

# NUESTRO Idioma

by Ruth Navarrete,  
Bellavista

**H**ello again. Not much new to report from this little corner of Ecuador. Yes, COS is on my mind, as I imagine it is on every person's mind from Omnibus 70. And if people from your site haven't reminded you a thousand times already that you are due to leave soon, *¡Qué lastima!* "Couldn't they talk to someone, so they'll let you stay longer?" "Aren't you going to be miserable leaving?" "Are you going to sell everything you have?" "After you leave, we'll never see you again, you'll never ever come back, verdad?" brace yourselves, it is coming soon. But, for those of you who are staying and who hope to speak Spanish better than (or at least at the level of) Erik Estrada, before you leave, here are some nice street expressions with which you can fool anyone into thinking you're a native (once they get past staring at your hair, eyes and height!). Use with discretion:

**¡A buena hora!** (About time!)  
**¡A buena hora te apareces por aquí!** (About time you showed up!)

**A duras penas.** (Barely, with great difficulty.) Si a duras penas entiendo lo que me estás diciendo, ¿como voy a repetirlo? (If I barely understand what you are telling me, how am I going to repeat it?)

**Tan claro como el agua.** (Clear as day.) ¡Ya sé lo que me dices pero lo que estoy viendo es tan claro como el agua! (I know what you're saying, but what I'm seeing is as clear as day!)

**A la Americana.** (Dutch treat, go dutch.) ¡Siempre que salgo con mis amigos es a la

Americana porque todos somos igual de pobres! (Every time I go out with my friends, we go Dutch, because we are all equally poor!)

**¡No entiendo ni papa!** (I don't understand a thing!) Repite lo que dijiste porque la verdad no entendí ni papa! (Repeat what you just said, because truly, I didn't understand a thing!)

**Al fin y al cabo.** (In the end, when all is said and done.)

Puede decir lo que quiera, pero al fin y al cabo yo sé que va a hacer lo que hagan los demás. (He can say what he wants, but when all is said and done, I know he's going to do what the others do.)

And now, to answer some of your questions about subjunctive tense (admittedly, when I was first asked in training, I said "Sub- what???"), here's a few examples:

Differences between *hubiera* (*hubiese*), *habría* y *haya*.

**Hubiera o hubiese** (English equivalent to "would have or had + past participle") as in:

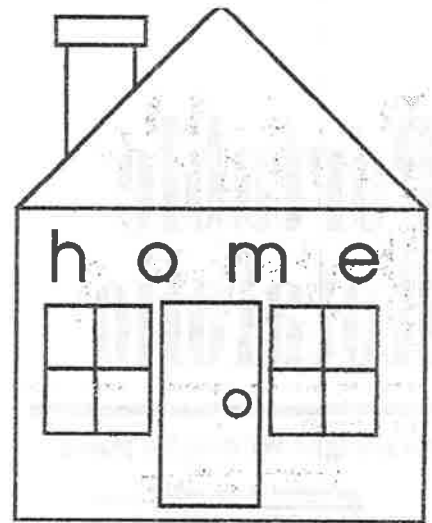
Si te hubieras despertado antes, lo hubieras visto. (If you would have woken up before, you would have seen it.) (Or "if you had woken up. . .")

**Habría** (potencial compuesto, equivalent to "would have or could have") No le habrías dicho eso, si no te hubiera hablado él antes. (You wouldn't have told him that if he hadn't spoken to you first.) Si hubieras venido ayer, habrías podido hablar con ella personalmente (If you had come yesterday, you could have talked to her personally.)

**Haya** (equivalent to have + past participle). No sabemos si él se haya acordado de traer los materiales. (We don't know if he has remembered to bring the materials.)

Note: *Hubiera* and *habría* can sometimes be used in the same context, but NEVER use *habría* with typical subjunctive works such as: *si, espero que, ojalá que, etc.*

Well eso es todo por hoy. Please suggest next issue's topic.  
**¡Cuidense y que lo pasen bonito!**



## improvement with jeff colon

**T**hanks to all who wrote with comments and suggestions for this column. In April, I was cruising around Washington State with my counterpart and his brother and wasn't able to submit anything for the last edition of *El Clima*, so I'm going to combine a few topics in this edition: 1. Shelving and fastening stuff to the wall and; 2. Mac Gyver's basic tool box. Our fabulous new editor, will make the final call as to whether there's room for the whole column in this issue. It will also depend, I suppose, on how long the **R-N-R Doctor** rambles.

Special thanks go to Neeta Kapila and Leslie Houston for their ideas and inspiration.

### Letters:

**Q: Dear Jeff:** I'm ready to make a mansion of my choza, but my site is rural and I don't want to bus back-and-forth to the hardware store all of the time. Can you recommend some basic tools and parts to get me going? And why are people calling you Mac Gyver now?  
Signed, **Listo en Las Lacas**

**A: Dear Listo:** As far as why they call me Mac Gyver, I earned the name for the little fix-it ideas I come up with. The myth, however is that people

think you must have real mechanical skills or construction experience to fix up a house. In truth, anyone can complete a simple maintenance project if they just set their mind to it; stop a leak, hang a shelf, install a light socket and switch. In most cases you can only improve the situation. Now a valve-job on a 12-cylinder, double-overhead cam Jaguar engine with hydraulic lifters, well, that's a different story al together. . . As for the tools, I'm glad you asked. Basic tools and materials are as follows:

### Mac Gyver's Basic Tool Box

Material:  
Local Name:  
Cost: (in sucres)

3m Tape Measure  
Flexometro; Cinta Metrica  
8.000

Claw Hammer  
Martillo  
7.000

Big wicked scissors (4" blades or so for cutting wire mesh, cardboard)  
Tijera  
5.000

Pliers  
Playo; Alcate  
4.000

Regular Screwdriver  
Destornillador Plano;  
Desarmador  
2.500

Phillips Screwdriver  
Destornillador Estrella;  
Desarmador Estrella  
2.500

Hand Saw (small)  
Serrucho  
16.000

Brace-n-Bit Drill  
Birabarquín  
13.000

7mm bit for above  
Tuerca de birabarquín;  
Broca para birabarquín 7mm  
3.000

Cement Bit (made for electric drill but will work in hand drill; have the dude at the hardware store match the diameter for #6 fissure screw - taco de fisura)  
Broca para cemento  
4.000

Small Level  
Nivel tipo "torpedo"  
6.000

Nails  
Clavos  
2.000/lb. (get an assortment of 1/2 pound each of 3.5cm, 4cm, and 5cm)

Fissure Screws  
Tacos Fisuras #6  
cheap  
(get about one dozen and be sure to get screws to go with of 2cm to 2.5cm length)

Flat Washers  
Arandelas; Anillos Planos  
cheap  
(get two dozen; match them to the screws above so that the head of the screw won't pass through the washer)

Hooks  
Ganchas  
250/each  
(get about 12 small to medium size; match the thread to the size of the plastic taco fisura that you buy)

Loops/Eyeletts  
Argollas  
250/each  
(get 12 of these, too and also match to taco fisura)

Bailing wire  
Allambre blanco de amarre  
2.500/lb

CLAVOS



3.5cm

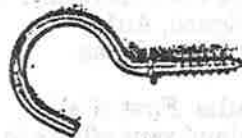


4cm



5cm

HOOK: GANCHA



FLAT WASHER: ARANDELAS;  
ANILLOS PLANOS

SCREW: TORNILLA



FISSURE SCREWS: TACOS FISURAS; TORNILLAS FISURAS



Size #6



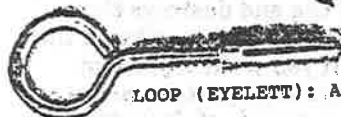
Size #7



← This is how they expand inside the hole



Size #8



LOOP (EYELETT): ARGOLLAS, shown with taco fisura #6



CONCRETE DRILL: BROCA PARA CEMENTO

← Note the 'arrowhead' point



WOOD BIT FOR HAND DRILL: TUERCA DE BIRABARQUIN; BROCA PARA BIRABARQUIN

(buy one pound of this; you can use it for anything).

Hinges (small)  
Visagras (5mm)  
600/each

(be sure to get small wood screws to go with them)

White Glue  
Blancola; Cola Blanco de uso multiple  
3.500/litre

Masking Tape  
Cinta masking  
2.000/roll

Box Tape  
Cinta Cartón; Cinta adhesiva  
3.500/roll

Black Electrical tape  
Cinta aislante; cinta negra  
2.000/roll

Sandpaper  
Lijas de #120 y #80  
800/sheet  
(get one or two sheets of each; course and fine)

Total.....about s/100.000,00

**Q: Dear MacGyver:** Two questions: What's the best way to cut bailing wire and how can I get a screw started in these super-hard types of wood that they use here? Signed, **Helpless con Herramientas, Huaquillas**

**A: Dear Helpless:** Don't feel so helpless; it's all a matter of having the right tools. Most pliers have a built-in wire cutter in the back part of the jaws, closest to the hinge. If your pliers isn't cutting, try tightening the hinge bolt. For starting screws, you can either make a pilot hole with a hammer and a nail of smaller diameter than the screw, or more effective, is to take a hook and mount the hook-end in your birabarquín so that the screw-end points out like a drill bit. Once mounted tightly in the drill, you can easily screw it in to the wood, then back it out again, leaving a pre-threaded hole for the screw you're going to use.

### **Shelving and Hanging stuff from cement walls:**

**Q: Dear MacGyver:** It seems to me that the hole in the wall made by concrete nails is inversely proportional to the size of the artwork you want to hang. How can you pound-in a concrete nail without making a mess of the wall? Signed, **Pocks en las Paredes, Piñas**

**A: Dear Pocks:** Don't use concrete nails! Use tacos fisuras instead or glue a small block of wood to the wall. It's more work (to drill the hole), but it is more precise; the hole goes where you want it to, it is much stronger, and much less damaging. Also it is silent; always a bonus if your nosy dueño lives in the same building. I hate concrete nails and never use them. They are really intended for new construction while the concrete is still "green," in which case they don't cause much damage.

**Q: Dear MacGyver:** Working in a small school classroom on the coast, I have tried everything to hang posters on the bare, whitewashed cement walls, but between the lousy quality paint that brushes off like dust and the humidity, neither masking tape nor box tape will hold. What can I do that will make the room more easy to decorate? Signed, **Aula Ordinaria, Santa Rosa**

**A: Dear Aula:** First of all I want to applaud your efforts to make your classroom more inviting than the local prison. The easiest way to attach something lightweight to a cement wall is to use regular Elmer's type glue or wood glue (blancola or cola blanca de uso multiple; approx. s/3.500 per 1-liter container). This is rather crude, however and in the end destroys the poster and leaves marks on the wall. If you want a place to hang the kids' posters, art or other materials of changing theme, I'd recommend installing a permanent tackboard strip. At most local sawmills you can find a pile of free scrap material that

will contain long, thin trimmings of wood about 1cm thick by 2cm wide by various lengths. Pick out the best ones, then sand them lightly (sheet of sandpaper = lija). Draw a line on the wall at eye-level (or lower for the kids) where you will place the strip of wood, then apply the cola blanca to one side of the wood and also to the wall. Tape it against the wall with plastic box tape (cinta de carton; the thin, wide brown tape mover's use for boxes). Let it dry for about three hours or overnight, then remove the tape. Note: The longer you leave the tape on the wall, the more likely it will leave permanent marks on the wall when you peel it off. Once the glue is dry, use thumbtacks to hang posters, flip chart paper, etc. Option: Instead of thumbtacks, you can use the same cola blanca to glue wooden clothespins to the tackboard at 30cm intervals or so. No-glue Alternative 1: Drill holes in the wall and use fissure screws (AKA: molly bolts; expansion screws; sp: tornillas fisuras; tacos fisuras) to fix the tackboard against the wall. No-Glue Alternative 2: Drill holes in the wall every 80cm, then use tacos fisuras with metal hooks (ganchas) or loops (argollas) and string bailing wire (alambre blanco de amarre) through them. You can then use masking tape or clothespins to hang papers from the wire.

**Q: Dear MacGyver:** My house has the heopies. I'm talking serious boxes all over the place, and every time I open a box that's been closed for a while I'm greeted by hordes of cockroaches. How can I mount some simple shelves to these concrete walls? Signed, **Cansado de Cartones, Portovelo**

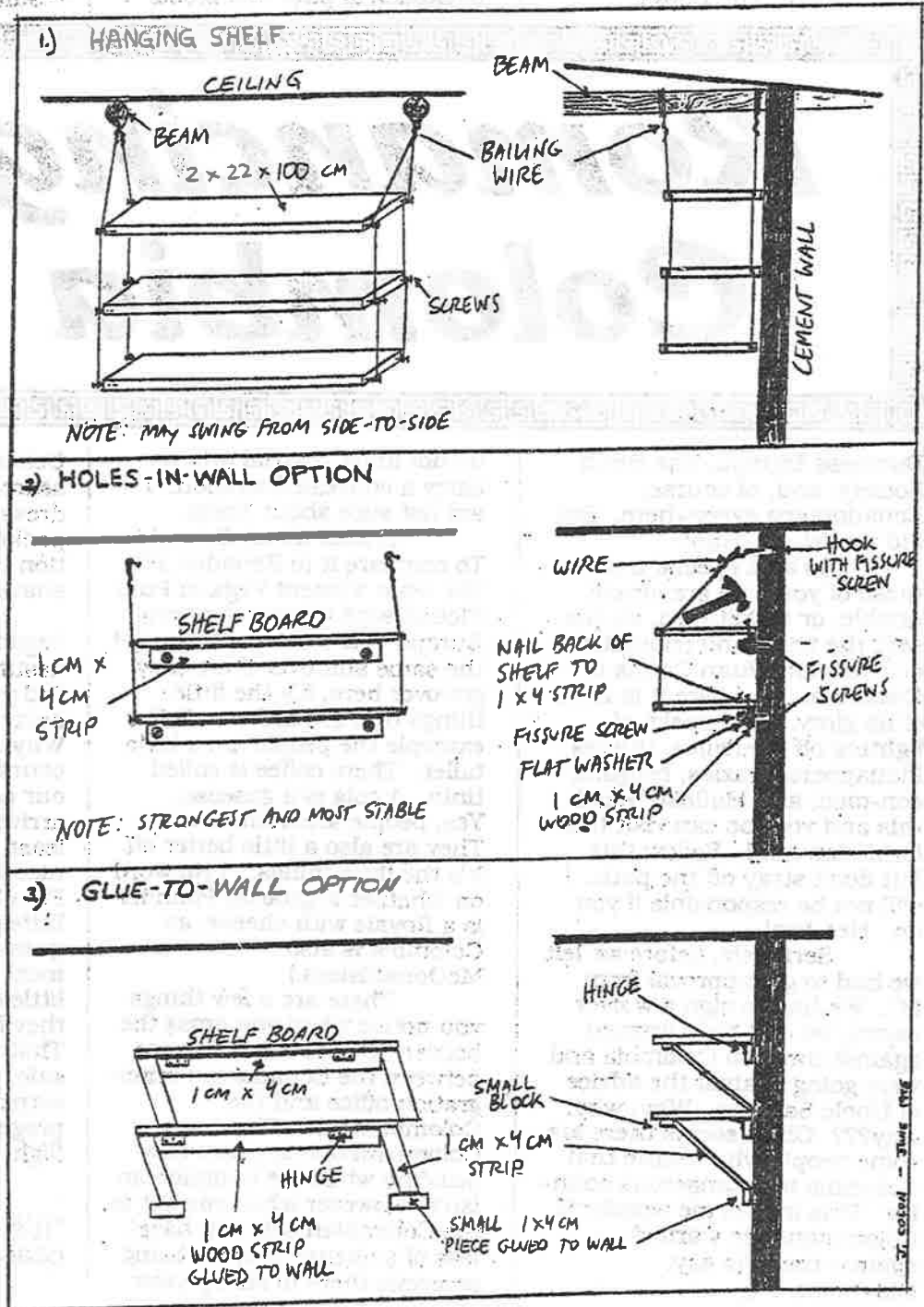
**A: Dear Cansado:** You'll need wood, of course. But first, compare costs of your options. Those ugly six-tiered bookshelves that everyone buys for their TV or equipo cost about s/50.000 and there's no work involved. Cheap tables cost about s/14.000. But if you want

something more "custom," have the local sawmill cut you some tablas 2cm x 22cm x 100cm (or as long/short as you want). If you have beams on the ceiling, you could make a hanging shelf without attaching anything to the walls. Just put a screw in the corner of each board (so that it sticks out horizontally), then tie four long strands of bailing wire to the ceiling beams so that they dangle about where the screws are. Take any slack out of the wire by grabbing it with pliers and pulling hard. Then, starting with the top shelf, wrap the wire at least four times around the portion of the screw sticking out of the wood. Repeat for the other three corners (getting the shelf level might be a challenge; buy some wine beforehand).

Continue with the next shelf down. Holes-in-wall option (for a more stable shelf): In addition to the shelf wood, get some strips 1cm x 4cm (or longer if you have a saw to cut it yourself). Mark the wall where the shelf will go, then drill a hole for taco fisuras; one hole 6cm in from the ends of the shelf. Drill the 1cm x 4cm strip to match the holes in the wall, then mount it to the wall with screws, washers and the tacos fisuras. About 80cm above the shelf, drill two more holes; one for each end of the shelf. In these holes you will install hooks to attach wire that will support the front half of the shelf. Put a screw in the each end of the board toward the front where the wire will be attached. Using 3.5cm nails, nail the shelf to the 1cm x 4cm strip (hint, start the nails with the board flat on the ground). Next

wrap the wire around the screws to support the outer edge of the shelf. Glue-to-Wall option: Instead of mounting the 1cm x 4cm strip to the wall with fissure screws, glue it to the wall with blancola (see Dear Aula above). In this case, however, use small hinges to attach the shelf to the 1x4 strip; a glued-on strip can't take the shock of

being beaten with a hammer and the hinges provide a semi-flexible connection so that the glued wood won't snap-off of the wall. To support the front, glue two small 1x4 pieces to the wall about 30cm below each end of the shelf. These will support diagonal supports (again 1cm x 4cm strips) from the front edge of the shelf. Refer to drawings.





Traveling is always better when there is a little risk involved. The promise of adventure or uncertainty gives it all a heightened sense of excitement. A trip to Colombia, the land of Emeralds, El Dorado, Cartels, and coffee promised all of this and more. At least according to the official word. We were warned against going by Peace Corps, the Embassy, the State Department. The Better

Well, we signed that waiver. Hah! We weren't about to back down to a little obstacle like that. So off we went like Tarzan and Jane, Hope and Crosby, Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner in *Romancing the Stone*...

A little background first. I have traveled in most South American countries before, including Colombia. Tricia has blonde hair. My backpack is pink and black. I

passport than you do on the Ecuadorean side. Which proves Third World Latin American countries all have the same level of efficiency, no matter how they look. And that's what I love about them. Another thing you notice is that on the Ecu side, the person who stamps your passport is in a military uniform, while on the Colo. side he's in civilian clothes. I think this is a result of paranoid tendencies

and attitude. Either way, the border is pretty much open. We could have been carrying rocket launchers and just gotten a smile. This is when traveling with Tricia is a definite advantage. A year ago, when I crossed the border with Ralph

# Romancing Colombia

Business Bureau, The Birch Society, and, of course, Ecuadoreans everywhere. But did we listen? Hah!

So as a special treat to those of you who are afraid, unable, or uninitiated, we present the trials and tribulations of Tricia and Juan Carlos in Colombia. Yes, here it is in all of its glory. Two weeks of fighting off guerrillas, thieves, kidnappers, crazies, beggars, con-men, and Mafiosi. Read this and you too can visit this forbidden land. Follow this, but don't stray off the path. I will not be responsible if you do. Hee-hee!

Seriously, before we left we had to get approval from PC. We had to sign a waiver saying we had been warned against travel in Colombia and were going against the advice of Uncle Sam etc. Why, why, why??? Oh, it seems there are some people who believe that Colombia is a dangerous country. This makes me wonder if Colombians are warned against travel to say, Oklahoma City.

do not know martial arts nor carry a concealed weapon. I am not sure about Tricia.

A little about Colombia: To compare it to Ecuador, it's like what Vincent Vega in *Pulp Fiction* says when comparing Europe to the States, "They got the same shit over there they got over here, it's the little things that are different." For example the people are a little taller. There coffee is called tinto. A cola is a gaseosa. Yes, people are friendlier. They are also a little better off. It's the little things... (No word on whether a Quarter Pounder is a Royale with cheese, as Colombia is also McDonaldsless.)

There are a few things you notice when you cross the border. One is the difference between the Ecuadorean immigration office and the Colombian one. The Colombian one is a nice new building while the Ecuadorean isn't. However when you get to the Colombian side you have less of a chance of there being someone there to stamp your

Coleman, we nearly got a body search. My advise here is to dress well but look like a backpacker, (I know, a contradiction in terms). It also helps to shave. Men, too.

That out of the way, we began our journey. Our first destination, the Ipiales airport. Did you say our flight is delayed an hour and a half? Why am I not surprised? Of course this means we'll miss our connection in Cali and arrive in Bogota very late. At least the Ipiales airport has nice gardens to look at. Finally our plane arrives. It's a little twin engine 20-seater. I guess we won't be getting a meal on this flight. There is little security on the flight; they barely glance at our bags. That rocket launcher is still safe. Through a storm, extreme turbulence, and a pregnant lady puking, the flight illicit's Tricia to say,

"It's better than a roller coaster!"

We arrive in Cali for a two hour layover before our flight to Bogota. I'll have more to say about Cali later but, man, people at the airport are dressed like they're all going to a wedding. And the women! This is when traveling with Tricia is a disadvantage.

On our flight to Bogota (once again security is relaxed) we sit next to one of the many super friendly Colombians we will meet. She's a college student who works for the Colombian Coffee Federation and has actually met Juan Valdez himself.

On arriving in Bogota we are faced with our first sign of danger. They surround us and there seems to be no way out. Thieves? Guerrillas? Hah! Nothing so tame! We're talking the airport taxis! They're yelling at us, promising to take us to a "good" hotel they know. They ask if we have reservations, warning us they are probably full wherever it is we want to go. I manage to burst through the crowd with Tricia following and we finally get someone to actually take us where we want to go. And I didn't even have to use the rocket launcher.

Our first hotel is a noisy, run down dive actually recommended in the "book". We don't really have any options and the price is right so we stay. No shower head or toilet seat. It seems the tradition of not finishing bathrooms is the rule here.

Bogota is an amazing city. It's huge, bustling, chaotic. Definitely not Quito and a great place to spend your first weekend in Colombia. It may not be the safest place in the world but it's not LA either. We visited museums, including the amazing Museo de Oro, which has a treasure trove of pre-Colombian gold artifacts. We walked the downtown

center, strolling through the old colonial center which is surprisingly well preserved and clean. The government area is noted for the army of heavily armed military men twiddling their thumbs at every corner. It was pleasant walking around Bogota on a Sunday afternoon seeing so many people out in the city, strolling, walking their dogs, etc.. We even went to a flea market. We also saw Pulp Fiction (even better the third time). Without a doubt, though, one of the best things is that we did not see one bogus backpacker gringo unlike Quito, where you can't get away from them. We did see some violence though, when two huge dogs nearly took apart a little dog. The pup was saved by the dog owners.

When it was time to leave we went to the first of several brand new, amazing bus terminals throughout Colombia. As we entered the terminal we were searched and my Swiss Army knife was thoroughly scrutinized. It turns out he's just warning me about getting it stolen because there worth a lot of money. And I thought he was being security conscious.

Our next stop was Tunja, a city similar to Cuenca, with a small colonial center and sprawling modern suburbs. Except the colonial center is ten times nicer, cleaner, and better preserved than Cuenca. Maybe the Rocknroll Dr. needs to visit. As we arrived in Tunja we noticed a heavy police presence, from the terminal, to all the strolling Tourist police. It made us feel safe but then wondered why it was all necessary in the first place. We found out when we saw a lady nearly get her gold necklace stolen in broad daylight on a crowded street. The culprit pulled on it but it didn't snap in time, just left a red mark on her neck. The real surprising thing was the reaction of the

lady. She calmly put the broken necklace in her purse and went back to what she was doing. It didn't faze her at all.

That's the thing about Colombian women in general. They wear so much gold and silver jewelry they are literally adorned like Christmas trees. I can't imagine a thief trying to rob backpackers when the locals offer so much better booty.

We took a side trip from Tunja to Villa de Leiva, an absolutely gorgeous town. It's a small colonial town with whitewashed walls that is completely intact with zero modern influence, except for all the tourist shops. The streets are paved with large stones which makes walking difficult but keeps most cars out. It is quite picturesque and charming. Though the absence of a little bustle and excitement bores me and we return to Tunja after a few hours. We hangout a little in Tunja, people watching, noticing how everyone seems to be standing on street corners drinking little shots of tinto (coffee). We are tired of the cold weather and start heading towards the Coast. Besides, there seemed to be an absence of that sense of danger...

Our next stop is Bucaramanga, a large modern city, not really a tourist destination, more like a stopover on the route to the Coast. The bus we're on gets thoroughly searched including a pat down of the four men on the bus. I guess the mostly women and children on the bus don't pose much of a threat. The ride to Bucaramanga proves to be one of the most dangerous aspects of the trip. It includes a precipitous descent into this extremely steep canyon. The views out the windows are spectacular if not a little hair raising and



nearly kills the perpetually nauseous Tricia. Its quite a road and makes the Santo Domingo road seem like a flat country lane.

As we approach Bucaramanga, we see nice modern suburbs. We're beginning to wonder when we'll see the poverty. The bus terminal is not where that's for sure. It is a multi-level brand new building that looks like an airport. It is truly amazing. Bucaramanga has a hot climate in more ways than one. The place is as bustling as Bogota, only with less clothes. It's kind of like a smaller nicer Guayaquil with that same uneasy feeling. Of course, I love it. People here wear the tightest clothes imaginable (I mean women), especially the jeans. We could not figure out how they could possibly get into them.

Our main reason for stopping in Bucaramanga was to visit Giron, which is yet another beautiful colonial town. It has basically become almost a suburb of Bucaramanga but it has retained it's small town charm. It was quite pretty with a little bustle to it. That was the main difference between Giron and Villa de Leiva; Giron seems like a normal as usual, working town, while Villa de Leiva seemed sort of Disney-ish. I wont bore you all with any more talk of Colonial towns, though I will say that Giron had the added bonus of roaming gypsies trying to read palms. One lady told me I had bad vibes and I needed guidance. Shows how much they know!

Back in Bucaramanga, we

made the further observations of an exceedingly high number of shoe stores in Colombia, and the fact that people knew the bus routes less than we did.

Well, we were ready for the beach, so we did the unthinkable and took a night bus to Santa Marta on the Coast. This is supposed to be one of the more "dangerous" routes in Colombia! Holy Paranoia! Well we had been looking for a little action but, well nothing happened. The bus got stuck on a speed bump and all the men had to get out and push, but that was about it.

Our main reason for going to Santa Marta was to visit Tayrona National Park, where supposedly the best beaches in Colombia are. So, the first thing we find out when we get there is that most of it is closed off. But, for a price, we could go with a guide, who would take us in clandestinely. We would have to leave very early and he would bribe the guards. After that we would be safe. Well, we decided to take the chance, but the guide never showed up

the morning we were supposed to leave. Luckily, we hadn't given him any money. We then settled to just visit the parts of the park that we could go to. They weren't as nice and were a little crowded but they were still the beautiful Caribbean waters. When I say they were crowded I mean with Colombian tourists. But here the spell was broken. Yes, droves of annoying Euro backpackers.

On this subject, I have to mention the famed Hotel Miramar. This is a hippie, backpacker hellhole, that is the most popular backpacker place in the whole country. But we had to get out of there after only one day. It was a dump, the parade of freaks and weirdoes was endless. Most of the people there looked like they hadn't shaved, eaten, or bathed, in months. The amazing thing was, that it was constantly full. If you arrived after noon, there was no chance of getting a room. Like I said we went to a different hotel across the street, that was ten times more pleasant, and almost as cheap. This has always perplexed me about





foot). The water, incredibly clear and warm. The weather, well, unbearable. That said, we were off to Cartagena. Cartagena is the most amazing and unique city in South America. It is a beautiful colonial city, surrounded by walls that were built to protect the city from pirates. The architecture is amazing, the atmosphere, overwhelming. It is easily one of my favorite cities in South America. It must be seen to believe so I won't try to

packers. How they can just stay in the worst places because they are the cheapest and most popular. They give the false impression of being individuals and adventurers, yet they stay in the same places as everyone else, and go to the same cities as everyone else. As you can tell, I have the same disdain for these gringos as the Rocknroll Dr. does.

Anyway, back to our story. Santa Marta itself wasn't that interesting, but it had plenty of energy and it was a pleasure walking the waterfront in the evening. And the surroundings were beautiful. The Coastal atmosphere, too, is amazing. The people even more interesting. A beach we went to had coral reefs (it was here where we had our true brush with danger, the result being a large coral rock attacking my

describe it. You will just have to go on your own.

From Cartagena, we took a day tour to some nearby islands that were very beautiful. We went to a beach on one of them, that, well, almost all of you will never go to. But mostly we just strolled the streets of old Cartagena, enjoying the city.

A few comments about Cartagena. We got harassed here more than any other place. There is a definite uneasiness and high energy level in the city and it's inhabitants. There are a large number of homeless people, beggars, street kids, and scam artists. If there was one place on the whole trip where we felt unsafe, it was here. Unfortunately for travelers, Cartagena is the highlight of any trip to Colombia and is a must see. It is packed with tourists of all kinds, from moneyed phoo-

phoo people, to Euro packers, to just plain old regular Colombians. And it is the most unbearably hot and humid place I have ever been.

Our final stop was a one day layover in Cali on our flight home. We hadn't originally planned to go there but it was a required stay on the flight deal we got. So we looked at it as a bonus. As we were only there one day there is not much to say. It was our best and last chance to run into a civil war or at least a bomb, or shooting or something. What we found instead, is the city most resembling the US in all of Colombia. Calm, yet bustling, clean, modern, signs of wealth everywhere, and well dressed, good looking people. Nice shops, restaurants etc.. Here I must make a comment about the women of Colombia.

Throughout the country, and especially here in Cali, they are among the prettiest I have seen in Latin America. They are always smartly dressed in the latest fashions (confirmed by ELLE subscriber Tricia), and they all look as if aerobics is a national obsession. They don't go out of the house in sweats and sneakers like in the States, that's for sure.

Just a comment...

The next day, we were on a flight back to Ipiales and a bus to Mira. It was a quick two weeks. I can't say we were glad to be back in Ecuador, but it's a lot better than going home to a real job in the States. I must recommend a trip to Colombia to anyone who has the traveler's bug. It is a great country with great people and well worth any hassles. If you can't go during your service, there's always post COS. If anyone has any questions about it, I will be glad to answer any questions (I have also traveled in Southern Colombia). Happy trails. Say goodnight, Tricia..

Juan Carlos Velasquez, Mira



a

# RAT

## in the kitchen...

*There comes a time in every man's life when circumstances require manly action, courage and bravery. I had a little practice since being in country, that being the disposal of a few pesky mice, but it took a real show of force and confidence to disembowel the rat in the kitchen.*

*I'll let my comrade-in-arms, Gene "the flame-thrower" Martin, tell what really happened that night when we notched a big one in our belts for pest control everywhere.*

• Karlos Banks, the ex-TERMINATOR

A few months ago I noted a small rodent problem, but I did not over-react, because I assumed that we could co-exist peacefully. The mice and I had an unspoken truce. They stayed out of my way and I stayed out of theirs. But then one night something snapped, and I had to play hard ball.

I was sleeping in my bed under the protection of my mosquito net when the sounds of not so quiet mice cheering the tying goal of the Mouse World Cup Final disrupted my rest. At first I was irritated at the noise, but no treaties had been broken. Feeling that the bed area was secure and that any further vector advancement would be contained to the floor, I turned on my side and proceeded to fall back asleep. At that precise moment, the festivities moved to my bed as I felt a mouse run straight up my back in clear defiance of our agreement. Peeling myself from the ceiling, I vaulted to the floor and officially declared war on all scavenging mammalian critters in my territory.

I cleverly assembled a snare using a kitchen pot, propped up by my P.C.-issued Cutter's roll-on (finally put to good use!) with string attached and I began my stake-out. As dawn broke, I decided more serious weapons were in order. First paying a neighbor kid cien to continue my vigil, I hit the streets to

seek out a first-rate trap. But to no avail, not a single trap in all of Manta. I'm sure the usually well-stocked markets and tiendas were simply out of serious supplies, as I'm sure the entire town is fighting the plague of varmints. I was quickly on the horn to the States and in a matter of days I had state-of-the-art traps shipped express mail. In the meantime, I relieved the local urchin and began a regiment of heavy poisonings using most of the stock of my local poison shop. (conveniently located at Iado de the blood bank)

In about two weeks, with the supply-lines intact, and the traps set, I figured I had this little mouse conflict wrapped up and once again I slept in peace.

I did not feel the need to alarm Karl and Shaila with the details when they came over for some R&R. The situation was under control with high-confidence. Covertly I set the traps as we bedded down for the night's rest.

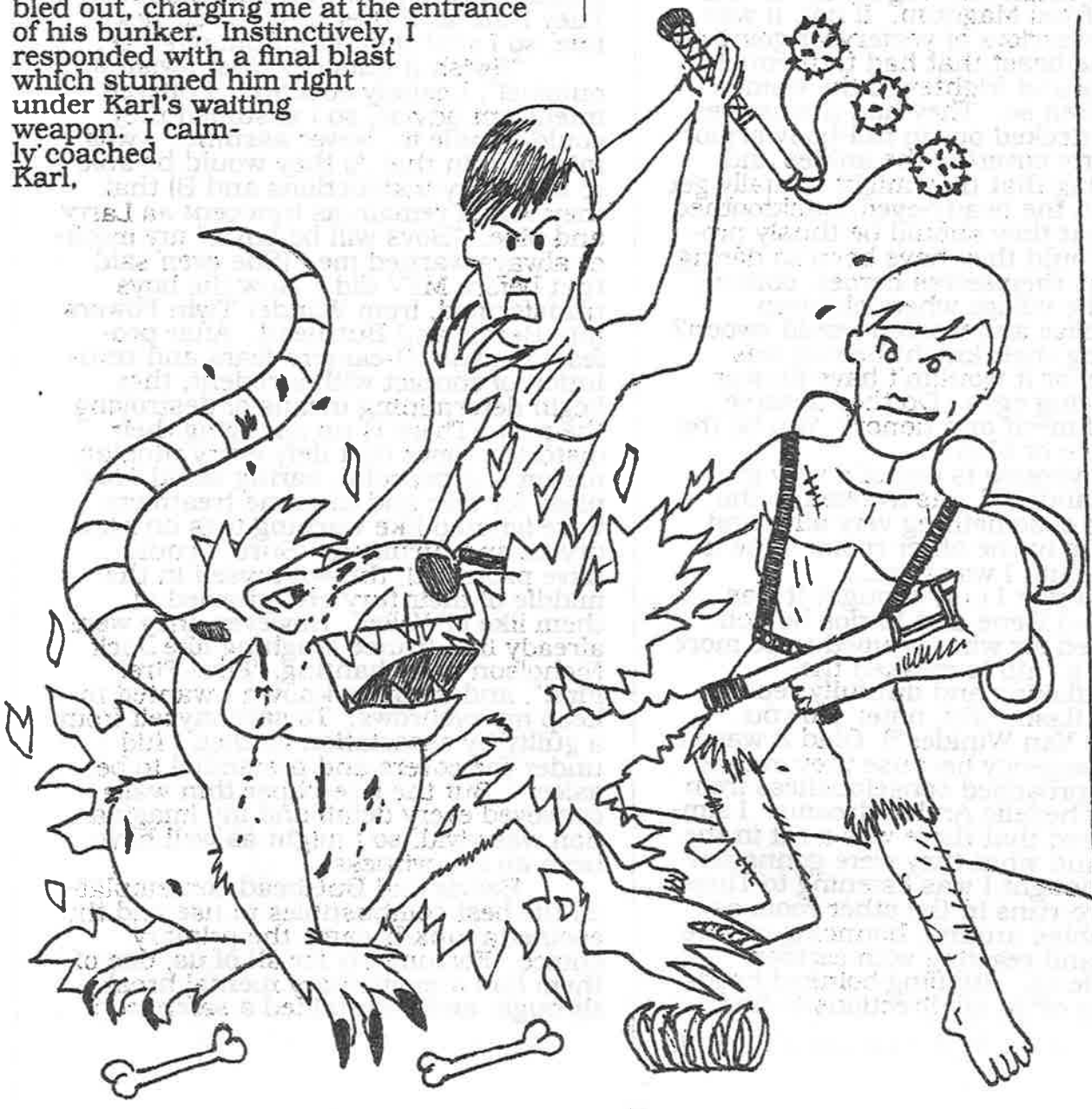
Five minutes after lights out, the telltale clack of a trap. I notched another kill into my bedpost and decided I would leave him 'till morning, but every few seconds I heard the trap shuffling along the floor. After a few minutes I decided that I better get up and put the poor sucker out of his misery, before the sounds of his death-throes disturbed my guests. But as I entered the kitchen and turned on the light, I discovered what had always lingered in the corner of my mind. The small mouse trap had snagged a monstrous rat, some 10 inches in body length alone, a gruesome 19 inches including that disgusting naked tail. Karl stirred and I called him for backup as I wasn't sure how to finish this one off. Of course, we would have to kill the wounded invader, but the immediate method did not at once appear to us. In the brief seconds while our brains were rolodexing through the possibilities, the rat took up a defensive position underneath the sink. With a stroke of a match and military genius a can of aerosol bug killer became a rat frying flame-thrower. As I readied the torch, Karl bravely climbed on top of the sink, armed with the heavy metal lid of my 55-gallon drum in one hand and a broom in the other. Our battle plan was one of terrorizing the disgusting creature with man's fire and then Karl would finish him quite humanely with a well-

aimed and swift blow with the edge of the heavy metal top. With not unwarranted caution, I edged up to the wounded, yet still quite dangerous, spitting, seething demon and gave him the heat. I was cautious, as I gave him a few more tastes of the inferno, not to allow the flame to melt the cap and suck into the can. (everyone's dad told them of the risk of this) But not to worry, we are experts. As I continued to shoot short blasts of flames towards the rat, who continued to back himself deeper, seeking protection inside half a plastic two-liter bottle. It was then that I saw my chance for victory. I increased the intensity of the fire, the plastic was melting around the animal sealing his tomb. But our adversary was savvy to this offensive and scrambled out, charging me at the entrance of his bunker. Instinctively, I responded with a final blast which stunned him right under Karl's waiting weapon. I calmly coached Karl,

saying, "Kill! Kill! Kill!" At this point everything was like an Oliver Stone movie; slow motion, surrealistic. With reflexes of a jungle cat he waited for the angle, and with swift plunge of the sharp metal, the poor creature's back was snapped in half. Sparing the gory details, I can assure animal lovers that it was painless and quick. We placed the trophy outside the door for the neighborhood cats and vultures to get a chance at, but also as a warning to any other such pests who might consider a counter-attack.

P.S. Tim: Either of us would be happy to give a charla on household pests for the next training group.

Gene Martin, Manta\*





a

## RAT

# in the kitchen...

As noble and gallant a picture my compañeros might have tried to paint, I will boldly tell what really happened. I imagine they saw themselves as a revised A-Team starring McGyver and that guy from Magnum. If not, it was as brave warriors of yesteryear going off to slay the beast that had tormented the village and frightened the women and children so. They had themselves mentally decked out in full-body armor particularly covering the ankles and toes, feeling that they might actually get so close to the beady-eyed, bucktoothed savage that they should be thusly protected. Could they have been so daring to imagine themselves heroes, coming back to the village where children would idolize and women would swoon? Good thing their knight helmet was imaginary or it wouldn't have fit over their growing egos. Do they deserve medals of merit and honor? You be the judge: Mice or Men?

My version is one of a very innocent bystander. I was awoken to the clattering of something very alive and scrambling in the other room. Fine it was there and I was here...

However I only thought it was correct that Gene and Karlos be notified. I tried for what seemed to be more than just a rato to awaken the Rumpelstilskins and dutifully report the news flash. (Ed. note: Do you mean Rip Van Winkles?) Glad it wasn't a real emergency because they ever so slowly approached consciousness from their psychedelic Aralen dreams. I simply declared that there was a rat in the kitchen and what they were gonna do?

I thought I was listening to Three Stooges re-runs in the other room as they fumbled around, bouncing off one another and reacting with cartoon sound effects. Rubbing boinked heads and going off in all directions to find

Curly. At this point, Larry and Moe crept around the small kitchen as if this were the episode where they were lost in the haunted house. I am sure Curly the rat, unsuspecting of his role in the mad comedy, watched with delighted amusement the hijinks of the so-called intelligent animals. He probably rolled his eyes as I did when, backing into each other in the dark, they both screamed like little girls and hugged each other in relief discovering they were safe

(for the moment).

Then I hear the boys gasp as if they had seen a ghost, or more likely a rat. After exclaiming in pre-pubescent shrills, "There it is!", all time stopped. They froze as if they forgot their next line, so I sent their cue from offstage.

"Swish it outside! Just swish it outside!", I calmly coached. I offered intelligent advice, so I assumed they could handle it. Never assume. I was mistaken in that A) they would be able to follow my instructions and B) that they would remain as innocent as Larry and Moe. "Boys will be boys," my mother always warned me. (She even said that before MTV did.) Now the boys transformed, from Wonder Twin Powers into Beevis and Butthead. After professing their off-camera fears and revolution of contact with a rodent, they begin determining means of destroying the pest. There is no changing their distorted views that defy every utopian dream of a peaceful, caring world. My pleas for love and humane treatment were ignored like warning tags on blow dryers and furniture. Sure, I could have protested, thrown myself in the middle of their fury and growled at them like ol' Yeller. However, they were already in a trance laughing like Jack Nicholson and chanting, "Fire! Fire! Fire!", and truth be known I wanted to keep my eyebrows. To save myself from a guilty by association verdict, I hid under the covers and pretended to be asleep. But the rice-paper thin walls conveyed every detail and my imagination was vivid, so I might as well have been an eye-witness.

Beevis and Butthead contemplated the best combustibles to use and the cocinetta tank became the primary choice. Fortunately for all of us, one of them had a momentary mental breakthrough and entertained a safety con-



sideration that it could blow us all to Timbuk Three. Then they found a can of Raid and decided that if it blew, only one of them would get burned. Butthead delegates this risk to Beevis and they move in for the kill.

I guess Curly is aware of their intentions by now and has hidden from their wrath. They must have chased him around for a while because their voices faded in and out like my dad's in a church service. They must have cornered him soon after, and scared him with the combination of fire and their morning breath. I think Butthead was responsible for lowering the boom if Curly dare poke his head out because Beevis soon shouted in his shrill voice of panic, "Get him dude! Kill him!" Beevis was scared Curly would make it up his leg before Butthead could do anything about it. Butthead reassures him he's just waiting for the right angle.

CRASH! BANG! BOOM! I only hoped it was one of them, but it was indeed the fall of poor little Curly. The boys high-fived in triumph and I played Taps.

Shaila Reidhead, Olón



## MAYO

Wipe the dew from your legs

As birds fly over green hillsides.

The trickle of the stream is heard

upon wind sweet with petals.

The shade of a tree,

and the laughter of children

is remembered well by

my old mother, who dreams

of the past.

Rub the mud from your boots

as dust blows down the mountain.

The smell of animals, smoke

and chemicals fills the gully.

The heat of the day

and the crying of children

is being recorded into my

young child, who dreams

of a photo on a calendar.

I press my face to the window.

My azadón purchased this ticket.

The city may reward my presence,

while my mother raises my child.

The shade of a building,

or the heat in the factory,

is not worth remembering

so I don't dream at night,

and I own no calendars.

Mike Meshall, Azogues

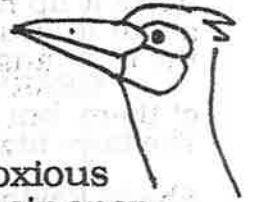
# the day Scoby Jones went to SCHOOL



Scoby Jones is my dog. I knew he was going to follow me, but I secretly wanted a companion for the 1/2 hour walk to school. Anyway, he has a good time scaring up the sea birds trying to have their breakfast.

With ears flapping, neon flea collar glowing, he leads the way. Every now and then stopping to furiously dig a hole.

When we get to school, I reason that he can wait in the shade outside the gate of the school as I work. Wrong! The obnoxious yelping begins. This not only attracts the preschool classes to their open air windows, but all the neighborhood dogs (who happen to be much bigger than Scoby Jones). As I look over the balcony from the classroom that I work in, I see the dogs closing in. So, of course, I run down to save him. He does his one dog trick—leaping into my arms at a run.



So then I think he'll be fine under the table in the resource room with me.

Don't dogs have a soothing effect on kids? Not on kids like Christian Sánchez!

When Christian sees Scoby Jones, he screams and runs for his life (Scoby's about the size of a large rat, but much cuter). Well, I have to chase Christian so he won't scare any of the kids, meanwhile Scoby chases me. Chaos.

So then I tie Scoby to a tree out back, in the shade with a bowl of water.

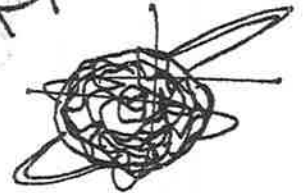
As Christian and I peacefully return to work, up the stairs runs Scoby with the gnawed-off rope around his neck. Christian throws his paper and pencil in the air, and begins to scream and run around the table. Scoby of course sees this as an invitation to play. More chaos!

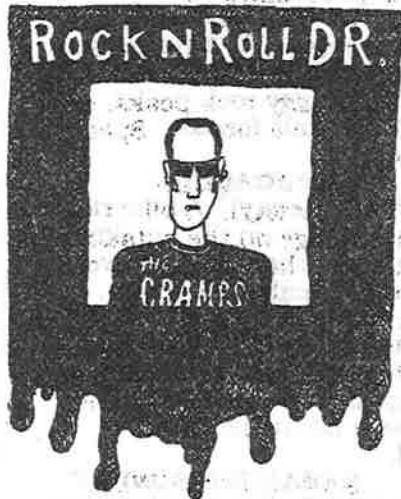
So as recess begins, I decide to personally guard Scoby.

As we enter the courtyard, he jumps up and steals an ice-cream from a first-grader. He then starts chasing the ball so the kids can't play soccer. He also finds Christian in the crowd and scares him out of his wits.

All the rest of the kids think Scoby's cute, and want to pet him. Well, Scoby's not too fond of fondling, and tries to bite a couple of the kids; this is my cue to go home. Cool—half day! Scoby took a long nap when we got home from school.

By Suzette Malone, Salinas





**G**reetings and salutations. Time certainly tends to fly here in Ecuador, as I enter my late 30's and as I'm about to COS in a few months. An unemployed, single punk who wants to change careers, not having much of an idea what to do in life post-Peace Corps. Anyway, this is probably my second-to-the-last El Clima column. Don't rejoice too quickly, I'm still heere. . . **INTI ILLIMANI** appeared in concert in May at La Casa de la Cultura in Cuenca. They're the most internationally famous Andean folk group in the world. Originally from Chile, they relocated to Europe when Pinochet started chopping off the hands of Chilean protest musicians. The balcony seats were a steal at 10 mil each. So the balcony was packed and the expensive orchestra section empty. Anyway, the first half of the show was just OK, kinda like the musica folklorica one can see at the corner peña. I don't know what they did during intermission, but the eight-piece group cooked in the second set, blending Afro-Cuban and Euro-classical rhythms with the traditional Andean sounds. The concert ended abruptly, as the house sound system came on during the third encore song. I guess **INTI ILLIMANI** passed their curfew. . .

Much more entertaining than the concert was the flick **NATURAL BORN**

**KILLERS**. Sick, twisted, excessively violent and. . . I loved it! I heart **MALLORY** big time.

Courtesy of the L.A. Times Calendar section I have some fairly recent music news. But first, a moment of silence in honor of the retirement of the greatest quarterback ever to play football, **JOE "God" MONTANA**. We'll miss ya, Joe. . . Okay, the biggest news is. . . **PETULA'S BACK!!!** Yep, that's right, the 60's British pop princess that brought us such great hits as "Downtown" and "Don't Sleep in the Subway." **PETULA CLARK**, lookin' good at 62 years young, has been in a musical on Broadway, with none other than the legendary **DAVID CASSIDY**. RocknRoll! Let's hope PET hits the concert circuit. . .

Best name of the month goes to the **FUNDY BUTT HALL**, a jazz venue in New Orleans in the early 1900's.

The **LOLLAPOOOZA** people were trying to get over-the-hillers **THE CLASH** to reunite and headline the annual mainstream "alternative" festival. Poor faavor, put it to rest guys. When I saw **THE CLASH**'s last tour in 1985, they were basura remains from their previous years. My friends and I called them "The Crap." Hey, I agreed with their old monicker "the only band that matters." From the ground-breaking rockin' self-titled first LP in 1977 to the superb multi-styled triple album "Sandinista" they were great. But I bet the last ten years have only made them worse, much worse. A lot is to be said for rock bands that break up before the inevitable downhill slide and do NOT bother trying to find the lost magic too many years later. . .

Speaking of **LOLLAPOLOSER, COURTNEY LOVE**, the frontwoman for the mediocre band **HOLE** (you may know her better as the widow of **NIRVANA'S KURT**

**COBAIN**), said she wouldn't play on the same bill as hip-hop groups **CYPRESS HILL** and **SNOOP DOGGY DOGG**. Why I don't know, but it appears she gave in. Even the tour organizer said he wished **MS. LOVE** wasn't on the tour. **COURTNEY** is one disgusting woman, in many more ways than one. An **HOLE** is almost as over-rated as her blown off-headed hubby's old band. . .

Watered down sellouts **SOCIAL DISTORTION** just headlined a massive "punk" fest in Los Angeles. I'm sure this band makes for typically shallow MTV-hyped crapola. . . Other concerts you've missed cuz you're here; the world's most boring "rocker", **TOM PETTY**; hip-hoppers **DA LENCH MOB** and **PARIS**; 70's schlock-folksters **AMERICA** (if it's possible to be crappier than **THE EAGLES**, these guys are); scorching Ohio punkers the **NEW BOMB TURKS**; funk king **GEORGE CLINTON**; soul king **AL GREEN**; melt-your-heart-and-throw-your-panties-on-stage king, the awesome **TOM JONES**; **CAPTAIN & TENNILLE** (God help us and them); take your pick—which is bigger crap? **PETER FRAMPTON** or the triple bill of **FOREIGNER/CHEAP TRICK/LOVERBOY** (talk bout givin' it up! Ok, C.**TRICK** ain't that bad, but the others?); and best of all, **MEL TORME**, doing a **BENNY GOODMAN** tribute—now we talkin' rockin'!!!

Well, since my current ponderings on lust and love are not printable in this fine publication, instead I'll treat you to. . .

**ROCKNROLL DOCTOR'S FAVORITE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS OF ECUADOR:**

**BORBON-SAN MIGUEL-RESERVA CAYAPAS (Esmeraldas)**: From the busy energetic Caribe-like riverside town to the super friendly black village to the coastal jungle al dentro. See my previous El Clima article on this, my favorite excursion on the mainland.



### **PORTOVIEJO**

**(Manabí):** Not only does it have a zillion times more energy than any place in the Sierra, and is relatively well-kept for a coastal city, but it has the most physically beautiful... people in the entire country.

### **ALANDALUZ/PUERTO**

**LOPEZ (Manabí):** A very unique environmentally correct "eco-tourism" center on the beach. Imagine a chévere hippy co-op without the damn hippies. Very nearby are the turquoise waters of Machalilla, hiking into sub-tropical forests, and quaint fishing villages. Check out the colorful early morning fish catch in P. Lopez and the superb seafood there at Carmita's Restaurant.

### **MONTANITA (Guayas):**

My fave beach in Ecuador. Almost completely undeveloped, get there while it's still tranquilo. Famous for great waves (and drownings). Vito's has cute, clean cabins on the beach. Be sure to hike to the end of the rocks and tide pools, and check out the great view of nearby Olón.

**THE GALAPAGOS:** No shit, Sherlock. The islands exceeded my high expectations, and for me a week on a boat cruise was barely enough. I recommend booking a small (8 to 12 person) intimate boat upon arrival.

### **LA CUEVA DE LOS**

**TAYOS (Morona-Santiago):** It's an almost 200 foot vertical rope descent into the darkness to the floor of this cave in the Oriente jungle. Crawl through the corridors and underground rivers, see stalagmites and mites, hear the unearthly echo sounds of the resident Oilbirds. This remote area was one of the hotbeds of the border war with Peru. Good luck. [Ed. note: This area is off-limits and PCVs are prohibited from travelling in this area as it is heavily mined.]

### **HOSTERIA CUSIN**

**(Imbabura):** Just outside the village of Laguna San Pablo, 10k from Otavalo. A 350-year-old hacienda, very picturesque and cozy. Cobblestone pathways, expansive gardens, great

views, fireplaces and antiques in the rooms, etc. Expensive. A big downside is the British born New Yorker (bad combo) owner who presides over the dinner table. Easily the snobbiest, most pompous person I've ever met. Even my Mom's British friend said the same.

### **MUSEO GUAYASAMIN**

**(Pichincha):** On top of the hilly suburbs of Quito. Features the maestro's incomparable, intense socio-political paintings. Museum grounds are lovely, and there's his pre-Colombian and colonial collections, as well as his daughter's jewelry. A no-miss.

### **LAGUNA QUILOTOA**

**(Cotopaxi):** Northeast of Latacunga, through gorgeous plaid cultivated hills to this enormous crater lake of every shade of green. The view from the top is stupendous, but you should hike to the bottom and camp out on the lakeshore.

### **EL ALTAR**

**(Tungurahua):** Situated in the northern half of Parque Nacional Sangay is Ecuador's fifth highest volcano. A long all-day approach hike to camp in a paramo pasture with semi-wild horses (and damn cows) with awesome views (if it's clear). The mountain looks more like a jagged chain of peaks than a cone-shaped volcano. Hike up to close-up views of the large glaciers and lake (if it's clear.) See a condor (I did.)

### **CANAR SUNDAY MARKET**

**(Cañar):** The most authentic, colorful indigenous market I've been to here. The last time I went, there was not one other tourist. Makes a great day trip with the nearby Ingapirca ruins. But PLEEZ, it's our little secret. Don't tell ANYBODY who won't be reading this so it STAYS traditional. If you break our little secret I will, as DeNiro said in Cape Fear, "show you the true meaning of the word pleasure."

### **CUENCA (Azuay):**

The nicest city in Ecuador. If you haven't been there yet—small townish atmosphere with some big city features (four movie theatres and two Supermaxis!), very colonial, several rivers,

lots of art, even small ruins. But a quiet nightlife.

### **EL CAJAS (Azuay):**

High paramo 1 1/2 hours from Cuenca. Over 200 lakes, trucha, craggy rock peaks, small fairytale forests. Spacey place.

### **SAN JOAQUIN-**

**SUSTAG (Azuay):** A bike ride from a village on the outskirts of Cuenca, then along a river, through eucalyptus groves, past adobe houses to a small pretty hacienda that serves good comida típica. Check out the quaint church and schoolhouse a bit further up the road.

### **SARAGURO SUNDAY**

**MARKET (Loja):** Another very visual traditional indigenous market. The clothing of both the men and women is very attractive and interesting. Good prices on antique tupos.

That's it. Excuse my lack of knowledge of the Oriente.

### **ENDQUOTES:**

"Plan to be breezy and aloof... Plan to be hotter than ever before in bed, and a little cold out of it." (Pam Houston, from *Cowboys Are My Weakness*, on how to make your man monogamous.)

"...my country snubs honest simplicity but fondles artistic villainy." (Mark Twain, 1861.)

"I'd rather live for a second than die for years." (Old punker Billy Ray Martin)

I recently read "In the Spirit of Crazy Horse" by Peter Mathiesson. It's about the many blatant murders in the 1970's of Native Americans by the FBI and the Bureau of Indian Affairs on South Dakota reservations, to rob them of their mineral rights and because of blatant racism. Not just verbal and physical abuse, but many murders. Mind-boggling that this shit is STILL happening. The FBI and CIA sued the author and publisher and kept the book off the shelves for eight years, but the Good Guys prevailed. Very suspicious behavior by the Bad Guys. Later.

by Barry Lazarus, Cuenca

# Cultural Insensitivity, Narrow-mindedness or just plain good taste?

This issue hit home one day in the kitchen. I was making my El Clima recipe-favorite **TunaBurgers™**. 'Course I've modified the original recipe a bit and put a bit of this, a lot of that, until I have **CAJUN TunaBurgers®** (Pat. Pending). Anyway, this isn't really the point of this already fluffy article.

For some reason I had bought a large bottle of an untested brand of *salsa de tomate*, just because it was s/500 less than my usual Ecuia-brand and bigger. (Call me cheap, call me a bargain shopper.) Well, I have had to suffer for my mistake for a month now. And I've come to the conclusion that you don't have to like everything to be culturally sensitive. In fact, it's not culturally insensitive to think an Ecuadorean product tastes like crap. When it comes to comparing a basic condiment, you don't have to be polite.

I want my **Heinz**.

It's not too sweet. (common in Ecuia-sup)

It's thick. (No comment necessary)

Hey! I've tried them all, worldwide: the States, Europe and here in Ecuador. Nothing comes close.

There's a parallel to be made in toothpaste. Likewise, I've tried brands from all around and what's my favorite? **Colgate**, regular flavor paste. No import prices; no cheap imitations; only the minor inconvenience of metal tubes. Cool! I can suffer.

Back to the point. Am I being culturally insensitive or narrow-minded? Hell no! If Ecuador had a catsup which blew away **Heinz Ketchup**, I'd drop **Heinz** in a heartbeat and whine about lacking the better product back in the U.S.

And no one can pin a narrow-minded label on me when it comes to trying unique things unknown in the States, like eating hamsters. (Oh, I guess I mean Guinea pigs. Whatever!?) I've been more than thrilled to try and enjoy such delicacies. *Cuy* is *super-sabroso* when well grilled, so the skin is as crispy as the bones.

So what's my solution? I don't know, I mostly just wanted to get this thick red stuff off my chest. If you let things bottle-up inside, you're apt to have a breakdown.

Maybe **Heinz** could create a Latin America division, but I fear that most Ecuadoreans wouldn't care enough to pay for what I feel is the best.



Karl Banks, Portoviejo •



# Watermelons Don't Grow in DESERTS

The hot winds peel and crack the desert wallpaper from the cactus condo; throwing sand in its eye, it passes by, whispering softly, "See ya. Wouldn't want to be ya!"

A roadrunner gets caught up in a race, blows by a gila monster and still manages to lose to a tumbleweed.

The sign out front says, "Take a Hike!" The Turtle won't even answer the door. Next time better to send a fax.

The rock stands stolidly, never budging an inch, laughing quietly with its finger in the air and occasionally spitting in the face of the wind.

The prairie dogs stay low-key in their underground resort complex; smoking cigarettes and playing dominoes beside the pool.

And somewhere, a man pulling a rickshaw gets a flat tire and curs-

es his luck, "dew neh loh moh on you and all your ox dung-eating generations to come!"

The snake slides by, the wind in his hair, warm smell of colitus, rising up in the air.

An armadillo sees opportunity knocking, opens the door and makes like his idol the 12-lb. Brunswick Black Pearl Classic, rolling across the emptiness: heading toward Los Angeles down I-10. Welcome to the jungle, baby.

It's just another desert story. Words of wisdom/nonsense from a voice faraway got me thinking: there's really no need for us (or at least, I) to impose any of the unnecessary guilt derived from the ever-present feeling of not fulfilling the work implied in "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love."

Writing of the fears about, and expectations of my ability as a Health Volunteer is the last thing anyone wants to read about, so I offer you this slice of senselessness as a reminder to not take life (at least the life you have here in Ecuador) so seriously. Many may be further along on this path to enlightenment . . . Wait for me, I'm coming.

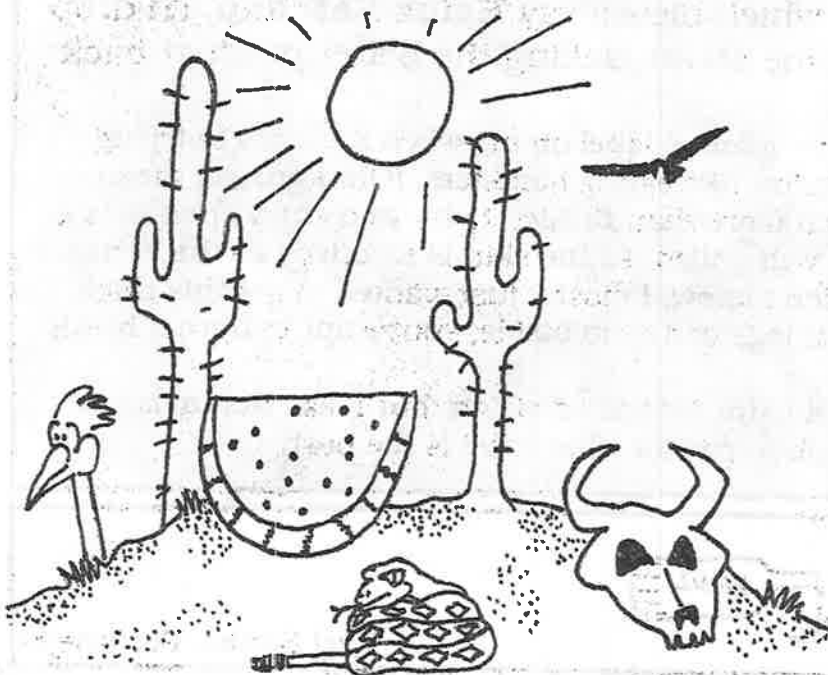
by Wendy Pearce, Membrillo

## ¡Only in Ecuador!

by Andrés Amador, Cuenca

Alright, here's the scene. I'm just finishing my meal at your typical Ecuadorean greasy spoon, the standard standby. Y'know the place: faded wallpaper peeling from the otherwise bare concrete walls, unintelligible music blaring from the straining speakers, Bruce Lee poster hanging from the wall, hard plastic roses on every table. The usual merienda: sopa of miraculously held together potato, choclo salad, jugo that would make a dentist's eyes light up with greed, pedacito de carne amid rice, rice, rice. Typical, but cheap and satisfying like a game of futbolín at S/200 per 5 balls, like a Salcedo ice-cream at the beach, like a booze-free night at the NO in Quito (if spirits are desired, buy them across the street).

I get up to pay. This tip from a different table gets up to help me but all I have is 10.000 sucres and he has no cambio. So he starts roaming the restaurant asking diners for change. Failing at that, he asks me to esperar un ratito while he casually saunters out of the restaurant and exits stage right. I don't think 'un ratito' needs expanding upon; being in the same category as 'mas allá' and 'claro, es agua hervida'; it's the phrase that the mind wants to rebel against but can do nothing but accept. So I esperar and rock back and forth, study the map on the wall, search for meat particles hiding out between my teeth with a dinky toothpick ("Untouched by hands" "From the choicest birch" as the box happily tells me. Now, am I supposed to be impressed? Who the hell cares what tree this palito was whittled from let alone the quality of the darn thing? I mean, is





there some quality control lady there, some fat inspector casting her discriminating eye, shrewd and uncompromising, standing hands on bulky hips, meeting every birch that enters, looking it up and down, tugging at its branches, poling a pudgy finger at the bark, finally drawing out her stamp and pounding a #6 on the tree fated to be swished around in the mouths of rebellious youths, stuck into cheap weenie and campo cheese snacks, used in searches of renegade bits of meat in the mouth of a certain guy patiently awaiting his suelto? and if so, why? I've yet to come across more poorly-made toothpicks than those hecho en Ecuador, ones that come in every shape and size from the same box (for the whole famn-damily, I guess), ones that are good for about two teeth before disintegrating in a pulpy mass, ones that just plain suck! Can they possibly be proud of these things?). I've now gone through about five toothpicks, memorized the entire map, topo lines and all, and nearly rocked myself to sleep when it suddenly dawns on me that, hey!, maybe that guy didn't work here after all! Why, maybe I've just been swindled out of my 10,000! I could just see it: this guy running down the street jumping up and clicking his heels together as he waves above his head my 10-spot, planning his night of wild abandonment thanks to a well meaning but woefully naive gringo.

Just then, another customer gets up to pay. Ha! You'll have to wait for that guy to come back with my change—but no! She's paying the woman who served us instead! Now what? Trepidly, I approach her and, feeling very stupid, try to explain that "the 'guy' had left about ten minutes ago with my 10 grand. And lo! The gods were smiling! More out of surprise from the request it seemed a genuine belief that I was telling the truth, her hand with the newly-placed payment slowly

came up as her eyes looked at me with this what-the-hell-am-I-doing-just-handing-dough-over-to-this-little-punk quiver. I took the money and got out as fast as I politely could, happy to be breathing metaphorically fresh air with my newly acquired bills in pocket.

I had gotten about a block towards my hotel when I

see this guy with one of those enormous bags of pink toilet paper (otherwise known as the amoeba special) walking towards the restaurant. Well, well, well, if it wasn't Sr. Cambio. Apparently he had decided to do the household shopping with my dinero. I could only smile and think "only in Ecuador."

## TRAVELLERS' TALES

By kind permission of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong, we offer the following selection of notices from around the globe. Offering light relief from the tedium of business travel, they provide ample proof that English is the lingua franca of the 20th Century.

- In a Bucharest hotel lobby:** The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time, we regret that you will be unbearable.
- In a Leipzig elevator:** Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.
- In a Belgrade hotel elevator:** To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order.
- In a Paris hotel elevator:** Please leave your values at the front desk.
- In a hotel in Athens:** Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. daily.
- In a Yugoslavian hotel:** The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.
- In an Austrian hotel catering for skiers:** Not to perambulate the corridor in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension.
- On the menu of a Swiss restaurant:** Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.
- On the menu of a Polish hotel:** Salad a firm's own make; limpid red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people's fashion.
- In a Hong Kong supermarket:** For your convenience, we recommend courteous efficient self-service.
- In a Bangkok dry cleaners:** Drop your trousers here for best results.
- Outside a Hong Kong dress shop:** Ladies have fits upstairs.
- From the Soviet Weekly:** There will be a Moscow Exhibition of Arts by 15,000 Soviet Republic painters and sculptors. These were executed over the past two years.
- In an East African Newspaper:** A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shape since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers.
- A sign posted in Germany's Black Forest:** It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose.
- In a Zurich hotel:** Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.
- In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist:** Teeth extracted by the latest methodists.
- In a Czechoslovakia tourist agency:** Take one of our horse-driven city tours — we guarantee no miscarriages.
- In the window of a Swedish furrier:** Fur coats made for ladies from their own skin.
- On the box of a clockwork toy made in Hong Kong:** Guaranteed to work throughout its useful life.
- In a Swiss mountain Inn:** Special today, no ice cream.

Submitted by Jean Seigle

## "Historia Del Taxista"

Lyrics translated by Italo  
Encalada and Jeff Colon,  
Machala

Eran las 10 de la noche piloteaba mi nave  
Era mi taxi un Volkswagen  
del año 78

Era un día de esos malos donde no hubo pasaje  
Las lentejuelas de un traje (the sequins of her dress)  
me hicieron la parada

Era una rubia preciosa llevaba mini falda  
El escote (part open in the back of the dress) en la espalda  
Llegaba justa a la gloria (butt)

Una lágrima negra rodaba en su mejilla (a black tear—as from heavy make-up—rolled down  
her cheek)

Mientras que el retrovisor (rearview) me hacia ver que pantorillas (sexy calves)

Yo vi un poco más

Eran las diez con cuarenta sigsageaba en reforma (weaving back and forth)

Me dijo "Me llamo Norma"

Mientras crusaba la pierna

Sacó cigarro algo extraño de esos que te dan risa

Le ofrecí fuego de prisa (se offered me some)

y me temblaba la mano

Le pregunté porque llora y me dijo por un tipo que se cree que  
por rico puede venir engañarme (thinks he can cheat on me because he is rich)

"Lo que yo se por amor debe levantarse" le dije

Cuente con un servidor (offered as volunteer service)

si lo que quiere es vegarse (if you want to make him jealous)

y me sonrió. . . ooooooooooooooooooooo

Que es lo que hace un taxista seduciendo a la vida

Que lo que hace un taxista construyendo un herida (injury)

Que lo que hace un taxista frente una dama

Que lo que hace un taxista con sus sueños de cama

Me pregunté. . . eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

"Lo vi abrazado y besando a una humilde muchacha

Es de clase muy sencilla

Lo se por su facha" (I saw him caressing and kissing a humble-looking, working-class woman—I  
could tell by her outfit)

Le sonreí en el espejo y se sentaba de lado

Yo, estaba idiotizada

Con el espejo empañado (steamed-up; fogged up)

Me dijo dobla en la esquina iremos hacia mi casa

Después de un par de tequillas veremos que es lo que pasa

Para que describir lo que hicimos en alfombra?

Si basta con describir que le bese hasta la sombra (kissed her head-to-toe) y un poco más [se ha ido  
de pozo].

No se sienta Ud. tan solo

Sufra aunque no es lo mismo (don't feel like before)

Mi mujer y mi horario

han abierto un abismo (my schedule has created an emptiness in my relation with my wife)

Como se sufre ambos lados de las clases sociales

Ud. sufre en su mansión; Yo sufro en los arravales (in the suburbs/barrios)

Me dijo "Vente conmigo que sepa no estoy sola"

Se hizo en el pelo una cola

Fuimos al bar donde estaba (lets go to the bar where he is)

Entramos precisamente el abrazado una chica (we came in

just as her husband was caressing another woman)

Mira si es grande el destino y esta ciudad es chica

Era mi mujer. . . . .

Que es lo que hace un taxista seduciendo a la vida

Que lo que hace un taxista construyendo un herida (injury)

Que lo que hace un taxista cuando un caballero

Hoy vive con su mujer en horario y esmero (dedicate your-  
self)

Me pregunté. . . . .

Que lo que hace un taxista con sus sueños de cama

Me pregunté. . . eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

Desde aquella noche ellos juegan a engañarnos

Se ven en el mismo bar

Y la rubia para el taxi siempre a las diez en el mismo lugar





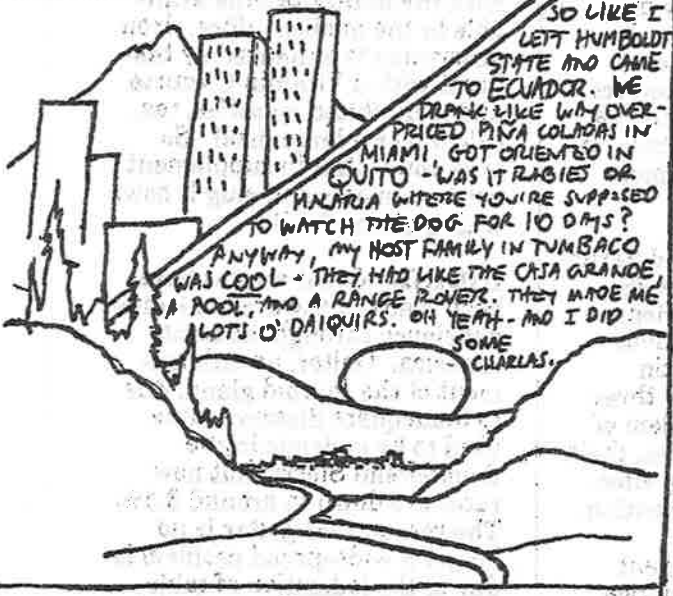
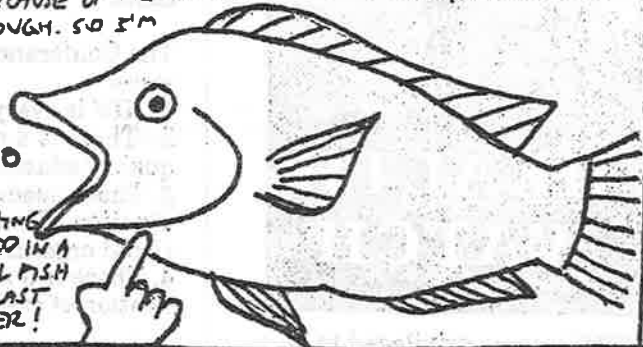
# EQUALAND



¡HOLA! YEAH, I'M LIKE ZENO, MEN VOLUNTEER IN THE FISHERIES PROGRAM. WE CALL IT FISH. YOU HAVEN'T MET ME 'CAUSE MY SITE IS LIKE ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, MAN... I'M FROM MINNESOTA - BUT LIKE I WENT TO SCHOOL IN CALIFORNIA. LIKE 90210. MAN. SO THIS IS KIND OF MY STORY...

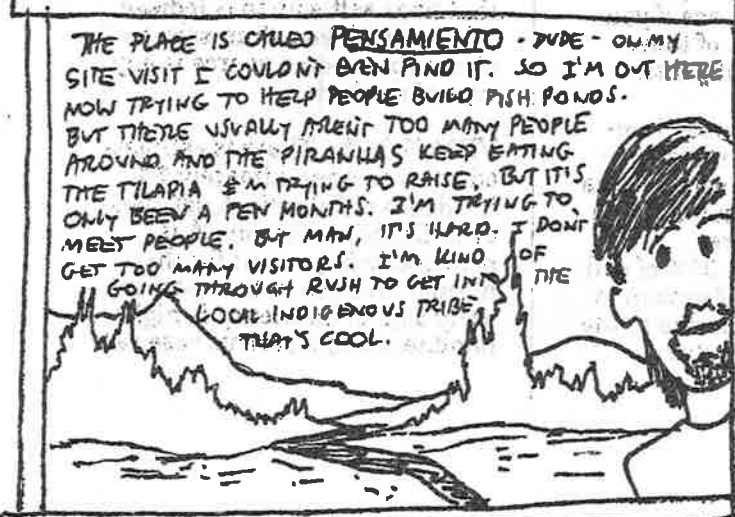
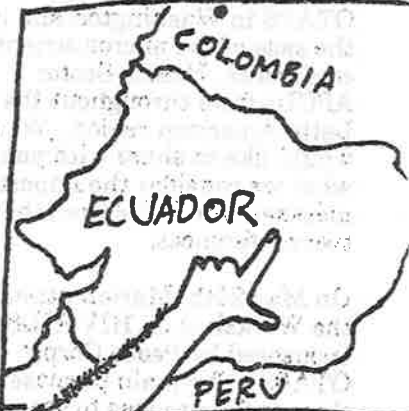
I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE WATER PROGRAM, BUT THEY LIKE CUT IT - SO THEY PUT ME IN FISH. BECAUSE OF THE BUDGET THEY COULD ONLY AFFORD ONE OF US, THROUGH. SO I'M IT.

GOOD THING I WORKED IN A TROPICAL FISH STORE LAST SUMMER!



SO LIKE I LEFT HUMBOLDT STATE AND CAME TO ECUADOR. WE DRANK LIKE WHY OVER-PRICED PINKA COLONAS IN MIAMI. GOT ORIENTED IN QUITO - WAS IT RABIES OR MALARIA W/HERE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WATCH THE DOG FOR 10 DMS? ANYWAY, MY HOST FAMILY IN TUMBACO WAS COOL - THEY HAD LIKE THE CASA GRANDE, A POOL, AND A RANGE ROVER. THEY MADE ME LOTS O' DAIQUIRS. OH YEAH - AND I DID SOME CHARLAS.

BECAUSE MY HOST FAMILY TOOK ME TO THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS A FEW TIMES, I REALLY WANTED TO BE ASSIGNED THERE, BECAUSE LIKE, IT KIND OF REMINDED ME OF MOLOKAI. BUT THEY SENT ME TO THE ORIENTE INSTEAD. AND I MEAN DEEP ORIENTE. MAN. WE'RE NOT TALKING NO TENA OR PUYO. THIS IS DEEP ORIENTE, DUDE. 20 HOURS BY BUS. 8 HOURS BY CANOE. 3 HOURS BY MOUNTAIN BIKE (BOULDERBUNGER), AND 2 HOURS BY BURRO. I WAS LIKE - WELL GUYS I GUESS I WON'T BE COMING INTO QUITO TOO OFTEN. DUDE - HOW 'BOUT A VIDEO OF MY JOB CONFERENCE?



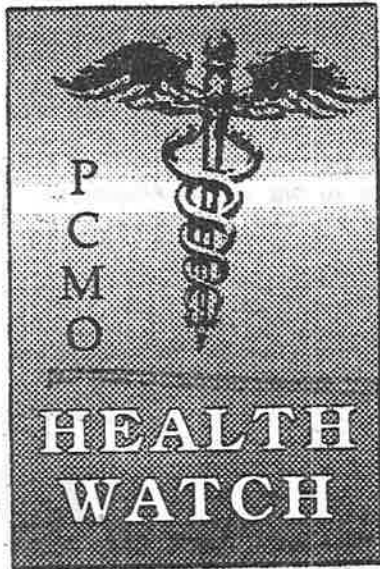
THE PLACE IS CALLED PENSAMIENTO - DUDE - ON MY SITE VISIT I COULDN'T EVEN FIND IT. SO I'M OUT HERE NOW TRYING TO HELP PEOPLE BUILD FISH PONDS. BUT THERE USUALLY MEET TOO MANY PEOPLE AROUND AND THE PIRANHAS KEEP EATING THE TILAPIA I'M TRYING TO RAISE. BUT IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW MONTHS. I'M TRYING TO MEET PEOPLE. BUT MAN, IT'S HARD. I DON'T GET TOO MANY VISITORS. I'M KIND OF GOING THROUGH RUSH TO GET INTO THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS TRIBE. THAT'S COOL.



THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER LIKE OUT HERE SOMEWHERE. I THINK IN CAMPO SERIO. I'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT. I JUST FINISHED BUILDING MY HUT. IT KIND OF SUCKS THOUGH. TOO MANY BUSH-MASTERS COME IN. (IT'S A SNAKE, MAN) SO WELCOME TO ZENO'S WORLD OUT HERE IN THE SELVA. COME VISIT ME. YOU'LL BE THE FIRST. LATER...

NEXT ISSUE: THE RAINY SEASON HITS AND ZENO TRIES TO FIND





PCMOs were privileged to be invited to two recent workshops sponsored by the Health Sector Program—a conference on AIDS and one on Micronutrients. These conferences were attended by PCVs working in these areas, Ecuadorean professionals, representatives from OTAPS in Washington and in the case of the micronutrient conference, Health Sector APCDs from throughout the Latin American region. We would like to share with you what we consider the important messages for PCVs from these two conferences.

On May 25th, Marian attended the Workshop on HIV/AIDS, sponsored by Peace Corps/OTAPS. The main purpose of this conference was to see just what is happening with AIDS education in Ecuador and determine how PC can work more effectively here. Various speakers guided the group through the history of HIV in Ecuador and the world. In Ecuador, there have been 955 confirmed cases of HIV since testing began in 1984, with rates on the increase in the past year. Ninety percent of HIV-infected persons in Ecuador are between the ages of 24 and 44.

Both the Ministries of Health and Education and many organizations in the private sector participated in the round table

and explained what their work is. PCVs explained a survey that was done here in Ecuador among 147 students, aged 15-24. This helped us to see the reality of sex education here and the future plans and strategies for PC and other organizations.

The Conference conclusions were:

1. HIV is everyone's concern.
2. There is a need for better quality education at all levels.
3. There needs to be closer coordination of local and international organizations.
4. There is a need for better utilization of resources--\$\$\$.

For PCVs--you need to realize that the virus is not only present here, but on the rise. In terms of prevention, we can only keep stressing the correct and consistent use of condoms with a monogamous partner, or abstinence. (It's getting more popular!)

On June 14th, Jackie and Sarah attended part of the OTAPS conference on Micronutrients. Peace Corps representatives from throughout the Latin American region met for three days to discuss the problem of micronutrient deficiencies, their diagnosis and to develop effective strategies for intervention.

The principal micronutrient deficiencies in Latin America and the developing world are deficiencies of:

1. Iron,
2. Iodine and
3. Vitamin A.

We encourage each of you to look at your diet to see if you are getting enough of these important micronutrients.

**IRON** - The problem of iron-deficiency anemia in Ecuador principally affects women (due to menses and frequent pregnancies) and children. Estimates are that 35% of children and 50-70% of women in Ecuador are anemic due to the lack of iron in their diets.

Consequences include weakness, fatigue, a decreased concentration and learning capacity, a decreased immune response and, especially in children, an increased risk of lead poisoning.

Remember that in Ecuador, flours and processed foods are not iron-fortified as they are in the U.S. Often PCVs drastically reduce their intake of red meat, which previously may have been their principal iron source. You will find iron in meats (especially organ meats), dark green leafy vegetables, eggs, legumes and whole grain breads and cereals. If you don't feel that you are getting enough iron in your diet, be sure to supplement with the multivitamins available in the medical office. Iron absorption is enhanced by taking it with a Vitamin C source and is inhibited by coffee, tea, calcium or a large meal. So take your vitamin supplement between meals and slug it down with a glass of OJ!!!

**IODINE** - Great strides have been made in the area of iodine deficiency throughout Latin America. Goiter, an enlargement of the thyroid gland, due to inadequate dietary iodine used to be endemic in the Ecuadorean Sierra, but now rates are down to around 3.5%. The reason that goiter is no longer a widespread problem is due to the iodization of table salt since 1972. The only risk of goiter currently exists in those people who use *sal en grano*, a cheaper salt source which is usually given to animals. This salt is not iodized. Make sure that your salt source is iodized table salt. If you shun salt, an alternative iodine source is any type of seafood.

**VITAMIN A** - There is estimated to be an approximately 7% incidence of Vitamin A deficiency in Ecuador. Vitamin A is principally important for the normal function of the eyes--an early sign of deficiency is night blindness and a serious case can

actually cause blindness. It also plays a role in the prevention of viral infections. Sources of vitamin A are meat, eggs, green or yellow veggies and fruits. Eat a varied diet and you'll be sure to get enough Vitamin A.

## Medical Announcements

In response to PCV concerns raised in the July VAC meeting, the following changes will be implemented:

1. Starting immediately, one PCMO will remain in the medical office during each Monday morning PC staff office meeting. This should alleviate the problem of absence of medical attention during the weekly staff meetings.

2. There is now an emergency First Aid kit stocked and kept at the guard station for after-hour/weekend PCV needs.

## Personal Safety Tips

There have been a number of recent reports of robberies and assaults on foreigners, both within and outside of Peace Corps. Several robberies have occurred in Guayaquil with a similar pattern in which the assailant grabs the victim around the neck while his partner robs him of his possessions. In Quito, there have been numerous robberies in the terminal area, as well as reports of drinks being drugged in order to later rob the person. In May, two American women were walking on the beach at night near Atacames and were raped. There were two burglaries of PCV houses in June.

During Training, a lot of time was spent on the issue of personal safety, so none of this is new.

As time goes on and we begin to feel comfortable, however, it's easy to get a little careless and not be as careful as one was at first. For this reason, we thought it would be a good idea to remind everybody of these personal safety tips. Most of the following comes from an article written by Jon Jelacic, a PCV, who worked for two years in Guayaquil.

Review this list from time to time and practice the measures or behaviors recommended in order to improve your basic personal safety. The following recommendations are in no particular order and they are not gender specific; they are as applicable to men as they are to women.

Don't be overly friendly with strangers. Remember, you are under no obligation to be polite in the urban areas.

If someone asks for the time, give it to them, but don't even break stride in the process.

If someone asks for change, tell them you don't have it. Again, don't even break stride.

If loiterers are near your home, don't hesitate to ask them, "¿Le puedo ayudar en algo?" Under such circumstances, this question is pretty much universally understood to mean, "What the hell are you doing around here?"

Be careful of any attention diverting techniques. There are many of them, for example...

- asking for the time
- asking for change
- small talk
- asking for help in picking up something someone "dropped."
- jerking of a handbag to rob a pocket, or jerking at a watch to rob a backpack, etc.

Though a robbery or assault can happen anywhere, there are certain places that are more "high risk." In Ecuador, these are: beaches, bus terminals, marketplaces or any crowded

area. When in these places, be extra aware.

When arriving at the terminal in Quito, it's best to budget an extra 10 mil and take a cab. If you do take a city bus, don't take a crowded one in which you'll have to stand. Wait for the next bus, preferably an *Ejecutivo*—it costs 250 sucres more, but you're guaranteed a seat.

If you have to walk through abandoned streets, and you should be able to avoid this most of the time, remember the following:

1. Practice observation skills, be ever aware of what's going on around you or some potential safe haven (wherever there are people). With some practice you will be able to sense a rat moving from a block away; I'm not kidding.

2. Furthermore, if you see someone, don't flinch, jump, or act startled. If your "on" to someone, it's good to let him/her know that with a calm glance, but not in a scared manner.

3. Don't act like prey. I know this is pretty obvious, but exceedingly important. Walk with confidence, but again, without calling excessive attention.

4. Don't stay too tight on the wall, nor in the middle of the street. The edge of sidewalks or just at the end of the reach of awnings are good because it gives you reaction time without calling too much attention to yourself.

5. If you think that you're being followed, don't keep staring over your shoulder. Get a look when you turn a corner. You'll probably have some options:

- stop at a tienda;
- stop at a well-lit house where you can see more than one person in a window; this is obviously a judgement call, but personal safety usually is;



- hide; or
- run.

Running is a calculated risk and my least favorite option. It works okay if you have somewhere to run to, or not far to go. Obviously, you're prey now.

When a friend gets you a taxi, or if you are the friend getting the taxi, make it obvious to the cabbie that you've got his license number and taxi coop name and number. Make this clear, even if you have to fake writing in front of his headlights or tell/ask

## VISUALIZE WHIRLED PEAS

him. Also, make sure the cabbie hears you say, "Te llamo en diez minutos." The fact that most Volunteers don't have phones is a mute point. (I'm told that taxis with normal, white plates are pirate taxis, so the coop name and number may be b.s. True or not, the plate numbers will always identify the owner of the vehicle.)

Make sure that you have all your personal possessions before getting out of the cab. If not, the cab could pull away with your luggage, camera or whatever you are carrying.

Wear little to no jewelry. Earrings, in particular, can be ripped out of your ears with no regard to tearing your lobes. It hurts and will probably not heal completely.

Open a bank account. It is not a good idea to keep your money stored in your house. Withdraw only the amount of money that you need.

Don't be flashy with personal belongings. For example, a nice walkman is a sign of wealth.

People won't be tempted to steal what they don't know exists.

Beaches and camping are dangerous here. We don't recommend camping at all. The beach, on the other hand, is nice and can be perfectly safe if you use your common sense and stay where people are. Under no circumstances should you walk alone and out of view of others. And under no circumstances, should you be on the beach at night.

In some cases it has worked to raise hell if you're getting robbed or if you think you may be getting robbed. You may wind up looking like an ass, but you may save yourself something too. Ecuadoreans do not appreciate theft any more than anybody else and I'm familiar with more than one incident of vigilante justice, or at least recuperation of lost goods due to citizens' action. This is particularly true for female victims. But be careful, if there is a chance of you getting hurt, then keep quiet and give up the money.

Keep your backpack in front of you. If that's too dorky for you, keep it on one shoulder, in front, with the same arm and hand guarding it.

Keep a tough face on, or at least, indifferent. Pretend you know exactly where you're going, even if you're completely lost. Don't stare at the tall buildings while walking. If the beauty just overwhelms you, stop for a Coke™ and admire, or sit on a bench.

Try not to be habitual in your arrival and departure times. Try to avoid patterns that may indicate if you are home or not (e.g., lights on or off, curtains opened or closed, etc.).

Obviously, well-lit routes are preferred, as are well-traveled or busier routes. It doesn't matter what Robert Frost says in this case.

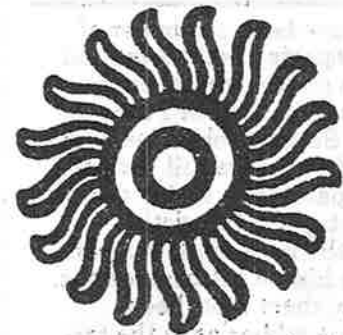
Be pals with your neighbors and get on their good side. This

shouldn't be difficult with Ecuadoreans, they usually love to get to know foreigners, especially folks from the EEUU. "Adopt" a family or have them "adopt" you and they will take care of you and watch out for your things; particularly when you're gone.

If you really get in good with them, and you should, they'll probably even lend you a child or family member to run to the store at night, or whatever. Ecuadoreans are very hospitable and are usually happy to help you out. Kids, in general, like the attention. Just be ready to return the favor someday.

Women, you had to be careful in the States, be even more careful here. We all stick out, if not because of appearance, then because of dress, behavior, etc. As in the States, you are perceived to be more vulnerable, and therefore, are more likely victims.

Just because you're a man, however, does not mean that you are safe. In fact, most of the recent assaults/robberies in the big cities have been on men. We think that this may be because the thieves feel it would be more likely that people will intervene if the victim is a woman.



Don't invite people in alone, unless you really know them. I mean really!!! There are ways to avoid embarrassment here. Invite friends, neighbors, whatever, in when you're having a guest. (Kids make good chaperones.) You can let neighbors know, stay out front, or leave windows and doors wide open. Be creative, but be careful.



Don't make assumptions about friendship between members of the opposite sex. The fact that men and women can be friends is a new concept here. Women, you must be especially clear with men on this topic. Be very careful that simple gestures of kindness and/or friendliness are not misconstrued. In most cases of rape (both in Ecuador and the States) the rapist and the victim are acquainted.

Men, being friends with Ecuadorean women may be a problem for you, but it's usually more reputation- than security-related. Of course, jealous boyfriends/husbands or protective male family members could make it a safety issue also.

Get many opinions on where it is and isn't safe to go. Trial and error is an exceedingly stupid learning method in this case.

Let people know, in general, that you live here, and are not a tourist.

In taxis, keep your window mostly rolled up. I've seen Ray Bans™ fly off faces and out windows in crowded streets with incredible speed.



Don't leave things around or set purses or backpacks down when you're in a public area.

Don't carry more money than necessary, and always split up large quantities. Never count money in public. Leave some "mugger pay" in your billfold. If it's completely empty, they'll figure it out and search you. Keep

small change apart from the rest of your money and use it for bus fare or small purchases.

You may want to consider keeping your *censo* and/or other documents away from your cash in case of robbery. They are a pain in the butt to replace and of little interest to thieves.

Night buses are a risk. While it is a pain to "lose" a day to an eight-hour bus ride, the chances that the bus will be held up (yes, it does happen), that you'll be in an accident, etc., are much less. Another good option is to take an *Ejecutivo* bus, which will not stop to pick people up en route.

Don't take candy from strangers. Yes, your mother was right. A common trick for robbing unwary travelers is to offer them a piece of drug-laced candy, wait until they are sound asleep and then rob them. A similar trick is done with drinks being drugged. People have been found wandering the side of the road without money, shoes, luggage, clothes; and have no idea how they got there.

Drinking affects your judgement. Everyone makes errors in judgement at times, but it isn't necessary to compound human error even more by virtue of being drunk. A drunk makes an easy target for thieves, or others interested in assaulting or robbing you. In a large percentage of the assaults and rapes involving PCVs here in Ecuador, either the victim, the assailant, or both had been drinking.

Report any crime within 48 hours. It will make the process much quicker and less painful.

Finally, in the worst case scenario, give a thief what they want. Nothing you could lose is more valuable than your life. Don't fight; try to stay calm.

**HAVE A SAFE TOUR!**

the PCMOs\*

# Peace Corps' Sexual Harassment Policy

Peace Corps' policy on sexual harassment was recently re-issued within the agency. Here is the text of the policy:

## PEACE CORPS' SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The Peace Corps is committed to maintaining high standards of conduct in the workplace and to providing all employees and Volunteers a work environment which is free from sexual harassment by other American or host country national Peace Corps employees, contractors, or Volunteers/Trainees.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. It is defined as unwelcome and unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and either verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or Volunteer service;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions (promotions, work assignments, etc.) or decisions regarding Volunteer status;
3. The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Each Peace Corps Volunteer/Trainee, employee and contractor is legally and ethically responsible to refrain from such unacceptable conduct in the workplace. Managers are responsible for taking immediate action to enforce this policy, to correct behavior or displays that may constitute sexual harassment, and to ensure that all Volunteers/Trainees, employees and contractors are advised of what constitutes unacceptable conduct through policy statements and/or training.

Volunteers/Trainees or employees who experience or observe behavior or displays that may constitute any level of sexual harassment should immediately notify their country director, supervisor, higher management authority, or an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor. If immediate action is not taken to stop the harassing activity or there are additional questions about sexual harassment, the matter should be brought to the attention of an EEO counselor within 45 days of the incident. An EEO counselor may be contacted by writing to the American Diversity Program Manager, Peace Corps, 1990 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20526.

submitted by Barry Bem,  
PTO•

## ALL-VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE

Hi. Rich Olson here. As the new VAC secretary, I'm working on organizing the *All Volunteer Conference*, tentatively scheduled for next January. If you would like to help or have any ideas for the conference (i.e., workshop topics, etc.), please contact me through the PC office (VAC Mailbox) or at my Casilla, 06-01-273, Riobamba. Thanks. •

# A Note on Funding Sources

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you are involved in transferring technology to your communities in many different ways. It may take the information form, such as implementing an accounting system, or it may take physical form, such as constructing a *chanchera* or installing a machine. Whatever the technology is to be transferred, care should be taken to insure that it is appropriate for your community.

Different economic and cultural backgrounds, educational levels and physical environments, and the gender of the beneficiaries present unique problems and require unique solutions. What is appropriate in industrialized countries may not be appropriate in developing countries; what is appropriate in one developing nation is not necessarily right for another; what works in one region of Ecuador may not work in another. In designing a project for women, you need to analyze the impact it will have on the men and children and vice-versa.

The problem of inappropriate technology may result, if Peace Corps Volunteers design solutions before adequately assessing their community, its problems and its obstacles. When outside ideas are imposed without first assessing their appropriateness, new problems may be created for the community and the PCV.

The key to avoiding this problem is to do a proper assessment and then to adapt technology to local needs. Applying the appropriate technology is very important when developing a project; any kind of project—PC Partnership, SPA, SDAA, or any other.

## SPA and SDAA

You all know about the SPA (Small Projects Assistance) program administered by Peace Corps. Funds come from AID (Agency for International Development), and PCVs can apply for up to \$5000 for small projects within certain guidelines. The mechanism for obtaining SPA funds is rather cumbersome, and budgetary problems in AID worldwide may make SPA funds unavailable or very late this year. And SPA funds may disappear completely in the future.

To replace SPA, Peace Corps and AID/Ecuador have come to an agreement to make more funds available for small projects and to make it possible to receive the funds faster than in the past.

As most of you know, AID has its own small project fund called SDAA (Special Development Activity Authority). It is similar to the SPA fund but has slightly different criteria; but these criteria will be expanded to accommodate PC proposals. A few PCVs have already obtained funds from SDAA. We have agreed that the SDAA fund will reserve a MINIMUM (not a maximum) of \$50,000 for PCV projects this year, and the funds are available now. Ten proposals that PCVs have submitted to SPA have already been approved by the SDAA committee, and additional projects are in the works.

AID welcomes PCV proposals. One of the past problems with the SDAA fund is that AID does not have the people to monitor and supervise the projects closely. They are delighted to have a PCV involved in each project, because they feel there will be a better chance for successful projects. However, communities may also submit proposals to AID without the presence or participation of a PCV.

All of your proposals should go directly to Cecilia Rueda at Peace Corps, on an application different from the one we have used in the past. The usual SPA



committee will consider the proposals. All approved proposals will then go to the SDAA committee at AID (Barry Bem currently sits on this committee) but will automatically be approved unless there is some unusual problem. As far as you are concerned, therefore, you can continue to submit proposals to Peace Corps, and Cecilia will continue to work with you from the beginning to the end of your projects.

#### **Partnership Program**

You should all have information on this program and how to use it. Cecilia can give you information if you need it.

#### **Trickle Up**

This was a very small fund for small projects, but it has come to an end. No more funds are available.

#### **FISE (Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia)**

The Ecuadorean Government created this fund so that any community in the country may apply for funds to finance community projects—water systems, latrines, schools, health centers, etc. Some PCVs have been very involved in helping their communities develop and submit the proposal to FISE and then in helping implement the projects. Every project must have an engineer as the contractor, and PCVs are not allowed to be the contractors; but PCVs can certainly be involved in developing the projects and even in obtaining the information on how to apply. The critical part of PCV participation is that it involve teaching community members how to determine project priorities and how to access funding sources.

We are often concerned about funds like SPA, because communities only have access to the money through a PCV. FISE (as well as SDAA) is available to any community and is not dependent on the presence of a PCV. However, many PCVs have said that they need to find funds somewhere to help finance small projects in their communi-

ties, and FISE is a good place to look. The main FISE office is in Quito.

#### **Gifts-in-Kind**

You also have information about this program, based out of the PC Washington. However, please note that this project has been suspended due to reductions in staffing in PC/Washington. Any current requests already in the works will be handled, but no new requests will be accepted for the time being. We are working with the IA Region to determine whether there is a way we can facilitate a surrogate program. We'll keep you posted.

#### **Cecilia Rueda, Project Coordinator\***

We, at El Clima, think now is as good a time as any to put our thoughts on paper for the new Volunteers from Omnibus 73 and the Trainees from Omnibus 74, who will be arriving shortly, as well as all current Volunteers. Thanks to all of you who submit your work. Your efforts make the El Clima a "must-read" for all of us.

Due to budget and time constraints, we prefer issues to be under 50 pages in length. Because of this, we'd prefer that submissions be kept concise/to-the-point to accommodate everyone's requests for publication. We have no word limit for articles, but exceedingly long articles may be condensed, if necessary.

Ideally, submissions sent to us on Macintosh disks, typed in Microsoft Word, are preferred. IBM (WordPerfect or Microsoft Word) files, with hardcopy, and hand-written articles will be accepted. Disks will be returned after use.

Thanks again. We look forward to continued, active Volunteer and Staff participation.

**El Clima Editorial Staff\***

## **Emergency Contact System: An Update**

I want to thank all Volunteers for their positive response to our updating of emergency contact forms and revising the emergency contact system. The new Emergency Contacts, the PCVs responsible for contacting people in their province, and their assistants have done good work in updating information, contacting PCVs under their supervision, and figuring out how to contact all PCVs in an emergency.

By the time you read this, we will have conducted a simulated emergency—calling the Emergency Contacts and telling them to call everyone. The purpose was to test the system and see whether we could make contact with every PCV in Ecuador, how long it took to do so, and to discover any bugs in the system.

You will hear us remind you every chance we get to keep your emergency contact form up-to-date—not only changes in site but also changes in address or telephone number or agency. We do not have national emergencies very often, such as the conflict between Ecuador and Perú. More often we have to contact a Volunteer because of a family emergency in the U.S., and we need to make contact quickly. Most of the time we can contact a Volunteer without difficulty from the information on the emergency contact form.

We, therefore, appreciate your updating your form constantly. María Eugenia Cobo is the keeper of the forms. In summary, thanks for your cooperation.

**Barry Bem, PTO\***





# Contacting Peace Corps in an Emergency

## A Change in the System

As all of you know, someone on the Peace Corps Staff is always on-duty to handle emergencies when the office is closed. This duty is currently rotated among senior staff members each week. The nurses (PC Medical Officers), however, carry their own beepers to handle all medical emergencies. The program managers, when they are on-duty, cannot travel for an entire week. Because we fortunately have so few emergency calls, we think it is unnecessary to tie up their schedule in this way.

Therefore, we are changing this system as of July 1, and we hope the system will be easier, both for you and for the Staff. Instead of beepers, we will use cellular telephones. This will increase the geographical range of contact dramatically. One of the Medical Officers will always carry a telephone and will be the first point of contact for all off-hour emergencies. She will make a decision about what steps to take after talking to the Volunteer.

You only need to know the following three rules:

1. During office hours, you should call the Peace Corps office directly for any reason—emergency or routine, medical or other. The numbers are the same as always, listed on your yellow card. Ask for the person who can most directly help you. Normal office hours are: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

2. For emergencies only outside of office hours, call this telephone number: (09) 494-018

Always make sure to dial the "09" first. One of the Medical Officers will answer and will handle your emergency. Each telephone call is expensive. Therefore, this number is only for emergencies outside of normal office hours. For any reason other than an emergency, follow rule #1 above.

3. If the office is closed and you cannot reach the emergency number, call the numbers listed on the yellow card for the Medical Officers, the Country Director, the PTO, your Program Manager, or anyone else on the list. These are home telephone numbers.

For a short transition period, until all PCVs know about this new telephone number, the answering service numbers and our beepers will still be functional. However, after August 1, we will no longer use the answering service and the beepers, and you will only be able to contact Peace Corps after hours through the emergency telephone number.

If you have any questions about this system, please talk to Ana María Castro or María Eugenia Cobo during office hours. \*

## Peace Corps Fellows Program Not Seeking Candidates This Year

Because of budgetary constraints, the Peace Corps Fellows program will not seek any candidates this year. Under this program, two returned PCVs are chosen to work in the PC office in Washington for one year, to gain experience and training, and then they are assigned as APCDs somewhere in the world. For the coming year there will be only one Fellow, who has already been selected. Depending on the budget for FY96, a nomination/selection process may be conducted again next year. \*

## Carbon Monoxide Exposure: Safety Message from the Embassy

Carbon Monoxide exposure from an unvented, gas-fired hot water heater has been linked to a recent fatality of a U.S. Government employee living in leased quarters overseas. Some residences may have water heaters which use propane gas. This type of hot water heater is often located on walls in bathrooms, kitchens or laundry rooms. Most lack flues for proper venting of exhaust gases to the outside.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, non-irritating gas that is produced by the burning of fuels such as kerosene, gasoline, propane, or natural gas. Low level exposure can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, drowsiness, and impaired judgement. Individuals often mistake carbon monoxide poisoning for other illnesses. At higher concentrations, carbon monoxide can cause vomiting, loss of consciousness and death. Often the onset of serious symptoms is rapid and there is little warning. Victims commonly die in their sleep.

Please check the source of hot water in your house. Most residences in Quito have electric hot water heaters, however if you do have a gas hot water heater, contact GSO immediately for a safety inspection. \*

## Aviso to Omnibus 70

A reorder of our Omnibus' t-shirts is being made; anybody interested in taking a new t-shirt home, send a note to Ruth Navarrete, Casilla 413, Portoviejo, including size and number of t-shirts you want A.S.A.P. The price will depend on the size of the order, and we can't place it unless it is for 30 or more shirts. \*

# Master's International Programs FYI

The *Master's International Program* was created in 1987, to establish partnerships between Peace Corps and universities offering graduate-level studies in "scarce skills assignment" areas. Students enter graduate school, complete their academic work, and enter Peace Corps as a capstone experience to their graduate program. These programs are currently in the fields of Forestry, Urban Planning, TEFL, and Public Health.

The *MI Program* has grown dramatically in the last year, particularly in the area of Public Health. There are 11 schools currently offering MPH degrees in partnership with Peace Corps. Among them are: University of Alabama, Boston University, George Washington University, UC-Berkeley, Loma Linda University, University of North Carolina, and Tulane University.

At this time, there are 42 currently-serving PCVs who are *Master's International* students. Over half of these students are in *Master's of Public Health* programs and are assigned to PC Health programs, which require specialized skills in Health and Nutrition. In the upcoming Summer '95 quarter alone, there are 39 *Master's International* students, 20 of whom are assigned to such health projects. As the *Master's International Program* grows, the Peace Corps has for the first time been able to meet 100% of the requests in the "specialized scarce skill" area. •

Peace Corps Manabí is really excited that it finally has enough Volunteers to actually write a *Provincial Poop*.

Thanks, of course, to the war, Manabí has been blessed with two Loja refugees **Karl Banks** and **Mark**

**Blaha**. **Mark**, was the gracious host of a 4th of July fest in his little fishing

pueblo of San Vicente, where many gringo skinnydippers were reportedly seen. When asked about it, **Mark** said, "No comment," and reportedly turned up his Jimmy Buffett.

**Karl Banks** just landed a record deal with the local Portoviejo refrigerator vendors and got *regalo'd* four glasses along with it — "No more jelly jars!" If you're passing through Portoviejo, you know where to go for a cold glass of beer.

A special warm welcome to **D.J. Gallagher**, from Omnibus 73, the latest addition to Port. He seems to be adapting well to Coastal life. When asked if he knew the city bus routes yet, he replied, "I don't know man, I just get on one and if it's not going where I want to go, I get off!"

**Diego VanValkenburg** is happy that his *Ecu*-friends are back from the war so he can enjoy their company for an afternoon *fútbol* game, while his neighbor, **Gene Martin**, moves up in the world to a new apart-

## Manabí Provincial Poop

ment, with water! Hopefully this place will be rodent-free, huh **Gene**!?

Soon-to-be-COSing, **Ruth Navarrete**, has recently gotten her second wind as a PCV but is still undecided about her post-PC plans. Will she go back to the land of coffee and emeralds, Colombia; *gringo*-land; or should she just stay and marry a Manabitan? Speaking of staying, is that what **Shelby Smith** will be doing with the recent rock band success we've all been hearing about? Hey, **Rock 'n Roll Doctor**, don't you think you should get on down there and give a review?!

**Wendy Pearce** has recently been seen in bliss since her steady's (PCV from Uruguay) arrival to the lands of Ecuador.

**Tricia Culverhouse**, our perpetual parasite host (though no lab can culture a thing), just returned from an "excellent" visit to Colombia and says, "The food is better, the taxi-drivers are honest. I wish they had PC-Colombia!" •



## ¿COMO?

*"So much that we had to cancel a whole program."*

**Anonymous**, bathroom graffiti on a sign saying "Please do not remove rolls of toilet paper. Loss of rolls is costing PC Ecuador lots of money..."

.....

*"Oh man, you should come to my site. Everyone there is **so** sick."*

**John Clarke**, after finding out PCV Tricia Culverhouse is a nurse.

.....

*"Who knows, maybe I'll stay here and become a star."*

**Shelby Smith**, discussing her secondary project, singing in a band.

.....

*"Well you know, its like water, it's there, you're thirsty, you drink it."*

**Pam Leamons**, comparing sex to (unboiled) water, while explaining why many Volunteers break their abstinence vows.

.....

*"They're just plants, man."*

**Andrew Reitz**, on why he's not impressed by the rare frailejones, plants only found in Northern Ecuador.

.....

*"I know, and I like it cuz everyone goes inside."*

**Kendall Ligon**, on the frequency of rainy days in her site.

.....

*"It was dark... I didn't know what I was doing."*

**Dwight Wilder**, trying to explain what he was doing in a shrimp pond with a World Teach® Volunteer.

.....

*"He's harmless...he's married."*

**Charlie Tamulonis**, putting Kendall's mind at ease about an overly friendly Ecuadorean man.

.....

*"I guess every article needs a boring paragraph."*

**Tricia Culverhouse**, critiquing JCV's travel submission.

.....

*"Just because he does latrine projects he thinks he can be a shit."*

**Linda Schultz**, describing Jay W. Carter III.