

ATENAS TODAY



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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 350 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Fred Macdonald at fredmac222@yahoo.com.*

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

The Chamber of Tourism and Commerce of Atenas (CATUCA)

By Fred Macdonald

One of the reasons I started this newsletter is that I have a good friend who I thought “was in the know” about what was going on in Atenas. Marietta Arce Valverde is an English-speaking Tica who lives in Los Angeles with her husband, Scott Schlieman, and their two children. When I talked with her about the newsletter idea, I was inspired to learn that she is a key member of an organization called *The Chamber of Tourism and Commerce of Atenas (CATUCA)*. What better source for the kind of information needed for **Atenas Today**?

Here is Marietta’s description of **CATUCA** and the **Climate Fair** they are sponsoring next month.

CATUCA is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to:

- (a) work to preserve traditions*
- (b) work to protect and enhance the environment and quality of living for residents*
- (c) work to promote tourism and commerce in Atenas*
- (d) work to provide training opportunities for inhabitants (for example, we arrange for courses through INA (National Institute for Learning)).*

In the month of April we will hold the 5th annual Climate Fair. The first one was in April 2003 when the Monument to Honor the Oxcart “Tradition” was inaugurated. That is the monument that is at the little park in Los Angeles which you pass each time you come our way!

We spend the months of January, February, and March scheduling and looking for funding for this event. Usually we are able to cover the costs through donations, ticket sales, and the fees we charge vendors who set up their tents in the park on the last weekend. Printed programs will be available soon in various Atenas stores.

There will be numerous events throughout the month of April as part of the Climate Fair. **Atenas Today** will be publishing a detailed schedule and keep you updated. I hope that many of you will take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy and support these community activities.

A Bachelor's Life in Atenas

by Douglas Benn

Atenas has great potential for bachelors, starting with the night life. Nowhere else I have lived (England and the USA) do people go to bed at 9PM and the streets are deserted. So the potential for nightlife is enormous if only you can figure a way to keep Atenians awake to 11PM or later.

One big plus living here is the large number of beautiful Ticas you find in Atenas, and if only I could manage to stop falling off of my horse, I am sure we could find something in common to discuss. My Spanish is now good enough for a brief conversation as long as the *senorita* does not mind everything being in the present tense. However, as one wit said to me, "you only need the present tense, since if it is in the past who cares, and as you get older you may never see the future."

One great thing about Costa Rica is that the utilities are designed to promote romantic cozy evenings. There is a special department at ICE that guarantees that just as you are about to start your intimate dinner, the power goes off, and just for good measure, so do the telephones and internet. No pesky interruptions; but if it is not your house beware – how was I supposed to know there was a coffee table there!

Another great Costa Rican institution is sharing of assets. Just like the USA, you find your perfect partner and tie the knot (or is it noose) and off into the sunset you go. Sometime later when your partner discovers that you keep your pet skunk in bed, she begins to wonder whether this was such a good idea. Then the fun begins as you never realized how good it feels to share everything. Oh well, one definition of an optimist is a divorcee planning on remarrying.

So how do bachelors find their way to Atenas? Most of them admit they thought they were going on a vacation to Greece, and by the time they realized people were talking Spanish not Greek, it was too late. So having taken the wrong flight they decide to make the best of an unplanned opportunity. As risk takers they feel certain that everything will turn out for the best, and that somehow Atenas will turn out to be a paradise for bachelors.

Don't hold your breath.....

Douglas Benn

sunrise

(Vista Atenas)

sunrise is a chattering affair,

lifting me from my sleep

into the green gold morning.

is it sunday? i ask myself,

are the swaying trees a gospel choir?

do blossoms perch like bonnets on the slender stalks of plants?

have i come in at the sermon:

the tsk-tsk and caw of countless birds

recalling me to my sins?

the warble and cry of still more birds

recalling me to my glory?

amen! i respond.

i—a humble communicant at this offering—say: praise be the lord!

by Diane Holman

(A small book of Diane's poems is for sale at The Don Juan Pharmacy in Atenas)