

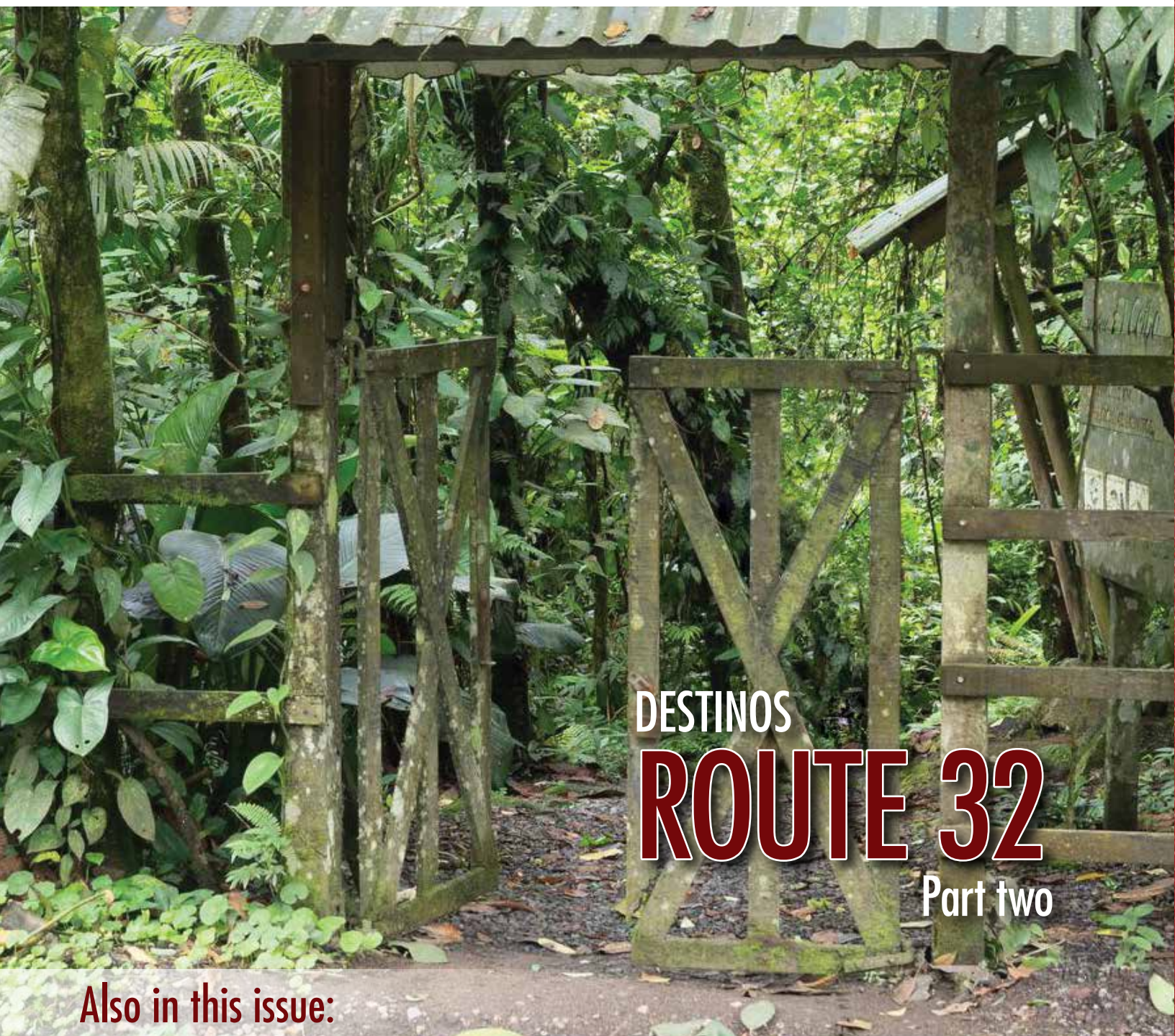
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El Residente



DESTINOS

ROUTE 32

Part two

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

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

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Want to show your appreciation? Advertising is the life blood of every business – it's the way they grow and attract new customers. Got a favorite business (or two) that has given you excellent service and who might like more gringo customers? El Residente is the ideal place for those companies to get more exposure to English-speaking expats!

To achieve that objective, we have a special program for new advertisers; 50% off their first ad (with an agreement for only two more ads at full price). An effective ad, targeted at a specific audience, can cost as little \$49.50 for the first listing, and provide savings of 13% over three issues, which offers six months of exposure!

Our experienced writing and graphic design team can create a professional presentation. So, if you are thinking about a business that you would like to show your appreciation for and which might benefit from more business, just send us their contact information and we'll do the rest. You will be helping a business you appreciate, and also helping expats who can benefit from your endorsement of good service.

And, on the subject of showing appreciation, read Making a Difference in this issue. It is a heart-warming recounting of how ARCR and some generous volunteers showed their appreciation for living in this beautiful country, by doing something to bring a little joy into the lives of some of our indigenous neighbors.

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Cover Photo: William Duckwall, Gate to Sendero Ceiba Trail

ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

LICENSE PLATE RESTRICTIONS EASED

A few years ago, when traffic congestion in downtown San José became critical, a law was passed that restricted vehicles from entering the city on days determined by the last number of their vehicle's license plate (the restriction proscribed that plates ending in 1 and 2 are prohibited on Mondays; 3 and 4 are not allowed on Tuesdays; Wednesdays it is 5 and 6; Thursdays 7 and 8; and, Fridays 9 and 0). The ban was, and still is, in place from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.). Offenders face a fine of 23,415 colones.

The Policía de Tránsito has announced that, beginning in February, the restriction has been eased a little: so that, if between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. and between 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., there are at least four persons, including the driver, in the vehicle on their prohibited day, they will not be "sanctioned" (ticketed). It should be kept in mind, however, that the new rule says there must be a minimum of four persons in the vehicle at ALL TIMES it is operating, or a fine will result.

VISITING A VOLCANO Those who want to take a day trip to visit Volcan Poás might encounter some difficulty; at the present time all visits must be by appointment only. The official appointments are only available online at the Poás site; <https://serviciosenlinea.sinac.go.cr>. and cost \$15 USD for non-residents, \$1,000 for residents and citizens. The charge must be paid in advance via credit or debit card, and is non-refundable, regardless of the weather conditions or visibility. Some persons who have tried to reserve online have reported encountering some difficulties with the website. For those who are unable to register at the above site, a private company can do it for you for a fee. More information about tours and reservations can be found (in English) at: <https://costa-rica-guide.com/nature/national-parks/poas-volcano-tickets-visitor-information/>

BRINGING MONEY INTO COSTA RICA If you have a check for a large amount of money (to purchase property, a vehicle, or make another large purchase, or receive a check for payment of a debt or as a medical expense reimbursement), be aware that at least one major Costa Rican bank will not accept a check for an amount greater than \$5,000 USD for deposit. Check with your bank for their policies and options.

CAJA PAYMENTS RATE INCREASE Article 25 of Session No.9072 of the Caja Committee, held December 19, 2019, Oficio GF-6987-2019, increased the rate of monthly Caja payments for all Independent Workers and Voluntary Caja Affiliates, whether individual or part of a group plan (such as the ARCR Caja group plan), effective in January 2020. If you belong to the ARCR group plan, you should have received an email detailing the change in your payment amount. If you have any questions about the amount, please call the office.

FIRST FRIDAY LUNCH The Board of Directors is considering moving the First Friday Lunch (FFL) from its present site, Restaurante Marisqueuría Marisco Vivo, to a new location. Deciding where to go is difficult because of the parameters required for a different restaurant:

- 1) Have a room or area where tables can be arranged so that up to 20 attendees can eat together.
- 2) Offer food ordered from a menu.
- 3) Have sufficient parking for those who drive to the lunch.
- 4) For those who have mobility issues, either have the meeting area on the first floor or have an elevator available to an upper floor.

We are looking for suggestions and recommendations, and if you know of a restaurant somewhere in the greater San José area that meets these specifications, please let us know. Send us an email at: service@arcr.cr, SUBJECT LINE: First Friday Lunch. Or come to the next FFL and tell us in person!



ARCR Board of Directors:

From the left, back row, Earl Tomlinson, Allen Dickinson, Bob Brashears, Terry Renfer, Terry Wise.
Front row, Mel Goldberg, Linda Leake, Martha Rollins.

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by William Duckwall

Route 32 From San José – Part Two

Continuing on Route 32 from where we left off in the last issue, our next destination is Braulio Carillo National Park. Driving from San José, it should take about an hour to drive the 42 kilometers to the ranger station. Traffic, weather, and road construction can conspire against you, but WAZE can give some advance warning of what lies ahead. There is even a Facebook page for this stretch of highway – *just Google ruta 32 Facebook*.

First destination – Braulio Carillo National Park

The highway starts in San José as Calles 1 and 3. It quickly becomes a four-lane divided highway that extends as far as the bridge over Rio Virilla, near Tibas. From there on it is a two-lane highway with an occasional third lane for passing. The Rio Virilla Bridge is now being widened to four lanes, and presumably the highway will also be widened in the future, at least for the section that goes up to the pass.

The road climbs 450 meters from San José to the pass at 1,600 meters. Just before the pass is a toll station for northbound traffic (toward the Caribbean) – 250 colones

for autos. Near the pass the highway enters Braulio Carillo National Park.

Everyone wonders – whose idea was it to put a highway through the middle of a national park? The answer is complicated. There was a long-standing desire to have a road from San José to Guapiles (today's Route 32 cuts an hour off the travel time to Siquirres, compared to the old Route 10 through Cartago and Turrialba, a road which is prohibitively twisty for large trucks). The original advocate for a roadway was none other than Braulio Carillo Colina, the third head of state of Costa Rica, for whom the park is named.

Around 1840, Camino Carillo was begun, but was beset by one problem after another. In 1881 President Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez opened an improved road, but it was abandoned in 1891 when the railroad to the Atlantic was completed.

Planning of today's Route 32 began in 1977. Concern over the mostly unspoiled forest prompted lobbying efforts by conservation groups, which led to creation of the national park in 1978. Subsequent acts over the

years have expanded the park, and it is now the largest of the national parks, and perhaps the least developed.

Construction of Route 32 was completed in 1987. Completed is a slippery term. Driving the road today you might believe it is still under construction. Frequent landslides and repaving, brought on by four to five meters of

yearly rainfall (156-195 inches) ensures that Route 32 will always be a work in progress. When a section is repaved, the last step is to repaint the lines. Unfortunately, the lining of the pavement sometimes lags traffic resumption by weeks or months. This is nerve-wracking in three-lane sections where the center lane is a passing lane for uphill traffic – or sometimes for downhill traffic. When in doubt, avoid the center lane, or at least tuck in behind the biggest truck you can find. The same advice applies if you find yourself on Route 32 on a rainy night – get behind a nice big truck. One additional tip – when anyone breaks down and gets stuck on the roadway (almost always going uphill), it is common practice to lop off some branches and put them on the road fifty or a hundred meters before the stoppage. So, if you encounter branches in the road, it may be a warning of trouble ahead. (Perhaps adding a machete to the emergency kit in your trunk is a good idea.)

Forty kilometers from San José, Route 32 comes to a long bridge over Rio Sucio. (Sucio means dirty – the river looks like it is muddy, but that's not the whole story. The water is mineral rich and there are strains of bacteria that thrive in it, so much of the muddy appearance is due to the bacterial mat covering the streambed. The bridge marks the end of the worst section of the twisty steep descent. After two more kilometers you will arrive at the park ranger station, which comes up suddenly on the right. There is a sign, though you could miss it if you are focused on traffic.

Braulio Carrillo National Park is huge, around 50,000 hectares (124,000 acres). There are trails at the Barva entrance, including a long trail that takes three or four days to traverse, ending at the La Selva research station, 9,400 feet lower than Barva. But for now I'll focus on the two short trails (one or two km in length) starting at the Quebrada González Ranger Station, shown on the map as the Carrillo Station.



Quebrada González Ranger Station

Braulio Carrillo National Park – Quebrada González Station

<http://www.costarica-nationalparks.com/brauliocarrillonationalpark.html>

The park is open daily, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. There is an entrance fee of \$12 for foreigners or 1,000 colones for residents and nationals. With payment of the fee, the ranger will offer you a trail map and perhaps advise you of what's been sighted lately.



Sendero Ceiba is the shorter of the two trails. It starts across the highway – look for the small wooden gate. The trail is well maintained, mostly a gravel path with only a few steps. You could surely walk it in twenty minutes, but please, slow down and take time to absorb the surroundings.

Your first impression may be, if you are a norteamericano, that houseplants have taken over – not surprising, since many of our houseplants originated in Central America. The trail passes by a good-sized ceiba tree, ceiba pentandra, also known also as the kapok tree. There are several species of kapok trees and all enclose their seeds in cottony fibers – kapok – thus the name. It is an emergent tree, meaning that at maturity it rises above the surrounding forest canopy. Ceibas can reach a height of 240 feet. They have huge buttress roots, though they are shallow. It is a well-known tree in Central America, turning up on flags and in folklore, with some individual specimens known by name in the same way that California has its General Grant (a giant sequoia).

The second trail, Sendero Las Palmas, goes up the hill from the upper parking lot, initially paralleling the stream Quebrada González. This trail has some steep uphill sections at the start and, consequently, a steep downhill stretch at the end, with lots of steps going up and down. The



trail is well maintained though, and should give no trouble to reasonably fit walkers. Anyone with mobility issues might want to stick with the Sendero Ceiba trail.

My wife and I visit this spot often; we live nearby so it's perfect for a morning walk and a good spot for visitors who want a look at lowland rainforest. We've seen many sloths, been scolded by white-faced capuchin monkeys, and startled by a collared peccary barreling up a hillside. The area is amply supplied with leafcutter ants, butterflies, frogs, lizards, snakes, and insects. According to Wikipedia, there are over 600 species of trees, 500 species of birds, and 135 species of mammals (mostly bats) within the park. The critters are secretive, so don't expect to see everything on one visit; they operate on their own schedules.

I'm no botanist, but I do like plants and I'm fascinated by the variety of palms and ferns seen along the two short trails. There are ferns growing in the ground, on trees, as vines up trees, and ferns doing their best to be trees, some of them quite tall. Palms are equally diverse. The task of identifying 600 different species of trees seems just about impossible (maybe if I had started when I was fifteen), but getting fifty species of palms straightened out might be doable. For a photographer, plants have a huge advantage over animals – they stay put.



Final notes. Daytime temperature is usually in the 80s. The humidity is always near 100%, and there's no breeze down on the forest floor. There are a few mosquitoes, so carry repellent. (You won't need it much as long as you're moving, but if you stop to fiddle with a camera, they'll find you.) The trails are well kept; sneakers are good enough. Even the longer trail will take less than an hour so there's no need to carry water, but taking a rain poncho or an umbrella with you is always a good idea. There are restrooms, picnic tables, and good spring water at the ranger station.

Many national parks have guides on hand to help find and identify animals and plants along the way. The Quebrada González station has no guides; the trails are short, and there aren't many visitors. If you'd like a guided walk (plus a host of other activities), you only have to drive down Route 32 another 3.2 km (2 miles) to the Rainforest Aerial Tram.

Second Destination – Rainforest Aerial Tram

<https://www.rainforestadventure.com/pages/cr-atlantic-packages>

The Rainforest Aerial Tram is on the right side of Route 32 as you drive down the hill. There are several large signs along the shoulder announcing the spot

and its attractions. The grounds are outside Braulio Carillo, but so close that the flora and fauna are basically the same. The operation offers something for everyone, and is perfect for groups with a range of ages and interests. All the activities can be booked in advance – see the website above. The place is a real gem, but often overlooked because tourists think they need to drive farther to find wild Costa Rica.

The grounds encompass 475 hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). The business opened in 1994 after two-and-a-half years of construction. There had been some small landholders there before, but they were all moved down to the Rio Frio area, a better (and flatter) place for agriculture. The company organized lessons in English and natural history for some of the workers who built the park, and they in turn became the first guides.

The aerial tram was the first draw at the park, but there are several other tours and activities today. All tours are guided, and all the guides I've encountered there have been terrific. They're knowledgeable, entertaining, and enthusiastic about showing the rainforest to visitors. They find things that I would never have noticed on my own.



Our birding guide Celimo Rojas



Birders are always excited about seeing a new species, even little fellows like this olive tanager

Activities at the Rainforest Aerial Tram include:

- Aerial tram – a gondola ride (up to six people plus a guide) with views of the forest from ground to treetop (two and a half hours)
- Bird watching tours – Half-day (four hours) and full-day (seven hours)
- Guided hikes – Short (two and a half hours) or full-day (seven hours)
- Zip line – A series of eleven lines – the longest is 700 meters (two-and-a-half hours)
- Frog tour – A guided night walk in the lodge area (two hours)

Prices for the tours range from \$34 per person for the shorter tours, to \$89 for the longer ones. Included with many of the activities are a butterfly enclosure, a snake exhibit, and numerous local orchids on display.

There are also a handful of small deluxe cabins, collectively called the Tapirus Lodge. We stayed here for a night fifteen years ago with our two sons. The cabins were rustic back then, and there were rows of whip scorpions lined up under the decks of each cabin. They aren't really scorpions, they can't sting, and they eat cockroaches. I wish I'd known all that back then; we slept with the window firmly closed, making sure the nightmarish arachnids stayed outside. But forget all that; today the cabins are new and beautifully furnished. If you stay there for a night, do consider the frog tour.

Last fall we returned and revisited the tram ride, fifteen years after our first visit. Things have grown in that time; the tram is the same, but the trees along the line are much bigger and closer now. Our guide was Miguel Delgado, who filled us in on the history of the park, as well as pointing out more animals and plants than I can list. It turns out we live close to Miguel, and we have since

met his family – including his 12-year old son, who walks around looking into every tree and under every leaf, just like his father.

After our tram ride, we got coffees and took a break at the restaurant. While we were there, a young tapir wandered by – the first tapir I'd ever seen in the wild. That topped off our visit.

In January we returned once more, this time for the half-day birding walk. We thoroughly enjoyed it, though by the end of the day we were beat. Our birding guide was Célimo Rojas, who is one of the original construction workers, and who subsequently became the first guide for the property. The birding tours are fairly serious – it's a good choice if you're working on your life list of birds, or think you might want to, but it might be overkill if you just want to see some toucans. Bring good binoculars. I saw a number of species for the first time; the highlight for me was a brightly colored broad-billed motmot that we saw at close range. Célimo knows all the local birds, their calls, their flight patterns, and the subtle differences between related species. The tram property is well-known to serious birders; a few years ago it was a major hotspot, with visitors from around the world arriving to view the first known nest of a yellow-eared toucanet, which was conveniently located in a tree cavity facing the main road on the property.

Next Issue – We'll head farther north to a pair of eco-lodges and some nearby attractions, with something special for gardeners, and yet another treat for chocolate lovers.

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

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by Christine Monteith

The Unexpected

This article differs from my usual subject matter, but every adventure comes with surprises; and how to handle the unexpected, yet inevitable, medical emergency is one of those.

After announcing to friends and family that we decided to live full-time in Costa Rica, one of the most frequently asked questions was, "Where is the nearest hospital?" In my younger decades, the location of a nearby hospital was one of my least important concerns; I was more interested the location of the closest subway, the nearest grocery store, restaurants, that sort of thing. However, as my social circle ages, access to doctors, clinics, and hospitals is becoming an important factor.

My husband, Ben, has visited the Golfo Dulce region since 1998 and access to medical attention was even more remote then. During my first trip, I was sitting on the terrace of a friend's beach house enjoying my coffee and the sunny warmth of the morning, when an older man wearing board shorts and pushing a bicycle carrying a surfboard, entered the gate.

Kenny, who was on the other side of 70, was returning from the beach after a mostly successful surf session. He was pretty pumped at a couple of waves that he rode, giving us a full description. Then, as an afterthought, he mentioned that he crashed out and may have cut his back. Asking if we could take a look, he turned and revealed a 6-inch gash on his lower back. It wasn't bleeding (too much) but it was deep. A conversation ensued on the merits and necessity of getting medical attention. There

was no urgency in the tone of the conversation and it was generally determined by the three surfers present that stitches would be a good idea. A retired medic lives locally and is the "go to guy" in these matters. A call was placed and Kenny proceeded up the road pushing his bike.

This is how our remote local community handled a non-life threatening medical situation in those days.

Ben and I have been fortunate in maintaining our good health. We are satisfied that a doctor with a private clinic attached to a pharmacy is located in a small town about 35 minutes drive from our home. The few times that we've visited Dr. Andres he was immediately available. He speaks a little English, and our Spanish is limited, but our needs have always been met. We now have Residency and are paying a monthly fee for the CAJA and, in case of emergency, we can go to the public clinics and hospitals for medical attention.

However, medical attention for a life-threatening problem can be problematic in our rural, coastal area. The closest Red Cross ambulance is stationed in Golfito, a minimum one-hour driving distance over partially paved roads. I know of two occasions when men have fallen from second story balconies and, in both emergencies, the decision was made to skip the ambulance and load the injured into the bed of a pickup truck and take them to a public hospital.

Our small community shares any medical emergency stories so that we all have as much information as possible when misfortune strikes. All this information, however, barely prepared us when, during my father's

two week vacation here, the left side of his body went numb. Jack was getting out of our 4WD after a couple of hours at the beach where he had been body surfing, and could barely walk to the terrace to sit down.

Jack is 85 and athletic. He usually plays golf and hockey (well more like skating up and down the rink while passing the puck), goes for long walks, and is a strong swimmer. The numbness passed within 15 minutes and he laid down for a nap, then got up to eat dinner. We weren't too concerned.

The next morning, after Jack got up and had some breakfast, he had a second "attack." My husband, the clear thinking one of all of us, looked up the symptoms online and determined that Dad was experiencing a TIA (stroke.)

Jack and Mom were scheduled to fly out of Golfito the same day, but the symptoms came and went. Although he could still walk and talk normally, we were at a crossroads as to how to proceed; would he be OK to fly, or should we take him to the nearest hospital?

Just to be sure, we rapidly packed and took the 1 1/2 hr drive to a public hospital in Ciudad Cortez, a town located on the Inter American Highway on the way north to San José. Jack was taken to an emergency bed and a little later the doctor took his vitals and followed protocol of a blood test, x-ray and arterial scan. The doctor teleconferenced with a neurologist at the hospital in San Isidro and it was decided to admit him for observation.

During the night, Jack collapsed in the bathroom and they decided to transport him to the San Isidro hospital.

In the morning, we arrived at the hospital in Ciudad Cortez and learned that Jack wasn't there. The shift had changed since his departure and no one at the admitting desk knew who he was or where he was. Luckily, while Ben was parking the car, he received a call from a nurse saying that the doctor was going to see Jack soon, so we knew that he was in a hospital, somewhere. On verifying his location in San Isidro, we drove the narrow and winding road up into the mountains.

Mom and I got out of the car at the hospital entrance and entered a maelstrom of people. It was 8:30 am on a Monday morning and the banks of chairs in the waiting area were filled with people, all sitting adjacent to four long, snaking lines of people inching towards the glass service windows. We decided that we knew that Jack was under the care of a neurologist

and that we couldn't wait in line for hours, so we headed down a long, crowded hallway in search of the neurologist's office.

We found it and discovered the service window next to it where I asked the young man in my faltering Spanish where I'd find my father. He told me to go to Admissions (aha!) At Admissions, there was a nurse behind a glass partition doing paperwork. I tried getting her attention without being an ugly Gringa, but was unable. Seeing my predicament, a kind security guard sitting nearby got her attention for me.

The nurse gave me only one visiting pass and wrote my name on it. We walked to the elevators to go to the 2nd floor when the security guard there stopped us; I had failed to see that the pass was only valid between 12:30 pm and 3 pm. It was 9 am!

I pleaded with the guard in Spanish, telling her that my elderly father, who spoke no Spanish, was upstairs and that my mother needed to be with him. The guard relented, wrote down her name and passport number, but did not allow her to take Dad's clothing or medications bag upstairs. I waited at the elevator bank not knowing what to do next.

After an hour or so, a young medical attendant asked me if I was Christine. When I confirmed I was, he kindly led me upstairs to where my Dad's bed was. He, however, was not there, but I then seen him being wheeled down the corridor with Mom alongside. Jack was to meet again with Dr. Rincon, the neurologist who had seen him at 2 am, after a CAT scan had been performed. As a nurse wheeled him to Dr. Rincon's office, Jack said that he couldn't spend another night there. I could see why. The medical staff was doing their best with the resources at hand and the intense demand.

To be released, Jack needed to pass a few physical tests. It was by sheer force of will that he lifted his leg and pushed his foot into the doctor's hand. Dr. Rincon reviewed the prognosis and in slightly accented but perfect English, told us the CT scan showed a very minor lesion and that the numbness symptoms would come and go. He said that if Jack followed certain lifestyle changes, he felt that Jack would have a full recovery. He also stressed that if the symptoms recurred to get to a hospital. Jack was released with caution, as he really wanted to make the flight back to Canada the next day. Some medication was prescribed and we headed to San José.

When we arrived in Alajuela to spend the night at a hotel near the airport Jack couldn't walk. He draped himself over our shoulders and we carried him to the room. I don't know what we were thinking. He was so focused on catching a flight the next morning that common sense had deserted us. While Ben, Mom, and I were having a bite at the on-site restaurant, Jack was supposed to stay in bed and wait until we brought him some food. Upon returning we found that he had tried to stand and had collapsed, squished between the bed and wall.

Finally, at 4 am after a very rough night with no sleep for anyone, the fantasy of making the return flight was nixed and we decided to call an ambulance to take him to Hospital CIMA. The motel front desk was very helpful and called the local Red Cross ambulance. When it arrived, the paramedics explained that they were restricted to carrying patients to the nearest hospital in Alajuela. The front desk man and I tried to find a private ambulance service with no luck, so we decided to drive Jack to CIMA in our vehicle. The paramedics checked his vitals and carried him to our car.

It was daylight now and San José morning traffic was stacking up but, navigating on Google maps, within 40 minutes we arrived at CIMA. At 6 am, Dad was the first patient of the day with a fresh flight of medical personnel.

CIMA caters to medical tourists and many of the staff speaks excellent English. The hospital was quiet and calm, and with top-of-the-line equipment they almost immediately performed an MRI. Dr. Rincon had mentioned that a Dr. Chinchilla was one of the top neurologists at CIMA and, as it turned out, he was Jack's physician.

The doctor suggested a minimum five-day stay, to stabilize him before flying home. Meanwhile Mom called their travel medical insurance company. CIMA is well-versed in using foreign medical insurance and the process of admissions and Dad's five-day stay, with physiotherapy two times a day, went smoothly. With the approval of Dr. Chinchilla, Jack was released and the insurance company sent a medical attendant to accompany them home on a First Class Air Canada flight, with limo service to the rehab hospital near their home.

Once Dad was settled. Ben and I felt that he was in good hands, so we returned home to the Golfo Dulce. We had traveled 836 kilometers and visited three hospitals in three days. Fortunately, our story has a happy outcome; Jack is recovering well and Ben and I know more of public vs. private hospital care in Costa Rica.

At each step of this journey, the kindness and generosity of the Costa Ricans who worked in the hospitals was invaluable and deeply appreciated.

My recommendation to all visitors is to buy travel medical insurance as the private hospitals are very expensive; the insurance company paid \$12,000 to CIMA. And guess how much the two public hospitals charged when Jack was released... \$0 ... a gift from the Costa Rican people.

Every experience in Costa Rica is a learning opportunity, even when it may be frightening, frustrating, or challenging. And each one makes me feel more comfortable with my decision to live my life here.

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



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by Allen Dickinson

The Tica Zone

"You're traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. That's the signpost up ahead – your next stop, the Twilight Zone!" – Rod Serling

I didn't enter Rod Serling's world, but I somehow have made a transition into a life sometimes as strange as any he ever imagined. My "next stop" – the Tica Zone!

As I have chronicled in this column numerous times, I have a wife and family which is comprised of mostly Ticas; there are five females: my wife, two pre-school grandchildren, and a daughter and her baby. (That's not counting the female cat, and the female parrot.) We all live in a typical Tico house with one full bathroom. I call our home the Tica Zone. As Rod would say, "Consider..."

There are some things you forget when you get older, after the kids have grown and have left the nest. For me, one of those was how much time a lone, female can spend doing gawd-knows-what in a bathroom!

Does your vehicle have a warning light that goes on when the gas tank is nearly empty? The kind that tells you that you need to get the tank filled soon? I am equipped with the exact same technology, but it works in reverse; when my bladder reaches a critical, imminent overflow condition, my "warning light" goes on. Can you see where I'm going with this?

Male members of our species have a solution to that problem when it arises; in most circumstances we will simply step up to the nearest bush and resolve the problem. I, however, am a gringo and I still retain some of the inhibitions I learned when I was young. You'd think that after over thirteen years living here I could shake that (the inhibition I mean) but it's been difficult. This has created a conflict in my Tica Zone: the offending female resents it when I demand they depart the bathroom on short notice – and I am incensed if they aren't quick enough.

The lesson here is to either not marry a Tica with female children, or if you do, not to buy/rent or otherwise occupy a house with only one bathroom!

There are other aspects of the Tica Zone which I might have discovered ahead of time, if I had asked myself the right questions.

For instance: At what age is one too old to live in a house with floors and walls so hard they reflect, and seemingly magnify, EVERY sound made by babies and young children? (Not to mention a television turned up to full volume – but that's another column.) The answer is simple: If you ask that question, you are too old!

Here's another one: To have a successful life with a Tica, how well should one like rice and beans? Anyone who has even a casual relationship with a Tica has a very good chance of quickly learning that rice and beans are essential components of every meal. (There are, I contend, only three ways you can have them: rice and beans, beans and rice and, rice WITH beans.) I have actually had my wife turn down an offer of a meal of steak/Italian/Chinese/hamburger/hot dog/sub sandwich, etc., to have her say that all she wanted was to go somewhere they serve rice and beans. (Oh sure, you like gallo pinto for breakfast now, but just wait until you've had it every breakfast for a few years!)

Another question: How good a detective should a person be to live in the Tica Zone? I don't know what it is, but there seems to be some cultural characteristic among Ticas about putting things back in the same place where they are regularly stored. I don't think it is just me or my family – people who have Tica maids report the same thing – commonly used items being put away are never returned to the same place twice. (I definitely don't have a maid, I have a wife, and she has made it VERY clear she is not a maid!)

It goes like this: We have a television in the master bedroom, and in the evenings I often repair there, away from the hubbub of the internal chaos of our Tica Zone home, seeking relative peace while I watch some English language TV. For years, every night, I had to search for the remote control before I could operate the TV. Since it is generally only my wife and I who watch that TV, I know it is she who decided where to store the control the next morning. You would think this would bring out the

Dick Tracy in me (I do have a kind of “wrist radio” on which I can talk to people, ICE willing) but sometimes my wife does such a good job of “storing” the remote that even she has trouble remembering where it is. So, for ages I have simply ranted, raved, and pleaded about having to search for the little electronic device that holds the key to my peaceful evening.

The good news is that I may have discovered a chink in the Tica Zone. For the past few months she has almost always placed the remote control in almost the same place. There is the occasional slip, but for about 98% of the time it's been in the same location. So, I know there is at least one characteristic of the Tica Zone which can be overcome.

One of the things I had hoped to encounter when I moved to Costa Rica was to experience some things that would challenge me, expand me, and make me a better person. I've found one – it's patience!

I always liked that old Twilight Zone show, I just never expected that one day I'd be living one of its stories! If you enter the Tica Zone, just remember Rod Serling's words, “...it is another dimension – a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. A journey into a wondrous land...”




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by Mitzi Stark

Ferias, Fiestas, y Festivales – Part 3

Exploring Costa Rica through ferias, or fairs, is a fun and easy way to get to know the country and its people. Fairs can be big or small. There are fairs to introduce new products and fairs to promote causes. Here is a sample of some Costa Rica fairs.

The ice cream fair is coming! It will be held on April 18 – 19 at the new convention center on the General Cañas highway. Last year's fair showed many ways to eat ice cream: on sticks, in cups, in cones, in dishes and tubes, and on waffles. There were new flavors, old flavors, some low in sugar, others high in fruit, and other ones covered in candy or made from yogurt. Plus, there were special treats for kids and dogs. All are likely to be repeated this year. There's a charge to enter but there will be free samples and discount prices if you can't resist and decide to buy.



The Chocolate Fair is another "fantasy land" event. It is coming to the Old Aduana building in San Jose in the latter part of June. There will be chocolate in every shape and form and in multiple varieties, some with flavors added, like vanilla and maple, while others will be crunchy. Companies attending will range from the international Swiss giant Lindt, to small producers from the Caribbean and Talamanca areas. The vendors will offer samples and all are yummy delicious! They too charge an entry fee, but lots of free samples and discounts offset the price. Look for announcements.

Strawberries are at their peak in March. They grow best at the high altitudes up near the Poas Volcano, along with other cool weather products like blackberries (moras, in Spanish), flowers, and cheese. Strawberries are a good reason to head up to Poasito and Vara Blanca. Last year the strawberry fair, Fresas del Volcan, had wine, jam, pastries, and, of course, fresh strawberries, plus other high altitude offerings such as hand knit shawls and caps and hot food. February and March are fair times, but check the lists of events for other year round fairs.

Later in the year, in October, it is International Egg Day in Alajuela; Alajuela is the center of egg production in Costa Rica. The fair is usually held the second Friday of October, but the day sometimes varies. There's a free breakfast for anyone who can stand in the long line, plus contests for the biggest egg, and fascinating displays of crafts made from egg shells. I love eggs, so



I'm there every Egg Day. I go early in the morning so I can get home before the rain starts.

Fairs are also held to promote causes and provide information. There are science fairs, health fairs, and environment fairs. One of the latter was an ecology fair which took place in San Juan de Poas this past January. This two day fair was an awareness campaign about protecting the environment, and it included throwing mud balls in the river. Mud balls? The clay spheres contained microorganisms which act on the contamination in the water. I never dreamed I'd be throwing mud balls, but young and old turned out to throw them and I eagerly joined in. There were also educational films complete with popcorn, bird watching, traditional games, and clean up campaigns. Organizers, Guaravito Costa Rica, has some other environmental fairs lined up, including a City Nature Challenge to be held April 24 in Alajuela, and a picnic. To find out where and when their events are to be held, check their facebook page at Guaravito Costa Rica.

Not enough? Finding fairs is easy. GAMculturalagenda.com and siempreeventos.com list them by date, place, and type of event. By clicking on one (or more) you will get a calendar of events on your Facebook page. Googling ferias costa rica will also fetch up various fairs and their schedules.

It's fair to say that attending ferias is a great way to see Costa Rica!

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(20) SENIOR LIVING IN COSTA RICA

by Katya De Luisa

Aging Out of Costa Rica

This may not be a totally pleasant article for some, but please bear with me and read it through; it contains some important things which deserve your time and thought.

Finally, retirement came and you realized your dream of living in Costa Rica; you had visited the country several times, fell in love, and decided to make the leap. Why not? The kids are grown, living their lives, and your professional job responsibilities are over. You and your life partner have found a new stage of your lives you can share, and the excitement of life in a tropical country is exhilarating, if a bit frightening. So you started your lives over here, created a new home, explored this tropical paradise, met interesting people from all over the world, and learned about another culture.

Now, you've been here a while, and it's been a struggle in some ways. Your family and children are far away, making it difficult to see them or the grandchildren. You have stocked up on bug repellants and kept the ever-encroaching foliage at bay. The mold in the rainy season is only rivaled by the dust in the dry season, the traffic is horrendous at certain times of the day, especially in urban areas, and vehicles and many other things are highly priced because of import taxes. And learning Spanish at your age is a challenge, but so many people know English that you can get most things done.

The first couple of years in your new home were pretty busy. You did the legal stuff, got your residency, bought a vehicle and furnishings, landscaped the property, planted a flower garden, got pets, and might have done some remodeling. You didn't travel as much as you thought you would, just some yearly visits home, usually during holidays or to renew a visa, and made the occasional trip to somewhere in Costa Rica, typically when you had visitors.

Time went by, as it does anywhere, and you found you have put down roots and adjusted to your new community, gotten to know the Costa Rican locals, and made friends with other expats in your area. You have adapted, may have hired a maid and gardener, and have a local handyman for any repairs. You buy amazing fresh fruits and vegetables at the weekly farmers' market and attend some cultural events offered in your area, sometimes traveling to the capital to catch a concert, ballet, or some other show.

If you are a couple, you have learned to rely on each other, functioning as a fine-tuned unit, and it is incomprehensible to imagine life anywhere else – or worse yet, life without your partner. So, maybe it's now time for making plans for the next stage in living the years you have left.

When you least expect it, time creeps in and aging often takes its toll, regardless of where you are living. Health challenges might begin to complicate the lifestyle you are now accustomed to. If you live high in the mountains you might find the damp cold is detrimental to your arthritis or have lung issues. Or, you find the heat at the beach saps your energy a lot nowadays. A worst case scenario might be that your partner has had a stroke and can't climb stairs anymore. Or that your beautiful beach home is too far from a hospital, or one of your special medications is not found in this country. Worse yet, your spouse may be showing the first symptoms of dementia, and you don't have specialized help or family here.

If something happens to your spouse and you find yourself faced with living alone in a foreign country, the luster of the dream can begin to fade. After all, regardless of the years you have spent here it was assumed you would always be together. The loneliness and grief after losing a spouse can be overwhelming.

When you retired to Costa Rica you assumed this would be your forever home. You were still pretty active and it wasn't for another decade or more that the aging process and its physical and mental challenges began to appear. But now they have, and you are wondering if you should be thinking about leaving.

The harsh realization is that even if you presently do not require help, you might need it in the future. And if one of those needs is a nursing home, the cost of one in Costa Rica will come out of your pocket, as Medicare is not accepted here. Also, most of the elder care facilities here are substandard compared to the large array of better equipped places to choose from in more developed countries. That makes the thought of moving back to your home country more of a necessity than a choice and you might decide it is a better option to leave Costa Rica, especially if the adult care facility you like is closer to family.

Aging anywhere can become challenging. But planning for the eventualities while living here, before they occur, is smart, and can make us more secure in our lives as retirees, whether we live as a couple or as a single person.

Now is the time to discuss with your spouse and family the probabilities and what would be required for your care, and take some steps to make sure that whatever happens, they know your wishes. Here's a short list of important things to help you prepare:

- Make sure your partner, spouse, or a local friend, has your emergency contact information.
- Keep a list of medications, dosages, and doctor contacts in a visible place.
- Consider giving someone, maybe one of your children, a power of attorney, so that they can take care of you if you are incapacitated.
- Get copies all of your legal dealings, in this country AND your home country, from your lawyers and store them in a place where they can be easily retrieved. (Believe me; those are important for you to have in both English and Spanish.)

- Have a will prepared in Spanish that's legal here.
- If you wish to be buried or cremated in Costa Rica, you can make advance arrangements at any of the funeral businesses. (I donated my body to the Medical school and when I croak, they will pick up my remains anywhere in Costa Rica. May I rest in pieces.)
- Discuss your wishes with your family and give them copies of any and all the contracts and contacts they would need if they are obliged to handle things here for you.

Remember, whether or not you are experiencing the effects of aging now, it is imperative that you prepare for the eventualities. And those that you love, and those who love you, deserve to have you act responsibly and get ready for the time they may have to deal with your health or life issues.

Katya De Luisa is an author, freelance writer on aging, and designer of expressive arts programs focused on self-awareness and raising personal consciousness. As a dementia consultant, she provides information centered on holistic approaches to eldercare. She can be reached at: kdeluisa@yahoo.com

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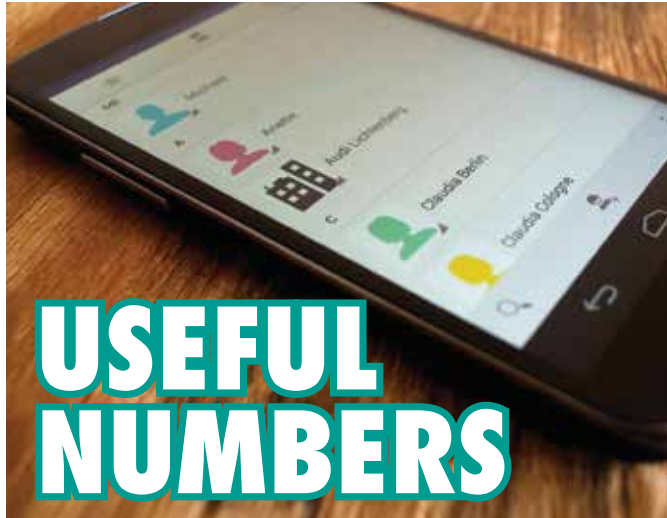
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Fraud prevention Department: (506) 2519-2117

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

United Kingdom Embassy

Phone: (506) 2258 2025

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

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

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

Email: costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

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

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

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French Embassy

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Address: Calle 32, San José

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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.

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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 × .034 = Fluid Ounces

Kilograms × 2.205 = Pounds

Millimeters × .039 = Inches

Meters × 3.28 = Feet

Square Meters × 10.764 = Square Feet

Square meters × 10,000 = Hectares

Hectares × 2.47 = Acres

Kilometers × .62 = Miles

Centigrade × 1.8 + 32 = Fahrenheit

Liters × .264 = Gallons

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

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24 FROM THE EMBASSIES



ASK ACS

The US Embassy in San Jose sees quite a few lost and stolen passports requests, often during the high travel season when there is an increased incidence of petty crime. We encourage you to safeguard your passport when traveling: Never leave bags unattended, even in a locked car; Keep your passport locked in a safe when not in use; Maintain a separate copy of the photo and biometric page of your most recent passport, as well as the page featuring your entry stamp into Costa Rica, for your records.

What Should a US Citizen Do if his/her Passport is Lost or Stolen Abroad?

You will have to replace the passport before returning to the United States. If you wish to report the loss of your passport, you may file a notification online at www.travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/lost-stolen.html, or you may do so in person at the US Embassy when you apply for a replacement.

If you do not have immediate travel needs, we suggest you make an appointment to ensure we are ready and available to assist you when you arrive. You can find more information on passports and our appointment system by visiting <https://cr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>.

The forms required for all passport services are free of charge and are available both online at travel.state.gov and in hard copy at the Consular section at the San Jose Embassy. You can print and fill out your application in advance to streamline your visit.

If you have concerns or questions before your visit, or cannot find a suitable time on our schedule to visit us, you can always reach out to our staff at the US Embassy in San Jose via phone at +506 2519-2590 or email at ACSSanJose@state.gov. We will make every effort to assist you quickly.

What Do I Need to Replace my Lost or Stolen Passport?

The following list identifies a number of documents/items you should bring with you to the embassy. Even if you are unable

to present all of the documents, the consular staff will do their best to assist you to replace your passport. Please provide:

- A passport photo. You can have your 2 inch-by-2 inch passport photo taken inside the ACS section of the Embassy. The cost of a set of passport photos at the embassy's photo booth is 1,000 colones.
- Identification (valid driver's license, expired passport, etc.)
- Evidence of US citizenship (birth certificate, photocopy of your missing passport)
- Travel Itinerary (airline tickets), if traveling is eminent
- Police Report, if available
- [DS-11 Application for Passport](#) and [DS-64 Statement Regarding a Lost or Stolen Passport](#)
- Execution fee, paid in cash or via major credit card, in either dollars or colones

What Fees are Charged to Replace Lost/Stolen Passports Abroad?

A full schedule of passport fees can be found online at travel.state.gov. A regular passport renewal currently costs \$110, and an emergency passport costs \$145.

Passport fees are collected from applicants for replacement passports. Applicants unable to pay the fee will be asked to provide names of persons they feel would be able to assist them financially. See our information about Financial Assistance to US citizens abroad and Sending Money Overseas to US Citizen in an Emergency on travel.state.gov.

How Long are Replacement/Emergency Passports Valid?

Replacement passports have full term validity. Complicating factors, such as multiple lost/stolen passports or borrowing money from the State Department to fund your trip home, may cause you to receive a limited passport. The interviewing officer will discuss these circumstances with you at the time of your interview, if this is the case.

If you have urgent travel plans, we can issue a limited-validity, emergency passport on site to quickly allow you to return to the USA or continue on your trip. Make sure you notify the interviewing officer of your ongoing travel plans to ensure we issue a document with sufficient validity! After you complete your travel, within one calendar year from the

issue date of the emergency passport, you may be eligible to receive a full-validity passport in the United States or at an Embassy or Consulate abroad for no additional cost.

Can the U.S. Embassy Issue a Replacement Passport on a Weekend or Holiday?

The US Embassy in Costa Rica cannot issue a replacement passport on a weekend or holiday. If you have an emergency need to travel or have been the victim of a serious crime, you can contact the after-hours duty officer at +506 2519-2590 for advice or assistance to learn what resources are available to you.



"IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL THE PAPERWORK IS DONE..."

Is there anything more fun than completing paperwork in Costa Rica? Maybe dealing with bureaucracy in the UK!

This time we thought we would look at some general guidelines for using Costa Rican official documents in UK and vice versa.

Firstly, the dreaded 'Apostille' This is simply a certificate that states that the signature of a government official on any document is genuine. If the document is signed by someone else (e.g. Bank, University etc) then you will need to get a Notary to certify it first. Notaries are recognised as 'official' signatories for this purpose.

To use a UK official document in Costa Rica you will need an apostille. As for most things related to the UK, the first place to look is www.gov.uk. There you can search "Legalise a document" and find the whole process explained. You pay online, send your document by post to the office in UK (address on the web page), sit back, and wait for it to be sent back to you. Of course, it is quicker and easier to do this if you are in the UK or have someone there who will help you.

Once you have your UK document apostilled, you will need to get it translated and further authenticated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Casa Amarilla" -

<https://www.rree.go.cr/>. Just search their web page for "Traductores" and then for "Autenticaciones".

To use a Costa Rican document in the UK you do not need an apostille. Amazing but true! Any official Costa Rican document, such as a birth or death certificate, with translation, is accepted for all official purposes in the UK. "What sort of translation?" you ask! Generally, a translation done by one of the Official Translators in Costa Rica will be fine.

A last useful fact People who have lived here for any period of time might well be asked for proof of their clean criminal record "hoja de delincuencia" in Costa Rica. This can be requested via any of the Costa Rican Consulates around the world but, for some reason, can only be collected by a physical person, or their representative, from the OIJ offices in San Jose. Tricky if you are back in the UK! If you don't have a cooperative friend who can devote time to picking this up for you, the good folk in ARCR will help for a small fee. Speak to Eileen Varela in the ARCR offices and they will guide you through the process!

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by Linda M. Loverude

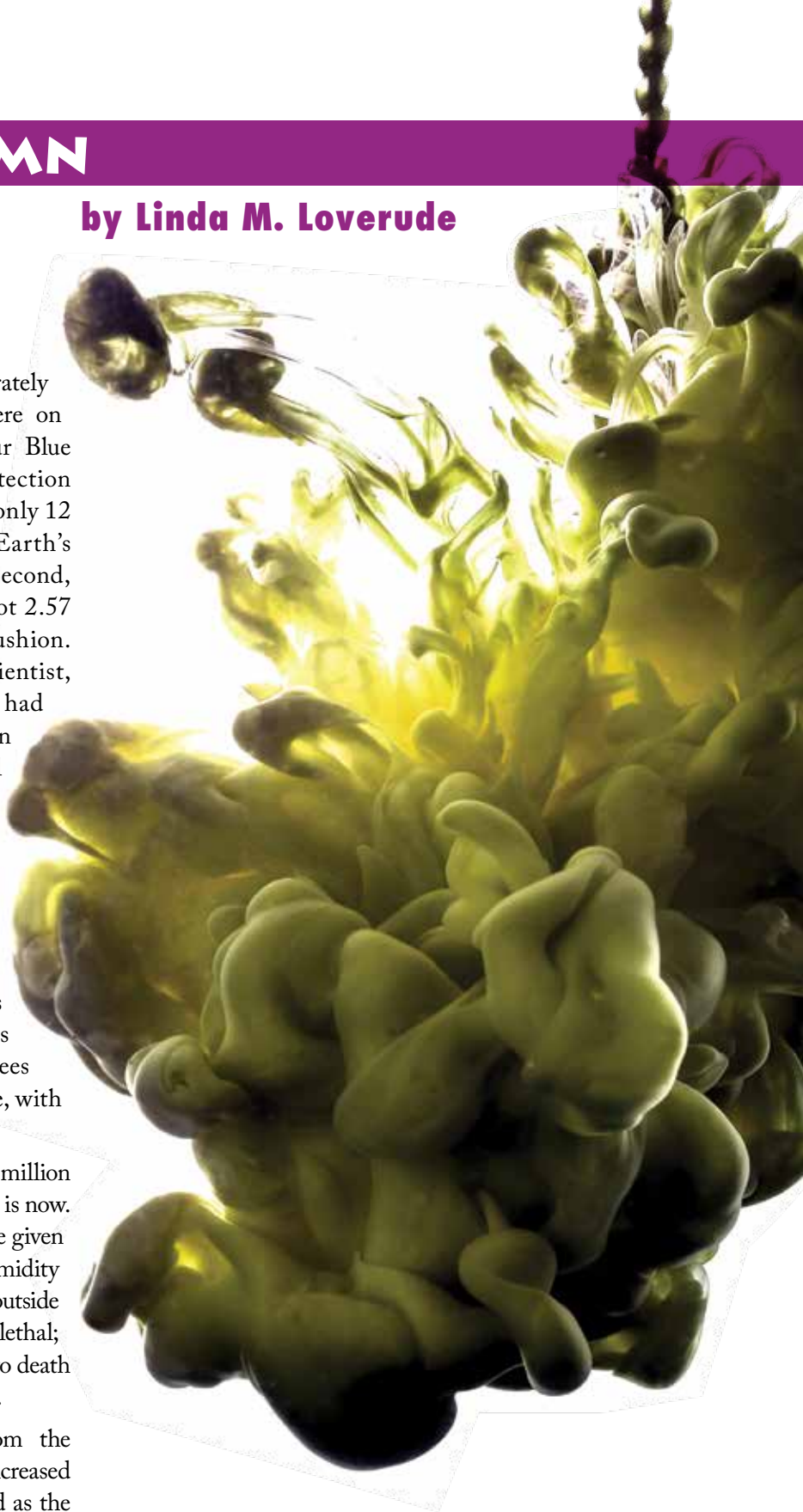
Climate Emergency

Even the finest-tipped pen can not accurately draw a line depicting Earth's atmosphere on a football field sized photograph of our Blue Planet. Our atmosphere, which affords us protection and generates life in so many complex ways, is only 12 miles deep; only 12 miles from the touch of Earth's surface to the first step into space. Every single second, without exception, humankind's activities shoot 2.57 million pounds of CO² into that 12 mile cushion. In 1988 Dr. James E. Hansen, a NASA scientist, testified to Congress that greenhouse gases had been causing Earth to warm since 1971. (In 1800, at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the CO² level was 200 parts per million and on Christmas Day 2019 the CO² level was 410 parts per million.) Right now, there is more CO² in our atmosphere than there has been since the Cambrian Era... and it is continuing to rise.

So what? You may say. Carbon dioxide traps Earth's heat and, if and when Earth reaches an average temperature increase of 2.0 degrees centigrade, the planet will be a very different place, with catastrophic climatic consequences.

The last time Planet Earth was that warm was three million years ago and the sea level was 80 feet higher than it is now. In the book *The Uninhabitable Earth*, a local example given was that in the jungles of Costa Rica, where humidity routinely tops 90 percent, simply moving around outside when it's over 105 degrees Fahrenheit would be lethal; within a few hours a human body would be cooked to death from both inside and out, a very unpleasant scenario.

As Bill McKibben, renowned climatologist from the organization 350.org states, the planet has already increased its average temperature 1.5 degrees centigrade. And as the planet warms there are chains of events that increase the problem – one is methane, another greenhouse gas, which is escaping from sequestration in the North as the tundra melts. Fires, destruction of natural habitats, deforestation of primordial forests, and plowing of land all exacerbate this whirlwind of chemistry heating our planet.



I've talked atmosphere, but now let's think about the Good Earth itself. In the USA alone, in 2018, 1.2 billion pounds of pesticides were dumped on our soil and sprayed into the air. 388 million pounds of those were potentially fatal pesticides currently outlawed in the European Union, China, and Brazil. These numbers don't even include

the chemical fertilizers that Earth's soils, and eventually waterways, are subjected to.

Let me share a story with you about how these factors are related.

In the 1980s, like others around the world, the reefs in Cuba were dying.

In 2018, while globally reefs are even more endangered, including the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the reefs in Cuba have healed and are flourishing.

The question was WHY? After years of studies, the answer was found through analyzing slices of Cuban reef depicting the last 50 years. What was discovered was that from the 1970s through the 1980s, the Soviet Union attempted to create an agricultural bounty of miraculous proportions in Cuba by dumping massive amounts of agricultural fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides onto the fields. Soviet sponsorship ended in 1991, leaving Cuba with no more Soviet agricultural chemicals. Without that sponsorship and with the ever tightening USA embargo, Cuba suffered through terrible economic hardship; what they referred to as "The Special Period." But, as a result, their agricultural practices reverted back to traditional ways and the entire island became "organic," as it still is today. And their reefs are again flourishing.

Another observation was made by Ali Hussein, the CEO of an investment firm in New York. He returns to Saudi Arabia annually, and has since the 1980s. He observed that while the edges of the Sahara were green and lush, the reef where he has scuba dived for 30 years, which was colorful and vibrant, is now barren, full of plastic, and devoid of life.

Of course, there are many, many reports, books, documentaries, and testimony about the Climate Emergency and all other aspects of this crisis. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change forecasts that changes human beings undertake to alleviate the Earth's rise in temperature, can take hundreds of years to reverse prior damage, and that that there is a tipping point where the changes will be irreversible. Those changes will cause profoundly physical effects on the natural world, and those will extract extreme human costs and threaten the very existence of the world as we know it.

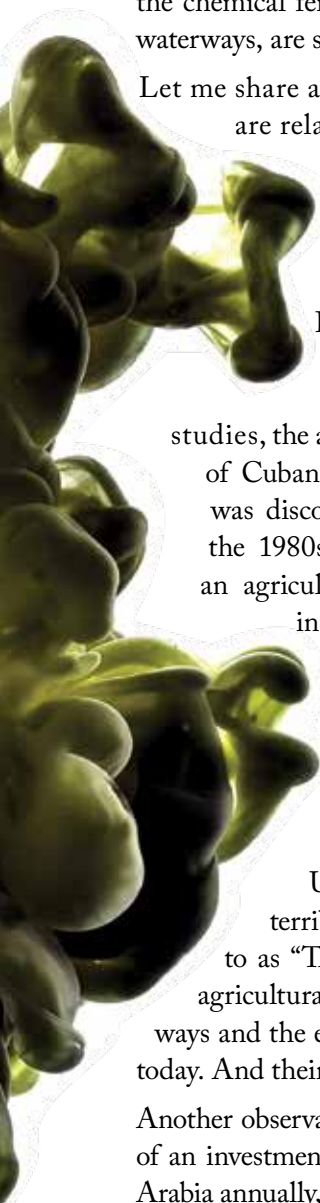
What I want to convey is the urgency and need for action. In *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore stated, "People are willing to do nothing until the consequences of inaction become impossible to ignore." It's because the solution lies in extreme economic and social change.

Humanity has already invented, and is continuing to invent, many pieces of a grand solution that can save what will be left of our planet to save. We must though, bring to a halt the train that is thundering down the track to the Sixth Mass Extinction. It will include us! We will disappear, not with a bang but with the proverbial whisper. Extinction moves along silently, but in these times, also steadily. An example was put forth by the South West Wildlife Trust, which estimates that the planet has lost nearly half of all insects since 1970 and that 41 percent of the remaining one million known species are living under the threat of extinction.

Reefs, forests, grasslands, desert buffers, animals, sea life, insects, human beings, and microbes are all affected by wildfires, drought, heat, hurricanes, rain bombs, and floods. Do you feel the pressure?

Globally, 11,000 scientists have declared a climate emergency and warn of "untold suffering." It is already happening. Doctors in New Delhi have observed that children's lungs are no longer pink, instead they're black. The Lancet Research, compiled by 35 global institutions, including the World Health Organization and the World Bank, clearly shows the relationship between climate change, environmental destruction, and health. Rising temperatures fuel hunger and malnutrition, increase the scale and scope of infectious diseases, and generally contribute to an increasing frequency of calamitous extreme weather events. Unless we all act quickly to stop the spiraling chain of events we will soon to reach a point where it can no longer be stopped.

The Climate Reality Project admonishes people to not be so negative as to what appears to be no hope for our future and the natural world; such "no hope" is paralyzing psychologically, while what the human race needs is immediate and fierce resistance to the status quo. Greta Thunberg has told us emphatically that "Our house is on fire!" Autumn Pelletier tells us we all must be Water Warriors. Jane Fonda is working to mobilize seniors with Fire Drill Fridays. (On Fridays, on an average, 600,000 people in the USA and 4,000,000 globally engage in climate mobilization, by far the largest mass protest in world history, and it's growing every week.) These strikes show the public, our elected officials, and world leaders that citizens of



this Blue Planet are not going to sit idly by while the world and the futures of our children are destroyed by greed and unwillingness to change. I hope it doesn't come too late.

In January, in Davos, Switzerland, the World Economic Summit failed miserably in initiating remedies to the Climate Emergency. While there is increasing awareness, the companies that need to dramatically change their carbon releasing ways seem to be unable to make the leap.

A few lines from Marvin Gaye's 1971 prayer for the world, Save the Children, still ring true today:

There'll come a time, when the world won't be singin'

Flowers won't grow, bells won't be ringin'

Who really cares?...

When I look at the world it fills me with sorrow

Little children today...

Are really going to suffer tomorrow

Live life for the children

Oh, for the children

You see, let's save the children

Let's save all the children

Save the babies...

I pray that this becomes the mantra of the world. The youth want and deserve a viable future; I want a viable future for my grandchildren and all the babies. We must act now.

Linda Loverude (her real name) currently spends half her year living on a cacao farm her husband inherited from his parents in the foothills of the Talamanca range south of Limón. The rest of the year she lives in Wisconsin and Minnesota. She is a teacher and a member of The Leadership Corps of The Climate Reality Project. Married to her husband Errol for over 40 years, they have two sons, two daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren.

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by Rómulo Pacheco

New Requirement for Residency Applicants

Costa Rica immigration authorities have made a change of the criteria regarding the ways in which United States citizens seeking Costa Rican residency may demonstrate their good behavior and a clean criminal record.

Costa Rica Inmigración requires each person who seeks residency here to provide a document of good standing and criminal history as part of their residency application package. Because of the various authorities from whom a certificate of good standing and criminal history are obtainable in the United States, the Costa Rican government has decided that all new and in process residency applicants coming from the USA must now supply documents issued by the FBI, ONLY, to comply with the requirement.

The below is a translation explaining of the reasoning the department used to reach this decision:

Articles 2 and 67 of the General Law on Migration and Immigration 8764, declares this migratory matter of public interest for the development of the country, its institutions and public security, and conditions to grant of legal residency.

The regulation of foreigners regulations issued by decree N. 37112-GOB, establishes the requirements that must be met by any foreign person who intends to regularize their immigration status in the country. One of those requirements is the certification of criminal records of the country of origin of the foreign person, or of the one in which he has resided regularly for the last three years, a document that must be presented properly apostilled and officially translated, in case it is not issued in Spanish language.

The foregoing obliges the general direction of immigration and immigration to order and practice all the necessary procedures to determine the real truth of the evidence provided by the foreigner who intend to reside in the country, in accordance with Article 190 of Law 8764, Therefore, in the case of the criminal record certificate, we must ensure that this document proves reliably that the foreign person has not committed any crime in the entire territory of their country of origin or in which they resided.

Some countries such as the United States and Canada have criminal systems made up of a local and federal jurisdiction. However, the certifications issued by local governments

or the federal government that do not include the review of criminal records by name, identification number, and fingerprint records, do not definitively guarantee that the person does not have a criminal record.

In this sense and with the purpose of guaranteeing the principle of public security more broadly, from now on, in any procedure that is carried out before the Directorate General that implies as a requirement the presentation of a criminal background certification, nationals from the United States of America, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, or any other country that has local and federal criminal systems, that said certification indicates that their judicial record has been collated by name, identification number, and fingerprint of the person.

Specifically, nationals of the United States will be required to obtain a federal criminal record certifying the information from the "National Crime Information Center, interstate identification index, or triple III", duly apostilled, in force, and in literal translation, issued by an official translator or by a notary public.

In the event that the federal criminal record certification indicates arrests or pending proceedings, the user must also provide a criminal record from the locality where the legal case is processed, in which the result of the process is indicated.

ARCR is assisting all members who need to update their background check (residency applicants in process) to comply with Costa Rica law. We escort them to the proper location where they will be fingerprinted on fingerprint cards. We send the cards to the FBI. After examination the FBI sends the results of the check to our associate in New York who sends them to ARCR. This process takes about 10 business days. The cost is \$268 USD. We have been using this procedure for some time and the results have proven to be satisfactory to Costa Rica Immigration.

Those persons affected by this new requirement should contact the ARCR office to arrange the necessary procedures.

Rómulo Pacheco

Attorney at Law, Notary Public

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(506) 2220-0055 / (506) 2290-1074

romulo@residencycr.com

by Terry Renfer

The Community at the End of the Road, 2019

Very early (5:00 a.m.) Friday, November 29, 2019, ARCR members and volunteer friends gathered at the ARCR office for the annual visit to the Cabécar indigenous community, located in the mountains above Turrialba. We had previously gathered gifts for the children and food for a lunch, and everyone helped load the items aboard a mini-bus to Turrialba where we would switch to 4x4 vehicles for the remainder of the trip. This was the culmination of much effort on the part of many who had donated money and time to purchase the items. Special thanks goes to those who wrapped the gifts in wonderful decorations. I mention the wrapping specifically, as an incident worth noting comes later.

For more than ten years, each year ARCR has visited the Cabécar school situated on the banks of the Rio Pacuare. On this morning we encountered a not-so-scenic trip through the low hanging, rainy clouds out of Cartago, but spent the time visiting with old friends from previous visits and new first-time friends. In Turrialba, we stopped at Hotel Wagelia and checked in for our overnight stay on the return trip. We then loaded all the items from the bus into the waiting 4x4s, had breakfast, and headed up into the mountains, fording streams, climbing rocky roads, and hoping the rain would stop.

Finally, after a few hours, we arrived at Escuela Paso Marcos. Waiting for us were school officials and a couple of hundred Cabécar families and children, some of whom had walked for hours in the rain to get to the school. There was lots of help unloading the food into the school kitchen, and the gifts into a couple of school rooms, after which Gama, one of the volunteers, started games for the children on the wet soccer field. Unfortunately the games lasted only about 20 minutes; "Games canceled on account of rain."

A production line was set up in the kitchen with many volunteers preparing lunch for all. After everyone had

transited the long lines for lunch, we started more lines; this time for giving the children the gifts we had brought for them. Luckily, the rain held off and the gifts were distributed by gender and age. (It should be noted that



some children also received additional gifts for their friends and siblings who could not attend; sometimes, when a child returns home with a treasured gift, but there is nothing for those who could not make the trip, it can create a problem.)

During this time the new school director, Heiner Acosta, proudly showed me the new construction being done by volunteers; it will allow school personnel to stay overnight, rather than make the long, two-way trip every day.

As the clouds lowered and the rain began again, so as to not to be unable to return to the hotel in Turrialba due to rising rivers and streams along the way, we departed the school in the late afternoon. We spent the night at the hotel and returned to San José the next day, a tired but happy group.

Regarding the beautiful gift wrapping mentioned earlier: A small Cabécar girl received a wrapped gift and simply stared at it – she thought the gift was just the pretty paper and ribbon. She had to be told to open it.

A big thank you to Martha Rollins, who was unable to make the trip this year, for all the time and hard work she spent making preparations for those of us who were able to go, as well as to all those who supported and participated in this effort and made it possible.

by Ivo Henfling

Think About Recreation Before You Retire in Costa Rica

You want to retire in Costa Rica and are afraid you won't have anything to do? Don't be, there is plenty to do here. Of course, it might take a while to figure out what activities or hobbies you will enjoy – and if you're moving to the right area for them.

Right off the top you can forget snow skiing, snowboarding, cliff hanging, kart racing, and spelunking; those are some recreation activities that you won't be able to practice much in Costa Rica. But don't despair, there are a plenty of others.

BEFORE MOVING

Many people who move to Costa Rica as soon as they retire don't have a clue about recreation at all. They have worked their whole life and never had the time for hobbies or recreation. Others spent all their time off with friends and family – but they are not moving to Costa Rica with you! So, it can be important to figure out what your preferred kinds of activities are before moving here so that you know what to bring with you. On the other hand, after you get here you might find some interesting activities that you never thought about.

GOT A HOBBY?

If you have a hobby, that's a good start for deciding what you'll do with your free time when you get here. And if you don't have one, before you move is a good time to start thinking about what might be fun. Here are some ideas.

Some hobbies will get you out of the house and meeting new people. There are lots of expats here that have the same interests, and you can join a group that shares them. For example there are bird watching groups, a little theater group, and, of course, lots of golfers. There a club that plays bridge and even a wine club. And did you know there are youth ice hockey teams in Costa Rica that could use another English speaking coach? Really! Other, more solo outdoor activities might include scuba diving, surfing, sailing, fishing, hiking, and exploring.

If you are more inclined towards hobbies that keep you indoors, there's computers, genealogy, writers groups (you'd be amazed at the number of people who move here with a book in their head!) jewelry making, drawing/painting, learning to play a musical instrument, and many, many

others. And if cooking is your thing, think about starting a cooking club (there have been some here in the past, but the organizers have left, for one reason or another). And there are some strictly social or political groups.

None of those appeal? Look a little further and you'll find we have some real weird hobby groups in Costa Rica, such as Yoga on horseback; or what about bouldering? Bungee jumping is another crazy one. Maybe one of those will fit you.

LEARN SPANISH

Until you can get around without too much sign language, pocket translators, or dictionaries, you should start by picking up some Spanish. There are private and group classes you can join. Whether it's a hobby or more, learning a new language is a necessity, one that can make all other activities more fun. You can even start doing that before moving here. I know, it doesn't sound like a lot of fun, but it is an activity that's not only good for mental health, it also expands your life.

ENGLISH SPOKEN

You're not the only expat who needs to find recreation. This magazine has a section about clubs in Costa Rica in the back. Check it out and you might find something you didn't even realize interested you! You can also check out my blog "61 Clubs in Costa Rica when you are bored stiff." <https://www.godutchrealty.com/costa-rica-real-estate-blog/costa-rica-entertainment/61-clubs-in-costa-rica-for-when-you-are-bored-stiff/> (There are actually 71 now, thanks to readers.)

No hobbies? No interests? No recreational activities appeal to you? When you wake up in the warm, Costa Rican morning sunshine, your view of the world might change; you are certainly in for some changes in your life just by moving here!

Honestly, if you get bored after moving here, you have a problem.

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

by Shelagh Duncan

Nine Simple Ways to Make You Happier at Home

I know, we tell ourselves “We live in paradise – what’s there not to be happy about?” However, sometimes we experience some guilt because we don’t feel happy all the time, and that can just make things worse.

If you believe that our homes are extensions of who we are, then we have somewhere to start. It follows then, that if we are not happy with ourselves, how can we be happy at home? Perhaps we can turn this around and make our home a happier place to be, so that we in turn, will feel happier about ourselves. Can that be possible?

Yes! Scientific studies have shown that what we do with the space we call home, both inside and out, shapes our mood, affects our productivity, and influences our outlook on life. Adjusting the tiny little habits and routines that constitute our daily lives can have an impact on our happiness. In fact, we can use them to affect our happiness. So what options are there, without having to move or redecorate?

The colors we paint our walls, the textures of the fabric we use, and even the artwork on our walls can all influence how we feel. It’s amazing how a few tweaks to our daily habits can become a catalyst for meaningful, positive change. Here are a few simple and inexpensive things you can do every day to feel happier at home.

1. MAKE YOUR BED

“When I was researching my book on happiness,” says author Gretchen Rubin, “this was the number one most impactful change that people brought up over and over.” Turns out, people are happier when everyday tasks in their lives are completed. So, given it only takes 30 seconds, it could lend a small sense of accomplishment at the very start of every day.

2. BRING EVERY ROOM BACK TO “READY”

This great trick is found in Marilyn Paul’s clever book, *It’s Hard to Make a Difference When You Can’t Find Your Keys*. It is a known fact that clutter causes stress; order creates a haven from it. This mood-boosting routine is simple; take about three minutes to bring each room back to “ready” before you leave. Unless you have a toddler, or a partner who likes to simulate a scene from one of the disaster movies, three minutes should be enough. Make sure your mirrors are clean and shiny too. This small detail can have a big impact – mirrors reflect the world as you see it.

3. INCLUDE SENTIMENTAL ITEMS INTO THE DECOR AROUND YOUR HOME

One reason for doing this is that experiences (and memories of those experiences) make us happier than material things. This is due to the entire cycle of enjoyment that experiences provide: planning the experience, looking forward to it, enjoying it, and then, remembering it. Making your home a gallery of sentimental items may be a bit too much – but have at least one meaningful item in each room.

5. START A ONE-LINE-A-DAY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Before bed, simply jot down one happy memory from that day. It can be as simple as no power cuts today (!) or a beautiful bird or butterfly visiting your garden. (If you have kids, you can ask them, “What was the best part of today?”) Reflection is an important part of happiness, and pausing to reflect on a positive event from each day cultivates gratitude. (An added bonus: later, when your memory has faded, you will have all of your meaningful events recorded!) If you have trouble getting started with journaling, consider getting a book to guide you. *Simple Abundance*, by Sarah Ban Breathnach, is a great one. Find joy in the small things – start slow, but start. It does get easier.

6. HAVE COMFORTABLE FURNITURE

If you cannot enjoy relaxing at home because your chair, sofa, or mattress is uncomfortable, then it is your body, not your mind, telling you it is unhappy. Treat yourself to a recliner or comfy chair at least, especially if you like to read or watch TV. As we spend about a third of our lives in bed, the mattress rates pretty high too. Keep an eye out for sales or promotions, and grab the opportunity to upgrade yours and get a good night's sleep. Your back will thank you too!

7. VOLUNTEER

Do small favors for your family members or neighbors and expect nothing in return. There are many local volunteer opportunities down here, even if your Spanish is not that great yet. Ask around in the community and you may be surprised. Making the smallest difference in someone else's life will give you an emotional lift, and you will bring that home with you every time. Ladies, mow the lawn for your husband (but don't expect him to pat you on the back.) Men, make the bed for your wife (but don't try to get bonus points for it). Give someone walking down your road a ride, if you are going that way,

4. USE HOME ACCESSORIES THAT WORK WITH THE COLOR OR FEEL OF A ROOM

This will make that room look more complete and finished, too. Finding a new throw pillow in just the right color or pattern will give you instant pleasure, and will continue to do so each time you see it. Keep an eye open for opportunities to give your home, and you, a little boost.

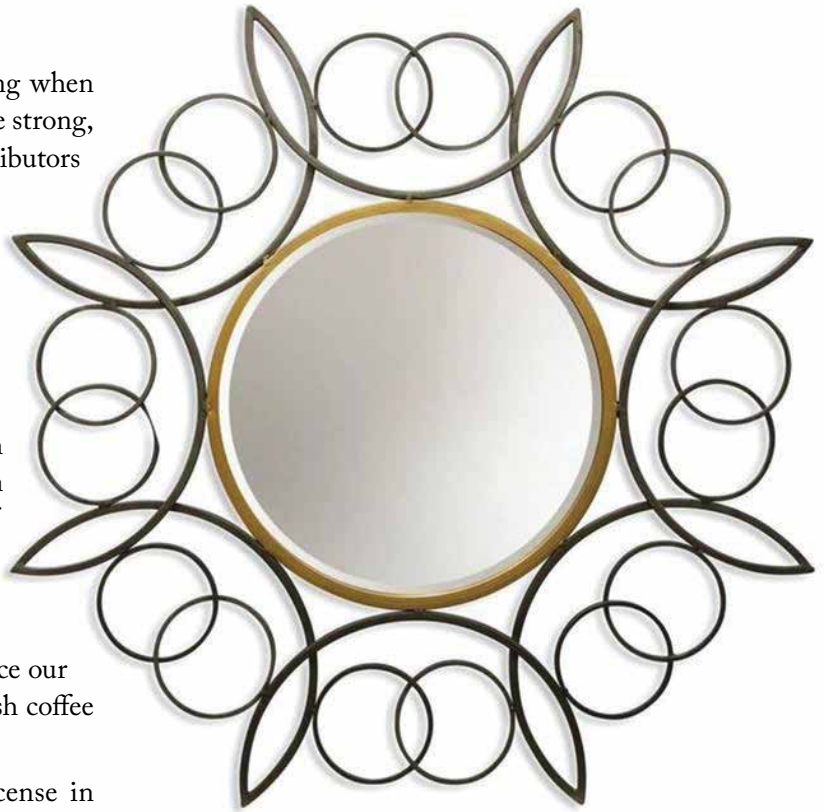


or ask a neighbor or friend if they need anything when you are there, just because. The ability to cultivate strong, healthy relationships is one of the biggest contributors to health and happiness, but when you start to keep score, the benefit is lost. It's a well-known fact, when you do good, you feel good

8. SMELL YOUR WAY TO A BETTER MOOD

Our sense of smell is always on duty and each breath floods our smell receptors with information about the environment we live in. Smells of pleasure, awareness, danger, sexual attraction; all create immediate reactions. We are capable of recognizing approximately 10,000 different odors, with each one having the power to influence our moods and behavior. How does the aroma of fresh coffee or baked bread make you feel – yeah, me too!

Use this important sense as therapy. Burn incense in your home to add another layer of well-being. The smells of vanilla and lavender have been directly linked with the production of endorphins in our brain, as has chocolate. And change up the aromas – try two or three of your favorites and each day and you can have fun selecting which one to use.



9. SPEND A FEW MINUTES EACH DAY CONNECTING WITH SOMETHING GREATER THAN YOURSELF

Whatever your spiritual beliefs, or non-beliefs, may be, studies show that connecting to a higher power is correlated with happiness. Just stepping back to realize that we are part of an enormous universe can put some perspective on your annoyance with the neighbor's ever-barking dogs, or the painfully slow (or non-existent!) internet connection.

Before bed, spend just a few minutes contemplating something larger than yourself. Take a walk outside to gaze up at the stars and take a few deep breaths – feel the stillness and wonder at the enormity of what you see. If spirituality is really not your thing, create a home spa; light some candles, soak in a hot bath, delve into a good book – are you feeling better yet?

There are no magic potions for happiness. We have to take some responsibility for taking care of that for ourselves, and I hope these simple ideas will help.

Until next time –

Shelagh Duncan

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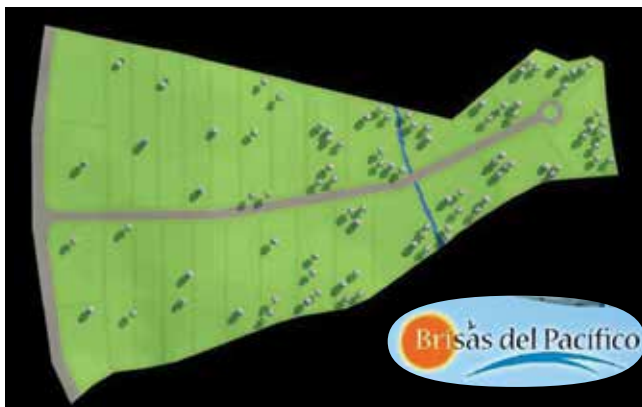
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by Ryan Piercy



Welcome to the Jungle!

This article marks the 100th in this series on wildlife in Costa Rica, so for something special I decided that instead of profiling a specific animal, it was a good opportunity to take a general look at the wildlife throughout all of the country.

Named the Rich Coast, Costa Rica is certainly rich. Perhaps the Spaniards who first arrived here did not encounter the gold and riches they had dreamed of, but today's explorer will find a country that is resplendent with a different kind of wealth; it is rich in a huge variety of animals, plants, insects, and more. This small country, which comprises less than one-third of 1% of the world's land mass, is home to nearly 5% of the entire world's biodiversity; the highest concentration of biodiversity anywhere on our planet!

Whether a visitor is a scientist, amateur photographer, or simply a passerby, one can't help but become enthralled with the abundance of species encountered here. The variety is

even more astounding when one considers that Costa Rica is such a small territory, only 51,100 square kilometers in area. It was due to the formation of the territory itself, along with Panama, about three to five million



years ago, that created a land bridge allowing flora and fauna from the Northern and Southern continents to mix, thus creating a melting pot for different species.


Costa Rica is home to over 500,000 animal species. Here one can encounter 175 kinds of amphibians (mostly frogs), 894 aves (nearly 10% of all birds worldwide), 245 species of mammals (with many bats and some wild cats), 100s of different kinds of pisces (fish), 225 types of reptiles, 1,250 genus of butterflies, and literally hundreds of thousands of different insects and invertebrates. And that doesn't even consider the gigantic number of unique plant species to be found here!



Just think about that for a second; that makes for ten different species for each square kilometer in the country! Most of us who have lived here for some time have come to realize that no matter where you are, there are creatures and wildlife all around you, all the time. Sometimes it is nice to just stop, breathe in the air, and quietly observe the immediate area for any wonders you may see.


No matter what your particular interests or preferences are, you will certainly be able to find enough variety to keep your interest piqued for a long period of time. It is certain that the more one learns about their favorite species, the more you will be drawn to learning about other forms of life here, all with equally fascinating aspects. This article is dedicated to the Golden Toad of Monteverde, and it is this writer's hope that these simple articles will help bring us a little closer to nature, and the wild side of Costa Rica.

Editor's Note: The Golden Toad (Incilius periglenes, formerly Bufo periglenes) is an extinct species of true toads that was once abundant in a small, high-altitude region of about 4 square kilometres (1.5 sq mi) in an area north of Monteverde, Costa Rica. It is commonly considered the "poster child" for the amphibian decline crisis. The last sighting of a single male golden toad was on 15 May 1989, and it has since been classified as extinct by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). (Adapted from Wikipedia)



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38 PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

“YOU IDIOT! YOU MORON!”

You ever talk to yourself like that? Why? Does it serve some useful purpose? Accomplish some beneficial outcome? Or, does it actually interfere with your intended goals?

For some, an inner critic is so habitual that its ugliness is rarely noticed, it just seems like the “normal” way to respond to one’s mistakes. But that negativity actually harms us; it becomes a barrier to enjoying our lives by causing anxiety, depression, or the inability to relax. Extreme self-criticism engenders an urgent and impossible drive to find perfection, and when we don’t achieve it we express our disappointment in ourselves with irritability, anger, hostility, and unhappiness.

We may think that those powerful condemnations result from the external circumstances of our life, and some do. But often, when we look closer, we’ll see they’re the consequence of how we TREAT OURSELVES in those life circumstances.

Abusive self-talk may seem as natural as breathing, that it is a way to control, direct, or manage ourselves, and it is therefore unwise to turn it off. But occasionally, if we get a glimpse of its direct connection to our negative feelings about ourselves, we may see that it’s totally unfair, irrational, and cruel. The truth is that we are not only HARMING OURSELVES...we are inflicting collateral damage on others.

It’s been said that “The mind is a dangerous neighborhood. Don’t go there alone.” But, when it’s the only neighborhood we’ve ever known, we may not even imagine there’s a different way of treating ourselves. And if we become cognizant of how we are treating ourselves, we may be in conflict; on one hand we want to be free of that brutal inner judge, but on the other, we don’t know how to develop a healthier relationship with ourselves.

How did we get here in the first place?

THE CRADLE OF CRITICISM

No infant is self-critical, self-destructive, or self-loathing; that is cognitively impossible. A child must have language (to call their self names with), a sense of self (with which to judge itself), and a list of readily available cognitive slams with which to bash themselves; none of which is possible until the child has developed thought language, which doesn’t occur until around 2½ to 3 years of age.

Fortunately, most parents are so loving and gentle and nurturing with their “bundle of joy” that no matter how frustrated they may be, they bite their critical tongue. Others, however, are not so kind; later, as the child grows and more can be expected of them, criticizing them seems to be a legitimate and a useful way to help the child learn to behave as expected, and that becomes the primary way their parents communicate with them.

Sure, kids can be tremendously annoying and parents do deserve compassion; they know that even though there are times when their child is lovably sweet and cooperative, they are not mature enough to be that way on a consistent basis. Even as they’re telling the child not to pull the dog’s tail, the child is pulling the tail; it takes a heroic amount of self-restraint to stay calm and realize that what went in the kid’s one ear, instantly came out the other.

HOW DOES SUCH PARENTAL CRITICISM BECOME SELF-CRITICISM?

It is learned. We learn to judge ourselves by the same criteria by which we are judged. And that becomes who we ARE. Pity the poor child raised on put downs, fault



finding, and abuse. When the parents say, “How could you be so dumb?” it implies that not only was THIS action dumb, but WE are dumb. We DID something dumb because our intellect is seriously limited; we see ourselves as flawed and defective – dumb.

Children exposed to those criticisms develop negative self-judgments, a mental “picture” of who they are, which can lead to a life of depression and misery. Unless they find a good mentor, they likely will continue their parents’ abuse by abusing themselves.

Recall, we take in not just memory “tapes” (as they were quaintly called in another technical era) we take in BELIEFS. Even when a child hates the suffering inflicted by their parents’ verbal abuse, it becomes “normal” for them and they believe and internalize those views of themselves. After all, those critical judgments come from the most important, the most powerful people in their life; people who are perceived as being omnipotent and infallible.

Those parental judgments become the fundamental core of our sense of self. It’s like gravity; ever present in absolutely every experience we ever have. And, like gravity, we don’t often see that our sense of self is there holding everything in its place. If our sense of self is based on negativity, our place becomes inferiority, inadequacy, worthlessness, and being unlovable. We may not even realize how ever-present and how deeply negative our identity is, until we furiously slam ourselves for some perceived flaw, attributing the mistake to some deep defect in our self. Like, spilling coffee becomes not a simple, single error, it becomes a catastrophic disaster; a definitive indicator of how thoroughly F’d up we are. So we react furiously to the minor mistake because it rubs our noses in WHO we think we are, “An idiot! A moron!”

If we stop to think about that, does such self-abuse really accomplish anything positive? We hated it when our parents did it to us, but like our parents, we’ve come to believe that harsh rebukes will motivate us to make the changes necessary to become someone we can like. Further, we unconsciously believe that such self-punishment will prevent us from making other similar errors in the future and, therefore, when we finally achieve that vaunted condition of perfection, we will be worthy of our own respect. So, the cycle continues and on, and on we go.

WHAT’S THE ACTUAL IMPACT?

Imagine living in constant fear of a parent’s condemnations? Could someone living under the threat of constant scrutiny, awaiting the verbal ax to fall, always vigilant for the slightest hint of parental displeasure, not be affected? Wouldn’t the conviction that there was no permanent relief leave them hopeless, helpless, depressed? Well, it’s even worse when we are the critic and doing it to ourselves.

A child can sometimes escape the anger of their parents in the companionship of understanding friends. But how do adults escape the critic who is ever-present inside themselves? How can they get the most satisfaction from life in Costa Rica, for example, when they’re rejecting and punitive toward the person living that life?

Talk to anyone who’s moved here and you’ll learn all about the many, many mistakes they made, during and after the move; blunders which, when you think about it, were inevitable. Regardless of the preparations that they made, they just didn’t know what they didn’t know. So the mistakes taught them how things really work, and to make modifications to make it work. Those

adjustments are all the harder if we're unforgiving and punitive about OUR OWN missteps.

If those misunderstandings are taken as indicators of stupidity, of weaknesses, rather than seeing them as realities for everyone making such a big change, we'll not be happy in our life here – or anywhere. Those who bash themselves anytime life becomes frustrating, and re-direct their anger onto family, friends, and Ticos (then bash themselves for being a jerk) are projecting their negative self-feelings onto others. That's a no-win situation, right?

THE FLAW IN OUR APPROACH TO OUR FLAWS

There are contradictions in trying to feel better about ourselves by brutalizing ourselves over our shortcomings. But over-the-top criticism doesn't really motivate anyone to change for the better. We know instantly we'd never treat our children that way, so why would we treat ourselves like that? What

it does is doom us into believing that self-esteem is impossible. Surely there must be something we can do to break the cycle?

Yes there is! Learning patience, understanding, encouragement, things that may have been lacking from our upbringing, are the first steps. Thinking of it in a different way, it is being to ourselves the way we wish our parents had been to us.

Last issue we looked at how some people want more and more physical possessions because they never feel they are "enough" in themselves. This time we considered how people may come to the CONVICTION that they're deficient by engaging in way too much self-criticism, believing it will finally move them into the "good enough" zone, when it actually digs them into a deeper hole of self-contempt.

Tony Johnson is a retired university mental health center psychologist. He lives quite happily in Ojochal having left his inner critic back in the United States. For more information, you can write Tony 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 meetings and their locations can be found at: www.costaricaaaa.com.

► Al-Anon

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

► American Legion Post 10-Escazú

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

► American Legion Post 12-Golfito

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

► American Legion Auxiliary

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

► Amigos of Costa Rica

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

► Atenas Bridge Club

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

► Birding Club Costa Rica

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

► Canadian Club

Welcomes everyone to join us for our monthly luncheons, and at our special annual events. 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 go to: www.canadianclubcr.com or email Pat at: canadianclubcr@yahoo.com to sign up.

► Central Valley Golf Association

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

► Costa Ballena Women's Network

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

► Costa Rica Writers Group

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

► Democrats Abroad

Meets on the last Saturday of the month at Casa LTG (Little Theater 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.

► Domestic Animal Welfare Group Costa Ballena

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

► First Friday Lunch

Each month on the first Friday of the month ARCR sponsors a First Friday Lunch at 12 p.m. All are invited to join ARCR officers and others for an informal lunch and BS session. No RSVP or agenda, just good food and meeting new and old friends. Attendees are responsible for their own food and drink expenses. Meetings are at the Chinese restaurant, Marisqueria Mariscos Vivo, located behind the Mas x Menos grocery store located across from the Nissan Dealer near Parque Sabana. Call ARCR (2220-0055) for directions.

► Little Theater Group

The oldest continuously running English-language theater 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 theater on the first Monday of the month from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Membership: Student C2,500, Adult C5,000, Family C8,000. For more information call the LTG Box Office: 8858-1446 or go to: www.littletheatregroup.org.

► Marine Corps League

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

► Newcomers Club of Costa Rica

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

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

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

► Professional Women's Network

PWN provides its members with opportunities to network with other professional women with the goal of aiding personal

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

► Radio Control Sailing Club

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

► San Vito Bird Club

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

► Wine Club of Costa Rica

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 costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com.

► Women's Club of Costa Rica

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

► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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

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

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

BUSINESS DIRECTORY (43)

Important dates in Costa Rica:

March 6th:

First Friday Lunch

March 8th:

Women's Day

March 26th, 27th:

ARCR Seminar for Expats.
Location: Palma Real
Hotel and Casino

April 3rd:

First Friday Lunch

April 11th:

Battle of Rivas
(Saturday)

April 4th - 12th:

Easter Week (Office
open Friday 3rd,
reopen Monday 13th)

April 23rd, 24th:

ARCR Seminar for Expats.
Location: Palma Real
Hotel and Casino

Funniest One Liners

*My girlfriend broke up
with me so I took her
wheelchair. Guess who
came crawling back*

*Just read that 4,153,237
people got married last
year. Not to cause any
trouble but shouldn't that
be an even number?*

*I'm reading a book about
anti-gravity. It's impossible
to put down.*

*My girlfriend is always
stealing my t-shirts and
sweaters... But if I take one
of her dresses, suddenly "We
need to talk".*



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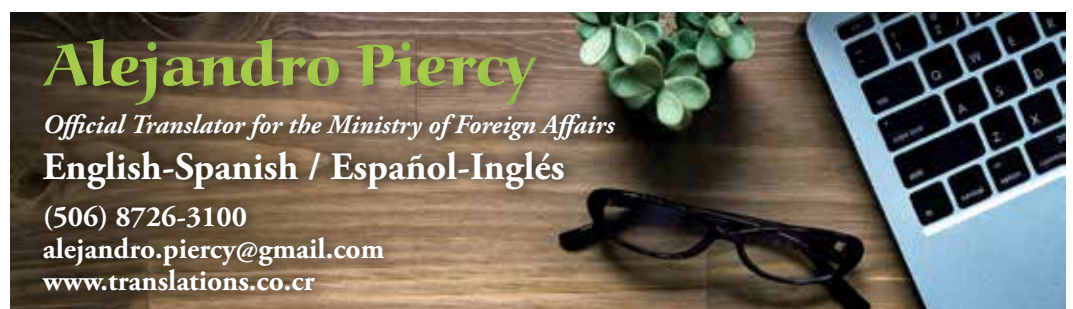
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