



Jeff & Diane Brown to Venezuela with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention



Of the kids, by the kids, and for the kids...



Daniel:

I have fun at soccer. I like my teacher, Miss Claire. She's nice and I like school. I like music class a lot. We're studying Pocahontas in history. I liked the music they had at the parade on Costa Rican independence day. They were all dressed up neat, too. I liked going to the Ambassador's house (on the 4th of July), and the games and frozen yogurt there. It was really good.



Alyssa:

My two best friends here left, and now I have a new best friend here, Faith and Laura. And please pray for us when we get to Venezuela.

Recent Events...

We went to the US Ambassador's complex for the Fourth of July. Alyssa played with a clown and the clown's big sheepdog puppet while we waited in line to get in. Once inside, everything was red-white-and-blue. It felt kind of like a county fair, with food and games, face-painting and music, balloons and lots of people everywhere. We gringos were especially happy to see the bagel booth, bagels not being a typical Costa Rican food. Alyssa pet the oxen, and rode in the oxcart. Daniel played the games and generally enjoyed running around.



Diane got to be in the wedding of two great friends of ours in Lincoln on July 31st. It was a whirlwind three day trip that she loved. Thanks to the bride and groom, Mitzi & Tim Dungan, for making it possible....in more ways than one!



Jeff got to go white water rafting with some guys from Costa Rica, England, USA, and Canada. It was his first time. It was on the Río Pacuare which drains into the Carribean, with class 3 & 4 rapids. Some parts of the river go through high narrow canyons, other parts in between mountains. Lots of waterfalls. It's indescribably beautiful. Nobody on his raft was thrown out, although others on other rafts were, and one raft completely overturned. Then four weeks later, both Jeff and Diane went and enjoyed it together.

In early August we took the second of three verbal exams that determine our overall Spanish progress. We both did well, Jeff moving up into the Advanced level.



Of course some big August news is that we got to play bridge for the first time overseas! ¡Que bueno!



During the 18 day break between trimesters we did a little home schooling with our kids. We have never home-schooled before, and in Venezuela we plan to supplement the kids' Venezuelan (in Spanish) schooling with some home schooling. The kids loved it. Diane arranged some neat field trips, and Jeff worked with them on science, PE, and math.



Special thanks to all of you dear friends and family members for your thoughtful birthday presents for Daniel and Alyssa in September. You can not know how exciting it is for them to receive these love gifts from "home". And for all of the wonderful care packages ... i.e. the sugar-free instant cappuccino packets, the Oxford Picture Dictionary, the Pampered Chef goodies from Joni T., Theresa H., Marcia C., et. al. THANK YOU!

We experienced two earthquakes (Jeff's first ever) in August. The first one was when we were at school. It was a 4.7 magnitude. The second one, a 6.4, happened at 4:00 a.m. It sounded as if someone was knocking loudly on the front door, and the whole bedroom was shaking. It woke Jeff up, which is really saying something. Many neighbors hurried outside, and people had radios and televisions going. (Diane never once thought of going outside.) Of course, Daniel and Alyssa slept right through it. Funny thing is that the day before, at the Museo de los Niños (Children's Museum), the kids got to feel what an earthquake feels like by standing on a special vibrating platform, as well as learn the right position to be in, should an earthquake occur.



This final trimester, instead of taking regular classes, Diane is in a program called FARO. FARO emphasizes talking with people in the community with planned texts, with an instructor at the school monitoring her progress. She's really enjoyed getting into the culture and community.



Jeff will begin teaching English to Nicaraguan immigrants. Costa Ricans tend to be prejudiced against them, and there are few services for them. A new church is starting specifically for them, and is offering classes in electricity, sewing, and English, among others. It will be a good mutually beneficial opportunity for Jeff.



Monte and Adam and Daniel painting the school.

I Am NOT Having Culture Shock!

When Diane noticed that Harold, one of her teachers, was left-handed, she remarked (in Spanish) to him that her husband and both of her children are left-handed. Unfortunately, she used the word for pig, instead of the word for left-handed! The rumor that Jeff is a pig spread through the campus like wildfire! That's *zurdos*, not *cerdos*. (Both the "z" and the "c" are pronounced like our "s".)



Where do you put toilet paper after you use it? Here's guessing that you put it in.....hmm.....the toilet? Well, in Costa Rica, customarily you put it in a small garbage can beside the toilet. Apparently the sewage treatment system doesn't accommodate paper products very well.



As we were praying together with three other neighborhood families on a recent evening, out on the porch of one of the families, what sounded like a series of bombs went off nearby. Actually, they were a type of fireworks used by Catholic churches to signal some special day or event. They do sound like bombs, and they do sound like they are next door, but we are used to them by now, and only jump at the first one. The sound of bombs is an interesting accompaniment to prayer.

It's interesting that most houses have a little mailbox on their gates somewhere, but we never see mail carriers. We're told that they exist, but our bills come without an envelope, and just get stuck in our gate by the guy from the electric company on a motorcycle. Families are very big here, and usually live on the same street, or very often, next door to each other. So, when Diane saw "Buzon" on one of these mailboxes, she assumed that was the family's name. Then, it seemed as if every mailbox she saw had "Buzon" written on it. Wow, what a big family! It was months later that she found out that "Buzon" is the Spanish word for mailbox!

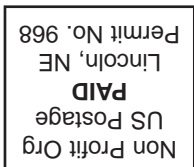


Psalm 17:8 says, "Keep me as the apple of your eye." But in Spanish it's, "Guard me like the little girl of your eyes." The saying "apple of your eye" makes complete sense in English, but wouldn't even begin to make sense to a country that has to import all their apples.



The first time we saw the large crocodiles in a river that empties out on a beach we were heading for, we asked a guide, "Do these crocodiles go down the river into the ocean." His "encouraging" reply was, "Oh, don't worry about the crocodiles. If they go in the ocean, the sharks will get them." Very funny!


News from Jeff & Diane





New Covenant Community Church
6000 S. 84th
Lincoln NE 68516


"It Takes a Village...."


Highlighting the contributions of some of our friends, because it takes a community of people to successfully prepare, move, and support a family going overseas to serve.

 Tom & Melissa Clemmons of Ft. Worth, Texas for sending us medicines and other goodies that they know from personal experience are hard to get here.

 Kirk, Cindy, Craig, and Lauren Conger of Lincoln for having us in their home for not one, but two extended periods of time -- after seminary, and right before coming to Costa Rica -- and making us feel at home.

 Jim & Peggy Cramer (Diane's mom) of Pacific Junction, Iowa for storing things, bringing things, sending us things, etc., etc., etc.

 Betsy Cunningham of either the USA or China or Thailand, for encouragement and wisdom while at seminary, helping us understand our future career better.

 Dorsey Derrick of Osceola, Iowa for introducing us to the folks at the Baptist Church in Osceola, whose support we sense across the miles.

If you know somebody who would like to receive **BROWNEWS**, send their address to:

Sue Thomsen at either:
7650 Cross Creek Circle
Lincoln Ne 68516; or
glrthomsen@juno.com.

If for some reason you would like to discontinue receiving these newsletters, or would like information about our Prayer Community, let Sue know.

Hittin' the Road

We are moving soon, December 11, to Caracas, Venezuela, now that we know Spanish soooo well! Until we know exactly where we will live and how we can be contacted there, here's the deal. There is a Venezuela address that is less reliable, takes longer, and is generally free for us on our end. It is for regular envelopes and small packages in padded envelopes. Here it is: Jeff or Diane Brown, Junta Misionera Forenea, Apartado 80920, Caracas 1080-A, Estado Miranda, VENEZUELA. There is a Miami address that is safer and quicker, but will cost us \$11 per kilogram plus \$3.41 per package. So for important stuff, here it is: Jeff or Diane Brown, CCS 3014, PO Box 02-5323, Miami FL 33102. Our e-mail address won't change when we move.

E-mail address: caracasbrown@bigfoot.com
Website: www.townbeacon.com/caracasbrown
(We are planning to update this soon.)