

ACTION UPDATE

April 9, 1979

Carter Names Celeste Peace Corps Director

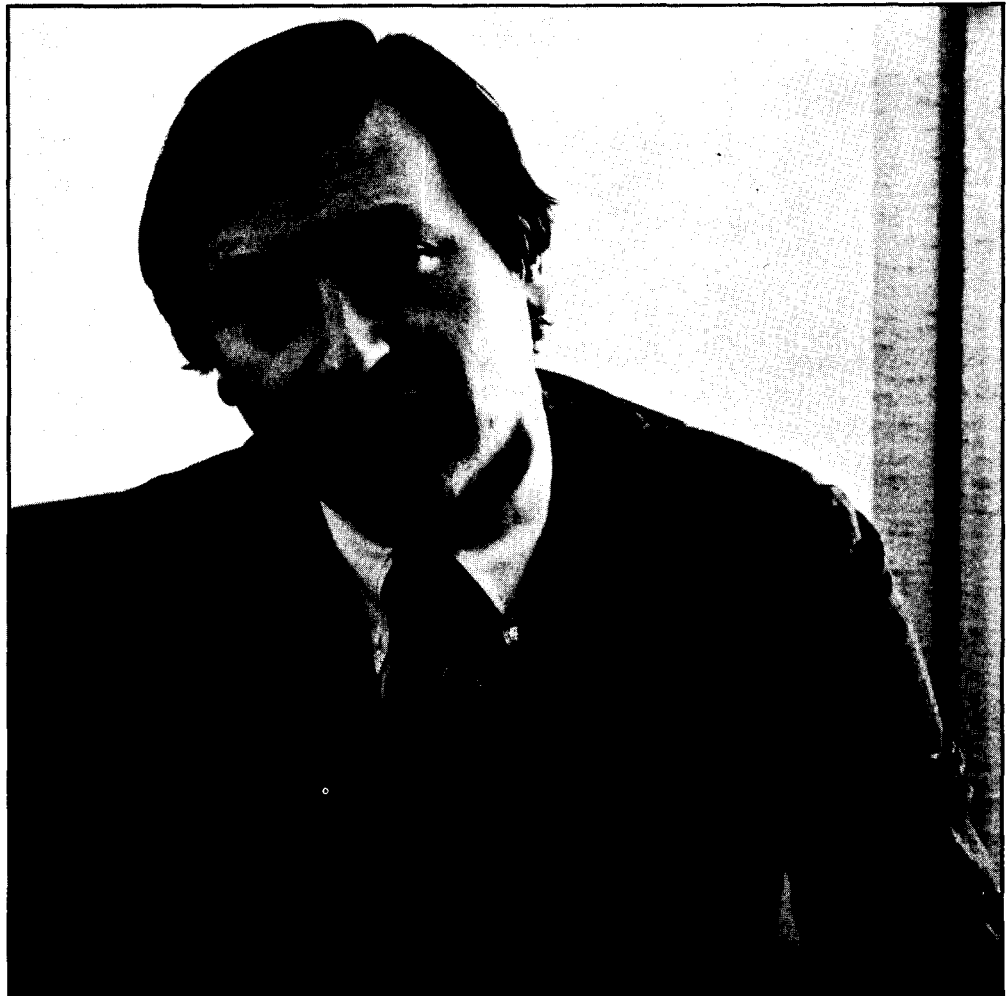
President Carter announced his nomination of Richard F. Celeste, former lieutenant governor of Ohio, as director of the Peace Corps on March 29.

"To be director of the Peace Corps is an irresistible challenge, and I am proud and excited to have been asked by President Carter to accept this post," said Celeste.

ACTION Director Sam Brown described Celeste

as a man who has "the ability to provoke, to inspire, to have a breadth of vision that stimulates people of different backgrounds to overcome their differences and reach an understanding of their shared commonality.

"He is a man of action and convictions who will build on the best of the Peace Corps legacy while adapting that great legacy to the changing development needs of the Third World," Brown said.



Celeste, 41, a native Ohioan, was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, England, where he studied American diplomatic relations with Africa. A Peace Corps staff member in 1963, he later served for four years in India as executive assistant to U.S. Ambassador to India Chester Bowles.

Celeste was Ohio's lieutenant governor from 1975 to January 1979. Last November, he ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic candidate for

Commenting on Celeste's appointment, Sargent Shriver, the first director of the Peace Corps from 1961 to 1966, said:

"Dick Celeste is an experienced, sensitive, highly motivated human being. He combines intelligence, common sense and a feeling for political possibilities and reality. I hope that he will succeed mightily. He will need the help of all who cherish the ideals of the Peace Corps -- but with their help, he may well be able to recapture the

"To be director of the Peace Corps is an irresistible challenge..."



governor of Ohio. From 1970 to 1974, he represented the 5th District in the Ohio House of Representatives.

"In less than a generation, more than 82,000 Peace Corps volunteers have established a legacy of enthusiastic service in every part of the globe," Celeste said. "Working with the Administration, the Congress, and especially the volunteers and staff of the Peace Corps and ACTION, I look forward to renewing and extending this legacy."

"As we move into the 1980s, I believe many of our citizens will commit their personal experience and energy to work as joint venturers in village-level development efforts throughout the Third World," he continued. "With this confidence, I am committed to the challenge of leadership in the Peace Corps."

Both Celeste and Brown commended the outstanding work done by Mary Leyland, ACTION's director of administration and finance, as acting director of the Peace Corps in the last four months. "Her dedication and professionalism have set a high standard for me and the entire Peace Corps staff," Celeste said.

early idealism and enthusiasm of the Peace Corps at its best."

Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) added: "The President has made an excellent appointment. Dick Celeste will bring to this position the new fresh, innovative ideas needed to make the Peace Corps relevant in today's changing world. The combination of his background and experience with his dedication to public service will make him an outstanding director."

"In my travels as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations I always try to meet Peace Corps volunteers. I think that with Dick Celeste we've got the same exuberance and talent in the new director that I find in the field," commented Ambassador Andrew Young.

Celeste is a graduate of Yale University, where he majored in African history. He worked for six months in 1963 as staff liaison officer with the Peace Corps' Division for Volunteer Support for Latin America.

From June 1963 to 1967, as executive assistant to Ambassador Chester Bowles, Celeste traveled throughout India, taking a special interest in

food production and community development efforts.

"Dick Celeste is one of the most talented, sensitive and capable men I have known in public service in India and here at home," said Bowles. "His special combination of leadership and humanity superbly qualify him to bring once again to the Peace Corps its essential spirit and promise. President Carter has made an inspired and brilliant choice."

In 1967, Celeste returned from India to Cleveland and joined the National Housing Corp., a small firm specializing in the development of

housing for senior citizens of moderate income. He became president of the company in 1972.

Celeste is a trustee of AFS International, formerly known as the American Field Service, and a board member of the Overseas Development Council and Americans for Democratic Action. In 1977, he visited West Africa with a group sponsored by the Overseas Development Council to study food production problems. He is a former president of the National Methodist Student Movement.

Celeste and his wife, Dagmar, are the parents of six children.

ACTION RESPONDS TO HILL DRAFT REPORT

Much press coverage has been generated by the House Appropriations Committee's investigative report on ACTION. We would like to share with you ACTION's response to some of the findings in the report. For copies of the summary response, contact the ACTION Office of the General Counsel.

On Feb. 15, Director Sam Brown delivered ACTION's response to the House Appropriations Committee's draft report on the agency which was completed last December.

The investigation of ACTION by the committee was begun early last year at the request of House Whip Rep. Robert M. Michel (R-Ill.), who charged widespread irregularities in the agency.

"The committee's extensive nine-month investigation found no evidence of fraud, no evidence of favoritism, no evidence of conflict of interest and no evidence of agency policies in conflict with the law," Brown stated.

According to Brown, the report found some management weaknesses inherited from the previous administration, a few isolated instances

of unintentional violations of agency rules, and a few matters of judgment on which the investigative staff disagreed with the current administration.

In a letter to William H. Natcher (D-Ky.), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Education and Welfare, House Appropriations Committee, Brown responded to some of the major points contained in the draft report:

"Of the five isolated instances of prohibited activity by VISTAs identified by the investigative staff, three had already been found by ACTION and all were ended immediately. These instances involved only nine of the 4,300 VISTA volunteers.

Prior to the inception of the investigative staff's work, the agency had decided, in January 1978, to require competition for all VISTA program grants. It should be noted that in the past, federal government program grants were rarely awarded competitively and, adhering to this practice, no ACTION grants had ever been submitted for competition.

According to the report, the agency's program staff has played too large a role in some procurement decisions. We agree. We are acting on the report's recommendation for an orientation course in procurement for all staff.

The investigative staff expressed concern that some people benefiting from VISTA projects do not meet the Community Services Administration's "low income" standard. This is true. In any given community, programs that benefit poor people - day care, lower utility rates, or street lighting - may help their slightly better-off neighbors as well. Surely a program intended to protect the elderly poor from street crime should not be closed down because it also keeps middle income retirees from being mugged.

This administration sees no value in setting the poor against other elements of our society. Our volunteers are working

to help the poor gain an equal role in the partnership that makes up our society.

The report notes that per volunteer costs of the national VISTA grants were initially higher than those of traditional VISTA projects. The approximately \$700 differential reflected our commitment to increased supervision and training in these innovative programs. This administration has begun a phased process of improving training for all VISTAs. Assuming funds are available, training and support services for all VISTA volunteers will be upgraded to the same level as the national grants this year."

In the letter, Brown said that the report could play a constructive role by highlighting areas in which the agency could improve. He concluded, "...we are committed to improving it. Mismanagement, no matter what the reason, or how small the abuse, is unacceptable to this administration."

VISTA Awards Grant to Farmworkers' Organization

VISTA has awarded \$220,000 to the National Association of Farmworker Organizations (NAFO) to train and support 35 VISTA volunteers who will work with migrant farmworker crews and migrant social service agencies throughout the United States.

The grant, awarded Feb. 16 for 14 months, represents an expansion of a 14-month pilot grant of \$49,000 awarded to the organization on May 1, 1978. Like all VISTA national grants, it covers volunteer stipends, subsistence allowances, the costs of training and transportation, Locally Recruited Volunteers (LRVs) recruitment, and logistical support. It also provides for two volunteer supervisors and one project director.

Under the pilot grant, six VISTAs began last summer and fall to work with farmworkers along the eastern seaboard migrant stream that runs from Florida to Maine.

Most of the VISTA volunteers live and travel with family work crews. At present the volun-

teers are with the farmworkers at home bases in Hillsborough and Orange counties, Fla., Dover, Del., Springfield-Holyoke, Mass. and Riverhead, Long Island, N.Y.

According to Jack Colbourn, VISTA program manager, the major goal of the VISTA grants is the formation of farmworker-governed advisory councils. The new VISTAs also will work with health clinics, day care and pre-school centers, food stamp monitoring committees, and leadership development and housing programs.

NAFO, created in 1973, is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural coalition of some 55 national and state farmworker organizations. It serves as an advocate for and develops programs to benefit migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Addressing the Fifth Annual Conference of NAFO in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 17, ACTION Associate Director John Lewis said that the farmworker movement for social and economic

justice will be recorded as one of the most important of this century.

"Farmworkers are excluded from the protections of many federal programs, exploited without due compensation by the giant complex of agribusiness, and denied equal protection under the law," Lewis told the largely Hispanic coalition of national organizations.

Lewis urged the groups to continue to organize at the grassroots level. He urged them to build a powerful coalition to bring about change for migrant and seasonal farmworkers whom he called those most in need, left out and left behind in American society.

"Change has to come at the community level where you live and work and will be meaningful only with the participation of the masses in determining their own destiny," he said.

The new volunteers, recruited from among farmworkers and national VISTA applicants, will receive 10 days of pre-service training from NAFO before beginning their assignments at farmworker home bases in a number of states including Florida, California, Texas and Oregon.

Susan Delahunt, 22 of Homewood, Ill., was one of the first VISTA volunteers to join the NAFO national grant project. Since July, she has been working with the Delmarva Ecumenical Agency (DEA) Rural Ministries in Dover, Del.

According to Ms. Delahunt, DEA Rural Ministries provides health services and an emergency food program for thousands of migrant farmworkers on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Delaware's Delmarva Peninsula and into Virginia.

She noted that the group's board of directors previously had no farmworkers among its 21 members who came from churches and social services agencies.

"I started out by getting a list of farmworkers and then talking to them one-on-one," she said "I'm still doing this."

In the eight months she has been a volunteer, 11 farmworkers have joined the board of directors. Recently, the board formed two new committees to address issues the farmworkers felt were important to them: housing and legislative monitoring.

Next on their agenda, in late March, was a full-day farmworkers' workshop "to get as many farmworkers in the area as possible to tell us their priorities. This will be followed by a full-day meeting with social service agencies so they can hear what the farmworkers want," she said.

As the farmworkers joined the board, Ms. Delahunt said she organized training sessions to help them understand agenda items and budgeting procedures. After each board meeting, she visits with each member, going over details and helping to resolve any questions.

"Change has to come at the community level.."

John Lewis

Ms. Delahunt said her first visit to a migrant camp for 700 to 1,000 people was "a shock. The buildings were built in World War II and meant to last three years. There were outdoor toilets and showers. I had read about all this but I had never seen it," she recalled.

Today, she says that her satisfactions come through the awareness and growth she has seen develop among the farmworkers.

"You don't always get to see the fruits of your labor," she said. "Until I started working with migrant families in Maryland a few weeks ago, starting at ground zero, I didn't realize how far we had come in Delaware.

"Being on the board broadens the awareness of the farmworkers from saying that 'I just don't have a housing problem' to 'everyone at this meeting has this problem.' And as people, they're becoming aware that if they come together in numbers, they can do something."

Arthur Wexler, VISTA Deputy Director Dies

ACTION employees were saddened by the loss of Arthur Wexler, deputy director of VISTA and ACTION Education Programs. Wexler, 49, died March 27 of a heart attack while vacationing with his family. He had been with VISTA since October 1967.

His co-workers and friends at VISTA expressed their sympathy and recalled the kind of person he was.

“Art was totally dedicated to VISTA,” they said in a jointly released statement. “He applied his considerable talents to combat the debilitating and wasteful effects of poverty and discrimination. His noble obsession was to improve the lives of his fellow human beings. His total dedication was to the support of his fellow Americans who are volunteering to address the problems of poverty.

“During Art’s time with VISTA, the program’s direction and its future were challenged on several occasions. It is not an exaggeration to say that it was Art’s conviction, tenacity and skills which kept VISTA alive and on the proper course. Our country owes Art a deep debt of gratitude for this.

“Art’s premature passing is a reminder that life is precious and sometimes much too brief, but Art leaves with us a glowing example how each of us may contribute through service rendered unselfishly to others. His accomplishments serve as a beacon to us all, inspiring us to redouble our own efforts to alleviate human bondage and suffering wherever and whenever we find it.”

Friends and co-workers from Washington and other parts of the country, including some ACTION field staff, attended Wexler’s funeral in Washington on April 1. A memorial service was held at ACTION Headquarters on April 6.

As deputy director, Wexler co-ordinated VISTA volunteer recruitment and training.



At the time of his death he was helping change VISTA’s one-to-one service back to its original mandate of helping the poor develop the capacity to help themselves.

VISTA Director Margery Tabankin said, “He fought to preserve the mission of VISTA and its service to poor people during politically unfavorable and neglectful times and devoted his life during the last two years to rebuilding and rekindling VISTA’s impact on poor communities throughout the United States.”

Wexler started with VISTA as an executive assistant and headed planning, management, budget and operations offices before becoming deputy director in 1975.

Before coming to VISTA, Wexler was a lawyer in Los Angeles, a Congressional officer for the State Department, and a staff assistant to the Speaker of the House, California State Assembly.

Wexler leaves his wife, Dorothy, and two children, Dorothy, 9, and Jacob Winthrop, 8, as well as many friends at ACTION.

Those who wish to express their sympathy may send a contribution to the Arthur Wexler-VISTA Memorial Fund. For further information, please contact Steve Grossman at 254-5195.

Brown Requests VISTA Reauthorization/ Urban Programs Approval

Urging Congressional support for "small programs that directly touch the lives of the poor" and build self-reliance, ACTION Director Sam Brown has asked Congress for a three-year reauthorization for VISTA and for approval of a new urban volunteer program that is part of President Carter's urban policy.

Testifying on Feb. 8 before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Subcommittee on Child and Human Development, Brown said VISTA is "one of the most successful programs that the federal government now has for helping the poor help themselves."

He told the subcommittee that the proposed new urban volunteer program is targeted "to the needs of neighborhood groups and low-income individuals who live in distressed urban areas." He said the Urban Volunteer Corps and Good Neighbor Fund would "complement other needed social programs Congress has authorized in its efforts to end poverty in America."

Brown said: "In the 15 years that we have waged this war against poverty we have learned some lessons: that big is not always better; that the 'trickle down' approach to development doesn't meet all our needs, and sometimes never reaches the bottom, and that any program which is successful must be inclusive - people need to be involved. We have applied these lessons and others in designing our neighborhood programs."

The budget proposed by President Carter on Jan. 22 for ACTION's domestic volunteer programs represents an increase of \$35 million or 26 percent over this year, including \$15.3 million in FY 1979 supplemental appropriations. The President requested \$105.4 million for Peace Corps programs in FY 1980, an increase of \$10 million over current levels. (See ACTION Update 2-15-79).

Brown was testifying at the first of the con-

gressional hearings scheduled to review ACTION's domestic volunteer programs. Senate and House hearings on the proposed Peace Corps budget are slated for late March and April.

Brown told the committees that all ACTION programs with their emphases on self-reliance are responding to the needs of the poor for dignity, economic advancement and equality just as the Peace Corps is responding to the needs of poor people in the developing world.

The authorization and appropriations requests reflect "this Administration's continued commitment to helping those who help themselves and their neighbors," Brown told the committees. "This budget request is rooted in the most basic of American values -- equality, participation and self-reliance -- and in the American tradition of helping one's neighbor."

The Administration is requesting an FY 1980 budget of \$37,399,000 for VISTA, a 10 percent increase that would expand the program to approximately 5,475 volunteer service years.

ACTION's urban volunteer program was part of the President's urban package announced March 27, 1978. Approximately \$4.68 million of ACTION's \$15.3 million FY 1979 supplemental request would be used to initiate the program this year.

For FY 1980, \$16.75 million would fund an Urban Volunteer Corps with two components: Technical and Management Assistance and Fixed Income Consumer Counseling.

ACTION also would receive \$8,457,000 for a Good Neighbor Fund to provide small grants, averaging \$3,000 to \$7,000, for community projects.

The agency has tested the concept of the urban volunteer programs through pilot projects in Cincinnati, Denver and elsewhere.

Women's Issues Discussed During Week-Long Program

Women's Awareness Week programs conducted by the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee Mar. 12 through 16 drew an estimated attendance of more than 600. Despite inclement weather the week, sponsored by the Office of Compliance, featured 25 programs focusing on a wide variety of issues of concern to women.

"My job is to further women's causes, but I didn't want to be called a special assistant to the President on women's issues because they are everybody's concern," said Sara Weddington, Special Assistant to the President, and the keynote speaker.

A day's focus on women in the workforce was highlighted by a lively point-counterpoint session between Barbara Kelley and Jim Anderson of the General Counsel's Office on "Women Getting Ahead in a Male Dominated World."

"Women in high level positions aren't as competent as men because they have skipped rungs in the ladder," declared Anderson.

Kelley retorted, "What a myth that men have made it through their intelligence. The 'good old boy' system is the oldest form of affirmative action that we know."

"Women refuse to play hard ball," said Anderson. "They are not tough enough to move people."

Kelley countered again. "I'm not so sure that women have to acquire the characteristics of Attila the Hun to get things done," she said.

Perdita Huston, director of the Peace Corps' NANEAP region, gave a first-hand account of the life styles and concerns of rural women in Third World countries. She interviewed hun-

dreds of village women in six countries for her recent book, Message from the Village.

"Their greatest concerns are for their families who are being pulled asunder by the changes in their developing world. The men are going off to find work, the elderly are losing their positions of respect in their communities and the women are left behind," said Ms. Huston. She saw few training programs for women.

"They want fewer children so that they can give them a better education. They want to advance, not as a separate group, but hand in hand with the men."



Sara Weddington

Expressing his commitment to the concerns of women in ACTION, Sam Brown said, "I hope that this week and efforts like it show us what kind of changes need to be made and make us more open to explore new ways of increasing the opportunities for growth in the agency.

"I don't mean growth just in terms of jobs, but in the whole wide range of non-traditional things. I would hope that the people who work here have a real chance to develop as human beings and not see their job as only a way to make a living."

RSVP Volunteers Provide Fixed Income Counseling

During the month of April we are saluting the valuable contributions that the more than 250,000 RSVP volunteers are making to their communities around the country.

RSVP began in 1971 with approximately 1,000 volunteers in 11 projects nationwide and grew over the years to its current volunteer force which serves in 682 projects. The following story on fixed income counseling highlights just one of the many activities in which RSVP volunteers are involved.

The good old American dollar doesn't go very far at the market these days. Ask anyone on a fixed income.

One of the continuing ventures for RSVP is a Fixed Income Consumer Counseling (FICC) demonstration project which began last July in Atlanta and will run for one year.

"We're trying to show low-income people how to manage their money better in these inflationary times," explained Eleanor Morse, director of RSVP in Atlanta.

The Atlanta FICC is one of four pilots for ACTION's urban volunteer program which is part of President Carter's urban partnership. It is the only one in which RSVP volunteers provide consumer counseling. The Atlanta program also has sites in Savannah and Athens, Ga. The FICC project provides workshops on budgeting, banking services and credit, consumer education and rights, and other related topics.

The entire FICC effort is coordinated by Gwen Tedford, assisted by four VISTAs.

Since last July, Ms. Tedford and the VISTAs worked hard to get the program off the ground. They trained RSVP volunteers and conducted

a survey to see who needed consumer counseling.

By September, six workshops on comparison shopping, health care, and nutrition were held for 178 people. Then 28 workshops were given in October for 800 people.

To conduct the growing number of workshops, Ms. Tedford and the VISTAs needed help from others. Mrs. Morse sought the aid of municipal and state agency representatives who were willing to contribute their time and expertise.

Members of the Atlanta police department, the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs and the Senior Citizens Law Project pitched in and formed the RSVP Advisory Council. Mrs. Morse said that eventually council members will be replaced by RSVP volunteers.

The advisory council members were helpful, Mrs. Morse said, in "giving us some ideas on how we could reach certain types of people, such as single heads of households, welfare recipients, and ethnic groups who badly needed this assistance."

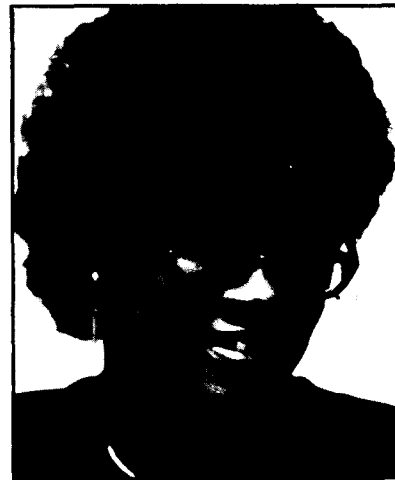
Mrs. Morse hopes FICC will become a permanent activity after the demonstration period ends in July. "I think the whole idea behind FICC is fantastic and badly needed. Our advisory council members felt it should have been done a long time ago because there is no such service on a continuing basis anywhere in Georgia."

The fact that many groups have asked for FICC workshops on additional topics suggests that the community endorses it wholeheartedly. "Attaching the RSVP component to it is also the best thing that could have been done," says Mrs. Morse. "Now volunteers not only have their choice of an interesting placement, but also look at all the benefits the community can gain from the volunteers' years of personal experience."

Lintner, Foster Head Women's Advisory Committee



Beverly Lintner



Alberta Foster

Beverly Lintner, a VISTA program specialist, has been elected chairperson of ACTION's Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee. The committee also chose Berta Foster, an employee development specialist, as its vice chairperson.

A former Peace Corps volunteer for four years in Nicaragua, Ms. Lintner, 29, has been with ACTION for two years. First, as a VISTA program evaluator for the Office of Policy and Planning. In September 1977, she became a program specialist for VISTA's Program Development Division.

Ms. Foster, 36, has been with the Peace Corps and ACTION for more than 16 years, starting as a GS-3 clerk typist in 1962. She now is a GS-11 and has been an employee development specialist for the Staff Training Division of the Office of Administration and Finance for nearly four years.

The advisory committee was formed in August, 1976, to serve as a resource and an advocate on issues concerning women employees of ACTION. Sponsored by the Office of Compliance, the committee conducts programs such as Women's Awareness Week and acts as an advisory body on women's rights. It is authorized to have 25 members and currently has 22.

"I am very excited to work with such an enthusiastic and dynamic group of men and women," says Ms. Lintner. "I hope that we can serve the best interests of the women in the agency by opening up lines of communication, and surfacing problems and inhibitions impeding the progress of female employees.

"I would like to see more men and women actively involved in the committee so that together we can discuss and deal with both personal and work-related issues affecting women," she says.

Ms. Foster hopes that her experience in bridging the gap between clerical and professional status will be a source of encouragement to other employees.

"I'll admit that I was lucky in having supervisors who fought for me, but if I wasn't ambitious and didn't enjoy working with people, I never would have made it," Ms. Foster maintains. "Self-development is the real key to getting ahead."

"I would like to see the committee actively assist employees to work at self-development as well as have more access to training and career opportunities. We can't solve problems for people, but we can help individuals find out where to go and how to deal with issues that affect them."

Governors, Mayors Proclaim PC/VISTA Month

Praising the Peace Corps and VISTA as "great human resources" for the needs of others, District of Columbia Mayor Marion Barry proclaimed February as Peace Corps/VISTA Month in Washington, D.C.

Barry (center) presents the Peace Corps/VISTA proclamation to Margaret Holmes (second from right), Peace Corps/VISTA area recruitment manager in Washington.

Looking on (left to right) are Minnie Blanks, a former Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines; Karen Gaskins, former Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone; and Alex Wilson, a former VISTA volunteer in North Carolina.

The campaign also received special recognition from seven other mayors and eight governors including Governors: George Busby, Ga.; James Hunt Jr., N.C.; James Thompson, Ill.; Joseph Teasdale, Mo.; William Milliken, Mich.; Bruce King, N.M.; Jerry Brown, Calif.; Dixie Lee Ray, Wash.

Mayors were: Richard Califuri, Pittsburgh; Michael Bilandic, Chicago; Tom Bradley, Los Angeles; Diane Feinstein, San Francisco; Pete Wilson, San Diego; Kevin White, Boston; and Neil Goldschmidt, Portland, Ore.



Second Group Trains Under PC Fellows Program

(See photo next page)

Three more former Peace Corps volunteers began their 12-month training under the Peace Corps Fellows Program on January 29. This second group of RPCVs -- Elizabeth Ernst, who served in Upper Volta; Charles Feinstein, Micronesia, and John Earhart, Guatemala -- join three other Fellows who began their training in early October.

After successfully completing four different three-month training assignments, each fellow will receive a 30-month overseas assignment as an associate Peace Corps director.

"I think that this program is a wonderful opportunity for myself, and I hope for the Peace Corps. It gets people who have been recently in the field involved in the management of Peace Corps programs," says Feinstein, 24, who trained local accountants in improved bookkeeping methods for two years on the Micronesian island of Ponape.

"I loved it! To me, a real Peace Corps experience consists of doing a job, learning a new culture and knowing new people. I had a true Peace Corps experience," maintains Feinstein, who rode to work in a canoe and lived with a Micronesian family throughout his Peace Corps service, which he completed last June.

Earhart, 25, thinks that the Peace Corps Fellows Program "is the best thing going," and believes that there are many of volunteers "who have a great deal to offer in management and administration because of their first-hand field experience."

His first-hand experience in Guatemala was one not shared by most Peace Corps volunteers. He was assigned in September, 1975, to work on a forestry and soil conservation project in Santa Apolonia, a small village about 65 miles north of Guatemala City. Four months later,

however, his job and his life changed drastically. The town was totally destroyed in the early morning earthquake which devastated much of Guatemala on Feb. 4, 1976.

For about a month after the earthquake, Earhart helped store and distribute food delivered by helicopter. During the next six months, he helped get people together to rebuild their homes. It was summer before he was able to get back to his conservation project.

Ms. Ernst also worked in environmental conservation in Upper Volta. Initially, she was assigned to the Ministry of Rural Planning, Tourism and Environment to develop an overall environmental program for the country's rural sector.

Later she helped improve an old colonial tree plantation in the town of Kongoussi, and then undertook a study of the consumption of wood in rural areas to help the Ministry determine the most suitable locations for tree plantations.

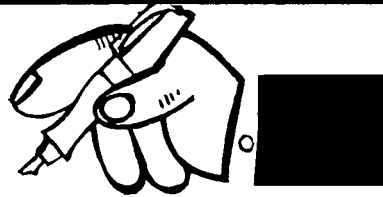
Ms. Ernst completed her service in July, 1977, and became a research analyst for the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C. Now, as part of her training as a Peace Corps Fellow, she is working as a Peace Corps program evaluator in OPP's Evaluation Division.

"I think that this training will make me much more effective overseas in dealing with Washington. I'll have a better understanding of the problems here and will know where to go to solve any problems I might have," she says. "I also will be better able to meet the needs of headquarters."

Feinstein is recruiting Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers in Atlanta and Earhart is working in the Policy and Planning Division of the Agency for International Development through an exchange program with the Peace Corps.

Civil Service Reform

Grade and Pay Retention



Under the new federal regulations, government employees can retain their grades for two years, avoiding salary cuts due to downgrading actions for which they aren't responsible.

Employees placed in lower-graded positions due to reductions-in-force or reclassification actions may, if they have held their current positions for one year, retain their current grades for two years from the demotion date without a pay reduction.

At the end of the two-year period the grades of these employees will be lowered. If their pay at that time exceeds the maximum rate of their new grades they will retain their current pay rate but receive only half of their annual comparability pay increase. When their pay becomes lower

than or equal to the maximum rate of their new grades, they will then receive full comparability pay increases.

The new regulations apply to employees downgraded on or after Jan. 1, 1977. The Office of Personnel Management will shortly release a directive instructing such employees to apply for retroactive pay and benefits.

Under the former regulations, downgraded employees retained their old salaries, but not their grades, for two years. At the end of the two year period, their salary was lowered to the top step of their new grade.

For additional information, contact Gwen Hoover at ext. 45806.

PC Fellows



With Acting Peace Corps Director Mary Leyland are Peace Corps Fellows Elizabeth Ernst (far left), Charles Feinstein and John Earhart.

YCS-Alternative Youth Service Opportunities



YCS volunteers contribute their services at the Salt City Center for the Performing Arts.

"I don't know where I'd be right now if it weren't for YCS!" says Vicky Albert, a volunteer with the Youth Community Service program (YCS) in Syracuse, N.Y.

Ms. Albert joined this unique community-based voluntary youth service project in August 1978. Designed to provide service opportunities for unemployed youth between the ages of 16 and 21, the demonstration project was launched on March 9, 1978 with a 22-month, \$8 million Department of Labor grant administered by ACTION. (See ACTION Update issues 3-20-78 and 10-24-78.)

YCS was founded on the idea that young people, serving as full-time stipended volunteers, can successfully contribute to community development. Joe Bass, project manager of YCS at ACTION, stresses the mutual benefits to both the youth and the community. "The volunteers oftentimes get their first positive work-world experience and develop discipline, while providing a needed service to the community. It's a working model of what young people can do to help their communities through service agencies and neighborhood groups."

After almost one full year of operation, the program has more than 800 active volunteers serving on nearly 300 projects. Project sponsors

include public and private non-profit agencies, community-based organizations and youth groups.

Vicky Albert had held several part-time jobs before coming to YCS, "but nothing really interesting," she explains. "I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do." One of the unusual aspects of YCS is that the volunteers themselves choose their placements - know as "matches" - from opportunities developed by sponsors. "I interviewed with three sponsors I had contacted, and was accepted by the Salt City Center for the Performing Arts.

Ms. Albert found that she has a particular talent for costume design and has concentrated her efforts in that area. "I know that this is what I want to do, and I'll use my educational voucher to study costume design once my year of volunteer service is over."

Like all YCS volunteers, she receives a weekly stipend of \$78 and health benefits as well as a \$400 educational voucher to be paid to any acceptable educational or trade institution.

"What we are trying to do through YCS," said Bass, "and I believe, successfully, is to create new ways for youth to contribute to our society, and to restore the spirit of service."

Staff Spotlight:

Ralph Coleman



Seeing the face of a poor farmer in Santo Domingo light up after getting a few extra pennies for his avocado crop may not seem too exciting, but if you were a 22-year old black college graduate from Jersey City, N.J. and as a Peace Corps volunteer had just had a hand in helping him, it was the experience of a lifetime.

This was Ralph Coleman's experience 10 years ago. Coleman has been the Service Center Director in San Francisco since January, 1978. In this position he monitors recruitment and communications activities in California, Nevada, Arizona, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Hawaii, Guam and American Samoa.

Following his Peace Corps service Coleman headed the ACTION recruitment office in San Diego until 1975. From then, until he assumed the directorship of the Service Center, he directed recruitment activities in the Los Angeles area office.

Coleman is deeply involved in ACTION's goal to recruit more blacks and other minorities into its programs.

In an interview with Bob Rubin, communications director for Regions IX and X, Coleman said he understands why many blacks want to get into the mainstream of the business world after they graduate. But he added that those who join the Peace Corps or VISTA get a kind of vital experience that cannot be matched by business corporations.

"Most blacks, particularly those with a college education, want to go where the money is," says Coleman, "and I certainly can understand that. Spending two years in a village of a Third World country may seem like you're putting your career on the shelf for awhile, but the experience very often leads to surprising opportunities."

Coleman cites his own case. After earning his degree in business administration from St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vt., he quickly joined the Peace Corps and found himself in Santo Domingo, capital city of the Dominican Republic, with a two-year career as an urban developer ahead of him. That was Coleman's official Peace Corps job title, but, in fact, he worked as an advisor to small businesses and agricultural cooperatives, and coached the local high school basketball team during his spare time.

While working with the cooperative, Coleman noticed a change in the farmers' outlook. Before the formation of the co-op, individual farmers would harvest their crop and engage in price wars which everyone lost. With the cooperative, prices stayed at the same level. In addition, by working closely with other Peace Corps volunteers with agricultural backgrounds, the local farmers who were members of the cooperative diversified their crops to include such products as miracle rice, mangoes and other fruits.

Thus, in his first working experience after earning his bachelor's degree, Coleman almost immediately became immersed in advising the farmers in their dealings with banks, counseling them on how to best use the bank loans, marketing strategy for their products, and even some research with an experimental farm operated with the help of other Peace Corps volunteers. In short, he was putting into practice everything he studied at St. Michael's and then some.

Coleman also considers the cultural and language training each Peace Corps volunteer receives extremely valuable toward future careers. "This comprehensive training, plus the actual volunteer experience abroad, certainly makes the ex-volunteer an attractive candidate for multinational corporations that send their executives to the four corners of the globe," Coleman emphasizes. "Where else can a black American become bilingual after two years? This is just another reason why ex-volunteers can adjust more quickly to living abroad than the average person, and can settle in and work much more effectively right from the first day."

personnel

PUBLICATIONS BUREAU CHIEF NAMED

Louis Panarale, recently appointed publications bureau chief in the Office of Communications, comes to ACTION with 19 years of press experience, most recently as a magazine editor with the Department of the Navy.

From 1974 to 1976 he was the publications chief for the Foundation for Cooperative Housing in Washington, D.C. Prior to that he worked as a reporter and editor with the National Catholic News Service, both in Washington and in Rome for three years as Vatican correspondent.

A journalism graduate of Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis., Panarale began his press career with United Press International, where he worked for five years.

NEW CHIEF OF STAFFING

Veronica "Vicki" Dixon-Trietsch became the new Chief of Staffing in ACTION's personnel management division on January 29. Her extensive background in personnel staffing activities began in 1969 when she became a staffing specialist at the Department of Commerce. Later she served as a supervisory personnel staffing specialist at the Consumer Products Safety Commission in Bethesda, Md. Before joining ACTION, Ms. Dixon-Trietsch was chief of staffing functions at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Headquarters for two years. She holds a B.A. in business administration from Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C.