

The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

January 2004

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Friends of Niger & NPCA Meet in Chicago this August Plan to Attend the Combination Reunion/Conference: August 5-8, 2004

Once again, **Friends of Niger** will sponsor and organize special **FON** events to coincide with the biannual NPCA conference. The 2004 gathering will take place August 5-8 in Chicago.

As has been the practice, **Friends of Niger** events will be open to all 'friends' of Niger - members of **FON**, Nigeriens, RPCVs, friends and family of PCVs, etc. **FON** members who are also NPCA members may choose to attend NPCA sessions as well and will receive information regarding these meetings (and their costs) directly from NPCA.

FON events (which are free of charge) will include social gatherings on the evenings of August 5, 6, and 7; an information/exchange session on Saturday, August 7; and other opportunities for 'friends' to gather, reacquaint themselves with old friends and make new ones. Updates will be posted to this site on a periodic basis between now and August.

Ambassador Robert J. Ryan Passes Away in His 90th Year

Robert J. Ryan, Sr., U.S. Ambassador to Niger, 1964-68, and long-time member and supporter of **Friends of Niger**, died at his home in Daytona Beach, Florida on September 17, 2003. 'Bob', as he was known to **FON** activists, was 89 years old.

Ambassador Ryan was born in Massachusetts and joined the Department of State in 1937. Upon retirement, he was appointed an Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations where he was responsible for overseeing the logistics of peacekeeping operations. He retired again in 1977 but retained an ongoing and active interest in both the Foreign Service and the United Nations.

Bob's love for and commitment to Niger never flagged. He retained an active membership in **Friends of Niger**, was strongly supportive of the organization's various activities and projects, freely sharing his knowledge and his personal resources. In 2001, at the Celebration of Niger event in Washington, D.C., Bob was recognized with a Friends of Niger Special Achievement Award for his "important and lasting contribution to Niger and its people and to the purposes of Friends of Niger."

Ambassador Ryan is survived by his wife Mary, two sons, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



Standing in the middle of the second row, Ambassador Ryan is flanked by his wife Mary and Nigerien President Hamani Diori. The photo was taken in 1965 at the presidential palace in Niamey on the occasion of a reception in honor of Peace Corps Volunteers and staff. In the bottom row, between President Diori and Ambassador Ryan is Niger Peace Corps County Director C. Payne Lucas.

In his June 10, 1963 speech at American University, President Kennedy said:

"What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children -- not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women -- not merely peace in our time but peace for all time."

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Schneider also indicated that the 2005 trip will include many of the same features as the highly successful 2002 event, "with, perhaps, a little more emphasis on participation in service activities or work projects."

Anyone with an interest or questions related to participation in the trip is encouraged to contact [Jim Schneider](#)

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The video was shot on location in Niamey, Maradi, Matamaye, Botsotsoua, Kantche and Zinder and includes interviews with Haoua Diatta of the Oxcart Project as well as with Schneider, representatives of FON's Nigerien partner organizations and others.

Copies of the videotape may be purchased for \$20 each (2 for \$35). Use the [FON 2004 Membership & Order Form](#) or send a check or money order, made payable to **Friends of Niger**, to **Video, c/o FON, PO Box 33164, Washington, DC, 20033-0164**.

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Credits and Other Information

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[ORUWOCA](#), founded and led by Nigerienne Mireille Gbetholancy, is a relatively new NGO, headquartered in Washington, DC The Summer Leadership Academy is the organization's first initiative in Niger and is a clear expression of one of ORUWOCA's goals - to empower girls and women through effective education programs (leadership and literacy academy for young girls and women's health education) and microcredit management programs (small loans for rural women).

The Summer Leadership Academy for girls will be held in Niamey in the 2nd half of August. The academy model was designed by ORUWOCA member Dr. Hassana Alidou, Associate Professor of International Teacher Education Program, Graduate School of Education, Alliant International University, San Diego, California, a gender and development specialist. The academy seeks to assist poor young girls to develop social and leadership abilities and to enhance their academic abilities. The focus of the 4-week program will be on the development of critical awareness about basic health issues such as prevention of malaria, STD and HIV/AIDS; and the preparation of participants for the end of primary education exam by enhancing their ability for critical thinking, mathematical problem solving and literacy.

Participants in the program will be drawn from Niamey's poorest neighborhoods with the help of primary school personnel, les chefs de quartiers and neighborhood Women's Associations, local griots and local radio.

ORUWOCA and FON hope to expand the program into rural areas and other urban centers in the coming year.

Financial contributions to this and similar initiatives can be made by sending a check or money order, payable to **Friends of Niger** to

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Friday - August 6 - FON Social & Dinner - 6:30 PM

Join FON members, Niger RPCVs and Nigeriens at the Ethiopian Diamond Restaurant, 6120 North Broadway, Chicago for a great evening. Other 'Friends' groups will be there as well, including Friends of Ethiopia & Eritrea and Friends of Mali. The Diamond is near the Granville stop on the Chicago transit Red Line (about 30 minutes from downtown) and is reputedly the best African restaurant in Chicago. We'll gather from 6:30, eat at 7:30 and stay for the music and dancing.

The buffet dinner costs \$20 (taxes & tip included). The buffet will include doro wett (chicken stew), ciga tibs (fried beef), another meat dish, two or three vegetable dishes, salad, and injera (Ethiopian bread) and soft drinks. The Diamond also features various African beers, Tej (Ethiopian Honey Wine) and great desserts. We need a reasonably accurate head count for Sisay Abebe, our contact at the Diamond. Please, please contact [Jim Schneider](#) and tell him that you'll be attending.

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Not a meeting in the usual sense, but an opportunity to gather and have an exchange on FON activities and initiatives as well as to share photos and other souvenirs of Niger. We are arranging to have the **FON Archives** exhibit on hand as well as **FON T-Shirts** and the **FON** video *Brother from Niger*. The gathering will be held at one of DePaul University's downtown campus buildings on Jackson Blvd between State and Wabash, just 2 blocks from the Palmer House (the NPCA conference hotel). Exact location TBA - check back at this site for an update.

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