

Rancho Mastatal Updates

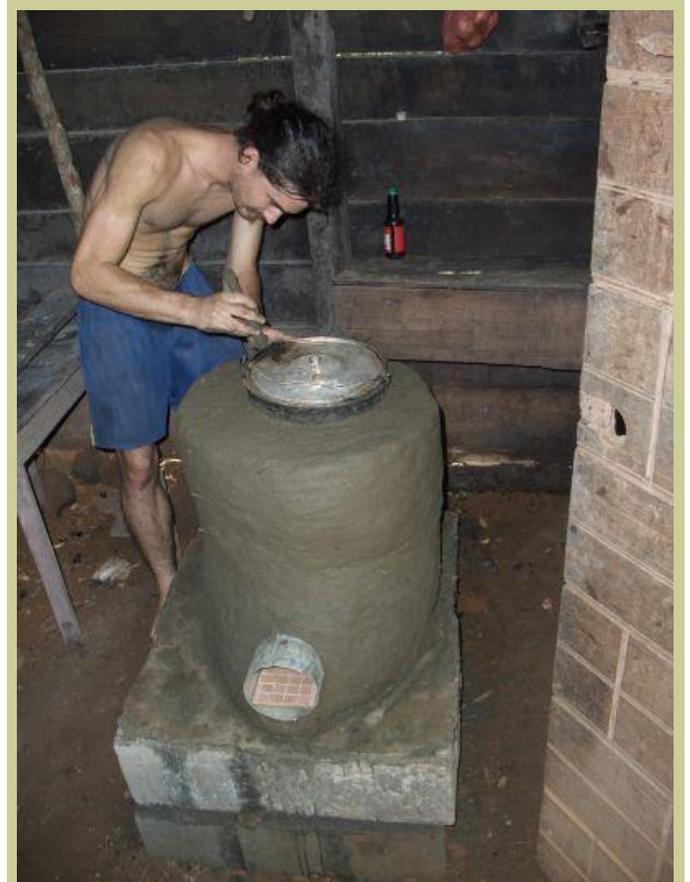
September 2007

Our apologies for getting behind once more on our newsletters. Seems to happen this way every year. Anyhoo, here we are, writing afresh from the comfort of my mother's Vestal, New York home, bringing you up to speed on what's going on where we're not, The Ranch, and a bit about where we are.

Reports from Greg confirm that the rainiest part of the rainy season has arrived on schedule. Torrential downpours have characterized the local weather pattern through much of October making afternoon outdoor work an impossibility. News of 14 deaths caused from a landslide outside of Atenas, Costa Rica actually made international news though a few days of recent sun according to the Ranch team have helped to dry everything out a bit and allowed crews to do some repair work on our sometimes tenuous roads. In one two-day stretch, Mastatal received over a foot of rain. The copious precipitation that the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica receives this time

of year is one reason why we have chosen to return to the States in the fall. And another, the stunning fall colors that permeate the Northeastern US, have not failed to deliver again for us this year. The Adirondacks, Berkshires, Catskills and rolling hills throughout New York and New England have put on yet another mind-blowing show for us leafpeepers. It really is a fabulous time to be in New York. Nevertheless, it never takes too long for our fearless George W. to spoil the party and put things back into perspective as war with Iran and the closing of our borders seems more like a real possibility each day. This guy belongs in jail, not in the White House. Just imagine how we could tackle so many of the world's social and environmental problems with \$200,000,000,000. Count the zeros.

Almost all of this money has gone to line the pockets of America's *corpocracy*, borrowing a word from John Perkins. It's shameful. Contact the politicians that represent your home and let them know how you feel. Sorry about that little tangent. It's just impossible to escape while here in the "land of the free". And now these attitudes are beginning to profoundly affect countries like Costa Rica as free-trade agreements get stuffed down their throats and presidential elections get manhandled to assure results favorable to United States corporations and their associated cronies.



Tyler working on an earthen stove

OK, that's all for now. For the most part I realize that I'm preaching to the choir. Let's just make sure that we take it upon ourselves and are doing everything possible to increase the numbers in our choir. Peace and love to you all.

NOTE: We had a group recently cancel their February 13 through 23, 2008 visit. We now have an opening during this slot. Please let us know if there's anyone out there interested in filling it.

Enjoy.

This month's update includes:

[RM Program News](#): Preparations for `08

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the beauty of timber framing

photo by Rachel Jackson

RM Program News: Preparations for `08

Having almost daily access to the Internet and a phone permits us to better think and plan about our 2008 schedule. Being able to respond to inquiries in a matter of days instead of weeks allows us to be a bit more efficient with our responses to inquiries making for a nice opportunity to get our itinerary more or less outlined for the upcoming season. Once again, the arriving year is chock full of innovative workshops, high school and college visits, and life-altering courses. Next year will see the return of [Aerie's Wilderness First Response Certification](#) course, Solar Energy's [Renewable Energy for the Developing World](#) workshop, and Yestermorrow's [Natural Building](#) program.

2008 will also see the return of college programs from the [University of Washington](#), Seattle University, and Villanova University and high school programs from a number of Seattle based educational institutions. We are once again trying to successfully organize a Permaculture Certification Course though the jury's still out on whether this will indeed happen. In addition to the above, we'll of course be hosting our yearly crew of volunteers and interns, the Ranch's real engine. We're always looking for new workshop ideas and educational groups. We're especially fired up about trying to add a yoga course and fermentation workshop in the near future though we may need help with the marketing. Let us know if you have any earth-shattering suggestions for 2008 or

beyond.

Conservation Update: Carbon Neutrality

This is an article about carbon credits and carbon neutrality written by Michael Kaye, president of Costa Rica Expeditions. We have borrowed the document to bring interested readers up to speed on this relatively new and growing concept.

In October 1980, a couple of years after I started Costa Rica Expeditions, a reporter from the Tico Times, Costa Rica's English language newspaper wrote an article about my fledgling enterprise. Almost 20 years later, researching her book on eco-tourism, Ecotourism and Sustainable Development,

Martha Honey found my long forgotten answer to a question about what made my vision of tourism different, "Tourism should contribute to, rather than exploit (the land)...It should be active rather than passive, emphasizing cultural exchange rather than mere sightseeing.



Gus the bike repairman

Honey called them "pioneering words.

Almost 30 years later, having watched eco-tourism fads come and go, I can't decide whether to be proud, or wish I had kept my big mouth shut. The new hot fad in sustainable travel these days is paying offsets for our carbon footprint. That is, to compensate for the amount our lifestyles contribute to the catastrophic largely man made changes that are taking place in the earth's climate we pay money that is supposedly used to change things back. As far as I can figure out, the way it is supposed to work is that we add up all the carbon our vacation spews into the atmosphere. Then using math way beyond the power of mere mortals to understand, experts calculate the amount of money that it would take to remove the carbon that we have put in. We then fork over this money to carbon offset brokers, and, after covering their overhead and administrative expenses, they spend the money on sequestering carbon by natural means, or on developing renewable energy technologies that will, they claim, result in a smaller carbon footprint from the same activities in the future.

A Seductive Strategy

It is a brilliantly seductive strategy. With a small manageable financial sacrifice we "offset" (or should it be buy off) our life styles. Any scheme that allows sustainability gurus to guiltlessly fly around in private jets and contaminate the atmosphere much more than the ordinary citizen has got to be worthy of our respect. Irrational symbolic fixes for potential catastrophes are nothing new. When I was a teenager, it was nuclear holocaust. The Russians had just gotten the hydrogen bomb. Since the US had just snuffed 250,000 Japs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, everyone assumed that we were next. In school the response that we were given were air raid drills in which we were made to get down beneath our desks and put our heads between our legs. After a while they must have figured that we needed to do more to protect ourselves against a bomb that was capable of making whole islands disappear in the South Pacific, so they told us to turn away from the windows. That

was when I must have made some typically wise-ass remark. I can't remember what I said, but I can remember being sent to the principal's office and accused of being a communist. I feel now exactly the way I feel then. As much as I would love to be able to pay for offsets and continue merrily on with my highly privileged and satisfying life, I can't help but think that paying carbon offsets as an answer to climate change is something like taking aspirin for cancer that has very possibly metastasized. It might be comforting to look at it as a good start. It does temporarily ease the pain and you do feel like you are doing something about it, but, if it distracts you from getting the chemo or the radiation that might really help in the long run, it is, to be charitable, a short sighted strategy. When I asked a scientist friend of mine who is one of the pioneers in climate change research what he thought of offsets, he put it very succinctly, "The science is doubtful and the social policy is worse."

Social Policy

Let's start with the social policy. No matter how hard you spin it, you don't get around the fact that essentially offsets are rich people paying so that they can maintain their unsustainable lifestyles. I find it particularly unfortunate that in the Travel Industry we have been especially self-deprecating by singling out the carbon footprint of travel to be offset. Conferences brag about being carbon neutral by paying offsets by all the carbon generated by the event. Travelers are encouraged to pay to offset carbon generated by their vacations. It is as if we believed that carbon produced by travel melts more glaciers than the carbon that we all generate in the rest of our lives. If our lifestyles are as unsustainable as the practice of offsets suggests, it seems to me that we need to change our lifestyles rather than paying to get ourselves off the hook. But if we are going to buy offsets, we should at least buy them for our entire carbon footprint, not just pick on travel. Finally even a cursory look at the literature makes it pretty clear that either offsets do not have the slightest potential to make a dent in the problem, or the threat of climate change is highly exaggerated. Hope for this second possibility is getting slimmer every day. When pressed offset supporters admit that offsets per se are not effective. Then they go on to defend offsets as the solution of last resort. After you have done everything possible to reduce your greenhouse gas admissions, they suggest, if you absolutely have to engage in polluting activities, it is better than nothing to pay some money that will be used to alleviate the theory. A quick perusal at the ecommerce sites dedicated to selling offsets shows that in almost all of them the idea of reducing emissions is dwarfed by the aggressive promoting of the sale of offsets. "You can balance it out. Undoing your contribution to global warming is easier than you think. Gaia Absolution (I made up this name) is simple, affordable and verified. Be part of the solution." Goes the pitch on one of the more prominent and splashy sites. This same site also offered a volume discount of as much as 28% on the cost for mile car offsets. The more you drive the less you pay per mile. When I pointed this out, the CEO of the company that owns the site said it was due to a "rounding error," and promised that it would be corrected immediately. All the sites claim that the offsets are verified. I have yet to figure out who verifies the verifiers. No place could I find an offset ecommerce site that promotes the idea of a high enough carbon tax to actually reduce emissions enough to make a difference, and, hopefully, but the offset brokers out of business. Nor do I find any evidence that offsets does anything other than help people justify high levels of consumption. A friend of mine who works for a prominent magazine dedicated to travel, adventure and sustainability admitted in a conversation in which she was defending offsets that when she first became aware of the implications of climate crisis she stopped heli-skiing. "If I was going to ski I was going to walk to the top of the mountain." Than she

found out about offsets and started heli-skiing again. The other defense of offsets is that even though their effect is minimal they sound good, because they "raise consciousness" and/or are a "good start." Sounds good, but the argument does not stand up to even minimal scrutiny. Is there any reason to believe that when Al Gore pays offsets for the carbon footprint of his 3 houses and his private jet travel that it is a start towards him raising his consciousness to make some real sacrifices to tighten his carbon belt? Is their historical evidence that offsets work as an educational tool or a good start? Did the Catholic Church selling indulgences for sinful behavior in the middle ages serve as start for people to learn to sin less or did it just encourage them to keep sinning, while buying them less time in purgatory? I am not saying here that selling indulgences for rape and pillage is the moral equivalent to selling offsets for a quick getaway to Cancun. But it is in the same spirit. I am also not saying that our lifestyles are sinful. My view is that rather than being sinful, we are human. And being human we are not saints. Al Gore does not fly around private jets because he is bad; he flies around in private jets because he can afford to---as would I. It seems to me hypocritical to criticize Al Gore for using private jets unless you have enough money to be able to do so and do not. But it also seems to me that a regime that allows the most prominent spokesman in the US for doing something about climate change to have an extraordinarily large carbon footprint in the long run is bound to breed more cynicism about sustainability than converts, no matter how effective it is in the short run. What I am saying is that the cause of sustainability and dealing with the impacts of climate crisis would be much better served if we stopped trying to hoodwink ourselves and others into thinking we can offset our carbon footprints. If we feel guilty about our carbon footprints we should reduce them or get over our guilt. We can't fool the glaciers into melting less. What's more, all of the above assumes that the money that received from the offset buyers is spent honestly. That is a hopelessly optimistic assumption. While there must be instances in which the money is being honestly spent on projects that promise to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, there also must be many other instances in which to put it bluntly the money is being ripped off. Costa Rica In a way even more pernicious than the out and out rip offs is offset money going to good causes dishonestly represented. An example of this is that the majority of the money spent for offsets in Costa Rica is used to protect old growth forest in parks and reserves. It is logical that it should be this way. Costa Rica is famous for protecting old growth tropical forests and an impressive percentage of the national territory is under protection. Furthermore maintaining old growth forest is a very worthy cause. There is one small problem. Old growth tropical forests are carbon neutral; they do not offset any carbon. Reforestation of pastures sequesters carbon, but in Costa Rica very little of the carbon offset money goes into reforestation, because the owners of the pastures are dispersed and not connected to the international networks that dole out the offset money. Also, in many cases the money for offsets is not enough to reforest a pasture. It is only enough to protect a forest that you are going to protect anyway. Gotta pay those administrative and marketing costs. What you do get with offsets is a whole industry with a vested interest against carbon taxes that would be high enough to actually reduce the amount of carbon we generate. As I pointed out above, with a high carbon tax, the offset brokers are going to have to find other work. While carbon offsets do not get you a whole lot of sustainability, what they do get you is hype. Google Carbon Neutral and you get 1,930,000 results. and you get 1,930,000 results. Costa Rica's Nature Air, Silverjet and Netjets all claim to be the world's first carbon neutral aviation company. I lost count at 25 "first" carbon neutral conferences. All through the magic of offsets. By and large the media reports all this with a straight face.

Media Darlings

Right now carbon neutrality through offsets is a media darling. Years ago a week did not go by when some journalist did not ask me up about what we were doing to support local communities. Now the media wouldn't notice if we were running a white slavery operation in a local community as long as it was carbon neutral. Media darlings have a way of becoming media goats. Almost certainly in my view the press is going to start to investigate the most ridiculous claims and how the money is spent. They will concentrate on the worse abuses and tar good and bad with the same brush. As somebody said, "The new yellow journalism is green."

Science

Which brings me to the science: Every responsible scientist that I can find believes that the climate is changing, and that on balance the impacts will be more or less catastrophic. As time goes on, the direr the predictions of responsible mainstream scientists. The most pessimistic, people like James Lovelock, go so far as to contemplate the possibility that eventually climate change will threaten civilization, as we know it. There is slightly less agreement about the relative roles of man-made factors and natural cycles, but the great preponderance of evidence is that human kind has played a decisive and negative role especially by the production and releasing of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Up until this point the picture is pretty clear, but as soon as we get to where in the cycle we are now, and what we should be doing about it, the clarity dissolves. My friend Robert Aglow won an Emmy for producing a documentary on climate change for ABC news some 12 years ago. He has been avidly following the topic ever since. In a recent email he gave me his "dispassionate" take in on where the science stands now, "There is no way to determine if we are at a tipping point, or tipping points because the best scientists in the world can't predict exactly how or when the various positive feedback scenarios (they call them positive feedback which is misleading, of course, since they have very negative effects) they are beginning to concentrate on will play out." So if this is the case what do we do? Here's Aglow again. "So to your question of whether we build dykes and floating cities and the rest or come up with real alternative fuel sources and sustainable living models, the answer is that both are necessary simultaneously." Looking at the Problem In my view it is not so much a matter of what to do about the problem as how to look at the problem. When we dedicate time and treasure to sustainability we are not buying sustainability in the sense that when we buy a car we get a car. Way before the carbon neutrality bandwagon, money and time spent on sustainability was an investment, not a purchase. And investment intrinsically means risk. Invest in eliminating DDT maybe we get non-toxic produce and mother's milk; maybe we get 800,000 deaths from malaria. In this case we got both. Since we are talking about investing, the golden rules about investing apply: Above all, diversify among high risk/high return and tried and true initiatives. Beware of bubbles and bandwagons. If everybody bets on the same thing you get a bubble. The great offset fever that we are witnessing at the moment with everybody racing to be the first or the biggest carbon neutral this or carbon neutral that is the sustainability equivalent of the .com bubble of the nineties and the housing bubble that is in the process of bursting at the moment. Bubbles always burst. Above all diversify. The most aggressive sustainability investors will want to make massive investments in carbon neutrality. At the same time it is still worthwhile and vital to continue to protect wildlife and wildlands -- biodiversity will always be important whatever happens with the climate. For some investing to protect an important work of art or architecture will still be the right answer. We can't be expected to do a good job with nature if we neglect the great works of man. Finally by all means helping local communities support themselves

and become self-sufficient is still the lynch pin of sustainability in the developing world -- and often the weak link. If the dire predictions of climate change play out as many of us fear, local communities will be more vulnerable than ever. In short (and in my personal opinion) anything but offsets. Of course if you would have bought indulgences in the middle ages, buy offsets now. The offset brokers gotta live too--and it just might get you some good press ... for a while.

Addendum

Since I first wrote this a few weeks ago, I have become increasingly aware of something more troubling than the dubious science and social policy. That is a concerted effort to stifle dissent with zeal worthy of the Bush administration. Responsible critics of offsets like Bjorn Lomborg the Danish environmentalist are vilified. I am not sure whether this intolerance of dissent is due the amount of money there is to be made with offsets of political correctness. I suspect both. Several people have told me in private that they agree with my views on offsets, but would not say so in public. I asked one of them why not and he told me that he lived in Berkeley.

Building Report:What's Next?

Here's a quick report to bring you up to speed with what will be taking place on our 2008 building calendar.

Couple's Cabin

One of our first priorities upon arriving back to Mastatal will be to build the wattle and daub/bamboo walls for our newest structure, the couple's cabin. JENNA DIMARE, a gifted architecture student at Brown University in Providence, RI, drew up some beautiful plans for the

interior space that will hopefully be receiving visitors not too long after the New Year. We'll begin hauling sand, clay and manure out to the site in early December in preparation for the *baile de mierda* that will shortly thereafter ensue. We'll also be focusing on some landscaping in that area.



Tim and others help with the timberframe roof of the couple's cabin (AKA "el nido" - "the nest")

photo by Rachel Jackson

Classroom

As I write this, GILBERTH and ALEX are framing out and roofing a new addition to our beautiful classroom. Once this work is done, it will be our responsibility to install the stairs and floor for the extension that will greatly enhance the use of this space. Before too long, the classroom will boast a new lab area and a hangout corner with rockers and a hammock or two. The multi-purpose location will be yet more versatile with the completion of the ad-on.

Toolshed

Now that the new kitchen is fully functional, it's time to get to work on the new toolshed to enable us to relocate the tools to make space in the current bodega for kitchen pantry items. And speaking of the bodega, it's currently receiving a little facelift in the form of a roof extension off of the front

of the main house as this slowly evolves into the Ranch's principle entrance. It will be a glorious day when we're able to move the tools into their new home, to be located close to where they are most needed, in between the barn and workshop.

We'll certainly be working on more than just the aforementioned projects. We are seriously considering the addition of some chickens and a goat this year, as we continue the measured shift towards more diversity. And depending on manpower, time, energy and money, we're pretty fired up to get our human methane bio-digester up and running at some point in 2008.

Happy Building.



Geoff playing with poo

Volunteer/Guest Gossip: Bioneers and Emerald City Peaks

October 19th through October 22nd marked the third annual Bioneers by the Bay: Connecting for Change Conference held in Marion, MA. Not only is this an opportunity to partake in one of the most incredible symposiums held anywhere in the world, but like last year, it was a chance to reunite with close friends from the Ranch. This year's group included ARI and JENNA; ELINOR, her soon-to-born little boy or girl and her partner TOMAS from France; CARIE PULVERMAN, and ANDREA GAINES; A. SMITH, THE H FACTOR, ELYSSA and KRISTEN, all coming up from Montclair, NJ; TYLER,

ROBIN, me and of course our gracious hosts GEOFF and DESA.

Desa, now the Executive Director of the Marion Institute, the organization who puts on the workshop, succeeded in organizing one of the most inspirational gatherings possible on social justice and the environment. Speakers included movement leaders such as John F. Kennedy Jr., Van Jones, John Perkins, Bill McKibbin, Rha Goddess, acclaimed author Naomi Wolf, Will Allen, Simran Sethi, Dr. Joia Mukherjee of Partners for Health, Diane Wilson, and others. The plenaries filled the morning with uplifting and often times frightening stories about the state of our world while experts in fields ranging from natural building to local currencies dominated the afternoons.

One of the many highlights for Ranchees was the chance to meet with, talk, and listen to Sandor Ellix Katz, the author of Wild Fermentation, one of the new bibles of our new kitchen. Van Jones, an activist working to combine solutions to social inequality and environmental destruction and founder of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights brought down the house with an emotional speech about bringing the poor into the fold of the green movement. Check out his work at <http://www.ellabakercenter.org>. Van for president! With so much talk these days about a possible war with Iran, Blackwater, border closings, torture, deaths in Iraq, and unbelievable natural disasters, Bioneers was an opportunity to feel hope again. Just as last year, we left the conference inspired to continue our good work and labor to oust the criminals currently running our country. Above and beyond this though was an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful New England fall

with some of the coolest people to ever walk this Earth. May Bioneers continue to act to not only change the way people think about the world, but also provide an incredible opportunity to reconnect with our growing community at the Ranch. So, mark your calendars for the third week of October, 2008 and sign up with the Marion Institute (<http://www.marioninstitute.org>) so that you can keep abreast of Desa and her amazing work.

For more information on what to do about global warming, see Bill McKibben's website <http://stepitup07.org>. For all sorts of information on the benefits and importance of fermentation, see Sandor Ellix Katz's website <http://www.wildfermentation.com>. And for more information about what happened this past October at Bioneers, see <http://www.connectingforchange.org>. If you're looking for some new books that will rock your world, check out the following:

- *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan
- *Whispering in the Giant's Ear: A Frontline Chronicle from Bolivia's War on Globalization* by William Powers
- *The End of America: A Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot* by Naomi Wolf
- *Ethical Markets: Growing the Green Economy*
- *EXPOSED: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What's at Stake for American Power* by Mark Shapiro
- *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* by John Perkins
- *An Unreasonable Woman* by Diane Wilson

And for flicks check out *Two Angry Moms* and *King Corn*.

We'd like to thank Desa and Geoff and Desa's wonderful parents HANK and NANCY for being such amazing hosts for the sometimes rowdy crew. All A. Smith's fault of course.



A foundation project to get the community to paint the walls of the Mastatal community center

Community Facts/Stories: High Hopes for Community Library

For many of you reading this, your experience in Mastatal has had a profound impact on the way that you think, act, work and live your everyday life. Since your visit to the Ranch, how many times have you fondly thought back to your experience in our community? How frequently have you dreamed about the waterfalls, the forests, the sense of community, the simple living and the people of Mastatal? How does that experience permeate your life today? What are you currently doing to improve the state of our planet, your local politics, or the way that your individual actions affect other people in

this country and abroad? How are you building community in your life, family, and neighborhood? Today's challenges are perhaps the most daunting in recent history. The trials of global warming

and widespread poverty and their proposed solutions can seem at times overwhelming. We are being called upon to take part in the most important revolution of our lives. Our leaders need to hear from us more than ever.

The [Mastate Charitable Foundation](#) is doing its part by working tirelessly to bring to the forefront the importance of living sustainably and simply; of raising our kids in a safe, productive and enlightening environment; and of rescuing the world's forests. Our latest and largest project will be a naturally built community learning and sharing center (CLSC) that will foster environmentalism, activism, and youth and woman's leadership in our small community. We envision the structure to be a gathering point constructed by local hands with native materials and resident knowledge. A place to learn, conduct responsible business, read, rest, and tell stories.

The CLSC will cultivate creative ideas about how to grow as a community, how to do business, how to be healthy, and how to share, learn and hope while simultaneously creating a responsible development model for Costa Rica and the rest of the world. Given the dire state of our environment and the increasing societal problems of poverty, crime, prostitution, drug addiction and child labor, it's essential to create examples of hope. Communities where others can learn or re-learn what it is to be a compassionate human. To be stewards of not only our families and communities but also of the ecological bounty that we are recklessly trashing with our irresponsible lifestyles. The CLSC is an important piece of the puzzle for Mastatal. Today we'd like to ask for your help in bringing this project to fruition. For the past two years we have been establishing the groundwork for this dream. We are now ready to take the next step of gathering materials and breaking ground. We have already raised approximately \$5,000 for the upcoming construction and with another \$25,000 we can see this project through to completion. Your contribution will create much-needed jobs and instill confidence and pride in the local population as we raise this model structure in the center of our town. Help us by joining the movement to make this world a better place to live. To make a tax-deductible contribution, please send a check to:

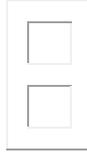
Desa VanLaarhoven
Executive Director
The Marion Institute
3 Barnabas Road
Marion, MA 02738

Or donate to the Mastate Charitable Foundation on their website at <http://www.mastate-foundation.org/> (or in the green box above) and make your gift using Paypal.

As always, not one penny of your contribution will go towards salaries or administrative costs. MCF is run by volunteers with 100% of its donations put directly towards the projects in which they are intended. Thank you in advance for your caring, and for your suggestions on how we might improve our work.

Grandes abrazos,





The Mastate Charitable Foundation



*Freshly baked bread from the Mastatal cob oven
photo by Claudio Pinzauti*

Comida Corner: Chocolate Peanut Butter Ice Cream Sandies

These scrumptious treats, brought to us by RACHEL CROWLEY, are simply amazing! According to ROBIN, this was the best dessert she had ever tasted at the Ranch. And that's saying something.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

For the cookie:

- 10 Tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 ½ ounces unsweetened chocolate, melted and cool

- 2 Tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 2/3 cups unbleached white flour
- ½ teaspoon salt

1. Sift together the cocoa powder, flour and salt, set aside.
2. In an electric mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until fluffy and pale.
3. Add ½ of the beaten egg until fully incorporated into the mix
4. Add the melted chocolate
5. On a low speed, add the mixture of dry ingredients and mix until fully incorporated
6. Scoop the dough into tablespoon size balls. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet and press down flat, to about ¼" thick. They will bake exactly how you shape them so make sure they are nice and circular!
7. Bake at 350 degrees F for 4-5 minutes, after they have cooled a bit, carefully transfer to a wire rack.

Makes about 24 cookies; or 12 sandwiches.

For filling:

Banana ice cream

We just purée frozen bananas and a little plain homemade yogurt and put it in the freezer. After approximately 4 hours, it will have frozen some, if you let it freeze all the way it will be too hard, so use it before it gets to that point. When the cookies are cool and the ice cream is ready, spread a

little peanut butter on one cookie. We just purée peanuts for the peanut butter and use it plain but you can use a store bought product if you want. Place a scoop of ice cream on top and finish it off with the top cookie. Enjoy right away if the ice cream is hard enough, or store back in the freezer.

¡Buen Provecho!

F?tbol Follies: We are the Champions

Those were the words belting out of the stereo at El Cubillón Restaurant in Guarumal after our convincing defeat of Chires in the finals that we have been keeping you up to speed on over the past many months. JUNIOR, ALEX and TIMO were elated to be part of the Guarumal championship squad and within days they had honorary statues of the three of them dominating Guarumal's downtown square. The day of the victory was by all estimates a glorious one. That morning, when driving with all of the Ranch and Mastatal supporters to the game held in Gamalotillo, about an hour and 20 minutes from Mastatal, we passed through the ghost town that was Guarumal. It seemed as if the entire community had boarded up their homes to sacrifice their day to root on the hometown team for the big game. When we arrived to the stadium, a newly built all-seater recently renamed Intel Field, we spotted a local Blue Bird school bus that had indeed hauled the entirety of Guarumal's population to the game to support their beloved Los Verdes. This was the first appearance in a final that the Guarumal team had made in well over a decade. Many people could not even remember the last time this had happened, prompting some theories of this actually being the first "campeonato" final ever for this town of 250 or so inhabitants. Regardless, it was certainly the first for the vast majority of the team members that would step on to the field that day, including the threesome from Mastatal. MAURICIO, the team's dominant central defender, was the only player fortunate enough to play in such a big game, though not with his hometown boys.

The third place game, held before the final, ended with the host team, Gamolotillo, taking down the squad from Vista del Mar, 2-0. The game succeeded in whetting the appetites of the masses that were congregating for the day's main event. The pre-game was a bit unique. Usually this would entail a few cigarettes and butt slaps as players donned the green uniforms and laced up their boots, but today was no normal day in the world of Costa Rica's rural fútbol. In an unusually quiet room, players went through their normal routines though cigarettes today were curiously absent. They were replaced in part by a soccer ball and pen, being passed around to all of the players, to be signed as a reminder of this momentous occasion. It was a particularly emotional time for me as game day also happened to be the birthday of my dead father. I secretly asked him to give us a little boost in exchange for my dedication of a victory to him. I must admit that it brought some pre-match tears to my eyes. And once they dried up, it was showtime. When prompted we headed out on to the field to cheers from the Guarumal fans, and to our surprise, the cheers of many other folks who had come to support the small, even for these parts, team from alli. The referee, making good money for arbitrating the final, checked our cleats for illegal studs and bodies for jewelry before we headed out onto the pitch for a little kick-around. Soon after, the whistle blew and the game was underway. Not five minutes later the bad guys from Chires scored the first goal of the match, taking advantage of a defensive mishap by los Verdes. You could hear the collective gasp of Guarumal fans as the excitement of the day quickly deflated with drooping heads. But thankfully, there was still plenty of time. The tough team from Chires kept the pressure up for the most of the first half; Guarumal narrowly escaping goals on a number of good attacks. And then, retribution. WILLY,

one of our stars, scored on an impossible angle to tie the score at 1-1. The elation was again short-lived as Chires countered with a goal 5 minutes later. We went into the half down my 1.

The hot day was taking its toll and the dampened spirit at halftime was a bit worrisome. Nevertheless, there was a second half to be played. About one minute into the last half of the tournament ERIC CHAVARRIA, another of our top players and in my opinion the tournament's MVP, tied the score on a breakaway caused by a mistake by the Chires defense. Emotions buoyed again and before the crowd had the chance to settle down, los Verdes added another, this time by CHRISTIAN, to go up 3-2 for the first time of the afternoon. Not five minutes later fans were witness to the golazo of the tournament. A blistering shot by Guarumal's midfielder HERMES that would prove to seal the deal. Good guys 4, bad guys 2. Spirited play continued to the final whistle though that would be it for the scoring. At the final whistle, Guarumal's entourage poured on to the field as the Imperial tap opened up wide. After a few beers and a fair chunk of celebrating (and a minor accident to the Ranch's red truck thanks to the raucous masses), the party migrated to El Cubillón Bar, owned by one of the game's stars Hermes' family. The partying continued well into the night even though the Mastatal crew had to head out early with a pretty major buzz and suitcases waiting to be packed for Tim and Robin's trip back to the States the next day. What a way to end the year!

Inspirational Impressions: Thinking

Story by Jung of a conversation with a chief of the Pueblo Indians: Jung asked the chief's opinion of the white man and was told that it was not a high one. White people, said Ochwiay Bianco, seem always upset, always restlessly looking for something, with the result that their faces are covered with wrinkles. He added that white men must be crazy because they think with their heads, and it is well-known that only crazy people do that. Jung asked in surprise how the Indian thought, to which Ochwiay Bianco replied that naturally he thought with his heart.

----- Laurens van der Post

Abrazos,

The Ranch Crew