

GBRPCV NEWSLETTER

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEACE CORPS

Mission

In the spirit of our Peace Corps experience, Greater Birmingham RPCVs promotes a continuing commitment to our community.

Goals

To develop a social and community action network

To remind ourselves and educate others about why we served

To provide support for potential, current and recently returned Peace Corps volunteers

To promote public awareness and support for the Peace Corps

The Greater Birmingham Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (GBRPCV) group hosts a bon voyage party every spring for new peace corps volunteers from the region who will be leaving soon for their overseas assignments. This year's celebration was a special event April 14 at the Smolian International House on UAB's campus celebrating the 50 years since the Peace Corps began. Senator Arthur Orr-Decatur, himself a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal, presented a Resolution from the Alabama State Senate recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps. He also participated in a panel discussion about the Peace Corps experience in each decade and its continuing importance today. Others on the panel were Dr. Craig Wilson, director of the Sparkman Center for Global Health at UAB who served in Samoa; Heather White, President of the GBRPCVs, a former volunteer in Burkina Faso, Dan Frederick, who served in Thailand in the early '60s and Mike Robie, regional Peace Corps recruiter who recently served in the Republic of Georgia.



Senator Arthur Orr-Decatur presents a resolution from the Alabama State Senate recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps.



RECENT ACTIVITIES

50th Anniversary Party- Members of GBRPCV brought treasured artifacts from their countries of service which were displayed around the hall and on the dinner tables. Music from many different countries was also played during the party.



Getting started on the map



Map Painting at Central Park Elementary School- In March, GBRPCVs worked with students from 3rd, 4th and 5th grades and their art teacher to paint a world map on the lunchroom wall. Adrienne Retief led the painters and Sue Seay led the geographic crafts and games.



Adrienne Retief helps painters choose colors



Nearly finished



Karmie Johnson and Adrienne with map

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LETTERS FROM CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

Princess Nash May 2011 –I joined Peace Corps on February 7, 2010, and at this point I am just over a year into my service. I got placed in Guyana in South America. Guyana is comprised mainly of people of East Indian and African decent. It is located approximately 4 degrees above the equator, and the temperature here usually stays around 90 day and night. Guyana is known as the Land of Many Waters, in reality the Land of Many Animals would be more fitting. I usually see anacondas a couple of times a month, mostly dead but some slither out of the trenches into residential areas. Exotic Macaws are kept as pets, its common to see monkeys roaming the rooftops of houses, and people still ride donkey and horse carts down the street as a means of transportation. I learned how to paddle a canoe.....Well actually it was a dugout canoe. Amerindians, the initial inhabitants of the country make canoes from a tree called “Danny Boy” a local term used to describe a lightweight tree that grows in the riverine regions of the country.

I spend a lot of time working with the Regional AIDS Committee and the Ministry of Health’s Chronic Disease department. I have organized two summer camps; one for diabetic children and the other for at risk youth. In the past year I have secured grants to do HIV and AIDS educational workshops about stigma & discrimination, prevention, and training for commercial sex workers.
princessvjnash@yahoo.com



Richard Marinos Update from Cameroon April 2011 Dear GBPCVs, Thanks in part to the GBPCVs gift, the entire budget for my school reforestation program is funded, all \$5,511! We’ve already been digging holes at the schools to plant trees, and outplanting is going to start in two weeks. My colleague Julie and I are already hard at work developing a comprehensive rural EE curriculum in French, and we’re very excited to get the project off the ground and very relieved that the funding arrived just in time. Thank you so much for your gift, and you can keep following my blog for updates on the project: <http://richardmarinos.blogspot.com>.

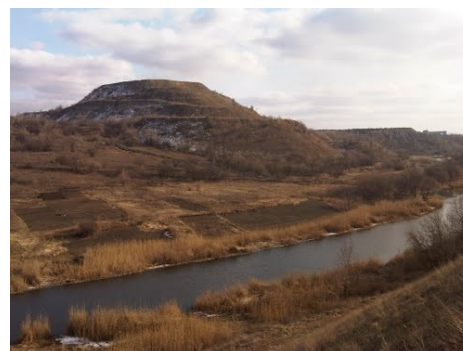
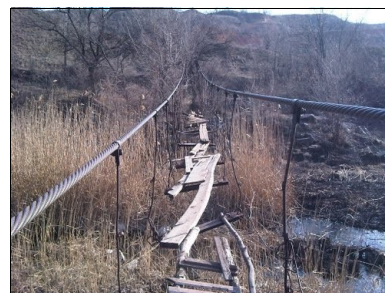
Sam Ryals Feb 2011. I am currently a PCV in Ukraine, sworn into office in December. My site is Krivoy Rog and I am a TEFL volunteer. This is the steel capitol of Ukraine with hundreds of environmental issues; sounds like Birmingham to me! My first few weeks have been very stressful because the English teachers and I have struggled to communicate properly. They told Peace Corps, however, that I was very polite and helpful person. They are fascinated with my "yes ma'ams" and "no sirs." June 2011 I have been helping some English tutors, and I am also involved in an “American culture club” at a local university. I am in the first stages of trying to write a grant for my school to install water filters for their fountains. My biggest struggle is trying to get the students at my school interested in learning English. I am also involved in the Peace Corps Ukraine Environmental Working Group, a group of volunteers joined together to increase awareness of recycling. My Ukrainian friends enjoy hearing me speak Russian to their fellow countrymen. They tell me that every Ukrainian I speak to exhibits a shocked facial expression. They enjoy hearing the integration of the Alabama dialect with Russian. Here are 2 pictures: a local footbridge and the area around Krivov Rog.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The GBRPCV Newsletter is the official, semi-annual publication of the Greater Birmingham Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, which publishes articles and information on the group’s activities and upcoming events. Our goal is to publish interesting and useful content, as well as to encourage and assist Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in carrying out the third goal of the Peace Corps: “To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people.” Paper copies of the newsletter will be distributed to members in good standing, and the newsletter will be posted online at www.gbrpcv.org at the time of publication. To receive additional paper copies, please send your name and address to the editor.

Submission Policy for Articles

The GBRPCV Newsletter invites Peace Corps-related articles, information, feedback and ideas for articles. If you are interested in contributing to the next issue of the GBRPCV Newsletter, please submit material by e-mail to laura@bakersmith.net and include your country and dates of service. Do not use attachments; put everything you want us to consider in the body of the message. Although we are only able to respond to submissions that we publish, all are read and considered. We reserve the right to choose or reject submissions based solely on our editorial judgment.



MEMBERSHIP

To join or to renew your membership in GBRPCV or NPCA, you may do so online: www.peacecorpsconnect.org
 If you want to join GBRPCV only, send in the membership form from our website www.gbrpcv.org along with your check to **GBRPCVs, P.O. Box 55924, Birmingham, AL 35255.**

CALENDARS

The beautiful 2012 international calendars produced by the Wisconsin RPCV group will be available for sale at the lake party in August. Our profits from calendar sales go to charities: usually international relief organizations, Peace Corps Partnership Projects, particularly those of Alabama PCVs, etc.
 Countries featured in 2012 include Nepal, Vanuatu, Ukraine, Swaziland, Congo, Georgia; all countries where GBRPCVs have served. Order them for your family, friends and Peace Corps co-workers. \$10 each or \$7 each if you order 10 or more. You can also order from hwhite@uab.edu.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings GBRPCVs,
 I hope that this message finds you in good spirits in spite of the heat! I cannot remember a hotter start to the summer season. I would like to start by extending my gratitude and saying goodbye to Julia Hartman who has been an active member of our group for many years. As many of you know, Julia moved to North Carolina earlier this year after retiring from UA in Tuscaloosa. Julia, we wish you the best! Good luck to you in North Carolina!
 Thanks to all who made it to our PC 50th Anniversary event in late April (pages 1-2). The event was informative and fun, with beautiful *objets d'art* on display from PCVs around the world. Another PC event that took place on May 18th was the Lillian Carter Award Ceremony recognizing the commitment to a senior volunteer's commitment to service and the principles of Peace Corps. A monetary donation to the award recipient, Diane Gallagher, was made on behalf of GBRPCVs. Thanks to our members for making this happen! Finally, I would like to extend an invitation to you all to make it to the Angus household on Saturday, August 20th for our annual lake party. We will be holding our annual elections at that time. If anyone is interested in taking on a leadership role within our organization, you will find the positions and duties listed below. Be a part of making this group grow and thrive! We welcome input from each of you. Until August, enjoy all that summer has to offer, and peace to you and yours. Heather
 (Editor note: Let us congratulate Heather on completing her DrPH in May! Somehow she did that while working, raising Suri and keeping us in order. Amazing!)

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION
 For news, anniversary registration, contests, jobs: www.peacecorpsconnect.org



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2011-2012 GBRPCV'S OFFICER ELECTIONS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

If you are interested in becoming an officer or chair a committee, please consider nominating a fellow member or volunteering for the following positions:

OFFICERS:

- President:** Planning yearly GBRPCV event calendar with GBRPCV officers; serving as a local liaison with the National Peace Corps Association and other PC entities
- Vice President:** Fulfilling any organizational duties in President's absence
- Secretary:** Maintaining e-mail listserv; compiling annual report; meeting minutes
- Treasurer:** Managing GBRPCV financial reports and accounting

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Membership Chair** (Vacant! Volunteers needed!): Maintaining membership database and annual dues from GBRPCV members
- Communications Chair:** Advertising and liaison for local events
- Social Chair:** Planning and organizing social events
- Newsletter Editor.** Compiling GBRPCV e-newsletter

Elections will be held at the Angus' Lake Party on **Saturday, August 20, 2011**
 Please submit nominations by Wednesday, August 17th, to Heather White (hwhite@uab.edu) or Kathy Angus (kjangu@charter.net).

We welcome your participation and contributions to GBRPCV

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Watch for emails for more information
 Sat, Aug 20- Lake Party and cookout at Angus residence 2-8 PM
- Mid-September- Fall reception at Ryals Building at UAB
- Thurs, Dec 1 -Dinner at local restaurant

