

NUMBER TWO 1995

# PEACE CORPS

T I M E S



## Education Volunteers

The Heart  
of What We Do

FROM THE DIRECTOR

# Glad to be here

I'm sure that all of you were excited when you received your invitation to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer. The people you would meet, the new culture you would experience, the chance to really do something good in the world—it all waited for you in the Peace Corps.

Well, that's exactly how *I* felt when President Clinton asked me to be the new Peace Corps Director. I couldn't wait to be part of this organization, which has been such a positive influence in our country—and in so many other countries—for 34 years. It's an honor to have this job

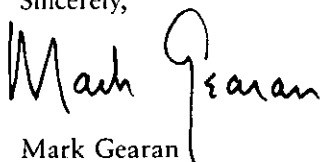
because I believe in the work all of you are doing around the world.

The biggest part of my job will be to make your service in the Peace Corps a rewarding one for you and for the communities where you live and work.

I plan to visit as many Peace Corps countries as possible in the months ahead, and I hope I'll get the chance to meet many of you. In the meantime, I

hope you'll write and let me know about your work and your experiences. Hearing from you will help me a great deal with my new job, and then I'll be better able to help you with yours.

Sincerely,



Mark Gearan  
Peace Corps Director

P.S. Send some photos so we can see how you're doing out there!

## PEACE CORPS TIMES

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# PEACE CORPS

## T I M E S



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A quarterly publication for Peace Corps  
Volunteers serving worldwide

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### Sowing Seeds

BY PATRICIA CUNNINGHAM—Still marching to the beat, Education Volunteers are the foundation of the Peace Corps mission.

### It's Your Move

BY SARAH BOTT—Quiet weekend nights a little too quiet? Resurrect those childhood games or learn some new ones for a friendly introduction to the community.

### It's a Sixties Thing

BY MELISSA JOHNS—Senior Volunteers exhibit the true spirit of adventure and show their younger colleagues a thing or two.

### Cheap Tricks

BY PATRICIA CUNNINGHAM—Call it ingenuity or just old-fashioned cheapness, these PCVs have no qualms about sharing their tricks for living the good life on a tight budget.

ON THE COVER—Melanie Kwan, PCV Senegal, unlocks the curiosity of her students.

# Letters

## Credit Where Credit Is Due

ONCE AGAIN PCVS ARE TRYING to get credit for doing something Africans have been doing for years. (RE: "99 Bottles of Beer In the Wall" Notes From Around the World, Winter 1995). Although, I think it's great that the PCV in Namibia cleaned up his area of bottles, the idea of building a house from beer cans and bottles has been a very common practice by host country nationals for years.

Jerry Koontz  
Mbaambi@AOL.COM

## Ticked Off by Anger

YOUR ARTICLE "MANAGING YOUR Anger" (Winter 1995) came close to covering my only criticism of the *Peace Corps Times*: the pollyanna tone with regard to PCVs.

Usually PCVs are presented in such a kind, sensitive, cooperative, unselfish way that I wish I was in that Peace Corps, rather than the one I spent the past two years with.

So to make this criticism constructive, I'd suggest more articles pointing out improper examples of PCV conduct. Perhaps some people (PCVs) would see themselves in a different light.

Ron Seibel  
Kazakhstan

THE ARTICLE "MANAGING YOUR Anger" is appropriate in any issue of the *Peace Corps Times*, but I was surprised to find the management suggestions to be both superficial and contrary to the ideals of Peace Corps. "Short-circuiting" your anger by "thinking of something unrelated" sounds like avoidance, not a solution.

If I become angry when the mail doesn't come, it's not because the mail is late but because I want contact with me friends and family, because I am lonely.

Identifying the source of my anger allows me to find pragmatic solutions (say, working toward stronger friendships with my neighbors).

Sure, this is not easy, but if you're going to deal with your anger by strapping on a Walkman, you're going to go through a lot of batteries over the years and, indeed, the rest of your life. In fact, why bother with the Walkman—just head for your nearest alcohol vendor.

Progress with intractable age-old problems such as anger require continuous re-examination and is only slowly achieved. And if that sounds like it comes straight out of your Peace Corps Handbook, that's because it does.

Glenn Heller  
Solomon Islands

I APPRECIATED THE ARTICLE "Managing Your Anger" and found myself easily relating to the feelings expressed in it. One thing I have learned and would like to add is the benefits of doing something nice for yourself to calm anger. Taking a little time out when you need it to replace tension with comfort can work wonders. Chewing that entire pack of gum your mother mailed you, locking yourself in your house for an hour to read your favorite comic book again, using two buckets of water to take your bath, or simply laying under a mosquito net while looking at old photos and having a good hard cry to the tunes of a back home band—it doesn't take much to relieve our aching emotions at times. A little self-pampering may be all you need to go back out and face the world that seemed so cruel only moments earlier. After all, we joined



Ruth Scham and her English class recognize International Women's Day in Guinea.

Peace Corps to learn from and take part in a new culture, not to be angered by it.

Tonya Buckler  
Gabon

## A Lump of Coal for Santa

YOU HAVE OPENED UP A MASSIVE can of worms by publishing both the article "Santa Visits Micronesia" (Fall 1994) and the editorial "Santa Doesn't Belong" (Winter 1995) in which PCV Michael Aurele condemns PCV Gloria Bailly's charitable actions.

Mr. Aurele is correct that Peace Corps should be promoting self-sufficiency. However, has he the right to condemn the actions of another Volunteer? In this case, I believe he does not.

I currently serve in the Central African Republic in a small village called Baoro. I've been here two years and made numerous friendships that will stay with me for the rest of my life. I've found it difficult and rather patronizing to tell my friends who work in the fields and live in mud-walled, straw-roofed houses that they can't have the things I do because they first must be self-sufficient. There are no "toys" in Baoro outside of empty tomato sauce cans. Even if they magically find money to buy gifts with, there are no gifts to purchase!

Over the last two years I have seen several development organizations

attempt to help CAR in different ways. Most are shooting for the goal of "sustainability," a very wise and worthwhile goal. No one likes dependency, least of all host-country nationals. However, if we find ourselves with the means to give our friends gifts they would otherwise probably never enjoy—is there really so much wrong with that?

I'm not saying what Baily did was right. I'm also not saying it's wrong. Peace Corps is unique in that it puts us in the community, and we can become a part of it if we choose. Each experience is different. If it were Christmas in the U.S., I'd give my friends presents. My Central African friends are just as worthy, and I refuse to treat them any differently. Let's stop condemning other Volunteers' decisions and recognize that people are people around the globe. That's what goals number two and three are all about.

*Scott McBride  
Central African Republic*

### Do Go On!

I RECENTLY SAW A COPY OF YOUR *Peace Corps Times*, Winter 1995 issue. Way to go! Finally a Peace Corps magazine with some really useful information for Volunteers, not just pleasure reading articles. Keep up the good work!

*Linda Millette  
Friends of Malawi (RPCV Group)*

### All in the Family

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ARTICLE on families with several Volunteers, "Family Affair" (Winter, 1995). I am one of five members of my family who have served: my parents met in the Philippines (married while Volunteering); my uncle served there as well; my sister just returned from the Eastern Caribbean (St. Lucia), and now I am beginning my service in Antigua. How about that!

*Jesse Ward Putnam  
Antigua, Eastern Caribbean*

### More Applause for Recycling

THE WINTER 1995 EDITION OF the *Peace Corps Times* is nice, interesting, and slick. Estonian volunteer organizations would be jealous if they knew there were even a question of what percentage of recycled paper it was printed on.

*Nathan Roe  
Estonia*

### Friendly Trekbers

I AM A PCV IN ZANZIBAR, Tanzania, winding up a typical atypical two-year tour as a teacher of secondary mathematics. It will be hard to leave the students, neighbors, and other friends that I have worked and played with, in and out of my community. This includes the countless number of PCVs from around Africa that have visited our "rest house" during their stay on Zanzibar.

It is through these encounters that I have come to truly believe that America is well represented by traveling PCVs. These Americans seem to share something that goes beyond a common Teva tan. Without wanting to sound mushy, I've found that PCVs traveling abroad are some of the most culturally sensitive and pleasant "tourists" I've met. PCVs are somehow able to travel thriftily and efficiently without sacrificing generosity. Of course, that must be my objectively biased opinion.

*Dave Hollis  
Zanzibar, Tanzania*

### International Women's Day a Hit

I AM A PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER in Tlamele, Guinea, West Africa, teaching high school English. Once each year during my two-year service, I organized a month-long art project with my students called "International Women's Day." I had my students brainstorm about the many roles and various jobs women perform daily in our town, portraying them in all their different settings.

There were four main objectives to this project: celebrate women and their contribution to society, come together in a relaxed social setting and speak English, interest a World-Wise school in corresponding with us by "introduction" with our paintings, and to bring these canvases back to Seattle for exposition to the public accompanied with commentaries and other artifacts about Guinea.

All these goals have been met except for the last, which hopefully will be realized soon after my COS in July. Unfortunately, and ironically, the few female students that I have did not participate in this project.

*Ruth Scham  
Tlamele, Guinea*



**Nathan Roe (center), flanked by fellow Volunteers, students, and a moose.**

### Editorial Policy:

Letters and photos are always welcome, but, for space reasons, we cannot print all that we receive. Preference will be given to letters that address the contents of the magazine. We request that letters be limited to 200 words, and we reserve the right to edit for style, clarity, and length. All black and white and color photos (up to 8x12 inches) are acceptable. We regret, however, that we cannot return them. Please identify all photos clearly. Peace Corps reserves the right to use any writing, photos, and artwork in other publications.

# NOTES FROM



## A NOMADIC NETWORK

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO WAKE UP THE MORNING of their COS date with a bad case of the travel bug. After all, when are you going to find yourself with both a passport and a broken-in backpack again?

### THAILAND

To help Volunteers figure out where they want to go and how they're going to get there, PCVs in Thailand created the TIO (Travel Information Outlets) Network. Participating countries provide lists of Volunteers who have agreed to correspond with potential PCV trekkers. Volunteers provide travel and cultural information to each other and frequently extend invitations to their sites. So far, 21 Peace Corps countries have signed on to the network and hundreds of PCVs have tramped new frontiers. To learn more about TIO, write Jonathan Carr and Jai Sullivan at TIO Network Thailand, c/o Peace Corps, 242 Rajvithi Road, Amphur Dusit, Bangkok 10300, Thailand.

## California, Here We Come!

MOROCCO PCV Paula Jeane AND 12 MOROCCAN COUNTERPARTS received a mighty big lift in their quest to improve the Moroccan education system for the blind. KLM Royal Dutch Airways jet Paula and her fellow instructors and students, most of whom are blind, off to California for a visit to some of the world's most technologically advanced institutes, schools, and libraries for the blind. KLM picked up the tab for the one week visit to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Mateo as part of the airline's "Bridging the World" contest. Paula works in a school for the blind in the Peace Corps Orientation and Mobility project with blind instructors, students, and their families to improve the living conditions and educational prospects for the visually impaired. The goal of the trip was to inform Paula's Moroccan counterparts of the operations of successful American institutes for the blind. It also introduced the Moroccan instructors to resource materials and technology used in the education of the blind in the States.

### MOROCCO

## AN ANCIENT DISCOVERY

For generations, pre-Colombian lore has told the tale of a mysterious people who dominated

### HONDURAS

ed the Central American terrain, predating even the Mayans, but relics of the ancient civilization have been few and far between—until now, with the discovery made by Honduras PCV TOM BERG and three fellow explorers. While caving at Cueva de Talgua near Catacamus, Tom's group came upon the burial site of the ancient people. After hearing of the find, the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History organized an expedition to examine the site and designated it the most important archeological discovery in Central America in over 150 years.

Please send news & pictures of your  
Notes From Around the World  
to Peace Corps Times.

Patricia Cunningham, Notes Editor.

## Silver Lining

LIKE THE REST OF THE world, Volunteers aren't immune to the everyday

**HONDURAS** — aggravations of

stale lunches and lost cash, nor are they insulated from threats to their personal safety. Volun-

teers in Honduras realized that a Volunteer can never feel more alone than when suffering through the aftermath of a crisis, so they created a support network. The Survivor Advocacy Group's (SAG) objectives are to train PCVs to provide emotional support for victims of crime and other crisis situations and to inform them of their medical and legal options. SAG advocates also help out with other Volunteer concerns, such as dealing with a family emergency or with doubts about whether to early terminate their service. Since PCVs most often turn to other Volunteers in difficult times, SAG enhances their capacities to be supportive. "What sets SAG apart from similar advocacy groups is that the training is organized, implemented, and facilitated by trained Volunteer advocates," said Honduras PCV Debra Richardson (pictured above with SAG training facilitators). "As we well know, being a Volunteer isn't always easy. SAG advocates feel more prepared to face the possible crisis situations that are a reality when working in a different culture." SAG hopes to be a model for other posts.



## Liga Nocturna

When he's not building a day care center for children of female prisoners or organizing a sewing work-

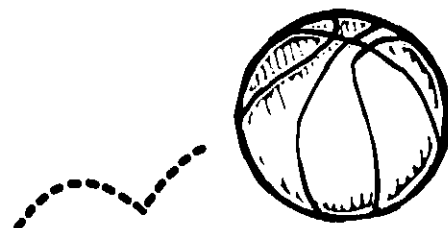
**ECUADOR** — shop for girls, Ecuador PCV **MILES**

**COOLEY** can be found practicing his jumpshot down at the local basketball court and toning up for his coaching job in Liga Nocturna, a night-time basketball league which Miles organized for the youth of the coastal city of Esmeraldas. The league helps keep kids off the street at night while engaging them in constructive activity. It is fast becoming the pride of the community—over 500 boys and girls have participated, and the championship games were attended by the Governor of Esmeraldas Province and the President of the National Ecuadorian Sports Association. "Liga Nocturna is a truly positive force in solving Esmeraldas' serious problems with delinquency, drugs, and gangs," says Miles. "Basketball has become a metaphor for life. The kids are learning that with determination and practice they can accomplish fantastic things." The league shows no signs of slowing down, especially since the Peace Corps Gifts in Kind program donated 20 new basketballs.

## MAKING HER MARK

IN A CULTURE WHERE A DISABLED CHILD IS OFTEN CONSIDERED the result of sorcery or voodoo, challenging the status quo can be a daunting task. But as is the case with most PCVs, once Tina Singleton, the first Special

**BENIN** Education Volunteer in Benin, hit the ground, she just started running. Through her efforts, both the Benin Ministry of Social Affairs and local and international NGOs will now have a detailed report of the state of resources and services for persons with disabilities in Benin, as well as strategies for further development. Two local schools for the deaf will have improved facilities and curricula, and Benin will have a full fledged sports federation to accommodate medal winning athletes—who recently took home six medals at the Special Olympics! "The opportunities to share information and exchange information are many," said Tina. "We just have to make it happen."





## The Environmental School

AS EVERY ENVIRONMENTALIST knows, the key to conservation is education. In Swaziland, PCVs decided to concentrate their efforts on combating environmental deterioration and resource erosion by creating a comprehensive and sustainable environmental education

program. The Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Education project aims to do just that. Funded jointly through USAID, the Swaziland National Trust Commission, and the hard work of environmental PCVs, the project will address the causes of natural resource degradation through community-based awareness activities and technical training. The centerpiece of the project is the Environmental Education Resource Center at Lobamba. The brainchild of PCV Jessie Lopez, the resource center provides a focal point for the development and dissemination of information and a basic infrastructure for environmental education. It's been such a huge success that PCVs Elaine Wells and Clarissa Tafoya will be heading up a second resource center in Mlawula this fall.

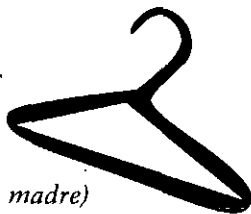
SWAZILAND

## A PERFECT FIT

SO WELL-REGARDED ARE THE HIGH QUALITY, BUT reasonably priced, sweaters of the city of La Ligua that the very mention of the city to a Chilean is sure to

CHILE

elicit the response *Mi hijo (hermano, primo, madre) tiene uno muy lindo*. "My son (or brother, cousin or mother) has a very nice one from there." Yet, these budding enterprisers are finding their sales endangered by imports of Asian sweaters and, lacking marketing and distribution systems to reach outside markets, are seeing the local economy begin to shrink. PCV David Hennekes and his Chilean counterparts came up with a solution: create the industry's first and only newsletter, "Trama." A bimonthly publication, "Trama" delivers to entrepreneurs marketing and management information to help them grow and remain competitive. "La Ligua is an island in the industry," says David. "A newsletter is an important method of breaking the barrier of isolation. Jump-starting this project provides a very important foundation for significant growth of the La Ligua textile industry."



## Getting Down to Business

When PCV MIKE WALTON arrived at his site in Estonia, he realized the rules of doing business in Eastern Europe would require a creative approach. Not only was there no trace of a cellular phone or a fax machine, there wasn't even a phone book. "They need information about the market, and they don't have the link to the outside world," explained Mike. "They don't know how to make the contact, they don't even know where to look for the phone number." Mike went about setting up a business information center for Eastern and Central Europe. The information center functions as part library, part trade database and provides businesses with the resources they need to network. "There are books on how to get set up, and there are trade books from other countries," said Mike. "So if someone needs supplies, they can go to the center and link to other countries through a trade network now." He also hopes to bring some consultants into the center to help would-be entrepreneurs set up shop. "Estonians have a lot of great ideas, they just don't know where to get started. I'm just trying to make it easy for people to do business."

ESTONIA





## PCV TO THE RESCUE

IT TOOK FIJI PCV Angelo Ventillo (PICTURED ABOVE, SECOND FROM left) almost two years and ten thousand miles to be at the right place at the right time but, fortunately, there he was at the platform of the Suva Olympic Pool when Kenji Nadaka, a Japanese tourist, lost consciousness while swimming. Angelo, a math teacher who moonlights as a Red Cross swimming instructor, was holding swimming classes for primary students when he heard Kenji yelling. A few moments later, the 23-year old Tokyo native was lying on the bottom of the pool. A four member rescue team, led by Angelo, pulled Kenji from the water and applied mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until he came to. "I cannot say thank you enough," said Kenji. "I owe these people my new life." The Japanese Ambassador to Fiji was so grateful, he awarded the team silver medals for bravery.

## To Washington with Great Expectations

"DEAR BOB, I'VE BEEN IN UKRAINE FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS NOW, AND it can best be described as really, really strange. Don't get me wrong, I've had a great time so far. It's just that living in Northern Virginia is a little different."

So begins PCV Dave Howard's Peace Corps adventure, as well as his letter to the world, via Washington Post columnist Bob Levey. Throughout Dave's tour as a small business adviser, he will regularly be sending letters back to Bob about his life and impressions. So far, readers have been introduced to Dave's host country family in Yalta, ridden on a train with two burly Ukrainian lieutenants, and witnessed Dave's hapless wanderings into poison ivy—plus his enthusiasm over his work as a business specialist at the Yalta Commercial Sea Port. "Am I tired of it all? Have I had enough? Do I want to go home? Not on your life. These past six months have been the experience of a lifetime both personally and professionally." And since he's just out of Training, the best is most certainly yet to come.

## Young Women on the Move

Setting your sights on a career is difficult when options and role models are not readily available

**TURKMENISTAN** to you, especially for

Turkmenistan's young women, who must cut a completely new path in order to achieve their goals. PCVS MARGO HAUBER, MARGUERITE BATY, and MELANIE VALLENTINE organized Career Day to give teenage girls a clearer perspective of their choices and to provide advice on making that difficult transition from student to professional. "The goal of Career Day was to acquaint girls with different career options by giving them opportunities to talk with local women from various professions," explained Melanie. Women physicians, journalists, teachers, and engineers talked to students about their jobs, answered questions about their education, and, in the mean time, became role models to the more than 100 teenagers who attended. "The question of which profession to pursue is arising in the minds of these girls as they approach the end of their school years," noted Margo. "It's a difficult time for them. They need to know the different responsibilities of possible careers for themselves."

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# SOWING SEEDS

## THE ENDURING CONTRIBUTIONS OF EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS

BY PATRICIA CUNNINGHAM

**A**T A TIME WHEN THE PEACE CORPS IS TOUTING ITS most exciting and “media-friendly” projects—saving the rain-forest in South America, building a market economy in Eastern Europe, introducing health initiatives to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Thailand—it’s easy to lose sight of the deeds of the more traditional, but equally important, project assignments, namely

Education. Since Peace Corps’ inception, Education Volunteers have been marching unswervingly to the beat of the agency’s mission and providing the backbone to its enterprise. More than five million people around the world have been taught by Volunteers, according to Peace Corps’ estimates, and that’s not including the countless other project

assignments that incorporate education in the transfer of skills and technology. Right now, 40 percent of Volunteers are involved in education projects. Twenty-five hundred Volunteers in 72 countries are introducing schoolchildren to *biology, chemistry, algebra, and English*; instructing adults in self-sustaining vocational skills like *mechanics, metalworking,* and home economics; working to help the disabled help themselves and make communities more accommodating to their needs; training primary and secondary classroom teachers in modern educational techniques; and assisting communities in the development of non-formal education and youth-related activities, such as literacy and nutrition train-

ing and drug prevention. Though the work may not appear as glamorous as cutting deals in Kiev, what it lacks in pretension it more than makes up for in effectiveness.

"I think it's the heart of what we do," says Kathy Rulon, a former Education Volunteer in Morocco who is now a senior agency official involved in international operations.

Over the course of Peace Corps' history, education has remained the agency's largest sector. Education Volunteers continue to lead in new country requests, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is almost invariably the first program countries request when they invite Peace Corps Volunteers. Developing nations have discovered that Peace Corps teachers have that certain knack for enhancing a country's most valuable asset—its people.

"You won't find another organization that has the four goals of working with the students, the teachers, the resources and the community," notes Rulon.

Nor will you find a group of people among teachers overseas who are more committed to the basic truth that the enlightened mind is the bedrock upon which all other advances are raised.

## A ROAD MAP TO IDEAS

The greatest impact Education Volunteers have on developing countries comes from their insistence on implementing better teaching methods and introducing more effective teaching tools. This is no easy feat since many Volunteers encounter education-

al systems that favor memorization over problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

"There is a push to introduce some of the new teaching methods and different techniques, such as experiential learning and participatory learning,"

**"MORE THAN FIVE MILLION  
PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD  
HAVE BEEN TAUGHT BY  
PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS."**



notes Elizabeth MacDonald, a former Volunteer in Central African Republic and one of Peace Corps' Education Specialists.

Volunteers work closely with host country teachers, school administrators, and the local community to develop new methodologies, materials, and curricula. Agency initiatives in educational programming, such as the Programming and Training System (PATS), are making it easier for Volunteers to meet these project goals.

Begun in 1989 to strengthen Peace Corps' contribution to educational

programming, PATS outlines achievable goals for Volunteers. Before Volunteers even arrive at their sites, APCDs are working with host country national sponsors to develop feasible projects and to chart a Volunteer's ability to implement various teaching

approaches and ways to interact with host country teachers. In fact, PATS is now a permanent part of pre-service training, in-service training, and project evaluation.

"It helps them understand fully what their project is, how they contribute to it, how they make a difference in it," says MacDonald, "and it treats the Volunteer as a professional contributor."

While PATS gives Education Volunteers a road map for what is expected of them and helps to focus their energies, the general rule is that the type of change Volunteers can effect, as well as the degree, depends on the condition of the educational system in each country and varies with each classroom.

"I think we see most Volunteers integrating the

system they're working in with the newer methods or techniques," explains Rulon. "And for the most part, they are bringing new ideas into the classroom."

And as every Education Volunteer knows, getting students to open up to new ideas often requires an innovative approach.

Sheila Smith, a former Volunteer in Fiji, admitted to being daunted nearly to the point of hopelessness when she first encountered the vacant, silent faces of the students in her English class.

"It was like they were comatose," she recalled. "I walked in and they said 'Good morning, Miss Smith,' and that was it. Then they just stared at me. It was difficult. I learned very quickly that they didn't have the motivation to do the assignments. Because it's an exam-based system, they don't worry about doing anything throughout the year. But about a month before the exam they start to cram."

In Eastern and Central Europe, it's the lingering educational dictates of the former political regimes that present an obstacle to Volunteers. Though levels of education are traditionally higher in this part of the world than in other developing countries, challenging students to think critically and creatively can often mean challenging institutional structures.

"Marxist-Leninist theories of education were based on indoctrination by rote memory," said Judy Brown, an Education Volunteer in the Czech Republic. "Students had stopped attending classes because they could memorize the books and pass based on whom they knew or were related to."

Judy's solution was to convince the director of her program to institute a mandatory attendance policy and redesign her courses to ensure that her students were using analysis, rather than memorization, to learn their subjects.

Sheila Smith took a slightly different approach. She found discussions of cultural differences were an effective segue into English instruction and provided just the spark she needed to pique her students' curiosities and open their minds to new ideas.

"We would get into some strong discussions and at points like that they



**"RIGHT NOW, 40 PERCENT OF  
VOLUNTEERS ARE ENGAGED  
IN EDUCATION PROJECTS. THAT'S  
2,500 VOLUNTEERS IN 72 COUNTRIES."**

would really open up. I would explain to them how we do things in my culture, and they would tell me how they did things in Fijian culture. It helped them and me, too, and they could talk more easily about novels they'd read for class."

### **BUILT TO LAST**

Along with instituting better teaching methods in the classroom, Education Volunteers are also concentrating their efforts on capacity building within the community. Teacher training, for instance, constitutes almost 20 percent of all education assignments and has a real impact on improving the quality of instruction in Peace Corps countries. Last year in Nepal, one of the world's poorest countries, Volunteers trained more than 500 teachers in math, science, and English language skills.

"I saw teachers using methods I had taught them," says Pam Randles, a former Volunteer in Nepal. "I saw people

really using a library I started. I saw a school using the microscope another Volunteer and I helped build. I saw the national teacher training project using curriculum materials I helped develop. I am fortunate to leave Nepal feeling I gave something for what I got."

Education Volunteers also assist counterparts in identifying resources in their own country and local community that can be used to facilitate learning. This might mean working with counterparts to create textbooks or helping them locate desks and blackboards. "We don't bring in the materials," says Rulon. "Our resources are human, and we work with people in the given country to help them develop a capacity."

More students and counterparts are gaining access to information, technology—and opportunities—around the world than ever before, thanks to Education Volunteers. English teaching, whether at the secondary or university level, is now the fastest growing programming area, mainly due to the fact that countries in Central and Eastern Europe are finding English to be one of the most crucial tools of the trade as they build free market economies. Fifty percent of all Peace Corps teachers are engaged in TEFL projects. In 1994 alone, Volunteers taught English to more than 100,000 students and worked with more than 15,000 host country teachers—developing language skills and sharing new approaches. In the meantime, being able to speak and read English provides them access to materials not available in their own languages. It also enables them to participate in world-wide conferences, communicate in the international business arena, attend universities, and find

employment in companies they would have been excluded from otherwise."

"English is a necessary skill in commerce and other fields today," says James Rubarth-Lay, a former TEFL Volunteer in Lesotho. "Some of my pupils might not have qualified as clerks and office assistants without improving their English. Three of my students went on to the National University of Lesotho."

### MORE THAN "THREE RS"

Capacity building today extends beyond the more traditional disciplines. Education Volunteers have been branching out from the "three Rs" and making inroads to new frontiers—incorporating special education, HIV/AIDS, environment, youth development, and business into classroom lessons—with considerable success.

Volunteers in Africa have been at the forefront of integrating HIV/AIDS education into the classroom curricula. In Cameroon, Volunteers worked with their host country partners to develop a manual, *Teach English, Prevent AIDS*, to teach HIV/AIDS awareness in English classes. Now that the manual is being implemented in 20 secondary schools throughout the country, over 5,000 students are hearing the HIV/AIDS message. In Benin, Volunteers are focusing their projects on training local community members. "Before the end of 1995," says Benin PCV Kristin Cook, "we hope to train 1,200 community health educators, 800 influential village leaders, and 600 high school peer counselors."

Environmental educa-

tion has also become a mainstay in Volunteer projects in Latin America. The region's natural resources are seriously threatened, challenging Volunteers to educate the growing rural and urban populations about ways to utilize their existing natural resource base while still protecting the environment. "We are sensitizing the surrounding communities to the fantastic natural resources they have close by," says Susan Qashu, a Volunteer in Chile. "We're trying to create an awareness of the desertification problems here in north Chile and assisting them in finding ways to ensure the health of their environment."

### A RIPPLE EFFECT

Peace Corps has an elaborate reporting system to gauge the success of Education Volunteers—their con-

tributions are more than evident in plain sight. For instance, developing countries with high literacy rates are seen to grow faster economically than those with low literacy rates. Improved education increases people's ability to contribute to scientific and technical advances in the world, as well as in one's own village. A more educated populace leads to visible improvements in a country's health, agriculture, economy, and use of its natural resources. In the long run, the benefits Education Volunteers bring to the communities in which they serve are immeasurable because technical assistance is only part of the Peace Corps mission and because the Volunteer's commitment to a country and its people is so strong.

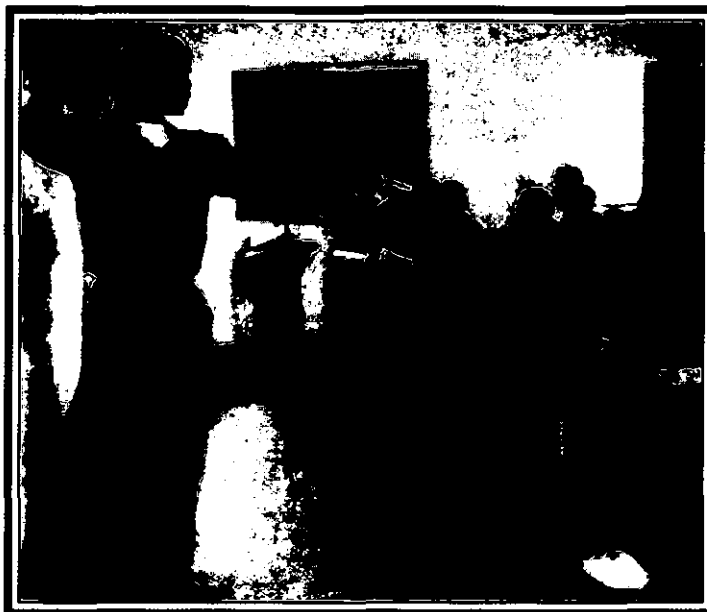
"Formal schooling is only part of the learning process," says Roy Guyton, a former Adult Education Volunteer in Costa Rica. "The majority of what we learn actually occurs outside of the formal learning environment, in the community. I like to think my actions had a ripple effect, that by touching the lives of those in the community, other lives were made better."

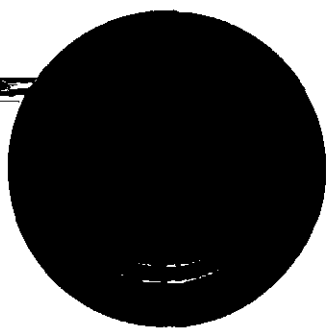
Ultimately it's hard to quantify the rewards of an illuminated mind or of the aspirations of an individual who begins to see what is possible to achieve.

They may not be cultivating whole forests, but Education Volunteers are sowing seeds which are sure to blossom for generations to come. ☐

*Patricia Cunningham works in the Office of Communications.*

**"VOLUNTEERS IN AFRICA HAVE BEEN  
AT THE FOREFRONT OF INTEGRATING  
HIV/AIDS EDUCATION INTO THE  
CLASSROOM CURRICULA."**





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# It's Your Move

## *The Universal Experience of Games*

BY SARAH BOTT

**I**F YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE JOE Zadrozny, you enjoy a rousing game of Monopoly® from time to time. Of course, if you're living in a remote village in

Mongolia, like Joe, you probably don't have Monopoly. But that didn't stop Joe. He and some friends sat down with some cardboard and glue and, in the spirit of good old fashioned "appropriate technology," made their own version of the popular American game.

"It's pretty elaborate," says the former Volunteer of his invention, *Mongolopoly*. "All of the 'chance' cards are true life experiences. There's the basic set for 'mixed' company, and the stress-relieving or venting 'Volunteer only' cards with more sarcastic expressions of our frustrations." *Mongolopoly* helped the group pass the long (seven to eight months long) winters on the other side of the Great Wall and today provides an amusing and tangible memory of his service.

*Mongolopoly* may have been more than just an amusing pastime, though. Making and playing the game helped Joe and his friends adapt to their new culture. Their modifications to a classic game from home illustrate the way games evolve over time, culture, geography, and personal preferences.

Games have been around in some form or another as long as civilization, and many of

the games that are popular in the United States are played in some form all over the world. "Blind Man's Buff," for example, is played in almost all countries. Games historian, Frederic Grunfeld (*Games of the World*: Holt Rinehart, New York, 1975) tells us that as far back as 239 AD Roman children played this same game, calling it "Murinda." In Germany it is called "Blind Cow," whereas in Spain children know it as "Blind Hen" and English children call it "Hoodman Blind."

Peace Corps Volunteers might not find partners for Trivial Pursuit® or Scrabble® among their host country neighbors, but they are likely to find someone who knows how to play checkers or chess or dominoes or something else from among many of other universally-enjoyed games.

Kimberly VanWagner, a former Volunteer in South America, didn't waste too much time bemoaning her town's lack of available amusements without taking action. "It wasn't what you'd call a hopping place," she says of her site's 400 people. "One especially boring afternoon I was talking to my neighbor's nephew, Alberto, about games we liked to play. Even if we didn't like the games, they were beginning to look appealing in comparison to the boredom.

So we decided to make our own checkers set. We couldn't find any cardboard for the board, but we did find an old school desk just the right size. So we drew a checkerboard onto the desk with a pencil and magic marker. I had a friend who worked in the cantina, and he gave us bottle caps to use for the checkers. For the rest of

Chris Williams sits in for a round of Sorry® in Kiribati.



Alberto's visit, we spent the hot lazy afternoons in the shade behind his uncle's house playing checkers on our homemade board."

If you don't remember how many squares are on a checkers board or how many game pieces you need, you might consult a booklet compiled by a couple of your colleagues, David Gordon and Pamela Skripak, former Volunteers in Ecuador. The two put *What's in a Game?* together "to help other Volunteers supplement meager collections of extracurricular games and activities at sites around the world." With instructions on how to make and play over twenty different games (including Road Rally, Snakes and Ladders, Bingo, Dominoes, and Use-Your-Head-Soccer), the book (available through your Whole ICE Catalog) is a valuable source that can help you add some fun to your daily life. A warning, though: once you start making games and playing them with your friends or kids from your school, you're likely to start giggling again the way you did when you beat your parents at Parchesi®.

Many games thought to be mere children's pastimes are actually a mirror to some of our religious and cultural backgrounds. Hopscotch, historian Grunfeld tells us, has been related to myths about labyrinths and mazes, later adapted

to represent the Christian soul's journey from earth to heaven. Certain types of games undoubtedly originated as a training ground for the young, or as a means of maintaining acquired skills. Chess, originally developed in India, was an imaginative reconstruction of a battlefield. Physical aspects of the game changed with its migration westward—elephants, maharajas, and chariots were replaced by castles, kings, and bishops. The strategy and foresight demanded by the game are still thought to provide excellent intellectual training. More mundane but no less useful skills were involved in such games as darts, hoops, foot races, and virtually every other game demanding strength or dexterity. Native American youths developed their marksmanship by throwing darts through a rolling hoop. Playing games, in other words, is a universal pastime that has never known any cultural or linguistic boundaries.

Some of the most fascinating primitive games are known in virtually every part of the globe, yet their local variations tell us a great deal about the nature of the particular culture to which they have been adapted. One of these universal games is Cat's Cradle, known in Africa, Asia, Europe, and throughout the Western hemisphere. The Eskimos play this

Carla Moschetti learns the finer points of a new game in Guatemala.



## **"Sometimes figuring out the rules of a new game is more of a puzzle than playing the game."**

game while narrating a story at each stage, and in this fashion their legends have been handed down unaltered from generation to generation. (The individual string figures are a way of helping the storyteller remember his tales. The figures represent birds, kayaks, sledges, bears, foxes, and other features of Arctic life.) In New Guinea they symbolize spears, drums, palm trees, fish, and crabs.

The game of *Yoté* is played throughout West Africa, and is one of many similar board games played in various parts of the world. The great popularity of these games is probably due to the simplicity of setting up a game: the "board," five rows of six holes, is scooped out of the ground, and the playing counters are pebbles for one player and bits of stick for the other, both which are available anywhere. Finding the equipment is probably the only easy part of *Yoté*. The rules allow for a variety of movements, and the game demands strategy and quick thinking. Two players are each equipped with twelve pieces and each player attempts to capture all his opponent's pieces. Such a game has been played for thousands of years in Egypt, where boards have been found carved into the stone of the pyramid of Cheops and the temples at Luxor and Karnak.

In the Philippines, former Volunteer Maureen Carroll played *Sunka*. "It was played on a board with recesses holding small shells or stones, with the object being to amass them through intricate moves, scooping them from the recesses and dropping them into other recesses. Filipinos moved around the board with amazing speed. We didn't."

Observing new games is part of most every Volunteer's experience. Sometimes they are simple to learn and sometimes trying to figure out the rules is more of a puzzle than playing the game.

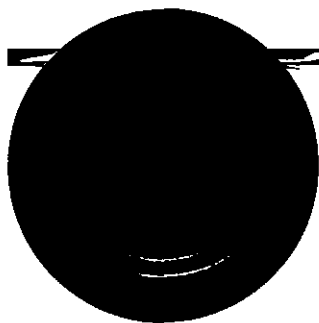
"In Benin, there is a game that the Volunteers like to

call the 'clapping game,'" says former Volunteer Mark Kohlman. "Volunteers spent many long hours debating the rules and the object since no one would or could provide the information." Kohlman describes the game as one that involved at least two girls, but more could play. "Two girls face each other and start clapping to the same beat. As they clap they jump up and down to another beat. At some point they both put one leg forward. This is where it becomes very unclear. If they put the same leg forward the whole process starts over again. If they put opposite legs forward, one of the girls moves out of the playing area and a new girl jumps in. It goes very fast and continues for a very long time. I guess the girl who stays in the longest is the winner."

Hand-clapping games, with their colorful accompaniment of songs and rhymes, are popular pastimes with children all over the world. They may chant traditional rhymes, clapping their hands together, against their own knees or chest, or against each others' hands as part of the game, and often it is not so much the winning of the game that is the fun as much as the endurance of the rhythms. Kohlman and his friends were not the first to puzzle over the "rules."

Cards are probably the most versatile and popular of all games, and which Volunteer does not own a stack, pulling them out of backpacks at parties and conferences? Innumerable games have been devised from the conventional deck of 52 cards, constituting an ingenious and flexible system of symbols, readily adapted to games combining luck and skill in varying degrees. At least part of the continuing fascination of cards, historian Grunfeld contends, is that they appeal to the player's tactile sense: "They feel exciting to the touch, and many people delight in displaying virtuoso ways of shuffling and dealing that add immeasurably to the 'theatre' of card playing." At the same time, cards also appeal to the visual sense, and are often decorated with designs of great beauty. Many Volunteers collect unusual decks in their travels, trading, perhaps, that deck with the American Airlines or IBM logo





for something they find more exotic. Finally, there is an air of mystery and magic about cards that science and logic have been unable to dissipate: it is an ancient tradition of the occult, kept alive by fortune-tellers and amateur tarot-readers.

"One of my major leisure time activities was a card game called *Belote*," says Tim DeLamarte, a former Volunteer in Mali. "It is similar in some ways to Bridge, in others to Pinochle or Euchre. It is, however, much more fast-paced than any of these, has complicated rules, and cheating is allowed if you don't get caught!" Every afternoon, members of Tim's village would gather to play *Belote* and sit and discuss the day's news. "It served as our information center and discussion group," he says of his regular group, or *grin*. "I found it to be a great stress reliever and an exceptional way to interact with Malians on their terms."

If you're looking for a way to enjoy some free time with friends or neighbors, but you're short on ideas, you might try your hand at making some games of your own. *What's in a Game?* provides instructions on making games for educational purposes or just for fun. Some of the games teach specific skills, such as telling time or basic multiplication. Others accommodate a broad range of topics and skill levels determined by individual game makers. Environmental educators, health workers, foresters, social studies, and language professors should all be able to find in this book creative formats for presenting new material. "Once you have started on the road to game making you will discover the many creative ways you can alter, improve, and combine the ideas to satisfy your group's specific needs," Volunteer authors Gordon and Skripak write. "Use your imagination and borrow from whatever sources you can find, especially your own childhood experiences."

Mongolopoly has already been done, but there's still room for your versions of Scrabble®, Twister®, and Trivial Pursuit®. Furthermore, your American audience, which waits impatiently for you to come home and rub off some of your exotic international experience, will clap their hands in delight when you open up your travel-beaten suitcase and introduce them to something new to play that hasn't yet made it onto the shelves at Toys R Us. ☐

Sarah Bott is the Editor of the Peace Corps Times.

## Volunteers Write

# She's a Thai

This week I received a very special compliment: "*Sharon ben kone Thi laow*." (Sharon is a Thai person.) What satisfaction—I am considered one of the gang. Yahoo! Seven months in this country, with three months of intensive, practically brainwashing Training, have granted me the auspicious title of "Thai person." If I were male and Thai, I would drink a lot of whisky to celebrate. Luckily, a sip of beer or maybe just a delicious *kanome* (dessert) will suffice.

What is it, however, that makes me "Thai" rather than "American?" Perhaps this question will explain why I can no longer easily pinpoint my identity, and why I often feel like the person I was eight months ago has been lost somewhere along the way in my travels to this place high in the mountains of northern Thailand.

First, let's look at my physical appearance. Sure, my hair is dark for a *farang*, but it is brown and curly, not straight and black. It definitely cannot be my body. Not only am I taller than most Thai men and women, but I probably weigh more, as well. At least nobody calls me fat, which Thais have no qualms about saying. (My threats to cry non-stop may be the reason *ooahp*, or shapely, has been used to describe me instead). Also, I have far more body hair than any of my Thai friends and co-workers. Thai women rarely have arm, leg, or armpit hair. My eyes are round, my skin is white, and I have body hair. There is no mistaking me for a Thai.

Maybe, then, it's my food consumption. My spicy food intake is definitely increasing. I can eat sticky rice with no problem and actually even prefer it to steamed rice.

There is more to my "Thai-ness" than food, however. Possibly it's my conversational abilities. I can hold a simple conversation in Thai (and a tiny bit in the northern dialect, too). For example:

**Sharon:** Hello.

**Thai:** Hello.

**Sharon:** Have you eaten yet?

**Thai:** Yes. Have you eaten?

**Sharon:** No. What did you eat with rice today?

**Thai:** Spicy pepper dip. And what will you eat with rice today?

**Sharon:** I don't know yet. Probably stir-fried vegetables.

**Thai:** (not knowing I don't eat meat): Will you eat beef or pork? Would you like some?

**Sharon:** No thanks, just vegetables.

Occasionally, conversations go further.

**Thai:** Do you have boyfriend? Are you married?

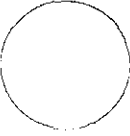
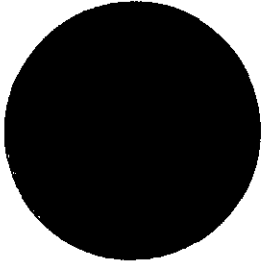

**Sharon:** Nope, not yet.

**Thai:** Do you want a Thai one? I know nice guy.

**Sharon:** Sure, only if he'll do all my laundry and cooking. And could you find me a couple? One won't be enough.

Yes, I would definitely say I am very Thai in my conversational patterns. I yell in conversation more than I have ever yelled in my past 24 years of life. I ask Thai people personal questions with no qualms, like how old they are, how much money they make, where they are going, and what they are eating. People in America may think I am prying upon my return. ☐

Sharon London is a Volunteer in Thailand.



# it's a sixties thing

BY MELISSA JOHNS

CAROLYN IOAKIMEDES HAS A STANDARD ANSWER FOR anyone asking why she decided to become a Peace Corps

Volunteer: "I tell people I was approaching my sixtieth birthday, and I had always heard that joining the Peace Corps was a 'sixties thing' to do." Ioakimedes, of Boulder, Colorado, is now two years into her sixth decade and not longing for a rocking chair yet.

Instead, she has a different idea for her "golden years:" putting to good use her 15 years of experience in midwifery to combat Morocco's high maternal mortality rate. Ioakimedes is the first member of the Peace Corps' Maternal Child Health program to serve in the Saharan town of Foumzguid.

"Most of my life has been doing service-oriented work.

I love to travel and experience new cultures. Joining the

Peace Corps seemed like the perfect thing for me."

A business development  
Volunteer in Guatemala helps  
run a women's co-operative.



## **“distanced from the youth-obsessed AMERICAN culture, gray hair can be worn proudly as an asset—not a liability.”**

**T**hough hardly the norm, there are too many senior Volunteers to call them rare. While 74 percent of Volunteers are in their twenties, with the median age in the mid-twenties, the burgeoning senior Volunteer population is pulling the average age upward into the low thirties. Around eight percent of PCVs setting off for foreign soil today are over the age of 50 (536 of them to be exact), and a good number of them are far-from-tottering septuagenarians.

Senior Volunteers are engaged in every area of service but are especially concentrated in small business development and education. Older Volunteers bring something beyond

book smarts to their projects: decades of professional experience.

In addition to their technical knowledge, senior Volunteers often have a more certain sense of their purpose as Peace Corps Volunteers. Younger Volunteers often admire them for being steadier, more diplomatic, and less prone to find cultural differences upsetting. In short, their additional years of life experience makes them more confident.

This is not to say that the Peace Corps experience is a one-way street of giving for senior Volunteers. Rewards to the senior Volunteer can be very different from those a younger Volunteer experiences.

One priceless payback is the honor and respect older members of a community are accorded in many developing nations. Distanced from the youth-obsessed American culture, gray hair can be worn proudly as an asset—not a liability in many countries.

“It’s amazing how much respect our older Volunteers can command just by their presence,” said Louis J. Brenner, a Peace Corps recruiter based at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. “They’re elders in most countries they go to. That means they’re to be listened to.”

**p**ace Corps also offers older citizens a reprieve from the

## Tapha the Hero



monotony of retirement or a break from friends who are more interested in a pilgrimage to the country clubs than to the ends of the earth. It offers a renewed vitality to those seniors who want to continue their growth as individuals. Their kids have flown the coop, why shouldn't the parents follow?

David Koehler, an insurance company owner turned workshop supervisor of developmentally-disabled Costa Rican children, never really considered joining the Peace Corps until after retirement. "I arrived at a stage in my life where I had fewer ties. I had divorced, sold my business, and was relatively free." Rather than seeing his Peace Corps years as a continuation of his profession in the States, as did Ioakimedes, Koehler saw this time as a discernible departure from the routine he had established in the business world.

"I don't think there is a person who has ever worked in an office who hasn't thought 'there's got to be more to life than this,'" says Jack Hawbaker, 65, a recent RPCV who served in both Costa Rica and Uruguay. "I think it's very important for people to develop the potential older people have." Rather than while the hours away in his rocking chair, this urban development professional got out while the going was good. Hawbaker headed South to Costa Rica to repair and construct rural housing. He then continued his service in Uruguay as a small business planner.

"It was a extremely rewarding," Hawbaker said of the Peace Corps. "I could point to something and say, 'Here's an improvement I had a hand in.'"

Not every aspect of a senior Volunteer's experience is so stellar. Many face opposition from family members who are afraid of the medical risks associated with over-

Upon my arrival, the villagers were hospitable, and anxious to know my nationality (Ghanaian) because I spoke English, which was strange to them. They told me about an American man named Tapha they admired for his courage and hard work. They said he was a hero.

Curiosity pushed me to find out who this American was and why he was hailed a hero. Through an investigation, I was told the man was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal who served as an agroforestry extension agent, specializing in dry land reforestation by raising trees for live fences, windbreaks, soil improvement, and shade. He also helped them to improve their sanitation and soil fertility by instituting composting latrines. They were very grateful to him for his efforts to protect their environment. The women, for his system of instituting fuel efficient mud stoves, which made it possible for them to reduce the consumption of firewood for cooking.

What raised him to the status of hero was his ability to locate well sights over water veins by dousing. According to villagers, those wells that were marked by Tapha have so far showed high accuracy on his predictions of water quality and quantity.

Heroism does not depend on which society you belong to, but you have to accomplish it within a given society. With Tapha's case, the villagers had deep affection for him such that they immediately discarded the fact that he did not belong to their society.

As his final months and weeks in Senegal flew by, he parceled his belongings and prepared to depart the village. As he said good-bye to his host family the morning of departure, it was quite emotional. The entire family broke up into tears. Tapha could not control his sentiments and also gave up with tears.

To the Americans, I send you a big hand clap for your generosity. For Africans to achieve our development goals, send us more Steven Herberts. ☒

*Emmanuel Ayam is a Ghanaian journalist living in Senegal.*

seas service, or who just can't understand why Grandma wants to "abandon" her family and traipse around the world doing good. "One of my sons thought I had gone absolutely out of my mind," laughed 70-year-old Janet Davidson, who organized craft market associations in Jamaica as a Volunteer.

Harsh living conditions provide challenges to all Volunteers, but can prove to be significant to an older Volunteer. "There were times when I had to sleep in gloves," said Jack Hawbaker, recalling the cold winters of Uruguay. His home heating system there consisted of a fireplace and layers of clothes. But even being forced to split wood all winter long to stay in his race with Mother Nature had its rewards.

"I learned to be more self-sufficient," Hawbaker said in a May interview about his Peace Corps experience with the Hagerstown, Maryland, *Herald Mail*.

So what do these adventuresome seniors do after their close of service? Anything they want to, triumphs Carolyn Ioakimedes.

"I don't anticipate going back to my former life. I feel like my days practicing midwifery are done, and I'm looking forward to moving on. I'm sure there are lots of exciting possibilities for me." ☒

*Melissa Johns works in the Office of Communications. A recent graduate of Duke University, she is bound for Honduras in February to be a Volunteer.*

# Reporting from the Field

## PCV 'Zines have their pages on the pulse

Of all the things you read (there's *Newsweek* for American news, *Peace Corps Times* for Peace Corps news, and letters from home for hometown news), there's nothing quite so delicious as opening up a copy of the latest in-country newsletter and perusing the commentary

and experiences of your Volunteer colleagues.

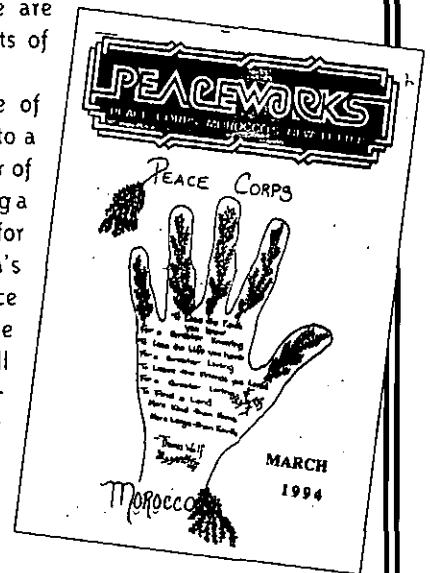
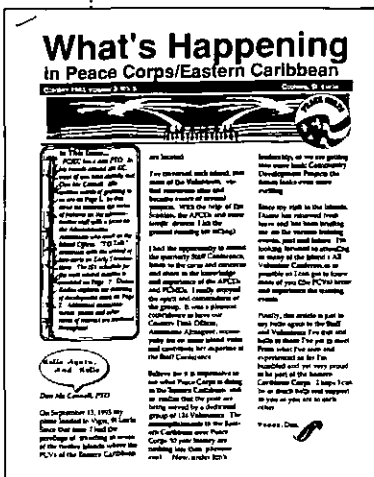
Almost all of our 90± posts have Volunteer newsletters to keep the local Peace Corps community in touch. Some are spartan, devoted mostly to announcements of upcoming events, new policies, and the names of incoming/outgoing PCVs. Others are luxu-

rious—fat with commentary about life overseas, rejection of new policies, and lots of dialogue on getting the job done. "I'm the ugliest I've ever been" (attributed to PCV Miles Cooley, on the prospect of heading back to the States after two years). Forty-eight pages of excellent journalism follow, with submissions by Volunteers throughout Ecuador. The articles deal with a spate of topics: an editorial about the Peace Corps "pregnancy policy" in light of sexual assault, trash recycling, and an African-American Volunteer's essay on the merits of his historically-black alma mater. There are recipes, announcements of meetings, and poems.

The April/May issue of *Kisko* (Jamaica) opens to a salute of the "Volunteer of the month" (Marga Shubert, for arranging for PCVs to pay children's prices at the Palace movie theatre). The newsletter is chock full of notices about restaurants and shops that offer other discounts to PCVs.

*Nazdar* (Czech Republic) is so slick it reminds you of *USA Today*. Full of news from home, movie reviews, local news and commentary, and even a language lesson ("inviting people to social situations"), *Nazdar* can occupy you for hours. It even has advertising from local coffee houses!

Those are just to mention a few of the newsletters that are regularly delivered to the *Peace Corps Times* office. We find them a primary source of news about Volunteer life, your opinions about what's going on at your sites, terrific essays and short stories, and advice to colleagues. So to the editors of these 'zines, we offer you enthusiastic kudos. Please keep *Peace Corps Times* on your mailing list!

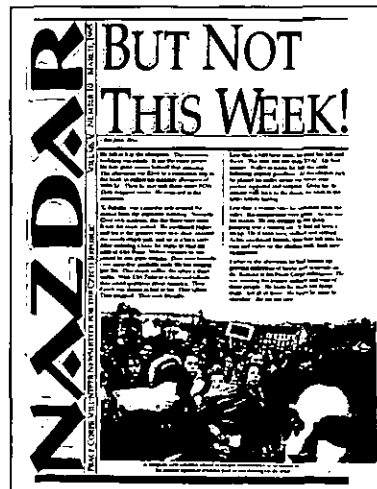


rious—fat with commentary about life overseas, rejection of new policies, and lots of dialogue on getting the job done.

So what's out there?

First, a caveat: most of the newsletters have editorial policies such as the one in *El Clima* (Ecuador): "Opinions expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily the opinions of the *El Clima* staff, the Peace Corps, or the United States Government." That out of the way, the communication starts to flow.

The March/April issue of *El Clima* starts off with a page of "overheard" type comments attributed to Volunteers, such as





THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE WAS SCHEDULED to begin about ten minutes ago in the capital city, and you find yourself stranded in a deserted countryside with nothing but soggy Birkenstocks for transportation. When hope of rescue has all but abandoned you, out of the corner of your eye you spot a bus rounding the bend. But you've been saving your cash for your capital shopping spree.

You have two alternatives: take a seat in the muck, shake your fist at the heavens, shed a few tears, and pray for sheer deliverance, or explain to the bus driver that the fate of the world rests on your getting to the capital, since you are a delegate to the papal ministry and are carrying the Dead Sea Scrolls. What do you do? Well, you're a Peace Corps Volunteer, is there really any choice? A nod, a wink . . . and by the time you reach the capital your fellow travelers on the bus are singing "Hail to the Chief," wishing you Godspeed, and offering to carry your bags.

PCVs are legendary for their ingenuity. Sure you make crops grow out

of a pile of rubble and stave off a swarm of malaria-carrying mosquitoes with a roll of flypaper, and you can do things with a ball of string and a mud pie that Ben Franklin could only have dreamed about. But come on, your real talent is your ability to glide effortlessly through the stickiest of situations and simultaneously get a free meal. Call it trickery (call it cheap!), call it what you will, that creative PCV resourcefulness always delivers when survival depends solely on wits.

Here, some of the trickiest PCVs we know come clean on their shrewdest exploits.





**PCV Mike Singer in Nepal exercises the finer points of haggling in a local market.**

**D**uring Training, I suffered from hemorrhoids. At the time, Peace Corps was not issuing refrigerators in my country of service, although they did have some on hand. Nonetheless desiring a refrigerator (warm gin and tonic is not a good thing), I put two and two together. I explained to my PCMO that the prescribed suppositories melted in the intense heat of my host country. A refrigerator would solve this dilemma, as well as the dilemma of warm drinks. The rest, as they say, is history.

—Anonymous

**W**hen I was planning my grand 30-day trek around Latin America, my PCV traveling buddy and I made it a point to tell everyone that we knew where we were going. Every time anyone said they knew someone in a certain country or city, we offered to carry letters, gifts, etc. to those people. Bottom line—we ended up with free (and very nice I might add) housing in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

—Ellen Yaffe, Jamaica and Guyana

**M**y husband and I were traveling with our five-year-old friend, Bali, to visit her grandfather on the southern island of Kadavu. I noticed that the tourists were asked

to pay approximately 10 times what the locals were paying. Holding Bali in my arms and speaking Fijian, I explained that my daughter, my brother (pointing to my husband), and I were traveling to visit my daughter's grandfather. When asked where the girl's father was, I explained that he was back in Rewa (the province where we lived). George and I paid local fare, while Bali was allowed to ride for free. My friends back in Rewa still love to tell this story!

—Merideth Binder, Fiji

**I** never had to tell a fib to get a meal in Guatemala. Just the opposite, in fact. Many times I had to say I was allergic to something so I wouldn't have to eat it. (Consequently, I had a lot of "allergies.")

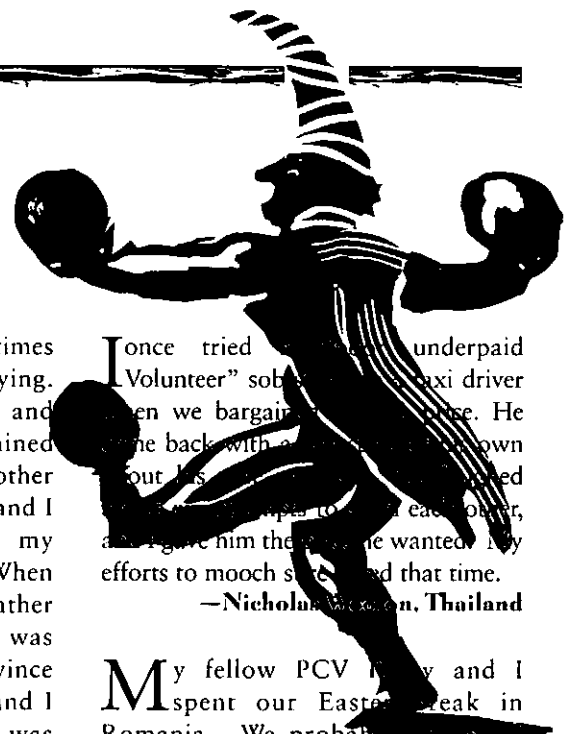
—Chris Davis, Guatemala

**E**thiopia Volunteers often were presented with housing rental contracts that showed thirteen months of rent payments. Ethiopia, of course, uses the Julian calendar of twelve months, each consisting of thirty days, followed by a "thirteenth month" of five or six days. Our landlord protested our insistence that we adhere to the "Western" calendar. We didn't think we were being "cheap," we thought we were being frugal.

—Woody Jewett, Ethiopia

**I**'m a cheapskate and darn proud of it! I passed as a Russian at St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow so I didn't have to pay the tourist rate. But I was too good at the Military Museum; the ticket seller tried to start a conversation and it blew up in my face.

—Anonymous



**I** once tried to get an underpaid "Volunteer" sobriety taxi driver when we bargained for a price. He came back with a taxi of his own about his size. He showed me the steps to get each corner, and I gave him the money he wanted. My efforts to mooch succeeded that time.

—Nicholas Wootton, Thailand

**M**y fellow PCV Mary and I spent our Easter break in Romania. We probably had \$100 between us in assorted currencies, but that would go forever in Hungary, so we felt fairly confident. Less than a year and a half after Ceausescu, however, Romania was still without much of a service industry. The hotels we found were cold, bleak, and about \$35 a night, and it was against the law for people to put us up in their houses. At this point I was ready to give up on the Transylvanian adventure when Peggy had a great idea: we could beg our way into the student dormitory. A few inquiries led us to the town gymnasium, empty except for the porter, Attila. He was quite puzzled. We were Americans? But we spoke Hungarian? And we needed to somewhere to sleep? Suddenly his brow cleared. Oh, were we judges for the Hungarian literature contest that week? "Yes!" We exclaimed. "Yeah...sure!" He showed us to our room and after that, we were home free. We went back out to explore Romania, and when we returned to the school, we found a delegation waiting for us—the headmaster and several professors, all wondering who these American judges were.

—Penny Anderson, Hungary

*Patricia Cunningham works in the Office of Communications.*

# FieldBook

## Tips for Making the Most of Your Tour



### A Gift for Gab

Chris Stark, a PCV in the Czech Republic, apparently has a way with words. Asked by frustrated fellow Volunteers how he picked up the language so quickly, he wrote the following letter for the in-country newsletter.

"Thanks for all of your compliments on my Czech-speaking ability, but I guarantee you that I have the same problems that you do. In fact, at times it can be downright frustrating. Here in the Sudetenland, people aren't always nice to you if you have an accent and

some speak German back to you.

I rank the best methods to improve your language like this (in order of importance):

1. Television—I am firmly convinced that the best method for learning a new language is to watch television (in the Czech Republic that means go easy on CNN). Because there is no pressure on you to respond, you can watch and learn. (If you don't have a television, Chris recommends looking into getting one, or for those of you for whom this is impossible, we would suggest looking at one when possible).

2. Study—yes, study. When you study, write the words down over and over. Pick out some scratch paper so we minimize our damage to the environment and write things down over a period of several days.

3. Tutor—candidly, I don't consider a tutor to be a tremendous necessity. I know there's a lot of fuss about getting the right tutor, and it's important so that you don't waste your money. I have an excellent tutor, but I wouldn't consider meeting more than once a week. Memorization is something you must do on your own, however. A tutor can't memorize things for you.

The rewards of learning a new language, at least for me, are fantastic. Oh, I draw stares and attention that sometimes I don't like when I speak Czech with my accent. However, when I happen to run into a friend or casual acquaintance on the square, I can walk with that person and converse with them in their language about almost any subject. This is one of the greatest rewards that I will experience here. ☐

*Reprinted from Nazdar, the PCV newsletter for the Czech Republic.*



### Reservations

References for Peace Corps applicants have made a few interesting comments about hopeful PCVs over the years—among them the following:

"I feel morally obliged to point out that he simply cannot spell."

"She has a Boston accent."

"I think you should know she attended a private girl's school."

"She's afraid of big, hairy spiders."

"He is sometimes very naive and could possibly be duped by a strong medicine man."

*Compiled by Craig Storti*

**Got a tip to share with other  
Volunteers?  
Peace Corps Times  
wants to hear from you!**



# What a Trip!

BY CHRIS DAVIS

Tom O'Brien in Malawi saddles up for a jaunt.



Vacationing in the Peace Corps can be an inexpensive and exotic adventure. (I am not referring to those splurges to the nicest hotels in the capital with hot showers, CNN, and swimming pools.) The idea, if I've got it right, is to absorb even further the multiple facets of the country of service or region. The trick is to go cheaply, see as much as you can, and keep away from the tourists. Here are a few examples to whet your appetite from some former Peace Corps Volunteers:

"Trekking in the Himalayas, in the Annapurna range, was an amazing experience," said Peaches Joyal, a former Volunteer in Afghanistan. "Seven days straight up (to 10,000 feet); one day layover; two days straight down again. We (two of us) hired a Tibetan guide for next to nothing. We ate oranges all day long, and our guide would stop in whatever village we came to at dusk. We shared an evening meal with a family and

slept on their floor. One night we slept in the hayloft of a missionary hospital. We didn't have access to water so we brushed our teeth with scotch (which we carried for "emergencies"). We

did have dinner with the nuns at the hospital—they were British—and they broke out a plum pudding they'd been saving for a special occasion."

Lora Parisien, who served in Tunisia, recalled one of her most memorable experiences as a Peace Corps Volunteer. "The international camel festival in the Sahara brings together Mauritians, Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, Libyans, and Egyptians. For

one week in December every year, thousands converge—with camels in tow—on the sun soaked dunes near the town of Douz. Huge tents are erected. There are camel races, traditional dances, parades, markets where camels, carpets, spices, and textiles are traded and sold. Camels can be rented cheaply for rides into the desert. And, of course, there is plenty of food (including delicious camel sandwiches)."

"One of the most enjoyable ways to spend a week in Malawi is to take a 'steamer' boat up or down beautiful Lake Malawi," recalls Jeff Berghage, a former Volunteer in that country. "The terrain is savannah forest with scrubland and palms. You can leave from Monkey Bay in the south, and go north toward Karonga. I went as far as Nkata Bay, which took about four days. Volunteer-types can stay on the roof of the boat, and string up a rain/sun tarp. The boat stops at several ports along the way picking up people, animals, and cargo. It is fascinating to watch this activity. Along the way you can stop at Cape Maclear, with its underwater park (in the south) or Livingstonia and the Nyika Plateau (in the north). If you like camping, breathtaking scenery, and the friendliest people on the planet, Malawi is the place!"

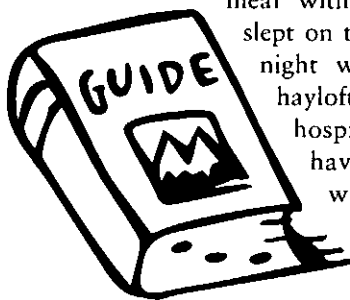
## Travel tips to consider:

- Seek out and take the advice of seasoned Peace Corps Volunteers and staff before you go.

- It is great to be a free spirit, but do some pre-planning before you leave.

- Travel light.
- Have proper currency.
- Take a journal.
- Travel in small numbers (fewer people, fewer opinions).
- Make sure someone knows where you are.
- Designate a responsible "keeper of the stuff" (wallets, passports, etc.) and make sure it is with you at all time. Never ever leave your wallet or passport in the room.
- Don't drink too much (or at least have a designated sober person). It is easy to take advantage of a drunk. . . and also, know what you are drinking before you drink it!
- Never travel alone.
- The "traveling" can actually be the best part of a vacation so choose your route creatively.
- Check out the airline or carrier before you board. Don't hop on some random twin-engine plane recommended by the taxi driver. ☐

*Chris Davis is a former Volunteer in Guatemala.*



## What I Need Is a Support Group

As I was cleaning out my bookshelf one day, I came across a paper explaining Women In Development (WID) and the Peace Corps. The first

paragraph explains that: WID is not a program, it is a philosophy. WID is not the exportation of western feminism. WID is not a support group for female Volunteers. WID is not for or by women only.

That got me thinking. Why aren't there any groups for Volunteers to share their experiences, problems, concerns, even laughter? A group to help you get through the hard times, whose

members understand where you're coming from, your customs, culture, etc. I finally decided to stop asking, and just did it.

I invited three other Volunteers who live in my area over to my house. Each of us had varied backgrounds and site experiences. I asked each Volunteer to be prepared to share something—a verse, saying, experience, that was special to them and why. To make it specific, I asked it to be related to Paraguay.

I felt there was a need for a group such as this to meet, share, support, and encourage each other because there are times when we are in need of support when we're falling and need some help to get back into action.

I have seen that sometimes we all get so gung-ho about our communities, our projects, and its needs that we overlook our own. When we finally realize that maybe we pushed it a little too far, it sometimes is a bit too late.

In our first meeting, we were able to open up and share ideas, opinions, encouragement, information and experiences. Afterwards I felt refreshed, with a reinforced confidence, drive, and initiative. The communication was better than the quick "Hey, how's it going?" here and the "Hi!" there that are most common in the rush of errands and appointments.

Why not give it a shot? My suggestions are:

1. Keep the group small.
2. Keep what's said in the group.
3. Save the alcohol for another get together—it tends to distract the purpose.
4. Have someone facilitate each session to make sure that the purpose is not lost and to stay on track.
5. Remember that this time is not to compare ourselves to other Volunteers and their accomplishments (or lack of).

By "Diane," PCV Paraguay. Reprinted from Kuat, the newsletter of Peace Corps Paraguay.

## Chilling Out

To those of you living at sites without refrigeration, the PCVs in Morocco have perfected the Peace Corps cooler that "gets cool enough and is humid enough to keep your veggies fresh for at least a week and also works well to keep your drinking water, etc., cool."

*Peaceworks*, the newsletter of Peace Corps Morocco, gives you the step by step instructions. (Warning: After an unfortunate experience, they discovered that this cooler will not work well with meat.)

### Directions:

To construct a cooler, you need a 30-liter plastic jug (the type they use for water with a closeable lid), some heavy cloth (about one square meter), some nylon string (clothesline), a few rocks and a large washtub.

Wrap the heavy cloth around the outside of the jug (attaching or sewing it on tightly with the nylon string) leaving it open on the bottom with a few extra inches of fabric. Obviously, you don't cover the top or you wouldn't be able to get into your cooler.

Put the water jug with its cloth wrapping into the washtub with the washtub about half full of water. The water should draw up into the cloth about halfway up the jug by capillary action. Use a small cut to daily moisten the rest of the fabric.

Take your rocks, wash them well and put them on the bottom of the water jug. Put some fabric on the rocks (plastic screening works best, but anything will do) to keep your food, etc., out of the water.

Your food and water sits on top of the fabric and the water on the bottom keeps humidity high so your veggies stay crisp rather than rubbery. It's the evaporation of the water from the outside fabric that absorbs heat and keeps your stuff cool. In a really dry climate, the water evaporates quickly and things are cooler. In a humid climate, it doesn't evaporate as quickly and it doesn't cool as well. Make sure that the fabric stays moist, close the lid, and pour a little water on the lid to keep things coolest. ■

By David Doctor. Reprinted from *Peaceworks*, the newsletter of Peace Corps Morocco.

# Recording Your Journey

BY ROSE GREEN

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "The palest ink is clearer than the sharpest memory." Two years from now, are you going to remember what you did today? Five years from now? Twenty years from now?

Your memory will be a lot sharper in the years ahead if you start writing things down today.

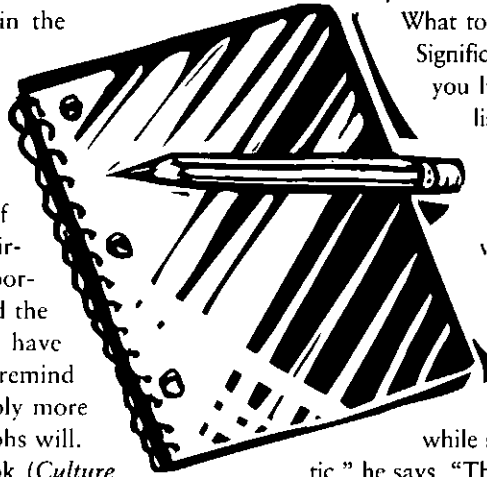
Keeping a journal helps you to observe more and respond more to what is taking place around you. A journal entry is like a snapshot. It may be out of focus at times, but it still catches your spirit and character better than any formal portrait. After you have returned home, and the memories of your time as a Volunteer have begun to fade, reading your journal will remind you of a special moment or place probably more vivid and interesting than your photographs will.

"A couple of years ago I wrote a book (*Culture Shock! Morocco*) and went first to my journals to refresh my memory," recalls Orin Hargraves, a former Volunteer in that country. "What really surprised me about reading the journals was how different the experience had become in my memory from what it was at the time. Over the course of a dozen years I had transformed my experience in Morocco into a kind of golden age, where I was always happy and everything was wonderful. But in reading the journals I was surprised to see how often I was angry, frustrated, lonely, and just not coping!" Taking that step back in time helped Hargraves take a more appropriate tone in writing his book of "cross cultural adjustment for the traveler or settler bound for Morocco."

If you've never kept a journal, or don't think you'll feel comfortable writing, the most important thing to realize is that after all these years of writing for other people—school papers, essays, application forms, and reports—your journal is just for you. It's a space for your thoughts, your opinions, your choice of words, your feelings, your grammar and spelling. No one can correct the pages, edit them, evaluate them, or even comment on them if you don't want them to. (Unless you become famous and someone finds them and publishes them—we'll deal with that possibility in a future issue).

Get a blank book, any old kind will do. A marble composition tablet. A spiral bound notebook. Plain sheets of paper.

Lined pages. A diary with a lock. Open it up and begin to write. You can write anywhere and at any time—in a crowded train station, by a pond, in the comfiest chair in your house.



What to write about? The occurrences of the day. Significant events that happen to you. Someone you like. Something you don't. Keep a running list of your favorite words and phrases, and what they mean, in your host country language. Go to one of your favorite locations and write a detailed description of whatever you see and how it makes you feel. Once you establish a routine of writing regularly in your journal, you'll be hooked. Chris Gomes, a former Volunteer in Equatorial Guinea, wrote three books worth of journals while serving. "I found the practice very cathar-

tic," he says. "The act of writing allowed me to have more of a sense of clarity about what I was doing."

If you don't like keeping a journal, there are other ways to keep a collection of your thoughts and words. When you write letters home ask your family and friends to keep them safe for your return.

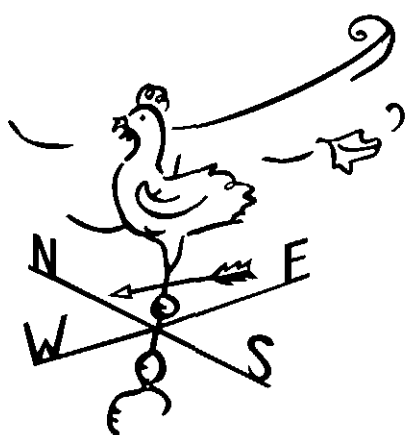
Jane Sommer, a former Volunteer in the Philippines, tells us, "I didn't keep a journal but wrote extremely detailed letters to my family, who typed them and circulated them to friends. When I came home I found them an interesting record, not only of my Peace Corps experiences, but also of my perspective of the time. I re-read them periodically. They jog my memory, and they also remind me of who I used to be and how I've changed."

Right now you may think you'll remember everything happening to you because each experience is so new and so often intense. Soon after you return home, however, you'll discover that one face or place blends into another, so be sure to date each entry and include the names of the people you meet and the places you go. Living in another country for an extended length of time and becoming part of another culture are things most of us will never know. Whether by journal or letter, treasure this time and write your memories in whatever way works best for you. Years from now you'll be glad you did. ☐

Rose Green works in the Office of Communications.

# TAPES TRY

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION



## A Peace Corps Forum Looks at "The Internet as a Tool for Development"

BY JUDY BENJAMIN

TAPES TRY is produced by the Office of Training and Program Support (OTAPS) for Peace Corps Volunteers and staff. OTAPS provides technical support to Peace Corps programs throughout the world through a wide range of quality programming, training, and technical information services. Compiled and edited by Information Collection and Exchange (ICE), a division of OTAPS, TAPES TRY is designed to present some of the latest and best PCV working in any given country.

OTAPS DIRECTOR: [Name]  
ICE DIRECTOR: David Wolfe  
TAPES TRY EDITOR: [Name]

**P**EACE CORPS TOOK A LEAP into cyberspace this year with its entry onto the Internet. Rushing to take advantage of the new medium, headquarters staff is sending e-mail messages around the globe at a rapid pace, doubling and tripling the number each month.

In the field, Peace Corps soon will be catching up, with at least one region—Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean (ECAM)—already linked to the Internet in about 90 percent of the countries.

As use has increased so have questions about its impact. What will Internet mean for development and for Peace Corps in particular? What effect will it have on countries that have limited access to it?

To address these issues, OTAPS sponsored an all-day forum at Peace Corps headquarters early in June for staff throughout the Agency. In organizing the forum, ICE Director David Wolfe sent out an e-mail message ask-

ing staff members what questions they had about the Internet. These then became the focus of the forum.

The questions also made it clear that staff would benefit from the experience of other development agencies with a longer Internet history. Together, Wolfe and Gail Wadsworth, ICE's Resource Development Specialist, arranged to have a panel of experts speak at the forum and stimulate discussion. The panelists also brought handouts with them, including Technology Fact Sheets and an article on Internet by e-mail, which ICE has reproduced in its electronic newsletter for In-Country Resource Centers, IRC Network News. The most recent issue features the Internet.

Panelists at the forum included Dr. Eugene Boostrom, a public health physician with the World Bank; Jake Brunner, an Associate of the World Resources Institute (WRI); Tony Bryne from the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX); Kaye

Gapen, Director of Research Services for the Morino Institute; and Jonathan Olsson, representing the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As a first step for Peace Corps into virtual reality, panelist Steve Cisler spoke from his office in Cupertino, California, on a slow-scan video image transmitted over the Internet and projected on a screen. Wendy White, a Senior Program Officer with the National Research Council, served as moderator.

## Experience of Other Organizations

In her opening remarks, White referred to the questions staff members had submitted to Wolfe as falling into four general categories—"The Four 'Cs' of Cost, Content, Connectivity and Capacity Building." Each of these issues was touched upon by the panel members in describing their experience with the Internet and its value for development.

An RPCV in the '60s from Togo and now a Senior Scientist at Apple Computer Corporation, Cisler spoke about the relevance for Peace Corps of Apple's work with Native American and rural communities, setting up public access sites to the Internet.

From his experience with IREX, which trains scholars and policy makers in Eastern Europe, Tony Bryne highlighted the problem of information control, especially acute in that part of the world. Because of governments' concern about open access to information, rather than dealing with communications ministries, his organization is working with the end users—the historians, the economists—to demonstrate how the Internet can meet their needs. Through an "Internet Peace Corps" of Volunteers, IREX hopes to encourage the development of public access sites.

In preparation for the forum, Jake

Brunner reported that he had reviewed WRI's Internet communications with environmental organizations in Africa, and found the most valuable feature to be e-mail. Through e-mail, these organizations have been able to secure from WRI maps of their own countries, monthly reports that highlight environmental activities, and announcements about how they can access evaluations of their country programs.

Kaye Gapen stressed the general advances in communication and information the Internet makes possible, providing an international reach to what we normally do internally. "It creates new ways of working, a new social meaning, a different cultural mindset," Gapen said.

Dr. Eugene Boostrom directed attention specifically to development in Africa stressing the Internet's potential for connecting the continent with the rest of the world. In his own field, for example, he cited how libraries in Africa, which have few scholarly journals, can now have online access to the British Medical Journal. Epidemiological data also now is being reported through a global health network.

The Internet's potential for Africa was stressed also by Jonathan Olsson, who argued that without access, Africa would become even more isolated. More important than communications from north to south, Olsson pointed out, are local and regional communication. Networks in the Sahel and in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, are now making it possible for such orga-



nizations as USAID and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to share their experience.

## Problems of Language, Culture, and Politics

Following the presentations, in answer to a question about languages, Cisler mentioned Apple's experience with schools on Native American reservations and in Hawaii, where pupils are practicing on computers in their indigenous languages. While worldwide discussion groups use mainly English, Cisler pointed out that through UNICODE, communication can be translated into any existing language.

Since an earlier problem of transposing the Latin alphabet into Cyrillic characters has now been solved, the Internet has become more popular in Eastern Europe. Language also has political implications, however, and many Eastern block countries are unwilling to accept Russian as their universal regional language.

Culture is another factor. Describing how we communicate, Cisler noted that "American informality doesn't always travel well," refer-

ring especially to Eastern Europe. In some countries, Iran for example, technology generally is considered threatening. How the Internet develops in any country will depend on the time and place.

## Organizing the Information

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People use the Internet in two ways that are important to Peace Corps—for personal communication and for access to files and information. Once the system is in place, using international e-mail is an easy matter, but accessing data can be far more complicated.

At the present time, only five percent of published works are in digital form. As Cisler reported, problems of security, copyright and accounting have slowed publishers from exploiting the medium.

As commercial activity increases, however, wading through the Internet will be even more of a problem than it is now. White said that the Internet had been likened to “a library without a card catalog,” and Gapen stressed the need to organize it.

The World Wide Web (WWW) and Gopher were among the various search tools mentioned to make it easier to locate information that in Gapen’s words “is reliable, current, usable and meaningful.” As Gapen said, “How you put content together is what matters. Information has to be pertinent to your own needs.”

## Costs and Connectivity

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“The Internet,” Olsson asserted, “is the least expensive way to bring communications to these developing countries.” To get an idea of exactly what the costs would be, Jake Brunner sent an e-mail to 40 countries in Africa, receiving a response from some 20 to 25 providers. They reported that the start-up costs of purchasing a modem, conducting a one-day training session,

providing technical support, and opening an account would be 500 dollars. Operating expenses they calculated at 1,000 dollars per year.

Even though these costs are low, as Dr. Boostrom pointed out in his opening remarks, telecommunications in Africa is often in the hands of government monopolies, which charge exorbitant fees. As a result, connections are limited.

The map published by the Internet Society may show substantial coverage worldwide, but fails to show that coverage in a country may consist of a single connection to a network of 50 physicists. Cisler suggested that a guide is needed, such as the kind airlines use, that would show the actual connections—that a message from someone in Nairobi, for example, may have to go through the U.S. to reach someone else in Nairobi.

Dr. Boostrom reiterated the efforts the World Bank is making to improve connectivity. Negotiations are under way with governments in Africa to change regulations and allow telecommunications to be privatized. USAID, the UNDP, the World Bank, and other organizations are proposing also to pool their resources and install in countries in Africa a shared “pipeline” to have an e-mail hookup, accessible to schools and other institutions as well.

Jake Brunner felt that local e-mail server providers should be the source for improving local connectivity, and other panelists agreed. Panel members noted several measures to reduce costs and bypass existing telecommunications systems: the work in the Philippines of the nongovernmental organization Volunteers in Technical Assistance, linking rural communities through packet radios connected to computers and, globally, through PACSAT; the use of solar energy to power computers; and reliance on low-earth orbiting satellites to use cellular telephones and other wireless techniques to make the connections.

## Training to Promote the Internet’s Expansion

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From his experience with IREX in Eastern Europe, Tony Bryne saw training as a “seeding” process, starting with developing small training groups, and then having these individuals become “lead networkers,” training others in their field. Although he saw the need for people with technical expertise, he and others on the panel felt it was better to have teachers be the trainers. More than the technical capacity is the need “to build a constituency for open and sustainable communication.”

Gapen, too, stressed the importance of gaining advocates. Training, she felt, needs to demonstrate to people what the Internet can do for them, how it can meet their needs, so they will be willing to take advantage of it. As one way to convince people, Cisler suggested publicizing the use being made of the Internet through the kinds of stories Brunner had mentioned.

## Commercial Development

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Although commercial activity has started slowly, no one on the panel doubted that it would soon catch up. So far, the government-research-education community has taken the lead, but eventually, Cisler predicted, it will be dwarfed by the commercial sector.

On its own, the private sector is unlikely to establish the connections to make the Internet more widespread in Africa. Private investment, Brunner noted, accounts for only eight percent of the economies of these countries, as opposed to development assistance, which accounts for 35 percent. So that the poor will not be left out of the loop, the panelists concluded that Peace Corps and other development organizations need to promote deregulation and seed initiatives by private sector groups to link up with the Internet.

## Peace Corps' Role

The afternoon's session was devoted to Peace Corps' own experience with the Internet. These are some of the examples cited:

Individual Volunteers have been using e-mail to search for sources of funding, send out proposals and resumes, and share TEFL materials. The Office of Volunteer Recruitment & Selection (VRS) is expecting to use the Internet for recruiting purposes; the World Wide Web for text, photographs and videos publicizing Volunteer service; and eventually, an online application process. Through a World Wide Web connection, the ECAM Region is hoping to share training materials, while World Wise Schools is planning to use the Web to reach teachers and students with its study guides and videos, as well as interviews with PCVs.

As a rule, PCVs have not been doing Internet training or develop-

ment as part of their assignments. But Peace Corps is looking for Volunteers with computer skills—in assignments to the Business Development Centers in Bulgaria, for example—which could be considered “public access sites.” OTAPS Director Howard Anderson suggested the In-Country Resource Centers as another possible site for Internet access and training.

## Is the Internet Appropriate Technology?

A major issue, however, is whether the Internet is appropriate technology for PCVs to use. Peace Corps always has questioned whether Volunteers should have resources their communities would not have otherwise, especially resources that can easily distract PCVs from their assignments. A country where only the capital has electricity, or lacks schools and basic teaching materials may have priorities other than

connecting everyone to the Internet.

Cisler, who stayed hooked up throughout the event, suggested developing a “Decision Matrix” to help determine when to introduce the Internet into a country. Such a mechanism would enable Peace Corps to set priorities, show the conditions that need to change, and adapt when change occurs.

In the future, Cisler predicted we may see walk-in telecenters for people to connect to the Internet in the same way they now make international calls. As Charles Baquet, Peace Corps' Acting Director, said in introducing the forum, “The Internet is like eagle's wings permitting people to fly higher and further.” Whether “another tool for communication,” in Wendy White's words, or “a tool for development,” there is no doubt, the Internet is here to stay. ☐

*Judy Benjamin is the Editor of Tapestry.*

## New Publications from ICE

**H**ERE ARE SOME OF ICE'S newest additions to The Whole ICE Catalog. For a more complete list, check your In-country Resource Center (IRC) and ask your IRC Manager for the list in IRC Network News or new publications available from ICE and other organizations.

**AG273 - Protect Yourself From Pesticides: Guide for Pesticide Handlers** (EPA) 1993 100 pp. [ICE Class. No. A1103]

A handbook that provides a complete Worker Protection Standard (WPS) safety training program for pesticide handlers. Contains 17 specific training

units, as well as additional discussion questions; an overview of pesticide regulation, and WPS training and protection requirements; and notes for trainers. Provides important information for PCVs working with pesticides or in environments where pesticides are being used. Also helpful for trainers to incorporate its safety messages in Volunteers' pre-service training.

**ED183 - Business Communication: Ten Steps to Success.** Lin Loughheed. (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.) 1993 136 pp. [ICE Class. No. G0463d]

DISTRIBUTION TO PEACE CORPS IN-COUNTRY RESOURCE CENTERS ONLY

A workbook for teaching business communication skills to adult ESL students. Presents ten steps, or chapters, each relating to attitudes that contribute to business success, e.g., being positive, a team player, punctual, etc. Each chapter includes two brief case studies to show a “right” and “wrong” way of behavior, and a variety of activities and exercises to develop language and human relations skills.

**ED188 - Options for Educators: A Monograph for Decision Makers on Alternative Participatory Strategies.** Lyra Srinivasan. (PACT/CDS) 1992 156 pp. [ICE Class. No. G0290]

Presents alternative educational strate-

gies based upon the belief that poverty is best fought through the tapping of an individual's capacity for self-direction and self-fulfillment. Provides a theoretical framework, as well as practical steps for applying participatory principles, including guidelines for a participatory workshop and sample activities for facilitators working with community groups on specific issues. Complements WD084 Tools for Community Participation and provides practical advice for Volunteers regardless of their assignment.

**FC204 - The Earthbird Magazine Series: Food for the Future; Our Trees and Forests; I Am So Hungry I Could Eat A Tree; and Fabulous Forest Factories.** Jared C. Crawford (Forestry Policy Planning Division, Forestry Department, FAO) 20 pp. ea. [ICE Class No. E0200]

A four-part series that educates children about the environment through the use of cartoons and stories. Deals with such issues as creating a balanced diet, preserving forests, and recognizing the value of natural resources. The information can be supplemented with classroom strategies for environmental education. Also available in Spanish as ICE Publication No. FC206.

**SB173 - New World of Microenterprise Finance: The Building Healthy Financial Institutions for the Poor.** Edited by Maria Otero and Elisabeth Rhyne. (Kumarian Press) 1994 302 pp. [ICE Class No. J0305]

A collection of papers previously commissioned by the GEMINI project on the new approaches to promote self-sufficiency, including innovations that motivate clients to repay loans, that cut administrative costs, and are based on market-based pricing. Part I describes the basic principles and institutions for microenterprise finance; Part II deals with such methodologies as solidarity groups, credit unions and village banks; and Part III presents case studies to take a closer look at successful microenterprise finance experiences.

**SB177 - Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations** Bryan W. Barry (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation) 1986 72 pp. [ICE Class No. J0201]

A workbook that defines strategic planning; explains its relevance to nonprofit organizations; and provides a step-by-step guide for developing, implementing and updating a strategic plan. Appendices include a summary of a situational analysis, an example of a strategic plan, and strategic planning worksheets.

**SB178 - Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards.** Richard T. Ingram. (National Center for Nonprofit Boards) 1988 22pp. [ICE Class No. J0400]

One of several booklets produced by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (NCNB) as part of the NCNB Governance Series. Clarifies the responsibilities of the board as a collective entity as well as the responsibilities of individual board members. Describes ten different functions, including determining an organization's mission and purposes, selecting and overseeing its executive, ensuring effective planning and adequate resources, monitoring its programs and services, and enhancing its public image.

**SB179 - Strategic Planning and the Nonprofit Board.** Dabney G. Park, Jr. (National Center for Nonprofit Boards) 1990 12 pp. [ICE Class No. J0201]

Explains the nature of strategic planning, its benefits and the steps involved. Also describes the role of the executive director and the board in planning and implementing strategic planning.

**SB181 - Creating and Renewing Advisory Boards: Strategies for Success.** Nancy R. Axelrod (National Center for Nonprofit Boards) 1990 22 pp. [ICE Class No. J0201]

Describes the role of advisory committees. Discusses the objectives, selection,

functions and structure of such committees, illustrated by case studies.

**SB182 - Fund-Raising and the Nonprofit Board Member.** Fisher Howe (National Center for Nonprofit Boards) 1989 [ICE Class No. J0201]

Presents the key principles of fund-raising and stresses the role of the board. Describes fund-raising as a natural process which must be supported by a persuasive case. Provides strategies for involving and motivating all board members in the fund-raising process.

**WD112 - Tools of Gender Analysis: A Guide to Field Methods for Bringing Gender into Sustainable Resource Management.** Barbara Thomas-Slayter, Andrea Lee Esser, and M. Dale Shields. (Clark University) 1993 44 pp. [ICE Class. No. E4000]

In a clear and concise manner, presents methods for gathering data and examining men's and women's roles in natural resource management. Information illustrated with brief examples of projects in different developing countries. Useful material for Pre-Service Training of Volunteers.

**YD008 - Leadership Development: A Handbook from YouthBuild USA and the Youth Action Program.** Dorothy Stoneman and John Bell. (YouthBuild USA) 1993 154 pp. [ICE Class. No. R0713]

A handbook based on ten years of experience building the Youth Action Program (YAP) of the East Harlem Block Schools. Contains background information on the accomplishments of the YAP program; and is organized around the seven essential elements of leadership development: 1) counteracting the effects of oppression; 2) nurturing personal development; 3) teaching leadership skills; 4) providing the experience of success; 5) educating about the world; 6) resolving personal hang-ups and correcting academic deficiencies; and 7) organizing to have impact on the world. ☐



# Peace Corps Gets Wired

## *Logging on to the 21st Century*

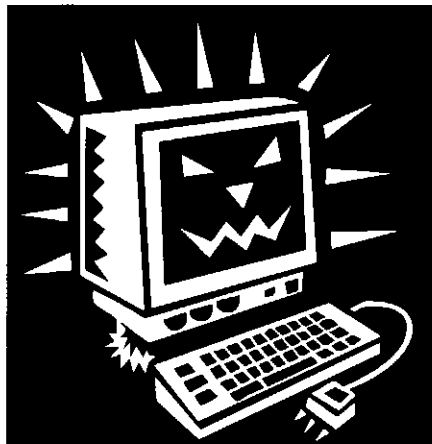
BY BURTON REIST

**I**MAGINE YOU'RE A SMALL BUSINESS Volunteer working with a loan program for pig farmers in the Dominican Republic. You've got some doubts about loan control

mechanisms, so you go to the Peace Corps office in town, log onto Internet, and post a message to the Peace Corps mailing list. You get a dozen or so responses over the next week from Volunteers and RPCVs who've already crossed that bridge and have some helpful advice.

To some Volunteers and staff, that scenario might sound like a pipe dream—either they don't have computer access or Internet has not yet been approved. Yet to others already hooked up and logged on, Internet is linking RPCVs, Peace Corps employees, and some Volunteers in user groups that allow them to exchange ideas and experiences. In addition, it's no pipe dream that Peace Corps is one of the first federal agencies to link its entire domestic staff in its own computer network, providing electronic mail (e-mail), software packages, and databases to Peace Corps employees nationwide.

"Internet and e-mail have created a tremendous increase in the transfer of information beyond the use of word processing," says Rick Lauderdale, Deputy Director for the Network Support Unit in Information Resources Management (IRM), Peace Corps' computer department. Consequently,



IRM has been working hard to get everyone hooked up and online. For the past few years they have focused primarily on developing the network, pulling nearly 20 miles of cable through the Peace Corps Washington building, and another five miles in the area recruitment offices. This alone took a year and a half, but staff in Washington are now all connected to a nation-wide net that lets them communicate instantly with their colleagues in Dallas, San Francisco, and anywhere else Peace Corps has an office. When e-mail goes down and people are suddenly cut off from one another, IRM's phones go crazy.

"It's instant communication," says one staff member handling Asia-Pacific region matters back in Washington, "even if that means overnight." He and others whose jobs involve daily communication find that Internet and e-mail keep them in the loop with what's going on. "It cuts down greatly on the need to DHL/Express Mail documents on computer disks, and we use the fax a lot less. I love it because I don't have to play telephone tag with people for minor questions. I send a message and they respond when they have a chance."

Peace Corps may never be able to build a world-wide network along the same lines of the national system now in place. "It would be very complex," says Jonathan McHugh, the IRM staffer who coordinated the nationwide effort. "The biggest obstacle is that we would have to adapt our network to the technologies available in each of the countries we serve—they each have different systems at varying levels of development, so connecting each of our overseas posts in a global network would be an enormous task."

But left to their own devices, many Volunteers and overseas staff are linking up to the system that everyone with Internet access uses. Several of the Eastern and Central European posts have access due to the more advanced telecommunication infrastructures of those countries. Ted Bongiovanni, a new TEFL trainee in Lithuania, is excited: "It is my understanding that most of the Small Enterprise Development Volunteers in Lithuania will be online, so e-mail should be a handy way to communicate. I've also heard that there are excellent TEFL resources online, though I haven't found them yet." In Africa, only one post (Ethiopia) is online, and there are a few in Inter-America. David Wolfe relates a story that reveals the possibil-

*Continued on page 36*

# More Than an Apple a Day

## *The Bottom Line is Excellent Health Care for Volunteers*

BY ANDREW FONTANEZ

**K**AREN WAS WORKING AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL education Volunteer in a town about ten hours from the capital city. While helping set up a water

system at a new housing project near her site, she was struck on the side of the head by a swinging pulley. She fell to the ground unconscious and was immediately taken to the local hospital. The hospital contacted the Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO) within 30 minutes of the accident.

This scenario, presented during health Training, has a happy outcome, because the PCV had followed the procedures issued by the Office of Medical Services (OMS)—she was carrying her Peace Corps ID, had previously introduced herself to the hospital staff, and had emergency phone numbers posted in her house. OMS is a stickler about this kind of thing. They don't take chances with your health, and they don't want you to either. Never again after Peace Corps service will you be likely to have so many people nagging you to take your vitamins and get your vaccinations on time.

Keeping everyone safe and healthy, considering the number of different locations where PCVs serve, is no small feat. OMS staff must be pre-

pared to treat Volunteers for anything. Boils. Impetigo. Broken legs. Snake bites. Ear infections. Dengue fever. Hookworms. And the most common problem among PCVs worldwide: diarrhea. "By the end of service, almost every PCV will have had at least one episode of acute diarrhea," says Dr. Noreen Carus, an epidemiologist in OMS. "It is the most common problem reported—four times more frequently than its closest competitor worldwide, dermatitis."

Your PCMO has to be a cross between a country surgeon and Sherlock Holmes, able to diagnose and treat tonsillitis, as well as solve the mystery of those funny spots that were all over your legs when you emerged from your demonstration fish pond. Annoyed about getting busted for riding on a motorcycle without a helmet? You're not going to get any sympathy from your PCMO, pal. She's the one who has to pick up the pieces if you're run into a ditch. And staff from OMS back in Washington are likely to be even less sympathetic. When you break the

rules and endanger your health, "Administrative Separation" turns from a warning into a red rubber stamp on your official file. "What I would like most to see more of among Volunteers is greater accountability for personal actions and responsible behavior," said Michele Price, former PCMO in both Lesotho and Bulgaria. "My greatest worry is for the safety and health maintenance of Volunteers."

OMS doesn't wait for you to get in-country before they start analyzing your well-being. Remember that medical clearance process you went through to even qualify for Peace Corps? Blame them. OMS staff are unapologetic about their strictness. OMS places Volunteers in areas where they will be able to perform their assignment without putting themselves at potential risk of aggravating a pre-existing condition. For example, placing a Volunteer with asthma in a location high in the Andes or Himalayas would not be in his or her best interest.

Medical Services also acts as the liaison for Volunteers once they have completed their service. If, after leaving Peace Corps, a returned Volunteer has a health problem which may be service-related, this office works to ensure that proper care and benefits are available to help them convalesce. You will learn more about this at your COS conference. If you can't wait, ask your PCMO for details.

So the next time your PCMO comes after you with a needle full of gamma globulin to ward off hepatitis and other infectious diseases, don't roll your eyes—roll up your shirt sleeves! They're just doing their job so you can do yours. ☐

*Andrew Fontanez, a former Volunteer in Honduras, works in the Office of Medical Services.*

# They're Right on the Money

## *Peace Corps' Keepers of the Books Keep You in the Black*

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**S**OME OF YOU MAKE IT THROUGH YOUR Peace Corps service without ever having to deal with Volunteer and Staff Payroll Services (VSPS). Some of you rely on us to

process the readjustment allowance withdrawals and allotments and certifications of loan deferments that keep you financially afloat at home while you serve overseas.

VSPS manages in excess of \$11,000,000 in readjustment allowances accrued by Peace Corps Volunteers in a year. The Trainee Registration and Readjustment Allowance withdrawal forms you fill out at Staging are delivered to our office. From these we start your readjustment allowance account and set up your payments to everything from credit cards to dog-sitters.

During your time overseas, your in-country administration keeps us updated on your status. As you progress from Trainee to Volunteer to transfer or extending Volunteer to COSing Volunteer, we make sure your allotments continue and that your one-third checks and W-2's reach you and provide your service information to lending agencies or others.

We also answer calls from your families, financial contacts, and others regarding the Readjustment



Allowance and your service information. Our most common questions are about student loans, taxes and payments (What payments are allowed? Where are they?).

Your families and financial contacts call us to explain the complexities of Peace Corps income. If these folks are your legal powers-of-attorney, we provide them with your duplicate W-2's, and if they aren't, we

provide them with assurance that you have the materials and capability to do your own taxes, even though you're "out in a small village in the middle of nowhere with no electricity or running water five hours away from a telephone."

It's the problems and emergencies that make our work interesting. Every day we deal with the challenges of international mail (like figuring out that we should call Gabon to find a one-third check addressed to Benin), readjustment checks which have been lost, stolen, burned, or hidden too well, and once in a while we'll have to drop everything for the day in order to prepare for a country evacuation.

Although we try to keep everything as consistent as we can, we sometimes have to engineer exceptions to the rule. For example, in order to provide one-third funds to Volunteers in the "Stan" countries (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan), where standard U.S. Treasury checks cannot be cashed, we changed our procedures so that we do not automatically generate one-third checks; we authorize cash disbursements of funds at post instead.

When you complete service you may end up calling us if your final readjustment allowance check has not arrived after four to six weeks, or for verification of your service for employers or student lending agencies. We store copies of your DOS, if you write one and your country director forwards it to us. (We don't keep originals! Don't lose yours!)

We love comments and suggestions from all of you. We also collect stamps, so please write to us! ☐

*Marilyn Campbell works in the Office of Volunteer and Staff Payroll Services.*

## Volunteers Write

# Drip Diplomacy

Strange and subtle sometimes are the habits of courtesy. Water is a precious commodity out here in the *campo* (countryside). So there is a whole culture built around its acquisition and usage. If you go to any store or wait for a *guagua* (bus), the custom, usually, is to push or shove your way to the front. When it comes to water, at least in my community, the rules are different. I spent the morning collecting water for myself at the communal tap. The same *doñas* who elbowed me aside in the *colmado* (corner store) last night made sure I got my water when it was my turn—first come, first serve.

Water is one of the first things you offer a visiting Volunteer, water to drink and wash off the dusty road. A good host is not stingy with his water even if he has to go through great effort to get it. A good guest notices how difficult it is to get the water and limits her usage accordingly. Even better, the guest helps replace the water used.

Volunteers from water-poor communities are often quick to notice the lavish habits of Volunteers from water-rich communities. "I can't believe she used three full gallons to take a bath. You'd think she were washing an elephant." On the other hand, Volunteers from water-rich communities are struck by the unreasonable stinginess of the water-poor. "He hoarded water like it was gold at Fort Knox, rationing it out drop by drop."

I consider myself a decent host in this area. I keep about 15 gallons in my house almost all the time. Since the average Volunteer uses about three to four gallons a day, that's a pretty good quantity.

I never tire of marveling at the combination of strength and grace displayed by the women and girls who carry five gallons on their head, with a gallon in each hand. My favorite is when they casually turn to chat with a neighbor, blithely ignoring the burden with which they are laden. I once watched a woman gracefully bend down and pluck a peso without spilling a precious drop!

I carry the water on my shoulder. I've assumed that the wide berth the folks give me is not due to unpleasant body odor but because of the constant splashes that leap forth from my bucket. But I'm improving. Now, people rarely ask me if I've recently gone swimming after I've actually been carrying water.

And the water source is one of the best places to catch the latest gossip. I have concluded *thatchismes* (rumors) are flying due to the occasional, "*No me digas* (Don't tell me!)" and "*¡Asquerosa!* (Gross!)" that escapes from their mouths while they are huddled over the tap.

I suppose that's what I like best about the water collection process. It's one of the places where I fit into the community best. My Spanish is what it is, and I do remain the gringo. Yet, I understand the rules at the tap and even some of the subtleties. The community sees I am on even ground with them and ask no privileges. It is a calm and orderly place. Maybe I will fondly remember the communal tap when I am reaching for the hot water faucet in the shower. And then again...

*Keith Talbot is a Volunteer in the Dominican Republic.*

*Continued from page 33*

ities. "Recently, the environmental sector needed to get their hands on national ecotourism policies in order to develop guidelines for posts entering this new program area; poking around on the Internet one night, I stumbled across Australia's policy. It was just what we needed, and it was remarkable that I found it so quickly."

People interested in joining Peace Corps are now able to peruse application questions on the Peace Corps "home page," available on the World Wide Web. Returned Volunteers and anyone else interested in talking about Peace Corps can subscribe to the Peace Corps discussion group, which typically delivers 20 messages a day into subscribers' mailboxes. The topics range from "Which ham radio should I buy to use in Kenya?" to "Does anyone know where I can hook up with RPCVs from Zimbabwe Group 23?"

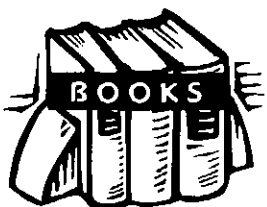
"Hearing from other RPCVs and their experiences, staying in touch with other Togo RPCVs, and having access to West Africa-specific news has all been beneficial" wrote Steve Johnson, a former Volunteer in Togo. Steve is one of hundreds of members of the Peace Corps-L (list) who stay in touch with Peace Corps via the Internet.

Every day IRM gets calls and e-mails asking when Peace Corps will be fully online. "I want it now," is the cry IRM hears every day. Patience, ever a Peace Corps virtue, is not a compatible bedfellow with the feverish pace of computer communication. But IRM keeps Peace Corps up to speed. ■

*Burton Reist works in the Director's Office.*

# REVIEWS

BOOKS, MUSIC, AND OTHER ART OF THE PEACE CORPS WORLD

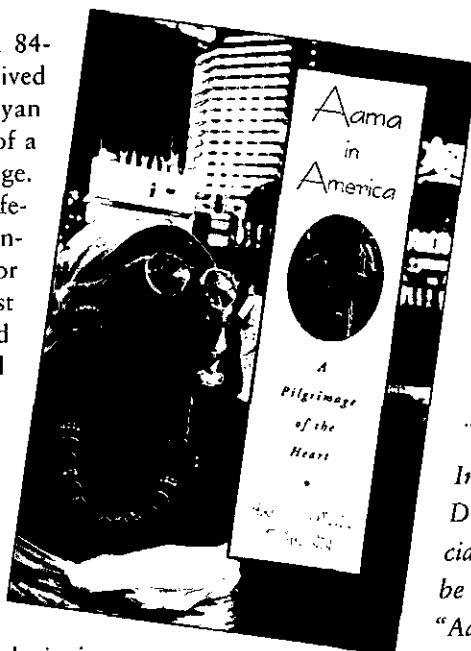


## ***In Aama in America: A Pilgrimage of the Heart*** **Broughton Coburn merges his two worlds**

In 1989, Vishnu Maya Gurung, an 84-year-old subsistence farmer who lived just below the majestic Himalayan mountains of Nepal, was the subject of a coming-of-age ceremony in her village. The ritual marked the fulfillment of a lifetime of worldly obligation and the beginning of her spiritual preparation for death. During the ceremony, the priest prescribed a pilgrimage for Vishnu, and Broughton Coburn, her "adopted American son," seized the opportunity to invite her to see the world he had come from. Not only would this help her receive religious merit from the priest, but Coburn felt that he might also be able to fulfill a part of his own "worldly obligation." Vishnu, who was affectionately known as Aama (Nepali for "mother"), accepted the invitation and, with Broughton and his companion Didi, left Nepal for the first time in her life to embark on a 25-state coast-to-coast tour of the United States.

Broughton Coburn had lived and worked in Nepal for more than 15 years, initially as a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher and later as an overseer of rural development and wildlife conservation for the United Nations and the World Wildlife Fund. Aama was Coburn's landlady when he was a PCV, and during that time the two formed a special bond since she had no son of her own and Coburn's mother had passed away. Coburn documented their unique kinship and the meeting of two very different cultures in his first book, *Aama: Portrait of a Nepalese Hill Woman* (Anchor Books, reissue; May 1995). In *Aama in America: A Pilgrimage of the Heart* (Anchor Books, May 1995), Coburn recounts Aama's rollicking American adventure and simultaneous philosophical odyssey.

A true life experience that reads like fiction, *Aama in America* is a vivid chronicle—sometimes profound, often



hilarious, and always revealing—of a 12,000 mile geographical and spiritual journey. Coburn records their conversations while visiting a Catholic sanctuary, Disneyland, Las Vegas, Old Faithful, kissing a killer whale, and riding a wheat combine, to name just a few of their adventures.

### **Excerpt**

*In a store on "Main Street," a young Disneyland ambassador leaked official word that Mickey Mouse would be making an appearance shortly.*

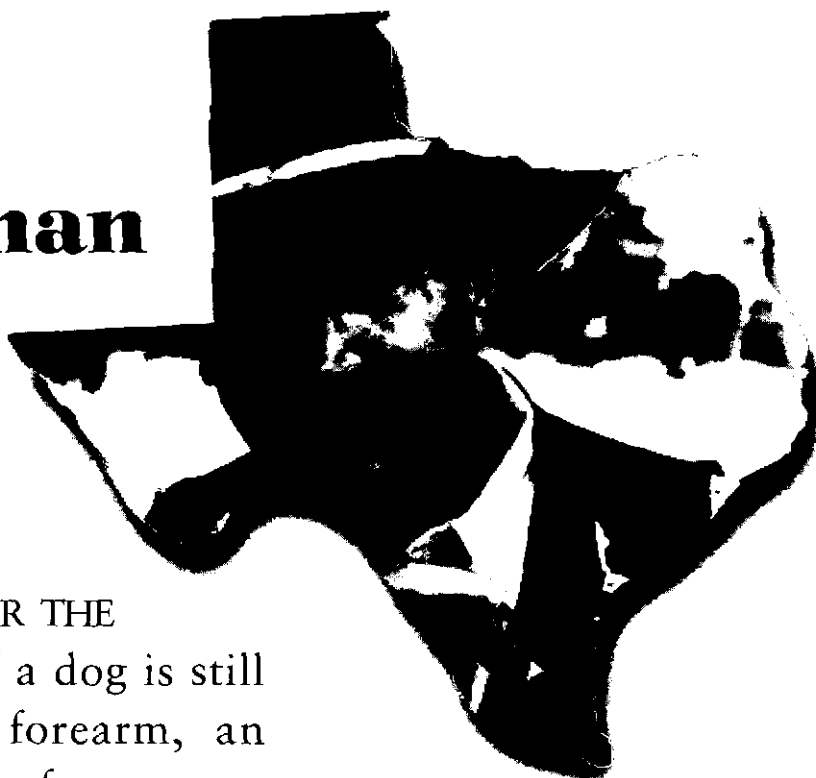
*"Aama, we're oing to meet an animal considered to be an American deity," I said, groping as usual for a sensible translation. "He's like the king of the mouse and animal caste."*

*Through a forest of balloons and cotton candy, we could see Mickey Mouse in front of the castle, walking and waving like a politician. We pushed forward, and he stopped regally in front of Aama. She tried to clasp his oversized gloved hands in hers, then lifted and lowered his hands with each point of recited incantation. She passed her fingers across the surface of his artificial face, feeling each ridge and depression as she spoke, trying to force her blessing through his malleable but impervious rubber skin. "I apologize for coming unprepared, but with humble words I offer my respect and blessings, and pray that your wishes and desires, and those of the children who love you, be fulfilled."*

# Kinky Friedman

## Wild Man from Borneo

BY SARAH BOTT



**T**WENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER THE fact, the blue tattoo of a dog is still chiseled on his left forearm, an ever-present reminder of two years

working in the jungles of Borneo. Kinky Friedman, the mystery writer *cum* jukebox hero *cum* ex-Peace Corps Volunteer points at it with his cigar stub as just another interesting facet of his kaleidoscopic life.

"They did it with a hammer and nails while I chewed betel nut and drank rice wine to relax," says the walking, talking, spitting image of Texas macho.

"It hurt like hell," he admits, adjusting his black Stetson.

No kidding.

Richard Friedman (the "Kinky" came later) signed up for Peace Corps right after graduating from the University of Texas in 1966.

"My friends all thought I was crazy," he recalls. "They were all going to medical school or law school and couldn't understand going to work for eleven cents an hour for two-and-a-half years."

Sound familiar?

Kinky (it's his hair) was offered an Agriculture Extension assignment in Borneo, a Malaysian island nation between Australia and the Philippines, twice the size of Texas.

The destination was described in his invitation packet as "exotic," with jungles, cobras, alligators, and brightly-colored birds. "You will see indigenous peoples," it read, "some covered head-to-toe with blue tattoos."

Kinky's site was remote, in the northern territory of Sarawac, where farmers used old fashioned (i.e., four or five-centuries olds) techniques that brought in poor yields. He tried to teach them some of the modern methods that he learned in training; methods that weren't so much difficult as they were different.

It was a tough row to hoe.

"You're asking people to plant seed a certain kind of way when they've been doing it another kind of way for a thousand years," Kinky says, shaking his head.

His secondary project fared better.

"I got a multi-racial boys' club going on over there between the Chinese and the jungle kids and the Malaysians."

*Jungle kids?* Political correctness apparently hasn't made a dent in this guy.

Among other things, Kinky intro-

duced the kids to the all-American sport of frisbee. He also spent a fair amount of time strumming his guitar. Kinky was delighted to learn that some Borneans had picked up a few country and western songs from Australian paratroopers, including music of his idol, country music legend, Hank Williams.

"They even knew 'Waltzing Mathilda,'" he says.

"We visited Richard in Borneo," recalls his father, Tom, a retired professor of psychology. "It was...."

"Very primitive!" Kinky shouts out from across the porch where we are all talking. His father smiles indulgently at this son who has tracked so many adventures over the years into his house.

When Kinky got out of the Peace Corps, he turned his attention back to his music and formed his second band, which went by the unlikely moniker the Texas Jewboys in deference to his religious and geographic heritage. (His first band, King Arthur and the Carrots, had recorded a record when Kinky was in college, but fizzled when he joined the Peace

Corps.) Certain tunes gave him a measure of notoriety (not to mention hate mail), including: "They Don't Make Jews Like Jesus Anymore," "Get Your Biscuits In the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed," and "Wild Man from Borneo." During their brush with fame throughout the seventies, The "Jewboys" toured with the likes of Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan, and Joni Mitchell, and they recorded four albums.

The ballads and music of the Jewboys wasn't enough to launch them into the Hank Williams or even Garth Brooks (whose music Kinky detests) galaxies, and when the music finally faded in the late '70s, Kinky looked around for another gig.

"When the horse dies, you get off," he says, with characteristic bluntness.

He found another gig, oddly enough, as a mystery writer.

Kinky's first novel, *Musical Chairs*, published in 1972, met with enough success that he was encouraged to continue. He is touring the country for his eighth novel, *Armadillos and Old Lace*, and has completed the manuscript for his ninth. With his own fan club and an eclectic following that keeps him in coffee and cigars, Kinky shows no sign of stopping.

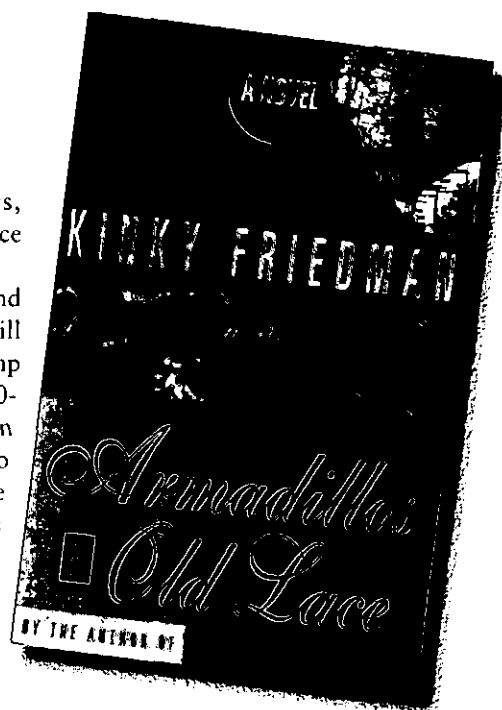
*Armadillos and Old Lace*, like the rest of his mysteries, stars a character named, who else, Kinky Friedman, a Jewish, ex-country and western singer from Texas who at one time was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Borneo, and who now lives part-time on the family ranch. The crimes in *Armadillos*, as in all the Kinky mysteries, are pure fiction. Many of the other characters are as real as he is: family members, friends, neighbors, and pets (two cats, two dogs, and, of course—an armadillo) appear on the pages with very little in the way of disguises. He doesn't bother chang-

ing names because, as he says, "There's not a whole lot of innocence to protect."

The backdrop of *Armadillos*, and indeed, Kinky's life, is Echo Hill Ranch, the family-run children's camp in Kerville, Texas. Echo Hill is a 500-acre spread two hours west of Austin that has been stomping ground to herds of kids every summer since 1964. At the center of the ranch is sprinkled a dozen or so whitewashed bunk houses, a combination tennis and basketball court, horse corral, dining tent, and infirmary. The Friedman's house is off to the left between the rifle range and the vegetable garden. Surrounding all this are acres and acres of hills, valleys, streams, and secret hiding places where countless kids have run around, toasted marshmallows, made macrame, and fallen in puppy love. Off-season, the place looks like a ghost town. Just the place to kick back and write mystery novels.

It is here that the novel's hero, coincidentally named Kinky Friedman, comes home each night to discuss latest developments in "the case" of the mysterious deaths of eight old ladies with his father, Tom; sister, Marcie; and a sweet young camp counselor he has an eye for.

*Armadillos*, in which Kinky returns from Greenwich Village to Echo Hill for the Summer and gets mixed up in the mysterious deaths of eight little-old ladies, is a fast, funny read. The book is selling like hotcakes across the country. The black-hatted author has made appearances in chain stores like Borders and Crown and in small regional stores like Bob's Books in Austin. His fans range from a sixty-seven year old grandmother who stood in line for an hour at the Jewish Community Center bookstore in Rockville, Maryland, to have the author inscribe, "See you in hell," to



President Clinton, who picked up a copy during a recent stop in Michigan. Kinky fans are not corralled into the United States, though. His mysteries have been translated into German, French, and Japanese.

"The Kinkster's very big in Germany," he boasts.

The Kinkster is also very big in Texas. In Austin, Kinky is a celebrity, a minor folk hero. Over drinks at Mezzaluna, a tony restaurant in Austin, Kinky, dressed in full on-the-town regalia, is approached at the bar by a waiter, three customers, and the owner for autographs. He gains an instant rapport with each of them, asking their names and chatting amiably for a minute or two.

"It's not always like this," he lies.

Then he turns around to greet another fan—a woman wearing an enormous Texas beehive.

After they've all gone, the man whose second act is in full swing, pulls the cigar out of his mouth.

"I'm grateful as hell to have a career that I love," he says.

The blue dog from Borneo, mysterious and silent, seems to grin.

Sarah Bott is the Editor of Peace Corps Times.

# Working at Peace Corps

*Looking for a Job? Don't Rule Out Washington*

BY BURTON REIST AND SARAH BOTT

**S** EVEN YEARS AFTER MARY LOU WEATHERS left Benin she started working for Peace Corps—on the other side. “Working here is definitely different from Volunteering,” the

personnel specialist says. “When I was in Benin I didn’t care for all the rules and regs regarding Volunteer service. However, after taking the job here I became part of the establishment that makes the rules!”

Weathers and thousands of returned Volunteers like her have made the transition from PCV to staff—some immediately after serving

overseas and some years later. All bring with them distinct opinions of how the bureaucracy should function, based largely on their own experiences.

Peace Corps employs about 1,000 people around the world, the highest concentration in its Washington headquarters (509).

“We do everything here,” says Personnel Director, Sharon Barbee Fletcher. “We send cables to posts, research new ways to smoke bees out of hives, process paychecks, find the least expensive vendor of computer diskettes, ship toilet paper, arrange for Volunteers to give radio interviews, and sort mail.”

The forms hopeful would-be Volunteers fill out—general application, medical survey, and references—are sent to Washington from Peace Corps’ 12 recruiting offices around the United States for evaluation and processing by people like Caroline Slade (Benin 1991-93). “As an evaluator, I help decide who will make a good Volunteer.” Slade and nine colleagues spend their days checking references, contacting applicants to discuss issues and concerns regarding their suitability for Peace

Corps service, and answering questions on what being a Volunteer is

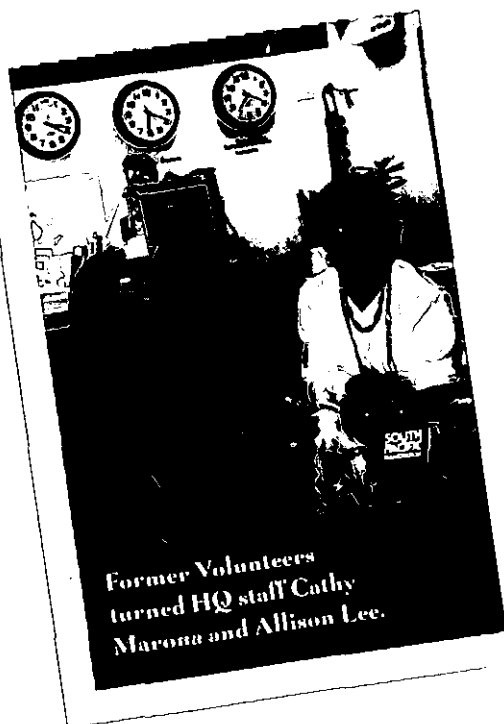
all about.

Laura Bayne (Dominican Republic, 1989-91) started working at headquarters as an unpaid intern when she started college in Washington, D.C. She’s now a film and video production assistant in the Office of Communications. “I’m very interested in documentary film-making, and working at Peace Corps has given me an incredible experience. It means a lot to me to still be connected to the Peace Corps world.” Bayne is the assistant producer of the video “Come Back Healthy,” which tells the stories of five Volunteers who contracted HIV while serving overseas.

Scott Phillips (Africa, 1992-94), a desk officer for Nepal, offers some important advice. “Washington is expensive, so if you can find someone to stay with at first, you’re better off.” Phillips says his job on “The Desk” is about 75 percent related to communications. “They tend to be very quick transactions,” he says. “A call from a parent about their son or daughter. A clarification needed by another office on a request from one of the countries. A little proactive lobbying to insure a post gets an In-Service Training funded. Talking to a Trainee about what to bring. A quick capsule briefing to senior regional staff on why this or that issue is being handled this or that way.”

What every former Volunteer who works for Peace Corps will tell you is that timing, along with persistence and a little luck, is everything. Like everywhere in the federal government, competition for jobs at Peace Corps is intense. However, since Peace Corps staff are subject to the “five year rule,” (written into the Peace Corps Act as an anti-bureaucracy clause) turnover is high and there are always a lot of opportunities.

If you’re interested in applying for a job with Peace Corps, we suggest you start by contacting the Office of Returned Volunteer Career Services. ☐



Burton Reist works in the Director's Office and Sarah Bott is the Editor of Peace Corps Times.



## Volunteers Write

# Out on a Limb

**L**ocated in Limbe, on the Southwest coast of Cameroon is the Limbe Zoo, which is now being transformed into a wildlife conservation center. I first visited the project about a year ago while taking a group of school children on an excursion to the southwest province and, while walking around, realized that this was someplace special. As luck would have it, the project was in serious need of someone with construction skills to build new enclosures for the existing and soon-to-be arriving primates. So, as the last day of school let out, I packed my bags and took the eight hour trip to the coast, where I did, in fact, end up spending the next three months—and more.

I will never forget the first day on the job. I walked through the gates of the zoo and in less than a minute had a four-year old gorilla climb up into my arms and give me a big hug. The only time I had ever seen a gorilla was at the National Zoo in Washington D.C., and that was from behind two barriers and three inches of plate glass. Now, here I was with this gorilla in my arms, thinking, "This is going to be an interesting summer." My next introduction was to eleven infant chimpanzees. Each of the infants was introduced individually and I was told their names. But at the time, they all looked the same to me, and I couldn't tell them apart. But after spending so much time with them I can't imagine that I ever thought they looked alike. Each chimpanzee has his or her own specific facial features and they all definitely have individual personalities.

This is what became of my daily routine after only two weeks in Limbe. Get up at 6:00 a.m., wake up my new roommate (Blond, six month old male chimpanzee), make his bottle, spoonfeed him baby cereal, and then change his diaper, all before I was fully awake. Then after my shower and some breakfast, we would head to the zoo where I'd give Ekou to a staff member and start work. At the end of the day it was the same thing in reverse. By the middle of August, his coordination had developed considerably, so much so, that when the rest of the staff was too busy to

baby-sit, I would put Ekou on my back and continue with the construction work as if he weren't even there.

Another activity that I grew quite fond of was playing Jack, Dja, and Susanne (three adolescent chimpanzees, aging from four to eight years old) out for some play time on Ape Island, which is an island in the middle of a river adjacent to the zoo. Then the game of chimpanzee tag teams wrestling would begin. Jack's favorite game was to climb a large tree, which was next to a jungle gym and rope swings we had built. As I played with the

others, Jack would jump from the top of the tree, sail about ten feet through the air, grab onto a branch on the way down and swing in a perfect arch until his feet slammed into my back and knocked me flat on my face and into the mud. After about an hour of this, it felt like I had just finished playing a full game of tackle football without pads.

As for the project itself, it was initiated to help protect primates in Cameroon and some endangered species of monkeys. At present, the threat mainly comes from poaching: a mother is killed for "bush meat," and her infant is sold as a pet to anyone interested in buying it. Owning a primate in Cameroon is illegal, but even with the support of the government, enforcement is difficult. Since its inception, the project has been responsible for the rescue of many primates and is now beginning to promote wildlife education by starting an outreach program with the local schools. We will soon begin the construction of a building that will contain a new office and a large room for visitors to come and learn about their environment and the wildlife it supports. Also, thanks to Peace Corps, we have just received a third year extension Volunteer from Cameroon who will work on the project full time.

As for me, I know that eventually my time will be up here, and I will have to return to the States. Fortunately, that time has not arrived yet, so I am able to appreciate my remaining time in Limbe watching these incredible animals grow and develop. After all is said and done, I know I will always look back with fond memories of all the friends, with and without fur, I made.

*Robert Maront is a Volunteer in Cameroon.*



# Lucille Raimondo

BY PETER LARA

**W**hile walking along a trail in the Highlands of Guatemala on the afternoon of May 22, 1995, PCV Lucille Raimondo was killed in an accident. She was 40 years old and had been a Volunteer since September 1994. Lucille was a nutri-

tionist and worked with rural indigenous people, mainly women and children. She already spoke Spanish well and was learning Mam, the language of the communities in the area of her assignment.



More than 200 Volunteers and the staff continue to mourn this terrible loss. In this country, where all of Peace Corps' efforts are rural, PCVs walk similar paths to work in small villages all the time. We still ask each other and ourselves how such a tragedy could have happened to Lucille. What we know is that it could happen to any of us, anytime.

William James wrote, "The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." From our perspective here in Guatemala, it is both fair and proper to say that Lucille Raimondo represented the best manifestation of an exceptional Volunteer. Lucille died directly involved in her work. She had spent much of the day, as do the best PCVs, living the obligations, frustrations, and joys of a development worker, of a nutrition extensionist in rural Guatemala. Lucille had left her home to trek to the village of Nimá, many kilometers and almost a couple of hours away. As with Volunteers everywhere, hers was a sort of migration, one that she made regularly to towns near her site. It was her job; it was her role; it was her duty.

We will remember Lucille walking through the beautiful mountains of Huchuetenango to visit, to work with and train the people of those communities. Her work and her efforts, her dedication to, and affection for, small farm families deep in the Highlands of Guatemala are examples by which we all can live and in which we all can take pride. ☐

*Peter Lara is the Country Director in Guatemala.*

# Donald Lee Weber

BY CARL SWARTZ

**O**n June 18, 1995, 64-year old PCV Don Weber died of a heart attack while participating in a wedding reception in the small Hungarian village of Csokonyavisonta.

Friends say that Don was dancing and singing with the all-Hungarian wedding party up until the moment he died.

Don was a Business Management Volunteer who arrived in Hungary on September 22, 1993, after a successful career as an investment banker and financial advisor in Missouri and Wisconsin. He was sworn in as a Volunteer on December 22, 1993, and served in the town of Pecs, in southern Hungary not far from the Croatian border. Don's host organization was a business center, the Baranya County Local Enterprise Agency, which responds to requests for services from the Pecs small business community.


Don worked very closely with his Hungarian counterpart, Dr. Tomas Peterfia, to make the center's programs relevant to its clients needs. He helped plan a strategy to make the business center financially self-sufficient. He assisted in establishing regular business seminars on topics ranging from banking to computer networking to financial investment strategies. He worked to establish an interactive business library at the center, complete with bilingual resource materials.

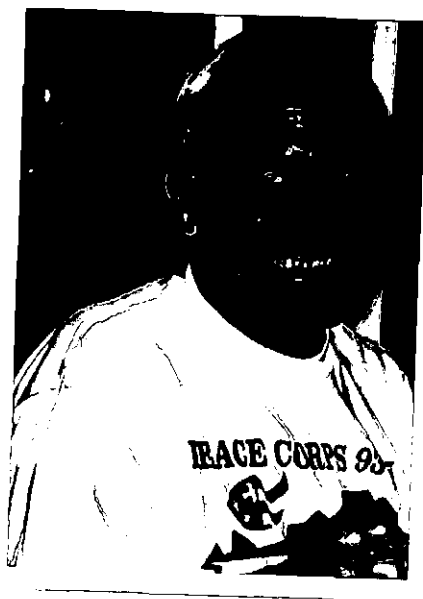
Don's untimely death cut short his stewardship of perhaps his favorite project, the revival of Baranya County's traditional Farmer's Day. Begun in the 1930's, this annual agricultural fair was canceled after the Communists assumed power in Hungary following WWII.

Conscious of Hungary's deep-seated respect for its own history, Don helped local agriculturalists and civic leaders re-initiate the event to include exhibits of livestock and farm products, seminars on agricultural

resources, foreign trade promotion, and presentations on the latest technological advances in agricultural equipment, planting methods, and animal husbandry. Last August, Don participated in the inauguration of the first Renewed Farmer's Day in the village of Szentlorinc. This month the second Farmer's Day will showcase the best of Baranya County's agro-products to western brokers and investors who will travel to Hungary from several neighboring nations.

In recognition of Don's service, Peace Corps recently granted a third year extension of his PCV status. He was intending to use the time to introduce the Junior Achievement program to a local high school.

At a memorial service held in Pecs, Don's friends and colleagues eulogized his work, his cross-cultural sensitivity, his language skills, and his community service. He was active in all of Peace Corps Hungary's training programs and was always quick to lend a hand to staff, other volunteers and, especially, to his Hungarian colleagues. Don's sharp wit, warm smile, generous heart, and gentle manner will be noticeably missed when his group celebrates its Close of Service this December. 



*Carl Swartz is the Country Director in Hungary.*



## PEACE CORPS MISSION

The Peace Corps was  
created to promote world  
peace and friendship.

Our goals are:

To help the people of interested  
countries meet their needs for  
trained men and women;

To help promote a better  
understanding of the American  
people on the part of the people  
served; and

To promote a better  
understanding of other people on  
the part of the American people.

