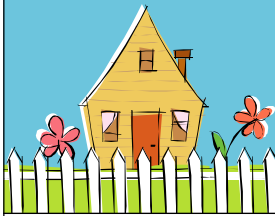


OUR FAMILY NEWSLETTER

April 26, 2006



MY BIRTHDAY BY NICOLE

For my 13th birthday we went to a pool with a couple of water slides. There was this big one that was very fast and fun. There was a big group of guys that would do crazy things like: stand up, go down with three people, go down backwards, and a bunch more. It was fun watching all the extreme things they would do. After the slides we went home to have a 50's dinner. We had hamburgers, fries, and chocolate shakes. The dinner was excellent! After dinner we opened presents. I got a lot of cool stuff! We were going to do cake and ice cream but we were all full from dinner and exhausted from our long day. So we had it on Tuesday (my real birthday). My family, Jennaka, Tiana, Austin and I all went out to dinner in the village. We played cards and won chocolates while we waited for our food. (Costa Rica restaurants are usually over an hour wait for your food). After dinner we went home and played fun games like Chubby Bunny, Egg Toss and Lip-Stick Partners. We also had cake and ice cream. I had a good birthday.



Nicole

VISITORS!

At the beginning of March we had our good friends Bill and Nettie come for a one week visit. Bill and Nettie have been retired now for about a year and a half. We were surprised to find that WE couldn't keep up with THEM! They sure wore us out! In one week we went to Manuel Antonio National Park, ATV Tour, Aerial Tram, Volcano Arenal and San Jose. We had many wonderful experiences and a lot of laughs. By the end of each day we had trouble keeping our eyes open. We look forward to seeing them in Arizona when we fly back in July!

You can tell stories about your life, your children's activities, your vacations or travel plans, new pets, or whatever you want to tell those closest to you! You can add pictures, too.



ATV TOUR BY HANNAH & MAYA

Hannah: One day I went on a cool, dirty ATV ride! It was my first ATV ride. The ATV's were really very fast. I almost fell of. I was riding with Bill. He was really funny. We were last in line. During the ride we got to see a water fall. And we got to see a Morpho butterfly and lots of Macaws too.

Maya: I went to do the ATV towers. It was so so so fun. We got to see lovely voos (views). And we saw some buteful morfoe butterflies. We saw some nice mokos (macaws) and some tocanes. I got really dirty. I got to ride on with Nettie.

great way to communicate with family and friends on a regular basis.



Hannah.



Maya

OUR COW EXPERIENCE, BY JESSICA

While staying at our little hotel near Arenal Volcano we got asked if we would like to go and milk cows. Everyone of course said yes, who could pass up an opportunity like this. The next morning we went cow milking at 8:30 in the morning. Our hotel was run by a family and one of the family members took us. He took us to his grandma's farm. We had to walk to the stalls through tons of cow manure. When we got to the stalls, there were already two family members there working away. We watched them for a while and then tried it ourselves. Kristy went first since she was raised on a farm. We had to sit on this piece of wood attached with a little leg. It was hard to balance on. I thought that it was going to be a lot harder than it was. Of course, I couldn't get as much milk out and as fast as the family members. They were pros. It was very weird. I didn't really like the feeling. I couldn't sit there all day and milk a cow. Raphael was too grossed out. He didn't do it for very long. Maya didn't want to do it at first but ended up doing it, liking it, and doing it another time. There was one cow there that was pregnant. She was so big it looked painful. The calves were so cute. They just wanted to drink

milk. After milking, he took us to his grandmother's house. It was sad because she didn't have very much. The good thing was that she seemed happy. Her house was just a tiny, cement-walled shack. Our "tour guide's" uncle was there and they got us pipas, or coconuts, to drink and eat. They were really good. The uncle even had a pet wild squirrel which was cool. As we at and drank our pipas it started to rain. We headed back to our cars before the rain came down hard. It was so much fun and I am glad that we got to experience it.

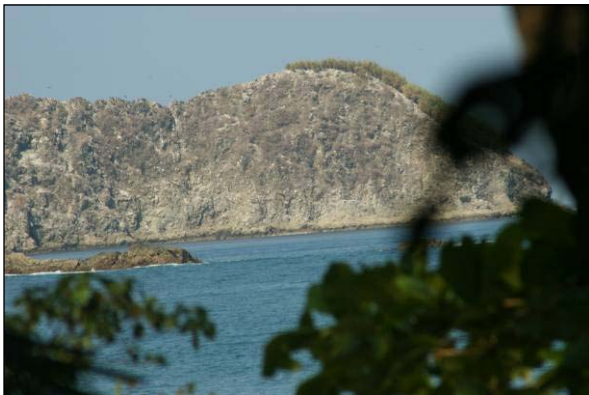


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MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK BY JESSICA

When Bill and Nettie came to visit we did many things. One thing we did was we went to the Manuel Antonio National Park. As soon as we parked, we were given a guide. He was great. He wanted to practice his English and we wanted to practice our Spanish so we spoke Spanish and he spoke English. Our first adventure with him was walking across a little stream leading to the ocean. It was hard for Hannah and Maya to jump on the rocks so this took a while. Once we finally crossed, we headed to the park entrance. We had to wait there for a while because the park rangers were having breakfast. Pura Vida in Costa Rica! No time schedule. Throughout the park we got to see so many animals. We saw birds, bats, spiders, monkeys, sloth, and



Manuel Antonio National Park

lizards, even a turtle. We also go to learn many things about the animals. My favorite animals to see were the monkeys. They were really smart. We had to watch out for our backpacks, purses, sunglasses, and hats because the monkeys steal them. We saw a monkey steal something out of someone's bag. The monkeys weren't scared of us. They came on the path and just walked around. It was so cute when they played with each other, especially the baby ones. The baby ones would ride on the parents' backs. It was a lot of fun. After the park we went to lunch at a restaurant on Manuel Antonio beach. The food at the restaurant was really good. The food came in really big servings. We got so much food for such a little price. It was a really good afternoon.



VOLCANO ARENA! BY JESSICA (AGAIN)

When Bill and Nettie came to visit us, we all went to Volcano Arenal. The Raihns came too. It was a long, six hour drive but it was an amazing drive. It was great to see the countryside and all the rolling hills. It was not only a change of scenery but also a change of weather. Finally, it was cold! It felt so good to be cold and to be able to wear a sweatshirt. At last, the volcano came into view. It was huge but we couldn't see the top. It was covered with clouds. We checked into a little family-run hotel. It was pretty nice. After everyone unpacked, we all got dressed and headed to the hot springs. The volcano produces these hot springs. Hotels have pools that are filled with this naturally warm water. The hotel we went to had about ten hot springs. It was a lot of fun. We walked around to all the different pools to test out the temperatures. The higher you go, the hotter the water is because the pool is closer to the volcano. The highest pool was way to hot to go into. Some of the pools at the bottom, furthest from the volcano were colder. The pools were all so beautiful. Many had waterfalls and swim-up bars. Everyone got to enjoy cold drinks. The kids got virgin Pina Colodas which were delicious. We headed back to the hotel and dressed for dinner. We contemplated on

where to eat dinner when one of the family members that helps to run the hotel offered to make dinner for us. While waiting, they let us play Bingo. They even gave us prizes to play for. The family made us a typical Costa Rican dinner. It was probably the best food most of us have had. It was very filling and included rice, beans, fried plantains, steamed vegetables, mashed potatoes, salad, and either fish, chicken, or steak. We all enjoyed this meal so much. The family member who made us dinner offered us an experience to milk cows at his farm the next day. We said yes and couldn't wait. As the sun set we all piled into the rental car and headed to the other side of the volcano. We felt like the Partridge family all packed into the car. At the other side of the volcano, it was dark and many people were standing facing the volcano. We got out and stood with them, waiting. About a minute or so after we arrived we saw hot, red, lava flowing down the side of the volcano. It was so cool! Every few minutes, lava would roll down the side of the volcano. This was such a great experience. This was a nice end to the day. We all slept well excited for the cow milking the next day.