

Friendship Force Outbound Exchange to Brazil, 2008

Tuesday, August 5

We left home at 3PM for our 5:30 flight to New York. Our flight was delayed one hour, but we still made our connecting flight in New York to Sao Paulo. There are 13 of us traveling on this plane, one will meet us in Sao Paulo. Our Sao Paulo flight left at midnight. It was a full plane. We had dinner and then slept for about 5 hours. Woke at 6AM and was very cramped. They served breakfast and we arrived in Sao Paulo about 10 AM.

Wednesday, August 6

We were met at the airport by the FF club and Maria (Tica, pronounced Chika), our host. She is a lovely woman, who speaks a little English. She drove us to their apartment in San Bernardo, about 1 ½ hours from airport, through heavy city traffic. Their apartment is on top floor (12), very beautiful with many rooms and small outside window gardens. We were given Maria Paula's room. We unpacked and then had a nice lunch with Eduardo, Maria Paula, their daughter, and Tica.

We rested and then went to welcome dinner at 5PM. Dinner was in Sao Paulo center, over one hour drive at a unique garden apartment of one of their members. They served wine, appetizers and a buffet dinner. Everyone was welcoming and friendly. We got home after 10 PM and slept well, but cold at night. They do not have heat or air conditioning in the apartment. They say they don't need it, just put on a sweater if cold.



Welcome Party in Sao Paulo

Thursday, August 7

Eduardo had to go to work, but Tica drove into Sao Paulo and we joined our group to visit a private air gallery, showing wooden art and plaster decorated heads, made by mother (86) of gallery owner. After seeing gallery, we walked to a local large restaurant for buffet lunch. While waiting for everyone to finish lunch, power went out, escalators stopped and the rest of group walked down to meet us.



Art Exhibit in Sao Paulo



Young artists display graffiti art

We walked several blocks and then visited another immigration museum, mostly Japanese art. After we drove to local craft area, where they teach kids to paint good graffiti on outside walls.

Friday, August 8

Drove to Ibirapuera Park to see the “50 years of Bossa Nova” exhibit. It was very interesting, following the music and events of the time, even included sand from the Ipineama Beach in Rio.

At night, we walked to very nice Pizza Restaurant 2 blocks from home. We had dinner with Eduardo’s parents, Esmeraldo and Laurie, Tica’s parents, Maria and Mario, their children Jose, 22, John 20 (studying to be chef) and Maria Paula 16. Sunday is Father’s Day in Brazil so this dinner was to celebrate the day and Tica gave presents to their fathers. They had about 25 different kinds of pizza, very good, artichoke, etc. We had lemon pizza for desert with ice cream topping. Eduardo ordered wine and after dinner drinks too. Rain stopped and we walked home.

Saturday, August 9

We left the house about 9:30 and drove in 2 cars, us with Eduardo, Maria Paula and Jose, who slept in back. Tica picked up her sister, Marsha, Luca 2, and her parents. We met their friends Fabio, Patricia and son Fabian at a convenience stop along the highway. Then drove to Dutch village, Holumbra, to see flowers. It was sunny and warm, no rain. We bought flowers for Laura’s 15 yr. party and had BBQ lunch there. They had a big salad bar, and then waiters brought different meats to table and sliced them on dishes for each of us. Included beef, pork, chicken, lamb and sausages. Most on huge skewers. Lots of food and very good. When finished, just turn sign from green to red and they

stop bringing more food. Everywhere in Brazil the napkins were very small and thin, smaller than a cocktail napkin. Usually needed 3 to 4 for a meal.



Sao Paulo Garden



View from Sao Paulo Apartment

Sunday, August 10

We woke at 8-9AM. Went for breakfast, took a walk outside and then packed again. Eduardo drove to Mario's house (Tica's brother) for a Brazilian lunch. They day was warm and sunny. Mario has a very nice home with small swimming pool. They made traditional bean dish, Feijoada, and Caipirinha (national drink). We talked with several friends and walked around street. About 3PM, we left for Sao Paulo and arrived about 5:30, good time. Tica was up till 3:30 AM and drove all the way home. She was tired. We rested. Stayed in for dinner and early to bed.

Monday, August 11

It was still damp and cool in morning. We had breakfast and watched some TV. Then Tica took us to Carradore supermarket and we bought some candies to take home. After, Tica took us to San Bernardo Park. It was very beautiful, with walking path, exercise area, playground, fountains, luncheonette, etc. We returned home and then John and I walked around area by ourselves. The sidewalks are all uneven, broken and up and down streets. Lots of little furniture, kitchen shops, etc. We walked back and had lunch at home. Tica made delicious salad, rice and ox-tail stew, beans and lemonade. John really loved the stew.



Sao Paulo Open Market



Starfruit Display

In evening, were drove to Dulsá's apartment in Sao Paulo for farewell dinner in her Community Room. They served various crepes, chicken, shrimp and desert crepes, chocolate, banana, run, etc. Very good. Enjoyed seeing all the members again. Got home about 11PM and said good-bye to Maria Paula.



Sao Paulo Farewell Party

Tuesday, August 12

We had breakfast and then packed. Tica took us to Faire, an open market near her home. Several streets lined with stalls of fruits, vegetables, meats, pork, fish and flowers. Some items we have not seen before. People were very friendly. One woman filleted chicken thighs for Tica and taught me how to bone them. We bought some kolacky, just like home. At noon, we met Eduardo and Jose for lunch at a very nice Italian Restaurant close by. Eduardo ordered cheese bread appetizer and broccoli pasta with braised lamb. Excellent. We picked up tab. We said our good-byes to Jose and Eduardo. Tica drove us to airport about 2:30. When we arrived, Al said our flight was canceled and our airline would bus us to the International Airport and then fly us direct to Fortaleza. It sounded good, but was a real hassle at both airports to get tickets. Finally OK and we arrived at 11:50 in Fortaleza. We were met by FF Club, all very friendly. Galdino drove us to his home, 2 guards outside, surrounded by wall and a barking guard dog. Inside was

beautiful. We had 2nd floor large room with bath. Galdino left gift of wall art of native Brazilians. It was difficult sleeping with noise and barking dog.

Wednesday, August 13

We boarded bus to tour Fortaleza. We stopped at Cathedral, had lunch at great buffet with cashew trees outside. We saw termites nest in trees. Then went shopping. Luiz, Galdino's driver, picked us up and we changed to swim in pool for a while. John napped and I enjoyed house. Tonight we met others at 8PM for folk dance show and dinner at Lupus Beer. Galdino picked up his friend, Marsha, and we went together. It was a good buffet dinner with different types of beer, pineapple beer. They show was singing and dancing, showing the 27 Brazilian dances of their states. It was very enjoyable and lasted until 11:30.



Old Fortaleza Theater



Cashew Fruit

Thursday, August 14

We woke about 7:30. Had wonderful breakfast again, always warm rolls, eggs, cheeses, several juices, fruit smoothies, fruits, coffee. Galdino left another gift of Brazilian placemats. Luiz drove us to Praia do Futuro Beach, 10 minutes away. We spend the day on beach, had lunch of Peixada Cearense, typical fish dish cooked with coconut juice and vegetables, with fried bananas and pineapples. We bought jewelry and purses. Dinner was good and we met other FF club members. There was music, dancing and speeches by Fortaleza members.



Our Group on the Beach



Fortaleza Welcome Party

Friday, August 15

We had another great breakfast. Galdino gave me a gift of banana leave purse. He is very generous. He showed us photos of his trips. Then we left laundry with Lidgia and met others at bus. We drove to Museum Da Cachaca. We toured the old house and saw the largest wood barrel in the world. We tasted different drinks made from sugar cane, some very hot. Then we took bus to Zecao Columijuba's farm, a property of our Patron Capistano de Adreau's Family. It was beautiful property, owned by one of FF members and her family. Had fruits and juices, then buffet lunch. Everyone got gift from family, a cross stiched kitchen towel. They had a swimming pool, chickens, ducks, turkeys, cows and horses. Mary Lou and others took ride on horses. Very enjoyable. Then we took bus back to Fortaleza and Luiz picked us up at 6:30. We chatted with Galdino and decided to eat in on our own. We were very tired. We showered and then went to kitchen and ate cheese, ham and fruit. John went to sleep early.

Saturday, August 16

Had breakfast and then meet group at 8AM. Took bus tour to Morro Branco and Prira das Fontas Beaches, sand dune rides and colored sands in the hills. We stopped along the way and I bought tie-dyed shorts for \$10R. First stop was Morro Branco, scenery of several soap opera shows and movies. The cliffs are sculptured by erosion of seawater. Twelve different shades of sand. Saw houses, fisherman village, hotels, restaurants, kiosks, etc.

Sunday, August 17

All of Galdino's family came for breakfast at 9AM. We met Katerina and son Victor 11, Solange (his ex-wife) and daughter Luanna. Everyone was very warm and friendly. At 11PM, FF people started to arrive for Farewell Lunch. Galdino had a 3-piece band playing Forro music and everyone danced.

Monday, August 18

We woke early to the jominto calling us. Galdino was eating at 7:30, so we joined him. We decided to stay in this morning. We sat and read by the pool. It got very hot, but the water was great. Galdino joined us for a lunch of chicken (frango), beets, salad and rice. Ice cream for desert. We were tired and packed for Belem. We need to leave at 5AM. We said our good-bye to Solange and Luana.

Tuesday, August 19

Flight to Belem was good about 1 ½ hours. Gloria joined us for trip to Belem. Jirandir, the Belem FF President, met us with a van that took us to hotel. Very small room, double bed with bunk on top. Bath was very small, like airplane. In evening, Al, Marilyn, Jane, Larry, Kathy and us went to French Restaurant at another market. Food was excellent, but one portion could feed two. We walked back to hotel and sleep by 10. Walking on Belem street, we saw animals in cages, ducks, chickens, birds. Also, it was difficult to walk on street, holes, uneven walks, one curb had about 2-foot hole to cross.

Wednesday, August 20

We met group at 5:30, took a bus to the dock. Then boarded a big boat to Ilha Do Marajo. It took about 3 hours with one stop by Marina Inspectors. We arrived at the Island about 9:30 and then boarded a van which drove about ½ hour to river and boats. We boarded a small motorboat that seated 6-8 people with luggage. We drove boat about 1 hour on Marejo Bay. Amazon tributaries flow through to the ocean. We arrived at Carmo-Carmara Farm and were treated to breakfast of pineapple, buffalo cheese, cake and home made fruit cookies and coffee.



Boat Taking Us to the Amazon Farm

We napped for a while. then about 2PM, heard bells for lunch in main room. Served buffet of buffalo meat (very salty like ham), rice, beans, salad, and pineapple. Then cashew desert, tapioca, cake. John bought cool beer for our table. Drinks are warm, no ice. After lunch, John went to sleep. I walked around farm. A couple in their 50s, Cine & Claudio Monard Dias, manage the 700 hector farm for his elderly mother. It's a working farm; they raise cattle for market, milk cows and buffalo, make buffalo cheese,

raise horses and water buffalos and are open to tourists. They are well known and considered best on island. It was very hot and humid, causing us to take several showers a day. I saw old kitchen where they iron clothes with old heated iron. I saw men putting TV antenna attached to bamboo pole on roof, being directed by 2 little kids in 2nd floor window. I met old man who makes buffalo cheese. He posed for pictures and was talking in Portuguese about Princess Diana.

I slept for a while, and then went for a boat ride on river. Guide pointed out birds, herons, sloth, monkeys. It was a beautiful ride. We returned and had a drink of capirahena. Showered again and rested. Then we were told we could see animals at night. Went for another boat ride and saw crocodiles, snakes, owls, sloths, tucans and many others. We stopped and heard howling monkeys, very loud. We returned, another shower and dinner at 9PM. Pea and potato soup. Then they served fish from river stew with potatoes, tomatoes and catfish. Very good. We were very tired. Went to bed, hot but not too bad. Slept fairly well under nets.



Looking for Wildlife

Thursday, August 21

Rooster woke me at 5AM. Then around 6AM, we heard the howling monkeys. I got dressed and walked to see the milking of buffalo and cows going to market on boat. At 7AM, we walked about a block through ponds, chicken coops, bull poop to where the cows are kept. They hand milk about 40 cows each day. Jane milked, but we did not. The milk looked like egg white froth. We were afraid to drink, after seeing them rinse the pails in dirty pond water. Went back to room for first shower of day. Breakfast at 8AM, consisted of homemade breads, cheese filled rolls, fruit salad, tapioca, and buffalo tongue, which was very salty. After breakfast, Al, Marilyn, John and I went fishing with owner. We dropped off the Spanish couple to explore the jungle on foot with guide. John and owner caught fish (a variety of catfish); Al and I only got nibbles. On the way back to farm, we passed the dock where they were loading cattle onto boat to take to market. They had to hoist cattle up on a wench to get them on boat.

Lunch was served at 1:30, with buffalo meat, pork, rice, sweet potatoes, salad, and cabbage. Desert of ricotta cheese and jam, cake, cheese slices and other cakes. It was very hot, no breeze. We went back to rest. John took shower and then went to sleep on porch hammock. I read outside for a while, then nice breeze picked up and it was a little cooler. We walked to pool area and sat with others. Very nice. Took another shower to

clean up and then wait for 9PM dinner. Other group went out on night boat ride as we did yesterday. Capybara is local animal like a huge guinea pig.

Dinner was a carrot soup. Very good with fresh warm bread. Then chicken with rice with a different type of seasoning. Very good lemonade with ice (a rarity). Deserts were leftover ricotta and cashew sweets. We went to bed about 10PM.



Lunch at the Farm

Friday, August 22

I woke at 5AM with rooster crowing. I got dressed and went down to take early boat ride. John was still sleeping. I met others in main house for cup of coffee to wake us up. The Spanish couple, French couple, Jane and Pam were there. The boat ride was peaceful in the morning. We saw many birds, toucans, monkeys, both the howling and others, sloth with babies and capybaras too. It was great to close your eyes and just listen to the sounds.

Each night around dusk, the toads appear around the property. They can be anywhere from 6"-12" and they are welcome because they eat the bugs. They did not come in our room, but we did have smaller frogs and chameleons in the room. They did not bother us, stayed on the outside walls. Marilyn Melkerson used the toilet in her room and when she flushed, a frog jumped out at her, really scared her. Al did not believe her until it happened to him too. John was taking a shower and a frog was on wall. Before he could do anything, the frog saw a large bug and his tongue reached out and got it. Surprisingly, no mosquitoes, but flies around the food, animals and us when we sweat.

After breakfast, we went fishing off the pier, using cow liver as bait. We all had lots of nibbles, but no fish. We enjoyed the nice breeze and saw fish swimming on top of water, bulging eyes, about 1-2 feet long. After, we went back to room to shower and pack. We leave the farm after lunch for a Posada in Salvatore.

We had a glass of wine and then showered and got ready for dinner and show right at the Posada. It was a very nice resort with 10 cabins, bar, music room. His staff prepared a good buffet with salad, shrimp & pasta, fruit with pineapple cream for desert. Then we were delighted with a native Brazilian dance show. Many young dancers dressed in colorful costumes danced about 1-1/2 hours of intense dancing. When they shouted "cannonball", everyone was invited to dance. The Brazilian people love to dance and

have a natural rhythm. I wore my sundress purchased in Fortaleza and we danced and enjoyed the show.

Saturday, August 23

We woke at 6AM. There was a nice breeze coming through the windows. Breakfast was at 6:30 and then we took a bus to the ferry at 7:30. The ferry took us to Soure to see leather shop, pottery and handmade crafts. Returned to bus and drove to a large remote beach. Tide was out so we had to walk to get to water. Gloria went swimming in huge pool created by sand and water and John also went in with his shorts on.

After about 1 hour, bus took us to city shops and then ferry back to Posada for shower, lunch and get ready for Belem. The boat took 3 hours to Belem. It rained while we were on board. We arrived about 6PM and went to Belem FF gathering after checking in at hotel Expresso XXI. The gathering was at Gina's apartment near hotel. Jurandir and girlfriend were there, with a few other FF members. A heavy rain came down while we were inside. Very nice place, but we were all tired.

Sunday, August 24

I had lots of leg cramps last night, but finally got to sleep after adjusting A/C too. This hotel is very nice, clean and nice bathroom. A/C is operated by remote and everything turns off when you leave the room. Belem is about 2 million people. It is hot and humid, usually rains every day in PM. It is located 1 degree south of equator and weather is same all year. We stopped at the Cathedral, outside market with food and crafts, the Botanical Gardens & Zoo w/Amazon forests and animals right in middle of city. We also saw an old church, now museum with lots of old wood carved by Indians. They have 75 different folk dances and their typical food is from Indians, Europeans, Japan and French. We also stopped at another market near hotel. Very typical crafts there. I bought wooden toy which was signed by artist.

Then bus took us to Mangal das Gargas, just outside military post on the water. It was very hot, but they had a beautiful restaurant on 2nd floor overlooking the water. Because we were late, we had to eat outside on deck and were OK because of breeze. After most of our group went sightseeing with taxi/tour set up by Jane, the Melkersons and John and I walked around the area. It had a lot to offer, screened bird and butterfly atriums, and we rode the elevator to top of lighthouse for a great view of Belem. It started raining, so we took taxi back to hotel and rested until 5:30 when we walked to church ½ block from hotel. The power was out, so mass was said by candlelight. After we walked to a huge indoor mall nearby, where Marilyn bought some meds. Security people were very helpful, using radio from 1st inquiry to man at top of escalator, who met us and directed us to pharmacy.

Monday, August 25

Woke up about 6:30 and went down to breakfast. Then back to room to rest and begin packing. John and I walked around hotel neighborhood, bought some shirts for us and also for the girls. It got very hot, so back to hotel for shower and rest. We met Melkersons at 12 noon and took taxi to docks. We walked around nice shops and I

bought an Amazon T-shirt and Marilyn bought a beautiful necklace. We stopped at food stand and had sandwich. Then walked among food vendors and bought a piece of fresh fried fish. Very good. Walked about ½ mile along dock near fishermen boats. It was very hot. Marilyn did not feel safe, so Al got taxi and we went to Hilton Hotel. We stopped at bank ATM with armed guard outside and inside. Lots of people in line at bank. Walked back to hotel and showered again. John slept and then we met Melkersons for dinner at 7:30 and took taxi to Hilton. We enjoyed a good dinner with wine. Took taxi back to hotel and paid our hotel bill.

Tuesday, August 26

We woke at 4AM to get ready for 5AM bus to airport. Hotel had coffee and rolls ready for us before departure. Our first leg home is Belem to Sao Paulo, with a plane stop in Rio. Marsha, Joan, Kathy and Pam got off in Rio and will take a 6-hour tour before flight to Atlanta. We arrived in Sao Paulo at 12:30 PM and tried to get an earlier flight to USA. Delta office said only other flight was to NY, but not good for us to get connecting flight to Chicago. So we walked around airport, had lunch and walked around shops again. We talked to people, shopped and at 5:30, stood in line for check-in. After 45 min, we checked in and then went to Pizza Hut for dinner. Good meal including salad, bread rolls, drinks and pizza. We had a few pieces left and when we left table a very distinguished older man sat down and finished our meal. Strange! Finally, our flight left at 10:55 PM. We were all so tired that we were able to sleep some.

Wednesday, August 27

We arrived in Atlanta 45 minutes early at 7AM. We had to go through customs, ID bags and then catch flight for Chicago Midway. All went well for us, but Larry and Jane's luggage were missing. We hope they will find their bags in Chicago. When we arrived at Midway, both Melkersons and us were missing one bag and the Ludwigs luggage was no where to be found, they could not track it in the system. We waited 1 ½ hours for next flight from Atlanta and our two bags were there, but not Ludwigs. We welcomed our other travelers who arrived from Rio and Melkersons, Marsha and we shared a taxi home to Lake Forest. Al drove us home and we thanked God for a wonderful exchange and safe return. There's no place like home.