

ATENAS TODAY



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Issue No. 40

July 20, 2008

***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.

Animal Farm

by Diane Holman

The scrawny-necked spinster hen walks up my driveway, scooting the chicks she has adopted ahead of her. She has taken them over because, according to 15-year-old Paula, their mother wants nothing to do with them. It appears that the mother is more interested in the rooster than in her babies. (Not that I judge these things.)

I not only think Hecate and Hera have feelings, I think I know what those feelings mean. I think the cows grazing on the hill are happy. I believe Sasso, the neighbor's puppy, has attached herself to Hera because they both have red coats and Sasso needs looking after. I believe Hera feels about Sasso the same way the mother hen feels about her chicks.

I think Priscilla the cat believes herself to be the queen of Vista Atenas, and I think Maya has a stash of speed.

I was taught in school, in no uncertain terms, NOT to anthropomorphize. It is a cardinal sin against science, logic and all that is holy. Further, anthropomorphism is a slippery slope. Who knows what further transgressions of thought will occur?

I think at my age it's time to start the slide.

COSTA RICA

R. Yankowski 2006

Costa Rica, a land of colorful tropical lush

Created by God's own special paint brush

A peaceful place of rare fauna and exotic plant

In an endangered rain forest with leaf cutter ant

Monkey's swinging in the canopy of a tree

Blue Morph butterflies are flitting about free

Lizards , caimans and iguanas are also here

White egrets and blue herons are wading near

The majestic scarlet macaw screeches and glides overhead

Under rocks there are poison dart frogs of bright green and red

A volcanic land that produces the best coffee bean

Also rainbow-like birds that strut and preen

The multi-colored oxcart is made in Sarchi

Whales and dolphins play in the rolling sea

Costa Rica is a place of peace and magnificent beauty

Where one can make a short visit and feel absolutely free

ST. PETER'S FISH

by Martin Lively



The farm pond just down the road from you is probably the best place to fish in the Central Valley. Most have been stocked with Tilapia, *oreochromis mosambicus*. Farm raised around the world this tasty fish originated in North Africa and the Middle East. It is the fish of the two fish and five loaves at the sermon on the mount in the Bible, and is often called in English St. Peter's Fish.

It has firm, white, mild flavored meat and you have eaten a lot of it as *ceviche* and as the *pescado* en your *casado con pescado*. Most seafood markets carry tilapia, and often it is the least expensive seafood in the case. Try it in your favorite fillet recipe.

Fish for tilapia as you did for carp, bass and bream as a kid. Put a doughball on a small hook a couple of feet below a bobber and toss that bait not too far from the bank. In a few minutes or less the bobber will move in one direction or the other. Seldom do tilapia strike hard enough to pull the bobber completely under, just look for a steady lateral movement and give a quick, light strike.



In the pond near my home in San Isidro my friend Jim, his girlfriend's eleven year old son, Esteban, and I using doughballs and mini-marshmallows hooked and released 20 or more fish in less than an hour. Four of the largest tilapia went home with Jim, and he reported the fillets were very tasty. Esteban caught the first fish, and the largest, and that one was the biggest fish of his life— almost 2 pounds!

So get out your lightest weight rod and reel, or just get a cane pole, and squeeze some Bimbo on a tiny hook. Your neighbor would love to have you at his pond.



Bufo Marinus, Cane Toad, Sapo Grande

by Martin Lively

Don't think of that big toad on your patio as smiling and sort of cute. It is in fact capable of eating anything that will fit in it's mouth and killing anything that dares to try to eat it!

You need not squeeze it to get doused with the venomous toxin from the two triangular glands just behind the eyes, it can squirt you from a meter or so.

And don't blame Rover or Kitty for all of those calling cards just outside the sliding doors. Bufo baby puts out a huge reminder of it's presence.

There is nothing good to be said for this non-indigenous species. It was introduced into Costa Rica and elsewhere in the world as a biological pest control. Well it worked, it wiped all the sugar cane pest insects and then some. Native frogs, toads, lizards, newts, snakes, mice, birds went too.

Because of their mess and possible harm to our small dog I used to remove them from the yard. They, or a cousin, an adult female lays between 5,000 and 25,000 eggs, always returned.

The naturalist in our family is Jon, he collects, raises and breeds lizards, snakes and frogs, including the poison dart frogs of Central America. He visited once and when he saw a Bufo Marinus he picked up a huge rock and crushed it! "Kill ém all," he said. They don't belong here, should never have been brought here, and are wiping out the small, pretty frogs of Costa Rica.

So, with regard to Sapo Grande, I repeat my baby boy's advice, **KILL THEM ALL!**

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Greetings from CATUCA

by Marietta Arce

We would like to update you on some of our activities:

On June 27th, we were invited to be a part of a round table to give the Bishop of Alajuela, Monseigneur Angel San Casimiro a real picture of Atenas. We were asked to present the current status of the Zoning Plan and we would be happy to make the presentation to any who would like it. In the next few days, we intend to update our website and it will be available there. The community has asked us to keep on top of the Zoning plan and we are committed to doing so.

The bishop's message to our community was an invitation to all organizations to work together (in spite of political loyalties) in favor of the county. He believes that the answer to the recent increase in crime, drug use, domestic violence, etc. is not an increase in police officers but an investment in education, recreation and sports. We agree and commit to working with organized associations in exploring this area.

The Municipal Council President (Mrs. Karen Porras) told of budget allocations for road repair, etc. and the Municipal attorney (Mr. Christian Arias) spoke of the Municipalities desire to work in favor of the community etc. This pleases us a great deal for we feel that the municipality has the best interests of the citizens in mind and that they will continue to help us with our projects.

And speaking of projects, we would like to inform you that we have begun to landscape route 03 with technical, municipal and community support and we have succeeded in seeing the flowering trees along Los Angeles (where Water Tank Viquez is). The municipality is also helping us to prepare the site of Mamita Tina's 'sesteo' (inn) (where Alida's Pizzeria is now) and in the next few months we hope to have the place properly marked as a tourist attraction. After traditional "boyeo" was declared by UNESCO as intangible patrimony to humanity, it seems everyone has a 'sesteo' location but we can feel proud that we focused on this area long before it was declared patrimonial and we boast the National Monument to the Costa Rican Oxcart Driver in Los Angeles.

We are preparing a tourist route and hope to have that available in the next few weeks.

If you have any question, comment, or suggestion please remember that we work on a pro-bono basis because we believe in service and welcome any input.

Thank you for your attention, Marietta Arce, Secretary, CATUCA