

Nouakchott Notes

In this issue:

- Director's Letter 2
- AgFo Report 3
- Education Report 4
- Health Report 6
- News 7
- Stagiaires 9
- Travel 10
- Fun 11
- Musings 12
- Amelioration 13

Letter from the Editor

Audrey Bottjen

You are Nouakchott Notes.
Nouakchott Notes is you.

Thanks to the many who contributed. We, the staff, believe the more voices are heard the better it all sounds. The next issue is coming in three short months, so the next time you have a great story idea (especially you newbies – sorry you're so under-represented this time) just jot it down. Or better yet, email us. In the meantime, good luck to the new volunteers, and to the old crusty ones, keep on trucking.

Overlord: Audrey Bottjen

audbot@hotmail.com

Humorist: Karl Adam

karladamde@yahoo.de

Catering Staff: Miriam Edwards

edwardsmmn@yahoo.com

Moral Support: Janine Kossen

kossenjfk@yahoo.com

Good Looks: Will Holcomb

will@himinbi.org

Presenting 101 Howlie Uses:

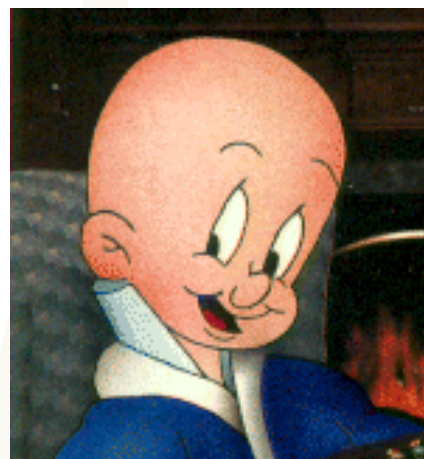
Turban • Diaper • Loincloth • Coffee Strainer • Belt • Bra • Tourniquet • Pillow • Sheet •

New Hope for PC Mauritania

By Miriam Edwards

Since April there has been a new director at the helm of Peace Corps Mauritania. As Country Director, Obie Shaw has overall responsibility for programming, training and administration, volunteer support, staffing and Mauritanian government relations. He decided to apply for the position because he felt it important to have a director familiar with Mauritania and its issues. "I love Peace Corps. I love Peace Corps Mauritania," Obie explains, "I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe in our mission and want to see the bureau be the best it can be. I can't imagine having a better job."

Obie started on the road to director as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Central African Republic, 1990-93 and Tunisia, 1993-95. As a Volunteer he especially enjoyed



Our Feawess Weader

joyed teaching math and connecting with students from varied backgrounds. He found the same affinity working with volunteers in Mauritania as Assistant Peace Corps Director for Small Enterprise Development for the past three

continued on page 7

Beyond the Acronyms: The IG visit

By Jay Davidson

In June, when we received the questionnaire from the Office of Inspector General (OIG), we began our participation in a process that happens in only four PC countries every year. Congress originally established an Office of Inspector General in 1978 in several large federal agencies. As quoted from the brochure about the Peace Corps OIG, its purpose is "to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in government." In 1988, the OIG was extended to include the Peace Corps. Because it was created as part of the Inspector General Act and not as part of the Peace Corps Act, it operates as an independent entity within the Peace Corps.

The three OIG departments: evaluation, criminology, and auditing/accounting include four evaluators and a support staff who report to the

continued on page 8

Director's NEWS

Hello All:

I wanted to take a brief moment to provide you with an overview of items that may be of interest to you...

- I would like to welcome our new Administrative Officer, David Solomon, and his family to Nouakchott. David comes to us from Peace Corps Gabon. He is an RPCV having served in both Senegal and Niger.
- As you may know, we are currently in the process of recruiting an APCD SED/ICT. The application process closed on 12 August and I expect PC DC to be forwarding three or four names to me for consideration by mid-September. I am confident that we are going to have a number of very solid candidates to choose from. With a mid-September selection, the best-case scenario for the new APCD's arrival is mid-October. Worst case will be a mid-December arrival.
- The Country Director's conference earlier this month went very well. I am pleased to report to you that Mauritania's reputation for outstanding Volunteers was known well by both PC DC representatives and our counterparts in Africa. Director Vasquez and Regional Director McKoy send their greetings to all of you.
- The Inspector General's visit went very well. Carlos Torres spoke highly of all of you. I will be sending out a more detailed overview of his report in a separate memo. He is scheduled to provide his first official draft of findings on 31 August.
- I would like to especially thank all of our departing Volunteers. You have done a fantastic job and served during a time of many difficulties. You should all be very proud of your service and ability to cope under some very difficult circumstances. I have no doubt that your time in Mauritania will serve you well in your future careers.
- Welcome to our 3rd Year Extendees! Amy Helmick, Whitney Rokui, Heather DeLong, and Kristen Weaver. All will spend their third year of service in Nouakchott.
- Many thanks to the outstanding Volunteers who took on full-time roles at PST this year. Miranda Dodd, Erin Beardsworth, Lisa Michael, and Caroline Handshuch and all of the PCVs who have lent their expertise to the training.
- The new PCV GAD Coordinator, Jessica Dunsmore, has officially taken up her new role. Please direct regional GAD and GMC issues to her and Miriam Mint El Bechir.
- Swear-in is scheduled for 09 September at 16h30 at the Lycée de Kaédi. All PCVs are welcome to attend. Please be aware that PC will not be able to provide transport or per diem for those PCVs attending. Visiting PCVs will be expected to return to site on 10 September as the new PCVs will be attending orientation sessions and preparing for the posting scheduled to begin on 12 September.
- Welcome aboard to the new *Nouakchott Notes* Staff! Editor Audrey Bottjen has assembled a crack team of reporters and investigative journalists for this issue including Miriam Edwards, Karl Adam, Janine Kossen, William Holcomb and Carl Strolle. ... *They Report, We Decide* ...

I would like to thank all of the PCVs for the outstanding service you are contributing to Mauritania. I am sincerely honored to be serving with each and every one of you. Please never hesitate to contact me if you have suggestions on how we might better serve all of you in the field.

Very Best,
Obie



"Do I Have a Living Allowance Survey from You?"

AgFoNOTES

Hello From the Agfo/EE Evergreen Corner:

I hope your skies have been very clement in terms of rain. It is amazing how much the nature changes with just with few droplets of water.

- **Goodbye to Nick Allen and Ben Richey**, and we will soon say goodbye to Caroline H. and Christopher H. You have done a fantastic job over the past two years. Your contribution to PC program is very appreciated. For Nick and Caroline, you have been the first volunteers to open the EE program. It was difficult to start this project in very challenging sites but you both stuck around and had a great contribution to the program. We all have learned so much together.
- **Congratulations to Amy Helmick and Heather DeLong** for doing a third year. I am looking forward to working with them over the next 12 to 13 months. Amy will be the EE program coordinator. She will hopefully visit the EE sites at least once if not twice. Heather will be working with Eco-Dev, a local NGO, on different projects: Gardening, environmental, natural resources management projects etc.
- **Congratulations and thanks for your constant effort** to help make Mauritania a little bit greener. With the rain many agroforestry and environmental activities are happening at your sites. I hope locusts haven't made lot of damage in your areas. Many of you have been involved with tree nursery and tree planting activities. Some of you have participated in the National Arbor Week celebration at site and did the follow up activities.
- **Seeds:** We have a stock of Moringa seeds from WFP. They are here to be used, so use them.
- **EE Lesson Plans Manual:** All the manual has been translated into French. I will do the final editing of the lesson plans and look for money to copy and bind it before distribution to volunteers.
- **Gardening Manual:** I would like to thank Dan B. for finishing the work on this manual. Please let me know if you need copies. Your suggestions on how to make it more useful to you and to your communities are more than welcome.

• **World Food Program (WFP) School Gardens:**

In a month or so the schools will start again and it will also be the be-

ginning of the gardening season. I know we had a late start last year, I hope that this year the school gardens will be more flourishing. Most of the sites have their garden infrastructure in place and others hopefully will have it ready before the school year. WFP will not fund any additional school gardens this year. They are looking into consolidating the ones that have been already established. We are supposed to have a meeting with them sometimes in September. We will talk about your garden needs during that meeting. Please let me know by writing what you need in terms of supplies to make your garden work: cement, rebar, tools, gates, seeds etc. I am not guaranteeing that we will get it all but we will ask.

- **Prepare an annual report about the progress on your gardens.** The report can be combined with the annual report that you will submit for your different sectors. I will try to visit your schools around the beginning of the school year to talk with you and your school staff about the upcoming year and help clarify issues and expectation particularly with the new group.

- **Annual Reporting:** Just as a heads up, this year you are again required to submit an annual report. I will put together the reporting format for both sectors and send it to you as soon as I can. This will be a data collection report so please keep track of your different activities. We are looking in the reports the description of your activities, the number of people trained (men, women, boys and girls), the



continued on page 6

MTR

The Mid-Term Reconnect Conference took place in NKC on August 30th as scheduled and went very well. The new second year PCVs were able to reflect on their first year experience sharing best practices/lessons learnt. Refer to the MTR Action Plan master list to learn more on this.

Summer Projects

Many PCVs have had a very productive summer working on new projects for their community.:

- In Chinguitty, Erin, Caroline and others conducted a trash clean up project with the Mayor's Office, NGOs, aubergistes and other partners. Later, Erin engaged in a summer English course for adults that was very well appreciated in her community.
- In Aioun, Genny organized English classes for adults that was very popular and successful. Adults from different walks of life enrolled in the intensive course and have expressed interest in going on with it over the fall.
- Dana of Maal and Mitch of Bababe are working with FLM and are planning to produce a major documentary in September to highlight volunteer efforts in promoting moringa tree planting. The film also narrates how communities get involved and how vital health are tackled in the PCVs approach to moringa growth. The documentary will stand as an interesting advocacy tool for Moringa planting and could also be used as a fund-raising tool. Something to look out for in future ISTs?
- A major summer activity for which volunteers devoted a lot of their time across regions was the Annual Girls' Education Conference. PCVs from 12 different sites (representing 9 regions) worked very hard and succeeded in making this nationwide event possible by drawing on some 34 girls participants, representing a rich and varied array of communities. Below is a final report excerpt.



Girls recording a song as part of the Girls Education Conference

Fifth Annual Girls Education Conference

In collaboration with local Girls Mentoring Centers, Condition Feminine, Peace Corps, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, girls from regions with Peace Corps presence were invited to Nouakchott the 18 – 22 July 2004 to attend the fifth annual Girls Education Conference. Thirty-four female students from Aioun, Atar, Bababe, Boghe, Kaedi, Maal, Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Rosso, Selibaby, Tidjikja and Toulde attended the conference. A Peace Corps volunteer accompanied the girls to Nouakchott from their regions.

Throughout the week of the conference professional Mauritanian women living in Nouakchott hosted participants and volunteers. The main focus of the conference ...

was to expose high school age girls to the professional world of women as well as educational opportunities available to them. An important component of the conference was the home stays with professional women; this allowed the girls to see that it is possible to balance both a career and a family, something that is very important to girls of this age in Mauritanian culture.

The home base of the conference was the Peace Corps bureau, although many activities took place in other settings. Activities of the conference included: health talks, women speakers, Internet, tour of the University of Nouakchott, visit to the National Museum of Mauritania, afternoon at the beach, shadowing women at work, film presentation, tour of a music recording studio and an art class.

The opening ceremony of the conference took place in the afternoon of July 18 at the Centre de Promotion Feminine and was attended by the Director de Cabinet of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the United States Ambassador to Mauritania, Peace Corps Director, representatives of UNICEF, DES (Direction d'Enseignement Secondaire), FLM (Federation Lutheran Mondiale) and Promotion Feminine. The closing ceremony, which took place July 22, was held at the Peace Corps bureau and attended by the Inspector General of Peace Corps Washington D.C., representatives of Peace Corps, DES, and Promotion Feminine.

The conference was made possible by generous donations from UNICEF, Peace Corps, Projet Pask and the American Embassy and the logistical support of Peace Corps and DES.

GAD: Comings and Goings

Well, as you all know Beth, or Khady as she goes by in Chinguitty, COSed on August 28th, after three years of productive service w/ PC/RIM. Beth's last year was primarily devoted to GAD/RIM and was rich with achievements.

We are pleased to officially announce Beth's replacement in the person of our own **Jessica Dunsmore**. Yes! Good luck to you, Jessy, in your new PCV GAD coordinator position and welcome!

Jessica is now stationed in Nouakchott and will work with you in your different regions to coordinate GAD work. Something worth mentioning here is that Jessica will be the first to oversee primarily GAD assigned PCVs. Yes, this coming school year we are starting a pilot sub-sector called GAD/GMC Managers and we have 2 of them based in Boghe and Kiffa. We wish all of the best to these pioneer volunteers!

That's all for now and take care-

MAB



Voting Cards

Absentee ballots will be coming to your sites in the coming weeks. Once you have completed your ballot you may send it back to the states courtesy of the bureau. Simply send the sealed envelope to the reception desk.



Delirium

The most recent issue of *Delirium*, the volunteer literary magazine, is available online along with many other goodies at:

<http://mr.pcv.org/delirium>



COSers

It has been very sad to see Nkechi, Danny and Adriane leave. It was really heartbreaking. I am getting old and sentimental about it all. But I want to say to them that their service meant a lot to their communities and to me. Danny, Nkechi and Adriane, thank you for your time and for your commitment to Mauritania and to the Health project. You will be missed.

Alassane Diakite

HIV/AIDS Initiative

This year, the Program got an extra amount of 7,500 USD for HIV/AIDS projects. The following table shows how the funds were spent.

Volunteer	Site	Amount
Nkechi Eneh	ONG STOP-SIDA Délinquance Juvénile et Pauvreté	257,280um
Margaret Ambrosino	Quarterly Art Exhibit/HIV/AIDS Awareness Seminar for NKC based youth	900,000um
Kari Brashers	Peer Group HIV/AIDS Training in cooperation with FLM and SOS	251,500um
Julia Kennedy	AIDS Educator Training and Community Awareness-Raising	290,780um
Dan Sutton	Peer Group HIV/AIDS Training	312,500um

Ambassador's Funds

Volunteers have also applied to the Ambassador's Funds for HIV/AIDS. Refer to the table below for more details. Approval status will be notified to Volunteers around mid-September:

Volunteer	Site	Amount
Kari and Mitch Brashers	Bababé	\$9,809
Melanie Thurber	Mbagne	\$2,518
Jill Sutton	Tidjikja	\$3,280
Lisa Jackson	Loboudou	\$7,536
Janine Kossen	Kaédi	\$4,370
Dan Sutton	Boghé	\$2,754



Other Volunteer Projects

- PCVs Daniel Sutton and Melanie Thurber are collaborating with Eco-Dev and their respective communes to control floodwater in Mbagne and to clean canals in Boghe.
- PCV Julia Kennedy wrapped up her Breun HIV/AIDS project and is now in the process of finalizing her application for Clean Indoor Air jointly with third year Volunteer Amy Helmick. Let's wish them a lot of luck.
- PCV Molly McCollom is still pushing forward the idea of the Kankossa CREN and is also interested in working with some Assaba teachers in order to launch an HIV/AIDS program in Kankossa.
- PCV Stephanie Rausch is working hard trying to organize the Rosso youth group in order to create a network of associations interested in HIV/AIDS work.

'agfo' con't from page 3: level of capacity building, the training or the activity addressed (individual, service provider, organization or community level and for how many people, organizations, or communities), the outcome of the activity and intended changes in terms of skills acquisition, behavior, aptitude and attitude changes. This is the kind of data we are looking for. The complete form will be sent to you soon with a deadline. The annual report will help us determine where we are with our project plans implementation. We use it also to inform our partners on what we are doing and to report out to PCW on our progress. PCW uses these reports to inform Congress and win their support for PC.

Mohamedou Aw

New Face in the Bureau

By Audrey Bottjen

David Solomon, Peace Corps Mauritania's new Administrative Associate Director, is back in the Sahel and excited to tackle a new challenge. He's bounced around the region for years, serving two Peace Corps tours (Senegal and Niger) and living in Tunisia and Burkina Faso working for a non-profit organization promoting educational and cultural development and the US Information Services (now part of the State Dept.). For the past two years, David has been living in Gabon working for Peace Corps in the same capacity in which he'll serve here.



Originally from northern New Jersey, David spaced out his overseas jobs with state-side jobs in IT consulting, providing training to a community college, and technical forecasting.

Because of the gap between Kathy Shannon's departure and David's arrival he's throwing himself into the job, learning the office rhythms and getting caught up on the paperwork – a full-time job in and of itself. "I'm here to support staff, implement efficiency practices and fine-tune how we allocate our resources," David says. "The budget is pretty tight, and since it's an election year, neither candidate is going to commit to a budget till after November at the earliest. So the budget resolution isn't going anywhere very soon." He strongly stresses that this will not affect Volunteer Services. "Our number one priority is Safety and Security. Number two is getting volunteers their living allowances on time. Number three is covering our payroll."

David says he is pleased with what he's seen of the Peace Corps Mauritania program so far. "Peace Corps Mauritania has a very solid reputation. The APCDs really know their programs. Very impressive. And the Safety and Security is known as one of the best in the region."

Together with his wife, Maria, and children Samuel (almost 7) and Lea (3), he hopes to see more of Mauritania, espe-

cially Nouadhibou. Morocco and Senegal are also possible destinations for the next three years of his contract, but he says it will be a while before he can get out of the office for a trip.

"There's a lot to do right now, but I'm glad to have the chance to work with the volunteers and the bureau. It's good to be back in the Sahel!"

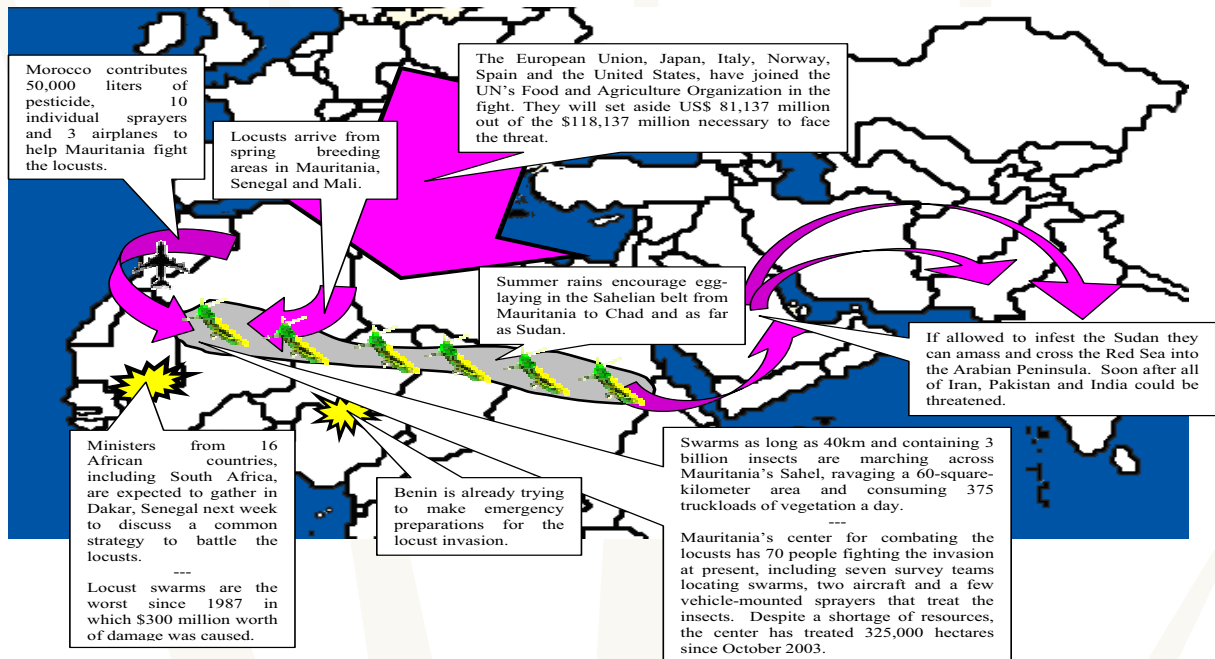
'Shaw' con't from page 1: over Peace Corps Mauritania at a good time: the program is stable, exceptional staff and PCVs are in place, the early termination rate is virtually zero, and in general, the country is calm. "Sometimes, from the volunteer perspective it's difficult to see, but overall the program works." The Mauritania program is a unique blend of a client-based management style, within the limits of a government agency.

When there is stability there is room for improvement, growth and innovation. He would like to see an expansion of all sectors and the evolution of sub-sectors into full-fledged programs. He sees a future where GAD, through partnerships with schools or micro finance support, and Information Communication Technology, through regional development/outreach, teaching, and maintenance/repair instruction, can be stand alone programs. Other priorities include safety and security vigilance, supporting the independence of volunteers, and hire additional staff to assist APCDs, alleviate staff workload and increase the ability of staff to serve clients.

For Obie the best part of being director is interaction with the volunteers. "Being a volunteer reinforced my sense of self-sufficiency and independence," says Obie. As director he hopes to maintain an environment that meets the mandates of Peace Corps worldwide and allows volunteers to create and refine their future.

Locust Invasion 2004

ROCK THE TCHEEBA
DANBO BUONADONNA



'IG' con't from page 1: Inspector General (IG). The IG reports directly to the Director of Peace Corps and to Congress twice a year. Prior to arrival in-country, the evaluator does his homework, reading up on the program and interviewing those in the bureau who are affiliated with the country. He also meets with representatives at the part of PCW that is known as "The Center," which is the cadre of specialists who represent all the Peace Corps programs (It is The Center that serves as the link to the APCDs who head their programs in-country.)

Carlos Torres, our evaluator, has done this work in six PC countries so far, most recently in Honduras, and has made similar site visits and evaluations for organizations as diverse as the World Bank, Arthur Andersen, and the US Department of Agriculture. Torres said his work for the Peace Corps has been significantly different from that for other agencies for which he worked because his evaluations for Peace Corps have actually led to influencing and changing practices. In other organizations, once he filed his report, there was not much done about improvements that needed to be made.

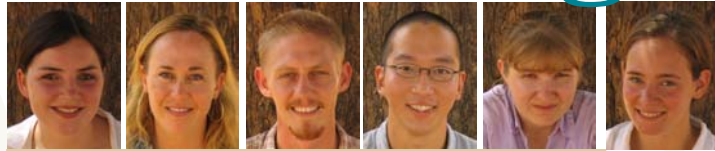
In addition to the confidential PCV interviews, the evaluators take photos of sites and monitor the conditions under

which PCVs are living and working. They speak to some PCVs' counterparts as well as staff at the PC bureaus. Interviewing includes three sessions with the Country Director, concluding with a debriefing at the end of the visit, in order to present findings before the evaluator leaves the country.

Once back in Washington, the evaluator debriefs an assortment of PC employees, including the region in which the country is located, the Country Desk, safety and security, health, and the specialists at The Center. The evaluator then drafts a report with his observations, including changes that need to be made. This report is submitted to the head of the region and to the Country Director, who then has an opportunity to respond to the recommendations. It is left to the post to find solutions. When the Country Director has a solution to the problem, (s)he presents it to the OIG, who can either agree or disagree.

Within a year or so, an evaluator from the OIG may revisit the country. They pay particular note to any discrepancies that may exist between the way the post officials reported that they would solve any problems and the way they actually did solve them.

Stagiaires



Education

Name	Site	Region
Alexis Aguilera	Tawaz	Adrar
Julie Anderson	Nouadhibou	Nouadhibou
Todd Bruce	Ouadane	Adrar
Jae Chung	M'bout	Gorgol
Dara Evans	Bagodine	Brakna
Andrea Gittleman	Boghé	Brakna
Julian Hadas	Aleg	Brakna
Cailin McGough	Selibaby	Guidimakha
Thomas Nordlum	Jidrel Mohguen	Trarza
Nancy Pile	Boghé	Brakna
Adriana Publico	Kiffa	Assaba
Jennifer Slinkard	Kaédi	Gorgol



Environmental Education

Name	Site	Region
Jeffrey Field	Chinguity	Adrar
Keith Gaddis	Atar	Adrar
Molly Bayer	Selibaby	Guidimakha
Justin Lawrence	Sylla	Gorgol



Information and Com. Technologies

Name	Site	Region
Jarad Logsdon	Nouakchott	Nouakchott



Small Enterprise Development

Name	Site	Region
Jessica Daniel	Atar	Adrar
Jordana Spadacini	Mghte Lejar	Brakna
Madeline England	Aioun	Hodh el Gharbi
Suzanne Carroll	Selibaby	Guidimakha
Luke Filose	Kiffa	Assaba
Nina Elisseou	Aleg	Brakna
Teresa Chesno	Rosso	Trarza



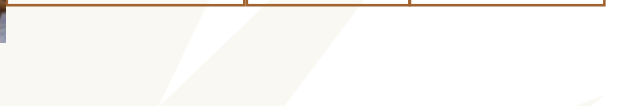
Agriculture and Forestry

Name	Site	Region
Tarn Mower	Seyenne	Gorgol
Michael Klein	Dioullom	Brakna
Karin Dahlgren	Chegar	Brakna
Alicia Wittmer	Thienel	Brakna
Caleb Judy	Agmamine I	Assaba
Alicia Liebel	Tijikja	Tagant
Jared Stearns	Koboni	Hodh el Gharbi



Community Health / Water Sanitation

Name	Site	Region
Alison Mickey	Atar	Adrar
Saman Wijesooriya	Ouadane	Adrar
Sarah Shanabrush	Sinthiane	Brakna
Laura Monahan	Lexeiba	Gorgol
Brock Emerson	Selibaby	Guidimakha
Andrew Medley	Kiffa	Assaba
Matt Briton	Lehwouettat	Tagant
Kyle Marker	Kobenni	Hodh el Gharbi



Obieisms

Favorite Color:	green
Favorite Flower:	jonquil
Favorite Word/Phrase	ambidextrous / "you can't print this..."
Pet Peeve:	passive aggressive behavior
Favorite Thing:	notes from his nieces and nephews; fun/evil emails
Favorite Vacation Spot:	Paris
If he were an animal or vegetable he would be an:	elephant

Travel

The Paradise that Calls Itself Doucki

Lisa Michael from the Road

Doucki (not to be confused with Doukeen) is a small village on the edge of an escarpment along the Kokolo Valley in Guinée (Conakry). If you ever have the good fortune to make the trip, you will want to stay at Hassan Ba's camp which, as of this past spring, costs \$20 per night for Peace Corps volunteers (\$25 for non-PCVs). Included in the price is your own hut, three delicious meals of local food per day, bucket baths (with gas stove heated water), an enthusiastic hiking guide (Hassan himself) of limitless energy who speaks at least six languages fluently, and an endless stream of amusing acronyms ("Be careful, it's RFS - Really F***ing Slippery").

Hassan's camp was set up with the aid of a PCV; together they 'discovered' and named various hikes along which Hassan will lead you (to quote him, "no trail will have you take the same footstep twice"). The endless variety of landscapes available to hikers from the camp is unbelievable - canyons, rivers, waterfalls, caves, rocks, bluffs, fields of green, mini rain forests. The difficulties and length of the hikes vary, from the two-hour saunter down "Indiana Jones" (through large rock crevices with hanging vines that easily support the swinging weight of any adult human) to the all-day "HCH" (hard-core hike) of "Chutes and Ladders" (ending with a vertical climb up a several hundred foot ravine with the aid of nine ultra-scary ladders made of tree roots, while avoiding the waterfalls rushing by and the bumping of one's head on the inside of caves). And if you go to Hassan's during May, the camp is covered in an all-you-can-eat nature provided buffet of seven varieties of mangos and an unspecified number of varieties of avocados.

Regarding logistics, I got a visa in Banjul within 2 hours of requesting one (a slightly expensive stamp - can't remember the exact figure, maybe about \$40). I flew from Banjul to Conakry for \$100 (and *do* spend the night at the PC house there, a two-story mansion with washers, dryers, large screen TV, AC, huge kitchen, armed guards, etc, etc, etc., for a few dollars a night). Then a taxi brousse to Pita (where small children cry when white people ask where the taxi stand to Doucki is); then a squished but short ride to Doucki. When dumped off at the house along the road marking Doucki, walk down the dirt trail until it dead-ends at the camp. For the return, I went back to Pita and

took taxi brousse north to Labé, where there is an auberge manned by grumpy people who argue about whether you will be entitled to the PC rate (you ARE entitled, as was negotiated by Guinée PC admin). A flight (dubious Air Guinée) from Labé to Dakar runs twice a week, costs \$100, and a ticket can be purchased in Labé or Conakry. You can also travel between Labé, Guinée and Bassé, Gambia via taxi brousse, but it's a hellish 30 hour ride that leaves at midnight and travels roads that can be impassable during rainy season.

Definitely a 5-star travel destination for those who like nature and hiking. Feel free to email or call me if you want more logistical details - I left my notes in Nouadhibou! Cheers, Lisa

Audrey's Runway Report

The hot season. You haven't felt a breeze in two months, your counterpart is en brousse and your project is melting - it's time to swing on your backpack, tie on a bandanna and hit the road. Read on for some of this season's hottest looks on the runways (airport runways, that is.)

"Mali is huge this season," raves veteran trip designer, Caroline Handschuch, "It's affordable, beautiful and easy for almost anybody to pull off stylishly." Handschuch's new Mali line debuts mid-September, but whispers throughout the industry indicate that there will be a veritable deluge this fall, with trips ranging from mid-length to quite long. Athletic accoutrements can be added easily, and the ever-elusive Timbuktu look can be a fashionable statement for those willing to spend a little more time.

Senegal: casual, comfortable and fun, has long been considered the blue jeans of PCIM travel. For this season, consider dressing up this old favorite with a sparkly trip out to Cap Skiring (one of the most beautiful beaches in West Africa), or a chic collection of beers in the culture-rich Toubab Dialao. Never forget, a strappy pair of hotties in Dakar can go a long ways toward making this vacation one of kind.

Vacationista giants Europe and America have not, of course, lost their timeless allure. Though always pricey, the quality is unparalleled, and if you're looking for one good vacation that will last a while and not wear thin within the first 5 days, you might consider splurging.

Taking the road less traveled can be an edgy alternative to your standard Senegal or Morocco vacations. Not

Fun PC Mauritania Horoscopes



Aries:

(Mar 21—Apr 19)

Your uncanny accuracy with rock throwing will elevate you to demi-god status among the local children and a feared adversary among local goats.



Taurus:

(Apr 20—May 20)

Seizing the moment during a local baptême your shooting-star career as Mauritania's first professional sock-puppeteer will be born.



Gemini:

(May 21—June 21)

While visiting a volunteer's site, you will have a Kafkaesque experience when roaches drag you into the douche and crown you as their king/queen, ruling with the power, wisdom and authority of the makresh.



Cancer:

(June 22—July 22)

Your game of one-upmanship with the neighborhood tailor will come to a tragic end when you sweat to death while wearing a trash bag, spray-painted hot pink.



Leo:

(July 23—Aug 22)

You will contract a ghastly, incurable and wasting illness, but you will simultaneously discover the meaning of Moringa: The Miracle Tree.



Virgo:

(Aug 23—Sept 22)

Your charm and charisma will soon be discovered by a local talent agency that will lead you to a star-studded career in morally suspect films directed by the notorious German film regisseur: Herr Hoffenpooperpants.



Libra:

(Sept 23—Oct 23)

Your self-confidence and good humor have carried you this far in life, but the children will put a short end to that.



Scorpio:

(Oct 24—Nov 21)

After being stung by a radioactive scorpion during a breakdown in the northern desert, you will develop incredible superhuman abilities. Nonetheless, your status as a superhuman hero will come to a humiliating conclusion next week at the hands of your arch-nemesis: Goatgirl.



Sagittarius:

(Nov 22—Dec 21)

You will come to realize the full meaning of the proverb: "Not all that glitters is gold" because it does not mean sweat. So come into the shade. You idiot.



Capricorn:

(Dec 22—Jan 19)

Obie will crown you as the High Premier Lord Generalissimo of SED when you develop a plan to sell space heaters to Mauritians.



Aquarius:

(Jan 20—Feb 18)

After forming a splinter eco-terrorist group to save the whales of Mauritania, your missions soon devolve into finding phoques on the beach.



Pisces:

(Feb 19—Mar 20)

Your excitement about discovering a brand new species of barbed death-wasp is marred only by the discovery that it is taking up residence in one of your body cavities.

'Audrey' con't from page 9: for the faint of heart, journeys into the nether regions of West Africa give that cutting edge, dangerous look. A word to wise on pulling this off—these trends (the Casamance, Guinea Bissau, Cote D'Ivoire) are time and circumstance specific. Much as studded dog collars and leather pants work only at certain times of the day, in certain venues, make sure you know what you're trying on. Listen to

the experts, and judge how far you're willing to risk it.

Looking for something more practical that can double for work and pleasure? Consider your own backyard. A nice, conservative seminar planning in the Brakna or garbage pick-up in the Adrar can be transformed from work to play simply by the addition of a duneboard or a few gallons of brousse wine. Remember, it'll still be hot, but it's a different *kind* of hot.

Musings

Pettigrew's Ponderings

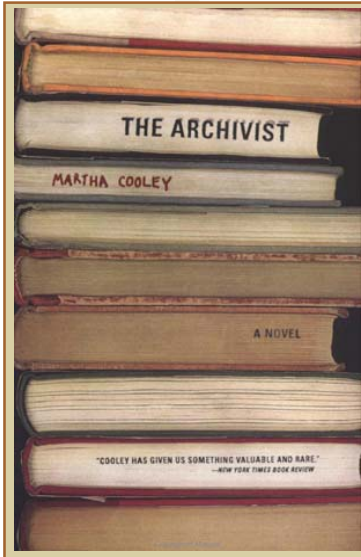
By Erin Pettigrew

The Archivist, by Martha Cooley

This book was sent to me by a friend who works at the National Archives. I initially thought this novel was supposed to be a joke and put off reading it until I didn't have other books on my shelf. Luckily, my shelf emptied itself and left only The Archivist to read. The story is split among four themes: T.S. Eliot's correspondence, New York's art scene in the 1950s, post-Holocaust for modern Jews and the life of an aging librarian who meets a younger grad student. Set in Princeton University's dark archives, where correspondence between T.S. Eliot and his lifelong friend/lover Emily Hale are carefully guarded by the librarian, the novel made me incredibly nostalgic even though I've never experienced a period like that...

but there was a bit of Sylvia Plath's presence, of the beat generation, of the intoxicating smell of writing and experimentation. It's a sad book, which is why I think I felt the nostalgia; it's like something I valued had been torn away from me and I was now feeling its absence. However, it did

inspire all of us in the Adrar to read Eliot and have our own brousse wine/poetry reading night. (I need to practice my recitation skills because following Audrey's reading of The Jabberwocky and Emily Dickinson is pretty humbling).



This book may seem a bit kitsch to some because it does use some romanticized images of the 1950s and 60s, but I really cared about the lives of the protagonists, which, to me, is a sign of a good writer. I don't know much about Martha Cooley save that she's a young New Yorker and that this is her first book. But she is obviously a lover of literature and she seems to be concerned about the political and intellectual apathy plaguing today's America.

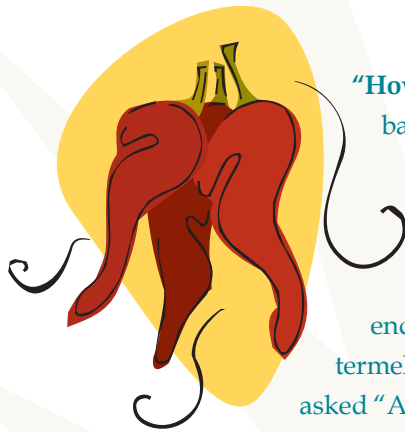
I thought it was well-written and well-researched. As someone who doesn't

normally appreciate poetry, I finished wanting to read T.S. Eliot's!

Librarian's note: The last time I saw the book, it was still in the Adrar but it could have migrated to some other region by now.

Dana Eats...????

By: Dana Weymouth



"How's that new Mexican restaurant?" Ben Richey said it best, "I could live in the bathroom it's so nice!" With a mouth full of chips and salsa, Marc Valentin nodded in agreement while mumbling "Mas chips por favor!" So how does it work at the Fiesta restaurant? Well the party is happening on Friday nights - Buffet style-. You get a starter, maybe tortilla soup or chili, and a choice between enchiladas and some other freshly prepared Mexican dish. The feast finally ends with a surprise dessert; ice cream? Watermelon? Maybe a little chocolate cake? When asked "Andak Margaritas?" The owner chuckled, shook his head and said, "No tengo alcohol."

So is shelling out 2000 ougiya for a meal when you can get 4 chwarmas at the same price worth it? I asked this question to Erin Ellingson, but before she could answer she ran out of the room saying, "I gotta poop!" Overall, I think everyone should try it once. Even if it gives you the runs. Highlights of the restaurant are the bed and breakfast (if you have a senior or seniorita to bunk with), a nice bathroom with a shower, and plenty of Mexican music filling the room with melodious ieee yah iee yah's.



Amelioration

Madge's Fashion Corner

By Margaret Ambrosino

Tired of wearing third-generation hand-me-downs from an ex-volunteer who left seven years ago? Did your host sister fashion your best foulard into a baby diaper? Or are you just tired of your brought-from-the-states-and-wearing-thin garb? It is time for some new clothes. There are no rules or limits to the creativity (or oddity) of things our HCN friends come up with. However, here are some basic guidelines for fashioning yourselves up in what you consider a tasteful way.

First off consider your needs: do you need an outfit for work or for a formal social event, (weddings, baptêmes, etc.)? If you are tight on funds, can that outfit double as both? As you put it together visually, plan on approaching the tailor with the following: (in order of reliability)

1. **Copy your existing clothes.** Most of you can stop right here as this meets most needs. Using your favorite western (or other) styles as models generally ensures optimal fit and functionality. Most tailors can get it right and is your best bet when testing out a new tailor or working with expensive fabric.
2. **Copy from a picture.** In surveying past volunteers, this seems to be the next most popular method as the tailor generally can see how the outfit is supposed to look on a model. If you don't have a clothing catalog, your tailor might. At the very least (s)he will have a photo portfolio, but since this usually consists of African styles and fancy embroidery, be prepared.
3. **Design from scratch.** Draw it out or find someone to draw it for you in as much detail as possible, front, sides and back. Write any applicable notes with arrows if necessary. This is useful for the tailor because (s)he can then just jot down your name and measurements right on the paper. However, as you're relying on a sketch and verbal description, allow room for errors and time for adjustments.

After design comes fabric. Solid colors in bazen or hiyatt 100% cotton fabric make for excellent western clothes, but you should never be afraid to experiment. Ask your friends in your village or regional capital to guide you to a good tailor and give advice on prices.

Bonne chance!

Tiramisu

Difficult Ingredients:

- *Ladyfingers.* You can probably find them in regional capitols. Substitute crushed camel biscuits as a last resort.
- *Chocolate.* Nestle's Quik or packets of hot cocoa mix are ideal.

Directions for *Brousse Cheese*:

- Rig up a double boiler by putting 2 or 3 inches of water in one pot, then put another pot on top of it
- On low to medium heat, cook 4 cans condensed milk with one tbsp of vinegar for each can for 30 minutes or so, stirring occasionally
- Add a little sugar to taste. A little almond or vanilla extract doesn't hurt
- Pour milk into a cloth (bandanas, or something of that texture pulled out of the giveaway pile works well). Tie it up, and hang it on your clothesline for a few hours, until firm.
- Mixing in a little milk, cream, or even cilia and water at this point makes it smoother and creamier, but isn't necessary

Directions for *Tirmasu* :

- Put a layer of ladyfingers down
- Pour very concentrated Nescafe over it
- Spread 2 cans worth of cheese on
- Repeat Nescafe and cheese on
- Pour thick chocolte sauce over it
- Repeat
- Chill if possible



Closing

Words of Wisdom

By Miranda Dodd

On my last vacation I was talking with some tourist and it came up that I had been in Mauritania for the last four years now this guy had never actually been to the RIM but judging from what he'd seen on Mali he responded with surprise saying, "I wouldn't do that for love nor money" I laughed "neither would I" I thought it was pretty clever but he didn't get it. I had to explain that as a volunteer I don't get paid and I am one of a very few extendees who hasn't gotten married. Honestly I have left no broken hearts (well maybe that but through no fault of my own) neither in my site or anywhere else in RIM. There it is no love, no money and people keep saying I should stay longer! Fat Chance.

As a long time volunteer, I have been asked to provide some parting words of wisdom. The wisdom of the words by someone who voluntarily spent four years here may be debatable. I was recently reminded they don't give that to criminals. However on short notice I will endeavor to recall enough English to offer some advice.

- Learn to speak local language very well but be judicious when deciding when to reveal this knowledge. It is a great weapon in bargaining and taxi brousse.
- Don't travel by taxi brousse when you can bum a ride from an ONG or random car owner. This proves cultural integration (it's also *way* more comfortable).
- Learn to prepare tea. You never know when you will be called upon to serve it. Possibly to tourists while on vacation in another country.
- Lie. About everything.
- Procrastinate. If God wants you to accomplish something, it will get done.
- Always factor in the tiredness.
- Don't do anything your Mauritanian counterparts wouldn't do... or you'll never get that 25% contribution
- Be mean. They like it. and it's the only way get anything done.
- The squeaky wheel doesn't always get the grease, but one that doesn't squeak never does.

So this is goodbye, I mean it I really am leaving this time, honestly in September, I think....

tea caisses per day	camel biscuits per week	pairs undies per month
3	1	19
0	0	30
6	3	25
0	7	30
0	0	28
3	0	15
3	1	28
6	4	26
9	2	30
3	4	0
6	2	7
6	1	30
0	0	30
1.5	0	30
3	1	10
3	0	28
3	1	0
5	4	0
1	3	28
9	0	30
3	0	7
6	3	0
3	1	19
6	1	0
3	2	5

Some Humor Courtesy of Ben Richey:

91.5 41 455

