

The Peace Corps 50 Celebration in Eugene Organized by WCPCA, 2011

The 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps was celebrated in several ways and on several occasions in Lane County throughout 2011. Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy initiated the celebrations by declaring March 1st as "Peace Corps Day 50 in Eugene." On that day WCPCA organized a day of celebration with two events in Eugene, a noon rally and a musical evening. WCPCA members made presentations to several local organizations throughout the year. In the spring the University of Oregon, in cooperation with the campus based Peace Corps recruiter, featured a display in the entry of the Knight Library to highlight the work of local returned Peace Corps volunteers. Local media publicized the Peace Corps' mission and work with a radio interview and several articles and editorials. Below you'll find details of these activities and a listing of the publications.

Noon rally in Eugene on March 1st:

A festive noon rally on the Kesey Plaza in downtown Eugene drew about a hundred celebrants. Denny Guehler (the voice of the Oregon Country Fair for 25 years) was the MC and Samba Ja provided a musical background.

Maggie Keenan (Philippines, 1987-90) welcomed the crowd and reflected on the third goal of Peace Corps. Roger Hamilton (Ghana, 1961-62) [shared his reflections](#) on serving in the first ever Peace Corps group. Tom English (Nepal, 1966-69) gave a tribute to Sargent Shriver. Justin Overdevest (Dominican Republic, 2000-04; Peru, 2004-06; and UO Peace Corps Recruiter) commented on the special connection between UO and Peace Corps. Cassady Walters (Mali, 2008-10) was joined by Aissitan Traoré, a UO student from Mali. Cassady spoke about her Peace Corps service in Bambara and Aissitan translated her remarks into English. Cleven Mmari, who is the director of the UO Information Technology Services for the Division of Student Affairs, and hails from Tanzania, spoke about the impact of PCVs in Tanzania and around the world. David Piercy (Iran, 1964-66) read the City of Eugene's Proclamation for Peace Corps 50 in Eugene.

The program was closed by Wayne Thompson (Peru, 1964-66) who spoke about the Grand Map which was displayed during the rally, and invited the crowd to sing *Happy Birthday* and enjoy cake and other treats courtesy of generous local businesses.

Grand Map:

An added highlight to Peace Corps 50 in Eugene was the return of the Grand Map which was displayed from the second story windows on the side of the old Center Court building in downtown Eugene. Produced at the 1990 National Conference of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers held at the Hilton Conference Center in Eugene, this world map was advertised as the largest ever hand-drawn and hand-painted map. The map is a 30 x 15 foot canvas piece and was created as part of a Biden-Pell grant that helped create a world-wide literacy and cartography campaign in schools in the United States and Peace Corps countries.

The Grand Map left Eugene in the fall of 1990 and did not return until Beryl Brinkman brought it back from the east coast years later. Since Beryl's death, it had stayed dry and safe but in a barn south of Eugene until its appearance on March 1. And now that the Grand Map has resurfaced, it has another show. It will be at the Old World Deli in Corvallis on May 11 for Peace Corps 50 in Corvallis. Who knows, it might even make it to Washington D.C. for the Peace Corps 50 celebrations happening in September.

Special thanks go to Pete Eggspuelher, owner of the Center Court building, and to Hyland Construction. They secured the Grand Map to the building and allowed Brain Davies, a *Register-Guard* photographer, access to take a photo of the event.



Tee shirt:

WCPA member, James Cloutier, designed a tee shirt to commemorate the Peace Corps' 50th anniversary. The shirts were unveiled at the rally and sold out quickly.



Musical evening:

The celebration of Peace Corps 50 in Eugene continued in the evening of March 1st with music, food, and fun at Cozmic Pizza. Music by Casera began at 7 p.m. and included musicians from Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Eugene. The instruments and songs had an Andean flavor. The second band, Macaco Velho, played Brazilian music. Special thanks go to John Hicks who made all the musical arrangements for the evening.

Media coverage:

We were thrilled with press coverage of our March 1st events, starting with a 4-page color supplement in the February 17 issue of the *Eugene Weekly*, featuring profiles of 20 RPCVs in our community. WCPCA board member, Maggie Keenan, produced the supplement with help from the *Eugene Weekly*'s Art Director, Todd Cooper, and thanks to generous support from Anita and Art Johnson.

A KEZI-TV camera crew and photographer Brian Davies from *The Register-Guard* attended the noon rally. Brian donned a hard hat and climbed up the Hyland building to get a photo of the crowd gathered below on Broadway Plaza:



Another photo by Brian Davies, of Tom English (Nepal, 1966-69), ran on the cover of the March 2 City Region section. Interviews with WCPCA members took place on KEZI-TV, March 1. *The Register-Guard* ran editorials on January 22 and February 28, as well as a Guest Viewpoint by George Jeffcott on February 28. *The Register Guard* ran a longer report in the March 6 issue and the *Eugene Magazine* ran a 14-page spread in its Spring 2011 issue. Maggie thanks Dorothy Soper for editing, Andy Behl for marketing, Sue Verner for help with press, and Felicia Kenney for posting everything on the WCPCA website.

Listing of and some links for articles, editorials, and photos pertaining to the Peace Corps' 50th:

Editorial, "[Shriver touched Oregon: Thousands have served in the Peace Corps he founded,](#)" *The Register-Guard*, 1/22/2011

[Eugene Weekly](#), paid supplement, 2/17/2011: Maggie Keenan, "Profiles of 20 local RPCVs"

Editorial, "[Protect the Peace Corps](#)", *The Register-Guard*, 2/28/2011

Guest Viewpoint, George Jeffcott, "[Ask not what you can do - Just celebrate](#)", *The Register-Guard*, 2/28/2011

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy's Proclamation of March 1, 2011 as "Peace Corps Day in Eugene"

Roger Hamilton's speech at the noon rally, "The First Peace Corps," March 1, 2011

"[Little by Little: Small steps make a big difference for volunteers and those they help](#)," *The Register-Guard*, 3/6/2011

Eugene Magazine, spring 2011, "The Peace Corps at 50, Local citizens who began their service overseas," Mikael Krummel, <http://www.eugenemagazine.com/spring-2011>

Oregon Quarterly, winter, 2011, "Corps Values, The UO and the state of Oregon have been long and lasting contributors to the international vision of the Peace Corps," Alice Tallmadge, <http://www.oregonquarterly.com/winter2011/winter2011-digital.ht>

[Letter from the Seattle Recruitment Office](#) for the "tremendous job" WPCPA did celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps in Eugene.

Photos from 50th events can be found in our [scrapbook](#).

50th Peace Corps Anniversary Knight Library Exhibit: A Legacy of Peace (April-July 2011), the University of Oregon

In 2011, the Peace Corps marks 50 years of promoting peace and friendship around the world. This historic milestone is an opportunity to honor Peace Corps' past and inspire the next generation of volunteers. This exhibit is a dedication to Peace Corps' history and accomplishments with a focus on what makes the organization run: the volunteers.

Using authentic photos, artifacts, books, and text, this exhibit explores volunteer experiences in each of the five decades and regions in which Peace Corps operates, finds out what returned volunteers have done since their terms of service, and highlights the University of Oregon's proud history of sending alumni abroad.

Justin Overdevest, Peace Corps Recruiter, University of Oregon, 2009-2011

Presentations by WPCPA to Lane County organizations:

Presentations were made to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the U of O, the League of Women Voters of Lane County, the Southtown Rotary, the National Association of Retired Persons, and OASIS.

In summary:

The mission of the West Cascade Peace Corps Association is to fulfill the third goal of the Peace Corps, "to promote a better understanding of other people on the part of the American people." Through the media coverage and events 2011, we pursued this goal and the response indicated that the community heard us.

Maggie Keenan and Wayne Thompson were cochairs for the March 1st celebrations. About 175 people participated in the noon rally and 120 joined us for the evening at Cozmic Pizza. The full board and an

additional 35 WCPA members, representing a third of our membership, took part in organizing and staffing the events of March 1st. Forty-seven Peace Corps host countries were represented by RPCVs and host country citizens. The best represented countries, with 4-6 people each, were Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Ghana, and Tanzania.

The new red, white, and blue Peace Corps 50 tee shirt designed by WCPA member, James Cloutier, was unveiled and sold out at the rally. Thirteen local businesses sponsored the March 1st events with cash or in kind donations. Many thanks are extended by the WCPA board to WCPA members who staffed our events and to our local sponsors. We greatly appreciate the support of community members who joined the celebrations. The names of our volunteers and sponsors are listed below.

The WCPA Board of Directors, 2011

Officers:

President: Dorothy Soper
Vice President: Maggie Keenan
Secretaries: Wendy Nelson and Miriam Aiken
Treasurer: Dale Morse
Communications Coordinator: Felicia Kenney
Ex officio: University of Oregon Peace Corps
Recruiters: Justin Overdeest and Hannah Klausman

Diane Jeffcott
Sarah Klinghammer
Ted Kulingoski
Joyce Leader
Lori Matthew
Dave McJunkin
Mary Meacham
Nancy Meyer
Walt Meyer
Shannon Micheel
Eva Miller
Cleven Mmari
Steve Mustow
Don Nordin
David Piercy
Audrey Squires
Rolly Thompson
Cassady Walters
Aissitan Traoré

Members at large:

Keith Beyer
Nick Bosustow
James Cloutier
Jack Meacham
Wayne Thompson
Bob Watada

Volunteers for the 2011 events:

Linda Ague
Gwen Ayers
Gwen Bailey
Andy Behl
Cathy Beyer
Julie Bosustow
Vern Delk
Dale Dow
Rob Dwan
Amy Ekparian
Nancy English
Tom English
Benj Epstein
Denny Guehler
Roger Hamilton
Joe Hindman
Beth Hunt
George Jeffcott

Corporate sponsors for the 2011 events:

- Adams' Sustainable Table
- Broadway Commerce Building (Pete Eggspueller)
- Cozmic Pizza
- Eugene Brewery
- Eugene Weekly (Art and Anita Johnson)
- Eye Beam
- Hyland Construction
- Imagine Group
- Oveissi and Company
- QSL Print
- Safeway
- Sweet Life Patisserie
- Voodoo Doughnuts

Report prepared by Dorothy Soper
July, 2012

