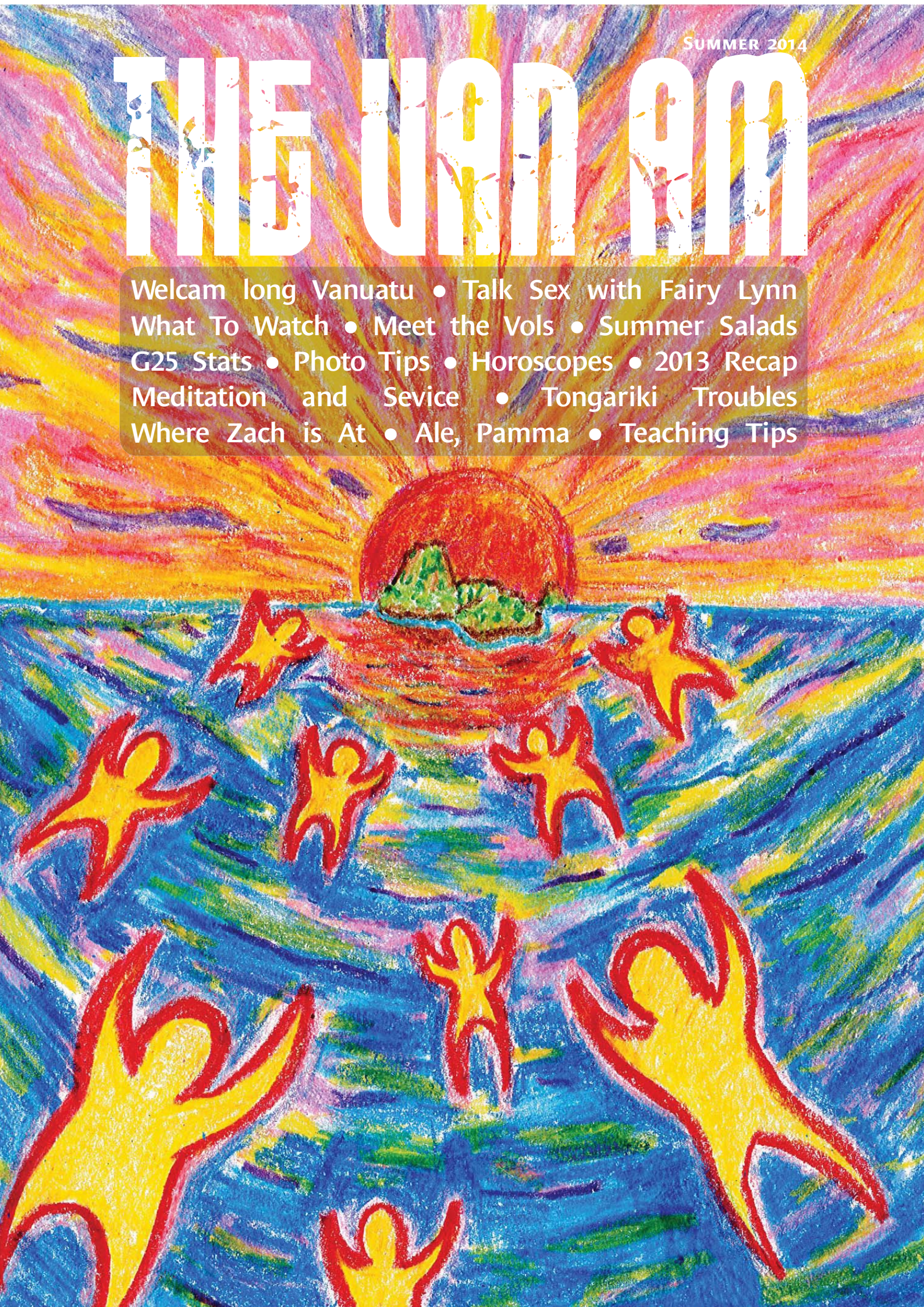


SUMMER 2014

THE VAN AM

Welcam long Vanuatu • Talk Sex with Fairy Lynn
What To Watch • Meet the Vols • Summer Salads
G25 Stats • Photo Tips • Horoscopes • 2013 Recap
Meditation and Sevice • Tongariki Troubles
Where Zach is At • Ale, Pamma • Teaching Tips



Letter from the Editor

NOBODY EVER RAVES ABOUT MIDDLES. Beginnings are filled with promise, endings with finality. The middle holds the struggle, the empty days, and the repetition. The middle is when quitting looks the most attractive.

The good news for G25 though, is that we're transitioning into the second half of the middle. The good part of the middle. Where we like to eat taro and drink kava. Where we comfortably speak Bislama and walk around barefoot. Where counting the number of days until we go home no longer seems like an exercise in self-abuse.

At the same time, G26, you're about to start a whirlwind adventure. This is the kind of beginning that comes once in a lifetime. A beginning that will shape your life for the next two years.

You will inevitably be surprised, touched, sad, happy, sad again, and most of all, you will make assumptions or observations about the new world you live in only to have them changed, and changed again.

The important thing is that you don't panic. Instead, read Denis's

enlightening piece on meditation. Try some exercise tips from Divya. Cook with Jen.

And then hear stories from Amanda as she shares her new life in the bush with her visiting parents. Follow the words of Sara as she reenergizes G25 while they transition into their second year. Read on about Sam's farewell to Paama, and about Zach as he readjusts to life in America.

Read them all and realize that beginnings, that these transitions, are a constant part of our lives and are never solely good or solely bad. And that every time you turn a page, every time you watch a new sunrise or start a new conversation, you have another chance to create a new beginning.

And before you know it, you'll be right in the middle, where G25 is standing now. You'll be eating lap lap because you want to (yup), you'll be wanting to go home at the same time that you want to stay here forever, and, best of all, all of your amazing stories will be pages filling the Van Am.



Jessica Geraci
Editor-In-Chief

HAILING FROM LONG ISLAND, JESSICA has a degree in journalism and interned at NPR in Washington, D.C. She is currently serving on Espritu Santo as an English volunteer.



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Trainees: Here's What You Missed in 2013



Paul Wari performs in Vila for 2013 Independence Day.

“Education”

APPEARING IN EARLY JULY, PAUL Wari’s reggae hit “Education” spread like a Dengue outbreak. On Efate and Espiritu Santo, it was the unofficial anthem of Independence Day, when the song could be heard unintentionally upwards of 10 times a day. Volunteers on outer islands reported that it took longer to reach their sites.

The song’s popularity took a nose dive in late July when stories spread that Wari had it wrong when singing “No one respect me / because no education / they call me criminal.” In fact, they call him a criminal because he was convicted of two murders. He is currently serving time in the Port Vila penitentiary.

The Independent confirmed the story in a front page attack piece on Paul Wari and his incarcerators, accusing them of offending the families of Wari’s murder victims by allowing the singer to record and perform his music freely.

Pamma Landslides

ON OCTOBER 23RD, HEAVY RAINFALL

during the month of October caused landslides throughout the hilly island of Paama. Gardens, kastom houses and water supplies were some of the things damaged. Lehili School, a French school in the south, was one of the areas most affected along with Asuas Village in the north. NDMO assessed the damage and delivered relief in the form of bottled water, rice, tin fish and breakfast crackers. Every household received some sort of relief based on NDMO’s assessment. AusAid also provided water tanks to some of the affected villages. The MP of Paama, Jonas James, accompanied Prime Minister Moana Carcasses on a short trip to Paama to see the damage and talk to the chiefs of the most affected areas about the relief plan. This trip was the Prime Minister’s first visit to Paama.

(CONTRIBUTED BY SAM HUNT)

Murders & Death Penalty

IN LATE JUNE AND EARLY JULY, THERE were several murders in the country that became widely publicized and newspapers used the murders to push

institution of the death penalty, which currently exists in Vanuatu. In an article titled “Justice minister opposes death penalty,” the Daily Post put the question to Toara Daniel, Minister of Justice, explaining that “following the recent spate of horrendous killings – one of a young mother at Etas who was 8 months pregnant and another young woman found floating in a river on Aneityum, and last weekend the murder of a man from Ambae at Ohien in Port Vila, the subject of how to stop such senseless killings reemerged including the death penalty.” A previous article noted that adoption of the death penalty may damage future aid opportunities as Vanuatu has ratified a number of UN conventions on human rights. The government’s position on the issue has remained unchanged.



Cocaine seized in August.

DRUG BUSTS

IN AUGUST, A JOINT OPERATION between US and Australian drug task forces and Vanuatu police seized 1,650 pounds of cocaine, worth about \$330m USD when they raided a yacht in the harbor at Port Vila. The cocaine reportedly belonged to Columbian drug runners who have begun to use South Pacific nations as a staging point for bringing narcotics into Australia, where black market growth still has potential.

In the same month, Vanuatu police arrested at least 63 people in the Southern Malekula village of Melip for cultivating and distributing marijuana.



**Hunter
Sizemore**
*VITEL IT,
Santo*

Beyond being illegal in Vanuatu, marijuana is heavily stigmatized in public life and is often the assumed cause for grievous accidents or anti-social behavior.



Vanuatu's top volleyballers.

Volleyball Champions

MILLER ELWIN AND HENRIETTE IATIKA became Vanuatu sensations in early July when they took 9th in the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships, winning \$11,000 in prize money. The two women continue to take donations at VanuatuVolleyball.org for their 2016 Rio Olympic bid.

Iririki Uproar

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, THE DAILY POST published a photo of a same-sex couple holding hands near a beach under the splash headline "Same Sex Marriage," explaining that a civil marriage ceremony had been performed for a lesbian couple at Iririki Island Resort, according to rumor and anonymous sources. At first, Minister for Internal Affairs Patrick Crowby, who passed away in late December and was mourned heavily, denied that the rumors were true, but he later issued a strong warning that resorts or ministers found facilitating same sex marriages would face a heavy penalty. This news was reported widely in the LGBT travel community, as homosexuality is legal in Vanuatu which, according to GayStarNews.com, makes it an attractive travel destination, though it warns there are no

anti-discrimination laws.



Valerie Martinez

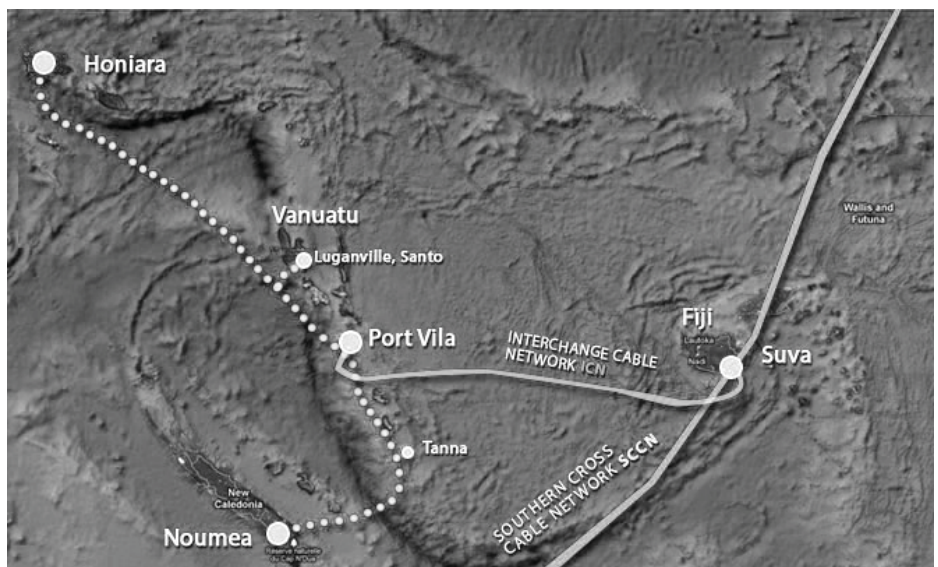
Miss Vanuatu

AFTER AN 8 YEAR ABSENCE, THE Vanuatu Tourism Office organized a new national (and possibly annual) beauty pageant held in June. Valerie Martinez, the winner of the pageant went on to represent Vanuatu in October in the Miss Asia Pacific World 2013 pageant held in Busan, South Korea. Martinez, who is of Spanish and ni-Vanuatu descent, addressed the objections raised by some at her crowning when she said in an interview "there were some negative comments on radio and Facebook, saying

that I was not a 'real' ni-Van... I did think that Jennifer Watson would win instead of me, because I had heard that there was a lot of feeling that a "pure" ni-Van should win, not a "half-caste" like me."

Submarine Cable

RUMORED FOR YEARS TO BE COMING TO Vanuatu and delayed several times due to funding issues, the high speed interchange, a submarine Internet cable, arrived on Efate in late December 2013. When connected, the line should increase Internet speeds in Vila significantly, though the way in which this will affect current pricing structures has yet to be announced. The cable scheduled to be connected in mid-January, but according to a Facebook comment from OGCIO official Jackson Miake that had been delayed. He expects the wider access to increased speeds, which is slated for February, should still be on schedule. Future plans for a submarine cable reaching Santo have not been expanded upon.

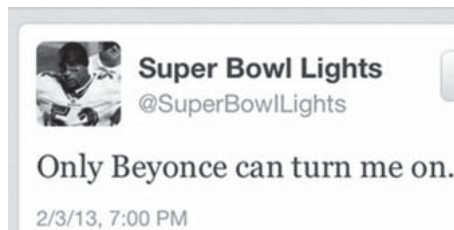


A map of the submarine Internet cable that now connects Suva, Fiji and Port Vila. Dotted lines mark planned cables, though no projected dates have been announced.

Vols: Here's What You Missed in 2013

Super Blackout - Feb. 3

A PARTIAL POWER OUTAGE INTERRUPTED the Super Bowl XLVII game of the Baltimore Ravens vs. San Francisco 49ers. It suspended play for 34 minutes in the third quarter and inspired countless internet jokes, many involving half-time show performer Beyoncé.



Tweet during the blackout.

Meteor Strike - Feb. 15

THE MOST POWERFUL METEOR TO strike Earth's atmosphere in over a century exploded over the Russian city of Chelyabinsk. It injured 1,491 people and damaged over 4,000 buildings. The incident sparked conversation and concern over the vulnerability of Earth to meteor strikes.

New Pope - Feb. 28

BENEDICT XVI BECAME THE FIRST POPE to resign since Gregory XII in 1415. He was replaced Pope Francis formerly Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Pope Francis

NSA Leaks - June 6

AMERICAN EDWARD SNOWDEN, A FORMER Central Intelligence Agency technical worker, disclosed government secrets about the NSA's massive surveillance program, revealing just how much illegal spying the government does at home and abroad. It also exposed the fact that the U.S. government is tapping the phone lines of high profile international leaders, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Snowden first hid from the retaliation of the U.S. government in Hong Kong, later seeking asylum in Russia where he resides currently with Putin's approval.



Wendy Davis, a Texas representative.

Abortion Debate - June 25

JUNE 25- TEXAS SENATOR WENDY Davis held an eleven hour long filibuster to block legislation that would create new abortion regulations in Texas. This advanced Senate Democrats' efforts to delay passage of the bill beyond the deadline for the end of the legislative session. Davis could not veer off topic, was not allowed bathroom breaks, and had to stand the entire time in her now famous bright pink Mizuno sneakers. During the 11 hours, #istandwithwendy blew up on Twitter drawing further national

media attention and coverage. As a female politician making a stand on this issue, Davis quickly became an icon for womens' right to abortion in America. She recently announced that she will run for Texas governor in upcoming elections.

Egypt Re-Revolt - July 3

VIOLENCE ERUPTED IN EGYPT AFTER President Mohamed Morsi was deposed in a military coup d'état.

Royal Birth - July 22

AFTER MONTHS OF SPECULATION AND talk about the baby of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George was born. The birth was followed closely around the world.

Miley's Mishap - Aug. 25

MILEY CYRUS'S CONTROVERSIAL PERFORMANCE at the MTV Video Music Awards garnered national attention and criticism. Cyrus performed her hit single "We Can't Stop" in teddy bear attire. She then joined Robin Thicke's performance of his own hit single, "Blurred Lines", where she touched Thicke's crotch with a foam finger and then "twerked" against him. Her other 2013 hit single, "Wrecking Ball" acquired a record breaking 19.3 million views on VEVO in the first 24 hours. The controversial video features Cyrus licking a sledgehammer and straddling a wrecking ball while naked.

Gov't Shutdown - Oct. 1

THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT shutdown after Congress failed to enact legislation appropriating funds for fiscal year 2014. In addition to normal government operations, national



Jessica Geraci VITEL, Santo



A child longs for the National Zoo.

monuments and museums were also closed. Republicans were largely blamed for the shutdown because of their efforts to prevent Obama Care from going into effect. The shutdown ended on October 16.

Beard Breakout - Oct. 23

BEARDS TOOK CENTER STAGE IN THE World Series playoffs between the Boston Red Sox and St. Louis Cardinals. 12 of the Red Sox players had spent the season growing out their beards. Fans followed suite by attending games sporting their own facial hair, both real and fake. A few weeks after the Series, New York Yankee's reportedly crossed pitcher Brian Wilson off their list when Wilson refused to shave the facial hair he has been growing since 2010. Newfound beard popularity and social acceptability is also thought to have risen as a result of the popular reality TV show, "Duck Dynasty".

Typhoon - Nov. 8

ONE OF THE STRONGEST TROPICAL cyclones on record, Typhoon Haiyan, hit the Philippines and Vietnam, killing 6,149 people .

Snapchat - Nov. 13

SNAPCHAT FOUNDER, 23-YEAR OLD Evan Spiegel, turned down a 3 billion dollar offer from Facebook. The social



Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa.

media app allows you to take photos and videos, add text and drawings, and then send them to a controlled list of recipients. Users set a viewing time limit, between one to ten seconds, before the image or video disappears. Snapchat has exploded in popularity in the last year.

MANDELA PASSES - DEC. 5

NELSON MANDELA, A WORLD SYMBOL of civil rights and key figure in the end of Apartheid in South Africa, died at the age of 95. Almost 90 representatives of foreign states attended the memorial events in South Africa. A picture of Obama taking a "selfie" with two other leaders of state at the event went viral and brought the concept of the "selfie" into the mainstream.

Moon Landing - Dec. 14

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1976, A spacecraft made a soft landing on the moon. The Chinese spacecraft Chang'e3 was the third robotic rover to do so.

Duck Dynasty - Dec. 18

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH GQ, "DUCK Dynasty" star Phil Robertson, made anti-gay comments that got him suspended by the show's network, A&E. After fans fought for his return, the network ended his suspension nine days later. "Duck Dynasty" is a massively popular reality show about a wealthy family that owns the business, Duck Commander, which makes products for duck hunters. Forbes has reported that the show has generated 400 billion dollars in retail revenue. It has also reinvigorated the camouflage trend in states below the Mason-Dixon Line.



The beards of Duck Dynasty.

Island Signs

with illustrations
by Lynn Overmyer



Capricorn

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)

YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS BACK home were aware of the importance of your past birthday but the Vanuatu postal service was not. If you haven't received any birthday cards or packages, they're probably lost or stuck at customs. If you don't get them in three months, remember it's the thought that counts. The margarine frosted cake will make up for it!

Aries

(March 21- April 20)

YOUR VILLAGE WILL BE PLANNING a Chief's Day celebration in April. Suggest a small dance party. The Ni-Vans will love an excuse to blast string band music and you can practice your traditional Vanuatu dance moves (walking in place while swinging your arms). You'll need the extra exercise after all the blessed yams you will eat.



Aquarius

(Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

YOU MAY FEEL AS IF THE UNIVERSE is working against you, it's good to take a step back and examine the good you've done in the world. No project you start is too small, even if you change one starfish's life, it's a big difference. Aquarius needs to look out for hot tempered people and especially even hotter tempered volcanoes. It's the year of the Pigeon, so you will probably eat many of them.

Taurus

(April 21 - May 21)

YOU MAY START TO NOTICE MORE tears and stains on your clothes. Don't be too embarrassed. As long as you soak them in soapy water, they're acceptable to wear around the village. Next time you are in town, be sure to go to the thrift stores to buy clothes with less stains and tears to wear to work. If you're desperate to look nice you can always wear an island shirt/dress...



Pisces

(Feb. 19 - March 20)

PISCES ARE BORN ADVENTURERS. They like smashing spiders with their bare hands and trying to walk to the bathroom in the middle of the night. Of course, everyone regards you as being dense, but you never notice. Unfortunately, you will have some upcoming gastrointestinal problems, but take some Bismuth and ORS. And if life is moving too fast just take a deep breathe, relax and ask apu how to weave a basket, it's pretty amazing!

Gemini

(May 22 - June 20)

LIKE A PHOENIX RISING OUT OF the ashes, so too will you frighten a number of small children as you walk back from the smol haos. You will eat an abundance of fruit, but don't forget to drink a lot of water too! Understand that things aren't always going to happen the way you want and you have to take the good with the bad. Try to stay focused, especially while wielding a large knife.



Richard
Gornall
Extende,
Santo



Molly
Geiser
VITEL,
Epi



Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

IN MARCH YOU MAY START TO feel a little island fever. Plan a workshop or small vacation to visit a friend. If a plane ticket isn't in your budget, take a ship! You'll meet a mama of a tawi of an uncle who will be happy to share a piece of laplap or a few scotch fingers. While taking your life jacket may seem annoying, it's a great pillow for when you're ready to try napping on a dirty floor or, if you're lucky, a metal bench.



Leo (July 23- Aug. 22)

YOU'LL HAVE A LOT OF FREE TIME in February... And March... And April. Plan a kava date or kakai with your counterpart or a friend from the village. Try not to get frustrated when they're two hours late. Enjoy the company and feel free to revert the conversation back to Bislama when everyone insists on speaking local language.



Virgo (Aug. 23- Sept. 22)

IN THE UPCOMING WEEKS IT WILL be very hot with high humidity, at times it may feel as if the power of a thousand suns is pouring down on you, but have no fear, climate change could go either way. You will soon complete a big project you were working on in your village, and will receive 0 credit, unless you're a man. Your expectations may be too high, don't get too worked up over details, perfection isn't demanded of you. Take a shell of kava and relax. (Kava not your thing? Try a piece of cheese-, the ones in the blue package at Au Bon need no refrigeration)

Libra

(Sept. 23- Oct. 22)

BE POLITE AND TRY YOUR BEST TO other people in your village. It's important to stay socially relevant, especially on the island. You may feel like locking yourself in your house to get away from it all, but get outside and story, it will make you feel better. Having a Pisces as a friend could be a good idea to keep your sanity in check, but beware of Cancer.



Scorpio

(Oct. 23- Nov. 21)

YOU MAY EXPERIENCE SIT SIT wota in early March. Invest in toilet paper instead of dry leaves and drink lots of water! Don't be ashamed to complain to other volunteers - We've all been there. Things will be looking up in April as the weather cools down and there will be avocados galore!



Saggittarius

(Nov. 22- Dec. 21)

SAGITTARIUS' ARE USUALLY AMBI-dextrous, which means that they can pick both sides of their noses at the same time. It may seem unusually rainy recently, if you are in need of English contact and have no reception in your house, no problem! Take any plastic bag (from last night's tin tuna) and wrap your phone in it as you make a game of getting extremely soaked and finding some reception up that big hill.



Ender's Game

Michael
Stafford
*Extende
Santo*



Wiggin Out — Ender Wiggin and his mentor Colonel Graff.

I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY DURING MY HOME LEAVE TO GET TO the Cineplex in Anchorage and catch a few films during the Christmas season of big movie releases. I had been anticipating one movie in particular, “Ender’s Game,” since learning of its production some time last year. The film is an adaptation of the acclaimed and thought provoking book by the same name written by prolific sci-fi author Orson Scott Card. Gavin Hood, who wrote the screenplay and directed the movie, is a relative unknown who’s only major directing credit prior to “Ender’s Game” was “X-Men Origins: Wolverine.” In the case of “Ender’s Game” it seemed like Hood had set himself up for failure trying to make a blockbuster out of a book that already had what could be considered a cult following. Going in, as a fan of the book myself, I knew I needed to try to let go of any preconceived notions I would be carrying and let the film take me where it would without making constant comparisons.

The story begins on Earth a few decades after a devastating alien invasion has nearly wiped out all life on earth, making “Ender’s Game” an indirect follow-up to about half of all sci-fi plotlines to date. Hood does an average, if not all that subtle, job of informing his audience of this background and setting the tone early in the film. The real attractiveness of this story however lies in the characters and their relationships, particularly with the title character: Ender Wiggin, a genius pre-teen military recruit. The pacing of major character introduction was the first major departure Hood makes from the book, and it does result

in some clumsiness and minor plot holes later in the film. Several key characters are introduced haphazardly, early in the film and it causes ambiguity about how crucial relationships between Ender and other characters developed over time.

The scope of the film is fairly expansive and the production team for “Ender’s Game” does a reasonable job immersing the audience in this Sci-fi world. Some stylistic choices in the film somewhat spoil the overall effect for the sake of theat-

ricality, in what is a fairly honest trade-off between adhering to the text and making a movie that really grasps the audience’s attention especially at the significant moments. I thought that Hood’s take on the Free Play/Mind Game, which is an extremely important plot element, was rather elegant, sparing the wrath of the sci-fi faithful but also retaining the attention of distractible movie-goers. Harrison Ford brings the real star power to the cast of EG but seems to have left behind some of the effortless panache that made people love him as Han Solo and Indiana Jones. He doesn’t quite capture the overworked and conflicted Colonel Graff the way some might have hoped but he certainly isn’t a complete let down either. It was a pleasure to see Hailee Steinfeld in another great role as Petra Arkanian, unfortunately the writing leads to a bit of the aforementioned awkwardness in character development in her case as well.

Overall, “Ender’s Game” was not necessarily a triumph but far from the complete betrayal that some have come to expect from Hollywood adaptations of beloved literature. The result is fence-riding story accompanied by some solid CGI and decent acting from some talented young actors. Watch it if you like some decent thought-provoking sci-fi action but don’t get your hopes up for a shot for shot adaptation of the book or anything Oscar-worthy. I give it a bland 65%. 🍷



**Hunter
Sizemore**
*VITEL IT,
Santo*

What To Watch

South Pacific

BBC Documentary Miniseries

6 Episodes | 60m Each

MADE IN THE VEIN OF “PLANET EARTH” and “Human Planet,” this 2009 documentary series gives plenty of screen time to Vanuatu and there are a number of segments on other island

nations that are relatable. In the first episode features coconut crabs in the Banks and land diving on Pentecost and a later episode explores the Toka Festival of Tanna. Other interesting segments include giant freshwater eels (what we call namari) in The Solomon Islands, the explosion of edible sea worms seen across the South Pacific every October (eaten with laplap in

Vanuatu, naturally), and the coral-destroying crown-of-thorns starfish being eaten by its natural predator the triton’s trumpet (aka the bubu shell, featured on the 5 vatu piece). Sure you could watch this series on your own to buff up on Melanesian natural history, but why miss out on a Host Family bonding experience?



Left: A US Marine in HBO’s “The Pacific” Right: A boy swims with a namari in “South Pacific.”

The Pacific

HBO Drama Miniseries

10 Episodes | 60m Each

ONCE, WHILE SITTING AT A SIDE STREET nakamal in Luganville, I began storying with an oldfala man who, when learning my nationality, talked undeterred for an hour about how thankful all of Vanuatu was for the service of American soldiers in WWII as if I myself had contributed. At the time, it seemed excessive. I mean, I wasn’t even alive at the time and I knew little about its history until watching this series. The spiritual successor to HBO’s

“Band of Brothers,” this WWII miniseries focuses on the American campaign in the Pacific from Guadalacanal in The Solomons to Okininawa. Based on several biographies and portraying its characters as humans, not just soldiers, it is the most profound and holistic realization of the utterance “war is hell” that I have ever seen. When the map zooms to the Southern Solomon Islands for the first battle of the series, it becomes apparent just how narrowly Vanuatu escaped being caught up in a brutal struggle. Watching “The Pacific” reframed how I view that oldfala’s respect, and my own.

Bob’s Burgers

FOX Animated Comedy Series

3 Seasons | 20m Eps

HITTING A COMEDIC SWEET-SPOT between Home Movies, Archer and the Simpsons, Bob’s Burgers follows the eponymous Bob, his wife Linda and three kids, Tina, Gene and Louise, who live above the burger joint that they run together. The show brings the laughs with an Adult Swim edginess, puns that fail hilariously and the characteristic deadpan of Archer. That last association is difficult to break, as H. Jon Benjamin, the voice of Archer,

uses the exact same character voice for Bob. While the show follows Fox's formula of the patriarch screw-up who spends entire episodes trying to fix things, it does so with enough style, sweetness and humor to stave off groans of "oh, another one?" Plus, each of the kids scrambles their stereotypical roles ("elder child," "smart one," "only son") in ways that injects equal doses of humanity and hilarity. This isn't the kind of show that sustains the investment of binge watching, but if you're looking for something to snack your eyes on for a quick laugh, Bob's Burgers is a good bet.



Left: Bob of Bob's Burgers. Top: Donald Glover of Community. Bottom: Danareys, Queen of Dragons, a star of Game of Thrones.

Community

NBC Sitcom Series

5 Seasons | 20m Eps

AN ECLECTIC GROUP OF 6 STUDENTS form a study group at Greendale Community College and, through their friendships, become an influential force in school affairs. While this technically classes the show as a sitcom, showrunner Dan Harmon is constantly finding ways to expand the genres boundaries while pursuing deep references to pop culture phenomenon such as Dr. Who, Ken's Burns-style documentaries and 8-bit video games. But Community has become almost as famous for its off-the-air struggles as it has for its onscreen brilliance. Last year, Donald Glover, who plays ex-high school jock Troy Barnes, charted several hit songs ("Heartbeat," "Campfire") under his stage name Childish Gambino, but

later announced that he was leaving Community because stardom had come too fast. Harmon, too, has had a troubled relationship with the show. Following two seasons of genre-bending action, he was taken off the project for the fourth season due to differences with NBC. With fan reaction tanking, Harmon returned for the fifth season (currently airing) but has to deal with the loss of two characters: Chevy Chase as the antiquated Pierce Hawthorne and the ticking time bomb of Donald Glover's departure, who appears only in the season's first six episodes. Like many troubled TV shows, Community continues generating a cult following for what could have been as much as for what it actually is.

Game of Thrones

HBO Drama Series

4 Seasons | 60m Eps

THE PREMIER DATE FOR GEORGE R. R. Martin's continuing epic tale of high fantasy has yet to be announced, but Season 4 is likely to begin around late March, the same time as Season 3 last year. The next 10 episodes, released weekly on Sundays, will cover the second half of A Storm of Swords, the 3rd book in the A Song of Ice and Fire series, which is considered by many fans to be the best of the books published so far. Last season ended shortly after The Red Wedding, catching many show-only fans off guard and causing a social media uproar, but as book readers know, Season 4 has its own share of surprises in store. Season 4 will also continue the precedent of songs from the books being fully rendered by indie artists, this time featuring Icelandic indie-darlings Sigur Ros. 🌀

Roughin' it with the 'Rents



Amanda
Russell
VITEL,
Tongariki

I DON'T THINK I'M ALONE IN SAYING that a lot of the time I feel conflicted about my site. On long lazy afternoons spent eating shell and navara down at the saltwater, I feel like I'll never be in a place this perfect ever again. I adore my host parents, my counterpart, my kids, and I love the easy-going communal culture of Vanuatu.

I even feel like living here is turning me into a better person. It's like every part of me that was stressed

year, I was glad to show them around the island, but I was worried that they'd just hate everything. It wouldn't be an irrational response; Tongariki is pretty bush and, creature comfort-wise, it's all very minimalist.

I think that people can get some idea of your life by hearing you talk about it or by looking at photos, but that's not enough to really understand what it's like at any particular site. Even among volunteers, we have

easily intimidated, but I envisioned a week of twisted ankles on the stone beach, spiders in the toilet, rats in the food safe, and lap lap banana with flying fox for dinner.

Luckily, I was overreacting. As my dad said, Tongariki was both better and worse than they had expected. On the good side, Dad was glad to see that I don't actually live in a mud hovel. They thought that aelan kakae was, and I quote my mother here, "bland



Tongariki Trio — Amanda Russell and her parents near her site on Tongariki.

out or wound up tight relaxed when faced with the reality that, sometimes, there's nothing to do today, nothing to do tomorrow, and nothing I can do to change it. The ship will come when it comes. If there's no phone credit, there's no phone credit. I will never complain about the quality of my internet connection because I don't have one. Que sera sera.

So when my parents came to visit Tongariki over Christmas this

so many different variables at play in our sites—work satisfaction, host family, kastom, gender roles, access to consumer goods—that there's no one standard experience.

I've definitely been surprised by other people's sites, and I live here in Vanuatu. So what were my parents going to think? As my mom would tell you, her idea of a vacation involves fruity cocktails with little umbrellas on top. My parents are tough and not

but quite all right." (Mom later claimed that chewed kava tasted fine, but there I suspect she was just being polite.)

More seriously, though, my parents were overwhelmed by the good old-fashioned Melanesian hospitality they received. The school committee set up a hosting schedule so that we were invited to lavets at all the village nakamal. As my mom said, she'd never gone to a party with so much food that everyone was expected to sleep

it off before round two, and they really appreciated how thoughtful and kind everyone was throughout the whole trip. (In fact, the only low point on the island was Christmas Eve dinner, when we had boiled manioc. Dry. We turned on White Christmas and added a can of baked beans and a packet of cream biscuits to our manioc feast, but that only does so much to promote the holiday spirit.)

Traveling to my site was a pain, though. By helicopter, Tongariki is fifteen minutes from Vila. By ship, it's an overnight trip, but you can't rely on the Brooklyn to come out every week. Our route, with a plane to Tongoa, a truck to the pasis, a boat to Tongariki and a truck up, usually takes about three hours when the airport is open, trucks and boats are available, and the water is quiet.

The way there was perfectly fine. My dad was a little sea sick, but my mom was having a great time on the boat. The way back was much more difficult as everything went by island time, while our plane was scheduled for actual time.

Our boat was late leaving and dropped us off at Tongoa an hour before our flight. The airport is an hour walk or a fifteen minute drive away. It's a tough fit, but doable if you have a ride. Unfortunately, the truck driver I'd called on Tongoa decided that he couldn't come get us after all. So we had forty-five minutes to get on the plane while carrying enough luggage to emigrate with, and we were still an hour walk from the airport. Also, I didn't actually know where I was going, except up the road. I knew



Tongariki of the Sheppard Islands, between Efate & Epi.

it was going to be an adventure.

Picture this: I'm jogging twenty-five minutes up the hill to a village where there's probably no truck anyway, my backpack on my back, three lifejackets around one arm, a duffle and a laptop case around the other. All while hoping that if I can somehow get to the airport maybe I can talk the Air Vanuatu agent into delaying the flight so that a truck can go and grab my parents.

Kami, the agent, is very nice but this is an obviously unrealistic plan. I have this awful sinking feeling that we have no money on an island where I know nobody. We're going to spend the weekend in some crummy guest-

house playing seven lock and staring at lizards and it will be all my fault.

Luckily I eventually found a truck, we left the island, and we spent the entire afternoon lying around in our air conditioned hotel room recuperating. But as you can imagine, my enthusiasm for traveling by air is pretty minimal. At least, never again when there's an international flight involved. I'm sticking to boats.

My parents' trip encapsulated all the inner conflict I have about Tongariki. When I'm there, I love it. I live in bush paradise. I've had such a crazy, incredibly thrilling, weird and wonderful year out at the edge of the world that I wonder if COS is going to feel like a huge let down.

But when I want to leave, I hate the place. I need to travel off my island if I want to send an email, buy food, or talk to another volunteer, but there's so much uncertainty and so many ways for everything to go wrong when traveling.

Earlier this year, when my ship was being repaired, my airport was rained out, and I was stuck in Vila until further notice, it all seemed like such a joke. What else would you call being placed in such a great site that I couldn't get back to? Things should improve soon—we're getting a second cargo ship servicing the Shepherds and Public Works is going to tar the airport as soon as they finish road maintenance. I hope it all works out. Tongariki is a great place. As for me, it'll be rough to leave. But I'll definitely be looking into boat travel a month before my COS date, just in case. 🌀

At Peace with the Corps



Denis
Hart
VITEL,

Efate > Tanna

I practice meditation because I believe it allows me to develop my best qualities. I joined the Peace Corps for the same reason.

IT'S WONDERFUL WHEN PEOPLE engage in service because they want to help others, but personally I made it clear throughout my application that I wanted to be a volunteer because I believed it would make me a better person. One aspect of mindfulness meditation is that whatever is happening in the present moment can be an object of meditation as long as you attend to it with your whole heart and mind. My intention is to treat Peace Corps service as a two-year meditation.

There are countless techniques of meditation but they all involve gradually training yourself to focus your attention in a deliberate way, usually on a particular object. In mindfulness meditation, which is the basic practice of Zen and many Buddhist schools, the most common object is the breath, because it is in constant flux and is always available. Focusing on the breath immediately returns us to the body and to the present moment. By sitting and attempting to keep our attention on the breath for an extended period, say twenty minutes or an hour, we are treated to a near-constant torrent of discomforts, dissatisfactions and desires. Bringing the attention back to the breath whenever it is inevitably carried away by thoughts and feelings exercises our faculty of concentration. This extremely simple but universally difficult discipline also allows us to cultivate an attitude of openness,

patience, and non-judgment. After a year of service, I am finding that the same attitudes that get me through an hour of sitting with my own issues are what help me deal with the issues inherent in living and working in a third-world country. Actually, they're the same issues.

Determination

EVEN IF YOU'VE BEEN MEDITATING FOR years, sitting in one position for extended periods can be boring. And when it's not, it's often unpleasant to endure the physical pain and negative emotions you distract yourself from during the rest of your life. Chances are one of the first things you will think about is what else you could be doing. If you're not careful, you'll be up and doing something else before you know it. It takes determination to sit with whatever comes up in your mind.

Joining the Peace Corps is obviously a much larger commitment than an hour of your day, and in a sense that makes it easier to maintain. Most of us had at least a year of applications to consider serving, and after all the resources it took to get here and trained, the decision to leave is never made lightly. Still, no one knows what the experience will be like until arriving, and some people are bound to be disappointed. When a volunteer sincerely believes he could be doing better things with his life somewhere

else, no one can argue with his decision to leave. Those of us who stay are either lucky enough to find ourselves doing meaningful work or have clear personal reasons for seeing the experience through to the end.

Because I entered service as a challenge to myself, my "what am I doing here?" moments are always followed by the answer, "you're here to see what happens when you're torn away from the comforts of home for two years." It turns out what happens includes a lot of questioning myself and wishing I was at home. But that's just part of the ride, which also includes a lot of incredible experiences. As much as we want to help people in a concrete way, none of us would be volunteers if we weren't interested in challenging ourselves. When the desire to quit and our ability to rationalize quitting threaten to become too much, we have to remind ourselves of why we came in the first place. Beneath the specific projects we want to accomplish lies a personal determination that runs deeper than the day-to-day obstacles we face, in fact it encompasses the obstacles. Everybody's motivation is different but it is the breath that we return to endlessly as we are tossed among the highs and lows of island life.

Patience

IF YOU'VE EVER HAD TO WAIT EIGHT hours for a bus or two weeks for a ship, you might have experienced a moment when being anxious about your departure finally became too much work and you decided you didn't care anymore. What a wonderful moment! What a release of mental and bodily tension! Suddenly it becomes clear that the waiting itself is not what was bothering you, it was the anger of being forgotten or worry about not arriving on

time. This insight usually comes fairly early on in meditation practice. The discomfort of sitting is never as bad as the discomfort of wanting the sitting to be over. Once you can let go of that desire, everything gets a lot easier. Unfortunately you don't just get to have this insight once and then be free of impatience forever. It will keep coming up and every time you just acknowledge it and do your best to let it go.

Life in Vanuatu is one long opportunity to practice patience. If it's not waiting on transportation, it's waiting for committees to meet and approve your projects, or sitting through interminable church services and conversations in local language.

It's hardly an exaggeration to say that everything here happens more slowly than you think it ought to. At some point you're going to have to come to terms with the fact that things happen in their own time and there is usually little we can do to hurry them up. Impatience is nothing but an extra anxiety over the normal flow of time.

Of course it doesn't do a lot of good



- DH

to stress about how you shouldn't be getting impatient. When a situation arises that causes us to feel impatient, rather than hate the situation or your impatience, try seeing it as an opportunity to practice letting go. You won't always feel better right away, but if we could simply decide to be more patient, we wouldn't need to practice. When you allow things to unfold in their

own time, you experience them more deeply.

Acceptance

PATIENCE AND ACCEPTANCE BOTH mean stepping back from our habit of evaluating every experience based on a sense of the way things "should" be and facing the way things are. I can't think

of anyone who wouldn't be happy to be more accepting of the never-ending surprises life throws at us. Once again, it is a skill that has to be gradually cultivated throughout life.

Living in a foreign culture, you will inevitably find your sense of what is universally acceptable challenged. Playing music so loud that all your neighbors can hear it until late at night, or saying you're going to do something and not doing it, aren't those always wrong? No, it turns out those are as culturally conditioned as everything else. You don't have to like it. The point of acceptance is that it goes beyond likes, dislikes and value judgments. Acceptance says this is the way things are and my evaluation of the experience is something extra, ephemeral and ultimately meaningless.

Although in meditation we practice accepting things outside ourselves, we try to minimize external distractions as much as possible because we are primarily interested in accepting what comes up in our own consciousness. This kind of acceptance is no less relevant to Peace Corps service and is an important key to developing acceptance of cultural differences. For example, I still struggle with Ni-Van vocalization, specifically loud, spontaneous interjections. I have an automatic negative reaction to these daily sounds. When I hear exaggerated, whooping laughter, my skin crawls. If I'm not careful I can easily compound my misery by getting caught in thoughts like, "Why am I such a hater? They're just having a good time and I have to get angry about it? What is wrong with me?" It's a common trap. We so want to be culturally tolerant that when we find that we keep having judgmental thoughts despite ourselves it can lead to feelings of guilt or inadequacy. Rather than compound judg-

ments with judgments of judgments, we can treat our own reaction with the same matter-of-fact acceptance as the experience itself. When I feel irritated, it's not my fault and it's not the fault of whatever's bothering me, it's a natural phenomenon that occurs at the intersection of different worldviews.

For me, the main benefit of meditation is learning to forgive myself. When you try to sit without thinking, you quickly realize that you are always thinking without even trying. I have a habit of getting absorbed in thoughts, some contradictory, and some downright evil. When I finally stepped back, I saw that thoughts simply appear. Because I never asked for them, I bear no responsibility for them. During your service you are going to learn more than you ever wanted to know about yourself. You may encounter some really ugly emotions that you didn't know you were capable of. The only way to overcome these feelings is to acknowledge them, honor them, and wait for them to pass. They are a part of you, but only temporarily. If facing these feelings is frightening, then acknowledge fear and honor it, too. That's what makes it an adventure. And of course you don't have to do it alone. Pick up your phone when you need to.

Bringing it back

SPEAKING OF FORGIVING YOURSELF, meditation is really great for learning to take failure. The value of trying to keep your attention focused on a single object lies in the fact that it is, for the sake of this conversation, impossible. For a while I would get frustrated when I realized that my mind had wandered, until I accepted that this is just what a mind does. Failing and starting over is the heart of the exercise. Convincing

the most laid-back people in the world that they need to change long-established habits is not much easier. You're going to fail a lot, and you will probably feel like a failure even more often than that. Whether or not you realized it at the time, that's what you signed up for. When you get comfortable with that idea, there are no successes or failures, just an endless series of lessons.

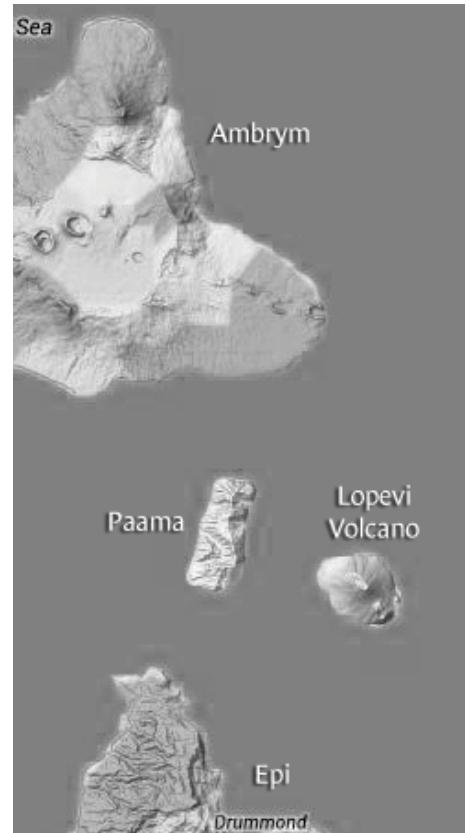
This is perhaps the most important parallel. When you meditate, it doesn't matter how many times your mind wanders as long as you bring it back every time you notice it has gone. But you can't just sit and daydream for an hour, or you wouldn't be cultivating your nobler qualities. Similarly, I have never doubted that I would get the spiritual growth that I came here for, because I am committed to being present for the whole experience. Even when I get lazy, unmindful, and negative for prolonged periods, I accept it as part of the ride and ask myself how I can move on from here. My service is the object of my meditation, and I have faith that if I put my whole heart into the work of service, then I will end up helping my community as much as I can.

So the good news is you can't fail. All you need is determination, and you wouldn't be here if you didn't have that. That's great for those of us who want to make the world a better place, too. Regardless of what you specifically accomplish during your service, if you stay true to your own purest intention, you are guaranteed to grow by leaps in patience, compassion, and inner strength. And whatever you go on to do you are going to carry that strength, touch others' lives with it and inspire them to find it within themselves. In other words, you're going to make the world a better place, starting with yourself. 🌀

Ale, Bye

Sam says see ya later Paama, hello Santo.

Samantha
Hunt
Extendee,
Santo



Sam, who now is now based on Santo assisting TVET, has fun with some pikinini in her last days on Paama.

Paama, positioned between Epi and Ambrym.

MY LAST DAY IN PAAMA, JAMIE AND Julie played hide and seek in my six foot by six foot front room. They took turns counting to 103 and 121, invariably skipping numbers 69 through 80. The one hiding would hide behind me or my dog and admonish us sternly not to tell. Julie took a break to brush and style my hair in an elaborate coif that involved five bobbie pins, three hair clips and one scrunchie. She assured me it was perfect for church. Julie then bragged to Jamie that I had shared popcorn with her and helped her draw a picture. Jamie countered with the fact that he and I watched Magic Man with the Ring three times last week.

Later that day my Uncle Dick offered me some whiskey and said sadly, “bae yu no stap blo danis bon ani.” Uncle Dick and my brother Bill drank the whiskey like kava- spitting and eating kumala for wasemaot while

I drank mine mixed with water in a puppy dog coffee mug. When we finished drinking Bill asked for the mug as a memory.

As I was leaving my village, crying and promising my similarly tearful students that I would see them again, Claude, the boat driver from Liro, asked me if Mark was going to follow me to Santo because if Mark didn't like Santo he was totally available and ready to move there with me. Just something to keep in mind, he said as he winked at me, inadvertently making the huge sore on his face more noticeable. One last memory of Man Liro.

Even before Claude showed up with his boat I started feeling nostalgic for Paama. It's strange how you can miss a place even before you have left. All the hard times seem to fade away. All the people who made you so angry you had to channel the emotion through

tears or by telling the offending person that your dog was going to pee in their kava, even those people become almost as missable as the people you love.

The hard times, when, to make yourself feel better, you tried to listen to Roar by Katy Perry, but because it had been raining for two weeks, the only thing you could do was sit in the dark and eat popcorn and then floss your teeth and then eat some more popcorn so you could floss again, are remembered as important character building moments. Or at the very least, remembered as the moment where you significantly improved your dental hygiene.

I do love this place and the people, and even though I am sure to some I was just the village white missus, for me I will always be Auntie Tija Tawi Best Fren blo mi woman Paama. 🌸



Michelle Wong
VITEL,
Ambae

“Be, Yu Blo Wea?”

“Mi blo U.S. nomo be from mami mo dadi blo mi, tufala blo China, mi fesbon lo U.S. Noaia mifala stap nomo lo America.”

THE MAJORITY OF THE U.S. IS PRETTY diverse and I would say that PC Vanuatu is fairly representative of that. Being an advocate for the diversity of America was something that I felt proud of, until I had something said and done to me that I had never experienced back in the United States. “Eh, Chinese ia, chi chi chang chang chong,” followed by a small hose down of wiper fluid from a Vila bus and some lovely cackling.

At that moment, I didn’t know what to think, do, or to say. I felt... embarrassed and ashamed. Coming from a very liberal city, Seattle, racial harassment is something that I normally don’t experience, only hear of. Feeling unwelcome, especially knowing that I was coming to the ‘happiest place on earth’, was not something I expected to experience here. Reacting to the ‘not your average white man’ volunteer remarks was anticipated, but the racism too? Yet, as I storian more with the local Chinese, I’m finding out that they are not very friendly and are, at times, very hostile with Ni-Vanuatu.



-DH



Being a first-generation daughter from a very traditional Chinese family and having a racist mother, I know where some of the racism stems from. I’m going to be completely honest right here; in my experience many Chinese (not Chinese-Americans, for the most part, but the Chinese who are born and raised in China) are racist and do not like black people. I’m not sure why this is the case. It could be ignorance of other races, because racial minorities are a very small part of the Chinese population. Or maybe it’s China’s obsession for light skin over dark skin (my mom is always telling me I’m too dark). Either way, I’ve come to terms with this fact.

Which brings me to this awkward position to be in. I understand why it’s happening, the racism against one another. Is it right? No. Do I agree with either side’s actions, absolutely not. So how do I cope? I don’t.

Not because I don’t want to, but because I don’t know how to. Vanuatu has challenged me to feel like I have to identify myself with only one group of people, when I’ve never had to do so before, especially with my diverse groups of friends back home.

Because of how Man-Vanuatu

reacts sometimes to the Chinese here, at times, I feel almost ashamed of who I am. Consequently, I try and force myself to be more American. Then at other times when I ring home and speak to my parents or speak to my host family about how important kastom is to their culture, I feel not only like I’m not Chinese enough but that my heritage, which is still a huge part of who I am, is fading quickly, especially in the Peace Corps where I’ve had to adapt to yet another culture.

Point is, this experience has confused me a lot. Being continuously asked, “Be yu blo wea?” has made me really question, where AM I from? The thing is, I really can’t tell you exactly which culture I identify with more. A fellow PCV once said, “there is nothing wrong with being different and not fitting in, nobody ever really does.”

Maybe I’ll never feel like I belong to either group but this experience has taught me that sometimes, laef i olsem. Luckily, my fellow PCVs are amazing people who back me and any other diverse PCV up about our different ethnic backgrounds. So thank you all for your continuous support and for really showing Vanuatu that America is beautifully sprinkled with all kinds of jellybeans.

As for the new group, especially any incoming ‘not your average white man’ volunteers: be ready. Because you will be asked, or you might even need to answer for someone else. You will get annoyed. And it won’t be the last time. But trust me, it will mean so much to your fellow PCV to know that we all have one others backs on whoever we want to be. Yu difren? I stret nomo. 🌀

A Note to the New Kids



Natalie
Felton
*Extendee,
Malekula > Vila*

BIENVENU! I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME you all and to let you know that you made a great choice becoming a PCV, especially in Vanuatu. You will have the experience of a lifetime here on the island. You will make life-time friends (probably with your island mates), eat things you never imagined were even edible (flying fox) and do things that you would have never imagined doing (poo in a hole).

As a Volunteer, this might be your first time overseas and you probably have a gazillion questions about living abroad. Well, I wanted to bestow some advice that may seem trivial now, but given time, you will find value in. It's a little something I wish I would have known or had been told upon my arrival in Vanuatu. My words of wisdom are derived from personal experience and the shared experiences from other Volunteers in my group. I am someone that -90% of the time- will tell you how I feel (good or bad), my philosophy is to keep it real. For what it's worth, read and assess my advice and go with your gut feeling. Always remember that what might work for one will not fit for yufala everiwan (you all).

Again, Congratulations on taking the first step in an experience of a lifetime and I look forward to seeing you all during PST I and PST II trainings.

Get to know EVERYONE in your group.

USE PST I, EXCURSIONS AROUND town, shopping for lunch to get to know each other better and open your friend circle; you never know who might be your closest neighbor at your site. Also, communicate with current Volunteers. We love to answer your questions. After all, we were once there ourselves.

Don't rush to cram

Bislama in your head

OR GET ENVOIOUS WHEN YOU HEAR other Volunteers speak Bislama. You have 2months of training with AWESOME Language Trainers. Use them to your advantage, but also give yourself breaks. Studying too hard can lead to headaches, stress and fatigue. You'll have plenty of time when you arrive at site to practice your Bislama.

Try the food given to you in the training village.

I KNOW, I KNOW, THERE ARE SOME things that just don't look appetizing. But give yourself until MST and you'll crave for those dishes that made you squirm in your seat.

Have an OPEN-MIND and lots of patience

LOOK DOROTHY...OR DON, WE ARE FAR from home, which means a different culture, and a different time-table on how and when things operate. It is definitely a challenge when you are adapting to a new culture. There is a difference between integrating and conforming. You don't have to give up your normal practices for the next two years. You do have to do some adjusting, but remember at the end of the day you do what you need to do to be happy. Taking one day at a time and always seeking your 'Happy Place' is the key to remain sane and content in your training village and at site (this might include a bottle of something for dinner every now and then).

Don't overload yourself

the first 6-9 months at site.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HOST FAMILY, becoming acclimated to your site and building strong relationships is ideal to having a successful and memorable service. You might hear about projects many current Volunteers are completing or have completed. Don't let that intimidate you or make you feel that you have to do the same. Everyone's service is different. You'll hear from your village that you need to leave a memory of your service in the village behind. Being physically there, sharing stories, visiting in the villages, sharing meals and playing with the kids, mamas and/or papas is just as important and valuable as anything else. Utilize these friendships later on to encourage participation in small workshops, or assisting in a World Map Project, water project, etc.

Set boundaries in the beginning.

YOU ARE A NEW PERSON IN A VILLAGE and you will receive a lot of attention. Set boundaries that will make you comfortable and happy. Don't feel bad that you don't allow anyone and everyone in your house. Entertaining guests outside on a mat or in your kitchen is quite alright. Again, do what you feel will make you comfortable, safe and happy.

Have FUN!

VISIT OTHER VOLUNTEERS AT THEIR sites, accumulate your personal days and save money while at site for a trip to Australia, New Zealand, and SE Asia! Don't hesitate to take a break from your village every now and then. This will help you keep a fresh mind

Think Positive

Michelle
Kenney
VITEL,
Epi



[A Note To The New Kids Con't.]

and will rejuvenate your spirits.

This advice is pretty simple. Be respectful to your community and yourself. The next two years will be an emotional rollercoaster, using Team Talk to vent to a friend or even staff can- and will- be necessary. We are all experiencing similar struggles as Americans here in Vanuatu. Sometimes we tend to do things to please others and are inclined to put our feelings and emotions on the back burner (I've done it plenty of times), but we must remember that our personal mental and physical health is important to our service. Though our family might be 7,000+ miles away, we have our PC family here in Vanuatu willing to support you in any way possible.

This advice might have left you with more questions and/or curiosity about living in Vanuatu. You will have plenty of time to get your questions answered when Staff and Volunteers come to visit you at your training site before and after your trainings. Take advantage. The more you ask questions, the more at ease you will become. ☸

“A teacher should not smile until after Christmas Break.”

THIS WAS SOME VALUABLE ADVICE given to me by a friend who teaches at a middle school in New Mexico on how to control “the little buggers” as she so fondly refers to her students. And while the timing does not apply to Vanuatu, she does have a point. Good classroom management is dependent on consistency and strong class rules. However, last year I was a bit lax on not smiling, sometimes those “little buggers” are just so cute!

I also find that in this culture, a teacher can relax within the classroom because all forms of discipline in this country revolve around corporal punishment and shaming, both examples of negative discipline. Rarely do you see, within a classroom or within a home, positive disciplining of a child. While many may think that whipping or shaming a child is effective, the consequences outweigh the benefits. Both instill fear into a child and in the classroom this makes learning more difficult.

Shaming is a highly popular type of punishment in Vanuatu but also causes the unbearable shyness that we see in our students. If shaming is used often in a classroom, a student will be afraid to answer for fear of answering incorrectly, forcing the student to never take the risk of participating in class. Corporal punishment also teaches kids that violence is an appropriate tool to solving problems. It is also highly ineffective in teaching correct behavior. A student will only behave properly when being watched, but when an adult is not around, a student is not motivated to act appropriately. Blah blah blah, of course we know we shouldn't hit students, but these are some things to can explain to your teachers or parents that use corporal punishment or shaming. But what's the alternative, you may ask? Positive reinforcement!

As teachers we should be focused on empowering our students and boosting their confidence rather than humbling them or ruling the classroom

with fear. Empowering our students is so important, especially because they rarely are encouraged inside the home or the classroom. I've often heard Ni-Vans say that someone has “hae tinkink” when they are accomplished entrepreneurs or businessmen, as if it's a bad thing! Positive reinforcement teaches a child to be independently motivated and to behave correctly at any time. So the best thing you can do in your classroom is reward your students for good behavior or for courageous action, etcetera. Below are some positive reinforcement techniques that have been successful by our current PCVs.

1 Tuff Tumas Box by Michelle Wong: The teacher keeps a box for when students behave well or deserve a reward and at the end of the week one name is pulled to win a prize.

2 Sticker Book by Jessica Geraci: Each student carries a sticker book in which they receive stickers when behaving well or when winning a game. Students enjoy comparing stickers and showing parents!

3 Star of the Week/Day by Elyse Robertson: The teacher puts categories on the board such as Best Listener, Best Writer, etc and at the end of the day they are rewarded by choosing the song of the day.

4 Stars of the Month by Michelle Kenney: The teacher keeps a chart keeping track of students who have received a star for the day. Students receive a star when earning 3 tally marks for good behavior or good work, etc. At the end of the month, the students with the most stars are rewarded with a party.

Tip: Think creatively when giving rewards. Students enjoy being the one who rakes the dirty rather than picking up the dirty. If you don't have stickers or other rewards to give, students enjoy positive acknowledgement or small responsibilities such as line leader. ☸



Tanksgiving

A group of G25 volunteers gathered for Thanksgiving in 2013. Pictured (starting with front row left) Katelyn, Amanda, Jazzy, Michelle, Baby Lynn, Sheena, Kelly (starting top row left) Ken, Corey, Elizabeth, Sydney, Nikki and Mary.



Above: Epi girls Molly, Lynn & Michelle. Below: Corey, Elyse and Kelly hang out with painted faces at a GAD ToT.



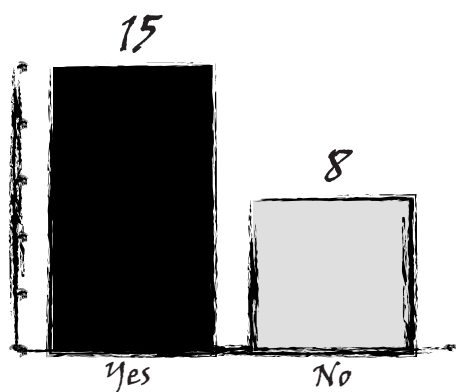
Happy Christmas

Takin ' a break from site, a group of vols hangs out at Hideaway Island in Vila. Pictured, Katelyn, Denise, Ken, Jasmine, Sheena and Elizabeth.

Note: charts based on 23 respondents of G25's 25 volunteers.

G25: A Year(ish) in Numbers

Q: HAVE YOU EVER CRAVED LAP LAP OR SAMBORO?



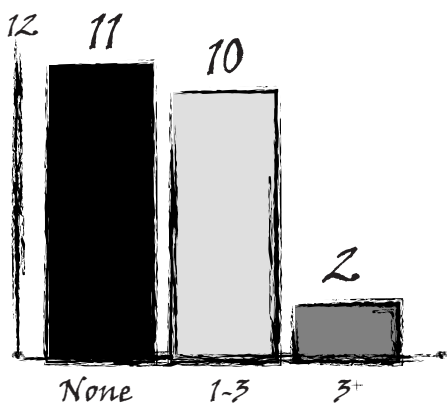
Naseem Tarmohamed
CH, Efate > Malekula



WHO LAUGHED WHEN THE PACKING list said “many volunteers will give up underwear...”, swore they’d never eat flying fox, packed sneakers now covered in cobwebs, or brought gallons of silica gel packets but still said sad goodbyes to an electronic device or five? Here’s a brief look into our last year in the form of statistics-the kind of which you’d only ever find in a Peace Corps publication.

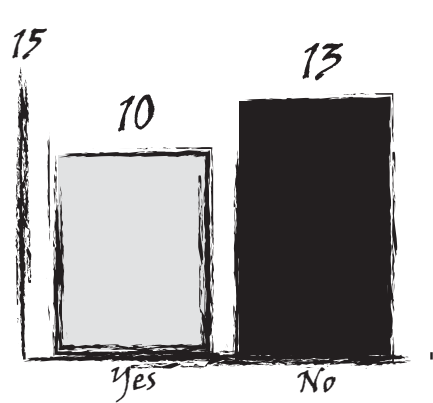
OF THOSE WHO HAVE CRAVED these culinary delights, the most had some variation on lap lap manioc in mind.

Q: HOW MANY PHONES HAVE YOU USED, ABUSED AND HAD TO REPLACE?

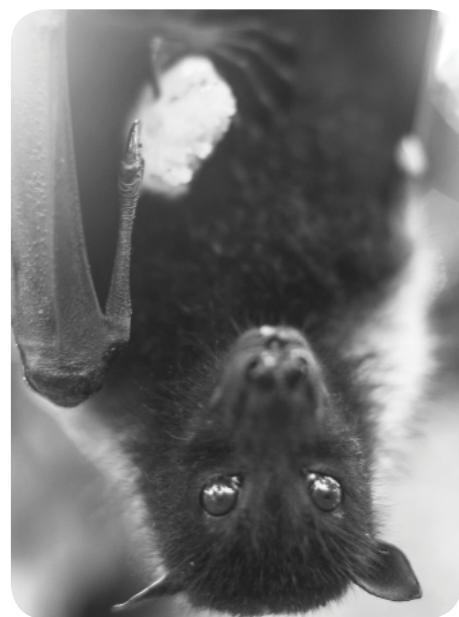


HALF STILL TOTE THEIR PC-issued mobiles and the other half have had a mishap or two. Then there are the vols who direct deposit their VICA to Digicel.

Q: HAVE YOU EATEN FLYING FOX YET?

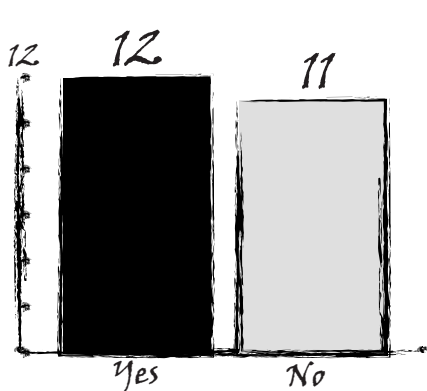


AND A WHOPPING 2 PEOPLE OF those 10 who have eaten it admit to enjoying the fragrant leathery meat. They say it’s best in a coconut yellow curry sauce.

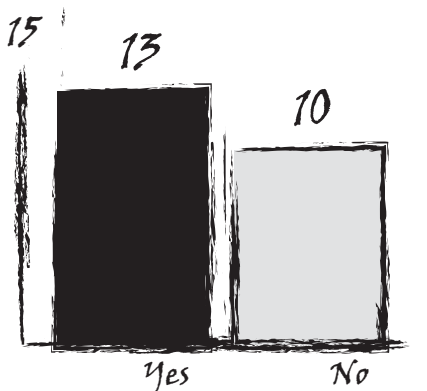


- MSH
Furry Food— Flying fox are cute and, say some, delicious.

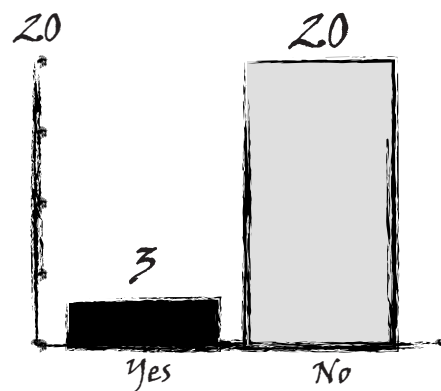
Q: HAVE YOU HAD A COMPUTER MALFUNCTION REQUIRING REPLACEMENT?



Q: DO YOU STILL WEAR UNDERWEAR?



Q: DO YOU USE FOOTWEAR OTHER THAN FLIP-FLOPS?



Yu No Wori

Meet, and laugh along with, your fellow volunteers.

YOU KNOW THAT NIGHTMARE WHERE you show up for the first day of school in your underwear and everyone laughs at you? You feared making a silly mistake, misunderstanding a situation and being ridiculed. The first couple of months are a series of first days of school. You'll make mistakes, be misinterpreted and, most importantly, you'll learn that it's not so bad. Read through these misunderstandings by current volunteers and see they've learned to laugh them off, just as you'll learn to. After all, they are just small speed bumps on your new, exciting journey in Vanuatu.



Nicci Areté

CH, Erromango

“PEOPLE IN A meeting referred to Peter as “Deis”- a language word meaning grandpa. I laughed loudly and enthusiastically, and very much alone. Moments later they referred to me as “Uyo” or grandmother. Which didn't seem as funny to me (and still not to anyone else). I later learned that Deis and Uyo don't necessarily mean grandma and grandpa but are respectful titles for men and women considered to have knowledge and life experience.”



Divya Cassity

CH, Maewo > Efate

“ONE DAY IN Epau one Mama gave me a dress and made one for my Mom in the US, it was a total surprise. I told her she was spoiling me and she started crying and saying sorry. I immediately apologized and told her that to spoil means to give a lot in English and it was not a bad thing. I am not sure how well it went over but she stopped saying sorry and I will never confuse that again.”



Lynn “Baby Lynn” Arsenault

VITEL, Emau

“I WAS GOING for a walk in the bush and came across a man who at first thought I was a white devil. I proceeded to talk to him and use one of the only words I knew in language blo emau. He switched over to only speaking language instead of bislama. Our entire interaction was completely useless.”



Peter Areté

VITEL, Erromango

“NICCI WAS talking about building a fence around the garden. “samting ia I blockem ol man”. Confused, I asked, “You're going to block all the men in the village?””



Amanda Russell

VITEL, Tongariki

“WHEN I FIRST got to site my host parents casually told me that a dog “kakaed” their cat. I thought they were just being really okay with a dog eating their cat. But no, it turned out it just bit it.”



Jessica Geraci

VITEL, Santo

“ I WAS AWAY from site for three weeks during the school’s spel. While I was gone, the kids in my village kept asking where I was so one of the yungfala told them I had been run over by a truck and was dead. The rumor stuck. I got back to my village and was bombarded for the next two weeks by a million questions about my “accident”. I was told that all of the momma’s were crying and that they had been seconds away from doing a dead for me. They made me stand at the end of church that Sunday with the honored guests because I had essentially returned from the dead. ”



Michelle Kenney

VITEL, Epi

“ I WAS MAKING guacamole for the kids and these year 4’s were watching. One had a ball they were playing with. Another kid said to him “Stop playing with your balls”. I turned to him and said “Hey, I heard you lost one of your balls”. The kids started cracking up and I realized we weren’t talking about that kind of balls. ”



Mary Maher

CH, Malekula

“ I THOUGHT that fluency in Bislama could get you through a conversation in local language. ”



Lynn “Fairy Lynn” Overmyer

VITEL IT, Epi

“ WHEN I FIRST got to site, I was planning to go to Bon Annie with my tawi. I saw him from a distance and he made the hand motion that here means “come ” and in the U.S. means “go away”. So I turned around and left. I felt so sad. ”



Jen Green

VITEL, Tanna

“ WE HAD BEEN sorting the books in the library for two weeks. I asked some of the girls that had been helping to fix some unsorted stacks. They took that to mean mix them all up and put them on the shelves randomly. I wanted to cry. ”



Jasmine Bass

CH, Malekula

“ WHEN I SAY “oslemwanem to Ni-Vans or bae yu go wea, and they answer with “no.” But when I give the same answer to the same question they are confused. ”



Katelyn Connell

CH, Pentecost > Efate

“ I asked my family how to say “I am cooking eggs” in language. I ended up telling everyone in language that I was pregnant. ”



Ken Kapoor

VITEL IT, Efate

“ I CREATED A lesson for my MS Word class about making posters. For shits and giggles I decided on a “Love Poster” featuring a picture of me with text asking for anyone interested in being the wife of a “Single Brown Man” (me). There was a list of traits (tall, rich, smart, etc.), one of which was “Desperate” (again, for laughs). In the Bislama Dictionary the word for “desperate” is “kaltrae”, so I put it in my poster. I showed it to my secretary, who saw it and laughed her ass off. Turns out “kaltrae” does mean desperate, but specifically “been dry for a long time”...and we ain’t talkin about the weather. Needless to say I changed it to “Krangke lelebet”.

”



Sydney Bowman

CH, Ambae

“ I WAS COMING back from Vila, heading back to site and I passed my host dad in a truck. He threw up his arms and started pointing places and I’m just bewildered. I’m supposed to know what that means? ”

“ MY HOST FAMILY asked me if there was anything that I didn’t eat and I told them pork. They thought I meant that I didn’t eat any meat at all, even fish. I ended up eating eggs for 16 days straight. 48 meals of eggs. I told my new host family that I don’t like fried eggs, thinking I may never have to eat runny whites again. ”



Naseem Tarmohamed

CH, Efate > Malekula



Elizabeth Wolfe

CH, Maewo > Efate

“ MY MOMMA came to my house one day and asked to play cards. But they don’t put a lot of emphasize on the “d” or “s” so I kept thinking she was saying she wanted to play cats. It went back and forth until I realized she meant cards. ”



Kelly Parshall

CH, Paama

“ MAYBE THIS time around last year when I had just arrived at site. I was fading in and out of consciousness in church on Christmas day, when an elder began delivering a homily on the Peace Corps. He informed us that George Bush had founded the Peace Corps upon ending the Iraq war and opted to divert his army funds to training PCVs to help countries all over the world. (If only.) So now there are no more wars, only volunteers! After the service people came up and congratulated me and I didn’t really have the strength to correct them. ”



Hunter Sizemore
VITEL IT, Santo

“ IN OUR HOST village, my papa and I played guitar together and my host family took to the song “Wagon Wheel” by Old Crow Medicine Show, which repeats the line “Hey, mama rock me” many times. My host papa once asked me to explain the song and I said it was an American boy in the South, in love with a girl in the North. He became confused, because, as I soon realized, “mama” means “mother” in Bislama. I avoided explaining the slang use of “mama” in English and told him that it was a boy singing a song to his mother, whom he loves, which was the right answer. ”



Corey Huber
CH, Erromango

“ IN TRAINING, I had a particularly rambunctious two year old host brother. I literally thought his name was “TabuJames” because every time my host mom called out to him, it was to scold him for hitting his friend with a stick or torturing the dog. Later I learned that Tabu was a reprimand, not a name. ”



Sara Barr
VITEL, Malekula

“ IT TOOK A long time to communicate that being inside my house alone does not necessarily mean I’m asleep. Private free time is my favorite time and it is misconstrued as lazy or upset. Thankfully, I’ve been able to get people to recognize the habit as my reading time. Baby steps. ”



Molly Geiser
VITEL, Epi

“ I TAUGHT MY students about dinosaurs and at the end of the lesson they were all under the impression that dinosaurs still existed in America. ”



Mike Hawkins
VITEL, Santo

“ I WENT TO site with long hair. At PST training II I let a PCV buzz my head, because it was so hot (January) and when I went back to site no one recognized me and thought I was a new volunteer. When one guy learned it was me, they told me I looked like Brad Pitt but fat-fat lilebet. ”



Michelle Wong
VITEL, Ambae

“ NOT SO MUCH in my village, but when I travel outside of my village they assume I’m just one of the Chinese people that own the stores here. It kind of rubs me the wrong way when they do that “chi chi chang chang chong” thing. I understand it but it still bothers me. It’s something that would be taboo in the States. ”



Sheena Savdharia

CH, Maewo > Efate

“ WHEN I FIRST got to site, my mom told me not to worry about the paper for the toilet. I thought she meant that she had toilet paper, but she actually meant student’s old exams. It was a rough month. ”



Monica Van Dora

Extendee, Buninga > Port Vila

“ “AWO” ON THE island is an exasperation in vila it indicates desire. Flirting unintentionally! ”



Elyse Robertson

Extendee, South Efate > Port Vila

“ THIS GUY told me that the Brooklyn, a ship, was going south to Efate but really it was going north to Epi. ”



Tim Harding

Extendee, Efate > Port Vila

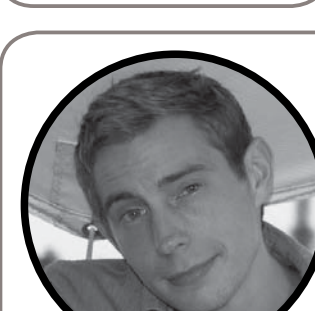
“ WHEN PEOPLE told me their houses were made of smen (cement), I thought they were saying “semen.” ”



Samantha Hunt

Extendee, Paama > Santo

“ A MAN SANTO visiting Paama telling me that he doesn’t like man Big Bay because they are man bush and don’t like brunch. Man Bush wan taem. He continued to talk about how much he loves brunch and eats it every day in Santo and how man Santo is far superior because they know about brunch. I finally realized he meant prawns. ”



Rich Gornall

Extendee, Ambae > Pentecost > Santo

“ SOME GUY AT the nakamal told me I should marry Woman Vanuatu. I jokingly agreed and was surprised when he said, “Come, my daughter is in the next room.” ”



Denis Hart

VITEL, Efate > Tanna



Natalie Felton

Extendee, Malekula > Vila



Tim Martin

Extendee, Malekula > Port Vila

“ WHEN I first arrived my host family made a big ridiculous first kakae that I never showed up to because I had no idea where they lived. I only found out about the first kakae several days later after I accidentally stumbled into my host village. ”



Mike Stafford

Extendee, Pentecost

> *Santo*

“ I WAS WALK-
ing into
Luganville with Sam
and a taxi pulled up
in front of us and
insisted we get in. We
told him we didn't
want a taxi since we
were already pretty
close to our destina-
tion. He kept insisting
we get in and saying
“help nomo” and that
“sun i strong tumas”.
We got in the taxi and
told him Sarakata
School. He proceeded
to drive past Sarakata
School and when we
finally got out (he
didn't charge us- help
nomo) we had to
walk farther than we
originally would have
had to if we had not
gotten in the
taxi. ”



Maureen Golan

Extendee, Pentecost

> *Malekula*

“ [ONCE WHEN
traveling by
ship,] I took the Moika
instead of Makila
because I had never
taken the Moika and
I was tired of taking
the Makila. ”

Build a Care Deck

WE CAN MAKE OUR PEACE CORPS service easier if we are deliberate about looking after ourselves—but so many of the things that brought us comfort at home aren't available or don't work at site. This short activity is designed to address both of these problems, and to help put a stressed volunteer back in control of his or her mood.

You'll need:

- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 marker
- 1 sheet of paper
- 1 pen
- some cardboard carton

1 Block out an hour for this, and put on some favorite tunes if you can. Sit down and start listing all of the things that make you feel better. Chocolate, hot shower, booze, brushing your teeth: nothing is too big or too small, and don't worry about whether these things are possible at your site. Just write for three minutes.

2 Stop, review the list. Write for three more minutes, take another break, finish with a final three. This gives your brain time to get into the game—and gives you enough time to remember what life was like before your service.

3 Evaluate your list. Star those things you can do easily at site. If an item on the list requires a resource that's limited or scarce at your site, draw a little minus sign and note what you need. (Alcohol, power, heat, privacy.) Some things may be impossible or accessible only in Vila. Mark these with an 'x'.

4 Rewrite your master list into three columns: Easy (star), Requires Resources (-), Wishlist (x).

5 Arts and crafts time! Cut your carton into equally-sized cards—or use paper, or leaves, or whatever you've got on

hand. On each card, write one item. Start with your Easy list, then go to your Requires Resources list. Don't include your Wishlist items. Once you're finished, shuffle these cards. Decorate them. This is your deck.

6 Every day, pull one card in the morning, then make time to do that thing. If the thing requires a resource you don't have, delay the card—leave it face-up—and make a note to get what you need. Draw another card until you get something you can or want to do. On bad days, or when you face a setback or frustration, draw extra cards. Cycle the cards you've already used back into the deck, and discard cards that stop working or prove too much of a hassle.

7 Last step: profit! Emotionally, physically, and psychologically, you will be healthier if you use these cards to be deliberate about looking after yourself. Your deck is also an excellent, low-pressure way to establish new habits: for example, if you want to try cooking for yourself at site, put that on a card. When it comes up, you cook, but you're only obligated to try when the card appears.

Is this an incredibly anal, nerdy way to make sure you're looking after yourself? Absolutely. But making a deck of these cards and using it daily can go a long way to easing the rough patches and helping you feel more in-control of the emotional roller-coaster that is Peace Corps service. ☸

Jen Green
VITEL,
Tanna



From Hell to Hoorah



Sara
Barr
VITEL,
Malekula

AS WE STRAP IN FOR ROUND TWO OF this fantastical experience, we all gleam with a bit of hope for a year that will bring us more wisdom about ourselves and maybe a hot shower or two.

The start is never an accurate representation of the final product. The batter isn't as enjoyable as the cake and the canvas is dull until the painting is in full. We are no longer in our baby form and are finally transforming.

The doubt we experience can be the most frustrating aspect. Questioning why we are here when there is so much to be done elsewhere drops in our minds often.

This is the process. This is what has to take place to enable us to return home better at pin pointing solutions and better at not being bogged down by minute details. We won't care about frivolous things that many back home are consumed by. We will be unconquerable.

We are survivors and we will always know it because we ate

the lap lap, we smiled when people told us we are fatfat, we wiped our asses with leaves, and we continued to help our village when they discredited our work or demanded material things.

Most of all, we stayed. We stayed and we are here. Many of us, if not all, have had that moment when we made a choice to go home. And for some reason we changed our minds and are sticking it out.

That reason is because we have a greater purpose and seeing this through to the end, doing what we can to make others happy, continuing to lead workshops, and showing up to teach, is a life lesson and will transform us.

The hard part is over. This next

year will be cake. Just ride the wave and believe in yourself. Do what you want and be demanding.

It is not strange for us to think that the only transformation occurring is in ourselves, and that the effects we are having on this country is the equivalent of nothing more than village pets.

Yet, while you may be sick of the cliché about all the lovely seeds you are planting yet will never see fully



- MSH

Lending a hand — Denise Hart helps out with a youth leadership exercise.

grown, it's fucking true. A whole village or one person, it doesn't matter, there are effects. Though you may feel that this revolving door of volunteers is, in fact, enabling a culture of dependent takers, there is still that one. That one little boy who listened when you said please and thank you during some exchange. He in turn acquired a small skill called manners.

Or the little girl who watched you hike in and out of your village as you pleased, who will in turn be brave enough to one day venture out on her own and find a path that leads to endless venturing.

Small these things may seem, but worth it in the end. Though we may continue to question the effects we are having, what we learn about ourselves

is just as damn important.

You will come out of this process more aware of yourself, more sure of what you want, a more competitive contender for a job, a person who values the differences in cultures and has compassion for other people.

We all want so much and our hopes were set so high. We shouldn't adjust our vision just because shooting for the stars is the best motto, but we should definitely learn how to thank ourselves for what has been done, little, as it may seem.

Even though we didn't start a revolution that overthrew a corrupted government. And even though some of our students still can't say the alphabet, no one is washing their hands after the toilet, and everyone still only uses the computers to download movies, there are things beyond our own vision and understanding that we have done to make change.

And it may not be change for the country, the whole village, or even your host family but for that shy little one in the corner whose name you can't remember. He or she will never forget your mannerisms, your confidence, your openness, your loud voice and most of all the transformation they watched you go through.

Many people knew us in the start and they see a change in us now. That makes them hungry for the same thing. It pushes them to take leaps and get out of their own boundaries so that they can grow just as they once saw in some crazy American that lived in their village a long time ago. And never forget that comfort is the enemy of achievement. You learn more from your failures than from your successes, and so will others. 🌱

Fairy Lynn



Lynn Overmyer
VITEL,
Epi

Talks Sex & So Can You

FOR THREE FRIDAYS IN OCTOBER I spent my afternoons explaining in detail how babies are made to a group of 25 ninth-grade girls.

Who the hell am I?

If you knew me at all a year ago you would not consider me the type to be speaking confidently in public about such risqué topics, let alone in a different language and in front of high school students. But after working with these students for 6 months in the classroom I've grown to really love and care for them. I want them to be able to live the best lives possible—and having the best life possible requires

knowledge about things like how to protect themselves against STI's, knowing their rights in a relationship, and understanding how to take care of their health.

That's where the GLOW/BILD Training of Trainers (TOT) comes in. The TOT trains volunteers and their counterparts who have never taught topics such as reproductive health, communication, and leadership, and gives them the tools to facilitate essential conversations in their communities.

After our last TOT in Tanna people have been empowered to face awkward conversations all over Vanuatu. Here's Rosemary's observations:

"I can say that my own ease in standing up before my entire church congregation to give an impromptu lesson on sexual health, HPV, and the importance of education and prevention, was very much a result of my having attended and helped facilitate the TOT. After you've held up balls and a penis made out of oranges and a condom-wrapped piece of sugarcane and pretended to make it go flaccid then get erect, there's not much you're embarrassed to talk about in front of locals."

Now don't let Rosemary's (a now COSed G24 volunteer who served on Tanna) comments make you think that the TOT is a 'dangle-the-arachnophobe-in-a-tank-of-tarantulas' type of 'scared-straight' training. The sessions are participant-oriented, leaving facilitators to simply guide the topics in the right direction and answer odd questions.

Hanky, a participant from Ambae, said this about the TOT training:

"Olsem... mi bin ko from woksope be mi no iven save se bae mi lanim fulap samting. A tink ol samting ia i mekem se mi gat jenj. Mi stap be... olsem se fastaem, mi harem no gud tumas from mi sem, be stap ko ko, mi harem gud from... mi no save, ol man oli enkarajmen mi planti blong mekem ol samting mo telemaot ol infomesen



Lynn Overmyer and Elyse Robertson look on as a ni-Vanuatu woman draws a picture during a GAD Training of Trainers held on Tanna in early 2013.

we bifo, mi sem blong mekem.”

Hanky, along with PCVs Michelle Wong and Joel Klaus went on to run a hugely successful Kamp GLOW/BILD this year, spreading the skills and savvy



Oh My GAD — Hanky, Michelle Wong & Joel Klaus held a GLOW/BILD on Ambae in 2013

to an even larger audience.

Don’t worry if you missed the Tanna TOT or can’t make it to Malekula in August; the newly updated GLOW/BILD training manual has detailed instructions that walk you through each topic.

The sessions are extremely flexible and can be used individually, in weekly sessions, or as a traditional weeklong kamp. (Pro tip: Prepare your favorite sessions ahead of time in case you need a last-minute lesson plan for school.) You can find a soft copy of the manual from any GAD member, off of SharePoint, or grab one off of your island mate’s bookshelf the next time you visit.

We all agree that having a strong base knowledge of communication, leadership, and healthy relationships is important to youth anywhere from Budinga to Brooklyn. For those of us who want to help the youth in our community discover new truths about these topics, but have never pictured ourselves growing up to teach sex ed, the GLOW/BILD training and manuals is the perfect tool to boost your confidence and get you standing by the chalk board holding a banana in no time. 🍌



Peace Corps' Prime Directive



Peter Areté
VITEL,
Erromango

⤴ First Gron-tact
⤴ Right, after failing to communicate with a lizard-like gron, Star Trek's Captain Kirk is attacked. Left, European explorers are discovered by a Native American chief, we all know how that went.

IN THE STAR TREK UNIVERSE, THE Prime Directive states that to interfere with the development of any culture or civilization is prohibited, and this includes avoiding first contact until that population has risen above faster than light travel (or warp technology).

This is going to start off nerdy, but there is a point, and it is relevant to all Peace Corps Volunteers. In the Star Trek franchise, the Prime Directive is usually about technology, and only infrequently about any other oblique form of information, with the exception of knowledge of other intelligent life. This implicitly suggests that technology; especially new technology has an inexorable impact on culture, and the evolution of that culture.

New Technology Sticks Around

THERE IS STICKINESS TO NEW TECHNOLOGY, I believe for two reasons. The first reason is that new tools allow us to do something either we couldn't do before, or to do something in a new fashion. Once we have habituated to using a new tool or device, we resist returning to a previous tool. We lose skills that were necessary before the introduction of the technology that lead to that tool's introduction.

The second reason is what I will call the toy factor. This is the aspect that encourages individuals to buy new models and newer versions of devices that they already own. To some degree this can make a lot of sense. Buying a new model of car that has new safety features, such as seat belts or air bags is a reasonable upgrade. Buying a new phone with either an mp3 player and/or a camera, albeit not better than the camera you already own- this is a toy

upgrade.

Technology has an irrepressible impact on a culture and the evolution of that culture. We in the West have been aware of this for some time as can be substantiated by the existence of different strains of technophobes as well as the historical Luddites and contemporary Neo-luddite groups. These groups, part of the English working class in the 19th century, feared losing their jobs and way of life due to an advancement in technology. They have known that technology changes things like cultural strata and organization, not necessarily for the better. Once it is embraced, progress tends to be one way. With the exception of the Amish, hardly any ever give it up for a more rudimentary way of life.

Where is this unstoppable progression of technology leading us? Quite possibly to a state of affairs where we

are incapable of living without them. Once technology has been accepted, it is difficult to reverse the impact it makes on a society.

In War, Technology is Transmittable

'TECH GULF' (SIMILAR TO THE IDEA OF the bomber gap or missile gap during the Cold War), is a term that I will use to describe when there are two different cultures, one of them with technology that is superior to the other. Should these two cultures compete, assuming they are equal in every other way, having superior technology will be an advantage to that culture. Being exposed to a culture with an advanced technology will be disruptive to your own development, either to its benefit or detriment. Think about the technology Ni-Vans can leapfrog over, skipping coal burning electrical generators and moving directly to solar panels. Also, the least advanced culture suffers the risk of being exploited by the more advanced culture, because as stated by Arthur C. Clarke's Third of Three Laws, "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

The tech gulf does not need to be restricted to merely military or weapons tech; a tech gulf can exist to profound impact in economics, government, communication and intelligence gathering. For instance, the US proved superior in economic tech when we defeated the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

Star Trek Prime Directive vs. Peace Corps Prime Directive

LET'S NOW EXPLORE THE PRINCIPLE behind the Prime Directive. The

unspoken premise in the Star Trek universe is that all cultures develop (or fail to and stagnate) towards a "universal cosmopolitan order." (This phrase is borrowed from Immanuel Kant's essay, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" in which he argues that a universal or world war involving all nations will bring about a collective distaste for war, effectively ending war as we know it.) At such a point, they are ready to intermingle with other races and intelligent life and join the confederacy of planets. But they are not ready until the race has conquered such domestic issues as civil war, poverty, inequality, etc... For some reason, the development of FTL travel or warp drive technology is thought to only be possible to a society that has become a universal cosmopolitan state.

After a culture has mastered these domestic policy issues, it is then possible to interact and share culture and technology with them without fear that said interaction will derail their moral and civil development.

The Peace Corps has a Prime Directive too. Not to avoid interference but quite the opposite; to aid development, to build capacity and to diminish dependency. We interfere with other cultures at their request, but we try to avoid the moral hazard of spoiling them or subjugating them to our culture.

We are in the midst of a grand age of globalization: of technology, of commodities, of information and of services. This is a patchwork project with no overarching philosophy or end. Sovereign nations and NGO's and corporations all determine their own ends and the means to pursue them. It is a world where some people proclaim and strive to bring about the supposed right of internet access alongside the universal need for clean water. I do not

mean to disparage any one project or goal, rather to show there is no unifying principle, everyone steers by their own stars.

What Gets Left Behind

SINCE COMING TO SITE, I HAVE had the experience of seeing globalization in action. I have learned the history of Western impact on these islands that we now reside on. I am (of course), not responsible for all so-called white man interactions with this culture, and yet at times I have thought, "We caused this," and by "we" I mean Western culture. I have seen a village of subsistence farmers struggling to find ways to join our economy; some to find ways to pay for schooling and Western education, others to pay for laptop computers and TV's. I have seen people who struggle between the values of Christianity that were fostered on them and the remnants of custom values left to them.

To be fair, this is just the way of the world- the clash of diverse culture has been the stuff of the recorded history of humanity for three thousand years. Every interaction has been a contest, the winner has spread their culture and the loser's culture often disappears. Where before the Mongols came with the tech of mounted archers and the recurve bow, and the Spanish came with the musket and the galleon, we come with wireless devices and Google. Before, the clash of different cultures was motivated by , the looting of goods to sell. Today we may have become less violent as individuals, but we are still

motivated by new markets and profit gained by the trafficking of goods.

Many Ni-Vans have already succumbed to the siren call of our society—captivated by our entertainment industry. After the first taste they are drawn into the web of participating in our cash-fueled economy at the expense of their traditional island economy of plenty.

Let me pose some questions now:

A Should our values dominate their developmental values without debate?

B Should we try to protect them from the damaging influence of our values and technology, much like Spock and Kirk must?

C Can we protect their agency and seek to only do good by offering improvements and amelioration?

I will try to answer these questions, but invite others to share their viewpoints to them as well. Questions A and B set up a false dilemma, an either/or scenario that are not the only two options. Rather, a third position somewhere in the middle is preferred. There should be a debate on this issue. Let them choose which values and goals to pursue, democratically.

I feel that this is what was missing in the work of the Missionaries before their Independence. The message Christianity delivered was, “You are wrong. Read the Bible.” Ni-vans are passively choosing our materialist values without the benefit of the deliberation of that choice – or without the realization of what they were likely giving up. Population wide consensus on this issue is unlikely any time in the near future. But that shifts the burden to us to inform them of the possible outcomes and perils of their choice. We cannot educate every man, woman

and child, hem wan; but we can reach crucial numbers of individuals to start the conversation in a meaningful way.

The answer to Question C seems to be ‘No’ and yet modern man has repeatedly sought and failed to do just this. The frontier between two cultures is described as one civilized and the other (at the worst) barbarous, savage or (at best) simple or noble. Is this a comparison of religious beliefs or art or language forms? No, respect for those complexities always comes later. At first it is a comparison of technology- with one being ‘higher’ and the other ‘lower’. To be fair, there is more than this going on, and I have neither the wit nor space to paraphrase Jared Diamond’s “Guns, Germs and Steel”; While geographical underpinnings might have had the causal power in giving one society an advantage or edge over another, I am speaking directly to the impact of relative levels of technology between cultures.

But not until modern cultural anthropology have we really considered judging them based on something other than what we value. I feel morally horrified and ethically superior when they mistreat dogs and other animals or when they have unaddressed sexism and domestic abuse. If it was turned around on us- if we were judged by our values- then even though we value egalitarian and humane treatment of animals, our culture is still horrifying and falling short.

It’s Up To US

AT THE RISK OF LOSING YOU, MY reader in a quandary, I give you my (imperfect) answer to this dilemma. I believe in the right of the individual and the collective culture to decide and grow in the direction it sees fit. To determine the wisest direction means

having a proper education and ability to think critically. This is why I am in support of mandatory education- to develop the mind and the character to be capable of good critical thinking skills and being able to make mistakes, bounce back from them and learn from them.

Early on in the 20th century, America had a very ‘hands off’ approach to foreign affairs. In some regards, it seems an isolationist approach is more respectful of other cultures than our last six decades of activity in this sphere. But this is moot- the eggs are broken, we can either throw them away or try to make an omelet. And since we have done the egg breaking ourselves (through aggressive trade, insurgent democracy, infiltrating cultural media, and destruction of resources potentially necessary for self-sufficiency) we cannot take a stance like that of Switzerland or Bhutan. I feel we should- that is, we are morally obligated to try to make something of the situation. Nations like Vanuatu have no opt out option- they have already been contaminated by the outside world, so to speak. So knowing this, how do we do right by them, so that they can develop freely, so that they can choose for themselves their own values?

Given an understanding of the problematic situation facing us as American cultural ambassadors, there is wisdom in Star Trek’s Prime Directive. Like newly graduated medical doctors who take the ages old Hippocratic Oath, “First, Do No Harm,” we as a nation should try to fulfill the Peace Corps Prime Directive- to aid development, build capacity and seek to diminish dependency. The danger is that while we are in country seeking to do just that, American foreign policy is promoting dependency around the world. ☸

Brain Food

A Web Article Hand Picked to Tickle Your Thought Buds

NPR:

How Language Seems To Shape One's View of the World

by Alan Yu - 1/2/2014

LERA BORODITSKY ONCE DID A SIMPLE experiment: She asked people to close their eyes and point southeast. A room of distinguished professors in the U.S. pointed in almost every possible direction, whereas 5-year-old Australian aboriginal girls always got it right.

She says the difference lies in language. Boroditsky, an associate professor of cognitive science at the University of California, San Diego, says the Australian aboriginal language doesn't use words like left or right. It uses compass points, so they say things like "that girl to the east of you is my sister."

If you want to learn another language and become fluent, you may have to change the way you behave in small but sometimes significant ways, specifically how you sort things into categories and what you notice.

Researchers are starting to study how those changes happen, says Aneta Pavlenko, a professor of applied linguistics at Temple University. She studies bilingualism and is the author of an upcoming book on this work.

If people speaking different languages need to group or observe things differently, then bilinguals ought to switch focus depending on the language they use. That's exactly the case, according to Pavlenko.

For example, she says English distinguishes between cups and glasses, but in Russian, the difference between chashka (cup) and stakan (glass) is based on shape, not material.

Based on her research, she started teaching future language teachers how to help their English-speaking students group things in Russian. If English-speaking students of Russian had to sort cups and glasses into different piles, then re-sort into chashka and stakan, they should sort them differently. She says language teachers could do activities like this with their students instead of just memorizing words.

"They feel generally that this acknowledges something that they've long expected, long wanted to do but didn't know how," Pavlenko says. "They felt that it moved them forward, away from teaching pronunciation and doing the 'repeat after me' activities."

Pavlenko points to research showing that if you're hungry, you'll pay more attention to food-related stimuli, and she says speaking another language fluently works the same way.

One's native language could also affect memory, says Pavlenko. She points to novelist Vladimir Nabokov, who was fully trilingual in English, French and Russian. She says Nabokov wrote three memoirs: He published one in English, and when another publishing house asked for one in Russian, he accepted, thinking he would simply translate his first memoir.

"When Nabokov started translating it into Russian, he recalled a lot of things that he did not remember when he was writing it in English, and so in essence it became a somewhat different book," Pavlenko says. "It came out in Russian and he felt that in order to represent his childhood properly to his American readership, he had to produce a new version. So the version of Nabokov's autobiography we know now is actually a third attempt, where he had to recall more things in Russian and then re-translate them from Russian back into English."

Boroditsky also studied the dif-

ferences in what research subjects remembered when using English, which doesn't always note the intent of an action, and Spanish, which does. This can lead to differences in how people remember what they saw, potentially important in eyewitness testimony, she says.

John McWhorter, a linguist at Columbia University, acknowledges such differences but says they don't really matter. The experiments "show that there are these tiny differentials that you can find that seem to correlate with what language you speak," McWhorter says. "Nothing has ever demonstrated that your language makes you process life in a different way. It just doesn't work."

He calls this "the language hoax," which happens to be the title of his upcoming book.

As an example, he refers to modern speakers of a Mayan language, who also use directions that roughly correspond to compass points, rather than left or right. Researchers asked people, most of whom only knew this language, to do tasks like memorizing how a ball moved through a maze, which would have been easier had they thought about it in terms of left and right, rather than compass points. The participants were just as good at these tasks and sometimes better, leading the experimenters to conclude they were not constrained by their language.

Boroditsky disagrees. She says the counterexamples simply prove language isn't the only factor affecting what we notice. Like studying to be a pilot or doctor, she says, learning to speak a different language fluently can also change us, and this means we can learn those changes, like learning any other skill.

"It's like a very extensive training program," Boroditsky says. "There's nothing exotic about the effects that language has on cognition. It's just the same that any learning has on cognition."

Viewable Online At:

npr.org/blogs/health/2013/12/30/258376009/how-language-seems-to-shape-ones-view-of-the-world

Lost & Found in Los Angeles

Zach
Gubser
Former G25,
Ca., USA



I GRAB MY GLOVES... MY BEANIE, MY scarf, my jacket, two pairs of socks, maybe more, jeans, and jump into my sleeping bag inside a sleeping bag. I lay another blanket on top of my face. I am fully enclosed.

This is how I go to sleep every night, 100 feet from the freeway. I am not homeless, but there is no insulation in my room, and it is cold. This isn't a cold I can wipe away or hide from. This is a cold that has seeped into my bones. Even in the sun, I can still feel the crisp night air attacking my toes through the many layers. I could say that I have never been so cold in my life, but that wouldn't be the truth.

I can tell you about December 14, 2012. It was the day I landed at LAX.

We walked out of the terminal to a flash mob of Christmas carolers. It was beautiful. It was the best welcome home we could have gotten.

It was cold.

I wished repeatedly that I hadn't shaved my beard. I had a pair of khakis and a sweatshirt, but they smelled like a third-world country. I didn't own shoes, or socks, or underwear. I had just left Los Angeles two months ago, and it was hard. Everywhere I looked, I was reminded of my failure. It was too much too soon.

I lived with my mom for a few

months, and when my older brother offered me a job doing construction in Denver, I figured I had nothing to lose. I could start my life over free from this shame I felt, this feeling of inferiority.

Joining the Peace Corps was my life. It was what I lived for. It was my craziest, wildest dream come true. The way things went... yeah, I could laugh it off. Most people did. But I was destroyed.

All of the things that had made up the "Temple of Zac" had been knocked down, and I couldn't find the will to put them back together.

Moving to Denver didn't help. I shared driving duties with a ski bum I found on Craigslist, and drove straight through from Oakland to Denver in early February. I can tell you about how I still wore my Chacos on that trip. I can tell you how I saw the sun rise while driving through Nevada, and I can tell you about the feel of snow on my bare toes when I got out of the car in Colorado.

It was cold.

I thought I could start over, but I fell apart. I didn't know anyone. I hated my job as a carpenter. I hated my living situation, and instead of reaching out for help, I folded. I had no goal, no direction.

Every version of the future I had

ever thought of involved life as an RPCV. I had to relearn how to think and be, but I lost my ability to cope. I saw no future. If I couldn't even make it as a PCV, how could I make it in real life? I signed up to join the Marines... and then one day, I had had enough. I called my on-again, off-again girlfriend, and asked her if we could make it work if I moved back to Los Angeles.

I checked my bank account: \$260. Later that same day, I got hurt playing basketball later that night. The ER bill to stitch my face back up? \$250. This was going to be interesting.

I moved back to L.A. on July 4th, the place I had run from when I first arrived back to America. It was the city I could not face, because every street was a bittersweet memory. I got a job, and I worked on my relationship, and I saw my friends, and you know what? I was still unhappy.

I thought that moving back would transform me, but I was the same, and that's when I realized that I needed to change. I had what I thought I wanted; I didn't have a scapegoat anymore, and it still wasn't working. Was I broken?

I knew I had to focus on becoming a functioning human being. It was tough. Before I left for the Peace Corps, I had faced my demons. I had conversations with people I never thought I would talk to again, and saw places that existed only in my dimmest

memories. I had climbed mountains, both literally and figuratively, and here I was, struggling to find a reason to get up in the morning.

I now work as a gymnastics teacher/ babysitter in West LA, teaching kids somersaults, and that not every bump and bruise is as bad as it seems. I am learning how to teach, something that the Peace Corps put in my path. I am single, free from my military contract, and am learning how to deal with the unexpected, whether it be a kid with a face covered in boogers, or my transmission giving out on the car ride home.

I recently met a girl from PNG, and we were able to speak together in pidgin. I

sang to her the songs my family had taught me in Vanuatu, and because of my experience, I was able to connect with this other person in a way neither of us ever thought would happen. It was a beautiful moment, and for the first time since I came back, I took a deep breath and told myself “I am okay with my life. I can do this.”

I brought home a lot of things from Vanuatu, but besides the knickknacks my family gave to me before my depart-



- MSH

Cooking a Chicken, Step Two — Zach Gubser kills a fowl by dashing its head against a post as part of a food prep class during training.

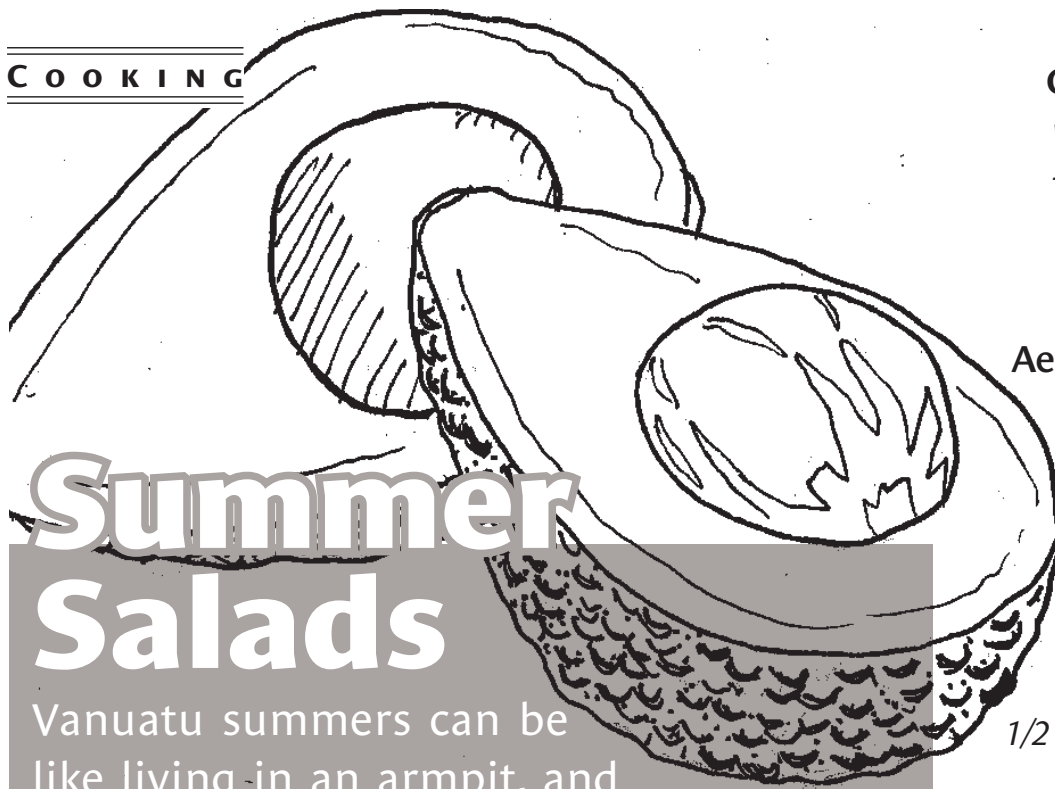
ing flight, I’m not sure what most of them are- they are things I can’t quite put into words. It’s something in the air, and in the way I see the world.

I always miss how long the days were in Vanuatu. Every day felt like three, and I try to capture that feeling when I can, that feeling of timelessness; that it is always now. I have spent my time in Los Angeles waking up those parts of me that had lain dormant for the past half year. I have been

to smile; how to open up and talk to people again; but most importantly, I have been learning to love- myself as well as others.

I always wanted a perfect life, but things never quite worked out that way, so I settled on a productive life, and lo and behold it was not to be, so I decided on a beautiful life, and that has made all the difference. ☸

Jen
Green
VITEL,
Tanna



Aelan Caprese

- 3 ripe tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 avocado
- 1 tbsp olive oil.
- 1/2 tsp dried basil

pepper and salt to taste

DICE THE GARLIC, AND COMBINE WITH olive oil and and basil in a small bowl. Set aside. Now cut your tomatoes in half from pole to pole, then slice them about 1/3" thick.

Peel the avocado by halving it, removing the seed, then turning the halves down on your cutting surface. Use the tip of your knife to slice through the skin of the avocado from pole to pole—as though you were going to quarter it, but not cutting too deeply. Then pick up each half of avocado and peel the skin away in two pieces, rather like you would the skin of a banana. Cut the avocado halves into thinner 1/4" slices.

On a plate or in a shallow dish, layer tomato and avocado slices. If you're not fussy about presentation, you can also just pitch it all into the same bowl. Drizzle the olive oil with garlic and basil over the tomatoes and avocado, and scoot the pieces around with your fingers to coat them in oil. Dust pepper and salt on top. Allow to set 10 – 30 minutes, covered. If you have bread, you can toast that and throw the caprese on top.

Summer Salads

Vanuatu summers can be like living in an armpit, and the last thing you want to do when coated in sweat is tend a fire. The following recipes are simple fruit and vegetable salads with interesting flavors. These aren't meals, but can round out and enhance other island staples.

Popo Salad

- 1 medium popo, peeled, seeded, and chunked
- juice of 2 limes
- 1 – 2 tsp honey

PEEL YOUR POPO AND CHOP IT INTO 1" chunks. Dump these in a large bowl. Juice your limes as above, pouring the juice over the popo. (Don't worry about escaped seeds.) Drizzle the honey over the popo, then turn once to coat. Can sit for thirty minutes, covered, for flavors to meld.

Note: Be careful not to do this with a popo that's too ripe. A really ripe popo will dissolve into a mush that closely resembles (and tastes like!) applesauce. If this does happen to you, just add a dash of cinnamon.

Sriracha Watermelon/ Pineapple Salad

- 2 cups peeled, chunked watermelon or pineapple
- 2 tsp Sriracha sauce
- 1 lime or lemon, juiced and zested

TO ZEST THE LIME, USE A GRATER IF YOU have one. If not, just juice the lime thoroughly: roll it between your palms until the fruit is softened, the cut in half and press the juice out with your fingers. Mix juice and Sriracha together in a large bowl, then mix chopped fruit in slowly, turning to coat. Allow to sit covered for one hour before eating, if possible.

Emia, No Em



Working With Dry Beans

PROTEIN AND FIBER ARE HARD to find on the island, but dried beans and peas are a great source of both. Some tips if you want to try them at site:

1 Most beans need to soak before being cooked. To soak, put the dried beans in a dish and pick through them quickly to remove any small stones or bad ‘uns that might be mixed in. Then cover the beans with triple their volume in water. Chickpeas and Mung beans can soak eight hours/overnight; peas, red and black beans may need a full day. Lentils do not need to be soaked, so they’re great when you’re short on time.

2 Once your beans have soaked, you’ll need to boil them—especially if you plan to use them in a recipe that calls for canned beans. (Canned beans are pre-cooked.) Cooking is simple: use double their volume of water, add some salt, and keep the pot on a slow boil, adding water as needed. Cooking over fire (gas or wood) will reduce cooking times if the heat is consistent.

3 Lentils are available cheaply at Leader Price and at Punja’s (where they may be called dal or split peas.) Buy several vari-

Don’t let the lack of familiar ingredients limit your dishes. Try these nifty substitutions for common American vegetables. »

eties and store them in the big screw-top peanut butter jars. One 500g bag can make several large meals, because a cup of dried lentils or Mung beans usually cooks into about four servings. (Bigger beans make less.)

4 Not all lentils are the same. Some have husks (French green/Puy lentils) where others (yellow, red) will not. Lentils with husks retain their shape when cooked (for a lentil salad, say) while lentils without dissolve into a thick purée (like a dal). If you use the wrong kind, don’t worry: only the texture of the dish will be affected.

5 It’s a good idea to buy some canned beans for those nights when you really do not want to cook. Canned chickpeas can be used to make hummus (just add garlic and lemon) or added to bulk up packaged soup or plain rice.

6 Beans and lentils are common in Ethiopian, Indian, and Caribbean cuisine, so these are all great places to go for recipe inspiration.

Beans require you to think ahead, which can be a little overwhelming on the island, but don’t be scared: beans are a really forgiving ingredient with a great nutritional profile. And as always, if you have questions, you can just call for help.

Carrot
Unripe or semi-ripe popo (add later), kumala
Spinach
Young greenbone or white-bone cabbage.
Kale, Chard, Collard
Aelan cabbage, watercress
Arugula Salad Greens
Watercress, Young greenbone leaves (no stem)
Potatoes (mashed)
Taro Fiji, Taro (fluffiest), yam.
Potatoes (stew, baked)
Yam, Taro, Kumala
Winter Squash
Pumpkin
Summer Squash
Susut/chuko, snake bean (zucchini), unripe popo (yellow squash)
Broccoli stems, celery, green pepper
Snake bean, susut/choko, gree popo, cabbage
Ground hamburger
Lentil
Chunked Chucken
Chickpeas
Tofu
Yam, eggplant
Pear, apples
Popo with llemon juice
Peach
Mango
Mayonnaise
Butterfruit homade mayo
Lemon, lime
Any citrus

Staying Fit at Site

Loosen Up

Divya
Cassity
CH, Maewo >
Efate



HAPPY HOLIDAYS everyone! Along with the holidays typically comes the gift of extra pounds. You know with all the extra laplap, alcohol and late night string band dancing, who can blame us. After careful consideration I have decided to pump up the volume (Yes I did just say that). Anyway, here is a workout with few moves that will shock your body and keep things fresh. But first here are some health tips for you to shed those unwanted lbs.

Health Reminders

- 1** Three to Four liters of water every day.
- 2** An hour of cardiovascular exercise everyday, such as:
 - Swimming
 - Sports
 - Brisk Walk
 - Running (chasing chickens included)
- 3** Three meals a day and no snacks. Meals should be the size of your cupped hands.
- 4** Get at least 8 hours of sleep every night.

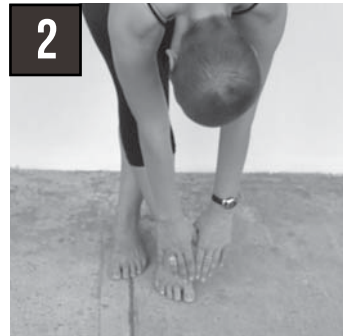
Stretching

Each stretch should be done while holding for 30 seconds to 2 minutes each, or 5 breaths.



1 Toe Reaching

WHILE STANDING UP bring feet together and reach for your toes. Then, cross one leg over the other and reach for the foot that is on the outside, Switch.

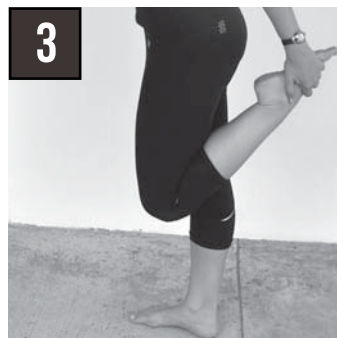


2

Standing

Quadriceps Stretch

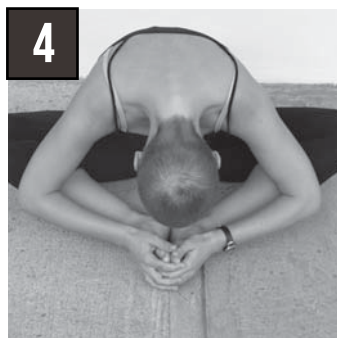
WHILE STANDING bring one foot behind and hold it with the same side hand, moving your hips forward, Switch.



3

Butterfly Stretch

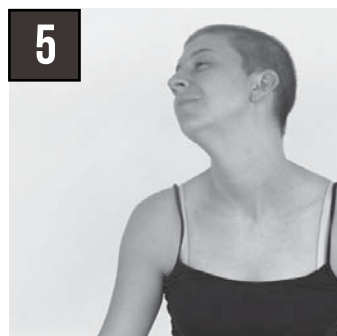
WHILE SITTING WITH your knees bent bring your feet together and bring your nose to your toes while sticking your butt back behind you.



4

Arm Stretch

SITTING OR STANDING cross one arm straight over your chest while pulling with the other arm, Switch.



5

Neck Rolls

WHILE SITTING AND starting with your chin reaching for your chest, move your chin and head in a circular motion as many times as feels good to you and then switch directions.

Chest Stretch-

REACH BEHIND YOU and interlace fingers while straightening the arms and lifting them up towards the sky.

Get Down

Workout

Clear out a place in your hut, throw on a high energy playlist and get down with these high-octane workouts. Remember to listen to your body, if it doesn't feel right then it probably isn't. Better to skip to the next one than risk an injury.

One legged dead lift drop

Targets abs, butt, legs

1 Stand on left leg, right knee lifted to hip height: raise arms out to sides and bend elbows (to resemble a goalpost)

2 Keeping back flat and arms raised, hinge forward, extend right leg behind you (body is parallel to floor, head to right heel).

3 Reverse motion, returning upright, and as right knee lifts forward, push off left leg to jump up

4 Land softly on left leg and repeat

5 Continue for 30 seconds, trying not to let right leg touch floor. Switch sides and repeat for 30 seconds

Plank

Straddle-Hop

Targets shoulders,

triceps, abs, butt, inner thighs, outer thighs

1 Start on floor in plank position with feet hip width apart, balancing on forearms and toes. Elbows directly under shoulders, palms flat on floor.

2 Hop feet out to sides into a wide v. then hop feet back to start position

3 Straighten arms, pressing palms into floor (hands will be slightly in front of shoulders on floor).

4 Reverse motion, lowering forearms to floor

5 Repeat for 30 to 45 seconds

Pop-Up

Targets shoulders, triceps, butt, legs

1 Lie face down on floor, palms next to chest, toes turned under

2 Do a push-up using upward momentum to jump left foot in between hands and quickly stand up into a plié squat as you bring hands besides chest

3 Reverse motion to start

4 Continue for 45 seconds alternation legs.

Double Jump

Targets abs, butt, legs

1 Stand with feet hip width apart and arms by sides. Lower into a deep squat and bring hands together in front of chest

2 Jump as high as you can and land in lunge position with left leg forward (bend both knees 90 degrees)

3 Jump as high as you can again and land in squat position

4 Repeat with right leg forward. Continue alternating for 45 seconds.

Plié Squat Jump

Targets abs, butt, legs

1 Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and toes pointing outward. Lower down into a deep plié squat with your hands in front of you.

2 Jump as high as you can, tapping heels together in midair

3 Land with knees soft in plié squat position

4 Repeat for 45 seconds

Lateral lunge

Targets abs, butt, legs

1 Step left leg out to left side, bending left knee while keeping right leg straight; hinge body forward from waist. Touch right hand to floor between feet and place left hand on top of left thigh.

2 Pushing off left heel, shuffle to right two times. Ending in side lunge to right with right knee bent and left leg straight; touch left hand to floor between feet.

3 Repeat on left side, using right heel.

4 Continue for 45 seconds alternating sides.



All but one of these photos were taken near the south coast of Santo (Starting at top, going clockwise) 1) Abu James Karai in Parissa village. 2) In Lekavatamel, central Pentecost, a mama makes natangura while looking after her two children. 3) Andre smiling in Haseviah village 4) Jonson on the beach of South Santo near Wilapa 5) Simeon burns dry leaves after clearing out a field in Namalo village.





**Michael
Hawkins**
*VITEL,
Santo*

Shoot Your Friends, Not the ‘Natives’

WELCOME G26, I’M SURE YOU’RE READY to get out there and shoot photos of all the cool, new things you’re seeing and I’d like to share a couple tips, some that I picked up in Vanuatu. I used to be a portrait photographer, with subjects ranging from corporate executives to Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. In Vanuatu, I’ve given photo workshops on Ambae and Petecost and I contribute regularly to the Facebook page “Humans of Vanuatu.” You can see my work (including what is published here) at www.flickr.com/michaelspearhawkins.

Chat first

WHEN YOU FIND A SCENE, OR A GROUP of people you want to take a photo of, spend a few moments engaging and talking with the people. Ni-Vanuatu love to chat and after a few minutes the natural guard is down. Asking to take a photo can be a great way to get to know someone- and to make new friends.

The name game

FEELING STUCK WITH NOTHING TO DO? Go search out people you’ve never met and ask to take their photo. You’ll have an interesting photo and a new friend. Plus, it’s easy to ask for their name, or even show the photo to someone else and ask them to identify the person.

For good expressions

DO A SILLY DANCE, LAUGH OR MAKE A FUNNY FACE. It often produces a genuine smile that doesn’t look posed, and your subject won’t be staring nervously into your lens.

Pay attention to the sun

THE BEST LIGHT FOR PHOTOS IS IN THE mornings and the evening when the light is coming at or near horizontal to your subject. The middle of the day people hide in the shade, get in the shade stay cool and maybe make use of the soft light under the nebanga or mango tree.

Portraits appreciated

DON’T BE AFRAID TO JUST TAKE A FEW candid shots of someone. If you want to, or if they catch you just smile and show them the photo(s). In my experience people happily say “thank you” to me for taking their picture.

Shoot Everything

SCHOOL OPENINGS, WORKSHOPS, BIG kakais, holidays, events, church. If people expect you to have a camera it’s not out of the ordinary. They’ll feel comfortable and you won’t have to worry about feeling intrusive.

Don’t abuse flash

NO ONE LIKES LIGHTS POPPING OFF IN their face. If you’re unaware, look for a little “lightening bolt” on your camera’s controls. Play with that and learn how to tell your flash what to do. If it’s an intimate moment, or you are taking a photo of something more than 3 meters away turn your flash off.

If you choose to take photos at a nakamal, don’t use your flash once people have already had a shell. In the dark eyes become dilated and kava often makes you very light sensitive.

Keep it dry

DRY BAGS, SMALL ONES, IF YOU HAVE them be sure to stash one or two in your pack for those unexpected showers. So you can keep the camera close and not worry much about it getting wet because the sky is looking gray.

IF YOU BROUGHT FANCY DSLR LENSES be sure to get a dry container/bag with some silica gel or desiccant (stuff that soaks moisture). Store them in when you’re not using them. Fungus thrives in heavy humidity and grows on the coating inside the lenses. If your lenses are showing signs of mold, lock your aperture wide open and put them out lens up to “sun” with your mattress and pillow on those really sunny days for an hour or so. Fungus hates light, especially team wea sun i strong tumas. ☹️



#1

Barefoot in the bush

Ten fish and a forest fire

Just another child's play day

On the hunt for wild fowl

For us horse-runners

it's a lifelong summer

No wonder nothing ever gets done

but growing up together

#2

This dream didn't take long

to worm its way out of that deep,

black dirt of idle fantasy

and into the inescapable now

Lofty thoughts of hidden meaning

lost in animal smells

and the grease of strange dinners

You asked for this headache

Believing in magic again already

Who would have thought?

I have powers you can't begin to understand

curled up and sleeping like a baby

#3

Turn the generator off - DH

The baby can't get to sleep

One of these dogs is going to kill the other

for a bone without any meat

Tighten your belt, the Milky Way

is too far off tonight

Overripe fruit falling rhythmically

Leaving an empty space in the night

Amazons shaking the tree

hidden only by my primitive insect eyes

seeing only motion

only what I want to see

Bite that poison apple, smoke

No air to choke on here

Forced to explore other options

Struggling against the rack,

going slack and then

actually growing a better back

Five-to-nine lifestyle

Two years to life

Why do I write why do I write

Found in a Notebook

BY

DENIS
HART

LAST SHELL

