



# Yale Alumni Service Corps

## Service Program to Fort Mojave 2017

**Newsletter #1**  
**August 2017**

Dear YASC Fort Mojave 2017 Participants,

We are so glad that you have registered to join us in Fort Mojave in October. Preparation is currently underway to make sure that we have a great set of projects planned on the reservation and that they will be meaningful and impactful. I know that a lot of you have been looking forward to this trip for quite some time, and I'm glad to finally get a chance to communicate more frequently.

In our first newsletter, I'd like to tell you a little bit about our group leaders and provide background information on Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. This trip is unique in that our ground partner is the community itself, and our group leaders have started working directly with tribal representatives to understand the local issues. It is these community leaders that are going to drive our activities based on the needs and desires of the tribe.

Over the next two and a half months, our pace of preparation will increase. Keep in mind that the nature of our projects is currently being reviewed by our project and tribal leaders. I know that many of you are already in touch with group leaders. We will be able to give you a more detailed overview of these activities in newsletter 2. We will also schedule an online Q&A session sometime in September so please stay tuned for details.

I am Max Sklar '06, the volunteer producer of the YASC Fort Mojave 2017. Supporting me in this role is João Aleixo, Director of the Yale Alumni Service Corps.

I look forward to getting to meet you all in the next few months and to a successful trip at Fort Mojave. Feel free to contact us with any questions.

Max Sklar  
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João Aleixo  
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## Important next steps

- **Submit** the following as soon as possible:
  - Signed **release forms** (attached) – if you have not yet done so, submit a form for each member of your party to Joao at [joao.aleixo@yale.edu](mailto:joao.aleixo@yale.edu) or fax to 203-432-0587.
  - **Photos** for our participant directory via email to [joao.aleixo@yale.edu](mailto:joao.aleixo@yale.edu) if you have not yet done so during registration.
  - **Flights** – send your flight information [Jim@UDVegas.com](mailto:Jim@UDVegas.com) who is handling our transportation. This should include airline, flight number, time of arrival and departure, as well as the dates you are travelling.

## Hotel



### **Avi Resort & Casino**

10000 Aha Macav Pkwy  
Laughlin, NV 89029  
(702) 535-5555

During our program to Fort Mojave we will stay at the Avi Resort & Casino, which is owned by Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. Set on the banks of the Colorado River, this casual casino complex is a mile from Mojave Crossing Event Center and 16 miles from Laughlin. The straightforward rooms come with free Wi-Fi, cable TV and coffeemakers. Some offer river or pool views. Feel free to visit their website for a complete list of amenities: <http://www.avicasino.com/>

## Project Leader Bios



### Crystal Astrachan '04

New York, NY

Profession: Data Analysis

Co-leader of **Entrepreneurship** Project

Crystal Astrachan graduated from Yale College in 2004. She served as the trip leader of one YASC trip to Nicaragua and attended two other trips. Crystal is a business analytics professional and recently earned a Master of Science in Business Analytics from NYU Stern. She has more than 10 years of experience in eCommerce, product management and digital marketing. Crystal is a New Haven native and currently lives in New York City. In addition to volunteering with the YASC, Crystal is actively involved in her community through her church.



### Lee Corbin '91

West Boothbay Harbor, ME

Profession: Former cartographer and graphic designer

Co-leader of **Education** Project

“Jill of all trades, master of none.” Then went back to school to get her undergraduate degree at Yale '91 (while her kids were in college simultaneously in CO), majoring in geology/environmental studies, then went on to law school in CO. Practiced law for a few years (estate planning, real estate, family law including children guardian work), but then became employed by the Fed Gov't (State Dept) in their passport office in Portsmouth, NH, where she focused on citizenship issues, until retirement 3 years ago. What's retirement? For the first 2+ years she worked part-time in the membership/development office of the non-profit, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, and now substitute teaches whenever possible in a local elementary school and works part-time at a local YMCA in their membership department. When not working, she loves to play with her dog and cats, play tennis, sail (on other people's boats), power walk sometimes competitively, and horseback ride (for fun). Her 2 kids are grown up and she has 4 grandkids!





### Bill Couchman '63

Tucson, AZ

Profession: Tax professional

Leader of **Construction** Project

Former board member of Yale Alumni Service Corps; trips to Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Ghana, working on home construction. Now working part-time for H&R Block (13 years, all after retirement) as tax preparer (Enrolled Agent); also teaching taxes at H&RB and outside. Yale '63 Cum Laude, BE (electrical engineering). MBA from Carnegie-Mellon. Worked 33 years in management of product planning and strategic planning for Ford Motor Company, in Michigan, California, and Brazil. After retirement, worked one year as carpenter and contractor. Board member and former Treasurer of Yale Alumni Chorus; one of the leaders of the Cuba tour. Hobbies: Marathons and triathlons; world travel (80 countries and 50 US states); charity volunteer work, especially for refugees; choral singing (now in 5 choruses). Married to Laura (also coming on the Fort Mojave trip).

	<p><b>Pam Crimmins '84</b>  New York, NY  Profession: Fine art underwater photographer and art educator  Co-leader of <b>Education</b> Project</p> <p>Pamela Crimmins was born in New York City and raised in Connecticut. She studied both painting and photography as an undergraduate at Yale. After graduation, she served as an intern photographer at the American Embassy in Rabat, Morocco. Upon her return, she moved to New York City, where she continued to paint and photograph and co-directed a non-profit that created murals with inner-city NYC children. She began taking pictures underwater in 1996 while teaching her children how to swim. Since then, her work has been exhibited and collected nationally. Pamela has taught art in NYC public schools and other venues for 25 years and has a master's degree in K-12 art education from Brooklyn College. She lives in Manhattan. This is her first trip with YASC.</p>
	<p><b>Ben Geboe</b>  New York, NY  Profession: Interim Exec. Director, American Indian Community House, Inc.,  Exec. Director, Yankton Sioux  Co-leader of <b>Entrepreneurship</b> Project</p> <p>Ben Geboe was born and raised on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. He is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe and is very active in the Native community in Montreal, NYC and on the Reservation. Chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Indian Community House, Inc. in NYC and an active member of the 1st People's House on campus. He has an MSW from Columbia University and a PhD from McGill University. Founding member of the North East 2 Spirit Society in NYC, which seeks to advance visibility of Native/Aboriginal LGBT identity in a traditional and culturally relevant manner through training and community organizing. Enjoys a pow wow dance and sing on a traditional Native/Aboriginal drum.</p>

**A Brief Background of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe**

Refer to attached pdf document for complete details

The Pipa Aha Macav (“people who live along the river”) are one of the most important Yuman-speaking tribes of the lower Colorado River (River). While the bulk of the historical population was concentrated in the area now occupied by Bullhead City, Fort Mohave, Mohave Valley and unincorporated Mohave County, AZ; Laughlin, NV; and Needles, CA; the Pipa Aha Macav originally occupied an area ranging from southern Nevada and Northwestern Arizona, down to near the current location of the City of Parker, AZ, on both sides of the River from the mountains of Northwestern Arizona through the Mojave Desert to near the current location of Joshua Tree National Monument in Southern California.

Several bands existed within the Pipa Aha Macav. One in the north, one in the central region, and one in the south. They often traveled great distances and were recognized throughout the Southwest as being great runners. They routinely traveled down to the Sea of Cortez, east into the mountains of central Arizona, and as far west as present-day Santa Barbara. Primarily practicing agriculture around the flooding seasons of the River, they grew corn, beans,

pumpkins, watermelons and cantaloupes in the soft mud. This diet was supplemented with bighorn sheep, deer, rabbit, and fish from the River. The Pipa Aha Macav would summer near the River and their fields, and live farther away from the River in the winter to avoid the spring flooding.

The earliest meeting of the Pipa Aha Macav and European explorers was likely around 1540, with numerous explorers commenting on the great health, vigor and society of the natives. With Lt. A.G. Tassin in his "Report on the Colorado Valley and Its Inhabitants Compiled While Stationed at Camp Mohave in 1877," noting in one passage that part of his, "party came upon a large and powerful tribe of *Mosa, Mojave* 1904. *Edward S. Curtis* Indians living upon the banks of a great river, the men and women of splendid physique, calling themselves Mojave's and with whom, being treated with great hospitality and reverence, they remained long enough to recuperate and then descended the left (East) bank of the river uniting with the other section of the expedition near the present boundary between the United States and Mexico."

The 1800's ushered in a troubling era with the opening of the American frontier which resulted in the encroachment of migrants into Pipa Aha Macav territory. In 1858, Fort Mohave, a U.S. Army Post, was established to guard American migrants crossing the Colorado River on the California Trail. During this time, many Mojave's were re-located south to the Colorado River Indian Reservation, which was established in 1865. The Mojave's that resisted relocation and remained in the vicinity of Fort Mohave, were eventually granted a reservation on both sides of the Colorado River in 1870. These Mojave's became known as the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe.