

beginning to wonder if being a woman doesn't make it easier for me in some way?

I got a wonderful, long letter from Martha. She'd sent it over with Dave, who had misplaced it, and so I got it 2 months late. It sure did wonders to lift my spirits. It seems she's going through some very similar things.

Mimi did one of her blitz tournaments this week - blink & she's gone. Barbara Junge came up with her & spent one night with us. She's a wonderful person. Her bush baby died a while ago.

Tues. 25 March

The big news is that I finally watched a baby get born! (See insert). A fascinating experience. Adia's brother's wife had her baby - a big, healthy boy, the same night. There were 3 babies born in a row - one after the other.

Sunday, Andy showed up &



surprised us. The family was thrilled to see him. Monday he came to a stove formation in

Bogor with all the responsables. There I learned that yet another responsible's baby had died several days earlier - it was so sad!

We often get asked for medical advice. Unfortunately, I've come to realize that people simply can't get medical advice that's very reliable. For example, mom's leg: Anna suggested a calcium deficiency causing severe muscle cramps.

The local "nurse" suggested "water on the knee", ~~was~~ requiring an operation! Now we have a little boy with irritated eyes. We think it's an allergy, but who knows? The local nurse said it was a "stomach" problem, and prescribed an expensive product - which didn't work.

So I can't blame people for not wanting to go to the dispensaire. Medicine here is very drug oriented. Doctors never explain anything to their patients, such as what they have wrong, and how to



cure it. Instead, they prescribe some expensive medicine, often ineffective. Then, if someone

has a serious illness, requiring hospital care or an operation

a) they probably can't afford it; and b) ~~it often doesn't~~ ~~save~~ they often die anyway.

People die every day - but if you ask why, no one knows what they died of.

It's been hot the last few days. It had cooled off a bit after the last rain, but now it's hotter & humid, and feels as if it will rain soon.

Today we have had several big wind storms, portending rain, but bringing only dust.

Built a 7-pot bioisson stove in Bombonaka this morning - a lot of fun.

Mike is working like mad on his cistern project. (Which means this place is a mess - shit & tools everywhere!)

Billions of small, black flies have recently appeared. They're sluggish & obnoxious.



Friday April 7 is now...

Tues April 8

I'm poolside in Kara, though this time it's dark & very quiet here. Left my bike in Barkossi & caught a ride with 2 Togolese in a government car. Arrived early afternoon in sweltering humidity, drank 2 too many sessions until my eyes grew sleepy. Then <sup>managed to</sup> ~~order~~ ice cream at the SOS. ~~and~~ Now I'm at the pool w/ Tamara, where I just had a wonderful shower & feel clean & fresh. As usual, it's nice to get away, though I always hope to relax & catch up on reading & writing, but instead run into too many people. Peace & quiet is hard to find here.

Last week 3 of the new stove volunteers came up to spend a week "au nord": Susan, Soname, & Jayne. Unfortunately Mike & I both had formations fall through, so they didn't get to see much of our work! But we ate well, baked some goodies, and they



got some much-needed rest time.

We had <sup>yet</sup> another storm, this one bringing ferocious wind, torrential, deafening rain, & spectacular lightening. Our roof not only leaked in many places, but also threatened to depart as well.

Have been trying to organize a formation in Limbon for several weeks now. With one thing & another, I rescheduled it several times. Finally I decided to give it one more chance or give up. ~~to~~ Each visit has been an experience in frustration, and I find it incredibly difficult to get my points across. Sure enough on the third try, there still wasn't enough day, and we weren't able to finish the stove (5 clay jars). Several times I was tempted to give up & leave, effectively jeopardizing any future work in that area. But when I gave in to the experience, and began to feel that this family was a sort of test, I decided to see it through &