



Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of West Michigan

Spring, 2004

The RPCVs of West Michigan is established to help returned volunteers network locally and nationally, to continue volunteering with local and international service projects, and to promote global education and understanding in West Michigan.

2004 Calendar

International Potluck Dinner

Saturday February 7th, 2004
6:00 PM
Marsh Ridge Apartments
Community Room

Workdays with the ICCF

April 24 and May 1st
The exact locations will be posted on the website in March.
Call Ken at 245-8220 with questions

May 7th - Cinco de Mayo - Dinner

7:00 pm
Little Mexico Restaurant
Bridge and Lexington
See website for map

July 11 - Picnic

1:00 pm
Greg and Lisa Pohlads
1731 Eastbrook
Call 245-6793 for more info
or visit our website.

September 18 - Garage Sale

9:00 - 2:00
Ken & Yvonne Schillings
2228 Madison, SE Grand Rapids

November 5 - Group Dinner

7:00 pm
Thai House (28th Street)
See Website for map.

December 4 - Annual Christmas Party

6:00 pm
Coleman/Stanford
244 Dale St NE Grand Rapids
(more info on website)

August 5 - 8 - National RPCV Conference in Chicago

Peace Corps 2004:
Celebrating a Legacy of Service

International Potluck Dinner
Saturday February 7th, 2004
6:00 PM

**Marsh Ridge Apartments
Community Room**

Start off the year right by joining us for our annual international potluck dinner. RPCV's take pride in making up their favorite dishes from all over the world. Please bring a large dish to pass as we like to invite international guests to partake in our festivities.

This year we will be inviting some people from different African countries. This will be in keeping with our African theme for 2004. Several RPCV's

having served in that area of the world will present a slide show of their experiences following dinner. Please feel free to bring your friends from any corner of the world as guests. We will conduct a short business meeting discussing our annual events and projects.

If you would like, you may bring a "white elephant." Previously highly prized items included household objects, magazines and books. We will be setting up a give-away table for our international guests.

Special thanks to the generosity of Virginia Pearce who lives at Marsh Ridge. To reach Marsh Ridge Apartments, take 196 west from Grand Rapids toward Holland. Take exit 75 west which is the

Michigan Street exit (also called M45). Continue west past Covell, Oakleigh, and Collindale. The next road past Collindale is for Marsh Ridge Apartments. It is on the north side of the road. Turn right and travel down the drive until you see the Marsh Ridge Community Center on your right.

If you have any questions, you can call Carolyn Peacock at (616) 975-2633. (note map on website)

2004 Spring Service Projects with Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF):

Projects: Landscaping around housing units
Dates: Saturdays, April 24 and May 1
Time: 9:00 - noon
Locations: TBA in March
Contact: Ken Schilling 245-8220
Remarks: Need 6 - 8 RPCVs for each work date. Bring own work gloves.
Tools, landscaping materials, and landscape plan will be provided.
Workers can bring own perennials if they want to contribute them, but should announce intent two weeks ahead so ICCF can plan. ICCF thanks us for our continuing support.

Ken Schilling

(look for more information and fotos from last year on the website)

RPCV's of Western Michigan Christmas Party December 6, 2003 Report

Treasure's Report

Savings \$1026.80 Checking \$1072.67

Total \$2099.47

Old Business

The migrant families who frequent the Sparta Clinic were very grateful for the layettes we made for them last summer. Barbara Stanford did the deliveries of the majority of the babies for the 15 families who received the layettes. The Sparta Clinic added to the layettes by purchasing very nice laundry baskets (that also served as portable cribs), diapers, and baby wipes. Hand-made quilts were also donated by another source. Thanks to all involved with this project.

New Business

Sue Celadilla will nominate Amy Ortiz for the Peace Corps Shriver award for continued service at home. Farmers from the Dominican Republic have traveled to Dorr for the past several years to learn more about American milk production. Amy and her husband host the farmers in their home for a couple of weeks each year and drive them to local farms for their see things first hand. Amy was featured in an article in the Grand Rapids Press for her terrific contribution to international development.

Sue has been in contact with Heather Medina, a current PCV serving in the Dominican Republic. Heather is adjusting to her new life as a volunteer and researching possible projects. She has an interest in water and sanitation. She is also hoping for a funding source for palm pilots for local doctors. Sue and Julio visited Heather over the holidays in the Dominican Republic to find out more specific ways that we can help.

The Sparta Clinic is once again in need of children's books for its "Reach Out and Read" program. The migrant population that frequents the clinic. The clinic tries to promote literacy and shared family time through reading by passing out a free book to each child at their well child visits. By unanimous voice vote, the RPCV,s of Western Michigan agreed to donate \$100 for the purchase of these books. Dr. Standford matched these funds for a total donation of \$200.

Vickie Craig brought materials to show us regarding the plight of Afghani children. She pointed out that much attention is currently being given to Iraq which recently has been restored with running water and electricity. Afghanistan, on the other hand, never had running water or electricity so there is considerable need in this country as well. By unanimous voice vote, we agreed to donate \$100 to help Afghani children.

A series of articles regarding safety for Peace Corps volunteers was published in an east coast newspaper. Some of these articles were nationally syndicated including one which was published in the Grand Rapids Press. There was a short discussion about whether the article, which depicted volunteers as highly at risk for personal injury, is real or inflammatory.

Sue has been in contact with the Chicago RPCV's regarding the national conference next summer. She offered for our group to organize a meeting of regional groups during a breakfast. Sue found at prior conferences that little opportunity has been given for regional groups to meet and discuss their issues. She envisions our group making signs for regional tables during a breakfast at the Palmer House conference hotel. Her offer to organize this did not seem to be well understood by conference organizers.



Heather Medina (on left) and Sue Celadilla (right of center) meet in the Dominican Republic

During the national conference, there will be a need for an available room RPCV,s who are not lodged at the Palmer Hotel. Sue proposed that she and a roommate each pay the cost of staying in such a room for two nights and that the RPCV,s of Western Michigan cover the cost of the third night. They will then make the use of the room available to Western MI RPCV,s during the day. This was approved by unanimous consensus.

Regarding the International Potluck dinner at Marsh Ridge apartments in 2004, Vicky Craig agreed to check on inviting refugees to share dinner as our guests. If this is not successful, we could try to contact Bethany Christian Services again. The give away table was very popular last year so we will try to do this again. This year our slide show will feature Africa. Barbara Stanford will help to organize RPCV slides from Liberia, Kenya, and Lesotho.

There was a discussion about possible fundraising projects for 2004. Hosting a food booth for one day at a festival of some sort was deemed feasible by much of the group. Funds raised from such an event could be used to help combat the AIDS epidemic in Africa

as one example. We could channel the funds through Peace Corps national, Catholic Relief Services, or Oxfam.

International calendars from the RPCV,s of Wisconsin-Madison were offered for sale at \$10 each.

Our group decided to save money on postage by using a postcard for our 2004 mailing. The postcard will feature the dates of our major events, our web site address, and an 800 number to call if the RPCV does not have access to the Internet. Rather than have a lengthy and expensive newsletter, we will mail the postcard. Members can go to the web site for all the details if they are interested.

2004 Calendar

See the Front Page for the events that are set for this year.

Members Present

Carolyn Peacock Benin 1987-1989
Billy (& Nancy) Smith Venezuela 1964-1969
Greg Pohlada Jamaica 1988-1990
Kathleen Russell Lesotho 1977-1979
Dick (& Linda) Koch Malaysia 1969-1970
Yvonne & Ken Schilling Liberia 1963-1965
Merrillie Benthin Cameroun 1969-1972
Charlotte Ansorge Thailand 1990-1993
Richard E Heft Ethiopia 1965-1969
Barbara Stanford Kenya 1986-1988
Priscilla Zeider Mauritania & Gabon 1989-1991
Amy Ortiz Dominican Republic 1980-1982
Joel Skok Chile, DR, Honduras 1981-1986
Karen (& Gene) Grimm St Lucia 1963-1965
Mark Coleman Honduras 1980-1983
Sue Celadilla Dominican Republic

Cinco de Mayo Dinner Meeting Friday May 7th, 2004 7:00 p.m. Little Mexico Restaurant

We will be meeting for dinner and to socialize at the Little Mexico Restaurant in honor of the Cinco de Mayo. For a more convenient schedule, we have altered the traditional date of the event to the seventh on May in order to gather on a Friday night. This way most of us can enjoy ourselves without worrying about going to work the next morning. We will follow our dinner with a short business meeting to discuss projects and events for 2004. We have asked the restaurant to cater our dinner. It will cost approximately \$12 per plate including a non-alcoholic beverage. Let the hostess know that you are with the RPCV's of West Michigan, and she will bring you to a room reserved for our group. Little Mexico is at 401 Stocking Avenue NW Grand Rapids, MI

To reach Little Mexico Restaurant, take 196 to exit 77C. This is the Ottawa exit. Turn west at the bottom of the exit onto Michigan Street. Travel down Michigan Street and cross under the 131 overpass. Michigan Street changes names and becomes Bridge Street. Continue to travel west four blocks until you come to the three way intersection of Bridge, Stocking, and Lexington. Little Mexico Restaurant is situated on the north west corner of this intersection. There is parking behind the restaurant. The restaurant is a light tan color.

If you need better directions, you can call Little Mexico Restaurant at (616) 456-0517. For any other questions, call Carolyn Peacock at (616) 975-2633.

Garage Sale

Saturday, September 18, 9:00 - 2:00 pm
2228 Madison, SE, Grand Rapids

Contact Ken Schilling, 245-8220.

People should bring their treasures the week before, preferably Thursday and Friday. We hope four or five volunteers will help mark prices Friday evening and drink beer, and also help out with the sale Saturday and with the coffee and donuts. We shouldn't consume all these refreshments by ourselves,

Ken

(see website for map and more information)

Bangkok View Restaurant Dinner Meeting Friday November 5, 2004 7:00 p.m.

We will have our autumn gathering for dinner and socializing at Bangkok View Restaurant. Following dinner there will be a short business meeting. The restaurant has agreed that they can accommodate our group, but it is too early in the year to finalize plans. We expect that they will be able to cater a Thai dinner for us in the \$10 to \$12 price range.

Bangkok View is located at 1233 W 28th Street in Wyoming across from the Studio 28 movie theater. If you are coming from out of town, the restaurant is situated on 28th Street squarely between 131 and M37. The restaurant is in a strip mall on the north side of the street across from Studio 28 movie theater. Just east of the strip mall is McDonald's restaurant.

Bangkok View (616) 531-8070. Their fax number is (616) 531-0668. RPCV Charlotte Ansorge will be organizing this event.
(see website for map)

President's Corner - Sue Celadilla 2003 in Review by the President

For the last two years we have had local RPCV's present slides of their country experience at our annual International Potluck. We started with Afghanistan and then we went to Central America with a combined presentation on Guatemala and Honduras. The response was overwhelming and this year we will feature Africa at our annual international dinner. There will be three countries representing East and West Africa over most of the history of the Peace Corps itself. I am sure it will also be a success. This year, our dinner is on February 7th at 6:00 pm Please bring a friend that might be interested in this international connection. Bring a dish to share that represents your country (or another international flavor). The directions are listed on the front page.

Last April and May, two groups of about 8 people each, pitched in and enjoyed landscaping on two Saturday mornings for newly renovated houses as part of the Inner City Christian Federation. We will do it again this spring. The two dates are on Saturdays, April 24th and May 1. Ken Schilling has been our coordinator of this project at 616- 245-8220. Fotos are on the website of last year's work.

We gathered enough donations, at our picnic last summer, for 15 layettes to be given to Migrant mothers at the Sparta Health Clinic. Barb Stanford works with expectant mothers and does deliveries there. Our group will also donate \$100 more to purchase books for the "Reach out and Read" program at that clinic for migrant children who get their vaccinations and well child visits.

In December we also agreed to send \$100 to help Afghani children through the Friends of Afghanistan on Vicki Craig's recommendation.

Fifteen members of the group turned out for Dominican food at the Santo Domingo Restaurant on Division Ave. Over the years we have really developed many friendships and enjoyed food from many different cultures around the world at these events.

There has been much discussion about our part in the National PC Conference next August 5-8. We will have a "Michigan" room at the Palmer House for you to rest and regroup between activities. Come and meet the other Michiganans at the conference. Please check out the conference website at www.rpcv2004.org for details and to register. You owe it to yourself to go to a conference every few years to reconnect with the Peace Corps spirit at the national level.

Sue Celadilla President

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West Michigan RPCV Web Address: http://rpcvwestmichigan.org		

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RPCV Group Web Site

We Want You to Connect
and to Share.

Stay in touch via our website.
Contribute - News, Links, Fotos

<http://rpcvwestmichigan.org>