



YACHASPA

Quechua for “sabiendo” or “knowing”...

Newsletter of Amigos de Bolivia y Perú, Inc.

Amigos Recordados; Amigos Nuevos

Patt Behler
Amigos President

As I think back over the past years of my affiliation with the *Amigos de Bolivia & Peru* organization, I realize that it has given me many opportunities to keep in touch with former PCVs who served in Peru. It has also given me the chance to get to know those who worked in Bolivia and now are still involved with our group. Although I traveled in Bolivia during my PCV days on a lengthy vacation from La Paz, with a side trip to Cochabamba, and then on to Argentina and Chile, I used to think mainly of

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From the Nominating Committee...

Patricia Edmisten, Gerard Maguire and Patt Behler

Queridos amigos y amigas, knowing how much your stint in the Peace Corps in Bolivia or Peru changed your life, re-ordered your values, got you thinking about your place in the world, and the role of the United States, **we ask that you step forward and help keep the dream alive.** What dream do you still harbor for the hurting world whose condition you tried to improve through your Peace Corps service? Perhaps the words of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. will resonate with you: "I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can

have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits."

Amigos de Bolivia & Peru wants to keep that dream alive, especially through its Kantuta Award projects which, with its grants, assists Peace Corps volunteers in the field. To advance that end, and to help us keep in touch with each other, and stay in tune with what's happening in Bolivia and Peru, we need to have Board Officers to keep our organization moving and on the right track.

Right now we need some members who are willing to volunteer to be on the Board, especially in the positions of Treasurer and Membership Coordinator.

These positions can be Board appointed for two years or a member can stand for election to the Board by the general membership for a three year period. Either way is OK.

The Membership Coordinator will have the enjoyment of adding old forgotten P.C. guys and gals to our roster. The Treasurer, well you know the spiel...take in the money, and then write the Kantuta Award checks to benefit worthwhile Peru and Bolivia projects. Will you volunteer? Do it now.. the sooner, the better!!!!

Join us by contacting any of the Board members listed on the next page. We're waiting for you!!

Spring 2006

Volume 17, Issue 1

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Amigos de Bolivia y Peru, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation, affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association. As an affiliate of NPCA, *Amigos* is one of approximately 150 organized groups of returned Peace Corps volunteers, former staff and friends who work together and separately. *Amigos* promotes and supports a variety of activities for the purpose of enhancing cooperation and understanding among the peoples of Bolivia and/or Peru and the peoples of the United States.

Yachaspa, the newsletter of *Amigos de Bolivia y Peru*, is distributed quarterly with the following anticipated deadlines for submitting materials to the editor: Spring Issue-

March 15th; Summer Issue-June 15th; Fall Issue-September 15th; Winter Issue-December 15th.

Articles are welcome and may be submitted to brownr@westminster-mo.edu.

Yachaspa is distributed to members by mail or electronically in .pdf format. Past issues are also available at www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org on the *Amigos* web site .

Amigos adopts new Bylaws

Steve Jacobs,
Amigos Secretary

On January 25, 2006 *Amigos* enacted a new set of Bylaws. This was the first major revision since the organization was founded in 1989 and reflects the current nature of the organization.

A committee consisting of Patt Behler and Bill Sherry initiated the process. Their draft was presented to the Board for review and after considerable debate and discussion; the bylaws took their current form. Criteria for Board membership was extended so that new Board members would not only be representative of the geographic distribution of

membership, but also era of service and would reflect a balance between returned volunteers from Bolivia and Peru.

The new bylaws are available through a link on the *Amigos* webpage at: <http://www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org/AmigosByLaws.pdf>.

Amigos Recordados; Amigos Nuevos (continued from p. 1)

my experiences in Peru. But, now, no more! Since I have been part of *Amigos*, I find myself scouring the news about both Bolivia y Peru, with an interest in each country. I think we, here in the EEUU, from our vantage point, can see that a definite relationship exists between those two countries in South America, as well as with other neighboring countries.

As you have realized from reading past issues of *Yachaspa*, we have now entered into a new phase of supporting Peace Corps programs financially in both countries through Kantuta Award grants. During the times when PC was not represented in these countries, our supportive efforts were directed to other non profit organizations with goals similar to those of our organization. That may happen again, but at this point in time, we want to and ARE supporting actively the multiple efforts among current volunteers in both Peru and Bolivia. Watch for ongoing information about these projects in issues of *Yachaspa*. If you are inclined to add your financial support to Kantuta/Bolivia funds or Kantuta/Peru funds, please feel free to "drop a check in the mail." If you prefer, a check marked for general use in the Kantuta Award fund,

is certainly OK too!

We are always glad to hear from you, either personally, or in an article of general or specific interest that can be published in *Yachaspa*. Don't think that just because it's about "folksy-keeping-in-touch-news," we can't use it. One of our goals is to improve upon communication among those of us in the EEUU. Also, if you belong to a local geographical group (as I do, to the Central MO RPCV group) let us know what's happening. It may give us an idea that we can use in *Amigos*.

The 45th year of the PC is being celebrated during all of 2006, with a national gathering in Washington, DC in September. I've already had a phone call from a member saying, "send information." I advised her to look on the web page (oops! she doesn't have a computer!) but there will soon be publicity available about arrangements that are taking shape as I write. Watch for them! Make reservations and plan to go to DC to be with *Amigos* from far and near....

We welcome Ray Brown as a new Director on our *Amigos* Board. Actually Ray is not new to our group since he's been the star organizer and publisher of our quarterly newsletter. Ray has worked wonders with our format, our content and the timeliness

of its publication. With Ray's expertise, *Amigos* has been identified as an up and coming RPCV group and one that enjoys the benefit of an outstanding newsletter. Thanks, Ray, we're glad to have you!

One last thought...did I mention this before? You see, a few Senior Moments are creeping into my brain these days!....anyway, I am strongly considering giving a GIFT membership (including a *Yachaspa* on-line subscription) to my familia Arequipena in Peru. They have e-mail now and their youngest son reads and writes English well (except that he did call me "Uncle Patti" instead of "Tia", but, so what?) and I'm sure there will be articles and information that they'd like to know of....they are always curious to know "how we are...and have we seen....and where is...?" So, maybe you'll decide to do the same...send a year of *Amigos* to un amigo en el Sur!???

May you join with all of us in helping to make *Amigos* bigger and better in this coming year!

45th Anniversary DVD, Stickers & Bookmarks!!!

This is the 45th Anniversary of Peace Corps and the NPCA has asked groups to help celebrate by hosting their own 45th Anniversary events. Peace Corps has developed an Anniversary Kit to help celebrate with a DVD, sticker, bookmarks and other information to help

out. To get these kits just contact your Regional Recruitment Office. Contact information is available at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/inex.cfm?shell=met.regrec>.

45th
Peace
Corps
Anniversary

"Where are they...?"

One of our PCVs used to visit Hugo Blanco in the provincial jail in Arequipa. Her maiden name was Kathy...something. She was from CT...the last I heard, she had married, moved to Switzerland, and has become a first rate translator.

Who remembers her? Anybody ever visit her in Europe? Get letters from her? If you know, send Patt Behler an e-mail at pabehler@socket.net.



"Care to share...?"

Who has original drawings or paintings or other art work as a result of our time spent in Bolivia or Peru? Could we reproduce photos of these in an upcoming issue of *Yachaspa* to make them available to other members for a donation to Kantuta?

Would any of you be willing to have us develop our own little E-bay party??? We could raise some funds for Kantuta and have fun doing it. Let us know....Ray Brown [brownr@westminster-mo.edu] is always open to suggestions for the newsletter and Gayle Hartmann [gayleh@theriver.com], our *Amigos* Communications Coordinator, will see that they will be presented appropriately.

"A contest...?"

Several years ago, these four RPCV gals had a reunion in Arizona. They haven't changed a bit (?) since 1962-64 when they worked in Arequipa. Can you name them, left to right? The first member sending the correct answer to Patt Behler [pabehler@socket.net] will receive a prize!!!

Really, I'll send you a truly lovely handmade necklace made in the Mercado artesanía in Arequipa. Can you figure out who they are???

Visit to the JFK Museum...anyone remember Joe Grant?

Gloria Levin
Amigos Membership Coordinator

I recently visited Boston and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Museum (the associated library, where the oral histories and artifacts for the Peace Corps collection is

housed, is closed on weekends). One room (#9) was devoted to the Peace Corps but was pretty paltry. However, one of the hanging photos of PCVs showed a tall, fresh-faced, African American male refereeing a baseball game among small Peruvian tykes. It carried the following caption: "Joe

Grant of the Bronx, New York, volunteered as a physical education instructor in Chimbote, a town on the Pacific Coast."

If you knew/know Joe, write me [g-levin@comcast.net] with information.

Update from PC/Peru

Saludos from Lima! As I write this, the summer beach season is coming to an end. In the sierra, the rains started a bit late but have since been abundant. The farmers are happy.

PC/Peru continues at a level of 115 PCV's, working in four program areas (Small Business, Health, Youth Development, and Environmental Education) in eight of the country's 24 departments (Tumbes, Piura, Lambayeque, La Libertad, Cajamarca, Ancash, Lima, and Ica). With the program now almost four years old, we have been assessing what has been working well and less well, and are rewriting our project plans.

The big topic of discussion in Peru is the upcoming elections. The first round will take place on April 9, and the second on either May 7 or 21 unless a candidate receives a majority of the votes in the first round. [Editor's Note: Also see article on p. 9 of this issue for more election details.] The three front-runners are a relatively unknown woman (Lourdes Flores), an anti-American nationalist/populist (Ollanta Humala), and a former president whose previous administration was marked by ineptness and hyperinflation (Alan García). Someone recently told me that the Chinese

phrase "May you live in interesting times!" was meant to be a curse.

The five years of the Toledo administration have been marked by almost amazing macroeconomic success. The economic growth rate (6.7% in 2005) is among the highest in the world. The problem is that the fruits of the growth have been very unevenly distributed. Nearly 52 percent of the population still lives under the poverty level (under \$58 per month), and 19.2% lives in extreme poverty (under \$32 per month). Many people feel marginalized from the economic success, and they are being attracted by rather outlandish campaign promises.

Hopefully the change in government will provide new opportunities for the types of social programs Peace Corps can assist with. There will also be municipal elections in November, which also will provide new blood and new opportunities.

As I write this, I have been busy the past several weeks attending five different in-service training events, in various parts of the country. Ninety percent of our PCVs were present at one or another of these events, in most cases with their counterparts. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to hear first-hand what the PCVs and their Peruvian partners are accomplishing. Frankly, I came away rather

awed. While it's easy to become cynical at some of the "third-world" inefficiencies here, the truth is that there are some amazingly dedicated and competent Peruvians out there, working hard for their communities for very little pay. Teamed up with the right PCV, these counterparts can achieve some amazing things. I heard about groups of poor artisans exporting weavings to Europe, communities where almost every family now has a garden and has added vegetables to its previously starch-heavy diet, at-risk street-children who are now participating in vocational workshops, and communities now engaged in sustainable economic ventures with adjoining protected areas. In addition, with every PCV required to live with a host family and integrate into his/her community, Peace Corps' cross-cultural goals are also being achieved.

I'm quite upbeat about PC/Peru and the future ahead. I encourage you to send me an e-mail [mhirsh@pe.peacecorps.gov] for more information on our programs, or better yet, to come visit and see for yourself.

Muchos saludos,
Michael Hirsh,
Country Director

News from Peace Corps & NPCA

Are you speaking at a school? If so, Peace Corps has prepared a host of materials for those planning to make presentations to classroom, workplace and community groups. Get involved by calling 800.424.8580, ext. 1961 or checking <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.former.pcweek>.

The **Shriver Award for Humanitarian Service** is given by the National Peace Corps Association to a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who continues to make a sustained and distinguished contribution to humanitarian causes at home or abroad. The award was named to recognize the tremendous contributions of the first Peace Corps Direc-

tor, Sargent Shriver, in the founding and development of the Peace Corps.

Nomination materials must be received by June 16, 2006. If you have questions, you can contact Stephanie Jowers, Director of Membership and Strategic Relations: membership@rpcv.org.

Nominations for NPCA Board

The nomination period for the NPCA Board started in March. Under the new NPCA structure, three positions are open for election this year. For Country of Service groups, there is one position open in Europe/North and East Africa. For Geographic groups, there is one position open in each of the following two regions: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic/ Nationwide.

Elections will be for three-year terms, commencing with the Annual Meeting in September.

According to the by-laws, only those who have served as a Peace Corps volunteer or staff member are eligible to stand for election. Nominations may be by a petition signed by at least ten current NPCA members or by nomination by an affiliate group of the NPCA. Nominations will be accepted through May 15,

with voting taking place from June 15 to July 15. Only current NPCA members may vote in the election. Newly elected members will begin their terms on the NPCA board at the September 2006 meeting of the Board of Directors in Washington, DC.

Nomination materials are available on the NPCA Web site.

PC/Bolivia Celebrates Peace Corps Week

Wendy Van Damme
APCD PC Bolivia
RPCV Guatemala

Several activities were held by PC/Bolivia over the past few weeks as ways of commemorating PC's 45th Anniversary.

We celebrated Peace Corps Week with 2 PCVs, Matt Sevon and Gerid Buckshire, participating in phone calls to kids in the U.S. participating in the World Wise Schools Program.

The picture below is from March 1, 2006 when PCVs Jillian Warner and Matt Lynn accompanied me to the

American International School of Bolivia (AISB) to speak about Peace Corps.

Jim Jansen, the 6th grade teacher at AISB, is a RPCV from Grenada, and Patty Valderrama, AISB 1st grade teacher, is a RPCV from Bolivia. The students, are from Bolivia, the US, Korea, France, Canada, Germany, and Brazil. They had lots of questions for the PCVs and RPCVs involved in the Peace Corps Day presentation. The kids laughingly tried on hand-woven typical clothing from Santa Catarina Palopo, Guatemala, located the countries we discussed on the map, and were happy to receive Peace Corps stickers we distributed during a review game we played outside at the end of the day.



Short-term Volunteer Opportunities on the Altiplano

Ralph Bolton, President
The Chijnaya Foundation

In the last issue of *Yachaspa*, Amigos President, Patt Behler, urged RPCVs to consider signing up for the Peace Corps again. For many of us this is not an option. However, some RPCVs might be available for short-term assignments in Peru, contributing their special skills for some select projects. To that end, I would like to encourage anyone interested in short-term work in Peru, specifically in the Department of Puno, to contact me at chijnaya@aol.com.

The Chijnaya Foundation is looking for individuals to teach English to young people who will be working in ecotourism, to teach basic computer and internet skills, to participate in the design and implementation of agricultural pro-

jects involving artificial insemination and forage production, to conduct health assessment research, to provide healthcare in the local clinic (nurses, doctors), and to engage in improving artisan skills.

Financial contributions are also welcome, of course. We accept checks or online credit card online donations at www.chijnayafoundation.org. The

Board of Directors of the Foundation has approved projects in education, agriculture, tourism, and health. The price tag for our approved projects is more than \$250,000. Please contact us for more information or to discuss ways in which you might be able to assist the communities in Puno to improve their conditions. Tupananchiskama, amigokuna.



President Toledo Feted at Peace Corps Headquarters

By Gloria Levin
Amigos Membership Coordinator

To honor its 45th anniversary, Peace Corps is hosting a speakers' series, beginning with President Alejandro Toledo of Peru on March 9, 2006. President Toledo was in Washington, DC on a state visit as a guest of President Bush and had,

vian embassy and representatives of Peruvian commercial groups. Eleven PC recruiting offices around the country listened on a telephone hookup.

Kate Raftery (the PC/Peru director who accomplished PC's re-entry to Peru after a 28-year hiatus and now serving as PC's Chief of Operations of the InterAmerican and Pacific Region) thanked President Toledo for his pas-

“you never know, one could be a future president of Peru,” referring to the often-cited story of his meeting new PCVs Nancy Deeds (later Meister, *Amigos* member) and Joel Meister on the streets of Chimbote when he was a teenager and how their mentoring changed his life, from shining shoes to the Presidency of Peru. (See the Fall 2005 issue of *Yachaspa* for the full story.)

PC Director, Gaddi Vasquez, noted that over 2,640 PCVs served in Peru from 1962 to 1975, when the program was suspended, and that 116 volunteers currently serve there.

With unnecessary modesty, President Toledo apologized for his “poor” English, admitting it would embarrass his English teachers, the Meisters. He acknowledged he first thought of them as “crazy gringos,” but they somehow communicated, despite their “broken Spanish” and his “nonexistent English.” He regaled the audience with the story of his attempts to raise money in 1965 to travel to San Francisco to attend college on a soccer scholarship. He learned that the donation from Chimbote's Rotary Club to support his travel would only purchase a ticket for travel by boat! Another amusing story detailed his cultural shock when, upon arriving in San Francisco, he encountered Black Panthers, transvestites and hippies and, upon meeting Nancy and Joel for his first (bag) lunch in the U.S., he watched a couple making love in a fountain and listened to Eldridge Cleaver nearby.

In a subtle reference to the impending end of his presidency in June, he told Gaddi Vasquez:

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Photo by Melissa B. Marion, Press Relations Specialist, Peace Corps

earlier in the day, held meetings on Capitol Hill to discuss Peru's trade interests. Shriver Hall at PC headquarters was packed, mostly with PC staff, but also with large donors to the National PC Association visiting Washington for special events and NPCA staff and board members.

Also attending were *Amigos* members Kate Raftery, Mike Wolfson and Gloria Levin as well as the former PC/Peru's (acting) Director, George Baldino, who closed the program in 1975. A large entourage accompanied President Toledo ~ three government ministers, staff from the Peru-

sion for PC and his persistence, upon first attaining the presidency, in garnering political support to re-invite PC into Peru. She recounted his inspirational and challenging meeting with Peru I trainees, having traveled to PC's training center to greet them. Toledo had commented on each of the sites to which the trainees were to be assigned as volunteers. She also remembered his contention that he had, over the years, developed a fine-tuned ability to pick out RPCVs in any group of Americans because “they're a little strange.” He had challenged Peru I trainees to pay close attention to all the kids who approach them because

President Toledo Feted... (continued from p. 8)

“You have a great job. I wish I could change jobs with you, particularly in five months.” He commended PC on having “broken the walls of the U.S. and gotten into the hearts and souls of others.” He ended his speech by stating: “I now have a dream. That all people of the world who are living in extreme poverty would have the opportunity to be the President of their own countries. I don’t want to be an exception, a statistical error.”

Mr. Vasquez presented the President with a special edition, lithographic reproduction of a famous painting – the most famous of a series of four created by Norman Rockwell to honor the Peace Corps’ founding. President Toledo was visibly moved by the gift and by Mr. Vasquez’s comment that Toledo “understood the PC in a unique and personal way.” In exchange, Toledo left a report of the accomplishments of his presidency, saying: “to a large extent, this report has to do with the Peace Corps.”

Mike Wolfson, who had helped coordinate the PC event with the Peruvian embassy, later attended a cocktail reception at the Ambassador’s residence for President Toledo and the First Lady.

The Peace Corps’ March 10, 2006 press release on this event can be accessed via <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.media.press>.

Peruvian Elections to be held April 9

By Gloria Levin
Amigos Membership Coordinator

A packed house, seemingly a majority Peruvian, attended a superb seminar, co-sponsored by George Washington University’s Andean Seminars for Culture and Politics and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) on February 16, 2006. The seminar analyzed the upcoming (April 9) Presidential and Congressional elections in Peru. However, the panelists cautioned the audience not to bank on their prognostications, recalling that Fujimori’s name was never mentioned in a similar seminar held two months before the 1990 elections which brought him to power. None of the speakers would be surprised if another “improvised, outside, dark horse candidate” were to win the 2006 presidential election. Added to the unpredictability of

the electoral outcome is the fact that the 2006 elections will be the first to extend the vote to the military (85,000 eligible voters) and police (90,000). And the former, disgraced president, Fujimori, is using part of the \$6 million he is alleged to have stolen to buy media time to manipulate the elections as well as campaign for amnesty for his supporters charged with crimes during his presidency.

Twenty-one candidates are in the presidential race; the panel gave a slight edge to the candidacy of Lourdes Flores Nano (Unidad Nacional party) as the front runner for the presidency, although she is more “right of Center” than most Peruvian voters. The panelists seemed to know her personally, referring to her as “Lourdes” throughout. In her favor are her “indefatigable energy for campaigning,” intelligence and honesty – the latter, a particularly important commodity after the corruption of the Fujimori regime – the outcome of which continues to reverberate in

Peru. (She has withheld support, at least until the judicial process has run its course, for amnesty for military leaders charged with human rights abuses, in contrast to many other candidates.)

Bitter memories of Fujimori have been reinvoked by his recent attempt to run for the presidency again, leaving his safe haven in Japan for Chile, amid cries for his extradition to stand trial in Peru. (See my article in the Winter 2005-6 *Yachaspa* concerning the extradition movement.) The recent election of the first woman president in Chile, Michelle Bachelet, could be a harbinger for making Peruvian cultural history in that women are generally viewed by voters as being more ethical politically than men. Lourdes Flores Nano has long been part of Peru’s political process but not currently as a member of the much-discredited Congress. Sensing an increase in nationalism, she has in-

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Peruvian Elections (continued from p. 9)

creasingly defined herself as a nationalist, by rejecting Chilean investments in Peru's ports. Yet the speakers cautioned that political sentiment in Peru can shift in a few days' time, so today's predictions can be worthless tomorrow. (An estimated 25% of Peru's electorate makes their choice on election day, and an additional quarter decides just prior to the last day.)

The end of 2005 saw a surge in the popularity of a "neopopulist outsider," Ollanta Humala Taso, the candidate of the UPP (Union por el Peru) party, who has been cast in the nationalistic and outspoken mold of Bolivia's Evo Morales and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. He fanned nationalistic fervor by proposing to team up with Bolivia to reclaim land lost to Chile in the War of the Pacific. Humala's father (Isaac) and older brother (Ulises) are extremists, acknowledged racists "with fascist overtones." While Ollanta attempted to distance himself from their rhetoric (as well as the imprisonment of another brother, Antauro, for participating in an armed revolt on a police station), his own clouded military career became a concern among the electorate. Lt. Col. Humala led a coup attempt in 2000 and has been accused of human rights abuses in

the 1990's, while serving as a Captain. He acknowledged using the pseudonym of "Capitan Carlos." A Capitan Carlos has been charged with commanding a military base in an area of Peru where cases of killing, kidnapping and torture by the military have been documented by eyewitnesses. Despite all this, the panelists predicted that he would run a close second to Lourdes Flores.

The third leading candidate is the articulate and colorful former (1985-1990) president Alan Garcia of the APRA party, along with his running mate, a military officer who stands accused of multiple violations. Garcia, long hostile to any foreign influence, now criticizes Toledo for failing to attract foreign trade, sending a mixed message. Also running is Valentin Paniagua (now Frente de Centro, formerly Accion Popular) who had been president of the Congress when he was named as the interim president of Peru (November 2000 - July 2001) after Fujimori resigned from office. He is 69 years old, failed to make strategic political alliances with leftist parties and has done poorly in the polls. Candidate Martha Chavez (Alianza por el Futuro) is the stand-in proxy for Fujimori who is currently jailed in Chile.

Brothers are running against brothers, and even the mother of Toledo's illegitimate daughter is running for office.

One speaker called the election process "technically sound but "surreal," in that approximately 30 presidential and over 2,000 congressional candidates have been fielded, many of whom have been discovered to have questionable qualifications or ethics. One candidate allegedly had built a *barriada*-like house for photo shoots, careful to obscure the swimming pool! Because the Congress is roundly despised, with fractious infighting rampant, relatively few incumbents are running for re-election, presenting the voters with many unknown candidates from which to choose. (High Congressional salaries are a tempting incentive to run.) In addition, the typical last-minute undecided vote has doubled according to recent polls. The Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and countries in Latin America has become an issue in the campaign, many Peruvians viewing it as the "path to gold," in contrast to others in the region who are skeptical.

The featured panelist, anthropologist Carlos Ivan Degregori (Universidad Mayor de San Marcos,

(Continued on page 11)



Peruvian Elections (continued from p. 10)

Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and a member of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2001-3), focused on the failure of Peru's political parties in the last number of years. In his view, the traditional political parties collapsed during Fujimori's decade in power ("a great blow to the party system") yet, when his regime fell, the parties did not take advantage of the political vacuum for the 2001 elections. Instead, Peru elected Toledo, another "improvised candidate," an "outsider" or "political meteorite" without a viable party infrastructure behind him. Degregori stated that Peru has lacked a consistent liberal force, in either the political or economic spheres. While Humala's popularity has tumbled lately, Degregori suspected "a hidden vote" for him, among persons who are unlikely to admit their true preference (for an alleged human rights violator and nationalist) to polltakers. He observed that voters have no loyalty to political parties in Peru, especially because most of the parties supported granting amnesty to the military, even before judicial trials for human rights abuses began. Peru has seen a 2-3% reduction in poverty in the context of its high economic growth; however, ethnic discrimination persists, as does the traditional split between the provinces and centralized power in Lima. While Humala is not as authentically indigenous as Toledo, he is darker skinned than the other candidates, and his fiery rhetoric and tough, military demeanor appeal to a sector of the electorate.

On the basis of then-current information, Degregori predicted that

Flores and Humala will enter a second round run-off, with Flores winning.

Cynthia McClintock (GWU professor of political science) saw Peru's democracy as even more precarious than usual, noting that a survey found over 80% of the electorate dissatisfied with the government (Congress as well as Toledo), whereas the rest of Latin America is showing a slight improvement in satisfaction with their governments. She echoed Degregori's concern for a lack of institutionalized political parties in Peru but noted that Lourdes Flores' party, which used to be based only in Lima, is making inroads to emerge as a viable national party. Whoever wins will benefit from the economic recovery, for which Toledo has been given little credit. However, she sees Toledo's biggest burden as being his failure to "cumplir," an important Peruvian concept, of fulfilling a promise, to extend political representation to the indigenous. McClintock was optimistic due to increased Peruvian scrutiny of electoral procedures, media activism and reactivation of the political parties. "Peru is poised for a good future, with a growing (if not yet well distributed) economy, peace and democracy."

WOLA's Collette Younger focused on human rights which she noted as having been politicized, pointing to the media's "incessant attacks" against Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its members, via "nasty editorials." Many of the parties, notably Accion Popular, have been hostile to the human rights campaign to bring to

justice government officials for the terrorism and corruption of the past. The electorate is disgusted with the traditional parties, leading to understandable apathy (and the Humala phenomenon). Younger finds the human rights case against Humala increasingly strong, as more evidence (before, not possible to collect in the dangerous region terrorized by the Senderos Luminosos) is accumulated.

Michael Schifler (vice president of the Inter-American Dialogue) opined that "too much has been made of Latin America's drift to the left," instead seeing a "general rejectionist mood" or "disenchantment" at work. He is a constant critic of those who cite a right/left fracture in Peru's current political life, finding that polarity unhelpful. He felt that Humala somewhat damaged his image by his much-publicized meeting with Venezuela's inflammatory president, Hugo Chavez. Since then, Humala has downplayed this relationship and attempted to moderate his positions. However, he has successfully capitalized on anger against the parties. Schifler saw Peru as combining characteristics of Chile ("sustained growth") and Bolivia ("turmoil and discontent").

A spirited question and answer period followed the formal presentations. Email me at (g-levin@comcast.net) for an account of the questions and answers, too lengthy for inclusion in this newsletter.

Changing Perspectives for a Volunteer in Bolivia

Christina Luongo
PCV/Bolivia

Thinking back to those first few months of adjusting, I remember the countdown I had going on in my head: Only 22 more months to go... that's not so long. I love Bolivia! It was my mantra for survival, which would help pull me out of bed every morning. At the time, it seemed like the days just dragged on. I had yet to find my niche with work, and I wondered if I ever really would. I was just a strange gringa (Westerner) in an even stranger land. There were days spent staring at walls. Countless books read during the rainy months. Recipe experimentation to pass the time (by the way, butter-free, egg-less cookies are not the best idea). Rehearsing excuses to avoid eating yet another boiled papa (potato) or, even worse, freeze-dried potato known here as chuño.

I always needed a daily dose of alone time to decompress and take in the new world around me. Then one day it all changed. Suddenly, I wasn't the stranger trying to find a place to fit: I was adopted into a family of 137 at the local orphanage. Work, life, and friendship all grew into part of my daily rhythm. Time began to fly by. And now as my days in the highlands of Tiraque come to a close, I have been spending every possible moment that I have foregoing the neurotic housecleaning that took up so much time in the beginning so I can hang out with the kids.

Where the American in me used to say, I must be doing something productive, now I don't care if we sit around watching the clouds pass,

as long as some of the children are by my side. I can't remember the last book I've read or the last moment I had to myself. I only bake when surrounded by tons of little (somewhat clean) hands, and we use whatever ingredients we are lucky enough to come by. I look forward to a plate of boiled papa, or any potato derivation, as long as it is eaten in good company.

One of the oddest experiences I had during the first month in my site was going to the wake for a man I had never met, the brother of the woman who owns the town stationery store. A neighbor took me because she thought it would heighten my cultural understanding. We walked into the front room of the family's home, and right there, elevated on a table, covered in a white sheet, was the figure of a man I had never known, surrounded by neon purple lights and wailing women. We all sat around the body and were served popcorn. It was a surreal experience—more like a night at the movies than a wake from my American perspective.

Three days ago, I revisited that scene. Only this time, instead of an unknown older man, the wake was for one of our boys. Tito, 15 years old, about to enter the fifth grade... and we lost him to suicide. I believe suicide is nothing more than a cry for help, but in a place like Tiraque, people are unaccustomed to asking children how they feel or what they dream of, and cries for help can only get lost in the blowing of the wind.

There was a time when the orphans were just a mix of smiling but nameless faces. When I was so overwhelmed with a new language, new

culture, new life, that I couldn't keep a single name straight...and of course I was at a disadvantage because being the only gringa around, all of the intimate details of my life (true or untrue) were immediately known by all.

And now I really know these kids. Ana and Mari have shared their adolescent love lives with me while baking thousands of cookies. I am helping Limbert reunite with his sister for the first time in 10 years. I taught tae-bo to Hilda, Maritza, and Sulema; Samuel and Daniel taught me to dance cumbia. The teenagers and I have discussed professional opportunities and sexual health. We've celebrated birthdays and Christmas. I've given workshops to their families on gender issues and nutrition. We roofed a greenhouse at Wilder's together. We ate freshly harvested fava beans on the dirt floor of Filimon's kitchen, staying warm by the heat of the wooden stove. We spent days riding around the campo (countryside) in an overcrowded car, playing like a family on a road trip, while Isaac took on the role of family dad. And now we are grieving the death of a loved one together.

Every trainee wonders, "What is a typical work schedule like?" That question always makes me smile, because although I had a daily routine, I never really felt as if I was working. Chatting with the women and girls during club meetings, cooking with the kids, making sure their nutritional intake continues to improve—none of that feels like work. There isn't a day when I wake up and wish I

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Changing Perspectives (continued from p. 12)

could just crawl back into bed again and forego my responsibilities.

The crazy thing about the Peace Corps is, now that everything has fallen into place, it is time to move on. The countdown to the end of my service continues; but now, as I have just three weeks left, instead of wishing the time away, I'm trying to squeeze out every possible second.

These two years and these kids have given me more than I had imagined possible. Even though the Peace Corps had been on my mind since high school, I never conceptualized how it would feel to be at the other end of these 27 months. Tiraque has become a home, the people at the orphanage a part of my family. I've learned to love in a way more profound than I've ever known before—how to be an older

sister, a mentor, a friend. These last two years haven't been about work at all; they've been about life, in all its depths, full of laughter and tears.

Editor's Note: Christina Luongo served as a nutrition education Volunteer in Bolivia from 2002–2004. She then took a third year position as the education project specialist and spent a year supporting fellow Volunteers and traveling throughout Bolivia. After the Peace Corps she plans to pursue a master's and work with immigrants in her new home of Chicago.



This story is excerpted from the recently published compilation of Volunteer stories, A Life Inspired: Tales of Peace Corps Service, which can be ordered through the Government Printing Office's website at www.bookstore.gpo.gov.

History of the Peace Corps



The ultimate purpose of "Ask Not" is to create a depository and virtual library that documents the history, accomplishments, and insights of 45 years of service by 180,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Phase One of the "History of the Peace Corps" is now available online at <http://historyofthepeacecorps.org>.

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The ultimate purpose of "Ask Not" is to create a depository and virtual

library that documents the history, accomplishments, and insights of 45 years of service by 180,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

More primary source documents are needed for the collection. If you have copies of in-country newsletters from your Country of Service, please consider donating them to the project. Please mail materials to: "Ask Not" - P.O. Box 1960 - Ponca City, OK 74602

Asserting Identity: Folklore and Violence as Collective Expression in Urban Bolivia

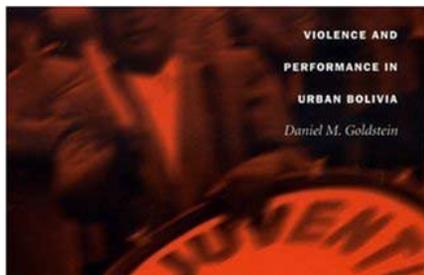
Review by
Stephen Paul Jacobs

In *The Spectacular City*, Daniel M. Goldstein explores the strategies used by the members of a recently established community to project its identity and communicate its needs within the context of Cochabamba's rapid growth. Working as an ethnologist, the author describes the character of the community of Villa Pagador, the dynamics of its internal social fabric and its struggles for recognition. In the process, Goldstein presents important insights into the modes of public discourse in contemporary Bolivia.

The book focuses on two aspects of the Villa Pagador's public expression. He first discusses the annual fiesta celebrating the Villa's foundation and the Mass of San Miguel, its patron saint. He then examines the lynching of three people caught in the act of robbery. As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, I have romanticized my experience in Bolivia and Goldstein's discussion of the fiesta and the specific role of music and folklore in its presentation are more comfortable. He presents the members of the community in constructive and sympathetic roles. The lynching episode (perhaps more correctly referred to as an attempted-lynching since it did not result in fatalities), while shocking, is presented with the same level

of detail and analysis as the discussion of folklore. Goldstein argues that both events are fundamentally alike in asserting the existence of the Villa Pagador and calling for its inclusion in the broader urban community.

The first chapters establish the context of Goldstein's research within the field of ethnography and the framework of Cochabamba's urban development. Given the slow pace of growth that preceded the closing of the mines, planners were lulled into thinking in terms of a Garden City surrounded and laced through with



The Spectacular City



parklands. (Incidentally, many of these very planners were my colleagues when, as a volunteer, I taught architecture at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón.)

The Villa Sebastián Pagador and other similar squatter settlements began to occupy lands that had been reserved as open space. The

newcomers, initially rejected by both the authorities and the long-time residents, felt the need to struggle for recognition and their share of municipal services. Goldstein attributes their ultimate success in large measure to the efforts of the residents of Villa Pagador to draw attention to themselves through dramatic acts of self-presentation like the fiesta de San Miguel and the lynching.

In both examples of "spectacular" behavior, Goldstein points out the media savvy of community leaders. The lynching was a brutal act of vigilantism and one that threatened the carefully constructed image of a highly organized community of hardworking and disciplined residents. Leaders were able to draw the attention of local media to the vulnerability of the community and the absence of effective police protection. Carefully constructed public statements, the orchestration of official delegations to the community and demonstrations at the prefecture all prepared for maximum media exposure successfully influenced public opinion and resulted in needed police protection.

One of the key elements of the Villa Pagador's self-presentation is its association with Oruro. The name of the settlement is that of an historic figure from colonial Oruro, an early independence leader and national hero. The fiesta de San Miguel specifically emphasizes dances and music characteristic of the Carnival of Oruro – in particular the Diablada and the Morenada. Oruro is frequently

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Asserting Identity (continued from p. 14)

referred to as the Folklore Capital of Bolivia – so the homage is nationalistic as well.

However, the reference has deeper implications. Oruro, as the former center of mining, carries with it the weight of Bolivia's entire colonial experience. The reference to organization is a reminder of the once powerful miner's union that was such a powerful and militant force in Bolivia's political life following the 1952 Revolution.

The ability of the people of the Villa Pagador to organize in constructive ways, as in the founding of the Villa and the presentation of the fiesta, also implies their destructive potential as demonstrated in the lynching and stated explicitly in their statement to Los Tiempos on 22 March 1995: Should the residents of "Sebastián Pagador" again suffer the aggressions of antisocial elements, we will rise up as one man and punish this act, knowing as we do that the security forces lack the personnel and the means necessary to do it.

Goldstein's book is particularly rich in detailed observation. He examines the dynamics of relationships within the community that impact both the lynching and the fiesta. The founding leadership profit from their ownership of resources needed by new arrivals. Gender roles in the fiesta are traditional with men acting as sponsors and organizers while woman prepare and serve food and drink. In the lynching however, the principle actors are women – far more immediately concerned about preserving their hard-earned property and their safety and the safety of their children while the men are more involved in the perception of events and the presentation in the media.

The phenomenon that David M. Goldstein examines at a local scale is characteristic of the nation as a whole. In a post-modern Bolivia, where the central government no longer has the resources or authority to shape a complex contemporary society, the drama of community life appears to call for a more public and competitive stage. The recent election of Evo Morales as

President of Bolivia is the consequence of the use of spectacle to influence public opinion.

The Spectacular City helps explain the use of folklore, on a national scale, to reinforce Bolivia's self-definition as a nation diverse but deeply rooted in its traditional culture. The Carnaval de Oruro, once a unique urban festival, now serves as the model for a series of major celebrations across the country such as the Fiesta del Gran Poder in La Paz, the Fiesta de Urkupiña in Quillacollo (Cochabamba Valley), and the Fiesta of la Virgen de Guadalupe in Sucre. The compelling magnetism of these celebrations, calling for the participation of musicians and dancers along with the commitment of festival organizers and sponsors is itself a unifying force capable of affirming the vitality of Bolivia as a nation and a culture.

THE SPECTACULAR CITY: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia. Paperback: 274 pages
Publisher: Duke University Press
(August 2004). ISBN: 0822333708

BOLIVIA TODAY *Travel Information for International Visitors*

Check out the *Bolivia Today* web site at <http://www.boliviaday.org/index.html>. Dave Dolson, former editor of *Yachaspa*, and friends, have created a useful website that serves as a clearing-house of information for travelers to Bolivia.

Contact Dave by telephone at (916) 743-7512 or by e-mail at administrator@boliviaday.org.



Dave Dolson, RPCV Bolivia, is lead editor and administrator for *Bolivia Today*.

Consideran a Lima como capital gastronómica de América Latina

By Mary Milliken

Peru, the land that gave us the tomato and the potato, has another gastronomic gift to the world: a chef named Gaston Acurio. He aims for nothing less than 50,000 Peruvian restaurants around the world where food lovers could savor the hot peppers, lime, onions and fish of a ceviche, creamy yellow Andean potatoes or



maybe even someday the Peruvian delicacy of guinea pig. Acurio can't possibly do it alone and he prefers to stay at home in Lima creating recipes. But he is so convinced of the power of Peruvian cuisine that he is inspiring financiers and fellow chefs to go out and conquer the world. "Our dream is that in 10 years, there will be 50,000 to 100,000 Peruvian restaurants out there," Acurio said at his headquarters in a Lima mansion.

"There are something like 200,000 Mexican restaurants in the world, so why shouldn't we aspire to something similar?" The 38-year-old chef is an

icon in food-crazed Lima, where he owns ~ with wife Astrid, a German pastry chef ~ a handful of top restaurants, stars in a popular cable TV cooking show and publishes best-selling cookbooks. His rise has coincided with what he calls "a total revolution in gastronomy in Peru in the last 10 years."

But he not only wins accolades for his food. Peruvians are puffed up with pride because he is promoting one of their most beloved cultural treasures. "Gaston is taking our cuisine around the world," said Rosi Zusman as she ate lunch at Tanta, his hip food emporium where counters are piled high with a Peruvian version of tapas.

Acurio has opened award-winning restaurants in four other South American cities and recently cooked at the international chefs' summit Madrid-Fusion alongside greats like Chicago chef Charlie Trotter or Ferran Adria of El Bulli in Catalonia. The Spanish press gave him rave reviews, and one newspaper told readers: "Remember this name: Gaston Acurio."

One visit to his La Mar "cevicheria" near Lima's oceanfront is enough to see that Acurio has the Midas touch. People of all ages line up every day to eat at the breezy, reasonably priced, lunch-only restaurant. Among 110 dishes on the menu are a tuna ceviche with Japanese spices and a grilled octopus brochette over a yellow potato mash. "We have created a cevicheria that you could envision in New York, Thailand or Shanghai, and that is an example for others to imitate as they go and conquer the world," said Acurio.

La Mar franchises will open this

year in Mexico and Panama, while California and London could be on the agenda for 2007. Acurio's friend, Japanese chef Nobu Matsuhisa of the famed Nobu restaurants, says Londoners will love his ceviche. While Acurio stays home, many among his young, 500-strong staff are ready to travel and spread his vision. "When the time comes and they ask me to go abroad, I will go happily," said chef Silvia Fernandez, 21, working behind the La Mar ceviche bar. "Who wouldn't want to go?" But even with Peruvian chefs, demanding Limenos, as the locals are known, have doubts their ceviche can be emulated elsewhere. Acurio says he has the know-how and technology to create flavor bases that can be copied all over the world to turn out a ceviche just like at La March. "Peppers are the umbilical cord to Peruvian cuisine and we have worked very hard so that this flavor is always present," said Acurio.

In his office next to his test kitchen, he uses white boards with lists of hundreds of ingredients and preparations to cook up his next creations. He is submerged now in "chifa" ~ the Chinese-Peruvian fusion that he feels doesn't have enough Peruvian in it. He is thinking of all the Peruvian ingredients he can throw in or on a wonton. "When I need ideas, I just go out here," said Acurio as he walked out onto the mansion's balcony on a quaint colonial square and gestured toward the ocean.

But it is hard to imagine Acurio needing more ideas. He is close to opening in Lima his first sandwich joints, where the stars will be pork

(Continued on page 18)

Membership Form (rev. Sept 2005)

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Lima: capital gastronómica (continued from p. 16)

and ham sandwiches, the recipes culled from Acurio's favorite dives. Instead of French fries, he will serve fried yucca sticks and he hopes he can pull Peruvians of all classes away from the ubiquitous American-style fast food. "We are trying to create the sandwich place of our dreams with the artisanal character of our cuisine, which is something people today value much more," Acurio said. He also plans to open "anticucho" or brochette joints in his quest to restore Peru's street food tradition. And

the sandwich and anticucho restaurants could go abroad in franchises, just like the cevicheria. But does he see foreign diners digging into the guinea pig, usually served whole and splayed, that he insists beats rabbit any day? "If you take the head and feet off, yes, perhaps," he said. "But all countries have their non-exportable food."

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was accessed on the Internet at: http://www.boston.com/news/world/latinamerica/articles/2006/03/01/chef_prepares_peruvian_cuisine_to_conquer_the_world/ on March 29, 2006.

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