

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.

Emergency Medical Service

by Fred Macdonald

Peace of Mind

It is the middle of the night. Your spouse has called out that he or she is having severe pain. You turn on the light and see a person in distress, unable to walk. Whom do you call for help?

A call to 911 in Atenas will connect you with an emergency operator, probably located in Alajuela. If you are lucky, the operator will speak some English, but you have to give directions to your house without referencing any street names or numbers. An ambulance may get there eventually, but when?

Fortunately we now have an alternative emergency medical care system in Atenas. A private company called *Linea Vital de Costa Rica* is located on the main road on the right going toward San Jose, about a quarter mile east of the coope. They have two modern ambulances, fully equipped with defibrulators, oxygen, and medicines. Certified paramedics are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When you sign up for their service, the paramedics will make notes on your medical condition, and then they will come to your house so that they will know exactly where to come in an emergency. They will give you a membership number, and in an emergency all you have to do is call their phone and give your number. An ambulance will respond promptly.

Depending on the situation the paramedics may treat you at home, or they may take you to the nearest hospital (Alajuela), or they may take you to CIMA.

One of the paramedics speaks fairly good English, but the others do not, and you do not know who will be on duty. However the company is affiliated with an English-speaking doctor who lives in the Jaco area, and comes to Atenas on a regular basis. This doctor may be reached by phone at any time to communicate with you.

Subscribing to this service also entitles you to free emergency care in your home. If you should need to have your condition monitored, or to have tests done, such as blood pressure or analysis, trained professionals will come to your home as often as needed.



Lineal Vital Headquarters

We live in a wonderful country surrounded by friendly people who are anxious to help us. Normally we get along fine. But in an emergency it would not be as easy as calling 911 in our home countries.

For a household with two adults this service costs about \$40 per month if you pay 6 months in advance. This fee also covers any temporary guests you may have in your house. You may never need it. But if you are like me, the peace of mind is worth every penny.

To sign up, call 2446-7440 and make an appointment to visit their facility and register. Depending on who answers and your Spanish skills, you may want to ask them to have someone who speaks English call you back. Here is how I think you might say that: "Por favor, digale a alguien quien habla ingles que llamarme a numero 2446-xxxx." Now you see why I don't want to be calling 911 and speaking Spanish.

An Inexpensive Night at the Beach

by *Fred Macdonald*

Note that I said “inexpensive”, not cheap. My twenty-one year old son can go to the beach cheap. Ten bucks for a cot in a tent. Not me. My minimum is a clean room, private bath, hot water, and nothing between me and the ocean except for a few bikinis. One more thing, I don’t want to have to drive very far from Atenas –two hours maximum—and the road has to be good. Oh, and I almost forgot, I need a decent bar/restaurant within easy walking distance (no driving after dark).

There are probably dozens of places that would meet these requirements, but the one that I know about, because my wife and I just returned from there, is the Pelican Hotel in Esterillos (778-8105). The beautiful, brown sand beach at Esterillos is twenty minutes south of Jaco. Along the beach road are a handful of small hotels of varying degrees of luxury, and many interesting private residences. The beach itself is uncrowded, clean, and wide, with a border of palms shielding the occasional house or hotel. It is perfect for long walks, if you can stand the heat.

So what is the “inexpensive” price? The best rooms at the Pelican are \$70 in the high season, including a continental breakfast (fruit, toast, and coffee). It is a small hotel, only 12 rooms, but it has an open-air bar and restaurant. An excellent dinner for two with filet mignon, desert, and a bottle of wine cost us \$60, but without the wine, you could eat well for half of that. Incidentally, you can pay for the room with a credit card, but for the restaurant you need cash.

Our room (number 8) was small, with a bare minimum of furniture, but it was clean and the queen bed comfortable. The small air conditioner struggled to keep the temperature below 75 degrees. We did not spend much time there when not in bed.

My wife likes to eat late, and I like to eat early. After much negotiation, we agreed on “dinner on the table” at 7:00 pm. At exactly 6:40 pm I ordered my grilled steak, and then, being an aggressive reporter for Atenas Today, I grilled the waiter to find out which was the best room in the hotel. When he recognized that I was an American, and therefore must be familiar with water board torture techniques, he succumbed and said there was indeed one especially nice room. At the same time he pointed straight up at the ceiling. I knew he was trying to tell me something without appearing to give away hotel secrets, so I went into the yard, and looking up, saw the balcony of room number 5 on top of the restaurant. Clearly this room had the best view of the ocean, as well as a spacious balcony. Further grilling revealed that the price for room 5 was the same \$70. Next time we are going to reserve room 5.

Between the hotel and the beach is a small swimming pool (with very warm water), and a very pleasant grass and palm covered lawn. Right now I am rocking in one of the four hammocks while writing this piece. Soon we will leave and go back to the cooler mountains.

Here is one more piece of information. If you drive to the Pacific before next Tuesday, April 3, you can stop at the annual Orotina Fruit Fair, which is indeed a huge affair. In addition to the many vendors offering mountains of fruits of every variety, there are well over 100 other vendors selling art, clothing, jewelry, shoes, plants, furniture, kitchenware, toys, etc. There must be concerts, as we saw several stages with sound equipment. Also, of course, there were numerous places to buy drinks and food. At the edge of the fair grounds there was a carnival with rides and games. The Orotina Fair might be a good place to stop in the late afternoon on your way home.