



Western Montana RPCV News

SEPTEMBER 2013

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 3

Upcoming Events:

**OCTOBER
POTLUCK
TBA**

**To include a special
presentation by the
Koesters on Ethiopia**

**DECEMBER
POTLUCK!
TBA**

**2014 GOAT CHASE
JUNE 13, 14 & 15!!!!**

2014!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Flathead Lake!!!!



Enjoying Tony and Michelle's yard in July despite a raging forest fire across the river.

President's Report

Dennis C. Bangs (Ecuador 70-72)

As the season ambles to an end in western Montana the Western Montana RPCVs have a relaxed summer to reflect on and another fall and winter's activities to look forward to. To begin with I would like to thank Tony Hoyt (Liberia/Guatemala 67-69/74/75) and Michelle for hosting the July potluck in the midst of a raging forest fire just across the river from them. As you can see from the picture above it was a sunny, warm day but a fire broke out just a few miles from their house only about an hour before the potluck.

Then in August Heidi Halvorsen and Steve Torcoletti (Jamaica 84-86) hosted another great potluck in their back patio complete with the Jamaican Rum Shack. A picture is on the following page. At this potluck we decided to make a donation to the NPCA's data base and mentoring program. Thanks to the membership and some special generosity from some individuals at the gathering we were able to contribute \$250. On page 2 of this newsletter you can see a thank you and more detailed information about how the NPCA plans to use the funds.

Fall is also the time to start selling those International Calendars for our fundraiser. Information is on page 5. Fall usually is when we meet the new Peace Corps Representative on Campus. This year it is Amber Gladney. She served for three years in Mali and is just getting started as the Peace Corps Rep. on campus and will be letting us know of campus or community events that she has planned. You can contact her at peacecorps@umnotana.edu.

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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:

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<wmrpcv@yahoo.com>

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

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The Western Montana RPCVs welcome the following new members:

Alysia Ballinger from Wyoming who served in Malawi.
Christine Brummer from Townsend who served in El Salvador.
Jaelyn Krusniak from Big Sky who served in Mongolia.
Stephanie Ruff from Great Falls who served in Rwanda, Costa Rica and The Dominican Republic.



Chris and Jeannie Siegler in the 'Rum Shack'.

September 20, 2013

Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
1729 North Avenue West Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers,

Thank you! With your \$250 donation and those of 29 other NPCA member groups, we exceeded the match of the \$7,150 grant from the RPCVs of WI-Madison to advance the Mentoring Program and address other data management needs. A total of \$8,200 is in hand, with four pledges still to come in. We launched the campaign back in May and in just four months, we surpassed our goal! We officially ended the campaign on September 15.

With the end of the campaign, we will shift into the next phase of the project. Planned and implemented in parallel with an overall NPCA technology assessment and strategic planning (now in progress), we are assessing and exploring potential new models for the Mentoring Program and improvements to data management systems. The new Mentoring Program redesign and re-launch are expected around year end.

Through the Mentoring Program, members of your NPCA community receive the one-on-one support they need at the time they need it most – when they are in transition, usually from PCV to RPCV. Many of those mentoring matches are made by member group coordinators, who also provide that key link to welcome and engage mentees at the local or country of service level. There are other models to explore as well, such as the applicant mentoring program established by the Southeastern Michigan RPCVs.

We will send periodic updates to keep you informed of our progress.

Thank you again for your support of this important program.

In gratitude,
Glenn Blumhorst President

Report of Lynne & Otto's Return Visit to Ethiopia, Summer 2013

In June/July 2013, Lynne and Otto Koester responded to invitations from two universities in Africa, Addis Ababa University (AAU) and University of Gondar (UG), to visit Ethiopia for approximately 2 ½ weeks. The main purposes were for Lynne to serve as the External Examiner for a doctoral dissertation and to give a lecture at Addis Ababa University (AAU), and for both Lynne and Otto to give presentations about their research and UM's international activities.

We would like to share some impressions (and photos) of the time we spent in Addis Ababa and Gondar, and to discuss possible ways in which we and others in Missoula might be following up in the future. As most of you know, both of us were Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia in the late 1960s, and have maintained our interest in and connections to that country over the past 43 years. Therefore, some of our reflections are quite positive ones, while others acknowledge our dismay at the depths of poverty still so evident in this beautiful country.

For those of you who are not members of the NPCA and for those members who have not been paying much attention to what the NPCA does, we would like to share with you one of the major activities that the organization does through its 'advocacy' activities. Early this spring Jonathan Pearson attended one of our potlucks and introduced himself and talked about some of the issues they were working on. In the meantime, Otto Koester (Ethiopia-Eritrea/Ghana 68-70) has been in contact with Jonathan and is going to try and advocate directly with the Montana congressional delegation on the following issues. The first is the Peace Corps Equity act and the second is the Peace Corps funding proposal. The following quotes and descriptions come from the NPCA website.

The Peace Corps Equity Act.

“We must not stand idly by while Peace Corps volunteers continue to be subjected to this gross inequity in their health care coverage. Peace Corps volunteers choose to provide a valuable public service despite inherent risks to their safety, including sexual assault, and it is unacceptable that their own country restricts their access to care. My legislation would ensure that Peace Corps volunteers don't have to forfeit their rights or jeopardize their health when they volunteer to help underserved populations throughout the world.”

– Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ)

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) supports legislation in the United States Senate that would allow Peace Corps Volunteers to receive the same health services and opportunities as other citizens serving our nation overseas.

Senate Bill 813, introduced by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) would provide a technical fix to the Peace Corps Act, allowing Volunteers to receive federal support for abortion services in the narrow circumstances of rape, incest or endangerment to the life of the mother. Peace Corps staff and others serving overseas who receive federal health care currently receive this allowance.

Last year, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, Congress unanimously approved a similar provision to provide such services to military servicewomen, leaving Peace Corps Volunteers virtually alone in being denied this provision.

Our basic message is to urge Senators to become a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 813 to make sure that Peace Corps Volunteers receive equitable and fair health care treatment as other citizens serving our nation overseas.

Peace Corps Funding

New York Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in between congressional meetings during the 2013 National Day of Action. The annual appropriations process is underway as Congress determines funding levels for Peace Corps and other federal programs for Fiscal Year 2014, which begins October 1st.

Members of the the Senate and House Appropriations Committee play a very important role in determining these funding levels. When it comes to Peace Corps, the Appropriations Subcommittees for State/Foreign Operations have the most direct role in setting funding levels for Peace Corps and other international affairs programs.

Boston Summer 2013

The following is taken from the NPCA website and shares some insights from the gathering in Boston earlier this year.

What an inspiring, motivating and exhilarating time in Boston. Over 365 returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), current and former Peace Corps staff, friends and family joined us for a jam-packed agenda of plenary sessions, panel discussions, practical workshops, open forums, exhibits and social events. The hallways were abuzz with lively chatter and a permeating energy. Attendees represented a good cross section of our community, including RPCVs who had returned as recently as April, as well as others celebrating more than 50 years since their return.

If you weren't able to trek to Boston, you can still vicariously experience it at Peace Corps Connect or check out Facebook photos of our community at the annual gathering. Watch the Peace Corps Connect recorded final session and awards ceremony (details coming soon) Read Global Citizen Award recipient Dr. Mohamud Said's acceptance speech. Listen to public radio journalist (and Togo RPCV!) Marco Werman (Public Radio International program, The World) interview Dr. Said and RPCV Russell Morgan (Kenya 1966-69). Learn more about the 2013 Ruppe and Sargent Shriver Humanitarian Service Award winners. Follow the frenzy of activity on NPCA's @pcorpsconnect Twitter account, and as captured by the hashtag #PCCBOS

We received a lot of positive feedback about the weekend and are still sifting through photos, and doing all the follow up that comes with a big event like this. Big "thank you's" go to everyone who who attended, and to everyone who pulled together to make the weekend a success — especially to our hosts, the Boston Area Peace Corps Association.

Planning has already begun for Peace Corps Connect 2014, set for June 20-21 in Nashville, Tennessee. Save the date and plan to join us!

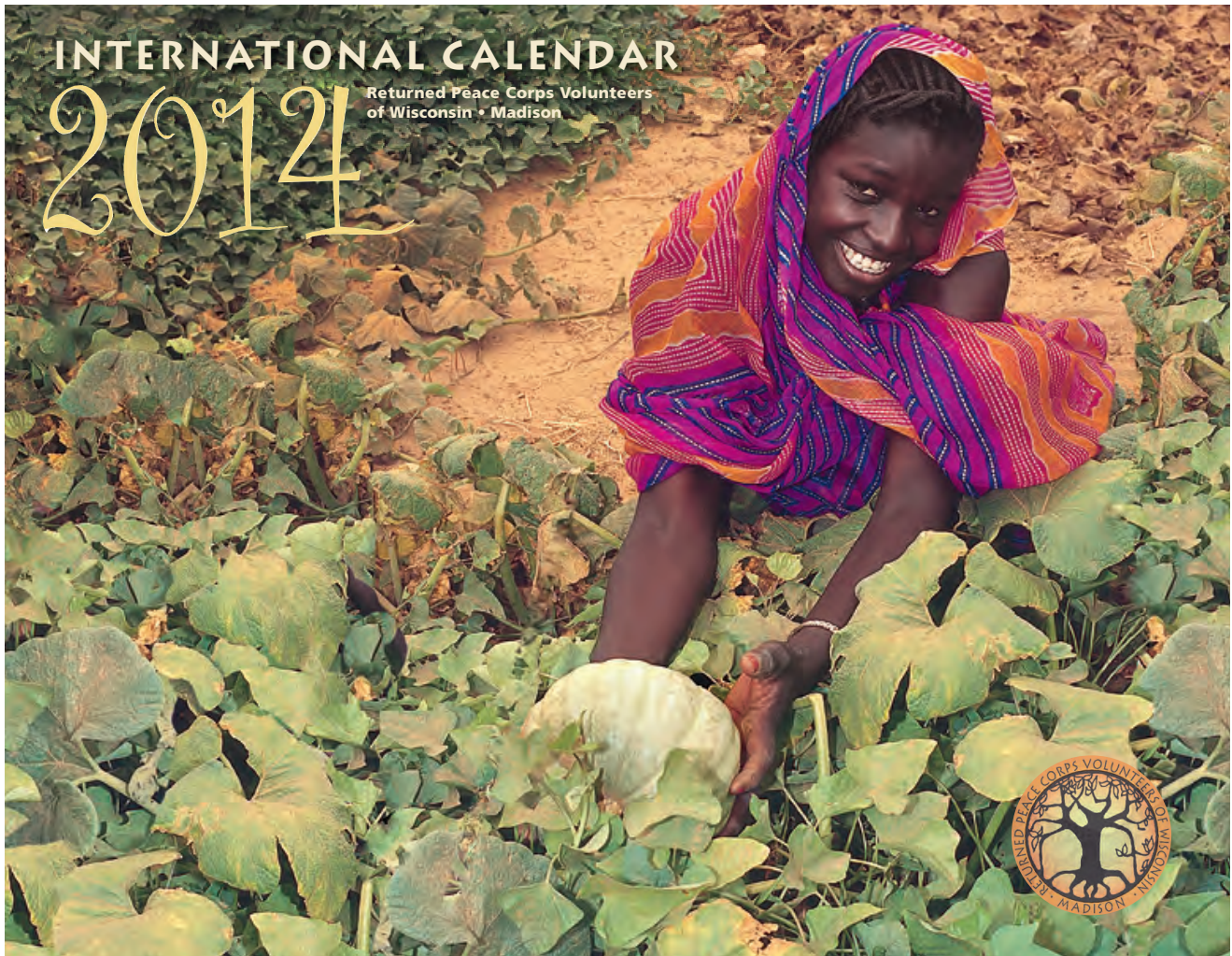
As we noted, we've gotten some great feedback about Peace Corps Connect Boston. We thought we'd share with you this write-up by Helene Dudley -- 2013 recipient of the Peace Corps' Lillian Carter Award, former NPCA board member and past president of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers South Florida -which originally was posted to the RPCVSF website.]

"President Kennedy envisioned a very large Peace Corps with hundreds of thousands of RPCVs "bringing the world home" and making their voices heard to enable a truly enlightened U.S. foreign policy. Numerous presidential candidates have vowed to expand the Peace Corps, a measure typically supported on both sides of the aisle. The larger challenge, however, is finding an effective way to communicate the valuable Peace Corps service experience. While many of the 250,000 members of the Peace Corps community have already made a significant impact on programs that make the world a more fair and more peaceful place, we can better implement Kennedy's vision if we combine our vision. At the Boston Peace Corps Connect Conference (June 28-29) it was energizing to be surrounded by people representing all generations of Peace Corps service, each sharing that common bond of having been transformed by our Peace Corps experiences, and dedicated to building a more fair and just world. With so much positive energy, one gets a sense that it could actually happen. I also sensed a renewed National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) commitment to working closely with RPCVs and member groups to promote Peace Corps and its values, making the NPCA the logical forum for making our collective voices heard. Save the date for the next Peace Corps Connect Conference in Nashville, June 20-21st, 2014.

At the Boston Peace Corps Connect conference there were top quality speakers and group sessions. During the session on "RPCVs in Public Service," we heard from Harris Wofford, an early Civil Rights advocate and adviser to Martin Luther King, who was instrumental in the creation of the Peace Corps. RPCV David Magnani was on the same panel, and he spoke of his success in getting the U.S. Congress to act on a bill to ban conflict diamonds. The "Raising Your Voice on Human Rights" panel featured Dr. Mohamud Sheikh Nurein Said, recipient of the 2013 Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award for his work with the Kenyan Red Cross in assisting displaced persons, overseeing the world's largest refugee camp and promoting the rights of torture victims. Hauwa Ibrahim gave a riveting presentation about her strategies for winning precedent-setting cases for women's human rights in Nigeria in Shariah Islamic Courts.

There were also workshops on Career Development, Peace Corps films and writers, advocacy, overseas job opportunities, Peace Corps archives, an opportunity for members and groups to provide feedback and suggestions to the NPCA at the Group Leaders Forum and a session on Peace Building lead by RPCV Chic Dambach, past president of the NPCA who helped negotiate an end to the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Phillip Lillienthal (RPCV Ethiopia) received the Sargent Shriver Award for his work as founder and chairman of Global Camps Africa, an organization that empowers African children for an AIDS-free tomorrow. Friends of the Dominican Republic and the Northern California Peace Corps Association received the Loret Miller Ruppe Award for their service projects. Those were the highlighted stories, but there was a steady stream of enrichment from encounters with RPCVs who "bring the world home" and make it better in unheralded ways every day. Being among them was like mind candy for people committed to peace and social justice. Treat yourself with a trip to Nashville for the next Peace Corps Connect, June 20-21st, 2014."



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 \$13 per calendar - shipping and handling included. Please complete the order form below and send it with your check payable to 'WMRPCV' to:

Mary Younger, WMRPCV Treasurer
100 Erika Court
Missoula, MT 59803

2014 International Calendar Order

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Please send me _____ calendars @ \$13 each (shipping included)

Included 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
 - _____ Free membership to all serving Peace Corps Volunteers – This membership, good for service term plus one year after COS, can be activated online by PCVs in the field.
 - _____ First time free - Any RPCV who has never been a member before may join for one year for free.
- TOTAL ENCLOSED:**

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