

NOUAKCHOTT NOTES



Kevin Spicer demonstrates leadership skills

Spice Rack

A letter from the Editor:

First and foremost I would like to send a huge congratulations to all of the newly sworn in Volunteers! Second and secondly I would like to thank all of the Peace Corps staff and volunteers who submitted their wonderful articles. Third and completely not thirdly or lastly I would like to yet also thank the Nouakchott Notes Staff who would not exist if not for this newsletter, and *visa versa*.

NEW VOLUNTEERS SWEAR IN

BY ALDEN KLINE

On September 12th, the first ever swearing-in ceremony to be held in Kaédi officially welcomed 45 new volunteers into the Peace Corps in Mauritania and the community of over 7000 Americans currently serving worldwide. Under a big, bright khaïma in the warm Gorgol evening, attendees at the ceremony heard speeches given by the new ambassador, Mr. Joseph LeBaron, country director Kateri Clement, training director Ahmeda Ould Sidna and by five new volunteers in all of the

official and local languages of Mauritania: French, Hasaniya, Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof. Before reading the official oath to the new volunteers, Ambassador LeBaron offered words of encouragement for the next two years. "I especially enjoyed the ambassador using bits of our aspiration statements in his speech," said Will Holcombe, a new PCV in Nouak-



Alice, Katie, Cat, Janine, and Melanie indulging in an post swearing-in drink

chott. Another first for this year's ceremony was a recognition of 16 Mauritians whom volunteers and Peace Corps staff voted to be the most indispensable and inspirational counterparts of current volunteers.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Thank you volunteers and trainees for such a memorable swearing-in ceremony. It was so good to see how many of the current volunteers made the trip. The Ambassador, the press and all sorts of other people who saw the ceremony on TV have commented on how impressed they were by the number of volunteers to swear-in, the quality of the organization and the language skills of the new volunteers. Once again, congratulations.

The swearing-in ceremony was the perfect way to cap off an exceptional PST. You may not realize it, but this PST, the biggest ever, was remarkable in more ways than just

numbers. I understand from Douada that the language scores were higher than average, from Sidna that the number of volunteers who did not stay – lower than average, and from the rest of the PST staff that the feeling of community and good will – unprecedented. On those accomplishments as well, congratulations to all of you. As I said when the new trainees arrived, nothing is more difficult than PST. If you can make it through that, you can make it through anything. And it seems that not only did you make it, you thrived. I really am excited to see how you will galvanize our programs.

Continued on page 2



Kateri, CD

Nouakchott Notes Staff

Megan Kaufmann, *Director of Creative Control*

Alden Kline, *Director of Grammar Control*

Adriane Lella, *Director of Font Control*

Whitney Rokui, *Director of Non-Verbalness Control*

Kevin Spicer, *Director of Uncontrol*



Adda and Cat celebrate her new status

“Stage
oh-va!”



Melanie waits to swear her allegiance

New Volunteers

Continued from page 1

After all the speeches, oaths, recognitions and congratulations everyone congregated on the carpet-spread basketball court for a big celebratory dinner and, once the officials left, a dance party. In true Mauritanian fashion the dancing was eventually interrupted by a sandstorm but the

subsequent rain cooled things off and undaunted, the energetic new volunteers moved the dancing indoors. Swearing-in came after a ten-week training program held in Kaédi and the surrounding environs in which the trainees received intensive technical and language instruction. “Overall, stage was great. By the last phase it was tiring but really helpful—especially model school for us teachers. Hats off to the staff!” said Jessica Dunsmore, new PCV in Selibaby. The new volunteers were posted to their sites the 14th and the 15th of September.



Lisa Michael and Sam after swearing-in



From the Director's Desk, Continued from page 1

After what seemed like forever, the admin unit is back from South Africa and a training on the new world-wide accounting system for the Peace Corps. Not sure what this is going to mean for us. I am hoping we do not even notice the change over but that just may be starry-eyed optimism. Madou is back from Senegal with a brand new baby girl named after our own RPCV Rhonda.

Oboe returned from vacation bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. The heat seems to be lessening and hope has returned.

In other news, as I write, posting is about to begin. Hope it goes well for all of you. Remember to send back your volunteer locator form and also your bank account number. Without it we will not be able to send you your living allowance or find you if you are lost.

I assume we will have another newsletter prior to election-day on November 7, so I will only offer a tad bit of advice. This is a historic event in Mauritania and will be very interesting to follow in the local press and on the radio and in private conversations with your host families and friends. I encourage you to do so. But at the same time, I would also caution you to avoid large political rallies and other gatherings that could get out of hand or at which your presence could be misunderstood.

Speaking of elections, my conversations with members of the Ministry of Education, indicate it is unlikely that much teaching will happen prior to the elections. Nonetheless, teachers are required to be at their posts and some administrative work will probably still go on. I tell you this so you will not be surprised and will get a good head start on being patient.

Finally, I am off to Ghana for the Africa Region Country Directors Conference. I will return just in time for the next volunteer advisory committee (VAC) meeting on Sept 28. Please be sure to meet with your VAC representative and brief him/her on issues of concern to the agency. We will publish a report on what was discussed and any recommendations in the next newsletter. That is all for now, hope you enjoy this newsletter as much as I did. Sincerely, your director who hails from the land of the moist towelette (see MRE review).

Ambassador LeBaron's Swearing-In Address

Well, you've made it. From the many tens of thousands of people who think about joining the Peace Corps each year, you actually applied. From the over 20,000 people who, like you, applied, you were among the 33% chosen. And among those 33% chosen, you are among the select group that finished training. You have already seen at least several of your fellow trainees drop out, even after you arrived in Mauritania. You are the "accepts," you are the winners in that great winnowing-out process. But you must be thinking right now: will I feel like a winner in a month, six months, a year? Will I thrive here? Can I survive here? That depends, really, on exactly who you are. So who are you? I've read through all your aspiration statements. I've studied your strategies for adapting to Mauritanian culture. I've seen your personal and professional goals. So who are you? Let me tell you who I think you are:

- you are, with the except of two or three, not long out of college, but you are well-trained – and realistic. One of you wrote: "There will be days when I feel terrible, sick and weak. I will lie shivering on my bed and wait for it to pass, for the next day to come."
- You probably will get sick from time to time. But I hope there will be days, too, when a rare and wonderful feeling descends upon you, days when you feel you are exactly where you are meant to be, doing exactly what you are supposed to be doing – professionally, emotionally, spiritually.
- If and when you feel that, hold on to it. Tuck it away in the deepest part of you. It will sustain you if times turn tough here.
- Many of you wrote something similar to this: By being in Mauritania, I will have fulfilled my goal of living and working in a foreign country.

I read a fascinating New York Times article recently. It reported the research on happiness by an economist and three psychologists, including a Nobel Laureate. Its major point was this: We are wrong to believe that achieving some major goal will make us as happy as we imagine it will. But the reverse is also true. We are wrong to think that not achieving that goal will make us as unhappy as we think it would. In other words, we humans are notoriously poor when it comes to predicting exactly how we will feel in the future, how happy or sad some event, condition, or achievement will make us feel. So what's my point? It is this: if realizing your dream of serving abroad in the Peace Corps turns out to be less fulfilling than you think it should, don't worry. If, as one of you wrote, "only by serving the needs of others and of the world as a whole can one truly achieve personal fulfillment" does not lead to the deep sense of happiness you think it will, well, that all right and to be expected. Something more fundamental than your Mauritanian experience is going on. It is simply that everything we humans have thought about life choices, and about happiness, has been at least somewhat naïve and, at worst, greatly mistaken. One other point from the professors' research came to mind when I read this: "I expect to be uncomfortable, feel out of place and in over my head at times." And this: "I will try not to fight against contradictions between

my culture and my adopted culture." Or this: "I expect my Peace Corps service to be one of the most emotionally, physically, and culturally challenging experiences of my life." According to the article, there is a fundamental difference between how we behave in "hot" states (those of anxiety, courage, fear, and the like) and "cold" states of rational calm. And the professors' research indicates that we cannot seem to predict how we will behave in a hot state when we are in a cold state. In fact, these kinds of states have the ability to change us so profoundly that we're more different from ourselves in different states than we are from another person."

Our emotions are pitted against our intellect. So, if you find yourself in a "hot" state sometime out in the field, this will be hard, but try not to make precipitate decisions. Give yourself a timeout.



Annika, Angus, Becky and Will are all smiles



Heather, Virginia, Molly, Brandon



FROM THE SED DESK OBIE SAYS:

Disclaimer: *I am currently being forced to write this article under extreme duress. The tactics being employed by the Nouakchott Notes Staff are directly responsible for the following submission. – Obie Shaw, APCD SED/ICT*

Hello current and soon-to-be SED and ICT PCVs:

I wanted to send you a quick note to thank you for all of your hard work over the past 12 weeks of PST. By the time this is published, I imagine that you will have sworn-in and be on your way to your new sites. I am taking off for a family reunion August 29 – September 13. Have a great Swearing-in ceremony and party.

CONGRATULATIONS to the MTR group for making it through a challenging year of service. You have definitely survived the famous Mauritania “full service” experience.

Since the last edition of the *Nouakchott Notes*, the following SED/ICT events have taken place:

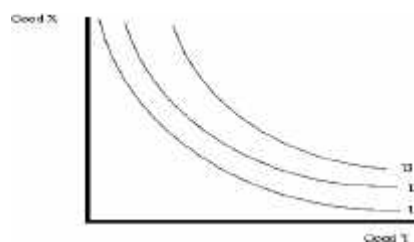
- CONGRATULATIONS to the MTR

group for making it through a challenging year of service. You have definitely survived the famous Mauritania “full service” experience. I wish you all a great second year!

- I am proud to report that the solar-powered cyber center in the community of Djajibiné, Gorgol was inaugurated. *Felicitations* go out to the community, Barton, Sherif and Chris for all of the hard work that went into making it possible.
- Our GAD/GeoTourism Coordinator, Beth Brogaard, has been invited to make a presentation on the GMCs at a Women’s Education Conference in Swaziland in late September.
- An international ICT conference focused on the decentralization of access of information technology was hosted in Nouakchott by the Secretariat of State for New Technologies. This conference was part of a larger U.N. initiative to expand the use and application to developing nations.

Kevin is here and has informed me....

Normal Indifference Curves for Goods
X and Y in Terms of Utils



SPA and PCPP Updates 08/28/03

Prepared by Aminetou Mint Baba/Cheikh Diakite

<u>PCV Names</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1. Matt Gould	5,000.00
2. Jenise Plourde	2,194.90
3. Beth Brogaard	577.7
4. Brett Southworth	4,598.86
5. Jason Ko/Nkechi Eneh	2,663.02
6. Erin Beardsworth	1,045.96
7. Nicholas Allen	312.06
8. Amy Helmick	2,391.19
9. Racey Bingham/Barton	4,966.45
10. Sherif Ayoub	2,371.19

<u>PCV Names</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11. Beth Brogaard	2,156.44
12. Kristen Weaver	5,033.19
13. Jason Ko	3,353.96
14. Karla Martalock	5,000.00
15. Ben Richey	1,182.80
16. Erin Beardsworth	1,600.00
17. Megan Kaufmann	500.00
Total	44,947.72
PCPP	
Liz Kenton	yes



News and Views From the Health Sector

By Alassane Diakite, APCD/Health

As you realize time flies. It is almost a year since you have been posted. Here we are again, regrouped and processing what has been achieved and what remains to be done. I would like to congratulate you all for a fine first year with its highs and lows but above all with your sense of commitment and perseverance intact.

PST caught much of my attention and of my time and as it draws to an end, I have a renewed excitement that I will see more of you soon as I will be traveling for posting and posting follow-up (This is especially true for Heather Delong. So get prepared, I am coming; and don't worry, I will be there before Aw.) In the meantime thank you all for helping with PST site visits. The Trainees did appreciate your guidance and support.

Program Update:

The Polio Project:

Thank you Kateri for your support on this project. Work on this project will proceed and hopefully we will produce a fine manual that will serve countless futures parents. The plan as you all know is to distribute the manual through junior/high schools as well as any relevant venues (GMCs, UNPFA's clubs, CLACs...)

PHAST and Well Workshop:

I am requesting support from the Center to organize a workshop on participatory hygiene education using PHAST methodology. This workshop will take place simultaneously with a well construction training, in December or January. These training will enhance our Volunteers skills in the vital areas of water supply and health education. I will pass on more details as I firm up plans with the Center and partners from Mali (well trainer) and Burkina Faso (PHAST trainers from CREPA).

New Vision for AIDS Awareness:

The Nouakchott AIDS Group chaired by Ambassador LeBaron met today to discuss potential activities. Ambassador LeBaron expressed his support to AIDS education in Mauritania and shared his vision on that subject. He would like to see more practical and creative projects related to HIV/AIDS education. He recommended that we explore ways to involve artists and local musicians in efforts to spread the message and carry it further. I will discuss with you all about ways we can access the Ambassador's Special Funds during my posting follow-up visits and during your technical IST.

"I would like to congratulate you all for a fine first year with its highs and lows but above all with your sense of commitment and perseverance intact."



Zachary Merrill

Peace Corps Saddened by Loss of Mali Volunteer

AP Report

LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON -- A memorial service for Zachary

Merrill, a 23-year-old Peace Corps volunteer and Lake Oswego High School graduate, will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 2, in Christ Church Episcopal Parish, 1060 Chandler Road, Lake Oswego.

Merrill had spent nearly two years working in the Peace Corps in a village of about 800 in Mali, the western African nation. A preliminary

autopsy report released Tuesday found that he took his own life near his work site July 7. Merrill, who grew up in Dunthorpe, attended Riverdale Grade School. He graduated from Lake Oswego High School in 1997 and Northwestern University with a degree in journalism in 2001.

In the Peace Corps, Merrill had spent almost two years on projects such as building a community garden to fight malnutrition and digging wells. He recently had applied for a one-year extension to assist in "information technology."

Current and Future PCV Projects

Activities	PCVs Involved
Tree Outplanting Ceremony	Caroline, Ben, Nick, Heather
Art Day with Trees	Caroline
Youth Sketch on the Importance of Trees	Caroline
Women's Garden Co-op Organisation	Caroline, Megan
Fencing and Seed Source	Caroline
Information Center for Tourism	Jessica
Web Site for Tourism Info Center	Jessica
Vaccination Manual	Adriane, Danny, Nkechi
Big Sister/Little Sister (GAD)	Adriane, Caroline, Jessica, Megan
Women's Health Fomation on 8 Mars	Adriane, Megan, Amy, Heather
English Book Libraries	Ben, Kristen
GMC Building	Ben
Moringa Flipchart <i>en miniature</i>	Ben
PACA	Nick, Jessica, Caroline, Christopher
Moringa Pepinière, 1 meter x 1 meter	Nick, Heather, Caroline, Christopher
School Gardens	Nick, Caroline, Amy
EE Days at Elementary Schools	Nick, Amy
Boghé Teacher Workshop	Stacy, Geri, Erin, Alden
English Club	Stacy
Adult English Classes	Stacy, Caroline
Running the GMCs	PCVs in all regions
Final Publication of Lesson Plan Project	Stacy, Erin, Geri, Alden
Lacrosse Teams	Erin
Improved Cookstoves	Amy
Schistosomiasis Sensibilisation	Amy, Julia, Nkechi
Marketing Sewing Center	Amy and Kevin
Fruit Trees Outplanting and Tournée	Amy, Heather, Christopher
AIDS and HIV Training Follow-up	Nkechi, Danny
Health Day Series	Nkechi
Boutique Project	Christopher, Catherine H.
Solar Pump	Christopher, Heather
Jardin d'Enfants	Danny
Oral/Fecal Cycle Sensibilisation	Danny, Kevin
Microfinance Mutual	Kevin, Jason
Computer Training	Kevin, Karla
Mural Completion	Heather, Karla, Whitney
Biogas	Heather
Microfinance Training	Whitney, Megan
Women's Bank Computer Training	Whitney

ED Corner



Hello from Bagga! Hope this finds you all doing well at site, rested from summer vacation and ready for the approaching school year!

*“Also,
as always,
be
vigilant”*

- About that approaching school year. The Ministry of Education has announced October 1st as the opening of school but the traditional delay coupled with the impending presidential elections scheduled for November 7th might result in a much later date for the commencement of regular instruction. Definitely report to your school October 1st and keep in very regular contact with your counterpart and school administration. Also, as always, be vigilant. This election has the potential to become a polarizing event and schools are a traditional arena of political expression. Keep your opinions to yourself and stay abreast of the news surrounding the elections.
- Congratulations to our new PCVs who have just completed their training and who swore in on September 12th! They are **Karl Adams** (Mederdra), **Mitch Brashers** (Bababé), **Annika Dubrall** (Kankossa), **Jessica Dunsmore** (Selibaby), **Erin Ellingson** (Moudjeria), **Genvieve Kirk** (Aioun), **Erin Pettigrew** (Chinguetti), **Heather Smith** (M'bangue) and **Dana Weymouth** (Maal). We are very proud and expect great things from you.
- Congratulations, too, to our “old” PCVs **Erin Beardsworth** (M'bout), **Geri Greenspan** (Boghé), **Stacy Rose** (Kaédi), **Kristen Weaver** (Nouakchott) and **Alden Kline** (Rosso) for completing their MTR and a full year of sometimes rather challenging volunteer service.

“Congratulations, too, our “old” PCVs for completing their MTR and a full year of sometimes rather challenging volunteer service”

- Erin, Geri, Stacy and Alden are also working on a lesson plan compilation project and a teacher-training workshop scheduled for next spring at the

Boghé Lycée, inshallah. They hope to test out their newly-published collection of English lessons with Mauritanian English-teacher counterparts and the Boghé students and to produce a written text of their pedagogical exchange for future TEFL PCVs and their Mauritanian counterparts.



NEW IN THE MEDICAL OFFICE WELCOME CLARA!



I am a native Mississippian with my permanent residence for the past 12 years in Cordova, Tennessee. I served in the United States Army Reserve for 10 years (Captain) and participated in several medical missions. I have also served as a Volunteer in Mission with the United Global Board of Ministries in Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone. I am married to Samuel Hingham Pieh and we have three children Hingha (24), Semche (22) and Hindowah (20). Our sons are in college in Memphis, Tennessee. My husband is a descendant of Sengbe Pieh. His great-grandfather was the leader of the revolt aboard the ship *La Amistad*. This was a movie produced by Steven Spielberg and Debbie Allen. Samuel served as a dialogue coach and he had a silent role in the film. Samuel has served in various positions as program developer, instructor, consultant, program coordinator and Chief Executive Officer of Mid South Africa Link.

My experience working and living in Africa span from 1980-1986, where we spent 6 years in Sierra Leone, West Africa with our family. My first career was as a high school science teacher which involved teaching basic science and health education. For the last 13 years I have worked as a health care professional. I completed my bachelor of science (1990) in Nursing at the University of Tennessee Medical Center, Memphis, Tennessee. My basic nursing experience was in The Regional Medical Center – Level 1 Trauma Center Intensive Care and then I progressed to Cardiovascular Unit.. My advance practice nurses training was completed at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, Mississippi. I received my master's degree (1998) in Primary Care Nursing. I became board certified as a Family Nurse Practitioner, which means I can assess, diagnose, treat, refer, counsel, prescribe medications (including narcotics), evaluate, consult and provide primary care to all age groups. As a nurse practitioner, my scope of practice provides me with the ability to provide up to 85% of health care services that a medical doctor provides. I have about a little more than ten years (1992-2003) teaching and training Army Medical Corp Personnel. My overseas employment also include short-term medical missions with the United States Army Reserve to Central America. I have advance cardiac life support certification, which means that I have the knowledge and skills to intervene during a life threatening crisis where there is cardiac or respiratory distress. I have provided telemedicine, developed and implemented treatment protocols and participated in research clinical trails.

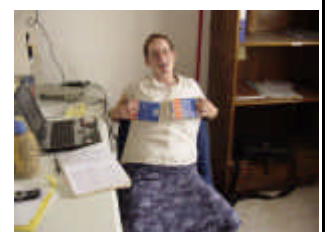
Sam and I received the Volunteers of the Month Award for May 2003, which was awarded by the city of Memphis, Tennessee. We both love family and friends and love to welcome you to stop by our home sometime and greet us!



Aw the Green APCD

Call to Article Submissions!

We here at Nouakchott Notes would like to send a open invitation to all new volunteers for any and many articles, pictures, poems, or discourses on any topic of your passion. This newsletter is for and by you. We would also like to redundantly extend this invitation to second year volunteers, third year volunteers, secretaries, drivers, cooks, VSOs, ASOs, CDs, and APCDs (especially of the green persuasion). Your articles make this newsletter, so please submit in a timely fashion. Help us help you!



What is Racey doing?

GLAD TO BE GAD

Nouakchott Notes welcomes Beth Broggard, new PCV GAD coordinator



It's been an interesting couple of months – with changes and conferences and new trainees and of course the intensified heat! The GAD office has had its hands full. We said good-bye to Rhonda at the end of July, hosted girls from around Mauritania in a five-day Girls Education Conference, introduced GAD to the 'newbies' and are now working on putting together materials to distribute to the Girls Mentoring Centers.

The 4th Annual Girls Education Conference was held July 27 – 31, 2003 in Nouakchott. Thirty-three high school aged girls accompanied by 11 PCVs came from around Mauritania to participate in the conference. They were kept busy with tours of the University of Nouakchott and the National Museum, Internet class, job shadowing professional women, attending health and motivational lectures, relaxing at the beach and living with host families. The girls enjoyed themselves and were excited about being in Nouakchott. I want to extend a huge THANK YOU to all of you that helped make the conference a success, it was a job well done!

Although we are always happy to see new faces, GAD is especially excited about the swearing-in of new volunteers because this means that Tidjikja and Selibaby will once again be on the GAD map! Also, the other regions will have more help, new ideas and good energy to continue the projects that they have been doing thus far with GAD.

I am also throwing a heads up to all Girls Mentoring Centers – there will be a truckload of supplies arriving at the centers shortly. A large quantity of school supplies, textbooks, and English books were generously donated to GAD. The materials will be divided equally among the nine GMCs and distributed to the regions as soon as possible.

GAD was fortunate to have had Rhonda Boutwell as PCV Gad Coordinator and Maimouna mint Taghi assisting the program through the Girls Conference. Both Maimouna and Rhonda have now moved on to different activities which means that GAD has fallen into my hands. I look forward to working with all of you and hope that this year is as successful as the last! If you have any questions or comments feel free to e-mail ringad@yahoo.com or call 660 61 10.

Congratulations to all the new volunteers – welcome aboard!

'Participants in the 4th Annual Girls Education Conference were kept busy with tours of the University and the National Museum...'



The RIM, Quoi



Lessons From The Baking Committee

Reunited At the Girls Conference

Since GAD is such an integral part of the PC Mauritania mission, we the Baking Committee feel a professional obligation to share all wisdom gleaned from the spectacularly successful 4th Annual GAD conference.

- Every Girl has approximately 8 brothers in Nouakchott and no sisters.
- Brothers can only be visited at night.
- One can never have enough credit on the cell phone or film in the camera.
- Movies are “*mandatoire*”.
- Beth is Superwoman—thanks for showing us that PCVs from the Ad-rar can do quality work
- Pig Latin and Women’s Health go Hand in Hand.
- Not only is the PCV from Nouadhibou a princess, so are the girls.
- “Really, we’re just going to the boutique” means “We’re taking a taxi to sixième without telling you.”
- JUST WRITE A RECEIPT!

Top 10 Things We Learned At Stage

10. Dalla should be the SED facilitator next year.

9. Lying on a matla and eating tcheb is not an appropriate training regime for Stage Olympics.

8. Never get in a chugging contest with people from a dry country.

7. Current PCVs should avoid Town Meetings at all costs. This new group has real talent.

6. Kaédi is still hot!

5. Stage is so much more fun when you’re not a trainee.

4. *Pause, mneyn?*

3. Stacy’s roof is an idyllic spot for budding romances.

2. Balbastiques in Boghé were better.

1. Host families and the lycée will teach the trainees not to complain about the Menzah.

Ben in the RIM ©

by Ben Richey (PCV, Tidjikja)



What's cooking In the RIM?

Legitimate Recipes Tested for You in the Brousse

Got Camel Crackers?



It's too hot to cook. It's too hot to eat greasy rice in a hot room. What's left when the hunger hits? Camel Biscuits, quoi! The Baking Committee is proud to present you with its favorite serving suggestions when you get bored with the straight out of the bag approach. Warning: nutritional benefits are not endorsed by PCMOs.

Cereal. *This is a no-brainer. Just add milk. One might want to crush the biscuits a little beforehand for better absorption and spooning capabilities. We recommend Rose milk but the Celia chunks aren't so noticeable in cereal form.*

Cinnamon Toast Crunch. *See Cereal. Add cinnamon and sugar (especially if the biscuits are not of the newer sweeter variety).*

Cocoa Puffs. *See Cereal. Add a little Nesquik.*

Peanut Butter Sandwich Crackers. *Just pretend that stuff for mafé is Skippy. One PCV likes to mix it with a lot piment sauce and a little sauce for a bit of a kick.*

Dunkin' Doughnuts. *Make up a glaze by mixing a small amount of water or milk with sugar, cinnamon and vanilla. Dip liberally.*

Pop Tarts. *Dip in your favorite variety of jam. Do not put in toaster.*

Bread. *Your neighborhood bakery not baking enough mburru? Use camel biscuits (preferably the older, less sweet variety) as a vehicle for tuna, banava or just straight condiments—mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup.*

No Bake Pie Crust. *Crush biscuits up finely with a little sugar and melted butter and press into a tin plate. (Nesquik can be added for a fancier chocolate pie crust). Fill with your favorite fruit, pudding, whip-cream substitute or just straight Nutella if you're feeling patron.*

Granola. *Crush up in your favorite yogurt, either the imported Spanish stuff or the good old homemade brousse yogurt. Can be mixed with oatmeal and raisins too.*

Oyster Crackers. *Just float in your favorite soup. Again, better if not of the newer, sweeter variety.*

Biscuits: A side by side comparison



On the left are the older version of the camel biscuit (and still the only type available in some really brousse sites). Puffier and less sweet, these are ideal for bland palates, weak stomachs and recipes requiring a more neutral compliment. Approximately 50 UM.

In the center are the best things to happen to camel biscuits since the invention of the plastic bag—animal shapes! With these we can cross 'animal crackers' off of the endless list of things that we miss from the States. Called *le jardin*, these biscuits are also sweeter and more vanilla-y. A bargain at only 40 UM because of their smaller sizes.

At right are the close relatives of *le jardin*—the newest camel biscuit and, in our opinion, the best. Sweet (but less so than *le jardin*), crunchy and not too dense. 45-50 UM depending on one's site.

From the New Kids....



Welcome to the Peace Corps

by Karl and Angus,
(new PCVs in Mederdra and M'bout, respectively)

(sung to the tune of
'Welcome to the Jungle' by Guns and Roses)

Welcome to the sauna
We got lots of sand
We got more trash and shi#
Than you can understand
We are all the people
that you smell
Whenever you walk by
So what if we look
funny, honey
My stench can make
you cry
Welcome, welcome to
the sauna
We ain't got no ta-ta-
ta-ta-trees, trees!
Pray for a breeze.

(then Slash gets crazy)

Red Bob, Blue Bob, One Bob, Toubab

by Jay Davidson (new PCV, Nouakchott), with apologies to Dr. Seuss
(The title was inspired by the Dr. Seuss book *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*.)

Toubabs here at PST,
(Those who didn't yet ET),

Toubabs get their invitation
to serve in sites around the nation.

Toubab, toubab near and far
learning Wolof and Pulaar,

Soninke and Hassaniya,
easy as a one-two-three-a.

French for me, French for you.
Comment-allez vous, vous,
vous ?

Ag-fo toubab up ahead
and Environmental Ed,

Community health and water
san,
six jeunes filles and big tall Dan,

Volunteers in education
teaching English 'round the nation,

SED, ICT, and CDS,
toubab, toubab, yes, yes, yes.

Selibaby, Kiffa, Atar,
toubabs living near and far.

Toubabs hankering for spaghetti.
Will they find it in Chinguetti?

Hey, hey, what do you say?
Toubabs going to Boghé.

More toubabs are coming soon
further east in hot Aioun.

For several weeks the town's
been ready
for toubabs here in old Kaédi.

Carefully selected hot shot
leaving Sunday for Nouakchott.

And up north, before we're
through,
toubabs to Nouadibou.

Toubabs learning how to live
culturally sensitive

Toubab her, toubab him
serving in the PC/RIM.

I love you, you love me,
we're a toubab family.

Trainees, staff, and Volunteers,
we're together for two years.

Toubabs funny, ha, ha, ha,
make big difference, Inshallah.



Here is a quotation from
Theodore Geisel, the real name
of Dr. Seuss. Hope you like it:

"Be who you are and say what
you feel. Those who mind won't
matter and those who matter
won't mind."

*Thanks to the new group for their fresh, fun
creativity.*



RIM Fashion

by Meg Kaufmann (PCV, Atar)

The Fashion Sensation that's Sweeping the Nation(s?)

Aaaaaaah, I still remember the first time I laid eyes on those beautiful creatures. It was back at a time when life was good and fun, there was nothing to clutter our days of lounging and hanging out with friends. It was that day at Camp Peace Corps 2003, otherwise know as *stress reduction seminar* in Keur Macene. Fashionable yet functional, I coveted them, the perfect shoes for Mauritania. These shoes were left outside of the now infamous Hut 17, all alone. So, being that I had left all of my slip-on friendly shoes in my room after receiving a little note, I wore them around. It was not for my benefit though, it was for the benefit of whoever had lost them. Much to my surprise, these lovely shoes belonged to none other than Matthew Cerny!

During that same seminar, I also noticed that both Nkechi and Paul had the same style of shoe. It must be a Trarza thing, I thought. But after discussing these shoes with many people, I decided that I could no longer leave it that way. Danny and Amy followed suit and bought these shoes, as well as Lori who had somehow broken her nice shoes after a "midnight swim." These shoes were quickly taking over Peace Corps and I had to get a pair before it was too late, I have never wanted to be one of those people who starts wearing the "trends" 2 years after they are popular.

Fast forward to a trip to Rosso. There I bought a pair of gold and we bought Kevin "Spicedawg" Spicer and pair of dark navy. Before I knew it, they had spread throughout the PC community. Not only that, but since I had first admired these shoes, I noticed that they were everywhere from the *patrona* white moor women of Nouakchott, to the stylin' rasta men of St. Louis.

These shoes, the now-famous 4 × 4's, are EVERYWHERE. I see kids wearing the mini-versions and adults from all walks of Mauritanian life wearing assorted colors and styles.

Which brings me to the best part – the colors and styles from which you can choose. The colors of the thongs themselves range from the original royal blue, green, red, and black, to the more sophisticated goldenrod, turquoise, and peach. The soles have 2 styles, brickwork or diamond lattice; as well as as-sorted colors, including those to match the thongs or those to mismatch them. Then there is the price...it costs a mere 300 – 500 um (depending on the place and your bargaining ability)! Unbelievable! But watch out, they are making generic 4 × 4's, don't get duped. Look for the 4 × 4 imprint on the thong. (For more information on generic 4 × 4's, please see Nick Allen in Ouadane.)

ATTENTION

A PARTY IS BEING PLANNED...

**MANY THINGS REMAIN UNCLEAR.
HERE IS WHAT IS KNOWN: TIDJIKJA...
MARCH...ZRIG...**

ATTENDANCE IS OBLIGATORY



DINNER AND A MOVIE

The Road to Singapore

By Obie Shaw
APCD Extrordinaire

1940

Staring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour

In *Road To Singapore*, Crosby flees his father and betrothed, who want to rope him into an office chair and marriage with a New York socialite. He goes to Singapore, accompanied by Hope, who's trying to escape an undesirable marriage himself. There, they meet Lamour, and naturally both of them fall in love with her. You might also remember this film by its famous "*paddy cake, paddy cake*" routine that Hope and Crosby employed to get out of jams. They would pretend to play the aforementioned game and then come out punching the bad guys. This gag was used in subsequent sequels in the same way Indiana Jones used his gun to shoot the bad guy in the first film and then in the sequels he never seemed to have his gun when he needed it.

Hope and Crosby established the rules of the game early on.

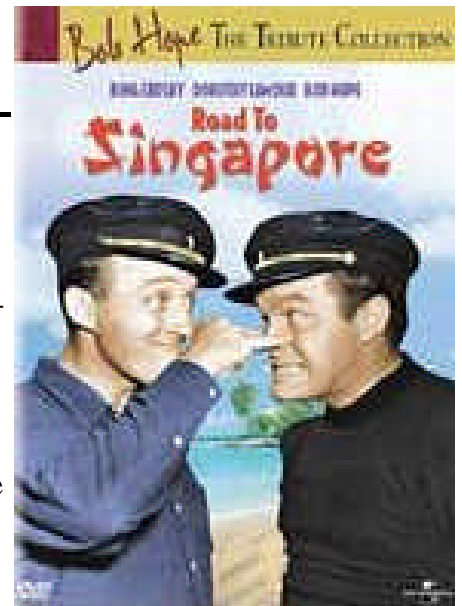
One of the first things you will notice about any of the Road movies is that Hope, Crosby, and Lamour really like each other. That kind of rapport is impossible to

fake. Hope

and Crosby established the rules of the game early on. They would adlib whatever wise-cracks came to mind. Some were planned adlibs, but most were spur of the moment. If you have grounding in American culture and especially the entertainment industry of the 40s, 50s, and early 60s, you will be able to pick up on a lot of these inside jokes. The comic chemistry between

Lamour, Crosby, and Hope was so popular with audiences that the three reunited for six sequels up until 1962

P.S. Crosby always ends up with the girl.



Hummus Among Us

Lebanese Restaurant Review by Beth Brogaard (PCV, Nouakchott)

Are you craving something besides pizza? Ready for a large satisfying meal? Do you miss buffet-style eating? Well, if you are willing to pay the price, there is a restaurant that is sure to please your palette.

Located in the Park Hotel – near Marché Capital – there is a Lebanese restaurant offering both good quality and large quantities. There is a full menu, but the option of choice is a mini-buffet brought to your table. Diners chose the number of dishes they would like; 6 dishes for 2000um, 12 dishes for 4000um, etc. Soon the table is covered with small dishes of falafel, tabouli, humus, baba ganoosh, and other unpronounceable (but very edible) dishes! Take your bread or pita and dig in!

The setting is very classy and alcohol is available – although not necessarily practical on a volunteer budget! To get to the restaurant, head towards Marché Capital, turn on the paved road that passes by Top Technology. There is a hotel set back a little ways on the same side of the street as Top Technology – the Park Hotel. The restaurant is located on the main floor of the hotel.



Music Channel Review

By Whitney Rokui, (PCV, Nouadhibou)



ETV

One of the most recent discoveries, broadcasted from the United Arab Emirates. Overall, I'd have to say that the theme for this channel is edgy looks with bland music. Not much grabs your attention unless you count the scrolling marquee following the conversations of lovebirds frolicking out in cyberspace. FYI-Hooked on Phonics did **not** experience the global success previously advertised. Nevertheless I was rather excited to see two of Britney Spears's videos in one morning. Now who's being overprotected....quoi?

Melody Hits

A longtime favorite that plays an unequal number of English videos verses the "others." Whenever you turn on this channel, I guarantee you'll be filled with an overwhelming desire to jump up and shake it just like Beyoncé in her "Crazy in Love" video. Unfortunately Melody Hits teases you by displaying the names of songs you'll never see.

Nagham

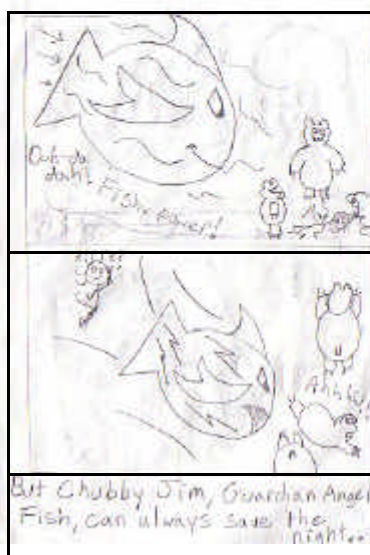
When the above aren't available, this is a decent substitute whenever you need a taste of pop music. You have a mix of videos, but the Arabic dance-athons sponsored by Pepsi get a thumbs down. Too many bad dancers with hair extensions on podiums are enough to make you beg for Christina Aguilera.

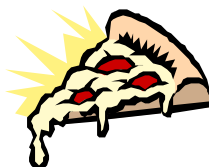
* don't forget to lower your standards before watching any of these channels!



The Adventures of Chubby Jim

By JK1 (new PCV, Breun)





The Pizza Chronicles: Part 1

The Nouakchott Notes team of food critics will review a different pizza place each issue in the quest to provide accurate, useful information to the pizza-eating public.

This issue's featured restaurant:

Pizza Hot

Ambiance

Upon arriving at Pizza Hot one could almost imagine being at a pizza fast food restaurant in the US. We were greeted by uniformed staff who offered us the choice of sitting indoors flooded by neon lights or outdoors with a charming view of the street.



Critics Nicolas and Adriane enjoy Pizza Hot for its ambiance and tasty cuisine

Pizza Hot has a very professional look complete with Dominoes take out boxes and placemats. Individual Pizzas are served on lazy susans. Frequent patrons of Mauritanian restaurants will appreciate the abundance of napkins and availability of utensils. These touches probably explain why Pizza Hot seems to be frequented by the trendy Moor population of Nouakchott. There is also a certain comfort a customer can take in knowing that one can go to Pizza Vite a few doors away if one is not satisfied at Pizza Hot.

Service

The staff at Pizza Hot was friendly and eager to please. The menu consisted of the typical Mauritanian pizza fare although Critic Danny Carmen was disappointed to learn that the *viande haché* did not come with onions (although had he read the menu it would not have been such a surprise). Also, adding pineapple costs more than an actual can of pineapple. These experiences did teach us the valuable lesson that one cannot bargain over the price of pizza toppings, even in Mauritania.

The amount of time it took our waiter to bring us tap water can only be explained by him boiling and bleaching it which was very thoughtful. While waiting for our drinks we had a rousing debate about pineapple as a topping and were approached by the staff of Pizza Pro who pleaded us to abandon Pizza Hot and try their establishment. "*Demain*," we told them. "*Haani Demain!*" When the water finally arrived it tasted like Omo indicating that the cups were clean. *Al hamdoulillah!* Within a reasonable amount of time our health-conscious waiter delivered the pizzas to our table.

Food

Upon first site of her pizza, crust-enthusiast Megan Kaufmann exclaimed, "It is thick! This place is wonderful!" Vegetarian Alden Kline stated the pizza had good cheese, a trait that is important to pizza not being masked by meat. Most of the critics found the pizza to be enjoyable. However there was the complaint that it managed to be burned yet not hot. Pizza Hot is a misleading name since it serves pizza lukewarm. Perhaps the considerate staff did not want us to burn our mouths.

Conclusion

With tasty pizza, a wallet-friendly menu, and good service Pizza Hot is a good choice particularly for those who appreci-

Kristen and Obie's MRE Review

Welcome to a new addition to the Nouakchott Notes. In case you are ever forced to choose from an MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) box, we thought you might like to have a preview of the menu choices that await you (this will also allow you to avoid getting stuck with the lame meals). Most commonly eaten in Mauritania during coups and when PCVs are facing malnutrition. Also readily available in your local sporting goods or Army/Navy Surplus store back home. Enjoy (bring scissors, "sporks" not included).



Menu No. 22

Item	Packaged	Fat Grams	Fat Calories	Calories	Kristen Stars	Obie Stars	Comment
Pork Chow Mein	Evansville, IN	22	198	360	5	5	Water chestnuts nice touch, Tabasco adds bite, tasty sauce, beef shredded, best with chow mein noodles
Chow Mein Noodles	Brooklyn, NY	6	54	140	5	4.5	Nice and crunchy, fresh, good flavor. A great snack alone
Oatmeal Cookie with Chocolate Flavored Coating	San Antonio, TX	10	90	190	2.5	2	Not impressed. Chocolate sucked plastic. Crunchy, but square "uncookie" form not appealing. Need a drink to wash it down with.
Peanut Butter	Stone Mountain, GA	19	171	260	4	4	Not quite Skippy but pretty darn good.
Vegetable Crackers	Evansville, IN	6	54	180	3	4	Flavorful and crunchy but very dry.
Beverage Base Powder (Grape)	Brooklyn, NY	0	0	130	4	1	Kristen liked change of color from dry to liquid form. Also liked that it made up for lack of jelly. Obie hated.
Gum	Parts Unknown	0	0	0	4	1	A bit hard but refreshes breath.
OVERALL Rating		63	567	1260	23.5	21.5	
MRE Heater	Parts Unknown						O.K. but toxic bubbles a bit scary
Spoon	Parts Unknown				5		Well designed and a keepsake
Tabasco Sauce	Avery Island, LA				5	5	Anything from Louisiana is GREAT!
Iodized Salt	Wilmington, MA				1	1	Not needed (unless you have a goiter).
Good Earth China Black Tea	Santa Cruz, CA				5	1	Excellent brand. Obie is not a tea drinker.
Tissues/Toilet Paper	San Francisco, CA				4	2	Kristen likes the utilitarian idea that you can wipe your face or other places. Obie says "that's what your left had is for!"
Domino's Sugar	NYC, NY				5	1	Good for tea and a quick fix.
Cream Substitute, Dry, Non-dairy	Decatur, AL				1	1	When in Mauritania, why would you need a substitute? Camels, goats, and cows offer a fresh squeeze...
Moist Towelette	Riverside, NJ				5	5	Refreshing after dinner clean-up



Official poet of Stage 2003,
Jay Davidson

Letter Home by Jay Davidson

Dear family and friends,

The objective of this letter I am writing to you

Is to explain some of
what we are going

through.

By the end of
my missive you'll
have an idea
Of the various
aspects of our
daily life here.
Little did we
know when we
met in Pennsylv-
ania

What was in store for us here in Maur-
itania!

Sometimes I wonder what I've gotten
into,

Here in the land of Moustapha and
Bintu.

The Trainees' routines are confusing
and strange

Because all of our schedules are sub-
ject to change.

We sit on the floor, and I have a confes-
sion:

Finding comfortable seating is my new-
est obsession.

Wherever we go, there are people
around.

A full day of solitude is not to be found.

Most of us think that the children are
sweet,

Except when they shout out "toubab" in
the street.

They sure make me wonder, sometimes,
what I am,



Natalie C. and Julia

As they see fit to say to me, "*Bonjour, ma-
dame.*"

Their greetings are friendly and I try to
adapt,

But if I hear "*ça va?*" one more time, some-
one's gonna get slapped!

When we shop for our food, to the marché we
go,

Not Safeway or Kroger's or the Trader
named Joe.

The lunch and the dinner we eat with our
hand -

I think that the principal seasoning is
sand.

And that hunk on the plate that they said
was a goat?

I'd rather have pizza going down my
throat.

Each one of us is learning to treasure

The small things in life that can give us great
pleasure.

Like you wouldn't be-
lieve how utterly
fantastic

Is Dalla's homemade
yogurt in those little
bags of plastic.

And the feeling that
we get, just short of



Becky's first impression of Mauritania

sublime,

When we make it to the toilet just in time!

Some of us took a trip all the way to Nouak-
chott;

You should have seen the car we got!

It took seven hours in that old Peugeot.

I'd give you the details, but you don't want to
know.

And when we got
there, what did we
see

But total vehicular
anarchy!



Sherif teaches the essentials of Mauritanian
hygiene

Run, run, run, as fast as
you can!
Don't be the next victim
of the taximan!

Beep, beep, charette! We
want to pass!

Hey, what's Hassaniya for "Move that
ass!"?

The first thing we did there, quick as a
wink,

We went to a restaurant to get us a
drink.

A thousand ougiya we paid for each beer,
And when they arrived, we let out a
cheer.

We enjoyed the eight days of our visits
to sites,

Then returned to the heat of Kaédi –
that bites!

You don't have to worry at all about me
Because I'm in excellent company.

I am surrounded by wonderful folk –
Funny, well-traveled, and smart – that's
no joke.

Annika, Angus, Becky, and Will,
Jennifer, Katie, Audrey, and Jill,
One Marc with a "c" and two with a "k,"
The Ayrin who spells her
name with an "A."

Karl with a "K" and Carl
with a "C,"

Erin E. and Erin P.

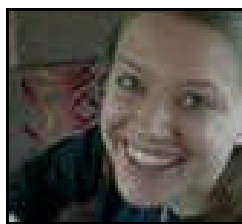
Arizona's Melanie,

Natalie C. and Natalie E.

The Margarets, yet another pair,



Jackson



Erin P.

Stephanie,
Nathan, and
Robert.



Angus and some new friends

Two Lisas have we; now check out this action:
Put them together, you get Michael Jackson.

Alice, Julia,
and Notre
Dame Dan,
You, Mr. Sut-
ton, "Stand
up! Be a
man!"

Our couples
are three,
and here's a

surprise:

One of each

from two programs do they comprise.

Jessica and Scott, Genny and Hector,

One from the SED and one from Ed. sector.

Of course I remembered dear Kari and Mitch.

How could you forget that sun of a gun?

Dana, Miriam, Andy, and Matt,

Smiling Janine and a gal named Cat.

Heather, Ginny, Brandon, and Molly –

I can't imagine a group more jolly.

Our Volunteer work is about to begin;

Tomorrow is our swearing in.

Eighty days of PST

About to become history.

We've studied the culture and built up our
confidence

As we have progressed through each language
competence.

We sure learned a lot – now don't get me
wrong,

But I think that it went on for three weeks
too long!

All of the Trainees who made it
this far,

Can now say together,
"Alhamdulillah!"

That's all for right now. What
more can I say?

I think of you often. I miss you.
Love, Jay.



Ali, Jay, Matt, and Dancing Carl on a typical day of training



Nana, Carl's stage-sister