

which goes to a nearby cave with an underground lake.

### POTOSI

Located about 12 hours south of La Paz by bus, this is a must! The mine tours are fascinating . . . and a real insight into one of Bolivia's main industries. There's a great hostel where Bolivian PCVs stay, located at the base of Calle Chuquisaca, just a block off the central park. It's called "Casa Elizabeth" or "Casa Catherine" . . . (the name of the hostel is a person's name anyway!) The owners are charming and able to arrange a complete mine tour, the buying of bus tickets, etc. And it's very reasonably priced.

### UYUNI

This is the southwestern province which borders on Chile and is recommended if you're in to natural beauty. It's absolutely amazing, but BUTT-cold, so if you plan to go there, you need to bring VERY warm clothing (I bought an alpaca sweater, mittens and a hat, as well as a huge parka in La Paz, in preparation—all for less than \$40.) Tours are organized out of Uyuni, which is six hours from Potosi. There are many companies offering tours of Uyuni, however they all consist of 2-4 days of travelling around in a four-wheel drive vehicle. While on the tour, you stay in very basic but adequate shelters/lodging. You drive across huge salt-pans that make you feel like you're on the moon (nothing else in sight), see amazing lakes filled with flamingos, pass by natural geysers and even have the opportunity to bathe in HOT springs in the freezing climate! It was definitely the highlight of the trip, in our opinion. Got some amazing photos, and even retain even more vivid memo-

ries . . . surely one of the most beautiful places on earth, at least from what I've seen.

The tour company we used was Olivos Tours, located at the end of the main street in Uyuni (Av. Ferroviaria), tele. # 0693-2173. The total cost of the four-day trip was \$300 TOTAL or \$50/person, assuming the tour fills up with six people . . . upon arriving in Uyuni, you can join up with other small groups of people to form a five- or six-some to share the price. The price includes all transportation, a guide, a cook, and all food. However, it does NOT include the relatively inexpensive lodging fees which were \$2-3 per night, nor a sleeping bag which can be rented through the tour company.

**And finally, things we didn't have time for, but wished we'd been able to see:**

**TIAHUANACO (Twanaku)**—Bolivia's most important archaeological site. Supposedly amazing and located about 70 km. from La Paz. We simply ran out of time due to a transportation strike which set our travel back a few days . . . (hmmm, sound familiar?!)

**THE NAZCA LINES**—Located about six hours from Arequipa in the southern part of Peru. Supposedly cool and interesting, but very far away/hard to get to, if you're in a time crunch.

**THE BOLIVIAN AMAZON**—We heard it is amazing, with opportunities to see pink dolphins, virgin rain forest, etc.

OK, that's it. I hope this info. is helpful to those of you venturing to Peru and Bolivia. HAPPY TRAVELS!

by Jodi Hammer  
Urcuqui, Imbabura\*

### Why should you go to *Isla de la Plata*?

Four easy reasons: It is far cheaper, considering both time and money, than the Galápagos. For aviary viewing—save penguins of that archipelago—it is equal providing habitat for blue and red-footed piqueros, frigate birds and others. There is not nearly the detrimental environmental impact of the rampant tourism of the Galápagos; as there are no permanent residents, only one structure and only regulated camping is allowed. The snorkeling and chances to see other sea life are great. The snorkeling rivals Hawaii and the Galápagos.

Tours can be arranged through several different agencies out of Manta, Puerto Cayo and Puerto Lopez. I signed up on the tour out of Alandauz, which is actually out of Puerto Lopez. The day trip—which includes a less than adequate lunch, two-way boat transport, guided tour on the island and use of snorkeling equipment—costs only s./65.000. It is also required to buy the Parque Nacional Machalilla three-day pass, which is s./4.000 with your censo and s./40.000 without.

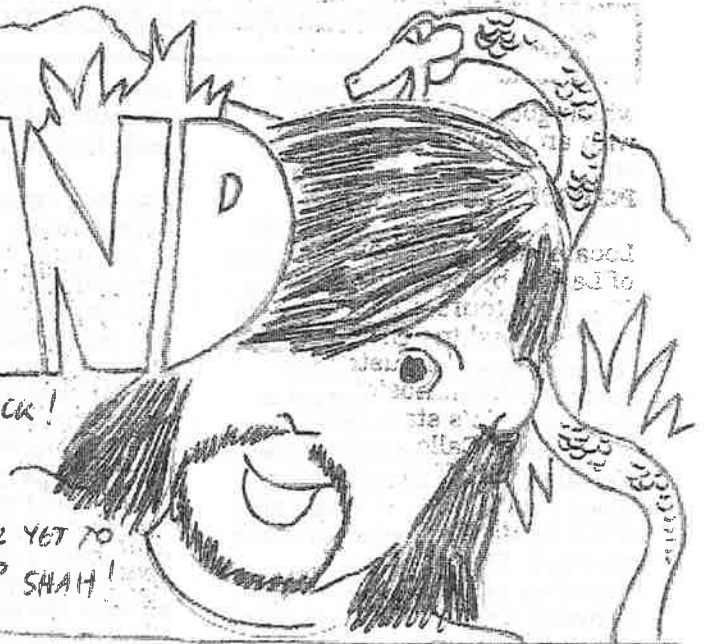
The boat ride is an easy hour, but water and sunscreen are a must. The day had just the right amount of boating, hiking and snorkeling and the three-day pass is good for a trip to Los Fraltes (the best beach in Ecuador) and Agua Blanca (sulfur springs and selva) which are the other major attractions of the park.

Think it over before paying highly inflated foreign tourist prices for that "other place" and adding your footsteps to the hordes there. After all, you don't even have to set foot on Isla de la Plata if you don't want to, but you can view the birds and snorkel from the boat.

Karl Banks  
Portoviejo\*

# EQUALAND

HEY PEACE CORPS KIDS - WELCOME BACK!  
CAN YOU LIKE EVEN BELIEVE OLD ZENO  
HAS CHANGED UP A YEAR IN THIS ANDEAN  
REPUBLIC? SO LIKE I HAVE ANOTHER YEAR YET TO  
GO AND THE GUY WHO DRAWS ME IS LEAVING? SHAH!



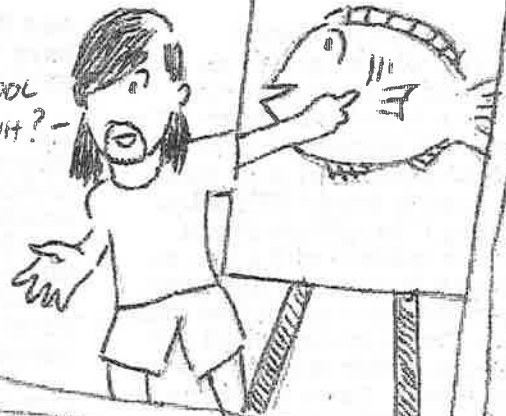
WELL, TO FINISH THE  
TERRORIST STORYLINE...  
PRESIDENT CLINTON WANTED  
TO LIKE, MEET ME, SO WE  
HAD A MEETING IN THE  
GALA PAGOS ISLANDS  
- COOL!



I GAVE HIM MY STANDARD CHARLA  
ON BREEDING TILAPIA...



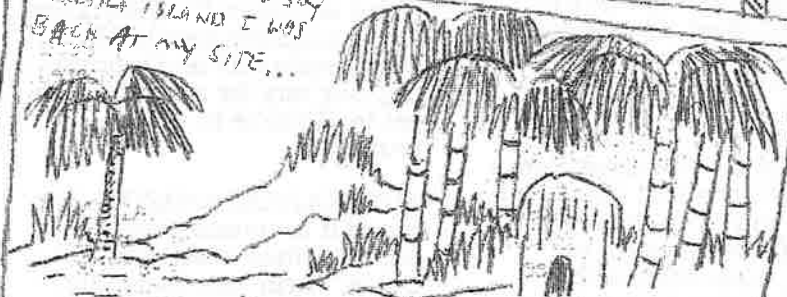
COOL  
HUH? -



FASCINATING ZENO BUDDY!  
I THINK CHELSEA SHOULD  
DO PEACE  
CORPS!



BEFORE YOU COULD SAY  
BARRA ISLAND I WAS  
BACK AT MY SITE...



SUNNY (A.K.A. SUPERTRAINEE) WENT BACK TO  
TRAINING IN TUMBACO AND AS FAR AS I  
KNOW IS DOING HER BEST TO INTRODUCE  
LLAMAS TO THE ORIENTE OUTSIDE OF LAGO AGRIO...

I THOUGHT AUKI WOULD FINALLY GO BACK TO SETTLE - BUT HE HAS DECIDED TO EXTEND AND CONTINUE HIS WATER PROJECTS IN YEMEN.

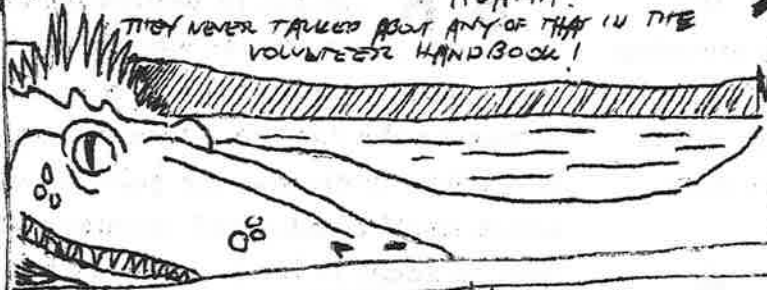


SO HERE I AM IN PENSAMIENTO DUDES. GUESS IT'S TIME TO WRITE THE FOLKS IN CALIFORNIA SO LIKE DEAR MOM & DAD...



ONE YEAR DOWN HERE IN ECUALAND. YOU WILL BE STOKED TO KNOW THAT YOUR PCV SON HELPED A WACKED-OUT FELLOW VOLUNTEER WHO HAD BEEN IN THE JUNGLE TOO LONG, ESCAPED FROM TERRORISTS, GAVE A CHARLA TO THE PRESIDENT, AND EVEN GREW SOME TILAPIA!

THEY NEVER TALKED ABOUT ANY OF THAT IN THE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK!



BUT THEY ARE NOW SAYING THE FISH PROGRAM MIGHT LIKE GET THE

BIG AXE!

SINCE I'M THE ONLY ONE



SO I MIGHT HAVE TO SWITCH TO, LIKE SWINE. NO WAY MAN - BUT WE'LL SEE. DOES THAT MEAN I GOT TO DIG A PIG POND?



AND I HAVEN'T SEEN MY COUNTRY PART FOR LIKE MONTHS - BUT IT'S COOL - IT'S ECUADOR THERE! NO RUSH...

HEY KIDS! SEE THE NEW MOVIE VERSION OF ECUALAND WITH CHRISTIAN SLATER AS ZENO AND DON'T MISS THE NEW SATURDAY MORNING ECUALAND CARTOON!



SO I HAVE TO TELL YOU IT HAS BEEN QUITE A TIME FOLKS - BUT LIKE THE MOST RADICAL PART OF IT ALL IS THE RUSH OF LIVING INTENSELY AND CHANGING DURING THE, LIKE PROCESS. I THINK

IT'S LIKE CALLED "INDIVIDUATION" YOU KNOW?

WELL I'LL SIGN OFF NOW, DUDES

YOUR SON  
**ZENO**

by Mark Blaha, San Vicente

"Direct your eye inward, and you'll find a thousand regions in your mind yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be expert in home-cosmography."

HDT [ed. hint: Henry David Thoreau]

## M o r n i n g

Toss. Turn. Can't sleep. Too many points to ponder. His eyes struggle to focus on the dark hill; it's horny hue not yet exposed to the burning admiration from above; the lone *ceibo's* silhouette, stiff against the skyline. His excitement for the approaching morning gets the best of him. He rolls out of the hammock. The morning air bites at his exposed frame. He laughs at his companion on the hill.

## t h e

He pours some leaves into the pot. A smile lifts his face in anticipation of the coming adrenaline. The tiny lighter presents a problem. His big thumb rolls the tiny striker providing the spark, but the gas fails to send the flame forward. Frustration at failure.

WOOOOUUUUUU. The flame fills the burner.

"Finally," says the *pyro*.

He relaxes on the love-seat waiting patiently for the tea to boil. Several open books flutter before him on the table. Ah, which channel to choose. On one, he had the G-

man, dashing from one sexual triumph to the next on a 60s college campus; two had Kundera's heaviness tempting the *philosopher*; on three, he had left a country's not-so-glamorous history festering.

Several mags also danced for his approval. One sung of the same country's glorious attempts to make the ugly world more pleasing to its perspective, its pages filled with misery and suffering. The *citizen* considers why the

## o n

country uses its economic might to punish other countries who differ in administrative philosophy. It is a way of paving the road to a future utopia; or is it a way to cleanse the guilt for crimes which itself committed?--crimes which it fails to admit in its own history books. The past, does indeed, belong to those who control the present.

The second dancing mag catches his eye. Quiet Miracles of the Brain. The *reader* is hooked. The tea begins to boil. Neurons race to make connections. He flips through the familiar article. The *student* smiles. There is much he

wants to learn. The three pounds of matter on his shoulders struggle in their search.

Several phrases fly off the page:

"Difficult to study," "We know relatively little," "Presumably," "Maybe," "No one knows how it happens," "Incomplete." The young student fails to appreciate



the amazing breakthroughs that neuroscientists have made in recent history. Instead, he lets the lack of answers trouble him. The further he gets, the more he realizes that the Internet of knowledge he seeks just doesn't exist.

He takes a study break to try the tea. It needs a little sugar. Umm. That's it. Perfect. Near perfect, ponders the philosopher.

"What will the morning have in store?" the man marvels. Deep inside, neuropeptides relay feelings of hunger to his brain. A quick scan of the shelf leaves the cook unemployed; his slats and peppers left unused for want of substance. A rumble reminds the man of his hunger. The thought of his empty bank account makes him hungrier.

He again looks at the hill. The sun rays now penetrate the *ceibo's* twisted branches.

He searches the shelves for shorts. Nothing. On the floor he sees several. As he tries the first, he finds fourteen kyats. "Now where'd this come from? I thought I was broke," the *previously*

*poor man* thinks. On a hunch he searches the second. Three more. Memories of past Easter egg hunts trickle through the temporal lobe of his brain. The third pair yields some fishing line, bobber, fly, hook and worm. Before it even becomes a thought, a split picosecond, debates in his frontal lobe, dismisses the possibility of using this find for food. The remainder of the search turns up two five-kyat bills. These discoveries are processed rapidly in the parietal lobe.

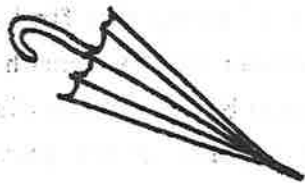
"Now I can shop!" reasons the *rich man*.

As he locks the door, he remembers he wanted to give a copy of his key to a friend. The thought of friendship makes his part of the friendship happy. "I have enough money to make copies and buy food," the *fortunate friend* fantasizes.

He meets his young neighbor on the steps down. "Good morning, neighbor. How did you sleep?" the older of the two asks. "Open it," she replies holding a rusty umbrella. "Good morning," he tries again. She's young. She perhaps cannot appreciate the power of politeness, the *wise man* thinks.



"Hello, please open it." All the power of his brain is released with the sound of the magic word. "What happened?" asked the *mechanic* examining the project before him. "It won't open," answers the sad girl as she presses the rusty button.



He studies the situation. She shows him the stem. That power on his shoulders speaks to his hands, "Override the button mechanism." He forces the stem up. As it opens, a smile breaks out on her face. Her cheeks lift off her jaw and crash into her eyes.

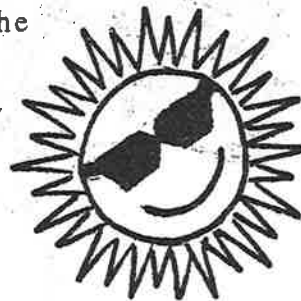
The *musician* thinks of a favorite tune from a song,

"Smiling eyes match  
The smiling faces."

A friendship is renewed. A confidence in the *wise man's* ability to solve all of the world's problems is expanded. She turns and flies

down the stairs. "Thank-you," the *future father* says, more to himself than to the little joy-maker dancing across the cornfield with her umbrella struggling to keep the beat. Her smile affects him more than the word would have anyway.

An extended debate lasting nearly a second, resolves the most efficient way to complete the trip to the Keyman and Veg-guy. The efficiency is defined more by the *sociologist* than the *geographer*.



The sun's radiation makes its presence felt. Its brilliance blocks many of the *sociologist's* specimens for study. He feels foolish for forgetting his sunglasses. His eyes squint to compensate for the lack of protection. He arrives at the D=Keyman. "Hello. Good Morning. How does it go for you?" the *sociologist* asks with

keen interest in the Keyman's response. "Regular," he answers, much to the disappointment of the *sociologist*. "Why is it that you are disappointed, sociologist?" ponders the *philosopher*. "Maybe his regular is pleasing to him." "More input is required to resolve this matter," they agree. "Don't go there!" concludes the *customer* without further probing into the regularness of the Keyman. "Two copies, please," the *customer* requests with emphasis given to that magical word. "OK," replies the Keyman accepting the key from the *customer*. As the Keyman performs his craft, the *customer* continues to cool the curiosity of the *sociologist* and *philosopher*. "But maybe with more questions I'll get a better price," concluded the *customer*. "How is your family?" he asks with little interest in



the response.

“Good, thank-you,” providing more for the *sociologist* to study.

His work now complete, the Keyman hands over the three keys.

“How much do I owe you?” the customer asks, this time with much interest in the response. He expects each key to cost three kyats.

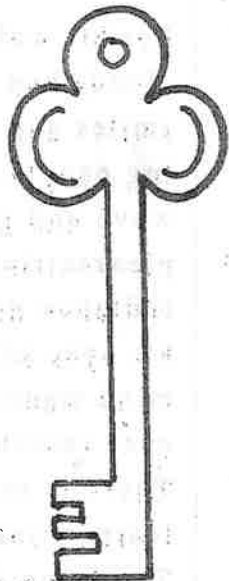
“Five kyats,” the reasonable Keyman replies.

“Thank-you,” contests the rich customer as he hands over the ten-kyat note.

“Do you have change?” asks the reasonable Keyman, with a slight hint of desperation in his voice.

Lie. “No, I’m sorry about it. I don’t have change.”

The reasonable Keyman, hesitates. The *cunning customer* knows he has won. His left hand rests in his left pocket on the seven single-note bills



and the two five-note bills he knows he won’t be needing. The reasonable Keyman has already given the *customer* his keys. He must make change. He digs out a cigar box from the bottom drawer of his cluttered desk.

Reluctantly, he produces five single-note bills. The *cunning customer* wins.

Twelve singles and two fives. The *customer* smiles as he crosses

the street. The *man* pauses. The *philanthropist* thinks of that momentary agony he saw on the reasonable Keyman’s face as he handed the singles over.

He considers returning and exchanging his superfluous singles for that tremendous ten. The *man* turns and continues to walk away from the reasonable Keyman.

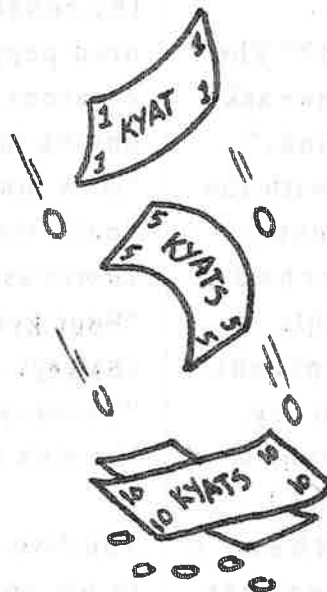
“Why is it that the voice of Man’s greed speaks so

much louder than his love and care for his fellow man’s welfare?” asks another part of the *man*. The exchange, which moments earlier meant little to the *man*, begins to weigh on him as he staggers down the road towards the Veg-guy.

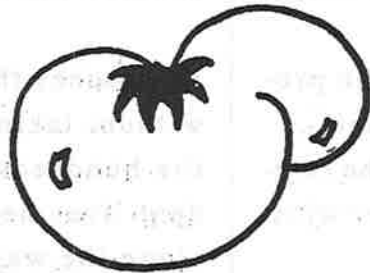
He reaches the Veg-guy without taking notice of the hundreds of independent lives he passed along the way. Many of them he perhaps had met on some occasion.

Others, perhaps, he would wish he had taken the time to notice. It wasn’t that the people he passed meant nothing to him; of course he cared for them, but his mind was too

cloudy with other thoughts to pay them the unprejudiced pleasantries they deserved as members of his species. He hoped they would understand.



The *consumer* searches the cart of vegetables. Veg-guy completes business with another client and turns to the *consumer*. He notices the *consumer* checking out tomatoes. He makes a judgment on the *consumer*. He begins to put perfectly-shaped and perfectly-colored tomatoes in a bag. "How many do you desire?" he asks his prejudged client. "How is the pound?" The prejudged *consumer* asks. "One kyat per pound," Veg-guy answers with the going rate. The knowledgeable *consumer* had expected to hear this. "I would like two pounds, but I have brought my own bag," he motions to his saddle bag, "and I won't be needing them. I like these," the *consumer* calls as he selects several large, disfigured samples. The *consumer* was above judging the tomatoes' taste solely by shape. He knew there was much to look for; often the prettiest, round, red

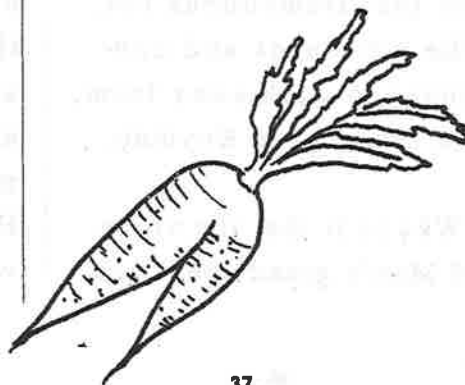


tomatoes offered little pleasure to the palate. Veg-guy was wrong about the *consumer*. He threw in an extra tomato at the end. The *consumer* wonders, "Is it out of kindness or guilt?"

Content they had reached a point of mutual understanding, the *consumer* contin-

ues his purchase from Veg-guy. Veg-guy helps the *consumer* put disfigured peppers, carrots, potatoes, cucumbers and onions into his bag. "How much do I owe you?" the *content consumer* asks. "Four kyats," Veg-guy answers. "Thank-you," contests the *rich consumer*.

The five-kyat bill remains in his pocket. He hands four single-kyat bills to



Veg-guy. He smiles when he sees Veg-guy put the money away among two tens and a five.

For his walk home the clouds had cleared. He smiles and waves at passing people. They in turn wave and greet him with pleasantries. The sun's radiance doesn't bother his eyes anymore. His mind wants more. His eyes search for more. There is so much more to learn, thinks the *student*. The *home-cosmographer* searches inward.

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***"Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade but of thought."***

Henry David Thoreau



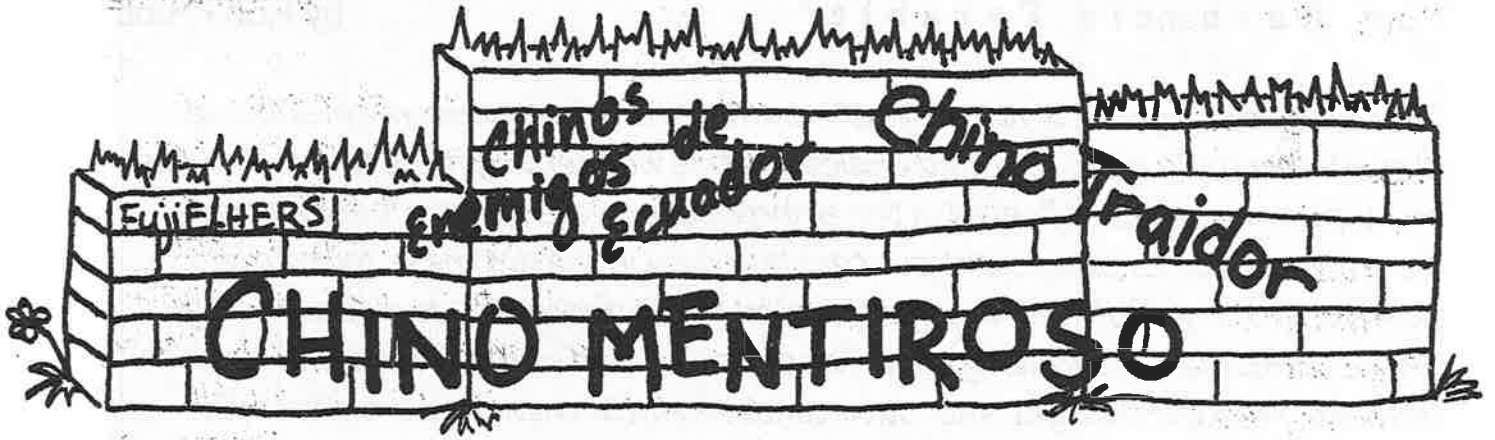


## The Barnacle Parable

by Ron Krupa

Once long, long ago, a barnacle nymph roamed the mighty universe in sublime bliss. "What could be so vast and endless as this wonderful gift the Great One has created?" it mused as it floated in the embrace of endless space. It encountered incredible creatures, saw countless stars twinkling in the darkness, found great warmth in the cycle of light, and yet yearned for an anchor to secure its identity. Then one moment it suddenly struck a solid object and immediately, without the chance of reflective thought, shot out a tentacle and latched onto the object. It found it good to be anchored so and feed freely on the plentiful food the Great One provided, and grew. At first all was well. It could observe the universe from a new perspective, made friends with many creatures which darted hither and tither or scampered over and around its world. Then one light cycle, it noticed one like itself anchored nearby. This was also good. Now it could communicate its wonderful stories and soon they were as one. Then another appeared and another until its world was totally engulfed by likenesses of itself. Friends became enemies as space became more crowded and food scarce. Rather than the peace of solitude and silence, its world became a cacophony of merged cadence. No more did it notice the vastness of eternity, and forgot, almost, the freedom of movement in its infinite universe. Even the idea of its endless universe was shattered when one moment the universe receded and opened into a numbing void without substance. It could not fathom the dimensional change and closed in on itself in total fear. Only when the familiar embrace of its own universe was felt did it chance to venture out from its shell and vie once again for existence. But the cycle of fear continued, and the world of attachment became unbearable where it yearned for the solitude of egoless space. It longed to float in freedom, detached from a world gone mad, but it could not. Its anchor was too deep, its fears too great and attachments too many—what would I do without my familiars, family and home? Security, after all, it rationalized, lies in the ability to make choices and accumulate, with fear as the glue. So it fanned its feeding tentacles, shared spore with its first friend and watched as images of itself were launched into the universe to experience the peace and freedom of birth, knowing they too, would eventually follow the same path as it and attach. And in this evil thought it died, crushed by the hull of a great ship.





Graffiti. These are just some I've seen on the walls in Ecuador. They make my skin crawl, my blood boil, my mind seethe with anger. Then, a kind of sadness comes over me and I think to myself, "Why?" I realize it is probably unwise to take it so personally, and that my year-and-a-half of service should, by now, have numbed me to the ignorance. The truth is . . . it hasn't. In fact, the longer I'm in country, the more cultural insensitivity hurts. The more work I do, the more offended I get.

I am writing this article not so much to vent, but to share experience in this country with my fellow Volunteers . . . the Asian-American perspective. As PCVs living in a different culture, it is obvious that we are all going to experience our own share of ups and downs during our two-year service. Since I'm nearly at the end, I look back and see only the positive things about Ecuador—the friends, the successful projects, the kids, my community, etc. . . . I definitely have had some wonderful times. But sometimes, due to cultural insensitivity, my happiness can be blurred, and so my reality becomes unpleasant.

Most Peace Corps Volunteers, I feel, are special in this way . . . we appreciate each other for our differences and are generally open-minded enough to want to learn about each other. It doesn't matter if

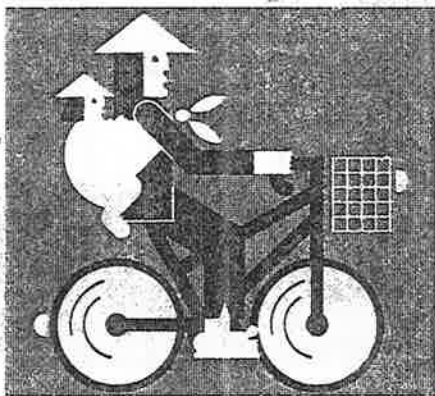
your skin color is yellow, black, green or purple. As far as my experience goes relating to Volunteers, the physical difference doesn't matter. The fact is that we are all Americans and we're all one. This comraderie feels good.

The difference is that when I am with Ecuadorians, I'm "Chinita." It wouldn't matter if I were Chinese (which I am), Japanese, Korean, South-East Asian or Mongolian, I would still be "Chinita." This is all right with me, because in Ecuador it is not culturally insensitive. But at first, it was difficult for me to get used to (being from the U.S. and all). We wouldn't exactly walk up to someone and say, "Hey, little Chinese person, what's up?" "In the American Book of Ethics," that would be rude, no doubt. Any person with blond hair and blue eyes is a "gringo." Any person with black hair and slanted eyes is a "chino." That is life here in Ecuador.

But times come, when I'm not so accepting and forgiving of Ecuadorians as they make these cultural *faux pas* and when their ignorance is down-right rude. For instance, during the Peru-Ecuador conflict last year, when the teachers at the school I worked with decided to be cool to me. Or, when I was asked, "Are you the cousin of Fujimori?" How about the time when I went to visit my friend Marta, who owns the local bar in San



Pablo, and a man in the bar asked me, "So, how do you feel about Fujimori since you're . . . (then he lifts his hands to his face, puts his two fingers at the ends of his eyes, and slants his eyes up). . . china?" Oh god, I wanted to slap him. Or when I was at a party with fellow PCVs and Ecuadorians, and the Ecuadorian host, whom I did not know at the time, decided to make a speech. During his speech, he pointed at me and said, "And the one from Taiwan doesn't even know what I am saying." That one little comment just about ruined my night. I have a million and one stories I could tell, but you all get the point.



What topped it off for me and motivated me to write this article was what happened one day in the park in Otavalo. I was obnoxious-ly and rudely insulted by a group of men while walking to the post office. I walked away from it and ignored it, but that incident left such a stain on my heart that I could not emotionally get rid of it. I ended up breaking down for the first time in Ecuador, and from that point on, I could no longer keep my eyes closed or feel as accepting as I had for nearly two years. It basically was the accumulation of the insensitivities I had experienced. And, for me, it was the last straw. I have since then learned that when similar situations happen, I need to confront the instigator. It feels better in my heart to know I did something about it, whether or not it works. In fact, everyone whom I have approached have all



apologized. Once I hear the "Disculpe" or "Lo siento," I feel renewed because I've just made one more Ecuadorian aware.

I think a lot about how this experience has affected me. I've grown a lot. I've learned that no matter how angry I get, sometimes blaming is not the answer. Oh, how I blamed Ecuadorians for being rude and insensitive. But when my immediate emotion passes and I have time to think logically about the situation, I become forgiving. Really, how can I blame them for being culturally insensitive when they never had the opportunity to learn to be otherwise? I mean, Ecuador is not exactly a melting pot, a tossed salad or a combination pizza. The diversity just isn't there. Unless you live in Quevedo, Asians aren't really that common. I do wonder sometimes about the Asians that are Ecuadorian. How do they feel? Maybe they don't feel anything because this is life in Ecuador and they don't know any different. As for me, an Asian American, I remain sensitive to it, but realize the only thing I can do is educate and accept.

Some funny things happen too. Remember the last El Clima article I wrote about the time a bunch of kids in Atacames followed me around because they thought I was Trini, the yellow Power Ranger? To this day, I'm quite often confused for Trini.

It is nice when people are curious about my culture and interested in getting to know me. What gets old is when people ask me, where I am from, and I answer, "The United States." And they say, "Well, you don't look like you're from the United States." Then I have to go through my whole speech on how the United States is oh-so rich in different cultures, blah, blah, blah. Boy, I know that talk well, so well I say it in my sleep. Now, when people ask me where I'm from, I automatically say,



"I'm from the United States, but I'm Chinese." Boom, right to the point, no questions asked. Thank God! But, sometimes, I still get those confused folks who continue to ask, "What part of China are you from?" Once (thank God, only once), I was asked, "Are you from Red China or normal China?" My answer, "Uh, sir, I'm from the U-N-I-T-E-D S-T-A-T-E-S, and I believe, there is only one China." I found this very amusing. I still laugh every time I think about it.

Because I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area--a well-diversified area-- I've always felt pretty integrated. I've never had any cultural conflicts because of my ethnicity. I've never had to educate anyone about my culture. I never had to look deep within myself to examine my identity. People always just accepted me for who I was, until now. Because of my experience living in Ecuador, I've grown to be prouder of my Asian heritage and prouder of who I am. I am proud and I'm motivated to share my culture with not only Ecuadorians, but more so, with my Peace Corps friends.

My life in Ecuador has been joyous, frustrating, satisfying, insulting, loving and hateful. No different probably, from any other Volunteer's. But being Asian has just made my experience more challenging, I guess you could say. Ten years down the road, I'm not going to look back at my Peace Corps days and focus on these incidents. Yeah, I'll remember that it was difficult culturally at times, but what I'll remember most are the special people in my community of San Pablo and how much this experience has changed my life. So, until I leave, I'll continue to be "la Chinita" and I may have to deal with a few more *ignorantes*, but that's okay, because I've learned to accept. Too bad I can't change the world in two years time.

by Cindy Chin  
San Pablo, Imbabura •

When I was little  
I remember two things  
in particular  
how the moon would  
always  
follow the car  
and  
how every time we  
drove past a mountain  
I was sad  
because I wanted to stop  
&  
climb it.

The wet wind sings  
Trees in the dark dance  
To its song  
Rain rattles against the pane &  
splashes through a cracked window  
On my table  
Cold seeps through the walls  
I am studying  
A kin to a monk, pouring of a text  
At some far off monastery  
There will be no Viking raids  
Tonight.

by Michael Morgan,  
Cerro Blanco, Guayas •



by Lisa Flores

La Celica, (Coastal) Pichincha

She laughed in my face when I told her I was from the United States. She didn't believe me. It wasn't a typical response, but one I sometimes get. My brown skin and dark hair can be tricky that way. There was a woman coming in to visit family and we had caught the same *camioneta* into my site. "¿De que familia es Ud?" she had asked me. I don't know how frequently this happens with white Volunteers, especially the ones that look more like what most people think of when they hear the word *gringo*, but being recognized as a *Latina* living in Ecuador happens frequently enough to me that it has become an additional aspect to my Peace Corps experience.

In the last "Pearce-ing Thought" editorial, my dear friend Wendy, wrote about how varied our PC experiences are and some of the factors that contribute to those differences. For the last (almost) two years, my buddy Cindy Chin and I have had an ongoing dialogue about how our different cultural identities have affected our PC experiences and made them different for us. Certain things

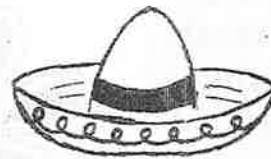
Ecuadorians have said to me have made me rethink a little of how I culturally self-identify and how I am culturally perceived by others.

When I was a little kid, my mother taught me to raise a clenched fist in salute and yell in pride, "*Chicana Power*." I learned early on what the word *Chicano* meant: literally, a U.S. American of Mexican descent.

However, the word has been politicized and those that use it generally express an awareness of and a solidarity for *Chicano* economic, social

and educational

causes. Culturally, it signifies an ever-expanding array of experiences, images and rituals that for some include but



are not limited to: Lowriders, *Cinco de Mayo*, Cesar Chavez, the Decade of the Hispanic, *tamales* for Christmas and I could fill the *El Clima* with more, but those are a few. Having a strong sense of my own cultural identity and history has provided me a backdrop against which, I can re-evaluate and better understand my current experience.

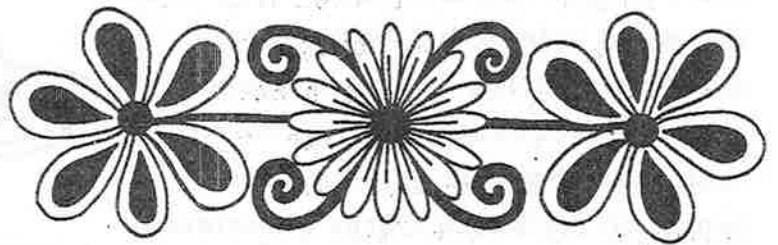
I wanted to serve in a Latin American country. It was



important to me to learn to speak Spanish, not only because it would be a marketable skill, but also because I've always felt I should. The random words and phrases I picked up from my family (a language usually reserved for talking about adult things in the presence of kids) wasn't enough to quench my desire for truly understanding the songs I belted out with Eddie Gorme, *Los Panchos* y Javier Solis every Sunday morning as my mother and I made brunch and cleaned house. Nor was the Spanish I learned in high school enough to effectively converse with my grandfather who speaks no English. Joining the PC, I felt like I was finally going to learn to speak the tongue of my ancestors. My desire to speak and self-expectations were high. I couldn't speak fluently enough, fast enough, and I cried during training that words wouldn't come; that the words weren't dancing off my tongue. I think there may have been a few people during training that understood why I was freaking out as much as I was over this Spanish thing. I've gained some confidence in the last (almost) two years. I still wouldn't call myself fluent, but people sometimes tell me that I sound like *una de aquí*, and that feels pretty good.

Speaking of language, here's another anecdote I'll share. Something that

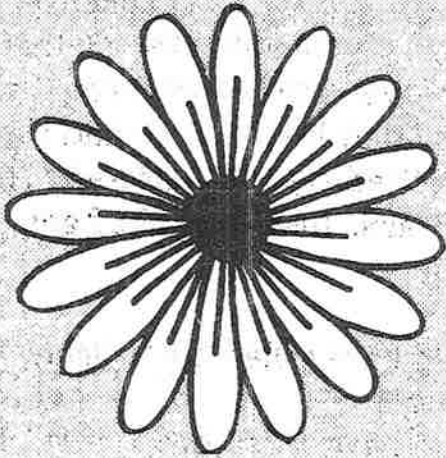
occurred on my last trip to Quito that I don't think happens to most other volunteers. Stuck at a landslide with about 12 other carsloads, I got off the bus and walked up to investigate. I passed a couple of hip-looking women speaking English. When I asked where they were from, they looked kind of startled, and instead of saying Connecticut, they told me I spoke English *soo well*. Yea, thanks. I think there are a lot of clues that would tell someone I'm not from around here. I think being half a foot taller than most tall Ecuadorian women and wearing Texas are generally dead give-aways. But, I think what people often see at first are my brown skin and dark hair.



I'm tan now, but I was brown when I got here. When I say I'm from the United States, people sometimes take a longer look at my complexion and make some sort of comment. Other North Americans sometimes suggest that I really DID get quite a tan. *Pendejos*. With Ecuadorians, if I don't immediately say, *Soy de Los Estados Unidos, pero mis abuelos son*



de Mexico, I usually go through some sort of interrogation that arrives at that same point. My counterpart was the best. He was so proud to have



"una gringa del Cuerpo de Paz" on his staff "con razas Mexicanas." His introduction of me taught me a lot. Sometimes in the States there exists criteria for laying claim to the Mexican culture, i.e., whether or not one speaks Spanish and/or how anglocized or "coconut" (brown on the outside, white on the inside) one might appear to be. In the States, there also seems to exist more confusion and boundaries surrounding how one should or should not self-identify. Conversely, most Ecuadorians don't have any problem simplifying and seeing clearly the duality that exists in my own identity—that I am a product of both the U.S. and Mexican cultures. Insight into how Ecuadorians culturally perceive me is another reference point I have gained in terms of my own cultural identity. It is something else I am taking away from this experience.

The story doesn't end here. I have one more personal anecdote that illustrates how sometimes, Ecuadorians have a difficult time recognizing, despite given clues, that I am from the U.S. Cindy and I were in the back seat of a taxi in Guayaquil, carrying on and on in English, when I noticed the driver's eyes bugging out in the rearview mirror as he looked back at Cindy and me. "What's the problem?" He begged our pardon, asked where we were from and couldn't believe that looking like we did, we were from the United States. So begins the *charla* that not all North Americans have blond hair and blue eyes. This scenario has repeated itself on numerous occasions with this same friend. The sad part is that when they want to know more about Cindy, they usually turn to me with their questions, assuming my Asian-looking friend only speaks Chinese and a little English. So many assumptions. I end on this note hoping that all Volunteers recognize this as a shared challenge—that in being from the United States and in our efforts to educate others about what our country and our people are like, we remember to include the range of diversity that constitutes our American people. •

**¡VIVA  
LA RAZA!**



# GUAPA

*Guapa*, that's what they like to call me in my town. Never mind that I don't wear any make-up and have massive split ends flying out of my ponytail. They don't care, to them I'm still *guapa*.

I know that they're just saying it to molest me; after all, they don't even know me. They just want to look cool in front of their friends, saying HI to the *gringa*. Why don't they leave me alone?



I'd try to ignore them. I'd walk away with my face down so that I don't look them in the eye or they'll think that I'm coming on to them.

That's how I used to feel when I first arrived at my site. But was I overreacting? Could it be that these people were just being friendly? Is it so wrong to want to greet you in the street, even though they don't even know you?

"Hoooola Guuuuaapa."

I used to grit my teeth when I'd hear it but now . . . now, I rank myself right up there with the supermodels like Cindy Crawford and—well more like XuXu—

*Guapa.*

The culture here is more vocal and honest in some respects ("Estás más gordita") and therefore, likes to remind me that I'm still *guapa* (and have gained a little weight). With *gringo* names like we have, who can remember them?; that is, if they can even pronounce them at all. That's why they just call us—and if you haven't noticed everyone else—by characteristic traits. Just looks like I got lucky.

They could have called me "*gigante*," for my height.  
They could have called me "*coneja*" for my buck teeth.  
They could have called me "*gata*," for my eyes.  
They could have called me "*flaca*," for my slenderness.  
They could have called me "*bemba*," for my full lips.  
They could have called me "*samba*," for my curly hair.  
They could have called me "*blanca*," for my pale skin.  
But they call me *GUAPA*, for my good looks. (Sometimes they call me *reina*, but I don't know why. I don't go trotting around with a silly crown on my head.)



I don't take offense anymore. But why **would** I take offense? Is there anything wrong with someone paying another a





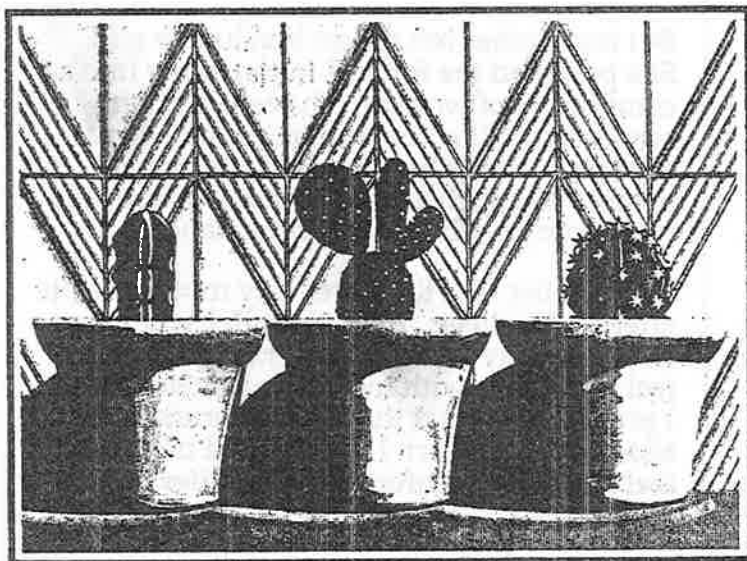
compliment? Do I want to be UGLY?  
*Hooola feeaa.*

I've learned not to take it offensively anymore because it's not just any Joe Shmoe in the street who says it. People I always pass by everyday on my way to work just want to greet me, and I know they don't mean to molest me. If I don't happen to see them they simply yell out, "*Guapa, buenos días*" No harm done. A simple "Hi, good morning." And they know that I'll look their way if they say what I'm accustomed to hearing—*guapa*.

Maybe the real fear lies not in the fact that they think that I'm beautiful, but the truth being that I'm not. No, I won't buy that one. Heck, I'm going to take this *piropo* for all it's worth, while I can. Won't hear these kinds of compliments in the United States.

Now whenever I hear *guapa* I turn my head around and smile because I know that they are talking to me.

by **LA GUAPA** (anonymous) •



## "Always, Mom."

*My mother lives on in the words of womanly wisdom she left behind.*

by **Rachel Zahavi** (as appeared in "Mademoiselle," May 1996)

submitted by **Lisa Flores, La Celica**

**M**y mother's heart stopped beating on December 10, 1994. On that day, I felt as if my heart would stop forever, too. My brothers and I buried her on my thirtieth birthday. She was only 53. We were both too young when she died.

My mother fought like a lioness for her young: Teachers who gave unfair grades, bank tellers who treated us with disrespect all faced her wrath. But with me, her oldest child and her only daughter, her agenda went further. In addition to raising me with the love and support she gave her two sons, my mother—an ardent feminist and an activist in the 1960s and 1970s women's liberation movement—was preparing me for womanhood.

*Learning to Be Alone*

**W**omanhood meant independence and self-sufficiency. "Try to get through the hard times without calling me or Dad," my mother had written me at camp when I was 13. The food stank, the bunks had leaky roofs and bats, and, worst of all, none of my summer friends had come back. But I stuck it out. And after my parents' divorce that same year, she was even more determined to raise a daughter capable of making her own way in the world. By the time I was in high school, her instructions had become more specific. "Go to movies



and restaurants on your own," she urged. "You should always know how to enjoy your own company." So, with a book as my only companion, I stood in movie lines and went out for dinner—and learned to like spending time by myself.

My mother felt I would learn how to achieve independence only through following advice from other woman. A 1962 graduate of Barnard College (an all-women's school), she had learned at an early age that becoming a woman meant joining a sisterhood and experiencing certain rites of passage. Womanhood held mysteries, secrets and gifts that she wanted to help me unlock, appreciate and savor.

### *Teaching Me Not to Be Afraid*

My mother wrote me many letters, and every ounce of her grit, determination and sagacity breathes through them. Even though she is no longer alive, I hear the clear ring of her voice in the words that she put to paper. "Loving is scary," she wrote during



my sophomore year in college, as I grappled with relationships for the first time, "but it's also wonderful to be held and loved and cherished. Even if you're afraid (we all are), you'll only grow stronger for loving and being loved. It's more than normal, darling—it's wonderful."

A year later, I found myself torn between my own desires and ambitions, and my boyfriend's needs. Again, my mother sent me words of warmth and guidance. "You're mired in a struggle that all of us who want to lead a full life go through," she reassured me. "What I am referring to is the struggle between doing what you want to do for yourself . . . as opposed to being loving, warm, giving, and understanding to the one you love. Obviously, a balance between the two is best, but finding that balance seems to be extremely difficult, especially for women."

A woman who'd raised three children while pursuing a career as a clinical psychologist, my mother knew what she was talking about. Confide in your girlfriends, she encouraged me, because "nothing helps as much as that wonderful support from women who really, really understand exactly what you're struggling with . . . but I do know, as sure as I know I'm alive, that doing for yourself . . . isn't wrong."

### *The Company of Women*

Since my mother's death from respiratory failure, I've used her letters to guide myself through my grief. Part of my soul went with my mother when she died, for I loved her with an intensity that only other daughters can understand. I am sadly aware that she will never know the man I'll eventually marry, nor the children I may have. Navigating those final steps toward womanhood on my own seems daunting.

But my mother left me an invaluable gift: She prepared me for and initiated me into a community of women. I have taken her advice and talked to women friends about my loss. True to her words, nothing has helped "as much as that wonderful support from women who really understand."

"Remember that I'm here," my mother wrote after I left college. Even though I will miss her every day for the rest of my life, I also feel that she is with me. I'm a teacher, and as I prepare to induct the next generation into sisterhood of which I am a proud member, I feel the sweet comfort of my mother's presence. •



# "QUOTE" CORNER

by Jodi Hammer  
Urcuquí, Imbabura

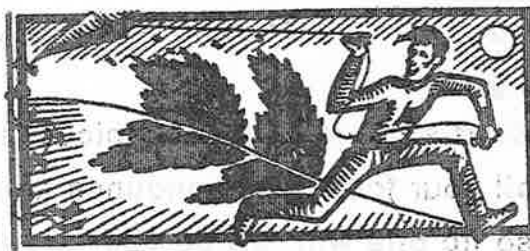
OK, OK, after much pressure to contribute to El Clima in the form of written material, I have finally conceded. In fact, with this, I intend to create a regular column, if all goes as planned. And if interest exists, perhaps someone can take over for me in a few short months when I COS, to continue on where I leave off.

"But why a quote column?" you may ask. Well, first of all, many of us Peace Corps Volunteers already informally share favorite quotes, poems or sayings we come across from time to time (Good journal material, you know!) So why not open up this sharing to more than just a few isolated friends? There are undoubtedly many of you out there who have fabulous tidbits to share. So, I intend this column to be a "bulletin board" in a sense; an area where we can share such inspirational, insightful or just plain funny sayings between all fellow PCVs. The success of it will depend largely on you . . . or, more accurately, your contributions. So write in with your favorites, including author or source, and I'll do my best to include them in

the confines of this column. I thought I'd start this month with a personal favorite, by Gandhi, which comes from A Second Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul, a wonderful collection of poems and sayings. I think the message of this quote is fundamental, especially as we reflect on our work as Peace Corps Volunteers. Here goes:

***"It is the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result."***

**-GANDHI**



With that I will end and ask for your contributions for upcoming issues. Perhaps, if interest is great enough (i.e. if enough contributions are received), I'll be able to organize a different theme each month.

*¡Chao!* for now. Looking forward to receiving your favorites. •



## 12 WAYS TO

**ANNOY**

**EVERYONE !**

submitted by Jean Seigle

1. Sing the Batman theme incessantly.
2. In the memo field of all your checks, write "for sensual massage."
3. Specify that your drive-thru order is "to go."
4. Learn Morse code and have conversations with friends in public consisting entirely of Beeeep Bip Bip Beeeep Bip . . ."
5. If you have a glass eye, tap on it occasionally with your pen while talking to others.
6. Amuse yourself for endless hours by hooking a camcorder to your TV and then pointing it at the screen.
7. Speak only in a "robot" voice.
8. Push all the flat Lego pieces together tightly.
9. Start each meal by conspicuously licking all your food, and announce that this is so no one will "swipe your grub."
10. Leave the copy machine set to reduce 200%, extra dark, 17 inch paper, 99 copies.
11. Stomp on little plastic ketchup packets.
12. Sniffle incessantly.
13. (Editor's Extra) Walk around with white paint on your face imitating Carlos Michelena.

## Silent Night Blues

by Eric Minzenberg  
la Y, baby

silent night blues  
makin' noise in my head  
clogging the oxygen  
to my brain,  
I cough  
and rise to a sneeze

silent stress  
of knowledge well spent  
leaving me broke  
but not on the cover of  
Newsweek,

shit

a cow's gotta do  
what a horse cannot  
and if it rains just one more  
stinkin' day,  
I could get wet,  
again

well yesterday,  
you see,  
I listened to Mingus  
until my hair tingled,  
until my toes wiggled,  
until I giggled,

until the tape broke,  
but

sometimes,  
and sometimes  
all the times,  
things make sense,  
sometimes. . .

and sometimes  
you wind up with a 50 sucre  
bill in your hand  
with a hole  
in your back pocket  
wishing

you could  
just,  
get,  
some,  
sleep.



# HOW TO MAKE RECYCLED PAPER



MADE WITH  
100% Recycled  
Paper

## Materials Needed:

- Blender
- Large laundry tub
- *Pelón* (material used to dry the paper, get two different thicknesses.)
- Mesh on a frame
- Recyclable paper (ex. periodicals or office paper)
- Rolling Pin
- Spatula



MADE WITH  
100% Recycled  
Paper

## Process:

1. Tear the recyclable paper into small pieces, more or less, and let it soak in water for 2-3 days.
2. Place the soaked paper (about one handful) into the blender with lots of water.
3. Blend the paper. Use the "grate" function first, then "liquefy".
4. Put the liquefied mixture in the large laundry tub. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until the tub is at least halfway full. (This depends on how much paper you want to make.)
5. Check the thickness of the mixture in the laundry tub. If it is too thick, add water. Also at this step, you can add coloring if you want. (*Achote* can be used by grinding the seeds in a bowl and adding water to make a paste. Don't forget to drain the paste to remove the seeds. Then add the coloring to the tub.)
6. Dip the screen into the large laundry tub, gathering paper on top. Let it drain into the tub for a few minutes.
7. Clean the edges of the screen by wiping the paper away.
8. Place the thin piece of *pelón* on the paper mixture on the screen. Press to soak up the water. Then carefully take it off.
9. If you want a design on your paper, you can place flowers or leaves on the mixture.
10. Continue to dry the paper mixture by placing new pieces of *pelón* on top and pressing.
11. When most of the water has been soaked up, take the spatula and flip the paper onto a large piece of *pelón*. Fold the *pelón* over and cover the paper. Use the rolling pin to flatten and dry the paper more.
12. Take the *pelón* off and dry the paper in the sun (about 2 hours). If you only want the print of the leaf in the paper, take it off carefully before you dry the paper in the sun.

*This information comes via the expertise of Shannon Parsons, Natural Resource PCV, who demonstrated the technique to the Natural Resource Trainees while at Maquipucuna. Thanks to PCT My Duyen Tran who wrote it all down.*





## Administrative Corner

**O**n behalf of the Administrative Unit, I would like to welcome Omnibus 75. For the PC staff it is always nice to attend swearing-in ceremonies—they are very special to us, and help renew our Peace Corps spirit. I hope that each of you new Volunteers enjoy your stay in Ecuador and also hope that you will greatly benefit from this tremendous experience in your lives. Please remember that we are here to support your volunteer work in all regards. As I told you during the Administrative overview, my door (or more accurately, my mind) is always open for suggestions, concerns, new ideas or complaints if that is the case.

Here's an update on what's happening in Administration:

### 1) SECURITY AND CLEANING SERVICES IN PEACE CORPS ECUADOR:

During the past few months we went through a bidding process of our Security and Cleaning services contracts as required by Peace Corps regulations every five years. Several companies in Quito presented their bids. The bidding committee formed by Peace Corps staff members and

the General Services Officer from the Embassy reviewed the offers and after a careful and detailed examination, awarded the contract to VICOSA. The new company interviewed all current personnel and, much to our pleasure, hired everyone back. That is why you may have noticed some changes, particularly in their uniforms. This contract's period started May 1, 1996, and ends April 30, 2000. Again, any suggestions will be greatly appreciated in order to improve our services at Peace Corps. On June 13, VICOSA will hold a one-day workshop to review and inform their security/cleaning personnel about their new policies, some instructions, training offered to their personnel, etc. During the workshop we will also try to formalize in writing our policies such as: lounge hours, who is allowed in the lounge, who is not, the sign-in log, etc. We will share this information with all of you and it will be posted at the security booth.



**2) CHANGE IN THE PCV HANDBOOK:** (Page 37) Please add Zamora and Morona Chinchipe to the Provinces authorized for air transportation. Therefore the policy will read as follows: "Volunteers in the Provinces of Loja, Zamora and Morona Chinchipe will be reimbursed for air transportation ONE-WAY to or from their sites when traveling on approved Peace Corps business to Quito. ROUND TRIP air travel will be approved for required or emergency medical travel only.

**3) GAD WORKSHOP:** From May 13 through May 15, I was lucky enough to attend a Gender And Development Workshop. The word "gender" for me didn't have any other meaning but to determine the gender of a person, animal, or thing. When I was in fourth grade at school, I learned in Spanish that "*la mesa es un sustantivo, con género femenino, y número singular; los árboles es un sustantivo, con género masculino, y número plural.*" That was about all I knew about gender. When I attended the taller I was surprised to realize how many things I learned besides the meaning of gender. I learned the importance of including women, older people and children in community activities or planning since they are a very important part of the working crew. I learned



how to prepare a calendar of activities and a community map. I can certainly use these tools to better organize my work in the office, as well as in my activities and planning at home. I was delighted to share three full days with PCVs and their counterparts. I learned that our local communities are not only willing, but eager to learn. This very well-organized *taller* was directed by consultant Susana Silva de Pico who handled this topic in a very professional way. I heartily recommend all PCVs, if they get a chance, to participate in future GAD workshops since they offer great tools for community work. Please stop at the reception desk and take a look at some of the pictures taken during the *taller*. Thank you to Peace Corps for giving the opportunity for personal growth through training.

That's about it for now. Take care.

*En Paz.* Ana María  
Administrative Officer•

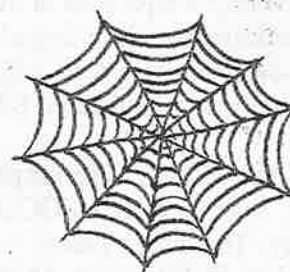


En el número pasado de "El Clima" les ofrecí continuar con la historia de Internet, aquí está lo relacionado con World Wide Web:

**THE WEB ARRIVES:**

Developed at the European Center for Particle Research (CERN), the World Wide Web (WWW) was first used in experimental form in 1989. In 1992, it came to the attention of programmers at the National Center for Supercomputer Applications (NCSA) at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. A young programming team developed an implementation of WWW that is called MOSAIC and, in accordance with NCSA policies, that software was made widely available on the Internet for free. It took the world by storm. Its ability to provide images, sound, video clips, and multiform text in a hypertext system was irresistible. Between 1992 and 1995, a number of commercial versions of Web browsers and servers emerged, among them Netscape Communications, founded by the former chairman of Silicon Graphics, who instantly realized that the Web would change the utility of the Internet from its rather arcane interface to something anyone could negotiate (point and click).

Web servers exploited onto the network, offering an endless array of home pages (starting points from which to explore a global, hyperlinked universe). There are more than 30,000 Web sites on the Internet, and the number doubles every two months. Companies that were for-



merly unsure about the utility of the Internet have started rushing to use the Web as a means of presenting products and services to potential customers. The search services help to find content. The rest of the 1990s belongs to the content providers who will use the rapidly evolving infrastructure to bring increasingly sophisticated material to customers. We cannot know what the world has in store over the next decade or two, but it is almost certain to be influenced by and will influence the evolution of the first really new infrastructure to develop in nearly a century." (Tomado de "On the Net" an International Publication of the Internet Society)•

by Mireya Yépez

Como ustedes saben el Programa de "Water and Sanitation" ha sido cerrado, razón por la cual disponemos de varios libros relacionados con este Programa y que están en exceso en nuestra Biblioteca, de los cuales un buen número de ellos quedará en nuestra colección pero de todas maneras nos sobran libros que van a ser donados a bibliotecas o centros de documentación que los necesiten y que utilicen literatura en inglés. Si ustedes saben de un lugar en el que estos libros sean útiles por favor comuníquense conmigo.

**ATTENTION:**  
Please, before checking out the books from the Resource Center, make sure they have a card on the back to sign your name & date, and place it in the box that corresponds (box labeled "books out" which is located on the telephone table)!

## NEW MAGAZINES

Como siempre aquí está la información de las publicaciones que han llegado al Centro de Recursos desde la última edición de "El Clima" y que pueden consultar en biblioteca:

- **World of Work.** The magazine of the ILO. No. 15, Mar./Apr. 96. FOCUS: Chernobyl Workers, Ten Years Later.
- **Contact.** Publicación de la Acción de Iglesias por la Salud. No. 132, Mar./Apr. 96. FOCUS: El Aspecto Político de la Adicción.
- **AIDS Action.** No. 31. Dec./Feb. 96. FOCUS: Tackling TB and HIV.
- **Teaching Pre K-8.** The Professional Magazine for Teachers. \*Feb. 96. SPECIAL FOCUS: "On Working with Parents"—in Classroom and in the Home. \*Mar. 96. FOCUS: Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Music and even Shakespearean Drama. \*Apr. 96. FOCUS: Recycling, Caring about the Environment and Earth Day.
- **Noticias sobre IRA.** No. 32. Dic. 95. FOCUS: Un Enfoque más Amplio Para la Atención de la Salud del Niño.
- **Diálogo sobre la Diarrea.** No. 53. Dic. 95. FOCUS: La leche materna es el mejor alimento.
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- **Echo Development Notes, EDN.** No. 52. Apr. 96. FOCUS: Tropical high-altitude Growing Conditions.
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## *Inter-America Region* **Volunteers Celebrate Earth Day**

The Environment Sector is the largest sector in the Inter-America Region. Volunteers work to promote increased environmental awareness and individual, group and community behavior change in protecting, conserving and working with the environment in a sustainable fashion. Among the activities in which we are engaged is included: teacher development; inclusion of local and national environment content in the curricula and school and community-based activities including tree-plantings, field trips, ecology clubs, and clean-up campaigns.

In celebration of Earth Day 1996, many of our Volunteers worked with local environmentalists to organize special events to take advantage of the worldwide spotlight on the environment and ecology. Many of our countries also celebrate World Environment Day, held on June 5, and their own national Arbor Day. Some Volunteers report that they have planned activities throughout the period between Earth Day and World Environment Day.

We would like to share with you some of the reports about the individual projects and activities of our Volunteers and their host country colleagues in honor of Earth Day. The ultimate goal of the Earth Day activities is to make information available to individuals and communities that will help people become more aware of environmental concerns and to provide the necessary educational tools for addressing present and future environmental issues.

### **Earth Day Celebrations "Tradition"**

#### **-Dominican Republic-**

In honor of Earth Day 1995, Peace Corps/Dominican Republic held special activities not in the capital but rather in outlying areas where there are on-going programs to address specific environmental challenges. Last year's celebration was held in the Nizaíto watershed, near the community of Paraíso, Barahona Province, where we had a PCV working on forestry, soil conservation and watershed protection. There were representatives of numerous public sector agencies and NGOs present, as well as over 200 community members. After a morning of formal presentations, there was a tree planting session.

In the same spirit, Peace Corps/Dominican Republic celebrated Earth Day in Loma de Cabrera, a town in Dajabón Province. A cluster of five PCVs serve in the area, working on sustainable agricultural practices. The morning activities took place in a large meeting room in Loma de Cabrera, where over 500 townspeople participated in songs, skits, a forum and speeches geared to raising environmental consciousness. The highly successful event was co-sponsored by three public sector agencies and four NGOs.

#### **-Ecuador-**

Ines Rutkovskis, an Environmental Education Volunteer in Baños, Ecuador, continued the tradition she founded last year and orga-

nized a second annual Earth Day Parade in her community. Public officials and students and teachers from area schools participated in the parade. Estimates vary but the event drew a crowd of 5,000 - 10,000 people. In his speech, one of the local officials thanked Ines and the Peace Corps for initiating the Earth Day celebrations which have been a huge success.

#### **-El Salvador-**

The National Earth Day Conference of El Salvador was held in San Salvador from April 22-23. Two PCVs and APCD/Environment, Rolando Barillas, were among the more than 350 attendees celebrating Earth Day. The star guest speaker of the activities was Senator Gaylord Nelson, one of

the original promoters of Earth Day 1970. The objective of the conference was to call attention to prevention measures and the need to protect the deteriorated Salvadoran environment.



**Many Volunteers are taking advantage of Earth Day to teach about ecology and the environment. These teaching methods vary from formal classroom settings to more non-traditional venues**

#### **-Uruguay-**

Two Volunteers in the town of Paysandú, working in conjunction with the local government office for development and the environment, commemorated Earth Day by facilitating a two-day workshop for 20 primary and secondary school teachers in their area. These teachers became more familiar with and knowledgeable about local and global environmental issues and the use of experiential environmental education teaching strategies. The teachers will now share their experience with more than 500 students through classroom activities.

#### **-Costa Rica-**

PCV Kim Dewitt, assigned to Hone Creek, Limon, is doing an activity with the teachers from three surrounding schools. Activities will include a mini-fair and a "charla" for the public at large about the importance of environmental awareness and the conservation of natural resources. Highlighting the fair will be an exposition of posters made by children and community members on the subject of Earth Day with prizes awarded to the artists.

#### **-Paraguay-**

Volunteers presented "The Environment Show" in four rural communities. The show is performed by a group of Volunteers in popular theater style. It emphasizes the importance of planting and caring for trees, of not littering, and of caring for the environment in general. The show is normally followed by a tree-planting activity.

#### **-Bolivia-**

PCV Maria Termini, one of our senior Volunteers, composed four songs in celebration of Earth Day. She performed them at the Instituto Cultural Boliviano-Aleman in Sucre, Bolivia, for a group of 40 children and adults who are affiliated with the drop-in center for street kids and women with domestic problems. Maria, playing the guitar, was accompanied in additional songs by the regional APCD, Gonzalo Jáuregui. They ended their performance with the John Lennon song *Imagine*. They

were so successful that they have been asked back for an encore performance.

#### **-Guatemala-**

PCVs assigned to *Defensores de la Naturaleza*, a Guatemalan NGO, have been heavily involved in putting together ecology fairs in various small communities throughout the country. *Defensores* was the recipient of a Presidential award for its environmental work in 1994, and PCVs directly assigned to the organization play a big role in its field activities.

#### **-Belize-**

Volunteers organized Earth Day activities in San Ignacio, Belize, featuring environmental displays from both government and non-government organizations including the Belize Audubon Society, the Belize Zoo, the Belize Tropical Center, Monkey Bay Research Station, the Pesticide Control Board and the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry.

To generate enthusiasm for the importance of the environment, a Belize PCV dressed up as Rainbow the Toucan (a Belizean cousin of our Big Bird) to give conservation awareness presentations to local primary school students.

#### **-Jamaica-**

Volunteers organized an awareness-raising "Wild Art Day." This novel idea involved 60 students—ranging in ages from 11-15 years—participating in a presentation on endangered Jamaican wildlife and an

art competition in which the students drew pictures of the animals discussed. The winning entries will be featured on T-shirts to be used in a fundraising venture for the St. Ann Environmental Protection Association (STAEP A).

### **-Uruguay-**

A Volunteer, assigned to a national park near the city of Minas, used Earth Day as the backdrop for special guided tours. Visitors to the park learned about the history of Earth Day and the importance of making every day an "Earth Day."

### **-Paraguay-**

A Volunteer assigned to Pereira Cué, Paraguay, helped in presenting in the primary school a play on erosion and the importance of soil conservation.



**Earth Day was a good day for trees in Inter-America**

### **-Paraguay-**

The students of the rural town of Ybycuí, Paraguay, were led by Volunteers in two days of tree-planting: one day by primary students and another by secondary students.

Volunteers in Paraguay were instrumental in the inaugura-

tion of a tree nursery in the rural community of Pereira Cué.

### **-Belize-**

Ben Piper, assigned to work with the Center for PCV Environmental Studies in Belize, coordinated students from several local schools together with the Forestry Department to plant trees in Punta Gorda and other communities in the Toledo District. Through this activity, they planted 35 different kinds of hardwoods.

### **-Jamaica-**

Through the efforts of a Jamaica Volunteer and counterparts, students from four primary schools participated in a project in which "used" drink boxes were used as containers to start a fruit tree nursery. This project will help both to increase significantly the number of trees in Jamaica and find a good use for the boxes which would otherwise be discarded as garbage.

**-Dominican Republic-**  
Volunteers in Dajabón Province of the Dominican Republic joined local *campesinos* in planting over 2,000 trees in this region near the Haitian border.

### **Clean-up Activities in the Community**

### **-Belize-**

Volunteers in San Ignacio have led a clean-up of a local park, including painting trash cans donated to the park. It is hoped the attractive trash

receptacles will discourage littering at the park.

### **-Jamaica-**

Volunteers organized two separate beach clean-ups. One Volunteer worked with community leaders to mobilize sixty citizens to clean up a local fishing beach. They removed twenty large containers of garbage including plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, tin and Styrofoam containers. The garbage was removed to the official dump.

Another Peace Corps Volunteer assigned to a Fisheries Improvement Program facilitated activities to clean up community beaches and refurbish buildings and led environmental education programs involving 150 fishermen and community members from five different fishing communities.

### **-Costa Rica-**

PCV Shannon Ward, assigned to Hojancha, Guanacate, conducted a clean-up activity with the members of the Ecological Club of the community high school and children of the elementary school. The clean-up covered the whole town, concentrating on the areas surrounding both schools.

### **-Paraguay-**

Volunteers are working together with primary schools, the municipality of Asunción, the US Embassy and USAID to sponsor a day-long clean-up campaign in a marginal urban area on the outskirts of Asunción, Paraguay. •



## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE



by Mark D. Gearan, Peace Corps Director

I want to thank all of you for keeping me informed and for offering suggestions to me and other headquarters staff. Although we face significant challenges in the coming year, I am confident that through our collective efforts it will be tremendously successful, and I congratulate you for your hard work and dedication.

The size and nature of the Peace Corps operations present obvious communication challenges, so I want to take this opportunity to update you on some of the important issues we have dealt with since January.

### **Death of Peace Corps Volunteer Nancy Coutu**

As many of you know, on April 9, 1996, PCV Nancy Coutu was killed in Madagascar. Following is a brief summary of what occurred to the best of our knowledge:

Nancy Coutu, a 29-year-old second year Parks and Wildlife Volunteer in Madagascar, was attacked while traveling by bicycle to work during the early morning hours of April 9th. The attack occurred approximately two kilometers outside of Nancy's village of Bereketa, in the southern region of Madagascar. Nancy died of a blow to the head.

Nancy Coutu's funeral was held in Nashua, New Hampshire on Monday, April 15th. Her body was accompanied to New Hampshire by Country Director Robert Freidman. Director Gearan, Senator Gregg of New Hampshire and the Malagasy Ambassador to the U.S., Pierrot Rajaonarivelo, also attended the funeral.

The Government of Madagascar commenced an immediate and intensive investigation into Nancy's killing. Three suspects have been arrested and are standing trial this week. No further details on the perpetrators or a motive can be confirmed at this time. We have every confidence that the Malagasy Government is doing all it can to bring to justice those individuals responsible for this heinous act. Inspector General Charles Maddox and IG Investigator Brian Hess traveled to Madagascar at my request, and they have worked closely with local law enforcement officials.

We are shocked and deeply saddened by these recent tragic events. Our hearts go out to Nancy Coutu's family and to the staff and Volunteers of Madagascar during this difficult time.

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### **Budget**

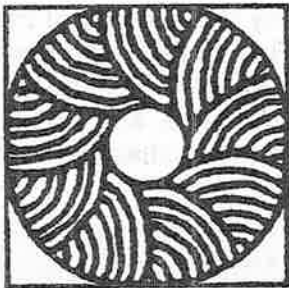
Although the FY 1997 Congressional Budget process has just begun and it will be some time before our FY 1997 funding levels are certain, Peace Corps is moving forward with the FY 1997 - FY 1998 IPBS Strategic Planning Process. In light of the uncertainty, my guidance to the Agency requested that all Associate and Regional Director's provide IPBS plans that assume funds are provided to maintain current operations as well as plans that assume a 15% reduction in funding levels. This will enable us to plan for the widest range of operating scenarios in FY 1997, and will, I hope, avoid your having to prepare a series of reduction plans in response to various congressional requests during the appropriations process. While I know this is a challenge for everyone, I appreciate the work being done to plan within this framework and I look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions during the IPBS senior staff forums in mid-May. We hope to

provide final decisions and guidance by mid-June.

**Conference on International Volunteerism: "Innovative Thinking for the 21st Century"**

Vice President Al Gore will deliver the keynote address to commence the Peace Corps Conference on International Volunteerism scheduled for April 30th and May 1st in Washington. I am pleased to report that over thirty-five organizations' directors, representing every geographic region, have accepted our invitation to gather at Georgetown University. Participants will include directors from Japan and Papua New Guinea, Great Britain and the Czech Republic, Argentina and Chile, Mali and Swaziland.

The conference discussion will address the following topics: development needs of the new millennium; the role of volunteer organizations in helping indigenous volunteer organizations develop; the role of volunteer organizations within the context of crisis; and methods to promote the support of our efforts back at



home. We anticipate a lively and thoughtful discussion which will be captured in a conference report for subsequent distribution.

**Haiti**

The Peace Corps recently re-opened its office in Haiti. Twelve Trainees will arrive on April 30, 1996. CD Francine Rodd is currently participating in Overseas Staff Training, and will participate in the Miami Staging. Haiti is a priority country for the Peace Corps and steady growth in the program is anticipated. The first group of Volunteers will work in three program areas—agro-business/forestry, animal husbandry, and community development. The program will initially concentrate on the southern region of Haiti.



**South Africa**

Start-up activities continue in Peace Corps South Africa. Trainees are scheduled to arrive at the beginning of the new year, and will be focusing primarily on education programs in the northern sector of the country. CD Earl Yates will be attending Overseas Staff Training in May and is expected to arrive in country by the end of June. Meanwhile, John Peterson, APCD/Admin. has arrived in Pretoria and is searching for office and residential space. This new post opening is an exciting challenge for Peace Corps, and we look forward to watching it flourish.

**Crisis Corps**

Our initial efforts with the Crisis Corps have shown good results and high potential. Eight Crisis Corps Volunteers are rebuilding homes lost to Hurricane Luis in Antigua and training young Antiguanians in hurricane-resistant construction methods. This Antiguan project follows successful pilot projects with Rwandan refugees in Tanzania and in drought mitigation in southern Africa. The response to the Crisis Corps among Volunteers, RPCVs and fellow development agencies has been overwhelmingly positive. Peace Corps has the technical language and cross-cultural skills that are enormously useful in disaster and crisis interventions.

AD/IO Jack Hogan has convened a Crisis Corps Working Group which is pulling together ideas for a Crisis Corps policy and procedures statement. This policy statement will be forthcoming within the next few weeks. Many of you have already shared your ideas with us and your input is still welcome. The potential of the Crisis Corps to respond effectively to the pressing human needs and to promote long-term development in the midst of our crisis-plagued world will be truly realized only with your help and advice.

## VRS

The 35th Anniversary will be the focal point for the VRS recruitment campaign this spring. All of their nationwide activities to date have concentrated on Peace Corps' 35-year legacy. Some of the more notable events have included: a first-ever, live interactive



"Faces of America" minority recruitment tele-conference aimed at students from over 300 historically Black, Hispanic and Native American colleges; and Peace Corps campus blitzes at top-producing schools, utilizing Agency Senior staff. VRS continues to place a major emphasis on using Internet as a recruitment tool and anticipates the implementation of an electronic Peace Corps application by mid-summer.

## Agency Events

Our 35th Anniversary weekend celebration served to highlight the Peace Corps story to the American public. Several of the major networks ran stories about our 35 years of service, RPCVs from across the nation came to Washington D.C. to celebrate, and several of the former Directors, including Sargent Shriver, Jack Vaughn, Kevin O'Donnell, Don Hess, Nick Craw, Elaine Chao and Carol Bellamy, came to headquarters to wish Peace Corps Happy Anniversary. Once again, the Peace Corps family turned out to give its heartiest thanks to the agency that played such a significant role in their lives.

Several prominent speakers have visited Headquarters recently. In the past four months, Ron Brown, Former Secretary of Commerce, Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State, and George Stephanopoulos, Assistant to the President, have spoken with agency staff. Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency is scheduled to visit in May.

I am encouraged by the number of Peace Corps employees in the field who have contacted me with suggestions for improving the way Peace Corps operates, and I truly hope that you will continue to share your ideas with me through-out the year. •

## VAC Budget Committee Survey Results

Here are the results of the VAC Budget Committee Survey. A total of 42 surveys were returned. The survey results show that the majority of the staff services, support functions and activities are important to the Volunteers with a few standouts. In general, the written comments were positive or provided constructive criticism with suggestions for solutions. One general suggestion was to cut back on blanket policies and to do more case by case decisions. For example, second site visits and APCD volunteer visits.

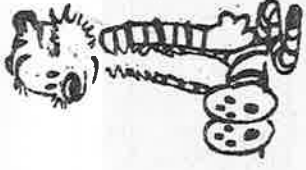
The surveys and results have been passed around to the Peace Corps staff. The results will be kept for future reference if budget cuts are necessary. I have combined the results into two categories: 1) essential or very important and 2) somewhat important or not important. (See following page for the results)

Thank you to those who completed and returned the surveys. I talked with Jean Siegle and she told me that if/when budget cuts are made, the Volunteers will be advised and consulted about potential cuts and/or program reductions. Any and all comments or suggestions are welcome so if you haven't turned in your survey there is still time. Your opinion is valued!

Karen Chamberlain  
VAC President

# Budget Survey

	essential/ very important	somewhat important/ not import.
Writing project plans	56%	44%
Monitoring project plans	62%	38%
Problem solving w/ host country agency	85%	15%
Negotiating w/ host government	71%	29%
<b>Site selection criteria:</b>		
APCD site investigation/evaluation	92%	8%
Host country agency contribution	76%	24%
Host agency resources	80%	20%
Location	74%	26%
<b>Site Development: APCD site preparation (PC goals, x-cultural issues, etc.)</b>		
Administrative support	95%	5%
<b>Central office support</b>		
payroll	95%	5%
secretarial	81%	19%
grants	80%	20%
materials and equipment	77%	23%
<b>Field support:</b>		
APCD volunteer visits	54%	46%
APCD reevaluation of PCV job plan and relationship w/ agency	70%	30%
Assisting PCVs with personal problems	68%	37%
<b>Medical support:</b>		
health and safety education and prevention activities	90%	10%
medical supplies	98%	2%
medical treatment	87%	13%
<b>Trainings:</b>		
preservice training	78%	22%
language	92%	8%
technical	76%	24%
cross-cultural	53%	47%
<b>Site visits:</b>		
first visit	81%	19%
second visit	74%	26%
field trips	60%	40%
<b>In service training:</b>		
job conferences	63%	37%
seminars	50%	50%
<b>Close of service conference:</b>		
evaluation of volunteer service	84%	16%
evaluation of project goals	78%	22%
life after Peace Corps	72%	28%
<b>Information resource center:</b>		
reference materials	79%	21%
organization of materials	78%	22%
computation	77%	23%



# Calendar Dates To Remember

## June, July, August, September 1996



### August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					8	9
	4	5	6	7	8	10
						Omnibus 76...
	11	12	13	14	15	16
		GAD Follow-up Workshop				
		visits with Volunteers				
		18	19	20	21	22
						23
	25	26	27	28	29	30
						31

### June 1996

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					May 31, Omnibus 76 Sweets In!	1
						8
	2	3	4	5	6	7
						15
FATHERS DAY	9	10	11	12	13	14
	16	17	18	19	20	21
						22
	23	24	25	26	27	28
						29
	30					

### September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
					Sites Announced to Omnibus 76		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
						Roeh Hashanah	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	
		Omnibus 76 visit their future sites...					
		Omnibus 76 site visit					
	15	16	17	18	19	20	
		Yom Kippur	Francisco Travels to Chile			21	
	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	29	30					
		October 14th, Columbus Day—Office Closed					
		25th, Omnibus 76 Sweets in					
		Week of the 28th, Integrated Job Conference & Follow up Conference (Omnibus 76)					

### July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Independence Day (US) PC Office Closed	Independence Day Ecuador (observed) PC Office Closed	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
						13
	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Senior Staff Retreat				
	14	15	16	17	18	19
		COS Conference for Omnibus 76				20
				PDM Workshop in Tumbaco		
	21	22	23	24	25	26
			Omnibus 76 Arrives			27
	28	29	30	31		