

# The LPCA Newsletter

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**(Editors Note: This Newsletter is designed to be printed out, read on paper, and then used to line your bird cage, or as a makeshift coaster or, in real emergencies, as sanitary napkins. We also recommend you print this at work to save money.)**

## Letter from the Editor

Before I get into anything, the LPCA Newsletter owes a debt of gratitude to outgoing editor Mike Madej. He breathed new life into it, and I hope I am able to produce something as half as entertaining as he did

I was an Agroforestry Volunteer in Togo, West Africa, from 2000-2002. I lived in a little village of 300 people called "Kollo" without electricity and running water in the middle of nowhere, more or less. My house was made of concrete - the only one in town - and no one had lived in it fulltime for a few months when I moved into it, so critters abound.

My first night, I dutifully hunted down, killed or removed all kinds of insects and rodents, and lied down on a dirty mattress under a brand new mosquito net to read and pass out. Then, a slow whir started circling the air over my head in my narrow room. It went away after a minute, so I kept reading for a few before turning off my lamp to pass out. As I started to drift, the whirring came back.

It was pitch black now, and my flashlight was just outside my mosquito netting. The whirring started getting more intense, so I fumbled for my headlamp and put it on at the same instant the whirring stopped and my mosquito net started shaking violently. When I switched the light on, a bat about the size of my hand was spread-eagle hooked into my mosquito netting six inches from my face screaming at me.

So I started to scream like a little girl and went running out into the family courtyard in my boxer shorts.

Sitting there were three little girls, my host sisters, ranging in age from 6 to 12 years old. At first, they were really worried about me, but I finally explained what happened, and they burst into laughter. After collecting themselves, the eldest grabbed a large stick, and then the three of them ran into my house and came out a minute later with the bat, dead.

So here's hoping that my start as the LPCA Newsletter Editor goes a little more smoothly.

In this issue, you'll meet the new Board of Directors, read a personal letter from new LPCA president Ryan Mast, get some meeting notes, find out about Peace Corps Week, set to begin March 1, get introduced to Third Goal activities here in Louisiana, get info on an upcoming recruiting event at Tulane, learn about the new Peace Corps Digital Library in addition to a few other things.

Finally, I'd like to solicit your participation in the LPCA Newsletter in any way. You'll notice the relative lack of graphics in this issue, so this is a naked, desperate plea to submit anything from stories to photos to money to beer to Jazzfest tickets to the newsletter. If you are worried about the quality of your writing, the Newsletter has a staff with years of professional experience and some fancy humanities degrees that have amounted to a hill of beans but nonetheless make for decent copy editing skills except in the case of this run-on sentence.

Bilabtasi (Till Soon)

-Josh Norman

write us at

[larpcv@hotmail.com](mailto:larpcv@hotmail.com)

## **THE LOUISIANA PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION BOARD**

Here are the new Board Members of the Louisiana Peace Corps Association for 2010:

<b>Ryan Mast</b>	President
<b>Bruce Ingber</b>	Vice President, Service chair
<b>Devon McGuinness</b>	Vice President, Social co-chair
<b>Sarah Truxillo</b>	Vice President, Social co-chair
<b>Brian Luckett</b>	Treasurer
<b>Aimee Lyons</b>	Secretary
<b>Michael Hornsby</b>	Membership Coordinator
<b>Michael Grodsky</b>	Web Coordinator
<b>Mike Madej</b>	Grant Coordinator
<b>David Wessell</b>	Director-at-large, 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Liaison
<b>Josh Norman</b>	Newsletter
<b>Veneeth Iyengar</b>	Baton Rouge Liaison
<b>Ruth Mentley</b>	Lafayette Liaison
<b>Tony Li</b>	Tulane Liaison

*Just because your name is not on that list, does not mean you cannot participate in the Board.* (And, no, being named “Mike” is not a prerequisite to joining the Board.) The LPCA is always eager for new ideas, and we love hearing stories (especially about intestinal viruses) so show up at the next Board Meeting and get involved. The next meeting will be in late March or April, exact time and place TBA.

## **LETTER FROM NEW LPCA PRESIDENT RYAN MAST**

Greetings LPCA members,

My name is Ryan Mast and I will be serving as the president of the LPCA board of directors for 2010. One of the main reasons that I accepted this position was to strengthen the image and representation of the Peace Corps in the state of Louisiana. After the first board meeting in January, I believe that this is a very attainable goal. Building off of last year's successes, the current board is looking forward to a very active year for both service and social events in the community. Peace Corps Week (March 1-7) is rapidly approaching, so please look for opportunities to spread the word, share your experiences, and promote JFK's vision.

The LPCA's Third Goal will be pushing to get RPCVs in local high/middle schools during this time, so please sign up on the website (<http://lapeacecorps.com/thirdgoal.aspx>) if you are interested. Additionally, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Corps will be celebrated in September of 2011 and there will be a big push nationally for involvement at all levels beginning this year. Finally, the LPCA is currently developing a grant program that will benefit current PCVs linked to Louisiana. Stay tuned for details on how you can get involved.

While the LPCA will continue to provide social events such as the potlucks and ethnic dinners as well as service projects such as the Christmas in October, we are constantly looking for other opportunities to continue the Peace Corps' mission. I would like to strongly encourage everyone to support the LPCA in two ways. The first is by becoming a paying member of the association. The cost is only \$15 per year and that money is currently our major source of revenue. We hope to get more programs and events off the ground, we will need help getting them funded. You can pay dues by paying joining the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org/membership](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/membership) and signing up for the LPCA or by contacting Brian Luckett at [bluckett@cox.net](mailto:bluckett@cox.net). The second way to support the LPCA is by getting involved in the organization's activities. Please let us know if you would like to help out with any of the currently planned events and/or share your ideas for additional events and functions. While the board provides direction, resources, and support for the organization, all members have a voice and a right to participate and it is our duty to help meet the needs of the RPCVs of Louisiana.

On a final note, as we move deeper into 2010, let us all remember the reasons why we became involved in the Peace Corps and work to continue living out the goals with which we were charged. Please continue to check our website (<http://lapeacecorps.com>) for updates. If you have any questions, you can direct them to [larpcv@gmail.com](mailto:larpcv@gmail.com) or me personally at [ryan.c.mast@gmail.com](mailto:ryan.c.mast@gmail.com).

Kindest Regards,

Ryan C. Mast

## **FIRST LPCA BOARD MEETING OF 2010 WRAP-UP**

On January 18, 2010, Ryan Mast, Dave Wessell, Bruce Ingber, Devon McGuinness, Michael Grodsky and Mike Madej gathered to plot LPCA's eventual world domination. In the meantime, they planned more humble goals.

Online stuff: Michael Grodsky, Bruce Ingber and first-time Board Member Michael Hornsby have promised to get together to sort out our email lists. The Board also acknowledged the lack of up-to-date info on the website and promise to get on it.

Service Projects: Service VP Bruce Ingber said he will be responsible for deciding which Service projects we do and will even set one or two up, but he will not be responsible for leading each of these projects. **IF YOU WANT TO LEAD A SERVICE PROJECT, CONTACT ANY FRIENDLY BOARD MEMBER.**

LPCA and the NPCA: We are classified as a 'small group' in regards to NPCA membership. **All LPCA Members are encouraged to join NPCA.**

Peace Corps 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: With one year to go, little has been planned for Louisiana and the big anniversary. **THE LPCA IS SOLICITING LOCAL RPCVs TO BECOME ITS 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY LIAISON.**

Fundraising and Dues: While the Board has not finalized any decision on what to do with LPCA funds that are available for grant distribution, it is working on it. Esteemed Board Member David Wessell pointed out that nearly every Board he's sat on (and that's more than a few) has struggled with this issue. The Board acknowledges that in order to charge for LPCA membership, we need to offer something more in return. It will happen.

Patience and suggestions please.

## **PEACE CORPS WEEK BEGINS MARCH 1**

The Peace Corps 49th anniversary celebration begins March 1, with the return of Peace Corps Week. Simply put, the Peace Corps wants you to use the date of its anniversary to participate in Third Goal activities. Come on now, be honest. How many of you have actually participated in Third Goal? If so, how long has it been since the last time? Got guilt? Will anything else get you to volunteer?

From the Peace Corps promotional material:

*“Returned Volunteers and friends of the Peace Corps are encouraged to participate in Third Goal activities in honor of the work of Peace Corps and its Volunteers of the past and present.*

*Be a part of Peace Corps ...Week by organizing or presenting a Third Goal activity. Share your Peace Corps story with your local community or on your blog. In addition, educators can help observe this significant week by using Speakers Match ([www.peacecorps.gov/wws/speakersmatch](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/speakersmatch)) to invite RPCVs to their classrooms to give presentations. Visit [www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal](http://www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal) to register your Peace Corps Week participation or to find out more. Registered participants will receive a resource packet the includes presentation materials and souvenirs for their audience.”*

## **Third Goal Activities in Louisiana**

We currently have 9 RPCVs signed up to participate in Third Goal Activities in Louisiana. While there hasn't been a lot of activity over the holidays, we will be pushing events during Peace Corps week, mainly in the schools. Share your photos and stories with school kids, gross them out with descriptions of the cool stuff you ate, whatever. Point is, sign up and participate and repay Uncle Sam for that fat paycheck you earned in the Peace Corps!

(<http://lapeacecorps.com/thirdgoal.aspx>)

## **RECRUITING EVENT AT TULANE**

There will be an official, Peace Corps-sponsored Recruiting Event at the Master's International Program at Tulane's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine on Friday, February 5.

### **Details:**

**What:** Master's International Lunch – this is an informal Meet-and-Greet with Peace Corps Recruiter Curt Baker, MI Coordinator's Tony Li and Christy Dimos, a few returned volunteers from LAPCA, and other area students interested in combining Peace Corps with graduate school.

**Where:** Tulane School of Public Health- Diboll Gallery

**When:** Friday, February 5 at 12:30 pm

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Curt Baker at the number listed below

Curt Baker

Peace Corps

Dallas Regional Office

RPCV Mali, 2003-2005

214-253-5404

## **THE NEW PEACE CORPS DIGITAL LIBRARY**

In December, the Peace Corps launched a new digital library to archive Peace Corps documents. That is to say, Peace Corps wants your letters and photos. It's gonna be like a Hippie Smithsonian!

From the official Peace Corps propaganda machine:

*“The Peace Corps’ Digital Library (will be) a searchable collection of electronic Peace Corps materials from 1961 to the present. (The Peace Corps) invites current and returned Peace Corps volunteers (RPCVs) to share their unique service experiences through firsthand narratives and personal photos.*

*As the Peace Corps approaches its 50th anniversary in 2011, the Digital Library is a living collection that represents the agency’s legacy of public service. Since 1961, nearly 200,000 Americans have served with the Peace Corps to promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of 139 host countries. The digital library can be accessed at <http://collection.peacecorps.gov>.*

*“The Peace Corps has always been an agency rooted in shared experiences – the volunteers share their perspective and expertise while our host-country communities share their languages, friendship and culture,” said Director Aaron Williams.”*

## **LPCA Newsletter Tilt-Shift Photo Contest/Parting Shots Section**

Welcome to the newest marketing ploy, er, I mean, section of the LPCA Newsletter. Every edition of the newsletter, the editors will select one or two submitted photos, and apply their fancy photo editing skills to make them look real purty. It is called the “Tilt-Shift Contest” because that is the most extreme type of editing available.

On the next page, you will find an example of the professional manipulation techniques that the photo editor of the Newsletter will apply to the winning photographs to be included as their “Parting Shots” of the Newsletter.

(Both photos are copyright of the Newsletter staff, taken on a professional junket to Sri Lanka two years ago.)

To make a long story short, we will provide you professional photo editing skills for free simply for sharing your work.

Think this is a dumb idea? Let us know!

- The Newsletter Staff

### **Before**



**After**

