



Oct 11, 2011
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On The Grow Again!

*Check out this rendering. An addition to The Bridge – a place
For food, school, fun and out reach.*

RECENT NEWS

Surf for Life is at it again, helping with a construction project that will expand the capabilities of The Bridge. We may – or may not – know the way to San José. More humor on getting things done around here. Just what IS the Bribri language like? Independence Day – Costa Rican style. Wow it's been busy around here!

ON THE GROW – AGAIN

The dream coming true above is an image provided by volunteer architect, par excellence, Travis Schuerman, of a new outdoor area for meal service, teaching classes, and many other uses outdoors at The Bridge! Yeah! Thank you, Travis!

The volunteers for Surf For Life are in town now. They have been busy working on adding a room to a public school in Playa Chiquita, and are getting ready to start here later this week. They will be building the floor shown in Travis's amazing rendering, starting in the next few days. Here we go!

You'll remember the "Holy Cow!" email I sent out. The Surf For Life crowd had simply showed up, and we jumped feet first into the project. So far, seven of you have jumped in as well, making some very helpful and timely donations, for which we also say "Thank You!" Measurements have been taken, and a local contractor who's guiding the volunteers went out and priced the wood needed. We have a professional working to find the best prices, so keep it coming, we intend to raise the roof!

Angel, Bob Zuur donated a super-large, heavy-duty tarp to put over the new floor area, and that can be put up even as the floor is being worked on, ensuring that we can work even in the rain! When the floor and tarp are in place, Phase 1 of this project will be completed, and we can start using the area for the Community Kitchen. I love seeing a plan coming together

And then... Phase 2 – the translucent roof over the new floor. Finally, with the roof in place, we can go back to INA with a photo and an invitation to conduct more classes here.

Onward!

DO YOU KNOW THE WAY...

Thought we'd throw in a laugh. Many people who have driven cars around here have commented on how ... uh ... interesting ... yes, that's it – how INTERESTING it is! Driving in this country is, in many ways, challenging, fun, infuriating, exciting, and frustrating. And yes, perhaps it's even "interesting".

Just how *do* you get to San Jose?

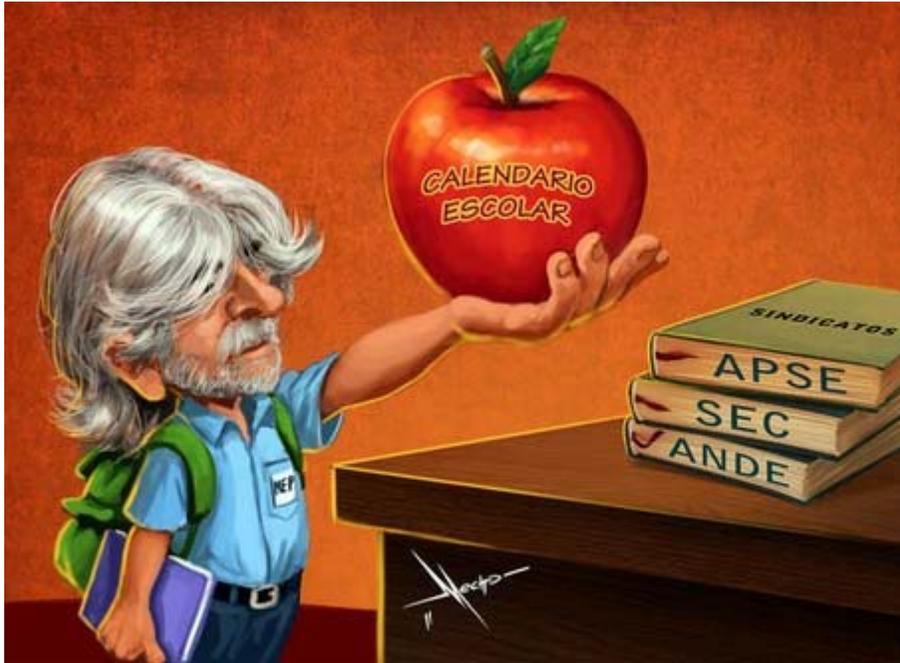


♪ *Do you know the way to San José?* ♪

MORE ON: WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GET SOMETHING DONE IN COSTA RICA

Remember the video clip about getting stuff done with a government agency? Then, I shared my nearly-hysterical experience dealing with Migracion, as I braved the bureaucracy for residency.

Here's the next dose of humor. You may recall I mentioned that we had been in touch with the Minister of Education, Leonardo Garnier. In one exchange, he mentioned how difficult it sometimes was to deal with the unions that represent employees in the Ministry of Education – specifically, the teacher's unions – all three of them. The Ministry has been working to rearrange the school calendars, being required to submit them to the unions for approval. I stumbled onto his Facebook page yesterday, and found the following cartoon.



*If you can't guess, "sindicatos" means "unions"...
and he looks just like his cartoon.*

You go, Leonardo!

WHAT'S THE BRIBRI LANGUAGE LIKE?

We hear this question often. Language is vitally important, since reading and writing it is one of the prerequisites for maintaining their legal status as a tribe. If they lose their designation as a tribe, they lose the indigenous reserve – their place to live. Last time I checked the numbers, only between 3% - 5% of the tribe used the written language.

The BriBri language is pretty exotic looking, with many forms of punctuation – diacritical markings – that appear to control the pronunciation. You can hear the Costa Rican National Anthem sung in the Bribri language, with Bribri language subtitles, by visiting this YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWUkPHEu-y4&feature=share>

Some of the diacritical markings we have seen cannot be displayed with the fonts currently available on most computers, so what you'll see in the video is a stripped down version of the written language.

Give it a listen. It's only a minute and a half long. The words are clear enough that it can be almost a sing-along.

COSTA RICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Independence Day – September 15 – is a big deal around here. Schools and businesses close, and there are ceremonies and parades. One custom in those parades is to carry little houses – called faroles - made from available materials and containing small candles, which are lit as the parade progresses. Nanci had the good fortune to accompany some of the kids to the school and was blown away to see a hundred little kids running around with paper boxes and burning candles. This is a different world.



Sandara and Mauricio proudly show the house that they built.

A good time was had by all!

MOMMY AND BABIES – JUNGLE STYLE

Nanci came running into the house, muttering something like “gotta get the camera”. Get it she did. Out she ran, to the water tubs that we keep beside the house in case of a water emergency. After a few minutes, she came back inside. “Got it”, she beamed, handing me the camera. I plugged in the cable, took the fotos out, and found this little beauty. Ladies and gentlemen, meet “Mommie Poison Arrow Frog” and two of her newest crop of babies clinging to her back.



Here's Mommie, after climbing up out of the plastic tub with two brand new tadpole babies on her back. Mom's body is about 1 inch from nose to butt, not counting her legs.

I've heard this little beauty called the “poison arrow frog”, the field guide calls it “Black and Green Dart Frog”, and Graciela's cat is fighting for his life after eating one of these same things, now called a “poison dart frog”. Whatever the name, I think one thing is clear. If you have an appetite for frog's legs, this is not the one to chase down for cooking.

GETTING ANTSY?

Do you ever get used to living here?

We hear that question often. On the surface, it seems to refer to the climate. But, after being here for many years, we know there's much more to it.

As an example, take our first encounter with army ants. These are the guys who come into the house by the Godzillions and literally clean it of insects. They're about 3/8 of an inch long.

The first visit happened shortly after we arrived. The ants flooded the place. The walls, ceiling, and the kitchen shelves were a swarming mass of ants. Take a look at a home video someone else took showing these guys.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-xLlfjrtFo&feature=related>

Nanci and I panicked. We threw the kitten into a cat carrier, some clothes into a suitcase, and got the heck out of there. We went to Cocles to spend the night at La Isla Inn. As we ventured back the following morning, we were nervous driving into the yard. We timidly walked toward the house and saw only one small line of ants walking away from the house, carrying a very still obviously very dead 3 inch cockroach with them as they left.

Recently, we were visited again. This is our ninth year of being here, and after nearly a dozen visits from the ants. Ho Hum. How did Nanci and I react this time? We looked around, found the ants climbing around in the kitchen and living room. We locked up the house for the night and went into the bedroom, where we also saw them climbing up and down the walls near the bed. Then, we turned the light out, and went to sleep.

The ants were gone in the morning.

SOMETIMES A FRIEND JUST NEEDS A LITTLE PUSH

Ever see someone that needs just a little helping hand? We found this video that really brings that story to life.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK9Xj7eY0UU>

All it takes is a little push!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Where did Nicki Goh go?

Remember that wonderful volunteer from England who "jumped out of a perfectly good airplane" to raise money for The Bridge? (See the issues dated August 13 and September 16 in 2008) We thought you might be interested in what she's up to now. Here's an update in her own words.

"After returning from the Bridge over 3 years ago, I have been making moves into working full-time in International Development. I worked in Senegal on behalf of a microfinance organisation called Kiva 2 years ago and then did a 1-year Masters programme in Development Studies that finished this month! I am now based in Ghana with Technoserve – an organisation whose mission is to bring 'business solutions to poverty'. My project is looking at rice production in West Africa and identifying initiatives that could increase the productivity of smallholder rice farmers through improved access to high-yielding seeds, microfinance products and machinery so that they can engage in commercial markets to earn an income and to be more self-sufficient."

Great to hear from you, Nicki! Thank you for the work you did for The Bridge, and it's really great to see the fine work you're involved with now!

Indexing The News

As long as we're talking about volunteers – did you notice the references to the August and September issues of the newsletter? They came from a **Master Index** of our newsletter issues from 2005 to 2010. That Index was built by a great angel by the name of **Lili Prince**. Thank you Lili!!

If you are curious, you can download that index by visiting www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly and downloading the Master Index file.

She Just Dove In – Head First!

One of our volunteers, **Christina Field**, joined us only for a week, but she turned into a bit of a whirling dervish, jumping into everything that needed doing. She helped Erick with English homework, got right into the business of chopping veggies, helped Nanci with the shopping, and yes, even washed a few dishes.



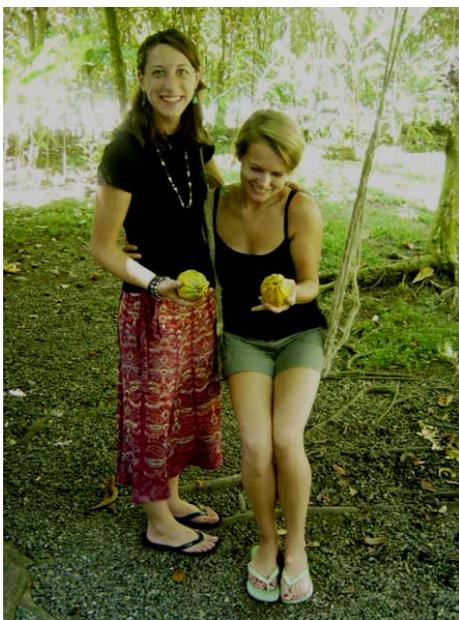
Christina is speaking English words to Erick so he can learn to pronounce them correctly. Erick, however, is seizing the moment to mug for the camera.



English lesson over, she jumps into the fray at the veggie chopping table, making sure they get packaged in plastic baggies for storage in our refrigerator on the porch.

We know you've seen many fotos of dishwashing in progress, so I chose not to include yet *another* picture of that very necessary activity.

There's another volunteer who's been here for several weeks, **Femke Esther Stad**, who has joined us from Holland. You'll see more about her in the next newsletter issue. We did, however, catch her and Christina in a light-hearted moment. They were relaxing out front, each holding a cacao pod – the form of chocolate as it first appears on the cacao tree.



Christina has an expression that looks like "You're kidding!", while Femke seems to be saying, "It doesn't LOOK like a chocolate bar..."

It certainly doesn't look like a chocolate bar. But... those yellow pods contain some white goo and some seeds. The white goo is the some of the most delicious goo you'd ever want to taste – and it does not taste one bit like chocolate. The seeds are collected, baked dry in the sun, and ground into the brown powder that eventually becomes what you and I know as chocolate.

Christina's left a week ago, heading back to Michigan. We're really happy that Femke will be with us for another few weeks before heading back to her home in Holland.

Thank You Ladies!

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 relevant web sites or discussion boards.**
- **Look at our list of critically needed supplies** – www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page26.html
- **Use GoodSearch and GoodShop to search the internet and buy things online from over 2,500 stores.** Each time you do, you'll save time and money, and a donation will be sent to The Bridge – and it won't cost you one cent!

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Thank You for 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** www.elpuente-thebridge.org/pledge

Make an **Immediate Donation** www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page30.html

You can donate online using PayPal, or mail a check.

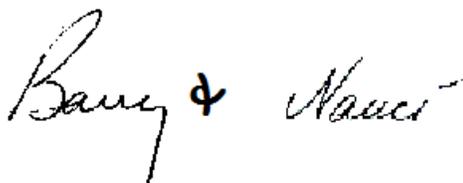
Do it NOW! You'll be glad you did!

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** www.elpuente-thebridge.org

Download a **Powerpoint presentation** or a **narrated slideshow/video** www.elpuente-thebridge.org/present

Download **brochures in Spanish, English, or French** www.elpuente-thebridge.org/brochures

Go to the **newsletter archive** www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly

See some **Video clips** showing activities at The Bridge www.elpuente-thebridge.org/video

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