

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

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Good things *happen* when an architect and artist get together! Here's a sketch that Nanci did from Travis Schuerman's great architectural design we sent you in the last issue. This vision of the new building next door is becoming more real every day!

RECENT NEWS

Big news this issue – travel by water. First, a great trip by van and canoe to Yorkin – and the mystery surrounding a woman leader is dispelled. Then, a group of pretty excited kids (and adults) find themselves aboard a Carnival cruise ship in Limón. (You'll see that in Part 2, the second half of this issue.) More great news about Jackie & Joseph! And finally - we can offer you the chance to buy a wild animal – and have it shipped directly to your home – details below! And **stay tuned for Part 2!**

TRIP TO YORKIN

About four or five years ago, we met a Swedish filmmaker – Mattias Low – as he went into the interior to film activities in Yorkin. When he came back, he sat on our porch and, slapping the table, said “those women are Nazis,” a particularly telling comment coming from a Swede. He was talking about Doña Bernarda and the other women of Yorkin. So as we took advantage of a free trip there, we weren't sure what to expect. Doña Bernarda's presentation made it all clear. Six years ago, the women of Yorkin decided they'd enough: they took over. Going back to Mattias' comment, his visit was probably right in the middle of the turmoil created by the takeover. Now it all fits. The atmosphere there now is happy, fun, and a pleasure to experience.

As the women took over, they pushed the men aside and built an elementary school (escuela), a high school (colegio), and a clinic. They're teaching the kids the Bribri language. There's now a tourism business, bringing visitors to Yorkin who want to learn about the Bribri lifestyle. Adventurous travelers can take the trip that we took, leaving Puerto Viejo and returning in the same day. This trip is called the “Mishka Tour”, meaning “hurry” in Bribri. Or, you can elect to stay overnight in simple but comfortable accommodations.

The fotos below tell the story. First, a ride in a van, about an hour, took us from Puerto Viejo to Bambu, a village inside the Reserve on the bank of the Sixaola River. It also gave us a chance to meet some really great people.



*Here's the starting point. Each boat carries 5 or 6 passengers, with a boatsman working the 25-HP motor, and a polesman in front, to get us over those shallow spots
Nanci's talking with one of the guides,
and is standing next to Enrique, Don Candido's son, in the yellow shirt.*

We were each issued a life jacket. Piling into the canoes, we took off. Much of the 1 hr and 15 minute time spent on the river was spent looking at beautiful jungle scenery in good company on a quiet river.



Nanci gazes across the river to spectacular scenery. You can't see it in this shot, but she has her life jacket on. She's sitting next to Karine, from the ACTUAR organization, that sponsored this free trip.

...quiet, that is, until we hit the rapids. That's when we saw the wisdom in keeping everything in waterproof bags, including the camera, which I stowed as soon as we got to the rapids – but not before taking at least one shot.



Here, we're clearly going uphill. You'll also notice that Nanci, seated directly in front of me, is not wearing her life jacket. "Too hot", she explained.



*Here's another shot taken by Karine Chardon, of ACTUAR.
Enrique is helping out with the pole work in this boat.
I picked up a pole, intending to help in our canoe, and it was suggested that I "put the pole down before I hurt somebody." Humpf!*



*Our first glimpse of Yorkin, as our boats pulled onshore.
We were greeted by a small crowd of enthusiastic schoolkids.*



*We passed the schoolhouse on the way in. This is for classes K-6. Karine Chardon is at lower left.
The white-haired guy at the left is John Wheatley, who ran a benefit concert for The Bridge a year ago.
Thank you John!*



*Here's the path from the river and schoolhouse to the "Ranch Grande", or meeting place.
Nanci's got the green shirt and the blue knapsack.*



This is a shot of the Colegio, which would be junior high and high school in the US.



In the Rancho Grande we are given several presentations. Doña Bernarda, the "Head Nazi" is at the center in the white T-shirt. Actually, we found her and the others to be delightful people.



These Bribri girls from the high school (colegio) gave us a song in their own language as a man from Costa Rican National Radio records the performance.



The women of Casa de las Mujeres welcoming us on our visit.



*A demonstration of how to make roofing materials, given by a local craftsman, as one of our tripmates tries to learn how to tie the simple, continuous knot that "holds it all together".
Photo by Karine Chardon, ACTUAR.*



Yours truly and Nanci are watching a demonstration of making chocolate. First, the delicious white goey stuff surrounding the seed of the cacao pod is eaten. Then, the seeds are dried, and finally ground into a powder, as you see here, using a rounded, smooth rock and a wooden bowl. Then, it's turned into a paste using the only concession to modern technology – a hand operated meat grinder with a special grating head. "Before this grinder", the woman doing the demonstration said, "we could never make it smooth" Photo by Karine Chardon, of ACTUAR

The trip back was much more interesting – and a lot shorter. I was too busy holding on to take pictures. It had rained during our visit, and the rivers had come to life, with LOTS of water flowing.

I gotta say... it was fun!

If you're interested in making this trip, either as a one-day or an overnight, give Karine Chardon at ACTUAR a call directly, at +506-2248-9470. Tell her EI Puente sent you!

JACKIE & JOSEPH

Jackie & Joseph are back after 14 months in rehab. Strong and healthy with a crack-free baby named Stephen. YAYYY!



Here's Jackie, Stephen, and Joseph on a recent visit to The Bridge

They're now looking for a community of recovering addicts to "hang" with. We may have found them a place to live and work at the finca (ranch) of a local woman with experience in running a drug rehab center. We're connecting them all to see what can happen. We're The Bridge! More news as it develops.

BUY SOME WILD ANIMALS

And Have Them Shipped Right To Your Home!

You know that Nanci has done a signed, numbered series of fine art lithographs of her scratchboard works, You can now order those wild animals online! Powerful animals such as a mountain lion, a bald eagle, a Serengeti lion, a snow leopard, even a CAMEL, for goodness' sake! can be yours for the asking!

These critters are, of course, a part of Nanci Wright's excellent scratchboard work. With each image you buy, The Bridge gets some cash to fund its operations. We'd like to bring in at least \$500 a month in product sales to pay for our personal living expenses, and with these sales, and sales of the greeting cards in our online store, we hope to do just that.

So get online! Visit www.art-exchange.com and enter "nanci wright" in the search box. You'll get to see these great wild animals and place your order online!

Do it now! You'll be glad you did!

RANDOM NOTES

Communications are "up" right now. We've had three days with no dial tone and spotty internet access. People calling here say they've been getting only a "busy" signal. I called the phone company, and they got up on a ladder and made the dial tone come back. It went away again an hour after they had gone. So... I got up on a ladder with a telephone, and started to push on wires, listening for... anything. I found a sharp bend in the cable that "crackled" when I pushed on it, so I got did some wire cutting and soldering. And, we're back on the air again. If any of you were frustrated at trying to reach us, please try again!

Trip to San José Sunday April 20. Juan Enrique Toro, Minister at the Unity Church in Piedades, asked me to give a talk at Unity while he was traveling to Australia. I stayed at Big Mike's Supper Club in Escazú (great place, incidentally) and really enjoyed giving that talk. Went to the American Embassy on Monday to file for Social Security, talked with John Gilbert of Enlinea about working with drug addicts on Monday night, and back home by bus on Tuesday morning.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

The Norwegians are back, if only for a short time. Mina and Maja had gone to South America, and have returned here once again. We expect to see them again this coming Saturday, and they'll be heading back to Norway on Sunday.

YOU CAN HELP US!

There are several ways you can help.

- **Send this email to people you know** who might also enjoy it.
- **Post a message about us on social networking sites or discussion boards** dealing with adventure, travel, volunteering, education, microlending, human services, eliminating poverty, or other humanitarian activities.

HELP WANTED

A computer-savvy volunteer is needed. We've finally run into a couple of things we can't do with our outdated software. It may be time to upgrade to Service Pack 2 and Internet Explorer 7. If there's someone traveling through here with the necessary knowledge, we'd sure appreciate it!

DONOR NOTES

We say "Thank You!" again to our regular donors, who faithfully provide a monthly donation to help keep us going! THANK YOU!

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

**We're grateful at the continuing support we have been getting.
You all are allowing us to continue to serve!**

NOW's a GREAT time to contribute.

Donate online by [clicking here](#), where you can use a **credit card** or an **E-Check**.

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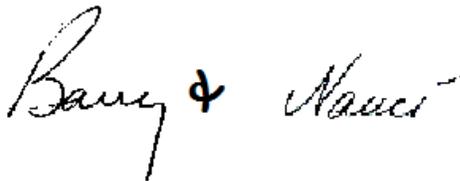
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Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!



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