

ATENAS TODAY



*Issue number 55
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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 250 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.

Updated Directory of English-Speaking People in the Atenas Area

New names and numbers have been added to the directory. With each issue Atenas Today subscribers will receive an updated file containing the names and contact information of people who have chosen to be listed. Simply download the PDF file attached to this Atenas Today email and print it or save it on your computer.

If your name is on the list without contact information, it is because you are a subscriber to the newsletter, but have not authorized the publication of your email address or other information. To add or correct data please send an email to fredmac222@yahoo.com.

Atenas Today Interviews Magda Corrales

owner of Finca Huetares



AT: Sorry I'm late. They told me I might find you working out here in the finca.

Magda: Yes, working is my middle name.

AT: This looks like the beginnings of a miniature golf course.

Magda: It is. I am making a nine hole course that will be integrated into the trees and flowers.

AT: Do your workers know what they are building?



Miniature golf hole in construction

Magda: Yes. I took them to the American-style miniature golf course in Belen to show them. We will not have all the fancy tunnels and windmills, but our course will be fun and beautiful.

AT: I see a lot of construction activity. Are you expanding *Finca Huetares*?

Magda: Every year I add more attractions and rooms. Now we can sleep 40 people in a variety of accommodations, and by Christmas we will have rooms for more.

AT: How would you define your business?

Magda: *Finca Huetares* is a 23 acre, mid-price all inclusive resort, catering primarily to middle class Costa Ricans who want to get out of the city and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of Atenas. We host large and small parties, weddings, corporate events, family vacations and reunions, romantic getaways, etc.

AT: What amenities do you offer your guests?

Magda: First of all we have a country setting with beautiful mountain views. There are two large swimming pools, one of which has a water slide for kids. We have a lighted tennis court, a soccer field, two playgrounds with swings, a hot tub, a dance pavilion, and a first class restaurant that serves only organic food.



Tennis court and pavilion

AT: And soon a miniature golf course, and a Tilapia pond where people can catch fresh fish that you will cook. What are your prices?

Magda: The accommodations vary from \$40 to \$100 a night, with the more expensive ones having multiple beds and kitchens. To use the facilities during the day is \$4 per person, and tennis is \$4 per hour.



AT: Very reasonable. What about the restaurant?

Magda: Prices are comparable with all the medium priced restaurants in Atenas. We also have full bar service.

AT: Can people come in off the street to the restaurant?

Magda: No, if you're not staying here you need to make a reservation for the restaurant. But for tennis or swimming or miniature golf you can come in off the street.

AT: Do you get many couples, or is it mainly big groups?

Magda: We often have couples come to enjoy our honeymoon suite. In fact I have reports that five children have been conceived here. We provide a "made in Finca Huetares" certification.

AT: Quite a testimonial. How can people find you.

Magda: It's very easy. You take the road by the oxcart statue into Barrio Los

Angeles. Stay on that road for about one and half miles, and you will see our sign on the right. Our phone numbers are:

2446-4147; cell 8315-4386. Our website is:

<http://www.atenasliving.net>

AT: Tell me about your background and how you got to be in this business.

Magda: I was born in San Jose, the 9th of 15 children, 5 boys and 10 girls. My mother was a native Costa Rican Indian of the Bibri tribe. My father's parents came from Spain.

AT: That's quite a family. What kind of work did your father do?

Magda: He was a policeman. Every four years the government would change, and he would be assigned to a new post. We moved all over Costa Rica.

AT: That must have made it difficult for you, leaving your friends and moving.

Magda: We were not allowed to have friends. My mother was a workaholic, and all of us kids did nothing but work and go to school.

AT: What kind of jobs did you have?

Magda: When I was young I was assigned jobs helping taking care of our family. At fifteen I became a legal secretary, and for ten years I worked for the Costa Rican Department of Justice.

AT: Then what happened?

Magda: I was married to a Costa Rican man and we had two children, a boy and a girl. That marriage ended after five years and I then married an American who was divorced with one son. He was in the Merchant Marine, and we moved to the United States, first to Long Island and then to California.

AT: What did you do there?

Magda: My first priority was to learn English, and I determined that the best way to do that was to go to a regular college. My hobby was flower arranging, so I enrolled in school and got degrees in floriculture and business. For a time I had my own florist shop.

AT: Your husband must have been gone a lot.

Magda: He was seldom home, but we managed to have a child, my second son.

AT: How did you happen to come back to Costa Rica?

Magda: I lived in the U.S. for 18 years, mostly in California, but for a couple of years on Long Island. It was okay, but I never felt it was home. In 1994 my husband was ready to retire, and we decided to go to Costa Rica and buy a small farm.

AT: Was that this place in Atenas?

Magda: Yes. I named it *Finca Huetares* in honor of my mother's heritage. The *Huetares* were one of the indigenous Indian tribes in this area of Costa Rica.

AT: What was it like?

Magda: There was nothing here, not even any trees. We started raising cows, goats, and chickens. I took classes to learn about farming, especially organic farming.

AT: What else did you get involved in?

Magda: I became active in the community and founded CATUCA, the Atenas Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. Also I sold real estate and

acted as a general contractor helping people build houses.



AT: How did your husband take to living in Costa Rica and farming?

Magda: Not well. We soon learned that having him home all the time made for a different kind of relationship, and our marriage ended a year after we moved here. He is now remarried in Thailand, and our son is a computer engineer in the U.S.

AT: Have you married again?

Magda: No, but I am not opposed to it. However it is not so easy to find the right partner, not too old, and not too young, who will work with me on the finca. I am a workaholic like my mother and would not be happy being with a man who wants to retire and sit around. Also I am very independent and self sufficient.

AT: I am sure there is the right someone out there, maybe even a subscriber to Atenas Today.

Magda: I'm not holding my breath.

Aspirin Saves Lives

from the Internet

If you take an aspirin or a baby aspirin once a day, take it at night. the reason: aspirin has a 24-hour "half-life". therefore, if most heart attacks happen in the wee hours of the morning, the aspirin would be strongest in your system.

Aspirin lasts a really long time; in your medicine chest. years.
(when it gets old, it smells like vinegar.)

It is important to always have ASPIRIN in the home!!!

ABOUT HEART ATTACKS

There are other symptoms of an heart attack besides the pain in the chest or the left arm. One may also be aware of an intense pain on the chin, as well as nausea and lots of sweating.

NOTE: There may be no pain in the chest during an heart attack.

The majority of people (about 60%) who had an heart attack during their sleep, did not wake up. However, if it occurs, the chest pain may wake you up from even a deep sleep.

If that happens, IMMEDIATELY DIS-SOLVE TWO ASPIRIN IN YOUR MOUTH and swallow them with a bit of water.

Afterwards, phone a neighbor or a family member who lives very close by and state "HEART ATTACK!!!"
and that you have taken 2 ASPIRIN.

Take a seat on a chair or sofa and wait for their arrival and
DO NOT LIE DOWN !!!

Announcement from Kay's



Kay's Gringo Postres will begin serving Sunday brunch from 9 to 2, starting August 23. Also, after that date they will be closed on Mondays.

A reminder that there are AA meetings at Kay's every Wednesday at 7 pm.

Writers' Group Formed

Published novelist Larry Rusin hosted the first meeting of an Atenas writers' group on August 13 at Kay's Gringo Postres. The purpose of the group is to exchange information and provide mutual support. All are welcome. The group plans to meet informally once a week, with the next meeting being next Tuesday, August 18, at 12 noon at Kay's.

HYMN

by Diane Holman

For me as well as you are the spill of morning sun

and the good hearts of friends

and turmeric and coriander

and the smell of rain.

The largesse of day,

the silent folds of night:

the wealth that can never be spent.

We are so lucky to be alive.



Be Like A Bird

contributed by Ruth Thumm

Be like a bird
That pausing in its flight awhile
On boughs too light,
Feels them give way,
Yet SINGS
Knowing she hath wings!
-Victor Hugo

Costa Rica In The Green Season

R. Yankowski 2009

A time of muggy humidity and vivid rainbows
Where tumultuous claps of thunder awaken the sleeping soul
And fingers of lightening touch the earth
While black clouds dance on the far horizon
creating ominous signs of pounding rain
In the fertile verdant Central Valley of Costa Rica

Tools and Jewelry

by Fred Macdonald

A few weeks ago our gardener asked to borrow some money to buy a set of tools that a friend was being forced to sell because of hard times. I gave him the money and then wrote my first serious poem.

A man needs his tools,
The power to do things.
The right ones,
Standing by, available.

Good ones cost,
Must collect slowly,
Gradually fill the shop
A source of pride.

A woman needs her jewelry,
Reflections of her taste,
Ornamental beauty
To enhance her own.

Good ones cost,
Must collect slowly,
Gradually fill the box,
A source of joy.

Suddenly hard times,
No jobs, no income.
Must have food,
Must have shelter.

No savings,
Only tools and jewelry.
What to do?
No choice.

Must sell.
Others will buy
At bargain prices.
Lucky for them.

Book Review

The History of Costa Rica

By Ivan Molina and Steven Palmer, San Jose, Costa Rica: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica. 2007, 2nd ed.

By Ron Bell

Costa Ricans think they are exceptional. What people don't? But they have good reasons with which to back it up. Amid all the bloody turmoil of Central American history they have managed to stave off (with brief exceptions) dictators and interfering *yanquis*, have built a functioning democracy (a bit shaky and with more than a smidgeon of corruption), and experienced a coup whose leaders abolished the army out of fear of future coups. What other country can stand behind such a claim?

It all began with hunter-gatherers who roamed, perhaps as long ago as 14,000 years, where now gringo condominiums with dipping pools are constructed every day. When the small bands became tribes and settled into villages, they were ruled by *caciques*, chiefs, whose title is now degraded to the brand name of a local variety of rotgut.

As did the forebears of the U.S. and Canada, the Spanish *conquistadores* were a bloody religious lot who, using the white man's advanced killing technologies, "first fell upon their knees and then fell upon the aborigines." The results were devastating for the natives.

Columbus and the conquistadores who followed him after 1502 were murderously mad for gold. The fantasy that it was plentiful here led him to name it *Costa Rica*, the rich coast. But finding very little gold, his followers turned to settling the land, enslaving and beating the native

population to produce the surplus needed by the Spanish empire to pay off its debts.

"The conquerors took advantage of conflicts among the indigenous groups, and co-opted their leaders as often as possible. [Is it surprising that today's Tico leaders do the same?] The Spaniards also benefitted from disease, exploitation and war that they had provoked." Amid their daily rapine and killing, they spoke of the native people as *indios bravos* (wild Indians). They reasoned that their advanced killing technologies and Catholic faith made them superior to the "heathens," as had Columbus, who explained, "Thus the eternal God, our Lord, gives victory to those who follow his way over apparent impossibilities."

In 1821, Mexicans overthrew the Spanish and independence fell like a ripe plum upon the surprised Costa Ricans. Central Americans formed a federation, and when it fell apart the main cities of Costa Rica fought among themselves for national supremacy, with San Jose winning in 1823.

True to their conquistadores' genes (although the racial mix included only about 8% white), Ticos also engaged in small-scale civil wars in 1823, 1835, and 1854, and the repulsion in 1856 of a mercenary army. The final war occurred in 1955 when an exiled politician, with help from Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, invaded. Oddly the bombing of San Jose during this conflict by Nicaraguan planes (U.S. made?) goes unmentioned by the authors.

With the growth of an international market in the 1800s, power shifted to the major coffee growers, the *cafetaleros*. Fortunately for the ordinary people, this power was limited. "The balance of social forces which had taken shape across the eighteenth century made it impossible for the new coffee bourgeoisie to expropriate the peasants violently or to submit them to ser-

vitude as occurred in the coffee industries of other countries. The only option left open to the wealthy was to exercise a type of domination that recognized the liberty and property of their social inferiors.”

An oddity of Tico history is that these peace-lovers honor a soldier, a peasant for whom the Juan Santamaria Airport is named. He was cut down by bullets after setting fire to the enemy fortress. The invaders were led by William Walker, an American mercenary who wanted to make Central America a slave republic. There is delicious double irony here: Santamaria’s kinky hair brought him the nickname Porcupine, and when an artist painted him as a mulatto forty years later, Costa Rica’s racist society was scandalized. But, importantly, Ticos still honor him.

Molina and Palmer give scant attention to the most glorious event of Costa Rica’s history: getting rid of and staying rid of its military forces. They write: “The most famous decree of the junta was to abolish the army, an act that has great symbolic importance and closed off avenues for future militarization.” Famous, yes, but no other national leaders have been brave and wise enough to lead their people on the path of peaceful coexistence.

When a U.S. president was told by an aide that the dictator he was planning to assist was a son-of-a-bitch, the president snapped, “Yes, but he’s our son-of-a-bitch!” He might have added, “And he respects our Freedom to Invest and repatriate the profits.”

The real test of Costa Rica’s commitment to its peace ideal occurred about the time President Reagan was warning that Nicaragua’s leftist Sandanistas were only two days’ march from Harlingen, Texas. Instead of falling over laughing, the mass media dutifully spread the propaganda,

mass killing began, and the U.S. tried to pressure Costa Rica to join in.

Buying some low-level SOBs, the Reagan administration “hoped to convert Costa Rican territory into a southern front. ... Nicaraguan exiles began to operate in San Jose, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy that had seized effective control of Costa Rica’s security forces and given them a military orientation. The main local print, radio and television news media were loyal allies of U.S. strategy, roundly calling for a militarization of Costa Rica to confront the red menace of Sandanismo and crack down on local underground ultra-leftists who perpetrated a series of violent actions between 1980 and 1983.” However, when Oscar Arias, later winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, regained the presidency, he was able to get the U.S. to abandon its re-supply and rest camps in Costa Rica. Arias also adopted a recommendation that Oliver North, CIA station chief Joseph F. Fernandez, and former ambassador Lewis Tambs be forever denied entry in Costa Rica. The commission making the recommendation was investigating arms smuggling and an explosion of drug trafficking. And yes, that is Fox News’ hero, U.S. marine Colonel North.

(Atenas’ foreigners who are concerned by the country’s seeming defenselessness will be interested to learn that the invaders of 1948 and 1955 were defeated by local volunteers and the Organization of American States.)

With the Cold War over and the dwindling influence of liberation theology, the Archbishop of San Jose appealed to the ruling elites: “When the time comes to raise taxes, to keep in mind the principle of fair taxation according to which those who have the most are those who must pay the most, so that those who have less might pay less.” Of course his plea fell mostly on deaf ears as Tico elites are guided by the same vile

maxim as the leaders of the First World: “All for us and none for the rest.”

The authors further warn that our eco-paradise is being whittled down with alarming rapidity: “The rate of deforestation reached 100,000 hectares per year in 1988, the highest rate in Central America, and one comparable to the destruction of the Amazon region during these same years.”

And there are other dangers. “Many Ticos insist that their society is corrupt from top to bottom ...” (*The Ticos*). But perhaps their desire to *quedar bien* (look good) keeps them from rivaling their neighbors in moral rot. Transparency International “reported less influence peddling in Costa Rican government than anywhere else in Latin America” (*ibid*).

Molina and Palmer, however, see “supercorruption” as a menace already undermining Costa Rica. With the global drug trade estimated at over \$1 trillion annually, and Mexican and Colombian traffickers looking for secure transit points and friendly money-laundering bankers, Costa Rica’s ruling elites face enormous temptations. In “1990 a minimum of 12 tons of cocaine entered the United States via Costa Rica each year;” by 1997 the estimate was “50 tons and by 2001 some 70 tons.” A further danger consists of U.S. efforts to use the drug trade as an excuse to remilitarize Costa Rica.

Equally insidious is the use of “aid” to gain control of some organs of state. The “economic hit man” method is to lend more money to a poor country than it can ever pay back and then pressure it to accept “structural-adjustment pacts” that favor foreign investors over the domestic population.

The “silver-tongued orator,” William Jennings Bryan, when he was U.S. Secretary of State, praised Woodrow Wilson as the president who had “opened the door to all the weaker countries to an invasion of American capital and American enterprise” (Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*). These efforts are ongoing. In the 1990s, USAID created what Costa Rican critics called a “parallel state” by using “aid” funds to establish parallel agencies friendlier to U.S. investors than to the Costa Rican government’s agencies.

Brief, with copious illustrations and numerous pertinent quotations, *The History of Costa Rica* is an excellent, up-to-date introduction to the history of this fascinating and exceptional culture.

Ron Bell is a writer, editor, and ghostwriter as well as a psychological counselor and life coach based in Rio Grande, Atenas.

Our Columnists

A Perplexing Incident



by *Marietta Arce*

I have always been fascinated by human nature, devoting countless hours observing the behavior people of different cultures adopt in order to adapt to their environment. Imagine my surprise at finding myself the subject of my own scrutiny during my recent visit to New York.

It had been a long and tiring day of walking and sightseeing and my daughter, some friends and I ended up at a Pizzeria Uno in the South Street Seaport area of Manhattan. The place was crowded and lively. We were invited to wait at the bar until a table became available to us. I ordered my favorite summer drink: a frozen margarita. When I took my first sip, I found it downright unpleasant, nothing like the margarita I had anticipated, but I said nothing and took it with me when it came time for us to be seated.

Our server, Lori, pleasantly handed us our oversized menus as she expertly told us about the specials. She left to give us a moment to decide and as I perused the contents of the menu, I accidentally knocked over my drink and the drink of the person sitting next to me. The spillage was abundant! It covered the table, the floor and the

clothing of several of my companions. I was mortified and jumped to action.

I signaled Lori and asked for napkins to help clean up the mess. Lori never lost her composure or her smile. She thanked me graciously for offering to help but confided that management's policy did not permit it. She carefully and cheerfully wiped and dried the table and the floor, and returned quickly with replacement drinks after she had taken our order.

I am a beef lover and usually go for that choice in New York because I find the quality superior in every way to what we can get here in Costa Rica. I like my meat on the red side and I was disappointed that my hamburger was well done, not the way I ordered it. Again, I said nothing and was about to take my first bite, when my friend remarked that she felt I should send it back to the kitchen and called for Lori to do so. I was embarrassed by this; after all, I had already made a big mess and didn't want to cause any more trouble!

Lori came back a second time with another hamburger which differed only slightly from the first and, again, my friend boldly sent it back for me. Before Lori came back the third time, I informed my friend that I would eat the next hamburger regardless of how it looked and did so, despite the fact that it was still not perfect. We enjoyed the rest of our meal and Lori came back again and again to make sure that everything was going well at our table.

I was amazed by her energy. She worked hard to earn her tip that evening and I had already mentally calculated what I thought

would be a good reward for such excellent service. Here in Costa Rica, because the 'tip' is already added to the bill before we pay it, many of our local servers don't feel the need to differentiate between good and bad service, rationalizing that they will get paid regardless. It is not that way in New York and most of these young people are not only working hard to get good tips, they are constantly being observed by their bosses who are usually very demanding.

When our bill came, I was shocked to find that the replacement drink and my meal were not on the bill. Needless to say, I made sure that Lori received a good tip that evening and I will certainly recommend Pizzeria Uno to all of my friends in the future. I was impressed with the way the whole thing was handled.

I can almost guarantee that would never happen here in Costa Rica. I have recently talked to a person acquainted with the General Manager of one of the fast-food chains here who has commented that Costa Rica is a difficult market to analyze because people rarely complain or send their food back. We (Ticos) prefer not to patronize a place that has disappointed us instead of letting them know so that they can learn and improve.

I am still puzzled by my own behavior and can only account for it by remembering that I was very tired. I am a firm believer that communication is the key to any successful interaction and hope for improvement on my part. After all, when we are happy with a place we should promote it and when we are not, we should let management know so that they can improve and thrive, rather than lose business and not know why.



Atenas Foundation for Abandoned Animals



by Lori, Sylvia, and Lorna

Many of you have probably seen us at the Friday Market, on the North East corner close to the basket ball field, with puppies and kittens as well as adult pets that desperately need homes. Even this work is important to reduce the amount of local street animals; it's only a small part of what we do. There is much more and we need your help. We are the Atenas Foundation of Helping Abandoned Animals formed in 2007 by a group of special people who do everything in their power to alleviate the suffering of the "animales callejeros" our street animals. Also, we work with animals from low income families where financial assistance is needed for their proper care. Beginning with this issue of Atenas Today we will publish a monthly column, we hope that this will increase involvement by allowing you to see first hand what we are doing and what our needs are to solve this overwhelming problem. We also will publish information considering pet care and health issues and laws specific to Costa Rica. Lastly, we will include information on animals that are the most needing of a home and success stories along the way. We have a very inclusive website that I urge you to look at for more detailed information and the history of our organization.

It is: www.costa-rica-live.com/AnimalesAtenas/index.html

SPAY/ NEUTER IS THE SOLUTION!

One female animal that is not castrated can easily be responsible for the birth of 75 animals in one year. Male animals, even more; if he impregnates 5 females the number rises to 370. Now, multiple those out for a lifetime and the proliferation of the offspring and the numbers are staggering. Simply put, there are not even nearly enough homes for all these animals, most of which are unwanted. **Recent WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals) studies show that here are about 1 million animals suffering in the streets of Costa Rica.**

We organize, hold and finance massive Spay/ Neuter Clinics in poorer areas of Atenas County and make appointments with local Veterinarians to perform surgeries in their consultories at low prices. Even though the owner families give a share if they can, it still costs money. After the earthquake of January 8th, while participating as first-aid-helpers in the Poas area, we promised to come back and donate a highly demanded castration clinic. So our most recent clinic was held in Poasito and Varablanca, in the center of the disaster area. 56 animals, most of them owned by the earthquake victims that still are living in wooden shelter cabins, were castrated in one day! It was a huge success.

We want to continue with our monthly massive clinics in Atenas. The cost is 7,500 colones per animal, so we need at least \$500 every month to do 40 animals. At the point of the writing of this column we have no money left in our account after the massive clinic held in Poasito and Varablanca in June. I am asking you all to give what you can for this goal so that we all can re-

lieve the suffering of the animals of our community of Atenas.

EDUCATION IS THE KEY! “4 PATAS” IS UP AND GOING!

On June 25th we held our first of many Animal Welfare Education sessions at Escuela Colina Azul in Barrio Los Angeles. It was a huge success. We taught three classes, starting with the 3rd -6th grades.

We will be going back in July to teach the younger children and they are already excited about it and asking questions. The goal of these classes is for children to understand the responsibility of pet ownership, the importance of castration and most importantly that animals deserve to be treated with respect and kindness and that is not acceptable to abuse or abandon animals. The Atenas Foundation for Helping Abandoned Animals created their own bilingual (Spanish-English) education material and we taught the classes by lecture, demonstration and activities. Our “assistant teacher” Kenny the German Shepherd was a big hit and the children seemed to really enjoy the program and take the key points with them. For the younger children we will introduce Botoneta and Trebol. Botoneta is clown and Trebol is a three legged dog. This is possible because our foundation president (Dora) is a professional clown and she of course brings her dog that she rescued with her! The kids will LOVE that. We will finish with Colina Azul; move on to Green Valley in Vista Atenas and then the Public Schools.

Education is truly the key to any change of behavior and we know we have made a huge step in effecting this change. Again, we need your help. The children enjoy and learn from hands on and visual tools. If we could send them home with a work book, colors and a few color pictures the information would become more meaningful and they would also share with their friends and family spreading this important message.

If you are interested in helping with the 4 PATAS Outreach Program please contact Lori Moberg at mysam9494@yahoo.com or 2446-0544!

It is very important that we not only focus on the problems concerning animal suffering but what concrete steps we can take to solve this problem. So, here is a list of our most urgent needs at the time of this writing.

1. We need donations, please reach into you heart and your wallet. You can donate cash at the Friday Market or we have an account at Banco National de Costa Rica (BNCR). The account for dollars is #200-02-021-003233-4 and Colones is #200-01-021-021644-8

2. We need blankets for our next Castration Clinic.



When the animals come out of anesthesia they go through a period of shivering and it is very important to keep them warm. Especially if they are on a cool, damp surface. The smaller animals with less fur are especially vulnerable to cold.

3. We need crates for the care and transport of the animals after the procedure.

4. We need volunteers to help with the recovery of the animals and transportation. The larger pets need transport home, even if they walked to the clinic, as they are still sedated.

5. Donations for the Education Outreach “4 PATAS” would be much appreciated. Paper, crayons, printer ink for photos and booklets would be a fantastic start. Also, anyone interested in helping teach please contact us!

6. We need foster homes! We need forever homes!

In conclusion, we need involvement of people who are able to help. It is important that we make Atenas a great place to live for our people and our animals. Please do not hesitate to contact us!
 Next issue..... updates on next Spay/ Neuter Clinic, info on Ehrlichia (tic disease), details to “our” Mercado dogs, adoption updates and more!

Help Us Raise Funds by Bidding on this Beautiful Secretary



This hand painted desk can be seen at Kay’s Gringo Postres. The minimum bid is \$250. Contact us at one of the addresses below.

Link to our website:

www.costa-rica-live.com/AnimalesAtenas/index.html

Contact Lori@ mysam9494@yahoo.com
 or 2446-0544

Contact Sylvia@
animalesatenascr@aol.com (or 8868-1386
 – emails preferred!)

Contact Virginia@ umavik@gmail.com or
 2446-5343



Booth at the Friday Market

Change

by Dana Schlieman



Until recently, I never noticed how different the world is from what I thought it was. While it is true that I've had a very different upbringing than almost—okay, *everyone* I know, it still took me by surprise.

I'm not one of those people that needs a hundred friends to feel popular. I'm much happier having a few friends, but *close* friends. Maybe it's just me, but it seems like that person with the hundred friends actually has it harder than someone like me. Questions often drift through my mind when I think about people like that: how does someone with so many friends choose one to go to the movies with? And if you have that many friends, which one do you confide in, ask for advice? For me, the person with a few close friends, these questions have much easier answers.

I try not to judge people. I'm not saying I always succeed, but I try, at least. It's not always easy to see past prejudices

and stereotypes. Sometimes it's easier not to judge than other times. I have this one friend, a relatively new friend, whose behavior and morals are *so* different from mine that it sometimes surprises me I'm even friends with her. She does not seem like the kind of person I would have a relationship with, even to me. I'd rather not describe all of her acts, but I will try to explain some of them, and what I think about them.

This girl is thirteen years old, a few months younger than I, but already she is much more...*mature* is not the word I want, definitely. *Experienced*, I guess. She has already done things that I haven't even thought about doing for at least a few years. Before anyone jumps to conclusions, I am not talking about sex. I'm talking about alcohol, cigarettes, etc. She has described her experiences to me (while I tried to keep my expressions composed); experiences like, falling asleep—or maybe passing out, next to a public toilet, too drunk or hung-over to move. Experiences like getting paid by her friends to make out with them. I tried not to look horrified, though that was how I felt.

When I first started getting to know this girl, her lifestyle really scared me. Freaked me out. And at first I couldn't decide if I was scared for her, theoretically destroying her life at thirteen, or if I was scared because the world was changing around me, not necessarily for the better, or if maybe I was scared because this was all happening right before my eyes, with no way of stopping it, and no way of knowing if I would get sucked in. I decided I'm scared about all of the above.

I've never been a worrier. I leave that to the rest of my family. My mind, up

until one or two years ago, has always been mostly free of darkness. I see now, that's because I never paid attention to what was going on outside my mind. I now understand, to an extent, phrases like "good-bye, *cruel* world". I didn't used to get that; the world felt perfectly fine to me. Boy, was I wrong.

The girl I've been talking about once called me an "over-protected saint". Yes, I did edit her words, and no, "saint" was not a compliment. It didn't really bother me. It's not that I actually feel *over*-protected, but I would rather be over-protected than completely ignored and uncared-for. More than once I've thought, "Where the heck are her parents??" And I feel sorry for her. Because her parents either don't know what she's up to, don't care, or have an idea but would rather see her as an angel, so they ignore it. And I am extremely grateful for the home-school system that has so far shielded me, as much as possible, from the world around me.



“Tropical Fusion” Baked Goods Delight All at the Friday Feria



by Lorna Smith

Visit the Friday morning Feria, Atenas’ weekly fresh farm market, or the Saturday morning Feria in Grecia, on any week, and you will discover a new delight. An American-style gourmet bakery stand offering cinnamon rolls, sticky buns, “zebra” cake (alternate layers of banana and chocolate), home-made individual pizzas and many other mouth-watering items.

This new enterprise is the “brain-child” of local Atenas businessman, Tom Yatkso and his talented artist wife, Jan. (See last month’s story on the Maleku Indigineous People and their art). Tom and Jan also bring their combined talents to their related catering service, available for your events and parties ranging from family-style to the utmost in elegance.



Tom got his start in cooking at age 12 when his working mom would call home and give him instructions on how to prepare the evening meal. The first time he took it upon himself to prepare his own creation, he chose cream puffs. He read about them in an encyclopedia and decided “I can make these”! He did—successfully! That early start later led to a rewarding career in the food and hospitality industry which has spanned over twenty five years.



Along the way Tom did a stint as a short order cook in high school and as a waiter for faculty and special events during his university years. After successfully completing a degree in Speech & Hearing, he decided to return to the restaurant field where he eventually became General Manager of a 500 seat restaurant, bakery & deli while also serving as a certified instructor in safe food handling. His expanding interests and abilities led to a course of study at the American Institute of Baking in Manhattan, Kansas.

Two years after moving to Atenas, Costa Rica where he and Jan have now live for more than ten years, Tom started his own international recruiting business while Jan

continued to pursue her artistic career. Tom's business provided the opportunity for many Costa Ricans to work legally in the US under temporary work permits, many in the food industry. When a change in U.S. immigration policies curtailed that program, he looked around for another niche, and the bakery stand and catering service were born.

Tom's artist wife, Jan "Juanita" is temporarily helping Tom to grow the business. Jan is not a cook, but she is passionate about food. She brings her artistic style to the display and packaging of the products, signage and to the original floral arrangements she creates for catered events. I was fortunate enough to participate in a recent catered event, and the flowers were so breath-takingly lovely, I had to take a photo. The food was unbelievably delicious and artistically presented.



Tom makes all the items at the bakery stand and for catered events from scratch and as the Costa Ricans say "con amor". He purchases many raw ingredients from fellow feria stand holders, like cheese & vegetable ingredients for homemade individual pizzas topped with a special Italian salsa, carrots for carrot cake, pineapple for individual pineapple upside down cakes and apples for his famous high apple pies, free form apple tarts, apple dumplings and apple cake.

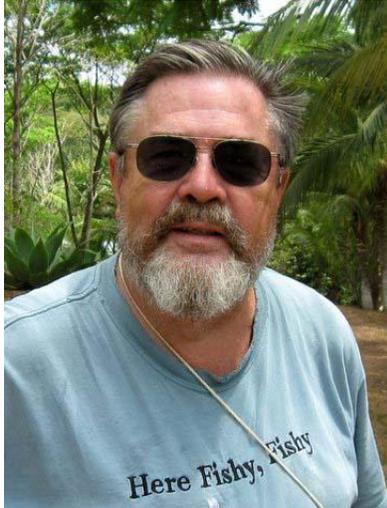
He also does a fusion creating fresh mango or pineapple, coconut and black raspberry pies and when the Costa Ricans couldn't relate to the soft pretzel shape, he decided to create bite-sized bread made with the same soft pretzel dough for Costa Ricans to snack with their afternoon "cafecito".

Other items offered include cinnamon cookies, brownies, apple tarts made with Splenda for diabetics, chocolate cake made with dark beer, and a varied offering of muffins, one of which is called "zaguato" because, like the Heinz 57 variety dogs, these muffins are made with many different ingredients to create a delicious final product. Prices range from a 400-colones rich and moist brownie to a 4,000- colones fresh, whole apple pie.

The bakery stand has become a welcome site for foreigners who are dissatisfied with the bland, taste alike, Costa Rican style bakery items and are looking for more distinctive flavors. However, at least 80% of their customers are Costa Ricans who have discovered that when they taste Tom's bakery products the flavors explode in their mouths and they come back every week to try another product. The smart customers call ahead to make sure their favorite items are waiting for them at the feria. Once you give Tom's products a try you will be hooked!

Look for the distinctive booth in an individual white tent by the basketball court on the lower level of the Atenas feria. You can Contact Tom at 2446-4039 or cell 8306-9767 to pre-order your special item, or to arrange for him to cater your special event.

Rio San Juan Tarpon Tournament 2008



by G. Martin Lively

Not a lot of tarpon were caught, but a lot were hooked and lost. I didn't even see the two sides of beef whose initial strike and run broke my too light rod, and then next my too light line. But son Geoffrey's fish made it to the boat, made it to the scales and made it into the record books as the third largest fish of the event!



Five of us drove from Atenas up to Los Chiles in Rick Mazza's Mahindra King Kong Kab. What a truck! Smooth, fast and used very little fuel. We went through the border crossing and boat trip to San Carlos, Nicaragua as described in *El Castillo*, my earlier article about the Rio San Juan.

Raquel from Sabalos Lodge met us at the dock, helped us through customs and immigration and got us to the downriver water taxi with only a few minutes to spare. Registration for the tournament took those few minutes and we learned that about a hundred entrants were expected. The hour and a half downriver run was a delight for Geoff and Rick and Roberto Muggli and John Difazio who had never been in this part of the world. Herons in three sizes and three colors, aningas, swifts, congo monkeys, kingfishers and the occasional caiman dotted the dense foliage of the shoreline. Rough sawn plank houses peek out from that shore now and then, and all of them fly the multicolor flag of bright pink, orange and yellow tee shirts and shorts.

Yadro, 70 something, and wife Rebecca, 18 something, waved from the Sabalos Lodge dock. Finally after a three hour drive from Atenas to Los Chiles, an hour plus trip down the Rio Frio and onto Lago Cocibolca, and another boat ride of an hour and half down the Rio San Juan, not to mention lots of waiting between each leg of the journey, the adventure began.

John had flown in from Virginia where only in the last few years he had started to fish with a neighbor there in Vienna. Roberto lives in Atenas and, like me, fishing is his passion. Especially ice fishing in Minnesota. Rick might have wet a line sometime, somewhere during his oil soaked, *Semper Fi*, coffee selling, colorful career but memories of it were vague. I handed Geoff his first spincast rod and reel when he was five and we caught sunfish. He went on to light tackle spinning for largemouth black bass and then to the fly-rod for trout, and has by now out fished me in every variety of fish. Especially tarpon!

At 5:30am on September 13 the contest began as two boats with the five of us shoved off from the dock at our lodge. After a ten minute run the trolling began. We used large, medium diving Rapalas in grey and silver and firetiger colors. The basic technique is to work the deep run out in front of El Castillo and each of the river mouths, alternating with trolling trips up the several smaller rivers feeding the Rio San Juan. In the rivers we caught snook and machaca. Circling the river mouths was best for tarpon. All but one of us had them say hello, several were hooked and were on long enough for an initial run and a few jumps. Tarpon are strong, primitive fish with very tough mouths and the difficulty of setting the hook combined with violent head shakes in the air makes for easy unhooking.

During the first morning Roberto boated a couple of snook over 12 lbs and Rick, Geoff and I each landed some smaller snook and a few machaca. John, as they say, "jumped" a couple of tarpon one of which Roberto reports was probably a prize winner.

We went to Cofalito's restaurant for lunch. Cofalito was our lead guide and is one of few licensed guides in El Castillo. Piña, also licensed, and Hamilton and Beto were our other guides. All of them are serious fisherman and very knowledgeable of the river and how to fish it. Cofalito and Piña debated locations and techniques all day and teased the hell out of each other if the final destination did not produce. This Heckel and Jeckel pair was a delight and kept us entertained when the fish were not paying attention. While at lunch a center console walk-around pulled up to the dock just below the restaurant and unloaded the largest fish I have ever seen caught in fresh water, 140 pounds. It was and remained the largest fish of the tourney. Geoff was pumped!

The afternoon was a boat ride. Hot, then rain, then troll, troll, troll. My back began to ache and Rick napped, hands still locked to rod and reel. He awoke and I sat up camera in hand as Geoff yelled "I got one!", and he DID. A head the size of a small keg of beer came out of the water followed by a matching mirror sided body. It was so huge that it failed to clear the water rising to three quarters of its body at best before splashing back like the fat kid at the pool doing belly flops.

Leaps became fewer and further between, and runs became shorter but still powerful as the fight between Geoff and His Sablao continued. The first half hour went like it was five minutes but then time began to drag and Geoff began to tire and I began to fear that the hook would straighten or the line would break or the lure would dislodge during a jump, or... The guys were all like boxing ring attendants, giving Geoff bottles of water, handing him a lit cigarette or a towel and always words of encouragement. Deep dives close to the boat were the most threatening. The line could foul on the engine. Cofalito worked the boat away when the fish approached as Piña, gaff in hand, sat at Geoff's feet giving instructions to both Geoff and Cofalito. Another half hour passed. Then during the final half hour the fish tired and began to only roll near the surface and could no longer resist the constant pressure Geoff had skillfully applied. After two near misses right at the boat Piña gaffed the lower jaw and we had our tarpon. The fight had taken us so far down river that the dock and weigh station were only a couple of hundred yards away and we dragged the fish alongside right up to the dock.

The crowd and tournament officials gathered as Geoff's catch was dragged up the boarding steps of the dock and over to the scales. The closest guy to the fish was the man whose fish was so far largest. He was as elated as Geoff was disappointed when

the scale read 104. That disappointment faded fast as Geoff grinned for the photographers. Everyone wanted a photo and I had to elbow my way into the paparazzi to get my shots in.

Geoffrey Stiles, Sabalo, 104#, 13/9/08 went up on the board. (Geoff's middle name became his *apellido* for this tournament.) He was in second place! But would it last?

Exhausted from a long days travel followed by a long day fishing, we headed in just before dusk for a dinner of our snook and early to bed for the final tournament day.

5:am on the 14th, Cofalito wanted to work the Sabalos Grande River before river traffic, swimming kids and washer women put the snook down. He was right and we caught more snook that morning than any other. This river stay wide and deep for quite a distance and would be perfect for fly rod popping along the bank below overhanging trees. Snook think poppers are frogs or flailing fish, machaca think a fruit has fallen from the trees and attack with their piranha like teeth. Both fight well, the snook going deep and the machaca taking to the air, and the snook/robalo is especially fine eating. After weighing in our snook at the Hotel Monte Cristo dock we took an eight pounder to a riverside restaurant for lunch. Cofalito thought that we might be in contention for the most total weight of snook caught during the tournament so we made sure all snook caught were recorded with officials.

We took a couple more snook in another little river, and then when trolling it's confluence with the Rio San Juan Rick well hooked what looked like a 60 or 70 pound tarpon that stayed on for more than the first couple of jumps. But then on a long, deep run the line went slack. The fish had rubbed it off on the bottom, or ... who knows? But that's why it's called "fishing" not "catching." Another hour of trolling

and we were home. But not for the night, tonight was awards night and fiesta in San Carlos. We had barely enough time for a shower, change of clothes and a cold Toña before Cofalito and the boys were back for our trip to San Carlos. High speed against a stinging rain prevented napping and made for a long hour and half trip.

We went Direct to the central, official weight tally. Geoff had been pushed down to third by a 114 pounder caught late afternoon of the second and final day. A 104 taken after Geoff's finished fourth. A commercial cooler full of beer for the entrants gave us our first beer of the festival. The town square was rimmed with food and beer tents and a high stage where the Victoria Girls, think Budweiser girls only hotter, tried to shake their scanty costumes off all night. In addition to the contestants everybody from within a hundred miles was there, hundreds and hundreds of beer-in-hand guys and families and groups of teenagers. The restaurant tents were jammed and we stood in a light rain eating vigaron and waiting for the award presentation.

Finally someone came to the microphone at the biggest elevated stage and called for the officials: the event coordinator, the head of the tourist bureau, the mayor of San Carlos, the candidates for the next election, and a bunch more – each made a fifteen minute speech, except for the woman from the tourist bureau who spoke for almost 45 minutes. The light rain continued.

Finally the tournament official started the prizes, but not for fishing; it was a raffle of door prizes using our entry numbers. Backpacks and tackle boxes and fishing rods, I thought it would never end. When the announcer called out JEFF, our ears perked up and Rick and Roberto shoved Geoff to the stage where he accepted a raffle won backpack. When JEFF was called again we listened closer and the number

was not Geoff's, it was some Canadian fellow – Geoff had snatched somebody else's prize and was known thereafter as "Geoff de Canada"

Most snook, biggest snook, most guapote, biggest guapote, biggest drum, the awards trolled on. Then 4th largest tarpon and the photographers crowded in as formal portraits of winner and officials was taken by the tournament photographer. When Geoff was called out again, it was Geoff Lively and he mounted the stage to accept third place in the Sabalo Real category. He got a huge trophy, a beautiful carving of a local fish, a quart of Flor de Cana 18 year old rum and a certificate. We all cheered and he and the other winners stood on stage grinning.

It was so late that we all slept on the floor of the Sabalo Lodge's office in San Carlos rather than risk the night run back down the Rio San Juan to the Lodge itself.

Up at dawn and the return trip by boat, boat and car to Atenas. Ready for 2009!

Planning is underway for the 2009 tournament and this year there will be ten or so of us. Stay tuned for results.



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Contact Fred Macdonald, 2446-0440, 8848-7632, fredmac222@yahoo.com.

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