

EL CLIMA

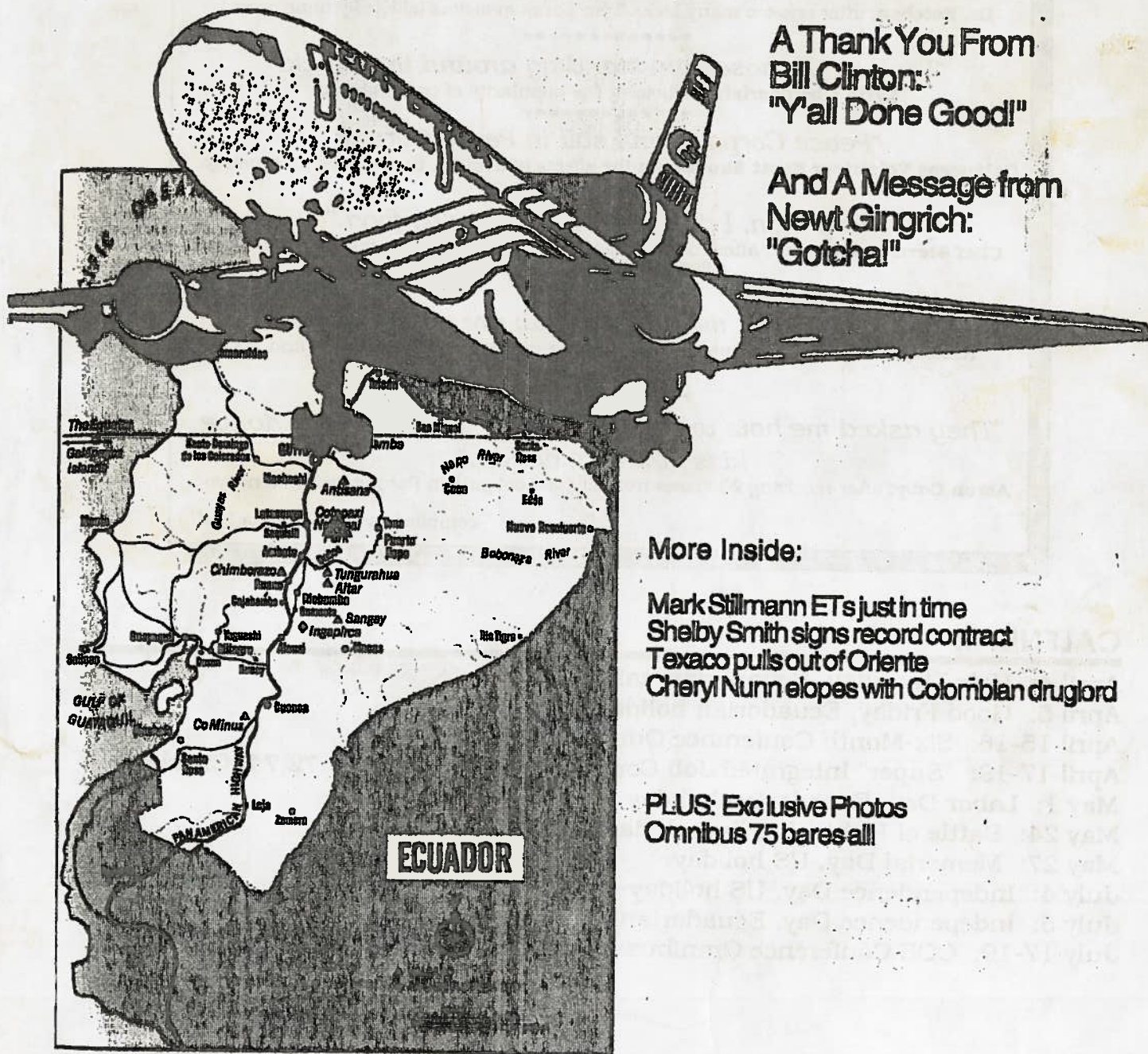
WORLD PEACE CORPS A PEACE CORPS IN ECUADOR PUBLICATION

SEE YA!

PEACE CORPS/ECUADOR SHUTS DOWN

A Thank You From
Bill Clinton:
"Y'all Done Good!"

And A Message from
Newt Gingrich:
"Gotcha!"



More Inside:

Mark Stillmann ETs just in time
Shelby Smith signs record contract
Texaco pulls out of Oriente
Cheryl Nunn elopes with Colombian druglord

PLUS: Exclusive Photos
Omnibus 75 bares all!

¿COMO?

"I'll go down and you put your feet up."

Two Volunteers, attempting synchronized swimming moves in a local Portoviejo swimming hole.

"Men? Yeah well, I guess I've done the range."

Anonymous, overheard at a social gathering.

"They're trying to kill me."

PCT Matt Mercer, when asked how things with his Tumbaco family were going.

"No dain Bramage."

Dr. Esteban, after one too many kicks from vacas mancitas (allegedly tame cows.)

"Look at all those men standing around their cock!"

Karin Chamberlain, criticizing the popularity of cock fighting.

"Peace Corps? Am I still in Peace Corps?"

Galápagos Volunteer Scott Shouse, on the effects of living in the isolated archipelago.

"Hey man, I didn't know it was dog food."

Chef Steve McLaughlin, after cooking up a New Year's feast with meat intended for Pata, Ron Krupa's dog.

"This time next year, me and Andrew are gonna be Arnolds."

Anonymous budding muscle man, making big claims about himself and his Cayambe buddy.

"They asked me how we said 'Goodbye' in the States, do we kiss or shake hands."

Aaron Coby, after receiving 20 kisses from highschool girls in Parque Pedro Moncayo.

-compiled by the El Clima Staff

CALENDAR

April 4: Holy Thursday, Ecuadorian holiday

April 5: Good Friday, Ecuadorian holiday

April 15-16: Six-Month Conference Omnibus 74, Chorlavi

April 17-19: "Super" Integrated Job Conference Omnibuses 70, 72, 74, Chorlavi

May 1: Labor Day, Ecuadorian holiday

May 24: Battle of Pichincha, Ecuadorian holiday

May 27: Memorial Day, US holiday

July 4: Independence Day, US holiday

July 5: Independence Day, Ecuadorian holiday

July 17-19: COS Conference Omnibus 72, Chorlavi (tentative)

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QUIN
 MUIP



Taking a short vacation from the hot weather on the coast and studying for the GRE, I'd like to contribute my two cents worth on the diversity within the Volunteer community. With that in mind, I'd like to welcome each of the trainees from Omnibus 75 to Ecuador and the Peace Corps. I had the opportunity to meet the group at their Health Fair this week. Once again, as I always am upon introduction to new arrivals, I was impressed with the seriousness of the individuals as well as the dedication they all have seemed to devote to the early stages of training. Good luck!

In February, I made a trip to Uruguay to visit my boyfriend who's a Peace Corps Volunteer there in the Environmental Education program. It's a country I probably never would have travelled to of my own accord but I sure was glad I had the chance. I instantly fell in love with it. The strong Italian and Spanish influence create such a distinct atmosphere. *Mate* and the subsequent culture it creates—Uruguayans casually cruising the cobblestone streets with *mate* gourd in hand (not functional without *bombilla* and *yerba*) and the hot water-filled thermos tucked underarm—was an instant attractor to a true coffee-aholic at heart. That, coupled with the *celeste* skies, fresh air, quaint towns and endless sunflower fields, were enough to make me consider that forever

debatable **ET.** Seriously though, I'd recommend some time in Uruguay to any South American traveler, but that's a whole other article. Back to the subject at hand. Along with exploring lots of Uruguay I had the chance to meet some other Peace Corps Volunteers and PC Uruguay's CD, José Rauls. The information I gathered from these encounters only proved to further back-up my thoughts on how different each and every Peace Corps experience ends up being. Uruguay's role as a developing, but nearly developed in my view, country seems to have attracted a particular breed of Volunteer and being the PCV that I am I found myself comparing the realities of being a Volunteer in Uruguay with that of being one here in Ecuador. Imagine being a PCV in Uruguay, knowing that when your COS date rolls around, with it comes the end of PC's role in the country. And upon my return I was once again analyzing how wide a range our PC/E Volunteer community itself exhibits. Why is this? Because each of us arrived here at various points on our life paths. For many of us the two years of Peace Corps service prove to be more of a personal journey than anything else but the thing that connects us all is the work Peace Corps strives to achieve, clearly explained in its three goals. It's kind of like college. What brought us there? The classes, right!?! To acquire an education that would prepare us for the rest of our lives. But when did most of that learning take place? Outside of the classroom, in our personal relationships, through our successes and failures. The experience is what molded us and changed us into the more mature individuals dressed in caps and gowns at graduation. The Peace Corps has proved to be much of the same for me. The work is the common denominator but the experience is what has molded me into the more introspective, matured individual who will enter into life back

in the states with a much more realistic view of what's important in life. And why? Because I took the "road less traveled." So I guess what I'm trying to say is that each of us has our own agenda and therefore applying rules to our experiences is foolish. Instead, we might attempt to learn something from each other and do as I've tried to, concentrate on the qualities that make each of us the individuals that we are.

The conclusion that my observations in Uruguay and those made upon my return to my life here in Ecuador have brought me, seems to coincide with many of the submissions in this issue of *El Clima* which scream of individual choices and the axiom, "live and let live." I'd like to thank those Volunteers who express their views. That's what we're looking for. °

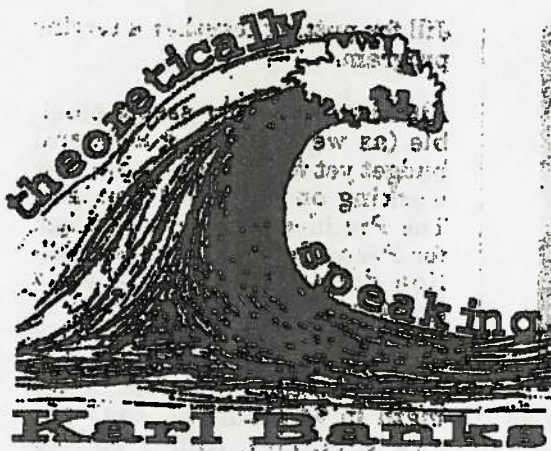
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I feel I am wasting paper by feeding these flames, but I will try to be concise (ha) and use my naturally-split personality to try to see both sides of this issue. What issue? Early Termination of course.

Probably the most frequent reason I hear people giving for an ET is an irreconcilable, work-related problem. There is no work. The people don't want to participate. The counterpart is lacking or non-existent. These are all legitimate problems which I think a majority of Volunteers must work through at some point during service. I must point out though: This is also a justification for a site change.

The most irritating rationalization for early termination I have heard is: "My site sucks." I heard this sentiment second and first hand from two health volunteers who ET'd; one from my Omnibus, 72, and one from 74. The basic gist I got was that their site was dirty, dusty, smelly, mosquito-infested and noisy. Well, welcome to the coast. First and foremost, why the hell do you think we are here? If you got to your site and encountered paved (dust-free) streets, daily trash pick-up, mosquito-free air (due to spraying and education), and well-washed citizens (reliable water) you would not be in Ecuador, you'd be in Suburbia, U.S.A. These health Volunteers should have

seen latrine, *agua potable*, trash collection and educational projects galore. (... with the help of a a a r b y Engineer/Volunteer, of course, but paving the streets is not our thing, and I have just learned to coexist with lots of dust.) But hey, if it really sucks, change sites.

But still people ET, and some people think that they are being let down by

these people. I don't think that anyone should make someone feel bad for a decision which is already hard to make and in almost all cases at least somewhat disappointing. But I still don't like that so many come down and so many bail out. It seems as if they had a false impression of what it would be like. I wonder if a lack of communication and understanding could be major culprits.

So, what solutions could I offer? First I think that we need to do more hard thinking during training and even more so before we get to Miami. I felt sort of uneasy or even undecided about the Peace Corps. Why? Well no one could tell me anything about Ecuador. No one could tell me what it would be like where I was to live (not only a packing hassle, but a mind frazzle.) So my suggestion is that every Volunteer write a page or two about life in their site, say at the COS conference. Then maybe 10 of these, chosen for their broad coverage of Volunteer living, work and social conditions, could be sent to all persons given an Ecuador assignment. During training, as site assignments became more focused, there could be sessions where more of these 'biographies' could be read and shared. Maybe then, the people who just will not be happy in similar situations will not even come to Miami, or will see in training that they just don't want that.

Some will say, "Hey, Karl! Don't be such an asshole. We need to encourage our fellow Volunteers to persevere through the tough times, especially during those early months of service when life can be hard." To this I will say I agree. While the option to ET for uncertain trainees should be made a comfortable and encouraged option, I think that once an individual makes that important choice to accept the challenge of full Volunteer status, they should be encouraged to stay. In fact I think that a six-month post swear-in moratorium on early termination should be enforced. I would allow for certain exceptions, but would rather not see people leaving until they have given their new environment a good shot. Plus there should be much more communication between the Volunteer AFCD and counterpart agencies in these critical months.

Two trainees in my group quit after realizing that work conditions would not be what they wanted, the treatment of women in the Ecuadorian workplace being their main conflict. In my mind this is exactly how it should work. As soon as one realizes that this just isn't the experience they want, they should make the adult decision to back out. It saves them emotional stress in the long run and saves Peace Corps money. Why is the ET not a more acceptable option, especially in training? I think the Peace Corps is lacking in weeding-out methods and counseling. I personally thought this would be much tougher and I thought my site would be much worse. I sort of think that life here as a Peace Corps Ecuador Volunteer is cushy.

Then I realize that many people may say one thing, but the real reason they ET is a significant other left at home. I can sympathize with this, but I think that if you are about to get on a plane to Miami and your heart is breaking because of who you are leaving behind, then you are in trouble. My simple advice: don't even

come to training with unresolved relationships. If you are already here, and you are suffering from this, then early terminate.

Back in "the day" when an older generation signed up for the Peace Corps, they got much less training, much less support and trained in Montana. Then after a short orientation (like a week?) they were shipped off to *campo* sites and told to sink or swim. I liken their experience to being dropped off in the middle of the ocean and told to tread water for two years. For us these days we are not even really in the deep end and the ladder is nearby and there are always lifeguards. Not to totally contradict my sympathetic feelings, but are we whiny wimps or what? Harshness aside I think those who decide that they are not cut out for this life and quit are better people for realizing that and making the correct move of an early termination.

Having so many friends from training who ET, sucks. Not for us, but for them. I am truly sorry it did not work out for them and I know that if their decision was made honestly, they are probably much happier and I certainly don't hold it against them that they early terminated. I only hope that they made their decisions for the right reasons.

A friend of mine who ET'd shortly after swearing-in and after having her apartment and all her new stuff robbed has expressed to me in letters that she regrets her decision to ET.

"I really shouldn't have freaked out like that and ET'd. I am back here with nothing really to do. I really don't feel like I should be here. I feel like I should be there with y'all in Ecuador. I want to visit, but it might upset me too much. . ."



VIEWPOINT

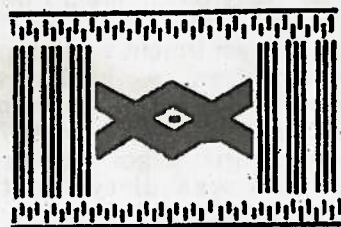


Welcome to the fifty-two trainees of Omnibus 75. As I write this, the trainees are visiting Volunteers in small groups for four days. They are working with a Volunteer who does technical work similar to what the trainee will do in the future. As Pablo has written about before, we are doing everything we can in this training to prepare trainees for the reality of Volunteer life. So far so good. The group is showing a tremendous amount of initiative and motivation. Thanks to all the Volunteers who are helping us with this training by participating in sessions, in the health fair, and by hosting a group of trainees. Your positive attitude and sharing of technical expertise is greatly appreciated.

Peace Corps 35th Anniversary celebration the weekend of March 1, was a great success. Over 1000 RPCVs came to town to join in the festivities. On pg. 24 please find a letter to Volunteers and staff written by our Regional Director Vic Johnson, inspired by the anniversary. Here in Ecuador we marked the anniversary with a fabulous concert at the Church in Guapulo. Co-sponsored by the Embassy, the Bowdoin Choral Choir performed Spanish sacred music, Quechua folk songs, and American spirituals. The choir toured Ecuador for a week at the invitation of (and due to the hard work of) choir alum PCV Jill DeTemple. Stops included a concert in Jill's rural site of Unguvi. Congratulations

Jill for putting together a terrific program.

Although it hardly seems possible (as we don't have a federal budget yet for FY 96) we are now working on our FY 97 budget. The President's proposed budget for Peace Corps holds a six million dollar increase. That is great news, given the reality of foreign aid budgets. It means a decrease for us as an individual country because when you do the math in 94 countries, and open new countries, things end up costing more. I have been asked to submit three budget plans: one which maintains us at current spending levels; one that shows a 10% decrease in spending; and one that decreases our trainee input so that we would have 120 Volunteers, with corresponding decreases in staff levels. I have discussed this with VAC President Mark Reichelt and am glad that I can reference the VAC budget survey as we consider various options. Senior Staff have met to discuss options for these various plans. I want to underscore that these are planning options. We probably will not know until mid-summer what our real budget numbers will be. At that time we'll adjust our plans accordingly. I will discuss this in more detail at the VAC meeting, April 9th.



On the same topic, \$\$, I hope you have received a letter from Pablo Davis about Living Allowances. We have submitted a request for an increase, retroactive to March, to the Region. I hope to have an answer by the VAC meeting.

The return rate on the survey was 63%.

PCV visits. Since the last El Clima I had the opportunity to travel with Jorge Delgado visiting Eric Cosgrove in Sucua, Dustin Wharton in Macas, David (a.k.a. Dr. Pollo) McNamee in Chuvitayo near Pitarishka, and John Hays in San Jorge. We were able to fly into one of the Shuar centers, Macuma, where Eric has been part of a team effort with his counterpart agency, *Ayuda en Acción*, to construct a total of 46 school rooms. By training Shuar community members in carpentry, masonry, and construction techniques, the project not only successfully completed the school rooms, but left new skills and equipment in each of 36 communities. In Macas we met friends of Dustin's who have formed a Shuar ecotourism agency ("IKI-AAM"). Andres Victoria, one of the founders of the group has since visited me in Quito to offer the following to our PCVs: "IKI-AAM" will provide ecotourism tours to PCVs at a VERY reduced rate. They travel to a number of communities and you can basically put together the kind of trip you want. Andres can be reached at 07-700457 in Macas. More info. on this on pg. 37.

In Chuvitayo we met with one of the women's groups with which David works. It boasts 54 members and is very well organized and productive. The chicken project which David helped to organize is already self-sustaining. I was especially impressed with the speeches given by Shuar men about the accomplishments of the women and how even a few years ago Shuar women could not have formed a legal entity and become a productive organization as they now are. (Pictures and other stories from this *encuentro* which you might hear/see have all been manufactured.)

John's work in San Jorge is coming to a close. He leaves the site with a very well organized artisan youth group which is opening its own store for paint supplies as most families in this town dedicate themselves to carving and painting balsa birds and other figures.

In all four of these sites, Jorge and I were proud to hear the spontaneous outpourings of affection and thanks that counterparts and community members bestowed upon these Volunteers. That personal impact is hard to measure, but impossible to forget. Thanks to Eric, Dustin, David and John for your hard work and generous hospitality.

I also traveled to Guayaquil and Duala recently. Mark Stillman and Kelly Rahn are thriving in Duala. I spent time with Jason Jex, Pete Fontaine, and George Walker in Guayaquil. I met with Jason's and Pete's counterparts. The flooding made it impossible to meet George's. I had made this trip to see first hand the realities of living in Guayaquil. These three PCVs are all doing good work and dealing well with city life. I guess I'm once again reminded that no two PCVs and no two sites are just alike. Each one has its "easier" and "tougher" aspects. What we need to do is remember the sacrifices that each of you is making to adjust to a new way of life, be it *campo* or city.

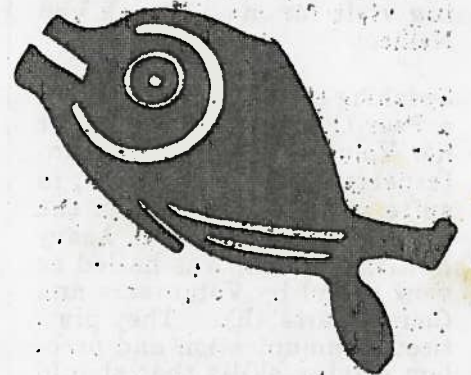
Looking ahead to April. I hope that you all enjoy *Semana Santa*. I look forward to seeing the Special Ed, Youth, Housing, Rural Infrastructure and Health PCVs at the Integrated Job Conference. By the time early May is here, most of the Volunteers of Omnibus 70 - 71? will have finished their service. Thanks to you all for your commitment to service and best of luck in the future. You'll be missed.

hablo pablo



by PTO Pablo Davis

I'm sure you're all anxious to find out what I've been up to since the last El Clima so I'll start out by filling you in. Thanks to Nellie, I can now say I've been to the South. Together we traveled to Cuenca (by the way, if you want to annoy Nellie, tell her it looks just like Ibarra) and visited Tresa Megenity, Brian Kemp, Robert Cronbach and their counterparts. We also hopped out to Azogues for an impressive, nutritionally balanced lunch in Justin Tomola's *Comedor*. In the evening many



of the Volunteers in the area took the time to meet us for coffee in downtown Cuenca. Apparently it was the first time many had seen each other in several months. This surprised me since they all lived relatively close to the centrally located cultural Mecca—the Ibarra of the south, if you will—Cuenca. It's not that they don't like each other. They just are more drawn to their friends in their local communities. From Cuenca we traveled to Machala, which, by the way, does not look just like

Esmeraldas. Just ask Nellie. There we visited with Lisa Rohleder and Dianne Shields. (Whatever they might have told you about my driving is highly exaggerated.) From Machala we drove to Guayaquil, where, for my own personal safety, I elected not to share with Nellie how I thought it looked a little like Quito. From Guayaquil we drove out to visit Susanna Letoto in La Libertad, returning in the evening to meet with Pete Fontaine and Jason Jex.

What impressed me most during the trip (aside from the uncanny resemblance between the southern cities and their northern counterparts) was the Volunteers: They were in different stages of their Volunteer experience; some were in their sites for just under six months; others were getting ready to COS. Each had been faced with very challenging obstacles that they, using their own unique abilities, skills and styles, had overcome, or were in the process of overcoming. It was an inspiring visit for me. Thank you Nellie.

Speaking of Nellie, she organized a Peer Coaching workshop for her Volunteers and their counterparts last month, which, in spite of having to rely on the help of translators with heavy British accents, was hailed as very useful by Volunteers and Counterparts alike. They practiced communication and problem solving skills that should help them work together more effectively. Many had expressed interest in replicating the workshop in their sites.

Speaking of workshops, there's a Gender and Development workshop on the horizon. In May to be exact, with a follow-up session in August. Susana Pico de Silva will be leading us through some field exercises using some very effective gender analysis techniques. An abbreviated version was held in March for Quito and Tumbaco staff, and we all came

away more aware of the issues facing our opposite genders and will be incorporating the strategies in all of our future programming and training efforts, starting with the current PST.

We also had a very productive Farmer to Farmer experience since the last El Clima hit the streets. A fruit tree farmer from Washington state did his very first overseas consultancy here in Ecuador. Even though Dennis Transue exposed him to violent thunder and hail storms and treacherous mountain roads the very first night he brought him to Sigsig, the farmer had a very productive four weeks, visiting Hugo Hoffman and Jeff Rathlef getting rave reviews from farmers and Volunteers alike. The Farmer to Farmer program is a resource we plan to continue to take advantage of, especially since we have learned that the program can also be used to bring experts in other areas such as pre-harvest or post-harvest processing and marketing, agribusiness, agroforestry, parks management, forest management and even ecotourism. The only (main) restriction is that the projects have to benefit rural inhabitants.



Dear El Clima...

Response to "ETs Unacceptable"

by Elizabeth Humphrey, Santo Domingo and Susanna Letoto, La Libertad

The two of us were together when first reading the letter "ETs Unacceptable" and were compelled to answer a few of the author's questions. The letter reminded us of the loss of friends, the reality that we must be selective with whom we confide, and the deviousness that exists within PC Ecuador.

We will never forget the day the first person from our Omnibus left. The group hugs and shared tears were not enough to relieve the pain in our hearts. In her fragile state of health, she persistently told us how lucky she felt to be a part of this family and how sad she was to have to leave. When many of us spoke and sang to her on the phone after swearing in, we all knew we were still connected. Her spirits were high, which made ours higher, especially after hearing of her progress and determination. Her struggle compelled a tight bond which revealed itself in peer support and communication. Naturally, this initiated an environment of open interpersonal sharing, which was augmented by other special individuals.

In Omnibus 74 there were six highly qualified, educated and experienced RNs whose skills would benefit any community in the world (including the US). Perhaps they felt their abilities would be more beneficial in a structured, scientific environment. They shared their dreams, frustrations and disappointments. As they disclosed their feelings, many of us empathized, but why they left the Rural Health Extensionist

program is not for us to judge or criticize. They left on separate occasions, but for similar reasons. We speculate this to have been the catalyst for the recent re-evaluation of the health program. We can only say that the time and laughter shared with them continues to provide strength for our own personal challenges. Although we didn't want to see any of them leave, there are times when it is appropriate.

I, Susanna, encouraged someone to ET. Her spirit was here, she had the language, the will and the dedication, but her health was unstable. She was told by doctors that she "could not be sick again or else..." I would stand by this decision any day, against any pressure she put on herself or felt from others.

As new volunteers, it is helpful when other PCVs are willing to share their perspectives, especially in regard to our frustrations. The letter re-emphasized that we cannot disclose to just anyone, which is unfortunate. It shouldn't be Omnibus vs. Omnibus, Sierra vs. Coast vs. Oriente; we should be a fellowship of volunteers. One message received from the letter oozed of a freshman's struggle to earn the respect of an "upper" classman who has deigned to lend a royal ear to one of the lower class. This idea is in direct opposition to empathetic listening without judgment or criticism. If we are being brought down by other people's whining, it is fully within our responsibility and definitely our choice to say we are not up for listening. After all, choice is a birthright as US citizens.

From day one of the application process we were told that PC isn't for everyone. People who leave have the right to decide this for themselves. This isn't the military, they haven't gone AWOL or deserted. Although when people leave us, it's perfectly normal to feel angry or sad as though we have been abandoned. Such emotions are natural human reactions. Often we

have a tendency to torture ourselves with societal and self expectations. It seems a bit sadistic to encourage a *compañero* to admit they "can't hack it." But just as the author has the right to her opinion, we all have the right to make our own decisions (even difficult ones with which others may not agree).

We must respect those who choose to ET knowing they will not be productive volunteers. This is a difficult decision, especially when faced with the opportunity to travel, vacation and relax for two years. Have we all not heard "*Cuerpo de Paseo*" at least once? Who do you think gives PC that reputation in some communities?

So where do all the recent ETs from Om. 74 leave us? First of all, Om. 74 was small from the beginning. Fifteen of the original thirty eight have returned to the states. Two of those 15 were med-evaced and one was administratively separated. That leaves us with 12 ETs, one of which left on doctor's advice. If we may quote Paul Davis, "The ET rate has consistently been around 30% from Peace Corps' birth." PC has tried many different approaches, but the ET rate has remained constant. Looks to me like Om. 74 is no different from the norm, but those volunteers with doubts still have until Nov. 97 to judge and criticize us upcoming sophomores. That's right, a new batch has arrived.

We would like to reassure everyone that a sincere feeling of fellowship does exist among most volunteers here in Ecuador. We hope to create an atmosphere of trust, open and honest communication (which of course includes empathetic listening) and fellowship. We would like to thank all of the *chêvere* Volunteers who shared their experiences and opinions with us throughout training and beyond. We hope to provide the same objective foresight when we gain our senior status.

Questioning Opinions Expressed in favor of abolishing ET Policy

by Diane Yanasupa Shields, Machala, El Oro

The first one was flippant; the second one was on the verge of scathing. Neither presented a logical argument in favor of abolishing the Early Termination Policy other than to appease a self-serving attitude and the rather juvenile mentality that we are deserving of something for staying. (Accolades?)

To surmise that a more rigorous application and interviewing process would encourage only the "most serious" contenders is a misconception: Peace Corps already is doing what it can in order to invite only those persons that they believe would be able to make a positive impact as a PC Volunteer. (Also keep in



mind that reading a fluffed-up recruitment brochure and actually being there are two very different things.) The very nature of the work we do as a PC volunteer is what attracts us. We're idealists — we have to be or else we wouldn't have signed up. But idealists are not borne from androids, which is exactly what we'd get if we tried to weed out

any applicants with "baggage." It's the baggage—our experience, perceptions, goals—that brings us here. As well, it's the baggage that triggers something within ourselves to decide to ET. And because we all carry different baggage, it is impossible to predict who will stay or who will go, and for what reasons. Furthermore, none of us is in a position to rank those reasons on a legitimacy scale of least to most.

It is inappropriate to liken sign-

Who benefits when a person is forced to stay? Not PC, and certainly not the host country and its people.

ing up for Peace Corps service to that of one of the Armed Forces (where there is no ET policy). Spitshines and bootcamp cannot be compared to struggling in a foreign language, culture and country.

Moreover, have we forgotten the meaning of the word "volunteer"? I had the impression "volunteer" meant that we willingly serve. And is that not what we are in the PC? Who benefits when a person is forced to stay? Not PC, and certainly not the host country and its people. I seriously question the effectiveness or the contributions that could be made by someone who's decided they don't want to be here anymore. And cost-effectively it would be more prudent to send that person home and invest what would have been squandered in that person's liv-

ing allowance into the potential of others.

Besides, does remaining for the entire length of service constitute being a good Volunteer? I heard a story of a POV that did nothing but listen to their Walkman all day off of their moped battery, then rode around on the moped all afternoon to charge the battery back up. Didn't get much out of their PC experience but at least that person could exclaim with proud banality, "I toughed it out!" or "There were those who didn't but I did!" Did what? Miss the point, much like some of us obviously have. Enduring the entire length of service does not necessarily equal success. Conversely, leaving early does not equate to failure. Serving as a PC Volunteer should be a significant, meaningful experience and should not be so shallowly defined as "being able to hack it," so to speak.

Hence, before we rant, "Now I'm not saying (that I'm passing judgment on those who decide to ET) . . . But (I am)," perhaps we need to keep in mind that some day it just might be us needing to go home earlier than we'd planned and know that our reasons for feeling this way, whatever they may be, are, as recognized by PC, honorable."



The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love?

by Kirk Leamons, Zuleta

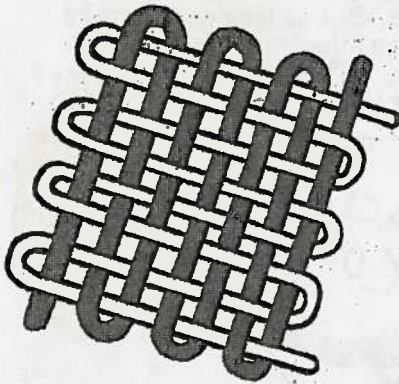
What does the Peace Corps promise the people who become Volunteers? Does it promise to make us rich and famous? Does it promise to make us a wiser person when we are finished with our service, or to be very satisfied with our work the whole time we are here? It isn't written anywhere that we're here to make mass quantities of income and live in the style we had in our former lives. The Peace Corps doesn't even promise to let us work only with people that we like and respect. Man, how unfair!

What the Peace Corps does promise is to put us in a culture totally different from the one we knew and to have us experience first-hand what the challenges and opportunities are that exist in a third world nation. They do kind of hint—through their elation—that there might be frustrations along with some small successes. One would hope we of a developed country could also be able to show adaptability and ingenuity to the people of our host country, as well as being able to learn basic survival techniques in whatever site we are placed. Because the people we live around are better at survival than we are by far.

In reality, the Peace Corps experience turns out to be a very personal thing. It is only as good (or bad) as we as Volunteers make it, although many of us came here for totally different reasons. Some came here to try and reach out and help others in whatever way they could. Others came, it would appear, for a two-year vacation on the U.S. Government, being gone from sites every weekend to travel, see their friends or significant others. Others came to make business contacts for their per-

sonal future and still others came because they thought they might find something that was missing in their lives at home in the U.S. and experience and learn about a different culture and point of view, other than theirs. Whatever the reason for joining Peace Corps, it is totally a personal decision to join and to serve or leave.

Judging from some of the comments lately in the El Clima, some PCVs seem to think we as Volunteers deserve scheduled raises in our monthly salary. This at times seems very—one could say—American, in attitude. One would be hard-pressed to find an occasion when we as Volunteers make equal or less money than the people we live around in our barriers or workplaces. Yet it would appear

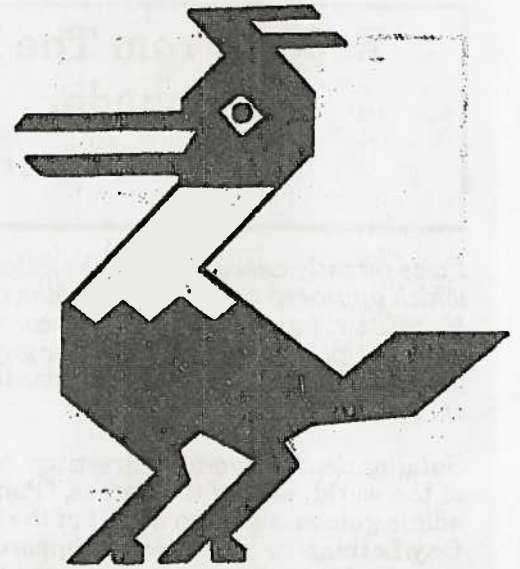


that if we can't afford to eat out and have a few drinks or beers whenever we want, we feel a raise is deserved. One could take a lesson from the natives at times in being conservative in our spending and living as they do. It might even open up some avenues to their personal thoughts on our culture and explain why they all feel we are wealthy and extravagant gringos. If we as Volunteers would take a step back and really consider our spending habits, maybe we would realize why there is a void in understanding between us and our communities.

On another point that has been self-righteously written about in the last few issues of El Clima, one might consider the issue of Early Termination on a group basis. Since when—as anything else related to the Peace Corps—has ET-ing been anything else but a very personal decision. The decision to join as well as the decision to quit is never made as a group. No one has the right to force anyone else to leave or stay and as an individual, anyone who can be influenced so, might not be strong enough mentally for any type of pressure employment such as the Peace Corps.

Granted, maybe some of the fault with the high ET rate might be placed on the Peace Corps Washington recruiting department. Maybe these trainees and PCVs were never screened or interviewed well enough to be prepared for the reality of the real Peace Corps world. Possibly, they weren't given enough information or facts about expectations, living conditions—in training as well as in-site—and possible problems to be encountered. Some trainees were never given more than a telephone interview before they were flown to their prospective host country. One would think the Peace Corps could save a substantial amount of money up-front by improving recruiting preparation and giving prospective PCVs a real picture of what to expect.

For whatever reason someone is faced with the decision to ET, it is always a very personal and hard decision to make. Sometimes it's much harder and takes more intestinal fortitude to come to the realization that the situation is just not working and has little chance of success in the future. And that these people as Volunteers need to make a change and ET. For some it may be a serious illness or death in the family; for others maybe it is frustrations with training from the start. Problems with living conditions or the language might also contribute to difficulties and some



even have programs canceled. There are many reasons, all very sound to each person on a personal basis, for ET-ing.

Although now—judging from the self-righteous attitudes of some fellow PCVs—we are asked to turn ourselves into some kind of vigilante peer pressure group to discourage other PCVs from ET-ing. Where do we, as fellow Volunteers, get off trying to make someone else's personal decisions for them? We should be here as sounding boards and peer counselors instead of using a, and I quote, "group think" attitude to use peer pressure on our fellow Volunteers. What may be right and acceptable for some doesn't make it a universal axiom.

Yes, at times the Peace Corps is a very trying and demanding experience, but in the end it is totally what we, on a personal basis, make it. No one else can make it or break it but ourselves. So be there for the other person, to listen and give viewpoints (when asked for them). We have enough problems of our own to deal with, let alone trying to make decisions for others.

You can leave your site fuller, wiser and with a better international understanding or be just as ignorant as you came. The choice is purely a personal one.°

Report From The Field: Ecuador

by Pete Fontaine, Guayaquil

I was recently asked to write the following article, which appeared in the Gay/Lesbian/Bi RPCV Newsletter, based in San Francisco. I thought that the description of the situation for gay PCVs and gay people in Ecuador might be informative for the readers of El Clima.

Saludos desde Ecuador! Greetings from the middle of the world, land of the llamas, "Panama" hats, and edible guinea pigs. On behalf of the P.C. Ecuador Gay/Lesbian/Bi and Friends Support Group (still in search of a catchy acronym), I want to write the LGB RPCV community back in the States to let you know how things are going in the Andean republic.

The support group in Ecuador was formed about three years ago. At first it consisted entirely of women. After several members returned home, the group was dormant for a year until we started it back up again last summer. Interestingly, it is now all male volunteers. There are currently five PCVs in the group. Our programs include youth development, animal production, alternate agriculture, and natural resources.

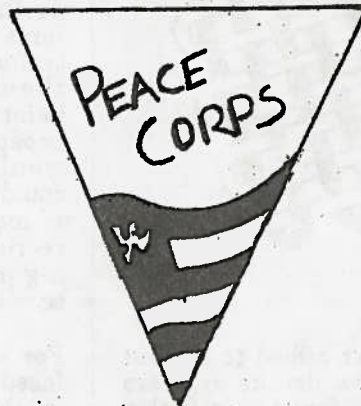
Our group meets every three months, usually in Quito, the capital. We discuss how life is at our sites, at work, and socially. We also talk about dating, relationships, homophobia, Peace Corps issues, and other topics related to our lives down here in South America. We have received strong support from our Country Director, Jean Seigle, and our Assistant Directors, formerly, Barry Bem, and currently Paul Davis. The group is known throughout the PCV community in Ecuador through our notices of meetings in El Clima, the P.C./Ecuador newsletter. As part of the diversity training conducted at the training center in Tumbaco, members of the support group have spoken to the trainees about their experiences as gay and lesbian volunteers, and what issues they have been confronted with in Ecuador. We received very positive feedback from the trainees about the sessions.

The situation for gay/lesbian/bi people in Ecuador is actually much better than I was expecting before I arrived in-country. I was expecting a much more repressive atmosphere in the highly Catholic and "machista" society. I was not expecting the much larger and open community that I actually found here. In Quito, and in Guayaquil (the biggest city and the main port), there are large gay communities with several night spots. Quito has a fledging AIDS support network. Cuenca, the third largest city, is

also said to have a sizable gay community. In terms of freedom of expression, the coast is considered more "liberal" and sexually adventurous than the more conservative, traditional Sierra (Andean mountains). But problems of homophobia exist in both areas.

I am told by my gay Ecuadorian friends that the atmosphere has improved considerably in the country politically and socially over the last four or five years. While you still periodically hear of a police raid on a bar, the bigger problem is Ecuadorian society itself. Many gay Ecuadorians still are living at home in their 20s and 30s (due to family traditions and economic realities). Marriage is expected, keeping up a straight front is essential, and in the Ecuadorian society, homosexuality is generally associated with prostitution, child molestation, and transvestism, narrowly defined submissive/dominant roles, and HIV/AIDS.

Many Ecuadorians believe only men who cross-dress are gay. Thus, anyone who is "straight-appearing" cannot be gay. Also there is a high prevalence of questionable bisexuality, since many gay male Ecuadorians marry out of religious or societal obligations. They find sex with male partners outside of the marriage. But as long as they take the "dominant" role with other men, they do not consider themselves gay. This may be leading to an increase in HIV among the general population.



Lesbians are practically invisible in Ecuadorian society. While gay men are viewed within a very narrow scope, lesbians are not on the screen at all. Some straight Ecuadorians I've talked to can barely conceive of what life as a lesbian would be like.

I have made many gay friends here in Ecuador. In fact, outside of the Peace Corps, most of my friends are gay. Many are very successful professionals, with a very attractive social life, though they still live with their parents. Of course it helps that I live in Guayaquil. As is the case with many volunteers in other countries, however, the life of a gay/lesbian/bi volunteer in the "campo" (rural areas) is much more difficult. We have had gay PCVs terminate early because of the isolation from the gay

community, particularly in the Oriente (Amazon region).

Another problem involves training. In Ecuador, some training groups have been more gay-friendly than others. I, for example, came out to my training group during the first diversity training session. I received a great deal of support right from the start from staff and my fellow trainees. Another member of our support group found himself in a much different situation. He experienced a homophobic group of trainees who felt threatened by the diversity training sessions, and by the mention of homosexuality in particular. His months of training ended up being very stressful. Support during those first few months of training is crucial to retaining gay/lesbian/bi PCVs for the rest of their tours.

Lastly, we have a problem shared by many gay PCVs around the world. We have to go back in the closet to a certain extent. We are all closeted at work, which is a big adjustment from our more open lives back in the U.S. It's hard for me personally, as I work with teenagers, and have actually had some of them come out to me (after I gave a talk on the facts and myths of homosexuality). While I was very supportive, I felt I could not reciprocate with the same information about myself.

So that's it from Ecuador. We welcome support from gay, lesbian, and bi RPCVs and PCVs in other countries. Gay related literature and videos (you know they won't show "Jeffery" or "The Priest" down here), or letters are great. We hope our group continues to grow, and to include some of the wamnyn.

.....

NOTICE: Gay, Lesbian, Bi & Friends Meeting

Hey PANAS! our meeting will be Sunday, May 5th. Contact Pete Fontaine (Casilla 16960 Guayaquil) or Paul Davis at the Peace Corps Office for more information. *



by Dr. Esteban McLaughlin, Cayambe

Well, Dr. Erica is off to the Galápagos, castrating feral dogs with a smile and a vengeance so I'm at the helm this ish. The old mailbox has been mighty *vacio* but several Volunteers called to ask about PIGS (Stacy "Insemination Queen" Long of Zamora, Mary "Howdy Doody" Riopedre of Esmeraldas and Eric "Da King" Minzenberg out in the jungle somewhere).

First and foremost, the acknowledged pig experts here are: Mark & Connie Reichelt, 04-960-673, El Enpalme. They are fixing to COS the end of April, so better call quick.

Scott Shouse, out in the Galápagos has admitted to more than a casual acquaintance with pigs, though being from deepest darkest Kentucky, one wonders exactly what kind of "acquaintance" were talking about here. . . Scott can be reached by slow boat on Isabela island should you have pig questions or provocative pictures of good looking *puerquitas* from your site.

WHY PIGS ARE A GOOD INVESTMENT

1. Omnivorous--They eat anything and I mean ANYTHING. Grass, grains, grubs, dirt, *plata*

tandas, potatoes, table scraps (*desperdicios*), milk, whey, eggs and intestines. Yes, intestines. I butchered some rabbits last fall and in time-honored Ecuadorian fashion, tossed the entrails in the street. In no time a herd of stunted wormy *campo* pigs materialized and sucked down all that bunny tripe like so much spaghetti. No muss, no fuss.

2. Don't need land--Unlike cows, you can raise a pig in a two meter square pen.

3. Grow fast--With good *manejo* a pig can be raised to market weight in six to eight months (150-200 pounds).

4. Simple *Manejo*--Unlike dairy cows, raising pigs is E-Z. Feed pig. Pig grows. Sell pig. Even a Texan could do it.

5. Small Investment--If the cow dies you're out about 2 million sucres--this is badness. If your pig dies, you might be out \$150,000 at most and you can still have a bodacious pig roast.

6. Market--What with the Ecuadorian taste for *fritada*, *puerco horneado* y *sopa de cuero*, there is ALWAYS a market for pork here.

BASIC PIG MANAGEMENT

1. Newborns
 - Dip navels in *Yodo* or *Eterol*.
 - (Days 1-2)--Clip off sharp "needle" teeth with wirecutters.
 - 2 c.c. Iron shot I.M. (*Hierro*).
2. One-two months
 - Castrate male
 - Deworm with PANACUR OR ALBENDAZOLE
 - Vaccinate against Hog Cholera
3. Adults (six-eight months)--sell at market weight (150-200 lbs.)

FEEDING

Ask around--what are the locals feeding their pigs? Most piglets need PROTEIN more than any-

thing. If you feed only scraps you can boost the protein content of the diet with: whole eggs (one per day), milk (1-4 cups/day) or *Suero* which is *Whey*, the liquid left from cheese making (2-4 liters a day or more). It is faster and easier to feed a pig a completely balanced pelleted or ground feed called *Balanceado* which sells for s./28 - 38.000 per *Quintal* (100 pounds).

Connie and Mark recommend using a 20% protein *Balanceado* fed with scraps and *suero* to make that pricy *Balanceado* last longer.

Age: *Balanceado* 20%; Protein
2 mos.: 3 pounds; scraps, *suero*
3-6,7 mos.: 4-5 pounds; scraps,
suero--5 pounds *Balanceado*/day
is the maximum.

PIGGY PRICES

Pure breeds run about s./10.000 per kilo and are sold at around two months of age weighing 12-15 kilos (s/120.000 - 150.000)

Contact: Chaltura--Dr. Luis Najera, 06-910-691 (Duros &

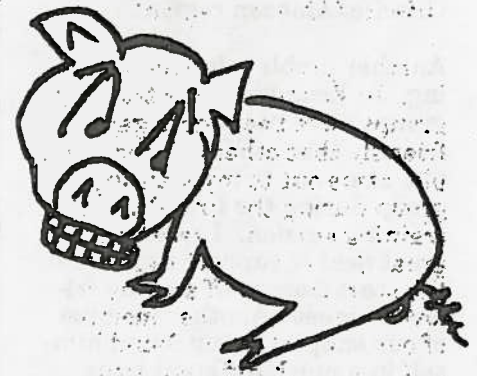
2. Wormy, lice-ridden, stunted *campo* pigs, *IYOMEC*--1c.c./110 pounds, *SUB-CUTANEOUS*. Gets internal worms AND mange AND those humongous *campo* lice.

Those pigs you see constantly rubbing their itchy selves against rough cement walls--They've got *MANGE*--caused by an intra-dermal microscopic mite.

VACCINATION

The only one that really matters to farmers here is *HOG CHOLERA* (*Colera* or *Peste Porcina*). This is a very contagious virus affecting swine of all ages, causing these very non-specific signs: Fever, no appetite, reluctant to move, eyelids stick together with discharge, diarrhea, convulsions and ultimately death. Infects all pigs but primarily kills younger pigs. Survivors often end up stunted. **NO CURE!**

Must vaccinate with *CER-DOVIRAC* (*Cepa-China*, about s./1500/dose) 2 c.c. IM once a



CASTRATION

We castrate males a one-two months before those little testicles get to be the size of grapefruits.

WHY?

1. The meat of an uncastrated boar has a strong hormonal flavor.
2. Castrated pigs sell quicker.
3. According to the Chaltura pig folks, castrates grow 15% faster than intact pigs. My readings indicate that opinions differ.

4. The younger you castrate the less the stress and the smaller the wound and the less the chance of pesky little side effects like say, bleeding to death through your lacerated scrotum... 'nuff said.

It's easier to learn by doing. Ask your friendly neighborhood animal production super-Volunteer to show you how.

I have a running deal with my communities--if I castrate the piglet it costs s./10.000. But if I show the farmer how with the first *huevo* and then he or she does the other one **IT'S FREE!** The *campesinos* love it! They really think they're pulling one over on the ol' doc and saving a bundle. In fact, they're generally so thrilled after learning how they don't let me do any more pigs because now **THEY** want to do them. It's empowerment in action. °

Here are two recipes for *balanceado* used in Chaltura.

	Lbs.	% Pro.	Lbs.	% Pro.
<i>Maiz:</i>	30	2.9	50	4.7
<i>Alfrechillo:</i> (barley)	10	6.4	30	4.8
<i>Harina Pescado:</i> (fish meal)	12	7.2	10	6.0
<i>Torta Soya:</i>	13	5.5	6	2.6
<i>Harina Hueso:</i> (Bone meal)	2		1	
<i>Azucar:</i>	1		1	
Mineral/Vitamin mix: (Premez Bouinn)	2		2	
Total	100	22	100	18

Hampshires); INIAP Ibarra--Jorge Orucungua; INIAP Boliche (near Guayquil)--Dr. John Rodriguez; (Landraces--white)--Dr. Luis Amador

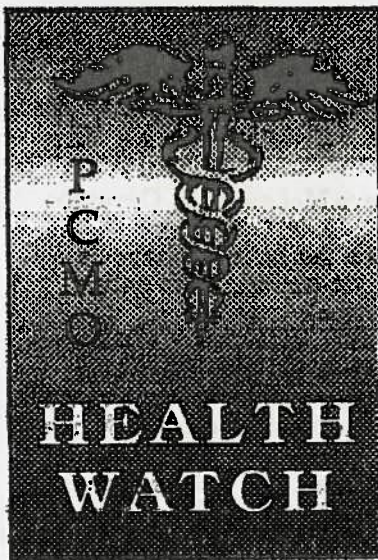
DEWORMING

1. Well-cared for clean one-two month old piglets, *PANACUR* or *ALBENDAZOLE*.

year, all pigs from six weeks of age and older.

DO NOT inject pregnant sows as this is a modified live virus vaccine (i.e. tamed but living virus).

In the face of an outbreak, vaccinate piglet at two weeks and again at six weeks.



RABIES

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Health is mobilizing in the face of an epidemic of **RABIES**. Since January, there have been a total of 15 confirmed human deaths from rabies. Eight of these cases have occurred in or around the city of Quito. The problem, however, is not limited to the capital. There have been two deaths reported in Loja, one in Milagro, Cuenca and Salcedo. We have also heard from Volunteers about apparent rabies deaths in their communities, which may have not made it to the official statistics. In order to combat this epidemic, a campaign has been initiated to vaccinate dogs and cats and to eliminate stray dogs.

A review of rabies:

WHAT IS RABIES?

It is an acute viral illness, which is almost 100% fatal.

HOW IS RABIES TRANSMITTED?

Rabies is transmitted when the virus is introduced into open cuts or wounds in the skin or mucous membranes. This usually occurs through the bite of an infected animal, but it is also possible to transmit it through the contact of an infected animal's saliva with an open wound. It is not transmitted through casual contact with an

animal (or human) with rabies or through contact with noninfectious fluids or tissues (blood, urine or feces.)

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

In an animal: The first sign in an animal is a change in behavior. They may also stop eating and drinking. Following these initial signs, the disease may take one of two courses. Either the animal shows signs of paralysis, beginning with the throat and progressing to the rest of the body ("paralytic form") or it exhibits increased aggressiveness ("furious form"). In this latter form, the animal will become irrational and vicious, biting any animal or person it has contact with.



In a human: Symptoms typically develop three to seven weeks after a bite. The earliest manifestations are usually nonspecific symptoms, making an early diagnosis very difficult—fever, sore throat, nervousness, headache, malaise. This progresses to tremulousness, paralysis, fear of water, difficulty swallowing, agitation, convulsions and ultimately death. Once rabies symptoms develop, there is no treatment. No human survivors of rabies have been reported in the US since 1977.

WHAT ANIMALS TRANSMIT THE DISEASE?

In Ecuador, dogs are the principal transmitters of human rabies. (The US has almost eradicated canine-transmitted rabies, through the vaccination of pets and elimination of stray animals.) Remember, however, it's not just cats and dogs that can transmit rabies. Rabies can infect any warm-blooded animal,

including dogs, cats, bats, foxes, skunks, raccoons and cattle.

Though in Ecuador and developing countries in general, it is the dog-associated strains of rabies that principally cause the disease, in the US, bats increasingly have been implicated as reservoirs of the rabies virus transmitted to humans. The September 1, 1995, MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Review—A CDC publication) reports on a 1995 case of Human Rabies in Washington State. The victim, a little girl, had no history of an animal bite. The family reported, however, that a bat had been found in her bedroom, though the child was examined and had no evidence of being bitten. The article goes on to say that variants of the rabies virus associated with bats has been identified in 12 of the 25 cases of human rabies diagnosed in the United States since 1980. Bat bites may be very difficult to identify and a clear history of a bite was documented in few of these cases. "This finding suggests that even apparently limited contact with bats or other animals infected with a bat variant of rabies virus may be associated with transmission. The case in Washington and reports of similar cases, underscore that in situations in which a bat is physically present and the person cannot exclude the possibility of a bite, postexposure treatment should be considered unless prompt testing of the bat has ruled out rabies infection." There is no information available about the incidence of bat-transmitted rabies in Ecuador.

What about cows and horses? Yes, it is theoretically possible that a cow or a horse could transmit rabies to a human. In fact, according to the CDC, rabies is diagnosed in approximately 200 cows each year in the United States. No cases of



cow to human transmission have been documented since national rabies surveillance began in 1946. Typical symptoms in a cow or horse are similar to those in any animal--irritability, aggressiveness and difficulty swallowing. Rabbits and rodents (rats, squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice) are almost never found to be infected with rabies. Human-to-human transmission, though theoretically possible, has been documented only in corneal transplant cases.

HOW TO PREVENT RABIES?

1. Prevent animal bites. Carry a stone or stick when walking in the *campo*. Avoid routes where there tend to be a lot of stray dogs. Don't enter someone's gate or house without first checking for a dog. Don't pet a dog unless you know it well. We've been told that if a dog comes after you when bike riding, it's best to stop the bike and push, until the dog goes away.

2. Vaccinate your pets at three months of age and then yearly. Vaccines are available either through the Ministry of Health, a private vet, or you can buy the vaccine at a store which sells veterinary products.



3. Keep bats out of your home. If there are bats in your area, do not leave window open unless they are screened and you always sleep under a mosquito net. Do not physically try to remove bats from your house. You can try to destroy their living quarters, which tend to be up in the rafters, when they are out at night.

4. If you work with animals, be sure to wear thick gloves when putting your hands in their mouths.

5. Vaccinations: In countries like Ecuador, where rabies is highly endemic, all PCVs receive a three-shot "pre-exposure series" of the Human Diploid Cell

(Rabies) Vaccine during training. This simplifies post-exposure treatment, gives you time to come and get the additional vaccines and may protect against an inadvertent exposure. The "post exposure" series consists of two additional vaccines. A different vaccine is used locally and could be potentially dangerous. Never allow any local health center or medical facility to administer any form of rabies immunization to you.

6. In the event of an animal bite: Wash the wound well with lots of soap and water. Call PCMOs. Identify the animal. If this is possible, observe it for 10 days. If the biting animal were infective at the time of the bite, signs of rabies will usually follow within five to eight days, with a change in behavior, and excitability or paralysis, followed by death. If it does not show signs of rabies within 10 days, there is not a risk that it had rabies at the time that it bit you. If the animal should develop symptoms of rabies, disappear or die during this time, you will need to come to Quito immediately for two additional rabies vaccines.

A few announcements:

1. Omnibus '74 is due for their final doses of the Hepatitis B and Hepatitis A vaccines. We will be administering these at the Integrated Job Conference. If for some reason you will not be attending the conference, make arrangements to receive your vaccines at the Medical Office.

2. PCMOs Marian and Sarah will be attending their annual CME (Continuing Medical Education) conference in Miami and will not be in the office May 16 - 25. Jackie will be covering. Since this is the last week of training and Jackie will need to be at the Training Center many of those days, we are asking that no routine medical appts. be scheduled that week. If you call the Medical Office and there is no answer, please call Jackie on the cellular phone (09-494018).

COOK IT, PORK BREATH!

by Steve McLaughlin, Cayambe

You can get both Trichanosis and Cysticercosis from eating poorly-cooked pork.

Trichanosis--Caused by eating the encysted larvae of the worm *Trichanella*. The cysts look like little sesame seed sized granules in the meat and you might hear pork vendors say, "*No te preocupes, es Quinoa!*" (Don't worry, it's Quinoa).

Cooking pork long and well, as with *fritada*, makes the meat safe to eat. HOWEVER, those whole roasted pigs (*horneado*) are often NOT well-cooked, clear through to the deeper parts. WATCH IT!

Cysticercosis--Caused by tapeworm eggs that form grape-sized larval cysts IN YOUR BRAIN.

If you eat undercooked pork or beef, encysted tapeworm larvae grow into harmless tapeworms in your intestines. No problem. The problem is when somehow or other tapeworm eggs "on their way out" shall we say, get on your hands and into your mouth (feco-oral transmission).

This is different from eating undercooked pork full of encysted larvae. Larvae grow into nice friendly no-harm-done tapeworms. EGGS on the other hand grow first into evil LARVAE and those malicious buggers crawl all through your body, forming cysts. They prefer to form cysts in the BRAIN and next thing you know you're blind, seizing and/or dead. The death rate if untreated is 50% and if treated you've STILL got a 35% chance of dying, according to Current Medical Diagnosis and Therapy '95. That's a one in three chance of death by pork-chop sports fans, so if you eat pork (of beef in Africa), be damn sure it's cooked. Throws a whole new light on vegetarianism, eh?.

NEWS FROM SAN LUIS

The Training Center is busy working with the new group of 52 Peace Corps Trainees. The Trainees are:

Agriculture and Agri-Business:

Ralph Allen
Lucy Angelis
Daniel Cordrey
Stephen Church
Amy English
Caroline Gray
Robert Gray
Lisa Kallal
Robin Kanev
Brian Marciniewicz
Lisa Materer
Dawn Moon
Curtis Nunn
Keith Odéen
Rose Peterson
Lisa Poley
Cara Ross
Bonnie Wilson

Animal Production:

Lora Baker-Davis
Rebecca Bond
Jay Davis
Penny Davis
Gladys Engle
Phillip Freeman
Jonathan Hilsher
Amy Karsten
Debbie Lepo
Tamara Lindell
Matt Mercer
Michael Moon
Sarah Nunn
Kimberley Robinson
Owen Ross
Tanya Schug
Jerome Socha
Sharon Tydrich
Jennifer Weisant

Natural Resources:

Brian Becker
Eugenia Crosby
Sean D'Souza
John Herbert

Eric Hubbell
Marcus Koenen
Sarah Koenen
Laurel Mattrey
Wendy Osterling
Mark Quail
Gretchen Roffler
Eric Schultz
Gregg Smith
My Duyen Tran
Peter Walter

A big thanks to all the Volunteers who hosted trainees from March 24-27. Also, thank you for coming to the training center to review the objectives of the trip and allowing the group to meet you. In addition, thanks to Nicole, Chris Schutz, Helen, Maggie, Shelly, Wendy, Chris Swier, Mary Kate, Jodi, Lisa and Cindy. The group learned a lot from all your information during the Health Fair.

Upcoming Training Activities:

The group will receive their sites on April 3rd and they will travel to their sites for a week beginning on April 15th.

The Animal Production group will leave for San Miguel and Cayambe for their technical training on Thursday, April 11th. The Ag. and Natural Resources groups will travel at various times throughout the country between April 25 and May 17th.

The Swearing-In for Omnibus 75 is Friday May 31st.

Training Notes:

As PTO Paul Davis described in his FIT article in the last El Clima, the Training Center is working very hard at looking at all aspects of training to create independent and self-reliant training that will help PCVs to be effective problem-solvers in their communities.

One idea we changed is to allow the Trainees to choose which Volunteer they wanted to visit based on work and interests. We are also looking at creative ways to allow trainees with a high level of Spanish to work on independent projects that they help design which will take them outside of the Training Center. We

are also working on having trainees take more Spanish if they meet technical requirements.

Also, we are separating the Animal Production group after their site visit for technical training. The PCTs who will work in the Sierra will train in Cayambe, while the PCTs in that group assigned to the coast will train at San Miguel. Since the Technical Trainer cannot be in two places at the same time, the PCTs will, with the APCDs and the Training Center staff, help design some of their activities and be responsible for insuring that they complete the activities they need to be prepared to begin their work at their sites.

In addition, we are hoping that, based on the fact that the Trainees will have a lot of technical training remaining after their site visit, they will be able to plan some of their own training based on their sites' needs.

Many thanks to the PCVs who have written to me with your thoughts and comments. I look forward to hearing from you as we continue to look at creative ways to improve our training.

Additional Information:

A notice to all Volunteers from Omnibus 74. One of you left a radio at the Training Center. Sarah Simon and I are trying to find out who owns it. If you have any information on whose radio it might be, please contact Sarah or myself at the Training Center.

The LLAMA gave birth a few weeks ago. So we have a baby llama without a name. I would like your suggestions as to a name. Please write me at the Training Center and I will announce the winning name in the next El Clima.

As always if the Training Center can provide you with any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. That's all for now. Stay Well.

Tim Callaghan
Training Director

Doggie Stuff

by Linda P. Quinn, Ocala, Fla.
 Hey, dog folks, dog treats are in the mail from our editors. You can be in the mail, too. Here's how to get it. (One, two) and I want to talk it all. First, let's recipe for keeping your dog (or cat) healthy with out using those nasty toxic flea collars and sprays.

Flea Collar/Spray Alternative

1. Run through grapefruit skins (peel) through a blender.

2. Hammer the peels with some water.

3. After the pulp has cooled, brush into gel with your hands.

You can also add the brewer's yeast and garlic to your pet's food. They seem to hate it, and dogs usually love garlic.

Janice, I'd love to see you try this for making your own dog biscuits.

- 2 and 1/2 cups flour (whole wheat if you can find it)

- 1/2 cup powdered semi-sweetened milk

- 1 teaspoon milk sugar and salt

- 6 tablespoons of margarine

- 1 egg

Mix ingredients with about 1/2 cup of cold water. Knead dough for three minutes. Dough should form a ball. Roll to 1/2 inch thick and cut into dog-shaped biscuits (or whatever you want). Bake on a lightly greased baking pan/cobble sheet or whatever fits in your oven at 350 degrees for 20 minutes (high on your burner).

Hope your dog enjoys them. Heck, you could eat them, too if you get desperate. They'll probably keep you regular.

"En Vino Veritas." In Wine there is Truth

There are some things that never change. Through the centuries man's relationship to alcohol seems to be one of those things. The Romans knew the effects of wine. It released inhibitions and dulled the senses. Wine was an intricate part of their culture and customs. It plays a similar role in Ecuador as in most cultures throughout the world.

A study was done in Pichincha with a *campesino* group to identify patterns of consumption. Six categories were chosen. These six categories also help, in part, to understand historical cultural aspects of drinking in Ecuador.

1. **BEBER TRANSFIGURANTE:** Alcohol changes the sentiments. Members from an indigenous group living north of Quito during the feast of San Pedro expressed wishes to feel

Alcoholism Awareness in Ecuador

Contributed by Nicole Dino, Mira, Carchi

The *Ministerio de Salud Publica* held its first "Seminario de Actualizacion en Alcolismo," October 16-20, 1995 in Tulcan, Carchi. The trainees were medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, police, teachers, alcoholics and the interested public. Professionals and non-professionals alike were seeking information on cause, effect and treatment modalities. A Colombian physician, well-known for his expertise in treating alcoholics, shared statistical and practical information. I was impressed with the enthusiasm of the presenters and the audience to understand the problem of alcoholism in Ecuador. Just as in the US 30 years ago, the knowledge base was small and growing. Ecuador is now beginning its journey toward the understanding of alcoholism as a treatable disease. For the most part, I agreed with the accuracy of the information. Statistical information is Ecuador specific.

happy, free, euphoric and free from suffering.

2. **BEBER ESTIMULANTE:** This type of consumption facilitates solidarity among workers in a *minga* or during harvest time. Many songs reflect alcohol usage. "Arriba, arriba compañeros, vamos sudando por una chicha año por año nuestro traguito."

3. **BEBER CEREMONIAL-COMUNAL:** In the Ecuadorian community everyone celebrates certain holidays and community celebrations. (I was recently at an impromptu celebration for *Dia de Bandera*. After one hour of drinking and dancing, I began refusing the *copas*. I was admonished by a guy who told me the drink represented life, love and especially love of women and what else is there?)

4. **BEBER CEREMONIAL-FAMILIAR:** These events are important in the lives of individuals; bap-

tism, matrimony, 15th birthday and first communion or graduation.

5. BEBER COMPULSO-EMBRUTECEDOR: This type of drinking is specifically done to get drunk or to dull the mind. Drinking in this manner was the first category they felt had negative social implications.

6. BEBER ANESTE-SANTE: They said drinking for this reason served to escape from reality and was also the category in which a person lost "will power" to stop. It is in this category that people will become unconscious.

I disagree with the idea of loss of will power and becoming unconscious as an interchangeable part of alcoholism. The concept of will power for an alcoholic to stop drinking is equal to telling a diabetic to will their liver to manufacture insulin for the process of metabolizing food. The disease concept here is still in its infancy stage.

Based on the six categories, their definition of alcoholism is: A chronic disorder manifested by repeated ingestion of alcoholic beverages that exceed dietetic and social customs of the community and that interferes with health and social functions of the individual. The difference between US and Ecuador's definitions of alcoholism "chronic disorder and disease" and "loss of will power and loss of control," may be slight or great depending on your point of view. The outcome though, is the same. An alcoholic is a person at high risk for health problems, physical and mental, as well as life problems. It's not so much how much or what one drinks but what consequences one has because of drinking.

Theory-wise, they were on line with the generally accepted psychological and socio-cultural theories of why someone can become alcoholic. Sighting these factors of high percentage of poor, unemployment and low education levels along with genetic and biological factors, they stated, "All these factors can lead to unchain the disease, alcoholism."

The most significant symptoms of the disease include physical, psychological and behavior changes with resultant consequence, for example: loss of control, increased tolerance, denial, personality changes, somatic problems, interpersonal conflicts, i.e. family, friends and work. They stated it wasn't important what kind of alcohol was drunk but the quantity that determined the problem. This is only true if you use increased tolerance as a parameter. More accurately and again, if a person drinks and has life consequences due to drinking, that's alcoholism. I think in Ecuador it would be hard to determine if a person is alcoholic by the quantity of *trago* ingested. We've all seen the empty bottles left from a house party and wondered how do



they drink that much and still function? I think it's much easier to hide and or deny a problem especially in the *campo* taking into consideration the cultural factors, customs and work situations.

One doesn't have to call in the next day with an excuse. It's probably okay to be in a *minga* hung-over because soon they'll be passing the *trago* around anyway. The cows don't care if you aren't up to par. This actually has far reaching consequences in Ecuadorian society, and as in the States, spouses and children are dramatically affected.

Statistics gathered for the incidence of alcoholism state the three top provinces for alcoholism are first, Esmeraldas; second, Azuay and third, Carchi. The age group that consumes the most, three times more than the rest, is the 40- to 49-year-olds. The drink of choice . . . *Cerveza!*

"*Tu camino empieza ahí Tu meta . . . tres metros bajo la tierra.*" The bottom line is, alcoholism kills. It causes diseases that kill, traffic accidents, suicides and death due to violence, abuse or neglect. Who is at high risk in Ecuador? The *Sierra campo* was given as the highest risk, the coast second, and the *Oriente* third. Those with low education levels, those poor who live with six or more persons and those who work in the production of alcoholic beverages.

Prevalence in Social Groups

Men	7.04%
Women	0.64%
Agricultural	12.14%
Middle Class	0.61%
Upper Class	0.80%
Total Pop	16.41%

Quito-Guayaquil-pharmaco-dependencies

Alcohol	90%
Cigarettes	80%
Drugs	36%
Marijuana	4%
Cocaine	1.7%

It was also stated that Carchi and Imbabura were at the highest risk for traffic accidents due to alcohol consumption. In general 75% of all auto accidents in Ecuador were directly caused by alcohol consumption and 40% of these were the fault of drunken pedestrians. There are penal codes in Ecuador dealing with drunkenness. They are wordy and vague. They refer to willfulness and consciousness of an act done under the influence. These gray areas provoked many questions from the *Ejercito* group. They couldn't understand how someone could commit a crime and not remember anything about their actions. Blackouts and memory lapses are two common symptoms of alcoholism. People often do things under the influence that they would never do straight or sober. It reminded me of a line from an instructional movie on alcoholism by Father Martin, "First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes the man." Plain and simple . . . loss of control.

Loss of control affects the family just as much if not more than the alcoholic. *"El punto mas importante - 100% de todas las mujeres sufieren mucho por la ingestion de alcohol de los maridos, porque este es una sociedad machista."* Within the Ecuadorian society the pressure to drink is tremendous and children learn at a very early age what is acceptable. Yet, they know drunkenness is not normal. Yesterday, while playing a game with a 3-year-old, out of the clear blue she whispered, "My daddy is drunk." In my site it is common to see a group of

young men drunk, walking around with nothing to do.

The point was made that from an early age children need to have love, respect and trust. They need words of communication, direct eye contact, caring touch and genuine interest in their lives. When there is an active alcoholic in the family, family life is unstable, communication strained. Often children grow up with low self-esteem. A communication alone of low self-esteem and the example of alcoholic drinking is a perfect set-up for turning to alcohol to feel better. It offers a magical instant release from reality. Take into consideration cultural norms and peer pressure and it's easy to understand how this disease is so prevalent.

Recommendations were made for parents to help communicate effectively about alcohol and drug use, the first steps in PREVENTION:

1. Talk to your children about alcohol and drug use.
2. Talk but also give a good example.
3. Start talking when your children are small.
4. Prohibit use of an alcohol or drug.
5. Listen realistically.
6. Help your child feel good about themselves; don't judge ridicule or . . . criticize.
7. Support alternative behaviors, i.e. sports, hobbies.
8. Help your child develop strong principles.
9. Help your child deal with peer pressure.

"La misión de los Padres. Educacion centrada en el amor, respecto, equilibrio fortalecen la personalidad, anticuerpos contra las adicciones."

The last day of the workshop was spent talking about PREVENTION and again the information was good. They stressed the fact that support from Ecuadorian institutions, local organizations and volunteer groups were needed to implement their five strategies for PREVENTION:

1. Education--inform the public.
2. Identify specific services for alcoholism.
3. Implement technological parameters.
4. Implement legislative parameters.
5. Implement economic parameters.

PREVENTION starts with education and education is primarily accomplished by example. The last hours of the workshop were invaluable and dramatic in that members from the Quito AA group "*La Libertad*" spoke about their disease, drinking behaviors, consequences and recovery. They wrapped up a perfectly full week of professional/technical information. They were the examples by which Ecuador will begin this journey.

ADDENDUM:

As PCVs, what can we do if we suspect someone is an alcoholic? We can act as any friend would. Talk to the person when they are sober. Explain your concerns about their welfare. Share your observations of their drinking behaviors and how it affects you. Ask them what you can do to help and follow up if they ask for your help. Not everyone will be willing, ready or able to talk and ask for help. Denial can be so strong that it takes a lot of losses to realize there is a problem. Expect resis-

tance. Talking to family and giving them support is equally important. It depends on the circumstances, how well you know the family, trust level and your comfort level in talking about alcoholism and the associated problems. It is also important to know where someone can get professional help or attend self-help groups like AA or NA. Treatment centers are available and costly. Yet the price of alcoholism cannot really be measured by dollars or *suces*. The price is paid in lost lives and broken dreams of children and family. •

" War doesn't
determine who's
right, only who's
left"

Volunteers' Mission Center Full Circle

The following appeared in the January 20, 1996, edition of "The Missoulian".

Returning to Ecuador 23 years later, a Missoula Peace Corps representative saw evidence of his two years of effort. "The Ecuadorian government was running the school I helped develop," Dennis Bangs told a group of Sentinel High School students Friday. "It was exactly what we planned."

Originally, Bangs designed the school to improve the livelihood of local cattle using flame bulls. Eventually, he envisioned the school becoming a resource for local farmers. The success was obvious: dormitories and classrooms filled the building that was once an empty ranch and the Ecuadorian National 4-H group was teaching classes that Bangs introduced.

Bangs visited Sentinel in honor of the 35th anniversary of the Peace Corps. President John F. Kennedy started the program on March 1, 1961. The Peace Corps sends representatives around the world today. Jeff Potts and Pam Doan, two other Peace Corps veterans, also shared their experiences Friday at Sentinel. Doan taught small business and management in Bolivia for two years. She said the job involved more than just classes. She spent a portion of her time teaching Bolivians that Americans are interested in more than kung fu movies. "It was the center of town because they had never seen a white person," she said. "I couldn't take a walk without being surrounded by a group." "And they loved Pink Floyd," she said.

The three presenters are volunteers for the Western Montana Returning Peace Corps Group. The organization completes the final goal of a Peace Corps representative: sharing their experiences with the rest of America. Bangs said that sharing is almost as exciting as living in Ecuador. "We try to relay the concept of being an American outside of America," he said. "When you're there you deal with a lot of hardships, like mail and the lack of support, that you forget about after a while."

As part of their efforts to tell their tales, a photo exhibit is traveling throughout Montana. It's on display at Sentinel High and will be at the Missoula Public Library during May.

Lazying the day away in my hammock the day before Christmas Eve, I had just dozed off when the firmament was split open by a tremendous explosion. I fell out of my hammock immediately thinking a volcano blew up or I was under siege by a rebel group. But then I remembered I wasn't in the Philippines so there were no rebels, and the sounds of the jungle put to rest my fears: the birds still sang and my dog was still asleep. Suddenly there was shouting and mirth, the women and young men of the community gathered together and started a *marimba* march along the river towards the jungle. Within minutes they returned with a whole passel of folk from a neighboring community. They were all shouting and laughing, sharing friendship. Thus started the Christmas festivities that went on through New Years Day. My first Christmas in Ecuador and I was with my adopted *pueblo*. Poverty is but a state of mind or a concept of material wealth. These people were rich with love and unity. And in this I received a wonderful gift--the gift of harmony and peace. This I found to be the true spirit of Christmas.

Christmas Eve dawned a beautiful day. It had been raining heavily for the past few days, the rainy season in its debut. A neighbor shouted up to me, "*Ron, ¿cuando empezamos a hornear el pan y las galletas? A las diez.*" I shouted back and laid back in my hammock reading the Christmas story. Then the heavens exploded. It was time. I gathered up all my baking supplies, got a couple of village kids to help me, and trudged on over to "*La Cocina*" to begin the bake fest. Soon the humid still air was full of rich flavors, and you could see the people respond with subtle hints of longing for the coming riches.

I had this uncanny feeling there was a snake in my path. I wasn't carrying my flashlight and there were no lights in town. I was returning to my house from the church following a recording session of the unusual service in progress. But it was time to hand out some of the gifts I had prepared for the community, six dozen oatmeal chocolate chip cookies and 10 banana cakes. I scanned the ground for shadows, hoping the background radiation would be sufficient to warn me of any impending peril but I saw nothing and arrived at my place untouched. I had no more

Two Eggs for Christmas

ascended the stairs leading to my second floor apartment in *casa communal* when a noisy commotion broke out along the path I had just walked. I heard the word *culebra* and saw lights dancing in the dark and the crack of sticks hitting the ground. I ran down the stairs and out to where the creature was being pummeled to death. I thought, O.K., it's just a harmless serpent, but when I arrived I was stunned to see this two meter (7 feet) long reptile coiled into a defense posture. It was already dead, one of the large sticks had severed it's spinal cord, but the body didn't know it. It was then I remembered a lesson in snake bites--"dead poisonous snakes" inflict more dangerous bites than live ones. I guess people thinking the critter dead, go and handle it (the wrong way) and the snake's genetic reflexes do the rest.

It was after I grabbed the snake and took a good look did I finally recognize it as probably the deadliest viper in South America, a bushmaster. I barred the 1.5 inch fangs for others to see and venom dripped from one of nature's best natural syringes. I shivered as if from a chill knowing I had

but one minute before I came within two feet of where the snake was killed. Knowing my sixth sense hadn't lied, it rarely does, didn't lessen the adrenalin rush that coursed through my body. The jungle is a remarkable place but one can never be too careful. I won't forget my flashlight again. I tanned the snake's skin after the incident and will make it into lampshades. A potent reminder of my walk in the dark on a Christmas eve in Playa de Oro.

After depositing the dead reptile in my house I proceeded on to the church where the festivities were in full swing. The young men beating on jungle drums, young and old ladies shaking out the rhythm on hand-made *canastas* while singing a tune, and an old man with a withered hand wringing the bell. This cacophony of noise, a soul-pounding rhythm and entranced chanting went on for 14 hours from 10:00 P.M. Christmas Eve until 12:00 noon Christmas day. The town's *borrachos* (drunks) were herded out and away from the ongoing ceremony while the *niños* of the women slept on the church floor. Sometimes sleepy ladies would join the kids only to be replaced by others to maintain the chant to God. Even when I handed out my food gift to the community inside the church the rhythm never faltered. It was mesmerizing.

Around noon on Christmas Day I handed out the *caramelos* to the kids, took photos of the community and individual portraits, shared stories of the differences between our cultures and swung in a hammock contemplating how different we all view the world. I thought of Christmases past with all the family gathered together sharing the riches of life: fine food, gifts of things and each other. How as a child I was engulfed

by a flood of stimulating emotions enough to suffocate but grand in their ability to give life meaning. There was a sense of security, love and sharing which today has been all but lost in the individual quest for a new dream of self. The family in the USA has fragmented, put upon the auction block of advertising copy, and driven to a frenzied-rush towards an ever elusive concept of individual success. We have almost all lost the ability to stop and smell the roses. And here I sit in Playa de Oro watching this culture slowly dissolve into our shared illusion of success. The women and boys move out to the big cities lured by consumer glitter and hopes for a better life. Some of the young men tell me of their boredom and dreams of the city too. How do you tell someone dreams can often turn into nightmares? Perhaps you can't; dreams, after all, are the seeds of hope. And hope is the eternal elixir of life forward, a mystery of the unknown with a sense of something better.



"Ron, venga," my neighbor's command broke my reverie. At the entrance to his house I waited. He came to the door and presented me with two eggs. I looked into his eyes and I felt good, I felt love. I walked home with a light heart holding my precious gift, my only physical gift on this Christmas day. Two eggs for Christmas. On the way home I saw the light of life in the people--warm smiles, childrens' laughter--in this I let go and accepted their acceptance of me in their community and I was free.

by Ron Krupa, Playa de Oro

The following article appeared in "Our Planet" Vol. 7, No. 4, and was submitted to El Clima by WID.

Women and the Environment

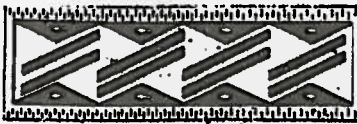
by Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF

ing their most basic needs.

At the same time, these

"Women hold up half the sky," according to the old saying. And these days, women in developing countries are getting recognition for contributions they have long made to upholding and protecting, if not the sky, at least the Earth.

With near universal responsibility for the most profound task of life—the sustenance of families—women over generations have accumulated an impressive store of environmental wisdom. Which food crops provide the most reliable and nutritious yields for the least effort? Which trees give wood that makes a hot, slow-burning fire? Which water sources are reliable, even in a drought? Which plants have medicinal properties? Women have always known.



Women are society's most important resource managers. In some countries in Africa, they perform up to 80 per cent of the work in running the household, in supplying such essentials as water and wood, and in farming, both for the family's food and the growing export business.

So they would seem to be the logical focus for efforts to encourage environmentally sensitive resource management.

Unfortunately, that has rarely been the case. Lacking status, education, credit, land, property rights and political clout, women have traditionally been bypassed when training, technology and access to technical assistance were being passed around.

Meanwhile, environmental degradation has made their burdens even heavier, especially in

ecologically vulnerable zones such as the Sahel, remote mountainous areas, deforested tropics and urban slums. More than one billion people—a quarter of the world's population—have seen their environments rapidly deteriorate and their lives become desperate.

Deforestation has forced them to walk farther for their fuelwood, diminishing access to safe water has sickened their children and desertification has taken their cropland. Various combinations of these obstacles have driven many families away from the sanctuary of their traditional homes and extended families into the hell of urban shanty towns. Estimates suggest that there may be as many as 25 million environmental refugees in the world today—people who can no longer gain a secure livelihood in their former homelands because of degradation of their soil, air, water and fuel reserves.

But the environmental concerns that make the headlines—deforestation, desertification, drought, global warming and ozone layer depletion—are just part of the problem.

For millions of the poorest families on Earth, the principal environmental threats are close to home. Their children suffer and die from diarrhea and other diseases that result from unsafe water; they

live with mental and physical impairments because of iodine deficiency resulting from poor soil; their lives are harder—and often shorter—because of malnutrition, a complex end-product of inadequate agricultural practices, soil erosion, drought, loss of soil fertility and other interconnected problems. Improvement of the environment is thus a necessary condition for satisfy-

families will not be able to improve or protect the environment unless they have opportunities for a better livelihood. In the current struggle for survival, many people in developing countries have little choice but to use whatever resources are within reach, ignoring, often knowingly, the impact on the environment. When sustainable fuel resources are low, for example, families often turn to scarce forests for firewood. Deterioration of a family's income and environment thus go hand in hand, each worsening its impact on the other.

Many observers view this effect as a downward spiral encompassing not only poverty and environment but population pressures as well.

Added burdens

For women, putting the environment on the agenda has lately become even more difficult as more and more of them are forced to wear yet another hat—that of family breadwinner. A growing number of female-headed households has resulted from poverty, migration, war, teenage

"No society can achieve a sustainable environment unless women have the chance to create a sustainable livelihood."

pregnancy and other factors. As the women heading these households take on added work, they feel even greater pressure in maintaining their roles as mothers and household managers.

Environmental problems are social problems. The time a woman spends dealing with the ramifications of environmental decline, such as the hours she spends searching for wood to prepare the evening meal or collecting drinking water, is time not spent on activities that are the essence of development: helping her children learn and

grow, learning to read, meeting with neighbours to learn about health and hygiene, regaining strength after childbirth, earning money.

The challenge is to provide women with the tools they need to adjust to social and environmental change and maintain reasonable standards of living. No society can achieve a sustainable environment unless women have the chance to create a sustainable livelihood. Strategies to help women improve their lot include developing low-cost, affordable technology to aid in house and job-related work and providing them with education, skills training, credit and decision-making power within the community.

Grassroots change

Fortunately, many communities have adopted such strategies and created significant change at the grassroots level. In Sudan, for example, a self-financed community programme got 85 per cent of all handpumps functioning under the care of women mechanics. The programme saved the women two to four hours each day in water collection. In Egypt, a rural women's project extends loans to rural women and gives them training in loan management, livestock raising, marketing, child survival and development activities. In Brazil, two UNICEF women's projects have assisted 418 small businesses with credit, raising income and quality of life for 80 per cent of the women involved. The list goes on.

At UNICEF, our strategy for achieving sustainable livelihoods is primary environmental care, or PEC. Primary environmental care is based on the assumption that communities fare best when three needs are met: first, basic requirements for health, nutrition, primary education, safe water and sanitation; second, optimal production and use of

sustainable resources such as fuel, water and forming soil; and third, the active participation and empowerment of community members, especially girls and women. The strategy represents a collaborative effort of women, families, communities, international organizations, government agencies, non-governmental

"Women are the hardest hit by deterioration of the environment but they are also the greatest promise for its future."

organizations (NGOs), and private organizations. It is our hope for addressing what often appear to be insurmountable problems, and it serves as the foundation of our response to Agenda 21.

Key to the strategy's success is the full participation not only of families and women but of children. In many countries, both primary schools and informal educational settings have provided children with both the information and means to help the environment. In Madagascar, for example, teaching about the environment has been combined with nutrition and hygiene education as part of the primary school curriculum. Both teachers and students have put their learning into practice by starting a school garden. There is no greater way to assure sustainability than to reach the younger generations.

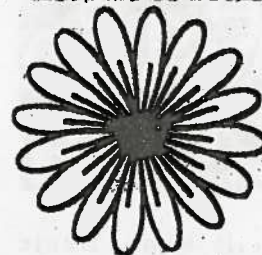
Although it receives funds, PEC is not a project per se. It is more of a mindset, reminding UNICEF programme officers and collaborating partners to consider a project's environmental sustainability, just as they would consider its effect on achieving year 2000 goals, adopted at the World Summit for Children in 1990.

Primary environmental care encourages renewable use of local resources. In Botswana, for example, a root known as 'devil's claw' has become a major drought-proof source of income.

Women came up with the idea to collect and sell the medicinal plant during the slack agricultural season. Communities in Botswana have also developed a profitable sustainable farming system with a 'whole farm' approach that integrates traditional crops, new crops, medicinal plants, trees and livestock into a stable ecological system. Approximately 70 per cent of the beneficiaries are women.

In Nepal, where paper making has a long history, UNICEF worked with an NGO that introduced a traditional technology making paper out of the bark of lokta bushes, a substance praised for its strength and durability. The industry, which employed men and women during agriculture's slack season, created paper that was sold to UNICEF for greeting cards. Between 1981 and 1991, the lokta industry quadrupled its gross income from sales, and is now self-supporting.

From rhetoric to reality



Agenda 21 addresses the crucial place of people at the centre of sustainable development. In particular, it recognized women's fundamental contributions to development, as does the Platform for Action for the upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Now it is time to bring the rhetoric and the reality together. We must make it clear that the environment cannot be saved without the active and informed participation of the people best situated for the task. Women are the hardest hit by deterioration of the environment but they are also the greatest promise for its future. Women—as consumers, householders, workers and voters—hold the key to a sustainable environment and sustainable development. •