

The Swazi Sojourn

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CHAT introduced to help new group assess communities

Volunteers Holly Bullock and Justin Garland used skills they learned at an HIV/AIDS assessment workshop they attended in October in Lesotho to plan a three-month community intergration project that the Trainees will use at their new communities after they are sworn in as Volunteers on Dec. 8.

They presented the plan, Community HIV/AIDS Assessment Toolbox, or CHAT, to the trainees and their counterparts at the kaGewasu Training Center in Ngonini on Nov. 19.

One of the traits of the Peace Corps Swaziland program is that Volunteers' jobs are very undefined. The job description states that Volunteers will work on "HIV prevention and impact mitigation."

This vagueness can be an asset in that it allows for flexibility, but can also be a detriment to Volunteers who are overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems they face. CHAT will begin to give PCVs the tools they need to assess a problem, sort through contributing factors, and then decide upon a positive and successful intervention.

Peace Corps Volunteers are encouraged not
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Photo by Annie Mohr

Tessa hands out prizes to Grade 1 after their stunning performance, which won them first prize in the AIDS education contest.

Volunteer Profile:

Hard work gets contagious with Tessa Reff

By Annie Mohr

Swazi Sojournal

"She's very fast," Elmon Dlamini says of Tessa, his Peace Corps counterpart. "If she wants to tell the community something, she goes and tells them. If something has to be done, she goes right to the counselors."

Tessa Reff has brought a work ethic to her community that others now emulate. At the Nsubane Primary AIDS Day, Elmon described her motivational prowess, saying "She encourage[s] the community to establish project[s], to work hard."

Projects and hard work are certainly not lacking in this rural, lowveld community. With Tessa's assistance, there is now a garden project, piggery project, and sewing project in the works.

The garden project will likely have the most impact. After seeing the potential and interest of the people trying to sell their goods at the local market, Tessa helped them apply for a Peace Corps Partnership grant that will fund a borehole and irrigation system for a com-

munity garden, which will allow them to "fight AIDS and stay strong" as Elmon says.

After several stressful meetings with the Department of Geology, Rural Water, an irrigation specialist, and the Department of Agriculture, her hard work has paid off. Nsubane will soon be enjoying loads of tomatoes, onions, and spinach to provide them with nutritious meals and a source of income, thanks to a combined effort and commitment from the market committee, Elmon, and Tessa.

Soon after enjoying a popcorn ball and juice at AIDS Day, Elmon carries chairs, collects trash, and promptly burns it in the trash pit. Yeah, there's a lot of hard work in Nsubane. Too tired and hot to help, I just sit and watch them clean up.

Sometimes, though, something as simple as a phone call can make a world a difference for a rural area. After Tessa made a call to Rural Water, Elmon says, "Now we have enough water because of her - the electricity pump was broken when she came." After
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Photo by Annie Mohr



Tessa and Elmon welcome students and guests to the Nsubane Primary AIDS Day, Nov. 1

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her call, they came to fix it and now they have water. After calling PSI to arrange for mobile HIV testing, “lots of people know their status now in Nsubane because of this lady.”

Prior to her arrival, Nsubane was full of potential, but lacking someone to coordinate minor yet fundamental details and advocate for their concerns. Tessa has been able to be the missing link in community development there.

Together, Elmon and Tessa make a strong steam. Mutual respect and admiration make this counterpart-volunteer pairing a success. Elmon says working with Tessa is, “very, very wonderful.” Tessa

“In order to beat this disease, we have to be strong. It’s one thing to talk about fighting AIDS, but now we must do it. A strong person abstains. A strong person uses a condom. A strong person goes for a test. A strong person who is positive tells people. A strong person is a friend to those suffering from the disease.”

immediately interjects, “And I couldn’t do anything without my wonderful counterpart – through his work.”

Watching the two interact is quite entertaining. Both are quick to smile, and Elmon is never short of energy. As music plays in between class performances at AIDS Day, Elmon snaps his fingers, shimmies his shoulders, and chants, “Dance Tessa, dance Tessa!” She can’t help but smile as she refuses, saying,

“I will if you will.”

This spirit of cooperation made the AIDS day celebration a hit. Tessa had the idea a

See **Reff** *continued on page 6*

in brief

Call APCD to follow PC policy

When traveling to Mbabane or to any location outside your site area, you must call or SMS Gus Konturas, APCD, or Lindiwe Dladla, program manager, for notification. Failure to do so could result in public flogging and/or administrative disciplinary action.

-VAC

Do you work with Positive Women?

Membership forms for joining the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS are available from the PCV Resource Binder by the mailboxes.

Country director delays departure

Winnie Emoungu, Swaziland Country Director, likes Swaziland *too much* and has delayed leaving post. She plans to stay in country until Dec. 18.

Susan Taylor takes a trip

Congratulations to Susan Taylor for not becoming the last Volunteer to take a trip outside the country. She spent a weekend last month in South Africa with Jill Granberg. Silena Layne stole the title as last PCV to step outside eSwatini on Nov. 30 when she travels to Oakland, Calif.

Creating awareness through art in Mozambique

10 November, IRIN PLUSNEWS -

Mozambican artists organised a four-day festival on Art and AIDS last week in the capital, Maputo, to create awareness around the epidemic.

The festival, the third to be organised by the Cooperative of Associated Artists, Musicians and Journalists, showcased a number of artistic initiatives, which were discussed by the audience. The event also included a one-day seminar on the role artists can play in AIDS prevention campaigns.

The film, ‘Nails on your Head’, by director Sol De Carvalho, was screened. It describes the reactions of a construction worker, his colleagues and bosses when they learn he is HIV positive.

‘Positive Life’, a travelling photo exhibi-

tion of people infected and affected by HIV, was organised by Medecins Sans Frontieres. The organisation provides antiretroviral treatment and general care for HIV positive people at its clinics.

By portraying HIV positive people with dignity, the exhibition and associated activities hope to reduce stigma and discrimination, and encourage people to live positive lives. One of the speakers at the festival noted that no Mozambican artist had disclosed his or her HIV status publicly and

called for colleagues to build a supportive environment where people would feel free to disclose.

Of 18.5 million people, an estimated 1.3 million Mozambicans have HIV, with a national prevalence rate of 12.2 percent.



A model of a VCT and clinic made in the traditional “Psikhhelekedana” wood sculpture style of southern Mozambique’s Ronga people



NEWS & NOTES

CHAT continued from page 1

to start any projects within the first three months of their service, but rather assess and get to know their new community, make friends and see how things happen.

Past Volunteers have expressed over and over, the desire to have more Swaziland and project specific tools for community assessment. Having not conducted a thorough appraisal of the community, Volunteers have found their projects are often misguided and doomed from the start. Current Volunteers feel that only by spending the first three months getting to know the community can a PCV create and implement a valuable action plan.

Bullock and Garland developed CHAT into five tasks, which they encourage the Trainees to complete in no particular order, but within the first three months.

They are Community Mapping and Calendar, Knowledge and Attitude Assessment, Household Census, Shadowing and Attendance at Community Events.

At the counterpart/trainee workshop, Bullock and Garland explained that the Community Assessment Plan comprises all the work a Volunteer will do for the first three months. Only in a fourth month will the volunteer be expected to begin projects pertaining to HIV prevention and impact mitigation. By waiting until at least the fourth month, Volunteers are assured of having a better grasp on the problem, and are thus able to better address them successfully.

Starting with On the Job Training Nov. 20-24, trainees will work with their counterparts

to construct a detailed community map, locating important places such as primary and high schools, water sources, meeting places, Neighborhood Care Points, and shops. They will also compile a community calendar including meeting times, places of gathering as well as annual calendars such as planting, harvesting and school. They will form a list of non-governmental organizations and development agencies present with their current and past projects.

To assess knowledge and attitudes of HIV, trainees will conduct surveys with different demographic groups, informal focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

They will visit every homestead within the first three months to administer questionnaires as a census and primary way for them to introduce and familiarize their communities with a Peace Corps Volunteer.

They will shadow community members such as a chief, rural health motivator, herd boys, community police, shop keeper, out-of-school youth or nurse at a clinic.

Future Volunteers will have opportunities to attend community events like weddings, funerals, church services and traditional Swazi ceremonies. This shows the community that the Volunteer wishes to be considered as a resident, not just a visitor. Current Volunteers know that sitting through these events (even while bored or lost) makes a lasting impression on the community member whom they'll work with for the next two years.

With these tools helping, the second group of Volunteers can anticipate an effective and productive term of service.

From the Peace Corps Web site

Crisis Corps sent to Zambia

Four returned Peace Corps volunteers last month arrived in Zambia as Crisis Corps volunteers, the first in the country to be supported by President George W. Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Peace Corps will receive more than \$1.1 million from the president's plan to enhance programs in six African countries heavily impacted by the virus. The funds are distributed with the goals of encouraging leadership at every level to fight HIV/AIDS.

"As returned Peace Corps Volunteers, Crisis Corps volunteers already have the training and expertise to immediately launch into their projects and make a real difference," Gaddi H. Vasquez, Peace Corps director said. "The funds from President Bush's plan will help save lives in Zambia and southern Africa."

The four Crisis Corps Volunteers will work with Neighborhood Health Committees and the Zambian Ministry of Health to mobilize communities and to train community members.

International Education Week kicks off

The U.S. Department of Education's Joseph Esposito, Deputy Under Secretary for International Affairs joined Director Vasquez, on Nov. 15 to kick-off International Education Week and unveil a special exhibit dedicated to Peace Corps volunteers in the education sector who work overseas.

"Now, more than ever, Americans need to know more about the people, culture, and customs of other countries around the world. By sharing stories and creating exhibits like this one, we begin to break down barriers and promote cross-cultural understanding and recognition," Vasquez said.

As a partner in this year's activities, the Peace Corps' exhibit features photographs from around the world and an interactive Web site that will be showcased in the Department of Education's lobby. The photo exhibit will remain on display until Jan. 7, 2005.



Photo by Gavin Dia

Trainees Luke Fiordalis and Justin Knox take a break from grooving at the Halloween Party at the House on Fire. The new group will move to their sites as Volunteers after swearing-in on Dec. 8.

Volunteer Profile: Silena Layne

Nkwene takes a liking to real life talk

By Kevin Okun

Swazi Sojournal

Individual and authentic relationships helped Silena Layne become the trusted and respected authority she is as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nkwene.

In fact, everyone who lives in Nkwene, including Layne herself, call her an Nkwenian. They consider her that much of the community.

"My community, Nkwene is my home away from home. I love the people there as I do my folks in Oakland," Layne said.

Using a vocal and honest voice, Layne said she helped promote the initiation of projects with sound reasoning. But that's not what Layne says was her starting point to integrate into her community.

"No matter what people say, I had one foot in the door because I'm black," she said.

Layne said it's easier for Nkwenians to communicate with her than non-black Volunteers because she is different from white Americans.

"They know I'm American, but at the same time, they see the restrictions and obstacles I've faced. They identify with me more on a social level – not so much on politics or class. But definitely with music, body language, confidence and style."

She says all those things make her more similar to Swazis. Another example is Layne's inability to learn SiSwati. Nkwenians say it's because she's lazy, just like them.

Take away race relations, and it's still evident that Layne has a connection to her community. She says it starts with love, something authentic. From love comes trust, open-mindedness, and self worth. With that attitude, Layne says her friends listen to her and believe what she has to say about HIV/AIDS.

"We have interactions at the shop," she said. "We talk about what respect means,



Photo by Jill Granberg



Photo by unknown

Silena Layne gives bhuti Njevu a bath. He is one of the many in Nkwene who had their hearts stolen by their Peace Corps Volunteer.

what love means. It's basic life skills, but with real life talk. There's growth and love with the Nkwenians."

With this connection and open communication, something Layne calls "straight-up honesty," she has brought her individual style to her community. "It's not a Peace Corps style, or a black style, but a personal style, as Silena. It's the Peace Corps Volunteer who's black. It's Silena at the end of the day who they know. That's what allows the acceptance," she said.

This has allowed Nkwenians to love all Volunteers, Layne said. "They are welcomed automatically because of the relationship with me."

Since moving to Nkwene in November 2003, Layne sees the most important event as the start and failure of a water project, what she calls the best thing that could have happened to Nkwene.

Boreholes and taps were constructed to bring clean water to 440 homesteads. Since its completion in May, the source dried up because it could not support the scheme.

With Layne's help, the community formed a youth water committee, which she hopes will grow with the project's sustainability.

Having youth digging trenches and building the scheme worked as a skills transfer between Rural Water and the newly trained Nkwenians. She said it's more empowering than just having the elders of the community involved.

But with the setbacks, Layne's community has learned not to be so dependent on the information from an American. She can make mistakes too.

"They understand I'm not bulletproof," she said. "They learned following up their questions is just as, if not more, important than my questions. They need to do more research and not depend on me so much."

Growing up in urban Oakland from age 8 to 22 and then graduating from the University of San Francisco in May 2003 with a bachelor's of arts degree in sociology and a minor in psychology prepared Layne to work in a poverty stricken rural Swazi community.

"The poverty of my whole life gave me defense mechanisms. It allows me not to trust instantly, be honest and street smart," she said.

Street smart in Swaziland means knowing the different between a *babe* who asks for kombie fare but really wants to buy beer and a *make* who has no food for her baby. She can use humor in difficult situation to defuse a problem.

"It crosses cultures," Layne said. "It's lifeskills through streetsmarts, strengthened through life experiences.



San Diego Peace Corps Association helps 2 SD PCVs with grant projects

Twice each year, the San Diego Peace Corps Association (SDPCA) remembers the needs of communities like where they served when in the Peace Corps. This year, two from Swaziland earned grants.

The Association contacts current Peace Corps Volunteers and asked them to nominate community projects where a small amount might make a big difference. Over the past 15 years, the *Mark J. Tonner International Support Fund* has funded precisely 100 projects.

They averaged \$343 per project. This spring they set a number of records. The SDPCA received 13 requests, covering a wide range of needs, scattered around the globe.

While having years with more qualified requests than they could support, and several years when lacking sufficient qualified requests, this spring they received proposals for \$5,318, and had the reserves to fund them all.

This set a new record for the SDPCA and they say they'll need to again do well with calendar and Entertainment Book sales in the

coming year.

Credit goes to the PCVs. They each wrote compelling proposals, with community involvement, and their country director signed off each project.

Jonathan Mitchell is working in a community struggling from AIDS, and the orphans of AIDS. UNICEF initiated a Neighborhood Care Point (NCP) and then offers only a corn-soya blend for food and a large pot for cooking. SDPCA funding purchases needed educational material, recreational equipment, bowls for food and building material for the construction of a pit latrine.

Ryan Crew, a former volunteer worked with the Zombodze Youth Organization. The community needed garden fence to protect the group's garden from grazing animals. It allows the members to protect their crops and encourage them to harvest more crops, a majority of which is used to feed the orphans of AIDS. Success will help establish their AIDS recovery organization as a community support tool and change agent.



Med unit construction continues at PCHQ

By Oghale Oddo
Admin Officier

The team building the Volunteer lounge has begun work and is expected to finish Dec. 12.

Please bear with us as there will be an inordinate amount of noise and up to 20 construction persons on site at any given time during this period. Since there will be some heavy machinery working near the medical unit, I would advise that we all park our cars as far away from the front of the Med Unit as possible, lower on the field at the back of the office.

The contractor informed us that he does not want to be held responsible for missing items within the office. He specifically mentioned that he does not want his workers in the office.

So let us work with him and make sure the workers do not enter the office for any reason during this time. Let us make certain to have people in the office at all times during work hours. The contractor brought this up himself and we should definitely follow his advice.

Cheers and thanks once again for your understanding. Will keep you updated if there are any new developments.

travel restriction: Ghana



Please inform Volunteers to avoid traveling to Ghana from December 5-12. All Ghana PCVs will be on standfast due to the presidential and parliamentary elections on December 7.

-Madeleine Mader, Ghana Country Director

Road accidents rival HIV/AIDS as Swaziland's biggest killer

By Innocent Maphalala
Times of Swaziland

MANZINI - Road accidents in Swaziland seem to be joining HIV/AIDS as a major killer with more than 1,200 people killed on the roads in less than five years.

That figure represents the number of people who died in traffic accidents between January 2000 and September 2004.

Since most people in Swaziland do not know their HIV status, it's impossible to calculate how the two killers compare.

Besides the fatalities, close to 15,000 people were injured, some slightly, while others seriously. Some of these developed per-

manent disabilities after the accidents.

Major causes of such accidents have been cited as speeding, which the police and Swaziland Road Safety Council keep warning motorists about; error in judgement; negligence; losing control; inattentiveness and the influence of alcohol.

Statistics released by the Road Safety Council show that many of the accidents are caused

by stray animals on roads.

These include dogs, cattle, donkeys and wild animals. Passengers are also said to be responsible for causing certain accidents.

Vehicle defects, road defects, weather and obstruction are some elements which some accidents are blamed.

Between January and September 2004, for instance, out of 471 accidents, at least 423 were caused by drivers' negligence.

Adult males fall victim to accidents more than other people.

There is not much difference between the number of accidents on weekdays than on weekends. Sunday is credited with the least number of accidents.



Editorial

Everyone has something to say. Everyone has an opinion- whether it's on drilling for oil in the Arctic Ocean or how the National Hockey League and its Players Association should end their lockout.

Everybody wants to share a feeling. That's what this space is for.

In the coming issues, we want to have a forum for a face off between issues that are important to us.

For next month, if you have a thought on anything, jot it down and find another volunteer (we'll all be volunteers next month!) who can take a counterpoint view. Then let us know and we'll publish both points of view.

The Sojo staff is willing to submit and we have ideas -like how the Electoral College works or if draining water from the Great Lakes for other drought stricken American towns is OK, but we thought it would mean more if the ideas came from you.

The Swazi Sojourn has a record of never turning down a submission. So take your chance, pick up your pen, and say what's on your noggen.

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month before. Then Elmon went around, telling the community - soliciting participation from a pastor and *bucopho*. Next, he got permission to use the community hall.

Tessa worked with the teachers to have them prepare presentations for their students. Elmon called the youth to clean the hall the Saturday before, and says they were such hard-workers; they finished before Tessa returned from Matata.

At the end of the celebration, Tessa passed on some wise words to the students, teachers, and guests: "In order to beat this disease, we have to be strong. It's one thing to talk about fighting HIV and AIDS, but now we must do it. A strong person abstains. A strong person uses a condom. A strong person goes for a test. A strong person who is positive tells people. A strong person is a friend to those who suffer from the disease." With good advice, an attitude of advocacy, and a constant model of hard work, Nsubane is reaping the benefits of the Peace Corps through their smiling *Jabulile*, Tessa Reff.

Despite outcome, Election 2004 surprisingly easy to accept...Why?

by Jill Granberg *Viewing the American political process from abroad*

Eyes transfixed upon a television screen in a darkened room without pause for fifteen hours straight can alone induce nausea and multi-leveled melancholy. Add a disheartening end to a monumental Election Night-cum-Midday-after, and you'd expect nothing short of convulsions, fingernails embedded in the hardwood floor, with a little frothing at the mouth as the icing on the fruitcake. But by noon on November 3rd, when the Southern Hemisphere received word of Ohio's official jump into the Bush egg basket, the vomiting never manifested. My anticipated sobs were reduced to distressed whimpers. My appetite returned and I reentered the outside world within mere hours. Had someone in a moment of pity spiked my morning yoghurt and bran flakes with an elixir of indifference, allowing me to lift my head toward the next four years masked by apathy-tinted sunglasses? Of course not: I continue to mourn the latency of the youth vote, grieve for severed international ties, yearn for a reformed electoral system, and wring my hands in fear of irreversible environmental, economic, and political misjudgement ahead. So what is the root of this unexpected *acceptance*?

Election Night began with CNN international coverage, reflecting the close watch of millions outside the United States. In the early hours preceding tangible poll results, in what could be called a political "pre-game show," British newscasters offered a tutorial of the American electoral system. This dissection, viewed with the

awkwardness of an outsider weighed down with urgent self-interest, felt much like a doctor's exam made public. The three-dimensional graphics in dynamic red and blue displayed nakedly the copious pillaging of the winner-take-all Electoral College sweepstakes. All of the gory details were spelled out in minutia, complete with dizzying statistics and a frenzied CNN correspondent whose reproachful, "Glad-I'm-British" sort of smirk kept me ill at ease.

And then the results trickled in. The following hours slipped by as reds and blues settled into a pattern of *deja vu* across the U.S. map. The huddled mass keeping vigil in a Swaziland backpackers hostel could easily have been my darkened dorm room with the flashing television screen and Dan Rather talking-head of four years previous. Nearly a perfect replica of Election 2000, sans Supreme Court involvement, the results were both sickeningly anti-climactic and refreshingly uncomplicated. Clear-cut. And even legitimate.

It's my hypothesis that such acceptance - and even *appreciation* for an election - despite the outcome, came easily only after one year of life in Swaziland. Southern Africa, bearing an unfortunate history of sham elections, questionable voting procedures, discrimination, and violence - all toxic ingredients for political apathy - suddenly pulls a new perspective over this voter's perceptions of the political system at home.

But there's still quite a political laundry list of work still needed to be done.

Why I didn't vote and may never again

by Kevin Okun

I didn't vote. I'm not ashamed.

This election reminds me of my Uncle Jim in 1994.

We didn't watch baseball because the season was over and he told me he'd never watch the major leagues again. This man played baseball when he was young. He taught me how to keep score when I was five years old. He played baseball with me until my scorebook was full. And then he watched baseball on TV with me.

Ten years after the work stoppage he still hasn't watched Major League Baseball.

That reminds me of my interest of politics. Since I was 18, Election Day was always important. It was the day my thoughts would be heard by the people in charge of my country, my state, my county, my town and my schools. But I never felt like anyone heard. I always voted.

There was nobody running that I could identify with. I decided not to vote for a candidate I did not believe in.

President Bush never impressed me with the war in Iraq and he didn't create jobs like my unemployed friends at home would have liked. He ruined relations with many countries I would like to see the United States work closely with. His term was costly.

And Senator Kerry couldn't stop confusing me. There was this other guy I thought about voting for, but he screamed really loud back in March and the rest of the Democrats thought he was too emotional. Kerry voted for the war in Iraq. Then he voted against the reconstruction of Iraq when the popularity of the war shifted.

I didn't trust them. I didn't know enough about any other candidate to make an informed choice.

I still want to vote in school elections. The children deserve a well-funded district and I feel like I'm heard most on that level.

The electoral system needs to impress me to get me involved again. Maybe I'll vote next year with something as important as merging the City of Buffalo with the County of Erie. But I don't know because I don't know if I'll trust anyone who's in charge after that vote.

November excites me as much as October excites Uncle Jim these days.



Welcome to Meflo-land

By Melissa O'Farrell,

I nervously make eye contact with the beast. He glares, snorts, then forcefully stomps his hoof. I glance at Tegan as the orange dust spins up. She first looks at the enormous angry bull, then raises her eyebrows in my direction. Her look clearly tells me it's "every woman for herself." Without hesitation my friend darts to the left, leaving me trembling in the center of the road. The animal lunges forward and I leave the starting blocks a nano-second later. With my arms frantically swinging I feel my backpack fall off, its contents spilling out onto the dirt. I then distinctly hear my peanut butter jar crack into pieces as the bull tramples my things. A quick glance back elevates my terror level from orange to red: the cow is effortlessly narrowing my lead. My life is imminently over; the cause of death being a double lung puncture at the horns of a Swazi bull. I careen to the right on a slim prayer of evasion, but the ground vibrates as the cow changes direction with me. I tack to the left, my thoughts alternating between the stipulations of my life insurance policy and disbelief that this qualifies as a sport in some cultures. The bulls breath sears the back of my neck and I flail my legs in one last surge ahead. My feet become tangled and I brace for immediate impalement. I'm startled

by the impact, but it strangely feels more like a cool cement floor than the sword-like horns I have been running from. I rub my eyes and realize that I am blissfully alive, just sweaty and twisted in my semi-destructed mosquito net. I hear *Babe* outside my door and my immense relief becomes embarrassment. The task of explaining in siSwati why exactly I've been kicking my closet door and am now sprawled out next to it is too daunting. I offer a weak "kulungile" and climb back into bed. Welcome to Meflo-land*, trainees – no guidebook needed, and the only requirements

“ My life is imminently over; the cause of death being a double lung puncture at the horns of a Swazi bull. ”

are a strong sense of adventure and a tolerant host family.

*PCVs are required to take a malaria prophylaxis, available in several tangy varieties, including mefloquine. They are known to occasionally induce awe-inspiring late night balcony conversations.



Congratulations

to Alexandra Geary-Stock for her award-winning costume, The Condom Clown, featured at the *Thriller Night* Halloween Party at "House on Fire," October 30, 2004. Combining both humor and education, she managed to pique the interest of many party-goers and encourage them to play it safe. "It was the most effective AIDS education I've done in the past year and a half," she recalls. Well-done, and thanks for the creative menagerie of balloon animals!

Photo by Annie Mohr

Staff poetry (& pleas)

The staff of the Swazi Sojournal would like to extend our thanks to those volunteers and trainees who allowed their work to help form the fabric of this fabulous issue! We will continue to grovel for your submissions and subject ye readers to our own brand of creative juices until every last inch of the newsletter sparkles with your talent. This month: limericks!

Parting gift - By Jill Granberg

Vacation with sis in its final hour
 Braced against breeze, last words we devour
 But – oh! What disgrace:
 A plastic bag whips her face
 SA's ubiquitous national flower

Acronyms R Us - By Annie Mohr

CSB at the NCPs
 Provided by WFP
 The kids like to eat
 With sugar so sweet,
 It's the lunch of an OVC

A couple Zs at the sea - By Kevin Okun

Eating sea turtle at Thanksgiving
 Forget the turkey 'cuz I'm living
 Leave your spuds at the bar
 You'll need more than a car
 Off to Zanzibar since the Bills sure ain't winning

You know you're

HARD CORPS

when...

- ...You wash your malaria pill down with a cocktail hotter than your shower. But that was back when you had showers and cocktails, for that matter.
- ... You have to go so bad, you actually sit down on the pit latrine.
- ... You pee in a bucket in the corner.
- ... Your friend is peeing in a bucket in the corner, and you don't think it's weird.

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A new monthly feature brought to you by the volunteers-in-training, as they adjust to the nuances of Peace Corps life.



High-brow book notes: Iain Banks' *Dead Air*

A review by Morgan Smith

Thanks to a few hundred thousand conservative Ohioans, author Iain Banks has another four years of material to produce a *Dead Air* sequel containing as much leftist criticism of Bush's right-wing extremist (sic ignorant and oppressive) agenda as speckled the pages of the original volume. The terrorist attacks of September 11 provide Banks with the backdrop to stage *Dead Air*, a novel that takes place not in the buzzing bars of New York's Greenwich Village, but among the pubs, cobblestone streets, and airwaves of metropolitan London. Ken Nott, Bank's protagonist, serves as the liberal-minded but somewhat shallow shock-jock radio DJ who voices a plethora of observations on the world of post-9/11. This ruse allows Banks to comment cleverly on a gamut of social and political issues throughout the story. The rants range from George Dubya's over-simplification of "good and evil" to the rationality behind a racist group's assertion that the Holocaust was staged, and are often convincing tirades expelled from the quick-thinking character. But for the rest of the story you may get the impression Banks is actually testing the waters for his own MP run. (Either way, you left-leaning PCVs out there ought to enjoy the digs

on conservatives and the dark empire of the Bushies).

Aside from the social introspection, *Dead Air* tows a layered and fast-moving plot that steals script pages from a Guy Ritchie film. With plenty of boozin', lovin', clubbin', smokin', sexin', and druggin', the book reads a bit quicker than you'd expect for its nearly 500 pages. An abundance of well-written Scottish and British slang keeps the dialogue sharp and serves to flesh out Nott's gang of laid back DJ friends and work colleagues. Bank's fixation on sex and whiskey, which may drive the average PCV towards the brink of some unhealthy masochistic behavior, is balanced by a precariously sweet (and barely plausible) love story between Nott and a gangster's wife.

Dead Air is worth a read if you've got the time (and I know you do, my fellow volunteer), and you are looking for a more intelligent version of a James Patterson novel. The high doses of liberal commentary hardly become overtiring, the humorous twists keep you turning pages, and you gotta love the Scottish brogues. With four more years of Bush now a reality, Banks has this reader frantically conducting internet searches for rentals in London's Soho district. With any luck, I'll spend the next three years after COS'ing in a flat eating curry chips and catching some leftist talk radio on the short-wave.

Dead Air - now available at the Peace Corps library.



Reflect

By Julie Grutzmacher,

PCT

Mirror, mirror on the wall. I never said I was the fairest of them all – still my eyes are light and my skin is fair. And there are no walls to hide my modesty behind watching with the trained eye of a referee, the bored curiosity of grandma rocking her frail body, to the pace of the passing breeze. This land – my new transplanted identity – offers only pin-pricking realizations of overindulgence. I've taken too much of this, way too much of that. Closet stashing, freedoms abused. With the guilt of a bulimic wanting to erase the Cheeto stains from her tongue and undo what's been done. Which way do I go from here? What justification can I mirror reflect?

Red ribbon

The days proceed with a disregard for the month's ending, the weeks' cycle of progress wrapped up, shoved in a blue binder with language notecards pleading for my attention and practice. Time – like the babysitting child – trying to figure out what to do with it in those fleeting, but necessary free, solitary moments. And I saw my reflection in the glass, child-fingerprint smudged window today, but the clone's eyes did not meet mine. Her eyes scanned through the glass, meeting the heads of school-age uniform dressed children. Girls' green and gold dresses, focused, and zoomed in on the red-ribboned poster claiming the wall, silencing outsiders, and demanding attention.

the Volunteer Kitchen

Bomake Baby Bake

Ingredients:

- Plump baby (male or female)
- Infant-sized winter coat
- Knit cap, mittens
- Terry-cloth towels
- Assorted acrylic and wool blankets

Directions:

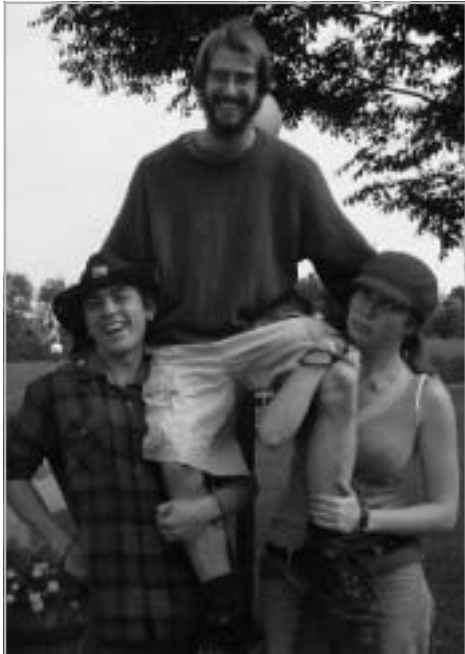
Bundle baby in winter clothes, coat, knit cap, mittens. Take baby by arm and fling it around onto your back as you bend forward from the waist. Take terry-cloth towel, wrap around both you and the baby. Secure tightly to immobilize the tasty morsel. Next wrap a wool or acrylic blanket atop the towel. When sweat droplets appear on baby's brow, add additional blankets. To ensure thorough baking, climb into crowded khombi or bus (convection oven). Serve with pap and beet root salad.

Kummandzi!



LIFE

After Peace Corps



Jason Grubb climbs to the next level with a new job and friends at Camphill Soltane in Pennsylvania.

It's now been nine months since I have left Swaziland. That is three months longer than I was in the country and six months longer than I was an actual PCV! And while I do miss Swaziland and sometimes wish that I could still be a part of things there, I am happy to say that I have moved on to something that is better for me at this point in my life.

At the end of August I moved to Pennsylvania to begin a new adventure volunteering at Camphill Soltane, a living/learning community for young adults with developmental disabilities. The house that I am living in consists of three other workers and five students.

Life here for the students is divided into two areas: house activities and coursework. Most of my help with house activities involves a mad scramble to get a meal ready for upwards of a dozen people. The classes are much more interactive and varied and include chorus, painting, pottery, eurythmy, horseback riding, swimming, Special Olympic training, and good old farm and land work (it is nice to see healthy cows, but not nice shoveling their manure into a compost pile twice a week!). I have also become involved in a drama class exclusively for the coworkers, and we may even perform a play next year.

While I always had a tough time

trying to see beyond myself and any intangible work that I would be doing in Swaziland, and this new situation provides me with that instant feedback and proof of my significance that I so greatly need to function at my best, and hardly feels like a job at all. It is wonderful seeing so many smiling faces every day, and knowing that what I am doing is appreciated. I must receive at least 20 hugs a day.

I really could not ask for anything more in my life right now, though I do find it amusing that my monthly living allowance now is less than it was when I was in Swaziland!

My best wishes to everyone. Enjoy the upcoming holidays!

Salani kahle,
Jason/Mbutfo

Jason Grubb, a former volunteer in Swaziland, recently began a new volunteer opportunity through assistance from the Peace Corps "Hotline," a bulletin of career, educational, and reentry information and opportunities for RPCVs. Volunteers nearing Close of Service are encouraged to make use of this resource, issued biweekly and archived in the volunteer lounge/resource center for your convenient perusal. The bulletin features both domestic and international opportunities in both the public and private sectors.

DIVERSITY



A friendly reminder that The Diversity Committee is here to help strengthen the volunteer environment by promoting understanding, support, and awareness of diversity issues.

Please note:

- * Starting in December, there will be an anonymous diversity suggestion box in the office volunteer lounge. Please feel free to share your diversity questions, concerns, and suggestions with us!

- * We will be holding quarterly forums to discuss diversity issues around central topics. If you have an idea for a topic please let one of us (Lisa, Yemi, Chequet or Teresa) know or put it in the suggestion box.
- * We will be posting diversity news each month in the SoJournal. Don't miss it!

The One that Got Away...

Was there one that got away this year? A pet project or an idea or an initiative that just hasn't come together yet?

Now, there are 29 more people in town who might be able to help you make it a reality. (Like that camp we've heard talk of.)

The new class of trainees would like to pitch in. Maybe we'll end up in a community where your idea could take root. Or we'll uncover an untapped resource. Or we'll have a fresh perspective that may spark a new approach. (Or maybe we're just desperate for good ideas to help get us started.)

If you've got an idea or project like this, send the information to Steve at the training center, or call him at 624-4775. He'll disseminate it to this year's class, and soon you'll have fresh-scrubbed faces showing up to help.



Academic Resource



**The University of Michigan
Population Fellows Program**
1214 South University, 2nd Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 763-9456
FAX: (734) 647-0643
e-mail: pop.fellows@umich.edu

Web site: www.sph.umich.edu/pfps
Population Fellowships are two-year professional assignments; they are not traditional research fellowships. RPCVs generally hold valuable field experience and are encouraged to apply.

Fellowship applicants must:

- be U.S. citizens or permanent residents;
- be early-career professionals;
- hold a relevant graduate degree.

Family planning activities are central to fellows' work.

December 2004 - "Hhohho-ho"

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 World AIDS Day	2 Heal our land - AIDS theatre @ House on Fire 7 p.m.	3	4 Int'l Hug Day! Jazzfest @House on Fire 8 p.m. Post-test club at Matata - 10 a.m.
5	6 St. Nicholas Day	7 Hanukkah begins	8 Swearing-in ceremony for new volunteers!! Mountain Inn, 11 a.m.	9 Comedian John Zlismas @House on Fire 8 p.m.	10	11 Holly and Val's AIDS Day Celebration, Esandleni Inkhundla - 9 a.m.
12	13	14 Alexandra Geary-Stock's birthday!!	15	16 Andre the Hilarious Hypnotist @ House on Fire 8 p.m	17	18 Winnie departs for the U.S.
19 Steve Kallaugher's birthday	20	21 Brigid O'Brien's birthday	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day
26 Kwanzaa • Boxing Day	27	28 Justin Garland's birthday	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	



The Swazi Sojournal
 c/o U.S. Peace Corps
 P.O. Box 199
 Mbabane H100
 Swaziland
