

## You Don't Know What You Got Yourself Into

(just kidding!)

*Adapted from Mary Schmich's "Everybody's Free (to wear sunscreen)" by Samantha Adams*

To the ladies and gentlemen of Group 5: if I could give you only one piece of advice for your next two years in Swaziland, it would be this: wear sunscreen. The long term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own Peace Corps service. I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy PST. Never mind. By the time you read this, you'll be a couple of weeks into training, and will be counting the days until

you can get out on your own. But trust me, a year into your service, after you've stared at your ceiling all day because you have nothing better to do, you will look back upon PST and remember how nice it was to have an actual schedule to follow.

most interesting and successful projects are often things you had no idea needed doing. Listen to your community. They know what they're talking about.

Take your malaria prophylaxis. If the hallucinations get too scary, you can always switch to doxy.

Be kind to your shoes. You probably won't miss them when they're gone, but you will miss the couple hundred rand you'll have to cough up to replace them.

Maybe you'll save a life, maybe you won't; maybe you'll make a difference, maybe you won't; maybe you'll be forgotten the day you leave, maybe your community will still be talking about you twenty years down the road. Whatever happens, don't congratulate yourself too much, or berate yourself, either. After all, you are only one person.

Dance. Even if you're alone in your hut doing your dishes, listening to cheesy 80's pop on Jacaranda.

Read gossip magazines. Even if they're six months old, they'll still make you feel connected.

Travel. It may not be why you joined Peace Corps, but it's definitely one of the perks.

Accept certain inalienable truths: you will get diarrhea, you will be bored silly, and you too will gleefully anticipate the next group's arrival, if only so you will no longer be the "newbies". And when Group 6 arrives, when you've been here for a year and we're about to COS, you will tell yourselves that you won't bore (or scare) them to death with the umpteenth retelling of The Spitting Cobra in the Pit Latrine.

Being a PCV can be a surreal experience, especially in a country like Swaziland, where you're bathing in a bucket and reading by candlelight, and just down the road there are hot showers and internet connections. So bear with us when we tell you our stories again and again. We're not trying to impress you with how "hard corps" we are. We're trying to remind ourselves that yes, this is Africa. Yes, we're really Peace Corps Volunteers. Yes, we're really doing this.

And now, so are you.

Welcome to the Swaz, and trust me on the sunscreen.



*Look how happy Kate and Amy M. are!*

You are NOT as fat as your make says you are.

Don't worry about how you're going to do your job. Or worry, but know that worrying is about as effective as trying to study SiSwati by osmosis. The real problems that will crop up are not the ones you've spent weeks agonizing over; they'll be dropped on you, atom-bomb style, by your bucopho after yet another boring umphakatsi meeting.

Eat something every once in a while that scares you.

Cook. PB & J is a sandwich, not a staple.

Don't try comparing your achievements to those over other PCVs. It's a long two years, after all, and the only person who can ultimately gauge your success or failure is you.

Bathe.

Remember compliments you receive, forget the marriage proposals.

Keep letters from your family and friends, throw away – wait. Don't throw anything away. You never know when that dusty stack of *Newsweeks* will be needed at a fellow PCV's day camp.

Knit.

Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do in your community. The

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POSTCARD FROM DENVER

# The Swazi Sojournal news

## Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD



Hi to all volunteers! As you can imagine the PCO is hopping as we are preparing for the arrival of Group 5 Trainees in mid-June. In fact, yesterday, May 28, was the first day of LTOT (Language Training of Trainers) where Musa reviews techniques and strategies for PCT language learning with the Language and Cross Culture Facilitators (LCFs). Happily all the LCFs who did such a good job with Group 4 are returning to PST to work with Group 5.

The new trainees are arriving in Jo-burg on Friday June 15 and will be met by Chad and Musa. They will overnight and drive to Emafini on Saturday. PSN and Diversity will be with them Sat and Sunday as will many of the PCO staff. Monday they drive to the Training Center in Nhlngano to start PST.

Nwando is in Washington now beginning her OST (Overseas Staff training). She will officially begin her new role as Country Director when she arrives back to the office on Monday June 25. I will be heading back to the USA on Thursday June 28.

Many thanks to those Volunteers who met with the team from the Inspector General's office in May. Your comments and opinions were invaluable in assisting the Inspectors to assess our Safety procedures and Programming. I have had a "de-brief" with the Inspectors which was very constructive. They had a series of recommendations for both SS and Programming that we will be-

gin to implement in the next few months. I know that Nwando will want to work with VAC to get more of your input in ways we can make some changes. I will be meeting with Group 4 before I leave to start the discussion. Ultimately we want the PC program to offer a quality volunteer experience while maintaining our commitment to help the people of Swaziland with HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation. The IG recommendations help to point us in that direction.

This will be my final article as Country Director for Swaziland so let me begin by thanking you all for your service and all your good efforts on behalf of the people of Swaziland. I have the distinct advantage of seeing all that you do in the aggregate. It's not just one Volunteer in one site but the combined efforts of 40 enthusiastic, creative and committed individuals making a difference throughout the country. I have repeatedly commented that I am very proud to be the CD in Swaziland because I know of all the good work you are doing! I wish you all a satisfying and meaningful service period with the US Peace Corps in Swaziland and then long and happy lives doing whatever calls you. If you are in the Washington, DC area, please consider giving me a call and an update on how you are doing. It has been a pleasure knowing you.

## The Programming Box with Chad, APCD

On May 24-25, 44 Bucophos met with Peace Staff and Volunteers to discuss community health and the role of Peace Corps in Swaziland. The Bucophos who attended were invited from the communities of both current Volunteers and future trainees.

General topics included the mission of Peace Corps as an agency, the role of kaGogo Centers, and the TB crisis in Swaziland. A great deal of time at the workshop was spent on the relationships and expectations between Volunteers, Bucophos, communities, and the PC staff. In one session, Bucophos were asked to share their thoughts on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a Volunteer should have. Some of their ideas included cultural sensitivity, perseverance, being honest about what you can and can't offer a community, and being understanding about how much influence or control one

Bucophos can have over the members of a community, particularly the type that harass Volunteers.

Similarly, Volunteer representatives – Virginia Gervin, Michael Marrone, and Mark Weng – were asked to share their thoughts on ideal support from a Bucophos. Regular communication was the point of emphasis. "Keep us informed about what's going on in the community, and we'll keep you informed about our work, too." Another message that Volunteers emphasized was the important role that the Bucophos can play in supporting the Volunteer's integration into the community and networking with community agents.

The workshop was covered by print, radio, and television media. Look for more details about the workshop (from the Volunteers' perspective) in the next issue of the SoJo.

## In Brief

### Wanted

Electric heater, CD player/boom box, 2 pillows. Call/SMS Brasil at 642-0098.

### Return or Risk Separation

Anyone who borrowed DVDs from Lindsay, please return them to her box. *Office Space* and *Transamerica* are definitely missing, but there may be more.

### Group 5 Site Visits

Group 5 is almost here, which means they will be shadowing Group 4 at the end of June. "Site matching" forms were emailed to Group 4 but if you have not received it, let Chad, Karen P. or Amy H. know. Email it to Karen (moviesforever@yahoo.com), drop it in Karen's box, or bring it to the June 15 braai. We want to make the experience a great one for them and us!

### Will I Am

Let Will (trainexpating@yahoo.com or 631-6006) know if you're interested in any of the following stuff (or make your best offer!):

- Car battery, inverter & solar panel** - E150;
- Lost Season 3 DVDs** (3 discs, episodes 1-12) - E100;
- Rough Guide to Thailand** (current ed.) - E100;
- GRE study guides** (2 GRE books, 1 CD, grad school essay writing guide) - E150;
- Head lamp** - E100;
- Travel Scrabble** - free;
- stick incense holder** - free;
- RCA foreign voltage adapter** - E150;
- French press w/2 mugs from Click's** (it's cute) - E50;
- Grundig Shortwave Radio** (crank or 3 AA batteries)- E50.

If you know Will's friend Ned Baker, he's in Zambia until November (nedatsea@yahoo.com; +260 97 959 6373). Will is also looking for a yoga book by Tara Frazer.

### World Map/sleeping bag

Contact Kim (631-6082) for World Map project supplies (almost all colors of paint for 1 or 2 maps; yarn for lines; and meterstick but no level). She can bring it to the office or arrange meeting. Also, for free giveaway: used sleeping bag of medium warmth and carrying tote!

# 2007 Youth Conference

That time has come again for the Peace Corps Annual Youth Conference. This is a similar occasion to the one which was initiated on September 1, 2006 at the Tums George Hotel. The conference theme then was "SWAZI GIRL / WOMAN IN THE HIV/AIDS ERA", since this project was aimed only at girls.

This year 2007, the Mentoring Program has been open to both Girls and Boys, hence it is befitting to call it an Annual Youth Conference.

The theme for this year 2007 is entitled "BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR AN HIV FREE YOUTH".

The Conference date for this year will be Wednesday September 12, 2007, and it will be going back to the Tums George Hotel in Manzini.

Similarly as the past year, we will run a competition.

The youth will be required to write a poem on the theme.

**CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES:**

On this day the youth will:

- Get a chance of talking about Behavior Change as one of the strategies to fight HIV/AIDS
- Build their capacity and express their talents of writing and reading poems
- Share information with their peers as to how best to behave to avoid HIV/AIDS and its consequences

**POEM COMPETITION:**

The PCVs will identify young people in their communities who will enter the poem writing and reading competition based on the theme.

**CATEGORIES:**

The competition will be categorized as follows:

**1. PRIMARY SCHOOL:**

They are expected to write their poems in **Siswati**. Not less than five and not more than seven stanzas.

**2. SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOL:**

Their poems are to be written in **English**. Not less than six and not more than ten stanzas.

**3. OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH:**

Depending on the level of education, the out-of-school youth can get into any of the two categories (Primary or Secondary and High school), which is equivalent with their level of education.

Age restriction for the young people in Swaziland is 30 years.

**NB:** Poems copied or duplicated from other sources will be identified by the group of adjudicators and will be disqualified

Poems should be sent into the Peace Corps office before Friday, August 10, 2007.

**ADJUDICATION:**

Three professionals have been identified who are going to judge the best ten poems in each category. The winners will be invited to come and present their poems at the conference

Each volunteer is allowed as many entries as possible but will only be allowed six young people (3 girls and 3 boys) to bring to the conference, excluding the competition winners.

Contact Mahlubi for more information.

2 interns at Baylor are interested in spending 1-2 nights with a PCV to get insight into what life in rural Swaziland is like. Contact Carrie at cgolitko@gmail.com or 614-3984 if interested.

## News & Notes

### Sanctions Against Sudan

President Bush will announce a new set of sanctions against Sudan's government, reports the *Washington Post*, for failure to stop the violence and genocide in the country's Darfur region. On May 28, Administration officials said the Treasury Department will step up efforts to squeeze the Sudanese economy by targeting government-run ventures involved with its booming oil business. Bush will also sanction two senior Sudanese officials and a rebel leader. However, it is unclear how much more leverage the U.S. has since strict sanctions dating back to 1997 already exist.

### Miss USA Slips and Falls

*CNN* reported that Miss Japan Riyo Mori, a 20-year-old dancer, was crowned the title of Miss Universe 2007 in Mexico City on May 28, beating out first runner-up, Natalia Guimaraes of Brazil. Miss USA Rachel Smith, the fourth runner-up slipped and fell to the floor during the evening gown competition. She was booed by the Mexican audience during her interview until she spoke in Spanish, saying "Buenas noches, Mexico. Muchas gracias!" to which the audience clapped. Protesters held a mock ceremony in downtown Mexico City that featured "Miss Marijuana," "Miss Sexual Health," and "Miss Human Rights."

### African Colleges Failing

The *New York Times* reported May 20 that Africa's best universities, which have educated a revolutionary generation of nation builders, statesmen, doctors, engineers, writers and intellectuals, are collapsing as a result of mismanagement and neglect. Contributing to the problem are the international development policies that for decades have favored basic education over higher learning, forcing the best and brightest across Africa to seek educations and fortunes abroad.

## APCD Site Visits

One of the recommendations the Peace Corps Inspector General made to Peace Corps/Swaziland was for future site visits by Peace Corps staff to include counterparts and/or partner organizations (such as schools or clinics) which PCVs are working with. This means site visits could grow to be 2-3 hours long.

Stella and Chad are currently soliciting "self-referrals" from Group 4 volunteers who are either struggling at site or need support from programming staff, in order to prioritize the volunteers who need visits the most over the next couple of months.

If you are one of these volunteers and would like to be on the "priority" list, please contact Stella or Chad at [snkosi@sz.peacecorps.gov](mailto:snkosi@sz.peacecorps.gov) or [cfeck@sz.peacecorps.gov](mailto:cfeck@sz.peacecorps.gov), with a brief explanation of the type of support you would like. For example, is there a school or NGO you would like help getting into? Based on emails received, the APCDs will start scheduling visits. Please send either APCD a message by June 15 if possible.



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

### WELCOME to SWAZILAND GROUP!

First impressions usually include such comments as; 'It really is cold here'; or, 'Swaziland is absolutely beautiful'; or, 'I can't believe that there's a KFC here' or 'Oh my god, they take VISA here'! Someone even said that they had 'seen more 'Africans' in Baltimore'!

So whatever impressions you have now be assured that they will change! Some areas of Swaziland are hotter than Atlanta in July. Draught manages to destroy the most spendid landscape. Dinner at KFC, you'll discover will actually be considered quite a splurge. Most shops outside of the capital don't accept VISA or American Express for that matter and rural Swaziland is about as African as you can get!

About change, (you'll hear this a lot), Swaziland may not change during your service but you definitely will! Change can be subtle, conspicuous, difficult, scary, welcomed, radical, painful, unpredictable, pleasant, costly, permanent or temporary. Keep in mind that as you encounter changes and adjust to those changes you will become more and more comfortable with the Swazi language and culture.

You will also become more accustomed to being away from your home, family, friends and favorite things. We're here to support you so that your Peace Corps experience will be an exciting, adventurous, challenging journey that will be uniquely yours and one that will enable you to make a difference.

snack foods. 'Zero grams trans fats' does not mean zero trans fats. Products containing less than one gram of trans fats are not required to list it as an ingredient. If the product contains 'partially hydrogenated oils', that's the same as trans fats. As little as 5 grams of trans fats can affect liver metabolism and brain chemistry. Don't get stiffed, let the buyer beware!

### GONORRHEA WARFARE DEMANDS NEW STRATEGY

According to experts at the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections at CDC, gonorrhea resistance has now reached a level in the U.S. that threatens the ability to control the disease across populations. Resistant strains of Gonorrhoea initially surfaced among men who have sex with men in 2000 and 2002 however resistance now a major factor in treatment across the board. CDC reported Gonorrhoea as the second most commonly reported infectious disease in the U.S. in 2005 with about 340,000 documented cases that year. CDC no longer recommends Ofloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Levofloxacin for treatment of Gonorrhoea in the U.S.

Without those 'big guns', CDC states that it is now in urgent need of new, effective medicines to treat gonorrhoea. This is just one more reason why practicing safe sex is critical. In addition to evading cure, untreated gonorrhoea may also result in infertility in females. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security when returning to the U.S. Re-evaluate the need for casual sex, the stakes are still

### IT'SALIE!!

Don't be misled when you're reading the labels on your favorite

quite high. Of course same rules apply, use condoms first time and everytime that you have any form of intercourse.

### PST BACK-UP CREW

Many of you have signed up to help out at PST this ing so it's important that you put your best foot forward. The newbies will be relying on you for advice and support. So let's put that positive spin on things, emphasizing what has worked for you so far. Remember that you're having your very own unique Peace Corps experience which may place you in a very different place than other volunteers. Take this opportunity to reflect on where you were one or two years ago and the growth that you've realized since then. Whether you're in a high place or a low place right now your presence has helped to make this program what it is today. So shed your bright light! It's important that you show up at the agreed upon time for med sessions and plan to remain until all equipment and supplies have been returned to the appropriate location. Thanks again.

### COS'ers

Last minute reminder, toss all outdated meds in your med kit into your latrine. Place the other meds in a bag and return them to the med unit. The case belongs to you, (it's your gift)! Also don't forget to return both Tamiflu and Coartem to the med unit, otherwise you will be billed for them. We'll also need your copy of Where There is no Doctor, the American Red Cross First Aid Pocket Guide and A Few Minor Adjustments. Thanks and do stay in touch!



## Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, S&S

### Greetings to all Peace Corps Volunteers in the Swaziland!

Winter has fully set in and it's the time of the year where reports of fatalities resulting from make shift portable fire places (imbawulas) that people bring into their rooms to keep warm and then forget to take them out and end up dying in their sleep due to excessive inhalation of carbon monoxide, are more likely on local media.

The OIG Inspectors have come and gone. I wish to sincerely thank all the PCVs that were selected to be interviewed, for their great cooperation in this important exercise

that the post was undergoing together with other selected posts. I also wish to assure Volunteers that the post can only do better because of their contribution to study that the OIG Inspectors were carrying out. A big thumbs up to all the Volunteers who have been reporting incidents so that PC Swaziland can take necessary steps to support them.

I have found it very important reminders as we approach the mid winter season;

1. Secure your house properly immediately after dark...yes, even if its before six o'clock.
2. Avoid jogging in the dark.
3. If you will be getting back to site by trans-

portation that arrives after dark, make arrangements with your host family members to meet you at the bus stop. The same should apply when you will be catching early morning transport.

4. Dress heavily for night vigils if you really feel strongly about going to one because temperatures really drop considerably after midnight.

5. Do not let strangers into your room even if it's just gotten dark.

6. Do not leave your bikes outside after dark, even for brief moments of time.

Lastly, I wish to announce that I will be coordinating an OIG debrief session for Group 4 on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 07 at Emafini, with the view of addressing specific areas of concern. Until next month maintain vigilance and be safe!

# Club AZN

“No, I don’t own a factory but do you want to learn how to use a condom?”  
 -Polly Chen, PCV serving in Gamula, Swaziland

## Peace Corps Celebrates the Contributions of Asian and Pacific Americans.

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 2, 2007 – This month, Peace Corps will celebrate the cultural traditions, ancestry, native languages, and unique experiences represented by the more than 30 ethnic groups from Asia and Pacific Islands in our country. This year’s theme of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month is “Pursuing Excellence Through Leadership.”

Peace Corps has benefited from the significant contributions of many Asian Pacific Americans who have served as Volunteers and staff. Elaine Chao was the first Asian American director of the Peace Corps from 1991-92. Chao can be credited with many institutional improvements including the initiation of Peace Corps programs in Eastern Europe and Central Asian, after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Notable Asian American Volunteers include U.S. Representative Mike Honda (El Salvador 1965-67), a member of Congress from California, and William Wong (Philippines 1967-68), a columnist for the San Francisco Examiner.

Currently, there are 382 Peace Corps Volunteers with an Asian or Pacific American background serving primarily in the education, business and environmental health sectors. Like all Volunteers, these men and women made a difference to their communities by sharing their knowledge and skills in many areas. For example:

- In Armenia, Betty Tham, of Thai

heritage, is a business development Volunteer and is currently working on a project to help rural villagers write a business plan to obtain credit with a micro-finance institution. “I feel that I am getting more from my Volunteer work than what I have given to my host country”, says Tham. “I hope that I can be an inspiration to other Asian Americans, especially to my own baby boom generation.”

- Becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer has been a lifelong dream for Volunteer Noel Maharaj, who traces his roots to the Fiji Islands. Maharaj is currently serving as an economic development Volunteer in Ukraine. He works with an organization that provides humanitarian assistance to illegal immigrants detained in Western Ukraine.

- In Cameroon, Peace Corps Volunteer Jonathan Fu is the first small enterprise de



Marian, Mark, Polly, Tommy, Hanna and Chris of Group 4. Photo by Kendra (honorary Asian)

- In Honduras, Peace Corps Volunteer Megan Lan is working on health education projects. Her primary job is with Pure Water for the World, where her goal is to encourage the use of water filters and to make sure the community values them and are aware of the importance of good hygiene. She is also developing a hygiene and water resource education program to increase project sustainability. “Living and volunteering in Honduras has taught me that education is the key to improving lives,” says Lan.

velopment Volunteer in the village of Ngalemendouka. He works at a community bank and has trained coworkers at the bank on computer software applications, accounting practices, and credit management.

- In Mongolia’s Gobi desert, Korean-American Peace Corps Volunteer Hanna Kim works 30 hours a week as an English teacher. Kim says, “There is just something about living and working in a country with people whom you have had no experience with that makes your overall experience that much more worthwhile—I am embracing every moment.”

# Peace Out, Peace Corps

## Thoughts from Three Group 3 PCVs

Oh, Swaziland. You had us all at ‘Sawubona.’ Now we’re standing here facing June, looking backwards over two years. ‘Where did two years go?’ everyone keeps muttering.

Really?

It seems more like one of those things people say because they don’t know what else to say.

I know where the time went because when I look back over my shoulder, I see the ocean of time I felt being slowly dripped through me...drop...by drop...by drop...percolating in what is impending to be an explosion of relief and joy and glee unmatched, unseen, unknown before, like bursting through the surface of all that watery time for a giant gasp of breath.

I’ve often compared this experience to a piece of art, thinking maybe I’m just too close to it, have got my face pressed up to the painting and can’t really make sense of it or see every beautiful aspect. Maybe it will be the walking away, the distance that reveals its true colour and shape.

In that sense, I’m not quite sure what I’m even saying goodbye to.

Or maybe I’m just waiting for other people tell me what i’ve jsut done. I need them to react to me to really know what I am.

Maybe the painting is me.

**-Justine Spisak**

I’m leaving behind my life of two years.

A life that taught me the meaning of compassion.

A life that showed me my own prejudices and faults.

A life that gave me the most unlikely of friends.

A life that showed me what it’s all about.

I’m leaving behind my life of two years.

A life that challenged my personal strength.

A life that made me question humanity.

A life that gave me my first love.

A life that created a bond with my fellow PCVs.

I’m leaving behind my life of two years.

A life that others only dream of.

A life that gave me new experiences.

A life that I will never forget.

A life that I will always be grateful for.

**-Krupa Mehta**



Last month, as we all sat at our COS conference, watching the pictures of our two years here go by, I felt some sense of closure. Our group felt oddly small, but we had all shared, knew. Then, we all packed our bags, awaited by the problems and inertia of being at site. We are all bound by similar experience: all the time that we have spent in our rooms, hoping that this would somehow redeem itself, often wondering whether to pack one’s bags and go home. We have lived in the past and future and far too little in the present. We know the dichotomy between what we perceive ourselves to be, our lives at home, and what we were able to display to others here. I sat there in my hut- my hut which contained my expensive groceries, my political magazines, my pictures of another me- drink in hand, long hair let down, laughing- things which I felt I had to hide. Things that I felt guilty about for the majority of my time here.

It is far too easy, as we look back on our two years in Swaziland with the often scary sun of Amelika on our faces, to romanticize this experience. And while this should be avoided, we should also remember that for many, our presence here has changed things. We’ve changed. Many of us have experienced situations which have put our idealisms in sharp perspective. Perhaps we are no longer the naive young trainees eager to be exposed to something different, something novel, something we thought might be more real. But even if we face feelings of futility and jadedness, we have to think of all the people at home who talk, but don’t do. Who might have objections to us being here, but are doing nothing themselves. And, for good or for ill, we were here. Even if some of feel we have not been of great benefit, we have born witness, and will ourselves be forever changed. Even in the act of writing this I cringe at how meager that is- but in other ways it isn’t small at all, and it is well deserved.

**-Alix Edwards**

# Thoughts on One Year Together

by Virginia Gervin

On June 5 it is our (Group 4’s) one year anniversary. Not as Peace Corps Volunteers, that one year anniversary arrives August 10, but rather as compatriots, coworkers, friends. One year ago, we all (with seven others, gone but not forgotten), left our homes, scared, excited, clueless, and boarded planes or drove in cars and somehow ended up in a conference room Philly, ready to begin this new part of our lives.

We just finished a Grief and Loss workshop which highlighted exactly how much we have lost to be here. Our independence,

anonymity. We have lost lovers and friends due to distance, due to the fact that we have changed from who we were when we walked into that conference room.

This year none of us will have overpriced cheap beer at Fenway or Wrigley Field. None of us will be able to keep up with *American Idol* as we’d like to or watch the latest blockbuster when it comes out (but no worries, wait a few weeks and buy it pirated). None of us can go to Barnes and Noble to buy the new Harry Potter on July 21. We can just hope our friends do not tell us what happens before we get ahold of a copy (anyone who tells me Harry’s fate before I read the book will be subject to a barrage of nasty glares).

But for all of our losses, there have been so many gains.

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# Collaboration is a Beautiful Thing

by Polly Chen

When I first got to site (wow, it seems like a long time ago now.), I was bright eyed and bushy tailed (I always think of a raccoon at that phrase) and went around the community with some peer facilitators with the intention of teaching each homestead a little about HIV and AIDS. Also, I wanted to assess the relative need and the best way to begin approaching it. We went around in the mornings, and what we found were mostly makes, sisis, and gogos doing housework or napping; sometimes we'd find the occasional babe. My Swazi counterpart would launch into a lecture about faithfulness and abstinence, and this was met by nods of agreement and declarations of their faithfulness. Ok, great. Since my Swazi friend was "workshopped" into becoming a counterpart by funds dictating that condoms not be mentioned ... this is where I

came in. I emphasized heavily on condom usage and offered information on where to get them for free. It was at this point where I'd hear questions and pleas that would reoccur at many other homesteads. The women were eager to learn about how to use a condom .. but the question they posed to me in the end was, "So, how do I make my husband/boyfriend wear a condom"? All my public health education experience failed to give me an answer that I could believe in myself. I waxed hopeful about "standing your ground", "talking to him more about the facts of HIV", "go for testing together", and "if he cares...". But even I was skeptical about the success rate of any of those.

The fact was, these women were at home because they were not working. They depended on an income generating partner, which, for approximately 40% of the homesteads, was working in the mines in South Africa or somewhere else in Swaziland for most of the week/month. To suggest condom usage would be akin to accusing their

partner of infidelity, a risk most of them would not take. It was a power relationship. And I was not able to reach the dominating one. To the women, HIV seemed like a death sentence. But so is being without an income generating partner in a country with an unemployment rate of 71%. I walked away from these homesteads frustrated and feeling incompetent. And I tried,



*HR manager Fiona Fitzpatrick assisting Polly in a workshop*

unsuccessfully, to brainstorm a way to reach these working babes.

It wasn't until recently that a ray of hope found its way to me. After doing a World AIDS Day event in Matata in '06, funded mostly by Spar, I was approached by Spar's human resources manager in January about doing HIV workshops for the employees. I jumped at the chance and Chris and I planned a 3 hour workshop together. We collaborated with the local VCT (Calakabusha Namuhla) and one of the counselors agreed to translate for us and let us use their veranda as a teaching space.

The collaboration included: the HR manager organizing the employees from each department to come, us Peace Corps volunteers planning and teaching the workshop, a well-trained Swazi HIV counselor as the translator, and a HIV+ guest speaker from a successful support group in Siteki.

The initial goal was to educate employees from each department so that they could disseminate the information back to

their respective departments. However, the feedback during and after the workshop were so overwhelmingly positive, that the HR manager decided to extend the workshop to have every single employee attend. After our first workshop, other employees were asking her when they would be able to go. Can you believe it? They were requesting to come to the workshop! I was ecstatic.

Our new goal is to educate every one of the 376 employees by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, the next World AIDS Day. We do this in manageable groups of 25-35 per session, twice a month. HR chooses the slowest days of operation for the month, and we take a few from each department. The half day workshop is just comprehensive enough without being information overload. We break up blocks of information with sessions like STI's in pictures, and we include games like "Lions and Elephants" to add some excitement (not that

HIV isn't riveting). Swazis loooove that game. I've never seen adults get so crazy. A couple of times the whole mama elephant-baby elephant group toppled onto the ground together because they got so into protecting the baby elephant from the voracious lions. Quite amusing.

I wanted to share this work experience because although I am doing other projects, this is the single most redeeming project that I have done. By collaborating with a big business that cares, I am able to reach the working class of Swazis, who work 6 days a week and would not normally care to spend their free time in a workshop. They bring money into their homesteads, and therefore they have a larger influence about how things are done. Not to say that money is omnipotent, but it does make a difference. The 376 employees are inhabitants of the 3-4 communities surround Spar and instead of just disseminating the information to each of their departments, we hope we're disseminating it to the larger population now.

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Continued from Page 7

These days, I walk through Spar and the occasional cashier or bakery girl will thank me for teaching, a secretary will encourage me to continue "doing what I'm doing", or a garage worker will wave to me and smile. It is a refreshing feeling (as opposed to the usual feeling of dragging and pulling teeth to get people to do anything) and it motivates me in my other projects, especially on the hard days. Testing rates have also gone up at our local VCT since we've been teaching since January!

I hope to encourage other PCVs to seek out these collaborations in their communities. I know that I am lucky to have a caring HR manager and VCT to work with, but I am sure that there are more to be found. Even if you work with a hardware store and teach 5-7 people a month with a decent counterpart.. it can make a difference. Business initiated education has a bigger impact than I realized and its something worth looking into. I've finally reached some of those Babes that I had mostly given up on a few months in. Woohoo!



Continued from Page 6

Hard to believe it was just a year ago. We did not know each other. We did not know where Manzini was or what "Sawubona" meant. We had American names, and the thought of being called something else for two years never entered our minds. We did not anticipate developing a relationship with our pee bucket. Or even having a pee bucket at all.

That ocean between us and America is far, but we have come much farther than the Atlantic.

And now we are the old ones, the ones to guide Group Five. We have had experiences we never thought we'd have,



### Book Review: The Devil in the White City

by Virginia Gervin

I love reading blurbs on book covers. They rarely have anything to do with the book described within, and, often as not, have nothing to do with the review excerpted from. "It is incredible that this sludge was published" becomes "Incredible!" On rare occasions though, the blurbs recommending the book turn out to be true.

I was intrigued by the blurbs on Erik Larson's *The Devil in the White City*. "So good, you find yourself asking how you could not know this already" (*Esquire*). My response after reading the book was not disbelief that I had not previously known the information but rather "So good, I find myself asking how I have not read this already." I should have read it ages ago.

I am often sad about the state of American books. I read the current books, the award winners, the *New York Times* recommended books, and I am usually disappointed. I am a snob; I admit it.

*The Devil in the White City* gives me faith in American writers, in American stories, for this story is American as apple pie. It is the story of one man's dream of greatness. It is also the story of one man's great evil. It is a true story, which makes it all the more fascinating.

Chicago 1893. Daniel Burnham, whom I had never heard of before despite that he designed one of my favorite buildings (which really is not saying much, because outside of I.M. Pei, Daniel

Liebskind, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Frank Gehry, I cannot really name any architects), is selected to create a new world for the World's Fair. This will be Chicago's chance to upstage New York, to prove it is more than the meatpacking yard described by Upton Sinclair, to show that America can come up with an answer to Alex Eiffel's tower built for the Paris Exposition a few years earlier. The expectations of a country are resting upon Burnham.

Contrasting Burnham's trials and triumphs is Dr. H.H. Holmes, a man little known today, but, in the late 1890s, as famous as Charles Manson. He is widely known as the first American serial killer, and he used the World's Fair as his base, drawing in girls who came to see Chicago.

*The Devil in the White City* is an amazing book. Fantastic! Fabulous! Insert blurb-y word here, followed by an exclamation point! Seriously though, the book is the kind of non-fiction that reads as easily as a novel. It never insults your intelligence, far from it actually. It also gives tiny glimpses of famous people at the World's Fair. Helen Keller, Buffalo Bill, Theodore Dreiser, Archduke Francis Ferdinand. I left the book feeling like I had just gotten a history lesson, and that I'd been through an emotional journey with Burnham and Holmes. I left the book wanting to visit Chicago. I left the book wanting to press it upon everyone, tell them to read it, which is, I suppose, what I just did by writing this. Read it now! You can quote me on that.

both good and bad. We have made friends, both with each other, and within our communities. We have been to more funerals in the past few months than in the previous few years (or ever in our lives pre-Swaziland).

Our two year commitment may be a long time, but this past year has passed in a blur, even though some individual days seemed neverending. Each of us came into Peace Corps with expectations, and each one of us got more than we bargained for. I was expecting my life to change. I was not expecting the changes that occurred, but I am okay with them.

The saying goes that you choose your friends not your family. We did not choose each other. Washington chose us, put us to-

gether in this group, stuck us in Swaziland, a place some of us did not know existed before we got our invitation. We come from different backgrounds, different colleges. We have degrees in everything from film to biochemical engineering. We are a pretty diverse group. I do not know that most of us would have gravitated to each other in our American lives, or even ever crossed paths. We did not choose each other. I guess that makes us family. And just like family, we are stuck with each other through good and bad.

I cannot imagine a better group of people to be stuck with. May our "Circle of Love" never end.

Happy Anniversary guys and girls. May all twenty of us survive to COS.

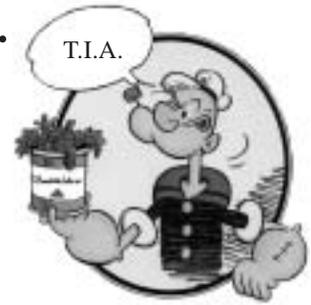
## Another Pick for Peace Corps/ Swaziland Theme Song (okay, maybe not...)

### FERGIE FT. LUDACRIS - GLAMAROUS

{Chorus:} We flyin' first class up in the sky  
Poppin' champagne, livin' the life  
In the fast lane,  
I won't change by the Glamorous  
Oh flossy, flossy  
{Bridge: 2X}  
The Glamorous, The Glamorous, Glamorous,  
By The Glamorous, oh the flossy flossy. [x2]  
Wear them gold and diamond rings  
All them things don't mean a thing  
Chaperones and limousines  
Shopping for expensive things  
I be on the movie screens  
Magazines and bougie scenes  
I'm not clean, I'm not pristine  
I'm no queen, I'm no machine  
I still go to taco bell  
Drive-thru, raw as hell  
I don't care, I'm still real  
No matter how many records I sell  
After the show, after the Grammys  
I like to go cool out with the family  
Sipping reminiscing on days when I had a  
Mustang  
{Chorus}{Bridge 2X}  
I'm talking champagne wishes, caviar dreams  
You deserve nothing but all the finer things  
Now this whole world has no clue what to  
do with us; I've got enough money in the  
bank for the two of us; Plus i gotta keep  
enough lettuce to support your shoe fetish  
lifestyle; So rich and famous, Robin Leach  
will get jealous; Half a million for the stones  
Take a trip from here to Rome; So if you ain't  
got no money take your broke a-- home  
G-L-A-M-O-R-O-U-S (yeah) {2X}  
{Chorus}{Bridge 2X}  
I got problems up to here  
I got people in my ear  
Telling me these crazy things that I don't  
wanna know (F--- ya'll)  
I got money in the bank and I'd really like to  
thank  
All them fans I'd like thank,  
thank you really though  
Cause I remember yesterday when I dreamt  
about the days  
When I'd rock on MTV, that'd be really dope  
Damn, it's been a long road and the industry  
is cold  
I'm glad my daddy told me so he let his  
daughter know  
(If you ain't got no money take your  
broke a-- home) My daddy told me so  
(If you ain't got no money take your  
broke a-- home) He let his daughter know  
{2X}

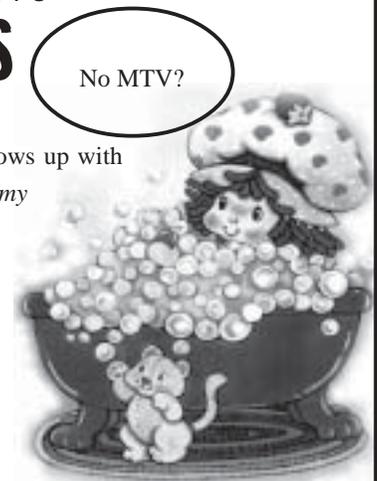
## You know you're **HARD CORPS** when..

- you victoriously nail OVCs in the head during dodgeball at the kids' camp you planned
- you survive pangaea several times
- you're either going blind or poo-ing blood during your final lock-down
- Daynese requires two alcohol wipes to clean the dirt off your arm before she draws your blood
- you walk out of your end-of-service physical with bloody q-tips in hand



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

- you cancel all work plans when a visitor shows up with a video iPod with *Real World* and *Grey's Anatomy*
- you panic when you realize Veki's doesn't have MTV
- you hatch a plan to open a KFC in Siteki as an "income-generating project"
- you generously give your stick incense holder away for free
- you try to scope out Group 5 on Facebook
- you spend most days during your last lockdown browsing Craigslist



## EmaQuotes from *The Real World: Denver*

- "I'm not good at baseball but I'm good at kissing."
- "I didn't even get to put the cake in the oven before I burnt it."
- "How's the house?" – Friend on the phone. "I made out with someone already."
- "I don't feel attached to Alex or anything but I definitely feel like Property Rights."
  - "So we're lying in the bed and I realize, oh my God we're having sex."
    - "The way to a girl's heart is not by f---ing her roommate."
      - "Nick is a random guy that was cute at the bar."
      - "Stop making out with people because I like you."
        - "You're pushing on my bladder."
  - "Let's make a pact – let's not hook up with other people tomorrow."
    - "Sorry for me being so wasted last night."
  - Playing Scrabble: "That's not how you spell shizzle. It's two Zs."
- "If I get drunk and fall on my face and people laugh at me, whatever because I'm having fun."
- "I don't want to go through this crap, I just want to get my nails done."
  - After training as an Outward Bound instructor:
    - "I've never been so happy to see something that's not trees."
      - "The bottle spoke for me."
      - "Having sex with you is repulsive."
- "I'm not going to stop myself from doing anything my heart feels like doing or my vagina feels like doing."
  - "She's wearing high heels with her ankle brace."
    - "Everyone in this house is vomiting lately."

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Mahlubi's b-day	5	6 Adam's b-day	7 Derek's b-day	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Farewell Braai for Pattie at Emafini	16 Group 5 arrives in- country
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 Megan's b-day Kristin's b-day	28	29 Krupa's b-day	30
_____ Sojo Production Computers in Use						

# The Swazi SoJournal

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