

# NOUAKCHOTT NOTES

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## **The Spice Rack**

Letter from the Editor

Hello to all and welcome to the new and evolving Nouakchott Notes. I would like first off to thank all of the staff and volunteers who contributed their time, literature, art and expertise to the creation of this newsletter. Secondly I encourage all to submit, critique or advise to the newsletter e-mail of : rimnews2003@yahoo.com. We are striving for the ideal of newsletter newletterness, but really have no idea what exactly that is... So if you have any ideas, suggestions or submissions let us know. And finally, thank you kindly to the newsletter staff. Your knowledge, patience, laughter and bravery are invaluable assets to this newsletter. Bismillah!

Kevin Spicer

# Coup Coup

## A Volunteer Perspective

Sleeping at the Arc-en-Ciel on a Saturday night brought recurring dreams and half-conscious questions concerning people knocking on the door, cars backfiring, or air conditioning units acting up. In reality, on the streets of Nouakchott, the coup d'état had started. For we volunteers who just happened to be in the capital with plans of catching planes, seeing dentists, or publishing this newsletter, our plans had been put on hold. We now took refuge in our hotel and wondered what number our headline would be on the BBC at the top of the hour. The streets were empty and mosque calls were silent as we heard the random explosions creep closer and the gunfire last longer. There were so many questions with impossible answers: Why now? What are we doing just sitting here? When are the marines coming? Will Air France refund my ticket if rebels are in control of the airport? Leaving laundry and lunch that a hotel employee had been sent out for, we scampered out in a rush and dashed to the bureau in Kateri's monster truck. It was in this instant, racing on the streets, the situation



Nouakchott streets, 8 June 2003



After: 'Viva Maaouiya!'

became real. But it was also in this instant we knew Peace Corps was taking care of us. And boy did they! For us ten Volunteers in Nouakchott we got the royal treatment of unlimited MREs, lodging in Kateri's office suite (a.k.a. the safe room), and access to Obie's 501 DVDs. And now, the car horns and cheers have replaced the shelling. The unanswerable questions will still remain, but in this moment, it is safe to say: we have survived our first coup.

## **From the Director's Desk**

Dear Volunteers,

It has come to my attention that the frequency of assaults in Nouakchott has increased dramatically. More than once, volunteers have been chased or abducted by groups of young white Moors late at night or early in the morning - usually during the weekend after returning from a night out on the town. Volunteers and staff MUST not assume they are immune. EVERYONE must observe the guidance and put into practice the training they have received on personal security, especially when in Nouakchott. That includes: being very aware of your surroundings, not giving out any personal information to anyone outside the PC circle, taking taxis and not walking alone (particularly at night in Nouakchott), keeping your PCV friends informed of your travel and other activity plans, reporting all incidences, avoiding risky locations (those known to be frequented by westerners), avoiding isolated locations (beach) and yelling and running away if a vehicle gets too close to you. During these dangerous times, you cannot be too careful.

Thank you very much.

Kateri Clement

## FROM THE SED DESK OBIE SAYS:



Having contributed extensively to the last edition of the Nouakchott Notes, I have been asked by the new editorial board to shorten my submission for this new improved version. First of all, thank you all for submitting your FY03Q02 Quarterly Reports. I am happy to report that as a sector, we are at 100%. I have fallen behind in my feed back to you but do expect to receive it by June 10 at the latest. By the way, your FY03Q03 quarterly report (APR//MAY/JUN) will be due on July 15, 2003.

### NEW TRAINEES

#### **SED: (Name; Home of Record; University/Background)**

Mr. Kyle Ambrosino; Portland, OR; Purdue University/English Literature & Italian

Ms. Kari Brashers; N/A

Ms. Audrey Bottjen; New Bern, NC; Northwestern University/Journalism

Ms. Miriam Edwards; Aurora, CO; Public Administration

Mr. Scott Eidson; San Francisco, CA; Wesleyan University/Economics

Mr. Nicolas Gale; San Diego, CA; CSU at Chico/International Relations

Ms. Mariam Haider; Kenmore, WA; Univ. of WA/Business Administration

Mr. Hector Hernandez; Oak Park, IL; University of Chicago/Economics

Ms. Catherine Horn; Riverside, CT; Binghamton Univ, NY/Political Science

Ms. Jennifer Justus; Willoughby, OH; Ohio State/Bus Mang & Marketing

Mr. Mark Lange; Fairfax, VA; University of Rhode Island/Finance

Ms. Virginia March; Alexandria, VA; George Mason Univ./Finance

Ms. Rebecca McKnight; San Antonio, TX; UT at Austin/Business Administration

Ms. Lisa Michael; Braddock Heights, MD; Tufts University/Intl Bus & Technology

Mr. Harvey Pitt; Washington D.C; SEC/Accounting

Mr. Marc Valentin; Birmingham, AL; N/A - Anthropology

#### **ICT: (Name; Home of Record; University/Background)**

Mr. William Holcomb; Cookeville, TN; Tennessee Technological University

Mr. Matthew Mills; Portola Valley, CA; Purdue University/Italian Studies

Mr. Robert Salita; N/A

Mr. Jason Standring; Fort Collins, CO; Colorado State Univ./Spanish Culture & Literature

Mr. Carl Strolle; Salisbury, VT; Bowdoin College/Economics

### NEW SITES

**Site Selection: SED and ICT** sites are pretty much determined. There are still some discussions going on but as of today, the sites most likely to receive at least one SED or ICT PCV are:

Aioun

Aleg

Atar

Boghé

Chinguetti

Diadjibine

Kaédi

Kankossa

Kiffa

M'Bout

Nouadhibou

Nouakchott

Rosso

Selibaby

Tidjikja

Touldé

### Input TI

As of 22 May 2003, Peace Corps Washington has actually given us more SED and ICT candidates than we had requested (I guess they are banging on the doors trying to get to Mauritania). We will have 15 SED trainees and 5 ICT trainees. The overall trainee input is now at 63. This number will of course change before June 27 (and maybe after too).

# www.geocities.com/pcmauritania

### **New SPA and Peace Corps Partnerships First Quarter 03**

<u>Volunteer Name</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Amy Helmick	Fruit Tree Orchard	\$2,391.19
Racey Bingham/Barton B.	Education and IT	\$4,966.45
Sherif Ayoub	Information and Com.	\$2,371.79
Liz Kenton	Moringa Promotion	PCPP

Taken a look at our website lately? You can find loads of information like: a Nouakchott entertainment guide; **HASH RUN SCHEDULE**; currency conversion tool; local, regional and development news; the latest edition of Delirium (well, the only edition so far); homeland politics; SPA forms, recent GAD project reports (with pictures) and much, much more. We're still looking for input from volunteers and staff to help make the site as useful and meaningful as possible. We are missing information for each subject that doesn't have a link, and of course we're open to adding new subjects. Contact the web diva at pcmauritania@yahoo.com with your suggestions and input!

# News and Views from the Education Sector

By M.Abderrahmane O/ Bagga, APCD/ED

## COSers

I would like to congratulate all of the Ed. COSing PCVs on completing their two-year tour. You have been an outstandingly strong and committed group. You stood firm and did a great job in spite of what we went through since September 11. All of you have been extremely brave when you had - at some times - to work and live under difficult and straining conditions. Peace Corps Mauritania will proudly remember you.

### Ed. C.O.S.-ers 2003

Barton Bryan  
Matt Cerny  
Ron Coffman  
Matt Gould  
Anton Jongeneel  
Johnny Osterman  
Jenise Plourde  
Katherine Wiley  
Paul Woolridge

'As we lose we win...'



COSers Jenise, Anton, Paul and Barton

## Hello all and every one,

First, I would like to wish **The Nouakchott Notes'** new editing team the best of luck. I am confident that no effort will be spared to make this publication as interesting as ever. A timely joint effort from every one concerned will ensure that submissions come in on a regular basis to prevent time from wearing off the audience's itch to read the increasingly popular **Notes**.

## Upcoming PST

We are expecting 8 secondary TEFL trainees and 1 CDS among the 60+ PC/RIM TI due to arrive on June 27<sup>th</sup>. This is an exciting time for all of us and I'd like to thank all of you for their help during PST. It's going to be of utmost importance.

**PCV help:** Regarding PCV guest speakers/trainers, I have been communicating with some of you on their potential help with the upcoming PST. I think we are now clear on the dates and phases when you are willing to help. I hope to finalize for everyone involved very soon. The idea is to plan the PST Kaédi events around your vacation and your own summer project. On my end is to make sure that I have at least one PCV helping over the entire PST phase.

### PST Phases:

Phase 0: June 27-July 2<sup>nd</sup>;  
Phase 1: July 3<sup>rd</sup>-July 15<sup>th</sup>;  
Phase 2: July 16<sup>th</sup>-Aug 5<sup>th</sup>;  
Phase 3: August 6<sup>th</sup>-August 16<sup>th</sup>;  
Phase 4 August 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>: Center Days. Model School starts on August 20<sup>th</sup>;  
Phase 5: September 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>: Center Days. Model school ends on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Potential Education Sites 2003:

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Aioun, Hodh G.       | 6. Chinguetty, Adrar |
| 2. Selibaby, Guidimakha | 7. M'bangue, Brakna  |
| 3. Bababe, Brakna       | 8. Moudjeria, Tagant |
| 4. Mederdra, Trarza     | 9. Oudane, Adrar     |
| 5. Kankossa, Assaba     | 10. Tidjikja, Tagant |

And one in Nouakchott for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training.

## World Wise Schools for Mauritania

The following volunteers are putting Mauritania on the map for American school children. If you would like to learn more about this important educational initiative, contact one of these PCVs or APCD Bagga.

### PCV

Lori Mitchell  
Sherif Ayoub  
Rachel Bingham  
Rhonda Boutwell  
Elizabeth Brogaard  
Caroline Handschuh  
Elizabeth Kenton  
Jason Ko  
Naruth Phadungchai  
Whitney Rokui

### TEACHER

Anne Mancilla  
Aaron Lewis  
Mary Jo Cavanaugh  
Cathy Smith  
Lynette Finnem  
Jim Floyd  
Kristi White  
Peter Thorpe  
S. Goralweski  
Marlene Lynch

### SCHOOL

Midlakes Middle School - Clifton Springs, NY  
Stewart M. Jones Middle School - Laurel, MS  
Riverview School - Sandwich, MA  
Johns Hopkins School - Clarkston, GA  
Wadena-Deer Creek Elem. School - Wadena, MN  
Notre Dame HS - San Jose, CA  
Lake Grove Elem. School - Federal Way, WA  
Vallejo HS - Vallejo, CA  
Oxford Middle School - Oxford, MI  
Lawrence HS - Lawrenceville, NJ

## PROSPECTIVE AGFO AND EE TRAINEES:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Hometown:</b>	<b>School/ Major:</b>
Dan Buonadonna	Renton, WA	Notre Dame - Civil Engineering
Andrew Furlong	Illinois	Elmhurst - Geography
Charles Davidaitis	N/A	N/A
Ginger Bright	Baggs, OK	Oklahoma State - Agriculture Comm.
Margaret Donovan	N/A	N/A
Mark Hitchcock	N/A	N/A
Diane Drollinger	Richman Hills, NY	SUNY - Biochemistry
Nathan Gretzinger	Colombia, MO	Univ. of Missouri - German/History
Brandon Guerneey	Greenville, MI	Hope College - French/Int'l Studies
Angus Kelly III	Dylan, SC	NC State - Agricultural Bus. Mgmt./History
Natalie Coperley	N/A	N/A
Natalie Bit	N/A	N/A
Mindi Iserhott	N/A	N/A
Lisa Jackson	Baton Rouge, LA	Penn State - Psychology
Alice Paal	New Haven, CT	Yale - History
Katherine Schroepfer	Washington, DC	Int'l Studies
Ayrin Zahner	Louisberg, KS	Boston Univ. - Int'l Relations/Environ. Dev.

## Prospective Education Trainees:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Hometown:</b>	<b>School/Major:</b>
Karl Adam	Houston, TX	Texas Tech. - Chemistry/German/History
Mitchell Brashera	Springfield, MO	SW Missouri State - Mass Media
Annika Dubrall	N/A	N/A
Jessica Dunsmore	San Francisco, CA	Wellsley - Psychology
Patrick Dwyer	Cincinnati, OH	Ohio State - Political Science
Erin Ellingson	Galestory, CN	UConn - Peace Studies & Human Rights
Christopher Higgs	Patter, NE	UNLV - Film Studies
Genvieve Kirk	Oak Park, IL	Univ. of Chicago - Visual Arts
Erin Pettigrew	Rapid City, SD	Hollins - French/Int'l Studies
Heather Smith	N/A	N/A
Dana Weymouth	Santa Barbara, CA	Westmont College

## Prospective Health and Water Sanitation Trainees:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Hometown:</b>	<b>School/Major:</b>
Cassandra Goodwin	Madison, WI	Washington University - Civil Engineering
Julia Kennedy	Brooklyn, NY	Brown - Mechanical Engineering
Thomas Parker	N/A	N/A
Callahan Parnell	N/A	N/A
Stephanie Rosch	N/A	N/A
April Shields	N/A	N/A
Daniel Sutton	Chicago, IL	Michigan Tech. - Civil Engineering
Janie Dossen	Cincinnati, OH	Univ. of Kentucky - MPH
Molly McCollom	Darnestown, MD	Haverford - Philosophy
Jill Sutton	N/A	N/A
Melanie Thurber	Mesa, AZ	Univ. of Arizona - Int'l Studies

## HEALTH CORNER BY ALASSANE DIAKITÉ



### Potential Health Sites 2003

1. Nouakchott
2. Nouadhibou
3. Breun - Trarza
4. Gani - Trarza
5. Boghe
6. Mbagne - Brakna
7. Maal - Brakna
8. Kaedi
9. Diadjebenni - Gorgol
10. Djeol - Gorgol
11. Selibaby
12. Hassy Cheggar - Guidimakha
13. Kiffa
14. Kankossa
15. Barkeol
16. Tijikja

### Words of Thanks

As you all know, the Program has lost three Volunteers who chose the interrupted service option as a result of the prevailing international climate. I would like to thank Tu Dang, Julie Plagenhoef and Nicholas Oliphant for their hard work while they were serving the communities that have become theirs. Their dedication to their work is commended and we wish them the best in their future endeavors.

### Programming

The site assessment process is continuing with missions in the Trarza, Brakna, Assaba and Dakhlet-Nouadhibou. The sites which were visited are promising and final decisions will be made later this month (see attached list for potential sites for 2003).

On the project activities front, congratulations are in order for Jason Ko, Nkechi Eneh, Kevin Spicer, Alden Kline and the Volunteers of ASPRO for the implementation of their Trachoma project on May 11, 2003 in Rosso. It was very inspiring to see them struggling in the heat of May, heading to the school to track trachoma cases. Thank you all for a job well done.

PCV Nkechi Eneh and her Counterpart Dam Ba are working on a potential follow up for the Trarza HIV/AIDS project involving the communities of Gani and Breun. I am hopeful that this project could be implemented before the end of the current fiscal year thanks to the funds remaining from the Trarza Campaign.

### PDM Training in Boghé

This is a project that RPCV Nicholas Oliphant initiated. It is about getting the Boghé community to prioritize their needs and training in getting the capacity they need to write project purposes, goals and objectives; in short, setting a vision for the community and planning its implementation. I would like to carry out the training sometime in June in collaboration with the AMPF youth, the Boghé Medecin-Chef and the Commune.

### Training

I am pleased to announce to you that we have hired our PST Technical trainers. Dia Mohamed El Kebir and Ba Abdoul Bolol. They are a nice addition to our program and I would like you to join me in welcoming them to Peace Corps.

## NEW POSTAL RATES!

There has been much confusion lately as to how much it REALLY costs to send a letter in and out of Mauritania. Here are the real prices, and don't let your not-so-friendly neighborhood postal worker tell you any differently.

### A Letter under 100 grams to:

- Anywhere in the R.I.M.
- Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Benin, Burkina F., Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Guinea, Togo
- Other African and Arab League Nations
- Anywhere else

### Costs:

100 UM  
220 UM  
280 UM  
370 UM







# TRAINING TIME IS HERE!

## BY SIDNA AND DAOUDA



### 2003 PST: A last update

Trainers and trainees usually say that they prefer the Community-based training model as it expands their capacities (especially in Language and Cross-Culture), and allows trainees to lead more natural lives during PST (as they live on their own rather than in dormitory-like conditions). Although no quantitative evidence is available, the conventional wisdom in Peace Corps Mauritania is that CBT facilitates the development of Volunteers who speak the language easily, integrate without hesitation, and succeed in combining soft (e.g. community entry) and hard (technical) skills in their jobs.

To prepare the next group of trainees to similar training conditions, a large group of PST trainers will move out to the training center on June 4<sup>th</sup> to start PST pre-trainee arrival preparation. In addition to the Training Director and the Language coordinator, there will be **ten** coordinators, **eight** assistant coordinators, and **seventeen** language facilitators. Later in August, **three**-model school supervisor will join the team to form a total of **thirty-eight** trainers. There will be two major new aspects and innovations in this year's PST:

1. After five year of good and faithful service, we are saying goodbye to Boghé and moving the center to the Gorgol in Kaédi where the High School is waiting to host the crew.
2. Host country national trainers will lead most programs this year. (ED, CHWS, AGFO, ICT) and all the assistant coordinators are Mauritians. Our goal in doing so is to start the process of capacity building at a higher level and avoid relying 100% on Peace Corps Volunteers who are busy working on their projects at their assignment sites during PST.

Right now, we are expecting 63 trainees who will be in country on Friday June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003 *inchaa-Allah*. After one and a half days of orientation in Nouakchott, they will travel to the center on the 29<sup>th</sup> to start the PST orientation phase in Kaédi until July 4<sup>th</sup> before joining their host families. The following are the sites selected for this year pre-service training:

**Kaédi → 10 sites:** 2 rural (**Tinzah** and **ENFVA**) and 7 urban spread out in different quarters of the city. ENFVA is an Agricultural training center located three kames north-east of Kaédi)

**Three Hassaniya rural sites:** **Mbedia**, **Medina** and **Daghveg**, (35, 75, 92 kms west of Kaédi, on the road to Boghé).

**Three Pulaar rural sites:** **Sylla**, **Rinjao**, and **Belinaabe** 7, 8 and 12 kms west of Kaedi)

**One Soninke rural sites:** **Jowol** (18 kms east of Kaédi; Jenise and Miranda's site)

One specific thing about these training sites is that they are all accessible by cell phone and have a Gendarme or Police post, which is good for security. All Hassaniya and Pulaar rural sites are easily accessible by car. With the exception of Sylla and Jowol, all the other sites are on the paved road between Kaédi and Boghé.

Volunteers who volunteer to help in this year's PST can contact their APCDs. We are planning to have them rotate during phases that will be spread as follows:

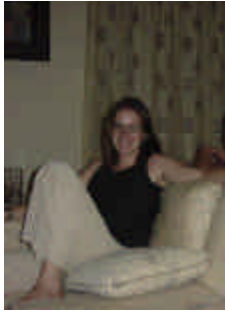
- **Phase 0** (Orientation phase): June 27<sup>th</sup> –July 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Phase 1:** July 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>
- **Phase 2:** July 16<sup>th</sup>-August 5<sup>th</sup>.
- **Phase 3:** August 6<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>.
- **Phase 4:** August 17<sup>th</sup>-September 9<sup>th</sup>.
- **Phase 5:** September 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>.

Site visit will be from August 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> and the counterpart workshop (slightly renewed version) will be held upon return from site visit. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, all new volunteers will be posted to their sites. Please contact and plan with your APCD if you want to be involved in the training.

The cross-culture program will also present two new sessions, one in Diversity among PCTs and the other on starting relationships, with a particular emphasis on male-female relationships. Volunteers who would like to take part to this session should contact Daouda, (email or call at 6471570). If you have ideas or want to share your own experience, send it by email (ddouada @mr.peacecorps.gov).

P  
S  
T  
2003

Thanks.



## News from the Small but Mighty Environmental Education Sector

Down to two, some are doubting our ability to make a difference, but as our omniscient country director has always said “drop by drop the bucket is filled”.

In Rosso, Tom's school has started the process of establishing a school garden despite many set backs, including salty soil and lack of water and fencing. Tom's incredibly motivated, creative and active counterpart Kayta Diawé (who is, by the way, a good childhood friend of Cheikh Gueye's. Somehow I don't think that's coincidence...) started a school environmental journal written by students.

Up in the Adrar, Nick and Caroline have been hammering out the details of working with teachers in their respective schools to create environmental lesson plans. In addition, Nick is in the midst of a SPA proposal to bring the robinet into the school, so a school garden will be possible and trees can be planted. Caroline has helped establish a drip irrigation system at her school in Chinguetti with the help of a group of energetic and curious 5<sup>th</sup> year students and collaborated with Beth during the Women's Day festivities to do a Moringa taste testing. The women were blindfolded and asked to tell the difference between bengeits and rice with and without Moringa powder added; it was a successful event and raised the awareness among many women about the benefits of Moringa. Both volunteers are also planning to do Moringa sensibilisations at their schools at the end of May.

Also, on the subject of Moringa: all of you interested in buying powder, it is possible to buy it for 100UM a casse in Cinquieme market near the vegetables or the butcher area. (Ask Caroline or me for details.) Beware, though, that the quality is not guaranteed. Soon individual Moringa trees will also be ready from cooperatives in Dar Niam, Nouakchott.

Recently, in conjunction with our EE Steering Committee Workshop, at which various partners discussed what had been accomplished this year, what had been challenging and their general expectations were for EE, we've begun a reorientation of the project focus from

committee building, to focusing on those motivated individuals who are willing to make time in their schedules for a untested, unevaluated subject. The know-how that Caroline and Nick have gained this year trying to work within the framework of an untried Project Plan will contribute immeasurably to the restructuring of our training program. Their hard work this year in the schools and the subsequent reaction/acceptance among students and teachers in their sites of EE, has illuminated the most effective ways to do Environmental Education in Mauritania. This experience, and what they have learned from the trial and error nature of their work has establish a strong base on which this new stage group will build.

Speaking of newbies, we are expecting 7 trainees who will be affectated, inshallah, to the Brakna region and to the Trarza. Maite Uranga and Heather Delong's Pulaar/French Teacher from Boghé, Bah Mamadou (AKA Abdara), will work at stage as the Assistant EE Coordinator.

As always collaboration with the ministry is harrying...with all the recent shake-ups and reorganization of the Ministry of Education and the usual overburdened top authorities, our counterparts have difficulties giving Environmental Education priority. However, we have been reassured in a number of meetings and in our recent Workshop that EE is an officially recognized, supported program and that it should be given priority in primary schools and eventually in upper levels as well.

Now a call for support from all of you who spend a lot of time around schools or gardens (no matter what sector you're in): Please let me know if you're doing any EE activities, what you did, how it was received and if you're going to do it again. We need as much documentation of Mauritania specific EE activities as possible to distribute to these newbies.

# GAD IN THE RIM BY RHONDA

Thanks to everyone for getting in all your receipts and write-ups for the additional money we received from EDDI. Hopefully once all the paperwork has been approved we will receive our funding for this year (yes, we still don't have it!). I have put several of your project conclusion reports on our website at [geocities.com/pcmauritania/gad](http://geocities.com/pcmauritania/gad). Take a look and let me know if you want to make any changes, or add pictures to your activity. You guys really made good use of the money!

Anyone who's been up to the GAD office in the past month knows how excited I am about the software order that FINALLY came in! Many thanks to Shelagh, Sherif, and Obie for jumping through all the hoops strewn in our path. Thanks to their efforts, we now have both Arabic and French software for the GMC's ranging from encyclopedias, to educational games like "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego," to educational scientific software; we have 82 CDs in French and 53 in Arabic! We even have Feng Shui (ask Sherif about that one!). Not only will this software be a wonderful education tool, you will also be able to use it as a management tool as well (1 hour of homework study can equal ½ hour of computer time, for example). We are in the process of developing a system of distribution for the centers. Be on the lookout for yet another email coming from the GAD team with a list of software for you to review with your counterparts, GMC mentors, and students to determine which items will be best for your center.



Please welcome Maïmouna mint Taghi to the GAD team during Mariem's absence. She may be familiar to some of you as she has participated in many other Peace Corps activities and is very dedicated to the education of Mauritania's girls especially as it concerns mathematics and science. She is the president of the ONG, *Association Mauritanienne des Femmes Scientifiques*. You can see her website at: <http://amfs.8k.com/>. Maïmouna will be working with us on the Annual Girls' Conference and I would love for you to meet her. She will be in the GAD office on Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday mornings, so please stop by. We are hoping Mariem will return to good health and be back with us soon.

Speaking of the Annual Girls' Conference . . . everyone should have received either an email or memo regarding the conference, so I will try not to be too redundant here. We chose July 27 through July 31 to allow everyone enough time to be back at site for site visit with the new volunteers in early August. We are going to have a great program involving the

Moringa tree, and we are also looking for Health volunteers to contribute an activity. We are hoping this year's event will be as successful as last year's, so any suggestions and help you can offer will be greatly appreciated.

## Congratulations!

The following Peace Corps staff members have all recently welcomed new additions to their homes:

- Madou the Librarian, a baby girl
- Kane Oumar, a baby boy
- Rashid, twins!



Unfortunately, this year's Big Sister/Little Sister programs have taken a back seat to the war in Iraq. Some of you have been able to go ahead with your activities, but for those who haven't I would like to say don't consider the time has past. It actually has worked to our advantage in that we don't have the funds yet to pay for it. And it would be a very good activity to work on with the new volunteers!

Just a reminder from an earlier email – The Exchange is looking for article submissions for Volume 39, which will focus on gender and youth. If you have any questions about the process for submitting an article, give me a call. We had some very good programs, experiences, and anecdotes in the past year and our experiences could benefit other volunteers in creating their own programs.

And lastly, farewell to the COSers! Thanks for all the good work you did for the GAD program! I will miss you all, and Mauritania is the better for your service.



# FROM THE GREEN CORNER

## BY AW MOHAMADOU



Hello once again from the green corner,

As always we are very happy to renew this contact with you all. Many things have happened for the past three weeks that are worth mentioning here

- 1) On May 08 we held the EE steering committee meeting/workshop to discuss about the project, what have been accomplished, the challenges of doing EE, the strategies to deal with these challenges, the expectations of the different participants of each others in terms of doing EE. In the end each school came up with an EE action plan to be implemented at site. Many good ideas have been generated during this meeting. One of the most important results was to have representatives from the Ministry of Education at the highest level, the school inspectors, the school directors and the teachers (PCVs counterparts) all in the same room discuss about EE, to hear each others' opinion and position about it and to hear from the officials the position of the Ministry on the subject and its integration in the school curriculum. The other important accomplishments of the meetings have been very well presented by Racey in her contribution (Thank you Racey!). Please read it
- 2) A revision of the Agroforestry sector was conducted during the month of May. This revision happened in three phases: The first phase was the field evaluation with a local consultant and Kane Oumar. The consultant visited the Assaba, Gorgol, Brakna and Trarza regions. They have met with officials, technical service people, community members, volunteers' counterparts and supervisors to discuss the project accomplishments, challenges and future planning for the sector in terms of projects, the collaboration and training and have visited volunteers' projects in the field. The field visit was followed by a focus group meeting where different stakeholders at a larger scale were invited to discuss about the accomplishments, the challenges, the recommendations and to plan for the next eight years. The results of the field evaluation were incorporated in the discussion during the two day-meeting/workshop. During this meeting, the participants came up with the main areas of intervention of Peace Corps for the next eight years and recommendations on how to strengthen the collaboration with the different partners. The third phase consisted in writing the project plan the PC way. What came out from this meeting is that the main focus areas of PC intervention haven't changed much. One of the major themes is to help reduce malnutrition through sensitization and promotion of better gardening techniques, of fruit trees and Moringa and as secondary projects working on fish farming, chicken raising and bee keeping. The second main theme is conservation and restoration of the environment through plantation of protection (wind breaks, dune fixation, live fences etc), alternative energy promotion (Solar, biogas etc.) and promotion of plantation of production for fuel wood, construction, gum Arabic production etc.) The third theme is working with the communities to establish auto-management for a sustainable community development. This is to basically work with the community and the cooperatives on organization and management skills, setting up management plans for their resources and identifying both internal and external resources.

The main thing to notice is that the main themes of this project plan haven't changed much.

Except that the environmental education is no longer a theme and that auto-management as the process sustaining the technical areas is emphasized on. The objectives within each of these themes have been prioritized. We will focus on the most important ones so we can deliver quality training to the volunteers.

- 3) PST and Trainees: As you all know PST is just around the corner. Kane and Racey will be the main technical trainers for Agfo and EE respectively. They will be working with all of you at different times during the PST to help with sessions. With the latest update (June 09) we are expecting 9 AGFO volunteers and 7 EE. Site selection and preparation are going well.



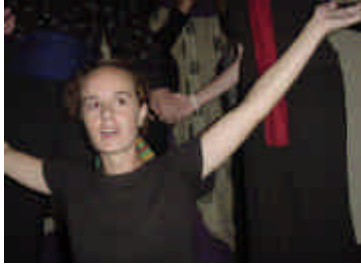
- 4) Tree nursery establishment: I am sure many of you have already started tree nurseries or are about to do it. Please coordinate with your inspection, delegation, cooperatives if they are planning for the Arbor Week.

Thanks to you all and sorry for not writing a lot. I will try to write more next time (didn't I say the same thing in the past edition also ☺)

You are doing great. Keep up the good work!

# THE RIM, QUOI...

## Come What May



### The parting words of Maita Uranga

running water, a car or a bed. In a way it seems like an extended game or a long sociology experiment. Take someone out of their natural environment, drop them somewhere entirely different, expect them to thrive and once they finally do send them back. In terms like these it seems cruel. Of course this person would want to go back to their natural environment.

Perhaps my sadness is simply overwhelmed by excitement. I am at the point that little kids reach. The point at which they are so happy that they start to bounce or shake because they have no other way to express their energy. I get to see my family in a couple weeks. I look forward to actually understanding almost everything that is happening around me. I am excited to blend in and not be the center of attention everywhere I go at all hours of the day or night. I can eat a burrito and then go to an air conditioned movie. In a sense I am delirious when I think about the comforts that I left two years ago. And also I feel at peace when I imagine waking up in my bed after the uncertainty of everything here.

In about three and a half months from today I will start law school. And my days, weeks and years in Africa will seem like a long past dream. I will forget a lot of the pain and hell of it all. Most likely I will have a picture on my desk of me with my

"I look forward to actually understanding almost everything that is happening around me."

host sister. It will remind me of this time and place. And also serve as a motivation to continue on through the strains of first year law. It will be late one night and I will have read on and on about some uninteresting subject and look up and see her face. In that moment Peace Corps will be real and in that moment I will be sad for everything that I left behind. Too much has happened in the last two years to fully grasp it. There are so many happy memories but all in a very trying situation. There is such a mélange of good and bad that I cannot be sad to go right now. But throughout the rest of my life whether I consciously realize it or not this place will be a part of me. Over time it will become less and less apparent. In this time and place I cannot fully grasp what happened in the last two years, although I have gained extreme amounts of patience. And with this patience I will watch and see over many years what really happened here. It will come out in the bedtime stories I tell my future children, nieces and nephews. It will appear when I watch Mauritania's first truly democratic election. It will happen when I hear a song. Now I have six days to go.

I have six more days left in my village and two weeks left in country. My two years of Peace Corps and living in Africa are gone. I have started to give away almost everything I have. Everyday I tell friends that I will go home to America soon. They, of course, are shocked and say I just got here. They want me to stay longer. Although, they add, if I really need to go home could I bring one of their children with me or marry their son. In the last few weeks I have done many things here all with the knowledge that it is the last time. I ran along the Senegal River at sunset when the herders bring the cows home as I dodge among the horns. I still love the irony of an American with headphones amongst the African cattle herders. I have appreciated my last full moon in Africa for a while. I read a book in my hammock. I have spent large amounts of time with my family and especially the kids. I went to my friend's village and slept on his roof.

In all of these events I expected some amount of sadness, but this is just not happening. I have tried to figure out how I can spend two years here and simply walk away. Probably because it all still seems like a dream. I am comfortable here. I can work, live and communicate in this culture and this environment. But I still cannot believe that I live in Africa and that I live with a host family in a village. I cannot believe that I do not have

## QUOI?

It is with great anticipation and corrigibility that the staff of the Nouakchott Notes welcomes you to "The RIM, Quoi..." This is the volunteer forum and section of the Nouakchott Notes for saying most anything that you want. This section is what you make of it quoi, so please feel free to submit articles, pictures, region updates, reviews, recipes, poems, tabs, critiques, advice and même gossip quoi to the appropriately named e-mail quoi of [rimnews2003@yahoo.com](mailto:rimnews2003@yahoo.com) Donc, without further adieu, bismillah, quoi...



## LESSONS FROM THE BAKING COMMITTEE

### THEY'RE COMING!

Remember when Mauritania seemed like an exciting new land of 'third-world charm' and adventure? Neither do we, but the new stage class will arrive soon fresh with innocence and potential. Wisdom in the kitchen means wisdom in life, so the Baking Committee offers these words to their fellow senior PCVs regarding the arrival of the new PCTs.

#### Ways to Mess with the New Stagiaries

- As soon as they arrive greet them by asking what they brought us.
- Look the women up and down and say, 'You'll never get a Moor to marry you that way—don't worry, we'll fatten you up.'
- Shake a trainee's hand then exam your right hand and mutter to yourself, 'Oops I always forget which hand is for what.'
- Speak to your fellow PCVs in French and act like the trainees are babies when they speak in English.
- Keep saying to yourself, 'Only 340 days to go. That's only...170 if I sleep 12 hours a day.'
- When dinner is served, sigh and say, 'Chicken again, I was hoping for goat intestines and couscous.'
- Keep talking about Keur Macene.
- Ask the girls why they're not wearing a mulafa.

## WHAT'S COOKING IN THE RIM?

LEGITIMATE RECIPES FIELD-TESTED FOR YOU IN THE BROUSSE

### Thai Noodles (from the Peace Corps Benin Cookbook)

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 12 oz. Pasta, cooked and drained                                       | 2 cloves garlic, diced |
| 1/2 c. hot water   | 1 tsp. Sugar           |
| 1/3 c. peanut butter (the Mauritanian kind for mafe works beautifully) | 1 small onion, chopped |
| 3 tsp. Maggi sauce   | Piment to taste        |
| 2 tsp. Vinegar   |                        |

Blend water and peanut butter. Stir in Maggi sauce, vinegar, onion, garlic, sugar and piment. Combine with hot pasta and eat.

### Top 10 Reasons to Be Eagerly Awaiting the New Group

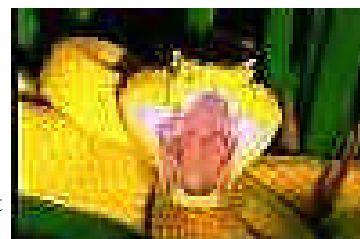
10. If there are 58 coming then at least one of them has to be as interesting as Rob.
9. They'll bring shiny new things for us to play with.
8. You know there will be some good-looking ones.
7. Rumor has it they're old, like Ron.
6. It will be fun to tell war stories since these people still think malaria and giardia are exotic maladies.
5. There has to be some good-looking ones.
4. Rumor has it that Rich re-enlisted.
3. They've seen *The Matrix: Reloaded*.
2. They'll think that we really speak Hassaniya.
1. There have got to be some good-looking ones, right?

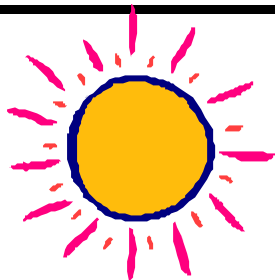


### Public Service Announcement

The following excerpt is purported to be taken from the U.S. Government Peace Corps Manual given to volunteers working in the Amazon.

1. If you are attacked by an **anaconda**, do not run. The snake is faster than you are.
2. Lie flat on the ground. Place your arms tightly against your sides, and press your legs against one another.
3. Tuck in your chin.
4. The snake will begin to nudge and climb over your body.
5. Do not panic.
6. After the snake has examined you, it will begin to swallow you from the feet end—always from the feet end. Permit the snake to swallow your feet and ankles. Do not panic!
7. The snake will now begin to suck your legs into its body. You must lie perfectly still. This will take a long time.
8. When the snake has reached your knees slowly and with as little movement as possible, reach down, take your knife and very gently slide it into the side of the snake's mouth between the edge of its mouth and your leg, then suddenly rip upwards, severing the snake's head.
9. Be sure you have your knife.
10. Be sure your knife is sharp.





Well, the **hot season** has arrived, and with a vengeance. In honor of this very special and wonderful time of year, I wanted to share my reasons for loving the hot season as much as I do.

1. **Balbastiquess** – can you even get enough tejmak or bissop?
2. **Sweating** a lot – all day, everyday;
3. **Dates** and mangoes;
4. **Waking up** at the crack of dawn – I mean it's great to get a jumpstart on your busy day;
5. Always **having something to talk about** – yes, it IS very hot. Maybe even hotter than yesterday. Hmm...no, I was not aware that the worse part is yet to come, mashallah;
6. **Sweating** while trying to nap and then waking up in a pool of my own sweat – and don't you just love when it gets into your eyes?;
7. **Chub rub** – ladies, you know what I'm talking about;
8. **Avoiding the sun** – it really is 10° cooler in the shade;
9. The **refreshing** scent of fresh pee warming on the cement walls;
10. Ooo...the **flies**;
11. The **blow-dryesque** winds;
12. The **fact** that I stink means I am better integrated;
13. **Heat rash** on my bum;
14. Still **wearing clothes** that cover my legs and shoulders when I would rather be walking around naked;
15. Lying **naked** under my fan;
16. **Seeking refuge** in the air-conditioned cyber café;
17. Taking a **refreshing** bucket bath; and
18. Watching **women in me-lahfas** walking around wearing gloves and 3 pairs of wool socks when it's 115°.

**Worried that you have just wasted two years on the matela? Burnt out after one year in Africa? Have some inspiration:**

## Become an Expat, by Bob Shacochis

When you teach grad students, those brainy, dreamy slack-ass selves who have been squeezed through the educational intestine into the relatively expansive bowel of never-ending highest education, you have a recurring thought each time you enter a seminar room and scan the robust, nascently cynical faces of the whatever generation horseshoed around the table, receptive to the morsels of your wisdom: When are you guys ever going to get the fuck out of here?

And I don't mean finish the degree, get a job, a life. I mean turn your life upside down, expose it raw, to the muddle. 'Put out,' as the New Testament (Luke 5:4) would have it, 'into deep water.' A headline in *The New York Times* on gardening delivers the same marching orders: IF A PLANT'S ROOTS ARE TOO TIGHT, REPOT. Go among strangers in strange lands. Sniff, lick and swallow the mysteries. Learn to say clearly in an unpronounceable language, 'Please, I very much need a toilet. A doctor. Change for a 500,000 note. I very much need a friend.'

If you want to know a man, the proverb goes, travel with him. If you want to know yourself, travel alone. If you want to know your own home, your own country, go make a home in another country (not Canada, England, or most of Western Europe). Stop at a crossroads where the light is surreal, nothing is familiar, the air smells like a nameless spice, and the vibes are just plain alien and stay long enough to truly be there. Become an expatriate, a victim of self-inflicted exile for a year or two. Sink into an otherness that reflects a reverse image of your identity, or lack of one. Teach English in Japan, aquaculture in the South Pacific, accounting in Brazil. Join the Peace Corps, work in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, set up a fishing camp on a beach in Uruguay, become a foreign correspondent, study architecture in Istanbul, sell cigarettes in China.

And here's the point: Amid the fun, the risk, the discomfort, the seduction and the sex in a fog of miscommunication, the servants and the thieves, the food and the disease, your new friends and enemies, the grand dance between romance and disillusionment, you'll find out a few things that you thought you knew but didn't.

You'll learn to engage the world, not fear it, or at least not to be paralysed by your fear of it. You'll find out, to your surprise, how American you are—100 percent, and you can never be anything but—and that is worth knowing. You'll discover that going native is self-deluding, a type of perversion. Whatever gender or race you are, you'll find out how much you are eternally hated and conditionally loved and thoroughly envied, based on the evidence of your passport.

You'll find out what you need to know to be an honest citizen of your own country, patriotic or not, partisan or non-partisan, active or passive. And you'll understand in your survivor's heart that it's best not to worry too much about making the world better. Worry about not making it worse.

When you come back home, it's never quite all the way, and only your dog will recognize you.

## Ben in the RIM©

