

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



July sunrise in Atenas
Photograph: 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.

Compositions from back issues are now archived on scomari.com/Atenas Today.



DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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

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

Publisher's Note



I feel like a broken record month after month when I say that the year is flying by us. But it is! The end of July means the celebration of the Annexation of the Nicoya Peninsula (more commonly referred to as the annexation of Guanacaste) and preparations for the annual pilgrimage to the Basilica of Cartago in August.

July has been busy in our county with fiestas of Canada Day, The Fourth of July and in our home, a visit from one of our sons and his friends. These gatherings warm my heart and make me feel happy and newly energized to tackle the rest of the year.

I recently saw pictures taken in the Central Park of Atenas by friends who have taken their children there to enjoy use of the playground. In just one short year, our town has been transformed and with all the greenery, it is a wonderful time to get out and enjoy the landscape. Of course, unless you go out early, chances for rain are very high at this time, so don't forget to bring an umbrella!

A year ago we were welcoming Vintage Wine Store which sadly closed several weeks ago. Etnia recently celebrated their first anniversary and has steady clientele, many catering opportunities and the regular participation of musicians on the weekends, which is always a great reason to get out to support the young people who are hoping to fulfill their dreams.

As always, I am amazed and grateful by the quality and commitment our regular contributors provide you, our loyal readers. Atenas is changing rapidly; every year brings newcomers and short-term residents who are eager to discover the many treasures we longtime residents take for granted. I encourage all of us to try to see our community through refreshed eyes and rejoice that we make our homes in Atenas today and every day.

Happy Reading!

Marietta Arce
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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.

July 25th – Guanacaste Annexation day – official holiday in Costa Rica

August 2nd – Feast of Virgin of Los Angeles, Patron Saint of Costa Rica

August 7th – Atenas Celebrates its birthday!

August 15th – Mother's Day is celebrated, official holiday in Costa Rica

August 24th – National Parks Day is observed

August 27th and 28th – Atenas Artists Exhibit at Colinas del Sol, profiles and details in this month's and next month's issues.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

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.

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

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

Every Wednesday: At 11:00 a.m. (Please confirm with Michele Clutter 2446-0664)

Atenas Wednesday Women
informal get togethers at Kay's Gringo Postres

Third Thursday: 11:00 a.m. Costa Rica Writer's Group meets at Henry's Beach Bar near Multiplaza, Escazu, lunch follows at around 1 p.m.
Contact : Bob Brashears at bbrashears0@gmail.com



Buddhist Book Discussion

*****'

Every Sunday

Meditation (optional) 1:30pm

Book Discussion 2:00pm

218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings

ALL ARE WELCOME !

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

Adrienne and Richard Baksa

2446-8509

adriennebaksa@me.com

rbaksa@me.com



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

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

SERVICES: 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://www.facebook.com/steve.lucas> • 8764-8960

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

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

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

Friendship Library* News July, 2016



Photograph: Eyleen Vargas *La Nación*

Greetings, Dear Readers. Just when I was thinking we really needed an infusion of good new fiction, the library angels descended with boxes and boxes of good books, mostly fiction. Over the next week, I will do some "weeding" of older stuff and make room for the approximately 200 new fiction titles.

Of particular interest to readers of science fiction, someone has filled a gaping hole in the fiction collection by donating a treasure trove of 107 science fiction books. And it's the good stuff. Some of the more recent titles are by M. John Harrison, Peter Hamilton, Ken MacLeod, and Richard K. Morgan. Or, you can put a quarter in your way-back machine and settle down for some nostalgic afternoons with old favorites by Scott Card, Larry Niven, Wm. Dietz, David Brin, Ben Bova, Isaac Asimov or Arthur C. Clarke.

Several years ago, I was browsing through the website of my favorite library supply company and saw ready-to-use spine labels for specific genres of literature (such as Science Fiction). So I bought a box with good intentions of going through the collection, identifying appropriate books and applying the spine labels. Yeah, well that never happened. Now all these science fiction books have arrived and readers will be able to spot them easily because they all have white "science fiction" labels with pictures of flying saucers.

We will keep filling up the "new arrivals" cart with fiction titles, including nine (!) books by Lee Child as well as books by Anne Perry, Debbie Macomber, Ken Follett, Patricia Cornwell, Janet Daily, Jeffrey Deaver, John Kellerman, Lisa Gardner and more.

Two books by a local author were donated this month. Many of you know Ken Lothridge, but you might not know that he was a train conductor in his former life. He wrote two books that are favorites among train enthusiasts and copies of these have been donated to the library.

The titles are Unauthorized Train Stories and Unbelievable Train Stories. They can be found on the nonfiction shelves at NF 3.

We received several interesting cookbooks this month, including the Three Dog Bakery Cookbook, with recipes for things to prepare for your favorite canine. NF 6.

Readers interested in learning more about Costa Rica have several new choices: Culture Shock! (NF 3), Birds of Costa Rica (NF 5), and Happier Than a Billionaire: Quitting my Job, Moving to Costa Rica & Living the Zero Hour Work Week (NF 3) by Nadine Pisani. And if you are ready to up your Spanish game, consider Madrigal's Magic Key to Spanish (NF 4), Breaking Out of Beginner Spanish (NF 4), or D!rty Spanish: Everyday Slang from "What's Up?" to "F*%# Off!" (NF 4).

For those readers waxing philosophical, I would recommend This I Believe: the Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women (NF 1) or my personal favorite this month, The Last Lecture (NF 1). Most people will have heard about this as there was a lot of press about it at the time. The book is about both the lecture and about Randy Pausch (who prepared and delivered it), a Carnegie Mellon computer science professor giving a "last lecture" that he hoped would provide a message to his children. He knew he would not live to see them grow up because he was dying of pancreatic cancer. Sound morbid? Not a bit. I laughed out loud and cried as well. I've already ordered two copies for young fathers in my family.

Happy Reading.

-Linda Ledbetter, librarian

*Located in La Carreta Restaurant, 50 meters East of the church, Atenas Central.

DOG OF THE MONTH



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

LULU



Photo by Marina

Lulu was found on the street pregnant and homeless. With veterinary care it was determined she had a tubal pregnancy. She has now recovered from the abortion and ready to be with a loving family that will care for her.

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM NEW LOCATION.

Stop by the Atenas Municipal Building next to the Fire Station Friday mornings to see the animals and good quality used clothing and household items. Donated items are needed and can be left at Kay's or at our Friday mornings location.

FOSTER CARE NEEDED

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

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

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

Showcasing Atenas Artists at
The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show



By Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com

A group of seven Atenas artists will be featured in August at The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show. The event will pay homage to the late Gordon Balter who organized an art show in 2014 that he called The Atenas Painters Association. Jean Alexander, this year's organizer, says, "Gordon had a mission statement for the group to increase the stature of the artist and the venues. We are committed to keeping it fine art, not crafts, and trying to keep the presentation as professional as we can."

This article profiles four of the seven exhibiting artists, Jocelyn Farquhar, Jan Yatsko, Diana F. Miskell and Julie Hawkins. Next month, Atenas Today will feature the remaining artists, Harriet Sheppard, Sheila Nelson and Al Alexander.

The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show will take place on Saturday and Sunday, August 27-28, in Hotel Colinas Del Sol, Calle Boqueron, Atenas (600 meters east of the high school gym, 100 meters east of Roca Verde gate.) Hours on Saturday are from 2 pm to 7 pm and on Sunday from 2 pm to 5 pm.



Jocelyn Farquhar
<http://squibblesdesigns.com/>

The youngest of the artists exhibiting The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show was indeed young when her artistic talent surfaced. At three, Jocelyn Farquhar began to draw bugs, earning her a family nickname of Squibbles that would become the name of her art ventures, Squibbles Design.

When she was 5, Jocelyn's mother was told by doctors that she would never ride a bike due to her development challenges. Overhearing that pronouncement, Jocelyn was riding within 3 weeks. Today she says, "I'm unique, very unique, and I never say, 'Never!' I never say, 'I can't.'"

Encouraged by her parents, Cameron and Diane Farquhar, Jocelyn has developed a whimsical style that has inspired others including Harriet Sheppard who will be one of the other featured artists at the upcoming show. Harriet says, "Jocelyn has influenced me with her colors, with the simplicity of her work, and by her intuitive nature."

In 2009 Jocelyn moved to Costa Rica with her parents. Each day living in Atenas differs for Jocelyn who has many interests including Zumba dancing, Tae Bo, and cooking. The one constant in her routine is that she starts early by walking the dogs. On these walks she observes birds, animals and flowers. If something catches her eye like a parakeet beak or a hydrangea, she says, "I try to capture in my mind. I stand and observe. I put it in my mind, and then I paint it."

Jocelyn says, "The tropical beauty and the birds that are singing right now in my back yard patio inspire me. I am also influenced by beauty I discover on trips to beach areas, and way up in the mountains, the different colored birds, and the beauty of the flowersand God inspires me."

Her canvasses surprise and amuse with an unexpected orange sky or frogs leaping among fronds that have assumed the colors of the frogs. She balances motmots in juxtaposition to each other. Her parrots jump off the painting, vibrantly lively and squawking. For The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show, she will feature Exotic Toucan Bird and Hop Scotch Birds, each painting fancifully named by Jocelyn.

Jocelyn has created a series of greeting cards taken from her paintings and she does commissioned works. Some patrons come to her with their ideas, or often they are stirred by her vibrant parrots and ask her to create something from her imagination.

Jocelyn says, "I express myself in different ways, but each painting tells a story." Her work, like Jocelyn, expresses her flair for life expressed in the beauty from which she draws her inventiveness. (Editor's note: see the Art Gallery for one of Jocelyn's paintings.)

Jan Yatsko

<http://www.janyatsko.com/>

Jan Yatsko finds inspiration for her art from Nature and doing what she calls "my internal work." As for the internal work, she is steadily creating a series called The 52 Diva Project as a reflection of her experiences, her dreams, and her life.

The 52 Diva Project was started in 2014, a particularly difficult year in which her father died, she and her husband were in a car accident in which she received a concussion, and there were stressors in the bakery business they owned at the time. Each painting includes a self-portrait addressing a personal crisis or a self-revelation, surrounded by jaguars, symbolism, and the ever present mango plants. Someday she envisions the series as a one person show.



Jan with some of her art

Many of her canvases contain mangos or mango leaves (a fruit to which she is ironically allergic), and currently she is experimenting with a series she calls Palm Tree with Third Eye that will be featured in The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show.

The Palm Tree with Third Eye series was inspired by a workshop she took in Mexico. Towards the end of the week-long workshop, she felt stuck until she took partially painted canvasses that she had created at the beginning of the week, turned them from horizontal to vertical, and glued on water colors of palm trees, each containing a third eye. The third eye is a mystical concept referring to a speculative invisible eye that provides perception beyond ordinary sight. To create this series, she decided to use the teacher's color wheel that she meticulously replicates on the vibrant canvas boards.

For The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show, Jan is currently branching out by painting abstracts, saying that the process is much more difficult than realistic painting. "There are no visual clues. Everything from must come from inside. This is a great big experiment." Whether painting for the 52 Diva Project or the Palm Tree with Third Eye series, Jan says, "I want to capture the soul that communicates between the artist and the person viewing the art."

A 17 year resident in Costa Rica, along with her husband, Tom Yatsko, Jan was formerly an accomplished business woman with a custom flag and banner enterprise. She is a skilled basket maker with baskets featured in a book, *The Basketmaker's Art: Contemporary Baskets and Their Makers*.

Throughout Atenas, Jan is known for her Discover your inner Diva workshops, this being the ninth year in which she has guided participants to use various mediums to explore where they are in their lives and where they wish to be. Under her guidance, using self-awareness exercises, the women are led to discern their own divas.

Within the body of work that Jan has created is her artist's eye and an expression of her curiosity as well as her learning process that is always continuing.

Diana F. Miskell
<http://www.dianamiskell.com>



If art is created from life's longing, Diana F. Miskell's early need for equine friends thrust her into the art world.

"I always wanted a horse," says Diana, who as a young girl was constantly moving because her father was in the Canadian Air Force, so she could never fulfill her dream of horse ownership. "As soon as I started working, I bought three horses," she says. Today, as an artist she specializes in equine and cattle drawings with an "odd dog or cat thrown into the mix."

A self-taught artist, she says, "You learn as you go." She believes that formal art training may stifle more than instruct, forcing the artist into a mold. By contrast, Diana learned her craft by observation and experiment, attending horse shows and rodeos in Vancouver British Columbia and Washington State. She entered her work in art shows, hoping to be juried. Eventually, she began to garner prizes and gain clients who appreciated her realistic renditions of animals that exude a tenderness as well as majesty.

Diana's love of animals, particularly horses, has inspired and fueled her large paintings of all sorts of gentle beasts. Her veranda that serves as her Dragonfly Animal Portraits studio outside her Vista Atenas house is a menagerie. A giant jovial pig in a painting titled "Pork and Coffee Beans" sits among coffee beans. A stately horse in a work, as yet untitled, awaits the finishing touches for the upcoming art fair. A Brahma bull titled "Tranquilo" reclines lazily to observe the humans observing him.

Her best and favorite critic is her husband, Lance Turlock. An engineer and patent lawyer who admits he can only draw stick figures, Lance discerns details that she may have overlooked by being "too close to the subject." Following Lance's critique, she is repainting the eyes to be larger on her portrait of a young cow.

Diana and Lance moved to Costa Rica five years ago with a cat and their suitcases, seeking a new lifestyle and an adventure. She retired early as a Supply Officer for the Canadian Coast Guard while Lance continues to work from Atenas. Her newly adopted country has offered her fresh subject matter with the Brahma cattle and oxen. Her canvasses have grown larger, perhaps to accommodate the larger subject matter, and she notes, "My detail work is better here."

A great deal of time and effort goes into each image that is built in layers and with glazes. Since her models would be constantly moving if she painted them in real time, she must work from a photograph. She has resisted being repetitive as might have happened with the popularity of the oxcart subjects.

Many may recall Diana's ox on the cover of an Atenas tourist map. Her painting of an ox in the Oxcart Parade entitled "Simbolico de Atenas" won a contest, meriting her the front page honors. As visitors to the upcoming Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show will observe, Diana skillfully captures the essence of her adopted homeland through her artistic portrayals of its many animals. (Editor's note: See Pork and Coffee Beans in the Art Gallery.)

Julie Hawkins



In her Vista Atenas home, Julie Hawkins' bedroom serves as her art studio in case she awakens in the night and has an inspiration. The creations that come from her daily and nightly work spill out onto the front patio that is currently filled with projects that she is creating for The Gordon Balter Memorial Art Show. While a nearby more spacious house contains the works of other artists as well as herself, she prefers the energy of a smaller space for herself and her creativity.

Julie is formally trained, although she left school to get married and have two children. She returned to college, at 41, to finish her degree. She learned that she had completed all of her basic coursework completed so she could concentrate on electives, those turning out to be art. After gaining a Masters in Fine Art, a requisite one woman art show was held, all of her paintings selling.

In the early days, she made three dimensional sculptures and abstract paintings. She admits, "I was never able to stay on the canvas. It still eludes me. It is hard for me to confine myself to a canvas, but give me a three dimensional object, and I am off and running."

Julie's contribution to the art show will be "Stick Stories," art objects that Julie transforms from simple sticks, continuing the three dimensional theme she prefers. First, she ages twigs or parts of limbs that she finds on walks or that are given to her by friends or her gardener. After stripping the bark and sanding, she paints the sticks with Gesso, a white paint mixture that contains chalk, gypsum, and/or pigment so that other materials may be applied. After another sanding, the magic begins as Julie applies lively colors, writing, silver foil, musical notes, pianos and carrots. Carrots are a theme that reoccurs in Julie's art. The finished product is suitable for hanging on a wall or to stand on its own as a decorative feature in a room.

After living in Costa Rica for 14 years, she paints solely for herself, although she is inspired by other Atenas artists. She is grateful for the encouragement of Gordon Balter to whose memory the art show is dedicated. "Gordon loved my sticks," she said. "He always said he wanted one of my sticks. I greatly regret that I never gave him one."

Another unlikely source of inspiration for Julie is a three year old Toby who is the daughter of friend Belinda Seabrook. "Toby is always coming up with fresh ideas," says Julie. "She only likes frozen peas, never cooked, so now I paint peas on my sticks. She is my youngest mentor."

Recently, while watching a 1936 movie in which black sticks were a part of the Art Deco décor backdrop, Julie was reminded of how timeless and fluid art can be. "Stick Stories" express Julie's world, a world that she recreates with simplicity and charm.



Remembering Gordon Balter

Gentle Solutions

By Konrad Esquivel

Have you ever felt, or are you feeling depressed? anxious? fearful? guilty? remorse or resentment? stressed? in a funk? Have these feelings resulted in physical pain or vice versa?

You are not alone.

We ALL experience these feelings at different degrees. We all wish, pray, and hope, and somehow fight, to free ourselves from this. I came across 2 gentle techniques that have proven beneficial to me and to thousands more around the world. The 2 techniques are Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and Ho? oponopono.

The story has been told of a young eagle that was captured, and a chain was tied to a stick in the ground and also to her leg. Day after day, she would walk in circles creating an obvious trail. Several years passed until one day her master decided to free her and removed the chain from her leg. He picked her up and thrust her into the air, so she could fly away. But the eagle took a short flight and landed on her trail and walked again without chain, without a latch, resuming her known routine.

We tend to be like that chained eagle. Have you ever had a fear that kept overpowering you, year after year? Have you fought depression and felt some relief and freedom only to succumb to it again? Anxiety, doubt, fear and depression are tough masters.

The point of this article is not to talk about those unwanted habits and painful issues in our lives, but to present a couple of holistic techniques that have proven almost miraculous to people around the world.

I have felt trapped by these task masters many times. It's a form of slavery in a free world, and invariably it keeps us feeling bad and weak. We tend to feel our energy drained as these different issues persist in our lives. And to worsen the situation, we tend to ruminate upon them. We regurgitate the thoughts and emotions over and over hoping to find a way out and breathe the special state of freedom.

We wake up every day with a given amount of energy, but we use so much of it dealing with personal issues. But I wish we all would live feeling empowered and connected to our creative streak, using our time and energy to grow and help others grow, building and constructing the life of our dreams. Yet somehow we are not fully free to do just that, because we use our most important assets mulling over our issues. So our energy goes where we are focused. In other words, energy follows thought.

Thanks to the wise healers of Hawaii, the practice of Ho? oponopono is alive and benefiting millions around the globe. It is a gentle technique of conflict resolution with the goal of healing the person physically, emotionally and intellectually. *It's based on*

the assumption that negative thoughts and unforgiven issues are errors we carry and provoke sickness at all levels. The kahuna priests were using Ho? oponopono to help people ease their ailments by recognizing, confessing, and then detaching from the heavy grips. What it basically does is unties any "errors" the person carries within and frees him of that attachment. It's a mental cleansing. The practice tidies up our insides! Many physical ailments heal, because they were the product of imbalance. IT'S AWESOME!!!!

How can we benefit from Ho? oponopono? It is easy. By repeating these short phrases when inner conflict arises in our consciousness, little by little, we neutralize the "acid".

So here the gentle solution. Recall an unresolved issue and talk to it by saying,

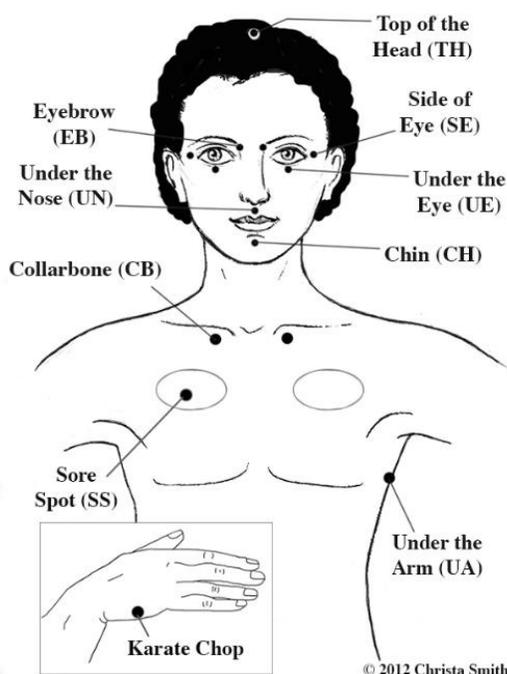
I'm sorry
Please forgive me
Thank you
I love you

Keep doing this practice as often as you want. Here is a good video about it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Qoq75-DQm4>

Now, let's talk about EFT. It is sometimes called needleless acupuncture and, as the name implies, it is very helpful with emotional issues of all kinds, including funks.

Once we are stressed about something, we can, for example, neutralize it doing exercise. But in our present time, we tend to keep stress as a constant companion, and we don't release those chemicals. We don't have exhaust valves for those old or new problems which gives EFT a chance to retrain the brain.



EFT is also called Tapping, because we tap on acupuncture points bringing balance and harmony. The full treatment goes deeply, but softly, into unresolved issues. It may be helpful to seek training from a certified practitioner. Happily, for all who live around the Atenas area, we have a certified EFT practitioner, Jean Hanshu, 8453-8988.

I'll leave you with a chart, so you can try it yourself. With your fingertips, gently tap the places shown. Try doing a round of 5 times starting at the crown of the head. You may repeat to yourself, "even though I (am, have) _____, I truly and completely accept myself".

Enjoy.



By Shannon Farley

The mystery of Mary

I live near Mary. She is quiet. Doesn't say much; but she's friendly enough. She likes to stand outside welcoming everyone into Atenas. My address is even based on where she stands. If you've paid attention along the road, you have probably seen her.

I am talking about *La Virgen de las Rosas* or, alternatively, *La Virgen de Los Angeles*. In English, that's the Virgin of the Roses, or the Virgin of the Angels.

On the way into Atenas from La Garita in the east, on the old main road – called Highway 3 or Route 3 by newcomers, who use its actual map name – there is an odd lump of a hill in a cow pasture on the north side of the road. Called “*Cerro Pelón*”, or “Bald Hill”, it looks like a huge camel hump. Mostly grassy with a few trees clustered at the top, it is where the shrine to the Virgin Mary rests.

Pure white, she stands regally on a large white pedestal surrounded in a square by a white metal fence. This time of year, a carpet of emerald green spreads out around her in the pasture. In the springtime, a brilliant sunny yellow Corteza tree blooms below her on the hill. She is named the Virgin of the Roses because in each of her extended hands she holds a delicate rose, one of the traditional symbols associated with the Virgin Mary. A crown of stars haloes her head.



The idea to create the statue came from Fr. Fabio Blanco Cubillo, pastor of the main Catholic Church in Atenas, the San Rafael Archangel parish, from 1981 to 1989. In the late 1980s, she was sculpted from marble by famous Costa Rican sculptor Orlando Carranza, who is from Atenas. The Virgin is one of Carranza's early works; he also sculpted all of the saints in the central Catholic Church.

August is the month Costa Rica dedicates to the Virgin Mary, with the annual countrywide pilgrimage on and around Aug. 2 to pray and give thanks to the “black virgin” at the Basilica in Cartago.

Often in May, when there are feast days dedicated to the Virgin, the church will hold an outdoor service here at the base of the hill, followed by a picnic.

To find *La Virgen de las Rosas*: Directly across the road from the entrance to Apanco recreation area, approximately 2 km east of downtown on the main road, you will see a white metal gate to the cow pasture. There is a white-sided green-roofed small structure at the base of the hill, and the Virgin Mary shrine directly up on top of the hill. Many people don't know that this area is also considered part of Barrio Los Angeles of Atenas. It is private property and you are not allowed to enter, or to go up to the statue, unless there is a church event happening. I wouldn't try it without permission unless you can outrun a 2,000-pound bull, or two or three, which usually occupy the pasture!!



Atenas Today Interviews:



The Central Valley Garden Club

We recently contacted Debra Hammen, Rayene Lehmann, Mae Worth and Bina Cline to learn about the CVGC and have the following interview to share with our readers!

AT: What prompted the creation of the Central Valley Garden Club?

DH: I really wanted to learn about how to garden and care for the plants in my garden. The club is a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and resources. We have fun as we learn!

I had been mulling over the idea of a club and when I mentioned it to Rayene, she was willing to help and so we got together and planned a first meeting which was held at my home in October 2015 and we had about 30 people in attendance.

Gardening in Costa Rica is so different for many of us with its unique micro-climates and varieties of vegetation (especially for those of us who moved from climates with snow). Sometimes you don't realize what's going wrong and why a plant is not thriving – it's nice to have a

place to ask for help and to get a response from a group of folks who really understand and want to help.

Mae and Bina also volunteered to help after the first meeting. We each came to the club with a variety of skills which has been a really big help. Mae keeps our Facebook page and Bina handles membership, and Rayene keeps us all organized and focused at our meetings. It's definitely a collaborative effort in planning meetings and getting things accomplished. I'm so very thankful to each of them as I could not keep the club going by myself.

AT: Is it a formal group with members, dues, by-laws, etc?

DH: We do have a membership list and a Facebook page as mentioned before but no by-laws or dues at this time. By-laws or more structure will be discussed if the need develops. We are discussing a fundraiser to help offset costs (which have been minimal to this point).

AT: Is the main focus beautification of homes, neighborhoods or to grow your own vegetables, let's say on your patio?

DH: Our membership is so varied with folks who have large yards to plant and those who are strictly gardening

in pots on a deck. We distributed a survey at the first meeting with about 25 ideas for meetings and we have been using it to plan. Some of the most popular topics: Vegetable Gardening, Growing Bromeliads, Caring for Orchids, attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to the garden, what to do about pests (ants, snails, armadillos, fungus ...).

AT: Is the club accessible to people who are new to gardening or is it for people for whom gardening is more than a hobby?

DH: This is definitely a user friendly group for any level of gardening. We have many beginners and some more seasoned gardeners. We all learn from each other and from our presenters. The monthly meetings are held in English and we welcome everybody. We have members who have gardened in Costa Rica all their lives, members who are new to Costa Rica and are just beginning to learn about gardening in the tropics and all kinds of levels in between.

AT: What kinds of things do you discuss at your meetings, where are they held?

DB: We have meetings every month, the date depends on the activity we will be having. We usually alternate between having a meeting one month at a member's house, and taking a field trip the next month.

When we meet at a member's house we usually have a plant and seed exchange. Someone does a "plant profile" presentation on a specific plant; it can be an herb, vegetable or ornamental. Besides getting to see the gardens of our members, there is always a great exchange of ideas.

We also exchange resource information, like where to buy good soil, compost, and seeds, which nurseries have a great selection of plants and knowledgeable and helpful staff.

Meetings are announced a couple weeks ahead via an email to all members and posted on Facebook. We have used bus transportation, but most often folks will carpool to the meeting locations.

AT: Do you hold classes, seed exchanges, seminars?

DH: We have not held classes or seminars specifically, but on the field trips we have taken the nursery owner and/or guides presented extensive information about their specialty.

AT: Tell us about some of the field trips you have taken.

DH: A few of our trips: Dura Flor in Palmares, the largest Bromeliad distributor in Costa Rica and one on the top 5 breeders of bromeliads in the world. Chester explained the detailed and lengthy breeding process needed to create new bromeliad varieties. Dura Flor grows an incredible variety of bromeliads and they have plants for sale to the public.

Chocolate Plantation Tour in La Garita, not only did we learn about growing coco bean pods and the history of chocolate but we got to sample the wonderful chocolate made here in Costa Rica. Some of us even purchased a Cacao tree to try growing some at home.

Ark Farm - which has a large

variety of vegetable and medicinal plants (some local others from far away destinations). Ark has an amazing garden to wander around and lots of plants that can be purchased at a reasonable price.

San Ramon Orchid Society Show – WOW, some of the amazing prize winning orchids were spectacular and many of us purchased orchids to take home.

In addition to the field trip meetings we have visited some of our member's homes for Garden Tours which have been extremely enjoyable. Our hosts have so much to share about what issues they have faced in gardening. For example, one of our members had poor soil so he shared with us the methods and products he used to enhance his soil and now has an amazing collection of trees/flowers, a water garden/pond and great vegetables.

Another of our other members shared a slide show of the evolution of her extensive garden including dealing with water flow issues and pests. Members who have lived in CR longer can attest to the variety of issues that have to be considered as you plan your garden, otherwise you will be dealing with them over and over again.

AT: Is there interest in medicinal plants or do you focus more on landscape or decorative plants?

DH: We focus on every kind of plant we think we can grow in the Central Valley!!! And some plants that usually grow at lower, hotter and

wetter elevations, or higher elevations in the cloud forests.

Vegetable gardens, fruit trees, berries, herbs, medicinal plants, and ornamentals are all areas we discuss and learn about through our meetings and field trips.

With Mae's help the club just purchased and sold a book on medicinal plants to members, Medicinal Plants of Costa Rica by Ed Bernhardt. This is an area many folks are interested in so we will be doing more on the topic in the future as we learn about presenters.

Some of the topics we plan to explore at meetings in the near future: everything about orchids, container gardening, herb gardening and flower arranging. We are also planning on touring a vanilla farm to learn about how it is grown and harvested, and visiting the Else Kientzler Botanical Garden in Sarchi and a ceramic/pottery maker to learn how the pots and decorative items are made and how to care for them so they keep looking as good as the plant inside.

AT: Thank you so much for sharing all this information with our readers.

DH: You're very welcome. Folks can find out information about our meetings and trips by contacting: centralvalleygardenclub@gmail.com

Cattleya orchid photo from Bing.com public domain images.

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.

April 16, 2005

Hola Y' all,

Well the first thing I have GOT to tell you guys about is the CRAZY LOOKING lizzard we saw the other day!!!!

We were having dinner when Mom spots this really pretty bird flying by. Well Mom leaps out the window, (the windows are real low and real big) to go look at it!

While she is out there the waiter comes out to look too. His name is Mauricio and Mom sent a pic of him a while back cause he treats us perros really good and Mom thinks he is cute.

Anyway....while we were standing there looking at the bird, the waiter says, "Oh look!! This is so cute!" We looked where he was pointing and here comes this BIG LIZZARD!!!! He was running right toward us!!! ON HIS HIND LEGS!!!

MAN!!! That was REALLY something to see!!!!

He is about two feet tall standing up!!!

He ran past us and then climbed a tree. Dad came running out with Mom's camera and she got a picture of him up in the tree. She went on the internet to see if she could find a picture of one running and she did!! They are called "Jesus Christ lizzards" because they can run that way on WATER!!!

They are SOOO NEAT!!!

Their real name is Basilisk. They are named after some mythical monster because they are really scary looking.

Now I gotta tell you about the little street dog Lluvia. (pronounced Zyoovia)

She has really made herself right at home here. She LOVES living at our house and Demon Dog Delilah has finally met her match!!!!!!!!!!

Lluvi doesn't give her a minutes rest. YAAAAAAAAYYYYYYYYYY!!!!!!!!!!!!

That little demon Delilah has run me ragged and now Lluvia is giving her some of her own medicine!!

Of course, I have to get in on some of the fun too!! Lluvia is a real sweetie.

She has learned to use the doggie door and has not had an accident in the casa!! Pretty smart huh? Mom is teaching her "sit," "down," and "stay."

All us Lighthouse babies know those words. Mom says sit and you can hear a muffled THUMP as all the fuzzy butts hit the floor!! LOL!!!

When Mom was in the States she brought back two kites. One for Dario and one for Javiercito. Today was really windy so Enid came out with the boys to fly the kites!! They had a really good time in our front garden!!!!!!

Today Mom went to Cajon (pronounced Cah-hone) and got Miryanna and Noellia. They are little human friends of ours.

Noellia is a special child and Krystal REALLY loves her. Noellia loves all animals and just loves to be with them. So does Miryanna. We like them too!!! They like to come here and play with us, watch movies, eat popcorn, and spend the night.

We all went to dinner tonight. Javiercito and Dario went with us!! Javiercito, (he is a little bitty guy) was saying how tall he is going to grow to be.

Then we went to the video store. Mom got Lady and the Tramp for the kids to watch!!

Mom ESPECIALLY likes dog movies.

I wonder why!!

Hasta luego everybody!!

From BudBud the Lizzard watcher!!

Small-Scale Community Way of Life



by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com

It is my great fortune to have been born into a family (on my mother's side) that, while not financially successful, possessed great intellectual curiosity. They valued education above almost everything else, which helps explain why most of my maternal relatives became educators. This was a wonderful bonus for me because mid-term vacation meant spending time with cousins whose parents were also on vacation from their employment at their local school.

One of my fondest memories is of spending time with one of these relatives whose children were close in age to my siblings and me. They lived on a large coffee plantation in Desamparados, San José that also had many orange trees. My great uncle (the Dad) was a teacher and a pretty good violinist who liked nothing better than to nurture us. I can still see him going out to pick oranges to make the juice he would serve to us every morning. While I cannot claim I loved the orange juice (preferring the whole fruit), I always appreciated the fact that he *sacrificed* his time in order to serve us, to be hospitable. He

seemed joyful to do it and I believe I began then to study the behavior of other adults to ascertain whether being of service to others was a natural consequence of being an adult. By the time I was a teenager, I had come across many adult narcissists who challenged this original hypothesis; that however, is a story for another day.

My son, his fiancée and two of their friends were recent visitors to Atenas. Because they were here for only a few days, we packed in as much sightseeing as possible. One of the trips I was happily included in was to the spectacular La Paz Waterfall Gardens Nature Park in Vara Blanca, not very far away from home. The co-existence of rain and cloud forests is really quite wonderful to see and experience.

Once inside the Nature Park, my son and his two friends decided to visit the waterfalls that line the trails while Sarah and I opted to visit the Big Trout Bar and catch up over some refreshments. I always forget how sketchy service at any restaurant in Costa Rica is (whether the place is crowded or empty) so I was very pleased that our waiter came right away and our order was taken quickly and we were soon engaged in our animated conversation.

By my modest estimate, Sarah and I sat and talked while nursing our drink for over an hour. Not once did

our waiter come over to see whether we needed or wanted anything else. In fact, when my son texted that they were ready to meet us, I mentally added up what I thought we owed, left it on the table, signaled the waiter and Sarah and I went to meet our party! Since he didn't come running after us, I suppose I calculated generously.

The service and hospitality industry in Costa Rica is often sadly lacking. It is my nature to give people the benefit of the doubt so I assume that our waiter noticed we were absolutely absorbed in our conversation (which we were) and needed nothing. Still I was disheartened because bad service is practically the norm unless you are a regular diner at favorite restaurants.

A 2013 Travel and Tourism report cites Costa Rica's lack of cultural sites as a weakness in our competitiveness in terms of attracting international tourists. The ICT (Costa Rican Tourist Board) seems to recycle its programs every few years (in my opinion and personal experience!) in an effort to remind Ticos that we need to create tours that focus on local strengths rather than the beauty of the beaches and the vibrancy of our natural wildlife since those particular gifts are also present in other (cheaper, friendlier) Central American countries.

I remember that my aforementioned great uncle Trino used to take us on simple hikes through his coffee plantation. We would bring sandwiches, natural fruit drinks and a blanket and find a place

to eat lunch while playing cards or singing songs. These uncomplicated outings remain my most vivid memories of being a child in this country.



Cousins Javier, Patricia, my sister Lilliana and me circa 1960

Other outings with Uncle Trino were more educational. He took us to the Cachi hydraulic plant in Cartago in 1967 during our first visit to CR since our departure to New York in 1963. Although he filled our day with facts and numbers, all I can remember is the absolute enthusiasm with which he boasted about this powerful project and how proud he was of his country.

Uncle Trino's coffee plantation in Desamparados has probably been turned into a residential subdivision. I have not had the courage to find out. As an avid nature lover, I am sure he would be very disappointed to see what has happened to Escazú, Santa Ana and even tiny Atenas. As a Tico, though, he would never have violated his identity as an educator and pacifist by speaking out forcefully against any progress but would have sought a way to look for a compromise that would ensure our small-scale community way of life despite all the changes in the world at large. It would include a focus on service and hospitality too!

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.



**Blue Macaw
8"x10" Watercolor**

Artist's Statement: I saw this bird at the Orchid Garden and tried to capture its essence in a quick watercolor.

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



"Pork and Coffee beans"
32" x 32"
acrylic on gallery wrapped canvas.

Diana F. Miskell
Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com
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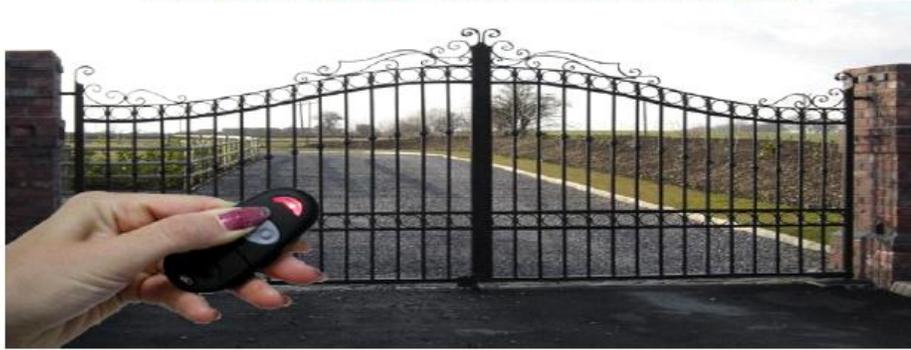
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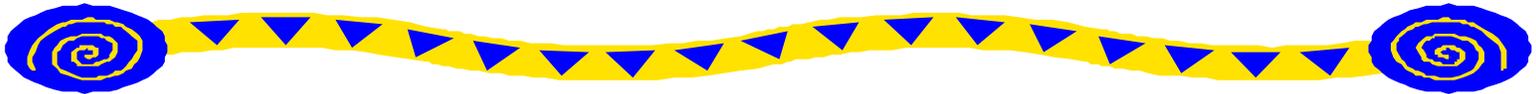


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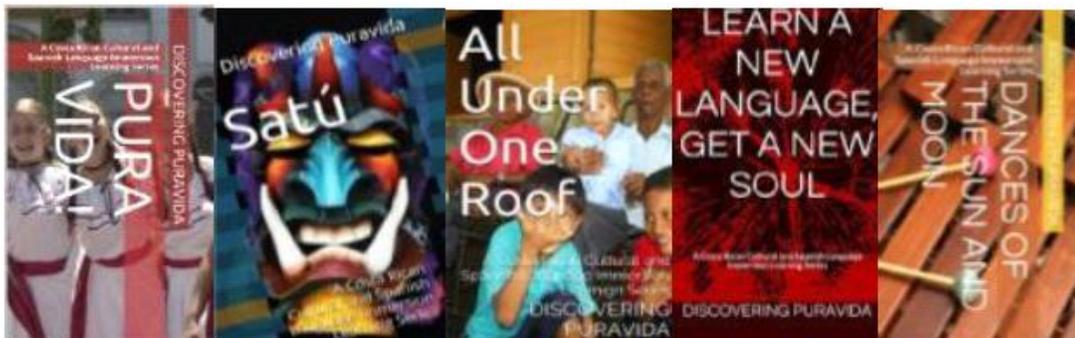
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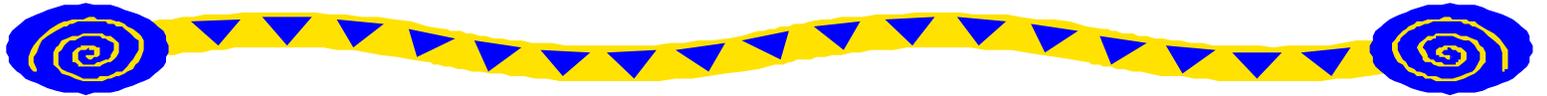
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