

Bill and Cathy McArthur in Spain: 6

We struggled this week with the two “simple” past tenses of Spanish, “indefinido” and “imperfecto”. One of the tenses seems to be mainly used for background information and the other for foreground action. Cathy had a couple of good experiences using Spanish. We had walked in to central Malaga and went to the train station to reserve tickets for Katie and Tom for a train to Madrid on March 9. Bill started the conversation with the clerk, but got stymied in a pronunciation problem with the number “9”. Although some digital communication might have worked, Cathy stepped in and completed the transaction in Spanish. Later in the week, Cathy used the telephone to reserve a room for two nights in Nerja which is about 60 kilometers to the east of Malaga. The conversation was all in Spanish.

Along with Bill’s inability to say the number “9” correctly, another incident was indicative of his talents. The man of the house where we live had been sick for over a week; when he reappeared, he asked us how our speaking in Spanish was going. Bill said “woman” in response instead of “better”. The man walked off in silence.

Spain has been in the midst of a cold wave with some accompanying clouds and rain. As the northeast of the U.S. was being inundated with snow, we were chilly with temperatures around 50 degrees. We continue to walk into Malaga several afternoons per week and Bill is still running three mornings per week.

We visited Nerja over the weekend. This “German ghetto” is a beautiful town about 36 miles to the east of Malaga. This is one end of the Costa del Sol with Gibraltar at the other end. There are a lot of German and British “pensioners” around town. Our hotel was located 200 yards from “Cueva”, a large cavern similar to many of the commercial caverns in the U.S. We took a tour of the cavern after checking into our hotel. It is a very impressive cavern with some huge “rooms” and gigantic stalactites and stalagmites.

Nerja is a pretty village with narrow, winding streets. There is an old fortress from the 9th century called “The Balcony of Europe” at water’s edge. Like a lot of other places along the Costa del Sol, the local population is being displaced and augmented by an influx of “extranjeros” who flock to this area because of its beauty and wonderful climate. The price for condos and villas is no longer cheap as it was many years ago, but the people, mainly from Germany and Great Britain, come anyway.

On Saturday we wanted to walk into Nerja, but took a bus because it was raining. We walked around all day. We went to an Internet café and read

emails. Afterward, we walked around Nerja. One of our professors, named Angel, had recommended a few restaurants; he is from Nerja. We walked to the beach and ate lunch at the restaurant called Ayo. We ate paella, which was cooked in a huge pan over a fire. Later, we walked up to the village of Frigiliana. It is 3.7 miles from Nerja to Frigiliana, but it seemed more. We took a taxi back to Nerja and watched the Carnival. Later, we ate dinner in the restaurant called Los Cuñaos. We walked back to our hotel and fell into bed.

El sábado, íbamos a caminar a Nerja, pero tomamos un autobús porque llovía. Paseábamos todos el día. Fuimos a un café Internet. Después, caminamos por las calles de Nerja. Nuestro profesor, Ángel, había recomendado algunos restaurantes; el es de Nerja. Anduvimos por la playa y almorzamos en el restaurante Ayo. Tomamos paella que estaba cocinando en una sartén grande sobre un fuego. Mas tarde, subimos a pie de Nerja a Frigiliana. Es 6 kilómetros de Nerja a Frigiliana, pero nos pareció que fue más. Tomamos un taxi a Nerja y observamos Carnaval. Más tarde, cenamos en restaurante Los Cuñaos. Volvamos a pie a nuestro hotel y nos tumbamos en cama.

Bill and Cathy