

EL CLIMA

MAY/JUN A PEACE CORPS ECUADOR PUBLICATION 1995

Karl Bowles.



¿COMO?

"I've affected twelve little girls."

Rich Valeika, on his proudest PC achievement, coaching a girls' basketball team to the Azuay Championship.

.....

"Fire knows me."

Jack Ballanger, boasting about his prowess for building campfires in harsh weather, seconds before rain and wind knew better.

.....

"Creo que despues de dos años de vivir yo en Bolívar, ya todos los sistemas y las letrinas estarán hechos."

Super Volunteer Karl Riebel, modestly arguing against being replaced in his site.

.....

"If that didn't make a Christer out of me, nothing will."

Dave Bolko, reflecting on a recent bus crash he survived without a scratch.

.....

"Thank God for World War II."

Thomas Harris, during a discussion about the developments the War contributed to modern climbing gear.

.....

"It's moving! It's alive!"

Melissa Mitchell, when a monkey climbed into her bed during a jungle trip.

.....

"How come you didn't scream?"

Anonymous, to their mate, after consummating their relationship.

.....

"The best thing about Guayaquil is the Velveeta cheese on the burgers at Burger King!"

Gene Martin, on the culinary pleasures of Ecuador's largest city.

.....

"I don't know what I'm going to do. . . I don't know what I'm going to do . . ."

Mark Stillman, shaking his head, after finding out Chris Samuel would be his roommate on a week-long Galapagos cruise.

.....

"I mean, I generally like men."

Chris Samuel, when asked to describe her type of guy.

EL CLIMA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPENING REMARKS

Christine's Corner by Chris Samuel 1
From JCV by Juan Carlos Velasquez 1
JES by Jean Seigle 2

VIEWPOINT

Other Remarks on the PC Pregnancy Policy by J.W. Carter III 3
(untitled) Quechua Rebuttal by Marlene Jarmillo 4
Who the Hell? by Juan Carlos Velasquez 6

FEATURES

Women and HIV/AIDS Conference by Corella Payne 7
The Driver by Juan Carlos Velasquez 9
Agua; Un Salto en el Desarrollo por APCD Napoleon Cevallos 10
Youth as a National Priority for Ecuador by Marie Skertic 11
Mejoramiento de la Ganaderia Ecuatoriana por APCD Jorge Delgado 14
Shadow Day by Corella Payne 15
Just Do It submitted anonymously 17
Nuestro Idioma by Chris Samuel and Julie Piskur 18
Seeds por APCD Nelson Oleas 19
The Violation by Miles Cooley 20
Beginnings- Ready, Set, Go by Nicole Dino 24



Between the Caribbean and the Amazon by Barry Lazarus 25
A Little Stroll With the Indigenous by Shane McCarthy 29
Karl's Cloud by Karl Banks 30
RockNRoll Dr. by Barry Lazarus 32
Dear RockNRoll Dr. by John Hays 35
The Birthday Beatitudes by Marie Skertic 35
¿Como? compiled by Juan Carlos Velasquez 36
Extinguished by Christopher Schutz 36
It's How You Cope by Marie Skertic 37
How Many Pieces Do I Have? by J.W. Carter III 37
A Quote submitted by Marie Skertic 37
All in the Getting There by Shaila "Sierra" Reidhead, Valdivia 37
St. Valentine's Day Poll compiled by Janet Dorman 38
The Cuenca Book Review Anonymous 39

Inspectors General Visit Ecuador by Jean Seigle 40
We're Getting There by Jeffrey A. Neild 41
Resource Center News by Maria Dolores 43
Immunization Safety by the PCMOs 44
WID News by Julie Piskur 45
Admin Corner by Ana Maria Castro 46
Photo Competition submitted by Janet Dorman 46
The Three R's by Nicole Dino 46
Greetings From Tumbaco by Tim Callaghan 47
Provincial Poops from Loja and Azuay 48
Fun With Food submitted by Christopher Schutz and Julie Piskur 49
Convertible Volkswagon by C. Bongiorno, R. Valeika, and J. C. V. back page



Christine's Corner

"She opens her mouth to speak, what comes out's a mystery. Thought about, not understood, she's achin' to be."
The Replacements

The above lyric was chosen by Juan Carlos in his attempt to write my editorial for me. It was a failed attempt, with JC unable to capture my style with his words. Interesting, though, is the fact that he has wanted to write an editorial for me since he first started as Managing Editor. Why could this be? Who knows. Who can begin to figure out Juan? Anyway, I like the quote. It's always easier to start an article with a quote.

The new El Clima staffers and JC, Kendall, and I just had a meeting with Jean Seigle. We discussed policy, procedure, and our work style. Arguments are common around here, and that's the way I think it should be. Debate is the seed of growth. I find it hard to believe how far El Clima has come since I first started to work on it. We had almost no administrative direction, few submissions, and not many people wanting to work on the newsletter. Now, we have an on-going, active dialogue between administration and ourselves, we have more submissions than we can fit in a 50-page publication (issues never used to be more than 30 pages), and we have more people wanting to work than there are positions available. What an incredible turn around. I feel very fortunate to have been around while all of these changes have taken place. El Clima is a Peace Corps organization that produces a tangible, productive piece of work every other month. That is one of the things that attracts me about it.

It is an inherently educating, constructive process. Every time I work on EC, I learn something. I debate a different issue or deal with a new controversy. I am proud to have been Editor of El Clima.

What can I say about my "right hand man" Juan? Who would I argue with if he wasn't here? He has been a great assistant and has made an incredible creative contribution to the newsletter. I first believed that JC became a part of El Clima just to scam per diem. But, it turned out to be a real pleasure to read his articles and watch him take-off as a writer. That is another reason that I'm thankful for EC— it serves as an outlet for creative energy and talent. I'll be the first in line at the signing party for Juan's first book. Country Director Jean Seigle has been a real inspiration to me. She is a hard-working, intelligent, articulate, giving, and motivational person. The list could go on, but, what I really want to say is that I feel lucky to have been able to work with her. I think of her as a role model and mentor. We are fortunate to have her here at Peace Corps Ecuador.

On to a new topic, I took Julie Piskur to the airport in April. What a sad morning, after an unsuccessful bon voyage party-effort on Julie's part. She drank four margarita shots and fell asleep after only a short time dancing at our fave hangout. Still though, I have various fond memories of us hanging out "all night long." While watching her walk through that yellow doorway to her plane, I couldn't help imagining my own departure. What a weird feeling— to become a Peace Corps ghost; to think about someone mentioning my name in a conversation and saying, "Oh, you wouldn't know her. She was here before. She was really cool." And that would be that. Boo, hoo, hoo, cry I, a soon-to-be phantom in the annals of PC history. It happens

to all of us sooner or later, and then we get to join the exciting ranks of the RPCVs— a bunch of crotchety old (a state of mind, not a number) people with tacky weavings and bits of foreign pottery and a few broken seashells from Tanzania decorating their graduate school dorm room or manager's office at K-Mart. Woe is me— unavoidable is my destiny. The best I can do is try to pick out the most tasteful tapestry I can find during my last "Saturday-in-country-I-better-buy-everything-I-see" trip to Otavalo. After that, I will go to Florida for a couple weeks, then to Chicago, and then to Boston to start grad school at the end of August.

I have met some great people here, especially at the end of my service. You guys are really cool. It's a shame I don't have more time to hang out. I look forward to being reunited with you all in RPCV-land. You cannot escape— unless your name is Andrew Swift.



Chris Samuel
El Clima Supervising Editor*





For my fans, (I know I have at least two), it is a wish come true. For my detractors, a nightmare. Yes, yes, I am the new Editor of El Clima. I now have the title to fit what we have known all along. I have let Chris be the figurehead up to now but she is history (and yes, a woman). Now I truly hold the Conch.

Seriously, I am excited to be the new Editor. First, though, I must express my gratitude to Chris Samuel, who has been a true pleasure to work with. We have often been at each other's throats but we have always been able to remain the best of friends. It has been the ideal work relationship. Chris once said to me, "When you first started working on El Clima, I thought you were just trying to scam per diem. I never thought you would work so hard on it." Well Chris, I can honestly say that working with you made working hard on El Clima fun. We sort of went through a lot together and it just won't be the same without you. I would like to thank Karl Banks, Pete Fontaine, Jodi Hammer and Wendy Pearce from Omnibus 72 and of course, "Quemperi," for all of their hard work for this issue. These new young punks seem very enthusiastic. I look forward to continued contributions from them.

Thank you all for the many contributions. Please continue to send anything and everything and we will try to fit it in. Specifically, please continue to send funny quotes for ¿Como?. Well, enough BS, lets blow this thing.

I hear there is a budget crisis on capitol hill. What else is new? It seems those pesky mighty Newton power mongers are looking to cut foreign aid and maybe even Peace Corps. No, not JFK's beloved Peace Corps! Well, PC Ecuador is being asked to trim its budget just in case. At the recent Water job conference we were asked for suggestions. Oh boy! Of course, the perfect forum for always whining Volunteers to gripe about what they don't like about PC Ecuador. Suggestions varied from practical (requiring minimum Spanish); intriguing (ditching medical and going with a private carrier), predictable (cutting staff), to mind-boggling (sink or swim--drop training and get put in your site after a week).

I was a non-participant in the discussion. As is usually the case, I avoid "bitch and whine sessions." I like to think things through before running off my mouth. I have given this some thought and because I am who I am, here's what I came up with.

No part of Volunteer expenses or support should be cut or eliminated with the exception of job conferences at Alandaluz and the Hotel Chorlavi. If anything, the levels are too low as it is. Some staff do seem overworked and there seem to be a lot of cars in the "pool", but I don't have the facts. So what does that leave? It seems that most of the budget waste goes to pampering Trainees for twelve weeks.

I can personally say that training for me was a colossal waste of time and money. All I basically learned, outside of a few technical insights, was where the Quito hot spots were. As if that wasn't enough, I also got a free all-expense paid vacation to Cuenca with side trips to the beach at Jambeli, the Ingapirca ruins, and Latacunga thrown in. I also got a free tour of Quito, several museum trips, and a trip to the Equator! What great fun

I had in training and all at the US taxpayers expense!

Ok, let's look at the facts. Yes, I was basically fluent in Spanish when I got here. I have a degree in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in Water and have work experience with water systems. I have traveled to South America before, including Ecuador. In short, I was ready to go from the start language-wise, technically and culturally. And I understand that I was an exception. But still, I went through those twelve weeks. Why?

It is hard for me to believe that out of 100,000 applicants, the placement office and recruiters can't find people who are basically qualified to come here, so they would only need a few weeks of training instead of a few months. A little bit of Spanish and Tech review and a short orientation to Ecuador is all that would be needed. Other than learning the various ways to die by eating a bag of fritada, what else did we learn that was absolutely necessary? Let me just say that I have the utmost respect for Training Director Tim Callaghan and these comments are not a reflection on his or the staff's performance but rather on the institution of training itself. The following is one person's opinion of how training can be changed.

1. **Spanish.** I think a minimum requirement is a good idea but hardly necessary. In my training group, there were probably 15 people whose Spanish was good enough from the start. And another 10-15 were ready after one month. That was almost half of the group of 59 who didn't need the full three months of language training. Additionally, many others were at a "passing" level after two months, but regressed during the third month, which was lost to site visits and tech trips. There should be a target for every Omnibus of "half qualified." That is, half of the trainees don't

need Spanish and the rest do. That is easily attainable. Those with the Spanish would leave training after a month. The others would stay a second with just Spanish.

2. Volunteer visit/ Tech trip. Every year the Health group visits Alandaluz as part of their "training", while in my omnibus at least, the Special Ed. group cruised the beaches of Salinas and Crucita. Is this really necessary? Both of these trips (Volunteer visit and Tech trip) can be eliminated altogether but since we want Trainees to adapt and learn, we can just combine the two into one 4-5 day trip. Trainees visit Volunteers in the field and get practical technical information, not for a vacation.

3. Site Visit. Do Trainees really need two? Do they really need one? Back in Peace Corps history, Volunteers used to have training in another country and get dropped into their sites before seeing them. Granted, this is a little harsh, but I believe most lived to tell about

it. We're not shopping for a home or car here. That's why they call it an assignment. Let Trainees go to their site one time for two or three days. How much time do they really need? Volunteers can find housing, etc. when they get there. Most do anyway.

4. Technical Training. Most Volunteers learn everything they need to know when they're in their sites. One week of afternoon sessions should be enough to familiarize Trainees with some of the basics. They don't need to know every bloody thing before they get there. For those who think this isn't enough, there can be a one month follow-up where Volunteers are better prepared to ask questions about what they need to know.

5. Miscellaneous Training. I believe you learn about a culture by living in it, not by listening to an American tell you about it. We are adults and we can learn and adapt and make decisions. A couple of sessions to get people thinking about differences and acceptance are enough. Other sessions such as the Health Fair are basically a way for Health Volunteers to get per diem in Quito. We all know and don't need to be told to use a condom, boil our water and watch what we eat. A prime example of Trainees getting pampered.

That's one week of visits and three weeks of Spanish with a few tech and cultural sessions. Those Trainees with the Spanish then go to their sites. The others stay either another month or until they can roll their r's, whichever comes first. A little harsh? Maybe. Tough medicine? Probably. Necessary? What would Newt think?•





Congratulations to Omnibus 73! Peace Corps Ecuador extends a warm welcome to our thirty-three newest

Volunteers. We wish you well in your service. You will hear it, from your peers and from staff, "The first six months are the hardest." Please let us know if you need help during these next few months. Your fellow Volunteers can be a great source of support and knowledge.

Transition, again. As I finish up this article, it's Saturday morning and El Clima staffers are at work putting this edition together. The passing of the editorial torch goes from Chris Samuel to Juan Carlos Velasquez. Thank you Chris for your positive attitude and hard work. You'll be missed around here. I do think we'll see you someday on CNN, reporting from some far corner of the globe. Best of luck to you and all the rest of the COSing members of Omnibus 69. Thank you for your commitment to Peace Corps.

Good news: Volunteers will be receiving a Living Allowance increase in their July paychecks. It will be retroactive to June. We are also once again reviewing the appropriateness of our categories. There will be changes. You'll receive a memo with details and amounts of the increase as soon as we finish the analysis. Thanks for your patience.

Below you'll find lots of updates on varying topics. Take care of yourselves, stop in to say hello if you're in the Office.

BUDGET:

In the last two months we've been busy with budget matters. Elsewhere in El Clima you will find a letter from Carol Bellamy explaining how we are faring in the budget process. Let me update you on where we are as PC/Ecuador. We receive two training classes per year - in August and in February.

Although we are already well into the planning for our August group; we do not know for certain the total number of Trainees we will receive. Our position has been that we do not want to bring Trainees into the country if we cannot support them effectively - meaning providing a reasonable Living Allowance and appropriate professional, technical and medical support during their service.

During the annual preparation of our budget, we prepare a strategy statement to discuss where we think PC/Ecuador should go in the next few years. At the last VAC meeting, I distributed PC/Ecuador's Strategy Statement to the representatives. It is included at the end of this column. It lays out our plans for where we would like to



go—given accompanying resource levels to support our plan. It is clear to me that if our budget is cut we will have to make hard choices about ending our programming in at least one sector. We are currently awaiting word on what our FY '96 resource levels will be.

TRANSITION:

Chuck Bacquet, previously PC's Deputy Director, is serving as our Acting Director, given Carol Bellamy's departure on May 1, to be Worldwide Director of UNICEF at the United Nations. Chuck has a long and distinguished career in Foreign Service. It is good to know that we're in competent and experienced hands. I'll let you know,

as we do, who President Clinton nominates as the next Peace Corps Director. That individual will need to pass Senate Confirmation Hearings prior to taking office.

PCV TRAVEL: Changes

If you plan to travel to Colombia or Perú on vacation, you must ask for authorization ahead of time. Your travel plans will be considered for approval on a case by case basis. In the case of Perú, concern is focused on the Ecuador/Perú border area. Flying should not be a problem. In Colombia, the incidence of kidnappings and violence against extranjeros has increased dramatically. Please submit your travel plans well in advance so that we can advise you of the specific security threats, and change plans accordingly if necessary.

PASSPORTS:

Volunteers are requested to keep their passports in the PC safe in Quito. The reason is simple: if we need to get you out of the country for a family emergency or for emergency medical care, we need to have your passport. If you have a personal passport you may wish to keep that with you in your site; however, your official passport shall be kept with María Eugenia in the safe. If any Volunteer has a question about this or believes she/he has a reason to keep the official passport, please discuss that with me or Barry. Otherwise, the next time you are in Quito, please leave your passport with María Eugenia.

JUST ANOTHER MANIC MONDAY:

Mondays are very busy days here in the office in Quito. Every second Monday, I begin the day with a Team Meeting at the Embassy; we then have our Staff meeting here beginning at about 1100. On the "off" Monday, we begin our staff meeting at 0930. These meetings last up to two hours, depending upon our agenda. I know it is frustrating for PCVs who want to meet with their APCDs or other staff, to

find us tied-up in meetings. If you plan to be in Quito on Monday to meet with a staff person, please phone ahead to insure that she/he will be available.

LIST OF CONFERENCES:

We are publishing a tentative list of up-coming Conferences for your information. Specific dates may change; you'll receive detailed information beforehand for any Conference that includes you. Please check the calendar.

Peace Corps Ecuador 25th Reunion.

About 40 RPCVs who served in Ecuador around 1970 will be returning to celebrate their 25th reunion at the beginning of August. They will be staying at the Cabanas Alinahtu, an eco-resort now managed by an RPCV from that era and his Ecuadorean wife. Some of the returning RPCVs will be visiting their old sites, and have asked to be put in touch with nearby current PCVs. I'll let you know as I get more details on this.

Strategy Statement:

During the next three years Peace Corps/Ecuador proposes to re-examine its relationship with and contribution to the Ecuadorean National Development Agenda. We intend to improve our overall effectiveness as a development agency by analyzing how our work with 100 Host Country Agencies at the local community level interacts with other sustainable development efforts. Duplication will be minimized. We will continue to work from the grassroots up in programming areas that are being neglected by the National Agenda: animal and agricultural production in indigenous communities, urban youth, water and sanitation promotion. We will complete the consolidation of our programming such that each of our six Ecuadorean APCDs will be managing one project by the end of FY 97.

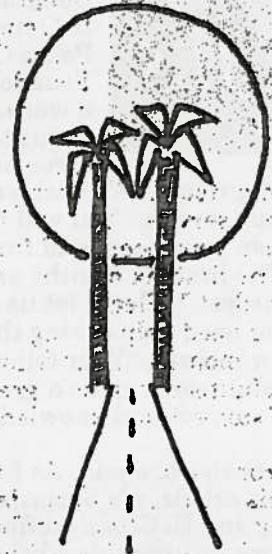
The focusing of our programmatic efforts will be complemented

by more balanced geographic distribution of site placements. We recognize our responsibility to avoid the perception that a Quito-based organization will be unresponsive to meeting the needs of Ecuador's three regions. We will continue to standardize site selection criteria and processes and PCV monitoring requirements across projects. We will increase the co-placement of PCVs in response to real community needs and to improve PCV peer support. This will be accomplished by increasing the coordination between APCDs during site development prior to PST. We will strive to think and act as team members of Peace Corps Ecuador rather than as individual managers.

We will train our Volunteers to more comprehensively understand Peace Corps' development philosophy in relationship to capacity building and resource dependence. By doing so, we plan to help Volunteers better understand their role in the complex and ever-changing world of development. Our budget proposes to provide PCVs with an adequate Living Allowance and to improve their training in health, safety, and technical areas.

During the next three years we recognize that we most probably will be required to make hard choices which will limit our ability to meet Ecuador's development needs. Given US budget realities and shifting priorities, we will most probably decrease the number of trainees invited to Ecuador, and make corresponding cuts in staff and support areas. We will do our best to make those decisions fairly and openly.

Jean Seigle, *Country Director*



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.

Supervising Editor - Chris Samuel
Editor - Juan Carlos Velasquez
Managing Editor - Kendall Ligon
Art Director - Pete Fontaine
Assistant Editors - Karl Banks and Wendy Pearce
Typing - Jodi Hammer
Volunteer Staff - Cindy Chin, Nicole Dino and Mark Stillman

Submit articles for publication by leaving them in the El Clima submissions folder on either of Quito's computer's hard disks and placing a hard (printed) copy in the El Clima mailbox, or by mail to:

El Clima
c/o Cuerpo de Paz
Casilla 17-03-635
Quito

Deadline for the next two issues:
Jul/Aug issue - Jun. 28
Sep/Oct issue - Aug. 30

Don't Dogg Hip Hop

By Ralph Coleman, Ibarra

"This is not a bunch of rantings but a bunch of black man's pride. Yet I can safely say, I've never played a sister by touching her where her private parts reside; I've always walked the right side of the road. If I wasn't making song, I wouldn't be a thug selling drugs, but a man with a plan and if I was a rug cleaner, I bet you Poss would have the cleanest rugs. I am."

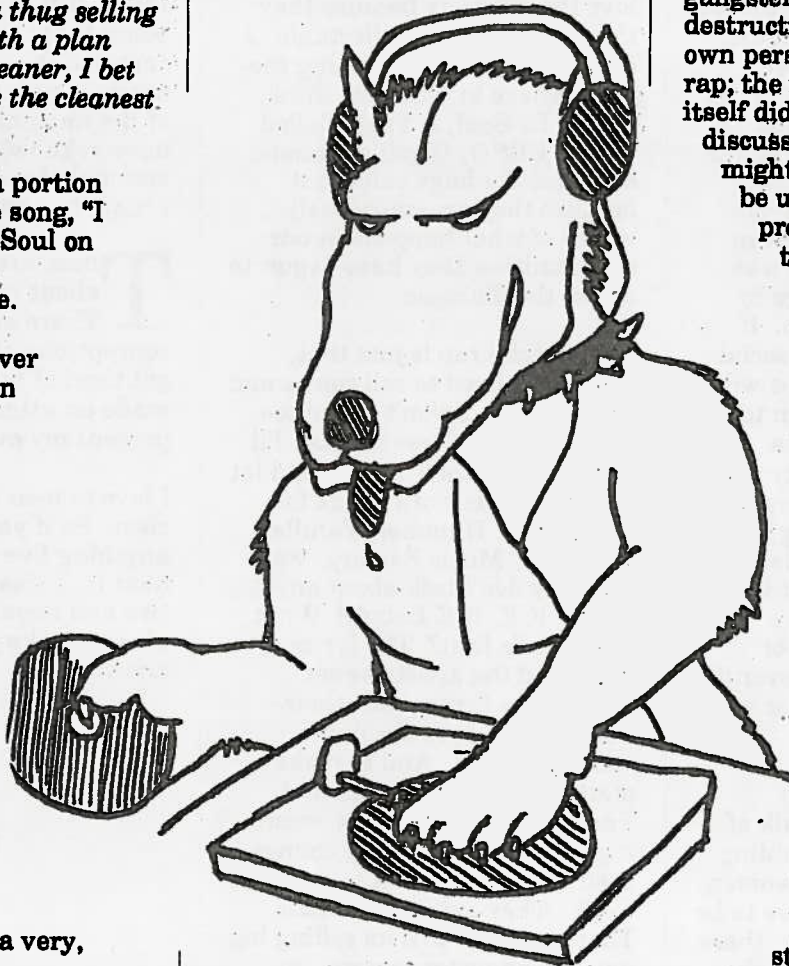
The above was a portion taken from the song, "I am," by De La Soul on their latest release, *Buhloone Mind State*.

It seems that whenever I've read an article on rap (or Hip-Hop) music, there is always the slanted opinion that rap music promotes violence and the degradation of women. I must admit that some artists utilize such lyrics to promote such thinking, but to generalize all rap music as such is a very, very sad mistake.

Rap music, like many types of music, has several categories into which different styles fall. The three categories are gangster rap, conscious rap and commercial rap.

The most controversial rap style that presently exists is gangster

rap. Several artists such as Snoop Doggy Dog, Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, The Dogg Pound and others have been heavily criticized by the media, music industry, women's and civil rights groups for promoting violence, gambling and the degradation of women. The argument is that these artists don't help in subsiding the inner-city violence, black-on-black crime, violence against women, etc. I beg to differ.



Social change does not come about by keeping people silent. These artists tell of the reality that exists in their communities. How are we to improve these conditions if no dialogue exists? By limiting these artists via to communicate, through censoring and other methods, how are we

to know what actually happens in the "hood"? By letting the media tell us on the nightly news how many murders occurred the night before? I don't think so. What does the media know about what actually happens in those communities? Absolutely nothing. They just report it and do nothing about it.

I have had several conversations with friends about whether gangster rap is constructive or destructive. We all came to our own personal conclusions about rap; the fact is that if the music itself didn't create a basis for discussion, then perhaps I might consider the music to be unproductive. But it is productive. It does create the basis for sound and intellectual discussions. Therefore, the dialogue remains open for change.

Many of those friends have returned to graduate school to obtain teaching certificates just so they can return to the inner-cities to teach. Why? To better the education there and to provide role models for some who are lost. Their decisions may not have been totally based on gangster rap music, but gangster rap music played a significant role in their decisions. Therefore, gangster rap-influenced their desire to help.

Another reason gangster rap has come under so much heat is because the music has reached "white-suburban America." Snoop Doggy Dog's recording, *Doggystyle*, sold some five or six million copies.

That means more than just people in the hood are buying the recordings. Gangster rap has now crossed the color barrier. Gangster rap was okay when it remained in the inner-city but now that it has arrived in "white-suburban America," all of a sudden, there is something wrong with it.

I also wonder what would have happened if J. Edgar Hoover had succeeded in keeping Martin Luther King Jr. silent. Hoover considered King a threat to the society and tried almost every means possible to keep him silent. That is why it pains me to see Jesse Jackson and other black individuals of power and influence attack gangster rap. These individuals never would have attempted to keep King silent, because King was marching for social change by keeping the dialogue open. If gangster rap is censored, social change in our communities will never occur. When I listen to those lyrics, I feel for those brothers and the mentality they have. I sometimes turn inside and say, damn, something has got to be done to curve this thinking and redirect that violent energy into productive efforts to revitalize many of these communities. However if the dialogue is ended, what will happen?

Conscious rap music is my favorite because it does talk of ways to end violence, gambling and the mistreatment of women, in the manner they deserve to be addressed. Unfortunately, these artists aren't as widely bought as the artists of gangster rap. My favorite line is the line included at the beginning of this article by De La Soul. That line sums up a lot of who I am. This style of rap music doesn't receive as much press or attention from society, because it's good. The negatives are always over-emphasized and that is the case

with gangster and conscious rap. Another favorite song of mine is, "Sound of Da Police," by KRS-1. He intelligently compares the work of a police officer to that of an "over-seer" on a slave plantation. I've lived in inner-city Washington D.C. and I've been overly harassed by the police. So I do understand the relation he is trying to make. If a slave disobeyed, he was whipped. If I disobeyed where I grew up, there was a possibility of getting beaten; just ask Rodney King. I love these artists because they think. They are intellectuals. I don't agree with everything they may believe in, but they think. So, De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, KRS-1, Diggable Planets, don't get the huge sales, but because they are consciously aware of what happens in our communities, they have begun to act on the dialogue.

Commercial rap is just that, commercialized to sell copies and more copies. I won't spend too much time on these artists. I'll just mention their names and let their previous work speak for itself. M.C. Hammer, Vanilla Ice, C & C Music Factory. For me, they don't talk about anything. ICE, ICE Baby!?! What on Earth is that? The lyrics are weak and the artists sweat themselves throughout their songs. That does absolutely nothing for me. And to make matters worse, Hammer and Vanilla Ice released new recordings in 1994 and totally changed their style from weak to super weak. They are opportunists. They knew the artists selling big now are gangster rappers, so their 1994 releases and images swayed towards the gangster rap style. Enough said.

Rap music is also not some new phenomenon that was born yesterday. I believe many of them could be professional poets. Not just because their words may rhyme with one

another, but because of their stance on social and political issues. They may not express their points as eloquently as Maya Angelou or other well-known poets, because individuals that read Maya Angelou probably don't listen to rap. Since I call rappers poets, I have to call Maya Angelou a rapper. I also must say that many of the samples contained in rap songs have origins from soul, funk and blues. Many rappers sample such artists as James Brown, P-Funk, B.B. King and others. So being that these rap artists have sampled these artists, their music is not new by any stretch of the imagination. Rap artists have acknowledged the musical accomplishments of the above artists by sampling their music.

These are just my opinions about my favorite music. There are too many misconceptions about rap and I just got tired of hearing them and made an attempt to clarify and present my own opinions.

I love to hear constructive criticism. So if you don't agree with anything I've said, I'd like to hear it. I like to hear the positive and negative sides; so please, make yourselves be known.



Reality Does Bite (but there's still hope)

By J.W. Carter III,
San Fernando

Below is an allegory to "Reality Bites" from the Mar/Apr issue of El Clima that could have been written circa 1861.

"... I gave 'em everything! They always had food. They always had shelter. When they needed new shoes, I'd get 'em new shoes. When they were sick, I'd get 'em well. My daughter even taught one of 'em how to read. And then they take off! All my other friends keep theirs in chains, all locked tight at night. Here I give mine a lil' freedom and what do they do?! This is the thanks I get! Now I have no one to help me and it's almost harvest time. This has been one of the best seasons in recent years, and now this happens. How am I going to pay my debts this year?"

This was just one of the many quotes of farmers who have been afflicted by the activities of the "Underground Railroad" in recent years. This thievery has robbed many of their livelihood and left the South worried of an economic crisis. Now our newly elected president (who has long voiced his disapproval of Southern practice) is now trying to quell the South's fears of an 1853 style depression in an effort to lure us away from the option of secession. But what are we to do? The South depends on agronomy. Agronomy depends on slavery. The Supreme Court has decided that slavery is legal under Constitutional Law. J.W. Carter, III, disagrees with the Supreme Court. And that's the whole point of this article. We all have differing opinions, and we need to respect that fact.

So how do I feel about Mr. Carter's article on the slavery issue? To put it simply, I hate the idea that a Northerner has taken it upon himself to crusade against our means of making a living in the South. I've re-read the article a few times, in a futile attempt to understand Mr. Carter's viewpoint, where he's coming from, why he feels the way he does about slavery (the same reasons why I've recently read some of the sayings of John Quincy Adams and William Wilberforce, to no avail). The fact is that the Southern way isn't the Northern way. The North has their means of making a living and that's fine. I would hope that the North would just respect our way.

Everyone's reality is different. Factors such as sex, socio-economic status, race, nationality, orientation and ability combine to make each individual's experience unique. So one person believes that a negro whose ancestors were sold as slaves has the same rights as the rest of us. Fine. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. It's when they try to make their opinion that of others that it infringes on that person's individual experiences.

I was talking with a group of people one day about various facets of the human existence. One person raised a question about disease, especially plagues that affect millions of people like bubonic plague, small pox, dysentery, etc. He asked, "Are these plagues brought upon by unsanitary lifestyles, or is it God's wrath upon the nations that it has inflicted?" One of us, a man of the cloth, actually said, "Plagues are widespread diseases that get out of control." The same attitude could be taken on the slavery question. When asked, "Does slavery infringe on a negro's rights? Is it wrong?" we could simply say, "Slavery is an economic tool which for various reasons Southerners find necessary."

Slavery has occurred since the dawn of time. Our ancestors have used slaves here for about 300 years, yet it wasn't until the last 15 years that anti-slavery movements have formed in significant numbers. Even the Church has failed to come out as one body for or against, and at present many churches accept and support slavery as an economic choice ..."

In 1856, the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision known as, "The Dred Scott Decision," which stated that blacks whose ancestors were sold as slaves had no rights as U.S. Citizens in U.S. courts. In effect, the highest court in the land decided that neither Congress nor the Court has the power to prohibit slavery and that blacks could legally be considered as property. The U.S. Supreme Court was wrong in 1856 and a civil war was fought in which more people died than in all other U.S. wars combined. Two amendments to the U.S. Constitution (the 14th and 15th) were also passed because of it.

The U.S. Supreme Court made another decision in 1973 which was wrong also, and a war has been raging that has taken millions more lives than in all other U.S. wars combined, including the Civil War.

"No man is justified in doing evil on the ground of expediency." - Theodore Roosevelt

"All that is required for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing." - Edmund Burke

Editor's Note: In the upcoming editions of El Clima articles pertaining to abortion will not be accepted. While we value submissions on this topic, we feel as though both sides of this issue have been effectively presented.

Rights, rights, who's got the rights?

By Kirk Leamons, Zuleta

In the time since I entered the Peace Corps, I have read many articles in *El Clima* and have sat through quite a few sessions on Diversity including Minority Rights, Women's Rights, Gay Rights, etc. . . and it seems, because I'm caucasian, heterosexual and male, I'm always made to feel like I'm the bad guy in this scenario.

Yes, I know it is written somewhere that the sins of the fathers will be visited upon their future generations, but somehow I feel it has to end somewhere.

I guess I get really tired of people asking for or demanding special privileges because they are in one of the Affirmative Action Plan's "protected" groups, or because they might be different from mainstream population. As a business manager of six years, I realize that we are now in a "world economy" and because of this, things like Affirmative Action just aren't going to work anymore. To be honest and straight-forward in business and in life, you must surround yourself with the very best people you can. Be they gay, straight, female, male, black, brown, yellow, white, purple or green; it doesn't matter. You seek out the finest or you will lose in one way or another in the end.

Yes, I know that people are asking for understanding of their individual problems and situations, and this is only fair because of our dark history of prejudice and the "good ol' boy" network that is just now starting to deteriorate because of business reasons not ethical ones. It's sad but true that it takes something economical instead of moral to change things.

Being raised in a fairly small town in Colorado, by a father who I consider to be pretty much unprejudiced, I was taught to look at who a person was by their character, not through their gender, color or sexual preference. This has served me well so far, in just about all parts of my life. Sure, everyone has personal prejudices; I think it's impossible not to. For example, I'm developing one against Ecuadoreans who design doorways and bus roofs to crack my head on!

I guess the point I'm trying to make here is, instead of looking at it from a special interest point-of-view — Women's Rights, Minority Rights, or Gay Rights—why not think in terms of Human Rights and start thinking of other people in those terms? I mean, why should one group be treated any differently than another? This way people who try to be fair and objective aren't made to feel ashamed of who they are because of how they were born. We should be equal and able to succeed or fail on our own merits.

I feel that there are a lot of people destroyed through discrimination as well as reverse discrimination. So, from a strictly Human aspect, everyone should be treated equal, regardless of age, gender, ethnic background or sexual preference. Then, who we are inside makes how we get through life a success or a failure. *



Letters to the Editor...

Vacancy in Daule

I have a few comments to make on Juan Carlos Velasquez' article "The Conch" appearing in the last issue of *El Clima*.

If I remember correctly, you emphasized in your article the lack of Volunteers and the dire need for us in the Coast since it offers the great potential for true change in the third-world conditions that you imagined us having before we signed up for Peace Corps.

I agree that you had some good, valid points and possible theories about the low PCV statistics in the coast, correlating it with the possible lack of support that we (I, speaking as a Coastal Volunteer) receive in that area. At first, I felt that you used up quite a bit of energy worrying about something that really doesn't affect you personally. I mean, what can you, as a mere Volunteer, do about it if Administration doesn't do something first? And, I'll admit that I was also a bit upset having you act as though you really know what Coastal life is like, since you yourself haven't served your PCV years living on the coast. But then I came to your last paragraph: "One last thing. I personally am willing to accept an immediate transfer with extension to any of the Coastal cities mentioned above."

Lucky for you, as of now, there is a position open in your work program in Daule and I understand it had been offered to you around the end of March. As you know, help is urgently needed there and, thanks to the abundance of work at this agency, I highly doubt that you'll have a moment

of boredom. (Whatever will happen to El Clima?) It's a PCV's dream—or at least what you and the other "Big Joehearts" originally had expected PC life to be like. What's your reaction?

- A) I can't wait!
- B) I'm packing my bags right now!!
- C) Why me? I don't want to go there! Why can't I stay in Mira?

Don't worry, you can be honest with yourself. No one will really know the truth, but can only guess by your decision (if this article even gets published, since you're the Managing Editor).

It's unfortunate and I can't understand, since you seem to feel so strongly about this problem, why you've waited so long to voice your opposition. The opposition, which in my opinion, seemingly implied that some Sierra sites (hmmm, is Mira in the Sierra?) offer a less than "poor, Third World country that has low living standards, probably isn't very clean or safe and needs (me)" experience. I'm furthermore extremely disappointed that you didn't find this obvious during your site visit. Why the sudden change of heart?

You stated that this problem was over your head, but now you, Juan Carlos, are offered your golden opportunity to change the Coastal statistics. Don't wait until some big guy in Washington reads El Clima and decides to do something about it via PC Ecuador Administration. You, yourself, now have a chance.

One last thing. I personally am willing to share my first-hand knowledge of Daule with you—and guess what? I've already got some great housing lined up for you!

Daule is waiting for you.

Kelly Rahn, Daule°

Careful with the Conch

I like how you have used the symbol of the Conch as your talisman of El Clima power.

I would like to give a friendly warning: Remember that in Lord of the Flies, Piggy whined too much and got his glasses broken and eventually fell to his death.

Karl Banks Portoyiejo°

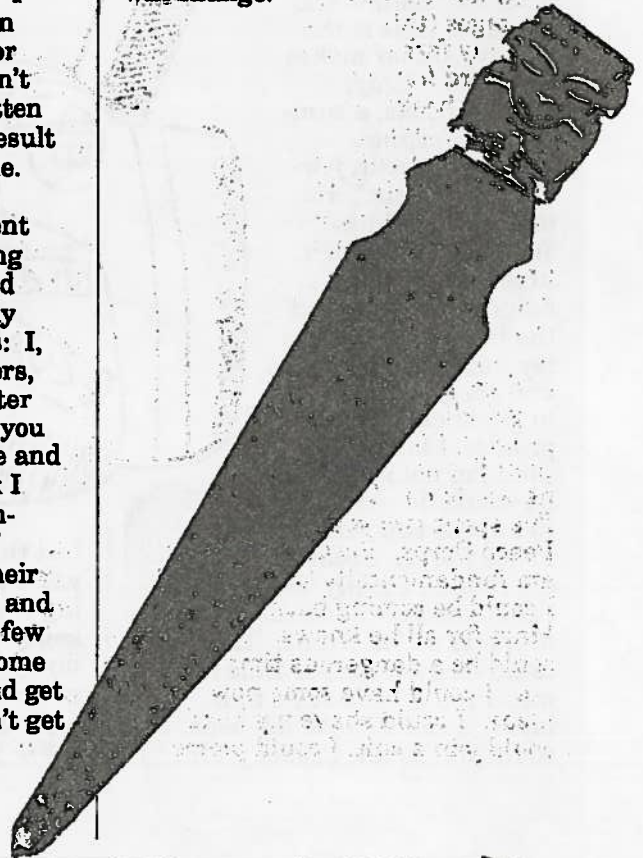
Editor's Response

I would like to thank Kelly Rahn for her excellent and well thought-out response. We can accept criticism here at El Clima. We certainly dish it out enough. As to Kelly Rahn's letter, I must clarify the main point and basis for her challenge. I was not and have never been offered a transfer to Daule or any other Coastal site. I don't know how she may have gotten that impression. Another result of the Peace Corps grapevine.

As to her disappointment that I've waited so long and should have found Mira, "less than poor," on my site visit, I can only say this: I, unlike many other Volunteers, never questioned my site after my site visit. I believe that you sign up, you get put in a site and that's it. I didn't even think I needed a site visit. I am constantly amazed at stories of Volunteers unhappy with their sites, requesting a new one, and this only after visiting for a few days. It seems some have come here expecting *Club Med* and get disappointed when they don't get it.

I did not request any site or region. I told my program manager to put me where he saw fit. I had no preference. In fact, I have not had a great experience in Mira. I actually don't enjoy it, consider it the most boring town in Ecuador and I yearn for the Coast. Yes, it is very clean, safe and not poor in the least. Fortunately, I only live in Mira and work outside of it, mostly along the Ibarra-San Lorenzo route, basically a poor "Coastal" region. I even take Mefloquin since its practically Esmeraldas. And I enjoy where I work.

No, it's not Daule. And no, I don't know what it's like to live on the Coast. But I have visited enough and I honestly like it. I am just trying to bring light to what I see as a grave injustice. I can't change it even if I do move to Daule (especially now since Mark Stillman has graciously accepted a move there). But if more people like Kelly Rahn speak out on the needs of the Coast, maybe things will change.°



"clothes and luggages"

By Chris Samuel,
Cuambo

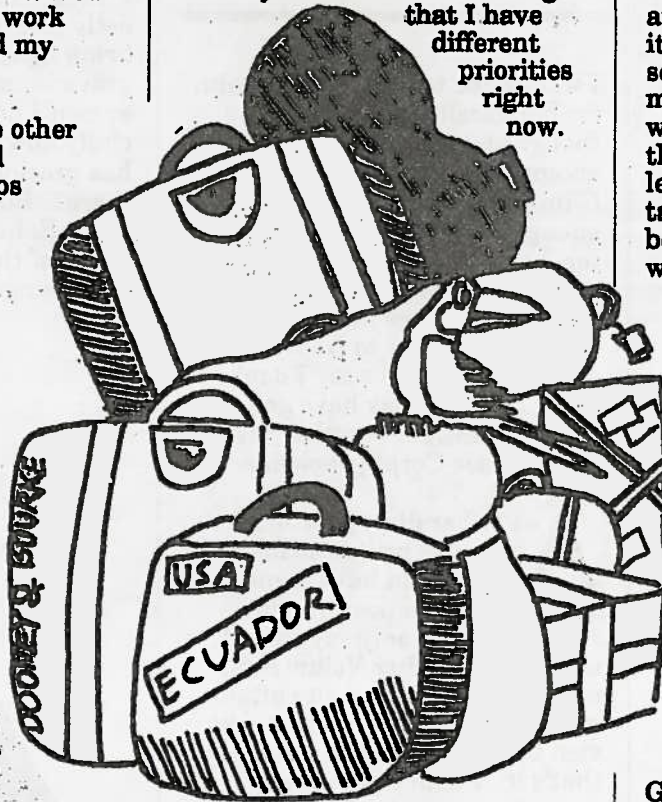
"Unconnected thoughts, conflicting ideas. . . time flies, everything grows, and words heal."

I've been walking around the last few days with a tightly coiled ball of tension, pressure, and pain inside of my chest. Who would guess that COSing would be so difficult? I realize now how many people I will miss upon leaving Ecuador; my Ecuadorian family and friends, my work mates and mentors, and my Volunteer friends.

I spoke to my father the other night. He's very excited about my future, perhaps more excited than I am. He is also very concerned about my need for "clothes and luggages (this is the way my father makes the word *luggage* plural), books, a summer job, 'connections', a haircut, jewelry, shoes, etc." He told me that I have 'nothing' and I am in urgent need of his help- I need to get on the fast track, whip my mind into a frenzy and go, go, go in order to get ahead. If, in the process, I lose my mind, then I'm not sure what he would do. You see, I've spent two years in the Peace Corps. Because of this, I am fundamentally 'out of touch'. I could be coming back from Mars for all he knows. This could be a dangerous time for me. I could have some new ideas. I could shave my head, I could join a cult, I could pierce

my nose if I'm not taken control of right away. Hence the urgent need for my father to take me back under his wing. I suddenly felt like I was 10 years old again- I was a wayward child who wanted to go outside and play instead of doing her homework. I felt the need to obey. Forget the fact that I wanted to spend more time in Ecuador, forget the fact that I wanted to visit my mother and my brothers, forget the fact that I know from past experience that with my father's help comes his right to interfere in every decision I make. Forget

that I have different priorities right now.



Forget the fact that I have lived for three years on my own because according to my father, "I was still being taken care of"-- either by my ex-boyfriend or by the U.S. government. Suddenly I was saying, "You're right, Dad. I've got to get serious, I've got to get

a job, there's no time to see Mom in Florida, I need clothes and jewelry (even though I don't like to wear it) and 'luggages', and they should say 'Dooney and Bourke.'"

How did this happen? How could I slip back into that old role? Do you know what it feels like to hand over control of your life? It's hardly a nice feeling. I realized all this after the phone call. While it was taking place, I couldn't figure out what was going on--it was as if I were caught up in a whirlwind of ambition. While talking about it with some friends, I realized something. I can take care of myself and do things my own way. Money cannot be everything to me. The things I have learned in Peace Corps cannot be taken away from me and cannot be given away. I have discovered what my independence means.

It is everything--it's my freedom to be what I want to be, to love who I want to love, to not wear jewelry, to like *Ace of Base*, and even to pierce my nose if I want to. It is so much more than 'luggages' and clothing, jewelry and a car. Everything grows and words heal. I'm not ten years old anymore and I don't want to need 'luggages' with the right name brand to make me feel secure in being who I am. So while I'm swanning away a week in the

Galapagos, getting tanner and sipping a pifia colada with Mark by my side, I will forget about the rat race, I will not obsess over my future. I will live in a Present of my own making. This is the most valuable gift Peace Corps could ever give me. How can I thank you all? For what I have found is me. °

A Director's Update and Farewell

The following article is an April 12th letter to CD Jean Seigle from past PC Worldwide Director Carol Bellamy.

Dear Jean:

I wanted to update you, your staff, and the Volunteers on several issues that were discussed in my "State of the Agency" speech back in February, as well as an important change that has occurred for me personally. Although we can communicate in various ways—by e-mail, cable, fax, or phone—I don't want the physical distance between Washington and the field to obscure the value I place on having a direct dialogue with you.

Peace Corps' FY 1996 Budget

The budget process continues as Congress considers the President's budget request of \$234 million for Peace Corps. As you've probably seen on CNN or heard on BBC, these are challenging budget times for all government agencies, even for popular programs like ours. On March 7, I defended our budget before the House subcommittee which appropriates funds for the Agency. The work that Volunteers are doing around the world made a strong case for the Agency, as did the steps we are taking to streamline operations and achieve savings here at headquarters. Because Peace Corps continues to enjoy bipartisan support in Congress, I hope we can come as close to the President's request as possible. Recognizing budget realities, however, I anticipate that we will take a reduction in funding. It's too early to tell by how much. But whatever difficult steps we have to take to adapt to these realities, I know that we share a common objective: to keep as many Volunteers working in the field as possible.

The next step in the process will likely be sometime in May when the House International Relations Committee is tentatively scheduled to authorize

funding for Peace Corps and other agencies in the foreign assistance account. We are following the budget process closely, and I have been meeting with members of Congress regularly to make the case for Peace Corps' budget. We will keep you informed as the process moves forward through the summer.

Peace Corps Takes a Technological Leap

Over the last year, a great deal of time and energy has been devoted to improving the way Peace Corps does its business. Last October, we decided to take a hard look at how the Agency managed its information systems. In this era of reinventing government, tight budgets, and the need to get the most for our money, it was clear that we needed to modernize our antiquated, fragmented information systems and technology.

We have just finished a comprehensive review and now have a concrete set of recommendations that will take our information infrastructure into the next century. Although it will take some time to implement, we will develop computer technology that will improve the way we communicate with one another, and new information systems that will strengthen the way we do our business in Volunteer delivery, Human Resources Management, and Financial Management. I think that this is a great investment in Peace Corps' future and will have a direct impact on our ability to devote more resources in more efficient ways to Volunteers in the field.

Reinvention Lives

Thanks to folks throughout the Agency, more than 100 pages of suggestions were generated as a result of February's "Time-Out" exercise. Many of these ideas have been incorporated into the IPBS process, and some were immediately folded into Agency cost-saving considerations for budget reductions. A number of

the particularly creative suggestions were about the structure and staffing of Peace Corps, especially here at headquarters. I have asked Maureen Carroll, Director of Planning and Policy Analysis, to head a working group to examine the ideas in more depth and to consider any others that would ensure that today's Peace Corps is the most efficient and effective grassroots development agency on the international scene. You will hear more about this group's work soon. In the meantime, if you have any suggestions that you think are relevant to the topic, please get in touch with Maureen directly as soon as possible.

Finally, as many of you have heard by now, the Secretary General of the United Nations has appointed me as the next Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). I am very grateful to President Clinton for submitting my name, and to the Secretary General for his decision. I will assume this new position in early May, and I am delighted that Deputy Director Chuck Baquet will be providing strong and steady leadership as Acting Director until the President decides who my successor will be.

I want each of you in the field to know that my years with the Peace Corps—as a Volunteer and as Director—have been very important to me. My trips to our posts overseas have allowed me to see firsthand the outstanding work that Volunteers carry out, and how they make a difference in the lives of so many people. I am convinced that Peace Corps is doing some of the best work in its history, and I am very proud to have worked with you.

Best wishes,

Carol Bellamy
Director •

Reflection Reflection Reflection

*Soothing words for the new
PCVs*

**By Shane McCarthy,
Riobamba**

Some days I would wake up and look out at the drizzle, at the old women of the village trudging by in the mud with heads bent into the wind, and I would ask myself again if there was really anything I could do to make their lives better. I would eat my Quaker oatmeal and think about the carpet of small checkered plots laid out before me. I would think of men and women with no education, six children, and one hectare of land, no birth control, no medical insurance, no retirement plan, no paid vacation, nobody to sue for the hot coffee that they spilled on themselves, and burned their genitals. No guarantees whatsoever. That is essentially the way it has been since mankind became mankind, and how it is for 80% of the people on the planet now. Maybe that is the way it is supposed to be, I would think. Maybe it is us, of the technocrat society that are wrong. Maybe we should just let the cycle continue and run its course. Mankind will sufficiently over breed, over consume, over war and generally make a mess of the place; life will then change on the earth, drastically perhaps, but I rest assured that life will not cease to exist. The planet will simply change its expression for a few hundred thousand or million years and the miraculous plasticity of life will churn and swirl and explode in yet another genesis bloom of mar-

velous creations. The ol' earth has been through it before, many times.

Then, as I lay at night in this magical place of Culebrillas, or El Placer, or Plazapamba and listen to the spectacled bear's mournful and mysterious wail, the owls and nightbirds sounding, the frog's and insect's ticks and cheeps, and the volcano sighing, I turn again to the here and now and my own mortality. I think how hollow the world will be without places like this, like a world without music and poetry and color...and I desperately want to try to save it. I don't want these places and animals to go extinct, as they are destined to if things don't change dramatically in the coming years. If or when they do go extinct, we are certain to follow if not in body, certainly in soul.

And then I am reminded of my mentor's axiom: "My level of optimism works in inverse proportion to the time of the day. From 6 a.m.-3 p.m. there is hope, I am optimistic and charged. Then from 3-11 p.m. the optimism has leaked away and we are doomed. The rest of the time I sleep." This from a battle weary old bear biologist that still gets up every morning at five and puts on his armor and goes out to fight. I have found that I too, am subject to the six to three syndrome. If you find yourself feeling that way, take a deep breath at about 3 p.m. and loosen your tie a bit. Go ride your bike if you can. Protected sex can also help tremendously.

I am now realizing that I am up to my poopchute in this article, and can't really offer any fresh advice or grand revelations. Just about everything that you need to know you will have been told in training in one form or another—though you probably didn't realize it or absorb it (sounds like a book title eh?). All I can say is this: We CAN change many of the destructive trends both here and at home. One person CAN make a difference. What you are doing IS of value and will hopefully continue to be. This is not sarcastic or idealistic bullshit, I truly believe in it. Don't quit. If you keep pecking away, even under what may seem to be absurd circumstances, at the end of two years you may look in the mirror and say, "I may have failed, or my projects may not continue, but by God I tried, I made a sincere effort." That's all you can do. . . is try.

The one for sure, sound piece of advice I can give you though, is to hang on to your sense of humor. It is and always will be your best ally. Like the old saying goes: "When you laugh, the world laughs with you; and when you cry, (the world either is disgusted, disinterested even worse—amused, so) you cry alone." Keep smiling! It can be really hard sometimes, and I sure as hell haven't been able to pull it off as much as I would have liked to, but when I did, it paid big dividends. Also, concentrate your efforts on the children, trust me, you'll get more bang for the buck. If your Spanish sucks and you just can't seem to get over a hump—get your butt back to Tumbaco for a few days. I didn't and wish that I would have.

The Trainee that was supposed to be placed in my site but went home instead betrayed his sentiments to me on the first site visit. He said "I'm worried that I might be wasting my life here."

"Waste your life?" I thought to myself, "Son, you are 22 goddamn years old, two years ain't shit, it'll pass like the snap of a finger. You have the opportunity to grow and learn here like you NEVER could back home on the farm. You could likely experience changes that will probably influence the way you think and feel for the rest of your life. How could that possibly be a waste?" When it is all said and done, if you look back on your two years here and feel only sadness—you have indeed wasted two years of your life. But if you can look back and say that you smiled and laughed a lot, despite the adversities, then you have truly accomplished something important. I feel that you are responsible to a great extent for your own happiness. This is a tremendous opportunity to grow and learn and to get to know yourself better, so take advantage of it. It is only a waste if you let it be. Peace.

P.S. - Muchas Gracias to all of the wonderful staff at the office and the training center, I appreciate your smiles and unconditional help. Keep up the good work. *

REMEMBER
AMIGOS:
WRAP YOUR
RASCAL!



INFORME ANUAL DE ACTIVIDADES DE VOLUNTARIOS/AS DEL PROGRAMA DE SALUD 1994

Por Dr. Miguel Artola
APCD Salud

Habiendose especificado que las actividades para el año 1994, de los/las Voluntarios/as de Salud del Cuerpo de Paz sean las siguientes: a) Monitoreo de crecimiento, b) entrenamiento a madres en los aspectos de nutrición, vacunas, enfermedades respiratorias y diarreicas, y c) la capacitación a profesores primarios en los aspectos de educación para la salud, tengo a bien informar las actividades realizadas por el Programa de Salud con sus Voluntarios/as asignados a las Provincias de Esmeraldas, Los Ríos, Manabí, Pastaza, Imbabura y Azuay

LAS ACTIVIDADES CUMPLIDAS POR LOS/LAS VOLUNTARIOS/AS FUERON LAS SIGUIENTES:

Monitoreo de Crecimiento y desarrollo:

Los Voluntarios/as siendo asignados a diferentes organizaciones (ONGs) y comunidades en las cuales en coordinación con las unidades de salud del Ministerio, han trabajado en función de equipo, en el control y monitoreo de crecimiento, desde la promoción hasta el mismo proceso de pesaje de los niños. Es así como se ha podido dar un seguimiento del control de crecimiento a niños menores de cinco años en un total de 2.080 niños, con seis controles de promedio por año.

Capacitación a Madres de niños menores de cinco años: 150 madres de niños que han recibido control y monitoreo de crecimiento han sido capacitadas a través de charlas, cursillos, visitas a domicilio, y entrevistas sobre el manejo domicil-

ario de los problemas nutricionales básicos; lactancia materna, uso y manejo de las curvas de crecimiento, como preparar suero casero y suero oral en el caso de diarreas y en el caso de problemas respiratorios el manejo de las siglas FALTAN, de acuerdo a las normas de MSP.

Capacitación a Profesores Primarios:

Treinta Profesores de escuelas primarias han recibido capacitación formal a través de cursillos, coordinados eficazmente con el Ministerio de Educación, Ministerio de Salud, las agencias con quienes están asignados los Voluntarios y Cuerpo de Paz, cursillos que fueron dictados en las mismas áreas de los profesores participantes (Pastaza-Puyo, Los Ríos-La Carmela, Pichincha-Escuela UNP), con un total de doce horas de duración por cursillo y la entrega de Manual de Educación para la Salud a cada uno de ellos, para la aplicación posterior de las técnicas revisadas en las aulas de clases.

OTRAS ACTIVIDADES SECUNDARIAS:

* Se desarrollan 20 murales permanentes en unidades de salud del Ministerio en especial en Pastaza, Tarqui.

* Se termina la construcción de Puesto de Salud en Bajo de las Palmas, Manabí.

* En Coordinación con CARE, y fondos de FISE se termina la construcción de 800 letrinas en Antonio Sotomayor, La Reversa y La Carmela y 48 letrinas en La Nena Chica, Los Ríos.

* Se termina la construcción de dos sistemas de agua en Chacrita y La Carmela en Los

Ríos con fondos compartidos de los Municipios de dichas parroquias y de CARE.

* 10 Huertos demostrativos, se suman a ellos 50 huertos familiares como parte de la promoción de los huertos demostrativos.

* Terminación de proyecto de electrificación para 30 familias del Aguayo, Los Ríos. Proyecto realizado con dineros provenientes de la participación comunitaria, Municipio de Baba, Diputado Provincial, EMEL Ríos y el Consejo Provincial.

* Se realiza el primer taller nacional, "La Mujer Latina y el SIDA," evento en el que participaron 25 agencias, el Ministerio de Salud, APROFE, la Organización Panamericana de la Salud. Se contó con la presencia de 110 participantes de todo el país.

* Elaboración de "Manual de Charlas de Salud." Un libro que trata de recopilar las mejores

técnicas de enseñanza para la salud para niños y adultos con poco o ninguna alfabetización.

* Se trabajó con grupo de 33 personas de la tercera edad en terapia de rehabilitación en el Hospital Geriátrico los Pinos de Quito.

PROBLEMAS Y SUGERENCIAS:

* Con las ONGs:
- Coordinación, apoyo y la planificación de actividades son magnificas, con una gran efectividad en el trabajo de equipo con las unidades de salud en donde se trabaja conjuntamente, ejemplo: Los Ríos, Manabí y Azuay.

* Con el Ministerio de Salud:
- Contrapartes locales, cuentan con muy pocos recursos para realizar el trabajo de extensión de cobertura por lo que es muy difícil realizar planes que se cumplan, con excepción de las campañas de vacunación.

* Con las Comunidades:
- Muy receptivas y deseosas de aprender salud, aclarandose

que son comunidades que han solicitado la ayuda y son de las mas necesitadas.

* Con los/as Voluntarios/as:
- Trabajan decididamente, aunque con muchas frustraciones con los planes de trabajo que no se cumplen o van muy lentos.




- Los Voluntarios/as deberán tener mas flexibilidad.

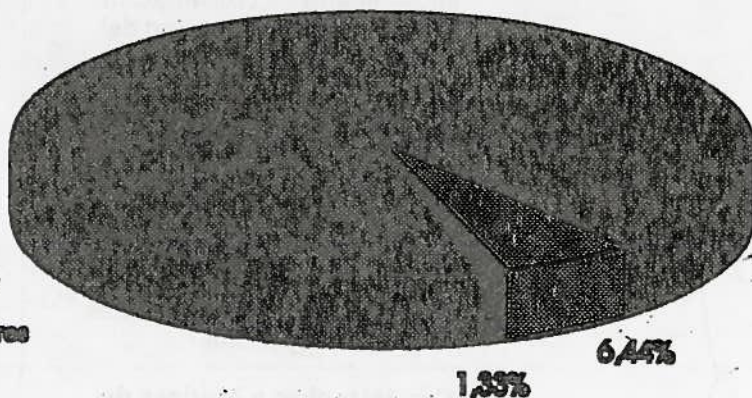
- La especificación de actividades son de mucha ayuda para mejorar la utilización del recurso Voluntario.

- Los cursillos de capacitación en servicio con sus contrapartes locales (Jefes de servicios provinciales y auxiliares) son de mucha utilidad.

- Los Voluntarios/as deben reportar mensualmente las actividades que realizan a los Coordinadores Provinciales de Salud en cada provincia, del Ministerio de Salud o de la NGO a las que han sido asignados/as. *

TAREAS DE VOLUNTARIOS/AS 1.994

-  Control y Monitoreo de crecimiento
-  Capacitación a Madres
-  Capacitación a Profesores



All the Promises We Make,

from the cradle to the grave - U2

By Wendy Pearce,
Membrillo

The death of a young child is something every parent hopes they will never have to experience. We can only pray that when we are blessed with a child, that he or she will grow up safe and healthy and that circumstances will allow us to ensure just such a future. We make the promise as much for ourselves, as for our children, that even through the bad times, everything will be okay. This isn't just a North American dream. The world over, mothers and fathers place the lives of their children in the hands of God and work for a brighter tomorrow for each one. But on March 6, in Membrillo, Manabí, every parent's nightmare came true for one family.

Nely Valencia and Milton Hidrovo lost their son, Ramon Marcel Hidrovo Valencia, and I gained an insight into a once foreign sequence of events.

As a Rural Public Health Volunteer in Membrillo (a site nestled deep within Manabí's central mountain chain), I've had six months of new experiences: giving my first shot, assisting with my first birth, inserting my first IV, not to mention learning how to live like my neighbors without leaving for weeks at a time; but none has opened my eyes as wide as the death of this little boy. It's kind of like how you feel when you're handed back an exam, only to find that half the questions you missed were stupid mistakes. If you'd just paid more attention to what was being asked or taken more time to review your answers, you wouldn't be left with this feeling of wondering what went wrong. Hey, you knew this stuff, right? But I guess that's what tests are

for: to measure our understanding, to make us think.

The day began like many others. Fellow Membrillanos and I filled our mornings with chores; I, preparing charlas and everyone else washing the clothes, preparing the meals, passing the hours. I returned from lunch up the street and was enjoying my quiet time - mid-day break at the sub-centro where I live. Walking through the center to use the bathroom, I realized someone had joined me--a mother and her son. I just assumed he had the "gripe" like most of the kids who'd been brought in recently, a change in the weather or something; and I went about my business. It wasn't until Marianita, the local auxiliary and my counterpart, arrived, that I asked what was up. She informed me that the one-and-a-half-year-old had gotten his hands on a lamp filled with kerosene a couple of hours earlier and ingested an unknown amount of the toxin.

Marianita sends a curious child to the pharmacy for some M.O.M. (Milk of Magnesia, that is), and I trot over to my room to retrieve my trusty-rusty, Donde No Hay Doctor. We review the recommendations for ingested poisons and I try to explain that in cases of kerosene or gasoline, induced vomiting is not advised. Oop, too late. Ramon has already thrown up two or three times and some home brew--a concoction of hot cooking oil with a raw egg or something-- is being stirred to hopefully bring on some more. This being my first exposure to poisoning (my health experience limited to two years as a volunteer in Children's Hospitals in Los Angeles and Orange County), I'm feeling far from comfortable spewing out commands, so I watch what's unveiling itself for

awhile and then slip away to continue with my charla prep.

By this time, Ramon's hooked up to an IV and seems to be resting peacefully. Marianita shares a story about another local boy who died after swallowing a fair amount of kerosene. Mom, who's been sitting vigilantly at Ramon's side, shifts her focus back to us as she overhears this. I make some sort of grunt to let Marianita know I've understood what she's told me and turn my head to avoid further discussion. People are in and out all afternoon, checking out the scene and giving advice or sharing stories. Randy Travis is playing in the background, a diversion coming from my makeshift stereo (a SONY walkman with mini speakers) and after a few hours, Marianita informs me she's returning to her house across the street to start on dinner and will check back in awhile. I decide now is as good a time as any to make some rice for dinner.

Eavesdropping as best I can with my limited Spanish comprehension, I suddenly realize something has changed. Nely is crying and I hear Milton quickly leave through the front doors. As I walk over to assess the situation, Marianita is running in with Ramon's father. The child's breathing is labored and heavy; he's despondent and limp. The IV is removed from his tiny hand and the room is swelling with people. I'm wondering where they've all come from; people I haven't seen in weeks.

What happened next is a bit blurry. As I strain to understand the discussion, I'm hit with the stunning fact that this little boy is dying. My Mary Chapin Carpenter tape has just switched to side B and "Passionate Kisses", blares through the

breezeway. I wriggle through the crowd to shut it off after meeting some concerned, rather annoyed, gazes from onlookers. Amongst Ramon's mother's wails and pleas, Marianita hands me the stethoscope to listen to the child's breathing—from lungs weighed down with the kerosene. I back away as Marianita consoles Nely, exclaiming the reality of what's occurring: Ramon is being taken to heaven to live eternally as an angel in God's Kingdom. This is a time to rejoice not grieve. I expel a whimper and meet the eyes of a friend across the room. He shakes his head as if to say, "Don't cry. That's wrong." I do anyway and am overwhelmed with a chilling emotion. I've never been so close to death before. I feel kind of numb, though.

The scene that then unfolded was almost unreal. Ramon is dressed in a white suit of sorts after expelling his final breath, laid on a white sheet and carried out, suspended on a makeshift canopy—four children, each grasping a corner of the folded cloth. There isn't much said. Things are packed up and the huddle moves from the room, out of the sub-centro, to the street, under a sunset sky and quietly proceeds up the road to prepare the wake.

I accepted Marianita's invitation to spend some time with her family and returned when I felt as if I'd be able to sleep. The following day, we payed our respects at the family's house. I hadn't prepared myself for what greeted us there. The front room had been cleared out. Benches lined the walls and the set-up in the center reminded me of a church altar. Ramon lay clothed in the same white polyester as the evening before on a low, draped table with a pair of paper mache and tissue paper angel wings resting under his shoulders, surrounded by fresh flowers and candles dripping onto old motor oil cans. Marianita led a rosary and we sat silent, looking from the body to the mother across the room and back again.

As we waited and contemplated, a worm about an inch-long squirmed its way from Ramon's left nostril. Nely slowly stood, grabbed it and placed it in a small plastic bag to the side of the altar. I was later to find out that some 35 such worms, some up to three inches long, journeyed from this poor child's body orifices during those first hours after his death. His distended stomach was overflowing with parasites. No wonder his malnourished, infected body couldn't digest the kerosene. His father was close by constructing the tiny wooden coffin into which Ramon was layed the next day. A procession led to the church where we sang and prayed together and later to the cemetery where he now rests.

Nely didn't come out that day. When I questioned as to why, I was told, "Sometimes these things are too hard on the parents." In a campo in Ecuador I was reminded, through ignorance and circumstance, why I'm here: to teach, to learn, to experience, and to grow. But if I'd prepared myself for this "test", I still think I'd be left asking the same questions. I've taken from these events what I could. I am again made aware of how fragile life is. It's not ours to take or give and sometimes it doesn't make sense.

Some promises just aren't ours to make. °



SEX, Babies and VOLUNTEERS

by Tricia Culverhouse, RN, San Jacinto

According to the 1988 INEC survey, 24% of Ecuadorian women living on the Coast will have eight or more pregnancies, with the average number of surviving children at 4.6. Also, 40% of pregnant or lactating women suffer from malnourishment and 10% of deaths in women, aged 15 - 49, are due to complications from pregnancy or miscarriage here in Ecuador. As a health PCV, I can only sigh heavily at those statistics and do my best to educate the people of Ecuador on the positives of family planning and the options available to them here in Ecuador.

I've spent the last month giving my family planning charla to mothers' clubs and during community meetings. It has been one of the most well-received charlas I have given. Luckily, I live on the Coast where women love talking about sex and birth control! They admit they have nothing better to do when the lights go out and add that there will be lots of babies born next December due to all the recent power rations. Of course, they laugh and joke about this but the reality is that a new child will most likely be born into an already crowded, malnourished, and impoverished family. That's not very funny. I know I can't change their customs or beliefs about family planning or what the ideal family size is, but I can give them the knowledge and the resources to make an informed decision.

The latest information on family planning can be found at your local APROFE (the Planned Parenthood of Ecuador).

APROFE, being well-organized, supplied me with pamphlets and can easily send people, a VCR, and videotapes to give a family planning seminar, if asked. The following information, given in my usual broken Spanish and hand-drawn visuals, as I said, was well-received (especially by the husbands!). Here it is:

What is Family Planning?

It's an agreement between a man and woman to plan, with responsibility and freedom, the number of kids they want and when they want to have them. Two years between each child is the recommended "spacing" to give the mother's health and nutritional state adequate time to recuperate. She is less weak and her breasts produce sufficient milk. Remember, the risk of serious illness or death, resulting from pregnancy in an unhealthy woman is much greater than the risks involved in using any of the common methods of birth control.

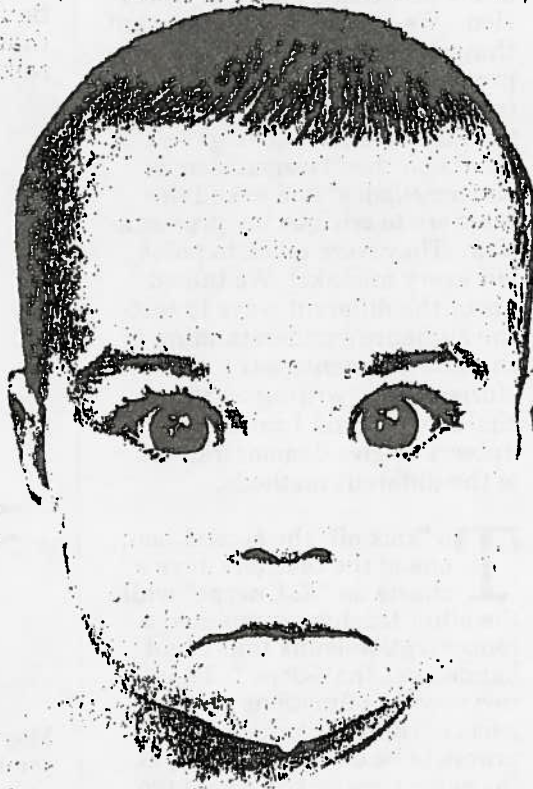
What methods for family planning are most commonly used in Ecuador?

The pill (oral contraception), an IUD (intrauterine device) or "la T de Cobre" and the rhythm method are most common.

The pill, if used properly, is 99% effective. APROFE charges 2,000 sucres per packet of pills (one packet per month) and a sliding scale can often be worked out for families unable to afford even that. The subcentros I work with supply the pill "free of charge." Actually, pills are supposed to be available for free from the Ministerio de Salud in all subcentros, but more often than not, they simply don't have them. Birth control pills should only be supplied by a doctor, subcentro nurse, midwife, or other authorized person. Women with a history of stroke, cancer, liver disease and women who smoke or are breastfeeding, should not use the pill if they can use

another method.

The IUD (or "T de Cobre") is the second most common form of birth control in Ecuador. It is a small metal object covered with plastic, placed inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy. APROFE inserts the T de Cobre for 13,000 sucres and subcentros can insert it for less. The T de Cobre can last up to eight years in a woman and is often the preferred choice for women who are breastfeeding. It is inserted



while the woman is on her period and can be taken out whenever she is ready to have a child. It requires no hospitalization, is a relatively painless procedure requiring no anesthesia, and is 98% effective in preventing pregnancy.

The third most commonly used method in Ecuador is the rhythm method or Billings method. This method depends on a woman's knowing her body well enough to recognize signs that she is ovulating (her most fertile time) and that her period

is very regular all of the time. (Not a common thing with women in the States, much less, Ecuador.) Also, the man and woman must be willing to pass one week out of each month abstaining from sexual intercourse. Few couples are successful for very long. Many women in my communities admit to using this method and freely admit it's ineffectiveness, proof being, four or five kids at their side. High success rates with the rhythm method are sometimes reported, but in reality, they are idealized studies, usually not done in Third-World countries. The failure rate is too high to even warrant, in my opinion, teaching it. In regions where the religion strongly influences people's beliefs towards birth control (you lucky PCV's in the Sierra!) pointing out this method's ineffectiveness, could prove difficult.

There are, of course, other methods used here in Ecuador (condoms, tubal ligation, vasectomy, Depo-Provera) which are mentionable, but not very common.

So, that's my charla in a nutshell. Usually from there, I facilitate a discussion on why family planning is so important. I usually have drawings of two families one with lots of kids, the other, few. It's easy to discuss which family has more food, more money, is living better and has healthier kids. But before Ecuadoreans begin to practice family planning, they must first believe in why it is necessary, what the positives are and how they outweigh the negatives. As PCV's, we've certainly seen enough of the negatives.

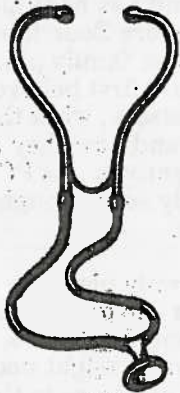
To me, family planning education is one of the most important charlas we, as PCV's, can give. I might not see women going in droves to their subcentros for that IUD, but I do believe I am helping to make a few of them at least think about it.°

Health Workshop

By Kendall Ligon,
Ahuano

As most of you know, take me to a party, wind me up, let me go, and I could talk all night. Or, put me in front of a group of niños, and I'm a regular lora. But, ask me to talk to a group of adults, and I'm speechless. (you'd have to see it to believe it, I know). Recently, though, I organized a workshop to capacitate fifteen teachers on how to prepare and present charlas. Suprisingly enough, it actually went very well. Go figure?? Just in case any of you might be thinking of doing something similar in your sites, I'll give you a general idea of how the conference went.

After deciding on a place to meet, I sent each of the teachers a written invitation to attend the "festivities." Two weeks was enough advance notice for most of the teachers to make arrangements to be in Ahuano for the big event. But a few of the teachers work in communities that are muy adentro so they did not receive news of the con-



ference until after the fact. (Next time, if I know myself, I'll try to notify the "guests" of the date earlier.) I planned for the workshop to take place during school hours so that the teachers would not have to give up their tiempo libre to participate. This was a plus for attendance!

I initiated the reunion by presenting a plan de trabajo to the group and then had each of the teachers present himself/herself to the others. For the remainder of the first hour, I led the discussion. We reviewed the important things to keep in mind when preparing or giving a charla (clarity, brevity, practicality for the audience...). I then gave a charla on the "Transmisión de Enfermedades" and asked the teachers to critique my presentation. They were quick to point out every mistake! We talked about the different ways to test the audience's understanding of the charla's mensaje (i.e., games, stories, skits, writing on the chalkboard), and I called on volunteers to give demonstrations of the different methods.

To "kick off" the second hour, one of the teachers gave a charla on "El Cuerpo" while the other teachers completed a concentration game that I had handed out "half-done." They reviewed the functions of the parts of the body (which always proves to be divertido!), and, at the same time, made a juego to use in their classrooms. After a short recess, another teacher gave a charla on "Nutrición", and I passed out copies of nutrition bingo. For the remaining 15 minutes, the teachers divided into groups and prepared "quick" charlas (using only paper and markers) from a guía de salud.

For the first half of the third hour, the teachers presented their charlas to the group. A variety of "fascinating" topics were discussed... how to heal

open, weeping sores, how to treat diarrhea, how to prevent tooth decay etc. I then gave the teachers time to cut, color and paste charla materials. A mutant mosca (to be used in skit illustrating "how disease is spread") turned out to be the most popular party favor. Before releasing them, I had the teachers do a final oral evaluation which revealed that they did not find the workshop to be "torture"; as I had feared. In fact, they actually found it be informative and at times, even entertaining. Go figure?? And, the best part was that they had done most of the talking!



Maybe this resumen will help some of you reduce the time spent using the "trial and error",... or maybe not. In the event that any of you are interested in organizing workshops or some of you just want to give a few health charlas in your sites, Miguel has a file in his office with mastercopies of games and charlas that health volunteers have made. Also, Miguel would like to submit an article from the health program (work experiences, helpful hints etc...) to each issue of El Clima. Any ideas for the next issue?*

What is a VOLUNTEER?

By Kirk Leamons, Zuleta

This question and many others were asked at a conference, sponsored by an organization called Comunidec, for the exchange of ideas by many different Volunteer organizations currently operating here in Ecuador.

Comunidec is a group, sponsored by the Inter America Foundation from Washington, D.C., which concerns itself with investigating the systems of Volunteer groups and community development in Ecuador. On April 6th and 7th they sponsored a conference to be attended by many various Volunteer organizations, with the hope of exchanging methods used by these groups for development on a community based and participatory level. It was hoped that this might recognize any overlap that is taking place and also open up avenues not currently known by some groups as to resources, methods, and opportunities for their groups to participate in.

I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to attend this conference with Jean Seigle for the two days in Cumbaya and to realize in a substantial way the extent to which the various groups operate here in this country. There were approximately 40 groups invited, of which 17 attended. These 17 operate in varied capacities from Child Welfare, to land rights, to missions, to community development.

Some of the organizations I found interesting were Hospederia Campesina "La Tola", International Volunteer Service, and two volunteer services very similar to the Peace Corps. These two being from Canada and the United Nations. Also groups from Esmeraldas seeking legal land rights for peo-

ple and a representative from a group called "Cicay" attended, their focus being Indigenous history and culture of the Indigenous people.

The "Hospederia Campesina "La Tola" is located in Quito at Calle Valparaiso 887 y Don Bosco. It is a place for indigenous people who are migrating to Quito for work and a different life, to stay for the night and get a meal until they have a place to work and live. It is run by a man named Padre Pio Baschiroto and they usually have about 400 people a night.

The International Volunteer Service is a privately funded group from New York which seeks volunteers from all over the world to work with community development in other countries. Their Volunteers are more similar to the original Peace Corps Volunteers in that they function in a multi-program basis and work with different programs at the same time. They receive no funding for projects from IVS, but help their communities to investigate and learn where to look for funding for projects. I thought this was a great way to capacitate a community. Another aspect of this group I found interesting was that of the total number of people in Ecuador working for the IVS, 25% were international Volunteers and 75% were Ecuadoreans. So the internationals are training the trainers/community Volunteers. I found this a great way to capacitate Ecuador itself. I thought this might work well for the Peace Corps, but then realized we're here to learn from the Ecuadorean culture and create better understanding at home which is more of a two way street than IVS. Also, one other point is the IVS term of service is from one year to as long as a

Volunteer wants to stay. The representatives from IVS attending the conference were from Sri Lanka and had been here 15 years.

It would seem the Canadian, United Nations and Peace Corps all function in the same areas and with the same goals. The term of service is from one to five years. The Canadian service however, gives their Volunteers \$2,000 a year to be budgeted as they see fit for transportation and projects. This probably isn't a bad way to teach money management.

Enough of the group descriptions, now on to the conference.

One of the main focuses was to describe what a Volunteer should be and what they should have to offer. As to defining a Volunteer some of the prerequisites were someone with an EXTRA LARGE (XL) heart that wants to help other people. They also need the technical skills to be of service to their community. They need to be strong minded, with open disposition, to be able to understand and learn from the new culture they are working in. And finally, to be able to take what they have learned and teach others in their country and around the world for a better understanding by all, worldwide.

Other questions discussed were:

1. What are the problems, and the proposals for solving them that Volunteers/communities have in working with their counterparts.
2. What are the problems in the relationships between volunteer organizations who work in the same community.
3. What strategies should we as

Volunteers develop to mobilize the human resources in our communities.

First, it was stated that many times Volunteers show up in a community and never really present themselves. So, the community doesn't know who they are or why they are there, or that at times there are different religious and Volunteer groups fighting over who is going to help who with what they consider are the problems. It was stated that the Volunteer should ask the community what they feel their needs are and help them come to a prioritization of these needs. Also, to help capacitate them, help them understand their options, and the different avenues they have for choosing and completing projects. Also, that the Volunteer should try to work within the cultural framework of the community to accomplish projects such as the way a minga works in the community and to learn to accept feedback from the community on whether they think it is a success or not.

Next the Volunteer should be aware of the resources that other Volunteer groups in the area can provide so as not to overlap and essentially not waste resources and also to work in a cooperative manner, not a competitive one. Many times, because of a drive to feel one needs to accomplish a certain goal, they feel they need to compete, with the community caught in the middle. Maybe collaboration is best in the end.

Finally, as far as strategies to help mobilize human resources, here again try to work within the community structure and find out the individual skills and capabilities each person has. Also, inform your communities of other Volunteer groups or government organizations (FISE, Municipios, Consejo Provincial, etc.). Other strategies will be to use your expertise to help develop answers and also we as

Volunteers should make ourselves aware of other Volunteer groups and organizations to collaborate with.

There are many challenges for Volunteers in Ecuador. Some range from organizational red tape, paper included, to the community having the self confidence and drive to start and complete a project. My personal challenge, (being a recovering type "A" personality), is "Hora Ecuatoriana", but my patience is developing and I'm learning from Ecuadorean culture. In the end the volunteer gains much from this experience and becomes a much different and probably more understanding person.

I cannot say how much this conference opened my eyes to other Volunteers and also to my possibilities as a Volunteer. I am grateful for the chance to see the big picture in a clearer perspective.

The groups attending decided to continue to meet on a regular basis to keep themselves informed as to projects and perspectives from the different groups. This I feel can only help to strengthen the efforts of all here in Ecuador and lead to better international understanding of the problems of developing countries.

If anyone has any questions about the conference or would like a list of names and addresses of the different groups, please ask me or Jean Seigle and we will get you copies.*



In Support of Foreign Aid

The following is a speech given by Brian Atwood, Administrator, USAID, as delivered on at the InterAction Annual Forum, Bethesda, Maryland:

InterAction and the Agency for International Development go back a long way. You and your constituent agencies have been our partners in the Green Revolution. You were with us in South Africa, when we helped bring about a peaceful transition to majority rule. You have been with us in Russia, as we helped bring about a psychological revolution--the beginning of the end of fear--that still resonates throughout a land that once was gripped by arbitrary power. In the African markets and the Andean schools, in the clinics and the farms, the agencies of InterAction have stood with us, and worked with us and built with us. So it's not at all surprising that we should come together today, at a time when the very nature of foreign aid, even its very existence, hangs in the balance. You know, it is curious in a way: this is a life and death issue for us, yet whose life and whose death may be getting lost in the shuffle.

I am not talking about USAID's life or death as an agency, though our survival is certainly on the line. But whether one bureaucracy lives or dies is not what makes this debate about foreign aid so critical. And I am not talking about the looming political battle as a matter of life and death. Nations and governments have a right to reinvent the themselves.

The people of the United States have the right to reorganize their government so it can better meet their needs and hopes. Let's understand from the outset: the debate about foreign aid--and indeed, the debate about everything the U.S. government does--is good for America. It is a sign of our strength. Whether we agree with the final result or not, we are seeing democracy in action: this is exactly what our founders meant when they talked about a free people choosing freely.

No, what makes this a life and death issue is that we know that real lives will be affected by the outcome: The lives of people in the developing world. The lives of people--men, women and children--who have shown, time and again, that they can create miracles if given the smallest amount of teaching and capital and technical aid.

The women who are just beginning to find the courage to join a local village bank in Central America, who dream about a small loan that will help them start a business, and educate their children.

The farmers who want to grow exotic fruits for export and dream of having title to their ancestral lands, and of being able to grow something more useful than coca leaves.

The children, young as they are, who know already that people don't have to live lives of quiet desperation, and dream of the chance of attending school.

And the infants, too young to dream, whose survival may be determined this day by whether their mothers can give sufficient food and clean water.

This debate isn't an abstraction for us. It is a gut issue. We are here because we care about the poor of the world, and because we want to help. But because we care so deeply, we must under-

stand exactly what it is that is at issue.

So what, really, are we talking about? The issue, ultimately, is the federal government: How can it best ensure the needs of the American people? What should it do, and what should it not do, and how should it pay for what it does? This debate did not begin in November. The debate did not end with the first 100 days and it will not end with this Congress.

The debate centers on federal responsibilities and the wherewithal to pay for them. Nearly every aspect of the federal budget is on the table. Certainly, every program in the discre-



tionary part of the federal budget--those things that are not entitlements like Social Security and Medicare--is being scrutinized. Resources become the currency of the debate, and because resources are finite, paying for one thing takes money from something else. And because less government and lower spending are considered virtues in and of themselves, there is further pressure to cut and whittle and eliminate.

Think of the scope of the debate: Defense. Welfare. The Environment. Education. Think of the special interests with a stake in those debates who are now butting heads like so many bull elephants. It is amazing that the entire 150

Account, the smallest element of the federal budget, gets any debate time at all. I'm reminded of the Kenyan proverb: "When the elephants battle, the grass suffers." Is it any wonder that some consider the international budget a sideshow? A diversion? Small potatoes? With hundreds of billions of dollars on the line, the twenty-odd billion--just one percent of our national budget--for everything in the 150 Account is hardly worth a moment's thought. Or so it seems. But it's not what it seems. It is vitally important to our nation's future. You know that. I know that. We look insignificant, but we aren't, and that is a weakness but it is also a strength.

It is a weakness because, obviously, many people don't know much about foreign assistance. InterAction's own poll showed that 42% of the American people think it is the largest element in the federal budget. In fact, the entire 150 Account is barely one percent. And too often, Members of Congress share these assumptions. Foreign aid doesn't have a particularly vocal constituency -- why should a Member with a hundred issues on his plate know that the larger programs of the budget dwarf us?

Why should Members or their constituents know that foreign assistance creates millions of American jobs?

That it creates markets for American products in the fastest growing economies in the world? That it spreads democracy and the free market throughout the world?

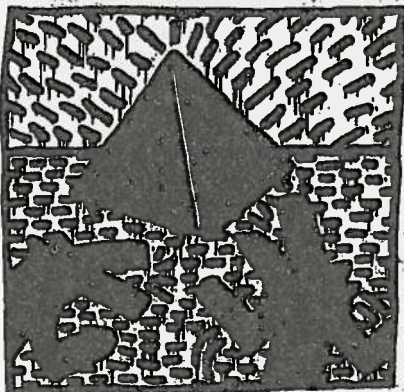
That it addresses transnational problems like population and global warming at the source? That it prevents crises and thus saves billions in relief aid? That it conveys American leadership among other donors and throughout the developing world?

There is no particular reason why Americans or their representatives should know these things, but it is something we can tell them. And in the current debate, that means we have something more to say than simply "don't cut my funding." And that is a source of strength.

So the debate over resources cuts two ways: First, whether resources should be invested in foreign assistance altogether. And second, whether resources should be invested through an independent foreign assistance agency.

These are not separate debates. I know there are some in the development community who believe that foreign assistance will continue to be funded whether or not USAID is independent or merged into the State Department or even exists at all. Let's say it straight: some even think that it will be easier to get funding if USAID--in their view, a bureaucratic obstacle--isn't in the way anymore. These opinions, I believe, represent an immense leap of faith.

It is a leap of faith to assume that the debate is about foreign assistance and not about how to allocate resources throughout the whole federal government.



It is a leap of faith to assume that the debate is about how much to spend on foreign assistance, and not about whether to fund foreign aid at all.

It is a leap of faith to assume that those who oppose an independent foreign assistance agency support, nonetheless, the proposition that foreign aid is good for business and our national security.

It is a leap of faith to assume that those who want to merge USAID or reduce foreign assistance are committed, nonetheless, to an activist pattern of American involvement throughout the world.

This is a leap of faith that I, for one, am not prepared to make. I have certainly noted the fact that people don't like to be called isolationists. One Member of Congress was quoted today as saying that everyone on Capitol Hill is an internationalist--that the debate is over what kind of internationalist.

Well, I am prepared to concede a lot. I concede that there are Republican isolationists and Democratic isolationists. I concede that foreign policy in the post-Cold War world is often imprecise. I concede that multi-lateral diplomacy is politically difficult to explain.

But I say that an internationalist does not support a 30 percent reduction in an international affairs account that is already too small.

I say that an internationalist does not write off the developing world as unimportant to U.S. national interests.

I say that an internationalist must support the maintenance of a foreign aid program that is less than one percent of our national budget and .15 percent of our GNP.

So, I say to Members of Congress of both parties, if you want to be an internationalist that's great. You can join the club. But you have to pay your dues.

If you don't want to pay your dues, and the interests of the United States suffer--as they surely will--you will be held accountable. And that's a lot worse fate than being called an isolationist.

Let me make it clear: this debate has nothing to do with turf. It has nothing to do with what title I hold, or my successors hold, or the pecking order when people sit around the table on the 7th floor at Foggy Bottom. The debate has everything to do with how the interests of our nation can be protected and advanced.

I will not be put on the defensive by those who want to reform our foreign aid program by killing it. I am not afraid of change. For two years I have pushed to reform USAID. To make it an instrument capable of meeting the challenges of the post-Cold War era. To make it responsive to the people of the developing world. To make it more responsive altogether, more modern, more cooperative, more open.

Some of you have already met with Members or Hill staffers and been told that major cuts or a merger or both are "inevitable." Listen to me: They are not inevitable. We do have a fight on our hands. But this fight is winnable.

It is winnable because the target is something that doesn't exist anymore--"the old foreign aid." large cash outlays, government-to-government transfers, aid to leaders whose respect for human rights is dubious, power politics on the public purse. But aid today is very different. And it is becoming more so.

If we want to win, we must communicate that our assistance aims at partnerships and empowerment, that it emphasizes ties between communities and reinforces democracy and the free market.

You can be part of a winning strategy by standing up for what you believe in. You needn't fear the outcome of this Democratic debate. After all you are the American people. You represent the best of our nation--its commitment to its own values, its commitment to international engagement, its commitment to our enlightened self interest.

We must at all costs avoid getting embroiled in partisan conflicts. We need a bipartisan coalition. Remember, the fight is just beginning.

Some of you have questioned the Administration's resolve. This week you will hear directly from two of the President's closest advisors--Hillary Clinton and Tony Lake. When this is over, I assure you this Administration will use every influence it has to fight for the resources it needs to conduct our nation's foreign policy. And we will not allow the Congress to throw our foreign policy agen-



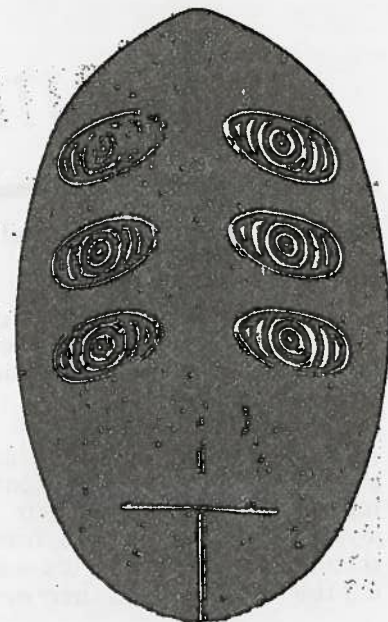
cies--and thus our foreign policy--into disarray through an ill-advised reorganization plan. We will constantly seek to encourage bipartisanship, but we will not stand still and allow partisanship to disrupt our foreign policy machinery. That I promise you.

I know that you struggle with these issues as an organization. I'm going to take a chance this morning and offer some candid advice to Interaction members, as a friend. Don't get distracted and waste your valuable time on the organizational proposals that are being advanced in the Congress. People are trying to use you. You will not be able to fix this problem from where you sit--this is something that must be fought out between the Congress and the Executive.

It will come out well if you continue to focus your attention on the foreign aid debate, not on organizational boxes. You have done a superb job explaining the impact of budget cuts. Advancing the principles that Congress and the Executive should apply if our development programs are going to be effectively managed. So, when it comes to legislative maneuvering, deal-making and the like, I would offer the same admonition Dean Acheson always used at crucial moments in history: "Don't just do something, sit there."

This fight is winnable because reducing the 150 Account would be tantamount to abdicating America's global leadership.

Our opponents can argue for slashing the budget only if they use a ledger, as it were, with no accounts. It will be hard to argue that in a time when chaos is a global threat, the United States should gut the one Agency that is the instrument of its leadership and the symbol of its concern in the developing world and the development community.



It will be hard to argue that in a time when markets are emerging in Asia and Africa and Latin America, we should cut back or eliminate funding for environmental protection, and microenterprise, for economic policy reform, and for expanded opportunities for women and girls--the very things that create markets and customers.

It will be hard to argue that at a moment in history when the appeal of democracy is greatest, the world's leading democracy should turn away.

If we want to win, we must force our opponents to confront the implications--for America and the world--of their pennywise and pound foolish proposals.

The outcome of this fight is not just a test of legislative wills or budgetary ideas. Ultimately it is a test of our national values. It is a test of our vision -- our vision of America. Our vision of its future. Our vision of ourselves. This is a good fight. It is worth waging. It is worth winning. *

The True Spirit of Community

By Marie Skertic, Guaranda

Years ago, when I first became interested in Latin America, I remember hearing and reading about liberation theology as well as "acompañamiento." What is acompañamiento? To me, in its simplest form, it means "accompanying" the people, sharing their joys, sorrows, experiences, frustrations, and triumphs; it's seeing the world through their eyes.

I recently had an excellent "acompañamiento" with the mothers and kids in the barrio where we work.

The mothers of the barrio had decided to have a bienvenida for Kléber García Gallegos, the PMT coordinator, who had been in Riobamba for over two months with the ejército and thankfully never had to go to the frontera to fight against Peru during our brief war. (We had heard four or five times that the men were leaving "today," but luckily the war ended and they never had to fight.) Kléber was able to return to Guaranda, to his life, his work, and his wife and little gift—and we wanted to celebrate his return!

The afternoon started out with us showing the video we'd made on October 30, 1994, almost six months before, when we made colada morada and pan for the Día de los Difuntos. It also happened to be my very first day in Guaranda. Boy, did we laugh and laugh at the video, and particularly at many of the kids, making faces at the camera! We poked fun at some of the clothes

the kids were wearing, how the mothers were sweating and turning away from the camera, how Marie was wearing a short-sleeved purple blouse (very nice, my folks had just sent it to me) and I had stains from the berries down the front of me (luckily, I got to them in time and they came out), and also had perspiration stains on my underarms. The latter got the most prolonged laugh of all!

As the others set up what turned out to be a banquet (gallina, soup, rice, galletas, postre, jello, canguil), we strung the piñatas so the kids could break them. What fun we all had! The kids laughed and teased each other, especially when they swung with all their might but missed the piñata by a mile! I have many great photos of this day, but the photos of the kids with the piñata are undoubtedly among the best.

Next came the food. What a treat for all of us to eat until we were full and to enjoy good food, good company, good times. Just watching the happy expressions on the kids' faces was joy; they were in their little groups, talking a mile a minute, happy, free and enjoying themselves. For many of the kids, it was the first time they'd really been able to just relax and enjoy themselves and be children, in quite awhile. Many of our kids have to work out of economic necessity and don't have the luxury of living for the moment.

After eating, we talked some more to let the food digest a bit,

then played games with the kids, including the practically mandatory fútbol. Later, we danced and just hung out together. We gave Kléber a card we'd all signed and he was very touched by the whole afternoon.

When I look back on my Peace Corps experience in years to come, that Sunday, April 9, 1995, will stand out as an afternoon to remember. Did we accomplish anything tangible? Not really, unless you count that it didn't rain, like it does a lot during this season. Did the day mean as much to the mothers and kids as it did to Kléber and me? Probably not, although they'll assuredly remember the good times we shared.

So then, why will the gringa remember this day as being so special? Because we shared time, experiences, memories, food and socialization. But more than that, we shared love and support, and we spent time in a spirit of celebration, comraderie and support. That, as simple, yet at the same time as complex, as it is, is what Peace Corps is all about: Sharing experiences and ideas and helping bridge the gap between cultures as well as helping to foster intercultural growth and understanding. Whew! Maybe we're actually accomplishing something lasting here!

That Sunday is engraved in my heart and mind, never to leave and always to be remembered. As is the following week, when we made fanesca with the mothers in preparation for Easter, as well as the week after that, when the mothers and kids of our barrio gave me a surprise birthday party.

What love and solidarity we've experienced in our barrio! As the North American writer Anne Moorow Lindbergh said, "Only love can be divided time and time again without diminishing."◦

NEWS FROM SAN LUIS

by Tim Callaghan,
Training Director

Greetings from Tumbaco!

Thirty-three Trainees from Omnibus 73 were sworn-in as Peace Corps Volunteers on Friday May 5th. Ambassador Peter Romero had the group laughing, as he joked with them about various comments regarding their interests and Peace Corps goals that appeared in their mug books. Hey Erica, could you please explain "human-animal bond" again?

As I stated in the previous El Clima, I would like to thank all the PCVs who assisted the Training Center in this most recent PST for allowing us to visit your communities and for sharing your technical expertise and ideas in various training sessions. In addition, the entire training center staff would like to thank Jean, Barry, Ana Maria, the APCDs, the Medical Office and the Administrative staff in Quito for all your support and hard work during this training cycle.

Upcoming Training Activities: The Close Of Service conference for Omnibus 70 will be held on July 25th and 26th. The tentative hotel that has been selected is Hotel Chorlavi, near Ibarra. A confirmation letter regarding the hotel will be sent out on June 15th. Transportation to the conference will

be provided at 3 p.m., on July 24th from the Quito office. If you wish to take the Peace Corps van from Quito, please confirm with Silvana or Paulina from the Training Center by July 15th. If there are any questions regarding the conference, please feel free to call the Training Center.

August 9th: Omnibus 74 arrives. The technical programs are Special Education, Youth Development, Rural Infrastructure and Rural Public Health.

As always, if the Training Center can provide you with any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. I will be on

vacation from May 19th until June 12th, but Sarah Simon or Miryam Flor will be able to assist you with any questions you may have.

Finally, I would like to ask the 12 new Volunteers who did not hand in their End of Training Evaluations to please do so as soon as possible. I do look at these evaluations seriously so I can continue to look at ways to improve training, and I strongly encourage those new PCVs to send these evaluations to me in Tumbaco.

That's all for now. Stay Well. •

¿QUIEN SABE? SAFETY FIRST

I'm positive? What?! But...*me*? Aw, and I trusted him. God, if I got this, what else might I have?! These were my thoughts after hanging up with the PCMOs who informed me that I had tested positive for a sexually transmitted disease. Lucky for me it is curable, but what about next time? And what about AIDS?

Yes, I always talk about the importance of safe sex, of condom use, of the risks involved if we aren't safe. Well, I made a mistake and I didn't follow my own advice. What was I thinking? That he is special? honest? clean? That I'm special? (Honest and clean I was. . . he was my second partner.)

One thing I have realized as a PCV is that I allow myself to take a hell of a lot more risks than I ever would on the home turf. Why? It still perplexes me and the majority of my friends here who have committed the same error as I. . . I simply didn't use a condom.

Now, six weeks later, I *think* I'm cured, but I won't know for sure until I go through another nasty exam where the doctor will scrape my innards to determine just how clean I may be. Believe me, I would rather go through that again than to live with the doubt of not knowing. And the guy? Do you think he is convinced he has this? That is another article in itself.

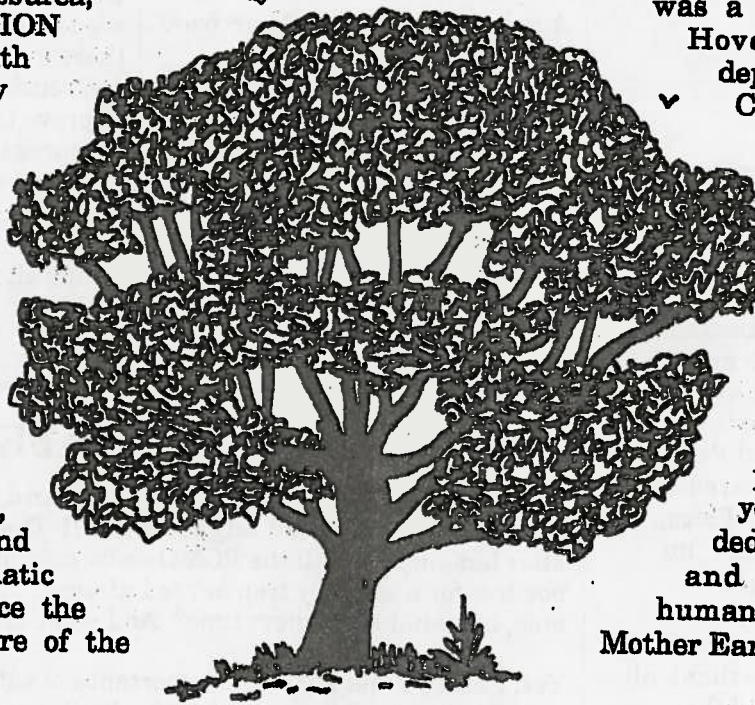
So, my advice? Please, *please*, PLEASE . . . THINK before you jump in bed without a condom. With this one man, I probably increased the number of my sexual partners by more than 1000 people because I have now slept with his partners, his partners' partners, and so on. And AIDS. . . let's just say I won't be sleeping well until I see a negative result on paper.

Anonymous •

Appreciating The Earth: A Day For Our Mother

Many Volunteers spent Earth Day 1995 at the fiestas of Riobamba. However, in the Azogues area, along with FUNDACION NATURA, a parade with seven elementary schools was organized as well as many environmental education talks.

June 5 is El Dia del Medio Ambiente which is celebrated world wide. Our plans are to continue working with the kids and set up tree planting charlas, sports tournaments, and possibly a little dramatic performance to enforce the importance of our care of the Earth.



The following is a poem I found in the book Earth Prayers which was a gift from Jeffrey Hovermale upon his departure from Peace Corps in mid-March.

The people of Ecuador and the Volunteers who had the pleasure of knowing him must feel a great loss because his absence reveals the impact of his presence. Thank you, Jeffrey, for your dedication, integrity, and respect for all human beings and our Mother Earth.

*We join with the earth and with each other.
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air
We join with the earth and with each other.
To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures
We join together with the earth and with each other.
To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars
We join together with the earth and with each other.
To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children
We join together with the earth and with each other.
We join together as many and diverse expressions
of one loving mystery: for the healing of the
earth and the renewal of all life.*

U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program
submitted by Rebecca Gigliotti, Azogues •