

Nouakchott Notes

CAPTIVE PCVS ESCAPE

Free from stagiaire captors, *NN* team resumes work

Matthew Britton

The *Nouakchott Notes* staff is back at the office this week after a series of harrowing escapes from stagiaire hooligans who held them captive for almost two full months.

The hostage-taking occurred shortly after the trainees' arrival in Kaedi. After several meals of well-prepared Mauritanian dishes, a large group of ungrateful trainees snuck into the coordinators' house in the lycee and locked all of the coordinators (half of whom are *NN* staff members) inside of their mosquito nets. In a statement released to the Mauritanian training staff, the stagiaires demanded American food (specifically pizza, ice cream, and hot dogs) in exchange for the release of the trainers. Unfortunately for the *NN* staff and other trainers, the American government has a policy of not negotiating with

hostage-takers. As a result, the PCVs were left in their nets for months, surviving solely on zrig and CéréAmine poured or smashed through their mosquito nets by sympathetic kitchen staff.

Unfortunately for the PCVs, most of their fellow stage-mates had already COSed or were in the process, and they were not missed for quite some time. "I kept wondering when someone would notice we were gone," says Keith Gaddis, former *NN* humorist. "I thought that someone would surely notice that we hadn't put an issue out in several months and would send a search party out to find us. I guess everyone must have been real busy or something."

Peace Corps staff in Nouakchott, while aware of the situation, were told to keep the episode under wraps to prevent



Gaddis, dressed as a fairy, languishes in captivity.

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Judy and his rescuer.

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Director's NEWS

Obie Shaw, Country Director

Hello All: I would like to extend a hearty welcome again to our new training class. It was a pleasure meeting your group in Philadelphia and with you individually in Kaédi. While I was in the States I had the pleasure of meeting with folks at Peace Corps HQ. Both the Peace Corps Director, Gaddi Vasquez, and Regional Director for Africa, Henry McKoy, commented on the outstanding job you are all doing and asked me to extend to you (volunteers and staff) their very best wishes. The following are some quick briefs for your information:

Office Move Status

We are still on schedule for an December 6 move to our new office space in the Al Khaima City Center. The build-out is progressing very well and we are hoping that all of the additional materials (VSAT, furniture, etc...) will arrive in a timely manner. Cheikh Gueye has been busy identifying additional lodging possibilities closer to the new office. I will be sure to keep to keep you all informed of any changes in the schedule as we get closer to the actual move-in date.

EAP Testing & LA Surveys

Please be prepared for our annual Emergency Action Plan test that will be coming up sometime in the next three months. You should all be familiar with your responsibilities as outlined in the EAP.

Thanks very much to all of you who submitted your Living Allowance Surveys! I am sure your fellow volunteers appreciate your efforts. We are well into the process of determining next fiscal year's stipend breakdown. We hope to have the new numbers out to you by mid-October.

Swear-In & Posting

As last year, all PCVs are welcome to attend the swear-in ceremony in Kaédi on September 7. Please note, however, that you will be responsible for all costs associated with your attendance at the event (lodging, transportation, meals, etc.). If you wish to attend, please clear your out-of-site absence with your APCD.



Posting will be held September 9 through 16. A detailed posting schedule will be sent out within the week. PCVs are expected to be at their sites during this period.

Around the Bureau

A fond farewell to all of our COSing volunteers. It has been a sincere honor to have served with you. Your legacy is in good hands with the new, second, and third year PCVs who remain. Please keep in touch!

Who are those third year extendees mentioned above? Cailin McGough (GAD), Matthew Britton (SPA), Keith Gaddis (GAD/EE), Saman Wijesooriya (HE), and Todd Bruce (ED).

Welcome to the newest members of the Peace Corps Staff, Mrs. Fatimetou Mint Babana (Staff GAD Coordinator) and Ms. Aichetou Konate (Receptionist).

I would like to extend our thanks and well wishes to Ambassador and Mrs. LeBaron who ended their tour of service in Mauritania on August 18. Their support of the Peace Corps program in Mauritania was without question extraordinary!

Obie

Living Allowance Survey Hall of Shame

PCVs managed to get enough Lsurveys turned in to meet the minimum requirement of 80 percent returned in order for volunteers' living allowances to be evaluated. Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill them out, especially COSing volunteers who won't even be affected by any raises that may result from this evaluation. On the other hand, *N Notes* has compiled the following list of volunteers who couldn't be bothered to spend five minutes to fill out their surveys to help out their fellow volunteers:

Derrek Hansen
Mary Anderson
Ben Burgen
Daryn Crowell

Andy Deer
Mary Fitzpatrick
Julian Hadas
Beth Larsen

Jake Newberry
Jessica Palmer
Alicia Wittmer
Tupper Rensdorf

Daouda Diallo, APCD/Health

First, I would like to start this by expressing my warm welcome to all our new trainees. I wish you all a very successful PST and a great service in Mauritania. Second, I would like to thank all our PCVs who are wrapping up: Andrew Medley, Brock Emerson, Laura Monahan and Molly McCollom. Your service has been very useful to Peace Corps Mauritania and your communities. Thank you very much for your two to three years of service. You will be missed.

I would like to also thank Matt Britton and Nalinka Saman Wijesooria for offering to give an extra year to serve Peace Corps Mauritania and the Mauritanian communities. I wish you the best of luck in that commitment.

Training of Traditional Midwives

In the Gorgol region, Rachel completed a very important traditional midwives and community health agents training. Eighteen villages have benefited from this important capacity-building project in which state-educated and employed midwives trained local birth attendants. Training consisted of lectures, quizzing, demonstration, and hands-on practice. Participants received kits with cord clamps, medical razors, bleach, plastic floor covering, latex examination gloves, talc powder in a nice storage sack and a folder with photocopied sketches illustrating various phases of the birth-giving process as well as post-natal practices such as breastfeeding and good nutrition. One community health agent from each of village also participated in another training conducted with the help of the AMPF Kaédirector and midwife. The participants in this training received bleach and visual aids for community sensibilisation.

GMC Girls Plan Animations

In the Guidimaka, Gorgol, Hodh, Brakna and Trarza, volunteers have led very important animations in GMCs and in the communities on the topics of reproductive health, sexually-transmitted diseases, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, sanitation, malaria and water-based diseases. Three regional animation outings took place during the month of April in the Brakna. GMC girls played an active role in the planning and facilitating of these animations, preparing skits and discussion questions on the assigned themes and encouraging the participation of the girls from local associations. The goal of these animations was to provide opportunities for GMC girls to share information they gained with others, encouraging them to be active as health advocates in their communities.

Projects in the Regions

Very important follow-up activities are also taking place in the southwest Brakna on diarrhea and dehydration, major food groups, how to prepare balanced meals, and the transmission of cold/flu viruses.

In addition, two volunteers made and distributed safety boxes around a health center, easing disposal of sharp items and reducing chances of disease transmission and injury due



to improperly disposed medical waste.

In the Hodh, Mira continues to successfully work with four women from the “Henna Collective”—a group a locally-based cooperatives—in the production and sale of recycled grain sack bags, a project she creatively named the “Kobeni Bag Project.” Together they’ve been building a potential sustainable small business, which would in theory act as a financial backbone for a women’s workshop center where classes can be held and educational resources can be shared. So far, they have sold many bags and made some good profit.

On world malaria Ariana gave presentations to the 5th and 6th grade classes about what malaria is, how it is transmitted and how to prevent it. There were also important information on the advantages of using the mosquito cream, how to make it and when to use it. Children got to take some home and said they would teach their parents. Ariana is also giving very important literacy courses to a group of 13 women in her village.

In Atar, several HIV-AIDS sensibilisations events done in collaboration with Espoir et Vie and ADIG, an NGO from Selibaby, addressed prevention and transmission in Ajar and Atar area.

HIV/AIDS Activities in Kiffa

On June 18 I took part in one-day fishpond training in Selibaby by fishing demonstration, followed by a well-illustrated from Brock that I would be very proud to share.

In order to help enhance *food security* in the Guidimaka, 25 women in a cooperative were also trained on how to can vegetables and how to make eggplant jelly.

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M. Abderrahmane O. Bagga, APCD/ED

I hope you are having a pleasant summer break! This has been a popular time to travel for most of you, which is good as you get to enjoy a well-deserved break and see other places and regions in the country and elsewhere. It is also a time that you have devoted to important projects that you do in your communities.

Training & New Pilot Programs

The stagiaires are back from a five-day site visit with their community contacts. Overall we have had good responses from site visits. Kudos to the ED training class – they are still here and intact!

As has been announced before, beginning with this group, we are starting to develop two pilot sub-assignments. The first one is the new Girls Education and Empowerment (GEE) component. Three of the new volunteers will be designated as GEE volunteers, and we hope that GEE will expand to become its own sector in the near future. The other pilot program is the Teacher Training Advisor (TTA) assignment. This is an offshoot of the current CDS (Curricula Design Specialist) assignment that has been in place for the past three years. The TTAs will be working with the DREFS at the regional level to support teacher development in a more decentralized manner, revitalizing *animation scolaire* at these institutions.

New GAD/GEE Coordinator

I'd like you to join me in welcoming a new addition to our program – Fatimetou Mint Babana, who goes by Siham. As of August 21, she is working with Peace Corps as our new GAD/GEE Coordinator. Fatimetou brings to PC/RIM a wealth of experience in the area of education in general, and girls' education in particular. Siham holds an M.A. TESOL from Moray-House College in Edinburgh and is an English teacher by training.

Over the past seven years she has worked in education development, coordinating projects between the UN and Mauritanian technical institutions.

Village GMCs Open

I am glad to confirm, as we mentioned in the last issue, that we have opened GMCs in Lexeiba and Tawaz! Two new education PCVs will be posted in September to these two sites. The volunteers will be teaching English at the local middle schools and be managing the new centers.



Current PCV Projects

A number of projects were shared amongst the Ed group at MTR:

English Department Library at the ENS: Zakia is working hand-in-hand with her counterparts at the Teachers' Training College in NKC to develop a library for the English Department there. The project seeks to purchase more books, organize the bookshelves more systematically, and standardize loan procedures.

LPTW new and expanded version: You all know what LPTW stands for, right? Stephanie and Zack are considering expanding the compilation of Lesson Plans That Work to include new lessons, but also to supplement the resource with a number of selections that are specifically geared to helping students better prepare for the BAC.

Another new section of the LPTW will be Exams That Work. Please do not hesitate to contact Stephanie and Zack should you have any suggestions, ideas, or questions.

The English Teachers' Conference: Jess and Mary are still planning to organize this conference sometime around December. The funding prospect looks better with new possibilities with the US Embassy and Woodside. The National Conference will be followed by a series of regional workshops for follow-up and action plan implementation.

Good Luck everyone with all of these and more projects. Looking forward to sharing more with you in the next issue!

Welcome again to your favorite column of *Nouakchott Notes*: The Agfo/EE Corner.

I hope rain has made it your way and the land is covered green. I would like to reiterate my thanks to the COSing volunteers and wish them good luck in their future endeavors.

I would also like to congratulate Keith Gaddis on his third year extension as EE and GAD coordinator. He will be working with the EE program and the EE volunteers to:

- Help develop the new EE project
- Meet with different partner organizations to further existing collaboration and seek out new collaboration opportunities
- Visit your sites for technical support and training
- Help find relevant EE information and share it with volunteers
- Update the EE lesson plans manual

...And any other odd jobs, like cleaning up my office, organizing my files and taking notes for me during meetings (just kidding). I am looking forward to working with him. He has great ideas that will enhance the program and help it grow.

Pre-Service Training Update

I would like to welcome the new trainees again. I am very impressed with their motivation level, positive attitude, talents and skills, and active participation in sessions. We have great sites waiting for them. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the whole training staff and particularly the EE and AGFO training team for the excellent job that they are doing to prepare the trainees for their future assignment. There has been a lot of improvement in the training this year in all areas. My hat is off to the language program for taking the new challenge of the language level requirement with grace and commitment to meet the challenge. This new requirement will greatly improve the performance of the future volunteers in the field.

EE Evaluation

As you all know, we just conducted the evaluation of the EE pilot project. The objective of this evaluation was to assess the impacts of the project to date, identify successes and challenges, and make recommendations about future of the project. A field evaluation was conducted in all current EE sites and some old ones by a team comprised of Jamie Shambaugh, an evaluation specialist with PCW, and RPCV Racey Bingham. After the field evaluation, a stakeholders' workshop was held in NKT. The field evaluation report is available; findings of the evaluation show that the project has an impact despite the fact that it is new, small and has only been around for a short period of time.

According to the report, some of the impacts are:

Impacts on Schools

-Volunteers have helped teachers gain environmental knowledge and knowledge of practical activities, and many teachers demonstrated this knowledge during our interviews.



- More so than in other sectors, a small number of motivated counterparts (teachers and school directors) are the key to getting work done in EE.

-Counterparts clearly understand the concept of integrating EE into lesson plans, and it has helped them understand the APC as well.

-Students know how to do practical environmental activities (planting trees, growing vegetables, etc) and can do them on their own. Some students are actually carrying out these activities under teacher and school directors' supervision at the schools. However, individual initiative was not evident.

Impacts on Communities

-The biggest impacts that the EE project has had on project beneficiaries are gardens, training on the value and production of Moringa, and individual relationships with counterparts.

-In most communities, there are shade trees planted by volunteers or in collaboration with volunteers that survived and are thriving.

Some of the challenges that the project faces are: low language level of the volunteers, lesson planning, harsh environmental realities of Mauritania, limited institutional support for EE and difficulties of explaining the job description to Mauritanian counterparts.

Participants at the stakeholders' workshop recommended that EE continue as a stand-alone project. To continue the project successfully and improve its impact, the evaluation has formulated some recommendations.

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Brian Zoeller, APCD/SED

In the News

Many PCVs went to Jazz Fest in St. Louis this year, but I can't find any who actually heard any jazz. Hmm...

The "Holy @#%&, I Can't Believe That Happened!" award goes to the World Bank this quarter. As it has done for many poor countries in the world, the World Bank recently forgave Mauritania's debt. Nice gesture! That means instead of paying off loans and interest with its revenues, the RIM can invest in its own economy.

Mauritania and a French gas firm, Gaz de France, have signed an energy cooperation agreement. This apparently covers a feasibility study for the establishment of a liquefied natural gas facility, the possibility of energy production from natural gas, and a plan to train Mauritanian personnel on natural gas-related activities. This would be huge for Mauritania because it would change its historic approach of leasing raw, primary resources (minerals, oil, gas, and fish) to other countries' firms to a more profitable value-added service approach that leases both primary and secondary resources to other countries.

The European Commission has restored its financial support of the RIM, a practice temporarily interrupted due to the coup last summer. The EU has allocated over € 66 million to the Kaedi-M'Bout-Selibaby-Gouraye road project. Just think - by the time some of you leave, we might be able to get to Selibaby in reasonable comfort!

Lastly, the Digital ICE Catalog is here. Now you can access most PC books and topical information in PDF files contained on the disk—very useful for researching projects in your own regional capital.

CéréAmine Conference

Now for more important things... CéréAmine. We held our long-awaited conference May 23 and 24 at the Hotel Koubi Saleh in Nouakchott, which went very well. Nearly 40 people attended from all over the country, and with the way our colleagues dressed, the conference could have doubled as a fashion show. The vibrant audience consisted of several health officials, feeding center workers, farmers, ONG and Co-op members, boutiquieres, and organizations concerning themselves with people living with HIV/AIDS. They listened to heartfelt speeches by representatives from the Ministry of Health, the creators of CéréAmine, and Espoir et Vie, an organization that cares for those living with HIV/AIDS.

The first day was focused on health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and included a CéréAmine factory tour at ONG Action. Their factory process can produce up to 80 KG of product a day



using custom-made local metalware. The second day focused on structuring CéréAmine as a retail product, learning from what we've already done with training and market development in the field. We had spirited, intellectual participation from the crowd.

Additional training and promotions are planned in Rosso, Kaedi, NKT, Boghe and Selibaby. Thanks to Brock Emerson, Maddie England, Ann Min, Aaron Dibner-Dunlap, Andrew Medley, Alexis Dunleavy, and Mauritanian Idol Daouda Diallo. Great cross-sectoral teamwork!

SED/ICT Project Plan Review

The SED and ICT project plan was reviewed by a crack platoon from P.C. Washington. By December, and with some outstanding input from a few SED and ICT PCVs, we will have rejuvenated goals for the project mission, which is designed to help the informal sector raise its standard of living by increasing employment and economic opportunities.

ICT Going Rural

Lastly, we have 12 new trainees this year in the SED and ICT sectors. Jordana Spadacini, our dual-duty SED/ICT coordinator this year has been wonderful. Many SED and ICT trainees are learning to swear in local language this year instead of French. But alas, there is still some French profanity to be heard. We'll be placing them in a variety of spots from semi-urban to very rural. No longer will the Aggies be the only hardcore Peace Corps volunteers.

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'Slight directional change' for Health

Daouda Diallo, Health APCD

In light of feedback we have been receiving from the field from PCVs, their communities, and PC Washington, the Health Program Advisory Committee, made up of Health PCVs, counterparts, Ministry partners, health-related NGOs, and association representatives, met August 21 and 22 to discuss the new priorities of the program. Our discussions confirmed findings from the field supervisors, Washington, and PCVs. The new focus of the health program will build upon the lessons learned by volunteers, counterparts, and staff.

In recent months, there has been a consensus among the program staff and Washington specialists that volunteers' activities no longer reflect the goals and objectives of the health project plan, leading us to believe that it needs to be redesigned. Additionally, a survey was sent out last year to technical counterparts and supervisors in the field, to which they responded and made valuable contributions that led to the same conclusions.

In the last few years, PC Mauritania's health volunteers have assisted the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, communities, families, and individuals in their efforts to improve their health living conditions through the reduction of malnutrition, upgrade the state of maternal and infant health care, prevent and treat diseases, train masons in Dutch brick wells, and help build and maintain water sanitation structures.

We are not changing much of the existing purpose and goals, but we will be changing directions slightly.

First, our overall purpose, while remaining unchanged, has tentatively been rephrased to "Working with the DRPSS and other partners (NGOs, community / youth organizations, counterparts, academic institutions) to mobilize communities through Health Education and capacity-building activities in order to reduce the rate of morbidity and mortality of Mauritians."

Additionally, our project goals (these are drafts) will be:

- Positive attitude change in communities as it relates to preventative health.
- Improvement of food security and nutritional practices
- Existence of a healthy environment

We will no longer be focusing on building Dutch brick wells, but we will not be drifting away completely from water sanitation. The program, in accordance with feedback received and needs stated by our program partners, is very much conscious of the fact that sanitation is one of the biggest health issues in the life of Mauritians, and Health volunteers are presently working on good projects under this goal.

I would like to thank all our partners and PCVs who actively took part to these two productive days. Thank you all for your contribution, your time and your critical thinking.

Brian from page 6

I've applied for Washington funding to add a tourism development component to our work and some of these new sites will partially address tourism.

A whole bunch of other great stuff is being done in youth business education training, tie-dye training, women's business education, GAD and HIV work, computer training, database construction, and EPA/multimedia development.

I want to thank all COSing PCVs in all of the sectors. I've enjoyed the company, the insults, and the attacks on my apparel. Sticks and stones... In all seriousness, thanks Maddie, Jarad, Nina, Jordy, Tupper, Suzanne and all of our leaving extenders who will finally have to start paying off student loans. Congratulations on your Peace Corps service! You are forever Peace Corps Volunteers. Now take it on home.

Nouakchott Notes Staff:

Cailin McGough
Editor-At-Large

Matt Britton
Diplomatic Liaison

**Brock Emerson, Chris Fletcher,
Mary Fitzpatrick, Luke Filose,
Rob Bryant**
Contributors

New Staff Spotted at PC-RIM Bureau

Name:

Aichetou Konatè

Position:

Secretary

Hometown:

Nouakchott

Started:

June 19, 2006

Background:

Completed second year at Nouakchott

University, then worked for Barouc, a local construction company before she was hired by Peace Corps.



Name: Fatimatou mint Babana *or* Siham

Position:

GAD/GEE Assistant

Hometown:

Nouakchott

Started:

August 21, 2006

Background:

Taught French and English at lycées in Nouakchott for a

number of years before working in the girls' education sector of the UNDP. Also worked for the Ministry of Education and the Condition Feminine.



Aw from page 5

Some of these recommendations are:

- Recruiting mature EE volunteers with a good French level or at least the ability to learn another language and with previous classroom experience

- Raising the language level for swearing-in to intermediate high

- Continuous learning of the same language during the volunteer's first few months at site

- Spending more time at site, particularly during the first six months of service

- Improved site choice and placement

- More institutional support at the central, regional and departmental level: More EE integration in the national curriculum, inspection of EE activities by the inspectors, development of action plans at site to be shared with inspectors and DRENs, designation of focal points at the regional level etc.

- Development of didactic material: Working with institutions like PAM, UNICEF, SPANA etc. to help develop EE documents and tools

I will meet with the new team at the ministry to present these recommendations and solicit their support, which is the main condition to continue this project with success.

ECO-CAMP

This year again the Eco-Camp was a great success. We had great participation from different communities. The community of Tawaz, the volunteers and the chaperones have done a fantastic job. Thank you Keith for a superb organization! Where is it going to be held next year? Nouakchott or N'Beyka?

Tree Manual

Please submit your contribution for the tree manual to Caleb before he leaves in late September. This project will be a very concise book about the different species found in your areas and their different uses. It will be a good complement to the literature that you have received, which often times is not Mauritania-specific.

Arbor Week Activities

August 1 marked the kick-off of arbor week celebrations throughout the country. Hopefully events planned by your delegations, inspections and /or communities went well. As agricultural and environmental agents, we should consider every week (particularly during the rainy

season) to be an arbor week. Plant as many trees as you can, anytime and anywhere it is possible. Happy tree planting!

Thanks and keep up the good work!

Daouda from page 3

Health Center Repairs and improvements

The Kiffa Health Center has seen existing structures improved and health murals painted. In addition, volunteers led a waste management training. This very important project will no doubt benefit Mauritians by improving the image as well as the functioning of the health center. Murals will help to educate people who visit and the staff gained significant knowledge through the training.

So as you can see, Health PCVs are doing a great work in the field. I encourage you all to keep up the good work and stay healthy and happy.

Eco-Camp 2006: Tawaz

In annual camp, girls learn about the environment

Mary Fitzpatrick

Fifty fifth-and sixth grade girls came together for Eco-Camp 2006 in Tawaz, a small village outside of Atar, from July 10 to 14. During the camp, girls participated in lessons with environmental themes, then ventured outside the classroom on a scavenger hunt in the village and a tree identification walk. Five teams of ten girls from different sites competed in sports activities and other games.

Lessons were taught in local languages by host country nationals in Hassaniya and Pulaar, and by PCVs Ariana Metchik and Michael Thoms in Soninke. Overall, 25 chaperones, 15 volunteers and 10 helpers (host country nationals invited to help with logistics, teaching, and general fun-having), made sure the girls had a good time and got to see part of the country they would not have had the opportunity to see otherwise.

Transportation from Nouakchott to Tawaz was arranged for volunteers, students and chaperones, making things easier for everyone. Once camp was underway, PCVs Alicia Whittmer, Jeff Fields, Keith, and Molly Bayer used their previous experience to ensure that everything ran smoothly. The camp was comparable to last year's event in Thide, but this year, girls from different parts of the country were divided into teams and had to work together in games and activities. This allowed for more cooperation between girls who would not normally interact as much.

EE volunteer Keith Gaddis started organizing this year's Eco-Camp in November. "The important part about a project like this is learning from problems



EcoCamp participants take a break from activities.

each year and making changes," he said. The third Eco-Camp to be held in Mauritania, this year's project was funded entirely with GAD funds.

Plans for next year are already underway, though funding has yet to be secured. Eco-Camp is tentatively planned for Kaédi and may be expanded and re-envisioned as an Eco/Health Camp, with more participants and more days at camp. The location would be easier logistically because staff and drivers would already be in town for stage. Hopefully since Mauritians play a strong role in organizing and making Eco-Camp feasible, in years to come they can show the volunteers how to do it.

Big thanks and love to all volunteers who participated. They did an amazing job.

GAD Update

Cailin McGough

Generally, the GAD office is pretty slow in August, with the Annual Girls' Education Conference over by July and GMCs closed until October. This summer, however, things have yet to slow down. Since the last issue of *NN*, GAD volunteer coordinator Jess Dunsmore completed her service and turned her responsibilities over to Keith Gaddis and me, who will co-coordinate the program in the coming year.

But before Keith and I had even finished getting updated on the status of all things GAD, we were met with a huge development for the program: Just before the new trainees arrived in June, Peace Corps signed an

agreement with the Condition Feminine creating the Girls' Education and Empowerment (GEE) pilot program. This means that if/when GEE becomes a sector, all of the projects we know as GAD – Girls Mentoring Centers, the girls' conference, mentoring workshops, etc. – will be supervised by the new GEE APCD. Meanwhile, GAD will continue to exist as a cross-sector initiative promoting gender consciousness in project planning.

Obviously things are not ready to go quite yet – hopefully, an APCD will be hired next year, and only three of the trainees in the current stage group have been designated as GEE volunteers. Still, having volunteers whose primary project is GMC management will facilitate the transfer of the centers to the communities in coming years (inshallah). This agreement with the CF is a huge step.

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Pronunciation debate: GEEEE

With an agreement signed between Peace Corps and the Mauritanian Women's Ministry in June creating a new sector focusing on girls' education, the debate continues to rage over the chosen pronunciation of the new acronym: GEE.

The disagreement comes down to the pronunciation of the first letter—proponents of the soft G sound point to the commonly used interjection “gee,” claiming that this is obviously the correct pronunciation. Those in support of a hard G sound, while not denying the validity of the interjection, argue that “gee” (as in “geek”) is simply more fun to say.

Education APCD M. Abderrahmane ould Bagga spent months pushing for the agreement with the Condition Feminine, which will allow GEE volunteers to work exclusively on projects promoting women and specifically girls' education. When asked about the pronunciation issue, Bagga heaved a long sigh.

“I really don't see why this is important,” he said, leaning back in his chair and doing that thing with his fingers.

Volunteers in the GEE – or Girls' Education and Empowerment – sector will be affectated to regional bureaus of the Condition Feminine; their main project will be management of the Girls' Mentoring Centers and training of mentors to prepare for the transition of centers to the community. They will also be charged with finding a suitable translation of the word “empowerment” in French.

At the bureau in Nouakchott, GAD program coordinators have been seen sulking and generally looking confused. Approximately 100 percent of GAD programming will be usurped by the GEE sector,

leaving GAD with only the vague mission to “recognize gender relations when planning projects.”

“What does that even mean?” queried GAD co-coordinator Keith Gaddis, who only got the job because his name has “gad” in it.

“Do we still get our own office?” asked co-coordinator Cailin McGough defensively. “If I have to give back the laptop I'm going home.”

While GAD will remain its own entity for the time being, the arrival of the GEE APCD by December 2007 will cement a major restructuring in PC-RIM's programming for women and girls. The APCD's arrival may also clear up the soft G/hard G issue.

However, some say the issue cannot be put on a backburner. With three members of this summer's stage group slated to become the first GEE volunteers when they swear-in next month, the pressure is on to find a consensus on the pronunciation.

GAD, from page 9

In other news, our new GAD coordinator, Siham, joined us in late August to help streamline the GAD program and define the direction of the new GEE sector. She brings a wealth of experience, and is already helping to plan the girls' conference, planned for September 11-15.

We expect over 40 girls from the interior, as well as PCVs and mentors, to attend. Among them will be members of the brand new Lexeiba GMC, which Laura got off the ground in early July.

This year's theme – “Who will we be tomorrow?” – will encompass education and career options, goal-setting, political participation, and personal finance management. We hope to make the conference more hands-on than ever before, and leave girls with a clear idea about how they can share what they learned back home.

Soooooooo...girls' conference, new GMCs, three new coordinators, and a possible new sector. All this, and school starts in a month!

Important Upcoming Dates:

September 4	Labor Day*
September 7	Swearing-in
September 9-16	Posting
September 24	Ramadan starts (?)
October 9	Columbus Day*
October 24	Eid El-Fitr (?)*
November 11	Veterans' Day*
November 12	Birth of Baha'u'llah
November 19	RIM elections
November 23	Thanksgiving*
November 28	Mauritania Day*
December 1	World AIDS Day
December 16-23	Hanukkah
December 25	Christmas Day*
December 26	Boxing Day
December 31	Eid Il-Adha (?)*
January 1	New Years Day*
*office closed	(?)dependent upon moon sighting

Health volunteers dominate in small enterprise arena

SED sector falls apart, Health PCVs pick up the slack

Cailin McGough

While the majority of SED volunteers claim to be busy doing “feasibility studies,” health volunteers have stepped up to the plate, making strides in small enterprise development at their sites.

Brock, Mira and Matt have all sidetracked their health work in favor of more lucrative and rewarding SED projects.

“There are only so many times you can sing that song about hand washing,” reports Matt Britton, who got as far from Tidjikja as possible when undertaking his SED project in Selibaby. Matt worked with a local artist to build a silkscreen-printing system that would enable him to profit from T-shirt sales during the coming election campaigns.

Matt spent nearly a month out of site in Nouakchott and Selibaby working on the training, during which time the children of the Tagant starved.

On the other side of Selibaby, health PCV Brock Emerson began a fish pond project. At the risk of his own health, Brock decided to dig a significant hole in rock-hard earth. Instead of leading community health sensibilizations, Brock could be seen in a mesh tank top, shoveling in the heat of the day.

“Fish need water to live,” Brock muttered, squinting.

Meanwhile, Selibaby SED volunteer Suzanne Carroll watched from the shade of her hangar, where she doodled fish.

The health-to-SED phenomenon is not limited to the south. Everyone is familiar with Kobeni PCV Mira Eng-Goetz’s bag project. The satchel-style bags made from rice sacks have been seen on the shoulders of



Fish, according to Emerson, need water to live.

basically every volunteer in Mauritania, and are popular gifts for those Urban Outfitter-types back home.

The project has not taken Mira away from site, and money generated from the bags can go back to the women, improving the their overall well being and that of their children.

In fact, Health APCD Daouda Diallo can’t complain about the outcome of the projects. Rather, it’s the icy stares of SED APCD Brian Zoeller that concern Daouda.

“I tried to tell him that we trained all of the health volunteers in *health*, but I think he’s suspicious,” Daouda said. “I’ve been trying to drop the word ‘health’ a lot in conversations with my volunteers. I

know the project plan needed work and everything, but...”

After declining to comment for this article, Zoeller took a bag of chocolate into his office and slammed the door.

SED stage coordinator Jordy Spadacini came to the defense of her sector-mates, citing “business training tours” and “CereAmine” promotion stints which keep SED volunteers out of the public eye.

The turf war playing out on the second story of the Nouakchott bureau has had little influence on the activities of health volunteers, who seem to have forgotten their roots.

Standing waist-deep in standing water, Brock seemed unfazed by the possibility of contracting shisto. “Fish need water to live,” he said.

Bodine Shaw eats better than PCVS, Mauritians

Matthew Britton

A recent study conducted by the Peace Corps Mauritania Medical Officer Cynthia Sullivan has revealed that Country Director Obie Shaw's dog, Bodine, has a more nutritious and varied diet than most Peace Corps volunteers assigned to the country. Additionally, the PCMO found that Bodine, affectionately called "Bo" by the Country Director, eats better than 70 percent of Mauritians.

The study of volunteers' diets was originally expanded to include Bodine merely as a joke, and Ms. Sullivan did not actually expect to find such astonishing results. "When I was at Obie's house one day, Toad Bryce*, a PCV, came over to pick something up," says Sullivan. "Obie had just finished feeding Bo, and Toad* commented that the rack of lamb that Obie had given to the dog was more meat than he had seen in a month." The PCMO took the comment lightly, but she was later concerned – are Peace Corps volunteers in Mauritania getting enough nutritious food?

This prompted Sullivan to send out nutritional surveys to all volunteers, which were completed and returned with astonishing quickness, as usual. Additionally, she asked Shaw to fill out a survey for Bodine. The results, when compared, were nothing less than shocking.

According to survey results, PCVs receive, on average, 42.2 grams of protein per day. Mr. Shaw reported that his dog received, on average, more than ten times as much protein. "Bo's a growing puppy! He needs lots and lots and lots of meat, dontcha, boy? Huh? Yes you do, yes you do! Come'ere, Bo! That's a good boy!" Shaw said when asked for comment on his pet's substantial intake of

meat. "I buy him a half-kilo of top sirloin beef every day. It gives him a nice, shiny coat."

The results also revealed that Bodine has a more regular supply of vegetables. "He loves tomatoes," says Shaw. "I buy him a couple every time I stop by the store." Meanwhile, 34 percent of RIM volunteers say that finding vegetables throughout the year is "difficult," while 52 percent report that it is "impossible," mainly during the hot season.



Additionally, volunteers report an annual consumption of "3-5 servings" of ice cream as part of their intake of dairy products, while Bo reportedly receives quite a bit more. "We share a bowl of ice cream about once a week," says Shaw. "He loves the H a a g e n - D a z z Macadamia Nut Brittle – I can hardly get a spoonful before he gobbles up everything in our bowl!"

Her curiosity piqued, Sullivan proceeded to contact the Ministry of Health for information on the diets of Mauritians. The statistics, compiled in 2001, paint a poignant picture. The average Mauritanian citizen living in the interior consumes even less protein and fewer vegetables than the average PCV, making the contrast between their diets and Bo's still more acute. "Well, Bo keeps me company, so he deserves better treatment," says Shaw in response to receiving this information. "What has Ahmed Ndiaye in Boutilimit ever done for me? Why should I share a bowl of ice cream with him instead of Bo?"

Shaw continues, "You know what? Bo doesn't whine about how small his Living Allowance is, and he doesn't borrow DVDs and 'forget' to bring them back for six months. Personally, I think he deserves to eat better than volunteers."

*name changed to protect the identity of the volunteer

**"Bo's a growing puppy! He needs lots and lots and lots of meat, dontcha, boy? Huh? Yes you do, Yes you do!"
-Obie Shaw, CD**

Who are all these new Americans?

Rob Bryant

Excitement at the initial arrival of a new trainee class of nearly 60 volunteers melted quickly as the group piled out of the Peace Corps fleet of shiny white SUVs into the Kaedi sun in late June.

"This is so hot. I feel disgusting. I just want to take a shower," trainee Amanda Owens said on her first day in country.

The other similarly bright-eyed and bushy-tailed recruits have since trained in Kaedi, learning local languages, throwing wacky talent shows, and developing skills and comprehensive integration strategies that they will need in order to realize their potential as not only the biggest, but also the best dressed and most talented trainee class, ever.

"I want to write a musical about robots who feel real emotions and then translate it into Pulaar," education trainee Patrick Wolack said. "For the kids."

"Deep in my heart, I believe that through full-integration, loving children and Zen-like cultural awareness, we can all learn to levitate," Doug Morrow, self-appointed spokesman for all trainees, said before promptly early terminating his service.

Other ways the trainees fulfilled their duty to assimilate included asinine comments, contracting diseases, and good old-fashioned humor.

"Isn't this fun?" asked health trainee Kristen Morella. "It's like Mauri-insania!"



Stagiaires engage in unnatural acts.

Stage: Summer Camp, This Time With Language Classes

Top 12 Reasons Why Stage Is Like Summer Camp

12. Trainers are just glorified councilors with God-complexes
11. Your day is completely ordered by a schedule (that is never adhered to)
10. It's hot, humid, there are tons of insects, and you sleep under the stars
9. Snack two times a day, naps after lunch
8. Your parents want you to call home once a week, and you're giddy on mail day
7. "Sports" are limited to playing Frisbee, softball, and tag
6. Everyone is trying to get laid before the end, and you have to sneak off to get some nooky
5. "Folky" kids play guitar and sing after sunset
4. Everyone can hear you when you take a shit
3. No matter what you do, you're not going to look pretty
2. Your sector coordinator keeps hitting on you and makes you feel dirty
1. YOUR BOYFRIEND BACK HOME IS PROBABLY CHEATING ON YOU



Captives, from page 1

a general panic amongst volunteers and the possibility of a heroic rescue attempt that could end up with the trainers getting hurt.

But this did not keep the *NN* staff from being missed. "I haven't laughed in months," says Mike Donovan. "When the *NN* staff disappeared, all the joy in my life went with them. I actually thought of ETing."

Fortunately, the *NN* staff succeeded in escaping from the clutches of the stagiaires this week. On August 21, AgFo trainer and former *NN* Class President Caleb Judy managed to tempt a hungry goat to chew through his Tropic Screen with CéréAmine that he had saved for several days. Escaping through the hole, Judy retrieved a knife from the kitchen and freed his fellow trainers, who then scattered in the night.

While her tormentors slept, *NN* editor and GAD trainer Cailin McGough made a daring escape from the Kaedi lycee in the early hours of the morning by clinging to the bottom of a PC vehicle for hours. Even worse, stage Administrative Coordinator and *NN* Diplomatic Liaison Matt Britton had to endure hours of taxi brousse to escape the stagiaires' clutches, an experience he says he hopes to never have to repeat.

Caleb was last seen hiding in a tree, and Keith was seen humping a wall, presumably to break through it, but has not been heard from since the breakout. Luckily, several articles written during confinement were retrieved and assembled in this current issue.

"I'm glad we got out," commented Cailin. "I felt terrible that we weren't able to produce an issue of hard-hitting, investigative journalism for months, depriving our fellow PCVs, bureau staff, and Washington personnel of the deep satisfaction that fills them when reading the *Notes*."

Sadly, the hostage incident seems to have broken the wills of the *NN* staff. "I hate Kaedi - I never want to go back," Matt said. "And we all decided we're through with *Nouakchott Notes*. We're getting too old for this sh*t."

Chad falls, RIM rises to #1 spot

With the closing of Peace Corps Chad, PC Mauritania has captured the title of “Toughest Peace Corps Country in the World.”

“We knew it was only be matter of time,” PC-RIM AO David Solomon said. “After Haiti went to hell, there was just one more contender... Everyone knew Chad wouldn’t be long.”

The PC Chad program began to fall apart after rebels invaded the capital. Government forces responded by piling bodies of rebels on the steps of government buildings.

PC Chad responded by radioing volunteers with silly code phrases before realizing that all volunteers were currently getting drunk at a resort “doing in-service trainings,” after which volunteers were quickly evacuated.

Prior to the closure of the Chad program, there was much debate between experts about whether Chad or Mauritania was the tougher Peace Corps program. Both suffer from a barren landscape, abused donkeys, and food high in MSG.

With Chad’s closing, however, that dispute has been rendered moot.

In the fallout, however, it has become apparent that Mauritania has always been the tougher country. Two PCV refugees from Chad now residing in Mauritania appear fatigued and weak, and according to Aleg RPCV Julian Hadas, cry every day. Meanwhile, former Mauritanian PCV Luke Filose remains in D’jamena, still living what he refers to as “the high life.”

Meanwhile, PC Mongolia volunteers look forward to upcoming elections in the RIM, hoping for an uprising that would close the Mauritania program, bumping Mongolia to the top position.

With no hope of taking the title without the disappearance of at least 20 other Peace Corps programs, PC Senegal hopes for a disruption as well, but for other reasons—with PC-RIM closed, they might finally have a chance to win a game at WAIST.

Sudan man marries goat

From the BBC wire

A Sudanese man has been forced to take a goat as his “wife”, after he was caught having sex with the animal.

The goat’s owner, Mr. Alifi, said he surprised the man with his goat and took him to a council of elders.

They ordered the man, Mr. Tombe, to pay a dowry of 15,000 Sudanese dinars (\$50) to Mr. Alifi. “We have given him the goat, and as far as we know they are still together,” Mr. Alifi said.

Mr. Alifi, Hai Malakal in Upper Nile State, told the Juba Post newspaper that he heard a loud noise around midnight on February 13 and immediately rushed outside to find Mr. Tombe with his goat. “When I asked him: ‘What are you doing there?’, he fell off the back of the goat, so I captured and tied him up.”

Mr. Alifi then called elders to decide how to deal with the case. “They said I should not take him to the police, but rather let him pay a dowry for my goat because he used it as his wife,” Mr. Alifi told the newspaper.



Donkeys, such as these Kaedi natives, are part of what makes us great.

Nema RPCV leaves post to fight terror in Sahara desert

A letter from Tupper Rensdorf, RPCV Nema

Well, it's that time of year again. The grass is green, the rain is falling, the goats are producing milk like waterfalls, old crusty volunteers are heading back to a much-anticipated America, and new greenhorns are undoubtedly wandering around Kaedi with a glazed look in their eyes. It's an exciting time, and I'm happy that I'm able to spend my fifth and last rainy season out here with my family in Nema. I guess the old saying is true, that all good things must come to an end, and for me, the end is here. I tried to extend for an unprecedented sixth year in Mauritania, but Peace Corps is finally giving me the boot, and they say it's time for me to go.

However, as always, I count myself fortunate that a unique opportunity has fallen into my lap as I close out my service. Macire called me last week to warn me that there have been numerous reports of terrorists in the Nema area. After a little investigation on my part, a couple of my friends here in Nema gave me a few solid leads on these freedom-hating ne'er-do-wells.

As you all know, I've had my fair share of combat back in 'Nam, but since I don't have much waiting for me back in the good ol' US of A, well, I up and decided to give the local branch of terrorists a taste of their own medicine, a little bit of Rensdorf Shock and Awe, you might say.

So that's my plan – I'm taking my cash-in-loo check this week (I suppose it's called that because all these young-gun PCVs take the money instead of a ticket and then blow it all on a 'round-the-world, drug- and booze-addled vacation and then beg their parents to fly them home so they can move back into the basement... Just about like throwing that money straight in the toilet, in my opinion).

Once I get my final deposit in the bank here, I'm heading to the black market to buy a small arsenal (it pays to have a few good friends on the gendarme payroll...wink, wink) and a camel and ride off to fight the Salafists for my fair country.

I like to think of it as an extension of my work with the Nema English Club "Good Guys/ Bad Guys" targeted vocabulary lessons. Lord knows I sure don't need the money, so I'm giving my readjustment allowance right back to Uncle Sam by contributing to the War on Terror.



The new Mr. & Mrs. Rensdorf ride out after Salafists.

Fortunately, it looks like I'll have some company on my mission. You see, when I announced to my family that I would be leaving soon, they got real excited-like, and they threw me a party. Wrapped me up in a boubou and set me down next to my 16-year-old host sister, Aichetou, who got all kinds of gussied up for the occasion, even had her hands hennaed and hair braided.

For the life of me, I couldn't figure out why she kept her face covered up at the party, but she seems to have had a good time – she hasn't left my side since!

She's been cooking special meals for me every day, and she won't even let me think about touching my laundry!

She says she's going with me when I take off, and she says she's not scared of the desert. I guess it will be nice to have someone along for the conversation, but I'll need to procure myself another steed-du-desert for my compatriot!

So that's my plan. I'll be heading the opposite direction from the rest of you COSers, but I wish you good travels and Godspeed on your return back to the U.S.

And for all you greenhorns, good luck in this fair land that I like to think of as my home away from home, Mauritania.

Since I don't have much waiting for me... I decided to give the local branch of terrorists a taste of their own medicine, a little bit of Rensdorf Shock and Awe, you might say.

PCVRC Reflects on Lessons Learned



Chris Fletcher, PCVRC, Tagant

Hello Kids,

It has been brought to my attention that we are currently in the process of a large changeover in Regional Coordinators. People of high rank in the Peace Corps community have asked me to write a little about my tenure as a PCVRC to give the newbies an idea about how they can run a tight ship.

First, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the most important job you have as PCVRC. Section 1, "Administrative Responsibilities of the Regional and VAC Representative Job Description," clearly states that we as PCVRCs are to "Alert Nouakchott staff to the violation of PC policies, especially bike infractions."

Nothing makes my blood run cold like a Mefloquine dream of PCVs riding around without helmets. Personally, I spend at least several hours each day perched on the water tower scanning Tidjikja's goudrons for possible bike infractions. My vigilance has paid off – not a single Tagant volunteer

has been injured in a bicycle accident (while not wearing a helmet) in my entire three months as PCVRC Tagant.

Perhaps the most successful program I've instituted as PCVRC has been trainings to remember the Emergency Action Plan Code Words. Every time the Tagant volunteers are together we drill the code words using the time honored method of the Telephone Game. In a circle (holding hands is optional), I whisper a code phrase, changing randomly between English, Hassaniya, and Pulaar, to one person, who then attempts to repeat the code phrase in turn around the circle. When it comes back to me, if I'm able to understand it we move on. If not, we continue to repeat the same code phrase in a different non-English language until the line of communication is complete. What would you do if Macire called you and said in Pulaar, "Lekde feso kese ne ngoodi to jodaniido on to reesion mon. Njeyhee so odon peso ko yahci!" I know what I'd do...

Remember under the RVACR Job Description (Programming Duties) you also have a responsibility as PCVRC to "Offer motivational strategies to PCVs." By the end of stage I hope to have out in hardcover from Penguin Press, *Chicken Soup for the Lonely and*

Isolated Volunteer in Sub-Saharan West Africa's Soul. Just as a teaser, some of the best strategies I've gathered through my extensive travels have been: throwing rocks at goats, hugging members of the same sex (always remember cultural appropriateness when implementing "motivational strategies"), and listening to recordings of Prairie Home Companion while eating couscous.

Note: While it is culturally appropriate to hug members of the

same sex, certain volunteers may not share your level of cultural appropriateness...

Finally, I'd like to stress the need for Constant Vigilance. I know we can't all have magical X-ray eyes like in *Harry Potter*, but we still must be constantly on guard for any possible negative eventuality. As a PCVRC you can make a difference. That's all I have time for. It's time for me to radio in my bike infraction report to Gorilla One.

Ten Ways to Avoid Making Enemies of Other Volunteers

by Miriam Edwards

NEVER:

1. Make a profit by sub-letting your apartment for more than your rent
2. Arrange a PC mission (in a PC vehicle) to your old site, paying yourself per diem, even though the place you said you needed to visit is closed
3. Exchange money and sell fabric, telephones, liquor, and other goods at inflated prices to new volunteers who don't know any better
4. Take vacation, after vacation, after vacation...with your never-ending vacation leave
5. Buy an old, broken fridge for PCVs who gave you enough for a new one and claim it got broken during transport
6. Reimburse PCVs with local currency two days before it expires
7. Close a house that's been rented and stocked by PCVs over the years by taking all the good stuff for yourself, not giving any of it to your region mates, then selling the rest
8. Buy a nice, big fridge for a project, then trade it out for your tiny, crappy one at home
9. House-sit for embassy employees
10. Pepper your conversation with tidbits about your access to fitness clubs, ex-pat homes, pools, vehicles, lifestyles, etc.

The Last Word with Maciré



**Mohamed Maciré,
PC/RIM Safety and
Security Officer**

This year, a few incidents took place, mostly while volunteers were away from their homes. Most of these were robberies, except for one, which was a physical assault.

Therefore, it seems useful to point out certain security measures that volunteers can take to decrease their vulnerability.

1) When choosing a house, volunteers should take into account the following criteria:

a - Placement of the house - the neighborhood should be peaceful and not a "hot" district. The house must be in an open, well-lit area and have neighbors nearby who will can provide extra security by dissuading would-be thieves.

b - The doors and windows must be solid, and security bars must be placed in the windows.

2) Volunteers should never leave valuables in their houses when they travel.

3) Never keep large sums of money in your house (withdraw the bare minimum for your daily needs from your bank account).

4) Never leave your belongings out in your house where they can be stolen, even if you know your guests. Keep your valuables in one room and limit its access to only yourself.

5) Never leave the windows and doors open when you leave the house, even if it is only for a short time.

6) Never let guests, even close friends, into the room where you keep your valuables, and try to be discreet about where you keep them.

7) Always be careful when you carry money from the bank after a withdrawal.

8) Advise PC immediately of any incident that occurs. By reporting the incident quickly, there is a chance that the police can find the criminal, but if you delay in reporting the incident, you give the perpetrator a chance to leave the area.

Note: All incidents must be reported to Peace Corps, whether the SSC, PCMO, CD, or and APCD) and also to the local police force.

I hope that this advice will be useful to you, and in the next issue of *NN*, we will address traveling problems, inshallah.

Obituaries: Rensdorf, decorated Vietnam vet, dies at 87

Coal Dust Herald-Gazette
Nutter Fort, West Virginia

Tijti, Mauritania, West Africa

Lt. Col. Tupper V. Rensdorf, age 87, formerly of Nutter Fort, West Virginia, passed from this life in service to his country on August 18, 2006 in Tijti, Mauritania, as he was in hot pursuit of a branch of the Salafist Group for Call and Combat.



Rensdorf

While evading waves of bullets fired at him by the terrorists, Rensdorf's camel was injured, causing the colonel to continue pursuit on foot.

After his gun jammed with sand, he bravely chased after the Salafists with a Bowie knife, but was thwarted in his attempt to reach them when, blinded by a rogue sandstorm, he fell to his death in an uncovered 30-foot-deep well in the middle of a palmery.

Tupper, affectionately referred to as "Uncle Boog" by friends, was born December 31, 1919, in Schenectady, West Virginia to Woolworth and Mary-Belle Rensdorf.

He attended Schenectady High School and Platt County Vocational Institution before joining the 5th Mounted Division of the United States Armed Forces, with whom he served three tours of duty during Vietnam.

Upon his return to the U.S., Rensdorf married his high school sweetheart, Beth-Ruth (Roth) Rensdorf and went to work as a welder for Nutter Fort Metalworks Co.

He held this position until Beth-Ruth's death in 2001, when he entered into service once more, this time as a volunteer for the Peace Corps. Rensdorf served a record five consecutive years as a volunteer, and had recently closed out his service in Mauritania when he met his maker at the bottom of a well shaft.

Tupper was predeceased by almost everyone he knew, but is survived by his recent bride, Aichetou mint Sidi, 16, of Nema, Mauritania. They had no children.

As per Rensdorf's wishes, his remains were cremated and scattered by canon-blast over the sands of the Sahara desert northeast of Nema.

Stage + Booze = MTR!

Volunteers rock Kaedi one more time...

