

**ACTION**

July 29, 1980

# update...

## Peace Corps Volunteers Serving as Role Models for the Deaf



## Special Program Trains Hearing Impaired PCVs for Service



Last year it was an idea germinating in the minds of four deaf Peace Corps volunteers and their program manager. Today, it's considered the largest single program involving the handicapped in Third World development.

It's an experimental and ambitious project, which involves 15 new PCVs – ten of them totally deaf or with severely impaired hearing – working in communities in the Philippines later this year. They will be teaching deaf children and adults, helping them become fully involved in their communities, and building awareness in the hearing community that the deaf can, indeed, function in society.

It won't be easy, according to Eli Savanick, acting director of the International Center on Deafness at Washington, D.C.'s Gallaudet College (whose student body is made up primarily of hearing-impaired persons), and director of an eight-week pre-service training program for the Philippines-bound PCVs which began June 28.

"Attitudes in the Philippines toward the deaf and the disabled in general are different from those in the U.S.," Savanick says. "Here, we're basically committed to the idea of equality, of equal rights for the handicapped. In the Philippines, a more paternalistic attitude prevails."

For that reason, Savanick is emphatic about the value of the hearing-impaired PCVs serving as "role models" to demonstrate to the deaf and hearing alike, that total or near-deafness isn't an insurmountable obstacle to getting a job, traveling, or performing almost any task now restricted to those whom some in the rehabilitation field like to call the "temporarily able bodied."

As an "extreme example" of the self-image of some hearing impaired individuals, Savanick tells the story of a seven-year-old deaf American boy who, when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, responded with a quizzical stare. It turned out that the boy assumed all deaf people died at age 16 – he had never seen a deaf adult.

The Gallaudet training program is typical for PCVs. They'll be learning the local language, (with the added component of Filipino sign language, sometimes different from that in the U.S.) community education and development, adult education, counseling and helping relationships, and cross-cultural awareness.

The inter-cultural aspect of Peace Corps life is what Joseph McDougall, 26, a hearing-impaired trainee from Austin, Tex. expects to be the most difficult. "I'm impatient," he says in sign language.

“I want to learn it all overnight, though I know I can’t do that. It bothers me to be in a situation where I don’t have all the information—I feel naked. And where do I draw the line between my culture and theirs? I don’t want them to adopt mine, but I do want to be comfortable in theirs.”

That’s why Savanick and his project coordinator Mencie Y. Yaguil-Hairston, are going to extra lengths to help the trainees form a tightly-knit group. The twin-edged cross-cultural sword – adjustments needed to succeed as an American in a Filipino world, coupled with those required of being deaf in a hearing world—make the mutual support provided by what Savanick calls the “sub-culture” of the hearing, extra important.

“It’s difficult for one person to function alone in a Peace Corps setting,” Savanick says. “Knowing that there are others in the same situation that you’re close to can be an important reinforcement.”

Though the Peace Corps volunteer force has long included the hearing-impaired, this is the first large-scale project specifically designed to get them out of the large cities, where they typically work in special institutions for the deaf, and into the smaller towns and villages where such special facilities usually don’t exist.

The project was promoted partially by the efforts of four deaf PCVs now serving in the Philippines, according to PC Philippines Desk Officer Bob Wilson. “They had taken the initiative to travel on their own around the island, then got together to compare the frustrations and problems they encountered, along with the potential they saw for hearing-impaired PCVs,” Wilson says. “They nudged Peace Corps a little and, with the enthusiastic support of program manager Mike Dix, and Filipino community leaders, the project was born.”

In a videotape made for the Gallaudet training program through facilities of the International Communications Agency in Manila, the four PCVs, using sign language, described some of their experiences. PCV Connie Kuntze, who works for the Southeast Asian Institute for the Deaf in Manila, reported on tape that many Filipinos “made fun of the sign language” used by the hearing-impaired PCVs among themselves. “In the U.S.,” she signed, “there’s enough deaf awareness that people don’t usually stare at signing. But it’s an unusual sight in the Philippines. We found ourselves not signing just to avoid the mockery.”

Whether the Philippines experiment will extend, later to other PC countries, depends on its success, which can perhaps be measured in a year or two.



Some feel an obstacle lies in the Peace Corps itself which, reflecting a common American attitude toward the handicapped, often resists placing such PCVs in the field. A frequently stated reason for this reluctance is that host countries sometimes re-

*(cont. page 10)*



# Task Force to Study Affirmative Action Procedures

A task force of ACTION management officials, employees and union representatives has been appointed by Sam Brown to re-evaluate the effectiveness of ACTION's programs, procedures and practices intended to promote opportunities for career advancement and affirmative action within the agency.

In a July 15 memorandum announcing the establishment of the task force, Brown said, "I think it is clear to all of us that we have not made the significant advancements we would have hoped in minority hiring and career advancement opportunities."

The task force, composed of a 27-member steering committee and a 13-member work group, is to complete its work by August 15.

Because equal employment opportunity and affirmative action are critical objectives throughout the agency, Peace Corps will participate actively in this task force effort," Brown said.

Task force members are listed below:

## *STEERING COMMITTEE*

Jim Lancaster, AF/Co-Chair  
Raul Rodriguez, OC/Co-Chair  
Karen Paget, DO/Headquarters  
Brenda Manley, DO/Headquarters  
Bill Hoing, DO/Headquarters  
Jeanne Carney, DO/Headquarters  
Ben Figueras, DO/Headquarters  
Nestor Llamas, Region II  
Sharron Matthews, DO/Region V  
Mamie Hughes, DO/Region VII

Vinette Jones, ORC/Headquarters  
Paulette Hammond, ORC/Headquarters  
Marlene Baxter, ORC/Headquarters  
Richard Della Costa, ORC/WDC  
Francis Turner, FWPAC/Headquarters  
Elaine Smithson, AFSCME  
Tom Lee, AFSCME  
Karen Gaskins, Minorities in ACTION  
Bill Sykes, PC/Headquarters  
Nancy Kingsbury, PC/Headquarters  
Nora Pacheco, PC/Headquarters  
Bob Currie, D/Headquarters  
Betty Mitchell, D/Headquarters  
Dennis Derryck, OPP/Headquarters  
Dana Rogers, OPP/Headquarters  
Donna McTizic, AF/Headquarters  
Mercedese Miller, OVCP/Headquarters

## *WORK GROUP*

Ed Guss, AF/D Chair  
Tom Hyland, AF/PM Co Vice-Chair  
Bart Crivella, OC/EO Co Vice-Chair  
Gina Myers, AF/PM  
Mark Meadows, AF/AS  
Chip Tejan, AF/CGM  
Julian Najeria, AF/MO  
Anne Bachand, AF/PM  
Sharon Steinberg, AF/PM  
Jeanne Snowden, OC/EO  
Beverly Lintner, DO/Headquarters  
Mosha Nelson, ORC/Headquarters  
Calvin Dawson, OPP/Headquarters

"Brown's memo stated: It will be the responsibility of the chairs to define the scope, objectives, approach, method and parameters of work to be undertaken by the task force. I have asked the co-chairpersons to report directly and regularly to me on the progress of this work."

# ACTION/PC Employees Enjoy An Ethnic Luncheon

**A**CTION staff is shown at an ethnic luncheon held at headquarters last month by a committee of agency employees to honor the contributions that people of Eastern European and other ethnic backgrounds have made to this country and to the world.

Pictured at bottom left is author Michael Novak, who delivered a keynote address at the luncheon. In speaking of ACTION's importance, Novak said, "It should come as no surprise that this agency, above all agencies in the government, should be closest to all the people in the world and the most representative of our people."

Nearly 100 employees attended the luncheon, some in ethnic costume, where they sampled a variety of foreign dishes made by staff volunteers. Foreign dolls, toys, books, record albums, pictures and posters graced the luncheon room, and ethnic music played in the background.

Other guest speakers included Peace Corps Director Richard Celeste; Victoria Mangiardo, deputy assistant, White House Office of Ethnic Affairs; and Paul Ascioffa of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Celeste equated the current immigration of Indo-Chinese, Cuban and Haitian refugees to that of the Eastern Europeans earlier in the century. "Just as the Eastern Europeans have made great contributions to American society, so has the newest wave of refugees," he said.

Celeste also stressed the importance of learning from our ancestors. "We should have great appreciation for their courage and wisdom," he said.

Novak added, "In the face of diminishing amounts of liberty in the world, we are likely to see an ever-increasing tide of persons seeking liberty... We shouldn't be surprised that every few years there are a hundred-thousand or two-hundred-thousand people coming to the United States from somewhere."



## Father Follows Son Into Peace Corps

**A**ccording to the old adage, a son should follow in his father's footsteps, but for Bob Irvin and his son it's been the other way around. Bob Irvin, Sr., 56, of Los Angeles has decided what's good enough for his son is good enough for him. He has joined the Peace Corps, following his son, Bob Jr., who was a Peace Corps teacher in Chad, West Africa.

Early in June, Bob, Sr. departed for Seattle for several days of Peace Corps orientation before beginning his assignment in the Philippines. As a volunteer, Irvin, who retired after more than 20 years of public service as a court clerk and investigator, acts as a business advisor and liaison person between the central bank of the Philippines and rural farmers.

It would be easy to assume that the son had recruited his father to join the Peace Corps but this was not the case. "I just think Bob Jr. has a unique sensitivity to what his dad is thinking about from time to time," said Bob Sr. The seed was planted in

the village of Somay in Liberia last February where the father went with his son, who was training new Peace Corps volunteers in that country.

Bob Sr. noted that at least half of the trainees were in his age bracket. He recalled his interest rising as he spoke with the new volunteers, and how they had shifted from being parents of adult sons and daughters to talking about the roles of Peace Corps workers. "I think that was a great influence," remembered the father of four children. Upon their return to the United States, the Irvins talked about their weeks together in Liberia.

"I think I might have been revealing my feeling about it all to him," said Irvin of his conversation with his son. "It just kind of led to his giving me an application." It was a natural thing for Bob Jr. to do, as he had once been a recruiter in the Los Angeles Peace Corps and VISTA Area Office before becoming a Peace Corps volunteer trainer in Liberia.

The elder Irvin, who is also a law school graduate, recalled a sign he had seen on a Los Angeles city bus. "It said 'one planet - one people' - I think that's true. In a humanistic sense, all the people of the planet are one, and so I look forward to the time in the Peace Corps as an opportunity to function in a people-helping-people program.

"I think it's incumbent upon us, since we have a better life in the United States," Irvin added, "to assist others toward their aspirations of a better life. I hope to help."



*Bob Irvin, Sr.*

## World Conference Focuses on Women

The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women 1980, marks the mid-point in the United Nations Decade for Women 1975-85. More than 150 U.N. member-countries are meeting to discuss the progress women have made in employment, education and health, since goals were established in the World Plan of Action at the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City in 1975; and to set priorities for the next five years for advancement, worldwide, in the status of women.

ACTION Deputy Director Mary King, NANEAP Regional Director Perdita Huston, and Anne Turpeau of the Office of Policy and Planning are among the 37-member United States delegation to the conference which is being held July 14-30 in Copenhagen.

Donald F. McHenry, Permanent United States Representative to the United Nations, and Sarah

Weddington, Assistant to the President, are co-chairing the U.S. delegation.

Speaking of the conference, King said that now is the time to translate the educational groundwork that has been laid since 1975 into solid action. "While most women can claim many singular successes in the first half of the Decade for Women, most of the work has been educational," King said. "Women have proved to governments around the world that there is no difference between political issues and women's issues. Starting with this conference in Copenhagen, women can begin to devote their attention, and the attention of their governments, to the Program of Action for the next five years."

Huston added, "We are very concerned that Copenhagen become a vehicle to promote equality and improve the standard of living for women around the world, rather than a forum for political one-upmanship."

A major conference topic is the status of and problems faced by refugee women. "The impact is more desperate on refugee women and on women in countries who face, not only racial discrimination, but sex discrimination," Turpeau said. "The conference will remind us once again of the human waste which results when women are denied fruitful roles in national development, because of age-old discriminations based on sex."

## Carter Signs DO Supplemental Bill

President Carter signed an appropriation bill of \$ 4 million in supplemental funds for ACTION's domestic volunteer programs for FY 1980. This is part of the \$16.9 billion emergency supplemental appropriation bill passed by Congress on July 2.

ACTION's domestic programs are currently operating under a continuing resolution providing \$140,492,000 for FY 1980.

Approximately \$ 2 million of the supplemental package will be allocated to VISTA. About \$1.8 million will allow for additional volunteer assignments, enabling VISTA to meet the President's goal of 5,000 volunteers in the field in FY 1981. This will be the largest number of VISTA volunteers in

the program's 15-year history.

An additional \$250,000 will provide for evaluation of VISTA projects, as well as ACTION's two service-learning programs - University Year for ACTION and the National Center for Service-Learning.

ACTION's Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation (OVCP) and two demonstration volunteer programs will share about \$960,000 of the supplemental. OVCP's half will support five continuation grants for state volunteer offices and 40 mini-grants, averaging \$5,000 each to assist community development projects.

The Fixed Income Consumer Counseling program and Helping Hand will receive \$360,000 and \$120,000, respectively. The former provides community volunteers to assist people on Social Security and other fixed incomes to budget wisely to get the most out of their dollar. Helping Hand involves volunteers in a person-to-person service relationship, such as youngsters assisting disabled senior citizens with their shopping.

The remaining \$990,000 of the supplemental funds will be allocated to program support services and VISTA volunteer recruitment.



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#### UCPP SENIOR PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Michael Gale has received a one-year assignment as senior program specialist for the Urban Crime Prevention Program (UCPP). He is serving as a UCPP liaison with the field. Before assuming this position, Gale was the state program director for ACTION in Hawaii. In the late 60s he worked with the Job Corps in San Francisco where he was in charge of recruitment and placement of volunteers, and also evaluated Job Corp centers. He was a PCV in Venezuela in 1964-66 and later worked as a PC recruiter in San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

A native of Los Angeles, Gale graduated from the University of Southern California in that city with a BS in education. He later earned a master's degree in criminology from the University of Hawaii in Honolulu.

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#### REGION IV ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Bill Bruton is the new administrative officer for Region IV in Atlanta. A former PCV, he served, in a managerial capacity for an agricultural extension service, in 1977-79 in Togo, West Africa. Bruton received a BA in economics in 1977 from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

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#### ACTING DIRECTOR BUDGET DIVISION

Marvin Whitehead has been named acting budget director for ACTION, effective June 9, 1980. He replaces Emerson Markham who has assumed the position of budget director with the Veterans' Administration. Previously, Whitehead was chief of the Budget Division's Support Program Branch. He joined ACTION in the fall of 1971 as a management analyst in the Office of Administration and Finance. Later, as an analyst in the Budget Division, he served in various capacities as an analyst and chief of that Division's Domestic Programs Branch.

Whitehead received his BSBA in 1966 and MBA in 1968 from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Before joining ACTION, he taught economics at Clemson University in South Carolina.

## ACTION/PC Employees May Receive Free Counseling

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been established at ACTION to assist employees in resolving personal, family, social, legal, alcohol and drug abuse problems through early intervention diagnosis, referral and treatment.

The agency recently obtained the services of the Cope Counseling Center to provide initial diagnostic counseling and referral services at no cost to Washington-based employees. A professional counselor will provide assistance concerning community resources, free services and health insurance.

All contacts are confidential and the individual's right to privacy is rigidly protected in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Employees who are experiencing problems which may or may not be affecting their job performance may make an appointment by:

- contacting Kathy Fowler, Labor Employee Relations at 254-8050, or
- calling 484-7400, the Cope Counseling Center, 525 School Street, S.W., a short subway ride from headquarters.

Regardless of whom you choose to contact, simply request an appointment to discuss a "personal" problem without identifying the problem. Specific directions to Cope may be obtained at that time.

Although Cope services Washington-based employees, it has agreed to provide ACTION with referrals to local sources of help for field employees. Field employees wishing assistance should call Kathy Fowler, FTS 254-8050.

Questions concerning the program may also be directed to Kathy Fowler.



He was a World War II refugee, arriving in this country from Fascist Italy in 1941 at the age of five.

Now, he is director of ACTION's Community Energy Project. The energy and commitment of Francis Luzzatto, who has been deeply involved in developing VISTA and Peace Corps programs since he first joined VISTA 13 years ago, are familiar to all who know him.

Luzzatto has been involved in development work nearly all his life. He saw it during the early 60s in Brazil, where he was studying art, and where his father was chief of mission of the Alliance for Progress.

"It was at that time that I had a chance to view, first hand, the work of the first PCVs in that country," Luzzatto recalls. "I thought they were doing important work. I loved the whole concept of Peace Corps and I wanted to be a volunteer - but I didn't apply because I didn't think they had any use for my skills - art."

Luzzatto returned to the United States in the mid-60s to work as an art instructor at D.C.'s Howard University. He went on to take a position as an art specialist for the city's Head Start Program, of which he later became deputy director.

While working for Head Start, Luzzatto met John Torian (now Region I ACTION director). Together they developed a summer VISTA Associates program which was considered a model at the time.

Their role in that program led to program development positions at VISTA headquarters in June, 1968. "At that time," Luzzatto notes, "only two percent of all VISTA volunteers were being recruited to work in their own communities, and even

worked in their own neighborhoods. Within two years, low-income volunteer participation rose to 20 percent. Based on the community volunteer initiative, Luzzatto later developed the Locally Recruited Volunteer (LRV) program, which several years later, resulted in a 50 percent enrollment of all VISTA volunteers as LRVs.

"Unfortunately, the Nationally Recruited Volunteer (NRV) system, under which volunteers are recruited to work in communities other than their own, seems to involve only people of the middle class," Luzzatto says. "Broadening low-income and minority participation among NRVs should be a high priority for VISTA."

Shortly after the incorporation of VISTA and Peace Corps into ACTION in 1971, Luzzatto began working with the Peace Corps. He recalls that in the mid-70s when he was working in PC's Office of Multi-Lateral and Special Programs:

"I began to see how so many valuable Peace Corps volunteer contributions were being lost. Every day, volunteers were learning significant lessons in development. They were learning how to adapt technologies to the realities of community life throughout the developing world.

"All we needed to do," he continues, "was to collect the lessons learned from volunteers and make them available in some usable form, both to our own volunteers and to other organizations involved in grassroots development."

This concept inspired Luzzatto to develop the Information Collection Exchange (ICE) system, now a part of Peace Corps. "ICE provides manuals and technical assistance, based on information from successful PC programs, to the volunteer," Luzzatto says. He credits much of ICE's success to



#### STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## Francis Luzzatto

they were brought in through a back door."

So Luzzatto and Torian began to develop the Community Volunteer System of recruiting low-income volunteers for VISTA, most of whom

Margot Aronson and the ICE staff who were recruited during the program's developing stage.

Out of the ICE concept came the Peace Corps energy program which teams up PCVs and host

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fuse to accept disabled PCVs.

But D.C. ACTION Recruiter Richard Della Costa suspects an unconscious bias within the agency itself – perhaps a submerged idea that the disabled should be “protected” from Third World rigors, or even that they may not be able to perform the duties required.

Della Costa, who admits to having had his consciousness raised largely through his experiences in recruiting on the Gallaudet campus, believes Peace Corps should “stop concentrating on the weaknesses of the disabled and begin looking at their strengths.” He points out that the handicapped, by simply learning to get along in an able-bodied world, have already “demonstrated an ability to adjust to problems of isolation and communication as great as, if not greater” than that required of a non-handicapped PCV. This view is reinforced by Savanick, who calls a Peace Corps experience “the opportunity of a lifetime” for a deaf person.

Although the Gallaudet training program may represent only the first steps toward full-scale Peace Corps acceptance of the disabled as potential volunteers, it is still an important move which may pave the way for “mainstreaming” the disabled in the developing world. It may also help create a greater acceptance of the handicapped in the United States.

#### D.C. Recruiters Learning Sign Language

Encouraged by their experience in recruiting hearing-impaired Peace Corps volunteers for the Philippines program, and also volunteers for VISTA deaf advocacy projects in the Southwest, three ACTION recruiters in Washington, D.C. are taking basic sign language courses at night at Gallaudet.

The recruiters – Rich Della Costa, Debra Like and Alex Wilson – attend classes two evenings a week. ACTION pays the tuition.

Area Recruitment Manager Margaret Holmes, strongly supports this training, noting the frustration of recruiters in communicating with deaf applicants. They had to use an interpreter.

Della Costa, who feels the agency should look more favorably on disabled applicants, says every area office should have a sign-skilled recruiter. “If we don’t make this effort to communicate with such a sizeable part of the population, we’re almost automatically depriving ourselves of some otherwise highly-qualified applicants,” he says.

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country counterparts to collect data on village energy consumption and explore alternative sources of energy, suitable for village level use.

Last September, Luzzatto became project director of a pilot community self-help energy program in Fitchburg, Mass. He notes the idea for this project was conceived by Don Green, ACTION’s executive assistant for programs.

Many ACTION staff members, including those from DO and ORC in the field, contributed to Fitchburg’s success, but Luzzatto attributes much of the success to the hard work and imagination of ACTION staff member Tamera Stanton, who worked in Fitchburg during much of the project’s first six weeks.

“Fitchburg showed that citizens will take direct action to conserve energy in their own homes, once they understand what needs to be done and how to do it,” Luzzatto says. “Fitchburg also illustrated the role that community leaders must play in local programs which set out to involve citizens in energy conservation.”

This success resulted in an interagency agreement under which ACTION received a Department of Energy grant to help 18 communities across the country develop their own energy conservation projects. This effort was named the Community Energy Project (CEP).

“Both the Peace Corps energy project and CEP are expressions of the same concept,” Luzzatto says. “Both are minor modifications of existing practices. In this country, it means low-cost/no-cost energy conservation, and in the Third World it means seeking ways of making the production and use of fuel more efficient—and both involve the cumulative impact of small steps.

“Working for ACTION has been a constant challenge,” Luzzatto says. “At its best, it is an exciting, creative agency. What I like is its size, purpose, and the commitment of its staff. At ACTION, we are less muscle-bound by bureaucracy, money and staff. In spite of whatever problems may exist, we are still able to make a difference through people.”

# PC Summer Interns in Action

Peace Corps summer interns have been with ACTION since the program began on June 30. The photos on this page show them on day-to-day assignments in PC offices and meeting with PC Director Richard Celeste. (Seated at right in group photo)

The eight-week intensive work-study program was designed to broaden the perspective of minorities about Peace Corps and its role in addressing development issues and basic human needs in developing countries. Fifteen third-year students from historically Black and Hispanic Colleges and universities are participating. (See May 21 issue of ACTION Update)

Both staff and interns have voiced comments about the impact of the program so far "Through my involvement in this program, I am gaining an in-depth knowledge about the Peace Corps and its function on an international level," said intern Kevin McKinnon. The program is definitely an asset in terms of minority awareness of the Peace Corps."

Dennis Derryck, coordinator of the program, said, "One of the goals of the program is an understanding of the need for minorities to participate in international affairs and development issues. I feel confident that we are well on our way to accomplishing that goal."



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## D.C. Campaign is Geared to Minorities



Chris Adams, a PC placement officer, and Alberta Stowe of OVCP (at right) chat with visitors to an ACTION recruitment booth in Washington, D.C.'s Lafayette Park during a June recruitment campaign, geared to minority volunteers. Throughout the week-long campaign, recruiters and other ACTION staff worked out of several minority areas, and ran media announcements, and classified ads in major newspapers and minority publications.

D.C. Area Recruitment Manager Margaret Holmes said the campaign was "the best we've had in D.C. The quality of inquiries was exceptional." Recruiter Caron Gwynn noted great interest among people in a Hispanic area where she campaigned. "They want to improve the health and living conditions of their people," Gwynn said.

According to D.C. recruiter Glen Wilson, "outreach to minorities has just begun. We can now begin working more closely with local minority organizations."

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### ACTION UPDATE

Editor .....	Patita McEvoy
Assistant Editor .....	Judy Kusheloff
Editorial Assistant .....	Eileen Gwynn
Graphics Designer .....	William Johnson

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