

## **RPCV – NENY NEWSLETTER**

*The Newsletter of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of  
Northeast New York, based in the Capital Region.*

October 2005

Coming Events – *hope to see you there*

### **Fall Foliage Walk** – Saturday, October 15, 2005

This fall, the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Northeast New York will hold a walk on a beautiful property in Chatham, New York, around the home of Sue Senecah & Van Calhoun. Their place is called Weathertop, sitting high on a hill, overlooking the hills, woods, and valleys of Columbia County. At that time of the year, the leaves will be at their peak, in crimson reds, brilliant yellows and burnished browns. The terrain should not be too difficult.

Sue and Van have invited us to come at 10 AM for coffee and hot chocolate, and start our walk at 10:30. We're then invited to return to their house for chili at 11:30. Folks can be on their way by 1 PM, to enjoy the rest of their day. Children are definitely welcome. Directions are available on the website, [www.rpcv-neny.org](http://www.rpcv-neny.org).

### **Festival of Nations** - Sunday, October 30, 2005

RPCVs of Northeast New York is planning to volunteer and possible table at the Festival of Nations at the Empire State Plaza from noon to 5 pm on Sunday, October 30. The festival involves a show, food, dancing, crafts, and more, representing about 25 countries. If you are interested in volunteering with this effort, or spending time at our table during the event, please contact Steve Hoyt at [steveh@Albany.net](mailto:steveh@Albany.net).

### **Thanksgiving Dinner for Foreign Students** – Saturday, November 26, 2005

The annual Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Thanksgiving Dinner will be held for foreign students at RPI on Saturday, November 26 from noon until 3:00pm. The event takes place at the student center. Please plan to attend and to help set up (come early), serve food and meet students.

We encourage returned volunteers who have never done this to become involved this year. Turkeys, vegetables, and other trimmings for the meal are still needed. Some people signed up at the September meeting, but more is still needed. We will be unable to attend the October meeting so if you wish to sign up for a specific item please contact Joan and Harry Thornhill at: [Harrythornhill@hotmail.com](mailto:Harrythornhill@hotmail.com). Cash contributions will also be accepted to help pay for beverages, paper goods and other items. We are writing to corporations to request donations but do not know how successful we will be doing that. Donations may be sent to Harry Thornhill at 23 Jennifer Road, Glenville, NY 12302. Please bring a microwave oven as we do not have access to a kitchen and need to heat the food by way of microwaves. Hope to see many of you there!

## Letter from the President

*Steve Hoyt (Niger '94-'96)*

Hello again, everyone! It may be nearly a year now since some of you have received a newsletter from the group. *So where have we been?* Well, we are still very active but we now issue a newsletter to our entire mailing list only once or twice a year and instead do most of our communication via e-mail and our website, [www.rpcv-neny.org](http://www.rpcv-neny.org).

***So what have we been doing?*** We continue to have monthly meetings the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month, but instead of meeting in one location, we now have potluck dinners at members' houses (always great food!). As always, we try to have a guest at each meeting do a presentation. Some of the interesting presentations we have had recently included a presentation and conversation with Amy Hart who is producing an excellent documentary on the water crisis in the world. Over 1.4 million people have no access to clean water and 6,000 children die every day from water born disease. Find out how you can help at [www.hartproductions.org](http://www.hartproductions.org). We also had a recent visit from Washington by Jonathon Pearson who is the NPCA Advocacy Coordinator. Jonathon gave an interesting presentation on the state of the proposed Peace Corps budget in Congress and spoke about the recent law which allows individuals to complete military service time as a Peace Corps Volunteer. This is a subject that our members feel very strongly about and so a letter was drafted to the NPCA by our group expressing the importance of Treasurer maintaining a clear separation between the PC and the military. Member Wendy Davis (Thailand) has been working on organizing participation of our group with Habitat for Humanity in Albany. Recently Wendy and other members worked on a garage sale that raised over \$2,000 for Habitat!

### Thank You, Bill!

I would like to express again our sincere thanks to **Bill Batt** (Ghana). Bill recently announced that he would be stepping down as the Membership coordinator for the group. Bill has been the one from the very beginning that has kept this group going, even when interest was waning. He is the group's longest serving president. We know he'll still be there to support the group but I'd like to say thank you to Bill on behalf of the entire group. Thank you Bill!

In his place, two members have volunteered to help out. **John Flynn** (Afghanistan) will be the Membership Coordinator, and **Jeanette Gottlieb** (Iran) will be our new Treasurer. Both have been a big help to the group in the past and Jeanette recently organized a garage sale that netted \$400 for the group. Great job, Jeanette! I look forward to working with you both!

***And what's new coming up?*** RPCV's of NENY have established a yearly tradition of putting on a Thanksgiving Dinner for foreign students at RPI. In past years we have served as much as 150 guests and this year will be our 3 year. Come and help! (See "*Coming Events*") This year we also plan on participating in the Festival of Nations at the Empire State Plaza and Career Day at Hudson Valley (See "*Coming Events*") Also this year we are going to expand our normal Peace Corps Day activities, when volunteers make presentations about their experiences at local schools, to the entire school year as our own Third Goal Class Presentations program. In the past we have found that it is difficult for teachers to schedule in a presentation in about a one week period. So now we are asking you to drop off the enclosed letter at your local school. Teachers can then, for example, schedule to have a presentation on Thailand by an RPCV when the class is studying Asia.

Hope to see you at an upcoming event or meeting!

*Steve Hoyt, President RPCV's of NENY*

# Advocacy Report

*Terry AmRhein (Swaziland)*

On August 17, Terry AmRhein and Wendy Davis from RPCV-NENY attended a fund raiser for Congressman John Sweeney (Republican, 20<sup>th</sup> NY district). Congressman Sweeney is on the very influential House Appropriations Committee which has appropriation power for the entire International Affairs budget. The Peace Corps represents a small part of this budget. While at the event, Terry and Wendy were able to get Congressman Sweeney in a private conversation about the importance of the Peace Corps and Peace Corps funding. During the conversation, the Congressman mentioned the new National Service Program that allows military personal to fulfill a portion of their service obligation by serving in the Peace Corps. Congressman Sweeney suggested that we have a meeting to discuss these issues.

A meeting with Congressman Sweeney would be a major event for the RPCV-NENY. Presently, Wendy is attempting to establish a firm date for the discussion. The most likely time frame would be in January during the Christmas Congressional break. When the event does occur, it will be crucially important that as many members of RPCV-NENY attend as possible. All NENY members will be invited but particularly those members living within the 20<sup>th</sup> district encompassing Columbia, Green, Warren, Washington, Saratoga counties as well as parts of Dutchess, Rensselaer, Essex and Schoharie counties should attend.

In addition, after speaking with the Congress, Terry asked Kevin Quigley, President of the National Peace Corps Association, if he would attend a discussion with the Congressman. Kevin graciously accepted the invitation. So this will be a great opportunity, probably one of a kind, for NENY members to meet both Congressman Sweeney and Kevin Quigley. We will keep everyone informed. Keep your fingers crossed.

# Wisdom for a Livable Planet

*Review by David Borton*

The book Wisdom for a Livable Planet by Carl N. McDaniel is subtitled, The Visionary Work of Terri Swearingen, Dave Foreman, Wes Jackson, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Werner Fornos, Herman Daly, Stephen Schneider, and David Orr. Eight of the ten chapters are about the men and women listed and how they devoted their lives to solving problems we create for ourselves by our current culture.

Each chapter shows how these individuals perceive a problem and then work in very individualized but specific ways to do something positive and make a difference. Most Peace Corps Volunteers will understand how the action of an individual can be part of making a larger difference in the world.

For me personally the problem of choice is energy. Although no chapter of Wisdom is specifically about energy, the problem of energy lurks in the topics covered. I now see that the price of energy is awakening most people to energy realities. The lives of the eight visionaries inspire us with their work and leadership.

The last chapter of Wisdom is "Can We Change, Will We Change?" Whatever your concerns for the world, Wisdom for a Livable Planet will inspire individuals to find ways to work, lead, and change for a livable planet.

# RPCV – NENY Newsletter, October 2005

*If you prefer to receive the newsletter by e-mail, please notify cvanderlan@hotmail.com.*

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