

Rancho Mastatal Updates

July 2006

All is quiet on the Mastatal front again after the departure of TIBURON's dynamic and spunky Center High group. They worked on a plethora of interesting projects during their stay while seeing and experiencing much of the area's natural and cultural attractions.

We concluded their stay in Mastatal with a bang by organizing and hosting an Awards Night/Pizza Party that many of us won't forget for a long time. Monty Python was the theme, coconut powered horses and all. There was no lack of laughter and of course, as always, the pizzas were to die for. Thanks to ALLIE for womaning the fire, to KATTIA and LAURA for working their magic with the dough, and to everyone else that made it yet another hugely successful final night for another group.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to express thanks to BRITTA CULBERTSON for helping Tom lead this group on their little rainforest adventure. July brought the return of our new friend COURTNEY BEAVERS, our good buddy RICK BAILEY's new partner and sailing companion. She'll be joining us for a month or so before heading north to Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. Rick's spending a few months in Seattle getting his business in order before returning to Costa Rica to set sail again for South America. Courtney's been a fabulous presence so far at the Ranch.

As I write this Robin is with her family in the Madeira Islands spreading the ashes of her grandmother. She's spending about 10 days there with her parents and sister getting reacquainted with what sounds like a stunningly beautiful country. That has left me solo with the Ranch reins, which has been a bit stressful at times, and other times a lot of fun. Regardless, it will be a joy to have her back at the helm soon.

Believe it or not, only a bit over 45 days before we take our yearly trip back to the States. This season has flown by particularly fast. We've assembled a motivated, albeit amateur, crew who will all be arriving at some point in September for their "training" period. BRUCE and ANNA, friends of DAVE and ANDREA, PHOEBE and STEPHEN, friends of our friends JEN and RENNY, and returning long-term volunteer NATE SANDERS along with a few others will be heading up the show this year in our absence. Tiburón will be back in a few weeks with a group from the University of Washington, our second to last group of the year. Soon it will time to gear up for what is shaping up to be a busy 2007. But until then, we've got plenty to do to wrap up this year including a bunch of building and community work.



Andrea and Vero

September 3, for anyone that happens to be in the area, marks the day when the winners of this year's essay contest will be giving presentations about their trips. It is also the date when we officially kick off our Third Annual Essay Contest. The competition seems to be gaining momentum and we're hoping for the biggest turnout yet in 2007. There should be some amazing trips for the kids to take advantage of.

That's it for now. Enjoy this month's newsletter. We hope to see some of you soon in the States soon.

Hasta pronto y Abrazos,

The Ranch Crew

This month's update includes:

[**RM Program News:**](#) La Gloria

[**Conservation Update:**](#) Environmental Education at the Elementary School

[**Building Report:**](#) We're In

[**Volunteer/Guest Gossip:**](#) Good Funk

[**Community Facts/Stories:**](#) Mangy's Obitchuary

[**Comida Corner:**](#) Black Bean Brownies

[**Fútbol Follies:**](#) SPECIAL EDITION Playoff Report

[**Inspirational Impressions:**](#) Patanjali



Traditional Costa Rican dance

RM Program News: La Gloria

With many of our groups, we spend one day at the regional high school in La Gloria as part of a cultural exchange. GUILLERMO ESPINOZA, a teacher and our counterpart at the high school, helps us run the increasingly popular program. A typical visit involves the planting of 150-200 native tree species somewhere in the region that needs some reforestation work and a typical "tico" lunch with all of the kids at the school and wraps up with presentations from both the visiting students and their hosts about their respective countries. It's all a pretty beautiful thing in the end and it seems that almost always everyone

involved is impacted profoundly by these visits.

TOM MCDONALD, with his most recent group, decided to take this wonderful experience one step further by offering his students homestay opportunities with the families of a number of the high school students and then an extra day in La Gloria so that the kids could spend some time

observing classes at the high school. Surprisingly, all 11 students jumped at the opportunity leaving us here at the Ranch with a chance to spend a reasonably quiet day with our projects. All that we could hear on the day that the students arrived back to the Ranch from La Gloria were enlightened stories about their 36-hour adventure. We hope to see this program continue grow and evolve in the coming years.

Conservation Update: Environmental Education at the Elementary School

The Costa Rican Ministry of Environment (MINAE) and the local elementary school are teaming up to reinitiate their stalled environmental education program. They are brainstorming to come up with project ideas for the current and upcoming academic years. On the short list are a small tree nursery, an organic garden, a kitchen compost system and breadmaking. The revived program will be launched on August 3 (this was obviously written before the 3rd) with a tree-planting event that will take place in and around the national park. The Ranch and Tropical Adventures in Education (TAE) are donating about 50 trees to help with the effort and a Canadian volunteer group from the organization Reto Juvenil will assist in the planting of the cedar, cristóbal and purple heart saplings. These small efforts help the kids better appreciate their natural surroundings while reforesting our region. Kudos to all involved.



The price of a saw

photo by Derrick M Benton



Stained Glass piece in the Choza by Alan Smith
photo by Greg Watson

Building Report: We're In!

Yep. Can you believe it? We're finally in. Never again will I have to answer the often-asked question, "Are you in the new house yet?" with the blasé answer, "Well, no, but almost". Since when did "almost" signify six months? You can imagine that we're pretty fired up about the move, especially Robin, who can talk about almost nothing else. I hear her say, "I love our new house" about a dozen times each day. My response, a predictable, "Yes, I realize that" as my inner voice says, "no shit, that's the eighth time that you've told me that today".

We're now in the process of decorating the new digs. I installed ALAN SMITH's stained glass work of art a few weeks ago. It's the first feature that you see when you look at the house from the front. It's absolutely amazing and a real tribute to his love for Mastatal and his artistic capacity. We can't wait for you to see it Alan. Each new decoration and piece of art that goes into the house takes me to a fascinating story or brilliant memory. We are filling our house with bits and pieces of our close friends and family and our past adventures. Alan's stained glass piece and the stunning mural that he made with former superstar volunteer RACHEL

BRANDEL. It hangs above a fabulous piece of

furniture that TYLER SEE fabricated which in turn is home to a handmade sink that our Costa Rica friend NORMAN QUIROZ made, his first ever. The beautiful painting that AARON WESTGATE did while an intern at Yestermorrow. Next to this the incredible ceramic cups gifted to us by DONNY and JEN SHAFFER for our wedding sitting on the awesome shelves that ROGER manufactured and installed. And next to these the mango wood vase from Tyler and GREG SEE. Alongside this PETER and HELEN FORBES's handmade spoon. A special rug from Oaxaca hangs on the wall close by. And a gleaming glass butterfly sent to us by MICHELE LEYTON dangles high from the ceiling. A colorful woven fabric called a *mola* from Roger's last trip to Panama. And soon a couch designed and built by STACEY CORBIN. This is to name but a few of the special items starting to populate the "choza".

The whole process started what seems to be a decade ago. Robin spending hours at a time sitting at the site, watching the rain, sun, clouds and ants; feeling the wind and precipitation; listening to the birds and for sounds along the road; smelling the forest; feeling the beauty of such an amazing space. And then the hours hunched over her drawings, steaming tea by her side, smiles and calls for opinions about this and that. Fast forward to the unforgettable first days when we broke ground,

watching BOB and GEOFF KINDER rip into the hillside with reckless abandon, doing the work of a backhoe in what seemed a matter of hours. Then GILBERTH, JUNIOR, ALEX and others putting up the formwork and mixing for the first foundation pour. So many firsts in those incipient weeks including the initial cob mix, leading to endless cobbing sessions highlighted by the Name Game, an eclectic mix of amazing tunes, wonderful stories and never-ending dance sessions. Many of us had never been in better shape in our entire lives. Schlepping batch after batch of cob from the cleared area in front of the mountain up to the house site. Hilarious dances with SPARKY, uncontrollable laughter followed by minutes of tired silence. Thank God for the music during that time. And the coolest people ever to walk our fine planet.

I now look at the house with complete awe. Roger's bamboo sunrays above Tyler and Timo's spectacular main doors. Roger's lime expertise oozing from every surface. So much of his love went into building the house. We are forever indebted Rog. I cannot do justice with the written word about how I feel about you and what you mean to this place. Geoff Kinder's striking stairs into the bedroom and the beautiful stone steps leading up to the house. His sexy grunting and ripped body carried stones that mortal men would have been crushed under. Alex's incredible bamboo floor. Gilberth's posts and beams and boards and door jams and electrical skill and I could write and this and that for pages for only this one incredible man. CARACA's bamboo weave. Junior and CHEPO's landscaping and *caña brava* expertise. FRANKY, PICHI, Caraca and GREIVIN's dancing. The "ticos" made the house possible in more ways than anyone else. The University of Washington's Permaculture proficiency. So many hands and feet that went into the mixing and applying of the cob. NICK LEDOUX's daily presence in the clay pit. G UNIT's incessant sand sifting. MICAHAH and TYLER's creativity and enthusiasm. EMILY J., GREG and KAREN, KIMBERLY and TIMOTHY, STACEY and JEFF, VERONIQUE, DAN D., ERIC and RENEE. I could write a book of only names. Virtually everyone that came to the Ranch after the project started until a few weeks ago had a hand in making the "choza" possible. We cannot of course list everyone's name that deserves to be here and I am deeply sorry for this. You are all so special and I'm remiss for not including everyone though I didn't want this to turn into one of those boring "Acknowledgements" that kicks off most novels but rather something that people would finish reading. So with the above said we would like to express our deep appreciation to everyone out there that had a hand in making this project a reality. We feel entirely blessed.

We were fulfilled and elated to move in last week. A house designed by Robin and built by friends and us. It's an extraordinary feeling. Thank yous seem so trite when thinking about the work of art that was created on that small opening of land looking out to the La Cangreja National Park. It may not be possible for everyone reading this to design and build his or her own house. But for those of you that can make it happen, well, make it happen. For us It all started with a 2-week course at the [Yestermorrow Design/Build School](#) in Warren, Vermont (how's that for a plug!). That fortnight changed our lives in dramatic ways that continue to manifest themselves. From this and other Y experiences we befriended SKIP and LIZABETH, GUS and EMILY, ERIK and ROBYN, KATE, Aaron W., AMELIA, and so many amazing students and friends of people affiliated with Y that inspired us to get involved with the construction of our own natural house. In the end we realized that building one's own house is no great mystery but rather a labor of love that's possible for anyone willing to make the time and put together the resources to bring it to fruition. It takes a fair amount of creativity and a load of patience but the rewards are like none that I ever dreamed of.

You can see some new pics of the "choza" on our website at the [Photo Gallery](#) on our website. Click the link above, or just go to the gallery and enter a search for "choza". We're going to have a housewarming party one of these days soon. We'll certainly let you all know when we decide on a date. It may make sense to wait until December or January when many of those that helped build the "choza" will be back to winter in beautiful Mastatal. So, until then, start thinking about your own site and begin doing some drawings.

Volunteer/Guest Gossip:Good Funk

I found irony in the Costa Rican clay the other day. It began with a charity event hosted by Rancho Mastatal in an effort to decrease the population of undesired cats and dogs. A wonderful four-person crew came here to perform what resulted in 40 operations. Due to the fact that a majority of the beneficiaries live a hilly distance from the community center housing the makeshift clinic, I was asked to pick up and drop off people and pets as needed. I executed this task in a truck that I assumed was red. I saw hints of this paint through the clay-covered layer otherwise disguising its original coat. The gray interior suffocated under clay dust, gravel and funk. Coming from an immaculate household headed by my fussy mother who made us clean clean things, I foresaw great reward in taking a wet rag to this clay pile on wheels. With care as not to offend Tim and Robin, I delicately asked if I could. With no hesitation they welcomed the idea, as it apparently hadn't been done in years. The following day I spent three hours sweeping, wiping, scrubbing and smiling...watching the truck emerge from rags to riches. It wasn't until a few days later when I found myself using the same clay-dirt recipe to cleanse myself. As the heavy rains fell one afternoon I found myself wanting to dance around in the natural shower. Walking down the road I noticed water engulfing the trenches dug on either side assuming responsibility for flood prevention. I walked into the mini rivers and the rushing water felt like heaven on my tired feet. Curiosity lead me to follow it up what, in essence, was a two-foot wide waterfall. Casting aside any conventionality, I plopped myself down square in the middle, unclothed and proceeded to grab chunks of clay from the sides of my "spa chair". With the hard water pressure massaging my back, I rubbed the earth loofa all over my face and body....scrubbing away my oil, sweat and funk.

It seems strange that days ago I was washing away what was now washing me.



Medical Clinic Volunteer Staff

By Jill Swanson



Our Mangey little mutt

Community Facts/Stories: Mangy's Obitchuary

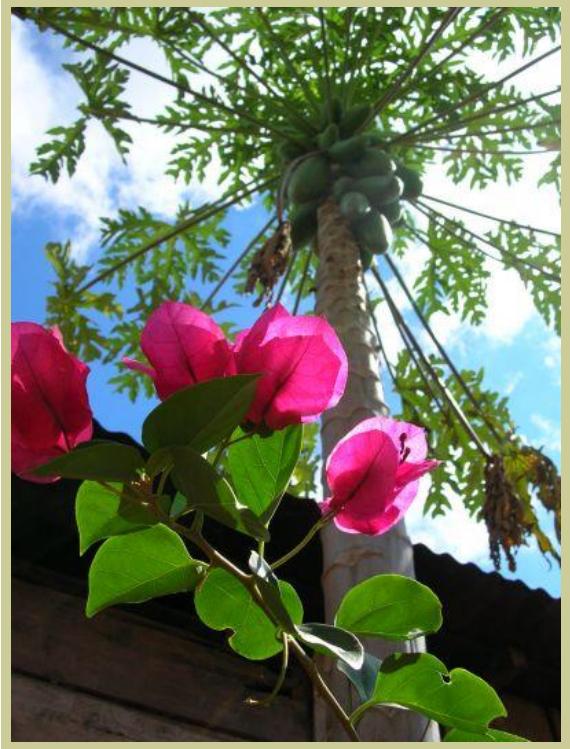
This brings us great sadness to share with you. We know how much many of you loved our little Mangy mutt. She will be greatly missed.

Saturday, August 5th, 2006 was a sad day for the small town of Mastatal — one of the town's most memorable personalities, Mangy the dog, was surrendered to her eternal subterranean abode. The face that found its way into the hearts of so many comers-through will bark no more.

The heart and soul of Rancho Mastatal had fallen ill five days prior and had stopped eating. In her weak state, Mangy lay down for a rest in the street, as was her mid-afternoon custom, when an allegedly drunken, rowdy driver came zooming through. Lacking the energy to escape, Mangy was the unfortunate victim of unfavorable circumstances. The unidentified driver fled the scene.

Later that day, members of the tight-knit Rancho Mastatal community gathered around to console each other and bid farewell to the spirit that so characterized affection and courage. We passed the shovel around amidst the retelling of fond memories so that each person was able to say goodbye in his or her own way, and, following the Jewish tradition, all would participate in the burial, signifying the part that Mangy played in all our lives. From the quality of her doggie paddle, antenna-tail, and alpha-female status to the heart-warming effect she had on so many people, we will remember the qualities of Mangy that touched the deepest parts of our beings. We, as a community, would like to offer our condolences to all readers who share in our grief. Mangy the dog: affectionate, courageous, resistance to the egg... zero. RIP Mangy.

By Travis Gould



Looking up to the papayas in the Ranch's front yard

Comida Corner: Black Bean Brownies

This is by far one of the favorites at the Ranch and has quickly become a veritable classic. It blows away every sweettooth, and yes, it's actually made from black beans! The Black Bean Brownie recipe comes from Dan Droughton (hope that I spelled that right Dan), an amazing long-term volunteer who was with us in 2005. So, let me make it official right here and right now that Dan is the Man, "Dan the Man who Provided Us All with the Most Kick Ass Desert Recipe that this Planet has ever Known".

Ingredients:

16 ozs. black beans (rehydrated)
4 eggs
1 stick butter or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
4 ozs. baking chocolate
1 cup grated "tapa dulce" or liquid "tapa dulce" or for our northern friends maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla

1 tsp salt

Additional Optional Ingredients:

1 Tbsp of ground espresso

1 Tbsp of orange zest

1 cup ground pecans

1. Rinse the beans in a strainer until all the brown juicy stuff is off the beans.

2. Combine chocolate and butter and vanilla over heat until well mixed.

3. Puree beans in Cuisinart (or any food annihilator) until pasty. Add eggs to this mixture so that they are well incorporated into the pureed beans. The eggs play the important part of making the mixture rise up like a soufflé.

4. Mix in the black bean puree and the remaining ingredients.

5. Place in a greased pan. The depth of the pan is very important with this recipe. The deeper the pan the fudgier/moister the brownies will be. A traditional pan with these brownies can get drier than normal brownies.

6. Place in oven at around 350 degrees F. It's ready when the knife comes out clean. The top of the brownies usually cracks. Add chocolate chip chunks if you're a real heathen.

Fútbol Follies: SPECIAL EDITION Playoff Report

For two weeks in Mastatal, more than any other time in recent history, the talk around town was all fútbol. Certainly, fútbol's always big here, especially with the Mundial going on. But we were in the midst of a very unique situation - Los Galácticos were in a position they had never been in before. Nerves were running high among the fanatics, and though it didn't show as much among the players, the butterflies were fluttering inside. Before they knew it, it was Sunday again, and so back

into the truck for the short trip to San Vicente.

Most of the team arrived just as the first semifinal was kicking off (not that a late start is surprising anymore). Much to everyone's surprise, San Miguel came roaring out of the gates against Guarumal. With only one goal in the first half, which just barely crossed the line after the San Miguel keeper's bobble, the top ranked squad was dead in the water at halftime, trailing 5-1. San Miguel was looking strong, dominating play on all sides of the field. Even Puma, their six-foot forward, was scoring goals (not terribly common for him), nearly achieving the hat trick before the final whistle blew. Alas, the collective Guarumal goma was all too apparent after a big "baile" in La Gloria the night before, and the green jerseys were paying the price in a big way. Although they managed to score two more goals, nothing was really going their way that day - their captain even booted a penalty kick over the bar, a la Larsson in Sweden's loss to Germany. Looking on, Mastatal was hoping to do its part to squash its opponent's hopes for an upset. Only a handful of players had travelled to La Gloria for the dance, and even they were feeling well rested.

As they gathered behind the cattle trucks to suit up and apply Cofal to their aching muscles, Los Galácticos were all ears for the starting lineup.

Goalkeeper (portero) MARCOS

Sweeper (central) ALEX

Left Back (defensa izquierda) GIOVANNI

Right Back (defensa derecha) TYLER

Stopper (cuarto) TIMO

Stopper (cuarto) CESAR

Left Wing (volante izquierda) MAURICIN

Center Mid (en el puro centro) PABLO

Right Wing (volante derecho) JUNIOR

Striker (delantero) CARLOS

Striker (delantero) CARACA

Subs (suplentes) JOSE, RONALD, VINDAS, JUAN LUIS, FRANKLIN, JORGE, MINOR, GREIVIN

It was a strong roster offensively, with only a couple weak areas on the defensive end. With MARCOS back in goal, certain players were feeling a bit uneasy, recalling some bad memories from the past. At left back, GIOVANNI also brought a worrisome presence to the field with his tendency to commit hard fouls near the box. However, after ten minutes of play, his obvious fatigue mandated an early substitution, and with the entry of FRANKLIN, the Mastatal defense was enhanced ten-fold for the rest of the match. An early shot off the post put the momentum in the Galácticos' favor, and soon enough CARLOS CUSUCO had put his first goal by the Salitrales keeper. With the excellent midfield play of the other two out-of-town superstars, MAURICIN and PABLO, Mastatal was on the surge, leaving MARCOS sitting pretty and watching the play unfold from the goalbox. In a beautiful run up the left flank, MAURICIN schooled three or four defenders and placed a superb cross on the powerful right boot of JUNIOR, who one-timed it into the back of the net for the game's biggest "golazo". Soon after, a long clear from MARCOS in net sent CARACA pressuring the defense up front, resulting in an own-goal on a defender's attempted clear

over the net. Before the first half was over, CUSUCO had scored again and the yellowshirts held a comfortable 4-0 lead as both teams went to the locker room. Of course, the tico locker room is on the sideline with a cigarette and maybe even a cold beer. Everyone was even privy to some halftime entertainment as a so-called "catfight" erupted by the vending stand. Unfortunately for some eager spectators, there was more action on the pitch that day then off. Still good for a few laughs though.

The Mastatal squad likewise dictated second half play. No matter how many giants Salitrales tried to substitute up front, none could pull the trigger against MARCOS. Indeed, he proved his doubters wrong that day, playing out of his mind to record a huge shutout - including a monster save of a penalty kick, reminiscent of Portugal's keeper Ricardo on the goalline. Los Galácticos managed to put one more on the board late in the second, on a rare show of ball movement originating from TYLER in the backfield through RONALD in the middle up to CUSUCO near the box, resulting in the latter's hat trick and subsequent substitution off the field to many cheers from the sidelines. In the end, Mastatal played a well-rounded, heartfelt match, building on previous momentum and showing signs of prowess not often seen by their fans on Sundays. And so everything was set for a San Miguel - Mastatal showdown in Guarumal on July 9th. It was sure to be a monumental day for fútbol, one which would see crowned the champion not only of this "campeanato", but also of the world.

As the Ranch celebrated the fourth and those still loyal to the Cup gathered at the "pulperia" to watch France and Italy squeak through to the finals, the Galácticos were preparing for their first final in the history of Mastatal football (as far as the elders can remember after a few beers). With afternoon rains only allowing a couple opportunities for practice on the field, most preparation was in turn mental. It was also of prime importance to monitor players' consumption at the bar, which was openly "prohibited" after Thursday night. There would be plenty of time for revelry, win or lose, on Sunday afternoon. With the championship originally scheduled to coincide with the World Cup final, many players were feeling a bit jipped by the "management," but news came late in the week that Salitrales would not be participating in the third place match with Guarumal, thereby pushing the final up to 10 am. Que dicha.

On the morning of the ninth, while the people of Mastatal were trying to find any kind of ride they could to the game, two cattle trucks rolled through from San Miguel, both packed to the gills with players and fans dressed in their Sunday best. It was sure to be a shouting fest from the sidelines, but no one could quite anticipate what would actually happen that day. Both teams and their fanclubs arrived at the same time, but the field was still being lined with lime and the ref was typically M.I.A. San Miguel descended to the pitch first to suit up, while Mastatal remained on the plateau for its opening ceremony. The yellow and black uniforms were looking a lot more professional with the addition of new "Mastatal" socks, thanks to the generous donation of part-time Galáctico, "el Grandote." (Many thanks to GEOFF and DESA for hooking the team up just in time.)

After a couple team pics, the starting lineup circle, and the ref's revision of uniforms and tacos, both squads were set to go. Los Galácticos were feeling good overall, but couldn't help notice the absence of FRANKLIN and CUSUCO, two key players who did a major part in earning Mastatal a spot in the finals. Once the opening whistle blew, though, there was no time to worry about missing players, as it was time to get serious. San Miguel was a skilled opponent and a huge rival, and the outcome of this game held some potential significance for the future. Moreover, the blue and

yellow jerseys' only victories throughout the entire tournament had come against the Galácticos, a trend the latter was hoping to buck.

The Mastatal defense was doing its part to shut down the offensive bids of Puma, Flaco and Macho, though the Galáctico presence up front was noticeably lacking in the first half. Despite good ball control in the middle, almost all forward movement to CARACA and RONALD up front was stymied by offsides or pushing fouls. Nevertheless, with enough pressure the Galáctico strikers managed to combine for the first goal of the championship, sparking uproar from the Mastatal fanclub. The play remained tense for the next ten minutes, culminating in a booming shot from the San Miguel captain which sailed easily past the immobile body of MARCOS to tie the score at 1-1. It was definitely a wake-up call for Mastatal, who were reminded that one goal was not going to be enough in the championship.

With seven minutes remaining in the first half, the flow and tone of the match changed completely. San Miguel's captain, the same player who had recently levelled the scoreboard, was called for a hard foul in Mastatal territory. Yet what seemed to be a straightforward call soon erupted into a free-for-all. After complaining long and hard to the ref, the San Miguel player was given two yellow cards and ejected from the game. Within seconds, San Miguel fans were rushing the field and getting in the referee's face, some even pushing him and using force to exhibit their outrage. The ref did his best to escape his offenders but was pursued wherever he went. The arguments, foul language and pseudo-fighting went on for over half an hour, forcing players to wait around to see if all the time and effort they had put in over the last three months was going to end in such a lame fashion. Meanwhile, CUSUCO had appeared and was in uniform on the Galáctico bench, having been delayed by a flat tire on his moto. This set off another argument as to whether he would be allowed to play, having been on the official roster but not present for the ref's revision. Throughout the entire tournament, as long as a player was on the list and the first half had not expired, he was allowed to sub in with an automatic yellow card. Yet the San Miguel contingency was having nothing of it, exerting their hot-tempered debating technique to deny the sixteen year-old from participating in the championship he had scored nearly a dozen goals to reach. When the smoke finally cleared and the players' muscles had cooled off, the ref turned over his duties to a member of the Salitralles squad (no longer impartial?), refusing with good reason to continue calling a game in which he was being attacked. With that, play was set to resume, just as the rain clouds started to roll in. So much for seeing all the World Cup final.

In the last fifty-two minutes of the match, Mastatal was looking to capitalize on their opponents' being a man down, but was still lacking the offensive power up front to put anything on net. Play was hard-fought throughout the second-half, but it was San Miguel who found themselves closer to goal than the Galácticos, who gave up a tough penalty kick after CESAR's instinctive but unintentional handball in the box. Mastatal kept their heads up and did their best to move the ball forward, but in the end their small size and desperation play inhibited their success. After another JUAN LUIS blunder in the backfield led to a third San Miguel goal, the championship was all but sealed. When the triple whistle finally blew, both teams exchanged respectful handshakes and offerings of congratulations. Indeed, it seemed as if the discipline debacle of the first half was already in the past (it was, after all, mainly the doing of inconsiderate spectators).

Given their caliber of play throughout the second half of the tournament, the San Miguel Football

Club was well deserving of the championship victory. Likewise, Los Galácticos de Mastatal did extremely well to make it as far as they did, and all players should be proud of their team's performance, unity and discipline. These were some of the many sentiments shared back at the Mastatal "cantina" after the game, where the Comite de Deportes was generous enough to prepare a food and drink celebration for the team. Spirits were high despite the loss, and the party continued throughout the night. Even Don Omar, the owner of the San Miguel bar, shut down a seemingly empty cantina and came down for the real party at Seco's.

In the end, fútbol's just a game to be played for fun, but in the small towns of rural Latin America, it can often be a way of life. Such was the case in Mastatal for the past three months, and such it will most likely be again come the next "campeanato".

Finally, a special thanks to ALEX HERNANDEZ, the Galácticos' team captain and president of the Comite de Deportes, for his hard work in managing the squad, as well as to his sister KATTIA for doing the dirty work of washing all the uniforms week in and week out, not to mention her well-felt presence on the Mastatal sideline.

Until the next time, keep your tacos shiny, there's always more fútbol to be played.

SEMIFINALS (7/2 in San Vicente) FINALS (7/9 in Guarumal)

- (1) Guarumal San Miguel 6-3
- (3) San Miguel San Miguel 3-1
- (2) Mastatal Mastatal 5-0
- (4) Salitralles

By Tyler See



The view out of the front gate of the Ranch

Inspirational Impressions

"When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all of your thoughts break their bonds: your mind expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties, and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be."

Patanjali

Abrazos,

The Ranch Crew