

DIVA'S LIVE *6 LAND OF CONFUSION* 9*

Spit in the face. G-strings in the face. Tea bags in the face. You guessed it! DIVAS LIVE triumphantly returned to the stage after a one year hiatus with another fun filled, exciting night studded with all the glitz and glamour and not to mention drama that got everyone including the DIVA herself in a frenzy. I recently sat down with the elusive DIVA for a one-on-one interview about her recent show, her fans, her backup dancers, and what the future holds for the DIVA.

Vincent D'Agostino: Thank you so much for giving me the time to do this interview with you.

The DIVA: The clock is ticking.

Vincent: Yes, um, so...this year's theme "Land of Confusion" had everyone talking. What was the message you were trying to send to your fans?

The DIVA: That we live in times where there are no straight answers and everyone's telling everyone something else to believe in; there are too many different messages out there and there's no line of



"...We live in times where there are no straight answers...to put it bluntly, we're more confused now than we ever were."

DIVA talks intimately about her latest performance and the conflicting messages in our experiences.

direction for any of us to follow. To put it bluntly, we're more confused now than we ever were.

Vincent: What was your favorite song to perform and why?

The DIVA: New Wild West. By Jewel. It's so appropriate for the volunteers to really listen to the lyrics. It was quite an attack on them. Of course, because of their drunken stupor, they were unable to get past me in white boxers with a guitar tossing the bible and cut Gavin's neck with a serrated knife. But all in all, the message was clear to me. Every man for himself.

Vincent: So what did you find the most challenging in your performance?

The DIVA: Jabu's big mouth.

Vincent: You opened with gospel and then jump right into Christina Aguilera's Dirty with you in a G-string giving your audience lap dances. Why did you choose such a transition?

The DIVA: Because of the irony of it all. You have so many men and women singing gospel, attending church, preaching God's word, and as soon as no one's looking they're at the bars drinking, being unfaithful, and corrupting society. Besides, I just felt like giving

lap dances.

Vincent: Is it true that some people got out of hand?

The DIVA: Yes. Security detained Jabu in a tent.

Vincent: Is it true you spit in one of your back up dancer's faces?

The DIVA: Yes, during Madonna's "Sorry" I got caught up in the moment when Gavin was *appropriately* being tied up for womanizing women. I make no apologies. Afterwards he was tied to the picnic table where I drenched him in paraffin and lit him on fire.

Vincent: Is it true one of your backup dancers almost walked out on you before the show even began?

The DIVA: Yes, that one is true. Caitlin had brought Lulu in MY dressing room with out My permission. And of course, I politely explained to her that no one, not even a 2 year old, is supposed be back here. She of course, a kid lover, did not like my tone and hastily bit off my head. She will be rightfully reprimanded. I assure you her big booty can be easily replaced.

Vincent: Last year's venue was at Emafini. This year, Grifter's hosted the event. How

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Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, S&S

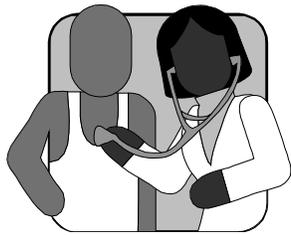
SANIBONANI NONKHE ma PCVs !

The winter season has finally arrived and with it comes a new set of security concerns, the biggest being the altered daybreak and nightfall times. Please note that dark comes much earlier than summer so everyone needs to adjust his/ her jogging and general site work schedules in order to avoid being out after dark. If you are in town and are aware that by the time your bus gets back to site it will be dark, please make an arrangement with your family to meet you at the bus stop.

I can't really seem to put enough emphasis on the importance of using private hire sedan taxis when going to the Johannesburg taxi rank for transport back to Swaziland. The number for the private hire taxi is 083-4817093 or 011- 789 3500. And again when in any area remember that you just can't be careful enough. I wish to strongly advise PCVs to just give thugs what they want in case they are attacked because the chances of getting stabbed or shot in case you resist are very high.

Preparations for 2006 PST are well under way and the PCVs that had expressed an interest in participating in Safety & Security sessions will be contacted by myself for more specific information. But I also wish to mention that it will regrettably and realistically not be everyone, but my appreciation goes to everyone who expressed interest.

Until next month ASIPHEPHE! Lets stay safe!



Keeping you Updated and Healthy w/Daynese Santos, PCMO

MUMPS OUTBREAK in the US

Even though most of you were vaccinated against mumps during childhood, that appears not to be protective. Mumps is a viral infection that causes flu-like symptoms and affects the salivary glands. Complications however may result in inflammation of the testicles, ovaries, breasts or pancreas. Severe cases may cause meningitis and spontaneous abortion. Unfortunately, young adults are hardest hit by complications, particularly ages 18-25. States most affected by recent the outbreak in the U.S. include, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Volunteers planning to travel to those states should be on alert and advise the PCMO if you expect visitors from those areas.

GOOGLE UNDER ATTACK

Medical professionals worldwide utilize the information highway to obtain data and recommendations regarding treatment modalities. Your PCMO is no exception. In the absence of a medical library, the internet provides instant access to pharmacology, clinical trials and an excellent collection of photos and illustrations which enhance patient education. For some bizarre reason, it appears that some volunteer skeptics find this practice inappropriate and suggestive of lack of medical competence. My comment, get over it!

TAMPONS on the HIT LIST

Feminine hygiene products may soon be added to our list of items that the medical unit will discontinue. In checking with other Peace Corps posts in the region, volunteers are responsible for purchasing pads and tampons as living allowances provide sufficient funds to cover those expenses. We have noticed that tampons are not always available at local supermarkets in Mbabane and Manzini so it's advisable to stock up when you can.

In Brief

Angela's Better Business Bureau

The customer service, or lack thereof, in many businesses really bothers me. It seems unfair that we, the naïve, innocent consumers, are left at the mercy of single-minded entrepreneurs, with no recourse we can depend on. It's time that we take action. For years, I've sat back and done nothing. Now's the time to change that. If you have a bad experience someplace, share it. If you have a good experience, let the people know. The only way to really improve customer service is to threaten with the Power of the People! Hopefully this is a habit I will start here and take back with me to the states. And while I hate to be negative (haha), my first story is unfortunately about a bad experience. The Variety Center, an electronics shop next to Spur, across from Steer's, admittedly sells products that will break. I have been through two phone chargers from them. Between the two, I had a charger for about a month. When I tried to return/exchange the broken chargers, I was told that I needed to buy the special guarantee, which isn't even offered for such low price items. To this, I replied, "So you're telling me that everything in your store under E2000 will break." "Yes." Granted, English is not the first language of these particular entrepreneurs, but I think the message was clear. Ye be warned.

Office Closures

The Peace Corps office will be closed May 1 (Labor Day), May 25 (Ascension Day), and May 29 (Memorial Day)

Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD

Greetings to all PCVs. The office staff continue to be very busy preparing for PST and the 26 trainees we anticipate receiving on June 9. This year we are trying a new arrival procedure: the PCTs will be met in Johannesburg and then bussed to Mbabane the following day. The Peace Corps Travel Office had difficulty booking the arrival flights into Matsapha necessitating splitting the group into thirds and arranging 3 different flights. Considering the possible luggage hassles and logistical problems we decided that a big bus carrying all the luggage and PCTs at one time was an idea worth trying.



So far, we have received notice that 23 people have accepted invitations to serve in SZ. There are 2 married couples and one married trainee serving without a spouse. There are 8 men, 5 of them unmarried. We also have received some older trainees; 2 people are in their 30s, 2 people in their 40s, and one person early 50s.

Please make sure you check the So-Jo for the updated schedule of PCV site visits and the All Volunteer Braii since these dates have changed.

We are in the process of reviewing and updating many areas of PC Swaziland. Some of these revisions result from finally having a full staff complement, some as a response to problems we've experienced, some from budgetary constraints and some from our upcoming Pre Service training. Most of you know the Free Weekend policy is changing effective August 1. We also are examining some of the Committee activities/membership numbers and we are re-writing the PCV Handbook to make it more user friendly and readable. Most importantly, in the upcoming months we will be reviewing and updating our Project Plan that defines the work of PC Volunteers in country. This programming document was written before PC Swaziland opened so its time to evaluate its effectiveness. Your input will be important as we compare what Volunteers are actually doing with our programming intentions and then redesign our activities or the Plan as necessary. So, we'll be asking for your opinions and ideas. We'll also be working with our government/NGO partners, Gene Peuse the Sub Regional Programming and Training Coordinator and with Barbara Brown, the Programming and Training Coordinator for the 26 Posts in the Africa region. She will be visiting us from May 9-13 and will be meeting with PCVs at their sites.



News from the training desk

By SimangaNtando

In a matter of 2 and half weeks Musa, Mahlubi and I will be starting with the Language Training of Trainers, which is in essence the last step before PST. Musa is currently buried under a heap of applications for the positions of Language Trainers and will hopefully come out alive and with a total of 15 potential candidates who will eventually go through the Language Training of Trainers billed for May 15 - 26th. At the end of this trying period we will come out with the final 8 trainers who will be assisting with language learning in 2006.

Let me thank those of you who showed their interest to help with training by sending in written requests. Training will do their best to use as many as possible of those people who applied.

I felt it might be helpful to once again remind you of important dates of key events in the 2006 PST.

- a) 5/15 - 26: Language Training of Trainers
- b) 5/29 - June 2: General Training of Trainers
- c) 6/16: Trainees begin living with families
- d) 6/22 - 24: Trainees on Site visits and coming back morning of June 24th
- e) 6/24: Trainees, staff and interested volunteers at Ngwane for the braai
- f) 7/20 - 22: Counterparts workshop and departure to OJT (7/22)
- g) 7/23 - 25: OJT and returning afternoon of 7/25
- h) 7/29: Baylor Workshop at Ngwane
- i) 8/5: Family Appreciation Ceremony at Ngwane
- j) 8/8: Trainees travel to Mbabane for Swearing-in
- k) 8/10: Swearing-in.

NEWS & NOTES

Challenges, Changes in Chad

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 14, 2006 - Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez has announced the temporary suspension of the Peace Corps program in Chad.

Over the past two months, there have been frequent attempts to destabilize the government of Chad by rebel forces in the country. In light of current conditions and concerns for volunteer safety, the Peace Corps has determined that a temporary suspension of the program is necessary.

Peace Corps Pres Promoted

Gaddi H. Vasquez, 48, will resign as Peace Corps' third longest running President in order to accept a nomination from President Bush for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as the United States Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture. Prior to this, he was a Division Vice President for Public Affairs at Southern California Edison Company. From 1987 to 1995, he was County Supervisor of Orange County, California, and from 1985 to 1987, he served in the California Governor's Office, first as the Deputy Appointments Secretary, then as Chief Deputy Appointments Secretary. Mr. Vasquez received his bachelor's degree from the University of the Redlands.

Possible Post in Afghanistan

According to the New York Times, President Bush announced that a Peace Corps team would leave within three weeks for Afghanistan to assess how the program could help reconstruct the country. If a program is installed in the country, it would be the first time Peace Corps has served there since the Soviet Union invaded in 1979.

Vaccine for Vicious Virus

An experimental vaccine against the deadly Marburg virus (featured in the bestselling book *The Hot Zone*) has been shown to work in monkeys even if the shot is not given until after the animals have been infected.

The virus, closely related to Ebola, causes fever and severe hemorrhaging and can be fatal within a week. Epidemics of the disease have occurred in Angola and elsewhere in Africa.

PROGRAMMING WITH SUSAN, LINDIWE, AND MAHLUBI

It's that time of the year again when we get ready for the new group of Trainees. As part of their training they will have the chance to spend a few days with current Volunteers who are in the field.

We would very much appreciate if you are able to host one (or possibly two) Trainees at your site for two nights. The dates are: JUNE 22-JUNE 24. Those who are interested in hosting can contact the APCD or PM by May 31st.

On June 24, all the Trainees and the hosting Volunteers will travel from the sites back to Ngwane College where there will be a braai. The braai will start at 11:00 hrs. We would like to encourage all of you to host a Trainee from Group 4, if you are able.

Thanks!

REMINDER— We are still missing a number of trimester reports from Dec '05 –March '06. If you have not done so already, please complete and return them to Lindi or Susan.

Funding Sources from the American Embassy

We met recently with the Coordinator Mr. Des Diallo (aka Nwando's husband) to find out more about what he does and how PCVs might work with their communities to access these funds.

Self-Help Program funds come from USAID and are designed to allow Ambassadors to support small community projects that promise to have immediate impact and meet U.S. Government development objectives. In countries where a Peace Corps program exists, PCVs are thought to play an important role in identifying and coordinating proposals and overseeing project implementation. However, an important concern expressed by many Embassies is that these projects do not collapse once the PCV leaves the country so they emphasize the necessity of having Volunteers work closely with community members to ensure the sustainability of the project and encourage self-reliance.

In fiscal year 2006 (Oct '05 – Sept '06) the US Embassy in Swaziland received \$45,000 for the Ambassador's Self-Help Program. The average grant is usually in the \$3,000 - \$4,000 range. Typically the SHP Coordinator receives over 100

grant applications but only about 15-20 are approved for funding.

Acceptable proposals are:

- small construction projects under 10,000 sq. ft, e.g. school rooms, grain storage, comm. centers, libraries, kitchens
- water projects, e.g. wells, latrines, boreholes
- school/clinic supplies or equipment and
- income-generating equipment, e.g. weaving looms, sewing machines, that can be maintained by the community

Unacceptable projects are:

- remodeling/renovating existing facilities
- activities that may have negative environmental consequences (e.g. dam or road construction)
- sports equipment/uniforms for a national team
- bursaries/scholarships
- computers/ofc supplies

Timing: In late June, the SHP Coordinator will set up a committee to review all proposals and pre-select about 20 for further review and arrange community visits. After review, the final selections will be made in late July. What this means for PCVs and their communities is that if you are interested in submitting a proposal, you must do so within the next six weeks or your community will need to wait until FY 2007 for the next funding cycle.

The Coordinator has asked that PCVs not only work closely with their communities to fill out the required forms completely and correctly, but that they channel their proposals through the PC Office so that they can be coordinated and reviewed more systematically. Your APCD and Program Manager have copies of the SHP guidelines and application forms if your communities are interested in applying for funding in either FY 2006 or FY 2007. We encourage you to come speak with us if you are interested in learning more about this program.

(continued from page 1)

do both venues compare?

The DIVA: Lighting could have been better. But by far, Sarah and James were my most vigil fans.

Vincent: What was your favorite costume?

The DIVA: I wore a fake leotard for Madonna's hung up.

Vincent: Your white boots was quite the talk of the night. How did you jump in them?

The DIVA: I once wore them for 12 hours straight.

Vincent: You were unable to play guitar for your live audience because of a horse riding accident. The same thing happened to both Jewel and Madonna. Tell me a little about your "Pieces of You" rendition?

The DIVA: That was the one song where I interacted with the audience. Jewel sings about how we tend to hate others because there are pieces of us in them that we hate about ourselves. Molly was my ugly girl, Meghan was my pretty girl, Will was my, and Jacque was my Jew.

Vincent: Afterwards you dedicated Celine Dion's "Power of Love" to Chris. Was he good a sport about it?

The DIVA: While sitting on him, he said to me, "If I open my legs, you'll fall." That was my cue to get off.

Vincent: Caitlin gave a lot of lap dances. Was that difficult for her to do with being a devout Christian?

The DIVA: How do you think she got through college? She's a pro. Besides, Destiny's Child's right, she really is a "Nasty Girl."

Vincent: Were there any injuries?

The DIVA: My backup dancers burned my head with sparklers during Coldplay's "Politik", I accidentally pushed Kate over in a chair during Cranberries's "Zombie" and sprained her neck, and Caitlin got her hand cut on a broken beer bottle, and I am thoroughly sore from the bottom up from all my Yoga-inspired dance moves, squats, jumps, and Tae-Bo punches.

Vincent: How many attended the event?

The DIVA: At least 30. A pathetic turnout.

Vincent: What would you like to say to those who missed your show?

The DIVA: I extend my gratitude for their absence with my third finger to the left.

Vincent: It seemed as if Group 3 found your performance of Tracy Chapman's "New Beginning" the most captivating. Why?

The DIVA: The song's lyrics are fittingly appropriate for them. The whole world is broke and it's in pieces so we must start all over by scratching language, symbols, religion from the drawing board.

Guests enjoy their lawn seat view of the DIVA herself.



Besides, I pranced around with a Swazi shield and Swazi traditional attire.

Vincent: There was a lot less nudity in this show? Why?

The DIVA: I'm tired of my fans calling me Lil'D***.

Vincent: I heard that you gave Gavin more of a spotlight this time around by giving him the male performance in "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" with Meredith.

The DIVA: Yes, I figured Gavin deserved a bit more of the spotlight. Besides, I just finished two ballads from Moulin Rouge with that uncharismatic Brigid.

Vincent: You fired Blia as your makeup artist and hired Kelly. What prompted that decision?

The DIVA: Blia made me look like a clown; Kelly made me look like a superstar.

Vincent: This time around you had Blia read the intro instead of Brigid. Why?

The DIVA: I won't make that mistake again.

Vincent: You signed Candace from Group 3 for a one year contract. Why?

The DIVA: Candace is a trained dancer and was focused during the entire time of rehearsals whereas the others were too busy eating, sleeping, and talking on the phone.

Vincent: How was rehearsals? Any temper tantrums?

The DIVA: No, of course not. The two-day rehearsals began with everyone late but me. I hadn't eaten in two days and I was trying to starve myself to shed off those few ungodly pounds while the others kept shoveling in the carbs and sugars. But that's ok. The bigger they are, the thinner I am.

Vincent: I am under the impression you had a wardrobe malfunction?

The DIVA: Yes, during Madonna's "Jump" and "How High" my skirt came undone.

Vincent: Is there another DIVAS LIVE possibly in the making?

The DIVA: Your time is up.

"I'm tired of my fans calling me Lil'D***"



DIVA shakes her booty with four of her back-up dancers.

Ultra-motivated Marathoners Caper Cape Town

by Molly Pacenta, Sidzakeni

It was 2:30am Saturday morning on the “hippest” street in Cape Town. In the bar of the Carnival Court Backpackers the band was raging, the beer was flowing, the good times were rolling, and on the other side of the paper thin wall, seven nervous Peace Corps volunteers were attempting to get some sleep. The next day would be the Two Oceans Marathon which they had been training for since December. Unfortunately, I was one of them. At 4:30 in the morning the alarm went off and Jana, Jessica, Jenny, Craig and I, along with our cheerleaders Brenda and Lauren took a taxi to the starting line, while most people our age were stumbling to the finish of another wild night.

The half-marathon began before the sun had risen. The crew almost missed the start because they were waiting in line for the bathrooms. But alas, off they went, along with Amy and her mom and around 7,000 other brave souls. Forty minutes later I crossed the starting line to attempt the 35 mile ultra-marathon. Miraculously we all finished our races and survived with only minor aches and pains including blisters in places I won't mention.

They bill the race as “the most

beautiful marathon in the world.” I've only done one other marathon before, but they may be right because running along the coast of two oceans, it's hard to imagine a course more beautiful. The power of the breathtaking scenery was only matched by the strength and perseverance of the thousands of people we got to run with and talk to. Among the people I had a chance to chat with was a 70 year old man who was doing his fifteenth Two Oceans Marathon and a 25 year old guy named Richard who completed the race with no legs. If that's not inspiration, I don't know what is.

We were hurtin' for certain after the race, but that didn't stop us from living it up and taking in the sights and sounds of Cape Town. Amongst the seven of us, we saw penguins, seals, and Nelson Mandela's prison cell. We rode on mountain bikes, boats, and trains. We bought book ends, ostrich eggs, and funny hats, and we tasted over 50 different kinds of wine. If you haven't made the trip to Cape Town, GO. But if you're going to run a marathon, here's my advice to you; try booking the Hilton instead of Carnival Court



PCV's “esCAPE” to the Town of Two Oceans

Coast 2 Coast: The Do's the Don't's and the MUSTS!

by Vincent D'Agostino, SOJO

The problem with such an itinerary is that I was on a 2 week limit for 2 reasons: vacation days and shortage of imali. So I had 14 days to travel the coast from Swaziland to Capetown. My suggestion is that you pick up Baz Bus from Durban to save yourself the 1 day of your 14 day pass and do St. Lucia for a free weekend before August comes. We all know Durban and what it's good for so I won't waste another word writing of it. After Durban, is the Wild Coast which by far is the most beautiful part of the entire coast. I won't waste words on details and attractive descriptive narratives. But Coffee Bay is a MUST: stay at the Coffee Shack. They give you a welcome beer, and they have Xhosa bread and the best Omelettes I have ever had in my whole entire life! I skipped out on Port St. John's. HUGE mistake. The next stop, Cintsa, is a Pirate's paradise. Buccaneer Backpackers is the place to dock your ship. But make sure you call them to book your reservation. Those three stops are a must on the Wild Coast. Port Elizabeth is a smaller version of Durban. Baz Bus will bring you there at about 11:00 pm so make sure you book your next Baz Bus connection earlier in the day because I was stuck in P.E. and wasted a day. Along the Suncoast, Jeffrey's Bay is a surfer's paradise but if you've been exposed to enough beaches in your life, it's a don't. But if you do stay, Island Vibe Backpackers jived the night away with the vibe of a house party on a beach. The Garden Coast in my opinion is over rated but TsiTsimkamma is home to Tree Top Canopy Tours and the highest bungee jump in the world. I stayed at the Tube n' Axe Backpackers and highly recommend the elevated tents. You must, you must, you must do the bungee jump; of course I didn't and now I regret it. Next, go to Knysna, don't spend the night, catch a taxi to the Choo Tjoo Train Station where you can buy a 3 hour train ride alongside the coast in an old steam train to George where you will have to spend the night. THIS IS A MUST! It was my most favorite activity I did on the entire trip. I stopped at Mossel Bay but that's a don't. Not much to do there besides a shell and DIAZ museum. Hermanus is a skip unless its whale season (Sept-Nov.). And the wine region is a do but you could save yourself the day by just going straight to Capetown and booking yourself a wine tour. In Capetown, I found Ashanti Lodge to be loud. I recommend the wine tour to be booked through Cape Wine Tours where you can visit the Cheetah estate and pet them. I also highly recommend the shark diving adventure. It's extremely safe, and fun. Expensive, but worth it. I also would recommend stopping at Hogsback along the way and Oudtshoorn to ride an ostrich. I did neither but wish I had.

In Capetown, go to Mamma Africa for South African game; go to African Café for pan-continental African food; go to the Labia theatre for indie-films; go to Yindee's for Thai; go to Bukhara for Indian; go to Perle for Italian; go to the Mount Nelson (Nellie) for high tea (absolutely divine); go to M Bar at the Metropole for the RED VELVET FEEL; go to Planet Bar at the Nellie for sum Liquid Cocaine...and before I leave you with my words of travel wisdom, I'd like to part you with one last piece of advice: try to be original and not copy my trip to the T!

Medications, Constellations, & Electrifications... Love, ID

By Justine Spisak, SOJO

Perhaps I'm a few years late in critiquing Tracy Kidder's biography of Dr. Paul Farmer (everyone's favorite Harvard genius/doctor/super-being/human rights activist/etc.) but one of the beautiful things about literature is its patience, as it is always lying deftly in wait, anticipating its own discovery by literary laggards like myself. But honestly, I think I read this amazing man's biography at the most perfect, possible time (losing patience, faith, and vision).

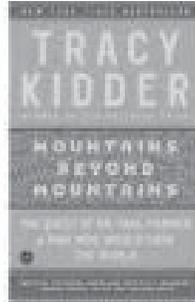
Recently, in several unrelated conversations/e-mails, people have "hypothetically" conjectured, "What if we just let "natural selection" take its course?" (i.e. allow HIV to decimate the countries of Africa and other impoverished nations without attempting to get them on ARV drugs or fix this crisis with western medicine). Is it ignorance, despair, or fear talking? I'm not sure. But after so many people express the same sentiment it gets rather hard to ignore and fleeting moments begin to flicker where you follow their narrow reasoning down a very dark conduit to a frighteningly desolate, post-cataclysmic world.

And then you read about Paul Farmer.

Suddenly your faith is restored in the capacity of western medicine to improve the lives of people who live without much of anything; and that perseverance really does pay off; and that you can accomplish truly amazing things if you believe that human beings inherently deserve basic needs including health care; and you aren't trying

to take more than your share and give people the shaft at the back end. (Love, ID)

One thing that really helped me put things in perspective was Farmer's disdain for the phrase "appropriate technology." This is



public health jargon for "less technical technology" used alternatively on the grounds that in poor places, newer technologies will be poorly maintained. The truth behind the fancy phrase is that it implies people with the least deserve less; which again sounds like a subtle mis-use of distorted Darwinian principles to justify giving poor people the shaft. For me, it's not about building "technologically appropriate" pit latrines in Haiti, but in assisting a tiny collective of about 50 homesteads obtain electricity.

Right now I can see Andromeda from my front door and it's beautiful and I can't help but think how it might be crowded out by nighttime light pollution if and once the electricity is hooked up and what a shame that will be. And this is exactly the trouble with taking a step "backwards" to help other people move forward.

Along with my 80 pounds of luggage I also carried across an ocean, values of traditional culture and simplicity; values that oppose the world I'm from, the world the people of rural Swaziland are attempting to materialize. But in reality, it doesn't matter at all how much I or any other Westerner loves looking at the stars in this village. I'm not here as a preservationist or a purist. I'm here as a volunteer. And what would I even be preserving in encouraging people to resist change? In many a sense... Darkness.

The laws of nature tell us that problems don't fix themselves. The universe tends toward entropy and disarray. The same way your hut inevitably gets messy, it doesn't get neat and tidy again unless you clean it. And perhaps it's these principles that cunningly drew me toward the Peace Corps: the world will not improve unless people exert the energy to do it. Folks like Farmer refuse to allow seemingly insurmountable problems like multi-drug resistant TB and HIV in grindingly impoverished places alter his goals to make them more "practical." And so why should we? Yes, supporting the health of millions of poor folks with HIV is one of the most daunting tasks on planet Earth, but somehow, I still feel deeply, like Farmer, willing to accept the challenge and provide the poorest and sickest people on earth with the best medicine the world contains.



Dr. Paul Farmer with a patient in Haiti

A graphic titled 'Veggie Advice' featuring a large, stylized letter 'V' on the left. To the right of the 'V' is the word 'Advice' in a serif font, and below it, the word 'Veggie' in a smaller, sans-serif font. A thick, black, hand-drawn outline of a vegetable, possibly a bell pepper or a similar shape, curves across the right side of the graphic. Inside this outline, there is text: 'Save your medical supply bags! Keep your veggies safe from insects but kept from spoiling. Wrap your precious produce in paper towels or newspaper and place in a paper bag. The paper will absorb the extra moisture while keeping your critter companions out of your food!' The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin black border.

VAC NEWS

- The group welcomes Craig and Brenda as new members.
- The new EAP codes are record, tape, CD, and iPod.
- The staff suggest that volunteers be respectful and limit after-hours calls to staff to emergencies and other urgent matters. Text messages are always welcome.
- No out-of-country free weekends will be allowed after July. Effective immediately, volunteers can take a free weekend in-country that includes either (1) Friday and Saturday nights or (2) Saturday and Sunday nights. This may alleviate some issues with transportation schedules. To take a free weekend, group 2 should text Lindiwe and group 3 should text Susan.
- Redundant travel reimbursements have been eliminated. If a volunteer's medical-related travel expenses exceed E270, the amount given in the monthly stipend, the volunteer can provide the receipts and the PCO will reimburse the difference.
- To get the Sojo mailed to your local post office, give Thandi .your local address. Her email is tmkhabela@sz.peacecorps.gov.

PSN NEWS

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS (AND STAFF)!

Remember how bored and lonely you were those first three months at site? Remember that little pink book filled with quotes, pictures, advice, and pages upon pages of... dresses, that you probably spent more time looking at than you would like to admit? The PSN "book committee" is beginning to compile material for the 2006 edition. We would love to have ALL KINDS of submissions from volunteers and staff alike. We are looking for funny, frustrating, or inspiring stories, poems, quotes, letters, journal entries, articles, passages from books, advice, jokes, riddles, games, cartoons, pictures, or anything that may bring a smile or comfort to the new volunteers in those first difficult months at site.

Don't be shy! Please submit all entries via email to molly_pacenta@yahoo.com (subject: PSN book) or a hard copy via office where there is now a PSN box (in the back corner where the leave forms are).

We look forward to perusing your submissions soon!

The Magic of Trench Gardening

Trench gardening is magical! When Sam and Bonkhosi said that vegetables grown in trenches grew faster, healthier and tastier, my gogo and I didn't imagine that the transplanted spinach would be ready to eat within three weeks. In our garden, we're growing spinach, cabbage, lettuce, beetroot, carrots, and broccoli to name a few. All are growing splendidly and all of the seeds in the seedbed are ready to be transplanted. All in three weeks! For those of you still unconvinced, stop by Sibovu and check it out!

~Jessica Oya



Angela's Literary Box



I recently received Jodi Piccoult's My Sister's Keeper in a package in the mail. I had never heard of the author before, but it came from a reliable source, so I decided to give it a try. Like most other mass produced, Oprah-approved novels, this book had a few snippets of commentary from reliable sources on its cover. Most publishers choose critical phrases like "beautifully crafted," or "compellingly brilliant." On the cover of this novel, the snippet the publisher chose was, "a stunning topic." That should have been my first clue. After reading the book, I can see why the best the publisher could do was to applaud Piccoult for at least finding a good topic to write about. The basic plot: a 13 year old girl named Anna was conceived by her parents in a petri dish so that her umbilical cord could be used to save her sister Kate, who had been suffering from leukemia since she was 2. Although that donation was made when Anna was a baby, Kate's health is tenuous, and many other donations are made by Anna, not necessarily with her permission. Finally, Anna gets herself a lawyer to become medically emancipated. The plot thickens from there. Whichever critic made the comment on Piccoult's novel was right: genetically engineered babies and stem cell research are hot topics right now. Unfortunately, Piccoult's writing scheme comes off as sporadic and jaunty. Writing from a dozen (give or take) different points of view will do that to a novel. Also, the ending was a little too neat. But hey, that's just my opinion.

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



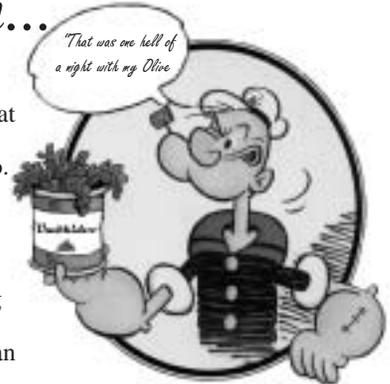
Gossip Column

In the Land of SWAZ

- Caitlin was attacked by Baboons in Kruger.
- Caitlin almost killed Vincent, Blia, and Vincent's mom twice.
- Babe Elliot suffered a burn on Easter.
- The Office is back up and running with Internet, Printers, and Electricity.
- Jessica, Craig, Jenny, Jana finished the 13 km half-marathon in Capetown.
- Molly finished the ultra-Marathon in Capetown with blisters .
- Caitlin is borrowing money from her own chicken project.
- Jacque hosted a Mexican fiesta at the RSS
- Mel was too afraid to come face to face with a cheetah.
- There really is a cheetah and a leopard at Hlane.
- Vincent, Blia, Vincent's mom, and Caitlin got lost in the ghetto.
- It's official: Lindsay never had scabies.
- Justine took her MCAT in Joberg.
- Stephanie, Meredith, and Kate head for Namibia for 10 days beginning April 28th.
- Cliff's friend Stephanie from Cali is coming for a visit.
- Cliff's sisi got slashed in the face while harvesting:
- Angela, Megan, and Jenny are going back to America for visits.
- The mystery of Big Boi was revealed.
- Gavin saw Basic Instinct 2, Final Destination 3, and Totsi, and visited the Apartheid Museum in Durban.
- Jacque's aunt is coming for a visit.
- Peace Corps is corrupting Lulu.
- Vincent and Jabu are friends again.
- Alix visited her family in England.
- Derek and Krupa went to India to visit friends and family.
- Sarah Coffey field terminated.
- Justin Knox will be back in country mid-May
- Brigid's friend Randy is a roommate with Group 1's Annie.
- Anna found herself an apartment in the ghetto and is currently fascinated with roller derby.
- Sandra Thomas-Magongo took over Muzi's GSA position at the Swaziland PC Office.
- Susan Taylor, Group 1, enjoyed herself at a night out at a strip joint.
- Jacque and Ted Reilly are homies.
- Brigid and Ted Reilly are homies

You know you're
HARD CORPS
when...

- ...you come face to face with a Buffalo in Kruger.
- ...you make your American make sleep in bat turds.
- ...you survive a night safari through Soweto.
- ...you wipe your behind with Peace Corps paperwork.
- ...you wipe your behind with your FAO proposal because FAO had no toilet paper.
- ...you kiss a puppy just seconds after seeing it lick chicken feces on your doorstep.
- ...you walk an hour to a movie theatre and an hour back from the same movie theatre just to watch one movie.



You know you're
Soft Corps
when..

- ...you still pee in a bucket even though its midday.
- ...you kill the battery on your phone by playing a pinball machine game out of boredom.
- ...you sleep with your electric lights on all night because you're afraid of the dark.
- ...you are med-EVAC'd for scabies.
- ...the staff of Spur knows you by name.
- ...you need contact paper for your latrine seat.
- ...you need three layers of blankets on a moderate evening.



TIME CAPSULE

Back in the Land of OZ



Worldwood

- The King of Nepal said he would step down as chief executive of the nation resulting in a ceasefire.
- Iraqi President's sister shot dead.
- A 40 year old woman in Germany is on trial for killing her 9 newborn infants which were found in fishtanks and flower pots.
- Iraqi forces killed a local al-Qaida leader and two other insurgents in a raid north of Baghdad on Friday, and roadside bombs killed an American soldier and an Iraqi policeman, officials said.

Americanwood

- A woman paddled during a team building exercise is suing for 1.2 million.
- Senate recommends abolishing FEMA.

Hollywood

- Madonna's concert tickets broke U2's record in Canada.

- Jewel's new album comes out May 2nd.

- Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise announced the arrival of their new baby, a girl!

- Rosie O'Donell to replace Meredith Vieira on The View.

- Britney Spears is 2 months pregnant.

- Snoop Dog released after brawl in airport.

Sciencewood

- Songbirds can learn grammar.

- The Navy's use of sonar during maritime exercises may have contributed to the mass stranding of more than 150 whales in Hawaii's Hanalei Bay two years ago, government scientists said.

- Heart attacks big threat to firefighters.

Weirdwood

- A northern Idaho man diagnosed with terminal cancer says a usually cantankerous goose that befriended him on his walks has helped him live past doctors' predictions.

the back page

May 2006

May (Inkhwekhwe)-Mamma Mia!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Swaziland Labor Day (Office Closed)	2	3	4	5	6
	Vincent's and Dumisa's Workshop					
	Brigid's Youth Camp					
7	8	9 Schools Reopen	10 Brenda's B-Day Kim's B-day	11	12	13
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17 Molly's B-day	18	19	20 Jaque's B-day
21	22	23	24	25 Ascension Day (Office Closed)	26	27
28	29 Julie Z's B-day Memorial Day (Office Closed)	30	31	Sojo Production Days		

The Swazi SoJournal

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