

Notes from the Underground

In this issue:



Dana and Virginia practice stress-relief techniques learned at MTR.

Letter from the Editor

Audrey Bottjen

Welcome to the inaugural *Notes from the Underground*, the weird, raspy morning after voice of you, Peace Corps Mauritania volunteers. Send us your tired jokes, your weary prose, your quivering masses of degenerate thoughts. Uncensored, barely edited, we let you tell it like it is.

Submit! Submit!

Dominatrix: Audrey Bottjen
Evil Henchman: Karl Adam
Trophy Wife: Miriam Edwards
Slick Attorney: Janine Kossen
Goon: Carl Strolle

Lightning-Streaked Stormclouds Hover Ominously Over the South

Austin - On the wind swept prairie of Goliad State Park, former governor Richard "Wrangler" Perry officially announced the secession of the Republic of Texas (R.o.T.) from the United States of America. "We will accept the rape and occupation of our sacred Texasland no longer. As Thomas Jefferson once said: 'The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots.'" Before his spur-shod boots left the podium, he sneered with a flourish of his barbeque apron: "yeah, bitch." He proclaimed himself High Inquisitor Commissar of the un-Texan Activities Committee from his "purdy" new trailer.

Further statements of sovereignty and belligerency have alternated with such trailblazing reforms as the annulment of the theory of evolution, seatbelts, mandatory gunracks and chaw tins and the establishment of a national language, Tejano (Spanglish). Former USA Peace Corps Volunteers Becky McKnight and Karl Adam have recently been recalled from their "foreign exploitation" duties in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania



for service and defense of the Texasland. Obie has been engaged in all-night sessions regarding the exact status of these two inpatriated former members of USAPC with the reigning R.o.T. Minister of non-Texan Affairs (Foreign Ministry). Tentative releases indicate a continuation of service, but under other titles and fealties: "the Republic of Texas Fuck-off Volunteers for Freedom."

Former USAPCV Karl Adam was available for comment, "Finally, our prayers to our most blessed Lady of Texarkana have been answered! The blood of such

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News Briefs

PCT Jeff Fields celebrates 21st birthday in crazy night in Mbedia. “Dude, it was crazy,” grins Field. “I hear it was anyways. All I really remember is vomiting on my shoes and passing out. But the way I felt the next morning, damn, I must have gotten FUCKED up,” he enthuses. “Dude, I’ve got some killer friends here. They went all out.” Interviewed later, Field’s training group exchanged guilty glances. “Well, hell, what were we supposed to do?” asked Keith Gaddis. “The poor bastard’s turning 21 in a dry country and he’s got some weird amoebas on top of it all. He totally threw up his hakko and just dropped. So in the morning we just told him all the things that should have happened.” Details of the night-that-should-have-been included hijacking a pirogue over to Senegal and renting out a posh hotel with an open bar, a swimming pool and hot tub and loads of beautiful English speaking girls. “We might have gone a little too far when we told him about the pole dancing twins and what they did to him with the marshmallow crème, but seeing his face, it was worth it.” “Yeah. Crazy night,” sighed Fields contentedly. “I wonder if that girl Nikki from the hot tub is gonna call...”

Ben Richey lives on. As well-wishers hugged COSing Tagant volunteer Ben Richey goodbye and told him he’d be missed, Richey just smiled gently at their naïveté. “Humans need to learn to not just see with their eyes but with their minds. They see me get on the Boeing and think I am gone, but the truth is, I’m still here! I live on

martyrs as Davie Crocket and David Koresh has not been spilled in vain. Long live the Alamo!”

He then proceeded to grab a Lone Star “Blue Label” beer and break it over his head.

Former fellow (American) southerner, Marc Valentin, voiced his regret at L’Ksar over his exclusion from “freemanship” (citizenship) in the newly conceived Republic: “I always felt like a Texan. I mean, I like drinkin’ and shootin’ guns and stuff. I might have been excluded because my penis is not “Texas-sized.”

Staunch Fascho-federalista Yankee and current USAPCV Julia Kennedy of New York voiced outrage over the secession while lowering her Saks Fifth Avenue sunglasses: “Blah, blah, blah! Where’s my goddamn clam chowder?”

Future plans of annexation include virtually the entire Southwest, but most debatable of all is the appropriation of the majority of southern California. Roundtable discussions with the current governor of California have shown him to be highly acquiescent in surrendering. “Vee tink it iz in dee best interest of zee peeepul to support our brozers in the Sūdetenland in der effortz to become zee most paowerful peeepul in dee vuuurld.” Current volunteer and native of Southern California, Dana Weymouth, commented on his imminent re-naturalization, “Well, I kinda like corn in my salsa because I can see how fast it goes through,” With one hand on a bottle of Lone Star “Blue Label” beer and the other tightly around his sister.



Precious! Where is my Precious?

25 Years of Bintu Beardsworth



- 1979** Bintu is born
- 1982** Grows opposable toes and begins to swing from trees
- 1984** Obsession with rich old men begins
- 1985** Does time in the "big house" for selling her little brother to gypsies in exchange for a bearded lady/monkey butler
- 1987** Decides living life in a shrink-wrap bubble is not the only way to avoid dust
- 1989** Wins Little Miss Inuit Pageant in Vermont
- 1991** Runs off with Olympic athlete from Croatia and temporarily renounces U.S.-Inuit citizenship
- 1992** Breaks Guinness Book of World Records for number of asses slapped in a 24-hour period
- 1994** Rescued by SWAT team after being abducted by monkeys during summer internship at city zoo
- 1995** Loses virginity to 16-year-old mute neighbor with club foot—discovers that absence of voice box doesn't hinder all uses of mouth
- 1996** Obtains temporary restraining order against Lord of the Dance creator and former boss
- 1997-2001** Enters NYU and earns BA in Feminine Hygiene Product Design and Manufacturing
- Dec. 2001** Discovers new species of worm in emu feces and is rewarded by having her name forever associated with poop
- June 2002** Joins Peace Corps Mauritania and becomes the princess of M'bout
- 2003** Wins lifetime supply of Diet Coke in divorce proceedings from Orville Sherman Hemsley, III, a rich oil tycoon whom she dumps for another rich tycoon, Donald Trump
- August 2004** Inadvertently signs contract as game show host during 25th birthday party and drunken celebration

Cat Horn and Janine Kossen

Sports Corner with Marc

The latest hash run went off without a hitch. The crowd, mostly Peace Corps volunteers including soon-to-retire hash run legend Sherif Ayoub, gathered at Udo, the crazy German's, house before the event. Being the eager, athletic bunch we are, we showed up earlier than expected, and were told by Udo to wait outside while he took a shower and "got in the zone" by slamming shots of vodka, downing loads of amphetamines, and repeatedly slam-

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through my stories, my teachings and my ever-growing legion of devout followers." Indeed, evidence of his expanding influence is more and more evident, moving beyond his home region of the Tagant into neighboring regions, such as the Brakna and some allege, Nouakchott. Adherents are characterized by substantial consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, inability to turn down dares and shaved heads. Despite rumors and whispers of brainwashing, his followers are quick to deny Richey has any real power over them. "These allegations are completely unfounded," insists fellow Tagant volunteer Jill Sutton. "Just because we love Ben and would do anything he suggests doesn't mean he has any weird supernatural power over us." "It's not a cult," Richey mildly explains minute before his 11:50 departure. "Typically cults foster submission to a charismatic leader and his/her ideals. I've never sought power. I only teach and show each of my 'friends,' as I prefer to call them, the little bit of Richey that is in each one of us. Therefore, do not weep my friends, I will live here forever, in your hearts and in your actions."

Peace Corps Miami. Pumped by the enthusiasm greeting the opening of the highly popular Peace Corps Mexico Program, Director Gaddi Vasquez is reportedly considering opening other programs closer to home. "Peace Corps Miami," enthuses Vasquez, "We see

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many needs that our volunteers will be able to address; many of the illegal immigrants have not received proper vaccinations, the informal market accounts for a majority of the employment opportunities in certain neighborhoods and could really benefit from some Small Enterprise Development initiatives." When his staff questioned whether a Peace Corps development program really has a place in the domestic arena Vasquez chortled, replying, "Whatever Miami is, it's not America. Seriously, the tourist district is nice, "Welcome to Miami, Benvenuto a Miami" but a couple blocks over, it's a completely different story. You can go a whole day without hearing a words of English. And the McDonalds there don't even put the condiments out on the shelves because the locals take them all. You have to ask at the register, and even then you only get 2 packets of ketchup."

Insatiable appetite... After yet another late night in front of a computer, Nouakchott volunteer Will Holcomb announced that he was now going to collect statistics on the meteorological conditions of each volunteer on the day of their birth, indexed by barometric pressure, humidity, temperature and wind speed/direction. When the data is formatted, it will be available on the password protected mr.pcv.org. Privately, Holcomb's Nouakchott neighbors express misgivings as to whether his interest in statistics is healthy. "There are times when Will is talking about the information he has collected when he gets this slightly maniacal glint in his eye," confided

ming a brick into his face.

While waiting in the backyard for the stragglers we told stories to the hash "wirgins," who then started getting a bit nervous about the impending 12 kilometer run in the blazing heat followed by "Eyes Wide Shut"-style rituals and drunken nude mud wrestling. Once the group of about 15 insane alcoholics was fully assembled, Udo brought everyone out front to explain the rules of the hash. Udo explained the rules, adjusted his headband, gave a final twirl to the moustache and we headed out with a cry of "ON ON!!!"

The first fifty steps were a cakewalk. Then the darkness came. This correspondent vaguely remembers stumbling forward through the heat, with flashes of being encouraged by Scott, hearing Udo scream, "Come on, Pussy Marc!" and laughing as Julia ran straight into a pile of mud/trash/possibly feces. I'm pretty sure the length of this run was somewhere in the vicinity of 38 kilometers and the unusually high thermometer reading didn't help matters. Yet once again, nobody died. Mashallah.

After the run, we fell into Udo's backyard to replace all the fluids we lost with liters and liters of dehydrating alcohol. After the obligatory scary group chanting and beer chugging, we piled into Udo's living room and danced around his bar eating salty snacks, playing darts and consuming copious amounts of German beer. Eventually Sherif, emotional after his last run, could no longer contain himself and hit the karaoke for a truly amazing rendition of November Rain, with the assistance of Dan "Slash" Buonadonna.

Although this hash run did not match some of the debaucheries of times past, it was a fitting adieu to one of the most consistent hashers ever, a legend in his own mind, Sherif Ayoub. Keep an eye out for more reviews, and be sure to be present in the future. The hash runs are usually the second Monday of every month. If you show up late, just have a taxi drive around until you find a group of toubabs running around in scuba suits, ugly dresses, inner tubes, or their underwear.



Love in the Time of Giardia

Penicillin, amoxicillin, how ya feelin?

Blood in your stool

Trying to still seem cool.

Sulphur burps, wow that hurts.

Just how far d'ya go

For love in the time of giardia?

Frothy yellow diarrhea and explosive gas

Make it difficult to hook up with any class.

*Spin the bottle, co-ed naked showers, and a shared mosquito net
These are all sure-fire ways to get your groove on if you haven't tried
them yet.*

Just how far d'ya go

For love in the time of giardia?

Bloated stomach and irregular piss

Never get in the way of making Top 5 lists.

A makkaresh in one hand

And your lover in the other.

Just how far d'ya go

For love in the time of giardia?

After all, this is Peace Corps Mauritania

There's not much else to do in the land of boubou mania.

What did you get out of MTR this year?



Angus: Dude....

**Heather S.:
It's not fair!**



Erin P.: Booooo!

**Marc V: Dirty sex
party at my house.**



**Hectorvieve: We're
in love. Have some
cookies.**

Dan S.: Moosecock?



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fellow ICT volunteer, Carl Strolle, "I usually just nod and then try to change the subject." When asked why he tirelessly works on garnering more and more data, Holcomb replies with a mysterious smile, and gazing toward the horizon responds softly, "The time is nigh. All will be revealed soon."

I can stop anytime I want.

Brakna Volunteer Mitch Brashers announced last week that when he finished his 254th book of his Peace Corps Service, he planned to take a break of a few days. "You know," said Brashers, "Putter around, do some visiting, work on a new song. Just something different." According to witness Kari Brashers, he exhaled when he finished reading, stood up and got a drink of water from the canary. Then holding his empty cup, he walked over to the empty door and yelled something at one of the neighbor kids. Just stood there for a couple minutes, said "Fuck it," and went back and picked up his next book.

Truth can be stranger than fiction.

Breaths are bated, curiosities sharpened and rumors flying in pre-MTR speculation about what the hell is really going on with Guidimakha Volunteer Nathan Gretzinger. "No one has seen him since, well, I'm not sure when. I heard he has a troop of monkeys that he's trained to dance at every sunset," offered Gorgol Volunteer Miriam Edwards. "Really, I heard he has a horse and is

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trying to crossbreed it with a camel to make some superior species," said Brakna's Jennifer Justus. Other rumors include his marrying a Soninke princess, embarking on a hunt for the last remaining man-eating leopard in Mauritania and having developed the facility for communication with animals.



Just a couple of homeys flashing signs

QUIZ: How many camels are you worth?

Have you ever felt undervalued by that pesky boutique owner who keeps harassing you for marriage? Take this quiz to determine how many camels you are worth.

1. What is your favorite Mauritanian meal?

- a. Thiebu Djen
- b. Meshoui
- c. Hakko
- d. Goat intestines and couscous

2. What is your most common response to a marriage proposal?

- a. I already have a fiancé in the US
- b. Are you sure you have a penis?
- c. No! Now can we get back to language class again?
- d. Depends...is that a goat horn in your chias or are you just happy to see me?

3. What do you do if your sweetie from the States has not called you in 2 weeks?

- a. Go to Nouakchott ASAP and find the nearest rich HCN or expat
- b. Hook up with a fellow PCV, or better yet, snag a stage-ey
- c. Promptly take a Mif kit and send them your stool sample
- d. Get drunk on brousse wine and screw

4. When did you change from a toothbrush to a stick?

- a. Never did
- b. 1-3 months
- c. 4-6 months
- d. At the 2 year mark

5. You last saw your knees...

- a. Last night
- b. WAIST
- c. Last year
- d. Before June 2003

6. How many sets of bin-bins have you gone through?

- a. 0
- b. 1-5
- c. Too many to count
- d. What the hell are bin-bins?

7. How many nights do you remember hearing the morning prayer call on your way home from a night out in Nouakchott?

- a. 0
- b. 1-5
- c. 6-10
- d. Only Allah knows

8. What do you do when you see an attractive Mauritanian man?

- a. Slightly uncover your head
- b. Offer to cook his meat
- c. Lie on your back
- d. I'll let you know if I ever find one!

9. You've kissed this many Tagant girls?

- a. 0...Not yet anyway!
- b. Once and I'm coming back for more!
- c. 10 and counting, mashallah!
- d. Does Ben count?

10. Where should the COS conference be?

- a. Mederdra—um...yeah!
- b. Kaedi—wasn't stage great?
- c. Obie's—group "couple" retreat
- d. WAIST—Dakar 2005

continued

Quiz scoring:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. a:2, b:3, c:0, d:1 | 6. a:1, b:2, c:3, d:0 |
| 2. a:0, b:1, c:2, d:3 | 7. a:0, b:1, c:2, d:3 |
| 3. a:3, b:1, c:2, d:0 | 8. a:0, b:1, c:2, d:3 |
| 4. a:3, b:0, c:1, d:2 | 9. a:0, b:1, c:2, d:3 |
| 5. a:3, b:2, c:1, d:0 | 10. a:0, b:1, c:2, d:3 |

If you scored between 0 and 10 points:

You deserve to be stuck in the brousse and survive only on milk, couscous, and possibly goat meat in order to become more in tune with your true Mauritanian self.

If you scored between 11 and 20 points:

You definitely show promise and have the ability to survive PC Mauritania. For further assistance, seek the advice and comfort of your language facilitator or your sitemates (everyone has a little love to share). Net worth: 1000 camels.

If you scored between 21 and 30 points:

You're one hot mulafa/boubou-wearing mama. You're worth 10,000 camels and every kilo you have gained over the past year (and more). May Allah grant you safe passage to the States ASAP before it is too late.

Marc's Sensitive Side: Ode to Ben

*I knew that your mental state was dire
When you made me burn my shirt in the fire
But I realized you would be a hoot
When you ran around in a scuba suit
You quickly became a friend of mine
Even though you killed a canine
When you'd lose your glasses in a tree
Or help me get us kicked out of St. Louis
I could always count on you to act the fool
From building fires to stealing Justin the mule
When it came to fun you never got your fill
Which is why your water filter became a still
Although you didn't mean to hurt her
You framed Virginia for a murder
Despite all the sweat and dirt and sun
You made sure we always had fun
Just to make sure we remembered you alot
You let us all know if we were hot or not
Although your service has come to an end
I'm glad that I made a retarded new friend
I'm sure that the fun now will be dampened
But we'll always remember you when we hear
"Wha happened?"*

Where are They Now?

They eat ice cream. Beer. Sushi. They can wear shorts. They can wear leather bondage gear. But they miss being able to say "Alhumdullilah!" without annoying everyone around them. They're our very own RPCVs, and this is what they're doing now.... (stay tuned next quarter for the next batch of updates)

Stacy Rose, Education 2002-04

Sitting around kinda bored 17:30. Ate some stale lowfat tortilla chips, possibly just low fat and the stale flavor is included. Wearing a very sexy stripped tank top that unfortunately does a bad job covering the mid-rif. Spent the day running boring errands shopping at a thrift grocery store (hence stale chips) 15:00-16:00, post office 14:30-14:40 and bank 14:50-15:00. I am thinking about going to get a glass of water 17:32. Just did a great job smashing my middle toe the other day. I dropped a can of paint on it and it swelled up and turned ugly shades of grey blue and purple 12:25 August 24th 2004. Now there is a faint green outline 17:33 August 27th 2004. Changed my mind about the water maybe I will go see what is on TV instead 17:33 and 18 seconds.

Danny Carman, Health 2002-04

I'll get back to you. Probably a Pearl Jam concert or something...

Adriane Lella, Health 2002-04

Mmmm...at about 11:30 am this morning I spent 75 dollars at Bath and Beauty works and \$9.99 at J.Crew. I guess smelling good is important, also they had this special where you could get this cute bag and all this foot stuff. My mom bought everything because she's so glad to have me back. Is that interesting to anyone besides me? I don't think so. Well, that's what I'm doing.

Personals

Bubbly blue-eyed blond seeks rich hearing-impaired man for nights of dancing and breaking glass at the V.I.P. justusofthepiece@yahoo.com
<<<>>>

3 SWF seek inspirational guru with sense of humor. Willing to imbibe anything for the right price and cross-dress. Must love dogs. Mullet and old man glasses provided. nakedparty@hotmail.com
<<<>>>

PCV seeks moor man to hold hands, play with belt and pet arm hair. Tea making a must. Discretion not guaranteed. eviljustevil@hotmail.com
<<<>>>

Butterfly looking to spread wings. I am a person with lots of emotions and I enjoy sharing and listening. I love fishing, baking bread, camping, raging against moors, Notre Dame. danbo@excite.com
<<<>>>

Hideous-looking, smelly, ill-tempered, lazy, cowardly, chronic, and a complete liar married to total opposite. Committed, but looking for serious connection. babababes@yahoo.com
<<<>>>

I like eating thiebu djen and long walks in the desert, watching Secrets de Famille, and licking strangers on taxi brousse; you drink zriig, have climbed Kilimanjaro, sweat freely and often. Must wear size five 4 x 4s. No weirdos. r.kelley3@hotmail.com

Wizened Veterans Reserving Judgment on the Greenhorns

According to embittered local Tarza veteran, Karl Adam: "All the new stagiaires are whiny little bitch-ass losers." Confirmed by nods and grunts of approvals from brousse-wine drunkards, unshaven villageois, sixth year volunteers looking for naturalization and God, the damning accusation appeared to be universal.

"I shit twice as much as any of those little runts, and blood too." Adam later added, "Another Jay? Please, we have already have one. And ours is a lot gayer too." Fellow Taruzi, Dan Buonadonna commented, "I remember, back in 'Veg, yeah them was some crazy times" He then proceeded to swallow his tongue and go into post-traumatic stress disorder induced seizures. His last, froth-garbled words were: "It feels so good to hate so much." Carl Strolle refused to comment and instead simply held up his hands. Andy was too busy raging to be reached for a statement. Julia Kennedy and Stephanie Rosch had the gall to speak up and say, "We kinda liked stage, especially our courteous and clean Wolof host families" at which point Mitch farted on them both.

Malady of the Month "The Carl Strolle Award"

This quarter's malady of the month goes to Dana Weymouth, for his horrifically swollen testicle. Resembling the size and firmness (and texture) of a tennis ball, Dana reported his malady at some point during stage. Dan Sutton was instrumental in helping him arrive in Nouakchott by creating a special "nut sling" from moringa branches to safeguard the tender, super-sized genitalia during transport. Dana himself commented on contracting the oddly fascinating swelling while sitting in the stirrups-table of Clara's office: "Well, I knew when my Lubriderm ran out, I was in trouble, but it's not that bad. All my friends come by and sign it now."



Weather Report

It's hot. That phrase, repeated so often, loses almost all meaning here. It's become almost a mantra, muttered under the breath, helping us zone out to a place where the 120 degree temps, blow dryer winds and that memory involving the clown that cornered us in the mall bathroom can't touch us. However, taking weather analysis to the next level; that of maps, numbers, charts and statistics, falls similarly short of conveying the urgency and anguish of a Mauritanian summer. What's more, it neglects the crucial, yet subtle regional differences—no two regions have exactly the same type of "hot." Therefore, for your meteorological pleasure, we present "Getting Beyond the Numbers," an attempt to capture the underlying essence of each region's heat through metaphor and poetic imagery.

Trarza: Hot like melty melty cheese on a deep dish pizza... mmmm. love that shit.....

Gorgol: Hot like the sweaty asscrack of a 400 lb man.

Assaba: Hot like Molly groping Miram.

Adrar: Hot like your mom last night.

Brakna: Hot like Dana – 9.8! Yowza!

Hodh: Hot like Dick Vitale. Now that's hot, baby!

Guidhimakha: Hot like that burning sensation you feel when you pee.

Tagant: Hot like some good girl-on-girl action.

Nouakchott: Hot like that TV in Marc's house.

Nouadhibou: Hot like Cherlize Theron...in that movie "Monster." Lucky bastards.

Taxi-brousse games

Counting

Counting teeth

Counting locusts

Asking about sisters

Putting thumb in goat's asshole

Koranic Karaoke

Surreptitious snacking

Teaching English

Teaching Chinese

White Camel Slug-Bug

Finding license plates from all the NGOs in Mauritania

Talking about heat

Three degrees of separation of everyone in the car

Creating photo montage of gendarme stops

Admit to being a spy

Try to outgreet a Mauritanian

Make tea and pass to other cars

Touching girls (or boys)

Ask for separate prayer stops for *your* religion

Pestering Mauritanian about Visa



Health tip: Amel says to make circular motions like this.