

## 2005 Guatemala Mission Team Daily News

Ron Amberg, Communications

Number 6, August 17, 2005

Spring Valley United Methodist Church

Part of the team travels to the Urbina Clinic in Xela. Others at Comanchaj make beds. Our reporters this time are Carol Baughn, Betty Reichel, Terry Baughn, and Frank Andersen.



### **DAY FIVE, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2005** **SPRING VALLEY GUATEMALA MISSION TEAM**

#### **Carol Baughn:**

Greetings from Guatemala.

This has been a very exciting trip so far. Jan [Andersen] and I took vital signs Monday and Tuesday at the Comanchaj clinic. I also managed to wander in and out of the pharmacy, and threw buckets of concrete into a hole... a big hole.

Today a small group of us went to Xela to see the patients there. The patients at both clinics this year have not seemed as ill as last year... Maybe they are coming on a regular basis so the diseases do not progress to a more severe state. All seem so appreciative of the care they are receiving at the clinics.

The countryside on the way to Xela this year was absolutely spectacular!! I'm looking forward to working outside tomorrow barring any unforeseen changes.

Happy birthday, Chris.

- Carol Baughn

#### **Betty Reichel:**

What a joy to return to Salud y Paz and see the buildings we finished last year in use. One room is used for a kitchen, a bedroom, storage, and a bathroom. They have make shift beds so today Terry [Baughn] will start building beds made of wood. He is to make a "matrimonial" (the term used for a double bed) and two sets of bunk beds.

The team is working well together and it is rewarding to watch the enthusiasm of those who are "first timers". It is difficult to get them to pace themselves because of their eagerness to work. It is so easy to fall in love with the work and people. There is not an unwilling missionary or a task too difficult. The tools are crude and we wish we had a Home Depot or Lowes to rent tools and equipment like home.

Today, Ted [Butler] and I sifted sand and when Robert [Gross] came over to help, we sent him after a bucket of dirt to sift. Ted started sifting the dirt Robert brought and I looked down and saw coins in the sifter. I got so



Urbina Team  
The team is leaving for the Urbina Clinic at 7:00 A.M.



Urbina Clinic  
These were patients waiting for us at the Urbina Clinic.

excited and told Robert he brought good luck to the job. I took off to get dirt from the same place that I saw Robert get his dirt from and when I dumped the dirt in the sifter and Ted began sifting again I saw more coins. I was ready to keep on sifting; as I wanted to find more coins. But we had filled the wheel barrow and it needed to dump. I was ready to continue sifting; but was told that we had enough sifted sand for now. When I went to

give the coins I pulled from the sifter to Robert, he finally confessed that Ted had planted the coins. Then Robert and Ted had a good laugh and I called Ted a real stinker. Those guys really had a good laugh.

Today Israel the little boy who lives next door came over looking for Lucy [Hemming]. You should have seen the smile on Lucy's face when we told her that he was looking for her.

Since I am too tired to write at night Jerry [Malone] was nice enough to bring his computer to the work site for me to write during the day. So I had better close and get back to work.

Many blessings from Guatemala,

- Betty Reichel



Building Beds – The construction team at Comanchaj built the first of two bunk beds. The contractors helping with construction were sleeping on the floor until our team built them a bed. (The three team members in front, left-to-right, are Jerry Malone, Robert Gross, and Terry Baughn.)

### **Terry Baughn:**

Day 3      Wednesday, August 17, 2005

We have spent 3 full days on the construction of the perimeter wall at the clinic. The block height has finally cleared ground level. The Jefa (construction boss) has keep us moving at a good pace. We spent most of Monday digging the ditch; Tuesday the steel was fabricated and the footer was poured; and Wednesday we laid block and started back filling the ditch. For a work team of people just over the age of 39, the work has been fatiguing.

A crew also went to get wood to build beds. The beds are for the caretaker and also for people who have had surgery and need to spend the night at the clinic. There is no local Home Depot. The trip exceeded 2 hours, sort of like Home Depot on Saturday. Apparently you don't just go buy a 2 x 4. At the mill a log was cut as directed not allowing much time for the wood to dry out. We have assembled one of two bunk beds. I think next year we will be back to tighten the screws.

Happy Birthday Chris

- Terry



Finished Bed – the finished product.  
The contractors are sleeping comfortably tonight!

## Frank Andersen:

### A Medical Note ...

Six of us went to the Urbina clinic in Quetzaltenango. It's a two hour drive from Chichicastenango to Urbina (Phil Plunk makes that trip each Monday and Tuesday to come to the Comanchaj clinic). We were better



People at the Urbina Clinic showing their appreciation for receiving photos of their families. Ginny Bitting gets a hug from a Mayan lady.

prepared for the differences – Urbina is an urban clinic and the patients are different than in the very rural Comanchaj site. They tend to be more demanding, ask more questions, and typically come with multiple complaints. All told, Dr. Freddy and I saw 52 patients today. Compared to last year, I saw very little dysentery (only 2 cases) – perhaps people are doing better with clean water. Nearly everyone had aches and pains as part of their problems – we give out a lot of ibuprofen (Advil). My most interesting cases were a severe case of acne (an 18 year old young man) – fortunately, we had the proper antibiotic ointment for acne, so I hope he will make progress. Another young man had seizures – he was treated for a few years, but then ran out of medication. Hopefully, he will return each month to continue his medication now. I also saw half a dozen gynecology problems (finally something in my area!), but you probably don't want to know the details! One thing I noticed is that very few people smoke –

perhaps the only positive side effect of poverty is that people don't have enough money to buy cigarettes.

The most fun is taking care of children. They mostly come with diarrhea (less frequent this year), ear infections, or rashes. One young boy with vomiting and diarrhea (one of only two today) told me he only drank boiled water or bottled water. A few minutes later, he added that he "sometimes drinks out of the pipe at school." It's a hard lesson to learn. Yesterday we finished clinic so early that I got drafted into the construction team. After an afternoon of shoveling sand and carrying cement buckets, I'm real happy to have a full day of patients!

We did have some time at the end of the Urbina clinic today to help with some cleaning, reorganizing and building shelves for the pharmacy. The clinic is making excellent progress. They are building dormitories to house visiting teams. A wall has been completed around the back of the clinic. It's much like the Comanchaj clinic – we are amazed at the changes from last year. It's good to know that we are part of a growing and developing project that is bringing health and wellness to people who need it badly.



People at the Urbina Clinic showing their appreciation for receiving photos of their families. Don Barnes received a big smile!

- Frank Andersen, MD