

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.

Senorita in the Park

There once was a lady from Atenas
With gorgeous dark eyes who was famous
Every day she walked in the park
And people were heard to remark
Isn't that Senorita Conchita the actress?
"No" said Juan who knew everyone
"That is Senora Pandora and if you open the box
her esposo is a boso who with a machete
will turn you into spaghetti ."
"Oooh" the men replied
"With such a mistake we could have died!"

But Juan was wrong, it was not Senora Conchita
But her little sister Juanita who looked like Conchita
Except for her wooden leg which went thump, thump, thump
As she skipped over the grassy bump, bump, bumps
Alas for her the termites chewed her appendage
And gradually she developed a fault with her steerage
As each day her leg became shorter
Her walks in the park began to falter
Alas at the end she could only manage a circle
And eventually was heard to gurgle
"Once more round and I will fall to the ground."

A passing nobleman, Don Quixote
Heard Juanita's plea while stroking his goatee
I cannot leave this damsel with such an inclination
Else her fate will be a Tower of Pisa imitation
With a few quick slashes with his sword
He fashioned an appendage as if made by the Lord
"There my Lady" you have a new leg
Juanita smiled at him for the attractive peg

So Juanita and Don Quixote were wed
And by now you must be wondering where this all led
To yet another day in Costa Rica
Looking for that special Senorita.

Atenas Today Interviews Melanie Lesueur

Owner of Melanie's Breads and Sweets

AT: Where did you come from? Your name sounds French.

Melanie: My father was French, but I was born and grew up in Germany.

AT: What kind of work did you do there?

Melanie: It always seemed to be something to do with food. I worked in a butcher shop, but didn't like the cold room. Then I worked in supermarkets, training cashiers and managing the store.

AT: When and why did you come to Costa Rica?

Melanie: My partner Chris was in the business of staging concerts in Europe. It was exhausting, and in 1997 we decided to take the money we had saved and start a new life in a new place. We had been to Costa Rica on vacation and loved it. So we decided to give it a try.

AT: Where did you go?

Melanie: We started out living in Alajuela, but then moved to Santa Ana, and ended up in Atenas.

AT: What was it like?

Melanie: It was wonderful until two and half years ago when Chris died of a heart attack.

AT: That must have been terrible.

Melanie: I can't tell you how bad it was. We went to the hospital in Alajuela, and they made me sit in a room filing out forms while they took Chris away. I would never go to that place again. We had gone to Hospital Mexico earlier when he had heart trouble, and the doctors there were wonderful.

AT: So Chris had a history of heart trouble?

Melanie: Yes, he was a smoker who wouldn't quit. Finally there was one heart attack too many.

AT: What did you do?

Melanie: I wanted to stay in Costa Rica. Things were very tight financially. I met Erhard and began helping in his building supply business in Atenas.

AT: And now you have a lot of business activity going on.

Melanie: Yes, I teach Spanish to German and English-speaking people; I bake breads and deserts; I cater dinners; and I manage properties.

AT: You are a one woman conglomerate. Tell me first about the Spanish lessons.

Melanie: I like to teach groups of 3 or 4 people who are all at about the same level. There is a group for beginners and a group for intermediates. Each group meets twice a week for two hours each time at my house in Savana Larga.

AT: What do you charge?

Melanie: Fifteen dollars a person for two hours.

AT: How does one sign up for lessons?

Melanie: Call me at 878-2740 or 446-4536 and I will arrange for you to join the appropriate group.

AT: What about the baked goods?

Melanie: I have my special recipes for cakes and pies, and I make them to order for individuals and for restaurants like *Rick's* and *La Trilla*. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays I bake fresh breads, which I sell through *Kay's Gringo Postres* in Atenas.

AT: Great. I am going to include some pictures and a price list at the end of this article. How much lead time do you need for a special order?

Melanie: Two days would be nice.

AT: You also cater dinners?

Melanie: I haven't done too much of that yet, but I would like to. I sell sausages and ham. And I have great recipes for soups, salads, and fish dishes. Vegetarian and Indian cooking is also a specialty of mine. I put a lot of love into making meals and deserts for people.

AT: Do you want to get into setting up and serving food at parties and functions?

Melanie: I don't think so. I would like to just prepare the food.

AT: And in your spare time you manage properties for absentee owners?

Melanie: I do like to keep busy.



Pura Vida and half and half.

by Martin Lively

“Pura Vida” can be literally translated into English as “Pure Life.” But that doesn’t convey the broad and significant thrust of the slogan of Costa Rica.

In response to “Good morning, how are you?” it means “Fine.” You will hear it used in the same manner when the mechanic checks your oil and, showing you the dipstick, exclaims “Pura Vida.”

When applied to the quality of life that we experience in Atenas the meaning combines the English terms pure, good, natural, simple, complete, wholesome, full, uncluttered, genuine – and much, much more. That list came from a thesaurus. The word that helps me get the meaning is balanced.

While back in the States and grocery shopping in a mid-size, neighborhood supermarket my pura vida balance was disturbed as I reached for a half pint of half and half for a friend’s coffee. The dairy case displayed: three sizes of containers for three brands of genuine half and half, and two brands of each of the following in quarts – organic half and half, fat free half and half, and half fat free half and half. That’s fifteen choices! That’s more than a few too many for me. There is nothing bad or impure or wrong with such excess – it’s just not Pura Vida



I finally remembered --- red with hunter, white with fisherman.