

SUGGESTION

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.



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.

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 fredmac222@yahoo.com.

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Atenas Today Survey Results

Thanks to all of you who responded to the Atenas Today survey. In general our readers seem pleased with the format and content, and like receiving the news magazine each month. Several people mentioned that the sense of the English-speaking community they got from the magazine influenced their decision to move to Atenas. Many readers reported that they especially liked the interviews with people involved in local business or community activities.

A few readers expressed concern about the growing amount of advertising, with the same large ads appearing month after month. At the same time, people asked for more information about businesses and services in Atenas. To address these issues Atenas Today is introducing a separate “Yellow Pages” section, where businesses can advertise inexpensively and readers can find the information they need. Advertising in the main magazine will continue, but the pricing structure will change to encourage future advertisers to run repeat ads in the Yellow Pages, not mixed in with the news.

Another frequent comment was that people did not like having to scroll up and down to read the two column format. The solution to this problem is to set the “View” option on your Adobe Reader to “Full Screen”. In most cases you will be able to read the page without scrolling.

Other good ideas for improving the magazine were:

- a regular feature on things to do in Atenas
- a calendar of activities
- more articles on how to deal with the Costa Rican bureaucracy

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Atenas Today Interviews
Helen Smith

Managing Director of Hogar de Vida



AT: What exactly is “Hogar de Vida”?

Helen: Many people think it is an orphanage, but it is really a provisional shelter for young children at risk. The goal is to care for them until their families are in a good place and can take them back.

AT: What if their families can never take them back?

Helen: Then they are adopted by stable families.

AT: How long do the children normally stay with you?

Helen: It varies but it may take up to four years. Unfortunately only around 30% return to their families. But in Costa Rica there is no shortage of parents wanting to adopt.

AT: What is your population right now.

Helen: Our capacity is 35 children, and at the moment we are full. Their ages range from 7 days to 11 years. Normally we don't have children over 8 years old.



AT: How do the children come to you?

Helen: The Costa Rican government places at risk children with us until their case is resolved either by PANI or the courts. There are 130 places like ours around the country.

AT: Does the government fund your operation?

Helen: We get about a third of our operating costs from the government, and the rest from private donations.

AT: How do you raise money privately?

Helen: We are associated with “Children of Promise”, an international evangelical Christian organization that handles donations to support missionary activities around the world. We also have “sponsor a child” programs where people provide \$30 a month to help a child get a good start on life.



AT: What is your cost per child in Hogar de Vida?

Helen: About \$600 per month. That pays for room and board and our staff of about 25 people including 2 medical professionals, a remedial teacher and a psychologist.

AT: What about volunteers?

Helen: Church groups send work teams who bring money. They live with us for 10 days and help with maintenance and construction. We also receive volunteers for periods up to 2 months. They must have more than rudimentary Spanish language skills to be able to interact with the children.

AT: What about volunteers from the local Gringo community?

Helen: Again, language is a must. I am working on ways to involve the local community more.

AT: You have a wonderful campus. It appears to be very well equipped and maintained.



Helen: Yes, we even have a swimming pool, a donation from a woman who thought children should grow up enjoying the water.



AT: What is the housing like?

Helen: We have three houses, each with multiple bedrooms and a place for live-in house mothers.

AT: Is your staff all female?

Helen: Yes, except for the maintenance men and husbands of live-in workers.

AT: That could be sad except that there are plenty of father figures when the men who work at outside jobs come home from work at night to play ball with the kids.

Helen: We do get plenty of visitors as well.

AT: Do you provide schooling for the children?

Helen: The older ones go to the public school here in Barrio Fatima or the Central School. We have our own school for remedial help.

AT: Tell me about the history of Hogar de Vida.

Helen: It was founded fifteen years ago by Tim and Dena Stromstad. They are Christian missionaries who have worked in Haiti, and Guatemala. Tim was paralyzed when he was 19 from a motorcycle accident, but it has never slowed him down. Right now Tim and Dena are on a one year sabbatical, and I am the interim director. They are returning in February.



AT: How did you get involved?

Helen: My husband, Dennis, and I were working as missionaries, based in San Jose. The air in San Jose was giving me asthma problems, so fifteen years ago we moved to Atenas. We actually were looking at the same house to buy as Tim and Dena, a house that is now part of the Hogar, but we ended buying one in barrio Los Angeles.

AT: Where are you from?

Helen: New Zealand. My husband is from California, and we met in Switzerland.

AT: What did you do when you came to Atenas?

Helen: I was a mother raising three children. My four year old developed cancer, and I spent two years at different times in the U.S. with him undergoing treatment. Tragically he died six years later.

AT: I am so sorry. That's every parent's nightmare.

Helen: Yes.



AT: What was your husband doing at the time?

Helen: He spent years traveling to Cuba, taking medicines for AIDS patients via Costa Rica. He was also taking in Bibles. Unfortunately he had to fight two governments: the U.S. would not let him travel to Cuba from his own country, and Cuba, who did not like Bibles coming in to undermine communism. Eventually he was expelled.

AT: Where is his mission work now?

Helen: He oversees several works of charity including an orphanage, a high school, a medical and dental clinic in Peru, as well as a girl's home in El Salvador, and a feeding program for hungry students in Guatemala among other things in Central America.

AT: What will you do when the Stromstads return?

Helen: They have asked me to stay on, but I am undecided. I couldn't imagine leaving the Hogar so I might combine this with traveling and helping in other countries with my husband.

AT: How can the local community help the Hogar?

Helen: Our biggest problem is funding. We get by, but financial donations are always appreciated.

AT: What is the best way for people to make donations?

Helen: They could call me at 2446-6212 or 8352 7404



Entrance drive to Hogar de Vida, Atenas



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Dengue Fever

Because of the many reported cases of Dengue fever this year, we are reprinting the following information from a 2007 [Atenas Today](#) article about this disease.

1. Dengue fever is a viral, flu-like disease transmitted from human to human by the bite of a particular type of mosquito, called the *Aedes aegypti*.
2. The *Aedes* mosquito can be recognized by the black and white stripes on its legs and abdomen.
3. The *Aedes* lives and breeds in urban areas in water filled manmade containers, such as old flower pots. Old tires are especially bad.
4. The *Aedes* likes lower altitudes; it is very rare above 4,000 feet.
5. The *Aedes* bites people only in the daytime; it is not active at night.
6. The average time between the bite of an infected *Aedes* and the onset of symptoms is 4 to 6 days, with a range of 3 to 14 days.
7. An infected person cannot spread the infection to other people, but can be a source of the virus for other mosquitoes for about 6 days.
8. Dengue fever usually starts suddenly with a high fever, headache, pain behind the eyes, and pain in the muscles and joints.
9. A rash usually appears 3 to 4 days after the start of the fever.
10. Nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite are common.
11. The presence of the Dengue virus can be detected by a simple blood test.
12. The severe portion of the illness usually lasts a week to ten days, but complete recovery can take a month.
13. The only treatment is rest, plenty of fluids, and acetaminophen (avoid aspirin).
14. If there are no complications, there are no long term effects from the disease.
15. The most dangerous complication is a progression to Dengue hemorrhagic fever. People who have already had dengue fever and are infected again are more susceptible to this complication.
16. Dengue hemorrhagic fever causes the blood vessels to start to leak, resulting in bleeding from the nose, mouth, and gums. Bruising can be a sign of internal bleeding.
17. Dengue hemorrhagic fever is potentially fatal and must be treated promptly after the first symptoms by replacing lost fluids, and sometimes having blood transfusions.
18. Dengue hemorrhagic fever is fatal in about 5 percent of cases, usually among children and young adults.
19. There is no vaccine to protect against this virus. The only way to avoid the possibility of contracting the illness is to avoid being bitten by an infected *Aedes* mosquito.
20. Insect repellent should contain at least 30% DEET to be effective. Strong repellent like this should not be inhaled or put on the hands of children, where it could find its way to their mouths.
21. Mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing, so apply repellent to clothing as well as to exposed skin.
22. There are likely to be many more infected mosquitoes in the downtown Atenas areas than in the outlying areas. If you live in Atenas Centro or Barrio Los Angeles you should have screens and eliminate all potential breeding sites around your property.

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Trimming hedges and plants, and spraying crops.

Frank Schornenberg

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Our office is across from the gas-station in Atenas.

The Atenas Today Art Gallery

The Art Gallery will be a new 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.

Nature's Siblings

Alice Constantine

AliceConstantine@live.com



Quetzal in the Forest

Mary Park

mandgpark@shaw.ca



Voodoo Baby
Harriet Sheppard
hweyman@hotmail.com

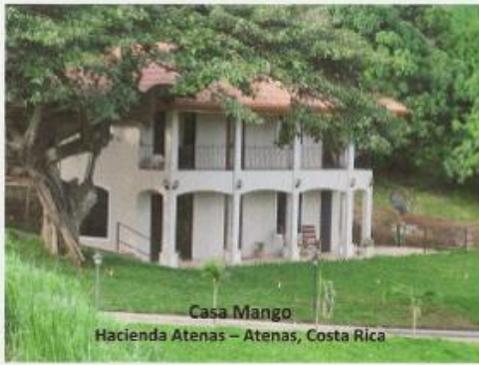


Steve Wiens
sjwiens@gmail.com



Al Alexander
jeanandal@gmail.com

Notice: Last year's successful Christmas art show will be repeated again this year on December 4th and 5th at the Catholic Church in Atenas. Contact Mary Park for more information.
mandgpark@shaw.ca



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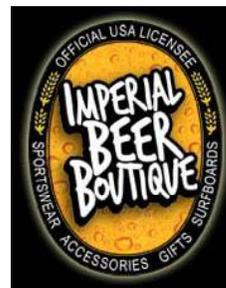
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TECH TALK

by Gordon Klatt

Hijacking, and spoofing, and phishing, oh my.

In the past few months I've received several emails that appeared to be from people I know, but were obviously not sent by them. In order for this to happen, someone had to have either gained access to their email accounts, called hijacking, or made the emails appear to be from someone other than the actual sender, called spoofing. You can't prevent spoofing, and it poses no threat to your email account. But if you think your account has been hijacked, you need to take immediate action.

Change your password. It should contain letters, numbers, and symbols. Don't use words found in the dictionary, your pet's name, or any other name. Don't make it easy to remember.

Most email services allow you to enter an alternate email address, where they will send notification if any changes are made to your account, and a secret question, used to verify your identity. Hijackers will often change these, so make sure they're correct.

I received this email a few days ago. It's called "phishing".

VERIFY YOUR YAHOO MAIL ACCOUNT NOW TO AVOID IT BEING CLOSE!!!

Dear Account User,

This message is from YahooMail message center to all YahooMail account owners and premium account owners. We are currently upgrading our data base and e-mail account center. We are deleting all unused YahooMail account to create more space for new accounts. To prevent your account from closing, you will have to verify it below before One (1) week from now!

VERIFY YOUR YAHOO MAIL ACCOUNT NOW TO AVOID CLOSE!!!

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Password:.....

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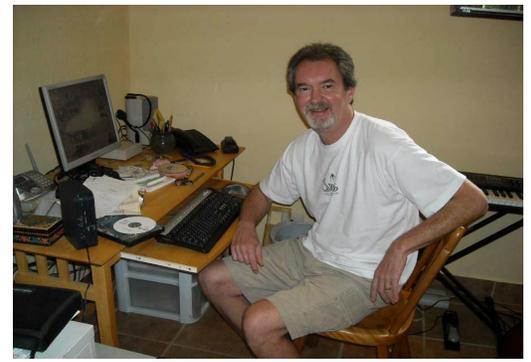
Warning!!! Account owner that refuses to update his or her account before One (1) week of receiving this warning will lose his or her account permanently.

Sincerely,
YahooMail Team

This email obviously did not come from Yahoo, but it's surprising how many people fall for this. Always remember, no legitimate web site will ever ask you to send sensitive information, like a password, in an email.

Online Storage

A reader recently reported a problem she was having with her external hard drive, which she uses to backup data on her computer. Luckily, the problem was resolved, but it raised an interesting question. What do you do if your backup fails? A number of companies are now offering another way to backup your data, online. For \$4.95 US per month, Mozy gives you unlimited online storage, and software to automate your backup process. After the initial backup, which can take a long time, Mozy only backs



up new or changed portions of files, which saves bandwidth and ensures future backups are performed quickly. You can sign up for a free account which gives you 2 Gb. of storage. If you'd like to learn more about Mozy, Ctrl-click here:

<http://mozy.com/home>

Windows XP Service Pack 3

As I previously reported, Windows XP users who had not updated to Service Pack 3 by July 13 will no longer receive security updates automatically through Windows Update. Microsoft will continue to provide updates to XP until 2014, so if you want to receive them and have not installed Service Pack 3, you can download it here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?displaylang=en&FamilyID=5b33b5a8-5e76-401f-be08-1e1555d4f3d4>

GigaPan

Ctrl-click on this link to view an interesting picture of the Obama inauguration, made using the GigaPan EPIC, a unique robotic camera mount that empowers most small digital cameras with the ability to capture gigapixel images.

<http://www.gigapan.org/gigapans/fullscreen/17217/>

To see more pictures made with the GigaPan EPIC, Ctrl-click the following link.

<http://www.gigapan.org/>

To learn about GigaPan EPIC and other products, Ctrl-click here:

<http://gigapansystems.com/>

The hyperlinks in my column last month didn't work. Here they are again.

Viewsonic VOT-132

<http://www.viewsonic.com/products/pcs/pc-mini/vot132.htm>

VOT-132 video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aezyByC1R98>

ASUS EeeBox PC EB1006

http://usa.asus.com/product.aspx?P_ID=8FovQG15VpP1pjTv

Dell Inspiron Zino HD

<http://www.dell.com/us/en/home/desktops/inspiron-zino-hd/pd.aspx?refid=inspiron-zino-hd&s=dhs&cs=19&~ck=mn>

Apple Mac mini

<http://www.apple.com/macmini/>

Apple TV

<http://www.apple.com/appletv/>

If you have a question, or suggestion for a future article, send me an email at gklatt@live.com.

Interpretation Services

Ever need help communicating something important in Spanish?

Michael Casaus is completely fluent in both English and Spanish and is offering his services to interpret documents, make phone calls, or come with you to critical meetings.

Legal -- review documents and contracts

Automotive -- purchases, repairs, etc.

Immigration -- visas, residency, etc.



Automotive -- registrations and inspections

Negotiations -- purchases, government officials

Home -- construction and maintenance

Travel -- transportation and tours

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Social -- communications with neighbors

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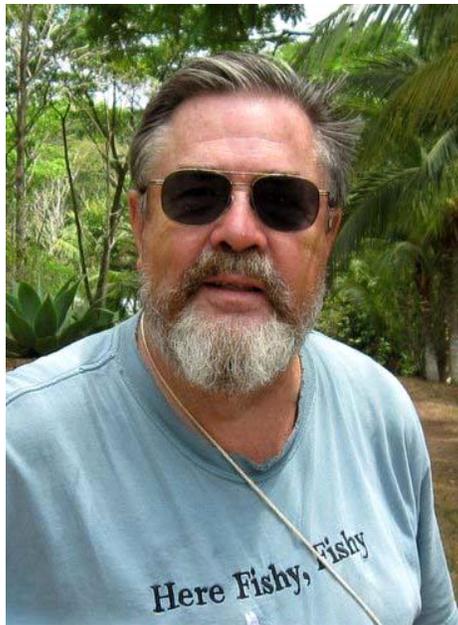
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YOUR HEALTH IN GOOD HANDS

Aldea del Rio Charters

Sierpe, Costa Rica



by Martin Lively

I'll bet it was the first time in 30 years that the three of us had fished together. It was a good day for fishing and getting together with sons George and Geoff who will be back soon to give Dad another excuse to fish. Chris Gardes who grew up in McLean with my sons came along too.



Brian of the Rio Lindo Resort in Dominical had told me of Aldea del Rio Charters in Sierpe and I booked a day offshore with them. We did not go to far out, maybe ten miles, before we found a huge school of small, six to eight pounds, tuna. The boat was a 27 foot, center console, full bimini top sportfisher with a 150 horsepower outboard. We cruised swiftly down the river for about an hour, ran the potato patch at the mouth and turned south for about an hour. From nine to eleven it was non-stop action with one or the other of us fighting a tuna. We trolled surface splashing plugs on two outriggers and two stern rigs. In addition to the yellow fins, which are great eating, we caught black tuna or skipjack which we kept for later bait.



The overcast burned off and the sea was calm; a perfect day. But no sails, dorado or marlin showed and when the tuna quit, we turned North to a sea mount Jay knew of. His GPS guided us there and the depthfinder showed the bottom rising to 60 feet below the surface. Large blips on the screen at about 40 feet meant big fish were available.

We rigged with heavy leader, a two ounce weight and a big circle hook. A fillet of skipjack is hooked once and then dangled down to the fifty foot level with the reel in free spool. Lots of little tugs from fish too small to get the big fillet in their mouths had to be resisted, as did the big tug and run, for a few seconds that is. A circle hook works by being pulled slowly towards the corner of the fish's mouth as it pulls away taking line. After a few seconds the drag is engaged and the hook digs in, no strike necessary. We drifted over the seamount and then motored back up current to do another drift. Over the next few hours we fought, caught and lost many kinds of fish: trigger fish, red snapper, green snapper, rooster fish, big eye jack, amberjack and white tipped reef shark. The amber jack weighed 23 pounds and the shark was between five and six feet long. The shark stayed in the water, but the rest joined the tuna in a large cooler as we headed for shore.



Jay had wasabi and soy and so the first yellow fin fillet was cut into thin bite sized slices and right after a swift dip in the soy and horseradish sauce was enjoyed by everyone on the dock.



Sierpe is a humble little town, but the market had beer & soda, and fresh lettuce, tomato and mayo. The restaurants served gallo pinto breakfasts and fried fish dinners and provided a rasher of cooked bacon for our BLT sandwiches at sea, and the tiny corner bar had more cold beer than the four of us could drink. We stayed at a small air conditioned hotel for \$25 each.

More photos of the trip at <http://picasaweb.google.com/gmlively/SierpeJune172010#>

Aldea del Rio website is <http://www.aldeadelrio.com/>

I'm eager for another trip, and if you are too, you can email me gmlively@gmail.com and we can arrange a charter.

<m><

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Office front near soda Tio Mano



Optical consultant Rosa Murillo



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Kittens, Puppies, and Humans



by Marietta Arce

Last Thursday, a kitten followed my daughter and her cousins as they were walking home from the bus stop. After their (half-hearted) efforts to lose the kitten failed, they came up with a great idea. They found a box for the kitten; enlisted my son's help, and went in search of a friend who had previously adopted abandoned animals. They were unsuccessful in locating this woman and soon found themselves at Kay's Gringo Postres where they secured the phone number of our local animal foundation (Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals).

I have never been drawn to cats. My indifference might be the result of being around my grandmother's cats that roamed freely in all areas of the home, climbing and jumping about. The cats were active at odd hours, disturbing my desire for quiet and solitude. It might also stem from memories of an eccentric neighbor on our floor in Manhattan who had a dozen cats that she let out of her apartment every day. One never knew when they would bolt from a hidden corner or doorway, startling my children or me.

More than likely, my coolness towards cats has something to do with their independent nature. I am confident that my dogs will be home when I arrive and that they will welcome me adoringly. In my experience, the same cannot be said about cats. Cats seem to come and go where their nature beckons, returning home when they are ready, not sooner. We never entertained the idea that we would adopt the kitten, so I proceeded to contact the Foundation for their guidance.

I spoke with Sylvia and she suggested we bring the kitten to the Farmer's market the following morning and see if anyone was interested in adopting her. She informed me that if no one adopted the animal, I would need to pick it up again and try for the next opportunity. I resigned myself to that possibility, and we prepared a place for the kitten to spend the night. I have to admit that I was surprised by and proud of my daughter's proactive behavior when it came to this kitten. She was concerned about the fleas; she encouraged the kitten to drink some milk and she kept our three dogs from attempting any chase and capture games! She made a very good *temporary* owner.

On Friday morning, we arrived at the Farmer's market and searched for the Foundation tent. We quickly found Dora and explained our situation to her. She informed us that just minutes earlier a young man had called seeking a male kitten. She called him to see if he would accept a female kitten instead! While she was making the phone call, she spent some time removing fleas and promptly discovered that 'she' was actually a 'he'! We all had a good laugh. The young man promised he would try to stop by

before noon. My daughter and I waited to meet him and make sure it was going to be a good fit.

While we were waiting, several people stopped by to admire the kitten and chat with Dora and Claudia (who was also working the tent that morning). I watched as both Dora and Claudia labored to remove the fleas from the kitten while chatting with visitors. It is hard to find words to describe the absolute tenderness with which these women approached this activity. I have a hard time removing critters from my own animals, let alone ones I don't know. Only people with tremendous generosity and kindness in their hearts could do what the members of this Foundation do.

The kitten ate all the solid food that was offered to him and shortly afterwards dozed off on Claudia's shoulder, a beautiful sight. The young man and his sister arrived about an hour later and we were happy to see how nicely and enthusiastically they all bonded. Although I cannot say I bonded with the kitten (who we now had named Cesar) I felt responsible for finding him a home that would welcome him and love him for many years. It was uplifting to admit that we were partly responsible for his good fortune.

I was very impressed with the formality that follows these adoptions. The siblings signed an agreement to neuter the animal and be responsible for his medical requirements. I imagine home visits are probably something the Foundation does also, despite their limited resources. I was moved to make a donation of my own towards the spaying/neutering campaign that the Foundation is conducting next weekend

with the help of a local veterinarian. I hope more people join this effort and spread the word about the Foundation.

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Oxygen and the Aging Brain



By Lois Craft

We are back in the US, after receiving a call that Jim's mother, who will be 95-years-old on August 15th, was in crisis. She is still holding on, but who knows?

But that is only part of what this article is about: oxygen and the aging brain. A little history:

Years ago, Jim's father had been bed-ridden long enough to form a bed sore on his heel. It was not responding to treatment, and there was some very horrifying talk about amputating his foot. Then one doctor said (slapping his forehead like a V-8 commercial,) "Hey, we have Hyperbaric chambers downstairs. Let's give it a shot." Hyperbarics was a rather new medical treatment at the time. It had been developed for deep-sea divers who were suffering from the bends.

In any case, Dad started 1.5-hour treatments, twice a week. We think this went on for about 3 months. A hyperbarics chamber is much like an old iron lung, but it has a clear top, so the patient can watch TV or videos, or whatever for entertainment, so Dad really enjoyed going to the hospital for

treatment. They bring the unit up to around 2 atmospheres, and pump in pure oxygen, so you are not only breathing it, it is literally being pounded through your skin, oxygenating all of your vital organs, and all of your blood.

Prior to starting hyperbarics, he had been having TIAs (mini-strokes) and the effect of those were clear to all who knew his brilliant mind. We were living in California at the time, and they were in Austin, TX, so we didn't see them much while he was having his sessions, but shortly after they ended, we went to Austin for a visit, and were absolutely astounded at the difference in Dad: all signs of TIAs were virtually *gone*, and he was healthier than we had seen him in quite some time. We are convinced that it added at least 5 years, maybe 10 years, to his life: he died at age 90.

Back to Mother. When we arrived here, she was on a very high percentage of oxygen, as her blood oxygenation was in the 80s. Normal is between 90-100%, but as a doctor explained, 90-100 in school is an A; in blood oxygen, 80-90% is slipping from an A to a low C or D. Very dangerous.

She had had a stroke a few years ago, is suffering with age-related dementia (all memory related, not strange behavior), and is almost totally deaf, although she can read lips sometimes. It was becoming more and more difficult to communicate with her, so we have started keeping 3"x5" cards with us to write out conversation.

She was released from the hospital after 3 days, but in those days, we saw a remarkable change in her, and it was from the high doses of oxygen she had been receiving. In 3 days!! She was processing conversation more easily and her brain was functioning at a higher level than we had seen in years. She is still on oxygen and, although very weak, is still better, mentally.

I tried to Google "Oxygen and the Aging Brain," but with the exception of some scholarly articles that I couldn't begin to decipher, there was not much directly relating one to the other. However, there are many very interesting articles that you can access about Hyperbarics and the tremendous good it has done for people with MS, Cerebral Palsy in young children and multiple other uses. Some sporting teams use hyperbarics to improve performance, but over use can be dangerous, as too much oxygen can lead to blindness and/or have a negative affect on one's ions, so medical supervision is important. I asked a doctor here if breathing H₂O for 30 minutes or so every other day would be okay, and he thought it would be fine. Yo, Dra. Candy and Jorge, H₂O, por favor!

There are hyperbaric chambers in many Costa Rican hospitals, so it's good to know more about the availability. But Jim and I really believe Oxygen can have a beneficial affect on the aging brain.

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