In April 2005, **Stanley Spielman, M.D. FN’96** and his wife, Margaretha, carried Flag # 99 on an expedition into the Amazon frontier region where three countries, Brazil, Columbia and Peru, converge. They traveled eleven hours by boat from Iquitos, Peru to the joined towns of Tabatinga, Brazil and Leticia, Columbia. From here they staged travels up the Javari River of Peru/Brazil and Amazon tributaries into Columbia.

Three indigenous groups, Marubo (featured in the movie *Medicine Man*), Matis (Cat People) and Mayoruna, from the Javari Valley were encountered in the vicinity of the frontier jungle town of Atalaia, Brazil. Dr. Spielman, an ophthalmologist, and his wife, an ophthalmic technician, performed eye exams and donated glasses to the people. Two-hundred pairs of glasses were utilized. Excellent relations were established that may hopefully attain future entry into the restricted indigenous areas of the Yavari Valley. Stan is developing a plan to bring medical care to the remote villages. (Interested Explorers, please contact him if you are an M.D. with tropical medical expertise or a woman gynecologist.) Travel up the Javari River into the indigenous areas beyond Atalaia is customarily prohibited by the Brazilian Government. The area is home to more isolated Indian people than any other place in the world. This fact is especially intriguing to Dr. Spielman in his search for surviving tribal people as subjects for his ongoing project to paint their portraits…before they are gone forever.

The Cat People simulate jaguars and are of particular interest because of their unique appearance. Vertical sticks protrude from the skin adjacent to the nose. Tattoos fan out on the cheeks like whiskers. Numerous additional fine black sticks protrude from either side of the nostrils, simulating cat whiskers. These People responded immediately to testing.
with symbols on an eye chart, much more quickly than any other preliterate people Stan has encountered. He believes this may indicate a high level of intelligence. They also had excellent vision and few eye diseases.

During the visit, the Matis set up camp in Peru and allowed photography of their activities. The naked Indians hunted in small groups using well crafted twelve-foot blowguns and bows and arrows. They also demonstrated several ceremonies. Covering themselves with clay and assembling in a circle, they performed the Ceremony of the Capybara, the world’s largest rodent. They then paraded in a line and imitated the sounds of wild pigs. Wearing bizarre red masks and decorating their bodies with ferns, they used thin sticks to strike children who had misbehaved. The menacing appearance of the masks further intimidated the children. The Cat People then prepared eye drops from bark scraped from a special tree and mixed with river water. Using a leaf formed into a funnel, they instilled drops into one another’s eyes and also into Dr. Spielman’s eyes! He is still awaiting the beneficial effects.

In Columbia eye care and donated glasses were also provided in Ticuna and Yagua villages. Numerous Ticunas had pterigia (vision threatening corneal growths). An adolescent Ticuna girl was painted black and decorated with feathers in the manner used for the traditional Pelazon Ceremony. This ritual, customarily performed during the full moon, celebrates the transition of young girls into womanhood.
Top Photo, Margaretha Spielman: Matis Indians (Cat People) in the jungle with Dr. Stan Spielman FN96, center.