



Western Montana RPCV News

June 2008

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 2

Upcoming Events

SATURDAY, JULY 26
Potluck at Tony & Michelle's on the Jocko, 3:00 p.m., call 726-3384 for directions

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16
Potluck at Steve and Heidi's, 1710 Lenore Ct. in Missoula, 6 p.m.



Goat Chase Retreat group photo

JUNE 12, 13 & 14 2009
Goat Chase Retreat

From the President

Dennis C. Bangs, Ecuador 70-72..

Once again we completed a fun and successful annual meeting and entertaining weekend at the Methodist Camp on Flathead Lake the second weekend of June. The weather really cooperated this year. The sun and moon shone on us all weekend. Nearly 60 people showed up for the fantastic celebration. The International Potluck on Saturday once again surpassed everyone's expectations and the professional DJ played music for all to dance to late into the night.

In addition to the fun time, we had our annual business meeting where we heard a report from the Bozeman group about having established themselves as a separate NPCA affiliated group. They still plan on coming to the Goat Chase retreat though. We also approved our slate of officers and got the calendar sales of to an early start. One other business oriented event was a presentation by Walter Tavaska (Niger 69-71) about our group being part of a Montana committee of the World Food Program. More details can be found inside this newsletter.

In upcoming news, we planned the July potluck at Tony (Liberia/Guatemala 67-69/74-75) and Michelle's for Saturday, July 26 and the August potluck at Steve and Heidi's (Jamaica 84-86) for the 16th of August. Thanks to Lynne and Otto Koester (Ethiopia/Ghana 68-70/69-70) for hosting the NOM party in April and to Mary Younger (Cameroon 74-76) for hosting the potluck in May.

During the spring both Bozeman and Missoula had a visit by Ron Tschetter, the current Peace Corps Director. More to follow on the inside about this visit.

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WMRPCV WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS.

Walter Tavaska who lives in Whitefish and served in Niger.

The WMRPCV Newsletter is published quarterly by and for the non-profit Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

All dues paying members receive a copy and are encouraged to participate in it's creation by sending comments, articles or other submissions to Dennis Bangs 1729 North Ave. West, Missoula, MT 59801, <wmrpcv@yahoo.com>

All newly returned volunteers will receive two free copies before they are requested to join.

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Big Sky RPCV members at Goat Chase



Peace Corps Director visits Bozeman and Missoula

Ron Tschetter, the current Peace Corps Director came to Montana in May to help promote the push for more Peace Corps volunteers over the age of 50. On Wednesday, May 28 he gave a presentation in Bozeman and on Thursday the 29th he gave two presentations in Missoula. During the afternoon he awarded the University of Montana an award in recognition for their continuing success in recruiting volunteers.

In the evening he joined a panel of RPCVs from Missoula and the WMRPCVs in a discussion about what it is like to serve in the Peace Corps after age 50. Tobie Weist (South Africa 01-03) along with Tom and Ann Jones (Bulgaria 02-04) shared their experiences with the well-attended audience. They all presented a very positive, if not challenging, picture of what it was like to serve in the Peace Corps at their time in life.

Big Sky RPCVs

The newest NPCA affiliated group hails from the Bozeman area. Dave McGoldrick (Zaire 86-88) and a group of dedicated friends have been meeting on a regular basis for a number of years and finally decided to become their own group instead of a part of the WMRPCVs. They have an enthusiastic membership and plan their own fundraisers and activities. Many of them plan to continue to come to the Goat Chase Retreat though. Good luck to you all.

WMRPCV Video Project

Garrett Olson (Zambia 04-06) has been working on a video biography of the members of our group and would like to get more people to participate in it. It is a work in progress and can be viewed on our website <wmrpcv.com>. It is on the bottom of the front page under who we are. Just click on the underlined who we are and you can see what Garrett has done to this point.

If you would like to be part of this project you can send Garrett a few pictures and some information about where you are now and what you did in your Peace Corps assignment. You can contact Garrett at 5765 W. Broadway, Missoula, MT 59808 or 329-4900 or at <www.gkolson@hotmail.com.

I am impressed with what Garrett has done and would like to see more of our members on the video. I hope many of you can find time to participate.



Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

Help plant the seeds for peace 365 days a year...

The funds raised from the sale of the International Calendars developed by the Madison, Wisconsin RPCV group are directly donated to a variety of local and international humanitarian endeavors. If you have a project you would like considered, please contact us at wmrpcv.com.

Cost is \$12 per calendar - shipping and handling included. Please complete the order form below and send it with your check payable to "WMRPCVs" to:

Mary Younger, WMRPCV treasurer

100 Erika Court

Missoula, MT 59803

2009 International Calendar Order

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Please send me _____ calendar(s) @ \$12 each (shipping included)

Enclosed is my check for \$_____, payable to "WMRPCVs".

The following is a summary of a presentation made at the retreat by one of our newest members, Walter Tavaska. Walter lives in Whitefish, served in Niger from 69-71, and would like our group to participate in his efforts to start a chapter of the World Food Program in Montana. At the general meeting we decided to join his efforts. After his appeal you can find his contact information if you would like to get more personally involved. Editor.

Appeal for RPCV Participation in the World Food Program State Committee of Montana

June 24, 2008

Proposal

- Seeking participation of Western Montana and Big Sky RPCV members to develop a long term coalition of Montanans that through the World Food Program State Committee structure, will contribute to alleviating world hunger, while also helping achieve the goals of the Peace Corps, the NPCA, and the Montana RPCV organizations.

Why?

- 850 million are chronically hungry (1 in 7 people on earth); 400 million are children; 9 million people die from hunger every year; a child dies from hunger and related illnesses every 5 seconds
- The situation is widespread in 30 of the poorest countries and getting worse, as food and fuel prices increase; an estimated 100 million more people will become hungry just from the increased prices; in developed countries 20% of income is used for food, whereas in poor countries, it is 80 %, meaning meals will be cut; these cost increases reduce the food aid that WFP can distribute; riots and violence are increasing which threaten democratic governments.
- Causes of high prices include: economic growth and diet changes to meat in China, India and other emerging markets have increased the demand for food; world food storages are low; urbanization is reducing the number of farmers who produce food; corn crops are being diverted to produce fuel; climate changes are affecting food production; drought in Australia reduced wheat crop in 2007; floods this year will reduce the U.S. corn crop an estimated 10-20% which will again increase prices; increased speculative commodity investing, and a weak U.S. dollar.

Why Support the UN World Food Program (www.wfp.org)?

- The largest food aid organization has the capacity to immediately deliver food around the world; 20 planes, 40 ships, and 5000 trucks are in operation on any given day.
- Delivers to, and coordinates with, more than 3000 non-governmental organizations that ensure food reaches the hungry.
- As a UN organization, its neutrality helps avoid the political and religious issues that prevent food from reaching the hungry, such as when Myanmar recently denied U.S. food aid after their typhoon.
- Implements 3 programs to reduce hunger: Emergencies: Myanmar typhoon; current African drought in Ethiopia; Darfur, where the WFP supplies food for 3 million people a month. Recovery: Food for Work to rebuild roads, bridges, and farms after disasters.
Development: School Feeding that gives children what is sometimes their only meal of the day so they can continue their education and not stop to hunt or work for food. Meals are being cut in some programs because of insufficient funds.

Goals of the U.S. Friends of the World Food Program (www.friendsofwfp.org)

- Increase awareness about the magnitude and impact of global hunger.
- Generate Resources for WFP programs to alleviate world hunger; donations are deductible for federal income taxes.
- Mobilize Public Support for government funding of food aid and policy improvements. Recently, funds for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education program in the 2008 Farm bill were reduced by \$40 million/year; in 2005, of 150 applications for the program, only 12 were funded; more than 110 million school age children suffer from hunger yet only 2.4 million children were reached by McGovern-Dole program and 20.2 million school children by the WFP in 2005.
- Establish WFP state committees to achieve all of the above goals.

(Continued on page 5)

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Personal Hopes for the WFP State Committee for Montana

- Gain the participation, at any activity level, of Montana's RPCVs on the state committee and/or in individual cities/towns, since they know well the issues of international poverty and hunger. Educational presentations of their country experiences can be combined with fund raising and public policy issues related to hunger and poverty.
- Share our knowledge with the public and our Congressman. Establish coordinators in our largest cities and where our representatives have their staff (Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glendive, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, and Missoula) in order to have a greater impact on legislation and funding.
- Support our Congressional delegation to make positive decisions on such future issues as: local cash purchases of food will feed more people by not encountering the high costs of shipping food commodities overseas; increased U.S. government funding for food aid; the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act of 2008; the More Peace Corps campaign of the NPCA; the Millennium Challenge; and the next U.S. Farm bill in 2012.
- Since world hunger is a long-term problem, create a sustainable organization across generations of new PCVs and RPCVs.
- Create a long-term funding organization. Try a different approach to fund-raising. Traditionally giving is motivated by disasters, which because media coverage is short term, funding is often short term. Donor fatigue develops when too many disasters occur.
- Concentrate fund raising efforts on the WFP School Feeding Program for the long term. If each working adult Montanan commits to a contribution of just \$34 per year, approximately \$21 million dollars could be raised to support school meals for about 500,000 children a year. As income increases over time and circumstances improve, a person may also be able to afford more of a contribution to any future emergencies.
- Create an exchange between Montanan and overseas school children and teachers to further the education and understanding of each other.
- Provide continuous feedback to Montanans on this statewide effort and incorporate education of countries and international issues into articles, columns, letters, or opinions of our local newspapers, just as we read about so many Montanans being responsible and helping ease their neighbors' hunger by donating to food banks.
- This caring side of Americans, of Montanans, isn't seen by foreign countries when Congress cuts funding for international school children's feeding programs while in the same bill increases funding for our own Food Stamp program. If political leaders see the community leading these efforts, they may have the courage to increase and reprioritize spending to these areas.

Upcoming Events for Developing Participation Activities

- World Hunger Relief Week (10-14-08), at the Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) in Kalispell, I will be giving a fund raising presentation about the WFP and world hunger.
- World Food Day (www.worldfooddayusa.org) (10-16-08) there is a worldwide, live teleconference on climate change and its effect on poverty, moderated by Ray Suarez of PBS). Will sponsor it live at the FVCC.
- Peace Corps Week (2/09-3/09) At the FVCC, Tentative plan is to offer the FVCC a combined presentation of Peace Corps Niger experience as an awareness, recruitment, and fund raising event for the Peace Corps, WMRPCV, and the WFP.
- Walk the World (6-01-09) an international event to raise awareness and funds for alleviation of world hunger alleviation.

Biography: Walter Tavaska

- PCV in the Republic of Niger coordinating well construction in rural villages throughout 2 counties (1969-1971).
- Career with the Texas Department of Human Resources programs providing Food Stamp, Medicaid, Work Incentives, Refugee and cash assistance benefits in Houston, Texas and its 10 surrounding counties.
- Retired, living in Whitefish, Montana.
- 2005 drought and famine in Niger raised personal concern about world hunger and began a commitment to support the food aid and development projects of the UN World Food Program (WFP), the U.S. Friends of the WFP (FWFP), the Friends of Niger (FON) and recently, the WMRPCV.
- Advocating support U.S. food aid, such as in the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program of the 2008 Farm Bill, with Congressional representatives.
- Volunteered to help start-up a WFP State Committee of Montana (2008).

If interested or want more information, please contact me at 406-862-3937 (FWFP) or mtcoalitionofthecaring@centurytel.net



1729 North Avenue West
Missoula, MT 59801

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To check your
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JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN WMRPCV OR NPCA

Name: _____
Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____ E-mail _____
Peace Corps country of service _____ Years _____
Peace Corps job title _____

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (CHECK YOUR LABEL!!!)

WMRPCV only, \$15.00 _____
National Peace Corps Association, includes WMRPCV \$50.00 _____
WMRPCV Student/Low Income \$7.50 _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WESTERN MONTANA RPCVs and send to:
Mary Younger, 100 Erika Court, Missoula, MT 59803