



ReConnections

A monthly newsletter of the West Cascades Peace Corps Association

www.westcascadepca.org

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For the Calendar...

Fri. May 8: Pub Night at **First National Taphouse** (51 W. Boradway, Eug.). Please come down early for Happy Hour at **4:30 pm** and **plan to stay late!**

Sun. May 10: **First kickball game at Tugman Park** in Eugene! Come cheer on the WCPCA team... and maybe be a pinch-kicker! (Time TBD.)

Wed. May 13: **Book Club at Patty MacAfee's home** from 6 - 8:30 pm. [See pg. 2 for details]

Tues. May 26: **Send-Off Party at Many Nations Longhouse on Campus.** [See pg. 2 for details]

Fri. May 29: Pub Night at **The Pint Pot** (195 E. 17th Ave., Eug.). Come down for Happy Hour at **4:30 pm** and **plan to stay late!**

June Preview:

Sun. June 7: **Day at the Farm!** [see pg. 3 for details]



Spring Potluck, April 24th

by Juliet Bender, Mexico 2009-2012

On April 24th, we held our latest potluck at the home of Juliet Bender and Charles Goldsmith.

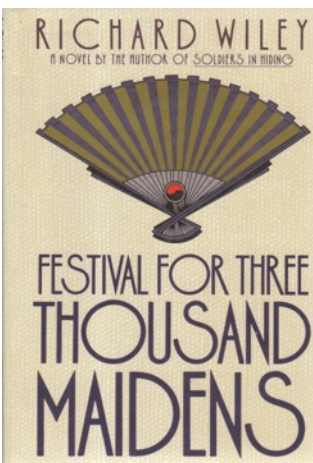
After enjoying each others' company and food, we listened to the program organized by Wayne Thompson. WCPCA members, who had recently traveled to Myanmar, India/Nepal and Cuba, spoke about their experiences. Jeem Peterson and Deb Jones showed pictures of their trip to Myanmar, Bob Watada discussed his trip to India/Nepal, and Wayne and Rolly Thompson presented photos of their journey to Cuba. Members in attendance had the opportunity to learn more about these off-the-beaten-track countries.

Thanks for sharing these fascinating experiences with us!

May Book Club: *Festival for Three Thousand Maidens* by Richard Wiley

On Wednesday, May 13 book club will be held at Patty MacAfee's home from 6 - 8:30 pm. All are welcome to attend and please bring a snack to share. You can find Patty's address in the membership directory, or email her at patjpatj@hotmail.com.

The chosen book 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 60's with Bobby Comstock as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Korea. This coming-of-age novel stations Comstock in rural Korea to teach English at a middle school. Comstock's adjustment to Korean life, his loneliness, and his coming to terms with his own haphazard personality are presented with a faint overlay of philosophy in an attempt to



On the Horizon: Upcoming Activities & Events



WCPCA members and newly nominated soon-to-be Volunteers at the 2014 Send-Off Party.

Annual Send-Off Party: Tuesday, May 26

It's that time of year for the annual Send-Off Party to welcome newly nominated Volunteers into the Peace Corps community before they begin their service. The event will be held on Tuesday, May 26th at Many Nations Longhouse on the UO campus from 6 - 8 pm. All WCPCA members are invited to share in dinner and socialization with soon-to-be Volunteers.

This year, due to the new Peace Corps application process, applicants at all stages of the process will be invited. Some applicants will have received their official nomination letters and country assignments, while others may be still awaiting. In light of this, WCPCA will be putting together a slideshow of different Volunteer experiences to show applicants what they may experience and where they may go. In order to put together this slideshow, WCPCA is asking members to contribute a few photographs of their own service showing where they lived, how they ate, who they spent their time with, what they did for fun and for work, and anything else they choose to share.

Photographs can be emailed to Denise Silfee at denise.silfee@gmail.com. If you do not have digital photos, but would like to contribute, Denise can scan your photos and return them to you, along with the digital files for preservation. Please contact Denise to make arrangements.



June 7th Day at the Farm: Family-Friendly Social Event at Berggren Demonstration Farm

by Nicolette Ulrich, Senegal 2011-2013

Nicolette is currently living and working on the Berggren Demonstration Farm while she pursues her graduate degree at UO (see Nicolette feeding baby goats in the picture at left). She is also the WCPCA membership chair. Please contact Nicolette at nicoletteulrich@gmail.com with questions.

The Berggren Demonstration Farm is a 30-acre working farm on the lower McKenzie River near Walterville, Oregon. Our mission is to promote the connections between healthy farms and clean ager by employing ecologically appropriate farming practices, educating young and beginning farmers, and partnering with our community to support a strong local food system. The farm is managed by Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development, a regional nonprofit organization that helps solve community problems by bringing partners together to accomplish conservation and community development projects.

The farm is located at the Berggren Watershed Conservation Area, a 92-acre property owned by the McKenzie River Trust. We have a wide range of animals on the farm, including goats, sheep, rabbits, ducks, chickens and turkeys. On Sunday, June 7th, we invite the WCPCA to come out and spend a day on the farm to enjoy the scenery and interact with the animals. You are invited to bring a picnic lunch and blankets. Please wear closed-toe shoes. We invite you to bring the whole family, but please, no pets. We will start the day with a short tour of the farm and then a leisurely lunch. Farm will be open for WCPCA members from 11 am - 2 pm.

Kickball is starting!

Come out to support the WCPCA kickball team on Sunday nights beginning May 10th at Tugman Park in Eugene. Hang out, cheer on the team, and maybe get recruited to play when the team is down a player!

The time for the first game is still to be determined.

Volunteers Needed!

UO Peace Corps rep Laurette Garner needs volunteers for the ASUO Spring Street Fair Wednesday -Friday, May 6th - 8th. Shifts will be from 10-1 pm and 1 pm-4 pm for each day. Laurette needs two RPCVs for each shift.

To sign up, please visit the Doodle poll link to sign up.

[Street Fair Sign-ups](#)

Please contact Laurette at pcorps@uoregon.edu with questions.

This is a great event! Thank you to all members who participate!

(More) April Updates: Past Activities

Top right: Gary Cornelius, Wayne Thomson, Rolly Thompson, Deb Jones and Julia Harvey after a job well done.

Bottom right: Attendees between floors at the Hult Center.

Chef's Night Out

WCPCA continues to be one of the few organizations permitted to volunteer for and attend the annual Chef's Night Out fundraiser held at the Hult Center and benefiting FOOD For Lane County. The event brings out hundreds of the Eugene area's best chefs and culinary artists to offer tastes and compete for the coveted "Best Bite" awards. Local breweries and wineries are also on hand for sampling. Tickets to the event cost between \$65 - \$90, but a perk of volunteering is free entrance.

As tear-down volunteers, WCPCA members showed up early on Tuesday, April 7th and spent about an hour sampling food and beverages from all of the vendors set up on each floor of the Hult Center. All in all it was a great night for a great cause!

Thank you to members and their friends who came out for the event this year, and keep in mind to sign up in 2016!



Dengue in the Classroom

By Julia Harvey, Tonga 1990-1993

This past April 7th, Denise Silfee (Thailand 2011-2013) shared her experience at the 2nd annual Dengue Fever Day in my classroom at South Eugene High School.

The lesson was a complete success. Students raved about her presentation. They described it as an interwoven story that drew them in and held their attention. Students learned about the Peace Corps and Thailand as well as Dengue Fever.

Students listened to how Dengue Fever spreads and ways to reduce the spread. They were captivated as Denise detailed her ordeal with Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever. And finally they were humbled to hear firsthand of a tropical disease that we are fortunate to not be exposed to on a daily basis.

Thank you, Denise! I look forward to next year's Dengue Day.

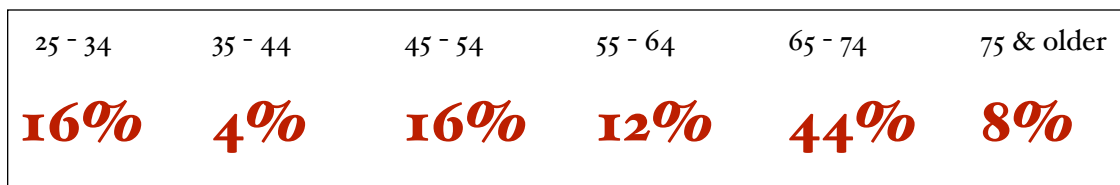
Organizational News

Results: 2015 Member Survey

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2015 Member Survey! The last Member Survey was conducted in August of 2013. Answers to the 5 questions on this year’s survey help Board members new and experienced to reassess WCPCA activities in order to make the organization one that continues to serve its broad membership base. Regular surveys are useful because membership fluctuates year to year, especially among college-age RPCVs.

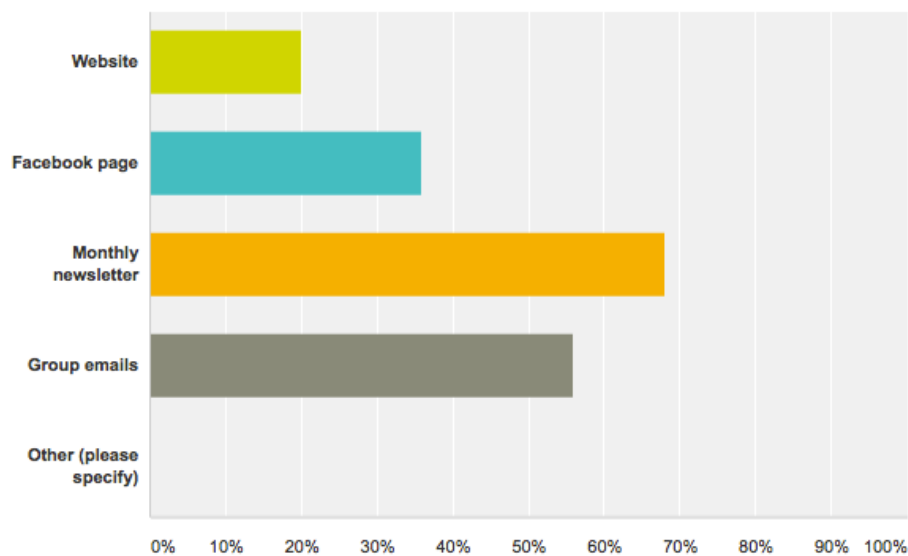
Twenty-six individuals responded to this year’s survey. Some of the information gained is reflected here.

Average Age of WCPCA Members Responding to Survey



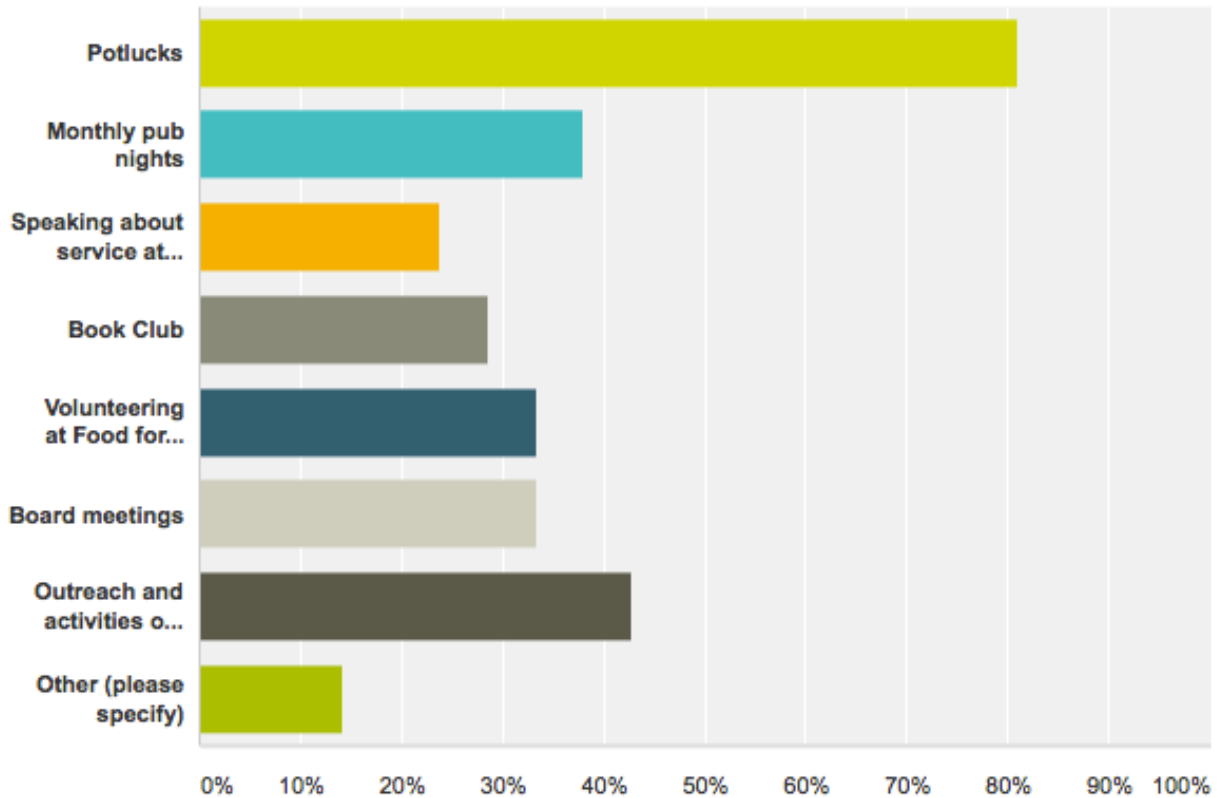
Average age of participants tends to reflect age-ranges when individuals have the most time to participate.

Preferred Method of Receiving Updates



The monthly newsletter continues to be the preferred method for receiving organizational updates, with group emails coming in second. The Facebook page is third, and reflects the fact that many members do not use Facebook. The website is the least preferred for reasons the Board will discuss to determine.

WCPCA Activities Members Currently Participate In



Responses of “Other” included written in responses of “I have not begun participating yet”, “Annual Regional Campouts”, and “Rotary for PC’s Third Goal”.

New or Revitalized Activities of Interest to Members

Responses presented here represent the top 8, receiving 20% votes or more.

Activities that received the fewest responses included Attending Regional RPCV Events & Meetings (12%), Other (8%), Writers’ Group (4%), and Leadership: Coordinating New Activities (4%).

Responses of “Other” included “Partnering with a Rotary Club on service projects”.

- 41%**..... More diverse social events
- 37%**..... Mentoring new RPCVs for career/reintegration
- 37%**..... Cooking club
- 33%**..... More diverse service opportunities
- 33%**..... Outdoor activities: hiking, golf, etc.
- 33%**..... Hosting international students for holidays, etc.
- 29%**..... More community events where attendees pay for tickets or services
- 20%**..... Fundraising

WCPCA Intern

WCPCA was recently contacted by Jesse Gordon who currently works and resides in Eugene and is interested in applying for the Peace Corps. He is hoping to help WCPCA out with tasks as a way to gain experience and better acquaint himself with Peace Corps.

Jesse's first assignment is to begin compiling information for a more comprehensive database of RPCV professional sectors, possibly to be integrated with the membership directory in the future. The idea behind this database is to make it easier to connect new RPCVs with current WCPCA mentors in career fields or with professional experience of interest for mentoring purposes and for better informing members of events related to their current fields and for recruiting appropriate volunteers for RPCV events.

Jesse plans to contact members by phone to ask a few questions. Members can opt out of participating, but we are hoping to make better connections in our RPCV association. Please expect a phone call/message in the coming weeks.

Funded Project



Notes from the Field: PC Tanzania Diantha Hull's Sewing Project

WCPCA recently voted to provide funding for a sewing project in Tanzania. Diantha Hull (pictured at left) is a current PCV from OR.

Diantha described her project as follows:

This project will offer instruction in the basic life skill of sewing by hand. Many students attend school in ripped and torn clothing due to poverty and lack of resources in the community. These garments can cause low self-esteem to the extent that some students avoid going to school altogether. The funds will provide materials to conduct four courses for 6th and 7th grade girls at the elementary school in the village and four courses for women from the same area.

Up to 15 participants may enroll in each session for a period of 10 weeks. Courses will be taught by community members with assistance from the Volunteer. These community members will also make up the project committee which will oversee all classes. All individuals will receive guidance in the basics of hand sewing while working to construct a cloth bag with strap. The classes were requested by members of the community who observed the

Volunteer doing simple embroidery while waiting for officials to convene for scheduled meetings, and after observations of the state of disrepair of students clothing.

Check out Diantha's blog to read more about her experiences in Tanzania: [Diantha's Blog](#)

Last Minute News...

Buy a Book and Support a Project

by Josette Green, Costa Rica 2007-2008

Reading about the experiences of other RPCVs is a hoot. The book club gets to enjoy these various experiences with each book read and each meeting. Now these books are available to you. The WCPCV book club is selling the books they've read over time and for \$5 each you can enjoy a good book... and support Peace Corps projects at the same time!

Book club members are donating these books, which means that your \$5 per book will go to supporting Peace Corps projects out in the world. The Send-Off party on May 26 is your next opportunity to take a journey to Tunisia, Korea, Ecuador, Panama, Cameroon and other places through purchasing a book by a Peace Corps author. Most of these books had to be special ordered and are not typically found at the library. You get to simply walk up to a table, pay \$5 and *voila* - a new journey is to unfold in your life. By purchasing a book, it's a win-win for all. WCPCV receives more money to support more PC projects and you get to enjoy a new world adventure!

Know Your Board!

Board President: Julia Harvey, Tonga 1990-1993

Vice President: Juliet Bender, Mexico 2009-2012

Treasurer: Patty MacAfee, Cameroon 1989-1991

Secretary: Gary Cornelius, South Africa 2012-2013

Membership Chair: Nicolette Ulrich, Senegal 2011-2013

Members at large:

Wayne Thompson, Peru 1964-1966

James Cloutier, Kenya 1964-1966

Denise Silfee, Thailand 2011-2013

Laurette Garner (campus rep), Madagascar 2004-2006

The next Board meeting will be **Thursday, July 2nd from 6 - 8**

pm at New Day Bakery. All WCPCA members are welcome to

attend. You may submit agenda items to the Board president at

juliaannamariebarvey@gmail.com.

A Note About Pub Nights

Thank you to all WCPCA members and other RPCVs and future PCVs for attending Pub Nights! The last Pub Night on Friday, April 17th did not go as planned when members tried to go to Cornucopia only to find it extremely crowded with a long wait. Pub Nights are great times to socialize, but a reminder that they are loosely planned and that individuals are not always free to attend. Please don't stop attending! The Facebook page is a great place to find information and connect with others planning to attend. And you do not even have to be a member on Facebook to view the page! Thanks for being flexible, and we hope to continue seeing new faces!