

Local

Flexible attitude, idealism essential for volunteers

Peace Corps offers a look at America from outside

By CATHIE FEIGHL
Battalion Reporter
Helping people to survive in Third World countries may not be an appealing idea for some, but for a Peace Corps volunteer, it can be

a stimulating and rewarding experience. Initiated in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps is an overseas volunteer service that gives aid to develop-

ing countries. The organization's aims are to enable Americans as individuals to help Third World countries acquire needed technical skills and knowledge, to give these nations

an opportunity for contact with Americans and to afford the volunteers a chance to learn, through first-hand contact, about other cultures and mores, according to a Peace Corps information booklet.

Mike Bowker, who runs the on-campus recruiting office for the Peace Corps, said being in the Peace Corps gave him a look at America from the outside, making him more appreciative of this country.

Bowker, a graduate student from Boston, spent three years teaching secondary science, math and agriculture in Western Samoa, a country in the South Pacific.

"It gave me an opportunity to see different cultures," Bowker said. "It was stimulating and exciting and helped me to decide what I wanted to do," he said.

Bowker said he became in-

terested in agriculture while in the Peace Corps and came to Texas A&M University to get a master's degree in agricultural economics. Bowker has been the Peace Corps representative at Texas A&M since September. He said he spends about 20 hours a week recruiting prospective volunteers and giving out information on what the Peace Corps is and what it has to offer.

"It can offer personal satisfaction in knowing that you might have helped someone," Bowker said.

He said for people who have an interest in working internationally, the Peace Corps could be helpful because it provides a chance to adapt to life overseas.

The Peace Corps is interested in those willing to work and to cooperate with people from different cultures, Bowker said.

"The volunteer needs to have a flexible attitude and should be somewhat idealistic," he said.

Bowker said a recruiting drive is held twice a year when recruiters from Austin and Dallas come to the University. Last week during a recruiting drive, Bowker said, he received eight applications.

Anyone interested in the Peace Corps must submit an application and then be interviewed, Bowker said. The applicant provides the Peace Corps with a list of work preferences and geographic locations, and if he is invited to participate in the service, the applicant's preferences are matched with the needs of a particular country, he said.

Volunteers receive training from four to 12 weeks in the country they will be working in, Bowker said. The training involves instruction in language, culture and


technical skills, he said. Peace Corps volunteers modestly while overseas to maintain a standard of living similar to the average citizen of the country.

While in the Peace Corps, a volunteer receives \$300 a month for living expenses, Bowker said, and then, upon his return, receives \$125 for every month he has served. Bowker said all medical and health services are provided by the Peace Corps for the volunteers while overseas.

Bowker said the Peace Corps prefers college graduates or those with working experience in the field. Applicants must be U.S. citizens over 18, but there is an upper age limit, he said. Volunteers are asked to stay in a foreign country for two years, but the workers may leave at any time, Bowker said.

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AAUW to conduct Saturday workshop for area women

By BETH GIBSON
Battalion Reporter

The American Association of University Women will present a workshop entitled "Women and Work: The Challenge of Change" Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Brazos Center.

The workshop was organized by the Bryan-College Station branch of the AAUW Committee on Women. Their goals are to identify issues affecting women and to achieve a network of support for women in Brazos County.

Sally Sheppard, Committee on Women chairperson, said the workshop will focus on the concerns of area women who are in or considering entering the working world.

With the number of working women steadily increasing, the resulting changes in lifestyle are dramatic for women themselves and for their families, said Sheppard, a professor in the computer science division of the industrial engineering department at Texas A&M University.

Rose Norman, AAUW programs vice president, said these changes, such as finding suitable daycare, single parenting and assertiveness on the job, also apply to men and she urges them to attend the workshop as well as women.

The workshop will include lectures and a panel discussion in the morning, small group discussions over brown-bag lunches and action-planning sessions in the afternoon. The day's activities will conclude with a film.

Dr. Elizabeth Meret, associate professor of sociology at Texas A&M, will start the workshop with a lecture on "Where We Are: Myth and Reality." Meret teaches a course about women in the labor force and will address the

myths about working women.

Norman said examples to be discussed include the myths that women are more unreliable than men, or that women work for unimportant reasons.

"Employers seem to think that women work for frivolous reasons, like to buy a sofa," she said. "Also, most people think that women are paid as well as men. Well, they're not. Nationally, women make 59 percent of what men make."

Dr. Elizabeth Cowan, English professor and assistant to the president at Texas A&M, will discuss the topic, "Why Choose Academia? And Why Stay?"

Norman said Cowan, an AAUW member, will explore the advantages and disadvantages of highly-qualified women taking academic jobs rather than taking higher paying, more competitive jobs in the industrial world.

Norman said the topic will also throw light on two problem areas at Texas A&M.

"So many women are underemployed," said Norman, a research associate in the oceanography department at Texas A&M. "There are women who have master's degrees who are secretaries here."

"The administration recognizes this, that they can get cheap, qualified labor," she said. "But they know they have many unhappy laborers."

Norman also said there are not enough high-ranking women at the University.

"There are only 19 women associate professors at Texas A&M compared to many men associate professors, and you have to be a superwoman to get there," she said.

"Almost 35 percent of the students here are women. They need role models. They need to see women getting someplace."

A panel discussion will follow Cowan's address. Pat Hensley will be the moderator of the panel which will discuss the topic, "Volunteer Work Opens Doors."

Norman said the topic was chosen to show the importance of volunteer work and how to translate it into a resume.

After the panel, Dr. Pamela Swan Horn, administrator of the Strengthening Career Program at Texas A&M, will discuss "Facing Challenge and Change in the Job Market," a topic focusing on re-entering the job market.

For lunch, participants will break into small discussion-planning groups over brown-bag lunches.

The 90-minute discussion topics will include re-entering the job market, local support services for women, dual career families, assertiveness/interpersonal communication, TAMU Women's Network, especially for graduate students and projects and prospects for volunteers.

After the sessions, the large group will meet again to compare small group conclusions. A film entitled "Pack Your Own Chute" will wrap up the day's activities. The film is about a woman skydiver and is "a good way to end the day on a positive note," Norman said.

Participants are asked to bring their own lunches for the day; beverages and desserts will be provided.

Brazos Center is located at 3232 Briarcrest Drive in Bryan.

The workshop, to be held in the lecture room, is open to the public and is free.

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