Greetings everyone,

I hope you will find this edition of Notes From the Field refreshing and maybe a little amusing. This is our first time compiling the newsletter and I hope our choices of material will be fun to read. Amanda and I have attempted to gather a variety of stories in hopes that we can fill in the reading gap between Peace Corps’ beloved Newsweek magazine and any other pop culture magazines (People, Cosmopolitan, Maxim) that volunteers might receive from friends and family back home.

We’re always happy to receive stories and reports from volunteers in the field, so keep us updated on the funny happenings in villages and cities around the world. A great big thank you to those of you who’ve sent in contributions to this edition. We’ll do our best to ensure that Notes From the Field improves with each publication— or until the next MI Coordinators replace us.

Until next time,

Adam & Amanda

A little about us.....

Adam Palmer - I am in the International Health Dept. I’m originally from Georgia, don’t worry I won’t start singing Dixie. I decided I needed to get out of Georgia for college, so I went across the state line into Alabama and did my undergraduate degree at Auburn University. I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Kingdom of Tonga, South Pacific from 1999-2001 as a Community Education Volunteer. I was the Vocational Ed. and English teacher. I taught kids how to read the directions on the sides of power tools and not cut off their fingers or put nails through their hands. I spent a lot of time climbing coconut trees and trying not to get sunburned on the secluded beaches. Not to make anyone jealous, but Tonga was considered the Club Med of Peace Corps.

Amanda Morrison – Rounding out the Southern contingent here in the Peace Corps office, I’m from the great state of Mississippi and got my B.S. in Biology from the University of the South in Sewanee, TN. I’m also in the Department of International Health.

I served in the Peace Corps in Morocco from 2001-03 and was a Maternal Child Health Extensionist. As it happened, my village was a little more in need of hygiene-type help rather than MCH, so I worked more with that. I also was working on introducing the taboo concept of HIV spread to my Muslim friends. Though PC Morocco wasn’t nearly as Club Med as people would like to think, I did have a sweet house— complete with toilet— for a rural volunteer!

Population Fellows Program

The Population Fellows Programs offer two-year fellowships to U.S. professionals with a recent graduate degree and experience in population/reproductive health or population-environment. Population Fellows are placed with organizations working to improve family planning and reproductive health programs in the developing world.

Population-Environment Fellows work on projects that link family planning and environmental programming in the developing world. Fellows receive a professional-level stipend and benefits.

For more information, contact: The Population Fellows Programs, University of Michigan, 1214 South University, 2nd Floor, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2548; Tel.(734) 763-9456; Fax(734)647-0643; E-mail <michiganfellows@umich.edu>; Web site <www.sph.umich.edu/pfps/>.
BENIN

Hope Pogemiller
• Gave 5 talks to women at ‘baby weighings’ about how to prevent malnutrition.
• Guided 2 peer educators as they surveyed the knowledge of the community in the domain of AIDS.
• Created a group of clubs at the local high school— including a theatre club, environmental club, and folklore club.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Colleen DiLiddo
• Working with NGO and health promoter in community to run HIV/AIDS prevention program for youth

Kelly Smith
• Conducted a health diagnostic survey
• Held focus groups with adolescent pregnancy, AIDS, and birth control themes
• Developing an organic garden/nutrition project
• Developing an AIDS prevention program with adolescents

GUYANA

Peter Theis
• Developing a survey as an information gathering/needs assessment tool for organizations of persons with disabilities.
• Developing a project proposal for a resource center
• Meeting with Minister of Legal Affairs and Ministry of Health to have a law drafted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in Guyana
• Designed and implemented a program for International Day of Disabled Persons

HONDURAS

Hedda McLendon
• Gave nutrition and hygiene presentations to elementary schools
• AIDS training to “trainees”
• Condom demonstrations and presentations at border crossing

LESOTHO

Garrett Hubbard
• Collaborated with UNDP to plan a 4-day HIV/AIDS workshop for 45 youth
• Held sessions that included lessons on facilitation skills, workshop objectives, and meeting with UNDP
• Created the Mokhotlong DATF (District AIDS Task Force) Constitution

Danielle Menefee
• Working as a consultant to the District AIDS Task Force
• Helping to organize and coordinate HIV/AIDS education and awareness programs

MADAGASCAR

Monique Bussell
• Started the Manakara English Club
• Malaria campaign for the Associations International of Charities
• Hoping to start a radio show with health topics

Kelsey Lind
• Conducted sexual reproductive health surveys with 700 students at junior high and high school level
• Creating an International Club where participants will learn about various cooking, dancing, environment, and health issues in other countries
• Plans to develop a teen peer-educator group that will extend into neighboring communities

Note: Would like information about host countries from fellow PCVs, so that it can be shared in the International Club. Please send: recipes, health issues, music, pictures, population info., environmental concerns, and fun cultural facts to:

Kelsey Lind
Peace Corps
BP 15
Imerimandroso 503
MADAGASCAR
Khulubule Malaw: Rhonda Dillon
- Implemented a health center garden to help sustain the nutrition clinic’s supplementary feeding program
- Constructed shallow wells along with capacity building training so that village committees can perform maintenance

Moldova: Amanda Reiner
- Working as health educator

Mongolia: K. Tinsley-Anderson
- Developing ideas and models for website design for youth & sexual health websites
- Presentations on internet use, websites, and HIV/AIDS
- Assisting with the development of the human rights and HIV/AIDS component for Mongolia of the Global Fund 4th round call for proposals
- Developed presentation for the International Women’s Day and 2004 World AIDS Day Theme (Women, Girls, and HIV/AIDS)

Christine Johnson
- Organizing a Nurses Education Project-3 day seminar on nutrition and chronic disease prevention
- Developed a radio series on chronic disease prevention and risk factors

Kristin Bork
- Working to creating a newspaper ad and television program about Tuberculosis
- Coordinating a public awareness campaign on HIV/AIDS using popular Mongolian music groups
- Teaching English to coworkers

SOUTH AFRICA
Jennifer Nall
- Working with the office staff, social workers, and children at the Amazing Grace Children’s Centre-orphanage
- Completing an introductory assessment of the organization
- Plans to develop a web page in order to keep international donors up to date

Chandra Gilmore
- Working with a savings and loans group of adults and children-teaching better business techniques
- Working on well building project, girl’s soccer league, and the local health clinic and middle school

Stacy Maslowski
- Participated in polio vaccination week
- Conducted focus groups with women
- Following up on the projects of the previous PCV
- Plans to hold sessions in farming villages-focus on severe malnutrition

Gina Jenkins
- Future plans include: developing health clubs at schools to train peer educators
- Work with neighboring PCVs to create sex education manual
- Assist in grant writing for UNDP funding

Jolie Dennis
- Recently completed pre-service training
- Plans to conduct interviews with local health professionals and community leaders
- Working with the community to address major sanitation issues

JORDAN
Katie Reilly (leaving in July)

CAMEROON
Carie Muntifering (September)
Kelly Gillin (September)

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Moments after completing her blood test for the AIDS virus Sunday morning, Huelen Brown stood up before her husband's congregation and said, "It didn't hurt a bit."

The Rev. Wilmer Brown, pastor of Central Congregational United Church of Christ, and his wife both underwent HIV tests in the middle of worship services to serve as an example for others and to show the tests are relatively painless.

"I like to lead by precept and example," Wilmer Brown said after the services. "If I'm going to ask someone to do something, I will do it too."

The tests at the church, at 2401 Bienville St., were part of a citywide effort called Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. More than 15 churches are participating in educational efforts and health fairs this week.

Wilmer Brown said he and his wife decided to get the tests at their services to encourage others to do so, and "if they don't get tested, they can at least spread the word around" on the importance of testing.

The pastor invited people to get tested at the church's week-long health fair, which runs today through Friday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Other tests, such as blood-pressure and prostate screenings, also will be offered. The church will close out the week with a prayer breakfast Saturday at 9 a.m.

Robert Swayzer, deputy director of Brotherhood Inc., a New Orleans group that helps fight AIDS, said a citywide effort is focusing on black churches because 54 percent of AIDS patients in 2002 were African-Americans, who make up only 12 percent of the U.S. population.

"A lot of people don't realize they are at risk; they think AIDS is something that can only happen to someone else," he said. "Secondly, people need to realize that AIDS is preventable, and that behavior can put them at risk. And finally, many (HIV-positive) people are not aware of their status."

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, which finances Brotherhood Inc., says one in 160 black women and one in 50 black men are HIV-positive.

"It's devastating the African-American community," Swayzer said.

Dr. Robert Perry, a local physician, told members of the Central congregation that early detection of HIV is important "because the earlier you find out, the longer you can live."

Helen Brown said the church is ready to provide prayer and compassion and "to remove the stigma of having AIDS" for anyone who tests positive. "We pray that 100 people will come forward to be tested this week" at the church, she said.

DONATED BODIES USED IN LAND MINE TESTS

By Cain Burdeau

March 10, 2004 | NEW ORLEANS (AP) -- Seven cadavers donated to Tulane University's medical school were sold to the Army and blown up in land mine experiments, officials said Wednesday. Tulane said it has suspended dealings with a national distributor of donated bodies.

Tulane receives up to 150 cadavers a year from donors but needs only between 40 and 45 for classes, said Mary Bitner Anderson, co-director of the Tulane School of Medicine's Willed Body Program.

The university paid National Anatomical Service, a New York-based company that distributes bodies nationwide, less than $1,000 a body to deliver surplus cadavers, thinking they were going to medical schools in need of corpses.

The anatomical services company sold seven cadavers to the Army for between $25,000 and $30,000, said Chuck Dasey, a spokesman for the Army's Medical Research and Materiel Command in Fort Detrick, Md. The bodies were blown up in tests on protective footwear against land mines at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

Tulane said it found out about the Army's use of the bodies in January 2003. It suspended its contract with the anatomical services company this month. The company did not immediately return calls for comment.

(Continued on page 5)
There is a legitimate need for medical research and cadavers are one of the models that help medical researchers find out valuable information," Dasey said. "Our position is that it is a regulated process. Obviously it makes some people uncomfortable." Cadaver remains are routinely cremated, he added.

For years military researchers have bought cadavers to use in research involving explosive devices. In the last five years, that research has been used to help determine safe standoff distances, on how to build the best shelters, and to improve helmets, Dasey said.

Michael Meyer, a philosophy professor at Santa Clara University in California who has written about the ethics of donated bodies, said the military's use is questionable because it knows donors did not expect to end up in land mine tests.

"Imagine if your mother had said all her life that she wanted her body to be used for science, and then her body was used to test land mines. I think that is disturbing, and I think there are some moral problems with deception here," Meyers said.

The market in bodies and body parts is under scrutiny after two men, including the head of the Willed Body Program at the University of California at Los Angeles, were arrested for trafficking in stolen body parts.

Tulane community aids medical student with cancer

Kate Dearing
staff writer

Tulane organizations have helped raise upwards of $30,000 for third-year medical student Andy Martin, who was diagnosed with a rare form of sinus cancer in July 2000.

Now in his third round of radiation treatment, Martin is devoting most of his time researching sinonasal undifferentiated carcinoma, or SNUC, at the Tulane School of Medicine.

SNUC makes up a very small percentage of the cancer cases in the United States and is incurable.

SNUC is one of the truly rare cancers of which we know, with fewer than 100 cases reported in the scientific literature, Martin said. It is also one of the most malignant cancers, with few surviving past five years.

While Martin was diagnosed in 2000, he has attempted to continue his work at the medical school, moving to researching his own disease for this academic year.

The first time [I had radiation], I took a year off from medical school to get treatment; the second time I got treatment during my second year of medical school, Martin said. Now I am doing research during my third year of medical school while I get the treatment.

In order to pay for supplies and space for Martin_research, organizations and individuals within the Tulane community are attempting to raise money through various drives and events.

Last December, Chief of Hematology and Medical Oncology at the Tulane School of Medicine Tyler Curiel dribbled a basketball while running 108 miles for 24 hours in an event called Bounce for Life, on behalf of Martin. Medical students, along with Curiel, wanted to raise money for Martin_research in Curiel_lab, so the $28,000 in donations from the event went to Martin and SNUC research.

[Martin] has been courageous in allowing us to use his name to raise money, Curiel said after the event Dec. 15. The next few years we see our discoveries go into human clinical trials, Curiel said. This is a very exciting time for cancer research at Tulane.

The Bounce for Life Organization along with the Tulane Club Hockey team have set up a program called Score Against SNUC for this semester. The program is headed by goalie Edwin Wu, a research technician in pharmacology who hopes to start medical school soon.

Through the hockey website, participants in the program are able to donate a dollar or more per goal scored by the team. The total amount of the donation will be determined at the end of the season based on the number of goals the team has scored. So far, the team has scored 26 goals, and the proceeds will go to Martin_research.

In his research, Martin wishes to find out more about his very rare cancer because little is known about it at this time. We have established a cell line of SNUC, which is the first in the country to our knowledge, Martin said. There is a lot more that we can learn now that we have gotten the line started, like which cancer genes are being expressed or not expressed by the tumor cells.

(Continued on page 6)
Tulane community aids (cont.)

Because of his current condition and the support from Curiel, Martin was able to sidetrack from the normal path of a third-year medical student.

I am at a unique point in both my personal struggle with the disease and in my education as a medical student, Martin said. This point allows me to sidestep the clinical duties of a typical third-year student and, under the mentorship of Dr. Tyler Curiel, learn how to do the type of research that will further our understanding of SNUC. This work involves not only learning how these cells look and behave, but assessing them as targets for some new, novel cancer treatments.

After completing medical school, Martin plans to become a head and neck surgeon. I think that head and neck surgery is one of the most interesting fields in medicine with a great balance of technically challenging surgeries balanced with the need for good cosmetic outcomes, and good functional outcomes because of all the important structures, neural and otherwise, that lie in the region, Martin said.

For now, Martin recognizes his ability to research SNUC would not be possible without the aid and support of the Tulane family.

Tulane is a truly remarkable community, and the amount of support I have received for this effort has been incredible, Martin said.

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Date: March 17, 2004

Strangely Placed Answers to the Crossword Puzzle

Across:
66-nato  31-jambs  60-gal
24-down
65-leon  27-atom  58-scan  21-busey
64-snead  25-banjos  57-dine  18-verbs
63-alls  24-dude  56-core  13-ryan
62-andy  23-rem  55-ivan  12-orca
61-marne  22-sty  54-rams
11-trim
60-guyscout  21-badman  53-fatso
10-carddealer
59-avoid  20-traveler  52-adult  9-ahead
57-dietsoda  19-eric  51-oola
8-ste
54-richie  17-facevalues  49-aided  7-pour
51-oaf  16-harry  47-evelyn
6-solemn
50-ava  15-zoot  46-hairdo  5-azalea
48-cash  14-opel  43-brats  4-elev
45-lather  9-actor  39-utah  3-decay
44-take  5-asps  38-false
43-bride  2-apart
1-lofts
34-bonechina

Million Dollar Bill User Speaks

Provided By: The Associated Press
Last Modified: 3/11/2004 1:17:07 PM

ATLANTA (AP) - A woman who tried to use a fake $1 million bill to buy $1,675 worth of merchandise at Wal-Mart said it was all just a misunderstanding - she thought the bill was real.

The United States Treasury does not make $1 million bills.

"You can't keep up with the U.S. Treasury," said Alice Pike, speaking from jail.

Pike, 35, was arrested last week at the Wal-Mart. The bill was a novelty item that can be bought at gag shops. Pike told police she got it from her estranged husband, who is a coin collector. Pike said she first tried to buy the merchandise with two Wal-Mart gift cards. But the cashier told her the cards only had a total value of $2.32. That's when Pike says she pulled out the $1 million bill.

"All I've got is this," Pike said she told the cashier.

"I wasn't trying to pass off the bill," she said. "That's ridiculous."

A police report says Pike tried to pay for the items with the fake bill and even asked for change. Prosecutors must decide whether to prosecute Pike on charges of first-degree forgery.

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An Interview With Two Soon to be PCVs -Kelly Gillin and Carie Muntifering

Two current Master’s Internationalist Students, Kelly Gillin and Carie Muntifering, have received Peace Corps assignments in Cameroon. Kelly and Carie will be leaving for Africa in September. Tulane currently has one volunteer, Drew Koleros, serving in Cameroon.

What did your parents and friends say when you told them that you will be going to Africa?

Kelly: Haha, when I said I was going to Cameroon most of them asked where that was, some didn't even know it was in Africa, and they had no idea that I'd be learning French too. But at the end of the day, they are all really happy and excited for me because I am really looking forward to it!

Carie: My parents were excited because they knew I really wanted to go there! Many of my friends asked, “That’s in Africa, right?”… I am from a small town in Minnesota!

What are your fears and uncertainties about serving in Cameroon?

Kelly: I am a bit nervous about language barriers, but I am just really excited about going, I'll figure out the fears and uncertainties once I'm there I guess, it's hard to know now really? Oh, but I was a little uncertain about eating oxtail...

Carie: Diseases, snakes, eating meat, and humidity

What western luxuries do you plan to take advantage of before leaving for Cameroon?

Kelly: Hot showers, running water, that's what comes to mind first...

Carie: TV, yoga class, and Whole Foods.

What strategy will you adopt to convince your favorite neighbor to wash your clothes for you, since you probably have little experience washing clothes by hand?

Kelly: I actually have a lot of experience washing clothes by hand from living in Central America, so I think I'll be alright! I prefer to do it myself anyhow, I had one experience where my host mom did it for me while I was studying abroad in Costa Rica before I worked there, and she hung my cute underwear in the front yard for all the SMALL town to see. No gracias, I don't need that again.

Carie: Is that really allowed? If so, I might have a lot of convincing to do… not only do I hate doing laundry but I can’t cook either!

What will you miss the most about New Orleans?

Kelly: I will miss the friends I've made here, Mona's Café, chai teas with soy milk at Café Arabesque every morning, going out dancing, and sitting by the river studying. Oh, and parades, they are always a great time.

Carie: Friends, live music, and being addressed as “baby” and “sweety” by all the locals.

Do you worry about taking enough underwear, socks, and deodorant?

Kelly: I worry about taking too much because I don't feel like carrying it all, but you can bet a big space will be allocated to those necessities.

Carie: No… I am sure Victoria’s Secret will ship to Africa!

What personal hygiene or beauty practice do you plan to give up?

Kelly: I am going to give up wearing lipstick and eye make-up, and I often get lazy about shaving my legs, my hair is short enough that skipping washing my hair for a bit should be alright, but I plan on sticking with brushing my teeth and deodorant if I can.

Carie: Maybe I’ll give up shaving my legs… but I hate hairy armpits so I’d still have to pack razors.

How long do you think it will take before you master the art of carrying water on your head?

Kelly: Should I start doing exercises now? I'm not sure, but I keep telling everyone my neck may look like Henry Rollins' by the time I return.

Carie: Not to long… I just tried carrying a bowl on top of my head across my apartment and I was pretty good!

Do you plan to have a pet (chicken, dog, cat, goat, pig) and are you prepared to prevent this animal from being eaten?

Kelly: I will have a dog, and I didn't even think about it, but I'll defend it with my life.

Carie: I would love to have a dog or maybe a monkey… and yes I am prepared to risk my life to avoid having my pet show up on my dinner plate but I promise not to become one of those people who treats their pets better than their children.

(Continued on page 8)
What kinds of treats do you think you'll want in your care packages?

Kelly: PLEASE girl scout cookies and DARK chocolate.

Carie: Chocolate soy milk and towels (my experience in developing countries is that the towels don’t really dry you off)

What will be your answer when you are bombarded by village marriage proposals?

Kelly: I haven't decided yet, maybe I'll have a "husband" back home, or maybe I'll make them participate in some sort of talent contest to court me.

Carie: I’m a nun

Peace Corps Suspends Program in Haiti

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 21, 2004, UPDATED 3:00 pm—Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez announced the suspension of the Peace Corps program in Haiti effective immediately.

“The Peace Corps has had a successful program in Haiti, making great strides in the areas of agriculture, small business development and working on health and HIV/AIDS education and awareness. The safety and security of the volunteer is the number one priority of the Peace Corps and in light of the current conditions in Haiti, suspension of the program is a necessary action,” said Peace Corps Director Vasquez.

The Peace Corps has served in Haiti a total of 14 years and consecutively since 1996. Agriculture volunteers have helped address poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation by assisting non-governmental organizations with programs in agroforestry, agricultural extension, agribusiness, microcredit, and community development. Peace Corps volunteers in business development have also helped create and sustain small business opportunities for the rural poor improving their access to financial services. In addition, health volunteers worked primarily with women and children stressing the importance of immunizations, sanitation, child and maternal health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Peace Corps Volunteers Return to China

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 4, 2004 - In July, approximately 50 Peace Corps volunteers will arrive in the People’s Republic of China, marking the Peace Corps’ return to the country. Peace Corps’ program in China was temporarily suspended on April 5, 2003, due to concerns surrounding the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Volunteers Launch Crisis Corps’ First HIV/AIDS Education Initiative in Ghana

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 9, 2004 – For the first time, the West African nation of Ghana is partnering with the Peace Corps’ Crisis Corps volunteers to tackle the critical issue of HIV/AIDS.

Six Crisis Corps volunteers, who recently arrived in Ghana, will work as HIV/AIDS education trainers for the next six months. Since the criteria for becoming a Crisis Corps volunteer includes prior service as a Peace Corps volunteer, the volunteers will bring to Ghana a wealth of skills and experiences obtained in countries such as Malawi, Madagascar, and Kenya. As Peace Corps volunteers, their work included teaching health education to students, providing nutrition education, and promoting HIV/AIDS prevention.

In their capacity as education trainers with the Crisis Corps, two volunteers will be working with teacher training colleges across Ghana to implement HIV/AIDS curriculums. Volunteers will provide feedback on the curriculum and will supervise students training to be teachers. Another volunteer will provide monitoring and training support for the HIV/AIDS curriculum being used at these training colleges.

All six volunteers will be building upon Peace Corps’ long-term relationship with Ghana, the first country ever to welcome Peace Corps volunteers. Since the establishment of the program in 1961, over 3,500 volunteers have served in Ghana.
While preparing to leave for Peace Corps, I remember packing my new journal and imagining myself joining the ranks of many former Volunteers whose experiences inspired such prolific writing that many of their collections even published. About a year and a half later, I cringe almost every time I make an entry, as I have come to realize that I am documenting nothing more than the story of how the perpetual singleton is surviving Peace Corps. Of all the unique experiences I have had, I have often wondered why, when the pen hits the paper, my thoughts revolve around my heart and its needs—until this evening that is. Tonight, I closed my door and realized that today, like many of my days here, consisted of explaining and/or defending my status of being single for the umpteenth time. After a full day of this, I found myself retreating to the house with my ever-increasing number of pets, listening to the bachata “Yo sin ti, no puedo vivir, yo sin ti me puedo morir,” and questioning just what the hell I am really saying to these people. And why?

I am sure that there are few Volunteers who are unfamiliar with the usual line of questioning and comments: "How many children do you have? Why don't you have children? Have you ever been married?" (A trick question—proceed with caution.) "Why wouldn't you marry a Dominican? You should really marry me. Besides, you need to start having children—now is a good time." (Carting baby on packed mini-bus, hmmm, and not to mention hiding pregnancy from Peace Corps if you are a female Volunteer.)

In response, I am usually quick to outline the benefits of being single and the consequences of being married (i.e. makes doing taxes a bitch and have to begin balancing checkbook). I then go on to explain the mantra of the self-assured singleton, who will settle for nothing less than her ideal, when the time is right, and everything is in place. Unfortunately, they buy into this idea like many of the initiatives I try to sell them at charlas. I can tell when we say our goodbyes that they feel for this poor senorita who has passed her prime. And so when I come home at night, ready to write, I myself am actually wondering about Mr. Wright and thinking he’d better surface soon. That is, until the next morning, when I have a clear mind and am again convinced that he is not in the plan right now and I am better off. Until about noontime, when the constant grilling from the folks begins and the carefreeness (or carelessness) I see around their love lives is clearly breaking me down, and has me questioning just where I am coming from, and if I am way off the mark.

Growing up in the States taught me that when making even the simplest of decisions I must go through a set process that is organized, defined and defendable. And now, living in this sexy Latino-Caribe island society where I'm not even sure the decision-making process exists is challenging all my logic. I have come to realize that while I am constantly fighting off one extreme and continually defending the other, I have not only gone off the deep end, but I may have also produced a journal, and another article, worthy only of meeting a fire.

In the end, though, I think my Dominican friends may be more realistic than I thought when they remind me that love and relationships don't always happen in near perfect conditions, and if they are not accepted because of that, they are lost due to mere impracticalities. How sorry they would feel for me if they knew that all of my relationships have been defined by these impracticalities.

-Colleen Diliddo

Sain baina uu! Hello from the land of Chinggis (not Genghis) Khaan, fermented mare's milk, and one hundred different ways to make a meal out of flour and water! I hope you enjoy your brief introduction to Mongolia through the eyes of one PCV. And if not, well, I know you'll read it anyway. What, you have something better to do like handwash unmentionables in cold to tepid water???

The primary language in Mongolia is Khalkh Mongol. A strong minority speak Kazakh, mainly in the west. Many people still speak Russian, though English is quickly becoming the most popular second language to study in school. And, you'll run into the random German speaker. Handy phrases from our language class last summer:

Baina uu?----Are you there? (Heard REPEATEDLY during telephone conversations, increasing in volume throughout the phone call)

Huuten baina uu?---Is it cold? (Common response to this: teem! yes!)

Za, za--Okay, okay. (Said all the time, most common word next to:

baikhgui--don't have
medekhgui--don't know
madadgui--maybe, but really means no

Allaa! Tuclaarai!---Help! I'm killed! (just fun to say, really)
STORIES FROM MY LIFE IN MONGOLIA-Kristin Bork

-keep in mind that I live in the capital so most of my experiences are NOT the typical PCV Mongolia experience.

THE CHILDREN'S PARK

Went to the children's park the past 2 weekends. it is rather decrepit and scary looking. more the setting for a bad horror film than an afternoon of magical fun. they have a few rides, some of which work. My favorites are the twin bicycles of death and the roller coaster of death. The ferris wheel of death is too slow for any real fear to build, though the creaking and groaning it makes as it tries to haul your fat foreigner ass up and over makes for a few appeasingly nervous minutes. The bicycle of death involves a side-by-side sort of tandem bicycle and a monorail about 20 feet off of the ground. as you corner turns, either you or your partner are quite certain you will fall off. Invariably, the people behind you will slam into you at least once, causing a bit too much shaking for comfort. and the safety measures? A nylon strap looped at both ends is casually strung in front of you. as i peddled, i kept sliding down in my seat and would have to try to scooch back up. Thank god for the nylon strap!!! The bike is my new exercise program. Between the scooching up and peddling the mammoth bike, I'll have thighs of steal in no time.

But Kristin, you say, you can't neglect your arms! never fear, this is where the roller coaster of death comes in. for a mere 600T (about 50 cents), I get quite the arm workout. The cars for the record are individual, with enough seat room for 2 Mongolians to squish or 1 foreigner to sit in relative comfort. My favorites are the twin bicycles of death and the roller coaster of death. The ferris wheel of death is too slow for any real fear to build, though the creaking and groaning it makes as it tries to haul your fat foreigner ass up and over makes for a few appeasingly nervous minutes. The bicycle of death involves a side-by-side sort of tandem bicycle and a monorail about 20 feet off of the ground. as you corner turns, either you or your partner are quite certain you will fall off. Invariably, the people behind you will slam into you at least once, causing a bit too much shaking for comfort. and the safety measures? A nylon strap looped at both ends is casually strung in front of you. as i peddled, i kept sliding down in my seat and would have to try to scooch back up. Thank god for the nylon strap!!! The bike is my new exercise program. Between the scooching up and peddling the mammoth bike, I'll have thighs of steal in no time.

Miss Mongolia 2003

Went to MONGOLIIN SAIHAN BUUCGUI 2003, or Miss Mongolia pageant. It lasted forever but was fabulous. We got there at 6:30, sat down at 7, and it only started 40 minutes late at 7:40. The only qualifications were that you had to be a single woman over 5 ft 8 in. They had a talent portion, but talent was NOT a prerequisite. I wish I had a tape of the show. 24 women competed in talent, evening gown, swimsuit, and interview. One girl was a complete disaster from the beginning. her sash fell down almost causing her to trip and she never regained her composure. I almost don't know where to begin. The talent was almost painful to watch/listen to. 2 girls who had obviously shown up not having talent had a drawing competition--one drew a cartoon goldfish and the other drew a picture that looked to some to be a stork, others to be a chicken, and still others to be a woman holding the world. While thy were drawing, another girl dazzled us with her talent on the keyboard. The majority of her talent came from the programmed beats. Two contestants competed for worst talent ever. One was a girl in a little bo peep outfit who had seriously the worst voice I've ever heard. This would not be SO bad except she brought out a very famous Mongol male singer to do her duet. It was so obvious she was trying to ride on his talent, but he only served to show exactly how bad her voice was. Then the last girl was a horror show. She was the main dancer/singer (or person attempting to pose in a provocative manner) and had three of the most uncoordinated, rhythmically challenged men in bad tuxes as her backup dancers. At the end, she dropped her mike and lifted her arms up and after a few beats, they ran forward to pick her up. Then she ran into one of them and it all ended after the music. Mongol crowds aren't kind. During the interviews several girls cried and they must have given some DUMB answers because people were hissing and laughing. One girl finally looked at the audience and said "yacan be?" which means, "What's up? or What's wrong?". Everyone just laughed harder. And I don't know WHAT the question was, but one girl got up and just said, "Chinggis...Chinggis" for about five minutes before running off stage in tears.

The highlight for everyone was the swimsuit competition that was followed by a salsa dance. The swimsuits were high-cut thongs barely secured at the top by a single strap. The women in the audience all had sympathy for the contestants' painful looking thongs projected on 30 ft high video screens that made even the tiniest woman look like she had a ginormous behind. But when the salsa dancing started, all sympathy was lost to thunderous laughter and much speculation as to whose breasts would fly out of their top first. The girls were troopers and kept going even after they saw the trauma happening to their comrades in dance.

(Continued on page 11)
Miss Mongolia (cont.)

Some of the male dancers who were partnered with the contestants tried to be gentlemen and place the flyaway breasts back into the tops. One male dancer eventually just smacked his palm over the contestant's breast after it fell out twice. My friend Chris was sitting next to me. One might best classify his expression during this interlude as one of childlike delight and awe. He's a fidgety fellow normally, but this scene sent him into such paroxysms of glee that he fell into my lap several times. He's already penciled next year's competition into his schedule.

Then while the judges deliberated, we were treated to a variety of popular mongolian musical acts. My favorite mongolian band, mcx, entertained the crowd in leopard-print skirts and with much punching of the air and gutteral yells. My favorite member of the band has bleached blonde hair that is strongly reminiscent of a mop and his skirt has a picture of the Tazmanian devil on it. My top personal goal for the next two years is to meet him. Hopefully I'll be sending a picture of me and the mopman home soon...

The other acts mainly consisted of people wandering aimlessly around stage in an attempt at choreography and interspersing bad pop with worse rap. This one group, ice top, had obviously seen an old Run DMC video and let that be their style guide. 9 of us went and 6 of us left at 1130. It ended almost an hour later. The winner got an suv.

FLYING BY MIAT
-Kristen Bork

I went on a vacation to Zavkhan. We flew miat (maybe I'll arrive today). I hate flying, especially in little planes. The plane took off, then a half an hour in the air we banked and the flight attendant came and told us we were going back to UB because the air was bad in Zavkhan. I felt very secure. So we waited around UB airport for a good five hours (not a thrilling airport) and then went up again. We were flying through dense cloud cover and had been in the air about a half an hour too long when the announcement came that in ten minutes we would land in Bayanhongor, which is clearly NOT Zavkhan. So we landed, played on the tarmac for a bit, pretended we were Hollywood stars from days of old, tried to get fed but were told that there was no food as the other people on the plane were being served what looked a lot like food. Eventually they told us we would stay the night in Bayanhongor. We checked into the hotel and then decided to sample Bayanhongor's night life.

The theme of our lives at this point was 'bayanhongor blows'. We went to a restaurant, were told that there were two different dishes. Then we saw a group walk in and be served quite a few more dishes than just two. We walked around looking for a place to sit that was relatively nice and quiet. A little girl in a store took us to a cafe, then came back to the cafe fifteen minutes later to try and take us to another one. We stayed at the original and eventually began circle dancing with some young Mongolian folk. We started saying that we were going to start a new tourism campaign for Bayanhongor. Bayanhongor- the city of brotherly love. I have a picture of my friend Jonathan kissing a Mongolian man on the cheek. This will be the perfect picture for the campaign. By this point in the evening, the theme had changed from 'bayanhongor blows' to BAYANHONGOR ROCKS! We went home. The next morning when waiting for the van to take us back to the airport, I was proposed to by a drunk man at the cafe. When I refused his ring, he gave me a blue bead and gave his address to Jonathan to give to me. We eventually got to Zavkhan that day and I got to experience the joys of using an outhouse with just a hole in the bottom and cracks big enough to watch people through, building a fire, and eating out of dishes that, 'hey they still look clean'. It was a lot of fun.

This picture was submitted by Kristin Bork, I leave this to your own imagination to figure out who this fellow in red might be?
Peace Corps Life
-Interviews with Volunteers around the World

Drew Koleros-Cameroon Sept. 2003-2005
Christine Johnson-Mongolia June 2002-2004
Kelly Smith-Dominican Republic Sept. 2003-2005

What did you eat for dinner last night?

Drew: I actually went for street food last night. I had poisson braisse, or grilled fish, with baton du manioc (I don't really know how to explain what baton is, but if you have ever been to Cameroon you are either nostalgic or horrified right now) with pimont and a "33" export beer. Not those tiny little American beers, we're talking beers west African style.

Christine: I had takeout pizza while watching some dvds with my friends. I can't usually afford it, but last night we splurged.

Kelly: Boiled yucca with red onions and eggs. (i love yucca!)

Describe your house in 1-2 sentences.

Drew: Hot and humid TOUJOURS.

Christine: I live in a one-bedroom apartment in a concrete block apartment building in the center of Ulaanbaatar. I have electricity, running hot and cold water and great heating (important when its 30 below outside).

Kelly: I've been in my little wood shack for 2 weeks now, it's still missing part of the floor but is 2 rooms, bright yellow and has a huge space for a garden(....organic veggies soon to be here). My house is surrounded by fruit trees; oranges, grapefruit, cherry, guava....love it! I have electricity most of the time and no running water, that means there is a latrine.

How many PCVs are in your country?

Drew: We have more than 150 volunteers here in all 10 provinces of Cameroon.

Christine: About 80

Kelly: about 130, and it's a fairly small island

What are the problems or issues with P.C. in your country?

Drew: Our Country Director is pretty strict here and isn't really in touch with the volunteers. He then makes a bunch of rules and regulations that makes us feel isolated from admin which isn't good. For instance, he closed the case du passage ici at midnight every night. So now if we want to go out late, we must find a hotel or something. After the boit du nuit that is not the best idea for anyone. Little thing like that make him out of touch...

Christine: In our country with one of the lowest population densities in the world, volunteers are very widely dispersed and isolated. It is very difficult for them to travel in to the provincial centers or into the capital. It is also very difficult to communicate between volunteers by any means other than letters.

Kelly: well...the living allowance isn't sufficient anymore because we've had extreme inflation here in the DR. We should be getting a raise soon. There is increasing violence and crime in the capital too. I really can't complain though because PC infrastructure here is amazing and they are really organized and on top of things.

What is your creepiest/scariest animal, insect, or person encounter?

Drew: I am kinda like indiana jones when it comes to snakes. I hate them, so I convinced myself somehow that there weren't any snakes at my post. A couple of weeks ago I was reading a book on the hammock on my porch and a huge snake came slithering by. I think it took it better than I thought. I just let him go and kept reading my book.

Christine: In general, its the drunks that sometimes pass out in my stairwell that are the worst. They can be particularly frightening, especially when the power goes out and you accidentally bump into them or step on them.

Kelly: When I put on my backpack one day to head out and I noticed a fuzzy thing stuck to it, I moved my hand over to wipe off the "dirt" and it moved it's leg just as I was about to touch it....tarantula!
What native habits have you picked up?

Drew: There are so many I don’t know where to begin. When I want someone to come, I make this weird hand gesture that looks like you are trying to grab a mosquito. I hiss at my friends when I want their attention. Maintenant franglais is my primary language (c’est comme ca), and I have mastered the present obvious tense of french (tu es la? Oui, je suis la. Donc, on est la ensemble. Oui.)— and I have only been here six months...

Christine: There’s a word, “za,” that means “ok”, “so”, “well” that is said at the beginning of most sentences. That one has really stuck with me and I use it even when speaking English. Also, I now also take off my shoes every time I enter someone’s house.

Kelly: living at a slower pace, drinking coffee 3 or 4 times a day.....really strong, lots of sugar and no milk, kissing everyone you meet on the cheek, scrunching up your nose instead of saying “what?” balancing a giant bucket of water on my head for a 10 minute walk from the aqueduct to my house and of course dancing the merengue!

Have you or any other PCVs been involved in traffic or bicycle accidents and what happened?

Drew: Unfortunately just a couple of weeks ago two volunteers were in a head-on collision in a provincial capital. They were both medi-vacced to D.C. and are still there now. I think they will be ok, but they are pretty shaken up by the experience.

Christine: One group of volunteers were in a van that flipped over in the snow in the middle of winter in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night during a 24 hour ride. They, and all the other Mongolians in the van, piled out, flipped it back upright and then continued on their way.

Kelly: nope, so far so good for me. Driving is crazy here though so theres been several volunteers in accidents but nothing serious.

Please briefly describe the most memorable person from your P.C. experience.

Drew: I have met so many amazing volunteers in country I couldn’t pick one. It’s crazy how close you can become to people you didn’t even know a year ago...

Christine: Two other volunteers and I had to wait by the side of the road to try to catch a van back to our town. We’d been waiting for about 3 hours when the wind really started to pick up and it started snowing. So, we were cowered under our sleeping bags trying to wait out the storm. There was a nice gas station owner who invited us in to the station to wait. He was incredibly friendly, but continually apologized for not being able to speak English. We told him it was no problem-- we could all talk in Mongolian. But, after he unsuccessfully tried Russian and Burait (a language for a small ethnic group living on either side of the Russian-Mongolian border), he gave up. Even though, we tried speaking in Monglian with him, he wouldn’t try to talk, so we just sat and watched tv in silence. It was a very strange night.

Kelly: My 93 year old “Dona” or host Mom during training who smokes a pipe every day and also gets up a 7am to chop wood with an axe (to use for cooking in the outdoor stove) and feed the chickens.

What is the strangest item that you have received in a care package?

Drew: Around Christmas time somebody sent me a package with swiss miss hot chocolate. It’s so hot here toujours that the thought of a hot beverage makes me sweat. I don’t know if my friend thought it would remind me of home or help make me feel more “together” with Boston, but I really have no intention of drinking it any time soon.

Christine: All of my items have been pretty useful and practical. However, one of my friends received a package of microwave popcorn. Very, very few people have microwaves here, much less in her town that had no electricity.

Kelly: A giant box full of yarn, oh yea and a make up set from my friend....when am I going to use that?
Workin' at the Car Wash

2003 Darwin Award Nominee
Confirmed True by Darwin

(29 January 2003, Brazil) At work, Manoel Messias Batista Coelho was responsible for cleaning out the storage tanks of gasoline tanker trucks. He had been employed in that capacity for two months when he ran aoul of fuel.

The 35-year-old began to fill a tanker with water, a standard safety procedure that forces flammable vapor out of the container. He returned an hour later to check whether the water level was high enough to proceed. But he had trouble deciding, because it was so DARK inside the tanker.

A resourceful employee, Manoel forgot the very reason why he was filling the tank with water when he lit a cigarette lighter to shed some light on the situation. His little test successfully determined that the water level was NOT yet high enough for safety. The vapor explosion launched him through the air, and he landed in the company parking lot 100 meters away.

Manoel suffered severe burns, blunt force trauma, and an injury to the head that exposed his brain. Our witless car washer had learned his terminal lesson in safety by the time the firemen arrived.

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Submitted by: Lucio Caleffi
Reference: O Estado de São Paulo, Folha de São Paulo Journal

DIY dil shoots nail into brain

2004 Reader Submission
Pending Acceptance


By Sue Hewitt

BRAD Shorten admits he is a fool who is lucky to be alive.
He was skylarking with mates over a few beers and took what he thought was an empty nail gun and pointed it at his head.
The Victorian father of three fired a 3.2cm nail through his skull into his brain, just behind his temple.

A centimetre deeper and Mr Shorten, 33, could have been dead or paralysed.
The Sunbury bricklayer's labourer thought the firing mechanism had glanced his skin, leaving a small red dot, not realising the nail had been counter-sunk into his skull.

Mr Shorten had minimal pain, but started to feel light headed.
His son, Nathan, 13, insisted on calling an ambulance.

(Continued on page 15)
"At hospital the pain got worse, and I was getting frustrated so I asked (nurses) for a pair of pliers to pull it out myself," he said.

That would have been the worst thing to do, according to Dr Kevin Siu, a Royal Melbourne Hospital neurosurgeon.

Dr Siu said there was a risk that removing the nail would cause a blood vessel to hemorrhage, possibly causing death.

The surgeon said had the nail been a centimetre deeper or had it been angled backwards, Mr Shorten risked a stroke, permanent brain damage or paralysis.

In a four-hour operation, a specialist team took a part of his skull off and removed the nail.

Mr Shorten said he was recovering from surgery and was expected to make a full recovery.

"I did a very stupid thing," he said.

The Victorian Injury Surveillance and Applied Research unit has found a growing trend of people, mainly men, injuring themselves doing stunts or tricks. In the six years to December 2002, 82 people suffered such injuries.

Submitted on 03/06/2004

Submitted by: Drew Sonne

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Child’s Play Crossword Puzzle (do you still know how to spell?)

April 1, 2004 - “Enter Laughing”

By Patrick Jordan

ACROSS
1. Mother ___ (forty-niner’s dream)
5. Horned vipers
9. Method student, e.g.
14. GM’s German subsidiary
15. Outlandish
17. Stock certificate number
19. “Fanny” novelist
20. Inn guest
21. Black hat wearer, in old Westerns
22. Oinker’s abode
23. “Monster” rock group
24. “___, Where’s My Car?”
25. “Deliverance” instruments
27. Hanna-Barbera’s heroic Ant
31. Beams in doorways
35. Reaction to Niagara Falls, often
36. Magma, after surfacing
37. Twistable treat
38. Word that can precede each theme entry’s first word
40. Departure
41. Mortgage company’s claim
42. Noshed on
43. Wedding cake figure
44. Seize
45. Barbados can’t output
48. The C in J.C. Penney
50. Glamorous Gardner
51. Clod
54. Fonzie’s red-haired pal
57. Low-calorie quencher
59. Duck
60. One whose motto is “Be Prepared”
61. The Seine’s largest branch
62. Filmmaker/painter Warhol
63. “___ fair in love and war
64. Golf’s “Slammin’ Sam”
65. Muhammad’s 1978 defeater
66. 19-country gp.

DOWN
1. Spots for choirs
d2. Dizzying gallery displays
d3. Waste away
d4. Everest’s is 29,028 ft.
d5. Shrub with flower clusters
d6. Grave
7. Do the honors at tea
8. Sault ___ Marie
9. In the offing
10. Lot figure
11. Svelte
12. Se a World biggie
13. No-hitter champ Nolan
18. Stop and go, say
21. 1978 Holly Holm’s portrait
24. Crossword column heading
26. Youngest Lennon sister
28. Curbside call
29. Poet of ancient Rome
30. One sock, to the other
31. Sudden elevator stop phenomenon
32. “Celeste Aida,” for one
33. Assertive’s antithesis
34. White setting pieces
38. Hypocritical
39. Last state admitted in the 19th century
43. Nursery school teachers
46. Bob or beehive
47. Speed-reading expert Wood
49. Gave a lift to
51. Alley Oop’s hearthrob
52. X-rated
53. Dom DeLuise movie
54. St. Louis squad since 1995
55. John, in St. Petersburg
56. Meltdown site
57. Philo Vance creator S. S. Van
58. Make a digital dupe of
60. Square dance sweetie

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