

# More Adventures of a Traveling Origamist

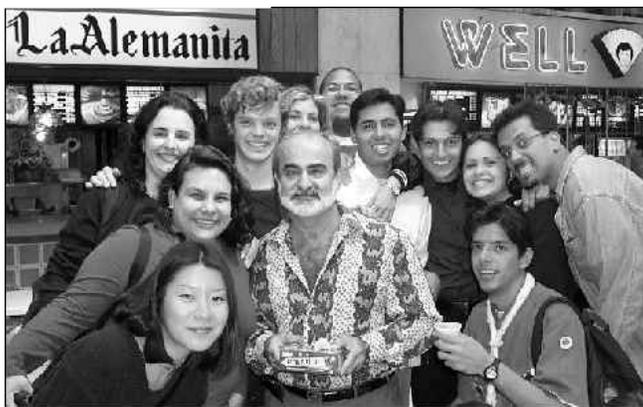
While rolling blackouts were sweeping across California, I was thousands of miles down south in Venezuela, having an absolutely fantastic time with the Caracas folders.

In short, they kept as busy as a California electricity generator -- they did a truly amazing job of setting up venues for me to perform in. During my two week stay, I was a performing guest on three national TV talkshows, an internet hub, two museums, three schools and also performed at numerous private homes. And that doesn't even include the original purpose of my trip -- to teach an origami workshop at the Semana de Japon.

The biggest thrill for me was appearing on the TV shows, in particular, Ni Tan Tarde ("Not So Late") -- the most widely watched television program in Venezuela. Just being in front of a live studio audience was an exciting first for me, and the fact I had to do it all in Spanish gave me that extra adrenaline rush.

But even before my turn on camara I was already on a high, for I had just met the one and only Viviana, host of "Viviana de la Noche," my

favorite Spanish talk show. I was waiting in the back of the studio with my fellow folders when all of a sudden she walked right past us. Nobody else recognized her except me, who exclaimed "That looks like Viviana de la Noche." Juan Carlo, my trip organizer, responded "Hey your right! That IS Viviana de la Noche!" and he summoned her back so I could get a photo with her. I was especially surprised to see her because for some reason I had thought her show was North American. My friends explained to me that she is actually more popular in the States than in Venezuela.



## Faces of Fun in Caracas, Venezuela

Top row from left: Mariana Garcia, Jeremy, Giannina Provenzali, Jorge, Macbeth Navas, Freddy, ?, Juan Carlo Rodriguez.

Middle: Lidia Coronado, ?, Carlos Buchelli.

Bottom: Emi Ujihara

The other guest that night on Ni Tan Tarde was a Venezuelan super model by the name of Patricia Fuemayor. Before the show I got to hang out with her in the waiting room for about a half hour during which I tried to teach her origami, juggling and even handwhistling!

So when I finally got on camara, I was already warmed up to T.V.

personalities, but when it came to speaking in Espanol, I was at first a bit tongue-tide. Understanding what the two hosts were saying was difficult because of all the inside jokes and jargon and simply because Venezuelans speak



**"It's for real! I got my picture taken with my favorite talk show host, Viviana de la Noche!"**



**"It's easiest with zero balls!" Teaching juggling to celebrity Patricia Fuemayor**

twice as fast as normal people. Nevertheless, I had a great time on the show -- juggling and showcasing my origami -- and the studio audience rewarded me with many rounds of applause. Included in this BARF newsletter is my attempt at translating the twelve-minute segment. I hope to soon put the video of it on the BARF website (barf.cc).



**Which looks scarier, Juan Carlo Rodriguez or the origami Medusa he's holding?**

The other main talk show I was on was a morning show called "De Par en Par" ("Two on Two"). On the segment, I juggled, folded the Flaming Crane on the unicycle, and taught the hosts how to fold a Frog's Tongue and Butterfly Heart Card.

My final TV appearance was on a lesser known midday show. On our way to the studio, Giannina Provenzali, who was responsible for getting me on all the shows, was reassuring me that there was absolutely no reason to be nervous about this television appearance, because so few people tune into the station. But when we arrived at the station, to our great surprise, there were literally hundreds of people lined up outside the gate. I exclaimed, "Are they all here to see me?!" It turned out that some famous astrologer was there at the gate foretelling the next day's lottery numbers. I was told by a fervent believer that this guy had come up with the correct numbers 95% of the time. Due to my skepticism I was much more impressed by the huge crowd of believers clawing at the fence than I was by the alleged accomplishments of the astrologer.



**Hundreds gather as astrologer comes forth with deeply sought after answers -- the next day's lottery numbers.**



**Carlos Buchelli and Jeremy play "Ojala" by Silvio Rodriguez**

My actual appearance on the show went well but it wasn't nearly as memorable as the astrologer's outside activities -- I can't even remember the name of the show or the host, and nobody bothered to tape it for me.

So what did I do in Venezuela when I wasn't appearing on TV? Well, in one word I would say, party. My folding friends took me out to official Salsa discotecas only twice but I seized on endless other chances to dance: A karaoke bar, a fancy restaurant, an Andean outdoor festival, about six different private homes, and I even salsa danced on TV with the host of the Lesser Known talk show!

We also had nightly folding parties. The Caracas folding body was comprised of less than twenty folders, but they were a very close-knit group of friends that met regularly and was active in the community.

During my first week I stayed at the home of Carlos Buchelli who happened to be an excellent guitarist and singer. We spent quite a bit of time jamming, him on guitar and me on handwhistle, and he taught me a few Venezuelan melodies.

For my second week I stayed at the home of Macbeth Navas, one of the few Venezuelan origami designers. He worked as a carpenter specializing in fine furniture, and even taught furniture making at the Caracas woodworking school. On one of the days he took me around to visit some of the classes at the school. I was particularly impressed by a class where students were taught how to make guitars and violins from scratch.

All in all, my time in Venezuela felt like a huge celebration. The Caracas folders really went out on a limb to see that I had a fantastic time, which I most certainly did and am very grateful to all of them. I received such wonderful hospitality, and I made so many new friends whom I can't wait to go back and see.

In looking back on how busy they kept me, I can't help but think, "Gosh if only I had an agent here in the U.S. that could book me like they did in Venezuela, my career would be flying oh so high!"

Perhaps I should just spend MORE time traveling. In that vein, I did take yet another trip recently, this time to Portland, OR. Thanks to the networking of folder Ramsey "RC" Cowlshaw, I was flown up for the weekend on a stipend from the Portland Japanese consulate.

My most memorable and funniest part of the trip was upon arrival. Somehow RC had gotten the wrong flight information, so when I arrived, there was no one to pick me up. To make matters worse I had somehow forgotten to bring both his phone number and his address. After waiting a reasonable time, I decided I would take a taxi to Viscount Ballroom, which I had been told via email was where folder Karen Lu went Swing dancing every Friday. So I arrived onto the Viscount swing scene on a mission to find Karen. Just my luck, the first person I danced with introduced herself as Karen. I very excitedly responded, "Oh, do you do origami?" She looked at me funny and said, "No, do you always start dances like that?" Luckily, eventually, I found the right Karen and she hooked me up with RC.

To sum up my weekend in Portland: I folded, danced, Karaoke'd, shopped, and raided RC's vast paper closet (carrying out HIS orders). On Sunday, RC was so kind as to drive me down to Salem for a brief visit with my grandparents, who also happen to be avid BARF members.

At the Portland origami meeting I led a design workshop in which folks came up with a new idea for what to fold and together we tried to fold it. The model was a clothes pin, which we succeeded in folding using a modified pleat-sunk waterbomb base. It was great to meet the Portland folders and I look forward to returning soon, perhaps on some sort of book tour.

In closing I would like to again express my utmost gratitude for the wonderful hospitality and friendship I've received on all my trips. The more I travel, the more I realize how much I love it, but at the same time, the more I am faced with a certain dilemma: each new place I visit means a new place I'll want to revisit. Meanwhile, I'm increasingly inspired to go to new places. Put these together and you get an exponential growth in my future travels until eventually, if I had my way, I would be traveling 100% of the time. People would exclaim, "Jeremy, you're MAD!" and I would contort back, "No, I'm NOMAD!" But for now I'll be content with merely a healthy dose of dancing around the world... Oops, gotta go plan a book tour. Hope to see you all in NYC in June.

Movingly,

Jeremy



**"You can have the big Flasher, but I get the hat!"  
Lidia Coronado (left) and Giannina Provenzali  
drool over Flashers**



**Violin-making class, Escuela de Madera  
(Woodworking School), Caracas, Venezuela**



**"In Venezuela, we start kids young."**



**Giannina Provenzali demonstrates her fearlessness at the wheel**

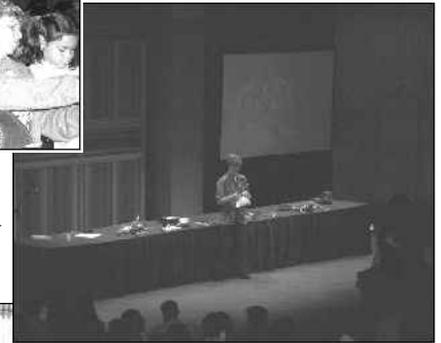


**The sound effects sound better than they look**

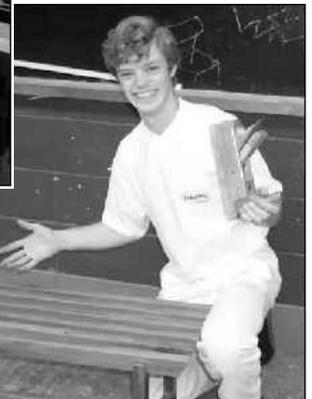


**Look at all the people... and that's just the right side of the auditorium!**

**Jeremy gives hour-long origami workshop to four hundred people at Caracas Week of Japan Festival**



**Furniture Making Class Caracas School of Woodworking**



**"Look what I just made!"**



**Venezuelan leaf that looked to me like a Tai Chi master**



**Ramsey "RC" Colishaw devouring whole shelves of origami paper Portland, OR**



**School of Art and Music San Valentin, Venezuela**