Let the holiday season be an uplifting time of service toward others!

World Roots News

November & December 2015

Tis the season where often less is more, so I decided to combine the newsletters for November & December into one. Plus, I need to use the extra time to get my 2016 international calendar order in before the new year rolls around. THANKS to everyone for your contributions this year...keep 'em coming! -- The Editor

38th Annual Willie Street Fair Parade & Booth

By Troy Rutter
Sunday, September 20, 2015, was another beautiful Fall day for the 38th annual Willy Street Fair on Madison’s east side. The skies were blue and a small group of RPCVs had picture perfect weather as they marched in the People’s Parade, behind the vintage 1964 Cadillac Bubblemobile starting the day-long festivities.

There was good music and delicious food along with good company as we talked to fair goers about our experiences as Peace Corps Volunteers. By the end of the day, we sold over 80 calendars and 22 note card sets. Thanks go out to Sharon Isensee and Helene Pesche [pictured above], Scot Simpson, Kristy Torres, Harry Bennett, Tom Brodd, Karl Stark, Phyllis Noble, Lynn and Tom Felhofer, Meghan Meeker, and Margot Kennard for helping staff the RPCV-Madison table. And special thanks to Kate Schachter for bringing the banners and flags and organizing our People’s Parade marchers.

RPCV Board Spotlight:
President Clare McNamara

Clare McNamara served as an education volunteer in the northeastern mountains of Tanzania from 2006-2008. During her service she taught secondary school physics, helped start a school garden, and worked on organizing a rain water catchment system for her school through PCPP. She also spent a lot of time hiking, and met her now husband who was also a PCV in Tanzania. After the Peace Corps, Clare attended the University of Michigan where she studied mechanical engineering, and went on to work at General Motors. She originally hails from Minnesota, but has also lived in Boston, Detroit, Madison, and now Baraboo where she spends her days caring for her toddler and (hopeful) future PCV, Elijah, and pursues her passions in renewable energy and sustainable living.

Submitted by Clare by Editor’s Request
Yes, it's that time of year...we need help with the Freeze for Food scheduled for Saturday, January 23, 2016. Plan to run or walk? Register to run/walk here.

Jack Laun and others from the Colombia Support Network will help again this year. Can you help? During December, we'll need more help getting the word out. Post this flyer at your work, school, and community locations. Activity ramps up the two weeks preceding the event, and of course, the day of the event. Last year we raised almost $3,800 for the Peace Community in San Jose de Apartado, Colombia, a record for the 34th annual event. With creative energy and ideas, we should be able to improve that number. See details about the event here. Please contact Kate if you can help. KateCell: 608-234-1795
In 2013, the Liberian Assistance Program (LAP) received a grant from the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of WI-Madison to buy teaching materials and hard cover, mostly picture books, about African children. The books and materials were used for the first summer Story Hour at the Barack Obama School LAP built in Cow Field, Liberia.

More than 100 children from kindergarten through the third grade participated in groups of five to 10 children for three days a week for four weeks. Eight teachers received salaries from LAP to read to the children, and help them discuss what they heard and to act out some parts of the stories. LAP also provided snacks for participating children.

The program was scheduled again for 2014 but had to be canceled due to the Ebola crisis. But Story Hour was held in the summer of 2015, using the books provided by RPCV of WI-Madison. The books are also used in the classroom during the regular school year and LAP is now sending new books for the 2016 Story Hour.

LAP is very appreciative of all the grants from RPCV of WI-Madison over the past seven years. Grants have made it possible to pay local workers to build chairs, desks and tables for the Obama School; to build a septic tank and bathrooms; to dig a well and install a water pump; to build bookshelves, and supply them with books; and, in 2015, to buy textbooks for the
recently added 7\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th} grade classes, as well as three sets of nine large, colorful paperback books featuring Liberian children. Thank you!

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**National Peace Corps Association Changes**

Submitted by Laura Vele Buchs

- Going forward, membership in the NPCA will be complimentary for every member of the Peace Corps community, so long as we have accurate service and contact information. As of January 1, 2016, NPCA membership dues are eliminated. We will continue to promote, collect & remit dues for affiliate groups.

- This approach aligns with our launch of the Peace Corps Community Fund. Members will have the opportunity to support the Peace Corps community as Mission Partners through donations to the Community Fund.

- NPCA is partnering with Publishing Concepts Inc (PCI) to produce the 2016 Peace Corps Community Directory. The print directory - and a searchable online version - will be published before Peace Corps Connect in Washington, DC next September, when we will honor Peace Corps' 55\textsuperscript{th} anniversary.
Tom Kenney's Peace Corps Response
by Tom Kenney

I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines from 1975 to 1977 and was hired by the Peace Corps to stay on after completing my service to assist in the training and orientation of new Volunteers upon their arrival in-country. I did that until April 1978, when I returned home to Wisconsin with my Filipina wife and our six-week-old son. My career after Peace Corps focused on teaching healthcare and higher education at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. I retired in May 15, 2015; eight days later, I rejoined the Peace Corps as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer, accepting a seven-month assignment to return to the same Philippine province, Bohol, where I had volunteered 40 years earlier.

Read the rest of Tom's article here.
Hiking Club Trip to Treinen Farm Corn Maze  
by Meghan Meeker

We dared to enter the [Treinen Farm Corn Maze](#), the largest corn maze in Wisconsin with over 6 miles of paths across 15 acres, whose design this year was inspired by Aesop’s fable, "The Fox and the Grapes.” Our adventurous group of RPCVs, family, and friends traversed the maze in an hour, finding enough of the hidden clues to win a “Certificate of Maze Mastery.” The RPCV Hiking Club will now take a winter break and resume its outings in Spring 2016.

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Taboo Story Slam  
by Jesse James White

In celebration of [International Education Week](#), RPCVs gathered with friends, family, and community members to share taboo stories of service. From sleeping in the Liberian bush to hitchhiking with a pair of Russians during the Cold War, the stories shared a glimpse of life as a Peace Corps Volunteer across the decades. Over 70 people ventured out of the warm homes into the rainy streets of Madison’s capital square to pack the basement of the [Argus Bar and Grill](#). Micah Kluppenburg and Zoe Schroeder MC’d the evening adding opportunities for the audience to share times with they trusted a stranger. Thirteen International calendars were purchased and 29 pounds of food was collected and donated to [Second Harvest](#).

Thanks go out to our eight wonderful storytellers, whom graced us with their tales: Harry Bennett (Belize), Jim Winship (El Salvador), Kate Schachter (Ghana), Stephanie Wester (Tanzania), Nimu Didhu (Liberia), Jason Lemberg (Kyrgyz Republic), Phillis Noble (Nigeria), and Allison Fuerstein (Nicaragua). We wouldn’t be able to have events like this without your willingness to share. Thanks also goes out to the story slam committee, you know who you are, who did an amazing job putting on [RPCVs of Wisconsin- Madison’s second story slam](#).
On behalf of the Peace Corps, thank you for your contribution of $14,748.58 to the Let Girls Learn Fund. As you know, globally, 62 million girls are not in school, and the barriers to girls completing school are significant. Your gift is going to help change that, and I cannot thank you enough for your leadership on this issue.

I would like to express a special thank you to the RPCVs of WI-Madison for giving the Peace Corps our first major donation to the Let Girls Learn Fund...Thank you as well for your past contributions to the Peace Corps Partnership Program -- over $520,000 since 2003.

Thanks to your gift, the Let Girls Learn Fund has already supported a variety of Peace Corps Volunteer-led projects: implementing Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) Camps and Clubs that empower young women and teach them leadership skills; and establishing libraries and safe spaces for girls to learn and grow; building latrines for girls to use while they are in school; and building wells, so girls spend more time in school rather than walking long distances to obtain water for their families.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Hessler-Radelet
Here's some information from the National Peace Corps Association about how you can be involved in the Let Girls Learn initiative.

**COMING SOON!**

Dec 5 - RPCV Holiday Party
Dec 10 - Calendar Committee Mtg
Dec 16 - Monthly Business Mtg

Jan 9 - Madison International Festival
Jan 14 - Calendar Committee Mtg
Jan 20 - Monthly Business Mtg
Jan 23 - Freeze for Food 5k/10k