

\$4.95 | Free for members | ARCR's English Language Magazine

# EL RESIDENTE

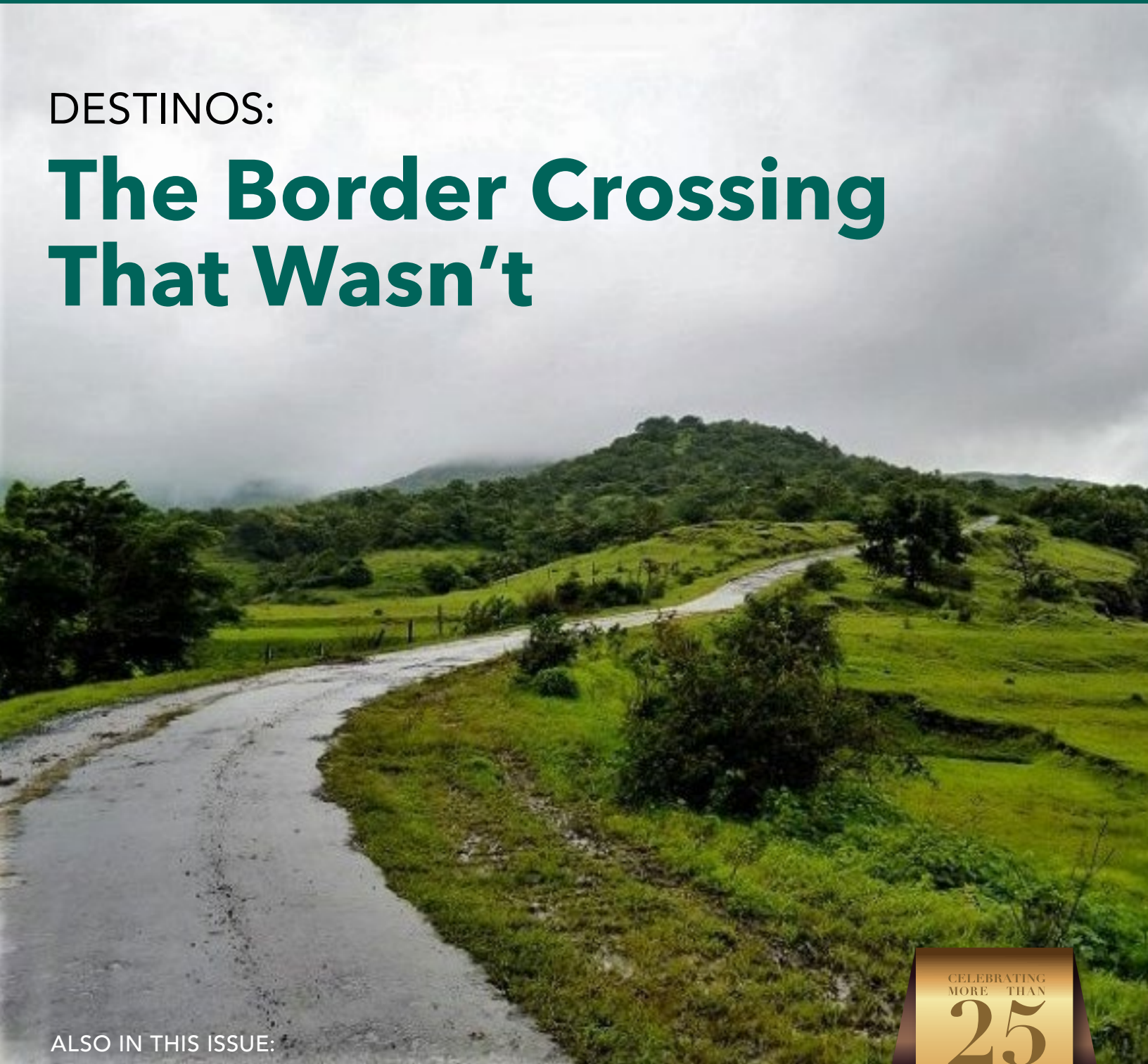
March

April

2022

DESTINOS:

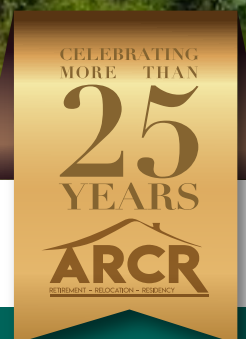
## The Border Crossing That Wasn't



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

**Sloths, Trains, and Costa Rica's Oldest City**  
**My No-Training-Necessary Triathlon**

**The Tica Zone**  
**Black Panther**



# NEW Catastrophic Insurance Plan

Available through INS Costa Rica!  
If you want health insurance coverage in the event of a catastrophe, this might be exactly what you're looking for! (Requires minimum overnight hospital stay.)

**Sonia Gómez García**

Licencia número 08-1271

Bancrédito Seguros



Bancrédito Seguros is the new, official ARCR provider for INS insurance.

We offer all types of insurance for homes and condos (ask about the Hogar Comprensivo option for condos) and automobiles. Options for automobile insurance deductibles are also available.

Our staff is highly trained to give you the best service possible. Call or drop by and see Carlos David Ortiz or Juan Carlos Calero in the Insurance office in the ARCR complex for a quote. We'll find the ideal policy to fit your needs!

**Available in ARCR's Insurance Office**  
Phone: 2220-0055 or 4052-4052 / email: [insurance@arcr.cr](mailto:insurance@arcr.cr)



# CONTENTS

<b>Across the Board</b> ARCR Board of Directors	<b>4</b>
<b>Destinos</b> Marshall Cobb	<b>5</b>
<b>Out and About</b> Mitzi Stark	<b>12</b>
<b>Guest Column</b> Dara Pastor	<b>17</b>
<b>The High Seas</b> Christine Monteith	<b>19</b>
<b>A Day in the Life</b> Allen Dickinson	<b>22</b>
<b>From the Embassies</b> US and UK Embassies	<b>26</b>
<b>Legal Update</b> Rómulo Pacheco	<b>28</b>
<b>On The Grid</b> Ivo Henfling	<b>30</b>
<b>Wild Side</b> Ryan Piercy	<b>34</b>
<b>Design Wise</b> Shelagh Duncan	<b>36</b>
<b>Paradise, We Have a Problem</b> Tony Johnson	<b>39</b>
<b>Club Corner</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Business Directory</b>	<b>46</b>

**Check our blog on our Facebook site.**

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.

Since 1984 we have been offering reliable **services, information and advocacy** to Costa Rica's foreign residents. We have the experience and ability to help you with your residency application, immigration, business and financial management, real estate purchases and rentals, property management, insurance, pet importation and much more.

If you wish to place an ad in El Residente, please contact the Advertising and Publicity desk in the ARCR Administration Office or at the email address listed in the masthead. Goods & services offered are paid advertisements. Neither ARCR Administration nor El Residente research the companies and take no responsibility for the quality of such goods and services. Some articles published in El Residente may have been written by non-professionals. El Residente attempts to check all facts included, but takes no responsibility for their accuracy.

## Editor's Note

**W**ELCOME TO EL RESIDENTE'S NEW LOOK! Change for the sake of change is never a good idea, and that was not our objective. The purpose of the changes you see here and on the pages ahead was to make your magazine better by adapting it to our now totally digital format. And in the process, we also tried to make it more pleasing to the eye and easier to read. Not to worry, we still have the same great writers with interesting, entertaining and, most of all, informative articles. We hope we met all our goals and that you like our new look!

Speaking of content, inside this issue you'll find some important information from the U.K. and U.S. embassies, as well as some tips on ways to make your home temperature more comfortable and some places to go to explore. There is more, of course, and the best way to discover it is to turn the page and start reading!

P.S. Don't forget DonaTapa!



## Contact Information

<b>Published by:</b>	ARCR CR Corp. S.A.
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:service@arcr.cr">service@arcr.cr</a>
<b>Managing Director:</b>	Rómulo Pacheco
<b>Editor-in-Chief:</b>	Allen Dickinson
<b>Associate Editor:</b>	Tracey Cobb
<b>Graphic Design and Advertising graphics:</b>	Eduardo González
<b>Advertising Sales:</b>	Hayley Babb
<b>Office hours:</b>	Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
<b>Main office:</b>	Av 14, Calle 42, San José, Costa Rica
<b>Telephone:</b>	(506) 2220-0055, (506) 4052-4052
<b>WhatsApp:</b>	8935-2444
<b>Mailing address:</b>	P.O. Box 1191-1007 Centro Colón, San José, Costa Rica
<b>Advertising and Publicity:</b>	<a href="mailto:service@arcr.cr">service@arcr.cr</a>
<b>Insurance Office:</b>	<a href="mailto:insurance@arcr.cr">insurance@arcr.cr</a>
<b>General information:</b>	<a href="mailto:legal@arcr.cr">legal@arcr.cr</a>
<b>Caja account info:</b>	<a href="mailto:service@arcr.cr">service@arcr.cr</a>
<b>Residency info:</b>	<a href="mailto:legal@arcr.cr">legal@arcr.cr</a>
<b>Facebook page:</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123">www.facebook.com/ARCR123</a>
<b>ARCR Webpage:</b>	<a href="http://www.arcr.cr">www.arcr.cr</a>

Cover photo credit: Stock Photo

# ACROSS THE BOARD

## Notes and News from the Board of Directors

**EXPIRED DIMEX CARDS EXTENDED** The General Directorate of Migration and Immigration, through Resolution No. DJUR-0197-12-2021-JM, published on January 10, 2022, extended the validity of all the Immigration Identity Documents for Foreigners, known as DIMEX. The DIMEX of those foreign persons authorized to remain in the country under the immigration categories of permanent residence, temporary residence, and special categories, as well as the immigration subcategory of stay, that expired after October 1, 2021, are extended until September 30, 2022.

As of January 22, 2022, no DIMEX renewal procedures will be carried out at any Banco de Costa Rica offices, the Costa Rica Post Office, or central or regional immigration offices. If the applicant has already made the renewal deposit, from January 12, 2022, they may go to central or regional immigration offices to initiate the return of their deposit upon presenting the payment receipt.

After September 30, 2022, when the extension expires, the foreign person must renew their DIMEX within the three subsequent months, using the normal procedure.

**SOME CAN RENEW THEIR PASSPORT ONLINE** The U.S. government has announced that beginning December 23, 2021, Americans will be able to renew their passports online using a new pilot program that the government plans to implement fully during 2022. Previously, renewing one's passport required a trip to a government office, surrendering the old passport, and submitting payment via check or money order. Applicants also had to find a place to have a passport photo taken as well.

Currently, only U.S. citizens in the following groups may renew their passports online:

- Those 16 years and older
- **Citizens living in the U.S. only, no foreign addresses**
- Those with no changes to their name, gender, or other personal information

Those using the online renewal system can have an expired passport, but it must be less than 15 years old. Diplomatic or official passports cannot be renewed

online. Passport cards for travel to Canada or Mexico are also currently unavailable for online renewal.

Because the online renewal system is in the pilot stages, the State Department says that routine processing should take eight to 11 weeks, and expedited processing, which is available for a premium price, should take five to seven weeks. No international travel should be scheduled within three weeks of the renewal date.

Currently, the price to renew a passport is \$130; an expedited passport requires an additional \$60 fee. Those renewing online will be able to pay using a credit or debit card or by direct transfer from their bank account. They also can submit a passport photo online with their renewal application.

Those interested in using the online renewal system at this time will need to pre-register. To renew your passport, check out the State Department's website.

**UPDATE** The U.S. Embassy has made the below announcement, which modifies the above procedure for U.S. citizens seeking to renew their passports in Costa Rica:

*Currently, all U.S. passport applicants in Costa Rica must arrange for in-person payment of their passport renewal fee at the U.S. Embassy in San Jose. We understand that this situation is inconvenient for U.S. citizens residing outside San Jose and have been working on a solution. The Department of State is pleased to announce that U.S. Embassy San Jose has been selected as a location to allow eligible U.S. citizens residing in Costa Rica to pay their DS-82 passport renewal fees online. The program is expected to begin in March 2022. We will send out another announcement when this online payment system has launched, along with specific instructions to help you confirm your eligibility to use this online payment option.*

ARCR will notify members by email when the final announcement is made. In the meantime, U.S. citizens are urged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/> to receive personal email updates on this program and other important information from the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica.





# The Border Crossing that Wasn't

I needed to renew my Costa Rica visa, so after reading Michael Miller's account of his trip to Nicaragua in the last issue, I decided to instead go to Panama, specifically the Rio Sereno crossing, which I had heard was less of a hassle than the main crossing at Paso Canoas. All conversations were in my unique version of Spanish.

\*\*\*

The man sat slumped in a plastic chair under a pop-up canopy. A fold-out plastic table was next to him, and on that table was one of the largest bottles of hand sanitizer I had ever seen. He stared down at his phone.

I rolled down the passenger window of my Kia Bongo truck (yes, "Bongo" is the actual model name) and asked, "Excuse me, is there a parking lot where I can leave my truck for a couple of days? I'm crossing over to Panama."

He squinted as he looked up from his phone and almost made eye contact with me.

"Where are you going?"

"Panama. To Volcán."

The man shifted uncomfortably in his chair. I briefly saw movement in the open doorway of the Panamanian immigration building behind him.

"Where?"

I took a deep breath and repeated my destination. This only seemed to confuse him further.

Just thirty minutes before, I'd found myself completely lost, driving up a dirt road that threatened to rattle the dentures out of one's head. I'd driven seven hours straight at that point, and in that effort I'd made a rookie mistake. I'd trusted Google Maps to guide me to Rio Sereno.

Things had gone well between Google and me until I drew close to the border and my cell phone's signal disappeared. When Google Maps loses its connection, it often retains the route already laid out. Sometimes this information is good, other times .... In this case, I decided to trust what Google remembered about the route, which



is how I'd found myself in front of a small house, asking really important, smart questions like, "Where am I?" I got out of the truck and asked, "Can you please tell me where the border is?"

Four men, three of whom had their shirts pulled up over their bellies to cool off in the sweltering heat, stared at me and my brightly colored vehicle. One of the men pointed further down the landslide of a road in the direction I was already heading.

I thanked him, got back in my truck and waved goodbye to the men, who all waved back with looks that conveyed the notion that I might never be seen again.

Eventually I found the border and the man with his giant bottle of hand sanitizer in front of the Panamanian immigration building. The last 30 minutes of my rudderless drive had worn me out more than the first seven hours, and I just needed to know where I could park. This did not seem to be an insurmountable problem, though the only parking lot I could see belonged to the hardware store behind and below me. The back lot featured a giant sign prohibiting parking by anyone other than paid customers.

Perhaps I could pay them to park in their lot. I drove in the front parking lot, breaking up a small gathering of men.

"Excuse me, I'm going to cross the border but need to find a place to park my truck for two days."

One of the men pointed to one of the many empty spots in their lot.

"But I'm going to be gone for two days. Is that OK?"

He smiled and shrugged. That didn't seem like the basis of a solid contract, and I didn't even know if he worked for the hardware store, so I parked in one of the empty spots and went inside to talk to the manager to make sure it was actually OK. It was, and the very nice manager refused to take any money when he told me to park in their back lot.

Backing up the Bongo, I waved to the guys in the lot, drove past the Panamanian hand sanitizer guy, and parked in the dirt lot. Moments later, I was back in front of him, this time with my backpack and duffle bag.

I produced my passport, my official Costa Rica vaccination card, and the rest of my supporting documentation. He pointed to the hand sanitizer. I obliged.

"I know I need to pay the tax to leave Costa Rica. Do you know where I can pay it?"

He pointed to a dilapidated metal building with no sign. I put my documents in my backpack, trudged across the dirt road, and was soon in an annex of sorts within the metal building. There were a lot of doors, several with ramps leading up to them. There did not, however, seem to be any people. I wandered, calling out as I did, "Hello?"

A minute or so later, a well-armed man in uniform emerged from one of the doors. He seemed shocked to see me, as though any encounter with another human might be a surprise.

"What are you doing here?"

"Um, sir, I'm trying to pay the exit tax."





“Oh, OK. That’s over there.” He pointed through the metal building. I followed his gaze, thanked him, and walked in that direction.

Shortly thereafter, I was in front of a different metal structure. This, as it turned out, was the Costa Rican immigration building. It was hard to tell because there were no signs and no people. The same guard suddenly appeared in front of me and gestured towards a glass door. I entered, and another armed gentleman inside asked me to produce the required bar code from Costa Rica proving that I was vaccinated against COVID-19. I did. He then said I needed to pay the exit tax. I agreed and asked how much.

“Nine dollars.”

I was prepared for the tax to be in U.S. dollars. Many official fees in this part of the world, are in dollars; Panama wanted nothing to do with Costa Rica’s colon any more than Costa Rica wanted to accept the Panamanian balboa. I had plenty of U.S. cash on hand and handed him a ten.

“No, not here.”

“Um, I’m sorry. Where do I pay?”

The officer looked back at his monitor, and said, “The Agro-Chemico.”

“And that is...?”

“Next to the hardware store.”

“Ah, OK. Thank you.”

I started to leave, and he slapped the counter to get my attention. His face now quite serious, he commanded, “Get the receipt in paper. It has to be in paper.”

I agreed that paper was the only way, walked out of the building, passed the Panamanian hand sanitizer guy, went down the hill and around the workers still hanging out in the parking lot of the hardware store, and into the Agro-Chemico store.

The nice man at the counter agreed that he was indeed the source of the receipt for the Costa Rican exit tax and asked me for nine dollars. I gave him the ten, and he, a bit sheepishly, gave me a Panamanian balboa as change. “You can spend it over there; I can’t give it away here.”

“You’ll want to take a picture of this,” he said as he spun his monitor around, revealing a receipt.

“Um... the Costa Rica immigration guy said the receipt had to be in paper.”

The man at the counter rolled his eyes. “We don’t have any paper.”

Owing to my substantial dealings in Costa Rica where the ability to produce a paper receipt was, in many cases, the only way to get something done, I wasn’t sure I agreed with him.

“There’s no way to get a paper receipt?”

He pointed to his keyboard and monitor. “This is all I have, and they know it.”

I took the picture, waved as I walked past the guys in the hardware parking lot, and walked back up the hill to the Costa Rica immigration office, where I was stamped out. I returned to the Panamanian office where the hand sanitizer guy was still parked in his plastic chair under his canopy. I again offered him all the same documents I had produced before. He immediately pulled out my official Costa Rican vaccination document and frowned.

“What is this?”

The card, which opens up to show a history of all vaccinations and says “Official Costa Rica Vaccination History” with the related state-sponsored imagery across the front, seemed like something that someone working at border crossing would have seen before. I was wrong.

He was unmoved, so I produced my official record of vaccinations from Canada, which were also recorded on the Costa Rica card. He glanced at my U.S. passport, then again at my Canadian vaccinations, and then at my paperwork that states I have filed to become a resident and am now in “tramite,” meaning in process. With the definite feeling that this was going the wrong way, I volunteered, “I’m a resident of Costa Rica but am originally from the United States. I left for two years while I was recuperating from cancer.” (Pulling out the Big C usually inspires enough sympathy to quash further questions as to why someone from the U.S. who was living in Costa Rica would choose to recuperate in Canada.) I don’t know if that was the case this time or if it was his desire to get back on his cell phone, which he kept sneaking looks at, but he grunted and pointed at the building behind him.

I gathered my papers, thanked him, and walked into the Panamanian immigration building. The desks of the two immigration officers were one step inside the door. The closest officer, without making eye contact, extended his hand. I handed him my passport and Costa Rica vaccine card and told him that I had the QR codes for both Costa Rica and Panama, as well as proof that I had paid the Costa Rica exit fee, on my phone. I queued up the first of those images and waited to hand the phone to him.

He tossed the vaccine card back in my direction.

“Where is your copy?”

“I’m sorry, my copy of what?”

“Your copy of your passport and your vaccine card.”

“I’m sorry, sir, you need photocopies?” I was confused; my family and I had made a trip to Bocas del Toro, Panama, in October, and no one at that crossing had asked us for copies.

He glared at me, and suddenly I wasn’t so keen on needing eye contact.

“Yes, of course, photocopies.”

I apologize. That’s my fault. Can you please tell me where I can get photocopies?”

The officer muttered something that I didn’t understand. I asked him to repeat it, and his colleague said something equally hard to understand that included the phrase “next to the Agro-Chemico.”

So, once again, I gathered my documents and my bags, marched past hand sanitizer guy, went down the hill to greet the guys in the hardware store parking lot, and waved to the guy at the counter in the Agro-Chemico. Sure enough, in the shop next door, I got two copies of each document and again went back up the hill to the Panamanian immigration building.

This time, hand sanitizer guy ignored me completely. I entered and placed all documents down on the desk in front of the immigration officer.

He quickly rifled through the copies, asked for my phone, then checked the QR codes and my receipt from Costa Rica. Sweat running down my face, I tried to be optimistic.

“And proof that you have paid the exit fee for Panama?”

The question startled me for a minute, and then I remembered reading that while there was no official exit fee to leave Panama it was not uncommon to be hit up for one. That was part of the reason I had a collection of U.S. bills with me.

“The exit fee for Panama? I thought I would pay that in Panama before I returned to Costa Rica, but I’m glad to pay it here. How much is it?”

“No, you don’t pay it here. You have to pay it before you come here.”

“Um, OK, can I pay it at the Agro-Chemico?”

“No. There is nowhere to pay it here. To pay it, you either go to a Ticabus station, or you can go to Coopevaca (in my head that sounded like cow cooperative).”

The bus station seemed like the safer bet; there were bus stations all over the place.

“Oh, so where is the closest Ticabus?”

He turned in disbelief to the other officer, who shook his head. “There is no Ticabus station anywhere near here. There is no bus service here.”

It seemed odd that there would be no bus service at a border crossing, but judging by my experience thus far, I was





possibly the only person who had ever attempted to cross the border in this town. Moreover, the only people I'd seen outside were the guys in the hardware parking lot and hand sanitizer guy.

"OK, I understand. And the Coope place...?"

"Is back in Sabalito." He pointed across the street in the direction of the Costa Rica building. "Fifteen minutes that way."

My stomach dropped. I was going to have to drive another thirty minutes (at least, probably more as I had no functioning map and would likely get lost) to find some place I'd never heard of to pay a tax that didn't actually exist.

I gathered things, picked up my bags, and lugged it all to my truck.

The guys in the parking lot looked at me curiously as I backed out and tried to figure out how to get to Sabalito. About 20 minutes and only one wrong turn later, I was on the main drag of a town that wasn't a lot bigger than the sleepy border crossing village. With cars and pedestrians darting in and out, I drove slowly, looking for something that had the word "coope" in it. I soon passed a store front that featured a sign saying Coopeavianca. There was no vaca, or cow, involved.

I was thoroughly inspected by the guard at Coopeavianca and was then assured that: 1) there was no tax to leave Panama, and 2) there was nothing they could sell me or receipt they could give me that would do anything.

What little enthusiasm I had left drained from me as I returned to my truck, where—cell service returned—I was met by a blizzard of texts and lengthy voice messages from the driver waiting for me on the Panamanian side of the border and from the hotel where I planned to stay. Trying to keep it together, I explained the delay and apologized for the fact that I was about 90 minutes late in my planned border crossing. The hotel assured me that I could pay the Panama exit tax at the border itself (on the Costa Rica side) or at any Banco Nacional or Coopeavianca.

My only option was to go back to the Panamanian immigration building and try one last time. I would either soon emerge on the Panamanian side of the border or I'd go home.

Two wrong turns and 25 minutes later, I was back in front of hand sanitizer guy. This time he actually seemed to be rooting for me.

"All done?"

"Nope. No one will sell me something that says I paid a tax to leave Panama, including Coopeavianca."

"That's too bad."

"Yes, it is. I'm going to try anyway."

He shrugged and went back to his phone. I entered the office to find that my main nemesis had never returned and I was now dealing with officer #2. I explained the

situation. He expressed no visible reaction. I asked him if there was anyone at his home office he could call who might be able to help. He checked his watch, smiled, and said, "Sorry, no, it's 4:01, so they're closed."

"Is there anything else I can do?"

He called officer #1, and after a long phone conversation, finally hung up and walked over to a laminated, faded poster mounted on the wall. With no small amount of ire, he began reading from the top. "Point one says... point two says..."

I had no idea where this was going. He arrived at point seven, which said not much more than, "If there are fees to be charged, they will be collected." He then glared at me and sat back down to pick up his phone and stare at it.

At the end of my rope, I dropped the sirs and thank you's and said, "I am happy to pay a fee. I have tried to do everything you've asked me to do. My family and I just crossed the border in October and had no trouble. I don't think it's fair that you're asking me to pay a fee to leave Panama that doesn't exist anywhere in writing but can't tell me where I can pay it."

Without looking up, he simply pointed to the open door.

"You haven't even been able to tell me how much the fee is. How much is the fee?" His finger remained pointed at the door.

Anger washed over me. After my return to Costa Rica from Canada, I re-applied for residency and do not have to leave the country every 90 days, like a tourist, during this up-to-two-year process. However, a quirk in the Costa Rican system requires a fresh stamp in my passport every 90 days until the process is complete to legally drive on my U.S. driver license. I was dealing with this bureaucratic quagmire solely to maintain my driving privileges.

As I stared at officer #2's finger, I noticed his ID in a plastic sleeve hanging from a lanyard around his neck. "I'll go, but I'm going to take a quick picture of your ID if that's OK."

His finger dropped, and he immediately covered his ID with his hand. "No, that's private."

"Seems like your boss wants it to be public if they make you wear it around your neck. Staring at the copies of my information still on their desk, "Plus you've got all of my information, so it only seems fair."

"Leave!"

Briefly pondering whether they would stamp my passport if I ended up in a Panamanian jail, I gave up and left. I

waved a final goodbye to the nice guys in the hardware store parking lot and drove about 20 minutes in the general direction of home, trying to think through my next step. I'd left my house at 6:00 a.m., had been on the road for ten hours, and was tired; an eight-hour drive back to Monteverde seemed more than daunting. In the end, I knew I really had only one option: to head to the much larger, dirtier, and more congested, border crossing at Paso Canoas. I pulled over and typed the location into Waze (I was done with Google). I put my Bongo back into gear and began another, thankfully shorter, drive.

I would eventually get my exit and entry stamps, though it didn't happen that night. I would also discover that the health officials in my zone had written in the incorrect dates of my vaccinations in my official record. This meant that the border officials couldn't input the data from my card to produce yet another COVID-19-related document with another QR code that they're calling a "cuero." I was only familiar with that word as the Spanish equivalent of "leather." I now have an entirely new definition for it: A pound of flesh.

## NEED TO RENEW YOUR COSTA RICA DRIVER LICENSE?

ARCR will arrange the renewal  
APPOINTMENT for you and can  
provide an ESCORT.

Call the office at  
2220-0055 or send an  
email to [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr) to  
arrange your appointment.



[www.facebook.com/ARCR123](https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)



# ARCR has joined **DONATAPA**

# You Can Help!

**DONATAPA** is an environmental and social responsibility project of the *Costa Rican Accessible Tourism Network*. Their flagship project is focused on generating accessible tourism and recreation spaces for people with disabilities.

The DONATAPA project involves the collection of plastic bottle caps which are used to manufacture plastic wood "boards." That product is used to build walkways and platforms that provide a way for people with disabilities to access and enjoy Costa Rica's beaches.

ARCR has joined this worthwhile project by becoming a collection point and we strongly encourage our members to save the caps from their drink bottles and bring them to the ARCR office. We will get them to DONATAPA.

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://costaricaturismoaccesible.com/donatapa/playa-accesible/>

# OUT AND ABOUT

by Mitzi Stark



## Sloths, Trains, and Costa Rica's Oldest City

### SLOTHS

Everybody loves sloths. Never mind that they have claws like meat hooks and prefer tree tops to people. Sloths live all over Costa Rica but are rarely seen. I have been told many times about the sloths in the central park in Alajuela and have a permanent crick in my neck from looking up but have yet to see one. They hide well.

Costa Rica has two-toed sloths and three-toed sloths, but you needn't count toes to see the difference. The three-toed variety have rough fur and are gray in color, while two-toed sloths are shades of brown and have smoother fur. Sloths look like they are smiling, which is what makes them so

appealing. Maybe that is why Costa Rica recently adopted them as a new national symbol.

Unfortunately, the sloths at Rescue Center Costa Rica in Guacima de Alajuela aren't really smiling. But if you want to see sloths up close, this place has some to see and to learn about sloth life – just not to cuddle.

Most of the center's sloths are in an isolation ward, too small to be on their own, and need to be away from human hands. These are babies and, like human newborns, they stay wrapped in blankets in individual cribs. You can observe them through windows just like a hospital maternity ward, and, yes, they are cute. Volunteers and staff who handle them take special care so that human contact is at a minimum, but babies need to eat too – every three hours. That means



round-the-clock vigilance by the host of volunteers who come from around the world and pay a fee for the privilege of helping the vulnerable animals to survive and return to their homes.

Sloths have a slow metabolism, so they can happily live up in the treetops munching away on leaves. But once a week they climb down to poop, and that's when they can come under attack from dogs that roam, traffic, and human unkindness. The sloths that visitors are able to see at the center are the unlucky ones that will never go home. They've been bitten, burned by electrical wires, or injured.

The sloths at the Rescue Center are not alone. There's also Cristiano Ronaldo, not the famous Manchester United soccer star, but an ocelot who lives by himself in a cage. He has ample room, but it is still a cage. Ronaldo was kept as a pet until he was confiscated by the Ministry of Environment and Energy (Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía, or MINAE). He was undernourished and underdeveloped and didn't know how to climb trees, hunt for his prey, or protect himself from predators. Next to his enclosure lives a single coyote, also a victim of human mistreatment. There are also a variety of monkeys that were former pets or were injured, parrots of all types and colors, some wild pigs, and a slew of deer, all of which are also permanent residents.

At the time of my visit, 16 volunteers kept the animals fed, clean, and as comfy as can be. I met Maya from Rhode Island, Claudia from Germany, and Sofia from Belgium, who are among the volunteers. All have an interest in biology or veterinary work, stay for varying lengths of time, and are happy to be there, even with 24-hour shifts to feed the baby sloths. They live at the center and enjoy the sunny, warm climate of Costa Rica when not on duty. The volunteers pay for the pleasure of working with the animals; it is like a summer course at their university for them. English is the common language for volunteers and staff.



In order to arrange for a volunteer guide, appointments are necessary to visit the center. Finding the location may be a problem without Waze or some system to guide you through Costa Rica's tangle of roads. If you want to try it on your own, from Alajuela take the road that runs along the Roma pasta factory and behind the City Mall, which goes to Guacima. At the Auto Mercado store in Guacima, instead of following the road, head straight for about one mile and look for the sign on the right. Or stop in the store and ask, like I did. Hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The price is \$20 (more for foreigners) – a bit hefty, but this is a rescue and restoration center and depends on fees to feed and care for the animals. For appointments, call 6048-1115 or check Rescue Center CR on Facebook.



## TRAINS

Being cowardly when it comes to driving, I use public transportation whenever it's available. I like to use the train from Alajuela whenever I need to go into San Jose early. It's hardly the bullet train that railroads in Europe and Asia use because it's for commuters and has stops all along the way. But it gives a different view of Costa Rica, is comfortable, and is free for older adults.

Trains are fun, and I wanted to try one to travel from Alajuela to Cartago, a trip that consists of riding two separate trains that meet at the Atlantic Station in San Jose (Av. 3, Calle 23). But the trains run only during peak hours early mornings and evenings, and the only way the schedules coincide are the 5:45 a.m. from Alajuela, which arrives in San Jose at 6:26. That allows only four minutes to detrain and climb aboard the 6:30 a.m. train to Cartago.

That was too short a time for me, so I chose to make the second leg via bus. Express buses leave from the San Jose depot (Calle 5-7, Av. 10) going to the Cartago Station every seven minutes. Seniors can use their cedula (aka DIMEX) and ride free.

To make it even more inconvenient, the train schedule online ([incofer.go.cr](http://incofer.go.cr)) is never up to date, which means you need to call the National Railroad Institute, INCOFER, (2221-0777) and patiently wait through the menu for the “horario.” Hopefully when the pandemic passes and the economy recovers, the government will consider making the trains more available.

## CARTAGO

Is Costa Rica's oldest city, dating back to 1563, and its first capitol. Not much is left from the colonial days, but the city center maintains its old-style elegance. It's an interesting city to visit and stroll around. In the central area, there are the ruins of the church of Santiago Apóstol (St. James Apostle) Parish, which was never finished after being struck by a major earthquake in 1910. Although the ruins have been closed off, the area is a perfect centerpiece for the old metropolis. The surrounding area and gardens are lovely and are where Cartagoans meet to sit with friends and enjoy just being in Cartago.







Two blocks north, you can see (just look up the road) the facade of the municipal museum. This was once the army's "cuartel" (barracks) and played an important part in the civil war of 1948, when Figueres's liberation forces on the outside fought a battle with government forces inside. Walking around the building is fun as it has been kept much as it was when built around 1910. Today it is an art gallery, a science center, and a museum. Best of all, it's free, and exhibits change regularly, so you can go as often as you want.

Walking back to the bus or train station two blocks away, we found a flower market and a bicycle lane (also used by skateboarders). Going off in another direction, we discovered the national shrine, the *Basílica de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles*, or *Basílica of our Lady of the Angels*. The basilica is home to *La Negrita*, the stone Madonna discovered by an indigenous girl, Juana Pereira, in 1635 and said to perform miracles. This is where each year on August 2 tens of thousands of Costa Ricans march, walk, bike, and even ride horseback to pay homage and give thanks to the Virgin.

On the corner in front of the cathedral is the *Casa de la Ciudad*, or culture center, which is open (check, as hours vary) for exhibits, classes, and cultural events. The building, built in 1880, is the preserved home of the Pirie family. Although the Casa is open and offers classes (mostly online), there are no activities at this writing. As soon as the Ministry of Health permits, there will be more of interest.



(506) 2291-5151 | Toll Free from USA 1-866-741-8194



*Prisma Dental*

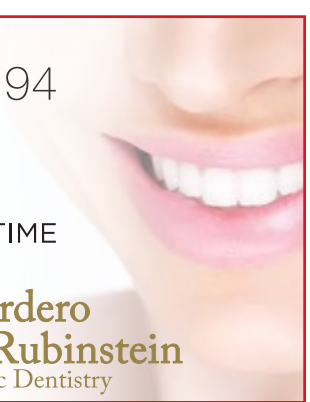
**CHANGING LIVES**

ONE *Smile* AT A TIME

*essential*  
**COSTA  
RICA**

clinic@prismadental.com www.prismadental.com  
300 m east Plaza Mayor, Rohrmoser, SJO, Costa Rica

**Drs Josef Cordero  
Telma Rubinstein**  
Cosmetic Dentistry





Hotel • Suites • Apartments  
**LA SABANA**  
Passion. Hospitality. You.

Fully furnished apartments with full 4 star hotel service  
Strategic location, north Sabana Park, San José  
+(506) 2220.2422 +(506) 8894.2410  
info@HotelAndApartmentsLaSabana.com



# U.S. Tax and Accounting

**Jaime Murray, EA**

Specializing in tax preparation for U.S. citizens living, working, or investing in foreign countries.

**4000-7288**  
**USA: 800-345-7034**

Over 20 years of  
experience in Costa Rica

[accounting1@ustaxinternational.com](mailto:accounting1@ustaxinternational.com)  
[www.ustax-international.com](http://www.ustax-international.com)

**Consultation Free!**

# Security!

**We've had your back for more than 25 years**



**Here yesterday, today, and tomorrow**

**- Information - Residency - Legal Service - Seminars - Magazine - Discounts, and more.**  
**Serving expatriates from around the world!**

**Association of Residents of Costa Rica. - Av. 14, Calle 42, San Jose, Costa Rica**  
**(506) 2220-0055 - Email: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr)**  
**Website: [www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr) - [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)**



# GUEST COLUMN

by Dara Pastor

## Our Car Buying Experience in Costa Rica

Renting a car in Costa Rica can be expensive. I got several quotes for a rental of a 4x4 SUV from the big names like Hertz and Alamo and from some national Costa Rican companies, and the best-case scenario would cost us something like \$1500 per month. Even long-term rentals don't offer much in the way of a discount: an annual rental was close to \$20,000. Once it was all added up, we could buy a car (or two) for what we would pay for a rental. And, at the end of the term, we would have no asset to show for all the money we had handed over. That's what got us thinking we should just buy.

While buying a car certainly requires a lot of effort and was no small decision, for us it made sense. We may keep the car for years, depending on how our plans in Costa Rica evolve, or we may leave and sell the car after a period of months. Our thinking was that by buying a car, if and when we do sell it, we can hope to make a good portion of the money back, and, ultimately, we will spend less than if we had rented. Plus, in the interim, we will have the autonomy of having our own car.

We wanted a vehicle to use to explore the country, so here was our wish list:

- 4-wheel drive, so as not to be limited in what kinds of roads we might encounter

- Nothing fancy, as we didn't want to worry about getting a scratch or small dent
- An SUV, because it would hold our surfboards and our luggage
- A brand like Toyota, Nissan, or Hyundai, for which it is easier to find knowledgeable mechanics and available parts than for some others
- Something that would be decently reliable, not too old, but also not too new

Based on our budget of about \$10,000, we eliminated the option of buying new. There are options for financing or leasing, but we knew we wanted something we would feel comfortable about if it were to get a few dings along the way.

We first looked at the large agencies, as they usually offer some length of warranty and maintenance with the purchase. We went to several of those in San José, but we found that they: 1) had few, if any, 4x4 options, and 2) the cars they typically carry are relatively newer models, no older than a few years, which were above our budget. If we were going to be doing only city driving, we wouldn't need 4x4, so the agencies might be a good option, but that wasn't our vision of what we'd be doing.

That left us with used car lots or individual sellers. Many people suggested looking online or in social media marketplaces. Of course, there's always your network; it doesn't hurt to put the word out to people you know and see if anybody you trust is selling. But we felt that dealing with individual sellers would be painstaking and slow, so with the help of a friend we ended up going to a few used car lots. Thankfully our friend has been living in Costa Rica for a couple decades, has experience as a mechanic, and has helped others find cars in the country before.

By going to used-car lots, we were able to see several cars in one place and get an idea of what was available and their prices. Sometimes there was nothing that met our requirements. It is important to be patient because, depending on the day or week, sometimes the cars in a lot's inventory turn over quickly. Eventually we found a Nissan X-Trail that was within our budget. When we test drove the car, we took it to a mechanic that our friend knew and trusted. He raised the car and looked under the carriage, the hood, and all around. The mechanic liked the condition of the car (no rust, everything in working order) and gave us the green light.

When it came time to make the purchase, we learned something unique to Costa Rica: It is important to have an attorney that you trust who is ready to help you with the transaction. For instance, our attorney ran the license plate number of the vehicle and found that the vehicle still had a lien on it. In Costa Rica, before a vehicle can be sold and transferred, the loan needs to be fully paid off with a zero balance remaining. Rather than allowing the seller to pay the loan off using the proceeds from our purchase, our attorney insisted that the debt be paid and all appropriate documents be presented BEFORE we exchanged any money or signatures. Meanwhile, the car lot's salesman was trying to get us to pay the purchase price before all the documents were done. Not a good idea!

Resolving the lien and obtaining the documents took the better part of a full week while the seller contacted the financing agency and closed out his loan. The ambiguity and uncertainty of the unfamiliar process made it feel very stressful and, looking back, it would have been less anxiety inducing if we had been prepared to wait a week for it all to play out. It did really help to route most communication with the car lot through our attorney, who could be specific and precise about what was needed, in Spanish.

Once our attorney received all the appropriate documentation, all parties convened to do the purchase and transfer. We decided to pay via a bank-certified check,

or "cheque de gerencia," made out to the seller of the car (the owner, not the car lot) because we felt it was more secure and safer than cash. Obtaining the check taught us something else about living in Costa Rica: The banks do not move quickly! The certified check took the bank several hours to generate.

There were times along the way when things seemingly to our North American minds "got hairy" with the loan documents and negotiations. I thought that maybe someone was trying to pull the wool over our eyes. More than once, I considered calling the deal off. Still, we knew the car was in great condition and much better value than others we'd seen, and we decided to trust our research, our attorney, the mechanic, and our friend. The unfamiliarity of laws and rules of doing business in a foreign country can be intimidating, but at some point one must take a leap of faith and go ahead, trusting their support network.

It may not always work out so well, so we realize we are lucky. But in the end, we are very happy with the car we found and the help and guidance we received along the way.

## Vote from Abroad.org

Absentee ballots for US citizens

# US CITIZENS CAN VOTE FROM COSTA RICA

Go to ***votefromabroad.org*** to register and request your ballot for the 2022 Midterm Elections.

*If you have questions or need more information, please call us at 8428 6972 or email us at [votefromabroadcr@gmail.com](mailto:votefromabroadcr@gmail.com).*



# (GETTING TO) THE HIGH SEAS

by Christine Monteith

## My No-Training-Necessary Triathlon



If you had told me a few years ago that I would set my alarm for 4:10 a.m. and that, instead of grumpily tapping the snooze button when it rang, I would eagerly get out of bed to put on my swimsuit in anticipation of catching great waves, I would have said, “You be crazy!” But that is exactly what I do this morning. Even crazier, Ben (whose nickname in the water is “La Maquina,” aka The Machine) stays in bed. This sunrise adventure is all on me.

First, this pre-dawn beach bunny needs breakfast fuel. A reheated of yesterday’s coffee stored in an insulated carafe, a medley of banana, coconut, papaya, and star fruit (all grown on our property) is topped off with yogurt and granola (made from scratch). For an extra energy boost, I pop a couple of toasted cacao beans harvested from our young trees. Breakfast consumed? Check! Water bottle filled? Check! Surf gear packed? Check! I head to the garage.

The clanking of the rollup garage door attracts our dog Pinta’s attention. She stands on the second-floor balcony outside our bedroom to observe me park my e-bike on

the gravel within the pool of light from the garage. I hear her padding down the stairs. Before she sprints away to track an intriguing scent and announce her discovery to the whole neighborhood with a 200 db howl, I capture her with collar and leash. We walk sedately down the driveway to open the front gate, my eyes intent on every shadow; no need to meet any slithering creatures this early in the morning. After attaching her to a long line on the terrace, I return to the warm light of the garage. I wax my body board and slide it into the rack attached to the bike’s seat post. My fins slide next to the board, and I affix them securely with bungee cords. Checking that the bike’s battery is fully charged, I turn on my head and taillights, don my helmet and elbow pads, and head down the hill to the gate.

Just outside our front gate is a steep hill that leads up to the neighborhood road. This hill is so steep that I dismount and walk up. The bike weighs approximately 70 pounds, and pushing it up the hill without assistance wouldn’t work for me. Fortunately, the bike’s motor has a setting for walking speed. I scramble up the hill at 6km an hour, trying to keep

pace with my surging bike. At the crest of the hill, a little out of breath, I mount it and, with a little boost from the motor, glide forward on the grass-covered lane. Passing our neighbors' house, their four dogs commit to their assigned duty of notifying the world that there is an intruder on the perimeter of their domain with a cacophony of barking.

To reach the main road, I have to traverse four undulating hills on gravel that is a mixture of small, sharp-edged crushed stone and larger rounded rocks. On the first steep descent, I pump the brakes rapidly and remind myself to breathe. I ride this route almost every day, yet the slippery consistency of the gravel still makes me nervous. The first time that I rode my shiny new e-bike on this road, I squeezed the brakes too hard, and the rear tire slid out. I landed on my right side, scraping my elbow and leaving a large contusion on my thigh. Since then, I have refined my braking technique to avoid any baseball-sized stones in my path.

The road is illuminated by my headlight beam, and the tall thin weeds that edge the road throw spindly shadows. I whisper to myself, "Pump, breathe, pump, breathe, pump, breathe," as the gravel grinds under my tires. Ascending to the highest point of the four hills, the vista to the east opens wide, and the distant sky is a wash of fuchsia of the sunrise, jaggedly torn at the bottom edge by mountain peaks.

Our neighborhood road tees into the main road, where a lonely streetlight casts a sodium yellow glow over the intersection. I give a glance for traffic and roll onto the asphalt. This road is designated by the Costa Rican government as a federal highway, and after decades of poorly graded gravel, MOPT came along with heavy equipment and huge trucks of road material. After some rudimentary repairs, they laid down a thin layer of asphalt but no center line, no reflectors, no shoulder. After the road was paved last summer, I had the confidence to ride my bike down to the beach. During the last two years, Ben has ridden his bike on the twisting, rutted gravel road, where a vehicle can round one of the tight curves taking their half from the middle many times. But for me, even on the asphalt, my first few rides down to the beach were white-knuckle trips. Literally. My hands were gripping the brakes so tightly, I wore down my first set of brakes. The rainy season downpours have undermined the shoddy paving work, and the road surface is now deteriorating daily. Cutting corners by not engineering good drainage has resulted in the run-off creating strut-mangling craters and wheel-rim-bending potholes. The smooth ride of six months ago is now a teeth-rattling whack-a-mole game of swerving around holes while avoiding other motorized traffic. Dark shadows from overhanging trees make the

holes harder to see, and I ride with caution as my headlight highlights hazards in its beam. A brief flash of cobalt catches my eye as a blue morpho butterfly flits alongside.

The sky lightens as I park my bike next to a cabina at fish camp. It's mid-tide, and I tuck my board under my arm as I briskly walk the half kilometer down the black sand beach to a spot where I like to paddle out. There is a great blue heron standing tall at the edge of the lapping water when I wade in. The waves are small today, and I enjoy floating in the soft swells. Eventually the current and my lazy swimming drift me the half kilometer back to where my bike is parked. My happy triathlon of biking, walking, and floating complete, I wade out of the water under a crystal blue sky.

When I think about it, I barely recognize the person that I am, though I realize that I am happily the person that I want to be.

*Christine has had the good fortune to live, work, and travel around the world, and now is happily ensconced in tropical tranquility near the Golfo Dulce with one husband, two dogs, and four hens.*





## Christopher Howard's Relocation & Retirement Tours to Costa Rica

Recommended by the Association  
of Residents of Costa Rica (ARCR)

**The FIRST logical CHOICE before  
you make the move...**

**Costa Rica's #1  
Retirement  
Relocation Expert**

Sign up here:  
[www.liveincostarica.com](http://www.liveincostarica.com)



## JOIN COSTA RICA SOCIAL SECURITY (CCSS) THROUGH ARCR

- Get COMPETITIVE RATES through ARCR's group health insurance plan and save money!
- Automatic payment option available.
- Joining CCSS is mandatory for residency in Costa Rica.

Call the office at 2220-0055  
or send an email to  
[service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr) to arrange  
your appointment.



[www.facebook.com/ARCR123](https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)



## SHIP TO COSTA RICA

### MAKING SHIPPING TO AND FROM NORTH AMERICA EASY

Our new California warehouse serves ALL the West Coast of the USA and Canada for shipment of large and small consignments – from cars and boats to building materials and household goods.



**[shiptocostarica@ship506.com](mailto:shiptocostarica@ship506.com)**

Partial or Full containers directly door to door from Canada and USA to Costa Rica.

We pickup palletized shipments all over the USA

Cars - Boats - Motorcycles - Quads - ATV's - Equipment - Lumber - Prefab Homes.

Moving back to the USA ? We do that too! We are logistics consultants.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Allen Dickinson

## The Tica Zone

I have just returned from another foray into the “Tica Zone...,” and I’m exhausted! You may recall that I have written about living in the Tica Zone (“... a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind...”) This time I made the trip by car.

We – my wife and I – recently delivered my number two daughter (by age) and her two children (ages six and seven) to a friend’s home for a visit. Riding along with us was another daughter. It was a trip I was pleased to make because I knew the result would be a couple of days of greatly reduced seismic-decibel noise (yes, I know those are separate measurements of energy, and I use them deliberately to describe the condition of living in a small home with two young, active children.) Noise, and my love of quiet, is something I have also written about before, so you might have some idea of my eager anticipation.

The trip, involving a jaunt of about twenty kilometers each way, was to the other side of the Central Valley, above Barva Heredia, a location with which I was not familiar. When we reached the area, I was pleased to learn our final destination was to be a house somewhere in a rural area surrounded by lots of coffee fields and nice homes, a quiet community where crime seems not to have penetrated because the homes generally don’t have fences, walls, or gates. At most, there were just

some small hedges alongside the road. It was a beautiful landscape and my kind of neighborhood.

We had set off to find this friend’s home without any firm directions. I don’t own a GPS or have Waze on my cell phone (many of my friends swear by Waze but, generally, I don’t want to know where I am – where’s the adventure in that?). Besides, it’s nearly impossible to get very lost in Costa Rica as it is a small country and every road goes somewhere. Exploring them can be fun.

Since this trip was to a specific destination, I expected that even though neither I nor any of the Ticas in the car knew exactly where we were going, finding the location shouldn’t be too difficult. More to the point, there were three grown women in the car with me, each possessing a working cell phone, and certainly someone could call for the final directions when necessary. Right?

Normally, to my Gringo way of thinking, getting directions should be easy. Call the person and have them tell someone in the car something like, “On this road go X kilometers, turn left at the \_\_\_\_\_, go Y meters to the \_\_\_\_\_ house on the right, etc., etc.”

You would be mistaken if you think that with three cell phones one of those Ticas might have gotten some helpful directions. But no! I am not saying that calls weren’t made – they were. But getting logical directions? Not so much. That’s not the Tico way; the use of landmarks and



distances to determine driving instructions is a concept that just doesn't seem to have taken hold here. So what I had to work with was something like, "Look for the place where the goat used to be tied, go to the next road, by the old oak tree" (the one that isn't there anymore) turn left, and look for a "macrobiotica" (health food store) next to a yellow house (in an area where one in three houses are yellow).

Apparently the spirit of Rod Serling lives in the neighborhood because somewhere along the way I was sure he had joined us (maybe he was lost too, or just needed a ride). Imagine, as we proceeded, all three Ticas talking at the same time, each of whom had a totally different interpretation of the meaning of the "directions" given on their phones, and you have the rough approximation of the Tica Zone. Not good for my stress level!

Through a barrage of rapidly spoken Spanish announcing three different interpretations of where we were to go, I deciphered that yes, we were apparently looking for "a road" and on it a macrobiotica store next to a yellow house. The question of which was the correct road, and if it was possibly the one onto which we were considering turning, was vigorously discussed. In the end, it was decided, with each Tica declaring (with varying degrees of certainty) it was the right road. We turned. Time to explore.

We proceeded for a few kilometers, looking for a macrobiotica alongside a yellow house. Ultimately, as the homes became fewer and farther apart, we arrived at a point where we were in the middle of a ravine between sprawling coffee fields. The track had become so narrow the cows were walking single file. Following some spirited discussion, it was decided that we were probably on the correct road (something about which a consensus had not been reached) but that we had indeed gone too far. Of course, by that time we were in an area where there was no cell phone reception, so it was impossible to verify, or disprove, the assumption.

Fortunately, the road was still paved, but where to turn around? We added another kilometer to our journey as we searched for a wide spot or a cell phone signal, during which the vigorous discussion about whether this was the proper road continued, interspersed with other non-related Tica conversation about such things as, "Is wearing white after Labor Day acceptable?" and "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" (I may have misinterpreted some of the conversation; my rapid-fire Spanish translation is not that good.) Naturally, not everyone agreed. On anything.

We finally found a place wide enough to safely reverse direction, and we headed back. We discovered (eventually) that, yes, we were on the right road and finally found the macrobiotica – but only after we had passed by it two more times because there was no sign, and only then because the friend we were meeting was standing along the side of the road looking for us. We later learned that the house next to it had at one time been yellow but was now orange. And, apparently, the existence of the macrobiotica is a secret because even the locals we stopped to ask for directions didn't know where it was.

Ah, but all is well that ends well. Mr. Serling must have gotten out of the car along with my daughter and her kids because the ride back home was peaceful, easy, and semi-quiet. We made it without a single missed turn the whole way. After the two-and-a-half hours needed to make the twenty-kilometer-one-way trip (and less than one-hour return) I arrived home knowing I had survived another foray into the Tica Zone. The upside was that I knew that now I would enjoy the reduced high decibel conditions normal in our house. Strangely though, I found it disconcertingly quiet. As my stress level receded, I realized that it's surprising how one can become used to those special family noises and soon be missing them.



**To Do List:**

1. Join ARCR. (✓)
2. Apply for residency. ( )
3. Attend ARCR Seminar for Expats. ( )
4. Relax! ( )

**f ResidencyCR**  
**www.residencycr.com**  
**Phone: (506) 2290-1074**  
**Serving ARCR members for over 20 years**



# Useful Numbers

## United States of America Embassy

Phone: (506) 2519 2000

Address: Vía 104, Calle 98, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

American Citizens Services: (506) 2519-2590

Fraud prevention Department: (506) 2519-2117

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

## United Kingdom Embassy

Phone: (506) 2258 2025

Address: Edificio Centro Colón, Paseo Colón, Provincia de San José, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Website: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica)

Email: [costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)

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

## French Embassy

Phone: (506) 2234 4167

Address: A022, San José, Curridabat

Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Email: [a.m.bafrcr@gmail.com](mailto:a.m.bafrcr@gmail.com)

## Spanish Embassy

Phone: (506) 2222 1933

Address: Calle 32, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Email: [emb.sanjose@maec.es](mailto:emb.sanjose@maec.es)

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](mailto:embv.crsjo@mppre.gob.ve) and [embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com](mailto:embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com)

Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., 1:30 – 3:30 p.m..

## CONFUSED BY THE METRIC SYSTEM?

Need to know how to convert common measurements used in Costa Rica to Customary US Standard measurements? Use the handy conversion chart below!

Milliliters × .034 = Fluid Ounces

Kilograms × 2.205 = Pounds

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

(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

Want a pocket version of some of the above conversion formulas?

Ask for one at the ARCR Reception Desk. It's FREE!

**ARCR: (506) 2220-0055**



Celebrating more than

# 25 years

of doing things **RIGHT!**



**Here yesterday, today, and tomorrow**



*Providing Information, Residency, Legal  
Services, Seminars, Magazine, Discounts,  
and more to expats from around the world.*

Association of Residents of Costa Rica  
Av. 14, Calle 42, San Jose, Costa Rica (506) 2220-0055  
Email: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr) Website: [www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr)  
[www.facebook.com/ARCR123](http://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)

# FROM THE EMBASSIES



## ASK ACS

**Q:** I've heard the U.S. Embassy will soon start allowing some passport renewals to be done online. Can you provide more information about this program and how it will work?

**A:** Currently, all U.S. passport applicants in Costa Rica must arrange for in-person payment of their passport renewal fees at the U.S. Embassy in San José. We understand that this situation is inconvenient for U.S. citizens residing outside San José and have been working on a solution.

In the coming weeks, qualified adult passport renewal applicants in Costa Rica will be able to pay the application fees online via electronic funds transfer from a U.S.-based bank account, U.S. or international credit or debit card, Amazon Pay, or PayPal. After you pay online for a U.S. passport renewal through this mechanism, you can mail your application to the U.S. Embassy in San José without the need to apply in person at the embassy or mail a bank check or money order.

**Q:** Who is eligible to pay online and renew their passport by?

**A:** You may be eligible to apply via online payment if you are an adult (16 years and older) who already has a ten-year U.S. passport book issued no more than 15 years ago. You must be resident in and have a mailing address in Costa Rica.

**Q:** Can minors (younger than 16 years) pay fees online and renew by mail?

**A:** No. Online fee payment and mail-in review is only available for adults (16 and older) with a ten-year passport book that was issued 15 years ago or less. To apply for a minor's passport, both parents/guardians must authorize in person the issuance of the child's passport. For more information, click here (<https://cr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>). Children under age 16 cannot apply for a passport by themselves.

**Q:** What if I don't have a passport book? Can I still participate?

**A:** No. To participate in the program, you must have in your possession a passport book that is valid for ten years. During the application process, you will be required to mail your

current passport and your passport application to the U.S. Embassy. It will take approximately two to three weeks to process your new passport. If you do not have your passport book in your possession, you must apply for a new one in person using a DS-11 passport application form.

**Q:** What if I don't have a passport book because it was lost or stolen? Can I still pay online and mail my application to the U.S. Embassy?

**A:** No. You will need to apply for a new passport in person at the U.S. Embassy. Instructions can be found at: <https://cr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>

**Q:** What payment methods are available for use via Pay.gov?

**A:** You can pay the \$130 fee by electronic check/transfer, credit/debit card, PayPal, or Amazon Pay on [Pay.gov](https://pay.gov). You must pay the fee in U.S. dollars.

**Q:** When will this program begin?

**A:** This program is scheduled to begin on March 20. The U.S. Embassy in San José will be sending out more announcements about how to use this online payment system as the launch date approaches, along with specific instructions to help you confirm your eligibility to use this online payment option. If you have not already done so, please enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/> to receive updates on this program and other important information for U.S. citizens in Costa Rica. Updates will also be posted to the U.S. Embassy San José website at <https://cr.usembassy.gov/>. You can also contact the American Citizens Services division at [ACSSANJOSE@state.gov](mailto:ACSSANJOSE@state.gov).



We know travel was complicated before the pandemic, don't we? Now it has more variables than three-dimensional chess, and planning for a trip is pretty daunting, even for the most experienced traveller.

Many of our readers will be thinking about a trip to the UK. The requirements for entry are subject to change at quite short notice, so always check the information on [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). Search "entering the UK," and select the country (England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland) to which



you are travelling. By the time you read this, rules will have changed again, on 11 February 2022. In general, the requirements are becoming less onerous, and for those of us vaccinated in Costa Rica, it's good to know our certificates are accepted for entry to the UK. If unsure, search [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for "approved Covid-19 vaccines and countries and territories with approved proof of vaccination."

Don't forget that you will need to take into account any countries you transit through. Search "foreign travel advice" on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), and read the entry requirements for your transit country.

Your other key partner in your travel is your airline. They will usually spell out in detail what you need to do for your journey. If you are unsure, ask!

One issue that has tripped people up recently is passport validity when travelling through the EU Schengen Area. It will usually need to be less than ten years old on the day you enter (check the "date of issue") and valid for at least three months after the day you plan to leave (check the "expiry date"). This includes transit!

If you're getting near to your passport expiry date, you can apply online for a new one from Costa Rica. Go to [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), and search "overseas British passport applications."



**Advertise your business to**  
**10,000 readers**  
 for as little as **\$99.00** per issue!

**Contact us at**  
**service@arcr.cr or by phone at**  
**(506) 2220-0055 for information.**  
**[www.facebook.com/arcr123](https://www.facebook.com/arcr123)**



# LEGAL SERVICES

**ARCR provides complete legal services through our affiliate, Residency CR**

- Residency - Change of Status - Corporation Creation
- Last Will and Testament - Home or Land Purchase
- Vehicle Purchase - Legal Services of All Kinds

**Consultation FREE**

**Appointments available by calling the ARCR office at 2220-0055, or send an email to: [legal@arcr.cr](mailto:legal@arcr.cr) or go to: [www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr)**



**Here yesterday, today, and tomorrow**



# LEGAL UPDATE

by Rómulo Pacheco

## What is the Immigration Status of Persons Who Have Applied for Residency and Have Not Received it?

Let's start by defining a foreigner with an application in process. We can categorize him or her as a person who has applied to the Directorate of Migration and Immigration to request a change of immigration status from tourist to any other condition, whether temporary or permanent.

The first step in that process is to request an appointment to present the request for a change of status. With the granting of the appointment and the subsequent presentation of the documents, the application process passes into an intermediate stage, if we can call it that. In effect, the person is not yet a resident nor have they acquired the rights of the desired migratory status, but they do acquire the possibility of staying in the country beyond the period they were initially authorized as a tourist. This is known as being “en trámite,” or “in process,” while the Migration and Immigration Directorate deals with the application. It is not a new status nor a consolidated legal situation but only an indefinite period during which the applicant may stay in the country while their application is being resolved.

Because Migration and Immigration is frequently unable to give a response within the period that the immigration law requires, the determination of “overstay” and “extra validity of the documents” is made so that, by law, the applicant cannot be “punished” because of the ineffectiveness of the administration.

These rules seem simple and straightforward. Other rules, however, can open a legal limbo into which some residency applicants may find themselves.

Foreigners who have not submitted an application for migratory regularization (residency) and who maintain non-resident permission – commonly known as being a “perpetual tourist” – or those who have not requested an extension of their tourism visa are obligated by law to leave the country when their current visa term expires. In this regard, article 33, paragraph 3 of the relevant law says:

*Foreigners will have the obligation to leave the country when the period of permission authorized by the immigration authority expires, unless there is a request for a change of category or an extension granted by said immigration authority. Any irregular stay in Costa Rican territory will cause foreigners to pay an immigration fine equivalent to one hundred dollars, currency of the United States of America (US \$100.00), for each month of irregular stay in the country or, failing that, will prohibit their entry for a period equivalent to three times the time of their irregular stay. (Ed: An “irregular stay” is interpreted as overstaying the allowed time of their tourist visa.)*

This same subsection exhaustively indicates the exceptions. Outside the case of requesting an extension of tourism – feasible only for foreigners who are authorized for periods of less than 90 days, the maximum term to extend tourism – the subsection also indicates when a change of category has taken place.

As noted, it is clear in the text of paragraph 3 that foreigners requesting immigration regularization are not obligated to leave the country once they have started the process. We must then refer to Article 89 of the same legal text, which indicates:



*Foreigners admitted as non-residents may change their migratory category while they are in the country, with special reference to those included in article 68 of this Law, upon payment of two hundred dollars, currency of the United States of America (US \$200.00).*

The question that has always arisen, not only under the present law No. 8764, but also with the previous immigration laws Nos. 7033 and 8487, is: What is the legal status of an applicant for residency? (Someone who has entered Costa Rica on a tourist visa and remains after its expiration while their application is en tramite.)

In effect, none of the migratory texts specifically address that question, emphasizing for years the criterion that when requesting a specific migratory condition, the interested party accesses an expectation of right. In this transitional state, the foreigner would not be completely illegal, although they would not be effectively legal either, since the migratory category they seek has not yet been authorized!

What is dictated by the laws is more than a bit contradictory and confusing because it technically places those people in a legal limbo and raises the question: Are they are obligated to comply with the requirements of the tourist category in article 33, paragraph 3, the immigration status under which

they entered Costa Rica and have left behind, or do they exist with a special category under their pending request?

The question can arise when an applicant en tramite leaves the country for any reason and returns: Does a new entry visa date obligate them to comply with article 33, paragraph 3 or article 89? The answer is that it is understood that the entry permission visa that is assigned to them at the time of re-entering the country will be irrelevant and only the denial of their residency application can force them to leave the country. En tramite status formally gives the applicant the right to remain in the country during the period of process of their application for temporary or permanent residence, regardless of the date on a more recent tourist visa.

I close by pointing out that the rights and limitations of foreigners are clearly defined in article 19 of the Political Constitution, and in the content of article 31 of the General Law of Migration and Immigration, for which we derive the fact that both Costa Ricans and foreigners have the same individual and social guarantees.

*Rómulo Pacheco Attorney at Law, Notary Public*

*Pacheco, Marin, and Associates:*

(506) 2220-0055, (506) 2290-1074 [romulo@residencycr.com](mailto:romulo@residencycr.com)

# More Than Simple Residency Experience!



Seminars – Driver Licenses – Bank Accounts – Advice  
Group Rate Caja Enrollment and Payments – Informative Magazine  
Discount Home and Auto Insurance – Complete Legal Services  
Referral Network – Lending Library – Friendly Bi-Lingual Staff

Get ALL these services and more – in one place! This indicates over 30 years experience.

[www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr) email: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr) [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)  
(506) 2220-0055. Avenida 14, Calle 42, San José, Costa Rica

# ON THE GRID

by Ivo Henfling

## 20 Essential Tips for Buying Property in Costa Rica

**I**s buying land in Costa Rica really a rock-solid investment, as some real estate agents will tell you? Is it smart to put your hard-earned money into buying property here?

Yes, it is, if you know what you're doing, play by the rules, use common sense, and follow the advice in this article. I've gotten emails from the heirs of investors saying, "My dad owns some property in Costa Rica, but we can't find the paperwork on it, and we don't know where it is. Can you help?"

Maybe Dad did make the best investment of his life and 40 years later the land is worth a fortune. Or maybe there are now squatters on it. Or maybe the city foreclosed on it years ago because the property taxes were not paid. Or maybe Dad never paid the corporation taxes?

Buying land in Costa Rica as an investment can only be a smart decision if you keep track of your investment. Not following common sense rules is like buying a new Mercedes-Benz and leaving it on a midtown Manhattan street with the keys in it then being surprised when you come back after 60 days and it's gone.

To make sure what you buy in Costa Rica is a rock-solid investment, here are 20 essential tips to follow:

### 1. HIRE THE RIGHT REAL ESTATE AGENT

I know some of my readers do not like the idea of having to work with real estate agents in Costa Rica, and some probably have good reasons. But, unless you know the area where you'd like to buy well, and you know how to meet the hurdles of buying land for sale by owner, I strongly recommend you get professional help. If you hire an agent who concentrates on a certain area, has done so for many years, is fully bilingual, and knows the lay of the land, you start off on the right foot.

### 2. RESEARCH THE GROWTH PATH

Find out where the growth path of the real estate development in a community you are interested in is going – in other words, where new construction will be happening next, given the lay of the land. By just looking at a map you can gain a lot of information. In Costa Rica, there are lots of mountains, rivers, and canyons that stand in the way of real estate development and tend to oblige the growth path to go a certain way. Ask for help from local experts and study the topography of the land to determine where real estate growth can and cannot occur.

### 3. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

You've all heard this one before, but first, you need to know if you're looking for commercial or residential land to invest in, and where. Real estate agents usually know the zoning in their areas well and have a zoning map on their computer. A zoning plan, if there is one, will limit certain construction, regulate density, and determine commercial, industrial, or residential use for anyone buying land. Look around the area before you start buying, and see what's going on with real estate development; look for where the hospital, schools, churches, and shopping areas are, which will give an indication of future growth.

### 4. OLD AND NEGLECTED AREAS

In every city in the world, old and neglected areas tend to eventually be redeveloped. Find out if the municipality has any plans for renovating those areas. Developing land at higher densities and a more efficient use to generate more revenue per acre is easier to manage in the old and neglected areas.



## 5. TOPOGRAPHY

In Costa Rica we have a lot of rain, so you would always want to be at the top of a hill and not at the bottom so you won't have any drainage problems. Look hard for erosion on the property. If you intend to do any land development in the future and plan to alter the topography of the property, hire a topographer and, if necessary, a geologist before buying and save yourself a lot of headaches.

## 6. SOIL STUDIES

Many areas of Costa Rica have bad topsoil and you may need to replace this soil before you build. Is the lot cut from the mountain or is it all landfill? Maybe the owner used the area to dump soil from somewhere else to make it a nice, flat-looking lot? Some have even used garbage or construction waste materials and then covered it with fill, on which you cannot build. Determine if the soil used for the fill is of good quality and if it has been compacted. If there has been fill, decide which part of the property you, or a future buyer, would want to build on and ask the owner for permission to put markers on it and have a soil study done. There are several good companies who can do this that can be found on Google by searching for "estudio de suelos Costa Rica."

## 7. UTILITIES

Are power and water available at the front of the property so you can simply apply for meters with the utility companies and get connected within a week? Some areas of Costa Rica have water supply problems, and to be able to get a building permit from the municipality you need a statement from the water company (or water co-op) that service is available for that particular property. That might not cover the issue forever and is probably the most insecure part of buying property in Costa Rica, but it's the best you can do. You also want to check with the internet and cable TV providers in the area. As for the sewer, very few areas in Costa Rica have city sewer and most of the country is on septic tanks. If you purchase land in a condominium, determine if there is a sewage plant installed.

## 8. ZONING

Find out if there is a zoning plan in the area where you want to make your purchase, and check what zoning would apply to that particular property. With a very irregular topography of the land, usually the density is very

low. A high-density property has a much higher chance of rising in value in the future than low-density property. Request a certification of zoning or "uso de suelo" from the municipality's engineering department that will tell you all about the restrictions, density, potential, and allowable options for subdividing the property.

## 9. VIEWS

If you are thinking of buying land for the view, make sure it cannot be taken away by new construction or neighbors who let trees grow too high. If possible, have your attorney constitute a view easement on the neighboring properties to avoid having your view blocked.

## 10. CLEAR TITLE

Hire an attorney who specializes in real estate and have him or her run a complete title check before buying. Is the property fully titled or is it a concession in the maritime zone? Have the attorney check for any liens and annotations. Also, ask your attorney to go see the property with you, with the survey map in hand, before signing the option to purchase or sale agreement. Your attorney might charge you extra for this diligence, but it's a great investment.

## 11. EASEMENTS

Have your attorney check if the title includes any easements that give others certain rights regarding the property, and have him or her explain them to you. These can include water easements, power easements, and right-of-way easements. Make sure you are not buying a property that has had an easement given to someone that might prevent your land from being developed as you want.

## 12. SURVEY

Make your purchase subject to a property survey showing the correct size of the property and its boundaries. Ask your real estate agent to recommend a surveyor who knows the area well but is not the same surveyor as the seller has used. This applies especially to properties that are extremely large and/or have a highly irregular topography for which an old survey might have differences in size or show wrong boundaries. It is possible that the property has not been measured for many years and that neighbors have moved their fences. Legally, the size is shown in the National Registry, and the size and shape shown

on a registered survey map must be the same. Make sure the survey map is duly stamped by the Cadastre (National Registry).

### 13. SETBACKS ON THE PROPERTY

If there is a river or a creek on the property or on the boundaries, there are probably setbacks, meaning areas where you cannot build within a certain distance from the water. You can have the setbacks checked and certified at the National Institute of Housing and Urban Development (INVU), requesting an “Alineamiento fluvial de ríos y quebradas.”

### 14. COMMUNITY OR CONDO FEES

If you purchase land in a community or a condominium, read the bylaws, and make sure they are legally recorded in the National Registry before you sign a promise to purchase. Understand your rights and obligations. Introduce yourself to the condo administration, and ask if there are any homeowner association fees, condo fees for raw land, water fees, maintenance fees, or other financial duties, legal or not. It is also very important to request up-to-date financial statements of the condominium association so you're sure not to purchase into an HOA that is insolvent.

### 15. TAXES

The municipality where the land is located will charge the owner taxes once a year at 0.25% of the registered value but will not notify you about them. You can pay quarterly. It is mandatory for owners to declare the value of the property every five years. If you purchase the land through a corporation, you should have a corporation tax. Check if the property is subject to a luxury home tax.

### 16. MAINTENANCE OF THE PROPERTY

Make sure the land you purchase is properly fenced in agreement with the legal boundaries on the survey map. Maintain the fence, and clean the property against brush fires at least twice a year.

### 17. SQUATTERS

The occupation of land by people who don't belong there typically occurs when a property appears abandoned – nobody is staying there, there's no fence, and the grass hasn't been cut in a year. Failure to pay property taxes can also be a green light to squatters who are alerted

by sources within the municipality. Protect yourself against squatters by establishing a physical presence on your land, erecting fences, maintaining the property, and paying the taxes.

### 18. WILL AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

Have your attorney write up a will and give your heirs the power of attorney to sell, in case you pass away. A will from another country can be strangled in red tape for years in the Costa Rican courts. Leave information about the property, where it is exactly located, and contact addresses in Costa Rica for your heirs so they will be able to find the property when it becomes theirs.

### 19. DOCUMENTS

Make copies of all the following documents, and give them to your attorney and your heirs, on paper AND in digital files:

- A copy of the deed
- A certified title search
- A copy of the survey map
- A copy of your will
- A copy of the powers of attorney
- A copy of the constitution of the corporation that owns your property
- A copy of the passport or residency papers you used when you purchased the property
- A map showing how to find the property without having to use a surveyor

### 20. LEGAL PROTECTION

Ask your real estate attorney about the possibility of putting a “cédula hipotecaria” on your property to protect you from others mortgaging your property or transferring the title without your knowledge. (Yes, that has happened!)

Follow these 20 steps, and you and your heirs will have the great investment you intended when you bought the property.

*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](mailto:ivo@american-european.net)*



# Trust!

**We've had your back for more than 25 years**



**Here yesterday, today, and tomorrow**

- Information - Residency - Legal Service - Seminars - Magazine - Discounts, and more.
- Serving expatriates from around the world!

**Association of Residents of Costa Rica. - Av. 14, Calle 42, San Jose, Costa Rica**  
**(506) 2220-0055 - Email: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr)**  
**Website: [www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr) - [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)**

## Save Time, Book Online!



**(506) 2656-2424**  **8706-7176**  
**[Info@CostaRicaInfoCenter.com](mailto:Info@CostaRicaInfoCenter.com)**

**Free Travel Planning and Booking  
Service for all of Costa Rica**



**TRANSPORTATION**

**TOURS**

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

**ALL COSTA RICA**



# WILD SIDE

by Ryan Piercy



## Black Panther

How exciting it has been to hear about the black panthers in Costa Rica! I do not know if Chadwick Boseman ever visited this country, but in this particular case it is not the Marvel superhero I am talking about, rather it is the various confirmations about the existence of a rare animal seen within the borders of this country. The animal is, in fact, a variation of the *Panthera onca*, a jaguar, but of the rare melanistic variety. (Melanism is the increased development of the dark-colored pigment melanin in the skin or hair and, in the case of leopards or jaguars, causes an all-black cub to be born.) “Black panther” is the colloquial name for any leopard or jaguar with melanism.

Melanism is actually known to have become a common polymorphism in 14 of the 37 *Felidae* families, and in jaguars it is estimated that about 11% are born with this trait, occurring more frequently in specific locations. Now, with a new confirmation from Monteverde of a melanistic *oncilla* (*Leopardus tigrinus*) in 2021, four of the six cat species found in Costa Rica have evidenced occurrences of melanism, adding to the jaguarundi (*Herpailurus yagouaroundi*) and margay (*Leopardus wiedii*). Even when appearing all black, it is still possible to observe the slightly darker jaguar spots.


The first specimen confirmed in Costa Rica was captured on camera in 2009, but since 2018 several more videos have been taken, verifying black jaguars within the



territory. Sightings include in various reserves, mainly near the Talamanca Mountains in the south of the country. Studies in that zone have brought to light that the melanistic cats appear more frequently in thicker, darker forests as opposed to just being random, as previously thought.


The indigenous peoples believed that the black panthers were a different species and thought them to be larger and much more dangerous than the spotted variety. While these cats may not be a different species, the studies show that these darker versions do appear to be more active in the day and on moonlit nights, possibly due to the advantage that they have because they are much more camouflaged in the forest shadows than their brothers. It is also possible this trait has made them more successful hunters.

On the downside, the better camouflage has made it much more difficult to spot these quiet panthers, making them harder to observe or study. Thus, it is best to not to have high expectations if you desire to see one of these magnificent creatures. But if you do have the opportunity to sight one, hopefully you will be aware of how rare and special the moment will be.



## COSTA RICA REAL STATE

From Coast to Coast




**Always up to date and easy to search**

Find the best properties in Costa Rica, from coast to coast, the right way!!!

Discover with us the wide variety of places to live, we cover the whole country. Over 2,500 properties listed.

Contact us now or visit our website.



Contact Us:  
ivo@american-european.net

Our Office  
300N, 25E CC Pazo, Escazú, San José, Costa Rica.  
Phone #: +506 2289-5125, Cell #: +506 8834-4515

<https://www.american-european.net/ARCR>



## ARCR'S COSTA RICA SEMINAR

Join us on the **last Thursday and Friday of any month** (except December) in San José to find out more about what it is like to live in Costa Rica and how to go about getting things done here. We invite professionals from each field to share their knowledge and expertise with you. Hear what they have to say and ask them the questions for which you have not found answers.

**SUBJECTS COVERED IN THE SEMINARS**

**Costa Rican Laws and Regulations - Health System in Costa Rica - Buying, Selling or Renting Real Estate - Title Guarantee Costa Rican Culture - Technology, Communications and the Internet in Costa Rica - Banking in Costa Rica - Moving and Customs - Insurance in Costa Rica - Living in Costa Rica**

For more information on seminar dates and to reserve your seat, visit the ARCR web site at [www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr), or send an email to [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr), or contact the office by telephone at **(506) 2220-0055**. Facebook: [www.facebook.com/arcr123](https://www.facebook.com/arcr123).

# DESIGN WISE

by Shelagh Duncan



## How to Keep Your House Comfortable This Summer

This seems to have been one of our warmer summers, and it gets harder to keep our homes cool. Air conditioning is expensive, and besides we all know it is better to breathe in the wonderful, oxygen-rich air that surrounds us than any “processed” air.

I was just in San José for a few days, and it was a fair bit cooler up there than here in Uvita. Some big breezes passed through – which were great – and helped make up for all the other stuff I don't really love about big cities! Coming home, I was reminded just how warm and humid our little part of paradise can be. That is not a bad thing, but we do want to be as comfortable as we can in the heat and maximize our enjoyment while living here. To help keep our homes cooler, here are a few ideas:

### OUTDOOR KITCHENS

I have written about these before, and they are a very practical option when you live anywhere warm; cooking can

heat up a house pretty fast! Installing an outdoor kitchen can let you enjoy cooking and allow you and your dinner guests to enjoy the outdoors while keeping yourself and your home cooler in the process. Even creating an outdoor grill center will keep a lot of that heat out of the kitchen. If you don't have an outdoor kitchen, then use your microwave or slow cooker whenever you can.







## FANS

Okay, this sounds like a no-brainer, but keeping a few key fans on in your home can make a big difference. Leaving them on all the time may not be necessary depending on your particular home and where it is located, but one essential is a turbo fan in the bathroom. They are great for quickly getting rid of the humidity after showers – and help get the towels dry too! If you are concerned that using a kitchen fan will make the food cold, install a wall-mounted one that you can position specifically on the chef! Or get a small tabletop one that you can move around with you.

## VENTILATION

There are many important things to consider when building a home, but probably one of the most important is ensuring there is good cross ventilation. If the house is positioned well, you can catch both the morning and evening breezes when they change direction.

## LIVE OUTSIDE

Before we came here, most of us probably did not realize that life in the tropics is lived outside the house as much as, or more than, inside. So create a comfortable lounge space outside on a terrace or rancho area, and position it such that you can enjoy it for most of the day and evening.

Use outdoor curtains or blinds to give you daytime shade when needed.

If bugs are an issue, special retractable screens can be used horizontally on wide openings. Also, put some strings of mini-lights around the perimeter of your roof line. They will draw the bugs to the brighter lights outside and keep them away from where you are sitting with dimmer lighting.

## CREATE SHADE

Naturally, where there is shade, the air will be cooler. I am an unabapologetic tree-hugger, and I strongly believe that the more trees you have around your home the cooler they will keep it. If you are concerned about falling trees or limbs, get insurance from INS, which includes that in its homeowner policies. And you can create instant shade by using Shade Sails. They offer a very practical solution for creating shade exactly where you need it, including over your car, pool, or patio.

## GO GREEN

On a similar note, reduce the amount of concrete around your home by planting anything green. Concrete heats up in the sun and retains that heat too. Replace it by planting native plants and shrubs around your house. They reduce the need for watering, and they will reward you with beauty and shade.



## WINDOW COVERINGS

In rooms where you have the sun coming in and heating up the house, use window blinds or curtains to create that much needed shade. The sun will quickly fade upholstery fabrics and bedding, so protect your investments. The best option is to use window coverings with special black-out lining.

## REDUCE ELECTRICITY

When you see a little red glowing light staring at you in the middle of the night, remember that item is still drawing power, costing you money, and producing heat. Just turning an electrical device off is not enough; unplug them when not in use. Also, change your light bulbs to florescent or LED. A traditional 100-watt light bulb can increase the heat in a small room by eleven degrees per hour!

Appliances with the Energy Star rating use less power (and create less heat), so when you need to replace an appliance, keep them in mind.

Another no-brainer is to reserve the electric clothes dryer for emergencies and rainy season drying. A good use for all that tile or concrete around your pool is to place your fold-up drying rack there to make the laundry dry faster!

When we have done all of the above and are still feeling the heat, there is always the pool or the beach to cool us off. Ya gotta love Costa Rica!

Until next time...

*Shelagh Duncan*

*Royal Palm Interiors - Next to the BCR in Uvita*  
2743-8323 - [www.royalpalminteriors.com](http://www.royalpalminteriors.com)

*Like us on Facebook:*

<http://www.facebook.com/RoyalPalmInteriors>



*Come live  
in Paradise!*

**Allow us to be  
your first home in Costa Rica**

Fully furnished apartments with 4 star hotel service  
24 hour bilingual staff  
Full breakfast & daily cleaning service included  
Security & private gated parking  
Beautiful gardens & relaxing sauna  
Broadband fiber optic Wifi  
Best rates available all year round  
Early check in and late check out (subject to availability)

More information Tel 2220-2422, Whatsapp 8403-016  
[mercadeo@HotelandApartamentosLaSabana.com](mailto:mercadeo@HotelandApartamentosLaSabana.com)

Hotel • Suites • Apartamentos  
**LA SABANA**  
Paraiso, Heredia, Costa Rica



# PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

Can't We All  
Get Along? *-Rodney King*



Everyone needs healthy and happy relationships, but many find achieving that goal very difficult. Why? Humanity has accomplished so much: science, space travel, medical cures, reducing poverty, awesome art, great cities, and on and on. Yet many of our personal relations are filled with conflict, disappointment, and unhappiness. Can that be explained? Can it be remedied? Let's be so bold as to try.

The paradox seems to be that the very qualities (language and abstract thinking) that enable our wondrous creations also explain our self-defeating, relationship-destroying behaviors. To understand that point, we need to review what makes us human. A comparison with another species will help.

## WELCOME TO RPTO

Here in Costa Ballena, we have a sea turtle rescue group that gives us brief, direct contact with endangered turtles. Normally invisible in the enormous ocean, female turtles must come ashore to lay and protect their eggs. Almost entirely ocean dwelling, sea turtles need a brief time on land to continue the species, but other than during mating, they lead solitary lives. The Reserva Playa Tortuga Ojochal watches for turtle landings and collects and protects eggs from predators, making the turtles' survival more likely. The turtles' world is water with a brief stint on shore, and they would die if stranded permanently on land. Unlike our solitary



turtle friends, our world is one of relations and ideas shared with others of our species, and our well-being is harmed if we are permanently isolated.

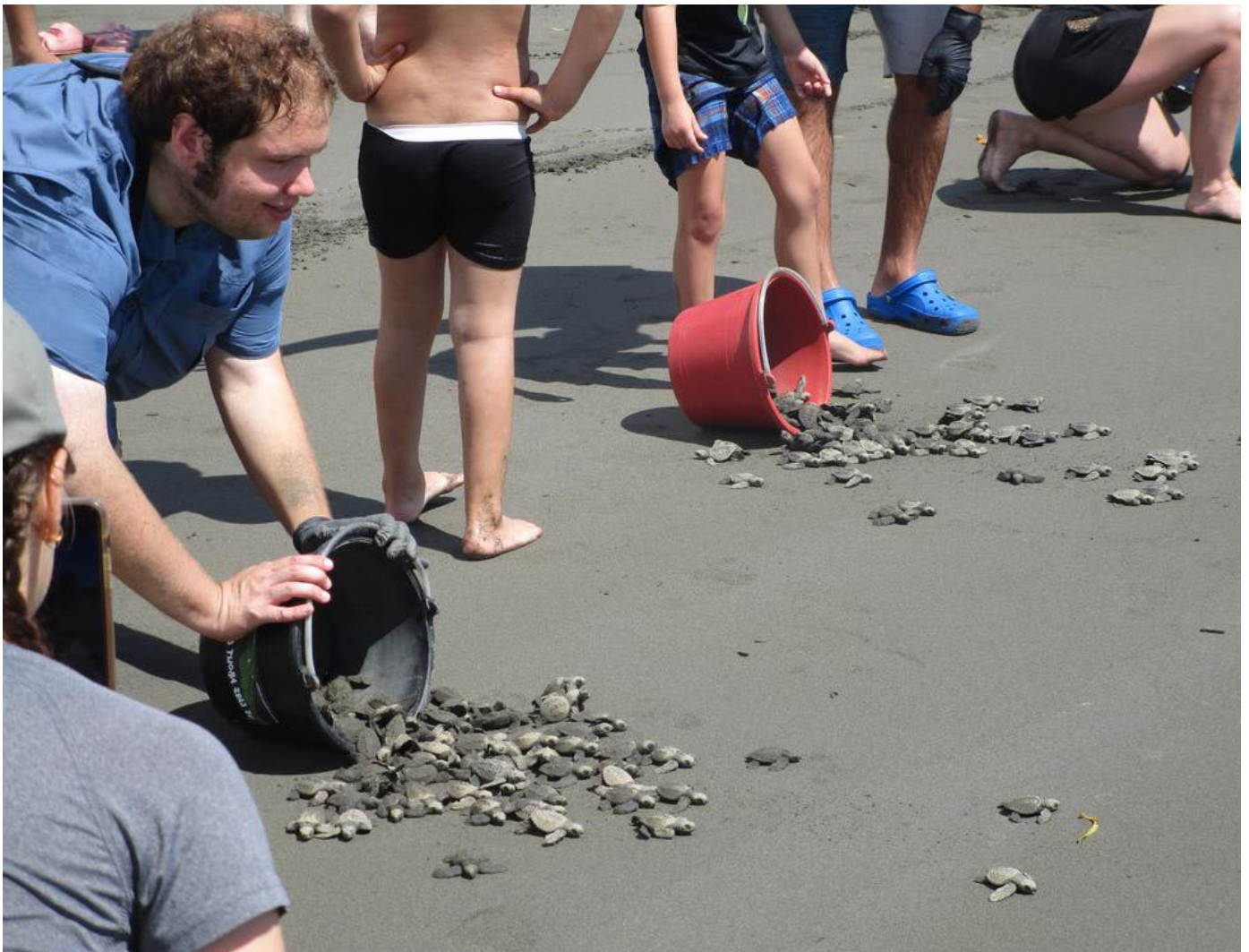
Humans are born in relationships and are utterly dependent on them during our early years. But that need doesn't end at adulthood, we need relationships throughout our lives. Relations aren't a temporary developmental phase, they are our essential world, our "water." And while they bring great joy and fulfillment, they can also be crazy-making nightmares.

## **SO IF RELATIONSHIPS ARE SO ESSENTIAL TO HUMANS, WHY ARE THEY SO DIFFICULT?**

Turtles live without relations except during mating. They have no inner world and no sense of identity, and they are unaware of their existence as separate individuals because they lack the language necessary

for any self-reflection and abstract thinking. We humans devote a great deal of time to the creation and protection of our conceptual identity through an on-going process of inner dialogue with ourselves and interactions with others. We need a world of ideas, concepts, and knowledge to guide and protect our well-being, so we have relations with both ourselves and others. The turtles' inner world is silent. They have hard shells to protect themselves from danger and injury; we have language, actions, and ideas to protect our most vulnerable part: our identity. We need and expect our important relations to grow and protect our identity, but we often discover that others are not as concerned with the fragility of our identity as we are. Why? Because they are busy protecting their own identity. We are now at the ground floor of relationship problems: clashes of identity. Turtles are blessedly free of such difficulties because they are totally without an individual identity.





## LANGUAGE

Language provides many benefits, including the creation of an identity. It enables the conveyance of ideas and important knowledge from one mind to another, a big reward of our relationships. Words enable us to generalize from experience, eliminating the necessity of each of us learning through direct experience. Once a turtle lays her eggs, she has no contact whatsoever with her offspring, except by random chance, so baby turtles must learn everything on their own. There's no way for one turtle to tell another, "There are a lot of tasty crabs over at that reef."

Much of what we know is taught to us by others: "Don't touch that stove," "don't put that in your mouth," etc. The development of many of our crucial life skills come by way of our relationships, and that includes our identity: "You can do that," "you're good at ...," "you're a ...." We learn from our caretakers and our own experience what we are capable of, what we're good at, and where we fall short.

If we're lucky, our caretakers want us to see ourselves positively, as capable and valuable. Unfortunately, sometimes we're also told about our shortcomings and our need for change by harsh parents. Their aim is usually to protect us from the dangers of life, but the result can be life-long identity injury.

None of us are loved unconditionally, free of criticism or verbal assaults. We all get mixed messages, setting us up for a lifelong struggle to create a secure sense of self. Since our identity is an idea, it's not open to objective validation like our eye color, height, or weight. This leaves us vulnerable to the slightest hint of doubt about our capability and value.

## "MAMA, YOU'RE A HUGE MESS"

Clumsily crawling onto shore to lay her eggs, covered in sand and seaweed, no turtle feels hurt when an egg rescuer calls her "a big mess." Those words are meaningless sounds to her. We humans, however, might

be hurt by such a comment because we are acutely alert to what others think of us, always seeking their validation. A turtle has no idea whatsoever about herself. She lives by instinct and stimulus response.

Our sense of self is front and center in all our thoughts. We constantly evaluate how things impact our identity and carry all these confusions and vulnerabilities into our relationships; we don't leave them back home with our parents. Hence, we sometimes expect our partner to heal our parentally inflicted wounds. Most of our upbringing was well intended, meant to prepare us for the ups and downs, pains and joys, of life. But sometimes our caretakers cruelly and unfairly take their own pains and frustrations out on us, and as youngsters we are unable to put such treatment into the proper perspective. Well-meaning but negative messages such as, "You're too lazy, try harder," as well as deliberate abuse, can leave lasting marks on our identity. Typically, such injuries, the result of thought and language, reappear in our relations. We expect our partners to confirm our positive self-concepts and eliminate the negative.

But when partners do the opposite – confirm the negative and deny the positive – great injury and conflicts occur.

A simple example: A wife yells at her husband doing the dishes, "You're not doing that right." Now, she may want to convey an easier method, but in her poor choice of words and tone of voice he hears, "There's something WRONG with both your dish washing and with YOU," a message that echoes back to negative parental messages that remain alive in his unconscious mind. Feeling attacked rather than helped, he instinctively becomes defensive and goes on the counterattack. "You're a know-it-all bully!" the husband shouts at his wife. Now her childhood injuries are resurrected, and the cycle of conflict begins: Her comment triggers him and his defensiveness triggers her. Both end up feeling hurt by the one person they expected to heal their wounds, not pour salt into them.

The message some of us get from childhood is that we're "disappointing, deficient, even broken." Much of what we do in life is consciously or unconsciously intended to prove that judgment wrong. We're born helpless and vulnerable, and most of us remain emotionally very fragile creatures for the rest of our lives; we have no passive hard shell protecting our soft parts. Typically, we protect ourselves by going on the offensive against the one we feel has hurt

us, using words, emotions, and aggressive action. This characteristically only provokes their counterattack against us. When deeply hurt, it's almost impossible to exercise self-restraint and explain ourselves calmly and rationally so we can be heard and understood.

Don't let yourself go from having some shortcoming to a sense of total rejection of who you are. Your partner may be attempting to make that case, but you don't have to buy into it. Calm yourself by remembering that you are much more than your dishwashing skills, and calm your partner by acknowledging where their concerns are correct. Interrupting the cycle of conflict-and-injury this way enables us to put the brakes on the conflict cycle and begin the repair process. Critical moves in the most difficult moments of our relationship.

Yes, Rodney, we can get along. But it takes a deliberate effort to avoid hurting others when we've been hurt ourselves. That requires an effective effort to protect our identity from injury. How? By separating our partner's legitimate concerns with some specific action done by us from the entirety of our identity. For example, "If I'm not the best dishwasher and could improve my game, that in no way indicates I'm totally inept."

Turtles have no identity and no sense of the past, nothing to defend and recover from. We humans spend way too much of their lives trying to recover from past identity injuries, hoping to finally feel secure about our worth.

Turtles have nothing to prove, no identity to protect, and it is wondrous to see the baby turtles race to the ocean immediately after digging out of their sandy nursery. Lacking language and abstract thought, they are unable to "step back" from the immediate present and experience the miracle of their survival programming. We, however, can reflect on our relationship patterns, soothe our identity injuries, and get along better as a result.

Here's hoping these ideas help you be, like The Turtles sang, "So happy together."

*Tony Johnson is a retired university mental health center therapist. He's had to learn and relearn these lessons. But he's getting there. [johnson.tony4536@gmail.com](mailto:johnson.tony4536@gmail.com)*





To  
**ship**  
from

**HERE**

to

**HERE**

call

**SHIP TO COSTA RICA**

[shiptocostarica@ship506.com](mailto:shiptocostarica@ship506.com)

Partial or Full containers directly door to door from Canada and USA to Costa Rica.

We pickup palletized shipments all over the USA

Cars - Boats - Motorcycles - Quads - ATV's - Equipment - Lumber - Prefab Homes.

Moving back to the USA? We do that too! We are logistics consultants.

Toll free: 1-866-245-6923

• Phone: (506) 2431-1234 • Fax: (506) 2258-7123

# CLUB CORNER

**Due to COVID-19 many groups and clubs in this listing have suspended meetings. Interested persons should contact their groups to determine the status of their group. Group leaders should contact El Residente with information for this section to be updated. Clubs whose listings are not updated will be deleted from future listings.**

**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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto:commander@alcr10.org) or visit our website at: [www.alcr10.org](http://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](http://www.amigosofcostarica.org) or email to: [emily@amigosofcostarica.org](mailto: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](http://www.atenasbridgeclub.com) or email to: [atenasbridgeclub@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.birdingclubcr.org) or email to: [info@birdingclubcr.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:democratsabroadcostarica@gmail.com) or visit our website at: [www.democratsabroad.org/cr](http://www.democratsabroad.org/cr) Register to vote absentee at: [votefromabroad.org](http://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](http://www.dawgcostarica.org) or email to: [dawgcostarica@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://littletheatregroup.org) Email: [info@littletheatregroup.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:pzwomansclub@gmail.com) or visit our web site at: [www.pziwc.org](http://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](mailto:pwn.costarica@gmail.com). PWN website is: [www.pwn-cr.com](http://www.pwn-cr.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](mailto:bob@bobnormand.com)

### ► Radio Control Sailing Club

Meets at Sabana Park Lake. For information email Walter Bibb at: [wwbbsurf40@yahoo.com](mailto: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](http://www.sanvitobirdclub.org) or email: [eltangaral@gmail.com](mailto:eltangaral@gmail.com) for more information.

### ► Wine Club of Costa Rica

Social group. Monthly Meeting, Mainly Escazú Email: [costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:mitzstar@gmail.com).

**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](mailto:service@arcr.cr) subject line; Club Corner, and post them on the the ARCR Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](http://www.facebook.com/ARCR123).

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

## Important dates in Costa Rica:

**19 March**

Saturday Saint Joseph's Day  
Observance

**11 April**

Monday Juan Santamaria  
Day  
National Holiday

**28/29 April**

ARCR Seminars for Expats  
Location: Park Inn Hotel

**1 May**

Sunday Labor Day  
National Holiday

## Funniest One Liners

Why do Americans choose  
from just two people to run  
for president and 50 for  
Miss America

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

Behind every successful  
man is his woman. Behind  
the fall of a successful man  
is often another woman.

Why did the football coach  
go to the bank? To get his  
quarter back.

Why can't a leopard hide?  
He's always spotted.

Air used to be free at the  
gas station, now it costs  
2.50. You want to know  
why? Inflation.



**DR. ESTEBAN PIERCY VARGAS**

Cod. 13230  
**Medicina General y Mixta CCSS**  
Home visits  
epv900@gmail.com  
(506) **8333-9222**  
(506) **4052-4052**  
En / Fr / Es



**Alejandro Piercy**  
*Official Translator for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*  
**English-Spanish / Español-Inglés**  
(506) 8726-3100  
alejandro.piercy@gmail.com  
www.translations.co.cr



**Like us on facebook!**

facebook.com/ARCR123



Looking for an  
**English speaking Church?**

**JOIN US!**

ibccostarica.org







# Are you a member of ARCR? Join today!

## Discover the benefits of membership

### **Complete residency application services include:**

- Translation of necessary documents into Spanish.
- Personal assistance with the application process.
- Legal assistance from attorneys.
- Application for residency from outside Costa Rica.
- Personal escort to Immigration.

### **Seminars on relocating to Costa Rica.**

#### **Discounts on:**

- Insurance (auto, homeowner, trip).
- Group health insurance.
- Legal services packages.
- Over 200 hotels, resorts, restaurants, and businesses.

### **Personal escort services for:**

- Enrolling in the CCSS (CR Social Security).
- Opening a bank account.
- Obtaining a Costa Rican driver's license.
- Obtaining or renewing cédulas.

### **EN-SP-EN Certified Translation of documents.**

### **Bi-monthly magazine containing the latest updates on living in Costa Rica.**

### **Enroll now and receive all these benefits and more!**

For more information, or to enroll online, go to our website at: **[www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr)**, email us at: **[service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr)**, call ARCR Administration at: **(506) 2220-0055**, or drop by our offices on Calle 42, Avenida 14, San José, Costa Rica (The ARCR office is on the right).

