

From Bruce Robbins (for Joe Kelly):

Hi Group- I wanted to welcome our newest group member, Joe Kelly. Joe lived in Guatemala in the 1960's and with his family from 1980-1991 (Joe's wife Carmen is from Guatemala). Joe has sent me the following to post to the group:

From Joe Kelly:

I very much admire what you and others are doing in forming the Behrhorst alumni group. I, myself, am not a physician nor a medical provider. I am more of a community volunteer who loves Guatemala and its people. I was in Guatemala both in the 1960's and later in the 1980's and got to know Doc Behrhorst. On an occasion or two I visited him at his home in Chimaltenango. I also was fortunate to be able to attend his funeral.

I took a medical group to Guatemala approximately 10 years ago and we were able to provide day clinics in a number of communities in and around Chimaltenango. My initial contact was with a woman living in Milwaukee, Wis. She had some position in the Behrhorst U.S. group...possibly in the annual trips that were organized to introduce Doc's efforts in the Chimaltenango area. Our organization, Southwest Medical Aid (www.southwestmedicalaid.org) recruited medical doctors, nurses and technicians for this mission. A member of the Guatemalan Behrhorst group coordinated our medical mission (I think she was from Zaragoza). Our team of approximately 15 traveled to many of the aldeas in and around Chimaltenango and San Martin Jilotepeque where we set up simple outpatient medical clinics. In addition, at each site, we organized a small pharmacy. Generally we were in each locale for one to two days. We have returned to Guatemala on two different occasions working with Pastor Julio Martinez of Salama, Baja Vera Paz, Guatemala in aldeas and communities near Salama.

I have two memories of Doc Behrhorst that I would like to share: when he helped me with a persistent cough; and his funeral.

During the 1980-1991 period, my family and I were living in Guatemala (my wife Carmen is from Guatemala). We had purchased some land near Sumpango and were slowly developing it into a small country place. Our place was about 20 minutes from Chimaltenango. During those years, I would meet Doc at different gatherings and we would always have a chat. In about 1988, I developed a pretty good cold with a bad cough. I was at our place in Sumpango when I decided to stop by Doc's house on the outskirts of Chimaltenango and ask for some medical advice. He was most gracious when we arrived and immediately sat me down in the living room while he went to the kitchen to put together some concoction for me. He came back with a full glass of something for me to take. He explained that it was a combination of hot water, honey, some type of alcohol and few other things. I drank it down and sure enough, my cough and cold disappeared in the next 12 hours. There was always something about him that I liked: he seemed to have the motto: keep it simple and let's get it done and he certainly did that with me.

My other memory is his funeral. I was working for AID Guatemala at the time and the word came that Doc had died. Myself with another colleague from AID went to Doc's house near Chimaltenango. It was May of 1990 and the annual rains had not yet started. A wake was taking place at Doc's house. His body was in the living room in a simple coffin. A prayer leader, I recall he was a Guatemalan medical doctor who spoke extensively about Doc's efforts with the poor. At the end of the service, a group of indigenous men shouldered the coffin and we all walked up the dusty road in silence to the city park in Chimaltenango. It was probably a walk of about one mile and we all quietly walked along with the coffin and our own private thoughts about this amazing man. At the city park, there was a pickup truck waiting and the coffin was loaded in the back. More prayers were offered and then many of Doc's family and friends got into the back and front of the pickup. The pickup drove to Chimazat, an aldea of Tecpan,

about a half hour ride from Chimaltenango. Chimazat is the birthplace of doc's wife, Alicia Nicole. At the cemetery in Chimazat a simple grave had been prepared and the coffin was lowered into the grave. My recall here is a bit vague, but I think all of us milled around briefly and then each of us went our separate ways.

Well, I think that is about it for now. I wish all the members of the Behrhorst Clinic Alumni group many blessings. I will not be able to attend the June 2017 celebration in Antigua. I certainly am supportive of what efforts have been made to keep Doc's spirit and work moving forward.

I will close by wishing you and yours every blessing in your important work.

Sincerely, Joe Kelly

From Molly Cooke Feb 12, 2017:



Molly Cooke, 1977



Home, Chimaltenango 1977

Here are some pictures taken between Jan and April/May 1977. "Home" is where I and a couple of medical students from Columbia and maybe another expat lived. It had a little 'pila' that we could fill from 6:00 am to 10:00am or something like that, if the generator was working. There was an ambient temperature shower that filled from the pila. To get a hot shower, I would trek in to 'La Naturalista', a Seventh Day Adventist spa of sorts in Antigua, departing from the Chimaltenango bus stop, shown. La Naturalista had a juice bar, hot showers, men's and women's saunas. In the women's sauna, my companions, invariably older Guatemalan women, would chat about me unless I established promptly that I spoke Spanish and could understand. They would call me 'delgada' if they were being nice or 'flaca' if they were being honest. The Guatel was the telegraph/phone operation - my recollection is that it was staffed and functioned Friday afternoons from 4:00 to 8:00 pm (sometimes) but really we were incommunicado while we were in-country. So different from the constant "in-touch-ness" that today's kids experience via cell phones and internet cafes. Ina May is Ina May Gaskin who has become