

Safer, More Compassionate World Forum

Speaker Biographies (Alphabetical order)

Linda Barnes

Linda Barnes has been involved in international development since 1968 and spent 15 years in East Africa in community health initiatives. She is a Certified Nurse Midwife and practiced midwifery at Bellevue Hospital in New York City for over a decade. From 2000-2001 she worked in Kosovo as a midwife trainer and technical advisor and from 2004 through 2007 has been involved in public health initiatives and midwife training in Afghanistan.

Judy Duke

Judy Duke is a retired Durango High School Special Education teacher and describes herself as a world traveler. Through a serendipitous coincidence during one of her trips (they both missed connections in Los Angeles) she met Tecla Mugomba, a Shone woman who had brought her daughter Zefari to Los Angeles for a cornea transplant, aided by an NGO. After establishing a long-distance relationship via email and telephone, Judy traveled to Zimbabwe and began helping Tecla sell her crafts in Durango to provide income for her and other families. 100% of the proceeds go directly to these Zimbabwean families. Judy is in the process of creating a 501(c)3 non-profit organization – *Make all Children Smile in Zimbabwe*- to expand her ability to help children in this impoverished and collapsing country.

Tom Grams

Tom Grams retired from a private dental practice in Durango two years ago in order to devote his time and energy as a volunteer dentist in rural Afghanistan and Nepal, where he travels at least twice a year. Tom was moved by the events of September 11, 2001 to try to understand the reasons for the violence in our world. He says he is not a political analyst: he just does dentistry. But as such, Tom offers the opportunity for others to know a humanitarian, who is also an American, who makes a difference in the lives of the many people who benefit from his services. Tom is also training locals in the areas where he volunteers so that when he leaves the good that is done can be carried on.

Tom Harrington

Tom Harrington was appointed Dean of the School of Business Administration, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, on July 1, 2004, culminating more than 20 years of experience as a faculty member and academic administrator. Dr. Harrington also served in the United States Air Force for 20 years, retiring from active duty in 1987 with the rank of lieutenant colonel, with his last position as Chief of the Air Force Transportation Programs Branch at the Pentagon. Tom is active in the Durango and regional communities, serving on the Boards of Directors/Advisors for the Downtown Durango Partnership, Durango Industrial Development Foundation (ex-officio), La Plata Economic Development Action Partnership (Vice President), the Region 9 Economic Development District (treasurer), Small Business Development Center (ex-officio), Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, and for the San Juan College School of Business.

Paula Huntley

Paula Huntley, author of *The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo*, is a native of Arkansas. She received a BA in History from Lindenwood College and an MA in History from Southern Methodist University. In her early career she taught history and later helped develop environmental, historic preservation and arts programs. In 2000 Paula and her husband, Ed Villmoare, volunteered to live and work in war-ravaged Kosovo, a country the Chief Prosecutor for the International War Crimes Tribunal called “one vast crime scene.” Ed joined the effort to help create a new legal system and Paula taught English as a Second Language. During the eight months of their stay Paula kept a journal, never imagining that it would become a highly-acclaimed book. *The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo* tells the stories of her young Muslim students who had endured a decade of apartheid under Serbia’s Milosevic, and had survived the brutal massacres and ethnic cleansing of 1998-2000. But though these are stories of unimaginable

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suffering, they are also stories of strength and resilience, of courage and hope. Schools and universities around the country have chosen Paula's book as required reading, and many American readers have been inspired to volunteer abroad, to welcome exchange students into their homes, and to donate funds to make American schooling available for young Kosovars. Paula and Ed now reside in Durango.

Connie Jacobs

Dr. Connie Jacobs is a professor of English at San Juan College. She is the author of two books on Ojibwe novelist Louise Erdrich and is a frequent presenter at academic conferences. She has been a world traveler for decades and her visits during the 1990s to her son serving in the Peace Corps in Namibia and Armenia brought home very powerfully the urgent need to be of whatever service she could to people in third world countries. To this end, she and other teachers from San Juan College took a group of students to Nicaragua for a service learning project. The outcome of this trip has been a small project she and a colleague began in a very poor village in northern Nicaragua. She continues to work for social justice.

Mike and Tricia Karpfen

Mike and Tricia Karpfen created the Shanta Foundation, a federally recognized 501(C)3, in 2006 after their visit to numerous countries in SE Asia and southern Africa. Moved by the unfailing generosity of those who had so little and the realization that a few dollars goes a long way in these countries, Mike and Tricia decided to make this work an active part of their lives. Mike is a psychotherapist in private practice and Tricia facilitates corporate leadership development and has a private acupuncture practice. Shanta Foundation is based in Durango, Colorado and is one of their dreams come true. Most recently, the Karpfens have been working with the residents of Yim Bya in Myanmar - still called by its former name, Burma, by some - to improve conditions there. In 2006, they raised \$14,000 and, with friends, helped the village build a school.

John Edward Mahan

Dr Mahan received his Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering from Stanford University in 1976, was a Research Associate, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from 1976-78, and has been with Colorado State University in Fort Collins since 1979, achieving Professor of Electrical Engineering rank in 1988. A two-time Fulbright scholar (in Belgium and India) he is a Board Member and Past President of the Colorado Chapter of the Fulbright Association. Dr Mahan has served as Visiting Professor, Department of Instrumentation, Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, India and most recently as Visiting Senior Engineer, EcoSystems Pvt. Ltd., Kathmandu, Nepal. He is the recipient of many awards and honors: 2005 Fulbright Scholar to India, 2004 Best Teaching Faculty Award, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, 1995 Fulbright Scholar to Belgium, and Colorado State University Inventor Award - 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991. He has contributed numerous Journal articles and is the author of *Physical Vapor Deposition of Thin Films* (John Wiley, New York, 2000).

Linda Mahan

A member of the LWV for over 25 years Linda Mahan has served on the Board of the Larimer County LWV and as VP for Membership on the LWVCO Board from 2004-5 and currently as a Director. Her background includes elementary school teaching, teaching English as a second language in France, Belgium and Nepal and civic education in the US, Nepal and India. She has over 30 years experience in organizational leadership in the fields of the arts, education, youth and faith-based groups. Currently she is a member of the Steering Committee of Health Care for All Colorado.

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Pamela J. Patton

Pam Patton currently serves as President of the Board of Directors of the La Plata Electric Association. She is a graduate of Fort Lewis College, University of Southern California, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and San Juan College. Ms Patton previously served on the Board of Directors of FastTrack Communication, Inc. She is a retired Commander, of the U. S. Navy, where she served as an Intelligence Officer. Pam devotes her life to civic duties. She is a graduate of Leadership La Plata, is a member of the Pine River Valley Centennial Rotary Club, League of Women Voters of La Plata County (where she frequently serves as moderator for candidate forums) and the Salvation Army Service Extension Unit. She is the U.S. Naval Academy Liaison Officer for Western Colorado.

Zachary Ray

Zachary Ray, Sociology major, Philosophy minor, found out about Engineers without Borders (see description on reverse) through his roommate who was an engineer major (now graduated and working for a local engineering firm) and had traveled on two EWB trips. This coming year will be Zach's third trip with EWB, the first trip being two years ago in May of 2006. "It was the first time in my life I had ever left the western U.S. I found EWB to be very rewarding and complimentary to my major so I continued to work with them. This is my third year with EWB and I try to promote it to any and all students, especially ones from under economic backgrounds as myself. Such an opportunity!"

Jan Williams

Jan Williams serves as the district governor of the Colorado Rotary Club District 5470, which covers southern Colorado except for the Denver Metro area. In 2002 she was charter president of the Durango Daybreak Rotary Club and continued to serve the club as secretary and Ecuador contact for high school students wishing to study abroad. She also served on the Red Cross' Board and volunteered in Miami after Hurricane Wilma. Jan traveled to India in February to participate in one of India's National Polio Immunization Days. Rotary International began addressing the widespread disease in the mid-1980s with a project in the Philippines. It soon created Polio Plus, an initiative to vaccinate all the children in the world against the disease. The organization recruited Dr. Albert Sabin, the researcher who developed the oral vaccine, to sit on the board to help guide its efforts. She has said that the trip deepened her appreciation of what Rotary does and changed her outlook on life.

Diane Wilson

Diane Wilson, a fourth-generation shrimper, began fishing the bays off the Gulf Coast of Texas at the age of eight. By 24 she was a boat captain. In 1989, while running her brother's fish house at the docks and mending nets, she read a newspaper article that listed her home of Calhoun County as the number one toxic polluter in the country. She set up a meeting in the town hall to discuss what the chemical plants were doing to the bays and thus began her life as an environmental activist. Threatened by thugs and despised by her neighbors, Diane insisted the truth be told and that Formosa Plastics stop dumping toxins into the bay. Her work on behalf of the people and aquatic life of Seadrift, Texas, has won her a number of awards including: National Fisherman Magazine Award, Mother Jones's Hell Raiser of the Month, Louis Gibbs' Environmental Lifetime Award, Louisiana Environmental Action (LEAN) Environmental Award, Giraffe Project, Jenifer Altman Award, and the Bioneers Award. She is co-founder of Code Pink and continues to lead the fight for social justice.

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Fort Lewis College Engineers without Borders

Fort Lewis College hosts a chapter of Engineers without Borders. In May 2006, 17 FLC students along with three professors and two professionals from the Durango community traveled to a remote Thai village -- home to about 350 farmers who survive by growing rice and raising pigs and chickens. The village was experiencing severe daily water rationing and during the dry season would run out of water. To address this problem, students designed and constructed a 6,000-foot water transmission line from a new, more reliable water source. They also performed water quality tests and discovered that significant contamination was occurring when villagers collected water at the communal taps and stored it their homes. Villagers were storing water in old plastic containers that had once contained kerosene, diesel and pesticides. The students purchased new, sanitary containers and held community meetings to explain the potential health risks of using the contaminated containers. In another project, Engineers without Borders added three classrooms to the school that serves two villages. Students worked with the community in preparing a design and building a 2,000 square-foot addition. In 2007, Engineers without Borders will return to the same villages to complete the water system and to work on other environmentally sustainable projects that help improve the villagers' standard of living. Engineering and non-engineering students are welcome to participate. Students work throughout the year, organizing logistics, preparing technical designs, developing educational materials, fundraising and learning about the history and culture of the host communities.

Hosts

Bridget Irish

Coordinator of First-year, General Education & Enrichment Experiences, including Common Reading Experience

Ellen Park

President, League of Women Voters of La Plata County

Ross Park

Publicity and PR Director, Safer World Project Team Leader, League of Women Voters of La Plata County

Safer World Project Team

Suzanne Becker, Mary Ruth Bowman, Pat Chatfield, Lee Conger, Edina Cullipher, Doreen Hunter, Bridget Irish, Kim Martin, Ellen Park, Ross Park, Jill Patton, Marilyn Sandstrom, Shaila Van Sickle