

# The Camel Express

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF NIGER

Volume 14, Issue 1

March, 1999



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## NIGER GOES TO THE POLLS

### Final Results Incomplete From Historic Local Elections

In an historic event, Nigeriennes went to the polls on Sunday, February 7 for the purpose of electing some 2000 local, departmental and regional councillors.

Results from the elections, Niger's first local elections since independence in 1960, are incomplete even as The Camel Express goes to print in early March.

Partial results, however, indicate a substantial overall lead for the anti-government coalition of FRDD (Front pour la Restauration et la Défense de la Démocratie) and AFDS (Alliance des Forces Démocratique et Sociales). The FRDD consists of five political parties including the CDS-Rahama (Convention Démocratique et Sociale) led by Mahamane Ousmane - Niger's only popularly elected president. The AFDS comprises an additional three parties.

The government coalition of six political parties was led by RDP-Jamma'a (Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progrés) - the party led by President and General Ibrahim Mainassara Bare, the man who led the military coup which ousted Ousmane in 1996.

Two independent parties completed the slate of electoral groups which fielded as many as 18,000 candidates.

## MORE SOURCES FOR ELECTION COVERAGE

Much of the factual content of the Niger election coverage, as provided here by The Camel Express, comes from the sources listed below. Those readers with internet access are encouraged to 'hit' the web sites listed below for additional and up-to-date information as well as more in-depth coverage.. Some of these sites also lead to other sources of news on Niger:.

- Kakaki-News of Niger - The pro-democracy news service of Focus on Niger. <http://users.idworld.net/jmayer/kakaki/>
- Les Internauts du Ténéré - A Nigerien site. <http://www.multimania.com/niger/labari.htm>
- PANA - The Panafrikan News Agency. <http://www.africanews.org/west/niger>

# Message from the President

Greetings, once again, on behalf of the Board of Directors of **Friends of Niger**. Welcome to the first 1999 edition of The Camel Express.

As promised in the last edition - and as you can see - **FON** is now officially 'on-line.' Please visit the site often and get back to us with your reactions. We think you'll like what you find, but we are wide open to ideas and additional input. You'll find a fuller description of the site's contents below..

Also below, you will find an update on plans for **FON's REUNION '99**. The idea for the reunion was the desire, expressed to us by many of you, for an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and friendships and meet other people who have lived and worked in Niger. The focus of the reunion will be social, with some time put aside for a Niger-oriented exchange. Please check out the emerging details on page three and get in touch with Vice-President Gabriella Maertens or myself.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to the kick-off of the 1999 **FON** membership campaign - by filling out the form, becoming a member and making additional financial contributions.

As grateful as we are for the response to-date, that response still falls short of the support that we are going to need if we hope to build a volunteer organization that keeps its members informed about what's happening in Niger; that helps its members stay in contact with each other; and that, eventually, is capable of making meaningful and direct contributions to the people of Niger.

Please take this opportunity to print out the 1999 Annual Membership Form (see below) and join **Friends of Niger**.

And, by all means, enjoy the newsletter and stay in contact.

Thank you.

Jim Schneider, President

## Moving? Changing Your E-Mail Address?

After the last issue of **The Camel Express** went out, we received 122 e-mail "undeliverables." That's 122 people who didn't receive the fall edition of the newsletter - because they didn't keep us informed. And we can't keep you informed if you don't keep us informed. Stay in contact!! We'll try to do the same.

**The Camel Express** is the periodical newsletter of **Friends of Niger (FON)**. FON can be contacted via the post at P.O. Box 33164, Washington, D.C., 20033-0164 or by e-mail at [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com).

## Reunion '99 Planned for August in St. Paul

It's not too early to begin making your plans to attend Reunion '99. Spring is just around the corner and the next thing you know - it'll be summer. **FON's Reunion '99** - an opportunity to reacquaint with old friends and reconnect with Niger - is scheduled for August 13-15 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The schedule, still tentative, has begun to take shape - with a *first contact*/registration event set for the afternoon of Friday, August 13 and a dinner/social slotted for that evening. **FON** Vice-President Gabriella Maertens, who is coordinating the organization of Reunion '99, is holding off the temptation to firm up plans for Saturday, Saturday evening and Sunday morning. She wants more input and ideas from you!! Does someone have a good selection of music from Niger? A slide show that they could bring to St. Paul? Photo albums crammed with embarrassing shots of themselves and other RPCVs? The desire to pull together people who were in Niger during the same period of time? Other ideas for Reunion '99? She wants to hear from you - ASAP!!

Gabriella reports that there appears to be considerable interest from people whose years of Nigerienne experience ranges from the early 60's right up the present. And she promises more details for the May issue of **The Camel Express**.

Contact info: Gabriella Maertens - [gmaerten@pps.k12.or.us](mailto:gmaerten@pps.k12.or.us); Jim Schneider - [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com); **Friends of Niger** - P.O. Box 33164, Washington, D.C., 20033-0164.

## 35th Anniversary Tee-Shirts Discounted to \$10

T-shirts commemorating the 35th anniversary of Peace Corps in Niger have been discounted to \$10 each, plus shipping & handling (\$3 for 1 or 2 shirts; another \$1 for each additional shirt). The shirts, [pictured below](#), are black on white, 100% pre-shrunk cotton with a green crest on the left sleeve.



Designed by a PCV in Niger, proceeds from the sale of the shirts go to fund the projects of the PC Niger Gender and Development (GAD) Committee. Available sizes are L, XL and a limited number of 2X. Send check or money order payable to Hassan Baroudy, 1324 Vermont Street NW, Washington, DC 20005. Include your name, address, size and quantity and a day-time contact number or e-mail address. All sales are final.



Hassan can be contacted at [hbaroudy@peacecorps.gov](mailto:hbaroudy@peacecorps.gov).

## CHEWABLE VITAMINS FOR NIGER

Sue Rosenfeld, Niamey Resident Director of Boston University's Study Abroad in Niger program has asked that visitors to Niger bring along a bottle of children's chewable multi-vitamins.

Here's the background. Sue - a 14 year resident of Niger - helps participants in BU's study program find and fill community placement 'mini-internships' during their stay in Niamey. Some of these students intern in the Pediatrics Ward of the National Hospital in Niamey (Pediatrie B). Among the responsibilities taken on by the hospital interns has been the distribution of vitamins to children at the hospital. That is until last year, when the supply of vitamins ran dry.

Sue put out her initial request late last year and received a productive response to her initiative.

This is how it works. When someone lands in Niamey, they give Sue a call at 73-54-26. She will pick up the bottles. Periodically Sue then passes the bottles along to Dr. Gamatie at the Pediatrics Ward. Dr. Gamatie oversees the distribution of the vitamins.

## Ousmane and Banguiéré Among Monitors in Nigeria

Nigeria, Niger's neighbor to the south, held presidential elections on Saturday, February 26. Amongst the international observers who monitored the elections were former Nigerien President Mahamane Ousmane, former US President Jimmy Carter and retired US General Colin Powell. The current government of Niger sent 15 additional observers led by Ali Banguiéré, president of the Supreme Court of Niger.

**Sources:** Kakaki-News of Niger, Channel Africa

## State Department Commends Niger

## But Expresses Concern Over Election Turmoil

On February 17, the US Department of State commended Niger on its efforts in relation to the recent local, departmental and regional elections and commented that the elections "marked a significant step in an ambitious program of decentralization" At the same time, the State Department expressed its concern over disruptions to the electoral process and urged the Nigerienne government to "ensure the integrity of the vote count."

Disruptions were reported in Niamey as well as in the regions of Maradi, Tahaoua and Zinder. CENI chairman, Lawali Maman Danda, has indicated that some election re-runs will likely take place in certain of the areas where the disruptions were the most severe.

**Sources:** BBC, Kakaki-News of Niger, US State Department

## RPCVs Needed for 1999 Special Olympics

The North Carolina Peace Corps Association (NCPCA) has issued an appeal for assistance to the RPCV community, as part of its work with the organizing committee of the 1999 Special Olympics World Summer Games. The games are being held June 26 through July 24 in North Carolina and will involve some 7000 athletes as well as coaches and family members from 150 countries and regions worldwide.

The Special Olympics is looking for 2500 volunteer interpreters to do work in 40 languages, as well as delegation assistants and delegation assistant leaders to work with athletes and their delegations during the Olympic period. The NCPCA is acting as liaison between interested RPCVs and the Olympic organizers and coordinating logistical support for participating RPCVs.

Individuals or groups that are interested in volunteering assistance or who want additional information should contact NCPCA President SaraTerry at 919-361-9770 or by e-mail at [ncpca\\_pres@worldnet.att.net](mailto:ncpca_pres@worldnet.att.net); or Reed Altman at 919-828-4617 or [ncpca@rtpnet.org](mailto:ncpca@rtpnet.org).

## FON Web Site Up, Running & Interactive

After a slight delay, **FON** is very much on-line! Bookmark the site while you're here.

The **FON** web page, a masterpiece of the web-authoring skills and dedication of Niger RPCV guru Jai Evans, made its official debut in January. The site contains information about **Friends of Niger**; links to sources of news and other information on Niger; links to RPCV web pages; an interactive Bulletin Board where you can leave messages to each other ; a Guest Book where you can leave messages for **FON**; an e-mail link to **FON**; and, the archives of **The Camel Express**.

The site will always be a work in progress as it adds new features and additional links. Please pass along any ideas or suggestions. And give us a 'hit' from time to time.

## Peace Corps Also Launches Newly Designed Web Site

While you're checking out the new **FON** site, take a few extra minutes and visit the new PC page at <http://www.peacecorps.gov>. It includes info on Returned Volunteer Services, the Fellows Program, World

Wise Schools and other programs and services of the Peace Corps.

While you're at it, visit the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) as well. You can find NPCA at <http://www.rpcv.org>.

## MESSAGES, Etc.....

Janine & Barry Rands, recently moved from NW Oregon to southern California, looking to make contact with other Niger folks in the area. Now live in Camarillo. Contact via e-mail at [BarryRands@aol.com](mailto:BarryRands@aol.com).

\* \* \* \* \*

NPCA reports that the 1998 edition of *Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Directory, 1961-1997* are now on sale at the reduced price of \$40 (down from \$65). Contact Rached Rebert at 202-293-7728 ext 2 or via e-mail at [Rpcvadmin@aol.com](mailto:Rpcvadmin@aol.com).

\* \* \* \* \*

Friends of Niger - Washington State will meet in Seattle on Saturday, April 17 from 1 to 4 PM. For details contact Sue Dernbach at 206-937-6320 or Sue Bracken at [Sbrckn@aol.com](mailto:Sbrckn@aol.com)

# FRIENDS OF NIGER 1999 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ State \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (w ) \_\_\_\_\_

E- Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Connection to Niger (RPCV, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Dates in Niger \_\_\_\_\_ Location in Niger \_\_\_\_\_

Program or Involvement in Niger \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

*Membership Dues & Contributions Help Fund FON Activities, including The Camel Express*

\*\*\*\*\*

Please Check Appropriate Boxes

Enclosed is \$20 for an Individual Membership in FON

\$45 to cover Individual Membership in both FON & NPCA

Enclosed is \$35 for a Family Membership (*2 Members at One Address*)

\$67.50 to cover Family Membership in both FON & NPCA

I am a New RPCV, entitled to a 1-Year Free Membership

Please send me a Copy of FON's Bylaws (*Members Only*)

In Addition to my Membership, I have enclosed a Contribution of \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of Joining FON at this time, I have enclosed a Contribution of \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Make Check or Money Order Payable to **Friends of Niger** and mail to:

**P. O. Box 33164, Washington, D. C. 20033-0164**

(Please Print & Enclose Membership Form)



# The Camel Express

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF NIGER

Volume 14 - SPECIAL EDITION

July 1999



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## Reunion '99 August Up-Date

With about ten days to go, there is one major addition/change to the schedule for **FON Reunion '99**. The **FON Supper/Social** scheduled for 7 PM, Saturday August 14 will be a **Burger, Brat & Beer Fest (BBB&F)** chez Niger RPCV **Jim Martin**. Jim was with the first PC group in Niger - arriving there in 1962 and spending his time as a teacher in Zinder and Maradi.

The **BBB&F** will be taking place at [1768 Lincoln Avenue in St. Paul](#) - about one mile from the St. Thomas campus in St. Paul. A nominal price will be charged at the door. Looks like the perfect event for an August evening in Minnesota.

All other events are as outlined below. In the case of some of the events, additional information may not be available until we arrive in St. Paul. Members of the FON Board will be available at the conference site - including **Jim Schneider, Gabriella Maertens, John Soloninka** and **Larry Koff**. Notices will be posted at the Koch Commons, the location for NPCA Registration and information exchange at St. Thomas College.

Thanks for the help received from **Angela Kieffer** and **Ron Dube** re: the previous request for help securing music and flags from Niger. **Bring photos, videotapes, slides, audiotapes, etc.**

FON Board President **Jim Schneider** will be staying at the Student Apartment Residence, arriving Thursday, August 12.

For further info, contact **Jim Schneider** - [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com) - or **Gabriella Maertens** - [gmaertens@earthlink.net](mailto:gmaertens@earthlink.net). Any further update will appear at the **FON website** - <http://www.friendsofniger.org>.

## See You in St. Paul!!!

## Reunion '99

This special summer edition of **The Camel Express** has been produced specifically to provide a bit of information to those of you who are planning - or might still plan - to attend the combination **FON Reunion '99** and **NPCA National Conference**.

First - some clarity regarding the two events. Every two years, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) holds a National Conference. In 1999 the conference is being held on the [University of St. Thomas campus in St. Paul, Minnesota](#) from Thursday, August 12 to Sunday, August 15. So - the Board of FON thought it would make sense to sponsor a FON reunion to coincide with the NPCA conference. Many of you had asked for a reunion-type gathering and the Board felt that we might benefit from the arrangements being made by NPCA. That is how **Reunion '99** came to be set for the period Friday, August 13 - Sunday, August 15.

This up-date will not contain a lot of information regarding the NPCA conference because all those of you who are NPCA members have received a pile of info directly from NPCA. And, to clarify - while we hope that many of you have decided to register and attend the conference - the conference is separate, though parallel, to the reunion and participation in the reunion events does not require that you be a conference attendant. For those of you who are members of FON, but not NPCA, and those of you who are members of neither see **Some NPCA Events** below for info on conference events that you may be able to tap into.

## FON Reunion Events

**Friday, August 13 - 4:30 PM - Reunion Registration and First Contact.** This will be the first opportunity for those of us who arrive on Friday to find each other, meet each other and spend some time together. For this purpose, NPCA has set aside a room for FON at the conference site. To find us (as rooms have yet to be assigned) go to the NPCA registration area at Koch Commons on the St. Paul campus of the University of St. Thomas. The people at the NPCA desk will know where we can be found. We have arranged for a slide projector and screen as well as a videotape playback unit and monitor - in the expectation that some of you will bring video material that you'd like to share. Someone has already volunteered to bring a selection of music from Niger. If you want to be sure to hear your favorite tunes - bring them along. Tables will be available for displaying photo albums or whatever else you might want to share. Coffee and juice should be available nearby. At some point there will be an informal exchange - not a meeting, but an opportunity to welcome each other. The room is available to 6 PM. Drop by at anytime.

**Friday, August 13 - 7 PM - FON Supper & Social.** [Blue Nile Restaurant & Lounge, 2027 E. Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota.](#) Arrangements have been made for a communal African-style vegetarian meal at about \$6 per person. Meat and other side dishes can be ordered individually. The restaurant is run by an Ethiopian family and has an excellent, long-standing local reputation. The eating area is non-smoking. The attached lounge and bar features live African music and will provide a great venue for social activities after supper - dancing, talking, singing, etc.

**Saturday, August 14 - 11 AM - Brunch.** The locations for most of the Saturday FON events have yet to be confirmed. Additional info will be available later this month at our website (see below) and at the events on Friday, August 13 referred to above as well as on the bulletin board at the Koch Commons NPCA registration area.

**Saturday, August 14 - 3 PM - FON Gathering/Exchange.** Sheraton Midway Hotel, 400 N. Hamline Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota. The hotel is situated less than 3 miles from the conference site. FON will have a hospitality room available for people to gather and make contact - in much the same fashion as the 4:30 PM session on Friday.

**Saturday, August 14 - 7 PM - FON Supper & Social.** Location to be announced. Emphasis will be on "social."

**Sunday, August 15.** Wide open.

## Some NPCA Events

The events below are part of the NPCA National Conference but to which you will all have access.

**International Bazaar and Career Fair.** These run from 9 am to 6 pm on both the Friday and the Saturday. The Bazaar will feature products sold by many of the RPCV groups as well as by NPCA, etc. The Career Fair will feature recruiting booths from some 40 international employers and graduate schools. Bring along your resumes. Information on location will be available as per the above.

**Film Festival.** Runs from noon to 6 pm on Friday, 10 am to 6 pm on Saturday. Films under consideration come from the Brazilian rain forest, the classrooms of Morocco, pre-Soviet Georgia, Africa and the forest home of Irian Jaya.

**Walk-Run for Peace - Sunday, August 15 - 7 AM.** 5 kilometers (about 2 1/4 miles).

**Peace Site Dedication - Sunday, August 15 - 8:30 AM.** University of St. Thomas campus.

## **Future Updates, Input from You Folks, On-Going Contacts**

Check out this website on a regular basis for additional info related to the reunion - bookmark us at <http://www.friendsofniger.org>. While at the site, click on the [Bulletin Board](#) located on the bottom left-hand column and leave messages or ask questions related to the reunion, who is going, etc Take a look now and respond to my message, or leave a message for someone else. Additional information regarding the NPCA conference is available at the NPCA website - <http://www.rpcv.org>.

**Contacts:** Jim Schneider, (819) 827-4870, [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com); Gabriella Maertens, 503-254-5161, [gmaertens@earthlink.net](mailto:gmaertens@earthlink.net).

Does anyone have or know where we could get one or more Niger flags?

**SEE YOU IN ST. PAUL!!!**

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

November 1999

## Message from the President

Well here we are!! Almost the end of 1999. Almost the end of the millennium - whichever year you prefer. And, whichever, it would be difficult not to be struck by the challenges which lie ahead - for Niger and for FON as well.

Will this country - Niger - which belongs to others, but which we care about so much - find its way towards a more representative, participatory and inclusive political system? The signs are good, as clearly illustrated by the recent first round of the presidential elections. But Niger's recent history bodes caution - and vigilance.

And will **Friends of Niger** - itself only recently revived - not only continue to grow, but, more importantly, find itself able to muster new and increasingly more effective means of response to Niger, the people of Niger and its own membership? Here, the signs are also good - witness the range of activities touched upon in this edition of *The Camel Express*. But, like all largely voluntary undertakings, **FON** too requires vigilance - best achieved, I submit, in the form of your involvement.

Taking out a membership or making a financial contribution is a form of involvement. Either of these actions are supportive of **FON** and directly assist with the newsletter, the website and our other activities. We are very grateful for this support and urge each of you to renew your existing membership or officially join **FON** for the first time (see the **FON Membership Form** below).

But, as is reflected in the more activist content of this edition of **The Camel Express**, the new millennium augurs a new and more activist agenda for **Friends of Niger**. Many of the articles in this edition - those on chewable vitamins, Books for Africa, Jubilee 2000, Peace Corps Day 2000, Help Wanted, even the little notice regarding The Hunger Site - suggest ways large, small and in between that you can find a more active role either within **Friends of Niger** or in other activities that are supportive of the interests of the people of Niger.

The **FON Participaction Menu** is an attempt on our part to make it easier for *you* to let *us* know what forms of participation you would be willing to at least explore. **Please respond.**

Enjoy the newsletter. Stay in contact. Have a great Thanksgiving. Join **Friends of Niger**.

Thanks.

Jim Schneider, President

# **Boston University & Friends of Niger Project**

## **- Chewable Vitamins for Niger's Children -**

### **\*PROJECT UPDATE\***

In the spring issue of **The Camel Express**, we reported on Sue Rosenfeld's request that visitors to Niger bring along a bottle of children's chewable multi-vitamins.

Sue is the Resident Director of Boston University's Study Abroad program, which is based in Niamey, where Sue has lived and worked for 15 years. When someone arrives in Niamey - with one or more bottles of vitamins - they give Sue a call at 73-54-26. Periodically, Sue passes the bottles along to Dr. Gamatie Youssouf at the Pediatric Ward of the National Hospital in Niamey. Dr. Gamatie oversees the distribution of the vitamins.

Since then the children at the National Hospital have been the recipients of a steady, if modest supply of vitamins brought to Niger by a variety of visitors and returning residents. Recently one donor, Beth Mundell, sent along 1600 chewables.

Now an even more exciting development has occurred. **A full suitcase has been put at the disposal of the chewable vitamin project!** Chris and Helene Zoolkoski, along with their daughter, will be carrying the suitcase with them when they arrive in Niamey on December 18. PCV's in Tahoua and Niamey (1988-91), Chris and Helene (Warkentin) are headed to Galmi where Chris, a recent med school grad, will work at the SIN referral hospital while Helene studies Hausa.

### **\*How You Can Help to Fill the Suitcase\***

There are two ways that you can help fill the suitcase - by sending bottles of *children's chewable multi-vitamins* **or** by making a project-specific financial contribution.

Bottles of *children's chewable multi-vitamins* should be sent to **Gabriella Maertens, 13302 NE Sacramento Drive, Portland, Oregon 97230-3000**. Gabriella is Vice-President of FON (& the originator of the 'suitcase' idea). Chris and Helene also live in Portland.

Financial contributions, in the form of checks or money orders, should be made out to **Friends of Niger** and sent by mid-November to::

**Vitamins c/o Friends of Niger  
P.O. Box 33164  
Washington, D.C. 20033-0164**

We'll forward a lump sum check to Chris for purchase of vitamins in Portland. And we'll let you know how this all worked out in the next issue of **The Camel Express**.

## **FON Explores Partnership with St. Paul Based Non-Profit Organization**



Books For Africa is a St. Paul based non-profit organization established in 1988 for the purpose of shipping donated books to Africa. To-date, BFA has been involved in the shipment of more than 4 million free books to over 20 African countries.

About 30 percent of the books are shipped from the BFA warehouse in St. Paul, the other 70 percent from partner organizations across the country.

About one-third of those partnerships have been with Rotary Clubs in the developed world and in Africa.

**Friends of Niger** is discussing with BFA the possibility of a partnership, a relationship which would see FON facilitate the movement of books to Niger (which has not been a recipient country).

Discussions have also been started with an NGO in Niger - important because NGO's are capable of ensuring duty-free entry of the books and, because some such organization needs to handle the internal distribution of the books to schools, libraries, etc.

### **We Need Your Involvement!!**

We need people to come forward who would be willing to take the local initiative with potential partner organizations and/or book-donor institutions. For more information and/or to become involved in the campaign, please contact Jim Schneider at the FON mailing address (see below), via E-mail at [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com) or by phone (819-827-4870).

## **JUBILEE 2000**

### **The Campaign to Cancel**

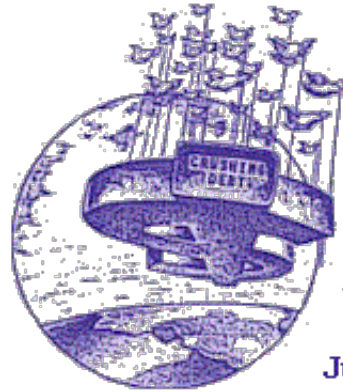
### **Third World Debt**



Jubilee 2000 campaigns and coalitions around the world have joined in a concentrated effort to cancel the international debt of the world's poorest countries - Niger included.

33 of the 41 countries identified by the World Bank as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) are in Africa - Niger near the bottom of the list.

Simply put, the continent's debt is so large in relation to its income that the debt can never be repaid. In 1997, for example, Niger GNP was \$2 billion US, its debt owed to foreign creditors \$1.579 billion - over 75% of its GNP. Servicing of debt of this magnitude diverts resources from health, education and other vital services. And development aid does not fill the gap. In 1996, sub-Saharan African countries shelled out 30% more for debt servicing than they received in grant aid.



**MUST WE STARVE  
OUR CHILDREN  
TO PAY OUR DEBTS?**

**Julius Nyerere,  
Former President of Tanzania**

And whereas individuals have access to bankruptcy proceedings and overextended businesses can go into receivership, poor countries have had no escape - no recourse - no means to start over with a clean slate.

To find out more about world debt, Niger's debt situation, current U.S. policy and how to get involved in the Jubilee and related campaigns - including the Jubilee petition - consult below:

**Jubilee 2000/USA** - largest coalition of US group .

Source for debt-related educational material; links to other groups and sources; information on regional and local activities and contacts.  
222 East Capitol Street, NE; Washington, DC, 20000-1036;  
1-202-783-3566 (phone); 1-202-546-4468 (fax);  
[coord@j2000usa.org](mailto:coord@j2000usa.org) (E-mail); <http://www.j2000usa.org> (website)

**African Policy Information Center (APIC)**

Source of background papers and other educational material.  
110 Maryland Avenue NE #509; Washington, DC, 20002;  
1-202-546-7961 (phone); 1-202-546-1545 (fax);  
[apic@igc.apc.org](mailto:apic@igc.apc.org) (E-mail); <http://www.africapolicy.org> (website)

**Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative**

<http://www.web.net/~jubilee>

**Oxfam International**

<http://www.oneworld.org/oxfam/policy/papers/1papers.html>



# PEACE CORPS DAY 2000

March 7, 2000 will mark the 3rd annual Peace Corps Day. Last year's event saw approximately 9000 RPCV's going into school's across the country, teaching students about their country of service and sharing their experience of living in another country.

The theme of this year's event is "Bringing the World Home to Our Nation's Schools."

The Peace Corps Day 2000 brochure - which includes info on how to receive a 'presentation kit' from Peace Corps - is scheduled for mailing in November to RPCV's and other educators.

RPCV's who are interested in speaking to a class or teachers who would like to host a speaker or others who are seeking information about Peace Corps Day 2000 may address their questions to Lisa Ward, Peace Corps Day Coordinator, at [eward@peacecorps.gov](mailto:eward@peacecorps.gov).

Inform **Friends of Niger** of your involvement and we'll try to get back to you with an information package which is Niger specific.

## Special Help Needed

**Friends of Niger** needs assistance with and through the process of obtaining federal tax-exempt status. At present, **FON** is a non-profit corporation registered in the District of Columbia but without tax-exempt status. The process is detailed and somewhat complicated and we're a bit daunted. Anyone with experience with the process or who is otherwise qualified and would be willing to offer *pro bono* assistance is urged to contact Jim Schneider at the **FON** mailing address (see below), via E-mail at [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com) or by phone (819-827-4870).

**FON** would also like to assemble an information/education package on Niger - the people, the country, the culture. If possible, we would like to assemble a basic set of materials for use during Peace Corps Day 2000 and then build a more sophisticated package over the course of the coming year. We'll probably produce the basic materials in-house and take it from there. Once assembled, materials would be made available on request. To help with this project, please contact Jim Schneider at the **FON** mailing address (see below), via E-mail at [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com) or by phone (819-827-4870).

## FON SETS UP PHOTO ARCHIVE



FON Recording Secretary John Soloninka has taken responsibility for establishing a **Friends of Niger** Photo Archive - a depository for all those photos from Niger that need to be rescued from closets and drawers and basement storage areas - while they are still salvagible. The collection will be stored on CD's and Zip discs as well as in albums and made available for reunions and other events.

Contact John at 2388 Glenmawr Drive, Columbus, Ohio, 43202; 614-261-0578 (phone); [soloninka.1@osu.edu](mailto:soloninka.1@osu.edu) (e-mail) or via FON.

## RPCV Books & Stories

Over the past 38 years, there have been quite a few books and stories written by Niger RPCV's, particularly books written from the perspective of the experiences of their volunteer years.. During the same period, other authors have also written books about Niger and its people. Here are four of the more recent.

Hale, Thomas A. **Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and Music**. Indiana Univ Press, 1999. ISBN: 0253334586 Hale (Niger '64-66) went back to Niger in 1980 on a Fulbright senior lectureship to teach African and American literature at the University of Niamey. While back in Niger, he conducted the research which led to four books, including **The Epic of Askia Mohammed** and **Oral Epics from Africa**.

Hill, Kathleen. **Still Waters in Niger**.

Triquarterly Books, 1999; ISBN: 0810150891.

A novel, released in May, built around the work of her daughter Kathleen (85-87) who was a NUT volunteer in Niger.

Chilson, Peter. **Riding the Demon: On the Road in West Africa**. Univ of Georgia Press, 1999. ISBN: 0-8203-2036-6.

Rain, David R. **Eaters of the Dry Season: Circular Labor Migration in the West African Sahel**. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999. ISBN: 0-8133-3616-3.

Coyne, John et. al. **Living on the Edge : Fiction by Peace Corps Writers**. Curbstone Press, 1999. ISBN: 1-8806-8457-8.

Check out the [RPCV Books link](#) on this page for more information

### VISIT the HUNGER SITE



Every 3.6 seconds someone dies of hunger; 3/4 of these deaths are children under 5. Visit The Hunger Site and make a difference - <http://www.thehungersite.com>.

## Friends of Niger WA State

# Support Orphanage in Niger

Niger RPCV's and other friends of Niger from the state of Washington gather twice yearly to spend an evening together, catch up with each other, share their Niger experiences and discuss ways that they can respond to today's Niger.

Their next get-together takes place from 5 PM, Saturday, November 6 at the Mandarin Chef, 5022 University Way NE, Seattle, 206-528-7596. For further information regarding the dinner contact Sue Dernbach by phone at 206-937-6320 or via E-mail at [Susandern@aol.com](mailto:Susandern@aol.com).

In 1998 the group launched a program in support of Niger's newest orphanage started in 1997 by Fraternité Notre Dame. Tax deductible donations can be sent to Fraternité Notre Dame at P.O. Box 1713, New York, NY, 10035 or directly to Niamey at B.P. 12661, Niamey, Niger. Last year the American Women's Club of Niamey funded the purchase of bedroom furniture for the orphanage. For additional information contact Sue Bracken (509-924-3903) at [Sbrckn@aol.com](mailto:Sbrckn@aol.com).

## - Dreamweaver Travel -

### Start the Millennium in the Air Massif



Dreamweaver Travel is a small tourism company, specializing in cross-cultural and adventure tours to West Africa. The new company, owned by Dudley Parkinson - RPCV Cameroun & PC staff in Togo, Benin & Cameroun - offers trips to Niger, Togo and Cameroun.

According to Dreamweaver, current packages include a two-week camel trek among the Tuareg, scheduled to start on December 27 and reach the Air or Tenere by December 31.

For a complete itinerary as well as information regarding Dreamweaver's commitment to "culturally and environmentally sustainable travel" visit their website at <http://www.dreamweavertravel.net> or make e-mail contact at [dudley@dreamweaver.net](mailto:dudley@dreamweaver.net) The company, based in River Falls, Wisconsin can be reached by phone at 715-425-1037.

## Reunion '99 Attended By

**40+ Friends of Niger**



Forty plus Niger RPCV's, their families, and other friends of Niger participated in part or all of **FON's Reunion '99** which took place August 13-15 in St. Paul, Minnesota at the same time as NPCA's annual conference.

Participants included RPCV's spanning the entire history of PC Niger - from 1962 right through 1999.

FON its special thanks to local members who helped organize the event, including Jim and Daisi Martin and Sue Riesgraf. [Photos From Reunion 1999](#)

## News Briefs from Niger

×In mid-September the Conseil de Réconciliation Nationale confirmed that the government has ratified the international convention calling for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The ratification occurred in spite of serious opposition from Islamic groups.

×On July 18, some 31.2 percent of Niger's electorate turned out to overwhelmingly approve (89.6 percent) Niger's new constitution. The constitution of the Fifth Republic was proclaimed by the government in August.

**Sources:** Kakaki, Reuters, BBC

## New Leadership for Peace Corps & NPCA

Since the last issue of **The Camel Express**, both Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) have undergone changes of leadership at the top. Mark Gearan has stepped down as Director of the Peace Corps and accepted an appointment as President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He has been replaced on an interim basis by Chuck Baquet. Meanwhile, the NPCA search for a replacement for its president, Chip Dambach, resulted in the successful recruitment of Dane Smith - former US Ambassador to Senegal.

## Credits & Other Information

This edition of **The Camel Express** was prepared, produced and distributed with the assistance of Jai Evans, Sue Bracken, Irma Poots Sarata, Judd Lyon, Sue Rosenfeld, as well as members of the Board of **FON**. Please send address changes and corrections, as well as any queries to **The Camel Express** at any of the addresses below.

**Board of Directors  
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\*

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**The Camel Express** is the periodical newsletter of **Friends of Niger (FON)**.

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by e-mail at [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com); and you will find **FON** on the web at the following Internet address  
[www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org).

Renew your **Friends of Niger** membership for the year 2000 or join us for the first time. You'll find the **Annual Membership Form** above. While you're there, fill in the **FON Participaction Form** which can be found immediately below the **Membership Form**.