

Sat April 20, 1985

Our plane left Sea-Tac on time, at 2:30 PM. We had a slight scare, as we watched a mechanic doing what appeared to be major repairs on our plane! Turns out it was an earlier flight, then 3 hours late, and ours was switched to another gate. The flight took 2 1/2 hours; Once again, it was hard to accept that an enormous, laden jet can lift off the ground. The flight was smooth, but we hit turbulence coming into Denver, and I slowly lost some of my careful composure. We barely made the 6:30 AM pickup time, and found they had nearly left without us - in an unmarked van! The driver only had a list of names, but didn't know what flights we were coming in on. So they didn't even check to see if planes were late! Yet we sent specific flight information to the Peace Corps office. So we ended up leaving one person behind - humm.

The lodge we're staying in is about 35 miles west of Denver near the small town of Evergreen. The Colorado Philharmonic Lodge sits near the road but feels secluded. We haven't yet had a grand tour. The main lodge has a kitchen and meeting room. We sleep in Barborka Lodge nearby. The lodges are rustic in the sense that they're built of cheap unfinished plywood and fakey facia "logs"! We'd never expected it, but we all have private rooms with baths! Mike & I have re-arranged our furniture to make a double bed on the floor with mattresses from the bunk bed.

Life here so far is anarchic. We arrived at 8PM last night, to find they'd saved us barely any dinner. Then, no orientation or introductions, just fend for yourselves. We've decided amongst ourselves that they're doing it on purpose to see how well we can work & communicate amongst ourselves.

dictionary
black type
line heights

Forgot to mention that our flight turned out to be a complimentary wine tasting, with crackers & cheese!

Sun. April 21

Breakfast will be at 7:15 AM, but I elected to sleep in and await the 12 o'clock lunch. The food here so far is excellent, cooked by two hard-working young women. So far, sesame chicken, eggplant parmesan, and a choice of 3 soups for lunch have been highlights. So the emphasis, happily, is on wholesome, healthy foods. However, I think they're 'discovering' this group are big eaters: only 7⁶ women out of 32! There are 3 couples: the other two are older, in their fifties^{to 70's}. Everyone seems very nice, and all have done varied and interesting things with their lives. However, the only other person going to Togo doesn't seem the PCV type. I know first impressions are often wrong, but so far I haven't been very impressed. Oh well, it's good for me I'm sure. P.S. He's from Tacoma!

Today we had orientation & met our trainers, all nice people, and with admirable backgrounds & skills! The training is run primarily by Malcolm & Linda Lillywhite, who founded DTI (Domestic Tech. Instntd.) 17 yrs. ago. They are subcontracted through the Denver Research Inst. (DRI), affiliated with the U. of Denver. Together, DTI & DRI won the Peace Corps contract for Renewable Energy Resources Training. This is the only integrated P.C. training program, in which volunteers headed for a variety of countries & projects are trained together. Although each group will have a unique training schedule, we will have many core sessions together, on such subjects as medical and sanitation. There are 32 trainees, going to 7 different countries. One trainer told a cute anecdote about his 4-yr. old daughter, who asked him "Daddy, what are Peace Corps?". He searched for a simple way to impart to a 4-yr. old the essence and importance of the Peace Corps. "Well," he told her, "Peace Corps are America's Care Bears"! So then we played a name game where each of us picked a word to match with our name

which would also tell something about ourselves or our reasons for being a volunteer. It seemed appropriate to call myself 'Core Bear Karen'! In

our lodge is a nice heated lounge with books & a piano. As it's the only heated area, there's a double incentive to gather there. Turns out only about $\frac{1}{2}$ of us are in this lodge. The others are in the main lodge. Hopefully this won't create 2 separate groups. Our day also

included a tour of the training facilities. We are living in the community of Marshdale, pop. ~200.

So surrounding us are private homes,

all originally summer cabins. The lodges themselves date to the early 1900's. Included in the facilities are a lab, workshop, stove building tent, and lots of sample projects left from previous groups: photovoltaic collectors, wind mill, food dryer, etc.

We're at nearly 8000', and the altitude will take some getting used to. I feel a bit headachy, and have less energy, but that's normal I guess. They say it takes a week or

so to acclimate to the lower level of oxygen. It's recommended to drink lots of water (it's so dry up here) and eat extra potassium

(eg. bananas!) also hard to get used to going 5 or 6 hours between meals. We'll have to hoard snacks, I guess! although life here is pretty posh, with plumbing & electricity, our ~~toilet~~ toilet doesn't work, and neither does our bathroom light. Pretty medieval in there! Also very cold - sitting on the icy toilet seat, you risk losing your tissue - sort of the popsicle stick on the tongue syndrome!

Mon. April 22 Today has been a very long day, and looking back, it seems as if most of it happened days ago. We had training from 8 AM to 9 PM, with 2 breaks plus lunch & dinner. In the morning we told the group about ourselves, and discussed our perceptions of Approp. Tech. (A/T). Then we had an intro to our medical program. We'll have three rounds of shots at Denver Gen'l. Hosp., the first tomorrow. Later we grouped with our resident country coordinator & discussed our specific training schedule. Karen Nelson will oversee Togo and I like her a lot. She spent 3 yrs. in Senegal, and has been a training consultant w/ DTI for 2 or 3 years. So far, all feedback we've had on Togo is that

It's a wonderful place, well-liked by all who've been there. Several have commented how glad we should be we didn't go to Siberia! Also, it seems "improved cookstoves" have made great inroads in Togo, and are already widely accepted, which will make our job that much easier, ^{more} productive, and more pleasant. — It snowed

the entire day, a silent, moist curtain of white outside the ^{millioned} lodge windows. ~~⊠~~ Before dinner, Mike & I walked to a deli a quarter mile down the road, and came back white & dripping. Malcolm taught a basic solar energy

principles session to about half of us before dinner. We reviewed the solar spectrum and the greenhouse effect, both of which I have learned about numerous times. Yet I couldn't recall much, and was excited to relearn.

Our Togo group's emphasis will be on solar food drying, which we learned is a more nutritious, sanitary, and effective means of drying food, yet is often cost prohibitive. Most

of the light entering the earth's atmosphere is in the V.V., visible & near infrared (vs. thermal I.R.) spectrum. V.V. light combines with vitamin D in

humans to create dark skin pigments, and in the food drying process ~~can~~ U.V. light can kill vitamins in the food, especially A, C, D, & E. Thus blocking out U.V. light is an important part of the drying processes we will learn.

With the greenhouse effect, sunlight reaching the earth's surface (a small %), is absorbed, causing that surface to heat up & emit longer-wave (warmer, because more readily absorbable due to lower frequency) light: Thermal I.R. This cannot pass through the atmosphere and is trapped as heat. This is why the earth is warm. Yet man, by deforestation, paving, emission of fossil fuel by-products, etc., is causing the earth to heat up slowly. There are 2 reasons: one, plants reflect light more than soil, bldgs. or pavement. The ~~latter~~ increase of the latter³ cause the absorption of more sunlight, and the increase of thermal radiation. Two, pollutants & particulates cause more (oops, I'm lost - forget it - more later).

After a wonderful dinner including mashed potatoes & mushroom gravy, we saw a short film on UNICEF water projects in the third world.

It was very interesting, eye-opening & uplifting. Yet I wonder how

for-reaching such improvements have been - so much more remains to be done. One sobering aspect of our solar discussion was the realization that while solar

technologies may be "appropriate" and bring improvements in quality of life, they do not address the truly basic needs such as water, sanitation, & health, and are much harder to introduce.

Tues. April 23 Today was "shots" day. Awoke to bright, cold sunshine, with rounded, snowy mts. visible to the west. At 9 AM we left for Denver in 3 vans, and ended up spending 3 fairly boring hours lounging in the sun outside the clinic waiting. It was quite warm by then. I received a polio oral booster, a yellow fever, and a measles/mumps/rubella shot. We also got a T.B. test. I didn't have to get a diphtheria-tetanus shot as I had one 5 years ago, and they are good for 10-15 yrs. Next we cashed our stipend checks, then those of us with glasses went to a clinic for "neutralization". Sounds terrible! But all they do is put your glasses in a machine to determine the prescription, which they then record in case your glasses are lost or broken overseas.

The others got to spend several hours cruising downtown Denver, but those with glasses had no time left. (I still can't get used to being in the "people w/ glasses" category!)

We'll have other opportunities for cruising in Denver, however. Along the drive we had a good view of Red Rocks Park, where massive chunks of bronze-red rock tower above a hillside.

Also, a bizarre, elliptical house on a large "stilt" sits high on a hill overlooking the freeway. It was used in the movie "Sleepers". On the way home we took a scenic route up Parmalee Gulch, which was lovely.

It is very much like the Methow Valley here, but with about 5000' elevation difference!

After returning we had a short session on Peace Corps policies and form-filling-out. These latter include optional savings bond w/ drawal from our pay, and personal articles insurance. The latter appears to be a complete rip-off, and I am seriously considering writing a nasty letter to the company! It's cold & very clear tonight, with a crescent moon & brilliant stars.

Wed. April 24 I'm very tired tonight. It's been a long day. Most of us have felt tired today from our shots. The backs of both my arms feel bruised. I suppose we're still adjusting to the altitude, and the dry air makes my eyes red & stinging. Also, at least one of us has strep throat, which doesn't bode well for "us others"!

Today we spent 4 hours discussing project documentation techniques. The focus was on keeping a journal, both personal & technical, which could include a variety of things and will offer both personal & technical support. This is called "Process History", and can include notes, drawings, references, and info of all kinds.

Puzzle Game

Malcolm also stressed letting villagers write in the book so they don't feel intimidated or threatened by it.

Later we learned about tools: repair, safety, & use. Then Mike & I took a lovely hike up onto a ridge behind the lodge. On a clear day the view would be grand. To the west the ridge was open & grassy, with scattered pine trees

and rounded, granite boulders & slabs. To the east it was dense, dry pine forest, with a thick carpet of needles, and little undergrowth. We also

noted groves of leafless aspen, with new catkins just emerging; clumps of low, heather-like juniper; scattered groups of fuzzy, blue flowers, crocus-shaped, 3" tall, with yellow stamens; and lots of elk droppings.

This evening we played Bafa Bafa, a "cross-cultural interaction" game. We split into 2 groups, and each learned the ground rules of ~~the~~ our culture. We then took turns visiting the other culture, to see how well we fit in, and whether we could figure out their "rules". It was hilarious, as well as eye-opening.

Also today I ~~we~~ got to facilitate a group meeting to create a program evaluation format. I was flattered to be chosen, and really enjoyed it. I think I did a good job, and felt we got lots done.

Thursday April 25 - It began snowing with great determination late last night, and by this morning, $\frac{1}{2}$ foot

of semi-dry snow had coated the world. It was quiet and beautiful, yet somehow out of place. All I could think about was the inevitable mud that would follow the seemingly innocent snow. Although overcast, with a limited view, the fields and tree-covered hillsides nearly were a touching site, I must admit. Most of us will not see snow for several years. However, we're all looking forward to warm sunshine and alpine wildflowers. Late last night (early this morning) Gus built a people-sized snow-person ~~to~~ near the gazebo between the lodges. I took pictures of today's contrasts - from sun 97° to winter wonderland in only a day. ~~Probably~~ One reason the snow is regarded a bit neutrally: there's no place to play in it! Remind everyone: do not send packages! Unless of no value to others (e.g. letters, photos). 2 reasons: theft, high customs! Turns out, our post-service Federal hiring preference is not a military-type point preference, but rather what is called "non-competitive job preference": We can be hired or interviewed regardless

of where we fall in the ordering process. (Usually, they're only allowed to consider the top 5 or so candidates, often based on a point system). Good for 2 years.

Tell Greg & Martha: Bill & Alma Cody are ~~72~~ 72 & 54, respectively (18 yrs. apart), and have been happily married for 35 years! Some boredom set in today, although it may have been that I wasn't feeling too well. I began to grow tired of the group size - I'm ready for smaller sessions. I also felt the sessions growing repetitive, and the progression too slow. Much of what we're learning feels like common sense, which I'm not sure can be taught. Some of the points are being belaboured. Anyhow, I forewent a session in the ~~slow~~ snow and slept for 4 hours! Feel much better now. The food has been great, but for some reason I don't seem to be digesting it well. We've all got chronic farts. It's also hard to get used to going 5-6 hours between meals, ~~so~~ so many of us are hoarding snacks in our rooms. We've learned never to refer to 'the natives', which as we're told this is derogatory. Rather, nationals, locals, villagers, Fogolese, etc., is more appropriate.

Near the end of this training, we'll have a community day, during which we'll attempt to share with the evergreen community what we've been

doing up here for 8 wks. This, of course, is a P.R. move, but also a chance to spread information & ideas. I have my heart set on writing a short article for the local newspaper. To that end I've begun to gather info on the trainees & trainers. Today, we broke into twos and interviewed each other, then posted our "findings" on the walls. Everyone has done a variety of fascinating things!

That was group Resource Assessment. We also had a session on "Survey & Assessment", in which we practiced interviewing skills in a new culture. Next came a brief discussion of the 3rd world fuel crisis, and then I bowed out. Mike took notes for me! Tonight, we had planned a trip into Denver to see "The Gods Must be Crazy", but due to the snow we rented movies instead. Nothing I really want to see. We've found an extra table and set up a desk in our room - wonderful! A moth fluttered out of the lamp, and is keeping me company on the

table. For a while he slept in the circle of lamplight, then seemed to get too hot, and groggily crawled into the "shade". I think I'm

slowly overcoming ~~coming~~ my "aversion" to insects! This guy is cute; fuzzy, brown with spots, & 1 1/2 inches long. Today, we met a woman named Francesca, who moved here from Ghana 5 years ago. She speaks excellent English, and is very nice. She will be a training consultant.

Friday April 26 - By this morning, a foot of snow lay on the ground and even on the trees, half-bruising many, & leaving others bowed to the ground. This morning we discussed various approaches to education: i.e. teaching & learning; esp. formal & non-formal education (these overlap). Also we discussed the characteristics of adult learning as opposed to children or young people. The afternoon was set aside for nutritional gardening, but as there was a foot of snow on the garden, we had lecture instead. Later, we discussed global issues, which was fascinating, and also

very depressing. Some new notes: the productivity of 3rd world farm land is decreasing, and it's only recently been realized that this is due in large

part to the fact that the average age of the 3rd world farmer is increasing; the avg. age is now ~50.

This is because the young people are leaving in droves for the city.

— Currently, 70% of the earth's land surface is considered 'dry'. This means irrigation is necessary to grow anything. This % is increasing rapidly. — As more people

leave the land for the city, multi-national corporate agri-

business is moving in and taking advantage of the cheap labor, etc. — Perhaps one of the most

alarming crises is the decrease of the earth's genetic pool. The 3rd world contains the large bulk of this pool, yet has no interest in preserving it. For this would mean setting aside large chunks of land in a sort of "Genetic Landscape Freeze". Yet those who advocate this feel it's so crucial, that

they believe these countries should be paid to set aside the land. — We also discussed the decrease of human variation:

Over 30 documented cases currently exist of tribes & peoples who are being "extincted", often through induction into the military (eg the Bushmen of S. Africa), and assimilation into modern society.

We've all grown very tired of sitting all day, and are dying to get outside for some fresh air & exercise. At break, Mike & I trudged up the hill through the mud & snow & rescued the ~~snow~~^{stove} tent, which was collapsing under a load of snow.

Tonight was our first Friday Ethnic food night, with Indonesian food. It was excellent: rice & vegetables with red pepper sauce; tofu chunks in p.b., ginger sauce; marinated veggie salad with small chunks of pickle; and for desert, fried bananas with walnuts & rum! Yum! (Mary Ellen's ^{white} icing recipe from yesterday: cream cheese, whipped cream, maple syrup & vanilla - great!)

2 lessons today: K.I.S.S.: Keep it simple, stupid; & the 6 P's: Prior preparation prevents piss-poor-performance. We bought a pop-corn popper today from

the local thrift shop: a brand new +
air popper for \$6!

Saturday April 27 - This morning
the sky was a brilliant blue,
and the snow so dazzling white
that we donned our "shades" on
the way to breakfast! By mid-
morning, rivers of melted snow
were pouring off the roof, drumming
the ground, and ~~so~~ muddy
runnels cascaded down the roads.

Classes lasted until lunch
time (trainee assessment and
needs / tech. assessment); and
then we were free! I sat in

the warm sun reading
marvelling at the incredible
change of weather, once again.
This time it changed from
frozen winter whiteness a foot
deep, to +- shirt caliber
sunshine. By evening, nearly
all the snow was gone. Mike
& I walked to the thrift store
nearby, and I found a nice
~~at~~ needlepoint kit for \$2!

Then we hitchhiked to Conifer,
about 6 miles north. It's a
sprawling collection of small
shops, a ^{nicer} "mall", and a movie
theater, on the sloping side

of a valley. We discovered several very nice shops, a large drug store, etc. Purchased a variety of odds & ends. Also got a list of movies available at the video store! ~~for~~ One of trainees, Brad H., has had a bad time lately. His 8 mos. pregnant wife is having complications, and then his young sister drowned. I feel so bad for him. He flew home to Michigan, and just returned today. Make's most troubles seem so piddly.

Last night, Willis let us play with his Macintosh computer. It's an incredible toy! Macpaint lets you create ^{superb} graphics at the touch of a button. Macwrite is the souped-up word processor. What a blast! I left there wondering how one could live without one!

Sunday, April 28 -

A semi-sunny day. We hitchhiked into Evergreen with our laundry, and after trying for quite a while, we eventually got a ride, from, of all people, an attractive woman with a car load of kids! It was one of those coincidences that make you

wonder if things are sometimes "meant to be". It turned out that her best friend's son is in the Peace Corps, in Togo, working on stores! Wow! He's been there a year, so we'll be meeting & working with him I'm sure. Evergreen is a dusty, dinky little town, a narrow, side-walk-less bottleneck along hiway 73.

A third of the buildings are for rent, a host businesses that obviously folded long ago. We did laundry at a ramshackle coin-op, then browsed nearby at a very nice shop, filled to the brim with cards, candles, kitchen ware, and odds-n-ends of every sort.

We had lunch w/ Caryl & Jack at the Char Palace, a cozy, if poorly-named hole-in-the-wall. Despite the fact that our waitress had long, stringy, greasy hair, and that the 3 people elbowing their way around the open kitchen, had loose, floppy hair and 'gungy' clothes - well, the food was pretty good. There were a few shops to look at, but most had

junky, touristy stuff, and very high prices. We caught a ride back with 2 of the trainers (Did I mention that P.C. policy

does not allow trainees to drive?).
Last evening, Willis let Charlie & I
put some program forms onto his
word processor. We created a
trainee assessment questionnaire,
and a program evaluation questionnaire.
And stayed up till 12:30 in
the process. What a blast!

Monday April 29 -

This morning we began to
learn about gas welding. It was
fun! We got comfortable with
cutting, and had just moved on
to brazing, when our time ran
out. Next, Mike & Gary & I
began gathering wood, which we
will eventually use to make
charcoal. It was a drizzly, overcast
day, just like home and dressed
in boots, rain gear, and muddy
jacket, I felt like I was
back with the Water Department -
it felt great!

I have recently finished
two wonderful books. Out of Africa
was written in the 1930's by the
Baroness Karen Blixen of Denmark.
She writes of the 17 years she
spent in Kenya running a coffee
plantation. Her writing brings to

life the people & landscape of Kenya in the early 1900's, vividly recreating the sights, smells, and people she experienced. She writes with insight, compassion, and a deep love for the African people she lived & worked with. 10 of these 17 years she ran the farm alone, after she & her husband were divorced. It is an eloquent & touching story of life as a woman in a far-away place, and of a changing world.

She writes of the changes wrought by "civilization" on the native peoples of E. Africa, and of the destruction of the land. In her time there, she watched the forests & herds of big game diminish, and saw the city grow & spread. She ~~is~~ was a truly gifted writer.

~~Last~~ Tonight I finished "Mask", based on the movie about Rocky Dennis, who was born with cranial, diaphyseal dysplasia. It was a sad, touching story, well worth reading if only to give some insight into what's really important in this life.

He had a black Labrador, and it made me miss Max very much.

Tuesday April 30 - A rainy day, spent entirely indoors. I was so sick of sitting, that I skipped the last 2-hour session. Felt bad since everyone knows. Doesn't show much motivation on my part. But I was so bored, I knew I'd never make it through 2 hours of Combustion Theory.

We had plans to go into Evergreen to a movie tonight. But transport fell through. Oh well.

Wednesday May 1 -

Been kinda down today. Feeling bored with sitting all day; tired of "group dynamics"; tired of being in charge of something, then getting glared at when I try to get it moving. For example, everyone said they wanted a rental T.V., so I called around & found one for \$10 a wk. But try to get \$2 out of each person?

Not chance. It's like pulling teeth, truly. It's phenomenal the number of committees we've managed to create in just two weeks here (1 1/2 wks!).

Committees for everything. It's very interesting to gather together 32 people, all of whom are used to being leaders & organizers. Most everyone here has a strong personality and is very independent. Large group sessions are beginning to grate on everyone's nerves, I think. At last, we're beginning to branch off into smaller groups & projects. Saturday, 11 trainees & several trainers leave for San Luis, in S. Col., where they'll work on water & sanitation projects on a ~~small~~ ^{village} scale.

I'm getting very confused about this improved wood cook-stove stuff. The info we've got is conflicting. We're currently designing our first stove out of mud & sand (Torena). "Technical" notes will go in my Record Book.

The best part of today was the hour we spent cleaning up the stove tent & building area. It was a warm, sunny day - the best kind.

Mrs. Reed, Eric's mom, stopped by today to meet us. She's very nice and invited us to a party on Sunday, where she'll show us photos &

letters that Eric has sent from Togo.
Thurs & Fri, May 24-3 -

We spent all day Thursday preparing our Lorena mix for stove-making. It was hot & sunny, and we pounded & sifted while the radio blared. By mid-afternoon we were in shorts & sandals!

After dinner we had a Talent Show. Alma had spent days coercing people into participating, and no one was quite sure it would come off. But it was a huge success! Willis & I sang "Swain" Louisiana in the Broad Daylight", decided upon at the last minute, and it sounded pretty good! Sure was fun. Even got an ovation - my, my.

Today we had Hiwan Village role playing. Each trainer took on the role of a villager, and all 32 of us descended upon the village as PCV's, to "assess their needs", so to speak. It was fun, though not particularly enlightening.

Tonight was Ghana ethnic food night, and the array was truly sumptuous:
Kosi (mashed beans made

into patties & deep fried - like bread when done); peanut sauce, bean stew, etc. Wonderful!

Sat. May 4 - Did our Hiwan Village assessment this morning. I suppose we learned a lot - mostly about how difficult it is to function effectively in a large group!

Went to Idaho Springs for pizza at Beau Jo's. Nice place, funky old gold mining town, would be fun to peruse the shops & boardwalks. Pizza was OK, but dinner was expensive. Beau Jo's is a charming place, of rough pine & velvet-upholstered saloon furniture. Mike left his coat there, 30 miles away. We may never see that again. Told terrible jokes on the way home.

Sun May 5 - Mr. Reed, Eric's dad, picked us up at noon, & drove us to their house in Indian Hills, about 10 miles away. It's a ~~very~~ rural community of small cabins

tucked away on steep, narrow dirt roads, amidst lodgepole pine. The Reed's house is a ramshackle affair of cement blocks.

We sat in their dusty living room, on makeshift furniture, amidst underfed plants in jars and cracked pots, and ~~was~~ heaps of knick-knacks in neglected piles. They showed us out-of-sequence photos of Togo, and played disjointed bits & pieces of dusty cassettes ~~which~~ ^{Eric had} sent. Some ^{parts} were quite interesting. After half a cup of cold coffee, and ^{two} vanilla cookie cremes, ^(in place of lunch) we piled into the crowded, hot back seat of a gungy Buick Montsaurus and headed for a party at ^{one} of their friends' houses. It was a surprise ^{60th} birthday party, attended by a fascinating array of overweight, sallow older women; cigarette-smoking, artificially-tanned, thin young women, with red-faced, beer-bellied, tattooed hubbies who played horseshoes & drank beer. It took a while to get us back on time for dinner: we said it was at 6:00, not 6:30, and they got us back at 6:15! Thought we'd never get out of there! But don't get me wrong - Dick & Lucille are kind, sweet, interesting people, and their

18-year old daughter, Heidi is really nice. The family is determined to adopt us, and has grand plans for all sorts of sure-to-be-thrilling get-togethers. Lucille is about 53, and very obese. She uses oxygen to keep her red blood cell count down. But geez, does she have energy! Can't shut her up! Turns out she does a lot of free-lance writing for the local papers, so she is a helpful connection for me. We drove around a little and they took us along a 'labyrinth' of steep, narrow dirt roads, past many beautiful old log cabins hidden in the trees. The aspen leaves are at last beginning to pop out. Lucille says the lovely purple wildflowers we've been seeing are wild crocus. Coming back, we descended a long, steep hill into evergreen, and in the distance lay what Lucille called the prettiest view in Colorado: in a "V" between pine-covered hills, lay the snow-covered continental divide.

Movies tonight on our new color TV!
Little Drummer girl - great! Reps Man -
strange, but good.

Mon. ^{May} ~~April~~ 6 -

We spent the day building
our Louisa stoves, and had fun!
It was overcast this morning,
but soon the sun appeared, and
by afternoon we had a thunder-
storm! Last night we had one
also, and most of us were woken
up by the loudest thunder I've
ever heard. They were quick,
explosive cracks, and I thought
something had exploded. They say
up here it's very loud because
you're closer to the source.

Tuesday ^{May} ~~April~~ 7 - Had a fun & busy
day today. Yesterday we built
our Louisa stoves and today we
finished them by digging the
tunnels between the potholes &
smoothing everything out. We're very
pleased with the end product.
It looks very nice. It will
take ~~over~~ quite a while to dry -
we hope to cook lunch on them
next Monday. Next we
worked in the garden. Mike
& I got a 10x4 foot plot, which
someone else had already double-

dug & composted, and planted a yummy variety of cold-hardy seeds, especially sugar snap peas & salad

stuff. We spent the after-~~noon~~ noon choosing metal stove designs. We each will build one. Deciding the dimensions & drawing up the plans turned out to be very difficult, and took hours. It was quite frustrating, and I was irritated that it was such a rush job. I'm building what's called a Paola stove, and modifying it to burn both wood & charcoal.

May
Wednesday ~~April~~ 8 - Kitty cats:
There are several cats in the neighborhood. One is very friendly, the others a bit shy. The friendly one is a silky black kitten, with long legs, a long, thin tail, and a wisp of ^{white} whiskers on her chest. She has a soft, raspy meow, a squarish nose, and intense mustard-yellow eyes. She purrs & muzzles, and loves to be held. When called, she comes prancing on her long legs, meowing with delight. She lives in a sloppy cabin with owners of questionable character.

We were supposed to go to a band concert at the High School last night to hear Heidi Reed play & conduct. But we had a lot of work to do, so had to cancel. Felt very bad, as Heidi was thrilled we might come, and very disappointed when we cancelled. She seems to think of us as Eric substitutes, in a way.

Mike woke up this morning with a pinched nerve or something in his neck, and couldn't move it. It hurt a lot. He looked like my uncle Tom, who ~~had~~ has severe arthritis in his neck & shoulders, and it gave me a scare. Linda sent him to the chiropractor up the road, saying Peace Corps will pay. He got a good neck massage, etc, and feels much better.

Spent 8 hours working on my metal stove - ugh. Fun, but hard work, & very frustrating.

Thursday May 9 - Finished my metal stove this morning. Turned out pretty funky! Curious to see if it works! Learned me lots of ~~about~~ working with sheet metal & hand tools.

After lunch we drove to lookout mountain to visit Gretchen Larson, a potter who will help us make

ceramic stoves. The view from the mountain is spectacular - east onto Denver and beyond. Denver sits on a high plain, flat as a pancake, surrounded by flat-

topped mesas & rolling, scrub-covered hills. In its center is a tiny hub of tall buildings, and around these radiates a low sprawl stretching for miles in every direction. Gretchen showed us some basics of pottery making: the wheel, slabs, & coiling.

~~She~~ This is a lovely person; she & her husband lived in Sudan for a year. She will come tomorrow to help us make simple ceramic stoves.

Friday, May 10 Spent the day building a ceramic "feu malgache" stove. It was a lot of work, but very enjoyable! The weather swung from muggy & warm to cool & breezy, until at last we had a spectacular, 15-minute thunderous downpour. Then the wind began blowing with a vengeance, sending pots & stoves flying, the tent flapping, and nearly lifting it from its moorings. Today, the 4 Honduras-bound folks got 6 rabbits to raise. They



built hutches for them, and will learn about breeding & butchering. The rabbits are so cute. 4 all babies - barely 2 months old. 3 all white, one is ~~white~~ grey. They are soft as can be, with enormous ears, fluffy paws, and puffy stumps of tail that twitch when they walk. They ~~is~~ cuddle into your neck when you hold them. The other two are pregnant females, due in 3 or 4 weeks. I'm afraid I'll grow rather attached to them, and it's pretty hard to imagine eating them in a few weeks... I've been feeding them spinach leaves left from last year in the garden. They love them, and wiggle their noses as they munch. Today I fed "Johnny Horse" a carrot. He's a lovely yellow, - brown fellow who lives up the hill. I love to hear horses eat - those enormous teeth ~~are~~ echo in their enormous, hollow mouth - ~~crump~~ crump, crump!

Sat. May 11 - a gloomy, grey morning has become a sunny afternoon, if not esp. warm. a cold wind is coming off the mountains. Got a packet of photos from home, of our going away party, and our trip to Lake Cushman. Mom & Dad got their portrait back from the St. Mads. photographer - it's very good. They didn't like the whole family one, so are having another done (?). Yesterday, I got another great pair of \$5 tennies! Wayne had bought them at the local thrift shop and they didn't fit. They're very nice ones, with leather reinforcements and "winged o's" on the sides! We had an interesting session this morning on child & maternal health. We talked about the two most common forms of malnutrition, and how to tell their severity. We learned how to mix a rehydration drink with water, sugar, salt, & soda if avail. (sod. bicarb.). We heard an excellent tape about the women's lives in Kenya. It's becoming apparent that to help solve the immense overpopulation problem, the

issues of health care & infant mortality must first be addressed. Women have 10 children, because they know that 5 or 6 are likely to die young. And a woman must have someone to care for her when she is old. As PCV's, we can help to indirectly affect pop. growth by working to provide clean water, improved sanitation, basic medical care, better nutrition. We're encouraged to have a garden for green vegetables.

We spent the afternoon spending money at the Target store in west Denver. Target is like a giant K-Mart, and we went wild purchasing dozens of little things. Our list had been growing rapidly. Went out for pizza in conifer - good. Then we rented two movies, but for some reason (could have been the 1/2 of a 16" pizza I ate), all I felt like doing was sleeping. Embarrassed to say I slept for 12 hours! Oh, how I love Sundays!

Sun, Mother's Day, May 12 -

Started out cold but clear, and has turned into a drippy, drizzly, slushy day. Brr! at 6 pm it's snowing - ugh. After lunch Mike & I hitched into town to do laundry & errands. Walked 2 miles

before we got picked up - just as the sky
let loose a torrential downpour. 37° in town!
We'd hoped to walk up to Keys on the green,
a nice bar about a mile out of
town. We've still never made it there,
and today was no exception. Too wet
& cold. After a thrilling hour & a half
in the laundromat we discovered every
store we had planned to visit was
closed. So we sat in the Char Parlor,
a sad specimen of a "hip" restaurant,
and drank expensive coffee & had a
piece of very disappointing cherry
cheese pie. At last we braved
the elements and lucked out - Karen
Nelson drove by just as we started
out. It's snowing with seriousness
now. We're supposed to cook lunch
for everyone outside on our stoves
tomorrow...

Mon. May 13 -

There are 4 inches of
snow everywhere, and a lazy veil
of falling snow in the air. It's
cold. But the cooking of lunch
goes on! Several of us stayed in
in the kitchen & "prepped". I
made up chocolate pudding
mix for chocolate cream pies,
and 5 graham cracker crusts -
what fun! The others fired up

the stoves, and began heating the food. At '12 sharp, right on time, we served up spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, and - chocolate cream pie w/ whipped cream! Quite a success, I'd say! The stoves worked very well, and it was fun! Spent the afternoon organizing - everything from next week's schedule to the design of a t-shirt logo. Today, I sold Wayne my logging boots for \$20 - 'twas sad to part with my dear old pals, but they're overkill for Africa, and have outgrown me to the point of no longer being comfortable. Oh well - it's best not to get too attached to your possessions. We've all been planning to see "The Killing Fields" in Evergreen tonight - but once again, a wrench in the works. Barb has mistakenly taken the van. Geez, this is getting old... The van returns on time. At last I've seen the Killing Fields. I've dry eyes. Somehow, not crying has upset me more than crying would have. Crying can be such a purge. Somehow, having ^{cried} ~~cry~~, we feel we've done our part, felt our pain, shed our guilt. Dry eyes

though, are a dam locked shut. What we do with what's pent up behind it is the question. Perhaps there is no, or no, answers.

Nov. 1979, Dith Pran at last escaped to America.

Millions more suffered & died - have suffered & died for thousands of years - always at the hands of some greedy, power-hungry, sadistic regime. Are all humans capable of atrocity? What does it take to spark it? So where the hell was I in Nov. 1979. Preparing for my wondrous post-adolescent tour of Europe. Did I know about Cambodia? Did I understand? Or care? Will I look back in 8 or 10 years with equal ignorance of Central America? How can anyone really know what's going on in this crazy world we live in? and what the hell can anyone do about it? Are humans fated to an eternity of suffering at the hands of others? It seems that since the dawn of man, human nature has contained the elements of cruelty, greed, and selfishness. It's also contained the elements of compassion, selflessness, and true understanding. So which

Will triumph? Will these maintain their uneasy truce - why does the one seem so often to outweigh the other. Is this the way it's meant to be? Why do the two have to mix? Are those that are capable of peaceful, loving co-existence required to be surrounded by the opposite? It's a paradox:

The most compassionate human beings, those most capable of living peacefully, are also those most upset by the world's injustices and most drawn to help fight them. And thus they end up living amidst the very things they most abhor. Yet the apathetic and disinterested, by nature of their disinterest, are able to ignore it and live in peace from the torments of all that is wrong in this world. What is one to do? Try to ignore it, & to live an exemplary, but self-indulgently peaceful life? Or jump into the millie? and jump in wholeheartedly, giving up any semblance of a "peaceful" life, but certain of satisfaction? Or halfway - and then, which half? and

how to balance the two worlds?
Then, the question is always: which
issue? How to get involved?

● Where can I do the most good?

Tues. May 14 -

Spent the day testing stores.
Mike & I ran 2 tests on our
Lorenz stove. The tests take about
2 hours each, and are somewhat
tedious. They involve weighing
everything, and recording water
temps. every 5 minutes, and
taking copious notes, in an attempt
to keep track of zillions of variables!

● The day progressed from chilly to
quite warm, and by afternoon, 90%
of the snow was gone. There are
animals galore up here, and I'm
in love with most of them. There's
Kilo, a big, fluffy fellow who loves
to howl - a plaintive, musical, wolf-
like howl. There are many cats,
but most are quite skittish. They
range from jet black to calico,
siamese, & pearly grey. I found out
that my little black kitty friend's
name is Spooky. I met Jason,
a cute 4-year old fellow who lives
at Spooky's house.

Sat. May 18

Today was spent recovering from last. We had a half way through training bash, sort of. Judy & I started out in her room girl - talking, and were joined by a succession of others. We sang lots, and danced some, and I got to bed at 2:30. Ugh. So Sat. morn. was a bit of a grind. Felt so good to talk to Judy. We had lots to share.

Tues. May 21 Mike sprained his ankle playing volleyball on Sunday, poor guy. Luckily it doesn't hurt much, and probably isn't serious at all, but it's swelled up like a grapefruit. He feels bad because this is his second "medical occurrence" at Peace Corps expense. We hope they don't think he's hypo-chondriac, or a chronic clutz! He's been hobbling about on crutches, which makes for sore arms & shoulders.

Got typhoid & cholera shots today. We are all wiped out. Made the mistake of having a drink

afterward, along with the worst nachos I've never conceived of: processed cheese! god! Felt terrible for the next 6

hours: headache, nausea. We got to go shopping at a large mall in south Denver, but felt too crummy to take advantage of the opportunity!

Wed. May 22 Woke up this morning feeling battered & beaten - the Mac truck syndrome. The shots have left everyone feeling achy, tired, nauseous, & weak. My back muscles ached in a tight band across the center of my back. Both arms are bruised where I got the shots. So had a slow day, but got lots done. Pounded lorena for the stove we'll make tomorrow. Also collected buffalo chips nearby! It was fun. a big, beautiful valley; rolling green pasture. Lots of baby buffalos - Judy calls them buffalettes. Look like light brown calves. The adults are shedding, and are mangy, if magnificent. Their heads are so big and shaggy. Crummy weather lately. No sun, quite

cold, lots of rain. Today we had some impressive hail.

Personally, I could use some warmth.

Sunday May 26 Went to the Reeds today for a community BBQ. About 15 of us went. Had a pretty good time. Didn't mingle much, but met some nice people. They even cleaned the house... somewhat. 4 new baby geese.

Yesterday, Mike bought me an Opus penguin! It was a surprise. He's so cute! Sort of a kitty replacement.

Friday was Togo ethnic food night. We cooked peanut & okra soups on our stoves, and also served jollof (rice with chicken & vegies & curry), fu-fu (starchy potato, mashed), and banku (fermented corn-meal mush fried in cakes). We laid cloths on the floor, sat on pillows, and ate with our fingers. It was fun! The Reeds came and brought some Togo artifacts.

The water & san. folks returned from San Luis Saturday. It's nice to have them back. We ~~through~~^{threw} a BBQ for them this

evening, with chicken & burgers. I never got any, and am hungry. Food has not tasted good to me lately.

I crave some plain hearty food: chili, spaghetti, fish & chips w/ tartar sauce!

Thursday Mike & I built a one-pot chimneyless Louisa stove called a 'Louga. This is the kind of stove we'll be building in Africa. It turned out great. It's cute: rounded & pudgy.

Wednesday (I think) I spent 5 hours digging the base of the garden fence to expose it for painting & fencing.

Mon. May 27 Memorial Day

A busy, tiring day. I haven't been eating well lately. Food hasn't tasted good - I crave plain old food (my own cooking, perhaps?), and am getting tired of Mary Ellen's cooking. Spent most of the day testing my metal stove. Developed a simpler, more practical method. But it got boring after a while. So I spent another 4 hours working on the fence - sealing & painting.

Tonight several of us got together to take our own visa photos. We used black & white pan-X 125 ASA.

Sure hope they turn out!

My back & knees ache from kneeling to paint the fence for so long. I really haven't been taking good care of myself. Not enough exercise and no stretching. My muscles get tighter each day. Perhaps I avoid stretching because the floors around here are so grungy.

Opus has become a good pal. He is a friendly, cuddly presence. I haven't had a stuffed animal in years. I'm feeling busy again. Now that San Luis folks are back, committees are reforming, and forgotten commitments are coming back to haunt. Ugh.

Mon. June 3 I can't believe a whole week has gone by without writing. Lots has happened. I've been very busy. Tuesday we had shots again (just meningitis). We spent the week building solar food dryers. (which still aren't done). Friday night was

Yemen ethnic food night. The women were requested to wear veils, and sat behind curtains, separate from the men. Judy, Carol, & I decided on silent rebellion. We wore veils, but as little else as possible: mini-skirts, bathing suit tops, lots of jewelry, and lots of make-up. A belly dancer entertained briefly, then us women retreated behind our screen & had a marvelous time! We told dirty jokes, ate chocolate chip cookies, hummus & pita wedges, and painted our hands with henna. This is very popular for special occasions in many muslim countries. The dried henna (a green herb) is ground into a very fine powder, mixed with water, and squeezed out of a syringe to make delicate, lined patterns. The henna is left on as long as possible, then washed off. The result is a rich, red-brown stain that can last from 1 day to 2 months.

Today I received not 1, but 2 tins of homemade chocolate chip cookies in the mail. Wow!! We found out on Friday that we will be leaving on Friday,

June 14, at 10:15 AM, instead of
Saturday. I'm so disappointed
that I will miss the Fri. night

going-away extravaganza.

It's going to break my heart
saying goodbye to these people.

I have gone to San Luis for a
week, and I miss them - Judy,
Caryl, Gus, etc. . . .

Friday June 14 - I'm disappointed
that I haven't written in here

for so long. I've had lots & lots
to write about, but haven't set

aside the time. We've been
very busy. In this last week

and a half we've built a super-
duper solar food dryer, and
a charcoal kiln. We've produced

a 300-page project documentation
book, detailing each of the projects
undertaken during training.

We also created a Peace Corps
silkscreen design, and ordered
over a hundred t-shirts in a
rainbow of rich, bright colors.

They're really nice. Tuesday

night was a talent show, and
Willis and I sang Two Emmy
Lou songs. I was in heaven!

Saturday Mike & I stumbled onto a wonderful band at the Little Bear, called Runaway Express.

They played a hot selection of country - and folk-rock, with a little bluegrass thrown in. We bought a tape which is good - though not as good as they were live.

The "vibes" around C.P.O.-land have been intense this last week - both good & bad. Lots of gossip, most of it obnoxious. Also lots of sad faces, as we realized we're about to leave.

So now it's Friday - but what time is it? In Denver, it's 7 PM, and the Vanquet is probably in full swing. In New York, it's 9 PM. We've just lifted off for Paris, an hour late. In Paris, it's 3 AM. We flew Denver to JFK on a Lockheed 1011. It was noisy, and the plane felt kind of old & rickety. But it was big - 9 seats across. Now we're on a 747 - my first. Had a smooth take-off. My stomach hurts - we met grandma at JFK and had a lousy junk food meal.

Our first flight left me pretty queasy - especially the landing. I hope that doesn't happen this time. 27 other Fogo-heads are on the plane with us - we've met 2 of them, briefly.

It's Saturday now, and we're en route to Rome on 'U.T.A. : Unions Transportes Aeriennes.

We're on a DC-10, sailing along over the Mediterranean.

I'm pretty burned out, but have caught some sleep here & there. The food has been good.

En route to Paris we had Chicken Kiev with steamed vegies, a salad, and pound cake. Yum. But that flight charged for headphones & most drinks. U.T.A. serves free wine & beer, free movie, etc.

We have our first window seats. The view of Spain & the Pyrennees was spectacular. We could see a squarish swath that looked like the border.

Dinner was fish or duck with potatoes or rice, an interesting bulgur salad, and a raspberry mousse. Yum. Then I slept - off & on. It was a 5 hour flight.

When my neck began aching, my eyes were completely red, and I'd had about all the flying I could

take, we began to descend and broke through the clouds. Below us was Togo - and it was green! Verdant, low plains in every hue of green. Clumps of low trees, squared off fields, groups of palms, scattered herds of animals. Most of the buildings were rectangular and metal, widely scattered. But we also saw groupings of rounded grass huts. It's been raining, and the ground shone with silvery

wetness. Brown ribbons of road ran straight for miles, and once I saw a car speeding along below us.

We touched down flawlessly, and rolled up to the terminal, a small, 2-story building, boasting a sign: Aéroport International de Lomé. A crowd of friendly black & white faces beamed at us from the open observation deck, as we walked across the wet, steaming runway. It is muggy, but comfortable. It smells lush. At least a dozen volunteers were there to greet us,

with a big sign: welcome to Togo,
and all of our names. There are 27 of
us, including Mathew, a 15-month

old carrot top. His parents will
be health workers in Somé.

Outside the airport, tiny children
sold cigarettes, and cans of Raid.

One young boy told me he liked
Michael Jackson, and pointed to
the name on the Raid can:

Johnson. He thought it said
Jackson. All the children asked

for "cadeau" - a present. Many
wanted a Bic. I want to speak

French with them, but then they
know you understand, and it's

hard to say no when they ask
for cadeaux. The children are

absolutely beautiful, and have
bright, ready smiles. I gave one

of them a candy bar. He was
very polite, and stood by the

van waving as we pulled away.
We drove through the

narrow, dirt streets of Somé to
the Hotel Le Prince, where we'll

stay for 4 days. Women in
colorful wrappings carried

enormous bundles on their heads.
Children waved and yelled as

we passed. One of them ran

nimbly behind the van, rolling a hoop with a stick. The streets are a maze of puddles, as it is the rainy season.

The hotel is quite nice, and very clean. Rooms are \$10-11 a night, tho' P.C. pays. Mike & I have a small room with a sink, shower, table, a double bed and a single. It also has air conditioning! We had a welcoming cocktail party with Bière Benin, which is excellent.

Dinner was a buffet with kebabs, chicken, avocado, rice, fries, etc. Fantastic! I am so tired, and plan to sleep for hours tonight - at least 10, I hope!

SUNDAY!

Well, I got 9, and woke up refreshed but groggy. We slept beneath a sheet & light blanket, as it was cool. But we forgot to open windows, and woke up sweltering. In a few moments the air conditioner had the room wonderfully cool. The Hotel is very nice. The Peace Corps has taken over most of the rooms. I don't know if extra cleanliness was

demanding, but the place is scrubbed & swept. Believe it or not, it's nicer than the CPO lodge!

The rooms are on 3 levels, above a central courtyard painted pink. The kitchen is next to our room, and food is carried down 3 flights of stairs. The food has been quite good, and it's rumoured that most volunteers gain weight during "stage" or in-country training. — Today we had a short tour of Somé.

There are few tall buildings, yet the city is not that large - somewhere around 12 Km in diameter. 2 "routes circulaires" ring the city. Some of the roads are paved, most are packed dirt. Potholes are enormous, and, filled with rain, make for circuitous driving. There are several traffic lights and traffic flows fairly well. But the traffic density has increased drastically over the last few years, and I'm told rush hour can be crazy.

Lots of honking, and pedestrians jam the streets.

The city is very attractive, and much cleaner than I expected.

The government emphasizes refuse collection, and shops in the market are required to sweep. On Sunday, children played soccer in the street, and people milled about. A large, 2-spired Cathedral was celebrating a special feast day. The bells rang continually, and a crowd of people jammed the street in a slow procession into the church.

Choristers dressed in white robes with red or green trim and scarves. Some wore mortarboards. We wandered a few downtown streets, stepping around puddles. I was constantly amazed at the cleanliness & lack of offensive smells. It was a muggy day, but fairly cool. It's also been overcast. We wandered through the grand Marché, a 3-story building. On Sunday's it's essentially closed, but we saw a good sampling of some's bounty. The ground floor is foods, the second floor is all

cloth, the third, I don't know.
Most of the buildings here are
made of cement block - it's
very readily available.

The Ghana border is
the west edge of the city.
There are fences and a border
station, but crossing isn't
too difficult. They say children
jump the fence all the time.

This afternoon we went to
Robinson beach, several KM's
east of town. The Hotel
Romador is a nice place
with huts for rent, a good
restaurant, and outdoor
drink pavillions. There are
lush gardens, pathways,
and strings of colored
lights. They let us use their
beach. The beach here is
good for swimming, because
there is a low reef a short
way out that helps buffer the
treacherous currents. The water
is warm and very pleasant.
The beach is a narrow strip
of clean, smooth sand.

There are 27 of us
here, nearly all in our
20's. Gary is the oldest,

at 39. — Our welcome packets included stamped post cards, a city map, tourist brochures, and a

washcloth! No ordinary cloth, it is made of mesh, I think nylon. They refresh like a loufa, but dry quickly. — So far no bugs. Lots of small lizards, and a very large spider. The latter disappeared quickly behind our bedroom wall.

MONDAY We've been sleeping a lot. The air conditioning is almost too cold, but with it off, we wake up sweating and incredibly groggy.

Some people seem to be full of energy. I'm mostly lazy. I've had no stomach problems, but have periods of great malaise. I think it's the heat. I feel better when I can sweat. I haven't felt like going out wandering. I figure I'll have plenty of time. Also, many here do not speak French that well. They may be hard to understand. I'm surprised

at the risqué dress worn by the African women. Most wear wraps of cloth, often exposing the top half of the

breasts. Obviously, bras are not common, and many women wear thin, sleeveless tops. So women volunteers have few dress restrictions. Common sense is best, and shorts are discouraged. I'm in need of clothes, and look forward to buying some 'colourful' clothes. The cloth here is a rainbow of colors & patterns.

We had our French speaking assessment today. This is called F.S.I. - Foreign Service Institute - and is a test system devised by the F.S.I. Ratings run from 0-5, with "plusses" in each category. We don't know ~~yet~~ our "score" yet. Mike will quite ^{likely} ~~please~~ be 0+, I will probably be 2 or 2+. That means I can focus on some local language. This morning we had a medical briefing with Dr. Moran and Anna Piatt - a P.C. nurse, and Bill Piatt's wife. We got a rabies shot and a large medical kit, containing most everything. There are many things we didn't need to bring: vitamins, aspirin, Band-aids, ace bandage, etc.

Later, we had a tour of the Peace Corps office. Air conditioned, with wms of cold water, its' quite

pleasant, if small and crowded.

— The women here amaze me. They carry enormous bundles on their heads, and most have babies tied on their backs with cloth slings. They walk, cook, shop, etc., somehow balancing 3 ft. diameter platters and jugs! —

Today it was a bit hotter & muggier, and will take some getting used to. Our

room is very private, and its so nice to close the door and peel off all your clothes. Its delightful to have a shower in here. Its by far cleaner & nicer than the one in our room at the C.P.O. The food

here is good - lots of fresh fruits. But they cook with lots of salt & oil. There are 3 or 4 vegetarians, and they can't think of anything to feed us except

eggs! Tonight was crepes, rice (full of butter, with tomatoe & green pepper sauce), chicken, orange sections. Yum!

One can buy absolutely anything here. I am amazed at the diversity of products. Many things are very cheap. Leather sandals \$3 (1500 francs), beer 25¢ a bottle, soap 40¢ a box. Other things are expensive: electronics appear to be $\approx 2 \times$ US prices. CFA, or Togolese Francs, appear to be worth 472 to the dollar. So 1000 Francs is about \$2. Our salary will be about 80,000 CFA a month - about \$160. I'm thinking of it as about \$800 a month, which is pretty good. We won't be rich, but shouldn't have any money worries. - The days here are short - it's a surprise to see it grow dark at 6:30 PM - and it grows dark quickly.

Tuesday June 18. A meeting this morning with Stoves & Ag. Ed. to discuss training. Mark will coordinate our training at Pagala, and I like him very much. He is animated, easy to listen to, and seems a very nice person.

The owner of the Hotel treated us to wine with lunch. Vinagery red stuff - tasted like Greece

or Portugal. I notice many similarities to these 2 countries here. The hissing at foreign women, however, seems to be missing. I'm thankful.

after lunch we packed the things we won't need during stage, to be stored at P.C. Somé. Then we caught a ride into town to shop. Mike bought some nice leather sandals and plastic flip-

flops - at good prices of course. We walked through the bustling grand Marché. The 2nd floor cloth stalls were a maze of brilliant colors and patterns. All cloth is 100% cotton, but qualities, and prices, vary. We also went inside the cathedral. Small but

colorful, it was decorated with bright cloths. Took our first taxi. After

dinner went to Minnie's for a petite soirée. Ah - left Mike's good Nikes in the taxi - thought they

were gone. But believe it or not,
the driver returned them!
gave him a tip for that!

Cher Mimi, we met a sea
of 'new faces', black & white,
incl. the ambassador, Robert
Owen, and his wife. We had
guacamole, and an assortment
of very American hors d'oeuvres.

Later, we broke into groups
and went for dinner. Our
group went to the "Café de la
Chine" for Chinese food.
Food was OK, service was
terrible. I'm told that's
atypical. I'd like to try.

The Phoenixian, which serves
Sri Lankan food. Deluxe food at
high, but reasonable, prices.
Haggled forever over mistakes
on the bill, till 4 of us
left. Had a hard time
getting a taxi, then he
tried to way overcharge
us. A beautiful, balmy
night. Sing-song African
music blaring in the cafe
below us. I'm afraid
I'm gaining back all the
weight I lost in Co.

at Minnie's, the music was
loud, and very American,
from John Denver, to Cat Stevens
and Huey Lewis. Tomorrow we
leave at 8 AM sharp for Pagala!

Wed. June 19 On to Pagala!
Leaving town, we
headed north on a fancy
boulevard, lined with Togolese
flags put out to herald the
President's return yesterday. The
north section of Lomé is a maze
of swamps. This seems to me a
very big health problem, esp.
mosquitoes, and also a waste
of water that could be collected
for other purposes. Also, these
swamps enlarge during the
rainy season, flooding many
homes. Today, Ramadan
ends, and there is celebration
& feasting in the 'zongo', or
muslim quarters. We received
our FSI scores - I am very
surprised to receive a 2+. This
is the ~~minimum~~ minimum
necessary to qualify as a
volunteer. This means I can
go on to local languages - but I
also plan to work on my

French, esp. vocabulary & local idioms. Everyone asks us for cadeaux, very bluntly. It is annoying,

and not fun to say no. But they are not offended, and it is worse to give cadeaux - then you will never be left alone. We stopped in Notse (Nô-chay), and bought pineapple 5 for 200 francs! Delicieux!

Saw my first "in-person" termite mounds: often 10-15 feet tall, they are perhaps a meter wide, and castle-like in shape. Columnar, and fluted, they resemble elongated jello molds.

In this climate, the skin takes on a stickiness that's not wet, but it's hard to run a hand over your skin without it catching a bit.

My skin feels good though - moisturized. Putting on cream is a mistake - you sweat under it as if it were plastic. My feet, though, are dry, and need cream. The goats

here are pygmies - and cute. They are for meat, not milk, and run free. They are a menace to crops, but eat refuse.

The road from Lomé to Pagala is paved, and in great shape. So our 4½ hour drive was smooth,

if cramped. Toyota vans are not made for people with long legs.

We arrived in Pagala at lunchtime, and were greeted by a large staff, black & white, who've been here preparing for our arrival. It's lovely here.

The entire drive was through lush, green countryside, with hardly any breaks in the vegetation, except in villages, where brown earth has been

pounded bare by centuries of feet. Corn is a main crop, partly, I think, because it is 'drought hardy'. But it is also a heavy feeder, and has depleted the soil. So it grows somewhat poorly. The remaining greenery is trees and bushes of many varieties, incl. teak, palm, and BAOBAB! They are a truly wondrous tree, and I was delighted to finally see

one in person! Our room is spartan, but clean. Pagala gare was built by the French to house engineers working on the

road system. It is 9 bungalows, with cement walls, tin roofs, small windows, and tile floors.

It once had plumbing and electricity, but now porcelain toilets, ~~sinks~~ sinks, and showers remain, only as "fixtures", so to speak. We use the toilets, but flush them manually - ie with buckets. We take showers using buckets of rainwater and calabashes - half a round gourd. We'll sleep on soft straw mats on the floor. The camp is hopefully en route to becoming a Togolese govt. gift to Peace Corps, and P.C. hopes to fix it up considerably during our stage. For light we'll use kerosene lamps. Each of us received the first of our "Peace Corps issue" equip. today: straw mats, foam mattresses with covers, lanterns, buckets, calabashes, pillows, a basket. When we leave here, it is going to be by the truckload - gey. An exciting event - soon after our arrival, we were honored with a visit by some of the local notables. I didn't begin to understand the political, religious, and social complexities.

of the event, but this is what happened: the head chief of the area, a very old man, was accompanied by the local chief and a number of advisors, etc. as best I can figure, this entourage represented only a fraction of the local notables. These were of a particular tribe - there are 36 here in Pagala! Pagala is one of the most diverse areas in Logo, culturally. Sounds like chaos to me! The chief was handed a bowl of something - greyish, watery, with things floating in it. He prayed, poured some on the ground, and repeated this several times. Then he passed the bowl for all to drink. I barely tasted any - it tasted like water. Then he took a small, white chicken, slit its throat, and poured the blood on the ground. ~~The~~ The chicken was left to flap, and ended lying on its back. This is a good sign. Then there were endless introductions and speechmaking, with a translator, as these men understood French only a bit. All in all, this impressed me. a "real" experience, pas pour les

(Cornflour & water)

touristes. These people were animists, and believe the animals, plants, earth etc. are living spirits. They believe the earth is sacred, and thus pour offerings on the ground - all goes back to the earth. They pray before digging, as it is a privilege to peer beneath the ground.

Animals here are more plentiful than Lomé! Spiders, wasps, lots of flies, beautiful, colored lizards. We're also told to watch for scorpions, snakes, etc. all kinds of lovely stuff.

~~Here~~ This place is famous for its teeming hordes of malicious mosquitoes as well. The rainy season began halfheartedly, but as of today, is well underway. It's been raining determinedly since about 3PM, and Pogala has become a sea of mud. There's also been thunder, and spectacular lightning. There are clouds - and the sky is a soft mélange of grey & blue. There are 2 night watchman who have just arrived. One is a muslim. He wears a squarish red hat - ~~he~~ this means he is an 'elhadj' - he's been to Mecca. As dusk descended, he began to pray.

He rolled out a straw mat bearing a stamped picture of the mosque at Mecca. Then he washed his hands

with water from a copper kettle. He chanted a soft sing-song, first standing, then bending at the waist, and finally kneeling with his forehead to the ground.

Thursday June 20

Today received a briefing on our French lesson format, and also on agricultural education and cross-cultural studies. The other components of our "stage" will be

motorcycle training, and health.

I will be in French class with Eric & Sisa. Mike will have a class all to himself! The French teachers are all really nice. Us stove people will take part in some of the ag. ed. training. We will have a garden plot, and can help with animal raising, if we'd like. Sent a letter to Ghana today. Am very interested to see how long it takes to get there.

This afternoon we went into Pagala village in small groups, each with a teacher. People were intrigued, and

children stared. Many shook our hand. Several sang us the "Yoro song": "Yoro, yoro, bon soir, ça va bien? Merci!". There is a train station here at Pagala. We watched the hustle and bustle as it loaded up for Jomé. Pagala is an important market town for this region. Saturday is market day; a large part of town is permanently set aside for this, with "pailots", thatch huts, set up as stalls. Within a large circle of spectators, a group of muslim women danced, while men played a variety of melodic rhythms on drums.

I think this is all to celebrate the end of Ramadan. Now, as I get ready to sleep, a soft drumming fills the night air, superimposed against a chorus of crickets, and the chatter & music from the house next door.

Friday June 21

Les nuages - the clouds here are so reminiscent of home - same patterns, textures, patches of soft blues, gray, white. French lessons all day today. It was hard work,

but enjoyable. We got to talk a lot, which is not only excellent practice, but also helps us stay awake. For me talking all day is an ideal state of affairs! I learned a lot.

Saw several new birds today. A large, vulture-like, black and white bird with long legs and a large, thick, downward-curving ~~to~~ yellow bill. Another was chickadee-sized, black & white, with a red head spot and a very long, black tail, perhaps 6-10" as compared with its '3-4" body!

cut Mike's & Bonnie's hair today.

Saturday June 22

Today: Jon & Susan are getting married this morning, our time. Yesterday was mom & dad's anniversary, and Steve's birthday. Today, the Ghana contingent arrives in Accra. I wish them the very best, and think of them a lot. I like the people here, but haven't gotten to know anyone very well yet.

Today we went to the Pagala market. It was crowded, but interesting. Many vendors sold a real hodge-podge of stuff:

(Note: divorced 1 1/2 yrs. later)

soap, mirrors, door hinges, and mirrors, for example! Mike & I bought a demi-piece of cloth (6 yards) for 3600 CFA. Also bought a chunk of fabric for curtains, a palm fan, 2 large plastic cups, a mirror with plastic frame, a straw mat, and I bought a pretty blue shirt. The Togolese seem to love plastic: polyester clothes are the norm at the markets. Tonight we are having a party in the paillet. The young black men have taken over and set up a blaring sound system with reggae & disco at 150 Dbs.

at the marche today, we tasted some local home-made millet beer, or tchoucontou. It wasn't too bad.

Sunday June 23 We left fairly early this morning to visit the Assonkoko waterfalls. We packed the van full (in Africa, cars are never partly full). The sky was full of dark clouds, and we expected a hike in the rain. Assonkoko is due west of here, very near the Ghana border. We parked in the village, and first spoke with the gendarme, to make sure it was OK for us to visit the falls. It is always a good idea to ingratiate

oneself to the local people of note!
The landscape here is lush rolling hills and dense vegetation. From some points along the trail we could see rolling, green hills stretching way into the distance. It took us perhaps an hour and a half to reach the falls. The trail was narrow and often nearly overgrown. The brush towered on either side. The trail is heavily used by villagers, and also by ghanians, who bring things to Togolese markets, and who also smuggle cocoa beans across for better prices. There really is no border patrol, except during "smuggling season". The hike in was cool, but very humid, and we arrived covered in sweat. The forest echoed with tropical noises: cackles, chirps, and rustlings. It really hit me then that I was in "deep, dark africa". The trail crossed the river on logs, descended slippery clay slopes, and at one point became a narrow ribbon traversing a steep hillside. We were in a canyon of sorts, where a series of hills came together. The view was spectacular. Then we dropped down a steep slope,

ducking under bushes & branches, and voilà, we were at the river. The falls is really a series of pools & small drops. We swam upstream and sunbathed near the main falls. The water was superb - cool and very refreshing. After thoroughly burning ourselves, we hiked back. By this time the clouds had cleared, and the sun was blazing down. I've never been so hot. Of course, going back, the trail seemed to go endlessly uphill. We offered to carry a jug of kerosene for an older man behind us on the trail. He also had an enormous sack of something on his head. I was panting & wheezing, yet he never seemed tired.

Tuesday June 25

Today they killed la chèvre - the female pygmy goat who had been tied to a tree near the paillet for several days. I guess I'm glad she's gone; she was very unhappy at being tied up and alone, and uttered desolate, mournful cries for hours in end. I'm finding myself even less inclined to eat meat here than

in the states. Here, meat eating is very close to the source. One lives with the animal, kills it,

butchers it, and eats nearly everything. Meats tend to be tougher and much more pungent. Meat isn't served in neat, boneless chunks, but in recognizable sections, complete with gistle, sinew, and bone. There are often slivers of the latter throughout, as cooks use their cleavers indiscriminately, and in lieu of more time-consuming methods of dissection. We've had several

Iogdese meals, and I must say I'm not too terribly impressed. The sauces tend to be delicious - but Pauline is a good cook. The base of the meal, however, is usually *pâte*, *fu-fu*, or *ignams*. *Pâte* is a gelatinous glob of millet or corn meal mush; *fu-fu* a gelatinous glob of pounded, cooked *ignam*; and *ignam* a sorry yam-like substitute for potato. All of these have a ~~strong~~ ^{decided} lack of flavor.

Finch is coming along well, and although it can be exhausting & frustrating, I'm

learning lots. As our confidence & knowledge increases, we're beginning to use French on an informal,

daily basis. Lots of "Français" spoken here! This stage has a pretty high French level - Mike was the only zero. He has learned so much in the past few days! He's doing great. So I find myself thinking constantly in French. I'm really enjoying being in a French-speaking environment. Eventually, we will have "total immersion" here, which means - pas d'anglais!

The weather has been very sultry, with high humidity and stale, still air. I feel fine during the mornings & afternoons, & evenings, but at mid-day the heavy, warm air is oppressive & I feel really wiped out. From 1-2:30, after lunch, we have siesta, and it's wonderful to sleep, but waking up ain't too fun. Sponge baths, several times a day, are the saving grace. At times, however, I have seriously considered climbing into the rainbarrel.

Each night in the barlieu
next to us there are drums.
I don't know what goes on -

• a fête, or an every day thing.

We are living fairly isolated
from the village of Pagala,
and Togolese life in general.
I like it this way for now.
I'm feeling pretty self-centered,
and devote my free time to me-
writing, reading, puttering.

Personal hygiene takes up a lot
of time, but is very rewarding;

• Taking good care of oneself is
of the essence in the tropics.

I've been doing a fair
number of haircuts, and really
enjoy it. It's fun, relaxing,
and a good way to chat with
people. I've learned a lot, and
think of it as a new craft, or
skill, that I'm acquiring.

Thursday June 27

Bonnie brought us a double
mattress from some yesterday -

• it's quite deluxe, and a ~~so~~
welcome improvement over what
we had: first, 2 straw mats,
then 2 single foam mattresses,

side by side, with the omnipresent crack down the center. Today we visited the marché at Anié,

about 45 min. south of here on the main road. It's one of the larger regional markets. We had an assignment of sorts: we split into groups of 2 or 3, and each group was given 1000 francs. With this we were to buy as many useful things as possible, attempting to bargain for lower prices. This is exhausting and frustrating: many of the market people speak very little French; we have no idea what the prices should be, or when they are fixed, so don't know when we can bargain. We were also supposed to find out as much as possible about each product: where it came from, who produced it, etc. The market system is intricate and fascinating, but pretty overwhelming for an outsider. Logo is considered the most colorful and lively marketplace in West Africa. The Switzerland of West Africa, they call it.

at the marché, a torrential downpour began. Within moments, the aisles were cleared, and clusters of people, surrounded by piles of merchandise, crammed under straw-roofed stalls. The rain ~~was~~ ^{poured} off the roofs in sheets, flooding most of the bare dirt marché to a depth of several inches. As yovos were due to rendezvous at 4:15, so being yovos, and obsessed with promptness, we dutifully slogged through the muck and rain to the van. This bizarre display of yovo yovo-dom elicited side-splitting laughter from the hundreds of black faces peering out at us. What a bizarre feeling, to be the only white people, visible for miles anyway, alone on a vast open square of deep mud, slogging, thoroughly soaked, ~~and~~ barely clinging to a pair of slippery flip-flops, which the muck is doing its best to claim, while from the surrounding shelters an enormous crowd of black faces is howling with laughter and hooting in unintelligible languages.

Hmm indeed. Today we also began serious work in the jardin, and dug 2 planches, traditional style. I have begun to feel bored, and burnt-out or being in stage, and am hoping this won't endure. Some frustrations and resentments are building up, and I'm not sure of the best way to deal with them. I'm bored in French class - yet have so much to learn. I'm bored in Tech classes because it's so repetitious - it's a repeat of Colorado, which was repetitious! Cindy is doing a really good job, though I think she is alienating some people by being a bit bossy, intimidating, and condescending. I think underneath her tough exterior she's a really nice person, though. Barry, who is supposed to teach us stoves, is laid up in Jomé from a moto accident. So we are in limbo as far as stove training goes. Ugh! Also, tomorrow, 3 new people move into our house, which means 5 people sharing one tiny bathroom. It also means no privacy.

it's going to be really tough.

Friday June 28

Much food for thought today. ~~to~~ Mark gave an excellent lecture on agroforestry in Africa - traditional gardening and the implications of increased population; the implications of imported ideas & technologies. I find myself getting impatient with stage, and it worries me a bit, because it's so early in the game. Also, I wonder if I'm just complaining for the sake of complaining, and wouldn't be satisfied even with changes. I'm scared to go out on our own, yet bored to stay in stage. I complain about the relative lack of space, privacy, and free time (I admit it, I'm spoiled); and I complain about tech & French classes being too basic or repetitious. Yet I've almost no energy, and wonder if I could motivate myself to independent studies.

I guess a lot of this is to be expected. I know we're living under a lot of stress, not the least of which is the heat, and that a lot of my complaints are "valid". But I also know it's up to me to take advantage of a golden opportunity; as Mark said, we are receiving a free education. I'm feeling somewhat overwhelmed, as I often do, by trying to learn & absorb overwhelming quantities of stuff. In some way I wish it could be spoon-fed to us - it would be so easy in a way. Yet I know the best, and in the long run, the most satisfying, way to learn, is to find out for yourself. And that takes work. I guess I'm frustrated because I have less energy than I'm used to having. I'm also pretty out of my element (we all are, of course), and it sometimes takes a supreme effort of will to integrate a bit with the local life. I guess I feel when the time is right I'll begin to

participate more. For example, tonight, most of the stagiaires went into town for an impromptu

dance that Mark heard about today. I didn't go. I have lots of wonderful excuses: too tired; class early tomorrow, lots of homework, etc. But really, to go into town is too much work. It's exhausting emotionally, to always be on display, to struggle to understand what others are saying, to never know what people really think of you: are they laughing with you or at you?

Outside my window I see firelight across the field, and hear faint laughter, singing, and the sing-song of a harmonica. I should get dressed, go out there, and just see what's happening, I tell myself. But I won't. I'll lie here, writing, reading, and feel sorry for myself for missing out on a "cultural opportunity". Ah well. I've felt this before, I shouldn't be surprised. I guess you got to trust your gut feelings, and not get down on yourself for feeling "abnormal".

The fish people arrived today -
exhausting exhausted from 2 months
of boot camp (literally) in
Oklahoma. 5 of them seem real nice.

We had a short talk on
development issues after dinner.
Mark filled us in a bit on Togo
history & tidbits. He is a great
speaker, and his talks are
animated and really enjoyable.
I think it will be grace a
him that I retain my spark of
idealism & enthusiasm. We also
talked about the pros & cons of
the Peace Corps; its positive &
neg. impacts on societies,
cultures, economies. Some inspiring,
some sobering responses. The gist:
It's crucial to think about, and
be as aware as possible of, the
import impacts of our work.
If we feel we have had a net
positive impact, however slight
it is worth being happy about,
and if we feel devoid of
accomplishments, we can always
relish this wonderful opportunity
for each of us to learn,
enrich our own lives, and
hopefully enlighten others for years
to come from what we've learned.

as Mark said, Peace Corps is one of the only opportunities of ^{its} each kind to allow people from the

Western world to really learn about the 3rd world.

Mon. July 1 Saturday

we we walked into town for dinner. There are no restaurants, but rather, straw huts where you can buy p^{ât}e, or rice, and sauce. So we had our first taste of real Jogo food, and it was peppery! They use handfuls of cayenne pepper in their sauce.

The typical sauce is made from tomatoe, oil, onion, pepper, water. For 50 Francs you can get a small plate of rice & sauce. It's extra with meat. We left there with our mouths on fire, and headed for the local bistro, where a dance was just getting underway. The courtyard was crammed with children, dancing to African music. They were thrilled to have us Jocos join in, and laughed hilariously at our ~~so~~ attempts to copy their rhythmic movements. The children are really a delight. They stare

openly, with big, ~~is~~ round eyes, extend chubby, grimy fingers for a handshake, and call out greetings in musical, sing-song voices. As the dance began, all the children were gruffly thrown out. Then there was a 100 Franc cover charge, and handfuls of people trickled in to the courtyard. The music began to blare over 2 immense speakers, powered by a generator. The most popular music is an African ~~is~~ reggae / traditional sound from Nigeria - not bad. We left early, and on the way home were literally ambushed by a group of screaming, laughing children. They ran at us, en masse, from the side of the road, grabbing at our hands and having a wonderful time.

Sunday, Mike and I rode ~~our~~ bicycles to Blitta, a town about 20 km north, on the old national highway. This was built by the Germans in the early 19th century. It's a dirt road, but is entirely lined with teak trees, so it's shady most of the day.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable ride, creating our own breeze all the way! The scenery was varied

and lovely; along the way are several small village clusters, tucked in amongst the forest. We ate a mango by a stream. The road was in pretty good shape, and we cruised along merrily. The bikes are single speed, with sturdy, fat tires and are really fun to ride. In Blitta we drank cold beer at a Bistro, where we were joined by a high school teacher en route to

Soutououa. We considered taking the train back, but it was very hot. The ride was cool & breezy. I've decided it's best not to sleep during the heat of the day, because I wake up feeling so incredibly crummy, and it can take a good hour to really get going again.

3 existing 'stoves' volunteers, Steve, Barry, & Eric, arrived to work with us for two days. Monday afternoon we visited several stoves here in Pagala which were built by

"stage" members last winter. all were in various states of disrepair, which underscored 1)

the importance of follow-up, or "suivis", to emphasize maintenance; and 2) the importance of having the women make the stores themselves, rather than doing it for them as a "cadeau". This was the first ^{time} Mike or I had been inside a family compound, or "concession".

The homes are made of banco bricks. This is some combination of local soil, straw, etc. It erodes quickly in the rain. Most families have overhanging "pails", or straw roofs, which need to be replaced about every 3 years.

The more well-to-do families have ~~tin~~ corrugated tin roofs.

The houses usually ~~are~~ ^{cluster} around a central courtyard, pounded hard by years of feet. Ideally there is at least one tree in the courtyard - often it is a fruit tree. The houses are separated into rooms, with dirt floors.

Some have doors; these are where the family sleeps.

Other rooms have open doorways and windows. These are

used for cooking and ~~food~~ storage. Usually each wife has her own kitchen space. The family cooks outdoors during hot weather, and indoors during rain or dry weather.

The Fozolese family is an extended family, and may include aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, brothers and sisters. Usually the daughters move away to live with their husbands' family, though this may be reversed. Polygamy is the rule here, and only among the very modern, or the educated, is monogamy ~~the~~ common. Two wives is considered necessary - a man with only one wife is to be pitied. Two wives seems to be most common. I'm told that the women don't like this, but tolerate it because they don't have much choice. Jealousy & rivalry among wives is common, and poisonings, or attempts, are surprisingly common. Paths between the ~~camp~~ concessions are narrow, and often not well-defined. To an insider it's totally unclear where one person's family's "holdings" begin, and another's end.

Scattered between concessions are fruit trees, patches of grass & weeds, grain storage bins, or

"grainiers", outside shower stalls, and very occasionally, an "outhouse". The grain storage bins are shaped like bees' nests, wide at the top and narrow at the bottom, suspended somehow by poles so they don't touch the ground, and covered by a straw roof. They are made from a clay/sand mix that dries nearly as hard as concrete. This mix is usually ideal for making stoves.

The local showers are simply a cleared space enclosed by palm mats. Occasionally they may have a concrete base.

Outhouses are a rarity. The ones that do exist, exist because Peace Corps built them at the homes where volunteers stayed during training.

Tuesday July 2

This afternoon we built our first Togo model "foyer amélioré". For the mix we used an old termite hill. This one had just the right amount of clay & sand, so all we had to add was some small bits of dry straw. These add tensile

strength, and help hold the stove together. We mixed with our feet, and with "houes", or the local tool-

of-all-trades, a sort of combination hoe & shovel. The stove turned out great, and now it's just a matter of waiting for it to dry so we can use it.

In the morning we also planted some trees. A mandarin in the garden required an enormous hole dug, then refilled with good soil & manure. We also planted some leucaena seeds.

Leucaena appears to be one of the more promising for reforestation in the tropics. It grows quickly, does well in poor soil, can withstand drought, fixes nitrogen, the leaves make good fodder, it makes decent lumber, and can be trimmed for firewood.

So far (tho' I shouldn't speak too soon) there are relatively fewer insects here than on your average all-American camping trip. Blessedly, the mosquitoes have not yet invaded, though we're getting menily munched up on by small gnats, or

no-see-ums. There are large, beautifully colored lizards, enormous toads (or crapauds),

cute, miniature crickets, spiders flat as a pancake (non-poisonous), an occasional small scorpion (non-fatal, but painful), well-hidden snakes of various sorts & sizes and now the termites are hatching. The newly-hatched hordes sport 4 oversized wings and flutter crazily in clusters of hundreds. Their wingbeats are audible as a loud swishing.

The Togolese (Africans in general) often eat them. They remove the wings and fry them. I'm told they're quite tasty. Termites are the scourge of the building trade here: they devastate lumber in no time flat. This morning I noticed a bucket half full of termites near the kitchen. Last night in town people saw dozens of villagers sitting by the road side with lamps & buckets of water, catching termites.

The food here at stage has been consistently wonderful. The staff of Togolese, however, don't much like American food. So