

The Two Most Important Words

Several years ago, I read an article which made reference to the words we use to express ourselves and how they not only express our thoughts and feelings, but also our state of mind and whether we are optimistic or pessimistic by nature.

The article went on to say: "What are the most important words in your life? A sage once gave this answer:

The six most important words are: *I admit I made a mistake.*

The five most important words are: *You did a good job.*

The four most important words are: *What is your opinion?*

The three most important words are: *If you please or I love you.*

The two most important words are: *Thank you.*

The least important word is: *I."*

I think we've all seen variations on this theme; and I think it's important to keep in mind that we're going to be evaluated, at least in part, on the words we use. This is probably even more apparent when we speak our second language everyday and occasionally have to grope for the correct word to express exactly what we are trying to say. The importance of having good communication skills and especially of being polite and saying "Thank you," when someone has assisted us, has become even clearer to me in the last few months as I continue to try to provide a good role model to the kids in our center.

At first, when I tried to relate the importance of good manners, the kids gave me a look as if to say, "What is this *gringa's* problem?"

We're worried about our next meal and if our father will come home

drunk again tonight, and this crazy *gringa* wants us to say, "Thank you" and, "Please" and not slap each other around and take responsibility for the games we play with?! This is just too much!" But, little by little, the message got through, and now our work place is a lot nicer and a much more pleasant place to be.

And now, when I give the kids "the look," they say, "Oh, thank you," or "Oh, would you please help me with . . .?" and, to do me proud, the older kids sometimes give the younger kids "the look" that says, "And what else are we forgetting to say?" In the grand scheme of things, it may not be much, but at least the kids see how being polite can get them what they want an awful lot faster than just grabbing for it or being rude. In the formal culture of Ecuador, this will assist them greatly.



Let's see, when was the last time I said "Thank you" to someone, other than when receiving change at the supermarket or something? I believe it was a few days ago when I went to another city and a friend let me stay overnight, even though I

arrived completely unexpectedly and her little baby was sick (and kept us up all night crying). When was the last time someone said, "Thank you" to me? That would have been yesterday, when we were playing bingo in our center and Alex said, "Thank you María, for the *chicle*," after winning. I'm still hoping an Ecuadorian will say to me, "Thank you María, for coming here to Ecuador and working with us through the Peace Corps," sometime in the next few months before I leave—but that might be asking a bit too much. Part of me knows perfectly well that they appreciate my help (at least as far as being "free labor" goes), but I'm not going to hold my breath waiting for someone to verbalize it.

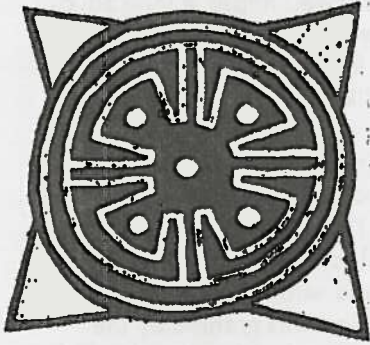
If we as PCVs would like to receive praise and may not receive it very often, I'm sure the staff in Quito would like to receive more positive feedback than negative. Why is it always so much easier to complain about something gone wrong than to be thankful for something going well?

So, I'd like to say: Thank you Jean, for having your door open and taking time to talk with us when we're in Quito and "harried." And thank you for taking enough interest in El Clima to change it from a hastily-put-together magazine to a more professional-looking and -sounding publication.

Thank you Barry, for keeping us up-to-date on what's happening in the office in Quito and for being available and having new ideas.

Thank you Tim, for actually making changes in the training program based on our needs and opinions! It's nice to be respect-





ed. And thanks for all the services you also offer at the training center in addition to training (more Spanish, help with resumes, etc.).

Thank you Ana María, for the times I've barged into your office just to get your signature and you've been very gracious. Thank you Nellie, for all of your support during the past 33 months and for being very knowledgeable and the best APCD Peace Corps Ecuador has. (God forbid if anything gets by Nellie!)

Thank you to the nurses for always providing assistance when it's needed. You have a lot of responsibility in monitoring and keeping track of up to 180 volunteers at any given time; to constantly update the charts and keep track of medicines, as well as a zillion other things. Thank you for your constant efforts. And thank you Marie (that's me!), for hanging in there all this time; doing the best job that you could; learning Spanish well and making real friends, lifetime friendships with Ecuadoreans.

Thank you for having motivation to keep trying, in spite of having no help, no money, no materials. We'll remember you.

Thank you landlady, for not raising the rent in the last eight months, although the prices here continue to skyrocket.

Thank you people of Ecuador, for allowing me to be part of your lives, for opening your hearts and homes to me and for allowing me to have an incredi-

ble experience. Here, I have constantly grown and discovered new aspects of myself. I've become much more patient and have learned the importance of simplicity and living in a community.

Thank you kids in the PMT in Riobamba and Guaranda, for allowing me into your lives and for providing me with many laughs and wonderful experiences (as well as some experiences that I'd just as soon forget!).

And last, but certainly not least, a very big thank you and hug to "el niño más preciosa del mundo," Carlos Isaac Culqui, aged 3, who brings a great spirit of adventure to my life and who never tires of playing in the park or of blowing bubbles. My life won't be the same without you, Carlin.

And thank you to the Peace Corps, for being in Ecuador in the first place!

Betty J. Eadie in her 1992 book, *Embraced by the Light*, speaks eloquently about the importance of the words we use and even the very thoughts we have. She had a near-death experience in 1973 at the age of 31, and had the chance to glimpse what she says awaits us after death:

"We create our own surroundings by the thoughts we think. Physically, this may take a period of time, but spiritually, it is instantaneous. If we understood the power of our thoughts, we would guard them more closely. If we understood the awesome power of our words, we would prefer silence to almost anything negative. In our thoughts and words, we create our own weaknesses and our own strengths. Our limitations and joys being in our hearts. . . Words and thoughts are power." (p. 58)

There's a quote to ponder!

by Marie Skertic, Guaranda.



Shouts and screams below my temporary living quarters alerted me to the impending demise of a two-meter-long boa constrictor. Three days before, about one kilometer from the community, the reptile had been snagged around the neck by a long cord and crammed into a plastic bucket. It was an incredible piece of luck for the snake to have been found by someone not intent on killing it. But the inevitable seemed certain; a group of young adults and children had surrounded the caged reptile and were trying to prod it out of its lair. They wanted its head. And, the second time, I intervened. I happened on the scene the day the snake was being transferred from a bucket to a wooden crate hastily constructed to house the reptile. "¿Que está en el balde?" I asked. "¡Nupa!" came the answer. "¿Es la culebra venenosa?" I inquired. "No," they said. I believed them and proceeded to pry the cover off the bucket but was severely reprimanded not to do so. "La culebra es brava," shouted the anxious crowd as they hastily beat a retreat. I popped the



lid. Called inside the 20-liter *balde* was a remarkable creature with a skin pattern that excelled any man-made tapestry, anywhere; and its eyes locked on me, its forked tongue testing the newest threat to invade its world. Your ancestors were here long before we humans arrived, I mused. By what right do we claim domination over you? It answered by slowly exiting the *balde*. I pinned its head. The response was instantaneous, the body swelled to twice its size and it exhaled with a trademark hiss that had the crowd of people fleeing in all directions. I cradled its two-meter-long body in my arms and took it to the river for a bath. The people followed, discreetly keeping their distance. Only they knew their thoughts about my antics. Once cleaned, the skin took on that iridescent sheen that shimmered *tanto un arco iris* in the noonday sun. Some of the braver lads approached and touched its smooth silky skin, but quickly retreated when I draped the serpent around my neck. I then tried, in my halting Spanish, to explain the simple biology of the animal; how it dispatched its prey by constriction; how it swallowed its meal whole even unhinging its jaws should the catch be larger than what could easily fit down its gullet. Photos were taken and then I put it in the wooden crate, and contemplated its future. The person who caught it wanted to take it to Quito to sell it. The people in the community wanted it dead. I said

nothing and waited. The box with the snake was placed under my neighbor's house and quickly forgotten. In two days, the serpent would know its fate.

The day of reckoning had arrived. I entered the fray when one of the village men tried to strike the snake's head with a sharp knife. The snake wisely remained in its wooden retreat, seemingly understanding its dilemma. The snake eyed me warily as I approached the box. It issued a menacing hiss. I flipped the box upright and deftly

with renewed hope: a lone advocate for a life that had no value and Duma looked it. He appeared much like a school boy asking a girl out on a first date. Yet he persisted in his uncomfortable role and, though I lost a lot in the translation, I knew he had won when Duma looked at me with a wide smile and said, "*Vamos.*" Permission was granted by the community president to release the snake, but across the river. Before anyone could change their minds, Dumar and I hopped in a canoe and spirited the reptile across Río

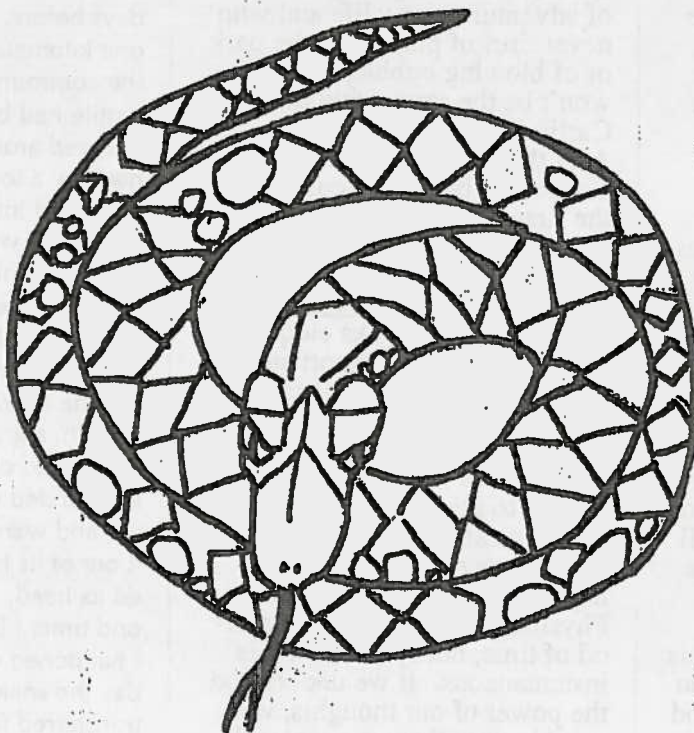
Santiago. After a short walk, I placed the python on the ground and it slowly merged back into its home.

Only later did I learn that one of the young pregnant women in the community had also spoken for the snake. She believed that if the community people killed the snake, something would happen to her unborn child.

It is stories such as this that hold much power within a culture that draws much of its existence from the wilderness. We,

in the consumer world, have lost touch with this power and consider such stories as nonsense. But it is just such stories that we should respect and accept, for in these stories may lie many of the secrets for the survival of the remaining rainforests and other pristine natural systems in the world. At least for one very lucky snake, this is the truth.

by Ron Krupa, Playa de Oro



grabbed its neck just behind the head and eased it out of the crate. "*Mátalo,*" shouted the crowd. "*¿Por qué?*" I replied, knowing full well I was on shaky ground, and never felt so alone. "*Podemos vender la piel y la culebra es sabrosa,*" they shot back. "*Es parte de la ecología,*" cried a small voice in the wilderness. My mind reeled. Who said that? I was shocked. Duma Ayoví stepped into the battle for the snake's life and I glowed



The evening began normally. Stacy, who was visiting from Paquishapa for the weekend and I went out to my favorite Ecuadive: s./1.800 for the full meal works, complete with large juice (sorry, can't help but brag!). Satisfied, we went for a stroll along the perilously cobblestoned, but utterly dead, Cuenca streets. For as cool as Cuenca is by day, night life is astonishingly dismal, so it came as a surprise to see signs of activity up ahead. As we turned the bend towards our central park, Parque Calderon, we were greeted with what seemed utter chaos: Corpus Cristi was in full, unadulterated, women-and-children first swing. For those unaccustomed to the rites of Corpus Cristi, I humbly present this scene which could never do justice to the glorious event.

The first things noticeable were the endless lines of tables covered with strange and mysterious sweets. As we walked down the aisle, marveling at the riot of colors and shapes: the pinks and blacks, squares and stars; we lost ourselves in a world where dentists are only a child's nightmare. In a word, we gorged ourselves; rationalizing that in order to fully appreciate this event—to truly achieve cultural merging—we'd have to nibble at least one of everything. A tummy-ache and a few rotted teeth later, we emerged from our binge of coconut fritters, sweet milk drops, and just plain-colored sugar cubes (c'mon, who are we tryin' to kid?), our daze broke and the rest of the festival came into focus.

The droning noise, that was just barely noticeable while under the sugar high, turned out to be a blasting DJ set-up erected directly in the mammoth doorway of the main church as if the rockin' angels of heaven themselves were playing with the good Lord on drums. The crowd put a respectable distance between the speakers and permanent hearing loss. But alas, this was to no avail as we realized that as we attempted to cross the street, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a spark and somewhere in the dark recesses of my consciousness realized a fuse was being lit. A primal urge overtook me as out of some Vietnam, feel-good-buddy movie and I virtually tackled Stacy onto the sidewalk to escape some grenade. Well, grenade wasn't too far off the mark as something exploded out of a metal tube standing in the middle of the street followed by what I swear felt like shrapnel. A rolling mushroom-cloud immediately followed (not an exag-

Corpus Cristi: Damnation or Damn Fun?

geration), like the Lord's own stogey smoke-ring. The item that erupted soared into the darkened sky, started back down, then burst into a shower of colorful embers; large embers that burned until after they hit the ground, bounced, sent up a handful of smaller embers and returned to the earth again. The return trip of some of these embers was obstructed by the occasional soon-to-be-burnt head. Having made it to the sidewalk didn't assure us safety however; shrapnel wounds, notwithstanding. Three "fizzth's" in a row shook in me previous lifes' memories of WWII mortars homing in on

my fox hole. As I was about to hit the deck, taking Stacy down with me yet again, I realized that what I thought was heading towards me were actually three bottle rockets that must have held M-80s or more as their cargo, judging from the BOOM they made in the sky. This was confirmed by the noise made by one from the next round that went off coarse, hit a tree, and decided to come back down in a nice comfortable spot like the center of the dance circle.

Staggering away from these in a daze, the TOWERS became apparent. Imagine bamboo structures, two stories high, fire-work strips covering them like the veins of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Pinwheels of all sizes adorned its faces; at the top, smiling benevolently, the Corpus Cristi himself. The towers looked fragile and innocent enough; the CC inviting me in, I edged closer to the front. But when the men scurried in to light the fuses, the dark side of this event leapt forward. At first, showers of sparks flew, lighting the faces of all gathered, as children ran and danced beneath hair and clothes coming out looking like those of a chain-smoking narcoleptic. Pinwheels whirled happily, powered by tiny rockets pointed just towards my face, precariously held on by pedactos of string. Suddenly, the first stage finished. The men scrambled in again and the next stage surged to life, bringing the same show as the stage before. When done, the men came in again. But this time, the fuses sputtered and flared straight to the top, towards the awaiting Jesus. And suddenly, this warm and generous God jumped into a wrath; arms spread-out wide, sending sprays of sparks out into the crowd as lit balls dropped from his platform, bounced innocuously on the ground, and then began furiously spinning. As the fire spread out from the punishing hands of Cristo, the spinning 'flowers' launched themselves into the air flipping end-over-end, straight into the crowd—at head level



The Rock & Roll Dr. whom I'd run into earlier swears up and down that he was able to kiss one as it flew by his face; or at least it seemed that way from the sulfur taste that was left behind in his mouth. I couldn't verify that, being too busy simultaneously watching flowers waltz through the crowd undergrowth, outflows of jumping and dancing onlookers; frantically running to avoid the little demons; keeping an eye on the spiteful God, arms still ablaze and dodging hell-bound flowers; intent on making contact with someone, anyone. But as if that weren't enough, the disapproving Lord's own crown lit on fire, began twirling madly on his head and suddenly shot into the sky, sending a cone of sparks to the earth, as it passed mere meters above the crowd. This was heavenly rage at its rawest, reminiscent of all the power of their religion and deity. And then... the sparks died down, a yelp was heard as the last remaining flower connected squarely into someone's noggin and Jesus' flaming arms slowly cooled off. The holy tantrum was over--for now. Most came out of it with little more than superficial burns. I got down on my knees right there in the street, blubbered something about being sorry for taking that pen from the office and vowed never to miss another confession. Then I tossed the nearest *vago* 50 sucres.

However, this celestial show wasn't over yet. As the last embers went dark, two men holding paper maché cows on their shoulders, the *Vacas Locas* began to playfully skip through the crowd, dancing to some dark and mysterious beat. My eyes were fixated. What was going to happen? Its horns were pointed menacingly upwards. What would it do? Its tail was curled up like a snake, ready to strike. What next? I noticed a small glow emanating from the cow's rear end. Huh?! The glow grew larger, burned a hole through the paper and suddenly, out dropped a road apple which quickly jumped to life--another flower! The cows danced their way through the crowd, dropping angry little gifts that once activated lost no time hanging out on the ground, but leapt into the air. And then, those menacing horns, those threatening tails, decided to join the action and began sending their own sprays of flaming sparks at least 10 feet ahead of them. And still, the mad cows charged the crowd! It was a scene coordinated by a dark Fellini, a night of hellfire and damnation straight out of Swaggart's most searing sermons. When the cows finally settled down, I breathed a sigh of relief. My muscles relaxed, and I realized that I had stood fixated in that very spot the entire time. For the night, I had had enough. Besides, I had to get up early the next day for the festivities of Inti Raymi at the Inca ruins of Inga Pirca. But that, of course, is a different story.

by Andrés Amador, Cuenca

For the Love of Flies



I really hope that the medical officers and various Peace Corps directors don't read this. But, just in case: to Marian, Sarafi, and Jackie -- I'm adjusting to my new living conditions just fine, really; to Jean, Barry, and my beloved program director, Francisco -- I'm getting tons accomplished, tons.

Anyhow, down to the meat of this little informational piece. At my site (Mariscal Sucre in Carchi), there are three types of flies: small ones that come with the bananas; medium-sized ones that seem to fly around in squares; and large ones that, even though quite few in number, are intensely annoying because of their loud buzzing. I despise them all. With every fiber of my being -- I hate 'em, I hate 'em, I hate 'em.

Since I arrived in Ecuador, I've found that I derive an inordinate amount of satisfaction from shortening the average lifespan of any given fly. Now, being a wildlife biologist with an interest in animal behavior, I am beginning to expand upon the simple act of killing a fly. By taking note of fly behavior and using this knowledge to my advantage in enhancing my extermination techniques, I find that my free time is extremely enjoyable.

I currently have six different methods and I thought I might share these with you, my fellow PCVs.

Method One: The Fly Swatter. This is well-known, straight-forward and fairly unimaginative. It may be improvised by any number of means: assorted notebooks, your "A Few Minor Adjustments" book, or your hand. This is somewhat messy with the resultant fly-goosh, but isn't much of a problem. Always a pleasurable stand-by.

Method Two: Honey-in-a-Bag. Here we begin to take advantage of some simple fly behavior. If there's something tasty in a bag, the fly will enter, provided that it's not too dark. How to do it: take a translucent (flies generally don't go into dark places) bag and put a tablespoon of honey in the bottom (or you can use anything that flies like to barf on and suck up). Lay the bag on a hard surface and make sure there's an opening for the flies to enter. Once there is a sufficient number of flies in the bag, promptly close the opening and proceed in squishing each and every one. Reopen the bag and repeat - other flies won't be discouraged by the carnage. When you're finally too grossed out by the contents of the bag, tie a knot in the top and throw it away. Very convenient and with no mess. I often make this a side activity when I'm doing something else at my kitchen table.

Method Three: It's Curtains for You, My Dear Flies. Flies will go to the light when things are getting dark. Sooo, between about 5 and 6 p.m., let your place-darken (no lights) and the flies will go hang out on the window through which the last light is coming in. Have a light-colored curtain over the window with gaps on the sides so that the flies can get by to the glass. Once there's an adequate number of



flies on the window say (in the voice of Snidely Whiplash of Dudley Do-Right fame), "It's curtains for you, my dear flies," and press the curtain up against the window and again, proceed to squash each and every one. This tends to make a mess but, nonetheless, is quite fun.

Method Four: Live Capture and Release (to Pending Doom, of course). This is where you get to work on your

hand-eye coordination with an optional bonus of making friends with local domesticated animals. Please don't turn me into PETA. The first step is to hand-capture a fly. The trick here is to

anticipate where the fly is going to go once you start to swipe at it then intercept its escape path. Once caught, proceed to remove one wing. Next, you have a few options.

Option One - Toss it on the ground, watch it buzz around in circles until you're satisfied, then stomp on it. **Option Two** - Find your favorite chicken and put the lame fly on the ground in front of it. Watch as the expression on the chicken's face changes from initial suspicion of your actions to love, adoration and devotion after it has eaten this treat. **Option Three** - Feed it to that damn, mangy dog that hangs out on your front steps because you're the only one who's ever fed it. These last two methods I borrow from none other than the genius mind of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. I will quote directly from, God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater (pp. 78-79):

Method Five: "The Rubber-Band technique worked like this: a man would slice through a rubber-band, making it a strand rather than a loop. He would stretch the strand between his hands, sight down the strand as though it were a

rifle barrel, let it snap when a fly was in his sights. A well-hit fly would often be vaporized, accounting for the peculiar color of Eliot's walls and woodwork, which was largely dried fly purée." I prefer to use the thicker bands (say, about one cm. wide) as I find them to be more effective. If you would like to work on your aim, use a thinner band. This is analogous to using a .22 caliber rifle rather than a sawed-off shotgun. As alluded to by Mr. Vonnegut, this is quite messy, but very entertaining.

Method Six: "The Tumbler-and-Soapsuds technique worked like this: a woman would look for a fly hanging upside down. She would bring the tumbler of suds directly under the fly very slowly, taking advantage of the fact that an upside-down fly, when approached by danger will drop straight down two inches or more, in a free fall, before using his wings. Ideally, the fly would not sense danger until it was directly below him, and he would obligingly drop into the suds to be caught, to work his way down through the bubbles, to drown." It really works, believe me. I personally use an empty peanut butter jar filled with a bit of hot water and dish soap. This way I can cap the jar and shake it up to get a good head of froth going.

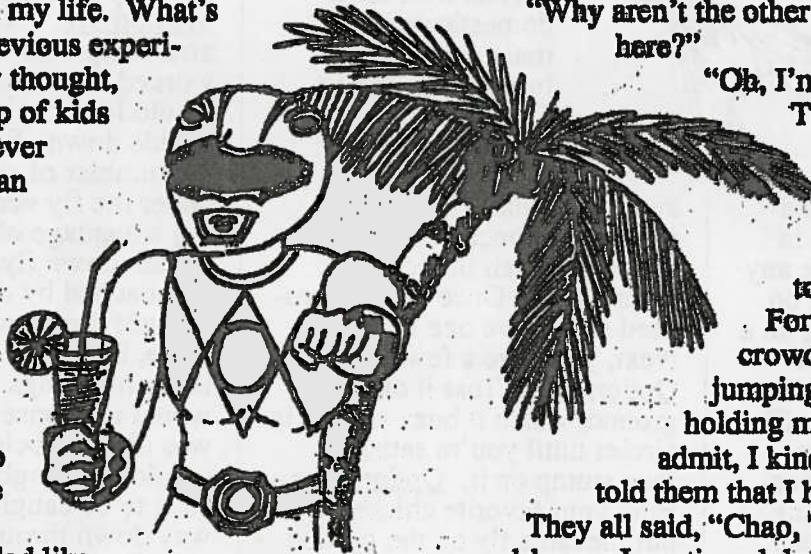
Well, that's all that I have to share. Please, if you know of any other techniques, drop me a note. I would greatly appreciate it. And, to reiterate to the medical officers and Peace Corps directors: I'm doing great and getting lots done. Really. Nonetheless, I suppose I should be expecting Francisco and a few others to come roaring up here in a Ford Explorer fairly soon. Sooo, ¡Hasta pronto!

Love, Tim Sulser,
Mariscal Sucre



Trini Goes to Atacames

A few weeks back I had a little taste of fame. I was in Atacames with a few friends enjoying the nightlife. We were all sitting at one of the many bars there, on the beach, when I noticed five kids waving at me, running back and forth excitedly, trying to get my attention. I turned around to see if there was anyone behind me that they might have been waving at. Nope! It was me alright. Who are these kids? I've never seen them before in my life. What's going on? From previous experience, I immediately thought, here's another group of kids who've probably never come across an Asian person before. Hmm. . . I didn't really mind, though. So I just smiled and waved back at them. The music in the background was loud, so I could barely make out what they were yelling, but it sounded like, "Cindy! Cindy!" Oh my God! How the hell do these kids know my name? Do I know them? Are they from my site? They could very well be, since I can't ever remember all the kids who go to the schools I work at. Whatever! So, I continued to wave at the happy, wide-eyed kids. Listening hard through the noise, my friends and I decided that it sounded more like they were yelling, "Trini! Trini!" than "Cindy! Cindy!" No connection was made or bright light flashed clueing me in to who Trini might be. When we all got up to leave, the kids continued to follow me, so I turned around and asked one of the little boys, "¿Qué están haciendo?" He nervously replied, "Eres...eres un PowerRanger?" I almost died. It was so cute! All I know is that the PowerRangers are a group of different-colored people/robots that fight the bad guys with karate-ish moves to save the universe. Although, I have never seen the show, it's supposedly one of the hottest TV shows for children in the States as well. Anyway, I couldn't very well disappoint them so I



said, "Yes, I'm Trini, the PowerRanger" They gasp. Then, they bombard me with questions. . .

"Can you sing the song?"

Oh man, I'm gonna blow my cover. What's the song?

"Can you do a move?"

"No, no. Can't fight right now because I only fight criminals. Are you all bad guys?"

"No-o-o-o," they all scream, shaking their heads.

"Why aren't the other PowerRangers here?"

"Oh, I'm on vacation.

They're at home fighting crime."

"Yeah, I'm on vacation, too." . . .

"Me, too." . . . "Me, too."

For 15 minutes, I had a crowd of kids circling me, jumping up and down, and holding my hands. I have to admit, I kinda liked it. Finally I told them that I had to get going.

They all said, "Chap, Trini!" and waved good-bye as I continued down the road. I didn't realize that *PowerRangers* was a popular TV show here in Ecuador until that incident. And then the other day, I went to visit a neighbor and her son sat comatose in front of the television watching this show. It's on every night before "Morejilla," for interested souls. Anyhow, I joined him and, sure enough, there was Trini, the yellow one (obviously). And, yeah, I could see the resemblance: She's Asian with straight black hair, I'm Asian with straight black hair. What do you know? We're practically twins! The kids missed the fact that I'm about 40 lbs heavier than the real Trini. That's okay by me, though. Here I am, 25 years old, and even I think the PowerRangers are the way to go. To tell you the truth, I'm kind of happy with my new claim to fame. I see it as a personal line of self-defense against harassment. "Don't touch me, I'm Trini, and I can kick your ass." Scary, huh? See what a little popularity can do to a gal?

by Cindy Chin, San Pablo del Lago



Isabel Allende's Paula

Isabel Allende is undoubtedly one of the most popular and gifted writers of Latin American literature. Her famous surname doesn't hurt, of course, but it is her ability to bring characters to life and to write in a smooth-flowing manner which keeps millions of readers enthralled. Having read her other novels (*The House of the Spirits*, *Eva Luna*, *Stories of Eva Luna*, and *Of Love and Shadows* — I still need to read *El Plan Infinito*) in English, I decided, after much inner debate, to shell out the 40,000 sucres that *Lubri Mundi* wanted for her latest masterpiece, *Paula*. *Paula* concerns the illness and death of Isabel Allende's 28-year-old daughter, Paula, who died in December 1992, after having been in a coma for one year. Reading *Paula* in the original Spanish, made me feel closer to the spirit in which the book had been written. It is well-written, both happy and sad at the same time and goes back and forth between vigils at Paula's bedside to anecdotes and history of the Allende family and Chile. I was somewhat disappointed that little of Paula's life is shared with us in a book bearing her name while Isabel's life is shared in great detail: her two husbands; two children (Paula and son Nicholas); various love affairs; the

absence of her father as she was growing up, as well as mischievous pranks she played in her youth; the *Golpe Militar* with Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973; how she assisted those fleeing the repression and finally went into exile in Venezuela (for 13 years), living in other countries as well, before marrying a North American and living in California; her career in journalism, as a TV personality and now as a respected writer. While all of this is quite interesting and helps us to understand Isabel Allende and her past, I wanted to learn more about Paula.

Paula is presented to us as a remarkable girl who had a Master's degree in Psychology, knew on the night she met her husband that she'd marry him; she knew English and Spanish and had studied Italian and French; she moved from Virginia to Spain after marrying Ernesto; then on their first wedding anniversary was sent into an irreversible coma. Paula had a nightmare shortly before falling into the coma and wrote a touching letter to her family, saying she didn't want to be trapped in her body and to please just let her spirit be free. But... what was Paula really like? What made her laugh? Cry? What plans did she have for the future other than wanting to get a doctorate and open an elder-care facility, as well as to leave money

to be used to help feed and clothe children-in-need? Did she want children? What were the happiest and the most difficult experiences of her life? How did she see herself and her role in the family? Doctors say many people in a coma can hear what is going on around them although they cannot respond. Was this true in Paula's case? And if so, how did this affect her?

To me, *Paula* is more of a personal memoir from a loving mother to her critically-ill daughter, explaining the family history and the bedside vigils and the small changes

in her physical condition, and perhaps was never written with the intention of being published. But, I sure was left with a feeling of incompleteness after reading it. Isabel Allende promises more than she delivers by naming the book after her daughter. I hope she writes a book in the future and

tells us more about her daughter—perhaps a biography of Paula or stories about her life and experiences—to provide some closure. As Paula wrote to her family: "*Sé que me recordarán y mientras lo hagan estaré con ustedes. . . Por ahora seguiremos juntos mientras me recuerden.*"

Interesting. This could be applied to us as PCVs when we leave as well.

by Marie Skertic, Guaranda-



Are You a REAL Guy?

Are you a real guy? Take this scientific quiz to determine your guyness quotient.

1. Alien beings from a highly advanced society visit the Earth, and you are the first human they encounter. As a token of intergalactic friendship, they present you with a small but incredibly sophisticated device that is capable of curing all disease, providing an infinite supply of clean energy, wiping out hunger and poverty, and permanently eliminating oppression and violence all over the entire Earth. You decide to:

- Present it to the president of the United States.
- Present it to the secretary general of the U.N.
- Take it apart.

2. As you grow older, what lost quality of your youthful life do you miss the most?

- Innocence.
- Idealism.
- Cherry bombs.

3. When is it okay to kiss another male?

- When you wish to display simple and pure affection without regard for narrow-minded social conventions.
- When he is the Pope. (Not on the lips.)
- When he is your brother and you are Al Pacino and this is the only really sportsmanlike way to let him know that, for business reasons, you have to have him killed.

4. What about hugging another male?

- If he's your father and at least one of you has a fatal disease.
- If you're performing the Heimlich maneuver. (And even in this case, you should repeatedly shout: "I am just dislodging food trapped in this male's trachea! I am not in any way aroused!")
- If you're a professional baseball player and a teammate hits a home run to win the World Series, you may hug him provided that (1) He is legally within the base path, (2) Both of you are wearing protective cups, and (3) You also pound him fraternally with your fist hand enough to cause fractures.



5. Complete this sentence: A funeral is a good time to ...

- ... remember the deceased and console his loved ones.
- ... reflect upon the fleeting transience of earthly life.
- ... tell the joke about the guy who has Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

6. In your opinion, the ideal pet is:

- A cat.
- A dog.
- A dog that eats cats.

7. You have been seeing a woman for several years. She's attractive and intelligent, and you always enjoy being with her. One leisurely Sunday afternoon the two of you are taking it easy—you're watching a football game; she's reading the papers—when she suddenly, out of the clear blue sky, tells you that she thinks she really loves you, but she can no longer bear the uncertainty of not knowing where your relationship is going. She says she's not asking whether you want to get married; only whether you believe that you have some kind of future together. What do you say?

- That you sincerely believe the two of you do have a future, but you don't want to rush it.



- b. That although you also have strong feelings for her, you cannot honestly say that you'll be ready anytime soon to make a lasting commitment, and you don't want to hurt her by holding out false hope.
- c. That you cannot believe the Jets called a draw play on third and seventeen.

8. Okay, so you have decided that you truly love a woman and you want to spend the rest of your life with her—sharing the joys and the sorrows, the triumphs and the tragedies, and all the adventures and opportunities that the world has to offer, come what may. How do you tell her?

- a. You take her to a nice restaurant and tell her after dinner.
- b. You take her for a walk on a moonlit beach, and you say her name, and when she turns to you, with the sea breeze blowing her hair and the stars in her eyes, you tell her.
- c. Tell her what?

9. One weekday morning your wife wakes up feeling ill and asks you to get your three children ready for school. Your first question to her is:

- a. "Do they need to eat or anything?"
- b. "They're in school already?"
- c. "There are three of them?"

10. When is it okay to throw away a set of veteran underwear?

- a. When it has turned the color of a dead whale and developed new holes so large that you're not sure which ones were originally intended for your legs.
- b. When it is down to eight loosely connected underwear molecules and has to be handled with tweezers.
- c. It is never okay to throw away veteran underwear. A real guy checks the garbage regularly in case somebody—and we are not naming names, but this would be his wife—is quietly trying to discard his underwear, which she is frankly jealous of, because the guy seems to have a more intimate relationship with it than with her.

Bus Bunnies

It's quite a ride from QuitoTown
 To anywhere both north or south
 The worst is west, Santo Domingo Down
 Take agua pura con su mouth
 The babies nurse and ladies laugh
 It's too bumpy to really sleep
 Many hours seem like life's half
 Just hope El Driver don't Leap!

(Spanish translation):

*Es un viaje especial de la ciudad de Quito
 para cualquier parte del norte o del sur
 Lo peor es el Oeste, la ciudad de Santo
 Domingo*

*Toma agua pura con tu boca
 Los niños, mamas y las senoras rien
 Es demasiado agitado el viaje para poder
 dormir*

*Las horas pasan como mitad de la vida.
 Espera que el chofer no se duerma.*

by Len Perkins, PCT

11. What, in your opinion, is the most reasonable explanation for the fact that Moses led the Israelites all over the place for forty years before they finally got to the Promised Land?

- a. He was being tested.
- b. He wanted them to really appreciate the Promised Land when they finally got there.
- c. He refused to ask directions.

12. What is the human race's single greatest achievement?

- a. Democracy.
- b. Religion.
- c. Remote control.

How to score: Give yourself one point for every time you picked answer "c". A real guy would score at least "10" on this test. In fact, a real guy would score at least 15, because he would get the special five-point bonus for knowing the joke about the guy who has Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

submitted by Tara Racine RPCT



LESSONS WITHOUT BORDERS
Seattle 1995
Jeff Colon
Machala

Goal 2: "To promote a better understanding of the United States and its people within the people served."

Beginning on April 17, 1995, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored a four-day international conference in Seattle, Washington, called Lessons Without Borders. The idea behind the conference was to bring together community leaders and development professionals from around the world to share ideas and experiences in resolving problems faced by both developing and developed nations.

For me, it was a golden opportunity come true: A chance to host my counterpart and his brother, Italo, at my parent's home in Marysville, Washington, and to show them around the beautiful Pacific Northwest. More importantly, a chance to see my folks and brother and an opportunity for our family to reciprocate the kindness and hospitality that I have been shown in Machala, Ecuador, especially by the Encalada family.

Machala, located on the south coast of Ecuador, is the fourth largest city in the country (approx. 170,000 people). Since the 1960's this city, banana capital of the world, has been recipient to technical assistance from Peace Corps Volunteers and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Most recently, USAID has played a leading role in improving solid waste collection services in Machala, and is helping to transform the archaic municipal departments of water, sewer and solid waste into more efficient public enterprises with emphasis on cost-recovery, transparent accounting methods (to reduce graft), and efficient management techniques. Serving as the Technical Advisor on Environmental Affairs to the Municipality, I have also played a role in these projects since the beginning of my Peace Corps service in March of 1994.

In light of substantial U.S. assistance provided to the Municipality of Machala, my counterpart, Wilmer Encalada, Director of the Municipal Projects Office, was invited to speak at the Lessons

Without Borders conference in Seattle last April. All conferences were to be placed not in hotels, but with host families in the Seattle area. Furthermore, all who would be invited needed basic English skills; no interpreters provided at the conference (potentially excluding my counterpart). As a native of the Seattle area, I couldn't let this opportunity go by and thus was able to work out a cost-sharing agreement by which I would go along to serve as interpreter, host family and transportation for my counterpart. Italo Encalada, my counterpart's brother, would also attend the conference to record the sessions on video.

The following are some of the highlights from this trip:

April 15: At 4:00 a.m. Wilmer, Italo and I left Machala. Twenty three hours and three flights later, we arrived at the home of my parents in Marysville, Washington. In true Seattle style, we were greeted by a light rainshower.

April 16: In anticipation of Easter Sunday, we brought with us palm *ramos* (flower-adorned palm fans) that we had saved from *Domingo de Ramos* in Machala. These we placed on the altar in a small presentation during Easter service at the Marysville United Methodist Church. Afterward, my mother prepared a wonderful brunch at our house overlooking Puget Sound, attended by my spry 92-year-old grandmother and my aunt and uncle (who brought homemade blackberry and rhubarb wines). Italo spotted a whale spouting on Puget Sound, and several bald eagles flew by in the afternoon as if to welcome our guests to the Pacific Northwest.

April 17: Visit to Boeing Co. airplane plant in Everett. This is the largest building in the world (largest surface area under one roof). The plant is impressive for its sheer size, but for my counterpart, who is a civil engineer, it was especially impressive to see the huge tool-dies, paint shop, overhead gantry cranes, testing instruments and other engineering marvels used in the manufacturing of jet airplanes. For me, it was a chance to be a tourist in my hometown. The Boeing facility is only 20 minutes from my house and many of my *compañeros* from high school work there, yet I had never been inside in spite of the free, daily tours they offer. Air-Force One happened to be on the ground for maintenance at the time of our tour, complete with a *cadre* of security personnel.

Conference Highlights:

April 17: Beginning at 5:00 p.m., we met with the conference organizers to form our "Community Empowerment" team, with whom we would be for the duration of the conference. Our team included 10 representatives from Indonesia, Chile, Peru, Mali, Belize and Ecuador, as well as 13 community leaders from the Seattle area.

April 18, 9:00 a.m.: Session regarding Micro-enterprise development. Some powerful Seattle businessmen have been funding what is essentially a community kitchen project in the poor *barrios* of Peru. They argue that the poverty cycle can, in many cases, be broken, if the right people (in this case, community groups founded by women) are granted access to capital in the form of low-interest loans and, at the same time, given basic education

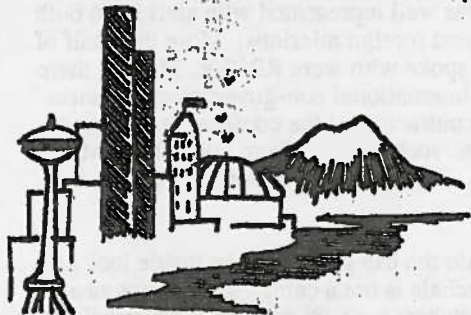


in reading, writing, math and business management. These are not hand-outs, but loans that must be paid back. It was very encouraging and not surprising to note that many of the successful micro-enterprises, worldwide, were founded by women's groups and continue to be successful under the management and supervision of women.

11:00 a.m.: Session regarding poverty and the black community in the US. In summary, it has been found that blacks in the US face many of the same financial obstacles as people in developing nations when trying to start a business: 1) Lack of access to venture capital, 2) Difficulty in pairing with capital partners and 3) The unofficial caste system that exists in the US that hinders blacks through racism, dead-end jobs, deficient schools, etc.

This session was held at an agency called CAMP, the Central Area Motivation Program, where I met RPCV Kelli Ayres (Sierra Leon) who through her job with CAMP helps low-income families to find and acquire affordable housing in the Seattle area. Her friend and co-worker, Gabriela, had worked as an English teacher in Spain for two years and was a tremendous help in translating during the conference.

2:00 p.m.: Visit to the Sea-Mar Health Clinic in South Seattle which provides managed health care to low-income residents and, thanks to a bi-lingual staff, caters to Western Washington's large Hispanic population. RPCV Lisa Cameron (Ecuador, Omnibus 68 - Health) was working at this clinic where she helped to develop a model system of



managed health care for low-income residents of Washington State. Not surprisingly, she made big improvements at

Sea-Mar in less than a year, before returning to Ecuador to work as the present Health Trainer in Tumbaco. Ironically, Lisa was not at the clinic during our visit; she was on the road giving charlas about managed health care at satellite clinics throughout Washington.

April 19: Tours of neighborhood projects in the Seattle area aimed at improving the environment and quality of life for local residents. The projects we saw included stream restoration, wetland preservation, urban gardens, urban art, organic markets and recycling projects.

April 20: A full day of workshops and guest speakers held on the beautiful campus of the University of Washington. In these workshops, we attempted to define the underlying themes that made community projects successful using examples presented by the international delegates and those witnessed during the Seattle area tours. This was the last day of the conference, and afterward we celebrated accordingly.

Conclusions about the Conference:

The conference was well-organized and included many field trips around the Seattle area to see first-hand the work of community-based organizations (CBOs), serving poor and minority groups and to see the work of many local volunteers working on environmental projects such as urban collective garden plots, stream restoration, and open spaces/greenbelts. For me, the conference was an eye-opener in two important aspects. First, finding out that many former Peace Corps Volunteers were involved with or responsible for these projects and second, learning about the Latin-American community in the Seattle area, my own back yard.

Post-Conference Highlights:

April 21: Toured the City of Everett Wastewater Treatment Plant. Yawn if you want, but it was important to us since in January, construction will start on a new sewage collection and treatment system for the City of Machala. The Machala system will feature pumping stations employing Archimedes screw pumps for the lift stations. These pumps look like huge cork-screws lying diagonally in a cement trough. As the screw is slowly turned by an electric gearmotor, wastewater and solids are lifted from a sump at the base of the trough to a holding chamber at the top (upper) end of the screw. Currently, there are none of these pumps in Ecuador; however, the Everett plant features three of them, almost identical to those which will be installed in Machala. Therefore, the pictures and video of these pumps that we brought back to Machala were very useful for the local engineers who will be involved with the construction and operation of the Machala plant. After looking at sewage all morning, we were ready for some natural beauty and took the Washington State Ferry to Bainbridge Island and back. It was a fabulous sunny day in Seattle.

April 22: Went to our summer cabin in the Cascade mountains, stopping at Steven's Pass to stomp in the snow and take a few pictures. After translating for a week both at the conference and at home, it was a chance for the three of us *Machaleños* to relax without any non-Spanish speakers around. We even tuned-in a Latin radio station which caters to Eastern Washington's large Hispanic population (but the music selection was different from what we normally hear in Ecuador). On the way to the cabin we stopped at a rest area to use the phone and, by coincidence, met two women from Colombia, apparent by the typical indian dress (almost *Otavaleño*) worn by the daughter of one of the women. Small world.

April 23: Stopped at the once logging-town, now touristy, Bavarian-style village of Leavenworth, en route to Grand Coulee Dam. Fighting sleep, I let Wilmer drive the family Camry for a couple hours (forgive me, mom!), his first pot-hole-free highway. We toured the immense concrete feat of engineering that powers most of Washington State (all-year round; no *cortes de luz!*). The powerhouse galleries of Grand Coulee are huge cavernous chambers of whirring turbines and copper armatures, buzzing at 60 cycles. The electricity generated by these turbines powered the aluminum smelters that were key in the manufac-



turing of U.S. military aircraft used to win World War II. Additionally, the expansive irrigation system afforded by this project is crucial to the agro-industries of Washington State.

On the return trip, we crossed the Colombia River at Vantage, a small seam cut into the mammoth rock cliffs of the Colombia River Gorge.

April 27: Toured the Pike Place Market with Italo (Wilmer had left on the 24th). Watched the famous fish-throwing (as seen in a Levi's 501 commercial) and drooled over a giant Alaskan King Crab (much more meat than the scrawny crabs of the Ecuadorian coast). At midnight, Italo left for Ecuador.

April 28: Back to the cabin in the Cascades, but this time with mom and dad. A chance to really relax, enjoy some of my mom's wonderful cooking, and to catch-up on news of family, neighbors and friends.

May 1: Surprised the heck out of Alex Thomas and Jen. Stayed at their cozy abode on Whidbey Island. Played keyboard in a jam session with Alex and the other band members. Made a beer run, then played some more. Alex played his trusty Yamaha six-string as his custom guitar from *Maestro Guacan* in Quito was in the shop being fitted with an electric pick-up (e.g. guitar microphone).

May 2: Made a surprise visit to my World-Wise Schools Class at Lakes Stickney Elementary in Mukilteo, and effectively derailed all that Ms. Rhonda Brice had planned for the afternoon. The students made sure that I didn't get too close to the class mascot, a guinea pig, as I spoke of the different ways *cuy* is prepared in Ecuador. We made a video, interviewing six students who asked questions about life in Ecuador to be answered by the students of Ramon Serrano's 3rd-year English class at Colegio Machala. We also filmed the classroom and school grounds. The fact that the classroom had a sink with running water and a TV and VCR was a stark reminder of just how well-equipped our schools are in the U.S. compared to the schools here.

May 3: Gypsy Kings Concert. Seven guitarists playing *Flamenco* in unison - incredible!

May 8: Drove to Montana to see my wonderful godparents, Ellie and Delbert Larson, who live in Bozeman. Drove past the Fonda/Turner ranch and took lots of pictures of Buffalo. Browsed through some of the yuppie art galleries in Bozeman to price wool tapestries. My advice: BUY IN OTAVALO! Although there were no Ecuadorian tapestries displayed, some of similar style and quality made in Mexico were selling for \$60.00 (the size and style that sells for \$20,000 in Otavalo).

May 10: Stopped in Idaho to visit my Uncle for the last time. He passed away on June 28, so I am very grateful to have had the chance to visit him while at home. Watched "Crimson Tide" with my brother, Chris, at the theater he manages in Ellensburg.

May 16: Gave a slide presentation on the mangrove ecosystem of Ecuador's south coast to a class of 40 environmental studies students at Everett Community College, elaborating on the importance of this ecosystem in global fisheries and current threats to mangrove forests (shrimp farms, charcoal production, lumber). It really felt great to be giving a presentation where I once sat as a student.

May 18: Went to the local Albertson's store and shot a short video about how bananas arrive, how they are displayed and how much they cost in the US. This was shown to the World-Wise Schools exchange class in Machala and will be used to complete a video about banana growing, harvesting and packing that we are making here in Machala. Later, my mom prepared one of her delicious home-cooked meals, the last I would enjoy for another six months.

May 19: I had a good case of butterflies in my stomach on the trip back to Ecuador, but as soon as the plane broke through the clouds, I was comforted by the familiar lights of Guayaquil and the slow waters of Río Guayas. It was a good feeling to be coming home, in a sense, to a different country.

In retrospect:

It was very encouraging for me to meet the many RPCVs working in community organizations, government and international NGOs and contractors. As the sponsor of the conference, AID was well represented with staff from both Washington, D.C. and foreign missions. More than half of the AID officials I spoke with were RPCVs. Finally, there were several large international non-government organizations (NGOs) and contractors at the conference. Many of their representatives, such as those from GREENCOM, were former PCVs. I was the only in-service PCV at the conference.

For Wilmer and Italo the trip gave them an inside look at life in the U.S. Machala is not a campo site by any means, and the Encalada brothers are very modern. Nevertheless, I was impressed by how quickly they adapted; filling a glass of water from the faucet and drinking it without hesitation, for example. The things that impressed them most, however, were things that I would never have considered. First, *tranquilidad*. We only heard about four cars honk their horns in two weeks. Second, *seguridad*. They couldn't understand how our house could have so many large bay windows... without steel bars across them. Third, social order. This was Wilmer's big conclusion that he formulated while he was driving on the straight, smooth, wide highways of Eastern Washington. He couldn't understand why people didn't go more than about 65 m.p.h. I tried to explain about tickets, police enforcement, higher insurance rates, etc., but he concluded that we, in the US, have a higher order of social consciousness. In other words, we exercise more self-control on a voluntary basis in order to uphold the sense of order we live by.

This, he concluded, was apparent in other things as well; such as, absence of litter on the roadside, courtesy on the part of other drivers, courtesy while waiting in a line, etc.

Note: We did not ride on any buses while in Washington.



In an effort to clarify questions about the purported durability and unusual physical characteristics of Twinkies, we subjected the Hostess snack logs to the following experiments:

EXPOSURE:

A Twinkie was left on a window ledge for four days, during which time an inch and a half of rain fell. Many flies were observed crawling across the Twinkie's surface, but contrary to hypothesis, birds—even pigeons—avoided this potential source of sustenance. Despite the rain and prolonged exposure to the sun, the Twinkie retained its original color and form. When removed, the Twinkie was found to be substantially dehydrated. Cracked open, it was observed to have taken on the consistency of industrial foam insulation; the filling, however, retained its advertised "creaminess."

RADIATION:
A Twinkie was placed in a conventional microwave oven, which was set for precisely four minutes—the approximate cooking time of bacon. After 20 seconds, the oven began to emit the Twinkie's rich, characteristic aroma of artificial butter. After one minute, this aroma began to resemble the acrid smell of burning rubber. The experiment was aborted after two minutes, 10 seconds, when thick, foul smoke began billowing from the top of the oven. A second Twinkie was subjected to the same experiment. This Twinkie leaked molten white filling. When cooled, this now epoxy-like fill-

ing bonded the Twinkie to its plate, defying gravity; it was removed only upon application of a butter knife.

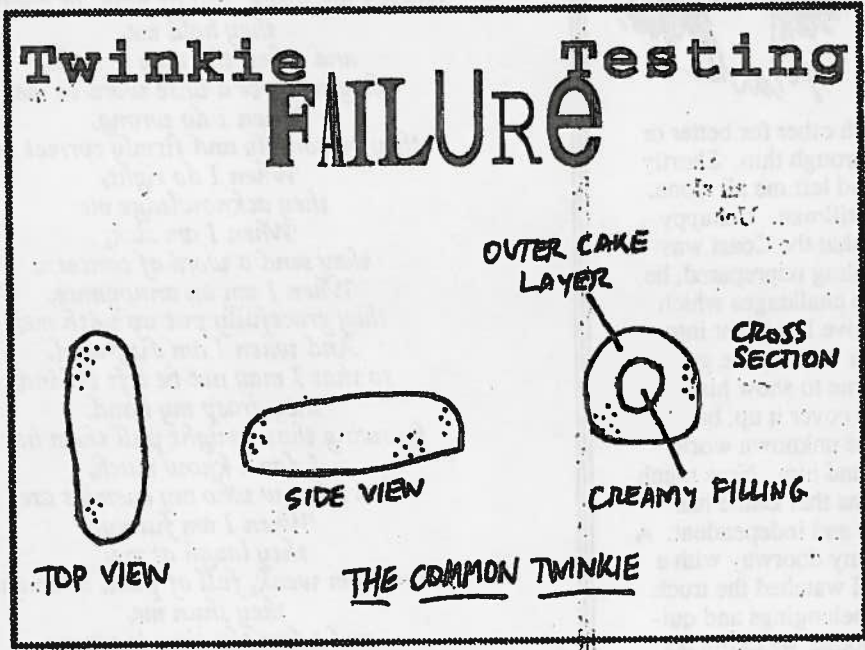
EXTREME FORCE:

A Twinkie was dropped from a ninth-floor window, a fall of approximately 120 feet. It landed right-side up, then bounced onto its back. The

the Twinkie did not catch fire. It did, however, produce the same "burning rubber" aroma noticed during the irradiation experiment.

IMMERSION:

A Twinkie was dropped into a large beaker filled with tap water. The Twinkie floated momentarily, began to list and sink, and viscous yellow tendrils ran off its lower half, possibly consisting of a water-soluble artificial coloring. After two hours, the Twinkie had bloated substantially. Its coloring was now a very pale tan—in contrast to the yellow, urine-like water that surrounded it. The Twinkie bobbed when touched, and had a gelatinous texture. After 72 hours, the Twinkie was



expected "splatter" effect was not observed. Indeed, the only discernible damage to the Twinkie was a narrow fissure on its underside. Otherwise, the Twinkie remained structurally intact.

EXTREME COLD:

A Twinkie was placed in a conventional freezer for 24 hours. Upon removal, the Twinkie was not found to be frozen solid, but its physical properties had noticeably "slowed": The filling was found to be the approximate consistency of acrylic paint, while exhibiting the mercury-like property of not adhering to practically any surface. It was noticed that the Twinkie had generously absorbed freezer odors.

EXTREME HEAT:

A Twinkie was exposed to a gas flame for two minutes. While the Twinkie smoked and blackened and the filling in one of its "cream holes" boiled,

found to have bloated to roughly 200 percent of its original size, the water had turned opaque, and a small, fan shaped spray of filling had leaked from one of the "cream holes." Unfortunately, efforts to remove the Twinkie for further analysis were abandoned when, under light pressure, the Twinkie disintegrated into an amorphous cloud of debris. A distinctly sour odor was noted.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Twinkie's survival of a 120-foot drop, along with some of the unusual phenomena associated with the "creamy filling" and artificial coloring, should give pause to those observers who would unequivocally categorize the Twinkie as "food." Further clinical inquiry is required before any definite conclusions can be drawn.

Anonymously submitted.



A Tribute

I'll admit it. When I first moved to my site in Daule, I was a fresh scared volunteer, discovering the world of Ecuador all alone. Then, I discovered Brian Haygood, another volunteer in my site. In the beginning, we shackled up together for convenience sake until I found a place of my own. You know, I thought we'd be there for each other for better or for worse, through thick or through thin. Shortly afterwards, he hit the thick and left me all alone. But then, along came Mark Stillman. Unhappy with his Sierra site, he knew that the Coast was the place to be. Although feeling unprepared, he couldn't resist longing for the challenges which left the former running and dove head first into his new life here. The truth is that first he got his feet wet while depending on me to show him the ropes of survival. He tried to cover it up, but the frightened little boy facing the unknown world was obvious to everyone around him. Now much later, through the tough lessons that Daule has taught him, he's all grown up and independent. A few weeks ago, as I stood in my doorway with a tinge of sadness in my heart, I watched the truck pull out with his last load of belongings and quietly felt the proudness of a mother watching her son leave for college. Mark has moved out. This is my tribute to him.



Top Ten Reasons Why Mark Stillman Was the Choicest Roommate:

- 10) He let me shave the back of his neck
- 9) He's definitely not camera shy
- 8) His computer illiteracy makes me look like a genius
- 7) He sings in the shower
- 6) He plays his Peaches-N-Herb Greatest Hits non-stop
- 5) He has horses on his boxer shorts
- 4) He has more hair than my last roommate
- 3) In exchange for two months of free rent, he paid off my \$/4 mil debt
- 2) During water outages, he saves doing the big ones for the toilet at the office

And... the number one reason that Mark Stillman was the choicest roommate is:

- 1) He thinks Daule is "the shit"
- (*"the shit" in California slang = the best.*)

by Kelly Rahn, Daule

I Know Who My Friends Are

by J.W. Carter, III, San Fernando

I don't know much,
but I know who my friends are.
When I am funny,
they laugh with me;
When I am weak, full of pain, or confused,
they hold me,
and when the time is right,
they whisper a wise word to me;
When I do wrong,
they personally and firmly correct me;
When I do right,
they acknowledge me;
When I am sick,
they send a word of concern;
When I am an annoyance,
they gracefully put up with me;
And when I am disgraced,
so that I may not be left behind,
they grasp my hand,
knowing that I might pull them back,
I don't know much,
but I know who my enemies are.
When I am funny,
they laugh at me;
When I am weak, full of pain, or confused,
they shun me,
and when the time is wrong,
they haughtily lecture me;
When I do wrong,
they tell the whole world before they tell me;
When I do right,
they quickly change the subject;
When I am sick,
they forget about me;
When I am an annoyance,
they spitefully bide their time;
And when I am disgraced,
in order to push themselves forward,
they step on my head,
driving me ever further backward.
There is not much difference in appearance
between my friends and my enemies.
I have beautiful friends and beautiful enemies,
I have homely friends and homely enemies.
Even the projections of their actions are similar
between my friends and my enemies.
For both laugh, speak and are silent
in many of the same instances.
No, the enemies distinguish themselves through their
motives,
which are usually selfish: more power, influence, prestige.
While my friends have only one motive, which is,
to be my friend.
Therefore, I embrace my friends,
and kindly keep my enemies at arm's length. ◦



Visit to the other side

As a Peace Corps administrator, I really don't get the chance to get out of the office and visit PCVs' sites much. I'm always tied up with numbers, figures, budgets, phone calls and paperwork. So, it was with pleasure that I looked forward to going with Marian Briones, one of our Medical Officers, to visit PCVs in several Sierran sites on July 12.

We had several professional visits to make on this trip, so on July 11, I made sure to pack very nice and expensive clothes. One pair of shoes for the green suit (and a bag to match), another pair of shoes for the blue suit with the nicest leather belt, matching earrings for every outfit and, of course, neatly and with great care, I packed everything in my most expensive piece of luggage.

Marian picked me up at 5:30 a.m. at my house to go to Salcedo, our first stop. At 8:30 a.m., and I simply had to have a cup of coffee. In this respect, I've become very "American." We arrived in Salcedo's main park. We parked our official vehicle, a Ford Explorer, and went to have my much-needed coffee with delicious warm bread around the corner from where we parked the car. We were done in less than 10 minutes and went back to our well-equipped comfortable vehicle only to find out that the window had been forced and pushed down and all our personal belongings (clothes, luggage) were gone!!!! Fortunately, the Peace Corps property (a bicycle, a heater and a few more things) were still there. What a shock!!!! Can you all believe it happened

to me, the Administrative Officer, who is always telling the PCVs, "Please be careful, watch your things."?! We immediately went to the police station to report our substantial losses. The policeman decided that the best thing to do would be for us to drive with him in our car as we were all going to be on the lookout for a thief (or thieves) with all of our things. I clearly recalled thinking--who were we supposed to be looking for? And even if we spotted the thief with our stuff, what was the cop going to do? Yell, "Hey you with the stuff that belongs to these ladies! You want to get in the car with us while I take you down to the police station?" I don't think so.

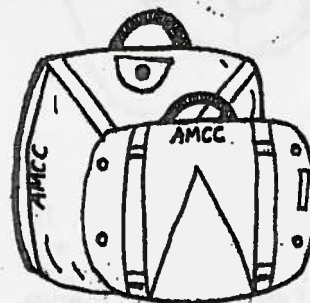
It made about as much sense to me as it probably does to Volunteers who have been robbed. They may spend an hour or more simply getting to the police station. The guy behind some old antiquated typewriter taking notes of all the things that were stolen, hands you the list of stolen things and says, "y ya hecho!!" Anyway, we never recovered any of our lost materials. Is this news familiar to all of you who have been robbed?!

We visited the PCV's site in Salcedo. It was a simple, bare, beautiful room. The Volunteer had what he needed, made do with what he had and lived and worked simply, without clutter and with purpose. It was a lesson in humility for me and gave me a new not-really-recognized-before understanding of the silly attachment I had to and for material things and what is really important; meaningful work, harmony, simplicity and essence. None of which can be found in expensive clothing or matching accessories, needless to say.

We left Salcedo and continued with our visits. We visited a Volunteer who has a small house on one of the highest points in Ecuador. This is my country and I was still taken-

aback by the beauty and tranquility of this area. One of the Volunteer's neighbors came up to me and said in his Spanish-Quichua language: "Ven a visitar a Gringo. Gringo queda solo con la pena." I began to appreciate his/my culture's perspective, "You shouldn't be alone all the time, you should always be with people." It gave me an increasingly better understanding of how many Volunteers live; not always having, nor wanting necessarily, to be with people, and wanting to enjoy time, tranquility and quiet space to work, to meet oneself, and to reflect. How could one not want to be surrounded by this beauty? I would love to be a Volunteer, to have the opportunity to work and to serve in the world; living within our means and experiencing another country's customs and language has to be a personal cross-cultural "journey," rich beyond words.

We arrived in Cuenca at 10:30 p.m. Talk about a big city rolling up its carpet for a good night's sleep! Hungry? Where's the 24-hour 7-Eleven or Denny's when you want a chili cheese dog or a good full meal? And having nothing to wear the next day but the clothes on our backs, I was thinking, hoping, praying that there'd be some late-night mall where we could buy some clothing, underwear and maybe a toothbrush. Where's an "El Bosque," when you need it?



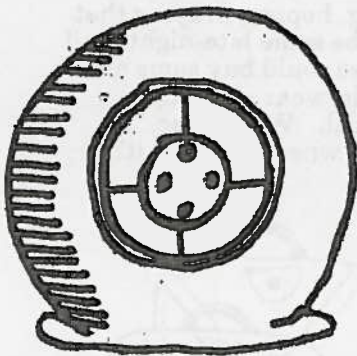
We went to the hotel. I had to wash my underwear out by hand. I had nothing to sleep in but my Omnibus 70 T-shirt which already had one day's use.



The next day, I awoke and put on the same clothes I had on the day before. My underwear were still damp. Simplicity, simplicity. When you have to make do. When you don't have, likewise.

Each morning when I'm out on administrative errands, I normally call in to the office. However, whoever broke into the car took the batteries for our cellular phone. So, I went to EMETEL, where I had to stand in the line to make a phone call! I couldn't imagine before, but now I appreciate what Volunteers *aguantan* in order to live where they are and do the good work they do. Here I was, worrying about not having batteries for my cellular phone, and a Volunteer rarely even has access to a phone.

The next day, coming back from Cuenca, we realized that our gas tank was crawling toward empty so we pulled into a gas station, well behind about 10 other cars. There happened to be a fuel strike, so we had to leave Cuenca with not much gas and fill up in Azogues. In Azogues, after being in line for a couple of hours, we finally got gas and could happily continue with our journey to Quito.



In Ambato, we got a flat tire. In spite of the hour (7:30 p.m.), we thought, "No problem." Marian and myself were ready to change the tire, but the *gata* didn't work. This problem had already been reported to administration by other Peace Corps personnel. So we had to look for a taxi driver to change the tire. It was not until an hour later that we left

Ambato after repairing the tire in a repair tire shop just before they closed.

We finally got in to Quito at 11:00 p.m. We hopped in a taxi and the taxi driver thought we were *gringas* as we were both talking in English (because I definitely don't look like a *gringa*). I noticed that the driver was taking long routes to get to our homes. I called his attention to the matter and he didn't like it. He got very upset and told me that he knew exactly how to get there. Marian and I looked at each other and prayed to get home as soon as possible. We finally arrived home at 11:30 p.m. I tell you, my house looked so nice. My bed never looked so warm, cozy and inviting. I blessed my "Home Sweet Home," and, as I got into bed and started dozing off, I kept thinking:

"Thank you Volunteers in Ecuador, for the lessons of resourcefulness, patience, and simplicity that you taught me. Don't ever attach significant importance to the beauty and cost of things. Because the bottom line is, no matter what the cost, things are still that, and nothing more."

My country, despite *lo bueno y lo malo*, can provide a rich, growing and challenging experience in which the Volunteer serves of his or her own free will. Thank you all for helping me to appreciate more what it means to be a Volunteer; to serve with simplicity, meaning and the limited resources you may have. Now, I am ready to begin another journey with Marian.

En paz,
Ana Maria

Note: Thanks to Corella Payne, RPCV, who helped me with some insights about Volunteer life, and to Pam Leamons who helped me with my grammar (I checked the spelling with the computer).

Ana María Castro
Administrative Officer



CONDOMS AND THEIR USE IN PREVENTING HIV AND OTHER STDs There continues to be misinformation and misunderstanding about condom effectiveness. Studies show that most sexually active people are not using latex condoms every time they have sex and that only 28% of Americans believe that condoms are very effective in preventing HIV. One of the key deterrents to using condoms is this belief that they don't work. Recent scientific data has shed new light on the issue of condom use and its effectiveness in preventing the transmission of AIDS and other STDs. The following article, extracted from a Center for Disease Control (CDC) publication on this subject, provides additional evidence that condoms do work!

The protection that proper use of latex condoms provides against HIV transmission is most evident from studies of couples in which one member is infected with HIV and the other is not (i.e. discordant couples). In a study of discordant couples in Europe, among 123 couples who reported consistent condom use, none of the uninfected partners became infected. In contrast, among 122 couples who used condoms inconsistently, 12 of the uninfected partners became infected.

As these studies indicate, condoms must be used consistently and correctly to provide maximum protection. Consistent use means using a condom from start to finish with each act of intercourse. Correct condom use should include the following steps:

*Use a new condom for each act of intercourse.

*Put on the condom as soon as erection occurs and before any sexual contact.

*Hold the tip of the condom and unroll it onto the erect penis, leaving space at the tip, yet assuring that no air is trapped in the condom's tip.

*Adequate lubrication is important, but use only water-based lubricants (available in the medical office).

*Withdraw from partner immediately after ejaculation, holding the condom firmly to keep it from slipping off.

Common questions about condoms and the CDC's response:

1. Q: What about studies that suggest condoms have as high as a 15.7% contraceptive failure rate?

A: These studies do not distinguish between inconsistent and consistent condom use. The fact is, latex condoms are highly effective for pregnancy preven-

tion, but only when they are used properly. Research indicates that only 30-60% of men who claim to use condoms for contraception actually use them for every act of intercourse. Furthermore, even people who use condoms every time may not use them correctly. Incorrect use contributes to the possibility that the condom could leak from the base or break. Recent studies show that pregnancy rates are estimated to be as low as 2% for couples who use condoms consistently and correctly.

2. Q: Can't condoms break?

A: Condoms rarely break. In those cases where breakage occurs, it is usually related to user error rather than condom quality. Using old condoms is a leading cause of breakage. Other common reasons for breakage include fingernail tears, exposure to heat or sunlight, reusing condoms or unrolling the condom before putting it on. Use of oil-based lubricants such as baby oil, Vaseline or cold cream can weaken latex condoms considerably and cause them to break as well. Mineral oil, a common ingredient of hand lotions, can cause a 90% decrease in condom strength after as little as 60 seconds of exposure.

3. Q: How are condoms regulated and tested?

A: Condoms are classified as medical devices, regulated by the FDA, and manufactured according to national standards. Every condom sold in the US is tested by the manufacturer electronically for defects, including holes or areas of thinning, before it is packaged. In addition, the FDA randomly tests condoms using the water leak test, in which a condom is filled with 300 ml of water. If the FDA finds that more than four per 1000 condoms leak, the lot is not allowed to be sold.

4. Q: Researchers studying surgical gloves made out of latex found "channels of five microns that penetrated the entire thickness of the glove." Don't con-

doms have these microscopic holes that allow HIV to pass through?

A: The quality of latex condoms is higher than that of latex gloves. Condoms are made differently than gloves. Condoms are double-dipped in latex, while gloves are only single-dipped. Condoms also undergo much more stringent quality control, including testing for holes before they are sold.

5. Q: In choosing a condom, is there any way to know which brand is best? Do some condoms have higher quality standards than others?

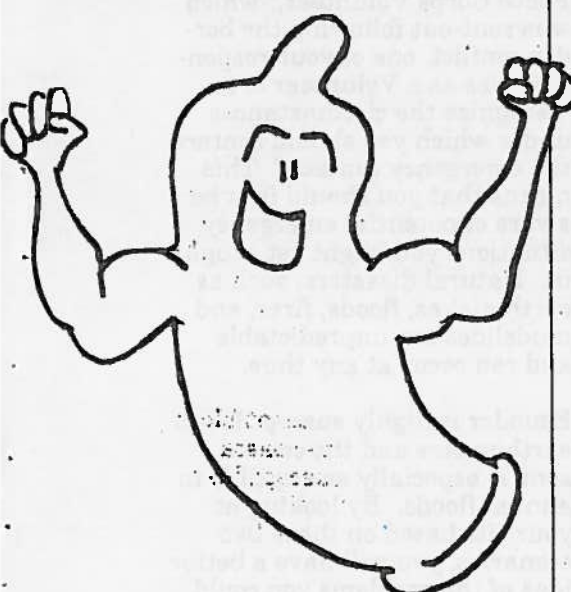
A: All of the condoms marketed in the US today meet federal quality assurance standards. You should look for the word "latex" on the package. Color, shape and packaging are all issues of personal preference. All are effective.

6. Q: What about a *University of Texas Medical Branch* study that estimated condoms to be only 69% effective in preventing HIV in heterosexual couples?

A: The University of Texas did not conduct a new study. Rather, it applied statistical methods to previously published studies. This method has several flaws. First, the study only cites data collected prior to July 1990, overlooking recent studies that provide some of the most compelling evidence that condoms are effective. Second, the study did not distinguish between consistent and inconsistent use.

7. Q: Isn't abstinence the only foolproof way to prevent HIV infection?

A: Yes, abstaining from sexual activity is the most effective HIV prevention strategy. Periodic abstinence, however, carries with it certain risks. A 1988 *National Survey of Family Growth* found abstinence to have a contraceptive failure rate of 26%, when not practiced consistently. So in abstinence—as in condom use—consistency is the key.



8. Q: What about Nonoxydol 9? Why has the CDC changed its position on the effectiveness of condoms used in conjunction with a spermicide?

A: Recent scientific studies show that condoms are more effective than many people previously thought and that spermicides may be less effective than had been hoped. The role of spermicides in preventing HIV is uncertain. Condoms lubricated with spermicides are not likely to be more effective than condoms used with other water based lubricants. Spermicides added to the tip of the condom are also not likely to add protection against HIV, though they do have some benefit in preventing pregnancy.

9. Q: Why did the FDA approve the female condom if it has proven to be only 74% effective in recent studies?

A: The female condom is the first barrier method of contraception available within the control of the female partner. It provides some level of protection against pregnancy and STDs, including AIDS. As a very new product, limited studies have been conducted on its actual effectiveness against HIV and STDs.

STDs, including AIDS are preventable, and there are several responsible prevention strategies to choose from:

- *Abstinence (consistently!)
- *Engaging in sexual activities that do not involve vaginal, anal or oral intercourse.
- *Using latex condoms correctly from start to finish with each act of intercourse—it can save your life!

The PCMOs•



Advice on... Natural Disasters

"THIS IS BARRY BEM CALLING... WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE YOU COULD BE IN DANGER. PLEASE LEAVE YOUR SITE WITHIN THE NEXT FOUR HOURS. THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT YOU MAY NEVER RETURN TO YOUR SITE."

During the border conflict, many PCVs from the southern provinces received a message similar to this. Others have faced the same pack-and-go-now situation for medical reasons or emergencies at home. Leaving on the spur of the moment last January was a real eye-opener for me and woke me up to the fact that, as rooted as we may sometimes feel in our communities, we are only here on a temporary basis. Life in Ecuador is like being in a worn-out relationship; you should always have one bag packed in case the day comes when you get the boot or have to leave for your own reasons.

I'd like to offer some suggestions for emergency-preparedness based on PCV experiences during the conflict and also based on the possibility of earthquakes and floods.

First: Make a list of basic essentials, as if you could carry only one bag and could never go back for the rest of your stuff. At a minimum include:

Passport (if you have it at your site)

Peace Corps I.D.

Censo

Credit cards

Checkbook / Savings account book

Cash: at least s./200.000 (leaving s./80.000 or so stashed at your site)

Amazingly, some PCVs left all three pieces of I.D. at their sites during the conflict, causing headaches at inter-provincial check-points and adding to the chaos of the evacuation.

Prescription Medicines

Toiletries

Glasses / contacts

Change of clothes, including warm clothes for Sierra travel and waterproof jacket or wind-breaker

Prized personal possessions:

Address book

Journal / Diary

You may want to make two lists: one for a rapid, one-bag evacuation, and another for a more *tranquilo*, 72-hour, multi-bag, get-out-of-country notice. The first list, however, is the most important because as calm as you might feel on receiving "get-out-now" orders, you won't be thinking clearly and you will forget something.

While my focus is natural disasters, the same ideas regarding preparedness hold true for other situations, such as border conflicts, labor/transportation strikes or medical emergencies. According to "The Emergency Contact System and You, the Peace Corps Volunteer," which was sent-out following the border conflict, one of your responsibilities as a Volunteer is to: "recognize the circumstances under which you should contact the emergency contact." This means that you should first be aware of potential emergency situations you might get caught in. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and mudslides are unpredictable and can occur at any time.

Ecuador is highly susceptible to earthquakes and the coastal zone is especially susceptible to annual floods. By looking at your site based on these two scenarios, you will have a better idea of the problems you could face not only during a natural disaster, but also in the case of a strike or other national emergency. In the case of an emergency, you should be prepared

to either get out fast or be self sufficient for at least 72 hours (stock-up on canned tuna now!).

EARTHQUAKES:

Work Safety: Ask yourself the following questions: "If there were an earthquake while I was at work, what would happen to me?" Office-based PCVs: "What is the building made of (wood, red brick, third-world concrete) and how likely would the building be to withstand an earthquake?" "Is the roof above me light (zinc or eternit) or is it heavy (concrete) and likely to crush me?" "Where would I duck-and-cover?"

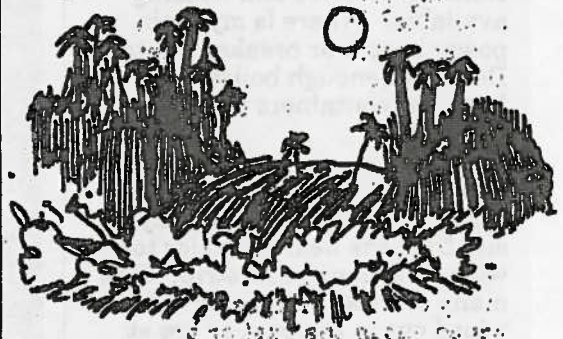
Home Safety: "What is the roof of my house made of (e.g. heavy concrete or light zinc/eternit)?" How far is the propane tank of the *cocineta* located from where I sleep (e.g. if it ruptured, would I blow-up with it)?" "How much non-perishable food and boiled water do I have right now?" "Is it enough to live off of for three days in case I can't get to the market or in case there is no market?" "Do I have an Ecuadorean friend whom I could trust to look after my house and/or pack and send my belongings to Quito for me if I can't go back to my site?" "Do I have some money stashed in the house somewhere that this friend could use (if so instructed) in order to send my stuff to Quito by *encomienda* service (s./60.000 to 100.000 is recommended)?"



Practical note: During the conflict, those PCVs with close Ecuadorean friends were able to have their belongings packed and sent to Quito within a couple of days. PCVs new to their sites had more difficulty because they had to contact counterparts who then had to contact landlords and had to describe where things were in the house, etc. Naturally, it is difficult to be able to trust someone enough to give them liberty to enter your house, especially if you haven't been in your site too long. Keep an eye out for a genuine friend and if you find that person, maybe test them a little under a low-risk situation (house-sit for a weekend, use your kitchen for an afternoon while you're working, etc.) so that if a crisis comes, you can at least be confident that your stuff won't take a walk while you're gone. Many PCVs in the same city have a spare set of keys to the other's house, but in the case of the conflict, nobody was helped since all PCVs were gone.

Route Safety: "How many bridges are there between my site and the closest city with an airport or airstrip?" "Is the highway to my site susceptible to mudslides or rockslides?" "What would my options for getting out of my site be if the roads were all closed or destroyed?" Some options to consider are: walk out by trail, on horseback, charter a small plane if an airstrip exists, boat, commercial plane flight, etc. "Would I have enough cash on hand (at least s./300.000) to buy myself out of the situation if I had to?"

Practical Note: Under ideal conditions, Banco de Fomento takes at least three days to process a simple *giro*. Don't expect that the Peace Corps will be able to get you money on short notice under emergency situations. Furthermore, since most of us can barely eat, let alone save money on our stingy living allowance, if you really care about your safety, take an emergency draw off of your living allowance so that you can have some emergency cash on hand at all times.



FLOODS:

Many coastal areas such as Daule, Babahoyo and Machala are susceptible to annual floods. These are usually mild, and most people are used to this seasonal problem of muddy streets, mosquitos and water in the living room. Sometimes, however, these floods are more severe, due to exceptionally high tides and/or an *el niño* year.

Floods are notorious for wiping out bridges and roads. Sanitary emergencies are also inevitable during floods (contaminated city water supply, backed-up sewers and mosquito outbreaks). In the Sierra, flash-floods wash out roads and often cause mudslides which can bury roads until MOP digs them out with their tractors. Mudslides are common on the Puyo-Baños, Azogues-Cuenca and Cuenca-Macas roads and have blocked such important routes as Quito-Santo Domingo.

Work Safety: Ask yourself, "Is, or has been, my workplace or area of fieldwork, subject to flooding? If so, where is the nearest high ground? Could I be caught in the *campo* during a flood or a flash-flood? How would I get out or get to a phone or radio?"

Home Safety: "Is my house located in a flood-prone area? How high could the water rise?" Near river deltas, coastal areas, etc., ask a neighbor or old-timer, since many people have water marks or carved lines to show how high the water has risen in the past. "If my house were inundated, where would or could I go, where I would have basic



sanitary services and housing available? Where is my main power switch or breaker located? Do I have enough boiled water in sealed containers to last me three days?"

Route Safety: "How many highway bridges separate my site from the nearest major town with an airport or airstrip? How many of these bridges have been wiped out in the past or are at risk of damage by cresting rivers?" Note that suspension bridges, such as the one in Daule, are generally unaffected, whereas bridges built on piles or concrete columns are easy prey for raging rivers.



These are, perhaps, extreme cases, but the purpose is to get you thinking about some "what if" scenarios. In summary, I'd like to re-emphasize the importance of having your identification with you, having some emergency cash on hand, having non-perishable food rations and drinking water stashed away and planning a basic get-away route. Hopefully, these are emergency procedures you will never have to use.

Jeff Colon, Machala

When I Call YOU

THE TEST.

During the week of July 24, we ran a test of the *Emergency Contact System* to see how long it would take to locate all Volunteers in the country and what problems might arise. I am pleased to report that, within a few days, the Emergency Contacts or Assistant Emergency Contacts had all reported to the office. I want to thank all of you for your cooperation in running this test. We didn't uncover any unusual problems. Because most PCVs do not have telephones, sometimes we have to leave messages with agencies, neighbors or others. However, during this test and during the border conflict earlier in the year, all PCVs eventually received messages and reported in.

The test, of course, depended on telephone/telegraph communications, which were working fine. In some sorts of natural disasters where communications might be cut off, it would be much more difficult to communicate with PCVs throughout the country.

Elsewhere in *El Clima*, you will find an article by Jeff Colon about such situations. He includes questions which he suggests you ask yourself to help figure out what steps you would take in your site in case of an emergency.

Family Emergencies and Other Calls.

Unfortunately, we occasionally receive news of a family emergency in the U.S. which we have to transmit to a PCV. However, it is not always bad news when we call you, and we do not want you to panic when you receive a message to call us back. Often, we call PCVs about work-related matters, materials that have arrived, visits to your site, etc. During the test described above, some of you panicked and thought we were calling you with bad news. We hope you will not always assume the worst when we call you, even though occasionally we have family news which we need to tell you.

Barry Bem, PTO

Dear Peace Corps Volunteers:

My name is Forrest Lamm. I am 10 years old and will be going into the 5th grade. I live in Portland, Oregon. My summer education project is to collect penny coins and stamps from around the world. I didn't have much luck with this project when I sent letters to the American Embassies so my Dad suggested that I write to the countries where there are Peace Corps Volunteers. My Dad was in the Peace Corps in 1964. He served in Honduras in Central America.

I hope to collect as many different kinds of foreign pennies and stamps as I can. My Dad is helping me pay for my letters. If you can't send me a penny coin from your country, could you please pass my letter on to someone who will. I would really appreciate the help. I will show my collection to my class at school.

Thank you for all the help and time you have given me.

Forrest Lamm

1308 NE 157th, Portland, OR, 97230, U.S.A. •



The U.S. Embassy has published the following information concerning travel to Peru:

Hostilities in the disputed border area between Ecuador and Peru have ceased. Although the state of national emergency declared by the Government of Ecuador continues, a demilitarized area has been negotiated and is in effect as of August 1.

The United States Embassy reports that travel to the southern provinces of Zamora-Chinchipe, Loja, El Oro, and Morona-Santiago no longer poses a danger because of the conflict. However, entering the demilitarized zone or crossing/approaching the Ecuador-Peru border anywhere, except at official checkpoints, is still dangerous and not advisable.

Visitors and residents can travel freely throughout the rest of Ecuador. As always, it is a good practice for U.S. citizens to carry proper identification.

PC/E comments: Peace Corps Volunteers should always carry their censo and a photocopy of their passport.

Additional note: *Travel to Colombia is still dangerous, particularly by land, and we must ask the U.S. Embassy in Bogota for special permission for PCVs in Ecuador to travel to Colombia. Permission will almost certainly be denied because of the uncertainty of conditions in various parts of Colombia.*

Barry Bem, PTO

There are only \$50.00 and \$100.00 monthly allotments for savings bonds. The face value of a bond denomination is worth double the amount of a monthly allotment; e.g. monthly allotment = \$50.00, bond denomination = \$100.00.

Bonds reach face value in about 12 years, depending upon interest rates. The maturation date of each individual bond is dependent upon the interest rate in effect at the time of its purchase. Bonds can be cashed before they mature, but they cannot be cashed until six months after their purchase date.

If a bond is cashed before five years, a reduced interest rate is applied to the monthly allotment amount of the bond. The bond will always be worth at least its monthly allotment plus a reduced interest rate.

If a bond is cashed after five years, but before its full maturation, the bond will earn full interest on the monthly allotment amount of the bond. Any combination of using your monthly Readjustment Allowance for Allotment and/or Savings Bonds may not exceed \$100.00 total per month.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you can begin purchasing bonds at any time until one month before your Close of Service. Bonds cannot be back-purchased for missed months. You can stop buying bonds at anytime.

Your record number is the same as your social security number. You must designate a single person other than yourself as a beneficiary. Your beneficiary only collects in the case of your death. Bond allotments are treated as any other Allotment/Withdrawal when computing the net amount of your one-third Readjustment

Allowance payable overseas at your Close of Service; i.e., you will have less money available to you at the end of your service if you buy savings bonds. **INTEREST RATES ARE BETTER THAN EVER.** Savings Bonds held five years or longer will earn 85% of the average yield on five year Treasury securities, with interest compounded semi-annually. **BIG TAX SAVINGS.** U.S. Savings Bonds are exempt from all State and Local Income or Personal Property

\$avings Bonds... Facts for the PCV

Taxes.
DELAYED FEDERAL TAXES. No Federal Taxes to pay on interest until bonds are cashed or reach final maturity.
CASH ON DEMAND. Liquidity is always on the thinking investor's mind. Cash when you need it is one of the best benefits of U.S. Savings Bonds because of easy conversion at any time after six months from purchase.
STRENGTHENING AMERICA. Buying bonds is patriotic. It helps you while you help your country. Bonds serve to underwrite Federal monetary needs and help fight inflation by supplying dollars that might otherwise be borrowed at much higher interest rates.
CURRENT MINIMUM RATE. Should market rates drop sharply, the average yield on Savings Bonds is no less than 4.0 percent, for Bonds held five years or longer.
COLLEGE COSTS MADE EASIER. Accumulating U.S. Savings Bonds in your child's name can, if certain conditions are followed, render them totally TAX FREE when they are cashed in for college use.
PEACE OF MIND RETIREMENT. You can cash bonds to



supplement your retirement income on your tax return. You will likely be in a lower tax bracket by then, and, with a double exemption if you're over 65, you'll have more of the money you've saved to enjoy.

Or, you can produce income from your savings by exchanging accumulated Series EE Savings Bonds for Series HH Bonds, which pay interest as it's earned by semi-annual Treasury Check. You need not pay tax on the accumulated interest on the bonds you exchange until the HH bonds are cashed or reach final maturity. This way you keep your principal intact, have a steady income for a least 10 years, and, when the HH Bonds are cashed, the tax will be your post-retirement rate.

SAFE/INDESTRUCTIBLE. If lost, stolen or destroyed, US Savings Bonds will be replaced, without charge, by the United States Government.

PAINLESS

ACCUMULATION. The Payroll Savings Plan hardly hurts when an allotment from each paycheck is automatically set aside to accumulate bonds. **NO COMMISSIONS OR MAINTENANCE CHARGES.**

What's
up
with WID?

The next WID (Women in Development) meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 3, 1995. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in the Conference Room. The guest speaker for the afternoon session has not been confirmed yet. One representative per province is requested. If your province does not have a WID Representative, please let me or Rebecca Gigliotti know.

Cheers!

Michelle Humes,
WID Coordinator

The First to Fall
Felicitaciones! We are proud to announce the joining of two wonderfully happy people. Yes, all the rumors are true. Bryan L. Kemp has asked Monica Ordoñez Fajardo to be his lovely bride. (I guess Omnibus 72's predictions on "Most Likely to..." were a little off!) The two will tie the knot in November right here in Cuenca, Ecuador. The big question is... where will they spend their honeymoon?!



Tuna Tuna

Try this a tuna salad. You're not alone. Tuna is the king! You probably think you're done to it, all there is to be done, right? Come on! You might also qualify yourself as an unusual combination. What about this of the Tuna Tuna? You'll hear. Well, for a new spin on your old-time favorites, read the book of your new recipe. Delicious. It starts with you!

Grounded in a tuna salad, you'll find...

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. canned (Tuna) or Quaker oatmeal (made for a thicker cream)

1 T. oil

1 onion, finely chopped

1 large red tomato, diced

2 cups of water

1/2 cup of mayonnaise

1/2 C. of milk

1/2 cup of vinegar

garlic (no oil, optional)

Soak the onion, tomato, water, salt and pepper. Add water with a pinch of salt. When boiling, add a milk, vinegar and minced "veggies." Stir slowly and continuously until done. Let boil for 15 minutes. Serve and enjoy. (Makes about five servings). Optional: add onions (from recipe) (optional).

Add now by regular demand:

Recipe for Tuna Tuna

(as told to me by my friend, pando in Portofino)

Ingredients:

1 cup

1/2 cup (optional)

1/2 cup (optional)

1/2 cup

1/2 cup

1/2 cup (optional)

1/2 cup (optional)

Soak the onion in water (plenty) with oil, vinegar or salt (add to taste) and seasonings, until tender. When ready, take some water and milk, blend together and add to the mix to thicken. Add fish and cook well. Before making soup, marinate onions in lemon juice (or vinegar). Serve and enjoy with onions, cilantro, lime juice and red pepper to taste. (Recipe)

Recipe: Tuna Tuna (optional)

Vegetarian Vittles

CREAM OF CORN SOUP:

Simmer 2 1/2 cups **corn** in 1 cup **milk** until tender. Blend (or mash up). Melt 3 Tablespoons **butter**, and saute 1/2 medium **onion**. Stir in 3 Tablespoons **flour**, 1 1/2 teaspoons **salt** and a dash of **pepper**. Stir in the **corn** and 3 cups **milk**. Heat and eat. Makes about 5 cups.

OUDEK GASPACHO:

Blend:

1/2 cup skinned, seeded **cucumbers**

3/4 cup skinned, seeded **tomatoes**

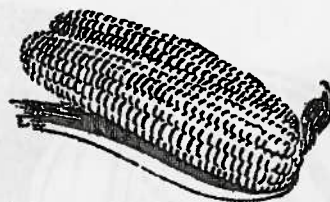
1/2 cup **red pimiento** (good luck finding this—I usually just forget it!)

Add and blend until mixed.

1 Tablespoon **olive oil**

Add, but **DO NOT** blend (as it will be overpowering), 1 teaspoon chopped **chives** or **white onion**.

No cooking involved; usually served chilled. Makes enough for one.



CUBAN STYLE BLACK BEANS

1 cup **black beans**

Soak beans with a green **bell pepper**, cut in half (with seeds). Make sure beans are covered by the water and soak overnight. Boil in the same water with **pepper**, chopped **onion** and **bayleaf**.

1 tsp. **cumin**

1 tsp **salt**

dash of **pepper**

2 Tbsp. **olive oil** (or **Girasol**)

1 Tbsp. **sugar** (sugar then, to taste)

Cover, simmer, and boil until tender (about three hours).

CHICKEN BROTH SAUCE

(also known as my version of **GAVADILLE**)

1 cup **chicken broth** (use a Maggi cube to about 1 cup boiled water)

1 bunch of **broccoli**, cleaned and steamed first

Tons of **garlic** (minced) or tons of **garlic powder**

Put all ingredients in blender and blend. Heat in saucepan and add 1 can **tomato paste**. Serve over **fettuchini noodles** or any type of **spaghetti**. Salt and pepper to taste. Sauté some **garlic** with a few **broccoli florets** and serve on top.

Corinne Manning, Santo Domingo.

CURRIED RICE:

Pour 2 cups hot **water** over 1/2 cup dry **rice**.

Place where it will keep warm, but do not cook for 45-60 minutes.

Add:

1/2 cup chopped **tomato**

3/4 teaspoon **salt**

1/4 cup finely chopped **onion**

1/4 cup chopped **green pepper**

2 Tablespoons melted **butter**

3/4 teaspoon **curry powder**

Bake (at 350 degrees F) for 1 1/2 hours, mixing every 15 minutes.

VEGGIE SOUFFLE:

Boil:

1/2 cup **cream (milk)** and 2/3 cup **vegetable stock** (from cooking your veggies).

Add:

1 cup minced cooked **veggies** (whatever kind you want)

When veggies are hot, add 3 beaten **egg yolks**. Cook and stir 1-2 minutes to thicken. Season to taste with **salt** and **pepper** and let cool. While cooling, whip until stiff but not dry, 3 **egg whites**.

fold **egg whites** into **veggie mixture**. Bake in a greased dish, until firm. This usually ends up more like a **cheeseless Quiche** than a **Souffle**, when I cook it.

Rich Olson, Pallatanga.

Rich Olson, Pallatanga.



QUE
LE VAYA
BIEN
SEÑOR
GARCIA