



capca newsletter

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Controversy Erupts Over Gaddi Vasquez Nomination for Peace Corps Director

By Lucinda Boyd

Since the article in the last newsletter regarding the onset of an e-mail, phone, fax and letter writing campaign by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in response to the nomination of Gaddi Vasquez, there have been moments of heat and cold for the organizers of the Committee for the Future of

the Peace Corps. This ad-hoc group, led by John P. Coyne and Barbara Ferris, kept up a steady stream of e-mail to the Senate Committee and to RPCVs across the country.

The following is a sample of Coyne's e-mail:

"As of Friday, November 30, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reports that it is holding off on scheduling a meeting to forward the Vasquez nomination to the Senate, until it is ready to do all the pending nominations. Therefore this meeting could occur not next week as originally anticipated, but the following week of December 10-14.

This means we have another week to email and fax Congress. Hit the Internet and the phones. The more calls made, the greater the impression. And we are making an impression on the Hill. Thank you."

- John Coyne, Committee for the Future of the Peace Corps

How this "future of PC" group outside NPCA, the official organization of former volunteers, will affect future activities and direction is yet to be seen. Certainly there has been a demonstration of interest and ability to respond, when the heart/head sentiment is aroused. Assuming the appointment of Mr. Vasquez as Peace Corps director early next year, there is likely to be intense interest in his earliest moves, his ability to work with current Peace Corps staff and responsibility given to Jody Olson, the new Associate Director. To follow the latest news in the debate over the nomination of Gaddi Vasquez, logon to www.peacecorpsonline.org or www.peacecorpswriters.org.

An Evening with Mawi Asgedom

By Liz Klaus

On Tuesday, November 13th, CAPCA members gathered at the Ethiopian Diamond Restaurant for our monthly meeting. The guest speaker for the evening was Mawi Asgedom, an immigrant from Eritrea and Ethiopia who spent three years in a Sudanese refugee camp before coming to the United States with his family at age seven. Mawi, a Harvard graduate, travels across the country speaking with various audiences, youth in particular, about his experiences as a refugee and the cultural and financial challenges he and his family faced after arriving in the U.S. He specializes in speeches that focus on motivation and self-empowerment.

After enjoying a buffet-style Ethiopian meal, CAPCA members watched a clip from a recent Oprah show in which Mawi was a featured guest. In the segment entitled "Why I came to America," Mawi recounts his journey from his homeland to America. At the conclusion of the video, Mawi shared additional insights with the group about his family's journey from a refugee camp in the Sudan to Wheaton, IL, and his subsequent pursuit of the American dream. Mawi then opened up the discussion to field members' questions. He also signed copies of his memoir, *Of Beetles and Angels*.

CAPCA was very pleased to have Mawi as a guest and turnout for the event was spectacular --approximately 45 CAPCA members in attendance! Though speaking to RPCVs was a bit of a departure from his usual circuit, sources say that Mawi enjoyed his evening chatting with CAPCA members and responding to their questions. He looks forward to opportunities to meet again in the future. To learn more about Mawi and his work or to order his memoir, logon to his website at www.mawispeaks.com.

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 2002

CAPCA Dinner Meeting

When: Wednesday, January 16th at 6:30pm

Where: Old Main Building (Boroson Lounge, 1st Floor), North Park University, 3225 W. Foster Avenue (near Foster and Kedzie) in Chicago.

Cost: The cost will be approximately \$15 per person. Remember to bring extra money if you'd like to get a 2002 Peace Corps calendar before supplies run out!

Featured guest: In addition to our usual friendly conversation, brief CAPCA business, 50/50 raffle and announcements, Velda Love and her colleagues will deliver a presentation about North Park University's Master of Arts in Community Development Program, which may be of interest to RPCVs.

RSVP: Please RSVP before the 16th to Velda Love at 773.244.5764 or vlove@northpark.edu or Elizabeth Mullenix at 773.244.5208.

FEBRUARY 2002

Camp Vista Annual Winter Getaway

Everyone is welcome! Come join area RPCVs, family, and friends for this annual weekend adventure up north.

When: February 1-3, 2002 thru Sunday, February 3, 2002

Where: Camp Vista, Dundee, Wisconsin (About 3 hours from Chicago)

Why: Cross-country skiing, hiking, gourmet food, games, laughs, and much much more!

Cost: TBD (Approximately \$50, rental equipment not included.) **Accommodations are simple yet comfortable. Bring your sleeping bag!**

Information/RSVP: For additional information (e.g., costs, directions, carpooling, etc.) and/or to RSVP, please contact Brian DeFilippo at 847.650.1080 or bdefilippo@aol.com.

CAPCA Dinner Meeting

When: Monday, February 11th at 6:30pm

Where: Join us for tasty Mexican fare at Lazo's, 2009 North Western Ave. in Chicago (near the Armitage, Milwaukee and Western intersection).

Cost: Dinner will be buffet style and approximately \$15 per person.

Featured guest: Our guest speaker will be Hank Perritt, Dean and Professor of Law at Chicago-Kent College of Law. He is also Vice-Chairman of the Global Chicago project, sponsored by the McArthur Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust, which is working to improve Chicago's position as a global city. He has launched major initiatives in Bosnia, Kosovo, Ukraine, Poland, China and Mexico, and will speak about foreign relations in a cultural, technological and legal context and how they interact.

RSVP: Please RSVP before February 11th to Stephanie Arnold at stephanie.c.arnold@us.andersen.com or 312.507.4885.

Please join us for our next CAPCA event!

Announcements

Culture Shocks 2001 Season Highlights - By Joe Andrews

Your RPCV Softball team, the co-rec Culture Shocks, finished the 2001 season with a dramatic playoff run in the fall softball league. The Culture Shocks, represented by returned volunteers from Mali, Mauritania, the Gambia, Kenya, Russia and some of their have-fun-no-matter-what pals, reached the semi-finals before falling 28-19. The first playoff game proved victorious, however, and the Shocks showed that they could play with any team. The scant victories during the regular season did not dampen team spirit as the Shocks brightened up the diamond with promotions like Hawaiian Shirt Day. No team has ever looked more resplendent than the Shocks did on that sunny October Saturday. Look for more exciting promotions (the always popular House Plant Day and the first annual Show Us Your Stuff Day — everybody pitches) and come out and join the team when late-March winter days turn into frolic on the softball diamond.

Western Samoa (now “Samoa”) RPCV Reunion

Attention CAPCA members! Western Samoa Group 2 ('67 to '69) is organizing another reunion for fall, 2002 somewhere in the Midwest. For more information, please contact Edie Sternberg at ediesternberg@aol.com

“Speaking to our Conscience - Socially and Politically Engaged Fiction”

Susan Robertson, from Evanston Public Library's Reader's Services Department, put together a “Speaking to our Conscience - Socially and Politically Engaged Fiction” readers list. One of the entries was *Living on the Edge: Fiction by Peace Corps Writers*, edited by John Coyne, 1999. The summary goes as follows, “Since 1961, the Peace Corps has provided inspiration to a surprising number of writers. Counting more than 400 published writers among its volunteers, including himself, Coyne comments “all their novels, short stories, essays, and poetry are a positive way to educating Americans around the world.” This collection of stories, including writers, Paul Theroux, Bob Shacochis, John Givens, Mark Jacobs, Marnie Mueller, and Norman Rush, covers the ambitious and well-intentioned efforts of those sent all over the globe to do great works. Coyne runs Peace Corps Writers (www.peacecorpswriters.org) for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers interested in writing. Check out this site for more writings and interviews. If you'd like more information or if you have questions, please contact Sabine Schuller at schullers_2000@yahoo.com or at 847.866.3338.

FOR SALE! FOR SALE! FOR SALE!

Peace Corps Calendars

It's now 2002! Did you just run out of days in your old calendar? We have what you need!

CAPCA has a very limited supply of 2002 Peace Corps calendars left and remaining supplies are expected to go fast! Calendars are \$10 each. All proceeds go towards supporting CAPCA's Peace Corps Partnership Projects and disaster relief efforts. CAPCA will continue selling calendars at monthly dinner meetings while supplies last.

To order, please contact Stephanie Arnold at 312.507.4885 or capcacalendarsales@bungo.com.

Special thanks to everyone who has purchased a 2002 calendar!

Save the Children Note Cards

To help preserve the traditional Mithila art form, and to help girls ages 10 to 15 develop creative skills for safe employment, Save the Children, the world's largest non-sectarian international development & relief organization, sponsors a group of young girls in the Siraha district of Nepal to hand-paint cards for sale.

Cards are 10 for \$12, plus \$3 for shipping and handling. Sales from the cards directly benefit these young girls as well as Peace Corps Partnership Projects, community-based projects such as Connections in Chicago, and other humanitarian initiatives worldwide.

To order, please contact Leslie Wilson at 773.973.6560 or lfwilson@hotmail.com or Nancy Kramer at 773.725.6944 or kramernancy@worldnet.att.net.

Opportunities

Peace Corps Fellows/USA

"Stateside" Service in the Peace Corps Tradition

By Gina Wynn, Fellows/USA Marketing Coordinator, RPCV Russian Far East

By nature, returned Peace Corps Volunteers tend to be conscientious, philanthropic, worldly individuals who stay involved with the communities in which they live. Especially now after the September 11 terrorist attacks, many RPCVs have been wondering how they can best direct their energies toward making a difference in the world.

One way to serve the needy and to extend one's Peace Corps experience on our home soil is to become a Peace Corps Fellow. Peace Corps Fellows/USA is a third goal program that places RPCVs in positions in under-served U.S. communities while they study with financial assistance toward master's or doctoral degrees. The program is offered at universities nationwide in a variety of subjects. In addition to enabling RPCVs to achieve their personal academic goals and to share their knowledge of other cultures with diverse groups of American populations, Fellows/USA helps fulfill needs within the United States that would otherwise go unmet.

Since the inception of the program, more than 1,500 RPCVs have participated, and an estimated 150,000 people have benefited from the important work of these Peace Corps Fellows. RPCVs are assets to any institution, company, or organization because of their cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, adaptability, and professional knowledge. For example, they are perfect candidates for working on Native American reservations where teachers face cultural challenges or in inner-city school districts where there are often language barriers and limited resources. Community and economic development or business volunteers who served in areas like Eastern Europe dealing with challenges such as lack of business plans, organizational structures, or funding, can also use their talents to overcome the same types of obstacles in American companies in urban or rural communities. These are just two examples of types of fellowships available, however.

Currently 13 of the programs are in education; the rest are in community and economic development offering degrees in a multitude of other fields. Degree programs exist in subject areas including: American studies; anthropology; business; communication; economics; English; environmental studies; geography; history; language; non-profit management; nursing; philosophy; political science; public administration; public health; the sciences; sociology; social work; recreation, park, and tourism management; teaching; urban planning, and more. Some of the more than 30 partner universities are also flexible in allowing RPCVs to tailor a degree to suit their own interests.

For RPCVs who are interested in working overseas again someday, many of the Fellows/USA programs focus on linking internationally. They teach concepts that are applicable to both domestic and international careers and provide valuable international contacts. Universities also value RPCVs for their global awareness, which adds a new perspective to the classroom and the institution. In return, Fellows benefit from combining the knowledge they acquired overseas with lessons learned through work in domestic settings. After Fellows/USA, they can then choose to apply this knowledge anywhere in the world.

Although the Fellows programs vary by institution, all include a combination of course work and an internship with a "community partner." Sometimes courses must be taken prior to the internship, sometimes they are taken concurrently or even afterward as at the University of Oregon. Lengths of the internships also vary. They range from six months to two years. Some programs also require the RPCV to commit to working in the community for a period of time after graduation.

Many Fellows' internships lead to permanent positions. Repeatedly, community partners tell Peace Corps Fellows staff, "Send us more Fellows!" Besides gaining valuable on-the-job training and networking opportunities, Fellows may receive scholarships, reduced tuition, health benefits, housing, or living allowances, depending on the program. Therefore, Fellows/USA enables RPCVs to earn degrees, establish their careers, and pay much less than students who have not served in the Peace Corps or those enrolled in degree programs not affiliated with Fellows/USA.

To learn more about Peace Corps Fellows program and eligibility requirements, visit online at www.peacecorps.gov/fellows, or contact the Fellows/USA staff at fellows@peacecorps.gov or at 800.424.8580 press 2, then ext. 1440.

No matter what a returned volunteer's age or interest may be, Fellows/USA offers unique opportunities. Join an elite group of RPCVs who have extended the Peace Corps philosophy to assist their compatriots at home.

Opportunities - continued

Illinois Society for International Development

Illinois Society for International Development (ISID) is the Illinois chapter of the Rome based Society for International Development (www.sidint.org). ISID utilizes the resources of the diverse communities of the State of Illinois to promote international development, and is committed to five principal objectives:

1. To stimulate dialogue, understanding, and cooperation on global development issues;
2. To enhance skills, knowledge, and collaboration among development practitioners;
3. To provide a network for individuals and organizations working in various sectors of international development;
4. To serve as a resource for the general public of Illinois regarding international development issues, including issues that affect the lives of those residing in this region; and
5. To support innovation and best practices in international development.

ISID organizes events monthly, the second Tuesday of every month, focusing on international development issues. Information about events and opportunities related to international development are distributed through the ISID listserv. To subscribe, send an email to: ISID-subscribe@topica.com and write "subscribe" in the subject line.

For more information, contact Trina Janes, ISID Membership Director and RPCV at cjanes1999@kellogg.nwu.edu or 312.645-9400 ex. 35.

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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 and join CAPCA and NPCA electronically.

Check one: RENEWAL NEW MEMBER ADDRESS CHANGE

NAME _____

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

ADDRESS _____

\$15.00 CAPCA Annual Dues

\$40.00 Joint CAPCA & NPCA Dues

EMAIL _____

\$55.00 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

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