
Semi Conductor

The newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Returned Peace Corps and VISTA Volunteers (SEMIRPCV)

Vol. XXIII No. 4

July/August 2011

We are all aware of the recent negative attention that the Peace Corps has recently received regarding its safety and security procedures and the treatment of victims of sexual assault within the PC. Given that our group participates in recruiting events, encourages nominees, and generally promotes Peace Corps service, we found this news unsettling and had many questions about the safety of currently serving volunteers, especially women. In March, our group composed a letter to PC director Aaron Williams to try and get answers to some of our most urgent questions.

Our letter found its way to the desk of Claudia Kuric, Senior Advisor to the Sexual Assault Working

Group at Peace Corps. I was contacted by Ms. Kuric and we had a lengthy discussion along with the David Fleisig the Lead Security Specialist for Peace Corps. The two of them were able to address all of our questions. Below you will find our list of seven questions and the responses from Peace Corps in *italic*.

Overall, Peace Corps is aware that they need to do better in the realm of safety and security, especially in supporting volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault. This is a need that they have been aware of for some time and that they are actively working on.

1. How are current Country Directors approaching the issue of security? For example, are Peace Corps Country Staffs conducting periodic risk management programs in their countries?

Are programs being done on a regular basis, perhaps every six months, to bring together all PCVs in-country to refresh training on local customs, practices, proper dress, and appropriate cultural behavior – as well as to discuss current safety issues, specific risk situations and how to respond to them, and how to report assaults if they occur? Is the approach to security and appropriate training consistent across the range of Peace Corps countries?

Answer:

In recent years PC has created two new positions in safety and security. First, the

position of Safety and Security Coordinator (SSC) in each host country. This person is trained in safety and security topics and is usually a host country national. The SSC works directly for the country director, advising him/her of security issues and on volunteer safety. Second, the position of regional Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO) was also created. The PCSSOs are US citizens; there are ten of them assigned regionally around the globe. They conduct full country safety assessments and report to PC in Washington. Their focus is on political issues, crime trends (drugs, gangs), and other social/economic conditions that may influence volunteer safety.. They make detailed reports of the status of PCV safety in each country of their region. Based upon these reports they present recommendations to each country director as well as to PC in Washington. The recommendations fall into two categories, mandatory and professional guidance. The reports are done,

2010-2011
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Meetings are the third
 Sunday of the month
 from 3-6 pm . We
 rotate the location
 each month so please
 read the newsletter.

July 23, 2011 Potnic The
 church address is 3000
 E 12 MILE RD,
 WARREN,48092

Directions to church for
 POTNIC
 I-696 E/WALTER P
 REUTHER FWY toward
 DETROIT.

Take EXIT 20 toward DEQUIN-
 DRE
 RD/RYAN RD.

Stay STRAIGHT to go onto
 E HEIGHTS DR/696 SERVICE
 DR. Turn SLIGHT LEFT
 onto DEQUINDRE RD. Turn
 RIGHT onto E 12 MILE RD.
 3000 E 12 MILE RD is on
 the RIGHT.

I-75 S toward DETROIT.
 Take the 12 MILE RD exit,
 EXIT 63. Turn SLIGHT LEFT
 to take the ramp toward
 MADISON HTS.

Merge onto W 12 MILE RD.
 3000 E 12 MILE. Please
 bring a dish to pass
 around. We provide the
 hamburgers and hot
 dogs.

AUGUST DINNER:

So we propose we gather on
 Saturday, August 13, at 7pm
 at a recently-opened Ann Arbor
 restaurant which has received
 excellent reviews for good quality

The Semi Conductor is the official
 newsletter of the Southeast Michigan
 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.
 Publication is bimonthly; letters,
 comments, and contributions are
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meals at reasonable costs:
 Satchel's BBQ, 3035
 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Ar-
 bor, MI 48104, Tel: (734)
 971-5100

-- Offering southern style bbq
 at a good value with courteous
 service. Serving pulled pork,
 brisket, chicken
 and ribs with a variety of
 sides.

Read more about the back-
 ground of Satchel's BBQ in a
 recent article on AnnArbor.com
 Satchel's BBQ to open on
 Washtenaw in Ann Arbor in
 early 2011.

A first-time restaurant operator
 chose a former retail space on
 the busy Washtenaw Avenue
 corridor near Huron Village for
 Ann Arbor's newest BBQ spot.
 Satchel's BBQ should open in
 January, said owner Hugh Mor-
 gan of Ann Arbor. The restau-
 rant, located at 3035 Washte-
 naw, is the second in Washte-
 naw County to make news this
 month about starting a BBQ
 format. In early November, the
 new buyer of TC's Speakeasy
 in Ypsilanti outlined plans to
 convert it into the Red Rock
 Downtown Barbecue. While
 that establishment will also
 offer live music and full bar,
 Satchell's is focusing on a sim-
 pler experience for customers,
 including carryout.
 to customize their food.

Website:
 semirpcv.org
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 website!

at a minimum of every three years for each country. Country directors can request to have the reports made more frequently if they feel that is necessary. PCSSOs also provide training and consulting in their respective countries on safety and security issues.

Additionally, each country is required to have an emergency action plan (EAP) that is reviewed annually.

Ultimately, it is the Country directors who are responsible for all safety and security of PCVs. They are

both trained for this and evaluated based on this record. They are evaluate twice yearly for volunteer safety.

PCVs are also involved in keeping PCVs safe. Their involvement in safety and security varies by country,

it depends on both the country director and the individual volunteers. PCV wardens (a position that exists in all host countries) are responsible for EAPs and host regional meetings based on their EAP

and any other safety issues that may come up. Wardens are given phones and additional training from PC.

Finally, there is a section in the PC manual dedicated to safety and security. Titled ms270, it deals with safety and security at post. It ensures that countries establish standards for site devel-

opment, site monitoring, housing standards, transportation, etc. PC ensures that countries use and make these standards two ways:

1. annual self reporting. 2. PCSSO compliance reviews. Biannual self reporting by country directors also includes this information.

2. Are Country Directors prepared to relocate PCVs who report problems with their programs or communities that involve the safety and/or the security of the Volunteer? Is this being done as a preventive measure rather than only happening after actual incidents take place? Is this being handled consistently across the range of Peace Corps countries?

Answer:

Yes, country directors are prepared to relocate PCVs. As stated in the PC manual, each country must have a plan to address PCV concerns. PCV relocation is no longer an issue; volunteers are not expected to stay in a site where they do not feel safe. Country directors are prepared to relocate volunteers if they determine that there is a safety risk. Additionally, country directors have the authority to relocate PCV's without the PCV's consent. The issue is compli-

cated by underreporting on the part of PCV's who fear that reporting safety and security issues will get them removed from a site that they want to stay at. PC has done its best to respond to the issue of

underreporting by not having a "knee jerk" reaction to complaints, and by making efforts to mitigate complaints in other ways when PCV's do not want to move.

3. If incidents occur, how does Peace Corps assure that Volunteers are consistently provided timely counseling and that adequate counseling is available both in the short and long term as needed?

Answer:

The PC protocols that pertain to this subject were refined over the winter prior to the 20/20 show. The new protocols were sent to all posts, along with training for all appropriate staff. Counseling is involved in those protocols. Medevacs for sexual assault will be approved. All medical staff have been trained to deal with PTSD.

In host countries, Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMO's) are instructed that if PCV's need to speak with a specialist, then they can match them with an in country or American coun-

selor if they are available. If they are not, then arrangements can be made for counseling services at a regional hub, at HQ or at the Volunteer's home of record. The PCMO has the authority to make a recommendation for counseling without a request from the volunteer.

In Washington, PC has recently hired a "victims advocate" to review its policies on sexual assault prevention and response and to create a SART (sexual assault response team) approach to supporting PCV victims. Kelly Green is a nationally known rape survivor advocate. PC also participates in national conferences on sexual assault best practices.

4. Has Peace Corps taken any special steps to better assure the safety of women Volunteers when they serve in countries in which a lack respect for women is part of local culture and may affect Peace Corps Volunteers?

Answer:

Yes they have taken steps, but there is no systematic approach. For example, in Jamaica, sexual harassment of female PCV's is rampant... so PC Jamaica has developed a training guide specifically for this for its female PCV's. It offers training, support, and avoidance tactics, etc. The training system is differ-

ent in all countries.

All countries do offer training on gender roles and how to avoid unwanted attention.

PC is designing training for trainees, and PCV's related to sexual assault prevention, response, etc.

There are internal and external groups looking at this issue and advising PC.

PC will roll out its new training in the Fall for all countries. In the last 5-10 years the field of risk reduction and response has really developed.

5. We have been told by recent RPCVs that Volunteer Advisory Councils have been set up in some Peace Corps countries; how do these work in terms of the Country Staffs identifying security and safety issues for Volunteers and the Volunteers being able to bring their concerns to the attention of the Country Directors? Is this being handled consistently across the range of Peace Corps countries?

Answer:

Yes, they work in all countries of service and they are financed by PC. They advise staff of everything, including safety and security issues. VAC's do not work consistently throughout the globe, some bring trivial issues to PC, others make policy. Many VAC's

lack training to make policy; some country directors offer the training. The groups are self operating and that can make it difficult for them to help with safety

and security. If they do not bring up serious issues PC does not make them address these issues. There is also an annual anonymous survey for PCV's that both gives PC info regarding safety issues and allows PCV's an outlet for reporting.

6. How is Peace Corps, at the national level as well as at the country level, dealing with the issue of transparency?

Answer:

Crime statistics are online and open, since before 2000. Crime statistics (country specific) are sent to invitees.

Are Country Staffs informing Volunteers when security incidents occur so other Volunteers can take appropriate safety precautions?

This depends upon the issue/incident. PC takes a victim centered approach to these. Some issues are too sensitive to report (to protect privacy of the affected PCV). Unless there is an imminent threat to other PCV's, country directors are required to protect the identity of the affected PCV. Crimes are published in PC newsletters that are sent to PCV's; this is without any identifying information of PCV's.

Are other Volunteers being told when the Country Staff takes specific measures to respond to a safety situation in one assignment location or in one part of the country? Are all Volunteers in country or in specific parts of the country encouraged to talk to each other to compare their individual safety situations in light of security incidents? Are Country Directors meeting within regions to compare their respective security situations? Are lessons from one country being shared with nearby countries? Yes, the country directors meet and discuss these issues. There are conferences, some of which are organized by the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officers. These vary by region and by the needs/wants of regional directors.

7. What role does Peace Corps play in trying to ensure the full pursuit of justice by a host country in response to incidents, especially those involving violence toward or the death of a PCV?

Answer:
This is very challenging, mostly because the U.S. does not have jurisdiction

over these cases. Therefore, PC has to rely on local law enforcement. In such cases, the only goal is that the victim makes decisions that are right for him/her. PC's aim is to support the victim and make sure he/she is aware of his/her options.

If a victim decides to pursue the crime in a local court, PC will accompany them, and, in some cases (where legal) PC is able to pay for the attorney. PC also lets the local court know that the U.S. government is interested in the case. PCSSOs have done a legal environment survey at all posts. They have met with embassies, courts, prosecutors, etc. to ensure that they have options to give to volunteers who are victims of sexual assault. This way PCV's can be better informed. This also ensures that evidence collected is usable in a court of law. When volunteers choose to pursue sexual assault in court they have a clearance of 60% (meaning the perpetrator was arrested). 89% of cases where a PCV has filed criminal charges, the cases are either under investigation, in court or have a conviction (39%). If a volunteer decides to pursue a court solution they are not made to leave nor are they separated from PC unless there is a credible threat to their safety. If they

are separated they can still pursue in court and will still be supported by PC.

SEMI RPCV Board Meeting May 22, 2011

Attending: Beth Gamburg, Tom Napolitano, Sarah Goodman and her parents Janet Hankin and Alan Goodman, Ron Peterson, Sid, Barb and Becky Henkin, Jim Urban Carol Hofer, Cheryl Bukhof, Jeff Jenks.

Introduction of all volunteers present.
Meeting called to order at 3:20 pm. Tom Napolitano chaired the meeting as Sarah and Don were absent.

Secretary's report: April minutes were published in the newsletter.

Treasurer's report: We started with \$2104. Collected dues of \$130 and paid the postal box fee.

We made a donation to Friends of Gueoul. We ended with \$2129.81 in the account.
Rummage Sale: We can't use Carol Hofer's church, but we can hold the sale at Sarah's church after the potnic.

We do need a date. Potnic is July 23 at Sarah's church. Lutheran Social Services will be the guest speaker. Chicago

PC will mail out the invitations. We need to organize the food, beverages, set up and clean up.

Mentoring survey in now on-line and functioning. We have had 8 legitimate responses.

July 29, Friday night, we have 50 tickets to the Tigers night game. Sarah will get the time and specific details. Concert of Colors is July 15, 16 and 17th at Max Fisher. Jeff Jenks will organize it. Sarah received a response to our letter to National Peace Corps re the 20/20 special in Jan. 2011.

We will order 125 Wisconsin RPCV Calendars this year for sale at \$12.00 each.

We will have the next meeting at Jeff's house on Sunday June 19.

Ron Peterson. Ethiopia 73-75 has published a book thru Amazon's Create Space Called "A Time To...". He would like a volunteer to read it and write a review to post on Amazon. Barb Henkin volunteered to do this. Ron signed her book.

Motion to donate \$50 to On My Own along with \$90.00 collected from committed volunteers-100% passed.

August 13 dinner will be in A2 at Satchels BBQ.

Aug 21 meeting will be at the Henkin's home in Lapeer- bring bathing suits. Will grill burgers and dogs.

Meeting ended at 4:20pm

and the socializing began. Sarah Goodman will be going to Burkina Faso in 2 weeks as a volunteer. She is already active with the program and volunteers via web and Face Book.

Semirpcv Board Meeting Minutes June 19, 2011

Attendance: Beth Gamburd, Jeff Jenks, Tom Napolitano, Harvey Somers, Carol Hofer and Janet Hankin.

Meeting called to order at 3pm. Tom chaired the meeting.

Secretary's report accepted as modified...change Peterman to Peterson.

Treasurer's report: We spent \$62 for the annual postal box and a \$50 donation to On My Own.

We had revenues of \$60.

Our total for May is \$2077.81 in the bank.

Yard Sale: hopefully we can hold is at Sarah's church in August. Saturday Aug. 6, 20 or 27th would be

best. We still need someone to oversee the yard sale.

***Note Saturday August 20 is the only date open at the church.

Mentoring Update: 210 surveys were emailed May 10, 19 were returned completed. One was completed but no name or address.

The survey is to be part of a data base for mentors to pe-

ruse and use to help mentees.

Survey will be resent by Tom to all SEMIRPCV members.

POTNIC: Saturday July 23.

Chicago will send out the invitations. Beth volunteered to buy the food and beverages and has the paper goods.

Janet Hankin volunteered her husband to be grillmeister.

We need a BBQ and charcoal.

All can do set up and clean up.

Upcoming Events:

June 24, Vietnamese Dinner

June 28, PC General Information Meeting at the Detroit Public Library from 4-6. Need volunteers to speak and answer questions.

July 17, Sunday, Concert of Colors...we will volunteer with On My Own – call Jeff if you are interested.

July 23, Potnic and meeting July 29, Tigers Night Game-call Jeff for Tickets

Aug. 13 BBQ Dinner in Ann Arbor

Aug. 21 Board Meeting in Lapeer- bring swimsuits.

Meeting adjourned at 4pm.

Nice dinner provided by Jeff Jenks.

*

DETROIT TIGERS TICKETS:

The Detroit Tigers will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps by inviting Returned Volunteers to a game on July 29th at

7:05PM. The Tigers have generously donated over 50 tickets to go to RPCV's, their families, and friends. If you would like tickets please contact Jeff Jenks <travelisfun@woway.com>. You will be able to pick up the tickets at the board meeting on the 19th of this month and again at the potnic on July 23rd. Go to www.semirpcv.org for event details. The tickets will be given out on a first come first served basis so please contact us quickly if you want to go.

Donation SEMIRPCV made to: Friends of Gueoul

Hey, I'm sending an official thank you note for Semi RPCVs donation to the Friends of Gueoul. In my next email, I'll send you an electronic version of our first Newsletter (taaa daaa). Maybe you'd like to forward it to your membership? It sure means a lot to have your support. Feels like it's our community standing behind these efforts. Judy begs gueoul@mindspring.com with a family. She passed the French language test. She will be at her site in mid- September.

A little bit of the Himala-

yas in Ann Arbor
Announcing the grand opening of The Himalayan Bazaar at 218 South Main Street. The store opened on the auspicious day of May 27. As if transported to one of the many shops that line the streets of Kathmandu in the shadows of the Himalayas, the Himalayan Bazaar features a wide variety of gifts and gear from Nepal. The Himalayan Bazaar's mission is to take you around the world and bring the world around to you. Owners Pemba Dorjee Sherpa and Heather O'Neal bring "a little bit of the Himalayas to Ann Arbor". This was how David Breashears, the famous American climber who created the Everest IMAX movie, described Heather's eleven year business in Ann Arbor. The Himalayan Bazaar on Main Street was formerly the Himalayan Bazaar in Heather's Old West Side garage. Pemba and Heather met in 1998 on a trek to Mt. Everest base camp and have been leading treks in the Himalayas together since 2000. Recently Pemba moved to Ann Arbor and their shop on Main Street marks a new venture. In the front of the store shoppers are surrounded by items from Nepal, mostly hand crafted. They sell Tibetan

Buddhist statues and healing singing bowls, Kathmandu fashions and jackets, pashmina shawls, silver jewelry, beaded necklaces, tapestries, temple bells, Buddhist monastery wall hangings, incense, CDs and more. Near the rear of the store is the educational center where you can learn about tours to Nepal, which are offered twice a year. School groups are also invited for cultural presentations and DVD showings. Pemba and Heather plan on hosting talks and presentations for the public in an effort to educate visitors about culture, travel and adventure. They can also be hired to speak at schools and for community groups. Pemba Dorjee Sherpa has an interesting resume. He happens to be a two time Mt. Everest summiter. In 2004 he climbed as a porter caring 150 pound loads of tents, food and oxygen tanks for western climbers up the ice slopes to high camps on Everest in the extreme cold and altitude. On his second climb in 2005, Pemba organized an expedition to celebrate the Rotary Club's 100 year anniversary. His team was successful, and Pemba and his team member turned wife, Moni Mulepati, made world news with their wedding at the summit

SEMIRPCV BOARD MEETING DATES: All meetings are on Sunday at 3pm (3rd Sunday of the month)

July 23, 2011 Potnic The church address is 3000 E 12 MILE RD, WARREN,48092 Directions to church for POTNIC I-696 E/WALTER P REUTHER FWY toward DETROIT. Take EXIT 20 toward DEQUINDRE RD/RYAN RD. Stay STRAIGHT to go onto E HEIGHTS DR/696 SERVICE DR. Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto DEQUINDRE RD. Turn RIGHT onto E 12 MILE RD. 3000 E 12 MILE RD is on the RIGHT. I-75 S toward DETROIT. Take the 12 MILE RD exit, EXIT 63. Turn SLIGHT LEFT to take the ramp toward MADISON HTS.

Merge onto W 12 MILE RD. 3000 E 12 MILE

August 21, 2011 Barb and Sid Henkin 1208 Lindberg Dr. Lapeer 48446. take 75N to M24N (exit 81) toward Lapeer. Merge onto M24N and go 22.5 miles to Newark Rd. (U-turn onto S. Lapeer Rd.). Right on Newark (1 mile), right on Baldwin (1 mile), left on Lippincott (.2 mile), right on Vasa Drive (.7mile). Left on Lindberg- last house on right.

Sept. 18, 2011 Elaine Jirkans 703 E. Windemere Royal Oak 48073 (313) 399-1182

Oct. 16, 2011 AGM at Tom Napolitano's 17748 Woodside, Livonia 48152 (248) 464-1897 *****

The Potnic will be the SRMIRPCV 50th Anniversary party. We will provide hamburgers and hot dogs and condiments. YOU bring the rest- potluck- bring a dish to pass around , talk, jokes and conversation. We will have the 2012 Madison Wisconsin Calen-

dars, SEMIRPCV T-shirts and just come to have a great time.

July 23 from 12 pm to 5pm.

***** Sara Hankin Goodman of Huntington Woods is a Peace Corps Trainee in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Sara is a 2011 graduate with high honors from the University of Illinois in Campaign-Urbana in Music Education, majoring in Strings for grades K-12. She plays the viola and will be doing Girls Education and Empowerment with middle school girls in Burkina Faso. She begins training in Ouagadougou and then will be in Sapone. Swearing in is scheduled for September 22, 2011. You can follow her blog at <http://www.ilovealtoclefinafica.wordpress.com/> While she will have limited access to the internet, you can email Sara at ilovealtoclef@gmail.com Sara is now in country training and will be at her site in mid-September. She is currently living with a host family and has her own hut.

of Mt. Everest at 29,035 feet.
 Heather O'Neal - RPCV Hungary 1990-92
 The Himalayan Bazaar LLC
 Of Global Interest LLC Adventure Travel
 218 South Main Street
 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
 Shop: 734-997-7229
 Home: 734-369-3107
 ofglobal@aol.com
 www.thehimalayanbazaar.com and also
 wwwofglobalinterest.com

May 10, 2011 New York Times
 Peace Corps Volunteers Speak Out on Rape
 By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG WASHINGTON —
 Jess Smochek arrived in Bangladesh in 2004 as a 23-year-old Peace Corps volunteer with dreams of teaching English and "helping the world." She left six weeks later a rape victim after being brutalized in an alley by a knife-wielding gang.

When she returned to the United States, the reception she received from Peace Corps officials was as devastating, she said, as the rape itself. In Bangladesh, she had been given scant medical care; in Washington, a counselor implied that she was to blame for the attack. For years she kept quiet, feeling "ashamed and embarrassed and guilty." Today, Ms. Smochek is

among a growing group of former Peace Corps volunteers who are speaking out about their sexual assaults, prompting scrutiny from Congress and a pledge from the agency for reform. In going public, they are exposing an ugly sliver of life in the Peace Corps: the dangers that volunteers face in far-flung corners of the world and the inconsistent — and, some say, callous — treatment they receive when they become crime victims.

"These women are alone in many cases, and they're in rough parts of the world," said Representative Ted Poe, Republican of Texas, who says the Peace Corps' promises do not go far enough and is sponsoring legislation to force changes in the way it treats victims of sexual assault. "We want the United States to rush in and treat them as a victim of crime like they would be treated here at home."

Founded in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps has 8,655 volunteers and trainees, as young as 21 and as old as 86, serving in 77 countries. For most, service is, as the agency's Web site boasts, "a life-defining leadership experience."

But from 2000 to 2009, on

average, 22 Peace Corps women each year reported being the victims of rape or attempted rape, the agency says. During that time, more than 1,000 Peace Corps volunteers reported sexual assaults, including 221 rapes or attempted rapes. Because sexual crimes often go unreported, experts say the incidence is likely to be higher, though they and the Peace Corps add that it is difficult to assess whether the volunteers face any greater risk overseas than women in the United States do.

On Wednesday, the House Foreign Affairs Committee will convene a hearing to examine what its chairwoman, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Republican of Florida, called "serious crimes" committed against Peace Corps volunteers, including murder; in announcing the hearing, her office cited reports of "gross mismanagement of sexual assault complaints."

Lois Puzey, whose daughter Kate was murdered in 2009 while posted in Benin, will testify. So will Ms. Smochek, now a board member of First Response Action, a fledgling advocacy group founded by another former volunteer, Casey Frazee. Ms. Frazee was sexually assaulted in

South Africa in 2009 and came home, she said, determined to not "let the Peace Corps toss me off like

I was an isolated incident."

In an interview Monday, the director of the Peace Corps, Aaron S. Williams, said he was committed to revamping the agency's practices to create a more "victim-centered approach."

He insisted that it was safe for women to serve in the Peace Corps. "We do not place Peace Corps volunteers in unsafe environments," he said.

But he said the agency must modernize its procedures to "make sure that we provide compassionate care" to crime victims. Already, Mr. Williams has made some changes, including hiring a "victim's advocate" who began work on Monday and signing an agreement with a nationally known rape crisis group to re-examine his organization's training and policies.

The changes reflect the work of Ms. Frazee, who has spent the last 18 months tracking down Peace Corps sexual assault survivors by reaching out through social networking sites and her blog. Last year, her work attracted the attention of the ABC News program "20/20," which ran

a segment on the women in January. In recent months, Ms. Frazee, 28, has collected more than two dozen affidavits from other women, who have shared stories that Mr. Williams called "tragic."

In interviews and documents, they paint a picture of what many call a "blame the victim" culture at the Peace Corps.

Jessica Gregg, who was drugged and sexually assaulted in 2007 in Mozambique, said a Peace Corps medical officer "made me write in my testimony that I was intoxicated" and suggested that "I willingly had sex with this guy." She and a number of other women complained that a training video the Peace Corps uses places too much emphasis on the role of alcohol in sexual assaults; in response, Mr. Williams said the video would be replaced. Many, like Kate Finn, who was raped in Costa Rica and now works in the district attorney's office in Denver as a victim's advocate, complain that they are not advised on how to prosecute their attackers; a 2010 survey of Peace Corps volunteers revealed that nearly 40 percent of those raped and 50 percent of those sexually assaulted did not report their attacks. Ms. Finn said that

her attacker's family was on the police force and that she "did not feel safe" reporting what had happened.

Still others say they are given inadequate information about counseling. Karestan Koenen, who sought therapy on her own and is now a psychologist who teaches at Columbia and Harvard, said she was shocked to discover that women today were confronting the same difficulties as she did when she was raped in 1991 in Niger.

"My own experience," she said, "was that the treatment by the Peace Corps was worse than the rape."

The women say Mr. Williams's efforts, while promising, are not enough. They want Congress to pass legislation requiring, among other things, that the Peace Corps develop "sexual assault response teams" to collect forensic evidence and provide emergency health care and advocacy for victims after attacks. Mr. Williams said he was open to such legislation but has not committed to supporting it.

But whether such a bill would pass Congress is unclear. Representative Niki Tsongas, Democrat of Massachusetts, is co-sponsoring Mr. Poe's bill, but other Democrats are skit-

tish about it. They worry that the legislation, and Wednesday's hearing, might be used to undermine the Peace Corps — the legacy of a Democratic president — and cut its funding. The women of First Response Action insist that was never their intention; they say they want to improve the Peace Corps, not destroy it. Ms. Smochek, now 30 and a graduate student, said her primary goal was to alert future volunteers, and in the process perhaps bring some solace to other sexual assault survivors "to let them know they are not alone."

Legislation introduced yesterday afternoon (5-23-11) in the Senate and House of Representatives is designed to provide further protections and support to Peace Corps Volunteers who are subjected to violent crimes, including and especially sexual assault. The legislation is named after Kate Puzey, a Georgia Peace Corps Volunteer who was murdered during her service in Benin.

The House legislation, H.R. 2337, would amend the Peace Corps Act to require sexual assault risk-reduction and response training, the development of sexual assault protocol and guidelines, the establishment of victims advocates, and the establishment of a Sexual Assault Advisory Council. The bill, introduced by Con-

gressman Ted Poe (R-TX), has thirteen original co-sponsors, including RPCV Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA).

Other co-sponsors are: Berman (D-CA), Buerkle (R-NY), Capuano (D-MA), Connolly (D-VA), Costa (D-CA), Doggett (D-TX), Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa), Rohrabacher (R-CA), Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Speier (D-CA), Tsongas (D-MA) and Wilson (D-FL).

Ok SEMIRPCVer's We need someone to oversee the yard sale on August 20 at the church. Someone needs to organize and set up the yard sale. This is our big fund raiser and we need your help. Donations can be dropped off at various sites: Rachel will be the east side collection point (9 Mile and Mack area), Tom for the west (Ann Arbor and west Oakland County and Wayne County) and Barb and Sid for the north.

Call Sarah Martin-Fanone if you can oversee this project. (585)295-9447

Wisconsin 2012 Calendars will be available at the Potnic. They are \$12 each. Get them for gifts, Xmas gifts, Chanuka gifts.... wonderful gifts. You can also buy them via email by emailing Beth or Sarah but then you have shipping and handling costs. So buy them at the potnic and save some money and help us raise some money for our projects.

POTNIC: FOR SALE:

2012 CALENDARS: \$12 EACH— GREAT GIFTS AND A GREAT FUNDRAISER FOR SEMIRPCV. WE HAVE ORDERED 125 CALENDARS— GET YOURS WHILE THEY LAST.

SEMIRPCV T-SHIRTS- \$15 EACH TWO COLORS AVAILABLE— GREY OR BLUE WITH THE SEMIRRPCV LOGO ON THEM.

YES! I want to join the
 Southeast Michigan Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
 (SEMIRPCV)

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Home _____

Work _____

Country, years of

service _____

Email Address:

Enclosed is:

\$15 voting membership in SEMIRPCV (PC and VISTA vols)

\$50 membership in SEMIRPCV and National Peace Corps

Assn.

\$15 associate membership (includes newsletter)

No money enclosed— I am a newly-returned volunteer and
 eligible for a free one-year "readjustment subscription."

\$_____ tax-deductible contribution to SEMIRPCV

All memberships are for one year. Check label for renewal date.

Return this form to:

SEMIRPCV Treasurer

PO Box 725075

Berkley MI 48072

CALENDAR

SEMIRPCV BOARD MEETING

DATES: All meetings are on Sun-
 day at 3pm (3rd Sunday of the
 month)

POTNIC

July 23, 2011 Potnic The church
 address is 3000

E 12 MILE RD,
 WARREN, 48092

Directions to church for
 POTNIC

I-696 E/WALTER P

REUTHER FWY toward
 DETROIT.

Take EXIT 20 toward DEQUINDRE
 RD/RYAN RD.

Stay STRAIGHT to go onto
 E HEIGHTS DR/696 SERVICE
 DR. Turn SLIGHT LEFT

onto DEQUINDRE RD. Turn
 RIGHT onto E 12 MILE RD.
 3000 E 12 MILE RD is on
 the RIGHT.

I-75 S toward DETROIT.

Take the 12 MILE RD exit,
 EXIT 63. Turn SLIGHT LEFT
 to take the ramp toward
 MADISON HTS.

Merge onto W 12 MILE RD.

Semi Conductor

SEMIRPCV

PO Box 725075

Berkley MI 48072-5075