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SCENE

THE
H&S

Mission to Naha

An open-sided hut in the lush rain forest of southern Mexico is a long, long way in both miles and elegance from the new quarters of the H&S Philadelphia office. Last spring, librarian Dena Dannenberg accompanied her husband, Jim, on a unique mercy mission among the

Indians of the Selva Lancandon in the Mexican State of Chiapas.

Dentist Jim Dannenberg had always wished for the opportunity to treat people who might otherwise not be helped. When Senora Gertrude Duby Blom, explorer and photojournalist, asked Jim if he might provide care for her special friends, the Lancandon Indians of the village of Naha, Jim and Dena began to plan what was to become an exciting and most unusual vacation.

After enduring the temper-taxing frustration and confusion of travel on various non-connecting airlines, a "spectacular" mountain taxi ride and a single-engine bush-plane trip to a grass airstrip in Naha, Jim and Dena were ready to set up their equipment.

As Dena recalls, "the camp consisted of a clearing in dense tropical jungle, with five open-sided, palm-thatched huts. When outfitted with hammocks or cots and mosquito netting, three of these became bedrooms. One was used for a kitchen and dining area, and one became the dental clinic and laboratory. All around towered giant trees hung with rope-like vines, palms of all sizes, enormous flowering begonias and other gigantic 'house plants' growing wild."

The facilities in Dr. Dannenberg's "office" were nearly as primitive as the setting. The Indians had found a short chair somewhere. Poles were set at an angle into the earth floor of the hut and the chair was lashed to the poles with vines. Jim had brought along a portable head rest, which was attached to the back of the chair. Additional

poles were hewn by machete and lashed together to form several tables. Stray boards of local mahogany were placed under the foot pedal of the dental drill to minimize dust, and the clinic was ready for its first patient.

Announcing the presence of a dentist in the jungle was neither practical nor necessary. The residents of Naha, some 55 to 60 persons, had rushed down to the airstrip when they heard the plane. Soon the news spread down the jungle trails to Tzeltal Indian settlements, and by the second day families who had walked some six to eight hours began to arrive for treatment.

For our H&S librarian, the moments between patients meant rushing madly to clean and sterilize instruments and checking the various pots of water used for washing, instrument cleaning and mouth rinsing. Dena also kept complete patient records—no simple task considering the language problems, lack of records and unusual Mayan naming customs.

Although the expedition was hard work, with Dena's husband treating over a hundred people in a seven-day period, the mission to Naha had its rewards. Mobile units, manned by American and Mexican dental students, are now being considered as a means of providing continuing care for thousands of people living in isolated communities who are too poor to pay for dental work.

Also from the experience came many new friends for Dena and Jim, exciting memories and happy pictures of a beautiful and remote place in the world. □

Thanksgiving spirit

With Labor Day past, the summer crops all in and an autumn nip in the air, it's an old American custom to look ahead to Thanksgiving and the traditional family gathering around the dinner table.

This year there are several dozen families in North Plainfield, New Jersey, and nearby communities who have special reason to remember Thanksgiving Day 1972. Much of their special memory of the day is due mainly to one determined lady, Mary Anne Pastino, wife of

manager Al Pastino, who was then in Executive Office and transferred this past summer to the Boston office.

Just a year ago Mary Anne became aware of the special need at Thanksgiving time of the 37 local families that her church congregation had been helping throughout the year with food. Most of them were families with a good many children. The official in charge of the Mobilization Against Hunger project at the church raised the question: What can we do to see that these children have a real Thanksgiving dinner?

The question at once became a call to action for Mary Anne. She recalled for *H&S Reports*: "I said that I'd see to it. So I called up all the people I knew in our town and others nearby, all people from H&S, and asked them if they'd be willing to help me with this Thanksgiving dinner project. I got a favorable response from everyone I spoke to."

Mary Anne explained that with all these willing hands to help her arrange to give 37 families a real Thanksgiving dinner, "I got more help than I had asked for. Mainly, I asked them to give time. I asked them to help me make up the menus, pack up the boxes of food when the time came, and deliver them to the people's homes. They all agreed."

After getting these pledges of manpower (much of it wifepower) from H&S people, she then went to the elementary school in New Providence, New Jersey, which her children attended and asked the principal for the school's cooperation. What she wanted was an appeal to the kids in the lower grades to collect dry ingredients, particularly canned goods, that could be safely carried to school by the children. No single item was to cost more than 35¢, so that everyone could take part.

"I had a friend who was a trained dietician," Mary Anne said, "who calculated how much of each item would be needed, following a dinner

menu that we planned. Each grade in the school was assigned an item to bring. The principal was very enthusiastic and quickly got the approval of the school board for the collection. Each child took home a slip asking if he or she could bring a specified item to school, and in three days we had it all in. The principal even called me to come to the school to receive a check for \$34.55 which the student council of the upper grades had collected among the youngsters."

The food was picked up at school by a crew of volunteer H&S wives, including Yvonne Pivik (Bob), Kay McLellan (Don), Diane Skidmore (Glen) and Brenda Jones (Ron), and was stored over the weekend in the Pastino basement. Previously Mary Anne had collected dozens of cartons at supermarkets, had obtained money from H&S people to buy turkeys and chickens, and had swung a discount deal for buying all the birds at one store. The store manager kept the birds in his freezer over the weekend while Mary Anne and a dozen H&S volunteers packed the boxes, including an additional five for needy families that the school principal added to the original 37.

On Monday morning at 8 a.m. Mary Anne picked up the birds in the Pastino station wagon, and by the time she returned the faithful volunteer crew had pulled the food boxes into the driveway, each complete with an envelope with name, address, number of people in the family and a Thanksgiving greeting. In went the turkeys and chickens, and away went the boxes to the recipients, all of whom had been notified that they were coming.

"We took four boxes to a car," Mary Anne recalls. "We had about ten cars and a truck—the Skidmores' vehicle became a truck when the camper was removed—and all deliveries were made that Monday.

"On Thursday it gave us a warm feeling when we sat down to our Thanksgiving dinner to know that we had helped other people sit down to a dinner the same as we did." □

Basement railroad baron

"I've been kind of a pack rat ever since I was seven years old," says manager Marty Cohen of the H&S Chicago office, "collecting stamps, baseball cards and coins. But when my kids began to get interested in model trains, I put aside the other collections and started collecting trains to add to the layout I had played with as a kid."

Since Marty began collecting trains "seriously" in 1970, he has put together a collection of about 1,000 cars and 165 engines—all of them different. Most of it is American Flyer S-Gauge equipment produced by our client, the A. C. Gilbert Company. At this writing, Marty's collection was missing just a single engine and nine cars from the entire A. C. Gilbert line of production between 1946 and 1966.

When a collector needs only so precious few, the acquisitions and trades are far between. "If I can find one that I need every six months now, I'm excited," says Marty, who advertises for the pieces he needs as well as searching in basements and checking out garage sales. Twice a year he journeys to York, Pennsylvania for the National Convention of Train Collectors—a meeting that draws about 3,000 model train buffs. Marty was the lucky winner of the door prize at a recent midwest regional meeting and as a result has added a 1930 American Flyer Standard Gauge train set (engine and five cars) to his collection.

Among the most prized pieces Marty owns are an orange Shell tank car produced in 1946—one of only forty known to exist—and a boxcar that is part of a limited

set produced for our client, White's Discount Stores of Tulsa. Marty acquired this boxcar last January and estimates its present value at from \$200 to \$250. Favorites with the Cohen children, seven and four, are the mail car which picks up miniature mail bags on the fly and a TNT car which explodes.

Marty estimates that his entire collection, plus the elaborate 8 by 12 foot "layout"—which includes 25 to 30 buildings, talking stations, operating switches, freight handling equipment, tunnels, bridges, etc.—is now worth around \$15,000 and growing in value every day.

With a collection that takes up much of the Cohens' basement, with three walls lined with shelves of cars and the fourth with cabinets and a repair area, Marty's hobby

has to be a family affair.

"I'm lucky to have two engineers and a repairman in the house," says Marty. "My wife, Linda, is the repairman. If anything in the layout isn't working, she fixes it. She also helps out by taking phone calls about equipment other collectors want to sell or trade, and she hits the local garage sales on Saturday mornings. One of the most interesting things about this hobby is the people we meet—everyone from bank presidents to truck drivers.

It sure beats stamp collecting!

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