

## Report No. 11 from Alto Cayma – 17 Aug 08

### Arequipa Day

On Friday Arequipa celebrated its 468<sup>th</sup> birthday, and what a party it was! Every year on this anniversary the streets of Arequipa are thronged with people. Many streets downtown are closed to vehicular traffic and are given over to pedestrians and street vendors (and also, unfortunately, to pickpockets and other petty thieves who come from all over the country to “work the crowd”). There is a big concert along the riverfront the night before, but the cultural centerpiece of the entire celebration, called the “Corso”, takes place on the 15<sup>th</sup>. This is a parade of scores of floats, musical groups and folkloric dance troupes which goes on for 11 hours. It’s incredible!

Although Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> was the big day, we and the girls of Creaciones Angel started celebrating on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup>. The girls fixed a typical Arequipan lunch for us, consisting of stuffed hot red peppers and scalloped potatoes. Gloria gave the girls a small pay bonus to spend over the holiday weekend, funded with the deliberate overpayment by one of our visitor customers from last February who insisted that the cards she ordered were worth more than we were charging. Later that afternoon we took the girls downtown to Capriccio for pizza and capuccino, compliments of Kelly Morris, who left money for this purpose behind after his most recent visit in February of this year. Going downtown even on Thursday afternoon, we had to abandon the car and walk to our destination because there was so much activity in the streets. By the time the big day of the actual anniversary arrived, we were happy to stay up in Alto Cayma and enjoy the peace and tranquility.

### Serving Alto Cayma

The parents of Miguel Angel have made an appointment for him to see the audiologist in Lima on Aug 25 to have his cochlear implant activated. Money from Chris Connelly’s Handicapped Medical Fund has been forwarded to Lima to guarantee this appointment. Aug 25 just happens to be Miguel Angel’s 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. What a birthday present this will be!

Victor and Lidia are now high-fiving over the acquisition of “gently used” laptop computers for each of them. These computers were donated by Ralph and Marinell Bostian and David Hodgkins from our visiting Dilworth Rotary group (see **Visitors** below). These computers will be invaluable in helping them stay on top of the considerable number of accounts each of them is responsible for managing under Serving Alto Cayma.

## Visitors

Victor and Chabelita, our visitors from Lima, returned to Lima on the overnight bus Monday evening. By all appearances, they left contented, impressed and inspired by all they saw and participated in while here.

The long-awaited group of 9 visitors organized by Dilworth Rotary arrived on Saturday. This is a real mixed group, consisting of 5 Rotarians from 3 different clubs, accompanied by 4 family members. Four of the nine have been here before, and the other 5 are “newbies”, including Karen Shore, our next District Governor in D7680 (NC, USA). They were supposed to arrive in time to participate in the Acercádonos birthday party Saturday afternoon, but their flight out of Lima was delayed, so they arrived just as the party was ready to break up. At least they got a chance to meet the Acercádonos staff, the girls from Creaciones Angel who help out with these parties, and the “ahijados” (sponsees) who were celebrating their August birthdays, and Ed King got to dance with Angélica, his ahijada who just turned 75. We had asked these visitors to bring a lot of stuff to donate, and they brought much more than we asked for.

This is going to be a very busy, but productive, week for the Dilworth group. They will be selecting recipients for 2 university scholarships (see **Salir Adelante** below), performing one hands-on construction project, planning and funding at least two additional Home Improvement Initiative construction projects, and presenting another bicycle to a deserving recipient (see **Rotary Projects** below). Father Alex’ big white van is in the shop awaiting the arrival of a spare part from the States, so we’re improvising transportation by chartering 2 taxicabs to complement Victor’s car.

### **Salir Adelante (“Getting Ahead”) Educational Sponsorships**

The monthly meeting of Salir Adelante took place on Saturday morning, before the visitors arrived. Starting this month, we imposed the same system of fines for tardiness as are used in the Creaciones Angel cardshop, and they seem to be equally effective in both places. Only a handful of the students arrived late. We welcomed Marcia, the girl I wrote about last week, to the group as its 29<sup>th</sup> member. The students then presented their own program in honor of Arequipa Day, recounting legends, singing songs and reciting poems reflecting Arequipa’s history and culture. We also celebrated a couple of birthdays – Isela’s and Dorian’s – with Gloria and me stuck with paying for the cake, since the “take” on the tardiness fines was so meager. While all this was going on, Lidia was conducting individual interviews with the students to give them their money for the month and deal with any issues they may be struggling with at the moment. Right now there are several of

them who want to change schools for a variety of reasons. For the most part, their reasons appear sound, so it's a matter of helping them make the transition.

This week, with the Dilworth group visiting, we will add 2 new members to Salir Adelante. Marinell and Ralph Bostian will be interviewing candidates for a nursing scholarship which they are awarding, and Karen Shore will be interviewing candidates with unrestricted majors for a scholarship from her Mooresville-Lake Norman Rotary Club. It's really gratifying to see the group grow like this, knowing that these scholarships truly will change lives.

### **Rotary Projects**

The Grant Coordinator in Evanston has confirmed that everything submitted on the Charlotte Rotary Water Project is complete and in order, so now we just have to wait (hopefully not long) for the order for the funds to be released.

Last week we had a chance to meet Alex, the Rotary Youth Exchange student from Ilo, Peru, who by now is in Mooresville, NC, to begin his year of exchange studies. We also met Alex' older sister, Valerie, a former RYE student to California, and his younger brother, Angel. This family will be hosting Alexis, our D7680 RYE student, who will be arriving in Peru next weekend. The mother of this family is an active Rotarian in Ilo, and Alex is actually the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4 children to be a RYE student. (Alex' oldest brother, Rogelio, spent his year in Michigan.) We look forward to being able to stay in touch with both ends of this Alex-Alexis Axis, and reporting on their activities from time to time.

We have selected José Nuñoncca as the recipient of the second bicycle in the Southwest Cabarrus Rotary Club's project to provide bikes to the people in Alto Cayma who deserve and/or need them most. In José's case, he scores well in both departments. In a culture where many men simply abandon their families, José is a single parent who is doing an excellent job of raising his son, Christian. He works as a night watchman who has to make rounds covering a large area, so he can actually put the bike to good use in his work as well. José went with Victor on Friday to pick out the bike he wanted, and it will be formally presented to him by the visiting Rotarians on Monday.

## **Shocking News**

We have just learned that the Capriccio coffee shop on Mercaderes Street will be closing on Sep 1 for approximately 1 month. It seems that the drainage system underneath that street has a serious problem which will require completely tearing the street up, to the point that there won't even be pedestrian access. Since projects like this rarely finish when they're supposed to, we probably won't see the reopening of Capriccio before our Oct 5 departure from Arequipa, so we'll spend the last 5 weeks of our current stay in deep mourning.

## **Motorcycle Diarrheas**

The other day I was cruising through my neighborhood on my mighty Wanxin motorcycle, waving to all my neighbors, when suddenly one-each medium-sized and one- each large-sized doggy came running at me. While I was concentrating my attention on the large-sized doggy, the medium-sized one chomped my right foot! I raised my foot to take it away from him, but he came right along with it. At this point I was needing to round a turn in loose volcanic sand, and in my concentration on not falling down as I executed this maneuver while waving a medium-sized doggy in the air off my right foot, I was no longer able to monitor the position, activities and attitude of the large-sized doggy, and I didn't know how close he might be to chomping some portion of my venerable self. I therefore resolved, and timely executed, that as soon as I had the bike straightened out from the turn, I was going to enter the medium-sized doggy in the Guinness Book of World Records in the category of "fastest trip taken down a dirt road by a doggy hanging from a foot", all in the interests of preventing the large-sized doggy from possibly entering ME in the same book, in the category of "largest trophy ever taken by a doggy in Alto Cayma". Fortunately the medium-sized doggy declined to stay aboard for his record run, and I was able to make my speedy exit in full control of the situation, even looking back over my shoulder and shouting, "And see if I don't do it again!"

“Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma”,

Jim