

Student Activities Coordinator Remembers the Peace Corps

By Dina Walker

"The chance to experience a different culture as more than simply a tourist." That's how Janet Widoff, Student Activities coordinator at Capital College, describes the Peace Corps.

Widoff spent two years, from 1966-68, in the Dominican Republic as a Peace Corps volunteer. She explained that during the Kennedy years joining the Corps was "the thing to do," plus it gave the volunteers the chance to live abroad. Her parents were not as receptive to the idea since it was a time of political unrest in the Dominican Republic. The news of that time reported U.S. military involvement in that country and made living there seem unsafe. But Widoff felt differently. Having been influenced by professors concerned with "awakening social consciousness," she volunteered for two years of service.

Widoff and a group of four others were trained as instructors for the teachers at their site. One day a week was spent formally instructing the teachers of proper educational techniques. The rest of the week the group visited the schools, actually shacks or thatched lean-tos.

"We used whatever form of transportation available to get there," Widoff said, "motorcycle, bus, even mule, whatever it took."

She added that the volunteers would actually live at the site the rest of the week. This was Widoff's least favorite aspect of the experience. There

were no conveniences available--no fast food, no television, no radio, none of the things of life she had become accustomed to.

It was this that actually gave Widoff the greatest learning experience of her service. "I learned self-reliance and initiative. I learned to adapt to the lifestyle," she said.

Now, Widoff said, when she looks back, it wasn't really as hard to adapt as she thought it was then. Of course now having modern conveniences she has to remind herself of the time when she struggled for survival.

The one other problem that arose for Widoff was of communication, since the Dominican Republic is a

Spanish-speaking country. This problem, too, was overcome through adaptation to the area.

Widoff considered the time spent there a growing experience and would recommend serving in the Peace Corps to any student. The chance to experience another country's culture, language, and rituals, as well as the chance to develop skills in community development, teaching, and overcoming language barriers were the benefits Widoff received from the experience, and she thinks these experiences would be beneficial to any student.

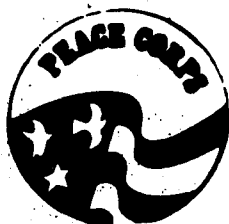
Widoff stressed that the greatest attraction of joining the Peace Corps was "the opportunity to be a part of a different culture, to experience the thrill of actually living it and being self-sufficient."

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I will be on campus each Wednesday, in the Lion's Den from 1:30 - 4:00pm. Feel free to stop by to say hello, or to talk over something on your mind, or for counseling or direction. Also, if the need arises, please call me residence anytime to make an appointment or to talk.

Sunday evenings, I will be on campus in the CUB from 7-9pm. I am available for counseling, sharing, talking, socializing, and confession. Mass will be held at 7:30pm with Sacrament of Penance anytime by appointment or before and after Mass on Sunday evenings.

Each semester the Catholic Campus Ministry group puts together a newsletter called, "Catholic Witness." It is available to all Catholic students on campus as a means of keeping in touch with the entire Catholic campus community.

Capital Times
Meeting

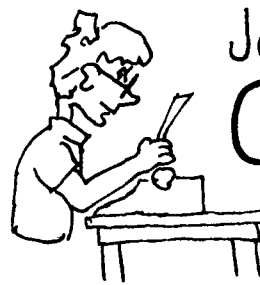
Thurs., Oct. 8
Room W-129 at Noon

**Sportswriter
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For Capital Times

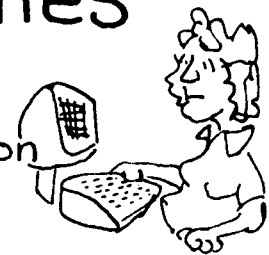
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