

NENY RPCV Meeting Notes Tuesday December 05, 2006

Agenda items:

- APHRICA Dance-A-Thon to Shine on Sierra Leone: Feb 24th, 2007
- Food and intros (where was Augusta?)
- Thanksgiving dinner: 2006 Debriefing & Thoughts for 2007
- The Newsletter is out there!
- Treasurer's report: Calendars & cookbooks
- Writer's Institute presenter on Afghanistan
- Next meeting
- Christmas party:
- Bob Fakundiny's kente
- Show & Tell
- Festival of Nations
- Web master

Presentation: APHRICA

(Acknowledging, Providing, Helping Raising & Investing in the Children of Africa)
Sponsoring the 1st Annual "**Dance for Life**" **Marathon**
When: **Saturday February 24, 2007**; 12pm – until the last dancer stops swaying
Where: **Albany Law School Gymnasium**, 80 New Scotland Ave, Albany
Contact: a.p.h.r.i.c.a@gmail.com

Jennifer Filomeno & Pearlina Guillaume, students from Albany Law, spoke about their summer in Africa and presented their Dance-A-Thon to raise funds for Shine On Sierra Leone.

Jennifer and Pearlina returned to Albany Law this fall after summer volunteer and study in experiences Africa, but their experiences remained in their hearts. They worked at elementary schools and with orphaned children... everyday, they saw the children's hunger ... for food, for life, for love.

They founded APHRICA (Acknowledging, Providing, Helping Raising & Investing in the Children of Africa) with the mission to improve the quality of life for the children of Africa. APHRICA is a fundraising and capacity building organization working to raise funds and awareness for other non-profits with similar goals. They are working most closely with CHOSA (Children of South Africa) <http://www.childrenofsouthafrica.org/> and Shine on Sierra Leone <http://www.shineonsierraleone.com/>.

Shine on Sierra Leone is raising funds to rebuild and maintain Bongema Elementary School in an impoverished diamond mining community. Proceeds from the Dance-A-Thon will be donated to Shine on Sierra Leone for Bongema Elementary School.

Sign up to dance or sponsor a dancer! We hope that NENY-RPCV will be able to send a dancer or two... and that our members will gladly sponsor dancers in this event. Some of us have extra sign-up sheets, or get one from a.p.h.r.i.c.a@gmail.com. If you sign up to dance, please send email to rpcv-ny@yahoo.com so the rest of us can sponsor you.

Food, Introductions:

Thanks to Joe & Pat Doherty for putting up their icicle lights so 18 others of us could find our way to their home. (But where was Augusta?)

Thanksgiving dinner:

2006 – The scary part: Only 16 people had registered for the dinner when Harry & Joan last checked on the numbers! That fear couldn't outlive the call of free food to students, and ~110 people shared Thanksgiving dinner at RPI on Saturday, November 25th.

There was some confusion amongst the students regarding PC. One RPCV's visitor from China reported that some Chinese students thought we were Vietnam vets. Another RPCV reported that students asked if PC was part of the US military. This year, we did not display the Steve Hoyt's RPCV poster. It's possible that we didn't do a good job explaining the PC mission without it and we have to be more attentive in the future.

2007 – The sequel: Harry & Joan will be retiring from Thanksgiving Dinner coordinators as of this year. Augusta has offered to co-coordinate the event, but would like a running mate. Since Augusta wasn't at the meeting, a motion was made to vote her in as full coordinator (hey... you never know what people will vote you in for when you miss a meeting!), however, the motion was not seconded. Instead, we discussed other formats.

RPI's primary objective is to have foreign students go home with a family to experience the holiday in an American home.

Should we participate in RPI's Thanksgiving program or continue to do our own?

Pros & Cons

- **The confusion about PC mission issue:** One-on-one at home would allow us to more clearly explain PC, but to a smaller audience. With our present format, we need to make sure a RPCV makes it to each table. Students sometimes come only for a quick meal and leave before a RPCV gets to their table. Students at one side of the table sometimes talk amongst themselves while the RPCV can be heard by only the students sitting close to them at the table. Perhaps if we had a list of talking points and assigned tables we could increase the one-on-one nature of our current format?
- **PR:** We've had good local newspaper coverage for our separate event which would be lost if we participated in RPI's at-home format.
- **Organization:** We are losing Harry & Joan as Thanksgiving Dinner Coordinators. Piggy-backing onto RPI's format would reduce the need for NENY-RPCV organization.
- **Level of volunteer commitment:** Some RPCV's can't bring a student home for a full-blown holiday dinner, but can participate in the current format.

Please think about this long-standing annual outreach and bring your comments to next meeting.

Newsletter:

Thanks to Augusta & Christine, the newsletter has gone out. If you got the paper version, Great! If you got the email version, Great! If you got no version, please contact Augusta afield3@earthlink.net or Christine cvanderlan@hotmail.com.

Treasurer's report:

There are only 10 **calendars** left! At \$10 each, they make great gifts. Contact Jeanette <jeanettegny@earthlink.net>. If you buy them before December 16th, Jeanette won't have to carry them to Bob's party.

End-O-Month balance was \$2379 at the start of the treasurer's report, but frantic holiday shoppers interrupted the tally to buy 6 more calendars. The new end-o-month balance is now estimated to be \$60 more, but will be confirmed on the official spread sheet and updated at next month's meeting.

Annual **membership** can be renewed online here... <http://www.rpcvw.org/store.html>, or download the membership form here... <http://www.rpcvw.org/join.pdf>.

Cookbooks also make great fund raisers. Jeanette proposed that each of us contribute a recipe from our country of service and/or food pictures and/or a short experience about food. This raised other thoughts on the topic:

- Has a PC cookbook been done already?
 - PS during preparation of notes: A web search & found the following:
 - a few PC cookbooks exist with recipes from a single region or country.
 - The Museum of the Peace Corps Experience (MPCE) in Portland OR is looking for contributions for a broad audience comprehensive cookbook museumofthepeacecorpsexperience.org. Their call for contributions appears as early as Oct 2004 in the San Diego RPCV newsletter. It doesn't seem as if they've published it yet, but to see what they request, check here http://edweb.sdsu.edu/sdpca/back_issues/v17n5.html
 - I've sent email to MPCE asking when their cookbook would come out.
- Should we go local or target a broader audience?
- If we contribute pictures, then the cost of color would require we target a broader market to cover production.
- If we do a small-scale local book, we can include our favorite pot-luck dishes as well as those from our service countries.
- If we go for a broader market, it would require we be comprehensive and find contributions from each country that PC has ever had volunteers.
- We could put it on a CD, we could include music from different countries. If we did music, we'd have be careful with copyright laws or we'd have to hire musicians to reproduce the works.
- Several people had publisher contacts

Cookbook conclusion: Please bring a recipe, food picture and/or food story to next meeting when we will talk about this idea more. The least case scenario is that we'd have a bunch of recipes to pass around amounts ourselves.

Writer's Institute: Possible future presenter on Afghanistan

Steve Gottlieb attended a Writer's Institute talk and made contact on a possible future presenter on Afghanistan. All were in favor and Steve will follow up with an invitation.

Next meeting: January 9th, 2007 (note: 2nd Tuesday for January)

The next meeting will be at Bob Crowley's at 10 Plank Rd in Poestenkill, 283-7364. He will post directions, or find him here...

<http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&sa=N&resnum=0&q=hor%20dorve%20&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&tab=w>

Christmas party: December 16, 2006

Congratulations to Bob Fakundiny, whose home at 3288 River Rd, Rensselaer NY is, indeed, searchable via google.com/maps. It is comforting to know that the retired state geologist is locatable by satellite imagery. For those who can't read satellite images, Bob's home is on Rt 9J (aka River Rd) 2.2 miles south of Columbia Turnpike between Rensselaer and Castleton. Spaghetti with and without meat will be served starting some time between 6:30 – 7pm. Bring an hor dorve if you are so inclined.

Bob Fakundiny's kente

Bob entertained and enlightened us on kente, wearing his tripple-weave silk Mrs Nkrumah Goes to London pattern, and explaining its long and winding road.

During Bob's stay in Ghana, Nkrumah was under pressure to terminate Ghana's PC programs. Shriver negotiated to have PC only teaching math and science and agreed to sending geologists to Ghana. Bob and other PC geologists, however, had resigned sometime during these negotiations without that info trickling up. This put the geologists in a good position to negotiate re-upping terms, and a group of them was sent to Ghana under very agreeable conditions.

Another geologist in this Ghana-Geo-Group (the GGG's), Jimmy Barr, was particularly well-liked by his village. They contracted to have a kente woven for him using the pattern named after Mrs Nkrumah's shopping trip to London. At that time, you couldn't buy kente at a market, and even now an equivalent cloth would cost \$3000 - \$4000 when you can find it. Jimmy's father passed away shortly after receiving the kente, and he sold his cloth to Bob to cover airfare.

But, Bob felt the transaction had bad karma. Jimmy's village contracted the kenta for Jimmy. It belonged to Jimmy. Bob mailed it back to Jimmy, but not before Bob took up painting. Bob painted the kente into the backdrop of a yet-unfinished masterpiece. Kente-less, this painting was Bob's only remaining link to Mrs Nkrumah. Jimmy passed away, and the kente remained safe in the hands of his wife.

Still another GGG married a Ghanian and lived in Ghana. When kente became available in markets, she bought one and mailed it to Bob. ...It looked familiar. He took out the painting and, indeed, it was exactly the same pattern – Mrs Nkrumah Goes to London! He phoned Jimmy's wife, but she still had Jimmy's. She mailed Jimmy's to Bob, and he opened it live... before our very eyes at this very meeting! This was the first time he'd seen this kente in years. He happily donned himself with the beautiful fabric.

(Maybe Bob can wear his Mrs Nkrumah Goes to London garb at the Dance-A-Thon!)

Show & Tell: Your turn to participate!

We so enjoyed Bob's kente story that we felt we need more. We all have something we've brought back which we can't part with and those things all have a story. We all want to tell those stories over and over, and, for the most part, other RPCV's are the only ones that want to hear those stories!

So, bring something to the meetings once in a while.

Festival of Nations:

We talked about an RPCV booth at the Festival of Nations, but didn't plan in advance. If we find our show & tell items are interesting enough, we could use them as a theme for a booth and start planning for next year. The festival of Nations is at the Empire State Plaza in October.

Web master

If we knew how to change the web page, we'd post all this info there.

If **you** know how to change the web page, please volunteer!