



# MNRPCV's Newsletter

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

Summer 2000

## The Corner Board .....by Judy Marcouiller

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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.*

I'm pleased to take my turn to contribute to our newsletter, although I've been one of the less active Board members this year. Somehow there continued to be reasons that caused me to travel the globe in my work with the American Refugee Committee (ARC), and I missed more Board meetings than I would have liked. Experiencing other cultures is still one of my favorite things to do, but I missed being "settled" here in Minneapolis - perhaps it was and is not meant to be?!

During my travels this past year (to Liberia, Guinea, Macedonia, Bosnia, Croatia and Montenegro) it never ceased to amaze me how many RPCVs and old friends I ran into. RPCVs are everywhere! It really is a small world. Recently in Minneapolis, I was talking with an RPCV who happens not to be very active in our group. When I started rambling on about all of the friendships and activities that abound with RPCVs in my life, she commented how she felt badly that she hadn't kept in touch with other RPCVs from her training group. She seemed surprised when I said that all of these RPCV friends are those whom I've met AFTER finishing my Peace Corps service! It's hard to put a finger on what it is that we have in common, but there really is something. Maybe some of the same values - we volunteer for whatever cause we believe in and we care about people. In my experience, we don't even talk about Peace Corps very much!

Last summer's conference demonstrated how well a bunch of folks can come together and do a great job. It's fun to watch the Washington D.C. RPCVs work through the process of figuring out how to host a national conference, and it will be even more fun to join them in September 2001 - this time we can be active participants and really enjoy ourselves! I hope

many of you will come to the 40th anniversary conference and also participate in other Peace Corps 40th anniversary events throughout the year.

Even sooner than that, I sincerely hope more of you will step up and offer to serve on the MNRPCV Board of Directors for next year. While there are several Board members willing to serve again, we will (as always!) need new blood to keep the leadership of the organization strong and alive. Whether you are a newly-returned RPCV or someone who's been around awhile, please consider taking a

**Corner Board, Continued on Page 7**

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## **Environmental Community Service Helps Restore Local Prairie**

It is a wonderful feeling knowing your help can make change for the better, especially when the fruits of one's labor are immediately seen. Does that sound reminiscent of your Peace Corps experience? Well, maybe change never happened that quickly, but perhaps it was a start in a new direction. In this case, I am talking about MNRPCV's environmental community service program.

This all began last Winter while looking out our front window, watching the Mississippi River flow by, thinking about what the concept of "community" was all about. Sure, we all know about Habitat for Humanity and Paint-A-Thon (NEXT YEAR FOLKS!!!) and an occasional call for assistance from NGO's in the Twin Cities or an immediate call for help from the outstate region for us all to mobilize or singly do some social good. But what about the part of "community" which defines our surroundings? What about the nature of our community? Don't we have a responsibility for this as well? I think so. And apparently so do the groups of folks who come out once a month for three hours to do some good ol' cutting, planting, clearing, and just plain busy work outside.

MNRPCVs of all ages and their families have taken part. Why not consider helping out as well?

We work exclusively at Theodore Wirth Park, as this is where we are needed most.

It's special, after living in the Twin Cities all these years, finally getting to know this, the largest of Minneapolis' city parks. It has so many wonderful places, and we get to see them all!



Our tasks vary, from removing buckthorn to planting prairie plants and assisting in prairie burns (this fall). Folks of all ages and abilities are welcome. (Of course an adult should accompany children under sixteen.)

In July we removed woody vegetation from a prairie remnant and at the completion of the work, had a picnic lunch and went swimming at Wirth Beach. Not a bad way to do some good work and then cool off!

The next three work sessions are August 19, September 16, and October 21. We meet at the Wirth Lake Beach Parking Lot at 9:00 AM, ready to work somewhere in the park.

### **The September work session is going to be special!**



I am working with park staff to reserve the picnic shelter on the hill, across the street from the beach parking lot. This will be a fun-filled day of work followed by outdoor activities such as hiking and volleyball, weather permitting, followed by a potluck and naturalist-led programs. This is a way of saying, "thank you" to the MN

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board!

**Make sure you reserve September 16 on your calendar!** I would love to have a big work group on that day! Even if you can't come to work, please come to celebrate the beginning of a new season and take part in the MNRPCV fete! More on this later!

For now, think about taking part in the next workday on **August 19**. It's good work, great exercise and wonderful comradery! See you then!

- Scott Eckert, Community Service Chair



## **MNRPCV is 20! - Time to Update By-Laws**

The Board reviewed the By-Laws this year, our 20<sup>th</sup> year as an organization, and decided to make a change to reflect our new use of technology in the way we communicate with our members. The Board voted to change the Newsletter Editor title to Communications Chair to better reflect both the current activities and the direction of this Board position. A Newsletter Editor has been part of the Board since the beginning of the organization. We acknowledge the importance of a printed newsletter, and plan to continue with quarterly issues. At the same time we recognize the value of electronic communications not available 20 years ago. The immediacy of email helped our Speaker's Bureau Chair, Karen Nikolai, match over 25 speakers with requests this year, and the innate networking capability of the web offers opportunities we know we haven't begun to explore.

The By-Laws are posted on our web site. If you'd like to see the change, go to [www.mnrpcv.org/bylaws.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/bylaws.html) and read Section 4.10.

## **Host Family Opportunities**

*Intercultural Homestay Services*, a nationally recognized foreign student exchange program based in Edina, is in need of host families for several girls and boys, 16 to 18 years of age, from Mexico for the 2000-2001 school year.

Basic requirements are the love of children, a caring home environment, the ability to share lives and experiences, a high regard for family and community values, and the ability to respect individual and cultural differences.

The students have been accepted. Complete files and video interview tapes are available for viewing.

*Intercultural Homestay Services* provides medical and liability insurance, ensures school placement, and provides support services to students, families and schools. Students have expense money from parents.

For more information call Program Director Charles R. Hanna (952) 933-2552 .

## **Membership Form**

If you are interested in joining our group, please send in the following membership registration form.

**Yes! I want to be a member!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country/Years of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Annual MEMBERSHIP (includes both NPCA and - MIN Local Group- membership) \$40 FOR INDIVIDUAL/\$55 FOR FAMILY

INCLUDE JOB HOTLINE (listing employment opportunities in the U.S. and abroad) \$30

INCLUDE OVERSEAS POSTAGE (if applicable) \$20

TOTAL PAYMENT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MY CHECK PAYABLE TO THE NPCA IS ENCLOSED  
 PLEASE CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD:

MC VISA

EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_ CARD# \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

NPCA, 1900 L Street, NW Suite 205, Washington, DC.  
 20038 fax 202/293-7754 phone 202/293-7728



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## **Web and Email FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)**

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### **Does MNRPCV have an email list?**

Yes. We use eGroups to manage our email list. eGroups is an email group service that allows you to easily create, join and manage email groups.

### **Why don't we just manage the list ourselves and not go through eGroups or any similar service?**

Anyone willing to volunteer their time for this purpose should contact the MNRPCV Communications Chair. Send an email to [elsa@gonzalez.com](mailto:elsa@gonzalez.com) and we'll talk!!

### **Why does eGroups ask for my age, gender, and the state where I live?**

Remember the "no free lunch" saying? It applies here. In return for them hosting our list we give them demographic data. If you're on the list, you've probably noticed ads at the bottom of every email you receive from [mnrpcvEmailList@egroups.com](mailto:mnrpcvEmailList@egroups.com). They can send different ads to target markets made up of people of a specific age, gender and geographic location. We tried this service with the Board first and did not see any increase in "junk" email because of it. *Please do read their Privacy Policy on their page before you register.*

### **I must be a member of the list because I get the emails, but when I tried to open a page on [www.eGroups.com](http://www.eGroups.com) it said "oops, you're not a member".**

You need to register at the [www.egroups.com](http://www.egroups.com) home page to have access to read the archived messages, post messages to the list, view the calendar, or download files from our eGroups web page. To register, click the word "Register" in the upper right corner of the eGroups home page, and fill in the blanks on the screen.

### **Can you add/delete my name from the email list?**

We can, but we would much prefer it if you made the additions or deletions to the list yourself. For one thing, there are currently about 190 members on the list – a lot to manage. Secondly, many people have more than one email address. By signing on themselves, they can choose the address they want to use in eGroups. Finally, if you change your email address you can delete your old address and add your new one whenever it's convenient for you.

### **Then how do I join the email list?**

Go to our website, [www.mnrpcv.org/ContactUs.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/ContactUs.html) and follow the onscreen instructions.

### **How do I get off the list?**

To unsubscribe from this group, send an email to:

[mnrpcvEmailList-unsubscribe@egroups.com](mailto:mnrpcvEmailList-unsubscribe@egroups.com)

### **Can I send email to the whole list? If so, how?**

Yes and no :-). Because the list is intended to inform the group of events or other items of interest, this is a monitored list, meaning that anything that is posted (mailed) to the whole list has been reviewed by someone. The Board opted for a monitored list in hopes of keeping to topics of interest to most of the group.

You can post to the list in one of two ways: 1) address an email directly to [mnrpcvEmailList@egroups.com](mailto:mnrpcvEmailList@egroups.com) and send it as you would any email. An email will go first to the group moderator saying there is a message to review. The moderator will review it (and may edit it), and can send it on to the list at that time. Or, 2) go to [www.egroups.com](http://www.egroups.com), sign on and go to the [mnrpcvEmailList](mailto:mnrpcvEmailList) group site. Click "Post" next to the list name. Fill in the form that comes up next (you can cut and paste), then click "Send Message". As with 1), the moderator will receive an email saying there is a note to review, and will follow the same procedure as above.

### **Why do I get two reminders for the same event?**

You may be on the list with two different email addresses. If this is the case, delete the one you don't want to use. Also the list automatically sends a reminder for events, which may have caused duplicate notices to be sent out. If you can't tell what the cause is, contact the list moderator, currently [elsa@gonzalez.com](mailto:elsa@gonzalez.com).

### **Does MNRPCV have a web site?**

Yes. We've had a site at [www.mnrpcv.org](http://www.mnrpcv.org) since January 2000. We also put up a site for the 1999 NPCA Conference in the spring and summer of 1999. By the way, check [www.mnrpcv.org/MNRPCVPhotoAlbum.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/MNRPCVPhotoAlbum.html) for photos of the conference, and other group photos.

#### **√ This Out:**

- \* The NPCA recently revamped their website at [www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org) - go see what they did!
- \* There is a new web site for all PCVs who served in Brazil at [www.expcvsbrazil.com](http://www.expcvsbrazil.com).
- \* Many other geographic and country of service groups have web sites, also. To find them (including us!) follow the Affiliate Groups link on the NPCA site, [www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org).



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## **MNRPCV Co-ed Soccer Team Advances to Semi-Finals**

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In a rags-to-(almost)riches tale reminiscent of Walter Mathau's *Bad News Bears*, a first-time team comprised almost entirely of former Peace Corps volunteers advanced to the semi-finals of the Cities Sports Connection 2000 Spring soccer league. Trailing 3-0 at the half of the semi-final, the squad of heretofore soccer misfits showed tremendous heart and rallied back only to lose 3-2 to the eventual champions.

The fact that they made it as far as they did was, well, worthy of any Peace Corps tale of triumph over travail. What started on a promise for some good, clean, non-competitive fun, was hardly that on that first cold, wet spring Sunday morning in April. But gradually the weather got better and so did the team. Throughout the league, the team – named for an obscure, hard thumping salsa band from desert Guatemala (Zacapa F.M.) – quickly became known as the most inclusive, fun loving bunch assembled.

But something happened along the way, the team got better and even developed a semi-loyal following of equally fun-loving fans. And, in an upset for the ages, Zacapa F.M. dumped the league's second-seeded team in the first round of the play-offs 2-1, before falling in the semi's.



The fun doesn't stop there. Zacapa F.M. has fielded another scrappy team in the summer league. The team played its last game of the season Sunday, August 6th at the V.A. hospital field in St. Paul. At least one play-off game will follow on Sunday August 13th (call Brad Muller at (651) 225-9069 for more details).

It's great fun and a stellar group of typical dirt-under-your-nails former volunteers. Catch this team in action soon and one day you'll be able to say, "I remember that group when..."

- Brad Muller, Social Chair

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## **2000 Habitat for Humanity a Success**

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I'm finally putting away all the notes from the planning meetings I've been to over the past few months in preparation for the Habitat for Humanity project. As I pour over the notes and recall the occasional anxiety, I am also reminded of the MNRPCVs who assisted me in pulling this project off. Without them it would have certainly been anxiety city.

Lois Braun and Les Everett enthusiastically offered to open their home to callers at all hours in order to record, track total volunteer hours, and schedule the overall shifts.

Margaret Lynch recruited and counted Friday food folks and a wonderful menu of goodies appeared. Special thanks to Elsa and Bernard for the food.

Finally, we would have been in deep buffalo biscuits if it weren't for long-time H4H site supervisor, Erik Streed.



He helped keep us organized and most importantly, busy!

And an extra special thank you to the 30 MNRPCVs that joined in, providing housing to some really nice folks!

- Scott Eckert, Community Service Chair



## Grants Awarded to Four Groups

Each year the MNRPCV organization receives grant requests from groups with Peace Corps connections. Because of our added income from hosting last year's national conference, this year's Board had the pleasure of giving away \$5000 of grant money to four worthy organizations on three continents. The organizations are engaged in a variety of projects to help their communities.

### **Trees, Water & People (TWP), Honduras (\$500)**

TWP is a reforestation project in Honduras dedicated to helping communities develop sustainable forests and watersheds. They believe that local people should play an integral part in the use and care of local natural resources. TWP's programs are specifically aimed at finding the balance between the needs of the environment and the needs of people in the 21st century. This is the second year TWP has received a grant from MNRPCV. For more information on TWP go to [www.treeswaterpeople.org](http://www.treeswaterpeople.org).

### **East African Deaf Connection**

#### **Skills Exchange Program, Kenya (\$2000)**

The Skills Exchange Program provides hearing Kenyan teachers with an education in Kenyan sign language, deaf culture awareness, and a co-teaching experience with a deaf American, to be applied and integrated into their teaching practices. The initial goal is to place 41 teachers in the deaf school and have them carry on the training they received by instructing and educating other teachers.

### **Sankhu School, Nepal (\$2000)**

In response to the overwhelming number of children who cannot sustain their basic needs and have no alternative to becoming child laborers, a volunteer committee of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights established and opened the Sankhu school in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal on September 9, 1999 for children under 16. The goal of the project is to help curb forced child labor by demonstrating that with an investment in education poor children can improve not only their lives but also the prospects for the larger community. The MNRPCV grant will go to help cover the costs of furniture, books and stationary. For more information see [www.mnadvocates.org/children/childlab.htm](http://www.mnadvocates.org/children/childlab.htm).

### **Friends of Dolpa, Nepal (\$500)**

Friends of Dolpa is a small, nonprofit organization working directly with Himalayan peoples to improve education and cultural preservation in the remote district of Dolpa, in northwestern Nepal. They



support locally-managed projects in and near Shey-Phoksundo National Park. Catherine Inman, Executive Director, is a former PC Volunteer from

Minnesota. She invites your comments via email at [friendsofdolpa@hotmail.com](mailto:friendsofdolpa@hotmail.com).

The Board reviews proposals for both local and international projects. Proposals are due by late spring each year and funding takes place once a year. You can find complete guidelines and grant proposal criteria on our website at [www.mnrpcv.org/grantProposal.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/grantProposal.html), or contact any Board member for information.

### ***NPCA Board Rep. Position Filled!!***

Our own Deb Most was recently elected to the NPCA Board to represent the Heartland district.

**Congratulations Deb!!**

#### ***Members Note:***

As a member you should receive not only this quarterly newsletter, but also the 3/1/61 newsletter from NPCA and the NPCA Worldview magazine. If you are a member but don't receive these, please contact Membership Chair Keith Pearson, (612) 789-3851 or [jolene.pearson@juno.com](mailto:jolene.pearson@juno.com).



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## **MNRPCV Toastmasters - Join Us!**

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Announcing the arrival of our very own specialty group of Toastmasters: the MNRPCV Toastmasters. It brings together the very best of the two worlds of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer with the world renowned Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters is the place where you can prepare a speech and deliver it in a warm and supportive environment. Your fellow toastmasters will not be critical of your speaking ability, but give you positive feedback, mixed with helpful hints on what to do to improve your ability to communicate with others.

Toastmasters is a place to get the experience to speak in front of people. It helps develop communication and leadership skills in its members. We learn to think, listen, and speak on our feet. We also learn to critique others speeches in a helpful way. We do that so others can

improve their ability to communicate in diverse ways. It helps make us, the evaluators, sensitive and confident when we are faced with similar situations in our day to day lives.

We meet at the Saint Anthony Park Public Library twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. Due to summer scheduling, be sure to call first, or check the calendar of events on [www.mnrpcv.org/Events.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/Events.html) for the date of the next meeting. For more information call Dan Grundtner at (651) 487-3068, or via email at [danielrg@uswest.net](mailto:danielrg@uswest.net). Sharon Goodyear is also available for questions. She can be reached during the day at (612) 624-6915 or at [sgoodyea@tc.umn.edu](mailto:sgoodyea@tc.umn.edu).

It's an investment in yourself that helps to bring home our Peace Corps experience. Don't let this opportunity slip by!

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### **Corner Board, Continued from Page 1**

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turn being a group leader. It's not difficult (its mostly fun!) but does require a time commitment of a few hours per month. The annual meeting and elections will take place on August 20 after a great potluck picnic at the home of Rhoda Brooks, on the shores of beautiful Lake Minnetonka. Please invite other RPCVs along and come out for the afternoon/evening – always a memorable and relaxing time. We really appreciate Rhoda's kind offer to host this event again this year.

I guess being "settled" really didn't agree with me very well, although I've greatly enjoyed living in Minneapolis for the past five years. I worked with ARC for more than four years, longer than I've ever stayed with any one job! I'm ready for a change, and it is time to move on. Maybe I'm deceiving myself by thinking that being a graduate student and non-homeowner will mean less responsibility and stress, but from where I sit now it looks pretty good. Arizona won't be Minnesota, but I won't be there forever and if I miss the winters too much, I'll come back to visit! Now on the other hand, if you have a yearning to give winter a brief respite, please do contact me at [judymarcouiller@hotmail.com](mailto:judymarcouiller@hotmail.com) and I'll try and make space for you in my humble abode in Tucson. I have a feeling there will be new RPCVs to meet there, as well!

- Judy Marcouiller, Secretary

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### **Mark your calendars!**

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Summer is always a busy time. We can tell by the relatively empty schedule here! Help us fill it up for fall. To host an event, just choose what you'd like to do, the time and place, and let our Social Chair know. Brad Muller ([bradmuller@hotmail.com](mailto:bradmuller@hotmail.com) or (651) 225-9069) is our out-going chair. We know he'll send the word on to whoever we elect on August 20. So please, choose an event to host and let us know. Meanwhile, these events are already on the list:

#### **Community Service at Theodore Wirth Park**

The schedule for fall is August 19, September 16, October 21 and November 18. Time is 9 to noon except for September 16. Watch for a postcard or an email, or check the events calendar on [www.mnrpcv.org/Events.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/Events.html).

#### **MNRPCV Toastmasters Meet**

Thursdays from 7 - 9 p.m. at the St. Anthony Park Library. Scheduled dates are: August 10, 24, September 7, 21, October 5, 19, November 2, 16, 30, and December 14. Questions? Call Dan at (651) 487-3068.

**Annual Meeting and PICNIC!!** See back page.



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## ***Annual Meeting, Board Election and PICNIC!!***

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### **We'd like to meet you...**

Yes you, Mary. We know you've been on this mailing list for years, have every intention of showing up and just haven't made it to an event yet. And you, Chris. You just moved to Minnesota and don't know anyone outside of work. And David, just back to the States and not sure what your next step is – we'd like to meet all of you. So,

**Please Come!** to the next Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

**When:** Sunday, August 20, 5 p.m.

**Where:** Rhoda Brooks' home (see directions below)

### **What to bring:**

- \* a dish to share (salad, veggie or dessert)
- \* your own beverage
- \* your own meat to grill (optional)
- \* mosquito lotion (it couldn't hurt)

**Annual Meeting Agenda:** Elect 10-12 Board members to serve September 2000 - August 2001. Interested in participating? Tell our current President, Deb Most ([debmost@prodigy.net](mailto:debmost@prodigy.net) or (612) 798-5859), or just show up and make sure someone voices your interest.

### **Directions to Rhoda's home from Minneapolis:**

Go west on Hwy. 394 to 494. Go south on 494 to Hwy. 7. Go west on Hwy. 7 (past intersection of 101 and 7, go west on 7 three more red lights) to Christmas Lake Road. Go right at the Texaco Station and immediately left on Excelsior Blvd. Go about 2-3 blocks to 849 Excelsior Blvd. (a brown house with decks on the hill). Look for the cars. Park on the street and walk up the driveway to the yard. You can also take Lake Street west to Hwy. 7 and go from there.

If you have any questions, call Rhoda Brooks at (612) 474-6097.

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