

**From the Book “Secret of Paradise”
By Patricio Tamariz**

CHAPTER THREE

Bahía the Eco City ~ A Tribute to Peter Berg

“We didn’t play it for the Big Time. We didn’t play it for the Small Time. We played it for the Real Time.”– Peter Berg 7/24/11

“Hermano, good to see you again,” was our most common phrase of greeting in the last years with Peter. Sometimes this was the only phrase we would say to each other on a yearly basis, especially on his last few visits. This was partially due to my being busy with the government or on a special project consulting for the Ministry of Tourism and not having enough time to sit with Peter here in Bahía. I always was saying to myself “next time he visits, I will meet with him like I used to.”

Peter would travel many times a year to work in Bahía for the Planet Drum Foundation. His work centered on Bahía, its people, and surrounding natural systems, so that one-day we could have a Model of Urban Sustainability, our Eco city. This was something I asked of him since the first time he came to our quaint beach city in 1999, still battered by the natural disasters of 1998. My only wish is for you to understand my relations with this man, who was so ahead of our times and truly part of my family. It was November 26 of 1997. I was sitting out on the Malecon (promenade) waiting for a pizza at Donatello's place, [close to where Puerto Amistad is now and long before we even thought of building the new bridge that is the longest in Ecuador, spanning out to San Vicente], when it started raining, the first rains of the El Niño of 1997 - 1998. I remember the date well because the next day I had an expedition with some professional diving friends to a site I wanted to explore 5 km out in the ocean, where I had found walls underwater almost 20 years earlier. If you are interested in seeing one of my projects, a team of divers from a local university created a nice video on the expeditions: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP9a9GhW4FU>.

Ecuador’s Pacific coast does not experience hurricanes or tornados, which is one of the reasons many sailing vessels from the Caribbean and Central America come to our beautiful port and stay for months on end. Their instruments suffer from all the electrical storms in those areas, of course magnified with all the humidity. With our green season and dry season, and with the influence of the warm Panama and cooler Humboldt Current, we have perfect weather all year long. We did experience what was earlier known as the Phenomena of El Niño, now called an event, due to scientists figuring out

that this actually has occurred with some periodicity through time. The 1997-1998 event was the most extreme in recorded history.

This fantastic story starts with my meeting a group of Japanese friends from ACTMANG, (Action for Mangrove Reforestation) an NGO that had come to Ecuador offering technical and financial support for the preservation and reforestation done by local residents of mangrove areas, and the research, study and promotion of those activities. In Ecuador, in addition to their main objective was a specific one of protecting and investigating the tallest mangroves of the world, the Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), which are on our coasts north of Bahía (Majagual). These grow up over 60 meters (180ft) tall. ACTMANG has also worked on many projects in Myanmar and Vietnam.

I was already doing voluntary work with this NGO here in Bahía, helping and coordinating mangrove reforestation and studies. I started a great friendship with Takayuki Tsuji, (better known as Taka) who was then a junior officer (now a world expert) of this organization that had come to Chirije www.chirije.com, where we met for the first time. He thought the bungalows there were great and wanted to build something similar in Olmedo for a group of Afro-Ecuadorian women who were looking to start a tourism operation for the conservation of the majestic Majagual forest.

Taka led me to know a good number of the honorable members of ACTMANG including Juichi Shibusawa and also its Chairman, the famous Japanese explorer, Motohiko Kogo. Many personalities were brought together for this worthy cause and it was a prodigious honor to be in his NGO. It was out of great respect and admiration that I became friends with Kogo San. This interesting personality was one of the first climbers, with a team from the Mountaineering Association of Japan, to ascend to the second tallest peak of the Himalayas, K2, and almost was the first to conquer the tallest peak of Antarctica but came in second behind another team. I already knew of some of the feats achieved by Motohiko in the environmental area; in the Arabian Peninsula a royal family member had asked him to bring back the forests in the sea, so he re-established mangroves back and like magic, fish and shellfish returned to this site. Due to this great deed, he was awarded the Rolex Award for Enterprise and was a primary advisor for mangroves for the United Nations. A couple of years ago, I heard the Worldwatch Institute had stated that Motohiko Kogo was one of top ten reasons for the world turning tides towards sustainability because of the work he had done in Vietnam (much of the mangrove was destroyed there, from the use of Agent Orange during the war and also in modern times, the building of shrimp farms), Myanmar and Ecuador.

One of his honorable members that I have had the gratitude of meeting and becoming good friends with is Keibo Oiwa, one of Japan's leading cultural anthropologists and environmentalists. He wrote a book with David Suzuki (who hosted the program "The Nature of Things", which was a television series that aired in over 50 countries) that was titled *The Japan That We Never Knew: A Journey of Discovery*. He is also the founder of the Sloth Club, Japan's leading Slow Life environmental club. I am also member of the Sloth Club, number 007. Though Keibo knows how active I am jumping on many projects, he says that although I am member of the Sloth Club, I am from the Monkey Division.

Last time I saw Keibo was in 2008, he was on CNN International being interviewed about the Slow Life movement. I was so happy to see him there as the authority he is. Further on in this account I will explain how his intervention was very important in my meeting Peter.

Our most difficult rainstorms are called "Nortes (Nor-Tes)", coming from the north and from the sea. They usually come in from the sea and drench everything for about half an hour, sometimes accompanied by thunder; it is wild to see the dark clouds just fly right by. This first storm in the 1997-1998 rainy season (green season really) was oddly a Norte. Oddly I say, because the Nortes usually come in later in the season. Another unusual thing was that this storm, instead of lasting around 30 minutes, lasted for almost 4 hours with very strong winds.

Just a few months before (during the Northern Hemisphere summer), I was in the United States at a good friends house when the catalyst for my worries (which were not much at that time) were the news channels and TV documentaries/programs advising that there was going to be a very strong El Niño during the upcoming winter. It was the first time I started to follow the graphs shown on TV illustrating a long tongue of red fire jutting from our Ecuadorian coast into the Pacific and following the equator towards the west. These were the SST graphs (Sea Surface Temperature) that showed the anomalies of the oceans' surface temperatures in real time.

We are just a half of a degree south of the Equator, surrounded by mountains on a beautiful peninsula with the bay (Rio Chone Estuary) on the northeastern side and the Pacific Ocean on the southwestern side. I have noticed here when we start having rain it is about when the ocean sea surface temperature reaches 26°C or (78.8°F).

So on this November evening in 1997, when the rain stopped and there was no more sign of El Norte, the bayside streets were flooded. What a premonition of what was to come.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States Department of Commerce (NOAA) states the following:

“The Earth's climate is dynamic and naturally varies on seasonal, decadal, centennial, and longer timescales. Each "up and down" fluctuation can lead to conditions, which are warmer or colder, wetter or drier, more stormy or quiescent. Analyses of decadal and longer climate records and studies based on climate models suggest that many changes in recent decades can be attributed to human actions; these decadal trends are referred to as climate change. The effects of climate variability and change, ripple throughout the environment and society – indeed touching nearly all aspects of the human endeavor and the environment. Perhaps the most well understood occurrence of climate variability is the naturally occurring phenomenon known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), an interaction between the ocean and the atmosphere over the tropical Pacific Ocean that has important consequences for weather around the globe. The ENSO cycle is characterized by coherent and strong variations in sea-surface temperatures, rainfall, air pressure, and atmospheric circulation across the equatorial Pacific.

El Niño refers to the warm phase of the cycle, in which above-average sea-surface temperatures develop across the east-central tropical Pacific. La Niña is the cold phase of the ENSO cycle.”

Source: ENSO Cycle: Recent Evolution, Current Status and Predictions Update prepared by Climate Prediction Center / NCEP 1 August 2011

The event of the 1997-1998 El Niño was the strongest in recorded history. The damage in our country was calculated in 2.8 Billion dollars, 4 times more than the event of 1982-1983. It was reported that seven million people in Ecuador had their lives altered in some aspect or another due to this extensive oceanic and atmospheric event. The province of Manabí (where Bahía is located) was the most affected and due to the specifics of currents and atmospheric change, Bahía de Caráquez was the worst hit city on the whole coast of Ecuador. I believe it was one of the most impacted by the El Niño on the eastern Pacific shoreline of the Americas. The words “We have nothing, we have lost our house, our land to cultivate and a family member” were commonly heard.

The roads were so interrupted that in some places there was about 21 feet of mud over the highways, leaving no chance to travel out of the city for up to 3 months. The supplies, food, etc. were being brought in by the ferry that crossed from Bahía to San Vicente, which was now used because of the emergency from Manta (about 1 and half hours away on a good road). In Bahía around the seaside promenade there were tent camps set up for the homeless.

Mud was the everyday scene and with only a few machines that were working to clear it up but for another rain at nightfall, just left the panorama the same (we did not have as

many companies as we have now constructing highways, these now have many land moving machines, tractors, retro excavators, etc.). Our actual President, Rafael Correa has made an impressive administration and management on the topic of new infrastructure.

Right before the winter of '98, I remember distinctively my mother, Flor Maria, having a meeting below the house of Samuel Zambrano, our shrimp farm administrator. He lived with the first floor open on all sides (where hammocks were hung for lazy afternoons) and the main living quarters were on the second floor where his family lived. This was very typical of the Manabí countryside constructions. His wife (now passed away with cancer) and his two sons were of great help to us. All four lived on the second floor.

This meeting's main subject was to prepare for the upcoming El Niño. I remember that mom burst into tears due to her preoccupation with this event's impact on her hard worked business and on the people she might not be able to sustain if something of a disaster hit again. The 1982-83 El Nino event was still fresh in her mind. That one was the second largest event in recorded world history. She had braved that by herself because I was studying in the United States at that time. Again, another premonition arose at that meeting. In that very same place, months later during the heavy rains of March 1998, a flash flood came up and covered the house and the water came in through the second story window. I imagine it was at least 15 feet high and caught everyone by surprise. Samuel jumped out of the opposite window with his wife and two kids hanging from his back towards the tree situated on one side of the house. The family was able to survive because Samuel was able to stay clinging on that tree. More than 50% of the shrimp farm was destroyed.

Event after event in Bahía de Caráquez catalyzed an uneasiness of the local community that grew into indignation and frustration of why nobody from the central government had ordered a National Disaster declaration for the area. All of this happened in waves of succession, up to when there was a large landslide and 12 people died in the upper area of Bahía. I had a friend, a hotel receptionist, who died there. At this time, a group from the community that was coordinating help for Bahía including my mother Flor Maria, had invited a Minister to come to Bahía (by plane and/or helicopter) so that he could see the disaster firsthand. When he arrived he was detained, so he couldn't leave Bahía. This was finally when attention started to be paid to the disaster.

The rains that usually last into April, because of the abnormality of the sea surface temperatures, lasted into almost late June. The land was saturated with water. Anything that fell from the sky made the dirt, clay and trees move down the slopes. Then all of a sudden the rains stopped.

I remember I felt like a king when I was able to cross Bahía's outer rural area (about 1.5 miles in 40 minutes). Just to go 12 miles you had to make 6 different transfers on different vehicles. With coordination being done by the municipality, central government, the Stuarium Foundation and Civic Action groups in Bahía, help was little, but surely trickling in. It was sad to see a medium sized tent city with a homeless population of about 300 families that were relocated into a barren mud flat called Fanca.

Friends living elsewhere in Ecuador did not truly grasp what had happened in Bahía and jokingly they would say, "Is that true all the mud we see there?" Sometimes I would get angry with this, and I would answer that what they saw was only the foot or so of mud that the TV cameras and reporters took when they followed the national authorities through some of the lesser-affected areas. This was the truth. Only our local radio and newspaper reporters knew what was really going on.

The sadness of our story does not stop here. On August 4, 1998, just about over a month after the rains had stopped, at about 12pm, Bahía was shook by 2 earthquakes.

My part of the story goes like this:

We were in Guayaquil with my mom and sister, when all of a sudden I got a telephone call from my secretary, Patricia Borja. I noticed a frightened tone in her voice as she said that there was a big shake and that plaster and cement had fallen on the computers at the office (Bahía Dolphin Tours) and that the mayor's wife had come down the stairs crying (Dos Hemisferios condo where we had our office). During the time I had lived in Bahía, the maximum shake had been a 4.0 on the Richter scale. This one was larger (5.4). Just a week before, we had heard about the earthquake and tsunami that hit Papua New Guinea and that had killed thousands. Due to this, Civil Defense was at that moment patrolling Bahía with loudspeakers saying that there could be a tsunami and that everyone should look for higher ground.

Patricia went on and told me about the earlier event, and then she started screaming "Oh no, it's happening again!" She and her family were in an open-air park and were pretty safe there, but she was very alarmed as she told me how she couldn't stand up. Then she screamed, "a building is falling; all the air is filled with dust and debris!" About a minute later, the city of Guayaquil where I was, started rocking hard. That is when I told myself, the epicenter is in Bahía. Within about 15 minutes all the news channels started to communicate that effectively the epicenter was just off Bahía in the ocean.

So it came to be that after such a devastation of El Nino we were hit by a 7.2 earthquake epicentered off of Bahía and Canoa at 1:59pm on August 4, 1998.

The United States Geological Survey states:

“Three people killed and forty injured in the Bahía de Caráquez- Canoa area. Approximately sixty percent of the buildings at Canoa severely damaged. Electricity, telephone and water services disrupted and most buildings with three or more stories damaged at Bahía de Caráquez. Considerable damage in many other parts of western Manabí Province. Landslides blocked a road between Bahía de Caráquez and Canoa. Felt strongly at Guayaquil and Quito. Felt in much of Ecuador and also at Cali, Colombia. Two large events occurring about 3 and 7 seconds after small onset.” How was it an earthquake of this magnitude occurred and so few were dead? We thank Universal Energy for the first shake that was a 5.4 on the Richter scale at 12:35 pm (exactly one hour and 24 minutes before the big earthquake of 7.2). This first one made everyone alert for a possible tsunami and aftershocks and so the majority of the citizens were out of their houses and buildings. How many times do you get a warning like this? The stronger quake usually comes first.

The television views from the helicopters over Bahía were appalling; we could not believe the destruction. All the buildings looked like Swiss cheese. What a beautiful city we had. My grandmother always said to me that about 50 years ago a strong earthquake had happened in Ecuador. Many of the local citizens say that about every 50 years it shakes hard around here.

Many of the Ecuadorians around the country asked themselves why this happened to this beautiful and quaint area. The worst hit city in the west coast of the Americas from El Niño, and a 7.2 Richter scale Earthquake concentrated in such a short time span. Jamil Mahuad, Ecuador’s President at that time, said on National TV, “We will start the reconstruction of the Coast first from Bahía de Caráquez.” This never happened.

Around a week or two after this last natural disaster, my friends from ACTMANG arrived in Ecuador. Motohiko Kogo, Keibo Oiwa and Taka were part of this group that came immediately to Bahía de Caráquez. As I was taking them around and showing them all the disaster areas, there was something that always will remain deep in me, and this was the meaningful and brotherly feeling of these friends from Japan. I was appalled by the quake impact in Bahía and thought their attention would be on that too, but I was surprised when they stated that more than the earthquake damage they were amazed what destruction the El Niño had done.

Eco City concept born

We had finished a long day of seeing the destruction; meeting with people and checking out the projects ACTMANG had started in the area. During dinner at a local hotel, Kogo,

Keibo, Taka, the rest of the important team (and forgive me for not remembering all the names) and myself were discussing the next steps. I remember the energy was high (in a good sense) and formal at this meeting.

I began a new conversation stating that if I could capture the essence of El Niño and of the Earthquake in manifestations or expressions that our sensory organs could assimilate most easily, it would be the following:

- If Visual for the El Niño, it would be a big poster with a boot covered in fresh mud.
- If Auditory for the Earthquake, it would be the Toc-Toc of all the hammers hitting nails throughout all of Bahía (even towards nighttime) with everyone reconstructing.

I felt sad as I said this to my Japanese friends who had just seen the after effects and destruction of my very beautiful city. Looking at Keibo Oiwa, I said, “But you know, we are strong people and we will be able to reconstruct the city and get it as beautiful as it was before!”

Keibo returned my expressions in the way I will never forget. As the wise man as he is, I captured the essence of his following statement:

“Patricio, this city might have been beautiful, but only on the outside, but on the inside and in its bases it is not. It has a long way to go for it to become truly beautiful. Its citizens and the infrastructure of this city need to strive to synchronize for a perfect balance with the natural systems surrounding and hosting it.”

I listened carefully and asked Keibo, “You mean like an Eco city?” He replied, “Yes, like an Eco city”. This is when the term Eco city was born for Bahía de Caráquez. He then said, “I know the man who can make this happen, **his name is Peter Berg!**” “Can you bring him here?” They replied, “Yes we will invite him.”

From here, ACTMANG’s role was of most importance, especially on helping us transmit the idea to the mayor and to the main Foundation by the name of Stuarium, which was proactive in the necessities and reconstruction of the city. We had a great meeting with the Fundacion Stuarium with all their members present and they accepted the proposal to move towards a Model of Urban Sustainability, as I put it in more formal terms, the concept of Eco city.

We had great support from Dario Proaño and Nicola Mears (who is originally from New Zealand) who have worked as pioneers in ecological tours and have a beautiful example of sustainable land management through permaculture design at Rio Muchacho. As soon as ACTMANG and I explained the concept at the round table they understood and pushed for it. So with the Fundacion onboard, now we needed to reach

the mayor, who at that time was Fernando Cassis. As he was a friend, I contacted him and started to move the idea towards city hall.

The city of Bahía and its city council at this moment was bombarded with all the effects of the disaster to attend to, so it really gives them merit that they actually listened during the lowest level of hope Bahía ever was at. Calamity gave way to opportunity.

Our shrimp farm in its majority was destroyed, and the economic network of Bahía was inexistent. We had no revenue for the family and all I had was a small factory exporting blue crabs to the United States. I was the pioneer of the first blue crab exporting company here in Ecuador. It was a tough job and had a weak money return for all the work I put into it. Later on, I understood it was an extracting industry, which I finally put a stop to. I wish I had been able to cherish the final moments of the political linking my mother so beautifully made (between the Fundacion Stuarium and City Hall), but our economic survival took precedence.

With no money coming in for the family, I had to leave to Guayaquil and start an operation that was on standstill there. I left my mother in charge of dealing with city hall for the Eco city movement. I can describe my mother, Flor Maria (Flower Maria) as a strong, hard working woman and also as a delicate loving human. This, combined with a powerful personality, makes her a tough act for many men to follow. She has had a successful life in many areas and was awarded best citizen of Bahía in 1994. Her mother, who had few economic resources, brought up Flor Maria. When she was 13, my Grandfather, Alfredo Dueñas, brought her in to the Hacienda Coaque where she became the right-hand-man, handling the only outpost of goods from San Vicente to Esmeraldas (a pretty good stretch of coast). This Hacienda was where originally Francisco Pizarro set up one of his first Spanish Conquistador camps in 1531, found the gold he needed to buy the ships, pay the soldiers needed for the capture of the last Inca ruler, Atahualpa and the riches of his kingdom. Then 205 years later, in 1736, this same place, was where the French mission of the Royal Academy of Science of Paris set the first equatorial marker. They came for measuring and to discover the shape of the earth by studying the arcs of the meridians. Of course, this also helped give name to our country...Ecuador.

My grandfather was educated in the United States. Many people from Bahía were educated in the major cities of the world. Bahía de Caráquez was the second largest port of Ecuador and for many passenger cruise lines it was a primary destination. With the education Flor Maria received from her father, she was formed for a different world. When my grandfather died in an accident, while we lived in the United States, her inheritance allowed her to buy a small, inexpensive house in Miami where we lived.

Once we came back from the United States in 1974, with my dad's grave illness, she had to start from zero, but became the first woman in Latin America to grow shrimp by aquaculture and was the first woman in the world to get an organic certification for this process. Our shrimp farm, the Eco-Poseidon, is the only one in the world to have more than 15,000 mangroves planted inside the ponds. With the proceeds from this, I was able to get educated in the United States and we were able to start our beautiful projects at the archaeological site of Chirije (www.chirije.com) and Casa Grande in Bahía (www.casagrandebahia.com).

Returning to Flor Maria's intervention for Bahía de Caráquez Eco city, I told her to take my place in the movement, trying to assure that the City Council and the Mayor would help us achieve the declaration. She did a great job and was the one honored to unveil the plaque at City Hall on Feb 23, 1999.

My mother, Flor Maria, unveiling the Eco City plaque on February 23, 1999.
Mayor of Bahía, Fernando Cassis on the left.

Meeting Peter Berg

I have inserted San Francisco Chronicle staff writer Robert Hurwitt's obituary of Peter, which appeared in the Sunday (8/14/11) edition and online:

"Bioregionalism, which Mr. Berg is credited with developing, relies on natural systems, such as watersheds, as the basis from which to develop sustainable societies. Born in the Jamaica section of Queens, N.Y., Mr. Berg grew up in Florida, where his mother moved when he was 6. He attended the University of Florida at Gainesville and served in the Army. After spending some time in New York and participating in civil rights activities, he hitchhiked across the country and settled in San Francisco in 1964. He joined the Mime Troupe, writing and acting in a half dozen plays, and directing. It is also where he met Judy Goldhaft, who would become his life partner. About the same time, Mr. Berg helped found the Artists Liberation Front and the Diggers, which ran daily free-food programs, a free store and other projects in the Haight-Ashbury.

He was the primary writer for the Diggers, penning terse, scathingly funny ant capitalist position papers and exhorting the city to prepare for the coming mass arrival of young hippies now known as the Summer of Love. An autodidact and voracious reader, he is often cited for his skill in synthesizing new concepts.

Mr. Berg's interest in environmental issues began in his childhood. It happened, Goldhaft said, when "he and his mother were driving through a swamp in a heavy mist. Then the mist opened up and there was a Native American fishing in a flat-bottomed boat. But by the time he could say, 'Oh look,' the mist had closed in again. It was a revelation to him."

Mr. Berg developed the concept of bioregionalism and founded Planet Drum after attending the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm. Along with its many publications, some of Planet Drum's major projects have included education programs and Green City projects, such as native plant gardens. In 1999, Mr. Berg began a project with the coastal city of Bahía de Caráquez in Ecuador, which had been ravaged by floods and an earthquake.

Though Mr. Berg had been battling lung cancer, he remained active, holding ecology workshops in Heron's Head Park in Bayview-Hunters Point and in the Tenderloin this year and participating in the urban sustainability project in Ecuador. He died of pneumonia, Goldhaft said.

Besides Goldhaft, his daughter, Ocean; stepson, Aaron Rosenberg; sister, Elizabeth Arnold; and two granddaughters survive Mr. Berg. " (San Francisco Chronicle, 2011)

From Peter Bergs book Envisioning Sustainability (2009):

"Planet Drum Foundation (PDF) was begun in 1973 after my return from the UN conference on the Environment. A slow house-truck trip back to San Francisco from the East Coast made it clear that the traditional environmental conservation approach was inadequate to stop assaults on nature. There was new evidence of fresh damage along the route I'd covered just a year before. Planet Drum's goal was to develop a place-located ecological philosophy and movement to restore bioregions that could eventually replace the disinhibitory view of industrialism. Using as a logo the image from Sweden of a Sami shaman playing an oracular drum, PDF began corresponding with the network of committed groups, new settlers and activists who had been contacted during the caravan (I referred to them as the "planetariat") to begin evolving this new perspective.

Our most important area of concern is identified as local-planet rather than nation-world, and cities are given responsibility for developing appropriate ecologically sustainable policies in the regions where they exist."(Berg, 2009)

Once Peter arrived in Ecuador, I was able to partake in long sessions with him and duly arrived at the conclusion that I was with an illuminated and intelligent man for our times. He made me hope that one day we could achieve the Eco city status. Although it was

clear that most of the work had to be done by the locals and ourselves, our first chore was to understand the bioregionalism concepts and believe in them.

As Peter told me, Bioregionalism was a term that he and Raymond Dasmann, a conservation biologist, coined during the early seventies. I knew that Peter had been one of the first activists that had given a statement at the first United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972.

On Peter's arrival to Bahía de Caráquez, I knew immediately that Bioregionalism was much more than environmentalism and that it depended not on geopolitical boundaries, but on geographical boundaries that made so much more sense. The water sheds, so important for all types of life human/animal, plants, trees and more, led way to important natural systems that held their own ecosystems. From there on, I made the deductions that human history from one water shed (or bioregion) to another, evolved in harmony with the own specifics of each region, different but complementary to each other.

A genius in life, Peter was a maestro for someone who was searching for more and wanted Bahía to excel in leading Ecuador to become a sustainable paradise. He came in, set up his foundation and was able to keep the dreams of an Eco city alive here in Bahía.

On his first trip here in February of 1999 and into the first rainy season after the 1997 - 1998 El Niño, guess what happened? It was still raining! Peter was a great writer, and wrote his Ecuador dispatches from the start of his stay here in Bahía. Please view at: www.planetdrum.org http://www.planetdrum.org/ecuador_1999_feb.htm#report.

I have many favorites but this one so eloquently captured just a small taste of what we Bahieños (Ba-Ye-Nyos, as we call ourselves from Bahía) lived during the El Niño. Here is a quote from his dispatch from Ecuador titled **“Two and a half Doses of Reality”** from February 16, 1999:

“A comparatively half-size reality appeared in the form of a new creek across the path when Patricio Tamariz and I were returning on an already mud-rutted road from a visit to the coast at Canoa. Ominous sheer clay cliffs rise a hundred feet high at 80-degree angles alongside the road at several points. Edges of rain-broken clay hang on their faces like draped theater curtains, waiting for enough additional soaking to ooze down across the road on the way to the beach. Only a few trucks had stopped for the water crossing the road when we arrived but the rain suddenly switched its volume upwards almost as though a faucet had been opened to full.

By the time it was our turn the creek was beginning to flow at the level of the door bottoms. Fast-moving, brown, gravel-spitting water was verging on impassable when

Patricio began to charge through and it became untraversable just as we entered the lowest point. Stuck with water rising quickly, Patricio asked me to take the wheel while he jumped out to slog in the current examining the situation with searching eyes and half-started gestures. If the water continued to rise, the truck would be carried across the embankment on the other side of the road. He threw a fairly wide log across the creek where it bordered the road, causing water to gush in both directions around the truck and fill underneath with gravel. Several local people and other drivers frantically dug out the front and rear wheels but the truck couldn't budge forward. Everyone came to the front and pushed to get some movement in reverse, then, they rushed like a team to the rear yelling and gesturing to heave the truck forward. It rose up onto the underwater gravel with uncertain slowness until a final heave carried it forward like a boat dragging bottom. I yelled to Patricio that I wouldn't stop until the truck was down the road well beyond the point where it became dry. We had already seen the water rise by a foot while we were in it. The storm continued on the way back to Bahía and through the night. The road in that section might easily be a river canyon by now."

As we started to work together, I was invited by the national government to become Provincial Director of Tourism for the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2000. I was then appointed Pacific Coast Manager for the same entity, and became founder of the Tourism School for the new Community College of Guayaquil called Eco Tec. In the latter part of 2004, I was appointed Executive Director for Ecuador's First Tourism Promotion fund. www.ecuador.travel.

My government work ended in 2010 [but was appointed Viceminister in 2014]. I was able to see and meet with Peter more than other years. I was blessed to be part of his bioregional effort. I have proposed to both city and national governments to have a new plan for sustainable tourism and to develop a strategy that associates human progress in all fields, even agriculture. This would include the baseline matrix for planning to be the Bioregions.

One of the beautiful projects that sprang out and caused a great effect not only in Bahía but also in other cities of Ecuador such as Guayaquil, was the Eco-Kids Clubs that Flor Maria founded. This was part of an undertaking that is praiseworthy to mention. She took in 150 kids from the homeless families and brought them together for afterschool environmental and family values education. She later was appointed as International promoter for the Latin America Eco Club network.

I have to thank Clay Plager-Unger, the manager of the Planet Drum Foundation in Ecuador. His hard work and sacrifice has surpassed my expectations and he still needs

a lot of help, especially in funding. They have done an incredible job in revegetating the dangerous, high-risk hills for future El Niños.

The environmental cause is still strong here; in my lifetime there is so much to be grateful for, but I do not think there are words that could describe my gratitude to the Japanese ACTMANG team, as they introduced me to Peter. I have to thank the Stuarium Foundation and also the ex-Mayor Fernando Cassis, who with his city council helped in the declaration of Bahía de Caráquez going forth as an Eco city. I also have deep gratitude for my mother, who was able to create the Eco Bahía Environmental Learning Center and keep it functioning during dire times. Thanks to the members of that foundation like Jacob Santos, who like me, along with the citizens of my birthplace, Bahía de Caráquez, were in for the trip of a lifetime.

As I said, on a local level we have a good group of people concerned with sustainability. This includes Nicola and Dario, who work at the Rio Muchacho Organic farm, along with many other women groups who make beautiful Eco-Papel out of recycled paper. Marcelo Luque is another stand out; he works for the conservation of Bahía's forest Cordillera del Balsamo and has Cerro Seco, which is a true example of conservation of the Dry Tropical Forest.

More good news is that the President of Ecuador has elected Bahía de Caráquez to become the pilot city for creating a total recycling program. I hope the city government has enough push to keep this program going. I always tell the Mayor I can help and he says "but Ad-Honorem", which means "for the honor of", not seeking any material reward. It is commonly used in institutions for some unpaid positions and I always say to the mayor, "You bet".

Dr. Carlos Mendoza, the actual mayor of Bahía [again reelected in 2023] has had many milestones in his lifetime, including pushing the building of the longest bridge of Ecuador that unites Bahía with San Vicente. He has worked with the ex-President Sixto Duran Ballen, whose holiday home was in Bahía at which time the city had an important growth. Papio, (Pa-pee-oo) as I call Sixto, which is an affectionate phrase used by his children and grandchildren was a great president in his time (1992-1996). Papio actually brought in my wife to his family when she had just graduated high school and helped her through her schooling when her dad died. Juliana had a grand political experience being with Sixto through the campaign and his 4-year presidential term. She was great to talk with and get opinions from when I had my almost 10 years active experience in the government. My cousin Carlos, the mayor, is a good guy with a good heart and good intentions, but there are many fires that he needs to put out on a daily basis and he needs all the help he can receive. As I now have come back from public life (national government positions) to private, one of my challenges is to get the Eco city committee working again. He was very

sad to hear about Peter. In the last Eco city day he knew Peter wasn't doing well and in a formal council meeting proposed that Peter be given an award. Peter now has the largest plaque on the walls of our City Hall, in remembrance of his love and work for Bahia.

Here is an email that I received from Judy once I sent my condolences. I felt guilty that just 3 weeks before his death, I was in San Francisco for one evening, contracted by the national government to do a presentation based on "*Ecuador a Sustainable Tourism Destination*", and was too busy to meet with him L.

From **Judy Goldhaft:**

"Dearest Patricio,

Don't be sad that you weren't able to see Peter during your visit to SF. He understood the difficulties of scheduling during a business trip. Peter had lots of love and respect for you...after all you were the one who invited him to work in Bahía. Thank you for your kind words and for also sending the news to Ron Mader so that he could post it too.

I guess he didn't make the 50/50 chance to go to Bahía again...we had planned to come again in November and would have I'm sure, except for the surprise pneumonia complication. Peter loved the projects in Bahía and loved describing them to everyone.

Ocean [his daughter] has suggested that we make a trip to Bahía together in a few months.....maybe after the New Year. I'll let you know if/when we have plans.

Love, Judy"

Peter gave me as a gift his book *Envisioning Sustainability* on November 20, 2009. He autographed it with the following words:

"Patricio,

With such great rewards from our friendship for 10 years, I look with wide-eyed anticipation at what will evolve for the rest of our lives.

Yr 'mano, Peter"

So as I close this chapter I wish these words that I have written will be printed so I can fulfill a desire from Peter to have the Eco-Mandato shown to others. I am attaching the page in English and Spanish. Let his work go on, let us work and play hard, let us survive in a world where Peter's and our main message was of Intergenerational Solidarity for the *peoples of the **Third Planet from the Sun*** (term he used to always repeat to me).

<https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Patricio-Tamariz/dp/0983862303>