



Western Montana RPCV News

June 2010

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 2

Upcoming Events

**July Potluck,
Saturday, July 24
at 3:00 PM at
Tony and
Michelle's. Call
726-3384 for
directions**



**JUNE 10, 11 &
12!!!! 2011!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Goat Chase Retreat
Flathead Lake!!!!**

From the President

Dennis C. Bangs (Ecuador 70-72)

Our annual gathering at the Flathead Lake Methodist Church Camp the second weekend of June culminated another fulfilling year for the Western Montana RPCV group. Considering that June has been one of the wettest on record for western Montana we were doubly blessed by the sunny weekend on the lake. Once again we had a good turnout of folks who took advantage of the weather. And thanks to friends of Steve Torcoletti and Heidi Halvorsen (Jamaica 84-86) many of us were able to visit Wildhorse Island where we were treated to spectacular displays of Bitterroots and Big Horn Sheep. Thanks to Richard and Teresa Galli (Botswana 90-92) and Don Gisselbeck (Sierra Leone 78-81) and their computer wisdom a number of people got to watch the US vs. England World Cup match live.

We conducted some business during the fun-filled and sun-soaked weekend. Jennifer Wintersteen (Kenya 89-91) replaced Jeanne Younger (Honduras 86-88) as the Helena representative, while the rest of the serving officers accepted the acclimation by the group to continue in their respective roles. We got the calendar sales of to a good start and scheduled the next gathering at Tony and Michelle's in July. If you didn't make it to the retreat, now would be the time to let Mary know how many calendars you will be able to sell this year.

We also had some great gatherings in Missoula leading up to the Goat Chase Retreat. Thanks to Lynne and Otto Koester (68-70) for hosting the April NOM potluck again. Once again it featured the newly nominated volunteers along with Elly, the recruiter from the Seattle office. In May, Russ and Shannon Parsons (Ecuador 95-97) hosted a very well attended potluck for the first time. Thanks to you all for hosting and thanks to everyone for continuing to be so supportive of our efforts.

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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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Peace Corps at 50!!

In 2011, Peace Corps will be commemorating 50 years of promoting peace and friendship around the world. You can find new information about how the Peace Corps plans to honor our past, demonstrate our effectiveness, and inspire the next generation of volunteers through education and engagement in 2011 by visiting www.peacecorps.gov/50

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary Celebration
September 22, 2011 to September 25, 2011 – Washington, DC ... and around the world. Join in celebrating the Peace Corps' first 50 years while looking ahead to the next 50. Events begin in 2009, culminating events in Washington, DC in September 2011.

Many groups around the country have organized events or activities around this historic date. The WMRPCV group has yet to decide on any specific activity, although a number of things have been mentioned. If you have an idea or would like to head up one of the ideas that we have already talked about, let me know and we will get the ball rolling. *The editor*

The Peace Corps changed your life. We want to hear your story.

This summer, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is running a video contest in celebration of the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. We're asking you to submit a one- to two-minute video about how the Peace Corps, a Peace Corps Volunteer, or Returned Peace Corps Volunteer changed your life.

For details on how to enter the contest, go to the NPCA website <www.peacecorpsconnect.org>. Enter now and share your story with the rest of the world! We look forward to receiving your entry.

This spring I attended a workshop put on by the Missoula Family YMCA's international committee for local organizations and groups with in international focus. The following announcement came from contacts made at that gathering. The editor.

COMMUNITY FRIENDS NEEDED FOR UM INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Missoula International Friendship Program (MIFP) is a non-profit, community organization that works closely with the UM Foreign Student & Scholar Services to provide the greater Missoula community an opportunity to develop personal friendships with UM international students and scholars. MIFP needs volunteer families, couples and single people to become Community Friends to the new, incoming foreign university students and scholars. This is NOT a home stay and the Community Friend has no financial or legal responsibilities for the student/scholar. Community Friends are asked to meet with their matched student/scholar once a month for the first two semesters of their University experience. Many international students want to get to know Americans on a more personal basis and are eager to share their culture with you. MIFP provides support and activities for Community Friends and their students/scholars through out the school year.

Interested individuals should complete an application form which will be used to make the best match possible. New Community Friends will receive information about their student as well as helpful hints on welcoming and interacting with them. If you are interested, you can get an application form at www.mifp.org (click on "forms") or by calling the UM Foreign Student & Scholar Services at 406-243-2226. Completed applications should be received by August 27 to be available for matching this fall semester.



Sierra Leone Postscript

After a sixteen year absence, a new group of Sierra Leone Peace Corps invitees are now in-country, beginning three months of training before they begin their assignments as education volunteers.

While their individual impact is yet to be determined, Wednesday's send-off celebration at Peace Corps Headquarters provided a glimpse of what is possible.

One of the speakers at the celebration was the Deputy Chief of Mission for the Embassy of Sierra Leone. When he accepted the invitation to address the gathering, Ibrahim Conteh had a request. Could Peace Corps locate Roberta Rabinoff - the volunteer who was his English teacher - and invite her to attend?

Working with the Friends of Sierra Leone, Peace Corps was able to locate Roberta Rabinoff-Kaplan, a member of the very first group of Sierra Leone volunteers and a current Washington DC resident.

The reunion marked the first time they had seen each other since Roberta's close of service 47 years ago.

"I bow to you. I am very grateful. God bless you," said Conteh as he introduced his former teacher to the audience.

As the formal ceremonies gave way to informal conversation, Conteh and Rabinoff-Kaplan returned to their days together at the Magburaka Government Secondary School for Boys in the Tonkolili District of Sierra Leone. Roberta received updates on the

lives of many school officials and students. They reflected on some of the coursework. Conteh recalled when his teacher read out loud one of his particularly good essays and how "the class went wild!"

Before the Peace Corps, Conteh said his only exposure to the United States came from missionaries. "The Peace Corps brought forth young, vibrant and motivated people, who gave us a different perspective about Americans."

Rabinoff-Kaplan said "it was a most amazing coincidence that he would remember my name and that I would be in DC."

A coincidence that she would be in DC? Perhaps.

Amazing that he would remember her name? Perhaps not.

And that is what the new Sierra Leone volunteers will soon experience.

Posted by Erica Burman Director of Communications on June 05, 2010 in Education, Peace Corps

National Day of Action in support of Peace Corps.

This afternoon, the House Appropriations Subcommittee for State and Foreign Operations approved a spending plan for the next fiscal year that includes \$446 million for the Peace Corps. This figure matches President Obama's Fiscal Year 2011 funding request and represents an 11.5% increase over current Peace Corps funding.

(Continued on page 4)



In addition to using the profits from our calendar sales to help local food banks and other local non-profits we often have the chance to help a PCV who is currently serving. The following description and photo come from one of the volunteers we made contact with at our NOM potluck a couple of years ago.

Art For Peace – Costa Rica

April 2010

Hello Mary and the rest of WMRPCV!

This regional Arte por la Paz, or “Art for Peace” event was planned in coordination with PANI, Costa Rica’s national child protection agency to include youth from the central valley of Costa Rica and their Peace Corps volunteer facilitators. The students are 5th-9th graders who have participated in Arte por la Paz sessions in their communities in the weeks leading up to the event.

The goal of Arte por la Paz is to foster creativity and better communication skills in elementary students in order for them to better address the violence that they experience in their homes, schools and communities. This is done through various art projects on themes such as domestic violence, anger management, and self-esteem. The regional conference was an exciting opportunity for these students from very poor communities to get to know other youth who care about making the world a more peaceful place.

This was also the first time for most of the children in our poor sites to get out of their community and see a new place. The workshop was a complete success with about 50 youth having participated. We did a series of workshops around art and anti-violence, as well as activities that promoted team work, critical thinking, and encouraged their self-esteem.

The children had the opportunity to present the work they had prepared at home (poetry, theater, painting, dance, etc) on the theme of peace. They also took part in educational workshops throughout the day to foster group cooperation, improve conflict resolution, as well as give them a creative outlet to express their feelings and dreams for the future.

Your generous donation helped us fund some of the art materials as well as the t-shirts for the conference, which you can see from the photos, the youth all very much enjoyed receiving and put on immediately!

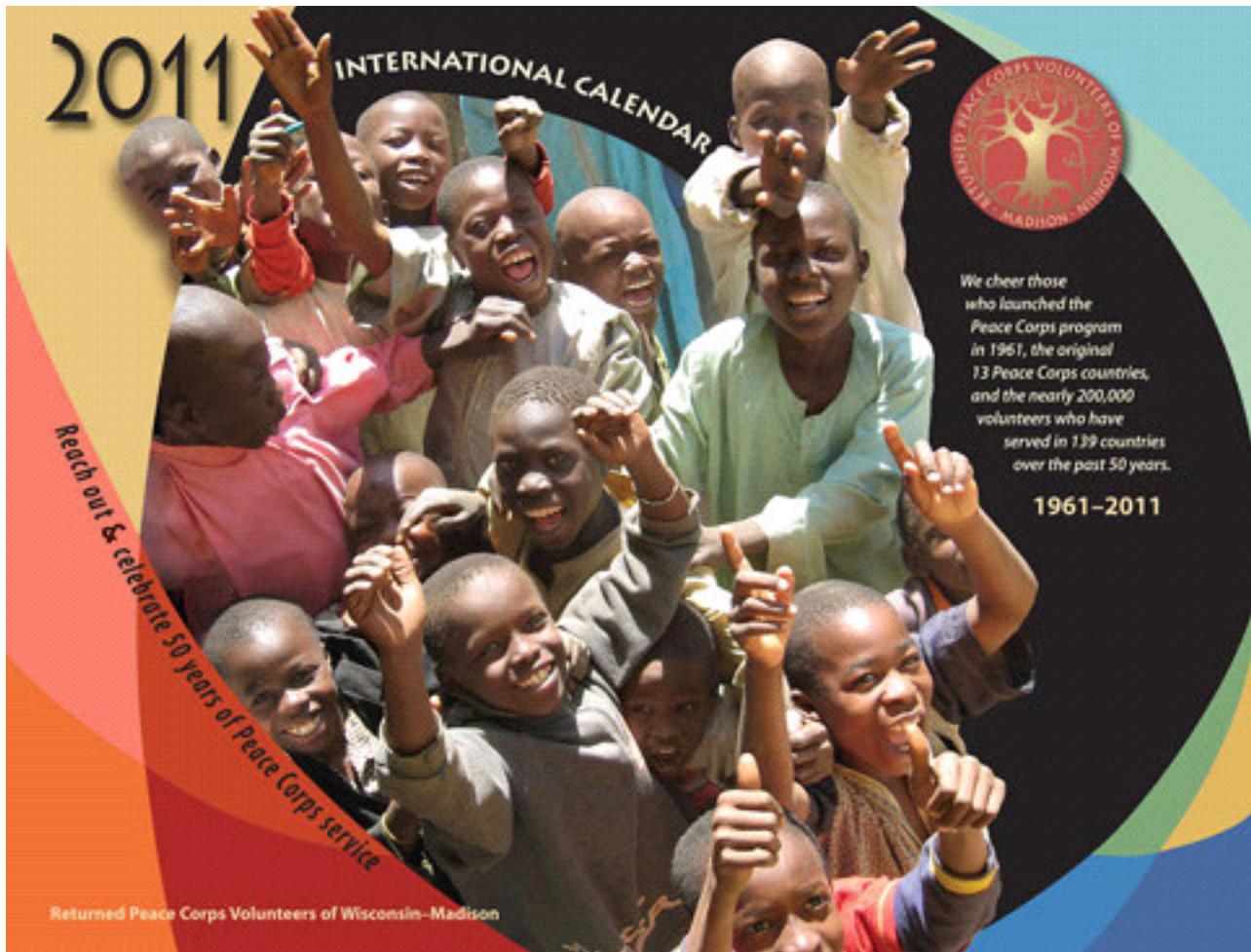
Thank you very much again! I'm so glad we were able to collaborate on this project!

Becca Stumpf
Peace Corps Volunteer
Costa Rica

(Continued from page 3)

“Given the challenging fiscal environment facing our nation and the Congress, this 11.5 percent increase in funding is good news for the Peace Corps and a positive testament to the ongoing advocacy to thousands of individuals who have reached out to the House of Representatives to urge robust funding for the Peace Corps,” said National Peace Corps Association President Kevin Quigley. Follow this link to read NPCA’s recent letter to State/Foreign Operations Chairwoman Nita Lowey. Similar letters were sent to other members of the Subcommittee.

Posted on the NPCA website June 30, 2010 by Erica Burman.



**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

2011 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”.



Western Montana RPCV News

1729 North Avenue West
Missoula, MT 59801

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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 dues expire in June of each year unless you are an NPCA member through the Western MT RPCVs.*****

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**