President's Message

It's been a quiet month on the shores of Lake Mendota. As I write this message, the shiny airplane carrying NPCA director, Chick Dambach, is probably just landing. The calendar committee will meet this evening with him, while enjoying a delicious Thai dinner and discussing marketing issues and the role NPCA might play in future calendar distribution. We're hoping that future includes the Nature Company.

Tomorrow Chick will address RPCVs and families of currently serving volunteers at the annual Family Brunch. This event promises to be successful, thanks largely to Helene for its planning. Thank you are also in order to Jim Smith, Don Sauer, and Henry Nehls-Lowe for orchestrating Chick's visit. Of course we extend a hearty thank you to Chick for his interest in and support of our group.

More thank yous must also be extended to Sandy Moss for her leadership and contribution to the Global Ed and Membership committees. As Sandy prepares to leave Madison, she is turning Membership over to Susan Mendrysas. Sandy has pointed out, as have several others of you, that we need to upgrade our software to meet the group's data base needs. She recommends FileMaker Pro as a replacement to our pirated and patched-up software system. We will need to discuss this at the May meeting.

The deadline for Project Funding is April 30. Application forms are available from Walt and should be returned to him. I have a list of worthy Projects sent to us by the Partnership Program. Anyone interested in writing up one of these Projects should contact me ASAP.

And, finally, as it was suggested to me at the last potluck meeting, we might include a joke-of-the month in the President's message. But what joke is both funny and inoffensive? It seems every joke makes a butt out of something. Would a buttless joke be funny? Whose butt is neutral? And will my butt be kicked if I do this? How many Madisoneans does it take to change a lightbulb? Two. One to do the work, and one to explain how it was better in the 60s.

Ha ha from the Pres.

Sue
Officers & Committees:

**PRESIDENT**
Lori Merrin
257-3279

**VICE PRESIDENT**
Conrad Wellenbach
251-5140

**SECRETARY**
Buck Trawicky
241-2292

**TREASURER**
Peter Joyce
251-9405

**DEADWOOD**
Walz Zettler
873-5257

**AGENT**
Gordon Malaise
255-3261

**FREEZE FOR FOOD**
Deb Stapleton
244-9609

Lori Merrin
257-2271

**FAMILY BRUNCH**
Helene Pesche
239-2792

**SPEAKERS BUREAU**
James Guity
238-0276

**GLOBAL EDUCATION**
Lisa Goldman
249-0243

Dave Wakeley
255-1339

Sandy Moss
246-9605

**INTERNAL EDUCATION**

???your name here???

**CALENDAR**

Henry Nehls-Lowe
839-5976

**PRODUCTION**

Julie Olsen
242-1355

**GRAPHICS**

Barbara Chatterjee
271-2405

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

Sandy Moss
246-9605

**MEMBERSHIP**

Sharon Lewandowski
241-2392

**SOCIAL**

Gordon Malaise
255-3261

**NEWSLETTER**

Sandy Moss
246-9605

**EDITOR**

??your name here??

**LABELS**

??your name here??

**PROPERTY LIBRARIAN**

??your name here??

**HISTORIAN**

??your name here??

**ADVENTURE**

Buck Trawicky
241-2392

**CAMPUS PC RECRUITER**

Erik Jensen
262-1121

Room 240, Agriculture Hall

Mon. 9-11

Tues. 9-11

Wed. 9-11

Thurs. 10-2

NEXT MEETING:

Monday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.
Union South, 127 N. Randall St.

FUTURE MEETING DATES:

Tuesday, June 7, 7:00 p.m.
Union South, 127 N. Randall St.

Wednesday, July 6, 7:00 p.m.
Union South, 127 N. Randall St.

Other RPCV organizations have our permission to use any material of interest in this newsletter.

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**Newsletter Policy**

Since we're always trying to get new members, We'll send three copies of our newsletter to anyone we think will be interested. After that, you have to pay to stay on our mailing list. Details can be found on the back page. ONE EXCEPTION: Contacts in other RPCV organizations can continue to receive our newsletter if they will send us theirs.
DATES TO NOTE

Saturday, April 30- Deadline for Project Funding Application. Submit application forms describing project and financial need to Walt Zeitner, 393 Lake Kegonsa Road, Oregon WI 53575.

Monday, May 2, 7PM- General Meeting at Union South, 127 N Randall Street. Check "Today in the Union" board for room number. Get agenda items to Lori Merriam before the weekend, 257-2271.

Thursday, May 12- Newsletter Deadline Get camera-ready materials to Gordon Malaise at 1447 Spaight Street, Madison WI 53703. His number: 255-3261

Sunday, May 15, 10AM- Calendar Committee Meeting at Barbara Chatterjee's place, 5102 Coney Weston Place, off of Odana Road. If you have questions, or need directions, call Barbara at 271-2405.

Tuesday, June 7- General Meeting at Union South, 127 Randall Street. Check "Today in the Union" board for room number. This is the Big Gift-Away meeting for project funding. Get any other agenda items to Lori Merriam before the weekend, 257-2271.

SUMMER CAMPOUT
JUNE 10-12
GOVERNOR DODGE STATE PARK

To get to Governor Dodge from Madison, take USH's 18 and 151 west into Dodgeville. In Dodgeville, head north on STH 23 maybe 3 or 4 miles and enter the park on the right. Or, for the athletes in the group, take the Military Ridge Bike Trail from Verona all the way to the park--39 miles in all. Proceed to Group Campsite E.

Remember, vehicle admission stickers are required for entry into the park--$15 annual/$4 daily. The cost of the campsite is $30/night for 20 or fewer people and $60/night for 21 to 40 people, so once everyone arrives, I will take a count and divide it up. It shouldn't come to much more that $2 or $3 per person per night.

The park offers all the great things we've come to expect from our state parks--swimming, fishing, boating, hiking, horseback riding, biking and raccoons! Bring your camping gear, toys and a dish to pass for Saturday night and be prepared for an excellent weekend in God's Country. Questions? Call Gordon at 255-3261.
This was a potluck meeting at Conrad Weiffenbach's house. It was very lively, the food was tasty (though tamarind tastes like old tires with date-flesh reinforcement), and it lasted for quite a long time. In a rare moment of repose, 49 were counted on the group's clicker. (Dean Mahon is back, for good (cheers), from Switzerland, with his wife Hilda.)

This was Lori's first meeting as our President; Jim is now in France, wowing the locals no doubt.

We introduced ourselves, and each named our country's favorite brunch. (Some weren't worth getting up for; and Peter's was unspeakable.)

The Family Brunch (Helene Pesche): it's on Sunday, 17 April (and you were there, right?). This is an annual event for the families of serving PCVs. The families (parents, grandparents, whatever) come to have brunch with us and ask questions about what's really happening to their relatives. (We've never been confident that meeting us, and seeing what their loved ones will probably turn into, really reassures them.) All is on track. For details, see last month's Newsletter.

Helene needs a replacement; she cannot lead this next year. (Buck has a nifty partial solution, but can't sell it yet.)

A visit from the National Peace Corps Association (Walt Zeltner): Chick Dambech, exec. dir. of the Nat'l PC Assoc., will be in Madison for the weekend of the Brunch, to meet us and guff. Don will meet him at the airport Saturday and be his driver, and Henry will be the bed-time host. Chick wants to discuss Calendar marketing ideas (so the Calendar obsessives want to meet with him on that), and he wants to talk with us about national business generally, and about how the NPCA can work with and aid local groups (which concerns all of us). He'll be at the Brunch. Thereafter, he flies off to visit another PC group.

Donation (Don Sauer): As per the MOTION in last month's NL, we all voted AYE to donate $500 to Chick Dambech to help defray the huge (and uninsured) medical expenses involved in donating one of his kidneys to his child Kai. Don will draft the letter to accompany the check. We made unfavorable comments on the NPCA's health insurance coverage.

2 Conferences (Barbara Chatterjee): One on dealing with climates of violence (noted in the last NL); another on "Communities in Transition--Making Diversity Work." This one is still in the planning stage.

Loret Ruppe Award (Barbara): This is an award given at the annual RPCV Conference, for excellent work done by an RPCV group. She has drafted our recommendation that we get one, for the Calendar. It's to be mailed in 15 April.

Help with labor (Joe): The Community Garden Program has several needs that we can perhaps help with. They need to install water systems, and the electric line to support them. He asks that an electrician in our group help with the wiring, and that all of us come help trench, probably in May. (Call Joe or Meredith, 271-0998.)

Pay Your Dues! (Susan).

Reconnect Project (Sharon): We are one of a few PC groups selected by the NPCA & PC/DC for a pilot project to help freshly returning PCVs readjust to the US, and get settled in (boring) jobs. Sharon is our honcho; she says training for those who'll help will be in September.
The Gift-Away (Walt): We have $14,000 left over from the proceeds of the 94 Calendar; this is to be transferred into the group's general bank accounts, for us to decide how to use. Those who brood on these matters recommend we allocate $8,000 of it to our June Gift-Away, when we make a batch of donations. Walt will lead the committee to organize all the donation suggestions that are coming in (about 40 so far), and make recommendations about amounts. Gordon and Buck will assist; others are very welcome to participate. We'll meet at Gordon's house after 30 April, the deadline for proposals. (Call Walt, 873-5257.)

The Annual National Rational PRCV Conference: is in Atlanta this summer, weekend of 30 July. Y'all come. We'll hump down a bunch of calendars, and sell about 700, we fondly hope. Buck's parents and brother live there, and you can meet them if you come.

The next President of Guatemala, says Peter Joyce, is speaking in Madison on 29 April.

And who lost his pants at the Baron Bliss Party? (Alan sheepishly claimed them.) A dandy ending.

--Buck.

15 April 94 (Malta Award Day)

CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 10, 1994

Those present at the meeting were Barbara Chatterjee, Dean Mahon, Lori Merriam, Julie Olsen, Don Sauer, Buck Trawicky and Conrad Weifenbach.

The size of the Press Run for the 1995 Calendar was discussed. After review of sales to last year's customers and possible new customers, it was determined to print 18,000 copies this year. This provides for some expansion of sales to each class of customers as well as providing for in-kind donations of Calendars we wish to make. If necessary, the number of Calendars to be printed can be altered till late April.

A discussion of accounting and other data management procedures was discussed. Kevin Nies has agreed to provide the main leadership in the area of Calendar distribution. This will involve handling the main responsibility for accepting and fulfilling orders. Peter Joyce, Group treasurer, and Don Sauer, de facto Calendar financial manager, are determined to see Group and Calendar financial matters brought under one software umbrella and then managed with skill (read someone other than Don Sauer).

We discussed the Data Management needs of the Calendar and, by extension, the Group. Don agreed to make a presentation to the May 2 General Meeting based on A MODEST PROPOSAL (see elsewhere in May Newsletter) regarding Data Management and to solicit committee members at that meeting. Don is to organize one meeting of this committee prior to the next Calendar meeting so that a preliminary report can be made at that time.

Printer bids were discussed. We have had two bids returned and Barbara Chatterjee has been in close contact with at least one of the printers to discuss the bids in some detail. We still have not received a bid from Litho Productions, our printer from past years and we are giving them some extra time. However, the decision on printer must be made quite soon in order to keep our production schedule on track.

Our production timelines are being met. Buck will present the dayblock text to Sue Kummer of Artifax on Monday, April 11 so that she can begin the typesetting process. Henry reports via long distance that the photo preparation is on schedule. The Good Taste Committee has had an initial run through on Buck's text and made some changes; Julie Olsen has prepared another set of beautiful borders for the date pages. Her work is well in hand and will be completed in a timely fashion. The transfer of $14,000 to the Group Treasury for dispersal will be accomplished before April 17. Collections of outstanding accounts continue apace but we are in excellent shape this year with all major accounts paid up.

We discussed the visit of Chic Dalmbach over the coming weekend. Arrangements are being made to host his visit which will have two main focuses, the Parents' Brunch and the Calendar. We will be discussing how NPCA and RPCVs of WI/Madison can expand the mutual benefits of the Calendar and what next steps might most profitably be taken. No specific agreements are anticipated but rather the development of a shared vision for future development of the Calendar and closer cooperation between the National and the Local Group.

Don Sauer
Scribe for a Day
Distribution of Calendar Proceeds - Walt Zeltner (H: 873-5257; W: 262-1321)

Last year we established a process for distributing the proceeds from our calendar. First, the International Calendar Steering Committee announces the amount available for distribution. This year, after setting aside money to cover most of the production costs of the 1995 calendar, we have $14,000 to distribute. This money is placed in a special account that is divided into three categories:

1. Small Projects - The types of projects that we have funded in the past with proceeds from the calendar. Requests for funding for such projects must be received by Apr. 30 and must be submitted on a form that is available from me. Only requests from members of the RPCVs of WI - Madison whose dues are paid will be considered. A committee will meet in early May to consider the requests and recommend the requests to be funded as well as the amount to be funded. These recommendations will be published in the newsletter available at the end of May. The group will make a final decision on the projects to be funded and the funding levels at the June business meeting. Checks then have to be written and sent to the appropriate place.

2. Contingency Fund - Money set aside so the Chapter can fund eligible projects at other times of the year (e.g., Freeze for Food expenses). We recommend that this fund be brought up to $2,000 each year.

3. Special Projects - Money set aside for projects that require larger amounts of funding and/or in an endowment fund. Procedures for handling these projects will be developed later.

The amount of funds to be placed in each category must be determined by a majority vote of the Chapter membership at the May business meeting. To facilitate this process, I am submitting the following motion:

The RPCVs of WI - Madison will utilize the $14,000 in proceeds from the 1994 International Calendar by placing $9,000 in the Small Projects Fund, $1,300 in the Contingency Fund, and $3,700 in the Special Projects Fund.

Considerations in arriving at my proposed split include:

a) Last year we received 24 requests for $6,000 in Small Project funding. This year I have distributed over 40 request forms, so the number of requests should increase substantially. In order for each approved project to receive a reasonable amount of funding (my criterion is at least $200 for each project but others have different feelings), the total amount in this fund must also increase substantially.

b) Peter is still involved in the difficult task of reorganizing our books (and verifying that we did not lose $4,000 somewhere), so I do not know how much money was spent from the Contingency funds. $1,300 seemed reasonable to bring up that fund. If it goes over $2,000, we can add less next year.

c) Last year we put $3,600 aside for Special Projects, so an additional contribution of $3,700 seems appropriate.

d) Final note: Please contact me if you want to serve on the committee that recommends funding for small projects. We'll meet at Gordon's house (1447 Spaight) and determine the time at the May meeting.

Walt
THE PROBLEM

The RFCVs of WJ/Madison has a history of about 14 years. During the first half of this period we were able to maintain our record keeping on an ad hoc basis with the Newsletter and simple checking and savings accounts. 8 years ago we began producing the Calendar and continued using our ad hoc procedures and systems. We put our things into print and distributed the Calendar. After I did this one year by hand (which involved writing every address down about four times) the group financed the purchase of a computer which I have used to create invoices, do bookkeeping and write letters related to the Calendar. I have repaid the group for the cost of the computer and I now own it. In addition to the work I have done, Buck is using my computer to do much of the text work for the Calendar.

Meanwhile the financial situation of the group has become much more complex. We received a grant of $5000 to create a Development Education project which financed the production and distribution of the "Unshackled Voices" video. We have a tradition of distributing the proceeds from our Calendar to various projects working in development and education in the US and around the world. In our typical ad hoc fashion we have established two separate sets of accounts for the financial management of the group and of the Calendar Project. As might be imagined, tax time is a major headache for our treasurer and those who deal with the group’s various financial elements.

At this point in the maturation of our organization there is a need to make the management of our finances more rational because of the confusion and difficulty which now exists and because of the increasing complexity of our finances which can be predicted for the future.

THE PROPOSAL

We should begin the process of a detailed look at the current and future data management needs of our organization. We should strive to make a comprehensive plan that can be implemented in stages and in a way consistent with the goals, traditions and philosophy of our organization. This will involve significant commitments from a number of people as we try to deal with current realities and predict future needs.

It seems to go almost without saying that the core of a comprehensive data management plan will be computerization. Throughout the planning process we must remain cognizant of the nature of our organization and our members. We must be aware of the challenges presented by the type of membership we have. We must also strive to take advantage of the unique qualities our members bring to the organization. How can we meet these challenges now and in the future?

A main complicating factor in all this is, of course, the Calendar. If we wish to continue to produce this Calendar (and conceivably other products) as a primary project of this group we have reached the point at which we must take a much more active stance in regard to our data management problems. If, on the other hand, we decide that we are willing to let the Calendar become a thing of the past we can probably continue on in our laid-back ad hoc style. Once again we will become an organization which rocks along with a few hundred dollars in the bank. In that scenario, a large scale plan to deal with finances and other data management challenges would be a useless drain on the time and resources of the group. Therefore, it seems to me that the first decision which must be made is whether or not we wish to continue to produce the Calendar. This decision must be made with the understanding that a decision to continue production will entail a commitment by the group to establishing a much more comprehensive data management operation than we have had heretofore. This would mean increasing expenditures and some rather long term commitments on the part of the organization. It would not, it seems to me, require individual commitments of more intensity or duration than have already been demonstrated by a large number of members in a variety of efforts throughout our history.

SCENARIOS

The first scenario is to do very little. We will probably want to bring in the financial dealings of the group including the Calendar Project under one manager, presumably the Treasurer. It seems necessary to clarify this area of management even if we decide to stop producing the Calendar. The Officers by virtue of the law and our organizational charter are legally responsible for the organization’s finances. It makes it very difficult for the Treasurer to discharge this responsibility if there is a large chunk of money out there which s/he has little control and oversight. One of the strengths of our group has been that we are honest and honorable people so we can operate on the basis of trust. However, the process of pulling together the necessary information on which to base the legally required reports is needlessly complicated by our current fragmented approach. Therefore, it seems necessary to me to pull our finances back together, regardless of our decision to continue or to cease Calendar production.

The second scenario is to continue what is currently being done but to pull a number of the data management tasks together by using various members’ personally owned computers and programs to perform the various tasks necessary. This might involve leasing the use of one member’s computer to do the Calendar and group finances in one bookkeeping operation. It could conceivably be used to manage the various mailing lists necessary for the group like the Newsletter and the Calendar. It would be possible to use it for database programs which could give us a variety of reports and allow us to gather and make use of information which is currently lost because we have no efficient way to manage it. The problems with this approach include its essentially ad hoc nature. We would be vulnerable to the individual’s desire and need to move on in their life and become a less active member of the organization. It could easily become an overbearing presence in the individual’s home and life. Imagine the conflict if your computer was the one and only way you could get to work frequently to create labels for the Newsletter, write invoices for the Calendar orders, work on the groups books or any of the numerous tasks which need to be done. You might be willing to do this for a couple of years or so if it fit in with your life, but it is hard to imagine that any of us would want to take this on as an open ended commitment. This leads to the conclusion that we would have to go through the process of finding a new home for our operation every couple of years or so. This approach may be necessary as an interim step but it does not seem like a good long term solution, especially if we decide to continue Calendar production.

The third scenario is much more comprehensive and would require more detailed planning and, thus, a longer lead time. It involves the purchase by the group of data management equipment and software. Of course, this equipment would have to be housed somewhere which raises the old question of the “Clubhouse.” It seems there would be three possibilities for housing the equipment if the group took this decision. One would be to house it in a members house, presumably with that individual being heavily involved in its use for the group. Another would be to rent a small space just large enough to house a small office in a commercial building of some sort which could be the nexus of our data management operations. The third option would be to rent a space which would house our data management office but would also have sufficient space and facilities to be a site for group meetings, parties and Calendar production and distribution activities.

SUGGESTED ACTION

We should form committees to investigate the various alternatives embodied in these scenarios and others which may arise. These committees would look at the costs and the benefits of various alternatives to be presented to the group with recommendations. General areas around which committees might coalesce would be the computer equipment and software to meet current and anticipated data management needs, investigation of the real estate situation to get an accurate understanding of various possibilities for housing the equipment, examination of the various capital, fixed and variable costs involved and a recommendations group to pull all this together for presentation to the group.

The most important asset of this organization is its membership and their willingness to lend their heads and hearts to improving the world in which we live. The membership, with its unique attributes and challenges, should be at the center of our deliberations. We are motivated, innovative, willing to work, honest, honorable and intelligent. We are also mobile, busy, and not particularly wealthy as individuals. We need to make plans which accentuate the strengths of our membership while meeting the organizational challenges a group like ours presents.
PARENT'S BRUNCH

As usual, the Parent's Brunch was a resounding success. Held at the Heritage House this year, the food was plentiful and the company was good. Helene did her usual excellent job as organizer and Lori's wit and humor served her well as the master of ceremonies.

We were honored by the presence of Chic Dambach, National Peace Corps Association (NCPA) Executive Director, who gave the keynote address. Chic spoke on the 3 goals of the NCPA. First, it is a network not only for RPCV's but also for all people who are sympathetic to our goals, hence, the more inclusive new name. But, a network for its own sake is not enough, so NCPA's 2nd goal is to use that network to help us bring the world back home. Through NCPA, we can tap into the creative work of other local and friends of countries groups to help us spread the word in our own community, but it is on us, not the folks in DC, to get out and do it. NCPA's 3rd goal is to advocate for the 1.2 billion hungry people in the world. NCPA lobbies for the Peace Corps itself as a good investment in foreign aid and for other sensible foreign aid policies that emphasize sustainable, village-based development. Chic lamented the fact that of the 15 richest nations on earth we are dead last in percentage of GNP that goes for foreign aid and that of that amount too much goes for military aid and big boondoggle projects that benefit the already wealthy elite. Chic noted that we in Wisconsin have the ear of Congressman David Obey, the man who holds the pursestrings in DC, and encouraged us to let him know what we think. Chic closed on a personal note by thanking us for our support in helping him and his wife meet the uninsured costs of his son's illness.

And so, with our heads and tummies full of good things, we headed our respective ways to enjoy the rest of a glorious Spring day.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
A SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY

SAM HARRIS
Founder of RESULTS
Author of
Reclaiming our Democracy:
Healing the break between people and government

Sunday, May 1, 1994
7:00- 9:30 PM
Grace Episcopal Church
Guild Hall
116 West Washington Avenue
Madison Wisconsin

For More Information, please call
Jeffrey Golden 829-1905
GREEN FIRES
Assault on Eden: A Novel of the Ecuadorian Rainforest

a debut work by Marnie Mueller

"...a gripping tale of adventure, intrigue, politics, and heartbreak set in the lush forests of Ecuador..."
says Alix Kates Shulman, author of Drinking the Rain, and Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen, "Green Fires is an impressive first novel."

"This is a remarkable achievement."
says Larry Cox, Executive Director of the Rainforest Foundation, "a novel which presents the indigenous peoples of the rainforest without cliché or stereotype, romanticism or ideology. It dares to depict their struggle for survival with all its complexity and contradictions, moments of fear and cruelty, courage and love. With honesty and art, Marnie Mueller has written a story not just about the war waged against the rainforest and the indigenous peoples but against—and within—each one of us."

"I lived, transfixed, in the Ecuadorian jungle Marnie Mueller recreates, among some of the most memorable characters I've met in fiction in a long time. I know of no contemporary writer who combines irresistible plot, uncompromising political vision, and moral exploration the way Mueller does in Green Fires," Says Jane Lazarre, author of The Mother Knot and Worlds Beyond My Control

In the heart of the Ecuadorian rainforest, there is currently a battle between five peoples such as the Huaorani, the Quichua and the Shuar; and the American oil companies who want to expand the roads and pipelines that would end their ancient ways of life. Set in 1969, Marnie Mueller's GREEN FIRES: Assault on Eden, a Novel of the Ecuadorian Rainforest has as its backdrop, the first clashes between indigenous peoples and multinational oil companies, a battle that may well determine the fate of the rainforest. It is the story of Annie Saunders, a disillusioned Kennedy-era Peace Corps volunteer, returning to Ecuador in 1969, hoping to come to terms with her traumatic experiences there years earlier. What she finds instead is a menacing and mysterious trail which she determinedly follows—ever deeper into the jungle—uncovering a sinister secret of international dimensions.

MARNIE MUELLER, a former Peace Corps volunteer, served in Ecuador on a tour of duty which began on November 22, 1963. She has also been program director at Pacifica's listener-sponsored WBAI-FM in New York, and has worked as a community organizer in the South Bronx and East Harlem. She currently lives in Manhattan.

$19.95 cloth
320 pp, ISBN 1-880684-16-0
pub date: April 12, 1994
OOPS!

Membership information can usually be found here, but we messed up this month. It will return next month.

Walt

(for a slightly embarrassed editor)