

## 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



October 12, 2012 - Costa Rica celebrates Day of Cultures

*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 470 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Marietta Arce at [atenastoday@gmail.com](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com).*

*Compositions from back issues are archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, [www.atenascatuca.com](http://www.atenascatuca.com). Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.*



## DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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

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

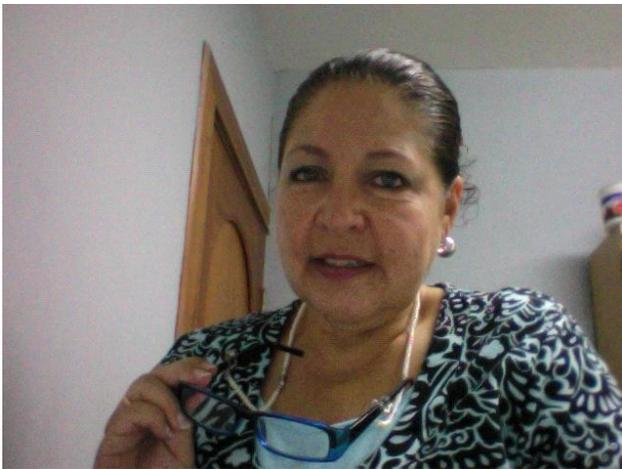
Issue No. 93

September 23, 2012

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## Publisher's Note



The summer is over and school is back! At least that's the way it is in our household because we have traditionally followed the U.S. calendar for our children's education.

I couldn't be happier about this change in 'seasons'. Since September is also my birthday month, I get the opportunity to start **my** new year. For me, this represents another chance to set new goals, make new schedules and adopt a general attitude of renewal.

Gathering material for each issue of Atenas Today has become one of my favorite activities. I notice that I read newsletters and magazines differently now, paying attention to the aspects that attract and keep my attention.

I am always alert for hidden talents in our community. It brings me great satisfaction when talented writers, artists and community leaders contact me with an idea or a request to be published.

There is a wealth of wonderful articles in this issue. Feedback is always welcome and can be sent directly to the emails provided by the contributors. It is always nice to hear from the many of you who take the time to acknowledge the effort that goes into this publication each month.

I have just returned from a long stay in New York where the fresh air of autumn served to remind me that the long, cold winter days are mine only if I choose them! I am fortunate to have the option and I am certain the many of you who live here will agree with me. Enjoy and appreciate the wonderful things we have right here in Atenas, today and every day.

Happy Reading!

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Fall foliage in the countryside USA



## COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

This space is available for posting community activities for the following weeks. Please provide information about your activity or event to [atenastoday@gmail.com](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

September 22<sup>nd</sup> – 3 p.m. Colinas del Sol : CATUCA hosts General Assembly (postponed from earlier date) for members and prospective members. More info: 8395-3923

September 23<sup>rd</sup> – from 11 to 5 p.m. OPEN HOUSE AT SIEMPRE JOVEN B&B in Barroeta for details contact: [Siemprejovenbarroeta@hotmail.com](mailto:Siemprejovenbarroeta@hotmail.com) or [www.fincasiemprejoven.com](http://www.fincasiemprejoven.com) or call 506-8747-7999/506-8978-9004 or 305-647-3884

September 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. ART CLASSES with Mary Park. Please call or October 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> email to: [mandgpark@shaw.ca](mailto:mandgpark@shaw.ca); 8330-3274

September 25<sup>th</sup> , - Atenas Bridge Club meets at the new, renovated Don Yayo's Restaurant. October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> --- 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

September 26<sup>th</sup> (Please confirm with Sara or Kay 2446-0664) and October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>

*Atenas Wednesday Women*  
informal get together at Kay's Gringo Postres  
every Wednesday afternoon at 12:30 PM

October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> - Recycling in Atenas from 7 a.m. to Noon at the Plaza in front of the Central School, near the volleyball court.– Recycling of aluminum, metal, plastic, paper, cardboard and tetrapak - NO ELECTRONICS, STYROFOAM or EGG CARTONS Please rinse and separate your recyclables before dropping them off. Thank you.

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

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

October 15<sup>th</sup> – "Official" celebration of Day of Cultures – Public institutions closed.

October 15<sup>th</sup> - PLEIN AIR - A group of people with curious minds who meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:janyatsko@ice.co.cr) to find out where we have been and where we are going.

October 27<sup>th</sup> – The Art of Tea in Atenas, for full details see the Classified Ads section.

October 31<sup>st</sup> - Halloween!!!

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT [www.atenaslife.com](http://www.atenaslife.com) FOR OTHER REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES.

## Nana's Visit



by *Dennis Easters easters3@msn.com*

When most people think of Costa Rica, the first images that come to mind are sun drenched beaches, tropical rain forests, rugged mountain peaks, and adventure. Because of the untamed, "adventurous" side of Costa Rica, many people mistakenly think the country is more suited for younger visitors. It only stands to reason that older visitors to the country are only looking for real estate, 18-hole golf courses and a place to spend their golden years, watching the sunset, right? My Nana, who is my father's mother and recently turned 84, made her first trip to Costa Rica blowing apart this stereotype, and set the bar high for what more mature visitors are enjoying about this diverse country.

As a family when we decided to make the big move to Costa Rica we were extremely excited. For us, the only real drawback would be missing our family and friends, especially my grandmother. I have been blessed with an amazing family and I give thanks for them everyday of my life. I am aware that the lessons they taught along with the morals and principles they showed me have help to shape the person I have become. I have always been very close to my grandmothers, all of which were strong, independent women. They had minds of their own, good values, and amazing work ethics. Most importantly they demonstrated to me and their families what a tender, loving mother and grandmother was, but with a firm hand. More often than not, they were not just our mothers and grandmothers but our fathers and grandfather's too!

I feel blessed and proud to say that I still have my Nana with me, a spry, young 84 years of age. When I first announced that we would be moving to Costa Rica my family was sad, but they let me know that I had their support. From the very beginning my Nana wanted to come visit and explore Costa Rica which was not a surprise to me because she has always loved to travel and was always willing to try new things. She had heard many wonderful things about Costa Rica and was especially curious about the canopy tours (zip lines).



Before leaving Florida everyone knew she would soon be zipping through the forest. Several people suggested that she reconsider given her mature age. As you can imagine that made her want to do it even more. There is a lesson to be learned here; never tell a determined grandmother that she can't do something!

A few years ago Nana, my two aunts, uncle and cousins had planned a vacation to Costa Rica but unforeseen circumstances caused the trip to be put on hold. Nana held strong and last week she arrived in Costa Rica with my cousin Debra, kicking off our first-class, whirlwind tour of this exhilarating country that I now call home.

The day of Nana and Debra's arrival, my mother and I headed to the airport to pick up our guests. On the way home we made a stop in La Garita at one of our favorite digs, Fiesta del Maiz for a typical lunch of chicken and rice. During lunch we talked for several hours, catching up on old times and planning our coming week of adventures. I asked my Nana what she wanted to do, and the first thing on her list was the zip lines! We decided that it was a good idea to just take it easy the first afternoon and evening

saving our energy for the adventurous week ahead. That first night I stayed up till midnight with everyone listening to and telling stories, gossiping and having a good time. Once I turned in the ladies continued talking and laughing like young girls.

Monday morning came and everyone was up bright and early, ready for the days adventures. We were in luck because the weather was perfect, only blue skies, sunshine and a cool, fresh breeze. The night before we had decided to go for "gold" on our first day with a visit to the Poas Volcano, La Paz waterfall, and of course a canopy tour at Colinas del Poas ([www.colinasdelpoas.com](http://www.colinasdelpoas.com))! Our first stop was the Poas Volcano. As we made our approach we had perfect visibility of the crater which is a steaming sulfur lake. It is a sight that always makes a lasting impression. We made our way down to the visitor center taking in the displays, history of the area and volcano. We then moved on to the gift shop where Nana and Debra bought an exportable Guaria Morada, the purple orchid which is the national flower of Costa Rica.



We left Poas and made our way down the hill to Fraijanes, a local village just before the entrance of Poas National Park, stopping along the way to purchase farm fresh strawberries and homemade sour cream. We decided to have a quick, typical breakfast, which was cooked on a wood burning stove, before making our way around the other side of Poas to Vara Blanca, for a photo op at the impressive La Paz waterfall. We made our way back around the volcano and were ready for the much anticipated canopy tour at Colina's del Poas, a beautiful nature park with canopy tours, nature trails,

Tarzan swing, kayaks, trout pond and restaurant overlooking colorful gardens and a lovely lake.

We arrived a few minutes early for our 2 p.m. tour so we could have a look around at the gardens and lake. As we walked into the reception we were greeted by the friendly staff where one of the tour guides took a quick look at my Nana and a concerned look came across his face. Nana, with her quick wit and a laugh in her voice, quickly replied to the young man "Don't look at me like that. Don't you have many older women who come up here to do zip lines?". He was speechless. We were quickly suited up and ready to go! Needless to say we had a BLAST. My cousin Debra, Nana and I were joined by a group of young Ticos who are tour operators and were visiting from the La Fortuna/Arenal area. They were impressed with Nana's courage and cheered her on every step of the way, giving her high fives at every platform! With each line we zipped across, I could see in my Nana's eyes she was going to take pleasure in saying to her nay sayers, I TOLD YOU I COULD DO IT!



On Tuesday morning we left Atenas, taking a road trip to our favorite Pacific coast beach town, Tamarindo. During the 3.5 hour drive we were able to continue our conversations and story telling. I have always loved hearing stories about times gone by and hearing my Nana tell them makes me feel as if I were actually there. My nana is a wonderful story teller, remembering things from way back with great detail, telling family stories with passion and humor the way only a grandmother could.

A few weeks before Nana's arrival I had called our great friend and We Love Costa Rica colleague Becky Clower to see what she had

available for rent. She offered us an amazing 6th floor penthouse with spectacular ocean views in downtown Tamarindo. Needless to say, it was luxury at its best. We spent the next few days enjoying each others company, watching the local monkeys hangout in the trees, shopping, eating wonderful food (Seasons by Shalomy is amazing), touring the near by beaches of Conchal and Flamingo as well as trying our luck at the local casino. We even took time out to drop in and see the progress of Becky's stunning new home overlooking the Pacific ocean near Pirates Bay!!

Thursday morning we said goodbye to Tamarindo and headed inland to be pampered at the world famous Tabacon Grand Spa Thermal Resort ([www.tabacon.com](http://www.tabacon.com)). Our tour took us around Lake Arenal, the area's impressive 33 square mile lake and the explosive Arenal volcano. Once again, the day could not have been better, with sunshine and blue skies. We were able to take in the sites of the beautiful lush countryside while stopping to marvel at the lake below and volcano in the distance. The drive was divine and the volcano completely visible which is not always the case. In my 8 years of visiting the Arenal area, this was only the second time I have been able to see the peak of Arenal!



At Tabacon we were greeted by a friendly, welcoming staff who offered fresh tropical juice while we waited for our rooms. Coco, one of the staff members, went above and beyond the call of duty to help accommodate my mother and Nana, making sure their every need was attended to. Once we settled in, we change into our bathing suits and headed to the hot springs to relax and benefit from the "healing" hot waters that are diverted from a local river that is heated by the volcano. In my humble opinion, these are the best, most natural looking

springs in the area with beautiful garden paths and a world class spa. After our time in the hot springs, we were all totally relaxed and for the first and only time of the week, went to bed early.

When Friday morning dawned we headed back home to Atenas. The drive back between La Fortuna and San Ramon was magnificent, passing through the Los Angeles Cloud Forest. That night, back at home Nana and I prepared dinner for everyone with collard greens, fried green tomatoes and Nana's homemade biscuits! They were so delicious and flaky, that Gerardo ate 5! The girls (Nana, mom and Debra) were tired but not to tired to announce they wanted to spend the evening at the Fiesta Casino in Alajuela. They gave it there best shot and just after midnight threw in the towel, both my mother and Nana coming home with winnings in hand!

Saturday was the last full day before our week long adventure would come to an end. We took a tour around Atenas, looking at a few houses and visiting the central market. We sat peacefully inside our beautiful church, reflecting on the beauty of the architecture, woodwork; hand carved and painted statues of Jesus and the Saints while talking about the detailed ceremonies of the Catholic faith. Earlier in the week new clients turned friends, Axel and Francina had invited us for a nice dinner and asked that we pick the time and place to celebrate. As it turned out, Saturday afternoon the Zephyr Palace ([www.zephyrpalace.com](http://www.zephyrpalace.com)) at Villa Caletas ([www.hotelvillacaletas.com](http://www.hotelvillacaletas.com)) was hosting the final concert of the season, featuring a Costa Rican composer Pilar Aguilar (piano) and her daughter Grace Marin (violin). The evening was divine as Pilar and Grace played with passion and grace. So much so that they brought Francina to tears. This is one of the jewels close to Atenas where we can find exquisite dining, a world class hotel and cultural experiences that rival any big city in the world.

After the concert we made our way to the hotel's exquisite restaurant, Mirador. The Mirador features traditional French cuisine with a tropical, Costa Rican infusion. The tables were elegantly set, place settings in the French style and white linen table cloths. The menu features

a nice variety of starters, main courses and desserts without being overwhelming.



There is an impressive wine list great for paring with your courses. Everyone was delighted with their meals which ranged from seared tuna, nut crusted duck breast, jumbo shrimp with a tamarind glaze, to homemade lobster ravioli with 3 sauces. I indulged and accompanied my crusted duck breast with a beautiful Pinot Noir. For desert you ask? Pears poached in red wine with homemade vanilla custard ice cream, tropical fruit tiramisu, and dark chocolate cake topped with ganache and stewed pineapple. The staff was more than accommodating, attending to every detail. Our hosts, Axel and Francina were lovely, keeping us amused with colorful stories that left us all with smiles and wanting more. The evening at Villa Caletas was the perfect ending to our week long adventure.

Throughout our week-long journey together Nana had remarked that this had been a once in a lifetime trip. I could not agree with her more but can only hope it is the first of many. During the week I felt many emotions but more than anything I was proud that I could show my Nana the beautiful country that I now call home. Through the years she has sacrificed and given her family so much. I hope that I was able to show her how grateful I am for all her love, sacrifice and the lessons she has taught me. I hope this story will inspire others to take similar journeys with those you love. If you think Costa Rica is only for a younger crowd, my 84 year old Nana will beg to differ with you. Savor every single moment with your loved ones. They are the most valuable assets you have



## Food Angels? What the hell are they?



by Suzanne Mark

[Suzanne@suzannemark.com](mailto:Suzanne@suzannemark.com)

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I have Food Angels. I simply wish for something and someone brings it to me. One time I was wanting cupcakes. I was really craving them. Then I was at a seminar with a bunch of people I didn't know and a beautiful woman named Jade (coincidentally, she looked like the goddess Quan Yin) brought the most WONDERFUL almond-flavored yellow cupcakes with cream cheese icing and sweet flakey coconut on top. It was like heaven came down and inserted itself into a little corrugated paper package just for me. I am ashamed to say how many I ate.

Do you have food angels? Does something you are craving have an uncanny way of showing up?

I call this The Law of Food Magnetism. (Not to put too fine a point on it, but you can say this with a booming "Piiiiggs In Spaaaaaaace" Muppetspeak.)

Lately, I've been wanting waffles. My Belgian waffle iron has been languishing in the back of a cupboard for far too long. I had not told anyone about this illicit craving, but last night my friend brought a package of Gluten Free Waffle and Pancake Mix. I love it when that happens.

My Angels also tell me what to cook for other people. A few summers ago, we had some neighbors for dinner. We had never invited them before, and I somehow got the crazy idea of making Babaganoush. I had never made Babaganoush (a

Middle Eastern eggplant spread if you are unfamiliar) and just HAD to make it. So, I looked up a recipe on the web, and I thought. "Hmmm, I bet this will be better if I grill the eggplant on the barbeque and then put it in a smoker bag and SMOKE it! I had never used a smoker bag, I had just randomly bought one at an Ace Hardware about a year before.

So, I mixed up all the ingredients: grilled and smoked eggplant, garlic, parsley, lemon juice, tahini, salt, pepper. (NOTE: I had to blend the Tahini with a stick blender as the oil and sesame paste had separated and had settled to the bottom of the can. It took me 30 minutes of practically burning out the motor on my stick blender to get it to a workable consistency. Sweating from the exertion, I finally finished the Babaganoush just as the guests arrived. Whew! Culinary disaster averted.) I served it with grilled garlic Naan rather than dreary Pita.

The result? It SHOCKED even me. It was quite simply one of the best things I had ever eaten. Ever.

WELL...unbeknownst to me, one of my guests, Kennard, just happened to be a self-described Babaganoush connoisseur. (Really.) HE said it was the best Babaganoush HE had EVER had (and he "grew up on the stuff so he should know"). He raved, everyone else raved, I soaked it in. My food angels had been hard at work.

Although, it is cool when this randomly happens, we could be food angels just because. Why not make something for someone? Be random. Let the inspiration move you. Nurture someone with something they did not expect. A nice fruit cobbler maybe. Or some soup. (This works both ways, people...)

Or, instead of using the Law of Attraction to get a new car, lover or what have you...practice on some small, faith-giving baked goods, and see what happens. How many times have you said to yourself, "Gee, I would LOVE to have some \_\_\_\_\_", forgot about it, and it just happened...on its own?

\*Four Steps to Food Nirvana:

ASK for what you want. (No Cheese Puffs...don't waste a good ask.)

BELIEVE that your Food Angels will bring it to you, because YOU are worthy of good stuff. (Yes, you are...)

LET GO, fuggedaboutit, don't obsess and DON'T keep nagging the food angels. They don't like that.

SAY THANK YOU in advance and say it a LOT when you get your Food Wish.

That's it!

Mmmm, wouldn't it be nice to have chocolate pudding? ;-)

Suzanne

P.S. By the way, this method Four Step method works well with anything, not just chocolate chip cookies.

(\*Adapted from Angelspeake, How to Talk to Your Angels or Hablando Con Su Angel De la Guarda, by Barbara Mark and Trudy Griswold)



The Earth as seen from Apollo 17

## The Gaia Theory



By Theresa Fulton

The furor over the environment and climate change reminded me of an intriguing scientific theory that I read about some years ago. Named the Gaia theory, after the goddess of the Earth, it proposes that the Earth and all the organisms on it are part of a single self-regulating system. I have always loved the idea of this – you and I might be just tiny cells of a giant being!

Originally proposed in the 1960s by scientists James Lovelock, a chemist, and later co-developed with Lynn Margulis, a microbiologist, the Gaia hypothesis is not widely accepted but is supported by a number of scientific studies that provide evidence that is hard to explain otherwise. For example: the salinity of the oceans has remained constant, despite a constant influx of salt from the rivers. It is difficult to explain this equilibrium without considering other outside influences such as organic processes. The stability of the earth's atmosphere, and the regulation of the earth's surface temperature are other phenomenon that seem to support the Gaia theory - the idea that the Earth has a planetary homeostasis that is "trying" to keep conditions optimal for life, and that the environment is heavily influenced by living organisms. Some people (not Lovelock and Margulis) take this a step further to a "Gaia philosophy" where the Earth is a conscious being, and the self-regulation purposeful.

Critics, including evolutionary biologists Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Dawkins, wonder how natural selection on the individual level could be part of a bigger regulatory system, but Lovelock responded by working with a mathematician to create a computer stimulation called Daisyworld that explains how small effects can help regulate a larger system. Research continues on the Gaia principles.

(As a side note, a recent Wired magazine article summarized recent research that found that human “bodies” actually consist of more microbe than human cells. So each of us is our own little Gaia, part of a larger one!)

James Lovelock is an English scientist and inventor, and was the first to discover CFC's in the atmosphere using a detector he created. He consulted for NASA during the 1970s' Mars expeditions, and has won a number of prizes for his research. Now 93, he has incited conflict over his view that using nuclear energy is the only way to stop the destruction of the earth's fossil fuels.

Lynn Margulis, who died last year of a stroke, was a microbiologist at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, who proved that plants, animals and fungi all originate from protists. She was well-known for her work on endosymbiotic theory, but also for her scientific tenacity: her 1966 paper on this, now considered a landmark study, was rejected by 15 journals before being accepted for publication. She was married to astronomer Carl Sagan for 8 years (one of their children is the science fiction writer Dorion Sagan).

The Gaia theory offers a unique way of looking at life, impacting ideas on climate change, health, energy, agriculture, etc. The implications of their elegant theory are clear – when we create and dump garbage, refuse to find the time to recycle, deplete our natural resources, and add pollution to the atmosphere....we are directly hurting ourselves! Imagine the additional effects on war, racism and poverty, if we all realized we are just interconnected parts of the same being. Sadly, Lovelock himself feels that it may be too late – we are damaging the earth too fast for it to be able to regulate itself, and the earth may be too far gone to save humans. Perhaps if we make a concerted effort we can prove him wrong.

For more, see:

Lovelock, James (1979, 1995, 2000) Gaia: A new look at life on earth. Oxford University Press

Margulis, Lynn and Sagan, Dorion (1995) What is life? California University Press.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaia\\_hypothesis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaia_hypothesis)

<http://www.gaiatheory.org/>

Please feel free to email [tf12@cornell.edu](mailto:tf12@cornell.edu) with comments or suggestions for future articles!



## Our Little Town

Paul Furlong

*A mixed bag of current events, low key survivalism and the Pura Vida factor.*

We believe we've seen it all at a certain age. That's what I was thinking the other day while standing in RJ's Moto Tours Costa Rica shop talking about life, motorcycles and why his brother's alarm system wouldn't work. I didn't notice his dog sniffing my leg, or the wet spot on my pants. I guess it was the laughing that tipped me off. It was just a squirt but it caused animated remarks about dogs taste and what constitutes good territory. I was just another tree for "Petrel."

"There's a first time for everything," I laughed, and the conversation fell back into the alarm problem.

This morning, Andre was helping me with a business proposal in Spanish. Involved in deciding what to say and how to find that balance between a humble staff and an experienced firearm lubricant distributor, I noticed her dog, Manfred, nosing around my chair. I laughed and told him he was too late! But, alas, he wasn't and I was anointed a second time.

I reached down and patted the little Schitzel and reflected that lightning often *does* strike the same place twice. Earthquakes, too, like the freight train that ran through our freshly built house in 2005. Cement still green, the garage roof slumped and one column cracked by the corner of our bedroom. But I have to say, though lacking some of the color, not since the sixties have I seen walls *ripple* like they did the other day with that 7.7 Richter ripper.

This was my week. The women in my house continue to laugh at my survival packs by the door. Food, water, flash lights and a first aid kit, I was ready for an aftershock. Things *do* happen these days, after all, just because we've settled into a rumble now and then, doesn't mean we can't return to the bad old days. Earthquake stories from my wife and mother-in-law add a reality that history only records in dusty books.

My daughter Andre was three months old in March 1990 when it began. Quakes and tremors came hard in waves that lasted on and off for nine months. The family slept outside in the field by the house when it was bad, and only went in to get food and bathe. Gaby often showered in shorts with the door open in case a strong one came. A few times they had to sit or be knocked down. By December it was about over, but in April of '91, the quakes came again to Lemon and finished off the railroad.

Well, why not keep a pack by the door? Why not be prepared? It costs the same to keep your tank full as it does empty. Why not keep a full medicine chest? What's wrong with extra batteries?

Fuel truck drivers went on strike a couple weeks ago for some reason. How about keeping a few gallons of fuel for the car, bike, or my neighbor Fast Eddie's motor driven wheelbarrow? Suppose Bimbo went on strike? We'd have a simultaneous shortage of bread and entertainment in one fell swoop. These are political earthquakes, a sign of the times, and seemingly strike in the same random way. The ground feels no more solid under our feet than a good old Costa Rican temblor.

My defensive pistol course includes a variety of awareness cues that allow a student to smell trouble when it walks in the door.<sup>1</sup> Suppose we used local and world events instead of *the news* as a broader form of situational awareness? It is not my intention to be political here, that time is over. But it's hard not to read the cards laying there in the dirt. The news on the street comes inadvertently by people, say, in the real estate business. I overheard a realtor say Arizona is a popular place to live and prices are going up there. What does that say about the mood of the electorate? Why the sudden influx of people to Costa Rica? These are votes. People are saying something when they sell everything and move out.

*"Blow up your TV. throw away your paper  
Go to the country, build you a home..."* John Prine

I notice, too, that the folks coming now are freshly retired and generally younger than the last crop. They've lost hope of a political fix in the states after quietly watching the power of the presidency amplified and passed, like a baton, to each new "winner." Yes, I believe we might respectfully call ourselves refugees.

So welcome friends, leave your baggage at the door. Stop into Kay's Gringo Pastry, meet Tom and eat something 'fore you both starve. Atenas is a place to feel at home. Being interested in community and letting go of our roots is the first step. Sink them here, the soil is moist and the weather great. There's a saying here, "Pura Vida."

Pura Vida literally means "Pure Life."

Pura Vida is a greeting.

Pura Vida is a good bye.

Pura Vida is an agreement.

Pura Vida is a baby sleeping.

Pura Vida means, "cool man."

A person can be very Pura Vida... or not.

Pura Vida cannot be faked, or bought; it's something akin to soul, a part of our *being*. After almost fifteen years here, I don't know if I will ever be as Pura Vida as the two dogs who thought me important enough to piss on.

So I'll buy that extra box of cereal, keep my pack by the door, my truck full of diesel and watch out for them stinkin' dogs. That's Pura Vida, right?

<sup>i</sup>The trick is for the good guy, you, and the bad guy, him, to *recognize* each other. After that, the threat will likely dissolve. There are plenty of easy targets out there in the park, texting their turtledoves.

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



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

**6/11/2004**

**Hola!!! Y'all,**

**We went back to see Curious George today. He sure is a little scamp. Mom says I am not NEARLY the monkey George is!**

**Mom and Dad wanted to look again at the property there. They just cannot make up their minds.**

**We stopped at the "soda" for lunch. A soda is a small, family operated dining place. There are LOT's of them here. You see them everywhere. Most of them are open air. That means they don't have windows or screens. The bugs don't seem to come in as much as they would back home.**

**Anyway, the house we saw that is being built is right next door to the lot we are looking at. It is about an acre and a half. Mom and Dad like the view from there but Mom is not at all sure she wants to be that close to humans. We are all going to have to think about it a LOT. Y'all know how Mom is. She'd rather just be out on the woods somewhere with Dad and all her fuzzbutts.**

**We got to visit with George quite a bit today. He**

climbed on all of us. He stood up on Mom's head and he pulled her hair. Then he tried to steal her glasses. He waved at me and then jumped on Dad's shoulder and I looked up at him. He is pretty neat!

LOL!! On the way home Mom told Dad to get the video camera out and take video of the roads we were traveling and of the pretty views.

Dad tried. The problem is he wants to keep his eyes on the road and he can't when he is trying to run the camera. He says it is even scarier than just riding with Mom. LOL!!!

He kept saying a nasty word and Mom finally told him to hush cause it was recording his voice on the camera too.

She laughed so hard at him!!!

Then she told him, "Give me the camera! I can drive and take video too!"

LOL!!!! Dad looked at her like she was CRAZY!!!!!!!!!!

We looked at the video when we got home but it is pretty shaky. The roads are REAL hilly and curvy so it is hard to keep the camera still. Also there are LOTS of pot holes.

I figure anybody that tries to watch it is going to get plenty car sick. LOL!!!!

Mom still hasn't found any cornmeal but she has had two offers from friends in the US to send it to her if she will shut up about it!! LOL!!!!

A couple of them offered to deliver it in person if Mom would pay the delivery fee.

Well, gotta go for now. I will write again tomorrow.

Hug and tailwags to everyone!!  
BudBud

# Costa Rica Whale Watching Celebrates the Longest Migration on Earth!



By Shannon Farley [shannonfarleycr@gmail.com](mailto:shannonfarleycr@gmail.com)

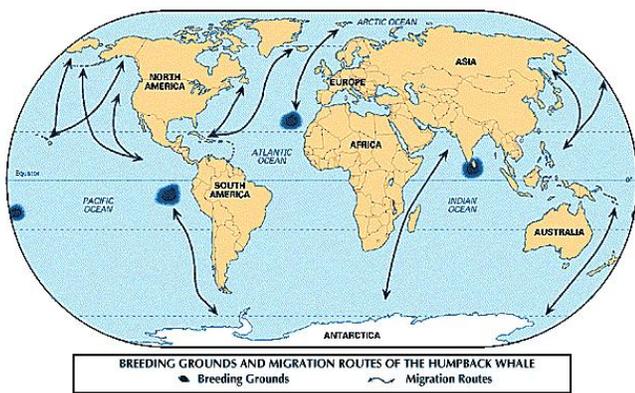
It is a gigantic journey.

A one-way trip can last upwards of 5,000 miles. Imagine walking from a bit north of Anchorage, Alaska, all the way to San Jose, Costa Rica, and that's the distance we're talking about. Or, think of swimming from Antarctica to Costa Rica. Now imagine not resting nearly at all, and not eating, during the entire journey!

This is the **annual migration of the Pacific humpback whales** – one of the most remarkable journeys by any creature on the planet. The cetaceans travel between 3,000 and 5,000 miles – twice in a year! – making them **one of the farthest-migrating animals on Earth**. **Now through mid-October is the time to see them off of Costa Rica's southern Pacific Coast.**



Northern Hemisphere humpbacks spend the northern summers off the coast of Alaska and British Columbia where they feed constantly on krill and small fish in the rich arctic waters. Southern Hemisphere whales do the same in the Antarctic Ocean during that summer season. The whales eat up to a ton of food per day, building up their thick fat layer called "blubber."



As winter closes in and the seas turn to ice, humpback whales start their long migration to warmer waters to breed and give birth. The northern-based whales head south to Mexico, Hawaii and Central America, spending December to March in warm, shallow waters. The Hawaiian Islands are the largest calving grounds, especially in the tropical seas around Maui which are designated as the Humpback Whale Sanctuary. The southern, Antarctic-based humpbacks usually winter off the Great Barrier Reef of Australia

from June to November.



**In Costa Rica, we are blessed with visits by migrating humpback whales from both the northern and southern hemispheres!** The great whales come to our warm, protected waters from **December to April** (from Alaska) and again between **August and the end of October** (from Antarctica).



The main place to see the gentle giants is the **Ballena National Marine Park (Parque Nacional Marino Ballena) just south of Dominical**, which is named for the whales that migrate there every year. Further south, off the Osa Peninsula, humpbacks may be seen in Drake Bay near the Caño Island Biological Reserve and in the Golfo Dulce, off the shores of Puerto Jimenez.

**Humpback whales are an endangered species** with international government-protected status. On the edge of extinction, their numbers were decimated by 90% from over-hunting until a whaling freeze in 1966 has helped the world population partially recover to about 65,000-75,000 whales worldwide (and growing at about 3% per year). Some countries – mainly Japan – still hunt humpbacks and other whales, but are under strong international pressure to stop.

Weighing between 60,000 and 80,000 pounds, humpback whales grow to be about 52 feet long (16m) – the 7<sup>th</sup> largest of the whales. Like all baleen whales, females are slightly larger than males. They live a long life to about 45-50 years old. Babies (or “calves”) are born after an 11-12 month gestation period, which explains why some years when the whales are visiting tropical waters they are breeding and other years they are giving birth. While in the warm waters, the adult whales don’t eat and instead live off that very thick layer of blubber (fat) that they developed all summer; the young calves feed on their mothers’ rich milk. Mothers and calves stay together for a year or longer, and maintain strong bonds; humpback whales reach maturity at about 15 years old.

**It’s easy to spot humpback whales** since they live at the ocean’s surface, both in the open ocean and in shallow coastline waters. They swim slowly and are the acrobats of the sea, which makes them perfect stars for whale-watching tours. Some common actions you might see when spotting the whales include “spy hopping,” when the whales pop their heads above the surface to take a look around, or fin slapping, fluke (tail) flipping and the spectacular “breaching” when they leap completely out of the water. **Humpbacks also are the noisiest and most creative of the whales** when it comes to their “songs,” or prolonged sounds they make. They have long, varied, complex and beautiful songs that include clear sequences of squeaks, grunts, and other sounds. Only males have been recorded singing, and they seem to sing the complex songs only in warm waters. The website [www.whalesong.net](http://www.whalesong.net) has **recorded humpback whales singing** off the coast of Maui and broadcasts free from their webpage (I’ve been listening while writing!).



Whales' graceful, playful and highly intelligent nature has always fascinated humans. You too can experience their captivating beauty on a **whale watching tour in the Ballena National Marine Park.**

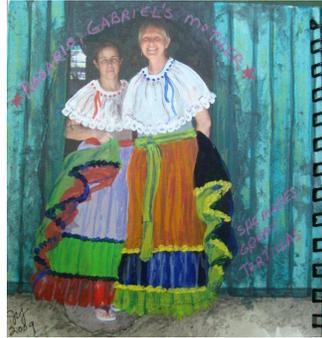


spotted and common dolphins.

I recommend staying at the fabulous **Cristal Ballena Resort & Spa** on the Pacific's **Costa Ballena, south of Dominical** (<http://www.cristal-ballena.com>). The hotel is running a **special** right now **for nationals and residents** of \$75 per person per night in a Junior Suite with breakfast buffet and all taxes included. A full day's whale watching tour in the Ballena National Marine Park costs \$70 per adult, and \$45 for children. Besides humpback whales, other marine life that visit the area include pilot whales, beaked whales and huge resident populations of dolphins – bottlenose, spinner,



## What is your story?



by Jan Yatsko  
[janyatsko@ice.co.cr](mailto:janyatsko@ice.co.cr)



What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the winter time; it is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.

*- Last words of Crowfoot, Blackfoot chief*

Every Friday morning in Atenas there is an outdoor farmer's market (La feria) lined up under the shade of 16 huge weeping fig trees. People come to sell vegetables, fruit, cheese, meat, tamales, baked items, clothing, flowers and craft items. Without fail, Ricardo Cortez Castro is there at the same corner, crouched behind a stand that sells colorful tropical flowers. Ricardo creates replicas of the traditional wooden carts pulled by two oxen and sells these carts at the farmer's market.

One afternoon I sat with Ricardo at the location where he was born 84 years ago and he told me about his life in Atenas. Four of his 16 grandchildren sat with us. Ricardo was 8 years old when his father made a wooden cart with two oxen and gave it to him. As a poor boy with many siblings, this gift made a lasting impression on him. By the time Ricardo reached 4<sup>th</sup> grade he had to quit school to work as a laborer on a farm that raised rice, beans, coffee and corn. He was one of 11 children and everyone had to contribute to sustain the family.

I asked Ricardo why he creates ox carts. He said he never forgot the ox cart that his father made for him. With 34 years of carpentry experience behind him, Ricardo recycles found materials to create his wooden ox carts. It is not sophisticated work, but it carries the spirit of creation and the honesty of work and tradition. Some would classify his work as outsider art.

Ricardo now lives with one of his seven children. As is the custom of many Costa Rican parents, he has divided up his land and has given it to his children. He owns very little and is a very content person. His bedroom consists of a simple bed surrounded by his ox carts and gourds. As he did as a child, Ricardo contributes what he earns at the farmer's market to help sustain the family.

A week after my visit, I stopped to say hello to Ricardo who had brought more ox carts to sell at the market. Ricardo told me that his youngest grandson, Fernando, asked him why he doesn't tell him stories like he told the *macha*. His grandson was referring to me as it is a term sometimes given to blue-eyed, blonde or light skinned people. Ricardo told me that his grandson made him realize that he needs to tell his stories before they are lost forever.

The Canadian painter, Emily Carr said that the ultimate challenge of her life was to face old age and death and to pass on what she loved about art. Carr wrote "Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of an Artist" and passed on her legacy and knowledge as an artist to others. Angeles Arrien said that as we look back on our lives, we realize that the harvest of youth is achievement, the harvest of middle age is perspective and the harvest of old age is wisdom. What will be your stories, your legacy and your wisdom to pass onto your family and future generations? Write it down!

## Mr. W. An Unforgettable Mentor



by Marietta Arce [marietta.arce@gmail.com](mailto:marietta.arce@gmail.com)

When I was a young apprentice in the shipping industry at the age of 18, I had the type of boss who could be described as a tyrant! Mr. W. ruled with an iron fist and compiled a list of guidelines that included every conceivable contingency. For example, if I wanted to eat breakfast at my desk, I could do so providing I waited to 'clock in' after I finished eating. If I wanted or had to stay overtime, I had to 'clock out' before starting my overtime; he was not authorizing extra pay! We didn't have the protection of a union in our company. I was brought up to respect my elders and do as I was directed so I was an exemplary employee who rarely took time off or made any trouble.

I was an alert and a quick learner. I absolutely loved the work I was doing even though it was an entry-level job and much of it entailed drudgework from day to day. I have always been drawn to reading motivational books and at the time, I was concentrating on Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale and their positive-thinking reasoning. I applied many of the concepts in their books and I met with tremendous success in making friends and feeling good at the end of the day. This was proof to me that the principles they taught could work for anyone and were really easy to apply, even in the monotonous work environment.

I worked for Mr. W. for only a couple of years. During that time, I learned everything I could about the industry. Mr. W. taught me about the importance of prioritizing my work, about meeting deadlines, about keeping my word to a client. He had a very precise definition of

boundaries and although he could be harsh at times, there was no denying the fact that his goal was to mentor the employees for their own success. I was an enthusiastic student open to his teachings.

By the time I was 20, I had moved up the ladder and was account executive for an important client who took me to another company when the contract with Mr. W. ended. Mr. W. tried to convince to stay in his company but understood my ambitious spirit, something he had helped nurture. He wished me well and we ended our relationship amicably.

The new company's director had a completely different management style from Mr. W. It took me a while to adjust to what I considered a rather informal office ambience. Here, the water cooler really was a popular social spot, in my former office, it was used to quench thirst and quickly! I soon adapted to the style but never quite adopted its components, sometimes eliciting angry stares or snide comments from my co-workers. I will forever be grateful that Mr. W. came into my life when I was young enough to be molded into the kind of worker I would like to hire. I am sorry I was never able to express that to him. It is my one regret.



## **The Atenas Today Art Gallery**

The Art Gallery is a regular feature of Atenas Today. Local artists are encouraged to submit photographs of their works to be included in the gallery, and to send a new picture each month. The artists may be contacted via the email addresses shown.



The Martin Mars Water Bomber  
20" x 52", Oil on Linen

Al Alexander  
*jeanandal@gmail.com*



"Mother's Day", watercolour

Dragonfly Animal Portraits

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

<http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>



"Autumn Transformation"

by Jerome Ives/Ives Images Photo-Art

[ivesig@mac.com](mailto:ivesig@mac.com) / 2446-6340



## "Sea Nymph at Port Aransas"

24" x 36" oil on canvas

Email: [larry@feldergallery.com](mailto:larry@feldergallery.com)  
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## For the bloggers...



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

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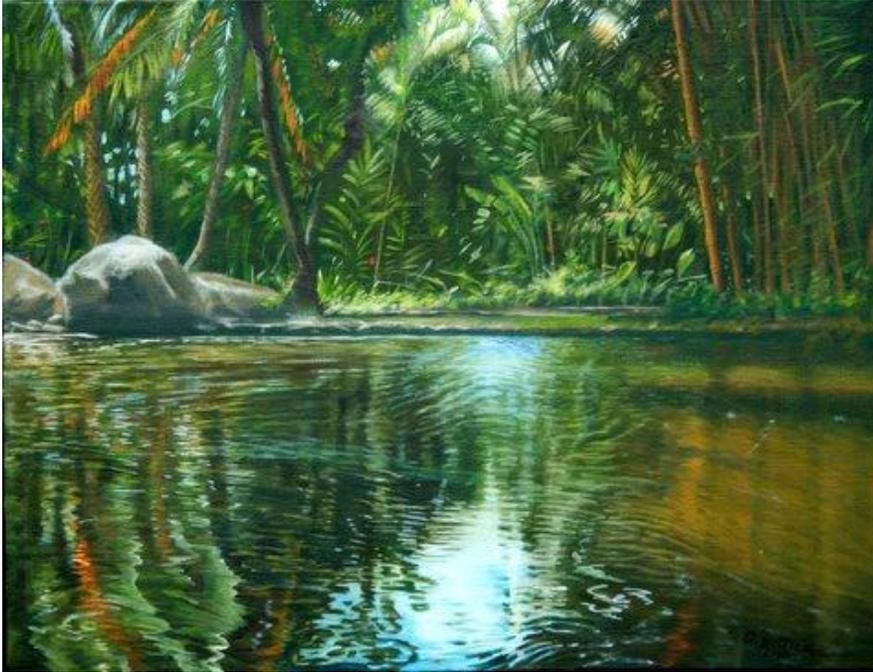
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# The Art of Tea

In Atenas

**October 27 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM**

**The** ancient art of tea brings many healing gifts. It lifts the spirit and at the same time calms and rejuvenates; it brings us into a still moment of meditation. During this 3 ½ hour class you will savor six high quality teas each followed by delectable palate cleansers. Increase your knowledge of these six teas, discover their healing qualities and create a visual diary of each tea to take home as a memento.

**Join Atenas residents,** Suzanne Mark and Jan Yatsko as they share with you their combined talents while you receive all of the benefits!

**COST: 14,000 colones – Register early to guarantee your space.**

**SUZANNE MARK** has taken two trips to India to learn about tea and has worked as a tea educator in the US. Tea is a perfect tool for inner exploration and for over 20 years, Suzanne has taught 1000's of people how to channel their natural wisdom. She loves helping people connect to the deep place within that is infinitely wise and creative.

**JAN YATSKO** has been a mixed media artist for 34 years. She believes that teaching a combination of different but complementary subjects can result in a richer experience for the student. For eight years, Jan led 10-day Explore and Create tours in Costa Rica that focused on art, nature, culture and food. She has combined yoga with writing and creating your own mandala. She delights in bringing out the natural creativity in her students, especially the people who think they don't have it!

**CONTACT:** Suzanne Mark at 2446-0674 [suzanne@suzannemark.com](mailto:suzanne@suzannemark.com)  
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