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ARCR's English Language Magazine

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El Residente

Following a Dream:

**Christopher
Howard**

Also in this issue:

Goodlight Bookstore
Stolen!

Saturday in Samara
The Past is Here and There

FREE MAPS
inside

WHAT CAN ARCR MEMBERSHIP DO FOR YOU?

The Association of Residents of Costa Rica is dedicated to serving expats from all over the world who are interested in this beautiful country. We can answer all your questions about life in this tropical paradise, AND help make YOUR transition of moving here **simpler**, **easier**, and **smoother**. ARCR provides our members:

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For information about how to join thousands of other expats living the **Pura Vida lifestyle**, visit our website at: www.arcr.net, call us at (506) 2220-0055 or (506) 4052-4052, or come by our offices at Av. 14, Calle 42, in San José, **today!**



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

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

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

Cover photo credit: Allen Dickinson

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EDITOR'S NOTE

There's some IMPORTANT NEWS about changes to the Caja in this issue. If you belong to the Caja, be sure to read about them in the "Across the Board" column.

Puzzled about the loss of mail and package delivery to the office? Please read, "From the Director's Desk." It tells the whole story of why the service is presently unavailable, and ARCR's efforts to have prevented the loss and to find a replacement.

There are some exciting NEW WRITERS in this issue too; one begins a new column about discovering some of the differences regarding living here in "Finding My Way in Costa Rica." For old hands it may bring back some memories of your first days here. If you are a more recent arrival, it may help you gain some insights on the adjustments we all must make when we choose this beautiful country for our new home. And, if you love animals, you'll enjoy reading this installment of "Life in the Southern Zone" and learning about some changes in animal rescue happening there.

Also, check out the new advertisers in this issue, and be sure to patronize the old ones too—they all help support El Residente.

Enjoy!



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ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

PHONE NUMBER CHANGE: The ARCR office is implementing a new telephone number, 2220-0055. The “old” number, 4052-4052, will continue to work for a period of time, but the transition has begun, so change your phone number records now.

CAJA CHANGE 1: The Caja has announced that beginning September 1, 2017, persons over the age of 65 no longer are required to have a paper Carnet (the card that shows entitlement)—the patient’s information will be available on the Caja computer system. (Don’t throw your Carnet away just yet—some clinics are still learning the new system.) If you want a new paper Carnet you can request one. Also, for those persons over 65, Carnets will no longer have an expiration date.

CAJA CHANGE 2: Persons over 65 who wish to add their family members to the Caja under their account only have to provide an affidavit of marriage, etc., to do so.

CAJA CHANGE 3: Some Caja clinics are now scheduling appointments via the Internet. Note: When you have scheduled your appointment, print out a copy and take it with you, as some clinics are not fully up to speed on the new system.

CAJA PAYMENTS: If you are making your Caja payments automatically through ARCR, and want to make sure your account is up to date, you can access the Caja account records online. BUT, to do so ARCR must first record your email address with the Caja. See Ivy to get your email address entered and thereafter you can do it directly.

CAJA RENEWALS: If you have changed your residency status since the last Caja renewal (from Temporary to Permanent, or to Pensionado) the Caja may have some difficulty identifying your account. That may be because the new cedula number is different from the old. Have them look for your account under your “old” cedula number.



ARCR Board members:

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

RELATED MEDICAL NEWS: Dr. Estaban Piercy Vargas, whose ad appears in this issue, is available for General Practice appointments through the ARCR office. Members should note that Dr. Piercy is affiliated with the Caja and can write prescriptions that can be taken directly to a Caja pharmacy for filling.

MAIL AND PACKAGE DELIVERY: Please read the article about the mail and package delivery problems, elsewhere in this issue. Those members who are still utilizing Aeropost (Aerocasillas) services, and who need assistance with locating a letter or package, can call Ivy for help.

CUSTOMS: We have been informed that Costa Rica Customs is again enforcing the rule, “one, laptop computer + one tablet + one cell phone per person” as the acceptable number of personal items. Attempting to bring in more than one of any of these items may be seen as attempting to avoid import duties and the excess item is subject to duties, fines, and/or confiscation.

FACEBOOK: Anyone, including groups and organizations listed on the Club Corner page wanting to inform members of their meeting schedules, special events, etc., can do so by posting the information on our Facebook page. Simply go to: www.facebook.com/ARCR123, and post your information there!

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by Allen Dickinson

Stolen!

During the early morning hours of Valentine's Day, February 14, 2007, my car, a 1992 Geo Tracker, which I had just purchased a month prior, was stolen from the street outside my home in La Sabana. I had been living in Costa Rica for sixty-nine days.

One could easily conclude that the theft was "my own fault." I had inadvertently left the car parked in the street earlier in the afternoon, assuming I would be going out later. But I didn't, and I forgot it was parked outside and that it needed to be brought inside the compound for the night.

In the morning I was car-less.

The next day I reported the theft to OIJ and a completed the requisite denuncia.

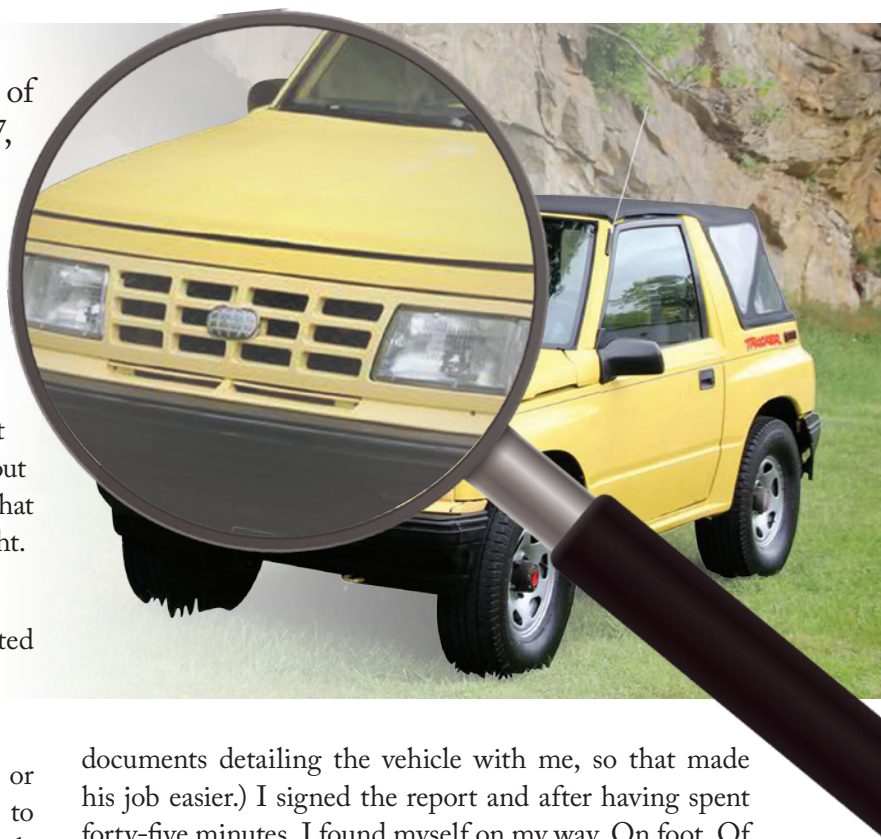
What is a denuncia? And what is the OIJ?

In English we would say a denuncia is a "statement" or "report" about the details of the theft, and I needed to make this report to the state police organization that deals with serious crimes in Costa Rica. That organization is the OIJ, Organismo de Investigación Judicial.

The reporting process was relatively easy. I went to the OIJ headquarters in downtown San José; it wasn't hard to find, as it is located on the ground floor of one of the huge, multi-story buildings in the government office complex. Once there, I was shown to the correct office where a receptionist greeted me and asked my reason for being there.

At that time my Spanish was very limited—I could order a beer, ask where the bathroom was, and get directions to the nearest Taco Bell, but not much more. I was, however, treated courteously, and a translator was summoned. I explained my situation and, after the lady had checked my passport and noticed my age, was directed to wait in the "mayor" (old folks) priority seats.

I had brought a book with me, but it was only about fifteen minutes before an officer came out and took me back to his desk. He spoke much more and better English than I did Spanish, and together we were able to communicate well enough that he could type out the report on an aged, Smith-Corona typewriter. (Of course I had brought the



documents detailing the vehicle with me, so that made his job easier.) I signed the report and after having spent forty-five minutes, I found myself on my way. On foot. Of course. I never expected to see the vehicle again, assuming that in the intervening twenty-four hours it had been reduced to a pile of parts and pieces which were probably already being distributed widely across the country.

Fast forward ten years. On a Friday, at about 8:30 in the evening, the phone in my home (I was now living in Santa Ana) rang. My wife answered it and was told by a lady that my car, as identified by the license plate number, was in Limón and was causing problems.

That lady must have been very upset; she had gone to the trouble of going to the National Registry and finding out I was the registered owner. She then, somehow, found my home telephone number, a number I did not have at the time of the original theft, and called me to inform me of the whereabouts of my car.

With the help of a friend, I too went online and, sure enough, there was the original registration in my name and the denuncia where I had reported it stolen. I printed off a copy of both documents and the next day again headed into San José, to the OIJ office to report the

information. This time I had my Tica wife with me to help with the Spanish translation.

And again, I was treated with respect and deference. This time I was simply given a copy of the denuncia "package" and told that the OIJ office in Limón would be notified and would be on the lookout for the vehicle, and that someone would contact me later. Really, no more than I expected; I didn't imagine that a SWAT team would be marshaled together and an intense sweep of the Limón area would be conducted to find a twenty-five-year old car that was stolen ten years ago.

And, as of the date of this writing, nobody has contacted me about the car—also not unexpected.

What was unexpected was that when I got home and looked through the package of papers I was given at the OIJ office, I found two other denuncias that had been filed at some time in the past ten years. One was a complaint about the car being involved in something illegal, and the second was a report that simply said I had reported a stolen "coffee maker." No additional details: no names, dates, or any other information was provided.

So now I'm rooting for the OIJ and hoping that one day someone calls and tell me to come get my car... and that there is a nice coffee maker sitting in the back seat.

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8 THE VIEW FROM DOWNTOWN

by Michael Miller

Mercado Central, a Slice of Costa Rican Life

Expats are often faced with this situation: “I have visitors, from back home, here in Costa Rica. They will be here for only a short visit, so what is the best way to quickly show them a taste of *real* Costa Rican life?”

My answer is the Mercado Central in downtown San José. The Mercado Central (or the Central Market) is more than a slice of Costa Rican life, it is a slice and a half!

The market was built on Avenida Central by the city of San José in 1880, and it has been a thriving Latino market ever since. It is only one square block and one story high, yet it contains a staggering maze of crowded, narrow walkways that wind their way among hundreds of small stalls and alcoves, jam-packed into this teeming marketplace.

Today, when you walk inside the Mercado, you will leave behind the reminders of the 21st century: the fast food chains, the bank money machines, the honking cars and San José’s infamously raucous motorcycles without mufflers. You will enter a marketplace that is not a lot different than it was 130 years ago. It is classic Costa Rica.

Entering the Mercado from the Avenida Central side, the first thing that you will see are shops selling tourist souvenirs: Costa Rican beach towels, Costa Rican coffee mugs, Costa Rican T-shirts, and on and on. Walk right on by... this is *not* the real Mercado experience.

Probe a little deeper and you will find that along the first walkway there are several stalls with attractive leather goods; things like belts, wallets and purses. Much of the leather has been hand-tooled with intricate designs. Go a little further and you will see stalls with traditional local clothing; for example, highly embroidered white shirts for boys, or embroidered dresses that girls might wear on special occasions such as holiday parties or their First Holy Communion.

As you explore the Mercado you will be amazed at the tremendous variety of what is available. There are fresh produce shops brimming with all kinds of fruits and

vegetables, also fresh meat and fish stalls, even stalls that sell only herbs and spices. I found one location that sold nothing but honey; many, many different varieties of honey. There are also stores selling all kinds of kitchen equipment and implements, others selling jewelry. And much, much more.

There is one modern adaptation that the Mercado has made that is very much for the better; all the vendors who sell fresh meat or fish, are required to show their products in glass-domed, refrigerated display cases. This is a good thing. In the old days, the meats and fish would have been marinating at room temperature, with the help of the local flies.

On a recent visit I stopped by a fruit stall and I saw many of the items that you would expect to see in a tropical marketplace: several different varieties of bananas, bright yellow pineapples, beautiful mangoes, juicy watermelons, and papayas as big as American footballs. In addition to these familiar fruits, I saw many different ones that I could not readily identify; fruits with names like guayaba, yuplon, anona, and maracuya. Wow, how exciting, I thought. Even though I have been coming to Costa Rica since the 1980’s, there is still much to discover.

As you wander around the Mercado you will find vendors with fresh-cut flowers. Then there are shops with forbidding looking local cheeses. You can even find live baby chickens. One small shop had “medicinal” plants. The proprietor of this shop showed me canning jars packed with combinations of these plants. He opened one of the jars and he assured me that it would cure any headache, just by smelling it.

Throughout the Mercado there are dozens of places to eat. Most of these places are inexpensive working-class eateries. Some of them are small “sodas,” the traditional Costa Rican diners where you can sit down and have a typical Tico meal... with beans and rice, of course. One restaurant offers a variety of seafood dishes, including a delicious seafood soup that would cost you much more if you ordered it at a restaurant in Escazú.

Some of these food outlets are so small that they look like tiny little stands, similar to small street-food vendors.



Starting with a soft tortilla shell with beans and rice, this food maker may add sausage, eggs, pork, or chicken. She will then fold it up in a sheet of banana leaf, and it will be ready for sale.



You can join the fun at the Mercado Central six days a week. Just remember, some sections of it can be very crowded, and you should use common sense while exploring this downtown landmark.



Selling only one flavor of ice cream for over 100 years, Sorbetera de Lolo Mora, has been an iconic shop for generations of Ticos. The flavor is a very rich vanilla with cinnamon and other spices.



Fresh fruit and produce stalls are some of the main attractions at the Mercado. Some fruits will be familiar, and some will be new to most North Americans.



The always busy Mercado Central (Central Market) on the always busy Avenida Central, has been an important part of Downtown San José for over 130 years. A visit here provides a slice of classic Costa Rican life.

They usually offer only a few items, such as empanadas or tamales wrapped in banana leaves. Most everything is made right in front of you, and the aromas are wonderful. One I found was so small that the counter and eight stools occupied all the available space, so that all the food preparation took place in the small space above, with the filled plates handed down through a hole in the ceiling.

There are several individual shops in Mercado Central that are worth highlighting, and here are just two of them. The first is Café Central, perhaps the best place in Costa Rica to buy top quality whole-bean coffee. The proprietors, Patricia and Adrian, will talk to you about their coffee the way a winemaker will talk about his wines. They proudly boast about the characteristics and subtle notes that you can taste in different varieties of

beans, based on the different growing regions of Costa Rica; places like Tarrazú south of San José, or the slopes of the Poás Volcano. Café Central gets its coffee beans raw and roasts them right there in the market.

The second shop worth highlighting is a place with a long name; La Sorbetera de Lolo Mora. This ice cream shop has been in the Mercado since 1901. When it opened, in an era before there was a single automobile on the streets of San José, it offered only one flavor of ice cream. Today, it still has only one flavor, the same flavor, a rich vanilla with cinnamon and a hint of nutmeg and perhaps cloves. The ice cream is soft and a bit slushy, and has a consistency similar to a custard, but each time I visit this shop, I see Tico parents treating their smiling children to this Costa Rican classic. It is obvious that the children

are being introduced to this iconic shop with a certain reverence, as generations of Tico children have been for over a century.

When you visit the Mercado Central, you will undoubtedly discover your own favorite vendors. It might be a shop with fruits you have never seen before. It might be a stand with a smiling old lady hand-making a tasty snack wrapped in a banana leaf. ¿Quien sabe? (Who knows?) One thing is certain. When you visit Mercado Central you will experience a bit of the real Costa Rican life-style that you will not find at a beach resort or in a gated suburban community. It's a healthy slice of the *real* San José.

One note of caution. The Mercado is a warren of small, intersecting passageways and aisles. If you have small children with you, keep them close; it's very easy to get lost. Also, the City of San José tells us that thousands of people visit the Mercado Central each day, sometimes *many* thousands. While the vast majority of those people are wonderful Ticos, it can be tight and crowded inside the Mercado and, like in any big city, that means there

may be a few ne'er-do-wells and pick-pockets wandering around. Use the same common sense you would use in any crowded urban situation; no flashy jewelry, keep your cell phones in a pocket or purse, gentlemen should keep their cash and wallet in their front pockets, and ladies should keep their purses close to them.

Personally, I have visited the Mercado Central hundreds of times. It is one of my regular shopping venues and I have never had any problems.

The Mercado Central is open Monday through Saturday; closed Sundays and Costa Rican holidays. It is located between Avenida Central and Avenida 1, between Calle 6 and Calle 8.

Michael Miller is the author of the first and only guide book that focuses on Downtown San José, Costa Rica, titled: The Real San José. Paperback copies of The Real San José are available at the ARCR office. An electronic version is available at Amazon/Kindle.

You can see additional stories that Michael has written about Downtown San José at his website: TheRealSanJose.com



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(12) GUANACASTE... FROM A HAMMOCK

by Geoff Hull

Saturday in Samara

The morning arrives at dawn and I stir awake, my sweetheart in my arms, as the last of the cool night air sifts in through the screens. Georgia gets up first; she walks outside for a few yoga sun salutations, and proceeds to the rancho, our kitchen. It's open to the jungle; no walls, just a roof and six posts. Luckily we haven't had to chase out anything larger than an iguana. No pumas, wild pigs, coatis, kinkajous, raccoons, boa constrictors, fox, or jaguarundis have awoken to our screams in the rancho; our pets usually keep jungle critters away. But those, and many other critters, do live all around us in this jungle we call home.

The rancho is just steps from our house, but her walk involves many stops along the way to pet meowing and dancing cats. Georgia finally makes it to the kitchen and starts boiling water for the French press coffee.

Our dogs are absolutely amazed that we arise and appear daily, making strange Tarzan noises while yawning, grunting, and doing downward dog yoga stretches. Staffordshire Bull Terriers are insane creatures, and ours have an affinity for coffee. I always guard my cup with both hands, and never leave it where those slobbering thieves can get to it.

I creak my way to a lounge chair outside and plop down. Bats and dragonflies vie for the early flying insects above our heads and my love has to dodge hummingbirds to bring me coffee. Squawking parrots fly overhead toward the beach, arguing constantly along the way. Yellow and red trogons dance in our papaya trees and buzz us, inches above our heads, and we can feel the vibration of their wings as they go by. Monkeys are everywhere, waking up, itching, and climbing from tree to tree. Soon one big male, way up in our Guanacaste tree, growls a low rumble. The others join in, and soon the surrounding troupe of twelve are howling like lions. We both smile and cringe at the volume of it. There is no sleeping-in here; we pretty much live in a zoo.



It rained all night and, as the sun peaks over the far mountain, the humidity is thick. An incredible rainbow suddenly appears in the Maxfield Parrish watercolor sky. It lasts only ten minutes, then disappears as the sun rises. Sunlight makes the ornamental garden, filled with Hibiscus, Bougainvillea, Ginger, Jasmine, Croton, Heliconia, Lantana, and Ti plants, explode in color; their reds, greens, yellows, oranges, pinks, blues, and purples all vibrant beyond description.

Two cups of Poas Volcano coffee on board, some impatient stares from canines, and it's time for a walk. Strolling hand

in hand with a third cup of coffee in our free hands, the blonde girl in my life and I amble down the dirt road, trailing four of her five cats and our crazed dogs, zigzagging about in front of us. Looking up, blooming orchids cling to giant palms. We cruise by mango, lime, and coconut trees and gather a bounty of each to add to our breakfast of fruit, yogurt, and homemade granola bars.

Our son, Cody, and I load our surfboards while Georgia pulls on jeans, boots, and a bandana; she has a horseback tour with three people scheduled for 8:00. High tide is at 9:00... perfect timing. Georgia will get her "fix," Cody and I get ours.

We drive to Horsejungle on a dirt road that passes through open fields and pastures. Their perimeters are fenced with barbed wire attached to large posts made from cut branches of the indio desnudo tree. These thick branches, when stuck in the ground, root, grow, and become indio desnudo trees on their own, often growing over the barbed wire attached to it. Most of rural Costa Rica has these "living fences" dividing properties. The locals nicknamed these "Tourist Trees" because their bark continuously turns red and then peels. It's a defense mechanism that keeps strangling vines from attaching to them. According to the old ones here that sell it, the tea made from these bark strips cures everything that ails you.

The last field we pass has a few hundred bright, white egrets, spaced perfectly apart from each other, in the tall hemp and wild grass dotting the entire pasture. In the evenings they all crowd together on mangroves above the river.

I drop Georgia off at Horsejungle where she is surrounded by horses and is glowingly happy. Cody and I head to Samara. It's crowded because of a beach volleyball tournament being held this weekend. Four competition courts, enclosed in waist high walls covered in sponsor ads, are set up oceanfront. The beach is brimming with people: spectators, judges, and athletes. There is rasta hair, tattoos, G-strings, dogs, and naked toddlers there to enjoy the competition. Cody and I watch a few really good rallies, but are distracted by some nice swells coming in.

The tournament has emptied the bay of weekend surfers, and we grab our boards and get in the water. After an hour or so I find myself sitting on my board, out in the turquoise warm Pacific, next to my son, as we look at a beautiful palm-covered beach surrounded by blue skies and green jungle. Music, tan bodies, and volleyball occupy the sand. I take a long ride back to shore, tickling the wave wall with my fingers along the way. Back onshore I

sit at a table in the sand to have a cold beer and watch the women's doubles compete.

Today Georgia is riding Centenario, who is behaving quite well. She and her three tourists have crossed a low river and ridden through the jungle where howlers screamed and hooted at them. Blue, long tailed motmots and magpie-jays chortle and jabber as they follow them. Butterflies of every design are abundant, drunkenly flying to all the flowers brought out by recent rains. In a field, the riders pass four very tall wood storks, white with black heads and huge beaks, who watch like vultures as they pass. The horses take them down a path and they pop out at stunning Buena Vista beach, which is rugged, gorgeous, and raw. The tourists jaws drop and they gasp, "Oh my God!" at the beauty of it. They point, mouths gaping, at something long and bright pink flying across the sky in front of them; my wife explains that it's the Roseate Spoonbill, the country's only pink bird. She then leads them on a gentle lope along the nearly deserted white sand beach, a bucket list dream for so many. On the way back, they cross in front of a turtle sanctuary and river estuary. On the sand banks, a pinch upriver, is a six-foot crocodile, smiling and sunning itself. Local crocs have been known to venture out into the ocean occasionally, and it makes me nervous surfing near any river mouth. If I ever saw one in the ocean near me, I'd shoot ink out like an octopus!

I finish my beer just as Georgia calls for a ride home. Perfect timing once again. We load up our boards and drive to get her.

Home again, home again, jiggety-jig. We all strip out of sweat soaked clothes and sandy bathing suits and jump in our dip pool. Lunch is a homegrown papaya split in half with banana, coconut, cacao nibs, strawberries, pineapple, and hemp seeds, with organic roasted peanut butter brimming out of it. A leafy green salad, and cold coconut water finish off the meal.

After lunch today there was some reading and a nap in the hammock. On other days it may be followed by an hour of doing some home maintenance; machete slashing to keep the jungle at bay, or doing some painting, digging, and gardening. Maintaining a house in the jungle requires constant counterattacks... and beer breaks.

Then it is time for another sortie into Samara. It needs to be a fast trip, before the combination of Samara's afternoon solar surface heat, and our trucks broken air conditioner, start those sizzling sounds between my ears, indicative of the few brain cells I have left, boiling. The

five-minute ride from jungle to town will bring a fifteen degree rise in temperature; the beaches in Guanacaste have some of the hottest climate in the country.

It is supposed to be a quick trip with just a few stops at the bank, store, and organic markets, but it turns into two hours of errands filled with smiles, laughs, sweaty hugs, kisses, hand slap/knuckle bumps, and catch-up conversations with the friendliest, kindest, most interesting, and loving people I am lucky enough to call my friends. A Steinbeck collection of quirky characters. When I wave at some of the locally-born, sun-kissed faces from my truck I get giant pearly white grins that just emit happiness with life. We love our local peeps to the point of risking suicidal spontaneous combustion to talk to them in the shade-less center of this town that somehow doesn't ignite in the afternoon heat.

We get home, strip off our third set of clothes for the day and take our second shower. The tropics are hot!

Dinner is early at our house. Green onions, garlic, ginger, tamari sauce and sesame oil are sautéed with broccoli, carrots, portabella mushrooms, tofu, and mung bean

noodles, all poured over turmeric root spiced rice. Chilled coconut water washes it all down.

Then it's time to mosey up to our secret spot, and watch a 360 degree view sunset over two beaches and endless rolling green mountains of jungle. The sky erupts into fire after the sun dips below the horizon. A hug and a kiss seals each of these cherished moments that begin the night.

Back home a glass of wine and a decision on whether to go out for live music or, most likely, to hang at home with a good book, and drift off to sleep early, while silent lightning flashes, and distant thunder hints of the rainstorm approaching our corner of paradise.

That's how my Saturday was. It was just another day that makes me feel like the luckiest guy on the planet.

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

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16 LIFE IN THE SOUTHERN ZONE

by Tony Johnson

It's a Love Shack, BABY!

Life is great in Costa Rica. I don't need to tell you why, but I would like to suggest a way to make it better—volunteer, and add some love! And one of the most certain ways to increase your happiness is by doing something for others. (And by “others” I don't confine the definition to humans only.)

Elsewhere in this issue (see, *Paradise, We Have a Problem*) I wrote about personal happiness, and the conditions that can effect that happiness, both positively and negatively. What I didn't go into there was that one of the very best conditions to improve our happiness is by giving freely of ourselves; helping make another being's life a little better. Doing that can give us huge rewards of happiness.

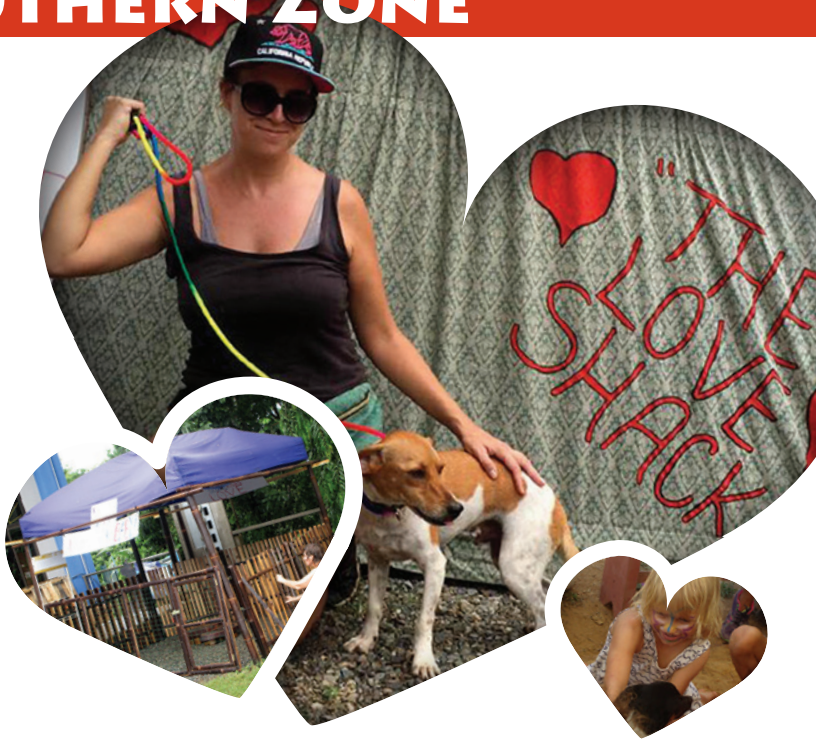
But sometimes it might seem a little difficult to find just the right opportunity.

There's a lot of opportunity to help others here in CR. People, kids, the environment, sea turtles, stray dogs and cats, to name but a few. All it takes from us is to step forward and to volunteer a little of our time to some worthy cause.

And, one of those volunteer opportunities that is happening in the Uvita area might suggest what you could do in your own Costa Rica hometown.

Recent developments have made this an exciting time for the Costa Ballena animal rescue community. A new rescue center has opened in the Zona Sur, and an old center, DAWG, has learned some new tricks. There are plenty of zaguates, so the two shelters will be kept very busy.

DAWG has updated its facilities; it has improved its animal housing area, and greatly remodeled its adoption center. Once a simple canopy with a portable fence to contain the adoptees, the center has become the “Love Shack.” This goes right along with DAWG's new slogan, DAWGisLOVE. That old canopy is now a delightful play on that hit wedding party song, “The Love Shack.” With a new elaborate bamboo exterior, and a more comfortable interior resting place for the animals, the strays are kept cooler and more comfortable. Bamboo planters decorate the exterior, and small tree trunk stools provide seating



for children or adults to play with the puppies. The change has created a more fun place for viewing and meeting the homeless critters housed there.

Dr. Fernando, owner of the Centro Veterinario, has generously allowed DAWGisLOVE to use part of his building and parking lot. All renovation material and labor was donated by DAWGisLove long time caregiver extraordinaire, Jackie, the mother of the “Bamboo Family.” Jackie is an expert in types and uses of bamboo and the “Family” lives on a large bamboo farm. They can be contacted at thebamboofamily@yahoo.com.

The updated and more festive adoption center, and free popcorn, make it a place to visit on your Saturdays in Uvita. The best part, of course, is the lovable puppies, kitties, and fabulous “used dogs” to whom one can give, and get, love.

Starting to see the possibilities for giving in your community?

All animal shelters need people with MANY skills: animal care, marketing, soliciting donations, maintenance and updating the facilities, organizing fund raising events, performing at those events, and practically anything else you can imagine that can help the animals.

If you don't live in the Uvita area, think about getting together with your local shelter. I'll bet they need YOU! And you can reap the rewards of happiness by volunteering!

by Marshall Cobb

The Day I Rode My Bicycle to See the President

The Costa Rica government announced their intention to pave CR Route 606; the mostly unpaved road that leads to the Monte Verde district where I, and about 7,000 others, live. The project has been a long time coming. Promises have previously been made, and broken, but this time it appeared that the pavement project was really going to happen.

The paving is a controversial subject among the locals, and many a spirited conversation has taken place about the pros and cons of such a project. I have documented those arguments elsewhere, so I won't rehash them again here, but my prior work, and my location here atop the unpaved mountain compelled me to attend a meeting where the project, and the many people who contributed to it, would be lauded. The keynote speaker was, of course, the President of Costa Rica: Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera.

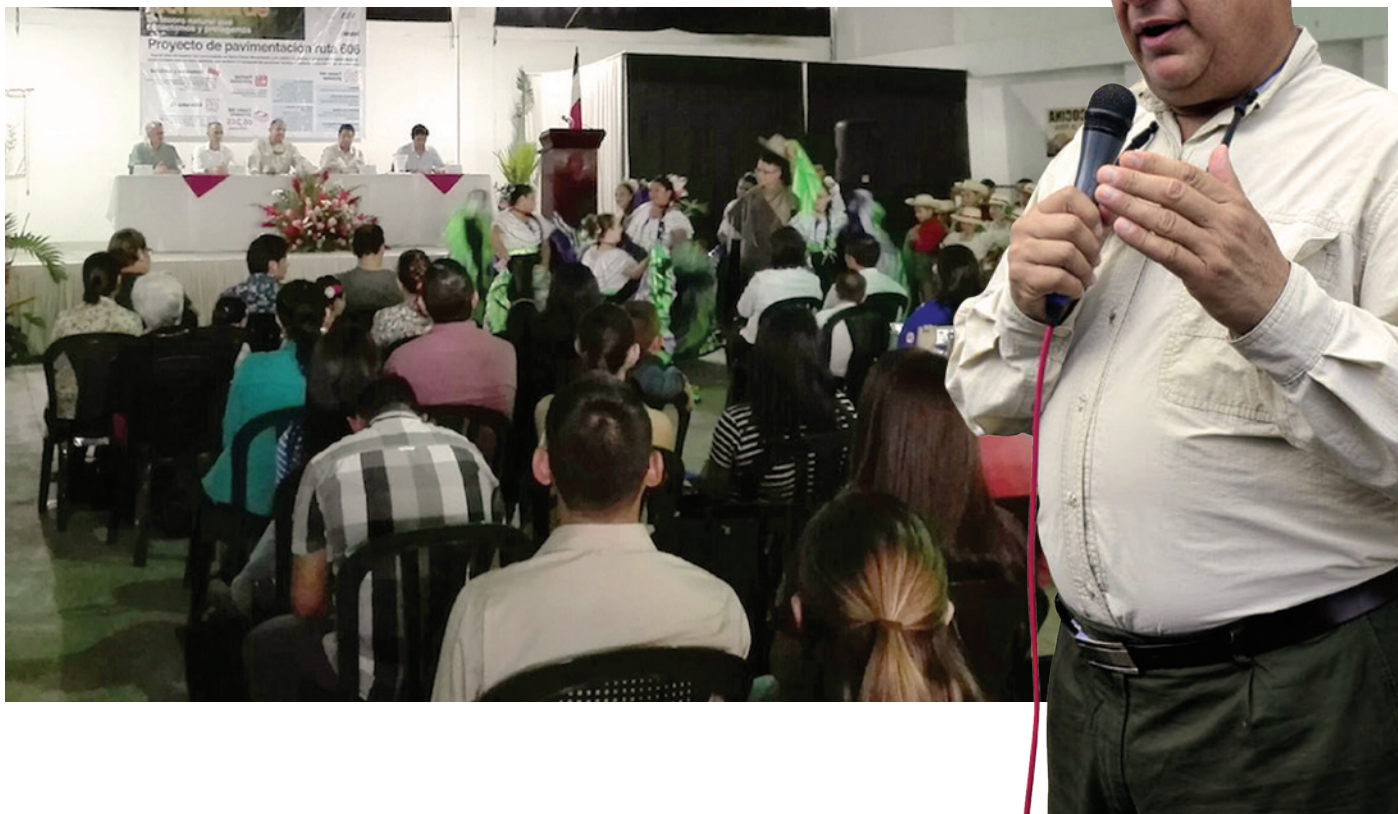
It is not often that you have the opportunity to ride your bicycle down the hill to attend a meeting involving the

President. It is likely even rarer that the event would take place in a large room in a shopping mall normally devoted to civic activities, including the weekly farmer's market.

It was a safe bet that the crowd would be large, and by the time President Solís arrived—about forty-five minutes past the anointed hour—it was at capacity. The room had been set up to handle the load with rows of folding chairs extending its length, and the organizers made efforts to cheer up the room, which is essentially a poorly-lit concrete box, with signage and displays.

To begin, prominent members of the community took turns recapping some of the history behind the pavement project and those who had worked on it.

Then the crowd heard from a representative from the National Roadway Council (CONAVI) as well as the Minister of Transportation. He threw-out a teaser regarding a different road that might soon be improved; the road to Tilarán. His comments



created quite a buzz. He also introduced the notion of a need for greater connectivity of the roadways in the area.

For as tiny as it is in terms of land mass, the various regions of Costa Rica are wildly different from one another. The Caribbean coast, besides being a coastline, has little in common with the the Pacific coast (close your eyes on the Caribbean side and you might well think you're in Jamaica.) And the greater San José area, with its population density and commerce, is nothing at all the Monte Verde district or much of the rest of Costa Rica.

One root cause of these disparities is the fact that a mountain range runs down the middle of the country. Another is, of course, the time and effort it takes to travel due to the poor condition of the roads. The difficulties involved with travel have created significant barriers between the various communities—outsized barriers in relation to the size of the country.

President Solís seized upon this theme quickly as he left the stage and went to stand on the main floor. He stressed that greater connectivity within our country is what is going to empower the people to do more, create more, and have more success. Further (with the hope that my poor Spanish proves equal to the challenge of translation) he stated, “This road, therefore, is the physical manifestation of what the government had promised to do in terms of connecting the people.”

The President was a better speaker than I'd expected—almost as good as the young lady who presented him with an award for all of his efforts.

Overall I took away a few key things, including the fact that, as I suspected, actual work on the road won't begin for at least three, perhaps six months, while all involved attempt to come up with a solution to the seismic challenges (pun intended) of what is known as

Kilometer 13 (which involves a fault line that potentially compromises that portion of the existing road and any improvements). The physical work done during this span will involve bringing up and positioning all of the needed equipment and material. It was also honestly stated that the road work is best done after the rainy season.

As I walked slowly through the crowd, back to my bicycle, I thought through all of the conflicting information and viewpoints I'd heard about the paving project over the last couple of years. I also mulled the various things about living here that can, at times, bring me to levels of frustration I didn't know existed (and I'm the parent of two young boys!)

Then I realized that I, along with several hundred other people, had just walked into a mall and sat within a few meters of our country's President. There were plenty of police waiting outside, but my backpack and I had waltzed right in and sat down among everyone else. There were no metal detectors or pat-downs, nor was I required to show my ID. And the people were respectful to one another and those speaking. It was like taking a time-machine back to a time that I barely even remember.

While I pedaled home, the President's words bounced around inside my head. Yes, there are a lot of challenges and no, not everyone agrees that pavement is a good thing. There are, however, some amazing upsides to a country where a government largely trusts its own people to attend a gathering, and where vitriol and intolerance are very much the exception, not the rule. Yes, a little more connectivity could probably do good things here—and everywhere else where people need to live together.

You can read more about the community arguments about the new pavement, as well as other issues in the Monteverde area, by going to: www.marshall-cobb.com



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Places of interest

1. Parque Central
2. Correos de Costa Rica
3. Cruz Roja
4. Canchas de tenis
5. Hospital CIMA
6. Escuela Rep. de Venezuela
7. Colegio Nuestra Sra del Pilar
8. Liceo de Escazú
9. Embajada de Corea
10. INS
11. Palacio Municipal
12. Edificio Anexo Municip.
13. PALÍ
14. Hulera
15. Estadio Nicolás Macís

16. Jazz Café
17. Plaza San Rafael
18. EPA
19. Peaje de Escazú
20. Iglesia San Miguel Arcángel
21. Iglesia Bautista
22. Super Las Promociones
23. Ctro. Com. Plaza Real
24. Ctro. Com. Laureles
25. Ctro. Com. Plaza Escazú
26. Plaza Colonial
27. C. Com. Trejos Montealegre
28. Ctro. Com. Los Anonos
29. Plaza Anonos
30. Costa Rica Country Club
31. Gasolinera
32. BAC San José
33. BCR
34. Banco Nacional

Map of
Escazú



Map of downtown San José

Museums

1. M. de Arte Costarricense
2. M. de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo (FANAL)
3. M. Nacional
4. M. del Ferrocarril
5. M. de Jade
6. M. de Criminología
7. M. de Oro y Numismática
8. M. Filatélico y Telegráfico
9. M. de los Niños

Hospitals

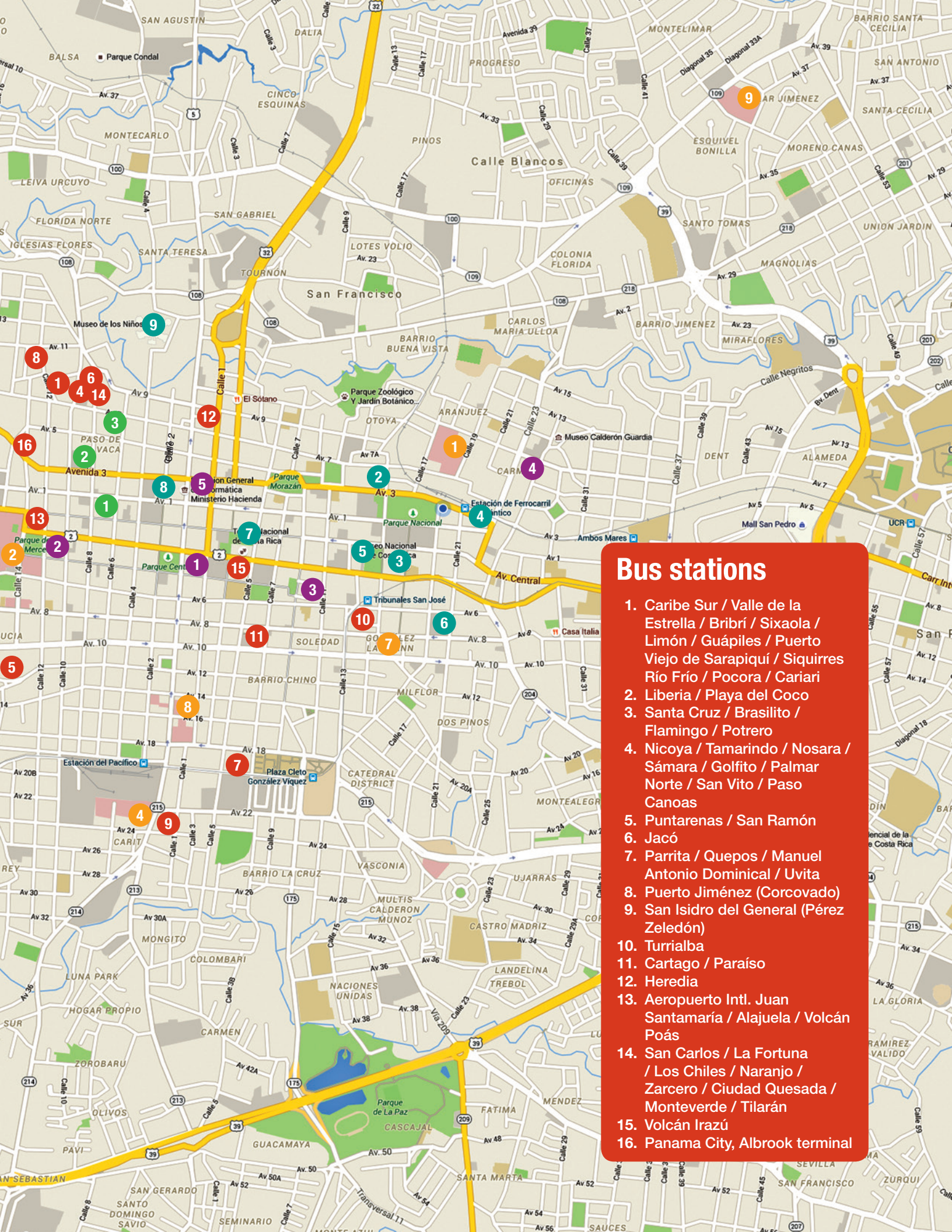
1. H. Calderón Guardia
2. H. San Juan de Dios
3. H. Nacional de Niños
4. H. de la Mujer
5. H. México
6. Cruz Roja Costarricense
7. H. Clínica Santa Rita
8. H. Clínica Bíblica
9. H. Clínica Católica

Markets

1. Mercado Central
2. Mercado Borbón
3. Mercado Paso de la Vaca
4. Mercado de Mayoreo
5. Mercado de la Coca Cola

Churches

1. Catedral Metropolitana
2. Iglesia La Merced
3. La Soledad
4. Santa Teresita
5. El Carmen



Bus stations

1. Caribe Sur / Valle de la Estrella / Bribri / Sixaola / Limón / Guápiles / Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí / Siquirres / Río Frío / Pocora / Cariari
2. Liberia / Playa del Coco
3. Santa Cruz / Brasilito / Flamingo / Potrero
4. Nicoya / Tamarindo / Nosara / Sámara / Golfito / Palmar Norte / San Vito / Paso Canoas
5. Puntarenas / San Ramón
6. Jacó
7. Parrita / Quepos / Manuel Antonio Dominical / Uvita
8. Puerto Jiménez (Corcovado)
9. San Isidro del General (Pérez Zeledón)
10. Turrialba
11. Cartago / Paraíso
12. Heredia
13. Aeropuerto Intl. Juan Santamaría / Alajuela / Volcán Poás
14. San Carlos / La Fortuna / Los Chiles / Naranjo / Zarcero / Ciudad Quesada / Monteverde / Tilarán
15. Volcán Irazú
16. Panama City, Albrook terminal

Map of Santa Ana

- ## Places of interest
1. Porky's
 2. Perro Loco
 3. Centro de Conserv. Sta. Ana
 4. Salón Comunal Río Oro
 5. Salón Comunal San Rafael
 6. Colegio Ecológico Sn. Martín
 7. Colegio de Santa Ana
 8. Escuela San Rafael
 9. Escuela de Artes Integradas
 10. EBAIS

11. Municipalidad de Santa Ana
12. Biblioteca Pública
13. Cruz Roja
14. Estación de Bomberos
15. Centro Médico Torre Fuerte
16. Aldeas Infantiles SOS
17. Correos de Costa Rica
18. Parque de calistenia
19. Plaza El INVU
20. Ctro de Estudios Brasileños
21. Berkeley Academy
22. Forum 1
23. Sports Complex
24. Auto Mercado
25. Plaza Murano
26. Centro Com. Tejas de Sol
27. Plaza San Antonio
28. Iglesia de Río Oro
29. Iglesia de San Rafael
30. Iglesia de Santa Ana
31. Gimnasio de Santa Ana
32. Servicentro Anatot
33. Gasolinera
34. Banco Popular
35. Banco Nacional
36. BCR
37. BAC San José





Ask ACS

I'm a U.S. citizen living in Costa Rica, but I just got an email about a special election in my home state. I thought elections were only every two years! What types of services does the Embassy provide to American citizens?

Our consul just got a notification too—did you know the state of Utah is holding a special election in early November? Eligible absentee voters from the third district have a chance to vote for a new Congressional representative. Even if this isn't your representative, it is a good reminder to keep your absentee voting and contact information up to date, so your home board of elections can notify you too.

As U.S. citizens, voting is a fundamental right and our staff is always ready to assist. The Federal Voting Assistance Program works to ensure overseas citizens and service members have the tools and information to successfully make their votes count from anywhere in the world.

U.S. elections are managed individually by the 50 States, U.S. territories (like Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and the District of Columbia. This means there are over 50 sets of rules for absentee voting. Though the Embassy does not offer on-site voting services, here's what you can do.

Either by coming to the Embassy or using FVAP.gov's handy online assistant, U.S. citizens can request an absentee ballot by filling out the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), and mailing it to their local election official in their State of legal residence. If you're near the Embassy in Pavas, drop it off and our staff will send it for you.

1. Upon receipt, the board of elections approves the FPCA or requests additional clarifying information.
2. Once the FPCA is approved, the election official sends an absentee ballot to the citizen.
3. The citizen returns their completed ballot to their local election official by their State's deadline.

For those Utah voters, if you have already requested and received an absentee ballot for the primary, send your ballot in now—and if you haven't received your ballot, use the Federal Write-In Ballot. You can download and fill it out using the online assistant on FVAP.gov or ask for help from our staff via ACSSanJose@state.gov.

If you'd like more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or need help with the absentee voting process please go to FVAP.gov or call FVAP at 001 703-588-1584 or 001-800-438-VOTE or email (vote@fvap.gov). There are also toll free numbers for 67 countries listed on FVAP.gov.

By the way...

U.S. citizens living or traveling outside the United States should also enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This free opt-in service allows our citizens to receive automatic updates about the foreign country where they are visiting or residing, including Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts. But more importantly, it permits our staff to contact registrants in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency. To sign up, visit: step.state.gov.



British fashion steals the spotlight at Costa Rica Fashion Week

For this issue, we'd like to share a little about a recently concluded event in which the British Embassy took part—the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, San José.

British designer labels Helen Anthony and Kitty Ferreira took the catwalk by storm at the 2017 edition of the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, San José; Central America's most important annual gathering of fashion designers, buyers and trend setters.

The 4-day event, which took place from 2 - 5 August at the InterContinental Hotel in Escazú, featured some of the country's biggest names in fashion, together with a sizeable roster of international designers from Guatemala, Mexico, and Spain. This was the first time that British designers were invited to showcase their lines at the renowned event, and the two participating British



brands, headed respectively by Naeem Anthony and Valerie Goode, delivered show-stopping performances on the final day of the fashion week, marking their entry onto the local and regional fashion scene with unforgettable style.

Valerie Goode's sustainable clothing line, Kitty Ferreira, brings a distinctly chic aesthetic to the ethical fashion movement, using non-toxic and fruit-based dyes and cruelty-free silk in her relaxed, yet stylish pieces. Naeem Anthony's label, Helen Anthony, employs the finest British fabrics, combining contemporary with classic elements to produce designs that leave no doubt as to why the British fashion industry remains a world leader.

This initiative was the British Embassy's first incursion into the fashion industry, and represents a valuable opportunity to bring the UK's creative energy and innovative spirit to the local market. We're looking forward to seeing a lot more British brands in local stores one day, not just in the fashion industry, but in other sectors as well, so if you spot an opportunity that you think we can help with, then do drop us a line or give us a call!

Luisa Pastor

Director, International Trade

Department for International Trade

British Embassy San José

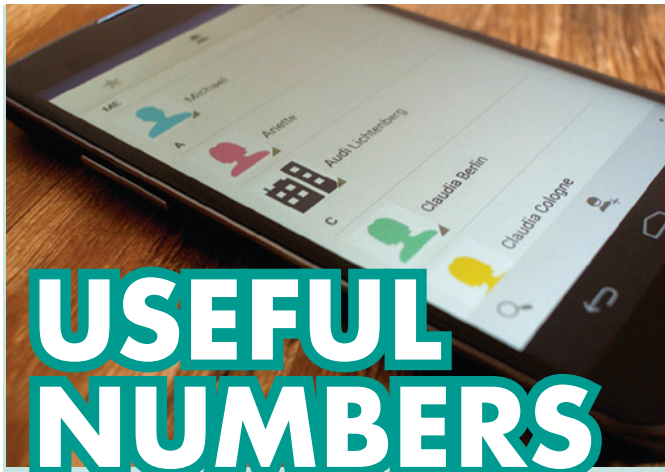
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Website: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica

Email: costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

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

Hours: 7:30AM–4PM

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

Email: sos@international.gc.ca

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

French Embassy

Phone: (506) 2234 4167

Address: A022, San José, Curridabat

Hours: 7:30AM–12:00PM

Email: ambafrcr@gmail.com

Spanish Embassy

Phone: (506) 2222 1933

Address: Calle 32, San José

Hours: 8AM–4AM

Email: emb.sanjose@maec.es

Emergency assistance: (506) 6050 9853

Venezuelan Embassy

Phone: (506) 2231 0974

Address: Boulevard de Rohrmoser, Calle 80A, San José

Email: embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com

Hours: 9AM–12:30PM, 2–4PM

CONFUSED BY THE METRIC SYSTEM?

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

(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

Milliliters × .034 = Fluid Ounces

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Square Meters × 10.764 = Square Feet

Square meters × 1000 = 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?

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

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(26) FINDING MY WAY IN COSTA RICA

by Carol McCool

The Past Is Here and There

Moving to Costa Rica was my first experience living outside the United States, and in a culture and climate different from what I had known. The story below is the first part of reflections on my early life here, when I was living on a farm in the mountains.

Daniela and her husband, Fernando worked for my husband and me on our small farm in the mountains. He cared for their two-year-old daughter while Daniela and I hiked together early in the morning for exercise. We were becoming friends.

She had lived in this Costa Rican campesino village for most of her twenty-five years, except for a short spell when she worked as a maid in a small hotel in the beach town of Quepos. I remember one of our conversations and the musings it started in my mind...

I stumbled on the worn, uneven surface of the bare rock that formed the road winding up and around the mountainside, and strained to keep up with my younger, and more physically fit, housekeeper. She pointed to a protruding boulder in our path and said, "That's where I was thrown from a horse when I was four. My head hit that rock. I was unconscious for three days."

"How did that happen?" I asked.

"I was sitting on a horse led by my uncle. It reared up and I fell off."

"Did you see a doctor?"

"No, the nearest doctor was too far away."

Farther along on our climb Daniela pointed to a hillside covered with bushy, shiny-green coffee plants:

"My sisters and I picked coffee over there for years when we were children. We were poor. My mother's first husband died in a train accident. Her second, my father, drank a lot. I wanted to stay in school, but we didn't have enough money. Our house was small and noisy. With five sisters there was nowhere for me to study."

I began to wonder what it was like to live your life in layers—over and over in a small space—where you turn a corner and see the house where you had your first kiss, or pass the nasty neighbor who poisoned your dog. Years later you and he are both here. You grow. People change.

The place is constant. The very rocks and fields sing your story.

When I came here José was 93. His father's family had been one of the first to permanently settle this area. They were descendents of Spanish immigrants. The Huetar Indians who preceded them had been more nomadic. Before he died, José told me about the jaguars and other wild animals that had lived here when he was a boy. He described going with his father by oxcart to take the annual coffee harvest to market. The trip, twenty-five kilometers each way, took nine days because of the weight—seven days to get there and two to return. They carried their food with them and slept in the open at the side of the road. These small farms have changed slowly over the years, but they are the same place, a place of shared history for five generations.

We pass some weathered fence posts which, after decades of standing the sun and rain, have eroded into gnarled, but deeply-anchored, sculptures. If I look closely, some of them seem to have faces.

In my mind I see one that looks like José, ready to pick up his old guitar, and softly sing a Spanish ballad of love and desire. Look at that narrow one with the fine lines in its weathered surface. You can see Ofelia in the wood, thin and erect, gray and elegant as she graces the fence along the road. Look over there at the wooden knots and curves revealing Samuel's face in a post as solid and unbending as he was in life.

I remember the thoughts I had when I arrived—me, a foreigner who came with a husband, thinking we would build a house and spend the rest of our lives here together. We chose the place because of the view, the affordable land and building costs. Two good years passed and then one bad one. Following our divorce, I alone remained and enjoyed living on my beautiful farm.

The community welcomed and supported me, even when they might not have understood my foreign ways. I must have been a sight to them as I bounced along the dirt road in my tiny, boxy four-wheel drive with my long, red

hair flying, and my little black dog sticking her head out the driver's-side window. Sometimes just for fun, I yelled like a rodeo rider, "Yee haw!"

They wanted to know and learn about me, and I them. When my car got stuck in ankle-deep mud, they sent a boy to run and borrow a shovel, and four men stopped everything to dig my car out. When a family was in need, I often helped. They called me Doña Carol, a sign of respect, and allowed me into their homes, and into their lives.

I had never thought about the importance of place in one's life before I came here. The country I came from is a land of wanderers, my family more so than others. Here I saw the richness of belonging to family and community, their unquestioning support of each other during hard times, and the desire to pass on to one's children the joys of life's blessings in this place called home. Not that everyone finds this to be ideal—some do leave. But they leave something, and they can come back.

I knew Ofelia when she was alive. She was old, frail and sometimes confused. Her husband had died, and her older children had left. Her youngest, Pablo, stayed and looked after her. She survived on a tiny government pension and support from Pablo, who worked at whatever odd jobs he could find. I sometimes hired him to pick fruit or cut weeds. I was astonished when Pablo told me he had Chinese cousins in Chicago, the place I had called home before coming here.

Daniela confirmed his claim. "Ofelia and her husband adopted Pablo. His father was Chinese. His mother was a Huétar woman from the nearby Zapaton Reserve."

Pablo was unquestionably a member of his community. I, however, felt like I had more in common with his wandering, biological family than I did with my current neighbors. I felt a vague loneliness and began to ask myself, "Where do I belong? Does this rolling stone need to stop and gather moss?"

I treasured my friendships with Ticos, especially the campesinos. But I slowly realized I needed to be with people who know the places I have come from, who can understand my story, and with whom I can share what is in my heart without needing to pause to remember how to conjugate a verb. I began spending more time in the urban areas where my North American friends live.

I had an opportunity to create a bed-and-breakfast near the capital. It is in the area I once considered too tame for me, but it would put me close to friends and activities I enjoy.

Next time: Moving.

About the author: Carol McCool moved to Costa Rica many years ago after retiring from working as a psychologist in schools in the Chicago area. Her stories about living on a farm in the mountains of Costa Rica are published in the anthology, Costa Rica Kaleidoscope. Her next book, due out next year, continues the adventure and includes stories told by other people. Look for future excerpts from her books in El Residente.

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by Mitzi Stark

Goodlight Bookstore; good books, good coffee

“Books are as popular as ever,” claims Rosa Carballo of the Goodlight Bookstore in Alajuela. “Even with electronic books, people still want a real book to read.” Bearing this out, business at the little bookstore, situated in an old house in the center of Alajuela, keeps growing.

Goodlight has about 20,000 used books in good condition. Most are in English, but there is also a sizable selection in Spanish, and there are books in German, French and other languages too. Prices start at one dollar and most are in the three to four dollar range. Top price is seven dollars, and there are a few super special books in that higher range.

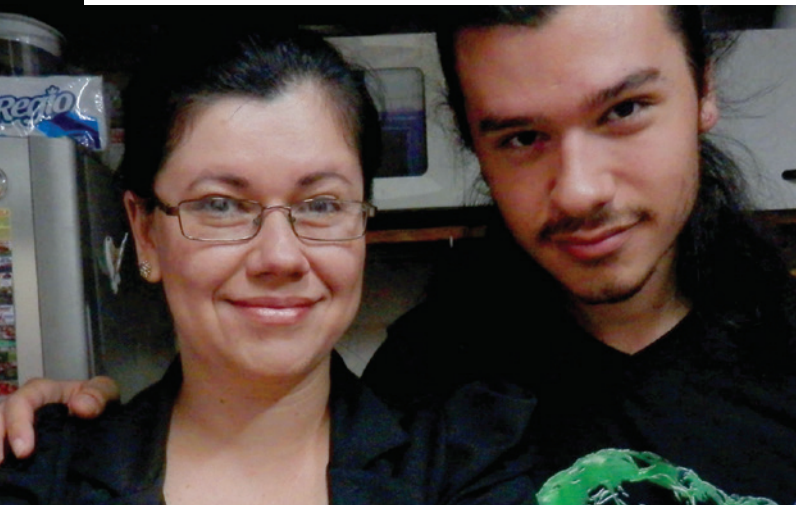
Goodlight brings back memories of the way bookstores used to be, with rows and rows of books lining the walls; so many it's difficult to know where to start. But, the sections are labeled and browsing is encouraged, with tables and chairs in nooks. Add a cup of coffee or herbal tea, some cookies, and it's a book lover's dream.

The Goodlight name comes from a poem by Spanish poet Antonio Machado, and was popularized in a short story, *A Clean Well Lighted Place*, by Ernest Hemingway. The Goodlight opened in 2003 when Larry Coulter, of California, first set up the bookstore. He hired Carballo as

an assistant because she spoke English, loved books, and was familiar with many titles and authors. When Coulter decided to give up the store in 2014 Rosa took it on. Today, her son Ian, nineteen, helps keep the books in order and fills in when Rosa runs errands. He also speaks English.

“It was a challenge learning the business and bringing in new customers,” Carballo said. “I spent time reading the ‘blurbs’ on the backs of books to become familiar with the stock, and by now I pretty much know where all the books are.” Carballo also lists books on Facebook, and customers can reserve a book and have it mailed to them. “Or, they come in to pick up their reserved book, and find more books to buy,” she adds with a smile.

The store has children's books, in Spanish and English, classics of literature, ever popular mysteries, biographies, business and current events, and fiction and non-fiction selections. There are also games: chess, backgammon and others, to while away a rainy afternoon. Or a sunny one. And for those who love animals there is also a chance to help strays; the “dollar books” mean a dollar donation for Territorio de Zaguates, a refuge home for hundreds of dogs. Although the books in that category are “sort of rejects” you're sure to find an interesting title among them. And, if not, there is a collection can inside the store that will allow you make a donation.



Goodlight Bookstore also has an outdoor, covered patio reading and meeting room. Carballo encourages groups to meet there to show their artwork, or to conduct a workshop, or teach a course. Occasional evening activities include musical programs, open mic poetry readings, and films.

Goodlight Bookstore attracts people from all over Costa Rica because of its excellent selection. Tourists have spread the word abroad and it is now listed in Lonely Planet and other guides. The store is open Monday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on the last Sunday of the month, when there is an event scheduled. You can call the store at 2430-4083 to check the hours or to ask about a book. Or, look for Goodlight Bookstore on Facebook.

Want to go there? The store is easy to find. Start from the front of the Alajuela church, located between Calles 1 and 3 (the church is easily identified by the round, red cupola that towers over the rest of the city.) Go one block north to Avenida 3 and turn east. Go 175 meters (one and one-half blocks) and the purple fence in front tells you when you are there.

Mitzi Stark has written professionally for numerous publications. She is an avid reader and devoted patron of Goodlight Books, and wishes to share her enthusiasm about the business with other El Residente readers. She is has no interest in the business.

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(30) FOLLOWING A DREAM

by Rich Sulzer

Christopher Howard; tour guide, translator, author

This multi-talented successful linguist, author, and tour guide has really followed his dream; from his home state of California to the Heredia side of the Central Valley. His path began as an undergraduate with Spanish classes and Latin American studies at UCLA. As a junior he was awarded a scholarship to study in Puebla Mexico, and lived with a Mexican family, an experience he considers one of the best in his life, since he discovered his real passion and a love for Latin America.

From that first experience he wanted to live in Latin America. In order to support his studies and travels, he picked up a graduate bilingual teaching credential, then worked as a teacher in San Francisco, heading up a special program for preliterate Latin American children.

He eventually earned a Master's Degree in Spanish Linguistics at UC Berkeley. In order to speed up the process, he spent three consecutive summers taking graduate Spanish classes in Guadalajara, Mexico, through the University of San Diego.

When asked the question, "What do you think of expats living here without any attempt to speak the local language?" Christopher replied, "They are missing more than 50 percent of the real experience of living in a new land." He advises learning Costa Rican Spanish, and using it every day—mistakes and all—to get a fuller experience. He added that good communication skills open more doorways to a happier life.

He traveled through Mexico and nearly every Central and South American country before getting his first taste of Costa Rica. He loved the country, the climate, and the people, so thirty-seven years ago he packed and moved to Los Yoses on the East side of San José. With his extensive knowledge of Spanish, he fit in easily.

There Christopher met and fell in love with a Tica whom he married, producing a son. After a lengthy illness, his wife passed away in 2004. He says that time has helped



heal the loss, but time has also enhanced his many pleasant memories of her. They had moved to Rohrmoser, then to Heredia, and he is now a real Tico, having been a citizen for seventeen years.

In the mid 1990's a friend who lived in California and published a Costa Rica newsletter, *The Costa Rica Outlook* (now defunct) had been conducting tours of Costa Rica for a couple of years. When the friend stopped giving the tours, Mr. Howard decided to try and fill the void with eight or nine people. He conducted his first tour in 1997. He now gives fixed-date tours every month except July, when he usually takes his own vacation.

The typical tour group consists of 8 -16 people. The clients like that size because they receive a lot of attention and have all of their questions answered. At the conclusion of the tour everyone is happy since they have all of the contacts and information necessary to make a seamless move, assuming they follow his time-tested advice.

He offers two main tours. The first is of the Central Valley, which lasts four days including a seminar sponsored by the ARCR on the first two days, and then two days touring. (Counting the two travel days getting to Costa Rica and returning home, there are six days in total.) On the third day of the Central Valley Tour his groups visit San José, Rhormoser, Escazú, Santa Ana, San Antonio de Belén, and the city of Heredia and surroundings. During the final day they visit Atenas, Grecia, and on occasions, San Ramón and parts of Alajuela.

The second, and more complete tour, starts on the Pacific Coast with four days spent visiting, Dominical, Uvita, Quepos, Manuel Antonio, and Jacó Beach. Along the way the group also stops at a few smaller beaches, including Playa Hermosa de Osa, Matapalo and Esterillos. The last four days duplicate the Central Valley Tour.

Both tours visit neighborhoods where expats live, go to a feria (outdoor farmer's market), a large grocery store, and PriceSmart, to learn what North American products are available here; and savor local cooking when they stop for meals. They see a variety of homes and condos to get an idea of how people live and what's available, and go to a local Spanish school to have a short lesson by a local teacher. The tours give his clients a general, but comprehensive overview of what it is like to live in Costa Rica. When you add on the two days of travel to and from Costa Rica, this longer tour adds up to a ten-day vacation/learning experience.

Besides the fixed-date tours, he also offers one and two day tours with add-on options to Guanacaste and Lake Arenal. The latter are usually done after his regular fixed date tour and are semi-private. He has even done private tours in Spanish for Venezuelans who want to relocate because of the ongoing political crisis in their own country.

Customer satisfaction is very high, with a lot of applause at the end. He always tells his guests that Costa Rica is not for everyone, and that they are doing the right thing by coming here and checking it out to see if it is right for them. He says that the most important thing a tour member should realize is that they are exploring Costa Rica the correct way; with someone who knows the ins and outs, the do's and don'ts, and who can give them time tested contacts and unbiased information with no hidden agendas.

In 2006 he was asked to accommodate a group from NBC's "The Today Show" for a retirement tour of Costa Rica. A reporter, producer, cameraman, and the full retinue arrived and were treated to Christopher's extensive knowledge of the country, taping for two full

days. Back in New York, the two day trip was cut down to just three minutes of airtime.

When asked what he enjoys the most about conducting these tours, he replied, "Meeting, interacting and helping a lot of really great people. At the end of most tours I feel a little down after having bonded with my group. Speaking of bonding, the people do it on the tour and have a great time together—very uplifting. Even if they do not relocate here, either full or part-time, they generally have a unique experience that they wouldn't get on a different tour. If they return they will have viewed the country from a completely different perspective."

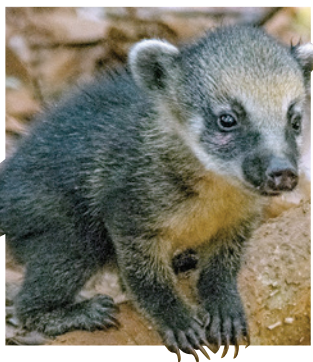
Mr. Howard has also written fourteen books, starting with his first one in 1988 called "The Golden Door to Retirement and Living in Costa Rica—the Official Guide to Relocation." The latest edition has grown from a 50 page "foot in the water" pamphlet to an 800 page tome covering everything about living here. It is now in its 18th printing, published June 28, 2017, via Amazon. As a natural adjunct to his books he has written and published several tour guides, on not only Costa Rica, but on Nicaragua, and Panama as well. He also has written similar digital guides to Mexico, Cuba, and most recently, Colombia. You can see them on the Internet at: liveincostarica.com, costaricabooks.com, costaricaspanish.net, officialguidetocostaricanrealestate.com, liveincuba.com, liveincolombia.com, and via email at: Christopher@costaricabooks.com. His blog can be found at: <http://liveincostarica/blog/>.

Christopher has also received several credits and awards, one of which was, "An international honor for providing a good tour." He was interviewed by one of the local television stations about people relocating here. Of course the interview was conducted in Spanish and afterwards, "many Costa Ricans came up to me on the street and thanked me for saying such nice things about their country."

Christopher Howard has truly lived his dream to the fullest. *Pura Vida!*

To see the NBC video look for "**Living in Costa Rica - overseas retirement**" on YouTube.

Rich Sulzer is the author of "The Hut, Adventures of Coming of Age in the '50's," available in paperback and for Kindle on Amazon, as well as in paperback at the ARCR office. Rich and his wife recently celebrated their tenth anniversary of living in Costa Rica and currently reside in the northwestern end of San José Province, near Ciudad Colón.



The White-nosed Coatimundi

While I am certain that their mothers have told them to keep their “noses clean,” such a practice is likely difficult for the white-nosed coati, and I am not referring to getting muddy. The *Pizote*, as they are known locally, are members of the raccoon family, and as such tend to raid garbage cans and dumps, resulting in dirty noses.

Known scientifically as *Nasua narica*, the coati pertains to the Procyonidae family. The white-nose likes to inhabit dry to moist jungle forest areas and can be found between sea level and 3,500 meters, from Arizona to Colombia. In Costa Rica they are everywhere, but are most commonly found in lowlands like Santa Rosa (Guanacaste), the south Pacific, Sarapiquí, and woodlands. They are frequently seen in sites like the Reserva de San Ramón and dry forests such as Santa Rosa or Rincón de la Vieja.

Pizotes are quite easy to observe, being diurnal (night-sleeping) creatures, and they often move in social groups; they have been seen in families of up to 150 individuals. They are dark to reddish brown in color, with masked eyes, and the nose, throat, and chin are light gray. They also have, similar to the North American raccoon, six or seven light bands on the tail. They are agile climbers, and though the tail is not prehensile, it is generally held up for balance. Their snout is long and shovel-shaped, and they have crushing molars with long canine teeth, so they should be approached cautiously. Weight is about 5-9 kilos (up to 20 pounds) and they can be 110-120 cms (43-47 inches) in length, with half of that being the length of the tail.

Being an expert jumper and climber, this species lives both in trees and on the ground, foraging for fruits,

carion, insects, and eggs. They are also known to drink flower nectar and it is possible they are a pollinator of trees such as the balsa.

In their natural habitat, coatis must be on alert for many predators, including boas, raptors, hunting cats, and tayras. They adapt easily to the presence of humans, like raccoons, which may be one of their best defenses against their predators, who are generally afraid of man.

Their social groups are normally made up of 8 to 20 females and immature males. The males are known to be primarily solitary and will live errant lives, especially when older, and are known as the pizote solos. I can imagine that they are often compared to the macho Latin men and may be known as “*viejos verdes*” in the social circles of their species.

After a gestation period of 65 to 74 days, the female will give birth to three to seven babies, and they join the family group about five weeks after birth. The youngsters will all stay with the mother until they are about two years of age.

Because of their characteristics, it is quite easy to find and observe this species, and to watch firsthand how they behave in their social groups. If you have the desire to go searching for these cute little annoyances, remember to try the dry woodlands, and for best results maybe take along a picnic basket to share with them... if they will share with you.

Tests have shown that pizotes are very intelligent and, like their raccoon brethren, these creatures are cute and cuddly and can actually be domesticated. However one hopes that they will be left mainly in the wild in their natural habitat.

A version of this article was previously published in El Residente. It is included here by request.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

33

by Rómulo Pacheco, Managing Director

What Happened to Aerocasillas?!

There has been much confusion and upset over the recent loss of the mail and package delivery service to the ARCR offices. Herein we will try to explain how this highly valued service came to be discontinued.

In 1984 ARCR was formed as a subdivision of Casa Canada. At that time Aerocasillas had a contract to deliver Casa Canada's mail and packages and ARCR was added to the contract. All went well for many years. In 2014 ARCR was spun off from Casa Canada to become a separate entity. Aerocasillas was notified of the division and things continued satisfactorily.

Some time later Aerocasillas was purchased by the U.S. mail and package forwarding service giant, Aeropost, and subsequently they began raising prices. The increases were of concern to some members, but for many, the convenience of having their mail and packages delivered to the central, secure, ARCR office location outweighed the price increases. The delivery services continued satisfactorily, even after ARCR changed office locations.

Then, in 2016, the Aeropost delivery services began to falter; members were receiving email notices that mail or packages had been received at the Aeropost facilities, but delivery to ARCR was often delayed, sometimes for inordinate periods of time, sometimes not at all. At times it took members and/or the ARCR staff multiple phone calls to trace the location of an item.

ARCR management began to be concerned; there were numerous member complaints, and occasionally some frayed tempers. No amount of explanation that the delays/non-deliveries were occurring at the hands of Aeropost was acceptable—people wanted their mail and packages!

During the fall of 2016, ARCR began a search for a replacement delivery service and in November one was found. Negotiations with the service were entered (to run parallel with Aeropost to provide members an option) and they promised to train ARCR employees and be fully operational by early 2017. However, the new service ran into internal problems, and a new implementation date of July 1, 2017, was established.

At the same time, ARCR management was conducting multiple meetings and phone calls with Aeropost executives attempting to resolve the ongoing delivery problems. Agreements were made which would allow members to continue to use Aeropost services, at their option.

In about May 2017, Casa Canada informed Aeropost they wished to discontinue their relationship. Aeropost, who never seemed to understand that ARCR and Casa Canada were two separate entities, began informing ARCR members that they would no longer deliver to ARCR, and that the members would have to choose a new delivery location. This resulted in more meetings and phone calls, and promises from Aeropost executives that members could choose ARCR as their "Home Delivery" site, and receive their deliveries there, as before. BUT, Aeropost management and Aeropost operations never seemed to be talking to each other and the denial of delivery to ARCR offices continued, requiring ARCR members to either select a new delivery site or find a different forwarding service provider.

And that's where we are today. Despite ARCR's numerous efforts to resolve the problems with Aeropost, we have hit a "stone wall;" Aeropost refuses to deliver to the ARCR office, and clearly is not interested in providing service to our members—except on their own terms. As a result, ARCR members have lost the important feature of having the ARCR office as a central delivery point and are now scattered among various Aeropost offices.

Unfortunately, no replacement for Aeropost has yet been found, but ARCR is again diligently searching for an alternative provider; one which will give our members all the services they have enjoyed in the past, including delivery at a convenient central location.

ARCR apologizes for the confusion, upset, and inconvenience Aeropost's actions have caused our members over the past year. We fully recognize the importance of having a reliable mail and package service that will deliver to our offices, and are working hard to find one for our members. Please stay tuned for future developments.

(34) PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

“Just Dropped in to See What Condition my Condition Was in...”

Have you been happy lately? I certainly hope so

When, and why, did you experience that wonderful, essential emotion? Did you solve a difficult problem, putting your life back on track? Did a situation turn out better than expected? Did you receive longed-for appreciation and recognition from family, friends, or coworkers? Did you glimpse a blue morph butterfly?

Such conditions are likely to produce happiness in most people, and a change in those conditions is also likely to cancel that happiness. As a result, humanity has sought to identify and hold onto “the right conditions” for happiness. Some have even sought to negate the power of conditions completely by pursuing a “no conditions” happiness. And, in between these options, we’ve discovered how to respond when conditions change, by changing what we have the most power over: our mindset.

Since life’s conditions constantly change, and if our happiness depends on those conditions, our happiness will be at the mercy of any changes. According to the “conditions-free” approach, rather than trying to create or maintain happy conditions, we must, instead, access our unchanging “inner core of happiness.” This approach deserves its own column and is better understood if we carefully explore the “conditions-plus-mindset” way to happiness.

Happiness is in our hands and heads

We do not live in a vacuum. There is no conditions-free condition. That would be just another type of...condition; the circumstances in which we live and conduct our lives. So, we can immediately see the difficulty with the “conditions-free” approach—a difficulty we will try to resolve in a later column. Here we will explore the interaction between us and the conditions that produces our happiness.

Most conditions (like the weather, the economy, the traffic) are out of our control. Ever try to change the weather? If we can’t change the weather, we can reduce its impact on us

by carrying an umbrella or wearing a warm coat. Likewise, some other circumstances are within our power to change, or at least to alter or improve. Our greatest capacity for happiness, however, lies in our ability to change ourselves in response to some difficult conditions.

Change myself? MOI? Are you serious?

The constantly changing nature of life shows why some thinkers would search for a “conditions-free” way to happiness; it would eliminate the constant effort to change or sustain conditions, or change our attitude, or just endure. But, for now, let’s acknowledge the necessity to adapt to conditions. It’s in our genes, after all.

Every life form has evolved to survive under certain conditions. Polar bears would die in the Sahara Desert, and camels would die in the Arctic; they survive in their conditions of origin and usually nowhere else. But remember, 99% (!) of all species that ever existed have gone extinct. Survival is never a “one and done” event. Conditions change and what worked previously may not work well in a new environment.

Species have developed a myriad of ways to adapt to their world. Outer coverings, the ability to extract nutrition from available resources, ways to evade predators and, most importantly, the ability to reproduce in sufficient numbers to ensure the survival of their species, even when numerous individuals are lost. (Think sea turtles. One in one hundred makes it to adulthood.)

Humans share many of those same adaptation abilities. But our species also possesses a certain cognitive advantage unavailable to many other forms of life; we can change our MINDSET!

But since this happens all day, every day, we may neglect to see how our ability to change our mindset is important to our happiness and survival. Fish don’t know they’re wet, and some of us humans don’t see the power our mindset—our way of looking at things—has on producing happiness.

Back to our weather example

Yes, “it’s raining perros and gatos,” but do I have to absolutely HATE the rain? (He asks during rainy season.) Do I have to feel that the rain is a deliberate effort by the universe to frustrate and defeat my happiness? Or is it a situation totally independent of me?

There’s no “magic wand” to convert rain to sunshine. Hollywood can only convert PICTURES of rain into PICTURES of sunshine. But there IS within us a mindset that CAN change actual rain from a miserable experience to an at least tolerable, maybe even pleasant, one.

Let’s say you’ve planned a glorious celebration at your favorite beach. This time of year, you and your friends might have it all to yourselves. But, on the planned day, you awake to a pouring rain. Seabirds down at that beach have few options other than seeking shelter. It’s highly unlikely that they think “Hey, we’re BIRDS! We could fly out of this rain and into the sun. Let’s go guys!”

We humans, unlike our bird friends, have numerous options (including flying elsewhere if it makes practical sense). For instance:

- 1) We can pitch a fit, moan and groan, and whine about how “This sucks. This isn’t fair. Stuff like this always happens to me. I’ve been planning this party for weeks.

Why rain NOW??” So the party is called off and we spend the rest of our day feeling miserable. The rain “ruined” the party...and WE ruined the remainder of the day.

- 2) We could go to the beach anyway, hoping the skies will clear. It could happen.
- 3) We could make the best of a bad situation and spend the rest of the day in some different pleasurable or productive activity. Catch up on reading or responding to our emails, anyone?

To enjoy one of those last two outcomes, we have to “change our mindset.” We can salvage some happiness by thinking, “It’s not the end of the world, we can go some other time. Now, what would be a good way to spend this time?” And, best of all, we can realize, “This ISN’T personal. The weather isn’t trying to ruin MY day.” In doing this we take the personal sting out of this setback; by removing the personal element from this equation, we eliminate a big part of why the condition is so upsetting.

We know the rain is not really a plot to make us feel bad, and we all can understand how it could make one feel down and frustrated, but it is important to see that it’s NOT PERSONAL; it’s not “out to get us” (like that old intimate partner may be). So our fallback position, when conditions are beyond our control, should be to control our mindset; to control the MEANING we give to conditions...and thereby to restore some happiness.

When an undesirable outcome isn’t personal (the rain), WHY ADD the extra pain of a personal insult when none exists? Rain does not mean that the universe fails to see your importance. It just means too much moisture has evaporated up to the clouds...which have become too saturated to hold that moisture any longer.

Change the meaning, change the feeling. Unlike the Zen masters, few of us can easily achieve condition-free happiness by going to our inner core, but we CAN change our reactions. We can realize that happiness is always a result of a simple equation: Conditions + Mindset = Happiness.

A Counter-Happiness Mindset

Sadly, for some the typical mindset is to see situations they regard as negative as being the three P’s: PERSONAL, PERMANENT, and PERVASIVE. For instance, we may suffer from some illness like arthritis. Yes, it’s personal. I suffer, not some other guy. But is it PERSONAL in that the “universe” has singled me out for this problem? Is arthritis a sign from the heavens that I am not worthy of better health? Yes, my condition is chronic, but is the pain really PERMANENTLY severe? Do the problems with my joints mean PERVASIVE problems in every other aspect of my life? Yes, it’s harder to move, but does that mean I’m denied pleasure, comfort, ease, everywhere else in my existence? Of course not!

If we (usually unconsciously) see our condition as Personal, Permanent, and Pervasive, we make a bad situation worse! So watch for those 3P’s and don’t worsen negative conditions by accepting them.

Add the “Attitude of Gratitude”

Another key mindset shift that protects and improves happiness is that famous “attitude of gratitude.” As 12-Steppers know well, even after they have ruined their lives with drugs and alcohol, there is STILL much to be grateful for. To begin with, they’re alive.

Being grateful on a regular basis shifts us from being totally negative to including the positive in our overall outlook. Do you know anyone who's extremely negative AND happy? Even they have something to be grateful for, even if they can't see it. Granted, we can't escape or change all the conditions of our lives, but I, for one, think Planet Earth is wondrous and don't want to try those other planets. What I am saying is that we can respond to our conditions in ways that enhance our experience, our happiness.

Realize that happiness is not easily attained or maintained. But unhappiness IS easily reached and can be made permanent. Be realistic about your situation. Don't exaggerate the negatives and overlook the positives, or let uncontrollable conditions dictate how you feel. "Let's be real," as a famous shrink says.

Our inner core of happiness is also a real option. See you next time.

Oh! Thanks to Kenny Rogers and the First Edition for the title: "Yeah, yeah, oh-yeah, what condition my condition was in"

Comments, questions, criticisms? Drop me a line at: paradise.we.have.a.problem@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/ARCR1

► **Alcoholics Anonymous**

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

► **Al-Anon Meetings**

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

► **American Legion Post 10-Escazú**

The A.L. Post 10 has relocated the monthly meetings to Casa de España in Sabana norte. There is an elevator so those with a handicap will not have a problem entering the building or reaching the meeting area. If you wish to attend please e-mail or call for directions. Terry Wise, cell#: 8893-4021, Claudio Pacheco, cell#: 8876-1394, home#: 2225-4239.

► **American Legion Post 12-Golfito**

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

► **American Legion Auxiliary**

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

► **Bird Watching Club**

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

► **Canadian Club**

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

► **Cooking Class Club**

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

► **Costa Ballena Women's Network**

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

► **Costa Rica Writers Group**

Published authors and writers; newbies, and wanna-bes make up this group, dedicated to helping and improving all authors' work, with resources for publishing, printing, editing, cover design; every aspect of the writing process. Third Thursday, January through November, Henry's Beach Café, Escazú, 11:00 a.m. Contact: bbrashears0@gmail.com, 8684-2526.

► **Democrats Abroad**

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

► **First Friday Lunch**

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

► Little Theatre Group

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

► Marine Corps League

Meets at 11 a.m. the 2nd Saturday of every month, at Tres Hermanas Restaurant on the service road opposite Hospital Mexico. Look for the big bull statue in front. For information call Bill Enell at 8812-0126 or write to mcleaguecr@gmail.com

► Newcomers Club

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

► PC Club of Costa Rica

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

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

PZIWC was formed in November 2009 to promote friendship between English speaking women in Pérez Zeledón and, through friendship, to make positive contributions to our local community. The PZWIC meets for luncheons on the SECOND Tuesday of the month, hosts Walkers Day on the THIRD Tuesday of the month, and has a Games Day (board and card games) on the FOURTH Tuesday of each month. Event sites change frequently, so call or check our website for locations. More information can be obtained from Jane Gregson at 8899-6859 or Cathy Carrolan at 8384-8281, or email to: pzwomansclub@gmail.com. Please visit our website at: www.pzwomansclub.org

► Professional Women's Network

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

of aiding personal and professional development of entrepreneurs, students, and professionals. PWN sponsors service and outreach programs to "give back" to the community. The meeting charge is 4,000 colones for visitors, members 3,000. Membership fee is 12,000 colones and includes listing in the business directory, if desired. Meetings schedules vary. For info on the speaker for the month and to register, call Helen at 2280-4362. Location: Tin Jo Restaurant in San José, Calle 11, Av. 6-8. Or email us at: pwn.costarica@gmail.com. PWN website is www.pwnrcr.com

► Radio Control Sailing Club

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

► Wine Club of Costa Rica

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

► Women's Club of Costa Rica

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

► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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

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



BUSINESS DIRECTORY (39)

Holidays and Observances of Costa Rica

Saturday September 9th
Children's Day
Observance

Friday September 15th
Independence Day
National Holiday
ARCR office closed

Thursday October 12th
Day of the Cultures
Observance
ARCR office closed

Funniest One Liners

How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station...

Some people are like Slinkies... not really good for anything, but you can't help smiling when you see one tumble down the stairs.

A bank is a place that will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

If 4 out of 5 people SUFFER from diarrhea... does that mean that one enjoys it?



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Sonia Gómez García

Licencia número 08-1271

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

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