



MNRPCV News

*Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
Serving RPCVs and the Community*

Spring 2007

2006-2007 MNRPCV Board

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Mission Statement

To serve Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and the community by providing service to others and fostering appreciation of cultural diversity.

Corner Board

by Anne Kanyusik

MNRPCV, in cooperation with the Regional Peace Corps Office, is working to create greater awareness of the international community and the Peace Corps experience by showing the exhibit *Peace and Friendship: Stories and Photographs from Minnesota Peace Corps Volunteers* at colleges, universities and other forums around the state.



Created by former Peace Corps Staff member Dan MacLaughlin, the *Peace & Friendship* exhibit features twenty photographs and stories by former volunteers with Minnesota connections. Their pictures and words show how volunteers promote peace and friendship in the developing world, often one at a time, with colleagues, neighbors, friends and host families. [Note: see inside for some of the photos and stories.] The photographers include Jack and Jane Bardon – Turkmenistan, 2003 – 2005; Ryan Kattner – Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, 2001 – 2004; Paula Zoromski - Central Africa, 1991 – 1993, Niger 1993 – 1995; Erin McGillivray – Kenya, 2002 – 2004; Laura Schmitz – Vanuatu, 2002 – 2004; Franny White – Panama, 2004 – 2006; Jennifer Lawrence – Kyrgyz Republic, 2004 – 2006; Erin and Michael Gerba – Nicaragua 2002- 2004; Ann Postera – Malawi, 2003 – 2005; and Benjamin Rau – El Salvador, 2002 -2004. The exhibition is sponsored by Utrecht Art Supplies, Pro Color, and Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Most recently, the exhibit was shown at Coffman Union at the University of Minnesota and at Carleton College. At these schools, the regional Peace Corps office held recruiting events and discussions related to Peace Corps in conjunction with the exhibit.

During the month of May 2007, the *Peace & Friendship* exhibit will be on display at Metropolitan State University. In addition, First College has generously offered to host a reception from 4-6 pm on Wednesday, May 2, 2007 to raise awareness of the exhibit. We will be sending out additional details about the reception over the MNRPCV listserv in the coming weeks. Hope to see you there!

During the coming year, we plan to display the *Peace & Friendship* exhibit at Gustavus Adolphus College, and other schools we've contacted throughout the state to ignite the Peace Corps spark in the next generation of volunteers. If you have ideas of great forums for the *Peace & Friendship* exhibit, where it might reach a wide audience of potential volunteers of any age, please contact Anne Kanyusik. Special thanks to LeeAnn Wolf, Colleen O'Dell and Gary Lore of the regional Peace Corps Office for all of their hard work in helping to further the third goal of Peace Corps!

*Anne Kanyusik, RPCV-Bangladesh, 1998-2000
Anne is an MNRPCV Member at Large*



Photos and Stories from the Peace and Friendship Exhibit (see Page 1)

My wife, Erin, and I entered the Peace Corps hoping to find an adventure by reaching out and volunteering our business expertise. We imagined before we left that we would be working on a big community project, something that you could take pictures of and write home about, telling everyone how we helped build this or that. We soon discovered that what lasts longer than brick and mortar in Nicaragua, is a strong friendship that is built on trust, honesty, and a willingness to listen and learn.



Don Alberto, by Erin and Michael Gerba, Nicaragua 02-04

We often worked and visited the local Nature Reserve “El Tisey Estranzuela”. In this reserve lives the friendliest old man that I have ever met. His name is Don Alberto he has lived in this park his whole life and can remember how life was before the war. We would visit him every couple of months and each time we would bring a different group of friends to see his rock sculptures. He gave up drinking about 20 years ago and took up rock carving. He now spends his days cultivating his farm and carving away new designs. He carves only with a hammer, a small nail for detail work, and a spike for the larger work. Don Alberto lives on the farm with his sister and brother and almost never leaves. He does not have many needs in the world except to create, eat and have an occasional smoke. Every time we returned we got big hugs from everyone and a long talk about the gossip in the area and what new carving he had created or was designing. In this photograph, Don Alberto is pointing out different points in the park.

Everyday in Nicaragua I learned something new about the land, its’ people and myself. Since returning I often think back to Don Alberto and his simple shirt, pants and boots that he wore every day. The shirt was so thin you could see through the material, but he was happy. He reminds me that one does not need much to be happy in this world.

Leah probably wouldn’t be too impressed with this picture. Here she is in her work clothes, early in the morning, doing her morning chores – not usually a time when a Kenyan would want her photo taken.



Leah, by Erin McGillivray, Kenya 02-04

But this is her place, her room, her kitchen. There aren’t many places in Kenya that a woman can call her own. A woman is married into the husband’s family. She leaves her family and moves on to her husband’s family land.

In Leah’s case, this happened when she was 22, three years ago. She had one child with another man and the young boy was seen as a burden to her husband’s family. Her son was not one of them, and therefore not welcome on the family compound. But soon enough, she had another son with her husband Josphat.

Now with a family of four, plus nieces and nephews orphaned by HIV/AIDS, she finds herself in this kitchen frequently. When she is not cooking, she is fetching water from a nearby spring, or buying produce at the market, or working in the family fields. Her walls are made of handmade bricks. Josphat and his nephews made them in the scorching sun with dung and mud. The floor is dirt, but is swept daily. Leah gathers the wood in a nearby forest to sustain her fire. The room lacks a chimney, hence, the black walls.

I begin to cough after spending one minute in that room. Leah spends a large portion of her day in there and the smell doesn’t seem to bother her. I think she has just grown used to it. Throughout the years, she has developed indestructible hands, as well.

She can grab any old pot straight off the fire, or test food in her bare hand. The first time she had me taste some food for her, she plopped a lump in my hand and I yelped and jumped away. It burned my soft, white hand. She laughed and I was humbled.

Though she may not take pride in her room, it is the foundation of her family. Without the food she makes and the tea she cooks, the days would be tougher than they inherently are. The kitchen is a symbol of her strength and her family’s strength.

Leah cooks tea for her family early in the morning and numerous times throughout the day, as she is doing in this photo. She first serves her husband, then her children, and she takes whatever remains. When she comes to my place, with my electric stovetop and cement floor, I like to serve her first. When I make the tea, it tastes bland. But in Leah’s ‘chai’, I can taste her experience, her effort, and her love. Her tea is the sweetest.



Membership Changes in '07

What should you do to join or renew your MNRPCV and/or NPCA membership?

- NPCA membership is \$35/individual for one year.
- Membership in MNRPCV is \$15/individual for one year.

You may join either group, or both groups.

The easiest way is on the web at <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org>. Click "join/renew" and be sure to specify MNRPCV as your affiliate group.

You may also send a check to either NPCA (see their new address at right), or to MNRPCV, P.O. Box 6413, Minneapolis MN, 55406 Attn: Membership.

NPCA Has a New Address

National Peace Corps Association
 1900 L Street NW, Suite 404
 Washington, DC 20036
 202-293-7728 (phone)
 202-293-7554 (fax)
<http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org>

MNRPCV January Financial Report

By Christi Williams, RPCV Poland 96-98

Income

Speaker's Bureau	\$930.00
Membership	\$140.00
Africa Dinner	\$420.00
NPCA Membership refund	\$45.00
Postage	\$12.00
Calendars	\$1,030.00
Interest	\$0.83

Total Income \$2,577.83

Expenses

Newsletter	\$460.84
Rochester Holiday Party	\$112.14
TC Holiday Party	\$9.44
Jeremiah Program	\$56.17
Calendars	\$35.59
Gallery Framing Supplies	\$439.60
NPCA Membership	\$135.00

Total Expenses \$1,248.78

Beginning Balance \$8,826.02

Ending Balance \$10,155.07

Balance at CCFCU \$5,292.51

Balance at Microenterprise \$3,091.49



Tuareg Woman, by Paula Zoromski, Niger 93-95

Nomads fascinated me. During my second year of service in Niger, I bought a camel. I called it, "Mai chin abinci" or "the one who eats." I traveled with the Bamo family of Dakoro on my camel for almost two months. We traveled to markets, ponds, parties, and grassy land for cows to graze. On the last week of my trip, I met a group of Tuareg women. The Fulanis and Tuaregs were celebrating the end of the rainy season. During this season, the nomads wander the desert following the natural supply of food and water. They drink water

from ponds, gather leaves for sauces, and make butter. When the rainy season ends, they migrate towards villages. Before they settle into the village, tribes gather to celebrate. The women painted their faces yellow with red accent lines. They sang and played drums. I attracted the leader's attention, and nodded my head at my camera. She shook her head, "OK." I crouched down, looked at the beautiful women, and smiled before I picked up my camera. We were very close to each other and at eye level. The woman continued to sing. I reached out my hand, and she clasped it in hers. With my free hand, I picked up my camera and snapped a couple of portraits. The music and the women were gorgeous to me. I held her hand while I shot photos and she finished the song. Then, our group broke up. It was time to go home.



Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act

Senator Chris Dodd, who served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Dominican Republic in the 1960's, recently introduced the **Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act**.

If passed, the bill will:

Provide seed monies to active volunteers for demonstration projects at their sites, and authorize some private donations to support their development projects;

Fund \$10 million in grants to returned volunteers for "third goal" projects in their communities;

Establish mechanisms for more volunteer input into Peace Corps operations such as programs, staffing decisions, site selection and language training;

Protect certain volunteer rights such as termination of service and whistleblower protection; and **provide better communication** by establishing websites and email links for use by volunteers in-country;

Authorize active recruitment of the 185,000 returned volunteers for second tours and as participants in third goal activities in the United States;

Remove certain medical, healthcare and other impediments that discourage older individuals from becoming volunteers.

Nomination for Lillian Carter Award

By Mary Adams, RPCV Latvia 95-97

MNRPCV is proud to nominate Jane and Jack Bardon for the 2007 **Lillian Carter Award**. This award honors outstanding senior volunteers who are keeping President Kennedy's dream alive by volunteering their time to make a difference in people's lives. The Lillian Carter Award is given in honor President Carter's mother, who joined the Peace Corps in 1966 at age 68 and served in India.

Jane and Jack served as public health volunteers in Turkmenistan from September 2003 to October 2005. Since returning to the United States, the Bardons have been promoting the third Peace Corps' goal by speaking about Turkmenistan and their experience there as Volunteers. As of early March 2007, the Bardons had given eight presentations on Peace Corps to groups such as the League of Women Voters, University of Minnesota Foreign Affairs and faculty groups, and Peace Corps recruiting meetings.

In addition to their speaking engagements, the Bardons have published articles in the Friendship Force International Newsletter and Minnesota Medicine. In the fall of 2006 they also traveled to Indonesia with the Friendship Force to promote a better relationship between Indonesia and the United States. In the short time since they completed their service, they also helped a Turkmen physician obtain a Muskie Fellowship at the University of Indiana.

MNRPCV is proud to have Jane and Jack as members and to honor them for their dedication to the third goal of Peace Corps and their efforts to make a difference in the lives of people everyday.

I sometimes see him at the popular 'hoteli' with his guitar and 'band.' They pick at their strings, beat on their drum, and sing for awhile. They have a good time.

I always admired him for his perseverance and his simplicity. I wondered, does he turn a profit, or is he just keeping busy? And as I pass by him everyday and wonder about his life, I think, what does he think of mine?

Just before I left Kenya for the US, I bought a bag from him. That was the last (and best) sugarcane I had. I never would have thought a 10 shilling bag of sugarcane from the sugarcane guy would find a place in my memory after 27 months of memories from Kenya. Now I can't seem to let go of that last bag of sugarcane that I shared with my best Kenyan friend as we walked back to my place that final day in the village of Wundanyi. But here it is, helping me recall my experience - calling me back for more.



Rasta Man, by Erin McGillivray, Kenya 02-04

I see him nearly every day. I don't know his name. We don't talk much. Rushing across the center of town, his bright blue head covering catches my eye. There he is - doing the same thing he was doing yesterday. Standing behind his crude table, he grabs another from his wheelbarrow full of sugarcane. He methodically runs his knife down the side of the stalk as the shavings sprinkle the dusty ground. He wears an old plastic bag on the hand that holds the cane, to keep it from getting sticky. Once the tough sides of the cane are removed, he sets it on the corner of his table and chops it into bite size pieces. He places

about 15 juicy pieces into a small plastic bag and grabs another stalk from his wheelbarrow. He sells each bag for 10 Kenyan shillings.

As I rush to meet the Headmaster of my school at the local 'hoteli' for a quick lunch of maize meal, tough meat and a warm soda, the equatorial sun beats down on me. I could really go for some of his sugarcane. But I rush by, always catching him out of the corner of my eye.

He is known as 'the Rasta Man' because of his head full of dreadlocks. I like to call him the sugarcane guy. In the evenings,



Kenkayba's Place

By Ann Kanyusik, RPCV Bangladesh 98-00



Emmanuel Woode left his native Ghana for New York City in the early 90s, and in 2002 Paul to escape the terrorism that

rocked his neighborhood. Now he and Cecilia, his wife, have a restaurant, Kenkayba's Place (www.kenkaybasplace.com), at 864 University Avenue. They began by selling kenkay, a staple food from Ghana, at soccer games and other local venues. The restaurant menu now includes classic West African cuisine such as goat, fried plantains and jolloff ("joy-love") rice; and may soon list palm wine and African beers if they obtain a liquor license. He told us about it after a recent metro dinner.

AK: Your restaurant is very busy today, thanks for taking the time to meet with me. How did you decide to open this restaurant?

EW: We always thought about opening a restaurant because Cecilia and her sister used to own a restaurant in Cote d'Ivoire. One day (in St. Paul), Cecilia was sick and I had to stay home from work. I went to deliver some kenkay for Cecilia and . . . saw a "Restaurant for Lease" sign in my peripheral vision. I saw it again on my way back. This was a Tuesday. I . . . got a hold of the owner and rented it.

AK: Where did you meet Cecilia?

EW: I met her in New York City.

Building a snowman with my host twin brothers, Kadin and Madin and sister Aisalkyn crosses all borders. I worried about entering a Kyrgyz household when I only knew Russian, but it wasn't as dif-



Snowman, by Jennifer Lawrence, Krygz Republic 04-06

AK: I understand that you also have some Peace Corps connections.

EW: Yes. I met a lot of Peace Corps going to secondary school and then some were my colleagues on staff when I was teaching. Peace Corps volunteers come to Ghana and work in remote parts of the country. Akuse is a small village. I met one Peace Corps medical personnel volunteer there – Dr. Waite and his wife – and they got medical supplies by helicopter from America. It takes two days to get to Akuse from any other part of Ghana.

AK: Any good stories about Peace Corps volunteers?

EW: They identify themselves and learn the culture and take African names. Normally, African names are given according to the day that you were born, but the Peace Corps volunteers on staff in Akuse did not know the day they were born so they took the names of the day they arrived. Koffi Taye Jason. Taye means twin brother and Koffi means that he arrived on a Friday [laughs]. Peace Corps volunteers surprised us because at home they drank Bacardi and in Ghana they drank the local drinks.

AK: Do you have a favorite dish?

EW: For Sundays, I love jolloff.

AK: What is that?

EW: It is "joy love" – adulterated English. It is rice cooked in gravy, tomato gravy. It is very rich. You eat it with chicken, beef or goat meat. I also love omo-tuo, which is a rice dumpling made of rice cooked soft with palm butter or peanut butter soup. Cecilia makes a special stew with omo-tuo that is really superb. Another favorite is called waukye. It is rice and beans cooked together with gravy to make a stew. One other favorite is red red – plantains cooked with beans.

AK: Those sound great. We'll have to try them next time we have a Peace Corps dinner here. Thanks for talking with us!

ficult of a language barrier as I thought. The only exception was trying to communicate with my three year old sister, Aisalkyn. Students here are formally educated in the Russian language when they enter first grade but Aisalkyn is years away from that education. In the first months in my new home, I lamented to my host mother that I wish I could speak Kyrgyz with Aisalkyn like the other two Volunteers in my village. She replied, "Jennifer, before you came, Aisalkyn didn't know any Russian and now she is talking and playing with the Russian children in her daycare. Look at what you are teaching her." What I saw as a frustration is inadvertently teaching a little Kyrgyz girl to be able to play with everyone. She has become my constant shadow and likes to imitate me by pretending to take photos of everyone with a small paper box.



Upcoming Social Events, Spring 2007

Sat., 5/12, 10 am METRO BREAKFAST

Cornmeal pancakes, huevos pericos, omelets served with beans and tortillas . . . yum! Enjoy this Columbian-American cuisine and get your weekend off to a delicious start. Location: 1113 E Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404. Parking lot in front of restaurant. Please rsvp. Host: Sarah (651-308-9923).

Fri., 5/18, 7 pm GAME NIGHT

Come join us for game night at Abbie's house! Bring a snack and a favorite game to share. Parking easily accessible on the street or in the lot. See you there! Location: 1436 Colorado Ave S., St. Louis Park, MN 55416. Host: Abigail Rotari (612-709-2833).

Sun., 5/20, 10 am POT LUCK BRUNCH

Celebrate spring! Bring a dish to share with MNrpcv friends . . . and possibly a bike or sneakers for an after-brunch ride or stroll :) Location: 3604 17th Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407. Host: Christi Williams (612-825-7203).

Sun., 6/3, all afternoon GRAND OLD DAY OPEN HOUSE at ELSA and BERNARD'S

Come and enjoy Grand Old Day, then take a break at Elsa and Bernard's, 669 Summit. Open house all afternoon; Bernard's home brew, burgers, tamales, etc. Kids welcome, but not required. Contact: Elsa (651-428-1765).

Sat., 6/16, 2 pm LAKE WALK

Come enjoy a walk around Lake Calhoun! We can go to Ben and Jerry's afterward ;) We'll meet at the Lake Calhoun Pavilion. There is a metered parking lot next to the lake, or neighborhood parking. Location: 3000 E Calhoun Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55416. Host: Sarah (651-308-9923).

Sat., 6/23, 6 pm FUND RAISER DINNER

Help raise funds to support MNRPCV and its grant projects, while enjoying the tantalizing tastes of Central and South America! Location: Elsa's home at 669 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105. If you are interested in cooking or have any questions, contact Sarah (651-308-9923).

Thurs., 6/28, 7 pm FREE THURS at the WALKER

A free evening of art! Meet us in the lobby and from there explore the "Picasso and American Art" exhibit. We can head to the nearby Dunn Bros afterward for a discussion. There is a parking ramp and a parking lot near the museum. Location: Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis MN 55403. Host: Sarah (651-308-9923).

Social Note

Worried you might misplace your newsletter social events calendar and miss out on all the great MNRPCV happenings?!?? Never fear . . . the social calendar is just a click away. Go to the MNRPCV Yahoo Groups site



(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mnrpcvEmailList/>)

and click "calendar." If you're new to this site, you will need to register before you can access the calendar. Just click "Join this Group" and you'll be on your way!

Race Volunteers Needed



Are you a runner at heart? Are you looking for a fun way to help MNRPCV raise money to support its activities and grant projects?

The Sporting Life will contact the MN-RPCV social chair when workers are needed to help manage local races. On race day, volunteers help register runners, hand out race packets, etc. Each volunteer earns \$10 an hour, which goes directly to MNRPCV! What a great opportunity to work as team! If you would like to be on the list of interested volunteers (you don't need to commit until we have specific dates), please email Sarah at sarah_e_hansen@yahoo.com. Thank you!



Fak i Manglay (The Children of Manglay), by Ryan Kattner, Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, 01-04

This photo was taken during Yap Day 2002; the man's name is Francis Manglay and he is wearing a gal' (loin cloth with hibiscus fibers). His daughter and son are wearing an ong (grass skirt) and thuw (loin cloth) respectively. This is the traditional dress for their culture



Annual Slide Show

By Sarah Hansen, RPCV Moldova 00-02

After two snowstorms and several days of being cooped up, Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers were ready for a change of scenery! And that's just what our Annual Slide Show provided: a chance to escape our snowy landscape. On March 3rd, stunning photographs invited more than 40 participants to travel to Kenya, Poland, Turkmenistan—and beyond. The stories MNRPCVs shared, as they showed us their slides, helped scenes from their service come alive. We joined Nicole in a yurt in Kazakhstan, played soccer with Bobby and his gang of kids in Bolivia, and watched with Emily as men sorted peanuts during harvest time in Ghana. And that was only the beginning! Our travels spanned the globe.

A special thank you to Kristen Spargo at Padilla Speer Beardsley for coordinating the complimentary use of their beautiful office space for our slide show. We truly appreciate her generosity! And thank you to all Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, family, and friends who shared slides, delicious dishes, and stories with us. You took us on an incredible adventure, while reminding us of the importance of Peace Corps' Third Goal: bringing the world back home.

If you're inspired to share your slides and Peace Corps experience with your Minnesotan community members, check out the Power Point presentation (complete with Peace Corps facts and slide templates for your own pictures) on the Peace Corps website: www.peacecorps.gov. Click on "Returned Volunteers" and then "Peace Corps Week." Under "Peace Corps Week," select "Presentation Resources." Scroll down and choose "Power Point Presentation." It's that easy. This is an incredible resource that makes meeting our third goal a breeze!

and, in present day Yap, is worn during ceremonies, traditional dances and celebrations.

As a library and literacy development Peace Corps Volunteer on Yap, I worked with Manglay at Gagil Community School; he was the 7th grade teacher at the time. Before receiving my invitation to serve in the Peace Corps, I had never heard of Yap and my knowledge of the language and culture were limited to what the internet and National Geographic magazines had to offer. Manglay was always willing to stop what he was doing in order to answer a question or explain some of the intricate details of the complex Yapese culture.

Yapese have been chewing betelnut for centuries and it is woven into the fabric of their culture. Through the course of my three year Peace Corps service I've had many conversations with Manglay and learned much about their language and culture while

www.mnrpcv.org

By Valerie Aas, RPCV Cameroon 93-95

The MNRPCV website has a new look! Visit www.mnrpcv.org to see the work of Pat Thompson, Valerie Aas, Elsa Frettem, Venisha Bahr, and numerous other board members. The site was launched April 22. We're hoping the new design will be easy to navigate and will appeal to new and old volunteers.

Periodically, we'll put up photos sent by RPCVs interested in sharing their stories and experiences with others. If you would like to be involved, please look

through your photos and choose ones you feel would look great displayed on the new site. We look forward to receiving lots of diverse photos from across the globe.

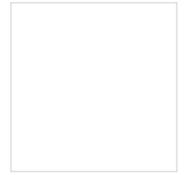
Our only request when you send photos: keep the size to 500 pixels wide (by whatever height) and 72 dpi, saved in JPG format. Your files should be under 500K. Please email photos to the webmasters Valerie Aas at valerieaas@yahoo.com or Venisha Bahr at Venishabahr@yahoo.com. Please be sure to include your name, country and years of service, and a brief explanation (one or two sentences) about the photo.

If you have other ideas about how to make the site more engaging and informative, please let us know. We'd love to hear from you at the e-mail addresses listed above. We hope the site will continue to evolve as we incorporate your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

relaxing with a "chew." Conversations were always easy to start on Yap. All you had to do is offer someone a betelnut, which was never refused. A Yapese proverb states "baey ea luwaen u wai," or "there is wisdom in the basket" and is specifically referring to the betelnut carried in a basket and the manner in which Yapese take their time to relax and chew betelnut, reflecting on events in one's life or talking in the forum of a village meeting.



MNRPCV
P.O. Box 6413
Minneapolis, MN 55406



Summer Fundraiser - June 23, 2007, 6 p.m.

Help raise funds to support MNRPCV and its grant projects, while enjoying the tantalizing tastes of Central and South America!

We need cooks, and we need people to eat what they cook. If you fall into one of those categories, consider coming to our next fundraiser dinner. All of the proceeds go to our grant fund. Grant award decisions are being made right now, and will be announced in the next MNRPCV News (August). Meanwhile, contact Sarah (below) if you want to cook, and watch the email list for reminders of this event.

Location: Elsa's home at 669 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.

If you are interested in cooking or have any questions, contact Sarah (651-308-9923).

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All events are announced via email on the mnrpcvEmailList. Join this listserv from www.mnrpcv.org