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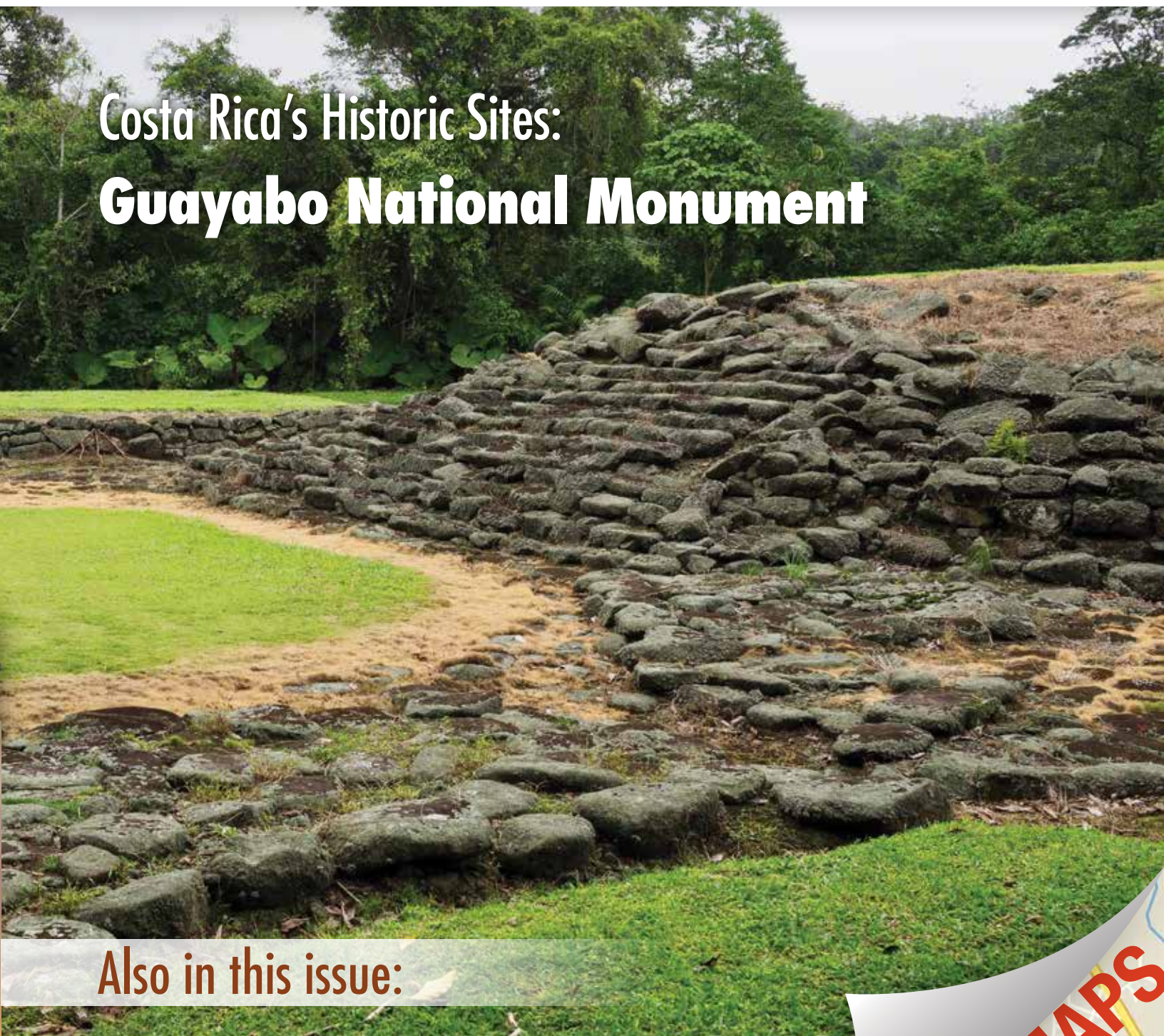
ARCR's English Language Magazine

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El Residente

Costa Rica's Historic Sites: **Guayabo National Monument**



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

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to two new contributors, and welcome back to two old ones!

In his new column, "Here and There," Jack Donnelly focuses on Costa Rican culture, so we can look forward to some mighty interesting articles from him in the future! If you can't wait and want to know more about the culture of Costa Rica, check out his book, *Costa Rica: Folk Culture, Traditions, and Cuisine*—copies are for sale in the office.

And a big HOLA to Shelagh Duncan! Shelagh has a background and expertise in interior design. In her new column, "Design Wise," she will be giving members tips on how to make the most of their Costa Rica homes. She operates Royal Palm Interiors in Uvita, so drop in and thank her for the tips!

The Welcome Back goes to Rich Sulzer and William Duckwall. This time Rich tells us about losing (and recovering) his Cedula in "It Happened to Me." (BTW, if you have a unique Costa Rica experience others would enjoy reading about, send it in!)

William Duckwall is writing the Historic Costa Rica series, which contains some fascinating information about some of the national heritage sites of this beautiful country.

And of course, there are the useful and informative articles by our usual, writers. Enjoy!

El Residente.

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Photo credit: The Principle Mound at the Guayabo National Monument, William Duckwall

ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

HEALTH INSURANCE: ARCR again has INS Health Insurance available to members. Applicants **MUST** have been granted residency, or have an application in process, and be members of ARCR to apply. Contact the ARCR Insurance Office for more information.

CHANGES TO PET TRAVEL POLICY: Delta Airlines has made a change to their pet travel policy. The change was made due to ongoing abuse of the law implemented to aid disabled passengers traveling with service animals. Because untrained animals were showing up at the ticket counter with falsified documents, the ticket agents could not refuse the animal. So, starting March 1, 2018, Delta will require service animal documentation 48-hours in advance. Delta says that those who pretend to need an animal for support just to travel without paying fees are being disrespectful of those with disabilities. (FYI: Those persons who desire to bring a pet on an airplane with them because they are nervous or afraid to fly are **NOT** covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act.)

OUTGOING LETTER MAIL: If you are using Aeropost (formerly Aerocasillas) you should be aware that the forwarding service will no longer accept letter mail to be delivered outside of Costa Rica. The Costa Rica Correo (post office) complained that Aeropost was functioning as a "postal system" and that the Correo is the only authorized mail service in Costa Rica. As a result, Aeropost has stopped accepting outbound letter mail. They **WILL** continue to take packages for outbound shipment.

INCOMING MAIL: Some USA entities will not send mail or packages to an address which contains a P.O. Box number. If you use a forwarding service like Aeropost, a solution is to delete the words "P.O. Box" and use only your mailbox/account number in the space provided for an address.

If you are having something sent direct to you at a Costa Rican address (APDO or street address), inform the sender to **NOT** include the Costa Rican Zip code. Instead, have them write "CENTRAL AMERICA" in large, capital letters after the words Costa Rica. This is because automated readers used by the USPS will read that number as a United States Zip Code and route the item there, and the item most probably will never reach Costa Rica.

INDIGENOUS: Curious about the indigenous people of Costa Rica? Would you like to visit one of their villages? Watch for a future announcement about how you can participate in a trip to deliver needed supplies and gifts to one of the tribes.

TIP: It is very important for expats living here in Costa Rica to periodically check to make sure that **ALL** their accounts (banking, credit card, voting, etc.) outside of Costa Rica have their current, up-to-date addresses, telephone contact numbers, etc. This particularly applies if any changes were made via a phone call. Check today to be sure your accounts know how to reach you!



ARCR Board members:

From the left, back row, Terry Wise, Ray Hagist, Allen Dickinson, Terry Renfer. Front row, Linda Leake, Martha Rollins, Mel Goldberg. Not present: Earl Tomlinson.

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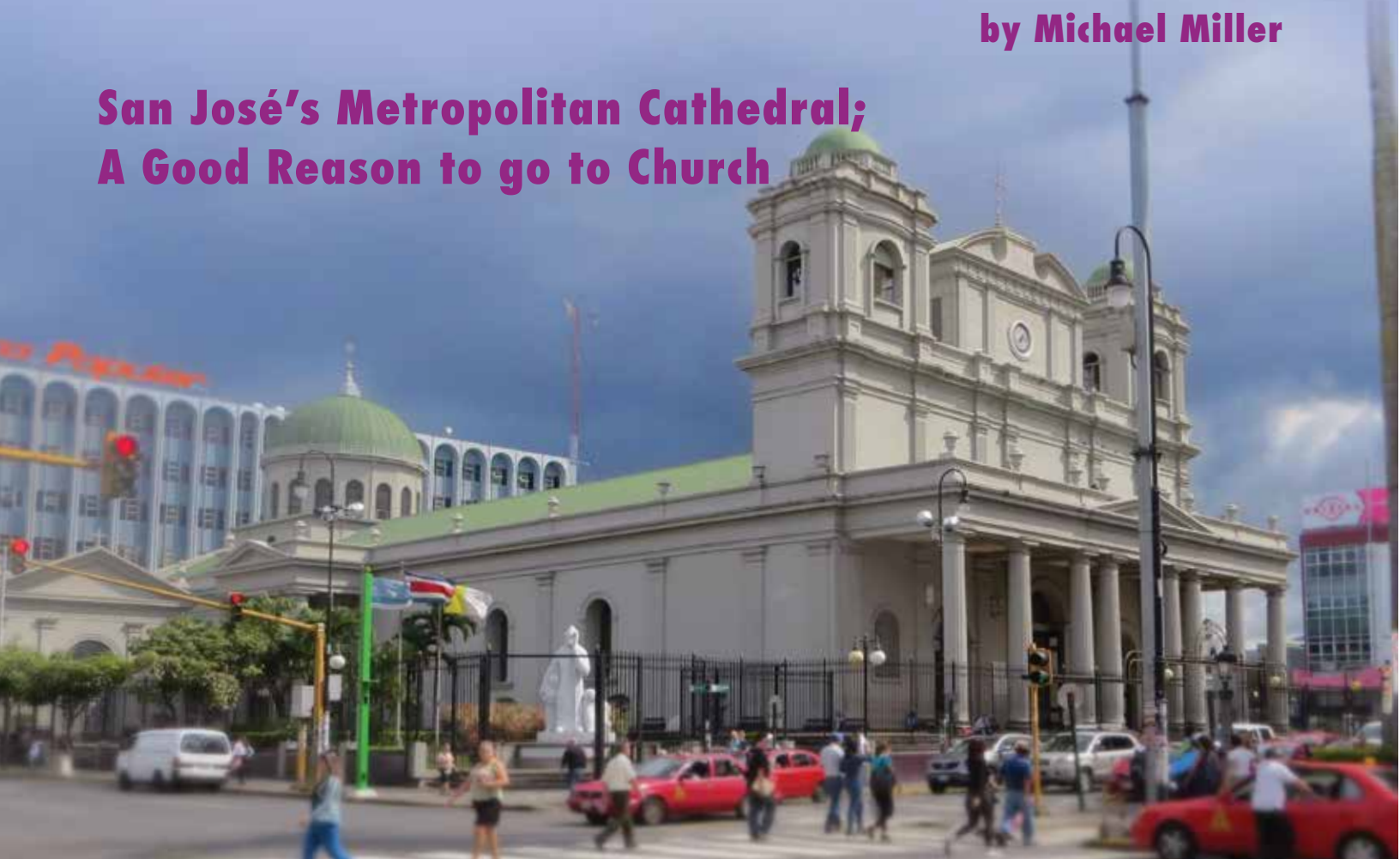
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by Michael Miller

San José's Metropolitan Cathedral; A Good Reason to go to Church



The Metropolitan Cathedral of San José, Costa Rica, features a facade with two bell towers and a clock tower. Behind the facade is the long nave, and at its eastern end is a small cupola, or dome, over the altar.

Why do we go to church? If we are religious, we go to worship. Some of us, however, go because it is a social event...for others because it is a social obligation. When we were children, many of us went to church because our parents made us.

Here is another good reason: We can go to church because—it is beautiful! In the case of the Metropolitan Cathedral, the main Catholic Church in San José, it is indeed very beautiful. And, it is an important building, rich with art, history, and culture.

The Metropolitan Cathedral of San José was built in the 1870's after an earthquake destroyed a smaller church on the site. It was designed by a Spanish architect in a style that is considered "neo-classical"; the front of the building features a facade with three towers; a clock tower in the center, and two bell towers. There are Doric pillars

supporting an overhang that covers a wide front portico. Behind the facade is the long nave and at its eastern end is the altar. The arched ceiling of the nave is supported by classic columns that run all the way to the altar.

In the Cathedral's 140-year history, parts of the building have been closed several times for restoration and strengthening. The most recent time was in the 1990's, after damage was caused by a series of strong earthquakes.

Located in the heart of downtown San José, two blocks west of the National Theater, across the street from the city's Central Park, the cathedral is the headquarters for the Roman Catholic hierarchy in San José. It is a quiet, peaceful place and once you are inside and escape from the hustle and bustle of the city, you cannot help but be impressed with what a peaceful, spiritual, and yes, sacred place, it is.

There are many things to see if you explore this historic building. For me, the most fascinating feature is an impressive collection of dazzling stained glass windows. These windows are French-made masterpieces, which were manufactured at the Champigneulle factory in Paris, and depict Biblical scenes of Jesus, the Holy Family, and various saints. One of the most moving is a window that powerfully illustrates Saint Michael, the Archangel, defeating Satan.

There are also fourteen sculpted bas-reliefs mounted on either side of the Cathedral. These were sculpted by an Italian artist and then painted with oils. They are depictions of the Stations of the Cross; fourteen images that depict the suffering of Jesus Christ on the way to His crucifixion. If you were not fortunate enough to have been raised a Catholic, the Stations of the Cross are commemorated each Friday during the season of Lent.

The magnificent altar area, at the eastern end of the Cathedral, is capped by a cupola or dome. The cupola has windows around its base which allow natural sunlight to bath the altar during daylight hours, creating a wonderful effect; while the main body of the Cathedral is softly lit, the altar appears to glow. Above the altar is a mural of Jesus and the Holy Father.

As you face the altar, to the left you will discover a small chapel in a separate room. This very quiet and solemn room is the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament. It is a replica of the original chapel that was demolished. It has its own series of stained glass windows and ornate statues of angels.

Throughout the Cathedral, you will see all kinds of interesting objects, including statues of cherubs and paintings of holy scenes and life-size reproductions of Christ and the Virgin Mary.

Secured to one of the columns is one of the many features of the Cathedral; a beautifully designed, raised pulpit, built with Costa Rican hardwood. This “flying pulpit” has a winding staircase leading to it, and is the work of a Guatemalan master craftsman who designed many of the interior features. Even the floor is beautiful, made of a painstakingly laid out colonial-style mosaic tile that runs the length of the building.

Up in the choir loft is a huge pipe organ imported from Belgium in the 1890's. It is considered to be one of the most important antique organs in Central America. It has



The Cathedral features an impressive collection of stained glass windows. This powerful scene depicts Saint Michael the Archangel defeating Satan.



The altar of the Cathedral is covered with a cupola. Windows around the base of the cupola allow natural sunlight to brighten the altar area during the day. There is a mural behind the altar depicting Jesus and the Holy Father.



A huge pipe organ, considered one of the most important antique organs in Central America, is in the choir loft. It was imported from Belgium in the 1890's.



The visit of Pope John Paul II in 1983 is considered the most important event in the Cathedral's long history. Note the expressions on the faces of some of the attendees as the Pope celebrates mass. This photo was provided to us by the Cathedral.



This statue of Pope John Paul II, now Saint John Paul, was sculpted by renowned Costa Rican artist Jorge Jiménez Deredia. It commemorates His Holiness's visit to the Cathedral in 1983. It is made of Italian Carrara marble.

recently been restored and has been played by several great masters of organ music.

The Metropolitan Cathedral is a historic building which has been the site of weddings and funerals for some of the most prominent people in Costa Rica's history. However, by far and away, the most important event to take place there was the visit by Papa Juan Pablo Segundo (Pope John Paul II) in 1983, less than two years after he had been shot in an assassination attempt. His Holiness said that he wanted to visit Costa Rica and the other Central American countries because the region was "crying out" for an end to war and hate. He

celebrated mass in the Cathedral to a packed house of a couple hundred very lucky people.

Two years after the death of John Paul (now Saint John Paul), San José Mayor, Johnny Araya, and a group of citizens raised money to have a statue created to commemorate the Pope's visit. It is the work of renowned Costa Rican sculptor Jorge Jiménez Deredia, one of the few Tico artists to gain international acclaim. It stands twelve feet tall, weighs twenty-five tons, and is made from white Carrara marble imported from Italy. It is now mounted on the northwest corner of the Cathedral's grounds.



San José's Metropolitan Cathedral is opposite the city's busy Central Park. It is an important part of the daily life of people in downtown San José.



Fourteen sculpted bas-reliefs are mounted on either side of the Cathedral. These are the Stations of the Cross, fourteen images that depict the suffering of Jesus Christ on the way to His crucifixion.



A "flying pulpit" attached to one of the columns, with a winding staircase, is just one of the many features of the Cathedral.

You can visit the Cathedral for free, but donations are greatly appreciated. Keep in mind, it takes a great deal of money to maintain a building of this stature and there are donation boxes at the entrances. Think about this: When it is your time to arrive at the pearly gates, and you are waiting for Saint Peter to decide which way you will go, a donation of a couple thousand colones to this beautiful Cathedral may be just enough to tip the balance in your favor.

If you visit this beautiful old-world cathedral, be sure to be respectful; if you arrive during a mass or other services; even though this is a popular tourist attraction, it is still a place of worship. *Gentlemen, please, remove your hats, and visitors should not go in wandering around and snapping pictures during a service.* Mass is held throughout the day on Sundays starting at 7:00 A.M., and several times a day during the week.

The Metropolitan Cathedral is well worth a visit, and it is an important feature of life in downtown San José.

Michael Miller is the author of the first and only guide book that focuses on downtown San José, titled The Real San José. An electronic version of the book is available at Amazon/Kindle, and a soft back version is available at the ARCR offices.

by Rich Sulzer

The Importance of Cédulas

Back in the States we all had a Social Security Card. I never carried mine in my wallet; I memorized the nine digits; if I needed to show an ID, my driver's license sufficed.

Costa Rica is not the USA. In lieu of a Social Security Card, we expats pay a small fortune and must wait an eternity to garner Residency status. And, when we finally achieve it, we are issued a plastic card called a cédula. That card has our picture and a unique number identifying us as legal inhabitants of this edge of Paradise.

Every resident of Costa Rica, native or imported, has a cédula. That card is THE critical piece of identification for anything we hope to accomplish: to go to a bank, a hospital, or even to purchase something with a separate credit card; to complete any action we are required to show that card. And, for those of us over 65, we can use it to get a free ride on a local bus.

My wife and I have been in country for over ten years and have acquired Permanent Residency. From the first day of receipt we have carried this plastic card to accomplish any and all of the before mentioned tasks. My most common use is to flash the card to every bus driver I meet. This begins a process where he (or she) would certify the card with a mechanical reader (which seldom works) then me rattling off the cédula number in Spanish as the driver wrote and drove at the same time. Upon completion I would return the card to my waiting shirt pocket for use on the return trip. This is where a problem I recently faced began.

On this particular day, this system worked perfectly on our voyage by bus from central Ciudad Colón to the Coca Cola bus terminal in San José, then back again to our medical ebais clinic in Ciudad Colón. When we exited the bus my wife informed me that she would walk down to the ebais to deposit her prescriptions for later pick-up; I was to wait at the comfy parada del bus for her return. All I had to do was to sit and wait.

Minutes later a cab rolled up at the parada and honked the horn. My wife sat regally in the back as I jumped

into the front passenger seat, wondering from where the cab had materialized. Out of pure coincidence, our long time cab driver had dropped his fare at the ebais and spotted my wife walking up the hill to meet me. He picked her up and went on to find me for the final leg home. Saludos were exchanged and we made the trip without complications. "Tenga un buen día", I waved to the driver as he rolled out of our driveway. My wife, ever the cautious one, asked me if I had everything. But of course I did. Or did I?

My wallet and shirt pocket were doubly searched in vain and an hour later my wife (a native Spanish speaker) was on the telephone calling the bus company requesting a search of the bus we had taken to look for my lost cédula. No luck. The bus company advised my wife to wait until the morning when the supervisor would be able to have the cleaning crew check.

The only other place it could have been lost was at the parada del bus. I vaguely remembered a fellow passenger sitting near me on the aluminum clad parada, but my memory of the details of this person was a bit sketchy and of no help. Then the phone rang.

It was our gardener saying that his son had been looking at the Facebook page for Ciudad Colón, and there before his eyes was a photo of my cédula. "Hey dad, isn't this the guy you work for?" Miguel, the gardener, called and spoke excitedly to my wife that my mug and the rest of my cédula was being advertised as having been found at the very parada at which I had been sitting.

That next day I turned on my computer only to see an email from a Tico friend who had moved to central Florida. He too had seen my cédula on the same Facebook page. Then the phone rang again and yet another cabdriver repeated the same story; the copy of my cédula was there on Facebook, along with a local telephone number. My wife called the number given by the Good Samaritan, who advised her I could meet her near the school in Piedades. We called our faithful taxi driver and he and I met the wonderful savior, along with her young daughter, at the

prescribed location. No further ID was needed; she recognized me straight away.

From this lucky occurrence I learned my lesson, so heed my warning; guard your cédula with your life! If it had not been for the kindness and generosity of several Ticos, I would have been forced to return to that dreaded bureaucratic site of confusion, Migración, to obtain a replacement; a memorized number or driver's license just will not work in Costa Rica.

Rich Sulzer moved to Costa Rica in July, 2007. He's the author of a book entitled "The Hut, Adventures of Growing up in the '50's", available on Amazon in both book and Kindle versions, also in the Local Authors Library in the ARCR office. He lives with his wife in El Rodeo, San José Province.



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by Marshall Cobb

Are You Sure?



My late father-in-law stood in his yard next to his beaten-up, overworked Suburban and the large, covered horse trailer attached to it. The trailer dwarfed the Suburban—taking up fully half of the street in this upscale Houston neighborhood. We had loaded the trailer with a variety of odds and ends from his farm in rural Texas. About the only thing not sitting within the trailer was an actual horse.

He gave me a look that I'd received many times before; a look that said, "If there's not a specific rule against it, why wouldn't I?" In this case, that meant that he'd be

blocking one side of this skinny, but heavily trafficked street for a couple of weeks while the contents of the trailer were exposed to the heat, rain, and bugs that call Houston home.

I was fairly certain that the neighborhood deed restrictions did, in fact, have something to say about this notion. I was also sure that no one was going to appreciate this new, unique hurdle to the already challenging traffic. Finally, I felt confident that none of the contents of the trailer, which had large openings to vent things—like horses—would emerge in a state worth keeping.

I kept these thoughts to myself, which has always been hard for me. My father-in-law was a wonderful man, but not one known to change a position. Until the villagers revolted and marched with torches to his front door, the trailer would stay right where it was (and even then he would, like any good lawyer, resist until the bitter end).

Here in Costa Rica, the notion that you can do whatever you want is the national credo. My father-in-law would have loved this aspect of Pura Vida. Now, a few years into the experiment that is the rest of my life, I have slowly learned to be a bit less rules-oriented, a bit more open to the idea that anything can indeed go (most of the time—and as long as it doesn't wake me up).



It is also true that the lack of clear rules, and the acceptance of a bit of anarchy, leads to situations that endanger public safety. For instance, the decision to drop a series of small boulders whimsically wrapped with warning tape in a span of the main road that Tropical Storm Nate turned into a spillway.

I don't believe this is what Shel Silverstein had in mind when he penned, "Where the Sidewalk Ends."

Without a doubt, post-Hurricane Nate a host of participants quickly pulled together and repaired access to Monteverde proper in record time. Those initial repairs

have left behind a number of situations, like this one, where it is only a matter of time before a tragedy occurs (a local taking pictures fell from this spot a few months back and broke a number of things on his twenty-meter plus descent to the creek below—but, amazingly, has fully recovered).

Our boulders, however long they are with us, may keep a tourist from driving off into the abyss. Like the horse trailer, they have turned the road into a complicated, one-lane affair where participants, including the public bus and the huge milk trucks, freely debate who has the right of way. Erosion, however, is not a process healed by time. Pura Vida may dictate that everyone just get used to the notion of driving around tape-laden boulders for the foreseeable future, but gravity likely has other, more compelling ideas.

I suspect that I will never attain the level of Pura Vida necessary to fully embrace this approach. I am, and will remain, a flawed, often worried, human being. I do appreciate the fact that it is an upgrade from the usual action: 1) ignore it, or 2) shove a stick into the hole and tie a plastic bag to the top.

With all of this baggage in mind, I pass these boulders on a regular basis, repeating my mantra to my inner doubt, "Are you sure?"

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Mercedes Castro

by Shelagh Duncan

Decorating Tips to Maximize Small-Space Living



Just purchased or moved into a new home? Finding furnishing and decorating a bit challenging because it's a smaller space than you are used to? Remember, bigger is not always better. Lovely as they are, large homes are more expensive to furnish and maintain. Here, in this tropical paradise, where we spend so much of our time outdoors, do we really need all that interior space? Probably not.

Whatever size home you have, you still want to make the most of it. In this article we will be looking at maximizing small-space living. There are decorating challenges of course, but the key is to always make the most appropriate choices for the space you are living in. So, here are a few tips you can try to help your condo, house, or room appear larger and more spacious.

Furniture for Small Spaces

One of the biggest mistakes people make when decorating a small room is to fill it with overstuffed or large-scale furnishings. Smaller rooms and homes require smaller,

or more lightly-scaled, furniture. One large item, a sectional for example, will make the room seem more open than a sofa and two chairs.

Try to avoid pushing all your furniture up against the walls. Leave some "breathing space" behind your sofa; just 6" to 12" will do it. Create groupings, place a couple of chairs at an angle to add interest, and float your sofa in the room if space allows. Small changes can make a big difference.

In any small space it's important to not to feel boxed in, so keep colors light and choose furniture with a low profile and clean lines. Pieces with exposed legs add to the open feel, as do sofas and chairs with low, slim arms. It is harder to get condo-scaled furniture here, so look for multi-use pieces to cut down on the amount of furniture you need: nesting tables, an extendable dining table, sofa sleepers, and even stacking or folding chairs are all very practical.

Shiny, reflective and transparent surfaces will visually expand your space. Accent pieces in acrylic, glass, or shiny metal will appear more weightless and will instantly transform your space.

In open-plan layouts, try to define the space by using lighting, furniture placement, and rugs to establish separate areas for dining, conversation, or other uses. Open shelving will also offer an airy feel and will visually separate areas without boxing them in.

Decorating for Openness

A decorating trick to create the illusion of height and depth is to hang curtains close to the ceiling—or in the case of vaulted ceilings, high above the window frame—never on it. The longest ready-made panels generally available here are 96-inches, but if you can find 108-inch panels, or decide to go with custom made draperies, the additional height will make a big difference. In smaller spaces hang your drapery panels so when they are open they will clear, not cover, the window glass—this will expand what the eye can see and make the room seem more spacious. If you prefer the look of blinds, install them within the window frame instead of on top of the frame. And, choose a color that blends in well with the wall.

Mirrors will reflect light and add interest to your walls—you can even consider adding a mirrored wall. Not that dated 1980's look, but a more modern interpretation, maybe by adding wood. This will add texture and warmth, and will visually open up your space.

To add other visual height, include things like a slim floor vase with tall bamboo or grass and vertical artwork, to encourage the eye upward.



Color & Pattern in Small Spaces

Decorators know that dark colors will seem to advance toward us, and lighter, cooler colors appear to recede, so opt for light-colored flooring to visually open up the space. An additional hint for a condo or small house is to keep the same flooring throughout. Wall colors should be light too, and use accent colors sparingly in small spaces. Neutral and monochromatic color schemes will work best, and using slightly lighter or darker color values can define spaces and add some subtle interest.

Stripes can work well in small spaces because they can be used to create the illusion of height or length. It's all about fooling the eye. Patterns are always popular to add some interest to a room, but keep to the 2:1 ratio; use two smaller-scaled patterns or textures to one lesser-used bold pattern, and you will not overpower your room.

If you want to use some dark or strong colors, keep them at or below eye-level. This will help anchor your room, yet still make it feel spacious.

Even if you try to use all the other tips mentioned here, here's a big one: it is important to keep clutter under control; if you don't, your space will always seem smaller than it is. Master the art of "a place for everything"; it will clear your mind as well as your home.

I hope some of these basic rules for small-space design can help you make the most of your home.

Until next time...

Shelagh Duncan has been working in the interior design field for over 30 years and can be found at ROYAL PALM INTERIORS in Uvita. She can be reached at 506-2743-8323, or email her at: royalpalminteriors@gmail.com

Lighting

Great lighting is always important, but it becomes essential when dealing with small spaces. If possible, allow lots of natural light to enter, and use floor and table lamps to illuminate corners and focal points to keep the eye moving. By adding a distinctive hanging light fixture you will draw the eye up and make the space seem larger.



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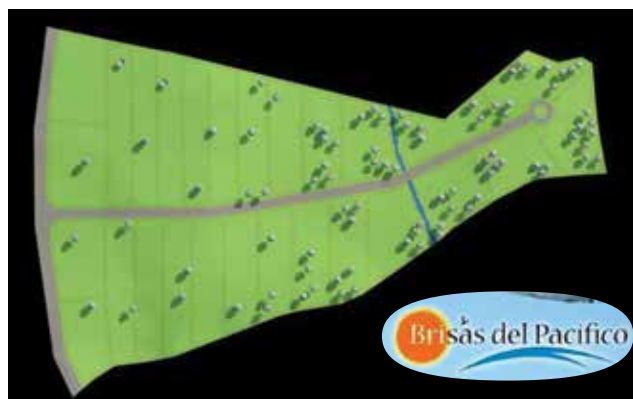


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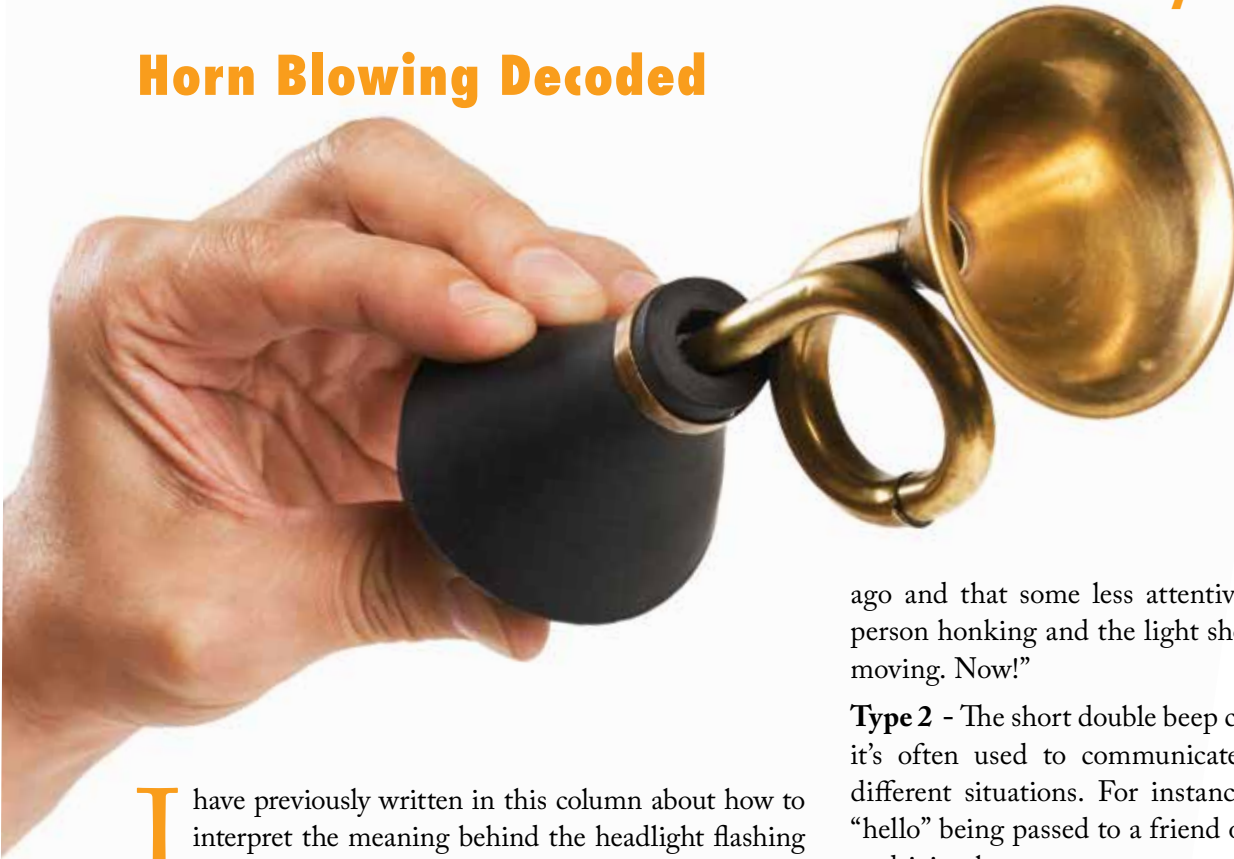
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Brisas del Pacífico is an ideal location for anyone who desires a private way of life while
realizing their dream home in beautiful Costa Rica.

by Allen Dickinson

Horn Blowing Decoded



I have previously written in this column about how to interpret the meaning behind the headlight flashing and turn-signals Tico car and bus drivers use when driving. In this column I want to say something about the etiquette of horn blowing by Costa Rican vehicle operators.

Basically, there are three types of horn blowing that will be encountered by a driver. But first a side note for those new to driving in Costa Rica; the occurrence of horn blowing has drastically reduced over the past decade. So, for those who find the current rate of honking extreme, be grateful it has diminished.

The reduction has made the horn honking signals Ticos use much easier to decipher. Here's a summary of the three basic types:

- 1) A single, brief (half-second) honk.
- 2) A double honk comprised of two single beeps, also usually of short duration.
- 3) A prolonged blast of two (or more) seconds in duration. What do they mean? What is being communicated? Here's a key:

Type 1 - The single, short beep, is often heard from behind while at a stop light. It's generally a polite signal to the car(s) ahead that the light changed nano-seconds

ago and that some less attentive driver(s) between the person honking and the light should, "Wake up and get moving. Now!"

Type 2 - The short double beep can be confusing because it's often used to communicate different messages in different situations. For instance, it could be a simple "hello" being passed to a friend or acquaintance walking or driving by...

Or, it could be someone asking for permission to enter a stopped or slow moving traffic stream (often answered by an equally short double toot granting said request)...

Or, it could be a "Thank you!" from a driver who was allowed to make the requested entry into the traffic stream (a friendly wave of the hand is an acceptable substitute for the "thank you" honks, if the noise isn't desired)...

Or, in the case of faster moving traffic, it can be a warning, "I am coming through and look out because I'm not slowing down for you!"

Or, in other situations, it can mean that the driver making the signal is saying, "I have a newer/more expensive vehicle than you, and therefore I have priority over your older/cheaper/low class vehicle, so you should get out of my way!"

Type 2 - A - In cases where the claxon sound is coming from a taxi, it could be that the driver is signaling a pedestrian saying "Estoy libre! (I'm free!) Do you need a ride?"

Or, if it is a pretty female pedestrian, it could be the driver (taxi or otherwise) is communicating that they find the

woman attractive and is offering her a possible ride, a relationship, and to father her children...

Or, it may mean “Hey, I know you. Do you need a ride? If so, I’ll stop right here in traffic so you can get in.” This can result in a Type 3 honk (discussed later) from other drivers.

Type 2 - B - Motorcycle riders also use their horns to communicate with other drivers. Most often it is to simply say, “I am riding in your blind spot and at some unannounced time I am going to come around you (to the right or left side) so don’t run over me.”

See, that’s not so confusing...is it?

Note, the duration of both kinds of signals described as type 1, 2, 2-A, and 2-B can vary in length. One should be aware that if one of these honks is repeated and is longer, it is showing aggravation. This sometimes happens in a stalled traffic situation where, by honking, someone is declaring that they think that all the vehicles preceding them should get out of their way, and thus disappear the traffic jam; so they can get on their way. This usually does not work.

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Type 3 - The meaning of Type 3 is much easier to determine. The message being conveyed by the long (two second or longer) blast is: “YOU-ARE-AN-IDIOT!-for-trying-that-stupid/dangerous/selfish/inconsiderate-maneuver-you-just-made-and-next-time-I’m-not-going-to-stop-and-we’ll-just-have-a-collision-and-I-will-ruin-your-life-and-the-lives-of-your-family-including-your-yet-to-be-born-children-and-you-will-pay-me-for-the-damage! Have a nice day!”

Obvious, no?

One might wonder, as I have, how Ticos can generate virtually instantaneous horn blowing actions (see “nano-seconds” in Type 1, above.) The secret is that many drive with both hands on the wheel and with a finger or thumb perpetually poised over the horn button, ready to communicate with others around them, at a moment’s notice. The attitude is that you never know when someone else needs notification of their stupidity/my importance.

From this you can understand why one of the requirements for a vehicle to pass the annual inspection is to have a working horn; not having one is cause for failing the inspection. It doesn’t matter if the original horn button on the steering wheel is no longer functional, a substitute button, placed somewhere approximately within the driver’s reach, is fine—it just has to activate the horn.

As I said earlier, the frequency of horn blowing in traffic has reduced significantly over the past few years. No longer, well, less frequently, do you have to decipher if the honker is saying something like, “The turn you just made, for which I was not ready, caused me to mis-select the radio station I was trying to tune in, so don’t do that again.” OR, “It’s only a red light—go ahead, I would.”

Or, “Hey pretty girl, want a ride?” So, count your blessings; driving in Costa Rica has become less complicated—and less noisy.

Finally, the key to reducing the stress from encountering excessive (by expat standards) Type 1 and Type 2 horn blowing is to recognize that many of those bleats and blats are not directed at you, and/or that it is simply someone expressing their displeasure without expecting anything to change. In most cases, the prudent driver may ignore the signals (or, optionally, return the message with a less than friendly gesture) and go on driving as they were before; it’s called, “Driving like a Tico.”

Disclaimer: These are just generalities; actual interpretation is up to you.

by Jack Donnelly

Sierpe: A Hidden Gem



“Snake” is generally not the first word tourists want to hear. However, in this case it refers to a delightful and interesting destination only a little off the beaten path. Sierpe is an archaic Spanish word for a large serpent, and the name applies to both the river and the town of Sierpe. There is a widespread misconception it derives from a local indigenous language. Indeed, the river twists and turns like a snake, but it doesn’t bite.

Sierpe is located in southern Puntarenas Province. It lies south of Palmar Norte and Palmar Sur off the Interamerican Highway just after it joins with the *costanera*, the Pacific coastal highway. The road is pavement all the way to the town, but gravel if you go any farther.

Many people only get a glimpse of Sierpe as they board a shuttle boat to Drake Bay. I think these travelers are missing out on an opportunity to spend a few days in an area with some very diverse attractions.

First, Sierpe is a Mecca for nature lovers, even those of us without the same level of mobility we once enjoyed.

La Perla del Sur operates boat tours of the mangroves, Corcovado, and Isla del Caño from their hotel-restaurant base by the docks. Even the short tour of nearby mangroves and estuaries should give you sightings of any number of birds, monkeys, crocodiles, caimans, and snakes (okay, there are snakes, but mostly they are small tree boas curled up for the day). A guide will explain the fascinating and complicated life cycles of different species of mangrove. Even if you normally prefer to view Mother Nature on your widescreen, this is a fascinating and very comfortable three-and-a-half-hour tour. Sport fishing is also available.

Five kilometers from Sierpe, on the main road back toward Palmar Norte, you will find *Parque Arqueológico Finca 6*—the archaeological park dedicated to the stone spheres. The locations of the spheres, sometimes called *Las esferas del Diquís* have been designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. There is a very nice new visitors’ center as well as signs giving information about the spheres and mounds one will encounter along the



outdoor trails. Walking these trails is not strenuous, but it can be pretty hot, so before noon and later in the day are better times for this attraction.

To the north of Palmar Norte you can visit the Brunka indigenous reserves of Curré Rey and Boruca. The road to Boruca may require four-wheel drive at times—best to ask locally about current conditions. Curré Rey is right on the Interamerican Highway and is accessible with an ordinary vehicle. Both communities celebrate their Brunka heritage annually by putting on The Game of the Little Devils—a reenactment of their battles with the invading Spanish conquistadors. There are craft shops specializing in ornate carved wooden masks, etched gourds, etc. Additionally, there is a small museum in Boruca.



Finally, there is water hyacinth watching—an activity that goes perfectly with coffee in the morning and something cooler in the evening. My favorite vantage point for this endeavor is the hotel patio next to the docks. Water hyacinth was brought to Costa Rica by the United Fruit Company from Colombia in the 1950s to mitigate pollution.

Because the Sierpe is tidal, the same floating islands of hyacinth drift back and forth.

An interesting small controversy is whether the Sierpe should be called a río, a river, or a ría, an inlet. The river does get some fresh water flow from some small springs and rain runoff, but it's not enough to give it a significant flow. For the most part, you are watching the same water flowing back and forth. This is what allows the water hyacinth to thrive—it cannot survive in salt water.

Sierpe is a hidden gem of a destination; it's a great place to spend a few days.

Jack Donnelly has been a life-long enthusiast of Latin American folk culture. He graduated from the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City with a degree in cultural anthropology. Donnelly is the author of COSTA RICA: Folk Culture, Traditions, and Cuisine which is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle. This article was previously published in ICR News.



USEFUL NUMBERS

United States of America Embassy

Phone: (506) 2519 2000

Address: Vía 104, Calle 98, San José

Hours: 8AM–4:30PM

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: 8AM–12PM, 12:30–4PM

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

Email: costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

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

Hours: 7:30AM–4PM

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

Email: 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: 7:30AM–12:00PM

Email: ambafrcr@gmail.com

Spanish Embassy

Phone: (506) 2222 1933

Address: Calle 32, San José

Hours: 8 AM–4AM

Email: 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 and embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com

Hours: 9:00AM–12:30PM, 1:30–3:30PM.

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!

(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

Milliliters $\times .034$ = Fluid Ounces

Kilograms $\times 2.205$ = Pounds

Millimeters $\times .039$ = Inches

Meters $\times 3.28$ = Feet

Square Meters $\times 10.764$ = Square Feet

Square meters $\times 10,000$ = Hectares

Hectares $\times 2.47$ = Acres

Kilometers $\times .62$ = Miles

Centigrade $\times 1.8 + 32$ = Fahrenheit

Liters $\times .264$ = Gallons

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

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Map of Tres Ríos



Places of interest

1. Parque de Tres Ríos
2. Parque Árbol Centenario
3. EBAIS de Tres Ríos
4. Área Rectora de Salud
5. CCSS
6. Correos de Costa Rica
7. Casa de la Cultura
8. Gimnasio Esperanza Herrán
9. Plaza de Fútbol
10. Pista Atlética de Tres Ríos

11. Piscinas de Tres Ríos
12. Biblioteca Pública
13. Escuela Municipal Música
14. Cementerio de La Unión
15. Municipalidad de La Unión
16. Parada del Tren Urbano
17. Subdelegación del OIJ
18. Fiscalía de La Unión
19. Juzgado Penal de La Unión
20. PriceSmart
21. Terramall
22. CTP Mario Quirós Sosa

23. Centro Com. Tres Ríos
24. Depósito Irazú
25. Megasuper
26. Más por Menos
27. ICE
28. Palí
29. Parroquia Ntra. Sra del Pilar
30. BAC Credomatic
31. BCR
32. Banco Nacional
33. Bancrédito
34. Banco Popular
35. Gasolinera

Map of Cartago



ARCR

Places of interest

1. Plaza Mayor
2. Plaza Iglesias
3. Parque Jesús Jiménez
4. Parque Memorial de la Independencia
5. Plaza del Santuario Nacional
6. Plaza de Deportes Pitahaya
7. Plaza Asís
8. Parque Sn Rafael Oreamuno
9. Polideportivo de Cartago
10. Registro Civil
11. Cruz Roja
12. Tribunales de Justicia
13. Correos de Costa Rica
14. Mercado Municipal
15. Ctro de Cultura Cartaginesa
16. Estación Tren Cartago

17. Ministerio de Hacienda
18. Delegación de Policía
19. Museo Municipal Cartago
20. INS
21. MEP
22. ICE
23. Plantel MOPT
24. INA
25. CCSS
26. Ministerio de Trabajo
27. IMAS Cartago
28. PANI
29. Cementerio General
30. Tecnológico de CR
31. Col. Universitario Cartago

32. Col. Sagrado Corazón Jesús
33. Col. Bilingüe Jorge Volio
34. Univ. Florencio del Castillo
35. Ctro. Educ. Bilingüe Sonny
36. Escuela Los Ángeles
37. Col. San Luis Gonzaga
38. Ctro. Educ. Ma. Auxiliadora
39. Lic. Experimental Bilingüe de Cartago
40. Esc. Sn. Ignacio de Loyola
41. Esc. Carlos Monge Alfaro
42. Col. Francisca Carrasco J.
43. Estadio "Fello" Meza
44. Basílica de los Ángeles
45. Ruinas de Cartago
46. Mall Paseo Metrópoli
47. Walmart
48. Gasolinera

24 FROM THE EMBASSIES



I've got some travel to Panama coming up and I'd like to know how to get in touch with the Embassy there. Any tips?

Glad you asked! Have you ever visited travel.state.gov? We recommend heading there first, then clicking on "International Travel"; we publish a whole wealth of information, including reminders and checklists there. Be sure to review the "Traveler's Checklist." This way you don't forget anything important—such as to double check your insurance to make sure you have overseas coverage.

While you're there, type in the name of any country under "Learn More About Your Destination." The Department of State, in consultation with its Embassies and Consulates, publishes and updates information, alerts, and recommendations, with U.S. citizen travelers in mind, for every country in the world. You'll also find descriptions of entry and exit requirements, contact information for any Embassies or Consulates, and recommendations from the Embassy on subjects such as transportation, security, and health.

Have any questions, suggestions, or additions? Use the email link on the right-hand side to contact the diplomatic posting responsible for publishing the information.

Wow! This page has changed quite a bit since I last visited. What's going on with the new Travel Advisories and Alerts?

Travel Advisories replace our old system, using plain language to help U.S. citizens find and use important security information. We issue an overall Travel Advisory level for a country, but levels of advice may vary for specific locations or areas within a country. For instance, we may advise U.S. citizens to "Exercise Increased Caution" (Level 2) in a country, but to "Reconsider Travel" (Level 3) to a particular area within the country.

Travel Advisories apply up to four standard levels of advice, give a description of the risks, and provide clear actions U.S. citizens should take to help ensure their safety. Remember that conditions in other countries may

differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.

Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel.

Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security.

Level 3 - Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security.

Level 4 - Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level. It is issued due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country, or to leave as soon as it is safe to do so.

This new system not only standardizes the language, but also is much more flexible; it allows the Department to adjust advisories much more quickly and accurately.

As for the Alerts, U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad will issue these new notifications to inform U.S. citizens of specific safety and security concerns in a country, such as demonstrations, crime trends, and weather events. Again, a standard format makes them easy to access, understand, and take action.

Is it possible to notify another Embassy that I will temporarily be in a specific country?

Yes! The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)—something we've mentioned here before—allows you to register your travel in this manner. This way you can opt in to receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country. It will also help the U.S. Embassy to contact you in an emergency, whether from a natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.

Just don't forget to unsubscribe or update your account when you're done; otherwise you will continue to receive messages from those Embassies! You can do so either from your account information page, or by browsing to the "subscribe or unsubscribe" link on step.state.gov.

Safe travels!



Five Tips on Getting Your UK Passport Done

We all have that sinking feeling when the expiry date in our passport is closer than we expected, or it has sneakily expired while we weren't looking. Added to this is the fact that we often need six months' validity to visit other countries in the region, and that means that we may need to renew our passport at some point.

Renewals were done in Embassies around the world until a few years ago. They are now all done in Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) centre in Durham.

We might feel more comfortable with some good old-fashioned paper forms to complete, but there are many advantages to the new system, not least is that the days of having applications rejected for minor errors in the paperwork are gone.

If we aren't confident with computers it can help to have a "tech-savvy" friend or relative helping us.

1. We start here: <https://www.gov.uk/overseas-passports>. We are led through a series of questions

designed to help us send in all the right things, such as: where are we; when does our passport expire; is it lost/stolen or just expired?

2. We can then upload photos electronically or choose to send in physical photos. Most of us will not need to have them countersigned, but if needed, we will be shown a page explaining who can sign.
3. Payment also happens at this stage, using a bank card, Visa or MasterCard. Costa Rican cards are accepted.
4. Finally we merely need to print off a single page for our signature, assemble any documents we have been told to include (usually the old passport) and post the package off to Durham.
5. It's best to send our package by courier, which can be pricey but is more secure. The good news is that the return postage, using a courier, is included in the price, which for us in Costa Rica is around £103. Turn-around time averages four weeks.

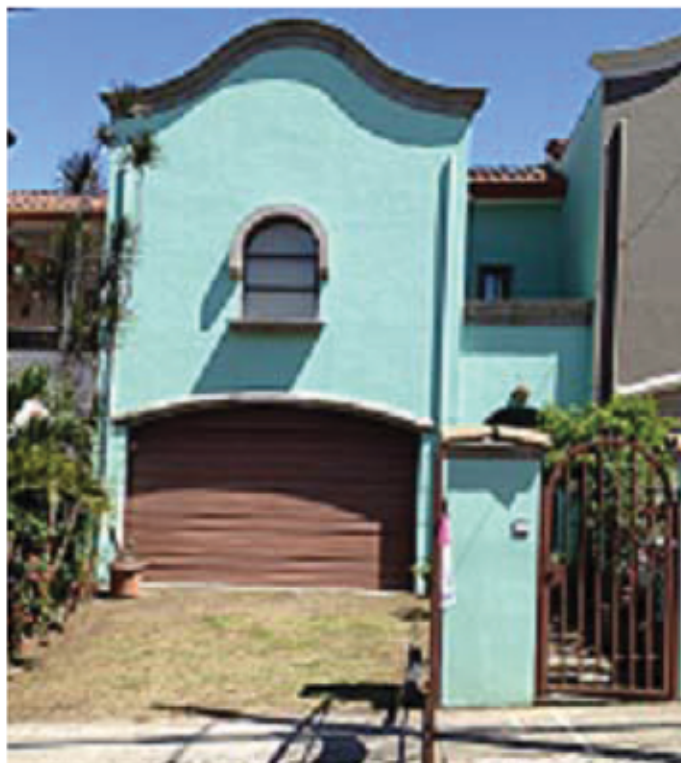
Need to travel urgently? We can issue a provisional document here in the Embassy. <https://www.gov.uk/emergency-travel-document>

Remember, though, that it costs £100, is only valid for the one trip, and if you intend to return to Costa Rica on this document you need to have a Cédula de Residencia.

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(26) FINDING MY WAY IN COSTA RICA

by Carol McCool

Other Special People Along the Way

These are stories of my transition in Costa Rica, from a farm in the mountains to a bed and breakfast in Escazú and some of the special people I met along the way.

Uriel was a Nicaraguan man in his 60s who lived across the street from my bed and breakfast. Speaking excellent English, he told me about some of his life experiences when I saw him outside his home and stopped to chat.

"I went to college in the United States."

I was intrigued. "How did you get to the U.S.?" I asked.

"When I was 19 I was jailed for six weeks because I was in a demonstration against the Somoza regime that turned into a riot. My older brother said, 'Get out of the country before you get killed. Make your mother proud. Learn English and study medicine.'"

He got me into a program that taught English to foreign students.

"I graduated from the University of Wisconsin and then continued my studies in botany in Colombia. When the Sandinistas defeated the Somoza regime in 1979, I returned to Nicaragua and worked in the government's literacy program and with the Minister of Education to improve the science instruction in the public schools. The Contra war was causing a severe shortage of medicines, and I was part of a team to study traditional plant medicines to help fill the gap. As a botanist I traveled throughout Latin America gathering plants and doing research on what plants could be used as medicine."

Working with an ethno-botanist, Uriel identified 950 species of medicinal plants, and integrated the traditional herbal medicine with modern medicine.

Uriel had immigrated to Costa Rica many years earlier for what he called personal reasons, and I did not pry. He was proud of his Nicaraguan heritage and culture and we



spent some time in downtown San José where he showed me the park that many Nicaraguans visit on Sunday mornings. Busy with the comings and goings of people and buses, this park is across the street from the Iglesia Nuestra Señora de la Merced (Church of Our Lady of Mercy). Many go there to hear the early mass and then hang out with other Nicaraguan expats in the park.

Uriel said, "The strength of the Nicaraguan people in Costa Rica is that they do not lose their culture. They resist becoming Ticos. Coming to this park on Sundays and eating typical Nicaraguan food is important for us to remember who we are."

He asked if he could plant medicinal herbs on my farm to use for medicines, an idea that appealed to me. I guessed that he could not give up using his knowledge of botany to help his countrymen. But, his own health developed some challenges and we lost touch for a while when he left for the Nicoya Peninsula to be closer to his family. I will always remember him for his dedication to his people.

I met Lisa because of a promise I made about a dog. Several years earlier, when I still lived on the farm, members of my family were visiting for the first time. We were having lunch near my home, and a large, injured, malnourished, flea-and-botfly-infested dog showed up, begging for food. The restaurant owner threw pebbles at it to drive it away, but my sister-in-law became distraught and fed her lunch to the animal, then pleaded for me to help it. She continued to advocate for the dog for hours, and finally I agreed that if she would stop talking about it, after the family visit was over, I would do what I could to get it some help. I privately imagined that the most humane thing to do would be euthanasia.

I asked around and mutual friends told me about Lisa, who took in injured and sick dogs, nursed them back to health when possible, and tried to get them adopted when they had recovered. She named her organization, Amigos de Zaguates. Zaguates is Spanish for a mutt or mixed-breed dog. She organized spaying and neutering programs throughout the area and belonged to a country-wide organization that raised donations to promote humane care for dogs and cats.

Lisa had about 30 dogs at the time, on her 12-acre property, located between my farm and the Central Valley. She took the gangly, short-haired hunting dog into her care and provided the medicine it needed, even healing his injured paw. She named the dog Pluto. He cleaned up well and became devoted to Lisa.

Many of my fondest memories of Costa Rica are of sitting on Lisa's front porch with her and her husband, talking and drinking wine. We looked out at a view

of green hills, tropical flowers, and birds, including laughing falcons that showed up each afternoon looking for handouts of chicken meat. Her husband was German and had been an executive for Lufthansa Airlines. Lisa, a Danish woman working for the airline in Copenhagen, met him there. They had lived in Peru and the Caribbean until he retired, and then moved to Costa Rica. He had become ill with a form of Parkinson's before I met them, and as his health deteriorated, Lisa cared for him for years in their beautiful home.

Just as Paul (my assistant manager at the B&B) and I were becoming quite bored with each other, and I was thinking of closing the business due to a lack of profits, an amazing and wonderful thing happened. After a long time of promising but not actually following through, Lisa acted on our invitation to have a day and night of relaxation at the B&B. She was struggling with the loss of her husband six months earlier and needed to make some tough decisions and adjustments for her life. That evening we all went to the nearby Jazz Café where we enjoyed the music and the ambiance of the night spot. It was very late for me when we returned to my place, so I said good night and went to bed.

A week later Paul and Lisa told me that when they had kissed goodnight, violins began to play and fireworks filled the sky. (Those were not their words, but that is how I like to think of it.) They retired to their separate rooms and in the morning discovered their feelings were still strong. A month later, Paul moved into Lisa's home. They have been together for some years now and still act like teenagers. Later that year, when they visited Paul's family in the U.S., Lisa was joyfully welcomed into the family.

A popular flowering bush in Costa Rica has blossoms that are a lavender color upon opening and gradually fade to white before dropping to the ground days later. The name of the bush is, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. It always reminds me of the Buddhist concept of impermanence: change is constant.

Carol McCool moved to Costa Rica many years ago after retiring from working as a psychologist in schools in the Chicago area. Her stories about living on a farm in the mountains of Costa Rica are published in the anthology, Costa Rica Kaleidoscope. Her next book, due to come out soon, continues the adventure.



by Rómulo Pacheco

What Happens if I Die in Costa Rica? Questions and Answers

In my previous article I addressed the situation of a person with heirs dying in Costa Rica. The article prompted some questions from persons who have no heirs, either in Costa Rica or in their home country, as well as some other general questions. I will try to answer them here.

What happens to my body if I die, but have no heirs in Costa Rica or in my home country?

If your death should occur in Costa Rica, the body will be taken to the nearest hospital to have it examined and to issue a certificate listing the apparent cause of death. The body will then be stored until a relative comes to pick it up. If three months elapse and no one comes to pick it up, the body will be donated to an educational institution to be used for practice by doctors in training. Following the end of the school's need for the body, the remains will be buried in the CEMENTERIO OBRERO, in a common grave.

What happens to my possessions, property, etc., if I have no heirs?

In the event you have assets and there is no relative to claim them, then article 572 of the Civil Code, section CH-6, establishes the following: The Education Boards from the jurisdiction where the assets are located will be declared as the heirs. If there are assets in more than one jurisdiction, the Probate will take place in the jurisdiction where the most assets are located.

I am unmarried and have no relatives in my home country. I wish to have my remains cremated. How can I be sure that is done?

The only way to assure that your body will be cremated is to enter a prepaid contract with a funeral home, and then

create a will. An executor or an heir named in the will has the obligation to ensure your body is cremated.

An alternative is to deposit a sufficient amount of money to cover all expenses (cremation/burial/shipping, etc.) in a bank account as an inheritance, which is only accessible to the heir upon your death. A specified amount can be designated for payment of those expenses. This gives the heir the incentive to follow your wishes in order to collect the full inheritance.

I desire to be buried in my home country. What steps are necessary for my heirs to have my body shipped to my home?

This is something you should arrange with a funeral home before you die. Be careful to arrange this with a reputable firm that can provide the services of transportation and burial (mostly to the US and Canada). It is also possible to have the remains cremated before shipping them to a specific person or address.

Must someone come to Costa Rica to claim my body before shipping it to my home country?

Yes. In accordance with the laws governing the exportation of a body, someone designated as your relative or heir must come here to sign the documents.

Who pays the shipping expenses for my body?

It is advisable that, before your death, you should either leave sufficient funds, or include the amount as part of your pre-paid contract with a funeral home. If this is not done beforehand, the heirs will be responsible for paying the expenses.

How is a body shipped?

Via airplane, in the cargo bay.

I am unmarried and have no family. Can I designate my girlfriend as my heir?

Yes. When you draw up a will you can designate anyone as your heir, relative or not.

Can I have two wills—one in Costa Rica and one in my home country?

Yes. And I strongly recommend it! Although one will can work in both jurisdictions, the process to legalize a will in a country which is not the country where it was originally drawn, may take months. Further, completing the legal requirement to have a foreign will accepted in a second country would be an expense your heirs would have to pay.

If you have any questions or need a consultation, please don't hesitate to contact my office and I will gladly answer your questions or set an appointment for a private conference.


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by Ivo Henfling

Five Considerations for Purchasing a House in Costa Rica

When moving to Costa Rica, you may not know if you will rent or buy, and a few will get suckered in by a realtor into buying right away, even when they had planned to rent in the first place. Before you make that commitment, I will try to clear up some issues that might assist in your decision between buying or renting.

There are many reasons I've heard for NOT buying a house when you move to Costa Rica. Here are just a few:

- I don't want my kids to end up with a problem in Costa Rica after I die.
- Staying mobile is a priority, I might hate living in Costa Rica.
- I want the perfect location and I'm very difficult, so I want to move every year.
- Why buy if I can rent?

See how easy it is to say NO to buying a house? If any of those reasons fit you, now may not be the best time to buy.

But, if those are not issues for you, how do you decide whether to buy a home or not? Here are five questions you might ask yourself:

1. it just an adventure?

Many of us started our move to Costa Rica as an adventure. Oh yes, I'm one of those. I started my adventure in February 1980 and it took me and my family 23 hours to get here (eight of those sitting in a closed Tocumen airport, in Panama, in the middle of the night, with 15 suitcases.) We began the adventure with the whole family and now, over 35 years later, we're spread all over the world. That shows how easy it is to start an adventure and move on to a new one. If you only came to Costa Rica for an adventure, renting may be your best strategy.

2. How committed am I?

During all the years I've lived in Costa Rica I have seen lots of people come and go. Often, they couldn't adjust to the lifestyle that Costa Rica offers. Or better said, they couldn't get past their culture shock. Many of those were

renting and had their suitcases packed and ready to leave whenever they decided it was enough. For sure, they were not committed to make their adventure work and, often, it was the worst vacation they ever had.

There are several ways to commit to a long-term adventure:

- Learn as much Spanish as you can.
- Marry a local and work hard at your marriage to make it function.
- Adopt Costa Rica as your new home country.
- If you are committed to making your adventure work long-term, buying a home can be a good move.

3. Do you want to establish a home?

If you pass the commitment test, you will often feel more established if you own a home, rather than renting. As a homeowner you are usually more involved in what is going on in the neighborhood. Plus, when you own it, you'll feel more compelled to turn a house into a home.

In my real estate career, I have known a few who have rented for as long as five years, but most had moved on even before that amount of time had passed. In other words, by buying you will feel much more committed to your adventure. And owning a home is the first big step of "going native."

4. Buy to create wealth?

Who said you must buy a house to create wealth? Who cares about wealth in Costa Rica? Just living here, meeting interesting people, enjoying the great weather and living the Pura Vida lifestyle is worth more than any wealth in the world. Property values everywhere vary up and down, so who knows what value your property will have when it's time to sell. So please, do NOT buy a home to create wealth, it may not work.

5. Do I only want to buy for investment?


Buying a house in Costa Rica simply for investment can be risky. But, have you had a good look at the ROI you're getting on your other investments lately? How much

interest is your banker paying on your CD? Are your stock market funds doing any better? If not, now may be a good time to have a look around. Buying a home in Costa Rica can be a good investment that might return more than traditional holdings. But remember, like any other financial investment, there is no guarantee of constantly rising values.

These are just the first five questions to ask yourself about buying a house in Costa Rica. There can be many more which are more personal to your situation, but these are a good place to start. And, if you need help in deciding what other questions are important to you, please contact me.


Ivo Henfling, a Dutch expat who has lived in Costa Rica since 1980, founded the American-European Real Estate Group back in 1999. It was the first functioning MLS with affiliate agents from coast to coast. He is also the broker/owner of Go Dutch Realty and can be reached at (506) 2289-5125 / 8834-4515 or at ivo@american-european.net





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by **William Duckwall****Guayabo National Monument**

Guayabo National Monument encompasses and protects the most extensive ruins of any pre-Columbian settlement currently known in Costa Rica. Its inhabitants, ancestors of the Cabécar people, last occupied the site around 1,400 AD. Had the occupation gone on longer, it would be tempting to suggest that European diseases wiped out the village. Ending as it did, however, roughly 100 years before Columbus, adds one more element of mystery to the site. Carbon dating reveals that it was occupied from 1,000 BC to 1,400 AD, with the peak population (and the peak in construction) believed to be around 800 – 1,000 AD.

Located roughly 12 miles north of the town of Turrialba, the site was discovered—in a limited way—in 1891. At that time a number of tombs were found and excavated, with roughly 100 artifacts first displayed in Madrid, at the Historical American Exposition. Not until 1968, when Dr. Carlos Aguilar Piedra, who realized the site was more than just a cemetery, was the archaeological excavation begun in earnest. The excavations are expected to continue for years. On the basis of the aqueducts and extensive stone roadways and plazas, the American Society of Civil Engineers declared the site to be a Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 2009.

The site occupies some 570 acres, of which only ten have been excavated. Archaeologists plan to excavate another

fifty acres. If you visit, you will see some of their current dig sites from a distance, though those sites are not open for viewing by the public. Approximately 6,000 artifacts—ceramics, stone carvings, and gold ornaments—have been taken from the site and are among the holdings of the Gold Museum and the National Museum in San José.

A central feature of the site is the “principal mound,” the dwelling of the cacique—the chief—and his family, is 90 feet in diameter, and the roof is estimated to have been nearly as high. It is constructed as a raised circle with stone walls and stairs, filled with dirt in the center as the foundation. There are another 48 smaller mounds of similar construction, some quite close to the principal mound, some scattered farther away, all believed to be family dwellings. Those dwellings were also circular with wooden walls and conical thatched roofs. From the number of mounds, about 1,500 people are believed to have lived there at its zenith.

Population estimates vary widely. Other estimates of the population at Guayabo go as high as 10,000. The dwellings were not all concentrated within the bounds of a dense village; when the Spaniards arrived, they found the “villages” of indigenous peoples were spread diffusely over large areas, so some of the difference in estimates of the size of the population may lie in where one draws the “boundary” of the village.

Stone plazas and walkways surround the main mound dwelling sites. Rainfall in the area today averages over 130 inches per year, and was probably higher before the advent of ranching (and clearing of forest)—which helps explain the enormous effort expended in building the walkways. The stone used for construction is sedimentary, quarried from deposits near Rio Lajitas, about three-quarters of a mile distant. This stone naturally separates into slabs. With no pack animals available, the job of transporting the stone needed for the construction must have been formidable.

The slabs were used to not only construct the dwelling foundations, walkways, and stairways around the site; they also went into longer roadways and aqueducts. The main roadway leads downhill from the site, between a pair of rectangular foundations for structures, now believed to have been defensive guardhouses, and continues 7.5 miles to what is now the town of Turrialba. There is a second stone walkway that leads to the village of Palomo, only slightly closer than Turrialba.

There are two aqueducts at the site. One, on the surface, no longer functions, but only because the water was diverted in 1850 to irrigate local farms. The other is underground, built of the same stone slabs, and is still in operation. It first feeds into a sedimentation pond, and then drains to a large rectangular stone-lined pool. This aqueduct has been working for 2,500 years, despite being subject to earthquakes, Volcan Turrialba, and a challenging rain forest environment; attesting to the engineering prowess of the original inhabitants.

When the first Spaniards arrived, the area was forested. Much of the land was subsequently cleared for cattle ranching, but the pre-Columbian ruins lay hidden and protected beneath three feet of soil. Ruins are not limited to this one site; there are another 150 known archaeological sites in Turrialba valley alone.

I visited recently the National Monument with my wife Janet and son Lee. We live less than 12 miles from the Turrialba volcano and the Guayabo site. There is, however, no direct road (unless there is an undiscovered pre-Columbian roadway) so our driving time was around two hours. Travel time from San José is about the same. You'll have no trouble finding driving directions on the Internet, as well as bus connections to get to the site. If you have a smart-phone, WAZE will direct you nicely. Note: if WAZE sends you down a precipitous rocky road to a stream ford, as she did to us on a visit sixteen months ago, GO BACK! There will be some gravel roads along



Principal mound and stairs

the way, but nothing really challenging; WAZE just likes to have a little fun now and then.

The park is open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and entry into the monument is \$5 USD per person. Snacks were available from a local vendor at the entrance, and the gift shop has cold drinks for sale. It might, however, be wise to bring something more for lunch, which can be enjoyed at the covered picnic tables in a pleasant area behind the gift shop. Also, the elevation is 4,250 feet and it can be a little cool there, so bringing a sweater or jacket is not a bad idea.

There are roughly two miles of trails within the monument, most of which wind around the ruins. One side loop is primarily a nature trail, and there is another trail loop that ascends to a high point, giving a nice view of much of the ruins. There are interpretive signs along the trails that describe the ruins and the recent history of the archaeological explorations. And, you will surely see a variety of birds while walking; we happened to run into a lot of crested guans—large dark birds, about four pounds, with a patch of bright red on their throats. The local name is pavo negro—black turkey. The Guayabo



Sedimentation pool at the end of the aqueduct



Our guide Elizabeth

National Monument is a perfect protected place for them; according to my bird book, they are notorious for making a racket and “complaining loudly from a high bough” even when a clumsy bird watcher—or a shotgun-toting hunter—is thrashing around below.

We hired a guide, available at the park entrance, for \$20 USD for the three of us (the price steps up gradually for larger groups), and the tour takes about an hour and a half. Our guide, Elizabeth, was able to fill us in on many details. One tidbit—in 2012 the archaeologists excavated a stone plaza where they found more than 4,000 pottery shards. They were puzzled at the find, and didn’t have a good explanation—until they talked to contemporary Cabécar people, who suggested that the pots were probably used in a religious ceremony and would have been smashed at the end of the ritual to insure that they could not be defiled by reuse for other purposes. Elizabeth also knew a few phrases in the Cabécar language; it should not have been a surprise that it sounded like no language we had ever heard before.

Elizabeth also told us, regretfully, that in her school, Costa Rican history began with the arrival of the Spaniards;



Stone figure

there was virtually no coverage of the indigenous people. It took about one second of reflection to realize that the situation is the same in the United States. I grew up in an area originally settled by Cherokee, but they were absent from any mention in the curriculum, aside from the name of the high school athletic teams—the Indians.

You could certainly visit Guayabo as a day trip from San José. We, however, decided to spread the driving out over two days and spent the night at the Guayabo Lodge, roughly a half-hour drive from the park. Our room had a spectacular view over the Turrialba valley.

Guayabo Lodge is a twenty-four-room hotel and most of the guests are European. Pedro, the owner, speculated that Europeans have a preference for smaller lodges and for the mountains, whereas norteamericanos flock to the beach, and bigger resorts. Their restaurant is excellent and Pedro’s Dutch-born wife bakes good, flavorful bread suited to European tastes. They also have an arrangement with a local butcher, who delivers thick pork chops to their kitchen. And, there is a pleasant lounge area, complete with a bar and a fireplace that we enjoyed before dinner. In the morning, Pedro took us on a half-hour walk down to a small river on the property. Along the way he pointed out a deposit of sedimentary stone that had been quarried by the Cabécar for construction—the same type of stone used at the National Monument.

We were glad that we had elected to spend the night in the area. It transformed the visit into a relaxed weekend getaway. And, acting on a tip from Pedro’s daughter Rosaria, we bought some excellent fresh cheese at a nearby shop, which we were still enjoying a week later.

William is a retired engineer who lives in Guapiles with his wife Janet. He has varied interests—Costa Rican birds and orchids—and writes a little now and then. He can be reached at: bduckwall@mac.com

Jaguarundi!

No, this is not some war cry or the name of that movie starring Robin Williams. Since in a previous edition we teased you with a feline title, in this issue we will favor you with an actual wildcat; the Jaguarundi (*Herpailurus yagouaroundi* or *Puma yagouaroundi*).

This rare diurnal creature is difficult to encounter, and although smaller than a puma and larger than a house cat, it is often mistaken for one or the other when sighted. The habitat for this amazing species ranges from southern Texas through much of South America, as far as northern Argentina, so naturally they can be found in all areas of Costa Rica, up to about 2,000 meters elevation.

They are normally 20-30 cm long with a 10-20 cm tail. Their height is around 25-30 cm, and they weigh around four to nine kilos. They have short legs, compared to the body, with rounded ears, which do not have a contrasting color on the backs, as do most wildcats. Their coloring varies from reddish through dark brown. Originally thought of as two separate species, it is now known that individuals of each color may be born in the same litter; commonly two-four kittens. Their coloring may, in fact, be more affected by their location being a dry or wet climate.

This species of wildcat has a preference for dense forest and being near running water, though dry or wet, both kinds of areas serve for their hunting. They are carnivores and feed on small birds and their eggs, reptiles, occasionally rabbits or opossum, and rodents. And, like

most cats, are also known to eat some vegetation, even fallen fruit. They were considered by the early Central American natives as easy to train, and were kept to control rodent

populations. They can be dangerous, however, and this is no longer considered wise. Known by many names, here they are most commonly called león breñero or gatio.

Sometimes seen together, the jaguarundi is considered a solitary animal. Though not listed as endangered, Costa Rica has several groups considered to be at great risk due to loss of habitat. The cats are not usually sought for their coats, but they can fall victim to traps for other species, or may be hunted if considered a threat to farms.

Jaguarundis have an incredible variety of calls, purrs, yaps, even a chirp that sounds like a bird; rather unusual for this type of species. They are considered to be closely related to the puma and the cheetah of Africa and it is interesting that, although they are primarily a ground dwelling creature, they can both climb trees and swim when necessary.

Good locations in the country to try to view these amazing animals include Corcovado National Park, Santa Rosa National Park, and Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. They are a treat to see, but be forewarned they are, in general, quite shy and reclusive.



(36) GUANACASTE...FROM A HAMMOCK

by Geoff Hull

A Bee Story



We live in a jungle and we built our kitchen outdoors in the traditional way, what is called a rancho here; six posts and a roof. No doors, walls, or screens. There have been a few adventures—finding “visitors” from the jungle when walking in first thing in the morning, or late at night when a Scooby-snack is needed, but there’s been nothing too large or terrible; our cats and dogs keep most larger critters at bay. On occasion, however, we have had an encounter or two with a guest we had not planned on.

One of those situations happened when I noticed a swarm of tiny bees around one of our dish cabinets. I opened the door and there they were, trying to build a nest inside. I shooed them away and cleaned the cabinet. This process was repeated daily for several days.

A few days later I was in town and it just happened that Sámara Organics Market was selling Bee Boxes made by Craig Compton (a bee box is a container that is supposed to be attractive to bees and gives them a place to build their hive). I bought one and returned home.

The next few days were spent begging, pleading, moving, positioning, and hoping the bees would move into their

new home where we could enjoy the honey from the compartmentalized Bee Box. No such luck; they wanted to stay in the kitchen cabinet. My daily battle for my right-hand cabinet door persisted for many more days as my wife, Georgia, looked on amused. Finally, being the wise person that she is, she said, “I think you’re missing the point, they’re telling you to just leave them bee.”

“What about my cabinet door?” I whined. She shrugged her shoulders, “The world needs more bees, let ‘em be.”

They’re stingless bees and are about half the size of a fly. They flutter all around me when I get stuff out of the left side of the cabinet, but never sting. The right-hand door was fully claimed by them and became wedged shut. The empty Bee Box has sat on top of the cabinet, mocking me every day.

I and the bees co-existed in the kitchen for over six months. Sometimes I would absentmindedly open their door by mistake, tearing the hive, but they always repaired it once the door was shut again. Then, one day, the cabinet door got opened, ripping the hive apart again. Later some larger bees arrived and the smaller bees abandoned



the hive. We were able to shoo the bigger ones off and get the honey.

We took out the hive and sifted through the honeycombed wax and got the most delicious honey I have ever tasted in my life! Sweet, with a hint of papaya blossom and... something like cinnamon. Absolute heaven! We crushed the beeswax into a bowl with our fists, then leaned over the sink and licked our hands clean, like bears in ecstasy. After our hands were nearly raw, we sifted the honey into a jar.

Beeswax is made by and excreted from the bees themselves to form the hive. It is used by the bees to form the six-sided, geometric chambers used to house the Queen, pupae, and to store the honey. To repair cracks, strengthen the structure and prevent mites, bacteria, and viruses, the bees mix saliva, beeswax, and nearby specific blossoms and tree sap to form a gummy mixture known as propolis.

I'm chewing a huge, ugly wad of propolis as I write this. We saved it because it is an amazingly healthy concoction, rich in vitamin A, has more keratin than carrots, is antibacterial, antiviral, and kills cancer cells. It lowers cholesterol and aids digestion. Topically it is used for diaper rash, car wax,

and chewing gum; Stradivarius supposedly used it as an ingredient in the varnish he used on his violins. When it is eaten it isn't absorbed, but does coat the digestive tract in a good way.

According to legend, it was used by women in the 17th and 18th century to hide the pock marks left on the face by small pox. So, if another woman got too curious about another's complexion, the response would be, "Mind your own beeswax!" The phrase paints an amusing picture, but it probably isn't true.

Nature has some amazing and wonderful little creatures, and what seemed to be going to be a disaster in the beginning turned into a delicious experience. Now I'm trying to find a way to entice another swarm to make either the Bee Box, or even our cabinet, their new home—before our honey is all gone. If they choose the cabinet, I promise I won't open the door.

Geoff Hull is a retired fire service Captain and Paramedic from California. He and his family have lived in Playa Sámara since he retired in 2010. He spends his days beach-bumming, surfing, gardening, and wrestling his memoirs into a future book. Read excerpts from them at: www.fireflashbacks.wordpress.com

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PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

The Repair and Re-Pair Way to Happiness

It's tough to be happy with your relationship when you're unhappy with your partner.

It's tough to be happy with life when you're unhappy with yourself.

That parallel is deliberate. When a critical aspect of a situation is disappointing, the entire arrangement is also likely to be disappointing. Can such disappointment not only have similar causes but also similar solutions? Let's explore how that's possible.

Many couples are conflicted about their relationship; feuding with their partner and conflicted within themselves about the value of their connection. They feel that something is missing, something is wrong, but their fights to correct the problems only make things worse. Possibly they are struggling with themselves about the costs and benefits of their commitment, but may feel the relationship too good to leave. But, at the same time, it's too unsatisfying to stay.

So they remain out of fear, feeling unhappy, stuck, and upset with their "disappointing" partner, unhappy with themselves for not having the courage to go after that missing something. And unhappy with their inability to make the relationship better.

Can we improve our relationship enough so we want to stay rather than fear leaving? Can we improve our relationship with ourselves enough to become happier with our life?

The answer is a resounding, YES!

To solve the problems, we will need to make changes in our expectations and attitudes about our relationship AND about ourselves. The solution lies in giving up our attempt to fix our partner, and transform ourselves by repairing how we see and treat our partner and ourselves. In other words, examine and change how we relate to our partner and ourselves.

A FUNDAMENTAL NEED FOR CONNECTION

Let's begin at the beginning. Why do we pair up in the first place? For great sex? For a larger combined income? Security? To fill the gaps in our sense of self? Love? All of these and more? Sure!

Humans have a profound need for some deep, solid connection with another; a connection that leaves us feeling

loved and lovable, safe, seen, accepted, secure. Pairing up with another, promises to meet those needs, and the connection enables us to withstand and overcome many of life's pains, disappointments, and tragedies. And, ideally, our relationship can inspire us to become our best self.

So why then so many unhappy couples?

Often it is because few of us know how to actually create such a fulfilling, loving connection.

Some relationships (our unique pattern of feelings, interactions, history and meaning) can grow love. Others can destroy it. We want a good relationship, but what does that involve? What does it "look like"? It helps to have some "picture" of what we're trying to achieve...and some concrete plans to get there.

Fortunately for us, scientists have been carefully studying relationships; those that meet our deep needs, and those that fail, looking for the distinguishing characteristics of each. Probably the most well known, highly regarded relationship researcher is Dr. John Gottman. His studies have identified the "Marriage Masters" and the "Marriage Disasters." What he has learned about both types of bonds show us what to aim for, and what to avoid, in order to have the deep, satisfying relationship we seek.

Relationships of both types began with love and high ideals regarding how the partners would relate to each other. But the Masters deepen and improve their connection, while the Disasters damage or even destroy it. Although both types may have started with the same aspirations, how they actually treat each other when disappointment occurs is the key difference between these two kinds of relationships. (Note that these principles apply to unmarried couples as well as those already married.)

THE MARRIAGE MASTERS

In Masters relationships, the partners deliberately strive to have regular positive interactions, rather than just enjoying such encounters when they occur. We've all heard, of course, that "marriage takes work" and that is true. The Masters regularly engage in that work by producing at least five positive exchanges for every negative, especially during conflicts, when it matters most.

No person, no relationship, is perfect (see Brad and Angelina), and there will always be things that bother each of us about the other. Masters overcome those things by having a high positive to negative interaction ratio; they deliberately act kind and generous, caring and considerate. Many think this occurs automatically, but it doesn't, it requires effort, and the Masters deliberately go positive by intentionally looking for things to praise about each other.

No, this isn't just a Pollyannaish, "La La Land" denial of our partner's reality. Nor is that positivity an insincere show of love. The Masters give real love and get real love in return. They help each other grow by giving their partner the benefit of the doubt, rather than assuming a "guilty" verdict. That's what creates the kind of relationship most of us were hoping for.

THE MARRIAGE DISASTERS

Reverse the Masters' picture and it can be seen the problems that the Disasters create in their relationships occur when it is made up of more negative than positive interactions. That Disasters' approach is characterized by hostile, abusive, attacking, actions; basically seeking things to criticize, which generates defensiveness and counterattacks. The strategy isn't a hard-nosed, "honest" judgment of our partner's imperfections, it's an exaggeration of them; a strategic overstatement meant to crush our partner in the belief that WE know the truth about THEM. Sadly, the repairs such attacks are intended to produce may actually destroy the partner's incentive to change; creating resentment and defiance instead.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If we reduce the essence of each type of connection to two words, those words would be safety, and danger. The Masters feel safe with each other. They're not on edge expecting the next personal attack. They're relaxed and at ease. They're safe because they're kind to each other. The Disasters feel their partner is a lethal danger to their self-esteem and emotional well-being, and they are tense, wound up, on edge, constantly ready to defend against the next personal attack.

Which conditions create and nurture the relationship that you need?

CREATING A DISASTER

How do things get so bad? As already mentioned, all relationships begin with high expectations and a commitment to make things truly wonderful. How we handle the inevitable disappointments and setbacks will

determine the ultimate quality of our connection. Some actually think that criticism and contempt will motivate change and improve things. Some believe that they can punish and coerce their partner into change and growth.

But that collides with our need to be fully accepted and loved as we are, and it deeply hurts when that acceptance and love isn't given. Some, expecting their partners to change for them, at first try persuasion. And when efforts to persuade a change fail, the strategy escalates to nagging, criticizing, and complaining. The result is the partner nags, complains, and criticizes in return.

This creates a double standard of, "you change—I stay the same," which arouses hurt in the partner and leads to more conflict between the couple. And, almost always, both partners will have the same double standard, expecting the other to change while they remain the same. When a couple tries to improve their relationship by changing each other, they end up changing nothing and cause damage to their connection...and to each other.

Feeling we are entitled to something better, feeling that WE ALONE are the injured party, and THEY ALONE are the cause of all the relationship problems, we feel justified in any and every attack we make on each other. We look for things to criticize...we don't hold back when the opening occurs. Tension grows, causing both persons to feel anxious around each other and prepare to defend themselves, rather than feeling the safety necessary to grow.

ANOTHER APPROACH

In conflict, we almost always focus exclusively on what THEY are doing wrong, while we are, typically blind to our own part in the problem. We both tend to forget that we EACH contribute something to our unhappy situation. We both become trapped in the delusion of our own complete innocence and their absolute responsibility and guilt. From such a perspective, THEY must change and we are ENTITLED to that change. Since both partners feel exactly the same, they get nowhere; it's an impasse. Who will back down and change? Who will win? No one!

What if that approach IS the problem? What if that tactic is actually preventing the solution of the original problems and creating more problems along the way?

Yes, we feel the IMPACT of our partner's part in the problem; the hurt, the disrespect, the dismissal, the sense of rejection, and more. So THEY MUST BE the cause of everything? Right? But what we don't feel is the impact of OUR actions on THEM: the hurt, the disrespect, the

dismissal, the sense of rejection that THEY feel; we don't SEE our part. They do. They don't see their part, WE do. In the process, neither sees the pain under the rage and adopts the position that "She's just a b..." — "He's just a d..." In truth, both are hurt.

How would the Masters handle that dilemma? The answer is that they might have prevented it in the first place by avoiding the criticism and attacks and, instead, showing fondness and affection. How would they undo and repair the damage and resolve the impasse? They would end the self-satisfied delusion of innocence and... gulp...face the painful reality of THEIR contributions to the problems and the conflicts. Repairing our damaged relationship will make us feel better about our partner, our relationship, and ourselves, all critical elements in the big picture of our happiness.

But accepting responsibility for our part is hard and painful. Is there any way to make it easier, if not easy?

Tony Johnson is a retired university mental health center psychologist who has been married for 45 years... because he did make these changes. He can be contacted for consultations at: johnson.tony4536@gmail.com



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Organizations are invited and encouraged to post their group activities, information, meeting schedules, and notices of special events FREE in the ARCR Facebook account. Go to www.facebook.com/ARCR123

► **Alcoholics Anonymous**

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

► **Al-Anon Meetings**

English language Al-Anon meetings are open to anyone whose life has been/is affected by someone else's problem with alcohol. Al-anon meeting information can be found at: <http://www.costaricaaaa.com/category/al-anon/>.

► **American Legion Post 10-Escazú**

Meets on the first Saturday of the month at 11AM at the Casa de España in Sabana Norte. Casa de España has an elevator so the building is handicap accessible. If you wish to attend please call 4034-0788, email: commander@alcr10.org or visit our website at: www.alcr10.org. If you need directions, call Terry Wise at 8893-4021.

► **American Legion Post 12-Golfito**

Meetings are held 4 p.m. 1st Tuesday every month at Banana Bay Marina. The Golfito GOVETS have been helping Southern Costa Rica for over 20 years. Contact Pat O'Connell at: walkergold@yahoo.com or 8919-8947, or Mel Goldberg at 8870-6756.

► **American Legion Auxiliary**

The Legion Auxiliary meets the second Saturday of each month, at 1300 hours in Moravia. Contact Doris Murillo 2240-2947.

► **Bird Watching Club**

The Birding Club of Costa Rica sponsors monthly trips to observe local and migrant birds in various areas of the country. For more information, please visit our website: www.birdingclubcr.org

► **Canadian Club**

The Canadian Club welcomes everyone to join us for our monthly luncheons, and at our special annual events, like our Canada Day Celebration, no passport required. There is no fee or dues to pay, just sign up with your email address and we will keep you informed of Canadian Events. For information visit our website: www.canadianclubcr.com or email Pat at: canadianclubcr@yahoo.com to sign up.

► **Cooking Class Club**

Meets the first Wednesday each month from 10am to noon. Learn how to create memorable dishes from a culinary expert. Each class will be followed by a four-course lunch and beverage at a special price. For location, directions, and more information, contact Barry Blazer at 6008-9944. (Reservations recommended.)

► **Costa Ballena Women's Network**

Costa Ballena Women's Network (CBWN) started in Ojochal with a handful of expat ladies almost 10 years ago. Our focus is networking, community, business, and social activities as well as offering an opportunity to meet new people. Monthly lunch meetings are held the 3rd Saturday of each month at various restaurants with guest speakers talking on interesting topics. For more information please contact: cbwn00@gmail.com and see our FB page - www.facebook.com/CostaBallenaWomensNetwork

► **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, 11:00 a.m. Contact: bbrashears0@gmail.com, 8684-2526.

► **Democrats Abroad**

Democrats Abroad meets on the last Saturday of every month at Casa LTG (Little Theatre Group). Contact Nelleke Bruyn, 8614-2622, e-mail: cr.democratsabroad@yahoo.com. Join Democrats Abroad at: www.democratsabroad.org. Register to vote absentee at: VoteFromAbroad.org

► **First Friday Lunch**

Each month ARCR sponsors a "First Friday Lunch." All are invited to join ARCR Officers and others for an informal lunch and BS session. There is no RSVP or agenda, just food and meeting new and old friends. Attendees are responsible for their own food and drink expenses. The FFL takes place at 12:00 PM on the first Friday of the month. Gatherings are at the Chinese restaurant, Mariscos Vivo, located behind the Mas x Menos grocery store (located across from the Nissan Dealer) and not far from Hotel Autentico (the former Hotel Torremolinos, where the ARCR Seminars are held).

► Little Theatre Group

LTG is the oldest continuously running English-language theatre in Central or South America and currently puts on a minimum of four productions a year. The group's monthly social meetings are held in the theatre on the first Monday of the month from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and everyone is welcome. Membership: Student C2,500, Adult C5,000, Family C8,000. For more information Call the LTG Box Office 8858-1446 or www.littletheatregroup.org

► Marine Corps League

Meetings are held at 11AM on the second Saturday of every month. We are looking for a few good men and women, Marines, and Navy FMF Corpsmen. Please contact Commandant Andrew Pucek at: andy@marinecorpsleaguecr.com

► Newcomers Club

Newcomers Club of Costa Rica (for women) meets the first Tuesday of every month, September through May. Contact: 2588-0937, email us at: costaricaporo@yahoo.com or visit our website at: www.newcomersclubofcostarica.com

► PC Club of Costa Rica

The PC Club meets the third Saturday of each month; social, coffee, doughnuts at 8:30 a.m. The meeting starts at 9 and ends at 11 a.m. Guests are allowed one free month before joining. Meetings are held at the Pan American school in Belén. For information call Dick Sandlin at 2416-8493, email him at d_sandlin@email.com or visit our website at: www.pcclub.net

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

PZIWC was 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 PZWIC meets for luncheons on the SECOND Tuesday of the month, hosts Walkers Day on the THIRD Tuesday of the month, and has a Games Day (board and card games) on the FOURTH Tuesday of each month. Event sites change frequently, so call or check our website for locations. More information can be obtained from Jane Gregson at 8899-6859 or Cathy Carrolan at 8384-8281, or email to: pzwomansclub@gmail.com. Please visit our website at: www.pzwomansclub.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. The meeting charge is 4,000 colones for visitors, members 3,000. Membership fee is 12,000 colones and includes listing in the business directory, if desired. Meetings schedules vary. For info on the speaker for the month and to register, call Helen at 2280-4362. Location: Tin Jo Restaurant in San José, Calle 11, Av. 6-8. Or email us at: pwn.costarica@gmail.com. PWN website is www.pwnocr.com

► Radio Control Sailing Club

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

► Wine Club of Costa Rica

The wine club usually meets at 1 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month. Join us to tantalize your taste buds and expand your education. For more information on upcoming events please contact us at 2279-8927.

► Women's Club of Costa Rica

The Women's Club of Costa Rica is the oldest, continuously operating, philanthropic organization for English-speaking women in Costa Rica. The Club is focused on serving community needs in Costa Rica, 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 and further information and a calendar of planned events can be found at: www.wccr.org

► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Open to men too. English language group in Cariari de Belén, English-Spanish group in Heredia, Spanish language group in San José. We work on peace and human rights issues. Call Mitzi, 2433-7078 or write us at: peacewomen@gmail.com

"Club members should review the contact information for their clubs and make sure it is up to date. Send any changes or corrections to: info@arcr.net, Subject line; El Residente."

BUSINESS DIRECTORY (43)

Holidays and Observances of Costa Rica

March:

Office will be closed due to Semana Santa from Monday 26th to Friday 30th. We will be back on April 2nd.

April:

11th (Día de Juan Santa María, National Hero).

Funniest One Liners

"God must love stupid people. He made SO many."

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

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

"Good girls are bad girls that never got caught."

"The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he can tell when he's really in trouble."

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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, 4052-4052 / email: insurancearcr@gmail.com

Come in and talk to our friendly staff and find out how you can obtain the health care insurance which suits you best.

For more information, see our staff in the ARCR Insurance Office, or email to insurancearcr@gmail.com

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