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# WORLDVIEW

Spring 2009

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Vol. 22, No. 1



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INAUGURATION 2009**

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*Volume 22 Number 1*

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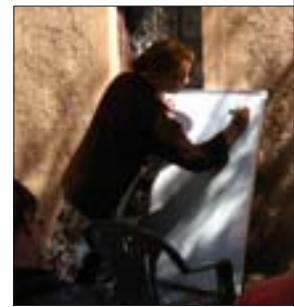
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Parade participants and representatives from the United States Armed Forces take part in the Presidential Inaugural Parade on January 20, 2009 in Washington, DC. Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States, becoming the first African-American to be elected President of the United States. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Kingston/U.S. Army via Getty Images)

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Spring 2009

Volume 22 Number 1

# WORLDVIEW

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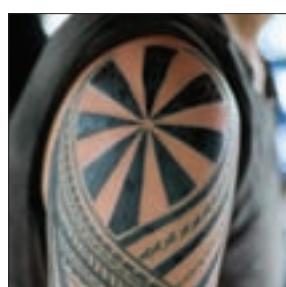
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# THE NEXT DIRECTOR OF PEACE CORPS

*What We Hope*

by Kevin F. F. Quigley

**A**s I write, it's more than 100 days since the election, and there is still no word on the individual that the President will nominate as the 18th Director of the Peace Corps.

This is a bit disappointing since many of us in the Peace Corps community think that the Peace Corps relates directly to the new President's core values—although we understand that he is confronting numerous pressing, and unprecedented, financial and other challenges. Among the other important positions waiting to be filled: Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, the CEO for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the President of Corporation for National and Community Service.

Many in our community are also disappointed by this delay because almost all returned Volunteers harbor the secret ambition of being the Director, and they are wondering why the new President hasn't approached them yet. Volunteers think that because they were great volunteers, are passionate about their service, and have some ideas to improve the Peace Corps, they are ideally suited to be the next Director.

Unfortunately, not all 195,000 of us can become the Director!

The Director and the Deputy Director are the only two Peace Corps officials that are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. There are also another approximately 30 political appointees who are vetted for senior positions by the White House Personnel Office.

The President will also reportedly select a "Service Czar" to provide overall guidance for the U.S. government's service programs including the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps. Under President Bush, this position was the

Director of Freedom Corps. There are suggestions that there might be a very high profile person in this position, which does not require confirmation by the Senate. If such a person is named, this could help the new Peace Corps Director attract significant new resources to the agency.

Filling these positions is an inherently and intensively political process.

Recognizing this, on December 12th the Board of the National Peace Corps Association wrote then President-elect Obama suggesting a set of principles that we hoped would guide his selection of Peace Corps's next Director. The Board specifically chose not to endorse individual candidates since there are many potentially well-qualified individuals, and the Board is not privy to all of the political qualifications related to the next Director.

In this December letter, the NPCA Board suggested that:

Recognizing that the model for the Peace Corps is essentially unchanged, although the world is vastly different than when the agency was created nearly half century ago,

- "*The Director needs to be a forward thinking innovator, prepared to adapt the Peace Corps to better meet the needs of the 21st century.*"

Recognizing that to attract great resources, the Peace Corps must be more closely aligned with major U.S. national interests (like "smart power"), a broad service agenda, or the fight against global poverty.

- "*The Director needs to be a passionate advocate for the independence and integrity of the Peace Corps.*"

Since we are on the cusp of the 50th Anniversary and a forward-looking, truly global celebration will require broad participation,

- "*The Director should embrace the greater Peace Corps community as a collaborative partner with common interests and goals.*"

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the next Director needs to inspire Americans of all ages, backgrounds, and interests to serve.

- "*We feel the next Director should understand the value and promise of the Peace Corps, have demonstrated experience in grassroots global development, and have sufficient passion to motivate volunteers and the clarity of vision to prepare and strengthen the Peace Corps initiative for the challenges of the coming decade. The next Director should also be able to raise attention and re-ignite the spirit and imagination of the American public for the need to advance the Peace Corps as part of your service agenda, like the first Director Sargent Shriver did.*"

With a President calling for expanding the Peace Corps, with countries requesting programs, and many more American wanting to serve, this may be the most important time in the Peace Corps's history since its creation.

These times require a leader with vision and leadership skills who has the President's trust so that she/he can innovate in ways that enhance the program and once again make the Peace Corps truly the global standard in volunteer programs.

We sincerely hope that President Obama will nominate such a visionary leader as the next Director of the Peace Corps.

*Kevin F. F. Quigley is President of the National Peace Corps Association. He served in Thailand, 1976 to 1979. Please send your comments to president@rpcv.org.*

# PEACE CORPS CONNECT ANSWERS OBAMA'S CALL FOR SERVICE AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

*A new social networking site for the Peace Corps community has the potential to unleash our collective energies*

by Meg Garlinghouse

**T**wo of President Obama's central themes while he was campaigning remain paramount since he has been elected. First, Obama continues to emphasize the importance of service and his commitment to making it a more integral part of our lives. Second is the idea that we, the American people, have the knowledge about and answers to many of our nation's problems and therefore, we must participate in the solutions.

Peace Corps Connect (PCC) is a terrific illustration of these two themes. Powered by the National Peace Corps Association, PCC was launched appropriately on January 20th, 2009. Its mission is to engage those who served in the Peace Corps, or share the Peace Corps values, to build communities that inform, inspire, and promote understanding and appreciation of other countries and cultures and sustainable development across the globe.

One of the inspirations for PCC was the realization that there currently is no central repository of information that collects, organizes and makes accessible the incredible and often times unique knowledge that Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) have gained through their service. There are nearly 200,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and many are doing extraordinary things. Moreover, these volunteers have within their memory banks a unique set of knowledge that is not yet accessible to the outside world. This information is incredibly valuable to educational institutions, development organizations as well as future Peace Corps Volunteers. This content is also compelling to the curious general

The screenshot shows the homepage of Connected Peace Corps. At the top, a banner reads "Connected Peace Corps" and "Connect. Inform. Engage." Below the banner, a sub-header says "to Peace Corps Connect". A navigation bar includes links for Main, My Page, Members, Groups, Interact, Multimedia, Events, and FAQs. A large image of a world map with green continents is on the right, labeled "Find people, projects". A central text box states: "Connected Peace Corps is the place online for people who value the Peace Corps to reconnect and work together toward a more peaceful and prosperous world." To the left, a "Groups" section lists four groups: Africa RPCV's (300 members), MorePeaceCorps (11 members), 2009 Presidential Inaugural Parade (28 members), and Friends of Burkina Faso (22 members). To the right, a "Featured Community Posts" section displays several posts from users like "Village Diary Project Launches in Cameroon" and "Third Annual Peace Corps and NPCA Information and Communications Technology Contest". On the far right, a sidebar titled "Welcome to Connected Peace Corps" offers "Sign Up" and "Log In" options, along with a "Site Usage" note and a "Members" section showing small profile pictures.

public, helping bring to life the colorful culture (music, food, photos) of countries around the world.

Peace Corps Connect was further inspired and fueled by the extraordinary amount of efforts that are already organically growing throughout the internet by the RPCV and PCV community. The number

of blogs, wikis and websites continue to multiply. Unfortunately, there is currently no "hub" or centralized place that makes this information easily accessible. We are hopeful that we will have the opportunity to either formally partner or simply link to many of these rich resources.

*Continued on page 8*



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## AROUND THE NPCA

*Continued from page 6*

Much has changed since Sargent Shriver initially launched the Peace Corps. Perhaps the most noteworthy is the internet—which enables social connections to happen among people and organizations in an incredibly efficient manner. PCC will make it easier for the community to take advantage of this technology and future technologies that we cannot yet imagine.

In its early stages the response has been very encouraging. We have already heard anecdotally that RPCVs have connected with “lost” members of their groups; recent recruits are getting answers to their anxious questions; the community is sharing ideas about the future of Peace Corps; and people are becoming re-engaged in an ideal with which they may have lost touch. The vision of the site is that it will eventually become a rich repository of information, knowledge and colorful facts available to the general public. Educational institutions and development organization will be able to use this as a resource to study or provide better services to the area. As the disparate community becomes re-united through this tool, the possibilities will become endless. Joining forces will hopefully spawn new ideas, enable us to raise funds for important projects and rally as a unified force around important policy issues.

Government doesn't have all the answers and we do need to find new ways to tap into the expertise of the American people. Peace Corps Connect is an excellent illustration of the potential of a community. However, it is only as strong as the community that participates in it. Please help us build these connections and collect this knowledge.

Have a suggestion on how to improve it? We want to hear from you. Please email us at: [pcc@peacecorpsconnect.org](mailto:pcc@peacecorpsconnect.org).

*Meg Garlinghouse served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger from 1990 to 1992 in the agriculture sector. She currently manages Yahoo!'s global philanthropy program.*

# The Peace Corps is for life. Stay connected through NPCA.

Your membership and support help us to remain a vibrant resource and advocate for all Peace Corps Volunteers. You don't have to take our word for it. Here are some of the voices from our community!

*“As far as I know NPCA is the single organization in DC that is the eyes and ears of the PC community on the Hill. RPCVs are the voice, but I certainly couldn't follow all the legislative activity on my own - I depend on NPCA to do that for me...NPCA is the one organization dedicated to promoting funding and legislative changes that strengthen Peace Corps.”* Don Kramer - Seattle, WA (Armenia, 04-06)

*“Connected Peace Corps is such a great web site. I connected with a former RPCV who was a fraternity brother of mine in the 1960's. Neither of us knew that each of us had joined PC in 1966. He was in Kenya and I was in Somalia. After I joined last week I was looking at the Africa Group and there was his name & picture. I emailed him and we have emailed each other several times since. What a great tool thing PC Connect is!”* Christopher Barnhart (Somalia, 66-68)

*“In our advocacy to support affordable postal rates for international book projects, I know we wouldn't be anywhere without the NPCA guiding us, providing leadership, suggestions, support and encouragement to RPCVs and other organizations with similar concerns.”* Shannon Brown - Portland, OR (Malawi, 93-94; Coordinator of the Malawi Book Project)

*“I have greatly enjoyed receiving your informative email newsletter GlobalEd News. Thank you so much for the time and effort you devote to helping us stay abreast of learning and teaching opportunities in global education.”*

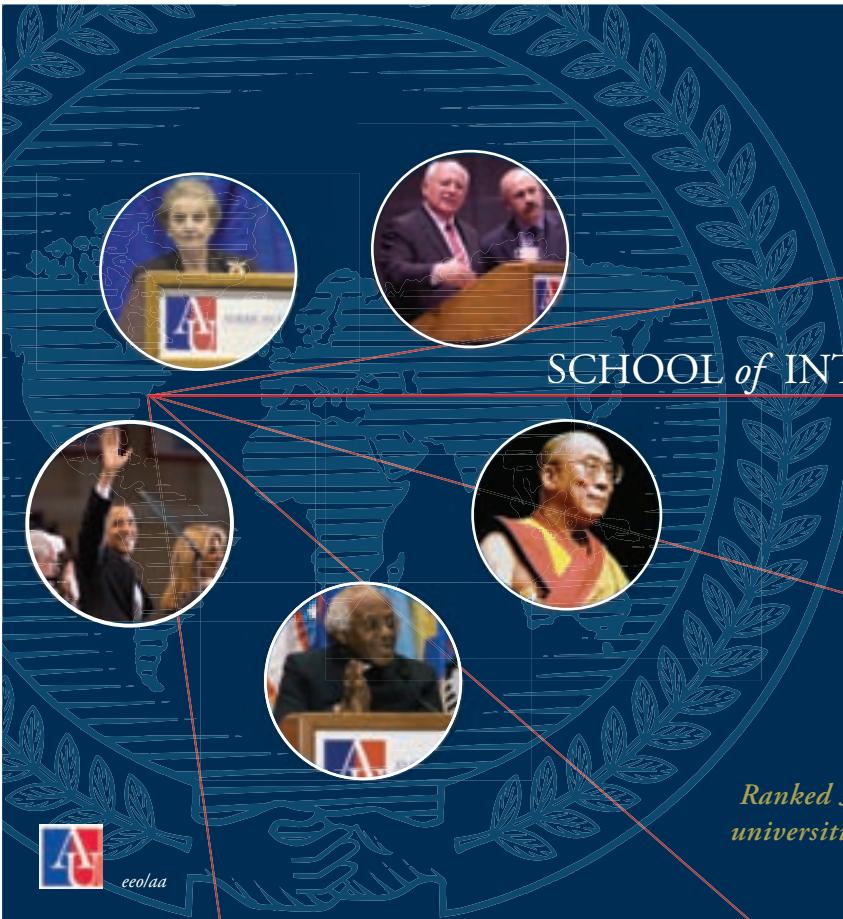
*“This is great information. I'd like to share it with a school or two here in Haiti if you don't mind. Hopefully the students and teachers could network with some of these great resources and start up some school to school programs and dialogue.”*

*“They told me it would be hard but I never realized how hard it would be until I got home. My mentor made a world of difference.”* (NPCA Mentee, Ecuador 04-06)

*“We really appreciated the time NPCA staff took to come and meet with our local advocates over coffee. We learned about NPCA's advocacy work on advancing a strong budget for Peace Corps as well as their work in supporting international aid projects close to many volunteers' hearts.”* Cheryl Nenn - Advocacy Coordinator, Milwaukee RPCVs

*“I had a blast yesterday going around (Capitol Hill). Thanks for organizing everything for us!”* Liz Sykes (China, 06-08) National Day of Action 2009 participant

*“Just wanted my friends at Global TeachNet to know about my newest teaching award. I was named the K-8 Social Studies Teacher of the Year for [my state]! My [NPCA] Award started it all.”*



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## PEACE CORPS ON THE MARCH

*Peace Corps Community members share stories of participating in a historic Inaugural celebration*

by Erica Burman

**B**ack in November when the National Peace Corps Association and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington DC submitted an application for the Peace Corps Community to participate in the Inaugural Parade, I don't think anyone anticipated all that would be involved.

The application itself was daunting, and once we got word that we had been accepted, we had one week to submit 200 names, Social Security numbers, place and dates of birth, etc. for the marchers—and one week to submit still more forms to the Presidential Inaugural Committee. We also had to secure buses at short notice, have a banner designed, procure the flags, draft a press release template, send instructions to everyone, field questions....

But in the end, of course, it was worth all the effort.

Here's glimpse of the day, as seen from the perspective of several of the marchers. You can also get more information, including links to photos, videos, stories and blogs at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org).



Erica Burman, NPCA

Serving and Returned Volunteers, current and former staff, friends and supporters of Peace Corps—all represented by the Peace Corps Community banner.



**Peace Corps flags create a striking scene.**

---

**JACQUI PATTERSON  
JAMAICA 95-97**

In late November I received a message from my dear friend Lillie Lindsay who served with me in Jamaica saying that they were looking for 200 volunteers to march in the Peace Corps delegation for

the Inauguration Parade. I was thrilled at the notion of being a part of this history and potentially carrying the flag of both my country of service as well as my family heritage. I sent in my information as requested and on December 16th I got the call. Then I heard that there was no guarantee that I would carry the Jamaican flag. I immediately commenced a

campaign to ensure that I would be able to carry the flag

I mercilessly harassed the National Peace Corps Association as well as contacted the other volunteers who served in Jamaica who were marching in the parade. All were gracious in their responses and I was thrilled to see, when they sent the list of who would be



Erica Burman, NPCA

**Sen. Harris Wofford and Stephen Buff  
(Ethiopia 64-66).**



**Dara Ross (Mongolia 91-93) came prepared for the cold.**



Erica Burman, NPCA

**Friendships are made while waiting to march.**

carrying which flag, that my name was listed next to Jamaica!

As we stood on the precipice of a new day for the United States, and prayed for the world, my family and friends from Jamaica (and beyond) were also proud and elated. My dad turns 80 in just a few months, and having lived through a time where people were routinely lynched for the color of their skin and not allowed to drink from the same water fountain, he was particularly enthused to have lived to see me playing this role while flying the colors of his home.

---

**AUDREY SCOTT  
ESTONIA 98-00**

I could have stared at those flags for hours. Visually, it was beautiful. Emotionally, it was staggering.

Those flags stood for the tens of thousands of American Peace Corps volunteers who served across the world, from the tropical heat of Micronesia to the frigid cold of Estonia. Their movement spoke of a spirit of service that still lives—in returned volunteers, in those currently serving and in the ideals of those who will someday serve.

Then came the call: time to march. I moved. My blood flowed. The adrenaline did too.

Although the parade route crowds had thinned, those that remained were excited. People cheered, waved, snapped photos and yelled out “Peace Corps!”

I heard shouts of “Thank you!!” and “Thank you, Peace Corps!!”

More importantly, the Obamas and Bidens appeared genuinely excited to see us! They waved, they smiled, they laughed.



The Obamas and Bidens wave to the Peace Corps Community marchers as they pass the presidential reviewing stand.

John McDonnell, Washington Post



**Hardy onlookers warmly greet the Peace Corps marchers along Pennsylvania Avenue.**

Ed Crockett



It was just awesome.

President Obama seemed to exchange glances and gestures with one of the leaders of our contingent, Harris Wofford, a former senator from Pennsylvania and a key player in the establishment of the Peace Corps. It was clear from President Obama's reaction that these men shared a personal connection and a mutual respect for one another.

---

**JOHN RIGGAN  
KENYA 65-70  
CHAD 71-72**

The pleasure of marching in the parade was more than doubled for me because my daughter Jennifer, a three month-old when we arrived in Chad and later a Peace Corps Volunteer in Eritrea 1, marched two rows behind me.... We were the only representatives of Eritrea and Chad and the only parent/child so we marched with extra pride. Jen declared it one of the best days of her life!

The spirit of the Inauguration event was amazing. The Peace Corps marchers, with our colorful flags, were greeted all along the route with shouts and applause. Immigrants would shout out their native country's name when they spotted their flag. My daughter swears that she heard someone yell "Chad!" Even law

enforcement and security people were calling out, "Good job!"

---

**RAJEEV GOYAL  
NEPAL 01-03**

There are three moments that will stay with me forever.

Sen. Harris Wofford showed up wearing a Peace Corps cap, with his two grandsons, one of whom was wearing the red AmeriCorps



Erica Burman, NPCA

**Zimbabwe RPCVs Lica Tomizuka and Julie Lee.**

jacket. I looked back and saw some of the older Peace Corps volunteers point at Harris and tear up and it was because decades ago Harris, who was the special director to Africa and personal advisor to President Kennedy, had come to their villages, trained them, shown them the way. And he was here again to show us the way through this cold.

The second moment came later when I saw Mark Shriver, who was standing with the children in the Special Olympics group about 100 meters ahead, looking back at us. The expression on his face was full of so much emotion. Because of my angle, I could see it very clearly. He was overwhelmed by the sea of flags. The Peace Corps was marching again. I think Mark wanted to keep the image of the flags in his mind forever. It was an image of how one person had changed the world and the inner world of all of the marchers—and it was his own father.

The Obamas and Bidens were in a giant heated white cube with a poster on it that said "President of the United States" in cursive letters. It was getting darker, and the crowds were getting bigger and bigger as we approached the reviewing stand—louder too.

Then it happened—the third moment I will never forget. As we came closer, I saw the new President and First Lady and the Bidens. They looked so beautiful and happy. When they saw us, they seemed warmed. But then, President Obama spotted Harris

and he pointing excitedly, telling Michelle and Joe Biden that Harris was there. The new President looked at Harris Wofford with his characteristic smile, only the look was different, more peaceful and nostalgic. I wonder if he was remembering traveling around the country with Harris during the campaign hearing Peace Corps stories. Whatever he was thinking, the President was emotional.

I wish I had seen Sen. Wofford's face but I was focused on the glowing cube, Obama's smile and trying to absorb what it all meant. The Obamas and Bidens leaned

forward to see us all and our sea of flags. I felt that we were now Obama's kids being ushered in by Kennedy's kids. And I knew then that President Obama is going to do something great for the Peace Corps.

---

**ELIZABETH B. FUHRMAN  
HONDURAS 84-85  
SRI LANKA 93-94**

I'm from Texas and I don't do cold weather. So when I first got the e-mail looking for flag bearers to march in the

inaugural parade, I chuckled and passed it by. Freezing my you-know-what all day just to carry a flag, are you kidding? But then I started thinking how proud I was, with my rainbow Obama bumper sticker, as well as how cool it would be to tell the high school students I teach English as a Second Language to in Montgomery County, Maryland. Also, I would love to tell my Sri Lankan or Honduran friends that I represented their beautiful countries *in front of the President of the United States!* I did an about-face, registered for the lottery and then waited for the weather gods to decide



**Paused in front of the National Archives, as the sun sets.**

Dan Noll, [www.uncorneredmarket.com](http://www.uncorneredmarket.com)

my fate. Meanwhile, I started bragging, like a true Texan, that I could do it, just like I climbed Sri Pada and Mt. Fuji.

The good news is my partner's from Long Island and she taught me about layering, among other things. Well, long story short, I was the most bundled-up marcher of the some 200 RPCVs who carried the 139 flags of countries of service. So, if you see us on C-SPAN, look for the one with the puffy green down ski jacket, pink ski gloves and ski hat. Yep, there were quite a few under-dressed RPCVs out there, and I sure felt sorry for them 'cause the wind chill was about 10 degrees by the time we marched.

The morning of, I put on all my garb, pocketed some big bold Human Rights Campaign beads that I planned to wear just in case the Obamas got a closer look at me, and Metro-ed to Pentagon City at 6 a.m. Former Peace Corps volunteers trickled in, all chatty with the usual questions: Where were you in the Peace Corps and when? Then on the bus, everyone was a-buzz with getting-to-know-you questions....

For me as a teacher, it was like I was on a school field trip. By the time we got to the tents near the Ellipse where we waited (and waited) for parade time, many of us were on a first name or nickname basis. I called one girl from San Antonio "Texas" and a few others I referred to by the name



Erica Burman, NPCA

A cacophony of flags.

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Betty Pyle carries the flag of St. Lucia.

Erica Burman, NPCA



of their country of service, "Hey Poland! Can you watch my stuff while I visit the Port-o-Potty?" "Pose with me for a picture, Mongolia."

Honestly, that day I realized how much I missed being around the Peace Corps "type": gregarious people with lots of adventures to share, risk-takers who often find humor in small, everyday events. Makes Peace Corps "after-life" seem somewhat mundane. Well, take that back. The Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender community and the Peace Corps community have many similar characteristics such as the very ones I just mentioned. I love "my GLBT peeps" here in the DC area. But perhaps it's the Peace Corps within me that helps me deal

with coming out over and over again with new people, the people skills I developed living in different worlds, different cultures. Even though I talked, walked and looked different, I learned that through random and not so random acts of kindness and humor, just about anybody can earn the respect and friendship of any/many-a-one.

A few special moments in the day really made this event something to "write Texas about." There was that first glimpse we got of the hordes of people on the Mall. Wow! Everyone strained to get pictures from the bus windows when we passed the Washington Monument. Later in the tent, it was the reverent hush as we watched Obama's acceptance speech on

a small TV, then the wild cheering when he completed the oath. And of course during the parade, every few blocks when our group was announced on loud speakers, we would all go, "Whooaa!" and "Yeeeahh!" Each time, I'd get a little choked up and hoist my flag higher. I felt a part of something way bigger than me and bigger than, say, Texas. We marchers represented almost fifty years of global change on the part of the Peace Corps and some 200,000 volunteers who returned, like me, "touched" by the experience. And gosh-darn-it, we marched for change in the way Obama stated in his speech, that we will work alongside other countries to build a future together.



**Aaron Christman (Madagascar 06-08) and Rajeev Goyal (Nepal 01-03).**

Erica Burman, NPCA



**A first look at the crowds.**

Anne Baker, NPCA



**Watching the swearing-in on the small screen.**

Erica Burman, NPCA



**Fur hats are a wise choice.**

Erica Burman, NPCA

**PEGGY MURRAH  
SIERRA LEONE 78-80**

When I returned home I had a huge surprise at my school. I have taught at the same tiny rural Georgia school system since before I was in the Peace Corps. I am finishing year 33, minus my two years in the Peace Corps, this year. From the moment I walked on campus, people started calling to me. I had a parent get out of her car and welcome me home. Students that I have never taught called to me in the hall. I had students and adults come up and grab me and hug me. Keep in mind that I live in a place that was overwhelmingly for McCain. I was not expecting the pride with which my community regarded my participation in the parade.

I have used the opportunity as I talk to the students to educate them about the Peace Corps and the Friends of Sierra Leone. Certainly, I have used every opportunity available in the 30+ years I have worked there to do this, but this time I really felt the students listened more. I am optimistic that at least some of them finally understood that you can serve your country as a volunteer just as much as joining the military.



Peggy Murrah



Forming a "penguin huddle" to stay warm.

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Sierra Leone RPCVs Peggy Murrah and Dave O'Neill.

## TICKET TO HISTORY

*Volunteer's Kenya service paved path to Inauguration*

by Jessica Benton Cooney

**W**hen the Presidential Inaugural Committee announced the "Ticket to History" contest, James Riviere wrote a quick essay over a lunch break, using his Peace Corps service as fodder to describe what the inauguration meant to him and the nation. Little did he imagine that he would be one of ten finalists to receive tickets to the opening concert at the Lincoln Memorial, the swearing-in, the Inaugural Parade, and the Neighborhood Ball.

Riviere, who was assigned to the home province of President Barack Obama's father during his Peace Corps service in Kenya, said it was an honor to attend the inauguration of the man Kenyans hailed a potential presidential winner even before he officially declared his White House intentions.

The Washington, D.C. native arrived in Kenya in early 2007, but his time there was cut short when the disputed presidential election in December 2007 unleashed chaos, destruction and looting.

Riviere was 20 miles from the border of Tanzania, inside the walls of a friend's secure compound, when officials announced that the incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, was the declared winner despite opposition leader Raila Odinga's claims of victory. An eerie silence descended, which Riviere said proved to be the quiet before the storm.

In the distance plumes of smoke began to rise, matching news reports that violent activity was starting a

kilometer away. He remained holed up, with his friend's armed military guards keeping watch, but after a few days the group was forced to make a trek to the closest town to buy food supplies. From his perch in the back of the truck he saw burning vehicles, stores and houses destroyed by looters, machete wounds and even witnessed a man receive a gun shot to the head.

Within a few days he evacuated to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and was reunited with other Kenya Volunteers. He returned to the U.S. in February 2008. While Peace Corps has reopened its post in Kenya and Volunteers have since gone back, Riviere opted to stay in the U.S. and accept a job with Management Sciences for Health in Arlington, Virginia.

Riviere said that he had work to finish in Kenya. "But I wanted to go

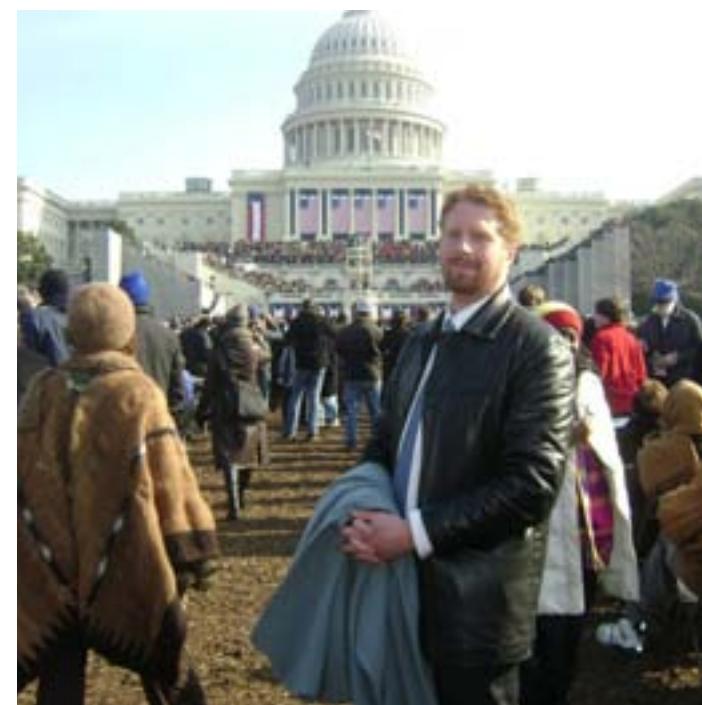
back in a greater capacity. In those nine months at that skill level I realized it would be about myself...it was better to go home."

Because of heavy security on the mall, Riviere arrived at his seat two minutes before the swearing-in ceremony started, and although Obama was a mere speck on the horizon, Riviere said he was overcome by a sense of peace. Despite the crowds and security frustrations, being able to witness the historical moment "ixed out everything else." He was confident that Kenyans were also proudly watching the ceremony, given their penchant for bringing in generators to watch soccer in "even the tiniest villages that had no running water." He added that, "even in the slums of Nairobi, they probably watched it projected on the side of a building."

During the inauguration, Riviere stayed at the Capital Hill Suites along with Hollywood and music stars, such as Alicia Keys, Tiger Woods, Steve Carell, and George Lopez. He also attended the bi-partisan dinner for Vice-President Joseph Biden at Union Station.

"As blessed as I am," Riviere said, "bless those that had patience...for coming at 4 a.m. just to look at the back of people's heads."

*Jessica Benton Cooney is a production editor and staff writer for the Congressional Quarterly, in Washington, D.C. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in El Salvador from 2004 to 2006.*



James Riviere has a place on the Mall.

## TICKET TO HISTORY ESSAY

*"What does this Inauguration mean to you?"*

by James Riviere

I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya and had the opportunity to brush shoulders with Senator Obama, before the announcement came that he would be running for President. I knew little about him as a person or politician, but with the realization that his father was from the Tribe in which I was living and had grown to love (the Luo tribe), I went out of my way to read the two books and numerous articles written by and about him. In a sense, my time in Peace Corps was an opportunity to better understand Barack Obama. When it was announced that he would be running for the democratic nomination and subsequent Presidency, I was very excited along with those I lived amongst...not to mention the entire country of Kenya.

Obama won the first primary state on January 3rd, 2008. Only days before, Kenya went into civil unrest due to the Kenyan presidential election results. A predicted win from Raila Odinga (a Luo) was upset by the announcement that the current president, Mwai Kibaki (a Kikuyu) had won the re-election. This highlighted the apparently corrupted election. From here, the majority of the country went into a violent state of affairs. Different tribes and areas clashed and thus created the first substantial civil unrest since Kenya's independence, nearly 45 years ago!

I was stuck in one of the worst hit areas with violence, the Nyanza province, and consequently had to evacuate myself from the country through the Tanzanian border. This was not before I was caught in the middle of gunfire, and witnessed mass looting and locals being sliced by machetes.

The Peace Corps program completely closed and all volunteers had to either

re-post or go home...either way, we were unable able to go back to say goodbye to all those who we came to care for. When they needed help the most, we had no option but to leave. This was an unfortunate end to a promising experience. Needless to say, I was not so happy when I returned. Bitterness and lack of clarity clouded my attitude.

Following Barack Obama, and the elections, was a point of lucidity. I was able to envision the promise of a better tomorrow, manifested in the dreams of Barack Obama.

I don't wish to rant forever on his influence on my life and my hopes of his Presidency. Yet, I would like to highlight that this inauguration means something far greater than myself, or Kenya, or even the United States. What this inauguration means is something paramount...redemption. I am sure many Americans never thought they would see the day which they might place hope back into America's future. Now these people, including myself, see the redemption of our fine nation. Not all is lost for America, not all is lost in mistakes and hard times. Obama's greater message to me is that if a nation can be redeemed, then so can a person. This inauguration symbolizes this redemption and hopeful betterment of us as a people, a nation, and a world. This is precisely what this inauguration means to me.

*More than a quarter-million Americans submitted essays answering the question, "What does this Inauguration mean to you?" James Riviere's essay was one of the ten selected.*

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## TALKING THE TALK

*Peace Corps uses new technology to fulfill second goal*

by Will Garneau

**C**limbing into the back of an idle taxi in Windhoek's Katutura neighborhood, I hurled a dusty bag onto the seat and greeted my Namibian driver using the Herero language.

"*Mwa penduka nawa?*"—how is the morning?, I asked reflexively.

"*Nawa.*"—good, he responded, before doing a double-take. Not only was it a native language, but it was his own tongue—I could tell by the name on the side of the taxi. Foreigners, especially white foreigners, rarely used any of the local languages, preferring Afrikaans or English. I could tell he was intrigued, and complimented, by my greeting. I had won him over and fulfilled, in a small way, the second goal of Peace Corps.

Language training, along with living within a community, sets Peace Corps apart from other organizations working outside the United States. It is an invaluable tool: assisting volunteers with immersion, developing relationships, and even safeguarding the volunteer from harm. In order to better serve volunteer needs, training is becoming more sophisticated for volunteers all over the world. It is a big change from the days the mimeograph machine. Posts are now podcasting.

Training can now start before invitees meet for staging. The Peace Corps is using a web-based application called MyToolKit that allows invitees to log in and access text and audio language training materials.

"Currently 30 countries globally offer introductory audio lessons on MyToolKit for Peace Corps invitees" explains Rasa Edwards, a training specialist at Peace Corps in the

Office of Programming and Training Support (OPATS). "[An] increasing number of posts use MP3 files and podcasts for listening activities during the pre-service training."

For instance, volunteers in The Gambia use a site that hosts language training files as well as audio lessons for six indigenous languages. Because the website is public, invitees can start their language training at home in the United States, increasing their exposure to the language prior to touching down in country. Posts generate most of the audio files using digital voice recorders and then encoding them as MP3s. Users are then able to download these materials to laptops and MP3 players for convenient playback. In addition to

these post-generated materials, many countries provide online accounts for Rosetta Stone, a professional language training company, to practice French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili and Tagalog.

Individual posts are still able to tailor their own training to meet volunteer needs and host country conditions. Some countries, in particular in the Africa Region, often teach multiple languages while countries in the EMA (Europe, Middle East, and Asia) will often only teach one. Many countries chose to use community-based training while others use center-based—or a mixture of the two. A group of volunteers having difficulty with language acquisition may request tutoring beyond language class, and



Environment Volunteers learning the Arabic alphabet.

Anthony Schmitt

older populations who may have more trouble picking up a new language are able to hire tutors after training is completed. This has been a special focus of the 50+ initiative of Peace Corps, and training staff are encouraged to develop holistic approaches to language acquisition as well as “learning portfolios” for individual students.

The only constant is that a language proficiency interview is conducted at the end of training to assess the volunteer’s ability.

Trainees are not the only ones benefiting from new technology. OPATS also utilizes a new, online system that allows Peace Corps staff to collaborate on best practices. Guru functions much like a bulletin board at an office. Staff can post sample lessons, successful activities and seek advice from a worldwide network of training staff. “A language and Cross-Cultural Coordinator from any post can ask questions on Guru and receive answers from any other post around the world,” says Edwards.

One emerging trend has been that language training is happening outside of formal classroom situations.

“Volunteers increasingly learn the language in an integrated fashion with other training components such as technical training.” This has led to a new philosophy of training. Objectives for language training are created in tandem with other aspects of programming and training; for example, during the week volunteers are learning about HIV/AIDS language class will deal with clinical language needed in healthcare settings. “Fewer training hours are spent in the classroom as trainees engage in participatory community assessment activities which provide extensive opportunities for language practice in an authentic environment,” explains Edwards.

Peace Corps is duly proud of its language training procedures and the fluency of volunteers serving abroad. The level of volunteer satisfaction seems to bear out this pride. According to the 2008 Biennial Volunteer Survey, over 50% rated pre-service language training



Anthony Schmitt

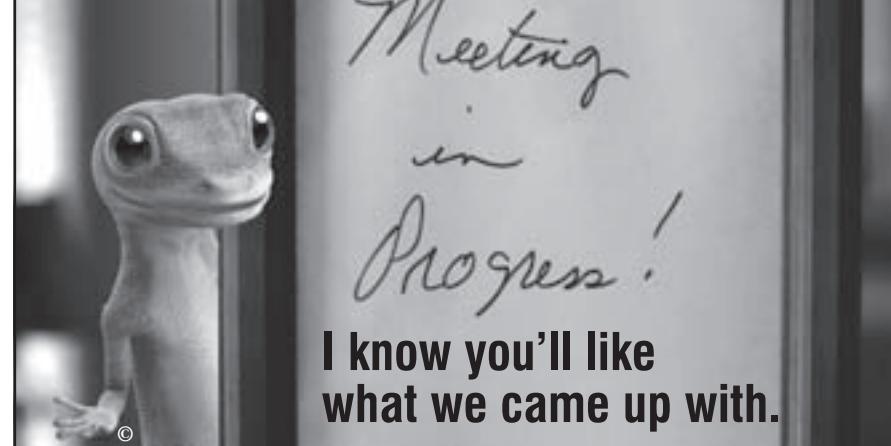
**Environment volunteer Justin Wood (Morocco 08-10) explaining his host family's "family tree." during a Community Based Training (CBT) Moroccan Arabic language class in Magraman, a small village outside of Ouazazate, Morocco.**

effective to very effective while less than 4% rated it ineffective. Peace Corps admits that pre-service training is often not completely sufficient but emphasizes that language acquisition must continue after a volunteer is sworn in.

In spite of the new tools, the most effective means of learning language is still practicing in local settings and trainees and Volunteers will continue

to warmly interact with strangers in markets, use customary greetings with colleagues and, most importantly, continue to fulfill the second goal of Peace Corps.

*Will Garneau served as an education volunteer in Namibia from 2005 until 2007 and recently returned from serving in Peace Corps Response in Liberia.*



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## A VOICE FOR THE UNHEARD

*Deaf education volunteers assist a frequently overlooked population*

by JoAnna Haugen

**P**ace Corps is known for sending volunteers into the most impoverished communities to help the most underserved populations. To date, however, only a single program has specifically focused on one of the most neglected groups of people around the world: those who are deaf.

In 1992, Peace Corps launched the deaf education program in Kenya and has since placed hundreds of volunteers—some of them deaf—at schools across the nation to teach both students and teachers. In recent years, two similar programs, in Ghana and Zambia, have also been established. The growth of the deaf education program is a positive one. In many of the countries where Peace Corps has a presence, nationals who are deaf receive little or no attention.

When disease and poverty are the primary concerns of a nation, the well being of the deaf population is of little importance.

Kenya, to its credit, has approximately 40 primary schools for the deaf to service the whole country, while many nations have half a dozen or fewer. However despite Kenya's efforts to serve deaf children, the attempts often fall short. "There is lots of stigma toward the children (at the deaf schools) and that is carried over to the teachers and staff," said Erin Hayba (Kenya 05-07), a former Peace Corps intern who

researched opportunities available for volunteers with special needs. Teachers don't have to know Kenyan Sign Language to teach at deaf schools, and because they work with a perceived lower class of students, morale is low and education suffers.

While deaf education volunteers find teaching to be rewarding, reaching this population at the primary school is almost too late. "I think 'deaf education' should be broadened to 'deaf community' so that we can address other (and more important) issues such as language access and human rights issues," said Julie Hochgesang (Kenya 02-04) through an e-mail interview. "Most deaf people do not have access to language ... until they attend school where other deaf people use language that is accessible to them." Exposure

to a language at a very young age is essential for all aspects of a healthy life. Social skills and cognitive development are severely stunted when children are not introduced to communication until primary school. In the current deaf education program volunteers work as teachers where deaf children start attending at the age of five, six or even later, Hochgesang said, and that is very late for language development. "Translated into real-world terms," she said, "this means that deaf people struggle to read and write, they struggle to understand the world around them, they struggle to communicate with their doctors, they struggle in obtaining equal pay from their bosses."

Raising awareness of basic rights for deaf people, such as education, employment and sign language



Peace Corps

Callie Sorensen, a deaf education volunteer in Kenya, looks on as her student signs.



Peace Corps

Callie Sorensen teaches sign language to her students.

recognition; expanding the network for deaf people across the globe; and educating deaf citizens who are employable and can fully participate in society are only a few of the wider issues at play in the deaf community. "Peace Corps has the opportunity to be a leader in the area of disability rights," Hayba said. One of the ways it is doing this is encouraging deaf Americans to become Peace Corps volunteers. Though the number of deaf volunteers who have served in the Peace Corps over the years is not available, Hayba said the organization is now actively looking for ways to increase the number of deaf volunteers in the field. It is currently working to foster relationships with and actively recruit recent graduates from Gallaudet University, a university for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in Washington, D.C., and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a technical college in Rochester, NY.

Historically, deaf volunteers have been placed in the deaf education program, with a few exceptions. Josh Swiller (Zambia 04-06), Deaf author of *The Unheard*, was in the first group to be placed in Zambia. Sent into the field as a water and sanitation health educator with no infrastructure or Peace Corps veterans to pave the way, his biggest challenge was not being deaf but learning about an unfamiliar culture. "I think in some ways being

a deaf volunteer is easier than being a volunteer," he said through an e-mail interview. "We're used to being in a world we don't quite understand. We're used to making conversations off of just bits and pieces, fragments of sentences grasped here and there. We're used to reading body language and connecting without words. We're used to being alone. [These are all] important skills for volunteers."

Many other former deaf volunteers echo his sentiment and are optimistic about the opportunities of placing deaf volunteers in multiple capacities and in expanding its services to deaf populations around the globe. "Peace Corps can keep its existing deaf program in Kenya, use it as a model and implement deaf programs in other Peace Corps countries," said Erickson Young (Kenya 05-07) through an e-mail interview. "Even if there isn't a deaf program, Peace Corps can consider (placing deaf volunteers with) schools for the deaf, associations for the deaf ... and other places on an individual basis."

In its efforts to provide access to basic human rights to all and truly serve underserved communities, Peace Corps can act as the voice for people who currently have no choice but to go unheard.

*JoAnna Haugen (Kenya 04-05) is the community news editor for the National Peace Corps Association.*



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# PEACE CORPS AND THE VALUE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES

*A former Peace Corps volunteer uses her language training to advocate for better education*

by Carol Benson

I was one of the slow ones. By the end of training, I could barely speak enough Krio to get my basic needs met, though the local Limba greetings went better because we used them repeatedly throughout the day. But I was going to Themne country, and would have to learn a whole new set of greetings and techniques for communicating, including getting directions to the rural primary schools in my teacher training zone.

Communicative language learning was frustratingly difficult, especially when our (otherwise kind) language trainers stuck to methodology from the Peace Corps language-training manual, like “no note-taking.” Of course we needed to learn how to communicate, but most of us were accustomed to writing things down. Being forced to rely on short-term memory reeeeally didn’t work for me. I tried not to be jealous when certain fellow volunteers were already telling stories in Krio, but I knew I was in trouble when I found myself home alone on “take your volunteer to the farm day”—I wonder what my host family and I actually did arrange for that day!

Luckily my time in Sierra Leone allowed me to learn at my own pace, and to develop enough language skills to get at least some glimpses into people’s thinking and cultural practices. I remember talking to other Peace Corps Volunteers about how people could be so “blinded” by our appearance that they sometimes didn’t realize we were speaking their languages. And I

will never forget the time a fellow lorry passenger, who had been listening to a conversation in which I participated, did a double-take when he actually saw me—for a moment, at least, I had blended in!

I do not know how useful I might have been to the primary teachers I worked with, especially since our hard work in preparing for the teacher’s college entrance examination was in vain—the results were cancelled in our region in both 1981 and 1982. What I do know is that the experience of seeing teachers and children struggle to use English, a foreign medium

of instruction, in their teaching and learning influenced the direction of my future studies and work. A fast-forward to the present finds me working in teacher training, curriculum development, policy development and research in mother tongue-based bilingual education, with a focus on educational development in low-income multilingual countries. Put more simply, I help bring learners’ home languages into the education systems that are meant to serve them.

My experiences as a language learner taught me were that people learn languages in different ways, at different

rates, depending on many things, including their own personalities, the methods to which they have been exposed previously, the methods their teachers use, the types of language input they get both formally and informally, and their motivations for learning languages. These and other factors are quite well researched, but are so varied and interact with each other in so many ways that it is quite difficult to make generalizations about the “best” language teaching practices.

What we do know is that the best foundation for learning additional languages is well-developed literacy in one’s best language(s). As Volunteers struggling to learn the languages of our hosts, we could at least rely on literacy and thinking skills developed in our own language(s), and possibly on language learning strategies developed during earlier studies. Our experience is nothing like that of pre-literate children



Author Carol Benson with bilingual educators in Incaia, Mozambique.



A child reads sentences he has written.

or adults, who are all too frequently subjected to immersion (or what researcher Tove Skutnabb-Kangas more accurately calls “submersion”) in a foreign language of instruction. Submersion deprives learners of ways to make sense of reading or even of what their teachers say, and meanwhile undermines their self-confidence and sense of identity. In contrast, learning to read and write in one’s own language (or a familiar community language) allows efficient linking between symbols, sounds and the communication of meaning. Research now shows that both cognitive (thinking) skills and language learning skills are maximized when people have the opportunity to develop their mother tongues to the highest possible level—an opportunity many of us in high-income countries take for granted.

As you might imagine, I am not a purveyor of English language around the world, though I am an advocate of broadening perspectives on non-standard language varieties to include Englishes (as spoken by Nigerians or Indians, for example) as well as English (and any other language of

wider communication) spoken as a second/third/other language. I am an even bigger advocate of recognizing the true value of people’s languages—and thus their cultures, beliefs, voices and identities—and trying not to erase them but to develop them.

As PCVs we unconsciously gave respect and value to people’s languages by learning and using them, and people’s responses showed us how much that was appreciated! What not everyone realizes is that Peace Corps language trainers have contributed



Carol Benson to developing writing systems, grammar guides, and other written materials in local languages where they did not always exist before. They join local and international NGOs in developing local languages where they have been systematically underdeveloped through colonialism, neocolonialism and other abuses of power.

Current goals for low-income countries involve improving access to basic education while improving its quality. I am happy to report that both national governments and international agencies are finally recognizing the role of language of instruction in that process, and many countries are reforming their educational systems

that were once monolingual in languages that were foreign to their citizens. Some, like Bolivia and South Africa, have adopted language policies that call for all citizens to be bilingual and biliterate, i.e. able to read and write more than one language. This means that Spanish or English is not enough; everyone should learn a local language as well.

Living in multilingual Europe and working in multilingual countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific has given me hope that future definitions of “basic education” will include bi- or multilingualism as a criterion. Further, if we recognize and value the multilingualism of our societies and give equal respect to the languages and cultures represented, we can go a long way toward making the world a better place for all.

*Carol Benson, Ph.D (Sierra Leone 80-82) is based at the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Stockholm University and consults widely in the field of mother tongue-based bilingual education. She welcomes communication about this article or any related comments or questions at carol.benson@upc.su.se.*

## A LIFE LINGUISTIC

*A Volunteer finds his life's calling in Peace Corps*

by R. David (Paul) Zorc

**B**ack in June 1965, newly graduated from college, I was really floundering about what to do with my life. I had spent my four high school years and the first year of college in a seminary, studying to be a priest before graduating from Georgetown University with a degree in Philosophy. I knew I wanted to help people in some way and thought that psychiatry might be an option. However, a series of aptitude and career placement tests suggested three professions: osteopath, musician and linguist. I didn't even know what an osteopath was. I had been composing some music, but doubted I could earn a living at it. And although I had studied Latin, German, and Classic Greek, and done pretty well in those courses, I did not really know what a linguist did for a living either. Hence, I deferred my decision by applying to the Peace Corps.

I was sent to the Philippines. Although our summer-long training taught us the basics of Tagalog (or Pilipino, the national language), I was assigned to teach English in Kalibo, Aklan Province on Panay, from September 1965 through August 1967. There Tagalog was either unknown or disliked, so I set about learning Aklanon. In order to master the vocabulary, I made flash cards with Aklanon on one side and English on the other. Eventually, my collection grew to over 4,000 entries, and one of my co-teachers suggested that I work on an Aklanon-English dictionary since there was no such resource available. As my second year was nearing its end, I asked the Peace Corps office in Manila if I could work on a grammar and dictionary of Aklanon. At that time,

Peace Corps/Philippines only had programs in three areas: teaching English, Math or Science in primary schools. "Dictionary author" was not an option. The Peace Corps Director suggested that I become a "language coordinator." I would learn the other dialects of the West Visayas in order to administer Foreign Service Institute fluency tests to Volunteers stationed throughout that region. So I set about visiting those other areas and gathering as much data on each as I could. The first book I ever published in my life came out in 1967, *Peace Corps Primer for the Western Visayas Philippines*.

I extended my service for another two-year term and met my future wife, Maria-Nellie Reyes Prado Zorc. The primer was revised and reissued in 1968 as the *Peace Corps Western Visayas Dialect Field Book*. But the bulk of my work was on *A Study of the Aklanon Dialect: Volume One—Grammar and an Aklanon-English Dictionary* with Vicente Salas-Reyes, which had about 8,000 entries.

Linguistics finally made sense to me, and I returned to the U.S. in 1969 to begin formal studies at Cornell University. I got my Ph.D. in Linguistics in 1975, writing my dissertation on *The Bisayan Dialects of the Philippines: Subgrouping and Reconstruction*. I took a research position in Austronesian at Yale University, and from there became a Senior Lecturer with the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) in Batchelor, Northern Territory.

That position was very much like my experience in the Peace Corps. I worked with Aboriginal students on sixty different languages, including an Aboriginal Kriol, teaching them to read and write their languages, and in

some cases actually developing a writing system. Just prior to my departure I printed a *Yolngu-Matha Dictionary*.

Again, the Peace Corps came into the fore. It was October 1986 and Peace Corps was celebrating its 25th anniversary on the Mall in Washington, DC. I went on a Sunday armed with CV's and good spirits and met Pam Moguet, who was working for the Language Research Center (LRC) in Hyattsville, Maryland. I was interviewed on Monday, and started work on Tuesday. I have been at the LRC for the last 22 years. It turned out that my Peace Corps and SAL experiences in researching and publishing materials on less-commonly taught languages were right down this company's alley.

R. David P. Zorc, Ph.D (Philippines 65-69) has published 22 books, 7 monographs, 39 journal articles and 12 data papers in the field of linguistics.

Dear Editor(s):

I suggest you get in touch with R. David Zorc, a PCV in Kalibo, Aklan, Philippines from 1965 to 1969, about his story....

Dave was not trained as a linguist but has a great facility with languages. In perhaps his finest moment, he was invited to address the entire province over the radio on Good Friday, giving a talk in Aklanon on one of the Seven Last Words of Christ—the first and probably the only foreigner, maybe even first and only non-Aklanon, ever to do so. The Congressman from Aklan even offered to sponsor a bill to make Dave a Filipino citizen. And of course he married a local lass.



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## LOVE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

*Past, present and future tense together*

by Evelyn Kohl LaTorre

**M**e gusta mis pescadores con limón." "I like my fishermen with lemon." That's what I said for the first four months of my Peace Corps stay, before I met Walter. He corrected that—and many other misstatements—by the time we married at the end of my Peace Corps service.

Learning to speak another language, theory says, has more to do with motivation and emotion than with time spent memorizing conjugations, vocabulary and declensions. That certainly was my experience. I always say I got a lot out of the Peace Corps. Besides a new language, I gained a loving Peruvian-born husband and two sons. We have mastered several languages in addition to the language of love.

Walter was the thirteenth Spanish-speaking young man to propose marriage to me: the blond, blue-eyed product of a Midwestern family with Germanic and English roots and the graduate of a Catholic all-women's college. Walter didn't speak English, only Spanish and Quechua. I had studied two years of Russian and one year of Spanish in college.

Walter's stepfather, Adolfo Eguiluz, had requested volunteers to work in his Food for Peace program in Abancay, a day's bus ride from Cuzco. When fellow Volunteer, Marie, and I were assigned there, the Eguiluz family "adopted" us. One day, we encountered Sr. Eguiluz in Cuzco. He said he was picking up his twenty year old son from the university. "Only twenty; a mere child," I thought, since I was all of twenty-two. But then we met him: broad shouldered, thin-waisted with a head of thick black hair, brown eyes and a gentle way about him. Sr. Eguiluz was mistaken; Walter

was a few months short of turning twenty-two.

Marie and I wouldn't have gotten to know Walter as a friend and later, for me, as my self-appointed language

tutor and "enamorado," if fate hadn't intervened. First, the University of Antonio Abad went on strike several times; often for months or entire semesters at a time. With each *huelga*



Evelyn LaTorre

Evelyn and Walter at an unrepaired wall along the Great Wall of China.

Walter returned home to Abancay. Once, when he reported back to the university, I developed a serious abscessed tooth that could only be taken care of by a dentist in Cuzco. Then Sra. Eguiluz became seriously ill after giving birth to her fifth child. Walter came home immediately and stayed with her in the hospital, day and night. There were the customary university breaks and vacations and the Peace Corps requirements for gamma globulin injections and assorted medical checks at the regional headquarters in Cuzco. Sr. Eguiluz frequently sent me to deliver messages to Walter.

Eventually, we simply sought out each other and sat in plazas and cafes in Cuzco or Abancay, talking for hours. To this day my husband says he taught me Spanish. He corrected my mismatched sentences and forced me to speak in past tenses to tell him about my life. I listened intently to his hopes and dreams learning the subjunctive "I would like" case. His wishes included studying physics instead of economics, which was his major in Peru.

A year after we met we started talking in the future tense trying to determine how we could spend the rest of our lives together. I wondered how someone who didn't know English and wasn't familiar with *Time* could fit into my world in the U.S. Walter's natural father, I learned, was living in Ohio. I wrote to him and received back a polite letter stating three requirements Walter would have to meet before Mr. Frank LaTorre would bring him to the U.S.: he'd have to be fluent in English, have a marketable skill and be eligible for a work visa.

We were married in two ceremonies, civil and religious. The latter was in an old Spanish chapel built on top of strong Incan walls. (My marriage, I often joke, began "in ruins.") A fellow Peace Corps Volunteer, whom I barely knew, signed as my witness for the civil ceremony because those I had been with for two years had left the country. There was nary a North American in the wedding chapel, save myself. All proceedings were conducted in Spanish. The wedding cake that Walter's aunt made for us fell flat due to the altitude

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and vanilla wafers were substituted and served with the champagne at the small wedding reception. I had sewn my white satin wedding dress.

The language learning tables were turned when we came to the U.S. Walter learned English better than I speak Spanish. In the first years we spoke mostly in Spanish but gradually slipped into total English.

Since I retired as a special education administrator and Walter as a computer program analyst, we have traveled the world together learning each country's language as we go. I have obtained jobs, scholarships and many friends because I speak Spanish. The same is true for Walter, but with English. Walter and I have recently mastered Italian and are

beginning to learn French. We believe that living in a country is the best way to learn a new language—just as I did years ago. Though I have much emotion for each language, it hasn't quite the intensity it did forty-five years ago when I was falling in love.

*Evelyn LaTorre served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Abancay, Peru from 1964 to 1966. She worked in an orphanage, a hospital, taught physical education and started a girls' 4-H group. After obtaining a Masters in Social Work and a Doctorate in Multicultural Education, she worked as a school psychologist and special education administrator until her retirement in 2002. Now she just writes about her experiences and travels.*



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— R. Sargent Shriver, Speech at Yale University, November 2001

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# KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

*His host mother was bound and determined to learn English*

by Joshua Barton

**M**imoza—my host mom—always seemed to have her nose in a book. When I first arrived in Bigir village, a sprawling agricultural community nestled in a crook of the Caucasus foothills, she would, decorously make herself scarce in the company of the foreign male guest. She would bring me tea and serve me dolma (greasy, stuffed grape leaves) or bozbash (a chunk of lamb and quartered potatoes in a lard gravy) and scurry back to the summer kitchen to read.

I wondered about the contents of the book she always seemed to have within arm's reach. Its cover was grey and frayed, with a worn, antique look. It reminded me of one of my American mother's cookbooks and this image of Mimoza engrossed in culinary pursuit seemed to mesh well with the traditional domestic role she played. After a few weeks, however, the monotony of her cooking made me suspicious.

As the weeks and months passed, Mimoza became comfortable with me. Memmet, her husband, had a quirky sense of humor and my progressing language skills strengthened our bond. In the fall I would come back from teaching English in the village school and help the host family harvest pomegranates from their orchard. In the evenings, Memmet and I would play Russian cards games after dinner and vodka (on a good day) or brandy (on a better day). Mimoza would cook and serve us, but always ate together with us and joined in the conversation.

One day, after coming home to an empty house, I found her book in the kitchen as I was warming up water for tea. Opening it up, I realized it was in fact an old Soviet-era English textbook

from the third grade. She was not trying to improve her cooking skills; she was trying to learn English! Her sister, who also served as the director of my school, must have given Mimoza the book from the school library before I came and Mimoza was doing what she could to try to learn to communicate with me in English.

I asked her about her English endeavors, and though initially embarrassed, after a few days she began asking me questions. How do you say this word? What does this mean? I noticed that if one of her sons was in the room, he would get upset with her for asking me these simple questions.

"Would you buy a box of tea when from school come?" Mimoza slowly pieced together one early winter morning as I was tightening my tie in

the mirror that hung in the courtyard. With a surprised but congratulatory chuckle I said, "Of course!" I realized she could understand written English quite well, but her conversational dexterity needed work. Slowly she began to improve, often peppering my breakfast with questions in English.

But still, any attempt she made to speak English in front of that one son of hers would provoke a stingy verbal rebuke. One morning she said to me, "When my family is gone, speak to me in English. When they are here speak Azerbaijani. They doesn't allow me to learn English." I realized, looking back, that she had become much more discreet about when and in what company she would read or speak English. Memmet apparently didn't approve of her learning English,



Mimoza Semedova, (left), and the author's mother, Hope Barton, (right) chat while preparing dinner.

Joshua Barton

but he had been polite enough not to raise a fuss in front of me, unlike her son. Mimoza, isolated in a traditional domestic role in a forgotten village and of an obviously sharp mind, was not allowed the simple intellectual frill of learning a language. I never really understood the chauvinism of Memmet's otherwise usually reasonable mindset. But Mimoza wasn't giving up.

One afternoon in May, I was digging through the empty kitchen for some food to warm up. Underneath the kitchen table, behind a curtain, and blocked by some rarely used pots, I found a bag of Chex-Mix left behind by a Peace Corps friend. Curious, I hoped that somehow it might still contain something salvageable to eat. Instead, inside I discovered two old English books. Despite her family's ire, Mimoza remained determined to learn whatever English she could whenever she could steal a glance.

My family came from America in June and stayed with my host family for a few days. By that time, if I was patient and spoke slowly enough, Mimoza could carry on a pretty decent conversation. She had a wonderful time talking to my mom and it was a relief for me to not have to translate every conversation. I think witnessing her speaking to my mom changed her family's attitude as well. She more bravely spoke English in front of them and she became less vigilant about hiding her English books.

After I returned from my vacation in Turkey, she asked me (in English) if I would buy her an English-Azerbaijani dictionary the next time I went into town. She left the equivalent of a few dollars by my room and, later that afternoon, I hid the dictionary in a place in the kitchen where she would quickly discover it. From that point on, we would speak English while I ate breakfast and Azerbaijani the rest of the day. Whenever Peace Corps friends visited, she would greet them in English, punctuated with an occasional chuckle and a gleam of delight in her eye.

*Joshua Barton was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Azerbaijan from 2004 to 2006.*



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# PEACE CORPS AND THE FUTURE OF SERVICE IN AMERICA

*The Peace Corps Community's newest Member in Congress will work to increase support for service*

by Rep. Steve Driehaus

**A** few days ago I was talking with Sam Farr, a Member of Congress from California and a fellow Peace Corps volunteer who spent two years working in Colombia. He and I were discussing the future of the Peace Corps, and our hopes to modernize and expand the program. But, as is often the case when I speak with past volunteers, Sam and I quickly found ourselves talking about our own years of service.

Sam and I agreed that none of the milestones we have reached in our lives has matched the profound impact of our experiences in the Peace Corps. For me, the Peace Corps was a unique time of personal growth that broadened my understanding of the world around me. I met a new people and a new culture, gained an appreciation for the global community and a different environment, and performed work that not only provided a great service, but taught me judgment and leadership. The work was never easy and the demands were always high, but the rewards were lasting and invaluable. The Peace Corps shaped the direction of my life, and helped me choose a path to continue working on behalf of my fellow citizens. Twenty years later I continue to cherish the commitment I made, and I would do it again in a minute.

But as volunteers know best, service in the Peace Corps is much more than a personally enriching experience. Service in the Peace Corps is service to our nation; it is service to our efforts to build strong relationships with other nations. When Peace Corps volunteers learn new cultures and forge new



**Rep. Steve Driehaus**

friendships, they are fostering goodwill between countries and spreading an understanding of America. When volunteers work to build communities and promote growth, they are strengthening the bonds between our nations and promoting American leadership around the world. Though Peace Corps volunteers seldom seek and rarely receive recognition for their tremendous efforts, they are serving this nation in the parts of the world where American values and ideals must once again serve as a guide and hope.

President Obama has promised a new foreign policy that is more than just an expression of American strength. He has pledged to fix broken relationships and to renew old friendships by showing a greater understanding and respect for other cultures, restoring America's image abroad, and extending a helping hand

when we are able. This is precisely what the Peace Corps has been doing for nearly fifty years. While the policies of recent years have favored a narrow use of power, the Peace Corps is an element of the broader approach that will help to define America's place in the global community in years ahead.

To reach our goals abroad, as well as to meet our many challenges at home, we need to recognize and promote all different types of service to our nation. Our men and women in uniform have rightly earned our support and gratitude for their service and sacrifice. But while we honor their commitments, we cannot ignore the many other ways Americans serve. We know from the success of programs such as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps that if Americans are given the chance to serve their nation, they will do so. We know that a greater national commitment to service can help to solve many of our nation's problems. That is why I believe we need a renewed push to get more Americans involved in service. That is why I am working with Congressman Farr and others to expand opportunities for service and to increase support for our service programs. Forty-eight years after President Kennedy founded the Peace Corps, we again live in a time when, with the right leadership, Americans will answer the call to help move their nation forward.

*Rep. Steve Driehaus is serving his first term in Congress as the Representative of Ohio's first district. He was a Peace Corps forestry volunteer in the village of Ngaye Diawar, Senegal from 1988 to 1999.*

## A CRUCIBLE FOR SERVICE

*Two years is not enough*

by James T. Walsh

I remember back in May of 1970 when the phone rang in our home in Syracuse. I was back from school, just graduated from St. Bonaventure. My mother answered and told me it was the Peace Corps. I nervously took the phone and was told I had been accepted into a Food Production Program in Nepal. Considering that I had studied Spanish and South American History, I was thunderstruck and delighted. I remember saying something like "Wow, that's terrific! Where is Nepal?"

The memory of that call is still fresh and my lack of worldliness at the time still puts a smile on my face. Having grown up in the city, my only agriculture experience was one summer at an apple orchard--that and cutting the lawn and trimming the hedges. It didn't matter to me what I did, I just wanted to do something positive for my fellow man. Remember these were the days of "you're either part of the problem or part of the solution." In the turbulence of those times I saw Peace Corps as a way to express my idealism in a concrete manner and actually make a difference.

Flash forward to my days in the Congress, and just like everywhere else along the way, I found RPCVs: Tom Petri, Mike Ward, Sam Farr, Chris Dodd, Chris Shays, Mike Honda and now, newly elected Member of the House Steve Driehaus. We are everywhere. Throughout my career I have found RPCVs providing continuing public service.

My group Nepal 22 has produced teachers, professors, community and international activists/advocates, and Federal and State government employees. We are leading business owners, scientists, and home builders. But even those who have settled into the private sector are actively supporting their communities in many ways.

Back home in Syracuse, my high school classmate and fellow Nepal RPCV Bill Byrne is the CEO of a large dairy business. Yet he finds the time to work actively with the Syracuse Area Interreligious Council and he served as Director of the Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative, organized to strengthen city neighborhoods.

A number of our colleagues entered the health field as MDs and also as advocates for international health programs. Others have found occupations outside of the United States doing public service in Canada, Sweden, Columbia and elsewhere.

I believe that the Peace Corps experience is so formative and transformational that anyone who has lived it is changed forever. Certainly the altruism that brought us to it is already part of our fiber, but the crucible of those two years gives us a sense that two years is not enough. That a lifetime of service in any capacity is an essential aspect of our futures.

When Kennedy challenged American youth to step up, make a difference; I'm not sure what he expected. Did he think that the Peace Corps would train a future generation of leaders? Did he anticipate that the world would grow smaller and more interconnected and the international experience of volunteers would position America better in the world? Did he anticipate that it would continue to do these things for over 40 years and affect thousands of lives? I don't know the answer, but the original concept of "what you can do for your country" is being fulfilled not just by Peace Corps volunteers in the field, but everyday by those who have returned.

*James "Jim" Walsh represented New York's 25th congressional district for 25 years before retiring in 2009.*



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## SURF SAFELY

*Internet cafes in less developed countries can pose health, safety and security risks*

by Lieutenant Colonel Bob Feldman

For Americans living or traveling overseas, the working assumption is that connection to friends and loved ones is just an Internet café way. However in less developed countries, Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), development workers and other travelers may be unwittingly exposing themselves to health, safety, and security risks, especially in inexpensive cafes that appeal to the budget-minded.

### HEALTH

Perhaps the most noticeable risk is the poor air quality. Many cafes lack adequate ventilation to deal with the mix of ozone from old wiring inside and the traffic fumes outside wafting in. Besides irritating eyes, these could lead to respiratory problems such as bronchitis, or aggravate existing ones such as asthma.

A cacophony of coughing should be a warning that contagious diseases such as tuberculosis might be present. People who spend long times in these overcrowded, poorly ventilated cafes may find themselves getting sick.

### SAFETY

In addition to the risk of the often poorly-maintained generator next to the cafe's only door exploding, wiring also frequently poses a significant threat. In Rube Goldberg-like designs, wires, often with crumbling insulation, are frequently crisscrossed in multiple ways, stopping only to attach to worn-out outlets.

Should fire occur, escape is made less likely due to narrow cluttered pathways as well as a

lack of emergency lighting, sprinklers, and extinguishers. My rule of thumb: the first thing to think about when going into a cybercafé is how to get out.

### PERSONAL SECURITY

Internet cafes present special challenges for personal security, especially in those countries where criminals or terrorists target Americans. In such places preventing disclosure of U.S. citizenship to various unsavory characters is extremely important.

Unfortunately, many seem to view the Internet café as a place to meet and greet other Americans. English is sometimes freely spoken, names called out, and personal information loudly shared not only with fellow volunteers but unwittingly with foreign nationals. Additionally, many PCVs appear at the same Internet cafés the same time each day, failing to observe the basic security rule of varying one's routine.

### COMPUTER SECURITY

Those using cybercafés also risk identity theft. Once I sat at a terminal following its use by a young American. When the system was activated, her e-mail appeared, still in "send" mode. Apparently, her computer time ran out before the letter was sent, allowing anyone who came after to read the contents.

There were many more times where I stumbled across names and other identifying characteristics of Americans in café computers. This information could sometimes be found on saved documents, which were not always automatically erased when a new user started working at a computer someone else had just left.

### DECREASING THE RISKS

There are numerous ways to reduce risks when using Internet cafés, beginning with visually scanning the premises before committing to



An Internet café in Senegal.

using a terminal. Items to watch out for include only one entrance/exit, generators too close to the door, old wiring, and desks arranged so close together that they provide little privacy or room to maneuver in an emergency. Whenever possible, PCVs should pay with local currency, not wear clothing that identifies them as being foreigners and refrain from English conversations. They should also vary their café routine, changing both the time and location of usage, and should avoid using Internet cafés for meeting places.

Watch for individuals who take an inordinate amount of interest in observing them. Avoid persons appearing to conduct business in order not to accidentally intrude on Internet fraud in the works.

Avoid entering personal information. Documents should never be saved to the hard drive, but rather to a portable storage device, though the user should understand the chance of acquiring computer viruses when doing so. Utilizing a "throw-away" e-mail account, which can be painlessly sacrificed if compromised by spammers, is a good idea. Finally, computer users need to clear their tracks by thoroughly erasing the browser's history.

Members of the Peace Corps community need to be aware of the risks Internet cafes pose and how to mitigate them. Briefings during training, postings on volunteer websites, and other measures to disseminate this information should be considered. The goal is not to create fear, but rather caution. The end result could be very beneficial: the saving of American lives.

*Lieutenant Colonel Bob Feldman is an analyst for the Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Honduras from 1979-1981 where he worked on health projects. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official policy or position of the department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.*



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## REWIRING PEDRO BADEJO

*A Peace Corps beneficiary returns the favor*

by Alex Alper

**I**t's Saturday and there are no students in the courtyard of Pedro Badejo's Vocational Education School. The sun is shining on a series of Greek arches—the final exams of the school's stone masonry students—giving the school courtyard the odd feel of an ancient mosque. Andrew Vernaza is standing beside a table saw talking to the wood shop professor.

The wood shop teacher flips the switch and the two excitedly watch as the saw begins to spin. Pedro Badejo's technical school hasn't had electricity in about a month, which hasn't exactly made it easy for Andrew to begin teaching electrical wiring to his students. A strong wind blows through the courtyard and the saw slows, stops, and begins turning in the opposite direction. The two chuckle. No more power.

Andrew is a first year Peace Corps Volunteer, a recent electrical engineering graduate of Drexel University, and the son of Columbian immigrants, who wouldn't have made it to the United States if it hadn't been for the Peace Corps. "Like all other volunteers, I guess, [I joined because] I wanted to help out," says Andrew. "I really saw the impact first hand of another generation of Peace Corps volunteers."

His parents immigrated to the United States in 1976,

eventually settling in Mount Laurel, New Jersey to raise their two sons. His father learned English from an ESL volunteer at the Universidad de Valle in Bogotá, where he studied engineering. His excellent English skills aided him in his embassy interview and subsequent transition to America. His mother, from the rural suburb of Tenza, watched as an irrigation volunteer helped her family greatly improve their farm's efficiency. "We still go back there for vacation and eat the tomatoes," says Andrew. "The reason the farm is still in my family is probably because of that Peace Corps Volunteer... My family really understands the impact Peace Corps has had on their lives."

Andrew joined the Peace Corps to give back, a decision he is still committed to, though his job isn't always easy. "I'm not a teacher, I engineer things," he says. As he glowingly describes "cool circuits" like burglar alarms, it's easy to imagine he is happiest when working on his own experiments.

Teaching, he explains, "is so frustrating sometimes. Once we were doing this problem with the equation  $V=IR$ . It's like the most important equation of electricity." He writes it, voltage equals resistance times current. "I gave the students simple numbers for resistance and voltage, but they couldn't come up with the current. They hadn't



Cape Verde Volunteer Andrew Vernaza works with one of his students.

Alex Alper

learned that you could divide both sides of the equation by the same number. A lot of them didn't go to high school and don't have basic math skills."

Nevertheless, there are definite "eureka" moments.

A student once confessed to Andrew after class that she still didn't understand an equation. "I just couldn't explain it again, so I asked this other student if he could. And then he just totally nailed it," Andrew recalls. "He derived the entire equation perfectly, and the girl got it, and I hadn't said a thing. I was like, 'Oh my God, I think I have just built capacity.'"

We leave the school and head down the road to the stadium where his students have a soccer match. Half-clad children run across the cobbled road, which narrows to a few feet in places where most of the stones are missing. Unpainted rectangular cement homes line the hilly, winding street that descends towards the expansive ocean, which eats up most of the horizon. A few women wash clothes in cement basins. Most people sit on stools and stone walls along the side of the street that still has a sliver of shade.

While Cape Verde is one of the most prosperous countries in West Africa, Pedro Badejo is among the poorest towns on the island of Santiago, with frequent power outages, high unemployment, and poor infrastructure. "It doesn't make sense that the only school specializing in electricity is in this poor town with bad power."

But Andrew is working on that. In the evenings he repairs broken street lamps with some of his motivated students. He is writing a proposal to install a wind turbine at the school that would generate power to offset the malfunctioning generator, and allow him to teach his students about renewable energies, an increasingly important field for a country with no petroleum resources and growing electricity demand.

For other challenges, Andrew turns to his parents. "I was complaining to my mom about not having running water. And she was like 'you should do what

we used to do—soak a towel in water and shower with that.'"

Many of Andrew's anecdotes about Columbia are funny or touching. But when he explains that drug-related violence claimed the lives of his father's two brothers, you are reminded of the real suffering that Columbia's infamous problems mean for its people.

And yet, knowing what his parents escaped from—and seeing how far they got—gives Andrew a clear sense of what he can achieve in Cape Verde. "The Peace Corps gives hope. If we weren't here, they wouldn't know their abilities. When I leave here they will say, 'Oh I can do that.'"

When other volunteers second-guess the Peace Corps's potential for making a difference Andrew replies without hesitation. "Volunteers have an impact. You probably won't ever get to see it, but that doesn't mean you don't have one. Twenty years from now, someone may do something because of something you said and you will have no idea."

We reach the stadium, a cement walled-basketball court on the edge of town. Andrew's students, the red shirted "Biscuits," file by and greet Andrew before the game starts.

"See that one, number eight?" He points to a player. "That's the one I was telling you about, who explained the equation. He is super motivated. Sometimes he asks if we can go fix another lamppost and I am like, 'How about tomorrow, okay?'"

Andrew leans forward as one of his students takes a shot and then continues.

"Maybe he won't get to America. But he will get a good job, give a good life to his kids, and maybe they will be able to go."

*Alex Alper is a third year Peace Corps Volunteer serving in Praia, Santiago, Cape Verde. He previously has written for WorldView.*

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## TATTOO ART IN SAMOA

*Volunteers come home with a unique souvenir*

by Sara Reeves

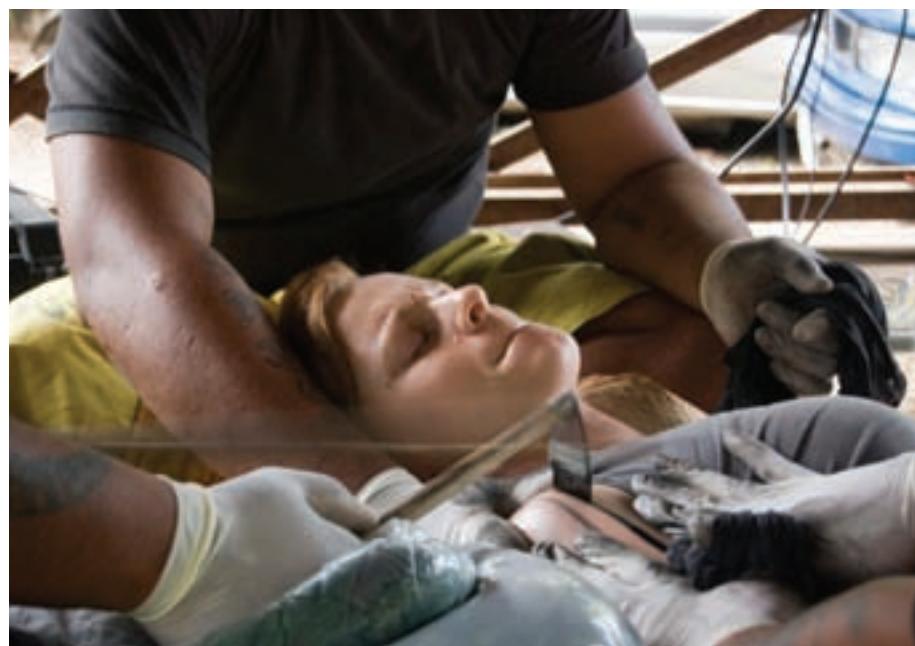
**T**ap, tap, tap. Pause. Tap, tap, tap, tap. Pause. To me, it is like the sound of a drummer knocking his sticks together to count the start of the band's next song, except that each of these taps sends a sharp, stainless steel comb dripping ink into the flesh of my arm. This tapping will go on almost uninterrupted for three hours and when it is done, I will be tattooed from shoulder to elbow.

When I came to Samoa more than a year ago, I came tattoo-free, but I knew I wouldn't be able to leave that way. Samoa is home to the oldest continuously practicing tattoo culture in the South Pacific. The missionaries were successful in stopping or greatly altering the tattooing practices elsewhere, but not in Samoa. It made sense that the ideal memento of my time in Samoa would be a tattoo.

Tattoo (or tatau here in Samoa) is one of the few Polynesian words to



Samoa Group 76 RPCVs show off the tattoos they received while serving in Samoa.



The author winces in pain as the teeth of the tattoo comb hit her shoulder bone.

Courtesy of Sara Reeves

have entered the English language. When European explorers first came to Samoa, their accounts were filled with comments on the local men's "decorative stockings." What the explorers took for lace-like pants was in fact the pe'a, a tattoo covering 65 percent of a man's body from rib cage to knees. The pe'a is a sign of manhood, of commitment to community and family, of service and dedication. It is also a sign of pain tolerance. Meant to resemble the wings of the flying fox (a bat) wrapped around the body, the tattoo is made of large areas of solid black ink (representing the night sea) and intricate designs (representing a myriad of elements important to Samoan life). It can take weeks or even months to complete. No Peace Corps volunteer I know of has ever received



Tattoo artist Peter Sulu'ape completes the top band on Laura Hanks' traditional tattoo.

## THE PCMO PERSPECTIVE

**T**euila Pati has been a Peace Corps Medical Officer in Samoa for 12 years. During that time, she has had the opportunity to see her fair share of volunteer tattoos and says the numbers getting tattooed is on the rise.

"For the volunteers, I have dubbed it the 'tattoo itch' period when most PCVs go through the mid-service crisis. It is a good sign... I think," said PCMO Teuila

Tattoos are so prevalent among volunteers that she covers it in her Pre-Service Training medical sessions and recommends a particular tattooist, Sulu'ape

"Sulu'ape is a well-known, acclaimed tattooist who has received training and follows international tattoo guidelines in sterilizing of equipment, using disposable gloves, etc.," she explained. "I have had minimal post-tattoo problems with PCVs who have used Sulu'ape."



Unsanitary tattoos can be a medical concern in the United States and the same goes for Samoa. For Teuila, medical concerns are diseases such as Hepatitis B and HIV and post-tattoo infection. There have been cases of overseas Samoans being hospitalized due to serious infections after receiving a tattoo. Teuila has not treated any life-threatening medical complications

among volunteers. However, she has treated several for infections.

Teuila does not have a tattoo herself but if she did, she would choose the malu, the traditional female tattoo, as it would symbolize her Samoan heritage.

"There is a deep meaning for the traditional tattoo for Samoan men and women. This encompasses cultural identity as well as tautua or serving in your family, village, and country," said Teuila. "There is always a sense of pride and connection seeing Samoans with traditional tattoos, especially on the international scene."

the full pe'a. However, several have replicas of the pe'a wrapped around their calves or arms.

I knew if I were going to get a tattoo in Samoa, I would have it done traditionally. I can get a tattoo with a gun anywhere; the reason for getting one here would be to have it done with the combs.

The combs used in the tattooing were once made with bone or tusk and consisted of a row of sharpened teeth that were first dipped into ink (most often made with charcoal) and then tapped into the skin. Today, they have been slightly modernized. The tools used for my tattoo were wooden handles with a plastic attachment to hold stainless steel teeth. They were first sterilized and the ink was tattoo ink and not charcoal. However, I still had sharp, pointed teeth hammered into my arm.

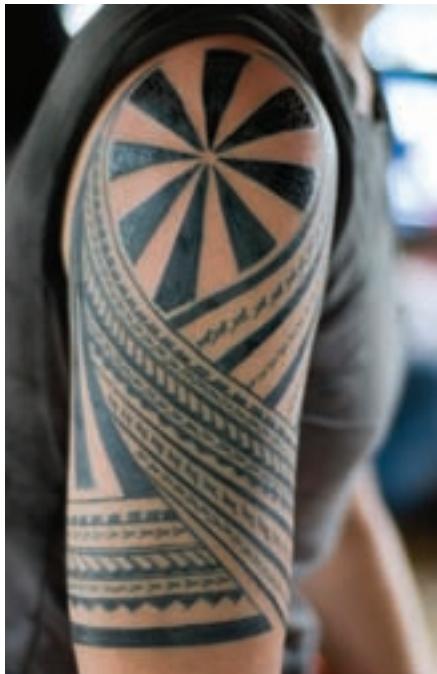
*Tap, tap, tap. Pause. Tap, tap, tap, tap. Pause. Peter Sulu'ape, a member of the legendary Sulu'ape tattoo family, is working on the band of designs that encircles my right bicep. I am laying face down on a mat in a faleo'o (small, open wooden hut), two men are pressing down on the skin on the back of my arm, pulling it tight. This part of the tattoo is decidedly uncomfortable, but I wouldn't say it hurts, not in the way I expected. The flies that keep landing on the face and legs are bothering me more than the comb being hammered into my arm.*

Obviously, I am not unique in my decision to get inked in Samoa. Tattoos are prolific among Peace Corps in Samoa. Our training manager jokingly refers to it as the "tag and release" program. We come to Samoa from the States and somewhere along the line the culture catches up with us, tags us and,

*Continued on page 40*



Sara Reeves displays her freshly finished tattoo.



Courtesy of Sara Reeves

#### TATTOO ART IN SAMOA

*Continued from page 39*

after two years, releases us back into the wild of our native habitat, permanently marked by our time here.

Recently, Group 77 completed their service here in Samoa and headed home. Of the nine remaining members, seven took traditional Samoan tattoos home with them. One of them is Laura Hanks. She has the malu on her right leg. The malu is the traditional tattoo for Samoan women. It is an open pattern of designs that covers the woman's thighs.

"The first time I saw the malu I thought it looked like a bunch of stitches, but the more I saw women with it the more beautiful and intricate I realized it was," said Hanks. "I also noticed that women with the malu were respected and honored for it. I decided to get a

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tattoo because I knew I wanted to always have a piece of Samoa with me to remember my experience and I felt getting part of the malu was the most appropriate way to do that."

*I am lying on my back now and struggling to hold my right arm steady with my left. Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap. Pause. Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap. Pause. Sulu'ape has reached the part of the tattoo on my shoulder. There is no muscle between skin and bone in this area. With every tap the teeth of the comb hit bone and my arm jerks involuntarily. Now things have started to hurt. I focus all my attention on the pain and drown out the chatter around me. I find myself wondering if I can make it to the end.*

Because so many Peace Corps volunteers choose to get tattoos, it gives us another shared experience. We rarely go alone. Laura had the first part of her malu completed on the say day two other Group 77 girls got tattoos, and returned to have it completed with two different volunteers. I went with another volunteer from my training group, Erik Martin. While Peter Sulu'ape was working on my arm, his father (also Peter) worked on Erik's.

We can also commiserate on the pain and care of the tattoo. We gather in the Resource Room of the Peace Corps office, shirtsleeves pulled back, pant legs rolled up, talking about the areas that were the most painful, the places of greatest bruising. In any number of group pictures, like the catch in a successful scientific experiment, we can be found, bellies and backs exposed, displaying our tags. And when we reunite in the States we will do the same, meeting with volunteers with whom we shared no time in country, but who we can identify immediately by the ink peeking out from a cuff or collar.

*Sara Reeves is a volunteer serving with her husband in Samoa. Formerly a news designer, she now teaches computer studies at a secondary school.*



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Germany's Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awards ten German Chancellor Fellowships annually to young professionals in the private, public, not-for-profit, cultural and academic sectors who are citizens of the United States. The program, which also includes fellowships for citizens of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, sponsors individuals who demonstrate the potential to strengthen ties between Germany and their own country through their profession or studies. The fellowship provides for a stay of one year in Germany for professional development, study, or research. Prior knowledge of German is not a prerequisite.

The program begins September 1 and lasts twelve months. It is preceded by three months of intensive language classes in Germany. Must be a U.S., Russian or Chinese citizen. A bachelor's degree is required. Candidates must have received their degree after September 1, 1998. Application deadline for U.S. applicants: October 31, 2009. Applications and information available at:

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# THE PEACE CORPS COMMUNITY MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Edited by JoAnna Haugen

## MAKING WAVES IN HONDURAS AND PERU

In many coastal cities across the world, tourists stop by to surf but local communities rarely benefit from this fleeting tourism. **WAVES for Development**, founded by David Aabo (Peru), uses surfing as a vehicle to empower youth. The community-based educational programs supported by this not-for-profit organization promote life skills, environmental conservation, social entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism. Through these programs, WAVES for Development takes advantage of surfing resources to meet community development goals and help reduce poverty. In Honduras, **Project Wave of Optimism** (WOO) is promoting sustainable community development by working with local residents to acquire its first public bus company, which would provide much-needed transportation. Founded by Nick Mucha and Adam Monaghan (Honduras), Project WOO has also helped pay the salaries of a few elementary school teachers, provided educational materials, helped with water and sanitation projects, and improved roads in the area.

[www.wavesfordevelopment.org](http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org)  
[www.projectwoo.org](http://www.projectwoo.org)

## MEDICAL HELP IN HONDURAS

This year **Central American Medical Outreach, Inc.**, (CAMO) celebrated 15 years as a humanitarian aid organization dedicated to strengthening health care systems and promoting sustainable community development in Honduras. CEO Kathryn Tschiegg, RN (Honduras 79-81) founded the organization after researching how best to integrate medical equipment and education into the public health system and social fabric of Central America. Since its inception, CAMO has

renovated a hospital and public health and community buildings, expanded healthcare programs, and donated medical supplies and expertise.

[www.camo.org](http://www.camo.org)

## TECHNOLOGY FOR EVERYONE

**Interconnection**, a non-profit organization founded and directed by Charles Brennick (Paraguay), strives to make information technology accessible to underserved communities around the world. The organization donates high-quality, low-cost refurbished computers as well as Internet services and training to those without these things. By doing so, Interconnection also provides a service to those stateside who are unsure what to do with computers and technology they no longer want.

[www.interconnection.org](http://www.interconnection.org)

## NATURAL HEALING IN NEPAL

Rob Buckley is the founder of the non-profit organization **Himalayan Healers**, a program that trains people in massage who are normally discriminated against in society. After training, these healers are employed to work in one of eight spas/boutiques in Nepal where they make a healthy wage in a well-respected trade. Himalayan Healers is currently raising \$20,000 to open a branch in Grand Junction, Colo.

[www.himalayanhealers.org](http://www.himalayanhealers.org)

## EDUCATION IN MICRONESIA

Designed to provide scholarships and tuition-assistance grants to children in the “low” or “outer” islands of Micronesia, **Habele Outer Island Education Fund** offers these students the opportunity to attend independent schools they would otherwise not be able to afford. The non-profit organization also supports public schools through book donations, material

assistance and performance-based teacher awards. President of the Board of Directors Neil Mellen (Micronesia, Yap Outer Islands 02-05), treasurer Tom Lutte (Micronesia, Yap Proper 02-04) and member Marc McNamara (Madagascar 03-05) are among the Habele staff who coordinate efforts with Peace Corps volunteers currently serving in the islands.

[www.habele.org](http://www.habele.org)

## EDUCATION IN HONDURAS

Burgeoning scholars in Central Honduras who wish to continue their educational careers are given that opportunity through **The Central Honduras Education (CHE) Fund**. Since 2005, founders Aaron Banas (Honduras, Ecuador), David Burke (Honduras) and Mike Mazza (Honduras) have used their existing friendships in Honduras to create a bridge between deserving Honduran students and scholarship donors. In addition to the academic opportunities given to the students, this year The CHE Fund sponsored a two-week oral health education and caries prevention project, which provided oral health instruction, treatment and distribution of toothbrushes and toothpaste to nearly 700 elementary school students.

<http://chefund.org/home.html>

## OPENING THE DOOR TO LEARNING IN GUATEMALA

Co-founded in January 2007 by Amanda Flayer (Guatemala), **The Open Door Children's Library** offers a public space for children to explore literature, academics and creativity. The non-profit learning center serves an average of 50 children daily in addition to three classroom visits a week with a variety of activities that spark creativity and curiosity, including reading clubs, art activities, puppet shows and story hours. The Open Door Children's Library also exposes teachers to new teaching styles and is open to the public for research and investigation as well.

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## HAVING A BALL

*Soccer opens doors in Niger*

by JoAnna Haugen

**H**enry Wadsworth Longfellow said music is the universal language of mankind, but Michael Mitchell (Niger 83-85) would argue that something else crosses all language barriers: soccer. When he prepared for his Peace Corps service, Mitchell packed 15 soccer balls in place of extra clothes. Once at his site he struggled to fit in, but, he says, "as soon as I brought the soccer ball out, my life changed."

Mitchell played with a local soccer team and was shocked by the difference a simple soccer ball made. "We won games and people were happier," he says. "This positive energy can be harnessed for so many purposes." Teachers used the soccer balls as learning tools and community members were more productive than before. When his service came to an end, Mitchell promised to return with more.

He kept his promise with the

creation of his nonprofit organization, Project Play, and delivered more than 2,000 soccer balls across Niger in early 2008. Peace Corps volunteers have been instrumental in distributing them, and the soccer balls have been instrumental in helping the volunteers. "The soccer ball is a way to get in with locals and make friends," Mitchell says. "It is a tool to combat poverty and violence. If you have a soccer ball, you have people's attention."

Project Play has grown quickly, garnering attention from national media and the United States government as it moves into its second year. In 2009, Project Play will deliver at least 2,000 balls to Togo. Beyond that, anything is possible for Mitchell.

Project Play defines who I am," he says. "I am doing what I'm supposed to do. I was born to serve."

Learn more about Project Play at [www.projectplay.me](http://www.projectplay.me).



A soccer net woven from plastic bags littering the village.

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# RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

by JoAnna Haugen

## ARGENTINA

The National Park Service recently named **Kate Hammond** (92-94) as superintendent at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. She has worked with the U.S. Interior Department for 14 years. Hammond received her bachelor's degree in history and environmental studies from Yale University and her master's degree in environmental management from the Yale School of Forestry.

## BULGARIA

**Susan Chestnut** (06-08) and **Jason Penarelli** (06-08) are producing a documentary about volunteerism with 2 Travel A Dirt Road Productions. It seeks



**Susan Chestnut**

to answer the question of why ordinary people choose to do extraordinary work for the benefit of others around the world. The two are traveling around the world to visit grassroots organizations working to combat some of the world's most critical issues.

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Robert Foster (85-88) was recently appointed as the deputy chief of party for the USAID Afghanistan Water, Agriculture and Technology Transfer Program in Kabul. He is an associate director in the College of Agriculture at New Mexico State University and also a program manager at the Institute for Energy and Environment in the College of Engineering.

## ECUADOR

Author **Eve Brown-Waite** (88-89) recently signed a contract with Broadway Books, a division of Random House, for her memoir, which will be published in spring 2009. Brown-Waite began writing her stories when her husband took a job with CARE in Uganda. She earned her master's degree in public health from Hunter College.

Former high school classmates **Rob Meyer** (05-07) and Ben Stone launched Papa Spuds Organics, a unique service that delivers local, fresh produce once a week to their



**Robert Foster**

growing list of clientele. They opened the company in February 2008. Meyer learned about alternative farming as a Peace Corps volunteer and has applied a simple business model he learned there to Papa Spuds Organics: grow and sell goods in the same community.

## HONDURAS

The Vogels may appear to be your average cyclists when they whiz by on their bikes, but this unique family of four is on a mission. Their goal? Pedal from Prudhoe Bay, Alaska to Ushuaia, Argentina. It will take approximately 30 months and 20,000 miles for John Vogel, **Nancy Sathre-Vogel** (84-86) and their sons, Davy and Daryl to achieve this task. The family left in June 2008 and is currently in Texas. Sathre-Vogel and her husband have been teachers for several years, and now their boys are enjoying an education of a lifetime—as well as the title of “Youngest Person to Cycle the Pan-American Highway” when they reach their final goal.

## KOREA

**Kathleen Stephens** (75-77) was appointed as U.S. ambassador to Korea in September. Known also by her Korean name, Shim Eun-kyung, Stephens has been with the Foreign Service since 1978. She has served in a variety of positions in China, Trinidad and Tobago, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ireland and Portugal. Her appointment as ambassador to Korea will be her first ambassadorial posting. Stephens holds a bachelor's degree from Prescott College and a master's degree from Harvard University.

## MADAGASCAR

Last year a team of scientists was chosen to help preserve part of Madagascar's

natural heritage. Among the chosen few was an associate professor of environmental studies from the University of Montana - Western, **Linda Lyon** (94-98). She is working as a consultant for the Lokaro Nature Preserve, a 350-acre parcel set in southeastern Madagascar. The purposes of this preserve and the team's goals are to protect the natural environment, provide a place for environmental education and help surrounding communities to grow sustainably. Lyon is involved with mapping the property and taking an inventory of what's found there. She earned her master's and doctorate degrees in natural resources sciences from Washington State University.



**Linda Lyon**

## **NIGER**

The 2008 *Times Literary Supplement* Poetry Competition was won by **Susan Rich** (84-86) for her poem *Different Places to Pray*. Her poetry has been honored before, when she won the PEN USA Poetry Award and the Peace Corps Writers Poetry Award for *The Cartographer's Tongue: Poems of the world*. Rich has worked on the staff of Amnesty International, as an electoral supervisor in Bosnia and as a human rights trainer in Gaza. She also taught at the University of Cape Town on a Fulbright Fellowship.

## **TUNISIA**

**Mark Campbell** (86-88), a plant breeder at Truman State University, has recently developed a variety of specialty corn called high amylase corn. This corn is of interest to food chemists and nutritionists because it has been found to serve as a prebiotic, which helps to boost levels of good beneficial bacteria in the lower digestive system. This cornstarch has also been shown to reduce the risk of colon cancer and other health problems. An associate professor of agricultural science at Truman State in Kirksville, Missouri, Campbell attended graduate school at Montana State University and earned his doctorate at Iowa State University.

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