

# ALAN SHEA NEWS

SERVING WITH SIM IN COTE D'IVOIRE @  
THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

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## Alan's Refugee Odyssey



US Special Forces watch over ICA evacuees Alan Shea, Tim Nace, & Paul Grossoehme

### The story until now:

In September 2002 the country of Cote d'Ivoire exploded, coming back to earth overnight in two immiscible parts. ICA, the school where I had served for more than three years, was locked down in a combat zone between the two sides until French and American forces escorted around 160 students and 40 staff to safety. Until the future of ICA clears I've been assigned to the SIM International office in Fort Mill, South Carolina.

**"I'm a meddler and get into useful things..."**

For the last year I've been assigned to "meddling" with a website called the SIM Intranet, or SIMnet, which is like a private library for SIM members and offices worldwide. All sorts of information goes on "the shelf" for immediate access such as approved personnel needs and projects, directories including email addresses, a huge photo library and newsletters and articles. I've been mounting resources like these on SIMnet and training field persons to do that themselves.

Other related projects are taking a larger interest now. One is preparing resource CDs for those of our members who have poor or no Internet access. I've also helped develop secure methods of handling email and file transfers, as well as "firewalls" that prevent hackers from snooping or destroying data and computer systems. A really interesting project was setting up the software for a "wireless link" about five miles long between the International and US offices. This will handle phone and

data lines and save thousands of dollars annually. We gave the system a stress-test before it went into service, trying to overload it to see what it can do! The link is now in use and serving very well.

I enjoy staying with my parents who work with SIM International, and we "carpool" and share many activities and a church home here in Rock Hill. I've been working with the church to help them upgrade their sound system, which will take some major work to wire up and move the controls to the back of the church.

### Invaluable, and Right in the Center of Things...

This year of "meddling" has in many ways been just what I needed. While at ICA I felt very keenly the need to learn how to make better use of internet and web technologies, but I was unable to find the time. What I have learned and the training I have received over the past year has been invaluable and right in the center of it all. In fact, I did initial development work on three websites in the last six months, one of them for ELWA in Liberia.

January 18, 2004 marked the Jubilee of Radio ELWA – 50 years of Good News. Being here to participate in the celebrations was very special for me. I was able to help dad prepare several historical re-releases on CD and DVD. And just think, none of that would have happened if it hadn't been for the events of September, 2002. Establishing a website for Radio ELWA was one of my contributions to the celebrations. But the greatest benefit of <http://www.RadioELWA.org> are email addresses for the ELWA management team in Liberia, something they have been very appreciative of.

How about ICA's website? A year ago February I went to California and worked with Brian Bliss, an ICA colleague, to update the ICA website in light of current events. This works well. You can see it at <http://www.ica.ed.ci> and sign up to receive news and updates directly from ICA by email.

### School is on, But...

ICA itself is not working well, at least not yet. The school board met on the ICA campus in January to assess the situation, and they voted unanimously to open for limited classes starting September 1, 2004. (See the ICA

website for the complete announcement.) There is a strong core of staff committed to ICA, but there is still a need for teachers and support staff. Write [discover@ica.ed.ci](mailto:discover@ica.ed.ci) if you have an interest!

However, it has been disappointing to see failed attempts to form a joint government the last few months.

Peace sometimes seems more

remote than at any time in the last year.

Continue to pray for God's protection on the country of Cote d'Ivoire and for His Good News to bring peace and change to the hearts of these upset people.

Meanwhile the French army and UN staff have continued to stay at ICA, along with several of our national staff. Dan Grudda, ICA's director, has been at the school until last week to keep an eye on things. In January, Brian and Cathy Bliss, who have been dorm parents at ICA, returned to Cote d'Ivoire with their three children.



Cathy, Brian, Cody, Chantelle & Charity Bliss, at ICA's "heliport"

They have taken up the monitoring task and will begin preparing the campus for the arrival of staff.

### Assignment: Assess Equipment & Infrastructure

ICA Director Dan Grudda and my supervisor, Mike Cousineau, have asked me to make a two-week trip to the ICA campus this month. My primary goal is to assess the state of equipment and network infrastructure to determine what will need to be done to prepare for classes in September. A secondary goal will be to restore the campus telephone system, which has been off-line since last September. I leave April 6 and fly via Brussels, Belgium. My return is scheduled for April 20.

One of my great concerns was for test equipment and tools that were reported to be

missing last year when some staff had returned to campus to pack things for long-term storage. Brian Bliss just emailed me digital pictures confirming that all but one cable tester had been found. Praise God! Pray that we will also locate that test tool (a Fluke 620 LAN meter). Pray also that the Lord will provide me strength and wisdom.

On my return I plan to purchase and prepare needed supplies and equipment to be "farmed out" to other staff to carry as they return to ICA. Early in May I hope to visit my supporting churches in New York, followed by a late May departure for ICA, where I expect to be joined by my colleagues Bob and Lois Gillespie. We will be part of the advance team before most staff arrive.

## Participation and Appreciation

Several churches are planning to send work teams to ICA this summer to help with preparing classrooms, dorms and residences for occupancy. Write Bill Grudda [6gruddas@cbi.org](mailto:6gruddas@cbi.org) if you are interested in participating.

Thanks for your prayers and support of this Technology Support missionary.

Our Lord is faithful — *solī Deo gloria!*

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