

# YACHASPA

QUECHUA FOR "SABIENDO" [KNOWING]...

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AMIGOS DE BOLIVIA Y PERÚ, INC.  
WINTER 2007-08

<http://www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org>

## EX-PRESIDENT TOLEDO ON DEMOCRACY AND POVERTY

**Erin Stratta**  
**Peru (2005-07)**

Alejandro Toledo, President of Peru from 2001-2006, presented a January 24, 2008 lecture entitled "Can the Poor Afford Democracy? A Presidential Perspective" at Stanford University. The lecture, the first of a series of three Dr. Toledo will



be presenting at Stanford over the next few months, focused on the relationship between democracy, economic growth, poverty and inequality. Toledo received his M.A. (1971) and PhD (1993) degrees in economics from Stanford.

Toledo cited his own experience as a case study for the larger problems revolving around economic growth and alleviation of poverty in democratic countries. Forty percent (230 million people) in Latin America live on less than \$2 a day. Across the region, there has been very little "poverty reduction" but, rather, a sizable increase in inequality, despite positive civic advances in the more democratic governments.

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## EVO'S FIRST TWO YEARS: AN ASSESSMENT

**Jeff Fletcher**  
**Bolivia (1967-69)**

Two dozen people, including Gustavo Guzmán, Bolivia's Ambassador to the U.S., braved a Washington, D.C. snowstorm on January 17 to attend a panel discussion about Bolivia. Billed as an assessment of the first two years of Bolivian President Evo Morales and his administration, the two speakers were upbeat about actions taken and progress made to date, particularly with respect to overall economic indicators and hydrocarbon nationalization. Poverty reduction and land reform are moving much more slowly, and continuing political controversy about the adoption

of a new constitution is slowing the overall pace of change.

Jean Paul Guevara Ávila, Director General of Bilateral Relations for Bolivia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described how the exclusion of indigenous people from power for the past two centuries

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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 130 organized groups of returned Peace Corps volunteers, former staff and friends. 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.

## AMIGOS CONTRACTS ELECTION FEVER

The U.S. is in full swing with electoral activity; Amigos members will get an additional vote -- electing members to the Amigos Board. Amigos Board members can be appointed (by the President but confirmed by a Board vote) for 2-year terms or (by all paid members of Amigos) for 3-year terms. We try to maintain a

healthy balance between appointed and elected Board members but now find the Board composition unbalanced, by the normal Board ebb and flow.

Self-nominations for elected positions on the Board are encouraged. If you nominate someone else, verify that the

person is willing to serve and is current in dues. (Sorry, according to our Bylaws, recent RPCVs receiving a free year of membership are not eligible, unless they pay dues a little early.)

Send nominations (name and email address of nominee) to both members of the Nominating Committee: Patt Behler ([pabehler@socket.net](mailto:pabehler@socket.net)) and Justin Lovell ([lovelljr@gmail.com](mailto:lovelljr@gmail.com)) for arrival by March 7, 2008. Provide a brief description of qualifications and interest in serving on the Amigos Board. Questions about the duties and responsibilities of Board membership will be cheerfully answered by Amigos' president, [glorialevin@verizon.net](mailto:glorialevin@verizon.net).

Soon after, all eligible voters will receive instructions and an online ballot from the Elections Committee -- Franklin Salvesson and John Smith. (These materials will be snail mailed to our few non-internet-users.)

### **YACHASPA SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Yachaspa welcomes submissions of relevance to Peace Corps, Bolivia and Peru. We're interested in a wide range of submissions, including photos, as exemplified in this and earlier issues. Send your idea as soon as possible to [yachaspa@gmail.com](mailto:yachaspa@gmail.com), leaving sufficient time for development.

Submissions will be edited for length and content, as well as relevance to Yachaspa's goal to keep Amigos members connected to Peace Corps and to developments in Bolivia and Peru. Because of space limitations, it is possible that your submission will not be used in the newsletter. It will, however, be considered for use as a newsletter "yapa" (bonus) or for posting on Amigos' website.

Please send submissions either in email text or as an attachment, with pictures whenever possible and captions, along with your country and dates of service, to [yachaspa@gmail.com](mailto:yachaspa@gmail.com).

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING 2008 YACHASPA IS  
APRIL10**

# EX-PRESIDENT TOLEDO ON DEMOCRACY AND POVERTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Dr. Toledo posited that an increase in poverty, inequality, and instability prevents proper functioning of democracy, by making the country more vulnerable and lowering growth. However, he used quantitative data derived from various economic standpoints during his presidency to also show that a period of economic growth in a functioning democracy does not necessarily alleviate poverty or minimize the inequality gap.

During his 5-year term, the country experienced unprecedented growth, a practical elimination of debt, and economic stability previously unimagined for Peru. This included a 40% increase in health care spending and a doubling of teachers' salaries. And although, during his term, there was a 10% decrease in poverty, he is "unsatisfied" with what his administration was able to accomplish socially.

Toledo stated that Peru's experience mirrored a reality throughout Latin America, where political democracies have not delivered concrete results for the poor. Typically, the public hears about the country's economic growth but sees only a widening inequality gap and little positive social changes for the poor. Because of this, poor people throughout Latin America lose faith in the democratic system and in their democratic leaders.

A solution, Dr. Toledo said, requires heavy investment in nutrition, health, education, and micro projects focused especially on women. He repeatedly reinforced that women are the best conduit for diminishing poverty within the family unit, as they are creative survivors and excellent managers. Toledo also urged big business to do its part to responsibly invest. He claimed that this sector is currently missing out on 40% of its potential market in Latin America. The solution

is more investment and proper leadership rather than more politics, he said.

The former president pointed to his program, Juntos, as an example of a step in the right direction. The pilot program, carried out in Ayacucho, identified the "poorest of the poor" and offered cash payments to women who completed pre/post natal checkups, vaccinations and school enrollment for their children. He added, with a laugh, that the women eventually were given whistles so they could alarm and protect each other when an inebriated male came home to steal the money. He offered it as a poignant example of the way micro-projects must be focused and adaptable to truly help those with the most need.

In a further effort to study issues of democracy and poverty, Dr. Toledo founded The Global Center for Development and Democracy (<http://www.cgdd.net/>). He admitted that, while he does not have all the answers, he is dedicating the rest of his life to alleviate poverty through the democratic process.

Dr. Toledo was exceptionally open to fielding questions from the public on a variety of topics and spent time after his lecture personally greeting students and others in attendance. When I met with the ex-president personally, he expressed interest in meeting with Peru RPCVs in the Bay Area.

Among several appointments as a visiting scholar at Stanford, Dr. Toledo is the Freeman Spogli Institute's Payne Visiting Distinguished Lecturer for the 2007-08 academic year as part of Stanford's Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL). Two further lectures by Dr. Toledo are scheduled for April 10 and May 14 at Stanford University. Check the schedule at <http://fsi.stanford.edu>

## MEETING WITH DR. TOLEDO

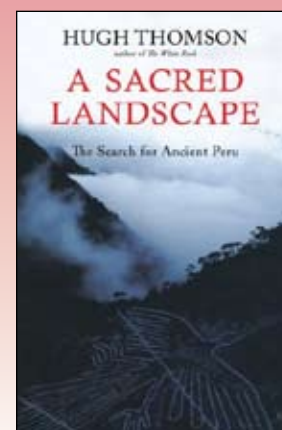
*Amigos de Bolivia y Peru will, if San Francisco Bay area members express interest, organize a meeting or event with Dr. Toledo. (He expressed particular interest in meeting with RPCVs who served during his presidency.) If you are interested, write Amigos at [boliviayperu@hotmail.com](mailto:boliviayperu@hotmail.com), providing your email address and phone number.*

*For a view of Toledo's life in Palo Alto, see a February 11, 2007 article "From president of Peru to just Palo Alto guy" in The San Francisco Chronicle. The author, Tyler Bridges is the Lima Bureau Chief of The Miami Herald, who has long covered Toledo's career.*

## NEW BOOK FOR REVIEW

For those who were enthralled by Hugh Thomson's *White Rock: An Exploration of the Inca Heartland* (2003), reviewed (p. 10) in the [Fall 2006 Yachaspa](#), look for his recently published book. *A Sacred Landscape: The Search for Ancient Peru* (Overlook, 2007) recounts his family's year spent on a farm in the Yucay Valley, the former heartland of ancient Peru, contrasting contemporary Peru with pre-Inca civilization.

Volunteer to review the book for a future *Yachaspa* at [yachaspa@gmail.com](mailto:yachaspa@gmail.com)



[Photo from Amazon.Com](http://Photo from Amazon.Com)

## EVO'S FIRST TWO YEARS: AN ASSESSMENT

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formed the historical context for the election of Evo Morales in December of 1995. Morales garnered 54 percent of the vote, the largest margin in the country's history.

Morales began his administration with a highly successful effort to recoup revenues from the hydrocarbon sector. This uniquely Bolivian-style of nationalization boosted overall revenues to the state and shared revenues to provincial governments. "This was accomplished," Guevara said, "through contract renegotiations, without expropriation or confiscation."

The second Morales initiative focused on re-writing the constitution. Guevara said forces opposing constitutional change threw up numerous roadblocks and straw men (such as a proposal to move the national capital to Sucre) to derail the effort. He said the new draft constitution recently adopted significantly expands the rights of indigenous people; respects private property; enhances democracy at the national, state, and local levels; and ensures the separation of powers.

The final vote approving the draft constitutional provisions, boycotted by opponents, led to riots and proposals by four regional departments (Beni, Pando, Tarija, and Santa Cruz) for autonomy from the national government. A fifth province, Chuquisaca, may soon join the breakaway movement. A panel of senior Bolivian judges recently ruled that the constitution is illegal and must be redone. To calm the waters, Morales has called for a national referendum on his own rule and on the performance of regional governors.

Bitter feelings remain. Guevara said, "Opposition is natural and expected, but opponents did not respect the rules for this important process, and thus revealed their latent intolerance and racism. They want to maintain their privileges and to

keep the indigenous people down as they have for the past two hundred years."

Throughout nearly two years of parliamentary wrangling and occasional street violence about the constitution re-write, Morales always sought compromise, dialogue, and mediation with opponents, Guevara asserted.

Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), focused his remarks on oil and gas nationalization issues. "This was a predicted disaster that did not happen," Weisbrot said.

He noted that, since nationalization began, there has been no decline in output, no loss of capitalization, and no decline in hydrocarbon investment from Bolivia's partners in Brazil and Argentina. The government's challenge for the future, he said, is to find ways to more equitably distribute hydrocarbon royalties and taxes among the nine producer and non-producer states.

Overall economic growth, which lagged in the two percent range for most of the past fifteen years, is now up to four percent, Weisbrot added. In addition, thanks to hydrocarbon reform, overall public sector revenues have increased from 27.5 percent of GDP in 2004 to 40.2 percent in 2006. Bolivia's public debt has been reduced in recent years, and its foreign public debt is now only 16 percent of GDP, a relatively low level.

The seminar was sponsored by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (<http://cepr.net>) an independent, nonpartisan Washington think tank that publishes numerous policy papers about Latin America.

# THE KANTUTA FUND

**Diane Hibino, Kantuta Coordinator**

Bolivia PCV (67-70); Bolivia/Country Director (93-96)

Thanks to generous contributions to the Kantuta/Bolivia Fund last year, Kantuta's coffers have been filling nicely. PC/Bolivia reported having paid down its prior Kantuta grants as of November 2007. We were able to award Peace Corps/Bolivia a \$1000 grant in late December but also pre-approved another \$1000, upon satisfactory expenditure of the first grant. We look forward to the award of new mini-grants in 2008 for PC/Bolivia Volunteers' proposals for their community-level projects.

A byproduct of the August 2007 reunion of 1960s-71 PC/Bolivia volunteers and staff was a \$2580 donation to Amigos' Kantuta/Bolivia Fund. However, we were asked to donate a portion of that sum to two organizations working in Bolivia: *Mano a Mano* and *ProMujer*. Recently, Amigos awarded \$400 to Mano a Mano Medical Resources (<http://www.manoamano.org>) which is described as a partnership to "build clinics, roads and schools, provide clean water, and run youth programs with our Bolivian staff." It was established in 1994 in Minnesota by Bolivia RPCV Joan White Velasquez (1967-69) and her Bolivian-born husband, Segundo Velasquez. The \$400 donation will be used for an agricultural

water reservoir project in Sancayani, located about 60 km from Cochabamba. "The campesinos of Sancayani asked *Mano a Mano* to help them construct a reservoir that will hold rain water and from which they will water about 1500 acres during the dry season.... About 600 families will receive water from the reservoir, and essentially all of them will contribute volunteer time to its construction."



## **Kantuta flowers. *Cantuta buxifolia*.**

It is the national flower of Peru and one of two national flowers of Bolivia, the other being the Patujú. The Bolivian national flower is in fact a particular variety of Cantuta, the "Kantuta Tricolor" (below) which has red petals, a yellow floral tube and a green calyx, reflecting the colours of the national flag. (*Wikipedia*)



A second donation of \$400 emanating from the Estes Park reunion has been offered to *ProMujer* in Bolivia to assist disadvantaged women. We are awaiting further logistical information from Pro Mujer to finalize that donation. Also pending is a final report on the use of Amigos' most recent Kantuta award to PC/Peru.

As always, we welcome your (tax-deductible) contribution to *The Kantuta Fund*. Your check should be made payable to Amigos de Bolivia y Peru and mailed to: Amigos, 7327 University Avenue, Glen Echo, MD 20812. Please include Amigos' membership form (at the end of this newsletter) or a note, indicating for which country (Bolivia or Peru) the donation is intended. Your donation will be acknowledged with verification of its tax deductibility.

### KANTUTA UPDATE/BOLIVIA

**Doreen Salazar**

Program and Training Officer, Peace Corps/Bolivia



Of the many Kantuta grants made in 2007, three were aimed at promoting the use of alternative cookstoves, based on the success of the earlier (Kantuta-supported) demonstration of the stoves by Agriculture Volunteer Heidi Gerling.

Heidi has since produced a manual, with the help of RPCV Dave Pérez, on other alternative cookers which increase fuel efficiency and decrease intake of harmful particulates. (Heidi received a second Kantuta grant, in 2007, to train women in Saipina, Santa Cruz, to preserve fruits and vegetables, thereby increasing their income and promoting the formation of small businesses.)

Heidi's excellent work has been recognized by the plan, pending approval from PC/Washington, to name her the PCVL (Leader) for Agriculture, beginning April 2008.

Subsequent Kantuta-supported projects promoted the use of alternative cookstoves in other communities. For example, in Boyuibe, PCV Meagan Leatherbury worked with CEDESOL technicians to train 30 soldiers in assembling 24 solar ovens and 133 wood cookers. These were distributed to schools and families in the area.

Aaron York's project in Colonia Linares demonstrated the solar oven and wood cooker technology to more than 100 community members, and the purchase of CEDESOL's Cocina Rockets by interested residents is now being coordinated. In La Laja, PCV Katie Conant reports that 15 families purchased the rocket stoves, and the Alcaldia purchased an additional fifteen stoves for installation in rural schools.

These projects were a model for another PCV, Nathan Hoxie, to incorporate the rocket stove in a kitchen project for a mother's club in San Miguel, without Kantuta funds.

### KANTUTA FUND DONORS, 2007

**Many thanks to the following 37 donors to the Kantuta Fund in 2007, with contributions ranging from \$7 to \$1,000:**

*Ginny Graveton Atherton; Don Beck; John Bradley; David Dolson; Patricia Silke Edmisten; Tom Finan; Alice Fitzgerald; Jeff Fletcher; Javier Garza; Pete and Sharen Gendebien; Geoffrey Groesbeck; Jim and Zarela Hamill; H. Kirk Harder; Gayle Harrison Hartmann; Frank Keim; Chuck Kleymeyer; Gail LeBow; Gloria Levin; Nancy Neaheer Maas; Barbara Mainster; Marilyn McGuire; Jean Meadowcroft; Jim Olson; Rosemary Pricci; Alan Rom; John Smith; Peg and Dwight Steen; Pat and Luis Stelzner; Clif and Jane Wolff Taylor; Rolly and Wayne Thompson; and Tom Yerg.*

**In addition, as reported in the Fall 2007 Yachaspa, two groups donated large sums -- \$2,580 from the Estes Park Bolivia PC reunion (of which \$800 was targeted to two NGOs in Bolivia) and \$410 from Jacksonville, FL RPCVs for use in Peru's earthquake recovery. Amigos' Board voted in the 2008 Budget to transfer to the Kantuta Fund, \$1,000 per country, from unexpended 2007 operating funds.**

### Gloria Levin

Peru (66-68)

*GloriaLevin@verizon.net*

Amigos' Board of Directors' second semi-annual meeting was held mid-December, via simultaneous email. All of our conscientious Board members were "in attendance." Amigos' 2008 budget was approved, and 2008 officers were elected. Due to our miserly operational spending in 2007, we were able to transfer \$2,000 in unexpended income to our Kantuta Fund, split equally between Bolivia and Peru. Continuing in office are **Gloria Levin** (*President, Membership Coordinator*), **Jeff Fletcher** (*Treasurer*) and **Diane Hibino** (*Kantuta Coordinator*). **Lindsey Eaves** was the one newly-elected Officer, voted *Secretary*, replacing the retired **Steve Jacobs**.

Amigos will be conducting an election of Board members so as to strengthen our status as a nonprofit organization. The first step will be nominating Amigos members for a 3-year term on the Board, to be received by the Nominations Committee by March 7. See instructions page 2. The next step will be your submission of a ballot, to be sent to you by the Elections Committee. Further instructions will follow when the ballot is sent to you.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I'll repeat that Amigos needs a new infusion of volunteers if the organization is to continue. Throughout this and every issue of *Yachaspa* are calls for members to fill various roles in Amigos. The terms of several Board members are ending in 2008, and some of us are filling multiple positions. (You know what that means for the future: "burn out".) A few good members used to step forward after reading such a plea in the newsletter, but we've had no such offers in several years. If you're waiting

for an invitation, this is IT. I realize that many people -- especially those without prior experience managing a nonprofit organization -- are hesitant, feeling they lack knowledge. However, we can phase in your involvement, starting with a delimited task and active mentoring to bring you on board. Contact me to discuss this, [glorialevin@verizon.net](mailto:glorialevin@verizon.net). And yes, I do mean **YOU**.

We recently completed the process for reaffiliating with the National Peace Corps Association. One task was to update our group's webpage on NPCA's website. Please take a look (<http://www.rpcv.org/pages/groupinfo.cfm?id=22&category=2>) for a summary of 2007 accomplishments and details about Amigos' structure.

We bid farewell and appreciation to Greg Bocquet (Peru 03-05) who was the designer and layout editor of our Spring, Summer and Fall 2007 newsletters. He contributed a smashing overall look to the newsletter, setting a high professional standard to which to aspire. Iceland-based Greg has been replaced by Don Beck, who lives 2/3 of the year in Ireland, 1/3 in San Diego. If that name sounds familiar, it's because Don is our webmaster also. A glutton for work, Don holds the same two positions for the San Diego (CA) affiliate group (see <http://www.sdpca.org>). We owe an enormous debt to him for stepping up, twice, with the skills we were struggling, unsuccessfully, to find in our membership. However, in line with Amigos' policy of redundancy (back up for all functions), we are greatly in need of members willing to work with Don in the newsletter layout/design and/or webmastering. I know you're out there -- especially members with technological

know how and/or writing and design skills. Contact [glorialevin@verizon.net](mailto:glorialevin@verizon.net) to discuss how you can contribute to Amigos.

Did you know that you have your own personal clipping service, for news of Bolivia, Peru and South America? Daily, Jeff Fletcher and I monitor multiple sites, identifying items of special relevance to our members, which we then send to our webmaster, Don Beck, to post. Bookmark these webpages so you can return to them frequently.

Whenever I receive a request for finding (non-member) RPCVs, the first resource I consult is the *2006 NPCA Directory of the Peace Corps Community*, published by Harris Connect, Inc. However, the information contained was collected a few years earlier (when everyone still had aol email addresses!) and quickly became outdated since PC alumni move around a lot, plus recent RPCVs do not appear. So I was pleased to learn that NPCA recently signed another agreement with Harris to produce a new directory, expected to be released December 2008. According to an NPCA report: "This directory will have an on-line community component, where individuals can post pictures and stories about their Peace Corps experience. Another issue is planned in late fall 2011 as part of Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary." Keep a lookout for a mailing from Harris (and/or NPCA) with a data form to complete; I'll alert all Amigos members, some of whom may not be NPCA members.

Special valentine's wishes to Lauren Gaudio and Erin Stratta, both newly returned PCVs, for their articles. And to all Amigos.

*Gloria*

## PEACE CORPS/BOLIVIA: COUNTRY UPDATE

### Doreen Salazar

Program and Training Officer, Peace Corps/Bolivia  
([dsalazar@bo.peacecorps.gov](mailto:dsalazar@bo.peacecorps.gov))



Greetings from Bolivia, where we are celebrating Carnavál while sympathizing with tens of thousands of flood victims, and hoping that the dialogues on critical national decisions result in sound compromises after the Carnavál celebrations are over.

Currently, we have 137 Volunteers serving in country, plus 31 B47 Natural Resources, Environmental Education, and Agriculture Volunteers who arrived in country to begin their training on Wednesday, January 30. On February 1, Ambassador Philip Goldberg made his first visit to Volunteers, visiting PCVs Jeff Albanese, Donovan Kessler, and Chris Yanaga in Montero. His visit was on the occasion of the launch of the new Embassy website for Santa Cruz. (Editor's Note: See Amb. Goldberg's biography at the Embassy's website: <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>; click "Embassy News" and then "Ambassador" for his biography.)

February 1 was the last day for Cesar Angulo, our Santa Cruz office administrator. Jorge Arce, who has been office administrator in Sucre, will replace him, and in February we hope to fill the open Sucre slot.

As of this year, our Integrated Education Project is in transition to a Youth Development Project. The three goals will promote improved:

- *Life Skills*, including self esteem, critical thinking, communication skills, and healthy practices for physical well-being and HIV/AIDS prevention.
- *Education and Technology*, such as English and computer skills, but also encompassing participatory teaching techniques
- *Community Development*, promoting the participation of youth in planning and implementing community development and service activities.

The VII International Baroque Music Festival will be held in Bolivia April 24-May 4, 2008. This festival takes place biennially in towns throughout the Chiquitania region of Santa Cruz. Peace Corps volunteers in the Community Tourism and Micro-Enterprise Development program are working under the watchful eye of Associate Director Daniel Lopez in sites across the Chiquitania to improve the tourism offerings along the Jesuit Mission circuit. Amigos members are invited to attend. However, make arrangements quickly, because hotel rooms fill up fast during this wonderful event!

(Editor's Note: The Festival is sponsored by the Asociación Pro Arte y Cultura at <http://www.festivalesapac.com/sitio>, an Eastern Bolivian nonprofit organization that promotes traditional culture throughout eastern Bolivia. See also [http://www.chiquitania.com/missions\\_music.html](http://www.chiquitania.com/missions_music.html) for further background on the Festival and <http://www.chiquitania.com/links.html> for travel information; the webmaster, Geoffrey Groesbeck, is a member of Amigos de Bolivia y Perú.)



Photos: <http://festivalesapac.com/sitio/index.php?option=com>

From the 2006 Music Festival "Misiones de Chiquitos", sponsored by the Asociación Pro Arte y Cultura.



### Michael Hirsh

Bolivia (70-71)

Country Director, Peace Corps/Peru

([mhirsh@pe.peacecorps.gov](mailto:mhirsh@pe.peacecorps.gov))



¡Saludos de Lima! As I write this, we have 138 Volunteers assigned to nine departments (from Tumbes to Arequipa), working in four program areas (Community Health, Small Business, Youth Development, and Environmental Management). We are finalizing our plans to start a fifth program this year, in Water and Sanitation.

Volunteers who served in Peru in the 1960s/70s often ask me if we have regional offices. We decided this time around to use a different model. Instead of offices, we have four Regional Coordinators, Peruvians who work out of their homes to support the Volunteers in their area. We have one in Cajamarca and one in Chiclayo who supports the Volunteers in both Lambayeque and La Libertad. The third, located in Piura, also supports the Volunteers in Tumbes (Wilfredo Ortega, pictured). We just hired our fourth Regional Coordinator, to work in Arequipa.

As I wrote in the last issue of *Yachaspa*, we have been assigning Volunteers to work with CARE on two-week rotations in areas affected by the devastating earthquake last August. That is working out extremely well. Both the Volunteers and CARE report that a lot is being accomplished. The reconstruction efforts will be going on for about another two months.

We are pleased to have been selected to receive \$20,000 in funds from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). PEPFAR is a multi-billion dollar effort, with the bulk of the money directed to the 15 countries with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Some of the funds, however, are directed to countries where the prevalence is still low but there is a risk of rapid spread. In most cases, the funds are channeled through USAID, but in Peru, Peace Corps has been selected to receive the funds. We are putting together a plan to provide training in HIV/AIDS prevention to counterparts in three high risk departments (Tumbes, Piura, and Lambayeque). Following the training, Volunteers and their counterparts in 30 communities will work together to develop and implement HIV/AIDS prevention action plans. This is an exciting complement to the HIV/AIDS prevention activities our Volunteers are already involved in, and we look forward to continued support from PEPFAR.

It was good to see several former Volunteers in Lima over the holidays, and we hope that all of you will drop by the Peace Corps office during your next visit to Peru. Have a happy 2008.



Photo from Michael Hirsh



*PCV Brad Ackerman working on a swine raising project in Yamango, a town in the highlands of Piura (see map). PC's Regional Coordinator in Piura, Wilfredo Ortega, is on the right, with a Peace Corps emblem on his shirt.*

### MARCH 4: NPCA'S NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

The premise of NPCA's National Day of Action is simple: If you take no other action over the course of the year, please take just five minutes on Tuesday, March 4th to join thousands of others in contacting lawmakers and urging strong support for the Peace Corps. Last year's campaign resulted in appropriations of \$330.8 million, the highest increase in PC funding in nearly five years. The President submitted his FY 2009 budget to Congress on February 4, requesting \$343.5 million for the Peace Corps. This figure is \$12.7 Million above current Peace Corps spending, an increase of less than 4%.

The President's Peace Corps request is part of a \$39.5 Billion International Affairs budget for Fiscal Year 2009, an 8.5% funding increase over current spending. An abbreviated summary of the Office of Management and Budget's report on the International Affairs Budget request (including Peace Corps)

can be found in html format at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2009/state.html>

Traditionally, RPCV leaders in the House and Senate have sent a "Dear Colleague" letter supporting increased PC funding on or about March 4. The Day of Action is timely: It comes as Congress begins consideration of Peace Corps funding levels for Fiscal Year 2009. The day coincides with Peace Corps Week, marking President Kennedy's March 1st, 1961 executive order establishing the Peace Corps.

If you will be Washington, D.C. on March 4 and can spare a few hours, contact NPCA at [advocacy@rpcv.org](mailto:advocacy@rpcv.org) to help with information distribution to congressional offices. NPCA also is looking for volunteers to make phone calls to Congressional offices, immediately after March 4, to follow up on the materials distribution."

### FRIENDSHIP FORCE SEEKING CULTURAL EXCHANGE LEADERS

NPCA has teamed up with Atlanta-based Friendship Force International (FFI) (<http://www.thefriendshipforce.org>), an international exchange organization, to identify exchange leaders who might be available to travel to 50 countries during 2009. Exchange leaders should be between 40-65 years of age, in good health, and interested in cultural exchange. Language skills are a plus but not essential.

Leaders will be required to supplement Friendship Force's existing national recruiting system by inviting colleagues in their personal or professional networks to join and to work with FFI

in designing an itinerary. Leaders will collect payments from participants, and if at least 20 participants are recruited, the leader's trip is free, with prorated discounts offered for fewer than 20 recruits. The leader represents the group at official functions in host communities.

Email Debbie Powell, [dpowell@thefriendshipforce.org](mailto:dpowell@thefriendshipforce.org), telling why you are interested, giving some background on your overseas experience and leadership, and describing which areas of the world you are interested in, and why.

### LAST CALL – PEACE CORPS WEEK 2008: FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 3

It's not too late to sign up to receive resource materials for this year's Peace Corps Week, set for February 25-March 3, 2008, as we begin the 47th year of Peace Corps.

This annual event, designed to help fulfill the third goal of Peace Corps—"to strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples"—encourages RPCVs to share their PC experiences and promote cross-cultural understanding, friendship, and peace in communities throughout the U.S.

Peace Corps can provide presentation kits (including Power Point presentations, posters, fliers, and sample PSAs), online guides for presentations to students, and a variety of proven community outreach ideas and presentation suggestions.

For more information, download [PC Week 2008 Newsletter](#) (a pdf document) and go to <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.former.pcweek> or email: [pcweek@peacecorps.gov](mailto:pcweek@peacecorps.gov).

### OUR DESK OFFICER AT PEACE CORPS/WASHINGTON

#### Christean Cole

Peru 1



Greetings from the South America Desk at Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, DC!

We are on track to send trainees to Bolivia to serve in their agriculture, environment, business, education and small business programs. Similarly, Peru will receive volunteers this year for its programs in youth, small business, health and environment.

We look forward to welcoming these trainees into the Peace Corps family and fostering their 27 month service as Peace

Corps Volunteers. The Peace Corps is celebrating a 46-year legacy of service at home and abroad.

Currently there are more than 8,000 Volunteers abroad, a 37-year high for Volunteers in the field. Since 1961, more than 190,000 Volunteers have helped promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of the 139 countries where Volunteers have served.

We are looking forward to another great year here at Peace Corps headquarters and in Peru and Bolivia!

### TOP VOLUNTEER PRODUCING SCHOOLS

Peace Corps recently released its annual list of the colleges and universities that produced the most volunteers each year. Approximately 95% of current PCVs have a college degree; of those, 11% also have a graduate degree.

Among large schools, the University of Washington ranks first (113 undergraduate alumni now serving), followed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Colorado-Boulder. In the medium-size school category, the University of Virginia took top honors with 72 volunteers, beating out George Washington University, which had 66. Among small schools, the University of Chicago had 34 volunteers, and Gonzaga University had 32.



The University of Washington also leads the pack in the annual graduate school rankings, with 17 graduate school alumni serving.

Historically, the University of California-Berkeley has produced the most PCVs since 1961, with a total of 3,326. Five other schools have produced more than 2,000 volunteers each: University of Wisconsin-Madison (2,812), University of Washington (2,504), University of Michigan (2,235), and Michigan State University (2,101.)

To view the complete list, you can download the Peace Corps' January 16, 2008 press release, at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/stats/schools2008.pdf>

#### **"WHAT'S IT LIKE TO VOLUNTEER?"**

"Before Peace Corps, I wanted to become a physician and was thinking of entering medical school, but through my Peace Corps service I realize that there is a much greater need to work in public health doing preventive work." So wrote RPCV Jan Le (Peru 2002-03), featured on PC's website in answer to the question: "What's It Like to Volunteer?"

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.whatlike.fiveminwith.Janle>

Jan served two years in Guatemala but extended for a third year, one of a handful of PCVs (Peru 1/2) assigned to help re-open PC/Peru's program. Jan was a community health volunteer, having enrolled via PC's Master's International Program.

## POLITICAL UNITY TALKS END IN CHAOS

Two weeks of negotiations designed to promote unity among political groups collapsed in mid-January when President Evo Morales imposed a plan that will slash provincial revenues and budgets. The plan cuts the shared revenues provinces receive from natural gas exports by 30 percent and uses the savings to fund social programs favored by the MAS party.

While government leaders say they will find alternative revenue sources for the provinces, opposition leaders are unconvinced.

Politics are turbulent in Bolivia now. Hopes that the election of Morales—the nation's first indigenous president—would end two centuries of virtually constant political strife appear misplaced. After a year of parliamentary bickering and some street violence, a new draft constitution was approved. But the vote was boycotted by members of the opposition parties.

Four of the nine provinces have declared autonomy from the national government and a fifth is expected to follow that path shortly. Top Bolivian judges and lawyers have said that the new constitution is both illegal (due to lack of opposition input) and so riddled with technical flaws that it cannot be put to a referendum.

## BOLIVIA PROTESTS HIGH-ALTITUDE SOCCER RULES

Bolivia has gained the support of Brazil and Venezuela in its fight against the high-altitude soccer rules promulgated by the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) last year.

Bolivia also has received support from the Soccer Professionals' International Federation, and President Morales will seek support from the World Soccer Players' Guild in late February.

Bolivia and Ecuador seek to reverse FIFA's decision to limit high-altitude matches. FIFA proposed a ban on international matches in locales higher than 2,750 meters without acclimatization. FIFA rules "highly recommend" three days of acclimatization for games played 2,500 meters above sea level, a week for games above 2,750 meters, and a minimum of two weeks for games played above 3,000 meters. The FIFA rules affect games scheduled for La Paz (3,600 meters), Sucre, Potosi, and Quito, Ecuador.

## INCREASED GAS REVENUES HELP YOUTH, SENIORS, INFRASTRUCTURE

Thanks to contract renegotiations pushed by the Morales administration, Bolivia's income from gas and oil has increased from \$173 million in 2002 to an estimated \$1.57 billion in 2007, according to a series of authoritative reports from the Andean Information Network (AIN). At the national level, the increased revenues are funding a stipend for families with children in primary school and a pension program for senior citizens. At the departmental and municipal level, the revenue infusion is funding road and school construction. The AIN series focuses on Bolivia's gas nationalization, with issue papers describing the background, politics, and uses of oil and gas funds. For more information, visit <http://ain-bolivia.org>.

## FLOODS RAVAGE BOLIVIA

The Bolivian government declared a state of emergency due to flooding caused by heavy rains since November 2007, and is now considering declaring a "national disaster." To date, 45 people have died, and nearly 30,000 families are homeless.

The areas most affected are eastern Santa Cruz and the Beni, but problems also exist in La Paz, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, and Tarija. As of mid-January, the Bolivian Defense Ministry said that \$30 million dollars was necessary for relief.

Bolivia suffered similar flooding, and needed similar financial resources, in the summer of 2006-2007. Similar to that event, this year's torrential rains are a result of the La Nina weather phenomenon. For up-to-date reports, visit <http://www.redhum.org>.

## EVO: NARCO-TRAFICANTE?

The *Miami Herald* reports that in a little-noticed portion of a major, four-hour speech about Colombia guerilla groups, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said that he "chews coca every day in the morning," thanks to regular gift packages of "coca paste" sent to him by Bolivian President Evo Morales.

Coca paste is a semi-refined product—an addictive, controlled substance that is illegal in both Bolivia and Venezuela. The growing and chewing of coca leaf, while legal and common in Bolivia, has been illegal in Venezuela ever since that country signed the anti-narcotics Vienna Convention of 1961.

A year ago Venezuela agreed to buy 4,000 tons of coca leaf from Bolivia to diminish the supply of potential cocaine and create a new market for coca-based foods and medicines. That project is stalled due to legal difficulties with cross-border shipping.

## CHILEAN FIRM BUYS OUT WONG CHAIN

Peru's largest supermarket chain, Wong, was sold (at a cost of \$500 million) to a Chilean retail giant (Cencosud), leading many Peruvians to bemoan this



*Wong Supermarket, Lima*

latest example of the "Chilenization of Peru." Combining Wong's 62-percent share of Peru's supermarkets with the 12 percent share held by Chilean-owned Tottus stores leaves a 26 percent share in the hands of Supermercados Peruanos, a Peruvian firm.

Chilean investors already have significant holdings in Peru's mining, banking and retail industries. But any intrusion on Peru's cuisine -- part of the national identity -- is viewed as a direct blow to Peru's pride, from the country's wealthier neighbor to the South. Call-in radio shows were besieged by Limeñans threatening to boycott the supermarket chain. Cencosud has promised to retain the Wong name and to continue the high level of customer service that earns Wong top ranking among the public opinion. The firm was founded in 1942 by a Chinese immigrant family, and its stores are all in the Lima area. This fracas is reminiscent of the 1999 sale of Inka Kola, Peru's top-selling soft drink, to Coca Cola.

## HEAVY FLOODING THROUGHOUT PERU

As of February 7, 22 people had been reported dead in the heavy flooding and mudslides throughout much of Peru. Hundreds of homes have been damaged or destroyed, and the rising waters have displaced an estimated 60,000 persons. Washed out bridges and roads have stranded trucks loaded with fresh



Photo: TV News 3 New Zealand

food supplies for remote areas. Plans are underway to ferry aid by helicopters. Among the localities most affected were the Pampa Grande section of Puno,

near the Bolivian border, Alto Inambari in Sandia Department; and central Junin east of Lima. In Junin, six people died when their bus plunged into the Tarma River after a huge boulder, dislodged by torrential rains, slammed into the bus, plunging the occupants into the Valley below. The bus was headed to Huancayo on the Tarma-LaMerced highway. Flood stage was reported on the Huayabamba, Saposoa, Mayo and Paranapura rivers in San Martín, northwest of Lima. The rainy season in Peru extends for several more weeks, and even more intense rains are predicted for March.

## COMAS TODAY

For those of us who knew Comas "when," *Living in Peru* (<http://www.livinginperu.com>) reports that a swimming pool complex is being constructed in the district of Comas, Peru, home to over one million people.



<http://www.livinginperu.com/news/5656>

Located in northern districts of the province of Lima, the 204,514 sq. ft. complex will be in Sinchi Roca Park. The Municipality of Lima will soon inaugurate the 37,673 sq ft swimming pool. Opening in the future will be a swimming pool for small children and a pool with six 82 ft. long lanes for swimming laps. The complex will also have parks, water slides, an artificial lake and a dining area.

## HUELGA CLOSSES CUSCO FOR A DAY

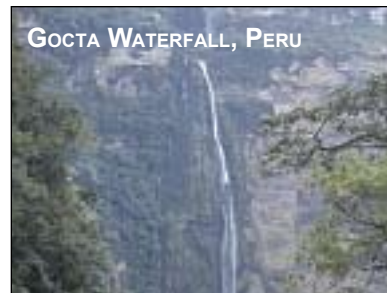
Peru's main tourist attraction, Cusco, was paralyzed by a strike mounted by 30,000 demonstrators who were protesting legislation that they felt would threaten the region's cultural heritage by overbuilding tourism facilities. They were asking President Alan Garcia not to sign two pieces of legislation that would ease licensing for tourist development near historical and archaeological sites. The strike was reported to have been effective, and roads linking the city with the provinces of Arequipa and Apurimac (as well as the road to the Sacred Valley of the Incas and the border with Bolivia) were blocked. Over 500 protesters controlled the Inca fortress of Sacsayhuaman until police arrived. Service was suspended on the train that normally carries 1,500 tourists daily to Machu Picchu. The strike is backed by Cusco's regional president and by the city's Mayor. The controversial legislation has been approved by Congress, but is yet to be signed by Garcia.



CATAHUASI CANYON, PERU



COLCA CANYON, PERU



GOCTA WATERFALL, PERU

## A NEW WONDERS OF THE WORLD COMPETITION

<http://www.new7wonders.com/nature/en/>

Amplly publicized is the election of Machu Picchu as one of the seven modern Wonders of the World after a worldwide popular vote, conducted by the (Swiss) Open World Corporation. Starting with the [Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](#) (all from the Mediteranean area), many other lists have been promulgated, notably by differentiating natural vs man-made sites.

A new competition is underway to select seven new natural wonders, again conducted by the OWC. Some early nominees are, for Bolivia, Laguna Colorada, Madidi National Park, Salar

de Uyuni and the Ulla Ulla Reserve and, for Peru, Apurimac River, Colca Canyon, Golca Waterfall, Huascarán and Paracas Beach. Also nominated are the Amazon and Lake Titicaca. Nominations can be made via <http://www.new7wonders.com/nature/en/nominees>.

OWC opened the competition for seven profit-making sites in 2001, starting with 200 monuments, winnowed down to 21 finalists in 2006, and followed by worldwide citizen voting for the final seven. The winners were announced in Lisbon, July 7, 2007 (got it? 7/7/07 for

7 Wonders). Latin America provided three of the selections, the other two being Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Chichen Itzá, Mexico. To commemorate the award to Machu Picchu, hundreds of celebrants gathered at the 15th century Inca ruins in the remote, 7,970 foot high site in the Amazon region of Peru.

USA Today and ABC's Good Morning America, announced a [different set of world wonders](#) in 2006, decided by six judges, with the Internet one of their choices!



APURIMAC RIVER, PERU



SALAR DE UYUNI, BOLIVIA



LAKE TITICACA, BOLIVIA



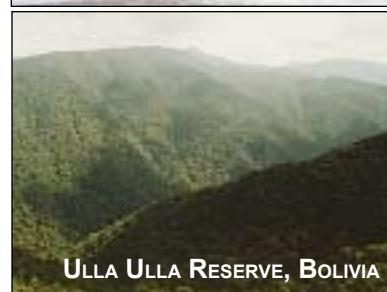
HUASCARAN, PERU



MADIDI NAT'L PARK, BOLIVIA



LAGUNA COLORADA, BOLIVIA



ULLA ULLA RESERVE, BOLIVIA



PARACAS BEACH, PERU

MAKE NOMINATIONS AT:  
<http://www.new7wonders.com/nature/en/nominees>

All photos from: <http://www.new7wonders.com/nature/en/>

## FILM REVIEWS



### **COCALERO (2007, 94 MIN)**

Directed by Alejandro Landes  
DVD available from Netflix and Blockbuster

**Gloria Levin, Peru (66-68)**

This documentary film, directed by Alejandro Landes -- Ecuadorian raised, Brown University-educated -- is a 60-day countdown in the populist union leader Evo Morales' unlikely and unpretentious 2005 campaign to become the first indigenous president of Bolivia. The backdrop is the rise of the "cocalero" union, challenging the U.S. backed crackdown on coca growing. Morales gave seemingly total access to the filmmakers -- visiting his one-room, cluttered house in Cochabamba; diving into a rural swimming hole in his underwear; having his hair cut by a woman barber at a small barbershop; and drinking beer with his pals. Frequent detours are made into his biography and the history of the rise of the cocalero movement, based in the Chapare region of Bolivia. His driver says that the

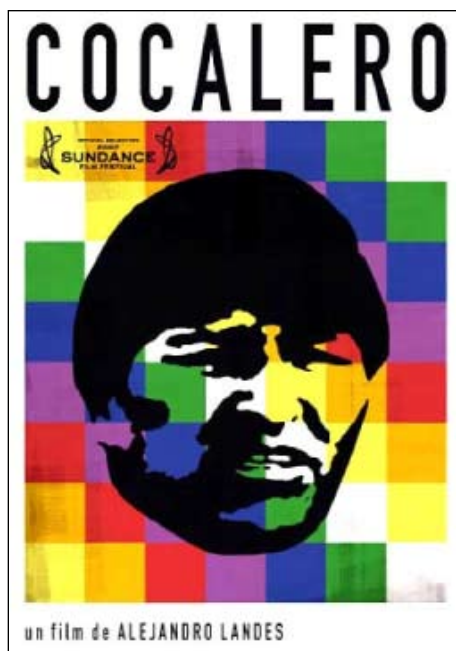


Photo: <http://www.muchochine.net/img/cocalero.jpg>

candidate, although an Aymara Indian, actually speaks little of the language, "not enough to make a speech." Morales claims that his politicization came about after seeing a Quechua Indian burned alive by government forces. "Up until then, I believed that the President was the father of all Bolivians," he remembered. "I had no education or ideology then but began to question."

Some aspects of the film were particularly memorable to me. First, the inhospitality he encountered in Santa Cruz, including a man shouting racist epithets at Morales. Second, his nurturing of indigenous persons, especially women, to assume leadership positions in his "March Toward Socialism" (MAS) party and the care given to training grassroots leaders, most illiterate. Third, the closing scene in which a crew of 24 tailors takes great pride in creating a special suit for Evo, trimmed in Andean weaving -- allegedly, his first. Evo is shown discussing the logistics for a major demonstration as well as attending a fundraiser with business leaders. The point of view of the film is 100% pro-Evo -- his opponents are depicted routinely in a negative light, without any pretense at fairness, although a priest describes brutal control methods used by the Party. "Cocalero" ends with a caption that Morales won the election with 54% of the vote. He assumed office January 22, 2006, Bolivia's 80th President. The film was screened at the 2007 Sundance and Human Rights Watch Film Festivals.



### **MÁNCORA (2008)**

Directed by Ricardo de Montreuil

**Gloria Levin, Peru (66-68)**

Look for "Máncora," a Peruvian - Spanish co-production, that made a minor splash at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. Directed by Ricardo de Montreuil, this road trip film follows a moody, 21-year old man on his odyssey in the aftermath of his father's suicide. Along with his



Photo: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1003023>

older half sister and her husband, who live in New York, they leave Lima to travel north 1165 km to the beach town of Máncora, Piura, where they party hard and, in the process, destroy their relationships.

The director's first (2006) film was "La Mujer de mi Hermano." Interviews with the director, producer and stars of the film are easily found via an internet search. Frequent descriptors of the film are "stylish," "lush," "steamy," but also "slow." Seventeen films from Latin America were screened at Sundance this year.

### PERÚ NEGRO: A LIVELY BLEND OF COLORS, MOVES AND SOUNDS

Lauren Gaudio, Bolivia (2005-07)

Joan Laliberte (Peru 1962-63), issued a challenge: "I dare anyone to see and hear Perú Negro without dancing." She had first seen the troupe perform in 1974 in Lima and purchased their subsequent albums. I accepted Joan's dare on a recent Sunday afternoon in Purchase, NY's Performing Arts Center. Based on my clappin' tappin', swaying body during their performance, I surmise that their power is undiminished in the intervening 33 years.

I was hypnotized by their pulsing percussion beats and their passionate guitar chords. I was awed at their movements -- at the way each person's neck and head, arms, legs and shoulders each pumped and swayed. But I most appreciated their extensive costume collection that brightened the stage.

Perú Negro is a colorful Afro-Peruvian dance and music performance group founded over 35 years ago by the late Rolando Campos to preserve Peru's African heritage. They have been appointed as "Cultural Ambassadors of Black Peru" by the Peruvian government.

In 2005, they were nominated for two Grammys for "*Jolgorio*," their second album released in the U.S. Perú Negro has performed all over the world, and its current tour through much of the U.S. is commendably affordable.

Perú Negro's goal, greater than Grammys or world tours, is to recreate the folkloric history of their ancestors through the 30+ member music and dance ensemble. Perú Negro boasts a collection of varied instruments, including borrowed ones such as African *djembe* and Cuban drums, as well as indigenous pieces such as wooden fruit crates (*cajones*), a tithing box used for church collections and a dried-out donkey's jaw (*quijada de burro*). The latter three were all that was left for African slaves to use after the Spanish colonizers banned drums.

In the 1500's, Spanish colonizers stole Africans, forcing them into slavery, primarily in Peru's dangerous mining industry. Perú Negro's website explains that "the legacy of slavery in Peru differed from elsewhere in the Americas in that slaves were brought from a wide variety of regions in Africa making cultural continuity virtually impossible."



Photo: <http://peruanista.blogspot.com/2008/01/peru-negro-tours-us.html>

Over 400 years later, in 1969, and influenced by the U.S.'s civil rights movement and the Black Power struggle, Perú Negro was founded. Issues of identity and rescuing and reshaping history at the heart of the civil rights movement also became, and remain, the heart of Perú Negro.

Perú Negro blends Andean melodies and rhythms true to Africa. The troupe performs dances mocking the waltzes of the slaves' masters (*Toro Mata*) and sings protest songs created by the enslaved Africans (*panalivio*). The company claims: "It's different from anything anyone has heard. It's Latin music, vibrant and melodic, but the musicians and dancers concentrate on the rhythms."

So, I pass the dare onto you: Go see Perú Negro and just try to sit still.

(Editor's Note: A 4½ minute sample of Perú Negro can be viewed on YouTube -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNi8PZdvKg0> The troupe's website, <http://www.perunegro.org>, includes dates and venues for its 2008 U.S. tour, ending March 31 in Pullman, WA. Groups of Amigos members are organizing to attend performances together in their towns. Amigos' membership coordinator can help members organize to meet -- [glorialevin@verizon.net](mailto:glorialevin@verizon.net)).

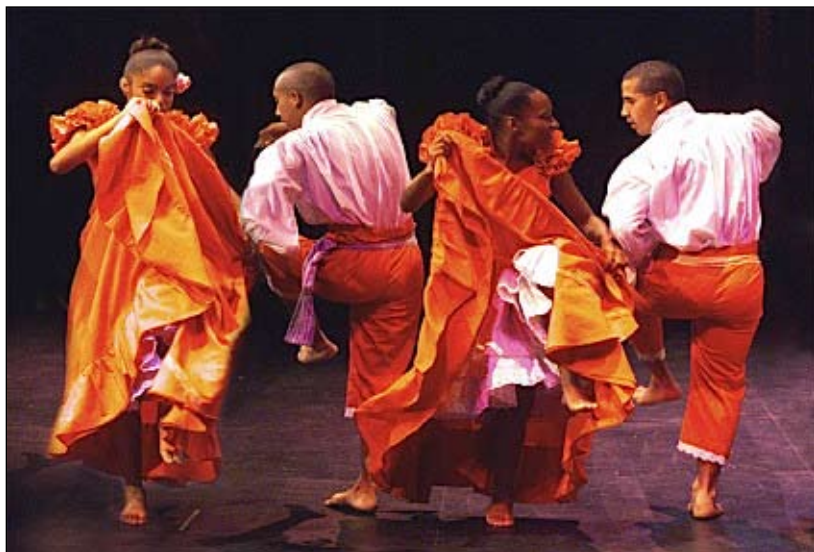


Photo from [http://www.cuconcerts.org/media\\_center/hi\\_res/perunegro.jpg](http://www.cuconcerts.org/media_center/hi_res/perunegro.jpg)

**YACHASPA** SPOTLIGHTS TWO AMIGOS MEMBERS WHO SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE IMPACT OF THEIR PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCES ON THEIR LIVES.

## BARBARA MAINSTER SAN JUAN DE DIOS, AREQUIPA, PERU (1964-66)

### Peace Corps Assignment:

Urban community development in a *barriada* (now known as a *pueblo joven*, squatter settlement that developed into an autonomous community). Founded a family planning project and taught preschool education in San Juan de Dios.

**Current Location:** Ft. Meyers, Florida

### Occupation:

Employed beginning 1972 (since 1988 as Executive Director) at the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, Florida. RCMA has grown to 1600 employees and a \$50 million budget. It is the largest nonprofit childcare organization in Florida, with 7,000 migrant children enrolled in facilities across 20 counties.

### Why did you join PC?

I always had an interest in other cultures. After my B.S. degree (Michigan State University), in social sciences, I studied anthropology at Cornell University's graduate school before entering Peace Corps.

### What was your housing situation as a PCV?

As a married couple, my (then) husband (Steve Mainster) and I first lived in an abandoned *sillar* (porous, white volcanic stone) block house in the *barriada* San Juan de Dios, and then he and the community constructed a house with *sillar* and cement (rather than mud) and we had "our window"! There was no electricity, water or roads, and the bus came as far as the *barriada* below us.



Photos from Barbara Mainster

**What was your favorite phrase/ expression?** "Si, pues....."

### What is your most notable memory?

When some of the women came to me, shortly after my arrival, and asked how was it that I had no kids. From that developed an IUD birth control project which had a real impact. Another notable memory is being called to help with a difficult birth, in a really dark little hut, in which the child eventually was born dead with the cord around her neck.

### How has PC impacted you, personally and in your career?

I became hooked on wanting to work with under served Spanish speakers, which led me to serve migrant farm workers here in Florida and to advocate for those in the rest of the U.S.

### How do you keep connected with PC, RPCVs and Peru?

The son we adopted in Peru is alive and well, having produced children and now grandchildren, which is a connection that will never end! When I returned to visit Arequipa in 2001, I helped a young woman from San Juan de Dios get her H1B visa to work with my organization. She lives with me and thus, between her and her family, I am in very close contact with what is happening in San Juan de Dios.

### Your advice for PCVs and PC recruits:

No question, Peace Corps does more for you than you will do for anyone there. If everyone could have that experience, war could become obsolete.

Further information about RCMA can be found at: <http://www.rcma.org>, including Barbara's bio at [http://www.rcma.org/executive\\_director.asp](http://www.rcma.org/executive_director.asp).



# MICHAEL KLEIN

## COHONI AND TIRAQUE, BOLIVIA (2002-04)

from Michael Klein



### Peace Corps Assignment:

Basic Sanitation Volunteer (Water Systems, Latrines, and some edutainment). First year was in Cohoni, eight hours outside of La Paz; second year transferred, due to unrest, to Tiraque, one hour outside of Cochabamba.

### Current Location:

University of Wisconsin at Madison

### Occupation:

I am a third year Law student. I spend most of my time now looking for a job as a litigator to pay the loans that I have accumulated.

### Why did you join PC?

I did not join because I expected to be able to "help people." I tend to follow Thoreau's idea in *Walden*, i.e., I tend to run the other way when someone is coming to "help" me. I think the whole idea of help is a bit patronizing, and I generally prefer to work with people for a common self-interest. Instead, I wanted to learn something about how the vast majority of humanity experiences life, which is in poverty. I believed, and still believe, that if I took what I learned in Peace Corps and kept it at the back of my mind, I can do a great deal more good now as a middle class American than I did in Peace Corps. Some volunteers did great things, some did almost nothing. I wish I was the former, but in all honesty I would say I was solidly in the middle of the pack, but I think all of us can go on to do great things with what we learned.

### What were you doing prior to joining PC?

I was a Habitat for Humanity Site Supervisor, and I also skied and enjoyed climbing the mountains of Colorado.

### What was your favorite (least favorite) food in country?

*Favorite:* Potatoes.

*Least favorite:* Potatoes. (Not a huge amount of variety, I'm afraid.)

### What was your favorite (least favorite) music in country?

Cumbia was my least favorite, and also seemed to be the only choice. I just never got into it, although I just spent a semester on an exchange program in Santiago, Chile, and I actually found my toes tapping to the cumbia beat when out at the bars.

### What is your most notable memory?

Either summiting Ancojuma (over 21,000 ft) with two friends from Colorado, or crashing into a house paragliding and throwing my back out. Both appear in my daydreams and are memories that I am fond of, even if they both involved some pain.

### What do you miss most about PC and Bolivia?

I miss walking the mountains, and drinking up what I saw, but I am glad to be where I am now.

### How has PC impacted you?

I believe that I came back much more sophisticated about how the world is

put together. I also doubt I would have gotten into UW Law School without it. Ultimately, Peace Corps informs everything I do now, even if it is not directly clear. Plus, I can order in Spanish at Mexican restaurants, which can be really handy.

### What interesting places have you visited post-PC?

Aside from the last semester studying law in Chile, I spent the summer in Hanoi, Vietnam working for a Vietnamese law firm. It was very cool to get an insider picture on one of the Asian tigers as their economy takes off. It was sort of the anti-Peace Corps, which has expanded my viewpoint in a new direction.

### Your advice for PC recruits and PCVs?

This is a great experience, but it is hard. Go in with your eyes open, and expect a lot of frustration, and that things will not function as you expected. That includes the Peace Corps administration itself.

Once you get in country, don't complain too much. It's your choice to be there, and focusing on the negatives is a choice you make. More than anything, this is your two years, own it. Also, don't listen to too much advice.

Once you get home, very few people will really care or understand what you've done, but you shouldn't have done it for others anyway. That's life, don't be surprised, but make sure to stay in touch with other RPCVs because they will be much more likely to understand.

*(Editor's Note: Attorney members: If you can help in Michael's job search for a litigator position, contact him at [kleinmj@yahoo.com](mailto:kleinmj@yahoo.com).)*

### SUERTE TO STEVE IN SUCRE

At the end of his third term as the Secretary of Amigos' Board, on December 31, 2007, Steve Jacobs, Bolivia (1963-66), resigned his office (followed shortly after by his Board membership), in order to devote full time to his studies. Steve is a retired architecture professor from Tulane University. He holds degrees in Architecture from MIT and the University of Pennsylvania and holds emeritus professor status at Tulane. His "retirement" has been busy. Not only did he volunteer to join Amigos' Board and soon after was elected its Secretary, but he also enrolled as a Ph.D. student in Tulane's Latin American Studies program. Specializing in "Colonial Cultural History of the Andean Region," he regularly contributed articles to *Yachaspa* based upon his cultural history research. Meanwhile, he evacuated his New Orleans home during Hurricane Katrina, traveled from place to place and then waited out the re-opening of New Orleans by auditing classes at the University of Texas, Austin. And he ruptured his Achilles tendon in Austin!! Never a dull moment. Through all this chaos, he barely missed a beat with Amigos, carrying Amigos' history around in his laptop computer, always in search of an internet connection to keep in touch with us.

Steve recently completed his doctoral coursework and is preparing for his comprehensive examinations, after which he embarks on his dissertation research. Much of 2008, he will be

in Sucre, conducting research at the ("very well organized") Bolivian National Archives, on the cultural history of colonial Sucre. He explains that Sucre was named "la Ciudad de los Cuatro Nombres." That is, Sucre was once known as Charcas ("the Audiencia de Charcas, a second tier political center under the Virreinato of Perú"); La Plata, Alto-Peru (before Simon Bolivar's visit); Chuquisaca; and finally, Sucre (named after Bolivar's general, Mariscal Antonio de Sucre). He writes: "The Potosi miners lived in La Plata, along with rich hacendados provisioning the mines and miners. It was one of the wealthiest cities in colonial America, with European artists, musicians, and architects; theaters; multiple church rituals, etc." Since Sucre's colonial history is very much understudied, Steve quips: "Sucre's past is my future!"

Having given the Board a year's notice of his planned resignation, we were able to recruit to the Board Lindsey Eaves, Peru (2003-05) who thereupon was elected Secretary (2008). Many thanks to Steve for his long and dedicated service to Amigos. And

best wishes on his dissertation research and a productive scholarly career.



*(right) Steve Jacobs views the colonial art collection at Sucre University's museum.*

*Photo from Steve Jacobs*

## ABOUT AMIGOS

### BIENVENIDOS, AMIGOS!

The following persons either became new members (underlined) or renewed their memberships between the Fall 2007 *Yachaspa* and 2/11/08:

#### *PC/BOLIVIA:*

**Heidi and Todd Abernethy** (1990-92); **Aurora Alvarez** (98-01); **Ginny Gravenor Atherton** (64-66); **Alexandra Aurilia** (01-04); **Don Beck** (67-69); **Richard Engan** (68-70); **Paul J. Fisher** (70-71); **Justin Godchaux** (68-70); **R. Lance Haddon** (67-9); **Walter Kaiser** (98-01); **Frank Keim** (66-68); **Michael Klein** (2002-04); **Joseph Lown** (99-2001); **Christina Luongo** (02-05); **Paul Martin** (67-70); **Megan McMahon** (00-02); **Ilse Pitts** (67-69); **Joan White Velasquez** (67-69)

#### *PC/PERU:*

**Dave and Meghan McNeil Aabo** (03-07); **Rick Bloom** (66-68); **John Riley Campbell** (03-05); **Richard Catanzaro** (68-70); **Kristin Rosling Collantes** (04-06); **Huong Diep** (03-05); **Lindsey Eaves** (03-05); **Bruce Gottschall** (65-67); **Gayle Hartmann** (64-66); **Linda Hatch** (70-72); **Archer Dodson Heinzen** (64-65); **Lorena Hinojosa** (04-06); **Andres Huerta** (64-66); **Jon Leeth** (62-64); **Barbara Mainster** (64-66); **Jordan Mallah** (03-05); **Janeice McConnell**; **Douglas Neal** (03-05); **Nancy O'Leary** (63-65); **Jim Olson** (64-66); **Lenora Retallic** (65-67); **Carol Salinas** (65-67); **Franklin Salveson** (67-69); **Roger Sattler** (66-68); **Hank Stonerook** (70-72);

**Joseph and Linda Stubbs** (68-71); **Ted Tate** (71-72); **Todd Tibbals** (62-64); **Diane Provost and Mark Tribo** (71-73); **Jeanne Hanna Vogel** (64-66); **BJ Warren** (62-64); **Nancy Holt Wiggins** (64-66); **Mike Wolfson** (64-66)

#### *OTHER:*

**Michael Hirsh** (Bolivia 70-71; current Peru PC staff); **Gail Lebow** (prior Bolivia staff spouse); **Terese and Jerry Perkins** (prior Bolivia staff); **Bob Roberts** (Peru 62-64; Bolivia staff 65-67)

The following recent RPCVs accepted a one-year free membership in Amigos:

#### *PC/BOLIVIA:*

**Natalia Boyce**; **Lauren Gaudio**; **Katherine Gordon**; **Jonathan Hemingway**; **Vanessa Hunter**; **Andrew McCown**

#### *PC/PERU:*

**Laura Beranek**; **Rachel Farrell**; **Shauna Goldberg**; **Erica Hill**; **Matthew Lange**; **Gracy Obuchowicz**; **Mike Wissner**

#### *PC/MADAGASCAR:*

**Daryn Crowell** (born in Peru)

## OXFAM'S EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

OXFAM's response to the August 16 magnitude 7.9 earthquake in Peru has concentrated on affected rural areas, especially vulnerable because of their lack of accessibility and visibility. OXFAM's focus was to provide clean water and latrines (to prevent the spread of disease) and shelter.

"A second phase ... will include helping communities advocate to ensure that the government distributes aid equitably, as well as creating systems so that communities will be better prepared for future emergencies." OXFAM/America received over \$345,000 in online donations for its Peru Earthquake Relief and Recovery Fund.

(Excerpted from the Fall 2007 newsletter, OXFAMExchange)

# PCVs' RUN-IN AT BUENOS AIRES MARATHON

Erin Stratta, Peru (2004-06)

The culmination of my Peace Corps experience was participating in the 2007 Buenos Aires Marathon (BAM). Four of us had recently completed service, two had become runners for the first time in their lives, several of us were nursing serious injuries, and we had survived prepping for a marathon in the Third World. We laughed at memories from our training runs: dog attacks, sand in the eyes, catcalls from men, dodging cattle/pigs/children, running up hills at 8000 feet altitude and the emergency squats along highways. The intestinal dramas of PCVs do not complement training for marathons.

But running offered a time that we could control, something incredibly elusive during our volunteer lives. We couldn't control the weather, barking dogs, the host sister crying, the meetings missed, plans foiled, and projects failed. But we could wake up early and put in a long run, feeling that we had accomplished something, however small, that day. Also, running was the only way to burn off calories from the immense amount of papas and arroz I was forced to consume daily.

We arrived in Buenos Aires excited to run (for most of us) our first marathon. We soaked up the city's sun and beautiful people on the day preceding the event. Strategic cheering positions were planned for several Peru RPCVs who had come to cheer us on. I realized that, like us, people from all over South America and the world had been training for months with the same goal.

The next morning, our hostel's hardcore partiers drunkenly wove us off as we departed in our taxi. Shoes were tied, chafe stick applied, numbers pinned, and pony tails tightly secured. Picture long lines for the port-a-potty's, incessant dance music, men in impossibly short shorts, runners chugging drinks and energy bars, and some incredibly lewd stretching techniques. Laura spotted a group of Americans (tall and white) wearing matching fleeces with the PC logo. They were Bolivia PCVs, the first non-Peru PCVs we had met during our service. We promised to meet up after the race and joined the sea of scantily clad bodies edging toward the start line. The starter's pistol got the race under way.

Before long, two Americans caught up to Anna and me, having seen the PC logo on our t-shirts. They were in a 15-person contingent of Paraguay PCV runners. One, "Spandex Sam," ran the whole race beside us. Fresh conversation in your native (albeit at times gasping) tongue helps in a long marathon. We shared PC stories -- "Your weirdest moment," "the sickest you've ever been," and "our PCMO is the best because\_\_\_." Sam explained why he was running in long-sleeves and pants (in the increasing heat). The hilarious story of how he got second degree burns all over his body carried us through at least 2 miles.



*At the finish line of the Buenos Aires Marathon (left to right) Peru PCVs Rachel Levy, Lizzi Clark, Laura Buckley and Anna Turbes; Bolivia PCVs Sarah Robinson, Sarah Anderson and Winston Harrell; and the author Erin Stratta (Peru 6) Photo from Erin Stratta.*

Fortunately for us, Spandex Sam's friends constituted the most crazed, energetic cheerleaders ever. How they popped up to cheer us on every 5 miles, despite the city's giant traffic jam, remains a mystery. And our very own Kim and Amanda from Peru provisioned us with every possible goody, even Snickers bars.

When we ran by Sarah, her family, and the Bolivia cheer squad around mile 17, I teared up. I was just overwhelmed with the camaraderie of fellow PCVs and Americans, notwithstanding the runner who kept spitting on me.

Upon finishing the race, we cheered as each succeeding PCV crossed the finish line, snapping photos and exchanging sweaty hugs. At the Irish pub later that night, we South American PCVs jointly toasted our bloody toes, huge blisters, and the inability to walk, all endured with fierce pride.

We fell in love with the remarkable city of Buenos Aires. We were impressed with the excellent management of BAM, with all the water, Gatorade, sponges, fruit, awesome crowds, orchestra, bands, and therapists giving free massages at the finish line. It was painful, yes, but so is our service. Perhaps they are good metaphors for each other; the unexpected happened, we were let down by our bodies but uplifted by our friends and Peruvian host families cheering us on from miles away, and, in the end, we were forced to face and overcome our fears.

Thanks to the Bolivia volunteers; I wish you all the best in the rest of your service. I hope that South America volunteers, past and present, uphold this masochistic marathon tradition, as it was truly one of the most unforgettable memories living south of the Equator. B.A.M.!

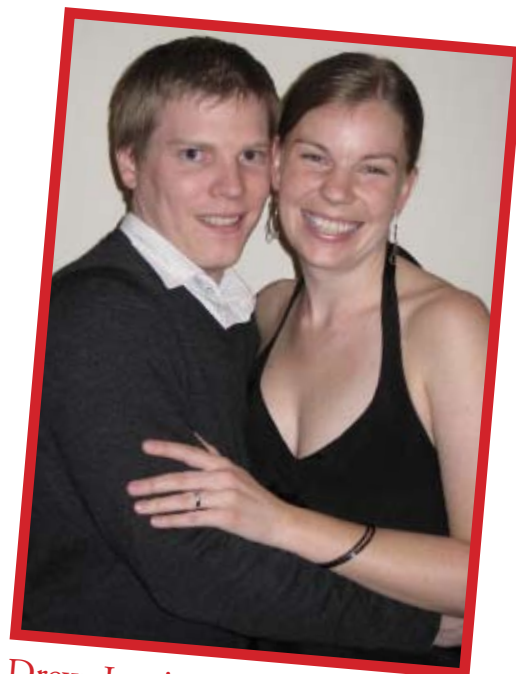
## ABOUT AMIGOS

### PEACE CORPS ROMANCE ♥ ♥ ♥

Peace Corps has given us many blessings -- cross cultural sensitivity, global understanding, career direction, a credential helpful on our job resumes, language ability, that hefty readjustment allowance, etc. But on **Valentine's Day**, we pay homage to Peace Corps' role as romantic matchmaker. Whether a PCV marries a fellow PCV or a host country national, we owe it all to PC.

Following are some recent Peace Corps couplings among Amigos members. **Happy Valentine's Day** to all!!

**Dave and Meghan (McNeil) Aabo**  
met in Peru 2, married May 12 on Mt. Hood,  
Oregon and are now living in New York  
City.



**Drew Lewis and Marta Young**  
(both Peru 4) were engaged in December.  
They are both medical students -- he in  
North Dakota, she in New York.



**Lindsey Eaves of Peru 2,**  
**and Jorge (Koki) Carrasco**  
met as health workers in Peru and  
married in Virginia recently.



# Amigos de Bolivia y Perú

## Membership Form (rev. March 2007)

*Mail this form and check (made out to Amigos de Bolivia y Peru) to  
Amigos, 7327 University Ave., Glen Echo, MD 20812  
To join or renew via the National PC Association, using a credit card, ( <http://www.rpcv.org> )  
Click "Join/Renew." When prompted for an affiliate group, choose Amigos de Bolivia y Peru.*

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname as PCV: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Country & Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., Bolivia, 1997-1999)

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(If spouse is also joining Amigos) Spouse surname as PCV: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse surname now: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Host Country & Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., Peru, 2002-2004)

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**Check, if you are a member of NPCA: \_\_\_\_\_**

*Please check as appropriate and tally the subtotals in the right-hand column.*

_____ Free (close of service within one year)	1 year FREE membership
_____ Annual Dues	\$ 15 Individual \$ _____
Double or triple for 2 or 3 year membership	\$ 22.50 Couple/Family \$ _____
	\$ 8 Student/Retired \$ _____
	\$ 4 Hardship \$ _____
_____ Foreign Address (Via U.S. Mail)	\$ 5 (if no email) \$ _____
_____ Tax deductible donation to Amigos' Kantuta development programs	\$ _____
Earmark your donation to:	
( _____ Bolivia) or ( _____ Peru) or ( _____ 50/50)	

GRAND TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_