

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

October 2001

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## Message from the President

Dear Friends of Niger -

Greetings to each of you, wherever you find yourself this mid-autumn of 2001. We apologize for being a bit longer than usual between site updates. The huge backlog created by the preoccupation with **Celebration of Niger 2001** as well our focus on activities reported in this edition of **The Camel** wreaked havoc with our normal schedule. And we have a lot to report - some of which you see here and more of which will be posted within the next couple of weeks.

Of short term interest to many of you will be the availability again this year of the magnificent **International Calendar 2002** produced, as always, by the RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison. The cover of this year's calendar is graced by a lovely photo provided by FON member and activist Diane Chopin. Inside the calendar, the September photo is by Charles O. Cecil, former U.S. Ambassador to Niger.

Details on how to order the calendar are provided above, along with instructions of how to purchase a **FON T-Shirt** - which now come in Small as well as M, L and XL. These are great shirts and, along with the calendars, make wonderful seasonal gifts.

All over the site, you will find little suggestions to the effect that it is now time to renew your FON membership for 2002. We would, of course, be equally thrilled if you decided to join us for the first time. In the final analysis, it is these membership contributions that sustain this site, our newsletter, and our growing list of projects and activities.

No mention of this website would be complete without reporting two items. First, the **Friends of Niger website** has been recognized by The National Peace Corps Association as the best site amongst all its affiliate organizations. (Our newsletter, **The Camel Express**, was also recognized). Second, **FON web guru Jai Evans**, who is almost singularly responsible for the development of this magnificent site, is stepping down from this responsibility - at least for the foreseeable future. We will greatly miss his dedication, skill and good humor. Niger RPCV Cathryn Poff will be replacing Jai as our primary website resource person.

Please take a moment to check out FON's exciting new microcredit initiative in partnership with CARE Niger - see the **Mata Masu Dubara** article above (which also has information on recent developments related to the FON/MICA Oxcart Project).

Our next update will be complete with stories and photos from **FON Celebration of Niger 2001**, including a report on the comments of Joseph Diatta - Niger's Ambassador to the U. S. - as well as an update on the **FON** return trip to Niger which is still scheduled for mid-autumn 2002.

Stay in contact and **please, please** join **Friends of Niger**.

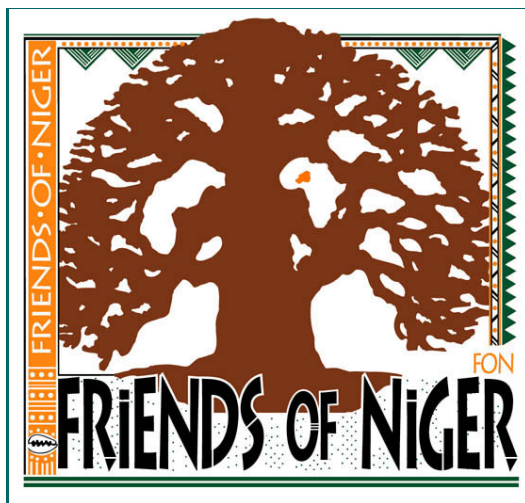
**Jim Schneider**  
President

## FON T-Shirts & International Calendar 2002

**You're Gonna Love**

**Makes a Great Gift!!**

**This T-Shirt**  
**Available in 3 Sizes**  
**- S, M, L, XL**



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

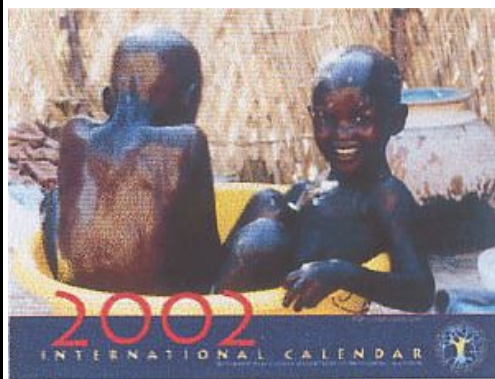
*Introducing - Friends of Niger T-Shirts You're gonna love this T-Shirt!!*

Based on a design originally created by our neighbors at Friends of Burkina Faso, FON had produced its first shirts in plenty of time to meet holiday gift giving needs. 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 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 Niger, P.O. Box 33164, Washington, D.C., 20033-0164.**

*... and the International Calendar 2001  
from RPCV's of Wisconsin-Madison*

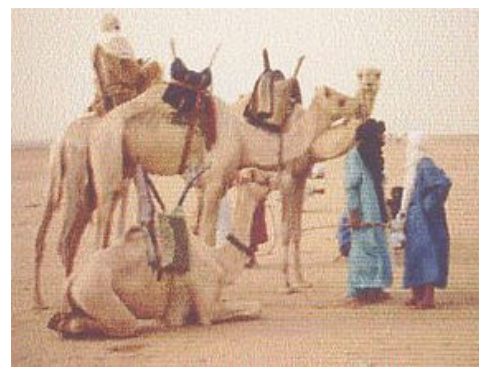
**And this Calendar as well!!**

Since 1987 the RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison have been producing and distributing one of the finest quality calendars on the market - the **International Calendar**. This year the calendar is available through **Friends of Niger**. The calendar is open size, 12 1/4" x 18 3/4", features 13 color photos along with information from past and present Peace Corps service countries, and is printed with soy-based ink on recycled paper. Each day of the year is annotated with holiday and event information; each month includes information on lunar and celestial events; and each photo is complimented by material related to the country portrayed. Use the [FON Membership & Order Form](#) or send a check for \$12 US made out to Friends of Niger, along with your name and address to: **Calendars, c/o Friends of Niger, P.O. Box 33164, Washington, D.C., 20033-0164.**



(left) Cover Photo 2002 -Diane Chopin "Bath time in Boulke"

(right) "Tuareg Cure Salée at In-Gall" ©  
Charle O Cecil (US Ambassador to Niger) for  
September 2001



## **FON Takes Another Microcredit Initiative & Supports CARE Niger's Mata Masu Dubara Groups in Matamaye and Agadez**

The Board of Director's of Friends of Niger has announced financial support for the microcredit activities of CARE Niger. The goal of the program, entitled *Mata Masu Dubara (MMD)*, is to improve the socioeconomic conditions of rural and urban women in Niger. *Mata Masu Dubara* is a Hausa term meaning "Women of the Move."

Over the past several years, CARE Niger has been active in the formation of MMD groups, of approximately 30 women each, in six of Niger's seven regions - Tillabery, Dosso, Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder and Diffa. It costs about \$300 to form a group, an eight-month training program

included. The support from FON will be used to establish one of the first groups in the north, somewhere in the Agadez region, as well as to form a group in the area of Matamaye.



The picture on the left is of Fourera Soumana from the small village of Djoga in western Niger near Torodi. Fourera's story - and the story of the wonderful potential of *Mata Masu Dubara* is the subject of an article, [Reducing Poverty a Few Cents at a Time](#), written by Mark Wentling, former assistant country director, CARE Niger, and now with CARE Mozambique. Additional information about the methodology, operation and impact of MMD can be found by [clicking here](#).

### FON Support for Oxcart Project Expands to Six Locations in Areas of Filingue and Gazaoua

Earlier this year, FON announced its support for the introduction of the Oxcart Project of MICA into two villages in Niger. With the support of financial contributions from FON members and contact people, FON has been able to support six Oxcart projects now in varying stages of development. Three of the sets of oxen and carts are being placed in the villages of Fandara, Siguirado and Inattes in the Baleyara/Boukoukou area between Filingue and Niamey. The other three will be located in the area in and around Gazaoua in central Niger between Maradi and Tessaoua. The organization of the groups in the Baleyara/Boukoukou area is being facilitated by PCV Brian Greenan and MICA coordinator Illiassou Na Indo.

### How People Can Help

For both projects - Mata Masu Dubara (CARE Niger) and the Oxcart Project (MICA) - FON will package donations from members and contacts and pass them along in the appropriate financial units.

Contributions to Mata Masu Dubara should be made payable to **Friends of Niger** and sent to :  
**MMD; c/o FON; P.O. Box 33164; Washington, DC; 20033?0164**

or

Contributions to the Oxcart Project should be made payable to **Friends of Niger** and sent to :  
**Oxcart; c/o FON; P.O. Box 33164; Washington, DC; 20033?0164**

## FRIENDS OF NIGER 2002 MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Membership Dues & Contributions Help Fund FON Activities - Including The Camel Express, the FON Website, the FON Archives, and Projects such as Those Listed Below.

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Please Check Appropriate Boxes

- Enclosed is \$20 for an Individual Membership in FON
- \$45 to cover Individual Membership in both FON & NPCA
- Enclosed is \$35 for a Family Membership (2 Members at One Address)
- \$67.50 to cover Family Membership in both FON & NPCA
- I am a current Niger PCV, entitled to Free Membership
- I am a New RPCV, entitled to a 1-Year Free Membership
- Please send me a Copy of FON's Bylaws (Members Only)
- In Addition to my Membership, I have enclosed a General Contribution of \_\_\_\_\_
- Instead of Joining FON at this time, I have enclosed a General Contribution of \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to support the Mata Masu Dubara project with a Contribution of \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to support the Oxcart Project with a Contribution of \_\_\_\_\_
- Please send \_\_\_\_\_ Friends of Niger T-Shirts at \$18 each (Shipping Included) \_\_\_\_\_
- T-Shirt Sizes: S \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_\_
- Please send \_\_\_\_\_ Year 2002 International Calendars at \$12 each (Shipping Included) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*\*\*\*

Make Check or Money Order Payable to Friends of Niger and mail to:  
P. O. Box 33164, Washington, D. C. 20033-0164  
(Please Enclose Membership Form)

## Credits and Other Information

The Camel Express is the periodical newsletter of Friends of Niger (FON).  
FON can be contacted via the post at P.O. Box 33164, Washington, D.C., 20033-0164;  
by e-mail at [lorenz3@magi.com](mailto:lorenz3@magi.com); and you will find FON on the web at the following Internet address

[www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org).

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