

YACHASPA

QUECHUA FOR "SABIENDO" [KNOWING]...

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AMIGOS DE BOLIVIA Y PERÚ, INC.
SPRING 2008

<http://www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org>

ADIÓS FROM JAVIER

Javier Garza, PCV Peru (70-71); Country Director, PC/Bolivia (05-08)

As my service as Country Director, two years in the Dominican Republic (2003-05) and now three years in Bolivia, ends, I feel good about a lot of things and kind of sad about others. I wish I had pushed myself harder to break the chains from the desk



and get this portly body out to visit more volunteers -- the real reason why we do this. Yes, there's a lot of joy and some sadness, anxiety and satisfaction but few regrets.

This hasn't been a job – it has been a mission. Where else can I get to play conductor to the best players that make up this development orchestra of some of American's best and brightest? For years, it was my dream to return to Peace Corps. For me, PC was an experience that truly opened my eyes to the world. It gave me satisfaction that, while we were in an horrific war, our country and its resilient people still had the capacity to express our kindness and goodwill.

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INTRODUCING ... KATHLEEN SIFER

Gloria Levin, Peru (66-68)

Kathleen Sifer, currently Country Director in Georgia (since 2006), has been appointed to head Bolivia's Peace Corps program, starting late May, replacing Javier Garza. Although not an RPCV, she brings outstanding managerial



skills and experience to Peace Corps/Bolivia, including fluency in Spanish. She holds a B.A. (Spanish with a Latin America Studies minor) and a master's in international management and business administration. Her subsequent career has been spent overseas primarily, as a senior manager for multi-national banks in South America and Asia. While vice president of the Mellon Bank for the Southern Cone and Andean regions, based in Chile and Argentina, she traveled extensively in Bolivia and Peru.

When she first looked into PC employment, she had assumed PC would place her in a Spanish-speaking country, but instead, PC placed her in Georgia where she established a business and social entrepreneurship program. She also oversaw existing programs in the areas of English language education and youth and community development.

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Collective Effort

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.

YACHASPA SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Welcomed are submissions of relevance to Peace Corps, Bolivia and Peru. We're interested in a wide range of submissions so send your ideas, as soon as possible, to yachaspa@gmail.com.

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 for Yachaspa. It will, however, be considered for use online as a newsletter "yapa" (bonus) or on Amigos' website.

Please send submissions, with pictures and captions, whenever possible, along with your country and dates of service, to yachaspa@gmail.com.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER 2008 YACHASPA

IS:

JULY 10

SPRING '08 YAPAS:

YAPA = "tip", something extra.

Related items and addendums to articles in the newsletter are posted online as yapas. Always check for yapas when you get Yachaspa.

Arts-Books

- **"New Book on Peru's Shameful Decade"**
by Gloria Levin. About lecture by Prof. Jo-Marie Burt at GMU April 3, 2008.

Bolivia News

- **"007 Filming Surfaces Old Tensions"**
- **"Not a Chicken Shit Bust"**

Peru News

- **"Peru and Yale University Locked in Artifacts Dispute"**
- **"Easing Divorces in Peru"**

Members

- **"Working on a Presidential Primary Campaign"**
by Evelyn Kohls LaTorre, Peru (64-66)

Amigos Finances in Good Shape

Jeff Fletcher, Bolivia (67-69), Treasurer of Board of Directors

Amigos ended 2007 in a strong financial position, with healthy carryover balances in all three accounts: the general operating fund and the two Kantuta accounts that are provided to the PC staffs in Bolivia and Peru for them to make small grants to PC volunteers' sustainable community projects.

Outlined below are 2007 financial highlights and budget plans for 2008. Additional details about both items can now be found on our website, <http://www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org/mission1.htm>, where the adopted 2008 budget and a shortened version of Amigos' tax return for 2007 have been posted.

2007 Financial Results

Thanks to strong growth in membership dues, operating fund income exceeded budget projections by approximately \$1,000. Cost reduction measures implemented during the year resulted in savings of some \$600 over projected expenses, leaving the operating budget with a carryover balance of approximately \$4,700 at year-end. The operating budget covers ongoing organizational expenditures — copying, supplies, postage, website hosting, software purchases, meeting expenses, and fees for NPCA affiliation and State corporate registrations.

Donations received and earmarked for Kantuta/Bolivia and Kantuta/Peru also exceeded projections by approximately \$400 and \$3,000, respectively. Kantuta/Bolivia received extraordinary financial support in 2007: a \$1,000 contribution from a Bolivia RPCV Amigos member and a \$2,600 donation

of funds left over from revenue collected at the August, 2007 reunion of Bolivia RPCVs in Estes Park, Colorado. On the expense side, Peace Corps/Peru received a \$500 grant, and Peace Corps/Bolivia was awarded \$2,000 in grants in 2007. Year-end carryover balances for Kantuta/Bolivia and Kantuta/Peru were approximately \$4,350 and \$2,650, respectively. Reinforcing the importance of the Kantuta program, the Board of Directors transferred \$1,000 from operating funds to each Kantuta account in 2007.

2008 Financial Plans

The adopted 2008 operating budget projects income and expenses at approximately 2007 budgeted levels. The budget continues the practice of transferring \$1,000 to each Kantuta account from operating funds.

For Kantuta, 2008 donations are projected at 2007 budgeted levels of approximately \$1,000 per country, and grants of \$2,000 have been authorized for each account in 2008. As recommended by the Estes Park reunion and approved by Amigos' Board in December, grants of \$400 each were made to support activities in Bolivia of *Mano a Mano*, an organization that supplies medical equipment and health services to poor communities, and of *Pro Mujer*, a group that provides micro-enterprise support to women entrepreneurs.

For more information, contact me at jeff_tara@comcast.net.

Amigos Board Balloting Returns 40%

John Smith, Bolivia (67-69)

During the month of April, elections were held for three elected positions on Amigos' Board of Directors. Nominations had been sought by a Nominating Committee of **Patt Behler**, Peru (62-64), and **Justin Lovell**, Bolivia (04-06). Three then-appointed Board members volunteered to run, to become elected Board members. **Franklin Salvesson**, Peru (65-67), and **John Smith**, Bolivia (67-69), constituted the Elections Committee.

Electronic ballots were sent to Amigos' members who were current in their dues and had electronic access, while postal

ballots were sent to those without internet access. Of the paid membership, 72 (or 40%) returned validly marked ballots -- a relatively good response.

All three candidates were elected to new three-year terms: **Lindsey Eaves** (unanimous) and **Jeff Fletcher** and **Diane Hibino** (both 71-1).

The Elections Committee thanks you for your participation.

Gloria Levin

Peru (66-68)

glorialevin@verizon.net



If on the day you read this, Spring isn't cooperating, click this to get a dose of Spring:

http://www.procreo.jp/labo/flower_garden.swf It will produce a black page. Click your mouse anywhere on the page and then get creative by clicking and dragging anywhere. OK, now read on.....

The big news of this *Yachaspa* issue is the coming transition in the position of Director, PC/Bolivia. Javier Garza is packed already for his May 13 departure, returning to loll around in Texas until he takes off for his next gig. I want to personally express my appreciation to Javier for his steadfast support of Amigos de Bolivia y Peru over the past 3 years, in a myriad of ways. He and Doreen Salazar have done a magnificent job in establishing the *Kantuta* program – meeting our highest expectations, again and again. And they have kept us thoroughly informed of their decisions in making mini-grant awards to PCVs as well as progress and outcomes of the projects. The flow of information between Amigos and Javier is constant, and yet I have never had the pleasure of meeting him. (The photos included in this newsletter are the first I had seen of him.) Javier remains a member of Amigos, so we hope to involve him in a different role in the future. We are looking forward to a similarly strong relationship with the incoming Director, Kathleen Sifer, and all signs are excellent that we will be able to continue Amigos' mutually supportive relationship with PC/Bolivia.

Thanks to all dues-paid members who cast their ballots in our recent elections, which ended April 25. Doing so allowed Amigos' Board to have a higher ratio of democratically elected to appointed members (now 5:3). Each of the three candidates who converted to elected status (and to new 3-year terms) already serve important roles in Amigos -- Lindsey Eaves as Secretary, Jeff Fletcher as Treasurer and Diane Hibino as Kantuta Coordinator. Thanks to Patt Behler and Justin Lowell, our Nominations Committee, and to Franklin Salvesson and John Smith, our Elections Committee for their careful adherence to our Bylaws in conducting these elections. Note, however, that these elections did not bring in new workers for Amigos. Keeping up the drumbeat, you are needed. Enough said.

Much of Amigos' work goes on behind the scenes, as many of our members can attest (to), and much of that is intergenerational. Newly returning members are being mentored in resume

writing, career guidance, job searching, suggestions for volunteer opportunities, etc. For example, a law student is given career advice by some of our attorney members. At the same time, older members are being mentored by younger members – for example, two of our members who have committed money to set up municipal libraries in their old communities are being advised by two recent RPCVs whose knowledge and current experience are proving invaluable. We've introduced one member teaching at a university in Bolivia to another who is a U.S.-based world-class expert in the subject matter being taught who has provided consultation to the students. I can and do serve as a conduit for these pairings and love to do so. Try me!! We've incorporated a theme into this issue of training and jobs after Peace Corps, with articles related to education, medicine and social justice.

Recent returnee, David Pérez, has demonstrated just the moxie we crave. While joining Amigos, he offered to adopt our Kantuta/Bolivia fund as one of two charitable recipients of monies raised by a team running the San Diego Rock'n'Roll Marathon (June 1) [see page 9]. Show your appreciation to David and his fellow runners by making a donation for each mile of their sweaty journey and designate Kantuta as the recipient. We'll email southern California members a graphic of the t-shirt they'll be wearing for the run.

One little way you can participate, although a bit gruesome, is to check our website's listing of deceased RPCVs from Bolivia and Peru. Click the RPCV webpage and scroll down. We're frequently asked whether *RPCV Fulano-de-tal* is still alive but have no way of knowing if you don't tell us. Contact our (beloved) webmaster, Don Beck (donbeck@cox.net), with the person's name and country of service. If you have information about the person's life, it can be hyperlinked to the person's name.

Finally, un mil thanks for all who contributed great articles to this issue. Make sure you read the yapas connected to the webpage for the newsletter, to read additional bonus articles. We just entered *Yachaspa* into a contest for the "best printed media," run by the NPCA. Wish us well; don't you think we deserve bragging rights?

Cuidense.



Javier Garza reading "Goodnight Moon" in Spanish to school kids near Sucre, Bolivia.

Thirty eight years after I flew off to Peru, I'm leaving this gorgeous Andean region where it all started for me. We are regrettably yet in another war. I still prefer our battles for peace, our struggle for smiles, our quest for justice and our call to constantly improve the human condition. This is what sets PC apart. We know that when we work and share experiences with other cultures we have not only added immense value to and forever changed our lives but we have also given them, our hospitable hosts, a glimpse of our decency.

Yes, my experience as a PCV in 1970-01 was marred, my program flawed and my staff support missing. It was a different time, a hurtful time. I clearly remember my Country Director sternly asking me how it felt to "abandon Peace Corps/Peru," I said. "It was Peace Corps/Peru that abandoned us." (I and 13 others in my group early terminated). My close out report was titled: Peru, the Peaks and Valleys. And so started the quest to someday come back. Now as I leave Bolivia, I can happily report that I am glad I did come back.

I had a long time to think about what I would do differently if I were in charge. Could I really change things? Could I lead the kind of place that Peace Corps volunteers, staff, our families and our country would be proud of? Would I have enough steering room in a sluggish, overwhelming government bureaucracy to set things in place that I yearned for during my service? Well, I surely tried. Time will tell whether my last five years met those goals.

In wanting to create an open, friendly, professional, caring, and always supportive environment, all the things I longed for during my service -- I fell in love all over again with the concept of Peace Corps. After a long time of doubt, bitterness and some years of yearning, it was the spirit of our work as PCV's, our commitment and care for the cultures we encountered, that rekindled this spirit. Yes, I believe in Peace Corps. You bet that I believe that Peace Corps is the sanest investment the U.S. Government can make.

Thank you Amigos de Bolivia y Peru, for all your support. Thanks to the PCV's and RPCV's for representing our country so well. Thank you for being so inspiring that I could hardly wait to get to work. And thanks to the most genuinely caring staffs that have supported us. It has been an honor to serve as Peace Corps Country Director.

Serving is a choice. As Peace Corps volunteers, it is a life-long commitment. That's what Peace Corps taught me. And I am a much better person for this experience. Peace Corps will always be in my spirit because we are a very special extended family.

Se cuidan. Abrazos.

Javier Garza visiting Machu Picchu as a PCV, vintage 1971.



Photos from Javier Garza.

Her weathering of political crises in Georgia should equip her well for Bolivia. PC/Bolivia is a slightly larger and more diverse program than Georgia, but Doreen Salazar will stay on as Program and Training Officer (PTO), providing continuity.

I had the delightful opportunity to meet with Kathleen, while she was in Washington, D.C. to attend Peace Corps' worldwide meeting of CDs. I found her to be straightforward, down to earth and with a good sense of humor. While she had no nonprofit or government experience before Peace Corps employment, she finds that management, in whatever context, mostly comes down to people management. She expressed fondness for PC, PCVs and the beauty and culture of Georgia but looks forward to new experiences with PC/Bolivia.

PC has only been in Georgia for about 7 years. Upon learning of Amigos' relationship with "our" two countries, especially our Kantuta Fund, she determined to encourage Georgia PCVs to create a Friends of Georgia alumni group. She promised to

keep Amigos updated on the PC/Bolivia program, including the outcome of grants made from our Kantuta Fund. Most encouraging of all, Kathleen whipped out her check book and joined Amigos de Bolivia y Peru for two years!!

New to her will be PCV Leaders (Editor's Note: PC/Bolivia currently is authorized for nine PCVs who extend for a third year) and PC/Bolivia's requirement that PCVs live with host families throughout their 2-year service. Georgia PCVs are allowed to live on their own after the first six months. However, she noted that most of the PCVs choose to remain with their host families, in part because of the difficulty of withstanding alone the bitterly cold Georgian winters in the remote villages where PCVs are assigned.

Kathleen can be heard in an interview on a podcast, created by Georgia PCVs, at <http://www.sakartvelopodcast.org/episode1.html> (Episode 1).

GREETINGS FROM GINO

One Amigos member well known to many Bolivia and Peru RPCVs and staff is Gino Baumann, the PC/Peru director for the Arequipa region (1964-67) and then Bolivia country director (1967-71). Now in his early 80's, he lives in Costa Rica and plays tennis every day on his own courts. He continues his valuable research on those who volunteered in 1936 for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade which traveled to Spain to defend the Republic in the Spanish Civil War.

After receiving his copy of the Winter *Yachaspa*, Gino sent a letter of greetings to Amigos members, and commented on the projects of each of the current PCVs whose *Kantuta*-funded projects were reported in that issue of the newsletter. Intrigued by descriptions of rocket stoves, he inquired if anyone could make available a plan of the latest model.

Gino welcomes Amigos to write and/or visit him, saying: "If in San Jose, Costa Rica, give me a ring to have coffee to *volar lengua* (a *Nicaruanismo* for *platicar* or chat)."



Gino at Aug 07 reunion in Estes Park, CO. Photo by Alan Rom

Confounded by computers, he instead encourages snail mail:

Gino Baumann,
Quinta Baumann-Perez,
Coyol de Alajuela,
Costa Rica, C.A.

phone or FAX (both 433-8693).



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” (right) which has red petals, a yellow floral tube and a green calyx, reflecting the colours of the national flag. (Wikipedia)



THE KANTUTA FUND

UPDATE

PC/Peru has expended \$400 of its most recent *Kantuta* grant of \$500 (awarded August 2007) to purchase packets of organic vegetable seeds to distribute to PCVs for creating community, school or family gardens. All recent PC trainees have undergone 5 training sessions from the La Molina National Agrarian University. Upon completing training, newly minted PCVs are provided, to take to their permanently assigned communities, six packets of vegetable seeds, obtained at a reduced price and appropriate to the growing conditions of the PCV's locale. Each supply is sufficient to plant one or two small demonstration gardens, totaling 20 to 50 sq. meters. Encouraging Peruvians to incorporate healthy vegetables in their diets has proved to be one of PC/Peru's most successful activities.

The \$410 donation from the Jacksonville, Florida RPCVs for recovery activities related to the Peruvian earthquake of last year has been targeted to assist a Peruvian NGO, Coprodeli, which operates in the disaster area. Coprodeli was an early responder to the earthquake disaster, active in repairing buildings and opening emergency shelters. These shelters have since been converted into daycare centers for the children of affected families. PCV Jorge Medrano, who had been working with Coprodeli near Lima, now works parttime with Coprodeli on its Ica operation, including overseeing these daycare centers.

Approximately half of the \$1,000 grant made to Kantuta/Bolivia in late December is in use on three PCV projects as described on page 8 by Doreen Salazar, with other proposals waiting in line. An additional \$1,000 for PC/Bolivia was pre-approved by Amigos' Board of Directors, payable upon reasonable paydown of the first \$1,000. Distribution of the second grant awaits the arrival in Bolivia of Kathleen Sifer, incoming PC country director, so the *Kantuta* agreement can be signed by her, so as to continue the *Kantuta* relationship between PC/Bolivia and Amigos.

We encourage you to develop a fund-raising project that would benefit the *Kantuta Fund*. For inspiration, read on page 9 about recently returned PCV, **David Pérez** and his team who are running a marathon to raise funds for *Kantuta* (and to advertise *Kantuta*). Support the team's hard work and charitable instincts by reading their website, making a donation and, if you live near San Diego, show up on June 1 to cheer them on.

Also welcome are individual donations from Amigos members. Make your check payable to “Amigos de Bolivia y Peru.” Include Amigos' membership form (at the end of this newsletter) or a note, indicating for which country (Bolivia and/or Peru) the donation is intended. Mail to: Amigos, 7327 University Ave., Glen Echo, MD 20812. Your donation will be acknowledged with verification of its tax deductibility.



KANTUTA UPDATE / BOLIVIA

Doreen Salazar

Program and Training Officer, Peace Corps/Bolivia

In the last few months (January to April 2008), PC/Bolivia's *Kantuta* evaluation team approved the following three projects:

Guarani Oral History Documentary

(PCV: Benjamin Conor Branch, awarded \$169 USD)

This project aims to film a short documentary on the culture of the Guarani ethnic group that lives to the south of Muyupampa. The Bolivian Guarani are highly resistant to modernization; however, their customs, traditions and language are being slowly eroded. The Guarani do not maintain any written records but instead rely on information passed on orally from one generation to the next. The principal purpose of this project is to film elders of the Guarani communities speaking in their native tongue, describing their lives, customs, traditions, etc. A documentary, subtitled in Spanish, will be produced, and copies will be distributed to the community to preserve a small piece of their cultural patrimony, as well as to the new library being constructed in Muyupampa and to the municipal government. Wider distribution will be made to Peace Corps/Bolivia and hopefully to others who wish to learn more about the Guarani people.

Improvement of the Quality of Education

(PCV: Emily Drakage, awarded \$169 USD)

The proposal, developed with the Dirección Distrital de Aiquile, is to train 50 teachers, representing all the schools in the district, on how to create and implement didactic material in their classrooms to improve the teaching-learning process. The aim is to improve the learning environment and the quality of education for the students in these schools.

Small Water Cooperative

(PCV: Kyle "Kilo" Lopez, awarded \$ 212 USD)

This project will pay 25% of the cost of a 10,000 liter ferrocement tank to provide clean water to benefit 12 families in the community of Achiras. These 12 families, with the assistance of the PCV, have formed a water cooperative.

TWO PROJECTS 2006-2007



(above) Sewing Bees masks; Bee-keeping Project, Quirusillas.

Making them like this cost 9Bs rather than buying them in the store for 45Bs.

(Photo from PCV Bonnie Cox)

(left) Club de Madres: Materials library/bank, San Lorenzo

The women learned skills of crocheting, incorporating native seeds into the designs, which they sold, using profits to reimburse materials "borrowed" from the library/bank.

(Photo from PCV Vanessa Hunter)

RUNNING FOR KANTUTA

David Pérez, Bolivia (05-07)

On June 1, 2008, six amateur runners will be racing to the finish line at the end of 26.2 miles in the *San Diego Rock 'n Roll Marathon*. Why? Because we're a little crazy but also to raise money for Amigos de Bolivia y Peru. We call ourselves SDMT, the unofficial "*San Diego Marathon Team*." Granted, the name is not original, but it stuck nonetheless.

SDMT plans to give 50% of the donations received to Amigos' Kantuta/Bolivia fund because I know, through first-hand experience, how important that money has been for Peace Corps Volunteer projects. We have already raised \$500 for Kantuta but need your help to reach our goal of raising at least \$1,000. Please visit our website to learn more and donate at <http://davidperez888.googlepages.com>

The six members of the team are, starting with me: **David Pérez**, recently returned from Bolivia as a PCV and PCV Leader. I worked in a small, rural, isolated community in the Gran Chaco of Southern Bolivia, near the Argentine border. My community projects addressed nutrition, food preservation, organic garden pest management, and sustainable cooking practices. Since returning to Maryland, I have been working as a substitute teacher. I plan on attending graduate school to earn an MS in conservation biology and sustainable development. Coming home after 3 years in Bolivia was certainly stressful at times; I hadn't planned on reverse culture shock. Running has been a great way for me to keep my head clear and focus on getting a good job and staying healthy. I also dig the everyday motivational challenge of getting out and hitting the road, knowing that by running, I'm supporting Bolivia. That knowledge keeps me out there day after day after day.

Cristina Pérez, my sister, graduated from Virginia Tech in 2005, lives in Washington, DC and works for Price Waterhouse Coopers. She has been in a consulting practice for a few years, supporting the U.S. Department of State. Cristina enjoys a challenge and is definitely getting one while training for her first marathon. When not running, Cristina enjoys time with her family and friends, listening to music, working hard and taking weekend trips.



Erin Kordis also is a 2005 Virginia Tech grad living in Washington. She works for Booz Allen Hamilton where she supports the Department of the Navy. Her true passion lies in health and fitness, so she is enthusiastic about training for her first marathon. She's even more excited about raising money for the Kantuta Fund. Her motto is: "any day I am too busy to run is a day that I am too busy." **Nicole Sacco** graduated from Virginia Tech with Cristina and Erin, and they look forward to sharing the marathon experience. Nicole is originally from New Jersey but now lives in downtown DC where she does fundraising for the Chamber of Commerce.

Jessica Franck is a 2004 Virginia Tech grad, currently employed by Deloitte Consulting. She lives in Arlington, VA, and is Erin's roommate. Jessica enjoys playing golf and soccer and cheering on the Hokies. Training has been pleasurable so far, and she looks forward to June 1. Finally, **Charles Sitkoff** is from Atlanta but lives in Washington now. When not running, his interests include red wine, Cold War history, baseball and rap music.

If you live in the San Diego area, please come to the race to cheer us on. We'll be wearing t-shirts with an Amigos and Kantuta theme (pictured above).

DOREEN SALAZAR

PTO PC/Bolivia

dsalazar@bo.peacecorps.gov



Bolivia has certainly been in the news lately. On May 4, citizens in the Santa Cruz department voted to approve autonomic statutes. Violence associated with this move left one 68-year old dead from tear gas and 20 injured, and MAS supporters burned ballot boxes. President Evo Morales has called for dialogue with the Prefects. On June 1, two more departments, Beni and Pando, will vote on their autonomic statutes, and on June 22, Tarija will vote. Chuquisaca and Cochabamba are also considering following suit, but the popular vote on whether the department should have further autonomy lost in these two departments previously, so they are gathering signatures on petitions to put the issue on the ballot again. The date for the referendum on the national constitution was originally set for May 4, but this date was repealed, and no new date has been set.

As a precautionary measure, a March 11 decision was made to cancel the incoming Basic Sanitation / Youth Development training class due to arrive in country on May 7. On April 18, we swore in B47's 31 Agriculture and Natural Resources / Environmental Education trainees. In July and August, B42 (Basic Sanitation / Integrated Education) will COS (end service). As of May 5, we have 148 volunteers in country, with Volunteer Leader Justin Taylor COSing on May 9. The next training class is expected to arrive in September for which we have requested 5 microenterprise development volunteers, 3 youth development volunteers, and 4 basic sanitation volunteers.

Two key staff members will leave Peace Corps/Bolivia this month: Javier Garza, Country Director, and Daniel Lopez, US Direct Hire APCD for Microenterprise Development. Javier's last day is May 13; for Daniel it will be May 23. We thank both for their dedication to improving Peace Corps/Bolivia, and for the new ideas they brought and implemented. We wish them well in Texas and Colorado, respectively.

(Editor's Note: The following paragraph refers to the news coverage and internet traffic in early February about an Embassy employee's earlier briefing of PC trainees in Bolivia. On February 14, Amigos emailed its members with information and links to reliable sources for staying updated. The Embassy employee was withdrawn from Bolivia by the U.S. State Department soon after.)

Finally, let me clarify the situation, stemming from a February 2008 ABC news report claiming that our Volunteers were "asked to spy." This article was well-timed politically, both in Bolivia (the U.S. Embassy was charged with using a special police force for information-gathering), and in the US (with the Patriot Act up for renewal). In July of 2007, a lower-level Embassy security officer delivered a routine briefing to trainees that we had requested. He had never given a briefing to Peace Corps trainees before and mistakenly instructed them to report to the Embassy any outside contacts who might seek confidential U.S. Government information. I was present at the event and corrected the instruction. No trainee left the room believing that they needed to report such contacts. It was the only time that mistake was ever made. At the next briefing in November, the mistake was not repeated.

"HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE..."

A story has been circulating through the RPCV grapevine that Bolivia PCVs are no longer placed in the Altiplano. Doreen Salazar, PC/Bolivia's PTO corrects that misperception: "We no longer place PCVs in La Paz, but we currently have 12 Volunteers in the department of Oruro and 2 in Potosi. We also have 2 Volunteers in Independencia, Cochabamba, which is Altiplano."



MICHAEL HIRSH

Bolivia (70-71)

Country Director, Peace Corps/Peru



It has been an unusually long and hot summer along the Peruvian coast and a much rainier season than normal in the Sierra. A lot of Sierra communities have been cut off for days at a time. Global warming?

We are going ahead with our plans to add a fifth program area – Water and Sanitation. We have been interviewing candidates to be Program Manager and will probably have someone selected by the time you read this. Our first group of 14 Water and Sanitation Volunteers will be arriving in September. During our assistance to communities in Ica affected by the August earthquake, we received many requests for help building or restoring water systems. In addition, water and sanitation is a constant theme we hear throughout the nine departments where we are working. So we expect we will be able to place the Volunteers in communities where they can hit the ground running.

We're also adding a Special Education component to our Youth Development program. Thanks to the efforts of a disabled congressman from Trujillo, Peru has designated 2007 to 2016 as the decade of the disabled, and there are a number of new programs being put in place. In smaller communities, all special needs children currently tend to be placed together in a single

classroom, and little learning takes place. We hope to help communities separate the children with physical disabilities but who can learn normally from others with various degrees of retardation, so that all can learn to their best abilities.

In a time of federal budget constraints, getting the green light to expand our program areas and our Volunteer numbers must mean we are doing something right. Also, I think everyone would agree that this is a perfect time for an agency like Peace Corps to be working in Peru. Given six years of high macroeconomic growth, funds are available for social investment, people are motivated to learn new skills, and there are opportunities for those who work hard and have the appropriate skills. Furthermore, there is a growing awareness of social issues that never were even spoken of before in Peru, such as corporate responsibility, labor rights, children's rights, family violence, alcoholism, gender, and opportunities for the disabled. Exciting new programs are opening up and often require the type of long-term technical assistance that a Peace Corps Volunteer can provide.

As always, we enjoy hearing from former Volunteers and having you stop by the office when you're in Lima. Contact me via mhirsh@pe.peacecorps.gov

Peru Appears in 2009 RPCV Calendar

Gloria Levin, Peru (66-68)

The 2009 *International Calendar*, produced by the RPCVs of Wisconsin, will include a photo of and cultural information about Peru, as its February page. Amber Davis Collins (Honduras RPCV) had submitted the winning photo (at right), taken in the Cuzco area when she was a tourist in Peru.

Amber asked Amigos de Bolivia y Peru for assistance since she is unfamiliar with Peruvian culture. In turn, I solicited suggestions from Amigos members recently returned from Peru, with responses received from Nikolaus Eichman, Lenah Geer, Abby Olson, as well as older RPCV Ralph Bolton, among others.

After considerable internal debate (as to accessibility to Americans, indigenous vs. modern, etc.), I made the following recommendations to Amber:

Book: Hugh Thomson's *White Rock: An Exploration of the Inca Heartland*; Mario Vargas Llosa's fiction.

Music: Eva Ayllon's "Eva! Leyenda Peruana"; Sonia Morales' *huaynos* for indigenous music.

Movie: "Paloma de Papél," in part because most Peruvian films are not readily available, e.g., from Blockbuster or Netflix.

Recipe: *Papas a la huancaína*, courtesy of Ralph Bolton

I'd be curious to know what you would have recommended as being representative of Peruvian culture (glorialevin@verizon.net). The calendar will be available for purchase beginning Fall 2008.



Photo: Amber Davis Collins.

FROM NPCA



Nominations Open for Sargent Shriver Award

If you know an RPCV who exemplifies the best qualities of the Peace Corps community, consider nominating that individual for NPCA's Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service. Nominations are due by June 2. For more information, visit the "awards" section of <http://www.rpcv.org> or contact

Anne Baker, vp@rpcv.org.

Join the *MorePeaceCorps* Campaign

NPCA has launched the *MorePeaceCorps* campaign, a public awareness and legislative initiative designed to double the size and budget of the Peace Corps in the future, thus enabling PC to respond to the more than 20 countries that have requested programs for which funds and volunteers are insufficient. Nepal RPCV Rajeev Goyal (rgoyal@mrss.com) is coordinating the effort.

PC alumni and other supporters can help the campaign by endorsing the effort, publishing op-eds in support in local newspapers, recruiting individuals to join the NPCA Director's Circle to help fund the campaign, sharing country of service information with NPCA, identifying emblematic volunteers whose inspiring projects can be used in brochures and videos and group members whose organizations can provide campaign help, holding fund-raisers for the campaign, and participating

in an upcoming *YouTube* contest showcasing the meaning of Peace Corps. For more information, visit the NPCA website, <http://www.rpcv.org>.

Lawmakers Endorse Expanded PC Funding

NPCA's Fourth National Day of Action was a success, resulting in 101 lawmakers (28 Senators, 73 Representatives) signing on to letters urging increased PC funding in FY 09. Leading the charge in the Senate were RPCVs Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Norm Coleman (R-MN); the House letter urging \$400 million for PC in FY 09, substantially above the President's request, was circulated by RPCVs Chris Shays (R-CT) and Sam Farr (D-CA). NPCA Advocacy Coordinator Jonathan Pearson said the mobilization was the largest yet for the Day of Action campaign, and generated a 43 percent increase in signatures from similar letters last year. Amigos de Bolivia y Peru's president, Gloria Levin, was cited by Pearson for having made telephone calls to over 150 Congressional offices in an effort to enlist signers.

NPCA Connects through Online Social Networking

Emerging social networks on the internet are being exploited by NPCA to connect, inform and engage the Peace Corps community. A PC presence has been established by NPCA on *Facebook.com*, *LinkedIn.com*, *Change.org*, *YouTube.com*, *MySpace.com*, *Flickr.com*, *Widgetbox.com* and *Orkut.com*. Some of these sites require the user to create an online profile in order to access the content.

FROM PEACE CORPS



Peace Corps Unveils 50th Anniversary Website

Peace Corps has launched a website to commemorate the organization's 50 years of service and its official

anniversary on March 1, 2011: <http://peacecorps.gov/50>. The site provides historical information, highlights ways to join in the celebration, lists events in the U.S. and in-country leading up to and during the anniversary period, and encourages website visitors to donate to a 50th Anniversary Fund.

Noted Journalist to Write History of Peace Corps

Stanley Meisler, an early evaluator of Peace Corps with a long and distinguished career in journalism, will write the history of the first fifty years of the agency for Beacon Press. Meisler knows the agency well and has observed PCVs at work around the world in his 30+ years as a foreign and diplomatic correspondent

for the Los Angeles Times. He has written a similar history of the United Nations and is the author of a biography of Kofi Annan. To see samples of his news commentaries, visit <http://www.stanleymeisler.com>.

President Bush Meets PC Country Directors

To honor National Volunteer Week, the President hosted 33 Peace Corps trainees enroute to Guatemala and 65 Country Directors in the White House's East Room on April 29. The CDs were in Washington to participate in their annual, worldwide meeting. PC Director (an RPCV from India) Ron Tschetter remarked that the President "has been an ardent supporter of the Peace Corps, not only by supporting the agency's largest budget in history, but also through his personal touch in meeting with individual Volunteers when he travels." The prior day, in meeting with the CDs, Condoleezza Rice became the first sitting Secretary of State to visit PC headquarters.



TRADE PREFERENCES EXTENDED TO BOLIVIA

In early March, the U.S. Senate, without objection, approved the extension of expiring trade preferences for Bolivia and other Andean nations until the end of 2008. The measure already had passed the House and is supported by the Bush Administration. Approval of the extension will allow Bolivia to continue to send most products to the U.S. duty-free. The legislation was uncoupled from the more controversial Colombia trade preference bill, currently pending in Congress, but with nearly zero prospects, due to the refusal of House Democrats to schedule it for a vote.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM POSTPONED: REGIONAL AUTONOMY VOTES MAY HAPPEN

Bolivia's National Electoral Court has indefinitely postponed a proposed May 4 referendum on a new constitution that would give more power to indigenous groups and create greater state control of the economy. The court said logistical concerns would make it impossible to ensure the necessary legal guarantees and electoral environment for the vote. National lawmakers from President Evo Morales' MAS party passed a bill two months ago sending the new constitution to voters, over the objection of opposition groups who had boycotted the assembly that drafted the document last year.

The court also suspended referenda planned in eastern states for greater state fiscal and administrative autonomy, but leaders in those regions (Beni, Pando, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, and Tarija) have vowed to press on with autonomy votes. The autonomy movement has the potential to provoke serious unrest in the country. Efforts by the Catholic church, the Organization of American States, the European Union and other Latin American nations have so far failed to persuade breakaway leaders from halting the votes, now scheduled for May 4 (Santa Cruz), June 1 (Beni and Pando), and June 22 (Tarija).

FUNDS PROPOSED FOR LEGAL COCA MARKET

President Morales recently proposed spending \$300,000 to develop legal markets for coca, defying a much-ridiculed U.N.-affiliated drug agency's call for the nation to abolish all coca use. The new investment is designed to spur uses of coca in tea, flour, and herbal medicines. Coca is sacred to some indigenous groups. Its widespread use in tea and as a mild stimulant/

appetite depressant when chewed predates the Inca Empire. Morales also plans to raise the legal limit on coca production from 30,000 to 49,000 acres. Bolivia is the world's third-largest producer of coca leaf.

INFLATION UP IN BOLIVIA

Bolivia's inflation will nearly double over 2007 levels and is likely to reach 15.1 percent this year, the highest level in 17 years and the second-highest rate in the region, according to a Latin Business Chronicle analysis of new data from the International Monetary Fund. Venezuela, with estimated inflation rates of 25.7 percent this year and 31 percent next year, is projected to have the highest inflation rate in Latin American and the second-highest rate (behind Zimbabwe) in the world.

STATE TO CONTROL ENERGY COMPANIES

By the end of April, Bolivia plans to purchase sufficient shares to take majority control of four energy companies as part of a continuation of the nationalization plans begun in 2006. The companies are Andina (controlled by Spain's Repsol YPF); Chaco (owned by BP); Transredes pipeline company (controlled by Ashmore Energy International); and fuel transport/storage company CLHB (controlled by German and Peruvian firms.) Bolivia plans to own 50 percent plus one share in the companies, and will fund the \$215+ million purchase largely from payments received from Brazil's imports of Bolivian natural gas. The four companies, which will become service providers to state energy company YPFB, have not expressed any opposition to the plan.

MORALES JOINS SOCCER CLUB

President Evo Morales, 47, has signed as a reserve player with Litoral, an amateur, minor league soccer team in La Paz. Morales' soccer skills helped get him into politics. As a young man, his play on a coca-growers' team was noticed by coca growers' union officials, who hired him for a union sports job. He later became union president, and that launched his political career. Morales has been a strong opponent of a soccer federation ban on high-altitude matches and has recruited well known soccer stars, such as Argentina's Diego Maradona, in support of his cause.

Two yapa (bonus) articles online: *007 Filming Surfaces Old Tensions* and *Not a Chicken Shit Bust*

FUJIMORI STILL ON TRIAL



April 15, Peru's Supreme Court upheld a six-year prison sentence, imposed in December when the trial began, against former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, for ordering, late in his Administration, an illegal search of a private home. In so doing, the Court rejected a claim in his formal appeal that the search was necessary as part of a nationwide hunt. Fujimori, 69, also was fined 400,000 soles (\$149,000) after he admitted to ordering a military officer to pose as a prosecutor in order to search the residence of the wife of his former head of intelligence, Vladimir Montesinos, in November 2000. It is rumored that Fujimori was in search of videotapes that would have proved incriminating to him.

Fujimori is the first former leader of Peru to be sentenced for crimes committed while in office. The son of Japanese immigrants, Fujimori fled to Japan in 2000 as his presidency collapsed, amid charges of corruption. Japan recognized him as a citizen and denied Peru's extradition requests. He was extradited in September of last year from Chile where he relocated after leaving Japan, intending to re-enter Peru via Chile.

The Supreme Court has barred Fujimori from participating in Peruvian politics for two years, but additional charges are yet to be adjudicated for Fujimori's role in ordering death squads to kill 25 people. The April 15 ruling "demolishes" defense arguments that Fujimori was not in the military chain of command so could not exert lethal power. That precedent is important because the trial will now address his role in death squad killings which could carry 30 additional years of imprisonment.

CHARGES OF VENEZUELA MEDDLING IN PERU

President Alan Garcia strongly suspects but has not yet been able to prove that Venezuela is using its oil wealth to interfere in Peru's domestic economy and politics. Among the charges are financing violent demonstrations by Peruvian farmers as well as supporting left-wing elements. Of particular concern is the reputed establishment of more than 300 organizations, known as ALBA Houses, in Peru. These organizations support the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), Hugo Chávez's fair-trade alternative to the U.S. free-trade agreements. Although Peru's Foreign Ministry investigated and dismissed as unfounded the existence of ALBA houses, Peru's Congress has formed a special committee to conduct its own investigations.

DOWNSIDERS OF PERU'S "BOOMING" ECONOMY

In the midst of a 6-year long economic boom, Peru's economy is one of the fastest growing in the world, with a projected 8-9% growth rate expected in 2008. So far this year, growth has registered double digit gains. However, signs of inflation are of concern, hitting a 12-month rate of 5.5% through March 2008. Peru's Central Bank, reacting to the surge of foreign speculators, is raising the reserve requirements for bank accounts owned by foreign investment funds. The influx of foreign currencies has contributed to steep appreciation in the sol's value, leading to concerns that Peru would face a depreciation cycle. In an attempt to combat inflation, the Bank announced tripling reserve requirements, from 40% to 120%, starting in May, and is prepared to impose even steeper increases so as to cool the market. The market reacted to the plan, with foreign investors withdrawing their funds from Peruvian banks, resulting in a 3 percent drop in the value of the sol since April 10, the biggest drop in 13 years. According to the Bloomberg Report: "The sol is still up 18.8 percent over the past two years, buoyed by a rally in the price of Peru's commodity exports, including copper, silver and gold."

The rise in food prices has contributed to a lack of confidence in Alan Garcia's presidency, reflected in a recent popularity poll rating which has dipped to 26% (from 63% early in this term), the majority (57%) of those polled having cited food prices as their major discontent. Garcia has slashed tariffs, and recently the Army began unannounced, late night, door to door distribution of food to the very poorest residents in Lima. Hundreds of protesters demonstrated in Arequipa against food prices. An estimated 42% (12 million) of Peruvians live in poverty.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED IN PERU

All Peruvian vehicular license plates and associated registration cards will be replaced within two years, in an effort to thwart counterfeit plates, according to a decree posted in El Peruano, the government's official gazette, on April 20. Newer technologies of lasers and seals will provide more security, including the ability to identify the cars' place of origin. In addition, an extra digit will be added to all (now 8-digit) mobile telephones in Peru. And the Peruvian government has ordered the development of emergency, satellite-based telephony, following the failure of existing communications during recent earthquakes in Peru.

Two additional yapa (bonus) articles online: *Peru and Yale University Locked in Artifacts Dispute* and *Easing Divorces in Peru*

A SACRED LANDSCAPE: THE SEARCH FOR ANCIENT PERU

BY HUGH THOMSON

REVIEWED BY

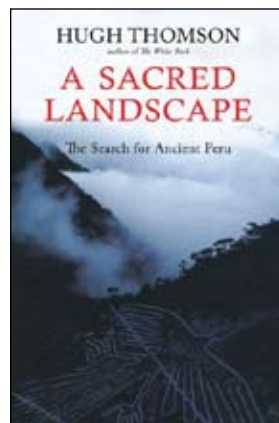
NANCY NEATHER MAAS

BOLIVIA (64-66)

If you are even mildly interested in the ancient cultures of the Andes, this is the book to read. Hugh Thomson is a genuine communicator, translating dense archeological and anthropological material into a highly readable narrative, leavened with human interest and humor. He makes the history of ancient Peru come alive with his vivid writing and original perspectives: starting with the most ancient finds at Caral, north of Lima, followed by the better known Chavin footprint, and the other great milestones which preceded the currently best-known civilization of the Inka. Along the way, Thomson points to longstanding connections between civilizations of the coast and the highlands, phenomena like El Niño that have affected developments in Peru for thousands of years, and fields like archeo-astronomy that hold keys to the past.

But, I'm selling *A Sacred Landscape* short if it comes off merely as a textbook. This journalist (turned "autodidact," a term he uses to define self-educated researchers) also makes a direct contribution to Andean archeology at Llactapata, a sister site to Machu Picchu. He described Llactapata in his earlier book on the Inka, *The White Rock: Exploration of the Inca Heartland*, (2003 in paperback), and later leads a sanctioned archeological expedition in which he not only adds a new extension to the site, but also determines its ultimate purpose. In addition, the book reaches an almost breathless crescendo towards the end as Thomson joins thousands of pilgrims in the festival of Qoyllurit'i among the glacial heights of the Andes, southeast of Cuzco. This dramatic experience helps Thomson answer a question he posed at the beginning: What makes ancient Andean civilizations tick? I won't give away the conclusion here; this page-turner will make you want to get there yourself. What I can say is that it brings to full closure other insights Thomson makes throughout the book.

Like *The White Rock*, the author has clearly done his homework. In every case, Thomson reveals a command of the academic literature, used deftly and blended with colorful sketches of the individuals responsible for making the first discoveries. Whether it be Hiram Bingham (not only known for Machu



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Hardback (2007)
376 pp
ISBN-10: 1585679011
List \$27.95
photo/info from Amazon.com

Picchu but also a chronicler of other sites), the German-born Maria Reiche who was the *grande dame* of Nazca studies, or the tragic story of Marino Gonzalez, who inherited Julio Tello's passion for Chavin de Huantar — Thomson captures the human dimension in ways not included in more mainstream academic works. (I write as one who taught courses in Pre-Columbian art at the university level for more than 25 years).

Thomson aligns himself with autodidacts like Maria Reiche and suggests that Andean studies progressed from the efforts of these characters at least as much as from the archeologists and other academic researchers who ply the field. He can be forgiven for his bias against academics, although in specific cases he is generous in recognizing their advances, for example, those archeo-astronomers who have done so much to expand understanding of these ancient cultures. One moment his views seemed to get the best of him -- this occurs in an early chapter where he is hired by the Young Presidents Organization to give a speech in Cuzco. However, again he turns a bizarre experience into one that enhances his quest to understand the ancient Peruvians.

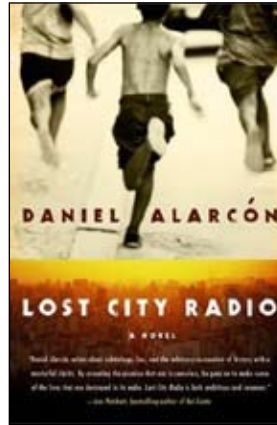
Thomson moved his family to Urubamba in the "Sacred Valley" of highland Peru while he worked on this book, precipitating sometimes humorous opportunities for them to share in his quest. He also spent many a session exchanging thoughts with locals, enjoying the local beers and making the most of his contacts with the current inhabitants at the sites. His great friends and fellow travelers appear continuously in the narrative, receiving his repeated gratitude for their assistance. This democratic approach, full of humor and a gentle humanity, infuses *A Sacred Landscape* and makes it an endearing ode to "the search for ancient Peru."

[Editor's Note: Nancy Neather Maas describes herself as loving to make art (<http://www.nmaas.com>) and to write, exercising the former a lot more in her "retirement" from university teaching than the latter. As an advocate of plainspoken English, she says: "I love Thomson's books because he communicates so directly and doesn't hesitate to give little jibes to stodgy academic egos along the way." *The White Rock* was reviewed in the Fall 2006 issue of *Yachaspa*, accessible from Amigos' public webpages, at <http://www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org/Yachaspa06/yachaspafall2006.pdf>]

LOST CITY RADIO (RADIO CIUDAD PERDIDA)

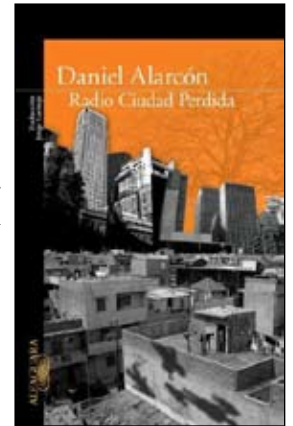
BY DANIEL ALCARÓN

REVIEWED BY
PATRICIA (SILKE) EDMISTEN
PERU (62-64)



English:
Harper Collins
Hardback (2007)
272 pp
ISBN-10: 0060594799
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Paperback (2008)
photos/info from Amazon.com

Spanish:
Alfaguara
Tra edition(2007)
388 pp
ISBN-10: 9972232662
List: \$22.95



Daniel Alarcón (<http://www.danielalarcon.com>) left Peru when he was three years old. He was raised in Birmingham, Alabama, where his parents attended medical school. Now he is a Distinguished Visiting Writer at Mills College in Oakland, California. In 2001, Alarcón won a Fulbright to do an anthropological study in San Juan de Lurigancho, a *pueblo joven*, or “young town,” near Lima. These towns grew exponentially during the “Decade of the Eighties,” when residents of Andean villages fled to the coast, trying to escape the violence wrought by *Sendero Luminoso* (The Shining Path) and the military, both forces vying for control of the residents and land.

Seeking safety and economic opportunities, hundreds of thousands of refugees settled near Lima, constructing shacks overnight. Unfortunately, the Peruvian government could not keep up with the massive growth of these communities which, in the beginning, lacked water, sewerage and police protection. Over time, however, residents elected their own leaders, many of whom were women who also organized communal kitchens, health and safety programs.

While doing anthropological research, Alarcón also searched for information about his own uncle, who had been sympathetic to the rebels and had disappeared during the eighties. It was this search that gave rise to *Lost City Radio*, named to several 2007 Best Books of the Year lists, including *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Financial Times*, *Christian Science Monitor* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

While in Peru, as part of his personal quest to learn of his missing uncle, and as preparation for his novel, Alarcón would listen to *Buscapersonas*, or “People Search,” a popular radio program. In the novel, set during the eighties, it is Norma, a well-known

radio announcer, who reads the names of the missing. Her voice is so comforting and her style so compassionate, that listeners take heart, just hearing the names of their loved ones. The listeners revere Norma, even though, at first, in her personal life, she seems indifferent to their losses, recognizing, instead, that such a program garners high ratings.

She is married to Rey, an ethnobotanist, who makes frequent trips to the selva (jungle). When he doesn't return, Norma becomes suspicious but won't give voice to her deepest fear, that he, too, has been made to disappear. Into this setting arrives Victor, a pre-adolescent boy from a village nestled between the jungle and the Andes. He delivers to Norma a precious list of his village's missing persons.

Will Norma read the list? What happened to Norma's husband? Is Rey a member of the rebel group known as “I L?” What will happen to the boy, Victor? Will the government close the radio station?

With all the accolades from others, why didn't I like this book more? By blurring Peru's identity, Alarcón paints a surreal setting that, apart from his descriptions of the *selva*, doesn't capture the essence of Peru. I wanted to know I was there. There is an unreal, futuristic feel to the story, in which Andean villages, by government mandate, may no longer be called by their names but by numbers the government assigns, and the dreadful place where rebels and suspected rebels are held and tortured is called “*la luna*.”

continued on page 17

Lost City Radio

continued from page 16

That being said, Alarcón fluidly portrays the dismal environment of the refuges in Lima's *pueblos jóvenes*: On their way to *la luna*, Norma and her boss Elmer:

“...drove through communities whose essential feature was their color: a burnt, dry shade of yellowish gray, everything bathed in murky sunlight. These were the areas that Norma could just make out from the station on a clear day, where the mountains first appeared and city seemed to end — only it didn't. It never ended. More people arrived each day as the jungle and the sierra emptied of human life. The capital's new residents made homes here, in the inhospitable folds of the lower mountains, in the city's dry and teeming servants' quarters.”

If one views the novel as a morality tale, then Alarcón has succeeded in capturing Peru's chilling, fearful underbelly during the Decade of the Eighties. He could also have been writing about Cuba, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua or myriad other countries where people have been divided by economic class, race or ethnicity, those places where tyrannies give rise to rebellions.

[Editor's Note: Amigos member **Patricia (Silke) Edmisten** is the author of *Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy*. She also wrote the introduction to, and translation of *María Moyano en Busca de una Esperanza*. (*The Autobiography of María Elena Moyano: The Life and Death of a Peruvian Activist*) and the novel, *The Mourning of Angels*, inspired by her Peace Corps experience in Peru. Patricia's book, *Wild Women with Tender Hearts*, won the 2007 Peace Corps Writers Award for poetry]

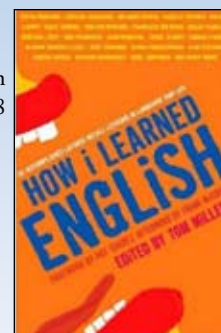
HOW I LEARNED ENGLISH EDITED BY TOM MILLER

Published by National Geographic Books (2007) and promoted on National Public Radio and BookTV, *How I Learned English: 55 Accomplished Latinos Recall Lessons in Language and Life* (also published in Spanish as *Como Aprendí Inglés*) includes essays written by 55 Latinos recalling how they learned English. Included are novelists and journalists, but also entertainers, athletes, and business and civic leaders.

All expressed that learning English was the key to success in their adopted homeland. However, they also relate many humiliations (especially feeling or being treated as ignorant) endured along their path to acquiring a new language in a new land. “They tell of struggling to fit in, trying desperately to succeed and of assimilating in a new society” but also in endeavoring to keep their culture of origin alive in their lives.

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FILM REVIEWS

Reviews by Gloria Levin (Peru 66-68)



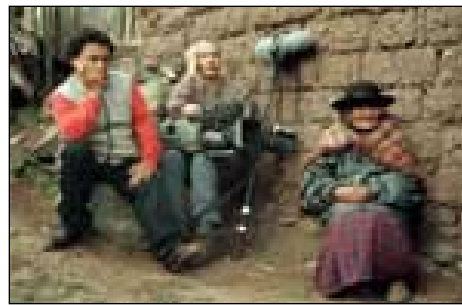
COMPADRE (2004, 90 MIN)

Directed by Mikael Wickstrom

Spanish with English subtitles

Trailer on YouTube at; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNVawYFbUF4>

“Compadre” has to be one of the most relevant films for Peace Corps, even though it has nothing (and yet everything) to do with Peace Corps or development workers. The fact that it was made in Peru makes it especially relevant for our readers. It is the second of two documentary films made by Swedish photojournalist, Mikael Wiström, about abject poverty in Peru, as seen through the struggles of one family. In 1974, on a trip to Peru where he was chronicling the lives of people who were forced to live off what they could find in rubbish dumps, Wiström met Daniel Barrientos, a young man crippled by polio, who was scavenging with his wife Nati (and their newborn daughter, Sandra) in a Lima garbage dump. Wiström eventually became Sandra’s godfather, made two return visits to Peru and corresponded with Daniel over the years. In 1991, then a documentary filmmaker, he returned



to make a film about the family, resulting in “The Other Shore.” “Compadre” updates the story, during a 2003 return trip to Peru, including photos from their initial meeting in 1974 and footage from the 1991 film.

The parents now have 4 adult children, daughters Judith and Sandra and sons Dani and Nata, and no longer scavenge – Nati works as a nanny and cleaner for wealthy Peruvians; Daniel drives a moto-taxi. But their lives are still hard scabble and passed down to their children. Intimate accounts of the children’s lives include the breakup of one daughter’s marriage and the other daughter moving to Brazil with her husband to seek work. The film also ventures into rural Peru when Daniel visits his ancestral home in



(above) Daniel Barrientos visiting his mother
(below left) Daniel Barrientos
(below middle) Daniel Barrientos, Mikael Wiström and Daniel’s mother
(below) Daniel and daughter.

Photos from trailer for film on YouTube.

the Andean altiplano, which he left 45 years earlier, with recriminations that he had abandoned his elders.

While depicting the daily grind and economic hardships faced by the Peruvian populace, it also reveals the complicated, tension-filled relationship between the structurally privileged (in this case, a filmmaker) and the structurally poor. Wiström calls Daniel his brother, but how real is this? The always present but submerged class differences surface dramatically when Daniel demands payment to continue the filming. (One synopsis of the film trivializes Daniel’s request as being “unrealistic.”)

The movie is circulating in human rights and documentary film festivals and occasionally can be viewed on television. The film is distributed by First Run Features whose president is RPCV Seymour Wishman (Peru 66-68) who was a PCV attorney in Lima, working on land rights issues.



FILM REVIEWS



BOLIVIA (2001, 75 MIN)

Directed by Israel Adrián Caetano;
Spanish with English subtitles
Filmed in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
Available from Netflix.



Ostensibly, this film is about the plight of Argentina in a state of social emergency, so the name “Bolivia” is a misnomer. However, it also concerns itself with Freddy, an illegal Bolivian immigrant come to Argentina at the same time as the economy has plummeted. He is seeking work and a future for his family, left behind in Bolivia. Freddy lost his

work in Bolivia when his coca crops were incinerated. Filmed in 16 mm black and white because of a minimal production budget, the film is set in a real diner. Freddy obtains work as a short-order cook for an employer who skirts immigration laws so as to obtain cheap labor. He earns barely enough to survive, and you're made painfully aware of every peso spent by the homeless Freddy. The movie focuses on the relations between the diner's staff and regular clientele, as well as some street thugs, including prejudice and discrimination against immigrants. Caetano said: “[T]he film's main theme is the collision among people of the same social class -- workers about to be left out of any class at all, and thus they are intolerant towards one another.”



MAÑANA TE CUENTO 2 (2008, 90 MIN)

Directed by Eduardo Mendoza de Echave
Made in Peru
Trailer on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Gk-XyigE6o&NR=1>



A sequel to an earlier film (“*Manana Te Cuento*,” available for rent from both Blockbuster and Netflix), this newer film returns to its adolescent male “humor” -- three college guys rooming together and their sex lives. A prostitute from the first film revisits one of the guys, her former client. The reviews are terrible (“basural, say many); needless to say, when the film opened in Lima in February 2008, it set a record for the most viewed Peruvian film in a decade. And another sequel is being contemplated!!

Drew Lewis (Peru) writes that the 2005 Peruvian film, “State of Fear” (“*Estado del Miedo*”) about the *Sendero Luminoso* movement in Peru, although not currently available via Blockbuster or Netflix, is available for downloading on *iTunes* for \$3.99. Go to *iTunes* - TV Shows - History en Espanol - Documentales Exclusivos - State of Fear.

Drew wrote: “I watched it on a recent flight and was yet again impressed with what the Peruvian people have been able to overcome.” The movie's website is <http://skylightpictures.com/>



RPCV PROFILE

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

ANN SCHRANER CHILE (1969-70); SOPACACHI BAJO, BOLIVIA (1970-71)

Peace Corps Assignment:

I first joined Peace Corps for Chile's Self Help Housing Project in 1969, where my husband (Bill Schraner) and I worked in a suburb of Santiago, Chile. When our project ended, in 1970, we went on vacation and found PC placements for ourselves in Bolivia, so we transferred there for our second year. I taught at an orphanage for girls. Bill taught masonry at a trade school in El Alto and helped his students build the Sandra Smith Elementary School near La Paz, named for a PCV who had died in service.

Current Location and Occupation:

I am a bilingual teacher in San Diego, California.

What was your background before PC?

My father worked for the United States Agency for International Development, so I had international exposure before joining Peace Corps. For example, I attended school in Karachi, Pakistan and later visited my family in Brazil where he was assigned. I majored in Psychology at California State University at Northridge but left before graduating to join PC with my husband.

Why did you join PC?

After my father left USAID, he became a psychologist for the PC and traveled all over South America, visiting volunteers. I knew that I wanted to serve as a PC volunteer in South America.

What was PC training like?

There were 22 couples in our PC/Chile group. We trained in country near Santiago, Chile and learned Spanish through an immersion program. Our



Photo from Ann Schraner.

professors, mostly Chileans, lived with us for about 15 weeks at a University of Chile facility in Maipu.

How did you live and work as a PCV?

In Chile, we lived in a "mediagua" in the "bodega" where all the building materials were stored. Families worked on their brick homes at night after work. When we moved in, it only had a spigot for water. I was assigned to work with the project's social worker. I was not much help because my Spanish was terrible. In Bolivia, I learned of the need for teachers at the orphanage from the PC doctor's wife, Leslie Fisher. We lived in an apartment in Sopocachi Bajo, a community with an unreliable (and often brown) water supply. Because the community was at 11,000 ft altitude, we had to boil our water for a long time, before filtering it.

What were your favorite foods?

In Chile, *empanadas*; in Bolivia, *salteñas*.

Why did you leave PC/Bolivia early?

The President of Bolivia forced all of the volunteers to leave in 1971.

What did you do immediately after leaving Peace Corps?

My husband and I went to New Delhi, India to visit my family, where my father was working for PC. When we returned from India, I enrolled again at Cal State Northridge and changed my major to Latin American History with a minor in Spanish. I graduated in 1973 and, because of my PC experience, I felt a strong need to teach Spanish-speaking children. I completed Bilingual Teacher Training and earned a Bilingual credential.

How has PC impacted you?

My work in the Peace Corps led me to my profession. In 1998, my husband and I returned for the close of PC in Chile where we met President and Mrs. Clinton. I felt that I was "at home" there. I miss the challenge of living overseas and the excitement of day to day living and traveling in another country. Several of my present students are from Latin America, including one girl from Lima, Peru.

What are your most notable memories from your PC days?

In Chile, it was the night that Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile. Also, the day our house burned down in the bodega. In Bolivia, I most remember the gun fire and chaos during the attempted coup of 1970. Also, when traveling on our motorcycle to the jungle in Bolivia, when a small girl was told that we were from the U.S., she asked her mother where it was. The mother replied, "*Más allá de Achicachi.*"

JOHN RILEY CAMPBELL
LA ENCAÑADA, CAJAMARCA, PERU (2003-05)



Photo from John Campbell.

Peace Corps Assignment:

Small Business Development that quickly turned into information technology work in Caxamarca (the old Quechua spelling of Cajamarca).

Current Location and Occupation:

Atsumionsen, Yamagata-ken, Japan (translates to “Hot Water” or “Hot Springs”); northwestern area on the Sea of Japan. I came to Japan with the JET Program that employs over 5,000 English teachers in Japan. I am an English teacher at a Japanese junior high school and a table tennis coach. I will be leaving Japan in July 08 to return to the U.S., resting up in Iowa for a month before embarking on a master’s degree program at Denver University in Library/Information Science.

What were you doing prior to joining PC?

Recreational Snow Specialist in Colorado (aka Ski Bum). Originally from Iowa.

Why did you join the PC?

To make up for the lack of International Education that I missed out on while studying in the Heartland of America, to see the world, and to make new friends.

Describe your housing as a PCV:

I lived in the only house in the village that had a western toilet and regulation size table tennis table. On the top of the table tennis table was painted the Peruvian Flag to help inspire creativity. Talking the local carpenter into making the table out of local eucalyptus trees was not nearly as hard as I thought it was going to be. End result was the coolest table tennis table ever built .

What were your favorite foods in country?

Ceviche, camote frito, and lucuma ice cream.

What were your least favorite foods in country?

Agua del rio, cau-cau, and rock hard pancitos.

What do you most miss about the PC and Peru?

The views from standing on a mountain on a clear day.

What were your favorite Peruvian phrases/expressions?

GOL!!!, Barrio Chino, and yapa .

What is your most notable work-related memory?

Introducing students to a computer (and internet) for the first time in their lives. Then watching them develop the interest and understanding of using the machines as a tool to find information. One day, a student figured out how to stream her favorite “telenovela” online, and the entire class surrounded her like a rock star. The excitement was running high, and all the students were smiling, giggling, excited, the way education should be in my opinion.

I was asked not to come back to that school because the Director didn’t agree with my teaching style and wanted more focus on the students learning PowerPoint. The unceremonious sacking was difficult to understand when it came from someone who himself could not use a computer (let alone understand what PowerPoint meant) and clearly didn’t understand the

potential of the opportunity. It was a long walk home that day, but I felt good that I had the opportunity to break through the traditional educational model.

What is your most notable personal memory?

A 9-day trek around the Cordillera Huayhuash with a few friends. It was the best 9 consecutive days of my life. It has forever changed my impression of nature, camping, and the meaning of the phrase “middle of nowhere.”

What was your least favorite memory?

Being able to operate in both the American and Peruvian systems of culture, values, and lifestyle while knowing that others did not have that luxury.

Book recommendations for PCVs?

A People’s History of the United States (Howard Zinn); *Guns, Germs, and Steel & Collapse* (Jared Diamond); *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (Jeffrey Sachs); *Making Globalization Work* (Joseph E. Stiglitz); *The Mystery of Capital* (Hernando De Soto); and *Open Veins of Latin America* (Eduardo Galeano)

Advice for PCVs and PC recruits:

- Year one: buy a notebook, ask questions, listen, and take notes.
- Package all the books you have always wanted to read and send them to your site. Take advantage of rainy season and read.
- Find something that you are passionate about in your community/country and become a self-styled expert about it.
- Keep an eye on FIFA/futbol game schedules and take advantage of the opportunity to watch some of the best futbol in the world.
- There is no one “right way” to do anything in the PC, so don’t look for one.

ABOUT AMIGOS

ALEJANDRO TOLEDO – A HIT IN TUCSON

Gayle Harrison Hartmann, Peru (64-66)

Alejandro Toledo, the former president of Peru, addressed a standing room only crowd at the University of Arizona on April 17, 2008. He was introduced by **Dr. Joel Meister**, Peru (64-65), Emeritus Professor of Public Health. Joel's former wife, **Nancy Meister**, Peru (64-65), and President Toledo's wife, **Eliane Karp de Toledo**, were also in attendance.

As many know, Joel and Nancy were PCV's in Chimbote, Peru in the mid-1960s who became good friends with Toledo when he was a teenager. After returning to the U.S., they learned that Toledo had raised enough money for a one-way ticket to the U.S. Joel told the story that when Toledo's plane landed in Los Angeles, he was confronted with his first escalator and promptly fell off.

After Toledo arrived in the Bay Area, the Meisters helped him enroll in English classes, and he attended the University of San Francisco where he received a Bachelor's degree in economics and business administration. He went on to earn three graduate degrees in Economics from Stanford University (two master's and a Ph.D.). He worked for a variety of institutions including Harvard University, the World Bank, and the United Nations, and, in 2001, won election to the presidency of Peru.

President Toledo referred to himself as a "statistical accident" who had escaped poverty, one who was free "to make choices because I had access to education." He spoke highly of President John F. Kennedy for sending young Americans "to touch the hands of others around the world" and noted that face-to-face conversation and handshakes are more profound than an internet message.

He talked about the goal of political and social democracy in poor countries. He emphasized that democracy means not just voting on election day, but also having the freedom to make choices. He stated that without clean water, electricity, health care, education, and a good job, a person is not free and, thus, does not live in a real democracy. Both Alejandro and Eliane called these benefits "rights," which the richer nations should try to help poorer nations achieve.

"Cautiously hopeful" about the future of Latin America, he thinks that Latin American countries have a good chance, within 15 to 20 years, of taking a prominent place in the world's democracies. He pointed out that during his term of office in



Pictured at the Tucson party are Nancy Meister, former President Toledo and the former First Lady Eliane and Joel Meister. (Photo: from Gayle Hartmann)

Peru, he was able to diversify exports from raw materials such as oil, gas, and gold to sustainable items such as mangos, grapes, lemons, and asparagus, and he achieved an annual economic growth rate of 6 percent.

He sees two serious challenges to the region. "First, leaders must make decisions that look to the next generation, not just the next election. Second, there need to be more leaders who have the courage to invest in clean water, better nutrition, health, and education, and fewer politicians who are primarily concerned with short-term results that win headlines but accomplish little. Time is running out if the region is not able to reduce the levels of inequality."

Addressing the Latin American students in the audience, he urged them to take advantage of the educational opportunities of the U.S., but he hoped they would eventually return home. He said, "Don't sell your heart to Wall Street; Latin America offers you a better opportunity."

Toledo is one of the founders of a foundation, "The Global Center for Development and Democracy," made up of 12 former Latin American presidents whose goal is to encourage social democracy in the region. Toledo quipped: "We may have concluded our terms, but we haven't finished our jobs."

Later, **Joel Meister**, **Nancy Meister**, and **William Mason** hosted a dinner for the Toledos. The attendees included RPCV's who live in Tucson, young Peruvians who are studying at local colleges and the university, and other friends of Peru. It was a glorious evening with a tasty mixture of Peruvian, Mexican, and American food including *ceviche*, *chiles rellenos*, *enchiladas*, and brownies. The Toledos mingled with the crowd, and President Toledo even sang a Mexican song – he has a great voice. The Toledos will be returning to Peru to try to continue the movement toward a successful social democracy.

ABOUT AMIGOS

VOLUNTEER COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE ALTIPLANO

Ralph Bolton Peru (62-65)

The Peruvian *Altiplano*, around Puno, is one of the poorest places in South America, a land of *pueblos olvidados, abandonados*. During the *Sendero Luminoso* epoch, some of the northern provinces of the Department of Puno were deeply involved in the terrorism. Puno is regarded as having been the second major focus of *Sendero* activities, with Ayacucho first.

For the past two years, I have been taking college-student volunteers to the *Altiplano* for six-week stints of living and working in rural communities on the *Altiplano* with the Foundation I created, The Chijnaya Foundation, Chijnaya being the town I served as a PCV. The people of Chijnaya wanted to begin a tourism project. It occurred to me that at least a few villagers would have to be able to communicate with any tourists who came to visit. At Pomona College where I teach, I put out a call for volunteers to teach English during the summer break. We had eight that first year (2006); the next year (2007), seventeen. The response was astounding, especially given the fact that these volunteers had to pay their own airfare and living expenses.

The volunteers live and take their meals with their families. Families are paid \$225 for the room and board for six weeks. They appreciate this additional income, but even more they quickly adopt the volunteers as family members. The bonding between the students and their host family is inspirational. Across tremendous differences in cultures, they somehow manage to create deep emotional ties, to establish enduring friendships and understanding. Most of the volunteers are 18 to 20 years old, most but not all have basic knowledge of Spanish.

During the first year, the emphasis was on teaching English, and volunteers spent a couple of hours per day in classes with youngsters, adolescents and adults. During the second

year, we encouraged all volunteers to become involved in other community projects. Some volunteers gave instruction in computer use, and others focused on revitalizing the art tradition in Chijnaya. Thanks to their efforts, the community's artisans will be represented by a local woman at the International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe, New Mexico in July where they hope to raise lots of money through the sale of their famous embroidered scenes.

Last year, we encouraged volunteers to engage in research relevant to ongoing projects in the community. An economics major, did a superb analysis of the animal protection sheds project, reporting on the increase in milk production due to this micro-loan program. Another volunteer participated in research on the smoke-free kitchens program that sponsored the installation of these health-promoting stoves. Two others organized and digitized the community's archives which were in total disarray. All in all, the volunteers perform extremely valuable work for the community and the Foundation.

To date, the majority of our student volunteers have been from Pomona College, but we have also had student volunteers from Pitzer, Claremont McKenna and Scripps Colleges. For the coming summer, we have volunteers from other institutions as well, e.g., Columbia University and Whitman College. We urgently need volunteers to teach English in two communities on Lake Titicaca. Tourism in these communities is in full swing, and villagers need to be able to speak some English. Contact me, chijnaya@aol.com, for information.



Ralph Bolton (seated, brown jacket and baseball cap) with volunteers and community residents in Chijnaya. (Photo from Ralph Bolton.)

ABOUT AMIGOS



COSTA OESTE AMIGOS PARTY

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Jane Wolff Taylor, Peru (67-69)

On April 20, 2008, a group of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Peru and Bolivia in the 1960's and early 1970's met for dinner at *Café de la Paz* in Berkeley, CA and then attended the performance of *Peru Negro* at Zellerbach Hall at the University of California. The restaurant serves Latin American fusion cuisine, and the nine of us took over the lower floor, dining on *ceviche* and talking about where we trained, where we worked, and our travels during and after Peace Corps service.

In addition to spouses and friends, we included a Bolivia RPCV – Amigos member **Rita Anberg**, former Chimbote-based RPCV **Jane Wolff Taylor** and Lima-based RPCVs **Clif Taylor**, **Bruce** and **Mel Greenlee**, and **Carol Murayama**. **Earl**

Beyer and **John Chesarek**, who had served in small villages near Ayacucho, helped organize the group. We included a mixture of lawyers, businessmen, teachers, and retirees from public service jobs.

Six of us had trained together at UC Berkeley in the summer of 1966 in an Advanced Training Program (meaning, we trained between our junior and senior years of college). A main topic of conversation was our memories of Alejandro Toledo (ex-President of Peru) who had taught us Spanish during his first summer as a college student at the University of San Francisco.

After dinner, we went to the UC campus to see and hear the outstanding performance by *Peru Negro*. We delighted in their *festejo* sound while marveling at the energy of the dance performances. *Peru Negro* finished its North American tour late March. [Editor's Note: See *Yachaspa's* Winter 07-08 coverage of the tour and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNi8PZdvKg0> for a video of a performance.]

We promised each other that we would meet again, to continue our *conversaciones*. We're planning to reconvene at Toledo's last in a series of 3 lectures at Stanford University on May 14. We warmly welcome RPCVs from the Bay Area to join in by contacting me at juana4@juno.com.

[Editor's Note: See *Yachaspa's* Winter 07-08 coverage of the first Stanford lecture. For further information on the third lecture see: http://fsi.stanford.edu/events/2008_payne_lecture_series_can_the_poor_afford_democracy_a_presidential_perspective_lecture_3/]



POLLO A LA BRASA INVADES TGIF

If your town doesn't have a Peruvian chicken dive on every block, you can get your fix at one of 600 *TGIFriday's* restaurants. This American chain is adding to its menu Peruvian herb-roasted chicken, as a result of that recipe winning Week One of the Food Network Channel's Ultimate Recipe Showdown. The recipe, submitted by (former) *Limeña* Amparo Alam now living in Utah, marinates the chicken in lime juice, rubs with cumin, basil and garlic, and is served with fried sweet potatoes and a spicy dipping sauce. See <http://www.livinginperu.com/gastronomy/features-1081> and the recipe at http://www.tgifridays.com/menu/E208_ultimate_recipe_home.htm (click Week 1 tab).

JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION FOR RPCVs

Lindsey Eaves, Peru (03-05)

After being abroad for two (or more) years with the Peace Corps, adjusting to life in the United States can be difficult. For most recent RPCVs, the first concern is: how can I make money? My advice (if you are able to do it) is to take a month off. Don't look for a job, don't look for an apartment; just enjoy the time back in the States. Go to the grocery store, get accustomed to speaking English and most importantly, don't forget to tip! After taking at least a month off, the job search can then begin.

The job search can be a long process, and many RPCVs need to find a job to support themselves while looking for "real" jobs in their field or waiting for graduate school to begin. Even after we find a "real" job, many are in low-paid, entry-level positions, so we need to find moonlighting jobs to supplement our income.

Start out by assessing what you have to offer. Newly returned PCVs certainly have skills that set them apart from most Americans. Speaking two languages gives us a huge advantage when it comes to the job search. Two opportunities that come fairly easy to most RPCVs is substitute teaching and tutoring. These two types of jobs provide some income but also allow for enough free time to continue the job search.

Ashley (Muir) Gavidia, Peru (03-05), applied to the Howard County (MD) Public School System when she returned from Peru. She attended an orientation and selected which types of classes and levels she wanted to teach. Only three weeks later, she was able to find substitute teaching work almost every day.

Dave Pérez, Bolivia (05-07), substitute teaches for the Montgomery County (MD) Public School System 30 hours a week, leaving time to interview for jobs. He teaches grades 1-8, in general subjects including Spanish. His experience teaching in a local elementary school in Bolivia helped him get qualified for substitute teaching in the U.S. He recommends making business cards that say "former Peace Corps Volunteer," finding that sparks an interest, and "Substitute Teacher." List a phone number and leave a few business cards behind after every sub job and distribute them to the other teachers. Dave reports: "I get tons of call backs that way and often have to turn jobs down." He especially recommends taking substitute jobs for special education, stating: "There's almost always multiple para-educators in the room who know the children and help keep things running smoothly." He encourages you not to shy



(above) Lindsey Eaves tutors a student in her home. (Photo from Lindsey Eaves)

away from special education because you don't have experience with the population -- "it's really not difficult."

One benefit of substitute teaching is that your day ends mid-afternoon which gives you a few hours in the afternoon to continue the job search. Substitute teaching jobs pay between \$50-\$100 per day. Every county has different application requirements, so be sure to check the school district where you live. To find your state's requirements:

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/28317/how_to_become_a_substitute_teacher_requirements.html

Another job opportunity is tutoring. With Spanish skills of an RPCV, tutoring Spanish is a great way to share your knowledge with others. It is also a great opportunity to practice your Spanish – hard to learn but easy to forget! *Craigslist* (<http://www.craigslist.org>) is a great place to find these kinds of tutoring jobs. You can find full time or part time gigs that are great to keep the money flowing while searching for your dream job.

Huong Diep, Peru (03-05), worked for Spectrum Languages, a language tutoring school in Irvine, CA when she first returned to the States. And then, after moving to Denver, she found similar Spanish tutoring jobs on *Craigslist*. Most companies have online applications or just require you to send in a resume and then go for an interview. Typically, you can pick which days you work and for how many hours a week.

I've been tutoring Spanish for a little less than a year with Educational Connections, a tutoring company I found on

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Job Opportunities in Education for RPCVs

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Craigslist in Northern Virginia. They email me names of students looking for tutors in various subjects. I choose the students that I want to work with and choose the hours that I want to work.

In my case, I work with four different students who are at 4 different Spanish levels. I go to their homes and tutor each once a week for an hour. Other than the actual tutor time, I spend about 30 minutes to an hour preparing for each lesson.

Having the additional income is a great bonus at the end of the month.

Tutoring jobs pay \$15-\$40 an hour. One thing to consider before taking a tutoring job is whether or not your students come to you. Some tutoring companies require you to travel to the student's home. Most tutoring companies don't cover mileage and other expenses, but you can deduct the cost as a business expense when filing your income taxes. Be sure to keep organized records for tax time!

TEACHING (ESL) CAREERS FOR RPCVs

Jane Wolff Taylor, Peru (67-69)

I am a Reading Coach at an elementary school in Oakland, CA but started out as a bilingual Spanish teacher (1978) when Bilingual Education was going strong. The field has seen a number of changes in philosophy and politics.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers with fluency in Spanish and facility with other cultures are an asset in the teaching profession. In reporting statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics that there will be 2.8 million new teaching-related jobs over the next eight years, *Parade* magazine stated (April 13, 2008): "Spanish-speaking educators will be particularly sought after. The need for bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers has increased each of the last three years."

To obtain a full-time teaching job, one has to have a teaching credential. This can be done in a multitude of ways. I recommend enrolling in a college or university with an excellent Education Department or at least one that offers opportunities to get classroom classrooms, not just study theory. The biggest complaint of new teachers is the insufficiency of real-life training. Credentialing programs may include studying and teaching at the same time, although in my experience, it is extremely difficult to teach fulltime and get a credential at the same time. One can obtain the necessary credentials via an internship and/or combining studying and practice teaching with a master teacher.

In the Spring, most school districts sponsor Job Fairs, which is where the districts recruit most of their teachers for the next year. Other teaching opportunities are found through programs such as Teaching Fellows and Teacher Corps. Many large cities offer both programs which help applicants find jobs and then provides them teacher training during the school year.



Jane Wolff Taylor coaches second graders in a bilingual English class as they prepare for a Statewide test. (Photo from Jane Taylor.)

In some states, bilingual education is being phased out, with the new emphasis on English Language Development and English as a Second Language. This is an excellent opportunity for RPCVs, especially those with Spanish skill, and RPCVs can get a special credential for teaching English Language Learners.

Another job opportunity is teaching in an after-school program. The *No Child Left Behind* legislation mandates that under-performing schools (frequently in urban areas) offer an after-school program which can be based on remediation or enrichment. Working in these programs offers an excellent try-out opportunity to determine whether teaching is for you.

Skills learned in PC are valuable for the teaching profession, and clever, energetic people are needed.

[Editor's Note: An excellent way to prepare for a teaching career, gaining teaching experience and a master's degree in education is via Peace Corps' Fellows/USA program. See <http://www.peacecorp.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.whyvol.eduben.fellows> for full information on this program, including participating colleges and universities.]



(Photo from authors)

PCVs APPLYING TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

Marta Young and Drew Lewis, Peru (04-06)

So you've tackled the Peace Corps and now you want to become a doctor? Most schools love to see qualified RPCVs in their classes because of the unique skills and experience we can share. However, be advised – the simple problem of supply and demand has made the medical school application process quite competitive in recent years. Quite simply, there are too many qualified applicants

for too few spots to accommodate everyone. The process can also be very time-consuming and costly, so be prepared.

BEFORE the application:

Academics: Do an audit of what academic coursework you have completed and what prospective schools require. Before applying, some applicants may need to pick up a course in Biochemistry or Genetics; others may need to consider an all-encompassing Post-Bachelors program.

The MCAT: Quite obviously an important component of the application, the MCAT provides one of the only true metrics schools can use to analyze applicants. Make sure enough time is allotted to study and take practice exams. There are several prep-services available, of which Kaplan courses are probably the most popular. Such programs can add a big expense to your budget; however many find that the structured study environment and practice tests are a great investment. Regardless of what study method you use... practice, practice, practice. Then, do the best you can. Doing great (>35) on the MCAT can make the application process a whole lot easier; however, an applicant can compensate for an average test score (27-32) by showing strength in other parts of the application.

Extracurricular Activities: Update your resume to include relevant extracurricular activities, research positions, leadership roles, work experiences, etc. (Obviously, including your having been a PCV.). Your resume will be useful when filling out both your primary and secondary applications.

Letters of Recommendation: Most medical schools prefer that letters be sent using an electronic filing system (aka Virtual Evals). This system allows letters to be collected by your

undergraduate institution and then uploaded to a confidential online system which can then be accessed by prospective medical schools. At undergraduate schools, this process is generally handled by a pre-professional advisor. If your school uses composite letters, the process will work much the same way in that your advisor will collect the letters, see that the composite letter is written and then upload that letter for you. Since this process varies, it is important to speak with your advisor. Applicants generally have three letters from faculty and perhaps two or three letters from sources outside of academia (like from your Peace Corps CD or APCD). Most importantly - always contact your letter writers early (April or earlier). You don't want to deal with this when you are trying to finish your secondary applications!

The ACTUAL Application:

Start applying early! By the time the AMCAS application comes out in May, you should have narrowed down your list of schools (students are applying to up to 20 schools these days, but keep in mind the costs and time associated with completing that many applications). Before May, you should also consider working on your personal statement and extracurricular activity list. June is the earliest that you can submit a completed AMCAS application, but the sooner the better! Processing a submitted application takes about five weeks. After that, schools that you selected on your AMCAS application will send you their institution's secondary application. These generally involve more essay writing, more paperwork and more money. You will also be asked to provide the names of your letter writers and the method by which your letters will be submitted (generally Virtual Evals). Complete these secondary applications as soon as possible. Don't forget to make copies and verify receipt of your application.

Interview season runs from September to March. If schools offer you an interview, they obviously think you are qualified, so be confident and sell yourself.

Although most Amigos readers are RPCVs and not currently serving as PC volunteers, here are additional considerations for those applying to medical school if you are overseas or may be out of the country during all or part of the application process. Start contacting letter writers early and decide the easiest way to contact them, whether by phone, email or letter. Especially if you are in a rural area overseas - do you or will you have access to a phone? email? reliable mail service?

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PCVs Applying to Medical School

Become good friends with the person at your school who is in charge of helping pre-professional applicants. Make sure they understand your situation (especially if you are overseas). They might be able to help you collect letters from professors or serve as a “warehouse” to receive and then distribute letters.

If you are working overseas, take advantage of any time you may have in the States. If possible, pay a visit to your University to coordinate with letter writers, advisers, counselors, etc. who

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might be needed once it is time to go through the application process. The entire process can seem long and arduous, but be patient! ¡Suerte!

Please feel free to contact us with any further questions, at marta.young@gmail.com and drew.j.lewis@gmail.com.

[Editor's Note: Marta and Drew are first-year M.D. students at New York Medical College and University of South Dakota's School of Medicine, respectively.]

SOCIAL JUSTICE JOBS FOR RETURNING PCVs

Spence Limbocker, Peru (66-68)

If you are interested in using your Peace Corps experience and language skills to help to build mass-based community organizations in the United States, there are job opportunities for you to consider across the United States. If you like overcoming challenges, equipping the powerless to build and exercise power, defeating injustice, and being involved in something more meaningful than just another job, then community organizing could be exactly what you are looking for.

There are community based organizations in nearly every state and most metro areas. Many of these are affiliated with training centers that recruit and train professional organizers. For more information on how you can become part of this growing movement, check their web sites.

Some national organizing networks to visit:

- **Acorn** – <http://www.acorn.org>
- **Direct Action and Research Training Center** – <http://www.thedartcenter.org>
- **Industrial Areas Foundation** – <http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org>
- **Gamaliel Foundation** – <http://www.gamaliel.org>
- **PICO National Network** – <http://www.piconetwork.org>

Also, some regional and local organizations:

- **Working In Neighborhoods in Cincinnati, Ohio** – <http://www.wincincy.org>
- **The Virginia Organizing Project** – <http://www.virginia-organizing.org>
- **New England** – <http://www.intervalleproject.org>

BIENVENIDOS, AMIGOS!

The following persons either became **new members (paid)** or **renewed memberships** between February 13 and May 5, 2008:

Bolivia: **Rita Anberg** (63-65); **Chris Bailey** (91-93); **David Behrends** (97-99); **Aaron Codispoti** (95-98); **Ken Goodson** (97-99); **Kirk Harder** (68-70); **Matt Kennedy** (04-06); **Jerome Ledin** (64-66); **Jean Meadowcroft** (66-68); **Dave Reynolds** (04-06); **Alan Jay Rom** (69-71); **Lois Klintworth Seijo** (65-67); **Jerry Sibley** (70-71).

Peru: **Alice Gilmore Alusic** (64-66); **Jim Bass** (63-65); **Greg Bocquet** (03-05); **Bob Cable** (62-64); **Patricia Silke Edmisten** (62-64); **Kevin Fitzpatrick** (03-07); **Jerry Kinsman** (63-64; staff 68-70); **Evelyn Kohls LaTorre** (64-66); **John O'Brien** (62-64, 70); **Ann**

Pfingsten (62-64); **Rosemary Pricci** (62-64); **Kurtis Shank** (04-06); **Mary Hennessey Wohn** (63-65).

Other: **Javier Garza** (Peru RPCV; outgoing PC/Bolivia director); **Demetri Sarantitis**; **Kathleen Sifer** (incoming PC/Bolivia director); **Jeffrey and Margaret Stewart** (Kodiak, AK)

The following recent **PCV returnees** accepted a one-year free membership in Amigos:

Bolivia: **Bonnie and Matt Cox**; **Minor Payne Huffman**; **David Pérez**; **Patty (Seminetta) Vargas**.

Peru: **Laura Buckley**; **Mia Farber**; **Matt Lindsley**.

Other: **Nikola Otlans** (Bulgaria RPCV but her mother was born in Peru).

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)

-----●

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 \$ _____