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# Amigos de Honduras

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**SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT** Joan M. Larimore (San Francisco del Valle, 1986-88) [amigosdehondurasjml@gmail.com](mailto:amigosdehondurasjml@gmail.com)

Our Treasury currently holds \$4498.09. We really need to do some grants! Contact me if you have any ideas for grant proposals. My apologies to those of you who sent in checks over the past four months. I was slow to get all the information into my computer and take the checks to the bank. What will you give me? A good talking to? Remember I will be resigning my position as Secretary-Treasurer as of May 13, 2019 and so far ... NO TAKERS. Call at 360-802-4417 or email me if you are even slightly interested. I'm sure we can divide up the task so that no one has too much to do! The next Newsletter will have all the grant donors listed as usual.

**AMIGO NEEDS YOU FOR SECRETARY-TREASURER** (Rerun from Aug.) Joan is retiring May 2019 from all of her Amigos de Honduras duties. We need you to volunteer to help. Secretary-Treasurer Joan can give you all the materials, details, help and contact info needed. We need someone to be **treasurer**. This means receiving and depositing membership payments, writing checks for mailings, grants, NPCA

and writing a brief quarterly report. **We need someone to print address labels & have the quarterly newsletter printed and mailed.** Loren has agreed to continue being the Newsletter editor and Brant continues to send out the pdf newsletter. **We need a secretary** who will maintain membership list, contacts with NPCA and contact with Grants Committee. Tell your friends to do it! Please consider one or all of the jobs or recruit a friend and do it as co-treasurer-secretary. **Contact Joan with questions or potential volunteers.** Joan's email is [amigosdehondurasjml@gmail.com](mailto:amigosdehondurasjml@gmail.com) and her phone is 360-802-4417. Dos Mil Gracias!

## EDITOR'S CORNER

**Loren Hintz (Olanchito, 1980-82)** [ldhintz@bellsouth.net](mailto:ldhintz@bellsouth.net) Honduras is back in the news due to the Caravan of migrants from Honduras. Several PC reunions occurred and this issue has some reflections of attendees. Enjoy! A year ago I was stuck in the SPS airport due to the postelection protests. This October I was able to visit some of the places I missed seeing last December plus I attended Robert Gallardo's Honduran Birds Field Guide book launch. I even stayed at the Hotel Granada #2 in Teguc! (See elsewhere in this issue for updates.) We really need someone to step up and take over the work Joan has been doing

for Amigos de Honduras. Please volunteer!

Last year I asked for folks to share the names of their favorite organization for donations but no one did so here are my suggestions. With many holidays coming up and the tax season to soon begin, RPCVs may be thinking about donations. Don't forget to give to the Amigos de Honduras Grant Program and encourage NGOs in Honduras to apply. There are lots of other good causes. CAMO (health) <http://www.camo.org/>; SHI (agriculture) <http://www.sustainableharvest.org/>; Pueblo-Sin-Fronteras(caravan) <http://www.pueblosinfronteras.org/>; USLEAP (labor) <https://www.laborrights.org/programs/usleap> are four with Honduran connections. Check them out. Share with **Amigos** in 2019 your favorite organization.



## LONELIEST ROAD IN AMERICA TO S LAKE

**TAHOE** Barbara Kaare-Lopez, Olanchito, Tocoa, & Trujillo, 1978-80 As Bernie and I left the brown desolate, sometimes interesting Highway 50 in Nevada, with highway markers that stated, "Loneliest Road in America," and ascended Highway 50 approaching South Lake Tahoe, California, we were amazed by the blue skies, tall green trees, and the blueness of Lake Tahoe. What a remarkable transformation. Nevada's Highway 50 had towns that were 100 miles apart, sometimes comprised of only a handful of buildings and the much-anticipated gas station. We felt we had entered a Paradise, especially when Bernie saw the Casinos on the Nevada side of Stateline Road.

Why were we on this road trip to Lake Tahoe? **Fred Corvi** and his cohorts had planned another Peace Corps Honduras reunion. How many was this? The last reunion Bernie and I attended was in New Orleans in 2016. Terri Salus planned that one. This reunion had approximately 200 folks who had signed up to come, counting their guests.

This was "advertised" as a No Frills Reunion...no t-shirts for sale, no souvenirs, and no planned book sales (although I had permission to informally schlep and sell the book I wrote, **Nurse Patch Its Diary: The Diary of a Public School Nurse and Clown**, to folks I knew). Oh, I also sold the 2019 Peace Corps calendar, produced by the Madison, Wisconsin Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) group. My RPCV

group in Denver sells these calendars as a fundraiser.

I assume a few folks will write about this latest reunion. (**Ed. Note: I am still waiting for more articles**) I am writing to thank Fred and Cohorts, to write about my favorite activities, and to put in a plug for NPCA, National Peace Corps Association. **So to begin, thanks Fred, Mike Raponi and Cohorts**, for the assortment of activities, the blues skies, the absence of smoke from our Western wildfires, the beauty of Lake Tahoe, and the assortment of activities to choose from to attend.

I was one of the guests at the Blue Jay Lodge, which was next to Base Camp where most folks seemed to stay, and where folks met up. My tiny group of 11 Peace Corps Volunteers (that arrived in Tegucigalpa June of 1978, has been reduced by 2 deaths. **Bob Groeneveld & Judy Isaacson Luna** have passed. Four of my group showed up for this reunion. Beside myself, **Donna Stern Slocum, Beverly Herman-Rivera, and Nikki Wooley** came. Three of us were able to drag our husbands to the reunion; I dragged my hubby Bernie Lopez, Donna dragged Dennis Slocum, and Beverly dragged her Honduran husband, Ruben Rivera, whose eyes do resemble Robert DeNiro's. **NOTE:** One of my worries was how I have let my español go to pot, or as I told Ruben, "mi español fue a la mierda!"

My favorite activities were: Thursday's pizza and beer get together at Base Camp; Friday's beach picnic at Round Hill Pines Beach; paddle boating on Lake Tahoe with Capitan Jaime and crew; **Frank Almaguer and Glen**

**Blumhorst's great talk** on the present state of Honduras and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA); and Saturday's Gondola ride to Heavenly Mountain, and walking short of breath at 9,000 feet altitude once we arrived. To continue my list, Saturday's dinner/dance boat cruise on Lake Tahoe, and actually dancing with the mob on the floor, and sitting on the top deck, gazing at the multitude of stars was the best. And lastly carpooling Sunday to Angora Lake to hike about 7,000 feet altitude (yes, I was huffing & puffing hiking uphill on this hike also) was great. The lovely alpine lake had steep cliffs rising behind it. But the great conversations I had with folks from my June, 1978 PCV group; my La Ceiba friends **Cheri Damschroder and Donaldo Pendleton**, my **Olanchito comrade Scott Zorowski**, **reconnecting with Sharon Waller**, who I befriended when we both lived in Albuquerque, and chatting with Catrachos who listened to my rusty español, and new folks I met was .....Macanudo!

**Per Frank Almaguer**, the Peace Corps Director when our group of 11 arrived, the situation in Honduras is a little better, although Peace Corps was pulled out of country in 2012 when a PCV was shot in the leg. How did the situation in Honduras get so awful that Peace Corps withdrew? Honduras became a conduit for "coca" from South America; vicious gangs appeared that were involved in drugs; Honduran convicts from the U. S. were sent back to Honduras, and dropped off at the Honduran airport. They learned their "stuff" in U. S. jails. And lastly, Honduras' weak government played a part. There is

now a List of Corruptos in Honduras. The wife of former President Pepe Lobo is in jail for stealing money.

**NOTE:** I was intrigued by Frank's presentation, and so Googled a few articles on Honduras. From 2000 to 2004, U. S. deported 20,000 people to Central America, including rival gangs as Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Barrio 18 Street, which brought the gang culture to this region. (BBC News). Rosa Elena Bonilla the wife of former President Porfirio Lobo (2009 to 2014) was arrested on corruption charges, siphoning funds from social work programs for the poor. Bonilla and others embezzled 16 million Lempiras (\$680,000) (Reuters). The homicide rate reached a peak in 2012 of an average of 20 homicides a day. "In 2015, Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba suffered more than 40% of the homicides in the country". These 3 cities are where the majority of the gang members live. And "Honduras is considered a major drug route to the U. S." (Crime in Honduras, Wikipedia).

So how can we help our former home and country? How can we live the Peace Corps goals back in the U. S.? **Glen Blumhorst is President of National Peace Corps Association (NPCA).** One way is to join NPCA; membership is free. NPCA has 3 specific goals: "Help the Peace Corps be the best that it can be; Empower members and affiliate groups to thrive; and Amplify the Peace Corps community's global development impact. (NPCA website). Included among the functions of NPCA are advocacy, News and Events; Marketplace where RPCV items are

sold; and traveling overseas with **Next Step Travel.**

Some ways to help besides joining include: attending the next Peace Corps Connect conference, which will be in Austin, Texas June 20-22, 2019. **NOTE:** our Denver RPCV group hosted this conference last year in Denver. Although not listed on their website, conducting Peace Corps interviews with RPCVs for the RPCV Oral History Archives project, with the interviews being sent to the JFK Library in Boston, is now a "division" of NPCA.

I am the lady with the laryngitis and cough. I hope I didn't make any of you sick with my mocos. P.S. See you at our next Honduras Reunion, which will be...when and where??

**RPCV STEVE MOULDS (Orocuina, Choluteca, 64-66) of Moulds Family Vineyards is the 2018 Napa Valley Grower of the Year**



Oak Knoll District grape grower Steve Moulds has been named the 2018 Napa Valley Grower of the Year. Moulds began his farming career in the early 1970s, on a ranch in Morgan Hill, raising animals to sell at auction. During that time, he

served in the Department of Social Services in Gilroy, helping Spanish-speaking migrant workers gain skills and remove barriers to employment.

The Peace Corps has played a central role in defining Moulds's relationship to civic duty. He has spent many years volunteering in Orocuina, Honduras, focusing on rural community and agricultural development. Moulds was instrumental in building schools there and he established a co-operative Savings and Loan, which is still in operation.

In 2000, he and his wife Betsy moved to a beautiful property in the Oak Knoll District, where they planted 11 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and committed themselves to producing high quality wine grapes. They forged strong relationships with winemakers and approached every agreement with the spirit of partnership and excellence. Steve became involved in causes and efforts near and dear to his heart, dedicating hours and years to boards such as the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley appellation, the Napa Valley Grape growers (where he joined the Board of Directors and served as President), and the Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation, where he currently serves as President.

Being a strong believer in community volunteerism, Steve did not stop with industry boards. He stepped forward and immersed himself in other Napa County civic, philanthropic, political and professional endeavors, including: the Napa County Housing Commission, where he and others work to provide affordable housing for farmworkers; FFA St Helena High School, where he is a strong supporter; Men Who Give a Damn; Festival Napa Valley; and Moulds

can always be found with his paddle raised at the annual Napa County Livestock Auction, supporting the children in the 4H, FFA, and Ag for Youth programs. He purchases several animals and donates the meat to the Napa County Farmworker Housing Centers.

Moulds is known for his deep concern for the plight of immigrants and he has spent his life helping anyone who is committed to dreams of a better life and a better world. He has set a great example for his 2 children and 5 grandchildren: that of a strong work ethic and the importance of community service.

NVG Vice President Paul Goldberg commented on Moulds's award by noting that, "Steve has contributed to the overall success of the Napa grape growing community in many ways. Among numerous achievements, Steve has exhibited a long-standing commitment to sustainable and high-quality farming practices, he has helped define the role of the Farmworker Foundation in educating and improving the lives of farmworkers throughout the valley, and his service to the Grape growers and other community organizations has been unparalleled".

## REUNION GREETINGS TO ALL Mario Palena, Jr (Comayagua, 69-71)

Most of our friends in Peace Corps Honduras XIII have left but me and the Oulahans are still here. In fact, I was the first to arrive and will be the last to leave on Wednesday. At our age, I feel it helps to know you are not alone and continue to have like-minded people remain in your life with whom you have shared important life experiences. Yesterday, our group shared some

amazing stories with each other and we learned much more about each other. My contributions to the discussions I managed to keep PG and the X rated stuff I'll save for a later time. Each member of our group is unique in their skills and abilities, I found, and their ability to contribute to our groups dynamic is what made us a very valuable asset to Peace Corps in helping address the many problems in Honduras. This said, all our group's members, I'm proud to report, continue to try and make the world a better place for everyone.

Strange, I had to deal with a hurricane coming here and I will be facing a hurricane on my way back home on Wednesday. There is nothing more I can think of which could make this reunion a more extraordinary life experience than to end it with a hurricane. Fred Corvi and his small group of helpers made this reunion possible and I hope he will continue to organize future reunions.

I started attending these reunions after I retired in 2009 and this is my 4th reunion. One of my female friends asked me why I make the effort. Looking back on my life, my time in Peace Corps is a major factor that changed my life from ordinary to extraordinary. My time in Peace Corps gave me the opportunity to meet a young Honduran girl with whom we created an amazing family. In many ways, I consider my Peace Corps friends extended family members.

At one point in the hours of conversations yesterday someone asked when we were going to have our next reunion. Just something to think about!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Peace and Love from the Peace Corps Reunion in Lake Tahoe.

## MITCH REMEMBERED

"On October 26, 1998 in Honduras it started to rain. It did not stop until five days later, the phenomenon was baptized with the name: Mitch, a name that 20 years later still causes fear, due to the destructive power of its passage. Honduras was affected in its totality, floods, dead, disappeared, damaged, evacuated, destroyed areas, bridges, communities forced to move. The vulnerability of the country was evident and its recovery is not yet total." **This link shows an El Pulso video I shared on the Peace Corps Honduras Facebook page of the hurricane ruins.**

<https://www.facebook.com/elpulsohn/videos/1883330031751113/UzpfSTEWMDAwMTUyNjczNzg4NTpWSzoXMDExNjIwMTcxODY2NDU5MQ/> Here are some shared comments:



[Andrew Motiwalla](#) We lived through Mitch during our service. Unbelievable devastation. My favorite village of Santa Rosa de Aguan was completely wiped out. It no longer exists in that location. Will never forget Mitch.

[Heather Simpson](#) A most powerful life changing event. It is still hard to put memories to words on El Mitch.

[Chris Logan](#) I remember we were at Cookie's house for her birthday, and the helicopter crashed killing the El Gordo the mayor of Teguc.

[Christopher Vukas](#) I was part of the first class back after Mitch. It was horrendous to hear the stories of people being carried down river and livestock swimming in the ocean and

eventually dying in the South. I was stationed in both Agua Fria and San Lorenzo. We grew thousands of trees to reforest the micro watersheds to avoid the massive erosion.

[Sherry Mathews](#) I was in training when Hurricane Mitch hit. Had been in country for 5 weeks. There were a lot of families (mine included) who thought we were crazy to stay!

[Frank Almaguer](#) For those who may not know much about Honduras, this video will help to understand both the suffering and the resiliency of the Honduran people. What followed this 1998 disaster was one of the largest reconstruction efforts in history, supported by the US and multiple other international partners. The Honduran authorities at the time, led by President Carlos Flores, did an excellent job in response to this calamity. Physical reconstruction was well managed. But the country, which at that time was making considerable progress in both the economic and social spheres, suffered a trauma that is hard to erase. It is both fitting and proper to recall this event 20 years ago, whose impact has lingered and to honor those who were impacted and those who labored so hard to help the country heal.

Ironically, I (Loren Hintz, editor) was in Honduras in October of this year as another major rainstorm hit Honduras. An **Alerta Roja** was declared closing schools and offices. Major flooding occurred in Choluteca and Valle. Bridges were damaged and homes destroyed. I was birding with **Angel Fong** who told me his Mitch story: Angel was 16 and visited his grandmother in a village in southern Choluteca. The rains came and people in the village left but his grandmother was confident the water would not reach their home. As the evening progressed the water

rose and started flooding their house. In the dark they climbed the hill behind their house and huddled in the storm under a tree. Throughout the night Angel could hear loud noises as one after another the houses collapsed. The next morning the entire village was gone. They hiked past the hill toward a nearby isolated village. After a few days a helicopter arrived and took away the old and sick including his grandmother. He remained alone wondering what to do. Later a medical helicopter arrived because of reports of sick people. There was some room remaining and he talked his way onto the helicopter and arrived in Tegucigalpa to be reunited with his grandmother and family.



## VISITING HONDURAS AGAIN Loren Hintz

**(Olanchito, Yoro 80-82)** So a year ago my birding trip to Honduras was only in the SPS airport due to the protests after the election. I decided to visit on my own some of the places I missed. I travelled by intercity public bus (\$4-12) city taxi(\$2-10), rented car(\$25/day) , hired vehicle(\$20-60/day), friend's driving, plane (\$80 Teguc to La Ceiba) and caminando. It was the

rainy season with exceptional aguaceros when I was in Choluteca but Olanchito was hot and dusty as usual. I visited the Montana de Vida project at El Sauce, El Dorado and San Luis Planes, Santa Barbara National Park. I had a very wet but enjoyable weekend of hiking in the forest and eating at local homes for meals. Very few foreign tourists are visiting so they are trying to focus on local tourism. I talked with a number of the Hondurans who were to be our bird guides last year. Since the election there has been little business for them. The government is attempting to create some internal tourism. The October holidays (Morazan-Soldado-3, Raza-Indio 12 and Fuerzas Armadas 21) have been combined into 3 days the first week of October called Semana Morazanica. Travelers beware since government offices are closed Wed-Fri that week and transportation and hotels can get crowded. Later I saw the Art Museum in Tegucigalpa and went birding at the flooded Berberia, Choluteca and saw the Salineras of San Lorenzo. Learned Rio Santiago Nature Resort has closed but Pico Bonito Lodge where I birded a bit is still open. Also near La Ceiba I crossed the swinging bridge over Rio Congrejal (\$1) into Pico Bonito National Park. I had a marisco lunch at Sambo Creek while they played Sopa de Caracol. And I attended the Launch of Gallardo's Honduran Birds book at the Casa de Cultura in Olanchito.

Honduras has always been safe for tourists. It seems even safer now. I walked around the downtown of SPS and Teguc at night and saw others doing the same. I didn't get the same warnings from friends that I used to get about walking around even small

towns. The only warning this time was to use known taxis and not random ones on the street at night. It is harder to judge what is happening at a national level for locals. In SPS I was told that the closing of the city prison and moving the gang leaders imprisoned there to distant prisons and the extradition of leading criminals to the US for trial has had a positive impact. There are check points on highways where soldiers stop you and ask for documents (I really noticed this when I used a rental car.) The owner of a bed and breakfast on Rio Congrejal told me there was a rash of moto thefts (45 over a short period of time!) and the dumping of bodies killed elsewhere in La Ceiba along the road to Omega Lodge and Pico Bonito Park. This has stopped since the check point was instituted. Friends who have a small business in Teguc say they no longer have to pay an “impuesto de guerra- gang protection” fee but I noticed several people interviewed on the caravan stated that was the main reason they were leaving Honduras. The gangs took any profit they made in their business.

Two friends really emphasized the good things happening in Honduras. Good paved roads exist from Teguc to the Nicaraguan border, between SPS and Teguc and La Ceiba and even Olanchito. Hondurans are beginning to visit the national parks. The huge bus terminal south of SPS means you no longer have to run from one Bus Company to another in downtown San Pedro. Many NGOs are working with indigenous groups, co-ops and schools. Electricity is reaching many more people. A number of companies have EU ties and that forces them to have health and safety rules in

agribusiness and factories that use to neglect them. (I have to admit, I have also read a lot on info contradicting this positive news.) On the other hand, other friends said the **Atlantic Coast** (La Ceiba, Olanchito) has frequent outages and areas that didn't vote for the president are not receiving government funds “we have no president”. Protected areas continue to be logged illegally. There are many reports of political repression and corruption. (US Congressmen have shared a dear colleague letter about concerns of this happening in Honduras.)

As always it was fun to see old friends. While walking around Olanchito several former students (who are now middle-aged men) said hi. One is an environmental engineer for the town. He and the municipal forest ranger were patrolling the forested watershed. They reported that a lot of the forest and wildlife in that area have recovered. All the teachers I worked with have retired. One teacher who called me during our US hurricane to see if I was OK recently had a stroke and is on dialysis but still loves to talk politics. Instituto Mejia now has an activity school bus and about 3xs more classrooms and students. There are many attempts at local tourism. The Honduran Emerald Reserve receives few foreigners now but many locals check out the arid flora and fauna. There is now a local bird club COA Esmeralda Hondureña which invited me along for a bird walk. Marina the cook at my comedor is still working at age 80. She says if she stops she will die. There are fewer banana and more citrus and palm oil plantations in the valley. The town now has 24 hour electricity, paved streets and several universities plus a hospital.

Please share with **Amigos de Honduras** your own travel experiences. And don't be afraid gringo, travelling there is fun.

Loren, Robert, Olanchito Mayor Casa de Cultura Oct. 12, 2018.

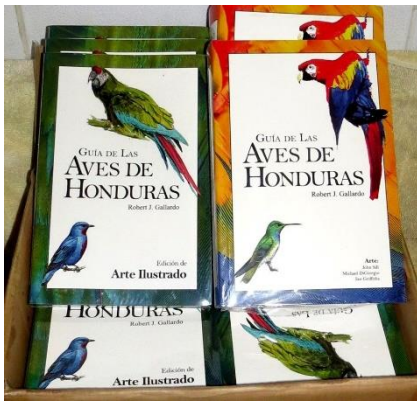


## BIRD BOOK FOR HONDURANS

**Robert Gallardo (Gualaco, Olanchito, La Mosquitia, 93-96) Editor note:** In 2015 Robert published Guide to the Birds of Honduras. This fall the Spanish edition was released. I contributed some money in the name of Amigos de Honduras and was part of the team that helped with the Spanish translation. Here I have edited some of the postings (without the photos) by Robert from his Club Nacional de Aviturismo de Honduras <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1538748196377896/> which tells the story of this project.

Today, the shipment of my new book "Guia de las Aves de Honduras" should be arriving in Miami (Florida, not Tela). Next, on a boat to Puerto Cortes, Honduras. As many a book author knows, we get "excited" as we track the movement and final arrival of our books. And as the author of (another) entirely self-published book, I feel an even greater sense of pride of accomplishment. Soon, thousands of Honduran nationals and school children will be able to learn about

THEIR birds in THEIR language. No "cost effectiveness" or worry about "returns" on this literary piece: it is PRICELESS.



One of the biggest gratifications of self-publishing a book is finally receiving the copies. Those years of dedication, patience and perseverance all boil down to this one fleeting moment. Opening the very first box and having a self-satisfying grin on one's face. "I did it," one thinks. Now it's time to get them into people's hands so they too can enjoy your piece of literature.

What is wrong with these photos? These are the sponsors of both editions (in English and Spanish) of my Honduran bird guides. For a good part of my life I "have gone against the grain," but that's just how I am and today I speak my voice again. Without too much scrutiny one notices that there isn't a single logo from a single Honduran government institution. For both editions I did try to get different institutions to help, but to no avail. One would assume and think that the country would want to support these types of publications as it increases environmental education, natural sciences, nature tourism, etc. Right? But something has definitely gone wrong somewhere. Not only is

there no financial support here whatsoever for carrying out the necessary field work to cover these topics in-depth, but one has to pay fees by means of a lawyer. 1+1=reasons for there being so few quality natural history books published in Honduras.



There is still time to pre-order and take advantage of the discounted prices of my Guide to the Birds of Honduras in Spanish. The complete book (with Scarlet Macaw) is Lps. 1,000. Portable version (with Great Green Macaw) is Lps. 400. The Portable Version is very light and fits in a vest bag or something similar. Takes all the plates of the birds with the opposite text and a checklist of species. There are less than 300 copies available for the whole country.

We're still plugging away at the school children's exercise manual to accompany the Spanish edition of

my bird book. Today with the teachers we polished the content for the manual that covers grades 1 to 3. One more meeting to cover 4 to 6 and then the teacher's guide. Then to graphic design. Will be cutting it close, but we'll have it done by the time of the first event at the end of September.

The author and designer. My buddy Luis Cueva is here again at Emerald Valley where we're putting the final touches on various projects in preparation for the upcoming book launch ceremony and follow-up events across the country.

If you look closely at the school girl on the left side of the photo you can see she is holding a flash drive. It contains two original activity booklets for grades 1 to 3 and 4 to 6, plus the answers for the teachers. This took months of meetings and working with school teachers from Siguatepeque and Comayagua. We did not get a grant to do this nor millions of Dollars of foreign aid to complete this worthy project. It was all voluntary. It shows what can be done by concerned citizens when our hearts and minds are set on something. Let this be a lesson for those who have and those of us who have not, but who have the will to do so.

We took a couple days off and headed to the lowlands of Magdalena, Lempira where Olivia grew up. There were no plans originally to give any of the new books in that region, but we did so anyways. This is the first public school in Honduras to receive the new book. Thanks to Copi Print in San Pedro Sula for donating the banner.

Book launch for the new book "Guía de las Aves de Honduras" in Valle de Angeles. Here I share a few photos of the event where we presented Honduras' newest book on its fauna. We enjoyed many good moments with family and friends. A very good friend and great person here in Honduras: **Oswaldo Munguia, Executive Director of the NGO MOPAWI**. Here giving a wonderful speech during the ceremony of my new Spanish bird book, "Guía de las Aves de Honduras." Another great character who supported us during the launch of my book was the rector of the metropolitan university of Honduras, Rosario Duarte De Fortin. Here giving nice words during the official ceremony

Yesterday was the first event in giving the birds of Honduras books to public schools in Valle de Angeles and San Juancito. Here one can see that we were given a space during the school parade together with the Mayor. The teachers were happy to receive their books and the activity booklet. Doing our part to enhance environmental education with the youth in the hopes of a better and greener future.

On October 8th we will be holding the book ceremony for school kids in the western sector of Lake Yojoa at BioParque Paradise, Los Naranjos, and Peña Blanca. A total of 60 teachers from 13 public elementary schools will be invited from the area. We will be handing over the new book "Guide to the Birds of Honduras" in Spanish whose value is over Lps. 80,000. Likewise, they will receive original copies of the activity manual. It will be a public event and we hope to see you there. Oct. 8 A huge success!! Despite warnings of

more heavy rains, we were able to carry out the ceremony for handing books out to public schools along the western perimeter of Santa Barbara N.P. About 40 teachers arrived from 17 schools. Hundreds of school children will now have access to the new book and activity booklet. Many thanks to all who arrived and especially Miguel Bendeck who shared his property with us. We are committed to improving the level of environmental education across the country with this unique pilot project.



Yesterday the ceremony in handing out books to public schools in the Rio Cangrejal area, La Ceiba. Sponsored by Solidaridad. More teachers and hundreds more school children now have access to the new book "Guide to the Birds of Honduras" in Spanish. Thanks to Isis Ica for all her hard work and dedication in supporting this initiative to increase environmental education in Honduras. Its version in Spanish, teachers, encouraging to cultivate in children the love for birds and the conservation of their habitat. Cangrejal Tours was one of the companies that collaborated.

Another great night and event in Olanchito, Yoro. Thanks to Solidarity for organizing the ceremony and to Loren Hintz for his donation towards the printing. Many people arrived from all over

including teachers and students. We left another 60 books in the area.

The last book handout with public schools for this printing of my Spanish version "Guide to the Birds of Honduras." Marcala, 9am, Hotel La Campa. Open to the public. Many thanks to all who have contributed and supported this worthwhile effort. This pilot project will now be passed on to our nascent foundation and we hope to do a big reprint next year that would allow us to put several thousand copies into more public schools. Regional book event with Marcala. A complete success. Despite the rainy weather, a large number of teachers and school children were able to descend the mountain to share this morning with us. They received their book, field versions and activity booklets.

**Wowza!!! After six events the results are in. Over 300 books were given to 66 schools.** Over 8,000 school children now have access to my new book "Guide to the Birds of Honduras" in its Spanish edition. Books were given near the National Parks or Reserves of La Tigra, Pico Bonito, Cuero y Salada, Honduran Emerald, Santa Barbara, Panacam and Guajoquiro in Departments of La Paz, Francisco Morazan, Lempira, Santa Barbara, Cortez, Atlantida and Yoro.

**HONDURAN CARAVAN TO US Loren Hintz (Olanchito, 1980-82.)** Since the election there has not been as much news coverage about the migrant caravans leaving Central America and headed to the US. I've been listening to the news, reading Facebook posts, watching Spanish language media and just listened to a



webinar on the topic. Please share your own thoughts. Last spring my son volunteered for a week in Texas at one of the facilities holding amnesty applicants. His job was to listen to the interpreter state the applicant's story and write it up. The women in the facility were from Eastern Europe, Brazil and various Central American nations. Some had newspaper articles or police documents describing what happened to them or relatives and had a pretty good chance of receiving a hearing. Others had very little or situations which did not qualify for asylum and were going to be deported.

The fear and false statements related to the most recent caravans were amazing. One I saw on Fox news was a statement by an expert saying folks in the caravan had smallpox! (Remember smallpox has been eliminated.) On the webinar Tristen a volunteer with **Pueblo Sin Fronteras**, a group which tries to help migrants, said that this recent caravan was self-organized and governed and were trying to decide what to do next. One of the main reasons for travelling via caravan is that it was much safer. Local governments and communities were helping them. As was seen last spring applicants intend to wait in line at border and be processed. There is no threat of riots.

Another talking point is whether applicants released from jail attend hearings. The experimental program which Trump discontinued had close to 100% compliance. Even the stats for general amnesty hearings are that most folks attend.

**Here is something I shared recently:** Three weeks ago I returned from a visit to Honduras. I was a Peace Corps Volunteer there for almost two and a half years in the

1980s. Since then I have returned frequently to visit friends and help with various projects. Upon return to the US I have been reading posts that high school friends have shared and have been studying the uninformed speeches that Trump has made about the recent caravans of migrants fleeing Honduras. I've also listened (in Spanish) to many interviews of the migrants and videos of their travels. The bottom line is that these are mostly women and children and poor people fleeing a bad situation in their countries. They are not from the Middle East. They are not carrying weapons and bombs. They are hoping to enter the US and receive asylum. The reality is that most of them will not make it all the way to the US border. Those who do make it there will discover that many will not qualify for asylum and will have to return home.

There was no need to send thousands of US soldiers to the border. I hope no one gets hurt because of that wasteful gesture. Unlike the statements given by the administration, people who enter the US for asylum do attend their hearings and they are not a risk of causing violence. Remember on the average, native born Americans are more violent than immigrants. It is pretty obvious from recent violence of killing Jews, African Americans and school children that the problem is "Americans" who hate people and use weapons and bombs to kill them. (Plus all those sad deaths due to suicide, opiate addiction, domestic violence, drugs and robberies and "accidents" of running over children at bus stops etc.)

JUST IN FROM THE NEWS:"President Trump's favorite cable news network has pulled his campaign ad that depicts a Central American migrant caravan making its way to the U.S. border with Mexico

as made up of criminals and accuses Democrats of inviting murderers into the country. "Upon further review, Fox News pulled the ad yesterday and it will not appear on either Fox News Channel or Fox Business Network," Marianne Gambelli, president of ad sales, told CNN in a statement. The move comes one day after NBC faced a backlash from viewers after it aired the controversial ad during Sunday night's NFL game between the New England Patriots and the Green Bay Packers. "After further review we recognize the insensitive nature of the ad and have decided to cease airing it across our properties as soon as possible," NBC said in a statement. For its part, CNN labeled the ad "racist," and refused to air it even in shortened form.""

## LA LAGUNA ENCANTADA DE COMAYAGUA

Dicen que hace muchos años había una laguna encantada. Alrededor de la laguna había muchos árboles de frutas como duraznos, sapotes y nísperos. Las personas que llegaban podían comer la cantidad que quisieran. En la naciente donde brotaban las puras aguas se podía encontrar vino y miel. Los que decían haber visitado la laguna contaban que mientras se permanecía en ella se olvidaban los sufrimientos y se disfrutaba de un bienestar y una felicidad maravillosos. Pero eso sí: nada podía sacarse de ese lugar. Los que intentaban hacían que desataran violentas ráfagas de viento, y las cosas robadas se transformaban en grandes vampiros que los perseguían y los hacían escapar de aquel lugar encantado. **(This is your translation assignment from Escuela Para Todos 2018; enjoy.)**

## A PROACTIVE RESPONSE TO THE HONDURAS EXODUS

Carol Spangler (Cofradia, 1966-68) [ckspang@centurytel.net](mailto:ckspang@centurytel.net)

Reading about the caravan of immigrants, primarily from Honduras, escaping their country because of poverty, violence and lack of economic opportunity is painful. The answer, of course, is not to build costly walls (estimated cost: \$10 billion) or send 7,000 US troops to the border (estimated cost \$100 – \$200 million). The answer is investment in impoverished Central America so thousands don't feel forced to leave. This is a compelling vignette of a small, effective non-profit with an annual budget of \$250,000 that is changing the lives of more than 600 Honduran students and their families annually.

**I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras fifty years ago (1966-68).** In January 2018, I had the opportunity to return to my site – Cofradia, Cortes about 20 miles from San Pedro Sula. I went to see first-hand the work of BECA, (Bilingual Education in Central America), a 501(c)3 organization that recruits, trains, and supports native English-speaking volunteer teachers to staff a network of community-run bilingual schools in Honduras. San Jeronimo Bilingual School (SJBS) in Cofradia is BECA's first community partner school. The vision for BECA was born in the homes of several Honduran families. Its mission is to provide quality, affordable bilingual education to the educationally disenfranchised while fostering meaningful cultural exchange. It is a community driven, solutions-oriented response to multiple issues

impacting children and families - a lack of educational opportunity, stagnating economic development, insufficient jobs, a growing drug trade, and surging violence.

One quick story. I visited a third grade classroom and was invited to introduce myself, which I did in halting Spanish. One of the children politely raised his hand and said "you can speak in English, Señora. We will understand what you want to tell us." In third grade, these children are totally fluent in English!

Currently BECA works with Honduran partners in three bilingual schools -- located at the epicenter of a crisis that is causing tens of thousands of children to leave for the United States. Yet in spite of its location, a grand total of zero BECA graduates have come to the United States illegally!

At a BECA school, students are taught much more than just English. Students graduate as champions of learning and literacy, as challengers of the status quo, and as leaders who embody a service-minded attitude to become persistent advocates for social change. While in Cofradia, I stayed with a family with two graduates of San Jeronimo. Their son recently graduated from university and is now an agronomy engineer. Their daughter is studying business management and is working part time as a bilingual interpreter for a major corporation.

And so, as I read about the young and old migrants leaving Honduras in desperation and fear, I want to share this compelling story. What I've written is just a glimpse of all that BECA is achieving. Check out

their [website](http://www.becaschools.org/about/about-us) (<http://www.becaschools.org/about/about-us>) and consider a generous year-end donation. **It is a proactive response to our deeply flawed immigration policy and a rewarding investment in the future of Honduras.**



Tegucigalpa Oct. 2018



SPS Oct. 2018 with military police



Students and Teachers Olanchito Yoro Oct. 12, 2018

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