

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.

February 23, 2016

ATENAS TODAY



Cassia Fistula (Cana Fistula) Summer Blossoms

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

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Publisher's Note



We have truly welcomed summer days here in Atenas! Returning expats brought their energy and friends to the 9th Chili Cook-Off which was held on January 31st at the Sabana Larga Redondel. Results of the Chili Cook-off are in this issue.

A week after the Chili Cook-off, La Nación was actually listing different places where Super Bowl Sunday (aka Sunday Funday) could be watched. Here in Atenas, (as elsewhere in the country) ticos did their civic duty by getting out and voting for mayor, council members and district representatives. Although participation in these elections is still not what it should be, Atenas can be proud to have reached an almost 50% turnout.

On February 14th we celebrated Valentine's Day, a day devoted to friendship and love. The Atenas Central Park was the site of a beautiful mass wedding ceremony that came together quickly after a post on Facebook by one of the participants. The power of social media was evident that day and you can read more about the event in this issue.

Changes are evident in our town every day. It seems restaurants; small shops and offices go up quickly and often disappear just as fast. While I do my best to keep up with these changes, I am aware that a major revision to the Yellow Pages needs to be done and I ask for your indulgence as I undertake this task. Many of you kindly email me when you find new businesses that should be listed or phone numbers to be corrected. I appreciate your input because it means that these pages are useful and provide a helping hand when you are looking for something.

The Atenas Today community grows and changes as new arrivals join us. It is gratifying to know that the publication has a wide national and global readership despite our focus being almost intensely local! As always, I extend my gratitude to our contributors, advertisers and you, our loyal readers!

I invite you to enjoy this issue and hope that you, like me, can contemplate the beauty and splendor of Atenas today and every day!

Happy reading!

Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

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

February 26th – 29th Fiestas in Fatima with TOPE on February 27th at 1 p.m. leaving from Plaza de Deportes. Every day food, music, dancing and more!

February 27th – Su Espacio hosts Fundraiser "Motown Dance Party (see flyer this section)

March 8th – International Women's Day 2016 Theme: Pledge for Parity

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day!

March 17th – 20th Retreat at Chirripo (see flyer in Classified Ads section)

March 21st – Beginning of Holy week, many places in CR shut down, please consult your favorite banks, stores, etc. for their schedules

March 22nd – World Water Day: A day for water and sustainable development

March 27th – Happy Easter Sunday!

SAVE THE DATE: TABLE FOR TWO WINE AND CHOCOLATE AND + APRIL 2, 2016

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

First Wednesday of each month – Recycling near CoopetransAtenas Bus Depot

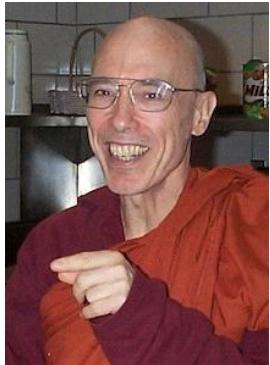
Second Monday of every month: 4 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Antaños Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

Every Tuesday: Atenas Bridge Club meets at Don Yayo's Restaurant. 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

Every Wednesday: At 11:30 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



Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, a prominent American Theravadan Buddhist monk, will be in Atenas from February 23rd through March 15th. He is the president of the Buddhist Association of the United States. He is also the author of numerous books on Buddhism and he is the founder of the Buddhist Global Relief organization that fights hunger across the world. Bhikkhu Bodhi will be present for the Buddhist Book Discussion sessions (see below) where he will be available to answer questions on Buddhism. He also plans to give several public talks on Buddhism.



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/olde-mar.artavia>

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

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light



MOTOWN DANCE PARTY / FUNDRAISER

for Su Espacio community center

Saturday, February 27, 2016 6pm-12am

Please join us for an evening of nonstop dancing to The Jackson Five, Temptations, Four Tops, The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and much more from 6-10pm, Latin music until 12am

C5,000 Admission includes a soul food/CR typical buffet

Where: Restaurante etnia [frente la bomba] RSVP: 2446-7735
More info: suespacioatenas@gmail.com

Why: To help our local community center for kids, Su Espacio,
continue to provide after-school classes in art, dance,
marching band, martial arts, and more.

Be part of the Village that raises our kids!

Friendship Library News*
February, 2016



Photograph: Eyleen Vargas *La Nación*

Lest we become complacent, some food for thought:

"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who ever have been alive." -James Baldwin

We are fortunate indeed to have such easy access to books. Whether we are looking for practical information, inspiration, or just a few hours lost in a good novel, we can usually find it at the library or in a downloadable format from the internet. To have a shared community library is particularly interesting since it reflects the interests of others in the community. The books on the shelves of the Friendship Library bear witness to an extremely diverse (and well-read) expat community.

The following are some examples of the 50 (or so) books added to the collection this month:

Someone has donated a couple of books on investing (NF 3) that are of a general nature and with fairly recent copyright dates:

"The Little Book of Alternative Investments"
"The Investment Answer"

If you are interested in fly fishing, check out these titles at NF 7:

"The Complete Book of Fly Tying"
"The Complete Book of Fly Fishing"
"The Little Red Book of Fly Fishing"

A seriously crafty person has donated three books and a very large stack of magazines on crocheting and knitting. Look for these titles at NF 7:

"Granny Squares, Nanny Squares"
"Quick and Cozy Afghans"
"Lace for Beginners"

For the philosophically adventurous, we added these titles in NF 1:

- "How to Walk the Earth as a Goddess"
- "Simple Spells for Success"
- "Practical Guide to Past Life Regressions"
- "When Are You Coming Home? A Personal Guide to Soul Transcendence"

Each month brings us more books about good health, nutrition, and fitness. These books can be found in NF 6. We have added these titles this month:

- "Preventing Arthritis"
- "Stop Aging Now"

I am not a reader of science fiction, but I am fortunate to have an in-house sci-fi fan whose reviews I trust. He heartily recommends this new title and says it is a really fine collection of science fiction stories: "The Year's Best Science Fiction"

Short stories and story collections have never had a home of their own in this library. I'm going to classify the new book of science fiction stories as SC (Story Collections) and put it in the upper left dining room at the beginning of the nonfiction collection. I'll add to that section as time goes on.

My own reading preference is for books about politics and religion. I read a review of "Wrapped in the Flag" and knew I must own it. It is the personal memoir of a woman (Claire Conner) who grew up in the bosom of the John Birch Society. I bought it, read it, donated it to the library and recommend it to anyone who shares these interests. NF 3.

Happy reading.

-Linda Ledbetter, librarian

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

DOG OF THE MONTH



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

ATENAS de Alajuela - COSTA RICA

PORCUPINES ALWAYS WIN



MEXICAN HAIRLESS PORCUPINE

If you have visions of pulling the quills out at home with a pair of pliers, think again. Removing the quills is a lengthy and risky process best done with the dog under anesthesia. You have to be able to look in the mouth and the back of the throat. Leaving a tiny fragment of a broken quill can cause serious damage. Quills do more than damage the area where they enter the body. The scaled tips mean they can move forward. One dog died suddenly after tangling with a porcupine a few months before. An autopsy was performed and found a quill that had poked through his heart.

The Mexican Hairy dwarf porcupine is a rodent found throughout Central America including Costa Rica.

Porcupines use their quills to defend themselves in precarious situations. Contrary to popular belief, porcupines can not throw their quills, but the quills become detached at the slightest touch. The quills stay rooted in the animal due to the dog's body temperature causing the scales on the tip of the quill to become enlarged and even more deeply entrenched in the skin.

Though its attacks are fierce, porcupines are not aggressive and will attack only when confronted or when they sense potential danger.

Porcupines are nocturnal and rarely seen in the day time. They are proficient tree climbers and spend much of their time in trees. They are very vocal and capable of making a wide range of sounds including moaning, coughing, whining, shrieking, wailing and tooth clenching.

A MEXICAN HAIRLESS PORCUPINE

A recent night visitor at Sylvia Spix's Atenas Home



DORA TEL.8855-9822 PRESIDENT (ESPAÑOL)
doritrebol@yahoo.com
SYLVIA TEL.8868-1386 SECRETARY (ES, EN, DEUTSCH)
ANIMALESATENASCR@AOL.CO

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM.

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

Sylvia Spix, Myrna Kastner

FOSTER PROGRAM

Animales Atenas needs foster homes for kittens, puppies and adult dogs. The program provides temporary housing for the many needy animals. Foster volunteers open their homes ad hearts to animals that require extra attention and care, including those who are too young for adoption requiring socialization and or need medical care. Animals Atenas provides vet care, food and litter free to foster parents. All foster parents are invited to showcase their animals at our weekly Friday Feria next to Pali Grocery store.
Animales Atenas has no shelter for the many homeless and abandoned pets in the area.

ANNOUNCEMENT FUNDRAISER

The Friends of Animales Atenas invite you to the 2015 'TABLE FOR TWO'

1. We are recruiting friends who like to cook, and asking them to prepare a meal for two, four or six.
2. We need volunteer cooks to write an enticing meal description and email it to pat@patwegner.com by Feb 21.
3. The 'TABLE FOR TWO' wine and chocolate event will be April 2, 2016 at the Oscar Vargas facility. More details will follow.
4. Join in the fun, help us make the 'TABLE FOR TWO' another success and share your culinary skills.

Atenas Today Interviews



It's no secret that we live in an aging society. There are families in Costa Rica that enjoy having four or five generations despite so many couples delaying or forgoing having children.

Traditionally, Costa Rican planning officials have forgotten to include an aging population in their development plans, which is often understandable given that mobility has not totally replaced the deeply ingrained expectation in our culture that senior citizens will live with and be cared for by their families.

The field of social gerontology has grown, however, and a long-term view of the needs of this population is being considered by the government, developers and professionals eager to share in society's responsibility to care for them. An inventory of local senior-friendly facilities confirms that there is a scarcity of centers.

Club Esmeralda is a private geriatric center specialized in caring for those 60 and over. *Atenas Today* had a chance to interview Stephannie

Jimenez about this recently inaugurated center in La Garita.



AT: Stephannie, tell us about Club Esmeralda.

SJ: Club Esmeralda offers two types of care. We have a day center that provides care from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and we also have the permanent residences with 25 rooms that will satisfy all tastes. Our goal is to become a new national benchmark for the resident senior citizen by providing personalized quality attention that will meet the needs of the client while also satisfying the concerns of their family.

AT: Describe the activities that are organized at Club Esmeralda .

SJ: We have activities for everyone, permanent residents and day center visitors. The therapeutic activities are designed to keep the mind active, such as afternoon crosswords, word searches, bingo. We do crafts, we make cookies and pastries, give swimming lessons, pool therapy for strengthening the muscles,

relaxing massage, facials, manicures and pedicures. In addition, we can take field trips to some tourist attraction in Costa Rica. Some of these activities are done individually and others can be done in groups depending on the number of people interested.

AT: What is the staff to client ratio?

SJ: The law requires one nurse for every 8-10 adults plus a general physician and a psychologist. There are special cases though where an adult might need around the clock attention so a personal nurse 24/7 is assigned.



AT: What are visiting hours? Are visits welcome?

SJ: The visiting hours are from 7 am-6pm Monday-Sunday with prior notice that you are coming to spend the day with your loved one. The resident is allowed to leave the club as long as the doctor approves and the responsible person signs an authorization form.

AT: What is the dining and meal service like?

SJ: The food is prepared according to the needs of the senior citizen. A

nutritionist is responsible for developing appropriate meal plans taking into account the needs, conditions, tastes and restrictions of a resident.



AT: What are the fees to live in this retirement community?

SJ: The costs vary depending on the type of package chosen. For example, if a person is fully independent or requires help on a daily basis. Apart from that, we need to consider whether therapy is required. It is best that interested persons come and visit (under no obligation) and we can personalize their package.

AT: What motivated the founders of Club Esmeralda to build it?

SJ: Club Esmeralda was originally German owned. It was going to be a hotel but the project was not completed. The current owners wanted to create something with the aging population in mind. One of the daughters is a doctor and she decided to join forces with them with a view to changing the model of care for this population.

AT: Is Club Esmeralda privately owned or does it receive public funds from JPS or CONAPAM?

SJ: The club is privately owned, but in order for it to function it had to meet rigorous Ministry of

Health criteria. In our case, we received approval for five years and it is worth mentioning that the facilities were upgraded to comply with Law 7600 (Rights of People with Disabilities).

AT: What is the maximum occupancy?

SJ: The maximum capacity will be approximately 35 residents.



AT: Does the center have its own vehicles?

SJ: Right now, the club has its own vehicles in case we need to take someone somewhere. We are also affiliated with Linea Vital in case we need ambulance service.

AT: Since this is a very unique population with special needs and traits, how is the staff selected, not only those who will care for the residents but

also gardeners, maintenance?

SJ: The staff has to meet certain requirements, such as training and experience in caring for the elderly. They must also undergo psychological assessment and a trial period is given before the job is filled.

AT: Is Club Esmeralda suitable for couples or is it strictly divided into sectors for women and men?

SJ: The Club has two sectors. The main one is for mature couples or single men or women in private rooms (mixed gender area). In Sector 2 there are apartments with 4 bedrooms that can be divided into apartments specifically for men or women.

AT: Thank you very much for your time today Stephannie. We wish Club Esmeralda great success.

SJ: Thank you also for this opportunity to introduce our club to your readers. We will be happy to receive questions or visits.



For more information please contact:

Stephannie Jimenez
2487-4007/2487-5805



The Wind

By Shannon Farley

I have to admit it. The much touted, much glorified summer dry season of Costa Rica is not my favorite time of year. It's the wind. The heat too, but that's another story.

The wind has probably been on your mind as well. It's hard not to notice. Blustering, howling and gusting dust, dirt, leaves, branches, and whatever else it can catch; the wind has been whipping around Atenas (and a good portion of the rest of the country) like a whirling dervish. And it's a good deal less joyous than an actual Whirling Dervish. If you are a pool owner, the wind is the bane of your life. Seconds after painstakingly scooping out every last bit of debris, the water is full of leaves again. Cleaning the house is a Sisyphus action. By the afternoon, the thick layer of dust is back.



In many places around the world, the wind has a name. In Southern California, where I'm from, **Santa Ana** winds blow hot out of the desert through Santa Ana Pass every autumn, scorching everything and fanning the flames of wildfires. The Rocky Mountains get **Chinook** winds, abrupt warming breezes that follow a cold snap. The famous **Mistral** winds are cold and dry, flowing from the north over the Mediterranean Sea. And there are the strong, warm **Föhn** winds in the European Alps.

Our wind is called **Papagayo**.

Named after the **Gulf of Papagayo in Guanacaste**, these particularly high-speed gusting winds that we get – on top of the usual trade winds – result from cold winter weather in North America. NASA tells us that when it is freezing cold and snowing in North America, the cold air and high-pressure weather systems move south over the Gulf of Mexico. The cold air is drawn toward the warmer, moist atmosphere over the Pacific Ocean, flowing from high pressure to lower pressure like a river flows downhill. The winds channel through a gap in the Central American Cordillera and shriek over Lake Nicaragua, blowing over the Papagayo Gulf and far out into the Pacific Ocean.

And even though I don't like these winds – and I know I'm not alone – they actually provide a purpose. Papagayo winds carry nutrient-rich dust into the ocean providing nourishment for diverse marine life. Additionally, the wind mixes the normally warm surface waters with deeper and colder, nutrient-rich water that lies near the coast. An entire food chain depends on these Papagayo winds.

Maybe it will help these days when the Papagayo winds are blowing to think of all of the fish and marine life being fed!



The Papagayo winds howling across Central America, pulling dust out over the Pacific Ocean.

Image provided by the SeaWiFS Project, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center.

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/view.php?id=12898>



Atenas Chili Cook Off 2016

PRO - AYUDA
HOGAR DE VIDA

The Atenas 9th Chili Cook-off has come and gone –
Were you there?

The big news comes first: Hogar de Vida is the new owner of a beautiful used red tractor, purchased with funds from the 9th Annual Atenas Chili Fiesta! We did it! We did it, and a Good Time was Had By All.

So why a tractor? It's because, with our help, over the last several years Hogar de Vida has met its critical security needs of the physical plant. Our community, through the Chili Cook-Off, has contributed funds to build walls, gates, and security systems. It's time to unveil a new dream/project, a multi-year undertaking that will support and nurture the children of Hogar for many years if done right. We are helping Hogar to achieve food sovereignty by building a Finca in their "outback".



Tractor

Each year before the cook-off the Hogar team meets with people from the planning committee to discuss how the money we raise will be used. The committee worked this year with Steve Hoover of Hogar to make our goal very specific. He presented us with Hogar's dream of farming, outlining their plan over time and through several phases. We decided it was a good plan, and we decided to aim for the red tractor. We agreed that with more money we would contribute to their next steps, an aquaponic pond and greenhouse. We didn't get all the way there this year. In the meantime, Hogar has begun to reach out to our gringo community as well as social, religious and government entities to corral support and assistance now that they have the tools to begin. Steve held his first community meeting at Kay's Gringo Postres on Feb. 11th. If this is an endeavor you would like to contribute to, and there are many different ways to help, read until the end of the article.

We had 20 Chili Teams in the Salon this year! We did a slight reorganization of the tables in the salon and were able to avoid the giant traffic jams of gente that plagued us all last year. We enlarged the pedestrian lane area of Sponsors and Handicrafts by not accepting so many craft vendors and it worked – people could stand in line for delicious iced coffee on one side of the lane while on the other side people walked, talked and shopped. Cutting down on one band at a time helped with noise problems.



Festive Mood at the Salon



Part of the Judging Team

On the other hand, we didn't fix the entrance problems, which ranged this year from people having to wait in long lines to pay to others strolling in and enjoying without paying. This year's plan for improvement just didn't work, so we'll try something new next year. Last year a nighttime concert didn't work – this year the Rodeo, Corridas de Toros Sensación Taurina, did.

work so we'll try something new next year. Last year a nighttime concert didn't work – this year the Rodeo, Corridas de Toros Sensación Taurina, did. And Tamela Hedstrom, last year's musical headliner, returned this year as our queen! Tamela is so impressed by the Hogar de Vida that she continues to visit them and donated a 3,000,000 colones prize won on a national television show in May!



Tamela, Chili Queen 2016



Fabio José and Tamela with the raffles!

Another area that was a serious success was the food and music court. Yummy food from our vendors! Chocolate! Meat on sticks, on plates, between buns! Chili! No long waits. Cold beer! The live music was energizing, playful, and fun to dance and listen to. Old Rock n' Roll. Classic Tico ballads. Latin pop. Amazing singing with karaoke. Muy divertido!!! If you see Marvin Suarez or DJ Armin around Atenas, or guys from Voces Duo and FLASHBACK, be sure to thank them. They all donated their time to help the children at Hogar. So did Fabio José, who emceed this year. Gracias, Fabio José!



Face painting for the children!

And on the note of thankfulness, watch store windows for a new Atenas Chili Fiesta sticker which will let you know that a business is really contributing to the cook-off for the kids at Hogar. When you see it, find someone working to say thank you!

What made this year's Chili Cook-off special for me was my committee experience. The first year I volunteered for the day of the event. Over 80 people came to a training meeting prior to the event. Last year I agreed to help write pieces for public relations. When I attended my first planning committee meeting, there were 22 people. This year my first meeting had nine of us. While last year we probably had 75 years of Chili Cook-off experience to guide us, this year we had people chairing committees who haven't lived here long enough to even have attended a Chili Cook-off! It was quite intimidating. It was strangely freeing! And we are all extremely pleased that we met our goals, with some stumbles, lots of helping hands from the community, and our heartfelt commitment to these children.

We made an agreement that on the subject of the Chili Cook-off, we would be united. We would not let our differences get in the way of our desire to help. We built our team on our goals and shared values, not our disagreements – we represent the full spectrum of opinions in the gringo/extranjero community of Atenas, politically, spiritually, and in terms of our fashion sense. Early in the planning, we made some important decisions, four of them: To enjoy the task and one another, To have a fun and safe event, To track the money carefully and demonstrably, and To support the food sovereignty and farming program at Hogar with all the money we raise this year.

We feel we were successful on all fronts. We hope your experience was good as well! If this year makes you curious about Hogar de Vida or the Chili Cook-Off, if you want to compete next year, or you wonder how we judge the chili, if you want to review our financial books or preview a new band for us, please find us! We can be reached through our website, www.atenascilicookoff.org.

You can leave messages at our Facebook page, Atenas Chili Cook-off. Find out more about Hogar de Vida at www.homesoflife.org, Facebook on the Hogar de Vida page, or through Steve Hoover at hogardevidainfo@gmail.com. Please contact us!



FLASHBACK



Voces Duo



Marvin Suarez

P.S. Want to know who won? Interested in looking for friends? Here are the winners, followed by some people shots. You can find more on our pages listed above.

Results of Trophy Winners for the 9th Annual Atenas Chili Cook Off 2016

First Place Judges Choice is an award given as a result of 11 judges tasting chili considering Aroma, Color, Consistency, Taste and After-Taste. The number of judges goes up or down depending on the number of Chili Teams entering the contest.

First Place Judges Choice - The Marine Corps League - they have entered our contest for 8 consecutive years and this is their second consecutive win for this 1st place trophy.

Second Place Judges Choice - Chili BOMBA - a new team this year with great potential for future contests.

Third Place Judges Choice - South of 'south of the border' - a team who has entered our contest for the last 6 years and is always among the top 4 winners.

Fourth Place Judges Choice - Chili Willas - a team who have been a trophy winner in every contest they entered since 2013. Showmanship trophies are judged by 3 judges and their decision is based on presentation of their Team Table which includes table decorations, crazy or colorful costumes and enthusiasm.

First Place Showmanship - Dinobite - a new team with a clever theme back to the days of the dinosaur.

Second Place Showmanship - Chili Willas - taking home their second trophy of the day.

Third Place Showmanship - Chili Chili Bang Bang - a new team this year and we hope to see this team in future contests.

Vegetarian Chili - Augusto's en Atenas - a new team this year in this expanding category.

People's Choice Trophy is won by the team who collects the most "silver beans". The public receives a silver bean when they pay admission to the event. The beans are given to a favorite Chili Team based on showmanship and best tasting chili from 19 different Teams.

This year's winner was Carne Rico Jerky Smoked Chili - a returning team of 3 years and a first time winner for this trophy.

A special thanks to the Best Ever Chili Cooking Teams in all of Costa Rica.



Text by Bonnie Fluke Bfluke@yahoo.com

All pictures courtesy of Tom Duffy tom@duffyportraits.com

Crossing the Wide Frontier between Nicaragua and Costa Rica



by Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com

Until residency is established, foreigners residing in Costa Rica must leave the country every three months, a measure instituted so visitors don't overstay their welcome. According to *The Tico Times*, there is no minimum amount of time outside Costa Rica required for the reentry for United States passport holders and other nationalities.* Consequently, foreigners living here may find themselves traveling south to Panama or north to Nicaragua in a quarterly trip that feels like one is going through a turnstile.

My decision to visit Granada, Nicaragua, accompanying a non-resident friend needing the requisite "run for the border," started with a curiosity about the Nicas, as Nicaraguans call themselves. Like many ex-pats, I had employed a Nicaraguan *domestica*; two in fact, and in getting to know them, I immediately sensed subtle differences between them and Ticos. I knew their families were often larger than Tico families, their standard of living in the poverty range, and that their history – both personal and collective – was tinged with sadness.

My second maid, Elvira, while working in Costa Rica had left 4 sons in her sick mother's care in Nicaragua and sent her scant wages back to them. Like my first *domestica*, she has returned to her homeland after working six months for me, telling me she would return in January in hopes of bringing some of her family back with her to a more promising future. I had already been warned by others that I would probably not see her again, as had happened with the first maid.

Once, Elvira picked up my portable hair dryer and put it to her face, making the motion of a shaver, asking me its function. It was the first of many clues of her naivety. I tried to get her employment with friends, but Elvira was unable to master using the vacuum cleaner. Questions about her life back in Nicaragua, asked in my broken Spanish, painted a portrait of a dirt floor hut, six family members huddled together with Elvira serving as the breadwinner, and a series of health and weather disasters that were the parentheses around her life. Was her story atypical?

Time Travel: A Historical Perspective

Granada was the destination for my friend and me, a colonial city burned in 1856 by an American, William Walker, who was attempting to establish a slave-holding empire in Central America. Walker had marched into Costa Rica after establishing himself as a dictator in

Nicaragua. The Juan Santamaría International Airport in Alajuela is named for a young hero and drummer boy who died in the battle to oust Walker. William Walker was captured and hung in Honduras, but not before permanently creating in the Nicaraguan mind a view of Americans as meddling and greedy. Was this still how we are viewed, I wondered.

If Walker were not enough of an embarrassment, it paled in comparison to America's backing the decades-long corrupt dictatorship of the Somoza family. Direct parallels to Cuba, a country I had visited in 2015, came to mind. The exportation of sugar cane to America had been before the Cuban Revolution a mainstay of the Cuban economy. By 1970, Nicaragua was the top beef supplier to the United States with President Anastasio "Tachito" Somoza DeBayle steadily filling his pockets with the profits. In 1972, when a massive earthquake decimated Managua, Somoza embezzled international aid money as well as United States donations and awarded lucrative restoration contracts to friends and family.

Tachitos' father, Somoza García had become president in Nicaragua through a coup in 1936, thus beginning a dictatorship sanctioned by the United States that lasted until 1956 when he was assassinated. His two sons continued his reign until 1979, although some non-related presidents served from 1963-1967. The Samoza regime was overthrown in 1979 when it was ousted by The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), popularly shorted to the Sandinistas. A Sandinista insurrection from 1972-1979 ushered in a Nicaraguan civil war with the murder in 1978 of Pedro Chamorro, a hero of Ché Guevara status. Chamorro was the editor of the opposition newspaper, La Prensa, and leader of the Democratic Union of Liberation.

It was commonly believed that Somoza's sons had ordered Chamorro's assassination that had resulted in a national strike against the dictatorship. The Somozas, in retaliation, ordered that "everything that moves be bombed until it stops moving." This included the colonial city of León that to this day has not restored a church and other buildings to remind future generations of Nicaraguans of their history.

History has not kindly portrayed American interventions into Central American affairs, the fear being that after the Sandinistas 1979 victory, Central America would fall to communism. As the American public openly opposed funding the Sandinista regime, President Ronald Reagan resorted to illegal, secret means of sending military equipment to the Contras. Although Congress had banned any support to Nicaragua, Reagan continued to secretly fund the Contras. He was forced to stop after journalists exposed the Iran-Contra affair in which Colonel Oliver North was implicated (whose plane is now a bar/restaurant in Quepos.) Amazingly, Iran and Contra were linked together in events so complicated that a short article would not suffice to explain the covert activities happening on both sides of the globe.

In 1984, a "free and fair" election (as declared by international observers) instated the Sandinistas. After the 1979 overthrow of the Somoza regime by the Sandinistas, the Sandinistas did not identify with communism. Today, President Daniel Ortega, who has been in that office since 2007, has moved from communism to democratic socialism, an eerie coincidence that

parallels present day Cuba. Raul Castro recently in speaking about post-Fidel Cuba said, "Is there going to be a transition here toward something? Yes, toward a better form of socialism and -- here's something you'll like -- toward a more democratic society.

Falling Under the Spell of Granada

Our trip to Granada began with a flight to Managua, the bustling capital of Nicaragua. The short taxi ride to Granada, with its population of 120,000, passed an endless array of vendors peddling life's necessities, some perched atop their heads in mammoth baskets. Stray unfettered horses wandered in and out of traffic, and as in Cuba, any object or animal capable of transporting had been enlisted as a taxi. Billboards with President's Ortega's face announced optimistic quotes. I resolved to ask everyone who would answer, their opinion of him.

Entering Granada, the architecture returns visitors to an earlier Spanish Colonial era. Our taxi wound around narrow cobblestone streets filled with rows of neon pastel-colored houses, each hue serving as a boundary between neighbors. Ancient wooden doors provided an entrance where families gather, sitting on the singular step or in rocking chairs around the iron grillwork windows. Weathered red tile roofs provided a uniform cover for the city.

Hotel Plaza Colon, our grand hotel, faced Parque Central, the hub of the sixth largest city in Nicaragua. The park, flanked by the lemon yellow Catedral de Granada, pulsed with sounds, the clip clop of the horse hooves on the cobblestone streets, the bells that regularly peeled from six historical churches, the bird call whistles that strolling vendors hawked, and the birds. Every tree limb in the park hid nests from which a cacophony of black birds screeched. Beneath the mango and ficus trees, groups of teenagers and families were enjoying the free Wi-Fi, all fixated on their phones and tablets.



Granada

We took a horse-drawn carriage around the town to get oriented, stopping along the way to board a boat at Lago Nicaragua, also called Lago Cocibolca. This 8365 square kilometer fresh water lake is one of the largest in Central and South America. Called "Sweet Sea" in the Nahuatl language, it was created by Volcán Mombacho that loomed in the distance. A \$50 billion proposed canal to be constructed by China is drawing national criticism for its potential contamination of Lake Nicaragua as well as dislocating 30,000 people. There are also rumblings because only Chinese workers are being employed, with the sanction of the president.

Our boat motored around some of the 365 islands, revealing private homes owned by the wealthy and hotels frequented by tourists. Bats dangled from the lush trees, and a variety of monkeys romped above us on a small isle. (Later we learned that a foreign veterinarian living on a nearby islet has populated and cares for the monkeys.)

As our boat traversed the lake, our guide, Victor elaborated on why a million Nicas work in Costa Rica, saying that they can improve the average \$30 weekly Nicaraguan wage to support their families. Managua's three factories provide scant employment. Despite those grim facts, Victor is a fan of his president, crediting him with improving roads and building 50,000 homes for the poor, free health care and free education, although he admitted that few are able to afford the transportation to the public university in Managua.

Victor appeared to be Mestizo, a combined European and Amerindian descent that is notable on many faces. He, like many of the Nicas we met, is industrious, careful in his opinions, and proud of his country. When he overheard our amazement at polluted streams we crossed, he claimed that President Ortega has a plan that will remedy pollution by next year. Victor said that the lake water can be safely consumed. Some later fact checking revealed an alarming run off into the lake from urban sewage and businesses.

We passed kayakers enjoying the lake and workers who hoisted themselves over tree limbs above the water to harvest the mangos. Fishermen worked in pairs, one with a net while the other dove for the many variety of fish. The lake's most unusual inhabitant is the bull shark that, like salmon, jumps the rapids of the San Juan River that connects Lake Nicaragua to the Caribbean Ocean. We observed egrets, herons, cormorants and other birds, nesting along the edge of the lake.

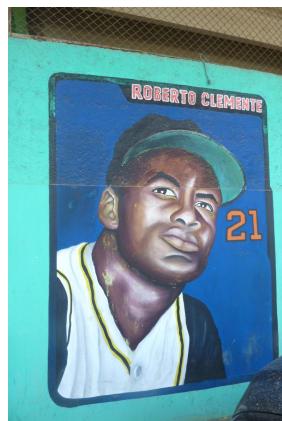
Back ashore, we employed the optimal way to explore the glories of Granada, walking. Each corner revealed new wonders, dogs that looked more sad than hungry, columns painted on houses to trick the eye, aproned women grilling corn, all framed by a palate of pigments that splashed the walls. We stopped at a restaurant to eat *guapote*, the popular fish caught in Lake Nicaragua. I made sure its toothy grin was aimed at my travelling companion as we sampled its delicious flavor that resembles halibut.



Volcan Masaya

After a comfortable night in our hotel, a different guide, Ernesto, transported us to the active Volcán Masaya. Our taxi scaled the dry tundra road, past enormous black remnants of lava flows, to the crater's edge. Ernesto pointed out a cross above the crater, commemorating the aboriginal women and children who were sacrificed by their people in hopes of quelling the volcano. The smoking volcano was magnificent with panoramic views often not possible at cloud-enclosed Costa Rican volcanoes.

Ernesto next took us to the Masaya baseball stadium named after baseball great, Roberto Clemente who died in a 1972-plane crash as he tried to deliver earthquake relief supplies from his homeland of Puerto Rico. Clemente's picture graces the outside of the stadium, as does a giant picture of President Ortega. Ernesto clearly revered Clemente, but was less enthusiastic about the president. He artfully dodged questions, saying "mas o menos" in rating the politician's accomplishments.



Roberto Clemente

The rest of the day was devoted to the Masaya Handicrafts Market or *Mercado Artesanías*. Here we bargained for traditional hammocks that are woven in the town. The market featured pottery, baskets, tablecloths and other indigenous souvenirs. Somoza's Guardia Nacional had leveled the market in 1978, but like much of the country, the market has reinvented itself inside the black charred outside walls.

Our last night in Granada, we climbed the spiraling rickety staircase to the bell tower of Iglesia La Merced to bask in the sunset. At Vespers, an overenthusiastic bell ringer grasped the bell rope to sound the deafening peel. Visitors covered their ears as the ancient bell sounded the hour.

Back at the hotel we came upon Robert, an American who once lived in Nicaragua and would return permanently, but his Nica wife refuses. His story, which is really her story, was delivered in dribbles after a number of conversations held with him and his sister over the past few days. He moved to Nicaragua in 1993 where he met his wife whose family split loyalties between the Contras and the Sandinistas, as so often happens in civil war torn countries. She taught school, and when their son at 13 was to be conscripted into the army, they moved to California where

they now live. He and his sister make many trips back, always bringing school supplies and clothing for his wife's family and for the mountain people.



Colonial Architecture

Robert had already given his opinion of President Ortega, that he takes more than he gives. "People are people," says Robert, and just as I started to delve more into what that meant, he said, "When my wife was 20, a soldier shot her in the cheek. There was no provocation. He just did it to do it. She was carried in a hammock by her family to the hospital because there was no ambulance. She has had reconstructive surgery, but the injury still gives her trouble. She is afraid to this day of police and of soldiers."

Throughout the trip, when someone found out we live in Costa Rica, they asked if we found any difference between the neighboring countries. Robert just revealed a profound difference in culture, in attitudes, and in history between Nicaragua and our adopted country that abolished its military in 1948.

I have no way of knowing if Elvira will return to Costa Rica, but now that I have been to her homeland, I hope to see her walking up my driveway. I can truly welcome her, now that I have crossed the frontier between us.

* Some confusion arises around the question of how long one must stay out of Costa Rica to be compliant with immigrant laws. There is no minimum time required. The confusion arises from customs forms that ask if you have been out of the country for at least 3 days. According to Assistant Customs Director Roy Chacón, the question on the customs form refers to paying taxes on goods brought into Costa Rica. By law, a person must remain out of Costa Rica for at least 72 hours and have less than \$500 worth of goods to return without having to pay taxes on those goods.

Taken with (and to) Atenas...Focus on the Expat Life of



Joni and Mike Lockwood
(with an introduction by Marietta Arce)

I was born and lived in San José until our family moved to New York when I was 8. Our life in Costa Rica was very simple: no television, no car, no telephone, but we lived in the city of San José which even in the early 1960's was crowded with people, cars, buildings, houses and all the things that came with them. In my innocence I had no idea there was anything beyond my immediate surroundings and I never felt like anything was missing. I had a truly delightful childhood then.

Sometime in the summer of 1964 or 1965 when we lived in Brooklyn, New York, a black and white television commercial for a mosquito repellent made me freeze on the spot. The announcer, with a deep voice like Rod Serling's, boasted that the product had been tested "deep in the jungles of Costa Rica". What!? my 9 or 10 year-old brain demanded. I felt like I was in the Twilight Zone: Costa Rica has jungles? I couldn't recall any jungles and in fact, I remember thinking somewhat cynically that in order to sell a product, the company would make up anything!

When we arrived in New York in 1963 very few people had heard of Costa Rica! I couldn't really understand that because I knew it existed, I came from there! We assimilated very quickly and although I missed my extended family very much my cheerful nature was my ally despite the freezing winters and stifling summers. In the summer of 1967, I returned to Costa Rica for the first time. I was almost 12 and the tentacles of this magical country instantly gripped my heart. My mother had said we would be in the U.S. for five years and with a child's trust I had believed her!

My parents rewarded me with a ticket to Costa Rica in 1973 after I graduated from High School. The idea was that I would return to New York in time to enter college in the fall. Once here, however, those tentacles squeezed me and I delayed my return so often and indefinitely that my spot at Brooklyn College was given to someone else. I was not sad; I lacked nothing, even though my life here was a lot less glamorous! I found myself thriving in ways I could not have predicted. I became a young and rather unconventional 'expat' from New York at age 18!

My story is a long one and one of these days I will write my book. The preceding paragraphs were really an introduction of sorts to the real purpose of this essay, which I hope is the first of many in a series that will expand on the reshaping of Atenas and Costa Rica since International Living, AARP and other sources have touted it as an ideal place to retire! I had the chance to sit and chat with expat couple Joni and Mike Lockwood, current residents of Atenas who came to us from Dallas, Texas and who have kindly shared a little bit about their lives here.

I first became aware of Joni about eighteen months ago when pictures of the Fundraising event (Table for Two) she created appeared on a mutual friend's Facebook Page. I had seen Joni around town so I contacted her and asked her to write a short article describing the details of the event so that readers of *Atenas Today* might be informed about the wonderful activities taken on by fellow expats in order to benefit the entire community of Atenas. The Table for Two event benefitted our many four-footed friends who are the mission of Animales de Atenas.



Mike and Joni dancing at a Fundraiser

Joni wrote a wonderful article that appeared in the October 2014 issue. After that, I saw her and Mike often around town participating in fun and fund-raising events. Mike and Joni always seem happy, well adjusted and enthusiastic about the next opportunity to be with friends and neighbors. Their desire to assimilate into tico and expat communities mirrored my own and it was a curiosity to learn more about them that nudged me to ask them if I could chat with them.

The first thing I noticed when I arrived at their home was that Joni was busy knotting shredded pieces of ties that she was turning into dog toys. She is a master at repurposing items and it reminded me that some months ago, she was making and selling dog beds as another fundraising project. The dog beds have concluded their product life cycles and since Joni is always looking for new and exciting ideas, the dog toys currently hold her attention.

Mike and Joni have been friends since their early teenager years, marrying each other finally when they were mature and ready to take on the next big

challenge! I asked Joni what had made them move to Costa Rica and she told me that they had agreed long ago that they wanted to live in a Spanish-speaking country. Due to Mike's employment in the past, they had lived in Germany and while everyone in Mike's office spoke English, the same was not true for Joni and she confessed that it had been a hard adjustment.



John Wegner, Pat Wegner, Mike Lockwood and Joni Lockwood with their Texas Chili

Joni is fluent in Spanish, something that makes it that much easier to adjust to life in Costa Rica. Mike mentioned that they did visit Panamá also but decided it wasn't for them. When I asked why they chose Atenas specifically, they mentioned the climate, location, natural beauty and the warm, friendly people. I can attest to finding those things a plus in favor of making a decision. I found myself extremely at home in their presence. I enjoyed hearing that there really is no typical day for them. One day might find them busy running errands, another day might find them relaxing on the porch reading books and nurturing their two dogs and an evening or two might find them on a dance floor moving and shaking to the music.

There is one thing that Joni and Mike do each morning though: entertain their Facebook friends with the magnificent sunrise pictures they rise early to take every day from their terrace. Each day finds many of their friends (and I am one) looking forward to witnessing another of Nature's gifts right here in Atenas!



Sunrise February 16, 2016

NOTE: If you would like to be featured in this Expat series please contact atenastoday@gmail.com

Photos from Joni Lockwood's Facebook Page

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

Hola Everyone!!!
March 26, 2005

It has been really quiet here for the past week. This is Holy Week here in Costa Rica. They call it "Semana Santa"....pronounced Say-mah-nah sahn-tah. Most all the stores and businesses close for the holiday. One tico told us that ten years ago the stores, restaurants, and businesses closed for the entire week. Now the "tourist" places only close for two days. The other businesses are closed all week and everybody heads for the beaches, (playas,) or the mountains.

Mom and Dad took me and Bunny into Grecia before the holiday started so we could stock up on groceries. Bunny is our brain damaged little pom sister who was born in a puppy mill in Tennessee.

Berenice wanted to go with us so I said I'd share my backseat with her. Berenice is Enid's and Javier's daughter. She is SO pretty!! She is just 17 years old and has started going to college this year. I heard Mom and Dad congratulating her because she won a FULL SCHOLARSHIP!!! I'm not sure what a "scholarship" is but I am sure it must be really good to win a full one rather than an empty one!!

OH!!!!!!!!! Mom told me yesterday that I am "THE HANDSOMEST MALE AMERICAN ESKIMO IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY!" Now THAT is pretty special!!!! A whole COUNTRY!!!!!!!

While we were in Grecia we went to the park to meet with the gringos and have coffee. They meet every morning, chat for a while, and then go to the soda at the indoor farmers market for coffee. While we were in the park Mom took Bunny and me out of the stroller. Mom wanted to take some pics of us in the park.

Bunny is CLUELESS when it comes to posing for a picture. I, of course, am a PROFESSIONAL and know when to stand still so the shot does not turn out blurry. Bunny just would NOT stand still. Even when Dad came over and tried to HOLD her still. She was off and running. She likes to explore.

Bunny is brain damaged BUT... if she is up on something where she has to jump down, she will stay on that thing. She has peripheral vision only so she can't see straight ahead. Once in a while she will jump down off the bed but she won't jump down off anything she is not real familiar with. She is pretty smart about things like that. So Mom felt safe letting her loose on that area of the park. Of course I stick really close to Mom so it was okay for me to be loose for a few minutes too!!

Bunny sniffed EVERYTHING and was really surprised at how many other perros go to that park!!! Some of them have moms and dads and some don't. Mom and Dad feed the ones who don't have a home. I like it when they do that. Even if they give them MY share of the leftover pollo (chicken).

Then we all went to the soda (a small diner) in the market. There are barstools at one side of the bar and there are tables and chairs on the other side. Bunny made a complete fool of herself FLIRTING with everybody who walked in or out.

It's funny because she used to be a real scaredy-cat and would just "freeze up" if she was in a strange place or a strange situation.

Dad was kind of worried about taking her with us cause he thought she would be afraid. Mom told him no though. She said Bunny had come out of her shell and was ready for the big time. Boy is she ever!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

She hogged ALL the attention from all the humans who stopped to pet us. She is a real scene-stealer.

When we left there we went to the bank. We stayed outside with Mom and Berenice while Dad went in.

Then we stopped across the street from the post office and Dad took a picture of Me, Bunny, Berenice, and Mom!

Semana Santa (Holy Week) had started and most all the stores were closed. The street dogs hang around the market and the butchers in the meat shops toss them scraps!

Mom and Dad went to a gringo friend's house a couple nights later. He has a perro named Bonnie. She was a street dog too but she got lucky and Irvin adopted her. Mom says she has the most amazing eyes!!! VERY expressive and very pretty.

She is a real sweetheart and loves everybody. If she wants petting she will lay her head on your knee and look at you with "those eyes."

There are some really pretty flowers growing right outside Mom's bedroom window.

OH!!!! And Mom got a present from a dear friend in the States!! It is a B-E-A-U-T-I-F-U-L quilt!!!!!!

Mom just LOVES it!! She won't put it on the bed though cause she is afraid us perros will get it all dirty!!

We do shed a lot and sometimes we get pretty dirty feet if it is raining. Mom says she picks up enough fur to build a dog a day!!! LOL!!! HA!!!! As if Mom needs any more dogs!!! I think she is just joking.

Anyway....just wanted to update you on my adventures here in Costa Rica.

Tailwags to everybody!!!!

Hasta luego!!!!

BudBud the professional poser

A Reaffirmation of Love and Commitment on Valentine's Day



by Marietta Arce marietta.arce@gmail.com

Pat Wegner's Facebook post earlier this month said in part: "... we are having a Mass Wedding Celebration with a Peaceful Solution for the CAJA Costarricense de Seguro Social requiring a new Apostilled copy of the original Marriage Certificates for all CAJA membership renewals. If you wish to join us in this celebration of love and marriage..." It concluded with instructions to follow for any couple that wished to be included in this planned event on Valentine's Day!

What could be more perfect for a day that is devoted to love than a wedding? To the amazement of everyone, including Pat Wegner, 73 couples responded in time to be part of this wonderful, unique gathering. The weather was perfect; the venue (Central Park of Atenas) allowed Mother Nature to set the stage and the air was abuzz with the happy anticipation of everyone in attendance.



Pat Wegner organizing couples

I was there to cover the occasion for *Atenas Today* and also in case they needed help getting people registered since I knew that the Municipality had given the group permission for only two hours in which to get everything done. My help was not required because everything proceeded according to schedule, evidencing the painstaking planning that had been going on in the previous few days by Pat, Rafael Valverde (the officiant) and his team at Outlier Legal Services.



The Festive mood in Central Park of Atenas

After everyone was accounted for and registered, the ceremony began. In just moments, the previous commotion turned to an expectant silence and Rafael began the wedding ceremony, which naturally included a Declaration of Intent.

I stood off to the side and listened while Rafael spoke the words that the brides and grooms were to repeat. When the couples repeated their sacred vows to each other, I became somewhat emotional. As I write this article and remember the happy faces of the many couples I witnessed exchange their vows, I get goosebumps. It is not often I get to experience such an outpouring of love!



Pat and John Wegner



Walter and Carol Wengrowich

When the ceremony concluded, each couple signed the registry before two witnesses and received a keepsake marriage certificate. The completed paperwork would be filed during the following week and in several weeks all of these couples will be able to obtain their marriage certificates from the Registro.



Tom and Dina Duffy



Chris and Sue Forni

A reception for any couple that wished to celebrate this new beginning took place at the home of Pat and John Wegner. Everyone contributed food and beverages and shared the cost of the cake. A mariachi band was in attendance, courtesy of Jorge Morera and Candy Midence of Linea Vital.



Mariachi Band Arrives



Joni and Mike Lockwood dancing!

A wedding day is usually one of the happiest moments in someone's life and also for the people who are connected to them. This distinctive renewal ceremony united friends, acquaintances and even strangers curious to know what was going on. It was unprecedented in our small county of Atenas.



Rafael Valverde (far left in white shirt) and some newlyweds!

My very best wishes to all the couples who renewed their wedding vows. May you have many more years together filled with love and happiness.

Pictures Courtesy Pat Wegner, Tom Duffy, Walter Wengrowich and Outlier Legal Services
Wedding rings from Bing.com Public Domain pictures.

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.



Puntarenas
15" x 33"
Oil on Canvas

Al Alexander

jeanandal@gmail.com



Mardi Gras Birds

Jocelyn Farquhar

Jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com

For the bloggers...



We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest to our readers. By providing this information, we are not endorsing or accepting responsibility for any content found therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share. These are alphabetized for your easy reference. **Please advise if you find that some blogs no longer exist.**

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| Carole Connolly Claudia Leon | http://carolejeanscostaricacapers.com http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/ http://straightline-cmk1.blogspot.com/ http://costaricadecisionprocess.blogspot.com/ |
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| The Real Costa Rica The Very Worst Missionary The View From Here | blog.therealcostarica.com theveryworstmissionary.com theviewfromherecr.blogspot.com |

Issue Number 134

February 23, 2016



Pet Boarding



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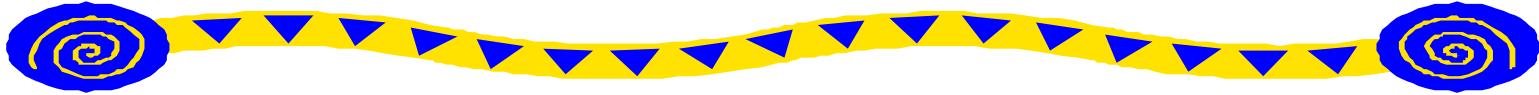


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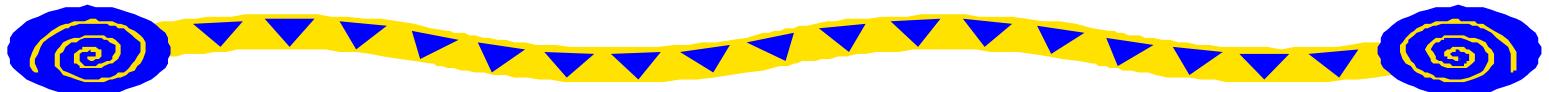
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