

A look back in time with Dave Moss

KAREN EARNSHAW

Former Peace Corps volunteer Dave Moss, who grew up in Richmond, California, arrived in the Marshall Islands in July, 1968 to work as a teacher. First he taught at Rita Elementary and then moved on to Marshall Islands High School. He shared a house with Ron Levy, who worked with a number of business people in Majuro, including as the general manager of Robert Reimers Enterprises during an exponential

growth period of the company.

Dave worked in Majuro for two years and then returned to the the US.

“Then, in the summer of 1971, I returned to the Marshall Islands,” he recounted. “I arrived on a Thursday and got a taxi straight to the Ministry of Education. I told the taxi driver to wait and went into the office, where I came across a friend, who was another Peace Corps volunteer.

“I asked him if there were any

jobs. He said yes and made a couple of suggestions.” By the next week Dave was back working at Marshall Islands High School, which he did until 1974.

Dave’s link to the Marshall Islands has continued through one of his daughters, Rhea Moss-Christian, who, among other things, worked for the RMI government in regional fisheries. She later became, in 2014, the first woman to be elected as chair of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Com-

mission and is now its executive director. She was also the founding chairperson of the Marshall Islands National Nuclear Commission, which was established under President Hilda Heine.

As background, the Peace Corps is an independent agency and program of the United States government that trains and deploys volunteers to provide international development assistance. It was established in March 1961 by an executive order of President John

F. Kennedy and authorized by Congress the following September by the Peace Corps Act. Over the decades to now, more than 240,000 Americans have served in the Corps. Peace Corps was active in the Marshall Islands from 1966 to 1994.

The following story by Dave first appeared in The Columbian newspaper in Vancouver, Washington, on November 25, 2023. It is republished here with the author’s permission.

The most memorable holiday we ever had

DAVE MOSS*

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. Unlike other holidays, it is remarkably free of hype — no gift exchanges, no particular religious significance, no special sales in the stores, no decorations. And it’s more than a feast. It’s a day when we are asked to be as thankful as it is possible for us to be for whatever we have. Communities across this country go to great lengths to provide turkey dinners and companionship to solitary senior citizens, to the homeless, to pretty much anyone in need.

To be sure, I’ve been fortunate. Growing up, my Thanksgivings were full of the four F’s: family, friends, food and, of course, football. But my Thanksgiving of November 1968 was very different.

It was my first year as a Peace Corps volunteer teacher in the Marshall Islands, where there was no Thanksgiving holiday. We worked that day like any other Thursday. Most of the 44 people in my contingent of teacher-volunteers, all recent college graduates, were already at their schools on the far-flung outer islands and atolls of the Marshall Islands, but a few of us were stationed in Majuro, the government center.

Two teacher-volunteers — a married couple named John and Jane Harris — were still waiting for a ship to take them to the most remote of all the inhabited Marshallese atolls, Ujelang. (That is where the people of the Enewetak Atoll had been relocated prior to the atomic and hydrogen bomb tests of the late 1940s and early 1950s.)

John and Jane had been given a small government house to stay in while they waited. Their house had electricity and running water, unlike the houses the rest of us lived in with kerosene lamps and stoves, and rainwater caught off tin roofs and kept in 55-gallon drums. We volunteers were paid approximately the same as our Marshallese counterparts, \$80 a month. That covered rent and food and not much else. We ate what the Marshallese ate — rice, canned food, coconuts, ramen, occasional fresh fish, breadfruit.



Writer Dave Moss

We had been in the Marshalls since July, so culture shock was beginning to wane, but the Thanksgiving holiday we were used to celebrating back in the USA was going to pass us by this year. We were missing traditional Thanksgivings, and our families and friends. But we decided to stop feeling sorry for ourselves and at least get together for some sort of dinner.

John and Jane said we should bring whatever food we could muster and come over to their house on Saturday evening to create our own version of Thanksgiving.

There were eight of us — or there should have been. My roommate, Ron Levy, was not there. Ron was not a teacher, he helped local businessmen with organization, inventory, bookkeeping and so forth. No one knew where he was. We put our motley provisions on John and Jane’s small dinner table — ramen, sardines, Chef Boyardee, corned beef, pork and beans, mixed vegetables, tea, rice, and ... Spam. Maybe we could carve one of the Spams into the shape of a turkey?

We were hungry, but we were waiting for Ron. Where was he?

Then, just as the sun was going down, here came Ron, a huge smile on his face. He had waited for the weekly flight from Honolulu and then walked from the airport, carrying two large shopping bags. Ron had prevailed on one of the businessmen he worked with to place a special order for us, and it was in those shopping bags: a small turkey, potatoes, fresh vegetables, cranberry sauce, and a half-gallon of Chablis. We poured that into a variety of cups and glasses (with ice!) and drank to our health, our hosts, our families, the Marshallese and Ron’s businessman friend. Then, we put together the most memorable Thanksgiving any of us had ever had. We were thankful for so much. I still am. Cheers!

* *The writer is a former Peace Corps Volunteer in the Marshall Islands. This account was originally published in The Columbian, Vancouver, Washington. Reprinted with permission of the author.*



One of Peace Corps volunteer Dave Moss’ residences in Majuro. Right, his friends John and Jane Harris in Ujelang Atoll.

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Majuro's sports watching HQ



TOEAK
BAR & GRILL



PHONE 625-3370 FOR RESERVATIONS OR MORE DETAILS.

UFC 296

PPV EVENT

Sunday, Dec. 17

3:00 PM

MAIN CARD

Leon Edwards vs Colby Covington



UFC WELTERWEIGHT TITLE BOUT — Welterweight champ Leon “Rocky” Edwards (21-3-0, 1NC) 32, 6.2 ft. with 74 in. reach will attempt to hold off the charge of Colby “Chaos” Covington (17-3-0) 35, 5.9 ft. with 72 in. reach.



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
WEEK 15

Friday, Dec. 15 @ 1:15pm

LA Chargers @ LV Raiders

Monday, Dec. 18 @ 1:20pm

Baltimore @ Jacksonville

Tuesday, Dec. 19 @ 1:15pm

Philadelphia @ Seattle

National Basketball Association



NBA games played throughout the week