



Western Montana RPCV News

DECEMBER 2009

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 4

Upcoming Events

DECEMBER POTLUCK
Saturday, Dec. 19
6:00 pm at Jim and
Melissa's, 525 Fairview,
Missoula

JANUARY POTLUCK
Saturday, Jan. 16 6:00 pm
at Dennis's, 1729 North
Ave. West., Missoula

FEBRUARY POTLUCK
Saturday, Feb. 13, 6:00
pm at Joe and Nancy's,
3918 Lincoln Rd.,
Missoula

PEACE CORPS WEEK!!
March 1 - 5

JUNE 11, 112 & 13!!!!
2010!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Goat Chase Retreat
Flathead Lake!!!!



Some of the revelers at the Halloween Potluck/Party

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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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WMRPCV WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS.

Rebecca Richter from Florence who was in Guinea.
Patrick Fekety from Missoula who was in Malawi.
Bruce and Barbara Sims from Missoula who were in the Philippines.
Don Sims from Missoula who was in Bulgaria.
Nora Olsgaard from Missoula who was in Tanzania.

From the President:

Dennis Bangs (Ecuador 70-72)

As usual the fall saw quite a bit of activity for the Western Montana RPVCs. Thanks to some generous hosts we saw more fun potlucks and thanks to numerous willing presenters we were treated to a number of entertaining and educational presentations.

It began in September at the home of Dave Beans (Sierra Leone 67-69). At Dave's potluck Jeannie Siegler (Sierra Leone 68-70) gave a presentation on her and her husband, Chris's trip to Sierra Leone and the work they were doing with the YMCA and a school teachers program.

In October, at the home of Jackie Johnson (Nicaragua 2000-01) we had a large turnout for the Halloween gathering and Nora Olsgaard (Tanzania 2006-08) gave a great presentation of her work and recent experiences in Tanzania.

The November potluck at the home of Reggie and Scott Spaulding (Fiji 1993-96) in addition to a Kava ceremony, featured a great show of pictures and stories from Jared and Bess Alden (Mali 2007-09). They just returned and had a newborn baby to show as well as the stories and photos from Mali. Jared and Bess are in the midst of starting a family and creating a career. Jared has developed a couple of websites featuring his experiences in Mali and his photography. They are pretty amazing and worth checking out. The photo website is www.jaredphotography.com, the Peace Corps Blog is www.reddenalden.blogspot.com and the baby photos are at www.jaredalden.com.

Activity is picking up on campus as well. The new recruiter for Peace Corps, Amy Quandt (Tanzania 2007-09) is putting together many recruiting events and would love to have RPCVs from the community help her out. On Thursday, November 19 five or six of us did. We participated in a panel about Peace Corps experiences for the International Week at the University.

Our annual fundraiser is wrapping up also. As you know, we sell the International Calendars from the Wisconsin RPCV group and donate to a wide range of groups and programs. We still have some calendars left, so if you can sell some more or need some more, don't hesitate to contact me.

On the upcoming news front, don't forget about the Christmas Party/Potluck. Once again Jim Burchfield (Guatemala 1973-77) and Melissa Mackenzie (Costa Rica 81-84) will be hosting it. In addition to the amazing food and camaraderie we have a fun 'White Elephant Gift' exchange. If anyone is unfamiliar with how this works you can contact me before hand. Hope to see you all there.

Further in the future will be the Peace Corps Week, the first week of March where we go into the schools and community to share our Peace Corps experiences. You should keep those dates in mind and participate if you can.

Have a great holiday season and hopefully we will see you in December.

The following letter and accompanying photos come from WMRPCV member who is on his way back to Zambia once again this winter.

Tiny Tim and Friends Farm

My name is Garrett Olson. I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Zambia from 2004-2006 working with subsistence and emergent farmers in the bush of Eastern Province. Part of my experience in Zambia was working on my master's degree in International Conservation and Development and my thesis was on forestry and agricultural programs aimed at poverty reduction. This is what sparked my interest in tropical agriculture. I currently work seasonally for the United States Forest Service in Montana and met Dr. Tim when he came to Montana to speak on HIV and AIDS in Zambia. Three weeks later I was in Zambia again helping to get the TT&F farm up and running.

The farm is approximately 8 acres and when I arrived in mid-October 2008 all that I found were two hoes and an empty reservoir with a booster pump in dire need of repair. Since then we have cultivated three acres and are currently preparing a fourth. We have planted corn, peanuts, soy beans, cow peas, and sorghum. All of which are prime ingredients in weaning foods for HIV negative children born to HIV positive mothers thanks to the efforts of the TT&F clinic. They are also ingredients in chicken feed since we have interests in poultry production here at the farm for added income generation. In addition, we have planted sun-hemp and pigeon peas, which are wonderful agro-forestry species aimed at improving and maintaining soil fertility.

Renovations to the reservoir and booster pump have been expensive, but they will allow the farm to do dry season farming and gardening. We are currently in the rainy season, but the addition of an irrigation system will allow the farm to plant three times a year versus just one in the rainy season; with proper crop rotation, of course. Although it is expensive now to establish an irrigation system, it offers great potential for income generation year-round especially when demand for corn and vegetables increases in the dry months in Zambia. In addition, we hope to develop the farm in a way to achieve organic status. The markets for organic produce are bountiful and not presently saturated so this would also generate added revenues from the more lucrative organic market.

Simply put, our current goal is to pay off our debts and generate income for the farm and the TT&F organization. As mentioned, starting a farm from very little is a costly enterprise and agriculture can be risky. However, we feel that it is paramount to start a fully functioning farm that would maintain profitability, expansion of uncultivated land on the farm, provide employment and training to TT&F patients, and allow for investment in secondary income generation projects such as poultry and mushroom production. Tantamount to that is to help support and expand the TT&F clinic especially in these uncertain economic times where donor monies have declined significantly.

Current challenges are completing the irrigation system, maintaining our current crop for harvest, and paying off our loans so that at the end of the rainy season we can have enough profits remaining to reinvest in the farm for dry season vegetable production and supporting the efforts at the TT&F clinic.

Please visit the "Contribute/Donate" page of this website <www.tinytimandfriends.org> if you are interested in assisting the TT&F farm. Thank you.

Garrett Chosembezesesa Olson
January, 2009

Sorry that I missed the last potluck, but I had to bail that weekend to prepare for my travels again. I'm going back to Zambia for the winter to volunteer again for Tiny Tim & Friends. The farm is doing ok, but stagnant so I'm going back to see if we can improve production. We got a new farm manager right before I returned to the States so apparently he didn't do a good job over the winter. Time to crack some skulls. Haha. No, seriously, read "Dead Aid" - Dambisa Moyo; my development paradigm finally articulated by an African; Zambian woman actually. Anyway, it was a crappy fire season so I can't really afford to do it, but a production company was at the smokejumper base last summer and I did some filming for them - long story short they are offsetting some of my costs to do some filming in Zambia this winter - poaching, wildlife protection, bush meat trade, etc. Should be interesting. So I'll split my time between the farm and the bush. I'm not swingin' a hoe for 60 hours a week this time. Haha.

Mary, I attached some stuff for the newsletter or whatever. Sorry that was so late. I'll send you an update this winter. No need to donate money. We got the farm up and running last winter and now it's up to them to make it productive - win, lose, or draw.

Have a safe and enjoyable winter, guys. See you in April.

Garrett



Butt-load of maize



Garrett with maize beer-full circle baby



Dry and fresh maize



Veg beds



Sorghum

On November 24 the NPCA held a 'webinar' discussing plans for the upcoming 50th anniversary of Peace Corps. I didn't participate but I did receive a summary of the discussion. Following is an edited version of what I received. Editor.

50th Anniversary Webinar 11.24.09 – Discussion and Q & A Summary

John Evans, Friends of the Dominican Republic: Friends of the DR is planning both a domestic event in conjunction with the September 2011 events in Washington, DC, which is in the initial planning stages, as well as a 50th Anniversary in-country reunion in Santo Domingo in February of 2012. This reunion has happened every 5 years since 1997, and Friends of the DR takes turns with a sister organization in hosting/planning the event. If anyone would like more information about planning an in-country reunion, you are welcome to contact Friends of the DR for advice.

Bill Stein, Columbia River Peace Corps Association: The Columbia River Peace Corps Association is working in conjunction with the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience to put on an exhibit honoring the 50th at the Oregon Historical Society beginning in March of 2011 that will run for three months.

Anne Baker, NPCA: If anyone is thinking about working with your local university for the 50th, a planning guide for university seminars can be found on both the 50th [Anniversary Campaign Page](#) on Peace Corps Connect and the 50th [Anniversary Liaisons Group page](#) on Connected Peace Corps.

Lee Row, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin-Madison: RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison is planning a number of 50th events. With the help of a curator friend, they are in the beginning stages of planning an exhibit that they hope will be held at the University of Wisconsin. They are also in the initial stages of planning a seminar (scheduled for March 4-5, 2011) about Africa and the Peace Corps in conjunction with the African Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin, as it also their 50th anniversary. Additionally, they are working to make their calendar commemorate the 50th by including key Peace Corps dates, important people of Peace Corps' birthdays, etc. They also will be sending out an email soon asking for photo submissions, as they want to feature pictures from the original 13 Peace Corps countries. Finally, they are keeping in contact with the Regional Recruiting Office in Chicago in order to help with their 50th efforts.

Anne Baker, NPCA (and who is also on the board of Friends of Fiji): Friends of Fiji is also in touch with the Country Director there to plan a Habitat for Humanity project where members of the Friends of Fiji will go back to Fiji to build homes. Anne has also been in touch with members of the Atlanta Area RPCVs who work for Habitat for Humanity and will be looking into ways for both regional groups and country of service groups to partner with Habitat for the 50th.

John Kuehnle, Boston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers: Boston Area RPCVs is in the process of putting together a 50th anniversary planning committee that will work on their 50th projects. This year, as an unofficial kickoff to the 50th, they organized a photo contest as well as an exhibit in a local coffee shop to raise awareness for the 50th. The group is also communicating with the Boston Regional Recruiting Office on the 50th. John also asked how to be in touch with NPCA and Peace Corps headquarters about the 50th, and how NPCA is collaborating with Peace Corps Headquarters on the 50th.

Anne Baker: (in response to John's question) The 50th anniversary planning that had taken place at Peace Corps Headquarters over the summer has been put on hold due to the leadership transitions that have been taking place since Aaron Williams was named the new Director. Plans are currently still on hold there, but in the meantime NPCA is still moving forward with planning for the 50th and is encouraging all member groups to do the same.

Anne Baker: A list of points of contact for the Peace Corps Regional Recruiting Offices can be found on the 50th [Liaisons Group Page](#) on Connected Peace Corps.

Anne Baker: (in response to John's question) Go to the Events page on Connected Peace Corps. Click on "Add an Event" in the upper right-hand corner, enter in the details of your event, and then click "Add Event" at the bottom. Under "Event Type", please put "50th", so that your event can be categorized as such and easily found.

James Gore: To conclude, the NPCA Board of Directors Regional Representatives will be in touch with group leaders regarding coordination of events, fundraising (i.e. info on preferred providers, how-to, etc.), and advocacy initiatives surrounding the 50th. Please keep the lines of communication going so that everyone's 50th anniversary events are well-coordinated.

Anne Baker: Please contact any of the 50th Anniversary points of contact (found on slide 9 of the power point presentation) should you have any more questions or need information regarding the planning your events for the 50th. Thank you all for participating!



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**