

Friends of Fiji

News

Fall 2003 Vol. 12 Issue 1

A NEWSLETTER FOR RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, STAFF & ALL FRIENDS OF FIJI

Peace Corps Returns To Fiji

As of September 2003, Peace Corps volunteers are once again working in the islands. In this issue, the Fiji Ambassador addresses them prior to their departure (page 2). The President of Friends of Fiji tells the words presented by Ambassador Jale at the staging held in California (page 2). Also in this issue, a letter from the new Fiji Country Director, Mark Lewis telling about his first days back in country (page 3). If you want to know more about Peace Corps plans for Fiji, read the in depth interview. Mark speaks of his plans and concerns (page 4).

In Other News

Ambassador Hosts Friends of Fiji

In November, The Fijian Ambassador to the United States, Anare Jale shall host a gathering of the Friends of Fiji as well as the larger Fijian community. (Page 5).

Investments

Find out how your fundraiser donations are being invested through micro-enterprises (page 6) and bicycles (page 7).

Organization

The next Friends of Fiji General Meeting is coming in January (page 2). Friends of Fiji inaugurates a new Board (page 11). The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) sees a change in staff (page 11). Friends of Fiji met in New England and California (page 5).

Internet

Friends of Fiji is looking to start a listserv (page 9). Our webmaster has also made available a copy of the Fiji Cookbook issued to Peace Corps Volunteers in years past (page 9), in case you've been hankering for cookies out of an old benzene drum oven.

Still More

The new U.S. Ambassador to Fiji, has begun his tenure. Read about him in this issue (page 10). Our recent Grand Prize Winner tells the tale of her trip to the Fiji Islands (page 8). Learn how donations of snorkeling gear helps coastal communities (page 6).

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Presidents Letter

Dear Friends,

In September Friends of Fiji provided a curry dinner for the first group of Peace Corps trainees to go to Fiji for many years. Several members represented us all that evening, taking their photo albums and telling of their experiences.

The Fijian Ambassador, Anore Jale, spoke to the trainees about the legacy of service from earlier volunteers and told me later that the group seemed very enthusiastic. We will make every effort to support the new volunteers and to pass along their stories to you.

This year, the Friends of Fiji Board is very interested in developing information packets that can be used for education about Fiji. We hope that Peace Corps staff in Fiji will work with us to help Fiji's people whenever there is need, such as in the recent hurricane. We welcome your ideas and suggestions about such endeavors.

Every two years Friends of Fiji has a fund-raising event to support Fiji. Our last event raised \$7,000 for Pedals for Progress to send a cargo container of bicycles and parts to Fiji. There were more than 400 bikes in the container. Our next fundraiser will be in the fall of 2004 and we have decided to dedicate the money to projects developed by the new Volunteers. We hope that this financial support will encourage them to identify areas of need and will assure that our money is going to good use.

With this issue of the Friends of Fiji newsletter, you will find information on renewing your membership. . We hope that you will show your support for the organization's goals and your appreciation for the newsletter and events that Friends provides by renewing your membership today. Please fill out the attached Membership Renewal Form and return it today with a check.

We have continued to send mailings to everyone in order to maintain an accurate list of addresses. Keeping in touch with all who have served is a vital part of our mission. So, please let us hear from you, either by mail or on the NPCA website.

David Downes has resigned his leadership position after 3 years as President of Friends of Fiji. However, he is remaining on the board and will continue to offer his wealth of knowledge of Fiji and Peace Corps. David has been a wonderful support for our organization. His many years working for Peace Corps and his natural diplomatic style make him irreplaceable.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Grant, Fiji IX

Annual General Meeting Notice

The Annual General Meeting and Potluck Dinner of the Friends of Fiji will be held on Saturday, January 10, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. at the home of David and Willa Downes, 3327 Mantua Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031.

The principal business of the meeting will be having fun and electing next year's Board of Directors. Nominations will be accepted up until the time of the election and all those receiving at least one vote will be elected.

Request for directions should be sent to David Downes at the address above, or by email to downesdd@aol.com, or by phone at 703-641-0517.

Nominations, suggestions for other agenda items, and requests for other information should be sent to President Cynthia Grant at 4327 43rd St, NW, Washington, DC 20016, or by email to grant@rand.com, or by phone at 202-362-9812.

Ambassador Addresses New Fiji Volunteers

The following report was assembled from releases by the Peace Corps Office of the Director and Office of Communications, forwarded to Friends of Fiji by Robert L. F. Reese with the Peace Corps Inter-America and the Pacific Region:

A special staging event was held September 19 at the Los Angeles regional recruitment office. The event was attended by RPCVs from Fiji, former staff, and Fijian representatives, including the Fijian Ambassador to the United States, the Honorable Anare Jale.

Ambassador Jale, who was taught by Peace Corps Volunteers, spoke of the contribution that PCVs have made in training the people of Fiji, and encouraged the new Volunteers to work hard to meet and exceed the success and commitment of their predecessors.

Ambassador Jale traveled from Washington, D.C. especially for the event and encountered difficulty with his planned travel due to the hurricane that impacted and canceled travel on the east coast. His flight to Los Angeles took him almost 18 hours, as he was routed and rerouted around bad weather as he changed planes in an effort to be present for the occasion.

The special event included Fijian food, music, presentations, artifacts, and a Kava ceremony demonstrated by former Country Director Eddie Stice and his wife Debbie. The Friends of Fiji provided the food for the occasion and several RPCV displayed their artifacts and collections gathered during their service.

The current group of Volunteers left Los Angeles the next day to go to Fiji and begin training for their two-years of service. The new Volunteers will be working in environmental education and youth and community development projects

Fiji Country Director Letter

Mark Lewis departed as Country Director for Fiji early this year to lay the ground work for the recent return of Peace Corps Volunteers to Fiji. Soon thereafter he took a moment to let us know how things were progressing:

Ni sa bula! Namaste! Greetings!

We have received warm welcomes from everyone we have met - from the Prime Minister to taxi drivers to former teachers and principals. I attribute these responses to the wonderful work and strong friendships that Volunteers built over the years. In fact, when people hear we are from Peace Corps, they invariably launch into a response that goes something like, "I knew a Peace Corpse [sic] in 1972. His name was Jason and he taught Maths at my school. He was from Indiana and had two brothers and one sister. Do you know him?" Jason, and all other Fiji RPCVs out there, rest assured that you really DID make a difference to people here and that memories of you live on...

As some of you may know this is actually a return to Fiji for me. As an RPCV Fiji, I'm delighted to be coming back, this time around with my wife Kelli (RPCV Tonga) and two boys, Taylor and Samuel. What a wonderful place to raise a family! Where else in the world can you walk into a restaurant and have your children whisked away for an hour while you enjoy a quiet dinner, worry free? It's nice to be back 'home!'

I know that people have many questions regarding Peace Corps' re-entry. Though Maslow's hierarchy of needs is currently dictating how our energy is being spent (i.e. looking for housing and office space) we have managed to meet a couple of times with former staff members as well as visit several Ministries and NGOs.

Our fundamental mission is to build a credible, effective Peace Corps program, held in positive regard by hosts, partners, and Volunteers alike. To accomplish this, our immediate focus is to hire quality staff and to establish meaningful programming that complements the development efforts of the Government and other local agencies. Based on encouraging discussions with these partners, we anticipate that our program will grow to ~80 Volunteers over the next couple of years.

Others have articulated better than I some of the challenges facing the country at this point. However, recently there have been encouraging signs of reconciliation. Forgiveness is respected in the cultures of Fiji and it seems that most people are ready to move forward. A local Peace Corps staff member in Tonga once said that the most valuable contribution Volunteers could make was to instill a sense of "what is possible." Fiji certainly seems ready for that type of enthusiasm and there are many opportunities for Volunteers to continue the positive legacy of the 2,200 Volunteers who have served here before them.

As life becomes more settled here, I am looking forward to engaging the Friends of Fiji and other local RPCVs more closely in our operations. Not only would I appreciate your thoughts and suggestions about re-building a strong program, but there are many other ways that you can contribute as well - from writing welcome letters to new trainees, to continuing to raise funds for scholarships or small development projects in Fiji. I will keep you posted on our progress.

Moce mada!

Mark Lewis
Country Director/Fiji

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Fiji Country Director Interview

Prior to being selected for the Country Director position in Fiji, Mark Lewis worked as the Associate Director for Programming and Training in Turkmenistan as well as more recently in Jordan. He has served twice as a Volunteer - first in Fiji and then several years later in Tonga with his wife, Kelli. Additional short-term work with Peace Corps has included pre-service trainings, workshops, and other consultancies.

Before his experience with Peace Corps, Mark was a technical manager and orbital operations specialist for Hughes Space and Communications Group in Los Angeles. He also has a passion for education and is an experienced Math and Science teacher. Mark and Kelli are both natives of Seattle.

David Downs of the Friends of Fiji interviewed Mark Lewis. David files this report:

FoF: What prompted the decision to return from both Fiji's and Peace Corps' points of view?

Lewis: Because of our ongoing presence in several Pacific islands and relationships with many regional organizations, Peace Corps maintained a connection to Fiji even after PC/Fiji closed in 1998. Our regional projects and collaboration with Pacific leaders frequently brought Peace Corps staff to Fiji and kept us in touch with key leaders in the Fijian community. The idea that Peace Corps could again make a positive contribution in Fiji received tremendous support from both sides.

Informal discussions between Peace Corps staff in Washington, DC, and the Fijian Embassy took place in 2001, leading to a formal invitation from the Government of Fiji in February 2002 to consider reopening the Peace Corps program. The assessment team arrived in May of last year and felt that there were well-defined development needs and opportunities for Volunteers to make meaningful contributions in a variety of sectors.

FoF: Who was on the exploratory team and what were their findings?

Lewis: [the Team was]

- Carl Swartz, Expert Consultant at Peace Corps (former CD Hungary and Guatemala)
- Jeff Henry, Sub-Regional Programming and Training Officer/Pacific
- Harris Bostic II, Regional Office Manager/San Francisco (recruiting office)
- Ed Hughes, Regional Safety and Security Officer/Inter-America and Pacific Region
- Leanne MacCullough, Consultant / medical (former PCMO Zimbabwe)

Members of the assessment team were in Fiji from May 17-27, 2002 and concluded that Fiji presented Peace Corps with a very positive, welcoming environment in which PCVs can work productively in support of grassroots development within a generally healthy and safe context. The leadership of the country warmly welcomed and fully supported PC's return. They promised strong support for Volunteers and staff along with flexibility in terms of programming options. Numerous government, academic and NGO institutions expressed interest in hosting Peace Corps Volunteers at the earliest possible opportunity.

FoF: What are the programmatic needs?

Lewis: We strongly believe that our initial programming must be built around clearly articulated goals and objectives. There have been many requests for Volunteers to support programs in sectors such as the environment, community health education, youth development, information technology, HIV/AIDS education, municipal development, organizational (NGO) strengthening, small business and women's issues. We feel confident that PCVs could be working alongside, not in lieu of, local grassroots development partners in these sectors.

Initially, we will have two projects: Integrated Coastal Management (Environment "plus"), and Youth Development. These project areas are sufficiently established as to provide the necessary supervisor/counterpart infrastructure for Volunteer assignments, but are still at a point where Volunteers can meaningfully contribute. Additionally, these two areas provide the flexibility for us to explore overlapping sectors such as health education, NGO strengthening, municipal development, and small business.

22 Trainees are scheduled to arrive late September 2003

- 15 integrated coastal management
- 7 youth and community development

FoF: What is the staffing pattern likely to be?

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Lewis: With fairly ambitious growth levels planned, we will be hiring several local staff members to fulfill positions within PC/Fiji, approximately 15 over the next two years. Initially, the Admin Officer, the PCMO, and one APCD will all be US direct-hires. However, local staff are the backbone of every post and we will be hiring the most qualified and experienced persons possible who can contribute to the long-term effectiveness of the program. There are specific regulations pertaining to government hiring practices and every consideration will be given to former staff members who apply for positions.

FoF: What are some of the more sensitive issues that Peace Corps will have to deal with as it returns to Fiji?

Lewis: The effectiveness of Peace Corps throughout the world is predicated on its staunch desire to remain as politically neutral as possible. Peace Corps/Fiji is sensitive to the complex political and social environment in which our programs will be operating. Poverty in Fiji is not limited to one ethnic group and we will endeavor to develop projects that address the needs of the peoples of Fiji regardless of ethnic background. Most Volunteers, by nature, have a deeply ingrained respect for diversity and there will be plenty of opportunities on a personal level to foster communication as well as cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

Though there has been a notable level of emigration in some professional areas such as nursing, Peace Corps will not be providing Volunteers to serve as direct "employees" within the government's civil service. Instead, we believe that placements which enable Volunteers to assist with developing the "capacity" of an agency or community is much more sustainable and will reap substantial long-term dividends for the country.

FoF: What other details about Peace Corps's return and the future can you tell us?

Lewis: This is truly an exciting time for us and we are fortunate to be in the position of building upon the excellent reputation of former Volunteers and staff. At the same time, there is a wonderful opportunity to take a fresh look at Fiji's current development needs and create a vibrant new program to benefit the peoples of Fiji. We are committed to developing a quality program that honors the level of commitment made by Volunteers, and which respects and engages local communities and stakeholders in the process.

We also hope that an established program in Fiji will strengthen Peace Corps' ability to contribute to regional initiatives that were developed over the last five years. Many regional NGOs are located here and our presence may foster greater cooperation and coordination with Peace Corps posts in other Pacific countries.

With the first group of trainees scheduled to come in late September, we are already beginning to develop tentative plans for a staging event on the West Coast (probably LA). Because of the importance of this re-opening, we think that it would be wonderful if the event could include the RPCV/Fiji community as well as members of the Fijian diplomatic mission. Again, this is tentative! Hopefully, we will have more news on this soon.

Upcoming Fijian Social Gathering

The Fijian Ambassador to the United States, Anare Jale is hosting a party at his home for Friends of Fiji and the Fijian community in the Washington, DC area.

Date: Saturday, November 22, 2003 at 7:00 pm
Location: 1030 Broadbranch Court McLean, VA

Please RSVP by the 21st (or earlier) to Fred Mosher at 301-439-0863 or fred@primelabel.com

Recent Friends of Fiji Gatherings

Fred Mosher keeps up with the gatherings of those of us who care about Fiji. Here is the latest:

Friends of Fiji Gather in Berkeley

Twenty-five Friends of Fiji celebrated the start of spring and the return of Peace Corps to Fiji at a gathering March 22, hosted by Jean and Raleigh Ellisen at their home in Berkeley, CA. The Ellisen's extended a special invitation to their friend, Harris Bostic II, of the San Francisco Regional Peace Corps office. Harris was a member of the assessment team that traveled to Fiji last year to set the stage for a return of Peace Corps to Fiji. Everyone in attendance was delighted to hear about that trip and the plans to start the new millennium tour of Peace Corps in Fiji with programs in Integrated Coastal Management and Youth Development. All in all, it was a most delightful evening, thanks to our wonderful hosts, the Ellisen's, with a pot-luck dinner that was scrumptious, and plenty of grog to bring the traditions of Fiji to Berkeley.

Friends of Fiji Gather in New England

Last Memorial Day Weekend, Friends of Fiji held its 16th Annual Get-Together in New England, continuing the tradition begun by Anne Baker (Fiji LVI) in Newport, RI. Two dozen Friends of Fiji enjoyed a delightful afternoon of grog, great food, bowling, walks on the docks, socializing, and more, despite some inclement weather. Many thanks to Lou Guarino (F XXX) and wife Ann Mulvaney for securing the Cottage Park Yacht Club on the Boston Harbor as our venue and for being such great hosts!

Coastal Communities Helping Each Other In Any Way They Can!

By: Glenn Ricci

Four hundred and twenty sets of snorkel gear. \$45,000. It's always great to be reminded of the success that partnerships can bring about. This is certainly the case with the Rotary and Snorkel Bob Foundation partnership in the Pacific Island region. Rotary Clubs in the US and the Pacific found the money, and Snorkel Bob made their snorkeling gear affordable for US Peace Corps Volunteers to assist coastal communities across the Pacific Islands in managing their coastal resources.

The donation of snorkel gear is going to select coastal communities in the Pacific as part of a larger integrated coastal management initiative. This initiative, known as the Partnership in Integrated Coastal Management in the Pacific, is a USAID-funded initiative bringing together the U.S. Peace Corps, the University of the South Pacific, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the Coastal Resources Center. The initial stages of this partnership assisted Pacific countries in developing strategies for integrated coastal management (ICM) and identifying appropriate roles for Peace Corps volunteers, training of community members and volunteers, and generating commitment from the communities up to the national government. The snorkel gear will help move the initiative from planning to community action.

While most Pacific Islanders have a wealth of knowledge about their marine resources, few have the opportunity to visualize the health of their resources and monitor from below the surface. Select coastal communities and Peace Corps Volunteers have been trained in ICM. The snorkel gear is just one small piece of the initiative to help communities to take a more active role in managing their resources. Some communities will use the snorkeling gear to educate youngsters. Others will use the equipment as a critical asset in their monitoring programs of coral reefs and fisheries.

Peace Corps currently has volunteers assisting in the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu and Kiribati. With over 300 Peace Corps Volunteers already stationed in the Pacific Region, countries have another valuable partner to get training services, information and resources to rural coastal communities.

By seeking out unique partnerships, coastal management initiatives can attract the needed materials for enabling resource users to become resource managers. Through international organizations such as Rotary, coastal communities from different countries have the ability to support one another. The expanded partnership, with help from the Snorkel Bob Foundation and Rotary, will empower the ICM process by giving communities the basic tools to help learn more about their resources, or to implement their own long-term monitoring programs. The more each citizen knows about their underwater world, the better equipped they will be to take action for their future. As this initiative develops, we invite partners with a vision for regional cooperation to join us in our shared goals.

Micro-Enterprise Investment

We are pleased to announce that the Friends of Fiji Board voted to invest organizational funds into the National Peace Corps Association's Microenterprise Program (MEP). The funds, from the 1997 FoF fundraiser to establish nursing scholarships in honor of the late Peace Corps/Fiji medical officer Wainiu Caginiliwalala, had been in a CD that had matured. By transferring the funds into the MEP, the Friends of Fiji are receiving a good return on their investment while supporting women and their families in developing countries.

The NPCA's MEP is an exciting new program that allows NPCA group affiliates, and individuals, the opportunity to invest money to be used for extending small loans primarily to women who, because of their extreme poverty, have no access to credit. The MEP partnered with FINCA International and the Calvert Social Investment Foundation in 2002, and began accepting investments last November. To date, over \$193,000 has been invested, improving the lives of several thousand women and their families. As the MEP grows, new international partners will be identified by the NPCA to broaden the geographic impact of the MEP - including projects

in the Pacific region.

Friends of Fiji members who would like to personally invest, or who wish to learn more about FINCA and Calvert Foundation, can easily access information at www.npca-mep.org. Information about the rate of return, the terms of investing and frequently asked questions can be found there. To receive an enrollment form and a copy of the prospectus, you may call Calvert directly at 800.239.5911.

Pedals For Progress – Update

David Schweidenback is the President of Pedals For Progress. He reports that a shipment of approximately 400 bicycles, 200 tires, 200 tubes, more than 100 pumps, 300 locks, racks, helmets, patch kits and tools are being packed in shipping containers sailed from New Jersey to Fiji in November 2002.



David Schweidenback (center) And Pedals for Progress, Loading Bicycles into Shipping Containers



Packing the Bicycles Inside the Container

Friends of Fiji contributed \$7000 of fund raiser proceeds to the effort, for shipping costs and purchases of spare parts. In Fiji, Percy Navolo received shipment. Mr. Navolo works as a bicycle and auto mechanic. He is the President of the Fiji Amateur Cycling Association. Below, he tells us about his plans:

My main objective has been to train youths with the initiative of starting up a small bicycle business within their small communities to help generate income for themselves and their families. My aim is to see more people riding bicycles for the benefits of the environment, their health and cost efficiency. To see more bicycle shops set up in remote and urban areas so they could be utilized. Youths that are employed under my care are: early school leavers, unemployed, ex-prisoners, street kids and youths from very poor families.

My interest to help youths came about in 1990 when I first revived the Fiji Cycling Association. It was saddening to see many youths with enthusiastic interest in the sport but were unable to provide for themselves proper bicycle and equipment. For the boys who had bicycles but could not afford to get them fixed as well I took under my care and shared my talents with them. I gave up my physical education teaching career to help these youths develop something for themselves. I opened a bicycle repair shop soon after I married to help these youths and at the same time generate income for my small family. In 1993 my youth training was discovered by a former Peace Corps volunteer Mr. John Geir who was with the Junior Achievement society. He had approached me on the interest of training youths who were involved with the JAC of Fiji. I assisted him with the setting up and sales of previous containers that were sent to Fiji from PEDAL FOR PROGRESS.

After his departure from the country I have never stopped training these youths. I have trained them both in the fields of motor and bicycle repairs. My bicycle career earned me \$120fjd a week but this did not stop me from sharing my talent with these youths. It gave me great pleasure to train and work among these youths and it only encouraged me more to see them progress and maintain

their skills in the bicycle repair field. After the coup in 2000 my youth project seemed dim and almost over, I did not let the economy dampen my spirits. I sold my three ton truck to help with my project. I had applied for funds from the government but was turned down due to the overspending the government went through during the time of the coup. Apart from keeping my family well maintained I also share with the youths the little cash that I earn in the workshop. You will not find many generous people in this part of the country due to the low income they earn effected from the coup.

In the sports part, we have a lot of youths who have great potential as I had mentioned earlier but I know with your help these youths will be able to afford their own bikes. On behalf of the youths I would like to first of all sincerely thank you Mr. David Schweidenback and Pedal for progress for the opportunity to help these youths and to see some of these youths being employed due to your generosity.

Also at this time we would also like to thank FRIENDS OF FIJI for helping open a door of opportunity for these youths and myself. I hope that this may help you with a bit of knowledge of my operation here in Fiji. I wish to invite you David and Eric and THE FRIENDS OF FIJI to come and experience our home. We may be poor financially but we are rich with love and hospitality.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,
Percy Navolo.

Grand Prize Winner's Trip To Fiji

Friends of Fiji raffled a trip for two to Fiji. The lucky winner was Janet Callis. What we didn't ever expect was the talenoa of how she spent her winnings. If its been too long since you've seen the shining moonlight on coconut trees rustling in the night wind on a moon lit night at a sandy beach, this story is for you:

Bula! From my first phone call to Air Pacific and e-mail to Mana Resort to our departure from Fiji, 'Bula' rang out over and over. Everyone we had contact with was open, friendly and willing to try to accommodate us. We had a wonderful adventure, enjoyed the envy of co-workers and friends, and soaked up the sun, the sea, the atmosphere, and found the people gentle, friendly, and fun loving.

Mana Resort had wonderful accommodations and it was great to enjoy the sea breeze in our open air room rather than having air conditioning. Fresh flowers in our room, and even in the foot washbasin outside the room, added color and joy every day. The fantastic colors of the sea were mesmerizing. I had to go sea canoeing and snorkeling to try to discover what was below the surface that made all those colors - a rainbow array of blues and green and white caps! Our submarine trip treated us to a great showcase of colorful fish and corals.

Part of the fun of the trip was being a minority among the Aussies, Kiwis, Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, and Germans while at Mana. We had a very informative Indian cab driver in Suva, where we also enjoyed some wonderful curry. People watching with such a rich mixture of characters was great. One of the pleasures was watching the Fijian men at Mana with the children. They were so gentle and good with children from infants to teens. They seemed to love spending time making sure everyone was involved and having a good time.

Air Pacific staff were very pleasant and we had good flights. We even took small trips - 12 minutes from Nadi to Mana and 30 minutes from Nadi to Suva - on Air Fiji and Sun Air. We even had a couple to private flights - the two of us and the pilots. The flights were long and full, but the food was good and the staff were very attentive.

All in all, I had a terrific trip that was both an adventure and relaxing. It was great to sit on the beach with a light breeze blowing and read or just take in the beauty. It was a tremendous trip. Can we win a trip again this year? I need to go back to stay at a resort in the rain forest and to spend some time in the interior!

Thanks Friends of Fiji. Bula!

Janet Callis (RPCV/Korea), Winner of the 2002 Friends of Fiji Fundraising Raffle Grand Prize

Notes From the Web Master

Jim Reiersen manages the Friends of Fiji Web page. He has these suggestions for websites to visit.

Visions of Fiji

John and Janet Pierson's website at www.grainypictures.com/fijiphotos.html includes articles and pictures that will keep you daydreaming for a week.

The following is excerpted from their website:

"Where to begin? As of 13 February, 2002, I've really taken over the world's most remote movie theater, the 180 Meridian Cinema, village of Wairiki, island of Taveuni, Republic of Fiji, South Pacific Ocean, for the purpose of showing free movies in a media-free, no-electricity environment/market...which also happens to be paradise. Oh yeah, I'm writing a new book and making a documentary about the project called "Coconut Wireless" or "Reel Paradise" or "I May Burn in Hell, But It Won't Be For Showing Movies."

Fiji Cookbook

Friends of Fiji has provided Peace Corps with a copy of the 1993 Fiji Volunteer Cookbook as a resource for the new volunteers in Fiji. It is also available on our website in PDF and Word formats for viewing or download. Check out our web site at www.fofiji.org. The site includes pictures from last fall's Friends of Fiji fundraiser and links to web sites with information on Fiji and Peace Corps. If you have suggestions for changes or additional links, email the Webmaster at jim-reiersen@worldnet.att.net.

Listservs

Stay on top of NPCA news by signing up for the weekly NPCANews listserv. Each Wednesday, NPCA staff send out an email with latest news for the Peace Corps Community. This generally includes updates on NPCA programs and activities, Peace Corps news, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and former staff featured in the media. To subscribe, visit <http://smtp.rpcv.org/mailman/listinfo> or send an email with your name and email address to infotech@rpcv.org. The NPCA actually has multiple lists focused on news, advocacy, global education and peace, all open for subscription. Please specify in which list(s) you are interested.

Local Contact Person Needed

A local contact person is needed for Fiji events around the NPCA conference in Chicago, August 5-8, 2004. The conference planning committee is setting aside Friday evening for Country of Service dinners and Saturday afternoon for country updates. We need a volunteer willing to help find a restaurant or home for the dinner, to help find guest speakers and to coordinate the country update, to stay in contact with the Chicago planning committee, and to collect RSVPs. That may sound like a lot, but it is actually not. If you can take on that volunteer role (ideally from Chicago, but can probably easily be done from anywhere), please contact Anne Baker at anne@rpcv.org.

Friends Of Fiji Listserv

Interested in a Friends of Fiji listserv? Many "Friends of" groups maintain regular contact with members through an email listserv. This list often highlights news from the country as it happens. All you need is an email account! If you are interested in having FoF establish and maintain such a news listserv, please contact Anne Baker at anne@rpcv.org. Anne is willing to set up and administer the list, but would like assistance in staying ontop of Fiji news and posting it regularly to the list. Please contact Anne if you can assist in that role.

US Ambassador to Fiji



David Laurence Lyon
United States Ambassador to Fiji, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu

David Lyon assumed his duties as the American Ambassador to the Republic of the Fiji Islands on January 9, 2003. Ambassador Lyon will also be accredited to the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu.

Ambassador Lyon was born in Frankfurt and grew up in Germany, Brazil and the United States. He joined the Foreign Service in 1974 after graduating with a degree of History from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. His previous overseas posts include Lagos, Nigeria (1974-76); Recife, Brazil (1976-78); Accra, Ghana (1978-80); Manila, the Philippines (1980-84); Bangkok, Thailand (1987-91); Beijing, China (1996-99), and Melbourne, Australia (1999-2002).

From 1984-86, Ambassador Lyon was Deputy Director, then Acting Director, of the Office of Regional Affairs in the Bureau of African Affairs. He spent the next year studying international security policy at the U.S. National War College. His third domestic assignment was in 1991-94 as an office director in the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters.

Ambassador Lyon received Superior Honor Awards for his work in the Philippines, the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, and China. He also received a Meritorious Honor Award for managing consular operations in China during the student demonstrations that followed the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May 1999. His other awards include three Senior Performance Awards, a Meritorious Service Increase, four nominations for the annual Consular Services award, the National War College Alumni Association's award for Excellence in Research and Writing, and the 1997-98 Thomas Jefferson award for Outstanding Service to American Citizens Overseas.

Ambassador Lyon is accompanied by his wife, Maureen Gomes Lyon. Prior to their marriage, Mrs. Lyon was an Army nurse in the U.S. and Okinawa, and a Peace Corps volunteer and staff officer in Brazil. The Lyons' two children, Nathaniel and Jocelyn, are university students in Australia.

NPCA News

Anne Baker is our correspondent to the National Peace Corps Association. Here is her latest filing:

Kevin Quigley is the new NPCA president

Kevin F. F. Quigley became president of the National Peace Corps Association on August 1. He has more than 20 years of experience working in the not-for-profit community for such organizations as the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Asia Society, and he most recently served as executive director of the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities. He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand from 1976 to 1979.

Quigley is a graduate of Swarthmore College, University College Dublin and Columbia University and received a doctorate in comparative government from Georgetown University. Among his many honors, Quigley has served as a Council on Foreign Relations international affairs fellow, a U.S.-Japan Leadership Fellow, a guest scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and a resident associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Quigley succeeded Dane Smith, a former Foreign Service Officer and U.S. ambassador who served in the position for four years.

For photos and contact information for all NPCA staff, visit the "Who We Are" section of the NPCA website at www.rpcv.org.

New Board Of Directors

Friends of Fiji has elected new board members, who met for the first time in February. Here is your new board of directors:

President: Cynthia Grant
Treasurer: Fred Mosher

Vice President: Jim Reierson
Secretary: Teresa Saunders

Board Members: Anne Baker, Amelia Catanasiga, David Downes, Dan Junker, Teresea Owens and Robin Weaver.



Pictured Left To Right: Cynthia Grant, Jim Reierson, Teresa Saunders, Fred Mosher

Friends of Fiji News is published by Friends of Fiji, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose goals are to keep Fiji RPCV's, staff, and friends in touch and informed about current affairs in Fiji and to raise funds for worthy projects in Fiji. Our general correspondence address is: Friends of Fiji, 10413 Kinloch Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903. Email us at femosher@erols.com, or visit our website at www.fofiji.org. The FOF board members welcome your correspondence. Reach them at the addresses below.

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