

CAJUN CORPS CHRONICLE

Bringin' da world to da bayou! December 2011

Louisiana Peace Corps Association's

COOKBOOK

A Publication of the Louisiana Peace Corps Association

President's Letter

Greetings Fellow RPCVs,

As the weather begins to turn colder and the days become shorter, it becomes natural to reflect back on the accomplishments of the year. For the LPCA, it has been a wonderful blend of our regular activities as well as reflection on the achievements of the Peace Corps over the past 50 years. Our group has grown to almost 300 members representing dozens of communities and continues to reach out and support returning volunteers. In addition, we are seeing increased involvement by new members, bringing new ideas and energy to the organization and carrying on one of the great legacies of the Peace Corps. As we ring in the New Year in a few weeks, I am very excited about the possibilities that it will hold and encourage everyone participate in our planning by letting us know what they would like to see from the LPCA in 2012.



On a more personal note, this letter marks my last correspondence as president of the LPCA. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to represent such a wonderful and dynamic group for the past two years and honored to have served on the board with such incredible individuals. Ours is a group of returned volunteers, but it has become clear to me that we share more than just a common experience. Collectively, we are a group of international do-gooders with a passion for global understanding and service to our fellow man. I am so proud to be associated with the LPCA and its members and look forward to continuing to provide whatever support I can. I would like to thank everyone for all of their support over the past two years and wish you all a very safe and happy holiday season.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan C Mast".

Ryan Mast
LPCA President

Letter from the Editor

'Twas the year twenty eleven
and all through the South
RPCVs
were equipped with mouths.

Their stomachs were hungry
and appetites whet,
but alas their tables
had yet to be set.

“I don’t know what to cook!”
they sulked and moped.
“If only a newsletter
could bring us hope!”

“Ah-ha! Look here!
The Cajun Corps
Chronicle arrived
to me once more!”

For inside the pages
behold were there
yummy recipes
and delicious fare.

Ambrosial dishes
from ‘round the world
sitting there, ready
to be unfurled.

So rest easy, volunteers,
and during this break
take time to cook,
prepare and make

a Peruvian chowder
or Jamaican Ackee.
The baleada
is a little wacky.

Try the Maharagwe,
Escoveitched Fish,
Guatemalan tamales
or a Mozambican dish.

Whatever your preference
you’re sure to find,
that delicious meal
for which you pined.

Happy Holidays!
Robyn Correll, editor

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Guatemalan-Style Tamales

from Ryan Mast

This is a great recipe I found for the best Nochebuena food out there. In my village, all the women would spend all day cooking hundreds of these. At night, the families would all visit each other, eat a tamale, have a drink, and move on. My first year I think I ate 10*!!!

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

1 package instant masa
1/2 cup granulated bouillon
1 cup pork lard
2 T. Salt
water
1-2 bunches of banana leaves
chicken pieces - cut up
pork pieces- cut up
olives
reynolds aluminum in ~8 inch squares

1 small onion
~5-6 roma tomato
~3-4 inches of french bread
2 cloves garlic
1 red bell pepper
~1/2 ancho pepper
salt to taste
~1 T. sesame seed
~2 T. ground toasted pumpkin seed
1 bay leaf

Cook tomatoes, bell pepper, garlic, bread, ancho, onion, bay leaf and salt together on top of stove on medium heat with enough fluid to cover peppers. Allow to cook while getting Masa cooking.

Mix instant Masa, bouillon, lard, salt and HOT water together to make a thick (like grits) consistency,

Then cook on stove on medium heat until very thick - stirring constantly so it won't stick and comes to a full boil at edges - (cook until thick like mashed potatoes).

Blend the sesame seed, toasted pumpkin seed and pepper in blender until to powdered state. Add the cooked red peppers first and blend until smooth. Pour into other container. Blend remainder of tomato mixture until smooth. Mix both together. Add raw pork and chicken to this mix.

Wilt banana leaves on stove.

Cut banana leaf piece about 7x7. Place banana leaf on top of aluminum foil. Put one large serving spoonful of masa in middle of banana leaf. Using another large serving spoon, place a piece of pork and a piece of chicken with sauce in center of the masa pressing the spoon into the center to make a shallow well for the filling. Add two olives to the tamale.

Fold the front edge to the back. Roll the tamale top so it becomes the bottom at the far edge and secure. Press from the sides to the center and secure the aluminum foil. Repeat until all are done.

Place some banana leaf and crumpled aluminum foil in the bottom of a large pan. Fill the pan above midline with water and cover. Bring to a boil and cook for an hour.

** We at CCC were assured that 10 is a LOT of tamales.*



Baleadas

from John Templeton

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

refried beans
scrambled eggs
salsa
cheese
avacado
flour or corn soft tortillas

This recipe is very easy and quick. Basically just heat up the refried beans and scramble some eggs. Take the refried beans and spread the desired amount on the tortilla. Then add a desired amount of scrambled eggs and any other ingredient (listed or improvised) that you want. Then when you have everything you want, just roll it up. Toast it a little on a skillet for added awesomeness. Basically a latin breakfast burrito. So easy you cant screw it up.



Ackee and Saltfish

from Kelly Nowicki

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

1/2 lb saltfish
2 dozen or 1 tin ackee
1 large onion, chopped
2 medium sized tomatoes, diced
4 stalks escallion, diced
1/2 pint cooking oil
1/4 oz black pepper
salt to taste

Ackee and Saltfish is the national dish of Jamaica. Ackee is actually a fruit that has a strange resemblance to scrambled eggs. The edible part of ackee is found within a reddish outer 'shell'. You have to wait for this 'shell' to open naturally otherwise the inner 'scrambled egg' looking part will be toxic and can make you sick. We were told to find an 'ackee guy' at the market that we could trust, because sometimes vendors would prematurely cut open the ackee with razor blades to sell them faster. Preparing is a lot of work because you have to extract the yellow part and then pull out the big black seed before boiling it and ultimately frying it to make this dish. It was my favorite Jamaican dish and I ate it often. It was most commonly served for breakfast.

Boil and flake saltfish. Remove seeds and red segment from ackee if fresh. Wash and cook cleaned ackees in boiling water until pulp is tender, then drain.

Sauté onion, tomatoes and escallions in cooking oil in a skillet. Add flaked fish and cooked ackee to skillet, stirring vigorously. Add black pepper and salt to taste. Serve hot.

Escoveitched Fish

Escoveitch Pickle Sauce:

2 1/2 cups cone vinegar or distilled (white) malt vinegar
1 cho-cho (chayote), peeled, cored and julienned
2 carrots, peeled and julienned
1 onion, cut into thin rings
1-3 hot peppers, de-seeded and sliced into rings
2 tbsps allspice berries
3 garlic cloves
Salt, to taste

Put vinegar in non-reactive sauce pan and add all other ingredients.

Heat for 5 minutes until vegetables soften a bit. Store in a large jar with a secure lid. Make sure that the vegetables are covered with vinegar; add more if necessary.

Fish:

2 lbs fish
1 lime
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup flour
1/4 cup cornmeal
Oil, for shallow-frying

Topping:

julienned carrots, cho-cho, and rings of onions softened in vinegar for 3 minutes

Rinse the fish, drain and squeeze the lime juice over. Season with salt and pepper. Mix the flour and cornmeal and dust the fish with it. Shake off any excess.

Heat some oil in a skillet until it just starts smoking. Gently drop in the fish and fry on both sides until golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain.

Pour 1/2 cup escoveitch sauce over and put some of the pickled vegetable pieces on top. Serve immediately, with extra julienned vegetables.

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED





Matapa: a Mozambican Dish

from Jason Denlinger

In addition to sharing this recipe, I'm also on the lookout for anywhere that sells frozen, ground cassava (mandioca) leaves. I was able to find them in a small Asian store in Iowa, but haven't been able to locate them in or around New Orleans. If you find them, please let me know... here's the recipe:

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

1 lb. cassava leaves (have substituted with spinach, but its not the same)
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 tomatoes
1 liter of water
1 tsp. of salt
coconut milk (can use from a can)
1 cup peanut flour (have used peanut butter as a substitute)
4 red chili peppers

In a pan without water, heat the leaves with the garlic, tomatoes, and salt. After natural water has evaporated, add coconut milk and seafood (shrimp or crab if desired). Bring to a boil. Add the peanut flour and chili peppers. Simmer for 1 hour, adding water as needed to keep as a thick sauce. Serve over rice.



Maharagwe Ya Nzi

from Mike Madej

This is the recipe for maharagwe ya nzi (beans and coconut). You can use either dry or canned beans for this dish.

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

2 cups of beans
between 1 to 2 cups of coconut milk
2 tomatoes chopped
1/2 to 1 onion chopped
1/2 chili pepper (jalapeno works fine)
salt to taste
1 tsp of curry powder or fresh grated
ginger (or both)

If using canned:

- 1) quickly fry up the onions with a small bit of oil or butter
- 2) add the tomatoes, chili, salt and curry/ginger, and thin portion of the coconut milk (bring to a simmer)
- 3) add canned beans and thick part of coconut milk (continue to simmer)
- 4) keep checking on beans, you don't want to over cook the canned beans. it's best to cook over lowerish heat
- 5) Enjoy!

If using dry beans: do you soaking process and add the beans in step 2.

It's one of those recipes that's fun to make your own. Some people put garlic in it, but in Kenya they don't use garlic.



Chupe De Camarones (*Peruvian Shrimp Chowder*)

from Robyn Correll

2lbs shrimp still in the shell
4 cups water
2T olive oil
1/2 small red onions, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1T aji panca chili paste or tomato paste
1 tsp aji amarillo chili paste
1 cup peas, fresh or frozen
1/4 cup long-grain white rice
1 -2 ears of corn, cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

1 lb russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
1 tsp salt (to taste)
1/4-1/2 cup queso fresco, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 cup evaporated milk
1T fresh oregano
3 eggs

NOTE: *Aji panca, aji amarillo and queso fresco can be found at Hispanic markets or a well-stocked grocery store as well.*

Remove heads and shells from shrimp, and refrigerate the shrimp. Put shells and heads in a medium saucepan, add water to cover, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

While shells are simmering, heat the olive oil in a large flameproof casserole over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring. Stir in the aji panca (or tomato paste) and aji amarillo pastes. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue cooking, stirring often, for 10 minutes, or until onion is softened.

Puree shrimp shells and cooking liquid. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl and reserve the liquid (solids can be discarded). Measure out the liquid and add enough water to make 4 cups. Add shrimp broth to onion mixture and bring to a boil. Stir in peas, rice and corn chunks. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add potatoes and salt. Continue cooking until potatoes and rice are just tender (approx 10 minutes more). Add shrimp and queso fresco. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until shrimp is just cooked through, about 4 minutes (shrimp should be pink).

Stir in the evaporated milk and oregano. Continue cooking and stirring. When the soup begins boiling again, Crack the eggs into the soup, spacing them so they remain separate in the soup. If you prefer, you can beat the eggs together in a bowl before adding them to the soup instead). When eggs are cooked, soup is finished.



Asian Tomato Salad

from Allison L. Davis

This is a dish that was influenced by the Chinese immigrants in East Timor, but it was widely served at weddings/funerals, etc. Plus, it's a really easy way to make a basic side dish interesting...

INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

2 large tomatoes

Dressing Ingredients:

about 1 tbsp of chopped scallions

about 1 or 2 tsp of chopped garlic (depending on your tastes)

1/2 teaspoon of sesame oil

1 tbsp of white rice vinegar

1/2 tsp of salt

a pinch of white pepper

and a pinch of sugar

Mix together all of the dressing ingredients in a bowl, **THINLY** slice the tomatoes and arrange decoratively on a plate and drizzle the dressing over the tomatoes. Makes a great side dish to any asian-type meal.



REBUILDING



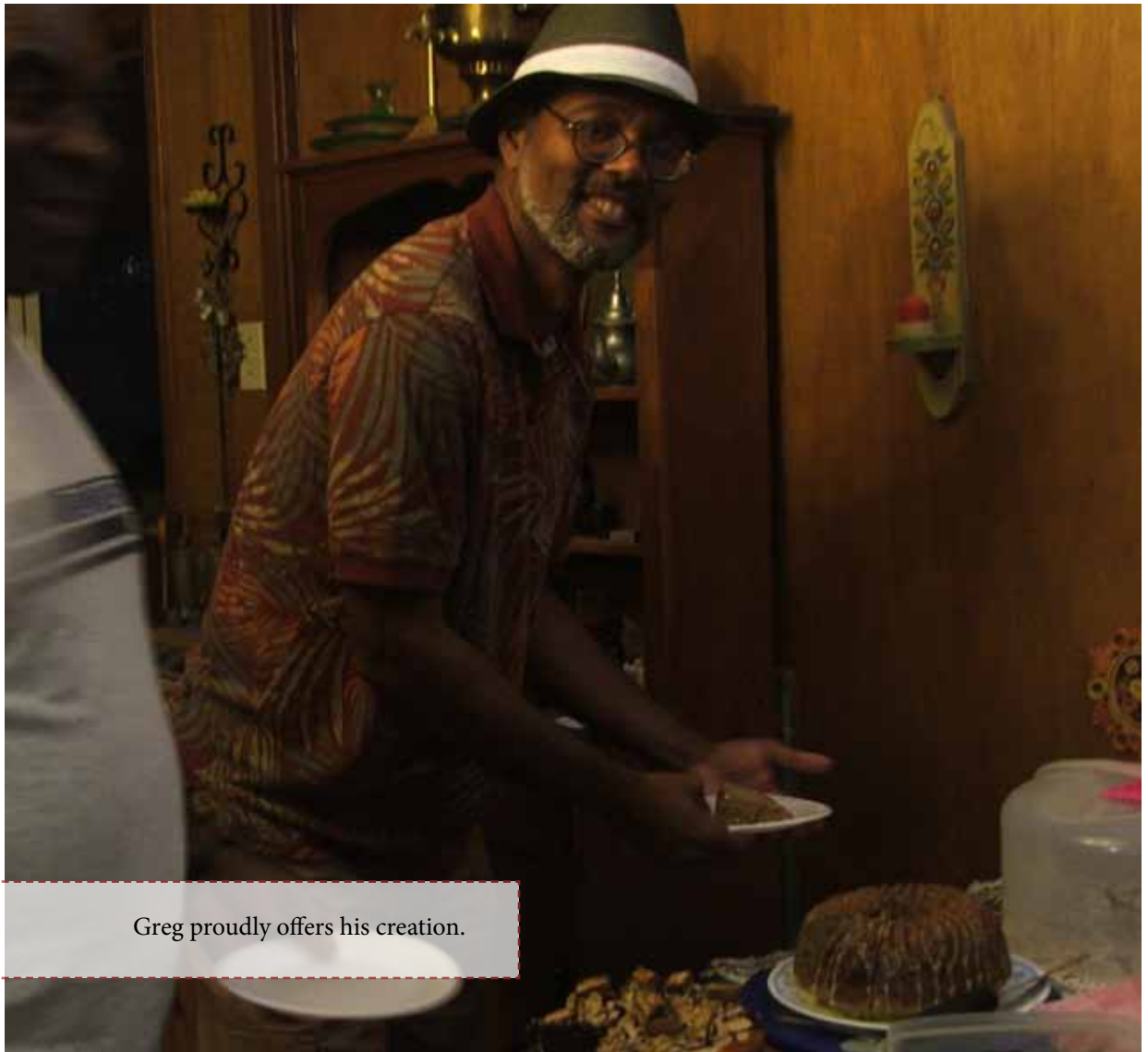
TOGETHER

AKA "Christmas in October"



Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Masters International students from Tulane University joined Rebuilding Together in October to help rebuild a home in Central City. Workers came to the site two Saturdays to paint, sand and set flooring. The event was part of LPCA's continued mission to conduct service activities in the community.

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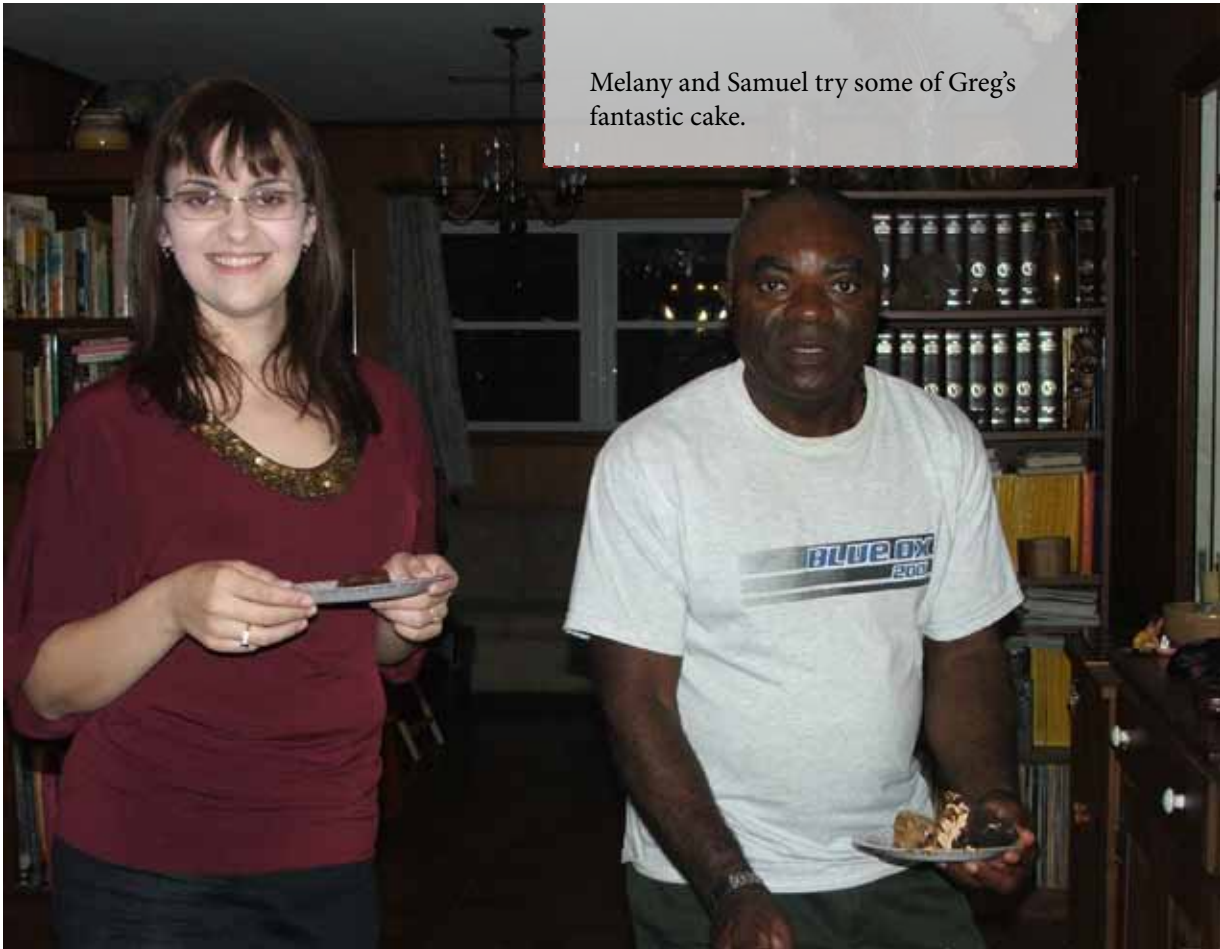


Greg proudly offers his creation.

Submitted by Ruth Mentley

After deciding not to go to the Washington, DC Celebration because of cost and logistics, I tried again to locate some RPCVs and friends to have a Potluck supper on Sept. 24th. A few from the area went to Washington, Victor Lebat - Senegal '72 and country director '70 - '75 and Jack Finlay -Nigeria '61 - '63. Happily, five RPCV's: Greg Tate - Honduras '83-'85, James Grant - Ghana '64 - '67, Vicki Slason - Sierra Leone '76 - '78, Wayne Arnold - Kingdom of Tonga, and myself, Ruth Mentley - Senegal '65- '67 as well as three friends: Ruth's husband Baker Kearfott, Samuel from Camaroon, and Melany Graham, a friend of Boukary Sawadogo from Senegal, both students at UL were able to get together and share some tasty food and good company.

LAFAYETTE



Melany and Samuel try some of Greg's fantastic cake.



Vicki, James, Greg, Wayne, Baker, Samuel, and Melany - Ruth is some where in there.

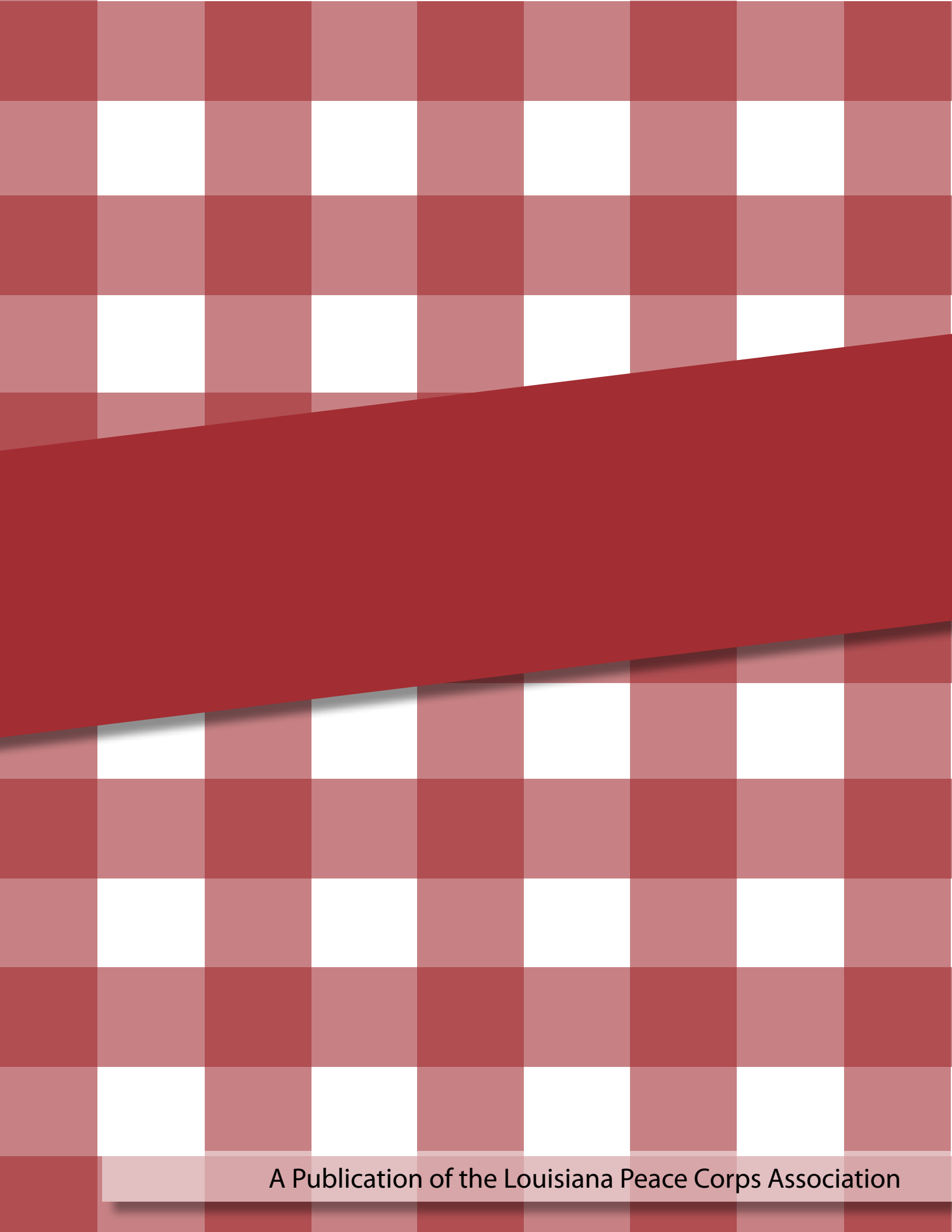
HOLIDAY PARTY





The LPCA hosted a holiday party in December. RPCVs and Masters International students came together for good food, great company and a lively gift exchange.



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