

Activities Report 2016
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Goat Chase 2016

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 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. 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 as well as help out with the Peace Corps Representative on the U of M campus with tabling and other events.

Near the end of March, we once again 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.



At the March rally for International understanding and Inclusion

In the spring of the year the NOM potluck and party for the newly nominated volunteers in the area was hosted by Otto and Lynne Koester (Ethiopia 68-70). Although, apparently the official name of the event has been changed to the 'send off party' we still had a nice turnout including newly nominated volunteers. 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, Peter McDonough, 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. This year was even more special because we celebrated our 25th year of gathering in the summer and celebrating Western Montana and the Western Montana Returned Peace Corps volunteers. The special events for the 25th helped to assure one of the largest turnouts we have had, and the weather was pretty good too.

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 Jackie Johnson's (Nicaragua 2000-01) flower-filled back yard. The weather cooperated nicely that evening as well.

In October the WMRPCV group once again had a presence at the Jeannette Ranking Peace Center Peace Party and fundraising. In March a number of us participated in a community-wide march for international understanding and inclusion, which focused on supporting accepting refugees from war torn countries to Missoula. In the fall, when a local group, 'Soft Landing Missoula' brought refugees to Missoula a number of RPCVs helped with translating and other tasks.

At the October potluck in the Missoula home of Joe Elliot (Kenya 68-70) and Nancy Volle we met the new campus representative on campy, Terri Nichols. She continued to be very active in our group and attended most of our potlucks.

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. One of the local international groups we have been supporting is "Missoula Medical Aid" which has been taking medical brigades to Honduras since hurricane Mitch in 1998. The calendar sales is one way to meet "The Third Goal" of promoting a better understanding of people in other parts of the world on 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.