



ReConnections

A monthly newsletter of the West Cascades Peace Corps Association

www.westcascadepca.org

www.facebook.com/RPCVEugene

Upcoming Events

Mon. Feb. 9: Pub Night!

Join us for trivia at
Cornucopia on 5th at 8 pm!

Thurs. Feb. 12: Our UO campus rep, Laurette Garner, will need **1-2 RPCVS to help man the PC table at the internship fair on campus from 12-3 pm.** Food is involved! Please contact Laurette at pcorps@uoregon.edu to sign up!

Fri. Feb. 27: Pub Night @ **7 pm Oakshire Brewery!** Come out to meet visiting RPCV from PC Micronesia!

Sun. March 1: Kick off Peace Corps week with a **get-together over pizza at Roaring Rapids Pizza from 1 - 3 pm!** There will be a prize for the group that brings the most numbers: 'new' RPCVs vs. 'esteemed & experienced' RPCVs.

March 1-7: Peace Corps Week on campus! Check out activities on pg. 4!



RPCVs gather at Hop Valley on Jan. 23rd. Ukraine, Macedonia, Tanzania, Peru, Thailand, Senegal and Mali were some of the host countries represented.

Pub Night, Fun Night!

Interested WCPA members met up for pub nights at Eugene's finest breweries in October and November, and are now going to begin planning twice monthly events at rotating locations. Twelve RPCVs came out to Falling Sky on Blair on January 9th to share brews and conversation, and thirteen RPCVs attended Pub Night at Hop Valley on Friday, January 23rd. So far the group has been meeting up around 8 pm, but suggestions for differing nights of the week and possibly an earlier time have been made.

In February we'll be trying out different times and days: Join us on Monday, February 9th at Cornucopia on 5th at 8:00 pm, with trivia starting at 9:00 pm, and then on Friday, February 27th at Oakshire at 7:00 pm. On February 27th the group will be joined by Catherine Trebes (RPCV Micronesia 1988-1990) who will be passing through Eugene as she travels through the Pacific Northwest. Catherine has had a long career in international work and is excited to meet Eugene-area RPCVs. She sent this short bio as an introduction:



Last Chance for Calendars: \$5 Sale Price!

It's nearly your last chance to get a 2015 Peace Corps calendar from WPCPA! Beautiful photos taken by PCVs in their countries of service plus information that highlights the richness of life and the diverse cultures of PC countries.

Since 2015 is already underway, we're offering the last few at fire sale prices --- \$5 each or three for \$12. (If you want to have it mailed, add \$2 each for postage).

Email Gary Cornelius to order. If you're local he will figure out a way to get your order filled. His email address is garycorn@quixnet.net. You can call him at 541-912-1518. (You can also order and pay via PayPal at the WPCPA website).

When you buy a calendar you support WPCPA, including our support of volunteers who have a connection to Oregon and are raising funds for projects through the Peace Corps Partnership Program.

"I've been working overseas since 1988 when I became a Small Business Volunteer on the island of Kosrae in Micronesia. The island had five villages but one wasn't connected by the road so you had to take a fishing boat or hike thru the jungle to get there. I backpacked in Asia for about 10 months after I COSed then taught English in Japan to save money for grad school; I went to Thunderbird. Since then, I've worked for Peace Corps as a PST trainer in Mongolia and as a PTO in Kazakhstan and then mostly with USAID as Program Officer, with a few other contracts with UNICEF, the EU and MSI. I met a man when I was working in Baghdad the second time with MSI who is from South Africa and we have a cattle farm in the Kalahari near the Botswana border. I'm just finishing up a short term contract with USAID in Sri Lanka and now heading to the US to travel by plane, train and rental car to see family and friends and places I haven't been to before, Oregon being one of those places, so I'm looking forward to meeting you all and hearing about your Peace Corps experiences and Oregon!"

We hope to see you at Pub Night this month!

RPCVs Participate in Day of Respect at South Eugene HS

by *Julia Harvey*
(Tonga 1990-1993)



Kathleen Conery quizzed students about life in Guinea.

South Eugene High School hosted the third biannual Day of Respect on January 15, 2015. This day is in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Instead of attending regular classes, students attend an assembly, workshops and a rally with a guest speaker to broaden their awareness, understanding and appreciation of diversity.

I choose to host returned Peace Corps volunteers because I believe that the Day of Respect ties in with the third goal of the



Jennifer Knowles shared photographs of her service in Macedonia.

Peace Corps: “Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.”

This year, Denise Silfee (Thailand 2011-2013), Jennifer Knowles (Macedonia 2009-2011), Tricia Buzzard (Honduras 2011-2012, Fiji 2012-2014), Kathleen Conery (Guinea 2013-2014 & Malawi 2015 – 2017), Charles Goldsmith (Mexico 2009-2012), Juliet Bender (Mexico 2009-2012), and Laurette Gardner (Madagascar 2004-2006) shared their experiences to about 175 students during the three sessions. The day was a complete success. It is likely that one of those students will one day be sworn in as a PCV.

Oregon PCV Project Spotlight

The WCPCA board received a request from Panama PCV and former Oregon Duck Chelsea Mackin for project funding for a Women’s Biodiversity Seminar. Chelsea is an extension volunteer and lives in Chitre, the provincial capital of Herrera. The project will invite women from all over the country to attend a multi-day seminar. This project is in conjunction with Seeders, the Peace Corps Panama seed bank, which offers resources to support agricultural and environmental projects across the country. Chelsea’s fund-raising goal was \$3565 and she had collected 37% of the total at the time of the request. The WCPCA board voted to donate \$300 towards Chelsea’s project.

You can check out more photographs of Chelsea’s site and project on the [RPCV Eugene Facebook](#) page, and you can learn more about the work of the Panama Seeders at the [Seeders Facebook](#) page.

The WCPCA strives to connect with currently serving Volunteers from Oregon to help fund projects during service. If you know of a currently serving OR PCV, encourage them to contact the WCPCA with details about their projects!

Stay tuned for updates about Chelsea’s project!



Panama PCVs and counterparts making organic pesticides. Photo provided by PCV Panama Chelsea Mackin.

March Book Club: *Living Poor* by Moritz Thomsen

Plan ahead for March Book Club! The club will meet in the evening on March 12 to discuss the book *Living Poor* by Moritz Thomsen. Thomsen joined the Peace Corps at age 48 and served in Ecuador. He recounts his experience in this memoir that is described as both “comic” and “moving”. You can purchase Thomsen’s book at [Powell's Books- Living Poor](#) online for \$9.95, or check it out from the Eugene Library.



March 1st Social Event: Peace Corps Week Kickoff!

In our efforts to expand the types of social events we offer, WCPCA is inviting all Eugene-area WCPCA members and RPCVs to a pizza get-together at **Roaring Rapids Pizza on Sunday, March 1, 1:00-3:00 pm**. There will be a prize to share for the group that shows up in the most numbers: “newer”

RPCVs and “esteemed and experienced” RPCVs. You choose which group you most identify with! Bring the whole family! Log-on to the [RPCV Eugene Facebook](#) page and watch your email for details as we get closer to March 1st!

Peace Corps Week Activities on Campus : Coming in March!

Peace Corps Week is coming up! The week of March 1-7, 2015 is reserved as a week to commemorate President Kennedy’s establishment of the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961. During this week, RPCVs are encouraged to become involved in Peace Corps festivals and events in their areas to celebrate the ways that Peace Corps makes a difference abroad and at home. You can learn more about Peace Corps Week worldwide at the following site: [Peace Corps Week](#).

This year, our UO Peace Corps rep, Laurette Garner, has organized the following events that Eugene-area RPCVs are invited to participate in. If you are interested, please contact Laurette at pcorps@uoregon.edu.

**Story Slam: Tuesday, March 3,
6:00-7:30 pm @ Willamette Hall 110**

The Story Slam & Information Session for UO students will involve RPCVs sharing a story from their service about a cross-cultural interaction, a ‘Host Country Hero’, or a humorous tale. Stories should be under 5 minutes long and can include a visual if sent to Laurette ahead of time. Ideally 8-10 RPCVs will be available to participate. You can sign up at the following link to the Doodle site sign-up: [Story Slam Sign-](#)

What is a Story Slam?

Based on the concept of the Poetry Slam, a Story Slam is a contest of words by new and undiscovered talent. Typically stories are 5 minutes or less and a winner is chosen. The Peace Corps Story Slam won’t involve winners or losers, but simply be a venue for sharing tales of service.

Tips for Telling a Good Story

- * Stories should have a beginning, middle and end.
- * Tell your story from your point of view.
- * Know your first and last line before you tell your story... it will help you stay on track!
- * You don’t have to memorize your story, but practice might help you avoid runaway tangents into other, equally amazing Peace Corps stories.
- * Have fun! The goal is camaraderie and sharing!

up. If you prefer not to share, please come out to listen and socialize in the spirit of Peace Corps Week!

Service Project with Trees Today and Forever:
Saturday, March 7, 10:00 am - 1:30 pm @ Bauman
Tree Farm, 84289 Territorial Rd.

Help prepare forest trails for forestry education programs, which serve over 1,500 middle school students each year. The experiential program teaches students about how to sustainably manage forest habitat for timber, wildlife, and clean water. The work includes picking up winter debris, weeding along the trail edge, and spreading wood chips and gravel. Before the work project, you will get a tour of the working tree farm to see how timber is managed to project water and wildlife habitat! This is a great opportunity to work together with other RPCVs and those interested in becoming Peace Corps Volunteers while serving our community.



Photo courtesy of www.karlinsloan.com.

Please contact Laurette if you have shovels, work gloves or clippers as these would be helpful! To sign up, please see visit the link for the Doodle sign-up: [Service Project Sign-up](#). More information will be sent to those who sign up.

Thank you for your participation in this year's Peace Corps Week— we hope to see you there!

WCPCA Member Survey... Postponed!

Don't worry, WCPCA members will still be invited to participate in a survey about activities and goals of the group. Unfortunately (don't be sad), the survey is being postponed until March. Expect a link in the March newsletter! (It will be short and help the WCPCA plan events and activities in the future!) Thank you for your patience, and your future participation!

Calling for Submissions!

If you'd like to submit something to the next WCPCA newsletter, please send your submission via email to [Denise Silfee](#) (Thailand 2011-2013) by the end of the month! Updates about social events or get-togethers, articles about recent travels, profiles of your host country past and present, service opportunities, humorous tales, or goings on in the community are all welcome! Pictures or a visual would be a nice addition as well! Thank you for reading!

Shout out and congratulations to WCPCA members **Maggie Mitteis & Andrew Seger**, RPCVs evacuated from Ukraine in summer 2014. They met while serving and were married in Portland on Friday, January 16!

