

Olivia Metzger's Visit

Don's daughter and friend Alex, both recent Yale graduates, came to CR last week for a whirlwind 5-day stay (Olivia) and part of a longer Central America trek (Alex, a Yale basketball star). After staying the first night at my place in San Jose, we were off at the crack of dawn back toward my current excavation project on a high terrace overlooking the Pacific between Playas Hermosa and Panama in Guanacaste, NW CR. Olivia had expressed uncertainty in lead-up emails about where exactly to go in CR for such a short stay, but they finally settled on the Pacific coast, so I was then able to put them up for two more nights in a big suite that I have, fairly luxe, as part of the project package, with rental car, that I have been provided with by the new owners of the Costa Blanca beach hotel (they will rename it The Point, renovate it and build more).

It was a pleasure to meet these recent Yalies (surely I wasn't so young after I graduated, right?), hear their stories and early career choices (I know I wasn't as responsible or forward-looking) and save them some \$ in their travels. So, like Joe and Surella Feit, they visited the excavations, seemed suitably impressed, but their real interest was to spend some time together at the beautiful beaches nearby. They didn't seem keen when I asked them if they wanted to wash some of our just-excavated pre-Columbian pottery; can't imagine why anyone wouldn't share my fascination with rocks and crocks, but one learns these things as one matures. We cruised through a typical small campo, non-beach tourism town on their way out, and then they were off to one of the big volcanoes and a tropical forest tour.

My excavation project just gets more and more interesting, as there is now some indication that the 30+ rock cemetery features may be arranged in a representative fashion, a la the giant Nazca line figures in the Peruvian desert, so big that they can only be appreciated from the air today. Our cemetery is nothing like that scale, but two months of hand shoveling seem to be revealing a definite patterning that may turn out to represent overall one or more stylized figures, human or animal, which would be a first in all of Costa Rican archaeology. I have lots of photos and just was able to install a new computer system, but don't yet have the high-speed connection, which requires a trip to the national electric company and a letter from the owner of my rented house and phone in San Jose--just don't have the time to do it in the 11/2 working days I occasionally have in town to take care of other errands. Plus I have now been asked to teach a Masters course at the Univ. of Costa Rica on Mondays, so that too is underway. Although I haven't mastered (nor will I ever, I'm afraid) my new system, I'll try to attach one photo here, but may have to wait until next weekend, at which time I will send a few to Robin or Cliff for them to pass on or put on their web sites as before.

Really look forward to all the list mails when I come back to San Jose, especially the science topics like the recent highest temp discussion (as if I could understand the equations, but no matter...) and the links that so many of you provide--so helpful and interesting to those like me who don't know how or where to access these things. Maybe when I'm older I'll learn how to attach links myself.

Michael