

12/9/83

I'm slipping and I've noticed that my journaling has fallen by the wayside. I do hope it doesn't stop totally. Though that appears to be the direction it's heading. Well, to update a bit.

My work phobia was circumvented by me mailing out the questionnaire. I figured that it would be less threatening to mail out the form, have the hotel managers fill it out, and then I'll follow up. No doubt I'll get a poor response rate and have to call most of them anyway, but at least I tried and at least they will know who I am when I call. It wasn't meeting the problem head on but at least it lessens my anxiety somewhat.

Deb's birthday has passed and it seems not so long ago that we were all gathered at Garfield for a celebratory dinner. One of the last big bashes at our old home. Seems so long ago and so ideal in comparison to the current situation. Even then our entry into the PC was anxiously approaching (oh how little we knew then!!). But beyond the memory was the nice reality of Deb's first birthday outside the U.S. I really tried to do it up big. I baked a chocolate cake (from scratch no less) and took Deb out for a very tasty (but expensive) dinner at the French restaurant. We had Keith's bike (as he was in Barbados) so the transport hassle was minimal. I bought her a Batik print wrap around skirt plus some needed kitchen glassware which was just waiting for a "special occasion" to be bought. Mom sent a very nice cotton dress for Deb and all in all we had a fairly festive birthday celebration.

Having Keith's bike was also a nice bonus last week. we immediately took it all the way up to Richmond Beach which is about the furthest point north on the leeward side which is accessible to vehicles. What beautiful country it is! Though I was a bit rusty with my motorcycle riding, we took it easy, stopping in Troumaca to visit with Dennis for an hour or so to rest our weary and sore bottoms.



By the time we finished the ride (some 5 hours!) we were very happy to stop. The bike gave us a needed change in our routine. A little excitement and a change of pace. The PC policy of prohibiting bike ownership except for job related reasons is really a shame. Deb and I have been here 9 months and saw more of the island in one day, than we had in 9 months. I've also noticed that I must be becoming used to the level of level of poverty here in St V. The housing and living conditions that we saw, though substandard, were not as heart-wrenching as they seem to be to me when I was up that way last Jan. Likewise for a subsequent Jeep trip to Fancy with Oro last Thursday. I don't think it's a case of overload, but rather finally beginning to fit all the pieces together into a sensible whole. I'm seeing things through a Vincentian's eyes. It's like I've known it all my life. That doesn't mean that I no longer care or that I don't think that things should be improved. Rather it's an adaptation or acculturation to the lifestyle. For example, if I found bugs in flour in the states, I probably throw out the flour. Here though, I'd sift out the bugs and throw them out. It's not that I've lowered my standards per se. I've just become more pragmatic when dealing with the realities here. Like my vision and my horror of all the mosquitoes that swarm about our house. Originally, I wanted to screen the place. The more practical method is to expose as little skin as possible while still remaining comfortable and use mosquito coils to control the rest. I do believe I'm getting used to living here. I certainly should be by now.



Job wise things have gone berserk. Earlier through the efforts of Van it looked as though I'd end up at the labour department. Well things have changed again and through a convoluted series of events I may end up in agriculture.

Way back in July, I spoke to Elizabeth (EC-31) about a possible position with agriculture coordinating marketing information. Such a position would call upon my skills and stats and econ plus give me a more hands on job collecting and disseminating marketing data. She had been asked by AG and Marketing Corp to start up such a project but since she only has a few months left, was reluctant to start it up. So she fielded it to me. I was ambivalent at the time and really unsure about such a change of direction. Fact is, this Manpower Development position who yield me greater professional benefits than say working in Agriculture. But, I said I would think about it. While in St Lucia I spoke to Cynthia from Barbados about the possibility of working on a marketing info project here just like she does in B-Dos. Well she talks to her boss and he writes to the Ministry of Agriculture and says he would be more than happy to send over an assistant to start up the project and assist Mr Helgren. Well, the minister had never even heard about me so we got on the phone to Elizabeth. The bottom line is that they do want me to start this thing up so I've been trying to talk to Mr Bonadie to figure out the particulars of the job. We'll have to see what happens but I think I'll take the position with a couple of "ifs". If I can finish what I'm doing here in Finance and if I can evaluate the project at the end of three months to see if I want to continue and if I can continue to freelance in training and manpower related activities. Nothing definite. Another promise looms on the horizon.

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