

Dear all

Here in Panajachel it is fair time again. The annual celebration of the town's patron saint is coming up this weekend, so the streets have slowly been filling up with makeshift stalls and ferris wheels of all sizes, parked on the main square. This caused an increase in traffic jams in the already narrow streets, as you can imagine. In our family, Lungi is the only one getting excited about this time of year. She loves dragging any willing soul with her to go ride the wheels or to try and win some plastic trinket at one of the game booths.

We have enjoyed several visits since April, from such faraway places as upstate New York, California and South Africa! Our friends, Nate and Addy, was here again for a few weeks - Addy has come down every year since we live here! My mom finally made it across the Atlantic and proved to be a world class traveler at the age of 69! She came for two months and we all wished she stayed longer! It was a real blessing to see her face again, after five years of separation. The kids got to know their grandma better and she was blessed watching their little developing characters. I was so proud of her courage and positive attitude, especially when we were without running water for five days! She is a trooper. She didn't get sick even once and got along bravely with a few words of Spanish, meandering the streets, bargaining and shopping for presents. Now she is talking of gathering some free airmiles and wants to come again next year! Yeah! That's what we want to hear! Also, Michael's aunt and cousin finally came to visit after "threatening" to do so for years. Aunt Mary embarked on this adventure in spite of her 80 years (dig that!)- Cousin Kathi and her two children had a riotous time shopping and squeezing in as much of Guatemala as would fit in six days! It took us a week to recover from this intense visit, but we have great memories to remind us of a wonderful time with the fam!

After a decade of keeping the idea of pets at bay, we finally succumbed to the kids' pleas and finely tuned arguments in favor of their case. They are now the proud owners of two guinea pigs. (We are secretly surprised that the animals are still alive and flourishing after four months, not to mention the kids' maintained interest in them.) They have proved to be responsible caretakers. Good preparation for the day we have a bigger crowd of animals on our little farm!

Last time we wrote we mentioned our ageing vehicle. We had a heartwarming response to the fundraiser for a new truck, from friends up in the States as well as all the way from Shetland Islands! We are so grateful for the help and encouragement. We have been looking out for the right deal here in Guatemala, and pray we are guided clearly to take the big step in the exact direction at the perfect time. We often talk about how we came to buy our van back in 1996, and wish it would happen again as divinely orchestrated as that time. We will keep you all posted and send a picture of the Robertses new wheels.

Talking about pictures...The Crossroads website has changed its address and have tons of photos which I'm sure you would enjoy. If you have the opportunity, go to <http://www.crossroadscafe.bluegillweb.com>

Our phone numbers have changed as well recently - an extra DIGIT was added in front (yet, you don't need an extra FINGER to call us!)

Home: 502-5396 9400; cell: 502-5211 1596

Two weeks ago a young couple arrived here from Alabama. Brett & Havilah wrote to us a year ago, asking about the possibility of apprenticing. They offered to come help us for six months in trade for learning all about running a coffee shop. Their dream is to open a cafe in Birmingham, AL one day, and after meeting Michael here, they felt he was the man they wanted to learn from. So, after much praying and writing back and forth, they are here. They fit in well, are learning little by little, and getting used to TRF's eccentric ways (The Roberts Family, in case you missed that one). We are happy to have them here, to pray with and to share our burdens.

One more good story : Just before Easter Week, earlier this year, Michael was robbed at gun point down in the shop. He was just closing the door after the last customers left at 8pm, when two guys came in and pulled their pistols out. He remained calm and talked them out of tying him up, or going upstairs where the girls and I were blissfully unaware of what was going on. He actually gave them some Bible tract and told them that Jesus Christ can give them a brand new life. All this time he thought he was going to die for sure - they did not even mask their faces and the guns was steadily pointed at him. They finally left with about \$60 only, and no one hurt! We know for sure that God's angels were protecting our family, as He continues to do. Michael says it happened for his own good, because he was reminded of how violently uncertain life is, and how ready we have to be to face God on the other side. It's amazing how one's perspective changes in moments like these.



Just as I am writing to you, the kids come running up to me with some poems they wrote this afternoon. This is a rare event - I usually have a hard time getting them excited about creative writing. Since it happened so spontaneously, I decided to include them for your entertainment.

Here's Lungi:

The Vines

What are the vines doing
On the silver fence
The fence can grow
Many things
Vines, Ivy, and Christmas lights
But it can not hold
The vine of love
That holds my family together
Because God will keep it safe

And Kasia:

Fairest Wheel

The fairest wheel goes round and round,
Twirling back and forth
The seats go up and down
The people on them holler and yell
The big spokes making a rainbow as they run
The lights on the spokes flashing
On and off, on and off
The numbers on the seats
Twirling by your sight
The scenery whizzing by your view
My tummy rumbles
With the thought of going on this ride
It is our friend, the Fairest Wheel

Many hugs and lots of love from TRF!

Crossroads Cafe

Panajachel

GUATEMALA

