

# Friends of Colombia



Newsletter of the Colombia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers  
P.O. Box 15292 • Chevy Chase, MD 20825

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## Letter from the President

Dear Friends of Colombia,

As most of you know by now, we are well underway with our plans for a conference/reunion in Cartagena in February 2008. Most people will arrive on February 4 for the conference dates of February 5, 6, and 7. We are receiving assistance from several sources, including the Embassy of Colombia, Los Cafeteros, the Hotel Santa Teresa, Avianca, and Fiesta Travel. The conference headquarters is the Hotel Santa Teresa.

The purpose of the event is many-fold: to reconnect with Colombia, reunite among ourselves, learn about modern-day Colombia, learn about projects we have been supporting and meet some of the recipients, identify ways in which we can continue to be involved in the process of change in Colombia, and have a great time in a city many of us remember well and a country we have never forgotten.

We have asked for reservation extensions, so if you did not reply by the July 31st deadline, contact the travel agency for further details—Mery Patterson at Fiesta Travel, 202-862-5570 or mpatterson@fiesta-travel.com. If you did not receive information about this event, please contact me at arlches@aol.com with the subject CARTAGENA.

Our webmaster, Jim O'Reilly, has designed and im-

plemented a new website. Our web address remains the same, friendsofcolombia.org. The Cartagena conference materials can be accessed on the website. Thank you, Jim.

We have received some interest in volunteer opportunities in Colombia. Maureen Orth, Mary Ray, and I have had planning sessions with Juan Esteban Orduz, President of the Colombian Coffee Federation. He is looking for ways to upgrade English language training and computer technology education in these schools. See the article "Update: Cafeteros' Invitation" on page 6.

I hope you are making your plans for Cartagena! Please send in your conference registration forms. The registration fee will cover some of the expenses of putting it together. If money is left over, it will go towards the projects we sponsor. We are planning social events for conference participants only. We hope to find sponsors for these events. If we do not get sponsors, you may sign up for the events and pay at the door.

I'm happy to report that by April we had received membership dues from 200, not 20. Our organization remains vital and growing

Sincerely yours,

Arleen Stewart Cheston  
President, Friends of Colombia

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## Reconnecting with the People of Colombia RPCV Conference February 4-7, 2008

The People of Colombia and Friends of Colombia, representing the 5,289 former Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Colombia, celebrate 20 years of service between the years 1961 and 1981. Stay in the fabulous colonial city of Cartagena, enjoy *comida típica*, and dance the *cumbia*. Extend your stay and visit other cities or your old Peace Corps site.

Conference site:

The Charleston Hotel Santa Teresa,  
located in the old city

Registration fee:

\$50.00 per person

Conference agenda

Sessions from 10 a.m. to noon

Optional activities in the afternoon  
and evening. Plenty of free time to  
explore on your own

February 4 Travel day to Cartagena  
Evening Reception

February 5

First Session: Peace Corps in Colombia 1961-1981

Second Session: Modern-day Colombia

February 6

First Session: Colombia—A World-Class  
Competitor

Second Session: Colombia—A Changing Image  
Group dinner is planned

February 7

First Session: Future of Colombia—Overcoming  
Obstacles

Wrap-up Session:

Reconnecting with Colombia—  
Volunteer Projects, Getting Involved,  
What You Can Do for Colombia

### Travel Arrangements

All travel arrangements are being handled by  
Fiesta Travel, 4626 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20016.  
Contact Mery Patterson at (202) 862-5570 or at [mpatterson@fiestatravel.com](mailto:mpatterson@fiestatravel.com)  
for all air and hotel reservations.

### A Better Life

Friends of Colombia and The Colombia Project (with headquarters in Florida) maintain a strong presence in northern Colombia, helping people receive education and start small businesses. According to RUPD (Colombian Association of Registered Displaced People), which is managed by Acción Social, an institution of the Colombian Presidency, the state of Magdalena ranks second for numbers of displaced people (14,773 at the end of 2005). However, Fundehumac (Human and Community Development Organization) estimates there are thousands more unregistered DP's who have migrated to Magdalena in the last two years.

Three programs are supported by FOC: Paso A Paso, the Magdalena Foundation scholarship program and the Colombia Project micro-enterprises. All three are administered by Fundehumac and all three have recipients who are displaced. Scholarship recipients provide support to the other two programs by mentoring the younger children and assisting the micro-enterprise recipients with training

and on-site counseling for their businesses. Alba Lucía Varela Moreno, President of Fundehumac, and Haroldo L. Suarez, President of The Magdalena Foundation, Inc., say the programs have exceeded all expectations.

Next year's FOC conference in Cartagena will provide an opportunity for RPCVs to witness the programs first-hand. Conference attendees who might be interested in a day trip or an overnight trip to Santa Marta/Rodadero to visit the programs supported by Friends of Colombia please contact [helenedudley@yahoo.com](mailto:helenedudley@yahoo.com) to indicate preference for a Friday, February 8th one-day van trip (three hours each way; cost \$40 RT) or a two-day trip (Fri.-Sat.), staying overnight in Rodadero. Participants would visit Paso A Paso, the Magdalena Foundation Scholarship Program, and The Colombia Project micro-credit loan program. More information on these projects is available at our Colombian partner's website, [www.fundehumac.org/Proyectos/Proyectos en Ejecucion](http://www.fundehumac.org/Proyectos/Proyectos en Ejecucion).

# The Sounds of the River

By John Greven

*John Greven (RCD 64) was stationed in Magangué, Bolívar, on the Magdalena River. Working to develop town meetings and projects in outlying towns, he traveled up and down the river and back into the bayous in his small motorboat. This is from his Peace Corps memoir, working title FRAGMENTS OF THE CORPS.*

When you listen to the broad, majestic Magdalena River, you hear the massed weight of all that water moving, the living things in and on it, the boats plying its surface. Sometimes I would turn my engine off and float for awhile, listening to everything and nothing. At dusk, clouds of bats emerged from their roosts in the thatch of the huts. Swarms of them swooped and dived over the river, looking for insect prey. I learned to run my boat through these clouds of bats, knowing that they would never hit me. At dusk, the palms along the river became dark silhouettes enveloped by orange light.

Certain scenes are etched into my consciousness—the river men standing on the river bank by their *canoas*; a *canoa* with a *Johnsonista* making a bow wave as it coursed downriver; the women of the villages coming down to fetch water or pound their clothes.

Running the river at night was peaceful and serene. Guided by the moonlight, the water turned light gray, the bank jet black. I learned to find my way by sound, but something helped me—the lighted statues of the Virgin. The priests in my part of Colombia were mostly Spaniards, foreigners like myself. In the towns where they lived, they put a statue of the Virgin by the river, with a string of light bulbs leading from it to the priest's house. The *padre* was the only one to have a generator. The rest of the town was in darkness. I used to think about the injustice of that.

The river was alive—an entity that moved,

stretched, and exhaled. All manner of dead things floated in it and were carried along: big tree trunks, dead steer carcasses, coconuts. Sometimes it seemed the dead lived in that river, were always there just below the surface ready to take me with them. I think I was always a bit afraid of that.

One night they did reach for me and almost succeeded. I was running to a town upriver on a moonless night when suddenly my engine quit. It would not start, no matter how hard I tried. At first I just floated to see where I would go—just downriver, but eventually out to the sea. I was bent over working on the motor when I first heard it. Slight, but there—a hissing sound unlike any other. I tried to see the source. There it was, a large high black shape moving toward me and closing. My mind raced. Then, without further thought, I ripped off my T-shirt, doused it in gas, held it on my paddle and lit it. It flared up brightly and I heard bells clanging. The hiss slowed and stopped. I saw it as it drifted by me, a river push boat with a large black barge in front. If you don't hear it, it can run you over and no one on board will realize it. You become mixed with the other dead in the river.

But my strongest memory of the river is not of that night, starkly memorable as it was. Rather, it was of quieter times—floating peacefully in the sun with my motor off, listening to the sound, always the sound of the river itself, and then a soft “thwup, thwup” just above me. I'd look up to see a flock of brightly colored Macaw parrots passing over at 50 feet. One loud “caw!” would resonate in the impossibly beautiful scene. I would like this to be my last vision on earth.

Contact John at [woodyboatman@comcast.net](mailto:woodyboatman@comcast.net).



## National PC Group Launches Blog

The National Peace Corps Association has launched new ways to stay in touch with the Peace Corps community. Their new blog, PeaceCorpsPolyglot, open to NPCA members, features dispatches about the Peace Corps community, plus continually updated Peace Corps newsfeeds in the sidebars. On the Peace Corps Community News page there are professional and community service updates about people who have been volunteers or worked for Peace Corps. The “PeaceCorpsConnect” group on Facebook.com, the social networking site, is for those who wish to join NPCA and meet others who share an interest in the Peace Corps. There's also an online store for apparel and gifts. The web site also features WorldView Magazine, a 16-year-old quarterly of news and commentary, with reviews of books written by or about the developing world, new and original fiction, and reporting, essays, and opinions about events in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Pacific.

Learn more at [www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org).

## THE FLOWER PARADE

By José Castañeda

### PART TWO of THREE: A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

The name of the Peace Corps volunteer I had approached in the streets of Ibagué decades earlier was Gary Gonya. He was a lean, athletic man of cropped hair and the power of a smile in conversation. And he had a unique blessing: he approached life as if evil never existed. When I addressed him for the first time he halted his brisk steps and narrowed his eyes as if struggling to assess the gravity of my plight. My words must have traveled directly to his heart, for at that instant, in an act of spontaneous generosity, Gary offered me a room in the house he shared with another volunteer, Pat Cooney. That was for me Lesson One on altruism. Lesson Two, giving the recipient the dignity of choice, followed next: "But you must come and see if you like our house first," he said to me. When I took full possession of my room later that evening, I felt I had gone to a new galaxy. "Oh my God, oh my God," I kept repeating while jumping up and down, grabbing my head, squinting my eyes in disbelief.

The next day I got up early, the anxiety still roaming through my body. Barefoot, avoiding noises, with my eyes adjusting to the darkness, I began a full exploration of the house. I started with the kitchen, where I discovered a medium-size refrigerator full of fruits and soda pops. A great addition to my life, I told myself. As I moved to next room, I was startled by the twisted remnants of a giant, droopy root hanging on the wall. It was a fitting decoration, for its naked wood matched the grain of two long benches that still carried the scent of fresh sawdust.

I then saw a turntable at the corner, and a shelf full of records next to it. Despite the early hour I was tempted to start playing some music. But that's when I noticed they had seen me. And that's when I confirmed from their silence that I was fully welcomed at their house. Sunday mornings became legend. We woke up to the sounds of the Tijuana Brass trumpets, while Gary filled the air with the scent of honey-coated French toasts on a hot skillet. I was then at the pinnacle of life. For the next two years Gary paid for my tuition and expenses out of his modest monthly stipend. It was an extraordinary gift that he enriched even further with the mantle of his friendship.

During that time our house was always full of conversation from the scores of volunteers that visited continuously. An exciting meeting of two cultures swirled in my head, leading to an expansion of my world into new values, new approaches, new ways of doing things. Those were also the intense days of "Hair," "The Graduate," "Sergeant Pepper," and Woodstock. And from the mountains of Tolima to the city of Ibagué, by way of the Peace Corps, I grew by extension into an honorary member of the flower generation.

When his two-year tour finally ended, Gary was replaced by a newly arrived volunteer, Mike Kalista, a barrel-chested wrestling coach from Erie, Pennsylvania. With tight biceps protruding from his sleeves and a ton of muscles that shifted as he moved, Mike looked the part of an ancient Roman warrior. But behind that powerful physiognomy was a man of gentle manners and ample generosity, and I continued living in his house as his friend and protégé. One day Mike cracked open his terra cotta piggy bank to pay for dental surgery I needed. From that day on I was convinced: in the realm of human kindness, never was so much owed by one person to so few. Yet those few would leave enormous imprints in their wake, for the Peace Corps brought to Colombia, and to the many regions where they serve, young, talented people bent on sharing their skills and their dreams to save the world. People like Robert Henderson, an economist who taught English to new teachers, and who was the first person to play a bagpipe in Ibagué; or Russell Schroeder, an architect who helped build schools in rural areas.

In the year I finished high school I won a history contest on Colombian television. With the prize money I bought my father a modest produce stand in the local market, and for myself an airline ticket to the U.S. By that time Gary and Diana, his equally kindhearted wife from Ibagué, were teaching at a boarding school north of New York City. Once again, they received me with open arms, and once again they cared about my future. Over the years, that trip culminated with a graduate degree from Columbia University and a law practice in New York.

The parade continued. Behind me, a group of loud youngsters marched single-file like a long, twisting snake, pushing their way through the pack of spectators. When the tail section of the snake finally cleared, I found myself looking at the base of a leafy acacia tree where an elderly couple occupied a long bench. They seemed to have preferred the protection of the acacia to the constant jostling at the sidewalk. I nodded at them briefly and turned my eyes back to the avenue, just in time to see a banquet of azaleas and camellias passing by.

A lull in the parade allowed me to look back at the couple under the acacia tree for a brief moment. The woman's lined face showed her age, but her slim, pliant figure hinted at youth. Her ears were adorned with a pair of golden pendants, and her small mouth looked smaller when she focused her attention on the flowers. She wore a wide dress that allowed her to flaunt her energy with freedom. She twisted, stretched, danced. She laughed, whistled, jumped up and down. She raised her arms, clapped her hands, yelled at men blocking her view.

Her companion, by contrast, sat still. His gaze seemed unfocused, his movements were slow. And judging from

the crevices that furrowed his brow, getting this far in life had not been easy. He held the woman's hand as she stepped up onto the bench, and then nodded approvingly as she gestured at the flowers she observed from her post.

I turned to watch a new *silleta* of wild orchids that seemed to have trapped the sun under their petals. Once the flowers passed, I again looked at the bench. I saw the woman reach into the man's shiny *carriel*, the distinctive leather satchel he carried across his chest. She took out a hairbrush, puffed briefly into the bristles, and began to smooth his rebel tufts of hair—two, three, four strokes—but despite her efforts the wisps kept swirling in the air. She then wet her fingers on her tongue and rubbed them on his bushy eyebrows in a vain attempt to press them flat. By then his eyes had turned into dim slits, and his lips showed hints of a complaisant smile.

I thought of joining them to revel in their tender interactions. I hesitated. Would I be intruding in their space? Moments later, the man dropped his cane, making no effort to retrieve it. I pushed my way through a group of giggling girls and drew close enough that I could hear his breathing. It was heavy, raspy, deep. His hands, joined in prayer, moved up and down with each expansion of his chest. He had a cherubic face with the round, puffy cheeks of an accomplished trumpet player. A bit closer, and I saw that his head showed the errors of a homemade haircut: uneven snips across its surface and traces of talcum clinging to his neck.

When I leaned the cane against his knee he half-opened one eye and confirmed with a nod that I was welcome. The woman also smiled.

"What do you think of the parade?" I asked her.

"The flowers are magnificent," she said.

An odor of mothballs wafted my way from the man's jacket. I twitched my nose and concentrated on her words. Speaking in the rapid cadence of the region, exuberant, intense, she commented on the fuchsias and chrysanthemums, and achilleas and azaleas, and the dozens of arrangements that had passed by that day.

"When I die I want to rest on a cushion of those flowers," she said. "My ride to heaven will be happier."

Now that I was closer, I could fully appreciate the gold figures that dangled from her ears.

"Beautiful earrings you have."

"They came from my grandmother," she said, placing a hand over her ear. "I got them for my *quince*." Her fifteenth birthday. A most special day for Latin girls.

I offered them water from my knapsack. As they finished drinking, they mentioned the hardships of the day. The crowds. The buses. The discomforts. And for the old man, the grinding of his joints. They made him pay with pain for every inch he moved.

"But it's always worth the effort," she said. "The freshness of the flowers and the faces from the hills rejuvenate our souls."

I soon learned from them that in the realm of fading memories, it was those gardens passing by that best connected their present with their past.

"Your life is lived twice if you live it through your memories," the old man said to me.

Once again we heard applause. Swift and agile, like a finch ascending branches, the woman climbed back onto the bench.

"Poofff! Lavender mixed with camellias!" she shouted down to us. "What a mismatched combination!"

I wasn't sure I understood her. "To me, they look just beautiful," I said. Before I could say more, the man pulled my arm to whisper in my ear.

"She doesn't mean the colors!"

"She doesn't?" I whispered in return.

"No," he said. "She's referring to their meaning."

The woman stepped down from the bench and faced us. With her back to the parade, her eyes fixed on his, conveying the assurance of a venerable headmistress, she explained with firm voice.

"Lavender: distrust. Camellias: for compassion—the flower you give when you want to reconcile. Right, Pachito?" she asked him.

"Right! Just as dandelions are for jealousy," he said. His complaisant grin had now vanished and his voice revealed some anxiety.

"And almond buds always meant perfidy," she replied, raising her voice, flaring her nostrils. "And don't say that you forgot the yellow acacias you once carried," she added.

"Yellow acacias?" I asked. "What's their meaning?"

"They stand for secret love," she explained to me, although I knew the words were meant for him.

"Not so!" he replied, stumping his cane on the ground several times. "From me, you had nothing but mounds of alstroemeria."

"Which are those?" I asked.

"Andean lilies," he said. "They stand for pure devotion."

She then flashed a wide smile. "And from me," she added, curling her body in coy suggestion, "it was always ambrosias that you got—love returned." Her last words were almost muffled by a smooch she planted on his cheek. After that, they exploded into laughter.

I thought this was the moment to flare my scant knowledge of the language of the flowers. "You two deserve a huge bouquet of bright, red roses!" I said.

"Ah! They're always abundant in our garden," she replied.

## END OF PART TWO

José Castañeda is a newly appointed judge in Port Chester, New York. Contact him at [jcjurist@aol.com](mailto:jcjurist@aol.com).

The photograph in our April newsletter of the *silleteros* parade in Medellín was mistakenly credited. It was taken by a staff photographer of El Colombiano newspaper.

## UPDATE:

### Cafeteros Invite RPCVS to Serve Again

Mary Ray (ETV 1966-68), specialist in English as a Second Language in the Fairfax County, VA, school district, is traveling to Medellín, Caldas and Bogotá this summer to help set up the first pilot program for a team of former PCVs to serve again. She will be accompanied in Caldas by Merrily Beyreuther (UCD 1964-66), a management consultant specializing in program design and development. The two women will meet with Federation of Coffee Growers (Cafeteros) officials as well as school officials in Caldas to plan the stays of former volunteers for three weeks. The RPCVs (fondly known as *los ancianos*) will assist Colombian elementary teachers assigned to teach English whose actual knowledge of English and how to teach it is mostly at a beginning level. The *ancianos* will also explore possible ETV projects. The Cafeteros will provide housing and a stipend while volunteers are in Caldas.

Over a dozen volunteers responded (many including their spouses) to the article in our April newsletter asking for former Colombia volunteers with decent Spanish skills to contact Maureen Orth about the possibility of returning to Colombia. Maureen, who traveled to Colombia last February to contact Colombian officials about such a program, returned in June to Medellín to announce its formation in an address to the Cafeteros' 80th Anniversary Convention. She received an enthusiastic response and the offer from to house the volunteers at the Federation's 10-acre, landscaped center in Caldas, about 20 minutes outside of Manizales. The *centro* includes a ski lift to a butterfly sanctuary and a nearby woods filled with hundreds of species of orchids.

Mary Ray will also travel to Medellín to speak about future programs with Michael Cooper, head of Centro Colombo-Americano, and Medellín education officials. She will spend two days at Escuela Marina Orth, built with Cafeteros help while Orth was a PCV. The public school, in a rural *vereda* above Medellín, is now being developed to become the first public bilingual school in Colombia.

For more information, e-mail Maureen at [morth@k12Wired.com](mailto:morth@k12Wired.com).

## Peace Corps Letters Home Solicited

The organization Peace Corps Writers is soliciting letters written home by PCVs for a publication that will coincide with the celebration of Peace Corps's 50th anniversary. Project advisor is Andrew Carroll, editor of the bestselling books of "war letters," featuring the extraordinary correspondence of American soldiers from many eras. Letters Home will be one way for Peace Corps Writers to preserve the history of the Peace Corps. PCW believes personal correspondence offers a valuable insight into the experience we all shared. They prefer previously unpublished material, but letters and/or e-mails that have already appeared in local newspapers, self-published books, and/or family web sites are all acceptable.

In selecting a letter (or e-mail) to be considered for publication in the book, we ask that you choose it thus: Would a reader find the letter intriguing? . . . Dramatic? . . . Humorous? . . . Historic? . . . Insightful? If you can answer yes to one of these questions, send it. The editors, John Coyne and Marian Haley Beil, will select the very best letters that tell the story—through the eyes of PCVs and Staff—of the Peace Corps since its beginnings in 1961.

Your letters can be about any aspect of the Peace Corps experience: Making the Decision to Join, Training, Peace Corps Service, Friends, HCNs, Family Visits, After the Peace Corps, Life as an RPCV, Returning to the Host Country.

The deadline for submission for first cut is September 4, 2007. Send no more than three letters, legible photocopies or typed transcripts. Please do not send original letters as materials will not be returned. Send to: Marian Haley Beil, 4 Lodge Pole Road, Pittsford, New York 14534. Send your e-mails to: [jpcoyne@peacecorpswriters.org](mailto:jpcoyne@peacecorpswriters.org). Please put in the subject line: Letters Home From the Peace Corps

Please include for either letters or e-mails: Information about yourself or the PCV/RPCV or staff member who wrote the letter (e.g., where and when he or she served, and any other important personal and/or background information); your phone number, e-mail address and mailing address.

Do not send a query asking if we are interested in your correspondence. If your letters (or e-mails) are Peace Corps-related and meet the criteria described above, you should assume that we are interested in reading them and considering them for publication in Letters Home From the Peace Corps.

## Overseas Volunteerism—The Right Time?

*Efforts are being made to create new U.S. overseas volunteer programs. Here's information on two of them, which we present without endorsement. A response from FOC colleague Jerry Norris follows.*

*--Editor*

U.S. Senator Russ Feingold is introducing legislation to provide more Americans with the opportunity to volunteer overseas and strengthen our existing international education and exchange system. The Global Service Fellowship Program Act reduces financial barriers by awarding fellowships that can be applied towards programmatic costs including airfare, housing, or program costs. Feingold's bill also allows potential volunteers flexibility in the amount of time they serve. Feingold, a long-time member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said, "People-to-people engagement is one of the United States' most effective public diplomacy tools and, today more than ever, we need to be investing in every opportunity to improve the perception of the U.S. overseas."

In a separate initiative, American World Service Corps proposes to send U.S. volunteers abroad under the umbrella of overseas organizations. AWSC is the vision of Dwayne Hunn, RPCV-India 65-67, now Executive Director of The People's Lobby Inc., a non-profit group for citizen-initiated legislative proposals. AWSC would send a group of Americans "to expand the work of peace here and abroad." Hunn envisions placing one million volunteers within seven years after his program is launched. He proposes they be administered by Peace Corps, Americorps, Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam America. These organizations have yet to sign on.

Hunn believes those who serve will have an opportunity for a solid, real-life education while gaining self-respect and bolstering the respect for our country that has eroded in recent years. There would be a ready supply of volunteers to respond to hurricanes, floods and other disasters, natural or man-made. AWSC would offer substantial financial

or educational compensation for two years of service. See [www.WorldServiceCorps.us](http://www.WorldServiceCorps.us).

*From Jerry Norris, RPCV-Colombia:*

I believe many of us who served during the 1960s retain a very fond memory of that time and place in our nation's history. Less well-known is the fact that programming volunteers into the field was then and remains now a serious problem. About 10 years ago, the Congress gave PC sufficient funds to double its size. It was unable to do so. Its size has remained rather constant at 7,500 or so, without any public figures having been released about the high number of early returnees.

The world has turned over many times since the 1960s. The assumption that countries want now what they wanted then is fallacious. They are deluged with foreign consultants sopping up their resources. A recent report from the OECD documented the fact that there were 740 aid workers in Cambodia assigned to the Millennium Development Goals. Their cost was equal to the 166,000 civil servants on the government's payroll.

At Peace Corps' height in 1968, we were only able to get 15,400 into the field; then it went downhill and never recovered. When I travel abroad I see many volunteers, but unfortunately, far too many of them end up being assigned to work with PVOs such as Africare and Project Concern. This is the state of programming today.

A daughter of my former PC partner recently went to Central America as a volunteer. She soon found out that those she was assigned to work with as counterparts all wanted to know how to get to America. Most of the young adults in her village are unemployed. She got the feeling that when they looked at her they were thinking, why are you here when I want to be where you came from?

The world has changed and we need to change with it. Otherwise, we remember more from nostalgia than accuracy the reasons why the Peace Corps worked in the 1960s.

*Do you have an opinion on this issue? Write [editor@friendsofcolombia.org](mailto:editor@friendsofcolombia.org).*

Check out the wonderfully improved website for Friends of Colombia and let Webmaster Jim O'Reilly know what you think: [www.friendsofcolombia.org](http://www.friendsofcolombia.org)



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### **Home Town Projects**

What are Colombia RPCVs doing in their communities that connect to their Peace Corps experiences and ideals? Send a 25-word description of your work, professional or volunteer, to [editor@friendsofcolombia.org](mailto:editor@friendsofcolombia.org).

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### **In Fond Memory**

Charles ("Chick") Tooker died Aug. 19, 2006 in Mill Valley, CA, after a long illness. A celebration of his life was held this June and his ashes scattered on San Francisco Bay. Chick joined Peace Corps staff in 1966 in Bogotá. As a regional director, he was responsible for approximately 300 volunteers in Cundinamarca, Meta and Boyacá. In 1968 he became a Deputy Director for VISTA and later served as Deputy Director for the U.S. Department of Education. Chick and his wife of 27 years, Gerry Zalkovsky (PC staff, Bogotá, 1965-1967), were avid sailors. A website with photos of the memorial is being developed. Contact Gerry at 415-383-5929 or [gerryzt@msn.com](mailto:gerryzt@msn.com).

Thomas W. Mitchell (PCV, Pital, 1965-67) died April 20, 2007 of leukemia. Tom helped organize a honey cooperative in Pital, Huila. He met his first wife, PCV nurse Theresa Motyka, in Pital. They later married and had three children. After Peace Corps Tom taught social studies, did carpentry work and energy conservation consulting, and served in the fire department and as town constable of Shrewsbury, VT. His widow, Ann Vanneman, would like to hear from all who knew Tom in Colombia. Her phone number in Shrewsbury is 802-492-3116.

Joe Therrien (PC Staff 1968-73) died May 20, 2007, at his home in Fairfax, CA, following a short illness. Joe was a Peace Corps Regional Director in Santander and Norte de Santander. He raised his four children in Marin County with his first wife, Noreen Therrien, who preceded him in death. He was blessed in later life to share the love and companionship of his second wife, Julia Martin.