

BURKINA CONNECTION



JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

2004 - No. 2

Meet Up in Chicago August 6-7-8

MEET UP . . .



Friends of Burkina Faso and National Peace Corps Association 2004 Conference “Celebrating a Legacy of Service” — Chicago, Illinois — August 6 to 8, 2004 Celebrate NPCA’s 25th Anniversary

- Friday evening 6-9pm: FBF Ouaga Dinner at Bolat African Cuisine, 3346 N. Clark
- Saturday afternoon 3-5pm: Joint regional country update — Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone — at Palmer House Hilton
 - 5-5:30pm: Friends of Burkina Faso annual meeting
- Sunday morning 8am: Flags of all nations procession
- Chicago FBFers **Dave Thomas** and **Elizabeth Ralyea** will be our local contacts
- Register online and get more info at www.rpcv2004.org





OUR MISSION

Friends of Burkina Faso, Inc.
 a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization
 affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association

- Maintain a network of RPCVs 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

FRIENDS



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The President's Yiri

This is indeed a special issue of the Burkina Connection, as it contains the Ballot for the 2004 election of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Burkina Faso. This truly marks the passing of the torch from the older members, who founded FBF in 1987 and have basically run the organization for the past 17 years, to a new generation of leaders who have proved their mettle, either through their immediate past service in some FBF function, or in their work and activities since leaving the Peace Corps.

I'm very excited for this moment, and I'm very proud of these candidates, and feel that the organization we all love so much will pass into good and capable hands. We "old guys" have much to be proud of, as FBF is thriving and fast becoming the envy of many other Country of Service groups who hope they can emulate our success. But time moves on, and the new folks must have their turn at the helm. So please, please, please do your part and participate in this election. Demonstrate that the new Board has the backing of a substantial share of the general membership.

And remember, your dues need to be paid up for you to be eligible to vote. See the Ballot instructions on how to make sure your voice is heard.

NPCA 2004 National Conference

The National Peace Corps Association is holding its 2004 National Conference in Chicago, August 5-8, and I want to encourage as many as possible of the FBF membership to come to this wonderful city and participate in the event. This need not cost you too much, as Chicago's centralized location makes it readily accessible at a reasonable price from virtually anywhere in the country. You can share rooms and eat cheap, and we'll figure out easy ways to get you around and involved in the meetings and activities. FBF will be very active, as usual, so you can meet some new friends, share a meal at a West African restaurant, and possibly find some of your Peace Corps colleagues that you haven't seen for years.

Registration can be made at the NPCA's website, and you can track who's registered so far, and see what specific plans FBF has made. The Palmer House Hilton is the conference headquarters hotel, ideally situated in the heart of Downtown Chicago. I hope many of you will make the effort and make it here. I guarantee you won't regret it.



Bob Osborne

Last Musings and Ramblings

If all goes according to plan, this will be my last Yiri, and the next President will take over this column, which has been written since FBF's inception, in the next Burkina Connection. I will probably feel a little nostalgic, but not too much, as I fully realize that the burn-out factor has crept in, and it's time for the change to take place. My Foreign Service tour in Lagos, Nigeria was successful, and while here in Washington for some further training, I'm reacquainting myself with the US and preparing for my next tour at the Embassy in Dakar. I'll be a management officer there, and perhaps will be able to put some of my past career experience to work. I'm also adjusting to my new life as a husband, as shortly before leaving Lagos I wed Betty, my new wife and a lovely and charming Nigeriane. We're looking forward to the new challenge in that terrific city.

Finally, this is just a reminder that I won't be too far away, as, thanks to a change in the FBF Bylaws last year, my immediate predecessor, John Sneed, and I as past President, will serve for the next five years as Ex Officio members of the Board. That means we can't vote, but we will serve to preserve some institutional memory.

So, farewell to all, and I'll see you in Chicago. And by the way, you all have an open invitation to our Dakar digs, so come visit.



YIRI



Field notes from Tony



Tony Holmes
U.S. Ambassador

Here are some excerpts from the press release that we did for the upcoming science and technology conference. The focus is on increasing agricultural productivity and reducing hunger.

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2004 - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today

announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will co-host with the government of Burkina Faso a regional science and technology ministerial conference June 21-23 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, for 15 West African countries.

"This conference is an opportunity to share information on technologies, policies and partnerships to increase agricultural productivity in West Africa," said Veneman. "In a supportive policy environment, science and technology have the potential to help reduce hunger, improve nutrition, elevate living standards and unleash the productive and economic potential of African economies." The conference is titled "Ministerial Conference on Harnessing Science and Technology To Increase Agricultural Productivity in Africa: West African Perspectives."

Scheduled speakers include President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, President John Kufuor of Ghana, President Amadou Toumani Toure of Mali, President Mamadou Tandja of Niger, Burkinabè Minister of State and Minister for Agriculture Salif Diallo, other ministers of African governments, and officials of USDA, the U.S. Agency

for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of State, among others.

Workshops will focus on four central themes, including water management, biotechnology and biosafety, public-private partnerships, and regulatory policies and frameworks that will support efforts to increase agricultural productivity, technology transfer and economic growth in Africa. The conference will support the Presidential Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, the Water for the Poor Initiative and the Trade for African Development and Enterprise Initiative.

Some 300-400 invited participants are expected to attend, including ministers and other officials from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. In addition to government ministers of agriculture, environment, and science and technology, representatives have been invited from international and regional African organizations, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and several African and U.S. universities.

The conference is co-sponsored by USDA, the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the Burkina Faso Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Fisheries Resources. Advisory support is being provided by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

Additional information about the conference is available on the Internet at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/stconf/event6.html>.

Cheers, —Tony.



FBF Projects Update

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

Once again, our sincere thanks goes out to all of you who have contributed to FBF-supported projects. We have received \$16,994 earmarked for development projects since Thanksgiving, with \$8,772 flowing into our kitty as a result of the December fundraising campaign. Not only have individuals within our small community made very generous contributions, but some have contributed considerable time, energy, and creativity in spreading the word about FBF projects, resulting in a variety of interesting and productive fundraising activities.

One of our members, **Patti Thomas** (1977-80) who now lives in Quebec, earlier this year proposed to her 12 year-old daughter's schoolmates the idea of fulfilling a class task by undertaking an educational and fundraising project in support of FBF's *mouton-école* scholarship project. The students of **l'École des Ursulines de Québec** took on this project with great enthusiasm and amazing results, as you can see in their article on the next page: *Les Moutons de L'Espoir!* Through their efforts, they raised nearly \$4,000 Canadian for the Lambs Project. Patti assisted the students' efforts with information about Burkina and schooling in the Tangaye region.

Meanwhile, a "sister school" in Montreal learned of the students' activities in Quebec and decided to partake in a similar educational and fundraising activity in support of the Lambs Project. These students recently sent FBF \$1,260 Canadian for the support of the primary education of young girls in the Tangaye Region. The activities of the students of the **Pensionnat Notre-Dame-des-Anges** are described in their article on page 8.

We are extremely grateful to the teachers and students of both of these primary schools for their initiative and commitment to supporting the education of young

girls in Burkina. Their combined efforts will enable approximately 93 girls to enter primary school next fall!

Here's an update we just received from the Lambs Project:

"Une bonne nouvelle concernant nos filles. L'année scolaire vient de s'achever et le bilan est très positif.

Toutes nos filles du projet "mouton-école" ont bouclé leur année scolaire avec succès. Elles passent toutes en classe supérieure. C'est très encourageant pour NEEDED et cela nous pousse à aller de l'avant."

Others in our small community have also been at work promoting FBF's outreach program. Recently, **Jill Hurwitz** (1976-79) requested friends and family to donate money to FBF projects in lieu of birthday gifts commemorating her 50th. **Jim Hyde** (1967-69) distributed a photo CD of Peace Corps to volunteers serving with him during the "early years" and encouraged donations to be made on behalf of FBF projects.

Art Westneat (1969-74) and **Peggy Hausman** (1974-76) have just established an FBF account with "Team in Focus" (TIF), enabling persons interested in supporting Friends of Burkina Special Projects (FOBF-SP) via internet shopping to purchase "quality, often unique, products." Either 5 or 15 percent of the product purchase price is rebated to us, depending upon how people register in the TIF program. For more information about this opportunity, as well as latest news stories and links to many Burkina web sites, visit Art's webpage at <http://home.quixnet.net/~westneat/>. Check this one out!



Tom Vollrath

PROJECTS





Les Moutons de l'Espoir

— Les jeunes filles de l'École des Ursulines de Québec



crayons, etc.). Nous avons ainsi récolté la somme de \$ 2,531.10.

Pour finir, on a offert aux élèves de toute l'école de se priver de dessert lors du repas à la cafétéria. Grâce à l'aide des 390 élèves qui se sont proposées, nous avons pu amasser la somme de \$136.50.

C'est ainsi que la générosité des jeunes filles de l'École des Ursulines de Québec a permis de recueillir près de \$4,000, permettant

Depuis le début de l'année scolaire, à l'École des Ursulines de Québec, des jeunes filles de 6e année ont coiffé leur chapeau d'entrepreneure: quatorze d'entre elles ont mis sur pied un projet d'entraide intitulé LES MOUTONS DE L'ESPOIR! Le but était d'organiser une collecte de fonds pour permettre à des jeunes filles du Burkina Faso de faire leur cours primaire, tout ceci au profit de l'organisme NEEDED.

Tout d'abord, elles ont informé toutes les élèves de l'école sur la situation de l'éducation au Burkina Faso. Chaque classe était invitée ensuite à déposer des dons dans des tirelires. La somme de \$1,130.05 a été recueillie ainsi.

Puis, les jeunes filles ont participé à l'organisation d'un magnifique bazar en ramassant des objets et en fabriquant des produits dérivés à l'effigie du mouton (signets, aimants, foulards, porte-

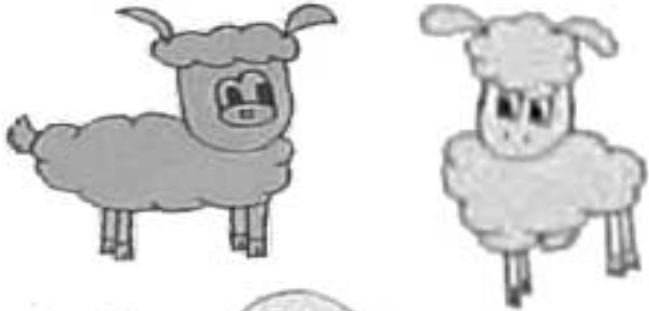
par le fait même à 65 filles du Burkina Faso d'aller à l'école et de faire leur cours primaire!!!

Cela dit, les élèves du projet LES MOUTONS DE L'ESPOIR ont éprouvé beaucoup de plaisir en s'impliquant dans cette cause. Elles ont été touchées par la situation des jeunes filles au Burkina Faso. Elles espèrent avoir pu les aider par ces petits gestes simples. Enfin, elles ont développé leur leadership, leur créativité et leur confiance!

De la part de toute l'équipe du projet défi: MOUTONS DE L'ESPOIR !

— Stéphanie Auger, Jessica Beaudoin, Catherine Bowen-Gouin, Roxanne Chamberland – Bégin, Maude Clusiaux, Claudine Després, Sandrine Garceau, Marie-Kim Gros-Louis, Catherine Jobin, Laurence Laberge-Plante, Daphné Lavoie-Cantin, Camille Potvin, Florence Rousseau, et Chloé-Isabel Thomas-Drolet.

"Moutons de l'Espoir"



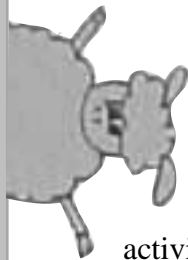
L'ESPOIR





Projet Mouton — Montréal

— Sylvie Quenneville, le Pensionnat Notre-Dame-des-Anges



Tout d'abord, je tiens à vous dire que nous gardons un merveilleux souvenir des deux activités que nous avons organisées pour le projet moutons du Burkina Faso. Lors du Carême, le service de la pastorale du Pensionnat Notre-Dame-des-Anges cherche à proposer des projets à dimension internationale aux élèves du primaire. Par le biais de Mme Anne-Marie Samson, animatrice de pastorale chez les Ursulines de Québec nous avons connu le fameux projet! Quel enthousiasme lorsqu'il a été présenté au comité de pastorale formé de trois enseignantes et de moi-même! Tout feu tout flammes nous allions élaborer deux activités qui nous permettraient de ramasser de l'argent pour nos petites amies du Burkina.

Première activité: une vente de desserts

Nous avons demandé à tous les enfants du primaire (plus de 500 élèves filles et garçons) et à leurs parents de cuisiner un dessert qu'ils auraient à diviser et à emballer en portion individuelle. Plus d'une centaine de famille ont mis la main à la pâte. À la date indiquée, les enfants ont apporté à l'école les délicieux desserts! À l'heure du dîner, une équipe super dynamique d'élèves et d'enseignantes a trié les desserts en deux catégories: les desserts à 25¢ et ceux à 50¢. Vers 14h30 alors que les élèves étaient encore en classe, une quinzaine de mamans bénévoles sont venues prêter

main forte à la vente des desserts. À 15h30 chacune était à son poste! (Des élèves avaient rejoint leur maman pour les aider à la vente). Prêtes? Prêtes! On ouvre les portes! Près de 2000 bouchées ont été achetées. Nous avons tout vendu! En 45 minutes, nous avons ramassé \$750!!! Ce projet a été fantastique! Le seul regret c'est d'avoir manqué de

desserts pour ceux qui sont arrivés plus tard. L'an prochain, nous doublerons les portions!

Deuxième activité: le dîner de la faim

Cette activité j'en suis très fière parce qu'elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de foi. Notre école est catholique et nous nous inspirons de la pensée de notre Église pour agir auprès des autres. Comme le jeûne est proposé aux chrétiens durant cette période, 150 élèves et une dizaine de membres du personnel ont décidé de se priver de leur repas habituel pour ne manger qu'une pomme, une tranche de pain et un morceau de fromage! Ils ont donné les 3/4 du coût d'un repas normal pour le projet mouton! Avec cette participation nous avons ramassé autour de \$500. Ce geste les a sensibilisé au problème de la faim dans le monde et leur a permis de se sentir solidaires face au partage des richesses. Au total, nous avons recueilli \$1260 canadiens. C'est un début! L'an prochain nous viserons le double! L'éducation de nos petites amies du Burkina Faso nous tient à coeur. Nous serons au rendez-vous en 2005. Bonne chance les filles.



RPCVs at Burkina Embassy

Washington DC-area RPCVs gathered at the Embassy of Burkina Faso in Washington, DC on May 7th to fête a recent donation to fund a solar power project in Bagaré. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, DC (RPCV/W) gives \$2,500 each year to a



Monica Ouedraogo, Mike O'Sullivan, Anastasia Hopkinson, Anne Knight, Keri Lowry, Angelique Moss, Jim Uschock

project of its choosing through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, which allows groups or individuals to review project proposals and donate money to them. This year the group decided to award its grant to a project proposed by Jeanne Lynch, a PCV in Bagaré, and the village's Parent Student Association (*Association des Parents d'Élèves*). The money will be used to purchase and install solar panels for the *lycée*, and provide training to *lycée* staff for the maintenance and repair of the panels. The Parent Student Association, who will contribute 25% of the overall costs for the project, will oversee the project and will be responsible for the replacement of bulbs and batteries. His Excellency Ambassador Tertius Zongo expressed his pleasure with the large turnout at the event and he singled out the Burkina RPCVs in attendance to thank them and their colleagues for all of the efforts they have put forth for his country.



FBF projects manual revised

Friends of Burkina Projects Committee members believe that an important key to the success of projects we support is funding activities that address locally-identified needs proposed by indigenous community-based organizations, and managed in partnership with non-governmental organizations and/or individuals with development expertise. And, we encourage recipients to “pass-on” the FBF gift in some meaningful way.

To help achieve our goals, the committee has developed new guidelines and procedures, and updated the FBF Projects Manual in an attempt to enhance communication and to build institutional capacity. The revised manual, which incorporates lessons learned over the past year, clarifies the roles and responsibilities of grantees, NGOs, PCVs, project managers, and committee and board members. We will gladly share this manual with anyone who expresses an interest. Copies are available in both English and French. We also welcome your ideas and involvement with FBF projects. Please let a committee member know of your interests and capabilities.



UPDATES





Candidates for FBF Board

Biographies and Qualifications of Declared Candidates



Molly Chambers

Burkina RPCV, 1999-01
Columbia, MO
(573) 268-0740
mollychmbers@
yahoo.com

Molly moved from DC to study microfinance and rural politics at the University of Missouri, where she finds the weather to be hotter than in Burkina. She has already passed her qualifiers, so she had time between semesters to say “Yes, yes, yes — sign me up as a candidate!”



John Dickey

Burkina RPCV, 1980-83
2622 Grambling Court
Davis, CA 95616
(530) 759-2247
j_dickey@pacbell.net

John was a PCV in agriculture in Pabre. He worked three more years in Burkina with a USAID agriculture project. Currently John is a soil scientist in California. He has been assisting the Projects Committee in streamlining the fundraising and mailing database.



Guy Fipps

Burkina RPCV, 1975-77
College Station, TX 77843
(979) 822-7471
gfipps@cox-internet.com

Guy was a well-digger in Yallogo. He is a professor and extension agricultural engineer at Texas A&M University, and director of their Irrigation Technology Center. He attended the FBF/NPCA conferences in 2002. He hopes A&M can help forward the mission of FBF.



Mike O'Sullivan

Burkina RPCV, 2001-03
Washington, DC
(202) 955-3455
mosullivan@chemonics.net

Mike was a community health PCV in Loropeni. Originally from Philadelphia, he's now back in DC working for Chemonics International. “Burkina will always be a special place to me — and FBF is an organization filled with people who feel the same way.”



Wende Smith

Burkina RPCV, 1977-80
7513 Marbury Road
Bethesda, MD 20817
(301) 320-4416
Wende.Smith2@verizon.net

Wende is an international trainer, with 15 years in human resources and over 25 years in education/training. She has worked in North and South America, Thailand, Mali, and Europe. Most recently she was International Director, Human Resources, SEK International Institute, Santiago, Chile.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING

ELECTION 2004

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

Vote now — Ballot on opposite side of this page

Please follow these instructions closely

Exercise your right as a member/stakeholder in FBF, YOUR organization

Voting is by **MAIL ONLY**:

- **Only members in Good Standing may vote.** This means that your regular dues must be paid up. You can tell if you're up-to-date by noting the date on your mailing sticker; if it's less than One (1) year ago, you're paid up and in good standing. If it's more than a year ago, then you can become instantly eligible by including a check for \$15, made out to FBF, in the same envelope as your Ballot.
- Vote for no more than Five (5) sections by marking (X) in the appropriate slot.
- You may vote for someone not on the Ballot by printing his/her name in the area(s) marked: () Write In _____. **However,** please note that each Write In counts as a selection, and must be included in your limit of Five.
- Marking more than Five (5) selections will disqualify your Ballot.
- Sign and print your name in the spaces provided. **Your vote will not count if you do not do so.** Your vote will be held secret, but we need the signature to ensure that no one double votes.
- Separate the two sections of the Ballot, and mail them together **in the same envelope** to either: Bob Osborne, 1814 North Oakland St., Arlington, VA 22207, or Denny FitzPatrick, P.O. Box 563, Grand Marais, MN 55604.
- Ballots must be received by Friday, July 16, 2004. Any received after July 16 **will not be counted.** If you need a replacement ballot for any reason, please email >dfitz@boreal.org<.
- The five top vote-receivers will be certified as soon as feasible after July 16, 2004, and will be immediately notified. In the event of a tie, the winner will be selected by a coin flip. The five winners will become the new Board of Directors of Friends of Burkina Faso, Inc., and they will then be responsible for selecting the appropriate Officers of the organization.



VOTE



OFFICIAL BALLOT

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2004

FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO, INC.

VOTE FOR A MAXIMUM OF FIVE (5)

Molly Chambers

John Dickey

Guy Fipps

Mike O'Sullivan

Wende Smith

Write In _____

Write In _____



**PLEASE DETACH THIS PORTION, PRINT YOUR NAME AND SIGN IT, AND
INCLUDE IT IN THE SAME ENVELOPE AS YOUR BALLOT.**

Print your name _____

Signed _____

Date _____



BALLOT



Surfin' safari by Andrea Joseph-Adams, '79-'80

Well, the long, cold, winter nights are over for the moment but these days we are heading to the basement with alarming frequency as the sirens sound. Say what you will about the Heartland, the weather is certainly exciting.

Surf's up! (Sadly, not really.) Is a picture really worth one thousand words? Check out these pictures of Burkina Faso as seen through the lens of diverse photographers.

www.alovelyworld.com/webbur/index2.html

Photos taken in several locations with charmingly translated English captions.

www.mangin.mon.fr/burkina

Great photos and if you click the music icon, the Burkina national anthem plays!

www.burkinabymatt.com

Matt McClure worked as a teacher in Kouka during 2001-2003. He shares photos he took while in Burkina and on his COS trip through Europe.

www.photosforpeace.org/gallery/burkina_faso

Inspired, the author says, by Goal 3 of the Peace Corps Mission - "Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans" - this site catalogues photos taken by PCVs and RPCVs. Photos are for sale and some proceeds supposedly fund projects in Peace Corps countries. Not affiliated with the Peace Corps.

www.dogon-lobi.ch

Fantastic site, full of fascinating photos and text. Plan on spending some time here; there's lots to see. Bilingual - French and English.

www.ditlafrica.com

On February 28, 2002, nearly 100 photojournalists had 24 hours to document the African continent. Their images are contained in a 288-page book titled *A Day in the Life of Africa*. The photos are available for viewing through the site's link to MSNBC.com. All publishing profits from the sale of the book will fund AIDS education programs in Africa.

www.freefromhunger.org

This organization, headquartered in Davis, CA, provides women in 16 countries with information about nutrition and family health, and cash for various microenterprises. There are photos of program participants in Burkina and other countries.

Wherever you go, there you are. Email me at <adamsfamily@kc.rr.com> and tell me where you've been. *Wend na kond laafi.*



Andrea Joseph-Adams

SURFIN'





As I see it — Peace Corps life

Debacles in Progress in a Rural West African Community Health Project

by Rachel Hill – current PCV Burkina Faso 2003-2005



Rachel *cherch*-ing water to make bricks, with her neighbor — and with her puppy Bobi (who was eaten by other neighbors at New Year's, much to her dismay)

The road to Sapouy is being paved, bringing modernity in its high and scary wake. The electricity that has caused orange electrical tubing to criss-cross the village like a connect-the-dots puzzle is pumped out of an enormous generator that if you are unlucky enough to live near, and by “near” I mean within a five mile radius, the normal, bucolic donkeys and millet pounding is drowned out by what sounds like really loud radio static with the volume turned high day and night.

Last night, after all was said and done, I wrote a glowing letter to my parents describing how, as Peace Corps always says it does, “it all worked out in the end.” I really felt like it had when I wrote the letter. Just for dramatic effect in the letter I practically had the road workers standing and chanting “C’est ma vie (clap-clap-clap), c’est ma vie (clap-clap-clap), je m’engage!” in recognition of the perils and responsibilities of living in sub-saharan Africa during the “AIDS crisis.” My mother needs to hear my enthusiasm to reassure herself of the reasons her daughter is in Burkina Faso for two years. I need the reassurance just as often.

My high last night didn’t come from the success of my first project as the relief that it was over. And that’s not to say that it was successful or that it was over. In fact, that was the first of four sensibilizations planned with the road company that set up base in Sapouy.

The new road cuts through the central market. Granted, Sapouy’s market is mainly a random layout of squatters and winding stands with seemingly little organization. But in the monotony of the three-day market cycle it actually has taken on some sort of order. Every vendor returns to his informal but known spot each market day. I can feel it now. It is ordered chaos. The tomato ladies sit in front of, a little to the right of, the used blue-jean vendor who shares his morsel of plastic with the flip-flop man. Soon the market will be moved to a brand spanking new plotted-out piece of land by the barrage. In March the new market will have beautiful views of the barrage and the chief’s tall, old mango grove which encircles the northern edge of the barrage. In June, when the rains hit hard and the barrage fills up, the market will be flooded. As for now, the trucks barrel through the new road spewing dust on the *benga* (bean) ven-

dors who now cover their entire table with a *pagna* (cloth wrap) and delve into it's depths each time they serve a customer. I've seen one pig., distracted with a mango pit, die under the wheels of the trucks. Each time a truck's dust plume rises in the distance, mothers scan the road and market for little kids and either scream at them to come quickly or run out and swipe them out of the path.

But back to my project. A couple of months back the nurses at the CSPA got into a heated discussion about the havoc wreaked on Sapouy since the road company came. *Buvettes* have sprung up this March and April like spring flowers. They are always lively, full of men tired after a very long day of work and looking to relax. A young girl came in for a pregnancy test a while back and when it came back positive, she ran away. In a couple of years there might be many young, single moms in Sapouy. The young fathers will have moved on to other road projects around the country. Many young girls come in asking for Depo-Provera shots which is a mode of birth control usually given to women who already have children. The girls are worried about pregnancy, which signals that they are having sex; but they are not concerned with disease. NGOs have already identified border and road connected communities as places of AIDS exchange. The "*Roulez Protégé* – Drive Protected" program is already in effect in most border communities working with sex workers and truckers. I see similarities in the road project in Sapouy. I believe the paved road into Sapouy has intravenously injected the village with sexually transmitted infections of all sorts. That is not to say that they didn't exist prior. The effects are not apparent right away but it won't be long. At the moment, diarrhea and malaria kill more Africans than AIDS. However, it is projected that in less than ten years, at the rate of infection, AIDS will take more lives than both those maladies together.

All the CSPA staff agreed that a sensitization of sorts would be a good idea.

Nobody had the time to help. I recruited the help of my good pals Salif and Thiambiano, who conveniently work for *l'Action Sociale*, the welfare office. To involve as well as to thank *l'Action Sociale*, I invited them all over to my house for dinner one night a week before the big first day. Every time I walk into the *l'Action Sociale* office there are four desks with four men who greet me enthusiastically. I like them all very much. The director is a bit serious but polite. Elvis drops whatever he is doing to greet me each time I walk in. I tease Thiambiano about being in the Burkinabè mafia with his Italian-esque name. Salif is the *l'Action Sociale* point man. I prepared *riz gras* and bought sodas for the four men and myself. That evening I cleaned my terrace, arranged the chairs and waited.

Thiambiano showed up first with a man on the back of his mobyette. He left the man on my terrace, taking off on his mobyette. He came back a while later with another man, depositing him and taking off. Two other men showed up on foot. A mobyette pulled up with two more. Thiambiano came back finally with his last passenger, making the total on my terrace twelve. Overwhelmed, I poured the soda into small goblets, ten centimeters high so everyone could have a bit. I served the rice in communal plates partly because I didn't have enough plates and partly to make the *riz gras* look more plentiful. When I invited "*tout de l'Action Sociale*," Thiambiano assumed that meant all of the satellite village agents and associates, not only the office staff. I informed them of the project asking for their opinions or advice. Most of the men could not speak French and my *Mooré* extends only to saying that I am learning *Mooré* — I speak it a little — I try — "how much are the papayas?" Everyone politely ate my rice and left.

The crafting of a health education project must be done delicately. I see health promotion like business. You are trying to "sell" behavior to people who don't really think they need to change. A good preven-

(continued on next page)

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tative health worker needs to have the determination, the tenacity, the suaveness, the thick skin and the endurance of a salesperson with a foot always in the door wearing a smile. It's exhausting. I am terrible at it. I can fashion the project to fit what seems like the constraints.

"Sure, you work all week and are tired. So come relax and watch a film. You don't make much money. Don't worry — it's free. You don't have a mobylette? The soiree will be in the primary school next to the market, central to all the workers."

There are over 200 road workers living in Sapouy. Assuming that only half of them came, we divided the sensibilization into four parts to occur on each of the four Sundays in April. The road company would provide the generator and the gasoline to run it. After gaining signatures aplenty from all of the important people in town, I "booked" a room in the market-side primary school. I posted fliers all over the village. For a week prior I acted as the human advertisement, even putting up with hassling flirts and beggars.

"Have you heard about the *soiree de cine et debat* concerning SIDA?"

"Oh yes, I have madam . . . or is it mademoiselle . . . ?"

"Um, wonderful. I hope to see you there."

"Will you give me *cent francs* if I go?"

"No, but the evening film and discussion is free."

"What will you give me if I go?"

Urgh . . . I want to shout. . . "I will give you information that might save your life, dang it!"

But most people seemed interested and willing. I was encouraged and terrified at the same time. I didn't care so much about the work I had put in to the project, but I didn't want to disappoint Salif and Thiombiano, and I wanted to prove to them, to the staff of the CSPS, and to myself that I could make this work.

In the back of my mind, the voices of Dee the Peace Corps training directrice and my health director Doctor Claude resonated:

"Make it sustainable . . . build capacity . . . give ownership."

I contacted several workers and found a group who seemingly were interested in coming for a "*formation des formateurs*" the Saturday before. I spent the day baking banana bread for the twenty-plus expected "*formateurs*," drawing maps with statistics and inspiring quotes from Kofi Annan.

I showed up an hour early. In the end, one person came. We snacked on the banana bread that he said was "too sweet . . . Americans like their food too sweet." We chatted about AIDS and the importance of informing the road workers, probably more just to soothe myself. He promised he'd show up the next day for the first *soiree de cine-debat*.

He never showed up. But four other road workers did. And they came an hour early. It was Palm Sunday and most had left for Ouagadougou or their respective villages. The man with the generator showed up an hour late. The chord was too short, and the generator, made to power highway night time lighting systems, could have lit Los Angeles for a short while. It was overkill for our television, which meant that



Rachel, currently doing well in Burkina

we were shouting over its noise of the engine. Surely it would be impossible to hear the film.

Thiombiano's ulcer had flared up that afternoon. He had left for Ouagadougou. Salif had spent the day in a small village dealing with a group Muslim school boys whose teacher had abandoned them. Thirty young boys were homeless. He had come straight from the village and was tired and covered in road dust.

Children started to gather at the steps of the classroom. Other children stood on buckets by the slated windows to peak into the classroom at the fiasco inside. Salif periodically shooed them away from the door but they came back defiantly, testing his limits and running from him when his step quickened in their direction. They didn't seem scared of me. I got tough and physically removed many who had inched in and were picking through my bag of condoms and wooden penises.

But the hum of the generator pulled people out of their houses like the siren's call. Their curiosity got the better of them and soon mothers with babies tied on, young men from the *buvette* across the way and the girls who fry *allico* and *ignams* in the market came. We started the film with ten viewers. An hour later as the credits rolled, the classroom was brimming with over seventy people. Who knows how many of them worked for the road company. Then again, the baby making and *bagarre* rousing doesn't happen in a vacuum. It made perfect sense that the permanent community in Sapouy would come to participate. The girls who sell *allico*, who flirt with the road workers from Bobo-Dioulasso, who drink *chapallo* with the rice *tantis* in the red-eye market, whose daughters work as secretaries at the road company — all were represented. Granted, the mamas had to leave early when their infants starting whimpering and whining, and many of the young men walked in and out paying *biigas* to buy them cigarettes. The "*causerie-debat-discussion*" that occurred after the film wavered between the snickering and the

ashamed. Salif controlled it like a teacher. Even though I was hoping for a more organic discussion of opinions, it was apparent that the large number of people wouldn't allow for intimate dialogue. I pulled some volunteers up and we demonstrated how to correctly put on a condom. This got laughs. And then it ended. I was relieved.

This is not to say that the project turned from a fiasco into a success, that it all ended smoothly and I am now writing a feel good story that will land me on Oprah. I am still terrified for the next couple of Sundays. I wish it were over. I wish we'd planned it for one evening so that I could get the inaugural first project over with and move on using the lessons I've learned. But it will be drawn out over the month of April. Thanks to Easter and end-of-the-month paychecks, I will have to do some heavy promoting, just short of promising t-shirt give-aways.

I have learned so much. Perhaps the biggest lesson is the realization that this type of project is not for me. I much prefer my weekly visits to the primary school and the English class at the local middle school. I learned that I didn't have to worry so much about rowdy road workers throwing wooden penises at each other as I did about renegade children who defiantly sneak into the classroom to swipe condoms and blow them up outside. I realized I need to take a big step back in the planning and production of projects. I need to look for community involvement beyond those whose job it already is to do this sort of thing. I wanted so much for it to work out well that I gave in on all the insanely difficult details of the Peace Corps philosophy on community development — sustainability and community implementation of community-derived needs.

In the end I bought Salif bean cakes and a beer. I had two myself. Thiombiano came back today. His ulcer is still bothering him but he is feeling better. Good thing since I will need his help and we've got three more evenings to go. Phew . . .



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*Project
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