

Lilia and Raul Casas live at 216 McGinnis Drive here in Pine Knoll Shores - a long way indeed from Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they were born. It seems that Raul, as a young Naval Officer, had some very special training in optical design while stationed in Spain, and discovered that the demand for that sort of thing was limited in his own country. Later, through a friend, he found a position with Perkin-Elmer Corporation in Danbury, Ct., and Raul, with Lilia and their four children, who then ranged in age from 10 down to 1, moved to the U.S. What stirring times those must have been! For example, it took them 23 hours to make that first trip. Imagine 23 hours entertaining 4 kids in planes and airports!

Anyway, they made happy adjustments to a new culture and a new language. Lilia taught Spanish for 5 years in a parochial school, then settled into teaching 1st and 2nd grades, working, in all, about 15 years. Raul has spent 30 years with Perkin-Elmer and is still doing consulting for them.

What, you may ask, by the way, is optical design? Aha - it has to do with instruments used in cameras and in the space programs. Sounds terribly complicated, but let us just understand that it is not related to eye-glasses.

The Casas children, 2 married, one about to be, and one single, all in Connecticut, are fluent in Spanish. One daughter works in a courtroom as a simultaneous interpreter. Both Lilia and Raul, now long-time U.S. citizens, said that, although the first few months were a bit of a challenge, they believe firmly that people who come to the U.S. to live ought to learn English well. Their kids managed in a very short time to pick it up and moved right along in school without problems. They think two languages in a school can be burdensome and a threat to learning in the long run.

Lilia's mother, 94, lives in Buenos Aires, near Lilia's sister. They go to see her as often as they can, but they love life on the sound in Pine Knoll Shores - they even have a photo of our island, taken from 50,000 feet up, and can point proudly on it to McGinnis Point.

MARY DOLL

Something as commonplace as spilling mustard on one's shirt doesn't ordinarily have a major effect on one's life, but it certainly did for Rick and Becky Barnes. The shirt was Rick's and he had traveled to Atlanta to see the Braves play baseball. Becky, who was working in Atlanta at the time, had also gone to see the game and came to the rescue after Rick decided to wear his mustard rather than eat it with his hot dog. I'm not sure whether or not the shirt was salvaged, but when asked who won the game Rick's answer is, "I did."

Rick, originally from Philadelphia, came to the Carolinas via N.C.State and then worked for Burlington Industries for 25 years. Becky from Savannah, Tenn. had worked for 20 years in Florence, Alabama for the TVA before meeting Rick. She then pursued a career in sales for Coldwell Bankers in Burlington, N. C. Since Rick was also licensed in real estate sales, when the Coldwell Bankers franchise became available here they decided to make the move. They reestablished Coldwell Bankers with Whitley Realty and also purchased Crystal Coast Rentals handling 185 units.

Afraid of leaving an hour of spare time in their day, this energetic couple went one step further and opened Crystal Coast Insurance Center, a full service agency. Rick Jr.'s company, Bankers and Shippers is one of the companies represented by their agency. Younger son Jason lives at home with them and attends school locally.

Able to squeeze thirty-six hours out of an ordinary day, Rick is an avid golfer, and while Becky also plays golf, she is quite accomplished at bridge.

No small consideration in the purchase of their lovely home on Oakleaf Drive is the walkway onto the ninth fairway of the golf course. If no one answers the door, try looking out back.

JACKIE DAVIDIAN