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ARCR's English Language Magazine

Published by ARCR CR Corp.S.A.

January / February 2022

Apdo. 1191-1007 Centro Colón San José, Costa Rica (www.arcr.cr)

El Residente

Destinos

A BORDER RUN TO NICARAGUA



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DONATAPA is a country-wide campaign of the *Costa Rican Accessible Tourism Network* and works through the support of over 370 public and private entities with 220 collection points.



If you'd like to know more about their project, enter DONATAPA in Google or Facebook, or go to their Spanish-language website at:

<https://costaricaturismoaccessible.com/donatapa/playa-accessible/>

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This magazine has been published every two months since 1995 as the official communications media of ARCR Administration. Our organization provides service to thousands of foreigners who have chosen Costa Rica to reside for short periods or for permanent residence.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Tired of staying home? Ready to get out and explore this beautiful country a little? Like to take day trips to see some of the attractions the country has to offer? With this issue, we resume the popular feature *Destinos*, an exploration of some of the wonderful and fascinating places and things to do that Costa Rica has to offer, like beautiful caverns, astronomical observatories, experimental medicinal plant gardens, and others. Though not exactly a Costa Rica attraction, to kick off the series Michael Miller tells us about his recent trip to Nicaragua. Look for more exciting articles about potential places to visit in future issues.

Bob Brashears, who has labored long and hard as the Associate Editor to make *El Residente* what it is, has moved on to other exciting projects. Many thanks to him for his long service and best of luck in all his future endeavors. And now, drum roll please, a BIG WELCOME goes to Tracey Cobb who has joined the El Residente team as the new Associate Editor. Welcome aboard, Tracey!

Last, I want to call your attention to the ad on the opposite page. DonaTapa is a worthwhile cause and ARCR is proud to become a supporter. Please join in our effort to help make life better for those in Costa Rica with disabilities.

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Cover photo credit: Michael Miller

ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

TREE OF HOPE We are very pleased to report that the ARCR 2021 Tree of Hope charity effort was a huge success! Generous donations from many members allowed us to purchase not only gifts for the children at Hospital de Niños but also many toys for the children at Obras del Espíritu Santo. We even had enough to buy 50 pairs of shoes and footballs for the orphan boys at the Hospicio San Agustín in Coronado. We are very grateful to all those who responded to the call and contributed unselfishly. On behalf of the children, we thank you!

SAVE YOUR BOTTLE CAPS ARCR has joined with DonaTapa, an environmental and social responsibility project of the Costa Rican Accessible Tourism Network. Their flagship project is focused on generating accessible tourism and recreation facilities for people with disabilities.

The DonaTapa project involves the collection of plastic bottle caps which are recycled to manufacture plastic “wood,” which is used to build walkways and platforms that provide a way for people with disabilities to access and enjoy Costa Rican beaches. ARCR has joined this worthwhile project by becoming a bottle cap collection point. We urge members to save the caps from their plastic drink bottles and bring them to the ARCR office. We will get them to DonaTapa.

If you’d like to know more about the project and get a list of other collection points around the country, enter “Donatapa” in Google or Facebook, or go to their Spanish-language website at: <https://costaricaturismoaccessible.com/donatapa/playa-accessible/>.

STEP In November, the U.S. Embassy sent out an email requesting those enrolled in the STEP, the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, to verify their information. If you missed that message, you can go to <https://step.state.gov/STEP/pages/common/SignIn.aspx> to make sure your data is up to date.

STEP is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The benefits of enrolling in STEP are:

- Receive important information from the embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency

If you are visiting or living in Costa Rica and have not yet enrolled in STEP, it is strongly encouraged you do so. Today!

BORDER RUNS It is true that those in Costa Rica on a 90-day tourist visa must leave the country before the 90-day visa period has elapsed. However, the old wives’ tale that says that when those trips - commonly called “border runs” - are made the person must remain out of the country for a minimum of three days before returning is FALSE. This urban legend comes from a misunderstanding of the separate customs document that is completed when a person enters the country and asks if they have been out of the country more than 72 hours. That information is for customs ONLY - Costa Rica immigration law has no minimum time that one must remain out of the country. Travelers can exit Costa Rica, enter another country, and legally re-enter Costa Rica immediately. As little as one hour is sufficient to comply with the law.

U.S. PASSPORT FEE INCREASE The U.S. Embassy has announced the charge for new or replacement U.S. passports was increased on December 27, 2021. For more information, see the Ask ACS column elsewhere in this issue, or visit the U.S. Embassy website at: <https://cr.usembassy.gov/ or travel.state.gov>.

2022 Official Holidays, Observances, and Days Off in Costa Rica

Date	Day	Name	Type
01 Jan	Saturday	New Year's Day	National Holiday
19 Mar	Saturday	Saint Joseph's Day	Observance
11 Apr	Monday	Juan Santamaría Day	National Holiday
01 May	Sunday	Labor Day	National Holiday
19 Jun	Sunday	Father's Day	Observance
25 Jul	Monday	Guanacaste Day	National Holiday
02 Aug	Tuesday	Our Lady of Los Ángeles	Non Compulsory Payment Holiday
15 Aug	Monday	Mother's Day	National Holiday
24 Aug	Wednesday	National Parks Day	Observance
09 Sep	Friday	Children's Day	Observance
15 Sep	Thursday*	Independence Day	National Holiday
22 Nov	Tuesday	Teacher's Day	Observance
01 Dec	Thursday*	Abolition of the Army Day	Non Compulsory Payment Holiday
08 Dec	Thursday	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	Observance
25 Dec	Sunday	Christmas Day	National Holiday
31 Dec	Sunday	New Year's Eve	Observance

Dates followed by * indicate that an official Day Off will be taken the following Monday.

DEFINITIONS OF HOLIDAY TERMS

DAY OFF: Days designated as a “Day Off” are paid days for Costa Rican workers.

OBSERVANCES: If the date falls on a weekday, it is a paid day off for Costa Rican workers and will be celebrated on the actual date, not moved.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS: Non-essential businesses will be closed. These are paid holidays for Costa Rican workers. A worker who is required to work on a national holiday must, by law, be paid double wages.

NON-COMPULSORY PAYMENT HOLIDAYS: These are official holidays; however, the employer is not required to pay their employees double if they are required to work that day.

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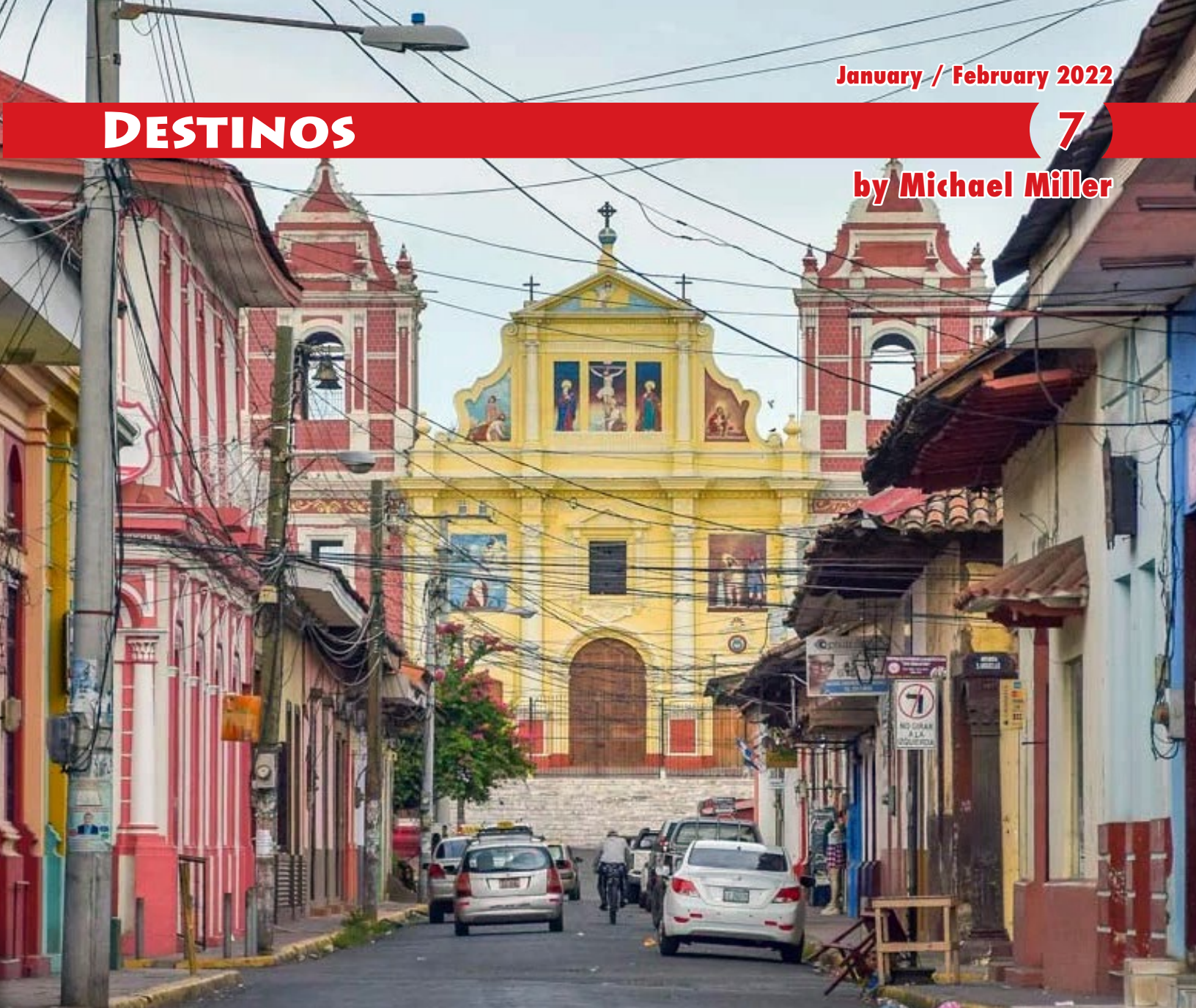
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A Border Run to Nicaragua

I used to visit Granada, Nicaragua, every year and always enjoyed the fascinating city. Granada is the oldest city in Central America, sits on the huge Lake Nicaragua, and is famous for its beautiful yellow cathedral. I always took delight in my time in that appealing colonial city; it was inexpensive, it was safe, and it had great restaurants. And, as the oldest city in Central America, it has five centuries of history to explore.

In November 2021, I made my first visit in five years. In the past it was an easy bus trip, but not so much today. The political unrest and travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 virus have made it more difficult to go there.

If you are unfamiliar with the term “border run,” here is a quick explanation. Many expats come to Costa Rica and spend all, or most, of the year here. If they are not official residents, or not in the process of becoming official, they are allowed to stay in the country for only 90 days as tourists and, before the end of the 90 days, must leave Costa Rica. They can then return and receive a new 90-day visa. One popular border-run destination is the city of Granada, which lies two hours north of the Costa Rican border.

In October, I decided to make a visit to Granada. I would be traveling with the famous tour guide Nury Mora, who



is a native of San Jose. Since our return, I have since been peppered with questions about the trip. This article will try to answer some of those questions. Here are two quick impressions:

First, Granada is still a charming, beautiful, and fascinating place to visit. It has much to offer. I highly recommend it.

Second, the journey (both going there and coming back) was a nightmare.

* * *

The hassles started before our journey began. We chose to travel via Tica Bus, so we visited the bus station two days before our trip to reserve our seats. It was a good thing we did, as there were very few seats left. The round-trip fare was about \$60 USD per person, plus \$8 USD per person to the government of Costa Rica for an exit tax. Next we had to get a COVID-19 test (the nose swab) and, of course, the test results had to be negative. The tests cost another \$60 USD per person.

The clerk at the bus station gave us a form that we were required to fill out, photograph, and email to the government of Nicaragua. This had to be done before the travel day. Fortunately, Nury is bilingual, has tremendous patience, and is very savvy in dealing with the bureaucratic details of the many layers of government.

On the morning we were to leave, we arrived at the Tica Bus station at about 5:20 a.m. The bus was scheduled to leave at 6:00 a.m. but left at 6:18 a.m. It carried 60 passengers and was comfortable, with air conditioning, seats that reclined (slightly), a bathroom, and movies (in Spanish) that ran for the entire trip. The only difficulty

was that we would be sitting in that bus for hours and hours, wearing a face mask the whole time.

The bus followed Highway 1, which is part of the old Pan-American Highway. During the long ride, the quality of the road varied dramatically. For a few miles near the city of Liberia, we sailed along on a modern, four-lane divided highway, but most of the trip was on a two-lane country road, and sometimes not even that. There were several times when the bus came to a complete stop because only a single lane was passable.

We finally arrived at the border crossing at Peñas Blancas just after noon. Little did we

know we would be at the border for the next three hours.

The first stop was on the Costa Rican side to get our passports “stamped out” of Costa Rica. Everyone got out of the bus and lined up outside a government building where they let us enter one person at a time. As we waited our turn, Nury told me that there is a popular joke among Ticos. When you go into a government building, there are often eight or ten windows set up to handle people as they arrive, but there is always only one clerk at one window. No matter how many windows there are, there is always only one clerk.

When it was my turn to go into the building, I saw that it was no joke. There were indeed eight windows and only one clerk. What should have taken ten minutes took nearly an hour. And that would prove to be a model of efficiency compared to the Nicaraguan side of the border.

Once all the passengers had cycled through Costa Rica immigration, we reboarded the bus and headed for the Nicaraguan side of the border. The bus traveled only a few hundred yards to the Nicaraguan border facilities, but we were not allowed to disembark. Instead, we waited until some Nicaraguan officials came aboard to check our passports and our COVID-19 test results. Only when that was complete were we let off the bus. Carrying our bags, we stood in line at a window where a team of officials could again check our passports and our test results.

Next we were told to go inside the immigration building. There was a very unpleasant woman in a uniform standing at the door who demanded \$2 USD per person before we were allowed to enter the building. After paying and entering, we stood in line and again a Nicaraguan official checked our passports and our

COVID-19 test results. He then charged each of us another \$14 USD as an entry tax.

Following that, we were directed to get in yet another line, this time to put our bags through a scanner. Here a Nicaraguan official once more checked our passports and our COVID-19 test results.

After hours of dealing with testy border officials, we were still not allowed to leave the building until another official examined our passports and our test results. When that was completed and they let us out of the building, we thought we were home free. No such luck! We were required to stand outside the bus for nearly 30 minutes and wait for another Nicaraguan official to check our passports and our COVID-19 test results before letting us get back on the bus.

I'm not joking. That was the streamlined version of the entry experience.

Our three days in Granada were delightful. The Hotel La Posada del Sol was a welcome sight after 12 hours of riding, standing in line, and government needling. It is a very pleasant hotel equipped with a pool

big enough for swimming laps and is located only three blocks from Granada's main plaza and the famous yellow Cathedral of Granada. The facility was clean and comfortable, and the price included breakfast. Our room included a small kitchen. The most noise we heard at night was the clop-clop-clop of horse-drawn wagons going by and the neighborhood roosters that roused us in the morning.

The center of Granada is dominated by the iconic yellow cathedral. The current structure is only about 100 years





old, but it stands on a site that has had several other churches and cathedrals constructed there since the city was founded in the 1520s.

Nury and I enjoyed the days as we explored the nearby streets, alleys, and plazas of downtown Granada. We found an open-air market, a museum with exhibits of some of the city's history, and a nice art gallery. We discovered that the Selina chain of hostels now has a very impressive branch right on the central plaza, and we took a tour of the city on a horse-drawn carriage.

The highlight of our visit was a boat ride on Lake Nicaragua out to some of the nearby islands. This huge freshwater lake has hundreds of islands, with a cluster of small ones about a mile to the south of the city.

Many of these are home sites for wealthy persons from all over the world. It was great fun cruising between the islands and looking at the beautiful houses, some with swimming pools and tennis courts. The captain of our boat made a special effort to stop at some swampy areas to find a variety of some wild, exceptionally beautiful, flowers for Nury.

During our time in Granada, we saw many indications of how bad the economy was. We were the only passengers on the boat ride on Lake Nicaragua, and in the central plaza the horse-drawn carriages wait for hours to get a single passenger. Many very nice small hotels can be found near the plaza. One had a sign outside encouraging walk-ins with prices below \$30 USD. These were all indications of the difficult recovery Nicaragua's tourist industry is facing.

One evening, we had dinner at a fine restaurant and chatted with our waiter. He was a sharp-looking young man, obviously quite intelligent, and he told us that he had been unemployed for over a year. He said he was now very happy because he had just found this job as a waiter and was making \$120 USD per month!

After our three days in Granada, we began the arduous journey back to San José. It was just as frustrating and difficult as the trip to Nicaragua had been, including the

unnecessary hours of nonsense at the border. The trip took over 12 hours, during which we had to wear a mask almost the entire time.

On the long ride back to San José, I had more than enough time to think about Granada and Nicaragua. The country is every bit as beautiful as Costa Rica and, in addition to the charming, historic city of Granada, the country has excellent beaches, picturesque farming communities, pristine rainforests, and of course, the magnificent Lake Nicaragua. But like every country in the world, Nicaragua has suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions during 2020 and 2021 have shut down hotels, restaurants, tour companies, and little businesses, like the tour boats and the horse-drawn carriages. But people

are now starting to travel again and are eager to visit and enjoy new places. Happily, some of those struggling travel-related businesses are getting back on their feet again.

I do not want to comment about the political situation in Nicaragua, but judging from my experiences at the border, it seems that the government of Nicaragua is doing everything it can to make it difficult to visit their wonderful country.

It is my sincere wish that Nicaragua (and all countries) can soon eliminate the onerous requirement for a COVID-19 test. Even if they do not, they need to eliminate the layers of bureaucratic horse manure at the borders and check passports once, maybe twice; six times is a bit ridiculous. And be a little more friendly too; tourists will spend money in their hotels and restaurants and their presence help put thousands of their countrymen get back to work. It would be nice to see the border guards smile and say, "Welcome to Nicaragua. I hope you enjoy your time in my beautiful country."

Michael Miller is the author of the guidebook for downtown San José, Costa Rica, titled The Real San José. He is also the author of the new novel Tribune Man, a portrait of Oakland, California, a beautiful, fascinating, and often underrated American city during a trying time. Both are available on Amazon.

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A New Museum, Artisan Fairs, and Costa Rica's Oldest Water Park

It's summer in Costa Rica, and that means we can enjoy going out without toting umbrellas or rushing home to avoid getting wet. Here are some ways to make the most of the season by getting out and about without traveling too far, getting too tired, or spending too much money.

There's a **new museum**, located near the center of Desamparados, a suburb of San Jose: Museo De La Carreta Y El Campesino Costarricense (Museum of the Costa Rican Oxcart and Farmer). The history of Desamparados goes back a long way, as it was on a major trade route. Some people claim it to be the site of the earliest Spanish city in Costa Rica, Garcimuñoz, which survived only a short time and disappeared. Nobody really knows exactly where Garcimuñoz was located, but it was 'around here someplace' according to local residents.

The museum has everything: history, architecture, oxcarts, a variety of plants, and an ample, airy park. A

main attraction is an adobe house that was part of the huge Hacienda Salitral and was once the country home of Costa Rica's first (and fifth) president, José Maria Castro Madriz, and his wife, Pacífica Fernández, who designed the national flag.

Along with the adobe house are two other houses that show what life was like in the 1800s, when the country was mostly rural and dedicated to coffee growing. The three houses are a study of the architecture spanning the 19th century, with one made of adobe, one of bajareque, and the third of wood. (Bajareque uses bamboo to strengthen the construction.) Cut away displays show how they were built.

Here we can see how mud – yes, mud – affected living in the Costa Rican rainy season. Not only was it a basic building material for adobe and bajareque homes, but the oxcarts' solid wood wheels allowed the mud to slide off, making travel on muddy roads possible.

The museum is dedicated to the carreta, one of Costa Rica's national symbols, which made coffee production and export possible, and to the campesinos who worked the land. History tells us there were mile-long caravans of coffee laden oxcarts that plodded to meet the waiting ships in Puntarenas and brought back imported goods for homes such as the ones on display.

Painted oxcarts are now part of the nation's patrimony, and the colors and designs differ for different regions, explained Hailyn Monge, director of the museum. "Carts from Sarchi had bold colors and designs, while those from Heredia had simpler designs and lighter colors. Guanacaste carts were not painted." Carts of different styles are on display, and Monge plans to have an "oxcart parking lot" with the acquisition of more carts.

The plants and grounds are also part of the museum to show visitors the variety of green growth. Guided tours are available.

The museum just reopened and is still in the "fixing up" state. The land with the houses was donated to the city in 1980 and became a museum, but an earthquake in 1991 caused enough damage to close it. Restoration is still in process. The grounds and the two older houses are open every day, but Monge recommends a call to her office, 2218-1667, ahead of time for a more informed visit or for groups. On weekends, a call ahead will assure that someone is there. And remember that masks and hand sanitizer are still a part of going out.

Entrance prices are reasonable. For nationals and residents, ₡1,000 colones, ₡500 colones for older adults and students, and \$5 USD for foreigners. The museum is located in Salitral de Desamparados. Directions: From the old stone building on the corner on the side of the church of Desamparados, follow the street about a mile and turn right. Just before the blue painted bridge, go to the Abastecedor 4M on the corner, and turn right again. The museum is 150 meters up that street. Look for the gate and sign. Or, to find your way on WAZE, input Lomas de Salitral. For more on activities in the area, check Agenda Cultural Desamparados online.





The **Municipal Artisan Fair** is a huge, fun place in the center of San Jose. Located on Calle 7 and Avenida 6, it is across the street from a little park. There is an enormous variety of items made by local craftsmen and women, and it is free, so enter and browse to your heart's content. There are souvenirs, gifts, home decorations, and Pura Vida T-shirts. You may not plan to buy anything, but who can resist a cuddly sloth puppet for ₡10,000 colones or a license plate that says Pura Vida? Just "looking" is a treat. Masks are a must. Gel and hand washing at all entrances. Open every day.

Local fairs are also opening up again. These are important for small businesses to show and sell their products. Most don't have the resources to enter the national markets,

and they depend on passersby and the internet. At a feria in front of the municipal building in Desamparados, I found chocolate bars and cocoa made by the two-person Mishka company. Pablo and Ivette bring the cocoa from Limon, process it, cook it, make it into candy bars, then wrap them and take them around to local fairs. They also have filled chocolate candies and cocoa products, all with that wonderful chocolate taste. You can find Mishkafoods on Facebook and Instagram.

The day I was there, about a dozen vendors had set up shop in a shady area, and I was happy to find those handy little traditional woven rugs which are good for many things, like for stepping out of the shower, or protecting the sofa from pets and food or boisterous kids, or a dog bed, or as shoe wiper to place at the door in the rainy season. These are local products and the vendor told me that the husband makes them and the wife sells them.

Local fairs are mostly listed locally, most often on flyers posted in the area, so you just happen upon them. When you do, stop and take a look. The variety and quality of products, and getting to know the entrepreneurs who are behind them, is worth it.

Summer is for water fun, and when you can't go to the beach there's **Ojo de Agua** (Eye of Water), a spring-fed water park in Belén that dates back to the 1930s. It consists of three pools with a small pool for small kids, waterfalls for a pounding massage, and a lake, all filled from the water gushing out of the "eye." The park attracts families, couples, picnickers, and those who come for sports or therapy. Plus, there is room for all manner of other activities in this 17-hectare park. There are tennis courts, hiking or running trails, paddle boats on the lake, and of course, diving and swimming.

The biggest pool, at 33 meters (101 feet), is good for swimming laps or diving into the four-meter (16 feet) deep end. Many people use the pool for therapy and in the afternoons, when the crowds go off to eat lunch



or rest up. The pool is free for walking in the water, exercising, or taking a good hard swim. If you are really ready for a workout, try swimming against the current in front of the waterfall in the lower level of the pool. Many people are regulars following exercise routines. The best part of all is that the constant flow of water from the gushing spring is pure, no chemicals. I am a frequent visitor.

Fees are reasonable for nationals and residents with a cedula. For older adults it's ₡800 colones. Parking is extra. A bag checking service is ₡2,500 colones, so

leave your valuables at home. Masks are needed at the entrance, and hand sanitizer or hand washing is a must. Some areas could use a bit more care, but overall, for swimming and sunning, this is the place!

Ojo de Agua opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 4:00 p.m. For exercise, the best times are early in the morning, if you can manage the cold, or later in the day. You cannot bring in food except for fruit, but there is a restaurant on site.

The park is located on Route 111 in Belen, close to San Jose, Heredia, and Alajuela. Check maps on the internet. Construction of the General Cañas Highway makes taking that route difficult, so take route 111 from Belen, Alajuela, or Heredia. Or, there is bus service from San Jose, Heredia, and Alajuela.

Finding out about local events can be tricky because the pandemic lingers. Try Googling "Agenda Cultural" for your area of interest. For example, Agenda Cultural GAM (Grand Area Metropolitan) lists some. Many other events are listed on Facebook, but most online listings are for 20 kilometer hikes or mountain bike trails. But there's always something going on.



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18 A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Allen Dickinson



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It was quite a party! Because of the pandemic, our family's annual New Year's party was different from those of years past when we went to a restaurant up in the hills above Escazú, danced to live music, and watched thousands of rockets light up the sky over the valley below. This year, like last, we stayed home. There were a lot fewer skyrockets here, but they were closer.

Our party was well attended: myself, my wife, two adult children, and three grandchildren. My wife was stunning in her butterfly mask, and the kids all wore their regular ones. I chose a black disposable mask in honor of the serious occasion – the ending of one year and the beginning of another. There were ample refreshments. We had a “queue seco,” two bags of potato chips, cola for the kids, and an almost endless supply of Rompope, Costa Rican egg nog,

with a little extra “nog” for the adults. (This year I bought the Rompope in liter containers – those little individual drink boxes didn't work out so well last year. Live and learn!)

At midnight, the excitement was palpable, but after about twenty minutes of oohs! and ahhs! we were ooh'ed out. We adults made some resolutions (I don't remember what mine was – must have been the nog) and called it a night: 2021 was in the books.

We arose the next morning to the remains of the party and the first day of 2022. We all gathered in the kitchen and again toasted the new year, this time with rich local coffee. The mystery of what surprises the coming year would bring was in the air, but we hoped for a little less drama and crisis in the world. And that for New Year's 2023 we will be able to return to the restaurant in the mountains.

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by Ivo Henfling

How to Calculate Property Tax



Have you purchased a property in Costa Rica? Are you planning to? I'm sure you know that you must pay property tax, but you also might wonder, how does it work? Where and how should I pay? How do I calculate the property tax due? When should it be paid? Here are some answers.

Property tax in Costa Rica is regulated by “ley 7509 de impuestos sobre bienes inmuebles,” which is the real estate tax law. You can find the Spanish version of this law online.

THE FIRST THING TO KNOW

The property tax rate is 0.25% of the value of the property as registered in the municipality where the property is located. The tax is paid quarterly and is the same in every municipality.

DISCOUNTS

Most municipalities will give a discount if the tax is paid for the whole year in advance. Usually, however, they won't have the amount due calculated before the 15th of February, even though it is due before the end of the first quarter. You will NOT get a warning for payment in your post office box like most other countries do, so put it on your agenda. The late fees are pretty low, but it is better to pay on time.

CHARGES FOR OTHER SERVICES

Besides the property tax, you'll also be charged for other municipal services. Because the municipalities in Costa Rica are autonomous, the law allows them to each have their own way of calculating the charges for those services. Therefore, the rate of

charge per million colones of each item can vary in each municipality. Here is an example of how some municipalities calculate the rate:

ITEM	Formula
Road cleaning (Aseo de Vías)	Property value x ¢131 / 1,000,000
Park maintenance (Servicio Parques)	Property value x ¢12.24 / 1,000,000
Storm sewer (Alcantarillado)	Property value x ¢21.10 / 1,000,000
Garbage pickup (Basura)	A fixed amount

Other municipalities calculate their services charges differently: To calculate each specific service, the municipality adds up the annual expenses for a category and adds 10% for administrative expenses and 10% for service development. The cost is then distributed among all the users for each item. Here's an example of the different way of calculating taxes for services some municipalities use:

ITEM	Formula
Road cleaning	Calculated per meter of property frontage
Park maintenance	Annual expenses plus 10% plus 10%
Storm sewer	Annual expenses plus 10% plus 10%
Garbage pickup	A fixed amount

THE GOOD NEWS

Property owners can receive exoneration from their property taxes! That is, they can be exempted from paying the tax. How? By law, if you own only one property in your personal name, you can request to be exempted from the property tax. This is established in article 4, subparagraph e) of the real estate tax law, which says that property tax exoneration can be requested by all natural persons who have only a single property in the entire country registered in the National Real Estate Registry. To learn more about this process, inquire at the “bienes inmuebles” window at your local municipality and ask for form F-VAL-28.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR TAX

Each municipality is responsible for charging property owners a tax on every property within the country's boundaries. If you do owe some tax, you need to know that the tools to calculate it are supplied by the Ministerio de Hacienda (Finance Ministry, or tax office). There are several ways of learning what the tax value of your property is:

- 1. The Easy Way.** Property owners have the obligation to declare their property value every five years. If you don't declare it, the municipality will adjust it automatically. You can find out how much you must pay by using the property information and calling the municipal tax office or, in some cases, by searching on their website.
- 2. The Almost Easy Way.** If you don't really want to bother reading the rest of this article, ask for an appointment with the city engineer. Most municipalities will accept an appointment request on their website. The engineer will calculate property tax for you. Bring the following information:
 - a) Property information. First, look for the property information, called Folio Real or Matricula, in your records. With luck, you still have on file the property search the closing attorney gave you after the purchase. Find the property title number, which will show as: PROVINCIA: ALAJUELA (or another province) FINCA: 184300 DERECHO: 000. You can also look for the name of the owner - personal or the corporation.
 - b) What else you will need to bring:
 - Owner's identity card (no need for a copy).
 - If the property is owned by corporation, a document stating the legal status (personería

jurídica) of the representative and a photocopy of their identity card.

- If a third party declares for the owner, they must present a signed authorization, a copy of the owner's identity card, and a copy of the authorized representative's identity card.
- In the case of shared ownership of a property where only one of the owners declares on behalf of all the others, the same documentation must be presented for each owner, with due authorization and copies of each identification.
- In the event that there is ongoing construction, you must provide information about the age, materials, and area of the buildings. (See below.)

3. The Long but More Perfect Way. If you speak and read enough Spanish and have absolutely nothing better to do, here is the information to calculate property tax correctly:

- a) Value Declaration. It is mandatory to update the value of your property every five years. I know, it is kind of weird that the municipality is asking you to update your own property's value. In most countries, the city will just send you a bill, but not in Costa Rica. The regulation is quite simple: the municipality gives you the chance to appraise your own property, to the best of your knowledge. You can download the declaration form (Declaración de Bienes Inmuebles) from the municipal website. Usually, they also have a how-to instruction guide (Instructivo - Declaración de Bienes Inmuebles). (In my experience, however, the engineers prefer to do it for you, so arm yourself with sufficient information and knowledge so you can guide the engineer to a perfect declaration.)
- b) How to get an overall assessment. An overall assessment will consider both land and construction components or just the land if the property is unimproved. The assessment will be made for the value of the area based on the respective district where the property is located, as registered in the property section of the National Registry.
- c) How to check the land value. Almost every municipality in the Central Valley, as well as many municipalities outside the Central Valley, have been given parameters for the values of the land in their canton. These values are easy to check on the Costa Rican Finance Ministry's website. The Ministry has organized the maps of the seven provinces, and the map of the municipality where a property is located can be downloaded. Use the survey map (plano catastrado) to find your property on those maps. The seven provinces are: [San José](#), [Alajuela](#), [Heredia](#), [Cartago](#), [Puntarenas](#), [Guanacaste](#), and [Limón](#). (Click on the province name for a link to its site.)
- d) Locate your property on the value map. Once you have that map downloaded, save it in a folder on your computer in a place that you will be able to find it later. Don't close the file, as you will need it to make the calculation. If you can't find your property on the map, ask the real estate agent who sold you the property to help you.

CONSTRUCTION

If the property has any construction going on, you can download the [construction value guide](#) (Manual de valores base unitarios por tipología constructiva 2020). Read this guide well, and pick the type of construction for each structure. Once you see this guide, you'll understand why it's easier to go back to #1, The Easy Way.

PAY ONLINE

In some municipalities, it is now possible to pay the property tax online. Look for "pagos en línea," and if you know how much you must pay, you can do it online. Some municipalities accept Visa or MasterCard. Others don't but have the online payment option on their website where payment can be made from most local banks' websites, just like you pay any other utility bill. But if you don't have a local bank account, you have a problem with which I can't help.

Ivo Henfling is a Dutch expat who has lived in Costa Rica for forty years. He founded the American-European Real Estate Group, the first functioning MLS with affiliate agents from coast to coast, in 1999. He is the broker/owner of GoDutch Realty and can be reached at (506) 2289-5125 or (506) 8834-4515 or email to: ivo@american-european.net



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Fraud prevention Department: (506) 2519-2117

Duty Officer (after business hours): (506) 2519-2000
(Dial zero and ask for the Duty officer)

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Website: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica

Email: costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

Address: Sabana Sur, Edificio Oficentro Ejecutivo, atrás de la Contraloría, San José, 1007, Provincia de San José, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Web site: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>

Email: sos@international.gc.ca

Emergency phone: +1 613 996 8885 (call collect where available)

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Address: Calle 32, San José

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Emergency assistance: (506) 6050 9853

Venezuelan Embassy

Phone: (506) 2220 3704, 2220 3708

Address: San Pedro, Los Yoses, 50 metros antes de finalizar la avenida 10.

Email: embv.crsjo@mppre.gob.ve and embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com

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(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

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Millimeters × .039 = Inches

Meters × 3.28 = Feet

Square Meters × 10.764 = Square Feet

Square meters × 10,000 = Hectares

Hectares × 2.47 = Acres

Kilometers × .62 = Miles

Centigrade × 1.8 + 32 = Fahrenheit

Liters × .264 = Gallons

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26 FROM THE EMBASSIES



ASK ACS

Q: I heard new COVID-19 testing requirements for U.S. citizens went into effect in December. What are the current requirements?

A: Effective December 6, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implemented a one-day COVID-19 testing requirement for all travelers over age two coming to the United States. Regardless of vaccination status or nationality, any individual coming to the United States must show a negative pre-departure COVID-19 viral test taken the day before they board their flight to the United States. You must show your negative result to the airline before you board your flight. If you recently recovered from COVID-19, you may instead travel with documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., your positive COVID-19 viral test result on a sample taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country and a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel). These requirements are for all air passengers two years of age or older boarding a flight from a foreign country to the United States. Check the CDC website for additional information and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. Up to date information on air travel requirements can also be found on the U.S. Embassy San Jose public website at: <https://cr.usembassy.gov/vaccine-mandate-air-travelers/>

Q: There have been several changes to the COVID-19 related entry requirements for both Costa Rica and the United States over the past several months. How can I be sure I have the most up-to-date information on testing and travel requirements?

A: The U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, maintains a public website that can be found at <https://cr.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>. On this website, there is a page dedicated to COVID-19 information specific to Costa Rica and requirements for air travel to the United States. This website is updated weekly or whenever new information or restrictions and regulations related to COVID-19 are published. In addition, all U.S. citizens living in Costa Rica

or planning to visit are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. U.S. citizens enrolled in STEP receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in their destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans. Enrollment in STEP also helps the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency. STEP enrollment also helps family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency. You can enroll in STEP at <https://step.state.gov/>. Sign up for STEP! Stay Informed, Stay Connected, Stay Safe!

Q: I enrolled in STEP several years ago but need to update my information. How can I access my STEP account if I have forgotten my password?

A: To access your account and request a new password, visit: <https://step.state.gov/STEP/pages/common/SignIn.aspx> and click the link to Log In. From there you will find instructions on how to reset your STEP password.



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by Rómulo Pacheco

What's Going on with Residency Renewal Procedures

Everything in our lives changed after the onset of the pandemic, and that includes the Costa Rica Immigration Directorate and the formats it prescribes to request, renew, and process residencies. This time I will talk about some of the procedures required by Immigration that have undergone some changes.

All renewal procedures are now accomplished through either the Banco de Costa Rica (BCR) or the Correos de Costa Rica (post office). You can request a residency renewal appointment online at migracion.go.cr, or via phone by calling 1311.

PENSIONADO

For those persons who currently have temporary residency under this category, remember that you should request an appointment with enough time to complete the process (you should start working on this three months before the expiration of your DIMEX card). As part of the process, you will be asked to provide proof that your monthly payments to the CAJA (CCSS, or Costa Rican Social Security) are up to date. Also, if you have dependents who are enrolled in the CAJA using the family benefit, it is important that their information is also current. Check with your local EBAIS (the first attention units, i.e., clinic, nearest to your home) to confirm that the family benefit information is correct (it needs to be renewed every two years).

Once you have done that and are sure you and your dependent(s) are current with the CAJA, you can ask the Banco de Costa Rica or the post office for an appointment to renew your DIMEX card. At your appointment, you will need to present a recent certification of your pension amounts, either from your local embassy (U.S. citizens can ask for a certification at the local embassy) or by having a recent certification issued, apostilled, and translated to Spanish from your home country pension fund, either private or public. Additionally, they will sometimes ask to see a record of the previous six months' activity (deposits) to your Costa Rican bank account.

RENTISTA

Those in the Rentista category also must confirm that your CAJA payments and family benefits for dependent(s) are up to date. Also, remember that you will need to provide a new letter of income guarantee that shows the ability to receive \$2,500 USD a month for the next 24 months. You will need to show that the previous payments have been coming into the country and were deposited in your Costa Rican bank account, as was promised in the current approval certification. Usually, to prove this requirement, the immigration office will ask for bank statements showing that the minimum amount was deposited into your bank account every month.

INVERSIONISTAS

Persons who qualified as Inversionistas must also comply with the CAJA requirements (for yourselves and your dependents). You will also need to show that you still retain ownership of your investment in Costa Rica – that you still own the real estate, bonds, or stocks that were declared in the initial application for residency in this category.

Anyone requesting the issuance of exit permits for minors, new passports, or any procedural verification appointments for residency procedures, such as residency based on marriage, will also have to request appointments either online or by phone to the call center.

Only time will tell if the new procedures will be an improvement, or a step back.

Remember that ARCR can help you with your renewals – getting an appointment, dealing with the CAJA, and any other requirements for individual cases. We will continue to comply with the new procedures and will try to complete them for our clients.

Rómulo Pacheco

Attorney at Law, Notary Public

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Here yesterday, today, and tomorrow



by Ryan Piercy



Velvet Ants

Wandering in the same forest as the two-spotted tiger beetle, covered in the previous issue, you may also come across a large, hairy ant-looking insect of the genus *Pseudomethoca*. Caution would be the best course of action here as this apparent ant, which has two spots similar to the beetle, is no ant at all. Called velvet ants, they are actually members of the wasp family, and the females are known to have a particularly nasty sting, the painful effect of which may last up to 30 minutes.

Velvet ants are of the family Mutillidae, made up of over 7,000 known species. Though actually wasps, their name comes from the appearance of the wingless females, which look like a large hairy ant. The term velvet ant refers to their dense pile of hair, which often is bright scarlet or orange, but may also be black, white, silver, or gold. The Costa Rican *Pseudomethoca* is black, with round white spots on its abdomen.



The species is solitary, unlike ants, and is not aggressive, stinging only in cases of defense. The exoskeleton of the velvet ant is particularly tough, being some 11 times



stronger than that of a honeybee. This characteristic allows them to successfully invade the nests of their prey, helps them retain moisture, and provides them with additional defense as they hunt for food. In both sexes, a structure called a stridulitrum on the metasoma is used to produce a squeaking or chirping sound when alarmed. Being diurnal, velvet ants will generally be found in the daytime and feeding on nectar.

The males of the species do have wings and appear very different from the females. The difference is so distinct that it is actually very difficult for entomologists to match the females and males that pertain to each other unless they are encountered while mating.

Of particular interest is how alike the velvet wasp appears next to the two-spotted tiger beetle. Scientists believe that the beetle possibly developed the two spots to emulate the velvet ants as a method of defense against potential prey. This visual warning may help to enforce the image that any attack would have unpleasant consequences. Known as Müllerian mimicry, this phenomenon in nature occurs when two or more well-defended species, often foul-tasting and which share common predators, have come to mimic each other's honest warning signals, to their mutual benefit.



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by **Shelagh Duncan**

Tips to Get Your Furniture Arrangement Right

Like a blank page or canvas, an empty room can be either an opportunity or a challenge. With so many ways to fill it, how do you know where to start?

In this, the basic rules of furniture arrangement have been distilled into ten simple steps that will help you or your interior designer determine where to put things (and where not to put things) that will create a polished, pulled-together look for any room.

STEP 1. THINK ABOUT HOW THE ROOM WILL FUNCTION

Consider how the room will be used and how many people will use it during the day. Many of us have a home with a great room that includes not only the entry and

living area, but also the kitchen and dining areas too, so there are many activities take place there. As well as reading and relaxing, you may use it for entertaining small- or large-scale gatherings, for the kids' homework or crafts, and/or as a home office. Knowing the uses will help determine the type of furnishings you'll need and the amount of seating required.

STEP 2. DECIDE ON A FOCAL POINT

A large open-plan space can include different focal points, but the main one will be for the living area. This is your principal space. Identify the room's main focal point – the view, the television, fabulous art, or a feature wall – and orient the furniture accordingly. If you plan



to watch television in the room, the ideal distance between the set and the seating is three times the size of the screen (measured diagonally). Therefore, if you've got a 40-inch set, your chair should be 120 inches away.

3. START WITH PRIORITY PIECES

Place the largest pieces of furniture first, such as the sofa in the living room or the bed in the bedroom. In most cases, this piece will face the room's focal point. Seating should be no more than eight feet apart to facilitate conversation, and, unless your room is especially small, avoid pushing all the furniture against the walls; leave space for the room to "breathe."

STEP 4. CONSIDER SYMMETRY

Symmetrical arrangements work best for formal rooms. They offer a sense of order. Try this plan if:

- You have a focal point centered in the room such as a fireplace, French doors, or a built-in unit
- You are more logical and like order and structure
- You don't want to put a lot of thought into your furniture arrangement but still want balance

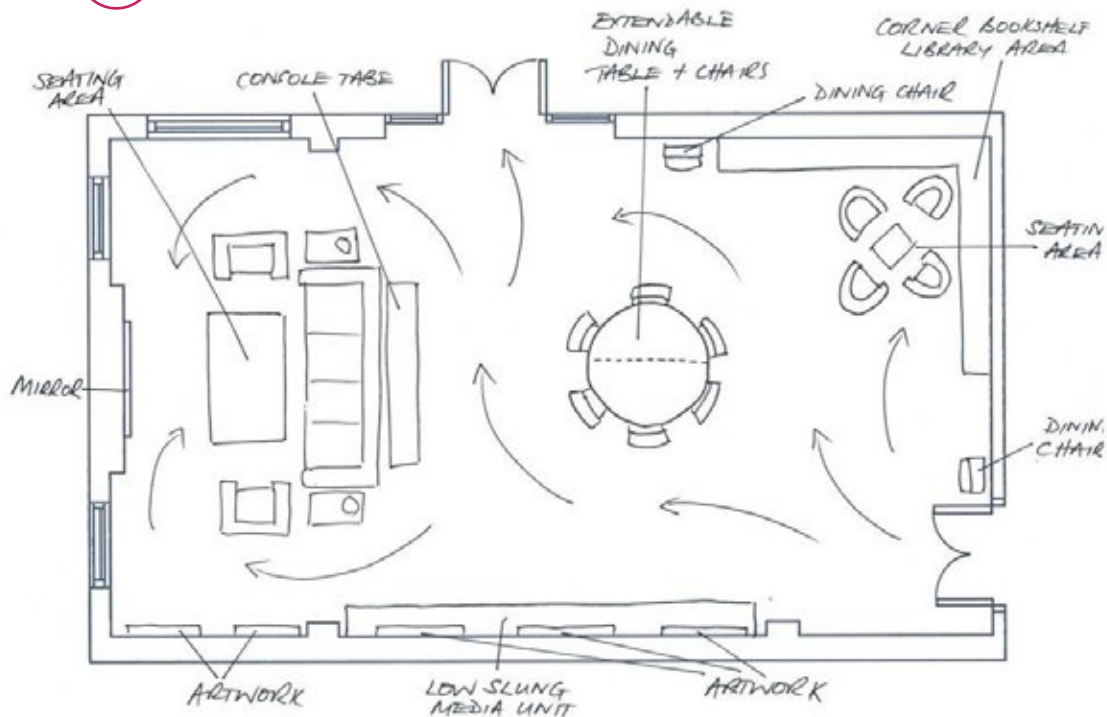


- You are seeking a more serious aesthetic

Asymmetrical arrangements, however, are more versatile and will make a room feel more casual.

Try an asymmetrical arrangement if:

- You thrive in organized chaos
- You love spending time arranging furniture to find unique ways of achieving balance
- You are seeking a more playful space
- You want to create a more casual setting



STEP 5. CREATE A TRAFFIC FLOW

Think about the flow of traffic through the room, generally the path between two doorways. Don't block that path with any large pieces of furniture if you can avoid it. Allow 30 to 48 inches of width for major traffic routes and a minimum of 24 inches of width for minor ones. Try to direct traffic around a seating group, not through the middle of it. If traffic cuts through the middle of the room, consider creating two small seating areas instead of one large one.

STEP 6. AIM FOR VARIETY

Vary the size of furniture pieces throughout the room, encouraging the eye to move up and down as you scan the space. Balance a large or tall item by placing another piece of similar size or height across the room from it (or use art to replicate the scale). Avoid putting two tall pieces next to each other.

STEP 7. BUILD IN CONTRAST – MIX IT UP!

Combine straight and curved lines for contrast. If larger furniture is linear, throw in a round table for contrast. If the furniture is curvy, mix in an angular piece. Similarly, pair solids with voids; combine a leggy chair with a solid side table and a solid chair with a leggy table.



STEP 8. DESIGN FOR EASE OF USE

Place a table within easy reach of every seat, being sure to combine pieces of similar scale, and make sure every reading chair has light accessible from a nearby lamp. Coffee tables should be located 14 to 18 inches from a sofa to provide sufficient leg room, and the table's height should be in relation to the height of the sofa seat.

STEP 9. ALLOW FOR CIRCULATION

In the dining area, make sure there's at least 48 inches between each edge of the table and the nearest wall or piece of furniture. If traffic doesn't pass behind the chairs on one

side of the table, 36 inches should be fine. In bedrooms, allow at least 24 inches between the side of the bed and a wall or other furniture and at least 36 inches between the bed and a swinging door.



STEP 10. DO YOUR PLANNING

Give your back a break. Before you move any furniture, test your design on paper. Measure the room's dimensions, noting the location of windows, doors, and electrical outlets, then draw up a floor plan on graph paper using cut-outs to represent the furnishings. Or better yet, use a digital room planner to draw the space and test various furniture configurations; it's less work and a lot more fun. Once you have it all planned out, take the opportunity to transform your blank canvas into a beautiful work of art for you to sit back and enjoy!

Until next time...

Shelagh Duncan

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(36) PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

“Be the Change You Want to See.” -Gandhi

The more romantic among us saw the marriage of Brad and Angelina as the stars’ finally getting it right. Each had been married before, suggesting that they may not have then possessed the traits and skills necessary for a successful marriage. But surely this time they’d “go the distance.” How could they not? How could such a dreamy couple not relate beautifully and create a perfect connection?

We lesser mortals don’t start with the enormous advantages of Brad and Angelina, so we have to struggle to make things work. Everyone wonders if their relationship will last. But the surprising end to “Brangelina” demonstrates that sustaining a satisfying relationship is hard for everyone.

In some ways it gets easier with time because we learn how to cope with each other and to better understand and resolve our relationship problems. But it can also get more difficult as we age, especially as our health fades and our aches and pains and frustrations increase, making it more difficult to be patient and tolerant with each other. As beautiful and healthy as they were, even the Pitts would have reached that point if their marriage had survived.

On our wedding day in 1973, my new wife and I wished our relationship would be permanent, but no one ever knows for sure. It’s clear now that we will not part until death, so what can we do to improve the quality of our connection while the quality of our health deteriorates? We’d like this to be the best phase of our time together.

ZOOM!

It’s glaringly obvious that our lifetime is rapidly running out. We were 23 and 26 when we married, and no one told us how blink-of-the-eye fast the time would go while we reached our 70s. We are now intensely aware of how swiftly whatever remaining lifetime we have left will pass. There are numerous reminders if we happen to deny that reality; we didn’t always look this old! Plus, not only were there three deaths from our generation in the family this year, but also we are not the people we used to be; every day we have less energy, more

aches and pains, less strength, and more difficulty with previously easy tasks.

These age-related changes have both brought us closer together ... and pushed us farther apart: closer, because we need each other more to deal with our multiplying life difficulties; farther, apart because our aches and pains make us less patient, more irritable, and more inclined to squabble. Hearing difficulties, suffered by both of us, and the necessity of frequent repetition doesn’t help either.

Therein lies the rub. At a time when we’d like to be more loving and considerate, spending our remaining days in caring and appreciation is both easier and harder to do. It is easier because we have a long and close history and we each mean the world to the other. We want to treat each other well - very well - and to thank each other for our shared history and the benefits we enjoyed from each other. But that can be difficult sometimes because we also have a long history of arguments, hurt feelings, and unsolved issues and because our irritability gets in the way of our hope for departing in harmony.

WHAT’S NEXT?

We’ve had difficult periods in our over 50 years together. Who doesn’t? Previously, once whatever stress we were struggling through was resolved, our positive feelings were restored. Over time, we developed our “ways” of quickly solving things. We’ve been great life partners, overcoming many demanding challenges together. As angry, upset, disappointed, and furious with each other that we have been, we’ve also been loving, devoted, and always caring about each other.

The disruption from those three family deaths has subsided; they’re no longer a shock and we’ve adapted as best as we might, given the time frame. We’ve worked diligently to clean up the messes left behind, but this current health stress will not get better. Each week, one or both of us has some health setback that makes us need the other and makes us harder to live with. Things like poor sleep, increased joint pain, or just not feeling well, make us both more likely to snap at the other.

Throughout our life, we've been ugly toward each other, as well as sweet and loving. Now we want more sweet and far, far less ugly than things have been sometimes in the past. Not ugly at all, if possible.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

She was the best thing that ever happened to me. Sharp as a tack, exquisitely beautiful, extremely hard working, and devoted to the family. We were equally pledged to leaving Detroit for someplace warm and beautiful. (You're reading this in El Residente, so you know we reached that goal.) Our family goals were also achieved: healthy, stable, successful children who were protected from our family's dysfunction. Well, most of it.

Confession time. None of the family were well protected from my moods and angry outbursts. As a military vet, my kids sometimes noted that they deserved veterans' benefits, too.

Admittedly, there were not a lot of clear and concrete conversations about the ideal relationship at the beginning. That came along after we had some relationship experiences to build on and, therefore, some clearer ideas about what we needed.

SO WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

First, to be clear, we know there's little we can do to prevent our further health decline. All we can do is to try to exert control over the quality of our present life together. We believe that our relationship can be improved and hope we can finally attain the quality of connection that we imagined those many years ago. But we know that it will take some work.



*After all this is over all that will have
really mattered is how we treated each other*

WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED?

While there are a few areas I wish my wife would change, I'm putting the onus for change and improving this final phase on me. Not because I'm a great guy - I'm not - but because I owe it to her. It is only fair that I make her last years better, much better, than our early days together.

There's a selfish motive I should also admit. When she's doing well emotionally, things are great for me.

So what do I need to do to make her, and me, feel better? Bluntly, I need to better cope with her habits that I find annoying. Here's what most pushes my buttons:

- bossing me around
- frequently interrupting me
- leaving me out of the loop
- doing things behind my back

I'll admit, none of these patterns are a problem for her. They'd be okay without MY reactions. It is MY reaction that creates the problems, so it is MY reactions that need changing, not her. The above list is her actions as seen from MY perspective. From her point of view, the same actions would be described as:

- making suggestions
- getting to the point/not wasting time
- saving me the trouble
- getting things done

So the issue then is, what causes my angry reactions to these patterns? The anger that then goes on to make her angry... and round and round we go. Can you guess?

It is my feeling that her actions are disrespectful that causes my anger. To me, it's like her actions are saying I "am an idiot," "don't know what I'm doing," "need supervision," "can't do it without help." My anger makes sense if those are her attitudes. But are they?

No, not really. And that's what I need to remember when I'm about to have an outburst. If I look at each of those behaviors from her perspective, I'd see she's not trying to upset me. Rather, her anxieties about being in control of things and being on top of life's demands motivate the behaviors that I find upsetting, not some disrespect for me. Recognizing that will help me calm myself.

SHOULDN'T WE BOTH CHANGE?

Out of fairness, you might say both of us need to act differently. Yes, there's logic in that. If we want our

remaining years together to be enjoyable and loving, we have to change how we're currently reacting to our aches and frustrations.

But have you ever tried to get someone else to change? Ever want to try that again? Truthfully, the only person we can change is ourselves, and trying to change her would just multiply the problems for me. Then, on top of the original problems I want her to change would be her resistance to changing. For example, what typically happens when we boss someone around and tell them how to behave? They get upset, dig in their heels, and tell you how and why you need to change. Not much chance of success there.

Because her contributions are driven by her innate anxieties, and mine by hurt feelings, seeing that makes it easier for me to remain calm, control my part, and reduce the friction between us. But how can I do that in the heat of the angry moment? A few ways:

- a) When I "hear" her actions as a put down, ask myself whether she's really saying that?
- b) Remind myself how much better I feel when she feels good.
- c) Never forget the especially bad recent argument that has motivated this written reflection. We never, ever want to go there again.

Setting aside my ego to forgo arguing and preserve harmony is a very small price to pay for going the distance in love.

I've never been the romantic guy that my wife longs for and that Brad's fans are convinced he is. But what I can do is show my gratitude for all the things that she has had to put up with by me "being the change." In return, our final years will be much, much better for both of us. We will have done better than those glorious stars did.

Tony Johnson is a retired university mental health center therapist. He should have figured this out a lot sooner. This article has been approved by my wife. johnson.tony4536@gmail.com



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- Guidance in opening a Costa Rica bank account.
- Group rates for national health insurance.
- Expert information on moving and shipping household goods.
- References to proven businesses who can assist arrivals obtain desired products and services.
- Discounted general medical services (by appointment).
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- Personal email answers to your questions about moving to Costa Rica.
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Organizations are invited and encouraged to post their group activities, information, meeting schedules, and notices of special events FREE in the ARCR Facebook account. Go to www.facebook.com/ARCR123

► Alcoholics Anonymous

Groups meet daily throughout the country; times and places change frequently. Schedules for meetings and their locations can be found at: www.costaricaaaa.com.

► Al-Anon

English language meetings open to anyone whose life has been/is affected by someone else's problem with alcohol. Meeting information can be found at: www.costaricaaaa.com. Family Resources.

► American Legion Post 10-Escazú

Meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 12 noon at the Tap House, Escazú Village, Escazú. If you wish to attend please call: 4034-0788, or email: commander@alcr10.org or visit our website at: www.alcr10.org. If you need directions, call Terry Wise at: 8893-4021.

► American Legion Post 12-Golfito

Information can be obtained from Pat O'Connell, 8303-0950

► American Legion Auxiliary

The Legion Auxiliary meets the second Saturday of each month, at 1p.m. in Moravia. Contact Doris Murillo at: 2240-2947.

► Amigos of Costa Rica

A US-based non-profit organization established in 1999. As an advocate for philanthropy in Costa Rica, it contributes to the well-being of Costa Rica by connecting donors resources with vetted non-profit solutions. US Government tax-payers donations are deductible. For more information go to: www.amigosofcostarica.org or email to: emily@amigosofcostarica.org.

► Atenas Bridge Club

Informal, friendly duplicate games. Classes at 11 a.m., games at 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays. New members welcome. For more information, visit the website at: www.atenasbridgeclub.com or email to: atenasbridgeclub@gmail.com.

► Birding Club Costa Rica

A private group that travels around Costa Rica to observe and identify the 900+ species of birds found here, learn about different parts of the country, and enjoy the company of like-minded and interested people. For more information, visit the website: www.birdingclubcr.org or email to: info@birdingclubcr.org.

► Canadian Club

Canadian Club welcomes everyone to join us for our monthly luncheons and at our special annual events. No passport required. There are no fees or dues to pay, just sign up with your email address and we will keep you informed of Canadian events. For

information go to Facebook: Canadian Club of Costa Rica, or email Pat at: canadianclubcr@yahoo.com to sign up.

► Central Valley Golf Association

Meets every Tuesday morning between 6-7 a.m. at the Valle Del Sol golf course in Santa Ana. Both individual and two person events with different formats every week. We invite all men and woman with all handicaps to join us and enjoy golf on a picturesque course. No membership required. For more information, contact: Larry Goldman 8933-3333, email to: nylarryg@yahoo.com.

► Costa Ballena Women's Network

Begun in Ojochal with a handful of expat ladies, our focus is networking, community, business, and social activities as well as offering an opportunity to meet new people. Monthly lunch meetings held the third Saturday of each month through a variety of social activities at various restaurants with guest speakers talking on interesting topics. For more information please email: cbwn00@gmail.com.

► Costa Rica Writers Group

Published authors and writers, newbies, and wanna-bes make up this group. Dedicated to helping and improving all authors' work with resources for publishing, printing, editing, cover design; every aspect of the writing process. Third Thursday, January through November, Henry's Beach Café, Escazú, 11 a.m. Contact: bbrashears0@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page, Costa Rica Writers Group.

► Democrats Abroad Costa Rica

Provides information about voting in the US and voting issues of interest to US citizens living in Costa Rica. For more information or to join, email: democratsabroadcostarica@gmail.com or visit our website at: www.democratsabroad.org/cr Register to vote absentee at: votefromabroad.org

► Domestic Animal Welfare Group Costa Ballena

DAWG is a volunteer run, non-profit organization focused on animal advocacy in the Costa Ballena region of Costa Rica with a goal of eliminating the abuse and abandonment of domestic animals in Costa Ballena. We stress education, spay and neuter. Donations are our lifeline. For information visit the website at: www.dawgcostarica.org or email to: dawgcostarica@gmail.com.

► First Friday Lunch

Each month on the first Friday of the month ARCR sponsors a First Friday Lunch at 12 p.m. All are invited to join ARCR officers and others for an informal lunch and BS session. No RSVP or agenda, just good food and meeting new and old friends.

Attendees are responsible for their own food and drink expenses. Meetings are at the Chinese restaurant, Marisqueria Mariscos Vivo, located behind the Mas x Menos grocery store located across from the Nissan Dealer near Parque Sabana. Call ARCR (2220-0055) for directions.

► Little Theater Group

An English-speaking theater group located in Escazu. Website: littletheatregroup.org Email: info@littletheatregroup.org Whatsapp: 8708-2607

► Marine Corps League

Meets the second Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. at the Tap House in City Place Mall in Santa Ana. We are looking for new members. Former Marines and Navy Corpsmen can be regular members. All other service members are welcome to join as associate members. For information call Andy Pucek at: 8721-6636 or email: andy@marinecorpsleaguecr.com.

► Newcomers Club of Costa Rica

(For Women) The Club, in existence since 1980, promotes friendship and support among members, mostly expats in Costa Rica, through conducting a variety of social and recreational activities. Meetings are held from September to May, interest groups meet year-round. General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. every first Tuesday of the month. For more information go to our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/newcomers.org/> or email to: newcomersclub.costarica@gmail.com.

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

Formed in November 2009 to promote friendship between English speaking women in Pérez Zeledón and, through friendship, to make positive contributions to our local community. The PZIWC meets for lunch on the second Tuesday of each month, hosts Ramblers Day on the third Tuesday of each month, and has a Games Day on the fourth Tuesday of each month. For more information, please send an email to: pzwomansclub@gmail.com or visit our web site at: www.pziwc.org.

► Professional Women's Network

PWN provides its members with opportunities to network with other professional women with the goal of aiding personal and professional development of entrepreneurs, students, and professionals. PWN sponsors service and outreach programs to "give back" to the community. Meeting schedules vary. For info on the speaker for the month and to register, call Helen at: 2280-4362. Location: Tin Jo Restaurant in San José, Calle 11, Av. 6-8. Or email us at: pwn.costarica@gmail.com. PWN website is: www.pwnocr.com.

► Quepos-Manuel Antonio Writers Group

The QMAWG is a group of aspiring and accomplished writers living in the Central and South Pacific Coast area who meet

to expand their skills, share resources, and support and socialize with others with an interest in writing. Meetings take place on the second Sunday of each month at 12:00 p.m. at El Avion restaurant in Manuel Antonio, and includes a presentation and Q&A session, followed by a luncheon and social exchange. For more information, email Bob Normand at: bob@bobnormand.com

► Radio Control Sailing Club

Meets at Sabana Park Lake. For information email Walter Bibb at: wwbbsurf40@yahoo.com.

► San Vito Bird Club

A community based birding/nature group centered in the diverse southern zone of Costa Rica. We also facilitate nature education to local elementary schools through Cornell University's Bird Sleuth program. Twice monthly bird walks through the Wilson Botanical Garden and other sites are open to all; binoculars available as needed. Please visit our website: www.sanvitobirdclub.org or email: eltangaral@gmail.com for more information.

► Wine Club of Costa Rica

Social group. Monthly Meeting, Mainly Escazú Email:

costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com

► Women's Club of Costa Rica

The oldest, continuously operating, philanthropic organization for English-speaking women in Costa Rica. The club is focused on serving community needs, particularly on children's needs. Along with its philanthropic fundraising activities, WCCR also hosts regular lunches, teas, and many special interest groups. Guests are welcome. Information and a calendar of events can be found at: www.wccr.org.

► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Open to men too. Meetings in English in Heredia, Spanish in San José, and English/Spanish in San Ramon. We work on peace and human rights issues. Call Mitzi: 2433-7078 or write us at: mitzstar@gmail.com.

Meeting times and dates are subject to change or suspension due to the coronavirus and Health Ministry mandates. Contact the club for further details.

NOTICE: Club officers should review the contact information for their clubs and make sure it is up to date.

Send any changes or corrections to: service@arcr.cr subject line; Club Corner, and post them on the the ARCR Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/ARCR123.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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Important dates in Costa Rica:

January 1

Friday New Year's Day
National Holiday

January 27 and 28

ARCR Seminars for Expats
Location: Park Inn Hotel

February 24 and 25

ARCR Seminars for Expats
Location: Park Inn Hotel

Funniest One Liners

Why does someone believe
you when you say there
are four billion stars, but
check when you say the
paint is wet?

A clear conscience is usually
the sign of a bad memory.

Always borrow money
from a pessimist. He won't
expect it back.

Women will never be equal
to men until they can walk
down the street with a bald
head and a beer gut and still
think they are sexy.

A diplomat is someone who
can tell you to go to hell
in such a way that you will
look forward to the trip.

Money can't buy happiness,
but it sure makes misery
easier to live with.

You do not need a parachute
to skydive. You only need a
parachute to skydive twice.

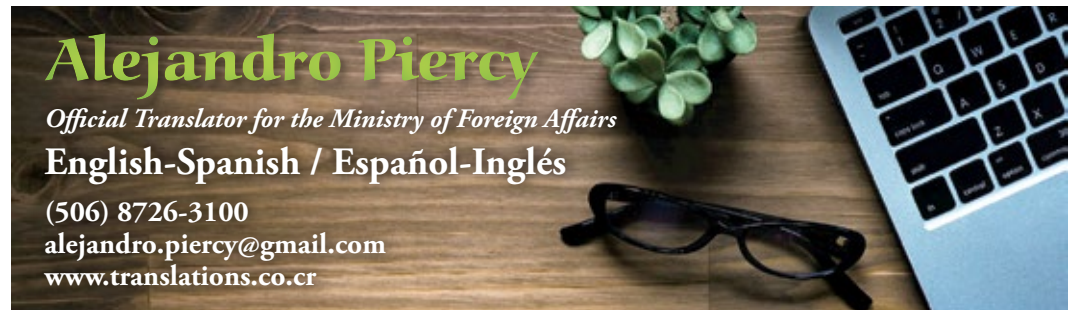


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