



# CAPCA Newsletter

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A Publication of the Chicago Area Peace Corps Association

## Peace Corps Day

Bring the World Back Home on Friday, February 28, 2003

The date has been set for Peace Corps Day 2003! "Peace Corps Day was started six years ago to shine a spotlight on the agency, the development work of our Volunteers, and the continuing work that returned Volunteers bring to their communities in the United States," according to Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez. It has become a very popular event, which last year brought out more than 6,000 RPCVs, who shared their international experiences with people in their communities.

If you have participated in Peace Corps Day before, we hope that you will do it again this year. If you have not yet been part of Peace Corps Day, please consider participating in 2003! Here's what you should do:

- Think about the type of group you would be most comfortable speaking to - Your colleagues at work? Your child's classmates? A local school or scout troop? There are endless possibilities.
- Contact a teacher, scout leader, community center, work supervisor, and offer your services. Point out that thousands of other RPCVs will be doing the same thing in an effort to increase understanding on the part of Americans about other parts of the world and its people.
- With your host or on your own, begin planning your presentation. Peace Corps has resources available to assist you. Check out the Peace Corps Day website at [www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/peacecorpsday/](http://www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/peacecorpsday/). You can register online, request a presentation kit, read about experiences of past participants, and sign up to be on the Peace Corps Day e-mail list.
- Consider asking another RPCV to do the presentation with you. While CAPCA will not be coordinating individual Peace Corps Day presentations, the CAPCA listserv might be a good tool for finding a co-presenter or ideas. Information about CAPCA's listserv can be found at [www.capca.org](http://www.capca.org).

Don't worry if Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> is not convenient for you. While it represents a single occasion for many of us to participate across the country, any day can be Peace Corps Day. Talks by RPCVs are always welcomed and appreciated.

If you have questions about Peace Corps Day, e-mail [pccday@peacecorps.gov](mailto:pccday@peacecorps.gov) or call 800-424-8580 (press 2, then extension 1961).

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*Check out the latest Peace Corps news and events from around the world at*  
*[www.peacecorpsonline.org](http://www.peacecorpsonline.org).*  
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# NPCA 2004 Chicago Conference Planning Committee Update

The Committee is nearing completion of its proposal to NPCA to designate Chicago as the site for the 2004 NPCA Conference. The proposal is the culmination of five months of work by nearly 40 volunteers. Later this month, Stephanie Arnold and Trina Janes will travel to Providence, RI to formally present CAPCA's proposal at the NPCA board meeting. Stay tuned for an official announcement once the NPCA board votes.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the NPCA 2004 theme contest. The votes are now in. The final theme is: Peace Corps 2004: Celebrating a Legacy of Service. The other two options that will be presented to NPCA are: Peace Corps 2004: Reconnecting People to Peace, and Peace Corps 2004: A Legacy of Service.

Support from the entire Chicago RPCV community as well as from many of the local internationally focused organizations is critical for the conference's success. Be sure you and your organizations are informed and planning to participate.

The conference planning committee meets regularly, and welcomes new participants and new ideas. For more information on how to get involved, please contact Trina Janes (Morocco 91-93), Committee Chair, at [cjanes1999@kellogg.nwu.edu](mailto:cjanes1999@kellogg.nwu.edu) or 312/645-9400 ex. 35.

## A Not So Typical Peace Corps Experience

By Stephanie C. Arnold, RPCV Ghana '93-'96

This summer I had the exciting opportunity to return to Ghana, where I served in the Peace Corps from 1993 to 1996. This was my first time back and this time I took a group of Habitat for Humanity volunteers with me for a 3-week Global Village trip. Our Habitat project was in a town about an hour from my Peace Corps community, so I had the chance to take the group to my village, where there was a big homecoming ceremony in my honor. I happened to pull out my photos of this at a CAPCA board meeting and this is when the other board members learned something unusual about my Peace Corps experience. They encouraged me to share the story, so here goes...

By most standards, my Peace Corps experience was very typical. Right after college, I was assigned to be a Health Education/Water and Sanitation volunteer in Africa. I was sent to a rural community, provided with a tiny two-room, mud-brick house with external "facilities" and, of course, no running water or electricity. When I arrived, an enthusiastic community greeted me, but no one was sure what I was really there to do. On day 2 in the community, the chief told me that all of the chiefs in the area had been summoned to the district secretary's residence for a meeting with the (then) President of Ghana, Jerry John Rawlings. The chief invited me to come along and I agreed. I was a little nervous, but excited at the same time. In my last semester of college, I had taken an African politics course in which Ghana and the Rawlings years had been studied in depth. At the end of the meeting with the chiefs (I had waited outside), my chief told President Rawlings that there was "an American Peace Corps volunteer here who would like to meet him." Next thing I knew, I was being ushered into the room and seated directly across from the President. To my amazement, I talked to him for nearly an hour - answering many questions and talking about my plans for my work in Ghana. Because several health topics were high on the national agenda - notably family planning and AIDS education - he asked me to stay in touch and update him on my progress. A photo was taken of me with the President that day, and you can imagine how excited I was to send a copy to my political science professor, an RPCV himself, who served in Ethiopia in the 1960s.

While the day-to-day aspects of my work in Ghana remained typical, I sent quarterly reports to the President and received two separate invitations to lunch at The Castle, Ghana's equivalent of The White House. I obtained permission from my Peace Corps Country Director and the Ambassador before formal communication began. The projects I undertook with my community included various educational presentations on health and hygiene topics, an innovative latrine project and the construction of two wells and a day care

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center. Life was good so I extended for a third year. My community knew about my correspondence with the President, so when it came time to commission our projects toward the end of my service, they asked me to invite my good friend, President Rawlings. We were all excited when he accepted the invitation to be our guest of honor for the commissioning ceremony and the event became far bigger than would have been the case otherwise. Special agents were combing the village a week in advance of his arrival, potholed roads were suddenly neatly paved by the district assembly, and lots of very important people suddenly took great interest in our community and our projects.

Commissioning day arrived with all the fanfare you can imagine. President Rawlings arrived by helicopter in my village of 1,500 inhabitants. Government ministers from all over the region were in attendance. The paramount chief of the traditional area was there along with nearly 60 chiefs and queen mothers from neighboring villages. I, by the way, had been named queen mother of my village the year before. My Country Director and the U.S. Ambassador were also there, along with several of my Peace Corps colleagues and another 10,000 people from the surrounding area. At the end of the ceremony, during which I had the chance to deliver my speech in the local language, Ewe, we proceeded to the project site for a ribbon cutting ceremony. To my surprise, there was a large structure under a veil. When the cover was removed, it was a larger-than-life-size statue of ME! I had been immortalized in concrete! The next day, photos of President Rawlings, me and my statue appeared on the front page of the two main national newspapers and the ceremony made the national TV news!

It was during my return to Ghana this summer that I was able to show some other Americans that I really had a statue. Before this, I only divulged this kind of information or the fact that I was queen of a village in Africa to stump people in "two truths and a lie" icebreakers. I was glad to see it was still standing, but was also reminded that it was not the most flattering image of myself. The other CAPCA board members saw the photo of my visit to my statue and encouraged me to share my story. About a month later, Marie Erdman and I were selling calendars at the Oak Park Council on International Affairs dinner when another more recently returned Ghana RPCV came to ask me where I had served. It didn't take long before she said, "Wait a minute...Are you the one...?" Apparently, I've become a sort of legend - or maybe a joke - among PCVs in Ghana. I worked really hard during my three years of service and believe I accomplished quite a lot. So, while it is kind of bizarre, I like to think I earned my statue.

One other cool thing that happened a couple years after I had returned to the States was that President Rawlings was invited by President Clinton on a State Visit to the U.S. I believe this was the second only to that of Nelson Mandela in terms of State Visits by an African Head of State. Because the U.S. Ambassador to Ghana and my Peace Corps Country Director knew of this visit and my relationship with President Rawlings, I received an invitation to the State Dinner in Washington, DC, which I attended. I was the only non-famous person there and found myself in a room filled with people like Stevie Wonder. I felt a little out of place, but just as Vice President Gore gave me the "who the &\*\$ are you?" look, President Rawlings, perhaps a little surprised to see me there, greeted me warmly and introduced me to the others. *Continued on page 3.*

Sometimes I think we all suppose our Peace Corps experiences are typical. While CAPCA successfully assembles groups of returned volunteers on a regular basis, it is surprising to me how few Peace Corps stories I get to hear! Maybe it is because I am always running around talking to the restaurant staff about when our dinner should be served, selling raffle tickets or thinking about the next item on the agenda, but I never seem to get much beyond the infamous "so where did you serve?" line. Even in a group of RPCVs -whom you would think would be very interested - we tend to assume that since everyone has "been there and done that," they probably do not want to hear the gory details. I don't think that is really the case. I would love to see the CAPCA Newsletter evolve into a forum where we would share stories from our Peace Corps experiences. Let's try to open up the newsletter to these kinds of stories. If you have a story to share, please send your article to Melissa Hall, CAPCA Newsletter Editor, at [capcanews@yahoo.com](mailto:capcanews@yahoo.com).

# Announcements

## DuPage RPCVs

The RPCV's of DuPage will be meeting once again on Friday, January 17, 2003 from 6:30-9:00 pm at Devonshire, 17 Robin Lane in Lisle. The cost will be \$15 per person. We will have dinner, tour the Devonshire and then have a general meeting to develop a mission statement, talk about future activities and our all time favorite - mingle!

Please RSVP by January 7, 2003 to (630) 782-6350 or send an e-mail to [dbullock@healthydupage.org](mailto:dbullock@healthydupage.org). Please help us keep our records current by including your name, country of service and phone number and/or e-mail address.

Reminder! In an effort to generate startup funds for the DuPage affiliates (Chicago western suburbs), we are marketing Peace Corps logo Christmas ornaments. The ornament is a 3 1/2" ball and arrives floating in a white and gold gift box. The ornaments sell for \$18 each, which includes shipping and handling costs. Enjoy the memory of your Peace Corps experience each Christmas as you select just the right branch for this special ornament.

## Annual Camp VISTA Outing

Everyone's invited! Come join your fellow RPCVs for a weekend of cross-country skiing, gourmet food, great conversation, games, music, daredevil sledding, and much much more.

*Who:* Everyone.

*What:* Weekend-o-fun.

*Where:* Dundee, Wisconsin

*When:* January 31 to February 2, 2003

*How much:* Approximately \$50. Ski rental extra.

*RSVP:* Brian DeFilippo at [bdefilippo@aol.com](mailto:bdefilippo@aol.com) or (847) 650-1080.

Camp VISTA provides comfortable, dormitory-style accommodations. Individuals are responsible for their own bedding (e.g., sleeping bags, sheets, blankets, etc.) and bathing needs.

## SAVE THE DATE!

CAPCA's Annual Founder's Day Dinner will be on Saturday, June 7, 2003. We are looking for a few committee members to help with plans for this year's event. Want to meet some new people and get involved in a fun project? Contact Stephanie Arnold at [msarnold@gsb.uchicago.edu](mailto:msarnold@gsb.uchicago.edu). Christine Blair and Kim Chulis will be the event co-chairs.

## Attention Jewish RPCVs

Overseas volunteer opportunities with the Jewish Volunteer Corps! Skilled volunteers needed to join the struggle against poverty, disease, and hunger in the developing world.

The Jewish Volunteer Corps, a project of American Jewish World Service, is seeking Jewish men and women to volunteer for a period of one month to one year to assist community organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Russia and Ukraine.

JVC volunteers are motivated Jewish men and women, from young professionals to retirees, who provide humanitarian aid in the form of technical assistance and training.

JVC Volunteers receive reimbursement for their round-trip airfare, evacuation insurance, and, if needed, a small cost-of-living stipend.

For additional information, or to request an application, click on the 'volunteer' link at [www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org), send an e-mail to [JVCVol@ajws.org](mailto:JVCVol@ajws.org), or call 1 (800) 889-7146 ext. 655.

## Center for Cultural Interchange

CCI is looking for individuals and families to host a student (high school and college) or intern for summer, semester, and school year programs. For more information, please contact Marge Ryan, Regional Manager at 1 (888) 488-4056.

## Join the List Serv!

Get all the latest CAPCA news and happenings via e-mail. To subscribe send an e-mail to [capca-announce-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:capca-announce-subscribe@egroups.com).

# Monthly Dinner Meetings

## January Dinner

**Monday, January 27, 2002 at 6:30 pm**

Come join CAPCA for the first monthly dinner of 2003 at Café Bolero, and enjoy a warm and lively atmosphere and afro-Cuban music while dining on what's frequently called the best of Cuban food in Chicago. Dinner is \$15 for CAPCA members (\$17 for non-CAPCA) and includes tax and tip. Beverages are extra and the restaurant offers a cash bar. Please RSVP by January 23rd to Kim Chulis at [kchulis@uic.edu](mailto:kchulis@uic.edu) or (847)869-6634.

Directions: Café Bolero is located at 2252 N. Western Ave. with a free parking lot (across the street at the bank) and is accessible by the Blue Line (Western) and by CTA buses 74-Fullerton, or 49-Western.

## February Dinner

**Tuesday, February 18, 2002 at 6:30 pm**

Do you like collard greens, black-eyed peas, corn bread, mac n' cheese, smothered chicken, short ribs and...peach cobbler? Join CAPCA for soul food in February! We are taking our monthly dinner meeting to the South Side, Daley's Restaurant, 809 E. 63rd St. Don't worry, it's just 3 doors down from the end of the Green Line (East 63rd run). The food is incredible. If you like soul, you will not be disappointed. If you don't know soul - what a great time to experience it! Cost will be approximately \$12 for CAPCA members (\$14 for non-CAPCA) including tax and tip. RSVP to Liz Thomas at [ethomas@peacecorps.gov](mailto:ethomas@peacecorps.gov) or at 1 (800) 424-8580 (option 1)

*CAPCA dinners not close enough to your neighborhood? Timing of CAPCA events not working well with your schedule? Know of a great international restaurant CAPCA should explore? Then, we invite you to coordinate or at least help coordinate a CAPCA event in 2003! If interested, please contact Stephanie Arnold at [msarnold@gsb.uchicago.edu](mailto:msarnold@gsb.uchicago.edu) or at (773) 529-1892.*

## *CAPCA Board Meeting Minutes*

*Summary for October 3, 2002, 6:00 pm*

Present: Stephanie Arnold, Marie Erdman, Stephen Maduli-Williams, Kara Malenfant, David Pope, Rachael Sharon, Chuck Sheftel, Elizabeth Thomas, Elizabeth Versten. Guest: Virginia Koch, Chicago Regional Peace Corps Office Manager.

Not Present: Wallace Goode, Trina Janes, Juliann Salinas.

1. Minutes (Erdman). Erdman presented the minutes from the July 2, 2002 and September 5, 2002 board meetings. After minor corrections, Sharon moved to approve both sets of minutes, Arnold seconded and the motion passed.
2. Treasurer's Report (Malenfant). Malenfant presented the treasurer's report; the final balance as of October 3, 2002 is \$9,436.43. Erdman moved to accept the treasurer's report as presented, Sheftel seconded, and the motion passed.
3. Calendar sales. CAPCA purchased 200 calendars from the Madison Area Returned Peace Corps group, and has so far sold 8 calendars.

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## *CAPCA Board Meeting Minutes - continued*

4. CAPCA Board Elections and Officers (Arnold). Congratulations to the five board members were elected or re-elected at the September monthly dinner meeting: Arnold, Erdman, Malenfant, Sharon, and Versten. Sheftel and Pope will remain in their current positions. Arnold recommended the appointment of Maduli-Williams to continue in the empty elected position vacated by Peeters. Pope moved to accept Arnold's recommendation, Sheftel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
5. Grants (Versten). Versten checked with the Country Director of PC Senegal, and received a letter of endorsement for the PCV soliciting \$500 for a garden project. We were reminded by the Country Director that solicitations for donations should go through Peace Corps Partnership Projects, the PCV will need to fill out an application, and our donation will need to be sent through PC Partnership. Also, by the time we sent the money to the Ndabibi/Moindabi Water project in Kenya, they only needed \$1505 (less than the \$2000 originally recommended by the board).
6. NPCA Conference 2004 (Sheftel). Sheftel reported on recent activities of the conference planning committee. Next meeting will be October 21, 2002.
7. Web site update. The site has not been updated recently. Malenfant will contact Judy Ossello, an RPCV who indicated interest in helping with Web Site maintenance and give her information about how to access the site.
8. Retreat follow-up. Pope presented a PowerPoint presentation that lists the highlights from the board retreat held August 3, 2002. The members of the board came up with a number of different areas that define the CAPCA mission, and each of the areas has a number of people who are assigned to it. Areas are: Social/Networking, Third Goal, Finance, Communications, Membership, Providing Resources/Volunteering, Board Development, and the overall Mission Statement. Each of the areas will be discussed at subsequent board meetings. The November meeting will be the Social/Networking area.
9. Upcoming events. The October monthly meeting will be a brunch at Mom's Bake Shoppe on Saturday, October 26 at 11:00 am. The November dinner meeting will be the annual dinner for the Oak Park Council on International Affairs on November 6, 2002, where Wallace Goode will be the guest speaker. The December dinner meeting will be the Holiday Potluck on December 9 at the Yacht club.
10. The next meeting will be held on November 4, 2002 at 6:00 pm, at a location to be determined.
11. Malenfant moved to adjourn the meeting, Versten seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### *Summary for November 4, 2002, 6:00 pm*

Present: Stephanie Arnold, Marie Erdman, Kara Malenfant, David Pope, Chuck Sheftel.

Not present: Wallace Goode, Trina Janes, Stephen Maduli-Williams, Juliann Salinas, Rachael Sharon, Elizabeth Thomas, Elizabeth Versten.

1. Minutes were not reviewed as there was not a quorum.
2. Treasurer's Report. As of November 4, 2002, there is \$9,686.86 in the CAPCA account. The report was not accepted as there was not a quorum.
3. Calendar update. There are currently 80 calendars left of the 200 ordered.
4. Grants committee. No update
5. Web site update. Judy Ossello is now keeping the CAPCA web site up to date with current events.
6. NPCA Conference planning 2004. Reviewed areas of current focus, including the theme, the meeting planner, letters of support, and forming the program. Next meeting is Dec 2 at the Congress Hotel.

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## *CAPCA Board Meeting Minutes - continued*

7. Board Retreat followup. Erdman and Sheftel presented discussions concerning the Social/Networking area of the board retreat. Several board members volunteered to organize the next dinner meetings: Erdman-February, Sheftel-March, Malenfant-April. Other months are still open for other board members. Several board members also volunteered to write job descriptions for various activities in the social/networking area: Erdman-Volunteering and Happy Hours, Arnold-Dinner meeting, Sheftel-Newsletter article, Malenfant-Founder's Day and Potluck, Pope-School presentations. Erdman will check with Brian DeFilippo to write something about the Culture Shocks. Also, Malenfant will write a general description of the web site upkeep for future reference.
8. Next board meeting to be decided.

### Chicago Area Peace Corps Association Board of Directors 2002-2004

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*All phone #s are home #s unless otherwise indicated.*

# CAPCA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Want to become a member? Membership about to expire? Please send in your dues today. Make checks payable to CAPCA. Send your dues and this form to Kara Malenfant, c/o CAPCA, PO Box 1149, Chicago, IL 60690 or go to [www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org) and join CAPCA and NPCA electronically.

Check one:     RENEWAL         NEW MEMBER         ADDRESS CHANGE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\$15.00 CAPCA Annual Dues

\_\_\_\_\_

\$50.00 Joint CAPCA & NPCA Dues

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

\$65.00 Family CAPCA & NPCA Dues  
(2 members/one address)

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

One year free for newly returned RPCVs

WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

\$500.00 Lifetime CAPCA Membership

COUNTRY/YEARS OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Unrestricted contribution

\_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Restricted contribution

JOB ASSIGNMENT \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in giving talks about Peace Corps

CURRENT EMPLOYER \_\_\_\_\_

Would NOT like my name in the CAPCA Directory

## CAPCA MEMBERSHIP

c/o Kara Malenfant  
PO Box 1149  
Chicago, IL 60690

*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED*