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Corps Continued from Page 1

terest once they find out the harsher realities of Peace Corps life; they "de-select" themselves, as DuDell puts it.

"Maybe they have some sort of romantic vision of what it's like in Micronesia. My job is to help the person see the realities of living in a developing country, that it's not all sitting around in a country club and drinking beer and talking to expatriates," DuDell said.

Other reasons for disqualification include poor health, past misdeeds, a lack of leadership skills, and a lack of motivation.

The Peace Corps is currently looking for people with what they refer to as "scarce skills," primarily people with backgrounds in math and science. However, liberal arts majors will always be sought after because of the broader scope of their education, DuDell stressed.

The process starts with an initial counseling interview, the completion of a 12-page application form — which requires at least eight recommendations, and a formal interview with visiting recruiters. A major qualification is a college degree, or five years of technical experience.

During the interview, recruiters ask applicants about past leadership experiences, their level of frustration, how they feel about leaving behind a romantic relationship if they have one, and where they wish to be placed.

If all goes well, the applicant is nominated to the regional Peace Corps office in San Francisco.

The next step is a battery of medical and dental examinations (paid for by the Peace Corps) and an FBI background check. If the applicant survives this, the Washington, D.C. office issues an invitation to volunteer in a specific country in a specific job category.

The entire process takes six to nine months.

...
"Will I live in a mud hut?" According to a "questions often asked" section of a Peace Corps pamphlet, it depends. Once volunteers are sent overseas,

they're usually in for a drastic change.

An average of three months of intensive language and cultural training take place in the host country before the volunteer is assigned to a village. During this process the volunteer lives with a host family, usually in one of the country's urban centers, attending classes five hours each day.

Typical Peace Corps jobs are agricultural training and English instruction, although the entire list of needed skills — about 70, include business, medicine, plumbing, and public administration.

Acclimating oneself to the new country and its culture can start out as an endurance test. Past volunteers recalled temporary feelings of loneliness and frustration during the adjustment process.

"The hard part came when you left everybody and had to be out on your own, because then it became less of an adventure when you realized 'hey,

leave. Such incidents bring down the Peace Corps image in a particular country, according to DuDell. "It's a shame on the organization to be sent to your village and two months later say 'I want to go home,' because the village goes through a lot of work to prepare for the volunteer," he explained.

A few strict rules try to prevent other embarrassments. Avoidance of drugs predictably top the list. Religious and political proselytization are two other taboos. Involvement in local politics could turn the Peace Corps mission in a particular country into a political football.

The Peace Corps avoids establishing itself in politically volatile countries, and if they do go into a country, it is only at the foreign government's request. The host country also decides how many volunteers it will allow within its borders, and what services the volunteers can provide.

About 50 percent of the cur-

'My job is to help the person see the realities of living in a developing country, that it's not all sitting around in a country club and drinking beer and talking to expatriates.'

— Jake DuDell

I've got to make it here," Meinen said. "You're conscious of the fact that you're very different from people," he added.

Bouts of malaria or dysentery seem to be a rite of passage.

"The worst part is getting sick," DuDell said, who served in Niger. "Something hits you there on how dependent you are on the locals to help you out... you find you're incapacitated to do things, and that's when you hope you've developed a nice support system, a good little circle of family and friends who will come and aid you."

A few people change their mind about serving once they are in the host country, and

rent 5,000 volunteers worldwide work in Africa, with 25 percent in Latin America, and 25 percent in Asia.

...

The standard length of Peace Corps service lasts two years, during which time volunteers are paid a wage in accordance to what their job would earn in the host country. Volunteers can ask to stay longer, but the limit is five years. In addition the returning volunteer receives a \$4,200 "re-adjustment allowance," and preferential treatment if they apply for government jobs, often in the foreign service or in various foreign aid and development agencies.

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