

# St Vincent Update



Labour Day Greetings from the Caribbean!!

2 Sept., 1984

Well, we don't actually get a labor day holiday like you folks up north but the Peace Corps Office will be closed tomorrow so that those U.S. Government employees (all Vincentians, by the way) won't have to labour on a U.S. National Holiday. Never mind that we PCV's (all U.S. Nationals, by the way) have to 'slave' away in the tropical sun... Ah well, just one of the 'hardships' of being a PCV.

When we last left you, Elections were imminent, the arrival of the new Physio was imminent and the renovations on the physiotherapy department were almost complete. Its hard to believe that two months have passed since I last wrote to you all (and some in-between). Anyway, we did finish the renovations on the physio dept before the new PCV arrived. In some ways it was a shame because she will never be able to appreciate the change. On the other hand it wasn't the shock for her like it was for Debbie (although its still hard to believe that its actually a part of a hospital). So we spent an entire weekend painting and putting the finishing touches on the newly renovated department. It looks great (if I do say so myself) and will be a somewhat lasting legacy to our Peace Corps years here (until its torn down, which may be soon...).

Irene Tarach from Western Springs Illinois arrived soon after the paint had dried as the next Peace Corps 'Physiotherapist' for Kingstown General Hospital. Its amazing that she arrived since Peace Corps has been sending most Caribbean PCV's to Grenada and has had trouble recruiting in the states since the Economic recovery has been so strong (who wants to volunteer when someone will pay you to work?). Despite those hurdles, Peace Corps managed to get someone to replace Debbie- Irene was that someone. It has appeared to work out quite well. But I'll let Deb fill you in on that chapter of the 'Update'.

A new chapter began in the political life of St. Vincent on July 25th. A completely new Government was voted into power after 18 years of one-party dominance. Actually, its not so radical as it sounds. Its just like one President being voted out after many years of 'rule' (except in St. Vincent there is no limit to the length). The New Democratic Party (NDP) defeated the Labour Party by winning 9 of 13 parliamentary seats. Thats a pretty radical change since Labour had 11 of 13 seats before the election. The whole thing looks even more radical when you think of how unwilling West Indians are to change. Perhaps, the 'tide is changing' and the hundreds of thousands of unemployed West Indian youth are now beginning to involve themselves politically in changing the years of oppression (Democratically, Thank God!!) The Caribbean has many, many problems that want solving. Participation was one of the biggest problems in St. Vincent. It will be interesting to see what will happen over the next ten years. The change has seemingly begun...

Some of the fallout from that political 'bomb' will affect me directly. The new Prime Minister is strongly oriented toward free enterprise and Agricultural Development as a mean to Economic growth. I agree. Whats more is that I feel Market Information is the key to Ag. Development. Fortunately, both the change of Government and a U.S.A.I.D. programme stress Market Info. So,

it looks like the Marketing Intelligence Unit (my 'baby') will receive the money, personnel and publicity it hasn't gotten through the last Government. AND, I heard from MY replacement (Karl Ries from Wheaton, Md.). I've already written to him and received a letter back. He sounds like he's got a sense of humour which he will NEED. Especially with all the changes going on. I warned him about the chaos at the Marketing Corporation (where I work) and the insanity of Peace Corps living. But, he's decided to come anyway.

We have kept busy with some weekend intra-island travel. We took Irene over to Bequia to meet the Handicapped Programme participants and volunteers. We also attended a committee meeting and made the decision to get a full-time Peace Corps Volunteer in Special Education to help run the programme and give it some continuity. Just a year ago it was a pilot project, and now, with help from so many sources, its becoming a reality (a permanent one) for the people of Bequia. The only problem was, with Bequia so beautiful this time of year, and the beaches so nice, its hard to convince Irene that being a Peace Corps Volunteer is hard work. We also went to Georgetown (20 some-odd miles north) and stayed at an abandoned bar now 'rented' by a Peace Corps Volunteer. HE hasn't done much to it. No running water. No indoor plumbing. But it has an awesome view of the Atlantic. We went up with another PCV and used the motorcycle of the PCV who 'rented' the place while he was on holiday in Guadalupe. We watched a magnificent full moon rise up over a cloud rimmed horizon and drank beers and talked until it was well up. Next day we hiked up to a waterfall with a pool (like a Tarzan movie) and motored back into town that evening. The next weekend we went with Paul and Margret Wijnhoven ( a Belgian couple) up to an area called Vermont valley. Its a sheer-sided valley with many streams and rivers coursing through. Again we stopped and swam in a waterfall/pool and picniced on the shore. The following weekend we went with the same couple up to another mountainous area called Montreal Gardens where a lot of nutmeg and citrus fruit is grown. We went about freely picking (perhaps, illegally??) the abundant fruit. And spent a few hours chatting beside a nice but algae filled pool (not used by us....). So the past few weekends have been busy. Mostly trying to see as much of this beautiful country as we can before our time here 'expires'.

Of primary importance to us now is getting ready to go to Europe. Yep, by the time you read this we will be holidaying in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France or England. After two years of carefully saving our East Caribbean pennies we are catching the worlds cheapest airline and renting the worlds cheapest rental, so we can spent four fast weeks trying to maximise our strong U.S. Dollars. We will of course fill you in on all the exciting details in our next (but, alas) LAST 'Update' which we should put to press around Nov. 3rd. But until then, God bless you all and keep you safe within His LOVE.

We're slowing even more on our personal letters but don't think we're forgotten you all. As Pete mentioned, we're keeping busy doing other things besides letter-writing. We are especially looking forward to the weather change we'll experience in Europe - St. Vincent is hot in August... good for almost nothing except snorkeling, sunburning and weight reduction through water loss... oh well.

Peace to all,

Deb & Pete