

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



BUSY ATENAS FARMERS MARKET ON A TYPICAL FRI DAY!

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ATENAS TODAY is a free English language newsletter for the residents and potential residents of Atenas, Costa Rica. It contains informative articles and creative compositions submitted by our readers, and is distributed via email approximately once a month to over 600 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Marietta Arce at atenastoday@gmail.com.

Advertising rates and policies

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Compositions from back issues are now archived on scomari.com/Atenas Today.



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

Publisher's Note



Almost 23 years ago, my husband and I found ourselves and our one-year-old son enjoying an invigorating caper in the park of Atenas. I knew then that we had found the place I wanted to live in for the rest of my life, although I did think we'd have to wait at least 20 years before it would become a reality.

Three years later, we had added a daughter to the family and everyday life (in New York City) with children in tow often gets in the way of "stopping to smell the roses". Less than 7 years after purchasing our property in Atenas, we relocated to San José while we got everything ready to build our home here in Atenas. The reasons leading to our momentous decision were many, but mostly centered on the idea of having our children grow up in a more relaxed environment that included their extended family.

After two unsuccessful attempts to educate our children in 'regular' schools, we decided to try something different: enrolling them in an accredited distance school and doing all the work from home. This was one of the best decisions we ever made - one that made it possible for us to check out local hidden gems like the aforementioned central park of Atenas.

These days our children are back in the States and my life is truly blessed because I know that they are happy, healthy and safe while they figure out what they want to do for the rest of their lives. We are able to enjoy the best of both worlds by traveling frequently to see them or having them come here to visit us. And of course, there is also Skype! I never take these blessings for granted.

We are in the high tourist season in Costa Rica right now. As we welcome seasonal residents and visitors back, we will be treated to many traditional activities in our own little town: the 9th Annual Chili Cook Off; the (hopefully) colorful festival of democracy during the Mayoral elections on Sunday February 7th and the Fiestas in Sabana Larga later in the month. Let's not forget to revisit all the sensible sun protection information available and also to remember about safety on the beaches.

My love for this county grows each day. I am affected deeply by the expressions of joy at simple things that are so often voiced by people who have spent just a little time here. There is something for everyone in our little slice of paradise, Atenas, today and every day!

Happy reading and Happy 2016!

Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

This space is available for posting community activities for the following weeks. Please provide information about your activity or event to atenastoday@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

January 13th – 25th Palmares Fiestas

January 31st – Atenas Chili Fiesta (see flyer/program/article)

February 9th – Public Schools Begin 2016 School Year

February 14th – Day of Love and Friendship (Valentine's Day)

February 19th - 22nd – Fiestas in Sabana Larga, Atenas

February 27th – MOTOWN DANCE PARTY – (See flyer)

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Every Sunday: Buddhist Book Discussion at Roca Verde (See Flyer)

Every Monday: Meditation #10 Roca Verde (Barb Moss), Gate opens at 8:30 a.m. closes at 9:00 a.m. Free and welcoming of men and women. Practice consists of a 20-minute silent meditation, followed by a dharma talk via YouTube Tara Brach of the Insight Meditation Society in the States.

Every Tuesday, Wednesday & Sunday Atenas New Community (See Flyer)

First Wednesday of each month – Recycling near CoopetransAtenas Bus Depot

Second Monday of every month: 4 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Antaños Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

Every Tuesday: Atenas Bridge Club meets at Don Yayo's Restaurant. 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

Every Wednesday: At 11:30 a.m. (Please confirm with Michele Clutter 2446-0664)

Atenas Wednesday Women
informal get togethers at Kay's Gringo Postres

Third Thursday: 11:00 a.m. Costa Rica Writer's Group meets at Henry's Beach Bar near Multiplaza, Escazu, lunch follows at around 1 p.m.
Contact : Bob Brashears at bbrashears0@gmail.com



Buddhist Book Discussion

*****'

Every Sunday
Meditation (optional) 1:30pm
Book Discussion 2:00pm
218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings

ALL ARE WELCOME !

If you need directions or any other information,
please feel free to telephone or e-mail:

Adrienne and Richard Baksa
2446-8509
adriennebaksa@me.com
rbaksa@me.com



ATENAS NEW COMMUNITY (associated with the Tico church, Iglesia Bíblica de Atenas)
[facebook.com/groups/145046998883605](https://www.facebook.com/groups/145046998883605)

DESCRIPTION: Atenas New Community is non-denominational with a diverse congregation - Messianic Jews, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Methodists, Catholics, Southern Baptists, etc. The focus is on Jesus Christ and the Bible, not on esoteric and divisive theological differences.

SERVICES: Tuesdays - 6pm - Bible study in English. Wednesdays - 6pm - English worship
First Sunday of each month - An English translator is provided for the 9:00am Spanish worship services. (After the service many of the ex-pats gather at a designated home for a potluck lunch. Just ask any ex-pat before or after worship for the particulars.)

ENGLISH PASTOR: Steve Lucas - <https://www.facebook.com/steve.lucas> • 8764-8960
ENGLISH PASTOR: Steve Lucas - <https://www.facebook.com/steve.lucas> • 8764-8960
TICO PASTOR: Oldemar Artavia - <https://www.facebook.com/oldemar.artavia>
ADDITIONAL CONTACT: Judy Hickman • 2446-4791 • judy@proslink.com

DIRECTIONS: On Highway 3 at the blinking light

ATENAS Chili Cook Off



31 enero del 2016
SABANA LARGA - ATENAS
11:00am - 8:00pm

CONCIERTOS



SALÓN

11:00 am CONCURSO CHILI



CAMPO FERAL

11:00am-1:00pm FLASH BACK BAND

1:00pm Concierto de Vozes Duo

2:00pm Concierto Marvin Suárez

3:00pm Música en Vivo DJ ARMIN y Karaoke

11:00am a 6:00pm Venta de Comidas
Cerveza
Artesanias
Actividades para Niños

REDONDEL DE TOROS

2:00pm - 4:00pm BINGO

4:00pm Corridas de Toros

**SENSACIÓN
TAURINA**



PRECIOS

ENTRADA GENERAL ¢2500
NIÑOS MENORES DE 10 AÑOS GRATIS
APARCAMIENTO ¢1000

**EL DINERO RECAUDADO
SERÁ PARA AYUDAR A**



www.atenaschilicookoff.org

DIVERSIÓN - JUEGOS - BBQ - CHILI - CASADOS - HAMBURGUESAS - PIZZA



MOTOWN DANCE PARTY / FUNDRAISER

for Su Espacio community center
Saturday, February 27, 2016 6pm-12am

Please join us for an evening of nonstop dancing to the best soul music of Motown, USA - including The Jackson Five, Temptations, Four Tops, The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and much more from 6-10pm, followed by DJ music until 12am

AND including a special dance performance by BRAVE
Su Espacio's awesome hip-hop dance company

C5,000 Admission includes a soul food/CR typical buffet

Where: Resturante etnia [frente la bomba] RSVP: 2446-7735
More info: suespacioatenas@gmail.com

Why: To help our local community center for kids, Su Espacio, continue to provide after-school classes in art, dance, marching band, martial arts, and more.

Be part of the Village that raises our kids!

Friendship Library News*
January, 2016



Photograph: Eyleen Vargas *La Nacion*

Greetings, Dear Readers. First a little exercise for you brains from Freaks of Figures by John Udy Lean:

A father divided one hundred silver dollars among his children in the following manner: he gave nine dollars to each son and seven dollars to each daughter. How many sons and how many daughters had he? (The answer is at the end of the article.)

And now, a look at some of what is new in the library. We have received the entire Twilight Saga (for fans of vampire stories), several award-winning books, books in French, books in German, books for children and some interesting historical fiction.

Vampires

Look for all four titles in the Twilight Saga by Stephanie Meyer (Twilight, New Moon, Breaking Dawn, and Eclipse) in the fiction collection. F Mey

Award-Winning Books

- Top Science Book of the Year: Sean Carroll's The Making of the Fittest: DNA and the Ultimate Record of Evolution. NF 5
- Man Booker Prize: Martel Yann's Life of Pi. F Yan
- Pulitzer Prize: Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies. F Lah

Books in French (On the second shelf of the New Books cart, upstairs.)

- La fille de papier by Guillaume Musso.
- Haka by Caryl Férey
- La première Nuit, by Mac Levy
- Vous revoir by Marc Levy

Books in German (On the first level, by the steps.)

- Der Wolf der Wall Street by Jordan Belfort. R Bel
- Der neue Leben by Orphan Pamuk (Nobelpreis für Literatur, 2006). R Pam

Books for Children

Someone who just might love children's literature as much as I do (Is that possible?? Who are you?) has donated an astonishing collection of "Stone Soup" books. Stone Soup is a folktale that is something of a trickster tale (think Brer Rabbit) but also a story of sharing. It changes from country to country but is always recognizable. We now have a version in Spanish (Sopa de Pietra), an easy-to-read version by Robert O'Brien, an animal version that includes a CD, Bone Button Borscht, Nail Soup, Bone Soup featuring a skeleton boy and a recipe, an Asian/Zen Buddhist version and a Mexican version (Cactus Soup).

Now, before you dismiss these delightful books as "just for kids", sit down with a cup of coffee and read one or two as short stories. Heck, read them just to enjoy the beautiful artwork.

All of these books and other picture books can be found in the new book carreta:



And finally, for fans of Historical Fiction, we have three new mysteries by I. J. Parker that are set in 11th century Japan. Island of Exiles, Dragon Scroll, and The Hell Screen. (F Par).

The books mentioned here represent only a portion of what has been donated this month. Keep checking the New Books cart in the upstairs rear dining room. Also, when returning books, please feel free to re-shelve them if you are confident about getting them back to the correct place. Otherwise, just put them on the table in the back room.

Happy Reading. Linda Ledbetter, librarian

[Answer to the puzzle: 8 sons and 4 daughters]

*Located in Restaurante La Carreta, 50 mts. east of the church, Atenas Central

DOG OF THE MONTH



Fundación Ateniense de Ayuda a Animales Abandonados
Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals
Cedula Juridica # 3-006-542026
ATENAS de Alajuela - COSTA RICA

PEKI



I am a small Pekinese mix, neutered male and about 3 years old. My family did not want me anymore. I was found hanging around the Mercado of Atenas with a bad eye infection. The eye was removed and has completely healed. I am doing great with one eye. I need a family to share my love and a warm spot to sleep.

FECES EATING DOGS

Malnourished dogs that lack nutrients in their diet or are unable to digest the nutrients in their food can resort to eating partially digested food in poop in order to provide the nutritional needs.

Consult your vet about the best diet for your dog, and also to rule out any medical problem associated with coprophagia, the scientific name for the act of dogs eating their own or other dog's feces.

Mother dogs cleaning behaviour includes licking the anal area to relieve the puppies poop and is necessary for the puppies health.

After addressing dietetic needs, and ruling out other conditions, you will have to break the habit. Use a hot sauce like Tabasco on poop in the yard for several days.

DORA TEL.8855-9822 PRESIDENT (ESPAÑOL)
doritrebol@yahoo.com

SYLVIA TEL.8868-1386 SECRETARY (ES,EN,DEUTSCH)
ANIMALESATENASCR@AOL.COM

ANIMALES ATENAS PROGRAM

Stop by the vacant lot next to Pali Grocery on Friday mornings to see the animals and good quality used clothing and household items. Donated items are needed and can be left at Kay's or at our Friday mornings location.

Sylvia Spix, Myrna Kastner

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Driver assistants to Dora
Friday morning set-up
Friday morning helpers

Computer and Facebook Tech
Bilingual telephone answering/scheduling
On-line auction-computer tech

FOSTER VOLUNTEERS

Foster volunteers open their homes and hearts to animals available for adoption. Many of these animals have been abandoned by the owners.

Animales Atenas provides all vet care as well as providing food, treats and toys free to foster parents.

Animales Atenas does not have a shelter for abandoned dogs and cats.

If you are not able to foster and would like to help in some other way, we have other options for volunteering.

Atenas Today Interviews
Cecilia Tristan and Tina Newton
Partners at



AT: Thank you both for allowing us this opportunity to introduce your wonderful new partnership to our readers. You have been interviewed independently in the past because of your participation in different community activities but this time, you are partners in a whole new adventure! Why don't you summarize how that happened?

CT: Thank you for coming to see us. I first opened “El Rincon de Nana” –the crafts store—but then decided that Atenas could benefit more from my background in law and to offer a “one stop shop” for legal issues, notarial, translation, real estate, insurance, development, and investment and therefore, I created the multidisciplinary consortium: Gomez, Tristan, & Tristan. However, I didn't have enough time to fully dedicate to the real estate side of the business. I was talking to some community members about the real estate side of the business and Tina's name was recommended to me for a partnership. When I discovered that she had a background in both real estate and a master's in economics, I knew that it was the right match and so in December, I invited Tina to join me in a partnership to form the company “Tristan & Newton” which falls under the consortium in order to provide complete services to our clients.

AT: That is very exciting. Tina has been a part of the Atenas community for well over a decade and is the founder of Su Espacio, a

community center which has truly made an impact here and continues to do so.

Tina, how did you and Cecilia team up?

TN: Cecilia and I met several years ago when we participated in one of many county activities, and again at last year's Chili Cook-Off. I was employed after I left Su Espacio so the timing was never right (until now) for me to get back into real estate, which I did in the States.

One day everything fell into place.

I am looking forward to growing the business, not only for our mutual benefit, but also to significantly benefit both buyers and sellers who come to us with their needs.

AT: We wish you success but it is no secret that there are many other realtors, not only in Atenas, but in the whole country. What do you feel differentiates you from others in the field?

CT: I am speaking for myself but I think Tina would agree that we make an excellent team. I like to think of us like a team of oxen working in tandem alongside each other. At the core, we have the same values (tenacity, responsibility, punctuality, honesty and integrity) combined with a down-to-earth approach which allows us to be flexible and open.

TN: Also, both of us are bi-lingual and bi-cultural. We know and understand how things work in Costa Rica and what our foreign **and** domestic clients expect. As a result of our participation in many of the community activities, we have gotten to know a lot of people and have been able to establish a reputation for our ability to get things done in an efficient manner. It is amazing to see how many referrals come to us by word of mouth, which a great compliment.

CT: I would like to mention that we are members of the Costa Rican Chamber of Real Estate Agents (CCCBR) which guarantees clients that they are dealing with a responsible broker. Not all realtors in Costa Rica believe it is

necessary to belong to this Chamber, but we feel that it is an important standard to ensure efficient and ethical real estate practices.

AT: That is very good to know because we are aware of how often transactions go badly. Are you concentrating on only the Atenas area?

CT: No, we have prospective sellers and buyers everywhere. With the current technological tools, we have the ability to participate in real estate opportunities in every corner of the country. We have many options, from small homes to large tracts of land that can be developed into interesting projects. In addition, because of our good relationship with public and private financial institutions, we can assist with securing financing by being a bridge between buyer and seller.

TN: I'd also like to mention that we believe in sharing information with other brokers; we welcome competition because it allows us to improve our skills. We feel that it is better to share a commission than to hoard information about properties that could take much longer to place on our own. Naturally, we expect the other brokers to follow the same ethical procedures we have.

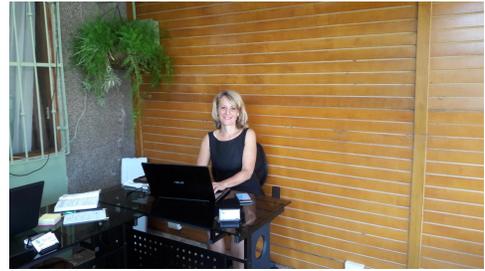
AT: Are there other members on your team that you would like to introduce to our readers?

CT: Yes, of course. We have Nidia Ramos Viquez, who has been working for us for about three years. She handles the legal aspects of the real estate and makes sure that all the properties are properly and legally registered.

Christine Lee is Tina's part-time assistant and Rosa Vallejos is the consortium receptionist who greets all our visitors and makes sure they are comfortable when they arrive at our office.



Nidia Ramos Viquez



Christine Lee



Rosa Vallejos

AT: Tell us about your motto.

CT: Our mission is in our motto— “Names to Trust...Homes to Cherish” and in Spanish: “En Nuestras Manos...Su Hogar de Ensueño”

AT: Okay, going back to our earlier comment about other realtors, why should people opt for your one-stop-shop?

CT: We focus on getting things done, getting them done correctly, and following up completely with the client. If we are selling your house, we will meet with you, get the photos, prepare a listing agreement which gives us legal permission to advertise your property, get it in the official MLS (multiple listing system) and on the internet as we fully recognize that the majority of buyers are not already here but thinking of coming. We will put up signs if the owner wants. Everything will be done to the standards of the needs and wants of the owner. We give market comparisons in order for a pricing that will sell and give feedback after showings. We will actively work on selling the property and finding the right buyer, bringing only qualified buyers through to see your home.

TN: On the buyer's side, we work hard to determine the exact needs and wants in order to prepare a list of properties to show. We understand that you don't have a lot of time and it is a waste to show you things are

completely outside of your price range or without your wants in mind. Then we get together after the showings to determine what were good options and bad and if we didn't find the right property, we will refine our definitions and put together more options. We also have the connections to assist with financing and legal options to transfer money to complete your transaction. We can assist with negotiations on any offers that you wish to be made. We also report back to all of the homes that we showed giving them the feedback necessary on price, how the home showed, and more so they can improve for the market.



Cecilia Tristan & Tina Newton

CT: So, as you can see, we want to help both sides make the transaction happen. Finally, we do not end the relationship with the signing of the deed, but make sure that the registry is entered and follow-up is given so that the new owner is getting what is expected. We can provide local contacts to get them completely settled in and introduced and integrated into the community which could include banks, schools, registry in the municipality, social groups, diminishing any red tape that one can encounter. As we have on our motto: Names to Trust...Homes to Cherish. We want people to be able to come to us for anything they need and trust us to guide them in fulfilling their dreams.

AT: Thank you very much for your time. How can people get in touch with you?

TN: Our office number is 2446-7583, my cell number is 7286-2940 and Christine's cell number is 7286-2939. By email I can be contacted at tina@tnrealestatecr.com Our website will be up and running shortly and that is: www.tnrealestatecr.com Thank you for coming to see us!



These are just a couple of examples of the amazing views that can be part of your "home to cherish"!



By Shannon Farley

Costa Rica festivals season 2016!

It's the New Year, and that means it's time for Costa Rica's summer festival season! Kicking off with the Christmas holidays, Costa Rica's summer festival season sashays into full swing in January and keeps you two-stepping to April. Be sure to attend our local events here in Atenas!!!



Costa Rica Festival Schedule 2016

January

Fiestas Palmares (Jan. 14-25) — In Palmares: One of the biggest fiestas in the country, huge horse parade, bull riding, rodeo, concerts, dancing, rides & games, arts & crafts, food & fireworks. <https://www.facebook.com/fiestaspalmaresoficial/>

Atenas Chili Cook-Off 2016 (Jan. 31) — In Sabana Larga, Atenas: 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Huge benefit event for the Hogar de Vida children's home in Atenas, with a chili cooking competition, live music, food & drink, bingo, bull riding. <https://www.facebook.com/events/456238654568473/>

February

Puntarenas Carnival (Feb. 11-13) — In the Pacific port town of Puntarenas: street fair, parades, horse parade, concerts, dancing, food & sporting events. <https://www.facebook.com/CarnavalPuntarenasCostaRica/>

Sabana Larga Fiestas Atenas (Feb. 19-22) — In Sabana Larga, Atenas. Traditional community fiestas with food, drink, live music, games, bull riding, equestrian shows, etc.

Liberia Fiestas (Feb. 26 – Mar. 6) — In Liberia, Guanacaste: biggest Guanacaste fiestas, horse parade, bull riding, rodeo, concerts, dancing, food, rides & games, fireworks.

Envision Festival (Feb. 25-28) — In Uvita on the southern Pacific Coast: eco-themed festival of art, spirituality, yoga, music, dance & sustainability. <http://www.envisionfestival.com/>



Monteverde Music Festival (February-March) – In Monteverde: top Costa Rican musicians and artists perform various concerts from the end of February to the end of March.

March

Oxcart Parade, San Antonio de Escazu (Mar. 13) — In Escazu, San Jose: traditional parade of beautifully handmade, painted oxcarts with oxen teams & “drivers” in traditional costumes; food and dancing; blessing of the animals ceremony.

St. Joseph’s Day (Mar. 19) — St. Joseph is the patron saint of the capital city, San José. Namesake towns celebrate with fiestas.

National Orchid Show (Mid-March) – In San Jose: celebration of the country’s national flower and 1,200 orchid species.

Fruit Festival (Mid-March) – In Orotina, Puntarenas: huge open-air fruit market and festival (on the way to the Pacific Coast from San Jose).

Semana Santa (Mar. 21-27) – Holy Week in Costa Rica: Holy Thursday (Mar. 24) & Good Friday (Mar. 25) are national holidays; Easter Sunday is Mar. 27.

April

International Arts Festival (first 2 weeks of April) – Top international artists and national performers give performances in San Jose and other locations throughout the country (concerts, dance, theatre).

Annual Atenas Hogar de Ancianos Cattle Auction (Apr. 10) – In Atenas at the Hogar de Ancianos nursing home: annual community event to raise funds for the Hogar de Ancianos nursing home in Atenas; cattle auction, music, food, etc.

Juan Santamaría Day (Apr. 11) — Commemorates Costa Rica’s national hero, Juan Santamaria, who died in the battle of Rivas in 1856. It is a national holiday; the majority of activities are held in Alajuela (parade, street fair, concerts).

Hogar de Ancianos Atenas Fiestas (Apr. 15-18) – At the Hogar de Ancianos nursing home in Atenas: a fun fund-raising community fair with traditional activities, horse parade, music, dancing, food, etc.

Atenas Climate Fair and Oxcart Parade (Apr. 22-24) – In the Atenas Central Park: a fun town fair focused on environmental solutions, innovations and practices. The traditional Oxcart Parade, honoring Atenas’ long-standing tradition of oxcarts and their oxen teams and drivers, will be held on Sunday, Apr. 24.





Atenas Chili Cook Off 2016 PRO - AYUDA



HOGAR DE VIDA

**SUNDAY/DOMINGO | REDONDEL
31 DE ENERO | SABANA LARGA**

www.atenaschilicookoff.org

11am-4pm

**The Chili Cook-off is coming so fast...
it's almost gone!**

The 9th Annual Chili Cook-off is the last Sunday in January, the 31st.

It's a week away! and it begs the question, why do we do this? We do it *For the Kids of Hogar de Vida*, and the best way to see why we support them so strongly that our community has thrown eight successful Chili Cook-off's. And we plan on a successful number 9. Please take a few minutes to watch this video explaining Hogar de Vida in their own words:

<https://youtu.be/bAWLkUIISP4A>

Hogar de Vida plans to grow their own organic, healthy food.

This year's goal is to buy a TRACTOR. A substantial amount of land is waiting to be cultivated and tilled. This will bring a healthy diet to these children and help them cultivate healthy habits for their future. Take a look at our plans.

<https://youtu.be/JKxv0L1FYbl>

Again this year we'll be located at the Sabana Larga Park (Redondel) y Bullring, one kilometer west of Atenas Centro on Highway 3. You can find the location on both Waze and Google, and you can watch for signs and banners on the radial (access road to Route 27) and Highway 3!



The Cook-Off runs from 11am-4pm.

If tasting lots of chili is your favorite thing, please come when we open to be sure you can taste all of the entrants' chili. Today, weeks before the Cook-off, we have 18 teams registered. We expect to have 20 or more teams to make the event really exciting! **Now may be too late - BUT - if you feel a real desire to join the fun by cooking chili, please check with Mary Cook on our website to see if we have space for you - www.atenaschilicookoff.org.**

Let me give you a run-down of this 9th Annual event, because while we have retained some of last year's activities, a few have dropped by the wayside based on participants' and attendees' feedback. Last year we - the Planning Committee - were many in number, and we tried to do Too Much. With so many enthusiastic and different kinds of people we thought we could do EVERYTHING (we are expats, after all)... Surprise...! we weren't able to do everything! (did I mention we are expats?)

This year we want a relaxed event, not too noisy and with enough space for everyone. We have rearranged a few activities. We will only have one band playing at a time. It was TOO LOUD! And we will have fewer artisans in order to create more space for walking, talking and shopping. We have also raised Sponsor Fees. It was just too crowded in the Tent Area. Please become our friend on Facebook to see which businesses in Atenas have contributed to Hogar de Vida through our event. If you want, you can thank them for their participation. That would really help!

The food area and beer garden outdoors will be pretty much as you found them last year, with many of the same vendors and maybe a few new ones. **Vintage** will be pouring some of their favorite wines. And the restaurant below the band shell will be serving just a few Tico Casados.

Entertainment takes place only at the Beer Garden this year. **FLASHBACK** will play from 11am-1pm while the major chili tasting, and judging, is going on in the Salon. They will be followed by **Voces Duo** from 1-2 pm. and **Marvin Suárez** from 2-3 pm. (Curious? You can find these bands on YouTube) Bingo will be 2-4 in the Bullring. Food and drink vendors will be open until 4pm. And we have changed up our raffle, moving to an hourly drawing based on your entrance number - you must be present to win - This year we will offer different gifts, including gifts from many local businesses and our best prizes are shared with the winning Chili Teams!

When this year's smaller group met to plan the 2016 fiesta, we began by touring Hogar de Vida and speaking with Tim and Deena Stromstad, the Founders. They invited us to participate this year with our hearts' as well as our good intentions and ideas. They want everyone who contributes to Hogar to be happy while doing so. They asked us very directly to create and maintain a work group with *convivencia*, a word not so common in English. It means we work together with a common goal, mutual trust, and with kindness y enjoyment. We have pulled that off thus far. We have to remind ourselves and each other on occasion. We were encouraged to contribute through our interactions with one another and the community as well as through the money we raise.

Please give some thought to volunteering part of the day of the fiesta. These kids need our help. You can contact Julie Vogner-Taylor on our website or on Facebook. And last of all, COME! We want a wonderful day for all our attendees, a community fiesta that brings fun and connection to everyone who attends. And in the end, we will all have given of ourselves to some of the neediest in our community.

On my 35th birthday my amazing boss took me to dinner and said "Bonnie, remember this. You are too old now to do everything, but you can still do anything."

Come and show up for the kids, January 31 at Sabana Larga. It will be GOOD!

Bonnie Fluke bfluke@yahoo.com



Atenas Today Interviews



Jodie Cook, Public Relations

AT: Thank you, Jodie, for letting us share a little bit about the band with our readers. First, why don't you tell us the names and what instrument each member plays, and then we'll begin the interview.

JC: Thanks for featuring the band. They really want everyone to come out and enjoy music as much as they do. The members are:

Piet Asma	Guitar/Bass/ Vocals
Jack Crook	Guitar/ Vocals
Bob Cates	Drums
Harriet Cates	Vocals/ Tambourine
Karen Elder	Vocals
Kip Larson	Bass/Guitar/Vocals
Tom Quick	Keyboard/ Guitar

AT: Can you give us a brief history of how the band got started?

JC: The band was formed in July of 2015...the brainchild of Bob Cates. The group wanted to have fun and give the locals a "live" dance band to bring people together. It was originally started "just for fun" but you can't hide talent and soon they were making public appearances performing top cover tunes from the 60's 70's & 80's ...thus the name "FLASHBACK".

AT: How many shows have they done?

JC: So far they have made 3 appearances in Atenas, beginning with a private party in Nov. of 2015. The party was so much fun and they received so much wonderful

feedback that they decided to take it to the next level. Now they are booked monthly through 2016.

AT: That's terrific. How would you describe the style?

JC: Old time Rock 'n Roll!

AT: Does the band play original music, or mostly covers?

JC: Only cover tunes...it's a get out and shake your booty kind of band.

AT: Are there any recordings available for readers and others interested in the band to access?

JC: No, you must come and see them in person for now...but in the future they may put together a demo for future bookings.



The band relaxing – Photo Credit Tom Duffy

AT: How often does the band practice?

JC: The entire band practices once per week, but vocals and a guitar or two will get together another day to work out harmonies for 5. That's a lot of harmony.

AT: Had anyone been in a band before?

JC: **Bob and Harriet Cates** both performed professionally and originally met in "Up with People" touring in the 1970's.

Harriet sang vocals in “Up with People” and her sweet voice has been inspiring Bob who has played drums for numerous professional bands in Nashville doing country, gospel and rock and roll and touring throughout the world.

Jack Crook has performed on the Grand Ole Opry and played Buck Taylor in Buck Taylor and the Mighty Notes on the TV Show I 40 Paradise for 4 years on the Nashville Network. He has played professionally in Nashville all his life.

Piet Asma is originally from the Netherlands. By day, he was the lead detective for the Amsterdam Police. But by night, he was lead singer in several rock bands appearing in the many night clubs and music venues all over Amsterdam.

Tom Quick has been playing keyboard since his teens and went on to work with many professional bands throughout his career, sometimes playing keyboard or as production manager as well sound and light technician.

Kip Larson has always had a love of music but used his talents for “special effects” starting his own company and was credited with numerous Hollywood movies. Now that he is retired, he rocks!

Karen Elder has spent her life singing in school and church choirs but since moving to Costa Rica, she has found her true calling as a “rock n roll diva”.

AT: Would you say this is a hobby or another career going forward?

JC: Going forward?? They are all retired! Most definitely a hobby. This is great fun for the band and a wonderful way to get the local expat and tico community to come together!

AT: How do they balance the time devoted to the band and other responsibilities in their lives?

JC: Time is always a challenge...everyone in the band is busy with their own personal lives and at our age, the occasional surgery! All are active in the community and give their time and talent to local charities such as

Animales Atenas, and Hogar de Vida but the band always gets top priority.



Animales de Atenas Fundraiser Photo Credit : Tom Duffy



Animales de Atenas Fundraiser Photo Credit: Tom Duffy

AT: How is the band promoted:

JC: All the promotion has been through word of mouth, personal emails, and social media. **FLASHBACK** has been fortunate to have developed a loyal following in our little town of Atenas. They are forever grateful to everyone that shows up to support them. The Expat community of Atenas is why they play!

AT: Tell us about your next shows and why we should be there.

JC: The next appearance of **FLASHBACK** will be at the 9th annual Atenas “Chili Cook Off” on Jan 31st at the Sabana Larga Redondel. They take the stage at 11:00 AM. Besides this being a super fun event, it is for a great cause raising money for the local orphan age, Hogar de Vida. Their subsequent appearance will be on Feb 13th for a Valentine’s show at “Augusto’s” restaurant and bar on Rt 3 in Atenas (formerly

Grecos) from 4:30 to 7pm, great music, drinks and food.

AT: That's great, I know lots of people who are looking forward to hearing them at the Chili Cook-Off. How can people get information about upcoming events?

JC: We encourage people to follow and like our FB page FLASHBACK Atenas, Costa Rica for future engagements.

AT: Is the band available for all types of events, like birthdays, weddings?

JC: Yes, the band is available for all kinds of events and the contact information is: Jodie Cook jodiecook73@gmail.com 8407-4796 or Bob Cates at robertpaulcates@gmail.com 2446-6305

AT: Thank you so much Jodie, and best wishes to all of you in the future.

JC: You're very welcome and thanks for letting us share our story with your readers.

FLASHBACK



Jack Crooke, Piet Asma, Tom Quick, Harriet Cates, Karen Elder, Bob Cates, and Kip Larsen
Photo Credit: Tom Duffy

Meeting the Boruca, the People behind the Masks



by Mary Martin Mason
marymason1946@gmail.com

Above my computer hangs a Boruca jaguar mask. As much human as animal, its emerald eyes peer out of a lush, verdant jungle painted on an ebony face. The jaguar's eyes are deeply set inside the balsa wood, following my activity throughout the day, sometimes in a disconcerting, but always watchful way.

Although newly carved, I have often imagined the art piece as a prototype dating back to the arrival of the Spanish when, according to Boruca oral tradition, they frightened away the conquistadors who ran rather than fight them. This interpretation of events is not literal since their tribe that currently numbers around 2000, once populous, ruled from Drake Bay and the Osa Peninsula to the area of present day Quepos. They now inhabit a 140 square kilometer reserve that is 20 kilometers from Panama. They have converted to Catholicism, and only a handful of elders can speak their language that has been largely replaced by the more dominant Spanish.

On December 19, 2015, with Bob and Adrienne Wiegenstein, I took a pilgrimage back to the Boruca (also called Brunca, Brunka or Borunca), repeating a May 23 visit. This time we were invited, with other volunteer *duendes* or elves, to bring Santa Claus to 350 Boruca children. We joined Daryl Wallace, a long time proprietor of Shelter from the Storm B & B in Domicallito, who for 16 years has played Santa. "I will do this until I die," says Daryl who raises funds to buy gifts in a yearlong effort to assure that every Boruca child, from baby to age 11, receives a present.



Daryl Wallace dons his Santa Suit



Boruca masks depict devils and Nature

The caravan of ex-pat and Tico volunteers from Domaticalito, Dominical, Uvita, Alajuela, and Lagunas drive south to Palmar Norte, and then turn east, eventually turning onto the 8-kilometer dirt road that precariously climbs to the village of Boruca. Just short of the settlement, Daryl and the caravan stop as he dons his Santa outfit, along with ice packs that he ties to his stomach, and glues on his beard. The day will include a relay race for coins (divided by age groups and teams of three children), a piñata, lunch prepared by the Boruca señoras, ice cream and of course, gifts from Santa. A polite, anticipatory crowd has already arrived to view the elaborate set-up, the children trying to get peeks at the gifts that are in huge boxes behind a cordoned off area. Soon the crowd will extend around the walls of the Community Center, an area easily the size of a football field.

Bob Wiegenstein is stationed near Santa to install batteries for the motorized cars and other toys. Brian Nice, one of many British volunteers, stamps the hands of each child to assure no repeats, and a number of experienced *duendes* stand ready to distribute the gifts according to gender and age to each child that sits on Santa's lap.

Adrienne and I, though, have another task related to this story. Adrienne, who speaks impeccable Spanish, has arranged through Daryl for an interview with Marina Lasora. Marina's house is near the entrance of the village where she provides a portal into the Boruca village and its culture. During our previous May visit, she enlightened our group that included students doing home tours with a demonstration of weaving, using the "cotton" from the local cottonwood trees. The Boruca are the only Costa Rican indigenous people that weave. She showed us samples of the plants that provide the natural dyes for the purses, tablecloths and billfolds. Turmeric, gavilana and azul de mata leaves were transformed into bright yellow, verdant green and cobalt blues. Tables in her open-air entrance held the masks that have become synonymous with her people.

Assured that the veteran *duendes* have the piñata activity covered, we leave the Community Center to go greet Marina who I hope will offer insights about her people, their legends, and why, after centuries of isolation, they opened up their village to tourists. My curiosity extends to the Boruca belief that they were victors against the conquistadors when their current lives seem contrary to that belief.



Marina Lasora wears weaving made from cottonwood cotton and plants



Marina's hands are rarely idle

Soft-spoken, her hands rarely idle as she sews while she speaks, Marina sits in the front of her house that so often is filled with visitors. She tells us that she never attended school and her husband has a third grade education. She spoke Baruka, (the Spanish word for her native language), when she was raising her nine daughters and one son. They, like most Boruca, understood, but they could not converse fluently. The language, descended from the Chibchan languages, is vastly different from English and Spanish. "*How are you?*" or "*Cómo estás?*" is translated as, "*i shój creraban?*" Marina held an unflappable belief that for her people to survive, they needed to open themselves up to a separate world, the very world that had invaded and nearly decimated them. Consequently, her children have all finished high school. Two of her daughters are currently in college.

Marina turned 61 on Christmas day. Today, on the day of our visit, she becomes one of many articulate voices for her people, explaining how centuries of isolation were ended when a few women artisans in the 1970s realized they needed to attract tourism for the survival of their village. At first they offered baskets and weavings in the natural colors of plants and sea urchins. In 1985, the museum that is next to Marina's house was established, and the Women's Association was formed in 1983 to promote ecotourism. Eventually the men joined, adding their talents in making drums, bows and arrows, and offering the vibrant masks that are used in celebrations.

In Marina's view, * "*Gracias a Dios (Thanks to God) for the tourists who have brought prosperity and better health to us. A doctor comes three times a week, and a dentist twice a year. Twenty years ago a secondary school was founded because we wanted our children to stay and learn their language. We owe everything to the people who come to buy and support our community. It gives us the opportunity to make our community better and to bring in better skilled teachers for our children.*"

The children who once had to travel outside the pueblo to go to school higher than elementary can now attend a local secondary school. Every two years a different English teacher is hired. The children learn the Spanish that Marina thinks is essential if they wish to attend university, English for commerce with the tourists, and Baruka to preserve their culture.

Marina views each visitor as an ambassador, vested with returning to their world and educating others about the Boruca. There is Internet with an informative Boruca website <http://www.boruca.org/en/boruca-culture/> and a Cultural Radio Station that broadcasts in both Spanish and in Baruka. The tribe welcomes student groups, tourists wishing to see demonstrations of their crafts, and overnight as well as extended stays.

Opening up the village to the outside world was a quantum leap for the reticent, timid Boruca who Marina describes in a very personal way. "*As a people, we are shy and intimidated by outsiders. My husband would greet you and then go away. He would not be comfortable talking to you like this. It has taken me many years to become comfortable.*"

Now that her children are adults, the youngest 21, she says that she is happy to have independence without the obligations of raising a family. "It has been a long road to today to have the opportunity to do what I have to do." Doing what she does includes during the high season, making a weekly trip to Uvita to display Boruca crafts, hosting visitors including educational groups, demonstrating and vending crafts in her home, and serving with the Women's Association. From the front room of her house she has a constant eye on each person passing by on the dirt road, greeting them. Her grandchildren, who arrive with their newly acquired gifts from Santa, swing in the nearby hammocks. She stops occasionally to direct them to put away a coloring book that might get dirty or to clean the ice cream from their face.

The dusty pueblo she depicts comes to life as a classless society, where everyone is responsible for all tasks from agriculture to making crafts. "No one person's job is more important than any other. We are all equal." A strengthened economy has led to self-sufficiency, the Boruca now growing their own flour, rice and vegetables. They only need to purchase cooking oil, sugar, paper products and cleaning supplies. Boruca families make an annual trip outside their community to buy clothes. Avon is alive and well in Costa Rica, with an Avon truck arriving regularly, bringing in cleaning and paper supplies as well as other treasures such as cosmetics.

Land cannot be sold outside of their tribe except in cases where a Boruca is married to a non-indigenous person. A governing board of seven makes decisions around civic issues and hires teachers, along with settling water and land disputes. There is a cantina that Marina says is a place to gather for a few beers.

As to whether the Boruca youth have issues with drugs or alcohol, Marina says, "Our youth don't have money to get into that kind of trouble." She explained that the community is very family-oriented and spends time in sporting events, playing bingo, and holding dances in their community center.

Divorce is rare and once was non-existent as in the days of her grandparents whose marriage was arranged by their parents, as was the custom. She laughs, when asked if that were the case for her and her husband. Their marriage broke that tradition. She says that she "chose" her husband. Today, children are given popular and even Western names, although once they were named after flowers, animals, and nature.

There is a police force comprised of Boruca that primarily keep the peace during festivals including the annual *Danza de los Diablitos Fiesta* or Dance of the Little Devils Festival. The *Fiesta de los Diablitos*, taking place December 31 to January 2, reenacts the ongoing conflict with the Spanish that began with the time of Columbus. Boruca men wear devil masks that they believed offered them protection from their European enemies. The Spanish conquistadors, who ironically called the unbaptized Boruca "devils," are portrayed as a singular bull. The many devils, typically played by younger males, wage war against the Europeans in a day and night display. By the beginning of the New Year morning, the bull kills off all the diablitos, but then like a Greek tragedy where the Sphinx rises from the ashes, the devils individually are resurrected.

The bull is burned – or at least his costume is burned - in a symbolic portrayal of the Boruca history.

Marina's grandmother told her the stories of how in ancient times the Boruca worshiped gods of Nature. Inside their palm roofed and dirt floored hut, Marina and her siblings slept in coffee sacks on the floor, listening as her grandmother explained how their ancestors found the present location for their village during a hunt for wild pigs who they believed were spirits leading them to their homeland.

While Joseph Campbell believed that legends are a metaphor for the experience of life, Marina is more practical. She says, "It doesn't matter where we came from. What matters is where we are going. We all die and turn to dust. We are like a tree. We grow and we fall over. What matters is the future. We don't know how long we have been here or where we came from; only where we are going."

Marina's belief explains why the Boruca can with all candor say that they conquered their enemies. By firmly planting their feet on the ground they hold sacred and directing their eyes to a future that welcomes outsiders onto that ground, they have survived, unlike many other indigenous tribes that long ago vanished.

* Adrienne Weigenstein's translation from Marina's Spanish is written in direct quotes in an effort to provide as near as possible an accurate paraphrase or a literal translation. Every effort was made to accurately provide Marina's words.

The village of Boruca is accessible from two entrances, either from the Pan American Highway from San Jose (Highway 2) or Costanera (Highway 34). Visiting during the rainy season is not recommended. Fuel is not available in the village. Daily bus service is available from Buenos Aires.

To reach Boruca, from the Costanera (Highway 34) heading south:

- At Palmar Norte turn left, inland toward Buenos Aires. (approximately 25km)
- Slow down after the Puerto Nuevo Bridge, look for the left turn to Boruca. Look for the brown directional sign on the right.
- Follow road uphill. (8km)

Visitors can arrange home stays with families, reserve rustic cabins or rancho sleeping by contacting Adriana Lazaro Morales at 8568-3008 or e-mail laflordeboruca@gmail.com.

Meaningful Friends

We are all friends to someone, but once in a while comes one that transforms us, usually because they have transformed themselves. Today's article is about Patricia. I've seen her change and grow, and being around her is a lot of fun with abundant jokes and laughter, yet when she speaks from her heart something moves you inside. Wow, I want to be like that, down to earth, fun, social and friendly. But I also dream of being meaningful at those times of connection. It is just so nice to have friends like that. Here is what this dear friend did for me the end of November:

She gave me point of view from where I could see things from a different standpoint by describing to me a graphic trip to India and all its extremes, and she also gave me two beautiful lessons in connection with a talk she gave recently in Cartago.



Having recently come back from trainings in yoga and alternative therapies at a city close to the Ganges River, considered a sacred place, she was full of stories and details.

As expected, she gave us an interesting outlook of what she felt was important



contrasts, but at the end said, "What I went looking for there, I could have perfectly found it here". We are always at Life's door of opportunity to learn.

"I grew up as a girl in Catholic Cartago, and much was expected from me to correctly fit into society. But I recently let go of all of that to find my own path and freedom. As women, we have been framed and subdued as housewives, mothers, and professionals. I have decided not to live to any of those expectations. I have learned to follow my inner Master. Your surroundings don't define who you are. What you do and believe won't completely define you. Your essence is neither male nor female, and now I don't live by any expectations of my husband, my kids, family or friends. I just follow God within me, and that makes me happy and free."

I've heard that message before, nothing new but, for the women present in that room, it was moving. It came from a mind and heart that has freed itself from bondage. She ended her talk by inviting them to be brave and cut loose by not being afraid to be themselves.

The next day, after her speech, she sent me this message via WhatsApp. It is a good example and lesson on dealing with disappointments.

Hello dear friend, how are you this morning, I write to tell you something that happened to me yesterday. Can you believe that I took my iPad to supposedly guide me with some notes I have written for my speech but I ended not using it and I forgot it on the taxi I took to go back home. Two hours later I remembered my iPad and I found out what had happened. I called the home we were at and it was not there, then we contacted the taxi driver and he told me that he had done some more rounds around the city and after checking he assured me that it was not there. The first thing that came to me was the drama of the attachment to the thing. Then the judgment of people that take things instead of returning them, something I have tried to be careful in my life. Then my mind was racing with the

“whys”, with the “I should haves” and a lot of different mind junk food. Then I resolved to yield to the old lesson that we learn over and over, I had to let go to free myself. Doing that I knew that I will be able to also receive from within information about my loss. I now know that it was not a person but Life who took my iPad away.

I have chosen to let go what had fulfilled its cycle in my life. (Emphasis was given by me.)

I learned that we construct our reality even without our conscious mind knowing it or being in control. I got knocked for a loop and I let go of what was stored in it. Now what remains is what I truly carry in my heart!

Thanks to Patricia, I realize that we usually respond to issues depending on what is really stored in our hearts. Is it resentment? Guilt? Addiction to drama? Inability to forgive? Or, is it a clean heart that recognizes it is not perfect, but truly loves to be in peace and in openness to flow with whatever Life brings its way. What is your heart default reaction?

I want to honor a couple of sayings that I have learned from other dear friends. They are awesome people, and I gladly share these “nuggets”. Just like Patricia, they too have found the inner thread to let go and be happy.... No man-pleasing, no fear of being what they are, rather loving and living freely.



Judi Purdy: “Sometimes, we may forget to rewrite our own stories. If the first version of our story is laced with a lower frequency and, over time, the true lesson emerges, remember to return to that story and rewrite it with a higher vibration. For it is the final version that will replay in our minds, and be told to our friends, and ultimately shapes our reality.”



Tea Ionescu: “I choose to stay with those people that love me just as I am.”

I leave you with a Proverb I memorized many years ago.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the outflowings of life.” 21st Century King James Version (KJ21)

Another translation said it like this:

“Above everything else, guard your heart, for it is the source of life’s consequences”. Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

Love you all, K

It's A Dogs Life...REALLY!!



Stories from Mr. BudBud, Primero Perro of Lighthouse Animal Rescue. They were written 11 years ago when he first came to Costa Rica for a house sitting job

March 19, 2005

Hola Y'all!!!

Well the last few days have been better now that things have settled down. Mom and Dad are looking at property and houses and most of the time some of us get to go along.

We got RAIN today!!! YAAAAAAAAAAYYYYYYYYYY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It is "dry" season here and we have not had any rain for a long time.

Mom loves rain but she gets pretty tired of all the muddy pawprints the other dogs make on the floor.

I don't make muddy pawprints of course. It is always the other perros.

Those yellow trees Mom has been raving about are starting to drop their petals now. They just cover the ground beneath them.

They really are pretty. Even us perros like them.

There's a bridge between Grecia and Atenas that looks like it was built upside down. That bridge and it is really strange looking.

Humans sure do build goofy looking stuff.

Yesterday Mom and Dad went to look at property in the town of Puriscal. AND THEY LEFT ME HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Not only that but they let Krystal and Princess Joy go with them.

MAN!!!! Talk about a slap in the face!!! I can tell you that I was pretty miffed about it.

They got to see the old church in that town. It was heavily damaged by earthquakes and tremors but it is still standing. The people built a new church because this one might fall down.

Princess Joy and Krystal BOTH really rubbed it in when they got home. I smelled their breath!!! They ate dinner while they were out! WITHOUT ME!!!!

But that is okay.....I really made Mom and Dad feel bad about it. I got in their laps and looked at them really sad. I even rested my pitiful chin on Dad's belly.

They have a tree here that grows a bunch of white flowers in its top!
The ticos climb up, cut the bunch of flowers, and chop the petals up
and add them to their food for seasoning.
Mom tasted one. She says it tastes sort of like an onion.

Today Mom and Dad felt guilty about not taking me with them the other
day so they let me go along. They also took our little fat brother
Andre' with them. We went to look at a house in the town of Atenas.
The house was neat and the man who lives there has a dog and a cat.

After we left the house we went to eat lunch at "El Rio" in Sarchi.
That is one of my favorite restaurants. There is a river right beside
it and you can hear it tumbling over the rocks.
River in Spanish is Rio. That is why it is named El Rio!!

While we were waiting for our food a poodle walked by the window. He
was leading his human on a leash.
All of a sudden he stood up and looked in OUR window!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Andre' BARKED at him and told him to go away.
Mom grabbed Andre's mouth to shut him up!
I KNOW better than to bark when I am in a restaurant so all I did was
growl at him and tell him we were NOT planning on sharing our food!!

Andre' was VERY happy that we did not have to share. He LOVES to eat!!!

Mauricio is always our waiter when we go there. He is REALLY nice and
always says hello to us. Mom thinks he is cute.

Tailwags from BudBud the poodle slayer.

Focusing on One's Own Task!



by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com

I've been taking guitar lessons for about 18 months, with some breaks in between due to travel or other commitments. I truly enjoy my lessons although I will be the first to admit my proficiency would be greatly improved if I devoted more time to practicing my lessons.

About three weeks ago, I was very diligent about my finger exercises and keeping my nails short. I was eager to get to my class so that I could impress my teacher with how well I was playing a particular piece he had assigned the previous week.



As I played for him, I became aware that his facial expression

showed some confusion and when I ended the piece, he told me that I had played the wrong notes in a certain section of the work.

Now it was my turn to become puzzled! I brought out the musical notation he had prepared for me and he was able to see that I had learned the piece exactly as he had written it for me. My teacher admitted he had given me the wrong notes and therefore gave me good marks for my performance. He did, however, immediately ask me to forget what I had learned and showed me how to play the correct notes!

Needless to say, I was very disappointed with this turn of events but I figured that if I applied myself in the next few minutes and during the week, I would learn the new notes and also help stave off Alzheimer's and/or dementia! According to the Bright Focus Organization, learning to play an instrument and learning to dance (along with a healthy lifestyle that includes physical exercise)

can be wonderful preventive measures that will also enrich our lives. But back to my story!

While I was practicing my new notes, my teacher sat down near me and began to write the correct notation so that I would be able to reference it during the week. I kept glancing at his paper and every so often, I would remark that I thought he had made a mistake (again).

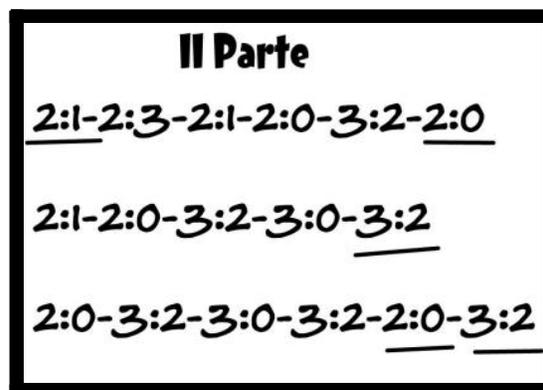
At one point, I almost rose from my chair to indicate the exact error he was making. Lucky for me, my teacher is a gentle person who takes everything in stride. After a few of my interruptions, he calmly put his pen down and said gently: "You have your task right now, which is to practice the new sequence; and I have mine which is to put it down correctly. So, focus on your task, while I focus on mine. Okay?"

I felt properly 'scolded' and blushing sheepishly, I returned to my task. Fortunately by that time, my fingers had become accustomed to the new sequence and I was able to play slowly while my mind's focus went elsewhere! It was an easy sequence.

My mental journey took me to familiar terrain where I silently accept my tendency to become distracted by what someone else is doing or saying. While my fingers' muscle memory played, my mind was busy thinking about the activities that awaited me upon my return home.

Suddenly, I heard the voice of my children in my head: "Focus, Mom, focus" something they used to say when they could see I was about to misplace keys, a wallet or was not answering a question they had asked because my attention was elsewhere.

For the rest of the lesson, I decided to really concentrate and I became so focused on my task, I didn't even have time to notice the corrected transcription that was placed before my eyes!



The corrected version!

Living a distracted life has kept me from mastering some of the goals I have (learning to play chess, for example). As I get older and realize that life really is short, I have begun to realistically appraise the areas where I can focus my energy with good results.

I will never be a guitar virtuoso but with regular, focused practice I might be able to play one piece of music really, really well. I can live with that!

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.



Sunrise on the Rhine
16" x 20"
Oil on Linen

Al Alexander

jeanandal@gmail.com



Gubbio Sees a Mouse
8"x8"
Acrylic on Canvas

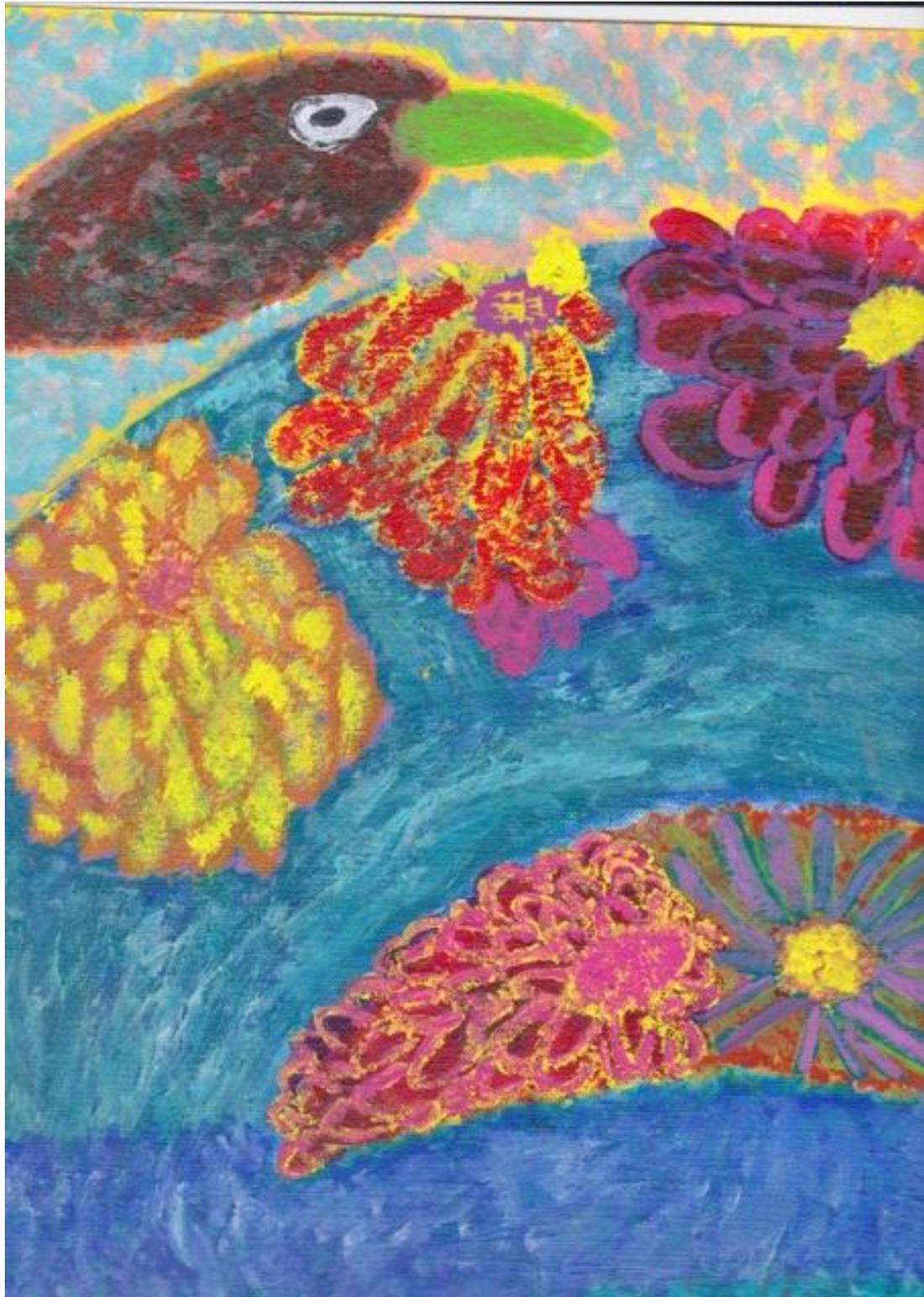
Artist's Statement: This a little surprise gift for Rose Mary and Tony Phillips in memory of their much loved cat, Gubbio. Gubbio had a little mustache under his nose! Photo reference: my own.

Diana F. Miskell
Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com
Costa Rica Blog: www.dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com



Untitled
24 inches x 36 inches
Acrylic on Canvas

Harriet Sheppard
hweyman@gmail.com



Bird Over Jeweled Waters

Jocelyn Farquhar

Jocelyn@squibblesdesigns.com

For the bloggers...



We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest 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. These are alphabetized for your easy reference. **Please advise if you find that some blogs no longer exist.**

Biolley Buzz Bunky Bartlett	bcrcoffee.com http://www.bestofcostarica.org
Carole Connolly Claudia Leon	http://carolejeanscostaricacapers.com http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/ http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/ http://costaricadecisionprocess.blogspot.com/
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De La Pura Vida Costa Rica Dennis Easters/Pure Life Development Diane Miskell	delapuravida.com http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com
Fred Ball	http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/
Going Like Sixty	http://goinglikesixty.com
Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/
Marietta Arce Mi Chunche	http://marisundays.wordpress.com michunche.com
Nadine Hays Pisani New Life in Costa Rica	happierthanabillionaire.com http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/
Paul Furlong motorcycle blog	http://eyeneo.com/
Pura Vida Mommy	puravidamommy.blogspot.com
Rubiatica	rubiatica.blogspot.com
Shannon Farley Somewhere In Costa Rica Su Espacio	http://enchanting-costarica.com/ http://somewhereincostarica.com http://www.suespacioatenas.blogspot.com/
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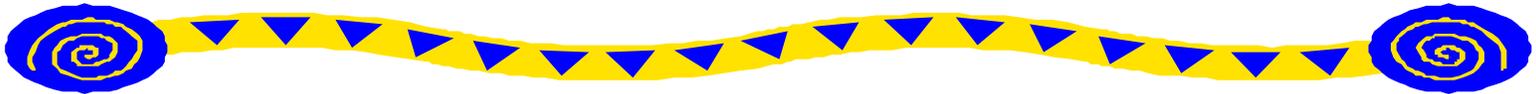


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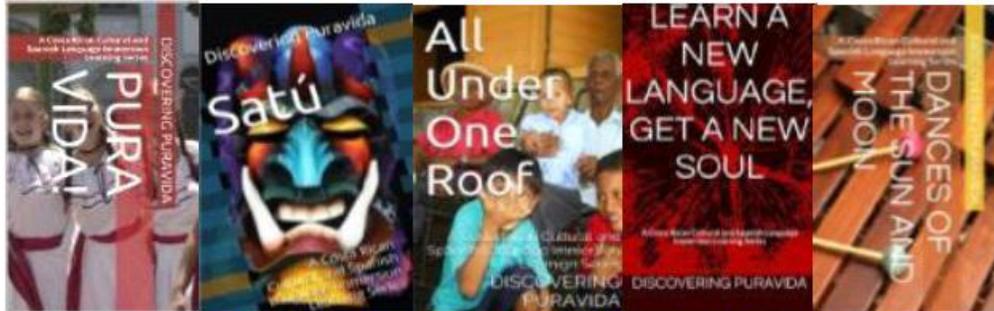
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For print copy contact Carole Jean directly: caroleconnolly@gmail.com

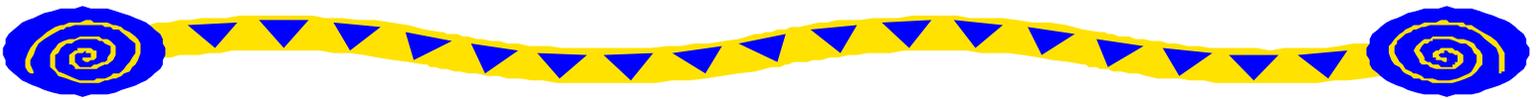
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Diana F. Miskell

Horse and Cattle Art

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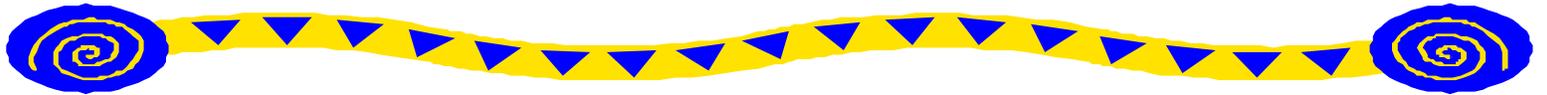
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