

The Jatropha Tree: Money *Can* Grow on Trees

by Kate Anderson, SOJO staff

So here's the scoop on that funny sounding tree, the *jatropha curcas*. This hardy tree produces seeds which can be refined into a biodiesel. Jatropha oil burns with one fifth the carbon emission of fossil fuels, making it a popular item for places like Europe. It's European Union has decreed that consumers will use 5.75 percent biodiesel in motor vehicles by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020. This means Europe has to come up with a 10.5 billion-liter supply of biodiesel in the next four years, which delightfully places the Jatropha tree in higher popularity than a prom queen.

With such a high demand, this could be Africa's ticket into the world economy. D1 Oils, a UK-based global producer of Jatropha

biodiesel, seems to think so. They have operations in South Africa, Zambia, Madagascar, and Swaziland. I was able to talk with Gaetan Ning, the director of D1 in the Swaz, and learned how the Jatropha tree can continue it's diaspora to our sites as PCVs.

We began by learning some physical facts about the tree. It takes two years for the tree to mature before producing seeds, making it far-sighted investment. However, it will yield for up to 50 years after planted. When it's first planted, ideally a tree needs about half a liter of water a week. It can survive on smaller amounts of water, but the lack will stunt the growth and ultimately it will produce less. It thrives in a hot climate, like the Lowveld in the Swaz, but can't survive a frost- which hits some areas of the Highveld. It is distasteful to animals and has few pests- making it attractive to farmers without fencing materials. Finally, the Jatropha Tree works well in intercropping- and D1 Oils encourages planting other crops thereby reducing dependence on a single crop. Long live the maize.

In a conservative estimate, if a farmer plants one hectare with 1,600 trees, it will produce about 4 to 5 tons of seeds. This, in turn, will make a profit for the farmer of about E 4,000 at the present market.

D1 Oils maintains its mission is one that will empower rural farmers to grow out of poverty through commercial, renewable and sustainable Jatropha farming. After talking with them, it's impressive to see how much they are willing to work with potential farmers. They have representatives for each region in Swaziland who will come out to Umphakatsi meetings, bring pamphlets, seedlings, and give a presentation in SiSwati. If there is an interest, and D1 Oils approves of the situation of the farmer and his land, they will go into a contractual agreement whereby D1 Oils will give Jatropha seedlings for free, and the farmer will sell the seeds to D1 Oils for 3 years. This is a deal which will only be available until next year, at which time the seedlings will be sold. D1 Oils also requires that the chief signs a document stating that the land which will



Zide Mkhabela, Khalangilile's *bucopho*, holds a seedling

be farmed is under the ownership of the farmer. This ensures the farmer from any legal hassles that might arise from 'land envy.'

In Khalangilile, we invited the rep to come to an Umphakatsi meeting. He was a popular fellow when distributing the pamphlets and seedlings, and the interest seemed high. Where this gets exciting for us as HIV/AIDS relief workers is the potential to start a collaborative project where crops are planted by groups which have been hurt by HIV/AIDS. For example, in Khalangilile we are attempting to plant trees on OVC land. The OVCs, by tending the trees, can perhaps earn money for school fees, food, or other such necessities. After talking about the potential of working on such projects with Patty, Swaziland's PC director, she acknowledged it's beneficial possibilities, but cautioned PCVs regarding the level of responsibility they take. For example, PCVs shouldn't participate in or sign the contractual agreements with D1 Oils in any way, thereby supporting Peace Corps mission of sustainability.

D1 Oils is interested in developing contacts with potential farmers, and will visit any community which invites them. Here are the numbers and names of the representatives. Hhohho and Lombombo Region: Siphon at 602- 4768. Manzini Region: Henry at 602-6450. Shishalweni Region: Howard at 602-4764. Also, if you have further questions, the D1 Oils office is located on the road to Grifters, stesh at Queen's Gate.

Inside this Sojo

Page 2
CHATTI WITH PATTI

Page 3
MENTORING/LIFE SKILLS

Page 4
COS INFO (BOO-YAH!)

Page 5
ODE TO APRIL

Page 6
A EULOGY

Page 7
ACHING SWEET TOOTH

Page 8
POOR EXPECTATIONS

Page 9
FUN FACTS

Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD



Greetings to all PCVs! There is lots of news to share so I will use my article to fill you in on the latest.

I am pleased to announce that a new APCD has been selected for Swaziland and HE may even be joining us in April. His name is Chad Fleck and he and his wife Betsy were both PCVs in Nepal. Chad is presently working as the Director of Staging so he has great supervisory experience, an extensive training background, and he is very familiar with PCV issues and concerns. The Flecks are hoping to arrive in SZ in time for the COS Conference if their security and medical clearances are complete.

For group 3 Volunteers who are closing their service, I understand Dr Von Wissel at NERCHA has several work opportunities for Volunteers wishing to stay in Swaziland, either as part of a 3rd year PC extension or under the NERCHA umbrella. Please let me know if you are interested.

For group 4 Volunteers, the Peace Corps Press office in Washington is seeking 5 PCVs who are willing to be on "standby"

in case of media requests for HIV/AIDS project information or other Volunteer stories. The Swaziland press spokespersons should be easily accessible by cell phone, be from diverse ages/backgrounds/ethnicities, be involved in interesting work and be positive in representing the PC program. If you are interested please contact me; there is a Release document and other forms to complete.

Swaziland is hosting another group of visitors in May and about half of the Volunteer group will be asked to participate. This HQ group is from the Office of Inspector General and they will be coming to assess the Safety and Security program at PC Swaziland with some attention given to programming as well. Since we have been open for almost 5 years we are "due" to be evaluated. The team will be visiting Mali and Senegal prior to stopping here. The OIG inspectors will want to conduct interviews of up to 2 hours with you at your sites. I will let you know of specific dates but the visit is scheduled now for the 15th of May till the 26th.

With COS Conference approaching for group 3 (April 25, 26, 27) some Volunteers may be planning extended travel abroad

before returning to the US. Please check your passports to assure you have adequate space for visas and stamps.

In the absence of a Consular officer at the Embassy, the Consular section has been moved to Johannesburg. American citizen services are still available in Mbabane but Charge d'affaires Lynn Allison is responsible for any passport issues. Please make an appointment with her before stopping by the Embassy; she is serving as Acting Ambassador and may not be available if you drop in.

Lastly, on a personal note, I will be sharing the COS Conference with Group 3 in that I will be completing my Peace Corps contract in late June and returning to the United States. HQ is currently evaluating CD applicants for the Swaziland position and following a very competitive selection process, will announce your new CD soon! There will be an OST (Overseas Staff training) and the new CD should be here for a brief overlap before I depart. I will certainly keep you all advised!



Stella gives the DL on WFP

Well programmed activities require good coordination and good timing. We all have a role to play and we need to remind one another constantly of ways of keeping this machinery going the proper and most convenient way for our convenience. This article serves to take a look at the procedures involved in the acquisition of food packages for our collaborating partners in the communities. This is with reference to food distributed by the UN World Food Program or any other source. Peace Corps does not allow PCVs to engage into seeking for food supplies to communities for the long term. This is simple because a PCV alone cannot manage the distribution of food to the whole community/chiefdom in the long term even if W.F.P can supply it. There are community officials that are supposed to take the lead in ensuring constant supply of food to communities. This could

be the chief and the Inner Council, Health motivators and many other community based groups. A PCV will not be there indefinitely to ensure the supply is kept going. However, if a PCV is doing a once off community development activity, food packages may be requested from any source. If the source approached is WFP. The expectations are:

- The PCV will submit a letter of request to WFP. **This letter should be signed by the PC programming staff i.e. APCD or programming assistants.**

- This letter should preferably reach WFP **at least a month** before the event for which the food will be used.

- It is the duty of the PCO staff to pursue progress on the food request from WFP. Therefore, the PCV may inquire from this staff member on the progress of the request.

- The PCV should communicate with the

PCO staff for the request. This way WFP does not have to deal with many different persons each time there has been a request submitted. This will make it easier and faster to process requests.

- To acknowledge that food will be given, WFP releases an official form/letter on each request which will be forwarded to the PCO.

- The PCO staff member dealing with the request will ensure this letter reaches the PCV promptly.

- This letter/form needs to be presented at the WFP stores which are in Matsapha at the building which houses the Matsapha Town Board Offices. Upon presenting the letter then the food is released.

- It is the responsibility of the collaborating communities to solicit transport for the food to site. Please note that the PCO will not release transport to specifically ferry the food to site.

- For further information, inquire from APCD Stella Nkosi.



Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, S&S

A very big Hello/ Sanibonani to all PCVs in Swaziland!

Winter is finally here and it is that time of the year when you have to take caution when planning your day so that nightfall does not find you away from your places of safety, you home. Reports of crocodile and hippo attacks continue to flood local media. I wish to once again advise PCVs to stay away from rivers until perhaps when we are well into winter and the crocodiles aren't very active in terms of movement on riverbanks.

Johannesburg: With immediate effect, the PCO will require all PCVs traveling to Johannesburg to sign a waiver basically stating that the traveling PCV has been informed of the risks of traveling in Johannesburg. This is also means of ensuring that PC Swaziland PCVs recognize and comply with PC South Africa travel policy. PC South Africa does not allow their PCVs to be in Johannesburg unless they request special permission from the CD or APCD.

I also want to take this time to urge PCVs to ensure that their cell phones are well maintained. By this I am referring to keeping the battery charged as well as ensuring that there is enough airtime for you to make a call. This is very important because the PCO may need to contact you in an emergency or you in turn may want to call for help.

When traveling to other countries with PC Programs please make it a point that you get contact numbers for SSCs in those countries so that you may be able to call for help should the need arise. It would also be wise to give call the SSC in that country a courtesy call about you safe arrival. To the soon to be COSing PCVs, please maintain vigilance. Statistics have shown that PCVs experience more incidents in the last three months of service, largely due to laxity on their part. So please keep your guard up.

Lastly take caution on who has access to your EAP booklet. The effectiveness of emergency plans depend a lot on the plan being treated as confidential by the parties who use it. The EAP booklet needs to be treated with some degree of confidentiality, lest it falls into the wrong hands. Traffic Accidents in Swaziland continue to take lives. PCVs are advised to minimize their trips, especially to the capital. Believe me when I say that your site is the safest place to be.

Until next month, keep those windows shut at night, burglar doors locked and wallets and other valuables away from site.

Asiphephe/ Lets keep safe!

Girls/Boys Mentoring Program

Should you wish to make an application for the Girls and Boys Mentoring Program Mini-VAST project funds, you are required to call and make an appointment to ensure that someone will be ready to assist you in the office. The PEPFAR Coordinator, Mahlubi Hadebe (Mobile: 602 7830) is the person responsible, but in his absence the Executive/Program Assistant Khabo Kunene (Mobile 603 3776) will help you. You can also use the Peace Corps office number @ 4220413.

Note Anglican workshop dates on page 4 for when Mahlubi will be out of the office. Khabo will be on her annual leave from April 10 and will be back on May 2. Note these days to ensure that you always find someone to assist you in the office.

SiSwati Life Skills Manuals

The SiSwati version of the Life Skills manual are now available at the Peace Corps Office. This will be of help especially to those who are dealing with children at lower school grades or at the Neighborhood Care Points. You can take a copy to assist anyone who may be teaching life Skills in your community, and who would be more comfortable in using the SiSwati instead of the English version.

Should you need a copy, please contact Mahlubi Hadebe in the office or Thandi Mkhabela in his absence.

In Brief

BOOK ORDER FORM - RESOURCE LIBRARY

By Khabo Kunene

Hello everyone:

As a means of getting our IRC better organized I have designed a form that you have to complete each time you request a book from the IRC. Please fill all the necessary information on the form and submit it to me, If I have the book in the library I can give it to you there and then but if I don't have it in stock I have to order it at HQ, which takes a bit of time until I receive the books.

There are some books that can only be viewed in the resource center i.e. they cannot be taken out of the library, please can we try by all means to adhere to that rule, normally you will also see this written next to the name of the book on the IRC catalog. You can access the IRC catalogs in the PCV lounge, with me and Stella.

Copies of the book order forms will be deposited on the bottom shelf of the form shelf (where you also get your grifters forms), please feel free to come to me for assistance if you experience any difficulty filling out the forms and please do make use of the library as much as possible.

Camp at Velezizweni

Come help at Jenny's Day camp May 7-10. Contact her at 631-6081.

Group 4 PSN manual contributions

Please think about and contribute tidbits for survival in the Swaz for the up and coming PSN Manual.

Helping with PST

If you have anything you would like to contribute to the upcoming PST for Group 5 (i.e. sessions on culture, PCV life, language, etc) please speak to Musa soon so that it can be incorporated into the schedule.

US to SD packages

For your family sending packages, try Global Express Mail through the US Postal Services. Packages are said to be delivered within 3-5 business days, but volunteers have contested to 8. With tracking features, you'll know when the package reaches Swaziland and the cost is not much more than traditional airmail.

Anglican/ Life Skills Training of Trainers

For the PCVs who are participating in the Training of Trainers, here is a list of who is going where:

Eastern Archdeaconry - March 30 - April 1 at St. Micheals in Manzini

1. Jenny Jones
2. Kristin Wetzler
3. Jana Barnes
4. Mark Weng
5. Kendra Oliver
6. Marian Gamboa
7. Adam Kohlrus
8. Kate Anderson
9. Rebecca Pedrotty

(Observers: Amy Huber and Karen P)

Western Archdeaconry - April 13 – 15 at Thokoza Church Center

1. Kristin Wetzler
2. Christopher Young
3. Hanna Lee
4. Mark Weng
5. Roselane Miller
6. Virginia Gervin

Southern Archdeaconry - April 20 – 22 at Nhlanguano Farmer's Training Center

1. Adam Khlrus
2. Marian Gamboa
3. Karen Peebles
4. Amy Huber
5. Virginia Gervin
6. Jenny Jones

Cathedral Archdeaconry - May 11 – 13 at Thokoza Church Center

1. Kate Anderson
2. Jessica Oya
3. Alexandra Edwards
4. Karen Peebles
5. Jana Barnes

All PCVs will be texted regarding time and places to meet up before the training.

COS News from the Admin. Unit

As Group Three approaches their Close of Service, here are some important dates and deadlines to keep in mind:

Activity

Activity	Due Date
Your COS Conference	April 25-27 (at Foresters' Arms)
Extension/Transfer of Service Request	Immediately
Request for Change in Home of Record	Your COS Conference
Request for Early COS (Between 16-30 days)	Your COS Conference
Language Proficiency Test	Your COS Conference
Final Decision (Ticket or "Cash-In-Lieu")	Your COS Conference
Final Decision (RA Payment by check or EFT)	Your COS Conference
Your 3-Day Medical Exam (Medical Appointments will be scheduled at COS Conference)	2 Months prior to your COS Date
Complete your Description of Service (DOS)	During your 3-Day Medical Exam
Final Medical Checkout	Within 72 Hours of COS Date
Exit Interview with Country Director	Within 72 Hours of COS Date

We are sending out a *Close of Service Manual* accompanied with a flashdrive. The flashdrive contains all the necessary COS forms you will need to fill out. Given the new rules surrounding volunteer use of office computers, we hope this will allow you to comfortably fill out the form in an internet café without having to stand in line for computer use here in the office.

New HQ Guidelines for Use of the Volunteer Workstations

The office has posted in the Volunteer Lounge the more comprehensive version of the new guidelines from headquarters regarding the use of volunteer workstations. I thought it would be helpful to highlight a few:

1. Please copy your files on a flashdrive or CD. Files will not be backed up by Peace Corps. The office will provide all PCVs with a flashdrive by end of April.
2. Only current PCVs can use the Volunteer Workstations. (NO family members, NO Counterparts, NO RPCVs).
3. Under NO circumstances are Volunteers allowed to use staff computers. Volunteers may only use the Volunteer Workstations.
4. Read and follow the Peace Corps Internet Usage Policy, such as: Do not download large documents from the Internet (i.e. MP3 songs, or other large documents)
5. You are not allowed to install Software on the Volunteer Workstations. This includes Games, Instant Messenger, Internet Chat Programs, Utilities, etc.
6. When finished using the computer, please logout to prevent unauthorized use and to protect your documents.
7. Do not eat or drink anything near the computers
8. Any violation of the mandatory computer system guidelines is grounds for possible Administrative Separation.

Thanks for your cooperation!

Yeah SOJO! (we're shameless)

Dear Swazi Journal editors,

I just wanted to let you guys know how much I enjoy reading your newsletters. The Swazi staff forwards them to me and I look forward to reading them. You guys do a great job of balancing news, current events, and great volunteer humor. Thanks for taking the time to put these together.

And thanks for your service! Enjoy the rest of your time in Swaziland.

All the best,
Lynn M. Foden
Chief of Regional Operations
Africa Region
Peace Corps
Tel: 202-692-2311
RPCV 84-87 Zaire

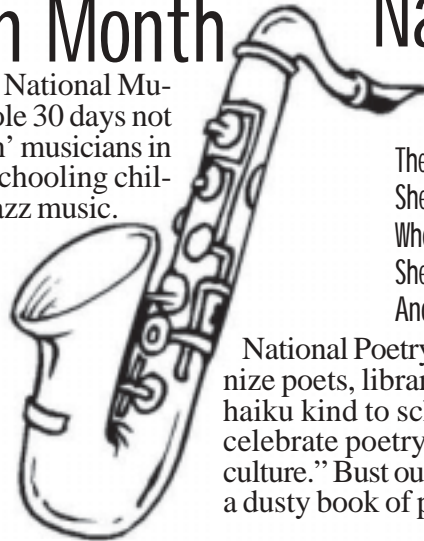
Got the April Blues?

Suck that lip back in before the chickens come to roost upon it! April offers numerous reasons to celebrate every day of the month, keep your spirits lifted, and explore new, untapped avenues. Here's an assemblage of what April is serving on its platter:



Jazz Appreciation Month

Thanks to the dear folks at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, we can spend a whole 30 days not only commemorating those spunky pipe-blowin' musicians in jazz history, but we (along with thousands of schooling children) can learn more about the ins and outs of jazz music.



National Poetry Month

There once was a PCV in the Swaz.
She came because she believed in the cause.
When she stepped off the plane,
She knew life would never be the same.
And I'll tell you, by God, never it was.

National Poetry Month is an opportunity to organize poets, libraries, schools, poetry-lovers of the haiku kind to scholars and publishers in order to celebrate poetry and "its vital place in American culture." Bust out your pen and paper or crack open a dusty book of poetry for April's sake.

5 reasons to bake a cake this month: many jazz and blues musicians past and present are celebrating their birthdays in April:

- 4-Muddy Waters
- 7-Billie Holiday
- 12-Herbie Hancock
- 25-Ella Fitzgerald
- 29-Duke Ellington

Be Vigilant Against Child Abuse Month.



Turn Purple is an American campaign "against child abuse and the resulting problem of youth homelessness." Even though the campaigning is happening at home, we certainly know child abuse is a problem everywhere, including Swaziland. So twist up some purple ribbons and get an initiative going in

your own community! Raise awareness and spread the love!

Egg Salad Week



In observance with Easter, the second week in April is Egg Salad

Week. Gather your siblings into your home, boil a dozen locally fresh eggs, and make your own delicious egg salad! The great thing about egg salad is that you really can't go wrong! Aside from the staples (eggs -duh-, mayonnaise, and mustard) the added veggies are to your liking: onion, green pepper, pickles, olives, etc. Try adding spinach and feta cheese, or curry for additional spice. With an entire week devoted to egg salad, why not explore the boundaries of egg salad cuisine?!

National Gardening Month

The intention of this holiday (as deemed by the National Gardening Association) is to spread awareness of the benefits of gardening: health and nutrition, environmental soundness, and community building to name a few. With all of the resources available in Swaziland, what a perfect month to organize a garden workshop, help your make or gogo in her personal garden, or, heck, build your own! With fall and winter approaching, 'tis the season for growing sweet potatoes, pumpkins, cabbage, spinach, carrots, and onions.

This April, here's what I suggest: Grow a garden, use the food to make egg salad while listening to jazz and reciting your favorite poetry about child abuse!

Other Birthdays Deserving Dance Parties:

- 7-Ravi Shankar
- Francis Coppola
- 14-Loretta Lynn
- 15-Leonardo Da Vinci
- 17-Liz Phair
- 20-Adolf Hitler
- 21-Iggy Pop
- 23-Vladimir Nabokov
- Shakespeare
- 24-Barbara Steisand
- 30-Willie Nelson



A Eulogy for Nonhlanhla

by Marion Gamboa

And right action is freedom
From past and future also
For most of us, this is the aim.
Never here to be realized;
Who are only undefeated
Because we have gone on trying
~T.S. Elliot "The Dry Salvages"

I extracted this quote from the book "Mountains Beyond Mountains," by Tracy Kidder, on the life of the revolutionary doctor, Paul Farmer. Although we are not doctors, I have found that I, as well as other PCVs, have identified with the situations that he was faced with in Haiti. I'm also writing this entry to follow up on the speech I wrote for our Peace Corps Swearing In Ceremony. When I wrote that speech, I was still 'wet behind the ears.' Having only two months of training, I was unaware of the real challenges that I would face and continue to face during my service. True, we did live with Swazi families in a rural village, but we were with other volunteers who lived a stone's throw away. Now, reading through the speech again, it has more substance because I can look back on situations where my ideologies and beliefs have been challenged. I have had the opportunity and the blessing to build relationships with people in my community. They have further complicated, confronted, and made me question my own motivations about my service here in Swaziland.

I have now been living in the Chiefdom of Nceka for 8 months. And I can say that it has been the most challenging 8 months of my life. I have witnessed situations that have either brought me to tears or have made me so angry that my jaws have gone sore from clenching. One instance that will forever change my perspective of my service here was the death of my counterpart, my colleague, my best friend in the community, Nonhlanhla. Her name means Lucky in Siswati, although it seemed to me that her name was the complete opposite of her life situation. Nonhlanhla died at the age of 24. Doctors said that she died in the hospital complaining of headache. What was documented on her death certificate, was that she died of "unknown causes." But I knew that she died of AIDS.

Nonhlanhla was a single orphan, her father passed away when she was 10. She was a very intelligent person who had high marks in secondary school, but because of her families' declining economic situation, she had to leave school. They could no longer afford to pay for her school fees. After she dropped out of school, she became involved with the community. Everyone said she was a "soldier for the community." She was an active member of the youth club, a caregiver for the Dziya NCP (which she helped build), a secretary who registered orphans every weekend, and a counterpart for Peace Corps volunteers- myself and Anna, the volunteer who came before me. Her mother is HIV positive and open about her status within the community. In turn, Nonhlanhla was an advocate for HIV testing, ARV adherence and anything associated with fighting against Ligciwane, or HIV. Nonhlanhla was the one who took care of her mother and



making sure that her mother adhered to her medications and received the food she needed. She also took care of her sister's child like it was her own. She paid for the school fees and made sure that she received the care and attention that she needed. She had no children of her own but she treated all the OVC's in the Dziya NCP like they were her own. She knew by heart the names, birthdays, and health status of 75 OVCs. I once asked her why she liked being a caregiver and she said, "I was an OVC, and I know

what it is like to suffer. They did not have NCPs before. We had to find food for ourselves and I would go hungry for many days. Now that we have NCPs, I can provide for children because I know what it is like to lose a parent and I know what it is like to be hungry." She had empathy. She knew the reality of being a Swazi woman. She went to a night vigil every weekend. Anyone who has been to a night vigil, will know how exhausting it is. Night vigils continue for 24-48 hours. They are held when someone dies preceding the burial. People have to stay awake all night and pray. There are about 3 to 4 funerals/night vigils in my community per week. Unfortunately, the first night vigil I attended was Nonhlanhla's.

I first remember thinking she was sick, in August, when I spent OJT in Nceka. She came to pick me up from my homestead. I asked her how she was doing and she said, "Not well. I have a problem with my neck." She pulled down her collar and showed me a protruding growth on her collarbone the size of a baseball. I was surprised by this because I knew that one sign of the onset of AIDS or TB is enlarged lymph nodes, which rest above the collarbone. This was the first weekend I spent with her so I did not ask her if she had tested for HIV. I just said "forget our plans for the day and we'll go to the clinic." She agreed and saw the nurses. They gave her some medication and said if the infection persists to come back in a couple of weeks. I was surprised that they did not give her any counseling or any encouragement to test for HIV, but I was still new in the community and did not want to interfere.

Around September, she fell ill. Very ill. She had trouble performing any major functions of survival. She had problems eating, drinking, and even breathing. I remember encouraging her to go to the hospital and her refusing, saying that she will get better if she continued to pray. I visited her everyday for 3 days bringing food, bananas, juice etc... On the third day, I came into her hut and she could barely breath. I remember her looking at me and it was a look that I will never forget. It's the look of absolute fear. Eyes wide open but sunken in. Almost defeated. An expressionless face but with eyes that you could see from a mile away. It was strange to see this look from an advocate for HIV/AIDS education/prevention, who administered pills to her HIV positive mother on a daily basis, and yet still did not take any measures to improve her own health. She got better and we continued working.

Thoughts On Sweets

By Virginia Gervin

At zoos, signs are posted that say “Don’t Feed The Elephants!” I am starting to believe we should post those signs around Swaziland. “Don’t Feed the Form Threes!” Not that I am comparing my students to elephants. Elephants are probably better behaved.

I am in the awkward position of being the third Volunteer at my site. The first Volunteer, from Group 1, has not affected my life here. Whether or not it is true, she is only remembered as the girl who never left her house. The second, whom I replaced and overlapped with for three months, continues to affect me. And not just because she built a fabulous school kitchen, and I seriously doubt I’ll build anything half so fancy.

I started teaching in the new school term. I was so excited to teach, though now I cannot remember why. The problem began in my first class. I greeted the class, they greeted me. I asked them what Andi had taught them. The response was unanimous. “Emaswedi!” “Ok, what did she teach you?” “Sweets!” It was the only answer I got to any question that day.

I told my career guidance teacher. She

said they were spoiled by Andi, and I should not give them any sweets.

I hoped that, with time, the class would calm down, understand that Siphwiwe gave them sweets, but I am not Siphwiwe. I have told them that, pretty much in those same words. But it is well into March now, and every class I teach, they only become animated at the end, when I ask if they have any questions. They always do. “Sicela emaswedi,” one will say. Then the whole class breaks out in something like a song. “Sweet! Sweet!” they chant in plaintive, high pitched wails. They sound like nothing so much a nest full of baby birds, their necks outstretched, waiting for Mamma Bird to sweep in with a mouth full of worms.

I half expect Oompa Loopmas to appear from underneath desks, dancing and singing songs about greed and candy. And maybe turn someone into a giant blueberry. I wish they would; it would liven up Life Skills class considerably.

I know that Andi was not the human vending machine that my classes make her out to be, but she did give them sweets on



occasion, and that is all the students choose to remember about her. By my not giving into their candy demands, I am the bad guy. The mean volunteer who refuses to be the Sugar Fairy.

The worst part is, I shall probably eventually cave. I will give into the emotional blackmail. The truth of the matter is, the way to a student’s heart is through his sweet tooth. And, though my classes can be quite bratty, I still want them to like me. Or, at least, not dislike me simple because I do not hand out Bratz (the candy name is so fitting for my classes!) like the previous volunteer. They will never think I am cool, but maybe I can manage to be at least as cool as Siphwiwe. If candy will soften them, so be it.

The moral of the story: Just as we are teaching our classes about the consequences of their actions, there are consequences to our own. Give out sweets with caution. It will be remembered. You will be asked again and again, and so will any other volunteer who follows you.

Pungent pulp: Panda poop perfect for paper

BEIJING, China (AP) — There’s a new Chinese saying: When life hands you panda poop, make paper.

Researchers at a giant panda reserve in southern China are looking for paper mills to process their surplus of fiber-rich panda excrement into high quality paper.

Liao Jun, a researcher at the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Base in Sichuan province, said the idea came to them after a visit to Thailand last year where they found paper made from elephant dung. They thought panda poop would produce an even finer quality paper, he said.

The base is in talks with several paper mills on how to turn the droppings of Jing Jing, Ke Bi, Ya Ya and dozens of other pandas at the base into reams of office paper and rolls of wrapping paper, Liao said.

They hope to have a product line available by next year, he said.

“We are not interested in doing this for the profits but to recycle the waste,” said Liao. “It’s environmentally friendly. We can use the paper ourselves, and also we can sell whatever is left over.”



The center’s 40 bamboo-fed pandas produce about 2 tons of droppings a day, but Liao said he was not sure yet how much paper would result.

What about squeamish customers who might consider the paper unsanitary?

“People won’t find it gross at all,” Liao said. “They probably won’t even be able to tell it’s from panda poop.”

The Chiang Mai Zoo in northern Thailand already sells multicolored paper made from the excrement produced by its two resident pandas. Making paper there involves a daylong process of cleaning the feces, boiling it in a soda solution, bleaching it with chlorine and drying it under the sun.

SUBMIT!
SUBMIT!
SUBMIT!

We’ll take anything you got, folks: articles on events and happenings at your site, journal entries, comics, editorials, recipes, craft ideas and projects, hard-corps/soft-corps, diy, gossip, photos, poetry, and any kind of poetically prosaic etceteras your minds can produce.

Love, j,k, k, & t.



Book Review: Great Expectations

by Virginia Gervin

Ninth grade English. *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Prelude*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. A typical entrance into The World of Literature. Only one book stayed with me. *Great Expectations*. It was my first experience reading Charles Dickens (though, like every other American alive, I'd seen my share of productions of *The Christmas Carol*).

I hated every word on every page. I felt vitriolic towards the book. The protagonist Pip had a cloying twee-ness about him, but mostly I hated the plot. It has more twists than a sideshow contortionist, and Dickens' reliance on absurd coincidences tested my patience considerably.

Time passed. Ninth grade English was over a dozen years ago. Slowly my disgust of Dickens dwindled. I have not returned to *Great Expectations* since I was 14, so I decided to try again.

The book has not changed in the intervening years, but I have. I have learned to read for more than plot; I read now just to enjoy ink on paper. Dickens has a wonderful way with words. His turn of phrase is witty, droll, at times a bit sarcastic.

Pip is still twee, but self-consciously so. The book is narrated by Pip long after the adventures have happened, and older Pip understands that young Pip is a fool. The story begins with Pip helping an escaped convict in the marshes near his house, where Pip lives with his abusive sister and her kind husband Joe. Pip is to be a companion to Estella, beautiful, proud, and raised to break men's hearts. Later, Pip moves to London after a mysterious benefactor has decided that Pip shall become a gentleman. No character is wasted; they return when least expected. What is ridiculous at first read is strangely comforting at a second go. The bizarre characters that populate this world are now charming, where before they seemed to me simply annoying. Instead of reading for plot, read to enjoy Wemmick, who takes the phrase "A Man's Home is His Castle" a little too seriously, Mrs. Pocket and her numerous children, and the descriptions of Pip's servants, especially The Avenger. This book actually contains a character called The Aged Parent, or Aged P. for short. How can I dislike a book with someone called Aged P. whose main amusement is being nodded at? At 14, I was much too young to appreciate this novel. I am glad I got the chance to recognize my mistake in despising the book.

Cont from Page 6

was the person that made Khisimussi Lomuhle Webantwana (Christmas is Beautiful for the Children) so successful and organized.

She died on January 27, 2007. I remember I was supposed to go to her house that day, and as I was getting ready, my Gogo knocked on my door. She said with a sweet smile on her face, "Nonhlanhla ufile" which meant Nonhlanhla died. I was unsure if I was translating Siswati correctly because it seemed so sudden, abrupt. She was getting better. But it was true. I remember calling the Assistant Peace Corps Director (APCD), Stella, because I didn't know what I was supposed to do. She was a Swazi and so I wanted to make sure I was translating correctly. I told her that my Gogo said "Nonhlanhla ufile" and my APCD said, "Sisi, who died?" and that was when I uncontrollably broke down in tears. In the U.S., people know me as a very non-emotional, reasonable person, who will rarely show my vulnerabilities to my close friends, and not at all to my supervisors. I was taken aback. I think she was too. Stella and Susan called my Make to come home from work to be there for me and they came that week to pay respects to the family of my counterpart. It was a really sweet gesture that I know Nonhlanhla's family appreciated. During mourning period, the mother and immediate relatives stay in their hut and weep all day long for one week before the night vigil. People come to visit the home and say what they need to say about the deceased. It's a very intense and emotional experience. Her mother kept apologizing to me saying, "Thandi, I know you kept working with my daughter even if you knew she was sick. I'm sorry she could not do more for you." This was when the feeling of guilt really sunk in because I felt that I received more from my relationship with Nonhlanhla than she ever did from me. She withstood gossip, jealousy, and false accusation from the community just to be my counterpart. People accused her of being greedy, of stealing ten 10kg bags of fertilizer just to discredit her reputation and so that they may have their own daughters as my counterpart. She became isolated from the community by having a relationship with me, the umlungu, the "rich foreigner."

It was because of this that I started questioning my role here in my Community as health educator for HIV and AIDS. I thought to myself, "how can I possibly make a difference in behavior change for my whole community when I can't even do this for the people who are closest to me, or who mean the most to me?" It seems as if all I was doing was reaping the benefits of the great experience like traveling to exotic locations or doing "good deeds" just to satisfy my ego. But that's not why I came here. Like I mentioned in my speech, I came here to learn, to serve, and to empower others. It seemed like all I was doing was serving my needs. Then, after speaking with some people, especially my mother and Susan, the APCD, I've come to realize that it was the fact that I was looking for tangible results in a situation where the "right thing to do," or the right action, will always go unseen. *Never here to be realized*. It's easy to hold on to the negative because that is what you can see clearly. But to do what is "right" is always a constant battle. The only hope you have of knowing that you are doing the right thing is to go on trying because that is the only way to affect change. I may never know if the girls in my girls club, or the 7th graders that I teach, will be able to grow up and fulfill their dreams. Statistically, most of them will not. They will either get pregnant, get HIV, get stuck in an abusive relationship, cheat or be cheated on by their spouses, or die before the age of 33. But it is the hope, the belief in them that will encourage one or two people to take charge of their lives. Maybe they'll tell their partner to always use condoms, or maybe they'll encourage a friend or family members to get tested and get on ARVs. There are too many "Maybe's" and "What if's?" that I will never get answers to. All I have to do is keep the hope, the faith, in their own human will to perform the right action, in order for me to go on trying.

That is what the Peace Corps experience is about. It is about the persistence and determination to keep trying to do the right thing regardless of the obstacles.

Derek's Pick of the Month:

If ever there was a theme song for Swaziand PCVs...

Invincible by Pat Benatar

This bloody road remains a mystery
 This sudden darkness fills the air
 What are we waiting for?
 Won't anybody help us?
 What are we waiting for?

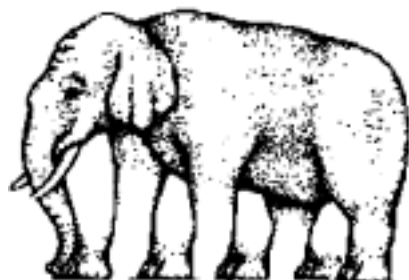
We can't afford to be innocent
 Stand up and face the enemy
 It's a do or die situation
 We will be Invincible

This shattered dream you cannot justify
 We're gonna scream until we're satisfied
 What are we running for?
 We've got the right to be angry
 What are we running for?
 When there's no where we can run to anymore

We can't afford to be innocent
 Stand up and face the enemy
 It's a do or die situation
 We will be Invincible
 And with the power of conviction
 There is no sacrifice
 It's a do or die situation
 We will be Invincible

Won't anybody help us?
 What are we running for?
 When there's no where, no where we can run to anymore

We can't afford to be innocent
 Stand up and face the enemy
 It's a do or die situation
 We will be Invincible
 And with the power of conviction
 There is no sacrifice
 It's a do or die situation
 We will be Invincible



You know you're
HARD CORPS
 when...

- you catch a mouse with your bare hands
- you stroke mutton chops while he licks your nose
- you get another sty in your eye and seriously consider the advice your sisi gave of using urine on it, cause didn't grandma used to say the same thing about athlete's foot?
- you get stung on the tongue by a bee when you thought it was only your friend's backwash in the coke
- you carry on a conversation while someone reaches around the corner
- you smoke a cigarette butt you found on the ground at Matsapha



You know you're
Soft Corps
 when...

- you have a hair straightener and you use it
- you can't wait for the occupied bathroom at Grieters so you take a dump outside the door
- you hear Hanson on the radio and get nostalgic for home
- you have enough dresses to outfit an entire party at Malandalas
- the first time you wore makeup was in the Swaz
- you spend E 80 at Woolworths for one white t-shirt



Just For Fun

- The Ramses brand condom is named after the great pharaoh Ramses II who fathered over 160 children.
- In France, a five year old child can buy an alcoholic drink in a bar
- A green diamond is the rarest diamond.
- In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak
- The Sahara desert expands at about 1km per month.
- All the planets in the solar system rotate anticlockwise, except Venus. It is the only planet that rotates clockwise.
- In September 1999 Dustin Philips of the US set a Guinness World Record by drinking a 400 ml (14-oz) bottle of tomato sauce through a straw in 33 seconds.
- Rodin died of frostbite in 1917 when the French government refused him financial aid for a flat, yet they kept his statues warmly housed in museums.
- 23% of all photocopier faults worldwide are caused by people sitting on them and photocopying their butts.
- Wearing headphones for just an hour will increase the bacteria in your ear by 700 times.
- The "sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick" is said to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language.
- The greatest recorded number of children that have been born by one mother is 69! The poor lass gave birth to 16 pairs of twins, seven sets of triplets and a measly 4 sets of quadruplets.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6 PCO Closed Good Friday	7 Easter Wknd
8 Easter Wknd	9 Shirley's Bday	10	11	12	13	14 Kabo's Bday
15	16	17	18	19 King's Bday PCO Closed	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

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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