

ICWA LETTERS

Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young professionals to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. An exempt operating foundation endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

TRUSTEES

Bryn Barnard
Carole Beaulieu
Mary Lynne Bird
William F. Foote
Peter Geithner
Pramila Jayapal
Peter Bird Martin
Judith Mayer
Dorothy S. Patterson
Paul A. Rahe
Carol Rose
John Spencer
Edmund Sutton
Dirk J. Vandewalle
Sally Wriggins

HONORARY TRUSTEES

David Elliot
David Hapgood
Pat M. Holt
Edwin S. Munger
Richard H. Nolte
Albert Ravenholt
Phillips Talbot

Institute of Current World Affairs
The Crane-Rogers Foundation
Four West Wheelock Street
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755 U.S.A.

PK-1
THE AMERICAS

Peter Keller is a Forest & Society Fellow of the Institute, studying and writing about national and private parks in Chile and Argentina.

The Race for Machu Picchu

By Peter Keller

April, 2000

PUCÓN, Chile – “Is that Machu Picchu? Or am I looking in the wrong direction? All I see is fog.” This was my first “view” of Machu Picchu, from the Sun Temple high above the ruins of the religious capital of the Inca Empire. My hiking companions and I were coming to the end of our four-day journey along the Inca Trail and were greeted with this sight. Which is no surprise, because during this time of year the rainy season often brings one enormous cloud that hangs continuously over the Peruvian Andes. During my month in Peru I can’t recall one day with complete and unbroken sunshine. So what drew me to Machu Picchu and why am I in Peru — instead of Chile where I should be? I have come to Peru to begin my three-month Spanish (or *Castellano* as my teachers prefer to call the language) immersion course in the lively city of Cusco. The language school is highly recommended, along with the accent spoken here in the highlands of the central Andes. In addition, I wanted to investigate first-hand a proposal to build a cable-car system from the Urubamba River Valley up to the base of Machu Picchu.

But first it is appropriate to explain more about the history of the Fellowship program that has brought me to Peru. As a short background, the Musser Fellowship began in 1978 when the late John Miller Musser provided fellowship support through his own foundation (General Service Foundation) to enable the Crane-Rogers Foundation to provide this type of opportunity. The fellowship is available to people with graduate degrees in forestry or related specialties to focus on the relationship of forest-resource problems to humans, including policy-makers, scientists and environmentalists, among others. John Musser was a college classmate of John Hazard, who became a fellow of the Institute in 1934. These two and one other classmate went on a journey of the world after graduating and never lost the spirit for exploring new horizons. This connection, along with Musser’s work in the forestry sector and the Institute’s desire to memorialize him following his death led to the development of the Memorial Fellowship.

Initially, three fellows were funded to pursue their aspirations. The inaugural group included Gary Hartshorn, who studied peoples’ relationships with the forest resources of tropical Latin America (1978-1982); William Knowland, who investigated the role of forests in economic development in Malaysia and Indonesia (1978-1981); and Deanna Donovan, who spent three years in the forests of Nepal writing about the fuelwood crisis in that country. The longest Musser Fellowship was held by Paula Williams, who spent over seven years studying the human uses of forest resources in francophone sub-Saharan Africa in the countries of Senegal, Burkina-Faso, Mali, and Burundi (1983-1991). However, the last five years were funded by sources other than the Crane-Rogers Foundation. Cynthia Caron developed an exciting opportunity through a classmate at Yale University to enter the Kingdom of Bhutan to learn about the impact of forest-preservation projects on the people in that secluded country (1994-1996). Finally, Randi Movich spent a year in Guinea reporting on the use of forest resources in women’s reproductive health before she and her husband Jeff returned to the United States to prepare for the arrival of their own child (1997-1998).

For the next two years I will follow in the footsteps of past Musser Fellows as I write monthly newsletters about my experiences — but for me these newslet-



The Author at Machu Picchu

ters will be written from Chile and parts of Argentina. The newsletters will focus on private — and publicly-owned — national parks in this corner of the world, along with other environmental issues. These newsletters will be sent to two different groups of people, those on the Institute’s regular mailing list (which amounts to nearly 1,500 entries) and another group of nearly 100 people whom I have chosen to receive these monthly accounts of my rumblings in South America.

The primary focus of my newsletters will be the Pumalin (draw out that “i” as an “ee” and you’ll have the correct pronunciation) Park project in southern Chile. In total acreage the Pumalin project is the largest privately purchased and owned area in the world dedicated to protecting nature. As one who has studied and worked in national parks for nearly a dozen years, the concept of a privately operated park is intriguing. Not because I see it as competition or a threat to public parks, but because I think this model may lend itself to new developments in the way we manage protected natural areas in the U.S. or perhaps other countries. I will clarify this more as the months roll by.

Besides park-management issues I plan on writing about a variety of topics including the salmon-farming industry located along the eastern shore of Chiloé Island, the plight of the indigenous Mapuche people, and the status of proposed projects for hydro-electricity power plants on the Biobío and Futaleufú Rivers. In addition, I hope to write about recent community-based strategies for protection of

natural and cultural resources near Valdivia and also in the Cochamó Valley (an area referred to as the Yosemite Valley of Chile). The newsletters will be a mix of issue-analysis and personal experiences. The Fellowship provides a unique opportunity to report on everyday life that is not possible in journals that strictly focus on science, law, or natural-resource issues. I plan to take advantage of this opportunity to share my experiences of life “behind the scenes” in Chile.

Recently, while residing at a local hostel and eating dinner with fellow travelers, a discussion emerged about “what is your dream?” A woman from Argentina wanted to play the piano, sing classical music, learn German, and become a famous lawyer — all overnight, of course. My answer was a corny one, but true. I am living my dream now: To learn Spanish and work in the national parks in and around Patagonia. Yes, this is for real! What could be better? Not much, and this is coming from someone who has worked in some spectacular areas, for example, as a river ranger on the Smith River in Montana, leading hikes for visitors in Glacier National Park, managing the public relations office at Redwood National Park, and most recently at Yosemite National Park assisting in the development of plans that will direct future management of this most cherished landscape.

As with most dreams, realization takes a good deal of work and preparation, combined with occasional luck. I’ve had a good share of both, which has given me the opportunity to earn a degree in Recreation Resource Management

from the University of Montana and a Masters in Environmental Law at the Vermont Law School. Afterwards, I went into the Presidential Management Intern program — a federal-government program designed to attract recent graduate students to federal service. For over three years I worked for a variety of federal agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service — all based in Washington, D.C. But still, after all this, I was missing what I craved for the past ten years — international experience. Thus appeared the opportunity with the Institute of Current World Affairs to explore and write about environmental issues in Chile. After much consternation and a healthy share of bureaucracy, the only option was to resign from government service (with an initial six-month leave of absence) to pursue this dream — and so far I have not regretted it.

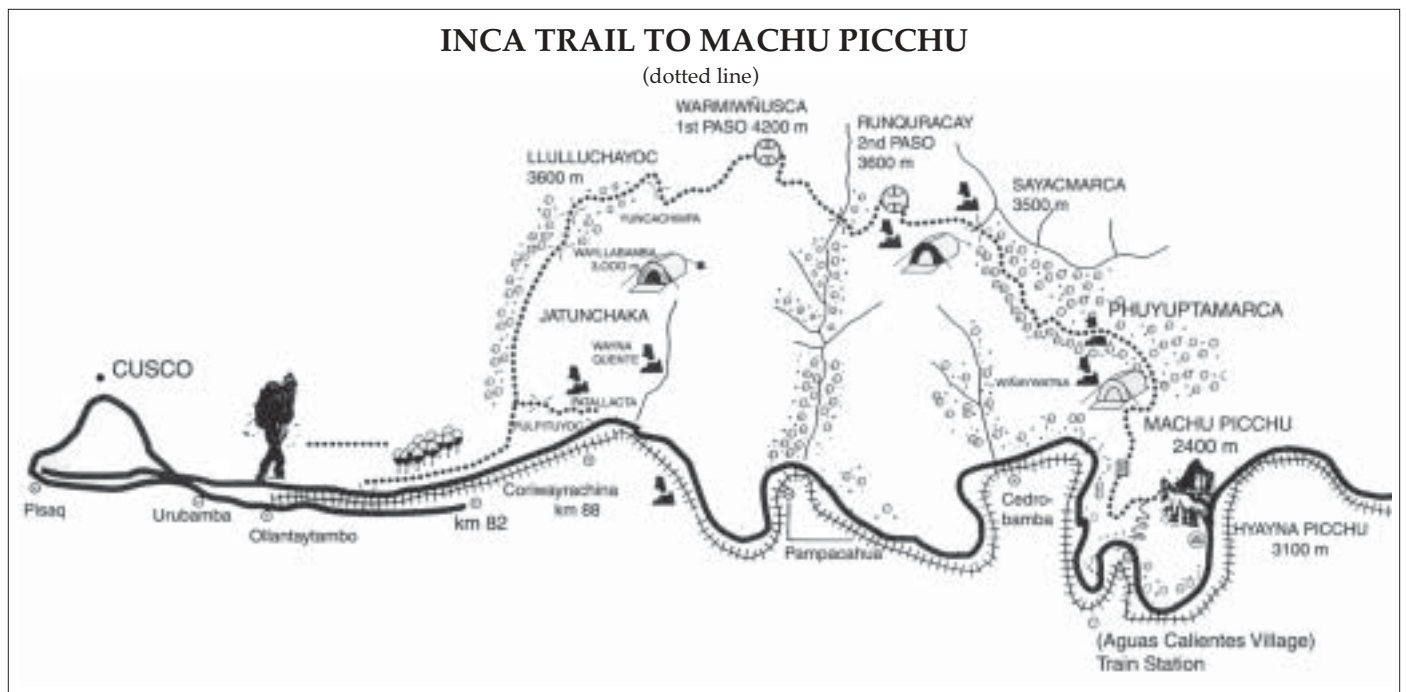
For now, this should be sufficient information on who I am and what I am doing here. Now, let's get back to the rest of the story about the most popular archaeological site in South America.

"If you want to be close to the gods, you have to hike high into the mountains." So goes the saying along the Inca Trail. For those who have time, this historic route to Machu Picchu provides context and long contemplation of the significance of the Inca world. Catching my breath at a mountain pass at 4,200 meters, I couldn't understand why the Incas would choose this route — or maybe I was just light-headed from lack of oxygen. But by the end of the four-day, 43-kilometer hike, our guide explained the reasons and it began to make sense to me.

Our first day on this organized trip began with 17 other people and Kenny, a seven-year veteran of guiding people along the trail. Kenny stopped the bus just three blocks from our start off point to kick two people off. As it turned out these two lads from Sweden had spent the night drink-

ing and dancing at Mama Africa's, The Uptown and the Irish Pub and then rolled onto the bus at 6 am unrefresh from an all-nighter. (As one can probably tell from the names of these hotspots, they cater to travelers from around the world, which makes it possible to spend any night of the year enjoying this activity in Cusco). To me, this ejection was a clue of what was ahead; to the two Norwegians on board, it was great fodder for more jokes about Swedes.

During the three-hour drive to the trailhead we stopped in the town of Urubamba to pick up our porters, who would carry the food and tents. This was accomplished by stopping at the first corner, opening the bus door, and the first





Locals dressed in traditional clothing along the road to Machu Picchu near the city of Cusco

seven to get on had work for the next four days. If there is one thing I regret it is not getting a picture of the porters at work. They were amazing! Here the 15 of us had the latest in fancy outdoor gear, from backpacks to hiking boots, and the porters wore only rubber sandals, shorts, and a long-sleeved shirt, and carried a few personal belongings wrapped up in a plastic sheet — which doubled as rain gear. Now, that is packing light!

In Ollantaytambo, the last stop before the trailhead, we had a chance to purchase last-minute supplies — the usual being a bag of Coca leaves. Many people buy a combination of Coca leaves and carbonated charcoal and chew this mixture, which supposedly reduces headaches caused by hiking at high elevations. I am not sure if it really works, but it's odd to hear people ask, "How much did your Coca leaves cost?" even though there is a large difference between the raw product and the processed version used for other purposes.

The final stretch to "kilometer 82," our starting point, was along a single-lane dirt road that wouldn't qualify as a country-home driveway in rural Montana. As we were bumping along I began to wonder how thousands of people get to Machu Picchu each year — considering the fact that you can't get there by automobile. The greatest asset for controlling access to Machu Picchu is the rugged terrain. There are only a few ways to get there, by foot-hiking along the Inca Trail, by train to the town of Aguas Calientes (and then by bus up to Machu Picchu), or by helicopter. The helicopter service has been in business for five years, ferrying people from Cusco to Aguas Calientes. Although an environmental impact study has been completed and the helicopter is not allowed to fly over the historic sanctuary, the sound and sight of the rotors is still present during the

second half of the hike along the Inca Trail.

Apart from that there is no other access (except for the truly brave, who kayak or raft down the raging Urubamba River). Construction of a highway was recently proposed from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes, but luckily the idea has been shelved for the time being. Having only one major point of access is an advantage in managing an international attraction, such as this World Heritage Site. That means funds and effort need to be invested in only one route — instead of three or four as in other major National Parks, such as Yosemite (which has four roads leading into it). For Machu Picchu there is hope for controlling access by means of the train system, however chaotic it may seem now.

For now, visitors will continue to come to Machu Picchu and the demand for access will in-



The road to the start of the Inca Trail near the town of Ollantaytambo

A World Heritage Site

Machu Picchu is a World Heritage Site; it is among 629 other places in the world that have been bestowed this title. What does this mean? Simply said, these are special places recognized for their international significance by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This program began in 1972 with the ratification of the World Heritage Convention. To list a World Heritage Site, a country's government submits an application to the World Heritage Committee for a cultural and/or natural resource they feel has "exceptional universal value." If accepted, the area is added to the list. Currently, 118 countries are participating in the program. An important aspect to note is that each country maintains sovereignty over its own sites. My interpretation of the program is that it is a method of recognizing the best of the best — presenting aspects that tell the story of who we are and what we value as a world society. But unfortunately some interpret the program in a different way.

In the last few years the World Heritage program (and a similar program for "biosphere reserves") has come under scrutiny from what I call the conspiracy theorists in our society. They fear that a World Heritage Site is actually being managed by the United Nations (UN) and is being used for tactical training to implement a "one-world order." I have worked in three national parks that are also World Heritage Sites and on several occasions have heard these fears expressed. One time a local resident came storming into my office demanding to know how I felt about Boutros Boutros Ghali signing my pay check (the former Secretary General of the United Nations). Often I would hear the code words "blue helmets" and "black helicopters" used by the theorists to indicate that they thought UN troops were hiding in the woods of the national park. Needless to say my paychecks were paid by U.S. taxpayers and no troops existed in the park. The reason I bring this up is that there are more than enough issues involved in managing world heritage sites and not enough time to tackle them all — so it is better to leave fictional hypothesis for bedtime reading and give more time to dealing with reality. Enough said.

In 1981 the Government of Peru declared Machu Picchu an "Historic Sanctuary" and two years later they submitted a successful application for placement of the site on the World Heritage List. A master plan for Machu Picchu was adopted in October 1998. It is interesting to note that the master plan states that no new roads should be built in the Citadel area, and it does not endorse the proposal to build a cable car to the city. However, in November 1998 the right to develop a cable-car system was sold during a government bidding process. The company that bought this right is the same company that manages the railway and the Machu Picchu Hotel. The company, *Machu Picchu Cable Car S.A.*, hopes to begin the \$10 million project soon, but the Peruvian government must first approve an environmental impact assessment (EIA).

In June of 1999 a management unit was created for the site under the direction of The National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) and the National Institute of Culture (INC). This was done in response to concerns by environmental groups and the World Heritage Committee that management of Machu Picchu was not being coordinated among the two main government authorities that are managing the site.

The company holding the right to build the cable-car sys-

tem submitted an EIA in August 1999 to the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, although INRENA is the government agency that will have to approve the project. The project proposes two towers, each between 13 and 15 meters high, to transport visitors within a cabin attached to the cable line — extending over 2,000 meters from Aguas Calientes to the visitor facilities at the Citadel. The Citadel is the main attraction at Machu Picchu and the center of the ancient city. The dropoff point would be nearly 300 meters from the Citadel entrance. Two cable cars would travel on the line, transporting visitors to and from Machu Picchu with a capacity of 500 people per hour.

In response to international concern about the cable car proposal, UNESCO sent a mission of three people to Peru in October 1999 to investigate the issue. The mission concluded "...that any new construction or infrastructure in this area would seriously affect the World Heritage Values, authenticity and integrity of the Citadel and its surrounding landscape." The mission also recommended that carrying-capacity studies be undertaken and overall planning for the Aguas Calientes village be initiated, along with reorganizing and possibly reducing the number of visitor facilities in the Citadel area. Also, the mission asked to be notified when the Peruvian government approves the EIA.

In December 1999 the World Heritage Committee met in Marrakesh, Morocco to review the report from the Mission sent to Peru in October and determine any further recommendations. Like the main United Nations operating body, UNESCO through the World Heritage Committee does not have direct authority to manage World Heritage Sites. However, they do have the power of suggestion and recommendation. When pollution, construction, wars or natural disasters threaten sites, the World Heritage Committee has the option of placing such sites on the "List of World Heritage Sites in Danger." This has helped focus international attention on the need for emergency conservation actions. Currently, there are 27 sites on the list, including Everglades National Park in Florida and parts of Timbuktu in Mali.

Although the Committee supported the report and its recommendations, it did not elect to place Machu Picchu on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. One reason: the Peruvian Government has not yet officially agreed. It seems two factors are in play for the company to actually begin work — the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Presidential politics. As of early April, the EIA had not been approved, according to the staff of the World Heritage Committee that is closely watching the project. As for presidential politics, the cable car proposal is not a high-level issue involving national debate in Peru. The outcome of the runoff Presidential election may accelerate the project towards ground-breaking. President Alberto Fujimori supports the proposal and would like to see it move forward. His opponent, Alejandro Toledo, has said that if he wins he would assume the Presidency at Machu Picchu and not in Lima, the traditional site. Toledo has strong ties with the Indian majority of this country because he is a son of a poor Andean peasant family and has worked his way up the ladder to become a World Bank economist. The direction of the cable-car proposal could change if he wins.



Visitors rushing to board the train in Aguas Calientes

crease. Setting quotas for access has been proposed and there is reason to believe some measures could be implemented — especially along the Inca Trail. But pressure from the travel industry will make it difficult to place limits on the train/bus access route. The number of visitors to Machu Picchu is a sensitive issue, not only for environmentalists, but also for the government. (see box, preceding page).

In Cusco I and my hiking friend Audrey, who works for a non-governmental organization specializing in ecotourism issues, paid a visit to the local National Institute of Culture office (*Instituto Nacional de Cultura*). This is the bureau that manages sites like Machu Picchu. We came looking for some easy answers to easy questions: How many people visited Machu Picchu last year; Are use-limits proposed; Is the cable car proposal still alive? After being shuffled to three different rooms and explaining several times who we were, we finally got some information but not what we wanted. Our handler reported to us, after an extensive consultation with another associate, that we would have to write an official letter to the government requesting this information. After a big sigh and more explanation about our interests, our host grudgingly gave us the visitation statistics — but that is all. The final result of this meeting was one piece of paper with the 1999 visitation total as 382,191 people. That is an average of 1,047 people per day, although the maximum count for one day was 2,760, reached in August of 1999. This includes the Inca Trail, offshoots to it, and the main entrance point. One of the most alarming statistics is the recent increase in visitation along the Inca Trail. In 1984 only 6,000 people hiked the trail; 14 years later the annual total had increased to 60,000 — a tenfold increase. As for the overall total, by comparison, Yosemite National Park receives nearly 4 million people each year and three million of them flock to the eastern end of

Yosemite Valley, an area less than four square miles in size. Machu Picchu covers a five-square kilometer area (1.95 square miles), which allows for even less dispersion.

After our bus reached the trailhead we began the 43-kilometer walk to Machu Picchu. The first day on the trail, I began to realize that this area was still being used for nontourism purposes, as it had been 500 years before during the height of the Inca civilization. The path we were on was and still is really a means for transporting crops and other sustenance from the high country down to the river valley. Except for the occasional *Coca-Cola* sign at someone's house, it was a walk back in time. A slow, gentle one, for we knew the next day was the big day, with the 4,200-meter pass looming just above our campsite. That first

night we stayed in the back yard of a *campesino's* house, next to pigs and chickens lulling us to sleep.

The second day began and ended with the sound of rain pelting the tent. After a breakfast of pancakes, Kenny gave us a peptalk to prepare us for the pendulum of the Inca trail and the 1,200-meter climb before us. I could sense among my group an unspoken spirit of competition to see who would be the first to the top. Not one to shy away from a good brisk hike, I was the first out of the gate. But within an hour, I realized I was not up to the test when a Dutch couple zipped past me. Next came an Argentine/Kiwi team, skipping along. I had delayed my trip by a day to recover from a respiratory infection I caught in Cusco, but I was beginning to think I should have waited a few more days.

Just four days prior to this, my Spanish teacher, Jorge, realized my "cold" needed some serious attention and offered help by way of his wife, Dina, who is a doctor. He set up an appointment for 9 p.m. that night when they would stop by my family's house. Earlier that evening the family I had been staying with for the previous three weeks had begun experimenting with some home-cooked remedies. I had a sore throat, earache, difficulty swallowing and pains in my mid-thorax, both front and back. So my housemother insisted on placing a special oil in my ears. The only thing that got fixed was that I wasn't able to hear the dogs bark outside my window for the next few nights — which was a good thing, but didn't cure my illness. When Dina arrived she brought out her medical kit and took a few vital signs. After a short consultation with Jorge she said I would need some shots. I thought this would be a convoluted process. But no, she wrote on a plain piece of paper a list of supplies and drugs needed and signed it. Then my housemother

walked down the street to the *farmacia* and purchased the supplies (about \$8). When my housemother returned Dina rolled up her sleeves, got out her syringe and began transferring liquids from one glass tube to another until the portion was ready. I began to wonder, "Is this for me, right now?" It was, and down came my pants for the butt shot. After making sure I didn't faint and wasn't allergic to the penicillin, Dina and Jorge headed home without charge or accepting my offer of payment. Of course, I needed three more shots for the rest of the week — but I was on my own for that.

I survived the remaining shots, but had not fully recovered my strength in time for the hike. I made it to the top of "Dead Woman's Pass," the highest point of the Inca Trail, exhausted and ready for lunch. But, rest and food were still several kilometers ahead. After the meal and a short siesta, our group continued on to the second mountain pass and that evening set up camp near a ruin called Sayacmarca. This site is perched on a mountain ridge, making it look like a fortress of some kind. But Kenny explained to us that the site was a home for the Inca elite, complete with patios, shrines, food storage rooms, a possible astronomical observatory and canals that supplied a permanent source of water for bathing and cooking.

That evening we ate dinner in an separate Inca ruin below Sayacmarca that had served as a check station several hundred years before, but now the reconstructed version serves as a field site for the National Institute of Culture



Typical view of stone-laid path known as the Camino Inca



The view from Sayacmarca with the Inca ruin on the left and our tent site on the right

The view of the switchback road from the Citadel connecting Aguas Calientes to Machu Picchu. The proposed cable-car system would be located above the road extending from the river valley below to within 300 meters of the Citadel of Machu Picchu.”



staff, visiting archeologists, and organized tours. The thatched roof, walls made from perfectly carved rocks, dirt floor, candlelit room and porters speaking the native-Quechua tongue stimulated a sense of being lost in time. After dinner Kenny told stories of ghosts that he and the porters had encountered on previous trips and the significance of the afterlife to the native people. The stories — or perhaps reality — were beginning to fill the room as we waited for a break in the rain. The rain subsided and the porters guided us back to our campsite with their flashlights. The dense fog created an atmosphere of walking in the clouds and the flashlights illuminating the stone path ahead created an eerie sense of vertigo. Although the Inca empire existed for barely a century from the-mid 15th to the-mid 16th century, that evening I could have sworn Pachacutec was leading us back to shelter. If that was he, he won another follower. Pachacutec, the 9th Inca, is noted for beginning the expansion of the Inca Empire that eventually extended from Quito, Ecuador in the north to Santiago, Chile in the south. He is seen as the Genghis Khan of South America.

The third day we awoke again to rain, but thanks to the porters we had a warm breakfast to prepare us for the hike to the Wiñaywayna Lodge, site of our final night on the Trail. Prior to hiking the trail I had heard much about this place from fellow travelers. The lodge and surrounding buildings and campsites house hundreds of people each night, and provide such amenities as a bar, music, showers, food and a lively nightlife. At first I was mortified at the thought of this outpost along the Inca Trail. The purist in me wanted no outside influences along this route — it should be just as it was 500 years before, when the Incas

trekked to Machu Picchu. However, after three days of rain and mud, I had no problem with a hot shower, a soft chair and a place to get out of the rain.

That evening Kenny briefed us on the schedule of our last day and later gave us his opinion about the management of the Trail and Machu Picchu — including the proposals for a cable-car system and visitation quotas. Kenny's primary concern is the protection of the Inca culture. If that means a reduction in visitation or an alternative mode of transportation to Machu Picchu, he supports it, even if the result is less business for him. He feels that when it comes to protecting Machu Picchu, money should not matter.

He made the international sign for money (rubbing his thumb with his fingers) when speaking about the cable-car proposal, because the same company that also owns the Machu Picchu Hotel and the railroad line owns the rights to this project. If built, the cable car would run from a site near Aguas Calientes up to the Machu Picchu visitor facilities. I thought for sure Kenny would object to this proposal on grounds of visual intrusion near the Citadel, which is the main feature of the historic sanctuary, but he surprised me by saying he supported it — although, for different reasons than the motivation of its proponents. The winding road up to Machu Picchu, to him, is a scar on the landscape and causes erosion of the hillside. He also feels that the 30-plus buses that travel the road each day may cause vibrations that destabilize the ruins. He feels the cable-car system will reduce erosion and vibrations. On the other hand, the construction of the cable-car system will produce vibrations of its own, and the road would still be in place to service the visitor facilities. We concluded the night by agreeing this may be a case of six

or one half dozen of the other — but for now we needed to sleep to prepare for our early departure.

In order to beat the crowds that arrive by bus, the hike to Machu Picchu begins around 6 am. However, everyone staying at Wiñaywayna has the same beat-the-bus idea, and is also filled with excitement to see the pinnacle of Inca sites. Thus most of the morning is spent jockeying for position on the trail, as you are either passing others or moving out of the way to prevent a hostile takeover. To say the least, it was not a pleasant experience — and this was the rainy season. I can't imagine the race atmosphere during the dry season, when twice as many hikers are on the trail vying for that "first sight" of Machu Picchu.

After hurrying to see nothing but fog, we relaxed for an hour while the curtain slowly lifted and the mysterious Machu Picchu came into view. For the next three hours Kenny guided us through the Inca world as interpreted by scholars who have used the few remaining clues to try to answer our most basic questions — why build it here, and where did they go? The Incas had no written language and the Spaniards never found the site. It's also believed the Incas abandoned it before the Conquistadors arrived in South America. Thus, when this city, nestled in the saddle of a mountain, was re-discovered in 1911 by North American Hiram Bingham, little if anything was known about the site. At the end of the last century we still didn't have complete answers to these most basic questions; however, each year a little more is learned and other sites are found that help tell the story of Machu Picchu.

For me it is the simple things that are intriguing about Machu Picchu. For instance, it's the symmetry. It is situated in a saddle between two mountain peaks. To the north is Huayna Picchu, meaning "young peak," and to the south is Machu Picchu, meaning "old peak." Incidentally, all those famous pictures of the Citadel are with Huayna Picchu in the background — not Machu Picchu. From the center of the saddle, there is a single spot where the bottom of the deep canyon of the Urubamba River can be seen on both sides of the ridge. The view is spectacular because you can see the river make a large bend in the shape of a horseshoe around the ancient city before continuing on toward the Amazon Basin. The linchpin of the Citadel is the Central Plaza, where construction of the city began to the west and east in the form of terraces. At the southern end of the Plaza the terraces join at The Temple of the Sun. This temple is the only round building in the Citadel. At this point the symmetrical simplicity is clearly

pronounced, with the four cardinal directions and a circle in the middle.

I am also amazed by the sheer effort and skill used to build the Citadel. Each of the stones used in the masonry work was prefitted and carved at a nearby quarry and then transported to the construction site. That means, in essence, Machu Picchu was actually built twice. Much of the high-quality stonework was fitted together by carving "tongue and groove" features into the stone; this engineering technique created a stronger foundation. Some of the foundation stones are the size of a small car. Moving them into place was a feat unto itself. At other Inca sites there is evidence that large boulders were moved across the Urubamba River by waiting for the dry season and then diverting the river around the boulder before continuing the transportation to the destined site.

Whatever the Incas were trying to do, perched up here in the Andes, is still a mystery to me because my brain, formed in a western framework of efficiency and productivity, does not compute. For starters, the Inca Trail is never



Our guide Kenny leading us through the Citadel

flat; it either goes up or down. Energy-saving techniques of using switchbacks or contouring the trail from one mountain pass to another (instead of down the mountainside and back up again) were not used. In addition there are easier routes to Machu Picchu, but they were not utilized. However, one thing I do know is that this is a spiritual place, not just from the features and history of the Citadel, but from watching others' reactions when they first see and experience Machu Picchu. One couple I noticed seemed to be in a trance with their jaws dropped and a glassy look in their eyes. When they spoke, it was in quiet, hushed tones, almost whispering in each other's ear — knowing from in-



stinct, perhaps, that they were entering a place connected to other dimensions of life, the underworld and the above, the before and the after.

As I sat on a terrace overlooking the Citadel, the calm and quiet (prior to the onslaught of busses) brought me back to the night at Sacaymarca, when we were nearly floating through the fog. Slowly my frame of mind changed from the techno-world we live in now to the mystical world of the Incas based on values of ritual and balance — not concerned with the end, but more in the manner by which you arrived. And I was reminded that this is why I came to the mountains — to seek serenity. And I think perhaps that is the reason why Incas came here too — for spiritual renewal. □

FELLOWS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Institute of Current World Affairs

EUROPE/RUSSIA

Adam Smith Albion—Uzbekistan

A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is studying and writing about the republics of Central Asia, and their importance as actors within and without the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. Degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University.

Gregory Feifer—Russia

With fluent Russian and a Master's from Harvard, Gregory worked in Moscow as political editor for *Agence France-Presse* and the weekly *Russia Journal* in 1998-9. Greg sees Russia's latest failures at economic and political reform as a continuation of failed attempts at Westernization that began with Peter the Great — failures that a long succession of behind-the-scenes elites have used to run Russia behind a mythic facade of "strong rulers" for centuries. He plans to assess the continuation of these cultural underpinnings of Russian governance in the wake of the Gorbachev/Yeltsin succession.

Whitney Mason—Turkey

A freelance print and television journalist, Whit began his career by founding a newspaper called *The Siberian Review* in Novosibirsk in 1991, then worked as an editor of the *Vladivostok News* and wrote for *Asiaweek* magazine in Hong Kong. In 1995 he switched to radio- and video-journalism, working in Bosnia and Korea for CBS. As an ICWA Fellow, he is studying and writing about Turkey's role as nexus between East and West, and between traditional and secular Islam.

Jean Benoît Nadeau—France

A French-Canadian journalist and playwright, Jean Benoît studied drama at the National Theater School in Montreal, then received a B.A. from McGill University in Political Science and History. The holder of several Canadian magazine and investigative-journalism awards, he is spending his ICWA-fellowship years in France studying "the resistance of the French to the trend of economic and cultural globalization."

SOUTH ASIA

Shelly Renae Browning—Australia

A surgeon specializing in ears and hearing, Dr. Browning is studying the approaches of traditional healers among the Aborigines of Australia and the indigenous peoples of Vanuatu to hearing loss and ear problems. She won her B.S. in Chemistry at the University of the South, studied physician/patient relationships in China and Australia on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and won her M.D. at Emory University in Atlanta. Before her ICWA fellowship, she was a Fellow in Skull-Base Surgery in Montreal at McGill University's Department of Otolaryngology.

sub-SAHARA

Marc Michaelson— Ethiopia

A program manager for Save the Children in The Gambia, Marc has moved across Africa to the Horn, there to assess nation-build-
Institute of Current World Affairs

ing in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and (conditions permitting) availing and unavailing humanitarian efforts in northern Somalia and southern Sudan. With a B.A. in political science from Tufts, a year of non-degree study at the London School of Economics and a Master's in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame, he describes his postgraduate years as "seven years' experience in international development programming and peace research."

THE AMERICAS

Wendy Call—Mexico

A "Healthy Societies" Fellow, Wendy is spending two years in Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec, immersed in contradictory trends: an attempt to industrialize and "develop" land along a proposed Caribbean-to-Pacific containerized railway, and the desire of indigenous peoples to preserve their way of life and some of Mexico's last remaining old-growth forests. With a B.A. in Biology from Oberlin, Wendy has worked as a communications coordinator for Grassroots International and national campaign director for Infact, a corporate accountability organization.

Paige Evans—Cuba

A playwright and former Literary Manager of the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City, Paige is looking at Cuba through the lens of its performing arts. With a History/Literature B.A. from Harvard, she has served as counselor at the Buckhorn Children's Center in Buckhorn, Kentucky (1983-84), as Arts Editor of the *International Courier* in Rome, Italy (1985-86), and as an adjunct professor teaching a course in Contemporary American Playwrights at New York University. She joined the Manhattan Theatre Club in 1990.

Peter Keller—Chile

Public affairs officer at Redwood National Park and a park planner at Yosemite National Park before his fellowship, Peter holds a B.S. in Recreation Resource Management from the University of Montana and a Masters in Environmental Law from the Vermont Law School. As a John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, he is spending two years in Chile and Argentina comparing the operations of parks and forest reserves controlled by the Chilean and Argentine governments to those controlled by private persons and non-governmental organizations.

Susan Sterner—Brazil

A staff photographer for the Associated Press in Los Angeles, Susan received her B.A. in International Studies and Cultural Anthropology at Emory University and a Master's in Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt. AP gave her a wide-ranging beat, with assignments in Haiti, Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexican border. Her fellowship topic: the lives and status of Brazilian women

Tyrone Turner—Brazil

A photojournalist (Black Star) whose work has appeared in many U.S. newspapers and magazines, Tyrone holds a Master's degree in Government and Latin American politics from Georgetown University and has produced photo-essays on youth violence in New Orleans, genocide in Rwanda and mining in Indonesia. As an Institute Fellow he is photographing and writing about Brazilian youth from São Paulo in the industrial South to Recife and Salvador in the Northeast.

ICWA Letters (**ISSN 1083-4303**) are published by the Institute of Current World Affairs Inc., a 501(c)(3) exempt operating foundation incorporated in New York State with offices located at 4 West Wheelock Street, Hanover, NH 03755. The letters are provided free of charge to members of ICWA and are available to libraries and professional researchers by subscription.

Phone: (603) 643-5548 E-Mail: ICWA@valley.net
 Fax: (603) 643-9599 Web Site: www.icwa.org

Executive Director: Peter Bird Martin
 Program Administrator: Gary L. Hansen
 Publications Manager: Ellen Kozak

©2000 Institute of Current World Affairs, The Crane-Rogers Foundation.
 The information contained in this publication may not be reproduced without the writer's permission.

Author: Keller, Peter
 Title: ICWA Letters -
 The Americas
 ISSN: 1083-4303
 Imprint: Institute of Current World
 Affairs, Hanover, NH
 Material Type: Serial
 Language: English
 Frequency: Monthly
 Other Regions: East Asia; South Asia;
 Mideast/North Africa;
 Europe/Russia;
 Sub-Saharan Africa

Institute Fellows are chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise. They are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

Institute of Current World Affairs

THE CRANE-ROGERS FOUNDATION

Four West Wheelock Street

Hanover, New Hampshire 03755 USA