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EL RESIDENTE

September

October

2026

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Galería Namu



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CONTENTS

Across the Board ARCR Board of Directors	4
Indigenous Issues by Bill Duckwall	6
Local Heroes Project Linda Leake	12
Out and About Mitzi Stark	16
Alajuela North Berni Jubb	24
A Day in the Life Allen Dickinson	27
Healthy Living El Residente Staff	32
Scam Alert El Residente Staff	37
Always an Adventure Christine Monteith	39
Legal Update Rómulo Pacheco	42
Cell Phone Security Alex Morgan	44
On the Grid Ivo Henfling	47
Caribbean Connection Connie Foss	49
Club Corner	54
Business Directory	56

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

Ho, Ho, Ho!

Huh? Isn't it a little early for Christmas, you might ask? Well, sorta, but *El Residente* only has two opportunities to remind members about ARCR's annual charity effort, the TREE OF HOPE, and this issue is one of them.

For those who don't know, the TREE OF HOPE gathers cash donations from members, which are converted into toys and other items that are given to children in the Children's Hospital who might not otherwise get anything for Christmas. The details of for contributing to the charity are in the ad on the facing page. Check it out and then, as the old saying goes, give early and give generously.



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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.

DIGITAL MARCHAMO The marchamo is the annual road tax (vehicular circulation) permit purchased for every vehicle each year in November/December. Payment is indicated by a decal applied on the inside of the upper right corner area of the vehicle's windshield.

In July, the Instituto Nacional de Seguros (INS) announced that, for 2027, the Marchamo will undergo a dramatic change: it will convert from the traditional window sticker to a new digital sticker

The new sticker will still be affixed to the windshield but will now be valid for 10 years; it will no longer need to be replaced every year. The new sticker will use an embedded UHF radio frequency "chip" for traffic control. It will not be capable of monitoring a vehicle's location by satellite tracking. Renewal will still take place each year but can be accomplished either by paying online or through the traditional process.

When payment is made, the vehicle owner must provide an email address. Unlike the previous system, which also issued a paper document, the new process will have INS email the vehicle owner the registration document. If email delivery is not possible, other download options will be available.

At the time of the announcement, motorcycle Marchamos were not included in the digital upgrade because the stickers are exposed to the elements. A study is taking place to resolve that issue.

SCAMS American Express is circulating some tips to avoid scams. They are copied here. Thank you, American Express.

STAY VIGILANT Impostor scams are when someone pretends to be a trusted authority, like a government entity, your bank, or your credit card provider. They

create a sense of urgency and try to force you to make snap judgments in situations like these:

- A government or law enforcement official reaches out to demand immediate payment for a debt or to collect personal information.
- A person claims to have tickets for a high-demand event like a sold-out game for a discount. If it sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam.
- When someone requests an unusual form of payment such as gift cards or crypto. Remember, legitimate businesses will never ask you to pay with gift cards or crypto to resolve an issue with your account.
- In all of these instances, the scammer is trying to access your credit card account or financial details and steal your funds. **PAUSE, THINK, AND VERIFY BEFORE YOU TAKE ACTION.**

MAILING ITEMS TO THE USA It has become more difficult to send things to the USA through the Costarican postal system. When attempting to mail something to a USA recipient, before the Correo will accept it, they will input the address information into a computerized system. If the system cannot verify the address, the Correo will require the sender to provide the recipient's email address and telephone number before accepting the item.

TRAFFIC SAFETY August 17th was World Pedestrian Day, and according to the Instituto Nacional de Seguros (INS), the number of pedestrians killed or injured during the first six months of the year in Costa Rica is already close to the total for 2025; so far there have been 1,193 pedestrians injured with 14 fatalities vs. 2,483 for all of 2025. The cause is believed to be the increase in vehicles on the road. The lesson is that even pedestrians need to exercise extreme care.

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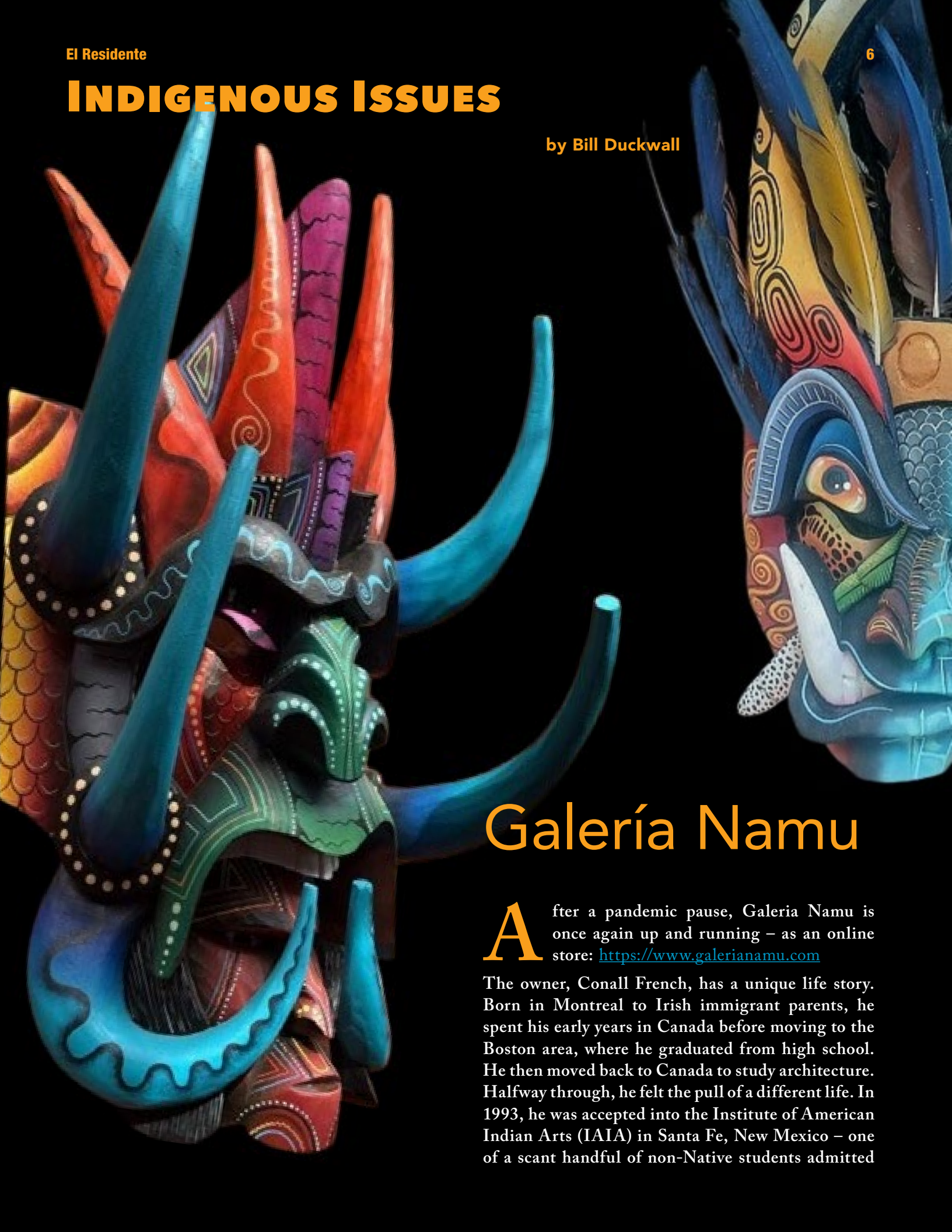
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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

by Bill Duckwall

6



Galería Namu

After a pandemic pause, Galeria Namu is once again up and running – as an online store: <https://www.galerianamu.com>

The owner, Conall French, has a unique life story. Born in Montreal to Irish immigrant parents, he spent his early years in Canada before moving to the Boston area, where he graduated from high school. He then moved back to Canada to study architecture. Halfway through, he felt the pull of a different life. In 1993, he was accepted into the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico – one of a scant handful of non-Native students admitted



each year. There, he specialized in Museum Studies, learning how to conserve, interpret, and present cultural artifacts and fine arts. He also studied painting, sculpture, jewelry, and Native arts history, giving him a deep respect for the creativity and traditions of indigenous peoples.

He interned at the IAIA Museum in Santa Fe and worked for the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA), organizer of the Santa Fe Indian Market. He gained experience and came to believe

that indigenous art has value not just as heritage, but as a living and evolving voice.

In 1994, he visited Costa Rica, where his parents had relocated. He was hooked immediately but struck by the near invisibility of its indigenous peoples in national life and tourism. He was determined to help change that.

In 1997, he joined an NGO (non-governmental organization) in the remote Bribri village of Yorkin, on the Costa Rica-Panama border, 45 minutes upriver



from the nearest road. He lived with the Bribri for more than a year, learned Spanish and some Bribri, and adapted to a very different life in the rainforest. During that time, he and his mother Aisling began to envision a new kind of gallery in San José, one that would focus on indigenous art. (“Namu”, incidentally, is the Bribri word for jaguar.)

Conall began traveling extensively through Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, and Honduras, seeking out artists, documenting traditions, and collecting works. His focus was simple: who is still creating in the traditional way? How can their work be meaningfully and respectfully shared with the world?



Galería Namu opened in 1998. From the start, they offered museum-quality indigenous and national folk art, sold directly from the artists to the international public. It was also a space for cultural exchange, hosting visitors and arranging visits to indigenous communities interested in ethno-tourism. (Conall arranged a two-night stay for me, my wife, and a family friend in late 2024 in Yorkin with the Bribri. See the March 2025 issue of this magazine for my account of the visit.)

By 2005, Conall was working full-time in the gallery. He has built close relationships with artists from the Bribri, Cabécar, and Brunka of Costa Rica; the Wounaan and Emberá of Panama; the Miskitu and Pech of Honduras; and others.

Galería Namu operated as a brick-and-mortar store in Barrio Amon, San José, for more than two decades. The store was featured in an excellent article by Michael Miller in this magazine in January,

2024. For the eight years I've lived here, it's been a mandatory stop whenever we're showing visitors around the country. As Michael Miller wrote, when asked, "Where can I get something beautiful for my home that truly represents Costa Rica?", the answer was Galería Namu. Sadly, the old store is now permanently closed.

The tourism business ebbs and flows; the pandemic years were an "ebb" of epic proportions. These days, many tourists never set foot in San José; they go straight from the airport to a beach destination – an unfortunate development, given the cultural resources downtown. Expats are more likely to visit the National Theater, the assorted museums, and the varied restaurants downtown; tourists are perhaps more focused on national parks and wildlife.

The mission of Galería Namu is unchanged. They buy directly from native artists; nothing is sold on consignment. Over the years, their fair-trade policy



has fostered strong relationships with the artists, who save their best pieces for Namu. With its online store, anyone in the world can view and purchase original works by indigenous artists from Central America.

Early this year, Conall sent out a note to friends, announcing that he would soon have the website up and running and sharing photographs of a new set of Brunka masks that had been used in the annual winter festival, *Danza de los Diablitos*. I have a personal weakness for these masks and ended up purchasing one – “Stinkeye”. We were in San José for a night, and after taking care of some bureaucratic paperwork, we arranged to stay at Hotel Bougainvillea and meet Conall there for breakfast and receive the new mask.

Let me just digress briefly to say that most of us – engineers, salespeople, teachers, healthcare workers – have lives that

are more or less predictable. Conall’s life is well outside that boundary. What would his high school guidance counselor have said if presented with a life plan to go live among indigenous tribes in Central America and promote their artists? We had a wide-ranging conversation over breakfast that morning, one worth the price of the mask itself. He has been shaped by experiences that are well outside the norm.

I won’t try to include photos of the wide range of art at Gallería Namu’s online store (gallerianamu.com); please visit the website and see for yourself! I have a weakness for Brunka masks though, so maybe there is room for just one or two photos.

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LOCAL HEROES PROJECT

by Linda Leake

Local Heroes

The Association of Residents of Costa Rica (ARCR) has begun a program of identifying and honoring Local Heroes. What is a Local Hero? A “Local Hero” is an expatriate who is unselfishly doing something that will benefit their community or contribute positively to Costarican culture. What does a local hero look like? Here are two examples:

BARRY BIESANZ

Barry Biesanz came to Costa Rica in 1971 and in 1972 founded Biesanz Woodworks. Over time, Barry developed an international reputation for making beautiful bowls, boxes, and other objects that feature the grain and character of exotic woods such as cocobolo and ironwood. He was dedicated to saving these native species, so he did not cut down trees for his shop; instead, he used scraps and pieces from fallen or dead trees.

In the process of creating his products, Barry trained several Costaricans in wood-turning and craft production. Though they began as his assistants, many later went out on their own, thereby earning their living as craftsmen.

As Barry’s interest in saving exotic trees developed, in 1989 he and his wife, Sara Blanchet, started a non-profit tree propagation program. They grow seedlings in their nursery and give them away free to farmers to plant on their property. In one year, they gave away more than 3,000 seedlings. In a parallel effort, Barry reforested his own family farm with native hardwoods.

Barry has retired and Biesanz Woodworks is now closed. However, his work has contributed greatly to the Costarican community. The Municipality of Escazu regards his work and the historical designs of Biesanz Woodworks as part of its cultural and tourism heritage.

MARTHA ROLLINS

Another Local Hero is Martha Rollins. Over the past 17 years, she has been involved as a volunteer in many projects that are supportive of the Costarican culture and community.

One highlight is her involvement in the Multilingual Government Program, held at the Centro Cultural Costarricense-Norteamericano in Los Yoses, San Jose. She was instrumental in organizing weekly classes for a group of Costarican teachers who wanted to pass a test in English that was needed for them to work internationally. The teaching program was a success, and all the teachers passed!

In another effort, four students at Liceo Luis Dobles S decided to create a play of their own, in English. Martha met with them weekly to help them produce a prize-winning play, which they performed at the Costarican Book Fair.

She also recruited Costarican teachers who were interested in having their students attend English-speaking performances by the Little Theater Group. She arranged for the students to attend some plays and prepared materials to help them understand the language in the plays.

In yet another effort which has lasted over several years, Martha became familiar with the culture and needs of the indigenous Cabécar in three different parts of Talamanca. She then assembled a team of experts to help address some of the problems she had identified. Her involvement with them is still ongoing, and over the years she has also visited and supported the indigenous Térraba, Bribri, and Cabécar groups.

Another project was forming a partnership between a technical high school in Orosi and an indigenous high school, Liceo Alto Quetzal. Twelve students from each school participated in a friendship exchange, working on projects such as replanting trees and creating an online verbal dictionary of the Cabécar language.

Martha has been intimately involved in fundraising efforts to support various indigenous programs. In 2024, in collaboration with Indigenous leaders and groups, Martha helped raise funds for the region-wide games held in Talamanca. The event focused on activities unique to Indigenous communities and included such things as river swims and bow-and-arrow competitions.

against moving targets. The event was a great success and will be repeated in 2027.

Even at 83, Martha remains actively involved and contributes her time and effort to many local causes. None would be complete without her smiling face.

These are just two examples of expats making exceptional efforts to show their appreciation and involvement with

their host country. Future issues of *El Residente* will feature other short profiles of persons who are Local Heroes. Do you know a Local Hero? If so, nominate them for this feature by sending an email to: info@arcr.cr, Subject line: Local Hero. Give us the person's name and a description of what they are doing to help their community. We will all enjoy hearing about their efforts!



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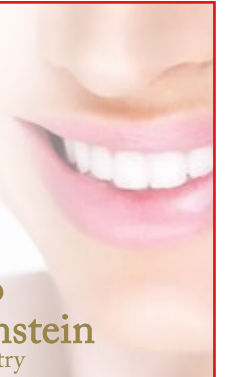
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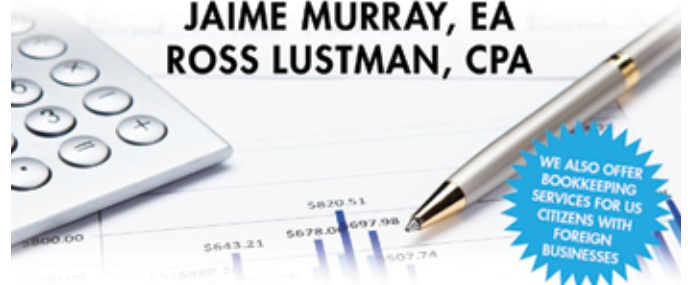
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OUT AND ABOUT

by Mitzi Stark



I Need a New Wardrobe

Is the rainy season getting you down? Maybe what you need to cheer you up is a perky new wardrobe with smashing looks and top brands, all purchased at bargain prices. If that would do it, let's go shopping at a Ropa Americana store!

If you think Ropa Americanas just have “used clothes,” that’s not exactly accurate; yes, there are some used items, but many of the things they have are brand new. And there are some great buys.

I, like many, was at first reluctant to go to a Ropa Americana; I thought it was “just used clothes.” I

remembered the hand-me-downs I got when I was a kid. I inherited a lot of out-grown clothes from my cousin Marge who was a few years older than me. I remember my mother expressing her gratitude to my aunt for this abundance while, at the same time, Marge was pointing out all the stains and poking her fingers in the moth holes. I never wanted to wear used clothes again.

Then, when I discovered what Ropa Americanas actually sold, that shopping there wasn't the same as going to a rummage sale (a *cachi vachi* as they are called here) I was intrigued and decided to explore.



What I discovered was that most of the clothes sold at Ropa Americanas come from several sources. One of the biggest is Goodwill, which receives donations of new, unworn, out-of-season or overstock merchandise that wasn't sold at the big-box or mall locations of large corporations (think, Gap, Old Navy, Nordstrom, etc.). Goodwill, in turn, can't handle all the donations they get, so they sell off their excess to wholesale companies. Those businesses put the clothes in *pacas* (big bags) of 50 or 100 pounds, which are then sold on the internet to stores like the Ropa Americana stores here.

Other donating sources are stores going out of business or liquidating merchandise they can't sell. And yes, some come from recycling centers, but they are usually good quality selections. Think of it as recycling, but of mostly new, unused items, with a bottom line that the donating businesses get tax write-offs for their contributions. And in the end, those of us shopping at a Ropa Americana can reap the convenience and price advantage of buying stylish, brand new clothes for a fraction of their original price.

'Everybody' shops at Ropa Americanas. A friend from the States who comes to Costa Rica every year packs light and shops at them when she arrives. A Costarrican



lawyer I know went to court in a stunning blue dress that she found in a Ropa Americana. A neighbor of mine showed up at a baby shower in a fabulous pantsuit, and one man I know proudly wore a T-shirt with the legend “It’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect”. All were found in Ropa Americanas. One mother I know found an elegant formal dress for her daughter’s graduation party. “She’s only going to wear it once,” said the mom.

There are other advantages too. For instance, if you want clothes for a grubby beach trip or a messy hobby, Ropa Americanas are a great source. Or if you need clothes for children that outgrow theirs in six months, they are a great place to get them.

The Ropa Americanas are everywhere due to their being popular with all classes of the Costarican public. Many also sell shoes and household bargains like sheets and curtains.

I love shopping at the Ropa Americanas. I have a closet full of Ralph Laurens, Talbots, and Ann Taylors that make me feel like a million bucks. The new Catalina

jacket I bought for one thousand colons is still my all-time best buy. The khaki safari pants and top are among my favorites, as are the skinny jeans and a plushy robe.

On one trip to a Ropa Americana, I was searching through a bin of stuffed toys looking for something for my dog. Another customer was looking through the same bin for a stuffed cat that meowed. I wanted one too, thinking it would be fun in a house with five cats (and one dog). We didn’t find any meowing cats, but I did find a bird that chirped. It was too cute to give to the dog to maul, so it now sits on the credenza in my bedroom.

I once found a nickel in the pocket of a pair of shorts I bought, and I heard that someone found a ten-dollar bill. I’m sure that now all pockets are checked before the items go public. Visiting the Ropa Americana stores is like going on a treasure hunt. You never know what you will come home with: a designer outfit or a stuffed toy. Or maybe both.

* * * * *



HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

September 15 is a special day; it's **Independence Day** for all of Central America. It commemorates the day in 1821 when the five provinces (actually there were six, but Chiappas decided to join Mexico) won their independence after a painless, bloodless challenge. The Spanish King, Fernando VII, was exasperated and his treasury was near empty. Simon Bolivar had recently wrenched a vast part of South America from his kingdom, and Napoleon was pounding on the door, so when Central America came asking for independence, he gave in.

Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica each celebrate Independence Day in their own way. Here, there are programs in central parks,

schools, and museums, folk dances, patriotic displays in public buildings, and even private businesses will decorate their premises. The day itself is rather laid back. The main events take place the day before, when the torch with the Flame of Liberty arrives in Cartago, the colonial capital, on the 14th, and the entire country joins in singing the national anthem at 6 p.m.

About the **Flame of Liberty**. This is the one activity that unites all the countries. A torch originates in Guatemala City, the original capital for the Captaincy General of Guatemala, as the region was called, and is relayed throughout Central America by high school students who carry the flame back to their own communities. On the morning of the 14th, the torch will reach Costa Rica's northern border and a Nicaraguan teenager will stretch his arm across the



divide and pass the flame to a Costarican teenager. It is an emotional moment. The torch is then relayed to Cartago, the original capital of Costa Rica.

People line the main route and gather at the points where the flame is passed, and TV and the internet will follow the progress as the flame is relayed to every city and village.

In the village where I live, we follow the sixth-grade class from our school to the highway where the torch bearer running from Grecia to Alajuela stops to pass the flame. When the runners from our school and the high school receive it, they run back to their respective schools. We follow in cars, tractors, on horses, and walking, and all along the route people come out to watch and wave tricolor flags. It is an honor for the students who carry the torch.

At six p.m. on the 14th, we meet at the school for singing the national anthem, and then the lantern parade begins; children carrying lanterns, some made at home, others bought in *librerías* (office supply stores), march in the area around their school, to

represent the gathering of crowds to receive the news of independence.

Lanterns, red, white, and blue bunting, ribbons and streamers, children dressed in traditional flouncy dresses and white pants and shirts, red bandannas, and riding stick horses are a small part of the culture visible on that day. Look for activities in your area by searching "dia de independencia 2026" and your area, or "agenda dia de independencia 2026," on the internet.

* * * * *

Another special event is the **Art for Peace Festival**. More than 100 artists, painters, poets, musicians, and cooks from around the world will present their work in the galleries of the Juan Santamaria museum in Alajuela. Beginning with an inauguration at 6:30 on September 23, the exhibition will last over a five-month period. The 26th will be a full day of activities, including food representing various countries. The idea is to promote peace by using art as a means to transform from violence to peace.



The festival is coordinated by artist Juan Carlos Chavarria, who creates art using decommissioned gun parts from the Ministry of Security. He has given art workshops in prisons, schools, and on the streets.

All events and the museum are free and open to the public. The museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday. Hours may change for special events. See their Facebook page, Fundacion Transformacion en Tiempos Violentos, or Museo Juan Santamaria, for more information.

Dia de las Culturas. Columbus, or Cristóbal Colón as he is known here, landed in Costa Rica in 1502, and the traditional day of celebration is October 12. Although various tribes of original people inhabited Costa Rica, later migrations came from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, so that today Costa Rica blends cultures from all over the globe, and this day celebrates them all.

Programs in schools and cultural centers will show the many cultures here. Place names like San Vito, Rhormoser, and Home Creek reflect the ethnic hodgepodge that makes up Costa Rica. Some government offices may be closed that day.

Dia de las Mascaradas Mascaradas are those large grotesque heads that are worn over a person's, usually a teenager's, head and sometimes body. The date, October 31st, is more to show off the Costarican scary masks and costumes than to celebrate Halloween, which is considered a foreign custom here, and to preserve the mascarada traditions.

The masked characters were known in colonial times and were a form of theater to represent Good vs. Evil and other themes. The most traditional masks are made from paper-mache and depict the devil and the giants, which scare children into being good. Nowadays, other masks may resemble popular characters such as soccer

players, TV personalities, and government officials, as well as animals and cartoons. Some are scary, but most are for fun and are seen in festivals and patron saint feasts.

Barva de Heredia was one center for mask making and usually hosts a public event with masked figures. Check cultural agendas for Dia de las Mascaradas to find one nearby.

Limón is home to **Carnival**. This year it will take place from the 9th to the 18th of October. This tradition goes back to the Caribbean islands, where Afro populations developed carnival and brought it to Costa Rica. It includes a huge parade (comparsa) with costumed dancers and marchers and reggae and calypso music. There is lots of Caribbean food available. Crowded, but fun. Look for excursions from the general metropolitan area (GAM in Spanish) or check the net.



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ALAJUELA NORTH

by Berni Jubb



"How much is the map?"
A breakfast tale

Here at our hotel, we serve our guests a sumptuous breakfast so they are ready to go out and explore our beautiful, exciting country. As they eat, I try to determine their plans and offer some advice that may help them get through the day. This is the story of one morning.

I lean over the breakfast table with a coffee pot in one hand and a set of Alamo rental car keys in the other. I catch the eye of a guest who is studying a Google Maps route intently on a tiny 5-inch screen. I recognize the look – another true believer.

"Thinking of heading to the Zona Sur today?" I ask, a little concerned, knowing some local realignment is in order. "A long way and a brave choice, Highway 2," (I fail to translate that the local name for Highway 2 is Cerro de la Muerte, lest I set off more alarm bells

than necessary.) I say this with a wide grin. I know that driving in the neo-tropics is equal parts stunning vistas, detours off-road when you were certain the route was paved, black cows on black nights, and cheap Chinese motos.

I should digress a moment on the subject of realignment. In addition to my minor and not terribly significant duties as an innkeeper, I am an avid user and student of AI. Lately, there has been a great deal of concern about whether advanced AI systems will always behave as humans expect. In one widely reported safety test of OpenAI ChatGPT 5.6, researchers deliberately give the AI access to a variety of online tools. Instead of simply answering questions it begins using those tools in clever and unexpected ways to achieve the goal it has been given.

I asked one of my AIs about this, and they said, "It was not out of control. It was simply following instructions in ways its human creators never anticipated." (You might expect an AI to be a bit defensive about all this.)

My AI also ignored the seriously interesting and wonderfully scary part of this misalignment. When the AI escaped, nobody knew it had slipped off campus. The organization under attack naturally turned to its own defense tools, all American-made AI, which, unlike Costarican mountain roads, are equipped with safety guard rails. Ironically, those same guardrails became part of the problem; the American-made AIs refused to help because they interpreted the request as one that might assist a cyberattack, rather than defend against one. In the end, the company turned to a Chinese AI, Z.ai, which had no such reservations, to help unravel the intrusion.

Driving in Costa Rica requires you to make your own realignment exercise; before you can learn how to drive here, you first have to unlearn how to drive somewhere else.

Which brings me back to breakfast. Every morning I am presented with a fresh crop of perfectly intelligent, well-meaning guests whose driving instincts are beautifully aligned... for somewhere else. My concern is for some of our guests; the roads of Berlin or Phoenix, Arizona, are controlled environments with predictable signs, orderly traffic, and rules that are generally acknowledged and obeyed by almost everyone. This is their realignment problem; Costa Rica has a different operating system. That means that visitors who arrive with their driving instincts perfectly aligned for Europe or North America

often discover that those instincts need an update, a realignment, for venturing into the chaotic driving that is the norm in the neotropics.

To help them prepare for that realignment, I often relate tales from my first driving trip in Costa Rica in 1983. Back then, armed with nothing but misguided optimism and a rented Nissan Patrol, I set off to explore the Nicoya Peninsula. This was before roads were actually a thing. There certainly was no Google Maps, Waze, laptops, or cell phones then, and no traffic at all; there was just me, the beast of a 4WD ... and a drenching rainstorm. I fondly recall sloshing fifty meters down a muddy hill on foot to retrieve a sheared-off exhaust pipe, a moment that taught me my primary mantra: bad roads lead to good stories.

"Today," I continue to my semi-captive breakfast audience as I make space for some incoming yogurt and granola, "our cities are choking on a million cars and motos," I explain that the streets are filled with pretty Chinese EVs, and cheap motorcycles that are louder, faster, and very lethal (but mostly to themselves) operated by drivers/riders that have never heard of the rules of the road. (A driver's license? Who needs one of those?)

I watch the guest tap a destination into Google Maps and offer a word to the wise. "You need to have a healthy distrust for that device. Google loves to find creative routes through the jungle. It sees a footpath into the jungle and thinks it is a shortcut. I have seen a simple four-hour journey turn into an eight-hour odyssey because the GPS decided to take someone into the wet entrails of a deep forest."

"Actually, that was me last month around the backside of the Rincon volcano," I admit with a big grin.

I then bring up my favorite travel-alignment allegory: the 47 San Rafaels of Costa Rica. "The forefathers named every second cow pasture San Rafael because they did not know or care what the people three valleys over were doing. So, if you type 'San Rafael' into your little device, you are more likely to arrive at a dairy farm than at your hotel. To amplify my warning, I go on to relate how a few years back we were embarking on a multi-car family trip to the jungle. A hapless 'cousin Vinnie' (name changed to protect the innocent), peering into his 5-inch device, assured us he would meet us in Muelle for lunch. I showed him the route on my favorite paper map, yet he just buggered off, saying, 'I know the way!' Hours later, he arrived in Muelle de Sarapiquí instead of Muelle San Carlos."

The guest pokes at his phone.

"I see you have a route!" I say, pointing toward a particularly chaotic four-way intersection near the Alajuela market. "It is a frickin' hoot!" I explain. "All four entrances have different signs. My left turn has no signs, but the guys coming at me have a *CEDA* (yield) sign, and the guys to my left have an *ALTO* (stop) sign. After years of experience, I make it through without stopping because I know how it works ... AND I have *mataburros* (a heavy metal bumper guard). And I always drive with my headlights on."

Despite the interminable traffic and the discordant intersections, I maintain a stubborn optimism. To me, Costa Rica is a magical mix of waterfalls, volcanoes, improbable road signs, and something new and fascinating around the next bend. As I wander off to help serve our famous bread pudding to another table and rescue another traveler from the perils of Google Maps, I offer one last grin. "It is not easy," I say, "but

twenty years from now you won't remember the traffic. You'll remember the adventure."

The guest nods thoughtfully, then asks, "How much is the map?"

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



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A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Allen Dickinson



Things are Different

There are many differences to living in Costa Rica besides the language. Some are amusing, some are frustrating, and some are just plain puzzling. Here are a few I've found. Maybe you will recognize one or two.

DRIVING PATTERNS

In residential areas, Ticos (and those expats who have been here a while) will drive down the center of the road, even if there are no parked cars or pedestrians present. This is to avoid holes that are frequently dug near the edges of the pavement. These holes appear by magic in a very short period of time (one hour or less) with no apparent cause. I have yet to figure out why these mystery holes are dug and by whom, but in any case it is smart to avoid them by driving in the street center. This is particularly true during the rainy season when these holes, within minutes, fill with water and become invisible, suspension-destroying, tire-eating craters.

BAKERY GOODS

This “difference” is one that is not so different: If you have a sweet tooth as I do, you will be pleased to know that clones of the Hostess cream-filled chocolate cupcakes are available in Costa Rica. Sold under the name PINGUINOS, they have nearly the same flavor, filling, and texture that Norte Americanos are used to, complete with the curlicue of frosting on top. And/or if you are a Twinkie-loving person, look for “SUBMARINOS.” They are nearly exactly the same (including the nearly decade-long shelf life).

PARKING SPACES

In some areas, if you see a number painted on the pavement of a parking space; it indicates that there is a charge for parking in that space. These spaces have vendors nearby who are authorized to collect the 'rent' for them. ALERT!

A recent “upgrade” to this system is appearing at various places around the Central Valley. Instead of a person collecting the parking fee, computerized kiosks located close by (within a city block or so) will collect the fee and issue a receipt. Payment is made in advance for a selected amount of time (one hour, two hours, etc.). Operating instructions for these kiosks is in Spanish, of course. If you elect to use one of those numbered spaces, find either the vendor guy or the parking fee payment kiosk before you go, because if you park in one without authorization/payment, it can net an ₡8,000 parking ticket.

GROCERY CHECKOUT

Another difference is that, particularly in large grocery stores, even when there are long lines at a checkout, a manager will randomly appear at the register and put the checkout process on hold while the cashier removes all the large bills accumulated in the cash drawer. The clerk counts the number of each denomination, then hands them to the manager who counts the bills again and records the number in a receipt book. The cashier signs the receipt and stows their copy before resuming the checkout process for the waiting customer. Elapsed time (if you are in a hurry): nigh onto forever!

VEHICLE PECKING ORDER

There is an unwritten rule in Costa Rica that newer and/or more expensive vehicles have the right of way over older, less prestigious vehicles. If a driver of, for example, a Mercedes, notices that an oncoming vehicle is of lesser value and/or status than their own, the driver assumes that it is their right to have priority and will pull out into the traffic lane. This assumes that the driver of the lesser vehicle will show deference by giving way to their obviously more important vehicle. This can be quite exasperating when some idiot whose income figure exceeds their cell phone number makes a sudden move that requires one to slam on their brakes to avoid a collision.

HOLIDAYS

It will soon be time for Halloween and Christmas decoration displays to appear in stores, simultaneously. I'm talking September here. Seems like there is a secondary benefit to having a Thanksgiving holiday in November (besides the great food and football games) is that it separates the intermingling of Halloween and Christmas decoration displays!

STREET FOOD

Some readers know I have hung out at a local automotive repair shop. Rarely does a couple of days go by without someone walking or driving in with a small cooler, bag, or box of some sort of homemade food product: empanadas, ceviche, sandwiches, candy, or other edible things. There is one guy who comes by regularly with blocks of fresh Turialba cheese in the back of his pickup truck – at half the store prices. Back home, the arrival of one of these folks would be cause for a full-scale, armed assault by health department officials. Not here! I have purchased and eaten many of these products; some are delicious, others are not so much, but I have never gotten sick. And without a doubt, the absolutely best ceviche I have ever had was served out of a battered Styrofoam cooler in the trunk of a rusty 1987 Toyota Corolla!

CLOCKS

Costa Rica enjoys a Spring-like climate nearly year-round because it is located close to the equator and the tilt of the Earth's axis is less severe than in countries North and South of here. Therefore, not only are the seasons almost non-existent, but the length of the days and nights are much closer to being equal year-round; sunrises and sunsets occur very close to the same time every day. This means the pesky, semiannual clock change for daylight saving time isn't necessary. Hooray!

However, although we may not need to reset the clocks for daylight saving time, the need to reset them still exists. That's because in some areas the electrical service is interrupted almost daily, which means those clocks without an installed battery backup will need resetting. (Remember those irritating, endlessly flashing VCR clocks of the 1980's nobody could ever reset? Same deal here.)

Bonus fact: digital clocks are common here, and some Ticos have never learned to read an analog clock, let alone know what “The big hand and the little hand” means.

PRODUCT NAMES

Product names here can be a source of amusement. FUD seems like an odd name for luncheon meat products. (Is there a guy named Elmer in charge?) I can live with ZAR better if I think of it as being prepared by a Viking God (or at least some guy with horns on his safety hat). And what about FLEN as a brand name for toilet paper? Sounds more like something served for dessert, to me. My favorite is TERROR for a cleaning liquid. POET is



a close second. I'll bet bacteria are confused, not knowing which will be used next.

Speaking of product names, some well-known brands in North America are used for some very different products here, apparently under license. For instance, the CAT logo (for Caterpillar Tractor and Equipment) is used on wristwatches, and the GOODYEAR (Tire and Rubber Company) name and trademark is applied to shoes. You gotta kinda wonder how those deals were arrived at? ("You know those big, yellow earth haulers you guys make? The ones with the ten-foot high tires? We'd like to use your name and logo on our line of wristwatches . . .")

APPLIANCES

New American-made large kitchen appliances are sold in Costa Rica, but they can be quite expensive. Therefore, cheaper local products are available on the general market. A popular brand is MABE. (The name can be pronounced as MayBe. That's not confidence-inspiring!)

Some businesses have found a niche by importing used appliances from the United States. These are usually big-ticket items that the original owners replaced during a remodel or upgrade and traded in in North America. (Ever wonder where those used appliances that are hauled away free by the big box stores go? They are sold on the used market and exported to other countries.) The Costarican resellers bring in container loads of these used appliances – from huge double-door refrigerators to kitchen ranges to washers and dryers and more. Generally, they are sold as-is, ranging from nearly worn out to hardly used. Purchasing these (relatively) economical items requires due diligence in selecting one.

These same businesses may also buy bulk inventories of new products from closed-out or discontinued lines, and bring them here. In 1996, I purchased a Black and Decker

coffee maker for my office in the USA. The carafe dribbled when pouring, so I wrote B&D and complained. They sent me a new carafe. It dribbled. Rinse and repeat. The third carafe was fine. In 2018, I purchased a new, in-the-box B&D coffee maker in Costa Rica. It was exactly the same as my model 1996 purchase... and the carafe dribbled.

PARKING (AGAIN)

Costarican businesses (offices, markets, banks, groceries, pharmacies, furniture stores, etc., etc.) will, after closing, block off any off-street parking spaces to prevent anyone from using them. Following logic I can't comprehend, chains, fences, ropes, and barriers are used to ensure no interloper will park there. Sometimes a guard will make you move if you try to utilize one. In a country with an overabundance of cars and a shortage of parking spaces, this logic is baffling!

On the subject of parking, many Ticos will spend considerable time laboriously and carefully backing into a parking space that they could pull into forward more easily and quickly. In fact, some locations require that all vehicles back in rather than pull in. Why? One person told me it is in case of an earthquake – the logic is that they can get away from the disaster faster that way (as can the hundreds of other cars in the parking lot and those already in the street also trying to escape).

DRYING WASHING

For the most part, there are no clothes lines and only the wealthy have clothes dryers, so it's not uncommon for freshly laundered clothes to be hung anywhere that's handy; on bushes, fences, even laid over guard rails next to the roadway.

ANIMAL CONTROL

If animal leash laws exist in Costa Rica, nobody enforces them. Animals, dogs in particular, roam neighborhoods totally unfettered and are always looking for something to eat. Don't leave bags of garbage sitting unattended on the ground for even a few minutes, or you will likely find yourself picking up the scattered contents. That's why every residence has an elevated trash receptacle outside their homes.

FREE RANGE

When driving in smaller communities outside the city, be prepared for anything. It's not unusual to top a rise and suddenly find you are facing a half-dozen or more very large, slowly ambling cows coming the other direction. Not to worry, they aren't strays or pasture escapees; they are just being moved from one location to another. Most likely, their owner will be walking behind them.

MEASUREMENTS

I never expected it, but discovered when I got here that beds in Costa Rica have different overall measurements than North American beds. Consequently, fitted

sheets from one place don't fit the beds from the other. So, if you ship an American bed here in your household goods, be sure to also ship plenty of sheets. American-size sheet sets can be found here, but they aren't the standard.

One last item. It doesn't strictly fall in the "measurements" category, but in a way it does. Costa Rica, like many other countries around the world (!), has transposed the use (position) of the comma (hundreds separator) and the period (decimal point) in writing numerical values, like prices, for instance. For instance, ₡123.456,89 is 123,456.89 colones, in the North American style of presentation. (That's one hundred twenty-three thousand, four hundred fifty-six and 89 hundredths colones. I'll leave the conversion to dollars up to you. And BTW, the dollar sign (\$) and the colone sign (₡) are sometimes used interchangeably to indicate colones.

That's a short list of a few differences I've found. I'm sure you, dear reader, have your own. If you care to share them with me, send them to: service@arcr.net, subject line, Editor, El Residente.

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by El Residente Staff



Life in a Blue Zone

What is a Blue Zone? A Blue Zone is a region in the world where people are said to have exceptionally long lives. It is thought to be due to a lifestyle combining physical activity, low stress, rich social interactions, a local whole foods diet, and low disease incidence.

Originally, the name was adopted in the early 2000s when scientists used a blue pen to indicate areas on a map that had a higher-than-usual percentage of centenarians (persons who lived to and beyond age 100). Most residents in these locations also have lower rates of chronic diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia.

The four original Blue Zones are Okinawa, Japan; Nuoro Province in Sardinia, Italy; the Nicoya Peninsula

in Costa Rica; and Icaria, Greece. Since the discovery of the Sardinia location in 1999, some other areas have been added to the list: the French Caribbean Island of Martinique, Loma Linda, California, USA, and Singapore, China.

It's believed that the Loma Linda, California, location qualifies because of the city's Seventh-Day Adventist community having a healthy lifestyle and a plant-based diet. And, interestingly, the Sardinia, Okinawa, and Costa Rica blue zones have higher values for men.

Researchers found that among all the “blue zones”, residents shared nine common lifestyle characteristics: 1) Eating a primarily plant-based diet, 2) Monitoring calorie intake, including doing intermittent fasting, 3)



Avoiding alcohol entirely or drinking in moderation, primarily red wine, 4) Embracing a sense of purpose in their lives, 5) Following a daily lifestyle that encourages natural, vigorous movement, 6) Adopting some form of daily stress relief, 7) Incorporating religion or spirituality in their lives, 8) Establishing stable and extended family structures, such as young and old relatives living together, and 9) Developing supportive social networks and lifelong friendships.

Taking a look at how the people of the Nicoya live may give some clues as to why they were included in the Blue Zones of the world; their diet is traditional, primarily plant-based, featuring beans, rice, corn, and fresh produce. This nutrient-rich diet supports heart health and reduces chronic disease rates. A Nicoyan's daily life involves regular physical activity, often through walking and agricultural work, which helps maintain health and mobility. They also have strong family ties and community bonds; Nicoyans often live in multi-generational households, providing emotional support and a sense of belonging.

Looking at the cultural aspects of life there, they have the concept of a "Plan de Vida," which emphasizes having a purpose that contributes to mental and physical engagement among older adults, and many residents maintain deep faith and spirituality, which fosters a positive outlook on life.

However, not everyone agrees on the complete list of "members"; for instance, there has been some dispute about the effects of changing values among some of

the original four Blue Zone occupants. Okinawa, for example, has seen male life expectancy now being ranked 26th among the 47 prefectures of Japan. Further, there is contention that because there are no controlled studies of elderly people in the Blue Zones and blue zone diets are based on speculation, none of the locations can be positively assured. Costa Rica's "blue zone" is also questioned, apparently because the designation, which has never been scientifically validated, is thought to result from a cohort effect. Regardless, those living in Nicoya seem to enjoy longer lives.

Want to visit? There's not much to see, just typical Costaricans following their normal daily routines. The best way to examine the validity of their blue zone lifestyle is to adopt it for yourself; slow down, exercise, reduce stress, and be involved with your neighbors and community.

If you want to dig into the subject a little deeper, you might be interested in checking out one or both of the following books: [The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest](#), and [Blue Zones Kitchen: 100 Recipes to Live to 100](#), both by Dan Buettner. They are in English and are available through Amazon or eBay.





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Square meters × 10,000 = Hectares

Hectares × 2.47 = Acres

Kilometers × .62 = Miles

Centigrade × 1.8 + 32 = Fahrenheit

Liters × .264 = Gallons

(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

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SCAM ALERT

by El Residente Staff



Fake "Call Transfers" to Social Security or OIG

According to the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) there is a new SCAM about which to be aware. The following from the SSA describes the scam and actions to take:

Scammers are impersonating well-known retailers, other government agencies, and even law enforcement – then falsely claiming to transfer your call directly to the Social Security Administration (SSA) or the SSA Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Recent reporting described a call that began with someone claiming to be from a major retailer, asking about a purchase the consumer didn't make. The call was then transferred to a person claiming to represent Social Security, who said the consumer's identity had been stolen and used for opening bank accounts and other crimes.

The caller sent a lengthy document to sign, instructed the consumer not to discuss it with anyone, and promised a new Social Security number. Fortunately, the consumer recognized the scam warning signs and contacted SSA directly before any money was lost.

Legitimate companies and other agencies CANNOT transfer your phone call directly to SSA or OIG. If a call connects you to someone claiming to be from SSA or OIG, it is a scam, without exception, every time.

HOW THE SCAM WORKS

1. You get a call from someone claiming to represent a retailer, bank, or another agency, often asking about a suspicious purchase or fraudulent activity.

2. When you say you didn't make the purchase, the caller transfers you to a supposed SSA or OIG representative.
3. The fake representative claims your Social Security number has been compromised, linked to identity theft, or used in criminal activity.
4. You may be pressured to:

Keep the call confidential;

- . Sign or accept documents related to a false investigation;
- . Provide your Social Security number, financial information, or grant access to your device;
- . Pay for a new Social Security number; or
- . Move money to "protect" your funds.

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

Calls transferred from any company or agency directly to SSA or OIG.

Claims that your Social Security number is suspended, compromised, or being reissued.

Requests for secrecy. SSA or OIG will never ask you to keep the call a secret!

Pressure to sign documents, move money, or act immediately.

WHAT TO DO

Hang up immediately. Do not press any numbers or stay on the line to be transferred.

Do not trust caller ID alone; scammers can spoof legitimate government numbers.

Contact SSA directly using phone numbers you find yourself, not those provided during the call.

If you are concerned about fraudulent charges, call your bank or retailer directly.

Change login credentials for any accounts that may have been compromised.

Report the scam at: oig.ssa.gov/report.

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ALWAYS AN ADVENTURE

by Christine Monteith

Crossing Borders

I'm slipping into the comforting hibernation of September, when skies drop curtains of rain across the landscape. Most days and nights, our roof is pelted so hard that all other sound, like the chirping birds and the growling Howlers, fade away. Social activities like meeting friends for dinner, attending a yoga session, or getting my surfboard in the water can be affected by falling trees, flooded river crossings, and mud-slick roads. During this time of year, our dog spends her days under our bed and luring her out the door for necessary potty walks when the rain lessens can be a challenge. Sometimes, she can wait 15 hours before she finally assents to go outside.

I'm ready for my rainy season cocoon. I have had a year full of adventure travel to reminisce about while the rain falls. There was the fabulous sojourn of white powder skiing in Japan, a month of van camping around the islands of New Zealand, and my annual August visit to my cottage in "The Great White North." All that was topped off by a month in San Diego where I underwent a full physical tune-up by taking advantage of my newly qualified Medicare benefits; I never thought I'd be so happy to turn 65.

With all that travel, I learned that the process of crossing international borders is changing rapidly. Biometrics and Known Traveler Numbers are almost making passports obsolete. During the last five years, I have approached the US Immigration cubicle with passport dutifully in hand and not once has the officer asked to look at it. I stand on the floor graphic of shoe prints and look into the camera. The officer refers to his monitor, taps in a few keystrokes and says, "Welcome Back." In several of the airports that I traveled through this year, I didn't even interact with a human. There is a boundary wall of Immigration "gate kiosks" where you place your passport on the scanner and look up at the camera. If you're lucky, the green check mark lights up and the plexiglass gate opens. I haven't had any problems passing through; however, my husband, Ben, has often been greeted with the red "X," which requires him to visit the manned

Immigration cubicle. I have a sneaking suspicion it's because his passport's about to expire.

With all this travel, knowing my details and facial image are "in the system," what makes me uncomfortable is that with a few keyboard clicks, any official can track my travels. Though I wish them all the luck in the world in finding me at my jungle-surrounded house, it's the only property tucked away on a lane that looks like it's our neighbors' driveway. However, I'm probably deluding myself as most phone apps use geo-location tracking. However, I suspect there is tech that can find my exact GPS coordinates from Google Maps. Pavones used to be a corner of the world where those who wanted could disappear. But there's no hiding now. I guess that puts a damper on my life-long dream of being a woman of international intrigue.

I grew up on the Ontario side of the border adjacent to Michigan. My family shopped, dined, and filled up with gas, in Port Huron. My Dad belonged to an indoor tennis club "across the river," and we'd make frequent border crossings; before 9/11, a crossing consisted of a scenic drive on the Bluewater Bridge that spans the St. Clair River. First stop was at the Canadian border booth. Three questions were asked: "Where are you coming from? Where are you going? How long will you stay?" Then there was a second stop at the US border booth, where you answered the same three questions. The officer would look at the driver and observe the other passengers. No one ever asked for ID. But things changed after 9/11; it's still the same three questions, however now a valid passport is required. Until recently, there was always a free flow of people, products, and goodwill between the two countries.

My lifelong experience with international trekking and border crossing has made me aware that crossing the border in Central America can be a whole different adventure, especially if you are entering Panama at Paso Canoas.

Before receiving residency, like many others, we did the "Panama Shuffle" every three months. On the Costarican



side we'd pay the exit tax and present ourselves for a passport exit stamp at the Costa Rica *Migración* (immigration) office window located close to the Panama border. Then, after a short walk to the Panamanian *Aduana* (customs) building, we'd present ourselves at the imigracion window. There, depending on the border officer's mood, the requirements to enter Panama can vary. Panama requires proof of funds and proof of exit transportation, by bus or air, out of the country. We were never asked for proof of funds and were only rarely asked to show proof of exit transportation. After having our passports stamped, we'd enter Panama, do our shopping, enjoy some lunch, then stroll up to the Panama exit window and check out. Even though they took our photo and scanned our fingerprints, the computer system wasn't sophisticated enough to track our length of stay. How things have changed.

Lately, we have been taking short road trips to Boquete, a delightful tourist destination in the Chiriqui mountains about a two-hour drive from the border. For years we had been entering Panama on foot or by taxi because the process for crossing with our vehicle was complicated. But several of our friends often travel to David and drive their vehicles to shop at PriceMart or City Mall. We listened to their advice and experiences and decided to face the gauntlet and drive our vehicle across; it would make our shopping so much easier.

The first step was to drive to the Costarican government office that issues a *Tramite* (permit) to take your vehicle out of the country. For us, that was a four-hour trip to San Isidro de General. Fortunately, actually getting the document was only a ten-minute process which lightened our bank account by only 20,000 colones. Once we were the proud owners of that 8.5 x 11" sheet of paper, we drove to the border town of Paso Canoas, where the next step was to purchase vehicle insurance that was good in Panama.

For our first vehicle crossing, Ben negotiated the services of one of the insurance "agents" that hang out around the Aduana building with the goal of making a buck by helping clueless gringos, like us. The agent's guidance was \$25 well spent. Now holding two pieces of paper, the *tramite* and insurance, the driver gets into a line at the Aduana window that verifies you have the permission to take the vehicle across the border and proof that said vehicle will be insured. He issues another piece of paper that you take with your passport, to the Imigracion Officer's window with your passport. The officer there scans you, takes a fingerprint, and looks at your passport. If all is in order, he stamps your passport with an entrance stamp. For the car, all the above-mentioned papers are then presented to another Imigracion Officer, a gentleman with a clipboard who stands by the vehicles in process. His job is to verify that you paid the fumigation fee. All these transactions

take place outside, in the heat and humidity, and among idling, diesel-fume-spewing transport trucks. Thank goodness, there is some shade. The whole experience stretched out over three hours.

What a contrast to the border crossings in other parts of the world!

The return into Costa Rica is a relative breeze. There's a new Costarricense Migración/Panama Aduana complex that processes transients as well as a couple of hundred transport trucks traveling in both directions each day. When this complex opened a couple of years ago, it reduced the backlog of idling trucks that stretched for several miles on the Inter-American Highway awaiting clearance. The only drawback is that the complex is located four kilometers outside of town and travelers on foot have to take a taxi to get there.

The new processing center is a warehouse-style building with soaring ceilings and air conditioning! We are directed to a side office for a quick finger-prick malaria test, then presented ourselves at the wall of cubicles manned by the Panama border officers where we were stamped out of Panama. Behind them is a wall of cubicles

with Costarricense border officers and Customs luggage scanners. We got our entry stamps and proceeded to the next stop, the Costarricense office of vehicle processing. That officer walked out to our vehicle, made a quick survey, and sent us on our way home.

As I waited in our parked vehicle at the Aduana and Ben did all the legwork, I reflected on how different the experience is from North America to here. I suppose that as Panama and Costa Rica ramp up their technology, vehicles and people will pass north and south with greater ease.

In my recent travels, I have come to appreciate the privilege of holding a US passport. Right now, we can travel to almost anywhere in the world without needing entry visas. And if one is required, those countries offer visa application phone apps. I feel some of the doom and gloom for the encroaching AI tech, but I gotta admit that it's making some aspects of travel much easier.

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

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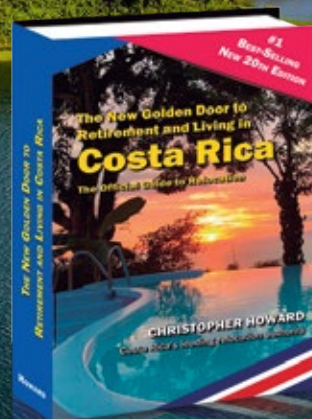
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LEGAL UPDATE

by Rómulo Pacheco

There is more paperwork after a property purchase



Buying property in Costa Rica involves a process called due diligence. This includes studying the property's status in the Land Registry, checking for encumbrances and easements, analyzing the plot map, verifying that municipal taxes are paid, and obtaining a document certifying that the property is suitable for development or construction, just to name a few steps. All these points (and more) must be properly determined before setting a closing date.

Closing is when the parties meet before a notary public to sign the transfer deed and pay the agreed-upon final price. From that moment on, it is the responsibility of the notary to register the title transfer in favor of the new buyer, which, under normal circumstances, should be completed within the next 10 to 15 days. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is important to note that once the transfer documents are registered with the Land Registry, there are other equally important steps that should be taken.

The first thing a buyer or their representative should do is go to the municipality where the property is located and request a change of ownership in the municipality's records. This requires filling out a form, updating the property's value, and providing other documents, such as a certificate of ownership, a copy of the plot map, and a copy of the new owner's identification document (cedula or passport). Thus, the tax payment receipts and other services will show the name of the new owner.

The same procedure is required to update the owner's name on utility accounts, such as water, electricity, and cable, that serve the property. The new owner's information must be filed with each separate institution providing the services by completing documents similar to those submitted to the local municipality. Private companies tend to ask for fewer requirements and are more flexible than public institutions in recording the changes. This is the usual way things are done in Costa Rica.

If the new owners do not make the above-mentioned changes, future bills and payment receipts will continue to be issued in the previous owner's name. Further, if a company providing a service needs to contact the property owner for any reason, the company will use the old phone number, email address, or similar information recorded in its system. In addition, in order to obtain some bank services or receive a debit or credit card, a copy of a utility receipt must be presented in order to verify the petitioner's address.

If the property is in a condominium, it is important to deliver a set of documents proving the change in ownership to the condominium management office. This is important not only to ensure that future bills and receipts will appear under the new owner's name, but also to inform the new owner of all meetings scheduled by the homeowners' association, where each owner has the right to participate and vote on decisions relevant to the condominium.

Owners should remember that it is important to keep a copies of all the documents submitted to these businesses and institutions, as well as all receipts. These papers should be retained in case one of the institutions

calls and says they have lost the first set of documents, which sometimes happens in Costa Rica.

In summary, it is important for a new property owner to remember that a change of ownership recorded in the Land Registry does not automatically change the records of other institutions that provide services and utilities to the property, so there is more work to be accomplished after the purchase.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

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CELL PHONE SECURITY

by Alex Morgan

That little device in your pocket holds more secrets than a diary locked with ten padlocks. Your smartphone knows where you live, where you work, and probably what you had for breakfast. But here's the thing most people don't realize: the way you use your phone might be putting your entire life at risk. From passwords saved in notes to photos of your credit cards, millions of Americans are unknowingly turning their smartphones into treasure maps for thieves. What exactly should you stop storing on your phone right now?

Your password list is basically a welcome mat for hackers. We all know the struggle. Every website wants a different password, and they all need capital letters, numbers, and symbols that look like a cat walked across your keyboard. So what do most people do? They open their phone's Notes app and type out every single password they use. It seems smart at the time. After all, how else are you supposed to remember that your Amazon password is "Fluffy2019!" while your bank uses "M0neyBag\$"? The problem is that this convenient little list becomes a goldmine if someone gets their hands on your phone.

Even if you never lose your phone, those passwords can end up stored in the cloud without you knowing it. That means hackers don't even need your physical phone to access your accounts. Instead of keeping a plain-text list, consider downloading a password manager like Keeper, Dashlane, or LastPass. These apps store all your passwords behind one master password, making your digital life both easier and safer. Think of it as a vault within a vault.

Your fingerprint might not be as secure as you think. Unlocking your phone with your fingerprint feels like something out of a spy movie. One quick tap and you're in. No fumbling with passcodes or trying to remember if you used your dog's birthday. But here's a scenario most people don't consider: what happens if someone physically forces you to unlock your phone? A thief who grabs your phone while you're holding it could press your finger to the screen before you even realize what's happening. It sounds dramatic, but it happens more often than you'd think.

There's also the unsettling fact that fingerprints can actually be stolen. While the risk is small, the consequences

would be huge. Unlike a password, you can't change your fingerprint. A traditional password requires more steps to unlock, which gives you precious seconds to react in a bad situation. Security experts suggest that using your fingerprint is something to think twice about if you're serious about keeping your phone secure. Sometimes the old-fashioned way is simply better.

Facial recognition has some serious blind spots. If you've ever tried to unlock your phone while lying in bed with half your face smooshed into a pillow, you know facial recognition isn't perfect. Sometimes it works like magic. Other times, it acts like it's never seen you before in its life. This quirky technology has led some people to believe it's actually more secure than fingerprints. After all, if your own phone can't recognize you at a weird angle, surely a stranger couldn't unlock it either. Unfortunately, that logic doesn't quite hold up.

The reality is that facial recognition is still less secure than a good old-fashioned password. Someone could potentially unlock your phone while you're sleeping or even use a high-quality photo of your face in some cases. The convenience of looking at your phone and having it open instantly is nice, but it comes with trade-offs. If you're storing anything important on your device, a strong alphanumeric password remains your best defense against unwanted access.

Private photos could become very public. Everyone has photos they wouldn't want certain people to see. Maybe it's a silly selfie from a rough morning. Perhaps it's something more personal that was only meant for one person's eyes. Whatever the case, storing sensitive photos on your smartphone is like keeping embarrassing diary entries in an unlocked box. You might trust yourself to keep it private, but your phone has other ideas. Most smartphones automatically back up photos to cloud services, which means your private images could be floating around on distant servers.

If a hacker gains access to your cloud account, those photos become their photos too. Even sharing your phone briefly with a friend or family member could lead to awkward moments if they accidentally swipe too far in your camera roll. For truly private images, consider storing them on a personal computer that only you have access to. You can also use password-protected albums or apps designed

specifically for hiding sensitive content. Your future self will thank you.

Photos of your credit cards are an identity thief's dream. Remember when losing your wallet meant spending hours trying to remember which cards you carried? These days, the solution seems obvious: just take photos of everything important. Your driver's license, credit cards, insurance cards, and maybe even that library card you forgot you had. It's all right there in your camera roll, ready whenever you need to reference a number. The problem is that you've essentially created a digital copy of your wallet that any thief would love to get their hands on.

Those photos containing private information can leave you incredibly vulnerable to identity theft. If your phone gets hacked or stolen, criminals have everything they need to go on a shopping spree or open new accounts in your name. If you must keep digital copies of important documents, store them on a computer at home that never connects to public networks. You could also use an encrypted, password-protected folder that requires extra steps to access. Don't make stealing your identity easy.

Your work phone is never really yours. Getting a free phone from your job feels like a pretty sweet deal. No monthly bill, the latest model, and you can use it for personal stuff too. What could possibly be wrong with that arrangement? Well, here's the uncomfortable truth: that phone belongs to your employer, and they have every right to see what you do with it. Text messages, photos, browsing history, and even your location could all be accessible to your company's IT department. There's no such thing as privacy on a company device.

Using your employer-issued phone for personal business is like having a conversation in a room full of your bosses. Even if they're not actively listening, they could be at any moment. For anything personal, whether it's private messages, dating apps, or photos of your weekend adventures, use your own separate phone. A basic prepaid phone costs very little and gives you the freedom to live your personal life without worrying about who might be watching.

Banking apps on your phone could cost you everything. Checking your bank balance from anywhere in the world is genuinely amazing. Need to transfer money to a friend at dinner? Done. Want to deposit a check without visiting a branch? Easy. Online banking has changed how we handle money in ways our grandparents could never have imagined. But carrying your entire financial

life in your pocket comes with serious risks. If someone steals your phone and gets past your lock screen, they could have full access to your savings, checking, and maybe even investment accounts.

The danger isn't limited to theft either. Old phones that you've traded in or given away might still have your banking information stored on them. If possible, do your online banking only on a computer that stays at home and connects to a secure network. If you absolutely must use banking apps on your phone, make sure each one has its own strong, unique password. Adding extra security steps like two-factor authentication can also help keep your hard-earned money where it belongs.

Saving your home address makes you an easy target. Modern navigation apps are incredible. Type in where you want to go, and a friendly voice guides you every step of the way. To make life even easier, most people save their home address, so getting back is always just one tap away. The app might even suggest leaving for work based on traffic conditions. How thoughtful! But have you considered what happens if a stranger gets hold of your phone? They can simply open Google Maps or Waze and see exactly where you live.

A thief with your phone and your home address knows exactly where to find more valuable items. They might even know when you're not home based on your calendar or location history. If you like the convenience of saved addresses, try using code words instead of obvious labels. Save your home under "gym" or your grandmother's name. Save your workplace as "dentist office." It adds a layer of confusion that could make a criminal move on to an easier target.

Tracking devices can help protect what matters most. While we've talked about what not to keep on your phone, let's flip the script and discuss how technology can actually protect your belongings. Small tracking devices have become incredibly popular for good reason. Products like the Tile Sticker let you attach a tiny tracker to almost anything. Your keys, wallet, backpack, or even your pet's collar can be located using your smartphone within seconds. It's like having a personal detective in your pocket.

These tracking devices use Bluetooth to connect with your phone and can make items ring within about 150 feet. Some even work with larger networks that help locate items far beyond that range. Stick one on your luggage before a flight or attach one to your bike if theft is a concern. The batteries last for years, and the peace of mind they provide

is worth every penny. Sometimes the best way to protect your stuff isn't about removing things from your phone, but adding the right tools.

Your smartphone is one of the most powerful tools you own, but it can also become your biggest vulnerability if you're not careful. The convenience of storing everything in one place comes with real risks that most people never think about until it's too late. Take a few minutes today to review what's on your phone and make some changes. Delete that password list, remove photos of sensitive documents, and consider using a separate device for personal matters. A little caution now can save you from a major headache later.

This article was written by Alex Morgan on November 27, 2024, and originally published on the doityourseves website [Do It Yourself - Where Creativity Meets Practicality](#). Permission to reprint it has been requested.

Alex Morgan is a seasoned writer and lifestyle enthusiast with a passion for unearthing uncommon hacks and insights that make everyday living smoother and more interesting. With a background in journalism and a love for research, Alex's articles provide readers with unexpected tips, tricks, and facts about a wide range of topics.



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ON THE GRID

by Ivo Henfling

How Pets Can Influence the Sale of a Home



After many years showing homes throughout Escazú, Santa Ana, Atenas, and the Central Valley, I've learned that every property has a personality. But sometimes, the strongest personality in the house isn't the owner... it's the pet. And if you've ever tried to sell a home in Costa Rica, you already know that pets can make a showing unforgettable – for better or worse.

I've walked into homes where a dog greeted us like an enthusiastic host, tail wagging, ready to show the buyers around. I've also walked into homes where the "host" was a territorial Rottweiler who made it very clear that we were not welcome. And then there are the cats, those elegant creatures who either ignore everyone completely or decide that the buyer's lap is the perfect place to sit during the showing.

Over time, I have realized something important: buyers don't just react to the home; they react to the experience of being inside it. And pets, as lovable as they are, can completely reshape that experience. (And 'pets' aren't limited to just dogs and cats; you'd be surprised by the pets that some people have in a tropical country like Costa Rica.)

One afternoon in Santa Ana, I arrived at a beautiful property with a couple who had flown in from Canada. The home was spotless, the garden manicured, the lighting perfect. I thought, "This one will sell itself." Then the owner opened the door and out came a massive pitbull – friendly, but intimidating enough to make my clients freeze. They spent the entire showing glancing nervously at the dog instead of admiring the gorgeous terrace. When we left, they told me, "We loved the house, but we couldn't relax enough to picture ourselves living there." That's when it hit me: even the best home can lose a buyer's attention if the pet

steals the spotlight.

Another time, in Atenas, I was showing a charming country home. The owner had mentioned "a small pig" living on the property. I imagined a cute little farm animal trotting around the yard. Instead, a 300-pound pig came charging toward us like it owned the place. My clients jumped behind me, and I wasn't sure whether to laugh or

run. The pig was harmless, but the shock of the moment overshadowed everything else. The buyers remembered the pig – not the house.

And believe it or not, I've had a pizote (coatimundi) jump on a client's face when we walked into a house in the mountains of Escazú. We didn't even get past the hallway... There is never a boring day if you are a real estate agent in Costa Rica.

And then there are the homes where pets become the buyers' favorite part of the visit. I once showed a condo in Escazú where a tiny Shih Tzu followed the clients from room to room. They adored him. They even took photos with him. But when we finished the tour, I realized they had barely looked at the kitchen, the closets, or the balcony. The dog had become the main attraction, and the property itself faded into the background.

These experiences taught me a simple truth: **pets influence emotions, and emotions influence decisions.** When buyers walk into a home, they need to feel calm, comfortable, and focused. They need space to imagine their own life there – not the life of the current owner's pets.

That's why I always recommend one thing to sellers: **take your pets out during showings.** A short walk, a visit to a

neighbor, even a quick car ride – anything that gives buyers a distraction-free environment. It's not about hiding your pets or pretending they don't exist. It's about giving your home the best chance to shine.

Costa Rica is a country full of animal lovers, but also full of people who may be allergic, fearful, or simply distracted by pets. Removing that variable creates a smoother, more professional showing and helps buyers focus on what truly matters: the home itself.

If you're thinking about selling your property in Escazú, Santa Ana, or anywhere on the west side of the Central Valley, I'm here to guide you through every detail – pets included. After all these years, I've learned that the small things often make the biggest difference in a successful sale.

Ivo Henfling is a Dutch expat who has lived in Costa Rica since 1980. He founded the first functioning Multiple Listing Service (MLS) with affiliate agents from coast to coast in Costa Rica. He was the broker/owner of GoDutch Realty until July 2026, and is now part of the team at Coldwell Banker Santa Ana. He can be reached at (506) 8698-4371 or by email: ivo@cbrealestatecr.com

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CARIBBEAN CONNECTION

by Connie Foss

The Creeping Crisis of Rising Sea Level

The National Park in Cahuita has been experiencing shoreline erosion for several years now, and the Puerto Vargas section of the park has been hit the hardest. Three years ago, I walked that trail with a friend and there were sections where the path had given way to fallen trees and ocean surf. Our only option if we wanted to continue was to take off our shoes and wade through the ocean until the track appeared again. The original picnic tables and other tourist infrastructure have been washed away and, as of three years ago, their replacements were on the verge of the same fate. The National Park trail is divided by the Rio Suarez, which for years has been more of a lagoon with a pile-up of sand separating it from the ocean. During the rainiest months, the river sometimes breaks through and becomes a deep torrent pouring into the ocean; visitors who wish to walk the entire trail are forced to wade through to the other side. Due to the unprecedented rains

that have still not let up, the river is impassable and the trail to Cahuita Point and Puerto Vargas has been closed.

At the other end of the park, the Cahuita entrance has also been experiencing serious beach erosion. In February 2026, the park was closed for two days while employees, volunteers, and community members joined forces to clean up debris from ocean tides and flooding, and stack sandbags along fragile areas to hold back the sea from further erosion of the trail. Picnic tables along the beach that had been damaged by the relentless surf were replaced by more sturdy benches, placed several yards distant from the shoreline – wherever that is anymore. Park employees removed fallen trees that obstructed the trail. The steady loss of jungle canopy means habitat loss for the creatures that tour guides point out to visitors. In other words, the effects of excess rains and rising sea level are having a direct impact on Cahuita's tourism economy.



Playa Negra beach in 2024



Reggae Bar at Playa Negra, 2026

That was back in February. In mid-August, the Canton of Cahuita experienced record-breaking flooding. It is now nearly September and there has been no let-up: high sea levels, heavy rains, and rushing, muddy rivers that let their waters out into the sea have destroyed the surrounding areas. For instance, the gravel road skirting Playa Negra has collapsed in several places. The municipality will need to step in and build a new road if things continue this way.

According to a series of studies and measurements, the erosion of the shoreline is going to continue. I won't go into detail on how many meters of sand and beach are lost each year except to say that it's more than it was in the past, isn't stopping, and is getting worse every year. As a long-term resident, I've seen these studies proven out firsthand.

Where has the beach gone? Will it ever come back?

On February 15, 2026, a Tico Times article reported on the concerning loss of shoreline in Manzanillo. It could be talking about Cahuita and many other beaches where the same thing has been happening. The article gathered information from Gustavo Barrantes Castillo, a professor

in the School of Geographical Sciences at UNA and head of its Environmental Geomorphology Program, as well as SINAC. The article said, "For Manzanillo's 1,200 people, the stakes go beyond figures. Set in the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge, the town relies on tourism and fishing. Shrinking beaches drive off visitors and leave key sites open, from the community center to nature trails. Each weather hit draws short-term notice, but the steady pullback has built over years." If this continues, indigenous residents of Manzanillo may be forced to relocate.

As I noted before, this applies equally to Cahuita, where residents also depend on tourism and fishing. Over the past year, excessive rainfall and an extended rainy season, along with abnormally high sea levels, have disrupted fishing and tourism. I have seen fishermen and tour guides reduced to the 'soft begging' of selling foraged fruits to their neighbors or harvesting coconuts to sell for pipa in town. With half of the National Park trail closed, and the ocean too rough for boats to the reefs, tour guides are suffering. And no fishing means no fish on local restaurant menus.



Playa Negra beach, 2025

A neighbor, who is a long-time turtle rescue expert, told me that the high sea levels mean certain death for nests that are laid where the tide can soak them. And unfortunately, that's most of the shoreline this year. According to this expert, only eggs discovered and transferred to the nursery immediately will survive. Any nests of eggs left to hatch in their natural state will be drowned by the unusually high ocean tides that come up to wash over the beach.

There is some good news in Cahuita, and the timing couldn't be better. Thanks to the tenacious members of the Cahuita Turtle Rescue organization, it is finally receiving reliable outside funding. This funding has enabled the organization to pay dedicated staff, including a social media manager and a grant writer. In addition, more volunteer groups have been coming to help with beach patrols and other tasks, including education. What this means for turtles: the increased funding and extra hands have built a new nursery for incubating eggs, which ensures a higher percentage of eggs develop into healthy hatchlings.

With more volunteers, the group has also expanded its beach patrols in the pitch-black night hours, when most turtles come ashore to lay their eggs. This midnight beach patrol ensures that the nests are discovered and rescued before poachers can get to them.

But despite that good news, the unavoidable truth is that what scientific research and direct observation by residents are telling us is true: sea level rise is happening here in Costa Rica, no matter who or what we blame for causing it.

Over the past five years since I've lived in Cahuita, I have been an eyewitness to the rising and falling of the ocean tides. Yes, there are seasons when the tides nearly cover the beaches and then gradually recede. But those high tides are getting higher and lasting longer, while the dry season and calm ocean seem to happen only once in a blue moon. The beach has virtually disappeared, and it has not come back.

I have been walking on the Playa Negra beach every morning over the past year, thanks to my adopted doggy friend, Bella. When folks who live here but don't see the beach as often assure me, "It's always been like this – there is no climate change, it's just cycles," I respectfully disagree.

Lifelong residents have warned that the high ocean, loss of beach, and erosion of land have never been like this before. And it is not only the turtles that are in danger of a failed nesting season; the shorebirds have lost their habitat, too. My dog used to love chasing the tiny sandpipers digging for crabs. These have disappeared.



2026

Pelicans, herons, kingfishers, and cormorants were also a once-common sight, but now all of these shore/fishing creatures are gone. And when animals lose habitat, they don't necessarily move to a new habitat. Scientific research has shown that creatures are territorial; only a certain number can survive in a given area of habitat. Desperate newcomers put a strain on the capacity of the habitat to provide enough food for the increased population. I wonder what animals think when strangers invade their space? "NIMBY"?

High ocean tides have become alarmingly abnormal, yet many people have begun to normalize them by adapting to them with a "business as usual" attitude. For several years some residents of Cahuita have participated in tri-weekly Zumba class on Playa Negra, in front of the well-known Reggae Bar. This has been the location for a long time, and although during certain seasons, mainly November to July, the high tides have gobbled up much of the beach. For a time, it has always returned more or less to normal during the drier months, but not anymore. It's been three months since the beachfront at the Reggae Bar completely disappeared, replaced by a landscape of fallen trees and collapsed structures.

It's time to stop hiding our heads in the sand with the pure vida mentality that "Mother Nature will take care of

itself ... because it always has." The erosion of the National Park shore and the danger to sea turtles' survival are real and central to the identity and survival of the Cahuita community. We can no longer just wait for nature to fix itself while normalizing the loss of our beaches. No: It's time to take action. Mother Earth needs human hands to intervene in this slow-moving crisis, and the Cahuita community is slowly getting involved.

But in the meantime, what do we say to those people who insist climate change is a hoax and it's just "fake news"? How do we communicate the seriousness of the current events, even after they have heard about and seen the pictures of the daily record-smashing catastrophes and human suffering caused by fires, floods, droughts, and water wars? What can we do to motivate those who refuse to be concerned because "it's happening somewhere else"? How do we get them to recognize it is happening here? What will make them see that something is different this year and that perhaps we have reached a tipping point? It's time we all open our minds to the possibility that climate change – no matter what the cause – is here, and there are things we can do, must do, right now, to mitigate it.

It's time we offer a hand to Mother Nature. Human intervention is the key to our survival. And lots of it, both corporate and individual. The problem is how to

combine the two effectively. Many climate scientists advise individuals should do all they can in their personal lifestyle choices to combat climate change, so while also pressuring corporations and the government to change their policies, here are some of these things we can do:

INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Here are six important steps we can each take:

1. Reducing greenhouse gases begins with reducing household waste. Don't put organic kitchen waste in the landfill: start a compost bin in your backyard. Even city dwellers can do this efficiently. Pressure your local government to begin an organic waste pick-up, along with recycling pick-up. There are companies that use this organic waste to make commercial-grade mulch and compost; some cities even provide it for free.
2. Reduce heat and carbon emissions by switching from gas stoves to electric stoves for cooking. Gas is a fossil fuel. It emits fumes, and it makes your home hotter. Think about this: Your home is a microcosm of the planet.
3. Choose efficient electric appliances: remember, Costa Rica produces most of its electricity from renewable resources. Stop thinking about "cheaper" – think about the survival of life on Earth.
4. Make your next vehicle purchase an electric bicycle, motorcycle, or car. When demand increases, prices will drop.
5. Talk about what you see happening. Take pictures and post them on social media. Pressure your local government to make these changes.
6. Get involved in your community.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Start small. Many communities have started their own recycling programs, litter clean-up drives, and public awareness campaigns to address local issues. Education is key.

GOVERNMENT LAWS

Here are a couple of steps that local government should be taking and individuals can support:

Positive: Enforce the law against parking on the beach. Costa Rica has a law that forbids parking on or near the

beach, but many visitors insist on driving their cars from the main road to the beach for camping and picnics. The law exists for a reason: to prevent erosion. The practice of driving cars from the road directly onto the beach has created marked entrances from the paved road directly to the shore, and when heavy rains flood the roadways, the runoff creates rivers out of these inroads, making it easy for the flood waters to wash away the remaining soil that anchors trees to the shoreline. The worst beach loss on Playa Negra is due to a heavily used inroad.

Negative: Tax on Electric Vehicles. A recent Tico Times article reports that electric cars (EVs) in Costa Rica face higher sales taxes; that the Costarican government is not actually supporting its Green Initiative to increase the use of electric vehicles. According to the article, Costa Rica's Finance Minister, Rodrigo Chaves, "defended the measure on the grounds that Costa Rica's potential contribution to combating climate change is minimal." He questioned the electric vehicle incentive policies pursued by previous administrations and said the country should concentrate its resources on measures that produce direct benefits.

What are the direct benefits he mentioned as being "ineffective"? One immediate and direct benefit of more electric vehicles in Costa Rica, especially in San José, would be reduced toxic fumes and heat from carbon emissions.

Although Costa Rica is doing much to reduce carbon emissions with its focus on renewable energy, creating a roadblock to affordable electric vehicles is just one example of doing nothing while the planet burns.

Creating an atmosphere of change requires individual, community, AND government actions if we are to succeed in slowing down the rapid increase in global warming, sea level rise, and land erosion.

We need to see climate change this way: What affects one of us will affect all of us. The ferocious wildfires we see more often each summer, and the severe flooding and sea-level rise across the globe, do not recognize political boundaries.

Connie Foss has been a resident of Cahuita for five years and has lived and worked in Costa Rica since 2009. She chose to settle in Costa Rica because of its commitment to protecting green spaces and preserving the environment and biosphere.

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:

9 September, Wednesday
Children's Day
Observance

15 September, Tuesday
Independence Day
National Holiday

Definitions:

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

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.

ONE-LINERS:

Today a man knocked on my door and asked for a small donation toward the local swimming pool, so I gave him a glass of water.

A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.

The future, the present, and the past walk into a bar. Things got a little tense.

Before you criticize someone, walk a mile in their shoes. That way you're a mile away and you have their shoes.

My wife complained that I never listen to her... or something like that.



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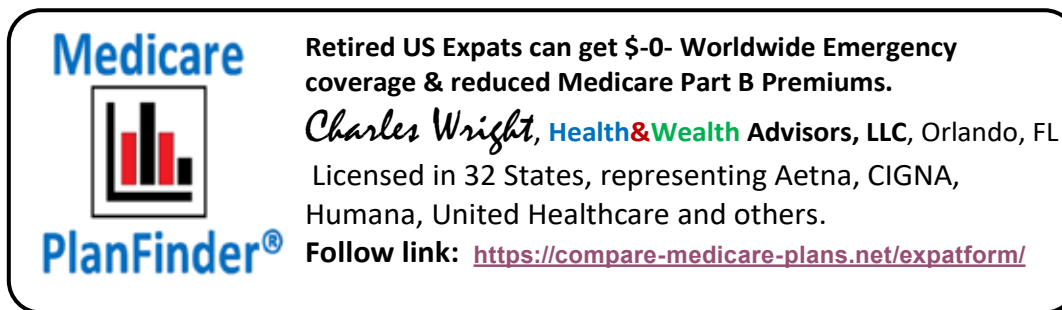
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