

VOLUNTEERS TOO CONCERNED WITH FINANCIAL WELL-BEING TO COMPLETE ALLOWANCE SURVEYS, EAT, BATHE

# NOUAKCHOTT NOTES

MAURITANIA'S  
ONLY RELIABLE  
NEWSPAPER

PEACE CORPS RIM | NOVEMBER 2007

# VOLUNTEERS TO BE REPLACED BY ROBOTS!

**INSIDE!!**  
**SEX ED TIPS**  
**FOR YOUR**  
**LOCAL MADRASSA**

**KATZ CONTRACTS  
SCABIES!  
RETHINKS LIVING  
IN SQUALOR**



# NOUAKCHOTT NOTES



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ENABLER **JOHN LANGDON**

SPONSOR **ERIN RIESLAND**

13TH STEP **AARON DIBNER-DUNLAP**

DAILY AFFIRMATION **CAREN RUBIN-BROWN**

Welcome to the latest issue of the Nouakchott Notes, now under new management. Come with us on a journey of discovery, in which we toe the company line whilst blowing your mind with new! dynamic! material!

That said, I just wanted to let people know that we are interested in increasing the number of future releases from the current industry standard of a mind-crippling two per year, to something in the realm of, well, more than that. In theory, this is a quarterly rag, but it could be so much more. This, of course, depends on your submissions.

Writing for the *Notes* is so easy, it's formulaic:

Mauritanian subject (sand, can kids, etc.) + Non sequitur (robots, lumberjacks, etc.) = Gold

As it is, half our non-staff material is coming from the Guidimakha. While there is no real problem with that, I think we would all agree that the official PC RIM newsletter should represent more than the Southern experience. Adrar, Tagant, Gorgol, Hodh el Gharbi, et al., I'm looking in your directions. Frankly, we all know you're not even up to that much.

Potential additions to the Notes include a correspondence section, in which you can voice just about anything you feel print-worthy, and o-bits, where we lament the slow deaths of our idealism and pet cats. Writing opportunities, short and long, abound.

So send us your words. Handwrite it and send it by shuttle. Tape it to a camel. Email it to [NouakchottNotes@gmail.com](mailto:NouakchottNotes@gmail.com). The future of the world depends on you.

Until then,

John L.

OBIE SHAW, CD

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES



## HELLO ALL

I would like to first take a moment to congratulate all of the recently COS'd volunteers for the fantastic job they did during their two (and three) years of service in Mauritania! Also many thanks to the PST team for doing a stellar job! And finally, a hearty welcome to all of the new Volunteers! I hope you are all getting settled and starting to get comfortable in your new communities.

**OBITUARY:** I am very sorry to announce the passing of Peace Corps Senegal's Safety and Security Coordinator, Lamine N'Dongo. He died in an automobile accident during the Columbus Day weekend while conducting site visits. In the words of Peace Corps Senegal Country Director, Christopher Hedrick, "A veteran of the Senegalese police force, Lamine N'Dongo was a brave man, completely dedicated to the safety of Peace Corps Volunteers. He gave long hours tirelessly to this effort, on call day and night. He was an exemplar of what we value most in host-country staff. He is survived by his wife and children and he will be missed terribly by us all." Lamine N'Dongo was a close colleague and friend of our SSC, Maciré, and had also worked to ensure the safety and security of Peace Corps Mauritania Volunteers visiting Senegal over the years. I know that you all join me in expressing our sincerest condolences to Lamine's family and the volunteers and staff of Peace Corps Senegal.

**NEW STAFF AND OFFICE UPDATES:** I am very pleased to welcome Soukeina Allaf to the Peace Corps Team as the new APCD for SED and ICT. A Mauritanian citizen, Soukeina comes to us with a wealth of experience in the private sector. She holds an MBA from HEC-Brussels and has studied in France

and Tunisia. In other news, I am pleased to announce that Aminetou Mint Baba has been promoted to a newly created position, Financial Management Assistant. In addition to her current responsibilities as the voucher examiner and travel coordinator (for "official" travel only) she will take on additional responsibilities as advisor to the Admin Officer and as the back-up cashier for Peace Corps. Finally, I continue to work with Peace Corps Washington on the recruitment of a Program and Training Officer.

**END OF FISCAL YEAR NEWS:** Mauritania's Early Termination rate (ET Rate) was officially 4.4% for Fiscal Year 2007! Congratulations to all. This is the second lowest rate in the last six years. Many thanks go to the Admin Unit for another outstanding end-of-year closing of the books.

**LIVING ALLOWANCE UPDATE:** The good news is that PCV living allowances will not be cut this year. The return rate for the living allowance surveys was 41% (35 of 85). The return rate for Urban PCVs was 18% (2 of 11); Semi-Urban 50% (21/42); and Rural 38%. If we had used the surveys that had been turned in, both Rural and Semi-Urban stipends would have been reduced by a small amount and Urban would have increased by a marginal amount. Since we required an 80% re-

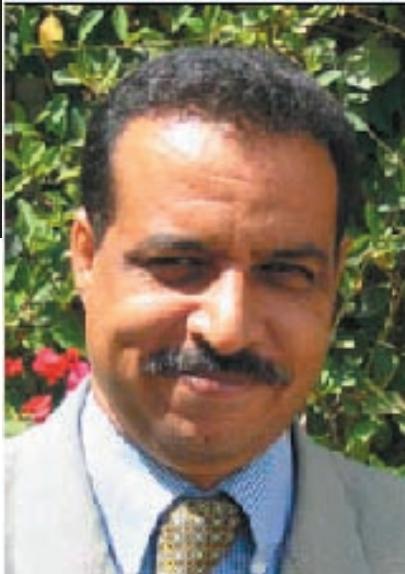
turn rate on these surveys, there will be no change to volunteer stipends in fiscal year 2008 (Oct '07 to Sep '08).

**VAC MEETING PREP:** A Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) meeting will take place in late December. I will contact the RC's directly to set the date. Volunteers should pass along any concerns or suggestions to their Regional Coordinator to bring up at this bi-annual meeting.

**CD TRAVEL:** I am currently on home leave in the U.S. and will be returning to Nouakchott on November 13<sup>th</sup>. I will have access to my office eMail account while I travel, so please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of assistance. I will be visiting PCV sites in North Brakna, Assaba, Tagant, and the two Hodhs November 14 to 20 (the only site in these regions that will not be visited is Kankossa; I will visit you when I travel to Guidimakha). I will also be visiting sites in the regions of Inchiri and Adrar December 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>.

**ETR DATES:** The date for the Early Term Reconnect has been set for January 3, 2008 in Nouakchott. All first-year PCVs should plan on attending this workshop. Each sector will attend additional sector specific trainings following the one-day ETR.

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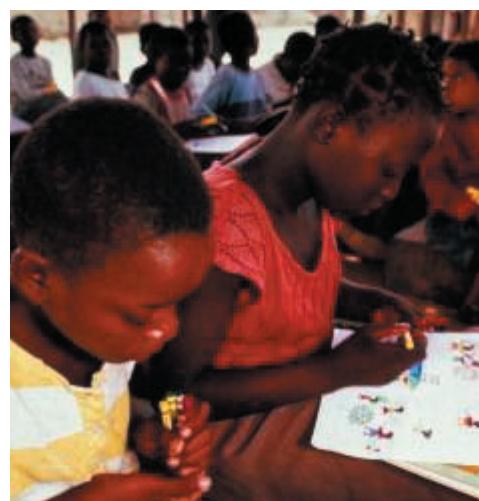
# ED NOTES

M. ABDELLAHMANE O. BAGGA, APCD/EDUCATION

## HELLO ALL AND WELCOME TO THE ED NOTES OF THIS NEW NN ISSUE!

First of all, I wish to congratulate you all on a new school year start. Yes, we know, it has been a slow and timid one with Ramadan overlapping and the usual difficulties we experience with an ever-changing schedule, or even one that is still in the making. I'd like to make a special mention and draw a hat – or waive a turban – in recognition of the newbies' unfailing positive spirits and efforts to have their classes on the roll despite those first difficult days of school. I am sure you praised your first few motivated students for their attendance. It means a lot to have school kick off, even with just a few!

**ENGLISH CAMP:** Rob, Nick, Patrick, Thad, and Victoria organized the first English camp ever for PC RIM over the summer. This summer camp took place in Boghe (September 1–3) and Aleg (September 4–6). The event, which was organized with the support of the town mayors and the HCN teachers, was a success and a reward to everyone's efforts. The education PCVs involved and their counterparts would like to organize a camp some time over a weekend in November in Kaedi. They also encourage other PCVs in other regions to seriously explore the potential of organizing camps at their sites. In fact, Rob Bryant has developed in writing some of the findings/best practices of this project in a very informative idea booklet entitled: *Peace Corps/RIM Regional English Camps 2007: Motivating English Students Through Cultural Awareness*. As the booklet clearly states, the goal of the English camp is a two-fold one. First, to have students develop a working knowledge and understanding of the English speaking world's cultures, and second, to build their communicative skills in English, with a view to boost their interest and motivation in learning this foreign language.



**THE LPTW 4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION:** I am still working on finalizing the 4th Edition of the LPTW. The bulk of this edition is made from the last one, with a few edits and a good number of new supplements and materials. I'd like to praise PCVs Farrell and Petersen for their initiative and thank all of those who contributed to the current compilation. I'd like to especially thank our new NKC based CDS. I've named PCV Angela Coffee for her time and effort, who has seconded me in proofreading the 200 page document. We hope to have this new version out by ETR/IST in '08, or at least make an on-line version available.

That's all from ED for now!

## CHALK CHAT

WITH BAHENA OULD MOUSTAPHA  
PTA/ED

### INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO CLASSES BY CLARE LAVERY:

The first lesson and subsequent lessons will be crucial in establishing the atmosphere in your classes and your students' attitude towards you. Here are ten useful tips for helping you to get to know your students better and get off to a good start.

- Enlist the help of teachers: Will the teacher introduce you? Will you have your own slot of time to talk to the class? What would the teacher like you to do?
- Confirm guidelines with teachers: Rules for rowdy behavior, leaving the room to go to the bathroom, etc. Will the teacher deal with bad behavior if you are both in the room together?
- Voice your worries, no matter how small.
- Keep in mind the old adage "first impressions count" and apply this to your first classes.

## CHALK CHAT CONT

- Make your role clear: You are a member of the staff, not a member of the student body (no matter how close in age), so do not set out to be “mates” with them. Keep a friendly distance; keep personal details about boyfriends/girlfriends to yourself.

- Look professional: Do not totally change your style, but dress appropriately for the school culture, and respect the staff dress code. Students need to perceive you as a teacher.

- Sound professional: Be careful about your voice (clear and calm) and posture. Students need to feel you are in control or they will take control.

- Assert yourself: Establish rules from the start and make them clear. No more than 5 will do. For example: Do not start the lesson or explain activities if students are talking. Always expect silence before you speak. Have signals for getting attention (clapping hands twice) or for students to speak (putting up hands).

- Be organized: Plan, plan and plan again! If you will be alone with groups decide how you will introduce yourself and plan a task to get to know students. What will you write on the board? How long will the activity last? What will you do if they get too noisy?

- Be positive: Smile, even if you are feeling a nervous wreck. Concentrate on giving students positive attention with encouraging smiles and praise for answering questions.

- Show real interest: Listen to their answers and react: “That’s a good answer,” “I like them too. Have you got their latest CD?” Keep your response as natural as possible.

- Make an effort to learn and use their names: Make name tags, cardboard name plates for desks or mark names on a seating plan of the room.

- Be patient: You may be the first native speaker they have ever met. Give them time to ask you questions and give them time to get used to your voice:

- Have fun: Try to relax and enjoy yourself. A sense of humor helps too!

# WORLD WISE SCHOOLS

## NEW MATCH STATUS REPORT FOR MAURITANIA

PCV	TEACHER	SCHOOL	EMAIL
RITESHWAR NATH	NATALIE FEINBERG	SHAFTER HS, CA	NATALIE_FEINBERG@KHSD.K12.CA
HEATHER WYLIE	BRANDY WELLS	DEAL JUNIOR HS, DC	BRANDYWELLSB@AOL.COM
ELEANOR ANDREWS	REBECCA BADER	MADISON PRIMARY SCHOOL, VA	MSREBECCABADER@AOL.COM
ALISON BLANK	CATIE HUGUENARD	HENDERSON ELEMENTARY, CO	CATIE1HUG@HOTMAIL.COM
ROBERT BRYANT	JAN NIXON	LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HS, AR	NO EMAIL
DONNA LENIUS	NANCY LOVE LOPEZ	PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL, VA	LOPEZNL@PWCS.EDU

# GET YOUR SEEDS!

I hope you all are doing well and that the new volunteers are settling in fine and Ramadan was an opportunity for you to be more integrated in your respective communities!

I would like to let you know that the following tree seeds are available:

- **MORINGA** (1 kg)
- **NEEM** (about ¼ kg)
- **MARIGOLD** (1/2 kg)
- **PARKINSONIA** (about 1/4 kg)
- **ACACIA MELLIFERA** for live fence (about 1/4 kg)
- **ZIZIPHUS MAURITIANA** (1/2 kg)
- **ACACIA NILOTICA** (2kg)
- **PARKINSONIA** (about 1/4 kg)
- **PIGEON PEA** (about 1/4 kg)

I would also like to ask you all to collect any tree seeds you have in your site (add date, place, and species name), and then send them to me through the shuttle, or any other means.

The tree sacks are available, so just ask me if need be.

Thanks a lot!

**-KANE OUMAR**



# AGFO NOTES

MOHAMEDOU AW, APCD/AGROFORESTRY

## HELLO AGAIN FROM THE AGFO/ EE EVERGREEN CORNER!

We are at the end of the rainy season. I hope that it was a wet season in your area and that you have planted many trees and a lot of beans, millet, etc. Overall it has been a very wet season this year with a lot of flooding throughout the country. The Hodh El Gharbi, Brakna, Gorgol and Guidimakha regions were hard hit with heavy rains and flash flooding, and the rising of the Senegal River destroyed homes, infrastructures, and fields and even caused some deaths. Let's hope that the Mauritanian expression that "*Water/flooding fixes more problems than it creates*" is true so that this heavy rain and flooding from the Senegal River creates great conditions for a productive agricultural season and a regeneration of natural vegetation and the survival of big and healthy trees.

As you all know, the new PCVs have been posted to their sites. Congratulations to all of you again for making it through PST and becoming PCVs. I have talked with every one of you already and I am glad to note that for the most part you all are doing great in integrating into your respective communities. These first few months at site are crucial for your service. It is one of the hardest parts of the service and at the same time an important one. It is during this time that you establish your base and your credibility, get comfortable in your site, and give your community a chance to know and trust you. There is one chance to make the first impression, so make it a very good one. It is during this time that you start knowing your community and how it is structured and its priorities. So take advantage of this moment. Spend as much time as possible with them and in their center of interest, whether it is in the fields, at the garden or the palm grove, or in the market, etc. This gives you better exposure to and a good interaction with your community members while they are doing what's important to them at that moment.

Good luck with your service and I have no doubt that you will be very successful and overachieving volunteers.

To the second year volunteers I say that you are entering a very important second half of your service. It should be easy and hard at the same time. You know your community very well by now; you have mastered the language, made friends, and have planned activities for your second year. You are better oriented on what you will and can do, you have established relationships both socially and professionally, and have a gazillion project ideas that you want to implement. Time passes so fast and before you realize it, the COS conference has come and you don't have time to implement all those ideas and projects before the end of your service. So please try to be focused and prioritize with your community what's most important and do it first. Good luck with the rest of your service. I am already impressed with your first year achievement.

Speaking of achievement, we are working on our "PSR." PSR stand for: Project Status Report. It is the annual report on the activities PC has conducted

to meet the goals and objectives in our respective project plans. We submit it to PC Washington and we also share it with our partners. This is a report mainly about the activities you have conducted, and the outcomes and impacts of these activities on the beneficiaries. Thank you very much for sending in your annual reports. Without them and your quarterly reports, it would be impossible for me to write these reports and share your accomplishments with PC Washington and the different stakeholders.

**POSTING FOLLOW-UP, VACATION AND DIFFERENT EVENTS:** Kane and I have worked out a plan for the next three months including posting follow-up visits, vacation, and the different events happening in January. Of course during our visits we will visit both first and second year volunteers. We will try as much as we can to stick to this schedule but if unavoidable changes happen we will let you know. We are looking forward to seeing you all at your sites.

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DOUDA DIALLO, APCD/HEALTH

# HEALTH NOTES



## GREETINGS FROM THE HEALTH CORNER!

I hope all of you have enjoyed Ramadan and Id el Fitr and that all new PCVs have found it very interesting. It might have been a good time to do some CHACA and observe some community practices since all activities were slow.

Congratulations to all new PCVs who have made it through PST and to site. The first few months will be hard, but they represent a very important part of your service. Do your Community Health Assessment for Community Action and do it well. It will be processed in the large group during IST in January. The information you will find out will help you throughout your two years of service. While doing your CHACA, keep in mind that your role as a volunteer is to encourage people to identify their changing needs as their circumstances change, and then work with them to address those needs. You will be a facilitator rather than a project implementer.

I would also like to congratulate our second year PCVs who are all working hard in numerous projects: Community latrines and sewing co-ops, fencing and well projects, health education and awareness raising, HIV/AIDS, bag projects, nutrition, Health Education in GMCs, reproductive health... Your work is immensely appreciated by the communities and Peace Corps.

As I have already said in my previous email to you all, I would like to remind first year PCVs to start talking to their counterparts about the upcoming IST. By the way, send your needs if you can already think of any technical issues you would like to see addressed during this training event. The sooner the better!

For those of you who would like to change counterparts or just pick up a new one, think of someone who really

wants to work with Americans, preferably a colleague who is ready to learn from Americans, who is ready to share Mauritania, someone who can become a middle person between the PCV and other community members, who will be ready to give professional and cultural feedback, someone who will help the volunteer adjust to the community's lifestyle and learn the community's language, someone who is ready to do it on daily basis ... this "counterpart" is for you!

Please go to your supervisors (DRPS or Medecin chef) if you need someone to:

- help you mobilize local resources in support of your activities through other agencies and within the local community;
- help to implement future projects;
- approve your leave by signing an "Absence From Post" form (this will not happen during your first three months of service).

I wish all good luck in your daily efforts.

## MEDICAL MINUTES WITH SARAH NELSON

The medical unit has undergone a few changes in the past month; Amel has started working in the mornings only and we are in the process of hiring another PCMO who will work afternoons, Monday through Thursday. These changes have gone smoothly and we hope to be up to full staffing in November. We appreciate your patience and consideration during these changes and hope to have the official process completed in the next few weeks. Just in time for site visits!

For the ladies under 27 years of age: the HPV vaccine has been requested from Peace Corps Washington and we hope to be able to start offering the vaccine to those who wish to receive it (it is totally optional) at the end of the year. Please see the

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# HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (H.P.V.) VACCINE

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

### 1. What is H.P.V.?

Genital human papillomavirus (H.P.V.) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States.

There are about 40 types of H.P.V. About 20 million people in the U.S. are infected, and about 6.2 million more get infected each year. H.P.V. is spread through sexual contact.

Most H.P.V. infections don't cause any symptoms, and go away on their own. But H.P.V. is important mainly because it can cause cervical cancer in women. Every year in the U.S. about 10,000 women get cervical cancer and 3,700 die from it. It is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women around the world.

H.P.V. is also associated with several less common types of cancer in both men and women. It can also cause genital warts and warts in the upper respiratory tract.

More than 50 percent of sexually active men and women are infected with H.P.V. at sometime in their lives.

There is no treatment for H.P.V. infection, but the conditions it causes can be treated.

### 2. Why get vaccinated?

The H.P.V. vaccine is an inactivated (not live) vaccine which protects against 4 major types of H.P.V.

These include 2 types that cause about 70 percent of cervical cancer and 2 types that cause about 90 percent of genital warts. The H.P.V. vaccine can prevent most genital warts and most cases of cervical cancer.

Protection from the H.P.V. vaccine is expected to be long-lasting. But vaccinated women still need cervical cancer screening because the vaccine does not protect against all H.P.V. types that cause cervical cancer.

### 3. Who should get the H.P.V. vaccine and when?

**Routine Vaccination:** the H.P.V. vaccine is routinely recommended for girls 11 and 12 years of age. Doctors may give it to girls as young as 9 years.

Why is the H.P.V. vaccine given to girls at this age?

It is important for girls to get H.P.V. vaccine before their first sexual contact – because they have not been exposed to H.P.V. For these girls, the vaccine can prevent almost 100 percent of disease caused by the 4 types of H.P.V. targeted by the vaccine.

However, if a girl or woman is already infected with a type of H.P.V., the vaccine will not prevent disease from that type.

**Catch-Up Vaccination:** the vaccine is also recommended for girls and women 13 through 26 years of age who did not receive it when they were younger.

The HPV vaccine is given as a 3-dose series:

**1st Dose:** Now

**2nd Dose:** 2 months after Dose 1

**3rd Dose:** 6 months after Dose 1

Additional (booster) doses are not recommended.

The H.P.V. vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

### 4. Some girls or women should not get H.P.V. vaccine or should wait.

Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to yeast, to any other component of the H.P.V. vaccine, or to a previous dose of the H.P.V. vaccine should not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if the person getting the vaccine has any severe allergies.

Pregnant women should not get the vaccine. The vaccine appears to be safe for both the mother and the unborn baby, but it is still being studied. Receiving the H.P.V. vaccine when pregnant is not a reason to consider terminating the pregnancy. Women who are breast feeding may safely get the vaccine.

Any woman who learns that she was pregnant when she got H.P.V. vaccine is encouraged to call the H.P.V. vaccine in pregnancy registry at 800-986-8999. Information from this registry will help us learn how pregnant women respond to the vaccine.

People who are mildly ill when the shot is scheduled can still get H.P.V. vaccine. People with moderate or severe illnesses should wait until they recover.

### 5. What are the risks from the H.P.V. vaccine?

The H.P.V. vaccine does not appear to cause any serious side effects.

*Continued on page 15*

# PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS TO BE AUTOMATED!

**BY NICK GROESZ** Recently, Peace Corps Washington unveiled its Volunteer Automation Program (VAP). Under this bold new initiative, all Peace Corps volunteers will be replaced by robots. Human volunteers will be completely phased out by the year 2012. According to a press release from Washington robot volunteers will be “up to twice as effective at implementing the three goals of Peace Corps [as compared to humans].” Additionally, they will not require nearly the same amount of resources currently needed to maintain the health and security of human volunteers.

## PREDICTS HUMAN VOLUNTEERS WILL BE OBSOLETE BY 2012

Dr. Feinstein is a lead scientist at DynaCorp, the company Peace Corps has contracted to develop the robot volunteers. “One major feature of these automatons is their ability to download and instantly learn how to speak a new language,” he says. “This should drastically reduce training time.”

When asked about the impact of the VAP for Mauritania, Country Director Obie Shaw responded, “The interior of Mauritania can be difficult to live in. Robots will be able to adapt to the vagaries of village life much quicker than humans.” On their website DynaCorp claims that their PeaceBot requires little maintenance and isn’t nearly as troubled by unsanitary conditions as a human would tend to be. “Also,” chimes in Shaw, “they are powered by hydrogen fuel-cells so there should be no more problems with volunteers getting crumbs in the bureau carpet.”

Not everyone is thrilled by the new initiative. “Have you ever seen RoboCop? What happens when one of these

things goes berserk?” demands an RPCV who wishes to remain anonymous. “The robots look genial and professional but they have a gripping strength of 300 psi. When one of these things short-circuits and starts killing everyone... that sort of incident will reflect poorly on America.”

DynaCorp asserts that their robot’s powerful hydraulics are necessary for working in agriculture and other labor-intensive fields. Company representatives insist that their robots are completely fail-safe. Claims one representative, “During our testing phase, we forced one robot to drink 15 glasses of tea then subjected it to the sounds of goat and donkey mating for eight hours straight. The robot just kept nodding politely. Every single human that we have tried that on simply cracked.”

Already PeaceBots are serving in several pilot countries including Poland and Togo. Administrative personnel are expected to remain human for some time. “We would love to fully automate



Peace Corps,” enthuses a Peace Corps Washington staffer. “Unfortunately, we will have to wait for significant strides in artificial intelligence before we can replace all staff.”

For now Peace Corps is content to replace the volunteers in the field. Feinstein claims that the technology behind PeaceBot is actually quite simple. “The average volunteer needs only to eat food, pretend to understand what host country nationals are saying, and babble nonsensically about community development,” Feinstein explains. “That kind of intelligence isn’t beyond the Commodore 64 I had back in 1985.”

When confronted with the apocalyptic vision of hundreds of robot volunteers going haywire and laying waste to their host country, Feinstein is dismissive. “That sort of thing occurs all the time in popular fiction but has no basis in reality,” he says. “Science has created a completely safe PeaceBot.”

**BY CAREN RUBIN-BROWN**

We have all had experience with children in this country. If you live with a family, they are infinite. If you live alone (lucky you), you run into them on the street. They are everywhere. They are a constant barrage of curiosity and cunning, bombarding into your private space with scrappy jabs at your character and intellect. They invade your mind with little effort. Just recall walking up the street in Kaedi during stage and hearing “Tubab! Tubab!” and how your blood boiled when those little punks would chant and chant and chant and chant TUBAB... it’s enough to drive one mad. You’ve probably thought of ways to get back at those little bastards. Maybe, you’ve thought about squeezing them to near death or smashing a bottle over their head. At times we snap. Everyone does, it’s only natural. But I challenge you to see it from their perspective. We have to see it on the other side.

## **CAREN CHANNELS WHITNEY HOUSTON; BELIEVES CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE**



Imagine yourself, being young in Mauritania. Say, 7 years old. The novelty of youth has worn away with the coming of several new younger brothers or sisters. You’re no longer cute in the way to cuddle and not yet an adult. You take orders, run errands, work and go to school. If you’re female, you cook, you clean, and babysit. No one gives you hugs or shows you affection because you’re too old to be kissed. But no one treats you with respect (though they bark orders at you constantly) because you’re not an adult. You feel riddled with burden. There are no outlets for you. You can’t go to the park and play on the swings, no morning Cocoa Puffs or

Saturday morning cartoons, no toys or mindless wandering. You’re trapped between being just young enough to not get respected and just old enough to do everything the grown folks do. You escape your compound in hopes of finding fun and stimulation before you must return in the evenings where, inevitably, somebody will throw a shoe, rock or stick to get your attention to do some damn chore like returning the shoe thrown at your head to whoever threw it. Then, when you think all traces of childhood are lost forever, you meander down the road only to find somebody who doesn’t fit into the scheme of things. A foreigner. They are ignorant to cultural norms and practices. They don’t treat you with disrespect or contempt. They smile and say hello, give you candy and even are slightly afraid of all your inquisitions. They are flighty and panicky. And they are afraid of you. It is like a diamond in the rough. You have finally discovered someone on whom to take out your frustrations. Your mother threw a rock at your head this morning to wake you up, so this fucking tubab is going to get a slingshot in the back for it. You expect no retaliation, no rebuttals, just frantic scrambling to escape your barrage of insults and attacks. You now have power beyond what you’ve ever had in

your 7 years of living. Someone who respects you! A novelty. Extortion is imminent. You develop schemes of extortion and torture next time you see this tubab fuck who is responsible for that knot on your head. You must, it is your duty. The only thing that life hasn’t sucked out of your being. The novelty of being a kid floods your soul and suddenly you become creative in ways to gain more respect. You do it in the same manner your parents do. You throw rocks, insult, attack showing no signs of weakness even when you think you’ve pushed the envelope too far—

**“THEY ARE FLIGHTY AND PANICKY. AND THEY ARE AFRAID OF YOU... YOU HAVE FINALLY DISCOVERED SOMEONE ON WHOM TO TAKE OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS.”**

even when the tubab turns and yells at you in some funky white man talk that you don’t care to understand. Even when they complain to other adults, the adults say, “They’re just kids!” Perfect! You are just a kid having finally gained a place in this world. You have respect; you have someone on which to take out your frustrations. Now those chores

*Continued on page 18*

# **WE HAVE WHORES. BRIEFLY, WE HAD COKE. WELCOME TO NOUADHIBOU.**



Around 9:00 pm on May 1<sup>st</sup>, air traffic control at Nouadhibou International Airport (“We’d serve you if our planes weren’t impounded in France”) cleared a small plane for an emergency landing on their airstrip. Claiming technical difficulties, the craft taxied to and remained in an obscure corner of the property, while crew unloaded 21 cases of cocaine onto the tarmac.

To reporters’ questions regarding the rare excitement provided by high crime in an otherwise uninterrupted daily stream of tea-soaked silence and tranquility, security personnel responded, “We have no idea, we were completely, entirely, and purely coincidentally, absent from the airport that night.”

In fact, very few airport staff were present, and most of those who were there failed to regard the incident as circumstances warranting special attention. “We primarily serve Air Mauritania. One emergency landing per week is a good week,” claimed one staff member. It took the concerned vigilance of “do-gooder” Sidi “Walt” Mohammed wul Mohammed, janitor, to notify emergency personnel. Air traffic control, when informed of their coworker’s heroism, stated simply, “That guy’s a prick.”

After approximately 30 minutes, firefighters arrived to administer aid to the patiently waiting aircraft. The crew, in a noble show of appreciation, promptly took off, leaving the first responders with 21 boxes containing, in total, 629 kilograms of cocaine. For the uninformed, that’s the max load capac-

## **NDB DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM: “VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS, NOUADHIBOU IS FOR BLOW” BY JOHN LANGDON**

ity of a small–medium sized elevator, roughly 5,535 quarter pounders with cheese, or four morbidly obese adults. Upon arrival, authorities, naturally, had no idea what was going on.

“I literally thought it was miracle snow,” said Cheik Sidi Mohammed, one of the first firefighters on the scene.

According to reports from bystanders, authorities did not realize that they had stumbled upon a veritable mountain of cocaine until they noticed a group of can kids indiscriminately eat and inhale fistfuls of the substance, set up a DJ booth, and begin dancing like assholes to house music. When reached for comment, one hapless child stated, “Donnezmoivingdonnezmoivingdonnez...,” before reeling into the darkness.

A criminal investigation began immediately.

The plane was discovered days later, abandoned in the desert about 145 kilometers from Nouadhibou. In the following weeks, authorities arrested two French people, one Moroccan, two Mauritians, and 63 can children suspected of having some involvement in the case. The Mauritanian INTERPOL representative was also arrested in Nouakchott. Further investigation led to a manhunt for Sidi Mohammed wul Heidellah, son of the former president, after a cursory search of his home turned up a large, undisclosed amount of cash in Euros, approximately 48 portable phones, and a computer with incriminating information, as well as three cases of McDonald’s straws and a Mötley Crüe t-shirt. He was eventually arrested in Morocco with 18 kilograms of cocaine.

*Continued on page 15*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRE-SERVICE TRAINING UPDATE

We completed PST with a great success. All the PCTs (oops! I meant ex-PCTs) who completed PST reached the required level – intermediate-mid – in language and were sworn-in as PCVs. And guess what: we had four advanced levels in the group. The common comment among the coordinators was that the group was positive. Unfortunately, we had six ETs, among the 72 PCTs who arrived, before the end of stage.

The training team is already getting ready for the next PST. However, the main question is: Where will it be? I'm sure you have all heard of the "Olympic" bid style of competition" proposed by Obie to the Trarza, Brakna and Gorgol regions' PCVRCs. We are looking forward to your proposals. A decision needs to be made by the end of December. So, go, go, go!

**PCV SITE VISITS/SOME KEY DATES:** During the trips to PCV sites, the Training Director (TD) and the Language Coordinator (LC) will meet the volunteers and their counterparts and hopefully gather a rich collection of feedback, suggestions, ideas, and input. We made sure the PCV site visits occur before the next ETR. This way, we are better prepared to discuss and give suggestions for your concerns at the ETR.

The following dates might be subject to slight changes:

EVENT	STAFF	DATE	PLACE
PCV SITE VISIT & CENTER SEARCH	TD	NOVEMBER 7-15, 2007	TRARZA, BRAKNA S., GORGOL & CENTER SEARCH
PCV SITE VISITS	TD	NOVEMBER 19-23, 2007	BRAKNA NORTH & TAGANT
PCV SITE VISITS	LC	NOVEMBER 19-27, 2007	ASSABA & BOTH HODHS
PCV SITE VISITS	LC	DECEMBER 4-6, 2007	NDB
PCV SITE VISITS	LC	DECEMBER 10-14, 2007	INCHIRI-ADRAR
PCV SITE VISITS	TD	DECEMBER 11-14, 2007	GUIDIMAKHA
ETR08	APCDS & TD, LC	JAN. 3, 2008	NOUAKCHOTT
ED/SED/AGFO/EE ISTS	APCDS & TD, LC	JAN. 4-7, 2008	NOUAKCHOTT
S&S IST	S&S COORD.	FEBRUARY 1-4, 2008	NOUAKCHOTT
MTR	TD/LC & APCDS	AUGUST 7, 2008	NOUAKCHOTT

### KEY DATES FOR PST '08:

- Trainees arrival : June 21, 2008
- Departure to center : June 22, 2008
- Departure to CBT sites : June 27, 2008
- Site Announcements : July 22, 2008
- Site Visit : July 23 to 29, 2008
- Swearing-in : August 28, 2008

## IRC:

I would like to announce that 4 new interest books have arrived in the IRC that will help volunteers prepare for the most common standardized tests for graduate school admission in the United States.

They are:

*Kaplan GRE (Graduate Record Examination), Exam 2008 Premier Program* (2 copies)

*Barron's GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test), 2007–2008* (1 copy)

*Barron's LSAT (Law School Admission Test) 2007–2008 with CD-ROM* (1 copy)

**— MADOU,** IRC Manager

## "DONNE-MOI UN CADEAU!"

### BY KRIS WEBB,

PCPP Coordinator

You too can use this extremely popular and ancient African phrase. I kid you not, it's not limited just to local kids and the occasional grown woman anymore. "How?" you ask. "I love that phrase but I never get to use it," you say. "Tell my more!" you plead. Without further ado, I am pleased to announce that the **Mauritania Fund** is currently up and operational. Now any and every PC RIM volunteer can ask for money from ANYONE, ANYWHERE, at dinner time, ANYTIME! We have always had a small contingent of folks in the RIM working with the **Peace Corps Partnership Program** to get much needed

Continued on next page

# SAFETY AND SECURITY

DEAR VOLUNTEERS, This is a brief reminder about certain security measures that you should consider. The end of the year in Mauritania is a period where a lot of events take place, such as Ramadan, Id El Fitr, Christmas, Id El Adha, and the Mauritanian Independence Day. All these events increase the crime rate. Therefore, we would like you to be vigilant and recommend that you consider the following recommendations:

1. Always lock your doors and windows even if you go out for 10 minutes only
2. Never have a lot of money on you. Keep your money in your bank account and do not withdraw more than what is needed
3. Make sure there are good iron bars on the windows and good locks on the doors
4. Always take your keys with you and make sure you do not lose them in your handbags or forget them somewhere
5. Never expose your money or allow anyone to come into the room where you keep your stuff
6. As it may be hot inside, you could sleep outside as the rest of your community members, but we recommend that you should lock the door even if you decide to sleep inside
7. Travel only in the morning, and during your trip; make sure you get off the car and check your luggage whenever the car stops to drop someone off
8. Be very selective as far as friends are concerned and think about your security and integration when making that selection
9. When you decide to travel, always write down the registration number for the car you are taking as well as its brand and color. These elements will help find the car in case of a problem
10. When you decide to travel, do not leave your valuable objects in your house/room (money, camera, jewels, etc.). Always tell your neighbors you're traveling and ask them to keep an eye on your house while you're away. Let the Police/Gendarmerie know about your trip and destination
11. Never walk around at night after 9 p.m. especially when you are alone. If you decide to do so, have someone reliable and that you know quite well to keep you company
12. Never take a car if you do not know the owner, unless a reliable person recommends it to you
13. Immediately report to PC and Police/Gendarmerie any incident that may occur. If you wait, the criminal will escape and it will be difficult for the Police to catch him. Never hesitate to call the Police and your Safety & Security Coordinator, even late at night. The Police are at work permanently and the Security Coordinator's phone is on 24h/day.

With these measures taken, we hope we can reduce the number of crimes. We are counting on your collaboration.

Good luck and happy end of year.

Safety & Security Coordinator,

**– MOHAMED CHEIKH MACIRÉ**



## MO' MONEY Con't

money to volunteers for small projects. But with the Mauritania Fund, you don't have to be one of those goody-two-shoes workaholic "I speak 5 local languages" volunteers to ask for money from family and friends. All you have to do is send people here: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/resources/donors/contribute/contribnow.cfm> or just follow the links for "donate to a special fund" from the peacecorps.gov website.

**Here's how it works:** Money is collected in the Mauritania Fund as a kind of slush fund for future use. When a volunteer applies for a PCPP project (and it gets approved), it qualifies for immediate funding out of the Mauritania Fund. The project is still posted on the peacecorps.gov website and the project is still responsible for raising all the money that it asked for. Once all the required funding for a project has been raised, it is removed from the peacecorps.gov website and the money is transferred back into the Mauritania Fund for the next person to use.

Remember this is a pilot program for the rest of Peace Corps; if we can't make this work then it dies with us. Does anyone want to be remembered as the class that killed the Mauritania Fund? I sure don't, so please remember this: EVEN THOUGH THE PROJECT GETS IMMEDIATELY FUNDED, ALL MONIES STILL NEED TO BE RAISED TO REIMBURSE THE MAURITANIA FUND.

If you are **definitely** planning a project, I would wait to ask for funding from family and friends until the project gets posted. This way you can make sure your project gets funded; any extra money collected will go straight into the Mauritania Fund.

I will be sending out updates pertaining to current project status. So if one of your sitemates is slacking on raising funds, you can give them the sharp kick in the ass they need to continue asking for money.

# ASK AMANDA

## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & QUESTIONABLE ANSWERS

**BY AMANDA OWENS**

I was cordially invited to submit an article to this esteemed journal by the editor himself. And while I was thrilled by the invitation, I must admit my mind drew a blank as to what I could possibly write. Luckily, in a previous issue of this illustrious publication an article was written to give our high-minded, if not fashion savvy volunteers advice on how to dress in ‘vogue,’ Mauritanian style. Rather than pick up that particular thread again (as I believe the response had given some sense of satisfaction to the readers and the writer), in the same envelope were additional questions from volunteers that were desperate for time-tested tricks of the trade for surviving in the R.I.M.



Rest assured, dear readers and questioners, I will give each and every question deep and careful consideration (these will not be responses off the top of my head, but probably stuff I have done myself). So we'll commence with a question from a volunteer in the South.\*

*Dear Amanda,*

*Recently I was asked to teach English to my friend's sister. There is not much else going on right now in town, so I figured why not. Nothing to teaching a kid English, I could do that in my sleep.*

*What my friend failed to mention was that her sister was not in high school, or a pimply 20-something, waiting to take the BAC. NOOOO!!!! Her sister was a pimply French professor at the University of Nouakchott! I thought she was 16—turns out she is 36.*

*I can only imagine all the things they have planned for a young and attractive guy like me (not that I am tooting my own horn or anything, but I know what those ladies say about me in the market. Some of it is actually really nice. That onion lady sure talks a lot. She be thinking that I don't know what she be saying. I passed that test in Pulaar. I know what's going on). I am not trying to get out of this cause of the professor's age, but 36 is a little old. Not that I would not have reservations about teaching private lessons to a 20 year old, it is the principle of the matter. If Mauritians could hear wedding bells I think the whole neighborhood would be able to hear them. How do I get out of this???????*

*Sincerely,*

*Tricked into Teaching*

*Continued on page 16*

**SAFETY & SECURITY REFRESHER WORKSHOP:** Please mark your calendars for an S&S Workshop to be held on Thursday, February 14, 2008. Attendance at this workshop is mandatory for all PCVs who wish to attend WAIST in Dakar. Attendance at this workshop is optional for PCVs not planning to travel to Dakar over the President's Day weekend (WAIST weekend).

**MEDICAL MINUTES Con't**

information below about the vaccine. All PCVs will receive the annual “flu” shot which we expect to give in November–December. We will contact you when the vaccines arrive so that when you are in NKT you can get them.

2007 Cookbooks will be sent to all the regional centers for you to use as needed. **Please copy** what you need and leave them for others. Remember if you need **resupplies on filters or medicines to call Ghallat** (769-9706 or 525-2448) or email her with a list and she will send them on the next shuttle. There are 110 volunteers and often cell phone connections are spotty so please give us your **full name** when calling so we are sure we have the right PCV! Many folks here have similar names and this will help us a lot!

Reminder: do not take any prescription medications without first consulting the PCMOs. Taking medication without authorization is ground for administrative separation and it is dangerous. We want to know and document if you are sick and we can only support you if you communicate with us. If you feel the need to take any prescription medicine **call the PCMO first to discuss it**.

Eat as well as you can, get adequate sleep, and give your body some exercise and relaxation so you can stay healthy and mentally intact! Be well!

## 'THOUSANDS OF CAN KIDS AWOKE AMONG TRAMPLED GOATS AND GLOW STICKS'



### DRUG BUST Con't

In an unprecedented show of bureaucratic celerity, the drugs were incinerated within days of their seizure, both prompting wild speculation among locals concerning the involvement of government and business higher-ups, and this author to question why it's going to take four goddamn months to have internet installed at the new NDB bureau. The contraband was burned, along with hundreds of old tires, in the deserted region of land between Nouadhibou and the southern neighborhood of Cansado, one kilometer upwind from the latter.

Residents, asked for comment on the opaque, black cloud enveloping their homes, responded by dying.

Societal fallout from the event has varied. Citizens continue to hypothesize on the nature and depth of a possible conspiracy. Sidi Mohammed wul Heidellah is to be extradited to Mauritania to face charges concerning his involvement. And, of course, there are the thousands of can kids, waking amongst fields of trampled, dead goats and glow sticks as the house beats fade into a distant, blurry memory.

### HPV Con't

However, a vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of any vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

Several mild problems may occur with the H.P.V. vaccine:

- Pain at the injection site (about 8 people in 10)
- Redness or swelling at the injection site (about 1 person in 4)
- Mild fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit) (about 1 person in 10)
- Itching at the injection site (about 1 person in 30)

- Moderate fever (102 degrees Fahrenheit) (about 1 person in 65)

These symptoms do not last long and go away on their own. Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it would be within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

Like all vaccines, H.P.V. vaccine will continue to be monitored for unusual or severe problems.

*COURTESY OF: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease*

### AGFO NOTES Con't

IST: This year again, we will hold In Service Training in the Trarza region. We have always been welcomed in the community of Dieuk and volunteers and their counterparts loved the village, appreciated their hospitality, and were impressed with their organizational set-up. Garack is also another possibility as Rachel pointed out to me. We haven't

draft an action plan that will be presented to the members of your community, so bring one. Choose someone from your community who will benefit from this training and will work with you to disseminate the information to the rest of the community. S/he doesn't have to be your community contact person. It could be a completely new person. The

EVENT	DATE	PLACE	SECTOR
ETR	JAN 3	NOUAKCHOTT	ALL
PROJECT DESIGN & MANAGEMENT (PDM)	JAN 4-5	NOUAKCHOTT	ALL
IST	JAN 5-9 (TRAVEL INCLUDED)	TBD (PROBABLY DIEUK OR GAROCK/TRARZA)	AGFO/EE

#### VACATION DATES:

AW: NOV 22- DEC 9

KANE: DEC 10-25

yet decided on where to go but we will let you know as soon as we make that decision. I know it might seem early to talk about participation at the IST but I just wanted to reinforce the idea of bringing a counterpart to the event. It will be very beneficial for both of you and for your community. I cannot stress enough the importance of bringing a counterpart to the IST. You will learn together and take what you have learned back to your community and share it with them. You will

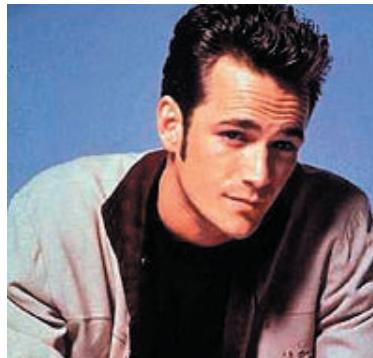
choice of that person should be done by you and your community.

*NB: I would like to mention that the counterparts are invited only to the ISTs and not the ETR or PDM.*

Please send in any training needs that you might have. We will try to find a way of meeting your needs.

That's all for now. Thanks and keep up the good work!

# NEMA'S BEST VOLUNTEER MAKES ROOM



Well hello there, faithful readers. So nice to see you again. Julius Wharthington III here, and another tale to regale you with.

When I got word that Nema was getting its very own bevy of new volunteers, I yipped for joy. It's been so lonely out here, friends! Even my wife and new pet sand crocodiles have been of little consolation recently. So I set about prettying up the town; for starters, I bought out the supply of crepe paper at Ahmed's boutique.

**"THEY ALWAYS GAVE ME FUNNY LOOKS, THOUGH, WHEN I REFILLED MY FIVE NALGENES AND TWO CAMELBAKS WITH WATER BEFORE I TOOK OFF IN THE MORNING. HYDRATION, PEOPLE!"**

He looked confused when I left with 24 rolls of thin pink paper! I wonder what he thinks I'll use them for. What anyone would do with squares of rosy tissue out here is beyond me.

Once I had decorated my home, I absconded with the first fifteen can kids I could find to train them into a welcoming can-kid choir. I was almost done with teaching them the Michael Jackson Super Bowl classic, "Heal the World," when something interesting happened: Ramadan began.

Now, readers, a newcomer to this country is likely to be very confused by this holiday. Take me, for example. I was sitting and talking with my friend Brahim, the local English teacher. He asked me, "Ramadan is coming. Are you fasting?" Having read almost an entire New Yorker comic about the holiday, I knew that Ramadan involves a race with many different people, all of whom are shout-

ing "No comic strips!" at someone who looks like the President. What a strange custom! So naturally, I assumed he meant fastest. His English can be so silly sometimes! "Of course, I'm *fasting!*" I retorted with a wink. "You Mauritanians don't have anything on me!" Brahim just looked confused, though.

So anywho, I began my training for the Ramadan run by devising a clever system. Do you know what I did, readers? I strapped a stray cat to a mangy dog with duct tape, and watched the fracas run and tumble away from me, at which point I would run after it for as long as I could stand! It sure tested my stamina, but not as much as those animals! Ha ha!

Well, the big day came, the Ramadan crescent moon, and I took off first thing. I didn't really know where I was going, but I wasn't worried, because I knew that my charm and ease would make me welcome guests in any home. And I will confide in you that in the evenings, after I had finished running for the day, I had some of the best dinners offered to me in the houses where I happened to stop. They always gave me funny looks, though, when I refilled my five Nalgenes and two CamelBaks with water before I took off in the morning. Hydration, people!

I thought I was running in circles, but imagine my surprise when I ended up in a new place! That's right, I had run so far that when the final day ended

## ASK AMANDA Con't

Dear Tricked,

Smells like something fishy is going on. I was listening to Lauren Hill last night and she said, "when ordinary people lie to God what makes you think that they wouldn't lie to yoouuu, too?" All is not lost. So, you get besieged by marriage proposals and females are on you like goats on sugar. It will never be this good again. Live it up. I am not saying to go around breaking hearts. That is not part of the PC mission (I looked that one up,

**"SO, YOU GET BESIEGED BY MARRIAGE PROPOSALS AND FEMALES ARE ON YOU LIKE GOATS ON SUGAR. IT WILL NEVER BE THIS GOOD AGAIN."**

to be sure that I gave sound advice). In America, everyone speaks English, so as soon as you get back there you'll be nothing special. Try that Pulaar in Walmart and see what happens... nothing. Enjoy this popularity while you can. I do. I am currently dating at least three people in town, and only because I shook their hands.

Okay, the thought of teaching English to your friend goes against all your principles. Just give her a magazine. I bet you were wondering what to do with all those Newsweeks. Ta-da!!!! Cross-cultural exchange in color, with lots of pretty pictures. Nothing to it and she can keep the magazine. What do you need it for? You got this.

\* Especially helpful information for reading this article. While I did not have the wondrous opportunity to meet Mr. Tricked into Teaching, I imagine a distinctive country accent rolls off the tongue. We totally value all our constituents and their confidentiality, but keep in mind that he might be a hick from the following states: Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, Iowa, Missouri, Alabama, or either of the Carolinas.

## 1 HOURS IN ...

# HOROSCOPE

FIND OUT WHAT'S IN STORE IN YOUR NEAR FUTURE!



## KIFFA

KIFFA is (although no one believes it), Mauritania's second largest city—in land mass anyway—a mere 7 to 24 hour taxi brousse ride from Nouakchott, known for its wire-framed baskets, handcrafted beads, gum Arabic, and the heat.

### LOUNGE

around reading French literature and sipping minty-caffeinated-sugar shots at the Kiffa Library, located directly behind the Maison des Jeunes, and stick around for afternoon b-ball, soccer, or volleyball matches. While the spirit in the air smacks of fierce competition, any and all are welcome to join in the fun.

### EAT

at the ever famous Tuuri Kumbo, (meaning "Elephant Tit"—when asked, the owner described eating there was "like partaking in the bounty equivalent to putting your lips up to the teat of an elephant and sucking") featuring fried chicken, Malian music videos, and tables.

### STROLL

(before or after the hours of 11am-5pm) through one of the larger sprawling markets in the RIM. Watch out for run-away donkey carts. Or remplir those rucksacks for an overnight journey to camp on top of the Kiffa dune. It takes a little effort, but the summit includes a lovely nighttime view of the lights of the big city as well as the vast landscape panoramas of...more dunes.

**-MAGGIE MAGDALENA**



**SCORPIO** (OCT 24–NOV 21) Your brousse wine recipe is snogged off your blog by a covetous *Franzia*. Mercifully, their efforts to replicate the taste will be marred when they fail to divine the necessary taste components engendered by the condom and the filthy bidon.



**TAURUS** (Apr 20–May 20) Soon after shattering your final tooth on sandy cous-cous, you become marooned on the side of the road for three days by a tea-happy, lounging taxi driver. When a land-rovered accountant working at the embassy stops and offers you a ride, you make the right decision and do not associate yourself with this man.



**GEMINI** (May 21–June 21) After Ramadan and feeling much too slim, you decided to enroll in a Mauritanian fat camp in order to retake your old figure. Upon arrival, you realize that the camps are discriminating unfairly against men. This heinous gender inequality becomes your *cause célèbre* and you spend the rest of your service combating it.



**CANCER** (June 22–July 22) You will read over 900 books in a single year, breaking the world record. News of your incredible record spreads around the globe and tourism is increased to the area by ten percent.



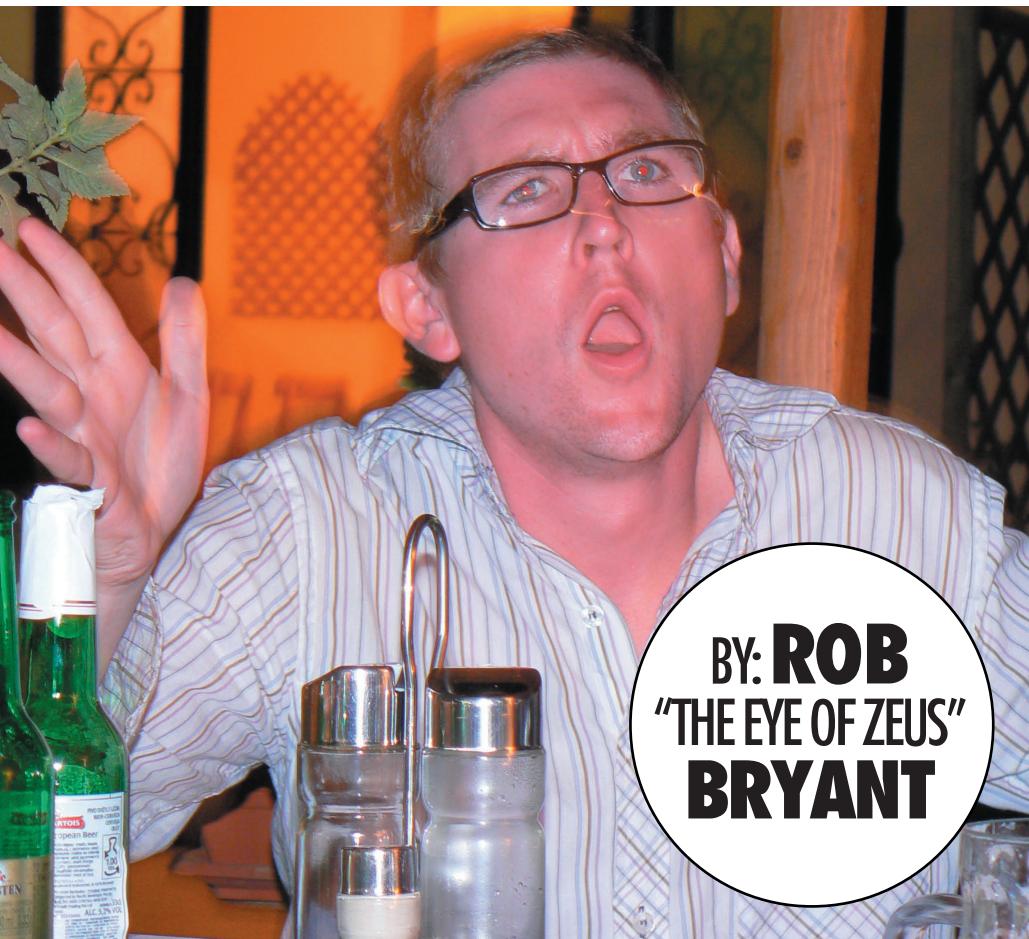
**LEO** (July 23–Aug 22) A short-lived yet stormy romance with a Host Country National will be brought to a messy closure when he/she realizes that you were in fact just using him/her to obtain your Mauritanian visa and that you don't even own any camels.



**VIRGO** (Aug 23–Sept 22) You end up signing up for a third year of service just because all this henna and braiding is taking so damn long, not to mention you have to stick around until that third round of tea is passed out.



**LIBRA** (Sept 23–Oct 23) Upon picking your mind after your return to the United States, friends and family discern that indeed you learned a little bit about African music, but, oddly enough, not nearly as much as you gleaned about the Dire Straits, Phil Collins, Bob Marley, and Michael Jackson.



BY: ROB  
“THE EYE OF ZEUS”  
BRYANT



**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov 22–Dec 21) After weeks of living in the village, you realize that there are no friends to be made other than old people or pre-teens. Struggling to decide which group to align yourself with, you finally choose to hang out with the oldies. Consequently, you learn a lot about “old people stuff.”



**CAPRICORN** (Dec 22–Jan 19) You are at the hospital and your stomach is being pumped within three hours of your arrival in Nouakchott, not because you went overboard at Shenckers, but rather because you had consumed three chocolate milkshakes and an entire wheel of cheese.



**AQUARIUS** (Jan 20–Feb 18) Despite your fears on contracting schisto, you develop a daily routine of swimming in the Senegal River, though not without a guilty conscience. To your own surprise, the lowly practice spins into a remarkably successful all-male synchronized swimming project which increases tourism to the area by ten percent.



**PISCES** (Feb 19–Mar 20) What starts as an off-handed side-comment about a bean soup you ate one time results in a near-total ostracization by the Pulaar community. Your reputation is saved when you declare in Pulaar that the latest round of tea was, “hot, delicious, and makes you go ‘Haaa!’”



**ARIES** (Mar 21–Apr 19) On an ominous weekend jaunt to the Tagant, your mosquito net gets swept up in a sandstorm. You wrap a *howli* across you face and follow the dancing net through the brutal onslaught of sand. Soon you lose sight of it and almost lose hope but then see a glowing apparition on a distant dune. You approach the luminous orb: it is a robed magician. You pay him 20 ougiyas and he instructs you to travel over the rocky mountains up ahead. He says to stay clear of the bands of nomad-thieves and to use the words “open-sesame” to open the mountain pass. When you have finally completed these trials, you see the village of N’baka and Fred Lam, who says, “Oh yeah, that’s actually the only way you can even get to my site.” The mosquito net is mysteriously waiting for you.

## NEMA Con't

(what a race!), I found myself in Kremi Rag, along the Road of Hope. Very appropriate, too, because that was just how I felt after all that running: like a floppy, wet rag. Well the people were so nice and interesting that I felt I just had to stay, if not forever, then at least until my cash runs out.

So, to the new Nema volunteers: I’m terribly sorry I can’t be there to see you in person. You can see what I’ve tried to do for you, if you’d just nab a can kid and get him to sing “Heal the World.” We will see each other again soon. And readers, if you’re traveling down the Road of Hope, stop by to see me—I’ll even dry out the Rag for you!

Toodles,

JWIII

## KIDS Con't

don’t seem as bad and you aren’t envious of adults anymore. After all, they can’t do what you do to tubabs without getting in trouble. They can’t shout TUBAB until they go blue in the face or run after the panicky pasties without hesitation. Now, you can be a kid again.

I know this all makes us tubabs feel a little uneasy that kids could reign free as they do without a remark from the adults. Sometimes they even laugh as the little bastards chase you in hordes. Sometimes you feel so overwhelmed by them that you drop to your knees and ask the Lord to guide you! It’s overwhelming, I know. But we all know what it’s like to be a kid where we come from. It’s a novelty. Everybody fawns over your little ass; you’re just a little kid. Even when you’re 18 fucking years old, you can be a loser, a waste away and someone will inevitably make an excuse for your pitiful ass saying, “Hey, you’re still young. Just a kid having some fun!” So we must not be too quick to judge. We must understand what the little tubab-chanting rapscallions are going through. They are just trying to find their place. They’re belonging in a world that has been cruel and relentless. They just want to be a kid again and we must let them.