
Amigos de Honduras

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SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Joan M. Larimore (San Francisco del Valle, 1986-88)
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Amigos de Honduras currently has \$4498.09 in its bank account and no bills to pay! And suddenly, we have three possible Grants to consider. As soon as I receive the formal requests and get them out to the Grant Committee, we can put those funds to work.

If, as a member of Amigos, you read my reports in the Amigos de Honduras editions of the Newsletter, you will know that I have been your Secretary-Treasurer for almost 21 years. **It is time for me to retire and pass the position to someone else!** So as of May 13, 2019 I will officially resign my position as Secretary-Treasurer of Amigos de Honduras. It is a time consuming task but one which I have loved! The next ten months should give our members time to consider taking on the responsibility and allow time for an easy transfer of knowledge and materials. I will very happily remain a

resource for the person or persons who take over the position. Please feel free to email or phone me (360-802-4417). I will tell you very frankly that this isn't a task for everybody, but I have loved every minute of it! Call me and I will tell you why. We can't let Amigos de Honduras to fade away and die!

VOLUNTEER FOR SECRETARY-TREASURER

Joan is retiring May 2019 from all of her Amigos de Honduras duties. We need you to volunteer to help. Secretary-Treasurer Joan can give you all the materials, details, help and contact info needed. We need someone to be **treasurer**. This means receiving and depositing membership payments, writing checks for mailings, grants, NPCA and writing a brief quarterly report. **We need someone to print address labels & have the quarterly newsletter printed and mailed.** Loren has agreed to continue being the Newsletter editor and Brant continues to send out the pdf newsletter. **We need a secretary** who will maintain membership list, contacts with NPCA and contact with Grants

Committee. Please consider one or all of the jobs or recruit a friend and do it as co-treasurer-secretary. Contact Joan with questions or potential volunteers. Joan's email is amigosdehondurasjml@gmail.com and her phone is 360-802-4417. Mil Gracias!

EDITOR'S

CORNER Loren Hintz (Olanchito, 1980-82)
ldhintz@bellsouth.net

Thanks to everyone for sharing articles. Keep on sending them. In writing this newsletter I discovered some emails sent months ago. Please send stuff again if you don't hear from me! **Don't forget to volunteer as Secretary-Treasurer.** We need you! I hope you have been following all the news stories about Hondurans seeking asylum status and children being separated from their parents. Truly these are scary times.

ALL THE FLAVOR OF A COUNTRY IN ONE CUP: CAFE CELAQUE

Andrea Catalano (El Negrito, Yoro 08-10, Comayagua, 10-11) In 2009, while serving as a Health Education volunteer in El Negrito, Yoro, I met Jimmy Amaya. Several moves, lots of immigration paperwork and a sweet pit bull later, we now reside in Atlanta, GA, nearly a decade after our first meeting. During the 4 years that I lived in Honduras, Jimmy's mother, Irma, would frequently send me coffee from the mountains of Intibuca, where she lived. One day in the fall of 2017, while dreaming of the simple life in Honduras, Jimmy and I began discussing the idea of importing that very same coffee. After several friendly debates, we landed peacefully on the name Café Celaque, both for its originality and connection to Honduran culture. Being all too aware of the challenges for women living in Honduras, we chose to focus on working with female coffee growers.

Despite our good intentions, we were virtually clueless about starting a business or the coffee production process and encountered a steep learning curve. After finding each other in Honduras, we are believers in serendipity and while building Café Celaque, we were again amazed at the alignment of the universe. Irma reencountered a woman she had met 10 years ago, **Maria Diaz**, who happened to be the

owner of a coffee farm. Jimmy was contacted by an elementary school friend who owns an import business. A colleague of mine introduced me to another woman starting a coffee business with her husband in neighboring Nicaragua. All these chance encounters provided momentum to Café Celaque. In our spare time, Jimmy and I worked out all the details of the supply chain, product design and promotional material. The political unrest experienced in Honduras due to the questionable election results in late 2017 led to a complete halt of any coffee activities as we anxiously checked in on our family and friends.

Once 2018 rolled around, life in Honduras had stabilized a bit and Café Celaque was manifested into reality. On a whim, I applied to be a vendor at the launch party for a local non-profit foundation. We were both shocked (and a bit scared) upon discovering our acceptance as a vendor. We quickly scrambled to finalize all the details of ordering bags, labels and the biggest piece of finding a roaster. Again, we were pleasantly surprised by a 'cold call' email resulting in a warm response from a local coffee shop owner who was more than happy to assist in toll roasting our coffee. The launch party was a success and the thrill of seeing interest in our product and business was indescribable. After handing

out many business cards at the event, I came home to officially launch our website and allow people to order online.

In early July, we made our first trip back to Honduras since Jimmy's move to Atlanta. The first stop on our agenda was Finca Plantas de Mujer, where Maria Diaz grows her coffee. Meeting Maria and her family felt like coming home and we were greeted with a desayuno of frijoles, queso, aguacate and lots of tortillas. After breakfast, we were whisked away in the bed of the family pick-up to see the farm firsthand. Nestled in the mountains of Intibuca, the finca has some of the most beautiful views I have ever seen. The terrain is rough and both Jimmy and I immediately regretted wearing sandals. Unwilling to miss the experience, we carefully explored the land, with Maria's family expertly leading the way. Beyond hundreds of coffee plants, the farm also has sugar cane and both orange and plantain trees. These trees create a canopy for the shade grown coffee on the farm and the roasted beans end up with hints of orange and sugarcane. We solidified our relationship with Maria and discussed future plans on how to improve production and quality at the farm. **Andrea, Jimmy, and Irma pose with Maria and her family on**

their way up to the finca



We spent the rest of our trip driving around the country visiting family and friends. We covered over 3,000 kilometers in our rental car and I was grateful that Jimmy did most of the driving. Having the freedom of a car is always such a change from what I recall of being in Peace Corps. But I have fond memories of waiting for a chicken bus on the side of the road, hoping it wasn't packed to the brim and buying agua de coco from the street vendors. Honduras feels the same as it did when I first moved there 10 years ago but also different. The increased military presence was obvious, and we passed more checkpoints than I can count. Perhaps I am naïve, but because Honduras feels like home, I always feel safe. We take the normal precautions of not traveling at night and being aware of our surroundings (For my fellow H12ers: Juan Carlos would be so proud!)

Café Celaque continues to grow every day. Whether it is securing a spot at a local farmers market or deciding on a new coffee bag, each step requires thought and energy. Sometimes it feels overwhelming: I often travel

for my full-time job and Jimmy works long hours and is studying for his citizenship test. But knowing that we are making a positive impact in a country that we love is worth the sacrifice. Interested in learning more or want to try our coffee? **Check out www.cafecelaque.com**



Roasting the coffee in Atlanta

STORIES OF CRISIS AND HOPE: 5 BEST BOOKS TO UNDERSTAND

HONDURAS Keith Rice 7/31/18 (www.signature-reads.com) Shared by Terri Salus.

Like its Central American neighbors in El Salvador and Guatemala, Honduras has been at the center of the ongoing debate on immigration in the United States — particularly what to do about the immigration of unaccompanied minors as well as those seeking asylum. The decades of unrest that have largely defined Honduran history have led to

skyrocketing levels of violence and murder within the country, forcing many to flee in the hope of survival and a better life. A long history of military rule, corruption, and poverty have left Honduras among the most unstable nations in Central America, leading to what seems to be an ever-increasing flow of migration of the country and region. One could argue that U.S. policy in the region has only exacerbated these issues.

Return of the River by Roberto Sosa. Honduran born poet Roberto Sosa was one of the country's leading contemporary poets. Like many Honduran authors, he received little acclaim outside of his home country. *Return of the River* represents a cross-section of his award-winning work and is a strong example of his measured, emotionally complex style.

The Lost City of the Monkey God by Douglas Preston. This fascinating book by journalist Douglas Preston centers on Preston's efforts to locate a legendary lost city in the dense interior of Honduras. For roughly five hundred years, the legend of this lost city, its immense wealth, and an ancient curse have drawn in adventurers and explorers. In 2012, Preston and a team of scientists equipped with a powerful piece of mapping technology made an extraordinary find hidden in

unexplored valley. They discovered the remnants of a sprawling metropolis, one that could very well be the famed lost city. Their journey to confirm the site would prove to be a larger-than-life, harrowing tale that was in many ways stranger than fiction.

Enrique's Journey The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother By Sonia Nazario.

Enrique's Journey puts an indelibly human face on the tragedies and complexities of the ongoing immigration debate in the U.S. — one that is even more potent given recent issues with family separations by the Trump administration. Building from her Pulitzer Prize-winning series in the Los Angeles Times, journalist Sonia Nazario recounts the extraordinary story of a Honduran boy named Enrique who began a search for his mother a decade after she was forced to leave her family and find work in the U.S. It is all too familiar story for many Hondurans, and one that is particularly insightful in this current political climate.

Don't Be Afraid, Gringo by Medea Benjamin. Don't Be Afraid, Gringo is an emotionally resonant look into not only life in Honduras and the everyday tumult that it entails, but also the ways military rule and U.S. intervention in the region continue to impact not only

Honduras, but the region of northern Central America. It is key to understanding the struggles, tyranny, and violence that define much of life in the country.

The Fish That Ate the Whale By Rich Cohen.

For a fair portion of its modern history, much of Honduras's economy was dominated by foreign-controlled banana companies. Honduras was, in many ways, the first stereotypical "banana republic" when Samuel Zemurray, a banana exporter, conspired with Manuel Bonilla, an ex-Honduran president, to overthrow Honduras' civil government in 1911 and install a military government more friendly to foreign business. The Fish That Ate the Whale is the extraordinary story of Zemurray, and how he built a sprawling empire on the backs of the banana trade and Honduran peasants.

MY PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCE

Deborah Moskowitz (Concepcion, 1992-94)

I have been reconnecting with my friends from Concepcion, Intibuca for the past year and a half. This summer, I received a message from a friend, Miriam. It said that her father, Jenaro, wanted to talk to me. As I asked more questions, I found out that he lived in El Espino, which turned out to be my favorite community of farmers. I eventually talked to Jenaro, and sure enough he knew all the farmers from the group.

Imagine my surprise, when I found out that his daughter had married my best friend's son, and they were now living in Pennsylvania! We may be visiting them!

Halfway through service, my Recursos Naturales counterpart introduced me to El Espino. When I met the farmers, we made a large raised bed of radishes that matured in three weeks. We also picked the ground and transplanted tomatoes and peppers onto a hillside. In this group, there were even two women, Juana and a girl named Maria. Jenaro and Arquilino were my two "star farmers". They were willing to do all the hardest jobs, and they always showed up! They even tried to convince me that I should move to El Espino, since they were my most successful group. This would have proven difficult, since I also worked with other people who lived all around Concepcion, but it was a nice thought.

About six months after meeting them, I planned a field trip. The largest group came from El Espino. I secured a grant from USAID, so that we could visit three private farms. They observed the new planting processes, ate bread made from Nitrogen fixing beans, and learn how to make a compost pile. USAID paid for us to get there, for the lunch that we ate, and a stipend for each farmer who spoke. The farmers who gave the classes, and the farmers who took them were equally happy with the day.

Once we got home, it was planting season, and we were very busy. Everyone who went on the field trip wanted to plant using the new ideas. I worked with about four communities around Concepcion, but still the most successful was El Espino. We put in level ditches and barriers to keep soil from slipping down the hillsides. We would take rocks and dead corn husks to make these barriers. All around I went helping people make kilometers of these barriers. I also brought people the nitrogen fixing beans to plant with their red beans to improve the soil, and we made compost piles. Another thing we did was plant less corn seeds in each hole but make the holes closer together.

About a month later, we had a representative from Zamorano Agricultural School come to El Espino for an Integrated Pest Management class. The teacher told everyone about how certain insects eat others, and he gave everyone a plastic bag to collect bugs. I remember when one farmer was very excited to see a spider eating a harmful insect inside his plastic bag! After this class, I sent four farmers including Jenaro and Arquilino to Zamorano for a three day agricultural class. As they, stood up in front of the group at El Espino, they told me how much going on this trip had meant to them, and how it had changed their lives. We were very sorry when we said goodbye, but now I've been able to talk to them again after more than twenty years. How wonderful life is!

NOT SO HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME. The day before my 24th birthday, I looked out my door, and saw light where there shouldn't have been one, and heard a huge commotion. There was no electricity then, and I wondered what was happening. Down the street from my room, there was a huge house and store fire. There were no fire trucks or hoses; so, the whole house and store went up in flames. I watched along with everyone else as people tried to put out the fire with buckets of water. I had always had dreams of a fire burning down a house in my neighborhood or my house. It seemed that that premonition was coming true half a world away! As I stood there, I talked in English to this young man, Doro, who had lived in the US for three years. I really felt I couldn't talk much in Spanish that night.

We didn't know it, but my landlord's shoe store was being looted, as were other's houses. It was complete chaos! My friends Jessenia, Gloria, and Professora Berta helped me move into their house temporarily for the night. There were nine children there including four nieces and nephews. Keyla was crying, when we went to bed, and her aunt wasn't there. Finally, everyone got back to the house, and we tried to get some sleep. The next day they baked the traditional Honduran Quesadilla for me in an old-fashioned wood oven, like the one at Sutter's Fort. In true Concepcion form, they threw water over my head. I still don't

know why this is a tradition, but it is in Concepcion. Maybe, because it's so hot! It was very nice of them to celebrate my birthday with me, and do so many nice things that day. I will be forever grateful!

After that, I moved back to my room. I spent a lot of time organizing and transporting my stuff that afternoon. One memory I have is a whole bunch of kids just looking into my room and watching me. This happened a lot, and it really got on my nerves. They wouldn't say anything, just watch me, like it was the most exciting show ever! I ended up having some money and other things stolen from me, because there were lots of looters. I will never know who stole the money or stuff, but it wasn't the happiest of birthdays.

Join me on my blog. The link to the blog is <https://dmoskovi.wixsite.com/dmoskovitz>.

PEACE CORPS AND NPCA As an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association, Amigos de Honduras receives reminders and announcements of various events. **Please check out <https://www.peacecorps.gov/returned-volunteers/>** to learn about RPCV events on the official Peace Corps web site. Also for NPCA go to the [peacecorpsconnect](http://peacecorpsconnect.org) website for more info. **The Atlanta Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers** have just released a new Peace Corps running tank in both men's and women's styles. You can view it at

www.customink.com/fundraising/peacecorpsrun. "Like our previous fundraising campaigns, 100% of all the profits from the sales of these shirts will be donated to Peace Corps Partnership Grants."

Peace Corps Connect 2018

Aug. 23-25 - Registration for Peace Corps Connect 2018 is LIVE. This year's event will be held in the Poconos at the Shawnee Institute, Shawnee, PA. Registration is more limited due to the venue's capacity, so please tell folks to register early if they are interested in attending. It should be a blast! Here is the link for more information: <https://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/events/peace-corps-connect-2018>

NPCA - The Americas Facebook Group - Our Facebook group is slowly gaining members, but we are trying to get more folks aware of it! Here is the FB group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/94008449483436/>.

Also see **Peace Corps Honduras** at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2209604190/>

HONDURAN NEWS compiled by Loren Hintz (Olancho, 1980-82)

Are you looking for where to disconnect and enjoy nature? It is difficult to find a better place than La Aguja in Montaña de Santa Bárbara. Part of the Montaña de Vida project, you can spend the night in the comfort of these cabins and make a tour during the day.

Walk in the mountains until you get tired, or stay reading in a hammock. Only 200Lps. per person per night. Contact: Esdras Lopez +504 9439 5490 or montanadevida@gmail.com for reservations. Visit www.montanasantabarbara.com for more information about our activities. **(Ed. Note, several PCVs worked on this project. Check it out.)**

Hello all, I wanted to let you know that I sold my vacation home, La Casa Rara last year and it has been remodeled. <http://www.highpointvilla.com/author/ian/> **Desiree Loeb-Guth**
PC Honduras 83-85

The June 2018 NY/HELP mission trip to Honduras is on their way back to the U.S., having spent a week working with the people of the Mataderos tribe in the villages around La Laguna. The 5 members of this group left last Sunday, 6.3.18, and arrived safely in the "county seat" of Yoro that same evening. They were up in the villages on the mountain all week, but due to internet vagaries, we did not hear from the group all week. They safely returned to the big city of San Pedro Sula 6.9.18. They stayed in our usual hotel there, had a celebratory meal at a city restaurant, and met with our old coordinator Jimmy Alvarado afterwards. **(Ginger Comstock)**

Tom Walz, first Honduran Peace Corps Country Director in Honduras, passed away 2.10.18. Thomas Walz (1933 - 2018) was best known for being a champion of the rights

for the disabled. Tom obtained his Masters in Social Work from St. Louis University and a PhD from the University of Minnesota, where he was hired as a professor. He later became the Director of the University Of Iowa School Of Social Work, a position he held for five years. He remained on the University of Iowa faculty until his retirement. Following his retirement, he founded and directed two non-profits dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged individuals living in the Iowa City area. Upon his death, a feature story in the *Iowa Press-Citizen* newspaper highlights the depth of Tom's community work in support of the disabled. **(NPCA memorial page)**

The Honduran police have arrested a high-ranking executive with a hydroelectric company in connection with the 2016 killing of an activist who led a decade-long fight against a dam project, saying that he had helped to plan the crime. The executive, Roberto David Castillo Mejia, was executive president of the Honduran company that is building the dam, Desarrollos Energéticos S.A., or Desa, at the time the activist, Berta Cáceres, was shot and killed. Mr. Castillo was arrested on Friday at an airport in San Pedro Sula, as he was about to fly to Houston. The Public Ministry said Mr. Castillo was "the person in charge of providing logistics and other resources to one of the material authors already being prosecuted for the crime,"

according to Reuters. **(NY Times 3.3.18)**

The capture of the former first lady of Honduras is another nail in the coffin of the Lobo family. This week she was arrested at her residence in Tegucigalpa, the former first lady of Honduras, Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo, wife of former president Porfirio Lobo, who governed the country, between 2010 and 2014, after the coup d'état to Manuel Zelaya. After the arrest, the representative of the Mission of Support for Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH), Ana María Calderón, explained that this procedure was the result of four months of investigation in the case that was denominated. **(Ronna Rísquez 3.2.18 <https://es.insightcrime.org/>)**

Honduras may be bearing the brunt of President Trump's ire today over immigration, but only a few months ago it was receiving accolades from the administration. Honduras was among only seven nations that voted with the United States and Israel in December against a resolution condemning the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Trump and Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, both suggested U.S. aid could hinge on how nations voted. For a time, U.S. appreciation was boundless. While 128 nations voted for the resolution anyway, Honduras, which got \$137.5 million in U.S. aid in 2017, seemed to be safe, along with Guatemala, Togo and several

small Pacific Island nations. In late February, Haley visited Honduras and Guatemala, in large part to thank them for having the administration's back. **(Washington Post 4.3.18)**

ICE rounded up dozens of undocumented immigrants from around the Triangle (NC) recently in an effort to detain and/or deport them. Two local churches, Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship and Church of the Reconciliation have teamed up to offer sanctuary to a woman threatened with deportation. Rosa has four children here and fled to the US years ago to escape a domestic violence situation. She fears that returning to Honduras will cost her life, so she sought sanctuary here in Chapel Hill. **(via neighborhood list serve, 4.17.18 News and Observer)**

(Remittances have) become essential to the economies of Central America. In Honduras and El Salvador, remittances account for nearly one-fifth of economic output, according to the World Bank. Cutting the migrant flow risks further economic deterioration that could spark even more migration, experts say. In Honduras, where two-thirds of the country's nine million people live in poverty, about one in four families receive remittances, said Manuel Orozco, a migration expert at the Inter-American Dialogue. Last year, they received on average 16 transfers of \$281 each, Mr. Orozco said. The money

transfers soared in 2017 as migrants fearful of deportation sent home more of their savings, according to the World Bank. In El Salvador, remittances rose nearly 10% to \$5.1 billion, and in Honduras 12% to \$4.3 billion. The first major exodus of Hondurans came in 1998 with Hurricane Mitch, which destroyed crops and displaced more than a million residents. It has expanded ever since as Hondurans escape ruthless criminal gangs such as MS-13 and unemployment. **(Wall St. Journal 8.7.18)**

The opposition LIBRE and PINU members of the National Congress introduced a bill calling for a mediator to see who won the Nov. elections. Members also donated their Easter bonus to the families of 33 protesters who died and 24 political prisoners. Street protests were announced for May 1, 21, 22, 28; June 28 and July 5. **(El Heraldo 4.15.18)**. The world was surprised when the US opposed a UN resolution supporting breastfeeding. **(NY Times 7.8.18)** Several Honduran RPCVs noted that part of their job was to promote breast feeding rather than using potentially diluted formula with unclean water. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 57,000 Hondurans who arrived after Hurricane Mitch ended 5.4.18 with an extension to 1.5.20. **(Vox.com 5.4.18)**

Amigos de Honduras Membership Info

Use this form to renew membership or notify us of a change in address. Or, copy and give to a friend whom you think might like to keep in touch with Honduras and RPCVs. Other than your name, enter only the info that has changed.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____ e-mail address _____

Peace Corps Info:

Years of service: from _____ to _____ Group # _____ Site(s) _____

Job _____

Post-Peace Corps Experiences (occupation, marriage, children, travels, interests) _____

Make check payable to Amigos de Honduras: Mail to Joan Larimore, 2334 Sunset Avenue, Enumclaw, WA 98022

8-18

Amigos de Honduras : \$15

NPCA Supporter (Basic FREE): \$50

Amigos, NPCA & another group: \$30
name of other group _____

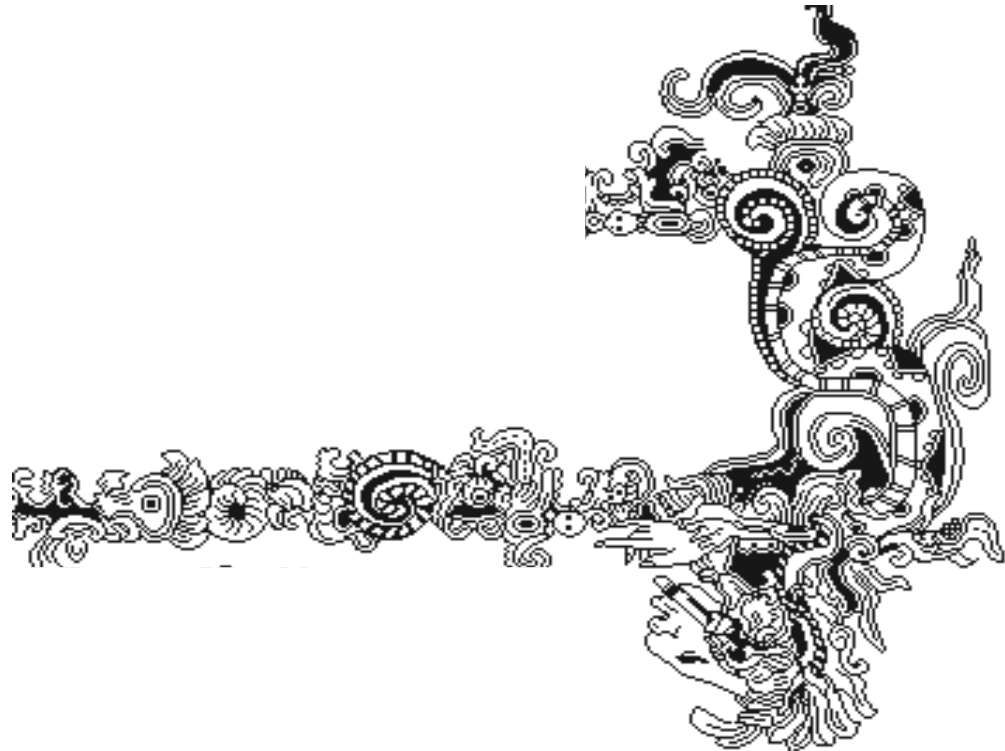
Contribution to projects Amigos will fund in Honduras:

\$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

I would prefer to receive my newsletter in .pdf format.

the date on the mailing label is the expiration date of your membership - please renew if you're due!



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