

2008 Guatemala Mission Team Daily News

Ron Amberg, Communications

Number 3, July 20, 2008

Spring Valley United Methodist Church



The focal point of a Sunday in Chichicastenango is Market Day! ... When that task is complete, it is off to Cunen.

Joni Copeland and Mark Jacobson report.

DAY TWO, SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2008

SPRING VALLEY / EVERETT GUATEMALA MISSION TEAM

Joni Copeland:

Hi! From the Highlands of Guatemala! It is so good to be back! Our Sunday started in Chichicastenango at the Casa del Rey Hotel with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. with French toast and fresh fruit, coffee, and the crisp morning air. The excited chatter at breakfast was determining who was buying what at the market in Chichi besides picking up our much needed supplies at the local grocer for our 4.5 hours up the mountain. This part of the trip most of us knew, was the trickiest and most beautiful; not so great roads sometimes, and tons of switchbacks and tight hairpin turns and for me, my nickname "Joni-don't look" brought lots of laughs as I either shut my eyes, looked away, gripped the seat for life, and or all three at once, gritting my teeth and saying prayers!! Just



Back: Frank Andersen, Robert Gross, Liz Gross, Jerry Malone, Michael Johnson, Jan Andersen, Mark Jacobson, Andrew Horton-Loup

Middle: Norma Warner, Kay Eubanks, Sue Metzler, Raoul (interpreter), Shelly Johnson, Daniel (interpreter), Raoul (interpreter), Bekki Beverly, Peggy Gilbert, Meghann Beverly

Kneeling: Lucy Hemming, Liao (driver), Joan Copeland



In front of Santo Thomas church in Chichicastenango Sunday morning.

ask anyone—it's all true! The roads were so bumpy, you could cut a cord of wood with how much our teeth were knocking from our heads bobbing! AND WE were so close to cars and trucks in the narrow village streets, I could shave the guys beards in them!! The bus driver deserves a medal!

But we were on our way, every mile getting us closer to our home for the week—to the people we love, to our place where God is sending us to make a difference. We see their faces; we feel their heart beats. All along the way, we watch them, walking their cattle, carrying their livelihoods on their backs or heads home or to market; many with children—but all curious, looking up as we pass. Who are these people, wondering why are they coming here. They don't know that God is sending

us; that people in Dallas and Everett are also praying for them, our extended family in Guatemala.

We are missing one of our team however. Susan hopes to join us tomorrow once they straighten out her passport problem. We miss her so much already! We finally make it here to Cunen as sun is setting. The greenest of mountains embrace us with open arms; we breathe a sigh a loving triumph to once again be here to give of our hearts, minds, and hands of God's love. We arrive at our same little hotel as last year, so familiar and calling us. Our work is already beginning, organizing, setting the week's agenda. We have team devotions led so beautifully by Jan Andersen, emphasizing our reason for being here—to show by action God's love to the Guatemalan people. We are so fortunate to serve and to make a positive difference in their lives. Tomorrow morning, God's Blessings rain, right here, in very special ways. Thank you for helping us be here!

- Joni Copeland RN

Mark Jacobson:

Ola from Cunen (like the spice, only different)! Day 2 started like a typical day 2 for your intrepid Salud Y Paz missionaries: up before daylight, hardscrabble breakfast of scrambled eggs and mystery meat, French toast, black beans, sautéed bananas, and the like @ oh, around 7:30; back to the room for an hour or so to prep for the day's onslaught.

9:00 o'clock finds us winding our way through the deadly turns of the streets of Chichi (not unlike the streets of Laredo). After a quick briefing (which is any less than an hour) by Robert Gross, we broke up into squads of shoppers to see what damage we could do in the infamous Chichi market.

11:30 arrives and we gather @ the Hotel Santo Thomas for buffet lunch and little R&R after our ordeal @ market. Then it's back to the bus to depart for our mission destination of Cunen.

Tragedy strikes! Poor Susan Hanchey has lost her passport and after searching everywhere finally decides she'd better hang around town until she can sort this problem out. Hopefully she'll be able to rejoin us later in the week.



This is the mudslide that held us up for an hour on the road to Cunen.



Overlooking Cunen on the way into the town.

We depart Chichi w/ light hearts and several stops to make before we reach home in Cunen. As we round one of myriad hairpin turns, we're greeted by strike number 2: apparently a water line adjacent to the road has broken and sent a mudslide down to block our way (along w/ a few other honking vehicles). Fortunately, a road crew was already on-site and had the way cleared in fairly short order (not much longer than one of Robert's briefings).

Shortly after our last pit stop, we're literally ascending into the clouds when we notice flashing lights in the rearviews, and it ain't Xmas! That's right, the local constabulary are pulling us over, and that's not easy on a 2-lane road w/ hairpin turns and no shoulders! Our driver got out and

sweet-talked us back on the road, finally arriving @ our destination around 6:30.

A full day to say the least, but here we stand, ready to jump into our mission w/ both feet in the morning, whatever that mission might be (we're not quite sure @ this point; film @ 11)!

Yours truly,
Mark J

Ps: Hi, Martha!