

# PEACE CORPS

## UPDATE

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### BUSH NOMINATES STATE SENATOR TO BE NEXT DIRECTOR

"The day John F. Kennedy was killed, I was in Okinawa with the Army. I knew from then on that I would go into public service," says Senator Paul D. Coverdell, President Bush's nominee for director of the Peace Corps.

Coverdell, minority leader of the Georgia Senate for the past 14 years and an Atlanta insurance executive, has been a frequent visitor to Peace Corps headquarters and Capitol Hill since his nomination on January 19. His confirmation hearings are expected sometime in mid or late March.

Formerly the chairman of the Georgia Republican Party, Coverdell has been an active political supporter of the President since 1979. He headed Mr. Bush's Georgia campaign during his 1980 presidential race, and chaired both his Southern steering committee and national legislators group in 1988.

Coverdell, 50, has two well-developed careers--public service and business, and feels that is the way it should be. "To be a healthy political figure, you have to have an independent and developing career," he says. "Otherwise you are too dependent on the political system."

His business, which he started with his father in the early 1960s, is one of the top marketers of supplemental insurance products to customers of third parties such as retailers and financial institutions. Coverdell & Co. does business in 40 states.

A member of the Georgia legislature since 1971, Coverdell has initiated legislation in the areas of pension re-

form, natural resources planning and harsher penalties against drunk drivers. He helped to create the Urban Study Institute. He has received numerous civic awards, including the Good Government Award from the Atlanta Jaycees and the 10 Leading State Legislators from the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*.

It is anticipated that President Bush will appoint a deputy Peace Corps director following Coverdell's confirmation by the Senate.

### CHINA PROGRAM UNDERWAY

In an historic step in bilateral relations between China and the United States as well as for the Peace Corps, a small pilot program to place volunteers in that country is being organized. Under plans now being discussed with the Chinese government, 19 volunteers will arrive this summer to teach English in universities and colleges in six towns in Sichuan Province. They will be under the supervision of a team leader.

Training will take place in the United States, probably in the Washington, DC area. The intense, nine-week program will concentrate on language and technical proficiency as well as cross-cultural skills. Staff from the Chinese Embassy will be invited to visit the training site at their convenience.

After arriving in Sichuan's capital of Cheng Du, the group will receive 10 days of orientation from their Chinese hosts.



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## **"SUPPORT NAT'L COUNCIL," OUTGOING DIRECTOR URGES**

"The National Council of RPCVs needs more members," says outgoing director Loret Miller Ruppe. "Look at the AARP [American Association of Retired Persons]—where do they get their power, their strength? If you want to change things, you have to create an entity with numbers."

In an interview for the *Update*, Mrs. Ruppe focused on the importance of the Council-- both to the Peace Corps itself and to Americans concerned about global development. Acknowledging that RPCVs are concerned with the Council's frequent requests for money and few member services, Mrs. Ruppe says returned volunteers have to organize somehow. With only a membership of 7,000, the Council has to spend too much time fundraising. "They have been unable to really take off as an organization," she said, "and, despite many fine initiatives, they are now at a critical juncture."

"We need their help with Congress. Several years ago I could say that the Peace Corps budget was one-half that of a B-1 bomber. This is no longer true. Our budget is now less than one-half--we are not growing at the same rate. We need the Council up there testifying on the Hill, being the voice of 'peace through development.'"

"There are countries now who want our volunteers, but we don't have the budget to go in and set up a program. We need the Council to help us here. The Council also has the potential to represent countries where volunteers have served during testimony on such important subjects as debt relief."

In Third Goal activities, Mrs. Ruppe said the Council can provide key support to RPCV groups around the country. The recent AID Biden-Pell program (see next page) is an example of such support.

They can help organize friends-of groups, scholarships, support for the VIDE program and numerous other activities to get the message out.

"If the National Council fails," says Mrs. Ruppe, "we all have a lot to lose. It isn't easy what they are trying to do—to build a cohesive advocacy group. Please, each one of you, give them a fighting chance to make it work. If you are not a member, JOIN!\* "

## **RPCVs MARCH IN INAUGURAL PARADE**

Taking their places for the first time with the military, state floats, marching bands and other representations of American life, a contingent of RPCVs and current staff participated in January's inaugural parade. The group--marchers for peace--walked 12 abreast and carried the flags of more than 60 nations where the Peace Corps currently serves.

Mrs. Ruppe watched them pass from a grandstand reserved for foreign dignitaries across from the White House. Those who marched reported that the Peace Corps contingent received enthusiastic cheers from the crowds lining the parade route.

## **DIRECTOR AND RPCVs RECEIVE NIGER'S HIGHEST AWARD**

Director Ruppe was one of five Americans honored by the government of Niger at a ceremony on December 17 which celebrated the country's 30th year of independence.

Presenting the Commander of National Merit awards, the highest the country presents to foreigners, was Ambassador and Minister of State Colonel Adamou Moumouni Djermakoye. In ac-

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\*National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, 1319 F St., NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004. Annual dues are \$30.

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cepting hers, Mrs. Ruppe said she did so "on behalf of the 1,680 volunteers who have served in Niger since 1962."

Also honored were Leonard Robinson, president of the African Development Fund; C. Payne Lucas, executive director of Africare; and Phyllis Dichter, AID's Officer for the Sahel and West African Affairs. Robinson and Dichter are RPCVs. Dichter was also an overseas staff member as was Lucas.

### **RPCV GROUPS RECEIVE BIDEN-PELL GRANTS**

Funds from AID's Biden-Pell Program and the Peace Corps are being used by the National Council of Returned Volunteers for a three-year development education program entitled "Development Education from the Bottom Up: A Regional Approach by RPCV Groups." In 1988, eighteen RPCV groups applied for funding to organize third goal activities and seven groups were selected to receive \$5,000 mini grants. They were awarded to:

#### **Indiana RPCVs**

To conduct international awareness training for the Indianapolis Children's Museum's youth volunteers participating in "Passport to the World."

#### **Friends of Bangladesh**

To develop, in cooperation with Friends of Nepal and Friends of India, a teaching module on the problems of deforestation and flooding of the eastern portion of the Indian sub-continent.

#### **Chicago Area RPCVs**

To help the Chicago Area School District develop a multi-cultural literacy program for high school students.

#### **Capital District RPCVs**

To develop an international component to an ongoing campaign in north-eastern New York and New England to reduce prejudice.

#### **Northern California Council of RPCVs**

To develop a kit of multi-media materials to be used by RPCV group speakers' bureaus.

#### **River City Volunteers**

To lead a global education workshop for San Antonio-area school teachers.

#### **North Carolina RPCVs**

To establish a model "Volunteer-in-Residence Program" in public schools.

### **BLACK RPCVs REACH OUT**

To aid in recruitment efforts of blacks and help support them overseas as well as to network and socialize among themselves, Afro-American RPCVs of Greater New York has been recently organized. The group joined with the New York area recruiting office to sponsor a program during Black History Month on "The Role of Native Women in Developing Countries."

Many Peace Corps area offices hosted special events and participated in the events of others during Black History Month. They organized cultural activities, museum visits and book displays. They highlighted the contributions of black RPCVs in their areas through press releases, posters and bookmarks. Visits were made to minority career expositions. Recruitment efforts were made at predominantly black colleges and universities.

From its earliest days, the Peace Corps has encouraged minority participation. The current number of black volunteers is disappointingly low and Vinette Jones, Director of Recruitment, is concerned about this. "I feel," she says, "that the Peace Corps is for everyone. More blacks must share in the opportunities Peace Corps offers. At the same time, people in the developing world need to see the truly rich multicultural composition of American society. Black

RPCVs, through their Goal Three initiatives and through their support of recruitment efforts, play a major role in kindling interest in future applicants."

### **PLOUGHSHARES WINS "World Citizen Award"**

Organized to encourage communication between people in the United States and people in the Soviet Union, Ploughshares has won the Seattle's World Affair Council's first World Citizen Award. The highly innovative group was established by RPCVs living in the Seattle area five years ago and it is an outstanding example of the creative energies and grass-roots organizing ability of volunteers. Ploughshares operates with the philosophy of, "Let's work together and get to know each other," says one of its founders, Fred Nolan (Iran, '65-'67).

In a citation accompanying the award, Ploughshares was honored for its work in motivating thousands of citizens, including children, to create and develop Tashkent Peace Park Project with Seattle's sister city in the Soviet Union. It was also cited for sponsoring the "Million Cranes" project. In keeping

with a Japanese legend that anyone folding a 1,000 paper cranes will be granted one wish, a 1,000 children's groups folded 1,000 cranes each to send to world leaders with their wishes for peace.

In 1988 Ploughshares signed an agreement in Moscow to organize a joint US-Soviet project modeled on the Peace Corps, to show the world that the Soviet Union and the United States can truly cooperate in relations with the developing world. The first step in developing a US-Soviet Volunteer Corps will be taken this summer when a team of 10 American and 10 Soviet citizens will work on earthquake relief in Armenia and low-income housing in Eastern Washington.

#### **FAX US SOME FACTS**

The Office of Public Affairs is interested in learning of RPCVs who have continued to stay in touch with an activity they started as a volunteer or who are directly using their Peace Corps experience in their career. Fax number is 202/254-4010. Please mark to attention of press officer.

Peace Corps Update is published quarterly for returned volunteers, staff and friends. Inquiries or address changes should be addressed to Peace Corps Update, Room 8500, 1990 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20526. Update Editor: Barbara L. Boyd

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