



You Will Be Missed

By Carolyn Lawrence

How do you say good-bye to two friends who have been such a large part of your professional and personal life for more than twelve years? John Gruidl and Thom Anderson, my co-workers with the Peace Corps Fellows Program, left the program this past summer to pursue other interests. Even though the transition was thought-out and planned nearly two years in advance, I still miss John's regular morning phone call and stories with Thom over morning coffee.



John Gruidl, former director of the Peace Corps Fellows Program

I was asked to write this article about what John and Thom brought to the Fellows program, and thoughts have been racing through my head for weeks. How do I put my feelings about these two exceptional people on paper? How do I do justice to their commitment and dedication to the Fellows program?

John's insight was the spark for the start of the WIU Fellows program in 1994. He saw the connection between the world-wide, but community-based experiences of Peace Corps Volunteers and the needs of rural Illinois communities. John was the "big picture" person on our team. He wrote the initial Kellogg grant to secure funding for the first three years of the program. Before that grant was over, John had found other sources of funding so that the good work of Peace Corps Fellows could continue beyond the initial grant period. He could also be counted on to listen to Fellows' problems and work out solutions, whether with classes, internships, or their personal lives. John was always generous, ready and willing to support Fellows' requests to attend conferences



Thom Anderson at his farewell party in July 2005.

or workshops. When family responsibilities or health interfered with class or internship duties, John was the first to say, "You are needed there now."

Fellows who have eaten John's delicious meals will no doubt remember another side of John's talents. On one September Saturday each year, John invited everyone in the program to his home for dinner. He spent the whole day preparing delicious dishes. As the program grew, and John's house didn't, it became quite a challenge to serve everyone. There were Fellows on the deck, Fellows in the sunroom, Fellows

(Continued on page 8)

Inside This Edition



From The Desk Of ...

Global Challenges and Personal Responsibility... PCF Style
page 2

From the Field

Change is Good if it Comes From Within
page 3

Fall Workshop
AmeriCorps Opening Day
page 4

Campus Beat
New Fellows
Exploring Ethiopia
page 5

Program Updates
Fellows Activities
Alumni Happenings
page 6

Midwest CDI
page 7

Editor
Shannon Ruh





From the desk of...*Karen Mauldin-Curtis, Program Manager*

Global Challenges and Personal Responsibility... PCF Style

Dear Fellows, Alumni, and Friends of the Program,

On October 4, Campus Fellows Shannon Ruh and Jessica Gershick led a Campus Dialogue session about the work each of them carried out in Belize during their Peace Corps service. Shannon presented information about the rapid decline of forested land, the rise of environmental degradation in the country, and discussed how her work aimed to curtail it. Jessica talked about the impact of the spread of HIV/AIDS on the people of Belize and shared how her work as an HIV/AIDS educator in the schools addressed the crisis. Both Shannon and Jessica encountered challenges but had successes as well – that’s the way it works in Peace Corps and in life.

Each of the Fellows in this program has a similar story to share from their Peace Corps experience. Each has lived and worked overseas in an effort to address a pressing human need, whether that need be halting environmental degradation and the spread of AIDS or improving access to quality education, clean water,

and healthy food. Each one took personal responsibility to address a global challenge!

Furthermore, our Fellows commit to serving an eleven-month internship in a rural community in Illinois. They understand they don’t have to cross the globe to find people and communities in need. They understand they can improve the quality of life for others right here at home. For example, Brian Todd has been serving the children of McDonough County in his capacity as Coordinator of the School-Based Mentoring Program for the local chapter of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Kim Luz has worked to develop a heart disease curriculum, *Blueprints of the Heart*, which will be used in rural hospitals across the state. Dave Keiser has directed the economic development effort in Carroll County and Paul Wierzbicki has been taking inventory of community forests and providing technical assistance to communities across southern Illinois. The list goes on ...

As I read each field Fellow’s monthly report and talk with their supervisors



Karen Mauldin-Curtis, Program Manager

during site visits to their communities, I am aware of the tremendously positive impact of each Fellow’s work. I am impressed and encouraged by their commitment. It makes my job as manager of this program so rewarding. Having served as a volunteer in the Dominican Republic and having graduated from this program, I understand the personal commitment each of our Fellows has made to address a human need and it is my privilege to play a part in their continued success. So, to each of the Fellows in this program I say “thank you” for taking action with your life and contributing so much to our program, the university, and your communities.

All my best,
Karen



Tidbits From the Institute

Annual Community Economic Development Conference
Date: March 8 -9, 2006
Location: Holiday Inn City Centre, Peoria, Illinois
Sessions: Conference session will focus on tourism, promoting entrepreneurship, health care, and other techniques for improving the rural economy. The conference program is a full day on Wednesday and the morning of Thursday. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.
For more information contact Carol Harper at 800-526-9943 or by email at CS-Harper@wiu.edu.
Information will be available on the IIRA Web site in January, www.iira.org.

New Director: We are happy to announce that Chris Merrett assumed the position of Director for the Institute for Rural Affairs beginning in June 2005. Norm Walzer continues to work for the Institute as director emeritus, conducting research and providing assistance to staff when needed.

Entrepreneurship in Scotland: John Gruidl recently spent two weeks in Scotland on a special educational tour focusing on entrepreneurship and community development.

MAPPING Program Wins National Award: The MAPPING program recently received the 2005 Outstanding Program Award by the Community Development Society (CDS). The award is presented in recognition of superior programming that exemplifies and positively influences community development practices.

Reflections From the Field

“Change is Good if it Comes From Within”

By Dave Keiser

When I arrived in Carroll County I had two tasks listed on my job description; form a non-profit corporation to address economic development and implement a business retention and expansion survey. On my third day on the job, I had to speak in front of the county board. Five of the non-profit's supporters were no longer on the board, so I really had to explain why I was there.

Development work has a broad definition. It can apply to a single person, creating a democracy such as what is being attempted in Iraq, or to the economic well being of a poor county. People have to be involved and they have to want the development for it to work and be sustainable. So after thanking the board for their forward thinking and the hospitality I had received, I reminded them that I was not from Carroll County, I have no family there, no land, no business ventures, no reason to want things to get better. However, there are thousands of people in the county that do, and I needed participation from the local governments to make things better.

The first two months, I went to every meeting I could find; I joined the local Rotary Club, created the Mt. Carroll Disc Golf Club, and went to local sporting events. I got my face out there and explained to every person possible why I was here. Everyone welcomed me with open arms. The next thing I did was invited 100 of those people to a community visioning meeting. I got 55 to attend a 3-hour meeting where we mapped out our vision for the organization and by the end of the night; the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation was born.

There are several things I have learned from my internship experience that I would like to pass on to fellows who will begin their internships in the future. Believe it or not, it's a lot like your Peace Corps service. You will be the center of attention for the first couple of months and people will give you the benefit of the doubt, but if you don't start producing, they can easily turn on you. You can not be an introvert and succeed at this job. It is very important to get involved locally.



Dave Keiser (far right) with officers from the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation

You also need to know how to form a consensus and listen to everyone. You quickly become a peace maker if the community is severely split; don't allow yourself to be pulled in a dozen directions. Just stick to the work plan in front of you. Finally, remember that you are not going to make everyone happy so don't sweat it. I force myself to turn the switch off at 4 p.m. on Friday. Make time for yourself or you will burn out.

Visit the Fellows Program online at www.peacecorpsfellows-wiu.org



Peace Corps
Fellows Program
in Community
Development
Western Illinois University

Program Staff

Karen Mauldin-Curtis, Manager
Carolyn Lawrence, Admin. Liaison
Karen Peitzmeier, Internal Coordinator

The Peace Corps Fellows Program in Community Development (PCF) is managed within the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. The mission of the PCF Program is to train the next generation of community development specialists and to assist small towns with the implementation of community projects while enhancing citizen capacity.

“Western Illinois University complies fully with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, orders, and regulations. The University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, marital status, disability, or veteran status.”

Fellows and Alumni!

We would like to make this newsletter one that serves your needs. If you have moved, let us know where you are. We are always looking for article ideas and submissions. Please write us with your thoughts and experiences. After all, this is your newsletter!

800-526-9943 (toll free)
PCF@wiu.edu

Fall Workshop 2005

By Jessica Gersbick

On October 28, 2005, Fellows attended the annual fall semester workshop. This year's group of Campus Fellows and Field Fellows came together for a day long workshop focusing on three important topics: networking etiquette, job search and resume writing, and an overview of the University of Illinois Extension. Each of these topics is important in helping fellows to develop their professional skills, better preparing them for their work in the field of community development.

The morning session on networking was presented by Mr. Al Waters, director of Career Services at WIU. Mr. Waters gave the Fellows a plethora of information about how one can interact with an individual they have just met. A significant point made by Mr. Waters was, "use your many experiences as the entry point to further conversation."

To illustrate his discussion, Mr. Waters facilitated an exercise where business

leaders from the local morning Rotary Club joined the Fellows in a timed game of introductions. This involved participants introducing themselves and asking questions of each other.



Marci Roberts, Scott Paszkiewicz, Dave Keiser, and Paul Wierszbicki taking a break during the fall workshop.

In the afternoon, the entire group enjoyed the presentations given by Scott Paszkiewicz, a former Fellow, who worked in Henry Illinois, with Prairie Rivers Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) and Kathie Brown of the University of Illinois

Extension Office in Macomb. Mr. Paszkiewicz spoke openly to the Fellows about his experience during his internship and what it was like looking for a job afterwards. The most important point he made is the need for a well formatted resume as employers want to see as much information about you as possible, relative to the job you apply for.

The final presenter of the day was Ms. Kathie Brown of the University of Illinois Extension Office in Macomb. Ms. Brown briefly went over how the Extension office works (units, directors, educators), the programs that Extension offers for economic development, and explained who the Extension Officers for economic development are in the various regions of Illinois.

Overall, the annual fall semester workshop was a success. We all learned valuable information that will be useful, while on campus and in the field.

AmeriCorps Opening Day

By Karen Peitzmeier



Señor Chocolate sauntered across the stage as the third generation California Latino Gangster that he was. He delivered a message about culture, persistence and understanding. He had experienced a life altering change when one person in a service organization had taken the time to make a connection with him. That connection, void of judgment and preconceived notions, gave Mr. Richard Santana (Señor Chocolate's real name) the fortitude to change his life. He went on to graduate from Harvard Graduate School, with a Masters of Education

Of the more than 500 attendees at this year's AmeriCorps Opening Day Celebration, many are confronted with people of different race, creed, color, needs and wants every day in their volunteer work for AmeriCorps in Illinois. Mr. Santana challenged each

person to assess their preconceived notions about the people they work with and to go beyond those notions; allowing themselves to learn to give from the heart, teach, and learn together.

This year we've strengthened our program by adding Illinois State University students who joined us in



New ISU AmeriCorps members join WTU Field Fellows at Opening Day. Back row from left to right: Pat Turner, Timothy Johnson, Jeremy Richart, Ken Springer, Eric Anderson, Molly Davies, Ryan Melliske, and Dave Keiser. Front row: Brian Todd.

attending Opening Day. This partnership, between WIU and ISU

provides an opportunity for graduate students from each campus to serve as AmeriCorps members, as they strive to fulfill the challenge Mr. Santana set before them.

Our Fellows face similar challenges to those identified by Mr. Santana, in working to understand rural Illinois communities. Learning to be open to new ideas presented by community members and to reach beyond preconceived notions continues throughout the eleven-month internship. Accomplishing this sometimes difficult task is rewarding for both the community and the Fellow in many different ways and at many different levels.

Two New Fellows Join Program

Sarrab Hammon

Hometown: Decatur, Illinois

Graduate Department: Recreation Parks and Tourism Administration

Undergraduate Degree: BFA in Industrial Design from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

Peace Corps: Mali, 2002-2004

Graduate Assistantship: Macomb Park District

Hobbies: Camping, Hiking, Running, crafty stuff

Future Plans: I hope to continue to serve the community I will live in through the Park Service as a park planner.

Reflections on Peace Corps Service: My two years in Mali helped change me into the person I have always wanted to be. I know who I am and that I have the power to make positive changes in my life as well as the lives of others.



New Peace Corps Fellows Sarrab Hammon and Anthony Bradford, pictured above.

Anthony Bradford

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Graduate Department: Political Science

Undergraduate Degree: Board of Governor Degree from Western Illinois University

Peace Corps: Haiti, 1996-1999

Graduate Assistantship: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

Hobbies: I love baseball/softball, reading, traveling, cooking, and I enjoy networking with diverse people!

Future Plans: With a major in political science my job options are broad. Some possibilities include working for the State Department, as a local alderman in Chicago, as a civic high school teacher or maybe work for USAID—wish me luck! I would consider any one of those careers after I finish here at WIU.

Reflections on Peace Corps Service: Challenging and rewarding.

Exploring Ethiopia

By Marci Roberts

On June 6th 2005, four Peace Corps Fellows joined eight other participants on a Fulbright-Hayes Scholarship program to Ethiopia. Dr. Fetene Gebrewold and Dr. Carolyn Ward, both professors at Western Illinois University, directed this teacher's cultural exchange program. Jessica Gershick, Christina Davis, Shannon Ruh, and Marci Roberts applied to and were accepted for this Fulbright-Hayes program in May 2005.

The group stayed in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, for the first week of their travels. Presenters educated the participants on various aspects of Ethiopian life. Topics included: economics, language, environment, health, politics, and gender roles. This first week acquainted the participants with daily life and important issues in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian teachers in Dessie then worked with the group participants for the next two weeks. The Ethiopians and Americans worked side-by-side in

the classrooms of a local non-governmental school. This collaboration allowed both the Ethiopians and Americans to learn a variety of teaching styles. It also provided a perfect environment for learning about one another's cultures.

After leaving Dessie, the group traveled to several other sites, gathering more information about Ethiopian culture along the way. Highlights of the trip included the ancient churches of Lalibella, the source of the Blue Nile in Bahar Dar, and the ancient walled city of Harrar. While visiting these other

regions, the group also toured government universities, the agricultural research center, and the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

The Fulbright-Hayes participants will be sharing their experiences via presentations and the World Wide Web. They will develop curriculum and lesson plans which will enable teachers around the world to teach their classes about Ethiopia. This Web site will be completed by December of 2005 and can be accessed from the Western Illinois University Web site (www.wiu.edu).



Jessica Gershick, Marci Roberts, Dr. Gebrewold, Shannon Ruh and Christina Davis outside of the hotel at the ancient churches of Lalibella.

Fellows Activities on Campus

By Shannon Rub

During fall semester the Campus Fellows have taken part in a variety of activities. In line with the campus theme “global challenges and personal responsibility”, the Fellows have had several opportunities to share their Peace Corps experience through class presentations, campus dialogues, and information meetings. This has helped in getting the word out about Peace Corps to interested individuals. In turn, causing others to think about the challenges people in other parts of the world face.

In September, some Fellows took part in the Macomb Memory Walk. The one and a half mile walk was in memory of those that have lived with Alzheimer’s.



Back row from left to right: Rob Lawrence, Anthony Bradford, Chuck Rub, and Brian Todd. Middle row from left to right: Shannon Rub, Marci Roberts, and Sarah Hammon. Front row from left to right: Carolyn Lawrence, Angie Sanders, and Jessica Gersbick enjoying a night of bowling at the Roseville Lanes Bowling Alley.

In addition, several Fellows helped to beautify the campus by planting flowers in front of the union. The annual fall semester bowling night in Roseville provided an opportunity for all the

Fellows to show off their bowling skills. In October, both the Field Fellows and the Campus Fellows gathered at Carolyn’s house for a Halloween party.

Throughout the semester Fellows have gathered several times to play walleyball at the recreation center and to scale the climbing wall at Horn Field Campus. When asked about her experience at the climbing wall, Peace Corps Fellow Angie Sanders responded, “I can’t believe I just started going out there. It has been fun and a great break from school work and assistantship duties”. These activities provided an opportunity to socialize, relieve some stress, and get some exercise.

UPDATES

CAREERS

- ◆ Linda Lee Blaine (PCF 2002-2004) – Program Coordinator, Community Technology Center and Special Projects, Warren County, University of Illinois Extension, Monmouth, IL
- ◆ Scott Paszkiewicz (PCF 1998-2000) – Watershed Planner, Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, Libertyville, IL
- ◆ Jason Walker (PCF 2002-2004) – Community Development Specialist for a six county area, Illinois Coalition for Community Services, Hillsboro, IL
- ◆ Martha Hesla (PCF 2001-2003) – Will be departing January 1 for Liberia. Her new job assignment with the National Center for State Courts fulfills a United Nations resolution to help develop strategy and a legal framework as a member of the Justice Sector Support Program in Liberia. Her work will involve court budget, finance, and personnel. The initial assignment is for six months with a possible extension.
- ◆ Brittany Odermann Heaton (PCF 2002-2004) - Transportation planner, Calaveras Council of Governments, The Regional Transportation Planning agency for Calaveras County, CA.
- ◆ Keven Hale (PCF 1999-2001) - Now working from home for the non-profit Rural Community Assistance Corporation as a loan officer in the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada. They do loans for community facilities, affordable housing, and water systems.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ David and Johanna Snedeker (PCFs 2000-2002) – Daughter, Abbie Lynn, born on May 6, 2005. Abbie was welcomed by big brother, Quinn.
- ◆ Kevin (PCF 1999-2001) and Shamenna Hale – Daughter, Cora Kaoloo, born July 23, 2005. Cora was welcomed by big brother, Conner.
- ◆ Shawn (PCF 2002-2004) and Jessie Kaskie – Daughter, Kamira (Kami) Rose, born July 23, 2005.
- ◆ Current Peace Corps Fellows, Mical McFarland and Christina Davis have spent the Fall 2005 semester in Russia. They have been working on a project entitled, “A Global Business Learning Partnership”, sponsored by the Department of State, University Partnership.

Fellows Attend Midwest CDI

By Angie Sanders

Eight Peace Corps Fellows, along with many community workers and members from Illinois, participated in the Midwest Community Development Institute (CDI) in Springfield from August 8-12, 2005.

This was the first year for the Midwest CDI, sponsored by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA), with support from WIU, Thomas N. Jacob & Associates Economic Development Group, Ltd., WIU Peace Corps Fellows Program, and the University of Illinois Extension. Professor John Gruidl and Peace Corps Fellow Molly Davies organized the training. Jack Vincent, President of Performance Development Plus, L.L.C., facilitated.

The training, part one of a three part series to earn a Certified Community Developer Certificate, was the first in the Midwest and is endorsed by the International Community Development Council. Topics for this first year's training included a variety of community development basics, such as team building, entrepreneurship, strategic visioning, and planning from several different trainers in the Midwest.

The group of trainees also took part in the week-long strategic "game," New Town,



facilitated by Vincent. New Town is an interactive game that asks the participants to start a town from scratch and includes quite a few complicated rules and lots of "city council" meetings. Peace Corps Fellow Shannon Ruh commented, "I enjoyed New Town, as it provided a practical example of the intricacies involved in planning, the need for well thought out community planning and the role that community dynamics play in the planning process."

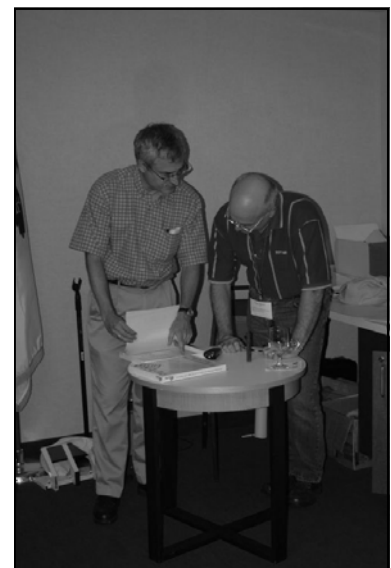
Conference planning for next year is underway. Next year's CDI will host the first and second year training sessions simultaneously. For more information visit the Web site at www.midwestcdi.org.



Pictured above: Community members from throughout Illinois join with WIU Peace Corps Fellows for year one of the Midwest Community Development Institute.

Pictured to the Left: PCF Sarrab Hammon and Megan Bleich from the Illinois Department of Public Health carefully analyze the placement of their pieces, to properly plan the development of New Town.

Pictured to the Right: John Gruidl and Jack Vincent tabulating points and verifying properties in New Town.





WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY

Peace Corps Fellows Program
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Stripes Hall 518
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455-1390

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Macomb, IL 61455
Permit No. 489

You Will Be Missed

(Continued from page 1)

in the kitchen, and Fellows in the living room. All were happy to squeeze together, laughing and enjoying the time together. Some might remember John's expertise at the charcoal grill during graduation picnics. I'm sure Denise will remember the hot coals rolling around in the back of her pick-up truck. But we won't bring that subject up again, John! We all enjoyed John's elaborate costumes at our Halloween parties. Superman in tights!! But I think only a few Fellows will remember when he turned a 15 passenger van around by driving over a median curb.

What do I think about when I remember Thom Anderson? Team-building! It was Thom who encouraged new Fellows and staff to build camaraderie with team building exercises at Horn Field Campus. Not just anyone could have gotten me on the high-ropes course! His methods worked. Classes of Fellows who participated in these exercises still remain close today. Thom's teamwork skills also guided our 3-person staff through decision making and job

assignments. He told everyone on the team how important we were and encouraged us to express our opinions during staff meetings.



John, Carolyn, and Thom

Thom always had a positive "we can do it" and "it will work out" attitude. On days when problems seemed overwhelming, Thom would see it through to the end, even if the end was 1:00 a.m. Thom is credited with writing our current AmeriCorps grant that provides generous Education Awards for Fellows as well as program operating money. The paperwork for an AmeriCorps grant is daunting, but Thom

was willing to wade through it for the good of the program. Maybe that's why he had less hair when he left than when he started six years ago!

Can Thom tell stories? But you would expect that from someone who was a wild teenager in high school, a college student, a marine, a Peace Corps Volunteer, a Seaman's Club manager in Morocco, a garbage collector in Colorado, and a father; just to name a few. Thom loved to meet the Fellows at a local pub or at their internship sites and spend the evening talking over a Guinness.

I remember my surprise birthday party in the Fellows office a few years ago. I was named Queen for the Day with a crown and scepter. Thom and John dropped to their knees in front of me and bowed. It is now my turn. Good-bye, my dear friends. I bow to your achievements, your dedication, and your commitment to the Fellows who have passed our way. May the future bring many good things to both of you.