

IN GEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF PEDALS FOR PROGRESS

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1996
VOLUME I
ISSUE I

Nicaragua's Fifth Anniversary for Pedals for Progress

By John Griffen

1996 in Rivas Nicaragua signaled the fifth consecutive year that Pedals for Progress has been supplying bicycles and spare parts to the Asociación de Desarrollo Comunitario, a small Nicaraguan cooperative. The impact of the project is tangible: Rivas has been transformed into a vibrant and bustling center of activity, made so in part because of the ubiquitous presence of bicycles. Whereas walking was once the leading mode of travel in Rivas, as it is in most Latin American towns and villages, the infusion of bicycles initiated by Pedals for Progress's efforts has made cycling the number one mode of travel in Rivas.

By most estimates, between 60% and 80% of all Rivas households own at least one bicycle and demand for affordable bikes continues to be high. Containers of up to 425 bicycles from Pedals for Progress are usually distributed by the Rivas ADC within two weeks of arrival. Demand is high because for many individuals, the bicycle is either a direct or indirect means of employment. At the least, the bicycle saves hours of tedious transport time for families, as well as money that would otherwise be spent on bus or taxi fare.

It is not uncommon in Rivas to see families of three on a bicycle, often transporting a child to school, an adult to a work place, while another adult uses the bicycle to do errands around town. A recent study by a City University of New York urban planning graduate student of the socio-economic impact of the bicycle in Rivas found that over one quarter of survey respondents reported using the bicycle regularly to earn income. For some this means that the bicycle is used to move goods for sale, while for others it means that the bicycle enables getting

to a job which would otherwise be impossible or uneconomical to reach. When incomes were compared between this group and those who don't use bikes to generate income, a 14% difference was noted, favoring those who use bicycles in their work.

It is common in Rivas for women to use the bicycle in numbers nearly equal to those of men, enabling far greater independence for women than in many other places where women's mobility is limited. This fact was borne out by results from the study

Continued on page 8



Photo by Jeff Singleton

Produce delivery in Rivas, Nicaragua



PfP Colorado ships first container!

John Elias and friends loaded a 45 foot container with 283 bicycles and a vast assortment of new donated parts and accessories and sent it off to San Marcos and Masaya, Nicaragua.

Our partner in San Marcos is Mayor Ernesto Ortega Calero. San Marcos received 146 bicycles while our oldest partner, Masinfa in Masaya received 137 bicycles. This shipment symbolizes the first shipment paid for through their respective revolving funds.

John is ready for spring and has already started collecting bikes. He estimates that PFP Colorado should be able to ship two more containers in 1995 to one of our established programs overseas.

**MEMBERSHIP
EMPOWERS
YOU TO MAKE
PROGRESS
WITHOUT
POLLUTION**

PEDALS FOR PROGRESS

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The President's Vision



A full five years ago, I saw a truckload of old bicycles going into our local transfer station. I thought back to my time as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sucúa, Ecuador:

There was only one bicycle in Sucúa. It belonged to my landlord Señor Peña. He was a rich man, and the reason for his wealth never escaped my thoughts. Señor Peña was a carpenter. His work was good but his success had only a little to do with his carpentry talents.

He was successful because, unlike his counterparts in Sucúa, he worked every day. He was the only carpenter fully employed, and that was because he had a bicycle that in-

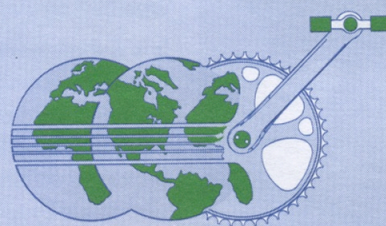
creased his ability to **get to work**. In the developing world often it isn't the lack of work that keeps people under employed, **it's an inability to get to where the work is**.

In February of 1991, after seeing that truck of bikes, I walked into the local newspaper office and asked them to put me on the front page asking for donations of old bicycles that I could send to Sucúa. Nine thousand bikes later, I still haven't gotten any bikes to Sucúa yet, but I'm working on it.

Four people called up about that early newspaper article and offered help—that was the genesis of PFP. During the first year we tried to find other functioning organizations that we could ally ourselves with. Other organizations were out there but we never found a fit between their ideals and ours. We weren't looking for social justice, or political ends; we wanted to recycle some bikes.

I view the Caribbean and Latin America as the American Common Market. We should be selling them computers and we're selling them machetes. Our closest neighbors are some of the poorest countries of the world. Growing up relatively poor I realized that there is only one cure for poverty—work. It's a cruel fact of life that we all need to get up and go to work every morning, and if you don't you're poor.

Continued on page 6



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Pedaling to Progress Up To Date

by The Eritrean Agency for the Environment

Riding a bicycle is seen by some people in developing countries to be a form of transportation only suitable for low income people.

However in most wealth countries of the world, the use of the bicycle is increasing, not decreasing. As more and more people in developed countries realize the problems associated with private car use (pollution, isolation, car fatalities, increased spending on more and more roads, etc.) many are turning to bicycle use, often combined with a good public transport system.

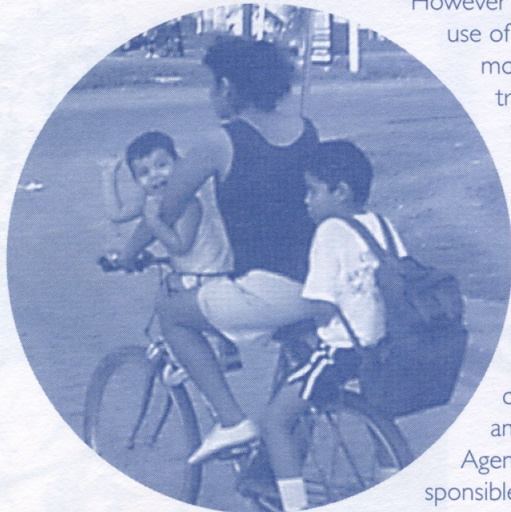
As readers of *Environment Eritrea Newsletter* will know, The Eritrean Agency for the Environment, in an attempt to encourage bicycle use, have embarked on an ambitious project called Pedalising Eritrea. The Agency has established a committee to be responsible for the project. The Committee aims to promote the greater use of bicycles by all sectors of so-

ciety, young, old, women and men. They believe that bicycle use is not only good for the environment, but is also good for the economy, and promotes better individual health through increased fitness levels, as well.

Without the use of adequate and cheap transport, many people in Eritrea spend much of their working day walking to places they need to go. This includes men and women on their way to paid work, but importantly includes women and children who are not in "paid employment," who have the burden of water and fuelwood collection, an addition to buying food etc. and traveling to the fields to work.

The need to provide low income working people in Eritrea with bicycles has lead to one of the most exciting parts of the pedalising Eritrea Project: the involvement

Continued on page 6



PEDALS FOR PROGRESS

MISSION STATEMENT

🚲 To improve the ability of the adult working class to commute to work by supplying reconditioned bicycles to people in communities of the developing world where reliable, environmentally sound transportation is scarce. The overall economy of the community is thus stimulated.

🚲 To establish in these communities self-sustaining repair facilities to maintain the bicycles and provide employment for local people.

🚲 To work within the communities of North America to reduce the flow of bicycles and bicycle parts to landfills by encouraging recycling of bicycles and bicycle parts.



Adan de Jesus Solís Vilchez prepares for lunch delivery in Rivas.

Meals on Wheels in Rivas

by John Griffin

Adan de Jesus Solís Vilchez and his wife Luz Maria start off their day even earlier than most Nicaraguans. Being up and working by 4 a.m. enables them a few hours free from the hot tropical sun and humid air.

By 5 a.m. Luz Maria has finished making the last of the sandwiches, tortillas, fruit cups, and custard puddings that Adan will pack onto his modified Huffy BMX bicycle. The last item he loads onto his bicycle before leaving is a large thermos of sweet black coffee. By 5:30, when Luz Maria has already begun working on the day's lunch time special, Adan is plying his heavily laden cycle through the crowds at the Rivas bus depot where the first busloads of the day from Managua and Costa Rica have already begun to arrive. The adjacent marketplace is also in full swing and Adan competes for road space with swarms of other cyclists, small traders pushing carts piled high with vegetables and tropical fruits, and the occasional loose pig.

Continued on page 6

PEDALS FOR PROGRESS COUNTRY TOTALS

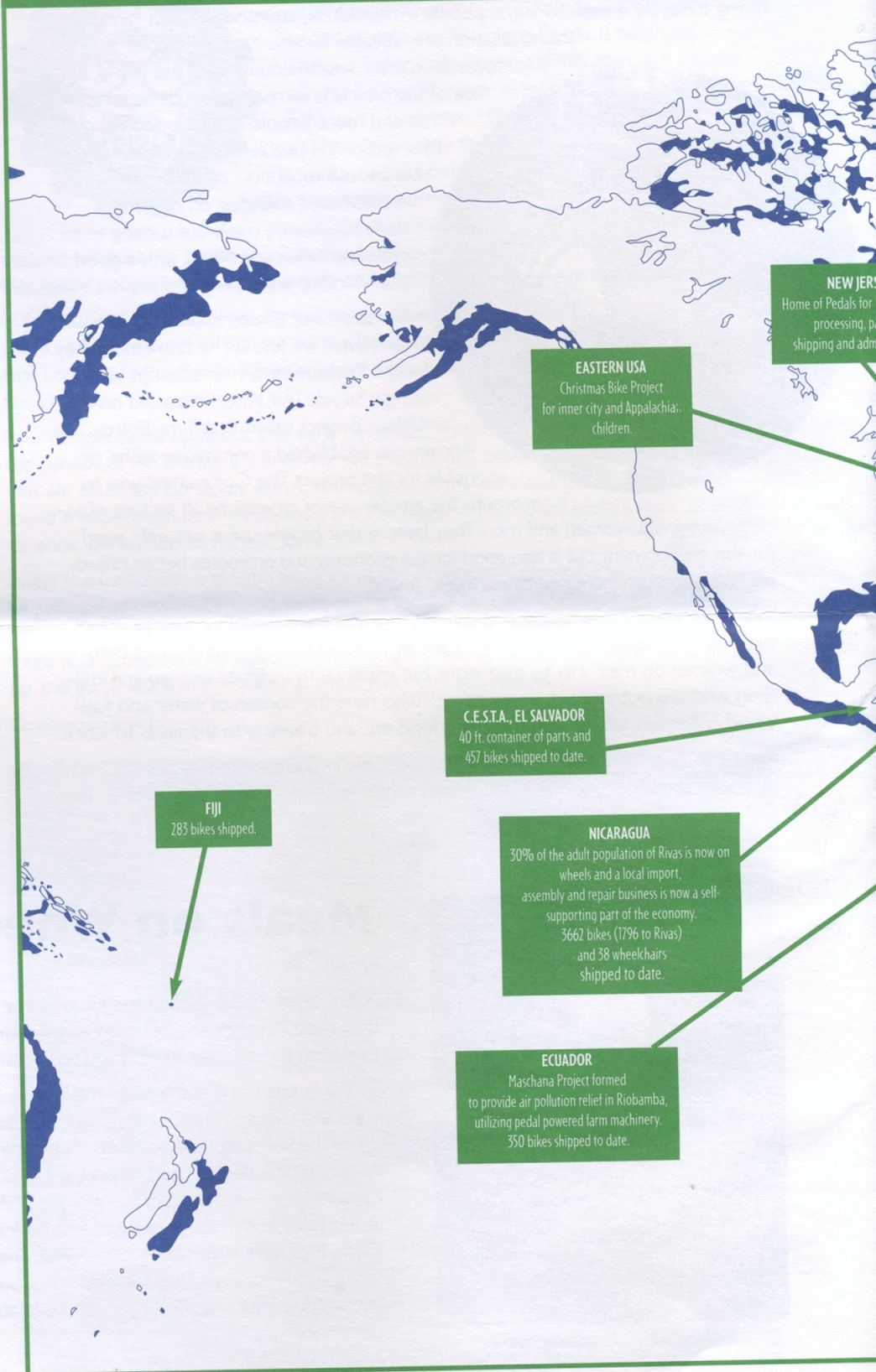
BARBADOS	7/7/95 (inactive)	
St. Michael		750
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	9/17/94	
Mao		1007
ECUADOR	10/28/94 (inactive)	
Riobamba		350
EL SALVADOR	8/31/95	
San Salvador		457
ERITREA	12/15/95	
Asmara		785
FIJI	10/9/93 (inactive)	
Nasori		203
Suva		80
TOTAL		283
HAITI (inactive)		
Port-au-Prince		87
MADAGASCAR		
Fort Dauphine		8
MOZAMBIQUE	9/12/95	
Chokwé		425
PAPAU NEW GUINEA	9/93	
Port Moresby		2
NICARAGUA	5/92	
Masaya		491
Rivas		1796
San Marco		694
Other Towns		966
TOTAL		3945
PERÚ (inactive)		
Tacna		143

Total International Bikes Shipped

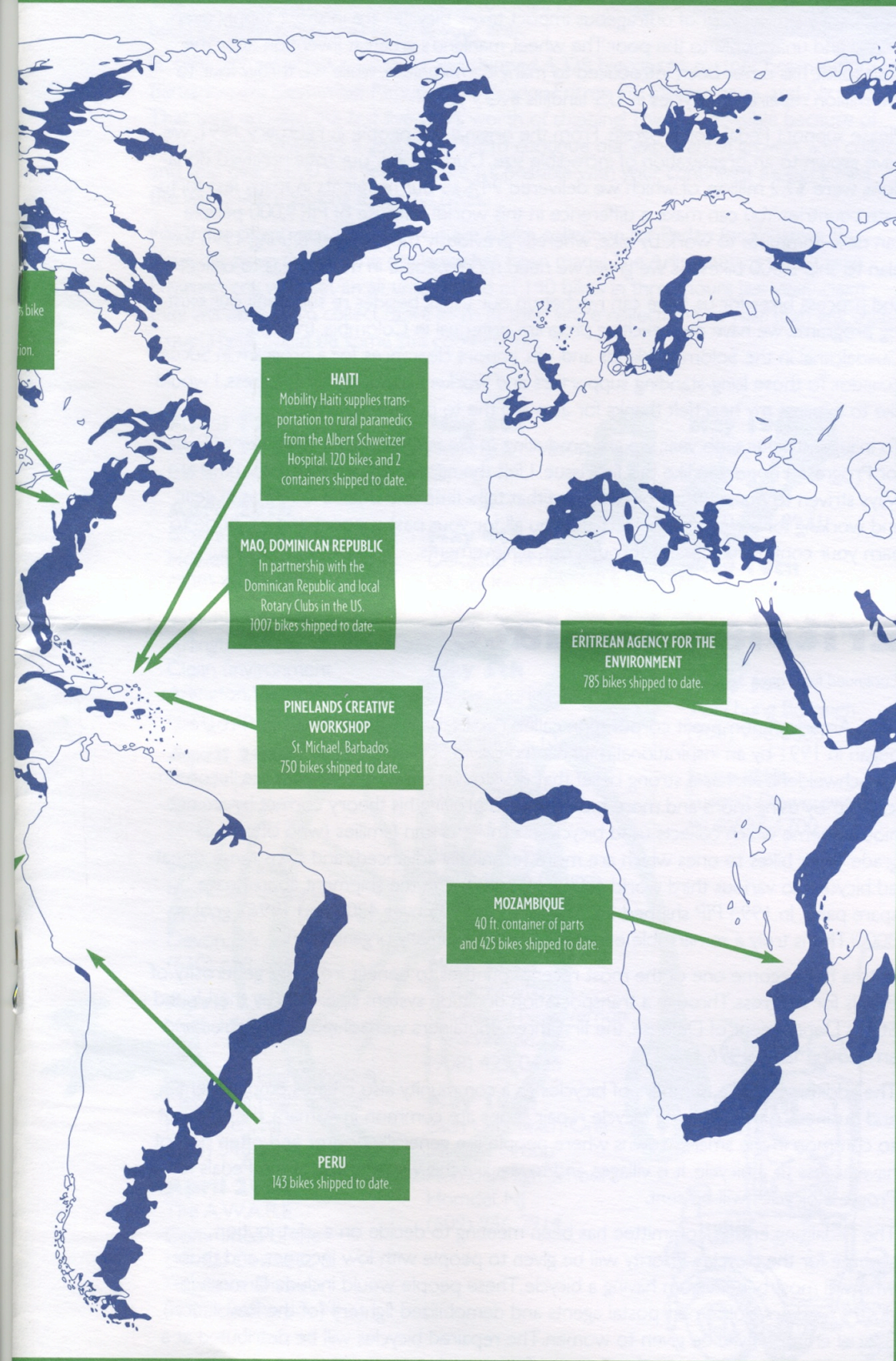
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PEDALS FOR PROGR



ESS - WORLD IMPACT



Rural Health Care Delivery....and Bicycles??

The Society Taking Active Responsibility for International Self-Help (STARFISH), an Ohio-based non-profit agency, and Pedals for Progress (PFP), a New Jersey non-profit specializing in mobilizing overseas development, have joined to more effectively deliver medical services to rural communities in an impoverished corner of the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar.

STARFISH and PFP are supporting the Malagasy medical assistance agency Action Sante Organization Secours (ASOS), to deliver regular immunization and other health services to rural communities located within the Andohahela Nature Preserve. Until now, these remote villages were accessible only by foot and have received few outside medical services. STARFISH is donating medical supplies valued at \$5,000, and the services of a volunteer public health nurse, while Pedals for Progress is donating eight new 18 speed Mongoose Mountain Bicycles distributed by Service Cycle, Inc., a well known American bicycle distributor, along with spare parts, tools and a volunteer mechanic trainer.

ASOS physicians and nurses, accompanied by STARFISH and Pedals form Progress personnel, will travel through the region over a two week period in June 1996. The enhanced transportation capacity provided ASOS by mountain bikes will cut the valuable travel time of participating personnel by more than half, and will be made sustainable through the training of local support personnel and a continuing re-supply of parts.

This innovative and technologically-appropriate health services delivers effort compliments an on-going World Wildlife Fund (WWF) biodiversity conservation project in the territory including and surrounding the Andohahela Nature preserve, a region containing a large number of threatened plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. WWF will assist shipping and Customs and port clearances for the medicines and bikes.

Meals on Wheels

Continued from page 3

Adan will proudly show any curious customers the clever modifications which have enabled him to convert his Huffy into a roving restaurant. By welding pieces of an old Harvard bed frame together, he has fashioned an extra-wide rear carrying rack capable of carrying two medium size coolers and a pair of burlap panniers at the sides. When not in use vending breakfast or lunch to Rivenses, Adan says there is ample room to carry his wife or one of his two children. In front, Adan has made good use of the heavy gauge foot pegs that American kids use to do stunts with and attached another wide rack with room for yet another cooler. All told, Adan can serve up an ample meal, including beverages, to as many as 15 customers from just one bicycle load.

Before acquiring their bicycle two years ago from the Rivas Asociación Desarrollo Comunitario (ADC), Adan and Luz Maria eked out a living by selling cold drinks from an unsteady wheeled cart pulled from the front. With it, they were limited to customers in a tight radius around their home. Now with the added mobility afforded by the bicycle, Adan is able to easily triple that radius. Extending his market area threefold means a similar increase in Adan and Luz Maria's daily earnings. By his own estimates Adan says that the bicycle, together with all of the improvements he has put into it, has paid for itself in less than three months.

With demand for Luz Maria's prepared foods seemingly unending, Adan has recently begun to look into ways to build a small trailer to tow from the rear of his BMX. When asked what the trailer would be used to carry, Adan responded that it would become Rivas's first mobile barbecue.

President's Vision

Continued from page 2

There are entire communities in Latin America where 90% of the people walk everywhere they go. Because of outrageous import taxes, bicycles are in short supply, overpriced and unavailable to the poor. The wheel, mankind's greatest invention after the flush toilet, has never been introduced to many communities, while we throw four to five million repairable bicycles in U.S. landfills every year.

Please support Pedals for Progress. From the original five people in February 1991, we have grown to an organization of incredible size. During 1995 our total received donations were \$2.2 million, of which we delivered 94% to our recipients in many less fortunate countries. You can make a difference in this world! Because of PFP, 9,000 people can now commute to work by bike, whereas previously they walked. During 1996 we plan to ship 8,000 bikes. As we grow, we need more people in more areas to collect and process bikes for us. If we can ratchet up our totals, besides resupplying our existing programs, we have new exciting program potential in Colombia, Trinidad, Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and, yes, import clearances for a program in Sucúa, Ecuador. To those long-standing supporters and workers of Pedals for Progress, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for allowing me to pursue my vision.

To inaugurate our sixth year, we are producing *In Gear*, a biannual newsletter of Pedals for Progress. I hope you like this first issue. I felt the name very appropriate. I have always striven to make PFP an organization that talks little and does a lot. PFP is in gear and working for a cleaner world. Thank you all for your past support and we hope to earn your continued support through our achievements.

Eritrian Update

Continued from page 3

of an American non-profit corporation called Pedals for Progress. Pedals for Progress began in 1991 by an inspirational man named David Schweidenback. Mr. Schweidenback has a strong belief that developing countries can become "economically fit" by using more and more bicycles. He is proving his theory correct by an ingenious scheme which collects used bicycles from American families (who often "upgrade" their bikes to ones which are more technically advanced) and ships these donated bicycles to various third world countries, including in the shipment appropriate spare parts. In 1994 PFP shipped 2429 bicycles, in 1995 over 4300 and 1996's goal is 8000! This is truly a remarkable effort for a small voluntary organization.

Eritrea has become one of the most recent countries to benefit from the generosity of Pedals for Progress. Through a transportation donation system operated by the United States Department of Defense, the first three containers were shipped to Eritrea and arrived in March 1996.

The addition of large numbers of bicycles to a community also creates employment and business. Although small bicycle repair shops are common in Asmara, they are not so common in the smaller towns where people are generally poorer, and often do not have access to a bicycle. It is villages and towns like this where most of the Pedals for Progress bicycles will be sent.

The Pedalising Eritrea committee has been meeting to decide on a distribution scheme for the bicycles. Priority will be given to people with low incomes, and those who will most benefit from having a bicycle. These people would include farmers, industry workers, policemen, postal agents and demobilized fighters (of the Revolution). Special emphasis will be given to women. The repaired bicycles will be distributed at a nominal cost appropriate to the income of the people.

DO YOUR THING TO CELEBRATE SPRING!

There are barns, garages and porches to clean! PFP needs your help to collect those bikes by organizing a collection in your area.

In 1995 PFP collected, processed and shipped 4,328 bicycles to partner organizations in Barbados, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, Mozambique, and Nicaragua. That total equaled the first five years worth of shipping! This was possible because of your support. We have a goal for 1996, to continue our exponential growth, and collect and ship over 8,000 this year. I'm sure it's possible with your continued support. Pass the word, we're looking for some bikes.

For those of you getting ready to have a bike collection for Pedals for Progress, the glove has been thrown, the challenge has been made! The Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, who set an all time record of 140 bikes in three hours last year, claim they will once again collect more bikes at their single collection this year than any other group! There could be some stiff competition!

April 14th

Temple Shalom
Cedar Grove, NJ

April 20th

Bicycle World
Howell, NJ
(908) 431-5610

April 20th

Arlingtonians for a
Clean Environment
Arlington, VA
(709) 525-0931

April 20th

Philadelphia Area Peace
Corps Assoc.
(610) 449-3127

April 21st

Main Line Unitarian
Church
Devon, PA
(610) 688-8332

April 27th

Metuchen Coalition for
Kids
J.P. Stevens High School &
Metuchen High School
Metuchen, NJ
(908) 548-2044

April 28th

The A.W.A.R.E.
Committee of the
L'Oréal Cosmetic &
Fragrance Division
North Brunswick NJ

May 4th

Flemington Presbyterian
Church
Flemington, NJ

May 4th

Delcastle Technical High
School Key Club
Wilmington, DE
(302) 654-1912

May 5th

Bicycle Touring Club of
North Jersey
Bikes for the Needy
Paramus, NJ
(201) 599-0359

May 11th

Blairtown First
Presbyterian Church
Blairtown, NJ
(908) 852-6240

May 19th

First Presbyterian
Church of New Vernon
New Vernon, NJ
(908) 425-0425

May 19th

Each One Teach One
Student Group
Homdel High School
Homdel, NJ
(609) 946-2914

May 19th

Langley Hill Friends
Meeting
McLean, VA
(703) 525-0931

May 19th

All Souls' Unitarian
Universalist Church
Washington, DC

June 1st

Watchung Borough
(908) 756-0800

June 8th

Summit Downtown Inc.
(908) 522-1700

THANKS!

Some PFP supporters include

Bell Sport
CSX Intermodal
Cycle Products
Global Mission
of the United Methodist Church
Mongoose
Presbytery of Newton, NJ
Sealand
TecMarine
Thompson & Formby
United States Department of Defense

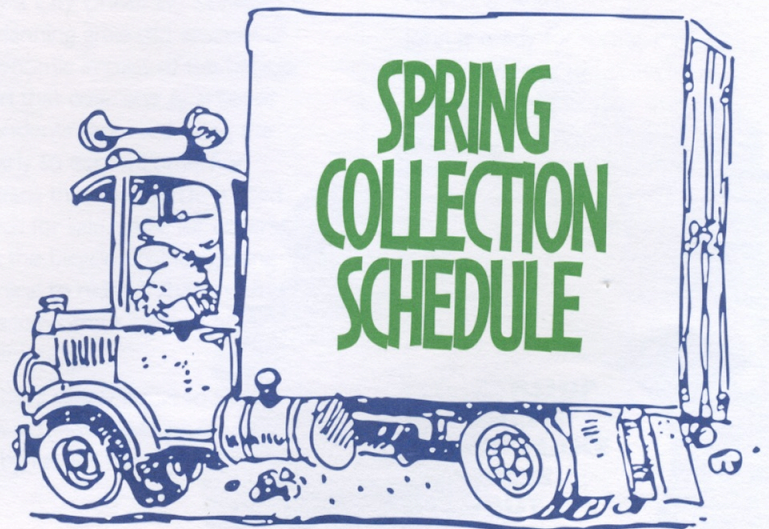
Carolyn's no ordinary girl,
just a ring to announce her engagement
to Phil wasn't enough. She challenged
Phil to be more creative!

Phil came through! His engagement
present – enough tools to open two
bike repair facilities
with four work
stations each.

The recipient –
Pedalising Eritrea.

Way to go Phil!

We salute you both.



PfP needs volunteers to

- donate bicycles
- organize local bicycle collection efforts
- prepare bicycles for shipment (minimal mechanical skills required!)
- contribute and raise funds
- spread the word about PfP and its efforts



Nicaraguan Anniversary

Continued from page 1

which showed greater parity of income between men and women who use bicycles in their work. These numbers are especially significant since income equality between the sexes is one of the most elusive goals for economic development experts.

Rivas is now a noticeable different town than it was prior to the introduction of the bicycle. Along with the backdrop of volcanoes and lush tropical growth, bicycles are now a permanent part of the Rivas landscape. Moreover, commercial activities appears to have increased in Rivas, perhaps due in part to the greater mobility of the inhabitants. One thing is certain: 1800 donated bicycles have found useful second lives as primary transport and means of employment for an equal number of people in Rivas.

*Proceeds from the sale of the cycles are used by the ADC to support projects in and around Rivas, including a tree nursery, an innovative roofing tile factory, construction of an elementary school, irrigation systems and an infant nutrition program and laying of potable water lines.



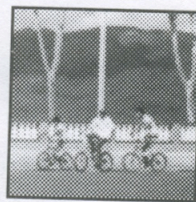
Family bicycling in Rivas



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Membership empowers you to make progress without pollution!

Yes, you can! With your membership in Pedals for Progress you make it possible for developing world peoples to get to work with bicycles, building their economies by making bicycles a source of trade in their communities, and making pedal-powered farm machinery to help them manage their own crops. Become a Contributing PfP Member today!