

30/4/84

Talk about constant changes, planning and ambiguity. Just when it seems we get a handle on the future, the rules change. Found out two things last week that kind of (or could) mash up all of our well-thought-out plans. First, P.C. is firm in its policy about travel during the last 3 months of service. That is, no vacation leave will be granted during the last 3 months. Which casts doubts that we will ever get to Europe this year. Plus it would cost us another 400 French Francs ~ 140 EC dollars to change our itinerary if an alternate date is available. Otherwise we 'eat' the 400 Francs and cancel the whole thing. But that's not all. Seems as though P.C. is having trouble filling its requests for the summer program. Looks as though Deb won't get a replacement this time around. Which brings up the possibility of extending - a very real possibility. How long? P.C. may concede a few months or may only offer a one-year option. The surprise is that we may do it. In fact we decided to extend if it's offered. Frankly, I can't quite believe it. After counting the days until COS for so long we now think of prolonging our 'agony' for up to 13 months longer. The one year option is preferable for practical reasons. First we could go to Europe as we planned Sept 13th - Oct 11th because our COS date would be Jan 15th 1986. Second, we would get a free 30-day holiday in the states and could spend that month over Christmas to be with our families.

Why extend? Gads I wish I knew how to answer that. About a month after we arrived, Deb and I were talking about why people extend and we figured that since they had lived through 20 months of PC life, another year would look like a 'cake walk'. I told Deb "Well, if I ever start talking about extending, shoot me!". Perhaps I should be shot. The biggest reason for extending is that somewhere over the last 4 months we moved from making good on a commitment, to being committed. We agreed with P.C. to remain 2 years and over the last 18 months have struggled and sweated to live up to that commitment as difficult as that has been. But, along the way we moved our commitment from P.C. to St Vincent or rather to the people we work with. Now that's a personal commitment rather than a contractual one. Frankly, saying goodbye to PC is a lot easier than saying goodbye to our friends here in St.V. Deb especially wants to avoid vacating her physio assignment with no one to fill her shoes. That takes the rationality out of why she was here. My job is more flexible. Whether I'm here or not will not affect it much since I plan to hand over the operation of this thing soon if we are going to leave in December.

Of course there are drawbacks. I guess I should have sold my truck, rather than leave it to depreciate with my brother, but that's a financial decision and I'd be hard-pressed to hang a price tag on alternatives. Second is in 'starting a family' which, of course, could wait a year. Mostly we just miss our family and friends who seem to be drifting away as time goes on. We miss the states too, but that's getting tougher to qualify. "First world" living is an option always ahead of us. So now, we wait and see what twists and turns will develop. Van is going to Antigua next week for a staff/COS/training meeting and will come back with more information about Deb's replacement and our options. As for our Europeans. I appealed the policy to P.C. Barbados and although I think they will throw it back to me, parroting "The Book" they might just let us go. We'll just have to see.

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