



Columbia River Peace Corps Association

Serving our community. Engaging the world.

NEWSLETTER

February 2010

Vol. 30, Issue 2

HAITI

by Richard Ireland, Haiti 1998-2000

We all are staggered by the tragedy in Haiti. And we all know that the tragedy has been a disaster waiting to happen. I do not need to tell you of the impact that poverty had on this horrendous event. Each of you has already given if not money then heart-felt caring and love. The question my Haiti RPCVs and I are contemplating is what do we do now. What needs to happen for the next year and for the next ten years?

There is this initial outpouring of money and help that is focused on the disaster itself. We are already hearing about the ripple effects it is having on the whole of Haiti. Prices for food and gas have already risen (if you can get them). Port au Prince was established by the Duvaliers as the only import port in Haiti. That way the revenues from the port could be a great source of income. Haiti has the highest import taxes in the world I believe. Will this be a silver lining where the other ports can now open to trade?

For now food, shelter, and water are the big concerns for immediate relief. These tent cities will become the new slums and like so many other disaster or refugee situations permanent. It is my belief that the more people that can be kept in the rural communities, the better it will be for Haiti.

So in our looking at the next 6-12 months' recovery phase, there should be aid to the outlying areas to provide immediate help and long-term development. Not an easy task. Our advice to you is to think about what organizations are best suited for both activities. There are some large organizations that have been involved in local development for years and other more home grown smaller groups that have exhibited the kind of development Peace Corps supports.

There is no easy, quick solution. But perhaps out of this tragedy, we can get a commitment that is long-term and effective. I would like to see our RPCV group identify one small NGO and commit to 5 years of support, developing a personal relationship with that NGO.

www.crpa.org

Visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/node/13354> for links to sites that can give you more information.

West Regional RPCV Meeting, Opening weekend of the 20th Annual Cascade Festival of African Films



Friday, February 5: 5pm welcome dinner at Laurelwood Pizza Company, 7pm screening of Teza at Hollywood Theatre

Saturday, February 6: 9am regional RPCV meeting at PCC-Cascade, noon post-meeting lunch at E'Njoni Café, 2pm screening of CRPCA-sponsored documentaries (Water First and African Underground) at PCC-Cascade.

See pages 4-5 for more information on the weekend's events.

CONTENTS

Ode to Peace Corps in Niger, by Bill Stein, p.2
Peace Corps Week, p. 3
Impacting the HIV/AIDS Pandemic, p. 4
Job Listings at Peace Corps Worldwide, p.4
West Regional RPCV Meeting, p.4
Additional Upcoming CRPCA Events, p. 5
CRPCA Elections, April 11, p. 6
Other Events of Interest to Internationalists, p. 6
2011 Exhibit at Oregon Historical Society, p. 6
Peace Corps News, p. 6
Welcome to New Members, p. 6
2009 Membership Report, p. 7
Officer Changes & Current Board Members, 7
Join CRPCA, p. 8

Ode to Peace Corps in Niger

by Bill Stein, CRPCA President

I wish to express my--and I'm sure your--profound sadness at recent events in Haiti. Lest you take the following as tone-deaf, please understand that I composed this essay (on a topic of much lower concern) prior to the devastating earthquake.

Over the past nine months, you may have become accustomed to reading (or ignoring) my rah-rah text about CRPCA people and initiatives on these pages. I'm taking a one-month break from that to share my personal thoughts on what Peace Corps means to a country.

My biggest rumor-spreading gaffe of 2009 was an e-mail I sent to a few dozen Niger people in November:

"Peace Corps will be pulling out of Niger over the coming days. I'm sorry I don't have much more information. Please reflect for a few moments on what a loss this is for the people of Niger--starting with Peace Corps' Nigerien employees."

I had adapted that first sentence from a Peace Corps trainee's parent's unequivocal e-mail (subject: "PC in leaving Niger"). Over the course of the following day, the true story emerged of Peace Corps' response to a deteriorating security situation. As you'll see, what's really happening with PC-Niger is more nuanced than a full evacuation, but it still fills me with concern for the future of a program that has served generations of Nigeriens over 48 consecutive years.

Peace Corps has pulled all volunteers out of two areas of Niger that had hosted many volunteers back when I served November 1990 to February 1993: Tahoua (in the center of the country, extending from the Sahara Desert in the north to the border with Nigeria in the south) and Gothèye (upriver from the capital Niamey, near the border with Mali). Many volunteers were offered early close-of-service. The training group (which includes two CRPCA members) moved *en masse* to Madagascar. Though dozens of PCVs are staying to complete their service, it's unclear when/whether additional training groups will be sent to Niger.

The immediate reason for the pull-back was an attempted kidnapping of U.S. government personnel, but there has been for some time a growth of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in parts of Niger. This is not the Niger I knew--all the early-1990s tensions were between settled farmers and nomadic herders, or between the Nigerien state and its employees/students--but it's resulted from changes in world affairs that I don't need to go into here.

Over the same hours that all the elements of this story were emerging, I had some opportunities--chiefly during my bike commute--to reflect on what the loss of Peace Corps means to a country. Many of my longtime friends in CRPCA (such as those who served in Sierra Leone, a country Peace Corps will finally re-enter in June) are intimately familiar with the subject, but it's a new one for me.

The most abrupt change is the one I mentioned above: the employment relationship Peace Corps has with dozens of host country nationals in most countries. In a country like Niger, this brings entire families out of absolute poverty.

Next we can all imagine our worksites without Peace Corps Volunteers. They'd still function--quite well in most cases. But would students be as inspired to think creatively? Would off-the-grid villagers be as served by city-based extension agents? Would the people be as inclined to view Americans as friends?

That last point is the most salient to America's security. I have talked to no RPCV who doesn't think their greatest on-the-ground impact was as a friend/mentor promoting more effective and/or sustainable ways of thinking and doing things. It is surely clear by now that America needs friends in every country, especially people in majority Muslim states who may be prone to distrust us. Nothing changes perceptions quite like friendships. Peace Corps Volunteers uphold a half-century's tradition of respecting cultures while doing useful work in communities.

But the biggest loss if there is an interruption of Peace Corps Volunteers sent to Niger (or any other country) is to our own society. Today's youthful (and not-so-youthful) volunteers are uniquely equipped to describe the joys and challenges of living in obscure cultures. Through their use of blogs, cell phones, e-mail, facebook, twitter, youtube, etc., they are building cheering sections for forgotten corners of the planet. When these volunteers come home, many build NGOs or make other efforts to support their countries of service. When Peace Corps permanently leaves a country, no new generations of advocates for that country replace those from earlier generations.

Since I'm no longer in contact with my village of service (long story), I have relied on others to share with me the current situation in Niger. In the past several months I was astonished to see my village, Lawai Kaoura Alassane, in perfect resolution on Google Earth. I was also pleased to be invited to view the hopeful blogs of the Niger training group that has since relocated to another part of Africa.

Peace Corps Week, March 1-7, 2010

March 1 marks the 49th anniversary of the Peace Corps. Whether you served in the 1960s or the 2000s, celebrate with us during Peace Corps week by sharing your snapshots, souvenirs, and stories. Help Americans increase their understanding about your country of service.

For tips, suggestions, and resources, visit www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal. Register your activity anytime during the year and we'll send you a free resource kit. Questions? Comments? E-mail thirdgoal@peacecorps.gov. Should you document your event, we also welcome photos and recordings.

There are various ways RPCVs can participate in Peace Corps Week, such as classroom visits, discussions, art exhibits, and articles. For those seeking classrooms to present to, they can register for [Speakers Match](#), a program of World Wise Schools that responds to teacher requests for RPCV speakers by helping match the teacher with RPCVs in their area.

Editor's note: The above came from Peace Corps – Washington, D.C. The below came from Peace Corps – Seattle. Please e-mail Bill Stein, president@crpca.org, if you'd like to help with this request.

Does the CRPCA have any plans during Peace Corps Week this year? If so, please let us know as we'd love to help promote any celebrations! For example, we will be hosting an [“Around the World in 90 Minutes” event](#) in Seattle.

Plus, we're working on obtaining Mayor Proclamations throughout Oregon and we would love to have CRPCA involved in any ceremonies that may come out of that.



My house was to the left of the big tree in the SW corner of this aerial photo.

It is my sincere hope and belief that the immediate security concern in Niger will reach a quiet resolution. Niger is not a country that has outgrown its need for development volunteers, and its people are amazingly receptive and friendly to those who come to help.

My message to all our members and friends: Stay engaged! CRPCA is an excellent vehicle for making connections in this community, though it's by no means the only one. The nationwide country-of-service groups (such as [Friends of Niger](#)) do an amazing job of connecting folks back to the places they served. I look forward to conversing with many of you at upcoming CRPCA events.

The Columbia River Peace Corps Association Newsletter is published monthly by the CRPCA for the benefit of its members. The CRPCA serves Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and others in Oregon and southwest Washington who share an interest in serving the cause of peace and global development.

To join CRPCA and, or, the National Peace Corps Association, please visit www.crpca.org.

Newsletter submissions are due by the 25th of each month. Send by mail to P.O. Box 802, Portland, OR 97207, or e-mail to:

newsletter@crpca.org.

Impacting the HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Making a Difference

Class has just started in downtown Portland on Sundays 1-3 pm. You can select any sessions that fit your interests and schedule, or register for all four sessions remaining of the series. Call ahead if at all possible, but you can just show up. \$5 requested a session.

REMAINING SESSIONS

Feb. 7 Women's Empowerment and Community

Building: Challenges & Successes: Jensine Larsen, founder of World Pulse Magazine which provides access to media for women globally; Sandy Grubb of Women of Vision: work with human trafficking in Cambodia and HIV/AIDS education in Mozambique.

Feb. 14- Note no session due to holiday weekend.

Feb. 21 Advocacy Works! Pat Rumer of Jubilee and Patsy O'Shea of RESULTS will share effective advocacy tools. Both women work with organizations that are respected in Congress for their knowledge of issues and tenacity that makes for success. Pat Rumer will bring her 30 years of work on debt relief to the issue of Haiti, and other nations strapped by debt and Patsy will be sharing major campaigns, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and education about TB.

Feb. 28 Potluck and Next Steps to Action: First Unitarian Church and Beyond: Updates from Marlene Anderson, founder of the Imani Project for AIDS orphans and their communities in Kenya; and Ann Pickar, Co-chair of PAGAC (Portland Global AIDS Coalition), a coordinating network for over 200 groups working on HIV/AIDS issues.

Facilitators:

Kirsten Carpentier: Co-chair of the UU Global AIDS Coalition (UUGAC) has a background in public health and social work, and has worked in Kenya bringing services to HIV/AIDS affected people.

Patricia O'Shea: Co-chair of UUGAC has a background in medicine, teaching and research and is active in RESULTS, a citizen lobby. striving to reduce poverty worldwide. She focuses on global health and education issues. E-mail kirstencarpentier@hotmail.com or patricia.oshea@gmail.com. Call Kirsten at 503-615-0874 or Patsy at 503-233-2984

When: Sundays: Feb. 7, 21, 28; 1–3 p.m.

Lunch: By all means bring your sack lunch and munch as you listen. Except last session 2/28: a potluck.

Where: Room B303 in Buchan Building (new building) of First Unitarian Church 1011 SW 12th Ave between SW Main and SW Salmon in downtown Portland. Enter by alleyway midway on SW 12th to brick building on right and follow signs. Be sure to press 3B, not 3A in the elevator of new building to access 303 down the hall.

Fee: \$5 donation requested per session
Scholarships available Class Ref. # C24WS10 Call: 503-228-6389 ext 17 or 26 to register if possible ahead, but not essential. We welcome you whenever you can join us!

Parking: Free in parking lot directly across from the Church on SW 12th between SW Salmon and SW Main. Free until 4, usually cleared out from the last Church service by 12:30 .

Job Listings Now at Peace Corps Worldwide

PeaceCorpsWorldwide.org is now accepting job postings from organizations looking for RPCVs or Returned Staff - for both domestic and international work. If your organization recruits RPCVs, you can post jobs for free, including full-time, part-time, volunteer positions or internships. Current employers registered with us include Save the Children, HealthNet TPO from the Netherlands, CDM, Abt Associates, Transparency International and others.

If you are an RPCV or Returned Staff looking for a job, you can visit the site and search current postings, or register with us and create a profile so employers can find you. Also, registered RPCVs and Staff can search the employer profiles to find organizations who match your interests even before jobs are posted. View current jobs at: http://www.cambridgedata.com/search_jobs.htm
Post Jobs, Search Jobs, Register at <http://peacecorpsworldwide.org>

West Regional RPCV Meeting

The Winter 2010 West Regional RPCV Group Leaders meeting will be held in Portland, Oregon on the morning of Saturday, February 6, 2010. But the events get underway the night before, as we've timed the meeting to coincide with opening weekend of the 20th Annual [Cascade Festival of African Films](#). The full schedule of the weekend's events is below.

All members/friends of CRPCA and other regional RPCV groups are welcome, not just group leaders! If you plan to attend the meals please take our survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RZ3KX2Q>. See the next page for the full schedule of events.

Friday, 2/05, 5:00-6:30pm - Welcome Dinner. Laurelwood Pizza Company, [1728 NE 40th Ave](#) in Portland. [View the menu](#), then place your pizza order in advance using [our survey](#). We're eating early as seating at the [Cascade Festival of African Films](#) is first-come, first-served.

Friday, 2/05, 7:00pm (but arrive early!) - Opening Night of the 20th Annual [Cascade Festival of African Films](#). Hollywood Theatre, [4122 NE Sandy Blvd](#) in Portland. The free opening night screening features [Teza](#), the film by Haile Gerima (in attendance) which won 2009 FESPACO (African film fest in Burkina Faso).

Saturday, 2/06, 9:00am-noon - Regional Meeting. PCC-Cascade, Terrell Hall 122 (see "TH" in the [campus map](#)). Portland Community College's Cascade campus is located at [705 N Killingsworth St](#) in Portland. Free parking is available at campus lots on Saturdays. Here is the agenda:

Time	Topic	Presenter(s)
9:00-9:15	Introductions (please be prepared to name a book you would recommend for an RPCV book club)	All
9:15-9:45	Group updates	CRPCA, Idaho RPCVs, Inland Northwest PCA, SEAPAX, West Cascade PCA, etc.
9:45-10:00	NPCA update	Joe Hindman
10:00-10:15	Login for RPCV groups to their own group's membership file on the NPCA database	Joana Ramos
10:15-10:30	BREAK	--
10:30-10:40	Upcoming regional events	Kevin Laughlin, Bill Stein
10:40-11:00	Peace Corps recruiting initiatives	Melanie Forthun
11:00-11:30	2011 exhibit honoring the Peace Corps at 50	Museum of the Peace Corps Experience
11:30-12:00	PeaceCorpsProjects.org	Brian Newhouse

Saturday, 2/06, noon-1:30pm - Post-Meeting Lunch. We'll walk a few blocks to E'Njoni Café, [910 N Killingsworth St](#). [View the menu](#), then place your entrée order in advance using [our survey](#). Joining us for lunch will be Amy Hart, director of [Water First: Reaching the Millennium Development Goals](#).

Saturday, 2/06, 2:00-4:00pm - Double-Feature Documentary Screening, sponsored by CRPCA. PCC-Cascade, [Moriarty Arts and Humanities Building](#) (room 104). [Water First: Reaching the Millennium Development Goals](#) will be followed by [African Underground: Democracy in Dakar](#). All [Cascade Festival of African Films](#) screenings are free

(donations accepted), accompanied by excellent film/country info pages, and followed by engaging post-film discussions.

Additional Upcoming CRPCA Events

Thursday, 2/18, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm - Service Activity at the Oregon Food Bank, [7900 NE 33rd Dr](#) in Portland. RSVP to [service@crpca.org](#) by Mon 2/15. Please see our [Service page](#) for additional details.

Monday, 2/22, 6:30 pm - Soirée. An informal gathering at the [Lucky Labrador Brew Pub, 915 SE Hawthorne Blvd](#) in Portland. This is a great way to link up with other RPCVs, hear interesting stories from around the world, and grab a beer and a bite to eat among good company. You can usually find us in the front room. Kids welcome until 9pm.

Tuesday, 3/02, 6:30 pm - Restaurant Gathering. [Ya Hala, 8005 SE Stark St](#) in Portland. Some of the best Lebanese food in town. Consider joining a group order of the Ya Hala Mezza, and you're guaranteed to leave happy.

Thursday, 3/11, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm - Service Activity at the Oregon Food Bank, [7900 NE 33rd Dr](#) in Portland. RSVP to [service@crpca.org](#) by Mon 3/08. Please see our [Service page](#) for additional details.

Sunday, 3/14, 5:00-8:00 pm - Business Meeting, Potluck and Program. Location at the home of Linda Centurion, [3940 SE 47th Ave](#) in Portland. All are welcome to the 5pm CRPCA business meeting (agenda items will include awarding winter grants and an update from the website redesign committee), 6pm dinner (please bring a dish to share), and 7pm program (Peace Corps history, presentation by Peace Corps founder Bob Textor, editor of *Cultural Frontiers of the Peace Corps*, MIT Press 1966).

Monday, 3/29, 6:30 pm - Soirée. An informal gathering at the [Lucky Labrador Brew Pub, 915 SE Hawthorne Blvd](#) in Portland.

Thursday, 4/01, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm - Service Activity at the Oregon Food Bank, [7900 NE 33rd Dr](#) in Portland. RSVP to [service@crpca.org](#) by Mon 3/29. Please see our [Service page](#) for additional details.

CRPCA Elections Coming Up April 11

CRPCA board members serve one-year terms, May-April, with three-year term limits. All 13 board positions will be up for election at our April 11 potluck, 5pm at the home of Tai Bainter, [500 Martin Ct](#) in Vancouver, WA. Most of our current board members are willing to continue, but we'd very much welcome some of the new energy in our group onto the board, even if it means having our first competitive elections in memory! At this point the only known openings are Co-Events Coordinator and Co-Webmaster, but there will possibly be more. Please contact Bill Stein (503-830-0817, president@crpca.org) with any questions about CRPCA board positions.

Ongoing Events of Interest to Internationalists in our Community

The [Cascade Festival of African Films](#) will continue its free Thurs-Sat screenings through March 6.

The World Affairs Council of Oregon will continue its free Friday lunchtime [Great Decisions](#) lectures through March 5.

The Portland International Film Festival will run February 11-28. Information on screenings and costs will be on the [Northwest Film Center website](#) by 2/03.

2011 Exhibit at Oregon Historical Society

Excitement is building toward the Portland region's primary celebration of Peace Corps' 50th anniversary, a Peace Corps exhibit at the [Oregon Historical Society](#) in spring 2011. Fifty RPCVs attended the kickoff meeting on the morning of January 23! There are three ways museum staff and the lead organizers, [Museum of the Peace Corps Experience](#), have so far asked for help.

If you would consider lending an item or items (artwork, instruments, photographs, recordings, textiles, tools, etc.) for secure display during the exhibit, please fill out the exhibit submission form (on [MPCE's website](#)) no later than April 1.

OHS is seeking major donors to underwrite the \$10,000 cost of the exhibit. They have promised widespread recognition for sponsors. Please spread the word about this great opportunity. Have folks contact Sue Metzler (503-306-5229, Sue.Metzler@ohs.org) for more information.

MPCE is seeking a new webmaster to help promote the exhibit. If you or a friend are interested in joining the MPCE board, please contact Martin Kaplan (503-699-9833, pcmuseum@comcast.net).

Another opportunity to learn more about the exhibit will come during the regional RPCV meeting on February 6.

Peace Corps News

The Portland metro area ranks 11th in the country for producing the most Peace Corps volunteers – congratulations! Oregon state remains a top producer of Peace Corps volunteers per capita [ranking fifth in the country](#).

The Peace Corps recently [launched a digital library](#). Be sure to check it out and [contribute](#) your own part of the Peace Corps legacy.

Welcome to new members:

Christopher Clark, Niger '08 - '09; Brian Lower, Belize '02 - '04; and Betsy and Tony Pfannenstiel, Micronesia '75 - '76.

Thank you to our renewing members:

Amy Evans, Jamaica '00 - '02; William Hammel, Oman '77 - '79; Charles Howard, Ecuador '90 - '92; Martin Kaplan, Somalia '62 - '64; Tadakazu Kumashiro, Namibia '01 - '03; Anne McLaughlin, Morocco '67 - '70; Jennifer Mead, Niger '86 - '88; Carol and William North, Micronesia '67 - '69; Linda Oh, Philippines '64 - '66; Melissa Stewart, Turkey '63 - '66; Gita Tanna-Howard, Jamaica '89 - '90 and Ecuador '90 - '92; and Marta Wicke, Mozambique '01 - '03.



Photo taken for submission to Starlight Parade committee at CRPCA's January 25 soirée. Photo by Phyllis Shelton.

Membership (as of 12/15/09)

- CRPCA has 213 individual members in 183 households.
- 105 CRPCA members also belong to the National Peace Corps Association.
- 70 CRPCA members are in a free year of membership, offered to currently-serving PCVs and for one year to first-time RPCV members.
- 4 CRPCA members are currently serving Peace Corps Volunteers.
- 192 CRPCA members are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, listed below by first year of service.

Decade of Service	Number of Members
1960s	30
1970s	23
1980s	25
1990s	35
2000s	79
TOTAL	192



Photo from Snowshoeing/Sledding Event at Mt. Hood, January 16. Photo by Phyllis Shelton.

Welcome New CRPCA Board Members

Brian Newhouse joins Scott Eckert as a Webmaster. Scott will lead our web redesign committee, while Brian's primary focus will be to build CRPCA's social media presence.

Jerry Gabay joins Dane Pikkola as a Social Coordinator, serving out Heather Swientek's term through April 2010. Before our Jan 31 potluck was over, he'd already proposed a new social event.

CONTACT US - CRPCA Board Members

President:

Bill Stein, Niger 1990-1993
503-830-0817, president@crpca.org

Secretary:

Brenda Michel, Sierra Leone 1986-1988
503-408-6933, secretary@crpca.org

Treasurer:

Phyllis Shelton, Honduras 1986-1988
503-704-6298, treasurer@crpca.org

Newsletter Editor:

Rachel Belida, Mali 2007-2009
802-735-4203, newsletter@crpca.org

Co-Webmasters:

Scott Eckert, St. Vincent & the Grenadines 1987-1989
971-832-9594, webmaster@crpca.org

Brian Newhouse, Cape Verde 2007-2009
770-713-4590, media@crpca.org

Education Coordinator:

Marta Wicke, Mozambique 2001-2003
480-747-3875, education@crpca.org

Events Co-Coordinator:

Amy Evans, Jamaica 2002 – 2004
417-763-9956, events@crpca.org

Richard Ireland, Haiti 1998-2000
503-246-0479, events@crpca.org

Fundraising Co-Coordinator:

Jenn Dederich, Dominican Republic 2000-2003
520-906-0387, fundraising@crpca.org

Courtney Martin, Dominican Republic 2001-2003
520-906-0436, fundraising@crpca.org

Membership Coordinator:

Elizabeth Samuels, Benin 1975-1977
503-228-7706, membership@crpca.org

Networking Coordinator & Program Coordinator:

Madeleine Mader, Cameroon 1984-1986
networking@crpca.org

Service Coordinator:

Tom DeMeo, Ghana 1980-1982, Botswana 1982-1984
503-267-3943, service@crpca.org

Social Co-Coordinator:

Jerry Gabay, Malawi 1984-1986
541-578-0051, social@crpca.org

Dane Pikkola, Swaziland 1992-1994
971-544-1727, social@crpca.org

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Mail To:



Columbia River Peace Corps Association & National Peace Corps Association

MEMBERSHIP - ADDRESS CHANGE - RENEWAL FORM

CRPCA's \$20 dues confer full membership on one or two named adults sharing an address. NPCA's \$35 dues are per individual. CRPCA urges you to support both organizations. Membership is open to all, and your contributions are tax-deductible. Note that most communication with our members is over the Internet.

Name

Member #1

Member #2

Address

City, State, & Zip

Home Phone

Work Phone

Cell Phone

E-mail Address

Peace Corps Country
& Years of Service

Peace Corps
Job/Sector

Current Occupation

CRPCA Annual Dues: \$20 per household

or check here for FREE membership in CRPCA. One free year is offered to all Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) residing in our geographic area who were never previously members of CRPCA. Currently-serving Peace Corps Volunteers from our geographic area are also welcome to free membership for the duration of their service.

NPCA Annual Dues: \$35 for Member #1 \$35 for Member #2

or check here for FREE membership in NPCA. One free year is offered to all RPCVs who closed their service within the last year. Please name your COS month & year: _____

Please mail this form with a check to CRPCA for the total of the boxes you checked.

CRPCA, PO Box 802, Portland OR 97207