

The Final Frontier

by Molly Pacenta, Sidzakeni

It's hard to believe how drastically the face of America has changed in the past three hundred years. It's difficult to imagine the time when a view wasn't interrupted by neon lights and golden arches; when the airwaves weren't filled with television stations, cell phone conversations, and emails; when the sky wasn't being scraped by tall buildings and clouded with car exhaust. It's hard to remember that people ever lived without highways, subways, airplanes and microwaves. I mean, what did they do before five star restaurants and video games?

The American Indians are just novelty now. Just dream catchers, baseball team logos, and figures on a commemorative plate eating turkey with the pilgrims. People don't live "off the earth" anymore, we live on cement, plush carpeting, and nicely tiled floors, and we get our food from the tidy isles of a supermarket. We don't exactly live in harmony with nature, and we certainly don't worship it. We leave alone the land marked "National Park" and destroy the rest to use for whatever we please.

fortune that only a few lucky beautiful people ever achieve, but that can't be it. That can't be what life is all about. There once was a time when life was simple, basic, and connected. Surely there are people left in this great big world of ours who still live like that. When I joined the Peace Corps, I thought maybe I would find them.

In most parts of Swaziland, people still live in mud huts with thatched roofs. They grow their own food, use the streams and rivers for water, and many people don't have electricity. I was assigned a tiny community in the rolling mountains. No television, no computers, no paved roads, no shopping malls, no fast pace, no bling-bling. For two years, I would live with a large extended family. They would cook over an open fire, plow, plant and harvest, and raise chickens, goats and cows. I would have peaceful evenings complete with nothing more than conversation and candlelight. I would live life the way it had been intended, before progress took its toll.

It is amazing to me and holds great significance that although Africa is perhaps the oldest civilization in the world, much of it remains largely unchanged despite the fast pace and consumption of more modern and developed societies. By moving to Swaziland, I had hoped to find a certain purity and untainted way of life, but what I found instead was, well, not exactly that.

While elders in the rural communities are trying to hold on to tradition, ritual, and a simplistic Swazi lifestyle, the youth are aware of what is going on in the rest of the world. They hear it on the radio, they catch glimpses of it on T.V., and they see it first hand when they cross the borders into the very westernized cities of South Africa. And being a twenty-something myself, I can understand. I can see the lure of hip-hop music, nightclubs, designer clothes, and expensive cars. I can see how a night on the town would be a little more enticing than porridge with GoGo and bed by eight. But I must admit, it made me a little bit sad.

It just blows my mind how some silly American ideals have found their way to such a remote part of Africa. America's material-



ism is slowly oozing its ugly way into every nook and cranny of the world. Is there really no place untouched by name brands, artificial flavoring, and mindless entertainment? The root of all evil and the land that I love — God bless America.

I guess I should have known that moving to Africa wouldn't be like time traveling. And anyone who has ever picked up a newspaper can tell you that Africa is no utopian society. I see Swaziland in this mad rush to catch up with the western world, and I have little doubt that if they ever do, they'll realize it isn't the paradise they imagined. It hurts my heart to watch so much money being poured into business development and cell phone towers when you and I both know these things don't bring happiness. Instead, more time, money and effort should be spent on health care and education in the rural areas where people are being ravished by HIV and then looked down upon for their ignorance, poverty, and "old fashioned rural ways." The aim should be at improving the quality of life for every Swazi, instead of attempting to propel a select few into entrepreneurial success.

I know, however, that culture can't be preserved in a time capsule— nor should it be. Time leads to progress, and progress leads to change. I guess my one idealistic wish would be for this society to treasure its simplicity and rooted nature, or at least what's left of it. I enjoy the nights when the sun goes down and the candles light up and the only things left are words. We should embrace this way of life - that we have this rare opportunity to experience - because I have a feeling that the neon signs and golden arches aren't so far away after all. It's only a matter of time before the whole world is lit up and rushing around. And pretty soon, no matter how far we venture, we won't be able to escape the almost inaudible buzz of the city lights.

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Now I'm not saying that I don't enjoy America. I like my Carmel Frappacino just as much as the next girl, but I tend to get a bit lost. I'm trying to find peace, and instead I find a magazine flaunting Jessica Simpson's new outfit. I could spend a lifetime seeking the fame and



News from the training desk w/Simanga Ntando



The training unit has the pleasure of announcing the 2006 PST dates for the benefit of all those volunteers who would like to be part of training. We have **limited** spaces for volunteers who would like to assist with training. Interested persons should drop Simanga or Musa a line stating what area of training they would like to assist in (language, cross-culture, safety and security, technical or medical) **on or before April 28th 2006.**

Volunteers who want to be part of this program should meet the following requirements:

- a) Carry a positive attitude towards training
- b) Have a willingness to abide by all training site norms
- c) Be willing to share their session outline with training staff before presentation

Here are important dates that all those who are stakeholders in the PST should know:

- May 15 – 26: Language Training Of Trainers
- May 29 - June 2: General Training Of Trainers
- June 12 – Aug. 10: Pre- Service Training
- July 2 - Independence Day Braii Celebration
- July 5 – 7: Volunteer site visits
- July 24 – 26: On The Job Training

We hope that this information will be useful to those who would like to assist



Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, S&S

Greetings to all Volunteers eSwatini (in Swaziland)!

I really hope everyone is safe at their sites and enjoying the last part of his and her African summer before the cold takes over. Lightening activity is still not over yet, and I wish to assure everyone that although the installation of lightening rods for Group 2 PCVs seems to be taking forever, it is indeed proceeding. Due to the heavy rains in most areas in Swaziland, a number of rivers are at the brink of flooding with dangerously high levels. I wish to warn PCVs to keep away from the rivers mainly because a number of them have a history of drownings and are also crocodile infested.

I wish to advise Volunteers of the fact that for security reasons, they are to **stick to office hours** when they have some work to do at the PCO. Due to the security upgrades that have been taking place at the PCO, it is no longer possible for people to get in and out of the office without computerized cards. It is therefore in everyone's interest to stick to office hours to avoid incidents of being locked in. Even if there is a staff member remaining after 5 pm, PCVs are still expected to leave at 5 pm. Cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated.

In response to the CDs comments in regard to the **Risk Assessment report** conducted in December, VAC voiced that part of the reason why Volunteers may not report safety and security incidents at their sites is fear of being moved from their sites. I wish to assure Volunteers that the PCO only moves Volunteers as a very last resort. Other means of sorting out the problem at hand are tried first before the PCO resorts to moving the PCV concerned to another site.

Contact information when applying for a vacation outside Swaziland is very important; PCVs should make sure that they supply the PCO with the accurate physical address of the accommodation facility they have booked in and the landline phone number or the PCVs personal number if he/she has one. In the event that a PCV changes plans, they should not neglect to inform the PCO of their new plans. Peace Corps HQ requires that posts should always know where their PCVs are and also be able to contact them if the need arises. Also, make an effort to get the transportation policy of the country you will be traveling to from the SSC, and you will be expected to adhere to that country's travel policy.

The Consolidation points Wardens and Alternate wardens workshop on February 1st at the Country Director's residence was a success and many thanks to the participants for playing their part. As the facilitator of the workshop, I feel that the objectives of the workshop were achieved. I therefore look forward to a smooth EAP test exercise or real live execution of the EAP.

Manzini bus rank area continues to be a crime hotspot area. Please do not put valuable items like cellphones, wallets and cameras in your backpacks. Rather have these in a smaller bag that you can always hold tightly in your hand. Also be aware of people who try to get your attention by pointing at something on you or around you. This most likely is an attempt to divert your attention as an accomplice works on your bag. I wish to encourage PCVs to continue to **maintain vigilance** when in this area.

Ngiyabonga kakhulu,

Always remember, SAFETY FIRST!

In Brief

www.virtualtourist.com

As an additional resource to the DOS website concerning travel in Africa, PCVs are advised to use this website as an added resource when planning for holiday as well. It offers information ranging from warning travel to hotel bookings.

Staff Travel, Visitors & Closures

Pattie on Leave: March 4-March 12

Gene Peusevisiting for Staff Training & PST preparation: Week of March 13

Pattie in Pretoria for Regional Meeting: March 23,24

All Staff Retreat for PST Planning: March 27,28-- PCO CLOSED

Brigid's Camp

If anyone is interested in helping with Brigid's Camp at the end of April then please contact her @624-3755

SMS's

Please remember to sign you SMS's with your name at the bottom when texting staff members.

Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD

Greetings to all PCVs. March will be a busy month as we are gearing up for PST. We have begun to receive notification from Washington of individuals who have accepted invitations to serve in Swaziland. The training department is busy preparing the PST schedule and selecting homestay families and trainers in the Nhlanguano area. Please note Simanga's article, and if you are interested in helping at PST, let him know in a timely fashion. Lindi and Susan are also doing site development in conjunction with Mfanfuthi and Daynese while Mahlubi is preparing for his technical training debut.

To assist the office with PST preparation, we have asked Gene Peuse the Sub-Regional Programming and Training specialist to spend a week in Swaziland. He will be working with the Training Team, as well as Susan and Lindi on programming and training issues. And as final preparation, entire office staff will attend a 2-day overnight retreat to work on PST on Monday and Tuesday March 27 and 28. The PCO will be closed on those 2 days.

Looking forward, the month of April will be devoted to completing site development, and in May, the training cycle begins in earnest with LTOT (Language Training of Trainers) and GTOT (General Training of Trainers). Our new trainees arrive June 9.

March also begins the official start of Peace Corps's 45th Anniversary year. The Peace Corps was established in 1961 by President John F Kennedy to promote world peace and friendship. Since 1961 over 182,000 Americans have served as PCVs in 138 countries around the world.

In Swaziland, we hope to celebrate the 45th anniversary year by promoting Peace Corps and PCVs through local media presentations. In conjunction with the Public Diplomacy Office at the Mission, we will have PCVs featured on local radio and TV. Additionally, I have solicited "testimonials" by our HIV/AIDS partners commenting on Peace Corps's contributions in Swaziland. I have received remarks from the Ambassador, the Deputy Prime Minister, NERCHA, Alan Brody at UNICEF, World Food, FAWE, SYNC, SHAPE, NATICC, and others. These will be included in an article for the local media. I will make copies of these complimentary statements for each of you.



Nemathuna ayebingelelwa
"Even the graves are greeted"

While a few of us from PSN were sitting around chatting with Simanga about greetings in Swaziland, he revealed to us that there is not a single instance he can think of where you would be considered interrupting if you were greeting someone. Often this is my dilemma as I'm passing by a group of important looking elders, and I'm torn between my upbringing to not interrupt and the urgency to greet here. The expert reports to us: always greet!

It is also the responsibility of the passing party to greet those remaining stationary. So whether you're passing a cubicle at the office or a meeting in your community (even the sitheshi!), call out a hello as you pass, to remain a superstar volunteer in the eyes of your community and to bring a twinkle of pride to your family's eye.

On March 13, Guru Simanga and PSN will be hosting a discussion with the staff as a learning time concerning the issues in the intersection between two cultures. It will be a time in which we hope to learn from each other and will continue every quarter or so. PSN will be dispersing the information we gain in the boxes of all volunteers. Additionally, this corner will become a monthly fixture in SOJO to answer conundrums found in our everyday site lives.

Much thanks to Simanga for all the wisdom he imparts and the hard work he put into the discussion, as well as patiently answering all our questions. If you have a question or topic for the cultural corner help us out by sending it to Michelle or swing my Mkhulu Ntando's office for the gentle guiding advice he so graciously bestows on us clueless Americans.

NEWS & NOTES

From the Peace Corps Website

P.C. Celebrates 45 Years of Service

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 27, 2006 – Honoring the first groups to begin service in Ghana and Tanganyika to the most recent group on its way to Uganda and everyone in between, the Peace Corps kicks off a 45th anniversary celebration on March 1 to celebrate the legacy of service at home and abroad.

"Forty-five years ago, President John F. Kennedy called on Americans to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries," said Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez. "From the coast of Madagascar to the jungles of Costa Rica, Peace Corps volunteers have built real bridges of friendship in 138 countries over the decades through thousands of remarkable projects and legacies."

NPCA Response to Program Linking P.C., Military Recruitment

Following Congressional action to remove Peace Corps service as an option under the "National Call to Service" military recruitment program, Bush approved this change on January 6th, 2006 when he signed into law the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006."

Peace Corps Mourns the Loss of Volunteer Tessa Horan

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 1, 2006 – Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez announced today with deep sadness the death of Tessa Horan, a 24-year-old Peace Corps volunteer in Tonga. Tessa died as a result of injuries sustained in a shark attack in Vava'u.

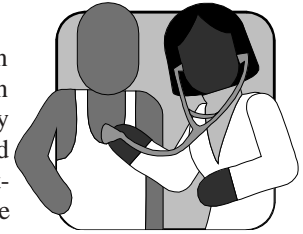
A Santa Fe, N.M. resident, Tessa left for Tonga in November of 2005 and was sworn in as a Peace Corps volunteer in January. She had been at her site for a little less than a month when the tragedy occurred. Tessa was assigned to Peace Corps/Tonga's Community Education project, which focuses on the development of English usage, and computer, vocational, and life skills for Tongan students. The project also helps local teachers develop their skills through team teaching.

Peace Corps staff and fellow volunteers who remember Tessa say she was enthusiastic about the opportunity to share her teaching skills with Tongan educators and learn from them in return.

Keeping you Updated and Healthy w/Daynese Santos, PCMO

DROUGHT BRINGS CHOLERA

The incidence of Cholera is on the rise in drought stricken areas of Kenya. New cases have also been reported in Mozambique and certain areas of South Africa. Cholera is an **extreme** intestinal infection caused by a bacterium, *Vibrio cholera*. Cholera victims may have as many as 30 watery stools per day resulting in collapse of the vascular system unless rapid administration of intravenous fluids is carried out and antibiotics are readily available. As water sources become scarce, fecal contamination of existing water and food sets up ideal conditions for Cholera to rapidly reach epidemic proportions. Unlike Typhoid, volunteers are not vaccinated against cholera as bacterial resistance has resulted in ineffective immunization. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security because water 'looks clear' or because 'others' are drinking it or because you haven't had any problems 'so far'. Unless bottled, drinking water must be boiled and filtered or boiled and bleached. Hand washing cannot be overstressed, however if conditions do not allow, keep a waterless hand sanitizer available for back-up. Foods must be cooked thoroughly and reheated before eating if necessary. Be an advocate for choice, choose this! Cholera can be deadly.



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IT COSTS MORE to CARE

Corps Care, the one-stop health insurance plan available to all Returned Peace Corps Volunteers has increased the monthly premium from \$145 to \$155 effective 01-March-2006. RPCV's will continue to receive the first month's coverage free of charge. Corps Care rates are highly competitive, however, it's never too early to start shopping around for a better deal particularly for individuals who have no immediate plans to enter graduate school or the work force right after Close of Service. We still care; it just costs more!

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AVIAN FLU UPDATE

Migratory birds infected by H5N1, the Avian Flu virus have now been identified in Germany, France and Hungary. Domestic poultry producers in Europe are now implementing measures to prevent the spread of the virus to poultry and livestock. Nigeria has managed to contain its current outbreak to three states; however, up to 18 suspected human cases are being investigated. If you're concerned about sick or dead poultry in your community, contact the local veterinary extension worker in your area, or phone the Department of Veterinary Services in Mbabane, (268 404 2731). Then educate your 'family' about Avian Flu.

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IT'S YOUR JOB to STAY HEALTHY

Most of us agree that the process of adjustment and integration is gradual, ongoing, difficult and frustrating yet challenging, life changing and rewarding. Volunteers may find themselves assuming guilt for obvious 'injustices' and inequities that have been inflicted upon the most vulnerable members of this society. Guilt may be disguised by attempting to deprive oneself of basic necessities such as food, water, clothing, basic hygiene or even recreation. Unfortunately these behaviors are generally unproductive and may have a negative impact on a volunteer's physical and emotional health. By design, volunteers are provided with a livable allowance, access to health care and time off for R&R. Use them! Don't allow guilt to rob you of what could be the experience of a lifetime. It's not your fault; change won't come overnight. Sometimes the big picture seems overwhelming, so stay focused on your personal goals and remember to take care of yourself.

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WHO'S YOUR PCMO?

Let's review, it's a violation of Peace Corps policy for volunteers to utilize health facilities or receive prescribed medications from other health care providers unless specifically referred by the PCMO. Documentation of all medical treatment must be maintained in each volunteer's medical record. There is life after Peace Corps, and in that life if medical history is not documented, it never happened! Medical problems that may resurface in the future will not be covered by FECA if not clearly documented in the Peace Corps Medical Record during service. So if you become ill while at site, first, contact your PCMO. If you don't have network coverage at site, start making your way to the medical unit and notify the PCMO as soon as you are within network range.

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JO-BERG OFF LIMITS

When in rome . . . South Africa PCV's are restricted from unauthorized travel to Jo-berg. Therefore Swaziland PCV's visiting South Africa are also restricted from unauthorized travel to Jo-berg. So even if you're on medevac to Pretoria, hit the lottery and win a free weekend, travel to Jo-berg is not allowed.



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*for health and supplies issues.

Life Skills Update

February was a busy month for the Life Skills team! We had three regional workshops — two in Lubumbo and one in Shiselweni — to launch the pilot amongst Swazi teachers. The workshops were planned in collaboration with the Regional Career Guidance Officers, and overall, we trained around 50 Swazi teachers on the Peace Corps Swaziland Life Skills Curriculum. We hope that the teachers will use the curriculum for the first term and provide useful feedback, which we will then incorporate into the manual before it becomes a final copy. On a whole, the whole team feels that these workshops went really well, and we got a great response from the teachers and the headmasters in both regions. We'd like to especially thank Mahlubi for all his hard work this month!

In general, we hope volunteers (especially group 3) are finding the manual useful and remembering to fill out the feedback forms as you go through the lessons. We will ask for the feedback forms at the end of the school term (Mid-April), so there is still plenty of time to teach lessons at your schools! If you are having any problems getting class time at schools please contact the programming staff right away.

Thanks!

Blia Yang, Brigid O'Brien,
Caitlin Coogan, Francie Picknell,
Marisa Harrison and Tegan Callahan

SOJO POLL

What is April Fool's Day?

Traditionally, pranks are to be performed by noon and men are advised not to get married on this day for the wife will rule them and children born on this day will be lucky except for in gambling. The origin of this custom has been much disputed, and many theories have been suggested that it is a farcical commemoration of Christ being sent from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, the crucifixion having taken place about the 1st of April.

What's your most memorbale April Fool's Day moment ever?

* When I wrapped up Legos in a Rubbermade container and sent them to school with my first grader and told her they were treats for her class!! She was shocked when her teacher told her to open them and pass them out!!(real treats were at school with the teacher and I sent her with real cookies more than enough times to atone for the this) ~"Lucy"

*When I lived in a ghetto apartment complex and turned all my friends young and old against each other by telling them each lies about what the other said about them like in that Stephen King book/movie Needful Things ~Vincent

*When I found out I was going to Peace Corps Swaziland and no one would believe me; they thought I was trying to "fool" them ~Lindsay

* Sophomore year of college, two of my suitemates convinced me my best friend was pregnant, even going through the trouble of faking the phone call to her mom, acting out the whole thing. The worst part was that the supposed father of the non-existent baby was her drug-dealing ex boyfriend who had just been arrested recently. They kept the "joke" going for half an hour. Needless to say, I was pissed; I was really worried about my friend. It's the most infamous April Fool's joke among my friends even today. ~Angela

*My little brother called me and said he joined the marines; unfortunately it wasn't a joke. ~Mel

travel diary

Malawi or Bust

by Brigid O'Brien, Luhlayeni

"It's a long trip, but it's worth it," fellow passengers assured us- the daunting 31 hour ride (that only a modest Peace Corps budget affords)-would be worthwhile. I tried to remind myself of this a day later when I looked down at the bulgy flesh where my ankles used to be. The long hours of sitting, sitting, and more sitting gave my legs and feet a club-like appearance. Not only did I have to worry about GETTING to Malawi, now I would be lucky if I arrived there without being accused of brandishing a weapon! The "Luxury" bus that we hoped for turned out to be not much more than an eMbabane-Nhlangano Bus. Without air conditioning or a bathroom, and limited leg-room, this would turn out to be our biggest challenge. This lack of facilities was only exacerbated by the fact that the driver had a militant, slightly crazy way of commanding us- "You stay ON the bus or you get off; we don't stop!" He was, I suppose, trying to compensate for the six-hour late departure!

Traveling on the 23rd and 24th of December turned out to be quite a challenge. The lines at the border gates were long and sometimes even a little out of control, like at the Zimbabwe border where we stumbled off the bus sleepily at 1am to find a mob of people pushing and shoving their way through the entrance. After we made it through, the guard, himself was pushed aside, and the door was broken down. Phew, we made it through unscathed! It wasn't until 3 hours later that we were safely on our way again. Zimbabwe was beautiful; it was kelly green with large boulders bordering fields. A day later, we drove through the northwestern corner of Mozambique, which was my favorite part of the drive.

By the time we reached the 2nd Mozambique Border Post at dusk, I needed to use the toilet urgently! I found the Border Guards less than helpful. Finally, they pointed me toward an outhouse, which much to my chagrin was locked! It was dark, so decided I would just go behind it, while Cliff stood guard. I dropped my drawers, and just as I had assumed the squat position....OOPS, SLIDE, DROP-BOOM. I fell into a huge hole. There I was-bare-bummed, pants around my ankles with a look of shock I'm sure. I stood there hoping that the skid marks aren't too big and praying that it's just MUD I landed in. I looked over at Cliff who had this funny expression on his face that seemed to say, "WHAT are you doing in there?" — As if I had jumped in cannonball style into the hole! I recovered quickly and soon it was *adeus* to Mozambique and *mulibanje* to Malawi!

Some 30 hours after we departed Jo-BURG, we rolled up to the Malawi border gate. It was approaching 10 pm, and we saw the lights flickering off and doors closing, signaling the end of the business day. It was Christmas Eve, and we were stuck! The driver, as anxious to rid himself of the bus as the rest of us, parked, jumped off, and went merrily on his way to a nearby lodge. After 30 hours on this bus, the thought of more quality time on it (i.e. stagnant air and cramped feet) seemed a bit loathsome! We opted to hire a taxi and stay at a nearby lodge. We arrived shortly at the lodge, and by the looks of it, it was no Holiday INN, but at least we could clean off the travel grime, rest our heads, (not to mention my clubs!), or so we thought. Turned out, the faucets and shower were more for decoration than function. Soon, an employee reached our door carrying a bucket bath on his head. It was Christmas Eve, and we had reached Dump#2 (Dump#1 was a hostel in Joburg..a rundown mansion, complete with shag carpeting, and a host of CHARACTERS, but that's another story!) Back to Dump#2; it did possess one redeeming quality- a restaurant. We were able to enjoy dinner with the booming bass of Sean Paul in the background.

The next morning, we got up early to go back to the border gate, and nearly 48 hours after we left Joburg, we reached Malawi! We arrived in Blantyre at noon Christmas Day. Somehow, we decided to soldier on to the Lake that day, which meant another 9 hours of travel. It took longer than we thought to get to Mangochi (a couple of hours before the Lake), and by then, it started pouring down rain. The minibus was overcrowded and wasn't even equipped with windshield wipers — scary to say the least. We kept going though, not really knowing where we'd stay that night because we learned that the place we had reservations at was a real "dive." We opted for another lodge that was in our guidebook. (Little did we know it would be dump#3!!!)

We dropped off in front of Nswadie "Lodge"(which is a bit of a stretch if you ask me!) around 10pm, Christmas Day. As soon as we got off, we were hounded by locals and were ushered to our room — Dump#3. The barren, unfinished cement room, with only a bed — no mosquito net and no curtain, albeit a mat suddenly made my house look like the Holiday Inn. We went to a "restaurant" nearby and had our Christmas dinner of pap and mystery meat, but it sure hit the spot. The next day, we headed off to Cape Maclear on Lake Malawi, a more touristy spot. We had finally made it!! The Backpackers was set right on the lake, which was beautiful, surrounded by lush green mountains. We went swimming, snorkeling, and kayaking. I had never seen so many bright, tropical fish! After a couple days at the Lake Malawi, it was time to head back. This time we wised up and paid the extra 100R for a luxury coach. And boy was the upgrade worth it! With air conditioning, a toilet, food, and refreshments, the ride back was MUCH smoother.

So, would I do it again? Torment myself? Spend more days on public transport than on the Lake? Sure! The scenic route was filled with adventure, interesting people, and beautiful views. It's all in the journey, and this is one I'll never forget. Yes, it's a long trip, but IT'S WORTH IT!!!!

You know you're **HARD CORPS** when...

...you witness the police take down a car jacker with guns drawn at the Durban McDonalds, and you're more concerned about whether you got enough French fries rather than get in the car and leave the crime scene.

...you fish the 1 lilangeni out of the Finesse wastebin.

...even though you continually get your blonde hair stuck in a fly strip, you still refuse to remove that fly strip.



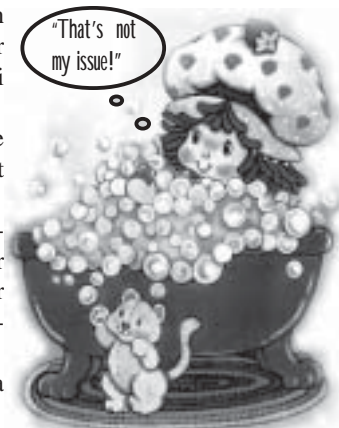
You know you're **Soft Corps** when...

...you are too lazy to wash the emasnack residue off your hands, so you let your little sisi lick it off.

...you will pay your little sisi's school fees just so that she is out of the house.

...you call home before returning home so that your bobhuti and bosisi sweep your floor and shake out your blankets.

...you still flinch when a Swazi picks his/her nose.



Anna's Literary Box

I hit a major P.C. milestone this month....150 books! It's probably no surprise to you all that as compulsive as I am, I actually keep a list of all the books I have read here. So in honor of the event, I thought it'd be an appropriate to pick my Peace Corps top ten. Widdling it down was tough enough, attempting to rank them proved impossible as they are all so different from each other. Thus, in no particular order, my favorite reads from the last 18 months:

Truth & Beauty: A Friendship

by Ann Patchett



Please Don't Kill the Freshman

by Zoe Trope

The Shadow of the Wind

by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

by Mark Haddon

Heartbreaking Work of a Staggering Genius

by Dave Eggers



Running with Scissors

by Augusten Burroughs

Kite Runner

by Khaled Hosseini

Scribbling the Cat: Travels with an African Soldier

by Alexandra Fuller

Shadow of the Sun

by Ryszard Kapuscinski



High Tide in Tuscon

by Barbara Kingsolver

Reading to Reduce the "cRash" of cul tuRes

by Marisa Harrison, Khubuta

When I first saw "Crash" I was pleased that I had insight into the Persian shopkeeper's violent reaction to his store being vandalized. I had just read "House of Sand and Fog" by Andre Dubus III, and in it, an Iranian man invests all his money into a city-auctioned house that was inappropriately put up for sale. Driven by pride and having invested all his money into this venture, the man fights bitterly to hold onto the house and his dreams. The author makes the motivations of the man, and the woman trying to get her house back, very clear. You want to side with each, and also despair the situation. "Crash" made me feel a similar way, its overlapping stories giving a deeper account of each characters' impetus. And I think that is what we need to see more of—movies and literature that illuminate the foundations of different cultures inside and outside the U.S.

After the screening of "Crash", hosted by the Diversity Committee last month, the question was raised, "So what do we do?" There is no denying that this is a complicated issue, and that each situation where cultures crash into each other is different, but I believe we must work actively to understand the sub-cultures in the States. After doing Peace Corps, cross-cultural exchange should be a bit easier with people who share the same geography and language. How many of us have adjusted to being called fat or found out how to approach the chief in the culturally appropriate way? But since we are still here, I suggest finding a few books to read that illuminate aspects of American culture you are less familiar with. Besides "House of Sand and Fog" (Iranian immigrants) I've found "The Kitchen God's Wife" by Amy Tan (Chinese Americans), "Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance" by Barack Obama (African American), and "The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts" by Maxine Hong Kingston (Chinese American), and "The Seventh Child" by Freddie Mae Baxter (African American). I am sure there are many more in our library, and if you have recommendations, send them my way. I am not claiming that reading is the answer for everything, there will come time for action. I am just suggesting a place to begin.

"You're a nobody unless you've made the SOJO gossip column!"



Gossip Column

- Elle retracted their offer to give Blia a hair straightener as they deemed her unworthy of their "Soldier of Elle" award.
- Anna had her corporate Merryl Lynch friend visit from America.
- Derek has another new puppy . . . #3
- Vincent bathed out of a wheelbarrow
- Jenny's worldly aunt and uncle are coming to visit for a few days in March.
- Molly is climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro.
- Jessica Oya may become a published genetics researcher.
- Justin Knox is coming to Swaziland to do research on traditional healers
- Cliff hates Group 2's profiles
- Jabu is Angela's personal assistant
- Gavin -- after eating Debonair's Pizza -- had a date with an unsuspecting latrine
- Vincent's friend in California will be hand delivering a letter for Jewel to her at her radio show appearance
- The Lifeskills Teacher Piloting workshops were a success
- Tegan's boyfriend, Bill, has bought a plane ticket to come and visit
- Vincent's welcome mat gave birth to over 50 worms
- Angela got hit by a khombie
- Khabo makes her triumphant return to the office at the end of March
- Vincent's "mommie dearest" is coming for a visit on her first trip to Africa
- Francie's been playing too much in the cornfields lately
- Grifter's hired a new manager
- Lulu's Bday is March 9
- Pattie will be meeting up with her identical sisi in the beginning of March
- Freshly Ground was a sell out success and a who's who of Peace Corps
- Blia's computer is having a technical difficulties
- Marisa was mistaken for Larissa
- Jabu was mistaken for Angela
- An Earthquake hit Mozambique and could be felt through Swaziland and down into Durban
- Caitlin's Uncle Tommy will be back in May to work for a few weeks
- Blia's foot may need to be amputated
- Jabu's Parisian love has returned
- Adam's counterpart Vusi got his American Visa
- Kelly's High School debate was a success, and that my dear is undebatable!

Time Capsule In the Land of Oz

HOLLYWOOD

- * Rolling Stones will play their first ever concert in China.
- * George Michael got arrested again but this time for drugs.
- * Madonna's second single and video "Sorry" has been released

SPORTSWOOD

- * Effa Manley became the first woman elected to the baseball Hall of Fame when the former Newark Eagles co-owner was among 17 people from the Negro Leagues and pre-Negro Leagues chosen Monday by a special committee.



AMERICAWOOD

- * Controversy rages over the sale of America's seaports to the United Arab Emirates.
- * New Orleans celebrates post-Katrina Mardi Gras
- * In Pennsylvania, a judge ruled a former prison guard convicted of killing 13 people in a 1982 shooting rampage can't be executed because he is mentally ill.

WEIRDWOOD

- * Chocolate linked to lower blood pressure.
- * In Jo'Berg, man loses wedding ring along with arm to a crocodile.
- * New York authorities charged four men with illegally harvesting and selling human tissue from 1,077 dead people over the past four years, possibly including the remains of British broadcaster Alistair Cooke.

WORLDWOOD

- * 41 people killed in 5 explosions in Baghdad.
- * China warns Taiwan against fighting for its independence.
- * The deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu was confirmed Monday in birds in a third African country, Niger, deepening experts' fears that the disease may be far more widespread than reported on the continent.
- * Scientists have found what they believe are traces of the lost Indonesian civilization of Tambora, which was wiped out in 1815 by the biggest volcanic eruption in recorded history.

Edladleni Corner w/Wi II Treese

Tomato Soup (Serves 4)

- 4-6 Medium Tomatoes, peeled*
- 3 C. water, 1 T sugar, 2 T salt, dash of pepper/curry
- ¼ C. Flour

Chop tomatoes and simmer for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add water, sugar, salt, pepper/curry. To thicken soup, dilute flour in water and add to mixture. Let simmer for an additional 10-15 minutes.

To make a heartier soup, add 1 tsp Bovril, Marmite or bullion.

**An easy way to peel tomatoes: pour boiling water over tomatoes, covering the whole tomato. Let sit for 5 minutes, and the skin should just peel right off. Enjoy!

REMINDER! REMINDER! REMINDER!

Please (sicela) submit all kinds/types of submissions from poetry, short stories, journal entries, gossip, soft & hard corps, news stories, hints, tips, recipes, reviews, etc...anything and everything you could think of that is SOJO worthy!

March (Indlovulenkhulu)-Wear Green!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Grifters' new manager arrives	2 Molly returns from Tanzania Lewis & Desiree return from S.A.	3 Michelle & Sarah Coffey's Birthdays	4 Maliaka @ H.O.F., R80
5 The Academy Awards	6 Shiselwani NATTIC @ 10:00am	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Kate's Birthday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18
19 Candace's Birthday	20 Khabo returns Arlene's Birthday	21 Anna's Birthday	22	23	24	25 Lauren's Birthday
26	27 Office Closed (Staff Retreat)	28	29 SOJO Production (Computers in Use) Vincent returns from S.A. w/"Mommie Dearest"	30	31	

The Swazi SoJournal

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