

Friends of the Dominican Republic

CYBERNEWS

FDR's Monthly E-Newsletter
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CyberNews Editor - Jim Shrefler: CyberNews@fotdr.org President - Roger Weiss:
weissdsl1@verizon.net

Treasurer - John Evans: Treasurer@fotdr.org

Membership Director - Janice Jorgensen:
MembershipDirector@fotdr.org

Webmaster - Doug Stone: dhstone@mydhs.net Founding President - Neil Ross:
neilross@cox.net

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FDR PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This was my third reunion in Santo Domingo and as always I am thrilled by the experience. I saw an amazing number of old friends, and met new ones. This was the first time I got a good idea of what Peace Corps is doing today. I always enjoy the Dominican food - fresh fruit rice and beans, and lots of tostones. I loaded up at the coffee co-ops table so my travel bag was bulging and I am still enjoying the morning pot of Dominican café'. Yes, I did manage to dance to the meringue and some music that was new to me.

The reunion was my first opportunity to meet some of the board members and the Cyber editor in person, even though we are in regular contact by phone, email and our board Yahoo site for messages and storage of documents. The board also added a monthly conference call which brings out a lot of discussion and feelings that we just did not get previously.

After the reunion I was able to get together with one family I knew in La Vega, and who moved to Santo Domingo by way of Nueva York. Amazing to be friends after 40+ years. I made a quick visit to my school project to deliver photos of the old school and construction of the new. I had visited there a year ago and

discovered that the director of the school was puzzling over the history of the building. (I guess that makes me ancient history!)

My profound thanks to Romeo Massey, Director of PC DR, and the volunteers for the organizing and set-up of the Reunion in Santo Domingo, and to Fondo Quisqueya that had the lead role for organizing this time. FDR and PC DR will lead the next one in 2012.

The new web site is growing. The complete database is there for members to look up friends. We have posted some of the photos and notes from the Reunion. Check it out at www.fotdr.org.

We did not receive COS dates from many current and recent PCVs, and so you must contact us and request your free memberships. Contact John Evans: Treasurer@fotdr.org.

45th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN THE DR

The word awesome is often overused these days. However, it is well chosen to describe the Peace Corps Dominican Republic 45th Anniversary Celebration that was held in Santo Domingo in February of 2007. Imagine going to a country which, soon after becoming freed of 30 years of an oppressive dictatorship and is trying to establish a new government, finds itself falling into a civil war. And you are there as a Peace Corps Volunteer or PC Administrator! That was the situation many of the conference attendees found themselves in 45 or so years ago. These were SPECIAL people! To be amongst these RPCVs as they return 45 years later to reminisce and rekindle old acquaintances; that is Awesome! It was also extremely enlightening to get a glimpse of what Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers are doing today.

And not to mention the excellent job they did with planning and conducting the conference. On behalf of all who attended - WE WHO ATTENDED THE 45 ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE CAN NOT THANK YOU ENOUGH! - The Editor

NEWS FROM AVENIDA BOLIVAR

El Banco de Ahorro and Credito ADEMI, through the ADEMI Foundation, provided PC-DR with RD\$373,000 for the construction of 4 rural water systems that will benefit 315 families. The funds were presented by Manuel Arsenio Urena, President of Banco ADEMI, to Miguel Leon, Peace Corps Associate Director for Water and Health programs of PC-DR. The funds will be used to construct water systems in rural areas of Navarette and Quita Sueno de Guanatico and in Palma Picada and Bajaboniquito, Altamira, Puerto Plata. The funds will be used under the technical guidance of Peace Corps Volunteers who reside in the communities. The works will be completed through a collective effort, and under an assistance model, that includes contributions by the recipient communities in the form of labor, technical assistance by Peace Corps, and financing by the Banco ADEMI.

Over the period 2001-2006 the Banco ADEMI has provided a total of 3.8 million Dominican Pesos to Peace Corps - DR for such water projects in various parts of the country. (Information credit - Clave Digital)

HAPPENINGS IN, AND ABOUT, THE DR --

Sustainable development for Miches - (Excerpts from DR1 March 19, 2007) As part of its commitment to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the Dominican government, in conjunction with Columbia University, has announced a pioneering, large-scale sustainable development project for the municipality of Miches, in the eastern province of El Seibo. Miches, with a population of just 20,000, is a relatively untouched area of remarkable natural beauty and ecological diversity, and the project aims to develop the area in an environmentally sustainable way, with the full involvement of local communities. Initiatives include reforestation and a micro-hydro power generation system using the existing waterfall network, which energy experts believe could potentially generate more electricity than the local population needs, and thus feed the national power grid with the surplus. The project also aims to clean up local lagoons, rivers and coastline where pollution has depleted fish stocks and contaminated drinking water sources. This will be combined with a social component, improving health and education facilities in the municipality, where according to the project staff, almost 100% of the population lives below the poverty line. This scenic part of the country with virgin beaches, verdant slopes, waterfalls and lagoons is ripe for discovery by tourism developers, so a key element of the project is to ensure that any tourism developments in the Miches area are environmentally sustainable and include the local community.

Mar 16

Study reveals alarming statistics - (DR1 March 16, 2007)

The Dominican National Statistics Office (ONE) has presented the third version of its study, "EnHogar," revealing high levels of malnutrition in children. The study also showed that people have limited knowledge of methods for curing illness in women and an increasing trend among teenagers to engage in sexual activity.

The study shows that 10% of the Dominican population uses wood for fire in order to cook food, that 20% of children born in the last five years have not been registered at the civil registries, and that 34% of women don't know how to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Also alarming is the fact that 11% of women get married before they are 15 years old and that more than 50% of children between the ages of 12 and 23 months don't have all the required immunizations. The study surveyed 10,950 households and questions were asked about the home, about women, and about children under 18. It also showed that one out of every 100 children is chronically malnourished and that 5% of all children display some form of malnutrition. The areas of Enriquillo and El Valle, as well as the provinces of Independencia, Barahona and Baoruco showed the highest level of malnutrition in children.

Improvements in Baby Registry - (DR1 March 16, 2007)

By noon yesterday 18 newborns had received their birth certificates and identification numbers once they were registered at the country's first civil registry to be based inside a maternity ward, Santo Domingo's Nuestra Senora de la Altagracia. New parents applauded the efficiency of the process and said that it was a relief not to have to wait in long lines. The birth certificates are free and all that parents have to do is present their own "cedula" identity card and the proof of birth they are given at the hospital.

PC-DR RELATED NEWS
45 YEARS OF HISTORY

More History? All who attended the 45th PC-DR Anniversary Conference would probably agree that it represented another event for PC-DR that will be remembered by all for many years to come. Part of the program was to continue with efforts to document the experiences and contributions of Peace Corps Volunteers and Programs. Opportunity exists to have these records placed in the Kennedy Library. Many items were collected at the February Conference but more are still needed. Any documents, special fotos and other items can become part of PD-DR History. How to help: To share your ideas and to find out how to submit history items, contact history chairman Neil Ross history@fotdr.org, (401)782-2116 or PC Volunteer Brian Quistorff bquistorff@gmail.com

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION Weekly Podcasts: You can now listen to returned Peace Corps volunteers describe their lives as social entrepreneurs. This series of weekly podcast interviews, produced by Social Edge <<http://www.socialedge.org>> in collaboration with the National Peace Corps Association, is available at <http://www.socialedge.org/features/peace-corps-entrepreneurs> and will soon be on iTunes. "These are amazing and inspirational stories of how individuals use the Peace Corps experience to develop the skills, habits and aptitude necessary to be effective agents for positive social change," says NPCA President Kevin Quigley. "These Peace Corps entrepreneurs exemplify what our community is fundamentally about---innovation leading to change that makes a difference." Social Edge, a program of the Skoll Foundation, is the global online community where tens of thousands of social entrepreneurs and other practitioners in the social benefit sector connect to network, learn, inspire and share resources. You can learn more about this exciting project by clicking here <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=1672&ref=1&fin=2>

Peace Corps Community Helps Its Own through Mentoring Program The NPCA/Peace Corps Mentoring Program is officially underway! In late January and early February, RPCVs in Miami, Portland (OR) and Chicago gathered for orientations to

kick off this new program which connects recently returned Peace Corps volunteers with RPCV mentors. The mentors provide transitional support and a connection to the larger RPCV community. From now until the end of June, mentors and mentees will meet one-on-one as well as with local RPCV affiliate groups, which are collaborating closely with NPCA. RPCVs involved in the program represent 52 different countries of service and have served in years spanning 1966 to 2006. NPCA will work to develop materials based on this pilot program to support other groups interested in starting mentoring programs. For more information on the mentoring program, please visit www.peacecorpsconnect.org/mentoring or by e-mail mentor@rpcv.org

JOBS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT -

NPCA Scholarships The School for International Training (SIT), led by President Carol Bellamy (PCV Guatemala 63-65, Peace Corps Director 93-95), announced increased NPCA academic scholarships of \$10,000 to pursue master's degrees in international programs at the school's Brattleboro, Vermont campus. The National Peace Corps Association Scholarship was established in 2000 to recognize the long-standing ties between SIT and the Peace Corps. Members of NPCA who have one year or more of significant intercultural experience are eligible to apply. Several awards of \$10,000 will be made each year. NPCA members can request information regarding this exclusive scholarship opportunity at 800-336-1616 or 802-257-7751, or on the Web at www.sit.edu <<http://www.sit.edu>>.

FONDO QUISQUEYA

FDR collaborates closely with our sister organization, Fondo Quisqueya. Like FDR, Fondo Q is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Fondo Q raises money to provide scholarships for low income Dominicans at all levels below university, including vocational and non-traditional education. Fondo Q welcomes your support for these efforts. For complete Information about Fondo Quisqueya, go to their website: www.fondoq.org. Contributions are tax deductible and may be sent to Fondo Quisqueya, P.O. Box 6628, Falls Church, VA 22040-6628

CONTACT US!

Have a news piece, announcement, or suggestion for the Cyber News? Send it along to the FDR Cyber News editor at CyberNews@fotdr.org .

Donations are juice that keep the FDR Program Development Fund and the Community Challenge fund operating to support Volunteer projects. Keep your Membership up to date: FDR dues are still only \$15 per year! Please mail dues and donations to FDR Treasurer, John Evans, and 4512 Park Road, Alexandria, VA 22312.

FDR is an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). NPCA dues are still only \$35 per year! Add that to your check for FDR membership and send to either FDR or to NPCA Membership, 1900 L Street NW, Suite 205, Washington, DC 20036 (be sure to designate FDR as your affiliate group). You may also join or renew both FDR and NPCA online at www.peacecorpsconnect.org/renew

Send changes in postal or e-mail addresses to: Membership Director - Janice Jorgensen: MembershipDirector@fotdr.org.

To Unsubscribe: If you do NOT want to receive future editions of the FDR Cyber News, please send a request to Janice Jorgensen (MembershipDirector@fotdr.org) to be removed from the email list.