

Subject: Que Pasa Grecia 2022 - Update #4

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

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To: cr.amani.amor@gmail.com

¿Qué Pasa?



New in Que Pasa Grecia

We have added “TV Ears” in Items For Sale. There are also many great items still available, including bicycles, cars, tools, and more. There’s a Jan. 6 Committee watch party on 23 June sponsored by Democrats Abroad on the Upcoming Events page, as well as a church service announcement. And that wonderful Feta cheese is still available for home delivery (we have an updated price list), and soon at the new Esencial Costa Rica cafe across from the Grecia hospital. See our Specialty Food page for details. Go to [QPG](#) and check out these and other points of interest.

U.S Passports by Mail

The U.S. Embassy is now processing most new passport applications and passport renewals by mail and will no longer schedule passport appointments at the Embassy with only a few exceptions. Go to this link for more information: [Passports - U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica \(usembassy.gov\)](#)

Change of Seasons – Not Here

The summer solstice has arrived, and so has our “little summer” where the rain is expected to ease off for the next two weeks or so in Guanacaste and the



Central Valley, then start up again. However, we have already had plenty of rain. April and May of 2022 set official precipitation records for these months in Costa Rica. Better get used to the implication of ‘climate change’ meaning a very wet Green Season.

Four-Digit CC Pins, a NonEvent

As we have discovered, four-digit pin numbers for use with credit cards in Costa Rica issued by U.S. banks have been a nonevent. I can confirm that use of U.S. Bank credit cards does not currently require the necessity of using a four-digit pin number to make charges over 30-mil colones.

CAJA Understaffed, Overstressed, Underfunded, Overwhelmed, and Hacked

To compound its many woes, CCSS (CAJA) has been hacked. Until they can get things sorted out, you will likely experience delays or an absence of information or the ability to schedule doctors’ appointments, diagnostics and surgeries. You will still be able to get medications or lab work with a prescription from a CAJA doctor and also receive COVID vaccinations.



In addition, beginning 13 June, you were supposed to be able to make monthly CAJA payments at Banco Nacional and 1,200 affiliated outlets. On 13 June, I went to BN to pay our monthly CAJA and the bank wouldn’t take my money. That may have changed in the past ten days, but good luck. QPG webmaster Diane was able to pay at the BN at Raul Vega store on the 17th...

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I am going to apologize in advance. I've taken off my neutral, apolitical hat as your editor for the first time that I can remember to share a few thoughts on two topics that have the potential of impacting all of us as residents of Costa Rica. My intent is not to throw the fear of God into you, but to alert you to a couple of areas that I find to be of some concern.

## Personal Observations on Costa Rica's New President

This country's new president, Rodrigo Chaves, gets mixed reviews from me in his first months of leading this country. President Chaves is faced with some severe troubles as he enters office. Some, such as



national/international debt, revenue generation and redundant or unnecessary government agencies, have been insufficiently addressed by the three previous administrations. Others, such as the hacking of government computers, are new to Costa Rica and the Chaves government.

As a former minister of finance for Costa Rica, President Chaves, has moved admirably in directives regarding the debt, agency redundancy, and in response to the computer hacking that has severely impacted several ministries' ability to function. Gold stars to Chaves for his first moves in these areas.

On the other hand during his first week in office, he called all of his ministries' communications directors together and had his chief of staff tell them, "Don't trust the media. The press is our enemy."

As a former communications professional, I found this stance to be frightening, threatening, and completely undemocratic in nature. I had the same gut-wrenching response when the very same position was taken toward a free press by a recent U.S. president. I have seen the division and lasting damage that this approach has had in America and do not relish a similar situation developing in Costa Rica.

With one eye, I will give him the benefit of the doubt and wish him success for the momentous job before him. With the other eye, I will watch his actions to be sure that the democratic rights we enjoy in this country are not usurped.

## **Personal Thoughts on a Threat from Nicaragua**

The tension between Costa Rica and Nicaragua probably goes all the way back to the annexation of the territory of Guanacaste by Costa Rica, which both countries have claimed as their own. President Daniel Ortega has never made a secret about wanting Costa Rica's seventh province, Guanacaste, returned as part of Nicaragua. Over his many years as president, Ortega has taken firm hold of Nicaragua by converting the country from an infant democracy into a dictatorship, which he and his wife now head. Ortega has thwarted democracy by declaring all political parties illegal and all political opponents to be criminals and imprisoning them or worse.

Mr. Ortega has now openly invited the Russian military to come to Nicaragua to set up shop. Reflecting on the history between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, which includes Costa Rica offering safe harbor to the CIA in support of Nicaragua's Sandinista government in its fight with Nicaraguan Contra rebels, of whom Daniel Ortega was once one.

There is plenty of concern in Costa Rica, a country without a standing army, about Nicaragua coveting Guanacaste and the invitation they have offered to Russian troops given a similar territorial scenario today in Ukraine. We need not worry today, as the current leadership of the OAS and U.S. government would likely not allow any hostile incursion by Nicaragua into Costa Rica. However, we all should be aware that such a wholehearted commitment might not continue should the current administration lose power.

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“No tener ni pies ni cabeza”

Literal translation: without feet or head

Meaning: to make no sense

Thank you Isabel Arguello for your continuing contributions.

Isabel teaches Spanish and does translations.

Find out more about Isabel on the QuePasaGrecia website.

Please be careful out there and get your second COVID booster,

D. Davis, editor

Diane Cooner, webmaster

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