



# Common Ground

Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Summer 2017

## IRPCV Snapshot: “A Web of Connections”

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Matt Anders, our current IRPCV Web Editor, received an online request from the grandson of Ranjit Menon in May regarding IRPCV Kent Kay. Kent Kay is from Idaho, and he was hosted by Ranjit’s grandparents during his time as an RPCV in India in the 60s. In his request, the grandson included the last communication of Kent to his host family. Following this request, John Hammond and Arnold Burgemeister, both of whom served in India around the same time as Kent, researched information about Kent and his family while contacting George Nepert of Friends of India to find a way to e-mail Ranjit. They were able to get in touch with him, while Arnold describes how this situation displays the “degrees of separation” which within RPCVs is very narrow. Ranjit ended up responding with the message below with pictures:

*“Hi George, Connie, Matt, Tom, John and Arnie and anyone I may have missed! Thank you all so much for your help! My mother Pravina will really appreciate this. It’s quite amazing how quickly you were able to locate Kent. It was great to hear about the poultry farming program in the 60s. Incidentally my mother (see picture) and her family moved to Mysore in the 80s and that’s where I spent my childhood and college days before moving to the US; it was cool to know that the same program ran in Mysore. There were probably many shared experiences between the volunteers then, some of which I heard through stories told by my mother. It inspires me to become a volunteer myself for the Peace Corps someday. Thank you all again! Hope you all have a fantastic day!”*

*Best regards,*

*Ranjit Menon,  
St. Paul, MN*



# ***Bon Voyage 2017***



***Our IRPCV Bon Voyage Picnic was held at Cassia Park on June 2, 2017.***



## In Memoriam: Lorissa Wilfong-Holt (1934-2017)

Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Lorissa Wilfong-Holt, passed away this year on January 16, 2017, in Emmett, Idaho. Born in Kiev, Ukraine, Lorissa and her mother were taken by the Nazis following the invasion of Kiev. They interned as slaves to work in officers' kitchens in various concentration camps, the last one being at Dachau. It was in Dachau where they were liberated by the Allies. After five years as displaced persons, Lorissa, her mother and her brother were assigned to Emmett, Idaho in 1950. Lorissa loved Emmett, Idaho and America. After the death of her husband, John Wilfong, she decided at the age of 60 to give back to her country and joined the Peace Corps. She completed her service in Hungary from 1994-1996. After returning to Emmett post-service, Lorissa remarried and continued her life while delivering lectures on her life experiences as a survivor and Peace Corps Volunteer. She wrote two books about both of these pivotal events titled: "I Remember: A Memoir of Nazi Invasion, Forced Exile and Concentration Camp," and "A Gift of Life," which detailed her Peace Corps experiences. Both of these books are available on Amazon. Lorissa spoke at the Peace Corps 50th celebration at the Boise Historical Museum. Her humor and love of life made us all glad that she was part of us. Peace Lorissa.



*(Story and pictures contributed by Connie Collins)*

### ★ 2017 IRPCV Grantee Awardees ★

Congratulations to this year's 3 award winners:

**Gates of Hope**  
**IALGBTEC**  
**Bou from Senegal**

Each award winner received funding of \$300 each to help their worthy cause. Gates of Hope is an agency working with refugee youth in Boise. IALGBTEC is working to conduct Safe Space Trainings, and Aviva and Justin's host family member from Senegal, Bou, will use the funds to help pay for an immigration lawyer. Thank you all for your applications and presentations at our annual meeting this year. We hope you will find these awards helpful.



# Pride Fest 2017

*Our IRPCV taxi made an appearance in the Boise Pride Parade on June 17, 2017. Thank you all members who came and helped at the festival!*



### You Shop and Amazon Gives: IRPCV Partners with Amazon Smile

Are you an on-line shopper, especially from Amazon? Did you know that you, your family and friends can have a small percentage of every purchase from Amazon donated to the **IRPCV**?

Just visit [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and click "Pick a charity." Search for Idaho Charities and **IRPCV**. Like magic, an Amazon icon will appear on your home tool bar, making it easy for you to click on the icon every time you want to shop Amazon. When you make a purchase, click on the icon and a percentage will go to us, giving us a little more to help us continue our work!

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## Peace Corps News:

ATLANTA- (April): On Wednesday, Former President Jimmy Carter was joined by Peace Corps Acting Director Sheila Crowley and Executive Director of the Atlanta Federal Executive Board Ron Stephens to present the 2017 [Lillian Carter Award](#) in the Cecil B. Day Chapel at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The biennial ceremony recognizes an outstanding returned volunteer who served over the age of 50 and demonstrates commitment to the Peace Corps' third goal: To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. The recipient this year is Leita Kaldi Davis (see pic on right). To read more about this story and this year's winner, you can find this story at [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).







## Natalie Perry's New Read

In her new book "DAD #1, DAD#2," IRPCV Natalie Perry shares her powerful family story. Check out more details on this new read from Amazon.com: *"Today there is a lot of talk about gay families, but twenty years ago in Boise, Idaho, the climate was different. Natalie's dad is a former Chief Judge of the Idaho State Court of Appeals. He would have lost his job if he'd come out publicly. So, for twenty years Natalie lived in a closeted gay family. Dad #1, Dad #2 is the first memoir written by a child growing up in a closeted LGBTQ family and chronicles the highs and lows of growing up with gay dads in one of the most conservative states in the country. While Natalie's family kept their secret for two decades, they have now all agreed to share their story. They hope this book starts conversations about how to accept families some still do not understand."* Natalie represents Idaho on the Western Region Advisory Council through Family Equality Council. Be sure to visit [www.natalieperryauthor.com](http://www.natalieperryauthor.com) to learn more about Natalie and her writing.

## IRPCV Memberships

Peace Corps service continues long after Volunteers leave their posts. President Kennedy stated that the third goal of the Peace Corps is to "strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples." This is a life-long commitment you made when you joined the Peace Corps. The easiest way for you to meet this goal is to join Idaho RPCVs. Together we can strengthen the understanding of other cultures in the State of Idaho. The annual dues are a pittance - just \$15 per year (less than a single dinner at a restaurant)! So there is no acceptable excuse for not joining us. If you live in Idaho and you served in the Peace Corps join IRPCV!

Thanks to all who have renewed your IRPCV membership. Renew or join online at [www.idahopeacecorps.com](http://www.idahopeacecorps.com). You can also mail your annual payment to Connie Collins (512 Eagleson Rd., Boise, ID, 83705). First time IRPCV members can join for 1 year free!

## New IRPCV Board Members

IRPCV is looking to fill two open board member positions in 2018: our **IRPCV President** and our **IRPCV Newsletter Editor**. If you are interested in these positions, please contact any of the IRPCV board members (see the next page for a listing) to discuss position duties. Board member service typically lasts 2 years.



## Food Bank Volunteer Nights:

The dates for Food Bank Volunteer nights this summer are **July 19, August 2 & September 20**. They start at 6:30 pm. Call Jennifer at 208-484-7511 if you have questions, otherwise follow the log-in instructions below to join us for the event:

If you have not registered under the online registration system:

- 1) Please go to <http://boisepeacecorps.idahofoodbank.volunteerhub.com/>
- 2) Click "Sign up" next desired shift
- 3) Follow instruction prompts (existing users –sign in; new users-create an account)
- 4) All volunteers must register and sign up at least 24 hours before the volunteer shift

Please Note: Adults will be able to electronically sign the release from online. Minors will be prompted to print it and will need to have their legal guardian sign it and bring it in when they volunteer.



We are on Facebook!  
Idaho Returned  
Peace Corps Volunteers

Peace Corps official merchandise!  
Visit the NPCA online store at  
[peacecorpsconnect.org](http://peacecorpsconnect.org)

## IRPCV 2017 Executive Board

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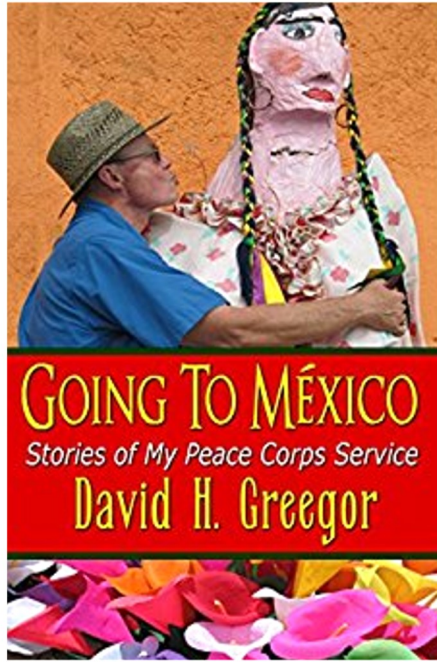
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**\*\*\*IRPCV Bar Night is August 12th at *Papa Joe's Italian Restaurant & Bar!* Come join us at 6 pm\*\*\***


## “Going to Mexico”

**About:** David H. Gregor is a retired university professor with a doctorate in Ecology. He lived in Querétaro, México for four years as a Peace Corps volunteer. During those years he helped the Mexican federal environmental agency address environmental problems and solutions in central México's poor villages. Research and recreation have taken him to Central and South America, New Zealand and Antarctica, where he has a mountain named in his honor. He has written many editorials and articles combining humor with environmental issues. David lives in Boise, Idaho with his harmonicas and his wife, Sonya. Check out his new publication “Going to Mexico” at Amazon Books or Barnes and Noble.



**HUNGRY?**

**Don't miss Ethnic Food Night!**

**Where:** *Kyoto Japanese Steakhouse*

**When:** 9-23-2017

**Location:** *6002 West Fairview Ave*







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PEACE CORPS  
VOLUNTEERS**

[www.IdahoPeaceCorps.com](http://www.IdahoPeaceCorps.com)