



October 28, 2012
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Here's Nanci in a local art exhibit, selling her original work

RECENT NEWS

I'm guessing that some of you wonder how we spend our time down here – here is a summary of a recent month. I bet you always wanted to know what to do with old roofing materials – here's an idea. A Thanksgiving Day benefit for El Puente, and I can hear the music already. A down to earth discussion of... shoes? Things get very, very moldy down here. Halloween is coming, and the turkey's getting fat... ,

SO WHAT DO WE REALLY DO AROUND HERE?

We put children in school, make microloans, and provide food support. We provide a place for the government trade school to hold classes. Looks like the same old thing.

But, as they say in those infomercials... “But Wait – There's **More!**”

Here's a summary of what really goes on around here, made by listing the things that have gone on within the last month.

- Yes, there's the Community Kitchen and School Programs, of course;
- We make books, workspace, and computer time available for Bridge Kids doing homework;
- This has become a “hangaround place” for the young Bribri men to gather, safe from street criminals and bad choices;
- Folks borrow the “futball” (soccer ball) we always seem to have around, and kick it around – and some of them are pretty darn good at it;
- Provide tools and air pumps for people fixing the tires on their bikes;
- Some days, every available electric outlet has a cel phone plugged in and charging;
- While “hanging around”, kids borrow the books on the front porch, including an encyclopedia set in Spanish donated by Swiss Travel – Thank you Swiss Travel!
- Wash mud off shoes, feet and ankles – and sometimes from the rest of their bodies. Folks walk through muddy jungle trails and through rivers to get to The Bridge.
- Use a toilet, sink, or shower;
- People who work here get to wash and dry their clothes, much better than taking them to the river on a sunny day;

- Passing workmen and others stop here and get water;
- We point the way for legal issues. We can't actually do things for people, since we're not lawyers, but we can show people what needs to be done and how they can do it themselves;
- We respond to emergency requests. For example, a young woman showed up here recently with a gunshot wound to her leg, resulting from an accidental shooting by a neighbor "just playing around". We gave her the money to get to a hospital in San José.
- Serve as a bridge between segments of society – for example, we learned that in order to open a bank account, government banks require a utility bill – water, electric or phone – to establish the address. Indigenous folks living in the jungle do not have utilities – no water, electricity, or phone, so they can't open bank accounts. As a workaround, we had been using the name of our corporation and its account numbers for these folks to open accounts. The utilities have recently picked up on those accounts and have closed them down. The indigenous need to be able to open bank accounts. We're currently working on this issue.

Now you have a better idea of what you make possible with your support of El Puente! Thank You!

“ROOF! ROOF!”

Question: “When is a roof not a roof?”

Answer: “When it’s a house!”

Remember the story last issue about getting the roof on this house replaced? Thanks to the Children’s Hunger Relief Fund, we were able to get the job done. But then there’s a nagging question – “What do you do with the old roofing materials?” No Problem!! Donate them all to an indigenous family, and they will build a house!



Leave ‘em alone, and they’ll build a home...

In this foto, Elda is supervising the split of the old roofing as they take the “sin” – (pronounced “seen”) – the corrugated tin pieces that made up our old roof. There’s enough to build two houses, and we promised a family and one individual they could share. Half of them went away today. They’ll only leak a little bit. Wow, what a find!

Nanci’s mother always used a phrase that fits beautifully here – “Injun use long time yet.”

How a propo.

THANKSGIVING DAY BENEFIT FOR EL PUENTE

Right Here In Costa Rica...

I can hear the music now...

Thanksgiving's coming
And the Turkey's getting fat
Please put a penny
In el Puente's hat!

Last year, Casa Alfi held a great benefit for El Puente, right in the center of San José (Costa Rica). A REAL turkey dinner with all the trimmings! It was a great success, and everybody walked away replete in every way. Good friends, great food, laughter and sharing. So, Alfi has decided he'd like to do it again! Here's your opportunity to share this amazing meal again or for the first time with us as we give thanks for all our many blessings.

Casa Alfi is walking distance to the National Theater - a great place to go for an evening out. If you were looking for a REAL turkey dinner, and an excuse to get out of the house and visit San José for one or more evenings, this is IT!

Here's a poster with the details!

Meet, Greet, and Give Thanks with us at the Charming

Casa Alfi's

In the heart of Culture in San José—At the second annual benefit for

El Puente—The Bridge

Offering a scrumptious **Turkey Dinner**, Complete with:
a stupendous stuffing, melt-in-your-mouth mashed potatoes,
Sensational Salad Bar, tender fresh veggies, a tasty soup, and
Pies, Pies, Pies! OMG—How much better Can it get?

How about a full cash bar? Woo-eee! And all this for only \$12,500 per person!
Mix this together with your good company, it's the makings of a great party!

See You There!

Where: Casa Alfi
Near Teatro Nacional
Al Frente Colegio de Señoritas

When? Thanksgiving Day Nov. 22
Dinner served 2 PM.

Reservations required—Space Is Limited—2221-2102



Please plan to have so much fun you'll need to stay a night or two; give Alfi your reservation early. Rooms are already starting to fill up! See you there. Bring an appetite!

Thank you, Alfi!

A REAL DOWN TO EARTH TOPIC - SHOES

Most of the children we serve live in the jungle. They walk here from their home, and walk to and from school. They walk through muddy trails, rivers, and muddy roads. The shoes put up a valiant struggle, but toward the end of the year they get really tired of being walked on and they start to fall apart.



Here's two views of those much abused jungle shoes

In one sense, these can give you a good idea of what the Bridge Kids go through as they walk to and from school each day. They also are an indication of the quality of the materials we can buy here – not always the best.

The good news – within reasonably wide limits, Nanci has been able to repair shoes using a marvelous product – “Shoe Goo” – the most tenacious glue I’ve ever seen. We’ve added it to our list of things on the “What Can I Bring?” page on the website.



Here's Nanci at work with the Goo...



and the finished product, which just might make it to the end of the school year, saving the need to buy another pair.

Why is this important? Some of the Bridge Kids tell stories of getting thrown out of school because their shoes weren't shined, or their uniforms were not clean. Earlier in the year, we were able to get a note from the Minister of Education, which we could pass out to specific schools and teachers as problems arose. This is also mute testimony to the lifestyle most of the Bridge Kids endure. They don't say much about it because to them, it's normal.

From our viewpoint, we do what we can do. Sometimes, we can fix the shoes. If the repairs last to the end of the school year, which is December 15, we're OK. If not, we'll have to buy some more shoes for the Kids to finish out the year. So hip hip hooray for Shoe Goo, folks, and keep it coming.

TROPICAL YOGA - DOWN DOLLY

A comment on what it's like living in the tropics - things get really, *really* moldy in this climate. A recently donated baby doll, much loved by the kids, a real favorite – boy, do they ever love her. Only one problem – Dolly got very, very moldy, looking like she had been pulled out of a tar pit.

The solution? Dolly gets a bath. Nanci stood her on her head in a bucket of bleach. Dolly didn't seem to mind it at all! Then, Nanci hung her out to dry.

So – here's the new Tropical Yoga position – “**Down Dolly**”.

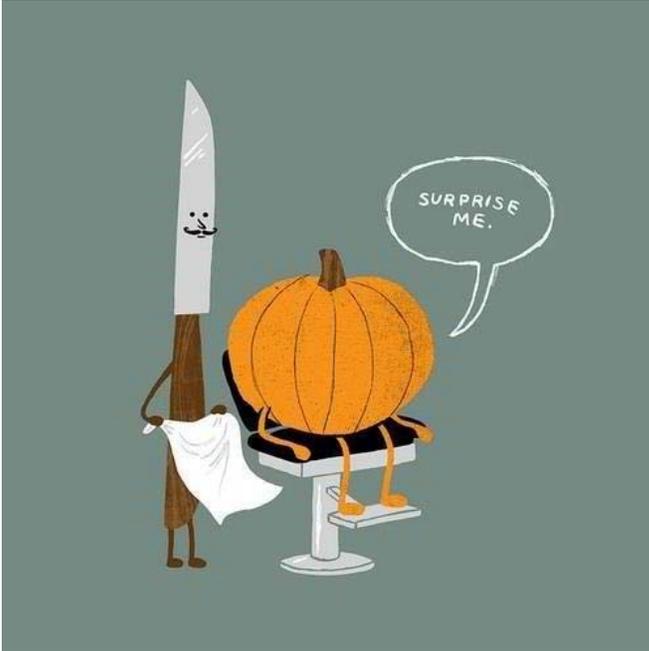


Hello, Dolly!!

And as a side effect, she appears to have become a platinum – streaked blonde!! A real doll.

HALLOWEEN IS COMING

Here in this culture, Halloween is called “Dia De Los Muertos” – Day Of The Dead. Pretty serious business. We take a more light-hearted approach in our culture, as you’ll see in these illustrations.



Pumpkin sits down and says “Surprise me!”...



....then later..... “Maybe I was a bit too hasty.”

Of course, we have traditions – such as Pumpkin Pie, a perennial favorite. Where do Pumpkin Pies come from? Why, from Pumpkins, of course!

Here’s one such Pumpkin – hard at work producing the traditional feast!



Trick-or-treat!

SHE CAN STAY!

Nanci's residency is complete! After working hard and selling some original paintings, she finally got to sit down in front of a camera in the Migracion office and smile for the foto that is now on her brand-new cedula. Thanks to Nancy Vieto, the great attorney who also serves as the lawyer for El Puente, the process went without a hitch. Around here that's no small feat - it could have been much more "exciting". You may remember that funny video done by two Costa Rican filmmakers, poking fun at dealing with the Bureaucracy here, <http://bit.ly/Tm8Zsu>

Nanci's now taking a couple of well-earned days off, visiting friends Mike & Johanna Bresnan at the beautiful hotel they created in Naranjo, the Vista del Valle Plantation Inn. Mike is a member of the El Puente Advisory Board. You can see where Nanci's staying and the beauty that surrounds her in the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2DWFfyJhQ&feature=share>

VOLUNTEER CORNER



Meet Magie, a writer, visiting at El Puente and doing – what else – serving at the Community Kitchen!

I never did get her last name, (please excuse) but you can get to know her through her website – <http://www.bymagie.com>.

ANOTHER SORT-OF-HUMOROUS NOTE

After a recent morning in which six light bulbs failed very quickly, and realizing that it is part of the description of what it's like to be living down here, I just couldn't resist including this vignette.

A Plague On All Our Houses

It strikes without warning. You'll be sitting around reading, working on something, whatever, and suddenly, a bulb burns out. A little while later, another bites the dust. In our house, we got up to six dead bulbs in a one-day period. It's a terrible "disease", and it doesn't seem like there's a cure.

We can call it the "**Bulbonic Plague**" ;-)

My wife says if I keep up with this sort of thing, I'll have to go to the Punitive.

In the meantime, I think I'll plug a voltmeter into the AC line and see what's going on.

Later...

The first result after plugging in the voltmeter – the line voltage was 135 volts, outside the "safety range" for most electric equipment, Should be interesting!

HOW CAN YOU SERVE?

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.**
- **Go to GoodSearch and look into searching the Internet, shopping online in 1,500 brand name stores, and even dining out at participating restaurants** – all of which will provide a donation to El Puente, and it won't cost you one penny extra. <http://www.goodsearch.com>
- **Look at our list of critically needed supplies** – <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page26.html>
- **Hold a FUNd Raising event for El Puente.** If you want more information about that, drop me an email!

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** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/pledge>

Make an **Immediate Donation** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page30.html>

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

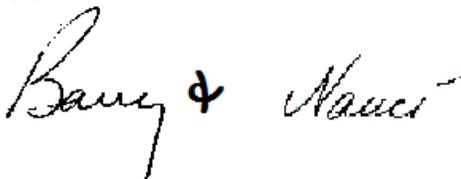
Do it NOW! You'll be glad you did!

Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!



IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SEEING THE PICTURES

...go to <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly> and download the DOC or PDF file with the date of this issue.

Go to The **Bridge Website** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org>

Download a **Powerpoint presentation(PPT)** or a **narrated slideshow/video(AVI)** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/present>

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

Go to the **newsletter archive** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly>

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

See us in action in the **CNN News Report** at <http://bit.ly/yQSVOZ> (Push the "CC" button for English subtitles)

More video including El Puente in a **Surf For Life video** at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ywkO7OziY>

There is a video on El Puente by Actuality Media available at <http://vimeo.com/46201540>

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