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EL RESIDENTE

July
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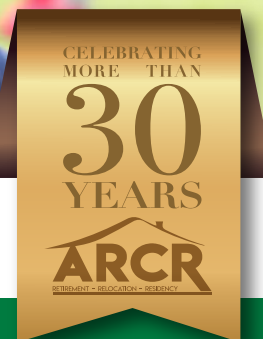
Fourth Ancestral Games of the Indigenous Peoples of Costa Rica



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Central Markets and Inaugurations
The Land of Pura Vida

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

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Editor's Note

Maybe you haven't noticed, but in this issue our feature article, *Destinos*, is about a future event: *The Fourth Ancestral Games of the Indigenous Peoples of Costa Rica*.

ARCR has long supported giving back to our host country, and in particular, by supporting our indigenous neighbors. In this issue, we are shining a spotlight on that important event. Please consider attending; it can be the experience of a lifetime. Watch future issues of *El Residente* for more information about the Games and how you can participate, as it becomes available.

Also, ARCR is looking for individuals who have taken on projects to improve their communities. Take a look at the *Local Heroes* article and, while you are making your plans to attend the indigenous games, let us know of anyone you think has gone above and beyond to better our adopted home.



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ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

THE ARCR MISSION STATEMENT

The Association of Residents of Costa Rica aims to assist people with up-to-date information on how to navigate the intricacies of transitioning to and living a "Pura Vida" life in Costa Rica, through a team of professionals offering services in various areas of expertise.

TRAFFIC RULE MODIFICATION A car stopped at a red light late at night can be an easy target for criminals. Realizing that, authorities at MOPT and the *Policia de Tránsito* (Traffic Police) have decided that, between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., traffic light enforcement changes: after making a full stop, it is acceptable for a vehicle to proceed through an intersection before the light changes. Doing so is not a traffic violation. However, be advised that coming to a complete stop and ensuring there is no risk from oncoming cross-traffic before advancing, is required. This rule was established to reduce the risk of hijacking, robbery, etc., to drivers at vacant intersections late at night. Relaxing traffic enforcement during the highest-risk hours allows drivers to focus on staying safe at red lights.

TRICARE IN LIBERIA Clínica Bíblica has recently acquired Hospital San Rafael Arcángel in Liberia, Guanacaste. U.S. veterans will be happy to know that the staff at Hospital San Raphael Arcángel is receiving training to ensure proper handling of TRICARE and the VA Foreign Medical Program. insurance programs, and will soon begin serving U.S. veterans with that coverage.

AEROPOST As of April 10, 2026, Aeropost, formerly Aerocasillas, discontinued routine importation of letter mail from the USA to Costa Rica. All letter mail received at the Aeropost Miami address will be returned to sender. No notice of their action will be given to the addressee. Their package forwarding service remains unchanged. For more information, contact your Aeropost office. Those persons desiring letter mail forwarding from the USA should contract with another forwarding service ASAP.

MOVING ACCIDENT VEHICLES Moving your vehicle after a minor traffic accident (fender bender) where there are no injuries or serious property damage IS ALLOWED. The objective is to avoid further traffic congestion. This change applies to vehicles involved in a collision where vehicles are still operable, there are no injuries, and minimal vehicle damage. Drivers must complete and sign a *Declaración de Accidente Menor* (Minor Accident Declaration) form, take photos or videos of both cars or license plates, the road, and the accident scene, as well as any other documentary evidence. They must also still contact their insurance company.

DENTAL DISCOUNT Prisma Dental has announced that ARCR Members receiving dental services will receive a 10% DISCOUNT for cash payment.

LOW COST HEALTHCARE PLAN INS has announced their Disfruta Plan, a healthcare plan available to both residents and non-residents. The plan is an affordable option for those seeking access to private medical care without the complexity of traditional insurance. At a flat rate of \$89 per month, per person, for all ages, it provides coverage for accidents and acute (sudden) illnesses, as well as access to a wide network of private medical providers. There are no medical exams and no residency requirements. Enrollment is quick and easy with a copy of your residency card or passport and a payment method. Contact Carlos in the ARCR office for more information.

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DESTINOS

by Berni Jubb



Mark Your Calendars: April 16 to 18, 2027

Please stop whatever else you are doing and go find a 2027 calendar. Now, put a large circle around April 16th, 17th, and 18th. Why? Because those are the dates for the **Fourth Ancestral Games of the Indigenous Peoples of Costa Rica** that are coming to Talamanca. This is one of those rare events that deserves advance planning. It's time to take a trip to the Caribbean Coast and meet the Defenders of the Mountain.

The schedule is now official:

Friday, April 16th: Welcoming ceremonies and arrivals.

Saturday, April 17th: Main competition day and cultural activities.

Sunday, April 18th: Football matches, final events, farewells, and departures.

If you only come for one day, make it Saturday. That is when most of the action takes place. Bring the family.



For many young people in the 24 indigenous territories, the Games are about far more than sports. They create a rare opportunity to build pride in their culture while meeting members of other indigenous peoples, sometimes for the first time. In regions that have struggled with youth isolation, loss of identity, and high suicide rates, the Games help strengthen connection to culture, community, and one another. For one weekend, the message becomes clear: Your culture matters, your history matters, and you are not alone.

THE CHALLENGES ARE IMMENSE

Many of the indigenous communities are geographically isolated and historically have had little interaction

with one another, let alone receiving any support from ANY Cost Rican institutions with regards to the idea. Yet somehow this event keeps growing through determination, volunteerism, and sheer stubborn optimism. This time, hundreds of athletes from 24 indigenous territories, representing all eight indigenous peoples of Costa Rica, the Bribri, Cabécar, Maleku, Chorotega, Boruca, Ngäbe-Buglé, Huetar, and Térraba (Broran), are expected to participate.

The Games will take place at Gavilán Canta in the heart of Talamanca. The site now includes a quality sports field, covered stands, and improvements for visitors. Even better, it is accessible by a regular 2WD vehicle from the Cahuita and Puerto Viejo area.



NO, THIS IS NOT A NORMAL SPORTS MEET

There will be bow-and-arrow competitions against moving targets, spear throwing, blowgun contests, firewood races, leaf weaving, river swims, rope pulls, banana-peel competitions, and the famous log carry. There is also a traditional drinking competition, which I suspect would leave me requesting emergency extraction somewhere around round three.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

For most Costarican residents, including many of us who have lived here for years, opportunities to meet our indigenous neighbors from across the county is surprisingly rare. In many cases, the territories themselves have had limited interaction with one another over the decades, so these Games create a unique social and cultural bridge, bringing people from the various territories together in one place. That alone

is extraordinary. And for we Sicua (a territory word meaning outsider, non-indigenous, gringo, curious person wandering around trying to understand what is going on) meeting representatives from indigenous peoples, is even rarer.

Besides the participants, at the Games, you can meet people like Gamaliel Molina Díaz, known universally as Gama, who is of Cabécar and Bribri descent and has been the catalyst and driving force behind the Games movement. Gama's efforts have been instrumental in creating the new organizing association, a 10-member leadership team called Asociación de Juegos y Deportes Indígenas Autóctonos y Tradicionales de Talamanca. Further, in preparation for the 2027 Games, Gama traveled to Mexico and Colombia to exchange ideas with indigenous leaders there and returned with new strategies and a renewed sense of “brotherhood and learning.”

You can also meet the women of Asociación de Mujeres Kábata Kōnana, the “Defenders of the Mountain,” who helped organize a gathering that would have seemed almost impossible not many years ago.



The Games are a bridge between cultures, and sometimes that bridge may wobble a little; A Bribri athlete watching Ngäbe-Buglé Balsería traditions may be just as puzzled as the visiting gringos. But perhaps that confusion is healthy. Countries should occasionally meet themselves.

Recently, as part of the Games' preparation and planning, a meeting was held at our hotel with organizers and supporters of the Games. Present were Gama, a team from Stanford University's EXTREME program (extreme.stanford.edu), Ian, Jaime, Thu, and their Tica advisor, Sara Munez (www.saranunez.info), Martha Rollins from ARCR (arcr.cr), Gail Nystrom of the Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation (www.crhf.org/), and ourselves, Berni Jubb and Nhi Chu from <http://www.puravidahotel.com/>.

The Stanford students can explain their involvement better than I, so I will leave their words untouched:

"The indigenous people of Costa Rica have survived for thousands of years by their strength, resilience, and

community. In 2018, Gamaliel, a man from the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous communities in Talamanca, decided to bring people from across Costa Rica together to celebrate the proud and diverse indigenous roots of Costa Rica by hosting The Ancestral Games of Costa Rica. Since 2018, these games have occurred 3 times and have brought together thousands of indigenous people, sicas (non-indigenous people), and other groups from across Costa Rica to celebrate indigenous history through ancestral games, cultural workshops, and community gatherings.

This incredibly meaningful initiative is what drew us three Stanford University students to work together with Gamaliel and various other indigenous groups, community leaders, and elders to co-design a solution for the consistent future of the games.

Stanford's EXTREME program began in 2004 and each year pairs about 20 students, ranging from freshmen to graduate students, with local organizations across the world that are doing extremely important work for their



communities but are facing some challenges. For the past 3 years, EXTREME has been partnering with local organizations in Costa Rica, and this year, Jaime, Thu, and I (Ian) are working together with Gamaliel and the Fourth Ancestral Games of the Indigenous Peoples of Costa Rica to explore various strategies to ensure the consistent future of the games as they are facing challenges in areas such as funding and planning. By combining design tools and strategies we are learning in the classroom with real-world Immersion we did with the local community during our Spring Break we are co-designing a solution to meet some of the challenges the Indigenous Games of Costa Rica are facing to help ensure this space exists to share and Strengthen indigenous history and traditions for many years to come.

Although we are still working through this design process, this experience has already been life- changing for us. Through working together with Gamaliel and the indigenous community, we have seen a beautiful way of life that balances life, work, family, and reflection, which creates a happier, more-connected existence: Pura Vida."

I am, without a doubt, a sicua, and at the last Games, after an exciting series of log-carry races, my septuagenarian friend Daryl and I decided we, too, should compete. We wandered off to locate appropriately lightweight logs. Unfortunately, the real logs were already waiting at the finish line, and neither of us wished to do the course twice – not that we were doing any actual thinking at that moment. So we each selected a respectable twig, power-walked 1/2 the course, and nearly died laughing. I remain optimistic about the future of the “Octogenarian Twig Carry.” And yes, visitors will absolutely be able to participate in selected activities in 2027.

A FINAL THOUGHT

People often imagine indigenous culture through a dusty 19th-century lens. But the youth in these 24 territories are sophisticated, modern, and deeply connected to both technology and tradition. In Gavilán Canta, you will find teenagers in sassy shirts balancing TikTok with ancestral knowledge of the forest passed down through



generations. That balancing act may turn out to be one of the most important stories in Costa Rica's future.

Over the coming months, as plans develop, ARCR and El Residente will continue to share their story. We will bring you maps, lodging suggestions, volunteer opportunities, and logistics, as the details become clearer. We will need a supporting cast of local heroes: People like Ana of Finca Tierra, Daryl from Uvita, Gail from CRHF, Martha Rollins from ARCR, and many others. And we will be looking for support with transportation, feeding the athletes, and other essentials that just do not grow on trees. Funds or donations raised will be funneled through Gail Nystrom's non-profit foundation: <https://www.crhf.org/community-services/indigenous-projects/>. Gail has many years of experience supporting all manner of organizations throughout Costa Rica and has deep connections in the territories.

So, mark your calendars:

Friday, April 16th, 2027 – welcoming ceremonies

Saturday, April 17th – the main day of competition and events

Sunday, April 18th – football, farewells, and departures

Check this website to keep up with developments and schedules, <https://www.puravidahotel.com/activities-and-tours/indigenous-games.html>. Watch this space in the next El Residente for the new Ancestral Games web site.

Block the dates now. It is a rare opportunity to meet your indigenous neighbors from across Costa Rica in one place, to experience traditions that few residents will ever witness firsthand, and to better understand a side of the country that too often remains distant and invisible.

Berni Jubb is a long-time Costa Rica resident and part-time philosopher on traffic, which includes sending traffic control suggestions to his local muni which are totally ignored but, in his mind, quite brilliant. He and his wife, Nhi, run the Pura Vida Hotel (www.puravidahotel.com) in Alajuela, where I allegorically explain the mysteries of Costa Rica to bewildered guests over breakfast.

Photos used in this article were taken by Manuel Sancho-Gutiérrez





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OUT AND ABOUT

by Mitzi Stark

Central Markets and Inauguraciones



Every good-sized city in Costa Rica has a central market which includes a number of *locales* (stalls) under one roof, selling a variety of goods from food to jewelry to shoes to pots and pans, and much more. Central markets go back to colonial times, and maybe even earlier, where sellers and buyers got together in an open space near the center of town. They are the prototype for today's "malls".

The early markets were open only on Sunday, when farmers and laborers were free of work. In those days, all the produce was brought to the market in oxcarts, a slow and cumbersome trip, even if it was just a few

miles away. (An older neighbor told me how there was a field next to the market in Alajuela for tethering oxen.) From the late 1800's, the markets were under cover and sold fruit, vegetables, raw sugar, firewood, clothes, chickens, and meat, and were open every day.

Today, central markets may seem obsolete, but they are still popular. Why? Because everything is under one roof and just a few steps away.

They are close to buses, taxis, and parking lots, and many people live in the neighborhood. You can get the size and quantity of any item you want; if you want one tomato and a head of lettuce, a quarter kilo of cheese,

three slices of beef, and two photocopies, it's okay, you can get them in the Central Mercado. And, if it's raining outside, you can wait it out over coffee and dinner at one of the sodas, or buy an umbrella.

Most Central Mercados open early, around 7 a.m., to receive fresh meat, fish, and vegetables, as well as customers. If you're on your way to work, you can stop in and have your watch repaired, pick up a baguette of bread for your lunch break, or buy a kilo of dog food. One-stop shopping at its finest.

I like shopping in the central market in Alajuela. If I need olives for pizza, I can ask for a thousand colones' worth, and that's what I get. And maybe if I want a 500 colones worth of chocolate chips (*chispas de chocolate*) for cookies, I can get that too.

What else can you find in the central market? *Chunches*, a word that translates to "thing or stuff", or simply

anything you don't know the name of. There are also souvenirs, shoes, aprons, and cleaning materials. You'll find someone selling macrobiotics (think vitamins and health foods), herbs and spices, jewelry, belts, all kinds of cheese, freshly made tortillas, and household utensils like you can't find anywhere else.

One year, Choché, a comedian from Alajuela, did a sketch on TV for Mother's Day. He sent his mother to the Central Market with a 10,000-colone bill to buy food for a lunch for four. The camera followed her around as she went from stall to stall, buying four slices of beef at a *carniceria* (meat market), two tomatoes and salad ingredients at one *veduler* (greengrocer), and potatoes and vegetables at yet another. For dessert, she purchased four cupcakes at a *panaderia* (bakery). And, she had change left over.

The Central Market in San Jose has more than 200 stalls. I almost found a husband there one day. Living





alone, I needed to downsize my cooking and decided to look into the old-country type of dishes called *losa* (a word that also means tombstone!). They sell them in several stalls, but when I asked about sets for one, I had no luck. At every stall I went to, there was a man about my age who was also looking for a cup and a plate; just one of each. At a store on the edge of the market, after I explained that I lived alone and needed only one set, I found what I was looking for. And, as it happened, the same man followed me in and explained to the clerks that because he lived alone, he only wanted a plate and cup for one. The clerks suggested we get together as *novios* (lovers).

The outer part of the markets consists of more small shops for clothes, cosmetics, and more chunches. Having difficulty finding something you need? Try the Central Market!

Inauguraciones (openings) take place for art shows, expositions, literary programs such as book presentations, new stores, or even whole buildings. They

are free and usually include refreshments. I have been to many. It's better if you understand Spanish, but it's not a requirement. You can enjoy looking around and having a cup of coffee and a pastry.

Years ago, my neighbor Rosario and I went to the inauguration of an art show by Venezuelan artists whose works depicted legends of that country in modern style. The ambassador spoke, the artists took bows, and then we were able to look over the paintings. We were not impressed; we didn't understand them and found them strange. But the atmosphere of the old building, the glamor of being "dressed up", and the wine and pastries were great! (Since then, the Ministry of Culture has prohibited the serving of wine at government expense.)

The museum in Alajuela has inauguraciones whenever there is a new exhibit and, if it is convenient, I go. They are usually short, but you can stay to look around as long as you want. A recent one was held for the 170th anniversary of the Battle of Rivas and presented historic posters for Juan Santamaria

Day. The program began with a high school string orchestra playing selections,, followed by several short speeches welcoming us to the program and giving brief explanations. It lasted about 15 minutes in all. The audience was then led to the hall to view all the posters. We could take a look at the display and ask questions about it, followed by coffee and a selection of baked goods while the orchestra played.

Inauguracions are a pleasant way to learn about Costa Rica and to appreciate the talent of Costarican artists. You can meet interesting people, including the artists and writers. And don't forget the free snack. How to find out about inauguracions? Check the online calendars for museums, art galleries, and cultural centers in your area.

* * * * *

There are some special days coming in July and August:

July 25th The Annexation of Guanacaste, also called the annexation of Nicoya, is a national holiday. The day will see kids dressed in traditional flouncy dresses and boys in white pants and shirts, with painted-on mustaches, as school programs teach history and culture. Many communities will have programs in parks or cultural centers, and there will be a week-long celebration in Nicoya from July 20th to the 28th. For a good review of the history in English, see the Wikipedia article on the Annexation of Nicoya. Check local agendas for events in your area.

August 2 This is an important day when thousands of people make a walking pilgrimage to the basilica in Cartago to petition the Virgin of the Angels, AKA La Negrita, or to give thanks. History tells us that on that day in 1635, while out collecting firewood, an indigenous girl named Juana Pereira discovered a small, dark statue of the Virgin and child. According to legend, she took the statue to the local church, but it kept disappearing and reappearing at the spot in the forest where she had found it. A church was built on the spot, and later, in 1824, the Virgin of the Angels was declared the patron saint of Costa Rica, and a basilica was built at the same place. In colonial times, black and indigenous populations were restricted from entering Cartago, but the relevance of the discovery of a black image by an indigenous child brought down racial barriers. Many people will begin walking in the week before Aug. 2, so be careful driving.

August 15 Mother's Day will be celebrated with events honoring mothers in schools and community centers.

It is also an important day for Catholic churches, as it commemorates Mary's ascension to Heaven.

August 31 The city of San Ramon celebrates its patron saint's day with the traditional Parade of the Saints. Neighboring communities and organizations march to the church in the center of town, carrying statues of their patron saints on platforms adorned with flowers, accompanied by music. And yes, they play, "When the saints go marching in" as they enter the cathedral. This tradition dates back 176 years to honor St. Ramon Nonato, patron saint of the city and patron of pregnant women (because he was born by cesarean after his mother died in 1204).

There will be crowds for the parade, but the flower-decked altars will be on display in the church for a week. There will also be booths offering traditional food and activities. If you live in the area, this is where you can see true Tico culture.



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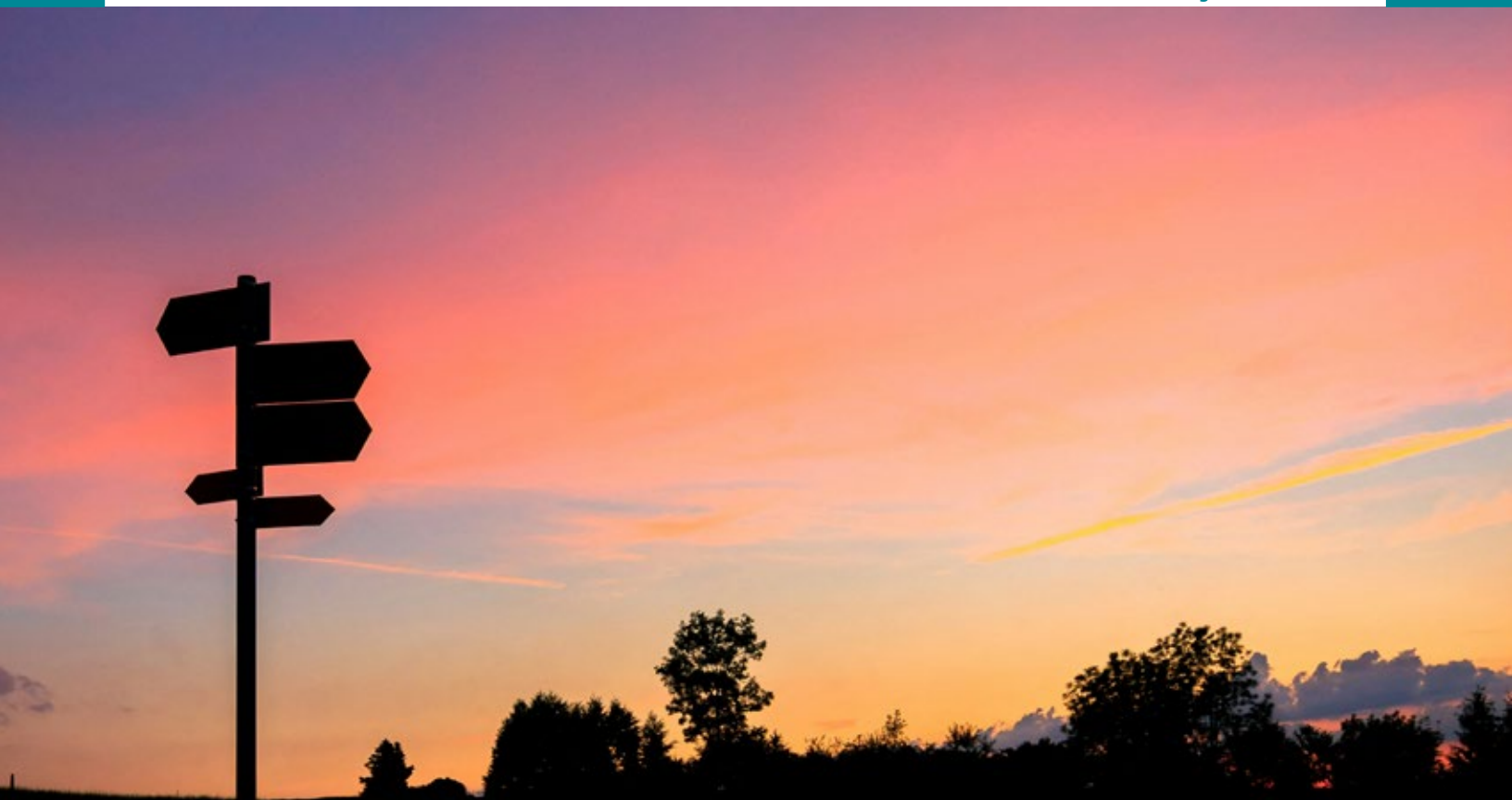
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ALAJUELA NORTH

by Berni Jubb



Welcome to San Rafael

Hola, fellow residentes! Berni here, your reasonably sane English innkeeper from the Pura Vida Hotel in Alajuela. I'm here to announce my new tour, the "Visit the 47 San Rafaels of Costa Rica" tour. Interested? Read on...

We have all done this. We've considered moving to Costa Rica and made ambitious plans fueled by misguided optimism and limited data. Before becoming a local fixture, I was a former British corporate dude in California, armed with a laptop and a mission to start a business in a country I had visited only a few times but had fallen in love with.

Back then, while still thousands of miles away, I spent many days building our future hotel website and inventing tours that seemed perfectly logical. One of my finest creations was called the "Three Falls in a Day and I Am Still Walking" tour. It featured three supposedly famous waterfalls, all within driving distance of our hotel, according to an out-of-print book I had bought online. I promised myself I would test these tours once we were actually up and running.

As you know, life in the neo-tropics has a way of ignoring the orderly sequence you carefully planned for that morning, day, week, or month. Sometimes for the current hour.

Shortly after we arrived, a guest named Joe and his young son Jimmie decided to try the waterfall tour before I had fully vetted it. As they set off, I felt duty-bound to inform Joe that although the tour appeared in print and on our website, he would be the first human to attempt it.

"Good luck!" I said, hoping for favorable reports from my scouts.

They returned late that afternoon, covered in mud and scrapes, with river water still squelching in their hiking boots. Joe made sure to let me hear the sloshing while grinning from ear to ear about his "incredible adventure". According to Joe, the trail to the first waterfall had "collapsed some years ago." After falling into the river, they followed the riverbed for hours, listening to the thunderous roar of a massive waterfall they never actually managed to find. Joe tried to make me feel better as he assured me they had a great time and would have many tales to tell when they got home.

My wife, Nhi, ever the voice of sanity and reason, suggested I remove the tour from the website.

This adventurous failure brings me to my current project, the "Visit the 47 San Rafaels of Costa Rica" tour. Tag line, "Wake Up in One San Rafael and Go to Bed in Another."

Over the years, I discovered that Costa Rica once seemed to have a national hobby of naming every second village, cow pasture, and mountain ridge San Rafael. For centuries, this was not a problem. The forefathers never quite got the road-building gig right, and Costaricans never developed much interest in maps or what the people three valleys over were up to; if you wanted to name your settlement after the archangel Raphael, you simply did. There was no need to check with another San Rafael because they were effectively on another planet.

Now, I should digress.

I have long hoped that 20th-century data might eventually bring some order to Costa Rica, though you don't really mess with culture. Collecting obscure information and trying to do something useful with it is a habit of mine, and years ago, one of the local gringo rags announced the discovery of Costa Rica's 200th volcano. This struck me as odd. How does one misplace something like that?

Investigation uncovered one researcher insisting there were only 116 volcanoes, and later, a University of Costa Rica professor, personally known to one of our

naturalist guides, assured us there were 162. So now, just to be safe, I tell our guests there are 165 volcanoes in Costa Rica. (I don't know why, but I find that number more satisfying.) I even started mapping them once and plotted about 75 of them on Google "mymaps" before giving up due to a lack of reliable data.

But, back to my story.

If your next innkeeper says, "I'm in San Rafael," the odds of you arriving at a dairy farm instead of your hotel are close to even. You could, of course, construct a specialized gringo protocol and ask:

Which province?

Which canton?

Arriba or Abajo?

Are you sure?

According to my current research, there are at least 47 confirmed locations of various types that carry the name. Though if you ask AI to produce a definitive map of them all, it quickly becomes confused and starts acting snarky, so I can't confirm the number. To help you avoid arriving at the incorrect San Rafael, here's an incomplete list of some of them:

San Rafael de Heredia

San Rafael de Escazú

San Rafael de Poás (Santa Ana)

San Rafael de Alajuela

San Rafael de Grecia

San Rafael de Oreamuno

San Rafael Arriba (Desamparados)

San Rafael Abajo (Desamparados)

San Rafael de Guatuso

San Rafael de Pérez Zeledón

San Rafael de Santa Ana

San Rafael de Vara Blanca

San Rafael de Peñas Blancas

San Rafael de Ciudad Quesada

San Rafael de Valverde Vega

San Rafael de Santa Cruz de Turrialba

San Rafael de Coronado

San Rafael de Puriscal

San Rafael de Río Cuarto

San Rafael de Bratsi
 San Rafael de Sixaola
 San Rafael Centro (Heredia)
 San Rafael Norte (various localities)
 San Rafael Sur (various localities)
 San Rafael Valley (Santa Ana/Lindora area)
 San Rafael Industrial Area (Santa Ana)
 San Rafael neighborhood (Santa Ana)
 San Rafael neighborhood (Pozos)
 San Rafael neighborhood (La Garita)
 San Rafael settlement (San Carlos region)

If you have ever wondered why the Costa Rican post office never made any inroads on actually delivering mail but was pretty good at commemorative stamps, there's a clue. In designing the "Visit the 47 San Rafaels of Costa Rica – Wake Up in One San Rafael and Go to Bed in Another" tour, I have found that there are, mathematically, something like 42 million possible seven-day routes where you can achieve the tour's name.

I have designed an itinerary for the truly adventurous, and each morning I search for adventurous guests at the Pura Vida Hotel breakfast table. To date, however, nobody has expressed the slightest interest in my organizing such a tour. So while I wait for a Curious George brave enough to tackle this concept and make it real, I'll be on the orchid terrace serving Nhi's famous bread pudding at breakfast and helping the next tourist with ideas for today. Come join us, provided you've packed a sense of humor and a healthy distrust of any GPS that confidently claims to know the way to San Rafael.

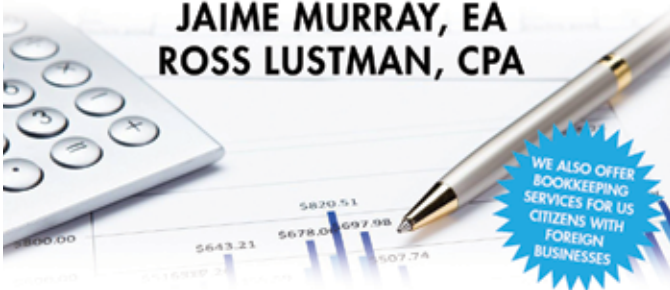
P.S. Did I tell you about Cousin Vinnie, who was supposed to meet us in Muelle for lunch? Yes, you long-time residents already know how this story ends. He was in Muelle de Sarapiquí, we were in Muelle de San Carlos.

Berni Jubb is a long-time Costa Rica resident and part-time philosopher on traffic, which includes sending traffic control suggestions to his local muni which are totally ignored but, in his mind, quite brilliant. He and his wife, Nhi, run the Pura Vida Hotel (www.puravidahotel.com) in Alajuela, where he allegorically explains the mysteries of Costa Rica to bewildered guests over breakfast.



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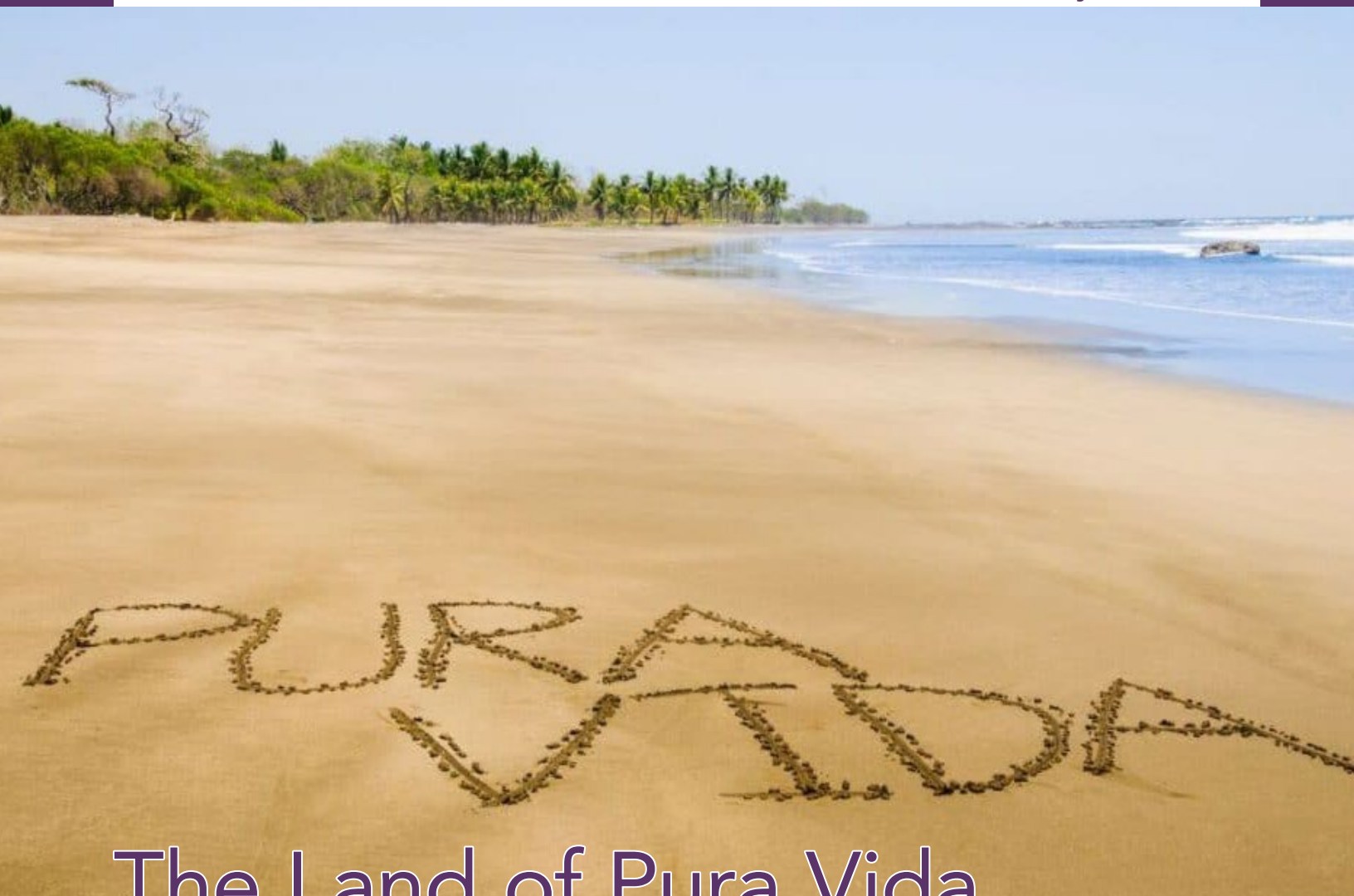
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CARIBBEAN CONNECTION

by Connie Foss



The Land of Pura Vida

What is Pura Vida? It is many things: An awareness of the beauty in ordinary things; a life undiluted by the impurities of materialism, pettiness, and selfish ambition; an unadulterated life; the absence of worry.

Of course, I am making up these definitions, but they fit. Literally, it means “Pure Life”, but only because the term eludes a more precise explanation. What words would you use to describe the feeling of happiness that has nothing to do with circumstances?

I first heard the term Pura Vida in the summer of 2009 when I spoke via Skype to my soon-to-be roommate in Costa Rica. We were making plans for my arrival at the San José airport, and she had ended our conversation by

saying, “Pura Vida!” I wondered at that time whether this was an expletive to be used only once, or whether it meant something like, “See you later!” Oddly, I never heard her use this phrase again because it was all business as soon as I moved in and paid my first month’s rent. However, I do give her credit for introducing me to the Caribbean side of Costa Rica, where I instantly experienced something so phenomenal that it can only be compared to Eastern enlightenment or Western conversion; Pura Vida.

Costa Rica is a small, developing country with a national optimism that is contagious. Its people are empowered by the joy of living life on its own terms. In my search for information about Costa Rica, I found an article by a North American student named Trester who had visited

Costa Rica and published an academic paper on the expression “Pura Vida!” as a distinctly Cost Rican discourse marker. She noted that the phrase was “a desirable tool for creating and communicating a unified and very positive ideology.” But what that ideology is, she did not explain.

“This is a story about life in a pure state. It is pure life.” Trester borrowed this first line from José María Mendiluce, a Spaniard who wrote a novel of dark romance drawn from his life as a tourist in the Caribe Sur. His novel, *Pura Vida*, published in 1998, lured thousands of Europeans to the Caribbean coast in search of an idyllic life.

I met several of these Spanish pilgrims during my own pilgrimage to the Caribe Sur in December 2009, and two of them became my students. I had come to teach English; they had come to build and manage eco lodges and beachside cabins as a way to realize their dreams of a pure life. During our informal afternoon classes, we laughed and joked about this pure life, swapping stories of our created (or borrowed) identities with a mixture of joy and cynicism. To us, *Pura Vida* meant a verbal rolling of the eyes over high food prices and petty theft juxtaposed with the joy of walking on a deserted beach at sunrise. It was our communal will to persist in the face of adversity, an existence stripped bare of pretense as we embraced alike the good and the evil with a good-natured shrug of the shoulders. It meant, “This is life.”

One of these Spanish friends, now married and building a family, still lives here in the *Pura Vida*. The other friend returned to her village in Spain with the parting admonition: “People should live this life for no more than three years. This is not the type of life to live permanently.” For her, that was true, but for others, not so much.

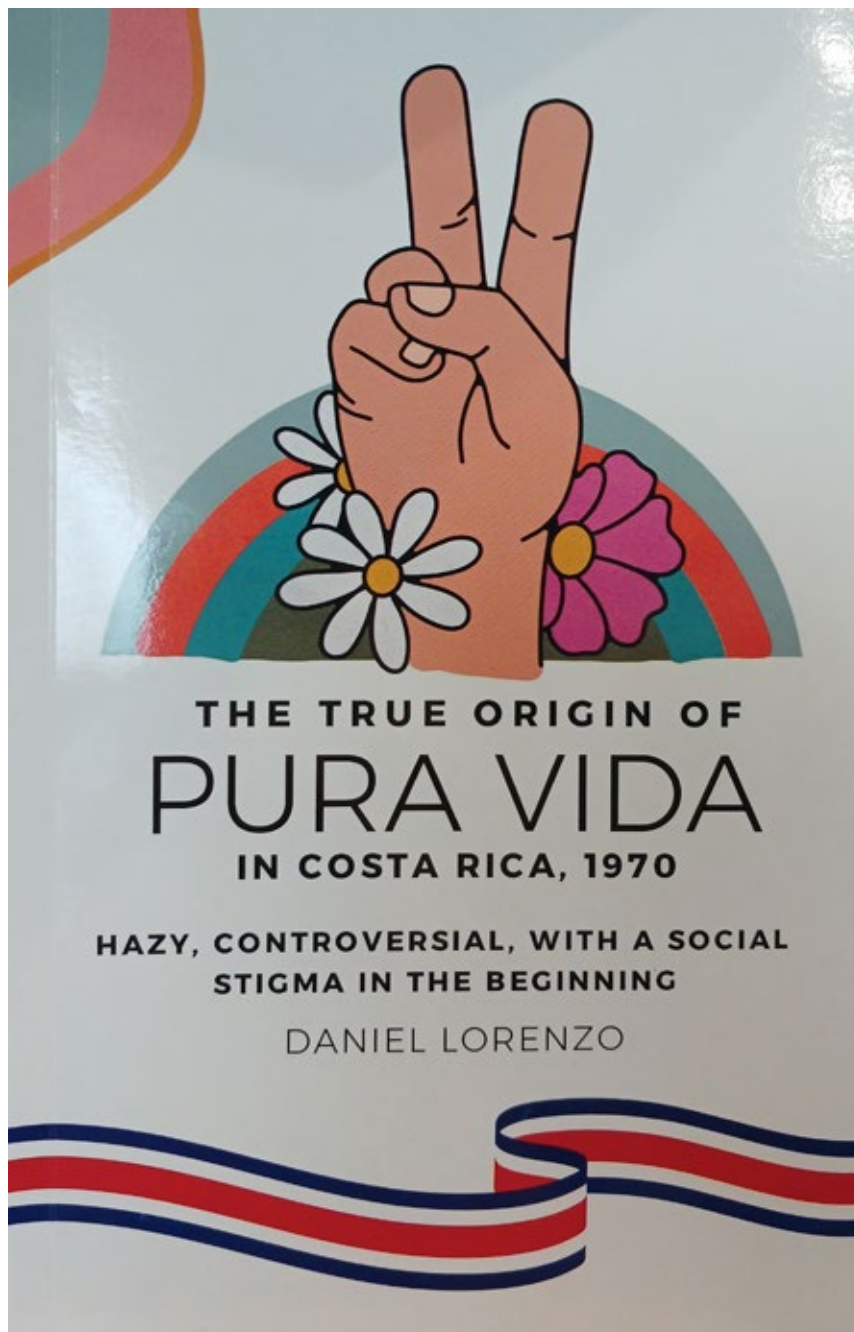
Many of my neighbors in Puerto Viejo, Playa Chiquita, and Playa Negra have lived in the *Pura Vida* for twenty years or more. Some of them have become like modern-day pirates, desperate for tourist cash, while others have accomplished what they set out to achieve and have



no plans for leaving what they now call home. As one German hotel manager told me, “I came here to change my life.” This simple statement says everything.

Over time, I have come to realize that *Pura Vida* does not happen to everyone. Tourists come to Costa Rica and leave, unimpressed. Many folks – teachers, retirees, business opportunists – become disillusioned by the difficulties and stark realities of living in paradise and flee back home. And of those who stay, some inevitably become bitter and cynical. But the bulk of those who come here to live find that *Pura Vida* is a warm and comfortable way of life.

Living in Costa Rica is not always easy. People say *Pura Vida* to one another as a reminder and a proclamation: “Sometimes life may be difficult, but this is the life we have.”



THE REST OF THE STORY

That's my story about Pura Vida. But is it true? I had come to my own conclusions by reading the academic paper of a UCR student and hearing the story of my Spanish friends who had read the book, *Pura Vida*. I had not heard anyone else give an explanation of the term's origins, though it has now spread worldwide. In fact, there is now a sign in the Juan Santamaria International Airport: "Pura Vida is in you. Essential Costa Rica." What a claim! But does anyone really know what it means, where it came from, and why this matters?

To my surprise, I discovered the answers to these questions while awaiting a flight in the Juan Santamaria International Airport on June 3rd, 2026. I had just submitted my article (above) to the editor, so "Pura Vida" was on my mind when I happened to notice a slim book, displayed in an airport kiosk with a catchy cover and the simple title, *The True Origin of PURA VIDA in Costa Rica, 1970*. I flipped through the book for contact information and found the author's email address, with the invitation for anyone who remembers the 1970 story to "step forward and raise your hand" to help the author collect data to prove his theory. Although I am not a Tico and had not been in 1970, I contacted him because I am a journalist and I wanted to know more.

Daniel Lorenzo very kindly answered my query, and when I returned from my trip, we met at a café in San Jose for an informal interview during which he told me his fascinating story. The following is my brief synopsis; I recommend reading his book to get all the facts.

The book's Introduction explains that, although he had witnessed the birth of the term, Daniel Lorenzo didn't think much about it at the time because it wasn't widely used. And also, because the term originated with the hippie movement of the late 1960s - early 1970s, and its origin carried the stigma of a minority of youth within the growing global hippie

movement, not the majority, and certainly was not the national identity of Costa Rica. But when tourism exploded in the 1990s, tourists began asking where the term "pura vida" originated.

What if they knew it came from a fictional drug deal in Mexico in the iconic 1969 film, *Easy Rider*? But, according to Daniel Lorenzo, that's exactly where it did originate.

In 2013, the newspaper *La Nación* published an article, without any documentation or sources, that claimed "pura vida" had originated from a 1956 Mexican film that was a flop in Costa Rica. Daniel Lorenzo knew the

claim was false and it bothered him, especially since the newspaper reporter claimed he had received the facts from a philologist at UCR. Then, in 2015, when the Costarican diplomat Cristian Figueres, on behalf of the UN, was involved in organizing the Paris Summit on Climate Change, the Eiffel Tower somehow displayed an illuminated legend: “100% Pura Vida.” There was no longer any question. This term had become the national identity marker for Costa Rica.

Daniel Lorenzo was watching these events unfold, but didn't want to divulge his knowledge of the term's origins, partly because it originated in hippie culture and carried a stigma that wasn't favorable to Costa Rica's national identity. But after the 50th anniversary of the release of the movie Easy Rider and Peter Fonda's death in 2020, he decided it was time to disclose what he knew.

The book includes a link to the first scene of Easy Rider, in which a Mexican drug dealer is selling cocaine to the character played by Peter Fonda. The Mexican dealer says to Fonda, “Pura Vida,” referring to the drug? And Fonda repeats the phrase with his gringo accent. Young Ticos who saw the film began repeating the greeting among themselves, and it spread to thousands during two outdoor concerts in Costa Rica in 1971. (Woodstock was another event that influenced young Ticos during the early 1970s.)

So there you have it: “Pura Vida” was first heard in Easy Rider in 1970 and was used as a greeting among like-minded young Ticos as a sort of code word, spreading during huge concerts in 1971. It continued to spread as tourists from Europe and North America sought to learn where it came from. And now it is the national identity marker of Costa Rica.

Daniel Lorenzo reflects that, “According to the use that people make of language and even more, the changes that little by little are introduced into it through the creativity and initiative of people in the environment that surrounds them, especially in the context of popular language, these innovations end up being a faithful expression of ourselves, of our character and, at the end of the day, of our national identity.”

And that is what compelled Daniel Lorenzo to write his book. I highly recommend it to anyone who lives in Costa Rica, Tico and Gringo alike. And it makes a perfect souvenir of authentic Costarican culture and history. Let's continue to export Pura Vida.

Daniel Lorenzo is the Costarican who made the effort to track down the origins of the term Pura Vida. His

self-published book, *The True Origin of PURA VIDA in Costa Rica, 1970* (2023), written in English and Spanish, will see a 2nd edition this year in preparation for his presentation on the origins of Pura Vida at Costa Rica's own TED-X Pura Vida, to be held in San Jose on August 29, 2026. For more information about the book and the upcoming TED-X Pura Vida, you may contact Daniel Lorenzo at: DanLor35@gmail.com. You may also find details about the event by clicking the link: <https://www.tedxpuravida.org/>

Connie Foss has lived in Cahuita since 2021 but first came to Costa Rica in 2009 to teach English in Heredia. This article is included in her upcoming book: Where the Jungle Meets the Sea: Rewilding a Life in the Talamancas Zone of Costa Rica.



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Lisa, Nov 2024

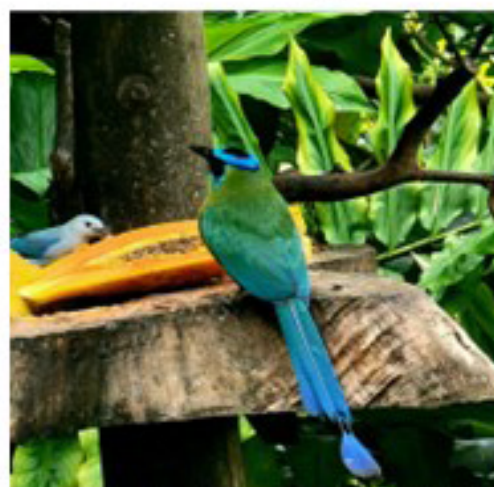
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TASTE THE TROPICS

by Allen Dickinson

Culantro/ Cilantro



Sadly, this is the final article in the Taste the Tropics series. We've been through 18 different fruits and vegetables, and hope we have expanded your selections at the market. There is one more, however, one that is so ubiquitous, so common, it was easy to overlook in our explorations. But, just because it's so ordinary and there's little to tell about it, we shouldn't skip it. So here's a little adventure I had with it to close out the series.

I have a friend in the United States who loves to grow things – he even supervises a community garden so others can join in the satisfaction of growing their own vegetables in the summer. In a casual conversation, I told him that there is a different version of the plant we know as cilantro, aka Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), in the US, here in Costa Rica. (FYI, cilantro is a member of the genus *Apium*, which includes celery, carrot, and parsley, among others.)

What we have in Costa Rica is called culantro (*Eryngium foetidum*), which is very similar to Cilantro, but it is a different species of the Apiaceae family that is an ingredient used in many Costarican food dishes. He asked me about appearance and flavor. I told him it does have a slightly different look, but, to tell the truth, I don't like the taste of either kind (they both taste like soap to me), so I couldn't tell him anything about the flavor.

BTW, there is another variation here called Culantro Coyote, also an *Eryngium foetidum*, but which looks quite different and has a very much stronger taste than "regular" culantro. It is also available in most local markets and is used in cooking. But this isn't about that variation.



Anyway, my gardener friend expressed interest in seeing how different the Latin American version was and asked me to send him some seeds. It was early spring there, and it was the ideal time to plant, so I said, "Sure, no problem!"

I checked the local farm supply store, and they sold factory-sealed envelopes of culantro seeds. The envelopes had been prepared by a commercial seed sales company and resembled the Burpee seed packets sold in the US. Each envelope had a color photo of the plant on the front and cultivation information on the back (in Spanish, of course) and contained maybe fifty seeds. Each package costs 300 colones (approx. \$0.65 USD). I bought one and put it in a small padded envelope to ship to my friend. Even though the seeds made a slight rattling noise inside their envelope, I figured that shouldn't be a problem, and sent the whole thing via the

Costarican Correo (postal system) for a charge of 350 colones (\$0.80 USD).

A few weeks later, my friend reported he received the padded envelope, but it was empty. Inside was a Homeland Security notification stating that the shipment was prohibited and had been confiscated. Some sort of international seed threat, I guess.

So now I had a challenge. I bought some more seeds. This time, all that was available was a bulk package without markings; it contained maybe 1,000 seeds, but it was only 950 colones (\$1.80 USD). I made up another envelope containing about 200 of the small seeds (similar in size and appearance to marijuana seeds, I am told, though I wouldn't know about that), which I gave to a friend who was flying back to the USA for a visit. His instructions were that, if he got the envelope through Customs in his luggage, he should drop it into the first USPS mailbox he encountered.



There was a US stamp on it; it was clearly addressed to my gardener friend, and I even put my name and US forwarding service mailbox number as the return address to give it a look of legitimacy. Time passed. After a couple of weeks, I inquired of my friend if he'd received it, but nothing had arrived. I assumed my mule had either forgotten to mail it or that it, too, had been confiscated at the border. I forgot about it.

About two months went by and one day I got a notice from Aeropost, the forwarding service I used, saying that my package needed "an invoice showing value for Costarican Customs." I informed Aeropost that I didn't want the package and to just dispose of it – it wasn't worth the trouble.

More time passed and I had again forgotten the whole thing when one day, included with my normal mail delivery, came the seed mailing envelope, intact and with the seeds still sealed inside the inner envelope. There was also a slip included stating that I had been charged import duties and transportation costs totaling 2,780 colones (\$5.75 USD). I had successfully imported Costarican culantro seeds into Costa Rica!

Not being easily dissuaded, some say stubborn, (and harboring a growing desire to be able to add "successful smuggler" to my resume), I vowed to beat the system.

Another friend who was flying home and also harbored a desire to thwart Homeland Security volunteered to carry the contraband and mail it for me. I bought another of the smaller seed packages, just like the original. I sealed the packet with some sound-deadening material in an envelope but left it unmarked. I then made up a second, empty envelope with my gardener friend's address on it, leaving it unsealed. My co-conspirator's instructions were that once he was deep inside the USA, he was to combine the two envelopes and drop them in a random mailbox. (We had deduced that they should not be mailed at the airport because that's where possibly other would-be smugglers also mailed things, so the postal system was under tighter scrutiny, which was probably the reason the last attempt had failed.) As a final step to assure success, he carried the two envelopes in separate pieces of luggage. I gave him some extra money for postage (\$1.00 - I was out of US postage stamps here), and off he went.

Success was imperative as I was now into this venture about \$8.00 USD!

You know how they ask if someone has put something in your bag you don't know about? That's such an insanely stupid question! If you don't know about someone putting something in your luggage, how can you tell anyone about it? Anyway, we figured that would be his excuse if the US Customs/Homeland Security people discovered those dangerous and prohibited seeds and asked that question: "Honest officer, I don't know how they got there – somebody I don't know about must have put it in my bag when I wasn't looking!"

A few days after my partner in crime arrived in the US, he found an isolated bathroom (at a gas station) and covertly combined the mailing envelope with silenced seed packet envelope, added a stamp, and off it went. To our amazement, it arrived at its destination in just a few days! Mission accomplished! We were relieved that no Customs or Homeland Security officials (or jail) were involved in the illegal importation of those dangerous seeds; persistence and trickery had triumphed!

By the time the shipment had arrived at my friend's house, it was late Fall and too late to plant the seed, so we waited. The next Spring he did plant them, alongside some "regular" cilantro, and we all awaited their maturation. I figure that the plants he was growing are probably the most expensive culantro ever cultivated! Later, he told me that he couldn't detect a difference in taste between the two types.

It only took a year to complete my nefarious plot, but I got a rush from the whole smuggling thing. Now that I have figured out how the underground seed railroad works, I am itching to try it again. Well, in truth, I was not THE smuggler, but I consider myself the kingpin of a successful smuggling ring. That's almost as good, isn't it? So I have set aside a significant amount of money (\$3.00 USD!) and am trying to find a source to buy a similar packet of Culantro Coyote seeds, which my friend has also requested to try. Wish me luck! (But please, don't tell Homeland what I'm doing.)

For more information about Cilantro, go to: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coriander>

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear ARCR:

I have lived in Costa Rica since January 2009 and feel as if I know how to navigate everything here with relative ease. In March of this year I realized that the renewal of my Permanent Resident Cedula was due in a few months.

This was a stressful time for me. My husband died in the middle of COVID and my son, who lives alone in the US, had suffered traumatic brain injury a year later, requiring many visits and daily communication. And all my projects here had pending deadlines. To get to the point, I am 84 years old and I was at my limit; I was beat.

After hearing others tales of long waits and difficulties with renewals, I decided, experienced as I was, to take advantage of my ARCR membership and ask for help.

On March 16, I called Carolina Biamonte at ARCR Customer Service (506) 4052-4052. She answered me on the same day and gave me all my options. From my choices she:

- Set the appointment with Migracion de Uruca for the earliest available date, 8:30 a.m. on April 15;
- Gave me full instructions including a list of paperwork to take with me;
- Supplied my missing information on my Caja payments;

- Instructed me to pay USD \$128 in colones for the new cedula, and gave me the account number at BAC for the deposit, to be made at least 24 hours before the appointment;
- Reminded me that day to make the deposit;
- Arranged for a bi-lingual person (Raul) to meet me at Migracion for my appointment, and gave him my photo and a copy of my DIMEX card;
- Gave me his photo and WAZE directions to Migracion so that we could connect seamlessly.

Raul met me on time and spoke for me with the people handling my renewal throughout the process. It was very quick and within two hours I walked out with my lovely new cedula in hand.

My longest wait was to catch the bus outside Migracion to San José!

Am I satisfied with the service ARCR provided me? YES! 100% ! The complete renewal process was smooth, easy, and efficient. I paid ARCR USD \$96.05 for it, start to finish; a bargain! I recommend using ARCR's service to everyone, regardless of their experience level. The peace of mind is worth much more than the charge!

Thank you ARCR!

Martha Rollins

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DAY IN THE LIFE

Allen Dickinson



How'd I Get Here?

From time to time I have been asked the question that those of us who have been here a while are often asked: “What brought you to Costa Rica?” Despite multiple attempts to discover the answer, I haven't come up with any answer except that, now and again, I inherited a genetic predisposition to be somewhere else.

My theory is that most of us who have transplanted ourselves here have a similar gene in our makeup; one that nags us to find out “what’s on the other side of the mountain.” I call it the Adventure Gene. I believe that some of us are endowed with it more strongly than others.

I came by mine naturally. By all accounts, the members of my family, on both sides, have been wanderers. According to my mother, a life-long member of the

DAR and normally a very reliable source, some of our earliest progenitors arrived on the Virginia coast in the 1600s. That was a pretty phenomenal feat, considering they had to spend months on leaky wooden boats to reach a place they had never seen and from which they could never return. Whatever their motivations, they must have had a pretty strong adventure gene!

That side of the family never quite got over their wanderlust; after generations of working their way west and ending up in Washington State, my mother and her parents moved to Alaska and back several times.

The knowledge of my father’s side doesn't go back quite as far, but I do know his forebears also worked their way across the country, ending up spread throughout Colorado, California, and Washington State. There are family tales involving some connections to President

Andrew Jackson and Buffalo Bill, but I'm not entirely clear on those stories.

The important thing is that, apparently, I inherited a double dose of the genes my forebears had that made them explorers.

My personal travels began (after a childhood spent living in six different locations across three states) at 17, when I joined the U.S. Navy. Over the following 23 years, I lived in eight U.S. States, two countries, and visited 30 ports in 20 countries. After I retired from the military and "settled down," I stayed in one place for the next 24 years...and was uncomfortable for a lot of the last 20; I had a deep-seated feeling of a need to "move"—to go somewhere—anywhere—just go. (I sorta did. In those 24 years I lived at eight different addresses...but all in the same general area.)

Then, in 2006, as the lust to relocate burned, the opportunity arrived; my personal situation coincided with my needs and the demands of my adventure gene. But where to go? I wanted to be warm, consistently warm, so I looked south and my focus fell on Costa Rica, and off on an exploratory trip I went. Within an hour of getting off the plane, I knew it was the right

choice; the trees, jungle, and lush foliage greeted me like an old friend. And it was warm!

I could go into all the pluses of why living here is right for me (I could also give you a laundry list of the negatives), but this is what will probably be the last stop on my personal adventure. I still have a strong desire to "go" from time to time, but it's not as insistent as it was in my younger days, and it passes. Mostly. I have moved locally five times.

I think I am done, have a home here and a family that doesn't understand my inner urges, and has no desire to go see strange places. And my age has had some impact, too. But what I do have are many memories of the places, people, and things I have seen and experienced. So, when the urge hits me, I relax and reminisce...it's sorta like taking a short trip.

I still don't know exactly "how" I got here, except that it was in answer to some inner drive, a wanderlust I have been following all my life. I've been to many places and seen many fascinating (and scary) things; my "Adventure Gene" has served me well.

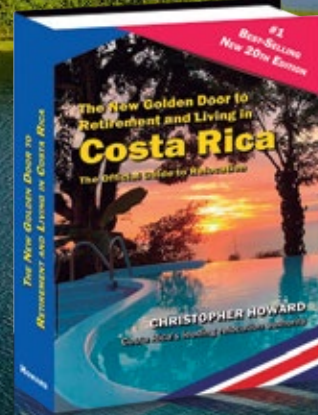
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GIVING BACK

by Linda Leake



WE CAN BE HEROES
JUST FOR ONE DAY

ARCR to Honor Local Heroes

The Association of Residents of Costa Rica (ARCR) is looking to identify expats who are Local Heroes. What is a Local Hero? A Local Hero is someone who is unselfishly doing something that will benefit their local community or advance Costa Rican culture. The purpose of the ARCR Local Hero program is to recognize those persons who have made contributions to their community that have bettered people's lives and/or advanced the culture in some way.

What does a Local hero look like? Here are a few examples:

Gail Nystrom, whose long-standing organization, the *Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation* (CRHF), provides a wide range of services focusing on the La Carpio community, a low-income area in San Jose next to the General Cañas highway. Among the services is providing food at very low prices through an agreement to receive excess (unsold) food items from markets such as the Automercado. Also, CRHF has created a fund to support the children of La Carpio who can each receive up to USD \$100 per year for their educational needs.

Another person serving the La Carpio community is Irene Laframboise, who crochets lovely baby blankets



to donate to new mothers. In addition, blankets were given to a woman who sold them to other La Carpio residents at a low price, thereby becoming a source of income for her and her family.

Berni Jubb and Nhi Chu are the owners of a small boutique hotel in Alajuela. They participate in the “Pack for a Purpose” charity. The program includes several tourist hotels that encourage their guests to bring school supplies in their luggage, which are then donated to children in local communities.

Someone else who is a Local Hero is Sherman Dems, who founded FANG (Fundación por amor a los niños de Grecia). One of their group’s activities is sponsoring a party with food, entertainment, and small gifts for the children of Isla Caballo in Nicoya. Most recently, this happened last January, when algae prevented fishing in the Gulf, the main source of income for local families. This year, other organizations, including the American Legion Post 10 and CRHF, also contributed to this activity.

In the Uvita area, heroes can be found at a 24-hour shelter for cats and dogs called El Refugio Hogar Animal Costa Ballena. The shelter was founded by a group of local people, among them Pamela Lopez, and is staffed by volunteers. They spay or neuter and vaccinate the animals before they are placed in foster care or are adopted. This service is a lifeline for the stray cats and dogs in the area and for those animals whose Tico owners cannot afford to care for them.

These are but a few of many individuals and organizations making exceptional efforts to show their appreciation for the hospitality of their host country.

Do you know a Local Hero? If so, to nominate them for the award, please send an email to info@arcr.cr, SUBJECT LINE: Local Hero, with the person's name and a description of what they are doing to help their community. In recognition, each Local Hero will receive public acknowledgment recognition of their efforts and a small token of appreciation.

ON THE GRID

by Ivo Henfling

Proceeds of a real estate closing



What should you do with the proceeds of a property closing in Costa Rica? Most would say, “Just put it in the bank.” Unfortunately, it's not that simple anymore. I have had what looked like a simple closing almost turn into a nightmare quite a few times because of money laundering laws; the rules are changing fast.

Normally, in the past, after the closing, the seller would deposit the proceeds of the sale into their local bank account (via a cashier's check) so that, after clearance, they could wire the funds to their US account. Nowadays, when a cashier's check is deposited, the bank's usual procedure is to freeze the

funds so it can verify that the money source complies with compliance rules and that the funds' origin is verified. Consequently, the closing attorney, the seller, and the realtor can all go through hell for two weeks as it is worked out.

The reason that happens is that the seller and their lawyer had no idea what the seller's obligations are, and that the funds they are using need to go through escrow, to meet money laundering laws. They should have read my article at: <https://tinyurl.com/bdh5x3jt>

Eventually, it all got straightened out. Let me explain what should have happened.

FORMALIZE AN OFFER

In most real estate transactions, it is customary to draft a formal offer so that the buyer's real estate attorney can use it to create an option to purchase-sale agreement. In Spanish, this is called a "*Promesa Recíproca de Compra y Venta*", and it states the buyer promises to purchase the house or land at X amount in Y amount of time, and that the seller agrees to these conditions. The option includes everything about the property, the transaction details, and how the funds will be disbursed.

In cases where either the seller or the buyer is out of the country, notary publics can use the DocuSign website, <https://www.docuSign.com/>, but I still see some asking both the seller and the buyer to print, sign, and scan a purchase/sale agreement. If you want to read more about selling/buying property from outside of Costa Rica, check out this site. <https://tinyurl.com/4upcddcv>

PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

For many years, to save on property transfer taxes, attorneys and realtors were putting a much lower price in the deed than the agreed-upon price. That tactic is no longer possible; the deed must reflect the actual sales price. If not, the deed will not reflect the same amount as the deposit made into the seller's bank account. In other words, the bank deposit must be for the same amount as shown in the deed.

Additionally, when the property being sold is not the seller's residence, the seller must pay capital gains tax on any amount higher than what it was purchased for. Thankfully, the government finally got organized because that was one of the main reasons for the potholes and the lack of infrastructure in this beautiful country. But that is a different story, which we'll keep for another time.

ESCROW

To avoid these problems, the seller should ask the buyer to do the purchase funds transaction through escrow. The escrow company will have the buyer complete the KYC (Know Your Customer) form and provide proof of the funds' origin. That will protect you, the seller, from having to accept money obtained illegally. Once the escrow company's bank has approved the origin of the funds, it will make the funds available to the buyer's bank (in Costa Rica or outside the country), who will then be able to make the deposit proceeds available to

the closing attorney, the realtor, and any other person(s) who must be paid at closing.

DO NOT ACCEPT CASH

There are still buyers out there who are offering cash, often more than the asking price, for a property. The most likely reason is that money was obtained illegally. If you accept cash and take it to the bank, even if it's the exact amount stated in the deed, you will not be able to deposit it because the KYC requirements have not been met, and a legitimate source for the money has not been proven.

THE DEED

At closing, ask the closing attorney to provide you with a notarized copy of the deed and proof of funds so your bank won't give you any trouble when they receive the deposit from the sale. Ask the bank to make a photocopy of those documents and keep the notarized copies for yourself.

OWNERSHIP THROUGH A CORPORATION

When the property is owned by a corporation, and you're selling it out of the corporation, ask the closing attorney to clearly state in the deed that you have the corporation's full power of attorney. Accompany the copy of the deed with a "*certificación literal*" and a copy of the *acta 32ter*, in which the board of the corporation authorizes you to sell, so the bank understands the source of the proceeds.

When dealing with the above, make sure you work with a reliable, experienced real estate agent to guide you through the transaction. The notary public, or closing attorney, is responsible only for preparing and recording the deed and will likely not be involved in the details of handling the proceeds from the property sale.

Are you buying or selling property in the Central Valley? Then contact me now to request a Zoom meeting.

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



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3. Attend ARCR Seminar for Expats. ()
4. Relax! ()

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LEGAL UPDATE

by Rómulo Pacheco

The three-Month Countdown: Why Letting Your Costa Rica DIMEX Expire Can Mean Starting From Zero

For years, many temporary residents in Costa Rica treated their residency (DIMEX) card's expiration date with a somewhat relaxed attitude. If a card expired, you typically expected to pay a minor monthly penalty (USD \$3 per month) and present a notarized letter explaining the delay.

However, Costa Rica's General Directorate of Migration and Extranjería (DGME) is strictly enforcing a long-standing legal rule – Article 129, section 10 of the Immigration Law (No. 8764) – which completely changes the game.

THE NEW REALITY

If the expiration date of your temporary residency card is exceeded by three consecutive months without making a renewal application or obtaining a formal appointment, your legal status is **CANCELED**. You must start the entire immigration process over from zero.

1. The Legal Trap: Article 129 (Inciso 10)

Under the strict interpretation of Costarican law, a temporary resident's legal status is only considered "vulnerable but salvageable" for a

short window. Once you cross the 90-day mark post-expiration without initiating the renewal, you are legally no longer considered a resident. You revert to a tourist status – or worse, an irregular status.

Renewal Timeline	Status & Penalties	Action Required
Up to 90 Days BEFORE Expiration	Safe & Recommended Window	Standard renewal at Banco de Costa Rica (BCR) or Correos.
1 to 30 Days AFTER Expiration	Grace Period / Soft Penalty	Renew via standard channels; minor fines apply (USD \$3/month).
31 to 90 Days AFTER Expiration	Escalated Renewal	Standard channels, but requires a formal, notarized justification letter from an attorney.
Over 90 Days (3+ Months) AFTER	CANCELED STATUS	Cannot renew. You must re-apply as a first-time applicant.

2. What "Starting From Zero" Actually Costs You

Letting your residency lapse past the three-month mark is a massive financial and bureaucratic setback. Re-applying as a first-time applicant means you must complete the following all over again:



- **Supply Fresh Home Country Documents:** You will need a brand-new background check, birth certificate, and marriage certificate (if applicable). These must be fresh, apostilled/legalized, and officially translated.
- **Massive Financial Hit:** First-time application government fees, background checks, translations, and private legal fees can easily reach USD \$1,500 to \$2,000.
- **Loss of Time Credited:** If you were planning to transition to Permanent Residency (which usually requires holding temporary status for three consecutive years), your clock resets to zero.
- **Daily Life Violations:** The moment your status is canceled, your CCSS (Caja) healthcare access is frozen, and local banks are legally obligated to freeze your bank accounts until you provide valid legal identification.

3. Protect Your Status

To ensure you never fall into the 3-month trap, memorize these core steps:

Step 1. Know your expiration date: Check your DIMEX card right now. Look for the expiration (vence) date. Do not trust your memory; physical proof is the only thing that matters to the DGME.

Step 2. Book your appointment 90 days out: Act early. The law allows you to apply for renewal up

to three months before your card expires. Call 800-BCRCITA or use the Correos de Costa Rica platform to book your slot the moment your window opens. Or have ARCR do it for you.

Step 3. Secure your proof of filing: Legally freeze the clock. If appointments at BCR or Correos are booked out, obtain proof that you have explicitly requested an appointment or submit a renewal application directly to the DGME. Having a formal *comprobante* (receipt/proof of submission) legally protects your status even if the actual appointment occurs after your expiration date.

CONCLUSION

Costa Rica is digitizing its systems and strictly enforcing deadlines to clear backlogs and regulate its expat population. The days of "I'll get to it next month" are officially over. Check your card, stay current with your Caja payments, and book your renewal early. Don't let a simple calendar date force you to start your legal life in paradise all over again.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Rómulo Pacheco

Attorney at Law, Notary Public

Pacheco, Marin, and Associates

4052-4055 / 8710-0780

romulo@residencycr.com

CLUB CORNER

► Alcoholics Anonymous

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

► Al-Anon

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

► American Legion Post 10

Meets at Yakky's Restaurant and Bar, located 50 meters NE of the corner of Avenida 30 & Calle 134, Escazu Centro, at 12:30 PM on the first Thursday of the month. Open to all NATO veterans. For more information call Leonardo Nelson (726) 205-9746

► Amigos of Costa Rica

A US-based non-profit organization established in 1999. Amigos of Costa Rica has the mission of connecting global resources to Costa Rican Organizations. Amigos currently works with over 120 Costa Rican nonprofits and is happy to connect with donors who wish to explore how they can contribute to Costa Rica. U.S. Government tax-payers donations are deductible. For more information go to: www.amigosofcostarica.org or email to: admin@amigosofcostarica.org

► The Atenas Book Club

Formed in 2004, meets the first Wednesday monthly at 10:30 am, at alternating locations and with discussion leaders among the members. The group reads a variety of books and authors, reading both fiction and non-fiction. All books must be available on Kindle or some electronic reader. Currently there is a waiting list to join. For more information contact Mary Martin Mason at: marymason1946@gmail.com.

► Birding Club Costa Rica

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

► Canadian Club

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

► Central Valley Golf Association

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

► Costa Rica Writers Group

Writers, authors, and anyone who would like to write can benefit from this group. Members read and evaluate or critique each other's work, or present what they write. Any aspect of writing can be discussed. We have access to resources for editing, publishing, and the whole writing process. We meet by ZOOM on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month at 11:30 a.m. For more information contact Edie Bakker at: edierainforest@yahoo.com

► Democrats Abroad Costa Rica

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

► First Tuesday Lunch

The ARCR First Tuesday Lunch takes place the first Tuesday of the month, 12:00 at the Restaurant El Dorado on Calle 62A in Sabana North. Open to all, no RSVP required. For directions call Allen Dickinson, 7033-3475

► Marine Corps Warriors League

Meets the second Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at the Tap House in City Place Mall in Santa Ana. We are looking for new members. Former Marines and Navy Corpsmen can be regular members. All other service members are welcome to join as associate members. For information call Andy Pucek at: 8721-6636 or email: andy@marinecorpsleaguecr.com, andypucek@live.com

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

Formed in November 2009 to promote friendship between English speaking women in Pérez Zeledón and, through friendship, to make a positive contribution to our local community. The Club meets for lunch on the second Tuesday of each month in different restaurants around the canton. We also host a Ramblers group, a Games group and currently have a team working in the Municipal gardens. For more information, please send an email to: pzwomansclub@gmail.com.

► Professional Women's Network

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

of entrepreneurs, students, and professionals. PWN sponsors service and outreach programs to "give back" to the community. Meeting schedules vary. For info on the speaker for the month and to register, call Sarah Joy at 8868-6990 or email us at info@pwn-cr.com The PWN website is: <http://www.pwn-cr.com>

► San Vito Bird Club

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

► The Umbrella Club of Costa Rica (formerly Newcomers of Costa Rica)

Is a group for English speaking women living in Costa Rica to share experiences, ideas, common interests, and to promote fellowship among members. The core of the Umbrella Club is the Interest Groups which meet monthly. There are two to three general meetings a year. There are no dues. For more information, contact:

Grace at 2249-1208 or 8369-7992, or send an email to: jaygracefernandes@gmail.com or Kelly at: kclayton2003@yahoo.com

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

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

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Important dates in Costa Rica:

25 July, Saturday
Annexation of Guanacaste,
National Holiday

2 August, Sunday
Our Lady of Los Ángeles,
Non Compulsory Payment
Holiday

15 August, Saturday
Mother's Day, National
Holiday

24 August, Monday
National Parks Day,
Observance

Tips and Tricks for a Pura
Vida Life: A Seminar, 27
& 28, August (Thursday/
Friday) Location: Four
Points by Sheraton San Jose
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Office for reservations

Definitions:

NATIONAL HOLIDAY:

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

NON-COMPULSORY PAYMENT HOLIDAY:

Official holiday, however
the employer is not required
to pay their employees
double if they are required
to work that day.

OBSERVANCE: If the
date falls on a weekday, it
is a paid day off for Costa
Rica workers.

ONE-LINERS:

The last thing I want to do
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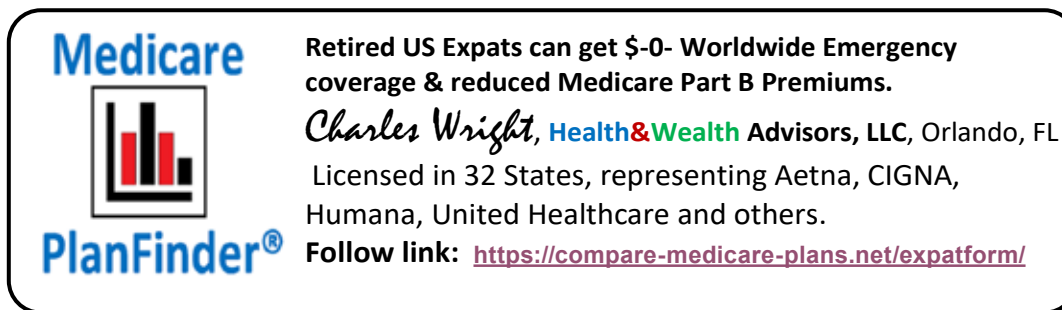
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