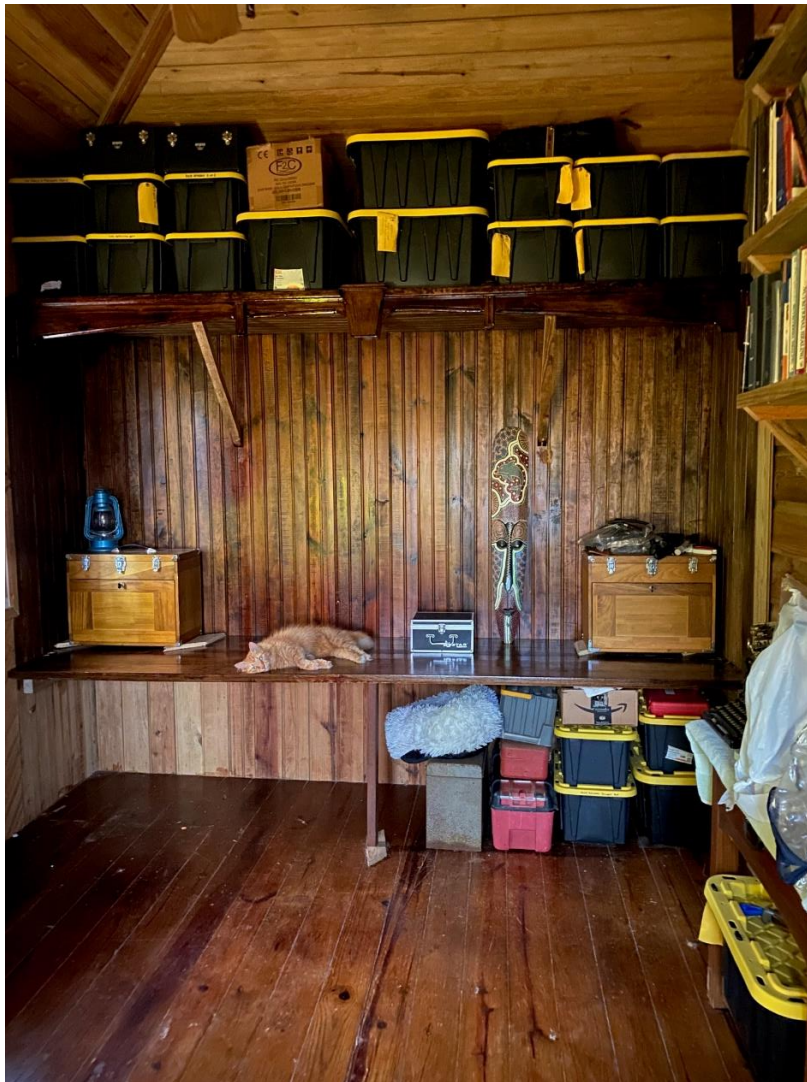


ROATAN 10 - Running the Ranch

I have heard the exasperation with the trend of my essays subject matter (Lab renovation) of most recent date as really having nothing to do with microscopy. Which of course is entirely true, but in my defense, I will get there eventually. Unless of course you would rather hear stories of a happily married elder couple in their retirement, wildly entertaining each other by lying about or diverting blame to the animals for the symphony of distinct audio offerings that two senior digestive tracts can conjure forth.

I thought not.

So, I plead your forbearance with my meager progression since last update. I had gotten as far as I could without having the wood shop fully operational, and have been dedicating time to refurbishing some power tools such as my table saw, jointer and milling machine. Basically, a hurricane, moving and two years of storage has taken its toll but is not irreversible. Below is the west wall lab area on hold, awaiting the table saw restoration to properly complete the cabinets and shelving.



I also now know exactly what is in all of the dry boxes and have sorted the lab equipment.

In the interim I shall offer my sage philosophic observations and pronouncements on the meaning of life and remarkable interactions with the local flora and fauna.

It has been excessively dry here, about an eighth of an inch of rain in ten weeks. I can now actually see other houses in the vicinity. Oh, and now with the horse, we are officially termed a “ranch”. We had smoke from the annual burning of the sugarcane fields on the mainland blot out the sun for about three weeks. Got so hot and with no breeze we had to turn on the AC for a short time. Locals say it is the driest they have seen in 25 years.

My wife has named every single lizard that freely roam the house. There’s “Stubby”, “Rubic” and “Cube” who hang out in one of my tribal masks. (I have a collection of Polynesian, Mexican, Central American and African) This particular mask is lit from the bottom in a Boris Karlov style.



It is a 30-inch-tall mosquito control device. The light attracts them and provides absolutely riveting and delightful, bordering on hilarious, entertainment observing the reactions from unassuming guests when one or more of these not so miniature reptiles rush out from the mouth, nose, eyes or ears to consume an insect du jour. Looks like it’s right out of an Indiana Jones episode. Consequently, we have no mosquito problem even with the doors wide open and no screen and not many repeat guests.

We have Krackles, which is the Roatan version of a crow. Their leader is "Roscoe" who we rescued from the horses water bucket and once we left a snack for him, he leaves presents for us on the deck railing, like a washer or screw or other shiny objects.

The hummingbird that occasionally flies into our living room to hover about two feet in front of your face to say "good morning" has been dubbed "Harrier" after the jet.

We seem to attract critters, so let me introduce a cat that has honored us by choosing to live here.



This guy just walked up to me in the shop and moved in downstairs. He is the most mellow cat, check out those eyes! He also had two huge testaments to his masculinity so we named him BC for Big Cajones. We had them removed so now it stands for "Beyond Cajones." Between him and the horse I have two shop supervisors.

The project list keeps growing and all the activity, along with lots of local fresh fruit and vegies, has had the unintended effect of producing the healthiest version of myself in the last ten years. Up with the sun every day at 5:15 and local coffee. I'm really starting to like it here.

Final note:

While the visual progress is slow, the last few weeks of finally getting to sort thru the microscopy kit has been a soothing exercise to see the equipment has survived the storage and trip with minimal collateral casualties. I even discovered a case of apothecary with highly flammable liquids like glacial alcohol, formaldehyde and acetone the movers neglected to empty before packing. Got lucky with those as that is a very big no-no.

More to come if I don't get removed from the site for not being on point.

Cheers!

Joseph

Comments if you wish to: gjw8844@gmail.com