

## Cliffhangers: Remarks on the remarks of Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa

by Mark Weng, Mabovini

The XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto, Canada prickled some South African hairs, as Mr. Lewis accused the government there of being “obtuse, dilatory and negligent.” His accusations may be justified, to a certain extent. But by his brashness and tendency to oversimplify the myriad contributing factors, he may further tilt the war on HIV/AIDS further away from a satisfactory resolution.

First, by castigating rich-world governments for their supposed stinginess, Mr. Lewis tries to impose more of a burden on the rich world than is their due. He is unduly harsh on his countrymen. Inequities do and will always exist and in this world, despite valiant attempts made at redress, but it is not necessary to

“Blame Canada” for the fact that an African or Asian child suffers. There are more dimensions involved than just fiscal ones.

UNAIDS director Peter Piot even pointed out that \$8.3 billion was delivered as pledged by rich-world countries – a sum that promises to soon be voraciously consumed. But simple economics dictates that money spent for treatment is money forgone for prevention, education, or behavioral programs.

Mr. Lewis demands continued roll-out of treatment. At this rate of infection, there will never be enough money for sustained treatment for the exploding number of patients. Once anti-retroviral therapy is begun en masse, do donors have the resources to sustain a growing number of patients? If not, then how does one choose which patients get to live? What would be truly callous and disruptive would be to initially assume the responsibility for the lives of millions of people only to inform them a few years later that, tough luck, there is no more money to further prolong their lives. This is not to say that the free ART should not continue. ART should still be provided to deal with such cases as mother-to-child transmission, but the role of prevention ought to be strengthened if there is to be a reachable light at the end of this long, dark tunnel.

The faltering Global Fund recently received \$500 million from the Gates Foundation to fight HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. But angel-like behavior from the likes of Bill Gates and Warren Buffet will not always be on hand. Altruism is fantastic as a personal virtue, but it may be difficult to force taxpayers of rich-world countries to continue to fork over money

On a macro level, when food is donated at times other than severe distress, an influx of outside supply may depress prices, disrupting the local market and hurting small-scale farmers – the bedrock of Swazi culture. This is not to suggest that aid should stop, since many people receiving aid are indeed in need of immediate help. But the



Stephen Lewis at the XVI Int'l AIDS Conference

day that the aid will dry up should constantly be in mind. Instead, the focus ought to be on training human resources, overhauling infrastructure to allow more effective and efficient distribution mechanisms, and advancing skills in sectors that are already national strengths by encouraging farmers and improving agricultural techniques. Here, Mr. Lewis does take a compelling position. This route is much slower and more difficult fix than writing a check, but will be the more enduring one.

The cultural psychology behind the disease is not often given enough emphasis. Although not a mainstream position, the rapid acceptance of pills and HIV lessons is confounded at least partly by a deep-rooted sense of skepticism concerning *bolungus* (foreigners). This apprehension blurs the line between good intentions and neo-colonialism in more than a few Swazi minds.

Good intentions, improperly articulated, can unexpectedly lead to wild speculation. Upon being informed of the U.S. Peace Corps Swaziland mission for HIV/AIDS, one Swazi man maintained, “In Swazi culture, there is no such thing as a volunteer.” He went on to clarify that in a developing country, everything must be done for money. The point is that the developing-world concept of volunteerism differs from the American view. Here, some people equate zero-cost with zero-value. The free cost of ART has led to wildly sinister speculation on why the Westerners are giving away the drugs. Like condoms, ART needs to be accompanied by a much more robust public relations campaign. Maybe even a

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# Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD



Hi to all PCVs. November promises to be a busy month for the office since we are planning the IST Program/Reconnect for Group 4 and the All Volunteer conference to follow. In addition Group 2 will be closing their service and leaving Swaziland beginning in early November.

Many Volunteers have asked for information regarding income-generating activities for community groups. In response, we have asked Techno Serve to come to the All Volunteer Meeting to give Volunteers an abbreviated education on business planning and small business resources in Swaziland. You may have heard of Techno Serve's Business Competition "Begin, Believe, Become" which identifies small and medium entrepreneurs and assists them in an educational business development course. Techno Serve is based in the USA and their program is being

funded by USAID.

Another area of interest for Volunteers has been the efforts of the US Government in Swaziland to assist the country in prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Christine Stevens, the US Government HIV/AIDS Coordinator, will also be speaking at the All Volunteer Conference to give Volunteers an overview of the USG efforts here. Last year Swaziland received 7.1 million dollars in PEPFAR programming money. Christine will identify some of the USG partners who are funded through USAID and who might be good resources for collaboration; NATICC and SWAGAA are two partner examples that Volunteers currently work with. Susan, Stella and Mahlubi will also review all the PEPFAR programming options so all Volunteers understand the activities and opportunities available through PEPFAR.

For Group 2 Volunteers this may be the final issue of the SOJO that is received in country so let me express on behalf of the PCO a hearty "Thank You" for your service and good luck in your future endeavors. I hope you will join a RPCV Group like Friends of Swaziland to keep in touch with events within the country and certainly email me or any staff member and keep us advised of what you are doing. We wish you the best!

On a personal note I will be on leave effective Nov 19 until Dec 11. I'm going home to Washington, DC and to visit family in Florida for Thanksgiving. Nwando will be the Acting Country Director in my absence.

## WHEN NOTHING THAT IS SO IS SO

by Stella Nkosi, APCD

There's a music album, one of the few I know entitled 'Silence is golden'. The title of this song sort of intrigues me. It says a lot of things, which I personally relate with. I know you are not going to believe this but immediately after the release of this album with that song on it, I began to think seriously about the difference between silence and peace. I remember one afternoon I was listening to the local radio station, SBIS, when I heard the dj say 'My listeners here's something for the soul, 'SILENCE IS GOLDEN' by...' and thereafter there was sheer silence as in there was no song playing on the radio and all I did was just smile at my thoughts about the concept of silence.

On another instance, I enjoyed an article from Swaziland's own magazine 'The Nation'. This article was entitled 'Silence Is Not Golden'. My first reaction to the article was "I wonder what this author thinks of this phrase" going through the article, I experienced different emotional phases. At certain points of the article I entirely agreed with the writer and at some points I totally disagreed. At other points I experienced some anger yet at some points I was consoled that I am not alone.

For the first time in my life I was driven to agree to disagree with what I used to agree with. To get you out of that confusion, I disagreed with the fact that silence is golden and was automatically found to agree with

the fact that 'Silence Is Not Golden'.

This certain writer, (cannot clearly recall his or her name but can clearly remember what s/he wrote) this writer went on about the rape issues, the HIV prevalence statistics in the country, poverty and hunger, the unemployment rate, and the list is long.

The writer kept on stressing the point of silence not being golden. Stating that being silent does not only kill you but the whole nation at large. It was ironic that this article was published on a magazine known as 'The Nation' and at the same time the writer was concerned about the nation *vele*. This was the best part of the article for me. Except that I would have emphatically added that the "silence" includes not being proactive in addressing our social issues, not seeing ourselves as part of the solutions and also not

being able to place ourselves strategically (individually or groups) inside the web of problems for our own benefit for our BEAUTIFUL SWAZI nation.

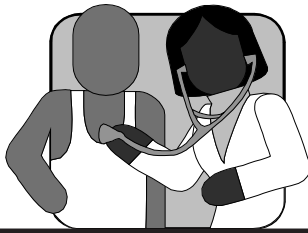
The only reason why I had the urge to write this article is to stress the point that silence is never golden. From minor issues which one thinks don't need any attention to those issues that are confusing and frustrating due to the gold kept in our hearts. Speaking out and taking action is the way to go. I know that you would agree with me if I said 'If only Swazi citizens could speak and act on time then there would be less social challenges to deal with. I implore everyone not to make the mistake that I did. Do not ever think that silence is golden. 'Silence Is Not Golden At All!!!'

### Siyabonga kakhulu!



**Thank you Friends of Swaziland for your dollar match pledge, Susan (APCD) for your encouragement, and my fellow Peace Corps Volunteers for contacting your friends and family to donate for the Women's Sewing Association of Nyanyali. Your contributions through Peace Corps Partnership has been fully funded and the women will be purchasing sewing machines. Be on the lookout to purchase African-print purses by November/December.**

**From: Bila Yang, PCV Nyanyali**



# Keeping you Updated and Healthy w/Daynese Santos, PCMO

## HAMBANIKAHLE GROUP 2

Goodbye may not mean forever but just in case it does we're tidying up your medical files and shipping them off to OMS. We're recycling your water filters, mosquito nets and 'Where There is No Doctor'. We're cherishing memories of your triumphs, dedication, generosity, even tears. We'll share your experiences with the 'newbies' each year. We'll hold our heads proudly and flash a smile when your communities remind us that your work has helped transform their lives. Things will seem strange around here, for a while that is, until we figure out what's missing... you! Thank you for caring. Thank you for making a difference.

## BITE THIS!

A visit to the dentist should be a pleasant experience yet some volunteers are experiencing shock and awe. Caries, gingivitis, cracked teeth, and loss of enamel are regulars on the play list.

Ok, back to basics. Regular brushing after meals is crucial. When brushing isn't possible, rinse your mouth thoroughly with water to remove trapped food. Floss, floss, floss, waxed or unwaxed, just do it! Flossing is the only way to prevent build up of plaque between teeth. Flossing also staves off gum disease a real menace. If you've been fitted for a mouth guard to prevent grinding of teeth during sleep, the guard must be worn every night. Otherwise, unchecked grinding erodes tooth enamel. According to Peace Corps' statistics, the number one cause of cracked or chipped teeth is biting down on foreign objects in food, such as stones in beans. However there are those who use their teeth to open bottles or crack bones and nuts. Obviously that kind of abuse can result in tooth fractures. Even state of the art dentistry will not be effective unless you do your part.

## RAPID HIV SCREENING IN THE HOUSE!

The test kits are in so we now have the ability to perform rapid HIV screening on whole blood, plasma or serum in the medical unit. This means that COS'ing volunteers will have their HIV result before leaving Swaziland. We'll also be able to determine

HIV status for volunteers requesting PEP. No we still won't do 'casual' HIV testing just for the sake of testing, but if you think that you've been exposed to HIV through contact with blood or body fluids, notify the PCMO immediately. Remember there's a 72 hour window for starting PEP.

## FRESHEN UP!

If you've had to learn the hard way that in some parts of Swaziland water is a precious commodity, we sympathize. By now, however, everyone should have made arrangements for water delivery. That includes sufficient water for regular bathing, shampooing and laundering. There's no reason to feel guilty about it. Good personal hygiene habits are essential to maintain healthy skin, scalp and teeth. While you're at it pick up a nail clipper the next time that you're in town. Remember to trim toenails straight across to prevent ingrown toenails. Remove dead skin from wet feet with a pumice stone. This prevents dry, cracked feet which lead to infections. Summer's around the corner, lather up!!

## 'AIDS DAY' WALK'ers

Plan carefully if you're not normally ath-

### PCMO Site Visits For Group 3

5/12	Alix Edwards	9:30
5/12	Oya Jessica	11:00
5/12	Jana Barnes	13:00
5/12	Bredna Grabua	15:00
7/12	Krupa Metha	11:00
7/12	Kim Kanney	13:00
8/12	Megan Guetzko	9:30
8/12	Amy Baker	12:30
8/12	Angela Galletta	14:30
11/12	Jenny Jones	11:00
11/12	Kristin Wetzler	13:00
11/12	Justine Spisak	15:00
12/12	Molly Pacent	9:30
12/12	Derek Vos	11:00
12/12	Will Treese	13:00
12/12	Lindsay Hayek	15:00
13/12	Candace Watson	10:00
13/12	Craig Stephan	12:00
13/12	Lauren Winterholer	12:00
14/12	Kelly Russell	10:00

letic. Start short walks now, 3-5K and gradually increase distance. Stretch those leg and foot muscles before starting your walk. Anticipate hydration needs, if you sweat a lot, water alone will not replace salt and electrolytes. Try out your shoes and insure that they don't pinch or blister your feet. Wear protective clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses. Take along nutritious snacks. See you at the finish line. Have fun!!

# NEWS & Notes

## Taken As Directed

A new documentary tells the story of five people who contend that Lariam destroyed their lives. Carlsbad resident and one-time competitive surfer Danny Rocha is one of those profiled, as is former Camp Pendleton Marine Patrick Farrell, who killed himself after taking Lariam while serving in Somalia. Lariam is the most effective anti-malarial drug known and has been used by thousands of Peace Corps Volunteers over the past ten years. However, the drug's potential side effects are rarely reported and include agitation, depression and aggression.

## Associates to Bachelors via Peace Corps

The Peace Corps and Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, Minn., have unveiled a new partnership that will allow graduates from community colleges to pursue bachelor's degrees while serving in the Peace Corps. "Community college graduates have many of the occupational and technical skills that are crucial to helping people in countries where Peace Corps Volunteers serve," said Peace Corps Director Tschetter. "The encouragement that this program will offer these graduates to enter the Peace Corps will potentially spark an increase in the number of qualified Volunteers assisting communities across the world."

## Tower of Powerlessness

Tower Records has filed for Chapter 11 and will be closing its 89 stores nationwide.

# Programming w/Susan Olson, APCD

Greetings from the Programming Unit!

During October Stella and I had the pleasure of visiting all of the **Group 4** Volunteers at their sites. Congratulations – you’ve nearly completed the integration period!! We were really impressed to see you adjusting so well in your new communities. Hopefully the time spent on the various integration activities will pay dividends in the future. We look forward to seeing you at the Reconnect In-service Training and have a full schedule planned that should prove useful when you begin working with your communities. There will be a 3.5 day HIV/AIDS training from Baylor, a project design and management workshop, a CHAPS (Community HIV/AIDS Problem Solving) workshop, Lifeskills update, siSwati training and Swazi history, and several other programming, medical, safety and admin sessions. Those of you who have Sunday transport issues, please let us know as we are expecting that you will arrive at Emafini around lunchtime on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Group 3** has been busy preparing various PC Partnership and VAST proposals as well as PSN, VCT and Girls Mentoring activities. We hope to have funding decisions on the Mankayane Walk for Life event on World AIDS Day (Dec 1<sup>st</sup>) and the Shiselweni Region Trench Gardening Workshop (Dec 12-15) very soon. We will see all of you at the 3.5-day All Vol Conference on the afternoon of Nov 21<sup>st</sup>. There are a number of programming, medical, admin and security updates that will be provided as well as a PEPFAR update, a half-day income generation training provided by Technoserve, various PCV committee activities and a day for our NGO and Govt. partners to visit and provide overviews on what their organizations are doing to help combat HIV/AIDS Swaziland.

October has seen **Group 2** PCVs busy closing out projects, taking COS medicals and writing their DOSes and Final Site Evaluations in preparation for their upcoming departure. A few have even managed to squeeze in a couple of HIV/AIDS education workshops and paint more World Maps! It’s hard to believe that your two-year’s of service has come to a close. We will miss you and really appreciate all of your hard work and perseverance. We know it’s not been easy but we hope it’s been a worthwhile experience. On behalf of the entire PC staff, we wish you all the best with your post-Peace Corps life!!

See you soon.

Susan, Stella and Mahlubi

## A Word from Dr. Tyers: Helping the Blind

**Program staff was recently approached by Dr. David Tyers at the Good Shepherd Eye Clinic in Siteki who asked that we share the following information with interested PCVs:**

Are you aware of people with blindness living in your communities? They may be hidden away in the poorest homesteads and struggling to cope because they cannot see. They probably think that nothing can be done or that any treatment would be too expensive for them. For most of them this is wrong!

Good Shepherd Hospital Eye Clinic, Siteki offers a comprehensive eye care service. For many blind people a simple operation to remove cataracts (a clouding of the lens of the eye) can transform them from total dependence to independence. For many elderly people this means that they can once more

take on the role of caring for grandchildren and OVCs. Patients are encouraged to make a contribution to the cost of an operation even if a small amount. The full cost of the operation is E500 (including overnight hospital stay etc.) plus a E15 consultation fee BUT sponsorship is available (up to 100% for the poorest patients). We can even help with the cost of bus fares!

Clinics are held on a Tuesday at St. Theresa’s Clinic in Manzini and at Good Shepherd Hospital Siteki on a Wednesday. Patients can just turn up – no appointment necessary. Surgery is carried out on Thursdays at Good Shepherd with patients going home the following day. Some operating lists are also held on a Monday at RFM Hospital Manzini but these do not occur every week.

Our aim is to alleviate preventable blind-

## In Brief

### Craft Donations

Alyson Peel has kindly donated several boxes of arts and crafts supplies that Volunteers could use if they’re planning a kids’ camp over the next school break. Ask Susan to see the supplies.

### Water Bottles Needed

To All PCV’s and Staff: Mankayane area volunteers request that you save all water bottles of any size and bring them to the marked box in the volunteer lounge. The volunteers are planning a two-day World AIDS Day Walk for Life and will need as many as they can get. The walk is currently in the planning stages but projects 400 participants. Stay hydrated and help out a group of fellow PCVs. (Beer, wine and liquor bottles will not help unless you’re going to donate them with the product still inside).

### From Here to There

Check out the “From Here to There” Travel Agency website (<http://www.ytbtravel.com/fromheretothere>) for affordable rates when traveling. Easy to navigate and customer service is great!

### Ebenezer World AIDS Day

All are invited to World AIDS Day at Ebenezer High School on Friday, December 1st, 2006. Contact Krupa (631-6084) for more information.

### Hand in Tamiflu Forms

Nelsiwe requests that all volunteers who have not done so sign and submit the forms that were attached to the boxes of Tamiflu placed in the mailboxes a few months ago. If you have since lost the form, please see her at your earliest convenience for another one.

ness in Swaziland and we need your help - send us the blind people from your community. Many volunteers already do and the results can be amazing. We offer a comprehensive service including managing eye trauma and laser treatment for complications of diabetes but would be swamped if we tried to deal the more trivial eye complaints you may come across (e.g. Infections, allergies etc.). These should be directed to your local clinics. Please phone me if you need more information or wish to discuss if we are likely to be able to assist a member of your community.

David Tyers, Programme Manager Tel: 645-1005 [tyers@doctors.org.uk](mailto:tyers@doctors.org.uk)



## Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, SXS

Very warm greetings goes to all PCVs at sites. Winter is gone and Summer is here!

Speaking of Summer and the thunder and lightening storms, it's a pleasure for me to announce that PC Swaziland has just completed a lightening rod installation exercise for all Group 4 sites. Please remember to tell your families to keep away from the lightening rod if there is lightening activity taking place in the area, no matter how mild it may seem. This goes for pets and livestock too.

The PCO has regrettably observed a trend of mail being tampered with or literally opened by the time it reaches the PCO. The PCO has also received on occasions some PCV packages that had been tampered with. The PCO has approached the Mbabane post office management about this issue but it turns out that the problem is in Johannesburg. Efforts are being made by the local postal services to engage their South African counterparts to cooperate in arresting this problem. South African media reports had it re-

cently that about 40 South Africans have been arrested for this practice, most of them postal services workers.

I wish to advise PCVs to tell their folks back in the U.S. to ensure that they really secure packages sent to Africa. Even if this means taping the parcel all over because this reduces the chances as compared to poorly secured packages.

PC Mali has informed PC Swaziland of their withdrawal of PCVs serving in the Timbuktu region of Mali due to safety and security reasons. I wish to further discourage all PCVs from going to this part of Mali as it has been declared a high risk area. More info on this place and other places PCVs may want to get information about is available on state sponsored website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

To the Group 4s, It is advisable not to be shy to set boundaries as early as now to avoid setting yourselves up for a fall in the future. Have your family know that they need your

permission to come into your room, use your stuff including food and even clothes. Do not get into the habit of lending people money because that simply suggest to them that there is plenty more where the money in hand came from. But of course this is *just my advice!* Also, keep your keys to yourself.

Manzini continues to be the crime capital of Swaziland. PCVs are advised to minimize their trips to this town. When at the bus rank, carry your backpack at the front and have your wallets and cell phones well tucked away preferably in your from pockets. Do not accept help from strangers.

Lastly I will be on leave as from the 31<sup>st</sup> October to 13<sup>th</sup> November. AO Nwando will be handling my phone in my absence. I pray that we have a safe summer and as we gear up for the festive season, always maintain vigilance!

Until next month ASIPHEPHE! LETS ENSURE OUR SAFETY!

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nominal fee might help in some regions.

Concerning country-level issues, Mr. Lewis could have been less caustic in certain areas. The dramatic language such as "mass murder" and "genocide" will have diminishing returns, as the world wearies of hearing of poor-country problems. Even Swazis themselves at times show irritation at this deluge of HIV evangelism. Polarizing rhetoric, like those incendiary comments about South Africa, although probably meant to incite action, will solve little and may exacerbate the situation.

Alarmingly, Mr. Lewis calls for a pause in statistical data. By themselves, surely, the numbers are useless, but without them health workers are fumbling haphazardly. How else will they know where to begin, what resources to allocate, or whether their approaches are working? It is a shame that even a rough estimate could not be provided of how many people have the disease when pressed by consultants from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Better monitoring of the programs already in place should be done, and the plug should be pulled on the ones that do not produce adequate results in a reasonable amount of time. Africa is fully capable of this, despite its own shaken sense of self-confidence after centuries of foreign chicanery.

Secondly, Mr. Lewis' tendency to jump the

gun with regard to scientific advances may well prove harmful in the long run. Some restraint is in order concerning his overly enthusiastic and very public embrace of "a preventative technology whose time has come." The microbicides he raves about are currently in trial. Delays and setbacks are common in the pharmaceutical industry, and most drugs that make it to trial stage never get FDA approval.

Concerning circumcision, only one South African study on the benefits of circumcision has shown such great results, but three other trials have yet to report their conclusions. Scientific veracity is based on peer-reviewed, reproducible results, and it might behoove policymakers to wait on a confirming verdict before making any bold claims that they might later have to retract.

Mr. Lewis has long forgotten the pain of his own circumcision, but if it turns out that the effects of the surgery were not as profound as expected, this could do no small damage to the credibility of the AIDS campaign.

His dig at big pharma companies touches a deeper issue. These corporations make easy scapegoats, but they are the only entities that have both the will and the capital to finance risky and resource-intensive new drug research. Reduce their incentives enough, and the only driving force that remains for new drug discovery will be government, which

often remains mired in red tape. Thus, the exit strategy should include better allocation of money, tracking and demanding more results, not overstating scientific findings, and expecting more of Africans. In addition, the psychology of the afflicted population should be accounted for and flexibly applied in any program to be promulgated. Granted, "ideological rigidity almost never works when applied to the human condition," but perhaps this is true in more ways than Mr. Lewis imagined. Abstinence should no longer be viewed only as a moral choice, but as a socially beneficial practice to be strongly encouraged (but not forced) in these circumstances, at this time and in this particular situation. In relatively rich American homes, it is may be a question of individual morality, but in the dire straits of sub-Saharan Africa, abstinence may simply be an effective alternative.

More important than any HIV-specific program, however, is integrating these programs in ways that foster local human capacity, while fiercely resisting the urge to "institutionalize." With 39 million currently infected, and 4 million new infections a year, it may seem early to talk about leaving. However, the subject of departure merits significant discussion immediately. The most important tasks may not be the ones that require much funding, but these must be quickly successful within the next few years before the crisis takes on unmanageable proportions.

## All About Me (Since Noone Else Would)

by Vincent D'Agostino

Since no one will write a profile on me I took it upon myself to let all of you know the good deeds I have done here in Swaziland. I mean, seriously, I did write in my Aspiration Statement that I was coming here to "help the indigenous native people of Africa." When we first arrived in Swaziland one of my fellow volunteers asked me what was my selfish reason for joining the Peace Corps, I said, "To advance my career opportunities." Then they asked me what my unselfish reason was and I said, "For the experience." She said that's a selfish reason, however I disagree.

In my village of Sitsatsaweni I'm known as Khetokuhle Mdlou. My first name means "choose the best," and boy did they!

My first 3 months at site I conducted & implemented the Community HIV/AIDS Assessment Toolbox (CHAT) where I interviewed over 400 homesteads. Can you believe I walked to 400 homesteads and only 8 people showed up to say good bye to me at umphakatsi? Seriously, I thought the bugle horn would be blowing (or a cow's horn) and the drums would be beating at a farewell party for me, but it was anticlimatic. By the way, I've commissioned for a famous Zionist pastor from my village to speak at my *big* farewell party from my family. I hope they throw me a party, I have been here for 2 years & I've been hinting to them that I would like a farewell party.

My understanding of people's beliefs & attitudes towards HIV, my eagerness to initiate & sustain successful interventions through personal relationships, and my dedication to opening a dialogue in a context of silence & apathy surrounding HIV decreased the amount of stigma attached to HIV/AIDS issues in my village. Every time I talk to my counterpart Dumisa, my bhuti Sandile, or any of my friends, I



am constantly teaching them values. I also taught weekly or sometimes bi-weekly (depending on my vacations) at the high school to over 100 students on Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education. With my good rapport with the students I decided to put on a camp. I am known as the "Nazi Camp Counselor" among many of my fellow PCV's. Word of Advice: Don't invite too many volunteers to your camp to help you out, because they will eat EVERYTHING. During the middle of the week I had to hide my food from those pigs. At my camps all the children have so much fun dancing to the most outdated songs from Madonna & we watched Diva Live DVD's. They just love Mariah Carey & Celine Dion! Although the next day when I was going to teach the Dance Session one of the kids did ask me to leave the room & he wanted to put in his own CD. Ungrateful kid. All of my camp activities I copied from other volunteers. That's what I do: I take something from another volunteer & I make it better - my own. I suppose in the end that's not really copying.

I also put on an HIV/AIDS Education Workshop in my community for the adults with my counterpart, Dumisa. I obtained the money from NERCHA. However, I was a no-show on the first day at the workshop because I was such a good friend to Brigid and had to go & support her for at least one day at her Boys & Girls Camp.

I identified 5 destitute classified orphan families for the gov-

ernment sponsorship assistance program, Young Heroes through NERCHA. I did this all for the Young Heroes t-shirt that Steve gave us. I have also been actively involved in the HIV/AIDS Support Group in my area. They are the only people that are throwing me a farewell party. I hope it's not anti-climatic. I drafted an approved U.S. Embassy Ambassador Self-Help Fund proposal (I framed my proposal after Blia's original proposal; however I used the Thesaurus to make it sound more eloquent) for the HIV/AIDS Support Group to access funding for a poultry house as an income-generating project.

I also participated in the World Map project & painted a map with my counterparts at the primary school. However, after the kids dirtied it up with their hands I decided my counterparts can do all the labeling & handling those wretched kids at the school.

My greatest contribution I've made towards Peace Corps Swaziland was when I became elected as Editor-in-Chief of the Sojo where I served a 2-year term and was crucial in disseminating critical information via e-mail and in paper to the volunteers. Of course, crucial information such as the Gossip Column and Soft Core & Hard Core sections. I was responsible for writing for publication as well as dispensing new information to the volunteers and editing the 10-page monthly document.

Overall, my work as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sitsatsaweni demanded a high level of determination flexibility & patience. I've exchanged cultural values (pop culture on Madonna) & beliefs with my community members, and do believe they grew personally & professionally. I represented my community to national & local NGO's by selling ideas (most of these ideas I borrowed from other volunteers) with the goal in mind to implement projects for the benefit of the community. I was respon-

sible for being a mentor to community members where I inspired, motivated, advised (I give very good advice), aspired, and mobilized (sometimes I had to push people around) them to take proactive measures in taking responsibility for their lives as well as their community. Despite the many challenges I faced in development & education in Sitsatsaweni, I found my service to be rewarding & a fulfilling experience as well as an enlightening opportunity to learn more about international development.



On Susan:

**"We're close friends; she's efficient & a wealth of knowledge. Also she has a good collection of DVDs that she lets me borrow"**



On Nwando:

**"Great for networking with. I mean seriously who wouldn't want to work for the Clinton Foundation one day? Or, did she work for the Carter Foundation?"**



On Patti:

**We're like two peas in a pod. Seriously, how do you think I get those twizzler packages in my box?!"**

# Diversity Dish: Something to Think About!

by William Treese, Lushikishini

Once a PCV asked me for the ethnic breakdown of Peace Corps Swaziland. Rather than gather that information (all one really needs to do is to look around the room at an All-Vol. I received the information for the entire Africa Region. Here's what the stats look like as of 30 Sept., 2005.

So, where do you fit? And how do you interpret this information? I look at it like this: overall we're a bunch of young, single-white-women who've graduated college with no relevant experience. Would you agree? Remember that this will be open game for discussion during IST and the All-Vol. Something to think about!!!

**To all PCVs:** The Diversity Committee (DC) will be planning an event for the 'All-Vol' in November. The DC will need art supplies such as colored paper, stamps, hole-punches, scissors, glitter, etc, anything you may have lying around. If you're able to bring something to the All-Vol please drop an SMS to Candace: 631-6009, Krupa: 631-6084 or Will: 631-6006. (Group #2, if you have art stuff that you're parting with and have no happy home for it, let us know we'll take some of it.)

By age:			Education:		
20-29	2410	85%	HS diploma	7	.2%
30-39	239	8%	1-2 College	18	1%
40-49	64	2%	Tech Sch. Grad	7	.2%
50-59	74	3%	AA Degree	23	1%
60-69	40	1%	3 Yrs College	42	1%
70-79	8	.3%	Bachelor Deg	2411	85%
By ethnicity:			Grad Study	39	1%
Caucasian	2149	76%	Grad Deg	288	10%
Not Specified*	239	8%	Related Experience:		
Asian	147	5%	< 1 yr	2827	100%
Af-American	116	4%	1-2 Yrs	3	.1%
Mixed race	114	4%	3-5 Yrs	1	0%
Hispanic	61	2%	>5 yrs	4	.1%
Native American	10	.4%	Skill Sector:		
Marital status:			Education	978	34%
Single	2639	93%	Health	908	32%
Married	177	6%	Environment	452	16%
Married/			Business	356	13%
			Agriculture	114	4%

\*- Normally specifies a Caucasian volunteer, as told by PC Washington former employee

## Are You Saved?!

by Krupa Mehta, Ebenezer, Div. Com.

Next month, Diversity Committee will host their second and final event of the year. Faith seemed like the obvious choice for a topic, as it is something we can all relate to as PCVs in Swaziland. Regardless of their religious beliefs, PCVs will face the question "Are you a Christian?" often during their two-year service. So we thought, why not openly discuss the issues surrounding this topic?

As I think of my own religious views, and how I have handled questions that in the States are considered very personal, I realized that my religious identity in Swaziland is some what of a sham. I grew up in a family that practices Hinduism and as a child, I went along with it, because, well, I didn't know I could choose otherwise. As I grew older and learned about "freedom of religion," I no longer felt I could follow Hinduism because I really didn't know anything about it. I struggled to figure out what exactly my religious beliefs were. Not until recently did I realize and acknowledge that I am in fact, an atheist.

In the States, this would not be common, but it also wouldn't be unheard of. However in the context of Peace Corps Swaziland, I had to rethink how I would present myself to my community and those who posed ques-

tions such as "Are you a Christian?", "Do you go to church?", etc. So when I face these questions, I lie. I still believe that these questions are personal and so, for the purpose of being an effective volunteer, I decided to hide my true beliefs. Instead, I tell my community members, that although I am not a Christian, I share many of their beliefs, which is true. Although I don't believe in God, I still believe in helping my neighbor as yourself, etc. I just leave the God part out. I feel that if my community found out that I didn't believe in God, it would do more harm than good. Since people associate being a "Christian" as a positive thing, I assumed that being an atheist would be considered negative. For this reason, I decided to lie.

I still on occasion get an invitation to go to church. I have so far declined and people have been very respectful of my choice. There are only a few people in my community that know of my true religious beliefs. I chose to tell them because they are very close to me and I felt I could trust them and that they wouldn't judge me. So far I have managed to avoid discussing my religious beliefs in depth with most Swazis. I hope to be able to express myself more freely around my community members, but as long as I'm a volunteer, I don't see that happening.

When I first had arrived  
I heard the rooster cry.  
Early or late he just would not wait  
His cock-a-doodles quite loud  
right outside my window he bowed.  
As he let loose his lungs  
from his perch of wooden rungs.  
Now many months its been  
and I call him no friend.  
So I cut off his head;  
he is now quite dead.  
He croaked his last breath  
'tween my fingers round his neck.  
I started from the back,  
it took more than one hack.  
The kitchen knife quite blunt  
finally came out the front.  
Only a few twitches more  
as he bled on the floor  
to show his protest  
as he failed his life's quest:  
to keep me awake,  
now my supper he'll make!

by Amy Mayer

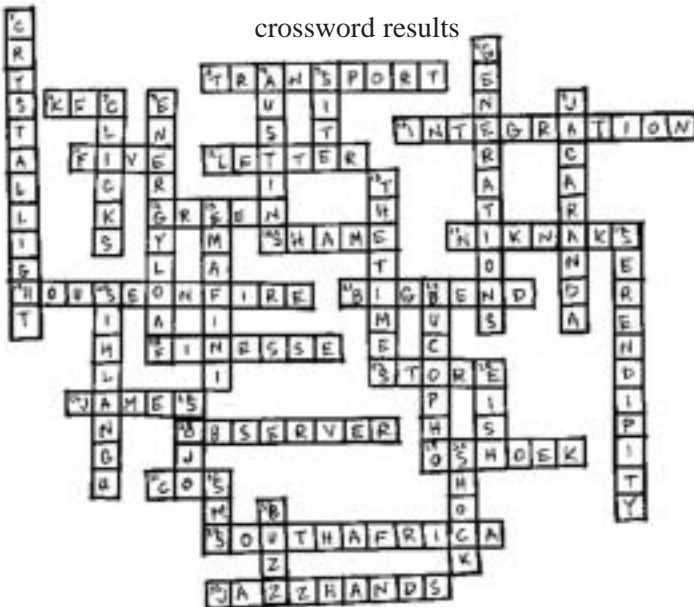


# Angela's Lit Box

by Angela Galletta, Nhlanguano

Most recently, I finished reading Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf. To me, time in Peace Corps also means time to catch up on classics, and Virginia Woolf is a classic by most standards. I had read To the Lighthouse (twice) in college and loved it, so I went into Mrs. Dalloway already thinking the novel would be brilliant. Besides that, I had also seen the film The Hours, and read the book it was based on by Michael Cunningham. With so much expectation, already it looked like Mrs. Dalloway would have to work extra hard to win my approval. Like most things that we build up too much, I was a little disappointed. The novel (the American published version, anyway) is only 190 pages, but still it took me almost two weeks to power through. The main problem is that the novel follows its characters through one day, with no breaks or chapters to give the reader some space. The novel, which Woolf originally titled The Hours, mostly follows two characters: Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith. Clarissa spends the entire day reminiscing about the past and planning a lavish party to take place that same night. Septimus Smith is a soldier returned from World War I suffering from shell shock and hallucinations of his dead Captain. The main point of the novel is to examine the same world through two different views: one from the supposedly mentally sound, and one from someone deranged. However, by the end of the novel, the reader begins to suspect that Woolf wants us to conclude that the realm of the mind cannot be boiled down to such simplicity. Clarissa is the supposedly sane one, but by the end of the novel, the reader has the feeling that all that sanity is very fragile. In fact, it seemed like a conscious choice that Clarissa made, to become Mrs. Dalloway and become "normal," and that choosing to remain a young and vibrant Clarissa would have been crazy and yet totally natural. Basically, it's a complicated story, and one that you really have to be in the mood for. Lots of imagery, lots of flowery language. When you sift through all the description, you're left with just plain people trying not to regret the lives they've chosen.

crossword results



## World Map Update/Clarification...

from Tegan Callahan, Mahlalini

It is my pleasure to announce that since July, nine world maps have been painted in Swaziland with the help of the Peace Corps Partnership Grant supplies, and 4 more are currently underway! However, the initial kit schedule has been significantly delayed and this is seemingly causing a bit of contention. I want to re-iterate the importance of trying to be efficient with the kit while you have it (preferably completion in 3 weeks). ALSO, please communicate with those after you on schedule.

As published in the July SOJO and subsequently amended with new additions, the world map kit schedules are as follows:

**Kit One:** Lauren, Krupa, Polly; **Kit Two:** Will, Jana, Brenda, Derek

I urge volunteers to continue with the order on this schedule even though the original dates I suggested are long passed. This schedule was built as people originally contacted me about their interest and therefore I see it as the fairest option that we continue with it. I will not assign dates to people anymore, again I urge you to be mindful of the time you have with the supplies as others are waiting.

That said, the kit is NOT ESSENTIAL for creating a world map mural. It only makes the process easier because you do not have to gather supplies on your own. Yet, if you do not want to wait for supplies or are tired of waiting you can easily paint the map on your own time, with your own resources. The only essential item is the manual which gives directions and maps out the grid system.

To facilitate those who want to work outside the schedule I will place a copied version of the world map manual in the volunteer lounge for those to re-copy and use. Look for it by the beginning of November on the bulletin board.

As for additional volunteers that are interested in painting a world map of their own, you can join the waiting list! I am handing over organizing responsibilities to Amy Baker (Group 03). Contact her to be put on the schedule, 631-6026.

Finally, for those who have completed the map, PLEASE PLEASE email or give me photos of your world maps (Kate, Brigid, Vincent, Blia, Caitlin, Angela, Jenny). The donors want to see the results of their money.

**PICK OUT YOUR FAVORITE AFRICAN-PRINT FABRIC FROM THE MANZINI MARKET AND get a DRESS, SKIRT, or TANK TOP made at a reasonable price.**



**Call Gugu at 606-8157. She can meet you in Manzini and your outfit could be made in one week. Just say you were referred by a Peace Corps Volunteer. Bring a magazine cut out of what you want or you can choose from her booklet as well.**

Ask Kate, Caitlin, Stephanie, Blia, Tegan, Anna, Megan, Jabu, & Beth of their experience with Gugu.



### Group 3 T-shirt Results

The results are finalized! You can now place your order for your very own Peace Corps Swaziland memorabilia shirt!

The logo below will be placed on the breast of a navy shirt with the line, "We are the knights who say 'ngi'". The logo will appear again large on the back with the line, "Umuntfu Munye Angawenta Umehluko" or One Person Can Make a Difference.

Short sleeve: E38

Long sleeve: E53



**Don't miss out! Give Lindsay your orders and money at upcoming All Vol.**

## Classifieds

### In Need

•GRE book, Psychology GRE book, converter, solar batteries. If you have any to sell or give, call **Caroline at 642-0091**.

### For Sale

•Princeton Review MCAT 2006 plus huge stack of practice tests. R150. **Contact Justine at 631-6004**

•2 "badass" speakers w/ subwoofer to use with iPod, computer, CD player, etc. 6 mo. old. E200

•Unused punching bag/kicking bag E200

•Sleeping bag E70

•Assorted furniture, table, bed, purple-striped straw rug E70

•Kitchen counters, house accessories & more!

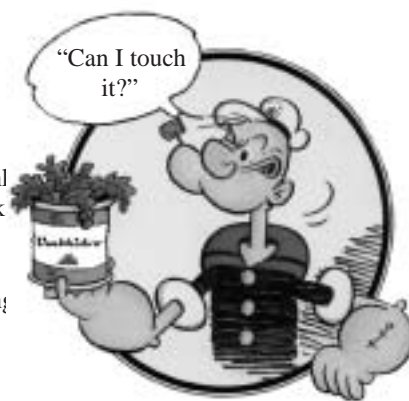
**Ten minutes from Nhlanguano, all prices negotiable. Contact Arlene at 626-1399**

### From Jackie

•The RSS of Denver just had it's grand opening celebration and is currently accepting ski season bookings from all returning Group 2 members (discounted rates available!).

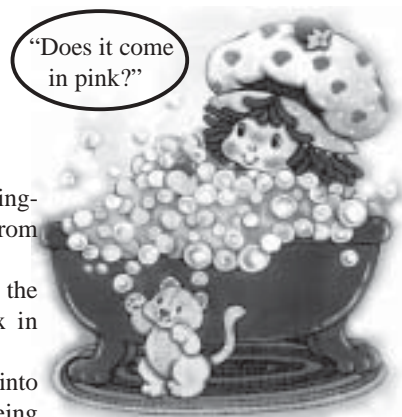
### You know you're **HARD CORPS** when...

- ...a Make grabs your boob out of your tan top to check out how an umlungu's boob look like and you don't even flinch.
- ...your hobby is picking ticks off dogs.
- ...you challenge someone to a fly-swattin' contest.
- ...you regularly use an upside down frisbee for a supper plate.



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

- ...you get upset & berate a PCV for not bringing you a 2 Rand Soft Twirl ice cream cone from KFC.
- ...you order a Victoria's Secret bikini off the internet to be delivered to your P.O. Box in Swaziland.
- ...you are embarrassed & hesitant to urinate into a pee-bucket at a volunteer's rondavel after being in the Swaz for over 1 year.



### You know you're **PATHETIC CORPS** when...

... you hit your puppy & you have talked all along about how you disagree with corporal punishment against your students.



... you have a tab at the sitolo.

... you just have ABSOLUTELY NO SHAME anymore when it comes to borrowing money from volunteers or Swazis.

... you run after a kid for putting his dirty hand on your world map (hint, hint: It's time to go!!!!).

... you pack away your solar shower to take back with you to the states because you think one day you will use it there.

### You know you're **Evil CORPS** when...

... you laugh at someone buying a RED I-POD who thinks that money will actually send a child in Africa to school for a year.

... you sell your furniture to your community members because you "really" need the money for traveling around the world - this is only one particular volunteer, the one who owns the dog kennel.

"The bidding starts at E300"



## November (Lweti) - Freeedom!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Stephanie's B-day	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Group 4 IST						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
CD on leave thru Dec 11...						
All Volunteer Conference						
26	27	28	29	30		
	Sojo Production Computers in use		Marisa's B-day	Lindsay's B-day		
		Andi's B-day				

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