



# ReConnections

A monthly newsletter of the West Cascades Peace Corps Association

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

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## For the Calendar...

**Thurs. July 2: Board meeting**  
at New Day Bakery on Blair,  
6 pm - 8 pm. All are  
welcome.

**Fri. July 10 - Sun. July 12:**  
**Eugene Country Fair!**  
Volunteers are needed to  
help out with WCPA booth.  
*See sidebar on p.3 for  
details!*

**Sun. July 12: Potluck picnic**  
**at Fox Hollow Farm & Fiber.**  
*See sidebar on p.2 for  
details!*

**Wed. July 22 - Sun. July 26:**  
**Lane County Fair!** *See p.4  
for how to get involved!*

## Coming up in August...

**Sun. Aug. 9: Potluck picnic**  
at Bob & Rosa Watada's  
home.

**Thurs. Aug. 13 - Sun. Aug.  
16: Regional campout.** *See  
p.7 for details.*



## An Afternoon on the Farm

WCPA members and friends visited Berggren Demonstration Farm, where fellow member and Senegal RPCV Nicolette Ulrich (pictured on the right) lives and works, to learn about the farm's initiatives and to enjoy a picnic lunch.

The farm's mission is to promote the connections between healthy farms and clean agriculture by employing ecologically appropriate farming practices, educating young and beginning farmers, and partnering with the 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

## Potluck at Fox Hollow Farm & Fiber

All members and families are invited to a potluck on **Sunday, July 12 around 2 pm** at the home of Wayne & Rolly Thompson (Peru 1964-1966). Wayne & Rolly live at the beautiful **Fox Hollow Farm and Fiber**, located at 30781 Fox Hollow Road in Eugene. Everyone is asked to bring a salad, dessert or side dish to share. Brats will be served at 3 pm.

If you are riding a bike to the party, ride out Fox Hollow Road to Bill's bench and you have arrived. If you are climbing Spencers Butte first, allow yourself a couple hours as the festivities begin around 2 pm.

Plan for a relaxing afternoon getting to know the llama, alpacas, sheep and dogs who also live on the farm. There is plenty of open space for kids to play and romp in the woods... this is a great opportunity for the whole family!

If you have any questions, please contact Wayne at [cwt1542@gmail.com](mailto:cwt1542@gmail.com).



The alpacas are waiting!

accomplish conservation and community development projects.

Thank you to all members who came out to enjoy a relaxing afternoon on the farm. If you were unable to make it but would like to learn more about Berggren Demonstration Farm, visit their [website](#) or their [Facebook page](#).



## The Ballunteers' Season Comes to a Bittersweet End... sort of

by Cary Fontana, Mali

The Ballunteers' first kickball season went out like a Viking funeral pyre: virtuous, but futile. We ended our mighty campaign 0-5, but refused to cower and lick our wounds even when the score line was a massacre. The Ballunteers' inaugural season will only prepare us better for our assault on the league next year. We've learned that boots can actually be an effective shoe choice in kickball, that kickball times conflict with "Game of Thrones", and that pegging our opponents any chance we get at close range makes us feel vindicated, even when unnecessary.

While we may have learned a few things from this season, we are less than 10 months 11 days and 18 hours from the kickoff of the 2016 season. That means training must begin immediately. Our conditioning will focus on body and mind to ensure we at least come close to winning one game. We shall continue our team bonding exercises at Eugene's local watering holes. The Ballunteers' chief of medicine, Denise Silfee, has insisted our biceps need work, and the only suitable training is an Edward Scissorhands night with the finest 40s Eugene has to offer. We can sharpen our minds with clever answers in Cards Against Humanity. And we can establish a solid cardiovascular baseline walking to pick up refills of beer rather than driving. We have much work to do, Ballunteers! As Peace Corps said to us, "Life is calling, will you answer?" Yes, I think we will.



From left to right: Rep John Garamendi with Berhane Daba, winner of the 2015 Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award; Posh Corps creator Alan Toth; reciting the new Peace Corps pledge.

## Report: Peace Corps Connect

by Gary Cornelius, *South Africa 2012-2013*

What do you have when you put 500 returned Peace Corps Volunteers in the same room? Answer: A lot of stories! In fact, this year's Peace Corps Connect convention in Berkeley, CA last month had as its official slogan, "The Stories We'll Tell". At least two WCPCA members, Vince Ceccacci (Columbia 1977-1978) and myself, represented our group at the event held at the University of California campus. Sure enough, we all told stories and listened to the stories of others.

The agenda for the two-day gathering included session topics ranging from corporate leadership to writing a memoir to climate change and the Peace Corps' role in the Ebola crisis in Africa. One, a presentation about First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let Girls Learn" initiative, was on of the most interesting and poignant. Mrs. Obama came to Peace Corps and asked the agency to partner with the Obama administration to implement the program in 11 countries "through empowering leaders, working hand in hand with communities, and increasing the impacts of PCVs." We learned there are 62 million girls worldwide that lack education opportunities, and that there are three new Peace Corps countries: Kosovo, Myanmar, and East Timor.

One of the speakers at the closing session was PC Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet, who let us know that applications from those over 50 years old are up 39% over the last year, and that the recently refined application process has led to a record number of applications. PC is on track to receive 30,000 application this year, she reported, though the agency budgeted for only 4,000 new Volunteers, making for lots of competition for some PC placements. A Peruvian environmental project, for example, had 800 applications for 150 positions.

The highlight of the closing ceremony, however, was the new 'Peace Corps Pledge' written by Third Goal staff member Malia Egger at DC headquarters. It will be recited at swearing-in ceremonies worldwide, in addition to the traditional oath, which is required by federal law.

*(Read the new pledge at the end of this month's newsletter!)*

## Lane County Fair Project Proposals: Volunteers will be needed!

by Maggie Mitteis, Ukraine 2012 - 2014

Wanted: RPCVs who enjoy the fair, fun, and a summer art project!

A few RPCVs are working on putting together a booth for the Lane County Fair taking place July 22 - July 26. The booth will be in the "Discovery Park" section of the fair, where kids can participate in hands-on activities. Pending Board approval, WCPCA will be the sponsor for the booth and volunteers will work with the community— specifically kids— to paint a world map mural, just like the one you may have painted during your Peace Corps service. The mural will be painted on panels that we hope to donate and install somewhere in Eugene or Springfield— location to be determined.

In the process of creating this large, colorful representation of our world, we hope to also teach the local youth about Peace Corps, service, and geography. Along with the painting project, we will also offer the opportunity to write a postcard to Volunteers currently in service. Some PCVs have already been identified, but if you know of someone currently in service who might be interested, please let us know how to contact them.

Volunteers at the booth will receive free admission to the fair for the day they volunteer and the opportunity to purchase a variety of deep-fried goodies. The number of volunteers and tickets per day is seven. The early shifts (11 am - 3 pm) will be focused on postcard writing, while the painting will be reserved for the early evening, between 3 pm - 8 pm. Please contact us to sign up for a day if you would like to help out! We need the most volunteers in the evenings for painting assistance. Please bring your own smock (or paint-friendly clothes).

Questions? Suggestions? Down with volunteering and want to sign up? Contact Maggie Mitteis at [mmitteis87@gmail.com](mailto:mmitteis87@gmail.com) or by calling 308-383-7723.

If you would like to reminisce about the [World Map Mural project](#), check out the website by clicking on the yellow link.

## Volunteer Opportunities!

Volunteers are needed for the WCPCA booth at the **Eugene Country Fair**. Please contact WCPCA member [James Peterson](#) for more information or to sign up for shifts.



The **Welcome Host Family Program** is a free, short-term hospitality program run by the Friendship Foundation for International Students for new UO international students. Local families and individuals host new international students for a few days at the beginning of each term (except summer), at no cost to the student. Home stay dates for fall are **September 12 - 16**. If you would like to host an international student please fill out the online [application](#).

For more information about the program, please visit the online [brochure](#) or international student advisor [Robyn L. Carter](#) by email or at 541-346-1682.



John Moriarty dresses up like broccoli with his veggie-themed staff. Photo from the School Garden Project Facebook page.

## RPCVs in the Community: John Moriarty, ED of School Garden Project

by Collin Director, WCPCA intern and future PCV hopeful

*Collin is a new WCPCA intern who is interviewing RPCVs in Lane County who may not be part of WCPCA but who give back to their communities in significant ways in order to learn more about how Peace Corps service often becomes a life of service.*

*For his first interview, he spoke with John Moriarty, the Executive Director of the School Garden Project, a local nonprofit that supports gardens at Lane County schools. This is an excerpt of the interview. If you would like to read the entire interview, it will be available upon request. Email Denise Silfee to request it.*

**Collin:** Let's start with Peace Corps... Where/when did you serve? What was your assignment?

**John:** Peace Corps came from DC to restart a program in Chile. In my case they took a look at my résumé and decided to place me in something called CODEF, which is

the Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Flora y Fauna. It was this national level assignment in Chile and they thought it would be a good fit because I was a Natural Resources / Forestry Undergrad. I got there in 1991. I was essentially Assistant Director of the Forestry Board, and the last thing I did in the country was put on a huge conference for the native landowners—small and medium sized native forest landowners. The big issue was the clearing of native forests for chip production and replacing it with either equal or pine plantations. We were trying to build an understanding of the intrinsic value of the native forests but also the economic value of the native hardwoods, which didn't have a big market.

**Collin:** What were some challenges of your Peace Corps service?

**John:** For me once I got that document (Agenda 21), I ended up playing a role in Chilean negotiations. They invited me to Rio as a member of their team and they just went for helping me learn Spanish. And they kept throwing me into things that were incredibly stressful but incredibly huge growth opportunities. They had me sit on round table panels, and this was in the first few months! They sent me to Ecuador to represent Chile for a Native Forest Conference with all Latin American countries. Walking off the plane and being the 'gringo' and this conference is in Spanish, to have all these people from Nicaragua, El Salvador, all these places where they are like: This is the Chilean representative? Someone from 'Gringo-landia'? Ronald Reagan is fighting the Contras [a label given to various rebel groups who were active from 1979 to the early 1990s], and this is all happening at this time, so it was pretty intense experience.

**Collin:** What made you so interested in working for School Garden Project, and what keeps you there?

**John:** I was starting to realize this intervention with kids and gardening education is tremendously strategic. At [first] I wasn't an expert on obesity issues, food equity issues, you know that was kind of out of my range of what I had been looking at. And then was just like, "Whoa! Ya know, this is a pretty low-cost, low-resource-intensive intervention that has this tremendous potential to lift some of these issues." I began to start to see it as a strategic move to address a lot of issues—education issues, there are such few opportunities for kids to be outside the classroom; activity issues, they're actually learning how to garden which a lot of them have no concept of. The sustainability side of growing our own food and introducing them to that; I mean we're not making farmers out of these kids—we work with elementary school kids for 10 hours a year, but we're getting their hands in the dirt. They're planting plants, they're learning, they're watering, and then we're teaching them standards-based science lessons, outside, again in a way that many of them grasp subjects that they can't inside. And then they eat and they taste everything they grow and are introduced to vegetables. So the closer I got, I continued to realize that this has a lot of potential. Not just as an educational program, as a nutrition program, and as a health intervention.



A School Garden Project helper and a student get their hands dirty. Photo from the School Garden Project Facebook page.

**Collin:** How can RPCVs get involved in the School Garden Project or support the organization?

**John:** I think there are all sorts of possibilities. From summer garden maintenance to adopting a particular garden and coming out for an hour or two a week to, for those who are interested and available, teaching at the school. We have that couple hours a week during the school year that if they could fit into their schedule that would be great. It would be a great connection I think that potentially from an event side being a volunteer group to help put on fundraising events and something like that. We've avoided large events because they're so time-and-people intensive for our board and that sort of thing.

**Collin:** Share a good memory of the School Garden Project's impact.

**John:** I get stories all of the time. This second grader came back the other day and tried cauliflower for the first time and said, "You know what's awesome about today? I love cauliflower!" That is profound.

*To learn more about the School Garden Project, check out their [website](#) and [Facebook page](#)!*

## Regional Campout at Beacon Rock State Park

The Columbia River Peace Corps Association is organizing a Regional Campout for all RPCV groups in the Pacific Northwest at Beacon Rock State Park in Washington on August 13 - 16. The price is \$18.00 per person flat rate (no matter how many nights you stay). Kids 14 and under camp free and there is no charge for parking.

The park is right on the Columbia Gorge. You can enjoy the view from the top of Beacon Rock, visit the fish ladders or just hang out at camp and visit. With room for up to 200 people, this site has plenty of space for games, many tents and small RVs (no hook ups). The quarterly regional group leaders meeting on Saturday afternoon. Saturday the 15th CRPCA will be providing dinner to all campers, and would love it if any local non-campers came out to the park to join in! Day use fee to be paid at the gate. Sunday morning's breakfast is hosted by the 2016 coordinating group.

If you are interested, please visit the website for the [Columbia River PCA](#) and go to the "checkout" link to register. Please use the "extrta" button to indicate how many nights you will be there. This does not change the price of \$18/person for the whole weekend! We hope to see you there!

### 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, Madagascar 2004-2006

The next Board meeting will be **Thursday, July 2nd from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at New Day Bakery**. All WCPCA members are welcome to attend. You may submit agenda items to the Board president at [juliaannamarieharvey@gmail.com](mailto:juliaannamarieharvey@gmail.com).

### The New Peace Corps Pledge

*"I (name) promise to serve alongside the people of (country). I promise to share my culture with an open heart and open mind. I promise to foster understanding of the people of (country) with creativity, cultural sensitivity and respect. I will face the challenges of service with patience, humility, and determination. I will embrace the mission of world peace and friendship for as long as I serve, and beyond. In the proud tradition of Peace Corps' legacy, and in the spirit of the Peace Corps community—past, present and future—I am a Peace Corps Volunteer."*