

## 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

Issue No. 86

February 23, 2012



*ATENAS TODAY is a free English language newsletter for the residents and potential residents of Atenas, Costa Rica. It contains informative articles and creative compositions submitted by our readers, and is distributed via email approximately once a month to over 400 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Marietta Arce at [atenastoday@gmail.com](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.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.*



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

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

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

### In This Issue:

Marietta Arce --Publisher's Note	p. 3
Community Bulletin Board	p. 4
Theresa Fulton - Neglected Foods!	p. 6
Marietta Arce - Immigration Law 8764	p. 8
Paul Furlong - Room for a View "Dem Bones"	p. 9
Jeanita Ives - The Amazing World of Costa Rica	p. 13
Gerardo Avalos SFS - Sustainability	p. 16
AT Staff - Chili Cook-Off Results	p. 17
Evelyn Levtchenko - Unforgettable Tropic Night	p. 19
Jo-Anne & Ron Findlay - Sardinal School	p. 21
FOCUS ON: The Cornucopian Cantaloupe	p. 23
Marietta Arce - "Montado en la Carreta"	p. 25
Art Gallery	p. 27
Listing of Blogs of Interest	p. 30
Classified Ads and	p. 31
<b>Display Advertising</b>	
Advertising rates and policies	p. 35

## Publisher's Note



The excitement and exhilaration that comes with the start of a new school term is palpable in the streets of our small town. There is no mistaking the exchange students or those coming for a semester 'abroad' as they jog their way bravely on our unpredictable roads! We welcome them with open arms and hearts and know that the learning adventure they are undertaking will broaden their horizons and add value to our community.

February is a wonderful summer month, perfectly suited for outdoor activities and festivals. I had a sensational time at the Chili Cook-Off in the gorgeous venue, Romavista in Barrio Mercedes. It was heartwarming to see so many people turn out for this event and for such a worthwhile cause. This issue features just a few of the many highlights of the day, which we hope you were able to partake of.

As we approach the end of the month of love and friendship, and go into the transition period leading to the rainy season I wish you many inspiring sunsets in the company of those you hold dear. Whether you are visiting for a while or living here permanently, enjoy the memories you are making in Atenas today, and everyday.

Marietta Arce  
marietta.arce@gmail





## COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

**This space is available for posting community activities for the following weeks. Please provide information about your activity or event to [atenastoday@gmail.com](mailto:atenastoday@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

February 25<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 a.m. Professional Women's Group workshop (see flyer) in San Jose.

February 28<sup>th</sup> - Atenas Bridge Club meets at the new, renovated Don Yayo's Restaurant. 1:00-4:00 p.m. No partner required.

February 29<sup>th</sup> (Please confirm with Sara or Kay 2446-0664) and  
March 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>

*Atenas Wednesday Women*  
informal get together at Kay's Gringo Postres  
every Wednesday afternoon at 12.30 PM

February 27<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. ART CLASSES with Mary Park. Please call or email to: [mandgpark@shaw.ca](mailto:mandgpark@shaw.ca); 8330-3274

March 1<sup>st</sup> - U.S. Embassy Outreach 10:00 a.m. at Salon Provee J&M (see flyer attached)

March 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> - Recycling of aluminum, metal, plastic, paper, electronics in the Central Park of Atenas from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Please rinse and separate your recyclables before dropping them off. Thank you for your continued efforts in this campaign.

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 13, 20, 27- Atenas Bridge Club meets at the new, renovated Don Yayo's Restaurant. 1:00-4:00 p.m. No partner required.

March 6<sup>th</sup> - Writer's Club meets at Kay's Gringo Postres Contact L. Michael Rusin @ [crcaseyboy@gmail.com](mailto:crcaseyboy@gmail.com) (2451-8063) for more information.

March 13<sup>th</sup> - 3 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Kay's Gringo Postres. Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

March 19<sup>th</sup> - PLEIN AIR - A group of people with curious minds who meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month at a different location to explore and express their creativity through visual art and writing. Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or [janyatsko@ice.co.cr](mailto:janyatsko@ice.co.cr) to find out where we have been and where we are going.

March 31<sup>st</sup> - Personal Symbols and Mandalas Workshop (See Classified Ads)

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT [www.atenaslife.com](http://www.atenaslife.com) FOR OTHER REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES.



## *You Are Invited!*

- Who:* All US citizens
- What:* A community outreach meeting from the US Embassy
- When:* Thursday, March 1, 2012 at 10:00am
- Where:* 65 metros East of the Escuela Central de Atenas,  
Salon Provee J&M
- Why:* The US Citizen Services representatives at the Embassy would like to provide a brief overview of:
- What the embassy does
  - Share voting information
  - Have a discussion on any safety/security concerns that the American community may have
  - Answer questions as well and can provide passport/notarial services as needed

Please **RSVP to [outreach@newsummitacademy.com](mailto:outreach@newsummitacademy.com)** so we can get a head count of how many people plan to attend, ensure proper space and seating, and update you with any new information.

*Sponsored and hosted by New Summit Academy*

## Neglected foods – expanding our culinary horizons



*By Theresa Fulton*

Although there are estimated to be 12-20,000 edible plant species, humans currently get 95% of their food from just over 30 of those. That's a lot of potential food we are not taking advantage of!

These “neglected” or underutilized crops are sometimes called “orphan crops” in the world of crop improvement, because not many resources (\$) are spent trying to understand them, use them for food, or improve them for better nutrition or agronomic qualities. Often these crops are not prioritized because they are eaten only by a small group of people (and therefore have low commercial value). For example, in most developed countries, millet (a cereal grain related to sorghum, maize and sugarcane) is used only in birdseed or for livestock. But in Africa, millet grows in dry sub-Saharan regions where no other crops can survive, making it a staple food for millions of people.

These crops may also be very important to traditional or indigenous groups, but just haven't “caught on” mainstream yet. In my travels to Africa, I have had many

vegetables that are commonly eaten yet no one could tell me exactly what they were! One delicious leafy vegetable my friend in Nigeria could only tell me was “something like spinach” (it was much tastier than spinach, though, and too hot for spinach to grow there).

Many of these under-used crops have the potential to grow in marginal areas, fill unmet nutritional needs, not to mention add to our culinary pleasure! Here are just a few examples – if you happen to spy one in the grocery store, why not try it out?

Amaranth is related to the ornamental plant Celosia and is actually a large group of species, but only a few are eaten today. It was a staple food of the Incas, and is now becoming more popular again because although it is eaten as a grain, it is gluten-free, thus a good source of protein for gluten-sensitive people.



*Amaranth caudatus* (also known as love-lies-bleeding!).



I have made Quinoa several times (most recently in a delicious salad with chiles and corn from Health.com) and thought it was a grain, but like amaranth it is an ancient “pseudograin” actually related to beets and spinach. It is usually cooked like rice, but is much more nutritious, with good levels of iron and many essential amino acids.



Teff, or tef (*Eragrostis tef*) is a grain, a grass native to Ethiopia (also called lovegrass!). The word comes from a Ethio-Semitic word meaning small, because of the size of the grain. Indeed, the grain is so small, it is very difficult to harvest or handle (in the lab, this also causes seed contamination problems because just a breath can blow the seed around!). Teff gluten does not contain

the compound that causes celiac disease, and so can be eaten by people sensitive

to gluten, and it is very high in fiber, iron, and many nutrients. An Ethiopian friend of mind swears that teff is the reason that Ethiopians are such good runners! Who knows?



Sacha Inchi (or Inca Peanut, Sacha Peanut, scientific name *Plukenetia volubilis*) is a plant in the Amazon rainforest that has some of the highest levels of Omegas of any plant source: 13 times the amount in salmon, “the richest source of Omega 3 on the planet!” according to the advertisement of Saviseeds (<http://saviseed.com/>). The oil can be used as a salad dressing.

For more see:

<http://www.cropsforthefuture.org/>  
<http://www.pfaf.org>

For comments or ideas for future columns, please email [tf12@cornell.edu](mailto:tf12@cornell.edu)

## Immigration Law 8764 and “Voluntary Insurance”



by Marietta Arce  
marietta\_arce@yahoo.com

Immigration Law 8764 went into effect on March 1, 2010. This new law requires residents to enroll in the Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social's (CCSS) “voluntary insurance program” and to bring proof of payment (with all the other required documents) in order to renew their residency (cédula). Generally speaking, this bureaucratic enrollment procedure should be scheduled at least a few months prior to the expiration of the current residency so that costly and stressful delays are not encountered. New residency applications require proof of Caja enrollment before approval.

In 2011, I was hired by several expats to help them navigate the confusing and tedious process of signing up for the Caja insurance. All of my clients successfully enrolled in the Caja system but I have recently become aware that many do not have a real grasp on what this entitles them to. Although most expats can afford private medical care, and usually choose it, I feel it is important to clarify what it is residents are ‘voluntarily’ paying for.

For the purposes of this article, we will assume that the initial interview with the Caja official has taken place, all documents have been reviewed, and a monthly fee (approximately 9% of your reported income) has been established and paid.

You have now proceeded to the registration area and have been given an insurance card, similar to this one

CAJA COSTARRICENSE DE SEGURO SOCIAL

CARNÉ ASEGURADO DIRECTO

No. Seguro Social: 123456789	Válido hasta: 03.10.2024
Nombre: JANET MONROE	
Fecha Nacimiento: 25/11/1932	Cód. Aseg.: 511
Clinica Adscripción: A.S. ATENAS EBAS LOS ANGELES	
Fecha Emisión: 03/10/2011	A.D. ASEG. VOLUNTARIO

4-78-07-0760 - 1005

AREA DE SALUD ATENAS EBAS  
OFICINA DE AFILIACION

4

which provides you and the Caja system with important information about which Clinic or EBAS you are assigned to (this will be determined by the district in which you live). The next step on your part should be to visit the clinic or EBAS and schedule an appointment for a routine check-up to establish the condition of your health at that time or to point out any known conditions. This will establish a history with Caja and will speed up the process should you have an emergency in the future.

The ‘voluntary’ insurance entitles you to the same treatment offered to Costa Ricans. You are entitled to receive care ‘free of charge’ when you have been enrolled and paying for six months. You will not be denied care if you need to use the system prior to being enrolled for six months, but you might have to pay for procedures that are complex, costly or the result of previous conditions.

Feel free to contact me if you have any specific questions, concerns or comments on this topic.

## Room for a View



by Paul Furlong  
fuzzlong@gmail.com

### Dem Bones

First of a three piece set

It was one of those full moon days... I made the coffee too weak, the truck wouldn't start, and when it did, it only took us to work... We worked all morning and by noon we were hungry. Gaby sent me for sandwiches. Seat belt on... can't reach my keys... seat belt off, start the truck and re-buckle...

She'd given me a list. The bank, pick up mail, stop by the court and of course... the food. This took some thinking...there'd been a re-arrangement of one way streets in town, so that ending up where you wanted was more like a billiard game than just driving where you wanted to go. I had a lawn mower, gas cans and pool supplies in the back. I thought I'd stop for the mail going down...but that would leave me bollixed for the bank if I wanted to watch the truck while making a withdrawal since I couldn't turn left to

park in front. But then if I came in from the other direction and stopped at the auto-teller, I couldn't turn right to go up to the post office...dear me...got to the bank and backed up to the tellers. I could see my mower in back of the truck okay, but the crowd was long and it seemed the machine was out of money...

Went to my favorite sandwich place and found no park an' watch. This necessitated a lap around town to go to #2 favorite place. I bought the sandwich and coke and headed back with my prize... Safety belt chafing my neck, I considered the powers that measure the chances of me dying on a two way street against the gallon of diesel smoke I'd contributed to the planet..for a coke and sandwich. That's when the questions began to appear...

Yea, as we enter Biblical times, even nonbelievers admit it sure looks biblical to them..I drag my chair back to the far reaches of my mind and sit... questions come to fester...random bits of truth skittle by and collide with solutions..the insistent hammering of

my muse wakes me again at 2:00 a.m.  
..more questions...

“What is the nature of government? What’s it for? Is there a moral or ethical use of it? ..and..and... if it's a tool ...who does it belong to?”<sup>i</sup>

“What would remain if we strained away the labels...left, right, liberal, conservative...communist, fascist..center right, right on, and far out? What do they mean and, more importantly, do they mean what they say they mean? Suppose we could look beyond the labels and just poke at the bones that support this thing we call government...”<sup>ii</sup>

First I guess we have to be careful not to get political... What a mess that would be...right? And if we take all the bones and dump ‘em on the table... we’ll be at it for a hundred years...

‘cause we know dat da thigh bone’s connected to the knee bone and the knee bone’s connected to da foot bone and the foot bone’s connected to the gas bone..and the gas bone’s connected to the jail bone...

let’s dump that sack of bones on the floor and pick through it. Who knows, maybe there’s some bones we don’t use anymore, like the head bone.

Economics are the backbone of a free society. Without the freedom to keep what’s ours there can’t be much

freedom, just a gradual increase in taxes<sup>iii</sup> to support a gradual perceived need that funnels our wealth into government coffers and makes power for the state through civil dependency, war and control. Is this something we want a government to “handle” for us? That is, would John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Jefferson, Frédéric Bastiat, or Ludwig Von Mises deem the control of our money as a proper function of government? A quick look in our rear view mirror could make this bone go down hard. Still, it’s a big bone and most of the world believes it’s a government bone. They call themselves Keynesians.<sup>iv</sup>

The issue is always the same: the government or the market. There is no third solution. Planned Chaos. Ludwig von Mises

Economic Titans battle through the ages...it’s easy to get caught up on a side. Who’s history to believe? Something as important as our own wealth, the very air we breathe..who’s responsible for that? That is...who do we belong to? If a country owns itself, and a town owns itself, why wouldn’t a bony old coot sitting by the fire..own himself? From whom should he ask permission? The state? His minister? His reflection in the pond?

Sitting by the fire...a blanket over our shoulders..a blanket of stars above. Lets pay tribute to the fires of our great great ancestors who sat at these same

fires and drank and ate and tripped and debated long into the night... in the absence of television, both before and since the invention of government, Anarchists argued that:

“In the absence of government, man would gravitate to communism.”<sup>i</sup>

On the far side, different Anarchists contended, “in the absence of government, we would gravitate towards a laissez-faire<sup>ii</sup> economy.”

As I sit by my own little fire, I wonder how these positions could be so fixed. I play with the words... commune... commune-ism... commun-ity...

If communism/socialism is such a great thing... people should flock to it. Some do, though I question their motives since they insist, usually through force of arms, that I do too. What if it was voluntary? What if we could choose to be charitable or not on any given day depending on our state of mind and financial flushness? How is it

we can walk past six beggars in San Jose and give the seventh a coin or two? Isn't the point of free will that we can grow our own Karma? Or is it something the state should force us to do..? Isn't there a man in front and behind us covering beggar number two and number four? What if these were opportunities instead of mandates?

On this golden nail strewn road of life, we seem to want the same things... love, peace, fat babies... What if our driver insists on fixing our tire with a portable drill? When will we tap him on the shoulder and ask him to please stand aside? What if he refused?

.....

To be continued next month. During this time, I'll sweep the debris and clean the shop..let's see if we can assemble just a few dem bones in a useful way. Meanwhile, if there's a ..er..."bone of contention" in the pits, give me a shout, I'm ready...  
[Fuzzlong@gmail.com](mailto:Fuzzlong@gmail.com)

**Endnotes on following page.**

## END NOTES

<sup>i</sup> “*Government is not reason, it is not eloquence, it is force; like fire, a troublesome servant and a fearful master. Never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action.*” George Washington

<sup>ii</sup> “*The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else.*” ? [Frédéric Bastiat](#), 1801-1850 A French [classical liberal](#) (“classical liberal” means the opposite of what *Liberal* means today) theorist, [political economist](#), and member of the French assembly. He was notable for developing the important economic concept of [opportunity cost](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Or the hidden tax of inflation.

<sup>iv</sup> Keynesian economics, also called Keynesianism and Keynesian theory) is a school of [macroeconomic](#) thought based on the ideas of 20th-century English economist [John Maynard Keynes](#). Keynesian economics advocates a [mixed economy](#) — predominantly private sector, but with a significant role of government and public sector

<sup>v</sup> Communism is a [social](#), [political](#) and [economic](#) ideology that aims at the establishment of a [classless](#), moneyless, [stateless](#) and [revolutionary socialist society structured](#) upon [common ownership](#) of the [means of production](#).

<sup>vi</sup> In economics, *laissez-faire* is an environment in which transactions between private parties are free from state intervention, including restrictive regulations, taxes, tariffs and enforced monopolies. The phrase *laissez-faire* is French and literally means “let do,” but it broadly implies “let it be.” or “leave it alone.” Today, this may be more easily aligned with “Austrian Economics.”

# Welcome to the Amazing World of Costa Rica

by Jeanita Ives---ivesimages.com

## Banana Tree Drama--- Lessons from Nature

I love the drama of the natural world. This was one of the big attractions that led us to relocate our lives to Costa Rica. This little country actually is serious about keeping its green spaces. The animals seem to sense that. I especially like it when autumn and winter begin in the north. That is when the bird population increases down here, and the Costa Rican summer begins. From my bird book I learned that as many as 25% of the species that occur in Costa Rica are seasonal migrants from up north.

This is when I spot Baltimore Orioles, Red Breasted Grosbeaks and numerous other North American birds that are smart enough to know where to vacation...sort of like the seasonal expats we get down here six months out of the year.

Birds wake you up very early in Costa Rica enabling you to tell time. About 3:30 a.m., the roosters start crowing. Chickens are commonplace in the middle of Atenas. Many people have them running loose in their yards and we often see the chickens wandering in the streets.

Today the noise in the banana tree outside our patio was more raucous than usual. I have found a lot of things happen around a banana tree. The birds were having a fit and I know enough about bird sounds to recognize that this was a very serious alert they were broadcasting. I grabbed my camera and rushed to the patio to see the show.

Thanks to Claudia Leon for identifying the most critters in the November issue. I have labeled the photos in this issue so you don't have to guess. Which format do you prefer? Feedback is appreciated. E-mail me at [ivesjg@mac.com](mailto:ivesjg@mac.com)



Blue-grey Tanager



Female Great-tailed Grackles



Great Kiskadee

Three different species of birds - a Baltimore Oriole, a White-wing Dove, and a Blue-grey Tanager- were using their warning calls to signal that they needed help. They bounced from the banana leaves to the seven-foot tall chain link fence that defines the property line between the closely packed houses. About half a dozen Clay-Colored Robins, known here as el yigüirro, the Costa Rica National bird, lined up on the fence to add their voices to the mix. Another half dozen birds were nervously hopping back and forth from the rooftops to the fence rail. A dove, usually quiet and cooing, was screeching a song I have never heard it sing before. It was acting more like the aggressive Great-tailed Grackle that was scolding from the top of the nearby power pole. Kiskadees were livid, squawking first as a gang of three, and then as a scattered group doing surveillance. I even spotted a pair that I hadn't seen before, Grayish-saltators, standing guard like soldiers at either side of the banana tree. The large Rufous-naped Wrens were singing the loudest protest song while the swallows, en mass, patrolled the sky circling the tree. It was like the 99% that just wouldn't quit. A whole half-hour of drama and it was barely 7 a.m.!

I suspected what the problem was and that it lurked somewhere in the dark within the concealing dying leaves of the lower part of the banana tree. It wasn't ready to show itself yet, and so I waited. It obviously hadn't counted on its cover being discovered so early and it didn't know how to make an exit without losing face.

The cacophony in the upper stories of the banana tree were enough to "Wake the Pope", as my still sleeping husband, Jerome, likes to say. The birds were all en mass and in unison singing their various warnings of the danger that lurked nearby. I was in awe of how they came together. They were an army of very diverse birds with a common purpose of making enough noise to wake up the neighborhood, (but apparently not my husband) and alert it to the danger from within.



Grayish Saltator

Suddenly there was a great fluttering and the birds spread out as if waiting for the next direction from their commander. But, they had no commander. They needed no commander as they all had one mission, one goal, and one reason for being... survival. And, they knew they had to hang tight. They moved back into position making even more noise, not like a chorus of Melodious Blackbirds, but a screaming cacophony of tunes off key and out of sync.

It worked! Suddenly out of the mess of dead leaves on the lower part of the banana tree emerged the foe, the calico cat that hangs around the neighborhood. He has no keeper but many people feed him rich bowls of milk and leftovers that keep him fat and sassy. He had been pushing his luck in hopes of a little extra dessert that might be in that banana tree nest. Now his head was down and he was rushing to safety. The birds were not going to cease and desist until he was gone.

The cat ran the whole fence line along the narrow upper support, head down, looking frantic. He usually had all the advantages, but not against all these birds who today were gathered together for a common cause. The cat, with tail between its legs, slunk off to the next house perhaps in hopes of securing a less alert and protected victim, or a free bowl of milk.

The whole event got me to thinking that in the natural world, animals do what they have to do to protect themselves and their young. When necessary they band together as one, ignoring their minor differences of color, species, or other differences that, due to the emergency facing them, become small. Each bird was contributing their special talents to the whole. Some were watch birds, other handled alerts, some were messengers inviting others to join the protest. Birds seem to understand this. Many other animals do this. We need to tune in to our natural instincts of right and wrong and not be afraid to unite as one, each sharing their special talents like the band of birds I was observing who seemed to understand that losing one nest of birds was a threat to all the birds.

Observing the natural world can teach us a lot if only we stop long enough to really look. I invite you to smell the flowers and enjoy what the banana gang can teach us.

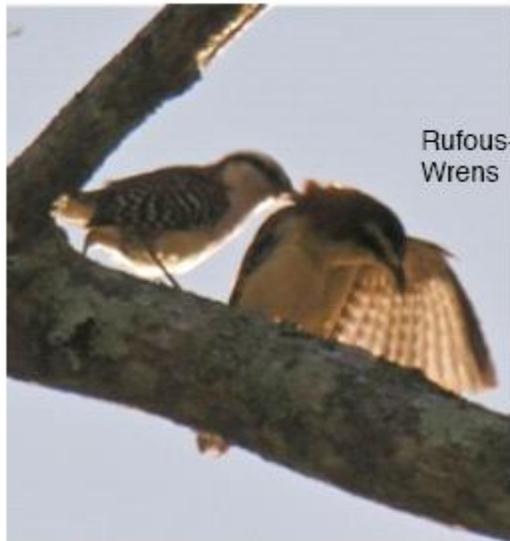


Baltimore Oriole above/Red-breasted Grosbeaks below



Clay-colored Robin

White-winged Dove



Rufous-and -white Wrens



## A More Sustainable Society is Possible

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



The term “sustainable development” refers to economic progress that is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all without damaging natural resources beyond their capacity to regenerate. Sustainable development is built upon three interdependent axes: to be ecologically sound, socio-culturally rich, and economically viable. Implicitly, the benefits of a sustainable society should reach everyone, creating an equality that respects the needs of today as well as those of future generations. Development strategies that disregard social needs have very little chance to succeed, no matter how ecologically- or economically-sound they are.

Sustainable development requires innovative actions to change the status quo, and thus, transform the institutional and economic structures that determine our collective behavior. However, it takes place one step at a time, at the individual level, by changing our consumption patterns and life-styles. This does not insinuate a passive transformation, but rather, we as families and communities must work proactively to implement positive changes. Planting a garden; being more involved in community initiatives to preserve nature; taking responsibility for our own ecological footprint: these are all honest efforts to improve our world. We need to depart from the fabled “grasshopper strategy”, that is, to stop thinking that we are entitled to anything we want, anywhere, anytime.

It is clear that sustainability represents the new paradigm of development, emphasizing long-term, participatory, culturally, ecologically and economically sound development. The United Nations is organizing the sequel to the Rio Earth Summit of 1992; again in Rio in June 2012 (known as RIO + 20). I hope this summit will lead to concrete accomplishments at the international level, and especially, at the level of corporations that cause much of the environmental damage we see today. Our international community needs goals; it’s true. But more than anything we are desperate for action.

Nevertheless, we cannot wait idly for our governments to take charge. We as individuals can still make a difference, and in the end implement a significant change. An ocean is made up of many individual drops of water – no action is too small. . Since 1993, the Center for Sustainable Development Studies has been involved in many projects in Atenas and throughout Costa Rica, working with different government offices and stakeholders. From reforestation projects, to the evaluation of ecosystem services in coffee plantations, to the generation of scientific information for national parks, and outreach projects centered on environmental awareness, the Center strives to improve the level of biological literacy in the county of Atenas. From understanding comes appreciation. From appreciation comes the desire to preserve. I invite you to do something small for the planet every day. Even if you think that it will not make a difference, in the end, it is one more drop towards a better future.



by AT Staff reporter

After months of anticipation, the day for the 5<sup>th</sup> annual **Kay's Chili Cook-off** to benefit the Hogar de Vida Orphanage finally arrived. The weather was perfect and the setting (Romavista) was superb.

The event was supposed to open to the public at 11:00 a.m. but by 10:30 there was a long line of eager visitors waiting to get in. Fortunately, the more than 90 volunteers and the contestants had everything set up and the fun began:

#### **Food Ticket Sales:**



#### **A little taste here:**



#### **and a little taste there:**



#### **A song here and there, catching up with some friends:**



#### **The judges getting ready:**



**Here's a list of our winners.**



**First place Judges Choice Trophy** went to Chesapeake Chili Champs  
Prepared by Steve & JoAnn

**Second place Judges Choice Trophy** went to Sperone  
Prepared by Marcial, Saedi, Kat, and Jackie.

**Third place Judges Choice Trophy** went to Maria's Texas Chili  
Prepared by Maria

**Fourth place Judges Choice Trophy** went to Hot Meat prepared by Sally, Leonard, Andy & Fran

**Fifth place Judges Choice Trophy** went to Pure Life Development prepared by Dennis & Gerardo

**Sixth place Judges Choice Trophy** went to Willie's Hoppin Jalapenos  
Prepared by Bill

**First Place Peoples Choice Trophy** went to Jalapeno Central Chili Team  
Prepared by Norman

The Financial Committee will have details of the proceeds that will be donated to the Hogar de Vida and we will pass that information to you in the next issue.

**Kay says:** “Well, we can say goodbye to another Chili Cook-off! We also can say thank you to a terrific group of people who worked for months to put together the best and biggest one yet. We had so many wonderful folks on committees and 90+ volunteers who made this year’s Cook-off the best and biggest one yet! We also need to thank the wonderful people who came and enjoyed the event. We hope that it was a good time for everyone. We also must say Thank You to the entertainers who made the day so much fun! The orphanage will do well, we think. We will let you know the head count and how much we will give the children. God bless you all!



**Editor’s Note:**

Photo Credit Jerome and Jeanita Ives of Ives Images Photo-Art, Feb. 13, 2012

## An Unforgettable Tropic Night



by Evelyn Levtchenko  
*levtchenko.art@gmx.eu*

For sure you now expect a passionate, stereotypical slushy love story. Tough luck! What we experienced in that tropical night, was far more exciting and not at all kitschy:

It started as an evening like any other - after dinner we had made ourselves comfortable in front of the TV, but the program, as usual turned out rather boring. After dozing off several times, we finally plucked up courage around 10:30 to change the couch for a more pleasant bed. While I was unenthusiastically shuffling along to the bathroom for a quick cleaning of my teeth, I could already hear my husband snoring loudly.

But what was that?

A broad black band was moving with great speed from the window, over the wall, down to the floor, where -- just like a meandering river -- it split into different, even speedier branches. I must have given a shrill cry of fear, because my husband, wide awake at the same moment, was next to his hysterical wife, to stand by her in her time of terror.

At once it was obvious what was going on: a huge contingent of army ants was on the rampage through the house ... and we were standing barefoot in the middle of the battlefield. The bellicose little beasts proved to be extremely aggressive. Even their pee was not benign - when it hit, our feet burnt like fire! Their bites were like a million tiny daggers entering our skin.

What do inexperienced gringos do in such a situation? Screaming does not help. Well, grabbing the vacuum cleaner hastily brought from the garage, my husband started a frantic counteroffensive. But the more he tried to beat the teeming masses back, the more excited they became, and the more militant men-at-arms moved up. No corner provided escape from the monsters! A glance at the walls showed us what drama was happening: Spiders of all kinds scurried for their lives! Big, strawberry-blonde ants hung around everywhere, motionless to escape detection, and each of them held a white egg tightly in its forelegs. Clearly, the robbers had stormed their hiding place and now pursued the fugitives. It

was a fight to the finish. Whether strawberry-blond ant or spider - none were safe in this house. Not anymore. They were easy game for the many attackers, who were well trained and controlled by only one purpose: - to kill!

Although both my husband and I were only fence-riders at this event, we could well forget our night's rest. The dark mass of a thousand aggressive bodies billowed towards the living room, and no one and nothing could make it stop. They even ran up our legs! Finally, walking on tiptoes like ballet dancers, we were able to reach the safety of the sofa - as firm as a rock, a tower of strength in the midst of a bubbling hell! Huddled, with drawn-up legs, we remained riveted by the action for a while, until sometime - well after midnight - we could no longer keep our eyes open.

I then had a terrible dream: Apocalyptic riders on black horses, decorated with blood-red, streaming ribbons, followed me - and I ran and ran and ran for my life. Fortunately I woke up with a start - just before they caught me! Ouch! There was pain in my back and numbness in my legs ... No wonder, because we had held out for hours in such an unusual crouch.

... At dawn, peace and silence reigned. - The apocalypse was over. The nocturnal apparitions had vanished into nothing. Or rather - almost nothing: Because on closer inspection, our house was a battlefield. - We found body parts, both red and black, occasionally punctuated by white eggs that had been dropped in the struggle to survive. And indeed - some of the red ants had survived. Completely traumatized, they still waited under the edge of the sink and in the toilet tank, each of them with a death grip on their white treasure.

A pitch-black cup of coffee drove away the evil spirits, and after that came the cleanup.

Evelyn Levtchenko:

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## THIEVES RANSACK SARDINAL SCHOOL



*by Jo-Anne and Ron Findlay,*  
[fincafive@gmail.com](mailto:fincafive@gmail.com)

The September 2011 school day continued as usual at Escuela La Libertad, a marginal school with very scarce resources, in the northern province of Guanacaste, just outside the small, rural town of Sardinal and only a half-hour drive from Liberia airport.

Teachers were presenting lessons, students were actively entering data on the school's computers and the school's cook was preparing noon lunch for the sixty students who daily attend the two-classroom school.

That night, thieves broke into the school through reinforced windows and carted away computers, a television, two DVD players, a sound system and CD's used for many school and community activities, a photocopier, a router, coffee makers, a microwave oven, kitchen utensils and equipment and a sizeable quantity of textbooks used in Grades 1 to 6 as well as English texts exclusively for students in the Discover English program at the school. Nothing has been recovered and nobody has been charged.

The following day, students were speechless. The educational and administrative personnel were demoralized. School spirit sank. The kitchen staff hustled throughout the community to borrow enough utensils to make the noon meal—and even today are still in the “borrow” mode. Grade six graduation was held without the advantage of a sound system.

The Asociacion Caritativa Canadiense (ACC), the outreach arm of the Canadian Club of Costa Rica composed entirely of volunteer Costa Ricans, Canadians and Americans, is guided by a clear philosophy that “all Costa Rican children have access to a school environment that is clean, secure, well-maintained and healthy in which they may learn and grow.” Since the year 2000, the ACC has provided \$300,000 in materials and supplies to more than 80 schools in the poorest areas of Alajuelita, Hatillos, Rio Azul, Puntarenas, San Jose, Playa Panama and Tibas.

Support for school projects comes from the Canadian Embassy and donations from corporate and private individuals.

How can you help?

Although financial assistance is always welcome, if you are cleaning out your bodega, rearranging your kitchen space or moving and discover any of the items in the following list that you no longer need, please consider donating them to the Sardinal school. The list includes –

- large cooking pots
- pressure cooker
- fans
- rice cooker
- DVD player
- wireless router
- coffee maker
- electric frypan

Contact in Atenas is Jo-Anne and Ron Findlay, at 2446-0936 or by email at [fincafive@gmail.com](mailto:fincafive@gmail.com) to arrange for a pickup date and time.

All contributions will help wake up the lost smiles of the school children again and bring happiness to the educational center of the community.



## The Cornucopian Cantaloupe



by Elizabeth Gonzalez

The ‘summer’ months in Costa Rica bring an abundance of **cantaloupe** to our markets. Cantaloupe refers to a variety of *Cucumis melo*, a species in the family *Cucurbitaceae* which includes nearly all melons and squashes. They range in size from 0.5 to 5.0 kilograms (1.1 to 11 lb). Originally, cantaloupe referred only to the non-netted orange-fleshed melons of Europe; however, in more recent usage it has come to mean any orange-fleshed melon (*C. melo*).

The cantaloupe originated in India and Africa and was first cultivated by the Egyptians, followed by the Greeks and Romans.

Because they are descended from tropical plants, and tend to require warm temperatures throughout a relatively long growing period, cantaloupes grown in temperate climates are frequently started indoors, and grown indoors for 14 days or longer, before being transplanted outdoors.

Cantaloupes are often picked, and shipped, before fully ripening. Postharvest practices include treatment with a sodium hypochlorite wash to prevent mold growth and *Salmonella* growth. This treatment, because it can mask the melon's musky aroma, can make it difficult for the purchaser to judge the relative quality of different cantaloupes.

Cantaloupe is normally eaten as a fresh fruit, as a salad, or as a dessert with ice cream or custard. Melon pieces wrapped in prosciutto are a familiar antipasto. In Costa Rica, it is common to see cantaloupe juice being served in the public school cafeterias as cantaloupes make an economical, nutritious and tasty drink.



Because the surface of a cantaloupe can contain harmful bacteria—in particular, *Salmonella*, it is always a good idea to wash a melon thoroughly before cutting and consumption. Only store the fruit for less than three days after cutting to prevent risk of *Salmonella* or other bacterial pathogens.

### Nutritional Facts about Cantaloupes

Cantaloupes are very low in calories and fats, but very rich in nutrients such as vitamins and minerals essential for a healthy body. This fruit can help to meet the daily requirement of vitamin A and vitamin C and also provide other valuable minerals like potassium and folic acid.

Nutrients per 1 cup of raw cantaloupe:

- Calories: 56
- Fat: 0
- Carbohydrate: 13g
- Protein: 1.0g
- Fiber: 1.0g
- Sodium: 14mg
- Potassium: 494mg
- Vitamin A: 515 RE or 5158 IU
- Water: 144g

Here is an interesting recipe for:

## **Cantaloupe Bread with Praline Glaze** courtesy of **Allrecipes.com**



### **Ingredients**

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups cantaloupe - peeled, seeded and pureed
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 2/3 cups brown sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

### **Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Lightly grease and flour two 9x5 inch loaf pans.
2. In a large bowl, beat together eggs, vegetable, sugar, vanilla and cantaloupe. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and ginger. Stir flour mixture into cantaloupe mixture; stir to combine. Pour batter into prepared pans.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 1 hour, until a toothpick inserted into center of a loaf comes out clean. Meanwhile, combine margarine and brown sugar. Microwave for 3 minutes, stirring at 1 minute intervals; mix in pecans. Pour sauce over warm bread. Let cool for 1 hour before serving.

### **REFERENCES:**

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/nutritional-facts-about-cantaloupes.html>

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[allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

[foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com)



## ON THE WAGON...



by Marietta Arce  
marietta.arce@gmail.com

Have you ever heard or used the expression “On the wagon”? In Costa Rica, the term has the opposite connotation that it does in North America and I’d like to tell you a little bit about how that came to be.

Costa Rica began to transport coffee for export from San José to Puntarenas at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thousands of oxcarts and teams of oxen were used for this activity.

It took about two weeks for the oxcarts to make a round trip with their coffee. Naturally, during these weeks, the oxen needed rest, the oxcarts often required repairs and the oxcart driver (boyero) also required rest and recreation at regularly scheduled ‘sesteos’, or rest stops.

The narrow dirt lanes often became jammed with oxcarts traveling in both directions with their cargo. Eventually, the government issued regulations which required the oxcart driver to lead his team of oxen in an orderly fashion to prevent accidents or damage to property. The regulation did not permit the oxcart driver to lead his team while on the wagon, something that seemed to happen when the oxcart driver was tired or had consumed too much alcohol at one of the sesteos.

Policemen on horseback patrolled the ‘roads’ frequently to make sure the rules were being obeyed. If you have ever been in the presence of a team of oxen, you can readily see that this regulation makes sense. Oxen are spooked easily when they realize that their ‘master’ is absent. Their behavior is unpredictable and can turn deadly if they panic and start running haphazardly.

Boyeros often drank to excess during these long journeys. Some were trying to stay warm at nighttime; others were staying cool during the day; or celebrating something, well, you get the idea. When they were too inebriated to lead the oxen because they couldn’t stand up, they had no choice but to climb into their oxcart and lead their team that way.

This was a violation of the law and when a policeman detected this behavior, he would specify on the summons that “So and so was **on the wagon.**”



This expression remains popular in Costa Rica and now you know how it started.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Climate Fair is scheduled for April 27, 28, and 29<sup>th</sup>. The Oxcart Parade will take place on Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. The sesteo will provide an opportunity for visitors and residents to climb ‘on the wagon’ without fear of getting a ticket. I hope you will join us!



Photo Credits: Jorge “Chino” Campos

Thanks to Jose Sanchez Rodriguez for providing the background for this article.

Some interesting videos on this tradition can be found at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXeM66akS-I&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3-IkdWzNBs>



## **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.



**A Friday at the Farmer's Market in Atenas**

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## GERARDO AVALOS PORTRAITS



## For the bloggers...



**We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest to our to our readers. By providing this information, we are not endorsing or accepting responsibility for any content found therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share.**

Biolley Buzz	<a href="http://bcrcoffee.com">bcrcoffee.com</a>
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica	<a href="http://delapuravida.com">delapuravida.com</a>
Fabulista De Costa Rica	<a href="http://fabulistadecr.blogspot.com">fabulistadecr.blogspot.com</a>
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Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	<a href="http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/">http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/</a>
Mi Chunché	<a href="http://michunche.com">michunche.com</a>
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April 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**April 27<sup>th</sup> Noon – Activities Begin in Central Park of Atenas**

**April 28<sup>th</sup> Entertainment, food, music all day. Family oriented, alcohol free activity.**

**April 29<sup>th</sup> Traditional Oxcart Parade**



**Complete Program Available in March**



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**March 31 in Atenas**

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**In all cases be sure to include your name and what the money is for.**