

Friday, May 9, 2008

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Hello, Liberty!

RECENT NEWS

Here's that "Part 2" you were promised in the last email. We show you what happened when we brought the Bridge Kids onboard a cruise ship in Limón. Wait 'till you read the lighter side from Nanci – "There's Pollywogs in My Drinking Water"! There's great news on Timoteo and the medical clinic. Finally, there's GoodNews about GoodShop!

LIFE IS A CARNIVAL!

What happens when you take thirteen Bribri kids onto a cruise ship? We found out on April 16, when we visited the Carnival Cruise ship Liberty as she docked in Limón. Darcy Clark, one of the ship's passengers, brought a donation of school supplies, and we agreed to meet dockside to accept the donation. After making some very special arrangements, Carnival Cruise Lines Management not only allowed us onboard, but provided a tour and a hosted lunch as well! Four adults also made the trip. Thank you Carnival!



Our first stop – checking in through security. Nanci identifies our group to the guard, as Roy, Erasmo, Mauricio, Willi, Catie, and Abelio wait their turn. After some nail-biting, we were all able to get on board!



*As we walked down the dock... that boat just kept getting bigger, and bigger, and **bigger!***



Once inside, we were greeted by two delightful crew members (in blue) from Peru, who gave us an absolutely wonderful tour of the boat.



*Alejandro, Willi, and Dani watch as Francisco takes a shot.
Basketball aboard the boat – I wonder how THAT works in high seas?*



*Nanci, Irene, and Ronualdo try their hand at golf, while Darcy Clark (right), and
her son Josh (back to the camera) look on along with Erasmo and Roy.
This crazy little golf course surrounded the smokestack.
The kids got a big kick out of this sport.
We only lost one ball over the side!*



Our trusty guides got us all up on stage for a group photo.



*With the fun of touring over, the travelers get down to some serious business – lunch!
And what a lunch it was. Two stories of every kind of food on the planet – all they could eat.*



A corner of the amazing Lido dining room was reserved just for us, as we enjoyed a great lunch.



Logan, on the left, Darcy, Darcy's mom Diane Goff, and Josh – and of course Nanci at the far right. The boys fit right in with our group of kids, helping to show them the ropes.

Before we committed to the visit, we gave it some serious thought. Many had been to Limón with Nanci to shop for school clothes, and had already seen cruise ships at a distance. They were clearly curious, but it was quite a jump from their own situations. After much thought, we decided it was a “go”. All in all, the kids were pretty excited, and according to reports, they stayed that way for quite some time. We’re glad we did it.

Thank you, Darcy, for the donation and hosting this visit. And thank you Carnival for letting our tribe on board!

There’s Pollywogs in My Drinking Water!
The Lighter Side - From Nanci

Seasons in Costa Rica are unpredictable. I never know what to tell people when they ask me, "What month is the best to visit?" Since I happen to love the rainy season most I usually answer, "come down anytime, It's always beautiful." I believe, however that Spring sprang sprightlier than the rains this year, which may have caused our amazing amphibian infiltration.

What I particularly love about the rainy season is that it brings with it a plethora of wildly noisy night creatures. One in particular, I believe is labeled Drab Smilisca. This unfortunately named frog although only 6.5 centimeters in length, more than makes up in power and presence what it lacks in physical charm.

The dry season in the South East corner of the country kept us hauling water much of the time. Only in the wee hours of the night could we get enough pressure in the hoses to fill the half dozen plastic barrels we tried to keep full to run the soup kitchen.

I have always been fond of wildlife and completely willing to share my resources with them. We'd had so little rain for such a long time, however, that there were no longer any puddles to paddle and splash in, no places to plant their progeny. So after a long night of very loud fun, frolic and fornicating, these webbed wonders wandered off into the wilderness leaving us in charge of their offspring. 5000 pollywogs evenly distributed among all six barrels of our precious drinking water.

During dry season, dumping the water out is unthinkable so I knew we had to use it. Equally unthinkable was to aid to their declining population by flushing the baby frogs down the toilet. It seemed I had no other choice but to supply them with their own container and care for the babies until the skies could at last present them with their own precious puddle.

What do baby pollywogs eat, anyway? Want to see a feeding frenzy? Drop a piece of hamburger into the water. Sort of like tiny piranhas. Scary! I thought I over did it the other day. Put too much food in and figured I'd have to dump the water out and give them fresh. Next day the water was crystal clear and fresh smelling. They even eat their own poop! Wish my kids had been so easy. Woah, come to think of it they did eat their own poop. I guess I don't remember it being so charming then. Well, anyway

So now that the rainy season has finally arrived, we're cultivating some really nice puddles. Barry and I are scouting the neighborhood for good homes for our babies. Not too near; the croaking from even one is enough to keep us awake at night. It's dizzying to imagine the voices from 5000.

Every morning, first thing, I check on our babies to make sure of one thing. That they have not sprouted tiny feet and escaped throughout the house. Long before that, we will have re-located them and the new batch that just came in this morning after another sleepless fun filled night, again covering the tops of all six water barrels.

There will be no shortage of the Drab Smilisca frogs this year.

Long live the species!

TIMOTEO AND THE MEDICAL CLINIC

You may remember that we were asked to help with the initial funding steps for a medical clinic in the indigenous reserve, near Timoteo's "Rancho Grande".

On May 7 we met with Timoteo and discussed information needed to begin finding a supporter for the initial step of this project – raising the \$9,000 needed to control the land. There is no "ownership" of land or titling inside the reserve – land is "controlled". In this case, the controlling entity will be "The Communal", a group composed entirely of women. Information on them is being gathered, as is information on the next steps of the project. Once that information is available, I'll ask them to inquire, about government funding. With a final picture in hand, we'll proceed.

Timoteo cautiously brought up an issue on organization – the Communal will be composed entirely of women. Nanci mentioned we had visited Doña Bernarda, and her "Casa de Las Mujeres" – and were pretty upbeat about women-only organizations as a result. He was relieved.

As usual, we'll keep you posted!

GOODSEARCH AND GOODSHOP PAY OFF!

In February and March, you made about \$310 in purchases at GoodShop that will result in a \$15.51 contribution to El Puente! Yay! And "Thank You!" to those who made purchases!

As a reminder, here's a list of the names you'll see when you go to the GoodShop page that has easy-to-use links to each store:

1-800-flowers	Half.com	Oriental Trading
Amazon.com	Home Depot	Overstock.com
Apple Store	Hotels.com	PetSmart
Barnes & Noble	Hewlett-Packard	Sears
Best Buy	Home Shopping Network	Sephora
Bloomingdale's	iTunes	Staples
Buy.com	J.Crew	Target
Circuit City	Kodak	Teleflora
Dell	Kohls	The Container Store
Drugstore.com	Lands' End	Toys R Us
Ebay	Macy's	Travelocity
Expedia.com	Nike	WalMart
Buy Movie Tickets	Nordstrom	Zappos
The Gap	Office Depot	
Guess	Old Navy	

To explore the GoodShop page, click on the following link and get started!

<http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx> If you haven't signed up with Goodsearch before, you'll have to do that before actually shopping. Be sure to choose "**El Puente-The Bridge**" as your charity.

COMMUNICATIONS

Some of you may be aware that we've been having difficulties with communications. The phone line was "down" for three days. Internet access was poor. Then, a hungry little "bug" ate my email address book. This, after our beloved cat Tica dumped our family address book into the wastebasket, where it was quickly covered with saltine wrappers and unceremoniously. As of this moment, the phone line is back, my email address book has been (mostly) restored from backups, the family address book is (mostly) restored, and we feel connected to the world again. We're still looking for phone numbers from everyone, so feel free to write us a note and send them along, with a brief note on how YOU'RE doing.

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.

DONOR NOTES

Stay tuned for a discussion of a new funding method, in which we will replace money taken from, say, a trust fund or a savings account, and immediately replace it with a US Government Zero-Coupon Bond. That'll give us about 40% of the cash to use on our projects here, with the US government paying interest and repaying the principal. Not quite a donation – not quite a loan. Only your tax accountant will know for sure!

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**.

Or, mail a check made out to "El Puente" with "Member 29409704" in the Memo Field
to

USE Credit Union, 8697 La Mesa Blvd, La Mesa, CA 91941

Deductions are tax-deductible

(And please drop us an email letting us know you've done it
so we can say a proper "Thank You!")

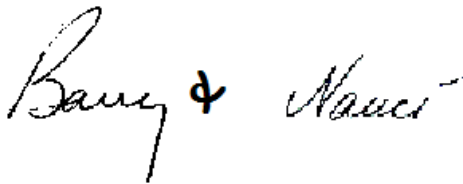
Do it NOW! You'll be glad you did!

Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry & Nancy". The ampersand is stylized.

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SEEING THE PICTURES

...go to www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly and download the file with the date of this issue.

Go to The **Bridge Website** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Go to The **Bridge Online Store** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Download a **Powerpoint presentation** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Download **brochures in Spanish or English** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Go to the **newsletter archive** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

See some **Video clips** showing activities at The Bridge by [CLICKING HERE](#)

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