

EL CLIMA

JUNE/JULY A PEACE CORPS ECUADOR PUBLICATION 1996

SPECIAL TRAVEL ISSUE



INSIDE:
An Editor's Final Jab
Mark Blaha Breaks the Silence
Steve Green Saves the Day
Multiple Welcomes to O'75

¿COMO?

"Well, if I was starvin' I'd eat it."

Penny Davis, on the joys of campo cheese.

.....

"I'm gonna freeze my butt off up there . . . they call it el clima."

Debbie Lepo, on her highest altitude site.

.....

"Hey, where's the 'Bill Clinton' farewell article?"

Swift Chris Schutz, futilely searching the last El Clima after reading the April Fool's cover highlights.

.....

"Hay muchos peces en el mar."

Steve Green, relating his philosophy of life.

.....

"I no longer drink from thirst, I drink to survive."

Rebecca Bond, surviving.

.....

"All I need is a spoon and a machete."

A fine dining tip from **Aaron Coby**.

.....

". . . And you can fill 'em with spices to make a great potpourri . . ."

Matt "large economy-size" Mercer, planning festive alternative uses for his med-kit condoms.

.....

"You'd be amazed at how far your body can get you."

Penny Davis, stating the obvious.

.....

"I'm just not much of a screamer."

Tricia Culverhouse, during George Walker's Personal Safety Integrated Job Conference seminar.

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"Oh shit, I have a boy/girlfriend at home, don't I?"

Spoken by many on the night of the **Omnibus 75** swearing-in celebration.

-Compiled by the El Clima Staff



EL CLIMA

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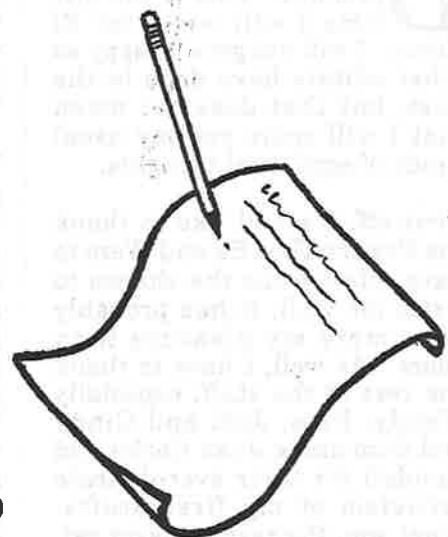


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SPEAK EASY

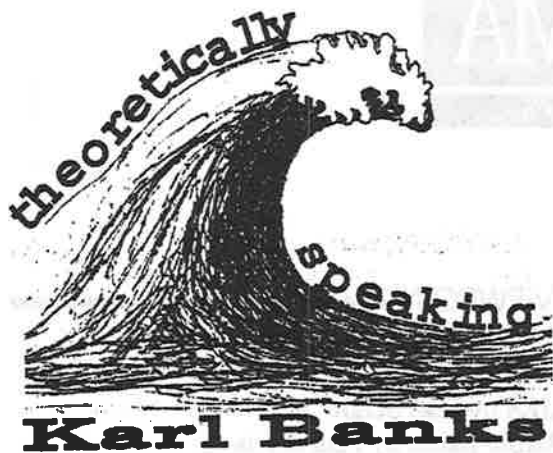
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Disclaimer, warning and promise: This is the last time I will write for El Clima. I will not get all sappy as other editors have done in the past, but that does not mean that I will spare you my usual tirade of egotistical thoughts.

First off, I would like to thank the Powers That Be and Were to have allowed me the chance to write for y'all; it has probably been more my pleasure than yours. As well, I have to thank the rest of the staff, especially Wendy, Pete, Jodi and Cindy and from *antes*, Juan Carlos and Kendall for their ever-delicate criticism of my first drafts. What you, the reader, never get, is a taste of just how rough I can be when I first sit in front of the computer to attack the latest thorn in my side. These people, with the input of Jean, Barry and Paul, have helped to make my writing kinder, gentler and the effect of that is that everyone doesn't think I am a total asshole. At least no one tells me so to my face.

Still, I have always tried to maintain my integrity. The Beastie Boys say it well: **"Be true to yourself and you will never fall."**

This is my last issue mostly because I was offered an early

COS; seeing that my work is done, there is absolutely no reason for me to hang out as free labor. Jeez, what I've written so far sounds so negative. Let me dispel that. I loved being a Peace Corps Volunteer. Really. For me, life in the States was too structured. I am the type who works on my own schedule; I'm not satisfied unless things are perfect

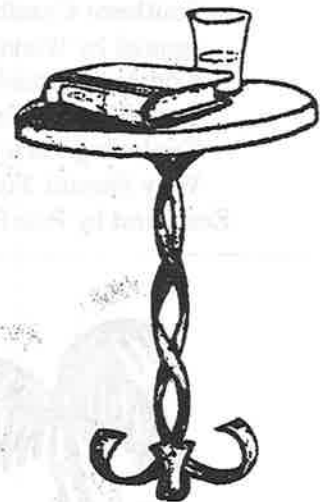
and I have a strong drive to accomplish. But (you could tell a 'but' was coming, couldn't you?), while part of the motto is "**Work Hard**," the other half is a strong "**Play Hard**."

This philosophy has been perfect for me down here in Ecuador. There were months that my primary work was at a dead standstill due to a bureaucratic mire against which I am powerless. I had time to wait. So I became involved in a secondary project, in a gorgeous place called Vilcabamba, where I was able to work directly with the people involved in the project, doing professional work, like designs and technical consulting, as well as sifting sand from river gravel, mixing concrete, carrying and, in general, gaining that sense of belonging to a community that I lacked in my primary work situation.

For my friend who complains of the lack of community-feeling working with a large development agency, I try to help and make her see the bigger picture and what we as Volunteers can and cannot do to make our lives here more satisfactory. One must remember that truly one controls one's own happiness. If a Volunteer still does not understand this, I can only suggest seeking the way through the wisdom many brilliant authors have left us. This is not only a way to

pass the idle time, but a chance you might never have again for the rest of your life, running the rat race, to expand your horizons and your mind.

For the budding writers, I recommend all John Irving's books and Foucault's Pendulum, by Umberto Eco. Shogun, by James Clavell, provides some insight into how Western and Eastern philosophies differ, and is very entertaining to boot. Walden, by Henry David Thoreau, will quench the Naturalist and Sustainable System Theorist in you. The Dune series, by Frank Herbert, covers it all: religion, prescience, environment, *agua=vida*, drug-dependence, mind and body perfection, individual regeneration and the Messiah Prophecy, as well as being extremely well-written science fiction. The Source, by James Michener, is a must-read for those interested in the proba-

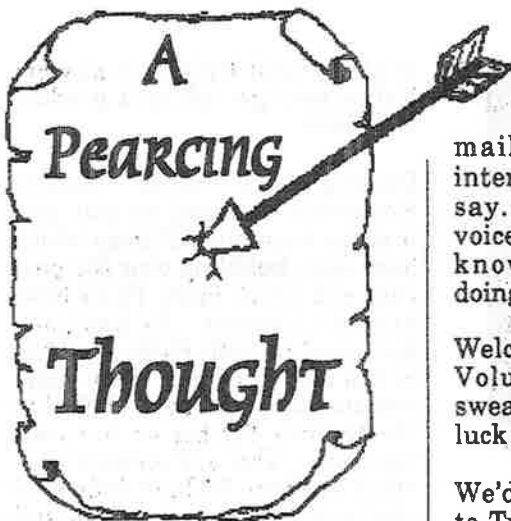


ble account of the development of Western religion. White Noise, by Don DeLillo, provides insight into our American culture, provoking ideas relevant to us all. Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged, both by Ayn Rand, expound the value of quality in thinking, work and living, show-

ing how the buyers, politicians, consumers and brokers are nothing without the creative thinking and engineering of society's intellectuals. Blue Highways, by Mr. Least Heat Moon, is a wonderful tale of a trip around our nation and the common threads that can be found in all of us. Other philosophical titles I recommend are: The Bagavaad-Gita, The Tao of Poo, The Way of the Peaceful Warrior, The Celestine Prophecy (to be taken with a grain of salt) and The Dancing Wu Li Masters. Two excellent books on love are The Art of Loving, by Erich Fromm, and Letters to a Young Poet, by Rilke. For a new twisted view of the world, there are the complete works of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.; especially, Jailbird and Slaughterhouse 5. Then of course, for really delving into language and geography, everyone should have an English dictionary with etymologies and an atlas. For world statistical data, the Almanac can provide hours of edification. For good historical fiction of northeast North America's indigenous, I highly recommend The Leatherstocking Tales, by James Fenimore Cooper—start with The Deerslayer. And finally, if development hang-ups and governmental inefficiency weren't made for reading those imposing volumes like War and Peace, Pride and Prejudice, Great Expectations, The Great Gatsby, 100 Years of Solitude, The Communist Manifesto, Mein Kampf, Gravity's Rainbow, Ghandi, Contract With America and Iacocca, I don't know what is.

So, besides telling y'all how I spend my free time, my point is that your Peace Corps experience is yours, and if you waste it, get upset, go home or stay and suffer, you really have no one to blame but yourself.

Adiós Amigos. *Nos vemos por el otro lado*•



Wow, another month come and gone. We're already at the end of May and it's time again for El Clima prep. This is the last issue with Karl and I as Co-Editors, as he'll be COSing early. I never thought I'd be sad when it came time to say ¡Chao! to Ecuador but with my friends starting to make plans to leave before the end of October and the days that seem to fly by, I've noticed my feelings have changed. It's amazing what insight 22 months here can provide you with.

Just wanted to say good-bye to Karl and to Pete, who turned in his title with the completion of the last issue. I know it sounds corny, but I've really enjoyed the work we've done together and the friendships that have come from our El Clima connection. It's always been difficult for me to see things come to an end but I'm optimistic and hope that the future will bring us together again, someday. Good luck to the both of you as you return home.

After the August/September issue of El Clima, I too, will pass the torch to a new Editor and staff. My only wish is that the pride I take in this publication will be part of what is received and that others can benefit as I have with what the El Clima allows us to do: voice our opinions as Volunteers. So, as usual,

I'll request that those entries continue to make their way to our mailbox in Quito. We're all interested in what you have to say. If you don't say it, that voice is muffled. Please, let us know what you're thinking, doing or experiencing.

Welcome to the newest group of Volunteers from Omnibus 75, swearing in this weekend. Good luck in your sites!

We'd like to dedicate this issue to Travel. Thanks to our roving reporters and their observations. Hope the information is relevant and utilized, now (with pre-approved vacationing, of course) or in the future. And if you've been somewhere we haven't covered, send us your travel notes for a future issue. •



El Clima is a bimonthly magazine by and for the Peace Corps community of Ecuador and beyond. Opinions expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily the opinions of the El Clima staff, the Peace Corps or the United States Government.

Co-Editors - Karl Banks and Wendy Pearce
 Art Director - Cindy Chin
 Copy Editor - Jodi Hammer
 Layout - Andrés Amador, Ron Krupa and Steve Green
 Typing - Julie Johnson

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VIEWPOINT →



May 31st. The sun shown brilliantly against Pichincha this morning. I'd been worried that it would continue raining as it did so copiously yesterday. But the Andean heavens smiled on us today as we welcomed a new group of 50 Volunteers to the proud tradition of Peace Corps service. It was an especially moving ceremony for me, the last that Ambassador Peter Romero will attend as he moves on to his next assignment. I know that as Volunteers; you have little to do with the Embassy, and that's as it should be. However for me, Peter Romero has been just the right kind of Ambassador. He understands and cares about grass roots development. He was incredibly supportive to Peace Corps when we had to find and relocate 25 PCVs during the border conflict last year. He and his wife Ruth have shared their Thanksgiving table with Volunteers. Peace Corps wishes him well. The new Ambassador designate is awaiting Congressional clearance hearings. I'll keep you posted. And so the cycle of comings and goings which punctuates our lives continues. Omnibus 75 joins the Peace Corps Ecuador family. You'll find PCV Sean D'Souza's speech, given at the Swearing-In Ceremony in this El Clima. His thoughts are a wonderful reflection of the promise of PC service. To you more experienced PCVs, please welcome Omnibus 75 to your corner of the

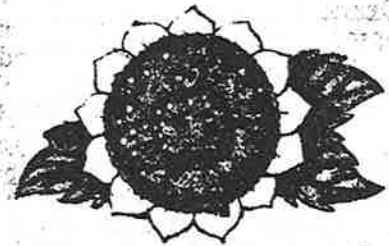
country and help our newest Volunteers get off to a productive start.

During the most recent Preservice training we put into practice a number of ideas which have been bubbling over the past year and which many PCVs have helped to create. As has been discussed by both Pablo and Tim in the last El Clima, much more responsibility has been shifted to the trainee for his or her own learning. The evaluations provided by Omn. 75 have indicated that we're on the right track and thus, we will continue to move in this direction. We have involved the trainees much more in site selection, especially in integrated sites. (See Pablo's article all about site selection). Integrated or "clustered" sites are those where the Volunteers will be collaborating on their projects. Each site presents a somewhat different picture. In some cases, the PCVs are assigned to the same agency, sometimes not. In some cases, the PCVs are in the same site; more often than not, they are placed in neighboring small communities. The amount of collaboration is also an individual matter. However, the Agencies or communities are aware of the plan. Not only is technical collaboration the expected outcome, mutual support is just as important an outcome. Because the trainees were involved in choosing to be in integrated sites, we hope that this clustering model results in a positive experience. It offers the opportunity for co-problem solving, shared technical skills and the immeasurable benefits of just plain friendship. We'll look at how these placements work, and proceed accordingly. We know that there is ample reason to co-place PCVs who don't necessarily train together, such as Ag. and Health PCVs. If you think this clustering idea makes sense for the future, in your site, please talk to your APCD about it. Thanks to Francisco, Nelson and Jorge for all the hard work

that went into setting up this new system.

We have continued to work at balancing our site placements, regionally speaking. A snapshot taken today reveals 41 PCVs on the Coast, 96 in the Sierra (13 now in Loja), 13 in the Oriente and Scott in the Galapagos.

The Follow-up conference for Omnibus 74, and the Integrated Job Conference for Health, Special Ed., Youth, Water and Housing PCVs took place in April. The Volunteer coordinators of the IJC did a great job; thank you. They have given us excellent concrete suggestions for the next one. Based on the evaluations, we are looking for a new location for the next IJC the last week in October. The Gallery Walk, Project Resource Fair and Integrated Workshops (presented by PCVs) were most highly rated. Observing these Workshops and the Resource Fair was really gratifying. Here were Volunteers sharing their knowledge, dance skills and experiences with one another; the energy was contagious. Thanks to all of you who participated.



We talked about Sector Coordinators at the IJC. I'd like to clarify where we are going with this concept. Many other countries have had a system like this in place for years. It usually functions well, given all the obvious variety that individual PCVs and APCD add to the mix. The basic idea is for a third year Volunteer to work closely with an APCD to provide

support to newer PCVs, help with site selection, project monitoring and administration, conferences, etc. The PCV might be working out of the Quito office, or might remain in his/her site. We are approaching this very flexibly here in Ecuador, looking to find a plan that works both for management and the PCVs who are interested in doing this kind of work. It may be that we go with Coordinators who only work with PCVs from one project (i.e. Ag. or Health), or we may have a Coordinator who supports all the PCVs in one Region or area, regardless of their technical project. Or we may have a combination. In June, we will be selecting Coordinators who will begin their third year extension in November. Currently Karin Chamberlain is working with Jorge as a Regional Coordinator, helping him with numerous support and planning functions. We want to avoid adding more bureaucracy to PC/E, but rather improve our support to our Volunteers. I'll keep you posted as things evolve.

It is great to have Cecy back with us. She reports that both she and her baby boy are doing just fine. I want to thank Pablo, Ana Maria and Xavier for picking up all the Special Projects work load. And to Sylvana, for picking up all the rest of Cecy's duties. The extra efforts are greatly appreciated.

Here we are in the middle of the election season in both the U.S. and Ecuador. I want to say just a word about how the election might impact you in your communities. The main effect may simply be a slow down in certain "business as usual" activities. Please remember that as members of the Peace Corps, it is our responsibility to avoid any involvement in politics.

I don't have anything concrete to report in regard to next year's budget. Our budget submission was well received by the IA

Region, and now we await their response, as they await the Regional budget figures from the Agency Director . . . all part of the normal budget process.

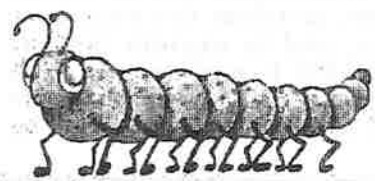
Let me wrap up with some field notes: Health PCVs Nicole Dino, Pam Leamons and Corinne Manning delivered a number of very well-received sessions at the First International Conference on Geriatrics, sponsored by the University of Loja. Hands-on field work during the conference was conducted in Vilcabamba. Makes sense.

The two leading California Condor specialists came to Ecuador to train INEFAN park guards and PCVs in Condor monitoring and habitat protection. The week-long training was very effective and included the sighting of a mother condor feeding her babe at their nest near Papallacta.

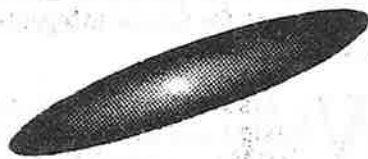
I visited Jane Moore in her site of San Rafael, Carchi. Jane is finishing up her third year. The richness of her accomplishments was inspiring. An Agriculture Volunteer (and previously a PCV in Costa Rica), Jane has introduced many non-traditional crops, fruit trees and grating techniques to her community. Two self-sustaining cuy and pig projects, although not as pretty as the orchards, were the pride and joy of her Women's group. Great work, Jane.

A final thought to Omnibus 75 . . . no question, the beginning of one's service can be tough. Trust in your own abilities and those of your fellow Volunteers to solve problems. Let your APCD hear from you when necessary. Enjoy.

Best to you all. Stop in to say hello when you're in Quito. *

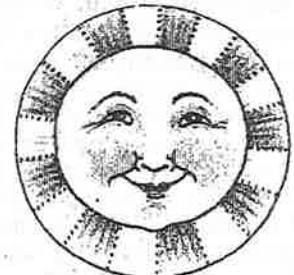


hablo pablo



by PTO Pablo Davis

Let me begin by filling you in on some recent events. We just completed Part One of a two part Gender and Development (GAD) workshop in Tumbaco. There were about 30 participants made up of Volunteers and counterparts from various programs and omnibii and PC staff and their counterparts. The workshop, which was actually a workshop within a workshop, was very useful and satisfying for all involved. On the first day, Susana Pico de Silva, with assis-



tance from Miguel Artola and Jorge Delgado led the participants through Gender Analysis exercises, which the participants then implemented the following day with two community groups in Salcedo (Russell Harris' site). On the third day the participants reviewed and analyzed the results with reps from the Salcedo groups, then planned activities for their own sites. In August, the same Volunteers and their counterparts, who by that time will have become the most experienced GAD experts

in the country, if not the continent, will return to Tumbaco for a follow-up discussion on the results of their activities in their sites. It is hoped that these workshops will produce some GAD trainers for future integrated job conferences.

We also held a Project Design and Management (PDM) workshop in Quito, delivered by Tim Callaghan, Sarah Simon and Cecy Rueda. The participants learned project design, implementation and evaluation tools, and seemed very satisfied with the material and the way it was presented. The relatively low turnout, combined with the very positive feedback received from the attendees, convinced us to offer the workshop again in July. An announcement went out to all Volunteers in Omnibus 73 and 74.

And now on to something different. I'd like to talk about Site Selection—the process. I never fully appreciated the work that was involved in identifying sites until I observed Jorge, Nelson and Francisco finding sites for Omnibus 75. Identifying sites is a year-round activity, which begins to intensify during the three months before a new group of Trainees arrives. Usually an APCD will visit a potential site and talk to potential counterpart organizations, explaining what Peace Corps does and does not do. If the site meets all the criteria (there's a need and a desire for a Volunteer, work for them to do, etc.) the APCD will leave a Request for Volunteer form—a supply of which they always have with them. These forms, by the way, are distributed selectively—we don't drop thousands of them from airplanes. APCDs will often ask second- and third-year Volunteers to help in doing first visits like these. They also encourage Volunteers to tell them if they know of good site possibilities. Also, depending on the counterpart organization, APCDs might work together

with their central office to do the initial identification of potential sites. With this recently sworn in group, O'75, the APCDs have also worked together to develop some 'integrated' sites, wherein two or three Volunteers were placed in proximity—not too close so that they each can have their "own" communities, and not too far so they can support each other technically and morally.

(If you want to take a break here and read another article or two, then come back, I'll understand).



Now, where was I? Oh, yes, what I just described could be called the Initial Potential Site Collection Phase. During that phase, the goal is to collect at least twice the number of potential sites as there are Trainees expected, all at least one or two months before the group arrives. During these last months, the APCDs will usually visit each of the potential sites at least once more in an effort to select the very best ones, and to explain (again) what PC is and can do with them to the potential counterpart agency people, who may be

different from the ones that were first visited, and may very well change again by the time the Trainee makes the first site visit. During this time, the APCDs are also receiving the PTQs (the Pre-Training Questionnaire, which you may recall having enjoyed filling out before coming down) from the soon-to-arrive Trainees and they begin getting an idea of the skills the new group has, and in some cases, they may even begin thinking of possible matches of Volunteers and sites.

At about T-minus fifteen, or two weeks before the arrival of the new group, the APCDs enter the Scramble-to-Make-Sure-We-Have-Enough-Good-Sites phase, sometimes referred to as the Mild-Panic phase, depending on how many curves are thrown to them in terms of agency personnel turnover and other factors. Usually by the time the trainees arrive, however, the APCDs have pretty much developed enough solid sites, with a few extras to give them some flexibility and an added margin of safety if some sites end up falling through. This allows them the opportunity to briefly relax, and begin to get to know the trainees and their specific skills and preferences. This could be called the Matching phase, during which the APCDs, with the help of the technical trainers, begin matching Trainees with sites, basing their decisions mostly on the needs of the sites and the abilities of the Trainees. Wherever possible, they also consider other Trainee preferences; such as big vs. small, hot vs. cold, extremely remote vs. just remote and the site's preferences; such as big vs. small, etc. This Matching phase lasts until about the end of week five, when the site announcements are made. Shortly after learning of their sites, the trainees make site visits to check them out for themselves, and upon return, are usually not shy about giving us feedback on how well we did in making the matches.

VIEWPOINT

This process does vary among the different programs since each has its specific approach. The Health program, for example, focuses on one geographic region at a time, whereas Volunteer assignments in the other programs are more dispersed throughout the country. This process is also evolving as we learn from each cycle.

Perhaps it's best for all of us to remember that one cannot really know a site by just *visiting* it, even several times. It's not until a Volunteer lives in the site for at least two or three months that we *really* know if the site is a good one. That is why Volunteer participation in this process is so important. We rarely replace a Volunteer without their concurrence. Also, if you know of communities near yours (or yours) that would be good sites for *future* Volunteers of the same or different programs, please tell your APCD. We'll send an airplane to drop some Request For Volunteer Forms.

Sorry for having rambled so. This topic might have been a tad on the complex side. . .next time I'll choose something more simple like maybe genetic engineering.*



Dear El Clima...

Human(e) Outrage

This is in response to Ron Krupa's article entitled "Animal Love," in the April 1996 issue of *El Clima*. Unfortunately, by the time Ron and the rest of the Peace Corps Ecuador community gets to read this, I will have completed my PC tour and be back in the U.S. Some may feel it is cowardly of me to respond, as I am going to do, and then leave. But I feel it would be far more cowardly not to respond at all.

First, let me say that I respect Ron's explanation of how he tries to influence the leaders and people of his community in their treatment of animals and his understanding of their customs, culture, etc. It is obvious from his other article in this same issue, that he loves the people of his community and has been accepted by them as well.

Nobody wants to be culturally insensitive. As Ron says, he is not in Playa de Oro to change the culture. . . "but the people need to know about certain sensitivities of the people they plan to attract to their community." The message I get from Ron's article (and I have read it over several times) is that it is OK for them to stone helpless animals to death, to roast a pig alive, to cut down trees to destroy birds' nests and rob the eggs, to use slingshots and throw rocks at anything that "walks, crawls, swims, slithers, or climbs," because this is part of their culture, i.e. "it is what they do, how they live." But they should be a bit more discreet, so as not to upset the tourists. "It might be wise to change the location where they butcher their food". . . "It would terrify tourists if they saw such acts. . . How they

catch, maintain, and dispatch the various creatures needs modification."

Ron says he was in "empathetic shock" while he watched the hapless pig kick, scream, arch its back and twist to and fro while it was roasted alive, but that he was "totally powerless to do anything about its predicament." He says he wanted to intervene, "but the expressions on the men's faces stopped me cold." So he cringed, continued on his way, and the next day ate pig (presumably the one he watched being roasted alive?). What kind of a message does this send to the men who carried out this barbaric act? To the rest of the community?

When I was bringing up my children, I always tried to be fair, to listen to their side of the story. But they know that I had my breaking point, too. There were certain things that I simply



would not, could not, stand for. There were times when I changed from a reasonable human being into a raging, screaming monster. (I used to hear them whisper to each other: "Look out, mom's going critical!") Fortunately, these times were few and far between. My children were not scarred for life. They respect me, and I respect them.

Seeing a helpless animal being tortured, in Ecuador, the U.S., or anywhere else, would be one of these times for me. I would scream, curse, try to free the animal, throw water on the flames, chase the kids (or men, especially if they looked amused), yell for help. . . Culturally insensitive? You betcha! It might make absolutely no sense to them, but it would be crystal clear that I was absolutely, totally outraged by what they were doing. It might even make them think.

As for Ron's statement that "cultures just coming into contact with the west show no such concern" (about humane treatment of animals), I translated parts of Ron's article for my counterparts, indigenous men and women of the sierra, and they were just as outraged as I. So much for "an anthropological view of development in human behavior." It is dangerous to generalize. Not all poor people treat animals badly. And there are different ways to "reinforce the message of change."

Leila Stockwell
Colta, Chimborazo •

Thanks For the Support

After the last issue's responses, I felt compelled to thank all those who wrote in, directly supporting Peace Corps policies and more so, indirectly supporting us, the trainees.

In the last five weeks, we have been challenged by our host families, language facilitators, Ecuadorian animal production, agricultural, and natural resources methods and our own physical and emotional adjustments to this culture, climate, and country. Some of us find the newness exciting and rewarding and are already warning our

families we may extend. Others of us try to find the good in each day to better decide which way is up. Whichever position on the spectrum, it helps to have those feelings validated and to be able to acknowledge them and receive whatever support or encouragement we may need.

Our group is fifty-two. To any fan of statistics, some of us are doomed. But from our directors, trainers, training staff and the visiting Volunteers, we have never been made to feel anything but brave for the steps we have taken. They never once began the "look to your right, now, look to your left," except to propose that your friends may, at times, need your support and confidentiality.

I guess, my true feeling is thankfulness that on top of the *monton de cosas* that we have to worry about in Ecuador, we still have the right to choice and individuality. And although we have not met all the Volunteers, it helps to read the letters of affirmation and inherent interest some or most of you have in supporting and maintaining the "Volunteer" aspect of volunteering.

Finally, I hope the myth of sierra vs. coast, etc. is just that because I cannot imagine the difficulties if the #1 link in the support chain was no longer confidential or reliable. Because, as told by Russ on my first Volunteer visit, "(we) trainees don't know anything and may not for our first year," so it seems unavoidable that we will need open-minded guidance, support and sincere advice during our initial ups and downs.

Rebecca Bond
Colon Eloy, Esmeraldas •



Blooming in Bolivia

The following are excerpts from former Volunteer Amy Feingold's recent letter to Jean Seigle, explaining her new Peace Corps assignment in Bolivia:

I was so excited to get news of your being here [in Bolivia] and hear that you are doing well. I'm sorry I don't have the opportunity to come see you and give you a hug in person, so Mike will have to give you one in my place. I'm doing really excellent and have enjoyed very much my last two months here. Coming [here] after Ecuador and having the language skills, as well as already having done all of the cultural adaptations, is a huge advantage.

My site is down in the Chaco, close to Argentina, where it's 120°. I'll be living in a very small village with 27 Guaraní families. They are really beautiful people—friendly, warm, open and accepting. They're really poor, only having broken away from the *patrones* five years ago. The area is very green and I can't imagine anyone being more *campo*. It's really just what I had asked and hoped for, and then some. I started learning Guaraní several weeks ago.

I heard from the nuns there [in Ecuador] that apparently they let the three guys out last month, which means they kept them in jail six months, which I feel good about. I really miss Ecuador and the people very much. Please send a warm hello to Jorge and thank him for me for all of his help. Please also give hugs to Jackie, Sarah and Marion. I'll always remember their warmth, support, and care—and of course, if you could say hello to my fellow PC buddies, maybe through El Clima, with my address. Best of wishes to you. . .

Amy Feingold
Correo Central
Entre Ríos, Tarija-Bolivia •

MAKING GOOD COME FROM BAD

Earthquake Relief in Latacunga

I had just returned from a relaxing six-day visit to Azogues and Cuenca. As I scurried about the Quito office, taking care of administrative tasks before the afternoon bus to Tena departed, Dr. Miguel Artola showed me a FAX that had come in from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The communication requested the assistance of four Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) in Latacunga, where several days before a 5.7 magnitude earthquake had left several communities devastated. The fact that many of the houses in the affected areas had been constructed using adobe bricks and were relatively old had intensified the impact of the tremor, leaving thousands homeless. In response, noted the FAX, USAID had sent a large quantity of plastic tarpaulin material that was to be used for constructing temporary housing. The PCVs were to monitor the distribution of the material and capacitate Ecuadorian nationals in the most efficient use of the plastic for building the tents. The FAX also asked the Volunteers to arrive at the airport on the Latacunga Air Force Base the following morning to initiate the relief effort.

Given the short notice and lengthy time commitment, a team of three PCVs was identified by the end of the day: Neal Colwell (Rural Infrastructure), Dipak Kshatriya (Youth Development) and myself (Health). Dipak, whose site in Ambato is relatively close to Latacunga, would meet us at the airport the next morning.

Neal and I met at an agreed upon hotel in Latacunga that evening. Not long after we had called it an evening, the terrifying reality of the March 28 earthquake manifested itself once again, as we were awoken by a series of after shocks. Neal, exercising the textbook response, immediately ran to take cover under the frame of the bathroom door. Being from Southern California and thus a seasoned veteran of earthquakes, I opted to wait it



out under the comfort of my warm blanket. While emerging unscathed, we were both noticeably rattled, increasing our anxiety of entering the zones nearest to the epicenter in the following days.

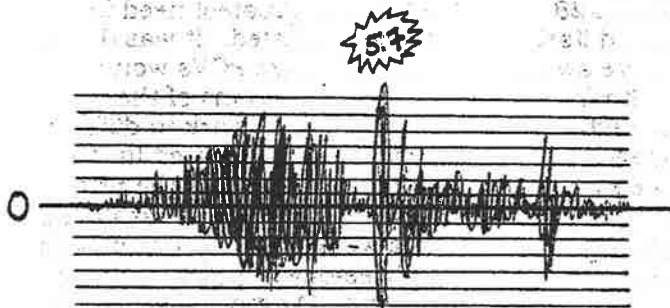
The next morning, we arrived at the airport and found our contact from USAID, Maria Augusta Fernandez. Shortly thereafter, working with cadets of the Latacunga Air Force Base Academy, an engineer from USAID demonstrated the recommended model for constructing the tents. Having studied engineering in college, Neal promptly modified the design, utilizing less material and reducing the amount of

time required to construct each tent. After this day of logistical planning, we were prepared to depart for the communities in which the greatest need for housing existed. It was decided that the three PCVs would accompany teams of the military cadets to work in different sectors, as delineated in the briefing sessions of the prior day. Each of us was assigned to a work team, equipped with a three-day supply of military rations. My group was slated to work in the community of Isinlivi, located five hours by ground transport in the mountains above Latacunga.

Arriving on Saturday afternoon, we immediately completed a damage assessment in Isinlivi. In the early evening, we began constructing tents next to the destroyed houses of those deemed to be in greatest need, such as elderly couples. Exhausted, we headed for our camp around 11 p.m.

The next day proved to be the most interesting Easter Sunday of my life. We were awoken at 5 a.m. and proceeded to eat our breakfast of canned chicken (the label advertised the meat as chicken but all of us swore it was ham). The sergeant was considerate enough to buy bread for his twenty cadets and, on this mission, one for the blond-haired, blue-eyed *gringo* as well. We then reported for orders from our captain, who appeared somewhat disturbed by my presence. He initially called the sergeant aside to inquire what I had to offer his crew. After a few moments, the captain left the sergeant and approached me. "Mister, you'll be working with that team over there." I thought to myself, "That's all! No hand-shake; no greeting; hell, the guy didn't even ask me what

my name is!" "Over there" was a group of three cadets I had identified as the troublemakers. "So he thinks the *gringo* is here to baby-sit. We'll see about that." I thought to myself.



We were soon travelling in the bed of an enormous military truck. The transport stopped about an hour down the hill, in an area that appeared to be totally uninhabited. I felt compelled to inquire about our destination, after helping unload the weighty cargo. One of the cadets calmly pointed over the edge of a virtual cliff to something at the bottom of the ravine that appeared to be the size of a small pebble. "An old lady lives down there. Can you see her house that was destroyed?" he asked me. "Are you referring to that tiny thing where the cattle are grazing?" I responded. "Yes," came the answer. So, grabbing the materials, we began our descent.

Amazingly, we completed the two-hour trek without incident, save a few pair of wet shoes from crossing the 50-foot wide, knee-deep river. And, sure enough, the elderly woman emerged from the leveled structure that had formerly provided her shelter from the extreme cold. She immediately thanked us for arriving and, while not knowing exactly where the United States is located in the world, wanted me to be sure to "thank the leaders of my country, who were so thoughtful to send her aid." After about two

hours of hard work in the intense Andean sun, her new home was completed. When we had gathered our tools and were prepared to depart, she presented me with the fattest of the four chickens she

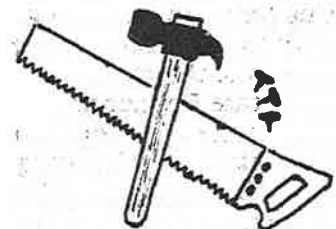
owned. While I initially protested, she insisted that I take the animal as a token of appreciation and friendship. When my partners

in peacemaking and I finally made our way, we could hear the gracious lady repeating the following: "*Gracias a Dios. Gracias a Dios. Porque hoy dia usted mandó sus angeles a mi casa.*" "These troublemakers are not so bad after all," I thought to myself. This experience captured the spirit of the three days we spent in and around the community of Isinlivi. It occurred to me how strange it is that tragedies and catastrophic events always seem to bring the very best out in human nature. Would the World not be a more enjoyable place to live in if we acted in such selfless ways more often?

On Monday, the final day of our work, we distributed tent materials to surrounding communities, making certain that someone within each community had been a part of the construction process during the previous days. In the afternoon, we all returned to the base in Isinlivi for some Rest and Relaxation. We played basketball together and the captain and I played on the same team; at his request. Afterward, we had lunch, and my work team and I ate the chicken we were given the day before. As we broke bread and joked together and I recalled the coldness of the captain just

days before, I was struck by how shared experiences have the power to link people through a sense of common purpose.

In retrospect, it appears as though the short time I spent with these cadets and victims of the earthquake in Latacunga provided the most productive experience since I had sworn in as a PCV back in November of last year. I write this because, as it appears to me, all three Peace Corps goals were achieved. First, we capacitated host-country nationals in several aspects of disaster relief. Second, the Ecuadorians we worked with gained a deeper understanding of our culture. Third, we also learned a great deal more about Ecuadorian culture through the time spent with them, information we can in turn take back and share with U.S. citizens upon return. On behalf of Neal and Dipak, who I trust enjoyed similar experiences, I want to thank the following Peace Corps Ecuador



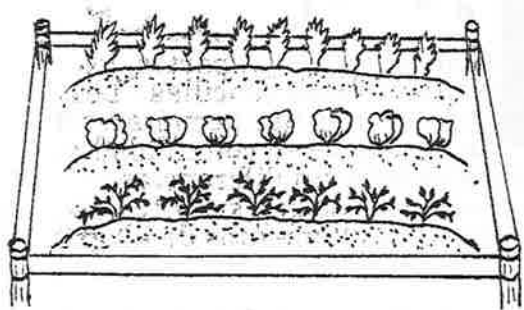
staff members for giving us the opportunity to become involved in this tremendous adventure and also for recognizing that a Volunteer does not necessarily have to be located in his or her site of work to fulfill the goals of the Peace Corps: Country Director, Jean Seigle; Paul Davis, PTO; Dr. Miguel Artola, APCD; and Nellie Villavicencio, APCD. Thank You.

**Stephen Green
Loreto, Napo**

PROGRAMA DE SEMILLAS

Como un Programa de apoyo a las actividades agrícolas del Cuerpo de Paz; Inter America Region en Washington, realizó convenios para participar en el *Seeds for the Americas Program*, a través de *Partners of the Americas*, programa que ha sido apoyado por la *W.K. Kellogg Foundation* y *Upjohn/Asgrow Seed Company*.

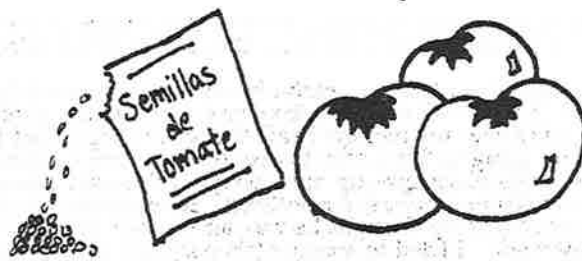
El mencionado Programa ha venido funcionando desde hace muchos años atrás, mediante el cual los países de la región solicitaban semillas y las cantidades solicitadas eran enviadas para su utilización con pequeños agricultores, básicamente en la implementación de huertos familiares.



En el país, todos los años recibíamos cantidades grandes de semillas que eran utilizadas por los voluntarios del Programa de Agricultura, como también de otros Programas, se debe manifestar que los resultados han sido muy positivos, por cuanto, por medio de estas acciones, el Cuerpo de Paz ha logrado contribuir al mejoramiento de los niveles de nutrición en las Comunidades, promoviendo el consumo de hortalizas tradicionales y también introduciendo nuevos tipos de productos que no eran conocidos por la gente y actualmente lo consumen en su dieta regular, tal es el caso del

Broccoli, Suchini, Col de brucas, Pepinillo, etc. Para el efecto, los voluntarios no solamente han dado asistencia técnica en la parte agrícola, sino también en aspectos de elaboración de comidas a base de dichos productos.

Generalmente las semillas eran donadas por el Cuerpo de Paz a los agricultores, pero desde hace aproximadamente un año atrás resolvimos cambiar el sistema, en vista de que no había mayores seguridades de que sigan llegando las semillas desde Washington, entonces comenzamos a formar los "Bancos de Semillas," mediante este sistema el Cuerpo de Paz entregaba las semillas en donación a las Asociaciones de agricultores y ellos tenían el compromiso de vender a los socios, a precios más bajos que los vigentes en el mercado, con el dinero proveniente de estas ventas se adquieren más semillas y el proyecto se hace sustentable. De acuerdo a las evaluaciones realizadas a este sistema, se ha observado que funciona bien y que en algunos casos se ha desarrollado mucho y hasta están entrando en la comercialización de semillas de cultivos especiales, como son: la alcachofa, espárragos, berengena, etc.



En el mes de Diciembre de 1995 recibimos un cable de parte de *Gifts in Kind*, en el cual nos hacen conocer que el Programa de Semillas no dispondrá de estos insumos, por cuanto la

Agencia donante ya no entregará semillas en el futuro, entonces la opción es buscar otra Agencia interesada en hacer las donaciones y así no paralizar el proyecto, hasta el momento pienso que no se ha logrado cumplir con esta búsqueda y más bien se ha tomado la alternativa de comprar las semillas. Entonces, hace aproximadamente unos tres meses atrás, nos enviaron otra comunicación de Washington en el sentido de que si queríamos comprar semillas podíamos hacer el pedido, y nosotros respondimos que sí estábamos interesados y adjuntamos una lista con nuestros requerimientos, pude notar que los precios a los cuales nos ofrecieron las semillas eran muy inferiores a los vigentes en los almacenes de Ecuador.

Actualmente, nos encontramos esperando a que nos envíen estas semillas, debido a que los lotes anteriores ya se han terminado, solamente nos queda un poco de semilla de melón y sandía.

por Nelson Oleas, APCD•

Por tres meses, nos hemos preparado para una aventura, lejos de nuestros hogares y familias y aquí estamos con familias y amigos nuevos con frustraciones y momentos de felicidad en la salud y en enfermedades. Ahora, sin vacilación, estamos listos para empezar ésta aventura que se llama el Cuerpo de Paz. No representamos solamente los Estados Unidos, sino a toda la humanidad. Como humanos nos damos cuenta de que la tierra no es nuestra, pero nosotros pertenecemos a la tierra, la Pachamama. Somos solamente una parte pequeña del mundo. Con ésta idea, creemos que los árboles, los animales, las montañas, los ríos y todos los humanos son una parte de nosotros y los cuidamos como a nosotros mismos. Con ésta creencia, trabajaremos aquí en el Ecuador. Venimos con ánimos positivos y corazones abiertos, no deseamos nada, sabemos que nuestra recompensa está en el hacer algo. Así como las palabras de Mahatma Gandhi, "Todas las obras buenas serán cosechadas con frutos buenos al final."

THOUGHTS FROM 75

presented May 31, 1995, Tambaco

A nuestras contrapartes, les pedimos cosas sencillas. Les pedimos que nos permitan ser una parte de su comunidad y

compártanos nuestras vidas. Les pedimos estar de pie a nuestro lado sin diferencias—estamos juntos trabajando para conseguir nuestras metas. Les pedimos que su entusiasmo y energía también; y especialmente, su amistad y su apoyo en los momentos de alegría y tristeza.

Omnibus setenta y cinco, mis compañeros, mis amigos; en tres meses, hemos encontrado un hogar nuevo, hablamos un idioma nuevo y entendemos y apreciamos una cultura nueva. Nos hemos unido a una familia en el Cuerpo de Paz para una experiencia que cambiará nuestras vidas. Somos voluntarios, con el respeto y admiración de mucha gente, pero trabajaremos con humildad y ahínco, que nuestra recompensa no se podrá medir. Henry David Thoreau dijo, "Debemos caminar conscientemente hacia solamente una parte de nuestra meta y entonces saltar en la obscuridad a nuestro éxito." Hemos caminado bastante. Pues, con un respiro profundo y una sonrisa en nuestros labios, mañana saltaremos.

by Sean D' Souza

Oye, párame bola (Hey, pay attention to me!)

Se habla de (it's rumored that) we got a raise of a couple of gambas (hundred sucres) this month so I decided to vivir a todo tren (live the high life) and hacerme la loca (go crazy) in the big city of Guayaquil. Yahoo!!

It started out that yo estaba harta de (I was tired of) the calor insoponible (unbearable heat) so yo invité treated my 13-year-old guambra (boy) next door to see a movie in the air conditioning. As soon as I entregué mis billetes (turned over my money) I saw the letrero (sign) that read "para mayores de 16 años de edad" (16 years and older). I was going to flip a coin to decide cara o cruz (heads or tails) if I should just lie and say he's patucho (a midget) or rendir mi plata (give up my money). I thought, there's no way that I acabo de derrochar (just squandered) 20 lucas (20 mil sucres) for nothing. Se metió a escondidas (he snuck in)—a lo mejor (probably) they thought he was an enanito (midget) and I, a gringa estúpida (stupid american). I tried to escoger (choose) one with more than just senseless balazos (shootings) and puñetazos (punches). Actually yo ni sabía papa (I didn't know a thing) about the content of the second movie but thought heck, this pelado (kid) can see more people in pelotas (nude) and caldo a palos (beaten up) by reading the daily EXTRA. So when Antonio Banderas came out in his traje de Adán (nakedness) y se la comió (he had sex with a woman) no one cared ni un carajo (no one gave a sh—), de hecho (in fact) se les cayó la baba (the drool started running) from all the girls in the theater. I was really feeling en la honda (right at home) with all this N. American culture. There weren't too many people there, just some ahajas (significant others) and some añiados (spoiled kids) matándose de risa (falling over laughing) and haciendo mucha bulla (making a lot of noise). Me calenté (I got pissed off) but I didn't atreverme (to dare to) use any of my new insultos because a sabido (a wise person) once told me "él que tiene seso, no dice eso" ("he who has brains won't say something like that"). So, las pilas que soy (the smart person that I am), I kept my mouth shut and read the subtitles.

Next time I'll save my "moony" (money) and patience by refrescándome (cooling off) with aw' a ela'a (agua helada).

Se fumiga la mica de Daule. (The blond from Daule is splitting.)
Bye-Bye.

Kelly Rahn
Daule, Guayas

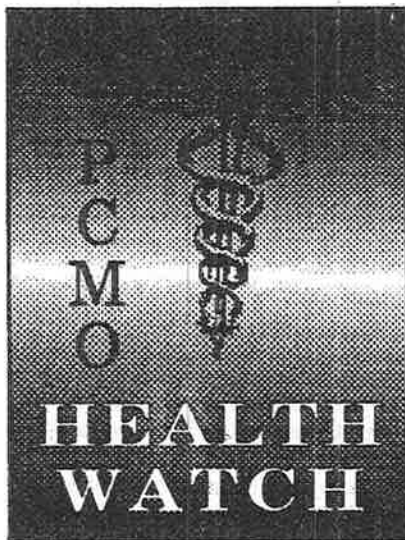
NUESTRO
Idioma

Becoming "street smart" is a necessity of Volunteer life in Ecuador! Awareness and avoidance are the keys to the prevention of becoming the victim of a personal assault, theft, burglary, or robbery during your time of Peace Corps service. The earnest desire of the Medical Office is to see the Volunteer numbers of these unfortunate incidents drasti-

cally reduced and, if possible, eliminated altogether!

The only way this goal can be accomplished is to reinforce and educate the Volunteer community on your responsibility for your personal security and to encourage your consistent practice of safe habits and awareness of your surroundings at all times!

Theft (taking away or attempting to take away property or cash without involving force or illegal entry, i.e., pick-pocketing, purse snatching) is by far the most common form of personal assault among the Volunteer community in Ecuador. There have been a total of nine thefts reported since



January '96. Burglaries (unlawful or forcible entry or attempted entry of a residence, usually, but not always involving theft) are second in line to thefts, totaling four reported incidents since January '96.

Comparing PC Ecuador statistics with those of the Inter-American Region (PC Rates of Reportable Health Conditions for 1994), Ecuador rates the second highest in thefts. We are happy to say that these numbers have been going down, with the increased emphasis on personal safety issues during training and service AND with the increased aware-

ness of the Volunteer community regarding simple guidelines to prevent becoming victimized!

Remember a crime can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. It can happen to you. You've got to be prepared and have a plan!

Here are some tips for becoming



"street smart & safe" from Detective JJBittenbinder's "TOUGH TARGET STREET SMART GUIDE TO STAYING SAFE," which can be applied in a number of ways to PCV life in Ecuador! They are not meant to make you paranoid, but simply to help you think of ways you can AVOID becoming the victim of a personal assault or theft.

"Personal security is the simple act of protecting yourself from physical harm. It is the accumulation of all the actions you have taken during your lifetime to reduce or eliminate the chances of being assaulted, attacked, or otherwise molested or harmed." (Patrick Collins: Living in Troubled Lands)

TIPS FOR BECOMING STREET SMART & SAFE:

- * Pay attention to your surroundings. Be alert at all times!
- * Look tough! Always walk and carry yourself in a confident manner. Keep your head up. Remember, it's not how tough you are, it's how tough you look!

- * Cross the street if you see a suspicious person, or persons, walking toward you. If you sense danger, go to where there are people. (PCMO addition: Avoid beaches & isolated areas, especially at night & after parties.)

- * Trust your instincts! They are about 200 million years of evolution grabbing you by the back of the neck and saying "get out of here!"

- * Yell "NO!" - if stopped on the street by a stranger for directions or any other reason--get out. No hesitation. Remember, if fleeing is an option, it's always your best option.

- * Give up your property. If confronted by someone with a weapon who demands your purse or wallet, or coat-- give it up and get your knees in the breeze. Do not wait around for request number two. The less time you spend in front of that weapon, the better it is for you.

- * Carry your purse with the strap across your body, preferably under your coat. (PCMO addition: Divide your money in two/three different spots on your body)
- * Carry a money clip with your "get-out-of-trouble" money—two 1.000 sucres bills wrapped in a



- * 5.000 or 10.000 sucre bill. If they want your money, you throw the money clip one way and you go the other, yelling, "LADRON!"

- * Carry a blast horn—it works.

- * Stranger-Danger Rape: If you are attacked by anyone, use your blast horn. If that is not possible, do whatever you need to do to stay alive!

- * If you decide to fight back, you must make your move as soon as the attacker approaches. If he grabs you, twist toward his thumb--that's the weakest part of the grip—and peel his hand away from your body and get out of there! If you can't get away—and

you fight back—the most vulnerable areas are the eyes, throat, groin, and shins.

* **Date Rape:** If you are on a date, or out with a friend, there may be some expectation of intimacy. But if he crosses the line, whatever

him on alert.)

BUSES. Sit near the front by the driver, especially at night. (PCMO addition: Sit in the 3rd or 4th row—the front rows are at higher risk for injury in event of accidents.)

making a maintenance call. A dog is an excellent deterrent and companion!

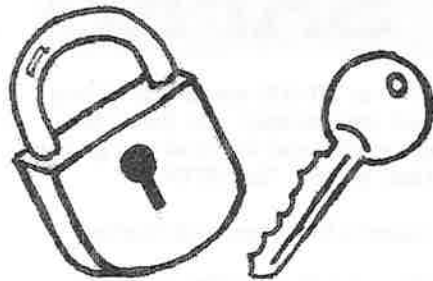
Create a safe room for your apartment. This could be your bedroom. Ideally, it should have a solid door with a deadbolt lock and a possible escape route—window, etc. This is where you should go if there is an intruder.

You're alone. At night. You hear

" BE TOUGH ... WHEN YOU TRAVEL "

that line is—if he wants to take you someplace—you say "NO!" And NO means NO! If he kisses you, grab his lower lip with your teeth and bite down until your teeth meet. You are ending the relationship! (PCMO cautions this practice- HIV risk!)

* If there ever is a "bottom line" you must draw, it's this: **YOU MUST NEVER ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE TAKEN INTO A CAR, OR DOWN AN ALLEY** (to a secondary scene)! If he grabs you, try to get out of your coat or your blouse—do whatever is necessary to get away. Even if he's got a gun, you cannot go! It could be a one-way trip!



* BE TOUGH IN VULNERABLE PLACES:

TAXIS. When you get into a taxi, note the driver's registration number or license plate. (PCMO addition: Tell a friend out loud that you'll call them as soon as you arrive home—the cab driver doesn't know whether you really have a phone or not and it puts

ELEVATORS. If you don't like who's on the elevator, don't get on! If somebody gets on you don't like, get off! If you do get confronted on an elevator, push all the buttons except the stop button—he wants the elevator stopped, but you want it moving, because every time the door opens there is a chance for you to escape or to yell for help! If he pulls the stop button, you've got to push it in and be prepared to fight this guy to do it.

STAIRWELLS. Stay out of them, unless it's an emergency!

DARK SIDEWALKS OR ALLEYS. Avoid them at all costs! If you must walk alone at night, walk in the middle of the street or on the edge of the sidewalk, rather than near a dark alley where you can be grabbed.

* **BE TOUGH WHERE YOU LIVE:** Keep points of entry locked, with dead-bolts on front & back doors; a 'charlie bar' for pane-glass patio doors & iron bars on windows. Change locks if keys are lost or stolen. Post emergency numbers in visible places. (PCMO addition: Work out an emergency notification plan with a *vecino*, so if they hear you yell, they know you need help!)

Draw shades and lights when no one is home. Leave the radio on. Install good exterior lighting. Never open the door to a stranger or at an inappropriate hour, even to an acquaintance. Use peep hole in door, if available. Be aware of ploys, such as someone being ill or

someone in your apartment. Lock your bedroom. Yell something that might scare him off like, "*¡Pepe, coja la pistola!*" Sound your blast horn or yell so the neighbors can hear!

* **BE TOUGH WHEN YOU TRAVEL:** Keep your travel plans confidential. Don't carry a lot of cash. Don't leave your belongings unattended. Travel accompanied or in groups whenever possible.

Stay in hostals with good security. If they have a safe or lock box, use



it for your valuables. When you arrive at the hostel, become familiar with the exits in case of fire or emergency. It is safer to stay off ground-level floors to avoid theft or assault.

Don't open the door if a stranger knocks. If he identifies himself as an employee of the hostel, check with the front desk, if possible; or don't open the door! Keep a low profile, be consistent with the cultural norms as much as possible.

knocks. If he identifies himself as an employee of the hostel, check with the front desk, if possible, or don't open the door! Keep a low profile, be consistent with the cultural norms as much as possible. Wear simple jewelry, if any.

Once again, remember that AWARENESS of your surroundings and AVOIDANCE of risk taking are your best means of preventing becoming the target of a personal assault or theft. If for any reason awareness and avoidance don't stop an assault from occurring, the correct ACTION on your part may still avert the incident or help you to escape.

If you suspect surveillance (being followed or watched): Report your suspicions to neighbors, PC or local authorities. Don't lead the suspect to your home--stop somewhere you can get help!

We hope some of these tips will help increase your awareness and help you to avoid becoming an unfortunate victim of theft or personal assault. By putting some of these simple suggestions into practice you can make your time of Peace Corps service a SAFE and happy one!

Please be careful, but don't get overly hung-up with the potential dangers. Travel accompanied or in groups whenever possible. This alone will help prevent becoming a "soft" or easy target. Enjoy getting to know this fantastic country by simply not taking unnecessary risks and by being consistent in practicing these principles for your personal safety.

Remember that we are all a family at Peace Corps and must look out for one another. Please let us know if there is any way that we, as your PCMOs, can be of more support to you in the area of your personal safety and awareness. Volunteer Safety Report forms are available in the Medical Office and from Maria Eugenia Cobo, but it is our earnest desire that you won't need to use one! Be street smart and safe.
PCMOs*



All of the questions this round have been about dogs, so I'll do a bit of a dog review. But first, I'm going to go off on my own personal tangent.

I didn't create Veterinarian's Corner to use as my own personal forum. I created it, obviously, so that PCV Vets could share information.

But, there is something I need to communicate with respect to human health to the Volunteer Community before I go on to talk about dogs.

Recently, there was a PCMO Health Watch article about overdosing on vitamins, about how too much Vitamin C does this and too much Calcium does that. And, I agree that too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. However, I would like to present you with a bit of the "other side" of the story.

Take Calcium, for instance. The majority of kidney stones in humans are calcium-based, given. So it was assumed by the American Medical Association (AMA) that lowering Calcium in the diet would help prevent them (as stated in the PCMO article). Note: The AMA also assumed that lowering salt in the diet would help reduce high blood pres-

sure, however, after a study several years long, they found out that you can have just about as much or as little salt as you want without it having any effect on your blood pressure.

Anyway, back to Calcium. There was a major study done that showed that it is actually a CALCIUM DEFICIENCY that causes Calcium-based kidney stones. Where does all the Calcium come from to form the stones, then?

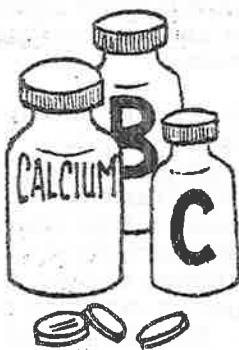
Well, in periods of Calcium-deficient stress, your parathyroid gland is going nuts saying, "Find me some calcium!!" So, your body starts absorbing bone like crazy (as in osteoporosis), then the kidney goes, "Augh, too much, too much, it's precipitating out," and a tiny stone begins to form.

Now, over the years and through many periods of Calcium-deficient stress, you will develop a full-fledged kidney stone. So, even with a whole gallon of milk in your gut, it is almost impossible to absorb enough calcium to make it precipitate in your kidneys. So, my recommendation is to take in more calcium if you have had calcium-based kidney stones.

Okay, on to Vitamin C. The effects of overdosing on Vitamin C are proven (as stated in the PCMO article). However, some things were left out. It was stated that two grams of Vitamin C a day is too much for an extended period of time. However, in the short term, two grams of Vitamin C a day has been shown to be very helpful for colds and other illnesses. In fact, up to 1.5 grams (1500 mg.) a day over the long term has been shown to have very beneficial effects. The thing is, we humans can't manufacture our own Vitamin C (cows are the same way) and we excrete it really fast. That's

why we get nasty things like scurvy when we don't get Vitamin C from some external source. So, it's a pretty good idea to take Vitamin C supplements.

The recommendation made by one of the leaders in vitamin study, Alfred Ordman (my undergrad biochemistry professor) is for their anti-oxidant properties (to prevent cancer) and for basic general health, vitamin supplements are recommended. Especially for preventing cancer, he has shown that taking 500 mg. of Vitamin C twice a day and 400 IU of Vitamin E once a day can significantly reduce your risk of many types of cancer. Unfortunately, it's very rare to hear human doctors in the U.S. talking about the importance of vitamin/mineral supplements. The reason is that the AMA is focused on troubleshooting and not on preventative medicine. So, if you want to start practicing basic preventative medicine on yourself, taking vitamin/mineral supplements is a good place to start. Here are some examples of things and what they can help:



Copper—helps in elastic fiber formation and therefore can help get rid of varicose veins and sagging skin.
 Chicken Cartilage—tried as a treatment for debilitating arthritis . . . an eight-month study was stopped after eight weeks because everyone was at least 90% cured.
 Human Ulcers—recently (Feb.

1995, I believe) found to be caused by bacteria.
 Treatment: tetracycline and a trace mineral bismuth (pepto-bismol). Side note: Veterinarians found that pigs had ulcers caused by the same bacteria, the treatment was found to be exactly the same as the human treatment, but veterinarians discovered this about 50 years ago.

These are just a few examples, there are many more. As a PCV, your state of mind is extremely important, so the following are the most important vitamins and minerals with respect to the mental status:

1. Folate or Folic Acid—deficiency can cause depression, confusion and poor memory. *El Comercio* (May 19, 1996) also notes its importance for normal growth in children. Best Source: spinach, acelga, other leafy greens, broccoli, liver, nuts, milk.
2. Calcium and Magnesium—deficiency can cause nervousness and dramatic mood changes (and kidney stones). Best Source: milk and dairy.
3. Niacin—deficiency can cause personality changes; those who are usually strong and courageous become cowardly, apprehensive, forgetful and depressed. Best Source: nutritional yeast (brewers), liver, wheat germ, kidneys, fish, muscles, meat, eggs and nuts.

So, now on to dogs. This is pretty much a review, but I hope it's helpful for all of you that asked questions.

Hints for Training Dogs

1. Praise them a lot when they do something right.
2. Punish them when they do something wrong by saying "NO" or giving a light swat on the butt.
3. DO NOT punish them too long after they have done

something wrong. They will not remember and therefore, will not understand what they are being punished for.



4. Give them lots of love and good food.
 5. Spend LOTS of time with puppies, they will bond with you really well that way. Take them places with you.
 6. When picking a puppy, don't get the most friendly or most timid. Get one in between. Also, if possible, meet the parents of the puppy to see if they seem like nice dogs.
 7. Try to avoid taking a puppy away from its mother until it is at least eight weeks of age.
 8. Advantages of getting a female dog:
 - the male dogs are less likely to attack them.
 - they don't pee on everything
 Disadvantages:
 - they go into heat if not spayed and need to be kept inside to avoid getting pregnant.
- #### Deworming Dogs
- Pamoato de Pyrantel*—for puppies (this product comes in many different brand names, just ask for "desparasitante para perros" then look at the

label for this generic name).
Give (if possible) at:
four wks. of age,
six wks.,
eight wks.,
12 wks.,
16 wks. and every six months
thereafter.

Tecnicar or Teni-Best—or any
other product that says it will
kill tapeworms (mostly
Dipylidium and *Echinococcus*
Taenia species).

Give this every six months
interposed with the *Pamoato*
de Pyrantel.

Example:

seven months old—*Tecnicar*
10 months old—*Pamoato de*
Pyrantel

13 months old—*Tecnicar*
16 months old—*Pamoato de*
Pyrantel

*With *Tecnicar*, they should
not eat three hours before or
three hours after you give
them the medication.

Vaccinating Dogs

1. DA2PP (distemper adenovirus 2 parvovirus panleukopenia) with *Leptospira* Bacterin (also called "sextuple").

Mix the liquid with the dry powder by pulling it into syringe and injecting into vial with dry powder—**BUT WAIT TO DO THIS UNTIL JUST BEFORE VACCINATING**—otherwise keep both vials refrigerated until ready for use.

Give subcutaneously at:
seven to nine weeks of age,
11-13 weeks of age,
15-17 weeks of age,
at one year, and annually after that.

2. Rabies (*Rabia*)

One Vial--Give intramuscularly or subcutaneously (ask when you are buying, it is different depending on which product):
at 16 weeks of age,
at one year, and annually after that.

Erica Periman D.V.M. •

From the Field: Environmental Quality Management in Machala, Ecuador

The following article appeared in the March 1996 issue of *Voices from the City-Newsletter on Urban Environmental Health Issues*.

by Chris Milligan

What do you do with 40 to 50 or more tons of uncollected trash each day? In Machala, Ecuador, faced with deficient municipal collection, residents of this tropical city on the Pacific coast threw their trash and garbage into canals and empty lots or burned it in their yards—with the obvious negative consequences. Numerous health problems related to

causes bacillary dysentery. Vermin attracted to garbage for food and refuge increase the risk of pathogen transmission.

Solutions to solid waste disposal and other environmental health problems, such as lack of potable water service or sewerage, are not simple. While many South American cities now generate the wealth necessary to deal with most of their environmental health problems, obstacles such as institutional failure, poor financial management, weak administrative systems and patronage-based politics can block cities from meeting their citizens' need for basic services.



poor handling of solid waste afflicted this city. Machala, it seemed, was Ecuador's point of entry for cholera.

Because the organic content of solid waste in Ecuador is high, often up to 70%, it presents unique health risks. Highly organic waste serves as a breeding place for insects that carry dengue, malaria, yellow fever, typhoid fever and dysentery. In addition, organic solid waste can contain significant amounts of salmonella, a cause of typhoid and paratyphoid fever and shigella, which

Machala's innovative approach

Over the past year, a division of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) located in Quito, Ecuador, has worked in Machala at the request of the Mayor and municipality's Department of Public Service. USAID's Regional Housing and Development Office for South America (RHUDO/SA) has joined with community members to find solutions to deficiencies in municipal services, particularly solid waste collection and disposal.

A two-fold goal was established: (1) to examine the options to increase the number of households covered by garbage collection and (2) to expand the local capacity for problem solving.

To perform the analysis needed in this undertaking, two recently graduated engineers from a local technical university were hired. RHUDO/SA provided them with assistance to complete the analysis and made recommendations for improving the service. With additional help from a Peruvian expert in microenterprises for solid waste collection and disposal, an alternative was presented to Machala's city council that allowed the municipality to reduce costs while it increased coverage for garbage collection.

As a result of assistance received, Machala has initiated an innovative waste collection system, soon to be organized into microenterprises. The municipality is now serving more than 25,000 city inhabitants by using low-cost bicycle- and push-carts for waste collection. By using bicycle-carts, the municipality has been able to expand services to marginal neighborhoods and irregular settlements that are inaccessible to standard waste collection equipment because of rough, narrow and often unpaved roads.

In addition, the Municipal Council acted favorably upon the recommendations and passed a resolution approving creation of the first small enterprise for waste management, which will be privately owned and operated. Catholic Relief Services has offered to provide a \$40,000 loan guarantee for start-up of the enterprise, which will serve approximately 50,000 people, at a cost per ton less than half of the current cost. The enterprise will have a contract with the municipality to provide services in a specific zone of the city.

In Machala, all households pay a 10% surcharge on their monthly electrical bills for solid waste management, but less than 50% of the city's 170,000 inhabitants receive service. With the savings generated by the microenterprise, the municipality will work to improve its current dump site, reduce its role in service provision and become more of a service monitor and foster the creation of other small enterprises for both collection and landfill management.



Machala as a model

Projects following the Machala model are being carried out in marginal neighborhoods in Quito and in the cities of Atacames, San Lorenzo, Baños and Babahoyo. These projects will use similar technology and organizational design for the enterprises.

Similar enterprise set-ups are also being designed for manually-operated landfills. Given its replicability and its adoption by several cities in Ecuador, the Machala model can provide a low-cost, sustainable solution for waste collection to small and medium-sized municipalities throughout the region. RHUDO/SA has signed a cooperative agreement with a Colombian NGO, Carvajal, to expand this pilot project to two municipalities in Colombia.

Chris Milligan is Deputy Director of the USAID Regional Housing and Urban Development Office in Quito, Ecuador.

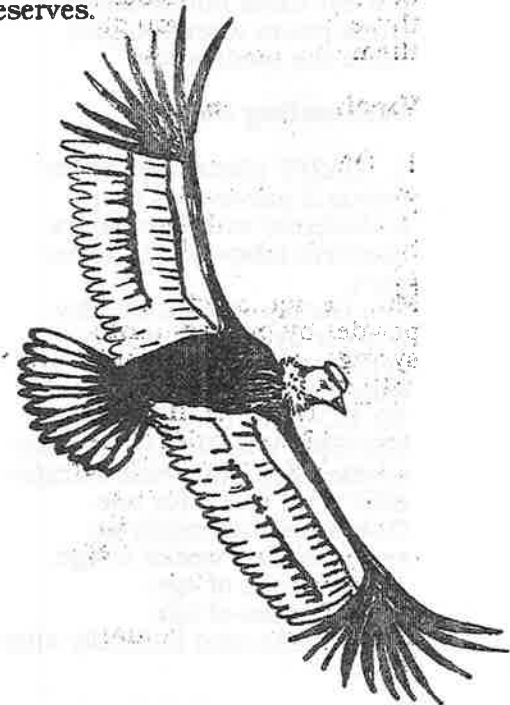
For more information, contact: RHUDO/ South America
USAID/ Quito
c/o American Embassy
Unit 5330
APO AA 34039-3420•

In the Andean Condor

Protected Areas in Ecuador

(This article appeared in Partnership for Biodiversity, May 1996 Update)

The Andean condor, Ecuador's national bird and cherished symbol, is extremely threatened. The Partnership site consists of four high-altitude reserves which contain the most important condor habitat in Ecuador—Cotacachi-Cayapas, Cayambe-Coca, El Angel and Antisana Ecological Reserves.



A site evaluation was completed.

The partners in the work in Ecuador are: CECIA, a non-governmental ornithological organization; the government of Ecuador; Peace Corps/ Ecuador; USAID/Ecuador; and DOI. A DOI condor and protected areas expert with experience in Latin America is leading the initiative for DOI. CECIA has designated a coor-

dinator for this program.

An annual workplan was approved to help conserve the Andean condor and its habitat. Partnership activities are geared toward improved management and conservation of the Andean condor, other high Andean species (e.g., páramo fox, wooly tapirs, spectacled bear) and their habitat. Activities include monitoring of high Andean ecosystems; environmental education and outreach and community-based, tourist-related income-generating activities. The monitoring and outreach techniques developed will be applicable to other Andean condor countries.

A training workshop in techniques for monitoring the Andean condor and high Andean ecosystems was conducted. Some 25 Ecuadorian and five Columbian professionals were trained. The trainers for the workshop were David Clendened and David Ledig from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as selected Ecuadorian professionals.

Equipment for monitoring the Andean condor (e.g., binoculars, cameras) were supplied for field use.

Some \$3,000 worth of field gear for the condor monitoring team was donated to the project by Patagonia, Inc.

Peace Corps Volunteers are engaged in environmental education on the Andean condor and high Andean ecosystems among high Andean communities. Peace Corps Volunteers are exploring possible income-generating activities based on the Andean condor and its ecosystems to encourage conservation among high Andean communities.

The Partnership activities were covered in an article in the April-May issue of Condor News.



TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL

OK. . .I've been coerced into writing. . .and the theme of this issue is travel . . . so here are my random thoughts. Bear with me.

Although I really enjoy the excitement and adventure of travel, I never really had the

Random Travel Thoughts

opportunities, or perhaps never took advantage of the opportunities to do so, in the States. It never occurred to me to hop on a bus or take a road trip to some unknown destination just for the sake of seeing what was there. Then again, I didn't have friends scattered about the States who were willing to lend me a *colchón* at a moments notice (or with no notice at all).

So here I am, living life in Ecuador and taking advantage of those "two days and one night away from the site one or two times per month" as specified in the Ecuador PCV Handbook. And what I've learned is this: The key to travel here is to (1) pick a destination (2) throw a few necessities into a bag (I've been known to pack everything including the kitchen sink, but I promise I am learning), and (3) find the next bus, truck, boat, or burro out of town. Oh, and cross your fingers that the Volunteer you are visiting can be found with that ever popular phrase, "*¿Dónde vive el gringo?*"

My Ecuadorian friends are continually baffled and amazed at this behavior. I guess the thought of hopping a bus with a destination 10 hours and two bus changes away, and being armed with only vague directions consisting of, "Look for the house with the brown door next to the church on the second dirt road," is a bit intimidating to them. Go figure.

They are not quite sure what gives me the confidence to do this, my venturing out on my own.

The fact is that most Volunteers have seen more of Ecuador than the majority of Ecuadorians will ever see. I

think this is one of the great cultural differences we experience here. As North Americans, we thrive on mobility. Where can I go that nobody has been before? How can I get there quicker and with more ease? Can I make it seven days with only my day pack? And once I get there and see all that there is to see, where can I go next?

When my time in Ecuador comes to a close, I hope to travel to all of those places I have marked on my world atlas (though it may be more realistic to scope out the many states I have yet to set foot in back home). I think that, by that time, I will have experienced first hand the ins and outs of successfully traveling (which will limit me to one medium back pack). Of course I will always be learning, but if there is a plane, train, or automobile going in the right direction, I will take my chances and explore that unchartered territory. There is something to be said for climbing the mountain because it's there. I just want to do it all. Is there anything wrong with that? To site a favorite quote of mine, "Seek opportunity, not security. A boat in a harbor is safe, but in time its bottom will rot." But try explaining that to my community!

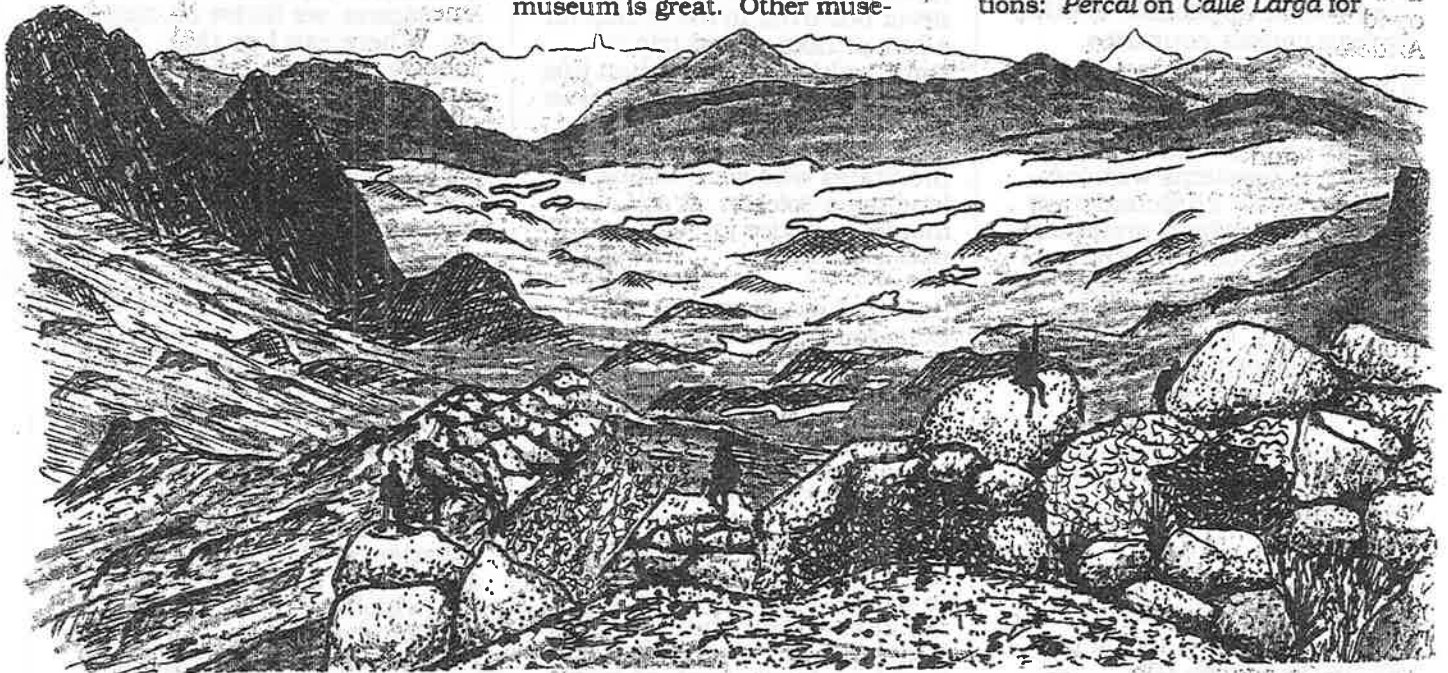
by Julie Johnson
Portoviejo

TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL

I would like to encourage Southern Ecuador travels. Why? I love it down there. I will not try to over-glorify but instead try to convince you that the landscape from Cuenca on down to the border at Macará is so beautiful that for this only it merits visiting.

Our trip starts just north of Cuenca. While not overwhelmingly spectacular, the ruins at

Southern



Ingapirca are a good representation of the amazing Incan masonry work done in Ecuador. You can check out rock walls so well-fitted you won't be able to slide a credit card between the stone blocks. Ingapirca is about two hours outside of Cuenca to the northwest, along the Pan-American Highway. Ask for a bus to Ingapirca at the terminal. Ask the driver to let you off in Tambo. From there you take a *camioneta* to the ruins. A good time to go is during the Incan Sun God Festivals which is three days of singing and dancing from native groups all over Ecuador

and other countries. It takes place during the Summer Solstice, this year June 20-22. In the same class are the ruins in Cuenca adjoining the Banco Central Art and Cultural Museum. If you are guiding tourists, especially Mom and Dad, this is the place to go. Choose it over *Mitad del Mundo* any day for Ecuadorian culture. You can paint a line almost anywhere and say it is the equator, but for a province-by-province display on the people, customs, costumes and lifestyle, this museum is great. Other muse-

only has about five or six other large markets dispersed throughout the center of town: there is even a small Otavaleño section in the *Mercado San Francisco*, just in case you forgot to buy a sweater for a relative when you were at the "real thing." And on Thursdays, the Basket Market, a block down from the 9 de Octubre market on *Ave. Vega Munoz*, is worth visiting. For places to stay: *Cafecito* has always treated me nice and *Macondo* for if the Folks are along. Restaurant recommendations: *Percal* on *Calle Larga* for

ums include, the Museum of Modern Art, which is free and always has good exhibits, and the *Museo de Las Conceptas*, which boasts an enormous collection of native artifacts. If you happen to be in Cuenca on a Wednesday, you cannot miss the *Feria Libre*, which is the largest market in the southern lands. This market is located on the Pan-American Highway as well, south past SuperMaxi. From the center, originating at the *terminal terrestre*, you can catch an orange *Feria Libre* bus for the low, low price of only 250 sucres. If you miss Wednesday, Cuenca

Comfort

good hot dogs, hamburgers, milkshakes and *ceviche de camarón* (the *ceviche* is only "good" for the sierra, for in Manabí it would only be "third rate.") The Chifa across from the *Cuerpo de Bombeos*, around the block from the movie theatre and one street *abajo del Parque Central* is perhaps the best Chinese Food I have eaten in Ecuador. (Yes, it even beats Chifa Fortuna in Portoviejo.) Prices are a bit elevated, but worth it. There is a

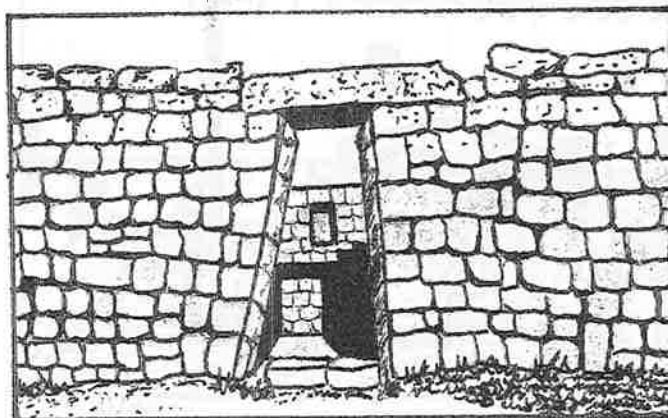
TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL

very good Mexican place near the other theatre and across from a *colegio*, but it is only open at night. There is a decent vegetarian restaurant on *Honorato Vasquez*, just down from *Cafecito* and a *Hare Krishna* vegetarian place kitty-corner to the flower market which is next to the New Cathedral. Of course, on the other side of the river there is always Pizza Hut. For night life, check out *Cafecito* or the *Wunderbar*, which is just off the *Escalinata* (a staircase leading from *Calle Larga* to the river *Tomebamba*). A good place to relax for a coffee and impress the folks is the *Raymi Pampa*, next door to the Cathedral. And for cheap, yummy ice cream, check out the *Heladeria Holanda*, a block to the right from the Cathedral on *Benigno Malo*.

But let us continue our imaginary journey. Before rushing off to Loja, a trip to *El Cajas* National Recreation Area is necessary. I recently spent a weekend camping in the 3-5 degree (C) wind, beside a rather large lake (pond, some would call it) from which rainbow trout can be coaxed. *El Cajas* is a huge area of *páramo* in the 3800-4400 meter range, filled with crystal clear lakes. Water is plentiful and clean for drinking; just take care to get water higher up than the highway or other human activity. The highway scars the pristine landscape, but does facilitate easy access and bus travel. When the highway is completed the new route will take an hour off the trip to Guayaquil from Cuenca and there will be ample bus service then. Until then, there is a bus which leaves Cuenca three times daily, information at the MAG office in Cuenca. Or just take a bus to Sayusi (they run along a portion of *Gran Columbia* to the west) and then, at the end of the line, hitch-hike in; it is easy. Park fees are rarely collected, but

there are several *refugios* that can be utilized for a modest fee of 2,000 sucres; but you get what you pay for. There is no firewood available at the first lake or further in. Plan to pack it in or use a stove. In short, *Cajas* is not for the "weak at heart," but if you can rise to the challenge, it can

the fifty-minute-plus, winding road to the first waterfall. While the waterfall alone is well worth the trip, the view of the valley and the surrounding lush mountains is incredible—not just at the end, but all along the road. The waterfalls sometimes have trash, unfortunately, but you



INGAPIRCA

offer an incredible natural high which might make you say, "This is so incredible. I could die today surrounded by such profound natural majesty!" Or not. There are a multitude of very climbable granite cliffs—if you have the equipment—but most of the peaks are reachable since the tough grass is so easy to climb. If you can see a grassed path—no matter how steep—it can be conquered.

Backing down, driven by cold and altitude headaches, we pass through Cuenca and head to *Avenida Loja* and the *Baños de Cuenca*. There, for about 12,000 sucres, you can enjoy turkish baths inundated with eucalyptus fumes and swim in the outside earth-heated pool.

Another great day trip from Cuenca is a visit to the waterfalls of *Girón*. From the terminal, take any *Machala* or *Girón* bus and get off in *Girón*—45 minutes from Cuenca. Ask for the direction to the *cascadas*. You can rent a car to drive you up or walk

can explore the area and look for the other waterfalls or hike above the first one.

From there, the bus ride to Loja is my favorite stretch of bus route in Ecuador. You can take an *Ejecutivo San Luis* bus, which is a big plus on this curvy road leading south to Loja. A friend from Loja told me that when the creator made the Americas, the starting point was in Alaska, heading south and east; then, to save material, the tiny isthmus was made to bridge the North and South; then the creation proceeded to the east, creating Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and, for some reason, skipped over the area where Loja is. After completing the towering Northern Ecuadorean Sierra there was no more space, and only Loja to fill, with far too much earth left over. The creator dumped all the left-over material in a million little piles on Loja until it was all used up. Why did I repeat that silly story? Oh yeah, Loja is incredi-

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bly convoluted and has some of the worst roads, including a five-hour stretch of the Panamerican which is unpaved. Anyway, the ride is scenic and should be done during the day.

seen—and the options for hiking, horseback riding, relaxation and spiritual cleansing are abundant. To obtain permission to hike on the reserve, *Protector El Bosque*, call: (07) 580 277. From

for animal comfort and happiness; but on the other hand, it might be your only chance to see mountain lions, speckled bears, large raptors, monkeys, turkeys, chickens, foxes, rodents of unusual size and wildcats. You can't stay in Vilcabamba and not eat at the vegetarian restaurant (whose name escapes me), which is just off the main square. Try their excellent, cheaply-priced banana bread.



CUENCA

Also, about three hours from Cuenca is the indigenous community of Saraguro, in which, you can buy fine woolen goods such as *ponchos* and *alforjas* (woven saddle bags) as well as, skirts and beaded collars. The Saragurans are a striking people, most immediately reminiscent of the Otavalans, but in a much more *tranquilo*, colonial and virtually, tourist-free town. The Saturday markets are a great time to be there to "people watch."

Loja itself is a very nice city, but nothing terribly special. There is an excellent restaurant called *La Stembra* located near the Tame office. From Loja (the nicest *terminal terrestre* in the country, by the way; I sometimes just hang out there eating chicken quarters), you can head south to Vilcabamba. Yes, it is everything everyone says—perhaps one of the most beautiful places I have

the valley, a foot trail leads to the entrance to the *Parque Nacional Podocarpus*. *Abajo* in Vilcabamba there are several, very comfortable hostals, including one I recently visited—*Cabañas de Charlie*, which, despite talk of a *bravo* owner, is an incredibly relaxing and well set-up hostel; very reasonably priced for the *cabañas*, which are built on stilts overlooking the river with a balcony and collapsing wall so you can enjoy the view from your bed. Ask anyone for directions to Charlie's, which is a 45 min., leisurely walk from town, putting you in a good position to get further away from people by following trails Charlie has set up leading from the *Cabañas* in different directions; including *Podocarpus* itself (where Charlie has other accommodations). The town is *tranquilo*—sort of a one- or two-horse type town. The zoo, which is a 20-minute walk outside of town, is not up to our high standards

From there, your choices are several. The Oriente route out to Zamora and up to Macas takes a number of hours (in the teens) and is well worth it for the scenery. You can also check out some great real estate deals around the Condor Range. Heading straight south to the border at Macará, you can walk across the river for excellent *ceviche* and superior Peruvian beer (but take care to see that there are no land mines left over from the border conflict, seriously). Macará is a sleepy, dusty town, but it is prettier and more pleasant than crossing the border at Huaquillas. The southwest route out of Loja is that hellish, dusty, bumpy section of the PanAm I mentioned earlier and a little spur heads to the fogged-in military town of Celica. Do not head this way unless you desire damp coldness, but you could pass over and drop down to El Oro to see the petrified forest and enjoy yet another Ecuadorian reserve.

So, I realize that I have left many details up to you, as I expect you can read *Lonely Planet* as well as I, but I hope this has served to spark your interest in the largely ignored southern regions of Ecuador and that you will have the money and approved vacation time to check it out.

Karl Banks and Andrés Amador

TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL·ADVENTURE·TRAVEL

Can you name all seven natural wonders of the World? Uh, the Grand Canyon, that's one! . . . Any help guy? Well, what difference does it make if you can list them all, if you never get the chance to visit each one. That's a goal I might spend much of my life trying to achieve, but it seems like as good a one as any other. After reading the recent "Newsweek" article on Mt. Everest and the deaths of climbers after a blizzard in May, I've scratched that one off the "ol' adven-

by

Wendy Pearce

ture gotta-do list". Anyway, I added my second natural wonder of the World to the list in February when I visited Iguazú Falls.

I didn't even know the place existed before Peace Corps placed me in South America. Most people I've asked about it since, haven't the foggiest idea either. It's one of the best kept secrets I know!

The falls sit at the juncture of three countries: Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, in the tropical rain forest on the Rio Iguacu roughly 20 km. east of its junction with the Paraná (which forms the Brazilian-Paraguayan border). Rio Iguacu serves as the border between Argentina and Brazil and both countries have national parks to protect and

provide access to the falls (at over 3 km. wide and 80 meters high they are wider than Victoria and higher than Niagara). One word describes this series of *cataratas*: Awesome! We approached the falls from the South, traveling from Uruguay. The trip was a long one, about 17

hours in a bus (although the luxury buses originating in Buenos Aires knock the socks off anything that labels itself "luxury" here in Ecuador (double-decker seating, continuous coffee--*cha-ching*-- and juice service, etc.) with an additional seven hours waiting across the border from Uruguay in Gualeguaychú, Argentina. We arrived late afternoon and chose to stay on the Argentine side of the Falls in the town of Puerto Iguazú (18 km. to park entrance). It's a mellow alternative to the big city of Foz on the Brazilian side. Hotel King is basic but clean and has a pool! We spent the following day in Argentina's national park. We were expecting the



hot, muggy weather (the months of August to November are much more tourist-friendly with lower water levels and cooler weather—but we avoided the gringos and over-crowded catwalks with our February, heart of *triverno*, visit) but were anticipating hours of hiking deep in the rain forest. So we were surprised when we'd walked all the available catwalks by lunch-time. The park caters to all tourists, so the getting-around isn't too difficult. We took a boat out to the downed-catwalks (left unrepaired after a year of heavy waters some decade-and-a-half ago) that end at the most spectacular *catarata*, Garganta del Diablo. After that we hopped in a raft which transported us down the river

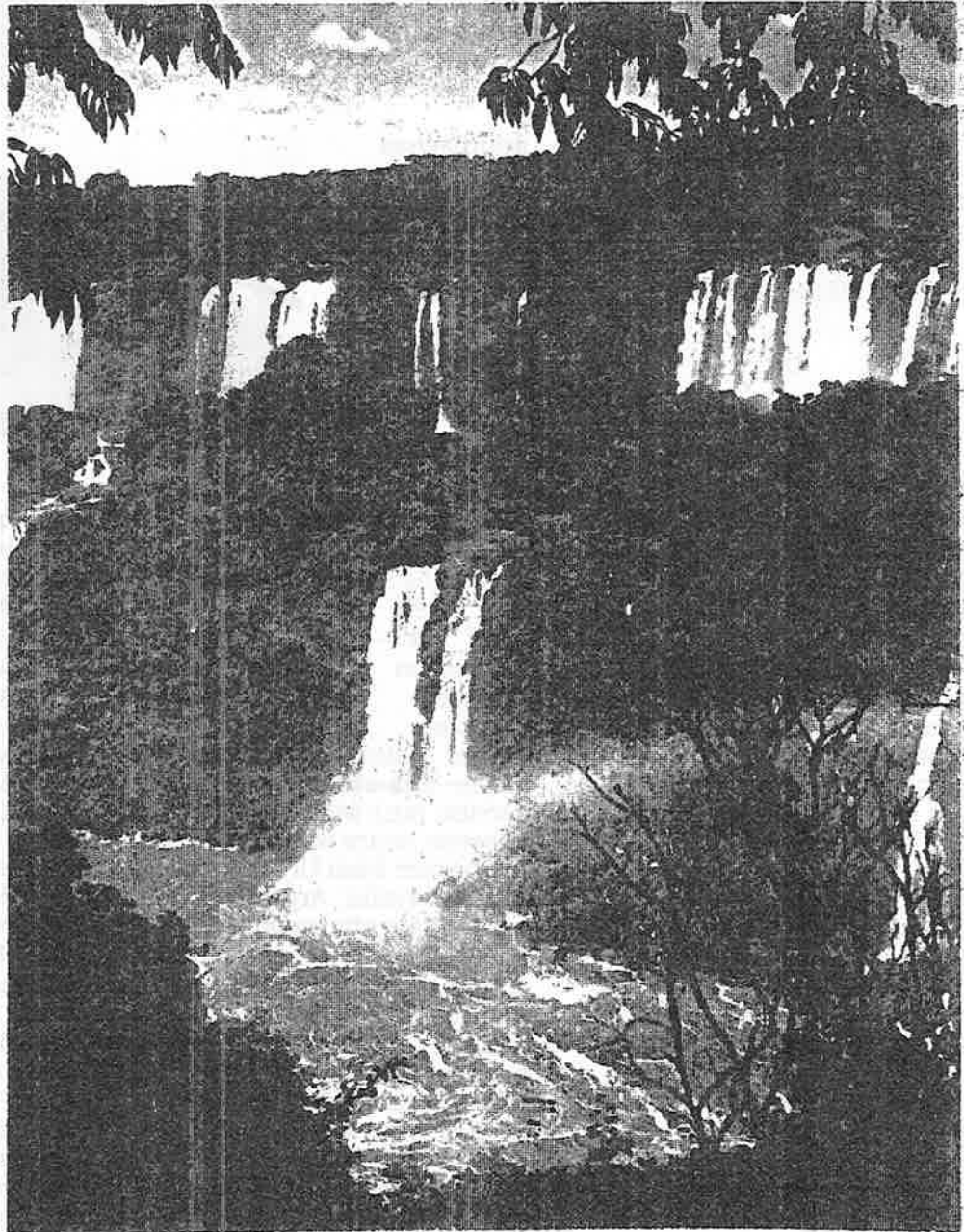
(above the falls) for a ways and then were trucked back to the center of the park.

The next day we, being the penny-pinching Volunteers we are, had planned a trip into Ciudad del Este, Paraguay—Free Shop heaven—to buy slide film, but it was Sunday and EVERYTHING is rumored to shut down so we postponed the trip until the next day. I had my fill of the place after an hour of traipsing through stores with mountains of the same products. We failed to locate any slide film and ended up paying the outrageous prices back in Puerto Iguazú. We had lunch in Foz, feijoadá, for a mere \$15. Oh well, you only live once, right!? And we were on vacation! The truth is though, that traveling in both Brazil and Argentina is quite costly. We spent a pretty penny but didn't deprive ourselves of too much either. The Argentine Peso and the Brazilian Real are valued at about the same as the dollar.

Our last day, we visited the Brazilian side of the falls. Where the Argentine side allows you to experience the falls up close and personal, with catwalks over and up next to the falls, Brazil gives you magnificent views from a distance. The park is a bit more developed and the wealthier traveler has the option of helicopter or rafts to take them directly into or under the falls. It's kind of like the Grand Canyon these days—a little spoiled with noise and motors in the sky but not worth boycotting because of it.

We took a ton of photos but it's like the guide books say, "Neither words nor photographs do them (the falls) justice—they must be seen and heard." We left Puerto Iguazú late afternoon and traveled the 24 hour trip back to Mercedes, Uruguay. What a treat the trip to the falls was for me! Had my boyfriend not been a PCV in Uruguay, I probably would have been one of the many who say, "Igua-what?" It's worth the time and money—

just do it!



I don't think any amount of description will ever evoke the bizarreness of my stay at Eddy's. Even now as I try to put my finger on just what the heck was going on, the words fail me.

Jambelli, a short, wet boat ride off the Machala coast, nestled in a lair of mangroves and mosquitos, is the closest thing to a beach resort south of Montañita. And being only four hours from Cuenca makes it the ideal beach getaway.

This was *Carnaval* weekend, just before the festival itself. The Cuenca newspapers talked about the massive beach cleanup effort underway to make the beach presentable to the throngs of partiers who'd, no doubt, leave it in worse condition than when cleanup began—ready for next year's cleanup. But that's all right, if there's anything I've learned it's that all's fair in *Carnaval* (learned on a particularly wet



afternoon walking my friend home. If there's anything more unbearable than being a *suca* during *Carnaval*, it's being targeted because you happen to be with her.)

After the bumpy, seaspray ride to the docks, my traveling friend Chelsea and I stepped off the boat and onto Main Street Jambelli, the central (and only)

strip on the island. Jambelli runs left and right: choose a direction. Well, we looked left, paused, turned right and started walking. As it turned out, left leads to the hotels, right only leads to Eddy's.

After a short stroll this teenager comes up and asks if we're looking for a place. He then leads us off the Strip back

EDDY'S

behind beach-front houses. I was starting to get wary when finally the lane turned and we were actually approaching a house. By then, though, it was too late to turn back—we had to keep going, the two story house with the crumbling paint, sinking porches and uneven beams looking no better as we neared. Continuing up the front stairs, we entered the doorway.

"DON'T STOP, MOVE IT, MOVE IT!" blared from the speakers within as we looked around for help. Then, from outside came the yell "HEY EDDY!!" Down came Eddy from upstairs, broom in hand. From a body thinner than the broom he carried, his completely black, shiny, comically caricaturish face gave us a warm smile from ear to ear, buck teeth spilling out—only a few missing—cheeks puffed up. After a few completely unintelligible words, I realized with a sigh that I had left articulate speech back in the Andes. Alright, fill in the missing syllables, mentally separate the words; he's speaking Spanish (I think!) so find equivalent sounds. Ah yes, he's asking about rooms. He then led us upstairs and showed us one that was bare but spacious. In the center was a bed with a mattress that appeared to have

given up its struggle to survive and had settled down here to die an undignified death. Topping that was a blanket that looked to have more experience with the bottom of a mechanic's floor. Luckily we had brought our own sheets—whew!

Setting our bags down and settling in, we realized that there was no way to lock the door—and that indeed, the door didn't close all the way which seemed moot since there wasn't even a handle to pull the door shut. Hiding our valuables, we ventured onto the balcony, bumping into the guy who, it turned out, had yelled to Eddy for us. It was this smallish, balding,

paunch-bellied man with a mustache, wearing a cheap Hawaiian shirt (are there any others?) and shorts, a drink, by its smell, in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Talking to us now, his accent from some mid-west state, he began explaining how Eddy was a good kid, just a bit slow, stopping to yell down to Eddy, who was still busy sweeping to turn down the music. From below came Eddy's "O-kay"—the extent of Eddy's English. This man before us seemed to talk as if we were in some run down Greyhound station and he had just sat down next to us and began telling us his story, eyes a little narrow, talking into the air, letting us in on his secrets.

Sitting at his side was a slightly heavysset woman with mostly white hair, sultry eyes, full lips, skin leatherized from years of sun, using her skirt as a *muumu*. She also held onto a drink and a cigarette-- two things we were never to see this couple without. She talked slowly and softly, almost dreamily, with a slight southern accent as she seemed to look beyond us into the past. She had an almost regal quality about her—or something that suggested great wealth at one time in her life—as she sat com-

fortably reclined on the bench lazily puffing on her cigarette. She asked about the scar on my chest (I was shirtless at the time), wondering whether I had been attacked by a jaguar—a blonde jaguar she added quickly, eyes lit, looking at my companion. This got her talking about her dream to run off with a shaman from some tribe of savages deep in the jungle. Looking back and forth, I couldn't comprehend how this couple had crossed paths to be here together. The one thing they seemed to have in common was the bottle of rum they poured from continuously and the pack of Marlboros that lay between them.

When I mentioned that we had been unable to close our door, the man pulled out his imitation Leatherman (Leatherdude or something like that) and motioned me over to his room door, which was entered from the balcony, to show me how he had rigged up a locking system that had stumped ol' Eddy. Apparently, explained the woman, Eddy had been nosing about the room, going through their bags, rummaging around her underwear. The guy even showed how Eddy had gotten in—how they had trapped him into revealing himself by stuffing a hole he used to unlock the door with toilet paper. Unwittingly, he poked the paper through but failed to replace it. Good ole Eddy! But, she continued casually and with a tipsy smile, Eddy meant no harm, he was just a curious kid. They then offered to let us put our valuables in their room while we went to the beach, which, out of a lack of options, we did.

Once on the beach, hot sand beneath us, hot sun above, cool breeze all around, we began discussing the folks we had just met. Just what were their origins? What was their real story? Why did we so innocently put our stuff in their room—money, passports and all? And

what if they were on the run and just might decide to leave soon?

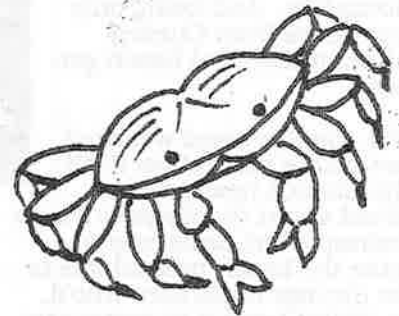
When we returned later in the afternoon, the couple was nowhere to be found. Their locked door hopefully indicated though that they were still around. Seated on the front porch we did see them return. The man was in front with a cigarette in one hand while the other held onto a set of 20 strung-up crabs, their purple and red bodies, arms outstretched and groping, eyes bulging, looked like demonic creatures slowly being strangled, writhing about as if to release itself from its captor. Behind him sauntered the woman in thin sandals and a sun hat, eyes at half mast.

He came right up to us talking endlessly about the great deal he'd gotten on the crabs, the scarred hands of the guy he bought them from, how he'd sell me half of 'em. I offered finally, to buy a few—10 being a bit much for me since Chelsea, unable to look her food in the face, was already cringing. As we talked, he would periodically pour water over the crabs which were strung up five by five, ten upright, ten upside down, all connected by their legs and claws. Their stem-like eyes would pop up and down now and then, their claws clacking in the air. But our man had his eyes wide, thinking of the feast to come.

As it grew dark, Eddy, who had been a cook at the Marriot or somesuch, started getting to work scrubbing and boiling and chopping. I ventured once into the kitchen to see how things were going and found Eddy talking quickly to himself about crabs; crabs and well, crabs. That was about the only thing I could understand that came from the seemingly endless stream of words that came forth. But I could tell that none of what he said made much

sense anyway as he looked at me with that head-splitting grin and laughed now and then in the midst of his babble. Leaving him be, I went back upstairs to put up the mosquito net we thankfully had the presence of mind to bring along, as the bloodsuckers were starting to come out.

The long awaited crabfest was served. On the balcony, armed



with pliers and hammers, we set down to work, Chelsea wincing disgustedly at every shell crunching swing. Eddy, eating his crab below, had the music screaming once again "DON'T WANT NO SHORT D— MAN!"

We stayed up for a few drinks with our housemates, going to sleep with the mosquitos buzzes a thin barrier away. Once in our room, I fashioned a makeshift lock from bits of wire and a nail I pulled out of the wall elsewhere. The next day we lounged on the beach and headed home mid-afternoon. The folks, who had been at the house for an incredible two weeks, were also ready to move along—up the coast, down the coast, it didn't really matter to them. Ready to get home, Chelsea and I boarded the little boat for the bumpy ride back to Machala, looking back to say goodbye to Eddy's.

by Andrés Amador
Cuenca

While the beauty to be found in Napo Province is totally different from that of the Coast (with its beaches) or the Sierra (with its rugged mountain terrain), Napo is home to many of the most beautiful rivers in the country, as well as unique Ecuadorian flora and

Travelling in Napo

fauna. In short, the traveler looking for the true "jungle" experience should head east to this sparsely



populated area of South America.

The Twin Cities

Tena, the provincial capital in the west, and Coca, the national petroleum capital in the east, form the backbone of the province. Many relatively cheap jungle tours and river rafting trips depart from the Tena area, while Coca serves as the departure point for many of the more intense jungle expeditions. The beautiful Napo River provides a water link between the cities and adventurous ones can travel by motorized canoe, in either direction. Also, buses run between the cities on a regular basis, throughout the day. The seven-hour road trip provides a scenic view of the Amazon River Basin and its panorama. While

Coca is worth a quick visit, Tena is the more highly recommended of the two.

TENA

Located roughly five hours by bus from Quito, Tena sits at the base of the Andean mountain range, acting as a gateway to the Oriente region of Ecuador. The atmosphere is very relaxed and the locals enjoy stopping on the street to chat with tourists. For the traveler short on time and/or money, Tena offers a crash course jungle experience. **What To See?**

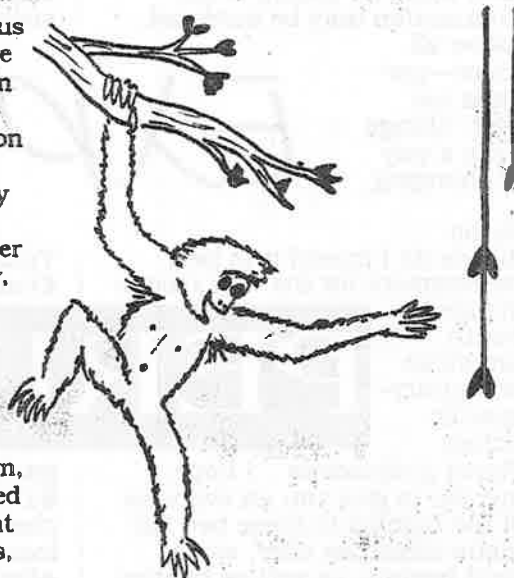
Parque Amazónico

Located in the middle of town, this park was recently opened by the municipal government and houses several monkeys, local birds, and other jungle wildlife. Well-groomed gardens exhibit the diverse fauna found in the area. Also, those who enjoy incredible viewing from the tops of trees will have fun climbing the three tree houses in the park, ranging in height from 40 to 75 feet. The entrance fee is reasonable at s./3,000 and PCVs receive a s./1,000 discount upon presenting Censo identification.

Misahualli

A short, 45-minute bus ride from Tena, the quaint community of Misahualli offers a relaxing atmosphere. Large trees filled with monkeys line the "beach" that runs along the Napo River. The monkeys are very social and enjoy performing for visitors. However, the reader is warned to watch personal belongings closely when near the monkeys. They have been known to snatch everything from soda pop to cameras and laugh from the top of the trees at the hapless victims below. Reasonable canoe rides are also available along the Napo River.

PCVs interested in finding out details can contact Michelle Roessler from the Health Program, who has been in Misahualli since February.



Where To Stay? Cositas Ricas: Located near the base of the foot bridge in Tena, Cositas Ricas offers comfortable accommodations, with private baths in each room, at low rates (s./12,000 per person) . . . look for the red façade. Ask Fabián if you can hold their two pet boa constrictors. Also, ask the owners for information about jungle tours and river rafting trips.

Where To Eat? Cositas Ricas: Adjacent to the hotel, the same owners run a restaurant. The menu features a wide variety of dishes, including delicious hamburgers and several vegetarian selections. Meals range from s./5,000 to s./10,000. Watch your plate closely, as monkeys have escaped from Parque Amazónico across the river and helped customers finish their meals.

by Stephen Green
Loreto Napo•

The following information is based largely on my own trip to Peru and Bolivia last October, which I embarked on with fellow PCV Cindy Chin, and therefore, some (or much) of the information may be outdated.

As we all know—perhaps too well—things have a way of changing.

By no means do I intend it to be a replacement for the very recommended

South American or country-specific Lonely Planet guidebooks.

I hope, merely, to give you an overview of the highlights these two fabulous countries offer, some good hostals, as well as relative costs and time constraints involved with each adventure.

My first suggestion would be that you allow a full three weeks of vacation time if you hope to explore both Peru and Bolivia. Any less results, as it



did for us) in a feeling of being rushed and undoubtedly missing out on awesome adventures. As for travel to and throughout

Peru, due to time and cost-effectiveness, I would strongly encourage air travel. You can purchase very reasonable package deals consisting of, for example, four in-country flights such as the following: (1)

simply cross the bridge-like border on foot to the Peruvian side, where you'll be met by a swarm of seemingly "unofficial," but apparently legit, collective taxis (they are anything but the standard yellow taxis we are all

so accustomed to here). The taxis will take you to the

EXPLORING

PERU

Tumbes (located just over the Ecuador/Peru border) to Lima, (2) Lima to Cuzco, (3) Juliaca (the border town between Peru and Bolivia) to Lima and (4) Lima to Tumbes. The 4-flight

package cost approximately \$175 U.S. dollars and was purchased through Ecua-Viajes, located here in Quito on Eloy Alfaro just off Parque Carolina.

AND

.. ask for Travel Agent Christina, who speaks fluent English and is very helpful.

We experienced no threat to our personal security whatsoever throughout our trip.

Traveling by air, we avoided altogether the notorious "guerrilla-terrorist areas" that supposedly exist in remote locations between the major cities, areas which we would have had to pass through had we been traveling by land.

The most cost-effective travel agenda includes traveling by bus to the Ecuadorian/Peruvian border town of Huaquillas (Pan-Americana has a nightbus from Quito). From Huaquillas, you

nearby Tumbes airport, located about a 20-minute taxi drive from the border. However, they first take you to the border control, waiting while you enter to get your entrance stamp, before continuing on to the airport.

Although changing perhaps \$20 at the border is recommended, for taxi/transit payments until you get to Lima, you can get much better exchange rates in Lima itself. Make sure the U.S. dollars you bring are in EXCELLENT condition, as the money changers, particularly in Bolivia, are very picky and won't accept bills that have even small marks or nicks on them.

Unfortunately, going through Lima is absolutely MANDATORY, due to the flight schedules.

BOLIVIA

.. you must spend at least one night there as there are no afternoon flights to Cuzco (the Machu Picchu ruins area)—so make the best of it. In spite of the bad reputation Lima has (as a very filthy, dangerous city), we found it to be like any other large city. Sure there's pick-pocketing and petty theft that occurs, and yes, walking around the central district (especially at night) is asking for trouble, but in all honesty, I

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don't think it merits all the paranoia it evokes in people. And it has some great areas as well!

The safest (and, correspondingly, more expensive) area of Lima to stay in is called Miraflores, but is quite a long ways from the airport. There are door-to-door service, collective vans to Miraflores which cost around \$5 per person (pretty hefty.) Or, if you're really pinching pennies, you can catch a minibus/van vehicle from the large street in front of the airport. The hostel we stayed at was called "Casa Grande", located at



Bolognesi 610 (and Tripoli) in Miraflores, Lima (tele #446-6791 or 446-4964). It's only a few blocks from the "beach" (waterfront) and just three or four blocks off the main street of the Pardo, which is the main street running through Miraflores. Miraflores is comparable to the Amazonas area of Quito, but nicer even . . . very modern and safe. Prices, at the time of our visit, were 25 soles for a double room (at that time, equivalent to approximately \$11.00). The hotel had shared bathrooms, but hot showers and a friendly owner. Or if you prefer to stay in the more historic, Central area, a less expensive option is the Hostel Espana, located at Azangaro 105 (y Ancash), just a few blocks from the Plaza de las

Armas where the Presidential Palace is located. The hostel itself is very safe but the Central District is more dangerous. The guidebook offers many more hostel options.

Although we were fortunate enough to get a private (free) tour of Lima, due to contacts I had there, we missed out on the single best attraction in all of Lima. . . the Museo de Oro—recommended they say.

On to CUZCO: Flights to Cuzco leave early a.m. so you have to get up at a god-forsaken hour

(like 4 or 5 a.m.). Once you arrive in Cuzco, there's a variety of cheaper hotels/hostals to choose from. We stayed at the Hostel Suiza II, which was basic but fine, although the guidebooks list several reasonable options. I found Cuzco to be a very pleasant, friendly and safe city. I wish I had had more time to stay there and explore the surrounding "Sacred Valley" region.

From Cuzco, you can easily organize your trip to the Machu Picchu ruins. I'd strongly recommend doing the Incan Trail—the three-to-four-day hike ending at the Machu Picchu ruins—whether you decide to do it on your own or as part of an organized tour group. Don't let concerns of "not being in shape" scare you away from doing the hike . . . just look who's writing this article ("Queen-of-Little-to-No-Exercise"). Remember, I am anything BUT your hard-core hiker—and I was FINE the whole way. (OK, the second morning was admittedly tiring; the final ascent to the first pass was not my definition of fun, but it was bearable . . . just continuously up, no switch backs . . . but other than that

second morning, it's CAKE!) It's "doable" and VERY worth it . . . an entirely spiritual journey.

Although there would certainly be advantages to doing the hike on your own (i.e. time and group pace slowing you down), in retrospect, I'm glad we went on an organized trip. In doing so, we relinquished all the worries of planning and cooking, not to mention the fact that all our tents, cooking gear and food were carried by porters, all included in the tour package price. The only thing not included was the sleeping bag, which can be rented through various agencies in Cuzco for a few dollars/day. The other advantage of going through a tour group was that we received a knowledgeable guide to accompany us, someone who knew the trail, the campsites (some of which were private ones accessible only to our group) and who was able to provide information on the many fascinating ruins that line the trail. The food on our tour was AWESOME . . . hot soups, meat (the first day), great pastas and, of course, the infamous and wonderful Mate de Coca—definitely better than your typical trail food!

On the organized hike, you arrive at Machu Picchu very early the fourth morning and spend the entire day seeing the ruins. Each day you hike 4-5 hours before eating lunch, and a couple hours after, before reaching your campsite.

The entire four-day adventure cost about \$75, but this included virtually EVERYTHING—tents, food, the guide, a cook, transport to the starting point of the trail, entrance into the park (which is \$18), a guided tour of Machu Picchu and train transport back to Cuzco (make sure you negotiate for first-class tickets, as the local class stinks—crowded; no assigned

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seating, which almost guarantees you'll be standing the entire trip, and filled with locals and all of their animals.) As it turns out, it really would NOT have been any cheaper to have done the hike on our own . . . people we met who didn't go through an organized trip spent virtually the same amount of money, if not MORE . . . and with a lot more hassles!

The tour company we went through was *Adventura* (sp??). The guide (who I would highly recommend) was named *Berner* (*Benny*) *Torres Pérez*. Although I don't remember the *Adventura* office location, *Benny's* address and phone are as follows: *Jirón Ccarmenca 128, Santa Ana, Cuzco* (tele. # 084-227-907). If you can't find the *Adventura* office, you might call *Benny* upon arriving in *Cuzco* to see if he's still guiding and, if so, through what company.

Upon arrival at *Machu Picchu*, I'd strongly recommend climbing the short, but VERY steep, hike up *Huayna Picchu*, a small "mountain" located directly behind *Machu Picchu*. Although it was definitely harder than anything along the *Incan Trail*, it was only about 45-minutes of painfully-steep hiking (for me anyway) and the views were spectacular!—absolutely breathtaking, perched on huge rock protrusions high above the *Machu Picchu* ruins; definitely the best view ever of *Machu Picchu*!

Leaving *Cuzco*, you can head to *Bolivia* either by flight to the border town of *Juliaca*, or, as we did, on the train from *Cuzco* to *Puno*, followed by bus transport into *Bolivia*. Buy your train tickets ahead of time (ideally before you leave to visit *Machu Picchu*) as it sells out. You can purchase the train tickets through any of the tour companies in *Cuzco*. (Note: Buy "first-class" tickets as they're actually cheaper and

just as comfortable as "tourist" class.) I highly recommend this train trip—the views of the *Peruvian* landscape were fabulous.

We had to stay one night in *Puno*, as transport to *Bolivia* leaves only in the morning. We stayed at the *Hostal Arequipa*, which cost 7 soles (approx. \$3). The owners there can help you arrange your transportation to *Bolivia* for the following morning. The bus/van passes through *Copacabana*, before heading onto *La Paz, Bolivia*. *Copacabana* and adjoining *Lake* are definitely recommended, whether you stop there on your way into *Bolivia* or, as we did, on the tail end of your *Bolivia* adventures, just before returning to *Peru/Ecuador*. A great (and cheap) place to stay in *Copacabana* is the *Hostal Emperador*, located at 235 *Murillo* just a few blocks behind the *Cathedral*.

SO LET'S TALK BOLIVIA:

In a nutshell, *BOLIVIA* is AWE-SOME! A great travel adventure, although to see it well you need much more time, as bus travel is slow (roads are even worse than many in *Ecuador*). Here's what we did and what I'd recommend:

We started in *La Paz*. We were trying to avoid the big cities and focus more on experiencing the countryside and its people throughout our trip, but we were both pleasantly surprised at how taken we were by *La Paz*. We ended up basing out of there, staying at a hostel where most all *Bolivia* PCVs stay (the equivalent, I guess, to the *Maple* or *Arupo*). The hostel, *Hotel La Paz City* (tele. # 368-380), which is located at *Calle Mexico 1539* (for cab directions, it's located in front of the well-known "Restaurante *La LLave*"). It's centrally located, just off *16 de Julio* (?) and,

it's close to the *Sagarnaga* market (one of the best street markets in all of *La Paz*; one of the best places to buy *Bolivian* artesanía.) Also, *Hotel La Paz City* offers luggage storage while you travel throughout *Bolivia*.

Highlights of where to go and what to see in *Bolivia*:

SORATA—a very beautiful area located between *La Paz* and *Copacabana* in the north, about four hours in bus from *La Paz*—a very beautiful, nature-lover's area, offering great day hikes, and a relaxing atmosphere. There's a great hostel there, the *Residencial Sorata*, right on the corner of the central park in *Sorata*. It's



a lovely old mansion, offering everything from a TV room, complete with a VCR, movies and a fireplace, to a reading room, to a reasonable restaurant. The cheapest rooms are very basic; we decided to splurge the \$4 U.S. dollars/person and get one of the many beautiful, antique-furnished "luxo" rooms. It was well worth it! There are many relaxing day hikes out of *Sorata*, one of