

Tense, as if waiting for a storm. Perhaps because high winds in the rainy season

signal the arrival of those storms that freaked me out last year!

Saturday Jan. 24 1987

Last night attended a U.I.P. funeral for the father of a bigwig at the Togolese Union - COTT.

(There is only one workers' union here). Martine is up from Somé, so we took her & Assibi. Neither of them are dancers, so we mostly sat and watched. It was nice not to feel forced to dance. A live band played the usual "high life" tunes, while hundreds of people, most already sloshed, danced abandonedly. We sat under a large tarp on rows of metal chairs, and people watched. The variety of clothes was fascinating, and although it can be embarrassing to watch drunk people stumble & fawn all over each other, it was fun to watch people having so much fun. Gins ear to ear. Moms with 7 & 8 kids out there cutting loose & shaking those hips!

Adias's brother's wife is here with her kids for a few weeks. She's the one who came last spring to have her baby here. He's huge now, but when I asked how old he was, she had no idea. It's finally occurred to me that many people who've never been to school have never learned the ~~idea~~ concept of time broken into months, years, & decades. Day are simply day, and you don't attempt to count more than a few at a time. Events are recounted in terms of other events: it happened during the cotton sale, or the millet harvest.

Today is yet another nat'l. holiday. Sarakawa day, which celebrates the pres. "miraculous" escape from a plane "crash" several years ago. The plane itself is on display at a monument in the village of Sarakawa, near Kara. It has been crunched up considerably for effect. It's also "economic liberation day" I think, whatever that means.

Sun. Jan. 25

As of tomorrow, I can start saying we have 7 months left.

We may not actually be able to leave Aug. 26, but it's a good target.

Hope to go up ^{to} Lokpanno today, visiting the Lutheran missionary family, and ask her to pierce my other ear! It's been over 10 years with only one ear pierced.

Weather: a lovely, cool night after starting out uncomfortably hot. Woke up with a coating of dust on my face. It's so dry I keep vaseline inside my nose to keep it from cracking & bleeding! Lotion soaks in as fast as you put it on. No wind this morning, just a light, cool breeze. The heavy winds are especially frustrating because they drive us into the house where it's equally hot but stifling as well. But the wind picks up fine dust and swirls it everywhere, into eyes, throat, & food. "Dust devils" are common, and send dirt, papers, quords, leaves flying everywhere. The wind seems to

really kick up from about noon
till 4 or 5. "Cool" today, about 95°!

Mon. Jan. 26

Got my other ear pierced
yesterday, by Mr. DeMoss, up
in Lokpanno. For most
people, having both ears pierced
is no big deal; but for me,
having had but one pierced
for over 10 years, it's a major
change!

Had a very nice visit
with the DeMoss'. They're very
nice people: Ma & Pa & 2
teenage kids (~~one~~^{a third's} at school in
the states); and another family,
a young couple and their 3
little girls. Although they're
missionaries, and their goal
here is evangelism, they have
never discussed it with us or
tried to "evangelize". If they
did, I suppose we'd start
avoiding them, which would be
a shame.

I think my intestinal
parasite level has risen
lately! Am suffering that
bloated, uncomfortable feeling

I had in Ghana. Had minor diarrhoea for a few days, but that's gone. I feel fine, except for the bloated feeling. A small meal leaves me feeling as if I've just piggied out.

My calisthenics regime seems to have bit the dust, now that it's hot in the house in the evenings. Never was one for morning calisthenics, if I could do them outside, but I'm sure I'd quickly have an audience.



Wed. 28 Jan. '87

An altogether dumpy day. Planned to write letters & work at my desk. But my first letter, to Greg & March, got so depressing I lost momentum. Then I got sleepy. Well anyway, another sluggish day. The harmattan haze is back, and it's cooler. More breeze and less heavy wind.

One week ago, as Hugo was driving his relatives to Iomé to catch their plane to Belgium, they were driven off the road by a big truck. Their truck rolled, and though Hugo & his ~~ex~~ uncle weren't hurt, his aunt's back was broken! They went through 2 days of bureaucratic agony trying to get her flown out. They think she'll be fine. Drivers here are so incredibly incompetent!

Went into work at Affaires Sociales Monday afternoon, and found out that Mme. Sankaredja's husband had died Sunday! It was unexpected, and a real

shock to everyone. She was his only wife and they had 6 kids. He was still "young". I didn't know him, but it seems ~~his~~ he was very well liked - ran the govt. school supplies store, born & raised in Dapaong, well-liked. Monday afternoon, a section of the main route through town was blocked off, as hundreds of people poured in to visit Mme. They were pretty wealthy, and their concession is a small ~~tree~~ plant-filled courtyard surrounded by a maze of cement buildings & terraces. On Monday it was so crowded we couldn't get in. On Tuesday I went back with Mme. Honkou. The place was still a bustle of people, cooking, working, sitting, and a steady stream in & out. Mme. will probably not be left alone for several months. It seems to me a good system. In our culture, too many widows are abandoned after the funeral, to grieve alone. The pain goes away only with

time, and all those visitors could just help fill up the hours & help the time go by.

Mme. looked tired & sad, and she wore no jewelry, where usually she does. Lines of people waited to greet her & offer their condolences, and I think she probably appreciated the small talk & activity and demands on her. Of course half the country is related to her or her husband, so all of them came to help out. Can you imagine the food to be cooked? Small fortunes are spent after a death.

The same day, Sunday, one of Mme. Honkou's "moms" died. She's a daughter of the chief of Bombouaka, and ^{of} his third wife ^{who} died. So ^{Mme. H.} ~~she~~ was called away there, and our work for the day postponed.

Our ^(Peace Corps) priority is our project - to accomplish something in 2 years. But our Togolese counterparts will be here forever in the same old job, and are more interested,

like many American workers,
in holidays, day off, and
life away from the office.

These 2 disparate outlooks
make it decidedly difficult
to get things done!

Did a followup Tues.
morning of last week's JARC
training. Found that one of
the women spectators had
rushed right home & built
herself a p^ote & sauce stove!
Went to see it with Mme H.
Looks great!

In the afternoon made
a tournée with Thérèse (Mme. H.)
to visit some of the ONFT
presidents. One of them has an
18-pot boisson factory! She'd been
present at the June mtg. of
the ONFT, and had gone
home and "améliorated" her
stove based on a drawing I'd
showed them! It's not as
efficient as it ~~can~~ could be, but
~~it~~ saves lots of wood. It was
such a treat to discover,
6 months later, that I had
been the source of her inspiration!
going "visiting" with Thérèse

was wonderful. No translating to do. She speaks Moba, and is a born saleswoman. She

also knows everyone, is a great talker, and seems to instantly put people at their ease. I felt comfortable instead of an intruder trying to "sell" stores door-to-door with the help of some male translator. Met lots of interesting people, incl. the ex-chief of Dapaong, a tiny, bright-eyed, elf-like old man, who speaks French. ~~and seems~~

Tues. Feb. 3

A week to catch up on... I've been busy, which is nice, and so has Mike. He & Rob' Deutsch received funding to build a 21,000 liter experimental cistern at the Bogou CEG.

Saturday we drove out to Pogno to a fete at Karen & Mike Barnes', a Lutheran missionary couple. They invited the entire "extended" Peace Corps crowd for sloppy joe's and poker and

movies on their VCR! Watched 3 films, incl. an old Jack Lemmon, "good Neighbor Sam", which was funny. Ate lots of popcorn! They have a very nice house, simple by villa standards, but opulent by Togolese villager's standards I'm sure!

Weather has been pleasant; cooler, often overcast, with short hot spells each afternoon, and delightful cool nights. The winds have mellowed to breezes.

Thurs. Feb. 5

A busy week, of many up & downs. Have gone to Capang every day. Monday got lots done "at the office". Tuesday had a disappointing mtg. with the JARC agents. Wednesday went to Nadjindi & organized a stove building for next week. Today spent the morning cleaning for the proprietair's arrival tomorrow.

Weather still same as above. Dry.

Thurs. Feb. 12

Another busy week, after a very lazy weekend. Gary & Renée came for dinner Friday night, leaving their daughter in Opaong. The proprietaire's wife showed up - alone & afoot. He^r was unable to make it due to a ministerial visit! We'd hoped to attend a funeral ceremony Fri. night, at which the dead person "comes back" for a final visit. But it didn't come off, so we all had a good night's sleep, and a nice lazy breakfast.

Then we proceeded to spend Sat. & Sun. doing almost nothing - just read & lounged around! It was utterly delightful. Just finished John Irving's The Cider House Rules, an excellent novel. Has everything a good novel should have: romance, a suspenseful plot, lovable characters, and some good solid issues, in this case, abortion & unwanted children.

Monday in Opaong setting up stove formations. Tuesday built a large, 8-pot boisson stove - our first in Opaong. It was a lot of

work, but turned out very well. A long day, though, and I felt sick driving home. Then at the house I got horrendous stomach cramps, that lasted several hours and kept getting worse. I was worried I might have appendicitis, and Mike eventually went to get the local nurse. He arrived as I was recovering from the worst of it, and I felt kind of silly having called him. But he assured me that amoebas can be that bad, and that's probably what it was. Left me drained for the next day.

Wednesday went with a ARC agent for his first formation. It went fairly well, though it's like pulling teeth to get these agents to do any work.

This morning, Thursday, we had a meeting scheduled for 8 am. One agent was on time, and the other 4 were 1 to 2 hours late! Very frustrating. But we got another Boisson stove built - this one with 6 metal marmites. It only took 1 1/2 hours, as opposed to 4 hours for Tuesday's stove.

Finally saw the Prefet with
Therise, to give him a Foyer
Amélioré + shirt, etc., and
tell him about the stoves
program. The visit went quite
well.

A toasty one today, though
you really only notice because of
the sweat rivulets that tickle.
I'm sitting on the porch in the
fading evening heat, with Pangma
playing hide & seek behind my
chair. Meanwhile a fist fight
is erupting next door. Just another
day, aggravated I suppose by
boisson at the market.

Sunday Feb. 15 1987

The humidity level is
rising, which makes it feel
hotter. I'm reminded that
last year's first rain was on
March 5 - just 2 to 3 weeks
away.

Yesterday was the annual
Dapaong walking tour. There
were 21 bars on this year's
list, but my heart just
wasn't in it. I put in an

appearance at 3 of the bars late in the day. Everyone was already pretty sloshed, and being sober in such a crowd is rarely much fun. Sometimes I feel us white folks stick out enough as it is, without making fools of ourselves en masse...

Spent the night with Gary & Renée, and had a pleasant, lazy Sunday breakfast. They're like a touch of home, as we have a lot in common, incl. age & couple-dom, and enjoy hanging out gabbing. Her baby is due in about 3 months!

They spent yesterday in Gondoza at a ceremony for a group of people coming out of the "Cowan", a voluntary mystical indoctrination that usually lasts 3 months. The ceremonies lasted all day, and they said it was fascinating. The initiates appeared to be heavily drugged, and shuffled around dozedly, led by their individual "caretakers" or guardians. They danced & chanted. Part of the ceremony

involved being buried in a pile of leaves. They were mostly naked, but for shell belts & strips of loincloth. Men & women participated. During the 3 month ritual they are cloistered, eat special food, learn a new language, and are given a new name. It is forbidden to ever again answer to their old one.

Another busy week looms, and a trip to Lomé the following. Adia is back from his one week in Kara. It was utterly delightful having the place to ourselves, though I suppose it's not so bad having him back. Can't decide if we want to recommend another volunteer move into this house. So many pros & cons.

Monday Feb. 16

Early to Capaong to see JARCF (Jeunesse Agricole Rurale Chrétienne Féminine).
Croyante

Arranged a date in April to train them. They may well be the best agents I'll ever train, and I sure hope it goes well.

Then out to Totogou, a long, pleasant drive west of Dapaong.

Went to oversee a practice formation with one of the JARC agents. Built 4 small stoves at the mission, with about 28 women. It went OK, though the mix was too sandy & slumped, so the finished stoves were too low. The 2 priests at the mission then invited me to lunch, a yummy, multi-course affair in plain & simple surroundings. They were a funny pair, one a crotchety old Frenchman with bad eyesight & long, wispy white hair & beard. The other a soft-spoken, almost timid man, about 55, plump and not so tall, very affable. The two of them were like the pair of spinsters who cluck & peck & squawk at each other, but couldn't quite live apart either.

Took some photos of Yendu-boime today, all scrubbed &

Combed & dressed in a matching t-shirt & shorts. He posed like a pro, smiled &

giggled, & thoroughly enjoyed himself. Also took a photo of him in my moto helmet.

We brought our kittie home today. He is very cute, very terrified of his new surroundings, and very mean! He spits, hisses & lashes out with his claws like a pro. He's closed in the magasin with some milk, a litter box and a bed box.

He's now meowing pitifully, and we've turned on loud music to drown him out. Poor guy!

Friday Feb. 20

Our kitty is taking over & making himself right at home. He's now sitting on my desk, walking back & forth across my journal, and chasing my pen.

He sleeps all day and keeps us awake all night running around like a madman.

He makes a lot of noise - a

repertoire of meows.

A whole day to myself today! Have been gone from

dawn to dusk every day this week. Had a good formation in Naki-Est on Wednesday, with 3 JARC agents and one JARCF animatrice. Built stoves at the JARC center, then one next to the market.

There were 20 or so participants - half men, and afterward we sat drinking boisson in the shade of a tree and they sang JARC songs in Moba!

I dearly love cement floors, and will sure miss them back in linoleum land. Just spilled about half a liter of kerosene behind the frigo and I don't even have to clean it up!

It's getting hot now, and very humid. Dust clouds are giving way to vaporous ones - wispy hints of rain in the sky.

Got a most interesting note from my dear lifelong friend Jan Atteberry: she's living in Paris with a man named Larry! Who's Larry?

And what on earth are they doing in Paris?! I'm excitedly awaiting more details!

I've been noticing bicycles a lot lately. The ones sold here are cheaply made in China and must be uncomfortable to ride, at best. Yet it's not unusual to see a rickety bicycle with 2 full cases of beer, or a passenger, or a full-grown screaming pig, perched precariously on the back. People, old & young, ride long distances in the hot sun, on trails & roads, through sand & ruts & gravel, on cycles with bent rims, bald, wobbly tires, non-existent brakes, tilted seats, and often no pedals!

Can't decide whether to call our kitty Homer or Phinney or...?

Thurs. Feb. 26 Pagala Gare

Been here since Sunday, working on a stove manual with Bany & Eric. It's going well, though it's a much larger task

than we'd realized. We've been writing 8 hours a day since Tuesday.

Pogala has changed a lot in a year & a half, and I must say all for the better. The buildings are spacious & attractive, & the food is excellent.

It's hot & muggy, but rains every day about 3:00. Then the air grows cool & fresh & sleeping is very pleasant.

Just read "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco. Much of the philosophy was over my head, but the story was delightful. I don't understand the significance of the title though. It's a 14th century, medieval murder mystery.

Sunday March 1

Spent last night at Kathy's in Baga, 30 k's north of Kara. She's in John's old place, a 3-room place perched near a cliff, with a view of a wide, empty valley. She's got it fixed up really nice. We sat in the cool morning and

drank too much coffee, so I was buzzed & headachy on the 2-hour drive up to Mango.

Also left too late so did the drive in the mid-day sun. Not too smart, as sun stroke & dehydration come easy. It's very dry, with a steady hot dry wind. Arrived around ~~a~~ noon in Mango to find most of the PC Swanes crowd recovering from a night of Jacob & revelry.

Bought some watermelons with Mike and hit the road for Bogon.

Monday March 2

Supposed to do a JACC formation in Joaga. Got completely lost & very frustrated. Had to stop at a school & interrupt class to ask a teacher, and meanwhile got surrounded by a crowd of gaping schoolkids. A creepy feeling to have a crowd of kids closing relentlessly in on you from all sides.

Threw on my helmet & spun out of there quick as I could, before they could get to