

Circulation 1365 Published by Vermont Adult Learning in Middlebury October, 2007

What Is Colombia All About?!

I think it is great to have the opportunity to share some of my feelings about my native Colombia with your readers. I am sure that what most people have heard on the news about Colombia is not very positive. This is unfortunate; Colombians are of a very positive upbeat nature. I would like to share with you the fact that the Colombian people are hard workers but unfortunately there are not enough opportunities where they can put all their energy and ability to work.

Only a small part of our population has the opportunity to graduate from college. However, there is no barrier that can stop us from being successful in life, because the desire, passion, belief and confidence in ourselves is inbred with us, and we learn from childhood to live in the world of possibilities. It is as natural to us as breathing.

I believe that hard times and difficult situations in life can make people wither, give up hope, or be stronger and make the best of things. I am pleased to tell you that we choose to believe in being strong and fighting every day in life. I would like to share an example that may help you understand us better. In the U.S. it is fairly easy to get a special job, one for which you are trained. In Colombia you typically see one hundred or more people waiting in line to apply for just one available position; they often go longer than a year waiting for such a precious opportunity to put all their energy to work. We pretty much live on hold waiting for a job opportunity. This is why many of the most intelligent people we have are doing things like driving taxis just to survive.

Here is another example I would like you to hear. It concerns my little brother Juan Carlos, who I raised since he was a newborn. I was mostly responsible for him from the time I was twelve years old. I had to be very mature for my age, teaching him all about life. Today my brother is a twenty-six year old man who was in mandatory military service for eighteen months, including eight months of combat. I thank God every day for keeping him safe. He is almost finished with his first professional qualification (five years at an engineering college) studying to be a Chemical Engineer and he will graduate next December. He is also in the fourth year of a mechanical engineering course at another college. All these years he kept his grades between 4.2 and 4.8, (I would like to point out that the highest possible grade is 5.0). As you can imagine, it is not easy to do all of this, not to mention the ideas, inventions and discoveries he has made. But he too is on hold trying to find a job. Why? Because there are so few opportunities. He works part-time, doing projects at his college, advising other students, teaching math, but not for a decent salary, just a minimum amount to cover basic expenses.

This story by Patricia Giaquinto of Moretown continues on page 3.

Patricia is third from the right. Her brother Juan Carlos is at the end of the table on the right.



Trucking

To some people trucking can be fun; to some, it can be the world's worst job. But to me, it's the world's greatest. I love the feeling of being bigger than everybody else on the road. I kind of feel like the King of the Road. A truck to me is like my home away from home. I have my bed, my TV, and my dog. I've got my 18 gears and my 18 wheels and nothing but the open road ahead.

But there are a lot of things you have to worry about when you're driving truck. You have to constantly check your surroundings by using your mirrors. You also have to worry about your brake pressure, but the most important is your surroundings. I know I already said that, but if you're not careful, you can hurt someone or worse. You see, your mirrors do a lot, but not enough. You have more blind spots than you do with a regular vehicle, and the cause of this is you're bigger, much bigger. You're the biggest vehicle on the road, which means you have the most responsibilities.

Also, when you're on the road, try to enjoy yourself. If you're doing a connection run, bring a camera or something. Me personally, I do all my driving at night to avoid the traffic; then I sleep for about 8-9 hours. Then I get up and check all my tires and the air pressure in them. I make sure that the trailer is properly secured into the fifth wheel before I take off.

So if you think trucking is the thing for you, then come join the family. Keep those 18 gears a-jammin' and those 18 wheels a-rolling. I'm 10-4, over and out.

**Harley Peryer
Rutland**

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The Found Dog

Tuesday night I found the little dog out by the restaurant. She ran out the door; her owner was looking for her. I found her and she was happy to see me. Her owners are Jeanne and Amber.

Corn Roast

August 24, 2007 we had a community corn roast at Oxbow Field. We had lots of people from all over the counties. We had lots of fun and live music.

My Painting Class was fun and everyone enjoyed it. We want to thank Anna Gagnon and Jack B. Sabon for helping us. And thank you to Gloria for letting us use the space at the Senior Center.

Project

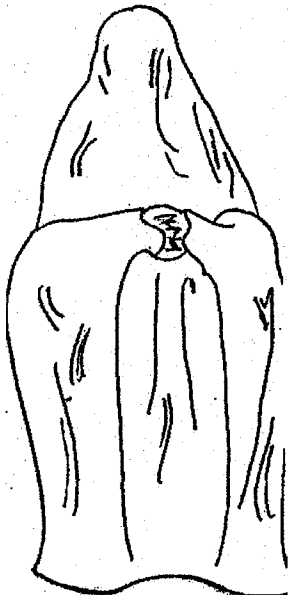
My brother Norman built a porch. It was his first building. I am very proud of him. It took him two days to build.

Norman's Find

Norman took a walk up in the woods and saw the turkeys scratching.

Out behind the skating rink he saw a big bald-headed eagle. It was up on a pole.

**Mrs. Frances Hill
Morrisville**



*by Amanda English
Bennington*

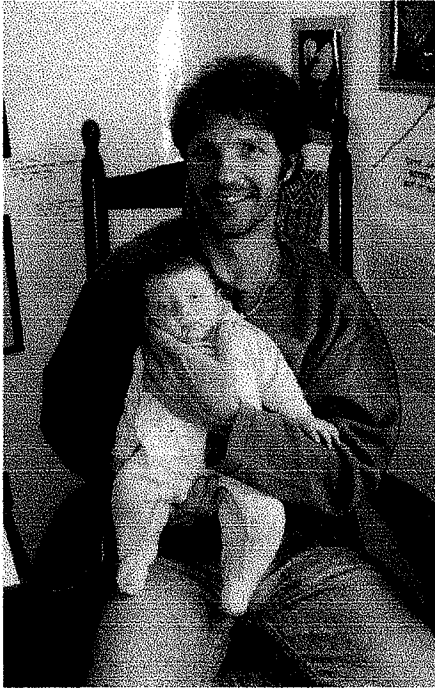
Why does love hurt. Why do you make me feel lower than dirt. Why does love confuse. Sometimes I feel like all you do is use me. No matter what I do, nothing I do is good enough for you. You really want me to love you, but how can I start, when almost every day you break my heart. I always say, no pain, no gain. But I'm really gonna go insane.

Another day has come and gone.
You've been away far too long.
Now it's time to go to bed and
hear these voices in my head.

Truth

You look me in the eyes
but all I hear is lies.
I ask for the truth,
you act like a sleuth.
You stole my heart from me,
now you want to set me free.
You said you want me to be happy.
How can I be, when the person
you're with isn't me.
I still watch the windows,
whenever I hear a sound,
just to see if you're around.
Not a single word will be heard
from your mouth.
Fate must hate me. I'm so
confused because of you.
I keep coming back. I'm stuck in a
moment that wasn't meant to last.

**Natasha Hamilton
Brandon**



Arlo and Savannah

**The baby that we
have been waiting for,
my wife's miscarriages,
the final pregnancy,
and our beautiful little girl.**

For three years we tried to have a baby. During that three years my wife had two miscarriages. After the second miscarriage, she was put on birth control. The birth control messed up her system so we couldn't have kids.

Four years later, we finally got pregnant. The whole pregnancy was hard because of the prior miscarriages. The doctors finally figured it out, and so we were able to stay pregnant.

After the long nine months, we finally have a beautiful baby girl. When she popped her little head out, out came the rest of her. Perfect in every aspect, like a beautiful baby doll. I cried for days because I was so happy.

The baby that we have been waiting for. Through the hard times, the final pregnancy, and our beautiful little baby. She is finally here.

**Arlo Mager
Middlebury**

Juan Carlos loves to read books, even dictionaries. He really loves science. He is a very smart fellow, but with few opportunities. In the last six months he applied to every possible place, a total of one hundred and forty resumes, with no success yet. All this potential is waiting for an opportunity; his greatest desire is to give all that he can to help our country, but each door he tries to open is closed with the sign, "We need experienced people; we have no vacancies now."

This is why many of our best people finish giving all their potential and energy to a country like the U.S. Our government programs are out-dated, and the way it has operated for decades has not provided our own people the support they need. But even so, Columbia is a beautiful place to be and live if you are blessed with a job.

I don't understand how the people in the U.S. can change jobs as easily as replacing out of style clothing! I think in one way it is a blessing to have thousands of job opportunities available, but in another way it makes people have unstable careers because they don't appreciate what they have in their hands. They may call it "freedom of choice", but for me nobody really cares or understands what it means to have endless job opportunities. It is a great blessing.

I feel sad while I am writing these lines, but also I am glad to let people know what is going on in other countries like mine. Now I would like to share some more positive things to give you more insight into what things are really like in Colombia for an individual. Most Colombians grow up with a model of living focused on following core values. I hope my words don't sound arrogant. We are a modest people. We are a people blessed with a loving upbringing and strong fundamental respect for others and ourselves. I believe most of us are people of good moral character. We love to work hard for our families and care for them. We learn to always do our best in all things and do not expect anything in return. Our satisfaction in life comes from making others happy.

We are excellent parents, educating our children with love, respect and clear objectives in life. We love to be our child's best friend and value quality time spent with them. We are always consistent in our value system which we impress on our children above all else, along with a basic joy in living. We are a warm people, considerate, loving as parents, sisters, brothers, partners, or friends. We are enthusiastic, idealistic, focused on other people's feelings, and very flexible. These attributes combine to make us especially interested in positive personal relationships. They also make us very able to promote positive relationships in fun and creative ways. We take our commitments very seriously. As partners we consider ourselves warm, loving and affirming, able to have an intense, meaningful, close relationship. We are an easy and understanding people, very open to listening and being supportive of our mate. We are also deeply loyal and faithful.

We love sports; the whole country stops when we have the national soccer championships. We enjoy games very much. We like swimming, tennis, boxing, and other physical activities. We believe family is the center of everything. The way we raise our children is more important to us than everything else. This is our treasure. We like our children to join an extracurricular institute, to learn another language, paint, draw, do crafts, etc. Learning new things is a basic part of our life and helping our children be active teaches them to be better people, independent, and productive adults in the future.

See page 8 for the rest of this story.

Fall is coming soon
Leaves falling onto the ground
Running through the leaves

Winter is coming
Snow is falling all around
Making snow angels

Summer is over
Hot weather is ending soon
Swimming weather ends now

Halloween is here
Pumpkins are being picked out
Kids getting candy

Flowers are blooming
Colors of red, yellow, and blue
Flowers smell of spring

Cats so heavenly
Eyes blue as a night sky
Heaven in their eyes

Amanda English

Birds in Nature

Birds are beautiful
In Vermont we observe them
Brings peace of mind now

The elephants roar out
Many birds scatter in flocks
Excitement and wonder

The elephants scream out
Many birds scatter
Excitement and wonder

Lisa Hansen

Teachers Write Too

This issue's writer is
Barb Keyes, a teacher at the
**Tutorial Center in
Bennington**. Also featured on
this page and the next is the
work of some of the students
in her classes.

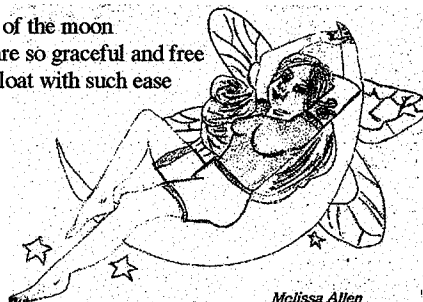
As an instructor, I have enjoyed a great deal of creative moments with so many of my students. It has been a pleasure to see that side of students whether it is through poetry, essay writing, or illustration. When I have taught a class on Haiku poetry, something I have done for many years, I have observed and listened to many comments from my students about how much they enjoyed writing Haiku poems.

Haiku poetry is a Japanese poem that appeared in the sixteenth century and is very popular in Japan. The poems, usually 3 lines, are written in a 5 syllable, 7 syllable, 5 syllable format and categorize nature, color, and seasons. These poems capture a certain moment of time. My morning AES class had a great time writing them and some added illustrations along with them. I hope you will enjoy reading them. I have also included a few of my own.

Spring is coming soon
Rejoice and be glad today
Flowers will appear

Frolicking every day
Near the jade forest so green
Mothers with their fawns

Fairy of the moon
You are so graceful and free
You float with such ease



1. Summer is leaving
The leaves are changing into
Beautiful colors.
2. The busy animals
Are getting ready for change
Storing winter food.
3. As the cool breeze blows
Through the tops of the trees
Back and forth with force.
4. As the sun beats down
It's warming the earth from
The cool night before.
5. As the fawn looks on
She eats the dew off the grass
With her mother near.
6. The snow is so white
It falls like feathers from the
Heavens into flight.

Melissa Allen

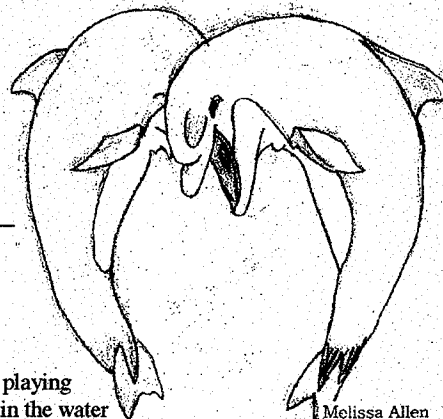
Autumn is coming
The leaves are so beautiful
A romantic time

I love the flowers
So many beautiful colors
Everything looks nice

Summer is so hot
Most enjoy the nice weather
Children play outdoors

Rosa Ford

Dolphins are playing
As they play in the water
Close friendships begin



Melissa Allen

Frogs sing a lullaby
Hear them in the distant breeze
Calling to their loves

Lightning in the night
Coloring the dark night sky
Nature is beautiful

Leaves flying through the sky
Pumpkins growing in the field
Fall is in the air

Dew on the petal
Like a tear waiting to fall
Red rose growing tall

Sun shining brightly
Clouds floating by taking shape
Endless summer days

Rain, rain falling down
From the heavens high above
Angels flying by

Shadows in the night
Creeping slowly through the trees
Moon shining above

Snow flakes falling soft
Covering the cold bare ground
Like a warm blanket

Butterfly flying
Floating with the gentle breeze
Falling to the flower

Witches hat and broom
Long black cat with bright green eyes
Halloween is here

So small and gentle
Beautiful colored strong wings
Hummingbird in flight

Fire ball glowing bright
Rays of light reaching to warm
Sun awakening

Curious and wide eyed
Unconditional my love
Gentle purring cat

Twinkling bright light
Shining silver reds and gold
Christmas Eve is near

Bonnie English



Snow boarding freedom
Sliding so fast down the hills
With some tricks aside

Melissa Allen

You're Never Too Old to Learn

My name is Kelly, and I am a 27 year old single mother from Barton. I dropped out of high school when I was 17. I always wanted to go back to school, but I always had an excuse until I entered the Newport "Making It Work" program, an excellent program that has helped me immeasurably. One of the requirements was for us to go to the Adult Basic Education Center. The people there were so nice and made such an impression on me, I decided to go for my GED. They treat everyone the same and are always there for any question you have. They will help you learn the easiest way for you.

Since I started going to ABE, I have learned things that I thought I could never do. I have taken several practice tests and every time I get a better score. I believe I owe that to these fine ladies! Every time I hear that I got a better score it gives me the desire to learn more. I want to be able to help my children in school when they have homework and get stuck. I want my children to be able to say, "Mommy can you help me?" and for me to be able to help them and know that I am helping them the right way. Not only will I be able to help my children academically, but I will also be able to get a job that will help me support them financially. In addition I would like to say "Thank you" to everyone who has helped me along the way.

I think we should give "Making It Work" and Northeast Kingdom Learning Services in Newport a hand for dedicating themselves to helping others learn. No matter your age, all are welcome; so come in and check out the programs and you will not regret it.

**Kelly Beaudette
Barton**

What Do YOU Think?

The school I went to wasn't good for me. I didn't have proper teaching, the kids picked on me, and it was overwhelming for me.

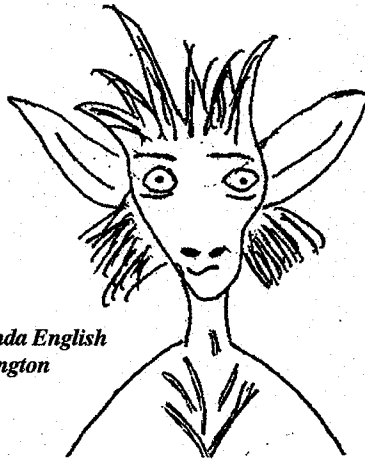
In the first place, the teaching was not right for me. My English teacher, Mr. Kaufman, wouldn't be fair to me because I have a head injury and I was treated like everybody else. I wasn't given enough time to do my work. In science, I was an honorable mention student before the accident. Then after, things just went bad because I wasn't given enough time.

In the second place, my friends would treat me different. Before the accident I was like the leader. Then after the accident it felt like I was thrown away from the crowd and just ignored. I was picked on, called names, and mocked because I had a limp, and I talked a little slower than everyone else.

In the third place, it was overwhelming for me. The school work was too much for me. I didn't understand the work, and I had nobody to show me how to do it. I felt all alone.

In conclusion, the school I went to wasn't good for me. I was bullied, I wasn't given enough time, and I felt all alone in my school work. Now, since I never graduated, I am working towards my GED.

Arlo Mager
Middlebury



by Amanda English
Bennington

Do you have an opinion about something you've read here? Please send your thoughts on any of these topics, or on any issues you would like to see discussed.

The opinions expressed may not be the opinions of *The Green Mountain Eagle*. It is each reader's responsibility to decide for her/himself what to think. What do YOU think?

Welfare

I am responding to your call for opinions on various topics such as welfare. Welfare is a good thing to help families out. It helps many people with bills, food, and many other things. Welfare is nice to have when you have kids and it's hard to get by.

I have seen people who receive state's help who don't work or even make an effort to. Then there are many other people who work two jobs and receive state's help. They can't even get by on that. Welfare is a great thing to have, don't get me wrong. I have nothing against it. I know many people who are on welfare.

My family and I used to receive state's help also. Life today is financially difficult which makes it very hard for families to get by. What I am saying is that some people take advantage of state's help. Why is it that people who are very capable of working don't, and bleed the system?

There are legitimate cases of people who are disabled and physically or mentally can't work. However, I have seen some people who waste their welfare checks on drugs, alcohol, and things that are not necessary. How does the system decide who actually qualifies for aid, because many of the people I have seen have wasted this money on the above purchases mentioned and shouldn't be allowed to have access to this system.

I personally don't agree with the way that welfare works. I think that people who receive welfare or state's help should work, or even do something like community service. I myself work two jobs and still can't survive. I am only 17 years old. I am on my own, so I have rent along with many other bills to pay for. It is very hard to survive today.

In conclusion, I personally feel that since many people work very hard for their money, the state should have a better system for who receives it. Many people have the attitude and don't work because they know that no matter what, they will have that check coming to them every month. The state should provide a system of checks and balances. Those who work and still cannot make it should be allowed some form of aid while those who refuse to work should not receive any! Many people who read this may not agree with what I have to say, but it's my opinion.

Jessica Elliott
Bennington



by Amanda English
Bennington

My Worst Day in School

First my mom took me to the school where she signed me up for kindergarten. I was five years old when I started school. My mom said that she could not stay with me on my first day of school.

After my mom left the school that morning I was sad but it was not so bad at first. Then when snack time came around, I did not have anything to eat because we forgot it at home. Some of the kids started to pick on me about being poor. I told them that I was not poor but forgot my snack at home.

We went outside to play when one of the kids threw a ball at me and called me fat, so I hit him with my hand in the face. Then I ran away crying because he hurt my feelings bad. When we got back inside, the kid that I hit went and told the teacher what I did to him. She called me up to her desk to talk to the both of us at the same time, and I told her what the kid said to me outside and we both got in trouble.

We had to wait for our parents to get us after kindergarten and the teacher told our parents what we did to each other.

Finally we got to go home. I was in trouble when my dad came home. I could not watch TV or go outside, and bed time was 6:30 for a week.

I learned that you don't hit or hurt any one at all. I learned that hitting is very wrong. The next day we were friends.

**Crystal Miller
Swanton**

Photos From My Trip to Brazil by Burdena Hopps of Bristol



I am holding a baby boa constrictor.



This is an image of boats on the Amazon River.



a wild green Amazon parrot



*A boto is
a type of
dolphin.
A woman is
feeding him.*



A girl has heavy wings, about 100 pounds. She dances with them on her back.

All these characteristics describe very clearly most of our population. We consider ourselves to be all equal. We are a democratic nation, free from royalty and titles; what are important to us are love, happiness, family closeness, honesty, and a passion for life. I would like to point out that what you see is what you get with us, because we don't wear masks to disguise what we really are. We are a very direct people in all matters. We also enjoy the peace we have now in our country. All these things combined are a treasure for me beyond words.

There are many Colombians who with their hard work are putting their positive mark on the world, like Shakira, a successful singer, songwriter and producer; Sofia Vergara, who works in the entertainment industry in the U.S.; Paola Turbay, a former Miss Universe second place winner, now working in a TV series in the U.S.; Juanes, the winner of several Grammys; Juan Pablo Montoya, the Formula One racing champion now in NASCAR; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, our Nobel Prize winner and famous writer; and El Pibe Valderrama, a soccer player in Colombia and also in the U.S. the last ten years of his career. My country also has many beautiful women; this is why we have lots of contestants competing in national and international beauty contests. There are many others that could be on my list, but I think this small group shows you the diversity that exists among talented Colombians.

I would also like to talk a little about our cuisine. We have variety in our cuisine. We love to eat many vegetables, most of them being organic and not expensive. In fact, most of our food is very inexpensive compared to the U.S. market. We have many kinds of fruit, some that I cannot find here. We love to be creative and mix several vegetables in soups. We love all types of meat and fish. The fruit juices available in the U.S. are not fresh squeezed. I am used to fresh squeezed natural juice every day at breakfast or lunch from different fruits, like guayaba, guanabana, mango, fresas, maracuya, lulo, and others. I buy tangerines, oranges or grapefruit when they are available at the market and squeeze my own juice from them every day. The variety is limited, but at least it is natural. However, they are very expensive.

We have a lot of variety in flora and fauna, exotic flowers in many colors that can be found in the back yard of my house in Colombia. Our weather is the same most of the time, with some rainy days, but pretty much we enjoy tropical weather with beautiful sunny days the whole year. Our country is located in a beautiful place on the globe. We have two oceans, the Caribbean and Pacific. We also have jungle, three big mountain chains that cross our country, valleys and volcanos.

We enjoy only two seasons, sun and rain. In our beautiful geography, there exist high mountains with snow the whole year, lakes and rivers like the Amazon, famous for its pink dolphins. We have beautiful nature reserves and have made progress with conservation in recent years.

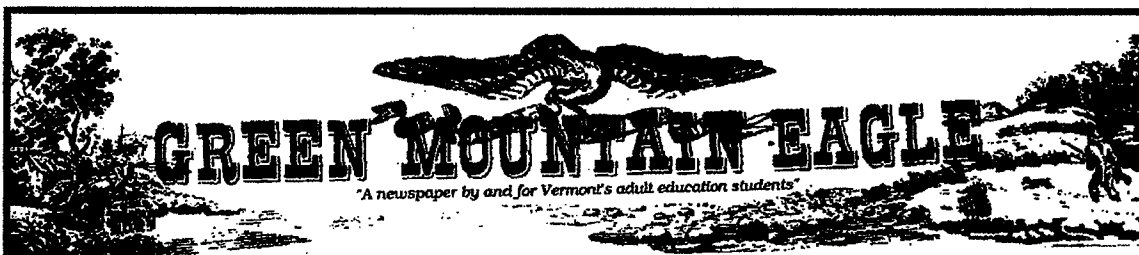
We are the second largest producer of gourmet quality coffee in the world. We also have flowers and fruit like bananas for exportation. In addition, we have crude oil deposits, coal mines, gold and emerald. The latter two were seriously depleted by our conquerors. In exchange they gave us their language, Castilian. We had other languages before the conquest. They are Indian dialects like Guane, Muisca, Tayrona, and Chibcha. In addition, African slaves arrived on the Caribbean coast and created their own language, Patua (a mix of English and French). Today you can still hear this dialect on San Andres Island. The Spanish we speak in Colombia is the purest in all Latin America. The conquest also gave us their Catholic religion. However, today we have a choice among other religions as well.

Our current president, Alvaro Uribe Velez, has made a lot of progress in recent years. He is a president who in his last two terms has led our country forward. Of course, he is not every Colombian's favorite person. There is still a lot of work to do. The same families led us for a long time. They were in power for many generations, and this is why the system developed in a lopsided way, only benefiting a small, privileged part of the population. I think that scrapping the old system is the first step and Uribe is the light to show the way. It may take many more years to change things fully, but this government is exploring the possibilities that many of us wish for our country. The important thing is that we move forward.

In closing, I wish to say that we are a people who live in a world of infinite possibilities for the better! We are a happy people who are always smiling, dancing, singing, etc. We express our feelings honestly no matter what the result. We become unhappy when we are confined by strict, often unnecessary rules. We are passionate about everything we do. Colombia is passion! We love work and work hard to survive and hopefully prosper in a better future to come.

You might well ask how a Colombian like myself can survive in the U.S. There are personal circumstances and reasons why I have lived in the U.S. for almost two years now. I had to start from nothing when I came here and I have many experiences to share, but that would require another article. This article is about my country and my people, not me. All I can say is that I LOVE MY COLOMBIA. I am here but my heart and soul live there. **!VIVA COLOMBIA!**

Patricia Giaquinto
Moretown



KEEP YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS COMING!

Address all comments, questions and contributions to:

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Please be sure to include your name, phone number and/or address or a way to reach you in case we have questions about your contribution.

We need your drawings and photos!

The more there are, the better the *Eagle* is. Send us your drawings done in black ink on white, unlined paper. Send us photos!