



# MNRPCV News

Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers  
Serving RPCVs and the Community

Fall 2009

## 2008-2009 MNRPCV Board

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651-428-1765

#### WEBMASTER

Valerie Aas, Cameroon 93-95  
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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.

## Life After Peace Corps

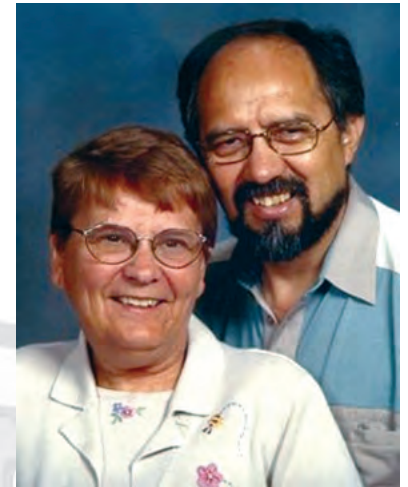
by Joan Velasquez

“The Peace Corps experience transformed my life.” Countless volunteers make this statement upon return to the U.S. I am among them. Having grown up on a farm in southwestern Minnesota with no running water or indoor plumbing, I felt prepared for two years of living with scarce resources. What I failed to anticipate was the powerful effect that a two-year immersion in a different cultural and social environment and a melodic foreign language would have on the rest of my life, starting as a social worker with Spanish speaking clients and then developing programs to serve the Twin Cities’ fast-growing Latino population.

In 1994, my husband Segundo (a Bolivian national) and I founded Mano a Mano International Partners, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that would focus on collecting surplus medical supplies, instruments and equipment in Minnesota and transporting them to Bolivia for use in non-profit health care programs that served the very poor. Our dream: to collect and ship 500 pounds of medical surplus each year.

Fast forward 15 years... Over time many friends have joined us in expanding our dream to creating an infrastructure for health care and economic development in Bolivia that is constructed, supported and ultimately run by Bolivians. Mano a Mano has since constructed 100 community health clinics and brought them into operation. Through this network more than 700,000 rural Bolivians have access to health care. Mano a Mano has built sanitation projects, schools and housing for teachers in over 30 communities, created an aviation program, and constructed roads and water reservoirs, all in partnership with the communities served.

We have been guided by the powerful premise that groups of committed volunteers can reach across national boundaries to make a difference in the lives of others. We hope that more RPCVs will be inspired by our story and volunteer with us. We sort and pack medical supplies, raise funds to support our projects, sell Bolivian crafts and much more. If you are interested, check out our website at [www.manoamano.org](http://www.manoamano.org), or phone me at 651-558-9168. We hope to hear from you.



Joan and Segundo Velasquez



Loading wheel chairs



Bolivians unpacking supplies

Joan Velasquez, Bolivia 1967-69  
[www.manoamano.org](http://www.manoamano.org)



## MNRPCV Photo Show

*Jane Bardon (Turkmenistan 2003-05)*

A highlight of the MNRPCV Membership Appreciation Event was our own gallery showing of the MNRPCV Photography Show, "Peace and Freedom." The show has nineteen framed and mounted photographs by PCVs and RPCVs telling the story of their contacts with people around the world during their Peace Corps service. The show was assembled in 2006 by Dan McLaughlin, then a recruiter at the Minneapolis Regional Peace Corps Office. The show has been exhibited at area colleges in support of Peace Corps recruiting events. All of the photographers were from the Midwest area, they are:

Paula Zoromski, Central Africa (1991-1992) and Niger (1993-1995)

Jane Bardon, Turkmenistan (2003-2005)

Jennifer Lawrence, Kyrgyz Republic (2004-2006)

Ryan Kattner, Yap, Federated States of Micronesia (2001-2004)

Jack Bardon, Turkmenistan (2003-2005)

Erin McGillvray, Kenya (2002-2004)

Erin and Michael Gerba, Nicaragua (2002-2004)

Ann Postera, Malawi (2003-2005)

Laua "Mariko" Schmitz, Vanuatu (2002-2006)

Benjamin Rau, El Salvador (2002-2004)

Franny White, Panama (2004-2006)

The "Peace and Freedom" show is now the property of MNRPCV. The MNRPCV Board has plans underway to exhibit it again for the Peace Corps 50th Anniversary in 2011. Suggestions for other venues are welcome.



## Member Appreciation Event

*Miriam Krause (Samoa 2000-02)*

The Member Appreciation Event held on June 25 was a huge success. About 60 RPCVs and guests attended, with most staying for the full three-hour event! Held at the Frank Stone Gallery ([www.frankstonegallery.com](http://www.frankstonegallery.com)), the event included music by Pavel Janey and Ticket to Brazil ([www.tickettobrasil.com](http://www.tickettobrasil.com)) and catering by Chowgirls ([www.chowgirls.net](http://www.chowgirls.net)). A great time was had by all!





## **MNRPCV Toastmasters**

*Mary Adams (Latvia 1995-97)*

Since being chartered in May 2001, the MNRPCV Toastmasters group has been a gem and something to be proud of. The MNRPCV community sees the emails about the bi-weekly meetings at Roseville City Hall. But what is Toastmasters? It's all about becoming a better speaker. We all have been called upon to give a presentation, or explain a new procedure or solicit support from coworkers or senior management at work. But every time this occurs there are butterflies in the stomach and we find ourselves using the crutches and filler words of um, ah, so, well, and ya know.

Toastmasters is the answer to allow the butterflies to leave and to give you the confidence of a better speaker. This is done in a formal setting where the members of the group learn how to be better speakers and leaders. Each meeting is made up of prepared speeches, extemporaneous speeches, and evaluations. It's the evaluations which allow the speaker to grow, since this is where the speaker receives praise about what was good/excellent in the speech and positive suggestions on how to improve the speech. With each speech given the speaker gains more confidence and the butterflies soon leave.

This gem of a Toastmasters group has won many awards since it was chartered in 2001. Since then, in every year but one, the group has received the Distinguished Club Program award, the highest award possible, along with many other awards. The MNRPCV Toastmasters group has produced several leaders for the next levels; the Area Governor and the District Governor. Wow, what a testimony to leadership skills learned in the Toastmasters group!

There are countless testimonies about how Toastmasters has helped its members. One talked about the time she received a poor performance review and was encouraged to join Toastmasters to improve her skills in working with people and giving presentations. After joining Toastmasters, it improved her relationships with her work colleagues and her future performance reviews. I personally have my own stories to tell about how Toastmasters has improved my confidence and leadership skills. Ask anyone who has been in Toastmasters, and they will tell you that it has helped them to conquer the butterflies about being a better speaker.

The credit for starting this Toastmasters group belongs to Daniel Grundtner (Jamaica 1985-87). We are proud to belong to the MNRPCV community and proud of the

support we receive from the organization. The MNRPCV budget this year includes awarding membership dues to Toastmasters as scholarships for newly returned RPCVs or RPCVs in financial need. In turn, MNRPCV Toastmasters members will speak in our communities about the Peace Corps. Thank you, MNRPCV, because without your support and encouragement, we would not be the successful group we are.



This gem of a group is a warm and welcoming oasis to learn to be a better speaker. The only thing missing from this group is you! Come and check us out on the first and third Thursdays of each month at Roseville City Hall, on the corner of Lexington and County Road C. We gather at 6:30pm and finish by 8:45pm; this is followed by the traditional gathering of Peace Corps Volunteers at a local pub. For further information, please contact President Mike MacDonald (Mali 2003) at [mrmacpc@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmacpc@yahoo.com) or phone 951-201-2845; or Membership Chair Brian Ahern (Micronesia 1986-88) at [bja85@hotmail.com](mailto:bja85@hotmail.com) or 651-486-7956.

### **MNRPCV**

*Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers*

### **2009 ANNUAL MEETING**

*Sunday September 13, 2009 3:30 PM*

### **AGENDA**

*Welcome by MNRPCV President Jane Bardon*

*Reports of 2008-2009 Year*

*Election of Board of Directors Members for 2009-2010*



## Letters from the Field: Grant Recipient Reports

It is always satisfying when MNRPCV receives letters from our PCV grant recipients who are working in the field. The three letters below, which we received this year, give a good perspective on how our grant program is perceived by PCVs and their colleagues.

### From Ecuador

PCV Andrew Hewitt and Foundation President Luis Chacha wrote (April 2009): “On behalf of the members of the Fundacion Ruku Kausay, we would like to express our gratitude for your generous support of the Jumandy Caves Project through the Peace Corps Partnership Program. As a result of your donation, the foundation has been able to successfully construct and operate a series of fish ponds, enhance local community eco-tourism projects, and spread awareness and understanding of Amazonian Kichwa culture and history. Over the course of the coming year, the foundation members will raise and harvest over 3500 tilapia. Fish production is just one example of the foundation’s work made possible by your donation. We thank you once again for your support.”

Aska pagarachu, Muchas gracias, Thank you.

### From Lesotho

PCV Travis Barnwell wrote (December 2008): “Soon I hope to join your ranks and get my “R”, but before that can happen, you should be aware that I’m earning it with your help. My service has had the typical ups and downs, but the real high point – and one that will carry me positively through to my return to the U.S. – is the success of our project that started a computer lab at St. Denis High School. Your generosity has provided not only a major incentive for students to take a greater interest in their education, but a wider range of possibilities for their futures as well. Everybody benefits from that – the school, the community, the country, and generations to come. We do as well because we played a part in that and we can be proud. I for one am not only proud, but thankful that you have been so selfless and allowed this to happen”.

Principal Paul M. Khoarai of St. Denis School also sent a letter: “Introduction of Computer Education in the school curriculum is in line with the vision of our school, which is to produce people who can respond well to the demands of the changing world. The contribution you have made will help to make the mission of our school a reality. On behalf of St. Denis High School, I would like to thank you very much for this generous gesture you have made.” Rea leboha. (We are thankful.)

### From Nicaragua

PCV Sarah Hawley sent a DVD showing the water project she worked on (2007-2008). She also enclosed a “thank you” note from one of the children in her village, which is shown here.



## 2010 Calendar Open House

You are invited and encouraged to come to the Calendar Open House on Saturday, October 10 anytime between 2:00pm and 7:00pm at Elsa and Bernard’s, 669 Summit Avenue, St. Paul. Join your fellow RPCVs for snacks and conversation, purchase your 2010 Peace Corps International Calendar(s) produced by our RPCV neighbors at Wisconsin-Madison, and pick up a supply to sell to others. Individuals will be asked to sign out calendars to sell so that we can keep track of our progress during the sale. Let’s make this the best calendar sales year ever!





## MNRPCV Grant Awards

*Jane Bardon (Turkmenistan 2003-05)*

MNRPCV gives grants to PCVs and RPCVs once or twice a year. Funding for these grants comes from our fundraiser dinners and calendar sales. Members of the Grant Review Advisory Committee for the spring grant offering were Anne Kanyusik (Bangladesh 1998-2000), Russ Petrika (Tanzania 1964-67), and Tom O'Toole (Guinea). The Spring 2009 grant recipients are described below.

### Irrigation Initiative

Andrew Jondahl (Senegal PCV) from MN proposed The Irrigation Initiative, a project that will help four farmers in the area of Saraya (northeast of the city of Kedougou) in Senegal to dig wells and construct irrigation systems in their fields to water their fruit trees and year-round vegetable gardens. This is a large project involving professional well diggers, cement, gravel and other supplies. He is seeking a total of \$8766 from a variety of sources to fund the project. 2009 MNRPCV Award: \$750

### Field Trips for Eco-Kids

Gabriel Sidman (Honduras PCV) from MN is training students in his community to be eco-tourism guides in the Rio Negro area. The students are limited to a sixth grade education and have no opportunity for other education or training. He proposes to take a group of students outside of their immediate area to get a broader view of their general environment. 2009 MNRPCV Award: \$600

### International Outreach Coalition (IOC)

Rosa Werthwein (Ukraine 2003-05) and three other RPCVs manage the IOC program. They propose to implement a YES (Youth Engaging Society) project in Ukraine in 2009. Selected students will run three large projects: a community leadership and project planning workshop, an HIV/AIDS art festival, and a creative leadership camp. These programs will involve 38 student leaders and 200 participants who will all be eligible for small grants and support through the YES program. 2009 MNRPCV Award: \$300

### Cottonwood Foundation

The Cottonwood Foundation is an all-volunteer organization that provides funds for grassroots organizations throughout the world. The work of these organizations combine: protecting the environment, promoting cultural diversity, empowering people to meet their basic needs, and relying on volunteers. MNRPCV has supported this organization for several years. 2009 MNRPCV Award: \$200

Total MNRPCV Spring 2009 Grant Awards	\$1850
Total MNRPCV Fall 2008 Grant Awards	\$1500
<b>Total for 2008-2009</b>	<b>\$3350</b>

## Kherson, Ukraine and Austin, MN Colleges Partnership

*Harry Stevens (Ukraine 1999-2001)*

The long-term partnership between Riverland College in Austin, Minnesota and Peace Corps began in 1999-2000, when Harry Stevens taught at Kherson University in the Ukraine as a Peace Corps Volunteer. The two colleges have further developed this relationship as sister colleges. In 2002-2003, educators from Riverland and Kherson expanded their international awareness via exchange visits. Also in 2003, the NPCA (National Peace Corps Association) provided funds to support and promote distance learning between Riverland and Kherson.

Last fall, a grant award from MNRPCV provided funds to expand the distance learning program to include a Summer 2009 English Composition course taught at Riverland by Richard Nicolai; as well as a fall course in Ukrainian Culture and a course in Conversational Russian to be taught by Ukrainian instructor Petro Melnichuk.

Ivan Okhin, a current Riverland International student from Kherson, serves as Project Manager and Website Developer with Petro Melnichuk. It is through their exceptional knowledge of computer technology that this effort is so successful.

We are extremely grateful to all of our supporters, especially MNRPCV and Riverland Community College, as we facilitate these joint efforts to encourage travel, email, distance learning, cross enrollment in on-line as well as off-line courses, transfer of credits, and similar efforts for students, faculty and others.

For further information, check out: <http://soukraine.pbwiki.com/> and <http://co.net/sisters/>.

## 2011 Return to Ukraine

*Harry Stevens (Ukraine 1999-2001)*

This is your chance to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps by going on a Cruise with the Cossacks in 2011 on the Dneiper River and Black Sea. For more information, go to the Friends of Ukraine website: <http://ukraina.ning.com/forum/topics/Yalta-in-2011/>. When you join the Friends of Ukraine Forum, fill out your profile, click on "enrolling but not dues paying" and then at the very bottom you must click on "follow". For information, an itinerary and map of the June 2-5, 2011 Yalta Conference Peace Corps Reunion, go to: <http://www.vikingrivercruises.com/us/cruises/FOTC/09ODSKBP11/VLO/itinerary.aspx>



## First MNRPCV International Cookbook

*Cindy Jurgensen (Kiribati 1981-83)*

### To Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps (2011)

#### The goals:

- Recognize the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps with an International Cookbook.
- Collect recipes from Minnesota RPCVs and other RPCVs.
- Do a fun project that ties RPCVs together.
- Sell the book at MNRPCV events (and elsewhere).
- Raise funds for the MNRPCV Grant Program.
- Complete the project by fall 2010 (to sell for holiday gifts).

#### Want to contribute?

- Select a recipe from your host country or another country served by Peace Corps.
- Submit your chosen recipe by November 1, 2009, to the Cookbook Team by email as an MSWord attachment to Cindy Jurgensen [cindyjurgensen@gmail.com](mailto:cindyjurgensen@gmail.com) OR write (legibly) or type your recipe and mail to: Cindy Jurgensen, 4209 Browndale Av., St. Louis Park, MN 55416
- Write 2-4 lines explaining the significance of the recipe and how it fits into the culture of the country.
- Include your name, country, and years of service; and phone number and email address (for the committee only - neither will be printed in the cookbook).

If you have questions or if you would like to help produce the cookbook contact Cindy at [cindyjurgensen@gmail.com](mailto:cindyjurgensen@gmail.com) (952-925-3118). And please help spread the word to your fellow RPCVs – we'd like this cookbook to include a wide collection of Peace Corps countries.

The PEACE CORPS 50th ANNIVERSARY  
will be in 2011!

#### Plan your special Anniversary Project now!

For questions or to let us know about your project, contact Jane Bardon,  
MNRPCV 50th Anniversary Liaison  
[janebardon@yahoo.com](mailto:janebardon@yahoo.com)

## 2009 Annual Meeting

*Jane Bardon, MNRPCV President (Turkmenistan 2003-05)*

The MNRPCV 2009 Annual Meeting will be held on September 13 in conjunction with the Annual Picnic and get-together at the home of Rhoda Brooks (Ecuador 1963-84, Chili CD 1980-82) in Excelsior. Please see separate notice on the back page for details on time and directions.

Business at the Annual Meeting will include reports from the 2008-2009 year and the election of Board Members for 2009-2010. We have an open board, which means people are elected as Board Members but not to a specific position. (The list of Board positions can be found on our website: [www.mnrpcv.org](http://www.mnrpcv.org).) At the first meeting of the Board everyone has a chance to indicate what they would like to do for the coming year. Somehow, this always works out and we manage to fill all of our essential positions. If you have never served on a board, this is a great learning opportunity; if you have served on other boards, we welcome your experience and expertise; and if you have served on the MNRPCV Board before, you can return. We need to add at least five new members for next year.

To volunteer or nominate someone, with their consent, for the 2009-10 MNRPCV Board of Directors, please contact Miriam Krause, current MNRPCV Secretary, at [mok4747@yahoo.com](mailto:mok4747@yahoo.com) or 763-412-9315. Additional nominations can be added at the Annual Meeting. We are looking forward to an exciting year with our usual medley of activities, plus planning for several major projects for the Peace Corps 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2011.

Since we are nearing the end of the term of the current Board of Directors, I would like to thank all of the Board Members for their loyal service to MNRPCV during the past year: Nancy Weiss-Sanfo, Vice President and Communications Committee member; Miriam Krause, Secretary, Communications Chair and NEWS Editor; Jack Bardon, Treasurer; Gary Bank, Community Service Co-Chair and Speakers Bureau Coordinator; Carole Fairbrother, Community Service Co-Chair; Carri Anderson, Membership Chair; Maggie Kozak, Social Chair; Mike Smith, Member at Large; and Mary Adams, Past President. I would also like to thank Elsa Frettem, who managed the newsletter layout and continued as our Listserv Manager; and Val Aas, our Webmaster. Everyone did a great job as leaders of MNRPCV and it is through their efforts that we all enjoyed many opportunities to join in the RPCV Community and to reach out to others through service projects and the grant program.



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## Community Service Events

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*Gary Bank (Kenya 1995-97)*

The Earth Day clean up at Fort Snelling was a success and lots of fun. Work at Books for Africa also went well, with two volunteers.

### **Tuesday, Aug 11 @ 4:30pm: JEREMIAH PROGRAM DINNER**

We will cook dinner for 40 to 50 (half adults, half young children); only about 5 cooks are needed, so it is first reply, first choice. You may also drop off desserts, etc.

Location: 1510 Laurel Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55403 (just behind the Basilica)

Contact person for RSVP and further information, including directions: Gary at [gtbank@msn.com](mailto:gtbank@msn.com)

Every three months the MNRPCVs make dinner for residents of the Jeremiah Program. The Jeremiah Program ([www.jeremiahprogram.org](http://www.jeremiahprogram.org)) is an organization in downtown Minneapolis that works with single young mothers to build life skills and to provide for certain needs of their children while the mothers continue their education. They just completed a brand new addition to the building and have a new children's Resource Library. In addition, for every fifty hours of direct service to The Jeremiah Program that a volunteer (or group) records, a book is donated to the Resource Library. Because of MNRPCV's gift of time, a new book has been donated.

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## **Letter to the Editor**

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To The Editor:

The member appreciation event was a very nice evening and a great success. It was great to see such a turn out of members including some faces we seldom see.

On the other hand, I want to voice a Thank You to those very few members who have come to do volunteer work at community service events.

The difference is striking to me. Many RPCVs are happy to 'schmooze' with wine, music, etc. at a social event. Very few are willing, or can find time, to do active, hands on, volunteer work. Yet we all volunteered to do Peace Corps service working to help other people in a foreign land. Perhaps my observation is skewed. However, the facts are very obvious to me.

There has been some slight change in demographics of Minnesota Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. At this point, participation in many events has been down. We definitely need to rebuild and revitalize our group to increase its worth to all.

*Gary T. Bank Peace Corps English Teacher Kenya 1995-97*

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## Upcoming Social Events Fall 2009

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*Maggie Kozak (Burkina Faso 2004-06)*

### **Wednesday, Sept 9 @ 5:00pm: HAPPY HOUR**

U of M RPCVS (and friends): Come celebrate the beginning of the semester with a happy hour at the Kitty Kat Club!

Location: 313 14th Ave SE (in Dinkytown)

Contact: Miriam at [mok4747@yahoo.com](mailto:mok4747@yahoo.com) or 763-412-9315.

### **Sunday, Sept 13 @ 3:30pm: ANNUAL PICNIC**

See back page for details!

### **Friday, August 21 @ 6:00pm - Gambia Fundraiser**

Peace Corps in The Gambia is working to fight malaria, a preventable disease that affects most Gambians once in their life. Their goal is to help prevent the transmission of malaria through distribution of and proper instruction on the use of treated bed nets. Each net costs just \$5. Britta Hansen (RPCV Bolivia) will be hosting a West African themed dinner and fundraiser to support their efforts. A typical Gambian meal will be served along with a slide show and conversation about life and health in the small West African Nation. All are welcome to stop by.

Location: St Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como ave., St Paul.

Contact: Britta at 651-280-9499 or [britta.lilley@gmail.com](mailto:britta.lilley@gmail.com) <<http://us.mc304.mail.yahoo.com/mc/compose?to=britta.lilley%40gmail.com>> . Please RSVP.

### **Tuesday, August 25 @ 6:30pm Cyril Paul and the Calypso Monarchs**

bring you a taste of the Carnival experience at the Minnesota History Center's final concert event of the summer.

Location: Performances are free and held on the Laura Jane Musser Plaza at the Minnesota History Center.

Contact: Jane at [janebardon@yahoo.com](mailto:janebardon@yahoo.com) or 651-484-7989

**Saturday, Nov 7 @ 6:00pm: FUNDRAISER DINNER** Join us for our first Scandanavian-themed Fundraiser Dinner! Bring a dish to share and a donation for the MNRPCV Grant Program.

Location: 669 Summit Ave, St. Paul

Contact: Christi at [quiltzilla@gmail.com](mailto:quiltzilla@gmail.com) or 612-825-7203

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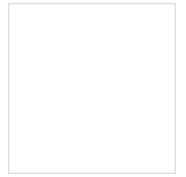
## **Plan an MNRPCV Event**

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Do you have fabulous ideas of fun and exciting social and/or community events? If so, we invite YOU to host an event! Please email [maggi kozak@yahoo.com](mailto:maggi kozak@yahoo.com) or call 651-387-7581 for more information.

Stay up to date on the latest MNRPCV Community Events and Social Events by checking the [mnrpcv yahoo list-serv calendar](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mnrpcvEmail-List/cal) (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mnrpcvEmail-List/cal>), Facebook page, or website ([www.mnrpcv.org](http://www.mnrpcv.org)).

**MNRPCV**  
**P.O. Box 6413**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55406**



Check your mailing label for  
your MNRPCV Membership  
Renewal Date.



**MNRPCV Annual Meeting and Potluck Picnic**  
**Sunday, September 13, 3:30 pm, Excelsior MN**

**Location:** Rhoda Brooks' house, 859 Excelsior Boulevard  
(on Lake Minnetonka) Excelsior MN 55331

Join us for Potluck Fun and our Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections! Family and friends are welcome!

Please bring a dish to share and a chair if you have one. Beverages will be provided. A grill will be available, if you'd like to bring items to grill.

**Directions:** Go out Hwy 394 to 494 south. Take 494 to Hwy 7 and go west. Pass the intersection of 7 and 101 and keep going west on 7 for three more red lights. Go right at the Christmas Lake Road intersection and immediately left on Excelsior Blvd. Go about two blocks. Rhoda's home is on the right across the street from a cemetery. It is a green house at the top of a driveway going up. If you go past Adele's Frozen Custard, you have gone too far.

Contact Maggie regarding car pooling (if you need a ride and/or would like to provide a ride) [maggiekozak@yahoo.com](mailto:maggiekozak@yahoo.com) or 651-387-7581

**Fall 2009**  
**Table of Contents**

Corner Board - Joan Velasquez	Page 1
MNRPCV Photo Show	Page 2
Member Appreciation Night	Page 2
MNRPCV Toastmasters	Page 3
Annual Meeting Notice	Page 3
Grant Recipient Reports	Page 4
2010 Calendar Open House	Page 4
Grant Award Announcement	Page 5
Ukraine / MN College Partnership	Page 5
Return to Ukraine	Page 5
MNRPCV Cookbook	Page 6
Annual Meeting	Page 6
Community Service Events	Page 7
Letter to Editor	Page 7
Fall Social Events	Page 7
Annual Meeting and Potluck Picnic	Page 8

All events are announced via email on the [mnrpcvEmailList](mailto:mnrpcvEmailList). Join this listserv from [www.mnrpcv.org/ContactUs.html](http://www.mnrpcv.org/ContactUs.html)