

To tackle a taboo: How Africa is opening up a new front in the fight against AIDS

Edited version of the article by Andrew Jack, published in the Financial Times on 18 Jan.

It was no surprise to Sibongile when her husband died of AIDS in 2003, even though he had always refused to take a test. She had suspected that he was HIV positive ever since she learnt of the death of one of his girlfriends two years earlier.

"I was expecting it. He was a real ladies' man," she says with an embarrassed smile. "I knew it for a long time but I stayed. I really loved him and he helped me financially. One of the things in our culture is that you don't question your husband."

Her experience in Swaziland touches on a taboo that a growing number of public health experts believe must be breached if the devastating impact of HIV is to be reversed in

southern Africa: the need to change sexual behaviour and, above all, to reduce the number of sexual partners people have.

Although hundreds of millions of dollars of donor and local funding have poured into HIV prevention programmes, far less effort has gone into persuading people to change their sexual practices. "Prevention has concentrated on testing, condoms, safe blood and mother-to-child transmission - things that fall easily off bureaucrats' lips," says Derek von Wissell, who runs NERCHA, Swaziland's official National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS. "Behaviour change is the difficult side. It needs a whole societal shift."

In the US and elsewhere, the debate around prevention became polarised around which aspects of the mantra of "ABC" - "abstinence, be faithful and condomise" - should receive priority. Religious groups focused on the first two in an effort to promote more conservative sexuality. More socially liberal advocates argued above all for condoms, maintaining that it was unrealistic to expect A and B to work.

"When you say ABC, it immediately conjures up George Bush," says Daniel Halperin from Harvard's School of Public Health, who specialises in AIDS and behaviour change. "There was an immediate polarisation between those saying condoms were evil and those who argued that only condoms were good."

Mr Halperin and other public health specialists argue that, while all three approaches to prevention have a role in the fight against AIDS, changing sexual behaviour and reducing the number of partners has been the "neglected middle child" in ABC.

In countries such as Thailand, Cambodia and Brazil, emphasis on the use of condoms was central to tackling infection rates. But Mark Dybul, the head of PEPFAR, argues that the decline was also driven by a fall in the number of men visiting prostitutes - the key driver of the epidemic in those regions.

There is no single or satisfactory explanation for why HIV in southern Africa -

which has infected up to 40 percent of the adult population in Swaziland and nearby Lesotho - is so much higher than in the rest of the world. Poverty, malnutrition, lack of circumcision and the low status of women play a strong part. However, a growing body of evidence

points to the predominant role of one aspect of sexual behaviour.

Polygamy sharply intensifies the spread of the epidemic for at least two reasons. First, HIV's ability to be transmitted reaches a peak in the weeks after someone has been infected. So those in multiple partnerships can rapidly spread the disease to others.

With one study in Malawi suggesting that in seven villages, 65 per cent of sexually active adults were linked into a single network, such concurrence means HIV can quickly spread across entire communities.

A second explanation is that long-term sexual partners, who show greater trust in and commitment to each other, are far less likely to use condoms. That also increases the likelihood that if one is HIV positive, the infection will be eventually passed on to the other.

The importance of such patterns of behaviour are beginning to be recognised. Public health specialists convened last year by the Southern African Development Community concluded in a report: "Key drivers of the epidemic in southern Africa . . . included multiple concurrent partnerships by men and women with low consistent condom use." It highlighted instances where HIV infections appeared to be falling and linked these to successful programmes aimed at changing behaviour, notably in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Perhaps most importantly, few programmes specifically intended to change



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Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD



Greetings to all PCVs. As you know the visit by the Peace Corps Director, originally slated for January, was re-scheduled for February 20-24. So, in about three weeks Director Tschetter (pronounced "cheddar") and his wife will be here. They will be accompanied by Mr. Ron Campbell, the Director of the Office of AIDS Relief, Mr. Henry McKoy, the Regional Director for Africa, Mr. Richard Parker, the Director of Communications and Mr. Chris Harnish, Confidential Assistant to the Director.

The Director's objective is to meet as many Volunteers as possible so we are trying to schedule a variety of activities so many of you will have a chance to greet him. Most of the committees, like VAC/PSN and Diversity will have meetings with him and he will be doing site visits in the Mankanyane and Siteki areas. We are working through the Embassy to arrange a meeting with King Mswati. The Director will also be meeting with Lynn Allison the Charge D'Affair at the Embassy, Dr Von Wissell of NERCHA, the DPM, the PM and other government officials. Thank you in advance for contributing to the Director's visit and sharing your ser-

vice experiences with him.

I understand that issues of sexual harassment continue to be of concern to some Volunteers. Please know that the Swazi staff in particular are a great source of information and advice in how to deal with unwanted attention. I have asked Khabo Kunene, Executive Assistant and Program Assistant, to write an article for this month's Sojo addressing this topic. Contact Khabo or any staff member for further advice in how to cope with this problem. I suspect that veteran Volunteers of Group 3 may also have good advice for Group 4!

The launch of our Anglican church HIV prevention training is next month and I appreciate the work that Volunteers are doing to prepare the curriculum. This PEPFAR funded program promises to be a great opportunity to work with the church in HIV prevention. I encourage Volunteers to contact Mahlubi Hadebe to get more information on the February 28 training in Manzini. All Volunteers are welcome to participate!

Utsini? Talkin' with Musa Malaza

Sanibonani bonkhosi! Ninjani namuhla. Mine ngiyaphila! Ngiyetsembe kutsi niyasebenta kakhulu kufundza nekukhuluma siSwati emimangweni yenu. Nginifisela inhlanhla lenhle, ngitsi kini Khulumani siSwati kamnandzi !

This is just a gentle reminder to Group 4 volunteers.

Each PCV is responsible for negotiating language-tutoring fees with his/her tutor. Volunteers are allowed a **maximum** payment rate of E20.00 per hour and no more than E320.00 per month. It is in your best interest to negotiate a lower per hour rate so you get more training out of the E320/month. **Please approach this payment and the tutoring as a business transaction and not a charity from you or the Peace Corps to your tutor.** If a Volunteer chooses to join an organized language class, the monthly amount will not be increased and class tuition will not be prepaid.

Reimbursements and or payments will be deposited to your account along with your living allowance after approval. The turn around time for reimbursements/payments may take up to 2 months. It is therefore best to plan

and inform your language tutor of this possibility when you first negotiate to take classes. Generally, Volunteers find it best and we advice PCVs to take classes for a full month or two, sign and submit the language payment form, and wait till they get the amounts owed to their language tutors before actually paying the language tutors.

If you are not already doing this, please try to negotiate with your tutor. If you are finding it tough to negotiate, please call Sandla, Shirley or Musa to help you speak with/ explain to the tutor.

Tutoring reimbursement forms must be completed fully and correctly, including all necessary signatures. For accounting purposes, each form should represent a full month, e.g. November. Please do not submit forms for Aug. 23rd through Sept. 22nd.

Please remember that tutoring reimbursements are not made six months (180 days) to the end of your service. Which means that the last month that payments will be made will be June 2006.

Siyabonga bekenene.
Musa
Training Manager

In Brief



Dr. Sach Needs You

Noticing the disturbing increase of Cyndi Lauper tunes on the radio these days? Unfortunately, nothing can be done to tame this travesty. Malnutrition in Swaziland is another story. If you would be willing to take a "nutritional inventory" at your homestead to help docs at the Baylor Pediatric Centre to gain a better understanding of caloric intake in rural Swaziland, please stop by the PCV office to pick up the project packet. The survey is completely voluntary and will be used solely for clinical service improvement - not for any research/publication purposes. No probes or sharks with lasers are involved in this exercise. Thank you for your support.

Hi All:

- All W2s for **Current PCV/T** have been mailed to Post (all sent DHL from HQ on 1/25/07 - except Turkmenistan by Pouch).

- All W2s for **Current PCV/T who have a Power of Attorney** on file as of November 30th had a duplicate W2 mailed to the POA (all sent from HQ on 1/25/07).

- All W2s for **Returned PCV/T** have been mailed to the HOR or other current address (all sent from HQ on 1/26/07).

The 2006 Tax Guide and 2006 Taxable Allowances Guide are posted on the Peace Corps website at: www.peacecorps.gov/docs under the heading of "**Tax Information for Peace Corps Trainees, Volunteers, and Former Volunteers**".

Let me know if you have questions.
Patti



Keeping you Updated and Healthy w/Daynese Santos, PCMO

PICK UP COARTEM

Back in 2005 the procedure for self treatment of malaria was changed. At the time the switch did not affect Group 3 PCV's as they had already been issued 12 Malarone tablets for that purpose. Now however those Malarone tablets have expired so Group 3 PCV's will need to stop by the med unit and pick up a package of Coartem.

To avoid confusion here are a few pointers.

- Coartem is only to be taken if you have symptoms of malaria and or a positive malaria screening test and you have contacted the PCMO.

- Regardless of which medication you are taking for malaria prophylaxis, you must take Coartem for self treatment of malaria.

- Coartem must be taken according to the instructions provided on the package.

- Your package of Coartem must be returned intact to the med unit at close of service.

- All PCV's should check the expiration date on the end flap of the Coartem package. If the product has expired, return the package to the med unit in exchange for a new one. Under no circumstances should anyone self treat malaria with expired Coartem.

- Should you use your Coartem for self treatment of malaria, pick up a replacement package from the med unit as soon as possible.

- Do not share your Coartem with friends or neighbors.

- After self treatment of malaria, resume normal malaria prophylaxis.

HEPATITIS A and HEPATITIS B IMMUNIZATION

Group 4 PCV's consider this unfinished business. If you have not yet done so, stop by the med unit to receive Hep A and/or Hep B immunizations in order to complete the series. Typically these final shots are given 6 months following the initial injections. We now have both vaccines in stock.

BAD NEWS FROM HOME

Usually unexpected, that phone call in the middle of the night or unfamiliar knock at the door that shatters our world in seconds. Instantly we may find ourselves overtaken by a torrent of emotions, decisions to make, travel arrangements, distressed family members back home, explanations, goodbyes, uncertainty. So what do we do? How do we get through it? Try reaching out to friends, they're right there to cry with you, listen with compassion, help you sort out all kinds of details. You are not alone. Even though we can never really be prepared for bad news there are some things that we can do to help minimize the chaos. Keep important phone numbers in a handy location and share a set with a friend. Be sure to have an emergency fund stashed away and replenish it if you have to tap into it. Stay in touch with family and friends back home, know what's going on in their lives. It just not helpful to stick your head in the sand when you know that loved ones are ill or struggling. Often it just takes a few words of acknowledgement and support. Then if tragedy does strike we avoid the added stress of guilt. Last month one of our PCV's suffered devastating loss and I witnessed an incredible outpouring of love and support from fellow PCV's and staff. It became very apparent, we're family, we stick together and we take care of our own.



Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, S&S

A happy new year to all PCVs, hoping that everyone had a great holiday season.

It is now that time of the year where public transportation will be packed as well as the bus and kombi terminals in the cities. It also goes without saying that this is also the time when criminal elements will be all-out to make a killing at the bus terminals areas as it is common knowledge that many people will be carrying lots of money to pay school fees and buy school uniforms and stationery. PCVs are advised to limit their movements to the cities at this time because of increased risks in public transportation and safety in urban area public facilities.

May I also clarify and emphasize that the idea behind me giving contacts of SSCs in PC countries that PC Swaziland PCVs will be visiting, is primarily to have PCVs contact the SSC in that country for assistance in case of a security incident. I wish to advise PCVs that they are to contact the SSCs as soon as possible after the incident so that a timely and effective follow up can be made. This is very important so that posts effectively monitor trends and make efforts to put systems in place that would ensure safe PCV travel.

With the departure of Group 2, it has become necessary for me to make replacements of Consolidation points Wardens and Alternate Wardens. An updated list of Wardens and their assistants is reflected in the table below:

Consolidation Point	Warden	Alternate Warden
Phumula Guest House	Jana Barnes	Roselane Miller
Matsapha Inn	Megan Guetzko	Kristin Wetzler
Riverside Hotel	Chris Young	Craig Stephen
Siteki Hotel	Jerome Mayer	Tommy Rimbach
Assegai Inn	Krupa Mehta	Candice Watson
Nhlangano Sun	Kim Kanney	Karen Peebles
Lavumisa Hotel	Mike Marrone	Joe DeGiorno

The above indicated PCVs will be undergoing training at Emafini on February 1st to enlighten them on their roles and responsibilities in the EAP.

The rainy season is not yet over and reports of people in the country drowning are on the rise. I wish to strongly advise PCVs against attempting to cross flooded rivers. Crocodiles also tend to swim close to river banks as a result of the floods. So **STAY AWAY FROM FLOODED RIVERS!**

There also have been reports of rabies cases with dogs in various places in Swaziland, including Mbabane. So be careful of dogs acting funny with saliva dripping from their mouths. Just run into your house if you spot one coming your way and call the police. If you are a pet owner make sure that it has taken its rabies shots which are administered free of charge at government vets.

Page 30 of the post's Volunteer Personal Safety Handbook has helpful SiSwati phrases that can be helpful should you find yourself under threat. Please learn and memorize these phrases, they could save your life and/or improve your language thus enhancing your safety. When using the phrases do not forget that SiSwati goes with body language, so use that as well!

Until next month take care and of course.....**STAY ALERT!**

Programming w/Stella Nkosi, APCD

Programming is all about turning plans into action and ensuring that quality outcome is achieved. *Vele!* I have witnessed this at Peace Corps Swaziland. Be proud of it without losing your head lest you get disillusioned and miss your cool focus.

I have marveled at the amount of work on the ground I am witnessing from basically all PCVs. My first greatest lesson was the site visit I undertook with Susan. This was for group four. Imagine this was during the integration period and I could not help but wonder how so much in terms of getting integrated into the communities/ homesteads has happened so naturally and fast for many. For me that on its own is the key component of programming because how else can one turn plans into action without proper integration in spite of all the challenges faced. My second greatest lesson was to be witnessed when one was invited to a number of community activities led by PCVs, individually and often as a team. This was the cherry on the cake to see members of the community clearly smitten by the go-getter attitude they were observing in the leadership skills of the PCVs involved. The Trimester reports also reveal a busy schedule for many PCVs

Mahlubi has been a busy man these days processing PEPFAR proposals and the VAST proposal committee has had the same experience. We hope you remember the requirements essential for your proposal to go through. For accessing the VAST funds it is essential that the activities planned have an HIV/AIDS prevention or education component incorporated. To ensure that the review team does not miss this in the proposal, it may help to have these aspects clearly articulated in the activities to be undertaken. Another useful piece of information to keep at the back of our minds when planning to apply for the VAST fund is that there is the mini VAST and the big VAST. There is the Boys and Girls Mentoring project aka Mini-VAST. Funding from this source has a maximum of E1400.00 (Fourteen hundred Emalangeneni). It is also a wise idea to work hard on your budget before submitting your proposal just to avoid either under budgeting or over budgeting.

The big VAST takes care of bigger projects. It is also good to note that it would take approximately 8 weeks to have the funds released from the day of submission of the big VAST proposal. The reason one is going over these stipulations is because of the way it has been pleasantly fulfilling to observe a number of Group 4 PCVs making a

submission of proposals. One can hope that everyone is getting the expected support from their community members, as they will be the ones to maintain the initiatives from these projects.

All PCPP proposals must be submitted by the 1st February 2007. All VAST (not MINI-VAST) projects must be completed by your COS conference at the end of April so realistically you should submit proposals by March 1st at the latest.

A kind reminder to Group 3, regarding planning for your projects. It cannot be overemphasized that it is important to plan such that all project work is complete with reports three months before Close Of Service. Remember that the last three months of your service ought to be dedicated to your site/host family and wrapping up projects not starting them. That way a lot of stress is spared and you end with a high note of fulfillment about a job well done.

Some will recall having a chat with Dr. Sachin Desai of the Baylor College about a Nutritional Inventory/ Survey. This is to reassure all that the PCO is fine with the project and that participation is not a requirement but completely voluntary. The Baylor College has prepared some information packets, which will be dropped into everyone's mailbox so look out for one if you are interested. Susan will do for more information needed.

All trimester reports have been submitted. Just for your information APCD Nkosi has a short written feedback of every report. These are posted on the wall in her office. If ever

PEPFAR w/

Mahlubi Hadebe

As of January 17, 2007, nine PCVs have accessed funds from the PEPFAR funded Swaziland Girls and Boys Mentoring Program. The program is doing very well and is picking up speed in terms of the number of proposals submitted and the variety of activities implemented. **We strongly encourage you all to apply!** A couple important points to emphasize, as you get ready to submit your proposals:

- Plan to present your proposal at least seven working days before the actual project implementation date.

- Make sure your co-mentor or counterpart has signed your proposal application form.

- Your project summary should be explicit about the HIV/AIDS component in your project activity.

To all of the Swaziland PC Volunteers from Susan Olson:

I wanted to let all of you know that I will be leaving the APCD position and returning to Washington, DC on March 12, 2007. It's been an honor to serve as your APCD and see the good work that you have done in all aspects of HIV + AIDS prevention and mitigation. I have very much enjoyed working with each and every one of you and will miss you all. Rest assured that Stella and Mahlubi will be on hand to provide advice and support for your various projects. Pattie has contacted PC/HQ and has received assurances that a new American APCD will be on the way soon to replace me. Once the Olson family gets back to the DC area, I would be happy to hear from Swazi PCVs or staff who are visiting the area. My personal email after March 12th will be spolson@mindspring.com. I wish you all the best with your continued service here and hope to be able to say a personal goodbye to each of you before my family and I depart.

Sincerely,
Susan Olson
APCD

you are interested in the feedback feel free to pop into her office and grab yours. This will help all of us to walk together in your plans and actions. Siyabonga kakhulu for all the hard work keep at it! *Cha shengatsi kute tink(h)inga, kuyasetjentwa la ekhaya ka PEACE CORPS Swaziland.*

- A clear project cost breakdown is a requirement .

- List by name, age, gender or category (e.g. OVC, In-school, Out-of-school etc) all the people participating in your project activity.

- Paste all your receipts on to a **Peace Corps receipt for cash form**, which can be made available to you in the office.

- For the items where there is no receipt, e.g. buying from the market, the same **Peace Corps receipt for cash form** can be used and you can have your vendor sign it.

- A narrative report with the HIV/AIDS component clearly described is a **MUST** after the activity has been completed.

A sample application form will be made available in the volunteer lounge.

Dealing with Unwanted Attention

By Khabo Kunene

The following are views from a Swazi woman who has had to deal and keep up and even ignore men and what they have to say about me, my appearance and even go as far as proposing on the spot, mind you they have never seen me, worse yet they will never see me again. Before getting to details I will share with you an experience I had when I was about 7 months pregnant, I was at the Manzini bus rank going to catch a kombi to Mbabane, this was early in the morning and I'm rushing for work. This man shouts "how I wish I was the one who made you pregnant", imagine that I'm highly pregnant put still someone can say that!, Swazi man, that's just how they are, they never stop, at least not anytime soon.

The aim for this article is to address issues that can be irritating and be labeled as unwanted attention by people outside of Swazi culture and practice.

Unwanted attention to female volunteers.

Generally Swazi men love passing comments to females, these comments can either be complementary i.e. complementing the woman's

beauty, a way of proposing love or even be a rude comment i.e. comments that can annoy you or even be a way of provoking you to react in a certain way.

Some or most of these comments you will not understand because it is only normal for Swazi men to use idioms when passing comments to woman, some of them we don't even understand as Swazi women because of their richness in syntax and lexicon. They are mostly in rich romantic prose.

Some of the comments you may come across are:

- **Zumbu!** – proposal for a relationship
- **Yaganaphi yona** – are you in a relationship, this can also be a proposal for a relationship.
- **Umlungu** – used to refer to a white person
- **Umuhle** – you are beautiful
- **Unjingile/unemali** – you are rich/ you have money
- **Uthuleleni** – why are you quiet

- **Ngikhuluma nawe** – I am talking to you
- **Ngifuna kulala nawe** – I want to sleep with you.

• **Umangingakutfola** – if I can get you, this is normally said to express how that man lusts for you.

It is advised that you ignore the comments stated above, however, if the person passing the comments comes closer to you, wanting to touch you or persisting with the comments, you can respond using the following words:

- o Angifuni! – I don't want
- o Ngiyekele! – leave me alone

- Cha! – no
- Suka! – go away/ leave
- Angitsandzi! – I don't like it
- Ngitokubophisa! – I will get you arrested
- Ungangitsintsi/ ungangibambi! – don't touch me.

While responding using the above-mentioned words it is important that your facial expression, eyes and tone of voice are very firm to show that you really mean what you are saying.

Is there such thing as unwanted attention given to males? This should be an interesting one.

Swazi men are the attention seekers most of the time. Things revolve around them or so they think. They are the ones who propose or make advances to females. They are the lawmakers. They view themselves as the movers and shakers in societies. We all know such statements are far from the truth but them. Shem!

That having been said though, men can get quite irritating attention at times. Mostly it is from little kids, at times from teenagers and at some other times from young women and men.

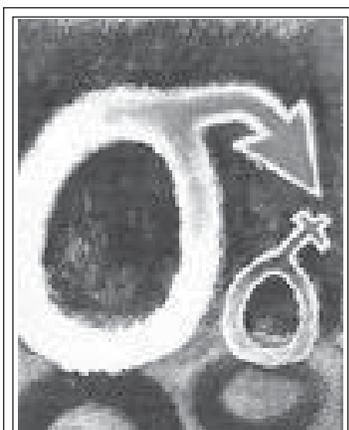
Little kids would associate you with money and goodies. They will ask for money and sweets. That is an innocent request from a kid who probably gets to have sweets as a form of reward from family members and friends. They never have enough to buy their own candy. How do you deal with that? I would hope that you would consider the fact that you are dealing with a kid. If what the child is saying irritates you, tell him or her

that you do not have money or sweets. The catch phrase would be;

Ncesi mngani wami, ngite imali nemaswidi. (Sorry my friend, I do not have money and sweets.)

Once it gets annoying, use just one word, KUTE! (There is nothing), and move on. Teenagers would want just to be your friend. It is quite important to them to know that you are their friend. Why? Because they brag about that fact to their peers at school and in the community. They feel quite important when they are seen in your company. Let them know that you are their friend, all of them not just one or a few, and keep them out of your room and your valuables. Gadgets are associated with rich kids, so they will most likely pilfer some to impress their friends at school. The girls would be thrilled to be in your company! To them you most likely look like their idol, movie or soapie star, or even a sports icon. There is no crime in fantasizing. What can you do to deal with it? Sit them around and talk to them about HIV and AIDS. Seek ways that you can help them in speaking good English while they help you learn how to speak good siSwati. Lastly, you have the young men and women. They have dreams to be in the United States of America some day. They may view you as their bridge to that dream. Oh, it is so good to dream. They will want to attach themselves to you in any way; they will volunteer to be your "counterpart", will probably do the home stay census with you or just want to chill out with you. Again, be careful. Do not invite them to your room. Share your reasons for being in Swaziland and learning about Swazis and their rich culture. Make them realize that they can achieve their dreams in Swaziland. Any reasons to be angry at the attention they give you? Obviously no. All you need to understand is their reasons for seeking your attention. You may be all that they will ever have good association with. Nobody really spends time to talk to them about themselves. Their self-confidence is low, very low. Turn around and use the attention they give you for their benefit. They present an already curious and captive audience. Open up to them and share your dreams about your job here in Swaziland with them!

What about the elderly? My advise, treat them like the kids. Sweet and short responses. They should know better than to be asking for money and sweets from you!



Swazi men love passing comments to females...that can annoy you or even be a way of provoking you to react in a certain way.

perspectives “Shewula” be missed!

by *Alix Edwards and Candace Watson*

“We must be Swazi Warriors!”: a quote which best captures PCV Kelly Russell in her constant fight against HIV apathy. After a few hours at Simunye Country Club, Kelly was steeled to debate a seemingly drunken babe on public transport about the responsibility of men in the HIV struggle. Always prepared to utilize any Swazi traditional resource available, whether in her community of Shewula or within the PC community, Kelly was always herself. One of the most open and genuine people of the group, Kelly approached everything with honesty and positivity.

Eager to confront the challenge of HIV/AIDS, Kelly began teaching in late 2005. Outgoing and real, she truly befriended her fellow teachers. Kelly also spent numerous hours at the VCT. In March Kelly real-

ized that her purpose was not to vocalize her own opinions but to give voice to others. She organized a debate between Shewula High School and Lomahasha High School centering on the pandemic. Recently, she managed to secure fencing for 8 NCP’s in kaShewula’s highly motivated community. Kelly was a very thoughtful volunteer and always took time to hear Swazi’s attitudes and point of view.

For everything she’s done for Shewula, Kelly has done just as much for her fellow volunteers. Nurturing, supportive, and a true fashionista, she was Swaziland’s best counselor and beautician. She was rumored to have brought more makeup to the Swaz than Bli. Amongst other beauty interventions, she transformed Swaziland’s infamous Diva in April. One of her specialties was the art of plucking eyebrows. When she wasn’t busy with a mascara brush, she offered empathy to her friends



in hard times. Kelly was always available to offer alternative solution to common PCV dilemmas. She could help those in a bind.

“If you have a problem, yo- she’ll solve it.” Her trouble shooting will be greatly missed. She was often the voice of reason in an environment which does not often yield clarity. On a recent afternoon as Kelly walked out of Grifter’s with an old bouquet Jabu had given her, she trailed a path of rose petals down the street. Somehow, this embodies the essence of Kelly; attempting to salvage what’s falling apart, while leaving a trail of beauty in her wake. She will be greatly missed by all!

To tackle a taboo...continued from page 1

behaviour have taken place - and fewer still have focused directly on reducing the number of partners. That reflects ideology, the sensitivity of the subject and a distaste for the social coercion attempted in programmes such as Uganda’s “zero grazing” initiative in the late 1980s, in which local councils assumed powers to monitor young people’s sexual activity.

Warren Parker, a public health consultant based in Johannesburg, is more blunt. “It’s very frustrating that so much money is going to imbeciles,” he says. “Everyone is putting money into youth programmes but we’ve been much less focused on partner reduction.”

He was an outspoken critic of loveLife, a glitzy South African programme targeted at young people, which received tens of millions of dollars in support from agencies including the Kaiser Foundation in the US and the Global Fund to fight Aids, TB and Malaria. Disappointment with the ineffective and poorly managed scheme eventually led the Fund to cut short its support.

With so little data available, making the case for partner-reduction programmes is only the beginning. Ms Purnima argues: “People have often shied away even from presenting the message because of the sensitivities of language and culture.”

Roger Kunene, who is studying for the priesthood, who works with Aids orphans in Swaziland, highlights the absence of role

models. “In our culture, you have to have a lot of girlfriends to be a man,” he says. “Many people don’t practise what they preach. A lot of teachers warn about Aids but are having relationships with their pupils.”

Swaziland has been one of the boldest recent experimenters, launching a media campaign last year denouncing the widespread practice of having “secret lovers”. It quickly ran into controversy, accused by local HIV activists of stigmatising sufferers, and toned down its approach within two weeks.

But polls afterwards suggested that most people across the country knew about the campaign, the majority supported it and a significant proportion claimed that it would influence them to reduce their number of partners.

Behavioural change programmes will provide only a partial solution to tackling Aids in southern Africa and other heavily affected parts of the world. As has been seen in the developed world, “disinhibition” can set in, causing infection rates to rise again. “The messages get old, people get sick of them and are not afraid of dying any more,” says Mr Dybul.

But there is a growing sense that partner reduction should receive far greater support and evaluation than it has so far, supplementing a growing number of medical and other approaches. These include increased HIV testing, counselling and malecircumcision.

“We need to create a rising tide of societal change,” says NERCHA’s Mr von Wissell. “My gut feeling is that behaviour change works. While all these academics are talking, we have to act.”

Life Skills Update

Happy 2007! Just a brief update from the Life Skills desk: Make Stella and Babe Mahlubi are busy arranging a meeting with the Ministry of Education and from there hope to plan meetings in all of the Regional Education Offices to give PCVs a chance to formally meet the career guidance teachers in their areas. It will also give PCVs the added benefit of support from the Ministry and hopefully help them successfully integrate into the schools. Stay tuned for more information.

In addition: The NERCHA sponsored SNYC Life Skills Handbook has arrived. Talk to Khabo or Mahlubi to check out a copy. And don’t forget to visit the Life Skills resource center in Stella’s office if you are in need of teaching materials (great for camps, NCPs, etc).

Lastly, Group 4 folks who are interested in being on the Lifeskills committee, please contact Mahlubi. We are looking for 4 people who will take over the responsibility of working with the office to coordinate Life Skills activities. Once we have four fresh faced, eager volunteers, we will meet to plan upcoming events and to get everyone on the same page.

If you have any questions, let me know.

Thanks! Amy

Living in Swaziland with Babe Chris Young

Like they say, sharing is caring...so I'll share some of my favorite SiSwati phrases. As a disclaimer: Musa had nothing to do with these.

Uyondza - "You are sickly skinny" *Think Kate Moss on coke

Awufuni nekwati- "You don't wanna know" *Accompanied by a wink usually gets a good laugh as an answer to any question

Ubonile yini bantfu labamhlope/behlungu? - "Have you seen the white people" * Useful if your wife and the girls disappear into a shopping mall, though it might just be easier to check Mr. Price, Woolworths, or the gelato stand first.

Ucombisa Bufakazi - "Show me the money" *Ok actually it means show me the proof but I think Cuba Gooding Jr. says it best.

Uhlebani/Nihlebani? - "What are you gossiping about?" * Good for catching Swazis off-guard when they are talking about stuff you don't understand (happens a lot for me, dunno bout ya'll)



Norwegian Wood

Book Review by
Virginia Gervin

"My favorite book was...*The Great Gatsby*. I would pull it off the shelf when the mood hit me and read a section at random. It never once disappointed me." So says Toru Watanabe, the protagonist of *Norwegian Wood*. This book is my *Gatsby* (well, *Gatsby* is my *Gatsby* also, but that is another review). The cadence of Haruki Murakami's words, in beautiful translation by Jay Rubin (the better of the two translators that do Murakami), still manages to hit all the right notes with me after all these readings. "All the right notes" is a cheesy-but apt-analogy, as music is one of the central motifs in this novel. "Norwegian Wood" is a favorite song of one of the characters (The

Beatles, *Rubber Soul*, in case you are not into sixties concept albums). Music is important to the characters' lives. The novel itself is music. The language is rhythmic, lyrical, and at times whimsical.

I first read Haruki Murakami in *The New Yorker*, a short story called "Honey Pie" (Beatles, *White Album*). I ran out and bought the first novel I could find by him. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. I enjoyed the novel, but it was not what I expected, as it is a strange and violent tale about the ramifications of WWII. Since then, I discovered that most of Murakami's work is bizarre, with talking frogs or disappearing elephants.

Norwegian Wood is not like his

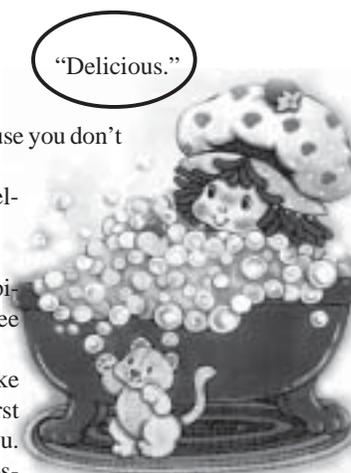
You know you're HARD CORPS when...

...you thought it over and applied to the Peace Corps/Ethiopia program anyway.
...people come to you to ask for your advice: "Spin or Storm?"
...your 6-hour bus ride in Mozambique turns into 12, and Joe Mayer is sitting next to you.
... "Promiscuous Girl" is your new theme song after your first vacation out of the country.
...you sleep on the outdoor kitchen counter on a camping ground during a rainstorm.
...you're so hungry you eat the old pap your family left out for the chickens



You know you're Soft Corps when...

...you take a flight from Jo'burg to Matsapha because you don't feel like taking public transport.
...you've seen Ellen Pompeo's hideous purple velvet dress in 4 separate magazines.
...you know who Ellen Pompeo is.
...you ignore the Portuguese subtitles on your pirated Babel DVD because you really just want to see Gael Garcia Bernal.
...you laugh at last month's Soft Corps: "you make out with the first guy you see while on your very first vacation out of Swaziland" but then it happens to you.
...you get pout and storm off when your team is losing flip cup.
...you're so lazy to cook, you just eat raw rice and chilli sauce.
...you want to save money so you make your own coconut bag



other novels. It is accessible. Maybe I am simpleminded to prefer this book to magical realism. But I do.

Norwegian Wood tells the story of Toru, a loner at university in Tokyo in the late 1960s. He begins a relationship with the beautiful, emotionally fragile Naoko. The two are bound by tragedy; a boy they both knew, his best friend, her boyfriend, committed suicide when they were 17. Later, Toru becomes involved with Midori, a spunky, porn-obsessed, modern young woman. The novel is not a love triangle; rather, it is just a tale about falling in love and having sex and growing up.

Murakami writes with precision, not wasting a word, and his use of metaphors is unlike any

other author I have read. His language is the reason I read him, not for plots and characters. The meticulous details make the novel a pleasure to read. The taste of cucumber with soy sauce and miso, a butterfly hair barrette exposing a perfect ear, Miles Davis records on a Sunday morning.

I have pushed this novel on many people in the past. Some like it okay. Some never bother to read it. A rare few feel like I feel, that *Norwegian Wood* is something special, indescribable, beautiful, erotic. The perfect bildungsroman to read while listening to *Kind of Blue* on a Sunday morning. Which is, to me, all I could ever hope of from a book.

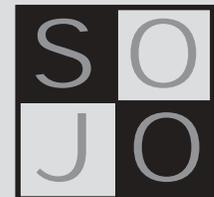
Feburary (2007)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
For February... APCD Site Development Continues PCMO begins evaluation of Group 5 Sites SSC begins evaluation of Group 5 Sites				1 EAP Warden Training	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Staff Retreat Tums George Hotel	9	10 Becky's bday
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 President's Day Office Closed	20	21	22	23 Director Tschetter, RD, et al Visit	24 Musa's bday
25 Caroline's bday	26	27 Sojo, computers in use	28	Anglican Training, Tums George Hotel		

The Swazi SoJournal

STAFF

Kim Kanney
631-6082/swaziteer@hotmail.com
Justine Spisak
631-6004/justine.spisak@gmail.com
Kate Anderson
641-9752/katelaurena@yahoo.com
Tommy Rimbach
642-0093/trimbach@gmail.com



The Swazi Sojournal
c/o US Peace Corps
P.O. Box 2797
Mbabane H100
Swaziland
swazisojournal@yahoo.com
(268) 624-3754