

St. SomeTimes



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Happy Halloween to the World!

Goblins, ghouls, ghosts, candy, pumpkins, and more candy! International schools around the world celebrate perhaps the greatest theme party of the entire year. My current school in Venezuela is no different.

Meet Carew, the newest of the Judd clan. He was born this summer in the great MidWest state of Minnesota. I think he even went to his first baseball game before he was two months old.



Carew came down to VZ with Matt and Stacy at the beginning of this school year. The picture above is my all time favorite picture, they shared it

with me. This little guy is all over the place. Thanks to him, we leave school at exactly 3:30pm every day after school. My car still isn't ready so I have to drive with them.

Known as "Roo Roo", Carew always smiles for his Tio Goyo (that's uncle goyo in Spanish). Good times! This little guy has stolen sleep from Matt and Stacy for the past few months, and months to come. Soon he will be playing for a toddler baseball team or hitting t-ball homeruns!

My Travel Buddy is Growing!

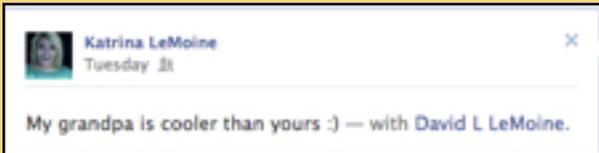
I miss my nieces and nephews so much. The only way I can deal with it from so far away is to hang out with the newest kids in our overseas family. It is so hard to believe how much little Elsie has grown. She started walking at the end of October. She is all over the place now. If Scott or Tara look away for a mere second, Elsie is off running!

Just the other day, Elsie grabbed my wireless router and POOF! no internet for several days. I had to google a few hours to find a work around. Maybe I



will be able to do a google search with a keyword ELSIE soon. Hah! But joking aside, she is a little miracle. Just months ago she was breast feeding from her

mommy on a jungle trail in Suriname. I look forward to seeing her grow up, wherever in the world she may end up.



I have to agree with my niece! Very few people can match up to David Lemoine, whether it is Halloween or any other time of year.



Judd has the Spirit

Matt and I stop in at the local PapaJohns once in a while. The little ice cream shop next door was featuring this Halloween photo opportunity.

I tell you, and Matt would agree, without PapaJohns, we would go crazy in this country. There is also Dominos, McD's, Subway, Wendys, KFC, and a few others. None of them get our business! Just the PapaJohns.



The Brown Leprechan

Don Patricios is one of our "haunts". (pun intended) The only things Irish about this place are the green chairs and the funny sign. (above) We stop in for a cold beverage or two after school because it is right on the way out to the "Rock", the apartment area most of the teachers live in. The *parrilla* is tasty too. A big plate of meat, chicken, and seafood (i pick off).



Chavez Wins?

Whatever. Our school had two weeks off just in case things went bloody during the elections. I was in the capital city, Caracas, just days before the elections.

Chavez requires all of the VZ companies to bus their employees into Caracas when he is campaigning. No kidding. So if you don't go to work, they fire you. No kidding. When I was there, there were tons of buses

like the image on the left. But things will be the same now for the next few years.

For us expats, we dodged a bullet. I was talking to Ruben's father while we waited for Ruben to buy a few computers. I asked him (four days before the election) what he thought will happen. His response was "there will be a lot of bloodshed in Caracas if Chavez does not win". Interesting. I knew at that point, no matter what anyone else was doing, that I would be on the island of Margarita. I would also be within reach of the airport, just in case.

Band of Four



John, Ruben, Me, and William. The band of four. Here we are in one of the many Caracas malls, laughing at a restaurant while we waited for the new Resident Evil 5 to start. (What a horrible movie!)

These guys are like brothers. Every time I go to Caracas, I am treated to new experiences and treated like one of the family.

This time was no different. Ruben and I spent several days buying computer parts. William and Higliee let me stay at their place again. Ruben and I used their apartment like a computer factory during the day.

Margarita Island



Your's truly on Margarita Island. Ruben and I went to escape the possible bloodshed during the election week. We stayed with Ruben's Uncle's Family and I even got to meet Ruben senior.

What a wild time. We stayed in a little apartment on a local beach. I was the only gringo for miles. Then we went to the touristy beach, El Jaque, the next day. My "break into your apartment" ex-girlfriend met us on the beach to hang out. That was weird! But it was certainly fun to compare the two beaches. I must have spent a thousand BsF (\$1=12Bsf at this point) on booze and food.

80's All Day, All Night



Meet Ruben's Uncle José Gregorio. He is personally hanging onto all 80's music for the rest of the world. He, his wife Sabrina, and daughter Laura, are so much fun. We spent a lot of time together as they showed me what there is to see on Margarita.

Two highlights of the three days were 1. the Western most point of the island. 80's music during the entire 2hour car ride one way, and we even sat next to the Vice President of VZ. (didn't know they had one). 2. I had the tastiest Lasagna I have ever had in my life. It was served upside-down.

Diving. I will miss Diving!

Diving in the Caribbean is either 5 minutes or an hour away, depending on whether I take my own boat out. I will certainly miss this next year. The chances of having a boat on the Caribbean again is slim to none.

Marbled Moray



Mabobo is a dive site just 7 miles Northeast of my apartment. It is a coral mound that sits just a meter under water at its peak. The depth drops down to just 50 or 60 ft all the way around the peak, in a circular pattern. Just a few kicks to the Southwest is a coral garden full of fish. This moray was out and about during the day, near the peak. The sun was flooding in at just 2 meters, so i had a lot of time to wait for him to open his mouth to do a fang check! This was the beginning of a 70 minute dive on Mabobo. What a blast! The water temperature is still 76F degrees, but it will decrease to 70F next month and the visibility will go from 50ft to 10ft. That's the way it is here in VZ.

Dancing Blenny - The ballet starts!



This is the first time I have been able to catch one of these dancers in motion. I waited at least five minutes and inched forward after he saw me. Usually, these dancers disappear in their sand hold if a diver is within a few feet. When the danger passes, they pop right out of the hole, flared out, and start dancing like a peacock! It's really something! I was close enough to take this shot (and some video) but he never popped up to dance. At least he was flared out! The minute I swam away, this one and about six others popped right up and commenced their ritualistic dance! Fantastic.



Forget Hand Cleansers, ask a Shrimp!

These shrimp can be found all over the world, but i never get tired of seeing them. Yes, if you place your hand correctly, they will start cleaning your hand like they clean a fish. Some divers have successfully had shrimp clean their teeth. I have never been THAT good. I'd rather get great pictures of them anyway. You can see from this perspective shot just how small they really are.

Getting Pecked to Death by Ducks

Things haven't gotten better! When all the small things happen at the same time, they all build up to a bizarre breaking point. Some people just "lose it". In overseas travel, and especially International Education, my friend Jim coined the title phrase for me back in 2003. I was teaching in Honduras at the time. What a perfect phrase! The ducks are pecking now!

"Greg, your boat is SINKING!"

With five hours left to get home via the slow ferry, I get a phone call from a neighbor. "Your boat is sinking!" Ruben received the call since it was in Spanish and told me. I immediately joked with a German accent: "Vut iz it Sinking about?" in honor of a favorite commercial. Joking aside. I immediately called Matt. He went over to find my neighbors and guards all trying to turn my boat around stern side facing the dock and looking for the bilge. They succeeded. The boat usually sits bow first to the dock. The weekend was a holiday. About three hundred boats passed by over the holiday with huge wakes (no rules) that filled my bilge with canal water. Time to move to a different boat slip and fix the automatic bilge!



Venezuela Sucks without Air Con.

At the first of the month, my air conditioner upstairs died. The air con was leaking and caved in the ceiling of the bathroom. (long story) Anyway, I filled out a work order at school for maintenance and slept downstairs for a week. Henry, our school maintenance man, came to fix the air a week later. At school, when I saw him, he said it was fixed. I got home and it was only shooting out warm air. It died completely. At the same time, the downstairs air con died. Do you know Venezuela is always just over 90 degrees all year? Talk about unbearable. Good thing I have friends' apartments!



Is Your Car Fixed?

What a joke! Mike, the Italian mechanic has had my car since I recovered it in July. Still not done. Every day someone has to bring it up. I have been getting on the school mini-bus (not the short bus though - haha) every morning and bummin' rides after school. What a pain. But Maikel the Mechanic still has problems finding all the little motor parts. I have told him time and again, all I want is for the thing to run. Motor, air con, lights and brakes. I'll get the rest of the pieces later. But still no luck. Since he is Italian, I told him from the beginning that I want a Mazerati back when he is finished. huh!



The Job Hunt Begins

Getting your walking papers in September, for the following school year, is a mixed blessing. Yes, you have an entire year to prepare and find a new school. On the other hand, you have to be a very strong person to avoid job hunting during the school day. It has to be done after school and on your own time. That's not an easy thing to do because the job hunt is time consuming, exciting, and just eats at you from the get-go. This page will let you peak into the process.

SEEK JOY!

With all the stress, these days, on the valuable idea of having and keeping balance...we sometimes complicate things too much.

A simple approach that works surprisingly well is this: do what brings you joy, and take care of things, systematically, that interfere with joy.

Preparation

I have every letter of recommendation in digital and analogue written format. My resume' has to be updated to include my current position. My digital CV, a website, has to be updated to include my current school. I prepared a video this year with a start up company called PowToon. It was a free beta test for two weeks. Now it costs about

\$50 a month. Once I have all of my artifacts ready, it is time to sign up for websites and online recruiters.

TIEonline

The International Educator is an online newspaper and resume' bank that helps match international schools and school personnel. I have been on since 2001 and update my status religiously. You just never know!

ISS/UNI/SEARCH/AASSA

The heart of finding the best overseas openings is job fairs. You can google the titles for more information. Basically, recruiters and teachers meet for in person interviews. The job fairs happen all over the world starting in November. I have been to three UNI fairs and the ISS in Bangkok. This year I am heading to the ISS fair in San Francisco in February 2013. I am going to the fair even if I land a job before hand.

Find a Job Before the Fairs?

Email, Skype, online Applications, Researching Databases



I have been hired once outside of a fair. It was a "who you know at the right time" kind of situation. This year, I am putting a lot of time into researching and communicating with schools. My goal is to find a great school somewhere before going to a job fair. Even if I don't land a job early, it is important to get my name out there and increase my chances of at least interviewing with the schools at the fair. The better schools get hundreds of applicants for each position. My resume', video, and email communications will hopefully make me stand out!

It's Early! (the waiting game is nerve racking)

Even though I am signed up with ISS, UNI, AASSA, and TIE, October is early for some schools. I'm ready and out the gate running, but many school administrators are looking for teaching couples first. I've been down this road before. Even though I have the patience of Job, the waiting game is nerve racking!