Amigos de Honduras

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November 2015

SECRETARY/TREASU RER'S REPORT Joan M.

Larimore (San Francisco del Valle 1986-88)

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Hola, Amigos members! Our treasury currently shows a balance of \$2703.86. We just did a grant of \$500 to Teri Salus to help her with the tasks involved with notifying members of the up-coming 2016 New Orleans Reunion.

Is the membership dilemma all straightened out? Not quite! We are finally square with NPCA after almost two years but still have members who have fallen far behind in their dues. In September I sent a letter to those 50 members and have received answers from about one third. Before the November Newsletter goes out, all those who have not replied will be deleted from our Roster. Many thanks to those of you who did respond! Gracias to Fred Corvi and his search for Honduran RPCVs. He always tells those folks about Amigos and so we gain some new members.

I will again make it my responsibility to notify members of upcoming due dates. It will be on the label on your newsletter. Brant Miller, our pdf guy, will notify those members receiving the electronic newsletter. Judith Whitney-Terry suggested that we should be keeping a list of RPCVs who have passed away. Fred has

many of them but we may be asking membership to email amigos about anyone they know who is deceased.

Arnoldo Horacio Resendez PC Honduras Director 1996-99 died July 30, 2015. Sarah Hall Goodwin PC Honduras Deputy Director/PTO 1978-84 died August 16, 2015. See Amigos_https://www.facebook.com/groups/2209604190/.

A final house-keeping note: when you pay your dues (affiliate and NPCA) through Amigos, your membership is sent to DC within two days. All checks are deposited within three days so you won't have checks outstanding. Have questions? Just let me know. Editor's note: NPCA members please read the article on page 2 about the new national dues policy.



2016 NEW ORLEANS REUNION IS SOON!
Terri Salus(Tegucigalpa 1978-80)Registration for the 2016

(Feb.11-15) New Orleans Reunion closes Dec. 11, 2015. See the website (www.PeaceCorpsHondurasReunio n2013.com) for up to date information. Reunion t-shirts and hoodies will be sold again mid-December to early January (check website for order information). Discounted hotel room blocks will return to inventory January 11, 2016 (if available), and excursions should be booked as soon as possible.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Loren Hintz (Olanchito 1980-82) ldhintz@bellsouth.netThis has a number of reports of RPCVs still working in Honduras. Please continue to share your experiences. There is always lots of news about Honduras and I have only included a small sample. As you will read in the NPCA article on page 2 they are no longer charging dues but are collecting donations (if you want the Worldview magazine vou will need to donate a minimum of \$25). Our dues are just \$15, but having dues creates a sense of membership and commitment that organizations such as ours need. The dues pay for mailings and also help fund the Amigos Grants and other projects. As editor I want to continue with the paper newsletter. The option exists for folks who want to get it electronically to do so. In terms of keeping in touch, my experience has been that email addresses change more frequently while mailing addresses are current especially once

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RPCVs have been in the states for a while. The New Orleans Reunion will be a chance for some members to talk about our organization but most RPCVs will not be able to attend. Please share your thoughts with me via email or at 804 Kings Mill Rd. Chapel Hill NC 27517 or 919-933-8987.

THANKS TO RECENT AMIGOS DE HONDURAS DONORS

MARY MAYER

JENNA & MATT TERMOLEN

CLYDE & JOELLE MORRIS BUFFA

PAUL LELAND

MARK REILLY

LARRY &NANCY FITTON

JUDITH WHITNEY TERRY

NPCA MEMBERSHIP CHANGES by Anne Baker, Terri Salus and Loren Hintz

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is the national organization for the Peace Corps Community – the hub of a network of individuals and affiliate groups (such as ours) working together to make the world a better place. The NPCA is excited to announce a change to their membership policy, one that will make our community more robust, inclusive, and diverse, while reflecting the increasingly more mission-driven nature of organization.

Going forward, basic membership in the NPCA will be complimentary for

everyone in the Peace Corps community - serving Peace Corps Volunteers, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, current Peace Corps staff, former Peace Corps staff, host country nationals and anyone who shares Peace Corps ideals, so long as the NPCA has accurate service and contact information for you. As of January 1, 2016, the dues required for NPCA membership are eliminated. Current 2015 members will become "NPCA Mission Partners."

This exciting change coincides with NPCA's launch of the boldest and most visionary initiative in its 36-year history: the Peace Corps Community Fund. The Community Fund enables the NPCA to do important work that it has never before been able to do in three of their fields activity: increasing the Peace Corps community's global development impact, supporting returned Volunteers, and advocating for Peace Corps.

The NPCA welcomes all to join the community as a Mission Partner by contributing to the Corps Community Peace Fund. And if you have not been receiving their communications, make sure you register for your complimentary membership in the NPCA on their website: http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org /membership/ OR to become a NPCA. member of contact Membership@PeaceCorpsConnect. org or 202-203-7728x18 and provide your contact information.

Questions? Visit the FAQ page on the new membership model at http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/community/npcas-new-membership-model-and-faqs/How does it work? "All NPCA members receive access to basic

programs and services, including digital newsletters, transition assistance programs, member discounts, and our jobs board" and "NPCA members may elect to receive add-on benefits, such as access to the searchable directory and World View magazine, for a modest fee {\$25}" All (Basic) members will receive NPCA voting privileges, NPCA board eligibility, Enewsletter, mentoring program, graduate scholarships, and job board. Mission Partner Supporters (\$50) receive all of the Basic benefits, plus World View Magazine, and partner discounts. Mission Partner Sustainers (\$100) receive all of the preceding, plus membership card, database search, and member discounts.

		NPCA Men	nbership Recog	inition			
	Basic Member						
Access to programs and services:	FREE	Supporter \$50/person \$80/household	Sustainer \$100/person \$175/household	Leader \$250/person \$400/household	Shriver \$1,000/person \$1,750/household	Founder \$10,000	
NPCA voting privileges	Х	X	X	X	X	X	
NPCA board eligibility	Х	X	Х	X	X	X	
E-newsletter	X	Х	X	X	X	X	
Mentoring program	Х	Х	X	X	X	Х	
Graduate scholarships	X	X	Х	X	X	Х	
Jobs board	Х	X	X	X	X	X	
WorldView magazine		Х	X	X	X	X	
Partner discounts		X	X	X	X	X	
Membership card			Х	X	X	Х	
Member discounts			Х	X	X	Х	
Traveler's insurance				X	X	X	
Peace Corps swag				X	X	Х	
FoundersCard member					X	X	
VIP events					Y	X	

To get an idea of what NPCA does, go to http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org /. For me, I, Terri, will continue to support NPCA in its efforts to support community connections (e.g., affiliate groups and reunions), recently returned volunteers, and lobbying for the benefit of returned, current, and future volunteers (e.g. Peace Corps commemorative park and health benefits and coverage for medical issues attributed to Peace Corps service, Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act, Peace Corps budget, etc.).

Effect on *Amigos de Honduras* The NPCA explained that its new membership policy does "not affect your membership with an NPCA Amigos de Honduras August 2015

affiliate group (such as Friends of Guatemala or Central Missouri Peace Corps Association). If you pay affiliate group dues through the NPCA, we will continue to collect and remit dues, as applicable, on behalf your of group." However, NPCA noted that "many affiliate groups transitioning to a similar model, as discovered by our research and assessment of membership model options." During the New Orleans Reunion (Sunday, February 14, 2016), we will discuss organization ideas including whether Amigos de Honduras should follow the NPCA model and eliminate dues.

RETURNING TO HONDURAS VIA ADEC

Leslie Hughes-Lind (Marcala, 1978-80) and Jonathan Lind (Tegucigalpa, 1980-82)

Times have changed in the 33 years since we were last in Honduras. Time can also bring wonderful perspective. We met in Honduras in 1980 and married upon our return to the US in 1982. As the years passed by, we occasionally thought about returning for a visit.

In 2011, it was agreed during the 50th Peace Corps Anniversary in Washington, D.C., that the next Honduras Peace Corps reunion would be in Colorado. We participated in preparing for the event – along with Sue Golding, Fred Corvi, Steve Phelan and others. The event took place in October 2013 and provided an opportunity for many of us to spend time with other volunteers from Honduras. At the reunion, we reconnected with John Nolan, who previously collaborated

with Fred Stottlemyer - a Peace Corps volunteer from East Pakistan who worked on international water projects. Meeting Fred led John Nolan back to Honduras to serve as an engineer for a program called ADEC - Agua y Desarrollo Comunitario. ADEC is a nongovernmental, non-partisan, nonprofit organization established in 2006 in the municipality of Marcala, La Paz. This organization provides expertise in technical sanitation, health and hygiene to improve the quality of life for people in the rural areas of Honduras and El Salvador.

Serendipitously, Leslie had served in Marcala from 1978-1980. Nolan, skyped with Leslie from Honduras in 2014, as he was visiting the home of the Leslie's Honduran mother (housemate), Dona Thelma, who was then 88 years young. Leslie wanted to return to see her. John was looking for someone to join the ADEC board, and Leslie volunteered. The board needed someone to go to Honduras to see the program in action - Leslie volunteered, and so did Jon.



John Nolan, and Jon and Leslie arrived in Honduras in July of 2015 to work on a water project and were met at the airport in San Pedro Sula. On the trip to Marcala, we noticed there were better roads and many

industries, like clothing factories, than in the 1980s. Some things had remained the same, with people selling fresh fruit, live toucans. coconuts and other products on the road passed Lago Yojoa. Arriving in Marcala, Leslie was surprised to see that the town had grown from 2,000 to 13,000 people! There were WIFI cafés and cell phone advertisements all around the town. Coffee cooperatives were located in the main part of the city. Open air markets selling nances, bananas, and other fruits and vegetables stood alongside large "Costco" like super mercados featuring products from all over the world - and the stores accepted plastic!

Leslie, having worked in Nutrition and Hygiene in Peace Corps with women's groups (amas de casas) discovered there was no longer a push to teach people to boil their water. Other health and sanitation practices were still taught but now, Honduran health workers teach chlorination practices and piped fresh water into their towns. Using battery operated computers and projectors, Hondurans have developed their own appropriate teaching materials. One worker at La Cruz Roja shared that infant mortality has dropped drastically since the 1980s, when 20% of all the children under five died from dehydration from diarrhea due to unclean water and food. Not knowing the exact numbers, he shared that children are living longer and healthier lives. Another welcome addition, they also had a car (like an ambulance) that would drive sick people to major towns, if they could not be treated in the local clinics. With phone cell use and

transportation, people survived that might have died from complications before reaching medical providers.

Unlike 1982, now the town had clean water ("agua de calidad") piped into most homes and businesses, even in the outlying aldeas. Although water was readily available, it was still generally contaminated. Water filtration and treatment were needed to ensure safe drinking water. ADEC was focused on providing the technical expertise and products like tablets and chlorine capabilities to provide towns and surrounding areas - including parts of El Salvador - with safe drinking water systems and better hygienic practices. This included education about the removal of smoke from homes via chimineas along with learning the value of keeping livestock out of homes due to the harmful micro-organisms hosted, handwashing and keeping flies off of food.

The people who worked for ADEC are well educated, dedicated and very energetic about the work they perform. This includes laboratory testing of water samples, collection of samples from towns and educational charlas to help people better understand how their health is impacted by unsanitary hygiene practices and poor water quality. While ADEC did not generally build new water tanks and treatment systems - they focused on restoring non-functioning water systems that were installed by other groups – they occasionally did build tanks and water filtration systems if justified. Jon was able to participate in the construction of one such filtration system while we were there. Although technology the

current, many of the construction practices had not changed since 1980.



We felt safe, most of the time, in the campo, yet, San Pedro Sula "felt" different. The "safe hotel" in which we staved was like a walled fortress, with heavily armed sentinels placed all around it. We did not get sick at all in Marcala, but all three of us think we got "la brinca pie" from water we drank at the armed hotel. I guess we were not safe from contamination! People we spoke to in Marcala were saddened that Peace Corps was gone. They asked us to tell others that it really was a safe place, although we heard stories of robberies and killings in the larger cities every day. Still, we would return again in a heartbeat, our hearts are still so tied to that beautiful land and the lovely people!

PS ADEC is an extremely frugal organization! With very limited funds, they have 12 employees who work both in an office and travel to remote outlying areas to collect water samples and educate people. As with most small rural organizations, money is always a very big need. If you would like to help, check out their website; www.adechonduras.org and donate at the International Rural Water Association

www.internationalruralwater.org. Gracias.

A STORY OF HOPE AND YOUTHFUL

EXUBERANCE: Bilingual Education in Central America (BECA) Carol Spangler (Cofradia, Cortes, 1966-68) and Sean Bell, Executive Director, BECA

In the midst of the media coverage about the flood of Central American immigrants, I googled my former PC site to see if I could find any news of the pueblo. To my shock and delight, I learned that Cofradia is the home of BECA (Bilingual Education in Central America), a 501(c)3 organization that recruits, trains, and supports native Englishspeaking volunteer teachers to staff a network of community-run bilingual schools in Honduras. San Jeronimo Bilingual School (SJBS) in Cofradia is BECA's first community partner school. It opened in 2004 with 113 students and a small staff of volunteer teachers.

Sean Bell, BECA's Executive Director, tells the rest of the

story: It was library day and SJBS's fourth grade class filed into a hot little room with a single, measly fan but delightfully filled from floor to ceiling with books. This is a special place for it is the biggest library in the region. Their teacher, Miss Bethany, has told me they are allowed one book a week. Upon excitedly selecting, the class forms a line to check out their books. Nohemy was next in line and handed me her book: it's a textured picture book for a toddlers to play with.

"Nohemy!" I say startled at her choice. I knew she was reading chapter books now. She hesitated then smiled sheepishly but reaffirmed her choice by pushing it closer to the scanner. I smiled, suddenly understanding. "Is this for your sister Sophie?" A broad grin crossed her face at the mention of her name and she nodded. I gestured for her to come closer to me and whispered into her ear, "Go pick out a book for yourself, this one can be for Sophie this week." She quickly pulled James and the Giant Peach off the shelf.

Nohemy - and one day her baby sister - is part of BECA's network of community schools. Her school, San Jeronimo Bilingual School, is located just 20 miles from San Pedro Sula. For several years running, San Pedro has been the poster child for the many struggles that are afflicting Honduras: poverty, violence, lack of educational opportunities, and social inequality.



Nohemy's school, in other words, is located at the epicenter of a crisis that is causing tens of thousands of children to leave for the United States. Yet in spite of its location, a grand total of zero BECA graduates have come to the United States illegally.

At a BECA school, students are taught much more than just English. Students at BECA graduate as champions of learning and literacy, as challengers of the status quo, and as leaders who embody a service-minded attitude to become persistent advocates for social change.

While many non-profits are hunkering down or cutting programs, BECA continues to improve upon the services we provide throughout Honduras. In the past year alone, we have made great strides with our curriculum development project and teacher training institute, both of which are instrumental in allowing us to serve our students. For the current school year BECA is operating in three rural communities to educate 520 students all through the hard work of local staff and 31 international, English-speaking volunteers.

But we aren't stopping there and just as Nohemy's family is growing, BECA hopes to do the same. We envision a day when every child in Honduras can access a high quality education, but to do so we are looking for new family members. We are looking for dedicated and energetic volunteers who will become the next crew of BECA teachers. We are looking for new donors interested in joining our mission for change.

If you are interested in applying, donating, or learning more please visit our website at www.becaschools.org or email me at sbell@becaschools.org

PALISAL UPDATE Dale Schmitz (Yamaranguila 1967-68)

It's about time to look for tickets for our trip next February-March to Honduras. I will again spend time there on training carpenters and providing tools for two sites in Honduras, which we'll conduct in early March. We'll be going back to Gracias, Lempira and also to the PALISAL Lumber Cooperative again next year with some training and tools. We'd like them to build a solar kiln with technical help from ENASCIFOR. They could then sell the wood for higher prices, furniture built from dried wood would warp less, and carpenters would not need as powerful of motors to work with it. Will see. We with Tools for Opportunity also have a trip planned to El Salvador about the same time.

Tools for Opportunity is a small non-profit organization based in central Iowa that collects new and used donated tools. It ships those to Honduras and in March of each year provides training by woodworkers from Iowa, and tools to new and/or struggling carpenters. They earn the tools after one year and completion of three tasks: donate 40 hours of work to a local town, school, park church or person in need; plant 5 trees; mentor another person in carpentry.

Amigos de Honduras made a donation of \$1,000 to Tools for Opportunity in 2014 to train carpenters at PALISAL, a cooperative lumber mill in Yamaranguila, Intibuca. This past March we trained and donated tools to carpenters there. In March 2016 we will return there to train additional carpenters using the same

tools donated last and to check-up on the five carpenters trained this year to assure they have completed their obligations. Our shipment of tools for 2016 is packed and ready to be shipped to Maryland and then to Honduras; next March we will train 15 carpenters at Colosuca in Gracias, Lempira.

Besides working with Tools for Opportunity in the U.S. to obtain tools and donations, in Honduras, I arrange for the training sessions in both Yamaranguila, Intibuca and also in Gracias, Lempira. This includes locating the training sites, hotels, meals and providing travel for the U.S. trainers with a vehicle my wife Frances and I keep in Honduras, where we spend two months each year visiting family.

More information about **Tools for Opportunity** may be found on our website or on Facebook.

<u>dalelschmitz@q.com</u> **Donations**are always welcomed.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY: IHS

Barbara E. Joe (El Triunfo & La Esperanza 2000-03)

Reminder: the non-profit, totally volunteer organization International Health Service of Minnesota (IHS, ihsmn.org) is again calling for volunteers, including physicians, nurses, PAs, dentists, and pharmacists, as well as radio operators, interpreters, and general helpers for its February 2016 teams serving rural Honduras. Usual stay is about 10 days and participants not only pay their own airfare but a fee for their in-country transportation and food, as well as medical supplies.

It's a tall order, but as someone who has participated 8 times, I can vouch for the experience.

While major Honduran cities do present security challenges, residents of the towns where the brigades take place are warm and welcoming, very grateful for the medical services and excited to have outside visitors. IHS meets people at the airport and escorts them where they need to go in special buses. Despite the name of the organization, it welcomes folks from all over the US and the world. The February 2016 trip dates are February 12 through February 26. For more information, contact John Kirckof imkkek@yahoo.com

SPANISH BLUNDERS Alli No Mas Aug 2010



Volunteer was coaching her baseball team and a player threw a ball hard without looking and it hit another player in the head (luckily it was a squishy ball and not a real baseball). Volunteers goes to the player and begins to lecture him on the importance of safety on the baseball diamond. Afterwards, she asks the player, "Entiendo? Entiendo?" meaning to ask "Me entiende? Me entiende?" Suffice it to say, the player had a very confused look on his face.

A volunteer was describing her day to her landlord. She spoke of all the people she had seen and commented that "Yo estaba **violando** y violando sobre todo de la communidad." Not until later did she realize she said she was raping the whole town, and not flying around town. Oops.

A volunteer was sitting in her host Mom's comedor when a creepy man came in. At one point he asked for "pan de mujer," and leaping to conclusions, the volunteer thought this meant something that it didn't, so she naturally felt insulted for all woman-kind. She gets upset and her host Mom can see this, so she asks her what she thought "pan de mujer" After a brief meant. embarrassing silence, the host Mom clued our red faced volunteer in to the fact that it means homemade bread.

New volunteer is out playing Frisbee and slips and slides in a fresh cow patty. While trying to explain what happened to her clothing she comes across a difference in Spanish between countries stating "Pisé la caca" but was then clued into the fact that pisar is not so polite here. Live and learn my friends.

A few weeks ago a volunteer was helping our municipality's dentist give dental hygiene charlas in the escuelas in the municipality and the dentist and volunteer were walking up to a school and she said to her: "oye, voluntaria, ud. es bien alta! Cuanto mide ud.?" to which she responded: "Pues yo no se en metros pero mido cinco pies, nueve PULGAS" she just kept looking at our volunteer weird and it took her a second to register what she had accidentally said, and they both burst out laughing and she still jokes with the 5'9" volunteer about how many pulgas I have!

A volunteer was helping translate a sermon for a pastor that came with a brigade from the states to a group of about 15 women from their community and the lesson he was Amigos de Honduras August 2015

preaching that day was about how Jesus died on the cross to wash away all our sins. She remember following along and keeping up well with the translation, the women were getting really in to the sermon and all of a sudden she slipped up and said that "Si aceptan a Jesus en sus corazones, les va a perdonar todos sus PESCADOS..." and immediately caught herself, but all the women burst out laughing and the poor pastor thought it was something that he had said in the sermon! The volunteer had to explain to him, but the women kept teasing her about it for the rest of the week!

NEWS OF HONDURAS

The Fifth Report of the State of the (www.estadonacion.com Region)released a study confirming modest poverty reduction in Central America, Belize and Panama from 2000-2013. With the exception of Guatemala, where poverty grew, each country showed some decrease in poverty and extreme poverty rates with Nicaragua's indicators exceeding the region in most categories. Region-wide poverty was lowered from 54% to 49% during the period studied. Houses without basic necessities decreased from 60% to 54%. Extreme poverty decreased three points from 29% to 26%. Despite the percentage decreases, the report stated that due to population growth, two million more people lived in poverty in 2013 than did so in 2000. It said that 22 million people do not have the economic resources to attain a minimum standard of living.

Nicaragua (which has historically, along with Honduras, had the highest poverty level in the region, exceeding 55%) showed the greatest

decrease, dropping 11%, and a reduction of extreme poverty from 42% to 30%. The report said Honduras poverty has decreased by 6%. An IMF report stated that in Latin America, Nicaragua has the most reduced inequality while inequality remains high in Honduras.

Ecotourism continues to grow in Honduras. **RPCV Robert Gallardo** has been encouraged by recent efforts of the Honduran Institute of Tourism to promote birding trips to Honduras.

Recently NPR reported that a Honduras teen who escaped to the US was granted legal residence because of violent threats of gangs. The Honduran woman who attempted suicide in Texas detention center and was then deported with her son back to Honduras was able to flee to Europe for asylum.

The Christian Science Monitor had two recent stories: Honduras has the second highest teen pregnancy rate in Latin America (after Nicaragua.) About half of the pregnancies are the result of sexual assault. The Tegucigalpa Hospital Escuela has a new program giving psychological and medical care to teen mothers in an effort to help them stay in school and avoid another birth in their teens. Several organizations are trying to change the attitude that talking about sex is taboo.

Droughts have increased in Honduras. COSECHA, founded by Gabino Lopez Vargas, for 20 years has been teaching techniques to farmers in the La Ceiba region and other areas to farm with less water. They have trained community

educators, terraced hillsides, dug holes and added organic material for fruit trees and hung upside down water bottles on sticks by samplings for condensation to add water to the soil.

The Garifuna continue to struggle to keep their communal land. In June 66 members of Barra Vieja of Tela were tried in court for "land usurpation" because of complaints by the Indura Beach Resort luxury hotel. On June 4 the judge acquitted the entire community. This was a pleasant surprise for everyone. See https://hondurasaccompanimentproject.wordpress.com/

Oct. 11, 2015 the Honduran government announced the closing of the Banco Continental because of association with money laundering and individuals involved in narcotrafficing as described by the US OFAC (Office of Foreign Exchange Control.) Individuals holding accounts in the bank were limited to withdrawals of L200, 000 or about \$10,000. The liberal newspaper El Tiempo announced they were suspending publication because they were unable to obtain the funds needed to run their business due to the closure of the Continental Bank. Some members of the Rosenthal family were main investors of Continental. Rosenthal family are well known Honduran businessmen but some individuals were singled out by the US Treasury Department. In a related story the Rosenthal crocodile farm in Villanueva, Cortes is in crisis. The 21 employees have not been paid and there have been no funds available to feed the 9000 crocodiles in the farm. Crocodiles have not been fed for 40 days.

Amigos de Honduras :	\$15 🗖	
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Contribution to projects Amigos will fund in Honduras:		
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