disparaged Texas chili, was offering his own much maligned chili concoction that included, to the horror of Texan chili cooks, kidney beans. His competitor, Wick Fowler of Austin, Texas, served up a pot of classic chili: beef with seasonings.

The three judges; Mayor David Witts; Lone Star Brewery exec., Floyd Schneider; and Justice of the Peace, Hallie Stillwell are gathered at the pots. (Unknown by the Chili Association, at that time, was that Hallie was a cousin of H. Allen Smith.)

We are now at the moment of truth with Hallie Stillwell's spoon poised over Fowler's pot of chili, which was actually pot #2. She dipped her

spoon and ate the chili; she dipped again, and then once more. She moved to Smith's pot, took a small bite of the bean chili and announced, "I vote for "Soupy's – I mean I vote for #1." Soupy had been the adjective used, by his detractors, to describe H. Allen Smith's chili and then the man himself.

Judge Schneider then took one good bite from Smith's pot. He did not look pleased. He then dipped into pot #2 and ate heartily from it. He announced his vote for Pot #2, Wick Fowler's.

So Mayor Witts would have to cast the tie-breaking vote. He dipped his spoon into Smith's chili and took one bite. His face reddened and became contorted; he fell on the floor, having what appeared to be a convulsion. He recovered but said his taste buds had been paralyzed by tasting Smith's chili and it would not be possible for him to cast the decisive vote. (Certainly one of the more inventive ways a politician has avoided taking a stance and making enemies.) Consequently, Fowler was robbed as the contest was declared a draw!

Smith and Fowler were supposed to face-off again for the 1968 chili cook off, however,

Smith claimed a case of hives and didn't attend. Woodruff De Silva, also known as "Wino Woody," Chief Chili Head of a California chapter of the Chili Appreciation Society Int., was invited to take Smith's place. He was the California state chili champ. Fowler, though, made a far superior chili. Yet victory was again taken from him. Some press agents had arranged, after the votes were written and placed in a ballot box, for armed, masked men to take the ballot box and throw it into a mine shaft! The judges, feeling no pain from copious amounts of champagne, once again declared a draw.

A year later the doors would open for more contestants to enter the contest. Chili" was becoming a popular menu item in cafes and taverns, and also in a chili chain called "Chilli Den Parlors." A chili canning factory opened in Springfield, IL. Then finally, in 1969, someone actually won the chili contest. That man was C.V. Wood, whose many accomplishments included; buying London Bridge and moving it piecemeal to Arizona and reassembling it, becoming a chief industrial engineer at 28, and becoming the first general manager of Disneyland. He was a tough competitor who ate chili for breakfast. He won for his green chillies and lime juice recipe, but some suspect it was the bevy of beautiful starlets whom he brought with him on his jet that swayed the many Californian judges.

As the years passed the judging became more honest and the contestants became more varied as women and Native Americans joined in. The popularity of the event increased greatly over the years and now there are numerous cook offs throughout the U.S. and internationally.

But the most important one, to many of us, is the one that is held here in Atenas, because we have a great time while helping to support the Hogar de Vida Home for Children. The date of the next one, the 5th Annual Atenas Chili Cook Off, is Feb. 12th. Please keep the date open and join us. You can see more information at www.atenaschilicookoff.com

Something that has come out of all this chili competition is some great chili recipes. If you'd like to try making your own, I would love to share some award winning recipes with you. But... that's another story.



THE ATENAS OF TODAY AND MY OLD COSTA RICA



by *Oscar Alvarado Saborío*
“Josefino” who lives in Atenas
oscar.saborio.alva@gmail.com

I was born and raised in the city, in downtown San José. Like all Ticos, our origins are provincial as our ancestors were or had to become ‘campesinos’ who lived from agriculture.

Costa Rica was populated initially after the arrival of Columbus to Limon. Between the Central Plateau and Limon, where ships from Europe arrived three or four times a year, travel took, depending on the how fast one could walk, six to eight days and as there were no inns to sleep in, this took place in the woods.

It occurred to someone to bring coffee beans from Saudi Arabia, which later made us (after cocoa) small exporters and thus improved our ties with Europe. Those ties allowed a few people to study in Paris and an even

fewer number to go to London and Madrid. This created a small group of educated entrepreneurs and increased the number of farmers in the Central Valley and the surrounding area, including Atenas.

Now I’d like to get to my point. In my now distant childhood, in the small bourgeoisie in which I grew up, I was the first in my family to be farmer and walk the fields. Most of my ancestors were educated men, professionals. The women were not. They received only primary education, and were responsible for cooking and learning a skill or craft. My mother became a painter; one of her sisters, a pianist; another a guitarist; and another a singer. These activities were performed at home or at the home of other couples who were friends.

By the time I was a kid, some things had improved; others had changed. For example my grandmother,

daughter of the Dean of the first university in Costa Rica, St. Thomas, met my grandfather on the Saturday when they became engaged, one week before the marriage.

There were many prejudices. If a woman were to go out without a corset, she was described as vulgar. I remember my mother telling a friend that an acquaintance of theirs was rude because when he greeted her, he took off his hat but only lowered it to eye level! The correct thing would have been to lower it to his chest, **that** would have been a proper greeting. A gentleman never went through a door before a woman. When walking, the woman knew the man would be at the edge of the sidewalk as she was given the inside. It was customary to give your seat to a woman or to an elderly person when riding a bus.

In my childhood, people went away for the summer, or vacation. A house would be rented in Coronado, Santa Ana, Escazú, Moravia and other places near the city for the summer: January to February. It was during those summers that I became acquainted with our farmers, their culture and their civility. Sadly, I must say, it no longer exists except in Atenas and perhaps a couple of dozen places of smaller population.

This is why I live here: if I am crossing the street and a driver sees that I can hardly walk, he yields and allows me to cross. When I go to the bank, a young man will give me his place in line so that I don't have to wait so long.

Some women have tried to do this too, but I cannot and must not accept this from them. I think about my mother and what she would think and say to me if I accepted!

Costa Rica was as Atenas is today, where you do not hear a man utter a flattering remark to a woman; respect prevails in many ways. Atenas has two problems. The first is that sitting on a park bench, after seeing a very beautiful woman go by, I turn my head to see that she is followed by another one, and then another one. I go home tired of seeing so many beautiful women. I never imagined I'd get tired of seeing so many beautiful women, or that my neck would hurt from turning so often to admire them.

During my life, my career allowed me to travel and see countless cities, but none like Atenas, which is different from any I have known. In Atenas, the homeowner believes that the sidewalk is part of his property, that it is not owned by the municipality, or there to serve the pedestrian. Atenas takes the gold medal for being the city with the worst sidewalks in the world.

Atenas, with good sidewalks, would be perfect. But there are those who say, and not incorrectly, that perfection is the enemy of good!

A GREEN CHRISTMAS*

Sergio a. Molina, Ph.D. (smolina@fieldstudies.org)
Resident Lecturer in Environmental Economics and Policy
Center for Sustainable Development Studies
The School for Field Studies (a.k.a. Universidad de la Presa)

We are already preparing ourselves to celebrate Christmas and New Year's, and now is a good opportunity to reflect not only on the true meaning of these holidays, but also on how we behave during these days so that we are more respectful to our environment. Soon families in the U.S. will be celebrating Thanksgiving followed by Black Friday—the largest shopping day there and the official beginning of the holiday shopping season. There the levels of consumption are quite dramatic during these days, but people in Costa Rica are not lagging behind, with the growing situation that the vast majority of waste here is not recycled or properly disposed.

On the other side of the continent, in Chile, official data indicate that December is the month in which citizens produce the greatest amount of waste per person, particularly due to the packaging and wrapping of gifts, replacement of clothing or items, and containers for food and beverage. It is assumed that a similar situation occurs in the majority of countries, including ours.

In its most recent publication, the global network for ecological footprint (Global Footprint Network) indicates that in

Costa Rica the biological capacity of system recovery has already been exceeded due to the high level of consumption reflected in the ecological footprint.

That is why it is important to reflect on how we can improve our relationship with the environment, so that we can give the opportunity to our future generations so they can enjoy these beautiful festivities in a healthy way. Unfortunately many fall into the equivocal position of assuming that their individual contribution to the solution is very small, leaving others to do the work; however, if we all think similarly, at the end nobody does anything. Economists call this the *free rider effect*. Unfortunately, most of us suffer from this effect, and in the end, the tragedy becomes inevitable.

With the joint efforts of everyone, it is very possible that this could be in fact a *Green Christmas*. Although corporations and governments have their share of responsibility, each of us can contribute significantly to solve the problem.

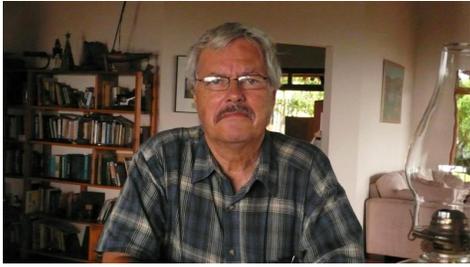
Here are some concrete ways you and I can help:

Concrete Actions

- Make a list of gifts in advance to reduce to a minimum the number of trips to the shopping mall, to achieve significant fuel savings.
- Consider if it is really necessary to buy some new article, or discard one you have.
- Buy local products, which not only have a reduced carbon footprint, but also support local small and medium businesses.
- To wrap gifts, use paper instead of plastic wrap.
- Find out if the product you want to buy is made of ingredients or materials which harm the environment.
- Choose products with returnable packaging (e.g., returnable bottles)
- Avoid the purchase of items that use batteries to operate. If necessary, choose rechargeable batteries.
- Opt for environmentally preferable products, especially those made of benign and biodegradable materials such as paper or wood.
- If you buy Christmas trees, buy natural ones that are local and encourage the planting of many more.
- Use efficient Christmas lights; disconnect them when not necessary.
- Fireworks can not only be dangerous, but they also produce emissions and wastes.
- For all the Christmas cooking, cooking gas can save you some money in the electric bill, but in addition it helps to reduce the consumption of dirty and expensive oil used to produce electricity in Costa Rica at times of high demand.
- If you are travelling abroad during the holidays, do so cleanly by neutralizing your travel carbon emissions through programs such as those offered by FONAFIFO (<https://www.fonafifo.com/csa/csavl.php?id=ing>).
- If you plan to travel within Costa Rica, consider using sites certified as sustainable by the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism, reduce to a minimum the number of vehicles used, be conscious about the use of lights and electrical appliances, and in particular, shut down the air conditioning if you are not in the room.

* Based on a similar article published by the author in *La Nacion* on December 19, 2009.

Room for a View



by Paul Furlong
fuzzlong@gmail.com

Home Security II (Second in a four part series)

“All my life I wanted to be a bank robber. Carry a gun and wear a mask. Now that it's happened I guess I'm just about the best bank robber they ever had. And I sure am happy.” John Dillinger

Banks aren't as popular with robbers anymore. It may be the quality of the banks today, but I think it's more likely the quality of the robber...cowards tying up old people for their Flat screen TVs and small change. Sure, they feel like John Dillinger, but their reflection in the mirror gives them away.

If I had it to do over, I'd build a Safe Room¹ in my house. Extreme, but times and customs change with the disposition of power. Whether you're Left or Right...or even *own yourself*, it's clear we're in tumultuous times. Nothing wrong with preparing for what *is*... or even what might *come to pass*.

In “Security I”, we left off with a gate, a fence around our property, some tactical thorn bush...trimmed so our house can still be seen from the road,

and some “Mental Set” that promises to make this a fun pastime and not a fearful gritty foot dragging chore. Let's continue with our gardening...or “un-gardening,” as it were. When we look out a window, we want to see who's there...and we don't want 'em sneaking up on us. So if you have bushes close to the house, in the middle of the yard or anyplace someone could hide, knock them back or down or thin them enough that you have a clear view of your property...in some circles referred to as a “field of fire.”

Remember, the best art comes from if you only have three crayons in the box. Work with what you have... your muse will pave the way... you'll be tempted to show your friends... don't. This is a test of another kind... can we keep a secret?

While we're outside, let's build in some early warning. Centuries old China kept crickets as pets. Their song became gray noise that no one noticed until it was stopped by an intruder.

Or...make noise with a couple Guinea Hens, Geese, or just a hip dog who only barks when the chips are down.

Perimeter alarms... and a gate alarm that sounds in your bedroom...invent your own or buy a known brand. Google Lives!! Try, if you can, to set up obstacles that will funnel trespassers into approaching from a few specific directions. Put early warning devices along the way. Speak to experts in Atenas or Alajuela.ⁱ

Viet Nam vets talk about the use of trip wires and tin cans filled with rocks along a perimeter already protected by advanced electronic countermeasures. In certain sensitive nuclear military bases today...they still use Geese to augment electronic surveillance. It's hard to beat a Goose while standing the 12 to 4.

False alarms only interrupt the harmony and cheapen your efforts. Make sure you don't have them; they discredit you with neighbors and discourage police participation. I personally want two kinds of warning: When I'm not home, an alarm to go off that my neighbors can hear, and also dials emergency numbers. The second, a quieter inside-the-house alarm tells me if my gate has been forced open. US police statistics generally agree that if you can't reach your Baseball Bat, Pepper Spray, Gun or Low cut Dress **within five seconds**... you may as well not have any of them... a good case for early warning. ⁱⁱ

An inexpensive and easy alarm is to keep your car close enough to your house that you can activate its Alarm from your key fob by the night stand...Some Wasp sprays reach up to twenty feet and are more accurate than Pepper Spray... Shake before using...

Outside again, let's walk around the property and see where we need lights with motion sensors. They're available at hardware stores and cheap. Nothing frustrates a thief more than light. Make all your devices inaccessible or hard to disarm and keep them in good repair. No reason you couldn't remove one bulb and wire some kind of alarm... something Erwin (see endnote) suggested. I'd put a lock on my meter box so they couldn't shut off my electric. I'd also want a buzzer for power failure. A UPS battery backup would protect your computer and signal you with a high pitched warning if the lights go out.

This is not as far as we can go with security outside. There are Laser Beams and Security Cameras that can be monitored from your cell phone. Done professionally, they're all effective. Mostly though, I'd like to promote security for those who think they can't afford it. A dog, who can't reach the fence where bad guys might harm him, will certainly be your best friend. His job is to warn you. Your job is to protect him. Good, too, if you ever have the blues.

Inside the house begins a different set of circumstances. First, have a glass of wine... allow yourself to become meditative... wander through your house in low light... click lights on here and there as questions pop up. Try to see your house for the first time... try to see it as a thief might. We have to assume he's done his homework and **knows** what he wants and the layout of your yard...even your house.

Outside doors are always a problem, especially here in Costa Rica with houses built for the views...lots of glass. Let's leave the glass for now. We're not at a point where we want to ruin the view with bars on the windows. They will come in through a door...ⁱ

But before the robber gets to the door, look over his shoulder... he went through the gate or over the fence and set off your personal alarm in the house. You now have the option to push the panic button on your home alarm, set loose the hounds and/or call the cops. He's not even at your door yet. Now, as he walks toward the house, lights begin to go on. Geese are attacking, car alarms are going off and *PEOPLE CAN SEE HIM* from the road! He tries to hide behind your Llama de Fuego tree but looks more like Yogi Bear with his butt sticking out the back and his belly sticking out the front. No bushes to hide in, no place to go and he's lit up like John Dillinger after a good movie. You may resist the urge to offer him coffee and a bite to eat before he leaves. Jeez... it's time to go...

Next month for Security III, we'll enter "The Fun House" and see what awaits our bedraggled band of thieves.

For comments, declarations of love or poison pal letters, I can be reached at Fuzzlong@gmail.com



"Safe Room" information following page.

¹ A "Safe Room" is a secrete, impregnable room that the inhabitants of a home can hide until the bad guys are gone. Taken seriously, this means a small bath, water, food, communication, weapons, beds enough and electronic surveillance. Anything of value should be stored there. Escape route can be an option. Most people believe this kind of thinking is paranoid... but safe rooms do exist in Costa Rica.

¹ Security Experts who I know personally and trust. This is not to say I mistrust the others... I just don't know them.

Omar Lizano, here in town installs reliable, good quality alarm systems and backs them up. 2446-4274 and 8353-6349

Erwin McDonald (El Angel Guardian) at 2431-4373 and 8392-9606, installs monitored alarm systems with 24/7 people on duty to tell you which zone has gone off and will ask, using a phrase you pick, if you are all right. They'll wait on the line until you're sure it's okay.

¹ Five Seconds to react to deadly force. Some people believe if Armed Robbers trick or force themselves into your house... that if you just be nice and let them tie you up... it will be all right... that if they don't hurt, touch or fondle your wife or kids ... they're good guys! I believe this view needs some reflection.

¹ According to Larry Laxon, security expert, robbers don't like noise and almost never break glass to get in. If money is not an issue, there are extremely resistant films to cover your windows with. Google "burglar proof window film."

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.



Al Alexander
jeanandal@gmail.com

Start the Holiday Season with a wine and cheese reception at the Grand Opening of Al Alexander's new Studio and Gallery Friday, December 2nd from 5 to 7 pm
Atenas Today readers are cordially invited.
We are located in Barrio San Jose Sur, minutes from downtown Atenas. Please RSVP to help us with parking and refreshment arrangements and to get directions. Carpooling helps.



Where's Billy?

Dragonfly Animal Portraits
www.dianamiskell.com
<http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>



"Our Place is Where We are Loved" by Jan Yatsko.

Acrylic wash.

Painting size is 15" X 20"

Jan has donated this framed painting to the Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals to raise funds for the group. See the announcement in the Community Bulletin Board Section for the fundraiser dinner for more details on how you can obtain this painting.



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.

November 24th – HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO YOU ALL!

November 25th – 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Learn all about Bats at the School of Field Services in La Presa. Dr. Sergio A. Molina (one of this month's contributors), expert in Economics and Environmental Policies will lead the evening's activities which include refreshments and surprises for kids! Don't miss it.

November 26th – 6 p.m. Atenas Animals Group Fundraiser Kay's Gringo Postres (see flyer).

November 29th Atenas Bridge Club meets at the new, renovated Don Yayo's Restaurant. 12:00, no partner required.

November 30th (Please confirm with Sara and/or Kay)

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

December 3rd – Canadian Club Christmas Dinner (see flyer)

December 6th and 7th – RECYCLING CAMPAIGN CENTRAL PARK OF ATENAS 9A.M. – 2 P.M.

December 6, 13, 20, 27 – Atenas Bridge Club, noon, Don Yayo's Restaurant
no partner required. (Please confirm with John)

December 14th – Wine Tasting at Hotel & Restaurant Colinas del Sol, ATENAS. For more information, contact Birgitta Paul at 2446-4244 or Shannon Farley at 8835-4690

December 14th – SPECIAL WRITER'S GROUP PRESENTATION

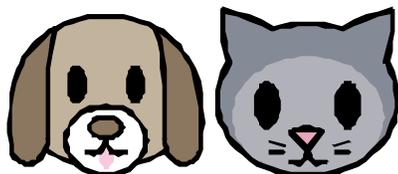
1 P.M. at The International Baptist Church, Guachipelin. Speakers, Refreshments, 2,000 colones donation. Contact L. Michael Rusin @ crcaseyboy@gmail.com (2451-9063) or Sharon Ann Wildey @ wildeysharon@yahoo.com (2228-6862) for more information.

December 17th Christmas Festival "Atenas Lights Up" in Central Park beginning early afternoon. Parade begins at 6 p.m.

December 19th - PLEIN AIR - A group of people with curious minds who meet the 3rd Monday of every month at a different location to explore and express their creativity through visual art and writing. Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or janyatsko@ice.co.cr to find out where we have been and where we are going.

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT www.atenaslife.com FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES.

Eat and **Dance** while you help abandoned animals



A fundraiser dinner for Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals

Saturday, November 26 at 6:00 PM at Kay's Gringo Postres

Dinner includes a drink (alcoholic beverages are extra), main course and dessert PLUS good music

Ticket price for adults is 7,500 colones Children to 12 years is 4,000 colones

AND...

The chance to obtain this original framed painting created and donated by Jan Yatsko (see the Gallery section for larger photo of painting)



Tickets available at: Kay's Gringo Postres and at the Atenas Foundation for Abandoned Animals every Friday morning by the basketball court at the outdoor farmer's market (feria)

For more info about the event or how to obtain the painting if you cannot attend the dinner:

Silvia at 8868-1386 or Eddie at 8656-2199



CHRISTMAS PARTY

Dec 3rd 6:30-12pm

6:30 - 7.30pm Carol Singing with
Bocas & Drinks from the Bar.
Dinner & dancing to follow.



CANADIAN CLUB CHRISTMAS DINNER

Great Food, Carol Singing, Prizes, DJ & Dancing
Main Dish is Leg of Pork & Turkey, Cash Bar

\$35

"Dress Up" is suggested

€18,000

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Join us to Celebrate the Holidays at Zamora Estates Hotel



BEFORE NOV 28, 11

Limited Seats-Pre-Purchase Only
For Tickets In Atenas Contact
Ron Findlay 2446-0936

Event Sponsored by www.CanadianClubCR.com



For the bloggers...



We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest to our readers. By providing this information, we are not endorsing or accepting responsibility for any content therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share.

Biolley Buzz

bcrcoffee.com

De La Pura Vida Costa Rica

delapuravida.com

Fabulista De Costa Rica

fabulistadecr.blogspot.com

The Very Worst Missionary

theveryworstmissionary.com

Julie and Rick in Costa Rica

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

Mi Chunché

michunche.com

New Life in Costa Rica

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

Pura Vida Mommy

puravidamommy.blogspot.com

Rubiatica

rubiatica.blogspot.com

Somewhere In Costa Rica

<http://somerwhereincostarica.com>

The Real Costa Rica

blog.therealcostarica.com

The View From Here

theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com

Claudia Leon

<http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/>

Going Like Sixty

<http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/>
goinglikesixty.com

Lois and Jim Craft

adventurecraft.blogspot.com

Dovile Vaigauskaite

www.powerofindividual.org

Diane Miskell

<http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>

Marietta Arce

<http://marisundays.wordpress.com>

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- Holiday specialties
- By order: GLUTEN FREE bread and cakes
- All products 100% natural with no preservatives

Call Tom Yatsko at: 2446-4764 or 8306-9767

Visit us every Friday 6-11 AM at the Atenas outdoor farmer's market to see our full selection. Look for the white tent by the basketball court.

Café Galería Lelia



Sabana Larga, Entrada a Vista Atenas/Entrance to Vista Atenas
Abierto martes a domingo de Mediodía a 7 P.M. Wi-Fi de cortesía
Open Tuesday to Sunday from Noon to 7 P.M. Complimentary Wi-Fi
Todos los domingos: lasaña de pollo / Every Sunday: Chicken lasagne
Reservaciones/Reservations: 2446-6469



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Atenas Today Advertising Rates and Policies

Atenas Today is sent out monthly to over 400 email addresses of people who live or vacation in the Atenas area. Display ads up to half a page in size cost \$20 per insertion; full page ads are \$35 per insertion. Ads in the Atenas Today Yellow Pages cost \$5 per month for one column by one inch, and \$10 per month for one column by two inches.

Advertisers should send the copy via email to atenastoday@gmail.com, with pictures attached as separate files. We will compose the ad and send back a proof for approval. The deadline for material for that month's issue is the 15th of the month.

Payment can be made in any of the following ways:

- 1) deposit to BCR Account No. 962-0003149-6 Marietta Arce Valverde
- 2) deposit to Paypal account of Marietta Arce (marietta_arce@yahoo.com)
- 3) cash in envelope in PO Box 65 (Marietta Arce Valverde) in Atenas.

In all cases be sure to include your name and what the money is for.