

## 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



Sunrise in Plancillo December 3, 2015  
Photo: Joni Lockwood

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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](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com).

## Advertising rates and policies

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Compositions from back issues are now archived on [scomari.com/Atenas Today](http://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](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com)

## Publisher's Note



Everywhere I look in my home reminds me that we are just days away from celebrating Christmas and also getting ready to welcome a new year, one which I hope is filled with wonderful things for all of us.

In our mobile, modern society, it is still very important to stay connected to family and friends through the yearly gatherings that take place at this time. Today's families have taken different forms but celebrating festivals and important occasions remains sacrosanct for most of us and we do our best to continue the traditions we grew up with, or start new, flexible ones that can be modified as life requires.

Many activities have taken place in Atenas since the November issue, beginning with the UCR 18 member guitar orchestra that entertained the residents of the Hogar de Ancianos, much to the delight of all.

The Art and Dance Festival organized by Su Espacio followed shortly and then the Angel Tree Christmas party was held for 300 children. Kudos to the organizers and the many volunteers who ensured a good time was had by all.

The Festival of Lights on December 13<sup>th</sup> was a big success despite the heavy rain that fell just hours before the start! Nothing could dampen the spirit of the intrepid marching bands and floats! The firework display was an amazing array of color and light.

The days that follow will be very busy for all of us. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our columnists, artists, guest contributors and advertisers for their input and work in 2015. Each month's publication brings positive feedback and requests to be added to the mailing list. In addition to that, when people move away they often ask to be kept on the list because they enjoy seeing what their friends and the county are doing!

As we end the year, I find myself enthusiastic about greeting 2016, hopeful that my modest and realistic (for a change!) goals can be reached. I wish you wonderful holidays and the very best for 2016. It continues to be a pleasure to bring you this publication in Atenas, today and every day.

Marietta Arce  
*[marietta.arce@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve, most businesses and banks close early.

**Atenas New Community (in conjunction with Iglesia Bíblica) will hold their 3rd annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service at 6:00pm on Thursday, December 24. This will be a time of Scripture and beloved Christmas carols in English and Spanish as well as communion ending with the singing of Silent Night by Candlelight. Bring a friend! Iglesia Bíblica is located at the flashing light on HWY 3**

December 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Day – Merry Christmas Everybody! – National Holiday

December 26<sup>th</sup> – Boxing Day Observed by Canada and Commonwealth Nations

December 26<sup>th</sup> – Kwanzaa begins, ends January 1<sup>st</sup>

December 31<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Eve – businesses close early

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – Happy New Year – National Holiday

January 6<sup>th</sup> – Three Kings Day – Epiphany – Marks the end of Christmas

January 14<sup>th</sup> – Palmares begins their Fiestas, end January 25<sup>th</sup>

January 18<sup>th</sup> – Martin Luther King Day is Observed in U.S.

## REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

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 YouTube 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](mailto: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 !

Book we're currently reading is "The Noble Eightfold Path" by Bhikkhu Bodhi,  
which is available at no charge. If you need directions or any other information,  
please feel free to telephone or e-mail:

Adrienne and Richard Baksa  
2446-8509  
adriennebaksa@me.com  
rbaksa@me.com

\*\*\*\*\*



**ATENAS NEW COMMUNITY** (associated with the Tico church, Iglesia Bíblica de Atenas)  
[facebook.com/groups/145046998883605](https://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](mailto:judy@proslink.com)

**DIRECTIONS:** On Highway 3 at the blinking light

## Schedule of Catholic Masses for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day In SPANISH

### HORARIO EUCARISTIAS, EN NAVIDAD

#### 24 JUEVES DE DICIEMBRE

7:00 am M. Centro  
5:00 pm Río Grande  
5:00 pm Santa Eulalia  
5:00 pm San Isidro  
7:00 pm Centro  
7:00 pm Barrio Jesús  
7:00 pm Los Ángeles

#### VIERNES 25 DE DICIEMBRE

9:00 am Centro  
9:00 am Balsa  
9:00 am San José Norte  
10:30 am Centro PC  
10:30 am Sabana Larga  
10:30 am Pavas  
6:00 pm Centro



### If you are interested in attending Catholic prayer and communion services *in English*

(Father Claudio has approved Mass with an English translator and English music). The first service took place Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 4 p.m. at San Rafael in Atenas Centro

**We would like to compile an email list.**

**Please contact David Davis**

**By Phone: 8759 3433 and/or send an email  
to: [davenansi@gmail.com](mailto:davenansi@gmail.com)**



# ATENAS Chili Cook Off



**31 enero del 2016**  
**SABANA LARGA - ATENAS**  
**11:00am - 8:00pm**

## CONCIERTOS



**FLASH  
BACK  
BAND**



**Vozes Duo**



**Marvín  
Suárez**



## SALÓN

11:00 am **CONCURSO CHILI**



## CAMPO FERIAL

11:00am-1:00pm **FLASH BACK BAND**

1:00pm **Concierto de Vozes Duo**

2:00pm **Concierto Marvín Suárez**

3:00pm **Música en Vivo DJ ARMIN y Karaoke**

11:00am a 6:00pm **Venta de Comidas**

**Cerveza**

**Artesanías**

**Actividades para Niños**

## REDONDEL DE TOROS

2:00pm - 4:00pm **BINGO**

4:00pm

**Corridas de Toros**

**SENSACIÓN  
TAURINA**



## PRECIOS

**ENTRADA GENERAL**

¢2500

**NIÑOS MENORES DE 10 AÑOS**

**GRATIS**

**APARCAMIENTO**

¢1000

**EL DINERO RECAUDADO  
SERÁ PARA AYUDAR A**



**HOGAR DE VIDA**

[www.atenaschilicookoff.org](http://www.atenaschilicookoff.org)

**DIVERSIÓN - JUEGOS - BBQ - CHILI - CASADOS - HAMBURGUESAS - PIZZA**

## Friendship Library\* News December, 2015



Photograph: Eyleen Vargas *La Nacion*

Blessings and Holiday Greetings, Dear Readers. I hope that peace reigns in each of your lives as the year draws to a close and we begin anew.

Santa has visited the library already and left bags and boxes full of interesting things to read. Readers interested in putting really good food on the table are particularly lucky this month. For example:



When I need a recipe, I go online to search for it. When I need inspiration, I peruse cookbooks and cooking journals. Come on in and be inspired. Cookbooks are in the upper rear dining room, under the window.

Books relating to what I would call the search for the Feminine Divine have been heavily represented in recent donations. They seem to go out quickly, but when they are on the shelves, they can be found in NF 2 (Religion and Mythology).

Library patrons who have not visited the back room may be unaware that we have a large collection of music and movies. Most of us have put our favorite music on our iPods or other devices. Sometimes it is interesting to go through the CD collection of someone else and find stuff we really like but never thought to acquire. Some recent donations

include "Chant: Music for Paradise" by a group of Cistercian monks, "Horowitz Plays Schuman", "Pure Gold" (Harry Belafonte), "Pure Ella" (Ella Fitzgerald), "Journey With the Sun" (Paul Winter and the Earth Band), "Didgeridoo: Water dreaming" (aboriginal Women's Water dreaming songs, "Abundant Life" (Rachel Colford). The collection includes quite a few movies for children. Enjoy.

Under the heading of "Hmm...what to do with this?", we have a copy of a Physicians Desk Reference (1999) that would like a good home. Also, we have a fairly large collection of American and British literature that I have tried unsuccessfully to find a home for. If anyone has connections to a school or university that might be interested in these books, please contact me.

And finally, if you still haven't found the right gift for that Grammar Geek in your life, consider a tee shirt that says:

Let's eat grandma  
Let's eat, grandma  
Commas Save Lives

Or the comforting pillow that says "There, Their, They're"

Or, for mature audiences, the tee shirt that says:

GRAMMAR  
The difference between  
knowing your sh\*t and  
knowing you're sh\*t

Thank you for your continuing support for the library. Best wishes for a happy and prosperous new year.  
-Linda Ledbetter

\*located in Restaurante La Carreta, Atenas Central

# PUPS OF THE MONTH



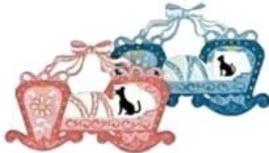
Fundación Ateniense de Ayuda a Animales Abandonados  
Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals  
Cedula Juridica # 3-006-542026  
ATENAS de Alajuela - COSTA RICA

## 9 ABANDONED NEWBORN PUPS

Una mujer en camino al trabajo recientemente encontró estas 9 cachorros abandonados en la calle. Tienen aún sus ojos cerrados y necesitan INMEDIATAMENTE casa cuna para mantenerlos vivos. Tienen que ser alimentados a mano (o mejor una perrita mamá sustituta). ¡POR FAVOR AYUDA!



*BUSCAMOS  
CASA CUNA!*



*LOOKING FOR  
FOSTER HOME!*

**EMERGENCIA \*\*\* EMERGENCY !!!**



**con Kattia: Cel. # 8308-0871**

A woman on her way to work recently found this 9 puppies abandoned in the street. They have still their eyes closed and need IMMEDIATELY a foster place to keep them alive. They have to be hand fed (or a substitute dog mom). PLEASE HELP!

# CARING FOR NEWBORN PUPPIES

During the first few weeks of life, a puppy's primary activities are feeding, keeping warm and developing social skills. In most cases, humans will simply watch the mother dog provide all necessary care for her puppies. However, if the puppy has been separated from his mother, or if the mother dog has rejected her young or cannot produce enough milk, caring for the pup is up to you.

## HOW DO I FEED A NEWBORN PUPPY?

A mother dog's milk provides everything the pups need during their first four weeks of life. If you are caring for an orphan or the mother is out of the picture, consult with a veterinarian for guidance on the proper way to bottle-feed a newborn, as it is easy to cause harm by doing it incorrectly. The babies will need to be fed a commercial canine milk replacer. Be sure to use one specifically formulated for puppies, as cow's milk and other milk replacer can cause diarrhea.

Puppies will need bottle or syringe feeding every few hours for several weeks.

Also, make sure orphaned puppies stay warm at this tender age—a well monitored heating pad or warm water bottle wrapped in a towel will do the trick.

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD A PUPPY EAT?

Puppies generally nurse at least every two hours in their first weeks of life. As they develop and grow, the intervals between feedings increase. At around four weeks of age, puppies can begin to transition to eating solid food. When making the transition to solid food, a high-quality dry kibble can be soaked with warm water or canine milk replacer and blended to the consistency of gruel. This can be made available several times a day. Gradually, the amount of milk replacer can be decreased until the puppies are eating dry kibble by 7-8 weeks.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD A NEWBORN PUPPY WEIGH?

The average birth weight for puppies depends on breed. During the first weeks of life, a pup's body weight may double or even triple. Gaining 10-15% of birth weight daily is considered healthy.

Pups who don't gain adequate weight during this early period may not survive.

ASPC

## WHEN WILL PUPPIES GO TO THE BATHROOM WITHOUT STIMULATION?

Newborn puppies do not instinctively know how to eliminate waste. They initially need their mother to get things moving.

Orphaned puppies do not have a mother to stimulate elimination. If you're caring for a puppy, your services are necessary. You can emulate a mother dog's stimulation by rubbing the puppies' anal and genital sections with a clean, damp warm cloth. Warm water feels a lot more like a mother dog's tongue. Massage the pup gently to induce elimination.

# KIRA-ADOPT ME



Kira is ready for adoption to a forever, caring home. She manages her leg with a cast well, however the cast will be removed the first week in January. She was hit by a car and had a vet specialist's surgery save her leg.  
Lovable is the best word to describe the one year old. Kira is happy to share a home with cats and kids as well as adults and friends.

DORA TEL.8855-9822 PRESIDENT (ESPAÑOL)  
SYLVIA TEL.8868-1386 SECRETARY(ES,EN,DEUTSCH)  
[ANIMALESATENASCR@AOL.COM](mailto:ANIMALESATENASCR@AOL.COM)  
EDDIE TEL. 8308-8485 VOLUNTEER (ES,EN)  
[EDOT13@GMAIL.COM](mailto:EDOT13@GMAIL.COM)



Please join the  
"Friends of Animales Atenas"  
for our 2015 Holiday Fiesta  
featuring Live Music and Dancing!  
This year, FlashBack, the new band in town, will donate their  
time and talent to Animales Atenas.

**FLASH  
BACK**

If you like music, singing, dancing, eating and mingling,  
join us and help support our furry friends.

Here are the details... so, mark your calendar!

When: Saturday, December 26th from 4:00 PM until 8:00 PM

Donation: ₡5,000 per person (\$10 USD)

Where: Casa Wegner in Barrio Fatima next to the Plaza Deportes, 100 meters west of Hogar de Vida (Secure parking provided on the service road next to the Plaza)

What to Bring: BYOB (bring your own beverages), a Heavy Appetizer to share, a lawn chair and your dancing shoes!!

The Friends of Animales Atenas will provide: Ice, water, cups, napkins, paper plates, plastic ware and some "Sweet Treats" for dessert.

Additional donations to Animales Atenas will be gratefully accepted throughout the evening. Your donations make it possible for us to continue our ongoing efforts to help the abused and abandoned animals in our area. Please support this worthwhile cause. If you are unable to attend, consider making a donation right here and now by clicking on this link: [Donate!](#)

If you need more information about the Holiday Fiesta, please contact [friends@animalesatenas.com](mailto:friends@animalesatenas.com), or call Joni Lockwood 2455-0020, Lynn Davis 6243-8504, Dina Duffy 8968-4827, or Pat Wegner 8375-2226.



# *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.

## **WANTED**

Animales Atenas needs a lot to care for some of its animals that have been injured, abused or neglected. We need an empty lot, with or without a building. We are prepared to build a fence; and if there is no building, we can construct something like a mini-hospital, shop or rehabilitation center. We prefer a lot that is available for a long-term; and we are prepared to discuss rental, if necessary.

### **WHO WE ARE:**

ANIMALES ATENAS FOUNDATION is an organization of community volunteers of Atenas that provide many types of care for abused, abandoned and neglected animals. We believe that an important measure of a society is how it cares for the animals within its territory. Our goal is to rehabilitate these animals and to find safe, healthy and permanent homes for them.

Since there are more animals than we have space for—animals that are injured, sick, or that need to recuperate after surgery—we need to find a site in order to provide these services.

We are a non-governmental organization and donations can be made through cedula juridica 3-006-42026. If you want to and can help us, or if you know someone who can, please contact Eddie Otero to share your ideas. Mr. Otero speaks English and Spanish. His telephone number is 8308-8485 or you can write to him via email at [edot13@gmail.com](mailto:edot13@gmail.com). We sincerely thank you.

Atenas Today Interviews

Jonathan “Jonny” Arguedas Campos  
Jewelry craftsman, teacher and owner of:



Jewelry by Jonny

**AT: Jonny, you are a native Ateniense, and your family has lived in Atenas for many years. Is that correct?**

JA: Yes, my family has lived here in Atenas for at least four generations, and I grew up and went to school here along with my brothers and sisters.

**AT: And when did you start making handcrafted jewelry?**

JA: When I was young there wasn't a lot of money for buying presents for friends' birthdays and at Christmas time, so I started when I was about ten years old, using seeds I found under the trees in Central Park, coconut shells, and small pieces of driftwood and seashells I found at the beach, to make jewelry for gifts for my friends and family.



Jonathan “Jonny” Arguedas

**AT: And you have continued to hand make jewelry ever since?**

JA: Well, more or less. At times I worked on other projects, but yes, when I was in junior high and high school, I made jewelry to sell to my classmates. At that time there was a shop in the

Centro called “Jade Arts” that would also sell my jewelry for me. When I was in the University I made jewelry to sell to my college classmates to finance part of my education.

**AT: What did you study at the University?**

JA: I spent four years studying Biology at the University of Costa Rica, and then switched to Tourism Studies at the National Technical University. After that I worked in the hotel industry and for several tourist travel agencies. But I always continued my interest in making hand-made jewelry, and learning more and more about the process. Sometimes on weekends I sold jewelry on the beaches of Guanacaste, where there were many visiting tourists.

**AT: So you abandoned your earlier interest in Biology?**

JA: Oh no, I am still very interested in some areas of Biology, particularly in seed production and tree planting – I do some work with the “Finca Orgánica La Nueva Era”, and I teach students the advantages of organic farming.

**AT: Where do you find the time?**

JA: (laughs) By working seven days a week!

**AT: And are you using the same materials to make jewelry that you started with?**

JA: Oh no, only if someone asks me to. Today I make jewelry – earrings, pendants, necklaces, bracelets and other pieces- using semi-precious stones, high-quality crystal and glass beads, natural pearls and gold and silver wire. About a year ago a friend gave me a small piece of glass which had soft and a appear- and he it was sea had edges frosted ance, told me “beach glass”.



After many years washed upon the beach

That is, a fragment of glass which ended up in the ocean, and rolled around on the sandy sea bottom for many years to get the lovely frosted appearance. So, I additionally began making

jewelry with “sea glass” and it has proved to be very popular.

**AT: Where do you get the sea glass?**

JA: Well, my brother Daniel and some friends and myself have gone up and down many beaches on the Pacific Coast searching for pieces of sea glass. Some beaches have none, some have a little, and on at least one I know about, you can often find about a hundred pieces in just one hour.



Beach sea glass may start with old bottles

**AT: And what beach is that?**

JA: (laughs again). Well, let’s just let the readers of Atenas Today enjoy the same adventure of finding it for themselves!

**AT: So now you make most of your artisanal jewelry using the beach sea glass.**

JA: Not exactly. Actually, because of the increasing use of plastics, natural sea glass is becoming more and more hard to find, particularly in the rarer colors, such as red, yellow, orange and blue. So then I had a thought. Could I use broken pieces of discarded glass and process them using a rock tumbler together with the abrasives used to tumble-polish semi-precious stones and achieve a similar appearance to the natural sea glass. Turns out you can! And people, tourists and locals alike, seem to really like the idea of jewelry made with this “cultured” or recycled glass. Instead of throwing away an old glass bottle or ashtray or lampshade, the idea is you can make the pieces of it into something beautiful again.



Earrings made with recycled sea glass Sea glass & silver starfish pendant

**AT: Jonny, where can we find your jewelry today?**

JA: Well I have small displays of “Jewelry by Jonny” at the Vista Atenas B&B, Kay’s Gringo Café, and Su Espacio, and of course at my workshop and display area at the Casa Catuca.



Jonny’s Display area at Casa Catuca

I also participate in many of the local *ferias*, such as the Climate Fair, the *Feria Navideña* and the annual Atenas Charity Chili Cook Off to benefit the *Hogar de Vida*. In the coming year I hope to expand our retailer network to include the new giant mall in Alajuela, and at some of the upscale hotel gift shops. I hope to also begin export sales in the coming year.

**AT: Well, it sounds like you have an exciting year ahead!**

JA: Yes, and I hope, profitable as well!

Jonny can be reached at 8318-0857 and more of his jewelry can be seen by visiting his page on Facebook: Jewelry by Jonny



# Atenas Chili Cook Off 2016

**PRO - AYUDA**

**HOGAR DE VIDA**

**SUNDAY/DOMINGO | REDONDEL  
31 DE ENERO | SABANA LARGA**

[www.atenaschilicookoff.org](http://www.atenaschilicookoff.org)



**By Bonnie Fluke** *bfluke@yahoo.com*

Next month, on the last Sunday in January, the 9th Annual Atenas Chili Cook-Off and Fiesta will be held in Sabana Larga. If last year is any guide, we will have over 2,000 people and 25 pots of chili, and we have already scheduled live bands and food, from Sushi to Hot Corned Beef Sandwiches to Pork Casados. We are busy asking shops and neighbors for prizes for Bingo, hotels and adventure tourism spots for wonderful trips and activities to give as Door Prizes, new this year, and we are saving the FOUR BEST donations for the first prizewinners in the Chili Cook-Off!

Kay and Tom Costello held the first Chili Cook-Off in their home in order to cheer up homesick friends. There were three steaming pots of chili the first year, and casual wagers made among competitors as to whose chili would be best. Chili quality that first year was diverse, and because everyone had so much fun, the winner donated the prize money to Hogar de Vida.

That's our origin myth, and while the people volunteering to create the fiesta each year change as much as they remain the same, while the Cook-Off location has changed and our outreach has grown, our intention remains the same. We want to create a whole congenial community of people from Atenas and beyond who find with us a place to volunteer for a few weeks or even a few hours, who might enjoy competing in the Chili Cook-Off sometimes, and who enjoy bringing their families to our yearly Chili Cook-Off & Fiesta. We do it in order to raise money for our local orphanage, Hogar de Vida.

Creating community, giving to the community, having the community give back. It's ALL for the kids.



After that first year the Cook-Off was held at Kay's Gringo Postres until too many people came to compete and to eat. It spent several years at Roma Vista, which we outgrew as well, and last year we initiated a new location, Sabana Larga.

Many of you know that last year was our first fiesta at Sabana Larga. And as often happens, we had problems. So we have taken the feedback provided by friends, family, and the Internet, and we have made changes. Small ones like a better entrance, new ways to give away more prizes; larger ones including a new book-keeper, and a new plan to manage and track money before, during, and after the event. We will have craftspeople, but not quite so many, so it doesn't get as crowded as last year. Bands will perform in one place, outdoors, and there is no late night concert. BUT, we are having a Bull Riding Festival beginning at 4pm for a separate admission fee.

Are you interested in putting together a Chili Team? We have room for a few more entrants, so if you'd like to show off your Chili Cookin' skills, please contact Mary Cook, at [wmmcook@gmail.com](mailto:wmmcook@gmail.com). Mary can get you started! Prizes are awarded for first place in four categories - Judge's Choice, People's Choice, Showmanship and and Vegetarian Chili. One of those winners will get a weekend getaway to Los Sueños, or something equally magical!

If you would like to help in some other way, check out [www.atenaschilicookoff.org](http://www.atenaschilicookoff.org) website. Our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator has been called away to care for a relative, and we need a new one! Or maybe you'd like to work half of the day and have done it before - we will be contacting you soon. If you haven't and would like to, please drop us a note on our website [www.atenaschilicookoff.org](http://www.atenaschilicookoff.org), or on our FaceBook Page, Atenas Chili Cook Off! We need you, and remember, It's ALL for the Kids!



**Little ones enjoying a nature walk with a "Tia"**

Atenas Today Interviews  
Charlotte Tarlo  
Traveling Mural Painter/Artist



**AT: It's great to have you visiting us again, Charlotte. We understand, though, that aside from rest and relaxation, you are also looking forward to spending some of your time painting murals. How did this career begin for you?**

CT: It's good to be back. Now to answer your question, I worked as a house painter and in time the walls presented themselves as canvases. I suppose I always knew that I was artistically inclined. It just evolved from there.

**AT: What kinds of things inspire you to paint?**

CT: Whatever the client wants, I will paint. If it is in their home, I am happy to give life to their ideas. But Personally, I love trees. It's the flow of them. They seem to beckon as if they have a great wisdom they want to share.



Art for a sloped ceiling

**AT: Is there a particular style in which you paint, like realism, impressionism, etc.?**

CT: I started out painting bright and colorful murals especially for children which still give me pleasure. Then I got into monochromatic, more subtle murals. Say you have a sage-

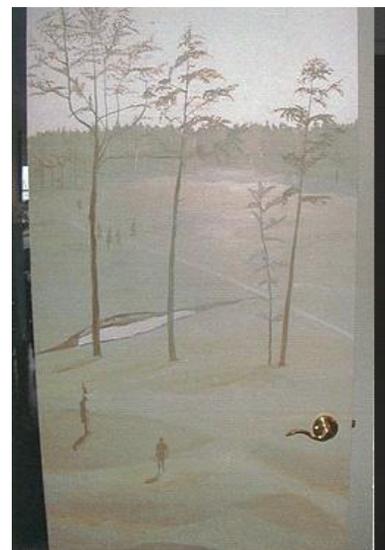
colored wall. I could paint for you a mural using different depths of that color in an impressionistic style. It's a mural that doesn't dominate the room.

**AT: Are you self-taught or did you attend courses or take classes?**

CT: I never did receive any formal training. In fact the monochromatic murals are entirely my thing. My mother has painted many lovely canvases. My grandfather enjoyed painting and I understand his brother was a muralist in California. Maybe it's in my blood! Recently, I have been taking oil paintings classes but that is an entirely different ball game.

**AT: How do you work with clients on deciding about subjects for your murals? Do you look through photos, books, work with interior decorators or designers?**

CT: Most of the children's murals are inspired by children's books and the internet. The client gives me an idea of what they want and I source out the composition. One client wanted a mural painted on an unattractive flat firewall door in her condo. She had no idea of what she would like. Her home was full of golf paraphernalia, so naturally I suggested a golf course. We browsed her books until we found something that would work. I did it in the monochromatic style using the existing color in the room. She was really pleased.



"Golf" Firewall Door

**AT: Are you equally comfortable painting large canvases that can later be hung on walls to make them 'moveable' murals?**

CT: In the past, I have painted murals on thin large boards that can be mounted on completion. They are thin so that they look as though they may have been painted on site. If I were to paint on canvas it would be something completely different. No longer a mural. I am not averse to canvas, I just prefer to paint the walls.

**AT: Do you prefer working indoors or outdoors?**

CT: As long as the surface is relatively smooth, I am comfortable indoors and outdoors. I am also fine working with ladders or scaffolding.



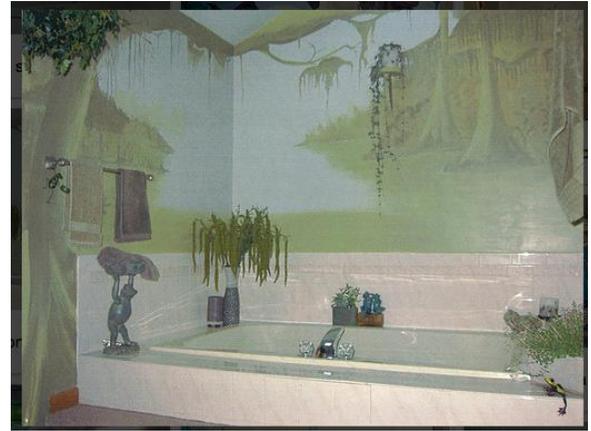
Outdoor mural at her mother, Ruth Thumm's home in Atenas

**AT: What are the steps involved for commissioning a project with you?**

CT: I enjoy my interaction with the client and have met so many great people along the way. It is important to get all the details. I discuss with them exactly what they want and then I return with the ideas.

**AT: How long does it take to complete a project?**

CT: Once again, that depends on size and detail and how much color is involved. People are always surprised at how fast I can get it done. As an example, if you go to my website ([charlottepaints.com](http://charlottepaints.com)), there is a green bayou over a tub. It was 3 walls and I did it in less than 20 hours.



Lagoon Bathroom

**AT: How long have you been doing this:**

CT: I have been painting murals for 15 years!



Fairy Bedroom

**AT: Tell us a little more about yourself. What did you do prior to painting?**

CT: I grew up in Southern Ontario. I have raised two daughters: one is teaching in South Korea and the other is attending University. I was originally a decorator and I have acted in community theatre. Most recently I played the lead in Death and the Maiden and in The Love Letters! I will be in Costa Rica until the middle of April.

**AT: Thank you Charlotte for your time. How can people contact you?**

CT: Thank you for this opportunity to bring my work to your readers. They can contact me at: [charlotteonthebay@gmail.com](mailto:charlotteonthebay@gmail.com)

## You Can and Can't Go Home Again



by Mary Martin Mason  
marymason1946@gmail.com

Thomas Wolfe's novel, *You Can't Go Home Again*, published in 1940, concerns a writer whose best seller about his home town that he left years before is not well received by the citizens. In the book they recognize his disillusionment with the capitalism they embrace and the fascism of that era that is creeping across the ocean. The title has come to characterize a feeling associated with a journey back to one's roots. Within the pages of the novel are thoughts about the difficulty of imagined and real homecomings: "Something spoke to me in the night and told me I shall die, I know not where. Saying death is to lose the earth you know, for greater knowing; knowing is to lose the life you have, for greater life; to leave the friends you loved, for greater loving; to find a land more kind than home, more large than earth."

A year after purposely and with great forethought moving to Costa Rica, a family emergency demanded my return. While most who move abroad return sooner, I had delayed, hoping my 30-year-old son, Josh's terror of flying gained during a horrific flight during his senior year in high school would be addressed. And then, my ex-husband was killed in a freak automobile accident in which an elderly driver ran over him. He died on my birthday in a tragedy layered in ironies that are apparent as I sit in Minnesota and write this on my son's computer. Nearby are some of my former husband's ashes inside a Mason jar that shouts the name we both share.

Suddenly I find myself reentering my home state in the frigid season that precipitated me moving. I have not worn socks in a year and only sport flip flops, necessitating pals in both Costa Rica and Minnesota loaning me clothing for the inevitable bundling. I had left a winter coat and various sweaters with friends in Minnesota, assuming I would never again need them. And then something spoke to me in the night.

Days ago, I left Alajuela's Juan Santamaria Airport with one large almost empty suitcase and the inevitable lists from Atenas friends requesting items to "mule" back. It is a familiar routine. When others returned to the States or Canada, I too have asked and sometimes begged for cat treats, a seasoning, even SOS soap pads, those nostalgic articles that are either unavailable or that cost a fortune. I have accumulated a year's worth of needs, especially clothes that the Costa Rican sun bakes on wash day. The problem is that the wintry shopping season offers few choices in clothing that will suffice in Central America. My son's girlfriend suggests Goodwill that is already becoming my haven during my trip. The bounty in North America results in castoffs, hardly worn, being donated for benevolence and for the tax write off.

After a poignant reunion with my son that felt like we had never parted, followed by a few

hours of sleep, we set out to shop on my first day in the States. My son drives me with uncharacteristic patience to clothing and grocery stores where I am overwhelmed. One endless grocery aisle contains strawberry balsamic jam, blueberry lemon marmalade, cranberry bourbon pepper jelly, French recipe peach jam and so many other varieties that I wonder how to choose. Josh saves the best for last, Trader Joe's, the only store that I have truly missed.

Trader Joe's describes itself as an amazing neighborhood grocery store with amazing food and drink from around the globe and around the corner. After living three blocks from one of the many Trader Joe's that dot the United States, my palate had learned to crave their Thai lime and lemon almonds, General Tso's sauce, organic jasmine rice, and my pocketbook appreciated their Two Buck Chuck wine. Their cheap Charles Shaw wine is so popular that it resulted in an urban legend that after 9/11, corkscrews were not available on airlines so the wine was sold to Trader Joe's. The truth is that a wine boom in the 1990s led to increased production by vineyards meeting a downturn in the United States economy of which the Trader Joe's franchise profited. Suffice to say, I lose my mind in Trader Joe's, resulting in one of many trips to Goodwill to buy a second and then a third suitcase.

An endless round of reunions with friends has begun, typically at a restaurant that awakens latent taste buds. Costa Ricans prefer a bland fare without the indigenous influences that flavor the foods of most other Central American countries. While Minnesota fruit in November tastes like wood, causing me to greatly miss the glorious papaya, pineapple and limes, I find myself murmuring aloud as I take bites of Korean, Thai, East Indian and yes, American fare. Over platters brimming with copious amounts of food, one shouts to be heard in warehouses where the deafening acoustics reportedly are purposeful, designed to move the diners along and fill a daily quota of customers. In North America the waiters and waitresses are overly solicitous, unlike in Costa Rica where one must set oneself on fire to get the check.



Josh and me at brunch

The closest Josh and I come to going home again is during a dinner with our former beloved next door neighbors. For a year, Josh has avoided driving by his childhood home where he spent his formative years. A view of our house from our host's dining table reveals the loss of huge pine trees, felled by the young couple who in making the house their own fail to grasp the value of underground roots that caress a house. We sneak peaks into their family room that has become a haven for three cats in a curious detail I share with them.

We learn that the other neighbors have short memories. During the construction of a mega

mansion next to my house before I moved, workers cut a wide swath out of my backyard. Former neighbors that once proclaimed their outrage now have signs on their lawns bearing the name of the contractor. It is a life lesson that began this trip for me. Some feuds perhaps rightfully fade over time, like wars in which years afterwards no one can remember the cause. This selective memory is a metaphor for the journey of peering into a past no longer shared with those we visit.

On this trip I am becoming accustomed to appearing exotic to sales clerks who in offering coupons to the next sale learn I live in another country. One hardware salesman ringing up a screwdriver not made in China waxes eloquent about his Costa Rican trip to a resort that has no relation to my daily existence.

"Tell me what a typical day is like for you," a friend asks. I start with the bird symphony that wakes me and end with the immediate darkness that overtakes dusk, rearranging my inner time clock. In between I describe the mountainous landscape that frames my new life with the quirky inhabitants who fill my days. Have I told it accurately, I wonder, trying not to portray a paradise that we who live abroad know contains a serpent or two. I amaze audiences with tales of not tossing toilet paper in the loo, of spending a morning playing musical chairs in a bank in order to establish a bank account, of buying a nail in a hardware store that entails working the room. I attempt to capture the Tico view of *Pura Vida* and *No hay problema*. I contrast the American Post Office delivery system to a country in which addresses are described like a treasure hunt map, my house east and south of the gas station and grocery store. Facebook friends remind me of the scorpions and other insects that cohabit with me. I regret former posts in which I was showing off with close-ups of creepy crawlers. Knowing this detail might deter their resolve to visit me, I downplay the size and frequency of these encounters.

In late night conversations with Josh, we recapture a stillness amid the losses that is not possible with Skype. I need to see him in person and not on a microscopic screen, to observe his movements that never mask his feelings. We gently spar as we always have, but the impatience he typically displays at my ineptitude with IT or a view arising from our generational differences has been tempered. I realize he is grasping to hold me while he has me physically near, something no longer possible with his father. I promise to return more frequently and he promises to conquer his fear of flying and see Costa Rica through his own eyes and not mine.

I acknowledge that despite the most dramatic of events that returned me to Josh, life continues unaltered with the companions I had left behind a year ago. Beside blazing fires in their living rooms I creep back into the world we once shared. Soon I will reverse this process, having to describe for friends in Atenas trends noted, the latest products, and if America truly is as jingoistic as it appears from afar. When I arrive in Costa Rica I will be able say that I did go home again with a new appreciation of all I had left behind and a heightened appreciation of what awaits me in "a land more kind than home, more large than earth."

## What's Happened To Atenas, Costa Rica Since It Was Recommended by the AARP in 2010?



by Dennis Easters [easters3@msn.com](mailto:easters3@msn.com)

In their September/October 2010 issue, AARP recommended Atenas, Costa Rica as one of the best places to retire abroad. The writer, Barry Golson, gave highlights of all the things one would expect to find in a retirement destination such as location, climate, affordability, safety, and government stability. In the article Golson says, "It (Costa Rica) is lush with nature, extraordinary wildlife, active volcanoes...as well as such comforting amenities as malls, supermarkets, and restaurants. Retirees have flocked here for years, drawn by its mild climate, its prosperity, its literacy rate, its health care, and significantly, its stable government; with no army. This is as bio-diverse a country as you'll find anywhere."

Fast forward five years to November 2015 and you may ask, what has changed about Atenas in the past five years? The answer is that everything has changed, yet nothing has changed. Sounds strange, right? At the time of the AARP article, Atenas had enjoyed a prosperous 10-year run of popularity as a favorable destination for retirees. That popularity has not waned; it has increased to the point where our inventory of quality properties, both for sale and for rent, remains extremely low. In Atenas, most new construction homes are either sold before they are completed or soon thereafter.

Interestingly enough, one of the unexpected changes has been a shift in the age demographic of those moving to Atenas today. Atenas remains a huge draw for retirees but a new wave of younger couples and families has made its way to Atenas, finding peace and tranquility in the Costa Rican countryside. Recently I asked one of our younger client families, a family of four, (mother, father, and two children) why they were moving their family to Costa Rica. Their response was, "We feel that we can give our children an experience and lifestyle that can no longer be found in the United States. We want them to experience real life, not something that is artificially created and spoon fed to them."

Another big change has been the influx of Costa Rican nationals, both retirees and young families, moving into Atenas from the capital of San Jose, and the town of Heredia. I do not see a direct correlation with this migration and the 2010 AARP article, but what I can say is that a buzz was created about Atenas in that article that permeated the world. There was a big energy shift; a positive energy shift. The biggest draw for the Costa Rican locals was the opening of the San Jose/Caldera Highway, also known as Highway 27. This new stretch of highway reduced the commute time to San Jose from 60-90 minutes to just 30 minutes, allowing professionals an easy commute to work. In a way, due to this influx of local professionals, Atenas became a 'bedroom' community of San Jose.

As one can imagine, with the demand many improvements have come to Atenas. New grocery stores have opened in town with the expansion of the local cooperative, CoopeAtenas, and a brand new Maxi-Pali. A new gas station opened at the corner of the Radial Atenas and Highway 27. A good variety of new restaurants have opened. We have a new farmers' market (Feria) that is under roof where many of the vendors cater to the expat market. We even have a new wine shop that offers a great selection of wine, cheeses, and cured meats. Several new communities have popped up around town, including Antigua del Valle, a small, boutique community of only six custom built homes. Roads have been paved and repaved, and our town installed a new, much needed water system. We even gained a new technical university campus at the edge of downtown.

With all the popularity within both the local and expat community, another change has occurred with the types of properties that developers are building. Ten years ago, a two bedroom, two bath, pool home of 1500 sq ft was commonplace and could be purchased for \$250,000.00 to \$350,000.00 depending on its location, amenities, and views. Now, developers are building larger three bedroom, three bath homes with more luxurious finishes and prices starting at around \$450,000.00.

However, with all the changes, most of which have been very positive for the local community, there are still a few things, gracias a Dios, or 'thanks to God' that have not changed. The people of Atenas are still among the most friendly and welcoming in the world. The stunning views and eternal spring like climate are still some of the biggest attractions. Atenas's location, with three major highways running through the town, could not get any better. The rural charm of this small village is something you typically only read about in fairy tales. I can say first hand that after living here full time for eight years; I still have to pinch myself to realize that I am not dreaming. I am truly blessed!

**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.**

**11/15/2004**

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

**It's your old buddy BudBud BACK IN COSTA RICA!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**This trip was not nearly as much fun as the last one! I, MR. BUDBUD, rode on Mom's lap in the plane last time.**

**Well let me tell you about THIS time!!!!**

**I knew we were in trouble when Mom left without us. Mom rarely leaves home without me but this time she took Bunny instead!! Mom explained to me that Bunny is special because she is brain damaged so she had to take Bunny with her this time. Well HECK!!!! I KNOW Bunny is special!!! All us Lighthouse babies know THAT for crying out loud!!! Bunny is a little pom who came from a nasty puppy mill in Tennessee. She and her littermates got distemper so the mill owners tossed them all in a ditch to die. All of them did too...except Bunny. Some lady found her, still breathing (barely) on top of a pile of dead little puppies. The lady brought her to Mom and Mom nursed her back to health. But the distemper monster caused her to be "special." She is brain damaged.**

**Now.....with that out of the way.....Mom left, taking Bunny with her.**

**Next day Dad leaves with Andre', Delilah, and Spanky the burn cat. AND HE COMES BACK WITHOUT THEM!!!!!!**

**The rest of us wondered what the heck was going on.**

**Well....next day Dad calls the rest of us in and says, "Time to go." and he PUT me in a BOX!! Can you imagine??? ME!...IN A BOX!!!**

**Sure it had HOLES in it but I'm not a "BOX" kind of dog!!!**

**I thought he KNEW that!!! He also put Krystal, Juliette, and Princess Joy in boxes!**

**Well that was only the beginning!! He THEN takes us all to the airport and hands us to some TOTAL STRANGER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**I can tell you at this point I was NOT a happy boy. Just what the heck was going on? DAD!!! HEY DAD!!!! Where ya goin? HEY!!!!!! DAAAAAAAAAAAAAAD!!!!!!**

Okay....so the stranger takes all four of us and puts us in this closet in the plane. Some fine how do you do THIS is!!!! Then they close the door and we hear the engines fire up for a take off.

Now LAST time Mom let me look out the window while we took off. Well I can tell you I didn't get to look any dang window THIS time!!! There WERE no windows. We were flying in a PLANE CLOSET!! How degrading!!!!!!

We had overheard Dad talking to Mom on the telephone the night before and he said something about us having to spend the night at the airport!! IN A BOX!!! I was beginning to think moving to Costa Rica was a HUGE mistake.

Anyway, we get to the airport in Costa Rica and a new stranger opens the plane closet and loads us up on this cart thingy. He rolls us into the terminal and through customs and right out the front door of the airport!!! AND THERE WAS MOM!! YAAAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It turns out that she had "greased some palms" when she picked up the first three and had made arrangements for us NOT to have to spend the night!!! WAY TO GO MOM!!!!!!

Boy were we happy to see her!!!!

We all got in the car and drove to the house we have rented. The others were all kind of scared but I told them everything is okay now cause we're with Mom. We got inside the fence and Mom cut the straps off the doors of the crates and let us out. MAN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Did we have to PEE!!!!!!!!!! Whew!!!!!!!! That was a relief!!!!

When we got inside. Mom sat down with all of us and hugged and kissed us all. It was great to be in her arms again.....but....hmmmmmm.....wait a minute!!!! She allowed ME to have to ride in a BOX in a PLANE CLOSET!!!!!!!!!!!!!! For that she must PAY!!!!!!

Sooooooooo.....I put on my saddest eyes and looked right into hers. I let HUGE tears roll down my cheeks and asked her, "Mom?? How COULD you?" When Mom saw my tears SHE started crying. I milked it for a few minutes more and then forgave her. She's a pretty good Mom and I just could not stay mad at her.

All the other babies were all excited now so I told them that they must pay CLOSE attention and they can learn some Spanish just like I did when I was here before!!!

Enid, Javier, Bernice, Darrio, and Javier Jr. all came over to meet us. They LOVE animals so of course we were all a big hit!!

Tailwags from the perro blanco, BudBud

## Here and There



*by Carole Connolly  
caroleconnolly@gmail.com*

It's the holidays. It is holiday season all over the world. Chanukah is over, Christmas is upon us and Kwanzaa? Well, this year the African-American holiday goes from December 26 through January 1. I generally celebrate everything since I was raised in the New York melting pot by a Jewish mother and a Catholic father. I didn't know about Kwanzaa until I moved the eclectic and quirky community of Santa Cruz, California. I took a class in African dance some years back and I thought the outfits were really cool, so I decided to celebrate it.

In some ways, I prefer the simplicity of Christmas in Atenas. There is no confusion, it's a religious holiday. It is a day to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. There are nativity scenes adorning churches, homes, businesses, and even public buildings such as banks.

On occasion, when I lived in Atenas, I had business at the local branch of Banco Popular. The first time I visited the bank in December, I was so fascinated by the elaborate Nativity scene that I barely read my book. (I always carried a book to the bank knowing I could be waiting for an hour or more.) The elaborate decoration had so much detail, including hay in the manger, but I was baffled by the empty cradle until it was explained to me; the baby Jesus was not placed in his crib until Christmas Eve. Makes sense.



Here, in the United States, I will not see a manger scene in the bank, with or without the baby. I will not see a manger scene in the park. I'm not even sure I will see one in the church. Hmmmm, I suppose I could actually go to church and look. I will put that on my list. Maybe make it a mission... visit a bunch of different churches of different denominations and see who has manger scenes set up.

I may have to venture to Watsonville, a predominantly Mexican town about twenty minutes south of here. I can look for mangers and practice my Spanish at the same time. I may even find a tamale or two.

I miss seeing the home-made tamales wrapped in string being sold by various street vendors, hearing the stories of the women gathering for tamale-making sessions where everybody from abuela (grandma) to niña (little girl) participates. I wanted to learn how to make them myself, but I left Costa Rica before I had the opportunity.

Now that I am back in the United States, I barely hear anybody say "Merry Christmas." I hear "Happy Holidays," which is considered *politically correct*. A few brave souls stick to the old way. Why, just today I was checking out at the local supermarket, and the check-out lady rang me up, looked me in the eye, and said "Merry Christmas!"

I brightened, smiled broadly, and said "Merry Christmas!" back. In my head I added *Happy Chanukah and Happy Kwansaa*. I much prefer any of those to *Happy Holidays*. But that's the way it is here.

There (Costa Rica) there is no confusion ... Feliz Navidad!

## What is a Posada?



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

When I was a little girl, before our family left for the United States, Christmas was something I looked forward to with extreme eagerness. It was the only time during the year that apples and grapes were available and as I write this, I can still recall the wonderful aroma of the fruit carried from the vendor's stalls by the chilly December breezes.

Although it seems hard to believe, we wore knitted hats and scarves as we made our way around San Jose's central marketplace to look for the special items that would adorn our home. I remember how my mother would stop and examine the painted clay figures of Joseph, Mary, and Baby Jesus, as well as the many animals that would be part of the display. When we got to New York in 1963, our life changed dramatically and although we continued to celebrate Christmas with a tree, traditional foods and presents, it wasn't quite the same!

This year, probably because of my involvement with the Hogar de Ancianos, I have become very aware that I know very little about of all the traditions that go hand in hand with the Christmas celebrations in Atenas. One of these traditions is called "Las Posadas" which begin on December 16<sup>th</sup> and continue until the 24<sup>th</sup>.



Rehearsing hymns and script

Las Posadas commemorate the difficult journey that Mary and Joseph made from Nazareth to Bethlehem when Jesus was about to be born. They were turned away time and again but finally were allowed to stay in a barn where after his birth Jesus was laid in a manger, surrounded by farm animals.

The word "posada" means "inn" and to ask for "posada" means to seek shelter. If you live in or near a tico neighborhood in Atenas, you might have been seeing or hearing people (adults and children) practicing traditional hymns requesting a bed for the night for this weary couple.



Seeking shelter at the inn

Each night at 7 p.m. during this festival, a host family acts as innkeepers (although there

is no sleepover!). The ‘villagers’ go from house to house and are turned away twice until they reach the ‘host’ house (chosen in advance). The procession is led by a child carrying a candle and other young people carry small statues of Joseph and Mary on a donkey, although here in Atenas it is not unheard of that the reenactment will actually feature children dressed as Mary and Joseph riding a real donkey or pony!



**A typical crèche**

Everyone carries a candle and there is much singing. They visit three houses, two refuse entry and they are admitted at the third. When they are welcomed in, the figures of Mary and Joseph are placed in the family’s nativity scene. The “manger” remains empty until Christmas eve when Jesus is placed in his spot by the youngest child (according to tradition).



**A host family’s nativity scene**

The “pilgrims” kneel and pray the rosary and sing traditional carols. The festival sometimes features a traditional piñata, sometimes in the shape of a star. A special song

is sung and the children hit the piñata with a stick, until oranges, tangerines, peanuts, candy canes and other sweets fall out. These days, it is common to do away with the piñata and prepare treat bags for the children instead.



**In this picture the ‘treat bags’ are on the tree**

I am always curious to see how people decorate their trees and nativity scenes. My great aunt’s elaborate crèche took up an entire room and although I never asked her, I am sure she must have hosted a Posada or two in her lifetime!

My thanks to Patricia Salazar for her generous sharing of both the traditional story and all the pictures in this article.

## 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.



Title: Dramatic Sky, Green Coast  
24" x 33"  
Oil on Linen

Al Alexander  
jeanandal@gmail.com

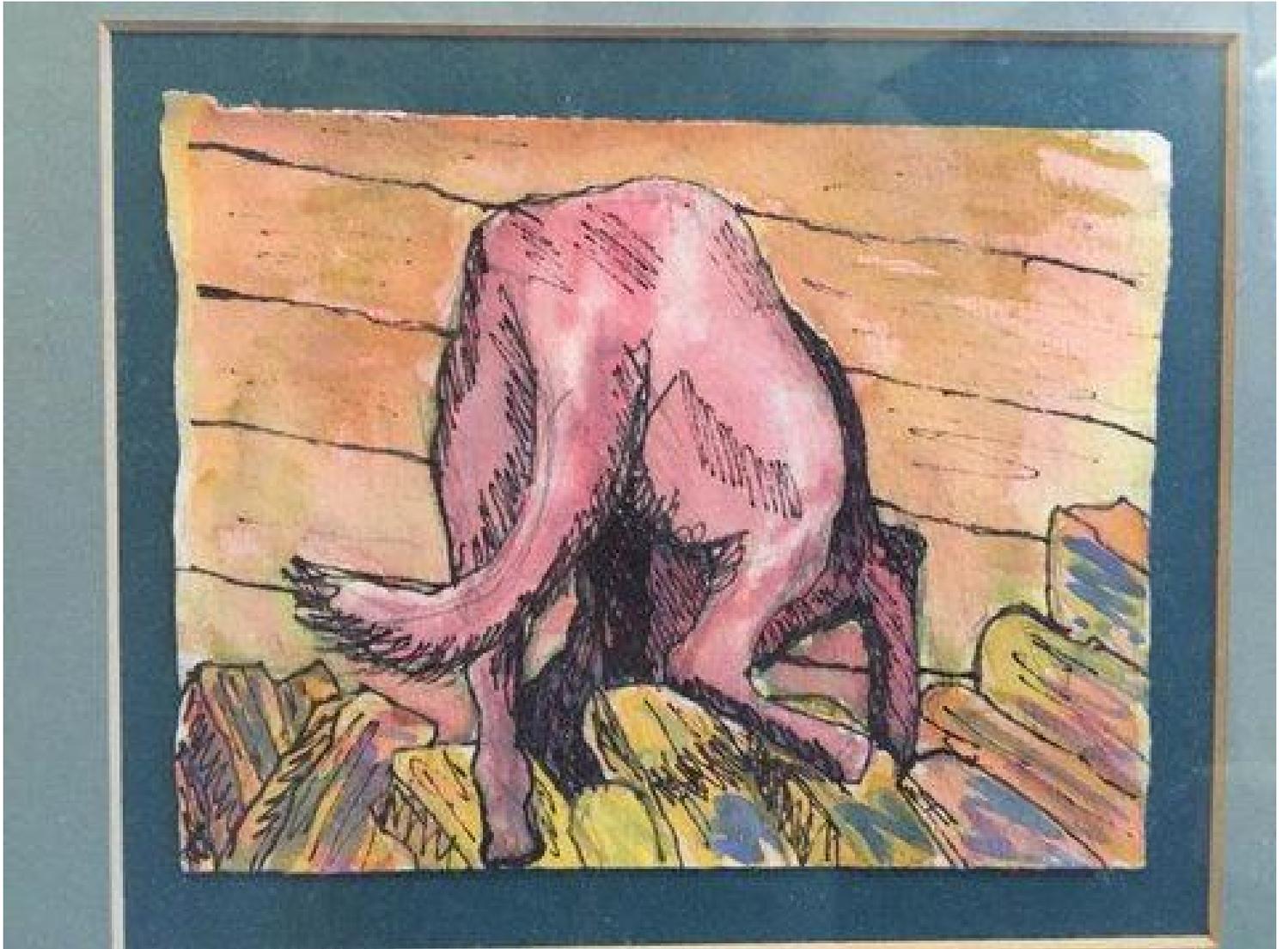


Untitled  
Graphite and Colored Pencil on Drawing paper  
8" x 12"

Artist's Statement: I had this and another drawing made into Christmas cards

Diana F. Miskell

Horse and Cattle Art: [www.dianamiskell.com](http://www.dianamiskell.com)  
Costa Rica Blog: [www.dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com](http://www.dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com)



Title: Where IS It?  
6 inches x 6 inches  
water color on paper

Harriet Sheppard  
hweyman@gmail.com



Peachy Bird

Jocelyn Farquhar

[Jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com](mailto:Jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com)



Sunrise in Plancillo December 6, 2015  
Photo: Joni Lockwood



Sunrise in Plancillo December 15, 2015  
Photo: Mike Lockwood

## 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.**

Biolley Buzz Bunky Bartlett	bcrcoffee.com <a href="http://www.bestofcostarica.org">http://www.bestofcostarica.org</a>
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Charlie Doggett	
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica Dennis Easters/Pure Life Development Diane Miskell	delapuravida.com <a href="http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog">http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog</a> <a href="http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com">http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com</a>
Fred Ball	<a href="http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/">http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/</a>
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Nadine Hays Pisani New Life in Costa Rica	happierthanabillionaire.com <a href="http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/">http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/</a>
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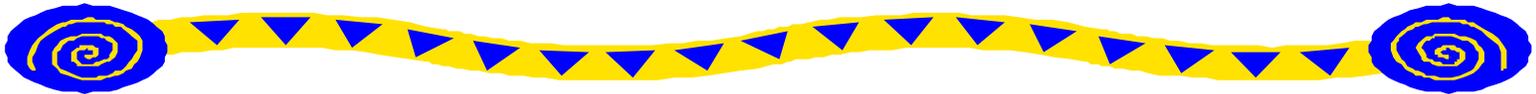


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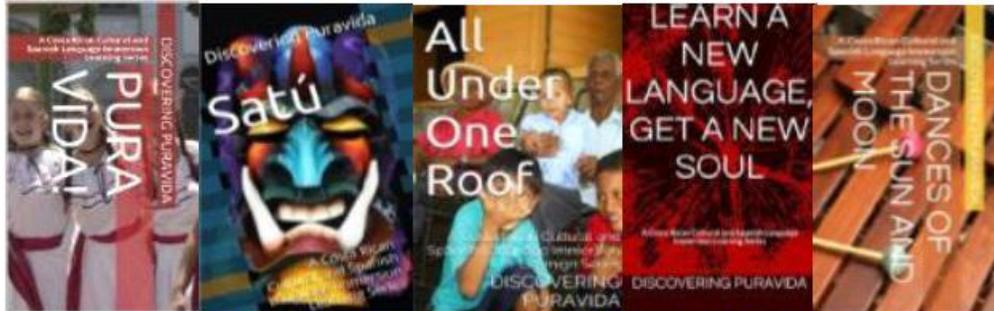
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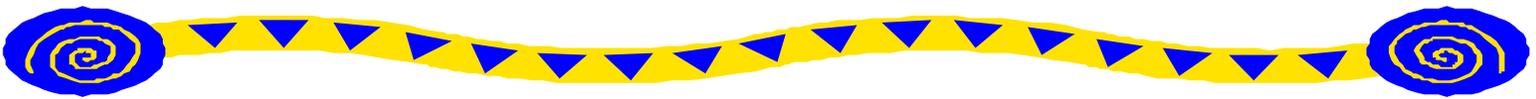
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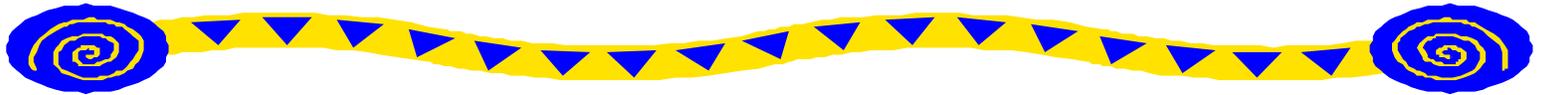
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