

BURKINA CONNECTION



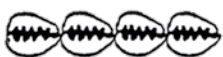
NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

2009 - No. 1



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 *Lawrence Diggs receives the National Fire Brigade's Fireman's Medal of Honor.*

DIGGS AWARDED FIREMAN'S MEDAL OF HONOR

by Lawrence Diggs, '79-'81

A few months ago I was contacted by FBF Board Member Suzanne Plopper who told me that the U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso was trying to contact me on behalf of the National Fire Brigade of Burkina Faso. They were in the process of planning their 30th anniversary celebration and wanted me to attend. It was also pointed out that they planned to award me the Firemen's Medal of Honor.

After a flurry of e-mails, I was able to contact the National Fire Brigade and an incredible adventure began to unfold. As the e-mails began to bounce back and forth I began to remember so many faces and experiences, though many of the names had long faded. I had many questions. What would the country look like? How many of my friends would still be alive? Who would I be able to find? What would they look like? What had their lives been like these past 30 years?

The plane ride was a long one that required

three connections (Minneapolis, New York and Paris) before reaching Ouagadougou. After a bit of hustle and bustle in the airport, the wonders of Ouaga began to flood my senses with sounds, smells and feelings that I had not experienced in the past 28 years.

On March 7, 2009, I received the Firemen's Medal of Honor with a gold star from the government of Burkina Faso as part of the 30th anniversary celebration of the National Fire Brigade. I also received a large bronze statuette of a stallion, the symbol of Burkina Faso. I received the honor for my help in setting up and training the country's first ambulance service when I was a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1979-1981. The service was then and still is a key component of the National Fire Brigade. The brigade is organized under the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, and the Ministry of Defense.

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To contact a member of the leadership team, please visit <http://fbf.tamu.edu>.



PRESIDENT'S YIRI

by Kristie McComb, '01-'03

Happy Spring to everyone! As it warms up around the U.S., let me extend another warm and heartfelt thanks to all of you who supported the Friends of Burkina Faso in the most recent GlobalGiving fundraising challenge. Though we didn't walk away with one of the top two \$15,000 bonus prizes, we did win a \$2,500 bonus after raising approximately \$11,500 for our school lunch program at the *College Moderne L'Amitié* in Tangaye. We are always grateful and impressed by the outpouring of support for our projects that our members, their friends and family give to us, especially during these nail-biting, time-clock-ticking, web-based competitions. So thank you again!

I hope that you'll enjoy this issue of *Burkina Connection* where we're recounting several special events from the reunion of a former Volunteer with the fire brigade he helped train in emergency medical techniques during his Volunteer service to the Peace Corps Community's participation in the Presidential Inaugural Parade. And we're getting ready for more special events to come...please mark your calendars for September 22-25, 2011.

In case you haven't heard, the Peace Corps will be turning 50 in 2011! And as you can imagine, the planning is already underway for the historic celebration. Both the Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) are gearing up to celebrate across the country; you can read about events and exhibitions by visiting <https://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.former.fiftieth> and <http://peacecorpsconnect.org/content/50th-anniversary-campaign>.

We have nominated two of our leadership team members, Dennis Haraszko and Lyndsey Wilson-Williams, to liaise with the NPCA in their official preparations. And we're

thinking about planning our own Burkina-specific celebration ourselves! Please consider serving on an FBF ad hoc 50th anniversary celebration steering committee. We're open to anyone with a connection to Burkina, especially those with creativity to help us envision, plan and orchestrate an event to remember! Please send expressions of interest to Lyndsey (fbf.npca@gmail.com) and/or Dennis (fbfcommunityrelations@gmail.com).

Are you connected? If you are not yet a member of Connected Peace Corps, the new virtual community for Peace Corps alumni that works a lot like Facebook, be sure to join now! According to the website, "Connected Peace Corps is *the* place online for people who value the Peace Corps to reconnect and work together toward a more peaceful and prosperous world."

With nearly 7,000 members, 250 groups and growing everyday, Peace Corps Volunteers, RPCVs and friends of Peace Corps are connecting every day to meet each other, discuss projects and jobs, and share stories unique to the Peace Corps experience. FBF has a page on the website and we'd love for you to become our friend. To join or start a conversation, please visit <http://community.peacecorpsconnect.org/group/friendsofburkinafaso>.

In closing, I'd like to express our sincere condolences to the family, friends and former Volunteers of the Reverend Roger Steven Taylor, a former Peace Corps Country Director in Burkina Faso, who passed away on February 23, 2009 while serving as the Senior Human Resources Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, China.

Enjoy the onset of summer and we look forward to connecting with all of you in many more ways over the coming months...

Kristie



 Kristie McComb



FIELD NOTES FROM DOUGLASS

by Douglass Teschner, Peace Corps
Country Director

As I write this at the end of March, the hot season is underway with most days reaching 40 degrees C. Having arrived just over a year ago, I now have experienced all the seasons so know better what to expect.

110 PCVs with Few ETs: Despite the cut in trainee numbers and the drop in Volunteer numbers in Peace Corps worldwide, we have more Burkina PCVs now than when I arrived last year. Peace Corps Burkina Faso has gone six months since the last voluntary early termination (ET). This is pretty exciting and a testament to the deep commitment of our staff and Volunteers.

Annual Strategic Plan: We recently submitted to Peace Corps Washington our annual strategic plan. Some of our priorities are to (1) continue improving language training including strengthening the tutor program at the village level, (2) provide more support to PCVs to positively address the food security crisis, (3) increase PCV work productivity (including more cross-sectoral training), (4) improve staff support of Volunteers, and (5) increase administrative capacity. We are proposing more staff to meet the above needs and are also requesting IT upgrades that will better support Volunteers in the use of the new computerized reporting tool and creation of a post website.

Growth Ahead? The most exciting news is that PC Washington is telling us that they are optimistic about increased funding and have even asked us to develop plans that could significantly increase the number of Burkina PCVs in upcoming years. The Ministry of Secondary Education alone has asked for 350 more teachers and, while we cannot meet that quantity any time soon, we hope to increase the number of teachers and perhaps develop a new Ag/Environment program.

Sesame: Through collaborative efforts led by our Small Enterprise Development APCD Dan Rooney, farmers in PCV villages are selling sesame to a major U.S. based sesame processor. Thus far, this relationship has resulted in sales totaling \$147,000 plus \$273,000 pending, and the expectation of \$210,000 in monthly sales going forward. We anticipate that this relationship could more than double Burkinabé exports to the U.S.

Guinea Worm Eradication Celebration: On December 18, 2008, I was invited to the Ministry of Health workshop celebrating the near elimination of Guinea worm in Burkina. Numerous people at the session told me that the work of PCVs was critically important in this effort. Congratulations to all RPCVs who were involved in that project!

RPCV Visitors: Last fall, we had a visit from RPCVs Bob Coffey and Charles Rodgers, who served in the well digging program in '67-'69. The two met with staff and we had a lively discussion about changes in PC/BF from then to now. Back then Peace Corps used to issue *motos* – now riding one can get you sent home! An even bigger change though is the impact of technology (remember not so long ago when there was no internet, satellite TV or cell phones?). I asked them how often they spoke on the phone with their parents and Charles responded, “Only once in the entire two years.” Our PCVs today all have cell phones and many receive calls from home once or twice a week.

In December, we received a visit from Robert P. Dunbar, M.D., who now teaches at the University of Washington. Bob served as a teacher in Bobo from '85-'87. He was in the last group before PC/BF closed down (we reopened in 1995). In discussions with the staff, we learned that two of his fellow PCVs back then were teachers of our staffers: Safety and Security Coordinator Harouna Congo and IRC Manager Armande Couliadiaty! Harouna is quick to show any visitor a faded, old report card with his PCV teacher's signature.

PCVs in Independence Day Parade: On December 11, 2008, eight PCVs marched in the 48th anniversary of independence parade held in Fada. The three hour parade was watched by numerous dignitaries and diplomats, as well as by thousands of Burkinabé, and was carried live on Burkina television. The Volunteers received a very warm response, including a friendly wave from President Blaise Compaoré seated in the reviewing stand. The eight PCVs also hosted a highly popular booth on the U.S. for two days prior to the parade. It was a great three days for PC/BF, and realization of the Peace Corps second goal.

Douglass Teschner
RPCV Morocco '71-'73





NUTRITION THROUGH MORINGA

by Ryan Gallagher, '07-'09

The Moringa Reseau of Ténado, a recently formed community-based organization, launched the Moringa tree initiative in 18 surrounding villages, thanks to seed money from the Friends of Burkina Faso. Moringa (*moringa olifeira*) is known as the “miracle tree.” Originally from India, the tree made its way into Africa where it thrives in hot, desert-like conditions. Its leaves provide a rich and inexpensive source of vitamins, minerals and protein.

The Moringa tree, when well protected from animals, can grow rapidly and regenerate leaves throughout the year providing a consistent nutritional supplement for malnourished children and their families. Just 30g per day (3 tablespoons) provide children with 100% of their daily vitamin A needs. This portion also provides 80% of children’s daily requirements for calcium, 60% of their iron needs, and 40% of their daily requirement for protein. The Moringa tree has many other diverse uses as well. It is a source for animal feed, natural fencing, cooking and cosmetic oil. The seeds can even be used to purify water!




The Moringa Reseau of Ténado has set a goal to plant 10,000 trees, making Moringa more accessible to the network of local villages. Currently, the Reseau is conducting a range of village-level educational trainings and is working to develop a small agribusiness enterprise through the production and sale of dried Moringa powder.

FBF helped the Moringa Reseau get started by funding a micro-plantation of Moringa trees for leaf harvest and a seedling nursery to grow small trees that can be planted throughout Ténado and neighboring villages. As activities continue to progress, the Reseau hopes to ramp up Moringa powder production with new drying sacks, and improved processing and packaging materials.

It’s such a simple way to tackle malnutrition problem that is endemic in these local communities. And if the villagers can generate some income at the same time, it’s a real win-win opportunity!

Stay tuned for future updates on the Ténado Moringa Project. We will have much more to report once the rainy season begins and tree planting hits full-stride.



-  Left: Densely planted Moringa trees in garden boxes.
-  Top: Moringa powder, hand pounded and sifted, packaged for sale at an exposition. Each bag sold for 500cfa.
-  Bottom: Moringa Reseau members sell the powder at a recent exposition.

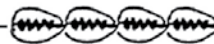


- ☞ *Top left: Country Director Doug Teschner with a village leader in Kompienbiga.*
- ☞ *Top right: Teschner takes a camel ride during a visit to Gorom Gorom.*
- ☞ *Middle left: Bibata Ouedraogo at home in the village of Bissegaye with her grandmother and her lamb funded through the Lambs for School Project. The yearly sale of a lamb and purchase of a new one will pay for Bibata's school expenses through secondary school.*
- ☞ *Middle right: Reading with an audience at the Niandorodougou library.*
- ☞ *Bottom right: Students sponsored by Omigbèfitè in the village of Loropeni.*



PHOTOS FROM BURKINA FASO





FBF BOARD UPDATES

Membership Update

For those of you who have been hoping to pay your FBF membership dues online, you can now pay for them on the Peace Corps Connect site when you join the NPCA at <https://secure.peacecorpsconnect.org/membership/application>. We hope to have an online payment option on our FBF website before the fall 2009 newsletter, but in the meantime, please consider supporting us through this interim online payment mechanism. And thanks to all of you who have already paid your 2009 dues!

Burkina Connection Update

The *Burkina Connection* is a biannual newsletter and a great source for information about FBF projects, updates from the FBF President, PC/BF Country Director and U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, and a chance for RPCVs to reconnect.

One way you can contribute to the commemoration of Peace Corps' 50 years of service is to write an article about your experience as a Volunteer in Upper Volta/Burkina Faso for an upcoming issue of the *Burkina Connection*. We plan to feature at least one RPCV per decade since the 1960s to show the evolution of Peace Corps' presence in Burkina. What has changed? What has stayed the same? What impact did your service have on Burkina? What impact did it have on you? If interested in sharing your story, please contact editor Nancy Weis-Sanfo at fbfnewsletter@gmail.com for more details.

Otherwise, please email Nancy any content. Photos must be 300 dpi and should include a caption. Submissions are accepted year-round, but the deadline for the next issue is October 1, 2009.

Finally, FBF is seeking a new newsletter editor starting in 2010. Preferably, the new editor could job shadow for the 2009 - No. 2 issue. If you are interested, please email Nancy with any questions.

Projects Committee Update

The Projects Committee would like to issue a call to those interested in submitting project proposals for possible funding in 2009-10. Guidelines for proposals can be obtained directly from the FBF website at <http://FBF.tamu.edu/projects.html>. The deadline for tendering submissions for this Fall is August 1, 2009. The subsequent Spring deadline is March 1, 2010.



FBF LISTSERV

- ❖ Are you looking for travel partners or travel tips for a return trip to Burkina?
- ❖ Do you want to locate long-lost Peace Corps friends?
- ❖ Are you recently-returned and looking for a mentor in your field?
- ❖ Do you have an interesting news article about Burkina to share with our members?
- ❖ Are you doing some exciting Burkina-related work that might interest our members?

If yes to any of these, our listserv is a great place to exchange information!

To join, please visit: <http://apache.tamu.edu/fbf/listserv.html>.

UPDATE ON FBF PROJECTS

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

FBF's most recently sanctioned project is the Moringa tree initiative. This exciting and ambitious initiative aims to provide an affordable means to improve nutrition in Ténado and surrounding villages in Burkina Faso. See the accompanying article on page 4 by Ryan Gallagher who is overseeing operations in the field for FBF and who has been serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ténado since December 2007 with his wife Sonia.

Below is a brief summary of recent developments and accomplishments of the four projects that FBF supported in 2008:

The Niankorodougou Library: Last November was designated as the reading competition month for 6th grade students in Niankorodougou according to Meghann Coughlin, FBF field manager of the Literacy and Library project in Niankorodougou. She wrote that all 6eme students were invited to participate by either sitting and reading at the library or by signing up as library members to take books home. After finishing a book, students would return to the library and give the librarian a short summary of the story and characters. Soumaila Ouattara won first place in the competition having read and reported on eight books. Soumaila's favorite book was *Afi et la Tambour Magique* because "it was interesting and had magic in it!"

Adelaide Schwartz, who replaced Coughlin after her Peace Corps service ended in 2008, says that the library is having a "phenomenal impact" on the community. It acts as a central location for all ages regardless of native tongue or reading level to congregate and interact.

The School Lunch Program at the Collège Modern de l'Amitié: Food prices skyrocketed this past year due to commodity inflation worldwide. While high food prices adversely affected household budgets in the U.S., it caused dire hardships in Burkina. Fortunately, the school lunch program at the *Collège Modern de l'Amitié*, partially funded by FBF, provided an opportunity for students at this middle school to focus on their studies rather than to worry about nutrition. The academic rewards were apparent: 81% of students passed national exams last year, qualifying them to continue on to the next grade level.

The Lambs For School Project: The Lambs For School Project, a program developed by NEEED (*Nimbus, Enfance, Environnement, Education et Developpement*), buys lambs and school materials for girls' first year schooling at the elementary level and requires parents to raise, sell, and purchase lambs to pay for their daughters' remaining primary and middle school needs. FBF's financial support of this project in 2008 enabled 300 young village girls in Tangaye and Oula Departments of Burkina to enter public primary school. This brings the number of girls who have entered primary school due to FBF's partnership with the Lambs program to nearly 1,500. An impressive 88% of girls supported by the project passed national exams last year, enabling them to go on to *collège* (middle school). Committed parents, NEEED's encouragement and support, and the girls' hard work have all contributed to the success.

Help Our Brothers: Omigbéfitè, loosely translated as "help our brothers," is an organization of 30 Burkinabé located in the village of Loropeni in south-central Burkina. Each of the adult members grew up as an orphan or in a single parent household. They formed their organization nine years ago to aid some of the younger orphans in the community. Omigbéfitè staff assumes important roles facilitating school registration, ensuring that students are equipped with basic school supplies, and watching over the academic and domestic well-being of the orphans they sponsor.

Recently, Social Services asked Omigbéfitè to sponsor 26 additional children this year, bringing the total currently under the Association's supervision to 38. One of the 13 students sponsored last year successfully obtained his Baccaularet degree and is now enrolled at the University of Ouagadougou. Ten of the 12 primary school students passed their exams and advanced to the next grade level. Two students are repeating their studies.

Omigbéfitè provided assistance to four young men enabling them to obtain valuable technical skills. The organization sent three students to gardening school in Bazega, another to a mechanical school in Ouaga. In addition, Omigbéfitè has provided support to five young women, enabling them to acquire marketable skills in sewing, hair-dressing and daycare.





THE JOURNEY BACK TO YALOGO

by Guy Fipps, '75-'77

Saturday, September 20, 2008: The Air France flight lands in Ouagadougou about 15 minutes behind schedule. An open air ramp is rolled out to the plane; the other passengers and I walk out into the warm tropical air, muggy from the passing storm which delayed our landing. The noise, smells and sights of this bustling city, the capital of Burkina Faso, bring back many memories.

It's been 30 years since I was here as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Then, I was a young man, on an adventure that would change my life. Then the country was called Upper Volta. Now, the country has a different name – what other changes, I wonder.

The Assignment: The U.S. government through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is funding an agricultural development project in the Sourou Valley in far western Burkina which will include the construction of a new irrigation scheme. The project will be implemented through the Sourou Valley Development Authority (AMVS), a Burkinabé government agency created 24 years ago. I'm part of a 6-person team here for the next 2.5 weeks to conduct a "water management audit" of the authority. The first week is spent in meetings with government officials.

The work week comes to an end, and Saturday arrives; my free day and the main reason I accepted this assignment. Today is the day I am going back to the village where I lived as a Volunteer.

I hire a car and a driver for the day. My driver's name is Ouatera, and he arrives at the hotel right on time to pick me up. However, Ouatera seems nervous. "There is a noise in the front wheel," he tells me in French, "I must take the car to the garage before we leave." As we drive to the garage, I hear the noise – definitely a bad bearing in the front right wheel.

The garage is down an alley, on a small, dirt lot, packed with broken down cars. We park in the alleyway, and Ouatera talks to the mechanic in the local language, *Mooré*. It's obvious that the shop is too busy today to work on our car. Finally, the car is pushed into shop area.

I sit on a metal chair in the shade and wait. I reminisce about all the fantastic festivals I

experienced. Traditional festivals of celebration, held during the cool season following harvest. The women and men dancing and singing in long, snaking lines, drums, masked men, *dolo* (the traditional beer made with red sorghum), and villages partying into the night.

I was a well digger. I worked with the men of villages to construct large diameter water wells. Most were the first and only permanent well in that village. A concrete lined well which would not cave in during the rainy season. The village women were happy – no more long treks to find water in the streams, mud ponds or lakes that often dry up during the long dry season. A safe drinking water supply free of the parasites and bacteria common in the surface waters in this part of the world.


Forty five minutes later the wheel is back on the car and we're off! Just half the day gone, perhaps there will still be enough time to complete my journey today.

Is it the Journey or the Destination? "So what am I looking for today? Is it the journey or the destination?" I wonder as we head northeast out of Ouagadougou. The Journey is to the village of my Peace Corps days, the remote village of Yalogo. However, the Destination for today is the present day village of Yalogo, as it is now called.

I do not expect to find Yalogo today. In my mind, Yalogo is almost a mythical place; the ancient village on the edge of the Mossi empire, located in the southern fringes of the Sahel. Yalogo, the village where three tribal groups meet and co-existed: the Mossi, the Gourmache, and the semi-nomadic Fulani.

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 One of the wells Fipps helped construct in Yalogo is still used almost 30 years later.

SHIVERING, WAVING, CELEBRATING!

by Kristie McComb, '01-'03

How did you spend Inauguration Day 2009? While it already seems like the distant past, I received the opportunity of a lifetime to represent the Peace Corps Community in the Presidential Inaugural Parade along with approximately 200 other RPCVs from every country where Peace Corps has ever had a presence. I was happily joined by two other Burkina RPCVs – John Waite and Pei Zei Lin.

Wearing five layers, three pairs of socks, a funny-looking furry hat, an inaugural commemorative scarf and a big blue “More Peace Corps” button, the cold still managed to seep into my clothing around 2pm as we waited indefinitely in front of the National Archives building for the show to start. Though we learned at some point during the afternoon that Senator Kennedy’s collapse was the reason for the significant delay, we didn’t lose hope or excitement for the moments ahead of us.

At approximately 5pm, just as evening was arriving in DC, we rounded the corner of 6th and Pennsylvania and tried to get ourselves in order for the 20 minute march ahead of us. Carrying large colorful flags of our countries of service, we were both an impressive sight and a motley-

looking crew. Though we tried to have some semblance of order to our marching, judging from the photo that made it into the *Washington Post* the next day, we were all over the place.

But what fun we had! Sadly, the parade route was not very crowded any longer with spectators at that hour (most had already been out in the cold since very early that morning), but there were a few hearty souls that stayed to watch and cheer us on. I can’t speak for everyone else but I was grinning and waving the whole time and miraculously, I forgot about my numb feet and freezing cold hands.

As we approached the presidential viewing stand, I think all of us abandoned the official warnings to make no sudden moves as we furiously waved and tried to catch the eye of our new President and First Lady who themselves were beaming from the excitement of the day. It was truly a great honor to be a part of that day in such a unique and honorable way.

Let’s keep up the hope that President Obama will follow through on his plans to expand the Peace Corps so that more Americans can both give of themselves and have the adventure of a lifetime well into the next 50 year history of this special program.



🔊 Kristie McComb '01-'03, John Waite '83-'86, and Pei Zei Lin '04-'06 pose with the Burkinabé flag before the Inauguration Day parade in Washington DC.



🔊 Obama supporters celebrate outside the American Cultural Center in Ouagadougou on Inauguration Day. (Photo by Douglass Teschner)





Fireman's Medal of Honor cont'd

During my service I helped organize the ambulance service, trained the first emergency medical technicians, designed equipment to be made locally, and coordinated the interface between the hospital and the new ambulance service. The service has grown from the original 40 men to over a thousand, and now includes women. I was elated to see that the service, which started with a couple of buildings in the capital, has grown to cover five cities, and well designed plans for expansion into every corner of the country are being implemented.

The brigade has also built a school to train firefighting personnel for Burkina Faso and all of its neighbors. I was included in meetings and discussions with military officers of the region about these plans and aspirations during my stay. I was especially happy to hear that one of the stated goals of this new school is to foster cooperation and friendships among the military units of bordering countries, who are in charge of their various fire brigades, with the hope that it will reduce the chance of war with their neighbors.

Receiving the medal was the high point of four days of festivities where I was introduced to various national dignitaries including the Minister

Back to Yalogo cont'd

Yalogo: I assume that the name of the village was changed from Yalogo to Yalgo at the same time the nation changed its name to Burkina Faso. I have the driver pull over a couple of kilometers outside of Yalgo so I can climb up to the top of what I called "Mount Yalogo." Not really mountain, but the highest point for miles around with dramatic vistas of the savanna and the lake that never dries up.

The land is spectacularly green from the abundant rain which has fallen during this usually wet rainy season, the lush vegetation masks the starkness that will slowly descend upon the landscape during the long dry season to come. The grass will first turn brown, then slowly deteriorate and blow away. The soil will turn a silty-grey color as the sun and heat bakes it into a hard crust.

The main road into the village has changed. Stalls and shops now crowd every inch along both sides, a testimony I suppose to the increased commerce that the paved road has brought. Sadly for me, these shops make the place seem

of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the Minister of Defense, the *Moro Naba* (Paramount Chief of the Mossi people), and various Burkinabé and French military officers. I was greeted and congratulated by Prime Minister Tertius Zongo. I was also a guest of honor at various events during the week including the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO).

The highlight of the trip for me was reuniting with my old students. While some are deceased and others have retired, many are still active and are now key officers in the fire brigade and other sectors of the military. I was also very happy to locate and reunite with adults whom I knew as children when I was living in Burkina. I was able to have nostalgic conversations with them and their parents and meet their children.

If you haven't been back to Burkina recently, I would encourage you to make the trip if you can. Even with all the new faces, it still maintains the old soul. I can be contacted at 605-486-4536 or vinegar@sbtc.net if you have questions or comments. Also visit www.ldiggs.com to see a short video slideshow of my trip.



unfamiliar, and block the once grand view of the village stretching down the hill.

I peer through the stalls, looking for my old bar. Then, the only bar in town, a tiny building with a single table. I became friends with the bartender, Tongande, who kept the beer and bottles of soda cool by storing them in clay pots filled with water.

Suddenly, my thoughts are jarred back to the present by the sight of a large diameter, concrete water well. Amazingly, there it is! One of the wells I worked on! It is still in use after 30 years!

I participated in the construction of 44 wells like this one during the two years I lived here. While greatly appreciated by the local population, these wells also changed my life. They inspired me to become a water engineer and led me to an amazing career and many grand adventures. Water wells like this one started me down a road that has now come full circle and brought me back home to Yalogo!

Editor's Note: This story has been edited for length. Please visit <http://gfipps.tamu.edu> under "Images & Trips" for the full version.



ADDITIONAL PROJECT UPDATES

by Suzanne Plover, '67-'69

New Contributors to FBF Projects

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to several new donors who have surprised us with generous contributions in support of the Lambs for School Project and the Noon Meal Project at the *College Moderne L'Amitié* (middle school for girls).

The third grade class of boys from St. Pat's B.N.S. in Galway, Ireland organized a pupil-teacher soccer match and charged 2 euro each to spectators. They netted a total of 773 euros for the Lambs For School Project.

Two staff members of **John Snow Inc.** (a health care consulting firm in Boston) contributed to the Lambs for School Project and the Noon Meal Project when the company president celebrated the company's 30th anniversary by giving employees \$500 to contribute to charity.

The Gathering, a group of women friends in Pennsylvania identified the Lambs for School Project as their choice of an "innovative and potentially life-changing" project they "were proud to support," and contributed generously to this project.

The Vermont Department of Education donated proceeds from their holiday party silent auction to the Lambs for School Project.

We also wish to express appreciation to the many faithful members and friends of FBF for your continued financial support of FBF Projects.

News from NEEDED

We share with you NEEDED's pride at being recognized by the Government of Burkina Faso for their work in community development, especially in the education of girls in the region.

NEEED a ete décoré à l'occasion de la fête nationale du Burkina le 11 décembre. Lors de cette fête, l'Etat témoigne sa reconnaissance à tout ceux qui se battent, à quelque niveau que ce soit, pour le développement du Burkina. La médaille que NEEED a recue à cet effet est avant tout la médaille de ces partenaires techniques et financiers.

MORE PROJECT UPDATES & MEMBERSHIP



Burkina
Connection
11

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- ☐ **I would like to renew my FBF membership for 2009 (\$15 a year).**
 - ☐ I would like to join the National Peace Corps Association (\$35 a year).
 - ☐ I would like to make a FBF Project Fund contribution of \$_____.
 - ☐ I would like to make a FBF Newsletter Fund contribution of \$_____.
- Total amount enclosed \$_____.**

Please mail this entire page with payment to:

Suzanne Plover

Treasurer, FBF

P.O. Box 395

Chester, CA 96020

Make checks payable to FBF. ❖ Contributions are tax-deductible. ❖ Puus baarka wusgo!

FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

- ❖ Maintains a network of RPCVs and friends of Burkina Faso
- ❖ Provides funding and assistance to support projects in Burkina Faso
- ❖ Improves social interaction, communication, and information exchange
- ❖ Educates others about the country and culture of Burkina Faso


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 *The Yalgo sign welcomes Guy Fipps 30 years after he left Yalogo. Fipps served as a well digger in Yalogo in 1975-1977. Read more about his visit on page 8.*

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within do not necessarily reflect the position of the Friends of Burkina Faso.



BURKINA CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO



C/O Suzanne Plopper
P.O. Box 395
Chester, CA 96020

