

HOW TO READ ATENAS TODAY

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

THE NEW YELLOW PAGES

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

ATENAS TODAY

Issue No. 89

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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 400 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 archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, www.atenascatuca.com. Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.



DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

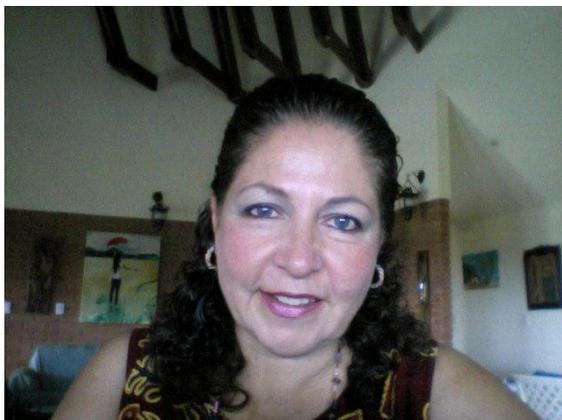
New names and numbers have been added to the directory. With each issue Atenas Today subscribers will receive an updated file containing the names and contact information of people who have chosen to be listed. Simply download the PDF file attached to this Atenas Today email and print it or save it on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

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

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Publisher's Note



The whole year is full of action but never more so than when the U.S. enters into summer vacation! Many expats are headed home for the summer, and many of us are expecting family and friends from the States to visit us here.

We welcome all of these transitions because in general May is the month of transition. A few days of Nature's rain lays down the lush and green carpet we are unable to procure during the dry season even with the most dedicated watering! Corn is being planted everywhere and we can expect that August will find us all eating more than our share of 'chorreadas'!

The 7th edition of the annual Climate Fair and Oxcart Parade at the end of April were tremendously successful. We thank each and every one of you who came out to support and visit the CATUCA booth. We reap many intangible rewards from the pro-bono work we undertake each year and we invite you to contact us if you would like to

join us in future events.

I was recently in the company of a young exchange student from Europe. She has been living in different parts of our country for the last few months. She remarked that she found Atenas to be quite unique and that she hopes to be able to return after she has finished school.

I was pleased, but not surprised, by the list of things she felt made Atenas different. After living here for ten years, I have become accustomed to the diversity, kindness and hospitality abundant 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.

May 21st, 28th 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. ART CLASSES with Mary Park. Please call or email June 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th to: mandgpark@shaw.ca; 8330-3274

May 22nd, 29th - Atenas Bridge Club meets at the new, renovated Don Yayo's Restaurant.
June 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th Noon-3:00 p.m. No partner required.

May 23rd (Please confirm with Sara or Kay 2446-0664) and
June 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

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

May 23rd, June 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th Recycling in Atenas from 8 a.m. 2 p.m. at the Plaza in front of the Central School, near the basketball court.- Recycling of aluminum, metal, plastic, paper, cardboard NO ELECTRONICS, STYROFOAM or EGG CARTONS Please rinse and separate your recyclables before dropping them off. Thank you for your continued efforts in this campaign.

June 1,2 The Now Technique at Vista Atenas B&B (see classified ad)

June 8, 9th Embody Awareness at Vista Atenas B&B (see classified ad)

June 12th - Writer's Club meets at Colinas del Sol, at Noon. Contact L. Michael Rusin @ crcaseyboy@gmail.com (2451-8063) for more information.

June 12th 3 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Kay's Gringo Postres. Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

June 17th - Happy Father's Day to all the dads!

June 18th - PLEIN AIR - A group of people with curious minds who meet the 3rd Monday of every month at a different location to explore and express their creativity through visual art and writing. Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or janyatsko@ice.co.cr to find out where we have been and where we are going.

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT www.atenaslife.com FOR OTHER REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES.

Global Warming influences elevation shifts in the distribution of animals and plants: hummingbirds are among the first ones to experience the impact.



Dr. Gerardo Avalos, Director, Center for Sustainable Development Studies, The School for Field Studies, Atenas, Costa Rica.

One of the most evident and immediate consequences of global warming is the rapid shift in distribution ranges of plant and animal species. There is recent highland habitat colonization by species usually found in lowland environments. The recent arrival of the Keel-billed Toucan to Monteverde is one of many examples. Bats are also experiencing some elevation changes in their distribution, and are moving up. The consequences of such changes in the abundance and distribution of plants and animals are basically unknown, although we may predict local extinctions in the short term, especially of species with small distribution ranges and very specialized habitat requirements. We also expect that species that depend on transient resources such as flower nectar will be the first ones to be impacted by global warming. Mountain areas serve as a refuge for lowland species, as they remain relatively cooler in comparison to lowland habitats during times of climate change.

Hummingbirds will be among the first species to respond to these changes due to their high metabolic requirements for food resources, especially nectar.

Hummingbirds have a considerable capacity to adapt almost instantaneously to changes in the spatial and temporal distribution of nectar. Some species consume several times their body weight in nectar, and also rely on small insects to complement their diet (thus the old joke "you eat like a hummingbird" is not really a compliment; it means that you eat a ton!) It is common to see hummingbirds stealing insects from spider webs. They need the protein, but their fuel comes from sugar.

Last April, I had the chance to observe the Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) foraging on flowers of Giant Thistle *Cirsium subcoriaceum* (Asteraceae) at Cerro de la Muerte, at 2,900 m of elevation on the Caribbean side of the continental divide. The Long-billed Hermit is a characteristic lowland rainforest species, and within Costa Rica, it is typically found in the humid lowlands of the Caribbean and South Pacific slope from sea level up to 1,200 m. This is your classic tropical hummingbird, and as such, it has been the classic subject of studies on bird pollination and bird-plant coevolution in the Tropics. It uses a feeding strategy called "traplining", which consists in following a route of flowers, rarely returning to the same flower patch in one day. As a group, hermit hummingbirds have curve beaks; have less flamboyant plumage as their non-hermit relatives

(which usually have more metallic colors and short, straight beaks), and are sluggish and sometimes lazy, since they do not defend flower resources. Hermits build their nests hanging from the tip of palm leaves (see the attached photograph), usually laying two eggs. As the chicks increase in size, their beaks also increase in length. Female hummingbirds feed them with a nectar soup sprinkled with insect body parts. Male hummingbirds do not help rearing the young. The Long-billed Hermit is a typical trappiner, ranging from central Mexico, Central America, to the tropical rainforest of northwestern Colombia, extremely western Venezuela, western Ecuador and Peru, and Amazonian Bolivia and Brazil.



Nest of the Long-billed Hummingbird with two babies at San Ramón Biological Reserve.

What is a lowland rainforest species doing at Cerro de La Muerte?

Cerro is dominated by oak forests and páramo ecosystems. Temperatures range from 25°-0°C, and may approach -5°C before dawn and 28°C at midday during the dry season. The dry season lasts from November-April, and the wet season reaches a peak during September-October. At the end of the dry season there is a blooming peak for most hummingbird-pollinated plants. The Caribbean side of Cerro de la Muerte has closed, continuous forests, buffered by Tapantí-Macizo de la Muerte National Park and Rio Macho Forest Reserve. The maintenance of continuous biological corridors between the highlands and the lowlands will be critical in the near future for the conservation of lowland species. Although trappining hummingbirds have been traditionally considered incapable of thriving in the highlands (mainly because of high energy requirements associated with withstanding low temperatures), temperature increases in the lowlands (combined with habitat loss) may push some species out of their normal ranges into the highlands, where they could benefit from transient peaks in nectar resources.

This is one sign of what we do is linked in many subtle ways to the natural world. Our consumption patterns and the way we related to the land is becoming the most important selective pressure on biodiversity.

Eating Around the World



*By Theresa Fulton
tf12@cornell.edu*

I travel quite a bit to Europe and Africa, and upon arriving back on US soil am always disheartened to immediately notice all the overweight people in the airport. This is just something you do not see abroad (yet), but recently it does seem that Costa Ricans are also increasing in size. I wonder how much longer the country can hold on to its reputation for having some of the longest-living people, once heart disease and diabetes starts taking over! I love traveling and trying local foods, and this has made me more aware of the differences in living and eating habits among different countries.

When I was in France recently, I was struck by, yes, the good food, but also the many food “no-no’s” (according to what we hear in the US): Red wine for lunch and dinner, even at business meetings. Plenty of cheese and eggs. People strolling down the street munching on foot-long baguettes. In short, everything we are told to avoid! Moreover, there is little formal exercise, never a fitness center in the hotel. Yet whenever one sees an obese person it is invariably an American – it seems so unfair! What is going on? One major

difference I noticed was the portion sizes. A person from the US would scream at paying the price of a good dinner and receiving a portion of fish the size of your fist (which is actually what a portion is supposed to be). But the food is SO good there that you feel completely satisfied without eating piles of food.

Last month I was in the Netherlands for 2 weeks (teaching crop improvement and plant genetics to a group of African scientists) and was somewhat dumb-founded at the food there as well – meat, meat and more meat! Now I’m not a vegetarian but I tend not to eat a lot of meat, so I was quite disconcerted to be served a big slab of meat at every meal, and was mentally counting calories while at the same time wondering – how do they do it? The only vegetable would be one spear of over-cooked asparagus or two little tiny potatoes. Beer is more popular there than wine, big frosty mugs of it, and it is even available in the vending machines! But there are no fat people there either! There the key seems to be exercise – every road has both a bike lane and a walking lane. There was no fitness center at the hotel, but there were miles of walking trails on the grounds and bikes for rent. Bikes are everywhere. I walked the 3 miles into town one day (it was the Queen’s birthday festival, so we had a day off) and whole families were biking. Downtown there are entire parking lots just for bikes (and nobody locks their bikes, and nobody has their bike stolen, but that is a different topic!). Given the great weather in Costa Rica, what a shame the lack of safe biking and walking lanes is! Think how we could be getting exercise, enjoying the weather,

while cutting down on pollution and gas use!

In the US (and CR seems to be catching up) the perception of food seems to be quantity rather than quality. For example, soda sizes have more than doubled in the last 50 years. Restaurant portions far exceed what a healthy portion size should be. At all-you-can-eat buffets people typically fill their plates to overflowing and then go back for more (because you want to get your money's worth, right?). And since when are french fries and mayonnaise part of "typical Costa Rican" food? Yet the news is full of the latest diet craze or culprits – which foods are to blame for the rise of obesity. Too much sugar, the wrong kind of fat, too many carbs, too much meat, etc. etc. People want to find something to blame for their weight, without having to take responsibility that maybe they need to approach the problem differently.

I'd like to suggest that we have lost the art of "mindful eating" – we don't respect our food for the nutrition it is giving us and take the time to appreciate the flavor. We are eating more and more trying to fulfill a need that isn't real hunger. We try to blame some specific food for making us fat. Try thinking a bit about your food today. Take a bite and savor it. Think about if you are really hungry versus just unsatisfied. Try a new flavor. Have that glass of wine or even that hamburger if that's what you want. But appreciate it, enjoy it, and know when you've had enough.



A bike parking lot in the Netherlands.



A road in the Netherlands with bike lane and pedestrian lane.

Screw Self Growth - A foodie's journey into the present moment



by Suzanne Mark
Suzanne@thenowtechnique.com

Ok, so we have done all of the self growth stuff, we have "let go" until the cows come home, we've gone on retreats, we've chanted our mantras until we are high, we've "tapped" ourselves into oblivion, we know "the Secret", we've turned our bodies into giant sweaty pretzels, we can talk to our angels, we've healed our trauma. Yes, some of us may EVEN know the name of our "inner child" in Hawaiian.

But let me ask you. Are you any more "in the moment" than when you started with all of this weirdness? Really? Don't get me wrong, as the guilty party, I am not pointing any fingers, but I have started to think...what IS the damn point of all of this self-indulgent navel gazing?? EnLIGHTenment? Are we any lighter? Are we enjoying life more? Are we "living juicy"?

Ask yourself: Are you SICK of the ever-shifting and illusory goal of SELF GROWTH? What the *hell* does it mean? How much does the "self" have to grow until we just allow it to RELAX and HAVE FUN?

Personally, I think that you can start having fun right now, with the help of the most constant and ubiquitous tool of all. FOOD.

Think about it. Food is a constant, like oxygen -- it is something that we need every day and that

closely defines our relationship with life. Are you allowing yourself to be nourished by life? Do you nourish others? Or maybe you are always running to the next goal, and the next idea of some somewhere that you have to GET to. Ooof. Personally, I am tired of it. I am rebelling against all voluntarily imposed angst. (Can I do that?) But really, just where IS there to GET in life???

Food IS life. (Just ask someone who doesn't have any.) As the most common denominator, it defines families, cultures, religions and nationalities. It tempers characters and unites the world.

Because of this, I think that food is an extremely effective healing tool. Simply put, it shows us where we will not allow ourselves to be loved or to love ourselves. Food IS love. A healthy relationship with food and shopping for, preparing and sharing food with friends and loved ones, allows us to have earthy, simple goodness in our lives. Isn't THAT what enlightenment is really all about?

So...here goes. I am going to share my food journey to enlightenment with you. Maybe, it will help me lighten up, enjoy the moment and stop taking life so seriously. I am game for that.

Are you?

Suzanne

P.S. Embrace the present moment – make soup.

P.P.S. These articles are apt to be somewhat random, get ready.

Questions? Comments? You can email Suzanne at Suzanne@thenowtechnique.com

Paradise, Sweet Paradise



by Dennis Easters easters3@msn.com

A few years back, I met Tom and Jan Yatsko at our local feria (farmers' market), when I spotted their stand of homemade baked goods. As a family, we are suckers for good quality baked goods, so we were more than eager to try a sampling of amazing products that we had been unable to find in our little town of Atenas. We were in heaven. I remember Tom had an amazing variety of fresh baked breads, cakes, pies, cookies, and sweet rolls. The first things we tried were the carrot cake with cream cheese icing and the sticky rolls. Needless to say, they were both amazing. In addition to producing a high quality product, I was impressed with the service and pride that the Yatskos' took in their budding business. You could see it not only in the products themselves, but in the expressions on their faces, and in the manner in which they interacted with their clients. However, the thing that most impressed me was that they spoke both English and Spanish! Being an entrepreneur myself, I knew that they had everything they needed to succeed in their new venture.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Tom and Jan discovered Costa Rica in the 1990's through their passion for cycling with a group from Washington State. They had made similar trips to Mexico and Belize, but they fell in love with Costa Rica. The cycling group stopped their trips to Costa Rica, but Tom says, "We kept coming back, year after year". For Tom, who worked in the restaurant business back in Pennsylvania, Costa Rica made perfect sense. He could take extended vacations in January and February when the winter stopped tourism back home and head south to soak up the tropical sun! "At one point we decided to take a one year sabbatical. We justified the break by saying we would learn the language and culture." Tom continues by saying, "After that first year we decided that we

did not want to go back home because we loved our life in Costa Rica".

For three months, Tom and Jan did a Spanish language course with home exchange in Zapote, a suburb of San Jose. They knew they did not want to live in the area because of the cold, dreary, rainy climate. One of the professors from the school, being from Atenas, suggested that the couple check out the small mountain town, offering a personal tour. However this was not the first time Tom and Jan had been to Atenas. On one of their biking tours through Costa Rica, they had ventured to Atenas via the steep and winding mountain road known as the Aguacate (Highway 3) from Orotina, stopping in Atenas for lunch. Tom says, "We loved it! It felt nice. Like home". There were other reasons for choosing Atenas. Jan said, "Atenas was half way between San Jose and the coast", offering country living with an amazing climate and lots of sunshine. The idea of "no more winter clothes" was exactly what the couple was looking for. "That was 13 years ago and we have been here ever since."

The idea of moving to a foreign country is one thing but starting a business and making a living is another ball game altogether. Tom says, "The process of starting a new life in a foreign country is dramatic and life changing. Some things are wonderful, and others not so much. That forces you to adapt, be more flexible, and less rigid. It makes you more understanding." Tom adds, "It also changes your attitude." Tom went on to say "We found opportunities to work and live our life in Costa Rica." At first Tom was an international recruiter, sending Costa Rican workers back to Pennsylvania for seasonal work. However, when the US government scrapped the temporary work visa program, that opportunity dried up. At that point Tom and Jan made a personal inventory and check list of what they could do to

earn a living. According to Tom, "Everything was related to the food business. Jan suggested that the local feria would be a good place to start. Our first inclination was towards catering but once we were at the feria, we found a great response from the locals for our products, so that is where we put our efforts." *Buen Pan Tomas* was born.

For Tom, having an extensive background in the hospitality and restaurant business, and a love for baking, made this venture a no brainer. One of his jobs was as a third shift baker for a family run business. Tom says he got the job by saying, "I know the difference between flour and sugar and I am a fast learner". Tom continues by saying, "I always liked baking. When I did other jobs I always missed the hands-on part of baking. It's magical. At the end of the day its nice to look at what you created and feel a sense of accomplishment." I made an immediate connection with this sentiment because this is how I have been motivated throughout my life, both personally and professionally.



Starting *Buen Pan Tomas* was like starting any other business. Tom told me as with most small businesses, the process can be "difficult and cumbersome. It can be scary because you don't want to make mistakes." However, Tom stresses that you shouldn't be afraid to "TRY IT" and "learn as you go". He adds, "It is a process of hard work! It's not a Monday thru Friday, 9-5 job." Getting the support of the local expat community was easy because they were familiar with the products and Tom and Jan were filling a niche that was missing in the small community of Atenas. However, winning the locals over was a different challenge, and that had been their mission all along. Jan said that "learning" was a major key in winning over the locals. For example,

knowing that when Costa Ricans drink their coffee, they like both sweet and salty treats as accompaniments. Round bread is not common here, but Jan noticed that around communion time, the locals would buy the round loafs of bread because it was what was described in the Bible. Tom added, "locals were not used to seeing baguettes displayed vertically in a basket. Here they are displayed horizontally", so he added a few baguettes horizontally at the base of the basket. Little by little Tom and Jan learned to market to the locals and won them over with samples and "word of mouth". Tom says a major key to doing business in Costa Rica is "perseverance".



Today, Tom and Jan feel that they have been warmly welcomed and accepted by the local community. In regards to working with locals, both as clients and as business owners, their experience has been positive. They both feel that they have worked hard and earned the respect of their peers at the local ferias. Jan says that in the beginning, "I think they did not think we would last, as we were perceived as being retired. We have now earned the respect of the Costa Ricans because they know that what we do is hard work. We have given them a different perspective from what they had of foreigners". Jan will often say to clients, "By purchasing our bread, you put bread on our table". As for having local employees, Tom says you have to be a "responsible employer". There are some cultural differences, for example, finding out that an employee needs Tuesday off for a doctor's appointment on Monday afternoon at 5 p.m.! Tom's response, "We will figure it out". Tom also credits being flexible and creating an environment where people enjoy what they do, which makes for happy employees.

Buen Pan Tomas offers a wide array of artisan baked goods and breads, priding themselves on the fact that everything is homemade from scratch, without the use of mixes or preservatives. Their whole wheat product line includes: sourdough bread, fig and walnut bread, oat, flax, and sunflower seed bread, 5 grain bread, 100% whole wheat bread and soft pretzel bread (also known as iguana bread - so called because of the ridges that are created from cuts across the dough, before baking, resembling the spiny back of an iguana).



Tom points out that iguanas are not part of the ingredients for the iguana bread! In addition to their whole wheat bread selections, *Buen Pan Tomas* turns out other breads such as focaccia, French baguettes, and white Italian bread. On the sweet side, *Buen Pan Tomas* offers apple pies, tropical fruit pies, cinnamon buns (which are their flagship product), cobblestones (which are a new version of the traditional cinnamon roll), sticky buns with almonds and caramel (which I am eating along with my cup of afternoon joe as I write this story), cookies, eclairs, lemon pound cake (made with Costa Rican heirloom lemons), carrot cake with cream cheese frosting (Gerardo's favorite), and a chocolate cake made with Bavaria Dark beer, a Costa Rican beer that Tom says, "combines great with the coco". One of my favorite treats is their Saguata muffin,

which is a bread pudding muffin. But the name? Well, Saguata is Costa Rican for "mutt". Tom says everything that's left over gets put together, fruit is added and you have a tasty muffin! Product prices start from as little as 700 colones for single buns and cookies, up to 4800 colones for an apple pie. Breads range from 1300 to 2000 colones.



So, what does the future hold for Tom and Jan? Tom says he is an "optimist" and is always looking for new opportunities. *Buen Pan Tomas* has recently expanded by offering some their products in our local grocery store, CoopeAtenas. In addition, they sell to local restaurants like The Galeria in Grecia, as well as the coffee shop at the new AutoMercado in Alajuela. Tom comments that, "Costa Rican society is becoming more connected technologically speaking. Costa Ricans are looking beyond their traditional borders and the middle class is growing here in Costa Rica. Because they have more income, the locals are wanting to expand their horizons and try new things." One client said to Tom and Jan, "That is the apple pie I saw in the movies, I want to try it!" This is a great sign and I instantly see why Tom is "optimistic about the opportunities in Costa Rica".





If you want to tickle your taste buds, Tom and Jan can be reached via their new Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Buen-Pan-y-Mas-Superb-Bread-in-Atenas/190006714434070> or call them at 2446-4764 / 8306-9767. You will also find them at the feria in Atenas on Friday mornings from 6 a.m. to 11a.m. under the white tent next to the basketball court. Friday afternoon starting at 2 p.m. and Saturday momings from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. they can be found at the feria in Grecia. Special orders can be made upon request.



The Cross

By
Paul Furlong

*Lord,
Please accept this no bullshit man,
Make him new, that we may know his face
when it's our turn,*

Amen



People do the damndest things. In 1998, I took a job with Motorcycles Costa Rica here in Barrio Mercedes. We were based out of "Villas de la Colina," and enjoyed the blessings of the Suarez family who owned and operated it. Rolando, Elsa, Tania, Sabrina and Barlon Suarez became our extended family and the core of our lives in Costa Rica.

Soon my personal friends began to visit and make an annual pilgrimage to Costa Rica for my motorcycle tours. It became something special that we all looked forward to. Then the unimaginable happened, allow me to quote myself;

"Seven years went by. We put a floor in the shop, bought more bikes; there were torrents, mud, injuries and laughter. During the season it was common to take ten riders out for a week, come home, change tires, kick the bikes straight and go out the next day with ten more riders. The business grew and there was great satisfaction in the tiny tributary that was Motorcycles Costa Rica.

One day, we lost a friend on his first trip down. A tear in the fabric... Greg hit a truck and died. The ambulance came... we prayed... we implored a re-set to an empty sky... and changed the tour to an easy ride; all that was left to do."

One by one, my New Jersey friends caught their flights home and life settled on

us like a gray blanket over sunny Costa Rica.



One afternoon, Dale, from our Ohio crew, (who tended to rent our motorcycles and stay longer), said if I wanted to make a monument, he would help me. Thus began the muse.

We found a man in the barrio to donate the wood and cut it for us. He picked a wood that would last a hundred years and refused to take my money. Each of the two planks are bolted through a countershaft sprocket that was Daytona gearing for a Kawasaki H1R back in '71. I found a gold anodized rear sprocket for a crown and a chain to use for "hair." Each of us put something of ourselves into it. Tania drew a beautiful set of dolphins to represent Greg's time in the Submarine Service. Dale was handier with my Dremel tool than I, and inscribed Greg's service as a Major in the New Jersey State Police. Then he put the dolphins on the left arm of the cross. Mathew, who accepted life's ups and downs as the products of unalterable destiny, bore witness to each stage of construction. You can tell I did the prayer and didn't plan it out right. I guess that's what makes things like this, "folk art."

When the cross was done and dry,

and with Transito permission, we bought a sack of concrete mix and dug a hole just off the road where Greg's slate gray eyes got their last look.



Mathew on left, Dale and me



From left, Tania, Mathew, Can't See, Dale and Gaby

Fast Eddie must have passed the hat back home, because he invited my family and I to attend the next Colorado 500 where we sprinkled the dust of a fallen friend who we thought would live forever. We brought some home with us for a spreading of our own.

The Colorado 500 is a chance to see people you haven't seen in far too long. We became a floating delegation of Greg's

friends, a face or two drifting in coloring each moment with quiet respect or wry humor. We met Irene, a good cop's wife. She watched him strap his gun on in the morning and take it off when he got home. She saw that he rode with the fastest guys and accepted that was the man she married. Irene wasn't surprised when she finally got that phone call. There were no incriminations. No law was brought to bear, no lawyers on standby. For his part, Fred never said a word about the bike we lost or cost to repair the truck. People like these just do what's right and stay quiet about the consequences.



One never knows... some joker put training wheels on Sumner's (blue shirt) bike. Probably The Fast one holding the camera



Pictures of Greg's friends at the Colorado 500 Fast Company. Father Ed Williams and son, Donnie Williams in the foreground, both Champions. Moving in, good rider Roland, ex-champion Fast Eddie Moran and ex-champion Sumner McKnight.



That's Greg, on the right



Left to right: Irene Stith, daughter Andre wife, Gaby, JB, Fast Ed (BO)



These are the mountains; these are the people with lives well led. Most of Greg's ashes are here.

A year went by with little fanfare or drama. Our friends returned with some

who hadn't made the year before. I had saved my ashes for this moment.



A year, a tear and a beer with Greg's friends

It became a habit of saluting Greg when I passed. I made sure there was a second of reverence even if the bike was dragging everything she had. I never made a deal out of it. Riders behind me never knew the cross was there. It was always special when Fast Eddie and I passed on the gas. Fact is, I believe we were showing off to Greg at times, as we passed on the edge of adhesion.

Over the years the varnish began to peel and the colors faded. Eddie and I split the cost to have it refinished a year ago.

Coming home from the pistol range the other day, I noticed the Cross was gone and rode back to see if I'd somehow misplaced it. I parked my bike and stepped over the steel barrier. There was the stub, sticking out of the ground.

I looked down the embankment, no cross. I looked for evidence that something had gotten through the barrier, no way. I got on my bike and rode home not knowing how to feel.



Like a broken tooth jutting from the ground, an eddy of mixed emotions

Why would someone steal a cross? Wavy Davy and Fast Eddie were having a beer in my kitchen the other day and I brought it up.

Eddie asked, "Didn't you ever do something like that when you were a kid?"

This question remains unanswered. Was there ever a time in my youth when I did things I'm ashamed of now? Yes, my life is dotted with things I did or said that I wish I hadn't. No one can make it through life without leaving a trail.

Are the cross and the words on it, making someone happy now? Is it the folk art part that a man with a good eye and a quart of whisky in him just had to have? I hope so. It wasn't thrown down the slope...where ever it is, it's gone, I expect in someone's house. I'll just have to be content that it's being appreciated.

Whoever it is, best keep his nose clean. Greg is mobile again and he was a major in the New Jersey State Police... don't want to make a man like that mad.

Atenas Today Interviews
Osmin Gonzalez & Marcial Rodriguez

Chef and Partners Café Cultura



AT: We recently visited **Café Cultura** located across the east side of Central Park in Atenas where we had a chance to speak with Osmin Gonzalez, partner and chef of this charming restaurant, coffee house and smoothie bar!

AT: Tell us a little bit about yourself, Osmin. Are you a native ateniense?

OG: Although I have spent many years living in other parts OF the country, backpacking even, I am from Atenas as are my parents. I've always wanted to come back to Atenas and be part of the restaurant sector. I was involved in the Café Gourmet some years ago and now I am back with Café Cultura. We have just celebrated our third month here.

AT: I do remember Café Gourmet; in fact, this is the same location, isn't it?

OG: Yes, it is. We have done some remodeling. As you can see, the original area where the garden was is now part of the restaurant so we have more seating capacity. We still have a small garden that can accommodate another 3 or 4 more tables.

AT: How did you get involved in the restaurant business?

OG: After high school, I became a student at INA (National Learning Institute) for Hotel and Hospitality but I owe my 'real' education to my mentor, Bill, with whom I worked in different places. He was my inspiration and taught me the kinds of things that were not being addressed at INA.

AT: The setting and the ambiance here are very welcoming. I see that in addition to being a restaurant, you are also displaying some art work and have a small area for souvenirs. Tell us about that.

OG: Displaying the art work was a practice we had even when this location was used for the Café Gourmet. Our intention is to give artists an opportunity to show their work in a setting that is relaxed. We hope that more artists will allow us to display their work since we think that it is beneficial all around. We have a small inventory of souvenir items because many visitors comment that they can't find items to bring home when they are in Atenas.



An assortment OF cOFFees and pastries

AT: We wish you lots OF success in this new venture. How have you been received in the community?

OG: We opened during the dry (summer) season and the opening met with tremendous support because there were many tourists visiting our town. We were serving brunch and had live music on Saturdays (we are closed on Sundays) That was a very popular activity which we hope to resume next season. Things have slowed down quite a bit now and we are looking for other ways to get people to come out and sample the many items on our menu.

AT: We noticed that you advertise one daily special (today it is chicken tikka mar-sala). What happens if a person doesn't care for chicken, for example?

OG: We try to keep a large variety of ingredients available and if a customer wants something different, I will always try my best to satisfy their requests. Our idea is that the customer has the last word but we also encourage our clients to try our special dishes. If they don't like them, we are willing to start again!

AT: Do you do all of the cooking yourself?
OG: Yes, I do. I chop, dice, and julienne everything fresh in the morning. It is important to tell you that all of our ingredients are organic and as fresh as possible and I would also like your readers to know that I make all of my own sauces. From my years in the restaurant business, I have some very good contacts and I can depend on my suppliers for quality and freshness. Our aim is to provide our customers with great quality at an affordable price.

AT: How do you describe the dishes that you serve as your specials?

OG: I really enjoy 'fusion' cuisine. I like experimenting with elements of different traditions so that the culinary experience is memorable and pleasing to the diner. I think that with Atenas' cultural diversity and sophistication, a different dining option has the potential to succeed. At least, we are counting on it!



Chicken Tikka Marsala

AT: Do you have any other plans that you wish to share with us? Perhaps using the space as a venue for music or private parties?

OG: Actually, we can accommodate about 50 people comfortably and we are consider-

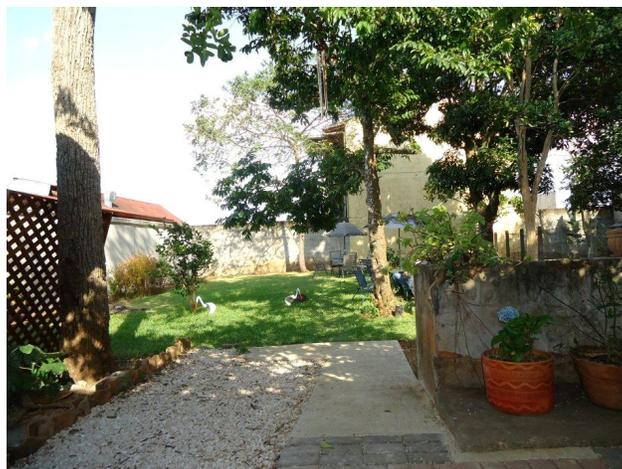
ing the possibility of offering cooking classes in the space in the future. Of course, the bureaucratic process is something we have to investigate, but we are hopeful that we will become a strong part of the community with our presence and our contribution to the town in the area of healthy gastronomy.



Front of Café Cultura

AT: Thank you, Osmin for spending this part of your day with us. I can see that customers are coming in now and your presence in the kitchen is needed!

OG: I am in the process of training a sous chef, but until then, I have to split my time between one thing and another. Please come again and invite your readers to join us also. We are open every day except Sunday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.



The Garden at Café Cultura

It's a Dog's Life...really!



by BudBud Jones

We made it to Costa Rica and I did Mom and Dad proud. I didn't bark or growl or anything the whole way!!

Things here are different. The dirt even smells funny. Mom says it is because it is from a volcano.

There are two other dogs here at the house. They are going with their humans to the states though so I will be the only fuzzibutt in residence. That is going to be a real change for me.

Mom and Dad are fine except Dad is going crazy with nothing to do!! He can't wait for the people to leave so he can get to work in the yard.

Mom feels kind of lost. She is not used to having only one fuzzibutt to care for. I'm getting MORE than my fair share of lovin'.

Today I made them laugh.

We were out walking on a dirt road near the house. I was trotting along with them when this man comes RUNNING toward us!!!!

Mom said "BudBud be nice. He is just jogging" but I figured HECK!!! We are in the woods!!! This guy may be a mass murderer or something else really bad so I ran at him and barked!!

He just kept running right on by us.

"Okay" I figured....."I scared him away."
(strut strut)

We walked a little further and ALL OF A SUDDEN he comes running toward us from behind!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

HOLY DOG POOP!!

I started barking and took off running. I ran really fast and barked LOUD!!!!.....problem was....I was ahead of him (blush).

It was pretty hard to convince Mom and Dad that I was chasing him "away."

I tried to convince them that I was "heading him off at the pass" but they didn't buy it.

Mom laughed and said it was okay to get scared now and then but I was still embarrassed!

hasta luego

BudBud



Dreams

You can never achieve anything without first dreaming about it.

You will never complete anything unless you first imagine it is yours.

To achieve a persuasion that comes to you in a dream you must imagine it is yours.

This is done by living it, imagining it, and by simply believing it. One day it will become a reality.

To achieve a dream we must first believe it is real. When it does become a reality and a part of who you are, remember, it all began with a simple thought, and then was brought to reality when you believed it could be real.

Never give up. Reach out there even if it seems to be impossible, for in a thought is the beginning of a dream, once achieved, it could alter your life forever more.

Be careful of what you dream. Once it comes to pass, it might be as sweet as a cup full of love or be as bitter as a jug full of vinegar.

Always remember, we are the Captain of our own ship, (our personal being), and we can steer it into a safe life's journey or simply drive it up onto the rocks to utter destruction.

It is our dreams that set us apart from all the others who are simply daydreamers, and without a true course. Knowing what we want, dreaming about it, imagining it is real, will ultimately turn a dream into reality for the dreamer. You have to want it bad enough to believe it is possible, and that's when the dream will come true.

I had dreams I desperately wanted to accomplish. Many were tedious, and at time appeared to be hanging out there beyond reach because of circumstances. I reached for those heady illusions and once I was able to capture one, it made me realize others could be had as well if I made just a little more effort. In a short while, once the first one was in my control, others came as well. At first it was a token accomplishment I was told I could never have, and then others began to fall into my net of dream catching.

It all starts with an idea that you dream about. After awhile the dream becomes reality, and you understand what it was you needed to do to have those things you want or need. After you reach a level of understanding in your own mind what once was obscured to you becomes clear as a newly washed pane of glass. There are no dreams too big or too un-attainable if you want them. You simply have to want them bad enough.

L Michael Rusin
Author of the novel Avalon

TI COS tick differently ...



by Evelyn Levtchenko

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www.levtchenko-art.de

Abroad in general a couple of virtues are assigned to us Germans, such as punctuality, diligence and discipline. Hospitality and love for children, however, are reviewed as rather atypical of us. This difference in national identity and priorities can lead to an occasional misunderstanding of motives and behaviours.

For some time it had grown into a habit to us, on Fridays, after visiting the farmers' market, having lunch at an Atenas restaurant.

The food - not really cheap - but good; the atmosphere - stylish; and the owner himself kept coming to our table to welcome us.

Thus we got closer to each other, and one day we were invited to have "Gallo Pinto" together with the owner's family.

Of course we felt flattered, probably we were perceived extraordinary interesting and

likeable!

A day was quickly found, as well as the time, namely between 9 and 11 a.m. We chose 9, a good time for a second breakfast or lunch, whatever ... that's what we thought.

On the aforementioned morning there was a ritualized rush in our home: before leaving, the beds and dishes had to be done quickly and everything else had to be in the right place. As usual, we fought a war of words, because I had misplaced my glasses, and the cat had just puked on the carpet. As we - spruced up carefully - entered the car a few moments after, a last glance at the watch confirmed what we knew anyway: we would be on time!

That's what we were, indeed ... but - had we been mistaken about the day? ... or about the address? Obviously there was no one to expect us, because the meter-high iron gate was locked firmly. Also my shyly called "Uupääh" did not cause any

response. Nothing moved behind the dark, drawn curtains. Not even that ugly little mutt, whose yelping always got on our nerves, seemed to hear us. Little by little, our good mood began to crumble, as we crept around the house like two thieves, hoping to spot someone or something. Even the splendidly-tied bow adorning our present, lost confidence and slowly buckled laterally.

But all of a sudden there came help from an unexpected source - an elderly woman, the maid, as it turned out, unenthusiastically dragged herself uphill on the road. At our request, she let "el jefe" know that we were there. The very same appeared shortly thereafter out of the depths of his house, hiding his surprise with difficulty behind a friendly "buenos dias".

Somehow we could not get rid of a feeling of having done something wrong ...

The embarrassment of the moment lay like lead in our lungs, but the three of us frantically tried to conceal it: Our host asked us to come in and led us several times in a circle through his tiny garden. He called each little plant by its name and explained its peculiarities. We, however, avoided desperately asking for the whereabouts of "la Senora". Obviously at this early morning hour she was not yet presentable. Finally we were allowed to take a seat on those delicate little metal chairs on the terrace, joined by daughter and son, both grown ups, and that white, curly-haired cur,

that failed cross-breed of Woody Allan's sheep "Daisy" and a bootlicking freak. Still missing was "la Senora", but right at this moment she floated down the stairs. Her middle-aged face, still lightly crumpled by her pillow, - dressed by something between a Baby-doll and a ballet "tutu", she presented herself to her family and their guests. Which made impact, particularly on the two men!

The presence of "la Senora" finally broke the ice - her words bubbled like spring water from her cherry lips, and soon we knew everything about everybody in Atenas. Step by step, our initial restraint gave way to a loose "Pura Vida" happiness. Then, when the "Gallo Pinto" was served, we felt free and easy enough to dig in.

Cheerfully we set out for home around midday, not without our hosts' promise to visit us soon. After it had turned out that the early morning was not really suitable, we settled for coffee and cake in the early afternoon instead.

Naturally it meant a lot to me, to demonstrate us "Gringos" not to be fast-food-eaters only but gourmets as well! (Even though we aren't - we have got used to be considered Gringos - no one ever made a distinction.). For days I browsed through all available cooking and baking recipes, until I finally ran into "little Bavarian apple pies". Oh yes! That was it! Although somewhat complicated and

involved a lot of dishes, that would surely impress.

To leave nothing to chance, I developed a precise work plan and schedule. For a long time I had forgotten, that "time" is an entirely abstract concept to TICOS ... but I was wrong!: Just in time for the agreed hour a big car drove up, followed by a short sound of horns. Then four car doors opened. ... What was that? ... A flood of wild children welled out of them, crying out a terrifying war screaming. To me, everything became blurred. Probably in panic, I perceived them twice or even three times. With an enchanting smile on her face "la Senora" delivered her esposo's message, namely - for a "very important reason" he sends his apologies. Instead of him, her daughter and her nieces and nephews had come. By this she held a bunch of plastic-like flowers right out under my nose.

Commanded by my good education, I tried to keep "contenance". After a visual contact with my husband, who seemed to be grown stiff like a pillar of salt, I forced myself into a false smile and an artificial "no se preocupe" and "bienvenidos". By trivial "blablabla" I then led the guests through the garden to the terrace. Meanwhile, in silent agreement, my husband disappeared furtively, to make the house tight: under no circumstances should the wild horde pounce upon our high-quality leather furniture and knick-knacks.

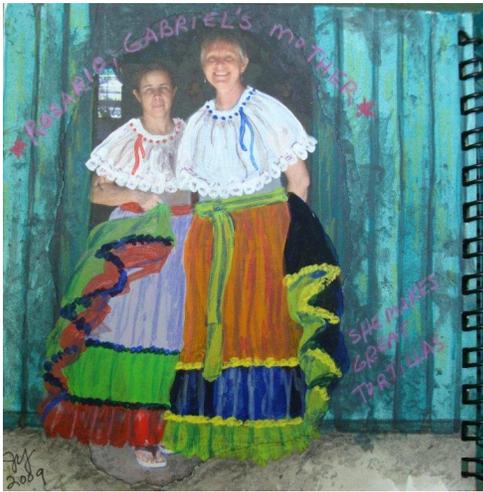
But this they didn't have in mind anyway, - rather all of them rushed upon the swimming pool. Only the monsters' lack of swimsuits, let us luckily escape from a water battle. It was enough to bear what else occurred to them: The boys chased behind our two Norwegian cats, while the girls fiddled about with our sliding doors in order to see, - what was inside the house.

Saying good bye, "la Senora" asked me to give her a doggie bag for her esposo - so to speak - as a little consolation prize, because he had not been able to come along. So, in the end - my little Bavarian apple pies turned out a success. I even must tell how to prepare them (but for me it was clear, she never ever would try it).

Well ... Ticos tick differently.

Thanks to my friend Patricia Graf for her support.

Is there a future for the Pencil?



By Jan Yatsko
janyatsko@ice.co.cr

Ulysses Grant, a US general, used a pencil to draw out his battle plans. Otto von Bismarck used one to press the tobacco into his pipe. Vincent van Gogh used a pencil to draw a woman sewing and discovered the pleasures of the black mark it left on the paper. Thomas Edison kept a pencil in his vest pocket to jot down his brightest ideas. Meriwether Lewis set out to explore the Louisiana Purchase with pencils. Henry David Thoreau, who wrote "Walden", was renowned for his pencil-making craftsmanship. John Steinbeck, author of "The Grapes of Wrath", used 60 pencils a day! Our history could have been different without the pencil.

Craftsmen have fabricated pencils in Stein, Germany for more than four centuries. Faber-Castell is the largest manufacturer of pencils in the world and they have been making them since 1761. The amount of pencils made each year equals half of the population of China (15-

20 million). Last year Faber-Castell's sales rose 6%, despite the recession.

The year 1839 marked the first innovation for the pencil. The great grandson of the founder of Faber-Castell decided to cut the pencil in a hexagonal shape to keep the pencil from rolling off of a table. Next, an eraser was attached to the end of the pencil. In 1990, watercolor pencils were introduced to the delight of children and artists.

The overseer of Faber-Castell was asked about the future of the pencil. His comments were that he sees a great opportunity to further refine the pencils to be stronger and more visually appealing. As far as the basic design, wood surrounding graphite, he said he doesn't see any changes within the next 10-15 years. When asked about the next 100 years, he laughed and said "that will be for the next generation to decide".

The pencil has so far outlasted the typewriter, the computer and the iPad. Artists know that drawing with a pencil is fundamental to seeing. Frederick Franck in his book "The Zen of Seeing" says that "what I have not drawn, I have never really seen and that when I start drawing an ordinary thing, I realize how extraordinary it is!"

Do you still use a pencil? How? Take a blank sheet of paper and list 25 uses for a pencil. Costa Rican artist, William Sánchez, believes that a blank piece of paper is full of "living possibilities". Think of how the pencil could be used in many situations and all kinds of possibilities appear, including the crazy creative ideas. Don't stop until you have reached 25! That is how Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. He made a list of crazy possibilities and tested each one until the light bulb was discovered.

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.



“Morning Flight”

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Oil on Linen

Al Alexander

jeanandal@gmail.com



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COURSE REGISTRATION: Contact Suzanne Mark at suzanne@thenowtechnique.com or at tel. 2455-0164 or 8517-3614
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