

HOW TO READ ATENAS TODAY

Many of the pages in Atenas Today are in two column format, and the default “view” in the *Adobe Reader* will present these pages in a large size that requires you to scroll up and down to read the whole page.

By changing the “view” to “**Full Screen**” you can fit the page to your screen and avoid the scrolling.

When in “Full Screen” view, left click to advance to the next page, or right click to go back a page.

If the text is too small for your taste, push the “escape” key to exit the “Full Screen” mode, and change the “zoom” level to get the size you want.

THE NEW YELLOW PAGES

Don't forget to download and save the latest version of the Yellow Pages. Many new businesses have been listed. This section will help you find the goods and services you need.

ATENAS TODAY

November 23, 2016



A November Visitor
Picture courtesy of Walter Wengrowich

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ATENAS TODAY is a free English language newsletter for the residents and potential residents of Atenas, Costa Rica. It contains informative articles and creative compositions submitted by our readers, and is distributed via email approximately once a month to over 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



Tomorrow is Thanksgiving in the United States and in most communities around the world where expats from the U.S. make their home. Atenas is no exception and many of us will be busy today cooking and baking in anticipation for spending time with family and friends.

If you have been paying attention to the news and weather forecasts, you are very aware that "Otto" is making its way toward us and emergency preparations are underway for all the communities that face danger. We are not used to these types of emergencies so the authorities are instructing us to be cautious and prepare just in case. Better safe than sorry!

Generally speaking, I take nothing for granted and try to always remember the many blessings I enjoy. Thanksgiving Day is my excuse, however, to really devote myself to spending extra minutes recalling the beautiful memories I have of past gatherings with our children and the many I trust the future will bring us.

The weeks ahead will be filled with celebrations for all of us as we prepare for the end of the year. I hope you venture out to enjoy the many activities that are taking

place in our little town; many are listed in the Community Bulletin Board section of this issue. I am sure there will be other events taking place that didn't make it into the issue, so I urge you to look for signs around town so you don't miss a thing.

All of us have faced some challenges during the year but I hope we all find something to enjoy and celebrate as we get into the real spirit behind the holidays.

As you get ready to welcome returning family and friends please remember to stay safe and to appreciate all the wonderful resources that we have that make it so worthwhile to live here in Atenas, today and every day.

I hope you enjoy this issue!

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.

November 24th – HAPPY U.S. THANKSGIVING!

December 2nd – Animales Atenas Christmas Fair (see flyer in their article this issue)

December 3rd – Three Lighting in Atenas (see flyer)

December 4th – Art Crafts Fair at Feria del Agricultor space (see flyer)

December 6th – St. Nicholas Day

December 8th – Feast of the Immaculate Conception (observed)

December 16th – Festival of Dance in the Church Hall in the center (Catholic Church), 7p.m.

December 17th – Angel Tree Christmas party 10 a.m.

December 16th – December 18th A weekend of entertainment and activities in Central Park

December 18th – 6 p.m. Festival de la Luz in ATENAS hosted by the Municipality

December 25th – Christmas Day

December 26th – Kwanza begins, ends January 1, 2016

December 24th (evening) – Hanukkah begins

January 1st (evening) – Hanukkah ends

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

Every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday: Hatha Yoga at Colinas del Sol
(see Flyer in this section for more details)

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

Every Tuesday: Atenas Mindfulness Meditation Group at the home of Barb Moss, barbsms@yandex.com#10 Roca Verde. All are welcome, attendance is free of charge (donations welcome), and no experience is necessary. The gate will be open between 8 to 9 a.m. Our practice consists of a half-hour meditation, a dharma (teaching) talk, and sharing. We conclude around 11 a.m., please plan to stay till then to fully experience the group energy.

NOTE: Classes will resume 11/15.

Every Wednesday (10 a.m.) and Saturday (9:15 a.m.) – The Feldenkrais Method (somatic education method) taught at Colinas del Sol. For more details, contact Rúbia Santos at: rssantos13@gmail.com

First and Third Wednesdays of each month (weather permitting) Recycling near CoopetransAtenas Bus Depot

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

Second and Fourth Sunday of each month: 10 a.m. in the Catholic Church in San Jose Sur, mass in English said by Father José Brennan Aedth.

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



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](https://www.facebook.com/groups/145046998883605)

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

SERVICES:

Tuesday - 6pm - Bible study in English at Iglesia Bíblica – **temporarily suspended due to health reasons.**

Wednesday - 6pm - English worship service at The Brook Training Center

1st Sunday of each month - an English translator is provided for the 9:00am Spanish worship service at Iglesia Bíblica. After 1st Sunday service many of the ex-pats gather to eat lunch together, either for a potluck or at a local restaurant.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

On the third Friday of each month at 6pm it's movie time at the Brook Training Center. Popcorn is provided. Bring your own beverage.

Early, early on **Easter Sunday** morning, we worship together at a member's home for Sunrise Service followed by a potluck breakfast.

On Christmas Eve at 6pm there is a bilingual candle light Communion service at Iglesia Biblica at the blinking light on HWY 3.

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 TO IGLESIA BIBLICA: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

DIRECTIONS TO THE BROOK TRAINING CENTER: 200 meters north of Iglesia Biblica on the right. After going through the entrance gates, take a left and drive down the hill. Parking will be on your left and the entrance on your right. In the event of heavy rains, the lower parking area will be blocked off. In this case, please park in upper area and enter through the home.

Atenas Yoga Center

Class Schedule

Monday	8:30 am - 9:45 am	Hatha Yoga with Leah
Wednesday	8:30 am - 9:45 am	Hatha Yoga with Leah
Thursday	8:30 am - 9:45 am	Hatha/Vinyasa Flow with Clara
Saturday	8:00 am - 9:00 am	Hatha Yoga with Leah/Clara

Feldenkrais Method Classes

Wednesday	10:00 am – 11:00 a.m.	Feldenkrais with Rubia Santos
Saturday	9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Feldenkrais with Rubia Santos

NOTE: Feldenkrais Classes Finish on November 12, 2016 and resume February 6, 2017

Hotel Colinas Del Sol is located in Atenas centro, about 100 meters after the main entrance of the Roca Verde neighborhood, on the left. We are in the salón de eventos



All classes are 3000 colones or US\$6 Mats can be rented for 1000 colones or US\$2 Please wear loose and comfortable clothing We also offer private sessions. Contact Us: 8835-9853 • 8928-5497
classes@atenasyoga.com www.atenasyoga.com



Iluminación del Árbol Municipalidad de Atenas

4:00 p.m. Iglesia Bautista: Títeres
y obra interactiva Odisea

4:30 p.m. Coro Escuela Colina
Azul

5:00 p.m. Ballet Estudio

5:30 p.m. Pastoral Juvenil Iglesia
Católica: Obra de
teatro/presentación musical

6:00 p.m. Iluminación del árbol

6:30 p.m. Grupo Atenea: Liceo de
Atenas

7:00 pm. Escuela de música Coro

Friendship Library News
November, 2016

It's been a fairly slow month in the library, a perfect time for some fixin'up and cleanin' up. New paint has brightened everything. A new shelf greets folks as they enter and a new arrangement of furniture makes it all feel more comfortable.

Changing Places

With the ongoing fix-up process, some things are in different places. If you are looking for books about history, geography, travel or biography, look for those books in the rear dining room at the end of the fiction shelves. The magazines and the books in German are in the back room with the DVDs and CDs. And check out the new comfy reading space in the rear dining room:



This new space gives us an opportunity to finally put out some lovely books that we have been saving. Every once in a while, we receive "coffee table" books. They are beautiful books but just too big for the shelves. I'll start putting them out on the table by the sofa and I will start with books of Canada, Ireland, and the Art and Architecture of Venice. These, like all of the books, can be borrowed.

As we are taking this opportunity to clean shelves and put things back in order, a short note might be in order about how we "put things back in order". Please feel free to put returned books on the table in the back room. My trusty library helper will re-shelve them. If you wish to return books to the shelves, keep this in mind: All fiction books are in order according to the author's last name. Those three letters below the "F"

on the spine label are the first three letters of the author's last name. Call on those alphabetizing skills and go for it. Non-fiction books are shelved by number. Just get books back with other books that have the same number.

Happy Thanksgiving, dear readers. 'Tis good to give thanks. Meister Eckhart said that if the only prayer you said in your whole life was 'Thank You', that would suffice. On a less serious note, I leave you with this thought from Shel Silverstein, one of my favorite authors of books for children.

"Thanksgiving dinner's sad and thankless,
Christmas dinner's dark and blue,
When you stop and try to see it
From the turkey's point of view."

-Linda Ledbetter, librarian

DOGS OF THE MONTH



Fundación Ateniense de Ayuda a Animales Abandonados
Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals
Cedula Juridica # 3-006-542026

ATENAS de Alajuela - COSTA RICA

CHINA



CHINA is a very playful and friendly dog. She is a mature, healthy lady and has been spayed. She will keep your home safe. China has much love to share in a forever home. China is 9 months old and needs a space to play and run in an enclosed yard. She gets along well with other dogs and is very affectionate with people.

The perfect Christmas surprize!! Lynda is a foxy lady with a fun loving personality with greetings for everyone. She will be a watch dog for your home. She is good with other dogs and children. Lynda has been spayed, wormed and had all her injections. Give her a forever loving home and she will reward you with loving kindness and many kisses. She is 1 ½-2 years of age.



LYNDA

**ANIMALES
ATENAS
GRAND CHRISTMAS
SALES**

**December 2
9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.**

**In the Salon Communal next to the
Bomberos**

In Atenas Central

New and Gently used baby and toddler clothing, new items for gifts including necklaces, bracelets and children's watches, Christmas decorations such as florals, swags, garlands, artificial trees, décor, bows, lights, ornaments

Cedula Juridica#3-006-542626



FERIA NAVIDENA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please help Animales Atenas at the Atenas Central Park booth December 17 and 18.

Support Animales Atenas by visiting the booth and purchasing the merchandise.

Contact info@animalesatenas.com to donate items or volunteer for 2 hours or a day. Spanish, German, Italian and English spoken.

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM

Stop by the community building next to the Fire Station 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

SPECIAL NEED- FOSTERING

Foster volunteers open their homes and hearts to animals for adoption. Many of these are abandoned by the owners and are starving on the street.

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 animals.

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

DORA 8855-9822
doritrebole@yahoo.com

Sylvia 8868-1386
AnimalesAtenasCR@AOL.com

Chasing Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo across Borders



*by Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com*

Years ago I was a columnist for a Minneapolis neighborhood newspaper. My column, entitled Lake People, allowed me to intrude upon famous and infamous residents of the City of Lakes. My editors occasionally assigned visitors from out of town so I was able to cover Maya Angelou, Hillary Clinton, and Anita Hill.

Two people I interviewed introduced me to the personalities of Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, and painter Frida Kahlo. I've been in hot pursuit of them ever since, sometimes chasing them across various countries to decipher the enigmas of their lives and their art.

Fred Vanderbilt Field reluctantly agreed to be interviewed after insisting on inspecting my briefcase to assure I had no electronic devices even though he had agreed to be audio-taped on my small recorder. Fred was the great great grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt. When he was in his twenties, Fred had declared himself to be a communist, a decision that resulted in his capitalist family immediately disinheriting him. In the 1950s, he was brought before the McCarthy Committee on Un American Activities, and in 1951, he was sent to prison for refusing to name names. His cell was next to mystery writer Dashiell Hammett, also convicted of espionage. Fred told me that Hammett's wife, Lillian Hellman, was the ugliest woman he had ever seen.

Fred had valid reasons to worry about the FBI spying on him. During our interview he showed me thousands of pages of his FBI records that he had procured through the Freedom of Information Act. Although redacted to the point of being practically un-readable, the dates showed that for decades he had been tailed in both America and Mexico.

Fred had been a self-exile, driving to Mexico in 1953 where he lived for the next 30 years. There he met Diego, their friendship built on Fred being an avid archeologist who shared an interest with Diego in pre-Columbian artifacts that Diego preferred to call pre-Colonialist. Both were active in the Communist Party.

In Mexico, Fred also met his wife, Nieves Orozco, reportedly Diego Rivera's favorite model. When their daughter, Xochitl Field, was born with cerebral palsy, they moved to Minnesota in 1982 so that Xochitl could receive rehabilitation services from Courage Center. Fred died at the

age of 94 in 2000, but back then he and Nieves, who I also interviewed, became fascinating fixtures in my life for a short period.

Fred and the interminably beautiful Nieves, who in those days danced and choreographed with a Mexican Folkloric dance group, told tales of a rotund, yet charming Diego and his fanatically jealous wife, Frida. Frida despised any woman who Diego admired. Diego was an avid womanizer, admiring most women, especially Nieves. I listened to Fred and Nieves describe a volatile Frida with a monkey wrapped around her neck like a boa, pet parrots landing on her shoulders, engaging in huge disagreements with Diego. The latter they attributed to Frida's possessiveness.



Nieves



Nieves and Diego Rivera

In these early encounters with Fred and Nieves, I hardly paid attention to their memories of Diego or Frida. I was much more interested in their stories of their friend Marilyn Monroe who they had met in Mexico in 1962. The FBI had investigated her for years, suspecting her as being a communist after she supported her then husband, Arthur Miller, in his trial by the House of Un-American Activities. In Miller's play, *The Crucible*, he used the Salem witch trials as an allegory for the McCarthy Era.

In Marilyn Monroe's redacted files, there is evidence that she and Fred were enamored with one another in 1962. If so, Fred did not "kiss and tell" to me. Instead, he and Nieves shared stories of the movie star's great intellect. They had stayed at her New York apartment once while she was away and found early recordings of her practicing *Happy Birthday to You* that she was scheduled to sing for President John F. Kennedy.

Years later, in 2007, I attended a Frida Kahlo exhibit at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Nearly 50 of her paintings and 90 newly released photographs of Frida and Diego with people who Fred and Nieves had often mentioned, were displayed. Her paintings were diaries, putting self-portraits beside her multiple surgeries and still born births and therapeutic abortions; recording her marital struggles with Diego; declaring her allegiance to communism. This Frida was more complex than the woman my friends had described. Each agonizing picture presented a reality that was starkly brutal and personal.

At the exhibition I purchased a Diego Rivera print that features Nieves kneeling before a man with a mammoth arrangement of calla lilies on his back. Her feet are folded behind her, and her

braids hang long, a style she had kept when I had met her. Like Frida, she wears the jewelry and clothes of her indigenous heritage that was so admired by Diego. I recognized in Nieves' story elements of Frida that included a harsh childhood. Nieves was sold by one set of relatives to be a servant to other relatives. Her beauty and talent at dance led her into an inner circle of artists and intellectuals that included Diego Rivera who immediately wanted to paint her. My homage to Nieves now hangs in the entry of my house in Costa Rica. Next to it is a mirror framed by 18 postage stamp size paintings by Frida, some of them self-portraits displaying her most notable trait that Diego described as, "Thick eyebrows met at her nose like two wings of a blackbird."

Like many admirers, I became fascinated by the artists' lives as much as their artistry. Glimpses into their past provided by Fred and Nieves sent me to learn about these two who had piqued my interest in their homeland. In 2013, I purposely scheduled a 24 hour layover in Mexico City where I grabbed a cab with a driver named Jesus who I hired for the day. "Show me the art of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo." So it came to pass that Mary with Jesus as my driver started at the Palacio Nacional de Mexico to view the murals that have come to be his hallmark as an artist.

It is hard to imagine the larger than life, egotistical Diego feeling inferior. As a young man for many years in Europe he imitated the art styles refined by his friends Pablo Picasso and Juan Gris. Later, he became aware of what he describes as "my Mexican American inferiority complex, my awe before historic Europe and its culture."

That changed during a voyage that Diego made from Hamburg to Mexico when a glorious sunset unfolded with a series of glaring red balls that came to rest on a bank of clouds. Fellow passenger, painter David Alfaro Siqueiros, exclaimed, "Those things are really small balls. If we could get them in our hands, we could play with them. Real balls, I tell you." In his autobiography, *My Art, My Life*, Diego said the image provided the inspiration for his masterpiece that begins at the top of the Palacio Nacional de Mexico stairway. As one ascends the stairs, a series of murals become visible that depict the pre-Spanish Conquest of his country. Then, like the unveiling of a sunset, a walk around the Palacio reveals the history of Mexico including Diego's present and the future that he foresaw.

With each step up the staircase and through the corridors, I, like millions before me, witnessed Mexico's antiquity. The conqueror Cortez resembled a monster as he stood before an Aztec man being tortured. To Cortez's side was a priest, equally ghoulish. In Diego's paintings, there were recognizable historical and popular figures including Benito Juarez who ended European dominance, the armies of Poncho Villa and Zapata, movie star Delores Del Rio, and Karl Marx. I pointed out Nieves to Jesus who stood admiringly beside me, although I am sure he didn't understand my babbling Spanish. I left with an appreciation of a body of work begun in 1929 that ended in 1935 with additional panels completed in 1940. Diego Rivera's murals represented a new national identity for both himself and for his country.

An hour before closing time, Jesus and I arrived at Frida Kahlo's La Casa Azul, the Frida Kahlo Museum, in the lovely barrio of Coyoacán. Casa Azul is appropriately named, the outside a

cobalt blue that is unrivaled in Nature. Here, off and on, Frida lived with Diego, the house where she was born, lived and died. "No photos. No flash," the many workers admonished guests who ignored the order, caught up in their frenzy to photograph the bed where Frida had been confined and had eventually died inside the rooms that were bathed in light to the envy of any painter. Diego had donated the house in 1958 in Frida's honor.



Casa Azul



Casa Azul



Casa Azul

Frida first met Rivera when she was an art student hoping to get advice on her career from the famous Mexican muralist. He recalled her from an earlier time when she, as a young girl, had taunted him as he painted on a scaffold. Although Rivera was married, a courtship ensued. They wed in 1929 (he was 42, she was 22) much to the disapproval of Frida's parents, who referred to the couple as "the elephant and the dove." Because of their volatile tempers and countless infidelities, the marriage was notoriously tumultuous. The couple divorced in 1939 only to remarry a year later, though the second marriage was just as turbulent as the first.

A subsequent visit to Casa Azul in late 2014 featured a temporary exhibit containing her leg corset, crutches, and a prosthetic leg attached to a colorful boot that Frida had decorated with Chinese dragons. Diego had not allowed the objects to be displayed until at least 50 years had passed since her death in 1954. The medical devices revealed the full extent of her constant pain, resulting from polio as a child and by a metal bar that had impaled her when she was in a streetcar accident. Her response in decorating them provides further insight into her character. Diego's art reflects a compulsive passion to tell the story of his country, while Frida's expresses the angst of her life circumstances, a life that by Diego's own admission was made more difficult by his inability to be faithful to her.

The two, who were volatile in life, are now inseparable in the art world. On a recent trip to Mexico, I visited Diego's birthplace in Guanajuato. Strolling past the room where he was born and that still contains his crib, I came to the *ofrenda* for *Días de los Muertos*. Despite this museum being a homage to Diego, half of the altar was dedicated to Diego, the other to Frida.



Ofrendas

Currently, there is a travelling exhibition in San Jose that features paintings by Diego and Frida. While *México: Identidad Fantástica Exhibición* fulfills its goal of providing historic moments in modern Mexico Art, for an aficionado like myself, one Diego and one Frida was like offering a few M&Ms to a chocolate freak.

A 1914 painting from Diego's short-lived Cubist period begins the show. A copy of Frida's "My Dress Hangs There" is more interesting, even though it is a copy of the original. This painting is her only collage and it lacks her signature self-portrait. Started by Frida in New York and finished in Mexico in 1933, the canvas screams Frida's longing to return to her homeland after spending three years in New York City with Diego as he finished the Rockefeller Center mural. She captures her view of American capitalism and superficiality with dollar symbols on a church's stained glass window, smoke stacks that belch soot onto a background that includes the Statue of Liberty and New York City skyline, and a Mae West portrait. She references herself with a Tehuana dress hanging on a clothes line between a toilet and a trophy, as if to say her outer wardrobe was her only means of expression in a society that had sacrificed everything to the Industrial Age. The Tehuana traditional dresses that Frida wore articulated her identity and hid her back brace and corset that she was forced to wear.

Diego once said that when he first met Frida and visited her house to view her paintings, "I did not know it then, but Frida had already become the most important fact in my life. And she would continue to be, up to the moment she died." Her paintings and even the Casa Azul kitchen décor with tiny ceramic cups spelling out the names Frida and Diego on the wall, reflect her lifelong love of him.

For me, it has been worth crossing a few borders to explore so universal a love between two art icons.

México: Identidad Fantástica Exhibición continues throughout November at the Museo de Nacional Dr. Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia in the Barrio Escalante in San Jose. For more information, call 506-2221-1239.

All pictures taken by Mary Mason, except Nieves and Nieves and Diego Rivera which are public domain.



Great Central Valley Day Tour

By Shannon Farley

If you have friends or family coming to Atenas to visit you, and you want a great day tour in the Central Valley that really shows off some of the best features of Costa Rica, go for this unbeatable triad: Doka Estate Coffee Tour in Alajuela, Poás Volcano National Park, and La Paz Waterfall Gardens.

I just took friends visiting from London to these three places yesterday (mid November) and they were captivated and awestruck by Costa Rica's beauty. These three tours are always a big hit, and no matter how many times I go, I always have a fun time too!

Doka Estate Coffee Tour (https://dokaestate.com/coffee_tour/tour_coffee.html)

The coffee tour at Doka Estate is really convenient to this day tour combination because it is located above Alajuela in Sabanilla on the way to Poas Volcano National Park. I love the fact that the Doka Estate is a family business now in its 4th generation of the Vargas family, and has been operating for close to 100 years. They still use the original coffee mill, which is one of the oldest in Costa Rica still in use!



The neat thing about the Doka Coffee Tour is that in 90 minutes you will be taken from the "seed to the cup" learning about the entire process of making coffee. You start out in the coffee plantation, then go to the mill, the sun-dried coffee area, the roasting room, and finally to taste test the different coffees. There are six tours a day on weekdays and five on weekends, and they offer discounts for residents. I recommend the 9:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. tour. If you go early, you can enjoy a traditional breakfast before the tour (served from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.)

My friend, Maria, trying her hand at turning the coffee drying in the sun at Doka Estate.



Poas Volcano National Park

(<http://www.costarica-nationalparks.com/poasvolcanonationalpark.html>)

After the coffee tour – and you'll be “fueled up” by drinking a lot of free coffee and eating chocolate covered coffee beans – I recommend heading straight up to Poás Volcano National Park. The drive there is gorgeous and full of scenic views and photo opportunities for your guests. We saw a sloth hanging from telephone cables along the way!

You'll arrive close to midday, and while there is a possibility that the crater will be wreathed in clouds (especially during rainy season), that's also part of the mystique of being in the cloud forest. We were lucky. The ticket attendant at the entrance told us the crater was covered in clouds, but we were determined still to go; when we got to the crater's edge it was completely clear. So, you never know. Since we were combining three tours in one day, we did not do the hike to Botos Lagoon; only going to the crater and museum.



La Paz Waterfall Gardens (<http://www.waterfallgardens.com/>)

La Paz Waterfall Gardens is touristy. It is. And it is on the expensive side; however it is worth every penny. And they have residents' rates which are very affordable. I recommend including the buffet lunch and making this your lunch stop (otherwise, “Fresas Restaurant” in Fraijanes is also good). Since you'll be getting here in the early afternoon (probably about 1:30 p.m.), most of the people that arrived in the morning will be leaving, and you'll be there after the lunch rush.

Not only does La Paz bring your guests right into the middle of the cloud forest with amazing waterfalls, they get to see an incredible range of Costa Rican animals that maybe they won't have the chance to see out in the wild – toucans, Scarlet Macaws, lots of other rainforest birds, butterflies, white-faced Capuchin and spider monkeys, dozens of hummingbirds buzzing right by your heads, snakes, rainforest frogs, jaguars and a Margay. The old-fashioned Costa Rican house shows off a pair of huge oxen with the traditional oxcart, with which your guests can take photos. Inside, the lovely staff serves traditional food and drink like *agua dulce*, corn bread pudding and fresh farmer's cheese (made from the cows in the pen outside).

The restaurant is in the middle of the wildlife areas, so I recommend going straight there for lunch and then walking back to the Aviary to start seeing the park. The park is designed to flow you through all of the different areas – Aviary, Butterfly Garden, Monkeys, Hummingbird Garden, Serpentarium, Orchid Garden, Frog Garden, and ending at the *Casita* (traditional house). Pop up to see the jungle cats, and then you will be ready for the Waterfall Trails.



The Waterfall Trails are for your physically fit guests as there are dozens and dozens of stairs – mostly down but some up. You'll see five waterfalls from varying perspectives – above, in front of, and right next to the thundering water. It's breathtaking! The trail ends at a small gift shop with bathrooms, and then there is a courtesy bus that drives you back up the mountain to the Waterfall Gardens parking lot and main building where you entered. A wonderful tour and experience! On the way back down to Alajuela, stop for fresh strawberries along the road in Fraijanes.



The Oxen of Atenas



By Melissa Michaud (Photo Meghan Young)

Atenas is famous for its annual Oxcart Parade, and every year oxen from around the country come to walk in the parade. The pairs range from small yearlings with buds of horns to enormous beasts with gold-tipped spiraling horns who could just as soon pull a bus as lick sugar cubes out of a small child's hand. The oxen are beautifully matched and many of them are twins. Each pair is joined by a yoke and they pull a gorgeously painted Oxcart that has an intricate pattern of a style that originated in Sarchi Costa Rica. Each cart is painted in a rainbow of colors and no two carts are exactly the same. Even though a hundred or more Boyeros (oxcart drivers) participate in the parade I never tire of admiring the care and beauty that goes into each team and oxcart.



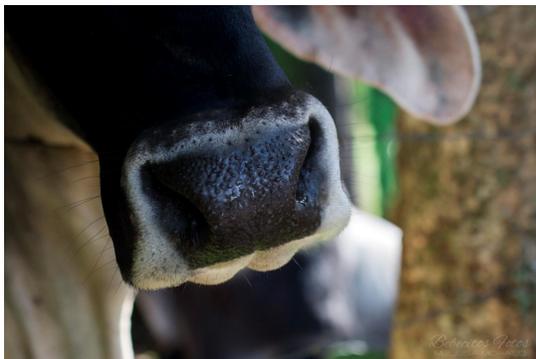
Don Tessie and his Gemelos

In Atenas you don't need to wait for the annual parade to see the oxen because any random day a pair could be walking along Highway 3 pulling their beautiful cart. One day I was lucky enough to see Don Tessie of Barrio Los Angeles as he trained his *bueyes* (oxen) on a knoll across from the Chicharronera Don Yayo. This pair was a beautifully matched set he named "Los Gemelos" (or twins) but whether they were actually twins he will never say.

But what do the Oxen do when they are not parading? Near where I met Don Tessie there is a large water tank covered in verdant moss and surrounded by thick brush. An old barbed wire fence haphazardly surrounds a small area where the Oxen will lounge in the shade and lick the



dew from the moss. I am always fascinated by these gentle giants, so one day I stopped to watch them as they rested. That such enormous beasts could be so calm and kind seems a miracle to me, but they are. They sat patiently for their portraits, and barely blinked an eye as I scrambled under the barbed wire to get even closer to them. One of them even came up to me and reached out his big, wet nose to my hands, asking to be pet, I'm sure, but even a friendly ox warranted a little bit of caution so near to my camera. It was a treat to see the Oxen in a way that the public never does when they are on parade, and their beauty and tranquility will keep me coming back to visit.





Melissa Michaud

Lifestyle Photographer, Bebecitos Fotos

www.bebecitosfotos.com

www.facebook.com/bebecitosfotos/

I take photos every single day of the year. See them at:

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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.

Buenos noches Y'all!!!!

GUESS WHAT!!!

We went to school today!!! Me, Bunny, and Lluvia!

Me and Mom got some papers ready to take with us to read to the kids and the teachers. We wrote them in English and then translated them into Spanish with her computer program. It does not do a very good job so she got Enid to come over and correct it.

We wanted to make sure it said what we wanted it to say.

It was about how humans should care for the animals and should never be cruel to them. While we were typing it up in English Mom put something in there about how God put us animals on the earth first and then put humans here. She also said something about how God loves us animals just like He loves humans.

I got kind of worried and told her maybe she should not put that in there about God because it may be against the law to mention Him in the school.

She smiled at me and said, "BudBud...we are not in the states anymore. God is allowed in the schools here!!"

Anyway, Mom, Enid, Dario, and us perros all got into the car and drove to the school. Mom put the three of us in the baby stroller and walked us up to the front door.

All of a sudden about 30 KIDS came running outside and wanted to pet us!!

Mom said "DESPACIO!!!" which means "SLOWLY!"

They all slowed down and then started petting us.

MAN!!! It was GREAT!!!

All those little hands rubbing us all over!! **WE LOVED IT!!!**

Bunny, who gets nervous sometimes, just **BEAMED!!!**

She **LOVED** getting petted by all those little people.

Lluvia, who Mom taught to ride in the stroller yesterday, acted like a perfect lady!!! Imagine that!!! Two weeks ago she was a street dog with no education!! Now she is an EDUCATOR!!!

After they had petted us for several minutes we all went inside the first classroom. Enid read the papers that we had written and then the children were allowed to ask questions. They were all VERY polite and wanted to know all about caring for animals, spaying and neutering, how to approach animals, and what to say to people they see abusing animals. Enid translated their questions and then translated Mom's answers. It was REALLY neat!!

Then Enid told the class that we will be having a spay/neuter clinic at our house on July 2nd!!! Some of the kids were very happy to hear that and told us that their parents had told them that they might have to get rid of their pets because they keep having babies. They are going to start saving their pennies to help pay for the surgery!!

Then we went to the other classroom and did it all over again!!!
Us perros had SO MUCH FUN!!!

SO.....now I am an EDUCATOR!! WOOF WOOF!!!! (oops....didn't mean to let that slip out)
I meant to say YAAYY!!!! (blush)

Tailwags from BudBud the SCHOOLBOY!!!!

More Than Just Grooming



by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com

"It's complicated," she said as I sat in her styling chair last week. "Curly hair is very complicated." The beautician was not saying anything new and I appreciated her soft voice and poker face. I sat back as she silently examined my hair. I waited anxiously to hear whether she would be able to continue a hair coloring correction process that began two months ago in New York.

My full-fledged curls have been with me since I was born. Imagine being the only one in the family with this thick, unruly mass. I yearned for long, straight tresses like my sisters had, but I was the child of a busy no-nonsense type of mom who didn't have the time it took to brush and style my type of hair every morning.

My early memories of "hair styling" were the frequent visits to the barber (yes, the barber!) because aside from being curly and thick, it grew quickly! I did not have any hair tips or secrets handed down to me by family members. No one even knew the crazy things I did before bed each night hoping the unruly swirls would be gone by morning!

By the time I was a sophomore in high school I had managed to grow my hair long enough to wear it in a ponytail or braids. It was at around this time that I allowed myself to be talked into bleaching it blonde without my mother's permission. She was furious, of course, and I spent most of the next two years growing it out and cutting it often. At one point, I had the two-tone hair that is all the rage these days, but back then it just made me look like a rebel, which I can assure you, I was not!

I used to wonder why my mother didn't just color it brown again, saving us both embarrassment, but now after knowing all I do about chemicals and hair, I think she was afraid it would all fall out! Probably to teach me some kind of a lesson too! When I graduated from high school, it was back to short, curly and medium brown, much to everyone's relief!

Right after high school, I came back to Costa Rica for a few months. It was during this time that I was exposed to women in Costa Rican society who spent many hours and lots of money at the beauty parlor regularly. It was a fascinating discovery because my mom's lack of interest in that area had not opened the doors to that world for me.

I was captivated and became aware of the subtle and intricate bond between the hairdresser and client. As I waited for my hair to be cut, set and styled for a relative's wedding, I was

privity to conversations I had no idea could take place between people of such different backgrounds. For the writer in me, it was an invitation to take notes for some future protagonists' development.

When I returned to New York in 1974, I visited the hair salon regularly after work and kept up with fashion and curly hair trends. At one point, my hair was just a few inches long all around my head but I continued to wish for long hair that I could style in different ways.

In the mid-80's, I saw Crystal Gale's famous floor length hair shine as she sang. When I discovered that her hairstylist was in Manhattan, I immediately made an appointment. My hair was suffering from years of experimentation! The owner of the salon, Dr. George Michael, long-hair guru, sat with me and promised me that if I followed his advice, I too could have long, beautiful hair just like Crystal Gale.

I never got to floor length but in the next 15 years it grew well past my waist, a dream come true!



Me and my hair, 1998

My hair was healthy and beautiful and stayed straight in the crisp New York weather! Dr. Michael, who no longer worked on clients but supervised the staff and was full of advice for his many patrons, charmed us all. I remember that a woman came in once and said she wanted to cut her hair short. He raised his eyebrows and rushed to her side because he knew she was undergoing a personal crisis that needed gentle and firm guidance, **never** a haircut! I was a faithful and happy client until we moved to Costa Rica in 1999.

The next decade found me busy with life and young children. My hair was usually in a bun because keeping it loose in this tropical climate was just not practical and making the fancy, intricate braids took too much time.

In 2008 I noticed an alarming amount of gray strands. I admire people who go with the flow with the gray hairs; it's not for me, though! I made an appointment with a local hairdresser. She suggested a haircut to start with and then some color to cover the gray. Although I agreed to the haircut, I almost fainted when she unceremoniously cut more than 12 inches with the first snip! I was glad George Michael was not there to see that. After the shock wore off, she proceeded to color and I admit that I left there feeling happy with the new look.

For the next few years, I went to her one-person salon and was very content with the privacy afforded by her small business. The sessions were wonderfully therapeutic for both of us. We caught up on all the details of each other's lives every five or six weeks.

The day she told me she was moving to another country was a very sad one for me because we had formed such a deep friendship. Naturally, I wished her well but the idea of looking for another hairdresser did stress me out.

At first I thought I would do my own coloring but I soon concluded that it was not realistic due to the nature of my hair. After reviewing several local options, I chose a large salon with lots of customers and stations. I liked the contrast: lots walk-in traffic, flat screen television sets and plenty of magazines to peruse while waiting between the stages of the treatments. I also liked the fact that they kept up with the latest styles and catered to the needs of men, women and children. It was an interesting environment.

The salon is very popular which also has a downside. I established a good rapport with one of the stylists but once when she was not there, I did allow another person to color my hair. The result was unexpected (black!) and I was not pleased. To my surprise, the stylist's response was to tell me that this darker shade complimented the color of my eyes! I went home feeling frustrated until I remembered that in another few weeks, I would be ready to cover the grays again and my regular stylist would be back.

I made another appointment a few weeks later. Although my usual stylist was there, my hair was colored by a junior apprentice under some supervision. The shop was busy and I sat with product in my hair for what seemed a very long time. Eventually, I was shampooed and combed out and when I looked in the mirror, my hair was very dark. Again. As I made my

way to the cashier, I knew I would not revisit this salon. There are many other options in Atenas; I just needed to find the right one.

A trip to New York and a conversation about my hair with my future daughter-in-law prompted her to make me an appointment with her grandmother's hairdresser who had been working with her for many years.

I was fortunate to be able to get an appointment because the shop is open only a few days per week. The initial process took many hours but when I left the salon, I was closer to having the hair color I feel comfortable with. Because I was coming back to Costa Rica, I was given an index card with all the information required for another professional to continue the process. The rates in New York are much higher than here in Atenas, but I gladly paid them and added a good tip on top of that because of the short notice on my side and the professional work on their side.

It took me almost 10 weeks to find another stylist. In "root" time, that's a long time! I made sure that those recommending her actually went to her one-person shop. I am very satisfied with the results of my first visit, enjoying the more relaxed atmosphere and one-to-one interaction that almost guarantees success.

It is ironic that the very things that made the larger (more anonymous) salon attractive to me made it almost impossible to receive the **quality** care I had gotten used to. I guess I will always be a "small town girl" preferring the kind of salon that provides an experience that exceeds expectations and deserves my loyalty.

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.



Jaco Beach
16.5" x 32.5"
Oil on Linen

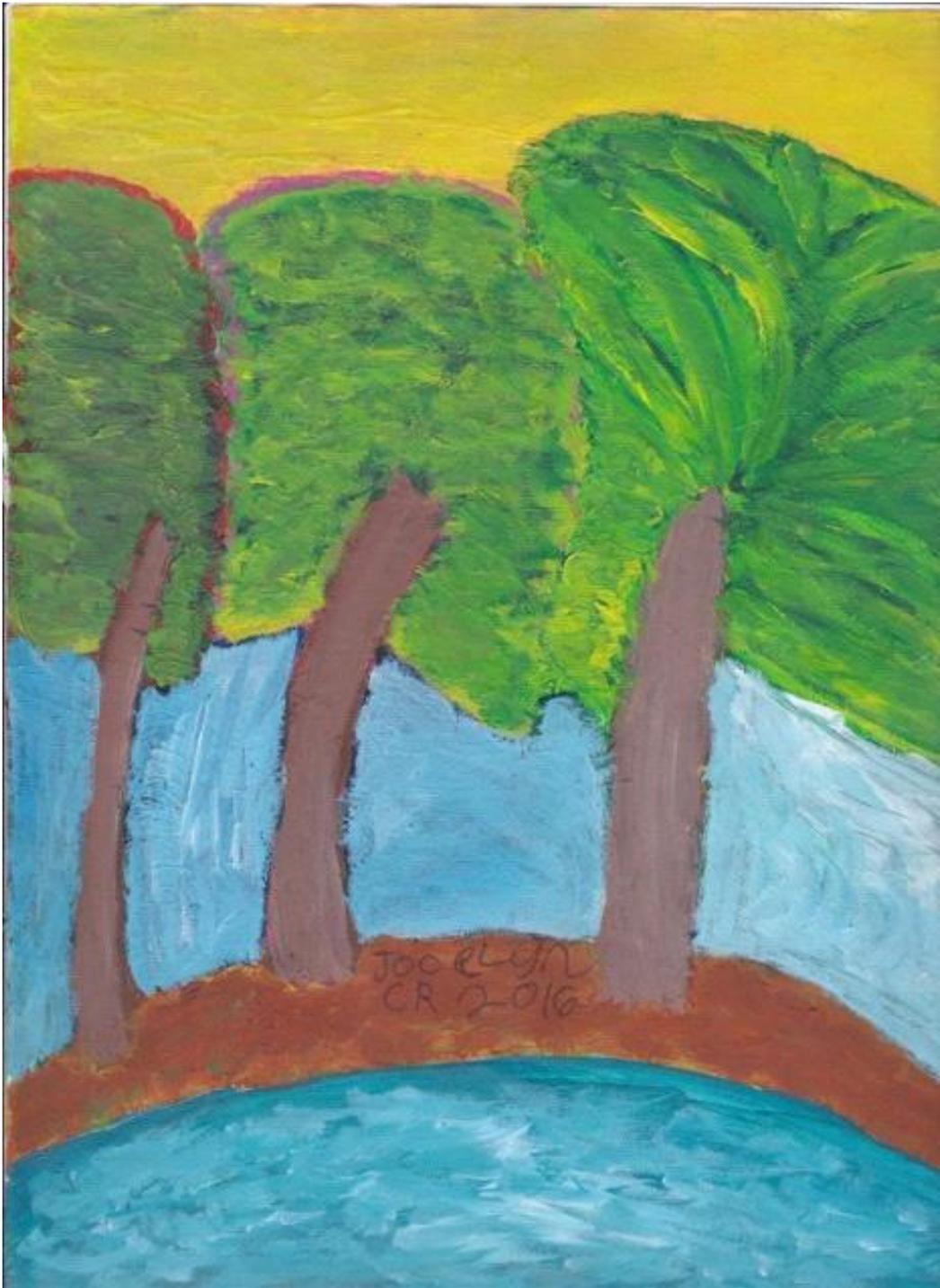
Artist's Statement: I was taken with the translucent light in the breaking wave and tried to capture that light.

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



Untitled
28" x 22"
Acrylic and Collage on Paper

Harriet Sheppard
hweyman@gmail.com



Playa Bejuco Palms

Jocelyn Farquhar

jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.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 found therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share. These are alphabetized for your easy reference. **Please advise if you find that some blogs no longer exist.**

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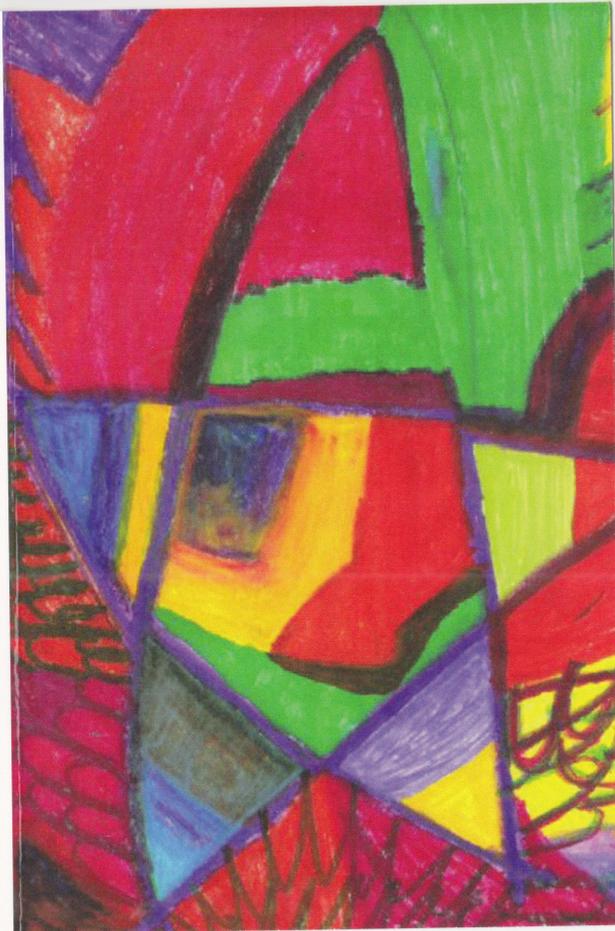
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JOCELYN is a lively and creative young woman who lives with her family in Costa Rica. Faced with developmental challenges, her imaginative illustrations are a form of expression that has continued to impress her family and friends throughout the years. Squibbles, a family nickname, is a collection of her whimsical designs. Part of our proceeds go to organizations that help others who face challenges lead bright and fulfilling lives.

JOCELYN es una señorita vivaz y creativa, quien vive en el hermoso país de Costa Rica con su familia. Haciéndole frente a los retos de su desarrollo, sus obras imaginativas sirven como forma de expresión que año tras año han impresionado a su familia y amigos. "Squibbles", un apodo familiar de Jocelyn, es una colección única de sus diseños vibrantes y llenos de fantasía. Una porción de todos los ingresos recibidos se designan a organizaciones que ayudan a otros a superar retos.

www.jocelynfarquhar.com





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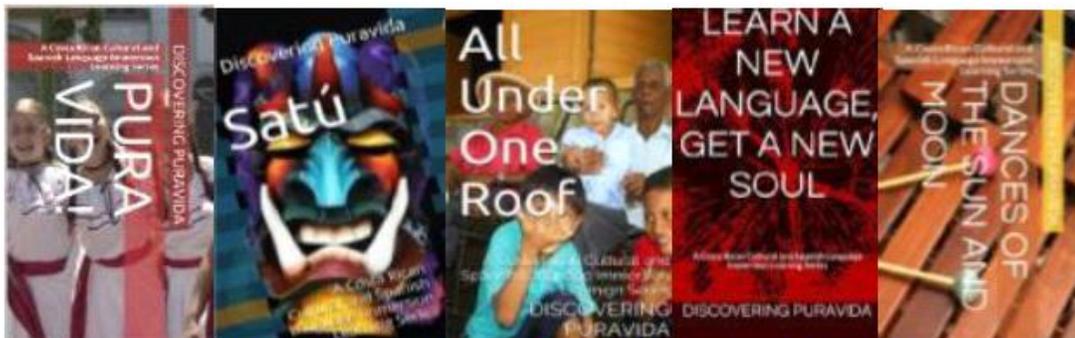
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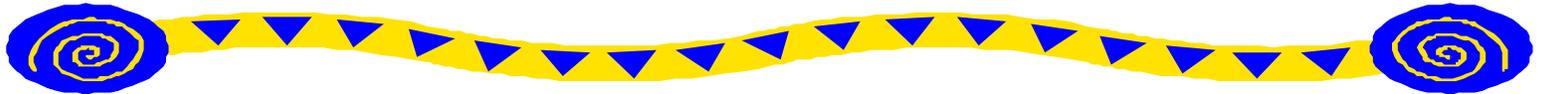
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