

A Green Mountain with a Valley Just Right



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A Green Mountain with a Valley Just Right

It was dusk, that time when the atmosphere is greyish in colour in the year 2004 on the Saturday before the United States' 4th of July holiday, and I was walking down a winding lane in Monteverde, Costa Rica. Having been a Borlaug-Ruan intern studying at the Monteverde Institute (MVI) for a



MVI Library with a classroom and the lab below.

month, I was still having trouble believing that I, an eighteen-year-old home-educated Iowan farm girl, was living in Costa Rica for eight weeks! And to think that I would not have had this great experience if my dad had not read the paper. Two years ago, Iowa Farmer Today published an article about a Borlaug-Ruan intern. My dad thought the internship, along with the Youth Institute, sounded like a great educational opportunity. He gave the article to me and asked me to search out more information. That move set in motion my relationship with the World Food Prize Foundation that is now in its third year.

I immensely enjoyed the researching of world issues for the required paper, interacting with experts and my fellow students, and attending the Symposium sessions at the 2002 Youth Institute, so much so that I again participated in 2003. Both years I applied for the internship program because of my interest in agricultural and humanity issues abroad. Though I did not qualify in 2002, after reapplying the following year I was chosen for the interview phase. I was thrilled to be selected and even more ecstatic when I learned I had qualified as one of the 2004 Borlaug-Ruan interns. I then anxiously awaited the letter from Ambassador Quinn that, upon arrival, informed me that I would be working at MVI.

MVI was established in 1986 as a Costa Rican non-profit educational organization with the goal of providing "Education for a Sustainable Future". To this extent they provide a variety of programs in partnership with U.S. universities, some subjects being biology, agriculture, public health, architecture and landscape architecture, and they also organize educational opportunities for



MVI lunchroom/classroom and the studio in the background.



MVI auditorium and offices

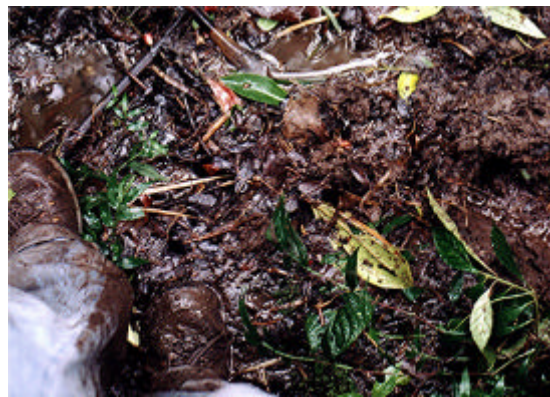
local residents. Besides hosting foreign students and educational workshops, MVI sponsors local cultural events, including a renowned music festival and it operates the Community Arts Center (Koningen 47). The Executive Director of MVI is Nat Scrimshaw and his father, Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw, is the 1991 World Food Prize laureate who was chosen for his development of the "principle for low-cost, protein-rich food products to combat malnutrition in developing countries ("World Food Prize" 1)."

The amazing Central American country that I found myself in is positioned between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and is part of a

land bridge between North and South America. The country, roughly twice the size of Vermont at 51,032 square kilometers (“Background Note” 1), boasts four mountain ranges, two of which are volcanic, coastal black and white beaches, and hosts dry tropical forests, cloud forests, mountain *paramos*, and mangroves. Costa Rica (Rich Coast) created its National Park Service in 1970 and it now encompasses nineteen national parks (Nickle 26). More than twenty-five percent of Costa Rica’s land is under some type of protection; either governmental or private, while the average is just three percent worldwide (1 Honey 139). The approximately 17,000 hectare (Rachowiecki and Thompson 228) *Reserva Biológica Bosque Nuboso Monteverde* (Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve), located in the Northwest region of Costa Rica, is one of the largest private protected areas and it was originally started by the North American Quaker settlers of Monteverde.



Hiking in the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve.



Hiking in a cloud forest means muddy boots.

It was because of these Quakers that I was walking that Saturday night on a winding lane. You see, the sign where the lane originated identified this place as Dona Flory’s, a local self-proclaimed “rustic” restaurant known for its good food and low prices. Dona Flory’s husband, Marvin Rockwell, is also one of the first Quakers to arrive here in 1951 on April 19th, what is now considered “Monteverde Day”. Previously some fellow MVI students and I had decided to meet here for supper, though I was starting to wonder having yet to spot any type of building. Rounding a turn I found it, a simply three-sided tin shed attached to a small home that housed four tables. My friends had arrived ahead of me and we soon learned, from Mr. Rockwell himself, that the cooks were gone, but that we could await their return. Not being pressed for time we settled in. After introducing ourselves we learned that Mr. Rockwell loves to narrate the rich history of Monteverde. That being said he soon commenced the telling of a first-hand account until the absent cooks arrived.

Between World War II and the Korean conflict a group of Alabama Quakers refused to register for the military draft because of their religious beliefs. Mr. Rockwell was one of the four that were sentenced to a year and a day in prison for not complying with the law. When, after four months, they were released for good behaviour, they and other Quakers decided to look for a more peaceful country. (At this point in the conversation Mr. Rockwell joked we were talking to a former jailbird.) After much searching they chose Costa Rica, citing its peaceful, no-force policies and the recent abolishment of their military. Around forty Quakers, including men, women and children, either flew or drove to San José, the capital of Costa



Marvin Rockwell regaling us with stories at Dona Flory's. Around forty Quakers, including men, women and children, either flew or drove to San José, the capital of Costa

Rica. Mr. Rockwell was one of the truck drivers on the three month trip to their new home and near the Costa Rican border the roads were so horrible the caravan spent one month travelling twenty kilometers.



Internet Cafe in Santa Elena where a tico parked his horse.

The group lodged in San José until they found a suitable area to homestead. According to Mr. Rockwell they chose this flatter spot in the Cordillera de Tilarán, mountains of northern Costa Rica, because the higher elevation is better for your health, since at the time the lowlands were beset with Yellow Fever and Malaria. Upon arriving at their newly acquired land which measured about 1500 hectares (Rachowiecki and Thompson 213), the Quakers named it “Green Mountain”, Monteverde. We were shown photos of men

up to their knees in mud as they guided a pair of oxen in the work of pulling out a jeep on the horrible road to Monteverde. In fact, for awhile the new settlers had to park their vehicles in Gaucimal and ride horses up the mountain to their new home. This road, which leads from the Pan -American Highway to Monteverde, has not improved much and remains the major complaint of residents and visitors alike, including me. I cannot count how many times I was splashed with the contents of a pothole, almost run over as vehicles tried to avoid the worst ruts and, as a passenger, banged my head on an auto’s ceiling. I have heard the infamous road described as “muffler-mashing and jeep-torturing” and that it “consumes the unfit.”



Mercado (market) in Santa Elena where the prices and quality of food produce fluctuates constantly.

Some members of Monteverde community opposed certain parts of the *tico* (what Costa Ricans call themselves) government’s recent plan to improve the road . The two parties have yet to come to an agreement and the repairs have yet to be implemented .

Tourists have been flocking to the Monteverde area despite the “bone-jarring” road, though they do plenty of grouching. One tourist described the infamous road to a friend of mine as not having “potholes in the road, but a road in the potholes.” Only 450 tourists came in 1975, then the count jumped to 8 thousand in 1985 and surged to more than 50 thousand in the late 1990s (1 Honey 4). In fact, Costa Rica as a whole, with a population of 4.24 million in 2004



Ticos love clean floors and before entering a house or the MVI library and classrooms. one must take off their shoes .

(“Background Note” 1), hosted 684 thousand tourists in 1993 (Koningen 26). The main draw to Monteverde is the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve (MCFR), where the Lonely Planet’s Costa Rica guidebook says you may “escape to cooler temperatures amid the cloud forest and search for the elusive Quetzal.” Certain residents of the Monteverde area, which includes the towns of Santa Elena, Cerro Plano, Los Llanos, San Luis and Monteverde, also fear if the road were improved more tourists will come. Which would increase pressure on existing infrastructure and the tourists would not be required to stay at least one night, cutting down on profits for area businesses.



View of tourist infrastructure from a trail in the Children's Eternal Rain Forest, a division of MCFR.

The Quakers began what is now the MCFR when they set aside 554 hectares from agriculture activity to protect the *Rio Guacimal* (Guacimal River) watershed. They named this primary growth cloud forest, *Bosque Eterno* (Eternal Forest) and in 1974 the Quakers,

lacking proper managing resources, leased the land to the *Centro Científico Tropical* (Tropical Science Center) of San José for ninety-nine years. Under the Tropical Science Center’s administration, MCFR has grown to its present size which spans eight ecological zones (2 Honey 43) and it generated eighteen percent of Costa Rica’s tourism revenues in 1996 (Klein 15). In 2002, tourism and commerce generated twenty percent of Costa Rica’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product), while agriculture activities were just ten percent



Monteverde Cheese Factory.

(“Background Note” 1). Tourism in the Monteverde area now employs more people than the *Fabrica*

de Quesos Monteverde (Monteverde Cheese Factory) and studies estimate that more than half the population works at least indirectly with tourism (Klein 16). Included in that count is my *tico* host family, Roy Vargas and Yorlenny Vega, who are employed by CoopeSanta Elena R.L. (Coop), which is the cooperative for the area and the membership has included dairy farmers, coffee growers, artisans and consumers (“CoopeSanta Elena” 1). The Coop’s main source of income is derived from activities supported by tourism; they market their *Café Monteverde* (Monteverde Coffee) My



My tico family: Yorlenny, Maria and "Senora Grandma" (Yorlenny's mother).

brand to them after buying coffee from local farmers and roasting it in their Monteverde plant.

The Monteverde Cheese Factory also caters now to tourists and celebrated its 50th year of



Tourist souvenir shop in Santa Elena.

operation recently. The Quakers established it soon after their arrival because cheese was a product that could be easily transported down the mountain and the surrounding land was suitable for raising cattle. That night at Dona Flory's, Mr. Rockwell described how they took Quaker Oat cans and punched holes in them for molds when they first began. The Factory now

produces ice cream, cheese, and meat, which is from their hog facility that makes use of whey, a by-product of milk. They presently hold the policy of selling milk only to local residents. The reason for this move is because there is another, larger, *tico* company, *Dos Pinos* (Two Pines), which sells milk and yogurt. The Factory currently draws milk from farms within a wide radius, which is termed the "Monteverde Milk-shed" and they export too several Central American countries. The Factory is located next to MVI and during my internship I had first-hand experience of their delicious ice cream, my favorite flavors being *naranja - piña* (orange-pineapple) and *ron con pasas* (rum with raisins).



Farmacia (pharmacy) in Santa Elena with the sign "We Speak English!" on the door.

In the Monteverde area during the late 1980s, dairy farming consisted of sixty-seven percent of



Mag's Stable has a thriving business renting to tourists in Monteverde.

regional income and tourism just ten percent, but by the mid-1990s, tourism had made the huge jump to approximately seventy percent (Vivanco 83). Tourism income in Monteverde per acre is now three times as high as from agriculture activities (Klein 15). Because of this many farmers are selling their land and moving to "town" to work in tourist jobs. There are a few entrepreneurs who are planting forests, building Quetzal nesting boxes and laying trails on their former farmland. One farmer who did this is Jorge Rodríguez, who

manages what is now the Ecological Farm which boasts walking paths and animal feeding stations.

The land has “terrain so steep that his cattle kept falling into ravines and breaking their necks (1 Honey 154)” and Rodríguez reports that the farm is narrowly making enough profit to sustain his family.

Hotels, pensions, restaurants and other businesses are being built at an alarming rate in the Monteverde

area. If you combined all the hotels and pensions in 1991, it totaled to six-hundred beds, compared to a population of two-thousand in all of Monteverde, Santa Elena and Cerro Plano. Almost eighty



Newly opened Ticos Restaurant in Cerro Plano (the man on the roof is painting the trim).



Hotel El Establo in Cerro Plano is by far the largest in the area.

Construction projects like it were being done throughout the area, since the May through November “wet” season, with its twenty days per month of rain (Rachowiecki and Thompson 21), is the slow tourist season. Recently though, the *tico* government implemented a new campaign advertising the wet season as “green” and more tourists are choosing to visit in the rain.

In 2001, seventy-two percent of tourist hotels and other companies in the area were owned by *ticos*, but, unfortunately, only forty-five percent are originally from the Monteverde region. The remaining businesses (45 percent) are foreign owned (Klein 14). Tourist dollars are also increasingly leaking out of the Monteverde community and Costa Rica at large. By

percent of the hotels and pensions in the area were opened after 1990. Over five-thousand people could spend the night simultaneously in 2001 (Klein 14). During the first month of my internship a building just below my house in Cerro Plano was gutted, redone and opened for business as the Ticos Restaurant.



Art House Gallery is one of many tourist establishments displaying local art.

the early 1990s, Costa Rica was the choice destination for U.S. travelers, but, unfortunately, “half of every tourist dollar never left the United States, and only twenty cents actually went in to the local economy, according to a USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] study (1 Honey 89).” Over seventy percent of foreign tourists visiting Costa Rica travel to Monteverde (Morris 8), but they’re tending to come more and more on prepaid “packaged” tours that are either planned by agencies in Europe, the United States



This “Directions” sign is located at the 3-way intersection in the center of Cerro Plano.

or San José. When I toured the Monteverde Cheese Factory with a friend



Laundry service businesses abound in the Monteverde area.

Laundry service businesses abound in the Monteverde area. I have witnessed vehicles loose traction half way up this prominent rise and have to back down and get a faster run for it. Also, on this skinny street is the general rule that if you are the smallest auto, you back somewhere to let the larger vehicle pass. Packaged tours usually arrive in Monteverde on touring buses that require a large space to turn around and park in, necessitating that the travel agencies choose larger hotels to send their tours.

The majority of work provided by the influx of tourists is of the low-paying service type. These jobs are filled by the locals who labor as waitresses, maids, drivers, hotel workers and guides. The swift rise of tourism has also attracted many

from MVI, a couple from New York joined us. They were staying at the Hotel El Establo, the largest in the area, and paid for the informative excursion with a “voucher” given them by their tour agency. People on packaged tours have less of a tendency to patronize smaller restaurants, like Dona Flory’s, having meals already “planned” at their hotel’s restaurant or in the prominent eateries located along the roadside. They also do not reside in tiny inns like *Pension Flor de Monteverde* which is situated on the street I lived on and to access it one has to go on a one lane



Johnny's is one of the popular Italian restaurants in the Monteverde community.

job-seeking immigrants from other parts of Costa Rica and from outside the country as well. “According to a 1992 survey, the population of the three communities, Monteverde, Santa Elena and Cerro Plano, grew by more than 130 percent between 1984 and 1992, and 600 of the area’s 3,500



residents had moved in over the previous five years (1 Honey 155).” Some of the immigrant worker’s families live elsewhere and they travel to visit them on the weekends. The public bus that serves the Monteverde area twice daily from San José is always packed on its last run on Sunday because of all the workers returning. My *tico* family and I traveled to visit relatives in Naranjo one weekend and we returned on the Sunday night bus. The bus was beyond full, crammed with passengers standing in the aisle, squished two to a seat and seated on the engine box behind the driver. It didn’t help that we stopped and picked up passengers of a small, private bus that had blown two tires. Public bus travel is an experience in and of itself, Sunday night or not, the driver stops for whoever flicks a finger remotely near the road, careens at unfit speeds, swerves to miss wandering cows and, without slowing, defiantly honks at dogs occupying the same track. With workers and tourists flooding into this formerly rural community it has put tremendous pressure on the existing infrastructure. There was no community

Skywalk and Sky Trek are highly promoted tourist activities and the majority of visitors pay the expensive fee to participate. garbage service until 1993; residents would just dispose of it by burying it in holes, throwing it over

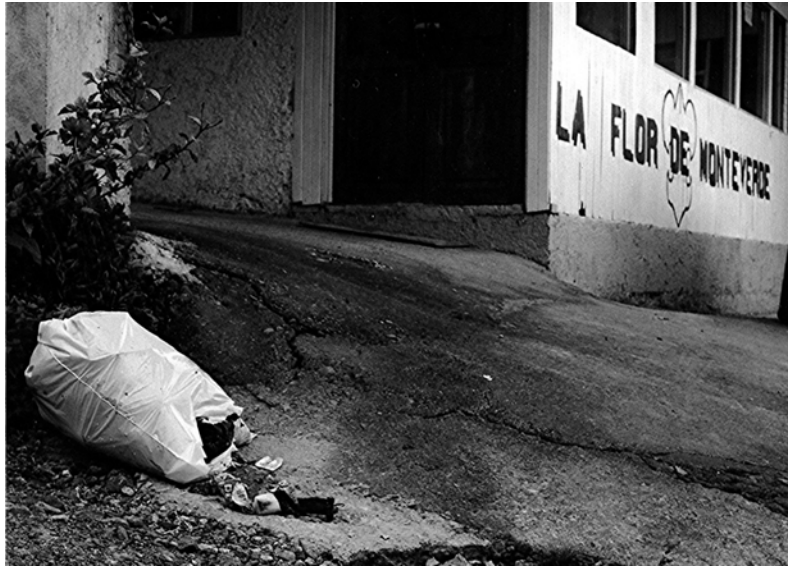
cliffs and into rivers, and via fire (1 Honey 155). The vehicle that now collects waste is a large truck with stock racks, the same style as they use to haul milk cans to the Cheese Factory. The workers load and unload the small bags that people set out near the road by hand. Unfortunately, the *ticos* do not make use of trash cans; consequently, the canine population creates havoc with the waste if they set it out too early. The cost of living has also skyrocketed; most goods and services are currently on a price level that fits tourists better than people. The rapid population growth has strained the electricity and water infrastructure beyond what ICE (national electricity company) and AyA (national water company) can presently provide. These companies have largely increased their services over the past few years, but the demand continues to grow. The electricity will randomly go off, sometimes causing black-outs throughout Santa Elena, Cerro Plano and Monteverde. The first time this happened during my internship I was calmly relaxing at home, the lights flickered, flickered again, and then again, staying off longer each time. Finally they just didn’t turn back on. I was slightly shocked, but my *tico* family only went about the business of lighting candles.

Housing is another problem that the area is currently facing. Land values have risen sharply because



A Monteverde Cheese Factory ice cream container and a Philsen can are a part of the street trash problem.

of purchases for tourism and conservation purposes. Many community residents can no longer afford



A bag of garbage outside a pension was torn open by a dog(s) as it awaits pick up.

to rent or buy housing (Koningen 72). Foreigners are willing to pay much higher prices than locals for land. These people come to Monteverde originally as visitors and then “fall in love” with the area. I spotted a sign tacked outside the Community Arts Center that stated just that. The poster went on to say that they wanted to buy land and settle down. The sellers are usually farmers who are desperate for cash. Upon selling they join the hoard of seasonal tourist laborers and move into a small home in the crowded communities of Cerro Plano or Santa Elena. This

progression was accelerated after 1989 when the “International Coffee Organization (ICO) failed to reach a new agreement, sending world coffee prices into a series of increasingly volatile downward swings (McCandless and Emery 3).”

Coffee is the cash crop for farmers in the Monteverde zone and today the prices have yet to significantly recover. The area economy largely depended on agriculture activities until both soil fertility and milk production declined in 1980. “Between 1980 and 1982, soil fertility dropped by an estimated 12.5 percent. Individual



The street I lived on in Cerro Plano. My house is to the far right.

farms producing eight to ten kilograms [of cheese] per cow per day in the 1970s dropped to as low as three to six kilograms of cheese per cow per day in 1982 (Kuzmier 2).” Both of these agricultural downturns have contributed to the fact that many farmers are now employed in seasonal urban jobs

that are dependent on tourists wanting to visit the area.

With the large flow of tourists coming into the area, businesses have widely begun to accept U.S. dollars in payment for goods and services. In fact, some now price merchandise in dollars and, as I experienced, must then find a calculator if you only have cash in *colones*, the Costa Rican currency.

When I visited the town of Naranjo with my *tico* family, I was



Planting windbreak trees with a group of MVI students.

astounded to learn that the stores do not accept dollars at all. Living in the Monteverde had

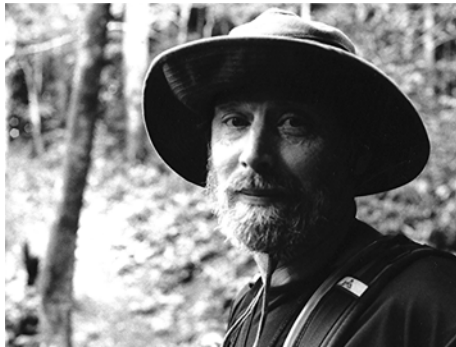


Landslides are frequent and this one happened on the Trocha (winding road), one of only two roads leading into the San Luis Valley.

accustomed me to cashiers not batting an eye when presented with dollars as payment. One problem with the spreading use of dollars is that companies typically pay their employees in *colones*. This causes the employees spending capacity to decline, and their money is worth less here than in shops in San José. Those who work as waitresses, guides, taxi drivers, or in other positions where they will be tipped, do benefit from dollars received directly from tourists (Klein 15).

With all the tourist companies that have been or are being established and all the workers flooding into the area to be employed by them, the Santa Elena and Cerro Plano communities are

becoming semi-urban developed, with no planning. Until recently there were no zoning laws and a large number of houses are being squished into a small area. "Most of the pieces of land that are suitable for building are full or privately owned (Klein 10)." This means that people have begun to construct buildings on a rock base or near



Nat Scrimshaw, my "internship" supervisor.

water sources. I've seen many a structure on the bank of a stream, some with only a foot of space between it and flowing water.

Residents now feel crowded and like an outsider in their own community. Many

complain about the traffic congestion, one can no longer stop your vehicle in the street to chat with your friend who is driving the other direction without some impatient person honking. Another problem is high-speed driving, especially of the popular dirt bikes and four-wheelers. I have had to jump into the drainage "gutter" carved out in the common clay-like soil along the road many a time to avoid a collision with these vehicles. The younger generation seems to have the opinion that the faster you drive the



Rachel Eisenstat and Susannah McCordless, my "project partner" and "project" supervisor respectively, inside the La Bella Casa Meple.

less you feel the bumps.

Also in the Monteverde community is an increased amount of air, sewage, and solid waste pollution. Many of the new habitants came only for work and do not care for community or environmental matters. Tourists are becoming increasingly disappointed in the area, because of the poorly maintained houses, trash scattered in the road, and erosion problems besetting many vicinities. Another grievance cited by locals is the sharp rise in the price of products and services, along with westernization (Koningen 57).



Sonia Montiel, my Spanish class teacher.

Furthermore, a holiday atmosphere seems to constantly permeate over the community. Many youths



The Smith College students: Liz, Sylvia, Ilona and Mia.

very subject as we enjoyed ice cream in the newly opened *Sabores*. Just looking out the window we could spot four eateries on that street alone and there are many other restaurants and hotels scattered

throughout the community. We never did come to a conclusion of how all these businesses could be sufficiently supported, even with the present level of visitors. With half of the community population working indirectly in tourism, many have lesser incomes during the low tourist season. Moreover, if a war starts, some misfortune happens to tourists in the area or a region's (i.e. the United States or Europe) economy falters, the first unnecessary expenditure that people cut is travelling. If any of those things come about, a large number of Monteverde residents would be out of



View from the Trocha of the San Luis Valley, Gulf of Nicoya and the Pacific Ocean.



Writing the La Bella History and Overview in the MVI Library.

17). If this occurs, the urban tourism workers who live in the homes crowded into the Monteverde area will not have an effective way to sustain their families.

have the opinion that since the tourists are partying, they should be as well. The traditional culture, unfortunately, is gradually decaying from the steady onslaught of foreigners and their morals. Tourists do bring added revenue into the local economy, but it has succeeded in benefiting noticeably only a few, while the problems that so many foreigners cause affect the whole population.

The area economy depending on tourist dollars as its mainstay is not healthy. One day, a fellow MVI student and I were discussing this

a job or have extremely diminutive incomes. In 1996, a slump occurred in the tourist flood, causing the amount of hotel rooms to outnumber the tourists (1 Honey 155), but since then the number of tourists has been steadily rising. Unfortunately, tourists are people and fickle as well, they are not a dependable market. They want to travel to the currently popular destination, feel immersed in the area and secluded from the world. When a location becomes too populated or developed or crowded with "other" tourists, the attractiveness of a site decreases (Koningen

This is why various organizations are trying to keep the local economy in San Luis de Monteverde, Puntarenas diversified and anchored in agriculture, while simultaneously bringing in



tourist money. The small community of San Luis, with a population of roughly 450, is located an hour's hike from Monteverde first up a mountain slope and then down an extremely steep switchback road, locally called the *Trocha*

View of the upper portion of Finca La Bella from the Trocha (notice the windbreaks in the middle of the righthand side). San Luis is divided into three parts, *Altos* (upper) San Luis, INVU (*Instituto Nacional de Viviendas y Urbanizaciones*), which has the greatest population density,



Sustainable Future students: back-Jonny, Yoni, Liz, Dave, and Bea; Middle-Kerit, Ashley, Shawn, Cynthia, Christiria, Renad, Susan, and Lynn; Front-Jessel, Sara, Trent and Charles, and *Abajo* (below) San Luis. In fact, the road signs will direct you to *Altos de San Luis* and then San Luis, which is *Abajo*. This is a steep, mountainous area where dairy farming is the principle agricultural activity and coffee is a secondary cash crop. The dairy farmers sell to the Monteverde

Cheese Factory and produce coffee for CoopeSanta Elena, which has its *Beneficio de Café* (coffee



MVI students outside the Alto San Luis pulperia (small store).

various programs being implemented, all the different activities that MVI is involved in, and accompanied other students as they worked on their projects. The Executive Director of MVI, Nat

Scrimshaw, was my “internship” supervisor. He assisted me in choosing a project and suggested, because of my interest in photojournalism, that I work on the La Bella project in San Luis (Appendix 1: Region Map). My “project” supervisor was Susannah McCandless, who is a Ph.D. candidate in Clark University’s Graduate School of Geography and is a co-facilitator on Finca La Bella conducting leadership training and strengthening the La Bella Association’s organizational capacity. I was assigned to work



Prices for merchandise in the Altos San Luis pulperia is written on a marker board. Rachel was living with a La Bella family while participating in her college’s Study-Service Term.



Misael Alvarado and Rachel climb the path that leads to his parcel from where he lives in the INVL.

processing plant) located in Abajo. This tight-knit community is similar to what Monteverde, Cerro Plano and Santa Elena resembled fifteen years ago. Located in San Luis, is the *Asociación Agrícola Finca La Bella-Ann Kriebel* project, which is a cooperative farm, simply called Finca La Bella (beautiful farm).

The Finca La Bella project is currently being assisted by MVI, and is where I ultimately spent my internship working. During my first week at MVI, I attended lectures, learned about the

Rachel was living with a La Bella family while participating in her college’s Study-Service Term.

The broad goal of our project was to gather information concerning the Finca La Bella project and the people involved to post on a website. Hopefully the website will attract more volunteers and students to the project where they will home-stay with families. Volunteers and students are thought to be a “better” kind of tourist, ones seeking education.

“Better” than the tourist who comes to Monteverde, rides Sky Trek (thirty U.S. dollars for a two hour zip-line ride through the cloud forest), walks a hour in the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve, rooms in the Hotel El Establo (by

far the largest in the area), spends their nights at the Taberna Bar (popular with *gringos*) and then leaves. The educational, “helpful” tourists, the volunteers and students that visit Finca La Bella, come to learn about agriculture, culture and/or nature,



Food produce that San Luis farmers sell to the Altos pulperia.

perhaps help the *parceleros* (the small parcel farmers of La Bella) farm, and their payment of ten U.S. dollars a day goes directly to the *parceleros* to pay for room and board.

the volunteers and students that home-stay with them write notes. The addresses scrawled in the tattered notebook ranged all over the United States and Europe. As I looked out Hugo’s door upon the magnificent view of the mountains and the Gulf of Nicoya glimmering in the distance, I realized that the La Bella community, which seems isolated tucked amongst the mountains, is truly an international society, made thus by the imprints of visiting individuals.

There is a difference between “volunteers” and “students” on La Bella. The volunteers pay to come live with a family and help them on their parcel (the families work small parcels of land) by planting, weeding, harvesting, and assisting with other agriculture activities, while students pay to live with a family and study biology, agriculture, and other subjects elsewhere. The main topic Rachel and I looked at is how to bring in more volunteers and students to La Bella. These people would help the families supplement their meager income derived from agriculture and help them provide education, healthcare, and social services for their families. Many of the families are subsisting on very low incomes and quite a few have to work off the farm to survive. This makes it hard for them to have time to work on their parcel caring for crops.



Don Jovel, a *parcelero* on La Bella.

Not only do the *parceleros* benefit from an increase in income, they and the San Luis community gain knowledge about other regions of the world and their cultural practices. When Rachel and I interviewed Hugo Picado Céspedes, we were shown a book in which the family has all the addresses scrawled in the tattered notebook ranged all over the United States and Europe. As I looked out Hugo’s door upon the



Milton Brenes beside the coffee plants that he tends on his parcel.

Rachel and I interviewed eighteen families (Appendix 3: Interview Questions), out of the twenty-four that are a part of La Bella, that accept volunteers and students in home-stay situations. We



MVI students pass Blanca Fuentes on the only road through La Bella.

created family and parcel profiles for each, photographed the family members, parcels and houses, and also wrote a history and overview of the farm. During the interviews, Rachel, because of her greater proficiency in the Spanish language, asked the questions and I photographed. To not confuse ourselves or overlap our work, Rachel wrote the profiles (Appendix 5: Family Profiles) from the information gained by our interviews (mainly because she could discern her notes better than I) and I researched and compiled the Finca La Bella history and overview (Appendix 4: History and Overview). All of this will be published on a website planned for the Finca La Bella project. We anticipate it will attract more volunteers and students. Right now there are very few visiting because several groups who were sending them abstain

now for various reasons.

The website will also contain the following information, Tips and Advice (Appendix 6) and Suggestions for Teaching English (Appendix 7), both written by former volunteers; Let Me Ask You A Question (Appendix 8), written by Ann Kriebel who inspired the La Bella project; Volunteer and Student



Damaris Salazar shows a family reunion photo.

Responsibilities

(Appendix 9); Virginia Leiton V. rolls out doughnuts on her kitchen table as we talk about her parcel.



Expect (Appendix 10). The first three items I typed and edited from papers found in the La Bella files and the last two I compiled from various sources. The hope is that the internet-posted information will attract more volunteers and students, which would generate more income for the *parceleros*. If all goes well the *parceleros* will not have to work off their parcel, therefore they will be able to devote more time to sustainable agriculture practices and development.

The concept of Finca La Bella was developed to assist poor landless farmers. Kathleen A. Starr wrote in a letter to Sybil Grace on March 4, 1994, that:

“Tracts of farmland in Costa Rica are being bought up by large and in many cases foreign companies for hotels and resort sites, ranches and plantations. This has accentuated the difficulty for poor and not so poor landless people.”

Starr was one of many members of Quaker Earthcare Witness of the Americas (QEW) who campaigned for funds in Canada and the United States to purchase the Finca La Bella land.

Bill Howenstine, the clerk for what QEW calls the Ann Kriebel/San Luis project, stated in a letter to QEW members on November 19, 1993, that:



Misael stands in his hand-planted corn field.

“The purchase effectively prevents the loss of this farm [Finca La Bella] to absentee or foreign owners and offers the hope of providing a sustainable development program to complement the protection of the cloud forest ecosystem in the adjacent Monteverde Biological reserve.”

The *Bosque Eternos Los Niños* (Children’s Eternal Rain Forest), a division of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve, shares a boundary with La Bella, making environmentally friendly agriculture activities an important necessity.

Currently, Finca La Bella supports twenty-four formerly landless families, all of whom are originally from San Luis and who hand-cultivate individual parcels of roughly the same amount of arable land (Appendix 2: Finca La Bella Parcel Map). Each *parcelero* signs a renewable twenty-five year lease contract that outlines the rights, responsibilities and limitations for his/her

personal parcel and for the Finca La Bella project as a whole (Appendix 11: Parceleros’ Contract). The *parceleros* cannot sell their parcel, but if they decide to leave the project they will be reimbursed for all physical improvements made on their parcels, such as buildings or permanent crops.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Roy Joe Stuckey during the initial planning phase of Finca La Bella and summarizes the reason behind the lease contracts:

“People work all their lives and live from the farm, but have no savings. The livestock, and the farm itself, are their savings accounts. Land concentration is often the result of having to liquidate assets (savings) under duress in unfavorable circumstances to meet emergencies. Having



Frayser and Menfred Arguaces-Alvarez pick produce in their family's garden. The families involved in the Finca La Bella project

alternative financial savings structures built in parallel



As Rachel asks our interview questions, Marielos Cruz mends clothes in fashion into the land ownership/stewardship model would help assure that people could farm, but not be forced or tempted to sell their assets to access their savings.”

Though many *parceleros* presently depend on outside sources for income, if the local economy ever takes a dive, perhaps because, as mentioned earlier, tourists fail to visit the Monteverde area, the La Bella *parceleros* will not be left without options. They will at least have land to raise animals and grow produce to feed their families, while providing a healthy environment and community for their children.

have made a conscientious lifestyle choice to farm sustainably. They are also solving a nutrition



Virginia Leiton V.'s granddaughter watches the path up the mountain to her grandma's house (market) for however many days. Food sharing is also an indication that the social aspect of community is alive and well on Finca La Bella.

problem that besets the Monteverde area, the lack of variety and availability of quality food produce. The *parceleros* grow vegetables and fruits for their own consumption and there is also an active food sharing network in place, neighbours trading or giving one type of food for another. This system works well; it means that the *parceleros* do not have to grow so many different foods and that it is much better quality than produce shipped up the mountain and that sits in the *Mercado*



Pipito feeding Misael's pig rotten bananas and ground corn.

I experienced this sense of community during my time spent on La Bella and it is very similar to my own, solidly-based in agriculture and family. My “project” supervisor, Susannah McCandless, commented to me once as we walked on one of the many intersecting paths throughout La Bella, that she enjoys seeing the paths well worn, because that meant neighbours are visiting. Giggling children race on the tiny paths, friends and family stop to chat and the *parceleros* frequently lend helping hands to each other. I was invited into this community as a friend, told to *sentarse, sentarse* (sit) when in their homes, served tea, donuts and sweet bread, given an ear of *maíz* (corn) and hailed on the road not only in San Luis, but in Monteverde as well. I would encounter



Mavis Trejos is reflected in a mirror as Rachel asks her interview questions. Pipito (nickname for José Daniel Chavarría González) on my half hour morning walk to MVI as he hauled produce upon his shoulder house to house, Oldemar riding his horse on my way to the Friends’ School for Spanish class, and Misael walking up the *Trocha* when I was heading down. I would see Gilbreth in the Alto *pulperia* (small store), Virginia tending her mother’s grave in the small San Luis Cemetery, Don Jovel with his ever present machete, the ladies of *Artesanas Finca La Bella* serving lunch to student groups and Olivier working his front garden by hand when I was walking through the San



Misael's pig.

Luis community.

The surrounding scenery of Finca La Bella is breathtaking, but to me the farm's true beauty is the people: Pipito playing his 1948 guitar while humming his harmonica and tapping his *maraca*; Virginia shaping donuts on her well worn kitchen table; Don Jovel, the man who believes he understands English; Hugo, the constant jokester; Aideé with her large flock of pet chickens; Damaris in her brightly coloured house; Mariebs who cranks the radio for her favourite Latino song; and Olivier who dances to that song. Upon my return home whenever I see a field of corn stretching into the distance I'll think of Don Jovel proudly pointing his machete at the carefully tended corn plants



Meloni Salazar Leiton is fascinated with my camera as Rachel and Erci talk.



William Leiton poses with his milking goat.

clinging to the slope below Virginia's house, when I smell the aroma of coffee I'll remember walking through Olivier's coffee plants between the crisscrossing rows of windbreaks, when I climb over a barbed wire fence I'll recall doing the same thing on the path between Ivannia's and Marielos's homes, when I see an onion I'll envision the chains upon chains of Blanca's produce hanging from her porch roof, and when I consume a banana I'll recollect Erci picking a few for me from a clump of bananas fresh from the tree. These are the beautiful people of the beautiful farm, Finca La Bella. They, along with the others I met during my internship, have forever changed my views of agriculture, communities, Costa Rica, and numerous other issues. I will always bear in mind my experiences of living and working in these special communities on a green mountain and in a valley just right.

clinging to the slope below Virginia's house, when I smell the aroma of coffee I'll remember walking through Olivier's coffee plants between the crisscrossing rows of windbreaks, when I climb over a barbed wire fence I'll recall doing the same thing on the path between Ivannia's and Marielos's homes, when I see an onion I'll envision the chains upon chains of Blanca's produce hanging from her porch roof, and when I consume a banana I'll recollect Erci picking a few for me from a clump of bananas fresh from the tree. These are the beautiful people of the beautiful farm, Finca La Bella. They, along with the others I met during my

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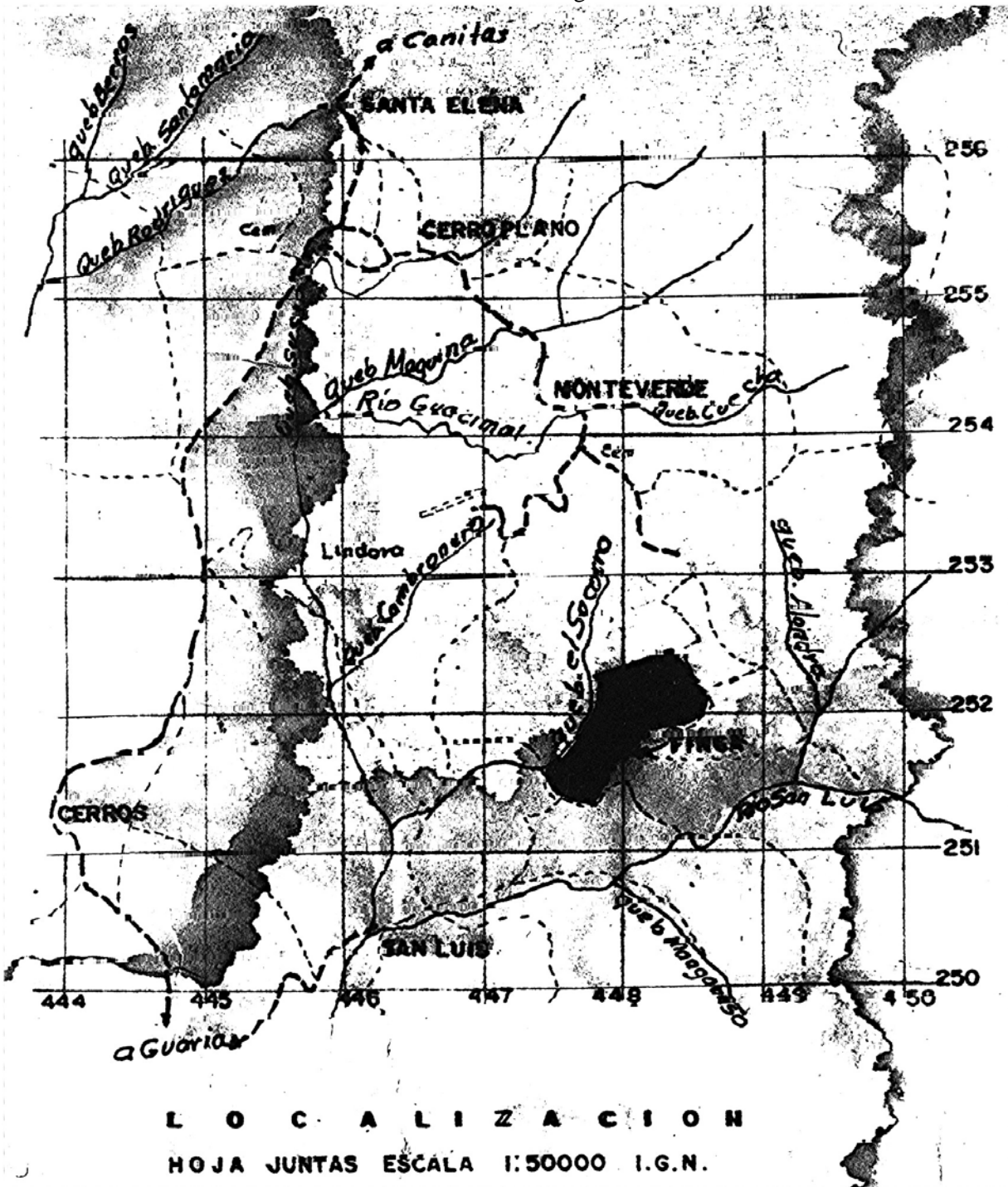
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Appendix 1: Region Map

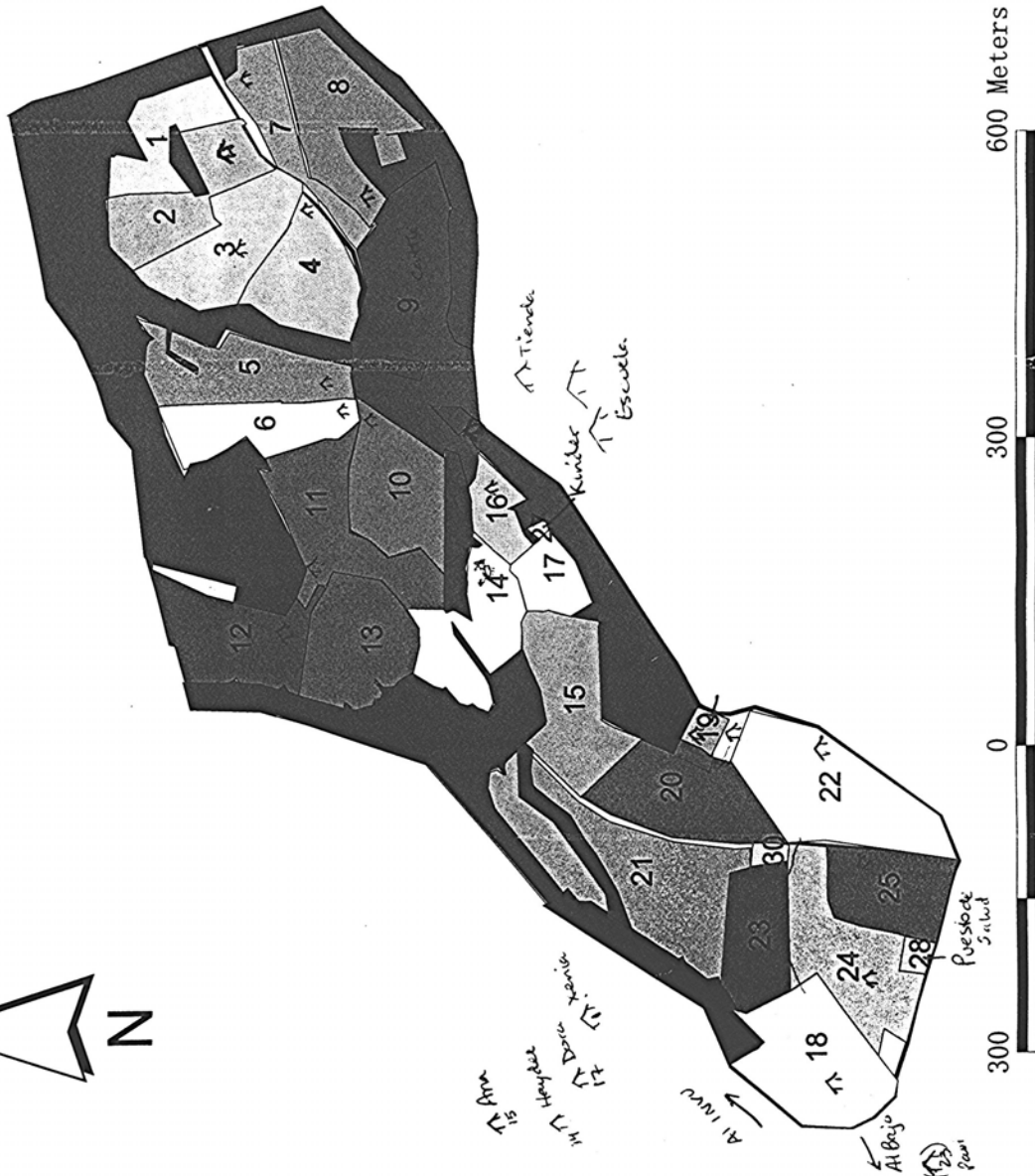
This is a photocopy of a water-stained map and the solid black area is Finca La Bella and the surrounding communities are written in bold.



Appendix 2: Finca La Bella Parcel Map

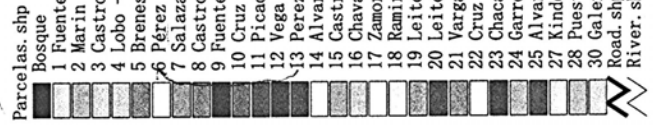
The parcel numbers match up with the family name of who leases it. The handwritten first names to the right of the table were added for my benefit by Susannah McCandless. The houses drawn outside the La Bella boundaries belong to the *parceleros* who live off their parcels and the landmarks were for me to orient myself. The blackest area is the primary forest.

Parcelas Finca La Bella



↑ 21
Maganita

Parcelas. shp	Parcelero	Handwritten Name
1	Fuentes - Cruz	Juan Xenia
2	Marin - Leiton	Marcos Lorena
3	Castro - Fuentes	Elmaco Maci
4	Lobo - Rodriguez	Gilberth Amalia
5	Brenes - Salazar	Milton Edith
6	Pérez - Salazar	Castro - Brenes
7	Salazar - Leiton	Osdeimar Ersi
8	Castro - Fuentes	Mario Blanca (nieve)
9	Fuentes - Rodriguez	Jorge (coki) Lilia
10	Cruz - Salazar	(Ronald) Miriam
11	Picado - Mora	Hugo Lilia
12	Vega - Mata	Alvaro Elizabeth
13	Perez - Picado	Marcos (Tom) Anabeli
14	Alvarado - Méndez	Miguel Haydee
15	Castro - Garro	Luis Ana (Jenny)
16	Chavarría - Campos	Jose Daniel (Pepito) Veli
17	Zamora - Elizondo	Josel (Lisa) Dora
18	Ramirez - Badilla	Edith
19	Leiton - Virginia	(Paulo)
20	Leiton - Salazar	William Demaris
21	Vargas - Torres	Nee Maganita
22	Cruz - Trejos	José (Cecilio) Mavis
23	Chacaltana - Ramirez	Fau! Yaelia
24	Garro - Cruz	Chivier Marielos
25	Alvarado - Méndez	B. Lidier Ivagrin Ramona
27	Kinder	Comunal
28	Puesto de Salud	
30	Galerón y casa	Maple Casa comunal



Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Interviews conducted by Melissa Hemken and Rachel Eis enstat.

- 1) Full names of all family members and birthdates of children 18 and younger.
- 2) What is the difference between your parcel today and when you first began to work on it? Do you have old photos we can borrow in order to see the difference?
- 3) What are your hopes and goals for the future of your parcel?
(This was added very late in the interviews.)
- 4) What is your main crop or product? What else do you grow or produce?
- 5) Do you sell your products? If so, where?
- 6) Generally, during what part of the day or week do you work in your parcel?
- 7) What are your interests, how do you spend your free time, or what do you enjoy doing? (We tried to find this out for all members of the family).
- 8) What community activities are members of your family involved in?
- 9) What do you enjoy about having students and volunteers in your home?
- 10) Is there anything else you would like to add to your interview?

Appendix 4: Finca La Bella History and Overview

Written by: Melissa Hemken

The Beginning

Finca La Bella means “the beautiful farm” in English, and it *is* truly beautiful. The forty-nine hectare (122 acres) cooperative farm is located in San Luis de Monteverde, Puntarenas, Costa Rica on the Pacific slope of the Cordillera de Tilarán. This is a steep, mountainous area where dairy farming is the principle agricultural activity and coffee is a secondary cash crop. In the 1940s cattle ranchers purchased and deforested large areas of Costa Rica’s northwest, including most of the San Luis Valley. Small farmers and dairy owners were gradually forced to practice agriculture on steep, previously forested areas, as land ownership was put into fewer hands (McCandless and Salazar 3). In the San Luis Valley, this process continued unabated for over forty years, with the majority of arable land eventually falling under the control of one man, Ramón Brenes (Mann 55).

Great attention has been focused on conserving Costa Rica’s amazing forests and diverse wildlife, and, unfortunately, very little to agrarian land reform. This is why residents of the San Luis Valley, with support from the Monteverde Quaker community, began looking for viable land reform options in their region during the 1980s. Thus, in 1991, they considered buying a farm owned by Brenes, approximately six kilometers south of Monteverde for the Finca La Bella project. Brenes had begun selling some of his land, including a seventy-hectare site to developers from the United States who created what is now the University of Georgia Ecolodge (Mann 56). The visionaries asked the local coop, *Coope Santa Elena R. L.* (Coop), to help finance the project in 1992. The Coop’s membership has included dairy farmers, coffee growers, artisans and consumers (“Coope Santa Elena” 1). The Finca La Bella project involved several local institutions in addition to the Coop, which is currently inactive. These include, the Monteverde Friends Meeting, the Monteverde Institute, a Friends organization, Quaker Earthcare Witness of the Americas (formerly Friends Committee on Unity with Nature [FCUN]), and the *Asociación de Desarrollo Integral San Luis* (San Luis Integrated Development Association), which is currently inactive. Quaker Earthcare Witness of the Americas (QEW) created the Ann Kriebel Fund to raise monies for the project and was able to reimburse the Coop for their costs by 1999.

An Inspiring Story

Ann Kriebel was a young Quaker woman from Wooster, Ohio, who in the early 1980s travelled to Costa Rica to live and work in the Monteverde Quaker community. Kriebel would daily walk down from Monteverde to the San Luis Valley “to carry out educational programs in literacy, health care, nutrition, and the environment (Wixom 1).” While serving there Kriebel died unexpectedly from an infection, but her spirit lives on at Finca La Bella (Wixom 1). In the December 15, 1984 issue of *Friends Journal*, Kriebel published an article entitled “What is Simplicity?” She asked whether simplicity is “really a matter of our material possessions or, rather, a state of mind, heart, and spirit?” Kriebel goes on to state that “true simplicity should connote not poverty but, rather, a richness of spirit, a joy in living, the nurturing of creativity, sensitivity to the natural world, and love for all its creatures. As an expression of this love, this true simplicity, we must then, too, commit ourselves to building a more equitable world - a world in which this simplicity may thrive and be enjoyed by everyone.” Kriebel also dreamed of assisting the landless farmers of San Luis with a cooperative farm as a way to provide them with more equitable access to land and increased self-employment. Out of respect for the vision she shared with San Luis residents, the La Bella project’s vision is to demonstrate the compatibility of environmental conservation, human development, and sustainable agriculture.

Project Organization

The Coop established a special planning committee to oversee the project, called the Commission, which involves residents of both San Luis and Monteverde. The Commission originally consisted of two representatives from the Coop which included an employee and member of the board, one representative from the Monteverde Friends Meeting, one representative from San Luis, one representative from the San Luis Integrated Development Association and one of the *parceleros*, the small parcel farmers of Finca La Bella. The Commission’s responsibilities are to:

“administrate, coordinate, control, and give continuity to all aspects of the project; evaluate each of the parcels, make recommendations as necessary, and evaluate positive experiences within the farm; respond to all forms of suggestions and complaints; direct resources and effort for the project; promote education, capacitation, and exchange of experiences among the *parceleros*, as well as coordinate technical assistance for the farm; name new beneficiaries for the parcels that have been renounced or whose tenants have been expelled; and other responsibilities that may be determined in the future through mutual agreement of involved parties (Mann 78).”

Currently, the Commission’s membership includes two *parceleros*, one Monteverde Institute staff member, and one Monteverde Quaker who also represents QEW.

The Finca La Bella project also formed, in 1999, a *parceleros’* association, *Asociación Agrícola Finca La Bella-Ann Kriebel*. The Association’s board includes a president, vice-president, vocal (has right to speak and vote, third in command), secretary, treasurer and fiscal (who has the right to speak and oversees the good functioning of the board). The Board is elected by the *Parceleros’* Assembly, which also has the right to ratify or overturn the Board’s decisions. Another position on La Bella is that of Volunteer Coordinator, whose responsibilities include maintaining equitable distribution of volunteers and students to families, connecting them with their *tico* (what Costa Ricans call themselves) family, ensuring that they have transportation from Santa Elena to Finca La Bella, and checking in on the volunteers and students during their stay. Finca La Bella not only hosts volunteers and students, but has also sent *parceleros* on agricultural exchanges. Eight *parceleros* participated in this program between 1998 and 2000. They were chosen by the La Bella community as representatives to their host communities. During their stay abroad they visited and worked on organic farms in the U.S. and Canada, and shared the story of La Bella with their host communities.

The Land

Having been reimbursed for the Finca La Bella land by QEW, the Coop held the land title only symbolically. In 2001 the *Asamblea de Parceleros’* (Parceleros’ Assembly), of whom all the *parceleros* are members, decided to transfer the title to Monteverde Institute (MVI), a Costa Rican non-profit organization committed to providing “Education for a Sustainable Future” in the Monteverde area. This decision was made because of the Coop’s unstable economic situation at the time and the resultant inability of Coop personnel to dedicate adequate attention to Finca La Bella issues. MVI filled the Coop’s position on the Commission, and established a land trust for Finca La Bella with the help of CEDARENA (The Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center), a Costa Rican non-profit, non-political association that was founded in 1989 “to harmonize the relationships between human beings and nature to improve the quality of life (“CEDARENA” 1).” The land trust is a three-year renewable agreement “which will ensure the use of the farm for its stated purpose of environmentally, and socially, sustainable agriculture (“Finca La Bella” 1).”

MVI, QEW, and CEDARENA are now working with the La Bella Association to establish a community land trust which would be overseen by the *parceleros* and a conservation easement that will legally dictate for which purpose the land may be used, all primary and secondary forest will remain as such, agricultural areas where the *parceleros* have the right to farm, areas that must be used for communal activities, and areas for the construction of homes and outbuildings. The process of implementing the easement and trust appropriately is a challenge currently facing the Finca La Bella project. A community land trust has never before been implemented in Costa Rica. Combining a community land trust, with the purpose of social justice and equity, with a conservation easement, which in Costa Rica has been only used “to ensue the natural character of private lands (Chacón et al. 10)”, creates certain complications. Both of these initiatives involve a technical and social process, as well as legal expenses and they are another challenge the project must surmount.

The Parceleros

Currently, Finca La Bella supports twenty-four formerly landless families, all of whom are originally from San Luis and who hand-cultivate individual parcels of roughly the same amount of arable land. The families were selected by a process that evaluated, among other things, their need, and the will and ability both to work the land and build community. Each *parcelero* signs a renewable

twenty-five year lease contract that outlines the rights, responsibilities and limitations for his/her personal parcel and for the Finca La Bella project as a whole. If they ever decide to leave Finca La Bella, they will be reimbursed for all physical improvements made on their parcels, such as buildings or permanent crops.

At the beginning, the Finca La Bella land had been mainly used for cattle pasture and was planted with invasive African grass which is very hardy and difficult to thwart. There were also a few fields of neglected coffee and a third of the land (14 ha [hectares]) contained primary and secondary forest. The *parceleros* have left untouched the primary growth forest, and measurements in 2003 revealed that there was a .9 ha increase, from the 14 ha of forest listed on the land deed in 1992. The tree nursery on La Bella is currently inactive, but has provided over ten thousand windbreak trees, which the *parceleros* planted to protect their coffee, fruit trees, vegetables, and other produce from the harsh winds that blow through the San Luis Valley during certain months. Some *parceleros* are currently looking at restarting the nursery to grow fruit trees. A greenhouse is also located on La Bella, and certain women are now considering a medicinal plants project.

A potable water system was established soon after the start of the Finca La Bella project and it supplies most homes. A couple of years ago, an irrigation system was installed with fifteen La Bella families participating, but soon after, Hurricane Mitch swept through and ruined the catchment tank. The system is still in very poor shape and does not fulfill the families' expectations. The San Luis community has also built on La Bella a kindergarten, a donor-supported community "kinder" for 4- to 6-year-olds. The Kinder operated from 1994 to 2004 and prepared approximately twenty children annually for 1st grade. While this Kinder has been incorporated in to the state school system, La Bella also hosts a two-room medical clinic staffed by government employees and community volunteers a few days a month, both of these serve the San Luis area. Another project that involves the broader San Luis community is *Artesanas Finca La Bella*. This is a fairly new women's craft and handiwork group, which at this time has fourteen members, half of them La Bella women. The only requirement of membership is that each woman brings a mug from which to sip coffee while crafting and one flower from their home garden to plant in front of the *Casa de la Finca* (Farmhouse), the original farmhouse building on La Bella where they meet. In March 2001, *parceleros* and students from the Fox Maple School of Traditional Building in Maine, U.S.A., built a post-and-beam community building using local renewable materials near the Farmhouse, christening it the Marcelino Cruz Community Center, "*Casa Maple*" (Timberframe House).

The Purpose

At the start of the *Asociación Agrícola Finca La Bella-Ann Kriebel* project, some "intentions and ethical principles" were laid out, and it continues to be a challenge to adhere consistently to all of them. They include:

"the land is not to be sold, commercialized, or speculated with; respect for all, regardless of beliefs, personal situation or capacity; this land is for those who work and care for it; participants will be chosen on the basis of interest, need and ability; responsibility for the impacts and repercussions of the project (both ecological and social processes); transparency in all proceedings (openness and honesty); favour consensus and unity in the community; do not encourage paternalism or sectarian politics; clear, dynamic and flexible planning; and priority given to direct service to *Sanluisenos*-San Luis residents ("Land of San Luis" 1)."

The economic and social sustainability of La Bella also continues to be a challenge.

To combat it, Monteverde Institute, with its vision of a sustainable future, has collaborated with Finca La Bella for a unique program. The *parceleros* work as teaching hosts, sharing their agrarian knowledge with groups of students and volunteers through tours of Finca La Bella. During some of these tours, the *Artesanas Finca La Bella* serves a noon meal and has their handiwork available for sale. These activities, and the hosting of visiting volunteers and students, provide the families with additional income to meet their education, healthcare and other social service needs. *Parceleros* also have been provided educational opportunities through the participation in classes on organic and biodynamic agriculture, accounting and marketing, organizational dynamics, tourism, and

guiding. Some other pressing challenges are that a credit union or revolving loan fund is needed for the *parceleros* to facilitate start-up and infrastructure development and that the Finca La Bella leadership needs to be strengthened to bring the project to full maturity (“La Bella Farm” 1).

Goals of the Finca La Bella project include, but are not limited to: advance agriculture techniques through the limitation of agrochemical use and diversification of crops; improvement of pasture management and general reduction of pasture land and cattle presence; establishment of windbreaks, natural barriers, and other soil conservation methods; maintenance and augmentation of current forest tracts to create and enhance biological corridors and connectivity; provide the means for participants to meet basic needs and have a source of income; and the establishment of projects which benefit the community in general, including a kindergarten and health clinic (Mann 55). Some of these goals have been met and others are still being worked toward, and the Finca La Bella project has done more besides giving farmers land - it has provided a healthy environment (both natural and social) for their children, and above all, has created community, with all the challenges and joys that human community brings. That’s what Ann Kriebel dreamed of - true simplicity in a “place just right in a valley of love and delight.”

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Appendix 5: Family Profiles

Written by: Rachel Eisenstat

(Except for Cruz-Méndez, Susannah and I interviewed them after Rachel left Monteverde)

Misael Alvarado Mendez and Aideé Mendez Ramirez

Aideé and Misael live with their grandchildren José (May 14, 1992) and María Paula (August 27, 1998) at the end of a road tucked away in the woods just below Finca La Bella. They hope soon



to be able to build a house on their parcel in order to be closer to their work. Aideé is known for her flock of chickens, which she enjoys taking care of when she's not working in the parcel. Their parcel is a ten-minute walk from their house, along the foot-paths that connect all the parcels of the finca through a bit of pasture, across a small creek, and through the woods. Once in their parcel, Misael, who very much enjoys working the land and planting trees, will gladly give a tour of the coffee, bananas, and plantains that the family produces. They also have a dairy cow, a pig, and plenty of vegetables, including lettuce,

corn, beans, cilantro, squash, cucumbers, and radishes. In their parcel, Aideé and Misael have various fruit trees as well, from which they gather oranges, lemons, mangos, and avocados. They sell what they grow to local families, the neighborhood grocery store, and to the Eco-lodge. Generally, they like to work in the parcel from about 8:00 each morning to around 1:00 in the afternoon.

Alvaro Vega Anchía and Elizabeth Mata Leitón

Alvaro and Elizabeth, along with their children Adriana (November 20, 1993) and Jason (May 3, 1995), are one of the newest families on Finca La Bella, pictured here with Katie Walker, a student they hosted this summer. They have always enjoyed hosting students and volunteers because of what they learn from them. In addition to coffee, their main crop which they sell to the *CoopeSanta Elena* (producer of Café Monteverde), they grow plantains, bananas, lettuce, and corn for their own family. Alvaro plays soccer in San Luis with a team each Wednesday, while Elizabeth is involved with the local artisan craft cooperative CASEM (*Cooperativa Artesanos de Santa Elena y Monteverde*).



Gilberth Lobo Navarro and Amalia Rodriguez Delgado

Along the lane from the top entrance to Finca La Bella sits the several-story house where Amalia and Gilberth live. They have three children—Christian (August 21, 1985), Susan (July 31, 1993), and Josué (December 25, 1994). They built their home so that there are actually four levels, with a half-story between each one. The upper part of the farm where they live used to be an abandoned coffee plantation, but they have planted windbreak trees, fruit trees, bananas, and various vegetables. They also have expanded the coffee on their farm, which is their principal crop and which they sell to the CoopeSanta Elena for Café Monteverde. In their free time, Gilberth loves running and usually participates in the annual San Luis Marathon. Amalia is part of *Grupo de Amistad*, a local group that plants in a greenhouse together. She also enjoys cooking for the family, something Susan likes to help with too, while Josué spends his time playing soccer and reading. Amalia says it's important to have volunteers and students visit and learn to know the *campo* culture and typical foods and how to work the land. Her hope for the future of her family's parcel and of Finca La Bella as a whole is "to always manage and cultivate our parcels and care for the forest land."



Mario Castro and Blanca Fuentes

Mario and Blanca live in the upper portion of Finca La Bella, where they grow lettuce, radishes, cilantro, squashes, and onions. They spend Mondays and Wednesdays selling their produce at markets in Guacimal and Santa Elena, working most of the day on the parcel the rest of the week. Aside from their farming, Blanca loves to cook and visit with friends, while Mario builds furniture from bamboo to sell. They also frequently go down to lower San Luis to watch the soccer games there. Mario's brother Elierses Castro also lives with the family, as well as their grown son Mario Enrique and their youngest son Francisco (February 12, 1989). Their middle son, Huer, lives outside of their home.



William Leitón Méndez and Damaris Salazar Picado

When Damaris and William started to work on their parcel, they planted trees to break the strong winds that come through the San Luis Valley. Three or four years after they moved into their home on Finca La Bella with their three children Wilfredi (February 9, 1992), Freisel (August 5, 1997) and Kimberli (September 21, 1999), the trees they had planted were large enough to allow them to begin planting their crops. Now they grow corn, bananas, plantains, green beans, chili peppers, and



hoping to learn piano as well. Damaris says the family enjoys learning about culture through hosting students and volunteers. “It’s important to me that our children learn that there shouldn’t be differentiation between each person because of color or culture.”

taro root. They don’t use organic fertilizers yet, but like most families on the Finca, they farm organically without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. The family enjoys planting their garden together and helping with projects in the community. For example, Damaris helped form with two other women of the Finca the women’s artisan cooperative called *Artesanas Finca La Bella*. She also is a part of the school foundation and kindergarten committee. Wilfredi takes music classes and plays guitar and flute,

Milton Brenes Mendez and Edith Salazar Picados

When asked how his family’s parcel has changed since they began to work on it, Milton, who loves to talk, says there is “*muchisima diferencia!* Before, we didn’t have a specific place to produce agriculture, and now we have a place to produce organically.” The family has also helped with the reforestation project on the farm. The kids Jonathan (March 15, 1991) and Josette (June 13, 1994) had an idea for a peaceful park on their parcel where they could study and play, and they have planted rows of trees that are now several years old. Their goals for the farm are that their children are a part of the project and that they continue maintaining the combination of protecting the forest and reforestation with agriculture. For example, the windbreaks that many families have planted on their parcels help conserve the soil while also reforesting. They sell their coffee to groups of tourists and students that visit the farm, chicken meat to neighbors and the Monteverde Quaker community, and occasionally their vegetables to the Eco-Lodge. Having students and volunteers allows them to share the vision of the farm with them to take back to their own parts of the world. “I like to learn what their customs are,” Edith adds.



Oldemar Salazar Picado and Erci Leitón Cuvero

On Erci's and Oldemar's parcel, which is just inside the upper gate to Finca La Bella, they grow mainly coffee, which they sell in Santa Elena, to other families, and to the nearby Eco-Lodge.



They also grow tomatoes, sweet peppers, and cilantro. Their hope for the future of the parcel is to make it more economically efficient. When they have volunteers and students in their home, they enjoy spending time talking with them, developing relationships and understanding about other cultures. Their kids Juan Manuel (April 6, 1986), Gloriana (August 7, 1992), and Melani (January 13, 2000) like playing cards and otherwise hanging out with them (Melani loves to have her picture taken!). When he's not

working on the parcel, Oldemar gives tours of the finca to groups of students and to urists. As a family, they all take part in activities with the church and school.

Hugo Picado Cespedes and Odilie Mora Burgos

One must walk along paths through the parcel, divided like rooms by the trees planted to break the wind, before getting to Odilie's and Hugo's house, where they live with their grandson Jeison (August 4, 1986). They have a well-cultivated plot with a lot of crop diversity—principally coffee, but also lettuce, *aracache*, *repullo*, radishes, *camote*, *sanlaoria*, yucca, *tikisje*, corn, *ñampí*, plantains, and bananas. They sell a lot of their produce to the nearby Eco-Lodge, where Odilie works. Hugo works all day in his parcel, but also cuts wood for furniture building and gives tours of the farm to student and tourist groups.



José Cruz Salazar and Mavis Trejos Garro

José and Mavis just moved into their new home on Finca La Bella in May of 2004 and are in the process of adding a room in order to be able to host students and volunteers. Mavis hopes to work

with visitors soon because she enjoys tapping into other cultures and especially learning about foods



from other parts of the world. The family has one daughter (Emily, October 22, 1992) and two lively sons (Alonzo, June 8, 1996, and Andres, August 14, 1998). Presently, they grow black beans on their parcel and plan to plant more in the future after they have finished working on their recently built home. For now, they work mostly on the weekends in their parcel. As a family, they like working together on their house and parcel and playing soccer. Mavis is also part of *Artesanas Finca La Bella*.

José Daniel Chavarría González and Victoria Campos Sivaja

Approaching José Daniel's and Victoria's house from the path near the school in San Luis, one might here the sounds of music coming from their open door. When they're not working, José Daniel

picks up his 1948 classical guitar and strums a few tunes while Victoria sings. Occasionally, they pull out their maracas and harmonica, too. "We feel very peaceful in our house," Victoria says, and their contentment there is apparent. They work in their parcel whenever the sun is out. They have coffee, bananas, cilantro, onions, spinach, and eggs, all of



which they sell in San Luis and the neighboring towns of Santa Elena, Monteverde, and Cerro Plano. "We like to host volunteers and students because of the friendships we build with them," Victoria says. José Daniel adds that he enjoys sharing music and working with them.

Juan Fuentes Ramirez and Xenia Cruz Rodríguez

Juan, Xenia, and their four daughters Lidieth (June 19, 1987), Karen (May 14, 1992), Melissa (December 9, 1993), and Erica (October 7, 1996) live in the neighborhood below the lower end of the



farm, near Aideé and Misael. Xenia works at the Eco-Lodge and is part of the women's artisan cooperative on the farm. The kids take part in community activities when they're not in school, such as the recent English classes given by a volunteer this summer. Juan works on the parcel during the mornings and early afternoons, where he cultivates coffee, plantains, *chayotes*, and *ñampí*. They will soon have lettuce, radish, and chili peppers as well. The family hopes in the future to be able to build a home on their parcel to be nearer to their work and closer to the rest of the Finca La Bella

community. Xenia says they've enjoyed being able to provide themselves with food from their own garden. She enjoys practicing English when they host visitors, and having the chance to help them with their Spanish.

Marcos Marín Murillo and Lorena Leitón Méndez

Lorena and Marcos live in the upper part of Finca La Bella with their son Jorge Luis (October 26, 1984), twin sons Arnaldo André and Marco Vinisio (September 14, 1998), and daughter Neybi Karina (October 18, 1994). During the week, the kids spend much of their time studying, but on the weekends, the family works together in their parcel and takes part in various activities at the school and with the Finca community. They principally grow legumes, but also have corn and plantains, which are all for the family's own use. Since they have been on their parcel, they have put a lot of work into making the land more suitable for planting.



Hosting students and volunteers in their home allows them to learn about different cultures from around the globe.

Olivier Garro Murillo and Marielos Cruz Rodriguez

Marielos and Olivier just moved last February onto the parcel they've been working on for several years with their children Martha (17), Kevin (13) and Keylor (June 19, 1995). Their new

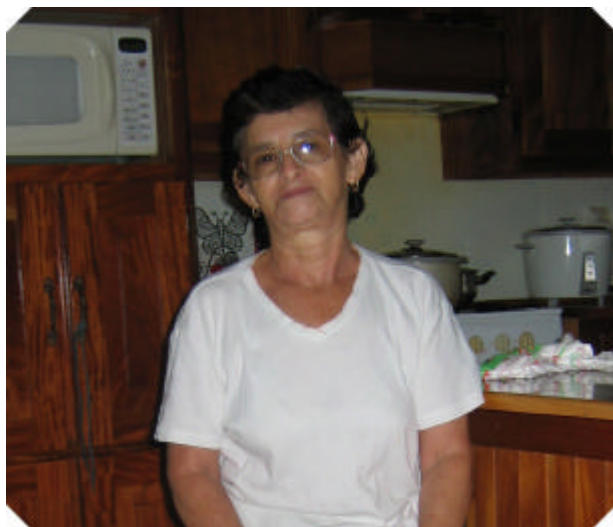
house is on the lower end of the farm, which used to be mainly pasture. They've done a lot of work to transform it into cultivatable land with windbreaks. Marielos says her hopes for the future are to be able to work entirely on the parcel without depending on other sources of income "and to teach the children how to work the land." They also will probably sell their coffee in the future, but as for now, they grow this and various vegetables including beans, corn, bananas, plantains, yucca, and *ñampí* for their own consumption. On the weekends, the whole family enjoys working together, since the kids aren't in school.



Olivier is on the board for the *parceleros'* association and does some construction work in Monteverde. Marielos spends a lot of her time embroidering and painting for the finca women's artesan group, which she helped form, and teaching catechism classes. The kids are most helpful in helping the students and volunteers that they host improve their Spanish. Marielos says, "The student forms part of the family, and when he or she has to leave my house, the family doesn't want them to leave."

Miriam Salazar Solorsano

Miriam's family spends much of their time working with wood, building furniture and other projects out of local timber for a living. Most of the interior of their home is their own work.



Miriam lives with her two grown sons, Carlos and Rona, in the middle section of Finca La Bella, where a driveway off the main road leads to many of the *parceleros'* homes. For Miriam, working in the soil with volunteers and students is very rewarding—it gives her the opportunity to learn from them and to share her experience with them as well. She spends many of her mornings working in the parcel, where the family grows cilantro, taro root, plantains, coffee, and various greens. She also spends much of her time making crafts to sell with the *Artesanas Finca La Bella*.

Virginia Leitón V.

Two paths leading from the neighborhood school and a lower part on the road through San Luis meet at a yellow house high above the road where Virginia and her two sons Jonathan (January 15, 1987) and Pablo (April 13, 1991) live. On their steep parcel, they mainly grow corn and beans, which they use for their family meals and give to other families. Besides going to school and working

on their parcel, Pablo plays soccer, taking part in the popular games on the field in Lower San Luis.



Virginia's skill and love for working with her hands is apparent to everyone around her—when she's not working in her garden, she not only enjoys giving massages, but also makes crafts for *Artesanas Finca La Bella* and is well-known

for her homemade donuts and tamales, which she sells and gives to friends. Virginia likes having the company of volunteers and students in her home, especially when her sons are working or at school. The work from volunteers on the parcel is great help for the family. "It's a way to learn about other cultures," she adds.



Margarita Torres Salazar and Noé Vargas Lestón

Noé, Margarita, and their three children Paula (October 10, 1995), Sebastian (September 21,



1998), and Karen Nohelia (September 12, 2001) live along a lane across from the upper entrance of *Finca La Bella*. Their parcel lies in the lower end of the farm, about a fifteen minute walk from their home, where they have planted windbreaks to protect the coffee, corn, plantains, bananas, squash, and potatoes they grow. When they host volunteers and students, they like working with them in the parcel and the kids love to

hang out with them. Paola likes to play, go walking, and go to school and play soccer. Sebastian enjoys to run, play soccer, and sometimes going to the Kinder. Noé and Margarita are both very involved with the San Luis community. Noé is the president of the San Luis Development Association, and Margarita takes part in *Artesanas Finca La Bella*.

Ivannia Arguedes Cruz and Lidier Alvarado Méndez

Lidier (May 11, 1973) and Ivannia (January 24, 1977) live on their parcel just off of the long lane that leads to *Casa de la Finca* and *Casa Maple*. They reside with their two sons, Manfred David (June 7, 1997) and Frayser Josué (November 12, 1999), who goes by Josué, along with Lidier's parents, Romona Méndez Ramirez (October 31, 1938) and Benedicto Alverado Charanga (February 24, 1941). Ramona, who is affectionately called Monchita, always dreamed of moving back to San Luis, where she spent her childhood. When the family first arrived on their parcel it was nearly all pasture grass, with a few existing windbreaks and some established coffee. The household now sells their coffee to CoopeSanta Elena, and produces plantains which they give away to neighbors. They also grow avocados, oranges, lemons, papayas, mango trees, and many guayabas. In their garden, cilantro, pepper, corn, radishes, green beans, cabbage, onions, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes and yucca (manioc), are planted. They enjoy eggs from Monchita's many chickens, and Bonita the goat should soon be producing milk. Manfred says not to forget to include their two dogs in the count. In the future the family hopes to have a milk cow, and plant the whole parcel with vegetables and fruit trees.



Josué, who is also known as "Macho", plans to focus on papaya and cabbage.

Ivannia and Monchita work in their parcel mainly in the morning, while Lidier's schedule depends on his hours as a waiter in a local hotel. Benedicto is the manager of a farm in the south of the country, but works dawn to dusk in the parcel when he is home. In her spare time, Ramona enjoys crocheting, watching the news, reading the Bible, planting in the parcel and her flower garden, and caring for her flock of chickens. Ivannia's leisure pastimes are jogging in the afternoons, embroidering with the *Artesanas Finca La Bella*, and baking desserts. Lidier's hobbies include participating in a night indoor-soccer league, playing daytime soccer with his sons, and working in the parcel. Manfred loves to plant everything in the garden, play soccer, ride his bike, play, draw and color, and go to school. Macho (Josué) also likes to work in the garden, draw, color, help his dad, do carpentry, and ride his bike.

Ivannia is active in the community through *Artesanas Finca La Bella*, and is the school treasurer; Lidier is treasurer of the Kinder Committee, while Ramona is active in the church. Ivannia takes pleasure in sharing across cultures with volunteers and students, while Manfred plans to take visitors to meet the neighbors, plant in the garden, and to learn how to milk the hoped-for cow. Macho will play, color, and read books with you. The family has plenty of work for volunteers and at the time of writing were beginning construction of a room for guests.

Appendix 6: Tips and Advice

Welcome to Finca La Bella! As a volunteer here on the farm I have observed and learned some things that I hope will help you to have a more enjoyable time here no matter how long you plan to stay. This is just an informal opinion but as you probably know, any information makes the transition to new surroundings much smoother. I cannot emphasize enough that the enjoyment of your stay here is based entirely on your attitude. No matter if you are here to learn Spanish, study biology, or just help out, an effort to meet the people of San Luis will help make your stay enriching and fulfilling.

–Erika Gingerich 1/22/99

Tips and Advice:

-If you are lucky enough to have an electric shower to “heat” the water in your home or at least take the edge off the freezing mountain spring water. REMEMBER, don’t touch the shower head unless you want to be jolted and have all the lights in the house dim! Electricity is fairly new here and they have not yet perfected the safety features that we are so used to. Your family will get a kick out of it and it doesn’t hurt too bad but it is something to avoid. Also, make showers quick (you will want to after you feel how cold the water is). If you shower too long the element will burn out and the family will not replace it since you are the culprit. As a general rule make your showers as long as the natives make theirs.

-The greater attempt you make to communicate with your family and others the more fun you will have and the more you will learn. You will also find that communication is reciprocated.

-The families of La Bella are warm and friendly and are willing to help you out. Take advantage of this opportunity!! Go to the grocery store with your new “mom”, play with your brothers and sisters, and talk to your grandparents. Many of the families have told me several times that they do not want their volunteers to feel obligated to work all the time. If you want to travel for the week just let them know. Perhaps you don’t want to do a certain job such as weeding, etc. They want volunteers to let them know what kind of jobs they enjoy and what they are there to learn about. Your family wants to help you accomplish your goals just as much as you want to help them out working.

-General respect and courtesy is important in family life and all aspects of a different culture. Tell your family where you are going when you leave and when you plan on being home. You don’t have to be exact but they just need an idea so that if something happens they will know your general whereabouts. Always make an attempt to speak Spanish with everyone even if you are just learning. They are so pleased at any attempt and they will tell you how wonderful you speak even if you are horrible.

-Costa Rican women pride themselves on their clean floors. You must always take your shoes off before entering a home. Take your cues from the locals. Food is delicious and arrives on your plate in huge quantities. Meat is very expensive here so it is a rarity and not served often. The women always appreciate any compliments to the chef.

-If you are young, you will find that San Luis has a fun youth population. Hanging out with them really improves your Spanish and it teaches you a whole new vocabulary. Go dancing at the local disco with them or play volleyball and soccer in the evenings when the work is done.

Appendix 7: Suggestions for Teaching English

I really enjoyed working with the kids and I loved to work for many hours. The children were so cute and friendly and really wanted to learn some English.

–Miriam Schleier, June 2004

What to expect:

- The kids don't know a lot about English and are beginners.
- There are two places to teach, the Kinder and INVU, and one is a steep, thirty-minute walk.
- The kids appreciate your work (teaching) very much!
- The age of the kids can vary from 4 to 12 years.
- You can also teach adults in the evenings.

What to bring:

- The kids will bring their own pencils and workbooks.
- Everything else you have to bring, English textbooks, etc.
- There is no blackboard in the Kinder or INVU.
- Shoes for wet conditions, rubber-boots are best.
- Games are good resources!
- The kids like drawing or doing handicrafts.

Other suggestions:

- Ask the kids what they already know or what they have learned.
- If you have too little work or kids talk with?
- Perhaps plan a good-bye party at the end of your stay.
- It's best to stay for one month minimum.

Appendix 8: Let Me Ask You A Question

Let Me Ask You A Question

By: Ann Kriebel - 1983

Translated into English by: Linda Coffin

Originally Published in Right Sharing News Vol. XI, No. 2 March/April 1984

Land of San Luis

Will you let me ask a question?

Will you let me ask you:

To whom do you belong?

Are you his?

– he who has so much, so very much?

They say that he has a paper that proves
that you are his.

But, because he has so much,

I believe that he couldn't even know you:

Your secret roads

Your deep rocks and stony hills

Your dark forests and burned fields

The sonorous rivers that pass through
you...

Not even your coffee plantations wrinkled
and sad,

Like lines of elderly ones who only await
death.

Or do you maybe belong to that man?

– he whom I see in the distance,

Stooped and broken, skin the color of mud

Whose right arm cannot be distinguished

From the machete which he grasps
eternally.

He knows you as no other does:

Your humidity and your dryness

Your smells of rain or of morning

Your sand and your clay.

It is he who plants dreams in you that
wither with the years

And little by little go on dying with each
year that repeats itself

And repeats itself...

Or maybe you are hers,

She who is behind that hut

She who washes you daily from the dirty
clothing

She who caresses you with her wide hands

Tenderly blessing seeds that will grow in
your womb.

And days later you will give birth

To the thousand wonders of *mapalones*,
carnations,

Cuiantro and parsley.

Is it possible that you are mine?

-- I who walk your paths

With joy or weariness, who breathe your
dust

Or slide with my horse in your mud?

Or maybe you belong to others:

Others who know you even better:

Who live between your arms

Who sing to you and praise you

With their hymns and dances of centuries
now lost.

Could it be that you belong to the thrush,

To the skylark and the *oropéndola*

To the squirrel and the *güititi* in which he
lives

To the little lizard, to the green frog,

Also to the mole and the worm?

Let me ask a question, beautiful land of
San Luis.

You can answer me very softly because

I'm listening;

And thus we will plant your truth nest to
the grain of maize:

To whom do you belong?

Appendix 9: Volunteer and Student Responsibilities

Written by: Melissa Hemken

There are an infinite number of activities that volunteers may assist with and the following is just a sample list of what volunteers have done in the past and what currently needs to be accomplished. Willing souls are needed to:

- ✓ clean walks and paths;
- ✓ collect waste and recycle it;
- ✓ carry out studies; collect and organize existing information;
- ✓ teach English classes and other activities for young and old;
- ✓ complete community work through the *Asociación de Desarrollo Integral San Luis* (San Luis Integrated Development Association);
- ✓ work in the communal area of La Bella where the *Casa de la Finca* (Farmhouse) and the Marcelino Cruz Community Center “*Casa Maple*” (Timberframe House) are located;
- ✓ assist the *parceleros* with cultivating, planting, weeding, harvesting, and other agricultural activities;
- ✓ and visitors are encouraged to contribute according to their expertise and interest.

In March 2001, *parceleros* and students from the Fox Maple School of Traditional Building in Maine, U.S.A., built a post-and-beam community building using local renewable materials near the Farmhouse, christening it the Marcelino Cruz Community Center “*Casa Maple* (Maple House).” A few years ago, other volunteers helped community residents construct and pave a much needed road up the mountain to Monteverde, know locally as the *Trocha* (winding road).

Appendix 10: What to Expect

Compiled by: Melissa Hemken

Be prepared for:

- Lots of children-they're curious and want to share everything. If you have something very special, i.e. camera, Walkman, etc., explain that they can only touch it when you are home.
- Strong extended family-they will be visiting frequently and in some instances several generations live in the same house.
- A diet of rice and beans-there is some variation, but not much. Breakfast is usually *gallo pinto* (rice and beans mixture) and the other meals consist of rice and beans served with other food items.
- The radio/television running constantly-look at it as good Spanish practice.
- A very traditional role of women. Respect it, you aren't here to redefine social structure or gender roles.
- Rural families are reserved-go out of your way to know them. Share photos/recipes from home, talk about yourself, and ask them questions about the community/farming.
- The houses are typical, rural Costa Rican homes:small, rustic, and very clean, often painted pink or blue with a profusion of flowers. Almost all homes have running water and toilets. Sometimes the water is hot, sometimes not.
- It's almost always damp, if not actually raining, cool in mornings and sunny in the afternoons. The night skies are clear and brilliant.

Respect the Costa Rican culture and your family:

- Be neat-Costa Ricans` pride themselves on cleanliness. The houses are usually small and neatness reflects care (do laundry, make your bed, shower every day).
- Take off muddy shoes before entering houses. Women take pride in neat houses and will be ashamed if someone stops by and it is messy, even if it is your mess. Your host mother will sweep out your room, so be sure to keep it organized.
- Personal hygiene is very important-look and smell clean.
- Costa Ricans are modest-don't walk from bedroom to bathroom in towel or vice versus.
- Keep the common areas of the house clean (living room, kitchen, etc.)
- Respect religious differences-sometimes it is best not to argue.
- Be flexible when working-adjust your plans to theirs.
- Be polite if you don't like the food or the monotony of it.
- They may serve you meals at a different time than the rest of the family, usually done if there are young children. Let them know if you'd like to eat with the family or if you won't be home for a meal.
- Offer to help clean, wash dishes, sweep, etc.-your host mother will appreciate it.
- Telephone calls are expensive-please use a calling card or call collect for non-local calls.
- Let your host family know when you will be out late or not returning for the evening. Give them an idea of your schedule, they feel responsible for you.

Suggestions from past volunteers and students:

- Have fun. The first couple days will be a bit awkward, but it gets easier.
- Be open-minded. Check expectations at the door.
- Break the ice by cooking for them.
- Take the time to be with your family and to get to know them.
- Attend family gatherings.
- Try everything once and the fun things twice.
- Communication will help a lot.

Appendix 11: Parceleros' Contract

Parceleros have the right to:

- Cultivate the land without deteriorating the soil.
- Construct a house, storage center, or workshop on the parcel.
- Keep small animals species, such as chickens, pigs, etc., on the parcel, always making sure such animals will not interfere with other parceleros or neighbors.
- Occasionally keep large animal species, such as a horse or a cow, for family use, always making sure such animals will not interfere with other parceleros or neighbors.
- For those who live in a house which is not on the farm and have constructed a domicile on their parcel, they may lend this second house to a person who works on the farm, including coffee pickers during the harvest.
- Occasionally, for short-term cultivation of annual species, the parcelero may lend up to twenty-five percent of the parcel to other persons who live in the community for a maximum of one year. In all cases permission of the Commission must be obtained.
- Unite to develop joint projects, sharing their land, when these projects do not violate the rules of Finca La Bella. Each parcelero will remain responsible for his own originally selected parcel.
- Have a volunteer, student, or researcher reside with the family.

The parcelero does not have the right to:

- Rent, with economic benefit, the land or any constructions thereon.
- Lend or give up permanently, partially or totally, the parcel to a person of the community or other parceleros.
- Develop tourist activities, industry, or business on the parcel. The latter is permitted only in relation to agricultural production.
- Construct more than 200m squared per parcel. Buildings may not exceed two stories.
- Hunt, burn, or cut trees: Hunting will be permitted only when an animal is causing damage to crops, animals, or persons. Burning will be permitted only in the treatment of trash or in special cases where the Commission feels it necessary, in which case it must be guaranteed that other properties, parcels, lives, or collective resources will not be put in danger. The cutting of trees will only be permitted when a tree is putting in danger constructions or human life, significantly affecting crops, or if a tree has died and can be used. In all cases the Commission must be consulted, and in the case of trees, the parcelero must agree to plant in the future three trees to every tree cut.

The parcelero has the following environmental responsibilities:

- Make correct use of trash or other waste that is produced both in the home and in systems of production. Meetings must be attended at least once every three months, and members must participate in group activities.
- Utilize a minimum of chemical products in agricultural production, and solicit technical assistance for their use and responsible management.
- Make all necessary improvements to avoid soil erosion and other negative effects.

The parcelero has the following organizational responsibilities:

- Form part of the committee of parceleros, which will be made up of all parceleros. Meetings must be attended at least once every three months, and members must participate in group activities.
- Recognize the authority of the Commission and the committee of parceleros and participate in activities they organize.
- Collaborate with the Commission to produce every six months an evaluation of each of the parcels. Recommendations of the Commission as a result of such evaluation must be adhered to.

The parcelero can lose his parcel for the following reasons:

- Through his own renunciation of the parcel.
- Three months have passed and the family has not realized any work on the parcel, without permission of the Commission.
- The Commission has indicated in writing on at least two consecutive occasions that practices within the parcel are affecting neighbors or the soil (environment), and the practices continue without heedance of Commission recommendations.
- Regular evaluation has demonstrated critical problems and the parcelero has not taken interest in solving these problems.
- The original nuclear family has disintegrated, leaving only one spouse (with no children) in control of the parcel.
- Inappropriate family or community behavior as determined by the Commission and notification in writing by the Commission at least two times without action to correct such behavior.
- No presence during a six-month period at group meetings or activities, without permission of the Commission.