

# Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Northeast New York

## Newsletter

October 2006

[www.rpcv-neny.org](http://www.rpcv-neny.org)

## Leadership Change at RPCV-NENY

### A Message from the new President, Augusta Field

This summer our President, Steve Hoyt began working with his German company in South Carolina and asked me if we could switch positions – he becoming the Vice President, and I becoming the Acting President. By September, Steve realized he would be spending more time in South Carolina, so an election was held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and I have officially become President and Steve is now Vice President.

So far this year, we have had a special array of speakers at different people's houses and at the Albany Law School. In February, a new RPCV, Chris Sayer hosted us in his house in Albany. March found us at Yvonne Demarino's new house in Bethlehem, where Harry and Joan Thornhill showed us slides and photographs of their time spent in Biloxi, Mississippi as Katrina Relief Volunteers. The stories of working to de-mold houses, working with other volunteers, and the spirit with which the assistance was given was inspiring, especially as the photographs of the devastated houses were unimaginable.

Pat Dougherty met Michael Rakower at the New York State Bar Association when he was voted Young Lawyer of the Year. Michael impressed her with his remarks on how he and his wife Sali volunteered their legal services to the Rwandan genocide tribunals so she arranged, with Steve Gottlieb and Wendy Davis, to have them come and lead a discussion at the Albany Law School. This discussion in April was sponsored by our RPCV group, the Albany Law School, and the UN Association, and followed a potluck dinner organized by Harry & Joan Thornhill. Michael and Sali gave us heart rendering stories, evoking provocative questions and answers.

Wendy Davis hosted our May meeting in Albany, with her apple tree in full bloom. Our guests that evening were Fardin Sanai and his wife Michele. Fardin worked with Steve Gottlieb at the Law School, and he gave an enlightening talk on his life in Iran and in the United States as a member of the Bha'i faith. June took us to the country, to Don & Carol Hegeman's wonderful place in Chatham where a walk up their hill gave us wildflowers and sights of hills and woods surrounding their land. Terry Amrhein gave us a most informative talk on his six months of working with FEMA in Biloxi. Tim Cooke's parents were also there visiting from Scotland.

Tim & Tracy Cooke held a wonderful meeting at their house in July, complete with beautiful gardens and delicious offerings of food and drink. They gave us an overview of their upcoming travels to Indonesia, New Zealand and beyond. In August we met at John and Barbara Flynn's house where in the hot evening we picked blueberries from John's beautiful bushes. Yvonne Demarino gave us a wonderful slide presentation on her visit to Nepal as a representative from the Department of Agriculture. September's meeting was held at Steve & Jeannette Gottlieb's house, comfortably spread from dining room to the back porch. A fascinating discussion took place with the guest of Bill Batt, Moshood Fayemiwo, a journalist who came to the United States from Nigeria, where he had been imprisoned. Diane Peapus' notes mention that Pope John Paul II prayed for his release, and the US Ambassador agreed to bring him to the United States if he would write about his work.

October brought us to my apartment in Troy, where twenty one people enjoyed dinner and my birthday cake baked by Wendy Davis. Erin Lennox and Natasha Kulkarni, seniors at RPI, gave a presentation on the water disinfection projects they worked on this summer with "Engineers for a Sustainable World." Our RPCV-NENY group gave them a contribution to help with their travel. Erin went to Oaxaca, Mexico and Natasha was in the Kamuli District of Uganda. More interesting programs are slated for the upcoming months and we hope to see you there!

Augusta Field, President

## A Message from President-turned-VP Steve Hoyt

Dear Friends,

Well, life can put you in places you never expect, can't it? I'm writing from my temporary home away from home in Greenville, SC, somewhere I never expected to be. I can't say it has many parallels to being posted to a Peace Corps host country – I live in a very suburban apartment and work in a very corporate suburban office spending most of the time on the phone, computer or in meetings – other than the parallel feeling of missing home, friends and family. And also the feeling that the work, frustrating as it can be, is to good purpose – working toward expanding renewable energy as quickly as possible.

So I miss you guys and I have enjoyed every meeting as the president of the group – who knew that the job could make you feel so good? But I am equally very happy to see the group roll along so well, and grow with Augusta, who I think we are very lucky to have and who is such an excellent person to boot! But of course I'll be around and continue to help as I can as the VP. But I just wanted to take this chance to say - thank you, to all my friends.

Steve Hoyt, Vice President

## Upcoming Events in Northeast New York

**Carol Bellamy**, former director of the Peace Corps, current President and CEO of World Learning, to speak at the annual **dinner of the Capital Area Chapter of the United Nations Association, Friday, October 20, 2006**. The dinner will be held at Siena College, 515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211 (<http://www.siena.edu/directions.asp>). The evening starts at 5:00 pm with a cash bar and hor d'oeuvres, Ms. Bellamy will speak after dinner. Ms. Bellamy served as Executive Director of UNICEF, a UN Agency, for ten years and also spent 13 years as an elected public official, including five years in the New York State Senate. Ms. Bellamy will be discussing the State of the World's Children. The cost of the dinner is \$25 per person. Contact Christine Kowalski of the UN Association at 458-8315 - leave a message and telephone call will be returned, or e-mail her at [ckonline@verizon.net](mailto:ckonline@verizon.net).

**Thanksgiving Dinner for Foreign Students** at the Student Union at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) will be held on **Saturday, November 25 from noon until 2:30**. At this annual event, our group, RPCVs of Northeast New York hosts the foreign students attending RPI for a U.S.- style Thanksgiving meal. We provide the turkeys and fixin's, coffee and pies, and enjoy the meal along with the students and their families. **Please join us at this fun event:** We need more food and help on the day of the event in setting up, and tearing down. Cash contributions are also welcome. If you can bring food or help, please contact Joan and Harry Thornhill at: [Harrythornhill@hotmail.com](mailto:Harrythornhill@hotmail.com). As of this printing, we need at least one more prepared turkey and lots of vegetable side dishes. We need full vegetable dishes even if they are not traditional Thanksgiving food as quite a few students from India and elsewhere attend who are vegetarians. Please label food as vegetarian—especially dressing. Cash contributions may be made by writing the check out to RPCV-NENY and giving it to Jeanette Gottlieb (at the next monthly meeting or the day of) so that it goes through the treasury. This helps pay for paper goods, and items that were not donated by members or supporting businesses. We have requested some corporate donations but we never know how much we will get from them. We hope to see you there!

**Next Meeting of the RPCV's of Northeast New York – Election Day – Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>**. We will meet at the home of Kathy Sanderson, 951 Krumkill Road, Slingerlands 12159. Join us for our usual potluck supper (which includes food that is anything but usual) and a special presentation by Abeba

Baatai, from Eritrea, author of the book [A Painful Season & A Stubborn Hope: The Odyssey of an Eritrean Woman](#).

## Help Maintain the Budget for Peace Corps – Contact your Congressperson

Members of Congress who support the Peace Corps are circulating a “Dear Colleague” letter to other members to build support for a strong budget for the Peace Corps in the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget. The letter asks President Bush to request robust funding for the agency when he submits his budget to Congress. A number of members of the House of Representatives from New York have signed the letter already - they are listed below. If your representative is not on the list, please contact their office to ask them to sign the letter. Let’s help get all New York’s representatives on board!

Current Supporters of the “Dear Colleague” letter from NYS:

Joseph Crowley

Carolyn Maloney

Eliot Engel

Jerrold Nadler

Major Owens

Louise Slaughter

Jim Walsh

Timothy Bishop

Contact your member of Congress today, contact information available at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).

## RPCV Ron Tschetter (India ‘66-‘68) is New Peace Corps Director

As reported on the website of the National Peace Corps Association, “On September 26 returned Peace Corps volunteer Ronald A. Tschetter was sworn in as the 17th director of the Peace Corps. Director Tschetter, who was nominated by the president on July 25, was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate on September 13. Both Ron and his wife Nancy served as Peace Corps volunteers in India. Ron is a former chairman of the NPCA and a current member of our Director’s Circle.” Read more about the new director at [www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org).

## College Students Work Abroad with Support of RPCV-NENY

This summer, RPCV’s of Northeast New York helped fund engineering students from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy to undertake their first projects abroad through the Engineers for a Sustainable World’s (ESW) SEED Program. ESW is a non-profit organization with chapters at 20 colleges around the United States. ESW mobilizes engineers to address the challenges of global poverty and sustainability through domestic and international development work, education, and public outreach. Their SEED program is a selective program that places students and professionals in community development projects around the world to improve the lives of poor people. Students work with local NGOs and use their technical skills to solve problems relating to health, sanitation, and energy issues. Our group’s funds supported the work of Erin Lennox and Natasha Kulkarni, students in Mechanical Engineering, class of 2007 at RPI. Erin worked in the Baja region of Mexico assisting with the introduction of household water purifying systems using ultraviolet radiation. Natasha worked on several projects in the Kamuli District of Uganda. She helped design a disinfecting system that would provide drinking water to local families and communities and a digester to produce energy. Erin and Natasha shared their experience with us at our October meeting. We hope this is the first of an ongoing collaboration between our RPCV group and the ESW at RPI. To read more about ESW, visit the website, [www.esustainableworld.org](http://www.esustainableworld.org).

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

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