Hear the Stories, see the Photos of Peace Corps Volunteer

Fresh from Bitola, Patrice Koerper will show photos and talk about her work as a Peace Corps Volunteer these past three years at Sunday’s dinner during the 88th annual MPO Convention, Sept. 4-7, in the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

Patrice frequently traveled through Macedonia and has many wonderful tales and photographs about her Peace Corps adventures. She also will share highlights of the many deep and ongoing friendships she experienced and the daily joy of living in such a historically rich and amazingly beautiful country.

She began her journey in Chaska, a small village in central Macedonia, where she lived for three months with a family whom she describes as, “warm and wonderful.” She spent the next 31 months living and working in the ancient city of Bitola.

Her work with Macedonian colleagues in and around Bitola included the development of a film commission (visit its Web site www.filmlandbitola.org), rural tourism development, a photographic survey in the village of Dihovo, the first public art painting in Bitola and numerous workshops on change and public relations emphasizing personal and professional planning skills.

She was born in Cleveland and raised in nearby Strongsville. She moved to Florida in the late 1980s. She has two sons, Nathan and Tim, and praises Tim’s planning skills.

She graduated summa cum laude with a degree in psychology and a masters in the science of management, leadership and organizational development. Before joining the Peace Corps, she worked for nearly 30 years in public relations, training and development in the public and private sectors.

She is happiest when helping others realize their personal or professional goals, which led her to volunteer with the Peace Corps.

You may remember meeting her at the 2006 MPO Convention at Cleveland.

Macedonia’s new president is Gjorgi Ivanov

When Gjorge Ivanov was sworn in as Macedonia’s new president on May 12, he promised to do all he can to improve the quality of life for all citizens.

“My political agenda is clear and unambiguous -- Macedonia must become a member of NATO and the EU, a strong, respected and egalitarian country with a developed language and culture.

“The solution respects Macedonia’s identity, standing name row with Greece so long as we're too busy, the location is too far away, our emotions get in the way.

“We need to ask ourselves if we are willing to allow our culture to die before passing it on to the next generation.

“Attending the conventions is even more important than ever. We continue to see so many young people attending in greater numbers -- enjoying the dances, meeting new friends and sometimes learning more about their heritage and our culture.

“Support them, make no excuses. Brothers and Sisters, we’ll see you in Columbus.

Earthquakes rock ROM

Nearly 300 earthquakes shook Southeast Macedonia in late May with the strongest registering 5.4 on the Richter scale.

Teams of doctors and fire fighters rushed to areas near Bogdanci and Valandovo. The US and German embassies offered aid.

No one was badly injured, but dozens of houses in a village near Valandovo sustained heavy damage.