

iQué Pasa!

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An Incredible Happening



From Left: Fran Marino, Linda & Minor Anderson, Vice President Dr. Jaime David Fernandez Mirabel, President Leonel Fernandez, Eduardo Salaman, Technical Secretary to the President. The rest of us were lined along the walls of this large reception area.

By
Carrie Meyer

By all accounts, Fondo Quisqueya's (FQ) 35th Anniversary of Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic was a great success. Activities ranged from reuniting with other former volunteers, learning about current PCDR programs, and meeting the new President and other local leaders, to enjoying the beach, merengue, comida tipica, and visits back to former sites.

An enthusiastic local committee including John and Sobeya

Seibel from ENTRENA, Mike and Bili Benson, Jerry and Polita Dupuy, Diane Partl, Roberto Pineyro, Carolyn Bain, Maura McCarthy, and Michael and Ana Hirsh volunteered countless hours to careful logistical planning resulting in a truly memorable conference that came off with hardly a hitch. One time the "family" had to eat standing, but they never had to eat light.

Of course, the anticipated American Airlines' strike was due on the same holiday

travel weekend. Although the scheduled strike discouraged a few, (many of us, in fact, were hoping to be stranded!) canceled flights on Friday evening did keep a few registrants from joining us. (we missed you!) The vast majority, however, arrived safely and returned all too soon.

The program began Friday evening with an incoming reception at the Peace Corps Office on Avenida Bolivar. Meeting old friends and new, former volunteers were re-

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Notes from the FQ Board

From the members of the Reunion Planning Committees Stateside and in the Dominican Republic, we wish to thank you for being such a good-natured, laid back group. Your interest, enthusiasm and attendance remained high throughout the four day meeting, and made all of our planning and logistics efforts very rewarding.

The Dominican planning contingent used every resource available to make the meeting as smooth as possible. To recognize several members of the Committee, the reunion participants voted to name the next three FQ grant awards in honor of Mike and Bili Benson, John and Sobeya Seibel, and Jerry and Polita Dupuy.

There was generosity among the reunion participants who pledged over \$12,000 toward future FQ grants. Ten per cent of the total amount pledged will go into the Endowment Fund. In addition, an anonymous donor was prepared to donate to FQ 20% of the total amount pledged during the meeting. It was also noted that the FQ has no real property, nor does it have any administrative expenses



From left, Carolyn Bain, Minor Anderson, Bob Talfeski, and Mike Benson, plus other committee members not pictured, make a vallant attempt to look serious.

(except those concerned with the mailings) since the Board Members serve on a volunteer basis.

Fondo Projects A listing of all FQ awards made to date was distributed during the business meeting on Monday. The awards represent a total of DR\$ 114,000 (or about \$10,000 U.S.

allowing for inflation). The latest Treasurer's Report, dated May 10, 1997 has \$4,350 in its Endowment Fund; \$1,500 in the Andy Hernandez Fund (more about this later) and \$17,400 in its basic Grant Fund.

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which kept going

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ceived in our old stomping grounds by current Peace Corps staff and Dominican friends of Peace Corps. Thanks to Jerry Dupuy, Barcelo helped out with refreshments and caterers provided picadera.

An open afternoon allowed tourism and preparation for an invitation that evening to the National Palace to meet the Dominican Republic's new president, Dr. Leonel Fernandez. The President greeted us with moving words of sincere appreciation for the role that Peace Corps has played both by volunteers in the DR and by RPCVs back

home. Fernandez recalled his youth in New York, his memories of Kennedy's death, and his contact with RPCVs from the DR in the U.S. such as Senator Chris Dodd and his good friend Kirby Jones (whom he had met in Washington, D.C. at the World Bank). Jones, PCV 1963-65, was instrumental in arranging the reception. We appreciate your hard work and diligence, Kirby.

Country director, Michael Hirsch presented President Fernandez with a letter from Peace Corps Director Mark Gearan, and with a PC pin and a PC/DR cap. Fondo President Minor Ander-

son followed with the presentation of a reunion T-shirt and book of photographs of the U.S. signed by each of the RPCVs at the reunion. Other Dominican friends of Peace Corps also spoke in appreciation of our efforts and especially for the close relationships formed between so many volunteers and so many Dominicans over the last 35 years. We were reminded of the extent to which our hearts still remained in our towns and villages.

Each of us was offered the opportunity to shake the President's hand, and refrescos concluded the visit.

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