

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

January 2019

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## 1) Message from the President

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Dear Friends of Niger,

Our new year is off to a great start with many of you responding to our yearend fundraising letter with generous donations. You are guaranteeing another year of efforts to help Niger and Nigeriens as well as keeping us in touch with each other.

If you haven't had a chance yet to send your support, you can do that at any time with the information provided on the last page of this newsletter. Thank you very much.

If you need a quick recap of the projects FON funded last year and what we're looking at for 2019, here's the report that accompanied our recent appeal letter to you:

[http://www.friendsofniger.org/pdf/projects\\_2018\\_2019.pdf](http://www.friendsofniger.org/pdf/projects_2018_2019.pdf)

Guess what? Your FON Board is meeting the weekend of April 5, 2019 in the Boston area. Although we volunteers have interacted plenty on your behalf via email, phone calls, Zoom conference calls, etc., some of us have never met. At this retreat, besides meeting socially, we'll also work hard to do things like clarify our mission, hone our organizational structure and procedures, update our bylaws, and plan upcoming projects. Incidentally, while board members will pay most of their own expenses, we are grateful for a donation that has been earmarked for building capacity of the organization. The donor, who is among our members, has specifically directed funds to our efforts to advance the organization including the retreat, a website update and activities to build and engage the membership. At the retreat we will be reviewing the suggestions that 104 of you supplied when you completed the member survey last year. Thank you again for those insights!

**You are invited!** On the last day of the Boston retreat, Sunday, April 7, 2019, from 2-4 p.m., we invite any of you in the neighborhood to come socialize with us and with each other. Location yet to be determined. Please stay tuned for details and contact us with suggestions. We welcome your input and ideas any time.

**FON regional get togethers!** What? Just planting a seed that there may be ways for our nationally spread-out membership to pull together with regional get-togethers. If you are interested in pursuing this idea, please raise your hand!

Thank you again, and best wishes for 2019!

*John Baird*

[president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

**“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”**



## 2) FON Updates

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Thanks to your generous donations we are looking forward to a new year of support for projects in Niger. The Project Committee is fine-tuning the review and implementation process, starting with setting a schedule of quarterly application reviews. We anticipate continued support for projects that promote women’s economic advancement, solar electrification and Moringa plantations.

We also want to provide you, the members, with inspiration, ideas and support for projects that you might be able to initiate in your villages in Niger. What ideas do you have? Do you have connections to help implement some of these successful projects in your village? For example, electrifying small clinics in rural areas with solar power is a relatively inexpensive and uncomplicated project you may want to take on with our support and connections. The technology used is simple and adapted to rural community capacity, the supplies are local and each one costs as little as \$1,000. Friends of Niger is happy to support projects you may be already engaged in with other partners through promotion among our membership, engaging our contacts and fiscal sponsorship.

If you are interested in working with us on any projects please check out the application and project information at our website: <http://www.friendsofniger.org/about/projects/>

## 3) FON Member Updates –



In the News: Lisa Curtis PCV 2010-11 who worked on Municipal/Community Development in Safo, Maradi was featured on the cover of Specialty Food Magazine for her entrepreneurial work with Moringa. Check out a sweet little video explaining how she started this work based on her experience in Niger.

<https://www.kulikulifoods.com/>

Inspiring new Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has a link to Niger:

‘. . . at Boston University, Ocasio-Cortez studied abroad in Niger, doing rotations at a maternity clinic on the outskirts of Niamey.’ Read More: [HERE](#)



#### 4) Where are they now – Pat Alio

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##### Then

Pat Alio was among the Peace Corps pioneers who went to Niger in the early years, serving as a volunteer from 1964 to 1966. Her assignment was teaching Physical Education in elementary schools. In practice this translated to creating a Track and Field program for girls. They had little to no equipment so they used rocks for the shot put, tied elastic cord between trees for the high jump and engaged the students in the creative, make-do exercise. The kids loved it, teachers loved it and principals loved it! They held competitions among schools in spite of lack of funding and some of those students went on to be national champions. The program helped build self-esteem and kids learned to work together not compete against each other. “The great thing about Peace Corps is the idea that you are going to learn as much as teach. You don’t know it all.”



In the category of other duties as assigned, she and other Peace Corps volunteers spent a lot of time teaching English to President Hamani Diori, who was very interested in the early stages of the Peace Corps program. In those early days Niamey was but a big village and people were very friendly and interested in the Peace Corps volunteers. Pat bought a horse with her settling in allowance (probably not what Peace Corps had in mind!) and rode to church and to the market; note there were very few cars in Niamey at the time.

Pat was invited to go back and carry on her work at the expense of the Niger government from 67-71. She was happy to take on new duties adding middle school, high school programs for youth in Niamey.



I Arbor Day tree planting

Pat never left Niger. She met her Nigerien husband and was married in 1970. She switched to teaching English, enjoyed being welcomed into her husband’s family, and raised their own 4 children and adopted a fifth. She went 21 years without travelling home to the states even though she considers both places home. She has continued to contribute to educational programs teaching and directing the English Language Program at the American Cultural Center, developing curriculum, teaching teachers and influencing the lives of countless Nigeriens and other expatriates working in Niger.

##### Now

As Pat’s children started coming to the US for schooling and her husband sought medical treatment in the US she came back to the US for longer visits and stays while still travelling back to Niger on a regular basis. She has enjoyed helping her daughter launch a school and lending a hand to develop English curriculum for the budding African Development University. She says now she is just a stay-at-home grandmother, but this seems like an understatement.

## The impact of your experience in Niger.

Pat's great joy and fulfillment comes from meeting former students in Niger and hearing from them how the educational opportunities and influences she provided has impacted their lives. "When you are teaching, you don't realize that you are helping shape their lives. Getting students to ask questions and search for answers, seeing them open up and get self-confidence."

## What do you miss from Niger?

Friends and family, food and the life there.

*Please suggest candidates for future "Where are they now" features. We are hoping to spotlight representatives from all the decades of service and diverse paths. Who do you want to hear about?*

## 5) Call to action: Pump Project in Ourogo, Say Arrondissement, Niger

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Join hands with the village of Ourogo, Water Charity, NPCA and **Ken Patterson** to repair 3 foot pumps.

*"I'm going to be doing a water project in the village where I was a volunteer with the help of **Water Charity** (watercharity.org). For anyone interested, I'll provide details on the project as it advances. I have a dependable project manager on the ground in Niger. Perhaps he'd be willing to support some other projects.*

*Thanks for your help! --Ken*

Go to the Water Charity link for [more project info](#)

## 6) NIGER NOW - telecommunications

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Charging cell phones in the market at Nya Beeri

If you have not been in touch with Niger lately it may be hard to imagine that cell phones have completely permeated Niger. Effectively skipping the stage of developing landlines, they jumped ahead to cell phones. This goes all the way from the streets of Niamey where hawkers at every intersection sell cards to put minutes on your phone, all the way out to villages without electricity that rely on charging their phones weekly at the market.

In recent news one of the big providers of cell service has been shut down for failure to pay taxes. Read the story here: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/682250/economie/niger-apres-orange-des-locaux-dairtel-niger-fermes-par-le-fisc/>

*The Nigerien authorities have ordered the closure of the premises in Niamey to the largest operator in the country, Airtel Niger telecoms, for "non-payment of taxes", announced Saturday of the officers of the company and the local media.*



*Airtel is one of four companies that shared the 7.7 million mobile phone subscribers, of a population of 19 million people.*

Cell phones are having a big impact and penetrating far into Africa and this is only expected to grow. According to CNN in Africa less than one in three people have a proper drainage system, half of the population live in areas without paved roads, and only 63% have access to piped water. Yet, 93% of Africans have cell phone service. [Read more from CNN <https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/19/africa/africa-afrobarometer-infrastructure-report/index.html> and about Sub Saharan Africa: <http://www.africanews.com/2017/07/25/over-half-a-billion-mobile-subscribers-in-africa-by-2020-hi-tech/>]

Sub-Saharan Africa currently has 420 million unique mobile subscribers with a 43% penetration rate. By 2020, this number is expected to hit over half a billion, making Africa the fastest growing mobile market.

Communication and much related development is vastly facilitated by the proliferation of cell phones, however, the technology is not without its problems. In 2013, unregistered phones were associated with crime, including the kidnapping of two French nationals in 2011 and other terrorist activity. Phones are now required to be registered, putting to an end a system where previously up to a third of the numbers were unregistered. Read more here: <https://phys.org/news/2013-11-niger-mobile-crime.html>

Technology Roundup According to Wikipedia

Main phone lines	100,500 lines in use, 145th in the world (2012)
Mobile cellular	5.4 million lines, 107th in the world (2012)
Internet users	230,084 users, 150th in the world; 1.4% of the population, 205th in the world (2012)
Fixed broadband	3,596 subscriptions, 166th in the world; less than 0.05% of the population, 185th in the world (2012)
Internet hosts	454 hosts, 185th in the world (2012)

## **7) Did you know? Fauna updates**

### **Saving the last West African giraffes in Niger**

In the mid-1990s there were only 49 West African giraffes left in the wild. As a result, the subspecies was listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species in 2008.

Efforts by the government of Niger in collaboration with local and international partners have led to a resurgence of the West African giraffe. The population has now increased to 600 and last month, the subspecies was downgraded to vulnerable by the IUCN. READ MORE from BBC: [HERE](#)

**Dama gazelle Update--** from Janet Donaghy, who is a Volunteer Guide at the National Zoo: Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute/National Zoo is doing excellent work with Dama gazelles, native to Niger, Mali, and Chad. The Scimitar Horned Oryx, another Niger and Chad

animal, was extinct in the wild until SCBI, GOC and others implemented a reintroduction program. In Chad, SCBI designed and created special collars to track the Oryxes once they were released.

### **Sahara Conservation Fund**

Check out more work being done in West Africa under the direction of a familiar face, John Newby, CEO of Sahara Conservation Fund. Their mission is to conserve the wildlife of the Sahara and bordering Sahelian grasslands.

CHAD - Scimitar-horned Oryx Reintroduction

CHAD & NIGER: Addax Conservation, Dama Gazelle Conservation, Health Care Missions

NIGER - Giraffe Conservation

<http://www.saharaconservation.org>

## **8) Important info:**

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### **Notes from the Editor, Amy Wilson**

We want **your** input! Please share any news, ideas, articles and ideas for other categories for your newsletter and let us know what you think of the changes in format and frequency.

We are looking for content that falls into these categories:

Niger now | Culture | FON Projects | Niger Diaspora | FON Update | Calls to Action |  
Where are they now? | Did you know?

Please keep in mind these two Friends of Niger resources:

- Our website (new webmaster needed): <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>
- Join & follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfNiger/>

CONTACT US AT: Camel Express FON [camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com)

### **Friends of Niger Board of Directors**

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President - John Baird

Vice President - Phyllis Dichter Forbes

Treasurer - Larry Koff

Secretary - Cheryl Turner

Members at large: Tom Corcoran, Seybou Douma, Dale Downes, John Hutchison, Amy Wilson,  
Penni St. Hilaire, Rabiou Yari.

### **Friends of Niger Membership Info** – *Please submit with dues*

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Name:

Address/City/State/Zip+4:

Phone:

Email:

Connection to Niger (RPCV, etc.):

Dates in Niger:

Location in Niger:

Program or type Involvement:

### **DUES & DONATIONS**

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Membership dues & donations help fund FON activities – including The Camel Express newsletter, the FON website, the FON archives, and local Nigerien projects. The Friends of

Niger is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3). Membership and contributions to Friends of Niger are fully tax deductible. We send receipts so you can take charitable tax deductions.

Dues are payable on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year. You may make a donation at any time. The first \$20 of your donation will be considered your annual membership unless it is earmarked for a specific project. To make a payment at any time you can either go to [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org) to donate via PayPal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: PO Box 1999, Brookline MA 02446-0017. Thank you very much!

PRIVACY POLICY: Your contact information is requested and maintained by FON so that we can contact you in the future. FON does not share your information with any third party other than with the National Peace Corps Association with whom we have a reciprocity agreement.

Please reply to this email with a request to <<unsubscribe>> at any time.

# The Camel Express

Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

February 2019

In this issue:

1. FON Updates; Join us for a social in Boston
2. Recommended Reading
3. Call to action- followup on Oourogo Pump Project
4. NIGER NOW – Drones, Cure Salee and Crossing the Desert
5. Did you know? That Hamani Diori was a founding member and co-chair of AFRICARE?

## Message from the President

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Dear Peace Corps Niger Friends – younger and older!

Yes, we span the entire era of Peace Corps Niger. From Dan Mainwaring, Forestry, 1962, to those of you, volunteers and trainees, who learned in January 2011 that the PC Niger program was being terminated. By coincidence, I was with several of you at the Maradi hostel when the text message came through on your cell phones from the PC Office in Niamey that you would either be reassigned to a different country ... or going home.

What life-changing experiences we had! How our worldview deepened!

I love staying in touch with you! And with our collective history in Niger.

From January last year to February this year, I sent out thank you notes to 243 of you to acknowledge your donations – with personal notes. Either I know you personally or I can see from our records when and where you served. I am just impressed with how you still care! During that period, you donated \$52,674 for Friends of Niger projects (including \$6,370 from Niger III & IV for albino children). Thank you!

Your FON board is all-volunteer, and frankly many of us are in the older category. We recognize a need to refresh our ideas and strategies, and we are taking a first step at a retreat in April to launch a new era. We look forward to delving into your survey ideas and suggestions. And we are always looking for ways to bring in new people and new ideas. Please continue to reach out to us and share your ideas.

Please stay in touch and please continue with your support.



Sincerely, John

John Baird [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

**“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”**



## Notes from the Editor, Amy Wilson

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We are always looking for content. Please share any news, ideas, articles and categories for your newsletter, and do let us know what you think of the changes in format and frequency.

Please keep in mind these two resources about Friends of Niger:

- Our website (new webmaster needed): <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>
- Join & follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfNiger/>

### 1) FON Updates; Join us for a social in Boston

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Attention anyone in the Boston area -- You are invited! Sunday, April 7, 2019, from 2-4 p.m., we invite you to come socialize with the FON board and with each other. Event location TBA; details will be forthcoming soon.

### 2) Recommended Reading

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#### “JFK: The Last Speech”

In October, 1963, three weeks before he was killed, JFK gave a memorable speech about poetry and power and public service at a dedication of the Robert Frost library. Kennedy's speech honoring Robert Frost motivated many Students at Amherst to join the Peace Corps and go into careers of public service. After their 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, members of the Amherst Class of 1964 wrote a book "JFK: The Last Speech" and launched a larger effort to bring Kennedy's message about public service into today's civic discussions. Check out the project web site for more info on the book, the companion documentary, and other Kennedy and Frost related

history. [www.jfkthelastspeech.org/the-book/](http://www.jfkthelastspeech.org/the-book/)

*Contributed by: Charlie Stover, PCV Niger 1964-66*

#### “A History of Niger 1850-1960” Finn Fuglestad, (Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Although academic and a bit boring in places, this book has a lot of interesting information. While very sympathetic to its people, the book shows how violent and disruptive the history of the 19th century, before the arrival of the French, really was. It also relates how brutal, harmful, and largely incompetent French colonialism was. Finally, it explained why the class of French speaking elites who took over from France were so disconnected from the interests of Niger's people and how they exploited their new power for their own self-interest. Like many other PCVs in the 1960s I got to talk with Hamani Diori quite a few times. In his earlier days I think he meant well and did some positive things, but ultimately, his rule was not just undemocratic but also exploitative and a disaster.

*Contributed by Daniel Chirot, PC Niger III; adult literacy program and Ministry of Rural Economy. Currently, Herbert J. Ellison Professor of International Studies at the University of Washington. Daniel has authored books about social change, ethnic conflict, genocides, Eastern Europe, and tyranny. He co-authored “Why Not Kill Them All?” about political mass murder and is the author of Modern Tyrants (both published by Princeton University Press).*

### 3) Call to action- follow-up on Pump Project

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Here is a follow-up on the project in our last issue: Pump Project in Ourogo, Say Arrondissement, Niger. Check out this nice video showing the results of this joint effort of Water Charity, NPCA and Ken Patterson to repair 3 foot pumps.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_bfUPDTWRE&fbclid=IwAR0ry7KBVETPDeR627Hn0GWH\\_8Tt8DPHiP6G87Tfj2wfZ5dqJZMu15Cytvs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_bfUPDTWRE&fbclid=IwAR0ry7KBVETPDeR627Hn0GWH_8Tt8DPHiP6G87Tfj2wfZ5dqJZMu15Cytvs)



### 4) NIGER NOW – Drones, cure Salee and Crossing the desert

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#### **Drones and technology helping to evaluate flooding in Niger:**

Evaluation par drone des inondation du fleuve Niger, janvier 2019, Niamey, Gamkalley, Libore. Mission commanditée par la DGPC (Protection Civile), exécutée par Drone Africa Service, avec l'inspection de l'ANAC (Aviation Civile). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbyUB-IoVnI>  
<http://www.drone-africa-service.com/>

*From the Christian Science Monitor – thanks to John Grettenberger:*

Check out this photo gallery: **Cure Salée: Niger's nomad oasis**

[https://www.csmonitor.com/Photo-Galleries/In-Pictures/Cure-Salee-Niger-s-nomad-oasis/\(photo\)/1072750](https://www.csmonitor.com/Photo-Galleries/In-Pictures/Cure-Salee-Niger-s-nomad-oasis/(photo)/1072750)

Read this story from the reporter's notebook: **In the Sahara, a vast emptiness etched with a thousand paths**

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2019/0111/In-the-Sahara-a-vast-emptiness-etched-with-a-thousand-paths>

### 5) Did you know? That Hamani Diori was a founding member and co-chair of AFRICARE?

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*“The task undertaken by Africare is immense — as immense as the continent of Africa itself, which must confront problems unimaginable to people who have not lived in African settings.”* **Hamani Diori, President of Niger, Co-Founder and Chairman of Africare 1972**

Africare, fittingly, was conceived in Africa — in the Republic of Niger. Niger had gained independence in 1960, and Hamani Diori became its first president: an office he held until 1974. By 1970, drought was raging in Niger and the suffering was extreme. Two Americans — William O. Kirker, M.D., and his wife, Barbara (a nurse), who had worked at Niger's Maine-

Soroa Hospital since 1966 — sought to help by forming a charity “to provide medical services and health care to the people of Africa, beginning in ... Niger.” That charity, named “Africare,” was incorporated in Hawaii on Sept. 20, 1970. Diori endorsed the venture. Bill Kirker became its president.

Within months, Diori and Kirker saw that the fledgling Africare needed to regroup. C. Payne Lucas, then director of the Peace Corps Office of Returned Volunteers in Washington, had known the president of Niger for some years. Diori sent Oumarou Youssoufou, a diplomat from the Nigerian embassy in Washington, to recruit Lucas to help. Also joining the Africare working group was Joseph C. Kennedy, Ph.D., former Peace Corps director in Sierra Leone.

What emerged was a reconstituted Africare:

1. It would support, not only health work, but all types of development and relief programs.
2. It would assist, not only Niger, but any African country.
3. And significantly, it would serve as a bridge between Africans and Americans, especially Americans of African descent.

In May 1971, “the new Africare” was permanently reincorporated in Washington, D.C. Diori (as chairman), Kennedy, Kirker, Lucas and Youssoufou were the founding Board members. Lucas took the helm as executive director. The Embassy of Niger donated office space. Aid to the Maine-Soroa Hospital became Africare’s first project — soon followed by drought relief in six countries. READ MORE AT: <https://www.africare.org/who-we-are/history/africare-early-1970s/>



## **FON BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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John Baird, FON President

Phyllis Dichter Forbes, FON Vice President; Projects Committee Chair

Larry Koff, FON Treasurer; Projects Committee

Cheryl Turner, FON Recording Secretary

Tom Corcoran, Member at large – Projects Committee

Seybou Douma, Member at large – CONUSA

Dale Downes, Member at large – Facebook admin

John Hutchison, Member at large – Projects Committee

Amy Wilson, Member at large – Membership/Bylaws/Camel Express  
Penni St. Hilaire, Member at large – Past Secretary/Advisor  
Rabiou Yari, Member at large – Niger Diaspora  
Tom Dechert, Non board – Projects  
Steve Bushell, Non board – Assistant Treasurer

**Friends of Niger Membership Form (Please print legibly)**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Phones: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Connection to Niger (RPCV, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Dates in Niger \_\_\_\_\_  
Location in Niger \_\_\_\_\_ Program or Involvement \_\_\_\_\_

*PRIVACY POLICY: Your contact information is requested and maintained by FON so that we can contact you in the future. FON does not share your information with any third party other than with the National Peace Corps Association with whom we have a reciprocity agreement.*  
*Membership dues & donations help fund FON activities – including The Camel Express newsletter, the FON website, the FON archives, and local Nigerien projects. The Friends of Niger is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3). Membership and contributions to Friends of Niger are fully tax deductible. We send receipts so you can take charitable tax deductions.*

**DUES & DONATIONS**

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Dues are payable on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year, but most pay dues and make donations in December after our annual fundraising appeal letter is sent early in the month. You may make a donation at any time. If we haven't received your dues yet for 2018, the first \$20 of your donation will be for your 2018 membership unless earmarked for a specific project. Our annual fundraising appeal for 2019 will come to you in December 2018 with summaries of many projects that FON supports. To make a payment now, you can either go to [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org) to Donate with Paypal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: PO Box 1999, Brookline MA 02446-0017. Thank you very much.

Dues (\$20) ----- ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
Donation ----- ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
TOTAL ENCLOSED ----- ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

“please reply to this email to unsubscribe”

# The Camel Express

Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

March 2019

Please note we have changed our mailing address to PO Box 612, Decatur IL 62525

**JOIN US IN BOSTON!!!** Sunday, April 7, 2019, from 2-4 p.m., we invite you to come socialize with the FON board and with each other. After the FON board retreat we'd like to meet you, share some of our ideas and hear your input.

Please join us at the **Social Restaurant and Bar, 320 Washington Street, Newton MA**, [www.socialrestaurantandbar.com](http://www.socialrestaurantandbar.com) . Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/gJb2DnJPnZ72>

We have reserved a private room and will be ordering up some snacks to share. It will really help us to know how many are attending, so please RSVP to [amibula.wilson@gmail.com](mailto:amibula.wilson@gmail.com) ASAP,—we'd really like to meet you!

In this issue:

- 1) FON Members Light up with Solar!
- 2) Where are they now - Michael Klinger, RPCV 1979-81,
- 3) Niger Diaspora, lending a helping hand
- 4) CALLS TO ACTION:
  - a. Make your voice heard to support Peace Corps \$\$
  - b. Connect a Nigerien artist to an interesting opportunity
- 5) WhatsApp gets you in touch
- 6) All about Kola Nuts—with link to hit single Goro City



## Message from the President

The Board has been active on many fronts in the last few months. We REALLY want you to join us on Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup> for a social get together with **any and all friends** of Niger. We are excitedly preparing for the retreat in Boston where we have some great discussions planned.

The board has new committees revising the bylaws, and reviewing and making recommendations on financial management. If you have expertise in any of these fields we would love to add members to our working committees.

**Board transitions and opportunities:** We must all thank Larry Koff for more than 20 years of service as the Treasurer! Larry has been a vital contributor to the work of FON in the role of Treasurer. We really need to thank Larry for taking on the sometimes challenging process of sending funds overseas which he has done with determination and perseverance. Also Transitioning from his role in supporting the website and all things PayPal we need to thank Steve Bushell who has served on the board for 10 years. Steve has helped us with all things technological and has maintained our virtual presence on the web.

We are looking to the membership for folks to step up and help fill in some of these duties in financial management and tech support. Technology is making it easier to split up some of these functions and spread th workload among more helpers. Can you help? Do you have expertise to share to achieve the mission of the Friends of Niger? Please think about getting more involved and contact us to talk about ways you can contribute.

John Baird [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

**“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”**

## **Notes from the Editor, Amy Wilson**

---

We want **your** input! Please share any news, ideas, articles and ideas for other categories for your newsletter and let us know what you think of the changes in format and frequency.

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- Join & follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfNiger/>

## **1) FON Members Light up with Solar!**

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FON members are embracing the solar electricity initiative. Living in Niger gave most of us personal awareness of the value of electricity and the possibilities it brings to a health clinic. Here are two different approaches to helping -- both models get the job done! What's your style?

### **Karen Brenner educates and crowd sources**

Karen Brenner got inspired reading a recent mailing from Friends of Niger and mobilized to do something for Bande, where she served as a nutritionist in 1990. Karen who is now a pediatrician living in Ann Arbor, immediately reached out to her contacts in the village via WhatsApp to see if solar electricity at the health center seemed like a good fit for them. They thought it sounded like a great idea to ease power costs and support health workers.

Karen got busy.

She got in touch with John Hutchison, the FON board member who in turn put her in contact with Moustapha Harou. Moustapha is a health worker who is very interested in seeing more rural clinics equipped with lighting and being less dependent on costly generated power. Moustapha has developed a list of rural clinics in need. Moustapha assessed the situation and developed a list of needed components and prices.

Meanwhile, back in the US Karen held a couple of fundraiser events. Her events were relatively small hosted parties where she shared information about health care needs in Niger and the benefits of installing solar electricity. She told her own story of the expedience of working in Niger and the value of the relationships she is still maintaining with Nigeriens. The fundraising parties were about 2 hour sessions in private homes.

She held one gathering at a house in Los Angeles and with only 20 or so people attending was able to raise \$6,000!! Back home in Ann Arbor she invited a Nigerien in town to participate and the party guests were very appreciative to have the opportunity to meet her and get to know her better. To help her out with the bigger event in her home she recruited her best friend from Peace Corps days to come make for a visit and to participate in the fundraiser.

Karen turned this need to fundraise into an opportunity to educate and to reconnect with Peace Corps friends while she was at it.

Karen's efforts have resulted in \$12,125 from 40 different donors for solar in Niger!!



Dr. Karen Brenner

### **John Baird puts his money where his heart is**

While our FON president contributes an enormous amount of time to the presidency and leadership of FON to help all of Niger, he has a particular soft spot for Djiratawa.

*“The people of Niger showered me with friendship and kindness during my time there in a way that I associate with living in rural America in the 1930s. I'm so glad for this opportunity to honor my brother, Idi Gonda, and his late wife, Mariama, as well as the people of Djiratawa, for their friendship and kindness, with this solar electrification of their health clinic.”*

The process John followed to install solar electricity in this village health clinic was similar to Karen's experience where John got in touch with Moustapha, who again did the ground work to gather information on what the health clinic might need.



John Baird with his friend Idi in 2011

## 2) Where are they now -

MICHAEL KLINGER, Niger RPCV 1979-81, Managing partner ANZU GLOBAL LLC, ACTON MA.

### Then.

Michael Klinger went into Peace Corps service after college by tagging along with a friend who was going to an interview with a recruiter. “It sounded like a great idea to have an expense-paid travel opportunity.” Serving as a volunteer from 1979 to 1981, Michael Klinger didn’t act like it was a free trip; he dedicated himself to the service aspect of Peace Corps, teaching English in Guidan Roumji. At the time the population was around 5000 people. Although physical education was not his assignment, he saw the need and opportunity to help out teaching a couple of physical education classes in addition to English. During his tenure they increased the offerings for students by developing a dirt basketball court and a sand volleyball court. Michael’s background included training in movement therapy so the Phys. Ed seemed like a natural thing to add to his official assignment.



### Now

Leaving Niger he was still interested in the field of Movement Therapy and made a film based on traditional dance in Niger as a means to apply for masters programs. That did not really pan out long term as a career and he ended up doing an MBA and has moved into international business staffing for technology. He is managing partner in a business called, ANZU GLOBAL LLC, which counts Google and Apple among their clients; check it out at <http://www.anzuglobal.com/>.

*Anzu Global, LLC provides temporary and permanent pre-qualified globalization resources to clients worldwide. Candidates are chosen based on their technical and linguistic, skills, education, cultural fit, availability, cost and geographic proximity.*

Soon after returning home, Michael encountered a man on the street who by his dress and manner was clearly from West Africa. He was lost and when Michael responded to his request for directions in Hausa the man seemed to take no notice that their encounter had just taken place in Hausa. He had just arrived in the US and it apparently did not occur to him that not everyone



spoke Hausa! Michael is still connected to some of his RPCV friends and occasionally still bumps into Hausa speakers, although he has had little contact with West Africa in his work despite being in a global field.

In 2007, Michael visited Niger with his 15 year-old daughter and it struck him how there really had not been a lot of progress on addressing some issues and there were still a lot of needs. He got to thinking about what he could to lend a hand and thought that the US has so much, there had to be a way to help. Rather than guess at their needs and impose his ideas, he convened village elders to hear what their needs were. These discussions lead to the creation of a non-profit called Bokai. They have taken on a number of projects at the request of village elders and have developed a sister city relationship between Guidan Roumji and Acton, Mass. Way to go on that third goal of Peace Corps Michael!! *Check out the nonprofit and consider donating or volunteering to support their activities at <http://bokai.org/>.*



### **How has your experience in Niger influenced your life**

“I don’t really know how it shaped me. I realize how unique and privileged we are to be living where we are. People who are just like me except they were born and raised in Niger look ten years older” because of the hard living conditions.

### **What do you miss from Niger?**

“I appreciated the sense of community and family in Niger. In every culture there is something you can learn from. I miss the people and that sense of comfort in another culture--the sight and sounds of Niger.”

*more on Bokai from the website:*

*“It is said, in your country, a real problem is obesity. In our country, a real problem is starvation. Maybe we can work together to solve each other’s problems.”*

*...The elders identified several areas of concern. There was a lack of access to medicine for their children. There were water shortages and wells in need of repair and new ones to be built. Irrigation pumps were needed to facilitate watering crops. There was a food shortage in the months preceding the rainy season. There was a lack of basic educational materials for their children in the schools. . . .*

Please suggest candidates for future “Where are they now” features. Who do you want to hear about?

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### 3) Niger Diaspora, lending a helping hand

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Dr Abdou Illia, a native of Zinder, is now an accomplished, published IT business professor at Eastern Illinois University. He has recently sponsored a project at his former elementary school in Zinder. Dr. Illia provided funds to build a substantial brick wall around the school yard to create a safe space for the kids to play, to protect them from traffic and help keep them focus on school while they are there. Before the concrete wall was built too many students were being injured by passing vehicles. Check out this short video about the project.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCiTOdwaknQ>

Thank you for paying it forward Abdou!



Dr Illia and

the school wall.

### 4) CALLS TO ACTION-

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- Make your voice heard to support Peace Corps \$\$
- Connect a Nigerien artist to an interesting opportunity.

Make your voice heard to support Peace Corps \$\$

---

A message from Anne Baker (Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Fiji 1985-87) Vice President National Peace Corps Association. Direct line: 202-981-2690. [PeaceCorpsConnect.org](https://www.peacecorpsconnect.org)

After four consecutive years of flat funding (\$410 million) for the Peace Corps, an effort is underway to give the Peace Corps a raise. **We are at a critical moment right now in the House of Representatives, as a very important letter which every House Rep has the opportunity to sign, is now circulating.** The letter asks for \$450 million for the Peace Corps in Fiscal Year 2020. Last year, this letter was signed by 180 Congressmen/women. We've been told no other similar letter contains that many signatures, and it carries a lot of clout when funding decisions are made later in the year.

**You Can Help: Wednesday, March 27th is the deadline for House members to sign the letter.** Please write, call or talk to your representative now and urge them to sign the Peace Corps funding Dear Colleague letter!

**Monitor Progress:** Before taking action, bookmark and [revisit the bottom of this blog post for regular updates](#) on which members of the House of Representatives have signed the letter. If your rep has already signed, your action is to thank them!

[Follow this link](#) to personalize and send a message to your House Rep. This is a House of Representatives action only. (A similar letter may be introduced later in the Senate, but do not contact your Senators at this time).

We only have until March 27th to secure signatures on this message. With your help, we can bring attention to the importance of the Peace Corps and help a nationwide effort to have a record 185 lawmakers sign this letter!

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Looking for a Nigerien Artist for a Women's Health Collaboration

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Here is an interesting request we received recently. Do you know anyone who might fit the bill?

Dear Friends of Niger,

I found your site while searching for Nigerien artist collectives. I am a textile designer working in the health and development field. I create textile designs in the West African “wax print” style to spread education and awareness of women’s health in West Africa. There are a few examples of my work in Mali on my website: <http://www.elizasquibb.com/>

Currently, I have two potential projects in Niger to promote children’s health, so I’m looking for a Nigerien artist to collaborate with on the drawings of women and children. Do you have any contacts with artists living in Niger (or Nigeriens living abroad) who might be interested in this type of health and education project?

Please feel free to share my contact info with them, or direct me to any resources you think would lead me in the right direction. *Many thanks for your time, Eliza Squibb.* [squibbeliza@gmail.com](mailto:squibbeliza@gmail.com)

## 5) NIGER NOW - WhatsApp

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<<Allo, Allo>> <<Fofu>> << Sannu>>

When was the last time you talked to you friends in Niger? Unlike the old days where lands lines were crazy bad and overseas calls were prohibitively expensive, you now have great options. Possibly the most popular option is WhatsApp -- <https://web.whatsapp.com/>

More than 1 billion people in over 180 countries use WhatsApp to stay in touch with friends and family, anytime and anywhere. WhatsApp is free and offers simple, secure, reliable messaging and calling, available on phones all over the world.

Cell phones have permeated rural village life to a surprising degree. It may be a bit of a puzzle to get hold of the phone numbers for your friends, but chances are, there is someone you know who has access to a phone and may be able to use WhatsApp.

With WhatsApp you can send and receive a variety of media: text, photos, videos, and documents as well as make voice calls.

## 6) Did you know? Kola Nuts

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Kola nut, the one thing that unites 140 million Nigerians – and possibly their neighbors to the north

Read more at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/kola-nut-nigerias-seed-of-togetherness/>



*Cola acuminata*. General description (Wikipedia)

The kola nut is a caffeine-containing nut of evergreen trees of the genus *Cola*, primarily of the species *Cola acuminata* and *Cola nitida*. [1] *Cola acuminata*, an evergreen tree about 20 metres in height, has long, ovoid leaves pointed at both the ends with a leathery texture. The trees have yellow flowers with purple spots, and star-shaped fruit. Inside the fruit, about a dozen round or square seeds develop in a white seed-shell. The nut's aroma is sweet and rose-like. The first taste is bitter, but it sweetens upon chewing. The nut can be boiled to extract the caffeine.

Kola nuts contain about 2- 4% caffeine and theobromine, as well as tannins, alkaloids, saponins, and flavonoids.

Kola nuts are an important part of the traditional spiritual practice of culture and religion in West Africa, particularly Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia. [6] The 1970s hit "Goro City", by Manu Dibango, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwmjNvnHjFs> highlights the significance of kola nuts (called "goro" in the Hausa language) [7] to the capital of Niger, Niamey. Kola nuts are used as a religious object and sacred offering during prayers, ancestor veneration, and significant life events, such as naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals.

## Friends of Niger Membership Form (Please print legibly)

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

*PRIVACY POLICY: Your contact information is requested and maintained by FON so that we can contact you in the future. FON does not share your information with any third party other than with the National Peace Corps Association with whom we have a reciprocity agreement.*

*Membership dues & donations help fund FON activities – including The Camel Express newsletter, the FON website, the FON archives, and local Nigerien projects. The Friends of Niger is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3). Membership and contributions to Friends of Niger are fully tax deductible. We send receipts so you can take charitable tax deductions.*

## **DONATIONS**

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You may make a donation at any time. To make a payment now, you can either go to [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org) to Donate with Paypal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: **FRIENDS OF NIGER, PO BOX 612, DECATUR IL 62525**. Thank you very much.

“please reply to this email to unsubscribe”

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

April/May 2019

Please note we have changed our mailing address to [PO Box 612, Decatur IL 62525](#)

In this issue:

1. Board Retreat surpasses all expectations
2. Members Pitch in for Fire Relief near Dosso
3. FON supports Feeding program for nomad children
4. Kirker Foundation of Niger improving health services in Diffa Region
5. Culture spotlight – comedy on YouTube
6. Kola nuts & link to the 70's hit tune "Goro City"
7. News –
  - *The Niger that I know* By RPCV Bill Miles 77-79, Christian Science Monitor
  - *Dispatch from Timbuktu*, The Economist
8. *More Retreat Photos*

*From the Editor*

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*Dear readers,*

*Please excuse the delay of our monthly news. April was a busy month for FON! We continue to try new things with format and content and your feedback is most welcome. As always, please send items of interest to share in future newsletters! - Amy Wilson, dit Amibula*

## ***1) Board Retreat surpasses all expectations!***

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The first weekend in April, board members travelled from Washington State, Michigan, Illinois, Washington DC and Vermont to spend a weekend together discussing all things FON in Boston. Spending a few days together turned out to be just what the doctor ordered.

FON board members are all remarkably engaged and motivated. We got to know each other much better and learned more about what each person has to offer.

We concluded the main purpose of Friends of Niger is to connect people. We connect people who served in Niger with each other and help them stay connected to Nigeriens. We connect people who want to support projects with people who want to implement them in Niger. We share our connection to Niger with others who have not been so lucky to have been there.

As the first step in developing a new FON Mission Statement, the Board developed three areas for focus in the coming years: 1) Connecting/Engaging Members; 2) Supporting Development through Projects and Partnerships; 3) Education and Advocacy. If these topics are important to you and you want to be part of the exciting next steps in developing new FON activities, please let us know and consider lending your ideas and expertise to a committee. We are specifically recruiting for Finance, Nominating, and Membership Committees as well as looking for a Webmaster.

Board members paid their own travel to the meeting and a generous donor agreed to cover our lodging and meeting space costs. Ken Patterson graciously donated his time to do a fabulous job as our facilitator and maximized the productivity of our time together. The board recognized Larry Koff for his years of service as Treasurer, see photo, and we found out that Phyllis is a fabulous cook and hostess!

The only question remaining at the end of the retreat was *when and where are we going to meet again!?*

We also committed to having more fun on the board and we'd like you to join us! Interested folks should contact me at [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

John Baird , **“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”**





to us for funds to help with immediate support and repair needs estimated to be on the order of \$10,000. Many of the girls and young women in the Potentiel Terre training programs we have supported came from the affected village, Koli. The FON board pledged \$1,000 from general funds and appealed to you our generous members for additional donations. You enthusiastically rose to the challenge, donating another \$3,000!!!

M. Zakari Hassane of Potentiel Terre, has done a remarkable job providing support to the affected families in Koli. He arranged for over 2 tons of maize to the village for immediate food needs and housed and fed many of the families of his trainees at the training center. The associated picture shows the sorts of supplies organized by Potentiel Terre for distribution to the affected families. FON recently provided Zakari with the last installment of funds collected by FON, so he is still out there trying to meet needs in the village.

Comments from donors:

- *"Irkoy ma boriandi!"*
- *"So sorry to hear this devastating fire in Dosso. Happy to donate to the people of Niger that I will be forever thankful for their support and love to Volunteers in Niger."*



See more photos of the fire and rebuilding efforts [here](http://www.friendsofniger.org/over-4000-donated-for-fire-relief-in-koli-koira-tegui). <http://www.friendsofniger.org/over-4000-donated-for-fire-relief-in-koli-koira-tegui>

### **3) FON Supports Feeding Program for Nomad Children.**

When some nomadic parents leave the northern reaches of Niger with their herds, they leave their children in the village with others to look out for their welfare. The children sleep in the house of the village chief, and do benefit from being able to attend school, but most have no means of support or regular meals.

In this northern region, the Achet'Akal women's cooperative was initially funded by FON to help disadvantaged women develop economic activities. Now that they have had some success making and marketing handcrafts, they proposed taking on the project of helping some of these practically abandoned children.

The school at Wambouzou serves many of these extremely disenfranchised children of nomads. The Achet'Akal Cooperative requested funding from FON to provide meals for 80 of these students during the current school year. The women oversee the distribution and assist with preparing the food for the children.

FON will be working with Achet'Akal to find a better solution for student nutrition and for ways to improve the condition of the school.



More photos of the school can be seen [HERE](#):

<http://www.friendsofniger.org/achetakil-womens-cooperative-supports-children-in-wambouzou>

#### **4) Kirker Foundation of Niger improving health services in Diffa Region**

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In February, FON approved a project with the Kirker Foundation of Niger (KF/N) for \$4,000 to help them deliver critically needed medicines and medical supplies, strengthen KF/N advocacy for health services in Niger, and increase local government inputs to promote long-term sustainability of KF/N efforts. These funds will help with the internal Niger costs of clearing the first MAP International shipment of medicines of 2019, over \$20 million of medications including antibiotics, eyeglasses and accessories, vitamins as well as medicine for cancer and heart disease, and delivering the medicines to approximately 12 hospitals in Niger. It is due to arrive in Niamey in early May. Just to provide some context, two MAP shipments of medicines in 2018 provided one third of all medications used by the hospitals in Niger.

While we are supporting KF/N in this first MAP shipment through the FON grant, a number of former Niger PCV's have been helping finance other shipments in earlier years.

Read more about the work of Kirker and the Situation in Niger by following this link

<http://www.friendsofniger.org/support-for-relief-efforts-in-eastern-niger-with-kirker-foundation-of-niger-may-2019>



Offices of Doctors Without Borders burned in Maine Soroa, April 2019

#### **5) Culture spotlight**

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On a far less serious note: Here are some short videos—a tomato paste commercial!! The lead actor Nourou, and others act in both the Hausa and Zarma versions. Search Nourou on YouTube to find other comedy routines in both languages. Enjoy---

Zarma version - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiOpjsFRO7M>

Hausa version - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNW781tsr9w>



## 6) Did you know? Kola Nuts

---

Kola nut, the one thing that unites 140 million Nigerians – and possibly their neighbors to the north. Read more at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/kola-nut-nigerias-seed-of-togetherness/>



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## 7) In the News

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*“The Niger that I know.” US friends worry about safety in Niger; Nigerien friends worry about US school shootings.*

By Bill Miles (RPCV Niger, 1977-1979), Professor of Political Science at Northeastern University, Boston

<https://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/The-Home-Forum/2018/0516/The-Niger-that-I-know>

*“My whirlwind tour of Timbuktu.”* If Timbuktu’s glory days were long gone by the 19th century, the Timbuktu of 2019 is an even sorer sight. Decades of neglect by the Malian government and desertification in the surrounding countryside has left it impoverished.

<https://www.1843magazine.com/dispatches/dispatches/my-whirlwind-tour-of-timbuktu>

*Submitted by Tom Dechert*

“please reply to this email to unsubscribe”

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

June/July 2019

**Please note** we have changed our mailing address to PO Box 612, Decatur IL 62525

In this issue:

1. CONUSA
2. Archive of the Republic of Niger at Boston University
3. Geography Now! – Niger
4. Survey of youth in Niger
5. Niger Connections at University of Illinois: Nigerien Ambassador-at-large Hassana Alidou and American Ambassador Eric Whitaker
6. GET INVOLVED: Online Auction to benefit Hesperian – publisher of Where There is no Doctor
7. Niger in the news – Op-ed by Leonard Pitts, Miami Herald

*From the Editor*

---

Dear Readers,

Let's get personal! I have been experiencing the joy and chaos of retiring and moving back to my home territory in southern Oregon. My apologies that all this personal activity has made the Camel Express late ---- again! For my last day at work as a federal employee, I went full circle back to the beginning of my federal career and wore a brightly colored Nigerien *complet*. This was met with a wide variety of responses by US Forest Service colleagues at Mount St. Helens National Monument. I had a blast and while purportedly leading a portion of a staff meeting, I managed to sneak in a plug for Peace Corps and the rehire possibility for federal employees, "agencies holding your spot for you". Ironically, the Peace Corps portion of my career where I had the least agency/organizational support was possibly the most fruitful and productive service. How about YOU? How do your current work experiences compare to Niger days? Friends of Niger would love to hear from you about how your time in Niger impacts your life.

*Amy Wilson, dit Amibula*

## 1) CONUSA

---

So what is CONUSA? To satisfy my curiosity I reached out to Douma who heads up the Conseil des Nigeriens aux USA and represents the group on the Board of the Friends of Niger. CONUSA is an organization formed to support Nigeriens living in the US. While there is no firm population number, it is estimated that there are some 10,000 Nigeriens living in the US. Many of them live in areas where there is a concentration of Nigeriens, like Harrisburg, Washington DC, NYC, Greensboro NC, Boston, Florida, New Orleans, and Lincoln Nebraska. Others are widely dispersed throughout the states, cities and even rural communities.

CONUSA is available to support Nigeriens with a range of social issues that they may encounter while living away from home, including immigration glitches, dealing with a death in the family, addressing education needs, and with diverse legal situations. The help CONUSA offers is in the form of referrals, and connections to resources, as well as moral and financial support.

According to Seybou some 18-20 Nigeriens are currently facing deportation from Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia and New Jersey. Most of those in this precarious situation have overstayed their visas, or they came as students and are flagged immediately after completing their education even if they stay out of trouble. A small number are drawn into legal and criminal trouble in the US and are being deported as a result. Seybou said that CONUSA is often able to help those who have not strayed into criminal activity. CONUSA raises funds for legal assistance and tries to help people resolve other uncomplicated, non-criminal legal issues.

A new concern they are seeing increasingly is that more of the diaspora are reaching retirement age and yearn to return to Niger to be with family to live out their days. Financial assistance and coaching to navigate the transition is much needed.

### How can Friends of Niger engage?

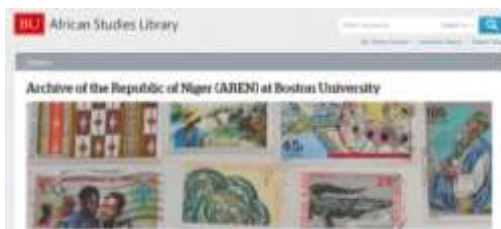
1. Connect Nigeriens. Nigeriens living in the US may not know about CONUSA. Whether they need assistance or have something to offer others, CONUSA would love to be in contact with Nigeriens living in the US.
2. Support Nigeriens. Find a Nigerien living near you! If you don't know of any, maybe Seybou and CONUSA can connect you. A friendly face and a word in Hausa or Zarma could really make a difference.
3. Offer expertise. Do you have expertise, connections, or ideas for Nigeriens making their living here?
4. Offer financial support. Some problems need money. Consider contributing to CONUSA to help them achieve their goals.

To learn more about CONUSA please contact Seybou Douma. He has been in the US since 1997 and is raising his family in the Bronx while he works for CVS Pharmacy and is an active community organizer. He has 6 kids, the oldest daughter just now completing a BA in psychology and the youngest is 7 years old. [douma2@optonline.net](mailto:douma2@optonline.net), 212-203-6048



**Speaking of immigration woes. . .** Here is more information on how Immigration and Customs Enforcement removal of Africans increased between 2016 and 2017 even as removals of other regions declined: <https://qz.com/africa/120411/trumps-immigration-ice-kicked-out-more-africans-than-ever-while-reducing-overall-removals/>

## 2) Archive of the Republic of Niger (AREN) at Boston University



Boston University has supported many programs linking Americans to Niger through academic programming. As a result of those strong ties an Archive of the Republic of Niger was established in the African Studies Library at Boston University.

The hope for the collection is that it might come to serve as a national resource for materials about and from the

Republic of Niger. The target stakeholders in establishing an Archive of the Republic of Niger include: Nigeriens, Nigerophiles, Nigerienists, Return Peace Corps Volunteers, Alumni of Study Abroad Programs, academics, consultants, former employees of NGOs, etc.

This Archive was inaugurated by the Nigerien President in April 2015; photographs from that inauguration event can be viewed here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/123460528@No3/sets/72157651729968556/>

Check out that portion available online at: <http://www.bu.edu/library/african-studies/aren/>. A link is available on that page to a form you can fill out if you are interested in contributing to the archive. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Restrict, African Studies Librarian (brestric "at" bu.edu). Consider looking at the larger African Studies collection at: <http://www.bu.edu/library/african-studies/>

For more on the Background submitted by John Hutchison please go to: <http://www.friendsofniger.org/archive-of-the-republic-of-niger-aren-at-boston-university/>

### 3) Geography Now! - Niger

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Check out this 15 minute speed version of Niger geography and see if you learn something new.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHeq99pojLo>

You'll see they need some help with pronunciation, but it is packed with information! It got: 429,746 views; likes - 17K thumbs down – 234 - from Sue Rosenfeld



### 4) Participatory survey of youth in Niger By UNICEF, World Bank and USAID

---

*Generating knowledge to better understand the social and economic exclusion and inclusion dynamics affecting young people. **75% of the population is now below 25 years old***

In Niger, young people represent the vast majority of the population. Rapid population growth creates a high demand for public investments in health and education and raises the issue of the place and role of young people in the society.

The issue of youths' insertion in the labour market and ability to engage in entrepreneurial initiatives is particularly acute, since half of the youth are estimated to be underemployed.


#### YOUTH MESSAGES

- Quel que soit l'âge que l'on a, l'on peut se considérer comme jeune, même lorsqu'on est marié.
- Certaines façons de faire et de penser, certaines règles de vie en société empêchent au jeune de s'exprimer et de se réaliser, c'est pourquoi le jeune a l'impression d'être prisonnier dans son terroir
- Pour s'en sortir, le jeune ne pense et ne peut que faire comme ceux qui sont supposé avoir réussi dans son milieu, mais certains exemples de réussite ne sont pas toujours bons
- Pour le jeune, l'état ne fait rien pour qu'il s'en sorte soit parce qu'il est perçu comme absent, soit quand il est présent, ses interventions semblent freiner la réalisation des aspirations du jeune

- beaucoup de jeunes femmes pensent ne rien pouvoir devenir si elles ne sont pas mariées, celles qui pensent le contraire et/ou se comportent différemment pour se réaliser sont mal vues.


**" Parole des Jeunes "**

**1** QUEL QUE SOIT L'ÂGE QUE L'ON A, L'ON PEUT SE CONSIDÉRER COMME JEUNE, MÊME LORSQU'ON EST MARIÉ.




"Avec la force que j'ai, je cultive la terre et je récolte de ma récolte, je suis donc jeune." Jeune homme de Difa  
 "Moi, j'ai 25 ans, ma fille n'est pas encore mariée donc je suis jeune... Je sortirai de la jeunesse quand je la donnerai en mariage." Jeune femme de Zinder

**2** CERTAINES FAÇONS DE FAIRE ET DE PENSER, CERTAINES RÈGLES DE VIE EN SOCIÉTÉ ENRÊMENT AU JEUNE DE S'EXPRIMER ET DE SE RÉALISER, C'EST POURQUOI LE JEUNE A L'IMPRESSION D'ÊTRE PIÉCINNIER DANS SON TERROIR.




"Je ne pourrai jamais pratiquer le bouchonnié ici. Pourtant, c'est ce que je fais quand je guéche avec village." Jeune homme de Desso  
 "Je suis actuellement au chômage, mais pour rien au monde je ne vais faire la reconnaissance pour avoir obtenu la note de ma licence." Jeune homme de Tibibary

**3** POUR S'EN SORTIR, LE JEUNE NE PENSE ET NE PEUT QUE FAIRE COMME CEUX QUI SONT SUPPOSÉS AVOIR RÉUSSI DANS SON MILIEU MAIS CERTAINS EXEMPLES DE RÉUSSITE NE SONT PAS TOUJOURS BONS.




"Je suis un commerçant et mon rêve est de connaître une grande maison, d'avoir un grand commerce." Jeune femme de Niamey  
 "Je voudrais avoir mon véhicule 4x4 grâce à l'argent de ma vie pour transporter les gens vers l'Algérie." Jeune homme d'Agadez

**4** POUR LE JEUNE, L'ÉTAT NE FAIT RIEN POUR QU'IL S'EN SORTE, SOIT PARCE QU'IL EST PERDU COMME ABSENT, SOIT QUAND IL EST PRÉSENT, SES INTERVENTIONS SEMBLENT FREDRE LA RÉALISATION DES ASPIRATIONS DU JEUNE.



"Dans le zone du lac, du en devenant la frontière, souvent il n'y a pas de gendarmes. Nous nous faisons attaquer par des bandits qui nous prennent notre bétail. C'est pourquoi beaucoup de jeunes sont amnés pour se protéger." Jeune homme de Difa  
 "Je ne souhaite pas travailler pour l'État, parce que l'État est corrompu." Jeune homme de Tahoua

**5** BEAUCOUP DE JEUNES FEMMES PENSENT NE BIEN POUVOIR DEVENIR SI ELLES NE SONT PAS MARIÉES, CELLES QUI PENSENT LE CONTRAIRE ET/OU SE COMPORTENT DIFFÉREMENT POUR SE RÉALISER SONT MAL VUES.



"Je suis une femme protestataire tout simplement parce que je suis la dernière entre le Nigeria et le Niger pour prendre un village mes 7 enfants." Jeune femme de Niamey  
 "Mon rêve c'est d'avoir un grand salon de coiffure et d'y inscrire le nom de ma fille. Arrivé / Pour ma fille je serai capable de tout." Jeune femme de Niamey

Check out the key findings and read the whole report at:  
<https://www.unicef.org/niger/participatory-survey-youth-niger-o>  
 Thanks to Cheryl Turner for sharing this report

**5) The Nigerien connection: The highest level diplomats between the U.S. and Niger are both**  
 University of Illinois alumni. Read the article in alumni news about Nigerien Ambassador-at-large  
 Hassana Alidou and American Ambassador Eric Whitaker  
<https://las.illinois.edu/news/2019-05-29/nigerien-connection>  
 Thanks to John Baird for sharing this link





## **6) GET INVOLVED: Online Auction to benefit Hesperian – publisher of *Where There is no Doctor***

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Hesperian is a small nonprofit with 15 employees and hundreds of volunteers, we depend on the generosity of our donors to develop, translate and distribute health information. For over 40 years, people worldwide with limited or no access to healthcare have been empowered to take control of their health by using our easy-to-read materials. In 86 languages, Hesperian's signature book – *Where There Is No Doctor* - is considered the gold standard in health books by the World Health Organization.

[https://www.32auctions.com/Hesperian?utm\\_source=Bidding+for+better+health+-+9%2F16%2F2019&utm\\_campaign=Auction\\_2019&utm\\_medium=email&fbclid=IwAR3cMPtdo\\_FjTSvKffCcSpvtLpGUkfZJwBqeRcNvbOm7kIOKEwCDn-t6xhk](https://www.32auctions.com/Hesperian?utm_source=Bidding+for+better+health+-+9%2F16%2F2019&utm_campaign=Auction_2019&utm_medium=email&fbclid=IwAR3cMPtdo_FjTSvKffCcSpvtLpGUkfZJwBqeRcNvbOm7kIOKEwCDn-t6xhk)

Some new titles they created include:

Helping Children Live with HIV

A Community Guide to Environmental Health

Where Women Have No Doctor

Disabled Village Children

Workers' Guide to Health and Safety

Where There Is No Dentist

*Thanks to Cathryn Poff for sharing this link*

## **7) Niger referenced in connection to current events—**

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Op-ed in the Miami Herald 7/16/2019. . Pulitzer Prize-winning author and journalist, Leonard Pitts  
Dear Donald Trump: Years ago, I got to visit Kwethluk, an Alaskan town of fewer than 900 souls. It is an isolated place where the people, most of them Yup'ik and Eskimo, live on what the tundra provides: ptarmigan, moose, seal, salmonberries. I remember standing upon that snowbound landscape and marveling that I was further than I'd ever been from everything I'd ever known.

It was a feeling I'd had once before, at a village in Niger. But this was different, because I'd needed no passport to get to Kwethluk. Though I stood in a distant place with people who did not look like me and whose traditions were not like mine, the marvel of it was that I was yet standing with fellow citizens, together in our country.



Read more at . . . <https://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/leonard-pitts-jr/article232738672.html>

Here is the backstory of Leonard Pitts' visit and connection to Niger

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnCZy-IR-yI>

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

**August/September 2019**

Please note our NEW mailing address: Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041

In this issue:

1. Organizational fine-tuning – what new bylaws mean for you
2. TCP Global- an RPCV fostered microloan model
3. Women's group merchandises goat cheese
4. Rotary action in Niger and with NPCA
  - Wisilli School project
  - Hepatitis screening program
  - Partnership with NPCA
5. Cultural spotlight – Sahel Sounds and les filles de Illighadad
6. News –
  - *Twelve dead in Boko Haram Niger attack*
  - *The Sahel in flames*
  - *What Happened When the EU Moved Its Fight to Stop Migration to Niger*
  - *Passing of Jerry Koloms*

*LAST WORD - A used car in Wisconsin . . . In'shala*

*From the Editor*

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*Dear readers,*

*Greetings as we prepare for winter in the US and in Niger they are harvesting millet and preparing for the dry season. Here in southern Oregon the white oak acorns (*Quercus alba*) are huge and abundant and we are taking note as legend has it this means a hard winter.*

*Please continue to share information of interest to readers and consider getting more active with the Friends of Niger. Help is needed updating our website and in future Newsletters we will be asking for volunteers to get more involved in other initiatives and activities that we discussed at our Board Retreat. What are your interests and concerns? We love to hear from you!*

*Amy Wilson, dit Amibula*

## **1) Organizational fine-tuning – what revised Bylaws mean for members**

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The topic of bylaws is often met with a groan, but they help keep an organization on track. The board has recently adopted revised bylaws to better guide and describe our current organization. Revisions have saved the good stuff and added some helpful guides. Here are the highlights that may be of interest to members.

- Major activities of FON:
  - Connecting and engaging people who have connections to Niger
  - Supporting and promoting development activities in Niger, primarily in the fields of healthcare, nutrition, and education.
  - Advocating and educating for the benefit of Niger & Nigeriens
- Membership:
  - Anyone who supports our mission and submits an application can be considered a member (no annual dues for **General** membership),

- **Voting** members are those who have donated at least \$20 in the 12 months preceding any vote.
- Board is expanded and elections are clarified:
  - Minimum of 7 and maximum of 13 Board members; CONUSA and Niger diaspora shall be represented on the board
  - Nominations will be sought from membership, with annual elections to be held electronically
- Committees, involvement and engagement:
  - Committees open to members and others who may contribute to the committee purpose
  - Standing Committees may include Finance, Projects and Nominating; Ad hoc and special committees to be formed as needed

See the details at <http://www.friendsofniger.org/about/friends-of-niger-bylaws/> and please give us feedback on any and all ideas for improvement.

## **2) TCP Global - an RPCV fostered microloan model**

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In August the Board heard from Helene Dudley who works with TCP Global to assist microloan projects in communities in Colombia and more than 5 countries in Africa. Initially called The Colombia Project, as of, 2014 it transitioned to TCP Global, a pro bono consulting service to assist small non-profits to implement micro-loan programs based on its successful model.

TCP Global partners with any effective grassroots organization but is particularly interested in working through PCVs and RPCVs who want to serve their Peace Corps service communities. Two Niger RPCVs have partnered with TCP Global to further effective efforts in Niger.

The ideal organization to implement Colombia Project micro-loans is one that is committed to serving an underserved/marginalized community where there are few resources and where there is an existing informal economy - a community largely beyond the reach of many services as well as regulations, where the people are too often on their own.

Learn more and contact them: <http://www.colombiaproject.org/>

Here's a short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeOM0tFOaEU&t=> and a WorldView Magazine article about Niger RPCV Virginia Emmons and TCP Global: [https://issuu.com/peacecorpsconnect/docs/worldview-spring19\\_v32\\_no1\\_pg\(32-34](https://issuu.com/peacecorpsconnect/docs/worldview-spring19_v32_no1_pg(32-34)

## **3) Women's group merchandises goat cheese**

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FON is working with Urgence Réhabilitation de la Zone Pastorale (OURZP) to improve economic opportunities for women in the area of Tchintabaraden through goat cheese production. Sixty women in two *groupements des femmes* are involved in this project which follows previous projects for goat husbandry, development and training of *les groupements* and well construction. This stage of support has helped with materials for the production, protection and preservation of cheese, and transportation to markets. This FON-funded project targets the most vulnerable women who are developing skills for *auto-gestion* while they are generating income and learning new skills.



#### 4) Rotary action in Niger

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Rotary is an international service organization active in Niger. In addition it connects other communities in the world to Niger. How many of you are associated with Rotary? Even if you are not a member, take note that Rotary in your community may be interested in connecting with you to support international service projects. For example, The Columbia Project got a big boost early on through a Rotary Grant.

Here are some Nigerien examples of Rotary activity.

→ Rotary Club of Battle Ground Washington helps Wisilli School (Amy Wilson)

Last year the *Resortissants de Wisilli* (a group of people from Wisilli who now live in Niamey and other larger cities) was providing desks for students in the CEG in their hometown, upriver from Niamey on a seasonal island northwest of Tillaberi. Morou Boureima, now retired from ORTN has enthusiasm for community service and has been active in this group of 'resortissants' villagers who want to help out folks still living in the village. I met Mourou while dropping off Nelson Cronyn at the airport in 1990 after a pre-service training and we have been friends ever since.

The opportunity to support this effort was embraced by the Battle Ground Rotary Club when I brought it to their attention. My fellow Rotarians had heard of Niger (I'm a hard core Third Goal kinda gal), and they loved the people-to-people connection. Morou was able to go directly to the school principal and teachers to learn what they needed and facilitate purchase, fabrication and delivery. He also captured lots of images that were shared with the Rotarians who voted unanimously with their pocketbooks to send over \$4,229 for the purchase of 69 desks and 263 textbooks. The *Resortissants* also worked with the Parent Teacher Association to make sure the parents were emphasizing the importance of school.



Please check out our short video about the project  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzY\\_xF7J00A&t=22s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzY_xF7J00A&t=22s)

#### → Nigerien Rotarians tackle Hepatitis

Rotarians in Niger supported a campaign against hepatitis in Niamey and Zinder by providing funding and volunteers. The Rotarians were accompanied by Rotaract\* members (\*very popular in developing countries they represent an encouraging display of altruism in the next generation-- they are 18-30 year olds who form their own volunteer-based clubs under the umbrella of Rotary).

Story and photos [HERE](#)

*Soucieux d'améliorer les conditions de vie des populations locales, les Rotary Clubs du Niger veulent s'investir dans la lutte contre les hépatites B et C, en commençant par une campagne de dépistage gratuit, dans le cadre du programme « Zéro Hépatite » du groupe rotarien. Le Rotary vient ainsi renforcer les actions menées par la Coordination de lutte contre le VIH/Sida et l'Hépatite sous l'égide de la Fondation Guri Vie Meilleure de la Première Dame du Niger. Dans ce cadre, les Rotary Clubs du Niger, veulent assurer correctement leur part du combat avec l'Initiative « Zéro Hépatite », en soutenant le dépistage des hépatites B et C à Niamey et à Zinder dans un 1er temps, sous le leadership du Ministère de la Santé Publique. L'objectif, à terme, est de Contribuer, comme pour la Poliomyélite, à l'éradication des hépatites B et C au Niger. Cette action, qui débute à Niamey au CSI Dar Es Salam et à Zinder au SCI Stade, est le point de départ d'un processus d'éradication des Hépatites B et C.*



→ Partnership agreement with Rotary and NPCA

Check out more information about Rotary and NPCA:

- Agreement announcement: <https://www.partneringforpeace.org/cpages/home1>
- Article by partnership participant: [HERE](#)
- A match made in heaven: <https://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/articles/peace-corps-and-rotary-a-match-made-in-heaven>
- Connect with a club in your area with the Rotary Club finder: <https://my.rotary.org/en/search/club-finder>



**5) Cultural spotlight**

Les Filles de Illighadad are in the US touring now – New York, Connecticut, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania -- More info [HERE](#)

Thanks to Sahel Sounds - a project focused on culture in the West African Sahel. Founded by Christopher Kirkley in 2009 to share field recordings, today it is a record label, artist collective, film production house, and arts organization. The artists that they represent have input and control over artistic endeavors AND profits are shared 50/50. “We’re committed to using culture as a means of communication, helping our artists build careers, and listening to good music.” <https://sahelsounds.com/>



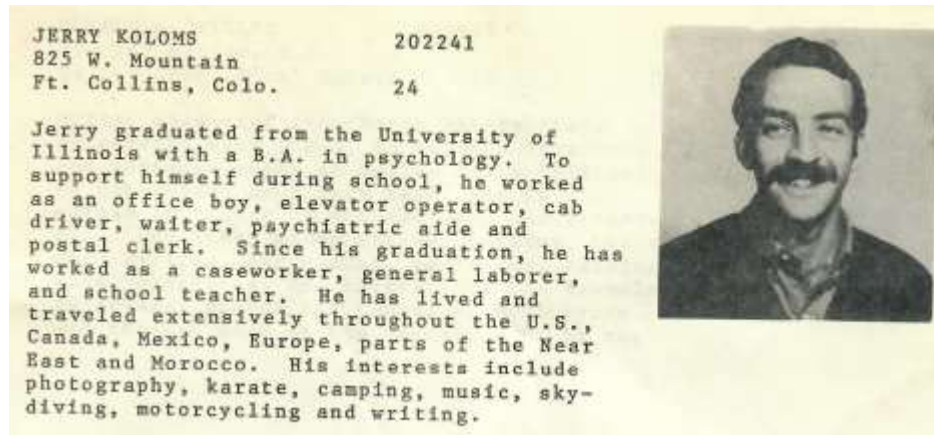
## 6) News

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- **Twelve dead in Boko Haram Niger attack** A night raid blamed on Boko Haram has left a dozen villagers dead in southeast Niger on the frontier with Nigeria, [Aug 24, 2019] [READ MORE](#)
  
- **The Sahel in flames** [May 31, 2019]. On the southern edge of the Sahara another jihadist insurgency has been spreading like wildfire, with far less international attention. The civilian toll in numbers:
  - Civilian fatalities rose 7,000 percent in Burkina Faso, 500 percent in Niger, and 300 percent in Mali compared to the previous year
  - 440,000 people displaced by conflict, a five-fold increase over the previous year
  - 1.8 million people face food insecurity
  - 5.1 million people require humanitarian assistance
  - 157 men, women, and children killed in March in one attack in MaliRead more [HERE](#)
  
- **What Happened When the EU Moved Its Fight to Stop Migration to Niger**  
Overnight, an EU-backed law criminalized the main source of income in the city of Agadez. It didn't stop migration, but it wrecked the economy. [JULY 5, 2019] Read more at - <https://www.thenation.com/article/niger-agadez-migration/>  
Submitted by Pamela White

- Irwin Jerome "Jerry" Koloms, Niger RPCV who worked in the UNCC program, 1967-69 died at age 75 in his sleep this month in Forestville, CA. He was loved and will be missed by all who knew him. :

*Submitted by Larry Koff and Joel Neuberg*



## LAST WORD

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Volunteers Lara Sutherlin and Grant Sovern were used-car shopping in Wisconsin and fate stepped in when they found a Subaru with these plates:



## **YOUR DONATIONS FUEL THIS WORK**

You may make a donation at any time. To donate now, you can either go to [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org) to use PayPal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041. Thank you very much.

For more about Friends of Niger:

- Our website (new webmaster needed): <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>
- Join & follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfNiger/>
- Contact President John Baird, [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

**“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”**

“please reply to this email to unsubscribe”





# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Oct/Nov 2019

Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041

In this issue:

1. Think of Friends of Niger on Giving Tuesday
2. Happening now in Niamey: Africa's Continental Summit for Peace
3. How child marriage harms agricultural productivity
4. Stand in solidarity with a family whose breadwinner was killed in a hit and run accident by a British tourist, a famous rock star
5. Cultural spotlight – Niger Diaspora website
6. "Surrounded by chaos, Niger is a nation on the edge", National Geographic article
7. News –
  - *After two years of activity Médecins Sans Frontières forced to leave Mainé Soroa*
  - *Data collectors map routes to get malaria medicines to rural health facilities.*
  - *Ex-smugglers complain about a downturn in business.*
  - *Catholic Relief Services working with farmers to deploy wasps as biological controls to tackle millet head miner and prevent catastrophic crop damage.*

*From the Editor*

---

*Dear readers,*

*Every once in a while I recognize that I am guilty of having freeze-frame images from my time in Niger crowding out current realities. Recently Morou Boureima sent me images of swanky new amenities in Agadez—where he had flown on the Niger Airline which hits all the major cities twice a week! It was hard for me to reconcile the cool architecture and facilities with my static memories of the extremely limited offerings in the early 1990s. Agadez now has charter flights from Europe. I have posted some of the photos he shared of Agadez on the website. My goal is for the Camel Express to nourish memories as well as bring you up to speed with Niger today. I welcome your feedback, story ideas and content.*

*Amy Wilson, dit Amibula*

## **1) Think of Friends of Niger on Giving Tuesday**

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Please consider going to our website on Giving Tuesday to support the efforts of the Friends of Niger: <http://www.friendsofniger.org/donate-online/>

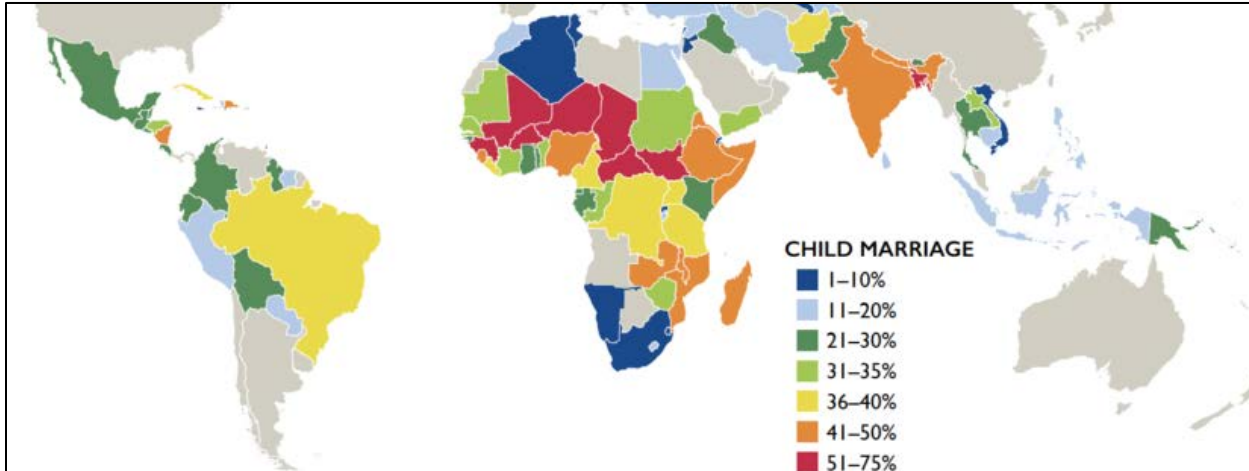
Keep an eye on your mailbox for our annual letter and report about projects and activities. This year's report includes updates on efforts to provide solar electrification in health clinics in Maradi and Zinder regions, individual family Moringa gardens in Dakoro, supplying medicines in Diffa, emergency fire relief and a warehouse for grain storage in Dosso region, emergency feeding for nomadic students and cheese making in Tchintabaraden. This work is made possible with your donations, THANK YOU!



### 3) How child marriage harms agricultural productivity

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Child, Early, and Forced Marriage are forms of gender-based violence which can also harm agricultural productivity. Child marriage is a global challenge that impedes our progress across all sectors of society, including agriculture. Each year 12 million girls are married before they turn 18 years old with girls in rural marrying young at twice the rate of girls in urban communities.



Fueled by poverty, lack of education, tradition, and insecurity, gender inequality and a devaluation of girls and women underlie all factors that contribute to the practice of child marriage.

Women are heavily involved in cultivating, harvesting, and processing food and bringing it to market, yet early marriage constrains women's productivity. Lack of education, increased care responsibilities, health issues, and imbalanced power dynamics shrinks access to land and other assets, resources, and information. Removing the production constraints on female farmers, including removing the exacerbating challenges that child marriage imposes on adolescent girls and young women could increase their farm yields by 20-30 percent, feeding an additional 150 million people.

Specific suggestions are provided for helping to end child marriage and integrating the needs of child brides into agriculture programming

See full article at: <https://www.agrilinks.org/post/how-child-marriage-harms-agricultural-productivity>

To learn more, read the blog - [The Role of Gender in Agriculture](#).

Gleaned from Agrilinks, the online hub for agriculture, food security and development professionals. If you're not a member, [join now](#). Agrilinks is part of the Feed the Future initiative that addresses the root causes of hunger, poverty and undernutrition, and establishes a lasting foundation for change; USAID Bureau for Food Security (BFS).

### 4) Support a family whose breadwinner was killed in a hit and run accident—by a British tourist.

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RPCV Pamela Britton White (Dosso 1969-70, [pamelabwhite@gmail.com](mailto:pamelabwhite@gmail.com)) is asking for your support for a family in Niger that has not found justice after a hit and run by a tourist. Pam has been on a quest to seek justice for the family of her Nigerien friend, Oumarou, who was killed in a hit and run accident in Niger in 1975. The perpetrator, a British tourist, a renowned rock star, fled the country after being tried and sentenced, failing to

compensate or acknowledge the loss to the family in any way. With incredible determination and the active support of Nigeriens who worked with and knew the victim, Pam tracked down the rock star in England and had direct communication with him. He admitted and remembered the incident well, had even written about it in published works, but callously refused any word of condolence or any compensation for the surviving family. A GoFundMe campaign has been established to give this family some justice, solidarity and support from the outside world, to acknowledge their loss and suffering. Please follow this link to support Oumarou's family and learn the rest of the story—WHO WAS THE FAMOUS ROCK STAR?

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/seeking-justice-for-Oumarous-family>

## 5) Cultural Spotlight: Niger Diaspora website

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Interested in more Niger news? Check out this website developed and maintained by Nigeriens living abroad.

Nous sommes tous des Nigériens de la diaspora résidant dans la capitale de l'Europe, Bruxelles. Nous restons très attachés à nos racines. Nous sommes conscients du fait que les Nigériens de l'extérieur - quel que soit le pays où ils résident - apprécient se retrouver au sein de « la communauté » pour échanger sur notre devenir respectif souvent en lien avec celui du pays.



Intéressés et préoccupés à participer à notre manière au développement du Niger, nous avons choisi d'utiliser nos compétences pour créer du lien entre les différentes communautés nigériennes réparties de par le monde. L'idée du site « Nigerdiaspora » est née de cette volonté. Sans pour autant être représentants de partis politiques, notre attachement au Niger nous avons cependant l'ambition de donner une dimension politique, dans le sens de « citoyenne » (s'occuper des affaires publiques pour permettre à chaque personne de jouir de ses droits civils et politiques) à ce projet conçu comme plate-forme d'informations et de dialogues au service du développement du Niger. L'expression des opinions sera respectueuse, la polémique est la bienvenue quand elle poursuit un objectif constructif.

Nous comptons sur votre contribution responsable. Votre expression sera respectueuse des interlocuteurs et de leurs points de vue. Elle sera élaborée dans un esprit critique constructif. Le respect de cette règle de vie nous permettra de favoriser la libre expression de chacun des acteurs de notre site. Nous vous remercions de votre compréhension.

<http://www.nigerdiaspora.net/>

## 6) Surrounded by chaos, Niger is a nation on the edge, from National Geographic

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"The West African country, a crossroads for trade and transit in one of the world's roughest regions, is clinging to stability. But for how long?

It is an ancient, low-slung city with a sultan's palace and a 500-year-old mosque at its historic center, the outlying neighborhoods composed largely of mud and straw, with more than 130,000 inhabitants, not counting the Boss's many clients just passing through.

A PRECARIOUS CROSSROADS, the arid expanses of Niger have been a nexus of trade and transit for centuries. Impoverished but relatively stable, the country is surrounded by conflict zones where Islamist terrorist groups have taken root. Western, UN, and regional military forces all increasingly see Niger as a crucial base for combating extremism in the region.

Nearly nine of 10 migrants in northern Africa are on the move to seek better economic opportunities. They follow well-worn routes through lands where the governments are weak and terrorist groups are thriving.

Thousands of UN and French troops are deployed in Mali to maintain regional stability. Yet groups linked to the Islamic State and al Qaeda regularly attack both military and civilian targets.

Since 2011, Boko Haram, the insurgent group based in northern Nigeria has sought to recast that country as a state based on sharia, or Islamic law. The group is linked to as many as 37,530 deaths.

As many as 300,000 migrants came through here every year."

This story by Robert Draper, photographs by Pascal Maitre appears in the July 2019 issue of National Geographic magazine

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2019/07/niger-clings-to-stability-in-west-africa/#close> (note you have to subscribe to read the article but it is free)

## 7) News

- ***After two years of activity MSF forced to leave Mainé Soroa.*** *Three months after a violent attack by unknown assailants on its office in the Diffa region, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has been forced to stop providing medical and humanitarian assistance to people in the area.*  
<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/story/niger-after-two-years-activities-msf-teams-forced-leave-mainé-soroa>
- ***Data collectors map routes to get malaria medicines to rural health facilities.*** *A survey collected data on health facilities in Niger to address distribution methods, storage conditions, and commodity inventory levels is now being mapped using GPS.*  
<https://medium.com/usaaid-2030/mapping-niger-153ded451634> from Meredith McGehee
- ***Niger: Ex-smugglers complain about a downturn in business. By Emma Wallis***  
***Published 2019/11/28***  
<https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/21174/niger-ex-smugglers-complain-about-a-downturn-in-business> from Pamela White
- ***Catholic Relief Services working with farmers to deploy wasps as biological controls to tackle millet head miner and prevent catastrophic crop damage.***  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-niger-farming/in-rain-short-niger-wasps-deployed-in-war-on-crop-munching-worm-idUSKBN1Y1182> from Pamela White

## YOUR DONATIONS FUEL THIS WORK

You may make a donation at any time. To donate now, you can either go to [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org) to use PayPal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041. Thank you very much.

For more about Friends of Niger:

- Our website (volunteers needed to help with the website): <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>

- Join & follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfNiger/>
- Submit news topics and articles: [camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com)
- Contact President John Baird, [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

**"There is no way to peace; peace is the way."**

"please reply to this email to unsubscribe"

Restaurant in Agadez