

HOW TO READ ATENAS TODAY

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

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

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

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

THE NEW YELLOW PAGES

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

ATENAS TODAY

Issue No. 141

September 23, 2016



Mary Mason on CR Independence Day!
Photo Credit: Maureen McLane

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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



The last few days have found most of us repeatedly sweeping our terraces and homes as the Turrialba Volcano continues its intermittent eruptions of ash, gas and vapor. As I write this I can see activity and cross my fingers that the direction of the wind will not shift too severely in our direction.

The summer is over in the U.S. and the presidential election is less than two months away. Every election in the U.S. brings new arrivals to Costa Rica (and Atenas) and I know this election will not be the exception. The mood in New York was not very inspiring but most people I spoke with agree that it is important to get out and vote. We need to recognize that being able to vote is not something every person in nations of the world can do.

Costa Rica celebrated 195 years of Independence last week. The turnout at this year's activities was spectacular and it was lovely to see so many of our local expats (like cover model Mary Mason!) with friends and cameras enjoying the festivities. I was happy to participate from the sidelines, something I had not done in a very long time. The patriotism present was contagious and I felt goose bumps several times as the bands, honor students and dancers made their way around town.

** Photo Credit: Patricia Salazar



** Honor Students participate in Parade

In addition to all the activities centering on Independence Day, the 4th Annual MTB Fundraiser for the Hogar de Ancianos took place on September 18th. Over 900 cyclists came to be part of an event that has captured their hearts. The event was dedicated to 94 year old Atenas resident Walter Gonzalez Alfaro who joked that he would still be riding his bike if his family let him!



** Walter Gonzalez Alfaro and wife Flor Mora



** MTB Starting Point

Spending time in New York always boosts my energy and I come home with renewed enthusiasm for our town. There are many changes which I will focus on in the next issue. What remains the same, though, is the joy with which I behold the beauty of the landscape in Atenas today and every day.

Happy Reading!

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.

September 22 – September Equinox!

September 27th – World Tourism Day! Theme this year: Accessible Tourism for All

October 1st – International Day of the Older Persons (Senior Citizens Day!)

Theme this year: Take a Stand Against Ageism

October 2nd Sunset Rosh Hashanah begin, ends evening October 4th.

October 11th – Sunset Yom Kippur begins, ends evening October 12th.

October 12th – Day of Cultures (Columbus Day)

October 15th – 5 p.m. FLASHBACK Fundraiser for Red Cross (see flyer)

October 15th – October 23th San Rafael Parish Celebrates Patron Saint Festival

See Flyer, look for updates around town

October 22nd - 1st San Rafael Parish Health Fair from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the

Catechism classrooms (Zumba, Workshops and more) info in flyer

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 (See 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: Last class is 10/4 and will resume again 11/15.

Every Thursday (5-6 p.m.) and Saturday (10-11 a.m.) – The Feldenkrais Method (somatic education method) taught at Colinas del Sol (see flyer this section). For more details, contact Rúbia Santos at: rssantos13@gmail.com

First Wednesday of each month – Recycling near CoopetransAtenas Bus Depot

Second Monday of every month: 4 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Antaños Please contact 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

informal get togethers at Kay's Gringo Postres

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

Contact : Bob Brashears at bbrashears0@gmail.com



Buddhist Book Discussion

*****'

Every Sunday

Meditation (optional) 1:30pm

Book Discussion 2:00pm

218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings

ALL ARE WELCOME !

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

Adrienne and Richard Baksa

2446-8509

adriennebaksa@me.com

rbaksa@me.com



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

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

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

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

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

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

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

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 - 9:45 am	Hatha Yoga with Leah

Feldenkrais Method Classes

Thursdays	1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Rubia Santos
Saturdays	10:00 am - 11:00 am	Rubia Santos

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



COME CELEBRATE

WITH THE BAND

The 50th Year Anniversary of “Cruz Roja in Atenas” will be a benefit celebration with a performance by FLASHBACK!



Saturday, October 15th, at the new Bar Rill restaurant, located in Plancillo, 100 meters west of Paraiso Escondido.

Five o'clock – HAPPY HOUR! Raffle! Rockin' Music from Six to Nine!

Minimum Donation of ₡3,000 per person at the door.



We all need the RED CROSS AMBULANCE service. Just knowing it's there, gives you peace of mind.

Help us support and give back to the Cruz Roja!

Please email your RSVP with the number of people in your party to:
robertpaulcates@gmail.com
This is to help Bar Rill plan the food & seating accordingly.

**A GOOD TIME, A GOOD CAUSE, GREAT FOOD
and CLASSIC ROCK 'n' ROLL!**



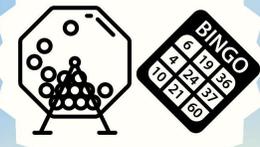

FLASHBACK - Atenas, Costa Rica

**FLASH
BACK**

PATRON SAINT ACTIVITIES 10/15 – 10/23

San Rafael Parish Patron Saint Celebration October 15th to October 23rd with the following Special activities. Don't miss out, there will be food, entertainment, prizes, etc. This is a wonderful opportunity to support the local community and talent.

Festejos Patronales Atenas 2016
Gran Bingo Parroquial



Premios
1° Pantalla Led
2° Lavadora
3° 75000 en efectivo
Y muchos Premios más

Parroquia San Rafael Arcángel, Atenas

Valor del Cartón: ₡ 1000
Sábado 15 de octubre, 12:00 m.d.
Salón Parroquial, Atenas Centro.

f t i Fiestas Patronales
San Rafael Arcángel, Atenas

Festejos Patronales Atenas 2016
Baile de la Toronja con Los Hicsos



Gerardo y Los Hicsos

¡Grandes Rifas!

Parroquia San Rafael Arcángel, Atenas

Valor de la entrada: ₡ 4.000
Sábado 15 de octubre, 8:00 p.m.
Salón Comunal de Sabana Larga.

f t i Fiestas Patronales
San Rafael Arcángel, Atenas

Saturday October 22nd from 8 am. to 2 p.m. in the Catechism Classrooms of the Church (schedule so far):

- Health Fair : 8 a.m. Zumba Class
9:15 a.m. Colon Cancer Conference
9:45 a.m. Nutrition and Health to Prevent Colon Cancer
10:15 a.m. Odontology and its relationship to Colon Cancer

Festejos Patronales Atenas 2016
Subasta Parroquial



Dedicados
Sr. Franklin Alpizar Castro y Sra.
Sr. Ivo Quesada Gatzjens y Sra.
Sr. Santiago Vargas y Sra.

Parroquia San Rafael Arcángel, Atenas

Domingo 23 de octubre, 10:30 a.m.
Jardines del Templo Parroquial.

f t i Fiestas Patronales
San Rafael Arcángel, Atenas

Friendship Library News
September, 2016

Greetings, Dear Readers. One would think that during this slow time of year, before refugees from Northern winters return to our fair climate, donations to the library would slow down dramatically. But the books just keep appearing by the box load. Once more, we have gone into shelf-building mode, adding two more shelving units.

The new owners of La Carreta, Craig (a Brit) and Adrianna (bilingual Tica), see the library as a real asset to their business. They have encouraged us to expand and they have added better lighting. Readers interested in history, geography, travel and biography can now find these books on the new shelves in the rear upstairs dining room:



I have a small poster in my workspace that says "I've always imagined that paradise will be some kind of library". As fate would have it, we have just received a large donation of books from someone with a keen interest in late 20th century American political history. With these recent arrivals, my workspace has become some kind of paradise as I share this donor's interests. I keep picking up one of these books and thinking "I really need to read this". I promise to read as fast as I can and get these books onto the shelves of the library over the next few weeks.

Additions of fiction titles have been sparse this month but a couple of notable titles bear mentioning:

- "Late Nights on Air" by Elizabeth Hay (F Hay) is a well-told story that is part adventure into the Arctic wilderness and, with that backdrop, "a story of misguided love, shifting loyalties and hard-won self-discoveries".

- "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides (F Eug), published in 2002, is a powerful, memorably told story that will enlighten the reader's thinking about transgender individuals. It is a winner of the Pulitzer Prize.

And now, a little wordplay for lovers of language. Each year, the Washington Post sponsors a neologism contest in two parts. In the first part, readers supply alternative meaning for common words. For example:

Abdicate (n): to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach

In the second part, readers take any word in the dictionary, then add, subtract or change one letter and add a new meaning. This one won extra credit:

Osteopornosis (n): a degenerate disease

Happy reading.

-Linda Ledbetter, librarian

DOG 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

CARAMELA (MELI)



Meli is 18 months old, playful and very smart, possibly a Labrador/retriever mix. Her foster parents have health issues and can no longer care for her. It is with a heavy heart they must find a forever home as soon as possible for their beautiful lady. She has been spayed and will be a loving addition to your family.

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM NEW LOCATION.

Stop by the Atenas Municipal Building next to the Fire Station 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.

FOSTER CARE NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to open their homes and hearts and provide foster care for the many animals, adult dogs, puppies and mothers with puppies that are waiting to be adopted. Animales Atenas provides all vet care and food.

If you are not able to provide foster care we offer many options for volunteering.

Dora Telephone 8855-9822 President Es
Sylvia 8868-1386 Secretary Es, En, Deutch
AnimalesAtenasCR@AOL.com

PLANTS FOR SALE

**Plants are available to purchase on Friday mornings with donation payments to
ANIMALES A TENAS.**

Order plants of your choice by emailing kenyakiwis@yahoo.com

Straddling Two Countries as an Expatriate



By Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com

Ernest Hemingway in his novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, mocked the 1920's expatriates, even though he was one of the most famous. One of his characters chides another, saying, "You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed with sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? You hang around cafes."

Hemingway along with Gertrude Stein and Scott Fitzgerald made being an expatriate seem campy and exotic, long before millions of Europeans and North Americans voluntarily purposely left their homelands for other shores. Today, the American State Department estimates between 3 and 8 million live abroad. An estimated 2.8 Canadians are expats, according to the CBC News.

Globally, broaden the definition to an estimated 50.5 million expats worldwide, many escaping abject poverty or war. The number is expected to reach 56.8 million by 2017, 0.77 percent of the total global population. Saudi Arabia hosts the largest number of expats, and India exports the largest number.

As for Hemingway's description, while it is possible to live a dissolute, precious life in a foreign land, few of us are hanging around cafes with the notable exception of Kay's Gringo Postres and Café in Atenas. Today, the reasons for expatriating are vastly different from Hemingway's time.

What exactly is an expatriate? Shortened to expat, it is a person who temporarily or permanently is living in a country other than that of their citizenship. The reasons for relocating are as varied as the folks who relocate. The reasons for staying are even more complicated.

A trip home forces one to answer the inevitable questions that arise as I learned on a recent trip back to the United States. My family has amended their initial "Have you lost your mind!" opinion to viewing me as some sort of Robinson Crusoe. They applaud me for surmounting what they call major inconveniences, although the current political climate in the United States has some of them considering relocating.

A visit to one's homeland can be better than a therapy session, serving as a journey of self-discovery when you are asked to describe your life in Costa Rica. Living away from one's beginnings allows a person to examine what it means to be French, Dutch, Canadian or North American. For some, there is a revived appreciation for one's homeland, and for others, there is a stronger attachment to one's new location.

Diana Miskell and her husband Lance Turlock, can't imagine moving back to Canada because their new homeland has so much to offer them. Diana says that some family and friends back in Canada don't have much interest in or curiosity about their new lives. Diana, who has written a blog since 2010, says, "I have no idea if my family reads it. They never leave comments or ask questions." <http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com/>

Diana says, "Compared to people that we have met here in Costa Rica, most Canadians seem to be quite provincial without any kind of world view."

Tired of the greed and violence in the United States, Vicki Smith and her husband, Julian Smith, left nothing behind, arriving in Costa Rica with 3 suitcases and 2 laptops. She says, "I would never return to live there now and do not even like to visit."

Vicki describes their new homeland, "as Paradise." To those who question their move, she says, "We tell them of Costa Rica's physical beauty and its lovely people and how laid back it is here – like America in the 1950's."

John Wegner echoes that 50's throwback view of Costa Rica, "but with cell phones and the Internet." He calls Costa Rica, "beautiful, peaceful and primitive."

While some expats worry about growing old far from their immediate family, John and his wife, Pat do not see health care and aging as important. John says, "We have a fairly strong attitude of 'When it comes, it comes.' We're pretty sure that we don't want to do anything special to prolong life. The only situation that we envision causing us to go back is if Social Security collapses, we would need to sell this Costa Rican property and go somewhere really cheap to try to live."

Pat Wegner fell in love with Costa Rica when she was in her twenties, saying, "This has always been my 'heart home,' even though I spent 35 years of my adult live back in the States. My goal has always been to spend the sunset years of my life here."

"There is no rat race here," says Pat. "We do things at a much slower pace. We don't worry about material things. We don't care that our vehicle is 13 years old. We don't have to impress the neighbors. I feel more connected to people than I ever did in the States. The country is beautiful, as are the people. The weather is wonderful, and we need no air conditioning or heat. We get to do whatever we want or simply nothing at all."

John says, "It's way better here, knowing that nobody makes any bones about being corrupt in their politics or business dealings. The only 'surprise,' even after many vacation visits to here, before moving permanently, is the background vibe of being a little bit Wild West, i.e., there ain't no police or fire or ambulance or government going to come racing to your rescue if things go south. If you can't take care of yourself on your own, then you're probably going to experience the unpleasant side of an incident."

Living here has broadened Pat's global view. She says, "Folks back home think the U.S. is the center of the universe, and everything else revolves around them. They have no clue that the rest of world views them as egocentric meddlers trying to control world economies and other global affairs."

Barb Moss calls her move to Costa Rica, "my Alzheimer's Prevention Program. What could be more challenging to the brain than learning a new language and living in a different culture?" To anyone back in the States who questions her decision, she says, "I tell them I live in Paradise, the weather is always perfect, and the people are friendly, but it is a very slow culture, and a different way of daily life."

Since moving here, Barb has not changed her view point of her homeland, saying, "It has just made me grateful for being born in the United States and grateful that I live here now."

Jan and Cindi Blechschmidt, residents of San Ramon, are retired and living permanently in Costa Rica. Cindi says, "We have built a lovely, comfortable home here, and we are happy. We love the country, the people, and have a nice network of friends." They view life with the Ticos as not without frustrations, "but nothing like the stress of the United States. We were happy where we lived in the U.S., but it is more affordable in Costa Rica. We love the year round summer-like weather and do not miss the cold."

Living here has changed Cindi and Jan's view of immigration. Cindi says, "Having gone through the process of immigrating to another country, I have more empathy for those immigrating to the U.S. who are having to adapt to a new culture and language. But I also feel that it is important to immigrate legally. I am probably more opinionated on that topic than I was before I left. I also feel that the escalating tension in the U.S. is frightening. There is more of a 'live and let live' attitude here in Costa Rica that I appreciate greatly."

Becky and Bryan Peterson moved to Costa Rica in 2010 after visiting since 2004. Becky says, "We fell in love with the beauty of this country and the warmth of the people. To this day we are amazed at the culture of the people here and their willingness to go out of their way to help you."

The lower cost of health care enticed them to this, their new homeland. She says, "We have experienced my husband's hip replacement, a bleeding ulcer and have found the care exceptional. We do not use the CAJA and pay independently through INS, which is still less expensive than the states. Now, after living here for 6-½ years we are realizing that it might be

less expensive as we get older to take advantage of Medicare, which we are looking into with friends in the states."

Becky and Bryan increasingly see the United States as a frightening place. Becky says, "The gun violence and insane outrage in political parties is disappointing and has changed dramatically from when my husband and I were growing up."

No matter the view is of "back home," living here increases one's longing for some of the creature comforts and palate pleasers. From my Sunday School days, I recall that even though they had escaped captivity, the Hebrews longed for the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic back in Egypt. As a child, I always wondered why they would miss leeks, something I associated with plumbing.

Returning to Costa Rica on August 10 from an exhausting three week trip back to the United States, I paid more for overweight luggage than my return ticket. I don't have enough drawers and closet space in my house to fit my new clothes and household items, proof that I once took the bounty of the United States for granted. I have packed my freezer with French thyme, Herbs de Provence, nuts from Trader Joe's, and an assortment of hot sauces and cat treats fill my pantry. I stocked up on makeup that costs a king's ransom here and bought a new SmartPhone.

Although I am proud to call myself an ex-pat, I am already making a list for friends to mule back to me when they visit the United States. I am like Henry David Thoreau who claimed that he went to the woods to live deliberately but each week sent his shirts home to his mother to wash. I have chosen this world as my new home, but in many ways I straddle both worlds.

A while ago, I gave workshops about the art of simplicity. Simplicity is a wonderful experience. Ironically, getting there is complicated.

Somebody who has achieved simplicity may be tempted to say, "it is simple; just simplify yourself". No way, Jose! Dig deeper, and you'll find a fight behind every story.

If you ask around, "what is simplicity, and how do I simplify my life?", you will get different answers, and most of those will be around the subject of having less things, having less responsibilities, less stress, less this and less that. Some spiritual teachers will agree that we are on the right track by engaging the less-is-more lifestyle. They might be talking not only about things and surroundings, but also about pride, self-righteousness, anger, resentfulness, envy, unforgiven issues. That is a different ballgame, but that is where spiritual freedom starts making sense.

Other spiritual teachers will go deeper into the subject and say that what you have to lose is the "I", the me-identity. Why do they say that? Because once we lose the me-identity, then clarity, freedom, stillness and peace remain.

In other words, at the core, there is peace and stillness, and its aftermath is simplicity. A wonderful quiet. A presence that enjoys life as it is, as it happens, and perceives everything through the eyes of simplicity.

The me-identity is a construction of the mind. Likewise, the mind may create a concept of what is simplicity, a simple life, but that is just a construction of concepts. It isn't until the mind is quieted that simplicity is perceived in any and all situations of life.

Life is beautiful, tough and complicated. Yet, beyond our perception of our own experience, there is a reality, a Oneness that embraces all of life as it is. Until you are past your own experience, perceiving not from ego but from presence, and have no judgment on what is complicated and what is simple, once you jump that hurdle, then simplicity appears by itself.

Once you are in peace, then the perception of life, and life, are simple. Not because life is simple, but because you made peace with life as it is.

Simplicity, Peace and Love,
Konrad



Going off-the-beaten-path at Arenal Volcano at the Villa Hermosa

By Shannon Farley

My husband, Rolando, and I have been to Arenal many times. We always enjoy seeing the volcano, going hiking, being by the lake, and the hot springs. But La Fortuna and the Arenal area can get pretty full with tourists during high season and Costa Rican vacations.

So, when we can find a way to explore and enjoy Arenal off-the-beaten-path, it's a hidden gem to be treasured.

On the north side of the Arenal Volcano, a rugged ridge of mountains carves its way southeast. With the small valley, low hills and the Arenal River in between, the ridge affords spectacular views of just how immense and perfectly-shaped the volcano is. The well-known The Springs Resort & Spa – sister hotel to Peace Lodge by the La Paz Waterfall Gardens – is located here.



Past The Springs, you enter another world of dairy farms, horse pastures and country communities. It is here you will find the **Villa Hermosa private guesthouse**. (<http://www.thevillahermosa.com>)

This marvelous Costa Rica vacation rental is only 7 km from the main road running from downtown La Fortuna to the Arenal Volcano National Park and Arenal Lake, yet is completely away from the tourist crush. If you're looking to experience the real countryside of Costa Rica, this is your chance. The local town of Monterrey and its meandering community has a population of about 450. It's a place where people still ride horses as transportation, and you will get a friendly smile and greeting from anyone you encounter.



Villa Hermosa is your home away from home

Villa Hermosa has a main guesthouse and a small villa, along with a lovely pool, nestled in an acre of lush, manicured tropical gardens, bordered by pastures. It sleeps seven, and better than a hotel, you can enjoy it all as if you were in your own home. The owners, Wendy Holt and Gary Kritzinger, live next door on the property and are there if you want them, although you have as much privacy as you want.

The main guesthouse features a large open-air living area with comfortable armchairs and a sofa, rocking chairs, a long dining table for six, two bar-style tall tables with six stools, and more stools tucked up to the kitchen counter. The open-air kitchen is fully stocked with all dishes and cookware, a full refrigerator, and a BBQ and stove. A large interior bedroom holds a king-size bed beautifully fashioned from thick, curving tree branches and outfitted with comfy pillows, silky soft sheets and a duvet cover. A queen size bed anchors a corner by a large armoire. There is air-conditioning, a ceiling fan, and lots of well-positioned windows for fresh breezes. The master bathroom is very spacious with a big shower, and is stocked with fluffy white towels and a hair dryer.



Everything is very well-appointed and tastefully decorated by Wendy, who has traveled all over the world and tried to think of every detail she liked from every place she ever stayed at. You really have all you need for a comfortable stay. There are flashlights, an iPod docking station for music, two folding luggage stands, umbrellas, board games, books, and even floating pool toys. There is free Wi-Fi, an ice bucket and chilled beer glasses in the freezer, and even coffee, tea, milk and sugar for you.

A few steps from the guesthouse there is a large pool with a cascading waterfall and an ample sun deck with loungers, tables and chairs, where you can relax, read a book or bird watch. Tucked back in the garden by the frog pond, the small newly-built Villa Toucan can sleep three with a queen bed and a single bed. Artsy nature murals by local artist, Rodrigo Lizano Vega, bring the rainforest to life on the walls. And a cozy, well-appointed bathroom features a stone-tile rain shower.



Gravel pathways meander through beautiful tropical plants and trees that attract hummingbirds, butterflies, blue-gray tanagers, crested guan, toucans, and even a resident armadillo. By the parking area, a games room offers a full-size billiards table, dart board, small bar, and a bathroom. There is a horseshoe throwing area on the grass to the side of the guesthouse.



What to do by Villa Hermosa in Arenal

Wendy has been living in the area for seven years and can personally recommend tours, the best hot springs, and things to do in the Arenal area. Consider her and Gary to be your personal concierges, and they really do their best to make your trip as wonderful as possible. Gary Kritzing is the owner and private guide of Bushmaster Adventures, which offers wildlife and nature tours in Costa Rica. Many guests go on night hikes with Gary at a private property close by. We did, and it was really fun! See my article next month about our cool tour with Bushmaster Adventures! (<http://www.bushmastercostaricatours.com/>)

A particularly cool feature about the Villa Hermosa is its close proximity to The Springs Resort & Spa – only 3.5 km. The Springs offers a two-day pass for only \$60 per person and you get unlimited access for two days to all of their fabulous hot springs, five restaurants and five bars, and they are open from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Tabacon Hot Springs, on the other hand, charges \$105 per person this time of year for their one-day pass, although it includes both lunch and dinner (\$85 per person with only one meal). (<http://www.thespringscostarica.com>)

Getting there: Villa Hermosa is located near the little town of Monterrey (also called Santo Domingo), between The Springs Resort & Spa and Leaves & Lizards Retreat in the Arenal Volcano area of Costa Rica. The Villa Hermosa website (<http://www.thevillahermosa.com>) has a fantastic map and driving directions to get there. Once you turn off the main road, the road across the valley to The Springs and up along the ridge is mostly unpaved, and is quite adventurous and bumpy. It is strongly recommended to have a 4x4 vehicle with high clearance. Allegedly there is a plan to fix the road at the end of November (we can only hope!).

Want your own business in paradise? Or know someone who does?

Villa Hermosa, including the owner's house, guesthouse and cabin, and the vacation rental business are all for sale. The owners are looking to downsize so they can spend more time traveling. If you are interested or know someone who is, contact Wendy Holt at Villa Hermosa for more information: info@theVillaHermosa.com or (506) 2478-0508.

Meeting Orlando Carranza, Atenas' Famous Sculptor



By Melissa Michaud (Photo Meghan Young)

In Atenas, Costa Rica, there is a statue of Christ that lies on the slab of a table, one arm broken off to a stub, prostrate and in pain as if he is a patient in the ER and not actually The Lord Incarnate. He lies in front of the studio of the famous sculptor Orlando Carranza, and I pass his workshop every day as I go to and from town. From the street you can see the statues he is working on, the Christs and Popes that are too big to fit within the workshop.



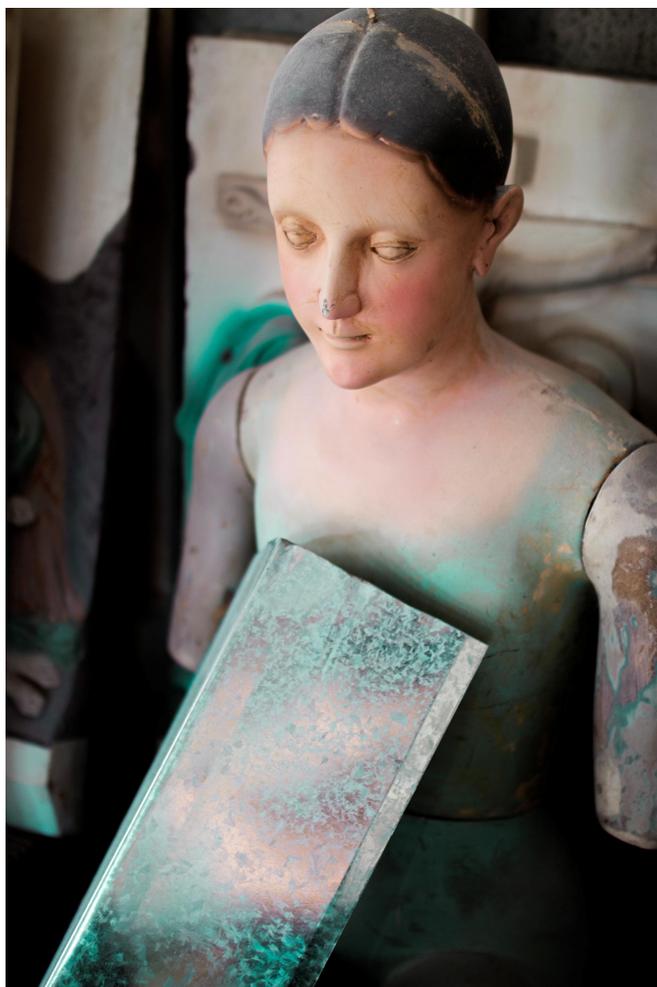
But it wasn't until today that I stopped to take a look inside, and I was amazed at what I saw. I was planning to only photograph the outside of the studio from the street because I noticed that the morning light was striking the Pope. But as I was taking the photo the artist walked up with his little white fluffy dog and invited me inside to take a look.

What I saw was hundreds of statues, new and old, both perfect and incredibly decrepit. Inside this man's workshop was a lifetime of work, and as I looked around he spoke proudly of the commissions he had had, the materials he uses (wood and marble) and he

pulled out his phone to show me the statues that he has placed and the press he has received.



He is a messy worker, like I am, and his work space was littered with his tools, small pints of oil paint and discarded coffee cups. The entire place had that lovely smell of linseed and paint thinner. His work was incredible, reminiscent of another time and place and was perfectly executed. These statues belong in shrines in towering churches in Europe or in the altars of old family homes. Thank goodness I was there in broad daylight because it was dusty and dark and there was a bucket full of Jesus' and other statues with missing limbs and faces. It was a bit creepy in there.



The artist's name is Orlando Carranza, and his workshop is here in central Atenas, Costa Rica. He is an incredible talent, and I am glad that I finally got around to stopping and getting to know him.

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.

Buenas Noches Y' all!!!
(That means good evening y'all)

I have just got to tell you all about the "BAT DOG" we saw at the indoor farmers market in Grecia!! At least I think that is what it was!!! Or maybe God got him mixed up with a Doberman or something. Who knows!!! Anyway, he somehow ended up with the wrong ears!! I don't know how he totes 'em around!!

His owner better hold on to his leash if they get out in the wind!

And he had the nerve to make nasty remarks about me and Bunny!!!!

The little snip said we had WHEELS for feet.

Guess he just never saw two beautiful perros in a baby stroller before.

He was just a pup though so I guess he has some learning to do when it comes to manners. He'd better learn QUICK too cause those ears are gonna bring him a lot of grief!!

It was Joy's "turn" to go with us to dinner the other night. Mom ordered pollo (chicken) (pronounced "po-yo") for us and she and Dad had spaghetti bolognese.

The waiter, Luis, treats us really special. He brings us agua (water) in a little pitcher with a plastic bowl to pour it in. We really feel special when he does that and the other customers seem impressed too!!!

Enid and Javercito were over the other day for lunch. Javi likes to invent new ways to sit in the barstools!!! He's a pretty neat kid. All us perros like it when he comes over to watch cartoons. We snuggle with him on the couch. Mom is teaching him some English.

He can say, "May I watch cartoons please?" very well and is learning to say: "May I have some please?" Mom bakes a lot of cakes these days. She says she finally found a country where they like her cooking!! LOL!!!!

Mom and Dad took THREE of us to the ice cream shop the other night!!!! Me, Juliette, and Joy!! MAN!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Was that stroller crowded!!!! We had vanilla ice cream in a cup but Mom got a chocolate milk shake (my personal favorite) so I made her share that with me too.

Dad is coming to the states on the 26th of this month so if any of you have found a twins stroller that seats front and rear, be sure to let Mom know!!!

We really need one!! They are VERY expensive here and Mom said maybe someone there could find one at a flea market or garage sale.

Then me and Bunny met this cute human kid in the park one morning. She was walking with her mom and when she saw us she just walked right over and squatted down in front of us. Her mom came over and told her to come along but she wouldn't budge!! She LIKED the perros in the stroller and wanted to stay with her.

We've got some really pretty flowers in the yard. The red things are blooming out like crazy and the bush is just loaded with them. As a matter of fact, two of them got so big and heavy that they broke the stalks they were growing on! Mom brought them in the house and put them in water. They are really thick and heavy!!!!

There are also some pretty yellow flowers we don't know the name of, Bird of Paradise, white flowers, and mangos.

We went out to dinner tonight and it was Andre's "turn" to go. It was kind of neat. You know...just two foot loose, good looking perros out for a night on the town. We went to the Rio and Mom ordered pollo for us again. Then SHE had the nerve to order STEAK!! Ahem!!! Excuse me!! I get chicken and she gets STEAK!! Well I made her share the steak with us too. How dare she try to pull that one on us. The very idea. Hmph!!

Anyway, while we were there this little human boy was bouncing around in the restaurant. He startled Andre' and Andre' BARKED at him and JUMPED out of the stroller!!!! It's a good thing Mom had the slip lead on him cause he would probably have beat us home!!! The little guy came over after a few minutes though and wanted to pet us. He was a cute kid, for a human, and Mom told him to go ahead. He talked a mile a minute and Mom, very politely, pretended to understand every word he said. LOL!!!!

Miss Lluvia, the little perro negro (black dog) Mom and Dad found in the street in Grecia, has become one of the pack here. She is a REALLY smart little girl and she just LOVES having someone to snuggle up with at night. She sleeps under the covers snuggled up to Mom's belly.

OH!! We had special company today!! There is a group here that is organizing what they call "castration clinics" for dogs and cats. Mom says it is the same as the spay clinics back in the states where they do low cost spay/neuter for folks who cannot afford to do it otherwise. They go to different areas and operate on fuzzbutts!! Sometimes they set up in churches. Sometimes schools. Wherever they can find a place that will allow them to do it. They do tubal ligation (tie the tubes) on the females and vasectomies on the males. The surgery is simpler and there is not as much chance of complications from the surgery. There is still a risk of uterine cancer in the females or of colon problems in the males but at least this will help cut down on the over population.

Anyway, the lady who organizes them had heard about Mom and her rescue efforts. She wanted to set up a "clinic day" in our area. She called Mom and today they came over. GUESS WHAT!! They are going to do a clinic here at our house on July 2nd!! Our kitchen is REAL big and well lighted and they said it would be perfect for the operating room. Mom will be assisting like she used to do back in the states but she will just be doing minor stuff. She really enjoys helping with the babies as they come out from under the anesthetic.

Also we had a visit from a really nice lady, Pat, who is visiting Costa Rica. She is a friend of a really nice guy who adopted two of Angel and Buddy's puppies. Angel and Buddy were the two eskies Mom rescued right before we moved!! Angel was REAL pregnant when we got her. We all liked Pat and she is going to come back real soon.

Mom has a new favorite bedtime snack. When she gets done with the computer and settles down to unwind before going to sleep, she likes to have a glass of red wine and a bowl of grits. I told y'all Mom is a southern gal!! Okay....that is about it for tonight. I'm pretty tuckered out from helping with all the company.

Hasta luego Y'all!!! (that means "bye"), Tailwags from BudBud the BAT DOG finder (4/2005)

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.



**Road Side Fruit Stand
12" x 22"
Oil on Linen**

Artist's Statement: The many colors and shapes of these market stands are a delight to the eye.

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



Painted Lady
Acrylic on Gallery Wrapped Canvas
35.5" X 35.5"

Artist's Statement: Photo Reference Courtesy of Linda Gorchinsky

Diana F. Miskell
Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com
Costa Rica Blog: www.dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com



The Bird Family

Jocelyn Farquhar
jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com

For the bloggers...



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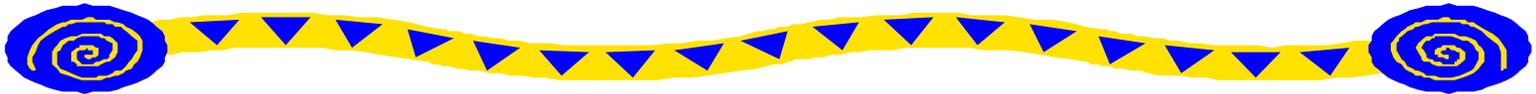


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Diana F. Miskell

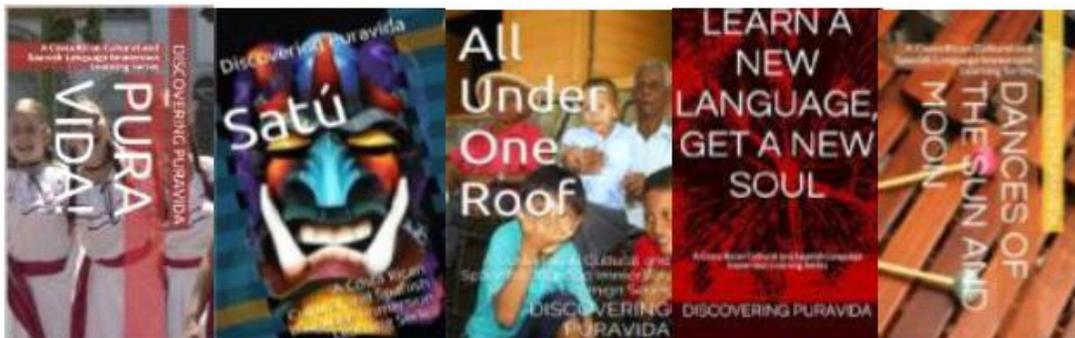
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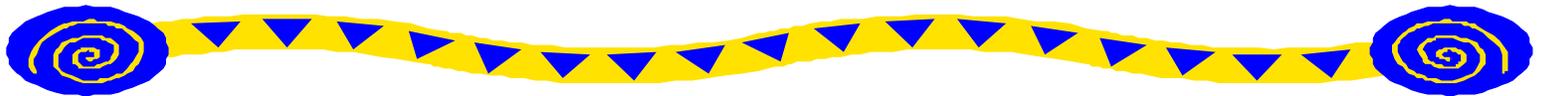
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