



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 250 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 by category 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 Interviews
Shelly Goettl and Roberto Muggli

Developers of the “Las Rocas” Community



AT: I hear that you met each other at the notorious “Tween” building—the apartment building in Minnesota for divorced people “tween” relationships.

Shelly: That’s right. As soon as I moved in a neighbor woman told me that I just had to meet the cute guy across the hall.

Roberto: My kids actually met Shelly first. She made cookies with them.

AT: So your first date was making cookies together?

Shelly: Actually no. Our first date was taking the kids ice fishing. There were four of us in this little house on the ice dangling lines in the hole.

AT: It doesn’t get much more romantic than that.

Shelly: If you wanted to get to know Roberto you had to go fishing a lot.

Roberto: I grew up in the Minnesota lake country and went fishing just about every day as long as I can remember. There were 9 siblings in our family, and my father taught us how to find materials for poles, lines, and hooks. Fishing kept us out of trouble and from fighting each other.

Shelly: Our first trip together was a long canoeing and camping weekend to find fish in the wilderness.

AT: Were you prepared for these rough adventures?

Shelly: I also grew up in Minnesota. My family had a farm, and we also enjoyed fishing and camping.

AT: So what is the connection to Costa Rica?

Roberto: My mother is Costa Rican. We have a huge family here, based in Atenas nearby Desmonte. I was born in Minnesota in 1974 and made my first visit to Costa Rica in 1975. We came frequently.

Shelly: I had never been to Costa Rica until I came with Roberto in 2006. A year later we decided to come here together and make this our home.

AT: What is your background?

Shelly: Since I was eighteen I have been in the real estate business. I was married right out of high school, and worked in Minnesota real estate development and construction until my marriage ended twenty eight years later.

AT: Are you a licensed realtor?

Shelly: Yes. I have been an active member of the National Association of Realtors in Minnesota since 1977.

AT: You have children?

Shelly: Yes, three, and one grandchild. All are still in Minnesota, and I go there often.

AT: What about you, Roberto?

Roberto: My father was a teacher, and that was also my career until I moved to Costa Rica. I have degrees in Spanish, Education and International Business from Minnesota State University. For five years I taught and ran the Spanish program in a K through 12 public school.

AT: Did you have your own family in Minnesota?

Roberto: Yes, I was married to a Tica who already had a daughter, and we had a son, who is now twelve and lives here with me here. My marriage ended in 2004.

AT: What kind of experience have you had in real estate?

Roberto: I am also a member of the National Association of Realtors in the U.S., and I am a member of the Costa Rican Real

Estate Brokers Board. There is a law pending in the Costa Rican legislature to require all people selling real estate in Costa Rica to be licensed and legal to work. This would involve education and testing just as is done in the U.S.

AT: Why should buyers in Costa Rica care whether their real estate agent is licensed? Everyone seems to be an agent here.

Roberto: Yes, and many buyers get burned. A licensed agent must abide by a code of ethics to keep his license. Licensing would regulate the sale of real estate. Members of the National Association of Realtors or the Costa Rican Chamber of Realtors must abide by a code of ethics to keep their membership.

AT: What was your first real estate project in Costa Rica?

Roberto: A relative had some property near Desmonte that was unregistered. I wanted to learn about the registration process, so we bought it, and I began the survey and paperwork right after we came in 2006.

AT: Is the land now registered?

Roberto: Almost. It takes a long, long time.

AT: Should anyone buy unregistered land in Costa Rica?

Roberto: Definitely not. I don't know how much unregistered land there is, but according to figures from the Registry and Cadastre Regularization Program even the registered land adds up to over 20% more area than actually exists in Costa Rica. You have to be careful and deal with reputable people.

AT: Tell me about the nature of your real estate business in Atenas.

Shelly: We have purchased the REMAX franchise for this area. From our office opposite the gas station we offer the full range of real estate services to both buyer and sellers. Through REMAX we can market property to an international audience.

AT: Do you also own property that you are offering for sale?

Shelly: Yes, we have several land parcels, one of which has been developed into a community called "Las Rocas". The de-

velopment contains ten ready-to-build lots, three of which have already been sold.

AT: Where is "Las Rocas"?

Shelly: It is 2.9 miles southwest of Atenas Centro, on the road to Guacimo and Escobal. The views are spectacular.

AT: What is the nature of the development?

Roberto: The lots vary in size from 7,000 to 12,500 square meters. We have planted thousands of trees to landscape the area and provide privacy. The infrastructure of water, electricity, fire hydrants, drainage, etc. is first rate. The private road that services the lots will be surfaced with concrete pavers.

AT: Sounds expensive. Are there any lots under \$100,000?

Shelly: Absolutely.

AT: I understand you are making donations to the local schools every time you sell a lot.

Shelly: Yes. Roberto has always been involved in education, and helping disadvantaged children is a major goal of mine. We will contribute \$1,000 to a school for every lot sold in "Las Rocas".

AT: Other than your development and your regular real estate activity, are you offering any other services?

Roberto: I am available to act as a consultant to people who want to subdivide agricultural land and residential subdivisions. Being fluent in both English and Spanish, and having knowledge of the local culture, laws, and people, I can help expats avoid costly and time consuming mistakes. Just knowing who are the good and honest geologists, well drillers, surveyors, civil engineers, electrical contractors, etc. can make a big difference.

AT: Amen. I wish you had been around five years ago when I went through this process. What should people do who want to look at "Las Rocas"?

Shelly: They should come to our office or contact us. We will be happy to show them around and answer their questions.



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



Memories of the Gulf Coast

By Katherine Lipsett

Sean and I reached the outskirts of Gulfport, Mississippi, about the 18th of October, 2003. I said to Sean, "I want to see the Gulf," so we drove straight south through the town to the water.

Then I said, "I want a site on the beach," and he looked at me as though I had lost my mind. We were in our Class C, 27 foot RV, with our two dogs, Marley and Raf, and I wanted a site on the beach. As we turned left and drove away from the pier and the casino we started looking. Two blocks later, there it was – a crummy little RV park on the beach.

It was wonderful. We walked the dogs on the beach, we drove east and west along the coast, and we had a wonderful week.

I'm Canadian and we had left Canada a few days after Canadian Thanksgiving. We basically headed south with no plan, ahead of the cold weather and sometimes behind the cold weather. So by the time we got to the Gulf we were ready for fun.

Eventually we packed up and left Gulfport and headed west to Louisiana on our way to Texas. Sean wanted to drive through the marshlands so we spent a day exploring the back roads along the coast. The wildlife was truly amazing.



I'm sorry to say we did not visit New Orleans. That is the only regret I have from that trip but we just weren't comfortable in big city traffic. We also avoided Houston. In order to do that, we drove coastal back roads through the oil industry. My impression is of miles and miles and miles of pipes.

We finally got back to the beach at Galveston Island. We found an RV site at Galveston Island State Park, and I will admit those were some of the happiest few days of my life. Marley, my border collie, was then about seven years old and he loved the ocean there. Marley was addicted to tennis balls and this was one of the first times he felt comfortable in the water. He and I spent hours on that beach, me walking along looking for shells and gently tossing the ball into the surf for Marley. I don't think I've ever seen a dog wetter and more covered in sand.

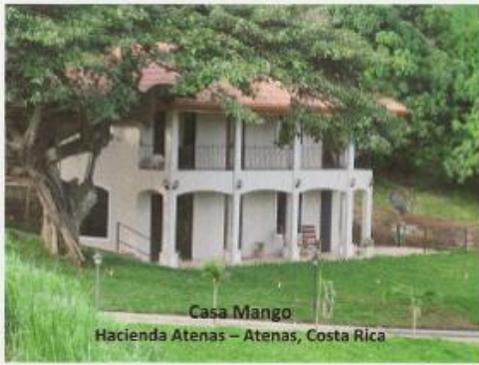


Unfortunately, Sean and Raf were truly suffering in the heat so we drove south, past all the beach houses built on stilts. It was fascinating to see and talk about all the different cultures of the Gulf Coast. Those were important days for us because we had sold everything in Canada to leave the cold. It was a wonderful, free time, a complete adventure.

Later, when we saw that Hurricane Katrina had reach shore at Gulfport and had also destroyed Galveston Island, we were heartbroken. And now the oil spill is reaching the Louisiana marshes. As I write this I am waiting to see if the top kill will succeed and thinking how fragile life is. Unfortunately, not every story has a happy ending.



May 29, 2010



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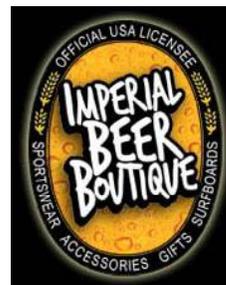
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Our Columnists

I Don't Know



by *Marietta Arce*

"I don't know" were the first three words in English that I remember learning in 1963 when our family moved to New York. They were magical words which I used whenever anyone asked me anything. Since I really didn't know what anyone was saying, these three little words saved me: the person moved on and I was relieved of further questioning.

My first two years of school in New York were at the local public school. I remember how kind my two teachers, Miss Hamill and Miss Crosson were, enabling the adjustment to the tremendous change that our move had brought the family.

A combination of total immersion and childhood made the acquisition of the English language a quick task for my siblings and me. Within months after our arrival, we were all fluent in English.

I continued to use the words "I don't know" but now I was fully aware of what I was saying.

When I was going into the fifth grade, my parents enrolled us in the catholic

school near home. I was never quite at ease there. The nuns' severe habits, the lay teachers' somber faces, and the seriousness with which each day was met were all in opposition to my cheerful disposition. I often felt they were on a quest to contain and destroy our spirit, but that is a story for another day! They were doing the best they could and I believe my spirit survived.

One day in high school, Sister Cornelia asked me a question and I replied, "I don't know". She looked at me for a long moment and said, "You don't know, Miss Arce? You don't know? And when will you know?" I felt so taken aback by her attitude that I decided my formerly magical words had to be eliminated from my vocabulary and my life! I became a know-it-all instead, and by the time I was a senior in high school, Sister Cornelia had taken to calling me "A jack of all trades".

I am always perplexed to find that many educators have no idea of the impact their words and actions have on their students. I tried so hard to please Sister Cornelia that I became a walking encyclopedia for a good part of my life. Many turned to me for answers instead of actually researching things for themselves. I have not always felt this to be a good thing, for them or for me.

In my quest for self-knowledge I often analyze the reasons I behave as I do. Will I ever know all the reasons? In my opinion "I don't know" is a perfectly good answer to that question. These are still my magical words. What are yours?

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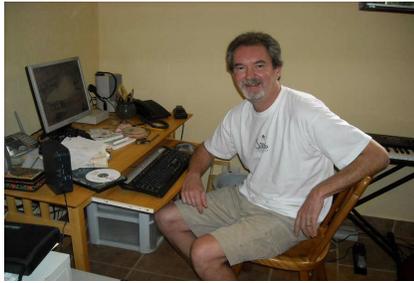
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TECH TALK

by Gordon Klatt
gklatt@live.com



Using a computer as a media hub is not a new idea. In 2002 Microsoft introduced Windows XP Media Center Edition with the hope that people would soon be connecting their televisions to their computers. Most people had analog TV's back then, and connecting a PC to one of these produced pretty poor results. And Media Center PC's were big, noisy, and expensive. But with digital televisions gaining in popularity we're seeing a number of new computer products designed for the home entertainment center.

The Viewsonic VOT132 comes equipped with:



Intel Atom 1.6 GHz.
processor
2 GB. RAM
320 GB. SATA HD
NVIDIA graphics w/
DVI & HDMI outputs
6 USB ports
802.11b/g/n wireless
adapter

Windows 7 Home Premium is the included OS.
You'll need to add a wireless keyboard and mouse.

Here's a YouTube video: [VOT132 Video](#)
Click here to learn more: [Viewsonic PC Mini](#)
Amazon.com sells the VOT132 for \$387.46.

Similar to the VOT132, the ASUS EeeBox PC EB1006 is less expensive and a little less powerful. Features include:



Intel Atom 1.6 GHz
processor
1GB. RAM
160 GB. SATA HD
ATI Radeon graphics w/
HDMI output
802.11b/g/n wireless
adapter
Wireless keyboard and
mouse

Operating system is Windows XP Home Edition.

Click here to learn more: [ASUS EB1006](#)
Buy.com sells the EB1006 for \$229.99.

Dell has entered the market with the Inspiron Zino HD. At eight inches square and 3.5 inches high, it's



a little bigger than the others, but it includes a DVD drive. There are four models to choose from, starting at \$249.99, although I would probably choose one with a dual-core processor, which will set you back at least \$499. Keyboard and mouse and wireless adapter are not included, so expect to pay more. They all come standard with ATI Radeon graphics and HDMI output.

To learn more, click here: [Dell Zino HD](#)

Apple has a new product worth mentioning. The redesigned Mac mini, starting at \$699, is the most expensive model in our group, and the most



powerful. It features:
Intel Core 2 Duo 2.4
GHz. processor
2 GB. RAM
320 GB. HD
NVIDIA graphics w/
HDMI output

An 802.11n wireless adapter is included, but a keyboard and mouse are not. To learn more about Mac Mini, click here: [Mac mini](#)

Apple TV connects to your home network and your television. It includes an 802.11n wireless adapter.



It's not a computer, so you don't get internet access, but you can transfer files to its internal hard drive, or download content from Apple's iTunes store.

For more information, click here: [Apple TV](#)

To use any of these effectively, you will need a connection download speed of at least 1 megabit/second. That's pretty common now, even in Costa Rica, so perhaps one of these will be coming soon to a living room near you.

** Megabit, megabyte, what's up? There are 8 bits in a byte, so if you download a file at 125 KB/sec, that's $125 \times 8 = 1000$ Kb/sec, or 1 Mb/sec. **

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YOUR HEALTH IN GOOD HANDS

Unintended Consequences



by Lois Craft

Oh *Goody!* Another cheerful article from Loie....*Yippeeeeeee!!!*

Jim and I have been in the US for almost 3 weeks, and the news has been nothing but BP and the terrible oil spill that is now spreading to Florida.

Our other news concerns our friend in Costa Rica, Diane, who has now been in CIMA for 10 weeks, following an accident in which she fainted, while doing chores in Atenas. In a Twilight Zone-type coincidence, a taxi driver, who was recently taking new owners of property in Atenas to the airport *also* passed out on the way to taking them to the airport, which landed the woman in CIMA with a broken jaw and pelvis.

What is going on??

Unintended consequences.

Diane:

She was admitted with a hairline fracture in her spine. A doctor at CIMA, who had successfully replaced her femur and hip following a fall a couple of years

earlier, decided to *cement* this hairline fracture, which led to paralysis.

Unintended consequences, which lead to two additional surgeries. Then, after 7 weeks of no meaningful nutrition, a feeding tube was placed through her nose into her stomach. She then aspirated the "food" into her lungs and developed septic shock and came close to dying. *Unintended consequences ...*

Now, with an abundance of caution, the hospital is keeping her, due to a new CT scan, that showed an abscess in her lung. The nursing home that had been reserved for her is now concerned that, until she is free of any infection, cannot take her for another week or so. Her room, the only one available, may not be available by the time she is released.

Unintended consequences..

BP:

BP executives were warned that the short-cuts that they were taking with the construction of the well were dangerous, but they thought that the cost-savings were worth the risk. The result has cost the livelihoods of multi-thousands, to say nothing of the environmental devastation . Save a buck.....

Unintended Consequences

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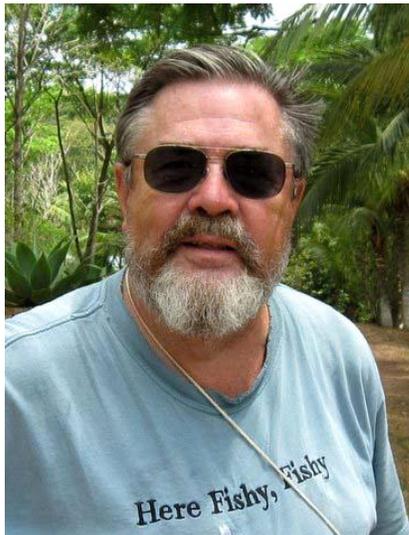
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Los Duende



by *Martin Lively*

Were there little people in the woods near where you grew up? Or had your family left them in the old country? With ancestry going back to Ireland on both sides it was sure 'n begorra that the leprechauns stayed tight to us and could be seen, albeit rarely, even in San Francisco. My paternal grandmother although a second generation born in the City, spoke with a bit of a brogue, and it was she who shared the ancient lore with me.



Un Duende

I had always considered the wee folk to be only Irish so you can imagine my surprise when in March of 2008 when preparing for our first St. Patrick's Day in Costa Rica I saw a 2 foot tall, red bearded man peeking at me from the bushes as I hung the Irish flag. As I glanced at him he disappeared. Then things began to happen: table decorations were moved, flowers appeared where none had been planted, and again a little man peeked down from a tall mango. They were here!

Mischief both good and bad are the hallmark of the Leprechauns. And of the Duende! That is what Mariluz our housekeeper called them when I

told her what I had seen. She related stories that matched those of my grandmother Rose.

Costa Rican little people live in the forest and in caves and under bridges and love to play tricks on people. They do good things for good people and punish bad people. They kidnap little children to play with and now and then keep a little girl to add to their tribe. Each group of them has a big pot of gold hidden in the woods, and sometimes it can be found by searching at the end of a rainbow.

A quick check of the Internet disclosed many references to the little people in many parts of the world especially Latin America. Below is one good article.

Los duendes

[http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leyendas de Costa Rica](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leyendas_de_Costa_Rica)
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Probablemente derivados de la mezcla de los [españoles con los espíritus guardianes de la tierra indígenas](#), los folclóricos costarricenses se describen como criaturitas con vestidos de colores, de treinta centímetros de altura, que parecen niños barbados, y sus huellas tienen la forma de las de un ave, un gallo.

Traviesos y juguetones, una leyenda indígena dice que en la primera batalla entre el Diablo y Dios, los duendes no siguieron a Dios ni apoyaron al Diablo. Esa apatía da origen a su condición de seres neutros, ni buenos ni malos.

Las creencias folclóricas de los campesinos dan fe de que, en su afán por actividades lúdicas, si se ensañan con una familia ponen de cabeza la casa. Vierten cenizas o heces en los alimentos, dejan caer los comales, rompen los trastes... Pero si se encariñan con los habitantes de la casa son excesivamente complacientes: hacen la comida, alimentan a los animales, limpian los utensilios culinarios, desgranar el maíz, hacen los quehaceres domésticos... La más popular de las leyendas sobre duendes, en Costa Rica, habla de una familia que decidió mudarse por los continuos asaltos de los duendes a su vivienda. Ya de camino, en la carreta, la esposa sintió deseos de hacer sus necesidades, y descubrió que habían olvidado el *bacín* o bacinica de madera, y al comentarle a su marido lo sucedido una vocecilla dijo: "*Aquí está*", y se oyó cuando el duende puso el recipiente en el piso de la carreta.

Su conducta con los niños varía. En lo común, las leyendas narran que los secuestran, tentándolos con juguetes y confites (dulces), para jugar con ellos y devolverlos, o para hacerle maldades (pellizcos, coscorriones)... Pero, siempre según el folclore, cuando nace el hijo o hija de una familia bienamada por ellos, o se encariñan con un infante por su inocencia, pasan a ser una especie de segundo ángel de la guarda.

Como todo duende legendario, los costarricenses poseen poderes mágicos. Muchas veces los usan para gastar bromas pesadas, como hacer que los viajeros apurados se extravíen o, en un relato, llenar a una mujer de vello.

Esta es mi historia de lo que he vivido con los duendes, cuando yo estaba pequeña y se me perdía algo, que se yo un zapato, una prenda de vestir, un juguete, yo siempre decía duendes devuelvanme lo que se me perdió, y en menos de un segundo encontraba lo que se me había perdido, incluso lo encontraba en lugares los cuales ya había yo chequeado hasta dos veces. En fin todo el tiempo hacia yo lo mismo. Hasta que un día de invierno, subí al cuarto de mis padres, yo estaba en la cama y se me cayó mi sandalia entonces al agacharme para juntarla, vi un duende era color azul pequeño y cuando me vio salió corriendo, yo me quede muda del susto y nunca más volvi a nombrar a un duende cuando perdía algo.

So, don't be afraid of that little man peeking at you. Think good thoughts and he and his tribe will help you now and then. Befriend him and he may share some of his pot of gold.

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Spanish to English translation from Wikipedia with a little help from Tim Shea

The Duendeo

Probably derived from a mixture of Spanish/European goblins with the guardian spirits of indigenous people, the Costa Rican duende are described as creatures with colorful clothes, standing a foot high, looking like bearded children, and whose footprints are in the shape of a bird, a rooster usually.

Mischievous and playful, an Indian legend says that in the first battle between the Devil and God, the elves did not follow God or the Devil. This apathy gives rise to its status as neutral beings, neither good nor bad.

The folk beliefs of farmers attest that, in their eagerness to play they sometimes victimize a family. . Discharging ash and dregs in food, dropping the griddles, breaking the dishes ...But if they grow attached to the inhabitants of the house they might prepare food, feed the animas, wash the dishes, shell corn, do other household chores ... The most popular of the legends of the Duende in Costa Rica, speaks of a family that decided to move because of the continued attacks of the fairies to their home. Already on the way, in the wagon, the wife was tempted to make their needs and discovered they had forgotten the wooden chamber pot or potty, and tell her husband what happened a little voice said, "Here it is," was heard when the elf put his bowl on the floor of the wagon.

His conduct with children varies. In common, legends tell that the kidnap, tempting them with toys and sweets (candy) to play with them and return them, or to do evil (pinching, cuffs) ... But, again according to folklore, when the child is born of a family beloved by them, or grow attached to an infant by his innocence, become a sort of second guardian angel.

One other aspect of the Duendes is that they have a horde of gold hidden in the woods. So especially on St. Patricks Day beware the little people.

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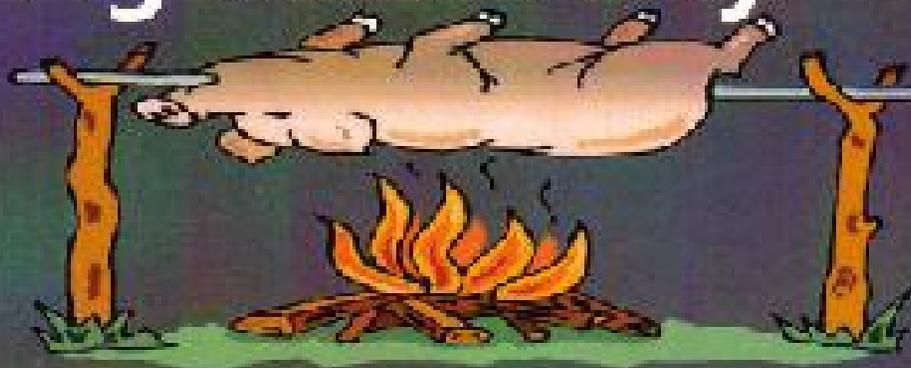
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Bosque Municipal de Atenas



by Lorna Smith

Darrell, Lorna and friend Fred Ball set off for a few hours of birding and exploration on recent morning in some unfamiliar terrain close to home, *Bosque Municipal de Atenas*. Atenas' protected watershed area is located only a few kilometers outside of central Atenas off the old highway to Jaco. A very good system of criss-crossing trails was constructed some years ago. Today visitors to the watershed can explore and admire the creeks, large old emergent trees, and birds and butterflies galore.

A good part of the now-protected forest includes a former coffee farm that is now reverting to native forest. This area of second-growth provides good habitat for a myriad of species. We heard a nostalgic and familiar song ring through the woods- the fluting, upwards-floating trills of the Swainson's Thrush.

As wintering migrants, Swainson's Thrushes are mostly silent in Costa Rica. The singing told us that the Swainson's

Thrushes are on the move, anxious to return to their northern breeding habitat, perhaps back in our old neighborhood in Snohomish, Washington, where half a dozen pair nested and serenaded us on our Snohomish farm.

The woods were noisy all morning. The varied and bizarre calls of a feeding frenzy of Montezuma's Oropendolas were interspersed with the buzzing and whirring calls of lekking Long-tailed Manakins. or as the Ticos call this species, el Toledo. For those seeking out this often difficult to see beauty, Atenas' Protected Watershed provides an excellent opportunity, especially during the breeding season.

Other species of note for the morning were Yellow-green Vireos, Red-capped Ant-tanager, Red-rumped Woodpeckers, Red-billed Pigeons and White-tipped Doves. The lovely warbling song of Rufous-and-white Wrens reverberated throughout the forest for the entire trip.

Lorna Smith and Marietta Arce returned last week on a walk sponsored by the Atenas group Aprosucuenca. This group of local conservationists has plans to improve the habitat within the forest and to provide additional access. Recently they hosted a tree planting day with volunteers from several schools in Atenas and students from abroad. If you can read Spanish and want to know more about the activities of this group, visit their Facebook Page for Aprosucuenca.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The new forming detachment of the Marine Corps League of Costa Rica is looking for a few good men. If interested please contact Bill Enell at mcleaguecr@yahoo.com ."

Juan Carlos is now offering dance classes 4 nights a week in Su Espacio. Mondays and Wednesdays are dance for exercise and Tuesdays and Thursdays are for learning the latin dances--merengue, salsa, cumbia, etc. They are at 7:00 p.m. and he is charging 1500 per class.

You can practice your dancing at the Mirador on Friday and Saturday nights from 8pm to 2am.

Private Lot on River

This 5400 square meter lot is in Finca Zacatal, a 9 lot community located in San Isidro de Atenas, approximately 5 kilometers from town. Huge trees and a stream border the property, which is completely private with no other houses visible. Water and electricity is installed to the property line. Two other houses have been constructed in the community, and a caretaker house at the entrance provides security.



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