

Career journalist exports TV talents

Hunsicker joins Peace Corps at age 47 BY ANGELA LINDLEY

When **Steve Hunsicker** was a student at WVU, he had no idea how far his training in broadcast news would take him. As it turns out, he's been around the world and back again.

After graduating in 1983, his first stop was WAJR radio in Morgantown, W.Va., where he was a news reporter.

A year later, he moved to a television station in Tallahassee, Fla., where he became acting news director just five months after his arrival.

"It was a trial by fire," Hunsicker said, "but that experience is what got me interested in management."



Shawn Quast

His career as a broadcaster and news director took him to television stations in Gainesville, Fla.; Harrisburg, Pa.; Honolulu, Hi.; and Chattanooga, Tenn., before he became Executive News Director at a station in West Palm Beach, Fla., in 2003. Although he was responsible for eight hours of local news programming on two TV stations and managed more than 70 people, Hunsicker felt distanced from the news and from what initially attracted him to the profession – public service.

"The best times of my news career were when I was helping viewers solve problems," he said.

After a 23-year broadcasting career, Hunsicker took a dramatic change in course,

but it certainly wasn't due to a shift in personal philosophy.

At age 47 – nearly 20 years older than the typical participant – Hunsicker was accepted to serve in the Peace Corps and traveled to the Kingdom of Tonga, an island country in the South Pacific. It was the fulfillment of a dream he had held since college, when he had the opportunity to interview Lillian Carter, a noted Peace Corps volunteer and President Jimmy Carter's mother.

In Tonga, Hunsicker utilized his background in management and worked as a small-business advisor. He also was able to transfer the skills he learned in his career to help Tongan-owned businesses, including building websites and creating videos.

Hunsicker said one big challenge he faced was creating a business training video, which was produced in the Tongan language. In the video, he profiled successful Tongan business people.

Shortly after he returned to the United States in December 2009, Hunsicker took a position as a Peace Corps recruiter in South Florida. He works from his home and spends a great deal of time on college campuses speaking with students.

Hunsicker has written one book about his experiences in the Peace Corps and is co-author of another. "Steve's Adventures with the Peace Corps" is available in both printed and electronic versions on Amazon.com and by other booksellers. "Tonga" is a travel book published by Other Places Publishing. The co-authors of the travel book with whom Hunsicker collaborated are returned Peace Corps volunteers.

Hunsicker credits his remarkable career to the groundwork laid by the School of Journalism and WVU.

"WVU gave me a great foundation for a wonderful career," he said. ■

***Inset:** At age 47, Steve Hunsicker fulfilled a personal dream and joined the Peace Corps. He is pictured here in 2009 in the Tongan Rain Forest on the island of 'Eua, the southernmost island in Tonga.*

***Background:** A Tongan man gives his horse a drink on the island of Nomuka in the Ha'apai island chain in Tonga. Hunsicker conducted a business workshop on the island in 2008.*