



ReConnections

A monthly newsletter of the West Cascades Peace Corps Association

www.westcascadepca.org

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Upcoming Events

Fri. April 3rd: Pub Night at **Falling Sky on Blair** at 7 pm!

Sun. April 5th: **Board meeting** from 6 - 8 pm at **New Day Bakery**. Members are invited to attend to weigh in on topics discussed.

Tues. April 7th: **Chef's Night Out** with Food For Lane County at the **Hult Center**! *Article at right for more info.*

Fri. April 17th: Pub Night at **Cornucopia on 17th** at 7 pm!

Fri. April 24th: **Potluck at Juliet Bender and Charlie Goldsmith's home** from 6 - 8:30 pm. *See page for 4 details.*

Mon. April 27th: Help pack food at **FOOD For Lane County** (770 Bailey Hill Rd.) from 6-9 pm!

Thurs. April 30th: Deadline for **early registration price of \$40 for RPCV Kickball!** See sidebar on page 2.

WCPCA Member Survey: Extended Response Time

So far the WCPCA Member Survey has received 14 responses with great feedback! In an effort to encourage more participation, we are extending the time available to take the short, 5-question survey into the month of April. If you have not yet participated, please visit the site [2015 Member Survey](#) to record your responses so that we can make WCPCA an organization that meets everyone's needs!



Service Opportunity: Chef's Night Out Fundraiser for FOOD for Lane County

Don't miss out on this great service opportunity that comes with two great perks: Helping FOOD For Lane County raise money for services they provide in the community and the chance to try some of the best food by the best chefs in Lane County! This year's event is **Tuesday, April 7th at the Hult Center**. Volunteers arrive at 8:15 to help tear down and clean up after the event, and get to try some amazing food while they're there! Please contact WCPCA member James Cloutier if you are interested in helping out! James' email address is cloutierjames@yahoo.com. You can also visit [Chef's Night Out](#) for more information about the event.

Campus Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact UO rep Laurette Garner at pcorps@uoregon.edu for information or to participate in any of the following events.

April 15th, Career Fair in the EMU Ballroom from 12-3 pm.

April 22nd, Earth Day Panel: Environment volunteers are needed from 6-7:30 pm in Willamette Hall 110. This is part of the UO Student Sustainability Coalition's week-long celebration.

April 22nd, Health Professions & Graduate School Fair from 11-2 pm in the EMU Ballroom.

May 6th-8th, ASUO Spring Street Fair: Shifts will be from 10-1 pm and 1-4 pm for each day; 2 RPCVs are needed for each one. Stay tuned for signup link in the May newsletter and on the Facebook page, or email Laurette to sign up sooner.

RPCV Kickball Team

RPCVs interested in joining the WCPA Kickball Team, the Ballunteers, are encouraged to signup by the **April 30th early registration deadline!** Cost is \$40/player and includes a t-shirt. 10 players are needed—RPCV family is welcomed to join! Games begin Sunday nights at, May 10th and ends June 14th at Tugman Park.

[Kickball Signup Link](#)

Local and Regional Campout

The Columbia River Peace Corps Association (CRPCA) from Portland is helping to organize two campouts this summer and WCPA members are invited to attend! The website is not up yet to officially register and pay via PayPal, but anyone who is planning to attend is encouraged to email Phyllis at phyllishelton@cs.com with the number in your party and the nights you will be there to secure your spot. Both events are family-friendly and scheduled from Thursday-Sunday. Cost is a flat rate, meaning you pay the same price per person no matter how many nights you stay. You can also stay tuned on Facebook for updates! Please see information for each campout below:

Local Campout: June 18-21

Location: **Milo McIver State Park** in Estacada, OR (Kingfisher Group Site)

Cost: \$12.00/person

Details: Kids 14 and under camp for FREE! No charge for parking! The Kingfisher Group site can camp up to 100 people and includes flush toilets. CRPCA will provide a light meal on Thursday night and everyone will be asked to participate in a potluck Saturday night. The park includes hiking trails, boat ramps and a disc golf course. Non-campers are invited to join for the day at the \$5 day-use fee.

Regional Campout: August 13-16

Location: **Beacon Rock State Park** in Skamania, WA (Group Site G1)

Cost: \$18.00/person

Details: Kids 14 and under camp for FREE! No charge for parking! This park is right on the Columbia River Gorge and has room for up to 200 RPCVs from all over the Pacific Northwest! The CRPCA will provide dinner to all campers on Saturday night and non-campers are welcome to come out for the day. The quarterly regional group meeting will be Saturday afternoon. Sunday morning breakfast will be hosted by the 2016 coordinating group.

Notes from the Field:

RPCV Chelsea Mackin & the Women's Biodiversity Seminar in Panama

Back in January WCPCA helped fund Panama PCV and former Oregon Duck Chelsea Mackin's Women's Biodiversity Seminar project that successfully took place this past month. Chelsea sent WCPCA a note of thanks with updates on her project, including great photos of the work she and her counterparts are doing in Panama!

Dear WCPCA,

Thank you so much for your generous contribution to the Biodiversity Seminar! All of our participants, facilitators and organizers were very pleased with the event. We had 21 rural Panamanian women spend 5 days away from home with us, some of them traveling over a day to get to the seminar.

The seminar was developed to frame a problem, the negative human impact on the natural environment, and provide a feasible solution, increasing local biodiversity to mitigate consequences of climate change. Day one, we had the Director of the Centro de Desarrollo Ambiental Sostenible (CEDESAM), or the Center of Sustainable Environmental Development, teach our participants about climate change. PCV facilitators developed a series of new resources such as interactive skits, "climate change" charades, and even a board game to help participants better grasp the concept of global warming. These resources, which are now available to Peace Corps Panama, could not have been developed without the infrastructure of our training of trainers and seminar.

Day two, we dove into ways to increase biodiversity and potential benefits having more diverse home gardens. We hired a bus to take us to the locally renowned Finca Perezosos, or Lazy Farm, a permaculture farm owned by RPCV John Douglass. The women loved John's sense of humor and learned a lot walking around his unorthodox but impressive farm. In the afternoon, we took our participants to two local Panamanian-owned organic farms, which they also enjoyed. The mix of farming styles was important and met the needs and interests of our diverse participant group.

We wanted our participants to not only understand climate change and biodiversity, but also have some ideas of how they could make it work for them—through improved nutrition and selling value-added products. Day three, we demonstrated baking, did some nutrition review, and taught about seed saving. At the end of the seminar, the women stood in a circle and



shared what they learned about the seminar. Many showed interest in bringing their new ideas home through replicating ideas and re-teaching the seminar. One participant even followed up to get our facilitation guides so that she could use them with her community.

Thank you again for all your support. This incredible event would not have been possible without your generous funding!

Sincerely,

Chelsea



You can learn more about the environmental work of PCVs in Panama by visiting the [Panama Seeders Facebook page](#), and you don't have to be a member of Facebook to view the page!

Next Month's Project Spotlight: OR PCV Diantha Hull's sewing project in Tanzania was chosen by the WCPCA board to receive funding. Check out May's newsletter and the Facebook page for updates, or visit Diantha's blog by clicking this link [fencerowgallery](#).

April Social Event: Potluck

On Friday, April 24th all members are invited to a potluck social event to be held at Juliet Bender and Charlie Goldsmith's home from 6:00 - 8:30 pm. All members and their families are invited to attend. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share. The evening's program will include presentations by WCPCA members who have recently travelled to places that have a history of restricted travel, including Cuba, Myanmar (Burma), and Tibet. Come out to share good food, conversation and see pictures and hear stories of faraway places! Please see the Member Directory for the address.

New Fundraising Committee

By Gary Cornelius, South Africa 2012-2013

One of the most significant things West Cascades Peace Corps Association does is to raise funds to support projects of Oregon Peace Corps Volunteers in their countries of service through the Peace Corps Partnership Program. This is how WCPCA locates projects like Chelsea Mackin's Women's Biodiversity Seminar in Panama and Diantha Hull's sewing project in Tanzania (*learn more about Diantha's project on the Facebook page and in May's newsletter*).

Some of our funds come from the interest created by an endowment, the Beryl Brinkman Memorial Fund, started many years ago by longtime WCPCA member Beryl Brinkman, who has passed away but left us with this legacy.

Thinking of creative ways to raise additional money is an ongoing job and we're looking for a couple of energetic people to assist the board in this effort. We've sold t-shirts and calendars and recently sponsored a movie showing of the Posh Corps film that brought in over \$100. We get the occasional donation. But what more can we do?

Several board members recently formed a board committee to explore ways to increase fundraising. The group met on Friday, March 27th at the Bier Stein to discuss ideas and we are looking for other WCPCA members to join us. Do you have relevant experience, or just energy to put toward a good cause? Maybe you would like to just sit and help us brainstorm ideas while stories of service.

If you're interested or have questions, contact WCPCA Board President Julia Harvey or Board Secretary Gary Cornelius.



WCPCA Board members Wayne, Denise, Gary, Patty, Julia and Laurette (not pictured) met at Bier Stein to talk fundraising.



May Book Club

The Book Club meeting in May will be from 6:30 - 8:30 pm on Wednesday, May 13th at the home of Patty MacAfee. Please email Patty at patjpatj@hotmail.com for the new address. All are welcome to attend and asked to bring a snack to share. The book for May is *Festival for Three Thousand Maidens* by Richard Wiley, a Pen/Faulkner award winner for his first novel, *Soldiers in Hiding*. Unlike other book club readings, this book is fiction and takes place in the 60s with Bobby Comstock as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Korea. He's an unlikely volunteer lost in a world he has never made.



Peace Corps Week Recap

by Laurette Garner, Madagascar 2004-2006

During Peace Corps Week, March 1-7, WCPCA members participated in here events.

The first event was a social on on Sunday, March 1st at Roaring Rapids Pizza where about 20 RPCVs and their families came out in the afternoon to share some pizza and cake from Sweet Life. It was a great chance to socialize and get to know each other in a family-friendly environment.



The second event was a Story Slam on Tuesday, March 3 held in Willamette Hall on campus. The Story Slam was a success! RPCVs who came out to share a story of their service in 5 minutes or less included:

Nicolette Ulrich, Senegal 2011-2013; Denise Silfee, Thailand 2011-2013; Roger Brubaker, Thailand 2011-2013; Maggie Mitteis, Ukraine 2012-2014; Cary Fontana, Mali 2010-2012; Pravin Mallavaram, Fiji 2005-2008; and Alex Russel, Ecuador 2012-2014.



Each RPCV told a fascinating and funny story about a Host Country Hero, the theme for the nationally recognized Peace Corps Week. All of the UO students who came had great questions and laughed at each story in all the right spots.

The service project on Saturday, March 7th went really well. Nine undergraduates and four RPCVs (Gary Cornelius, Cary Fontana, Patty MacAffee and myself) came to help prepare the Bauman Family Tree Farm for Educational programs for middle school students that start in the spring. We helped spread gravel and wood chips for trails, pruned some trees and weeded some areas. We also got a tour of the farm and learned interesting things about trees and tree farming in Oregon. For more info visit foreststodayandforever.org. They are always looking for help and more volunteers.



Julie Olson, WCPCA Member, Publishes Book About Peace Corps Service in Turkey

This past February, WCPCA member Julie Olson published a book with Katharine Valentino about her and her husband's Peace Corps service in Turkey from 1964-1966. The book is called *To Make a Difference: A Peace Corps Memoir* and is available in paperback on Amazon for \$11.99. We asked Julie a few questions about the process of publishing her story, and here are her responses:

What inspired you to write your story? On the 50th anniversary of JFK's assassination I was inspired to transcribe my handwritten journals of our Peace Corps experience in Turkey. Gary, my husband, and I were students at the University of Oregon. Gary was graduating and picked up a Peace Corps flyer on campus. A year after JFK died we joined. A letter from Sargent Shriver said, "We believe you are one of a small group that can do the job that must be done." Easier said than done. Our 35-mm slides from the experience are in the John F. Kennedy Library.

What was the experience of writing about and reflecting on your service in Turkey? Writing this book has been an arduous task ...the transcribing and editing. I returned home feeling that I was a better American and in more appreciation of what that means to me.

A favorite story from your experience: "A Shepherd's Crush - October 1965." A Derekoy shepherd, old and half-witted was telling his wife, "Julie is beautiful. I think that I will take her for my second wife and then she will take me to America."

He was probably just goading his wife, and not being too bright, he kept right on throughout the day. Finally, his wife became sick and tired of hearing her husband go on and on about how Julie was going to take him to America. She let him have it with both barrels, bellowing, "What does Julie want with an old man like you? Why would she take you to America?"

All the villagers were angry with the old man. They told him, "It's disgraceful to be talking like this about OUR Julie." One the village matriarchs shrieked, "Don't worry. I am going to stone him tomorrow, so don't do a thing." She did not, but I believed she could have; she was quite a fighter.

I felt sorry for the poor old guy. Public opinion was certainly against him.

Life was never dull in Derekoy.

Suggestions for PCVs wanting to tell their story: Keep a diary!

Check out Julie's book at the [Amazon page here](#).

Thank you for reading! We are open to newsletter feedback and welcome your newsletter ideas and contributions! Please email newsletter editor Denise Silfee at denise.silfee@gmail.com with your input by mid-month!

Also, check out the [RPCV Eugene: West Cascades Peace Corps Association](#) Facebook page! You don't need to be a member of Facebook to view updates and photos!