



Tuesday, February 17, 2009

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*Nanci provides backpacks of school supplies to Meyquelin, Nellie, and Yeus, three Tico children from the Bribri area. We're hearing from families that have been seriously hurt by the recent severe weather...
...and we're doing what we can.*

RECENT NEWS

The "suit-em-up" phase of the 2009 school year is mainly over. Next – the book-buying phase. Stay tuned! Meet some "Angels With Their Skins On", as Nanci recounts recent events at The Bridge. We're coming to the US! We got tanked! Come in and meet "El Coco Natural"! We say "Thanks!" to two great volunteers!

SCHOOL BUYS, SCHOOL BUYS

Nanci is almost done making those fun trips to Cahuita and Bribri to buy school uniforms and supplies. School started on Feb. 16, and so far, things are moving along well. All told, will likely be providing 32 "Bridge Kids" with "full support", with another 5 provided with some supplies that we had left over here. We have a Wednesday appointment for the last 3 of the "full support" kids, and the father of that family showed up with one more today. At first, it looked like the 8-year-old wasn't going to school, but that's changed now. If we can make that happen, we'll be at 33 "full support" Bridge Kids. To get this finished, we'll need another \$500-\$600 for uniforms and supplies.

In a week or two, we'll find out what school books are needed. This will require an additional \$1,000 in the next couple of weeks.

We're almost there, and with your help, these kids will be well on their way into another school year!

As we can, we'll introduce you to this year's group so you can see what your donations have done!

ANGELS WITH THEIR SKINS ON

(I mentioned this earlier simply as a news item. Here's a much different view, written by Nanci. Enjoy!)

As part of our spiritual practice, Bear and I read quality books about God and His saints. One evening after reading from "Where Angels Walk" by Joan Webster Anderson, I closed my eyes to sleep and repeated over and over again, "I wish to meet my angel, I wish to meet my angel." The author contends that we each have our own guardian angel, so I kept repeating, "I wish to meet my angel. I wish to meet my angel," as I fell off to sleep. About an hour or so I was awakened with an insight to write down this story and present it here to you.

Early one Friday morning, I made two commitments to myself; one to finally finish the hardwood floor in my bedroom and two, to somehow manifest the groceries that we always give away to some less than privileged mothers during soup kitchen on Saturdays. The floors would be easy. For days now a neighbor and I had been sanding and varnishing the beautiful kasha wood boards. We were so close to being finished and I was more than ready to be done with the mess and upheaval that such a project entails. As for the food, that was another story. We were down to our last \$10.00. The groceries usually run to close to \$100.00. In the five years of operating 'The Bridge', we had never missed a Saturday. We weren't expecting any donations in, nor was there any money left in our coffer. "Okay God," I prayed, "I'll finish the floors but if You want us to hand out food this week, You'll have to be in charge of that part." Then I got down on my knees with a can of varnish and a brush to complete my part of the bargain.

Bear was in his usual place, at his desk at the computer working on funding, bookkeeping and the myriad of the other details of running 'The Bridge' as he usually does at least twelve hours every day. He was a bit disgruntled that morning; the telephone had had no dial tone since the day before. Not that that was so rare. One of Bear's favorite expressions is, "phone, electricity, water, pick any two." It isn't unusual to be temporarily without at least one utility in Costa Rica. Apparently, it was now the telephones' turn.

About mid-morning, however, the phone did ring. Startled and delighted, Bear went to answer it. A couple of angels we had never met were calling from Price Smart in San José. They had heard about 'The Bridge' through one of Barry's postings and wanted to know what they could bring. They were making the five-hour trip to the Caribbean that afternoon. After I got over being speechless, Bear handed me the phone and I gave them the list of groceries we usually donate to the needy families. The lovely couple arrived later that same day with so much more than we could have dreamed of. The mothers did indeed go home that Saturday with bulging bags of food for their families.

And the telephone? The line went back to being dead again until the repairman finally came by to fix it the following day.

I am certain I will some say meet the ethereal beauty of my own sweet guardian angel, but for now I'm really very happy with the ones who show up with their skins on. Thank You God, Thank you angels.

LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE MAKING A TRIP TO THE U.S.

We're processing our Costa Rican residency. For that we need a criminal background check, and what they call a "Good Guy" letter. We did this when we left the US, and it turns out that a criminal background check done 5 years ago is just too old. So - back to the La Mesa Police Department. We'll present our faces and our thumbs, and get a fresh "Good Guy" report. So, we'll be back to the U.S. on a whirlwind trip to get that report and deliver the result to the Costa Rican Consulate in Anaheim.

When? Not sure yet. There are at least three churches we'd like to visit while we're there. We'll have to work out the timing with them.

We hope to find some of our subscribers who have American Airlines Frequent Flyer Miles they'd like to donate, a bed to sleep in, and possibly a car to borrow - or someone willing to provide transportation as needed. If you can volunteer for one or more of these, please get in touch with us. If you have other suggestions, please don't be bashful! We'd rather spend available cash on the School and/or Food Programs.

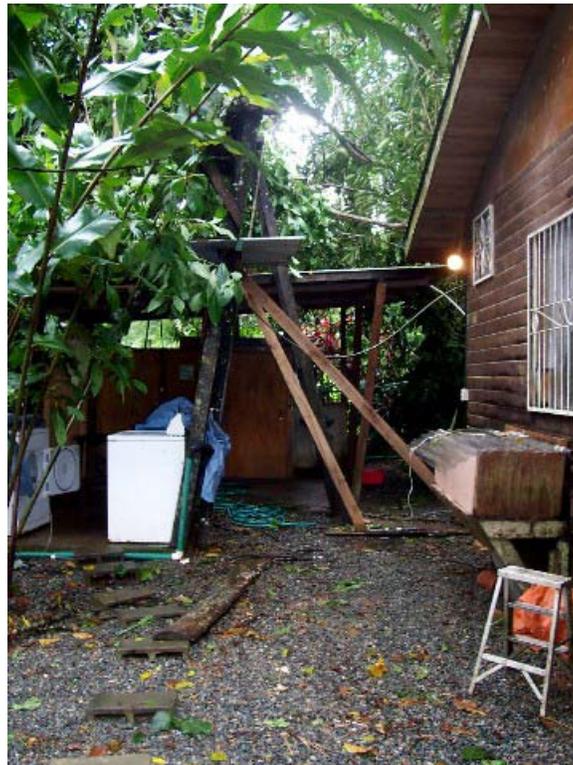
Thank you in advance!

WE GOT TANKED!

It started simply enough. We had some repair work done on the water tower, with brand new hardwood as the "floor" underneath the 250-gallon water tank that towers above the house.

The real problems began a couple of days later, on a normal Thursday. The veggie truck came in the morning, bringing our week's supply of vegetables. Mercifully, the rain stopped for that morning's Community Kitchen. We were joined by three welcome visitors who came to see what The Bridge is all about. Gregory the "Bush Doctor", a dropout pharmacist from the US, was here, checking up on some of the Bribri patients he'd been providing medicinal plants to. Maria and Elda showed up with their families, to share in the Community Kitchen, and to spend some time at midday chopping up the week's vegetables. The day finished normally.

We'd been experiencing a big rainstorm lasting several days. Water was everywhere - surrounding the house, filling up the adjacent lot. The ground was very soft over in that lot. There was a lot of wind. And, on this Thursday night, one of the trees in that other lot "gave up the ghost" and fell over - right onto our water tank, the tower leaning precariously toward the house.



It was dark as we immediately drained the tank, too dark to see which tree had done the deed, and which way it was "pointed" in its fall. After taking all the glass from off the shelves and walls, killing the gas and electricity, and buttoning up the house, we went off to La Isla Inn, in order to relax for the night. Coming back in the early morning, we were relieved to see that the damage was considerably less than it might have been if a larger tree had been involved.



BACK YARD BEFORE “THE TREE”



BACK YARD AFTER “THE TREE”

At the Ferreteria, we were introduced to a worker who promptly showed up the following day with a chain saw and cut away the fallen tree. The next day he repaired the tower. He brought his 10-year-old son with him, and the lad helped out with basic tasks.

Some of the older Bribri boys watched them both intently. They can build up Hope, seeing that it is possible to learn how to use tools and earn more money.

We were blown away by how little damage was done.

MICROLOANS AT WORK

You remember Jackie & Joseph? Over a year ago, they were promised a microloan for the coconut oil business. On the condition, that is, that they be out of drug rehab and drug-free for six months. That milestone was reached recently, and one of our subscribers generously provided the cash for their microloan. With \$380, they bought the heavy-duty pots, pans, tools, and other materials needed to make coconut oil.



Joseph cooks up a storm



Jackie gets the bottles ready



♪ They're back in the business again ♪

So, ladies and gentlemen – it looks like the “**El Coco Natural**” coconut oil company is in business!

RANDOM NOTES

Power-Full Progress We've been blessed with Craig, an electrician who will be here for a month or so. Craig has volunteered to put up the electric meter pole, and we expect to have some progress notes on that project for you soon.

Pass Along Readership We're learning that quite a number of people are receiving "pass-along" copies of our newsletter. That's great! If you are one of those readers, we'd love to know about it, so we can get a rough idea how many of you there are! If you are getting a copy of this newsletter from someone else, please let us know by email. We'll count you as a “reader”, **but will only keep your email address and add you to our email list if you specifically ask us to in your email.**

Web Site Update We've just updated the website, including the School Program and Volunteer pages. Check it out, beginning at the [Home Page!](#)

The Last Bus Trip Nanci and I took a recent trip by bus toward Manzanillo, on the "last bus", that goes by our house at 7:15 PM. As we boarded the bus, we noticed the driver had his shirt open, and was singing along with music playing on his radio. The passengers near the front were laughing, joining in the singing, and in general just carrying on. The trip had the atmosphere of a party. We joined in. Gotta love this place.

Water Line Cut! Tuesday, Feb 17, 1:50 in the afternoon. The folks driving heavy equipment to fix the road just this minute cut the water line leading to our water meter. The water from the aqueduct is pouring all over the road, instead of through our water meter and into the house. Fortunately, a little bird told me last night to fill up some buckets and partially fill the newly repaired tank. We called AYA, the water company, and the dispatcher at first said “it's a little late to do anything today.” Nanci had taken over the conversation by then, and said “but the aqueduct is pouring water all over the road, wasting it.” This is another of those “we'll keep you posted” things.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Please help us say “Thank You!” to two *very* dedicated volunteers.

Lili Prince took on the job of **indexing our newsletters** for 2008 – a monumental job! It's now available for downloading on our website. If you're interested, you can download this file by clicking on this link:

WORD format: www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly/2008masterindex.doc

PDF format: www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly/2008masterindex.pdf

And as if THAT weren't enough, Lili is on her way through the newsletters for 2007! Stay tuned!

Trudy Baker jumped right in and **input all our accounting data for 2008** into a huge EXCEL spreadsheet - allowing us to prepare the data and present it to a registered accountant here. That sounds a bit abstract, but I can tell you it was a LOT of work! And now, she's starting in on 2007! As we get financial reports through the process, we'll make those available to you as well!

And again – THANK YOU to Lili and Trudy!

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

We say “Thank You!” again to our Pledge donors, who faithfully provide a monthly donation to help keep us going! And “Thank You” as well to those who continue to support us through occasional donations – they are appreciated.

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.

Make a **Monthly Pledge** by [clicking here](#).

Make an immediate donation 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!”)

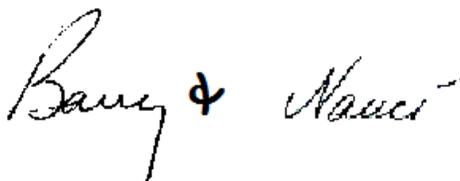
Do it NOW! You’ll be glad you did!

Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!



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

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ANGELS WITH THEIR SKINS ON
(Story from Nanci's Computer)

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