

Subject: QuePasa Grecia, March/April 2024

From: Don Davis - Que Pasa Grecia <editor@quepasagrecia.com>

Date: 4/2/2024, 7:26 AM

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Que Pasa Grecia

2024 Update #3

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Silent Epidemic": 2024 Car Fatalities Rivaling the Escalating Homicide Rate

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Que Pasa offers articles on local places to go, helpful how-to's, and general observations of life in the Grecia/Sarchi area.

Click on the photo to visit our site!



Chalet House in Cajon Arriba Now Available for Rent! Click on photo to view page.

reduction in force of Costa Rica's Policia de Trafico. So, little to no enforcement of existing traffic laws is taking place. The Semana Santa fatality stats are just in. During Semana Santa Week, there were 47 at-the-scene fatalities of all stripes, most of which it can be presumed were road fatalities. This number did not include the 59 people taken to hospital in critical condition (many of whom will probably not survive). PLEASE BE VERY CAREFUL out there.

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Make/model/year. I mention this as a food for thought when considering the purchase of a new or late-model vehicle. What happens when your car is in an accident? Will there be replacement parts in stock to make repairs for your make, model or model year?

The lack of parts available in Costa Rica has impacted me, as well as another friend. Not having replacement parts in stock at the authorized dealer has meant waiting for the necessary gear to be ordered and arrive from the maker's inventory in whatever country they are located. In my case and that of my friend, that's Japan.

If my windshield (loaded with sensors and electronics) arrives by late April, repairs will be started with completion by about 8 May. That's exactly one week short of six months since the accident that we will have been without our car. My insurance (and most or all insurance policies) DOES NOT cover car rentals for what amounts to a significant inconvenience.

My advice to seriously consider before buying your next car: 1. see if you can get car rental coverage as part of, or added to, your auto insurance policy as a rider; and/or 2. think about buying a car make and model that has broad distribution in Costa Rica—probably not a car from China or a new make/model that you don't often see on the road. Neither of these approaches are a guaranteed assurance that you won't suffer a long wait for parts/repairs if your car is in accident, but you'll have a better chance of not suffering the significant inconvenience and expense of being without a vehicle for an extended period of time.

Costa Rica Preparing to Match Extended Visa Length with Driving Permission

Reassuringly, the government's right and left hands are about to be in synch on the non-resident driving front once again. Costa Rica recently extended visas from three months to six months—a very nice thing, but failed to extend the right to drive here using a valid foreign driver's license from its three-month limit. This meant that despite now having a six-month visa, any non-resident still needed to exit the country every three months to have their visa renewed in order to continue driving here legally.

That should be changing soon as a bill making visas and legal driving for non-residents six months has passed through the legislature. It hasn't been signed into law yet. So, those inconvenient trips are still required for a bit longer, but it is gratifying that the two will soon be in alignment.

Your U.S. Embassy Serving You



Help San Francisco de San Isidro school - they are facing budget cut that eliminated their school cook! Click on the photo for flyer with info and to contact Trisha Mac about the jewelry classes she is offering to assist - ALL funds go to the school.



Great music and great food! Always a fun afternoon!



Mountain Bike for Sale! Click on photo to see first listing on Items for Sale page

Informational graphic from Cruz Roja Costarricense titled '¿Qué hacer en caso de caída de ceniza volcánica?' (What to do in case of volcanic ash fall). It includes instructions such as: 'Busquen refugio', 'Use mascarilla N95 o un pañuelo que cubra su nariz y boca', 'Use fuentes de producción y agua que cubra la mayor parte de su cuerpo', 'Aliméntese agua potable para lavarse las ojos, la cara, cuello y para consumo personal. Al menos 1 galón de agua por persona por día', 'Mantenga su comida cubierta para evitar que se contamine', 'No vestirse con ropa si sus fuentes de contacto se han cenizas en sus', and 'Si padece enfermedades respiratorias, tenga a mano sus medicamentos. En caso de presentar algún síntoma alérgico, acuda al médico.' Source: Cruz Roja Costarricense.

[In English, go to Resources/Emergency Preparedness on our site.](#)

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Thank you for contacting the Federal Benefits Unit at the US Embassy.

The Federal Benefits Unit (FBU) at the U.S. Embassy, San Jose no longer issues benefit verifications letters for individuals receiving federal benefits from the Social Security Administration, Department of Veteran's Administration or Office of Personnel Management. You may obtain an official letter from either agency directly (see below).

Social Security Administration

1. Go to www.ssa.gov/myaccount.
2. On the My Social Security page, select the "Create an Account" button and then select "Sign in with ID.me."
3. Select the "Create an ID.me account" link and follow the instructions.
4. On ID.me's "Verify Your Identity" screen, select the "I don't live in the United States" link at the bottom of the page and follow the instructions to complete the registration process.
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If you already have an ID.me credential, select "Sign In" from the "my Social Security" page and then sign in to "ID.me." You will be redirected to your My Social Security account.

Note: if you had a "My Social Security" account prior to moving overseas, you will need to create an "ID.me" credential to use it from an international address.

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Department of Veterans Affairs - [Download VA Benefit Letters](#)

[Office of Personnel Management](#)

To request a new copy of "Your Federal Retirement Benefits", or to receive a verification of your annuity, contact OPM's Retirement Office at 1-888-767-6738 or retire@opm.gov. The phone lines are open from 7:30 am to 7:45 pm (Eastern Standard Time).

"Good luck" (your editor)

Misc. News Notes

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[Also on our Emergency Preparedness page.](#)



[Larger image plus PDF version on our Emergency Preparedness page.](#)

continue through the end of the year.

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Poás Is Acting Up—just be alert SINAE/MINAE have placed additional visit limits to the Poás Volcano National Park and there's lots of sulfur smell in the air originating from Volcan Poas. (Several Poás community precautions are mentioned in the image sidebar to the right. You can also view larger images with [some English translation on our website under Resources/Emergency Preparedness](#)).

USA FACTA—do not be surprised if your Costa Rica bank or insurance company requests that you provide your sources of income and whether you pay U.S. income taxes. This is "USA FACTA" reporting. Costa Rica banks and insurance companies are moving to apply the USA financial service process of "KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER" and this info must be provided in order to continue doing business with them.

Gracias for Your Support of QuePasaGrecia--Thank you so much for your generous support of QuePasaGrecia.com. We now have collected what we need to fund operations for the remainder of 2024.

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"Ser uña y mugre"

Literal translation: to be like nails and dirt.

Actual meaning: when two people do everything together.

Thank you, Isabel Arguello, for your continuing contributions.

***Isabel teaches Spanish and does translations.
Find out more about Isabel on the [QuePasaGrecia website](#).***

No deep breathing, we've got cane burning and Poás misbehaving,
D. Davis, editor
Diane Cooner, webmaster

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