

Nouakchott Notes

Pirates win 3rd consecutive trophy, go something-and-0 at WAIST

By Jess Palmer

On the afternoon of February 19th, WAIST organizer Nancy Toolan accosted Pirates coaches Keith Gaddis and Jess Palmer after the championship game, her furious eyes throwing silent accusations of steroid use, magic tricks, and peepee tucks in the infield. "You know," she said in her not-so-different-from-Fran-Drescher voice, "that being champions for three consecutive years will hopefully force you into the competitive league next year." To this, 'Captain Critter' and 'Captain Hooker' responded, "Brg dphhg pabrsy hmpde."

Inside this issue:

Obie announces new Risk Board Game sector for incoming volunteers

Stage trainers announced; APCDs, Sidna disappointed

Fitzpatrick's blog starting to read like harlequin romance novel

Repeated conversations about food we miss finally getting old

You're never going to make it all the way through Joyce's Ulysses

Harguth prank misinterpreted by all Ed volunteers

Aaah, the incoherence, the tea bags, the hangovers. The outsider hatred, the hook-ups. So goes WAIST. Oh yeah, and the softball.

On Friday, February 16th, more than eighty volunteers piled into their assigned buses, fueled with entirely too much adrenaline for the 5 A.M. departure time. (It was reported that a certain volunteer was even seen gyrating against the passenger-side wall of one of the buses.) The trip to Dakar was an undeniable success, despite one minor setback. The larger of the two buses was forced off the road and became so deeply embedded in a sand dune that, despite great effort, the volunteers could not push it free. The problem was remedied with the mysterious arrival of Cheikh Gueye, who pointed at the bus and said, "BOOYA!," then disappeared into the brousse as the vehicle righted itself back onto the road.

Having already lost one of their strongest players before even leaving Nouakchott (APCD Brian Zoeller was unable to attend), the Pirates began the tournament with what seemed like a disadvantage.



Inspiration, perspiration, inebriation: Pirates' trifecta of success

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Director's Notes

Obie Shaw, Country Director

Another issue of *Nouakchott Notes* so soon? Below are some quick briefing points for your information. My door is always open so please feel free to drop in!

Congratulations to our COSers!

You are all soon to accomplish a significant goal and I commend your strength and dedication. It has been a sincere honor to have served with you here in Mauritania and I wish you all much success in your future endeavors!

Extension Opportunities Last Call

For those of you still who might be thinking about the possibility of a 3rd Year extension with PC/Mauritania, please contact me **before May 20th**. We were allocated 5 slots in FY07 and if there is definitely no interest, I would prefer to return the \$\$ to the PC/Africa Region for use in other countries. Open Nouakchott-based 3rd Year positions include: 1) Small Projects Fund Coordinator; 2) Gender and Development Coordinator; and 3) tailored positions to meet interest of extending PCV. Additionally, two shorter term region-based extension positions (in Akjoujt and Nema) will be available to 3rd Year extendees. The start for these positions would be July 2007. All extendees receive 30-days home leave with travel provided by Peace Corps.

Staff Changes at the Office

First off, I would like to bid a fond farewell to PCMO **Cynthia Sullivan**. I am sure that I speak for all when I wish her the very best in her new role as a PCMO with PC Ghana! You might all be interested in knowing that the day she arrived in Ghana, the first confirmed case of Avian Flu in the country was announced ... you can imagine that she has her work cut out for her! A big welcome goes out to our soon-to-be new PCMO, **Sarah Nelson** (arriving June 9th) – Sarah comes to us from PC Mongolia where she has been serving as a PCV for the past two years. With his final two months winding down, I would like to thank APCD **Brian Zoeller** for his past term of service with Mauritania on behalf of the entire staff. We all wish him the very best in his future adventures. We expect to be interviewing for his replacement in early May. Congratulations go out to a number of staff. First to our soon-to-be former General Services Officer (GSO), **Aminetou Mint Baba** – Aminetou will be transitioning to the position of Voucher Examiner on May 14th. Being promoted to the position of GSO is our current Assistant GSO, **Mouhamedou El Moctar**. Thanks very much to **Rocky Haidara** for the time she spent working with Peace Corps as the Programming and Training Assistant for GEE. We are currently conducting interviews to fill the open PTA/GEE and A/GSO slots. Interviews are scheduled to take place in early May.

Official Visitors

We will be welcoming Peace Corps' Chief Financial Officer, **George Schutter** to post May 6th to 11th. In addition to meetings



with Mauritanian and American officials in Nouakchott, George will be traveling out to the Adrar region to meet with PCVs during his stay in Mauritania. AO David Solomon will be accompanying George to the Adrar. Many thanks to Peace Corps sub-regional Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO), **Michael Fitzgerald** (a.k.a. "Fitz") for his recent visit to Mauritania. This was Fitz' fifth visit to Mauritania. In the past, he has visited all of the southern and eastern regions of the country. On this trip, he visited volunteers in the Adrar region for the first time, met with security officials, and was instrumental in clarifying a number of outstanding office move security issues. Many thanks the Computer Refresh Team of **Gabriela Gomez** and **Sakib Khan**! For those of you who have had an opportunity to visit the office in the past week, you will have noticed that all of the computers and monitors have been replaced and more importantly, that the PCV Computer Room is operational! There are currently four PCV computers (to be expanded to nine during the non-PST months). In the coming month, we hope to have our wireless service up and running for PCVs with personal laptops. We are still working to get computer replacements/upgrades

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AgFo Notes

Mohamedou Aw, APCD/AgroForestry

Hello Again From the Agfo/EE Evergreen Corner

I hope every one is doing well and that it is still cool in your villages, towns and cities. I would like to first take this opportunity to congratulate the COSing group for almost two years of good service. Your hard work has been very appreciated by your communities and by PC staff. Good luck with the rest of your service as you are beginning the final stretch of your service. On behalf of all the APCDs and the Mauritanian communities I say THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE.

Kane and I have already visited most of you when doing site assessment. We are very happy with the level of integration in your communities and the work you are doing or planning to do. Kane will do Trarza soon and Guidimakha sometimes in May.

As you all know we are trying to open new regions. We are thinking of Hodh Chargui and Inchiri as new regions for EE and AgFo. We have been able to identify many good sites thanks to your help. We will continue involving you with the site assessment process.

IST in Dieuk

This year again the IST in Dieuk went well. It was highly rated by all participants. Thank you for bringing your counterparts and keeping it a fun and learning experience.

I know some of you were interested in the Indian Jujube, please let me if you are still interested and we can re-contact the cooperative in Dieuk about it and I could even ask Ibrahima Gueye (their technician) to develop a technical pamphlet about the tree (rearing it in the nursery, grafting, transplanting, maintenance, pest control etc.)

EE Workshop

As you all know the EE stakeholders' second workshop was held in February as a follow up to the EE pilot project evaluation last year. The objectives of this workshop were to revisit with the different stakeholders the results of the evaluation and to review the recommendations made during the field evaluation and the first stakeholders' workshop and based on that define the areas and the levels at which PC should intervene and craft a new project framework. According to the participants the workshop was very successful. We were able to accomplish a lot. We had a big turn out from the counterparts and the ministry officials both at central and regional levels. I am still working on finalizing the project framework document. It is taking more time than I have expected it to but it will come out someday (I promise).

Other good news about the EE program is that the Ministry of Education has created a division within its ministry in charge of the environment and environmental education in schools. This gives us a



focal point and a counterpart office for all matters related to EE in schools. It is a new division that is still figuring out its plan and settling in but is a good step in the right direction for EE in schools.

I would like to thank the PCVs who participated in the workshop. Their contribution was very valuable and greatly appreciated. I was glad that they were there to also serve as a reality check on what is feasible and doable and what is not.

School gardens update

Most of the supplies for the proposed sites (Aere Mbare, Belinaabe, Tokomadji, Wouloumboni and Ecole 1 & 2 in Kankossa) Have been delivered. Because the delivery happened so late in the gardening season, the rest of the school year will be used to set up the gardens (installing fences, digging or fixing wells, hooking up robinet systems etc.) and hopefully start a tree nursery for tree planting.

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Ed Notes

M. Abderrahmane O. Bagga, APCD/Education

Hello and welcome to the Ed. Notes of this new NN issue!

First of all, I wish to congratulate you all on a job well done over the past 6 months. Indeed, it has been overtly challenging for all of you to carry out your assignment during a school year that has endured many an interruption. Yet, you kept your good spirits and went on acquitting yourself professionally to the best of your capacity of the Educating tasks. And I do hope that you are enjoying and making the most of your Spring break!

New Trimester Report

In an effort to streamline reports, we have decided across sectors to adopt a new Trimester Report format. The new report format has the same outline/ headings across sectors and of course the same periodicity. We do hope that it will be easier to fill out for you and at the same more exhaustive in terms of information eliciting, as we decrease the reporting periods.

I've sent you electronically a couple weeks ago an updated version of the Project Framework as well as the new ED-TEFL Trimester Report. I'd like to point out a couple things here about the new reporting format and periods.

The reporting periods of the Trimester Report are **June–September (due on October 15th)**; **September–November (due on November 30th—this is a preliminary report for 1st Year ONLY)**; **October–January (report due on February 15th)**; **February–May (Report due on June 15th)**. Please note also that all of you are required to complete an Annual Section in the June Report for the technical component. This Annual Section is of a two-fold importance. First, it allows you-and us in NKC- to more clearly monitor and assess the impact of your activities over the year, on all of the beneficiaries/participants, with a cumulative effect at the end of the year. The annual section should thus give you some indication, for instance, on who among your students made progress and to which extent. Second, it allows us in NKC and DC to report back more easily on what you have been able to attain and how.

The new Trimester Report Format that you now have in your hands highlights the 4 capacity building levels in the Annual sheet and outlines the project framework goals and objectives as well. This gives an idea about how your activities contribute to achieving the project objectives and overall how to keep track of what you are doing.

I have also developed a condensed version of the Annual Report sheet in French that I'll be sharing with you very shortly by e-mail. We would like you to fill this out, as you do the June Report, and submit to your DREFS Office in your respective regions. We feel that this is important as it gives our partners and ourselves more accountability for what we do. It keeps them in the loop on a more formal basis, and allows them to feel more comfortable reporting up on what we do in



their regions. We used to report at the Central level mainly.

Project Framework Updates

Revisions brought to the ED Project Framework stem from a necessary refocus of the PCVs' activities since our goal three is now fully owned by the GEE PCVs. True we lost our goal 3, but hey we won a whole new Sector, GEE! Yes, we are glad that we were part—indeed at the roots-of the program growth that saw GEE emerge as a sector of its own, earlier this year! Let's wish the new Sector all the best again!

The new goal 3 of the Ed. Project framework places the emphasis on activities that pertain to fostering links and collaboration between schools and communities. We think that PCVs are in a privileged position to work as liaison between the school administrations, the teachers, the students, on one hand, and the PTA (or A.P.E.), and the community, on the other hand, to render school more in tune to what takes place out there and To achieve this, PCVs will undertake a wide range of activities

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Health Notes

Douda Diallo, APCD/Health Education

Voeux et Remerciements...

In nearly five months, PC RIM staff, Mauritanian communities and counterparts will have to sadly say goodbye again to a committed group of volunteers. Well! This is life.... As we're moving closer to the end of your service, I would like to congratulate all of you for the excellent job done and the rich contributions you have constantly brought in improving the lives of thousands of Mauritians. Thank you all for accepting to serve in Mauritania particularly, a country that was probably unknown to most of you before receiving your invitation to join Peace Corps. Whatever your plans are, I wish you good luck in your future endeavors. I am sure you'll all keep up the good work for the remaining months of your service.

Par Ailleurs, I would like to thank and encourage the many Health volunteers who are now working hard on their projects: Nutrition, Health Education, HIV/AIDS week, Murals, latrine projects, trash collection, Girls Health Education in GMCs, Avian Flu training, PCVs who are preparing other trainings for less skilled health workers (traditional birth attendants) and the ones who are setting up girls health clubs. Thanks to those who were actively involved in the World AIDS day last December... *Du courage*. Your efforts are really appreciated.

Last but not least, you all know by now that our *Ajar Debe Gume*, PCV Ariana Metchik, has accepted to lead the Health component technical training for the upcoming PST. I look forward to a great PST and to working with her this summer in warm *warm* Kaédi.... Thank you *Debe Gume*...

Upcoming HIV/AIDS Training for PCVs and counterparts

To tackle the many complex problems associated with the growing AIDS pandemic in the developing world, Peace Corps Washington launched a worldwide initiative on HIV/AIDS, asking all volunteers regardless of their primary project to implement at least one HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention educational activity during the course of their 2 year service. Our training program has always included HIV/AIDS in its training curriculum, and our volunteers have constantly educated communities and counterparts in that capacity.

To better address this initiative, PC RIM Health Program will organize a 5 day intensive HIV/AIDS/Life Skills training for a group of Volunteers and their counterparts. These trainings will be facilitated by local Guinean trainers who are familiar with the Peace Corps Life Skills approach and well versed in the techniques of HIV/AIDS awareness education and prevention and communication for behavior change. The training will emphasize HIV/AIDS as a development issue and teach



participants Life Skills techniques highlighting communication for behavior change.

The training seeks to motivate and train not only Volunteers (who have 1-2 years of time to work on HIV/AIDS related activities in their remote villages), but also their Mauritanian counterparts. This training opportunity encourages self-sufficiency and sustainability as it empowers an individual from his/her own community. It involves the transfer of knowledge and it promotes capacity building, two criteria essential for development.

Moreover, conducting such training reinforces the need to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a true development issue, not merely a health concern. This training also stresses the importance of a multi-sector approach as the repercussions of the pandemic affect all levels of society and sectors.

Additionally, it is intended that this workshop will enhance the working relationship between the volunteers and their counterparts, as well as provide a forum for a formal venue for capacity building activities for the Mauritians. After the workshop, the volunteers and their counterparts will implement activities using the knowl-

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SED Notes

Brian Zoeller, APCD/Small Enterprise Development Mauritania Economics Roundup

In the news these past months are elections, elections and more elections culminating in what appears to be successful and peaceful elections. Yeah! Now we can all move forward more easily with our projects and partnerships. What this means for the world of business and IT remains to be seen. What we hope for is some good governance, continued openness to investment and transparency in country, and strong leadership that starts a direction that everyone can buy into. As part of buying into Mauritania, I will be asking certain volunteers, counterparts and officials to join us in mid to late May for a Stakeholder's Workshop. These sessions are designed to test whether our project plan guides us properly over the next 3-4 years in a way which the government wants us to assist. Thanks in advance for your participation.

Of recent, the Islamic Bank pledged \$18 million to build a road from Tidjikja to Atar and about 15% of that amount to assist irrigation efforts in the Sengal River basin. The Spanish Cooperation also signed a large pact with Mauritania to work on irrigation/appropriate technology projects in the Rosso, Boghé, Kaedi areas. The mining sector, which represents between 12 and 15 percent of its GDP and 55 percent of its export earnings, is expected to boost the economy this year. Projections of 4 tones of gold will be extracted in a new Canadian/Mauritanian mine half way between NKT and NDB. The mine in Akjoujt is now producing approximately 2 tons of gold annually and 120,000 of concentrated copper.

What this partially expresses to us is that external price shocks (previous NKT Notes) and internal consistency of resource availability greatly affect this country's wealth and budgetary outlook. This is where we come in, the informal sector. We educate Mauritians one person at a time to build their capacity to improve their own life without reliance on income or access to funds that may not fully reach them.

Last Trimester's Highlights

Aaron Dibner-Dunlap was recently selected to be our SED/ICT technical coordinator. This is going to be a big job this year because APCD's will be turning over around the end of June and beginning of July for SED. Thanks to Aaron for taking this challenge on.

My grandma turned 100. Just thought I'd mention that.

No one appears to want to extend. I suppose I'll take that as you knew I was leaving and you couldn't bear another year without me. I'm misty-eyed. Some volunteers are trying out a new Village Savings and Loan program I learned about last year: Aaron, Heather, pinch-hitters Loic and Mira, and Brooke. This is basically a savings club that can also turn into a financing of projects club over time. The essence however is to focus on internal reliance.

Sam Bryar has been surveying tourists in Chinguetti at the airport and crunching data with Leah's Access database. We hope to find out more about the tourism industry in the Adrar. With the new road to



Tidjikja, one can imagine the tours many will take from here and loop around the road of hope and back.

Leah Dale married Mowdou Cheikhna Sow and many witnessed the nuptials. It was a very nice ceremony and very fruitful for SED PCV's to show up and train the people of Kiffa in Computers and the girls at the GMC's. Tyler Cummings-Bond has worked his @\$& off putting together the Project Database with help from Todd and Saman. Many a stage will benefit from that effort. Dan Zhu continues to work with the youth and local government of Rosso to build profitable, sustainable music businesses.

Sam Riesland has almost finished a Linux based CD for Cyber Café's to install as free, legitimate virus protection. Derrek Hansen, wife Mary, Chris Fletcher, Fred Lam and Leah Dale have done a great job putting together French and English versions of a Computer Maintenance and Repair manual that will be available soon to anyone, especially GMC's. There are others doing many things and the first year PCV's continue to improve language, community understanding, selection of projects and people to work with... You've had a rough start with the elections and that is much noted by staff. But now they are over and you should expect more interested audience groups to work with in the ensuing months. Best of luck.

GEE Notes

Fatimatou mint Babana, APCD/GEE

The Girls Education and Empowerment (GEE) Project sets out as its key goal to support Girls' Education in primary and secondary schools in Mauritania by undertaking quality and quantity actions to improve the ratio of female to male students in this country. More specifically The GEE sector will seek to alleviate and mitigate obstacles and difficulties that stand as a stumbling block towards the securing of better rates of access, retention, and transition (into secondary/tertiary) of girls' schooling in Mauritania. Thus, in the long term, the project will foster equitable and sustainable capacity building for girls, allowing them to participate in an effective manner in the economic and political development of their communities and country. An inter-sectoral approach would allow a global response to the diverse constraints that hinder girls' schooling. The project strategy is based also on sustainability and transferability.

Stakeholders' Workshop

A stakeholders' workshop was held in February, 2007. Dr Linda Gonzales and Teri Wingate from PC Washington participated. And as a result the purpose, goals and objectives were set out as follows:

Purpose

Adolescent girls will make informed decisions about their futures, increase their attendance and success in school, and participate in the development process of their communities.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Adolescent girls will participate in activities that provide access to life skills, livelihood, and academic formation in an environment that supports behavior change.

Objective 1: By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts will train 12,240 adolescent Girls throughout Mauritania in life skills and livelihood in clubs (GMCs, CFs, etc) that provide a safe and supportive environment. As a result, 50% of the girls will gain new skills and 10% will adopt new behaviors. **Objective 2:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts will organize tutorial classes for 9180 at-risk Adolescent Girls to promote their retention and success in school. As a result, 20% of these girls will pass to the next class. **Objective 3:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts will organize activities with 12,240 adolescent girls that create a mutually supportive environment and strengthen peer relationships of support. As a result, 20% of the participants will engage in activities that support peers.

Goal 2: Service providers (mentors, youth workers, peer educators, teachers) will plan and implement projects/activities that benefit girls and increase girls retention and success in school and community life.

Objective 1: By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts will train 1020 service providers (mentors, peer educators, youth trainers) in life skills and livelihood skills using principles of gender equity. As



a result, 20% of service providers trained will plan and implement activities for adolescent girls that increase their knowledge and adoption of healthy lifestyles. **Objective 2:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts will train 1020 service providers (mentors, peer educators, youth workers, teachers, APE, and AME) to provide tutoring and counseling services to at risk girls and their families. As a result, 20% of service providers will initiate activities that support girls in school success and retention. **Objective 3:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts in collaboration with the MoE will train 1020 teachers (primary and secondary) in gender equity and positive reinforcement for girls in the classroom. As a result, 20% of teachers trained will increase the participation of girls in their classes.

Goal 3: Communities will support girls through the coordinated actions of families, community groups, school and national and local administration.

Objective 1: By the year 2012, PCVs and counterparts will facilitate the development of 35 networks of community organizations that support girls' education. As a result, 35 communities will advocate for improvements to address the constraints to girls' edu-

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Get Trained

Ahmed ould Sidna, Training Coordinator



PST Preparation

We are getting ready for PST 2007 Pre-service training and there are tons of things to be completed in order to be ready before the arrival of the new trainees. Seventy-seven trainees! Can you imagine?

So far, among the activities that were completed we have the interviews and selection of sector PCV coordinators and assistant coordinators as well as the language facilitator interviews (their final selection will be completed by May 15, 2007). The HCN assistant coordinators will be interviewed and selected in two weeks at the latest.

After the interviews for the PST positions, the following applicants have been selected:








- ★ **Health Training Coordinator:** Ariana Metchik
- ★ **EE Training Coordinator:** Keith Gaddis
- ★ **SED/ICT Coordinator:** Aaron Dibner-Dunlap
- ★ **X-Culture Coordinator:** Michael Donovan
- ★ **Admin Coordinator:** Mary Fitzpatrick
- ★ **Education Assistant Coordinator:** Kate Van Roekel
- ★ **Agroforestry Assistant Coordinator:** Michael Thoms
- ★ **GEE Assistant Coordinator:** Amanda Moody
- ★ **EE Assistant Coordinator:** TBD
- ★ **Health Assistant Coordinator:** TBD
- ★ **SED/ICT Assistant Coordinator:** TBD

The Training Manager and the Language Coordinator will be traveling to Kaédi on April 25, 2007 to finalize the center needs assessment.

PCV Site Visits Summary

Later in this issue of Nouakchott Notes is a table of the main issues that PCVs encounter at site and the ideas that could be developed (taken from data gathered during site visits).

PST Key Dates

-  Training Design and Evaluation (TDE) workshop in Nouakchott on **May 3-4, 2007**
-  Integration Workshop (IW) in Nouakchott on **May 8 & 11, 2007**
-  Homestay coordinators on board **May 14, 2007**
-  Logisticians on board **May 28, 2007**
-  Coordinators on board **June 4, 2007**
-  Staff support on board **June 7, 2007**
-  Language facilitators on board **June 12, 2007**

The PST staff will be leaving to the training center in Kaédi on June 12, 2007.

US still awesome, says Dibner-Dunlap

An Editorial

Hi, friends. Many of you probably already know this, but I recently went on a trip to the United States. And you know what? America is still really great.

First of all, there are so many paved roads! At least twice the number of roads in Mauritania. So when I went walking from my host family to my English facilitator's house, it wasn't nearly as rough on my knees and ankles as shifting sands. Plus, there are sidewalks! Sidewalks that cars don't drive on. So instead of a 70% chance of being hit by a car, there's only a 2% chance!

There are also multiple types of soda! So many that I had a hard time deciding. Do I want Coke, Coke with lemon, Diet Coke, Pepsi, Pepsi Twist, Pepsi One, Diet Pepsi? And they all taste sooooo different! In addition to soda, a great deal

of products have different brands and varieties. Powdered milk, palm oil, water-soluble coffee, and even canned pineapple all have so many different styles to choose from. And after rigorous sampling and testing, I concluded that all of this variety is definitely necessary and not at all superfluous. How else will I develop my highly refined taste for Corn Flakes if I cannot pick between box sizes and types? Choice of Corn Flakes is just part of what makes America great.

There are also movies in the States. English-language movies! I was so glad to watch *Amelie*, *Crouching Tiger/Hidden Dragon*, or my large stock of anime and really understand what was going on.

People are so friendly, too. Kids, instead of throwing rocks, would throw marshmallows. They hurt so much less! Strangers, instead of shouting things like *Toubab* or *Nasrani*, will just call out famil-

iar phrases like *Asshole* or *Motherfucker*!

You know what are missing, though? American-themed products. Hawaii soda, American Legend cigarettes. I wanted to celebrate being in the home of the brave by buying an American-flag wallet, but these were surprisingly hard to find. What's going on? Don't people love the brand of America? Don't people want to show love for their country by shelling out money for appropriate products? I thought expressing one's identity through consumerism was *en vogue*, but I guess not.

You know what exists in America? Flying cars. It's true, I drove (flew?) one. Invisibility cloaks, too. They haven't quite exploded onto the fashion scene yet, but there's a solid cadre of cloak-wearers out there. I brought one back with me; if you want to, you can touch it.

Chalk Chat Corner!

With Bahena Ould Moustapha, PTA/ED

Hello and congratulations! It's almost the end of the school year, and you all did a great job despite the number of disruptions we have had this year.

THE CLASSROOM AND THE COMMUNITY

In order to give meaning to what we teach, we should make sure it's relevant to the students' lives and communities. As Lou Holtz put it, "Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it", hence the necessity to be selective as far as planning activities is concerned if we are really interested in providing our students with the himself in the place of those who find learning hard," (Eliphas Levi).

STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE MISTAKES

Lets not consider this a failure, as "Failure begins" only "when we stop trying". We should rather encourage them to make more efforts and help them feel confident about their learning, as that "first failure may pave the way for later success," (Arnold Lobel, *Fables*).

Students will certainly face a lot of difficulty, which requires our patience and that we should always remember that "A good teacher must be able to put himself in the place of those who find learning hard," (Eliphas Levi).

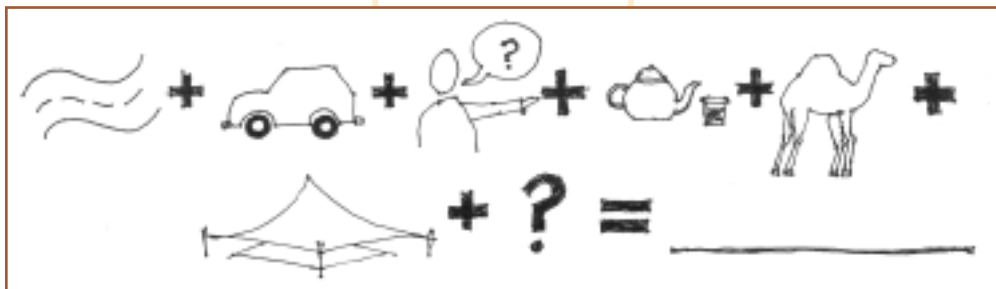
Paved with Good Intentions

By Andy Deer

I recently saw a local newspaper reporting the inaugural ceremony to commence construction of the new road from Kaedi to Selibaby. The press was overly ecstatic to report it had been given a name: *La Route D'Espoir Deux*. Forgive me if my feeble high school French fails me, but I believe this roughly translates to 'The Road of Hope Two'. I have never seen the street signs for the Road of Hope One, but the rumor is that this is the name that was once

the 'The Rosso-Boghé Road' which is a lousy name at best, if you can even call it that. If only I had realized this oversight earlier in my service, I could have given this project the attention it deserves.

For those of you in other corners of the country who might be unaware, I'll provide some background. Ever since my arrival in Thielaw there has been talk of a road connecting Rosso and Boghé, and it has been under construction for many years. Cars traveling out to near my site might occasionally drive



Suggested ballot item for naming the new road. It has been optimized for maximum comprehension.

given to the road from Nouakchott all the way out to Jake's third year site assignment of Nema. MyWest Africa Michelin® Map simply calls it *route fréquemment ensablé*, which I am pretty certain is a bad name for a road that I *fréquemment* see nothing traveling on. When I saw that this new gemstone of the national highway system was to be named as a sequel, my heart broke with despair and I spiraled into a two week bout of melancholy (which, now that I think about it, was probably caused by cheeseburger withdrawal following my last trip to Senegal). The name made me think of a stupid Hollywood spoof that Leslie Nielson would star in. I started to run down a long list of names in my head that would be more fitting than *Deux*. Geez, what a missed opportunity! It could have been a write-in slot on the backside of the presidential ballot, a picture based word puzzle to describe the question for the illiterate: ? = _____.

If I had had a road running to my site I would have made a commitment to make that my SED project for my two years, encouraging the people of Mauritania to name it accurately, for the sake of tourism. I could have filled out a PCPP request for the cost of installing a new roadway sign saying "Welcome to the La Route de _____". Then it hit me...I **do** have a new road running to my site and as far as I know I have only ever heard it ever referred to as

on or by the gravel base being laid, and I watched the progress as culverts were built, blown out by a rainstorm, and then rebuilt one size larger- a method that appeared trial and error but I assure you was just a misunderstanding from a translation error in the Pulaar-Mandarin Dictionary. At any rate, the road recently made it all the way to the village of Lougatt about 80 km west of Boghé. Just a short 5 km hike north of my village, a fact that until now I have tried to keep quiet, because I have lost all my street cred with guys like Tad and Colton, and Beth in Maal. No longer do I have stories of forging rivers in the darkness or hiking through kilometers of ankle deep water (PCMO note: in water proof hip waders of course which I always carry in my backpack along with black medical kit, mosquito net, life vest and Health handbook of course).

The road coming from the west has made considerably less progress; area PCVs say it's still mostly gravel for 70 km. This leaves about 100 km or more in the middle that are somewhat untraveled by PC aside from the regular safari trek APCD Brian Zoeller calls site visits—on which he continually fails to stop and drop me off any apples or loaves of bread. Everyone had claimed 2006 would be the year of completion, but here it is 2007 and no signs of things

Continued on page 11

Road, Continued from page 10

picking up. When it is complete I want it to have a name, and a good one—not *Part Trois*. So help me by getting the country talking and try to give them some creative inspiration! Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Road of Thorns

Route de la Fleuve

Road of Good Intentions

Road of No Return

Route of Depravity

Route Out

Exit

Highway to Heaven

Route 666

Cannery Row

Khayma Highway

Goudron

Road to Democracy

Magnificant Km (Mile)

National Scenic Highway

Going-Through-the-Sun Road

Red Ridge Parkway

Mauritanian TurnPike

Daoda, Continued from page 5

edge and skills they have gained to educate their communities about HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention and promote additional knowledge and skills transfer at the local level.

Tentative dates for the workshop are May 21 thru 27. In the next fifteen days, I will email you more precise updates as I finalize the logistics with Headquarters in DC and the Guinean local organization, Groupe Vie Saine (GVS) who are both actively involved in preparing the workshop. Look forward to this event.

World Wise Schools Update

PCV	Teacher	Teacher Address
Robert Bryant	Amber Bright	Hunters Creek Middle School 4040 Hunters Trail Jacksonville, NC 28546
Whitney Carr	Sonia Childress-Hoek	Frankton Junior/Senior High School 610 East Clyde Street Frankton, IN 46044
Jolene Foucault	Lisa Main	North Douglas High School 305 South Main Street Drain, OR 97435
Laura Hoffmann	Cindy Murphy	Obsidian Middle School 1335 SW Obsidian Avenue Redmond, OR 97756
Colton Hubbard	Robert Dutton	Glenridge Middle School 2900 Upper Park Rd. Orlando, FL 32810
Pamela Kyle	Jill Lambert	Horning Middle School 2000 Wolf Road Waukesha, WI 53186
Amanda Magdalena	Joyce Zimmer	Vermillion Middle School 422 Princenton Street Vermillion, SD 57069
William Robsky	Ginny Knapp	Keene High School 43 Arch Street Surry, NH 03431
Laura Smith	Janet Lepre	Hommocks Middle School 130 Hommocks Rd. Larchmont, NY 10538

Interoffice Memo

From: Brian Zoeller, SED APCD

To: PCRIM

As I wind my time down in Mauritania (without knowing what is next), I want to take this opportunity to thank a few groups of people, firstly the staff. Local staff has been acclaimed to be on of the best in Africa. Without a doubt, that is the case. Staff, specifically my programming and training colleagues, have always been there for me and they've taken the time to make me feel invited, appreciated, and through their tutelage, more competent than when I arrived. I will miss their friendships dearly and the trips we've all taken together.

To my sector volunteers, for all of their hard work and participation in all that PC Mauritania does in this country. I've consistently seen my role here as providing you assistance and resources so you are equipped to help those in your community. It is my hope that you leave here feeling you were able to be of assistance and that many (including yourself) are better off for it.

For all the other sector volunteers and PCVs of years ago, thank you for your hospitality, laughter and openness. My experience, perhaps like your own in Mauritania, has been challenging at times but in the end very rewarding both personally and professionally. I know I've changed and grown and I've seen that in each of you. Let us keep in touch and best of luck in your futures here and beyond.



Obie, Continued from page 2

for the regional satellite offices. I encourage all RCs to continue to follow-up with Mauritel on the possibility of either DSL or CDMA Internet service for your regional bureaus. Thanks again for your patience with all of these computer issues (FYI: the current worldwide "policy" for PC-provided volunteer computers is that one computer is provided for every 25 PCVs in country ... we are already ahead of the curve but have requested replacement computers from PC/W for each PC Regional office).

My Upcoming Travel

I will be traveling out-of-country May 11th through the 19th attending the annual country director conference taking place this year in Maputo, Mozambique. I will depart for official home leave on May 24th returning to post on June 19th. During both absences, AO David Solomon will be Acting CD.

Nouakchott No Travel Days

Please note that PCV travel to Nouakchott will be restricted from June 25th through July 5th to essential travel only (medical emergencies, catching flights, etc...).

Welcome Committee

As is PC Mauritania tradition, members of the Welcome Committee for the new training class will consist of the newly elected RCs and 3rd Year PCVs. You will all be contacted soon with additional details.

Office Closures

The PC Office will be closed the following days: May 25th (Africa Day); May 28th (Memorial Day); June 27th & 28th (Trainee Arrival and In-Processing); July 4th (U.S. Independence Day).

Obie

April 2007

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Siham, Continued from page 7

Objective 2: By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and counterparts will train and coach 210 community groups in the change process and build their capacity to implement sustainable projects to support girls' education. As a result, the 21 communities will carry out projects in favor of girls' education.

Goal 4: Girls Mentoring Centers will be supported by the local community in coordination with the regional representative of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Objective 1: PCVs, CF Regional Coordinators and counterparts will establish and train GMC advisory committees in 35 targeted sites. As a result, advisory committees will participate in the development and implementation of strategies for the sustainability of GMCs. **Objective 2:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs, CF Regional Coordinators will train managers and mentors for all GMCs. As a result, all GMCs will be locally managed and provided with trained mentors. **Objective 3:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and CF Regional Coordinators will create new GMCs and upgrade existing GMCs

in accordance with established criteria and seek sustainable resources to equip and maintain the centers. As a result, new and existing GMCs will be sustainable. **Objective 4:** By the year 2012, 102 PCVs and CF Regional Coordinators will evaluate the effectiveness of GMCs on an annual basis. As a result, GMCs will function effectively and meet established criteria for sustainability and services.

Bagga, Continued from page 4

involving students, peers, school administrations, PTAs, parents and community members at large. Examples of these activities include commemorating important Days such as Earth Day, Tree Day, Women's Day, HIV/AIDS, etc. Processes will include discussions, chats, excursions, theater skits to sensitize the community on the related issues and integrated pertinent content in the language class. Students could be asked to undertake a group survey on pertinent themes in their community (e.g. child malnutrition, desertification, pollution, illiteracy...) to share with other classes and then work out a plan to address these issues by initiating awareness raising activities that target specific groups in the community with a view to change attitude and then behavior. You could invite other sector PCVs, such as Health, and have your students ask them questions, for example, on what makes a balanced diet. Then take the students out to organizations/ structures in the community (Women's coops, youth associations, or the PTAs) to share the health information with the group members, who in turn will disseminate the information in their households. Other popular activities that most Ed. PCVs have

undertaken include school/community exchange visits, sports tournaments, end of school year awards/prizes giving, Little Sister-Big Sister exchanges, Annual Girls' Education Conferences, Eco Camps, Career Fairs and Clubs.

So as you could see most of these activities have been undertaken in the past –and are still by Ed. PCVs, the only difference being that, with the refocus, they are more explicitly spelt out under Goal 3, instead of just being merged into goals 1 & 2 under extra-curricular activities or volunteer initiatives.

Ultimately, what we are seeking is to trigger a dynamics that brings about a more effective collaboration between the school and the community. Our Goal 3 activities will be about making what is taught at school more pertinent to the community and involving the latter more into what takes place at the school. This should contribute to having parents gain a more positive understanding of what their children do at school, with a view to value education in their eyes, and thus get their support to better sustain their kids' schooling.

School Vacation Dates

Since this is still the Holiday season, here is a reminder for school breaks and exams dates for the rest of **the school year 2006-2007**. For the Second Quarter: Schools will be out on Wednesday, March 28 through Monday, April 9th, 2007 at 08:00. For the third Quarter, *Grandes Vacances*: Friday, June 15th at 12:00 to Monday, September 24th, at 08:00.

End of year Exams: Monday, May 28th to Friday, June 8th, 2007.

Ø **Bac (First round): June 11-14, 2007**

Ø **Bac (Second round): July 17th & 18th, 2007.**

PST News

We are delighted to announce that Kate Van Roekel was selected, out of a very competitive group of candidates, to fill the position of Assistant Ed. Trainer for the upcoming PST. Congratulations Kate and sincere thanks to all of those who showed their interest and will to work with us on training the new class!

The Good Life

4 HOURS



SELIBABY

THE CAPITAL OF THE GUIDIMAKHA IS SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL TREES AND STRIKING ROCK FORMATIONS. IT IS POPULATED BY A DIVERSE MIXTURE OF PEOPLE.

EAT

at Bean Lady, near the Peace Corps office, where you can purchase a salad topped with golden fries, a delicious onion sauce, and tender meat cutlets for 300 UM.

TOUR

the southern outskirts of the city. Find the hollow baobab tree and stand in it. Photo opportunities abound.

RIDE

the information superhighway at Selibaby's one and only cybercafe. Speeds range from slow to mind-numbing, with Moor dudes occasionally leaning over your shoulder to surf on your ouguiya.

Nick Groesz

Fashion Frenzy with the RIM Fashionista

By Amanda Owens

DEAR RIM FASHIONISTA,
I'M TORN. I WANT TO FIT IN HERE IN MAURITANIA BY WEARING MAURITANIAN CLOTHES BUT SOMETIMES I JUST WANT TO WEAR A PAIR OF DAISY DUKES AND A TUBE TOP. WHAT DO I DO?! HELP ME, FASHIONISTA!!
SINCERELY,
HOT, HORNY AND HIDING IT IN THE ADRAR

Dear Hot and Hiding it in the Adrar,

Integration is numero uno in my RIM fashion handbook! Often when I'm strolling through the market, people think I'm just a cute Pulaar girl and they don't even realize I'm from another country. To assimilate, I make it a policy to wear Mauritanian clothing *toujours* (ok, well *presque* *toujours*, lol :). But sometimes Mauritanian attire tends to be a bit blah so I like to spice it up a bit. Like, take a boubou for example. The 1-size-fits-all thing just doesn't compliment a lady's hourglass figure. So I cinch the waist up

a bit (break out those girdles girls!), cut off the sleeves, lower the neckline a foot or two and maybe even put a cute slit up the side to show a little thigh (wink!). NO one can tell that you're a foreigner but they *can* tell that you look good. Sometimes people yell "disquette" after me, which I've been told is what the local boys call the extra cute local girls. I just giggle, say 'merci beaucoup' and walk my happy butt home.

That being said, sometimes on the weekends I like to let my hair down and go a little wild! That's when I break out my more American style dresses (I have a whole scrapbook of magazine clipped photos of my fashion faves that I take to the tailor, mostly Mariah, Shakira, and Janet). Then I'll add on

some sunglasses, cute pumps and a string of pearls for class. And bam, I'm off to the Maison des Jeunes for a soiree! One Pulaar boy

thought I was Chaka Khan, you

know, the famous singer from the 70's. He just kept yelling "CHAGA, CHAGA!" I autographed a piece of trash for him just so I wouldn't break his little heart. Its weird, people either think I'm totally Pulaar or a famous pop star. Hope this advice helps!



Chaka Kahn or RIM Fashionista?
Who can tell??

Nema's Best Volunteer Checks In

A-slam-a-makeup, volunteers! Julius Wharthington III here, with big fat congratulations on the WAIST win! Sorry I couldn't make it to the tournament to "bat some down" with you. You know, I used to be quite a softball player myself, back at the Academy. I made quite the second base-gentleman, let me assure you, although some of the ladies and I couldn't quite agree on what second base was. And during games, I would make so many double plays! It's almost *too* easy to tag someone twice with the ball! Yessiree, the Plymouth Prancers had never seen a player with my talents before or since. At any rate, bang up job at the tournament.

Speaking of which, the reason I had to miss the vacation (oops, sorry Obie! Cross-cultural experience) was that I had a bit of a mechanical problem myself. You see, I had installed a solar motor pump on top of my well—the first in the area, I'm proud to say! Anyway, the thing went on the fritz one day, just like that. Instead of crying like a Democrat, I decided to flex my integration muscles and invite my neighbors over to help me fix it. Well wouldn't you know it, their little Mauritanian wrenches started banging—literally—right away. I was helping out too, and it's a good thing I did, because every time I fixed a part it seemed like there were three other ones that needed fixing! Parts that I hadn't even seen were broken before.

During all of this time, water was gushing everywhere. There

was so much I thought I was going to have to change into my waders or my bathing suit or something. But again, my neighbors came to the rescue by carting away the overflow! All in all, the problem was more complex than I thought, and with me and the Mauritanians working side by side, it took us the better part of two weeks to fix it. My helpers were so into the work, they acted genuinely sad when I forcefully tightened the final screw for the last time.

One machine that *doesn't* need fixing, though, is the machine of my marriage! Aichetou and I are getting along just famously. She's even given me a new nickname. I'm not sure what the first part means, but I told her to drop it, just Ronny will do. She said, in her cute little broken two-year-old English, "It mean...Christian." Christian! Well, I've only known one other guy named Christian from my boyhood and I don't look anything like him! He suffers from *male-pattern baldness*. Some-

times this culture seems so confusing and convoluted, dear readers. I mean, one nickname that means a completely different name? What if I called my wife Sheila and told her it meant Fatimetou?

In work news, I got my official posting under Daoda as a Healthy volunteer. A good thing, too! *Somebody* has to be the healthy one around here, because everyone else is soooooooo sick! I would tell them not to drink the water, but there isn't any around anyway!



I figure the best way to start off my job is by giving basic lessons to the villagers on the fundamentals of organic chemistry. That way, they'll know which molecules combine to eventually form food that is healthy for them! I'm just teaching the basics, though; last week we started off with atomic structures, valences, and electron transfers. They're so appreciative—their blank stares tell me how amazed they are that I'm doing this for them!

Well, that's about all from Nema. I'm off to try to find a muscular adolescent to star in a project I'm thinking about: *Saved by the Bell, the Mauritania Years. Monsieur Belding!!*

Look at this Staff

Jess Palmer

The Feisty One

Aaron Dibner-Dunlap

The Aloof One

Michael Donovan

The Drummer

**Andy Deer, Heidi Gehret,
Zack Petersen, Nick
Groesz, Maggie
Magdalena**

Contributors

nouakchottnotes@gmail.com

The Biggest and Best of WAIST

MVP - Haley Harguth

MIA - Brian Zoeller

Most Arresting - Greg Coordes

"Take off the necktie" award - David Solomon

Most unwelcome guest award - John Slattery

Blood Alcohol Content MVP (BAC MVP) - Maggie Magdalena

Best Bling/Socks - Patrick Wolack

Biggest pimp - Kristen Morella

Most likely to be drugged and molested by Kristen Morella - Sam Bryar

Best defense - Jeremy Miller

Best poolside defense - Joni Pedersen

Best poolside offense - Greger Calhan



BAC MVP COSing from the RIM ASAP - Jess Palmer

Coolest Parents Award - Bill and Peggy Kendall

Best Behavior in front of parents if you don't count the tea bag award - Virginia Kendall

Best Pirate - Ellen Brinkerhoff

Best Peg Leg - Keith Gaddis

Best 'Hawk - Kate Van Roekel

Best Tattoo Artist - Heidi Gehret

Happiest Drunk - Loic Hudson

Most Surprising Hookup - Beth Larsen and Tyler Cummings Bond

Least Surprising Hookup - Mary Fitzpatrick and

Team Gambia



Most likely to fly back for WAIST 2008 (Ben Richey award) - Zach Petersen

Best Umpen Drunkire - Mike Thoms

Best Varsity Pirates - Todd Bruce and Saman Wijesoriya

Best Public Skinny Dip - Kris and Jen Webb

WAIST, Continued from page 1

However, the first day's games proved that the Mauritanian A-team was not to be underestimated. After three days of battling fierce competitors from all across West Africa and the even fiercer 8 A.M. game times, the Pirates ended the tournament undefeated, brutally beating the Baobab Bashers in the championship game.

"It feels really, really good, thinking about all the chicks I've impressed this weekend," said Pirates' assistant coach Zach Petersen. "I mean, did you see me out there?"

"My foot hurts," was Coach Keith Gaddis' contribution.

This year's MVP award went to Haley Harguth, who threw out 537 runners at first from shortstop and hit 86 out-of-the-park home-runs. Harguth replied with a modest "Huh?" when asked how she felt upon receiving the award.

In addition to the Pirates, PC-RIM brought along two other teams, the Swashbucklers and the Buccaneers. Led by ménage-a-trois Nicole Horvath, Matt Britton and Aaron Dibner-Dunlap, the teams won a combined total of two games, tying for second place in the "Teams from Mauritania" category. Not too shabby. The Buccaneers were also responsible for creating a new WAIST tradition, by taking the pantless kick line to a new level and playing pantless innings.

Country Director Obie Shaw was pleased with the new addition to his growing trophy collection and with every volunteer's safe and, um, timely arrival back in country. Most, in fact, did escape Dakar without incident, though there were reports of two hospital visits amongst the volunteers. Pirates' coach Gaddis received two stitches in his left foot after stepping on a broken beer bottle at the American Club in Dakar. PCV and Buccaneer Dan Zhu was treated for a minor concussion after colliding with fellow outfielder Ben Burgen. In addition, a nameless volunteer was absent for a period of time, upon his return relating a COMPLETELY FICTIONAL story of mistakenly urinating on a Dakar police station, which he claims to have thought was an abandoned building. Oops.

As in years past, Peace Corps Mauritania proved to be the most fun, most annoying, and overall best group at WAIST. Good job to all participants for being 'obnoxious' without being 'so obnoxious that we're never invited back.' All should be proud.

PCV Site Visits Summary

During the trips to PCV sites, the Training manager and the Language Coordinator met the Volunteers and their counterparts and made a rich collection of feedbacks, suggestions, ideas and input. Here are some of the main issues that PCVs encounter at site and the ideas that could be developed.

Issues:

- ☞ The fishbowl phenomena.
- ☞ Finding a place to live.
- ☞ Family compensation.
- ☞ Living with a family versus living alone.
- ☞ Addressing authorities/officials.
- ☞ Finding a female language tutor who speaks French.
- ☞ Finding a support at site (PCV, counterpart, tutor, family).
- ☞ Dealing with expectation during cultural events and holidays (gift of new clothes to family members).
- ☞ Accepting/declining invitation.
- ☞ How to approach unplanned events (unscheduled visitors, planning events at the last minute, etc).
- ☞ Playing cards, making tea as integration tools
- ☞ How to stay American while respecting the Mauritanian culture.
- ☞ Dressing at school and in meetings.
- ☞ Adapting from life in a small training site to a big city.

Ideas:

- ☞ Ask COSing PCVs to write letters to the following PCVs.
- ☞ Prepare PCVs on how to adjust on the first month at site/the first three months at site/the first six months at site:
 - ↳ First month: integration and tutoring;
 - ↳ First three months: initiating projects;
 - ↳ First six months: how to write a project proposal.
- ☞ Develop some tips on goal persona/setting boundaries.
- ☞ Tips on how to maintain friendship.
- ☞ Develop sector specific newsletter by 2nd year PCVs to compile tips to share with 1st year PCVs. It could be monthly or quarterly.

Leah & Mowdou 4EVA

A Wedding to Remember

By Maggie Magdalena

Toubabs and Naceranis hit Kiffa hard the first weekend of March to celebrate the marriage of PCV Leah Dale to HCN Mowdou Sow. Dale, a second year SED volunteer, met Mowdou last year while working on projects together, and fellow region mates agree that they've never seen her so happy.

As folks flowed in throughout the day, guests entertained themselves with preparing for the evening's meal, helping with decorations, or viewing a little obsession we all now know as "the L-Word."

The first night of the festivities featured the Bachelorette party—Dale's last day as an mra hejaale. This wild and crazy night began (as all wild and crazy nights do) over crepes and a folk sing-along. After all the excitement died down, the lights dimmed, the music boomed on 3 inch speakers, and out came a Mystery Moor and his Wiley Wench to "review" the situation. Boubous fell, hips didn't lie, and bills were exchanged; that's all I'm sayin'.*

The following evening was started off by an amazing feast headed by Iron Chef Ginger Tissier featuring stuffed tomatoes and eggplant parmesan (among other delectables), while Sous Chef Brooke Olster baked scrumptious chocolate and carrot cakes topped with the stunning peanut-soap carvings of the bride and groom, done by none other than Ms. Donna Lenius. Bellies full, all guests headed to the roof for a romantic sun-set-ceremony. Bouquets of balloons and rows of candles encased the funeral pyre-esque mar-

riage podium where Leah and Mowdou said their vows, and by the power vested in Father Sam, they became man and wife (sniffles abounded).

Later, while the group awaited an ill-fated lunar eclipse, a band of fete-ing Pulaars (Mowdou's family) rolled up in honking, screaming wedding fashion to seize the bride. She was whisked away, but not until they had paid a hefty 4000 ouguiya ransom.

The lucky bride got to spend the entirety of the next day lounging in a room being pampered with four women assigned to simultaneously henna each of her appendages and another lady installing snazzy cinnaberry hair extensions, breaking only for banava and couscous. The rest of the group socialized outside each finding their own niche in the joy of integration. Some girls decided to help cut onions and potatoes with the women, until one of the ladies gave a somewhat disturbing phallic dance with a stuffed large intestine, while others decided to teach Loup-Garou to the Pulaars (grâce à Derek). All in all it was *un jour formidable* capped off for many volunteers with storytelling around a fire.

In a recent update on the couple, when asked – "How's married life?" Leah responded, "We got a TV and satellite!!" while Mowdou grinned and stated "She's still la fleur de ma coeur."

*For further details, see anyone but Leah.**

**Who knew what a little chain smoking and vodka could lead to??

A Big Ol' Thanks from Leah

Mowdou and I would like to say thank you to all of you that dropped the cash and made the time after WAIST to come to our wedding. Everyone made the experience beautiful and unforgettable. We could not ask for a better Peace Corps family. We are blessed.

Thanks.

The newly married, Leah Dale-Sow

Aw, Continued from page 3

Trash clean up in Atar

Many of you participated in this event. This is a good event it cleans up the city, educates about the environment and gives PC more visibility and exposure. I hope that we can replicate this event in other regions with good participation from your communities, schools, mayor's offices and with targeted environmental themes and messages.

PREDAS update

As you recall I wrote about this project in the last NKT notes (if you have read it ☺). PREDAS is a Sahelian project promoting efficient use of domestic energy. They wanted to promote the transformation of *Typha australis* into charcoal. I guess the update is that I haven't heard from them yet.

Thanks and Keep Up the Good Work!

Divertissements

Your RIM Horoscopes



ARIES (Mar 21- Apr 19)

The combined forces of total disbelief and utter exasperation will compel you to slap the next illiterate librarian, blind bank teller, or deaf French teacher you meet.



TAURUS (Apr 20- May 20)

You're always whining about missing the stuff in your closet back home, but you're usually not referring to your rainbow suspenders, headgear, or shoulder-padded purple silk shirt.



GEMINI (May 21- June 21)

The stars foretell a high probability of some reposeful moments of shut-eye after your post-breakfast nap and before your late morning beauty rest.



CANCER (June 22- July 22)

You can't help but think that this sea-

son would be a lot more livable if only you had an enormous trampoline and Ted Nugent's company.



LEO (July 23-Aug 22)

You'll soon meet a sy sy who seeks to chub chub you with yo-yos, go go boots, cous cous, bling bling, gris gris, dumdums and bin bins. Since that's a no no, keep it hush hush.



VIRGO (Aug 23- Sept 22)

Your life will change immensely once the PCMO puts you on a 5000 mg daily regimen of an experimental drug called SexyCycline.



LIBRA (Sept 23- Oct 23)

No one doubts that a lot of blood, sweat, and tears have gone into your trusty matela. Just ask one of its many thriving bacterial colonies.



SCORPIO (Oct 24- Nov 21)

Your next brousse elephantiasis sensibilization will end on a disturbingly enthusiastic note, with all female participants asking, "So, where can we get it?"



Nouakchott Notes

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22- Dec 21)

A local imam will advise you to change the tune of your SED song and dance from „profit“ to „prophet.“



CAPRICORN (Dec 22- Jan 19)

With the hot season and all its sluggishness just around the corner, now's the time to fulfill your dream of creating a musical sitcom called "Can Kids Incorporated."



AQUARIUS (Jan 20- Feb 18)

Come on people now, smile on your brother. Everybody get together; try to love one another right now.



PISCES (Feb 19- Mar 20)

You'll find that the country's natural abundance of "muffin tops" is of no consolation to your hankering for pastries.

By Seer and Muffin-top Remover Heidi Gehret

Seeds!

By Kane Oumar

I hope that you all are doing well. I would like to let you know that the following seeds are available:

Moringa (2 kg), Balanites (3 kg), Neem (1 kg), Marigold (1/2 kg), Parkinsonia (about 1/4 kg) and Acacia mellifera for live fence (about 1/2 kg). Thank you Ginger, Loic and Jacob for collecting and sending the seeds.

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

The tree sacks are currently out of stock.

PST

Please join me in congratulating Michael Thoms for being selected as the Agfo technical trainer assistant. I am looking forward to

working with him. I'll soon send out a memo to all of you with all the sessions. We will ask you to see which one you think you can contribute/help with the most. In addition to technical skills, we will select participants based on teamwork spirit, positiveness etc. The participations of PCVs in PST is something that contribute positively to preparing the new trainees for the job and the integration that are waiting for them. We value a lot this contribution.

Thanks a lot!

Kane

Playgirl holds open call for "Boys of Peace Corps"

By Zack Petersen

Dig out those banana hammocks and start a regiment of sit-ups, boys! Following a press conference held at the Palais du Congres last weekend in Nouakchott, Playgirl representatives Jasmine Degorge and a now single Terri Erwin announced an open call for all male Peace Corps volunteers of Mauritania to strut their stuff. Applicants are to be present at the Palais du Congres on the 2nd and 3rd of June with their resumes and headshots. In the absence of headshots, passport photos are acceptable. If no resume is available, a bar napkin on which you have drunkenly scribbled your zodiac sign and your favorite pick-up line will suffice.

"We expect a large turnout," explained Degorge, vice president of human relations and a former Peace Corps Tunisia volunteer. "So don't think for a minute the competition isn't stiff."

Mauritania is just one of the twenty Peace Corps countries participating in the issue. But what made them hot for this desert nation? "We saw a video of Keith Gaddis in a documentary film about illegal immigration in and through Mauritania. I saw that red beard and told every-

one in publishing we had to see that kid's unmentionables."

"Peace Corps has this reputation of only having scrawny hippie types," Erwin said, her Lee Press-On fingernails forming imaginary quotes in the air. "But we want to change that stereotype. Recently there have been outrageous advancements in airbrushing technology so we can make it look like anyone can do more than six push-ups."

This is good news for Ben Burgen.

"Just the thought of being famous makes me quiver," says first-year volunteer Nick Vroboooooosky. "This should propel my career to great heights. I mean first this and then who knows, maybe a role in Goonies 2!"

Those who make it into the issue slated for early summer will collect a purse of two hundred dollars. "That's like giving plasma fifteen times," says philanthropist Mike Thoms. "You can't pass up these kinds of opportunities. I mean, once in a lifetime, hello! I am going to use

my money to build an above-ground pool at my girls mentoring center." But what makes him so sure of a spot among the Peace



"Boys of Peace Corps" issue featuring PCV Greger Calhan

Corps elite?

"Confidence is what we look for—that and a good Brazilian," said Degorge. "We aren't really worried about conventional good looks; otherwise, why would we be here?"

Most male volunteers are chomping at the bit to shine, but there are some volunteers who want to do their work behind the camera, not in front of it. "I have an eye for trimming. I worked as a landscaper for three summers before Peace Corps," said a mildly intoxicated Patrick Wolack during a sidewalk café interview last week.

Second year volunteer and future skeeball champion of the world Zack Petersen summoned all four of his feelings during a candid interview when he said "This is my one chance to become marginally famous, and you can't ask me to pass that up. Jerk."

"Confidence is what we look for—that and a good Brazilian"

The Back Side

WAIST!!!

