Coming Soon: NPCA Happy Hour, Full Moon Burn, Sunset Cliffs Restoration, Book Club, and More!

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San Diego Peace Corps Association E-Newsletter

Pacific Waves

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings, SDPCA Members!

We are so pleased to get back on track with our monthly newsletter with this issue! Our website and subsequently our communications have been affected by technology/domain issues, but we're finally back in action! I want to thank our Board Members, and especially Colleen and Sara for all the work they put into this effort.

We are looking forward to some great fall activities in the coming months, including a Harvest Moon Burn, the Annual SDPCA Bonfire, a Sunset Cliffs Restoration activity, and of course the monthly book club! We're also invited to a special Happy Hour with the National Peace Corps Association! The NPCA is eager to get a big crowd with great discussion, so please join the fun.

If you haven't heard yet, I'm excited to report that San Diego will host the next Peace Corps Connect Conference in June 2027! The event will be held at USD's Joan Kroc School of Peace Studies, and there will be a lot of fun ways for SDPCA members to get involved. We will keep you posted on these opportunities.

I want to thank everyone who has been coming out to our events over the past couple of months. The happy hours, surf and beach day, and the meal efforts for Rachel's Women's Shelter are examples of the breadth of fun and service that inspire us!

All the best,
Nina Pruyn, Board President
Costa Rica 93-95

NPCA Happy Hour & Reception



Friday, September 25th, 2026 @ 4-7PM
The Lot La Jolla
7611 Fay Avenue, La Jolla 92037
RSVP: https://evite.me/MSGtek5mGQ

NPCA is inviting all SDPCA Members to a happy hour & reception! Come meet the NPCA Board President and CEO Carla Brown. Learn about NPCA and let them know what SDPCA is doing.

Questions? Email johnleeevans@peacecorpsconnect.org or ninapruyn@gmail.com

SDPCA Hosts: John Lee Evans & Nina Pruyn



Harvest Moon Burn

Saturday, September 26th, 2026 @ 6:30PM
2200 Shelter Island Dr
San Diego, CA, 92106
RSVP: https://evite.me/bhWrhQPChm

Join us for an evening of reflection, connection, and release under the Harvest Moon. 🌕🔥

We'll gather by the fire to slow down, reflect on what we're ready to let go of, and create space for what comes next. Bring paper and a pen to write down something you're ready to release, which we'll symbolically offer to the fire together.

The evening will include journaling, optional sharing, a release ritual, and a guided meditation to help us feel lighter as we head into the new season. No pressure to share or participate in anything that doesn't feel right for you. This is simply a space to pause, connect, and let go together.

Bring anything to support your comfort—chair, blanket, sweatshirt, water, etc.

Moonrise: 6:35 PM, Sunset: 6:41 PM

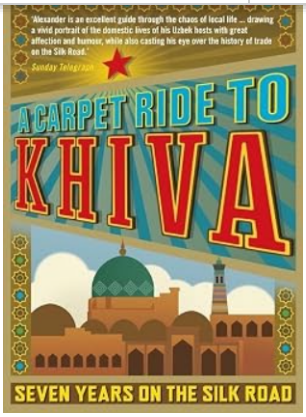
Text Lacy at 785-608-5277 if you're planning to attend so she can share the exact fire pit location on the day of the event. We will start at 6:30. Please arrive early to find parking and our pit.

SDPCA Host: Lacy Szuwalski

Wednesday, September 30th, 2026 @ 7-8PM
Zoom
RSVP: https://evite.me/EB7SunN4Xw

Join us to discuss A Carpet Ride to Khiva - Seven Years on the Silk Road by Christopher Alexander (Uzbekistan). We'll meet on Zoom.

SDPCA Host: Sharon Kennedy





SDPCA Annual Beach Bonfire

Saturday, Oct 17, 4:30 PM
North Cove Public Beach
539 Hummingbird Ln, San Diego, CA, 92109
RSVP: https://evite.me/WD1n4G1dfH

Please join us for our annual beach bonfire. Bring a chair, water bottle, and beach gear.

This is the same location as last year. Turn right onto Hummingbird Lane just BEFORE the Paradise Point Resort entrance. It looks like a service road but actually leads to the best bonfire pits in Mission Bay.

The SDPCA will provide Bahn Mi sandwiches and water. If you bring something to share, please make it finger food, as we won't have plates or utensils.

Thanks, can't wait to see you all!

SDPCA Host: SDPCA Board

Sunset Cliffs Habitat Restoration

Saturday, October 24, 2026 @ 9am - 12pm
705 Cornish Dr, San Diego CA 92107
RSVP: https://evite.me/4x4uha6YGy



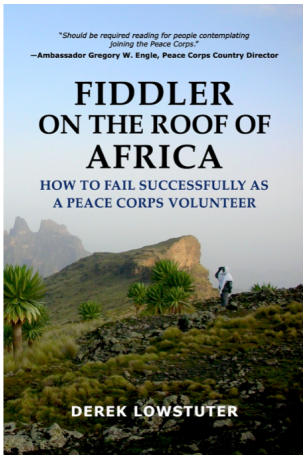
Join SDPCA for a memorable morning of habitat restoration at Sunset Cliffs Natural Park.

We'll be planting, tackling invasive plants, clearing noxious weeds, and smoothing out the main trail to showcase the natural beauty of this space.

Meet us in the parking lot (entrance at Ladera St. and Cornish Dr.) and look for the Peace Corps banner. Hope to see you there!

Call or text Sara with any questions at 5623708711

SDPCA Hosts: Leon Scales and Sara Russell



Book Club: Fiddler on the Roof of Africa
Wednesday, October 28, 2026 @ 7-8pm PDT
Zoom
RSVP: https://evite.me/Qu5QnWXTPZ

Join us for a discussion of *Fiddler on the Roof of Africa - How to Fail Successfully as a Peace Corps* Volunteer by Derek Lowstuter (RPCV Ethiopia).

SDPCA Host: Sharon Kennedy

WHAT'S NEW?

SDPCA Membership Matters

What a summer! A great time to travel and reconnect with family and friends. Earlier this summer I spent some time in Cape Cod for the 13th year that a group of Peace Corps Nepal friends have rented a house with a big kitchen where 12 can sit down to a lobster dinner. Although it's 40 years since our shared adventure and we have all gone off to lead different lives around the world, there is still a special bond.

I find a similar tie with RPCVS I did not serve with. We all share a special experience that has shaped our personal and professional lives. The exuberant conversations at our SDPCA events reflect the ease with which we connect.

This month, the spotlight features new SDPCA member Jake Zawlacki, who served in Mongolia.

Hope to see you at an upcoming event!

Laura Streichert

Member Spotlight

Get to know: Jake Zawlacki



Peace Corps countries and years served:

Mongolia, 2015-17

What did you do as a volunteer?

I was a Community Youth Development volunteer in the Kazakh majority province in western Mongolia. In practical terms, it meant I helped teach life skills lessons, co-coached basketball and volleyball, and worked with the local center for children with developmental disabilities. One of the most successful events co-organized by PCVs and their counterparts was an annual Western Regional Special Olympics. Bringing children from all over rural Western Mongolia, the event was over multiple days, funded by the local government and grants, and covered by media throughout the country.

What is your profession/current occupation?

I am a writer, translator, and scholar currently teaching writing at the University of San Diego. When I'm not teaching classes or lesson planning, I'm working on a couple book projects. My most recent book was actually a translation of a collection of Kazakh poetry by Akhmet Baitursynov, which came out through Academic Studies Press. You can check it out here: https://www.academicstudiespress.com/9798897831104/

What is a favorite memory or experience from your time in the Peace Corps?

My favorite experience from Peace Corps was the shifted priorities. Sitting in silence and drinking salted milk tea with a friend was more important than work, than family, than pretty much anything. I remember one instance of drinking tea at a table when my counterpart received a phone call. "No, I can't come right now. I'm busy drinking tea"; I was busy drinking tea too.



Do you have a special souvenir you brought home from Peace Corps?

Kazakh wall hangings. In Western Mongolia, many families had so many of these wall hangings as to want to get rid of them to anyone interested. I, of course, was very interested. Now one hangs in my living room!

Please recommend activities that you enjoy that other SDPCA members might be interested in.

When I'm not chasing around my 1.5-year-old daughter, I try and sneak down to Hey Books! and Now or Never Comics in Downtown.

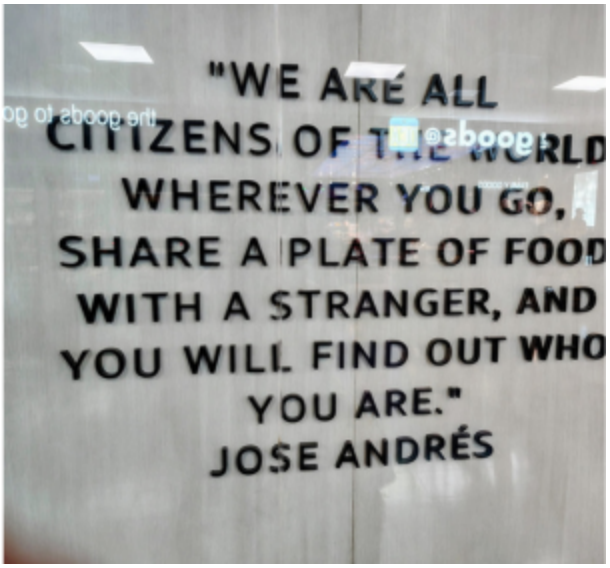
PAST EVENTS





Happy Pride Drag Bingo, June 17th





Rachel's Womans' Shelter Prepare and Serve, June 21st



Happy Hour, July 17th



Book Club: *Whites*, July 29th



Happy Hour, July 12th











Surf & Beach Day, August 16th



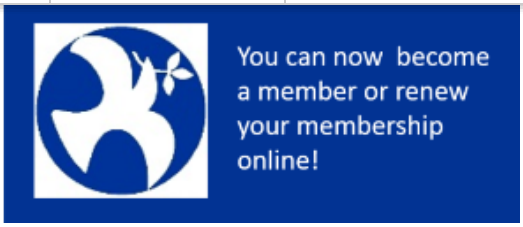
Book Club: Touba Kolong, August 26th

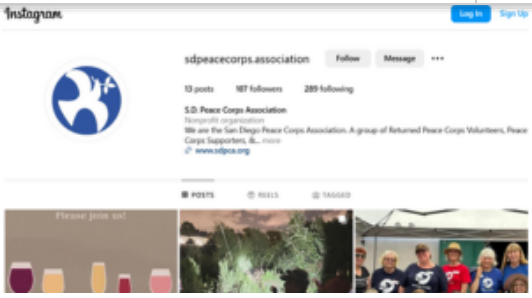


Snorkeling Adventure, September 20th

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