

# ATENAS TODAY



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## Issue No. 26

*December 18, 2007*

**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](mailto:fredmac222@yahoo.com).

Compositions from back issues are archived by category 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.

**Meet Fred Macdonald, “the man behind” Atenas Today who would like to dine with Barack Obama and who is writing a book of short stories based on thought provoking life situations. He describes himself as “curious”, “easy going” and “active”.**

By Jan (Juanita) Yatsko

Fred Macdonald is a man who is just as comfortable building a successful gift business with his wife Linda as he is building wooden shelves for their new home in Atenas. This duality of interest was formed at a young age under the influence of his father and his uncle. Young Fred spent his formative years in Huntington, WV with his intellectual father who loved to read and write and his family vacations in Florida at his uncle’s orange grove farm. His uncle loved to build things with his hands and Fred admired him as a person who chose his own lifestyle.

Fred graduated from college with a degree in electrical engineering just as the United States was beginning its moon exploration program. Frustrated by not being able to get a job with NASA, Fred headed west with enough money for 6 weeks. When asked what he would do if he could travel back into history (his favorite subject) and live there for one year, Fred said that he would choose the exploration of the west with Lewis and Clark. In reality, Fred explored further west than L & C. He fell in love with San Francisco and took the first job offered to him, a position in product management in a radar company in Palo Alto, in spite of the fact that his goal was to become an electronic design engineer, not a manager. Later his mother convinced him that degrees in electronics and business would be a winning combination, so he went back to school and earned an MBA. Upon reflection of his many years in management and sales, Fred has realized that this combination proved to be the best use of his natural talents.

It was the fate of several circumstances that brought a man and a woman comfortably living in Massachusetts to end up living in a developing country and in rural Atenas. Several years ago, Fred and Linda had an approved trip to Cuba planned and it fell through, leaving them with a scheduled vacation and no place to go. Fred had read the book “Jurassic Park” which piqued his interest in Costa Rica, and to seal the fate, their first night in Costa Rica was spent in El Cafetal Inn, Atenas.

Fred followed his natural inclinations when he decided to retire and live in the small town of Atenas. He had always chosen to be employed by small companies where he could work with a small team of people in many different projects that brought visible results. He volunteered through his church in Massachusetts to assist the community feeding and housing programs; and now, after only living in Atenas for several years, Fred decided to start **Atenas Today**. The e-newsletter idea came to him because he saw a need for the English-speaking residents of Atenas to have a vehicle to get to know each other and to learn about what was happening in their town... So to Fred, **Atenas Today** acts as an information center and a community bond for over 150 English-speakers, as well as an opportunity to creatively express himself. However, the purpose of **Atenas Today** doesn’t end there. His desire is that others will feel comfortable to use **Atenas Today** as an outlet for their creative expression, even if they choose to do it anonymously.

# **My Experience at the Flying Crocodile Air Show**

*By Ruth Thumm*

For a few days, I kept thinking of going to an air show advertised by the Flying Crocodile in the Tico Times. The show was on the Nicoya Peninsula, and to get there you had to take a small plane from the airfield in Pavas. I called a few friends to see if they would go with me, but when they declined, I decided to go alone.

So Saturday morning I left at 9 am. I knew that I would have difficulties finding the Pavas airfield, but taking courage in my hands, I ventured forth. After turning right off the highway at Uruca, I kept asking for directions and getting wrong information. I had almost given up on catching the small 6 seater airman, but in desperation I stopped a taxi and asked him to lead me to the airport, and I phoned Flying Crocodile on my cell to explain my problem.

Once I got to the airfield, finding Paradise Air was easy, I strolled in and past the office there was the hangar. Someone said. "Are you Ruth"?

"Yes," I said surprised.

"We are waiting for you. Get your bag and hop in."

I was a whole hour and 10 minutes late, but they didn't even ask for identification or money. Hey, way to go!

I sat beside a tall parachute jumper, and behind the pilot. Now I knew I was in for an adventure & my flagging spirits picked up. It was a perfect day for flying... strong head wind & clear blue skies. After a 40 minute flight, flying over Puntarenas, the bay and then Nicoya Peninsula, the pilot made a great landing on a grass strip just north of Samara. There were quite a few ultra light aircraft, of different types, and gyrocopters too, parked at the side of the runway. On the other side, there was a row of booths offering food and drinks. I sat at a table under a canopy (open tent) and decided to observe the flying activity.

In 10 minutes there was an accident. A small ultra light went over on its nose (quite badly damaged), the pilot broke his foot, and a passenger was slightly injured. A waiting ambulance took the pilot away. At this point I quickly decided I would only be an observer today, although since I am a seasoned glider pilot I had planned to fly.

At that point, they started busily flying aircraft models, probably to distract us from the accident. A live band began playing and wouldn't give up, then parachute jumpers, and then again the ultra light aircraft and gyrocopters took off. There was lots of activity.

And the food was VERY good...sushi, hamburgers, cake, etc. It was a German run operation. I was surprised to find out that there was a whole German settlement near Samara.

An American couple who sat at my table with their grandchildren offered to take me in their Unimog to the hotel where I had reserved a room. A Unimog (made by Mercedes) is the largest vehicle made (larger than a Hummer), and the grandson was very proud of it. The roads are very rough here, with no improvement since I was here 5 years ago.

Well, guess what, my reservation was not reserved (some foul-up)...so these new friends said I could stay at their hotel which was right on the ocean. My luck was holding out

After a swim in the morning, Bill (the Unimog driver) drove us, another customer, and the grandsons back to the airfield, a 15 minute rugged drive. After a short while, the head honcho of the Flying Croc. ....a tall very charming German, took me aside, and said, "I just know the aircraft for you, the controls handle very much like a glider. Fly with Gerhart in the gyrocopter".



"O.K." I said, but I thought, to myself. This sleek little aircraft made of metal, has only got a canopy in front, otherwise it is all open .The engine is right behind the back seat. After strapping me in the back seat, slightly higher than the pilot, and putting on a helmet, the pilot (a 6 foot, 5 inch blond) said we were ready for takeoff.

It turned out to be a very wonderful flight. Gerh. said I could take the controls, which I happily did, and yes, unbelievably it was very easy to handle. We flew a meter above the ocean and below the cliffs, and over Samara. It was certainly worth it, the scenery breathtaking as you can imagine..

At 6 am. the next morning I left this tiny runway, with same airman, sitting beside the pilot, and watching the beautiful scenery on the way home to Pavas airport It was definitely a weekend to remember, and I look forward to going again next year, as its an annual affair.

I definitely lucked out again!

Dear Friends and Members,

We trust all are well and send you a greeting.

On Wednesday November 28th, we met with Mr. Olman Jimenez from the OIJ Regional office in Alajuela. We requested this meeting in order to update the situation in our canton and request the OIJ's support, as recommended in a workshop on security.

Active, interested citizens were present, including our Municipal Board president, Rigoberto Chavez and Attorney general's local assistant Tatiana Brenes. Don Olman expressed concern about our mayor's absence and Don Rigo expressed his opinion that we need more communication among the community/the local Police/the court and the OIJ, he further expressed his support for any and all efforts to organize and keep the crime statistics down.

It is no coincidence that the statistics presented differ from the reality with which we live and Don Olman insists that they cannot have accurate figures as long as people refuse to come forward and go on record. He admits that it is difficult for people to make the trip to Alajuela when the office is closed here in Atenas but that is the only way to make the crime known and it must be the procedure followed until more personnel is based here in Atenas. Right now, the office in Atenas is only open on weekdays, office hours, but there are telephone numbers that have 24-hour access. The office in Alajuela is open 24 hours.

Don Ricardo Alvarez, chief of the Fuerza Publica in Atenas, supports the creation of a Security Commission in the County. He laments the lack of interest on the part of the Municipality to get this done. We will continue to follow up and encourage community participation and we will seek crime-prevention strategies including changing the culture of not reporting. We must also find avenues of expression for the youth of our town so that they do not fall prey to drug addiction and a life of crime. We need help to get this done. In addition, it is suggested that we practice common sense and not leave our cars and gates unlocked, our possessions in plain sight, etc.

We are aware that our county is still relatively safe when compared to others but we must not let our guard down as long as crime is on the rise.

As a first step, please note below the information on how to report any criminal activity or specific crime. In addition, we will be distributing flyers (in Spanish, English, French and German) with this same information for the citizens.

### **ATENIENSE**

**The OIJ office in Atenas is located in the Courthouse Building, diagonal to the Catholic Church in the Center.**

**Phone numbers for information and reports are:**

**446-8200**

**437-0340**

**437-0342**

**PLEASE REPORT CRIME OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY!**

**It is a citizen's democratic right.**

**Atenas with Secure Citizens !**

Thank you for your attention and have a good, safe week.

Regards, Marietta Arce, Secretary/Catuca