

# Paradise Post

News From Ojochal, Costa Rica  
and Beyond

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November 2018



## Updates from the Osa

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This has been an exciting year in Costa Rica. Tax reform has been on the forefront of the news in Costa Rica. With current deficit spending at 7.1% of GDP, President Alvarado called for fiscal reform, the most controversial being a change from a sales tax to a value added tax which would be levied on additional goods and services. The measure also includes a 1% duty on basic food. A second component of the tax reform is a reduction of public sector pensions, bonuses and benefits. Alvarado realizes that most of these benefits are unsustainable without an increase in taxes. Teachers, hospital workers and other public sector union employees called for a strike that

lasted for a week in mid September. Recent Supreme Court rulings has upheld the austerity program rulings and tax reform is moving forward. One outcome has been a loss in value of the Colon, the currency of Costa Rica, a benefit to those changing US dollars to Colons. Costa Rica has also offered humanitarian migration rights to Venezuelans displaced under the Maduro Regime. See more on page 4 about the crisis in Venezuela.

Steve Linder

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## Discovery Property Tour Dates

### 4 Day All Inclusive Tours for \$299

December 12 - 15	February 13 - 16
December 26 - 29 <b>Sold Out</b>	February 20 - 23
January 2 - 5, 2019	February 24 - 27
January 9 - 12 <b>Sold Out</b>	March 6 - 9
January 16 - 19	March 10 - 13
January 18 - 27 10 day CR	March 15 - 24 Panama
January 20 - 23 <b>Sold Out</b>	Costa Rica 10 day tour
January 30 - February 2	March 20 - 23
February 6 - 9 <b>Sold Out</b>	April 3 - 6



**Click Here To Sign Up for our 4 Day Tour**  
**See Page five for details on our longer tours**  
**sign up 10 day Costa Rica Country Property tour**  
**sign up 10 day Costa Rica AND Panama tour**

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The Waterfalls of Costa Rica

One might assume there'd be waterfalls in a country noted for mountains and rainforest but I never imagined how spectacular and numerous they would be. Costa Rica is loaded with waterfalls. When I think of waterfalls, I remember the freezing waters of the kankamangus River in New Hampshire, close to where I grew up. The difference in Costa Rica is that most are nice and warm and many are open for swimming. Do be aware, sometimes swimming in waterfalls can be dangerous but I've always liked to live a bit on the edge and adventure tourism is one of Costa Rica's main attractions.

A few really unique waterfalls include one on the Rio Celeste, where minerals interacting between the volcanic spring fed river and the natural minerals of a rainforest stream cause the conjoined river to glow a bright iridescent blue. It's breathtaking. Though a hike to get there, the trip is one of my favorite day trips in Costa Rica.

You can also find waterfalls that flank Arenal volcano, originating from volcanic hot springs. One of my favorites is La Fortuna waterfall on the Tenorio river. This waterfall plunges nearly 60 meters into a perfect swimming hole. Along the flanks of Arenal volcano a number of spas have been built to take advantage of these naturally heated rivers. One of

our favorites is Tabacan Hot Springs resort.

Further south, in the town of Dominical another favorite is the Baru River falls where you can jump from the upper falls into deep pools formed by millions of years of water eroding the stone. In another area in Tres Rios Coronado, about 25 miles further south, parents often drop their children a few miles upriver and park further down and wait for them to slip and slide their way down. A popular hotel in the area is the Rio Tico Safari Lodge, built along the river and waterfalls. The hotel consists of luxury tents built on platforms that flank the river. The Paz Azul waterfalls are unique in that a huge bolder rolled down the river only to end up stuck between both sides of the top of the waterfall.

One of the best viewable waterfall collections is an attraction known as La Paz Waterfall Gardens. This national treasure, a private reserve that's open to the public, has a series of trails, bridges and stairways to allow one to get up close and personal with some of my favorites. I joke that a trip to La Paz is like two hours on a stairmaster, but most of the stairs go downhill to a bus at the bottom that returns you to the top. The park is located on the back side of Poas Volcano where the owners have built a variety of other attractions to compliment the amazing location

tucked in a cloud forest. There's a huge aviary, a butterfly garden, an orchid and bromeliad display, a frog exhibit, a serpentarium, a big cat exhibit, a hummingbird garden, a trout pool, a traditional Costa Rican farm house and about 6 large waterfalls, complete with viewing stations. You can even get next to or behind a few of the larger ones, making for great photo ops. Having led tours in Costa Rica for over 10 years, our clients rave again and again that this is the best attraction in Costa Rica.

One point to note, if swimming in waterfalls in Costa Rica, do be aware that rocks, debris and large branches are often tumbling or floating down the river upstream and may come over the top of a waterfall at any time so avoid getting directly under the waterfall, as this debris can do serious damage to you. Also be aware of the currents during rainy season, I have witnessed people being swept away by the unexpected force of water.









Costa Rica holds a presidential election every 4 years. If a candidate does not receive at least 40% of the popular vote, a runoff election is held between the top two candidates.

On February 4, 2018 the general elections were held. No candidate received at least 40% of the vote so a runoff election was held April 1st. The top candidate in the initial election was Fabricio Alvarado Muñoz, an evangelical Christian, musician and member of the Conservative National Restoration Party, who rocketed to top candidate based on his opposition to same sex marriage and his position that the court of Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that Costa Rica must recognize same sex marriage, much to his consternation. His opponent, Carlos Alvarado Quesada, thought the ruling of the court should be upheld

and respected. In the run-off election it became clear that the majority did not want an evangelical Christian president as Carlos Alvarado Quesada won by a landslide with 60.6% of the vote.

Carlos Alvarado is a member of the center left "Citizens Action Party" (PAC). He earned a Bachelor's degree in communications and a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Costa Rica. He also attended Sussex University in the UK and earned a degree in Developmental Studies. He's the second youngest president to serve in Costa Rica, at only 38 years old. He's held a variety of positions prior to president, most recently as Minister of Labor. Under this position he was the first ever successful in negotiating the lowering of pensions, benefits or luxury packages away from state collective agreements, unions

and even government officials. Part of his campaign platform is the reform of labor agreements and state pensions to help deal with a worsening public spending issue.

In Costa Rica there are two vice presidents. Carlos Avarado's first vice president is Epsy Campbell Barr and second vice president is Marvin Rodríguez Cordero. Epsy Campbell is the first candidate of African American descent to ever win a vice presidency in Costa Rica. She's also only the second African American ever elected in the Americas.

Marvin Rodriguez Cordero's background is in education and Alvarado chose him for his knowledge to be used in education reform. Rodríguez was Secretary General of the Costa Rican Education Workers Union (SEC)

# Welcome to the Neighborhood

Chuck Barr

I grew up in Auburn, Washington near Seattle and then joined the service.

I was in the Air Force for 8 years, and stationed in Georgia and Montana.

I have been living in Phoenix, Arizona and working as an Operator for a nuclear power plant for the past 25 years since 1991. I will retire in 2024.

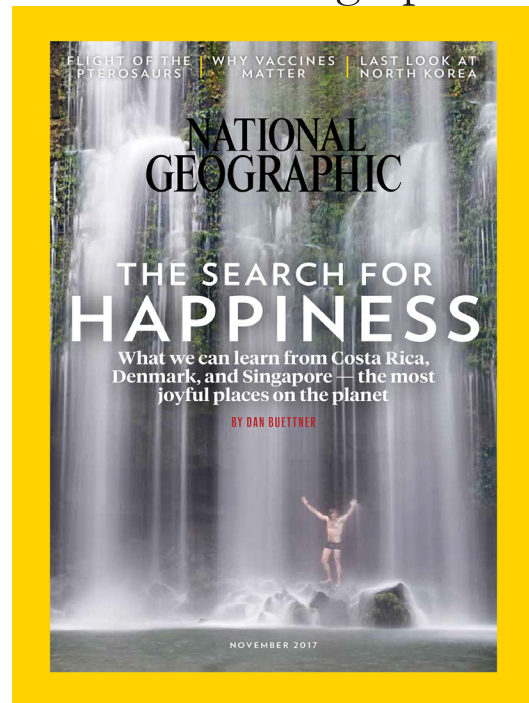
I bought the land in Costa Rica in 2016, and plan to build the home before I retire in the next 6-8 years.

I learned about the benefits of living in Central America by visiting my son in Guatemala. I saw the great weather for 12 months of



the year, and the cost of living being about half of what it is in the US.

## *Paradise Post* Costa Rica Tops Happiest People List in National Geographic



## 2019 Ten Day Country and Property Tours and **NEW** COSTA RICA & PANAMA TOUR

10 DAY COSTA RICA COUNTRY & PROPERTY TOUR JANUARY 18 - 27: we are again offering our popular tour which includes two nights at our development for those who are interested in property but also want to see other parts of Costa Rica go to <http://www.pacificlots.com/10-day-tour>

10 DAY COSTA RICA AND PANAMA TOUR MARCH 15 - 24: we are offering a higher end tourism tour that will start in Costa Rica and end in Panama and won't have any property tours involved. We've had prior tour clients ask us to offer a tour like this and have now put one together. We work hard on planning these tours to find great attractions and activities, great lodging choices, great restaurants and try to keep you amazed and entertained but not crazy busy. We now include all park entrance fees, activity fees and all meals except a few dinners in all tours. We visit national parks, beaches, take boat rides, see animals, see waterfalls, visit quaint towns, tour landmarks and points of interest including city tours. We travel in great vehicles and on the Costa Rica/Panama tour we'll be visiting the Panama Canal as well as the island of Tobago.. To sign up for the Costa Rica Panama tour go to <http://www.pacificlots.com/costa-rica-panama-tour>



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## Seniors Can Downsize and Give Themselves a New Lease on Life - by Michael Longsdon

When the kids are gone and we begin to age, it's time to take stock of our spatial situation. Do you really need all that house anymore? What about all the stuff you've amassed over the years that fills said house? Wouldn't life be easier if you were to simply get rid of what you don't need and learn to live with a smaller footprint? For many, the answer to this is absolutely. Here's how you can begin to downsize.

### First things first: declutter

Any downsizing project must begin with getting rid of excess belongings in your home. This is no easy task. Not only are many of us inclined to hold onto just about everything (I may need it someday!), but we form sentimental attachments that can cloud our better judgment. Easy or not, it's vital.

How do you know what to get rid of? Sometimes, you have to get creative.

A good way to start is by implementing the 12-12-12 rule. It's simple - all you do is throw 12 items away, donate another 12, and keep another 12, but make sure they have a real home and aren't just shoved into a closet somewhere. The good thing about following this is that for every few dozen items you come across, 66 percent

are leaving your home. That's a fast way to get rid of clutter.

Next, tackle your clothing. We don't wear most of our wardrobes, and seniors usually have an exorbitant amount of clothing from bygone eras. Ask yourself some simple questions: Have I worn it in the past year? Would I buy it right now if I saw it in a store? Does it even fit? If the answer to any of these is no, then donate it. When downsizing your stuff, always stick to this rule: Everything in its designated place. That means everything gets assigned to the "throw away," "donate," or "keep" pile. You do not want to have a "maybe" pile, as everything will somehow find its way there. But what about the sentimental stuff?

If you are ruthless when downsizing your non-sentimental items (do you really need two coffee makers?), then you won't be forced to get rid of too much of the sentimental stuff. But if you don't want to part with your kids' mementos and old photos, ask your family to hold onto them. Another tip is to digitize what you can. If it's flat, it can be scanned. You can house thousands of old photos on a thumb drive the size of a quarter.

Think about moving to a smaller home

One way to "force" yourself into downsizing is to get rid of excess space. Your longtime family home may be too large for you now that the kids are gone. By moving to a smaller home, you can save time, energy and money on maintenance and upkeep. The benefits are grand and far-reaching. You can also pick a home that better suits your physical needs. There are many homes that are already built for accessibility, meaning you can comfortably age in place no matter how your needs change over time.

For seniors, health problems and mobility issues will likely get worse over time. When house hunting, you don't have to find your "goldilocks" home right away - it may not exist. Just know that you may need to make modifications, and work that into your budget.

Downsizing is not giving up and sliding meekly into old age. It's quite the opposite. Downsizing can give seniors more independence - physically, financially, and emotionally. Think of it as a new lease on life, and it will be easier to give up all the stuff you don't truly need to be happy.

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## Condo For Sale in Coco Beach - Guanacaste

Occasionally really good deals are referred to me and this is one I thought I would share with our readers. An older Costa Rican in San Jose has a fully furnished 800 square foot, 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo in Coco beach and asked us to help him find a buyer. The unit comes fully furnished and is nicely finished. The property has a great pool and ample parking. It's located just a block and a half from the beach. The complex is called Los Juncos Dorados del Coco and has nice mature landscaping and the unit is located on the first floor so no stairs to climb. HOA fees are \$160 per month and all fees are up to date. It's priced at just \$135,000 and if anyone wants to see it, we can set up a rental at \$140 per night, \$700 per week, \$1300 for two weeks or \$2,250/month. I have more details and plenty more photos but here are some to give you an idea what the unit looks like. For more information contact Steve at 305-295-0137

