

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

March 2002

- [Message from the President](#)
- [Friends of Niger Featured in Video Production for Canadian Television: Hour-Long Program Focuses on Grassroots Projects](#)
- [Botsotsoua, Dan Keri, Aguié, Gazaoua, Galmi, Niamey & Hamdallaye - FON Visits its Project Partners Across Niger - and likes what it sees!!](#)
- [Aboukan Aboukan Niger](#)
- [When an Ox & a Cart Can Make a Difference](#)
- [FON's Continuing Commitment to Microcredit in Niger & How You Can Help](#)
- [FON Chewable Vitamin Campaign Back On Track: Pat Alio to Coordinate Distribution from Niamey](#)
- [Yakking it up](#)
- [Inside Friends of Niger](#)
- [Inside FON Finance](#)
- [The Camel at the Crossroads & Other Such Stories](#)
- [FON T-Shirts](#)
- [Inside Peace Corps Niger](#)
- [Preserving the Independence of the Peace Corps - Act Now!!](#)
- [FON Trip to Niger 2002 Slated for October 17 Arrival](#)
- [PC Niger Seeks Historian as Peace Corps Prepares to Celebrate 40 Years in Niger](#)
- [Who the Heck Are These Guys?](#)
- [New Peace Corps Trainees Arrive at Hamdallaye in January...](#)
- [Help Wanted, A Great Web Site & Two Really Great Books](#)
- [NPCA Reschedules 40th Anniversary Conference for June in DC](#)
- ["Making a Difference: One Village at a Time"](#)
- [Credits and Other Information](#)
- [FRIENDS OF NIGER 2002 MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM](#)

## Message from the President

Dear Friends of Niger -

Greetings to each of you. We hope that this first edition of 2002 finds you well. As you will note in the [lead story below](#), I am recently returned from eight days in Niger - a journey as exciting as it was unexpected. And although the main purpose of the trip was to assist with a video production, the nature of the project was such that, by definition, it allowed me direct contact with most all the people and projects with which **Friends of Niger** has had an involvement - and to which so many of you have contributed - these past couple of years. You will all be aware of the occasionally uneasy feeling that comes with believing in what you are doing while being aware that this belief is based more on secondhand analysis than on firsthand experience. For me, this trip relegated that feeling to history. The story of the exchanges that I had and of the things that I learned can be found [below](#) along with updates on our continuing commitment to [microcredit](#) activities in Niger and to the [children's chewable multivitamin campaign](#).

Back in 1998, when **Friends of Niger** was just getting back on its feet and before we even had a web site, we dedicated a good portion of **The Camel Express** to the purpose of sharing basic information on **FON** - who we are, how we're organized and financed, what we hope to achieve. Our little organization has come a long way in four years and we felt it was time to repeat the exercise - for all of those who have helped us along our way and for all of those whom we hope will join us now. Please take a look at the [related stories](#).

Check out the latest news regarding the celebration of Peace Corps' unbroken 40 years of service in Niger, including the [FON trip](#) to Niger scheduled for this October. These and other stories on Niger, **Friends of Niger**, the Peace Corps and the [NPCA](#) will also found within the list below - along with a reminder of the continuing availability of the [FON T-Shirt](#) and information on how you can get yourself into one. Jim Bullington's column, [Inside Peace Corps Niger](#), is on the list as well. Please also take time to read through the material on related to the [future of the Peace Corps](#).

Finally, when you've done all that we hope that you'll use the [Friends of Niger Membership & Order Form](#) to either renew your membership for 2002 or join us for the first time. And if you're not a joiner, we hope that you will consider making a financial contribution to **FON** and/or to one or more of our activities. Please be assured that all support is gratefully received and that all support truly makes a difference.

Enjoy this edition of the **Camel Express** and please stay in contact.

Peace.

**Jim Schneider**  
**President**

## **Friends of Niger Featured in Video Production for Canadian Television: Hour-Long Program Focuses on Grassroots Projects**

At 19h20 local time on the evening of Sunday, January 13, Air France flight 774 touched down in Niamey. The flight was on time - an improbable start to an improbable event, the production for Canadian television of an hour-long documentary on Niger featuring Friends of Niger, FON President Jim Schneider, and FON support for such grassroots activities as MICA's Oxcart Project and CARE Niger's Mata Masu Dubara program. The documentary, produced by Andrew Younger of Whalesong Production and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was filmed on location in Niger, Quebec and Washington, D. C. and will first air on on the CBC later this spring.

The Niger portion of the "shoot" occurred between January 13 and January 21 and took Schneider, Younger, cameraman Kevin Hanlon and Whalesong's Amadou Kimba Siddo from Niamey to Zinder, Kanteche, Matamaye, Dan Barto, Botsotsoua, Gazaoua, Aguié, Dan Keri, Maradi, Galmi, Hamdallaye and back to Niamey. Additional information on the trip and on Schneider's meetings with [Oxcart Project](#) and [Mata Masu Dubara](#) groups; representatives of MICA, Care International, MECREF, the SIM and Niger National hospitals; as well as the new group of PC trainees and others can be found below.



Friends of Niger President Jim Schneider, Care Niger representatives Safiatou Mamane and Hadjara Ouedrago, and Amadou Kimba

## **Botsotsoua, Dan Keri, Aguié, Gazaoua, Galmi, Niamey & Hamdallaye - FON Visits its Project Partners Across Niger - and likes what it sees!!**

When Andrew Younger offered me the chance to accompany him to Niger and assist him and Kevin Hanlon with the production of a video documentary on Niger, it occurred to me that it might be possible to squeeze in some Friends of Niger business. For some time, I had been uneasy with the knowledge that none of us on FON's Board had had direct contact with the activities that we were supporting and, indeed, recommending to our members and contacts. We had done our homework, we had asked the right questions, we had sought advice from people who should know. We were persuaded we had the correct priorities - small scale, transparent, grassroots projects with a focus on tapping the immense and largely untapped potential of women, pastoralists and younger people. But - we had not had the opportunity to spend time, on location, with the people whose lives were effected by the activities that we were supporting.

This was that opportunity and take it I did. You all know how this works. It takes the best part of two days to get from North America to Niger. You arrive in Niamey - tired and disoriented. It takes half the next morning to buy CFA and the other half to get from Niamey to Dosso (between which the road is cratered like the surface of the moon). But then, after lunch at Dogondoutchi, you can finally settle into some of the things that you knew - the sights and the sounds of Niger - as you make your way to Zinder. And as the sun sets behind you, somewhere between Maradi and Tessaoua, you begin to accept that you are back in Niger.

For the next seven days - as Andrew and Kevin made their film - I visited with and talked to people whose lives were being touched by our activities these last several years. In Matamaye, Dan Barto, Kantché and Botsotsoua I was able to spend time with friends and colleagues that I had not seen for almost forty years. At Hamdallaye, I had a fun and meaningful exchange with the new contingent of PC Niger trainees. And back in Niamey, I was able to put faces to the names of people from FON's growing list of partner organizations. All in all, a very productive and worthwhile trip - some few reflections of which are shared in the articles that follow. - Jim

### **Aboukan Aboukan Niger**

The village of Botsotsoua is a relative newcomer to the area just east of the Matamaye - Kano road. Founded a scant 110 years ago by a man named Galihou, Beriberi from near Myrriah, the village sits along Niger's border with Nigeria - which runs beside a baobab that stands less than a hundred feet from the compound of the chef de village.

Eight years ago, the village was destroyed by flood and reconstructed with help from the Red Cross. Seventeen weeks before my morning in Botsotsoua, it became the last village in the Matamaye area to launch a formal Mata Masu Dubara group. Actually, CARE Niger had decided that the Matamaye area had enough groups and had turned down the Botsotsoua group's original request for training and assistance. So the women of the village started on their own. Then CARE's agent in Matamaye, Hadjara Ouedrago, was informed that funding had arrived from Friends of Niger - sufficient to cover the cost of training one more group.

This is why the women of Botsotsoua have named their group "Aboukan Aboukan Niger" - in Hausa "the friends of Friends of Niger." It is why when we arrived - in the middle of the afternoon and a day late - 31 women turned out in their finest to spend an hour talking about what the group meant for them and how they saw the group as a vehicle for the continued economic recovery of the village. And it was their sense of purpose which, in turn, convinced me that Mata Masu Dubara truly does mean "women on the move."



## When an Ox & a Cart Can Make a Difference

The communities of Dan Keri, Aguié and Gazaoua are situated - one after the other - along Niger's main east-west highway, midway between Maradi and Tessaoua. Aguié is the seat of the souspréfecture and Gazaoua the home of the Chef de Canton. The three are also home to 19 of MICA's Oxcart Project groups. And, in turn, three of these were organized with financial support from Friends of Niger.

Over the course of one entire day, MICA organizer Halima Mazaou and I went from village to village along that road, meeting with the leadership of Oxcart groups, discussing their experiences, their learnings and their aspirations. In the process I saw and was told of examples of how sets of oxen and carts were making a difference in ease of access to medical facilities, markets, and fields.

But as I listened to these women articulate other needs and envision other applications for their new sense of economic competence, I came to realize that this clear expression of confidence was perhaps the most significant difference of all and that it likely represented Oxcart's most important and most lasting contribution.



Above an oxen and cart, serving as an ambulance, leaves Dan Keri for Aguié - site of the nearest dispensaire. Below, and later the same day, a FON sponsored ox has a quick feed shortly after returning from its task of transporting banco for making bricks.





## FON's Continuing Commitment to Microcredit in Niger & How You Can Help

Over the course of the past year, Friends of Niger has made a clear commitment to microcredit (and/or microfinance) in Niger. This commitment has been strongly seconded by FON members and contacts who have been generous with their support for both the Mata Masu Dubara program of CARE Niger and the Oxcart Project of MICA. While in Niger, I had the opportunity to meet with Rabiou Haoua Hambali, Directrice de la Mutuelle d'Epargne et de Crédit des Femmes in Niamey, and with Danielle Dumont, Canadian project advisor to MECREF, and discuss their work with urban approaches to women's credit institutions. Africare is also in the early stages of a microfinance project in eight villages and two towns in the Dosso area, under the direction of Sheryl Cowan, and FON is in the process of learning more about that initiative as well.

Contributions to our ongoing support for microcredit in Niger should be made payable to **Friends of Niger** and sent to: Micro Niger c/o FON, P.O. Box 33164, Washington, DC, 20033-0164 or sent along with the [Friends of Niger 2002 Membership & Order Form](#).

## FON Chewable Vitamin Campaign Back On Track: Pat Alio to Coordinate Distribution from Niamey

As some of you know, but many do not, Sue Rosenfeld has not been well. Sue, an RPCV and a member of FON, has been back in the US for some time now - waiting for a liver transplant. During her tenure as Niamey Resident Director for the Boston University Study Abroad Program, Sue was the person who originally launched the campaign for the distribution in Niger of children's chewable multivitamins. She began the project in collaboration with Dr. Herbert Degbey of the Pediatric Ward at the National Hospital in Niamey. The good response that she received to her original efforts, encouraged Sue to contact Friends of Niger and enlist our support. That was the start of the FON/BU program. Later, when Niger RPCV Chris Zoolkoski decided to do his medical internship at the SIM hospital in Galmi, he decided to try to initiate the program there. FON worked with Chris toward that end and now the FON/BU program includes both insitutions. Now - with Sue's illness and her temporary absence from Niger - the program was in jeopardy. During my visit, I was able to meet with in Galmi with SIM administrator Allan Quinn and in Niamey with Dr. Degbey - both of whom assured me of the important role that the vitamins played in their treatment of children fighting illness, disease and malnutrition. And I was able to meet with Pat Alio - Niger PCV (1964-66) and Director of the English Language Program at the American Cultural Center in Niamey. Pat has agreed to manage the vitamin distribution process in Niamey - which puts the program back on track.

**For anyone so inclined, the best way to reach Sue Rosenfeld is via e-mail at - [meredebebe@yahoo.com](mailto:meredebebe@yahoo.com).**

# Yakking it up



Yakking it up with the trainees at Hamdallaye; with Issa and Hassan in Matamaye; and (below) with Elhadji Ibrahim in front of the cooperative store at Dan Barto.



## Inside Friends of Niger

Back in 1998, when **Friends of Niger** was just getting back on its feet, we dedicated a good portion of **The Camel Express** to the purpose of sharing basic information on **FON**. At the time, we were particularly sensitive to the confusion that seemed to exist in people's minds between **Friends of Niger**, Focus on Niger, NigerNet, NPCA, etc. Since that time, although a lot of this information is readily accessible at the **FON** website - <http://www.friendsofniger.org> - and all of it is available for the asking, we've tended to confine this kind of material to the President's Annual Report to *members* each year. This is likely to continue to be standard practice but, after four years, it seemed timely to repeat the exercise both for its own sake and as part of an outreach designed to expand the base of active, participatory support for **Friends of Niger**.

**Friends of Niger (FON)** is a registered nonprofit corporation under the laws of the District of Columbia. The purpose of **FON** is to initiate and/or support activities related to Niger and its people and for the benefit of its membership. **FON** was established in about 1986 and was active for many years under the leadership of its founder, Meredith McGehee. In the mid-90's, the organization became more or less inactive for a couple of years before being revitalized by Terry O'Leary and others - most of whom are members of the current Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors of **FON** is comprised of up to five people elected every second spring. The Board then chooses its own officers. The composition of the present Board can be found on page two. The next election is slated for spring 2002. **FON's** By Laws can be found at its website - [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org). The membership of **Friends of Niger** includes Niger RPCVs and Niger PCVs in service as well as other people who have lived and worked in Niger.

**The Camel Express** is the name of its newsletter. It is usually issued three times a year in hardcopy, e-mail and website editions. Both the e-mail and website editions are updated frequently between these three complete issues. In addition, the **FON** website provides links to a large range of sources of news and information on Niger.

At the point a couple of years ago when **FON** went into temporary hiatus, the Camel Express Telematique and Niger Net were amongst the services provided by **Friends of Niger**. During **FON's** down time, these two services would have disappeared had it not been for the special efforts of two people - Joel Mayer and Bill Stein, both Niger RPCVs. Joel, who kept CET going until very recently, added additional features under the umbrella of Focus on Niger and eventually changed the name of his news service to

Kakaki. Bill kept Niger Net going, giving many of us the information that we needed in order to establish or maintain contact with each other. In 1998 Bill was replaced as manager of Niger Net by John Soloninka and, as you read these words, Focus on Niger has ceased to exist.

Niger Net is an e-mail network of people who have lived in Niger. Joining puts you in electronic contact with Nigeriens, RPCVs and other people interested in Niger. It currently has an active list of almost 800 names. John Soloninka, FON's Recording Secretary, is the manager of the list. He can be reached at [soloninka1@osu.edu](mailto:soloninka1@osu.edu) or via links available at the **FON** website by scrolling down the lefthand side of the site's front page.

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is a worldwide network of RPCVs, former staff and supporters of the Peace Corps movement. NPCA works in the U.S. and abroad for world peace, understanding and well-being. Its membership tops 11,000 and it has more than 130 affiliated geographical and country-of-service organizations - **Friends of Niger** being one. Membership includes entitlement to its magazine - World View - and its newsletter - 3/1/61. More information on NPCA and its various programs and services can be found at - [www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org).

## Inside FON Finance

Friends of Niger is entirely financed by people like you -through membership dues, outright financial contributions, targeted donations and sales of T-shirts and the yearly International Calendar.

Everything that comes in goes into one of three accounts - the annual operating budget, the turnaround account, or the discretionary account.

Each year in the autumn, the Board of FON dedicates one of its meetings to discussion, debate and approval of an operating budget for the upcoming year. This is the budget that is designed to cover all the basic, more or less ongoing activities of the organization and includes - this newsletter, the FON website, the FON Archives, Board meetings (which are conference calls), occasional attendance at NPCA meetings, affiliation to NPCA, occasional special activities like Celebration of Niger, and all the unavoidable administrative costs such as - postage, telephone, post office box rental, bank charges, etc. This budget (and these kinds of costs) are covered by membership dues and those donations which are specifically earmarked by the donor as a General Contribution to FON.

The turnaround account is our name for a way to keep track of money that arrives in response to an appeal for financial support for specific projects or activities in Niger - Oxcart, MMD, vitamins, etc. We also use this account for the membership money that we forward to NPCA. In other words, every cent that comes in, turns around and goes back out. All the normal administrative costs related to these kinds of activities - long distance phone calls, postage, etc. have been borne by the operating budget.

The discretionary account, is where we keep track of expenses and revenue related to the sale of T-shirts and calendars. We use this still very small amount of money for unanticipated expenses and operating budget deficits as well as for the provision of calendars to new PC trainees and to PC Niger's 13 transit houses.

For the first time, in year 2001, the operating budget was slightly in deficit. This was due to two factors, both on the expense side of the ledger: cost overrun on Celebration of Niger 2001 and the purchase of software for use on our web site. The operating budget for 2002 is expected to be \$5500.

## The Camel at the Crossroads & Other Such Stories

The title is meant to get your attention so that you will read this article and respond to its underlying message which is this - The Camel Express, the FON website, and other basic services of Friends of Niger are caught in a classic cost squeeze which poses the classic dilemma: how do we continue to provide the widest range of service to the widest range of people - and pay our bills - if only some of those people are helping to pick up the tab? Here are several examples of how the dilemma manifests itself for Friends of Niger.

Since 1998 - when The Camel Express made its reappearance on the scene - the Board of Friends of Niger has worked hard to get the newsletter into the hands or before the eyes of each and every person with whom we have contact. Cost-wise this is very economical for the e-mail and web site editions. The hardcopy edition, however, is expensive to produce and distribute. The easy solution is to not send copies to anyone who has not made a financial contribution in one form or another to FON over a set period of time - e.g. the past year. And so - at least until we are certain that the FON operating budget for 2002 (see article on this page) will balance - this is what we will do starting with the next issue, scheduled for publication this spring.

Since later that same year, when we launched the FON website - [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org), we have openly posted each edition of the

newsletter onto the site - and updated that material on a more or less monthly basis. From some quarters we have been advised to refrain from doing this because, obviously, this allows anyone free access to the newsletter. But we will not be heeding that advice because getting information before people remains a high priority for us. We've opted for inclusion, trusting that over time more of you will join FON or otherwise help us financially.

That's the Camel's dilemma - how does it keep getting the word out to as many people as possible - about Niger, about the people of Niger, and about how people here can respond to people their - and balance its budget.

This, of course, poses a related but different question. Why should all those of you who do make a contribution continue doing so, knowing that you could easily join the ranks of those who have been enjoying a free ride? After we cut away the fluff, the answer is this - without your help the women of Botsotsoua and others near Agadez would not have their Mata Masu Dubara group; women east of Maradi and others south of Filingue would not have an ox and cart; children near Galmi and in Niamey would not have had the vitamin supplement that helped them through malnutrition and/or illness; some of the children in Niger's north would not have been immunized against polio; Niger would not have had sufficient vaccine to respond to the meningitis epidemic in 2000; etc.

That is to say - you help because it makes a difference. No one has said it better than Peace Corps' first director. - Jim

**“Serve, serve, serve. That's the challenge. For in the end it will be the servants that save us all.” - Sargent Shriver .**

Friends of  
Niger

**You're Gonna  
Love This T-Shirt**

**Available in 3  
Sizes  
- S, M, L, XL**



**Makes a  
Great  
Gift!!**

**It'll Look  
Good on  
You as  
Well!!**

***Introducing - Friends of Niger T-Shirts You're gonna love this T-Shirt!!***

Based on a design originally created by our neighbors at Friends of Burkina Faso, FON had produced its first and very own T-shirt. The short-sleeved shirts are 100% cotton, pre-shrunk beefy-T, natural muslin-colored fabric. The design (above) is four color: brown, black and the orange and green of the flag of Niger. You'll notice a nifty proximity map of Niger within the map of Africa which appears in the branches of the baobab tree. The shirts are available in Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large sizes and sell for \$18 each, shipping included. Use the [FON Membership & Order Form](#) or send a check made out to Friends of Niger (indicating the number of shirts by size), along with your name and address to: **Shirts. c/o Friends of**



## INSIDE PEACE CORPS NIGER



### Dear Friends of Niger:

Niger remains peaceful as we begin the transition from the beautiful weather of the past few months to the rigors of the coming hot season. The anxieties that beset us post-9/11 have eased, and life has more or less returned to normal, especially for the Volunteers in the bush.

Our 55 trainees, who arrived for PST on January 13, are doing well. We hope to be able to swear them all in as Volunteers on March 29.

We are excited about President Bush's Peace Corps expansion initiative and its implications for Niger.

The first impact was Peace Corps/Washington's approval in principle of our new education project. This had been under discussion and in planning for nearly a year, but the President's initiative put the approval process on fast forward by making it all but certain that the needed Volunteer input and other resources will be available.

Most Niger RPCVs will recall that education was a major element of the program in Niger from 1962 until serious political turbulence and financial collapse in the mid-1990s caused Niger's schools essentially to cease functioning for several years. Consequently, Peace Corps/Niger was forced to close out its work in education.

With renewed political stability and emphasis on education since the current Government came to power in early 2000, we decided it would be appropriate to add an educational project to our current programs in health, agriculture and natural resource management.

Our plan is to use the new education Volunteers to create and operate several English Language Centers in regional towns, where there are few if any opportunities to learn English. As demonstrated by the popularity of the English program at the Embassy's American Cultural Center (directed by Niger RPCV Pat Alio), there is a high demand for English classes among Nigeriens. Moreover, teachers of English are easy for Peace Corps to recruit and train (as opposed, for example, to teachers of math and science, who would need a high level of French to be effective). Since the English Language Centers will be primarily for working adults and will operate only during evening hours, the education Volunteers would also be expected to work with youth groups and undertake other education-related projects such as organizing in-service training for Nigerien teachers.

We anticipate bringing a new APCD/Education on board this fall to prepare for the arrival of 15-20 education Volunteers in June or July of 2003, with another 15-20 to follow in the summer of 2004. This should bring our average number of Volunteers in Niger from the current level of just under 100 to more than 130.

One implication of this project is that we will move from one to two PSTs per year. The current intent is to have an AG/NRM PST beginning next December, and a Health/Education PST beginning in June or July of 2003.

It may also be possible to further expand the PC/Niger program in other areas, both programmatically and geographically, but any serious planning in that regard will have to await guidance from PC/Washington on resource allocation and policy directions.

**Jim Bullington**  
**Country Director**  
**Niger**

## Preserving the Independence of the Peace Corps - Act Now!!

Ever since George Bush called for a significant expansion of the Peace Corps and, in almost the same breath, mandated the

establishment of the Freedom Corps, there has been much speculation and considerable discussion of the obvious possibility that the expansion initiative was a cover for the intent to bring the Peace Corps under the jurisdiction of the Freedom Corps. RPCV Colin Gallagher has been spearheading efforts to make certain that this does not occur. Colin has established an internet location where people can express their concern by signing a petition. It can be found at - <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/632965389>. A discussion of the related issues can be found at - <http://208.234.30.110/messages/messages/2629/6870.html?1012969871>. Colin has also been working where he can with Congressional staff people in an effort to agree upon legislative language that would protect Peace Corps' historic independence. The draft petition below is only that - a draft - and is intended to serve as an example of a position that the Board of Directors of Friends of Niger could support and that we would encourage you to sign. Encourage others to sign it as well. Then do one or more of the following - forward the petition, with or without comments of your own' to potentially supportive members of Congress; and, send us a copy. We will package the signatures that we receive and pass them along to the petition organizers. Send to Petition, c/o FON, P.O. Box 33164, Washington, DC, 20033-0164. When you've finished doing that, sign the web site petition as well. A [click here](#) will take you to a page from which you can easily print the petition. Keep informed and stay in touch.

**Whereas, under Section 908(b)(1) of the USA Patriot Act, officials of the Federal Government who are not ordinarily engaged in the collection, dissemination, and use of foreign intelligence in the performance of their duties may be trained to do so at the discretion of the Attorney General and the Director of Central Intelligence, pursuant to Section 908(a) of that same Act, and funded pursuant to Section 908(c) of that Act,**

**And furthermore, under Section 3(b)(ii) of the Executive Order establishing the USA Freedom Corps, the Attorney General is a member of the USA Freedom Corps Council, with the Director of the United States Peace Corps and other executive branch or agency heads; and per Section 3(f)(iii) of that same Executive Order, upon the request of the Chair of the USA Freedom Corps Council, to the extent permitted by law, the heads of executive branch departments and agencies shall provide the Council with relevant information,**

**Regardless of these or any other such sections of law, the U.S. Peace Corps shall retain the right to withhold information from the USA Freedom Corps Council, pursuant to Section 3(f)(iii) of the Presidential Executive Order establishing the USA Freedom Corps, or pursuant to any request to provide the aforementioned Council with relevant information;**

**Further held, that the U.S. Peace Corps shall withhold information and disallow participation from any agency, entity, initiative, individual, or group of individuals, where the distribution of said information or the allowance of said participation would be contrary to the mission goals of the U.S. Peace Corps;**

**Further held, that no person or organizational entity associated with the U.S. Peace Corps shall be allowed to participate in any class of activities which occur pursuant to section 908 of the USA Patriot Act, nor shall any person who is not associated with the U.S. Peace Corps involve or cause to be involved any person associated with the U.S. Peace Corps in such activities, regardless of whether these persons act knowingly or otherwise;**

**Further held, the words "or interagency initiative" shall be inserted following that part of U.S. Code, Title 22, Chapter 34, Section 2501-1, which states, "Effective on December 29, 1981, the Peace Corps shall be an independent agency within the executive branch and shall not be an agency within the ACTION Agency, the successor to the ACTION agency, or any other department or agency" --**

**This shall hereby be made law, to maintain a true independence of the U.S. Peace Corps, and to maintain separation of Peace Corps Volunteers from political, intelligence, and religious intervention, so as to preserve and protect the intent of U.S.C., Title 22, Chapter 34, Sec. 2501: To promote world peace and friendship through a Peace Corps.**

**This petition is made in the spirit of and in accordance with the people's first and tenth Amendment rights.**

**Presented this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.**

**(Signatures)**

## **FON Trip to Niger 2002 Slated for October 17 Arrival**

The **FON** sponsored trip to Niger is now confirmed for autumn 2002, with a Niamey arrival date of Thursday, October 17. Participants will be in-country for 15 days. Activities are still in the planning stages but highlights of the trip will likely include: an exchange with current PCVs at the PC Niger training center at Hamdallaye, visits to communities of service, a group excursion to Agadez and points

north, participation in one or more work projects, a reception in Niamey as part of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Peace Corps in Niger.

Transatlantic flight arrangements are expected to be finalized during April 2002. For information, contact Jim Schneider at 819-827-4870 or [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com).

## **PC Niger Seeks Historian as Peace Corps Prepares to Celebrate 40 Years in Niger**

Peace Corps Niger is in the early stages of planning related to 40th anniversary activities in Niger. Among the ideas being discussed is the possibility of producing a history of Peace Corps in Niger - which would then be available for sale on a cost-recovery basis. Is there a historian out there who would be willing to take this on as a project? Anyone interested should contact Jim Bullington, PC Niger Country Director at - [jbullington@ne.peacecorps.gov](mailto:jbullington@ne.peacecorps.gov) - or Jim Schneider at - [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com).

## **Who the Heck Are These Guys?**



In September 1964, within days of their arrival in Niamey, the Niger 3 PCV basketball team played Niger's national team in back to back outdoor games - splitting the two-game series. In the back row (left to right) - Len Strauss, Brian Sarata, Jim Waters, Dave Cook, Charles Stover ; in the front row - Jim Schneider, Ron Wisner, Dean Lockwood, Newton Baker, Owen Melville and PCMO Dave Nicholas.

## **New Peace Corps Trainees Arrive at Hamdallaye in January...**

On Sunday, January 13, 55 new Peace Corps Niger trainees arrived in Niger and headed for the training center at Hamdallaye. Members of the 2002 group will work in the fields of natural resource management, agriculture and community health and should be at their posts by early April.

At their one-day pre-departure stage at Philadelphia, each trainee received an International Calendar 2002 - courtesy of Friends of Niger. Calendars were also made available for all 13 of the PC Niger transit houses and for the training center.

## **... and 50 become Peace Corps Volunteers on March 29**

# **Help Wanted, A Great Web Site & Two Really Great Books**

As **Friends of Niger** continues to expand its range of activities, we find that we often tax and then surpass the limits of the volunteer energies that we have at our disposal. Right now we really need help from someone who could assist with the management of our web site - <http://www.friendsofniger.org>. If you have that kind of experience, please contact Jim Schneider via e-mail at - [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com).

The next time you find yourself looking for information on a location in Niger - or anywhere else, for that matter - check out the Worldwide Directory of Cities and Towns which can be found at - <http://www.calle.com/world/index.html>. The maps themselves are not all that useful, but the page for each location has Google links to other websites with info on the location as well as to All the Web graphic images for the specific location. Hint: you may need to try alternative spellings - e.g. Bouré (see article below) is listed as Baouré. and Botsotsoua is listed as Bossosowa.

Paul Stoller - one of the featured presenters at last year's **Celebration of Niger 2001** - has announced the publication of his new book, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*. Published by University of Chicago Press, the book traces the lives of three street traders from Niger as they attempt to adjust to life in New York City.

Kathleen Hill's must read novel, *Still Waters in Niger*, is now available in paperback via Amazon - <http://www.amazon.com>. You can probably find Paul's book there as well.

## **NPCA Reschedules 40th Anniversary Conference for June in DC**

Like so many other events originally scheduled for September of 2001, the NPCA biannual conference was postponed. The theme of the conference, now slated for June 20-23, is "The Peace Corps Family: Bringing the World Together."

Conference activities will kick off with Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill and windup with closing ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. In between, delegates will discuss Peace Corps new mandate and the RPCV impact on US multiculturalism, hear from Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo, and participate in a variety of workshops and panels.

Detailed information can be found at - <http://www.rpcv.org>.

## **"Making a Difference; One Village at a Time"**

The headline above is the motto of the Peace Corps Partnership Program sponsored by the students of Corcoran High School and Roberts K-8 School of Syracuse, New York.

For 18 years now, these schools have annually funded a PCPP. In the process, they have raised almost \$100,000 for 18 projects - including the construction of six primary schools, two maternity hospitals, two wells and the first school for the blind in all of central Africa.

This year's project involves the construction of a cemented drinking water well in Bouré, Niger - southeast of Myrriah and is the second time that the students have supported an activity in Niger. In 1998 funding was directed at an adult literacy project in Torodi.

For more information on the schools and on their incredible 18-year record, visit their great web site at - <http://www.angelfire.com/ny5/corcoranpeace/>.

## **Credits and Other Information**

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

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This edition of **The Camel Express** was prepared, produced and distributed with the contributions of Sue Bracken, Irma Sarata, Jim Bullington, Don Bracken, Andrew Younger, Kevin Hanlon, Amadou Kimba Siddo, Pat Reilly, Pat Alio, Sheryl Cowan, Dan Reilly, Angus Martin, Doug Steinberg, Safia Mamane, Hadjara Ouedrago, Haoua Diatta, Halima Mazaou, Cathryn Poff, Gabriella Maertens, John Soloninka, Larry Koff, Jim Miller, Colin Gallagher, Michelle Ghiselli and the people of Niger. Please send address changes and corrections, as well as any queries to **The Camel Express** at any of the addresses above.

# **FRIENDS OF NIGER**



## **2002 MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM**