

GCC-RPCV

December-January News Letter

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1. Upcoming Events

January 4th, Wednesday – 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Recently Returned PCV Happy Hour

Location: To be announced (check the Facebook page "[Houston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers](#)" or the website, [peacecorphouston.com](#), a week before the event for the location)

Contact person: Kate Simpson, E-mail: katelsimpson@gmail.com, Phone: 713-628-9817

January 22nd, Sunday – 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Annual GCC-RPCV Membership Meeting

Come meet other GCC-RPCV members, have a say in group activities, and elect new board members. We will also have a guest speaker, John Blake (RPCV Afghanistan), talk about his trip to Washington, DC, for the Peace Corps 50th Anniversary in September. Food and drink will be provided.

Location: First Congregational Church, 10840 Beinhorn, Houston, TX 77024 (near I-10 and Voss)

Contact person: Stephanie Wilson, E-mail: bobnsteph@entouch.net, Phone: 281-246-4407

February 1st, Wednesday – 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Recently Returned PCV Happy Hour

Location: To be announced (check the Facebook page "[Houston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers](#)" or the website, [peacecorphouston.com](#), a week before the event for the location)

Contact person: Kate Simpson, E-mail: katelsimpson@gmail.com, Phone: 713-628-9817

February 25th, Saturday – 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

February Reconnect: Trinity African Bar and Grill

Location: 5700 S. Gessner Drive, #J, Phone: (713) 779-5300

Contact person: Ryan Gorczycki, E-mail: gorc0001@umn.edu, Phone: 612-701-5745

2. Message from the Board of Directors

Special thanks to all who completed the GCC-RPCV survey.

We will be incorporating your suggestions into the events we plan over the 2012 calendar year. If you have not yet completed the survey it is available via [peacecorphouston.com](#).

Peace Corps 2012 International Calendars are here!

Calendars are available to purchase at any GCC-RPCV event or online at [peacecorphouston.com](#). Cost is \$10 for one calendar or \$25 for three calendars. Proceeds from calendar sales go to help fund Texas Peace Corps Volunteer projects voted on at the GCC-RPCV Annual Fundraiser held in the spring.

Contact person: David Scheinman, E-mail: tanga4@yahoo.com, Phone: 917-855-4119



Board of Directors Openings Available

Candidates will be voted on at the upcoming GCC-RPCV Annual Meeting. Please e-mail gccrpcv@gmail.com with your name, country, and dates of service if you are interested.

3. Photos from December Events

Annual Holiday Party:



Camping Trip



4. Member Spotlight: Cliff Maat, RPCV Ghana, 1987-1989

1) A short description of your Peace Corps service:

I was a chemistry and math teacher at Pope John Secondary School in Koforidua, Ghana. Ghanaian students must apply for admission, and their parents must pay tuition, to secondary schools, so my students were generally well motivated. The school was a former Catholic seminary which the government took over at independence.

Thinking that I could improve safety standards in a poor country's chemical laboratories, I brought over a box of safety goggles. The goggles were useless - the warm humidity fogged them up within seconds. The lab was reasonably well stocked with chemicals, though I frequently had to substitute some chemicals for others that were supposed to be in the curriculum. My Peace Corps predecessor teacher, Tom Verme, sent us a generous gift of silver nitrate (expensive!). The school headmaster kept it locked in his office.

The language of instruction was English, which made the job easier but hampered my motivation to learn Twi. Good classroom management was the toughest part of the job - it was a good thing most of my students wanted to learn. The headmaster applied to host two Peace Corps volunteers after I left, which was gratifying.



2) Fun fact about your host country:

2a. Ghana was the first former colony in Africa to gain independence, in 1957. The first president, Kwame Nkrumah, joked that they might build a monument to the Anopheles mosquito, which brought malaria and fear to would-be European colonizers for centuries.

2b. Ghana is home to a herd of wild elephants in a national park in a remote northern region. Elephants are common in East and Southern Africa but rare in West Africa.



3) Fun fact about your community:

My host community had been originally settled by refugees from a nineteenth century civil war in the western part of the country. Consequently they spoke a dialect of Twi somewhat different from that spoken in the surrounding countryside. Among my students were native speakers of Akwapim Twi, Asante Twi, Guan, Krobo, and Ewe.

4) Most unique part of your Peace Corps service:

Nothing I can take credit for, but my best chemistry student was studying to become a priest.

5) What are you up to now?

I am a chemical engineer at TPC Group (Texas Petrochemicals) and I hope to organize a track and field team to participate at the annual Houston Corporate Athletic Association Regional Track Meet in June.

