

FBF helps welcome new ambassador

New U.S. Ambassador Jimmy Kolker at his Signing Ceremony surrounded by family and well-wishers.

Photo and article by Bob Osborne



On Wednesday, November 24, 1999, Jimmy Kolker was sworn in as the new Ambassador from the United States to Burkina Faso. He succeeded Sharon Wilkinson, who moved to the State Department in Washington to head up West African Affairs. FBF Board members Bob Osborne (President) and Holland McKenna (Treasurer) were in attendance to represent the organization. Also attending were FBF members Marianne and Alexandre Bambara, friends of the new Ambassador.

Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot gave the welcoming speech to the new Ambassador. He praised Burkina's ethnic diversity and harmony, stressed the need for better relations between the U.S. and West African nations, and emphasized that he was pleased that America is sending an "homme intègre" to this post.

Mr. Kolker, in his remarks, stated how happy and excited he was to attain this appointment, and how honored he was to be headed to Ouagadougou. He left no doubt about his enthusiasm for the job.

When Osborne and McKenna reached the Ambassador through the reception line, they presented him and his family with several

gifts, in the familiar Burkina tradition, including an FBF t-shirt and tote-bag as well as handcrafted items from Burkina Faso (Holland had already presented "le chef" with a few symbolic kola nuts). Ambassador Kolker renewed his wish to strengthen ties with Friends of Burkina Faso, while Bob and Holland expressed FBF's desires to work more closely with the Embassy.

Also attending the event were a number of diplomatic luminaries, including Sharon Wilkinson, who was a good friend of FBF and the Peace Corps during her tenure in Ouagadougou; Don Easum, an FBF member and Ambassador to Upper Volta in the early '70s; and M. Bruno Zidouemba, Burkina Faso's Ambassador to the United States (see our story on Ambassador Zidouemba in the May 1999 edition of the "Connection").

"...America is sending an 'homme intègre' to this post."

The ceremony and reception were held in the beautiful Benjamin Franklin Room in the State Department's building. This room is the largest of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms and was

named after the "Father of the American Foreign Service". This monumental room has free-standing Corinthian columns along the long walls and embedded columns along the shorter end walls. A portrait of Benjamin Franklin, painted in 1767, hangs in one end. The Great Seal of the U.S., done in plaster and gilt, decorates the center of the ceiling. A large balcony affords a terrific view of the Lincoln Memorial. This truly provided a great setting for the event.





President's yiri *by Bob Osborne*



This issue has so many good articles that much of what I would normally talk about is already covered - meeting our new ambassador, reflecting on the past year - so I won't dwell further on them. Instead, I'd like to focus on a couple of important subjects that need to be addressed this year:

new leadership, and a group return trip to Burkina Faso.

NEW LEADERSHIP:

In 1999, we actually recruited a new person into our active volunteer worker ranks, namely Andrea Joseph-Adams, our new assistant editor. To be sure, it's only one person, but it's important nonetheless. She is both younger and female, as contrasted to the current leadership group which is all older (make that middle-aged) and male. All of us come from the late '60s or early '70s. That's nothing to be ashamed of, but we need diversity in our ranks, to infuse new ideas and add more sheer energy. I freely admit that these 54-year-old bones find it harder and harder to spend a lot of time nights and weekends on volunteer work, however rewarding (and it is!), after putting in the time and effort required of your basic management job, the one that pays the rent, buys the computer, etc.

We still have an opening on the Board of Directors, and the current members are committed to filling that vacancy; we want that fifth person to be younger and female. We have discussed this internally, and we may be able to make an appointment this spring. Now **THAT** will be a worthy news item for our next publication.

But it is important to recognize that new volunteers need not jump right into a director or officer position. There are plenty of "entry-level" openings in such areas as website maintenance, marketing our products, seeking donors, encouraging new members, organizing social and cultural events, writing and editing: the list can go on and on. If you can help, call or e-mail me; or, rat on somebody that you think has too much time on his or her hands and I'll make the necessary phone call (preserving your anonymity, of course).

RETURN TO BURKINA:

My second focus area concerns a possible group return trip to Burkina Faso in early 2001. In 1994, we had our first such excursion with 16 people, and for many of us it was truly a defining time. Getting back to a much-changed Ouagadougou was a blast, and making a visit to our old villages was often stunning.

That trip generated a great deal of enthusiasm, and I feel strongly that another such trip would do likewise. If we then harness that enthusiasm and excitement, we can get some new blood in, re-energize some of the old blood and generally crank up our organization and move forward.

We are looking at a two-week trip (a third week can be added as an individual option) in mid-January to mid-February. The weather will be warm but not unbearable, and Ouaga will be jumping to **FESPACO**, the Pan-African Film Festival, which lasts just over a week. This is the finest cinematic festival in Africa, and also one of the premier cultural events of any kind on the continent.

The extra time could be spent in and around Ouagadougou, meeting current Peace Corps Volunteers, traveling to your specific villages, checking out one of the game parks or visiting tourism centers such as Bobo-Dioulasso or Banfora. And, we might consider going through Paris this time, as it would likely be considerably cheaper going there first from any one of several U.S. cities, then head to West Africa. There's a lot more African traffic from Europe, and some bargain fares can be found from Paris to Ouaga. So we think we could chop a few hundred dollars off the airfare, and maybe pass a little time in Paris, which wouldn't be all bad.

But **FIRST**, we need some indications of interest. If you think there's a chance you might go, please contact me by April 15, 2000. If the numbers warrant, we'll put together a cost estimate and itinerary, and request a smallish good-faith deposit by July or so. Then in October we'll put out some serious money in order to lock in airline tickets and hotels. So get the first step out of the way by giving this some serious thought, then contacting either me or Holland McKenna by telephone, fax, e-mail or snail mail. All the addresses are on the cover. **NOW**, start saving your change!



See Burkina movies at home!

Can't wait for FESPACO in 2001? How about hosting your own Burkina Faso film festival right at home. Home Film Festival, www.homefilmfestival.com, or 1-800-258-3456, offers the following three Burkina movies for video rental:

Yaaba

Directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo with Fatima Sanga, Noufou Ouedraogo, Roukietou Barry, Adama Ouedraogo. 1989, 90 min., in Moré with subtitles in English.

While visiting a gravesite, young cousins Bila (Noufou Ouedraogo) and Nopoko (Barry) meet a mysterious old woman (Sanga) who years before was cast out of her village as a witch. Warned to stay away from the woman, the children nonetheless are drawn into her mysterious world. Refreshingly natural performances and beautiful scenery highlight this feature shot in Burkina Faso, which pits the innocence of the children against the superstition of their elders.

"The dry, brown plains of Burkina Faso offer a spare backdrop to Idrissa Ouedraogo's exquisitely simple tale...The film establishes him as one of Africa's most sensitive directors...**Yaaba** turns its simple ingredients into a powerful film whose subjects are the essential human traits of goodness, generosity, evil, fear, superstition and intolerance." -Variety



Tilai

Directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo with Rasmane Ouedraogo, Ina Cisse. 1990, 81 min., in Moré with subtitles in English.

Simple, haunting film from Burkina Faso about Saga (Rasmane Ouedraogo), a young villager who is set to marry. However, Saga's father decides to wed his beloved instead. Secretly, Saga resumes his now incestuous relationship, despite the fact that such a union is punishable by death...

Wend Kunni (God's Gift)

Directed by Gaston J.M. Kabore with Serge Yanogo, Rosine Yanogo, Joseph Nikiema. 1982, 70 min., in Moré with subtitles in English.

This sweet little film from Burkina Faso is set in pre-colonial Africa, and tells the story of a mute child who is abandoned and hungry. He is discovered by a peddler, and adopted by the peddler's Mossi village. However, the film also works as an allegory which depicts the manner in which traditional Mossi values might rehabilitate and unite a contemporary Africa plagued by dislocation and social conflict.

African Family Film Foundation



American Family Film Foundation, PO Box 630, Santa Cruz, CA 95061 is a nonprofit organization committed to bringing uplifting images

of African peoples to schools, community groups, public and alternative media. Their film projects are dedicated to providing the public with positive, enlightening and real portraits of Africans and their cultures.

Taale Laafi Rosellini, RPCV Upper Volta I '67-'69, is a filmmaker, founder and executive director of AFFF.

On the web at www.africanfamily.org, they currently have four films available in video:

Diro and His Talking Musical Bow

Color. 11 minutes.

Dance of the Bella

Color. 11 minutes.

Adama - the Fulani magician

Color. 22 minutes.

Great great great grandparents' music

Color. 105 minutes.

VIDEO MOVIES...



Notes from U.S. Ambassador Kolker



(Editor's note: The following are some random thoughts and impressions that were recently e-mailed to FBF from Jimmy Kolker, U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso. We hope to share his notes with you on a regular basis.)

My family and I were really delighted that FBF was able to make it to my swearing-in ceremony, and we appreciate very much the gifts that you left with us. My daughters wore their bracelets the rest of the evening, and all the gifts will be good reminders of the Burkina network around us. It was a great send-off.

Being Ambassador to Burkina Faso must be one of the best jobs in the world. I've been at it ten weeks and have been in what seems like perpetual motion. Recently a visitor asked, "Isn't there anything stressful about your work?" Well, there are some stresses, but fewer than most places!

One practice that has kept me calm is my determination to make at least one trip per week outside of Ouaga. Here are some recent highlights:

- Visited **Gorom-Gorom** on market day!
- Called on current Peace Corps volunteers in **Tengrela** and **Toma** (and **Bobo**, but that doesn't really count);
- Inaugurated Embassy-financed village self-help projects in **Souryala** (14km E of Sabse, Bam province), **Nionioro** (Boussouma district, Sanmatenga), **Lounga** (7 km from Imasgo, Boulkemde) and **Samsagbo** (a zillion km from anywhere, Komtoega district, Boulgou).
- Spoke at the graduation ceremony at the School of Eaux and Forests at **Dinderesso** (to rekindle the US connection) and to several Hunger Project villages in the **Nagreongo** district.
- Attended a celebration of karité (shea nut products) in **Bieha** (Sissili).

"...must be one of the best jobs in the world."

→ Sighted elephants at **Nazinga** and, more remarkably, by my count, a group of 23 elephants right along the Ouaga-Bobo road east of **Boromo!**

→ The most dramatic events of my first weeks concerned the coup in Cote d'Ivoire. Around 20 Burkina PCVs were spending their holidays there, and the largest group of them, 14, en route to **Sassandra**, arrived by rail at the Abidjan train station at the height of the tension, totally unaware that there was coup underway and a curfew imposed. They got in touch with PC/Ouaga, which notified PC/Abidjan, which dispatched a driver (on foot, since vehicles would be hijacked) to get them to accommodations. I called the State Department in Washington to be sure the Task Force knew they were there (they didn't). But all of the worry was unne-

sary: Within an hour, the resourceful volunteers found/commandeered a minivan taxi willing to take them and their gear (for a mere 40,000 CFA!) 5 km to the overfull Peace Corps hostel, where they pitched their tents and waited a few days for the all-clear signal.

→ It has been a source of great delight that several Friends of Burkina Faso have been in touch with me since my arrival. I was able to take the one who has made it to Ouaga so far, **Mead Over**, to the "new" Ricardo's, on the far side of the Barrage, where the current owner, **Richard Julia**, son of the proprietors of the original bistro on the barrage's near side, claimed to remember Mead from the '60s! Since Richard is married to **Paulina**, the Embassy nurse since 1986, adored by all, it was a warm homecoming.

P.S. Speaking of memories, one reason I wanted to get to Ouaga in 1971 was the French hit single "**Sur La Route de Ouagadougou**". Anyone out there remember it? Tracking down that song would make an article worth writing for the next newsletter. The tune still goes through my head when the name of my new home town is mentioned!



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PEACE CORPS

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The short-sleeved shirts are 100% cotton, pre-shrunk beefy-T, natural muslin-colored fabric. The tote bags are also cotton, natural, roomy and hefty. Our famous design (above) is four-color: brown, black, rust and green. Note that a handy proximity map is found in the Baobab tree! T-shirt sizes are XL and L.

To order your shirt or tote, please complete the form below and send with a check to:

FBF, C/O BOB OSBORNE, 539 NORTH CHIPMAN, OWOSSO, MI, 48867

Please make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ZIP: _____

HOW MANY: T-SHIRTS: XL _____

T-SHIRTS: L _____

TOTE BAGS: _____

PRICE PER SHIRT: \$16

PRICE PER TOTE: \$20

(PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING)

BOOK AWARD NOMINEE!

Read it before the movie comes along! We're proud to announce that Michael Patton's Burkina-inspired book, Grand Canyon Celebration: A Father-Son Journey of Discovery, has been nominated for the Minnesota Book Awards, chosen from over 250 entries.



SEND YOUR CHECK FOR \$19 (INCLUDES SHIPPING) TO MICHAEL AT
3228 46TH AVENUE SOUTH, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55406.
FOR EVERY COPY SOLD, FBF WILL GET \$5.

BOOKS, TEES & TOTES...

ANNUAL REPORT 1999 *by Bob Osborne, President*



We referred to 1998 as a “**transitional**” year in that Annual Report, as Friends of Burkina Faso began to reemerge as an active entity after several near-dormant years. The past year has seen a continuation of the transition, as we have moved slowly in several key areas. However, in some other areas, we have made some significant advances. Let us look at the good news first.

THE BURKINA CONNECTION

In 1999, **Denny FitzPatrick**, '67-69, took over as editor of the “Connection” and transformed it into a far better, more professional publication. For the first time, we may actually realize our long time goal of producing a quarterly member newsletter. Further, he arranged for non-profit bulk mail status, which significantly reduces mailing costs. Perhaps most significantly for the long term, we now have an assistant editor, **Andrea Joseph-Adams**, '79-80, who takes some of the burden off the editor.

FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

1999 marked the first full year of FBF's **501 (c) (3) status**, which gives us official status as a charitable organization not subject to taxation, and capable of granting its donors income tax deductibility for any contributions. Donations are still small in total, but we began to experience more interest from more members in 1999, and this could serve as a base to build on.

Product sales (t-shirts, tote bags) continued, and ideas for significantly increasing sales began to receive serious

attention. We have hardly started to exploit our extremely attractive logo, but we should start doing so this year. We have discussed more active and creative marketing, including “tweaking” the digital-based logo format to sell variations on our standard format to non-Peace Corps members, as well as other African “Friends of...” groups.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

At the 1999 National Conference of the **National Peace Corps Association** in St. Paul, MN, Friends of Burkina Faso had an official presence for the first time. We had eight members present for several functions, and **Michael Patton**, '67-'69, helped lead some of the writing sessions. Again, this is a good start, and we hope to build larger attendance in future events.

OTHER EVENTS

Friends of Burkina Faso sponsored no other major social or cultural events in 1999, beyond those of the NPCA conference, but we did have an official presence at the swearing-in ceremony of **Jimmy Kolker**, the new U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso. FBF was represented by President Bob Osborne and Treasurer Holland McKenna, as well as by members Marianne and Alexandre Bambara.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Three issues still need addressing. First, our leadership remains **too old and too male**. FBF needs more women and younger members generally to get involved. Andrea's recruitment is a start, but only a start. Secondly, we did not develop a consistent policy or plan for identifying and developing **assistance projects** in Burkina Faso. We now have the legal status to move forward in that regard, but someone must step forward to lead that action. Finally, we hoped to have an active **web site** implemented in 1999, but that goal fell short. **John Sneed**, '67-69, has begun working on it, and we hope to have it operational soon.



AIDS in Africa

from Detroit Free Press - February 13, 2000

U.S. steps into the lead

It's not every day that the United Nations Security Council holds a meeting on a health care crisis, but it did this week to discuss the AIDS catastrophe that is devastating sub-Saharan Africa.

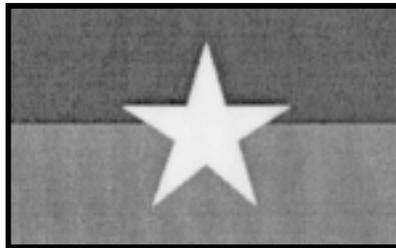
The sheer magnitude of the AIDS problem there has made it an issue not only of health care, but international security. Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is wise to use his term as Security Council president to raise the world body's awareness of this tragedy.

AIDS has decimated the economy and social fabric of Africa. It has taxed already poverty-stricken health systems, robbed countries of their most productive members, and left more than 10 million AIDS orphans. High AIDS death rates among Africa's elite, including public servants, threaten the ability of some countries to govern effectively. The high infection rates among police and armed forces have left African countries ill-equipped to face security threats.

Chairing the Security Council meeting, Vice President Al Gore astutely noted that governments must consider the epidemic a threat to African peace and make fighting it a world priority. The Clinton administration is seeking \$325 million from Congress - \$100 million more than last year - for vaccine research, prevention programs and new education campaigns in Africa.

That's the kind of commitment needed to combat this international crisis. This week, the United States showed leadership that has been sorely lacking. Members of a smart and compassionate Security Council would follow.

(Editor's Note: FBF member Mead Over, '67-'69, has published numerous articles addressing the economic and governmental issues regarding AIDS and African development. He is a senior economist with the World Bank Policy Research Department. He promises us a report in a future issue.)



L'Affaire Zongo

compiled by Andrea Joseph-Adams

Seeking resolution

An article by San Francisco Chronicle foreign service correspondent, Ursula Singenberger, 2/19/00, provides an update into the inquiry surrounding the 1998 death of Norbert Zongo, chief editor of L'Independant, a weekly paper published in Ouagadougou. Zongo had founded the paper in 1993 and he had used the publication to openly criticize the government of President Blaise Compaore.

Zongo had written a series of articles denouncing François Compaore, brother of the president

and a man believed to be excessively brutal in his "vaguely defined" job as "head of mission to the presidency." In what many people believe was the final motive for Zongo's murder, Zongo was openly asking, in late 1998, why there had been no investigation into the death earlier that year of David Ouedraogo, Compaore's driver. Ouedraogo had been accused of stealing, was subsequently arrested by the presidential guard, and died while in custody.

At Zongo's killing, violent protests broke out in Ouagadougou and Koudougou, Zongo's hometown, and independent daily newspapers stopped publishing. To appease the protestors, the president formed the Independent Inquiry Commission and promised the country that Zongo's death would be fully investigated. A bombshell came on May 8, 1999, when the commission presented its report. Among the findings was the conclusion that Zongo "was assassinated for purely political reasons, since he practiced investigative journalism." Six of the presidential guards were listed as likely suspects. The influential Council of Elders is calling for a "government of national unity and truth commission" as a means of resolving the crisis.

In the meantime, L'Independant has a new chief editor, David Sanhouidi, and the weekly's circulation has increased by about 5,000 to 20,000 since Zongo's death.

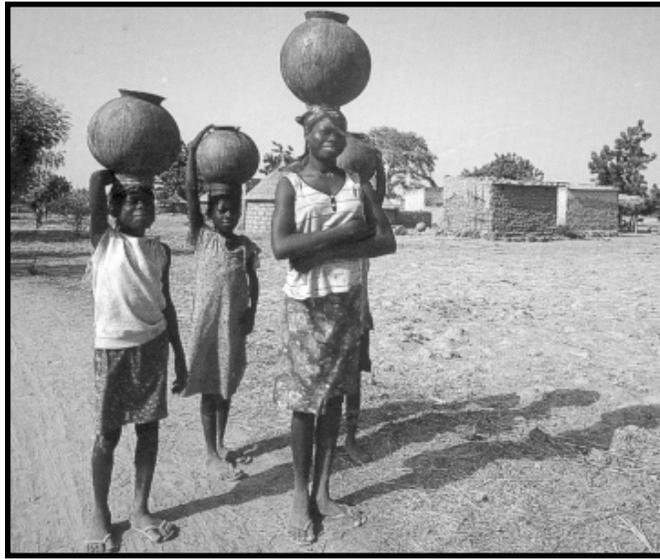


FROM THE NEWS...



Celebrating International Women's Day

by Naudia Bryan, Peace Corps Volunteer, Gonse



The suffering of women is an all too common theme in Burkina Faso and in the rest of the world. Women, as all PCVs know, are overburdened by all of their household chores. Moreover, their lack of empowerment results in an overall adverse effect on their health outcomes. The women in my village Gonse and throughout the world are heroines. All that they do in terms of their daily chores and beyond cannot be remunerated; however, we can use International Women's Day to let them know that we appreciate their courage, strength and patience.

The second week of March will be one big celebration in my village.

March 6 will be the first day of activities. Films will be shown to look at the mistreatment of women and at the importance of girls education. There will be discussions afterwards to see if the audience understood the messages of each film.

March 7 will be dedicated to women's health. There will be activities surrounding HIV/AIDS awareness. Family planning and female genital mutilation will also be discussed. The final activity for this day will be an artistic competition in which the participants will use theater, song or dance to show a message about women's subordination and/or strength.

March 8 will be a day in which women will have the opportunity to take part in activities that are usually designated as masculine. The first activity of the day will be a 14km bike race. Afterwards, the guests of honor will give brief speeches on the importance of this day and will urge the population to improve the treatment of women. Then the guests of honor will distribute the various prizes to the participants of the bike race and to the children at the primary school. Prizes will be given out to the children who wrote the best essays

on "Why is it important to send girls to school?". Also two girls with the highest averages in each grade of the elementary school will be given prizes.

"The women in my village...are heroines."

Thereafter, a culinary art contest will take place in which women will enter their best traditional dishes to be judged. Small monetary prizes and a few cooking utensils will be distributed to the women. Once these prizes are given out, there will be

a reception ceremony for the guests of honor. After the ceremony, there will be a women's soccer tournament. The final activity for this day will be a dance. The profits from the dance will be used to pay the tuition and school supplies of selected girls for the upcoming academic year.

Although I don't know how much of an impact all of these activities will have on the lives of women in my village, at least it will be the beginning of a dialog which will eventually lead to change. Therefore, I encourage all PCVs to do some activity, no matter how minute, in their respective villages for International Women's Day. If lack of funds is a problem, seek money from the COGES or from the parent associations or from pooling money. Du courage!



Everyday life in Burkina

(during training in Bobo-Dioulasso, August 1999)

by Cathy Seeley, Peace Corps Volunteer, Ouahigouya



Every now and then I realize how much I don't even notice any more about my life in Burkina. On my daily ride to school/training, I routinely pass dogs, goats, sheep, chickens, cows, and horses. Usually, I can avoid running into them with my newly developed bicycle skills. Then there are all the smells of things the street vendors are cooking—corn (not sweet corn, more like field corn grilled on an open fire), meat (I try not to think about particular animals I have just passed on the street), fried plantains (sometimes quite tasty), fried dough in various forms (I haven't really gotten into that yet, much to my surprise), and, of course, grilled caterpillars (thank heaven they have a short season).

I'm getting pretty good on my bike, and I can even ride pretty fast sometimes. I love my rear-view mirror. I know most of the huge trenches in the roads. My path consists of a very short segment of paved road, a school-yard soccer field, and several dirt roads with lots of ruts (and mud if it's rained recently). Soon I will put a light on my bike, and I might even try it after dark. We have gotten stuck at meetings a couple of times and had to ride home in rapidly falling darkness, which was a little terrifying even knowing the roads.

I've lost 30 pounds, what with not having a McDonald's apple pie every night on the way home from work, and what with not eating unconsciously out of boredom, and what with having many new food challenges, and what with riding my bike every day, and what with sweating so much. With "riz-sauce" (rice with sauce) getting repetitious, since I have it 5 to 7 times a week, my roommate, Kristi, and I made an allegedly American meal for our family a little while back. It was pretty funny, especially trying to deal with the unfamiliar kitchen, utensils, etc. and making do with what we could find at the stores here. The menu was grilled cheese sandwiches (on baguette slices), tomato soup (from an African mix), guacamole (avocados are everywhere here), mashed potatoes (from

some pretty old potatoes and some really icky margarine), and fruit salad (the mangoes add a nice touch). The meal was a huge success, but then our host family is pretty supportive.

I have many Burkinabe friends here, especially within the family and among the trainers. I like that a lot. We had a get-together for the families and trainees and trainers last night, with lots of dancing and comaraderie. I think I may have a more active social life here than I did in the US!

Latrine adventures continue. The other night, I dropped a whole brand-new precious roll of toilet paper down the hole by mistake. I generally worry about dropping in my

flashlight, my tappettes (flip-flops), or my glasses, but I hadn't thought to worry about the TP. Now I do. Life goes on.

Last night on my way back from the latrine at midnight, I stopped to look at the sky. There was a lot of

moonlight and the stars were really bright without city lights. And then I realized that I'm in Africa, on the other side of the world from my friends and family. Sometimes in the daytime, too, I find myself sitting outside, doing something ordinary like reading or writing, and then I remind myself I'm in Africa. It's both amazing and ordinary. I live my life every day, and it doesn't seem like any special challenge, and then I remember that my life is very different from what it used to be, and different from what it will be again in a couple of years. I'm living and working in Africa. Wow.

(Editor's Note: Cathy is a first-year education volunteer in Ouahigouya. She has put up a wonderful website: msnhomepages.talkcity.com/VolunteerSt/cathyseeley/ with essays, photos, recipes, and lots of other interesting Burkina-related links. Be sure to check it out!)



PEACE CORPS...





FBF attends Summit on Africa

FBF President Bob Osborne attended the National Summit on Africa in Washington, DC in February.

The Summit is diligently working to change Africa's profile and elevate its status in the United States. Apart from media coverage of human conflict and humanitarian crises, Africa remains invisible to the vast majority of Americans.

The Summit has embarked upon a mission to create a shared policy agenda to guide U.S. relations with the countries of Africa, educate the American public about the continent, and broaden and strengthen the network of Africa's supporters in this country.

Here is Bob's report:

The National Summit on Africa was the culmination of several regional conferences held during the previous year. My major problem with the Summit is that it was way too expensive for an event that billed itself as geared to a lay audience.

Anyway, that said, I was able to meet several interesting people and hear a lot of different views. As a delegate from Michigan, I was able to participate in the official position debates, and my personal interest was in sustainable economic development.

The various discussion sessions covered some great subjects, including desertification in the Sahel, African art and culture, promoting grassroots development, the state of democracy, microcredit and many others. Unfortunately, many sessions had too many speakers who often droned on, but when "Q & A" time arrived, things usually got quite lively and interesting.

The best times for me came from listening to Andrew Young at the Friday night banquet (he is a very compassionate and inspiring person, dedicated to Africa), and meeting up with Burkina Faso's Ambassador to Washington, Bruno N. Zidouemba. Just before he had to hold a press interview, we had a few minutes to chat and discuss increasing contacts between FBF and his embassy.

Despite my serious reservations about the Summit's cost and disorganization, these are fixable problems, and I sincerely hope that it will become a regular event. Certainly a biennial national conference is workable and desirable. I wholeheartedly echo the words of Mansour Seck, Senegal's Ambassador to the United States (another very interesting speaker): "You can't just have a five-day event. We have to have a concrete follow-up, we Africans and you Americans". 



Let's go to Burkina!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

MID-JANUARY to MID-FEBRUARY, 2001



If you think there's a chance you might go with us on FBF Return to Burkina II, be sure to contact Bob Osborne by April 15, 2000 with an indication of interest.

Lost and not yet found:

The following folks have moved and the Postal Service is unable to forward! So if you know anyone on this list, please have them get their new address to us. Thanks!

**Ed Becker
Evon Bradley
Christine Bergmark
Alex Ann Cambon
Lorna (Fuller) Carranza
George Deikun
Walt Fegley**

**Whit Garberson
Mark Gilcrest
Bonnetta Hubbard
Steve Kester
Denise S Kinch
Barbara M Kooiman
Roger Lutts**

**Ann Connell Parker
Philip/Paula Donnelly-Roark
Mark Walker & Tia Rudd
Gene & Jean Sheldon
Rob Stevens
Steve Taylor
David & Claudia Witzel**

Letters and news from members...

An invitation from the editors:

We encourage you to communicate with us! Share with us your letters, short stories, clippings, work, tales, news about members, recipes, whatever. Write, e-mail or fax... the addresses are on the cover!



Re-connected with Ned

Just finished reading our most recent issue of Burkina Connection. We were quite impressed with your new format. Mike and I would qualify as “vieux” since we were in Africa '73 to '76.

What really caught our attention was the article about Ned Seligman. Ned took the photos at our wedding in Ouaga, then met up with us in Venice, Italy to present us with our wedding album. We traveled together through Northern Italy until we parted in Barcelona, Spain. During that trip he hooked us up with a great room in Marseilles that turned out to be a brothel.....It's nice to have an address for him again.

Besides the stories you present about Africa in the newsletter, I find stories of RPCV's very interesting. Two people I know personally still travel to Africa for business (**Alex Brown**) or live in Africa (**Roger Bloom**). People might be interested in their stories.

Keep up the good publication.

Sincerely,

Reesa Compton, '73-'76

Anacortes, WA

Pride Africa

My ole hole punching friends, God, do you guys all look so old! I am still a trim 215 lbs and growing down, after 12 years here in Nairobi.

Browse the website **prideafrica.com** to see how banking and introducing the internet has become my new incarnation. PRIDE AFRICA has programs in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and Malawi. 60,000 plus clients strong and a vision for a million. Most satisfying is the development of a Pan African Group, now some 350 people, which shows great promise of continuity and sustainability.

Best to you all, and remindful of trees that walk in the night,

Jonathan Campagne, '67-'69

Nairobi, Kenya

Former Ambassador Easum

I congratulate all of you on your splendid Fall/Winter issue of the Burkina Connection. It's a truly professional piece of work and should importantly buttress your and others' efforts to bring attention and development resources to a country ill-served by fortune.

I was pleased to see the column on Ned Seligman, whom I will be visiting the last week of May in São Tomé if present plans materialize. I also plan to visit Ambassador Kolker in Burkina during the first week of June, reaching Ouagadougou by way of Abidjan from São Tomé.

With warm wishes to you all,

Don Easum,

U.S. Ambassador to Upper Volta '71-'73
New York, NY

A friend at State

A mutual friend of ours, **Doug Kinney**, '67-'69, left the Foreign Service a couple of years ago, but is back at State on a contract running crisis management scenarios. Doug's wife, **Stephanie**, served with me in Copenhagen, when she was not medically cleared to go with Doug to Chad.

Best to everyone,

Jimmy Kolker,

U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso
Ouagadougou, BF

ABASUS

Thanks, I received the extra copies of the Connection and have distributed them.

A.B.A.S.U.S. (Association Burkinabe d'Amitié et de Solidarité avec les United States) is still alive and well. I'll try to send you a report for a future issue...

Très sincèrement et amicalement,

KIENTEGA Prosper,

Ouagadougou, BF

MAILBOX...



BURKINA CONNECTION 
 JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

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Burkina Connection



OUR MISSION:

Friends of Burkina Faso, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was established to:

- Maintain a network of returned Peace Corps Volunteers and friends of Burkina Faso
- Provide funding and assistance to support projects in Burkina Faso
- Improve social interaction, communication and information exchange
- Educate others about the country and culture of Burkina Faso

MAM PUUS YAMB BARKA WUSGO! (THANKS MUCH!)

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