

Our February 2009 trip took several turns. First, we were scheduled to go on a Safari/ environmental expedition with Elderhostel and bicycling trip with VBT to Africa. Unfortunately the Elderhostel part of the trip did not have an adequate response and was therefore canceled. So, we hurriedly changed our plans and took a trip to Costa Rica instead. There were three segments; birding with an Elderhostel group, taking an “adventure” tour with REI and spending a week bicycling with VBT. What follows are some of the highlights of the bicycling trip.

Looking, with the “group” at the Arenal Volcano. The volcano is active and on the right side is where lava has been flowing. Then there is Bill and Mary Ann posing.



Stopping for a rest after bicycling a part of the way around Lake Arenal.



Due to the varied climate, rain forests to desert, cool high elevations to humid lower elevations there is a variety of agriculture practiced. This appeared to be a tobacco plantation with workers in the background spraying pesticides and/or herbicides on or between the plants. Note the “living fence.”





One of our bike stops was at the Doka Estate Coffee Plantation, the largest privately owned coffee plantation in CR. Of interest to we Seattleites was the fact that all of their production was contracted for by Starbucks. When back in Seattle I

stopped by our local Madison Park Starbucks (Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks lives in Madison Park), which is one of their test centers, to see if they had Doka beans for sale. They did not, the manager of the store indicated that most of the CR beans were used for blending. Here Bill is raking the beans that are spread thin on a drying bed.

There were many additional things we did besides bicycling, such as:



Rafting



Zip Lining

And relaxing in the Tabacon Hot Springs, located near La Fortuna, with a glass of fine CR ale.

