

*[Archivist note: This document was written by Bob Brown for Paul Vanden Bout, the "you" in the document, who made the May 1994 trip with Bob. Pat Smiley, referenced in the document, was NRAO's Education and Public Outreach person responsible for NRAO images.]*

I remember vividly our first trip to Chile. It was in May 1994 where we went to see the two "best" sites that had been identified by the SAO group, both of those sites being near Ollague. The next day we ended up stuck in the sand of the Paso de Jama, but clearly impressed that this area, not the area near Ollague was better if for no reason because of its accessibility. In any case, I remember that very well and I also remembered that I took a lot of photographs on the trip. But I couldn't remember what I did with the photos. When you asked for them, for me it was just a question of locating them. I've looked everywhere, I have boxes and boxes of photos and slides. But the Ollague trip photos were no where to be found.

I just found them. I had carefully put them in a photo album, complete with a short description of each photo. I had completely forgotten. I will FEDEX the album to Pat Smiley tomorrow.

There are about 150 pictures. We went a lot of places on that trip. Remember it was the dedication of the Gemini south site at Cerro Pachon and we crashed their party? We went to Las Campanas where a couple of unfortunate souls were digging the foundation for the Magellan telescope with a pickax. We went to Paranal. And we even went to Argentina (El Leoncita). There are photos of all that in the album. Specifically, re Ollague, we visited sites #19 and 20 on the SAO list of candidate sites and there are photos of both (which look like everything else in the Atacama, barren and flat).

The final result, identification of the Chajnantor site, did not occur on this trip. Instead, that was done on the day following the visit of Bill Harris and Hugh VanHorn to Chile in October 1994. We took these guys up the Paso de Jama about 5 km past (east) of the road that turns off toward Boliva. I had chosen a spot with a view that overlooks Laguna Verde. This was not meant to be the MMA site, it was meant to be a place that we could say to Harris could be the MMA site and it would impress. We took them to that spot on October 25, 1994, got out of the cars and took photographs of all of us looking pleased.

Harris was clearly feeling the effects of the altitude so we took everyone back down, did some shopping in Toconao and ended up celebrating with pisco sours at the restaurant on Caracoles street in San Pedro. The next day you took the NSF folks off to Santiago or somewhere (La Serena?) and I drove with Geraldo Valladares back up the Paso de Jama to find a "real" site for the MMA. It was at that time that Geraldo and I ventured down the road to Bolivia only to be turned around by a guy pointing a rifle at us (Geraldo says "I do not like his face"). We then drove the opposite way, south, found the western entrance to the plateau by following the switchback road that goes to the sulfur mine on Cerro Toco and continued onto the Chajnantor plateau. The plateau was perfect. I climbed up on a rock and excitedly took some panoramic pictures with Geraldo watching me perhaps wondering if I had lost my mind. I said to Geraldo, "Isn't this a beautiful place? Can't you just see it with the MMA antennas spread out in the distance?" Geraldo

was very serious. He says, "Yes, but it is a beautiful place without the antennas". I got a bit of cultural sensitivity that day that I haven't forgotten. I'm very grateful. That was October 26, 1994.

I was in Chile a couple of months ago, in January. With Karen and another couple we stopped for gas at the Shell station in Calama on our way from Antofagasta to SPdA. While the car was being filled I hear someone yell "Hey Bob!", I look around and there's Geraldo washing his car. I've got a great photograph of the two of us standing in the Calama Shell station. Small world.

In any case, the album is on its way to Pat. I'll suggest that she scan all the photos and you can use the ones appropriate for your talk.

Bob Brown