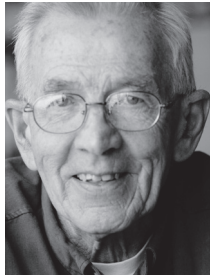


THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS' CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • Spring 2013



Padre's Message



Dear folks,

The Lord's peace be with you. Easter time is upon us with its revelation of our lives constantly being renewed by companionship with Jesus, who's alive and staying with us

because, obviously, He loves us. Certainly He loves the families of the working kids who love life and are grateful for their chance to work for better ways to live for each other. His love for them shows through their increasing self esteem. All of you and all of us involved in making the Working Boys' Center - A Family of Families a big part of their lives also feel and show the power of that same love of life lived for each other.

It's not too soon in this Easter Shoeshine Special to share our excitement over celebrating WBC's 50th anniversary in 2014. Of course, we're planning parties all over the Americas. We understand that Father Scott Pilarz, S.J., President of Marquette University, along with everybody else there, will help us host a big birthday party involving you and other high society guests in the USA. Here in Quito, we'll celebrate with swarms of dignitaries, heads of

State and others who'll fly in. Which reminds me that we had an inauguration of Quito's beautiful new airport that didn't get one hundred percent public approval; so we don't want to give the impression the new airport was built just for our party. I'll slip you the scoop on that in the Centerfold.

I share a few items of news that, even without description, are evidence of ongoing new life at WBC. 1) Preparations are underway and we've contacted an excellent music teacher for a first class children's choir. 2) We have new solid contacts and agreements with other good agencies for help with special physical and mental health needs of some of our members. 3) Our families' obligatory savings program for buying land and materials for their own private houses enjoys more enthusiasm thanks to the "gringa mingas" or work gangs of USA benefactors who send money ahead for the materials and then come and help build.

God bless,

John J. Halligan, S.J.

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Working with the Angels

When I was a grocery delivery boy, I did my best with every bump and curb in sight to square off all three wheels on the pushcart. It was a delight to make the pushcart worse each day. So, I had no reason to imagine, as I used to imagine all the way into adulthood, that other kids growing up out in the countryside cherish nature's gentle embrace any more than I cherished the rowdy embrace of the city streets. I learned soon enough that all kids consider ecology to be the science of maintaining life/death superiority in

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The boys work hard to prepare a hole for a new plant

The New Airport and Some Classified Information

The big topic of conversation in Quito is all about our new airport. February 20th was the day planes began landing and taking off at the new site far enough away from the city on a nice long plateau where no skyscrapers stick up into the flight paths. That's a big advantage. Another advantage is that the noise the planes make is too far away to bother anybody in Quito.



Josep Gongora:
"They never should have moved that airport. There was good business for kids there shining shoes and selling candy. Five cents a piece for each of the hundred pieces in the can that costs one dollar. You can sell it there in less than a morning before school or in one afternoon after school."

Here in the north end of Quito around Working Boys' Center Number 2, near where the old airport sits quiet, we used to interrupt sentences or speeches or classroom teaching every few minutes to stare without seeing and try not to hear the tons of air traffic aiming over our roof for the rather short landing strip nearby. Even those of us happy with the airport's move out of town still keep the habit of sudden silences either to commemorate our relief from the racket or to enjoy some free floating sensory deprivation.

Of course, not everybody is proud and happy with the new airport; and the loud complaints have considerably increased the noise at ground level. Especially on the roads all over the countryside it's a widespread mix of naughty words, disparaging comments

about other people's brain functions, and loud demands about how we are supposed to get to and from the airport. So, what's happening?



Kleber Negrete:
"When I worked at the old airport, the pilots paid three dollars for a shine. Nobody else pays that. But I had to quit because I want to work in a mechanic shop to combine with my technical education in metal mechanics."

Well, if we are honest, we admit to a permanent population of at least two million persons in Quito. It wasn't known until now that every single one of them has a relative or friend that has to get to or from the airport every single day. They are all furious because they don't want a scenic ride on country roads as smooth as the faces of the tough guys that built them and that go and stop wherever they please like when the world was free. It's not a conflict of city folk against the country dwellers. It's a fury of people who fly in airplanes against the city fathers who didn't build or finish roads to and from the airport before they opened it for flying in and out. The way the city fathers see it, on the other hand, is that it took forty years to build the new airport and it could take another forty to build the roads. We should try to use it during our own lifetime.



Cynthia Pantoja:
"They'll be sorry they moved it. If they have a crash, the ambulances will get there after everybody is dead."

But people can be so stubborn cruel. You build them a big new spacious modern mansion of a house and maybe it hasn't got a doorway yet. They don't catch the dream coming true. All they see is what's missing.



Santiago Vaca:
"It was nice to have the airport close in town. Even some of us who didn't work there could walk over and get a couple of quick shines when business on the streets was slow."

Myself, I'm one hundred percent on the side of the city fathers. I defend the new airport as another giant step on the past into the future and I defend people's right to occasional oversights like roads into that future. Also, I'm for downplaying the criticism and making it go away. I don't want anybody investigating how this all started. I'm pretty sure that word leaked out that we are planning to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of the Working Boys' Center this coming year 2014. The city fathers panicked and went looking for that long plateau where our swarms of guests will be able to land for the party.



Dennis Vega:
"Sure! Out there in the woods they'll have all the space for a lot more planes and people coming and going and that's a pile of money for them. But, how about all of us left here with no work?"

What can conveniently distract from blaming us for the airport's move is the wealth of opinion about its relocation. There's talk about the noise factor improvement and about the elimination of the safety risk of aiming for the strip in a populated area. Some are enchanted

with the new airport's breathtaking panorama with planes gliding through. Others are furious because it's not easy to discover and follow the route to and from. We're proud that the Center kids we interviewed on the subject are, for the most part, loud and clear on the healthy old-fashioned concentration on the money to be made or not made by having the airport out of town. An airport is an investment, not a place to "ooh" and "aah" and "whew!" They want to make money for their families.



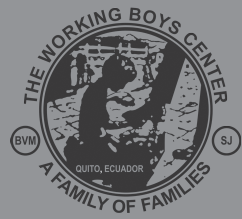
Jorge Perugachi:
"I worked at the old airport every night. The guards gave us a hard time but our mothers worked there too; so the guards couldn't chase us. Besides, we all went home together after work so it was perfectly safe."

Editor's note:

Our kids work three half days a week, Monday through Friday and whatever hours on Saturday and Sunday that their folks decide. They have school two full days and three half days a week.



Roberto Andrango:
"Everybody knows the people want to fly into Quito, not into the woods. The only thing they accomplished moving the airport was to have a hundred old busses blocking all the roads. By the time the people get to Quito, they don't want candy. They hardly even say hello."



Family Unity International, Inc.
12750 Stephen Place
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Family Unity International Office

Pat Parks, President
Phone: 262-797-8988
Email: jparks@wi.rr.com

WBC U.S. Development Office

Patricia Jessup, Development Director
Phone: 414-534-8285
Email: patricia.jessup@
workingboyscenter.org

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Working with the Angels continued from front page

the interrelationships with all other organisms around. Kids not only like to square round wheels; they like to climb up and break off the weaker branches, batter with a stick the sprig that won't give when you try to pull it out and, most of all, trample on any living thing that dares to be graceful or pretty. When the surrounding environment trembles at a kid's passing, he's more satisfied than he'll be later on in life earning his doctorate in environmental protection.

But Marco Polo, our Education Director, has discovered the secret of converting our grammar school savages doing the devil's work into guardian angels of nature. He achieved the donation of hundreds of delicate little plants and had the kids plant their own rows along the paths. The kids have a set time each day for the very hard work of carrying pails of water to keep the plants alive. Each row has a sign on

a stick with the owner's name and a drawing of Michael the Archangel with his sword shining. There's no mention of violence or death – just a pious suggestion.



Students gather around their Michael the Archangel sign in the garden.