

# Nouakchott Notes

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Audrey's New Cat: "Petit"

Curious about the new volunteers? As information comes in it will go into the roster:

<http://mr.pcvs.org/roster/>



Professor X: Audrey Bottjen

[afbottjen@yahoo.com](mailto:afbottjen@yahoo.com)

Cyclops: Karl Adam

[karladamde@yahoo.de](mailto:karladamde@yahoo.de)

Rogue: Miriam Edwards

[edwardsmmn@yahoo.com](mailto:edwardsmmn@yahoo.com)

Storm: Janine Kossen

[kossenjfk@yahoo.com](mailto:kossenjfk@yahoo.com)

Beast: Will Holcomb

[will@himinbi.org](mailto:will@himinbi.org)

## Stage 2005:

### Once Again, with Feeling

By Janine Kossen

It's that time of year again when the newbies start arriving and Kaédi once again rightfully becomes the center of the RIM universe. To get the inside scoop on what we all have to look forward to, I sat down with our ever-capable stage



PCTs	
AGFO	10 (8 male, 2 female)
EE	5 (1 male, 4 female)
SED	8 (5 male, 3 female)
ICT	3 (3 male, 0 female)
CHWS	9 (0 male, 9 female)
ED/GAD	15 (3 male, 12 female)
	50 (19 male, 31 female)

training staff in their luxurious AC offices for an in-depth look at stage '05.

Let's start with the vital stats. Fifty young, impressionable, and optimistic PCTs will be landing at the ultra-modern Nkt airport July 2 just in time to watch Mitch and Kari Brashers enthusiastically wave goodbye with an intimidating smirk and some inaudible words of **continued on page 13**

## My First Day at Peace Corps!

By Bahena Ould Moustapha, ED Programming Assistant

I just can't find the right words to describe how well I was received. Everyone smiled and said to me, "Welcome to Peace Corps!" Yeah! And I could see that they meant it. I really felt that every single person was looking forward to seeing me joining the team. Everyone offered to help and was glad to do so.

I would like everyone to know that I am open to criticism and that I believe criticism is always positive as long as one can learn from it. We're all human beings, thus we will inevitably make mistakes, but these mistakes can be of great help for us as we can learn from them.

Among the things I like in Peace Corps is that I can clearly see the difference between what I did well and what I didn't as I am watched by the rest of the family members, who will certainly provide me with their very useful and constructive feedback. I think that one shouldn't just say, "Oh, I failed" and give up. That's not the solution; one should rather try... try... try..., because it's when we stop trying that failure begins.

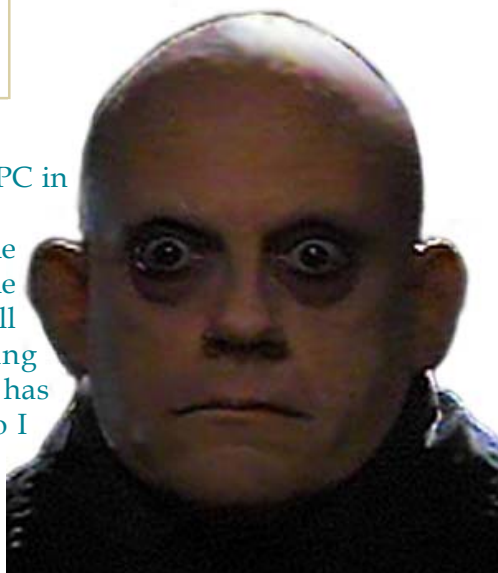
At Peace Corps, your point of view is always very important. No matter what your sector is, there is always a complementarity between the different sectors. We're all keen on getting the work successfully done and for that, we all work as a team not as individuals.



# Director's NEWS

**Staff Transitions:** We will see a number of staff transitions at PC in the month of June:

- I am pleased to welcome **Bahena Ould Moustapha** to the PC team. Many of you know Bahena from PST where he has served as the Assistant Trainer for Education. He will now be serving as the full-time Program and Training Assistant for Education and GAD (PTA/ED). Bahena has written a piece for this edition of the *Nouakchott Notes* so I will let him introduce himself.
- **PCMO Clara Pieh** departed post on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Clara had been with PC Mauritania for two-years. Wish Clara and Sam the very best in their future endeavors.
- **PCMO Cynthia Sullivan** arrived to post on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Cynthia is a Certified Physician's Assistant and comes to us most recently from the great State of Utah. Cynthia received her degrees from Colorado State University (BS Biology) and the University of Utah (MA in PA Studies). In addition to her professional experience as a PA, Cynthia served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Poland and believe it or not ... in MAURITANIA! She was posted to the remote vacation resort town of Aioun, famous for their fine restaurants, outstanding golf courses, and dramatic scenery.



## Office News:

- APCD Aw has been invited to attend Overseas Staff Training in Washington, D.C. He will be out of the office June 6<sup>th</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup>. There is a strong possibility that he will meet the new training group in Philadelphia during their staging event.
- 46 Trainees are scheduled to arrive in Nouakchott on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the group, we are expecting three married couples.

**VAC Notes:** Following intense and difficult negotiations with the VAC (just kidding), I am pleased to announce to the volunteers in the Tagant and Adrar that their regions have been added to the monthly shuttle service.

**CD Travel Update.** I will be attending the annual Africa PC Country Directors' conference from August 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. I am also looking forward to finally having the opportunity to visit PST during all Phases this coming summer.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions please do not hesitate to call me or drop me an eMail. Have a great next quarter!

Very Best,  
Obie

## *Life After the Peace Corps? Think Crisis Corps*

You've dedicated the last two years to fighting HIV/AIDS but there are still challenges to be faced. Volunteer with the Crisis Corps. CCVs are assigned to high-impact short-term projects that utilize the experience and knowledge you've already gained. We're looking for highly skilled and trained individuals to join our elite team of on-call experts. Volunteers are encouraged to submit their applications three months prior to their COS.

HIV/AIDS Program Development • Home Based Care Voluntary Testing and Counseling •  
Program Monitoring and Evaluation • HIV/AIDS Education

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/crisiscorps>

By Alassane Djakite, APCD/Health

## SPA/HIV/AIDS Funds

PCV Laura Monahan has creatively used these funds to implement an HIV/AIDS education project with the Lexeiba schools. The project promoted information sharing incorporating a quiz contest on the subject. This project fostered a good collaborative approach with schoolteachers and allowed schoolchildren to test their knowledge of HIV/AIDS through drawing and questions/answers.

## Nutrition

Great work is being achieved on this front thanks to the introduction and promotion of cereamine; a five-cereal powder used as complementary food for babies in the fight against malnutrition. Cereamine is a combination of millet, corn, rice, beans, and peanuts. Brock Emerson, who is now implementing a PCPP-funded training program on how to make cereamine, spearheads this effort. He has already implemented training in the Guidimakha and the Hodh el Gharbi. Other cereamine training will probably take place

## Reproductive Health

PCV Melanie Thurber has been giving regular reproductive health classes to young motivated girls from Mbagne. This interesting approach has climaxed with an exchange with Janine Kossen, the Health Volunteer in Kaedi where the young girls learned more about female genital mutilations and their impacts on their health.

Lahjar, Jill Sutton in Tidjikja and Melanie Thurber in Mbagne) as a response to the locust invasion, in order to incorporate cereamine in their projects. For more information on the subject, please speak to Brock or myself.

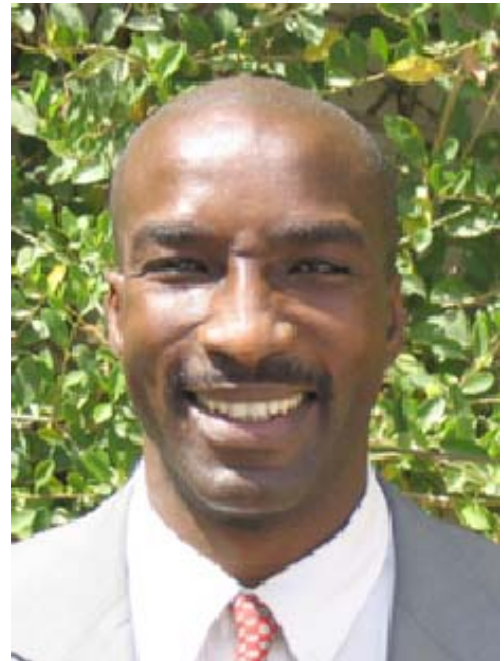
PCVs Matt Britton and Andrew Medley have also explored food canning through an interesting exchange to Tidjikja in collaboration with World Vision Tagant.

## Mother and Child Health

PCV Stephanie Rosch has been working with nurses from the Rosso PMI on maternal health and pregnancy related topics. This twice-weekly class program covered maternal and child health needs during pregnancy, birth, and post-natal care. She used the Universal Childbirth Picture Book as a main reference. Anyone interested, please, contact me in order to put your reference in the tally that I am keeping to order this important resource.

## Soak Pit Projects

PCV Brock Emerson has worked with the youth of Hassy Cheggar to develop a soak pit training aimed at improving the sanitation situation of this Soninke village. Brock has worked with the notable and the youth in order to organize the community and fashion a sustainable system. The agreement was that Brock will train interested and



motivated community members on how to design and construct a Dutch-brick soak pit and community members who'd be interested in having soak pits built in their households needed all the necessary materials and the trained youth would construct it. This very interesting project has potential for replication elsewhere, for PCV Monahan has visited with PCV Emerson and she plans to introduce the concept in Lexeiba.

## Health Post Project

PCV Julia Kennedy and her counterpart were able to pull together this ambitious project which consists of helping to complete the construction of the Breun health post in concrete. This facility will provide this village with the adequate venue to provide timely medical support to an area infested with schisto and malaria.

## Ambassador's HIV/AIDS Funds

Thanks to the Ambassador's Funds four projects have been implemented this past quarter in the Brakna, Gorgol and Tagant, in an effort to reinforce the national HIV/AIDS response. These projects have targeted diverse audiences ranging from Imams (Tidjikja) to youths (Boghé, Bababe) health professionals (Tidjikja, Kaedi), and NGOs members (Kaédi). As a result of these activities, more than 345 participants were trained to be peer educators and more than 4 communities were exposed to large-scale HIV/AIDS animations. Congratulations to Dan Sutton, Samba Woni, Kari Brashers, Jill Sutton, Janine Kossen and Yacine Kone for a job well done!



By M.Abderrahmane O. Bagga, APCD/ED

Let's start off by some big news! I'd like you to join me in welcoming Mr. Bahena Ould Moustapha, our new Programming and Training Assistant. Bahena comes to Peace Corps Education with an impressive teaching experience of more than 13 years in Mauritanian secondary schools. Over the last 4 years or so, Bahena has worked with the IGEN (Inspection Generale pour l'Education Nationale) as an English Inspector. In that capacity he has provided technical support and expertise to Mauritanian English teachers all over the country. Bahena has also worked with us over the last 3 PSTs and has greatly contributed to the success of ED Training. He already feels well integrated in the big family here and is a real team player (check out his eloquent "First Day at Peace Corps!!!")

## Rosso IST and LPTW

The SPA-funded intensive teaching workshop took place on April 30 and May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Lycée de Rosso and was a real success. The teaching event brought together some 30 teachers (volunteers and counterparts) and benefited some 200 students. At the end of the two-day intensive Model School, 29 new lessons were produced and with that the third edition of the *Lesson Plans that Work* saw the light!

I would like to reiterate the expression of my satisfaction of a work well done to all of you. Special thanks should go to Karl, Jay and Kristen! Congratulations. 200 copies of the LPTW have been printed and by now you and your counterparts (and school libraries) should have your copies of the new edition in your hands.

## Upcoming Events

The Event with capital 'E' is no doubt PST- hey this rhymes but I can be no match to Jay! (I'd like to break to everyone that Jay promised to produce a revisited 'Welcome Stagiaires poem' to the newbies in his worthwhile - albeit too short - interaction with them, n'est-ce pas, Jay?)

I'd like to solicit, as was done in the past, First/Second year volunteers' active participation in PST. I would like you, of course, to make sure you accommodate your summer vacation and individual action plans first. This year Bahena



and Jess will approach very shortly to gauge your interest in helping some with sessions, but mainly panels and school practicum.

Thank you for always making the difference.

Out of the 50 new PCTs, 15 are joining the Education Sector with all its three components (Sec. TEFL, GAD, and CDS / Teacher Training). We look forward to meeting and working with everyone. I do hope that you will be able to meet the new group at some point during training or even better around when they go on Site Visit (August 17-22), at least you could see them in the regional capital.

Potential Education Sites - 2005		
Site	Region	Assignment
Rosso	Trarza	TEFL
Aleg	Brakna	GAD/GMC Manager
Bagodine	Brakna	TEFL
Tidjikja	Tagant	GAD/GMC Manager
Chinguitty	Adrar	TEFL
Kankossa	Assaba	TEFL
Moudjeria	Tagant	TEFL
Aioun	Hodh El Gharby	TEFL
Ould Yenge	Guidimakha	TEFL
Maal	Brakna	TEFL
Kobeni	Hodh El Gharby	TEFL
Tekane	Trarza	TEFL
M'bagne	Brakna	TEFL
Nouakchott	NKC	Teacher Training w/ ENS/IPN
	NKC	TEFL (Lycée T.Z) GAD/IGEN
TOTAL		15

## The Annual Girls Conference...

...is scheduled to take place in NKC for the period July 18-22. All protocol / information have already been sent out to the different and we anticipate a successful Conference this year centered around Information and Communication Technologies.

By Mohamadou Aw, APCD/AgFo

I hope you all are coping well with the heat by staying cool and re-hydrated and by keeping yourself busy despite the blazing sun and the burning heat. I hope that your tree nurseries are growing and getting ready to be outplanted during the rainy season and that you are spreading the word of Moringa everywhere.

This again is my modest contribution to the NKC Notes. Don't you have the impression that all the important things come always at the wrong time, when we really don't have time to devote to them? It seems like that it always happens to me when it comes to NKC Notes contributions. This time also was no exception (as reflected on the length of my contribution). I made it a point to contribute to this one (or maybe Obie made me do it J) because I knew this was Audrey's last edition and didn't want her to leave this country thinking of me as the laziest of all the staff members]. I want her to leave this country with the image of me as a hard working staff member who always makes his contribution to NKC Notes and it doesn't matter how busy he is. But, seriously we will miss you Audrey. Whoever is going to take over the NKC Notes will have a big shoe to fill. Thanks a lot for your professionalism and many thanks also to the whole editing team. Good luck with your future endeavors.

## Environmental Ed Lesson Plans Manual (LPM)

I am happy to inform you that the manual is almost done. I can hear a big sigh of relief from Amy

Helmick. I would like to thank you all for your contributions. It will be a good reference and guide for the volunteers and their counterparts in implementing EE in their schools. I would like to



give special thanks to Amy Helmick for her commitment, hard work, time, energy and resourcefulness that she put in for the development and the organization of this manual. I have no doubt that it will be a beautiful product. She will certainly miss my editing-mania.

The document is in the process of being translated in both Arabic and French. It will be distributed to volunteers as soon as it is done and to the counterparts at the beginning of next school year. This manual is a living document. Your comments, suggestions, additions, critiques and feedback are all welcome. If there is money for the next year I would like to organize a workshop to improve the manual and tailor it more to the needs of the Ministry of Education, particularly in terms of harmonizing between CCBI (community Content Based Instruction) approach and the APC (Approche par les Compétences).

continued on page 14

## Number of Trainees and ETs by Training Class (1994-2004)

Training Class	# PCTs at Arrival	# PCTs at Swearing-In	% of PCTs Completing PST	# of PCVs in the field or COSed	# PCVs who ETed	% of PCVs to Complete 2 Years
1994	22	21	95%	19	2	90%
1995	17	16	95%	14	2	87%
1996	30	26	87%	22	4	85%
1997	38	32	84%	23	9	72%
1998	29	23	79%	14	9	61%
1999	41	39	95%	21	18	54%
2000	55	49	89%	40	9	82%
2001	28	25	89%	18	7	72%
2002	46	33	72%	19	14	58%
2003	56	46	82%	45	1	98%
2004	42	38	90%	35	3	92%
	404	348	86%	270	78	78%

# SED NOTES

By Brian Zoeller, APCD/SED

Have you ever ridden a horse again for the first time? One time I took a 5-hour tour through the coastal forests of Ecuador on an ol' nag sporting a true wooden saddle and a Gringo on top. I couldn't walk properly for days. I'm fine now but I was reminded of that event here as I write. Today I am happy to report that I'm back in the saddle of what it means to be in Peace Corps and there's no dismounting in the foreseeable future. I guess this means I'm conforming to the environment that is Mauritania.

Ok, ok...so I work in an air-conditioned office and live the dual life of Ex-PCV and Ex-pat. Minor details. The fact remains that my travels have taken me to each SED and ICT post over the past 4 months. I feel well-oriented to Mauritania by now. A great deal of gratitude goes out to all the volunteers I've visited. Additional gratitude goes out to volunteer counterparts, host families, and PCV friends who've also hosted.

I have discovered two enduring themes in these voyages to the interior. First is the level of professionalism you maintain with your colleagues, friends and even those whom you'd rather not be professional with. We're in the business of building relationships and I must say, you folks do it right. Secondly, I can't say enough about my colleagues' talents. From what I gather, most of you feel the same way. It is a rare breed here from head to toe and I only hope those leaving Peace Corps Mauritania can find such a welcoming, competent environment in your next careers.

Now that the mushy stuff is over, what about the program? I've "interviewed" all of the PCVs I'm charged with by now. I partially used this process to discover any patterns that evolved concerning programming and training, both positive and negative. I'm digging into that information to decipher how to best orient incoming trainees with appropriate content and effective delivery. Clearly a learn-by-doing-approach was one attribute most

of you found effective and we will design the coming training accordingly. Many of you also stated that you appreciated less theory and more practicality. Thus, we will

focus on what is currently effective, as indicated by your responses, ¼ reports, and project results. Additionally we will emphasize project continuity and integration with other sector work such as agribusiness, GMC's, and adult teaching. Thanks for the input over the months. It will assist SED and ICT to evolve more concretely.

In addition to the interviews, we held a half-day workshop with the ICT volunteers and some ICT-involved SED volunteers. That information has been written up and sent to staff and this year's trainers to better prepare our 3 projected ICT trainees. This year's trainers are Scott Eidson for SED with support from a new hire, Ibrahima Seck. Lisa Michael will guide ICT with assistance from Madou Fall. They will be contacting some of you soon with requests for your assistance with this year's training in Kaedi. We currently have 3 ICT volunteers and 8 SED volunteers scheduled to arrive on July 2 for training. I will be working over the next months to finalize site selection and affectation details. I will likely be calling on some of you to assist again

Finally, I want to thank the COSing PCVs for their service. I wish you all happy trails and much success in your next adventures. Quip: you can take an individual out of Peace Corps but you just can't take Peace Corps out of the individual. Having said that, I think I'm going to volunteer for the butt pot demonstration at stage.



## Mohamedou Ould El Mactar

Title:	Assistant GSO
Family:	Single
Hometown:	Originally Rosso, but has lived in NKT for 20-25 years
Age:	28
Previous Experience:	Private Business
Current Duties:	Assist Aminetou with logistics, volunteer requests, etc.
Favorite Color:	Pink
Favorite Number:	7
Wants Enquiring Minds to Know:	"I am at always at your service. When you need help, come see me. And good luck!"

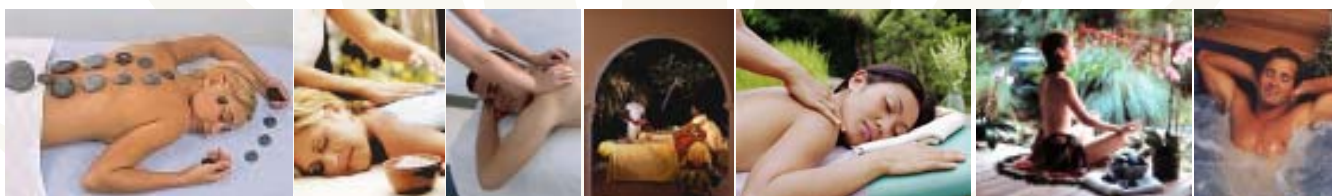


# SPAs

FY '05 SPA Grant Authority: \$35000						
Volunteer Name	Project Title	SPA Request Amount	Exchange Rate	Project Cost	Check Recieved	Completion Report
Scott Edson	Accounting & Pedagogy Training	1 348 479 MRO	\$269,80	\$4 998,07	X	
Dan Buonadonna	Charcoal from Light Biomass	121 100 MRO	\$269,80	\$448,85	X	
M. Ambrosino	Computer System for Bank Management Staff	680 499 MRO	\$269,80	\$2 522,23	X	
Brandon Guernsey	Jeddida Well	401 881 MRO	\$269,80	\$1 489,55	X	
Julia Kennedy	Primary School World Map Project	36 100 MRO	\$269,80	\$133,80	X	X
Karl Adam	English Education Seminar/WKP	1 079 470 MRO	\$269,80	\$4 001,00	X	
Laura Monahan	Sey'Nmadi Well	931 140 MRO	\$269,80	\$3 451,22	X	
Alicia Liebel	Business Training & Coin Purse Production	26 171 MRO	\$269,80	\$97,00	X	
Jordana Spadicini	Hands-on Tie-Dyeing and Business Skills WKP	610 484 MRO	\$269,80	\$2 262,73	X	
Jessica Daniel	Training of Computer Teachers	1 283 184 MRO	\$269,80	\$4 756,06	X	
Erin Ellingson	Youth Development Training & Application in Moudjeria	249 000 MRO	\$269,80	\$922,91	X	
Karin Dahlgen	Wells in Chegar	354 800 MRO	\$269,80	\$1 315,05		
Kristen Weaver	Laptop Computer and Equipment for Girls to School Program	600 000 MRO	\$269,80	\$2 223,87		
		7 722 308 MRO		\$28 622,34		



Peace Corps Partnerships '05						
Volunteer Name	Project Title	Funding Recieved	Exchange Rate	Funding Recieved	Check Recieved	Completion Report
Virginia March	Training/Leather Treatment	1 330 300 MRO	\$269,80	\$4 930,69	Cancel	Cancel
Katie Shroepfer	Robinet extension for School Garden	50 722 MRO	\$269,80	\$188,00	X	X
Julia Kennedy	Community Health	2 686 850 MRO	\$269,80	\$9 958,67	X	
Lisa Jackson	Small Enterprise Development	749 998 MRO	\$269,80	\$2 779,83	X	
Andrew Furlong	Garden Expansion	973 600 MRO	\$269,80	\$3 608,60		
Natalie Eft	Earth Day Conf. & Dune Fixation Project	727 000 MRO	\$269,80	\$2 694,59	X	
Brock Emerson	Cereamine Training and Marketing	336 999 MRO	\$269,80	\$1 249,07	X	
Caillin McGough	End of Academic Year Celebration	85 000 MRO	\$269,80	\$315,05		
Justin Lawrence	World Map and Village Clean-Up	53 960 MRO	\$269,80	\$200,00		
Katie Shroepfer	Solar Pump for Women's garden	2 250 000 MRO	\$269,80	\$8 339,51		
		6 518 470 MRO		\$24 160,38		



FY 05 HIV/AIDS APA Authority: \$18000						
Volunteer Name	Project Title	SPA Request Amount	Exchange Rate	Project Cost	Check Recieved	Completion Report
Jessica Dunsmore	Health and HIV/AIDS Awareness Tour	1 230 000 MRO	\$269,80	\$4 558,93	X	
Justus Jennifer	SOS Peer Group Educators	353 223 MRO	\$269,80	\$1 309,20	X	
DeLong Heather	HIV/AIDS Tournee Around High Schools of Nouakchott	1 205 030 MRO	\$269,80	\$4 466,38	X	
McKnight Rebecca	Scout's SIDA Sensibilization and Sketch	155 675 MRO	\$269,80	\$577,00	X	
Kossen Janine	AIDS Education Program	8 384 MRO	\$269,80	\$31,07	X	
Lawrence Justin	Health and Environmental Awareness Caravan	9 982 MRO	\$269,80	\$37,00		
		2 962 294 MRO		\$4 558,93		

# VAC Update

June 6, 2005

## Regional Coordinator Info

- Please submit new RC names and alternates ASAP to facilitate transfers.
- Separate bank accounts will be opened for all regional funds (PCVRC-Region Name) and Cheikh Gueye will be averaging out quarterly bills so as to deposit only what is needed each quarter.
- Regional travel allowances for RCs will be removed from the quarterly deposits. If you need to travel to sites, you will need to submit reimbursement forms.
- Regional medical kits must be returned ASAP. Any prescription drugs must be requested by individual PCVs from the PCMO and will be dispensed only by those licensed medical professionals. Only non-prescription drugs will be allowed to be kept in each region. A list of what meds are to be returned will be provided to RCs.
- Any improvements to regional bureaus must be pre-approved after submitting 2-3 estimates. Cash advances will then be approved as long as completed receipts are received within 5 days.
- Any office supplies (paper, etc.) for regional bureaus must now be requested from the GSO rather than being purchased in regional capitals.
- Regional emergency funds must be returned to PC ASAP. In the event of an emergency, PC will ensure that transportation through PC, government, or other means is made available.
- All RC funds should be kept in the bank at all times for security reasons.
- All COSing RCs must return all unused RC funds and clear their names with David before leaving. New RC funds will then be transferred to their successors.

## Security Briefing

On Saturday June 4, members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), an alleged Algerian terrorist group with suspected links to Al-Qaeda, ambushed Mauritanian military personnel on the Algerian and Malian borders in the remote northeast region of RIM. Twenty-three people are dead and 17 injured. Travel advisories will be issued for the border areas in this region as well as around Nema and in the eastern Adrar.

## Funding

After this fiscal year, SPA funds will no longer be available. However, Peace Corps (aka, Kane) will soon be taking over Self-Help funds from the US Embassy in an effort to streamline the program, making it similar to SPA. In the meantime, there is \$6000 in SPA funds and \$3000 in HIV/AIDS funds still available for proposals approved by September 1. Once the new Self-Help procedures are cleared, there will be \$87,000 per year available for PCV projects along with \$100,000 per year in Ambassador's AIDS funding.

## GAD

GAD has just been approved \$150,000 to be used for girls' education programs, GMCs, etc. If you have suggestions or ideas for how money should be used, please talk to Jessica.

## Tutoring

Any tutoring reimbursements submitted more than 3 months after the fact cannot be reimbursed. Please submit forms in a timely fashion.

## Medical

Cynthia Sullivan, RPCV who served in Aioun, joined the PC team as our new PCMO June 20. She arrived in country on June 18. Starting July 1, the US Embassy nurse will no longer be covering weekend cell phone duty for PCVs. Therefore, to ease the burden of PC medical staff, please only make calls on the weekends if it is an emergency. Medical personnel will also begin making more frequent site visits to ensure the health of PCVs.

## Living Allowances

Living Allowance Surveys have been distributed. Please encourage all village volunteers to submit updated surveys. Until further notice, living allowances will continue to be deposited every two months. The next deposit for August and September will be made by the end of July.

## Internet

Washington will be providing the bureau with a VSAT internet connection in the near future. The hope is that this satellite connection will be extended to the regional bureaus as well, thereby allowing regional bureaus to access the internet through Nouakchott's satellite feed.

## Important Dates

MTR: September 6

VAC Meeting: September 7



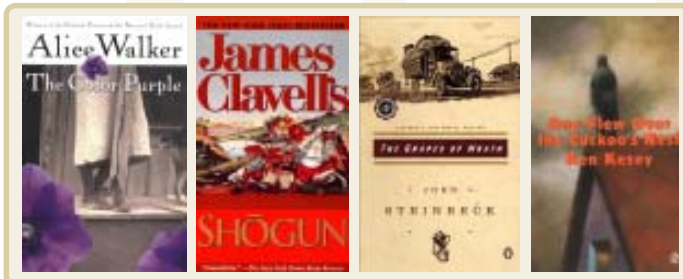
# Readin'

By Mitch Brashers

As of this writing, the book tally is up to 313 in just under two years. But, instead of giving you a list of the best books I've read here, I decided to give a more comprehensive guide. I've left out so many great books, though, that I suggest you quit any work you're doing and read **ALL THE TIME**. Well, go on. Get started.

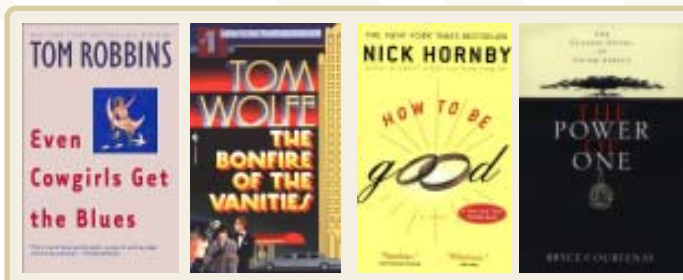
## Best Five Books You've Heard Of

1. *The Color Purple* - Alice Walker
2. *Shogun* - James Clavell
3. *The Grapes of Wrath* - John Steinbeck
4. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* - Ken Kesey
5. *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* - Tom Robbins



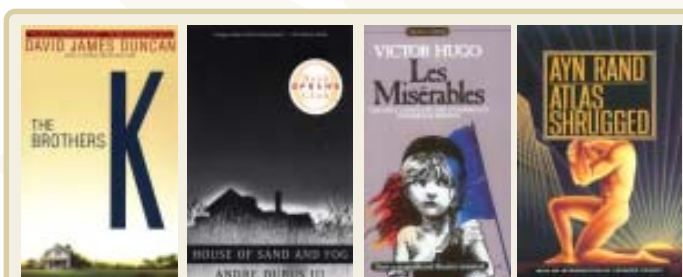
## Best Five Books You Might Not Have Heard Of

1. *The Bonfire of the Vanities* - Tom Wolfe
2. *How to Be Good* - Nick Hornby
3. *The Power of One* - Bryce Courtenay
4. *The Brothers K* - David James Duncan
5. *House of Sand and Fog* - Andre Dubus III



## You've Got Two Years So You Might as Well

1. *Les Miserables* - Victor Hugo
2. *Atlas Shrugged* - Ayn Rand
3. *Lord of the Rings* - J.R.R. Tolkien



## Best Detective Books

1. *The Travis McGee Series* - John D. MacDonald — These flat out rock.
2. *Harry Bosch Series* - Michael Connelly — Like "NYPD Blue" but in book form.

## Best Religious Books

1. *Tao Te Ching* - Lao-Tzu — Short enough to read in one sitting, big enough to read for a lifetime.
2. *Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* - Robert M. Pirsig — A different view of life.

## Best Erotic Literature

1. *Exit to Eden* - Anne Rice (as Anne Rampling) — This was hot and a pretty good story, too.
2. *Best Of Erotic Literature 2002* - Various — Hit or miss in this one but we're a little shy on erotic books in the RIM.

## Best Comedy

1. *Me Talk Pretty One Day* - David Sedaris — Try not to laugh. I dare you.
2. *A Walk in the Woods* - Bill Bryson — My favorite Bryson although some people prefer his others. This one's short and not too whiney.

## Best Science Fiction

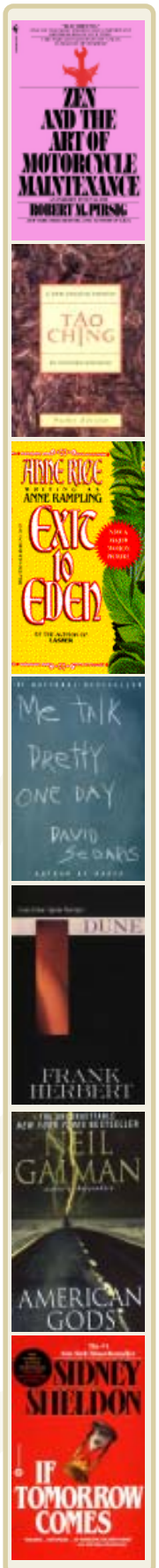
1. *Dune* - Frank Herbert — Awesome in its scope and invention.
2. *I, Robot* - Isaac Asimov — Can't go wrong with this delightful little classic.

## Best Fantasy

1. *American Gods* - Neil Gaiman — Gaiman outdoes himself in this book of gods on the New Continent.
2. *Lost Horizon* - James Hilton — The classic book about Shangri-la.

## Crapola

1. *If Tomorrow Never Comes* - Sidney Sheldon — Most contrived, trite, hackneyed, piece of goat dung I've ever read.
2. *Master and Commander* - Patrick O'Brian — Perhaps the most boring book ever.





# Fun PC Mauritania Horrscopes



## Aries:

(Mar 21 – Apr 19)

The whispering sand of time across the desert will seduce with its primal call you until you realize that you fell asleep to 1-900 numbers of Mauritanian animals.



## Leo:

(July 23 – Aug 22)

Though your dance move of the air hump will sweep the nation, the ensuing pelvic damage caused by your host-mom will leave you in a Stephen Hawkins state of celebrity and paralysis.



## Sagittarius:

(Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You will soon learn that "child" in the local language actually means "demon monkey retard gremlin."



## Taurus:

(Apr 20 – May 20)

Your impression that your hot host sister/brother wants you badly will come to a screeching halt when finally you see that old chunk of mafe stuck to your forehead.



## Virgo:

(Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Don't ask why all the donkeys around Jae's house are wearing diskette pants.



## Capricorn:

(Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You will discover that it is no coincidence that the campaign against obesity sign is the same size as a mulehfa.



## Gemini:

(May 21 – June 21)

Regardless of what Clara says, boogers *do not* replace multivitamins. Though they do make a salty and crunchy substitute to croutons.



## Libra:

(Sept 23 – Oct 23)

Though your developing Dr. Doolittle abilities will seem cool at first, you will find to your chagrin that the goats are saying Toubab and the donkeys just mutter sexual harassment.



## Aquarius:

(Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Though the black uniforms are kinda cute, Girl Scout cookies and Muslim Sister cookies are not the same.



## Cancer:

(June 22 – July 22)

Your next APCD visit will leave you somewhat unsatisfied.



## Scorpio:

(Oct 24 – Nov 21)

Completely unforeseen, your worth in the eyes of all local women will skyrocket with your creation of the "vibrating brushing stick."



## Pisces:

(Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Though your dream about string bikinis, Pol Pot, and bacon will change your life, don't try telling the local madrassa

### Flights from Las Palmas

Las Palmas, Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain) has direct flights to many cities in the EU. Because the city is in the EU, the fares can be substantially cheaper than flying from Nouakchott. For example, round trip from Las Palmas (LPA) to Madrid cost \$176 (January 2005) and roundtrip LPA to Washington DC cost \$525 (April 2004).

The Air Mauritania flight to LPA takes about two hours. Roundtrip NDB-LPA was 84,000 um in January 2005 (an additional 10 kum from NKT). There are usually at least two flights a week. Buy the ticket from the Air Mauritania bureau rather than a travel agent. Give yourself at least a day buffer in LPA to account for Air Mauritania's possible changes in schedule. Also, beware of the Arabic accounting of time in which the day begins at sundown. If Air Mauritania says a plane leaves on Thursday morning at 2:00am, they really mean Friday at 2:00am. It is also cheaper to buy roundtrip LPA-Mauritania tickets here than in Las Palmas if you have someone coming to visit. For the LPA-whenever portion of the flight, have the airline hold the ticket (e-ticket or fax) at the counter in LPA for you to pick up.

Your village may not like you. Obie might not like you. We probably don't like you. But you've got the love of Chaco Sandals, the brilliant company who is ready to sell you their rough and ready footwear at half price. Simply order via credit card and have them shipped to someone visiting in the States. The order form (in Excel format) is at: [http://mr.pcvs.org/nouakchott\\_notes/chacos.xls](http://mr.pcvs.org/nouakchott_notes/chacos.xls) Contact [info@chacousa.com](mailto:info@chacousa.com) for more information.



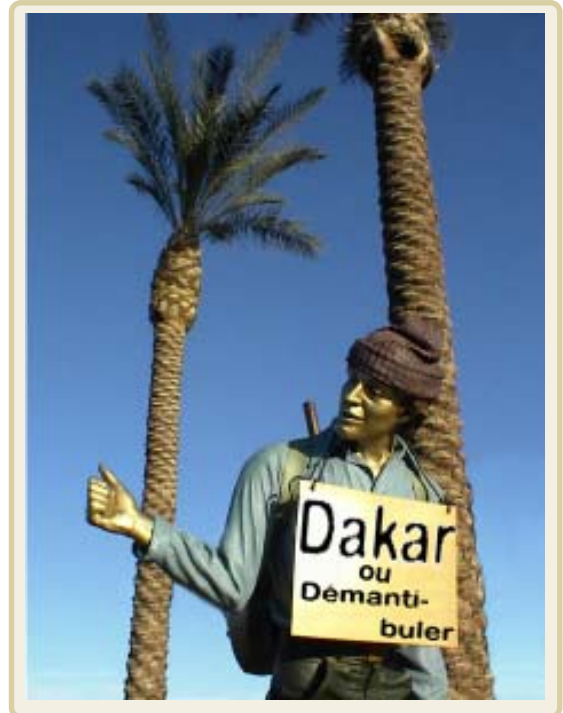
## Hitchin' in the RIM

By Lisa Michael

Want to spend very little money traveling in comfort instead of paying some maniac in a piece of junk to haul you and twice a vehicle's capacity of other passengers to your destination? Consider hitchhiking. Especially if you are a woman traveling alone in Mauritania.

Afraid? Was at first, but everyone's really helpful; they feel obliged to take care of a woman traveling alone. Have taken at least 20 hitchhiking trips now (some into Senegal) and have not run into a single scary moment. You can piss off the police, though, by declining a ride (let's say you are not in the mood to take a 'prison van' on a 500km trek through the desert). Unless you are feisty, you will likely be stuffed into the first available ride. Resist the bad rides, I say! Mauritians don't hold grudges (not even the cops).

How does one find a ride? Go to the police (gendarme, douane, whatever is first) stop at a city's exit on the road to the destination of one's choice (pas la garage). Tell the



### General Rules of Hitching

1. Get to the police checkpoint around 7am. Few travel between 12:30 and 3:00 except workers going somewhere for lunch. There is some traffic after 2:00pm to major destinations (NKT, NDB, Rosso).
2. Give your song and dance to the police guy who is standing on the road and to anyone else who asks. Beware that cops tend not to tell each other why you are sitting there. If there is a shift change, it is worthwhile to update the new guy.
3. Don't carry too much stuff. A lot of cars that stop barely have enough room.
4. Have your green residency card available for police checkpoints, but *always* try to avoid showing it. Greet the cops in Hassaniya, tell them you are a PCV from XXX doing "autostop" to wherever, and put your headphones back on. It's much faster that way, and it impresses the vehicle's other occupants when the cop accepts it.
5. Bring 3 litres of water and some food. Some drivers never stop. That's hard to take after about seven hours. Also, you want it in case you get stuck or in the unlikely event that you bail out of unpleasant situation in the middle of nowhere.
6. Beef jerky is excellent emergency food. Pull it out in a car, offer it up to everyone, but tell them that it's dried beef but it is *not* halal. Most will not partake.

cops at the police stop that you are a Peace Corps volunteer living in wherever. You are doing 'auto-stop' to go to XXX. You have no money. Tell the cops that when cars come, they should ask where they are going, and if it is to XXX, can they 'depose' you there? Eventually a car will come that will take you. Realize there is no certainty in this hitchhiking stuff. Three times I've hoped for, but not gotten, a ride.

Want to find a ride straight through to final destination? Sometimes the cops will try to put you in a car that isn't going all the way to the final destination. Judgement call. You don't want to arrive at the next place too late in the day, or you won't be able to catch another ride. So sometimes you're better off turning down the part-way ride to wait for one going all the way. Occasionally, you will want to get a ride to a busier place (for example, more cars leave Tintane for NKT than do Aioun to NKT, so get to Tintane first.)

Chub-chub to the police? No, only recently (since they've started recognizing me) have I been asked for a cadeau. No way I would ever pay. I read them the riot act instead. I am a volunteer, working in your country for two years for only enough money for food and an apartment. That is not a big enough cadeau for you? They laugh at this and get to work finding me a ride. I say the same thing if a hitched ride asks for payment after I've gotten into the car.

HAPPY TRAILS! And would love to hear from anyone who has any wisdom to share on this topic. As a wrap, bit of deep thought from my brother, applicable in most contexts. "I'm no tough guy, but after twenty years of martial arts training, full contact competition, having been groomed by some of the most despised masters," he says. "Number one thing to remember in bad situations: Escape."



# Boustifaille

## Savana Café

By Cat Horne

Two words come to mind in summarizing this new establishment.... Super Swank! Located across from the Palais de Congrès, Savana is an easy walk from the Peace Corps bureau offering a wide array of food for all tastes. There is no way a Mauritanian masterminded the design of this place, with everything matching in natural hues and a charming theme of safari pictures on the walls. With bissap churning in the chrome slushy-style fountain thing, wait staff in matching Café Savana silk-screened aprons and polo shirts and single étrangers reading books while munching on their meal, PCVs will feel transported to the euro-sophisticate cafés of the West.

The wide variety of food will satisfy any volunteer, as well as the rule of free round of soft drinks to volunteers (you may have to remind them). More often than not a plate of veggies (remember those?) with a dipping sauce of ketchup and mayo as well as a bowl of bread will materialize on the table before you've decided on your meal. Choices range from salads (500-1200 UM), the usual fast food of chwarmas, burgers, and sandwiches (500-1500), various



Savana's brochettes are as tasty as they are cheap

pizzas (1100-1500) pastas (1200-1500), brochette plates (1500) and desserts (400-1000). As Janine pointed out, the brochette plates come not only with the meat on the skewer and fries but a salad so it's a better deal than Pizza Lina. You can choose your pasta type as well as the sauce (although the tomato-caper sauce is really more like tomato with olives sauce). And for those longing for pork, the panini jambon is a sure reliable choice. If you're like the white moor guys who come just for a coffee you won't be disappointed with the assortment of hot drinks (300-500 UM).

You'll also notice at night lots of well-off expats sitting outside on the terrace and some pleasing eye candy; men, maybe of Lebanese and Moroccan descent, eyeing you while sucking on the hookah. You can freshen up in the bathroom that has two mirrors or just make faces at yourself as you angle awkwardly onto the toilet. And not only do the waitperson staff smell freshly showered, they are toubab friendly, chasing away aging can kids as you walk out the entrance.

### Do It Anyway

By Karl Menninger

People are unreasonable,  
illogical, self-centered.  
Love them anyway.

If you do good,  
people will accuse  
you of selfish, ulterior  
motives.  
Do good anyway.

If you are successful,  
you will win false  
friends and true  
enemies.  
Try to be successful  
anyway.

The good you do  
today will be forgotten  
tomorrow.  
Do it anyway.

Honesty and frankness make  
you vulnerable.  
Be honest and frank anyway.

People favor underdogs, but I  
notice they follow the top dogs.  
Fight for some underdogs  
anyway.

What you spend years building  
may be destroyed overnight.  
Build anyway.

People really need help, but  
they may attach to you if you  
help them.  
Try to help people anyway.

Give the world the best you  
have, and you'll get kicked in  
the teeth.  
Give the world the best you  
have anyway.

Mmm, crudite

Stage from page 1 encouragement, particularly for the three married couples joining the PCRIM team.

In addition to many new faces among the staff, there will be quite a few new changes to stage this year. In fact, it is entirely possible that once you look past the beautifully landscaped (i.e. trash-filled) entrance to the lycée, you might not recognize the new state-of-the-art PCRIM training facility. Not only will visitors notice several structural improvements to the center (painting, roof repairs, refurbishing offices and classrooms, etc.), they will also have much greater access to APCDs who will be traveling to the lycée for every center days session. In addition, Peace Corps has entered into a contract to use the Arabisant collège on the outskirts of town for Model School and storage.

Stagiaires will also benefit from more emphasis and follow-up on TDAs, medical procedures, and safety and security protocols, including a new session dedicated to sexual harassment. In an effort to further improve the health of PCTs, special attention will be given to improving their diets and having qualified locally available medical professionals assist with care as needed.

With the hiring of one new female and one new male Hassaniya facilitator, this year there will be a total of 8 Hassaniya/French facilitators, 4 Pulaar/French facilitators, 2 Soninké/French facilitators, and 1 Wolof/French facilitator. Given the limited number of facilitators this year, one of the biggest challenges expected is how to manage the logistics involved in training and programming for eight mixed sector language groups. Coordinating field trips, TDAs, and language time for these groups will likely require a great deal of flexibility which may result in some additional frustrations for all involved.

Adequate space at the training center will prove

to be another challenge this stage. With so many out-of-town PCVs involved as stage coordinators, finding enough housing for all has proven difficult. This is why it is particularly important this year to respect the policy that only invited PCVs will be permitted to be at the training center during center days.

Despite the many challenges of managing an 11-week intensive training program, Sidna and Daouda still view stage as the highlight of the year. Their work is constantly changing and demanding, yet invigorating and fun, especially getting to know

each training class and their unique characteristics. According to our fearless leaders, the learning never ends and each year they get such a sense of achievement out of seeing so many PCTs become PCVs. Being out of the office and in the field is what

makes them come back year after year. For Sidna, that's meant 25 years of service to PC stage, including 12 years as a Hassaniya/French language facilitator, 3 years as the Language Coordinator, and the last 10 years as the Training Director. Daouda likewise began his involvement with stage as a facilitator (Pulaar/French) for 2 years before becoming the Assistant Language Coordinator and then the Language Coordinator for the past 6 years. As always, they welcome PCV and PCT feedback in an effort to constantly improve

stage.

After meticulously surveying the educated elite among us, the word on the street is that this year stage will be all the talk of PCRIM. So, get yourselves ready to share your infinite wisdom with fresh faces who think you are experts on life in the RIM. It may be the only time in your lives when so many people will look up to you so take advantage of that while you can.

Important Stage Dates	
Arrival	July 2 (Nkt)
	July 3 (Kaédi)
Center Days	July 2-8
	July 27-28
	August 15-16
	August 23-24
Site Visit	September 13-15
	August 17-22
Swearing-In	September 15
Posting	September 18-23

Stage Training Staff	
Training Director:	Ahmedaould Sidna
Asst. Training Director:	Daouda Diallo
Language Coordinator:	Daouda Diallo
Asst. Language Coordinator:	Ibrahima Ba
Homestay Coordinator:	Fall Abderrahmane
Asst. Homestay Coordinator:	Brahimould Bihel
Logistics Coordinator:	Abass Traoré
Asst. Logistics Coordinator:	Mame Kany Basse
AGFO Trainers:	Oumar Kane
	Diawaye Keita
EE Trainers:	Amy Helmick
	Diawaye Keita
SED Trainers:	Scott Eidson
	Seck Ibrahima
ICT Trainers:	Lisa Michael
	Seck Ibrahima
CHWS Trainer:	Ba Abdoul Bolol
ED/GAD Trainers:	Bahenaould Moustapha
	Jessica Dunsmore
Cross-Culture & Cashier:	Margaret Ambrosino

# Mo' AgFo

AgFo continued from page 3

## CCBI Document

The translation of the CCBI training document is done. It will be bound and distributed to the counterparts.

## National Arbor Week Celebration

As you know the first week of August is the National Arbor Week. Many delegations and inspections of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Environment organize tree-planting activities during that week. Check with your delegation or inspection to find out if they are planning any activities that week and how you can be involved. If they are planning on doing anything this year they should be in the preparation phase by now.

## PST and Site Assessment

As you all know PST is approaching. We have almost completed our site assessment visits. Several communities have been retained as potential sites. The final list of sites will be made known right before site visit due to the possible ET's. We may ask your help for follow up visits for some of the sites to get them ready for the PCVs. So far we have 10 Agfo invitees and 5 EE's. Kane and Amy will be the lead trainers assisted by Keita Diawoye from Rosso. They will get in touch with you for sessions that they would like/ need your help on.

## Community Feeding Centers (CAC's)

We are getting close to opening the CAC's for malnourished children in the Brakna and Tagant regions. The situation is particularly alarming this year due to a very poor harvest, which in turn is due to locust invasion and lack of rain. Many organizations are involved in this activity. The Peace Corps is

collaborating with the Ministry of Health and some ONG's to establish seven (7) CAC's (two in the department of Mbagne, three in Moghta Lahjar and two in Tidjikja). Each CAC will feed 25 children every day for three months. Melanie Thurber, Jordana Spadacini, Jill Sutton and Matt Britton are collaborating with some of these institutions for the establishment of these centers in their areas. I would like to thank them for their much-appreciated active involvement in this project.

"I feel there is some powerful value for us to go far in order to be close. For it is in the Third World that our hearts and eyes are opened to that which we have been blind to at home."

-Henry Nouwen

They will conduct nutrition animations for the mothers of the children. We will also use the services of a Moringa adduct here in NKC to do Moringa promotion and at some point we would like to train local communities on Cereamine production. This product is a nutritious blend of different grains and Moringa powder for children's consumption. Ask Brock, our national expert about it.

## OST

I am sure you all know by now, I am going for an Overseas Staff Training. This is about getting trained and sharing experiences in the areas of programming, training, volunteer support and project management. I went through this training about 8 years ago and they have asked me to come back to refresh my mind, share my experience, get new information (8 years is a long time ago and many things have happened and have changed) and shake off that crust that I have been forming after being set loose for all these years. I will leave on June 6 and return on July 4. I guess I will be watching the fireworks from the sky (wouldn't that be magnificent?). During my absence please address all your matters to Kane before he heads off to Kaedi for PST, or to anyone of the other APCD's or the CD.

## Alpha Amadou Diallo



Title:	Administrative Assistant
Family:	Single
Hometown:	Lamé, Guinea. Moved to Mauritania 3 years ago.
Age:	24
Previous Experience:	Financial Assistant at UNDP
Current Duties:	Assists David in developing budget estimates, calculates personnel and staffing costs, handles financial obligations, liquidations, disbursements, and billings
Favorite Color:	Blue
Favorite Number:	5
Interesting Factoid:	Studied management at Berkeley College in New York
Wants Enquiring Minds to Know:	Eager to get to know as many PCVs as possible while maintaining his standing within the administration



# Closing

## Farewell

By Jay Davidson

Before I leave the RIM, I'm taking time to tell  
Some words of reflection, closure, and  
farewell.

My service has concluded and I've made it  
out alive.  
Was it really only two years? Sometimes it  
seemed like five!

Since my arrival here I have never left *Afrique*  
But it's time to move away from this continent  
unique.

I'm leaving Mauritania none the worse for the  
wear,  
With a few more wrinkles and a little less hair.

I'm outta here soon – that's the end for me.  
Nouakchott now needs a new PCVRC.

So long to the guards who work at the CAC,  
And the quarterly meetings with Obie and  
the VAC.

Training was reciprocal; each of us has had  
our turn,  
For even we teachers must continue to learn.

I've enjoyed to the max the privilege of  
seniority,  
For as a *shaybahni* there's been respect for  
my authority.

And besides my distinction as the oldest  
Volunteer,  
I have a reputation for being a bit queer.

The day-to-day life is unusual, *n'est-ce pas?*  
It doesn't get much different than Africa,  
*quoi?*

I've come to understand a new meaning of  
"soon."  
If said in December, it may mean "by June."

You only get frustration wanting other folks  
to hurry.  
So get with the program: Be happy! Don't  
worry!

Continued on page 16



Marc's New Cat: "Bwett"

## Stage 2003 Superlatives

Via a Poll Conducted by Molly McCollom

- Most likely to succeed: Dan Buonadonna
- Most likely to become an APCD: Lisa Michael
- Most likely to seduce Obie: Jessica Dunsmore
- Most likely to marry a Mauritanian: Melanie Thurber
- Most likely to marry another PCV: Mark Hitchcock and Alice Paal
- Most likely to continue to use a makareh in the States: Natalie Eft
- Most likely to fly back to WAIST after COS (the Ben Richey award) : Marc Valentin
- Most likely to continue to beat children in the US: Evil Karl Adam
- Most likely to leave behind an illegitimate child in Mauritania: Nathan Gretzinger
- Most likely to leave Mauritarians with the most bizarre memories: Jen Justice
- Most likely to become a politician: Annika Dubrall
- Most likely to have a steady job, get married, and have two kids, a dog, and a white picket fence: Hector Hernandez and Genevieve Kirk
- Most likely to bring up their Peace Corps experience in a bar as an effort to hook up with someone: Dana Weymouth
- Most likely to have four wives: Nathan Gretzinger
- Most likely to be a PCV for five years (the Miranda Dodd award): Mark Lange
- Most likely to continue to wear Mauritanian clothes in the States: Natalie Ceperly
- Most likely to rule the world: Jessica Dunsmore
- Most likely to write a Peace Corps book (the Mango Elephants in the Sun award): Jay Davidson
- Most likely to calculate 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners of this survey with percentages according to age, sector, hometown, and blood type: Will Holcomb

# Closing II



Carl's New Cat: "Scabs"

Who will be the next...

- Cheikh Gueye? Scott Eidson
- Condi Rice? Jessica Dunsmore
- George Dubya Bush? Mark Lange
- Maaouiya? Mitch Brashers
- Bill Gates? Matt Mills
- Michael Jackson? Karl Adam
- Obie Shaw? Brandon Guernsey
- David Solomon? Matt Mills

A third year and an invitee are hanging out en brusse. The volunteer says to the invitee, "See that camel over there? I'll bet you dinner at Pizza Lina I can make him jump 30 feet in the air."

"Impossible," says the invitee, "you're on."

So, the volunteer walks around to the back of the camel with two bricks, reaches in between the camel's legs and crashes the bricks together. The camel jumps 30 feet in the air.

A couple of days later the volunteer says to the invitee. "I bet you your next care package I can make that camel nod his head yes."

The invitee says, "You got me last time, but there's no way you can make that dumb animal nod his head yes."

The volunteer takes the same two bricks, walks around to the front of the camel, holds up the bricks and says, "Remember me?".

The camel nods...

Farewell continued from page 15

Where I come from we don't have such brutal heat  
Or quite as many people peeing in the street.

And there's always real coffee, that's what I say.  
Don't give me none o' yo' Nescafé!

No more knocks on the door when I'd rather be alone.  
No more dust from the desert or cellular phone.

Did I enjoy the food? Of course! Now don't be silly!  
*Zeine hateh, nech-nuh, alinyeh, inihwilly.*

The people are descending like locusts on a tree  
With these words of good-bye that they offer to me:

"You weren't with us here for nearly long enough,  
But as long as you're leaving, can we have all your stuff?"

Sure. Keep it with the thanks from the bottom of my heart.

Keep the *mate/as*, keep the rugs – and you can keep my counterpart!

I won't need all of that as I slowly make my way  
Toward an autumn arrival in my City by the Bay.

Where as an RPCV I'll take on a newer role,  
Explaining my life here, per the Peace Corp's Third Goal.

So until such time arrives as I see you all again,  
I also leave you with a grateful *shokuran jehzilen*.

It's time to hit the road and I'll become a rover.  
I can sum up two years thusly: Glad I did it! Glad it's over!



Will's New Cat: "Dionysius"