

El Bochinche

Peace Corps Panama Friends

Issue: 14

2010 Quarter IV

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Dear Friend of Panama,

Happy November 3rd from Panama City, Panama! In the few months since being elected as presidenta of PCPF we have seen many changes!

We have an energetic new group, including a few "PCPF first-timers" David Modzelewski (Panama Liaison), Ed O'Brien (Database Manager) and Alicia Añino (Communications Director)! It's great to have new input and ideas! If you want to know about opportunities to get involved in the directiva, shoot me an email at president@panamapcv.net.

Peace Corps celebrates 50 years in 2011 and we want to make sure that Panama is represented! We're looking for GROUP LEADERS, someone from each training group (or anyone who has kept in contact with their core Peace Corps friends), who would be willing to rally the troops, hunt up anyone who has been lost with time, and encourage your group to participate in the 50th! We'll be asking for help collecting pictures, inviting people to events throughout the country, and possibly hosting mini-reunions of their own! If you're the one to hold your old Peace Corps buddies together, please contact David at davidmodz@gmail.com and keep a look out for more information on how you can get involved!

We're already in contact with the Peace Corps office in Panama about a 50th Reunion of PC Panama in 2013, so start saving up those pesos y reales!

Lastly, I recently moved back to Panama and am having fun finding all of the RPCVs who are still in country. If you're looking to come back to visit, I would be more than happy to have visitors!

I look forward to seeing PCPF grow over the next year, and I look forward to celebrating all of these epic upcoming events with you all! Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and if there is any way that we can assist you in keeping in touch with Panama, volunteers, or volunteerism, please let us know!

La Presidenta,
Valerie

2011 Panama Calendar

The 2011 Panama calendars are now for sale. For \$17 (free shipping to U.S. address; at cost shipping to overseas address) you can relive your PC days through pictures, give a one-of-a-kind gift, and/or feel good knowing you are helping support needed projects in Panama.

Last year, PCPF sold 450 calendars and sent over \$3,000 to Panama's Volunteer Action Committee's super small project fund. This year we have 550 to sell!

You can order [online](#) or by [mail](#), and they're available now.



Elections - Peace Corps Panama Friends Board of Directors

Let us introduce you to the new PCPF Directiva for 2010-2011!

Valerie Whiting, President
Sarah Schmidt, Vice President
Jaime Holland, Treasurer
Hugh Smith, Secretary
David Modzelewski, Panama Liason
Jerry Lutes, Bud Keith Fund Committee Director
Valerie Whiting/Ed O'Brien, Membership Committee Director
Alicia Añino, Communications Committee Director
Steve Spangler, Webmaster

The Directiva meets monthly to review the budget, vote on new projects to fund, brainstorm activities relevant to the PCPF community, and continue moving the organization in a direction that is coherent with the Peace Corps activities in Panama.

PCRV Profile: Hay Más Tax Code Que Vida

by Darren Wendroff

Serving in Santa Catalina, Panama as a small business volunteer taught me how to run a CPA Firm the same way Daniel Larusso learned karate from Mr. Miyagi by painting his house - painfully unaware I'd learned a thing until the moment of truth.

This January Wendroff & Associates, CPA will celebrate its fifth anniversary, and we're one of the fastest growing firms in Arlington, Virginia. The main thing I learned from planning meetings at 4 pm because I really wanted people to show up at 7 pm is that adaptation is the most critical skill a PCV - or entrepreneur - can develop. It is served me well in both the urban and actual jungle.

If you're ever in Arlington, Virginia, please stop by the office. We always enjoy hearing RPCV adventures and you will probably find an Atlas in the fridge (Panamanian for beer). We may even be able to help you write off your next trip back "home."

Wendroff & Associates, LLC
Arlington, Virginia CPA and Accounting Firm
www.wendroffcpa.com

PCPF Supported Projects

by Hugh Smith

PCPF, through you, contributes to all Peace Corps Partnership Panama projects and raises funds for the Super Small Program Assistance grants through your calendar purchase. Thank you for your continued support!



Donate



90% of your donations go directly to projects in Panama! With your help, PCPF sponsor 30% (up to \$500) of funds needed by Panama volunteers.

PCPF Special Projects: Bud Fund Scholars Racing Ahead

by Jerry Lutes

In spite of his blindness, our former President Bud Keith loved sports and was an excellent skier. He would be pleased that Erika, one of the blind students assisted by the Bud Keith Scholarship fund, placed first in one walking race for the blind and second in another. She plans to keep training and compete again next year.

We've just received the grades of our other two scholars. Alejandro, now in his second year of college, continues to maintain an A- average at ISAE Universidad. Melfín, a high school student, has a B+ average and recently won a domino competition at the Patronato Luz del Ciego.

The Deputy Director of the Patronato, Analida Chacón, was in Washington in September and had dinner with several members of the PCPF Directiva. She confirmed the good academic progress of the Bud Keith scholars and urged us to sponsor as many more as we can. To make that happen visit [our web site](#).



Erika (left), Bud Keith Fund recipient

Make a Donation

PCPF Events and Fundraising

Bikes for the World

PCPF members and their friends and family loaded a shipping container with 574 bikes for Panama on Saturday, October 16th, in McLean, Virginia. The bicycles, equipment and supplies were collected by [Bikes for the World](#) in the Washington, DC, and the mid-Atlantic area. The bikes will be donated to the [Asociación Panameña de Industrias de Buena Voluntad](#) (Goodwill Industries) who trains Panamanians to repair and prepare the bikes for sale. They then sell the bikes to teachers, workers, students, and others who need low-cost transportation. [See video](#). Peace Corps Panama Friends has packed four containers for Panama over the past two years with over 1,600 bikes.



Bikes for Panama container

See [photos and videos](#) of our previous work loading containers for Panama.

[Click here for more information](#) or contact Steve Spangler at: stephen.spangler@gmail.com

Are you in the Washington DC area?

[If so let us know!](#)

And if you're interested in collecting used bikes from other parts of the US to send to Panama through Bikes for the World, here's more information: [Intro to sponsoring a bike collection](#).

Spotlight: Volcán Quilters Guild

At the base of Volcán Barú, in the Highlands of Chiriquí, Panamá, a small group of American expats and a Peace Corps volunteer came together to start an initiative to teach sewing and quilting to the local women. These women are often the sole breadwinner of the family and yet do not have the skills to adequately provide for their family. This group of volunteers wanted to "make a difference" in the lives of these women. A branch of the Volcán Quilters Guild was born.



Backed by a grant from the local Soroptimistas Internacional de Volcán women's group, 6 sewing machines were contributed and 8 more were loaned by various American women in the community. On a shoestring, we began. We taught a basic sewing course that taught basic machine usage and maintenance, sewing techniques that would later be used in quilting, and included useful but easy projects. As some of the women were unable to pay for any supplies, we offered scholarships so as not to have to turn anyone away. For those who had a basic knowledge of machine sewing, we also offered a basic quilting class where we taught the basics of quilting with small but tasteful projects. During our classes we also give talks on health, nutrition, and women's issues as well as trying to instill a sense of social awareness.

Our classes run twice a week for four weeks, 3 hours per class. At the end of each series of classes we have a graduation ceremony where certificates are awarded and the ladies are offered the chance to show off their newly-acquired skills. We have also had two separate exhibitions that have shown the ladies that there is a market for their goods and offered a venue for sales and now plan on attending a local Christmas market. At the end of 3 series of classes, we now have

long waiting lists for the basic class series and the advanced quilting classes and see more people being added weekly.

Our biggest challenge is finding basic, quality materials that are used in quilting. They are simply not available in Panamá. We have a source for quality cotton but the choices are somewhat limited. As we stress the importance of quality, not quantity, it is important to stress the use of quality materials, and to do this, we bring supplies in from the USA. To fund this venue, we raffle off a queen-sized quilt bi-annually which allows for the purchase of supplies and equipment and the continuation of scholarships.

You can support this women's group with monetary donations through PayPal, or by sending donations of supplies, old magazines, and equipment. Go to [Volcán Quilters](#) for more information.

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary

by Alicia Añino

Since 1961, when then Senator John F. Kennedy tasked us to promote world peace and friendship, more than 200,000 volunteers in 139 countries have answered that call.



University of Michigan
floor marker

[transcript.php](http://michigantoday.umich.edu/2008/01/jfk-transcript.php)

On October 14, 1960 at the University of Michigan, presidential candidate Kennedy gave a 3 minute unprepared talk to a group of university students.

How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers: how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world? On your willingness to do that, not merely to serve one year or two years in the service, but on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think will depend the answer whether a free society can compete. I think it can. And I think Americans are willing to contribute. But the effort must be far greater than we've ever made in the past.

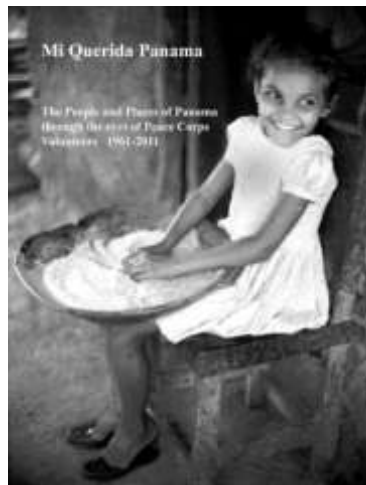
Full transcript: <http://michigantoday.umich.edu/2008/01/jfk-transcript.php>

Thus, when Kennedy was elected President of the United States, Congress approved the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961; and still, 50 years later this civil service program continues to change lives around the world.

Peace Corps Panama saw its first volunteers in 1963, and the program continued until May 1971 when it was recalled by Panamanian dictator, Omar Torrijos. In February 1990, the Panamanian government asked Peace Corps to return, and the program has continued without interruption ever since with a total of 1,928 volunteers to date.

The myriad list of activities to celebrate Peace Corps' anniversary has already begun (<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=about.fiftieth>) and PCPF is not far behind. We are planning stateside activities, and will begin organizing a Peace Corps Panama anniversary reunion in Panama in 2013. PCPF has also begun work on an anniversary photo montage, *Mi Querida Panamá*.

Happy anniversary Peace Corps!



Mi Querida Panamá

On the Blog - PCPF on Facebook

by Alicia Añino

Here is what RPCVs are talking about:

R.I.P. RPCVs [Martha Cabrera](#) (May 28, 2010) and [Bob Bell](#) (July 2, 2010).

An organic farm in Panama, [Finca Santa Marta Organic Produce](#), opened in 2007.

Panamanian comedy, Chance (2009) at Latin Film Festival. See [trailer](#) at IMDB.

RPCV was finalist in 2010 [Electrolux Design Lab competition](#).

[Peace Corps volunteer numbers at a 40 year high.](#)

[Peace Corps Journals](#): Follow Peace Corps Panama volunteers on one blog spot!

Befriend us on [Facebook](#) to see ALL the stories!

La Vaina

by Jerry Lutes

Research Enhances Volunteer Experience

"Wondering what drink to order on a first date? What cubetazo do you bring to the pre-game party? Will the beer I order negatively affect my masculinity? These were the questions that faced us as we undertook the monumental task of deciding once and for all the best beer in Panama." What beer won the volunteers' taste test? Find out in La Vaina. Read La Vaina every day!

Read [La Vaina](#) everyday!



Tú Opinión

Feedback and articles ideas for *El Bochinche*

Ideas for the Editor of El Bochinche

- Write an opinion piece or article for *El Bochinche*.
- Promote a non-profit you work for or support to PCPF members.
- Share an update about yourself with Peace Corps Panama alumni.
- Publish photos on www.panamapcv.net or link to an on-line photo album.

Email tú opinión to: editorelbo@gmail.com.

Thanks for reading El Bochinche.

Sincerely,

Alicia Añino
Peace Corps Panama Friends



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