

Whither Friends of Brasil? Goodbye to You in '92?

Joan Ramos and John Reeder

The functioning and future direction of Friends of Brasil have been matters of concern for those of us who have been actively involved with organizing and maintaining the group. In our scant three years of existence, we have accomplished a lot, in terms of outreach, in producing a newsletter and directories, fundraising, and holding a few regional and national meetings. All of this has been accomplished through the volunteer efforts of a very few people. At the August (1991) Reunion, it was hoped that new, active officers would be recruited who would commit to seeing the group through another productive year. However, volunteers were not forthcoming, and written appeals have brought no response. Those of us who have been involved are being stretched to our limits by other personal and work commitments.

For this reason, a core group of active FOB Board members has decided that it's time to re-structure the group, with a view to disbanding if reasonable alternatives are not found. It seems to us that unless there is an interest among members to recycle the

posts of officers, then our group cannot function.

The RPCV "Country of Service" groups that seem to be the most successful are those where there are current Peace Corps programs that yearly spawn a group of enthusiastic, newly returned former PCVs. This is not our situation—it's been almost 12 years since the Peace Corps left Brazil, and it is not likely to ever return. For viability, we need to reach those with more recent experience or with a general interest in Brazil, whether or not they were in Peace Corps.

Also, the kind of support services, including incorporation, that had seemed a possibility through the National Council of RPCVs have not materialized. It seems that the NCRPCV is going through struggles of its own, and it has not been a significant source of referrals to our group. We also have geographic constraints: since members live all over the U.S. as well as in Brazil.

With a limited budget and volunteer staff, we simply cannot "connect" the way we might like to. There seems to be little interest among most members in planning or attending local gatherings or even social events.

Those of us who have been active feel that our group needs to be more than just an alumni organization. Reunions are fun, and we can still hold them at the NCRPCV conferences by paying a use fee, whether or not our group is still active. The FOB core group had envisioned us reconnecting



to Brazil through aiding grassroots projects in a variety of areas. To a limited extent, we made some steps in this area. We'd like to continue these endeavors, but can't do so without the real support of members. There were approximately 4000 PCVs in Brazil from 1962-80; we have names of over 900, of whom some 200 have joined and retained their membership in Friends of Brasil.

So, we are at a crossroads. Shall we continue to have a newsletter and directory be the essence of our group? If so, who will write and produce them? Shall we continue to hold yearly reunions? Continue our fundraising projects? We've seen that it only takes a few people to do these things, but those of us who have organized these activities in the past are burnt out, and no one seems to be stepping forward to take our places. Shall FOB disband?

One positive suggestion that has been made is that we seek affiliation or merger with another Brazil-interest group. Currently, the Brazil Network in Washington, DC, is considering such a proposal. If all parties agree, a number of logistical details will need to be worked out.

to page 3

In this issue:

<i>Cartas</i>	6
<i>FOB 1991 Reunion News</i>	2
<i>Noticiário</i>	4
<i>Novidades em Leitura</i>	6
<i>Organizations of Interest</i>	5
<i>Rio-92</i>	5

Friends of Brasil is an alumni organization for former Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Brazil; however, membership is open to all those interested in Brazil.

We strive to keep our members informed about current events and issues in Brazil, to maintain ties with Brazil and the Brazilian people and with relevant organizations in the US. We aim to help increase awareness and understanding of Brazil here in the US and support grassroots development projects in Brazil.

Officers:

Acting President	John Reeder
Treasurers	Karen Thielke Alan Dockterman
Secretary	vacant

Advisor: João Setúbal

Board of Directors:

Ed Crotty	Joan Ramos
Tom Folan	Scott Ramos
Lacey Gude	Elizabeth Santos

Committees:

Education	vacant
Fundraising	Elizabeth Santos
Membership	Scott Ramos
Newsletter	Joan Ramos
Social	vacant

Send correspondence to:

Friends of Brasil
909 N. Madison
Arlington, VA 22205
(703) 536-7834

FOB holds yearly reunions in conjunction with the National RPCV conference and publishes the quarterly newsletter **Jornal da Amizade**. Annual dues, which includes a subscription to *JA* and a member directory, are \$15.

Send material for newsletter to:

Jornal da Amizade
7303 23rd Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 525-1270

Friends of Brasil Reunion at the 1991 NCRPCV Conference

About 30 former volunteers from Brazil gathered at the 30th Anniversary event of the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C., for several events organized by FOB. Major happenings centered around the FOB table in the exhibit area, a panel discussion on current events in Brasil, dinner at a Brazilian restaurant, and a party hosted at the home of a Washington area couple. On Volunteer Day, former Brazil volunteers also worked together repairing and painting an inner city house to assist a low-income family. Special thanks are in order to Alan Dockterman, Lacey Gude, Larry Miller, and John Reeder, who organized the FOB Reunion.

FOB Reunion: Brazil Update

Larry Miller

A highlight of the Friends of Brasil Reunion was the Brazil Update held at St. Stephen the Martyr Church on Saturday afternoon, August 3. Immediately prior to the Update presentation, Lacey Gude chaired a short business meeting for the group. The presenters were RPCVs with extensive, post-Peace Corps Brazil experience, and Brazilian professionals. The presentation was organized to help attendees learn more about current issues and events in Brazil. The no-frills setting of the church hall was appropriate to both the audience and the topic at hand.

Sérgio Sandenberg, an attorney practicing international law in both Brazil and the U.S., began the panel presentation with an overview of

political events in the '60's (when most attendees had been in Brazil), the 1964 revolution, the military dictatorship years, the gradual return to civilian rule, and finally, recent elections at all levels and the concurrent economic crisis. Charles Fortin, a Bahia RPCV who spent most of the past 20 years in Recife as a university professor and is now at a D.C. university, followed Sérgio's talk with an analysis of the situation of the homeless and the landless in urban Brazil.

Jim Bruckhauser, another former PCV, spoke next on environmental issues. His experiences as an engineer working in Brazil over the past fifteen years involved first-hand involvement with Amazon rainforest issues, indigenous peoples, and rubber tappers. He also addressed the areas of resource management and pollution.

The next two speakers were staff members of the Brazil Network. Fátima Mello, a community organizer from IBASE who is currently spending a year in the U.S, discussed the current growth of grassroots community organizations in Brazil. She outlined how a lack of viable governmental programs to address the dire needs of Brazil's poor majority has spawned self-help movements, and the potential of these groups to coalesce into a popular political force. Anne Marie Smith, the BN Program Director, graphically described the plight of the vast numbers of street children in Brazil's major cities. She also spoke of the assassinations of these children which have become commonplace.

Also present on the panel were Bill Reese, former PCV and PC staff in Brazil who is now President of Partners of the Americas, and Fernando

to next page

FOB Reunion

from previous page

Rodrigues, a correspondent for the **Folha de São Paulo** newspaper. Bill and Fernando fielded questions from the audience on a variety of subjects following the presentations. Fernando had just returned from a month in Brazil, and was able to offer updated information about the connections between current events and the media, based on his expertise with both print and TV media.

Following this fascinating and sobering look at Brazil today, the group broke for dinner at the Brasil Tropical Restaurant, across the street from the church. Many who attended said that their only regret was that more information was not available about the situation in the interior, in the small rural towns where many of us served. It seems that as Brazil becomes urbanized, these areas will be increasingly marginalized and perhaps forgotten. This could be a focus for future FOB discussion.

[Editors note: Larry Miller organized the Brazil Update session, and arranged for the speakers. He deserves a sincere "muito obrigado" for his efforts.]

Brazil 17 Reunion

Betty (Reeves) Shackelford

Six members of the former Brazil 17 group (not "Brazil 13" as we had thought) met during the NCRPCV Conference, marking 25 years since we had joined the Peace Corps. Present were: Gary (Ricardo) Campbell, Janet (O'Brien) Cozad, Eileen (Marshall) Fitch, Sheila Kane, Liz (Knight) Mathewson, and Betty (Reeves) Shackelford. A number of others sent regrets that they could not attend. The group had an almost non-stop 12-hour marathon of catching up, which started on Wednesday afternoon, and ended with brunch on Thursday. A reunion "year book" is being prepared, which will contain photos of the group in training in the Virgin Islands, photos from this reunion, letters, pictures, and momentos from group members about their time in Brazil and their present lives. Those interested in obtaining a copy, should contact me directly:

Betty Shackelford
P.O. Box 749
Marysville, CA 95901

Liz Mathewson rather aptly stated probably what our motivations were for getting together after 25 years. She said she was "just curious" to know whether this overwhelming experience she'd had as a PCV had affected everyone else's life with the same magnitude as it had her own. It was comforting to have some validation that you are not alone, in finding that you have some company in this regard and that you're not totally out of step, even though the average person you meet just does not share that sense of world perspective. What the reunion validated is that we are not alone. We, in fact, had a "group experience", that was unique and important to us, and for the spouses present it was great that they could absorb somewhat this "out of country" experience. So maybe now they can understand why we are all a "little crazy." It was such an intense and positive experience to see people after 25 years, it was a little overwhelming!

Whither FOB?

from page 1

The Brazil Network, for those of you not familiar with it, is a "nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting human rights and social justice through exchange among nongovernmental organizations". BN has a small paid staff and publishes a bimonthly newsletter, in addition to hosting meetings, participating in conferences,

and facilitating exchange of information and ideas between US and Brazilian groups. Perhaps by joining forces with another group, the effect of our collective efforts could be magnified.

We'll keep you posted on what develops with this option. In the meantime, John Reeder has agreed to be Interim President, and Alan Dockterman, the Interim Treasurer.

Noticiário-News from the International Press

U.S. Donates War Surplus Food to Brazil

Brazil's Ministério da Saúde negotiated an agreement with the U.S. State Department, via its embassy in Brasília, to receive a donation of 14 tons of foodstuffs that were prepared for the Gulf War but never used. The donation includes MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat), milk, bread, mashed potatoes, and other soft prepared foods, all vacuum-packed, which will be given to school lunch programs, public hospitals, daycare centers, and public university cafeterias. The terms of the agreement stipulated that the Brazilian government take care of unloading, storing, and distributing the foodstuffs, which will arrive in one thousand sea freight containers, and that Brazilian nutritionists supervise the use of these foods in feeding programs and not allow them to be distributed directly to the public. The value of the donation is estimated at US \$25 million, while the cost of transportation to Brazil from Saudi Arabia where the foods are now stored, is said to be an additional \$3 million. INAN, the Instituto Nacional de Alimentação e Nutrição will oversee the receipt and storage of the food, which is scheduled to arrive in Brazil by late October.

O Liberal 8/8/91 and Diário do Pará, 8/8/91

Brazil-U.S. Forestry Accord

During his recent visit to Brasília, Vice-President Dan Quayle signed a pact with Tânia Munhoz, president of the Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) pledging the cooperation of the U.S. Forest Service to help IBAMA develop a forest fire control program in Brazil. The pact will last for 5 years, and aims to train Brazilians in modern forest-fire control techniques. Three IBAMA technicians have already gone to the U.S. to begin training and to work on development of a comparative model between the cerrado of the Parque Nacional das Emas in Goiás and the savannah region of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Diário do Pará, 8/8/91

Unsolved Mysteries: Disappearing School Lunches

It is widely known throughout Brazil that the school lunch program is what attracts many children from low-income families to attend school. However, the national school lunch program continues to be plagued by mysteries and scandals. Money has been allocated, food has been purchased, students fill the schools, and yet they are not being fed. In Rio de Janeiro for example, the state government is conducting an investigation into the disappearance of foodstuffs destined for schools administered by city governments. While the school year began in March, some schools did not receive food supplies until July. In other schools, supplies

to page 5

Meninos de Ninguém

Há cerca de oito milhões de “meninos de rua” no Brasil engrossados por outros 35 milhões que vivem em estado de pobreza absoluta. Um relatório da Polícia Federal brasileira sublinha que entre 1988 e 1990 foram mortos violentamente 4,611 crianças e adolescentes em circunstâncias que levam a crer no carácter deliberado de extermínio. Só em São Paulo foram assassinados 918 no ano passado e 312 nos primeiros cinco meses deste ano.

Os grupos de extermínio justifiquem os seus atos com a “limpeza da cidade”, “proteção à sociedade”, “manutenção da ordem” e acerto de contas” no presuposto de que “se deve eliminar o ‘menor abandonado’ hoje para que ele não seja o bandido de amanhã. O MNMMR (Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas da Rua) conseguiu provar que a crença de que o “menino da rua” é um assaltante ou traficante de drogas em potencial não passa de um grande equívoco.

Os assassinos respondem por mais de 51% da mortalidade de crianças e adolescentes entre 10 e 14 anos de idade e por 66% das mortes dos jovens entre os 15 e 17 anos. O que significa que, no Brasil, o homicídio é a causa externa mais frequente da morte entre as crianças que escapam à seleção natural”.

Instituiu-se no dia 23 de Maio deste ano no Brasil, por iniciativa do Congresso Nacional, uma comissão parlamentar de inquérito (CPI) para apurar as denúncias que levarão à punição dos responsáveis (policiais e ex- policiais civis e militares,

to next page

Meninos

from previous page

elementos de segurança e empresários) por esse extermínio.

O Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente defende os meninos. Diz que a criança não pode ser mais preso simplesmente por estar na rua, a menos que tenha cometido uma infração. Apesar do Estatuto, a Polícia continua a prender e a bater arbitrariamente nas crianças e adolescentes.

Expresso de Lisboa, 4/10/1991

Rio-92: International Environmental Conference

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be held in Rio de Janeiro in June, 1992, with some 40,000 people expected to attend. Among the topics to be discussed are:

Protection of the atmosphere:

- Climate change;
- Ozone depletion;
- Transboundary air pollution.

Land resources:

- Deforestation;
- Soil loss;
- Desertification and drought.

Protection of the oceans:

- Global aspects of marine pollution;
- Regional seas and coastal areas;
- Rational use and development of living marine resources.

Protection of fresh-water resources:

- Supply of fresh water;
- Quality of fresh water.

Organizations of Interest

Rio Maria Committee

The **Rio Maria Committee** has been formed to establish an information and urgent action group in the U.S. that will help support the work of Rio Maria Committees throughout Brazil in their efforts to promote social justice for poor farmers in southern Pará.

The town of Rio Maria was the home of Expedito Ribeiro da Souza, president of the local Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais, who was assassinated in February of this year. Although three men have been charged with his murder, no trial has yet been held.

Five others active in the land reform movement have been killed in the past 16 months, and death threats

have been made against both farmers and church workers.

The Rio Maria Committee has begun an international campaign to call attention to human rights abuses in the region, and to have interested parties worldwide send letters to Brazilian officials requesting proper investigations and prosecutions when abuses occur. Those who want to support RMC's work will receive urgent action bulletins and information about letter-writing campaigns. For complete information, contact Madeleine Adriance at the following address:

The Rio Maria Committee
238 Charles Street
Cambridge, MA 02141-2004
(617) 868-4828

Noticiário

from previous page

which on paper were intended for one month's worth of lunches only lasted for nine days.

In the entire country, there are 32 million needy students, but every year they are receiving less food. Marlene Lopes Baeta, Community Education Supervisor in Maje, RJ, blames the problem on funds destined for the school lunch program being invested in interest-earning bank accounts, instead of being spent to buy food. Poor storage and distribution management practices are to blame for part of the problem. In São Paulo alone, an estimated 450 tons of spoiled meat and dairy products destined for school lunches end up in the landfill each year.

Nova Escola, August, 1991.

Mais Alunos — Menos Comida

Ano	Toneladas	Alunos	kg/ano/criança
1986	342,240	31,705,457	10,794
1987	194,661	30,025,660	6,483
1988	190,364	27,998,257	6,800
1989	100,842	32,000,000	3,151

Fonte: MEC/FAE

Novidades em Leitura

The Indian: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow was released in July as a co-edition between the Fundação Memorial da América Latina and the São Paulo University Press. The book, which contains photographs by Cláudia Andujar and Vicent Carelli, details presentations given at a symposium, held in 1990, on the situation of the indigenous population in contemporary Brazil. Included are transcripts of talks by Indian leaders themselves, activists in the Brazilian Indian rights movement, anthropologists and government officials. Synopses of more than 2 dozen films and videos that have been produced by and about Brazilian Indians in the past forty years, as well as an in-depth discussion of the situation of the Yanomami complete this work. For ordering information contact:

Pavilhão da Criatividade Popular
Fundação Memorial da América
Latina
Av. Mário de Andrade, 664
01156 São Paulo SP
(011) 823-9762 or (011) 823-9611.

The Brazilian Sound (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1991) by Chris Gowan and Ricardo Pessanha examines the history and development of Brazilian folk and popular music in the twentieth century, in a format geared to the general U.S. audience. Also included are many photographs of important artists and their instruments. Music of the diverse regions of Brazil, from historic origins to present day forms, is covered in the book's 216 pages. An extensive discography is also included.

Brazilian Cuisine with Yara Roberts is a one-hour video which features recipes from the northern region of Bahia to the mountains of Minas Gerais. Narration is in English.

Yara Roberts is a Brazilian-born cook who now lives in Boston. Among

the recipes featured in the video are Vatapá, Feijoada, Lombo, Farofa, Pumpkin Surprise, Fish à Guanabara, Mango Mousse, Quindim, etc. The cost of the video is \$19.95 plus \$3.95 for shipping and handling. The video can be obtained by calling 1-800-822-1105 or by writing to VCA Teltronics for Video Recipes, 50 Leyland Drive, Leonia, N.J. 07605.

Brazil Up-Date Weekly of 142 W. 49th St., New York, NY. 10019 offers four hour video cassettes of the latest programs being shown in Brazil. Each video cassette include news reports, documentaries, entertainment, and musical performances. The tapes may be purchased individually at a cost of \$16.85 or they may be purchased as a monthly package of four. For anyone wishing to keep abreast of the latest happenings in Brazil, these videos are excellent. They also can provide those of us whose Portuguese is getting rusty an opportunity to hear authentic material as it was presented on Brazilian TV.

Jornal da Amizade Wins Award

Our FOB newsletter won the "Excellence in Writing" Award for newsletters published by country-of-service groups, at the 30th Anniversary NCRPCV Conference held in Washington, DC, this past August. Comments about *JA* included: "deeply informative, professional tone, sensitive, and excellent."

Cartas

Dear friends,

I would like to thank John Reeder for the memoriam for Mirtes do Vale. I would also like to add a little to John's news about Mirtes. Like John, I met her in the training program in 1969. When I returned to Brasil for 6 months in 1979, ten years later, I ran into her in Natal. She told me that she had a niece "I should meet." About a year later Mirtes succeeded in introducing us. I was working in Sobral, Ceará, with a goat and sheep research project. In November, 1981, Mirtes' niece, Célia do Vale Abreu and I were married. I returned to the States in 1985 with Celia and our two children (born in Brazil).

Presently Mirtes has 5 "sobrinhos" in Kansas City: Celia's brothers João and Carlos and sister Maze, all 3 living with us, and a cousin, Celso. One has finished a nursing degree and the others are students.

After a few years with the IRS, I accepted a position with Chemlawn Tree and Shrub Service, a bit closer to the horticultural line of work I was in in Brazil. I'm still looking for a way to apply some of my experience and appreciate "O Jornal da Amizade."

*Abraços,
Tom (Tomás) Miller*

Yanomami Territory Decreed

Pres. Collor signed a decree on November 15, 1991, that establishes a 36,000 square mile territory for the Yanomami people, marking a first step in protecting the rights of the Yanomami against mining and military interests.

Directory Information/Membership Form

Name _____

Peace Corps Service or other Brazil experience (mo/yr):

Address _____

Arrival _____ Departure _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Program(s) _____

Country (if not USA) _____

Telephone: Home: (____) _____

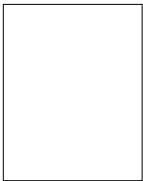
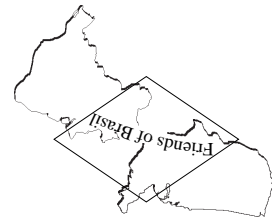
Site(s) _____

Work: (____) _____

Member of National Council of RPCVs? _____

Current Occupation _____

Friends of Brasil
7303 23rd Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98115



Check your mailing label. In the upper right corner is important information about your status in Friends of Brasil. It will tell you:

- If you are a member of FoB, the date when your membership will expire is shown. If your membership has recently expired, a notice will be placed on the label. Please keep your membership current—use the form below for your renewal. Our organization is only as strong as our membership—we are counting on your support.
- If your name has only recently been added to our mailing list, you have received this copy of the newsletter de graça. But this will be your last issue, unless you join FoB.



Join/Renew Friends of Brasil now!

Enclosed is payment for: \$15/household
 \$10/student/low-income
 This is a Renewal Add \$5/Overseas mail

Donation: \$ _____ Total: \$ _____

Please indicate those areas in which you can contribute your energy to Friends of Brasil:

Social
 Newsletter
 Membership
 Education
 Fund Raising

 Please make checks payable to “Friends of Brasil” and mail with this form to: Friends of Brasil • c/o Karen Thielke • 19518 14th Ave. NW • Seattle, WA 98177 

Please list below the names & addresses of other RPCVs or Staff who served in Brasil so that we can add them to our mailing list: _____