

**Activities Report 2015**  
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**President WMRPCV**



***Goat Chase 2015***

This past year saw continued enthusiastic participation in the regular potlucks in the Missoula area. Our nearly monthly meetings foster a real sense of family and community, along with the regular newsletters and the updates and reminders via email and the website. The website [wmrpcv.com](http://wmrpcv.com) continues to see improvements and use. The Facebook page gets some use as well.

Bunny Sims (Philippines 73-76), continued the task of coordinating the Peace Corps Week presentations in early March in the Missoula area schools. About 15 local RPCVs shared their experiences with many students in the local schools. Through their efforts nearly 1000 students in local schools heard personal stories from Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Several members in other areas of Montana worked with local schools to speak to individual classroom groups as well. Western MT RPCV members continued to make presentations to schools and community groups throughout the year.

Near the end of March, once again we participated in the University of Montana's International Week. The week culminates with a day of international food and festivities. Our group helps the Peace Corps representative on campus get the word out about the Peace Corps at a special information table. Not only is it a fun, internationally oriented event, it also serves as a way for us to reach out to other RPCVs and prospective volunteers in the community.

In the spring of the year the NOM potluck and party for the newly nominated volunteers in the area was hosted by Amber Gladney, the Peace Corps Representative on campus and Peter Baker at the U of M FLAT house. The UM Flat is a living and learning residence for UM students to demonstrate sustainable ways of living. We had a nice turnout including newly nominated volunteers and a few foreign visitors. This is a great time to meet the newly nominated volunteers and cheer them on as they get ready for their upcoming assignments. Through the U of M Peace Corps representative and the recruiting office in Seattle we gathered together and shared our stories and experiences with the newly nominated volunteers who are getting ready to begin their service.

Like always, the Goat Chase Retreat in June was the big event of the year as well as our annual meeting. It brought together most of the membership for a weekend of fun, camaraderie, and discussion of the group's humanitarian activities. We also had a special visitor from NPCA. Chuck McConnell, from Portland, is the NPCA Northwest Region board member.

The monthly potlucks continued during the summer, with a July gathering at the home of Tony Hoyt (Liberia 67-69/ Guatemala 74-75) and Michelle on the banks of the Jocko River. The August potluck returned to the 'Rum Shop' at Steve and Heidi's for a great time of camaraderie and music.

In October the WMRPCV group once again had a presence at the Jeannette Ranking Peace Center Peace Party and fundraising. The new Peace Corps Representative on campus, Peter McDonough attend along with 10 or 11 others. Peter continued attending our monthly gatherings and is coordinating his recruiting efforts on campus with our group.

Also at the October potluck in Missoula, Lynne and Otto Koester gave a very informative and entertaining report on their return to Ethiopia in the spring. They had been volunteers in Ethiopia in the 60s and recently retired from the University of Montana. Their academic careers brought them in contact with educators in Ethiopia and led to a short term project with a university in Ethiopia. The sharing of their experience was the highlight of the gathering.

The international calendars from the Wisconsin group continue to be our main fundraiser. With the hard work of many of our members, we once again sold 325 calendars. The Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers donate the proceeds from the calendar sales each year to local humanitarian efforts across Montana as well as around the world. It is one way to meet "The Third Goal" of promoting a better understanding of people in other parts of the world on



### *Peace Party 2015*

the part of Americans while assisting with development and educational projects. Not only do the calendars themselves get the word out about Peace Corps, but this is also our only fundraiser, without which we wouldn't be able to support the many fine projects we do.

The members of the Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are a committed, compassionate group, involved in numerous local and international humanitarian projects. Over the years a wonderful sense of community has developed, always welcoming new members and other people interested in Peace Corps.