

## 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



**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 Fred Macdonald at [fredmac222@yahoo.com](mailto:fredmac222@yahoo.com).

Compositions from back issues are archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, [www.atenascatuca.com](http://www.atenascatuca.com). Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.

Issue No. 72

December 23, 2010

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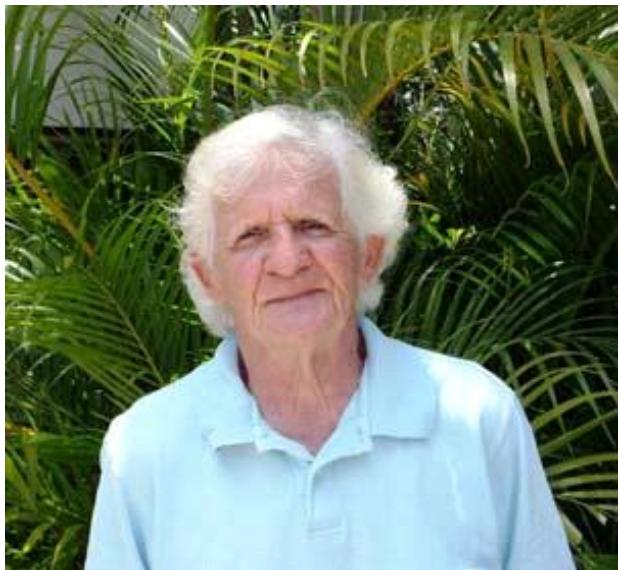
## DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

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 [fredmac222@yahoo.com](mailto:fredmac222@yahoo.com).

## Memories of Ron

An Interview with Ron Bell's wife, Hisano



AT: It was a great loss to all of us when your husband, Ron, died so suddenly. Thank you for talking with me and providing this picture of his life.

Hisano: We all miss him, and I want everyone to know what a great man he was: quiet, funny, a great-listener, and a passionate peace lover.

AT: What can you tell me about his early years?

Hisano: He was born into a poor Irish Catholic family in Elizabeth, New Jersey, one of fourteen children. Due to the circumstances he was in, he gave up on the idea of going to college. He loved learning from reading books. His younger sister once told me that he was always reading quietly at a corner, away from the other noisy siblings.

He worked to help his family until after high school, and then he joined the military to see the world. He was Marine for seven years, serving in Germany, Korea, and Japan. And after that he spent three years in the Army. It is ironic, because in his later life he was a total pacifist.

AT: Yes, several books he reviewed for this publication were about the evils of militarism.

Hisano: He hated bullies in all forms. He was a passionate idealist who wanted a better

world, and he studied history, politics, philosophy, literature, poetry, psychology, and theology searching for the answers.

AT: What did he do after leaving the military?

Hisano: He had been stationed in Japan and loved the country and its culture. He learned to read, write and speak Japanese. He married a Japanese woman, which made him leave Marines, they were not allowed to marry Japanese back then. So, he left Marine and they moved to California, where he went to college for a while. But as his love for Japan was so strong, in 3 years or so they moved back to Japan. For a while he taught English, but oh, he said he hated it, as the students were so dull, boring, no real conversations. He could not stand it. At the same time he went to Sophia University and got a B.A. from it. He then got a job as an editor at Weatherhill Publishing House in Tokyo, owned by an American, and eventually he worked for Mitsubishi Electric as the chief editor.

AT: Did that work suit him?

Hisano: He had the perfect temperament for interfacing between Japanese and Americans. The Japanese tend to avoid conflicts at all costs, and Ron had a way of helping them communicate without anyone losing face. He called himself their "international face-saver", and they paid him very well for working not many hours. It left him time to pursue his interest in Japanese history, poetry, literature and others. His book Japan Experience was published in Tokyo and was used even as a text book for university students. He was also known as a Haiku poet.

AT: When did you meet him?

Hisano: I had studied at the University of Washington and worked for Planned Parenthood in Seattle, then returned to Tokyo and started working for a company providing information about human sexuality. Ron was interested in Japanese sexuality and wanted to write a book

about it. We met at Annual Sex Educator's Convention and began to collaborate. He was 49 and in an unhappy marriage. I was 28 and rebelling against the strictures on women in the Japanese society. After a time he got divorced and we were married.

AT: When did you leave Japan?

Hisano: In 1991 we moved to California so that Ron could attend a graduate school called CIIS and get a graduate degree in clinical psychology. He was 60 years old, and in Japanese culture you are encouraged to become a child again at 60, so you can do what you want to do. What he wanted was to go to a grad school to study psychology, so I became the bread winner, working as an interpreter/translator. Ron went to school, worked as a counselor, and took care of our daughter, Meg. Three years later we had our son, Michael.

AT: How long were you in California?

Hisano: About eight years. Ron was a great listener and helped a lot of people. But we did not like the unsettled nature of Californian culture, with its lack of traditional family value. A friend mentioned the attractiveness of the Chapel Hill area of North Carolina, with its more traditional way of life and its ties to the intellectual communities of UNC and Duke, so we took a trip, liked it, bought a house, and sold our house in CA, and moved. We tended to be adventuresome and impetuous.

AT: How did it work out?

Hisano: Ron loved it. He taught classes at Duke Institute for Retired Learning and became part of an intellectual coffee shop group and NC Ethical Culture . I worked as a free-lance interpreter/translator mostly for a licensing company and traveled constantly. By 2007 I was ready to retire to become a stay-at-home mom and wife for the first time.

AT: Why didn't you retire in North Carolina?  
Hisano: It was too cold in the winter, and too hot in the summer, with lots of insects. And except for Ron's coffee shop community

we felt that life and relationships were way too individualistic for us and we wanted to live in a more genuinely welcoming community

AT: How did you happen to come to Costa Rica?

Hisano: We visited here first in 1996 and traveled all over the country. At that time the infrastructure in terms of roads, telephone, internet, etc. was not good, and we did not even think about it as a place to retire. But ten years later we came back because our daughter had bought property here, and it seemed much better. We rented a place in Grecia, but nearly froze to death. We were looking for a B&B kind of property and stumbled on this "fixer upper" in the Rio Grande area of Atenas. Ron and I and our son have been very happy here.

AT: Did Ron pursue his counseling in Atenas?

Hisano: Yes, he had half a dozen clients who will miss him. But mostly he continued his intellectual pursuits while I worked on fixing up the house and property.

AT: How did you find the community in Atenas?

Hisano: The Costa Ricans are wonderful, and the English-speaking people have a real community here. Ron would have liked more intellectual activity, and that probably would have developed as time went on. Unfortunately at age 79 his heart gave out.

AT: Are you planning to continue operating your vacation rental business?

Hisano: Yes, we have two units with kitchens for rent, plus some extra bedrooms. My mother is living here with us. This is our home now and we love living here.



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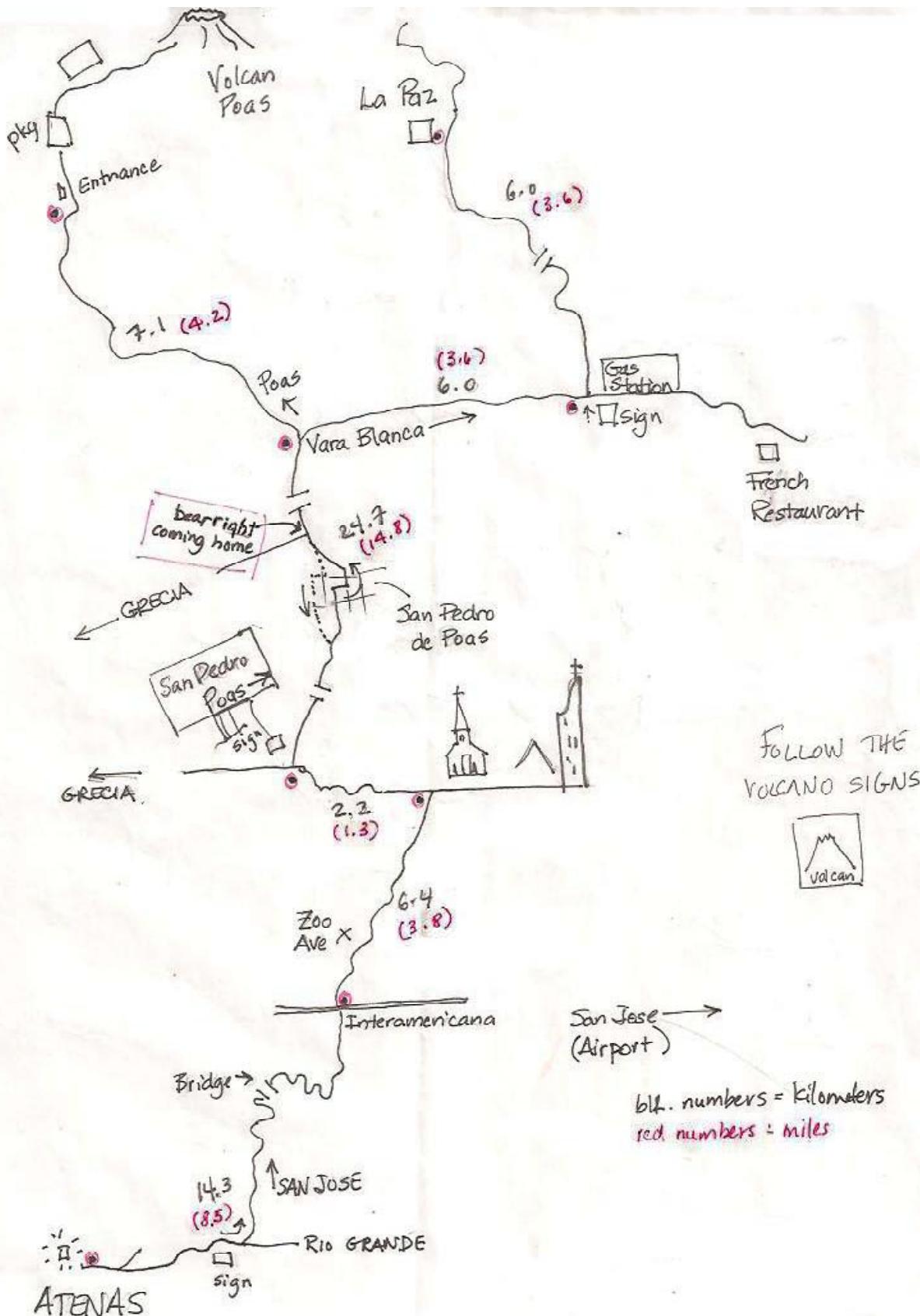
Peaceful Christmas days and a Happy 2011!

.....

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Con su ayuda podemos mejorar el destino de muchos perros y gatos!  
Juntos HACEMOS la diferencia! GRACIAS!

Contemplativos días de Navidad y un Feliz 2011!

# Take Your Visitors to Poas



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# 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.



"Peggy's Cove",  
Nova Scotia, Canada

Steve Wiens  
*sjwiens@gmail.com*

Tucan in my jungle garden

Evelyn Levtchenko  
*levtchenko.art@gmx.eu*





Morning at the Souk, Marakesh

Alice Constantine  
[www.aliceartworks.com](http://www.aliceartworks.com)



Alone on the Beach

Al Alexander  
*jeanandal@gmail.com*



Candida Roso Davila

*CandyDavila29@yahoo.com*



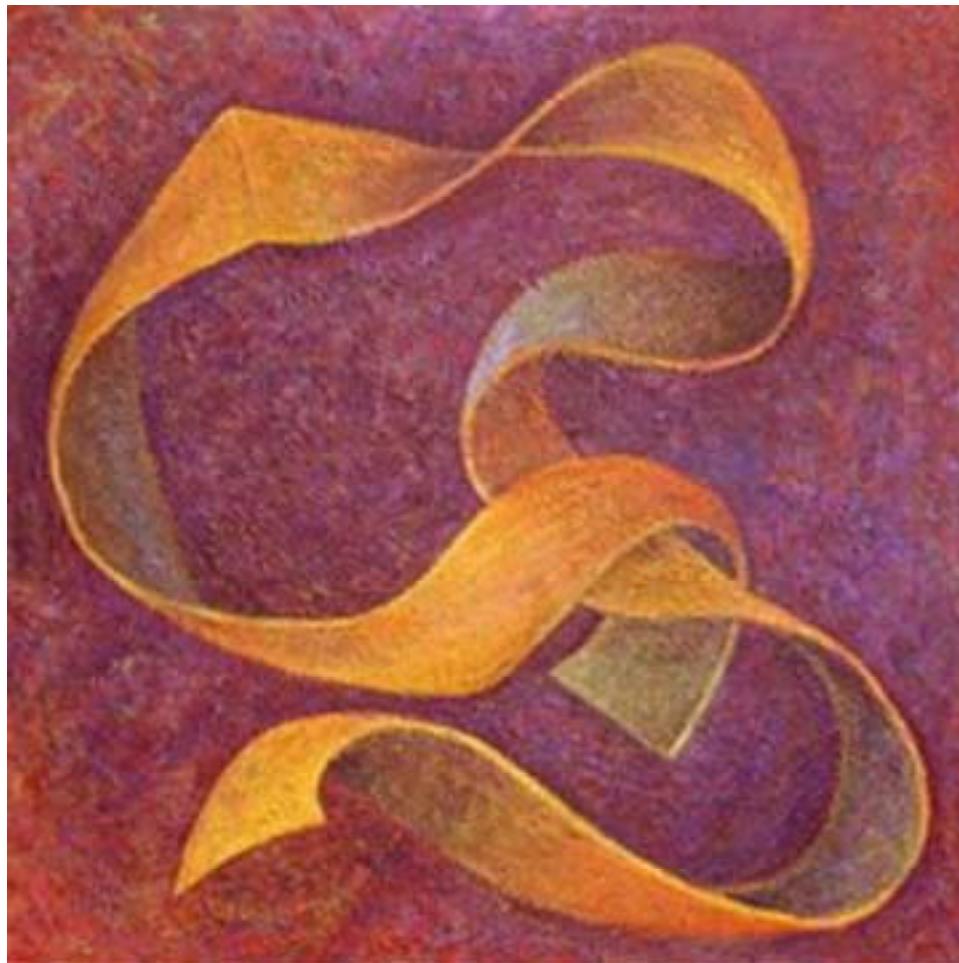
Bismarck Ubeda Granados

*Bismark72345@yahoo.com*



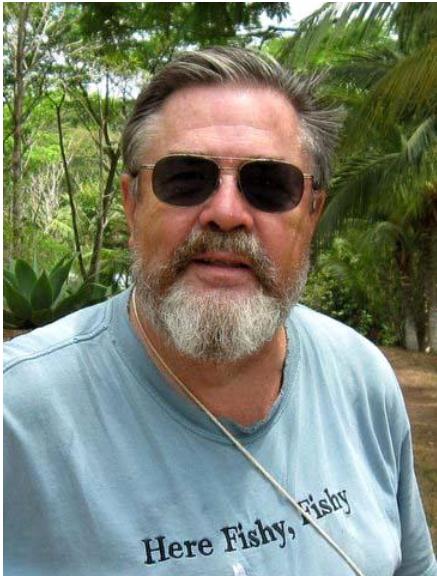
Scarlet-bodied Wasp moth (*Cosmosoma myrodora*)

Martin Lively  
*gmlively@gmail.com*



Flattery  
Harriet Sheppard  
*hwewayman@hotmail.com*

# Crime in Atenas ?



G. Martin Lively, JD

The response to a Crime Survey last edition was low. 16 surveys were completed, 3 of those by *Atenas Today* staff and reviewers - so 13 readers had sufficient interest in the issue to take the few minutes to read and reply.

**7 of 16 or 43.8% reported one or more crimes against them family or staff during 2010.**

**Specific crimes reported were:**

2 robberies, one of the person by gun, and one of a store with no weapon

4 thefts from a car

1 theft from a yard

1 battery (during a robbery)

1 house burglary

**In 5 cases suspects were identified.**

**No prosecutions were initiated by authorities.**

**Crime prevention actions featured** dogs (4 instances), alarms (4), a new gate, double locking all the time, and asking neighbors to keep an eye out. Two persons reporting no crime credited their dogs for keeping thieves away.

The online survey was a one time free offer. The survey closed, cannot be accessed and will not be repeated.

# Sonoma, CA

To put my Atenas survey data, as unreliable as it is because of low [response rate](#), in perspective I took a look at recent crime data in [Sonoma, CA](#), a small rural and agricultural pueblo where I lived for a few years.

Sonoma, CA, population 9,893, is located in California's [Sonoma county](#), about 17.0 miles from [Vallejo](#) and 17.3 miles from [Santa Rosa](#). Through the 90's Sonoma's population has grown by about 12%. It is estimated that in the first 5 years of the past decade the population of Sonoma has grown by about 8%. Since 2005 Sonoma's population has grown by about 1%. Sonoma's [property crime levels](#) tend to be about the same as California's average level. The same data shows [violent crime levels](#) in Sonoma tend to be lower than California's average level.

## Sonoma, California

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### city Annual Crimes

VIOLENT	PROPERTY	TOTAL
46	360	406

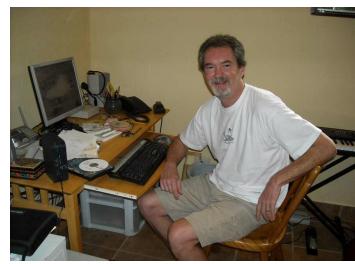
annual crimes per 1,000 residents	Violent	Property
5.18	40.55	45.73

As weak as the data is and as faulty as the comparison is, it can still be said that [Atenas](#) is not quite the "No Crime" area that most think it is.

# TECH TALK

by Gordon Klatt

IBM introduced the first hard disk drive in 1956. Modern disk technology can be traced back to 1973 and IBM's 'Winchester' 3340 drive, named after the Winchester 30-30 rifle because it was originally designed with twin 30mb spindles. But it wasn't until the early 1980's that hard disk drives became viable for small business and home computing use. In 1983 Apple brought out their first hard drive, the ProFile. With an internal Seagate ST-506 drive, the ProFile offered customers a staggering 5mb of storage! And for a reasonable \$3000! "What could anyone possibly do with that much space?", we wondered.



I recently helped someone with a common problem. The 80gb hard drive that came with her PC 5 years ago was quickly running out of room. She didn't know what to do, except perhaps start deleting stuff to free up disk space. I suggested that it would be simple and inexpensive to buy a bigger drive and copy the contents of her old drive to the new one. Since her computer couldn't use the one of the newer SATA hard drives, I went to Unitec in Atenas and bought the biggest IDE drive they had, 160 gb, for about \$60. Seagate offers a free utility, DiscWizard, that easily copies the image from one hard drive to another. Also available as Maxtor MaxBlast, both are OEM versions of Acronis True Image, a popular disk imaging utility that sells for \$49. I've used DiscWizard many times. IDE to IDE, IDE to SATA. It transfers everything, OS, programs, data. (The only requirement is that a Seagate or Maxtor drive be present in your system.) If your desktop computer's hard drive is filling up, or is several years old, you should consider getting a new one. DiscWizard makes it easy.

<http://www.seagate.com/www/us/support/downloads/discwizard>

## OrangeWare WebCamDV

Like most of you, we use Skype or Yahoo Messenger to stay in touch with friends and family. When we got high speed internet service, I decided to add a webcam so we could video chat.

I went to the local computer store and bought a webcam, hooked it up, and was very disappointed in its performance. Grainy picture, poor audio, no ability to zoom. So when I found an article about how to use a camcorder as a webcam, I was intrigued. I downloaded a trial version of OrangeWare's WebCamDV. As a trial, it runs for only ten minutes, but that's long enough for you to check if your camera is compatible. To run it again, you have to reboot your computer. Once I verified that my six year old Panasonic camcorder worked with the software, I went on line and paid \$20 for the full version. I now have a high resolution webcam with auto-focus and 20x zoom. If you have a DV camcorder with a Firewire connection, you might want to check this out. Sorry Mac people, PC only.

<http://www.orangeware.com/endusers/webcamdv.html>

With all the success that Microsoft has enjoyed over the years, it's easy to forget that they don't always get it right. Anyone remember Microsoft Bob, the dumbed-down user interface that preceded

Windows 95? Unfortunately, nobody was that dumb. Or when Microsoft was late to the browser party because Bill Gates didn't see much of a future in the internet? How about Vista? Which brings us to Bing, Microsoft's new internet search product. It's not just a search engine, they say, it's the internet's first decision engine. Oh please. I think I'll google it instead.

## New Breakthrough in Wind Technology

4SKINS, an Australian company, has developed a new line of men's underwear made from an odor absorbing fabric that soaks up offensive gases. Unfortunately, the fabric isn't soundproof.

Want the latest info on restaurants around the Central Valley? Lenny Karpman, a cardiologist in the US before moving to Costa Rica, used to write a restaurant column for A.M. Costa Rica and now has his own web site. Buen provecho.

[http://zt.typepad.com/lenny\\_eng/](http://zt.typepad.com/lenny_eng/)

## NICARAGUA NIGHTMARE



By Bettie Nebergall

This Thanksgiving, we visited Nicaragua for the first time and came back filled with gratitude for the people of Costa Rica. We enjoyed sightseeing in Granada, visiting the beaches and varied restaurants at San Juan del Sur, bargain shopping around Masaya and soaking up serenity at Laguna del Apoyo. Spending quality time with friends filled the days with fun and happy memories. Two incidents marred the trip and our appreciation of the country, however.

During one cross-country drive, we were suddenly attacked by

Montezuma's Revenge and desperately needed a baño. We reached a town, pulled into a gas station and requested a fill only to find that there were no servicios anywhere nearby. As soon as the car was ready we raced through town searching for any place that might accommodate us. This was the first day of a local festival, fireworks were exploding and the streets were crowded making progress difficult. Finally we found another service station, screeched to a stop, hollered: "Lleno, con super" and ran into the appropriate doors. After only a few minutes, I stepped outside to find a

minutes, I stepped outside to find a near riot.

Lines of cars 4-5 deep were honking incessantly, manned by furious drivers angrily screaming curses, screeching tires and switching lanes with attendants yelling and waving wildly. Our friends were caught in the fury, trying to bring peace in the midst of chaos. The problem was simple: the gasoline hose was too short to reach our passenger-side tank, and everyone wanted the car moved. Bob had taken the keys with him, and by the time I found him and returned with the keys, it looked like a movie set – you know, the scene where street gangs storm a car, shoot it up and set it on fire. One angry driver nearly ran me over to make his point. The entire emotional scene ended as soon as the car was moved, but it's a memory that replays whenever we hear the word Nicaragua.

To top it off, on our last day in the country we passed through Rivas and were within 6 miles of the border when we reached the cones of a traffic stop. We were pulled over and joined the line of cars alongside the road while a bright yellow motorcycle roared past honking and waving at the

cops. It was pouring rain. The policeman was waving and shouting so rapidly that we could not understand what he wanted. We handed over all the car's papers, entry permit and drivers license and waited while the guy conferred with his cohorts in the bus stop shelter. There was another gringo talking with them, and as soon as he put his wallet back in his pocket and returned to his car, our policeman came back and asked Bob to join the discussion.

As it turned out, we had created an "Infraction" when we passed that bright yellow motorcycle dawdling along a few meters back. Even though we never entered the oncoming lane, our tires did cross the double yellow center line, and therefore we would need to return to Managua for a hearing which could take several days. Our alternative, of course, was to pay the estimated fine right here, right now, and like all the folks before us, we did just that.

As we neared the border, passing all the little farms where hardworking families struggled to make ends meet, we thought of the 3 cops and their shill on the motorcycle bilking motorists out of hundreds of dollars

per day and laughing all the way to the bank. It really soured the trip for us.

The next morning, we woke up in our own bed, glad to be home in Costa Rica. We needed supplies and headed into Escazu, where we received the best comparison possible between the two countries. The Multi-Plaza parking lot was jammed with early December shoppers, so I hopped out at the Auto Mercado while Bob hunted for a spot. I had completed my shopping and was checking out by the time he finally came in and told me why he'd been delayed.

As he came around in front of the store, the car two lengths ahead slued to a stop and the driver, a well-dressed middle-aged gentleman, hopped out and jogged into the Mall. Because the car slanted across the road, no one could get around it from either side. The lines of cars backed up in both directions, winding around both sides of the Mall.

Sometime later, the gentleman reappeared, opened his car door, and stood there while receiving a call on his cell phone. He paced around the side of his car, chatting away for several more minutes while the lines of immobilized drivers watched. No

one honked, yelled or threatened him. When he finally concluded his call, straightened his car and drove away, there wasn't even a round of applause. I shudder to think what might have happened to him if he pulled that stunt north of the border.

While we always hear horns honking at stop lights, we've been caught in lengthy traffic jams throughout Costa Rica over the years, and never have we witnessed the anger, rudeness and outright threat displayed at that Nicaraguan gas station.

Tranquilo is more than just a word in Costa Rica. It's a way of life, and I'm thankful to be a part of it.

# Results of the Mayoral Election in Atenas

Turnout: 7,647 people (about 50%)

Voting:	PUSC (Wilberth, incumbent)	31.9%
	PLN (Gerardo Mata)	28.0%
	PUA (Ericka Alpizar)	20.8%
	PAC (Hugo Alpizar)	12.9%
	PASE (Iris Rodriguez)	6.4%

## The Bliss of a ‘Non-Traditional Gift’ Experience



by *Marietta Arce*

My disenchantment with organized religion (but not God as I understand that Spirit) began when I was ten years old. It was that year that my parents' misguided, but sincere, efforts made it possible for my siblings and me to attend the local parish school from which I would graduate seven years later. Prior to that, we had attended the neighborhood public school and only received 'religious instruction' at the Catholic school in preparation for First Communion. My contact with nuns and priests had been limited to those weekly sessions and to the required Mass attendance on Sundays.

By the time I was twelve, I had witnessed enough behavior unbecoming (in my opinion, of course) what I believed were "servers of God" and I came to my own, very personal, conclusions regarding anything remotely 'organized' and 'religious'. I was fortunate that my parents were pretty liberal (or maybe just too distracted) and it was never an issue between us. They accepted my eventual and permanent separation from religion and were not verbally judgmental of my decision.

One of many positive aspects of belonging to a parish, however, is the opportunity to perform community service activities like bringing food to needy homes or singing carols in hospital lobbies at Christmas. I always signed up to be part of a welcoming committee or a singing group and felt nourished by the gratitude with which these simple gestures were received. It was in these groups that my lifelong passion for serving by bringing a little bit of joy to someone was born.

I have never succumbed to the spirit of the holidays by purchasing costly and superficial gifts for my family and friends. I think it results from the fact that I have never been addicted to television and have avoided the marketing imperative to make me part with my money just because they say I should. My favorite things to give and receive have always been those that required spending time (the most valuable of all possessions): a scarf; a plate of cookies; a homemade meal; an outing to a favorite museum or park.

It has been my tradition to bring my neighbors a cake or cookies around this time. A few years ago one of our neighbors hired a new family to take care of their property. As I did when I was part of the church community, I usually introduce myself and offer any assistance to the new family as they get settled in. At Christmas time that year, I made a small basket of fruits and cakes and brought it over to this new family. Since they were not at home, I left it on a table with a little note. Hours later, I received a call from the wife who was crying and difficult to understand.

She asked me why I had left the items. I told her that I customarily do so around the holidays, and that I would appreciate if she could give me her opinion on the cookies since it was a new recipe that I was trying out that week. She didn't say anything for a while and I thought maybe I had made a terrible mistake.

When she finally did speak again, she told me that in her entire life (she is around 40), no one had ever had that kind of gesture for her; that she was overcome with emotion and gratitude.

She brought back to my mind the times in my childhood when the experience of a simple, loved-based holiday was enough in itself for most of us. I was rewarded for my gift months later when she brought my family a plate of traditional Costa Rican foods which she knows I don't know how to prepare. It seems in giving, we both received much more and have so much more to look forward to.



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**YOUR HEALTH IN GOOD HANDS**

# Postcards from New York City



by Lois Craft

For Christmas this year we did a “house exchange” with a couple who live in Manhattan. They got to enjoy Atenas, and we got to experience “The Big Apple” decked out for the holiday. You should try it. Here are excerpts from my on-going journal.

We landed at 1:50 this afternoon, seeing leftover snow on the ground. The pilot said it would be about 25', with winds between 20-30 mph. Okay. Until we went outside to wait for our limo. Damn, I thought I was in Antarctica! We were dressed for the North Pole, but it was grossly inadequate.....welcome to NYC at Christmas! What were we thinking?!

When we got into the City, we were thrilled after so many years. The apartment we have traded is small, but warm and cozy, so after warming up a bit, we hit the street. We are located on W. 23rd St., between 7th & 8th Avenue in Chelsea, and it has all the energy that we remember and love from the time when we used to live on the East side.

Early on we visited Harlem, which is very nice, clean and friendly, and headed

to restaurants in the area that we thought we would enjoy: Ethiopian was our first choice, but it was open only for dinner, so we walked and walked until we reached Central Park and 110th St. From there, we took the subway over to the East Side, to visit our old neighborhood around East 54th, between 1st and 2nd. We were hoping that our favorite late-night restaurant, Jubilee, was open for lunch, and it WAS! Yippeeeee! It is located about 5 doors down from our little studio apartment that we had for 5 years in the '90s.

Tomorrow, we will have a late lunch at a French culinary school.: L'Ecole. Then the "Harlem Food and Culture Tour" on Wednesday. What fun this city is!!

Have you ever heard of people eating and enjoying themselves to death? Well, we came close today! As I sit here, my stomach is hanging close to the floor, and yes, I'm sitting on a normal chair.....Good grief!

We set out for Chinatown at 10:45 this morning to ensure that we would make it to the restaurant by 11:45, having never been there. It was unbelievably cold: in the high 20s, with stiff winds, but forecasts of mid-30s, also with stiff winds. We got off of the subway (the wrong one, if one were to ask me) then we walked about 1/2 mile or more to the restaurant: Dim Sum Go-Go (5 E. Broadway @ Chatham Square, Betsy). This is thought to be the very best and purest Dim Sum in the City.

A lively, interesting group was already gathered on the 2nd Floor, which was ours alone. Our guide, Rasheem (yeah, I know) was wonderful, talking with great humor and knowledge about Dim Sum and the history of same. Apparently, Dim Sum was originally developed as a means of disbursing herbal medicines to combat raging disease to the masses: medicines were loaded into dumplings with bits of meat and vegetables, which was tossed off of a wagon. And it worked! The doctor who developed this distribution became a national hero, who is honored to this day on Chinese New Years worldwide.

We were first served 3 steamed dumplings: Duck Dumplings, which Rasheem suggested we eat without any sauce or condiments. It was fabulous - unbelievable! The second was a pink (dumpling, not meat) chicken dumpling, pink because it was colored with beets; and the third was a chive and shrimp dumpling. Condiments that we were given were: a dried fish and (ready for this?) country ham; vinegar and hot chili pepper; and a ginger/shallot mixture. All were amazing. Rasheem recommended various condiments with different dumplings, and he was right-on.

Our 4th dumpling was a pork pot sticker and the final dish was a Steamed Roast Pork Bun. By that time, I was moaning. Jim had only eaten 1/2 of each dumpling and the final bun, so he was doing fine. Sometimes, I wish I listened to him more carefully, but it was *so good!*

Setting out into Siberia, we were shown the "Gangs of NY" tunnels below Chinatown; the *Three Sisters* of....(forget); a portion of Chinatown that used to be Opium Dens and brothels; an bar that specialized on herbal (alcoholic) concoctions for whatever you want (.....???.....) and other historical and rather shocking things.

Next stop was the very famous, and undisputed finest Peking Duck House, which makes Peking Duck according to ancient recipes that date back to the Emperors. Apparently, if the duck was not perfect, the chef was immediately put to death: a bit harsh, in my humble opinion....In any case, this duck is unlike any that we have ever had: the preparation takes about 6 hours, and includes separating the skin from the flesh, then blowing the duck up with air to dry the skin, and many other preps. It was indescribable. The chef sliced up 4 ducks for us, which we placed in very thin, delicious pancakes with housin sause (again, different than we had tasted), with scallions and cucumber. Divine! If we weren't already full enough, we ate 2 each!

What's NYC without Broadway, and I won the Lottery. No, not *the* Lottery: I won the last two tickets to *West Side Story* that could be purchased for \$26.50 each. Front row seats! Many theatres have a lottery on the day of the show: you show up at the ticket office at 5:30, fill out your name and the # of tickets

you want (max. 2), then return at 6:00 to see if you won. I was the last called! I have always loved the music in WSS, and the soprano who played Maria, Sarah Amengual, didn't disappoint: she had the voice of an angel and could hit every note above Middle C without breaking a sweat or squeaking! Amazing: watch out for her....The baritone who played Tony, Matthew Mydzik, was no slouch, himself - another one to watch out for.

After we put our name in for the lottery, we walked a couple of blocks and stopped in to the two-story M&Ms building. The whole second floor is devoted to every imaginable color/flavor of M&Ms: have you ever seen black, licorice M&Ms; pastels; country flag colors? Amazing!

Oh, an observation about NYC, You know how everyone says how rude the people are? It has *always* been our experience that these are the most friendly and helpful people on the planet: they are just always in a hurry, but they will always stop to help you find places, negotiate the subway, or just make friendly conversation. We met a woman on the subway, as we were debating where to get off, and in just a few minutes, we had exchanged email addresses!

And it's not even Christmas yet! What a great experience!

# HUMOR PAGE

A group of 15-year-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Dairy Queen next to the Ocean View restaurant because they had only \$6.00 among them and Jimmy Johnson, the cute boy in Social Studies, lived on that street.

10 years later, the group of 25-year-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the beer was cheap, the restaurant offered free snacks, the band was good, there was no cover and there were lots of cute guys.

10 years later, the group of 35-year-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the cosmos were good, it was right near the gym and, if they went late enough, there wouldn't be too many whiny little kids.

10 years later, the group of 45-year-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the martinis were big and the waiters had tight pants and nice buns.

10 years later, the group of 55-year-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the prices were reasonable, the wine list was good, the restaurant had windows that opened (in case of a hot flashes), and fish is good for cholesterol.

10 years later, the group of 65-year-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the lighting was good and the restaurant had an early bird special.

10 years later, the group of 75-years-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the food was not too spicy and the restaurant was handicapped-accessible.

10 years later, the group of 85-years-old girlfriends discussed where to meet for dinner. Finally, they agreed to meet at the Ocean View restaurant because they had never been there before.

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