

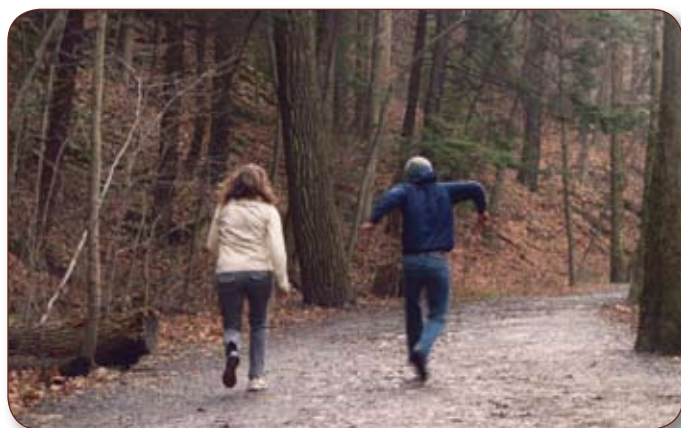
DISCOVERING DEAF WORLDS

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

AUGUST 2007

WWW.DISCOVERINGDEAFWORLDS.COM

...AND WE'RE OFF!



Fall 2007: First stop...New Zealand! Famous for bungee jumping, kiwis (that's a type of bird and slang for locals, not the fruit), mountain scenes from **Lord of the Rings**, and the longest place name in the world, Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapikimaungahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu. The name has 85 letters (we counted) and translates

to the summit where Tamatea, the man with the big knees, the climber of mountains, the land-swallower who traveled about, played his flute to his loved one. In reality, it's just a hill.

So off to Auckland, NZ we will go with our one-way ticket from Los Angeles, CA. It's a strange feeling to know we will be traveling west...and we'll just keep on traveling west until we get back where we started! Our current itinerary, though likely to change, is:

- October/November '07: New Zealand
- December '07: Australia
- January '08: Japan
- February '08: China
- March/April '08: Thailand
- May/June/July '08: Nepal/India
- August '08: Kenya

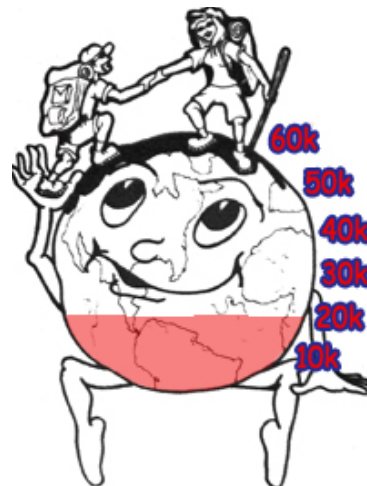
We want to stay flexible enough to take advantage

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WHAT IS DDW?

Discovering Deaf Worlds (DDW) is an opportunity to connect international Deaf communities from all walks of life. Dave Justice and Christy Smith will travel the world to meet with Deaf storytellers, community leaders, youth and organizations. They will document their adventure and feed their website with video logs (in sign languages and captions), photos, and newsletter articles. For more information, visit: www.discoveringdeafworlds.com.

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL!



Artwork by Yolanda Mosher, Portland, OR, 2007

DONATE ONLINE AT

WWW.DISCOVERINGDEAFWORLDS.COM

DISCOVERING DEAF WORLDS KICK-OFF EVENT AT ROWE PHOTO

SAVE THE DATE!

When: Saturday, October 6, 2007
11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Where: Rowe Photo, Buckman's Plaza
www.rowephoto.com
2590 West Ridge Road
Rochester, NY



Come celebrate and join in sending Dave & Christy off on their Around the World Tour!

- Hear the stories of Deaf natives from Europe, India, Africa, Asia, and elsewhere!
- Learn more about the DDW Signing Storyteller and Deaf Leadership film projects (www.discoveringdeafworlds.com/projects.php)
- Share what you are most curious to learn about international Deaf communities.
- Offer Dave & Christy last-minute travel advice!
- Enjoy free refreshments and a chance to win one of several door prizes.

Interpreters will be available.

Contact info@discoveringdeafworlds.com for questions.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIDBITS OF THE MONTH

Not sure what shots you need? Contact your local Passport Health Agency! For \$50, you can sit down with a registered nurse and learn what immunization shots are needed, how to get traveler's insurance, and any other health-related issues before traveling internationally. They will also provide interpreters upon request. To find a nearby Passport Health Agency: www.passporthealthusa.com.

Don't forget about outlet converters if you want to recharge! Nowadays, you can purchase an inexpensive, all-in-one universal outlet converter/surge protector adaptable for most countries worldwide. One such site

is at www.walkabouttravelgear.com/ts237.htm.

The full proof back-up! Gather all of your important documents (passport, visas, flight ticket, credit card/ATM information, U.S. embassy contact information, traveler's checks and receipts, proof of immunization shots, etc.) and scan them into a computer before you leave.

Next, send yourself an e-mail, attaching the scanned copy of your documents, and save the e-mail. If anything gets lost or stolen...*ta-daaaaaaa*, you have your backup waiting for you at the nearest computer.

Travel safely!

REFLECTIONS FROM A WORLD TRAVELER

By Sandra Renteria
Guest Writer

Ten years ago I went to Haiti for the first time and still remember my harrowing entry as if it happened moments ago. After arriving to have all my altruistic thoughts thrown out the window, I began a minute-by-minute journey of living completely terrified as I maneuvered through those first 6 hours of my visit.

I checked into a very basic guest-house with an eyelet hook for a lock and sat there completely numb. I was hungry. I felt lost. And I heard loud noises that continued to paralyze me. Despite my hunger, I refused to leave the room. Instead, I sat there thinking about how I could leave first thing in the morning. Then a torrential downpour hit, and shook the room. I couldn't stop crying. What did I get myself into? What was I trying to prove to myself? What was I THINKING?!

It continued to rain and my room began to flood. I placed my backpack on my bed and held onto it for dear life as I watched the water continuously pour inside. As if I wasn't already on edge, there was all this loud pounding outside my room.

I felt miserable, but didn't have the courage to look outside for an hour. When I finally made it to my makeshift window, I saw several women washing clothes and dishes in the rain. What possessed them to do such a mundane chore in the middle of a downpour? Couldn't the dishes wait? Why the urgency?

It took a while to sink in...they needed the rain to do this because of



a limited source of water. I started to lighten up and the mysteries of this foreign world began to unfold.

The next day I removed the eyelet hook lock that seemed to keep intruders out. I took out my translation book and figured my way out of this maze I created. I found out there was a celebration the night before, hence the pounding and the noise. They apologized if they kept me up and I was on my way.

Today I find myself in the middle of a Tsunami stricken village in Thailand, listening to the rain while I pound on a keyboard. This is the moment I am in, but my mind is still lost in thought...

A few days ago I was outside in the rain with the same sense of urgency as those women in Haiti. It was then I realized I have completed a cycle of my life that now makes so much sense to me: I have learned to live beside nature instead of against it. And as I have been looking for answers to the mysteries of life, I feel I have finally found mine. I found my answer in a pail of laundry in the rain. I am now the

person I used to stare at with confusion and have come to understand that... Life is this simple!

As a developed nation in the U.S., we have complicated our lives to the point of insanity. We have so much to do and so little time. Where did we go wrong? How did we learn to ride a bicycle without learning how to walk? Are we so obsessed with progression that we don't realize that we are digressing instead?

The other day, my five-year-old daughter Serena jumped onto the back of a bike being peddled by eight-year-old Bhuk. Serena was scared but up for the challenge. I was nervous at first, but held my breath and let her do it. She had just conned me out five Baht (a dime) to get a treat at the local store, so they took off into the forest. 10 minutes later, Serena came back squealing about how she held on tight. It was one of the happiest moments of my life.

Life is that simple: five Baht, a little girl, nature, a rickety old bike, and ice cream.

My husband Kevin always makes fun of my wanderlust nature. "Anywhere but here" seems to be my motto. But that search is finally over. I have found the answer that has caused me to drag my backpack all over the world, always searching. I found my peace in a village that is picking up the pieces from a catastrophic event. I am honored to have lived within their lives, not just viewed as an outsider. I have spent my life traveling, gaining all my "worldly" knowledge, to be able to come back and live a simple life,

Continued on page 5

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**Ralph P.
DeStephano**

DEAF POPULATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Australia	90,000–196,000
China	3,000,000
India	9,400,000–14,000,000
Japan	317,000–7,585,237
Kenya	200,000
Nepal	1,275,776
New Zealand	223,500
Thailand	56,000–67,000
U.S.A.	28,000,000

The above numbers are approximations. In the U.S., for instance, it is estimated there are 28 million individuals with hearing loss of different levels. Compiled from various websites.

AND OFF WE GO!, *continued from front page*

of any unexpected opportunities that pop up along the way. We will fly, hop on trains and buses, ride bikes, elephants, camels, hike, and get around any way we can to these eight countries and maybe more. Since we will be living on a very humble budget, we will do our best to stretch our dollars to eventually make it home. Fortunately, many unique alternatives to spending money on hotels and hostels have already come up. Thanks to worldwide organizations like Couch Surfing International (www.couchsurfing.org), we can stay with locals along the way, free of charge. We also plan to work on organic farms in exchange for room and board through the WWOOF program (www.woof.org), sleep in dorms at Deaf schools, camp, and connect with a few friends of friends of friends...

Thanks to those of you who have contributed to Discovering Deaf Worlds to help us get started. In just two months, your sponsorships and donations have added up to over \$20,000! Woo-hoo! We are WOWed by your generosity and grateful that you believe in this project. Your money will help connect international Deaf communities and draw awareness to Deaf issues worldwide. Rest assured that your contributions and sponsorship have been budgeted for DDW's project development, video equipment, editing & captioning, interpreting services, transportation expenses, website updates, and newsletter distribution. We have saved up our own pennies this past year to cover personal expenses for passports/visas, immunization shots, and any side adventures we may take along the way.

In every country we visit, we will report back to you in ASL (with English captions for the signing impaired) through our website. We will be filming the stories of



CHRISTY AND DAVE

Deaf people from around the world and interviewing Deaf leaders. We will also share the little things that make each country's culture unique.

Several people have asked us how we plan to communicate in all these countries since American Sign Language (ASL) is not a universal sign language. That will definitely be an interesting piece to this whole adventure. As a Deaf person and a hearing person jumping in and out of Deaf and hearing worlds from country to country, we will both be leaning on each other at times for communication assistance. We plan to make good use of our time by learning some native signs and spoken/written words on all those lengthy 15-hour flights. And through gestures, charades, and a cute little 'point-to-pictures' book, we'll figure out a way to get by and make that connection.

Feel free to share your thoughts on our blog at <http://discoveringdeafworlds.blogspot.com>. And off we go!

To learn more about DDW or to donate, visit DDW's website at www.discoveringdeafworlds.com.

WORLD TRAVELER,

continued from page 3

flawlessly. I learned that life is not a harrowing journey, but a meandering walk.

I hope you take some time in the next day to just 'be.' Slow down, stare at your child, stare at your loved ones, and think of nothing else but that moment. If the phone rings, ignore it. If there are outside distractions forget them. Just 'be' in the moment for an hour. Give yourself at least one



Sandra Renteria

whole hour to see your life. Capture it with all your senses. See it with your eyes, smell it with your nose, feel it with your hands and soul and just BE...because that moment will be anchored in your mind forever.

Sandra Renteria is a Naif artist who lives in Denver, Colorado. She is the co-founder of Art Creation Foundation for Children (www.artforhaitianchildren.org), and her journey photos can be seen at www.sandrarenteria.shutterfly.com.

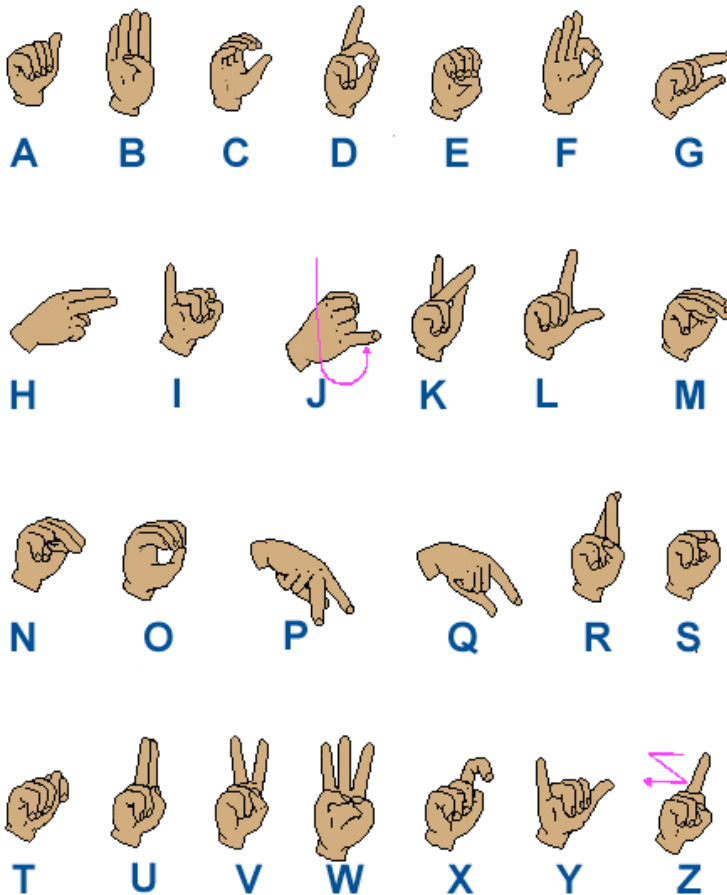
WANT TO JOIN THE DISCOVERING DEAF WORLDS TEAM?



We are in search of a professional team to edit and caption our videos as we travel. Whenever we have Internet access, we will upload our footage to a secondary storage website. We will need a team to edit/caption this video and pass it on to our website development team. Updates will occur once or twice a month. We can offer a combination sponsorship status, international exposure and monthly payment. E-mail info@discoveringdeafworlds.com for more information.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE ALPHABET

In each issue, DDW will post the fingerspelled alphabet of a visited country.



Source: www.chaffey.edu/asl/index.shtml
To learn more, visit www.aslpro.com

SHOUT-OUTS!

A huge hearty thank you to:

Christine Kretchmer of UpYourImage.com who has been feeding the momentum of this project with endless hours of creativity and consultation!

Gina Griffo and Helen Smith for their more than generous individual boosts to our fundraising goal!



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