

Thurs. 13 February 1986

Dad's 50th birthday today - oh my. So young, yet growing old. It's very hard to think of someday losing your parents - yet that's a long way off, Insh'allah.

Today finds us working on our new banco garden wall! It's really looking good, and it feels wonderful to watch it growing.

We've been planning it for weeks, and struggling to get it started. Strangely enough, promising to pay people does not seem to be a strong enough incentive to get ~~people~~^{them} to work. So finally we just started doing it ourselves! So far, so good.

Last Friday we attended the belated Affaires Sociales annual meeting in Papaong. Fairly boring, but I learned a lot about the way the A.S. works. We gave our stoves project "annual report" which was well received and won us many promises of support. Very encouraging!

Work has been going well lately, and we've been busy. My bouts of depression have subsided, thank god, though they occasionally threaten. Being married adds a number of variables to the "standard" single P.C. experience. Some are improvements, others the opposite. In the 'ensemble, it probably comes out about even. I've been content lately, however, and feel our marriage recovering to its old vigor, slowly, slowly.

Friday night we held a belated birthday dinner for Steve (Feb. 3) and Dave (Feb 5). Mr.

Atonkou brought his 2 darling kids, and we munched spaghetti, salad, and chocolate cake. ^{our "standard" w-dog} Atonkou's wife is still in Amlané at her parents' house, recovering from her "nervous breakdown". It's been real tough on him, as he's had to be both mom & dad & work full time.

Sat. we attended lunch at the Dir. of Radio Kara's to celebrate the closing of the funeral for his father. In the morning we'd climbed the mt. with Dave & Steve, and Laura, ever punctual, showed up (only 16 hours late!). just as we returned.

At least 100 people were served at the funeral lunch, incl. Gary, Renée, and their daughter Katherine,

a Canadian ^{family} ~~couple~~ living in Dapaong. We ate at school desks beneath enormous, spreading mango trees, nearly 100 years old. Educated guesses put the deceased's age at his death at over 100 years. He planted the mangoes as a young man.

We feasted on a succession of courses, from brussel sprout salad to rice, spaghetti, cow-cow, macaroni, pintard, mutton, etc, accompanied by an exhaustive variety of liquids, from soft to hard. Lawrence Welk-style music blared soothingly nearby!

Sunday, reserved for starting the garden wall, saw only the merest of starts: day's end found ~~the~~ ^{a token} "foundation" in place, ie a squiggly line of cement bricks outlining the garden-to-be.

Monday Mike went to ~~the~~ Nanergon, where he held a highly successful formation for over 20 energetic women, which included the building of a 5-pot boisson stove in 1 1/2 hours, an unheard of speed! The woman is thrilled

with the stove and say it uses
2/3 as much wood (2 piles vs. 3)!!

I gave a formation in
Sandjoari Monday, with M. Ativo,
the A.S. agent, and several
women. We built a boisson
stove, then a double pate & sauce
stove in a neighbor's case. Ativo
did most of the demonstrating,
and seems to understand the
technique.

Tuesday I spent in Dapaong,
accomplishing lots of misc. stuff,
incl. typing up our 4-page
annual report. I was thrilled
to learn that 2 of the office
workers at A.S. have each built
a stove at friends' houses!
Mike stayed home & worked on
the wall foundation. Saw a
Tuareg on a camel in Dapaong,
going around begging. Quite
exotic-looking. Camels are most
strange & fascinating creatures!

So now to Wednesday, on
which we voyaged to far-away
Cinkassé to give a formation at
the nutritional center. The agent
is nice, but a bit of a slouch.
~~He~~ Rather than invite the
gouvernement responsables as we'd

asked, he roped an entire group of 40 women into attending. This was ensured by not giving them their food ration until after the formation. We were not happy to learn of this later. But despite this, the day was a success. Mike gave an inspiring talk, then I demonstrated the building of one stove. Next, a few of the women built a second stove on their own while the others watched & gave advice.

Later, the agent bought us drinks & lunch! On the way home we visited Mike's stoves & the A.A. agent in Nanergon, then Cambé in Naki-Ouest, then the Barrage, where we found few vegies & no eggs, then Papaong, where we ran a few errands, and at last straggled wearily home. I got up this morning at 8:00!

22 February Sat.

The biggest event of the past week is the progress on our long-awaited garden wall & shower! Four mornings in a row we stacked

mud bricks & mortar, row after row until - presto - we had 'a garden wall! Mike spent hours sawing warped wood & made a beautiful gate. The cement crepissage is on the shower walls, and once the floor is done, we 'can't wait to tear down the old tin monstrosity!

Mike's been busy with stoves in Nanergou, while I've done a few more in Tandyoaré, & started work in Timbou. Work in general is going quite well.

Home is shaping up into a comfortable place, though we still have problems with privacy & people hanging around too much.

Today, Feb. 24, we leave for Lomé. Looking forward to it!

Tuesday March 4

Taxis to Kara are getting harder to find in Mango, so we decided to drive our motos down. This is against P.C. policy, and is also 140 kms., a very long drive. So

I was doubly apprehensive. But it turned out to be a lovely, if chilly, early morning drive, and we arrived safe & sound. Got a taxi straight to Loué, though we made enemies with the apprentice right off, which made the 7-hour ride tense as well as physically uncomfortable!

Had a very nice stay in Loué. Accomplished a lot, didn't spend a fortune, and didn't get too burned out. Got some per diem, and lots of reimbursements, so we enjoyed splurging on good food. It's kind of fun having your biggest decision of the day be whether to eat pizza at the Cabanon, or shrimp sauté at the abri! Worked on the Qiot newsletter for the first time, which was fun. I wrote several articles, none spectacular, but I'm excited to see them "in print". Loué was hot & humid, but tolerable, and all in all it was nice to get away from the north for a few days.

Now we're in Adjingié, just north of Lotouboua, where the Coops/Stores Stage is being held. We'll spend the week here doing stove & moto sessions. It's fun to meet everyone, but I'm not thrilled about being back in the "stage