

Celebrate Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary with FON friends in DC, Sept. 22-25, 2011

We've secured great rates (\$119 per room) at the Sheraton Crystal City in Arlington, conveniently situated for you to enjoy the full range of Peace Corps 50th Anniversary events. These include the Sunday commemorative march, and FON's own Friday night dinner celebration (details to be announced). On Saturday, meet your friends in our hospitality suite and head out to a West African meal, or enjoy one of the many other pleasures in Crystal City or the greater Washington, DC area. A Metro station is adjacent to the hotel. We will also hold our FON General Meeting, an opportunity to learn and to influence FON.

For FON-sponsored rates on our hotel, go to: <http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/booking/reservation?id=1005284417&key=5B15C> or call: 888-627-8209/703-486-1111. Reservations may be cancelled without penalty until 24 hours before your scheduled check-in.



Sheraton hotel with FON rates



But please hurry — more than half of our 75-room allocation at the discount rate were booked as of March 1. Your FON friends are coming to Washington for the celebration. Join them?

For further information: Contact Ken Sale at KSale@aol.com or Mike

Goodkind at mgoodkind@earthlink.net.

With your help this will be the best FON gathering ever. Make a difference in our planning and contact Mike or Ken to see how you can help shape the weekend the way you want to see it.



Being a Guest is Great, Being a Host is Divine

Be an insider at FON's Celebration of the Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary. Your FON leadership team is looking for a **registration/hospitality chair** for the event to work closely with your fellow members and guests to ensure that event fees are processed promptly and that questions of your fellow members are answered enthusiastically or directed to the right person. Ideal candidate will have robust internet access. Residency in the Washington metro area is optional. See how you can have fun making a difference. Contact Mike Goodkind (mgoodkind@earthlink.net).

Guest Editor Summer and Fall

Jim Clark, our long-time assistant editor in charge of obituaries and then-and-now stories, will be guest editor for the newsletter's next two issues, May and September. Please welcome him with your articles, letters, and photos. He can be reached at jclark7341@triad.rr.com.

President's Column

By Mike Goodkind (16) 65-67

We've reached a landmark at FON. Peter Hansen, our venerable membership chair, reports that we have 529 dues-paying members as of Feb. 26. This is the most ever in FON's 13-year history. Many of you are opting for multiple-year memberships, further validation that you expect us — not to mention yourself — to stick around for a few years.

I'm gratified by the numbers, but I'm even happier with what we are doing as an organization. We are not only continuing to provide ongoing support to VSO volunteers and to the Fantsuam Foundation, but we are establishing links among those organizations and with ourselves as well. VSO volunteers work at Fantsuam and we are beginning to accept requests for small grants from VSO volunteers and others for projects in Nigeria. VSO volunteers are ideal partners to point us toward potential funding needs, notably modest requests where a small amount of money can make real difference. In the past year, your unrestricted donations have made possible support for the Solar Suitcase project, which supplies inexpensive power to Nigerian operating rooms, and to the Nigerian program of Ashoka, a worldwide social entrepreneurship organization.

These projects not only keep us in touch with needs in Nigeria, but also remind and educate us about how development and social entrepreneurship have changed since the time many of us served in Nigeria. That recollection is particularly germane as I write this on March 1, the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps.

If you talk with Peace Corps officials, you'll learn that the most perceptible change for volunteers since the 1960s is the communications revolution. My most advanced technological gadget was a tape recorder (at least a foot long) that I used to create the small tape reels I sent back to my family so they could hear me pontificate (naively as retrospect reveals) on what I saw around me. I never called home for two years, although many volunteers made a call or two. The main communications vehicle was those ubiquitous air letters we picked up after standing in line at the post office.

Today's volunteers of course have Sky-

pe. They are required for security purposes to send text messages to headquarters when they leave their posts temporarily. If they need informational resources for students or an agriculture project, they can Google an answer (at least when the power is on).

Other world changes have profoundly affected host countries, their citizens, and their relationship with Americans, including Peace Corps volunteers. And this helps to answer a question, "When is the Peace Corps going back into Nigeria?" that I've discussed before, although I think my perspective is growing as I gain more information. We may indeed go back, but if and when volunteers are sent to Nigeria, we can bet that the program and needs, the volunteers themselves, and their hosts will all be profoundly different from what we remember from the 1960s.

Then, Nigeria was only a few years beyond colonialism. Peace Corps, VSO and CUSO volunteers were often the first "non masters" many Nigerians had seen in their country from Europe or North America, and we were often welcomed for our freshness and lack of guile. For today's Nigerians, the need to call in "experts" from countries we call the first world can be a potential embarrassment. "Why can't we do this ourselves?" What is needed is a whole new model of volunteer, including specialists whose expertise and seasoning transcend national origin. I'm simplifying, but this is essentially the model that VSO uses successfully when sending volunteers to Nigeria. The Peace Corps is exploring a variety of expanded options, including people skilled in building trades, recent community college graduates in fields such as dental hygiene, and recent military veterans looking for a change of focus.

The bottom line for us is to treasure our memories, but don't rely on those good feelings, which for most of us were reinforced by an occasional success, to direct what we do in the future. The connections between FON and Nigeria will only evolve and flourish if we ourselves do the same.

What are your thoughts? Email me at mgoodkind@earthlink.net, or share thoughts with our GoogleGroup. You are a member, aren't you? (If not, you can email me, and I'll put you on the list).

FRIENDS OF NIGERIA NEWSLETTER

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Historical Newsletters now on the Website

By Greg Jones (22) 66-68

We now have a complete history of all FON newsletters on our website. Prior to 2006 website newsletters were .html excerpts from the newsletters. **C Leigh Gerber (14) 65-67** did the work of creating the .html files. Some later issues were a bit better in that they had color photos, while the newsletters back then were in black/white only. But the .html versions were neither complete nor in exactly the same format.

Andy Philpot (VSO) 65-67 has now created .pdfs of all the earlier newsletters. We kept the choice of .html or .pdf, as people with slow access speeds may not want to wait for the .pdf files



(considerably larger) to download. This might be somewhat solipsistic (a newsletter article about newsletter articles), but

I found them very interesting. Maybe some of you may be motivated to look at the older issues as I did.

Repository for FON Members' Peace Corps Materials

By Susan McElrath, University Archivist, American University Library

We have **Norm and Jan (Driggs) Heise (07) 63-65** to thank for this announcement. Norm wanted to donate to FON a CD copy of his "memoir of my wife's and my Peace Corps experiences in Northern Nigeria written for my children and grandchildren. It is a rather lengthy (200+ pages) Word document accompanied by a separate file of some 200+ images scanned from old 35 mm slides." FON's Mike Goodkind and Peter Hansen were also involved in connecting Norm with Susan McElrath.

American University Library is pleased to serve as the official repository for the records of the Friends of Nigeria (FON). We hold a variety of documents from FON's founding to the present including budgets, by-laws, directories, minutes, newsletters and reports. We would also be interested in acquiring materials relating to the Peace Corps experiences of FON members. Preferred materials would be letters, reports, photographs, etc. that were created while FON members were in the Peace

Corps. We will also accept memoirs and other materials which discuss or document Peace Corps activities.

FON members interested in donating materials to the American University Library should contact the University Archivist, Susan McElrath, at (202) 885-3255 or mcelrath@american.edu. All donations will be acknowledged in writing.

American University Library also holds the archives of the National Peace Corps Association and the Friends of Colombia. For more information on American University Library Special Collections, please visit our website <http://www.american.edu/library/archives/index.cfm>.

Lost Peace Corps Staff

By Peter Hansen (27) 66-68

Recently I started re-reading some of my correspondence with John McConnell, Peace Corps Nigeria Eastern Region and Country Director, 1965-68. Included with his letters John often sent me lists, e.g., early termination statistics, names of evacuees.

Several lists that he sent me included names of Peace Corps staff that are not in our Friends of Nigeria database. Already I have been in touch with the family of one of them (**Fred & Gwen Pettem**), but the other three remain a mystery. If you have any information or recollections of any of the three, or if you can confirm any of the job titles or cities given below, please contact me (USPS address on the back page or pjhansen@ia.net).

The names are:

June Fulbright, Peace Corps Nurse, (city not known)

Lonnie (& Anne) Lane, Deputy Director for Programs, Lagos

Fred Scott, Northern Region Director, Kaduna

Making a Difference in Nigeria?

By Emily Bullock (VSO) 09-

I have just completed a VSO placement at the International Centre for Energy Environment and Development (ICEED). I was recruited as Environmental Policy Researcher. The aim of my placement was to support high quality research in order to inform advocacy to fight poverty in Nigeria.

My placement was part of the VSO Nigeria Secure Livelihoods programme. One of the objectives is to increase the capacity of women and men to manage their natural resources. VSO is currently working out how to mesh climate change work within this objective; likewise ICEED is working on individual projects that aim to help Nigerians increase access to energy and manage the impacts of climate change.



My main work at ICEED was to work with the Renewable Energy Team on improved wood stoves. Around 60% of Nigerians cook with wood as it is the cheapest fuel to buy. However, it is very costly to the environment. Nigeria is experiencing around 3% deforestation



annually. It is also harmful to peoples' health. Around 79,000 Nigerians die annually from indoor air pollution, caused by the smoke and soot from cooking with biomass fuels in unventilated spaces. (The international figure is 1.6 million).*

Most schools cook with wood, using a traditional three-stone fire. With support from the Swiss embassy, and GTZ, ICEED installed improved wood burning stoves in Government Girls Secondary School, Bida in Niger State. These stoves were sourced from Aprovecho, and their consultant Fred Colgan came to install them and to train the cooks in their use. The cooks provide three meals a day for around 1200 students. These meals include moi moi and porridge, fufu and stew, rice and beans and similar Nigerian dishes. In a side-by-side trial the new cooking methods cooked around 15% faster and used 88% less wood, while smoke in the kitchen was eliminated. One of the cooks said, "With the new stoves, my eyes don't water, my chest doesn't hurt, my back doesn't ache and the baby on my back has stopped crying." At the commissioning of the stoves, the state governor committed to install similar stoves in all government boarding schools in the state.

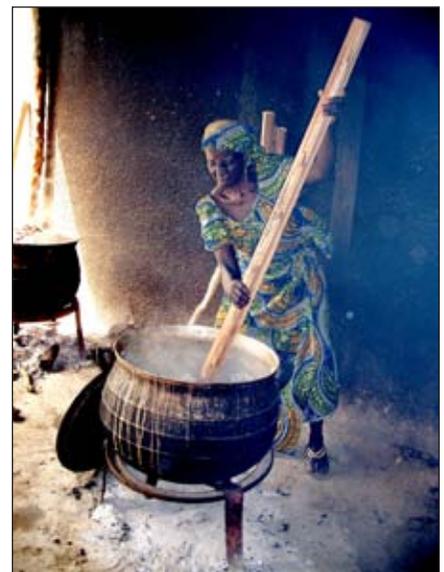
From 7 February 2011, I will be beginning a new placement at Nigeria Environment Study and Action Team (NEST) in Ibadan. Here my role will be Climate Change Technical Writer. I will be supporting the final reporting on a four-year project, Building Nigeria's



Response to Climate Change, and leading organisational development of the organisation.

Naturally, as I close one chapter and open another I am asking myself whether I made a difference to the organisation, my colleagues, and Nigerians. My conclusion is that one of the colleagues with whom I was working closely has improved in confidence, writing skills and professionalism, and I was also a key part to making the improved wood stove project happen. So hopefully, yes, I made a difference that will in the long term be good for Nigeria and Nigerians!

* World Health Organisation.



Solar Suitcases in Nigeria

Last year the FON board authorized one-time donations from your dues to the Ashoka organization and the We Care Solar (Solar Suitcase) project. The winter newsletter included some additional detail on Ashoka's work in Nigeria. This article provides an update on the Solar Suitcase project in Nigeria. For more details, see: <http://wecaresolar.com/mission>.

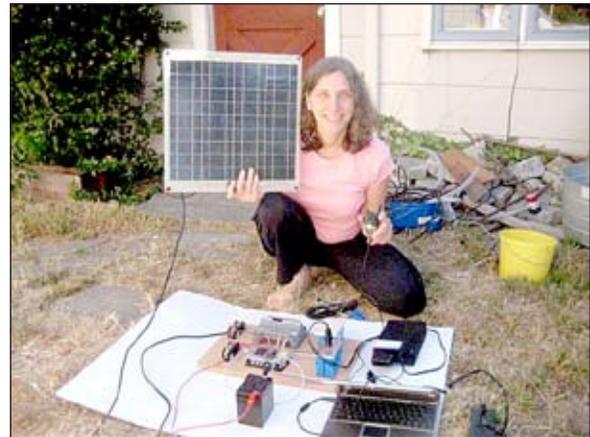
Laura Stachel, MD MPH, is Co-Founder and Director of WE CARE Solar (Women's Emergency Communication and Reliable Electricity). In early Feb. she said that there were already eight solar suitcases in Nigeria and that three more had just been sent out that week. Zaria has been the main focus for the solar suitcases – maternity clinic, pediatrics ward, primary care clinics that do maternity care, small hospital. In addition, throughout Kaduna State are smaller



Nurse using solar headlamp.

portable lights, headlamps, and lots of solar flashlights. We Care Solar plans to equip 12 clinics in Nigeria during 2011 and then 24 more clinics within the following 18 months.

A recent entry from Laura's Blog: Two of my favorite people in the world joined forces in December to check on clinic solar suitcases in Northern Nigeria. UCSF Midwife Sharon Wiener flew to Nigeria to continue her fabulous work to bring "Centering Pregnancy" to rural women in need of prenatal care. In mid-2010, she began teaching Nigerian health care workers about this method of group prenatal care that empowers women as they teach and learn about pregnancy from each other. She returned in December, to continue coaching the "Centering Pregnancy" team in Nigeria. We couldn't miss an opportunity to connect with our solar suitcase clinics, and asked Sharon



Laura with components of a solar suitcase

for assistance. Armed with solar suitcase supplies, she met up with Idris Jibrin, who has been my driver and #1 assistant in Nigeria over the last two years. Perhaps most importantly, Idris has become the official WE CARE Solar Suitcase "fix-it man." He brought Sharon to see several clinics during her December trip and the two of them restocked the clinics with LED light bulbs and collected valuable feedback for our research.



Operating room with a single 5 watt LED bulb.

Keep The Lorry Rolling!

As of January 25, 2011:

VSO Project (since 2004):

Total raised:	\$40,159
Number of donations:	748
Number of donors:	357

Fantsuam Project (since 2008):

Total raised:	\$14,511
Number of donations:	238
Number of donors:	176

VSO Blogs

Emily Bullock (UK) 2010-
Cicely Brown (UK) 2008-10
Glenn Dodge (Canada) 2008-9
Wil van Koningsbrugge (the Netherlands) 2006-7

<http://www.emily-in-nigeria.blogspot.com/>
<http://cicelyinnigeria.blogspot.com/>
<http://acanuckamuck.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.wilvankoningsbrugge.whereareyou.net/>

Personal Reflections

By Mike Abkin (21) 66-68

This was my first visit to Abuja, though not my first to Nigeria. In the Peace Corps, I taught French and math at Ondo Boys High School in the then-Western Region town of Ondo. Later, in the early '70s, I made several short trips back for an agricultural development research project. I returned again in 2008, invited by the Nigeria Alliance for Peace to deliver a public lecture at the University of Ibadan about the role of government ministries of peace and to provide



some campaign organization training.

The purpose of this latest trip was to attend and present a paper at the Second Regional Summit of the African Alliance for Peace, 22-23 October 2010, hosted by the Nigeria Alliance for Peace. (See the winter 2010 FON newsletter for a report on this meeting.)

Forty years of oil and gas mining have been more bane than boon for that once-and-future-promising country, so rich in natural and human resources. In fact, it's been no boon at all. Before the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, Nigeria was self-sufficient in food and thrived on agricultural exports of cocoa, rubber, palm oil, and other commodities. Within a few short years, with investment resources diverted from agriculture to oil and gas exploration and exploitation, Nigeria had become a food importer, its export crops were withering, and its rural

population was streaming into the cities. By 2008, oil installations were being sabotaged by desperate and angry villagers, bandits were roaming the highways, and the highways themselves were barely passable. The main east-west highway from Lagos to Benin, for example, had long stretches that were more "pot hole" (hardly the word for it!) than pavement.

Case in point: On the Frankfurt-to-Abuja leg of this most recent trip, several strapping, boisterous young men, clearly traveling as a group, took their seats in the cabin around me. As the flight proceeded south across the Mediterranean and over the Sahara, I wondered if they might be oil field workers headed for Port Harcourt, this flight's destination after Abuja. Indeed, they did remain in their seats while we Abuja-bound passengers deplaned. I then couldn't help but wonder whether the oil companies mightn't have saved themselves a lot of civil unrest and sabotage trouble if from the start they'd trained and hired people from the Niger Delta communities to do the work instead of importing European laborers.

The valley in which Abuja sits is dotted here and there with giant outcroppings of bush-covered granite – blobs of green, gray, and black sitting on the valley floor like giant, rounded termite mounds. In the last 30 years, what was the village of Abuja has disappeared into the burgeoning, sprawling megalopolis that is now home to the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria – and the five million people that have come with it.

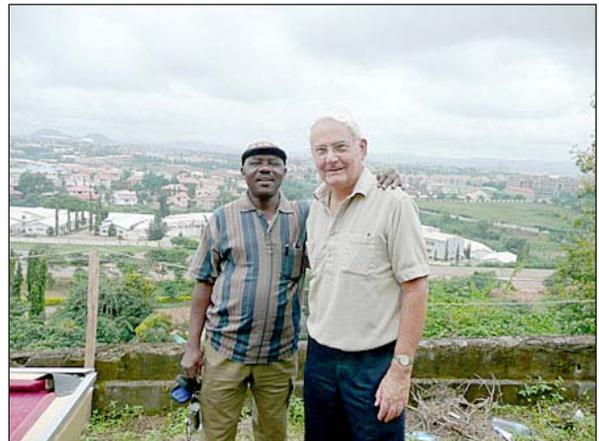
The president's residence nestles in the protective embrace of one of these mounds. Not far away sits the National Assembly complex,



wherein reside Nigeria's Senate and House of Representatives. Nearby, row upon row of multi-story office buildings have sprung up to house the various federal ministries and departments. The Central Mosque and Central Cathedral stand next to one another, each occupying its own entire city block and thus together marking a massive gateway to their shared God. World class Hilton and Sheraton Hotels rise to the sky to serve visiting business and government VIPs.

A multi-lane, divided highway rings the city. Well, it used to ring it, anyway. The highway is still there, but the city has overrun it, leaving it in the dust of the constant construction of roads, bridges, pastel apartment blocks, gated housing communities, and satellite villages. On and on, creeping relentlessly across the valley floor, the mounds scattered as parks amongst them.

And the food! I enjoyed Nigerian food on this trip as never before. For fried plantain, of course, my mouth has *always* watered ever since that first



succulent bite way back in 1966. But the rest of it! Fish pepper soup. Pepper chicken. Boiled yam. Jolof rice. Even jolof spaghetti. And washing it all down with Guinness Stout and Star Beer, I felt indeed “brighter by far.”

Then there’s the story of how Victor Ogunmakin and I met. In August 2010, Victor attended the Peacebuilding Peacelearning Intensive, a program of the National Peace Academy (with whom I work now – see www.nationalpeaceacademy.us) held this year at Wilmington College in Ohio. Victor was an engineer and Deputy Director of Strategic Services in Nigeria’s federal Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs. He was determined to return home to work for nonviolent conflict resolution and corporate social responsibility in the troubled, oil-rich Niger Delta region.

It turned out that this was not our first meeting! Victor and I got to talking about Nigeria, and I told him I’d served there in the Peace Corps. The conversation proceeded from there:

VO: “Oh, where did you serve?”

MA: “In Ondo, in what was then the Western Region.”

VO: “Eh, eh! That’s my town; I’m from there!”

MA: “Really? Well, I taught at Ondo Boys High School.”

VO: “Eh, eh! That’s my school; I graduated from there!”

MA: “Wow! Well, I left there in 1968.”

VO: “That’s the year I graduated! We were there at the same time!”

MA: “Well, how about that. I was the French teacher.”

VO: “The French teacher?? I was in your class!!”

Anyway, that’s how we discovered each other again in 2010 in Ohio (below left). After the AAP Summit, Victor drove me around Abuja showing me the sights (below right) on the way to his home to share a glass of wine. The next day he drove me to the airport. We also shared Nigerian chop, Guinness Stout, and Star Beer at roadside eateries (below center).

Snippets from the Past

By Richard Blyther (03) 62-64

Dateline January 1962 in Eastern Nigeria

All training was over and we were on our way to our schools in Calabar, Eastern Nigeria. The three of us, **Jim Gross (03) 62-64**, **Tom Marinkovich (03) 62-64** and I, were late leaving Enugu and early darkness came swiftly. We had a driver and a VW bus that was to take us to the Elder Dempster Ferry line that would convey us from Uyo on the Cross River to Calabar. Our timing was bad; hence we had to spend the night on the Uyo side of the river in a little rest house that was designed specifically for those travelers who missed the last ferry. The rest house came with a couple of lanterns with enough oil for the night, a sleeping bed with a mosquito net and another bed without a mosquito net. We drew straws to determine who would get the bed without the net. As luck would have it, I won the bed without the net. After all of our health training at UCLA, I was determined never to sleep in a bed without a mosquito net in a malaria-infested area. I immediately told the others that I was not going to sleep in a bed without a net. Hence the three of us shared the one bed with the mosquito net.

One of the first things one becomes aware of in the tropics is the fact that unless it is a moonlit night, it becomes pitch dark almost immediately. Throughout the night we could hear drums in the distance where some family or village was honoring their dead with appropriate sounds. I believed the drums continued throughout the night. We were not afraid, but we definitely knew without a doubt that we were alone in the tropics in the bush.

Eventually we went to sleep and awoke the next morning. I do not recall what we did for breakfast because no food was on the premises but we were determined to catch the first ferry of the morning. And we did.

The ferry carried cars, people, animals etc. At that time the crossing lasted about two hours down the Cross River/ Calabar River which was rather picturesque. We saw many dugout canoes and small fishing vessels. We pass the weathered construc-

tion site of a building that had belonged to a smuggler who was either killed or in jail. (During my two years in Calabar no additional work was ever started on that building.) Smuggling was one of those nefarious jobs which many people pursued. Sometimes they were caught and punished. Much later after we got settled in our homes and schools, we were frequented by a smuggler or two who always believed we were ripe for their trade. We did not want anything to do with them because we were at a Presbyterian school and wanted to be outstanding citizens. On an occasion or two one smuggler would journey to Fernando Po, a tiny island of the coast of Nigeria, and bring back many types of goods. His specialty was trafficking in Spanish brandy in large Texas size bottles. We may have yielded to the temptation to sample a few bottles of this rare liquor which was excellent with café royal. But that was the end of it, I am telling you!

Eventually we completed the crossing and were met by personnel from our respective schools. They had expected us the previous day. Tom went to West Africa Public Institute (WAPI); Jim and I went to Hope Waddell Training Institute, one of the oldest and finest established secondary schools in all of Nigeria. Our second year there Jim, as coach and athletic director, applied American training techniques and wound up with a winning powerhouse soccer team that won the Phensic Cup for secondary schools in Eastern Nigeria. The British teachers were dumbfounded because they didn’t believe Americans knew soccer well enough to produce champions.

Because we were not lacking for necessities and had a well organized school with a staff of about 20 persons, running water, electricity and splendid housing, we didn’t fit the typical Peace Corps image. Our school was started by missionaries back in 1846 by Hope Waddell himself. Jim taught biology to sixth form boys who were studying for their serious examinations. My job was to teach fourth, fifth, and sixth form boys mathematics and science. I also served as housemaster and coached tennis.

Swallow

By Sefi Atta

Interlink Books, 2010, 295 pp., paperback \$15.00

Reviewed by David Strain (07) 63-66

The population of Lagos in 1950 was 300,000; in 1960 1,000,000; today 15,000,000. Lagos is predicted to reach 40,000,000 by 2050, which would make it the third largest city in the world. Its deficiencies in electricity, water, traffic control and other infrastructure are widely reported. Photos of slums with



Sefi Atta

public toilets hanging over the water, usually with people nearby washing clothes, playing and swimming, are widespread on the internet. Architect Rem Koolhaas, a Harvard professor of urban studies, has investigated Lagos for over eleven years, and praises Lagosians' non-governmental adjustments to their city's decrepit conditions: shopping on the roads during Go Slows for example. But recently the young governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Fashola, has, in the fashion of power broker Robert Moses in New York in the last century, tried to bulldoze Lagos into a more orderly condition. Displaced Lagos citizens are indignant. Author Wole Soyinka applauds.

What is missing in most reports is a description of how this gigantic, chaotic new Lagos shapes the lives, not of the slum dwellers or of the Ikoyi elite, but of people like the students we taught in the sixties, and their children, who have swarmed to Lagos in the ensuing years to find work and excitement.

Sefi Atta's new book, *Swallow*, fills in many missing pieces. It is a cautionary tale of a secretary, Tolani Ajao (26

and Yoruba) and Rose Adamson (28 and Ijaw) who share an apartment on the mainland, and bus 2½ hours (each way) to their jobs at a bank in city center Lagos. Work at the bank has its difficulties, including that of dealing with male superiors who feel entitled to have their way with younger female staff. Outside of work Tolani has a long term boyfriend Sanwo, but their two years together have been difficult, and the path to marriage impeded by the expense of a traditional dowry and the instability of jobs in Lagos. Tolani's patience exasperates Rose – Rose's men are out if not ready to marry in six months. . . but they have all been out.

Events cascade into loss. Rose loses her job. Tolani loses her life savings in an investment with Sanwo. Tolani is suspended and her job jeopardized when she reports her boss's unwanted attentions. With their economic stability shaken, Rose's mysterious thug-like boyfriend persuades Rose, and Rose persuades Tolani, to be mules, swallowing condoms filled with cocaine and flying

(Continued on p. 10)

From Measles to Magic: Memoirs of a Medical Officer in Northern Nigeria 1957-1964

By Kathleen Abraham

2QT Ltd Publishing, www.2qt.co.uk.

Submitted by Earl (Buzz) Welker (05) 62-65

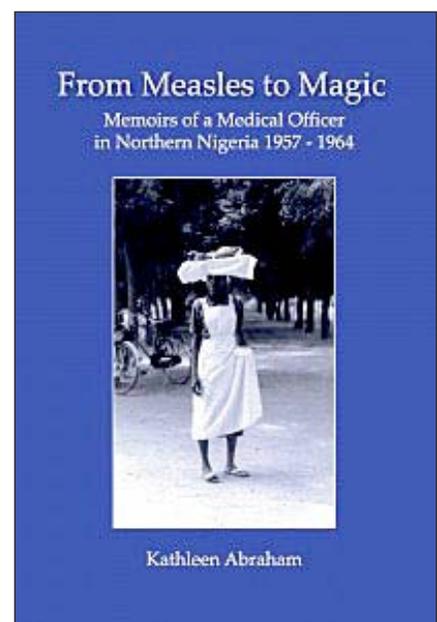
Kathleen Abraham was a medical doctor working for the Overseas Civil Service of the UK while Buzz taught at Bornu Teacher Training College. His principal was Kathleen's husband Rex.

Delving into her memories and referring to the letters she had sent home to her parents, Kathleen Abraham sets down her experiences as a doctor in Northern Nigeria from 1957 until her departure in 1964.

Descriptions of her work in the hospitals of Maiduguri and Katsina and of her medical tours into the bush combine with vivid and often humorous accounts of her day to day life.

It was a world far removed from any she had known before, but one in which she found much happiness, and one that in many ways has now vanished.

To get to Gorgoram we travelled through what seemed to be totally trackless bush. No signs of life anywhere. I decided that instead of using signposts, one had to think something like "Turn off at the third tree on the left, carry on for a bit and then turn right at the clump of thornbush with an old tree trunk just behind it." What would happen if any trees were to be felled, I wondered. I felt as if I was being taken to the ends of the earth and asked myself if we would ever find our way back.



Nollywood – Nigeria’s Burgeoning Movie Industry

By Eliezer Spaeth (26) 66-68

Did you manage to go to the movies while serving in Nigeria? Perhaps your experience was similar to mine: a large, open air theatre showing an American western (Paul Newman in a shoot-out with Richard Boone as overweight *bandito*). This was usually followed by an Indian musical in black-and-white full of magicians, trick photography and thousands of singing, dancing girls. How did such things stay in my memory after so many years? Probably it was the rarity of being in a city and seeing a movie that made the memory stay. The jolting incongruity of the subject matter always caused me to wonder what the Nigerian audience was making of those foreign films.

Fast-forward to the present day, and...welcome to Nollywood! You will find that Nigerians have really molded the movie medium into unique forms of expression that are very much their own and have taken over their domestic movie market. Thousands of titles made by and for Nigerians have been produced in the past 20 years at an ever-accelerating rate. Nollywood CDs and tapes fly off the shelves as soon as they are released, outselling overseas films by a considerable margin.

You can take your pick of dramas in Yoruba, Hausa, and other languages (graciously subtitled in English, in some cases), as well as a core production of ever-so-many movies in English. These dramatizations, where some scenes are videoed in a single take, feel as personal as a home movie, but they can pack an emotional punch with a national reach. Many of the movies deal with issues from current headlines and current lifestyle issues. They provide an ongoing independent voice of grass-roots social commentary and societal self-reflection – a “Fifth Estate” – that connects with a large audience.

I encountered my first Nollywood movies by chance while surfing YouTube®. The setting of *Owo Eje*, a movie

adaptation of Kola Akinlade’s novel, was familiar enough: rural village scenes through which a cleverly wrought detective story rolled along. They evoked in yours truly, the RPCV beholder, a rich flow of memories from over forty years ago. There came to life again before my eyes the special pace of village life, the humor, graceful gestures, and elaborate give-and-take of Yoruba dialogue (now made instantly understandable thanks to English subtitles). All in all, it was a comfortably pleasant, nostalgic trip down a lane of memories for which I will be forever grateful.

Then, *click-click...* and I began Funke Akindele’s *Omo Ghetto*. Total culture shock! a “Rip Van Winkle” moment as I awoke to a Nigeria I had never seen. First I had to sort out what American hip-hop, ghetto culture was doing in Nigeria. In this film, at least, a particularly over-the-top version of the ghetto style is appropriated by a disaffected gang of girls who cause all kinds of outlandish mayhem. Then, through a plot device which seems to be common to a number of Yoruba films - twins exchanged or separated at birth who meet later in life - a key member of the ghetto girls, Lefty (Shalewa), is arrested. She is mistaken for her twin Ayomide. Ayomide is from “the other side of the tracks,” a wealthy girl with “an anger management problem” who had conked her boyfriend on the head with a flower vase in a fit of jealous rage putting him into a coma. She had, consequently, gone into hiding. As the true story of the reason for the twins’ separation at birth comes to light, the twins, so different in socio-economic

background, meet and begin their healing process. This causes repercussions on the *omo ghetto* girls who, as Part I of *Omo Ghetto* draws to a close, begin to reconsider their wild ways.

As former PCVs and present Friends of Nigeria, you will likely enjoy exploring the spectrum of Nollywood offerings. The sheer volume of plots and themes defies generalization. A common denominator in many of these movies, which are, after all, commercial ventures in a highly competitive market, is a fundamental mission to be not only entertaining but didactic -- healthily and often humorously moralistic about the real problems of the day. You can find an inspiring example of this essential component of Nollywood in Omotola Jalade Ekeinde’s talk to orphans of the Sierra Leone war at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k72bPRyffUI>. “Words from the heart enter into the heart.”



Nigerian Restaurant Review

Recently **Dennis Furbush (03) 61-63** posted one of the more popular recent items on FON's GoogleGroup -- a *New York Times* (Dec. 28, 2010) restaurant review of *Buka* in Brooklyn. Perhaps it's time for a regular Food section in the newsletter -- restaurant reviews, recipes, ... We could start with a recipe for snails. Volunteers?

From *New York Times*' Ligaya Mishan's review of *Buka*:

"The giant African land snail can grow up to a foot long and weigh more than a pound. But the three specimens (\$10) on our plate at *Buka*, denuded of their shells and curled in tight black whorls, looked about as imposing as



jumbo shrimp.

"... We chewed. 'It tastes like mushroom,' someone ventured, and the table concurred: the meat was woody in texture, not slippery like escargot, and slightly nutty in flavor. It was edible. We were eating it. There was nothing to fear.

"... *Buka* opened last spring in the

southern reaches of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. The restaurant's name comes from Hausa, one of Nigeria's hundreds of languages, and suggests a canteen serving unfussy, traditional food.

"Make that a shabby-chic canteen. The owners, Lookman Mashood and Nat Goldberg, have transformed a former law office on a dingy stretch of Fulton Street into an airy, inviting space. Victorian details — a floral couch, an oil painting in a gilded frame, a chandelier — are juxtaposed with gritty exposed brick.

"... Mr. Mashood, who doubles as the chef, grew up in Lagos, where he learned to cook from his aunts. On his [Twitter](#) feed, he mixes announcements of which bands will be playing at *Buka* that weekend with news updates from Nigeria..."

"*Buka*, 946 Fulton Street (Cambridge Place), Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, (347) 763-0619, bukanewyork.com

"Best Dishes: *Moi moi*, akara, suya, goat pepper soup, fresh ginger juice.

"Price Range: \$3 to \$19."

From the GoogleGroup discussion:

David Sugarman (10) 64-66:

I think the only time I ventured for snail was reaching thru a bus window to a platter on a headtop. They were well seasoned with pepper and yes, very chewy.

Herb Stahlke (07) 63-65:

I ate snail pretty regularly while I was in the Peace Corps. The description of the flavor in the *Buka* review is accurate.

and learns from her widowed aunt to become independent through the cloth dyeing trade.

This is the setting in which Sefi Atta deftly explores the relationships of women and men, daughter and mother and father, friend and friend, in two time periods, one contemporary and the other roughly in the sixties when most of us were in Nigeria. Everything does not work out well for Atta's characters, but they are believable, often funny,

Cathy Onyemelukwe (04) 62-64:

My husband loves snail. His mother used to cook it but only when his father was away, since his father forbade cooking it! After eating their snail, they would scour all the cooking pots so he wouldn't know! We plan to go to *Buka* on Friday. Clem will surely have the snail.

Brian Boyle (06) 62-64:

(As a child) our landlord was a "large" Sicilian family. I remember how fascinated I was to watch them cook snails, watching the snails try to crawl up the side of the pot, only to fall back into the boiling water. And I learned to eat snails with a toothpick. Not escargot, but snails. With that kind of upbringing, when I see an article like this, I ask, "so what? What's the big deal?"

And a testimonial from *Cathy*:

We did eat there. The food was delicious. My daughter and I had egusi soup with goat meat; Clem had the snails. Our American son-in-law who has come to like Nigerian food had another soup, I can't remember which. Our grandkids, with appropriate yuks over the snails, also ate heartily. Clem ordered another meal to bring home, and *Buka* gave us extra pounded yam to bring home as well to have with our soup which was too much to eat at once. The restaurant was pleasant, not full though several people came after we were seated. They had no problem giving us a table for 6. They were selling art from African artists, attractively displayed on the walls.

(Continued from p. 8)

them to London.

In the midst of these tales of city turmoil, Atta contrasts with the mirror story of Tolani's mother Arike's own battles, a generation before, to establish herself in the much smaller but still male driven village of Makoku, west of Lagos. Arike refuses to marry the older husband chosen by her parents, refuses the local Oba as well, marries a Shango drummer,

frequently sarcastic, and good company. Atta's writing provokes our thought, stirs our consciences, and brings enjoyment throughout the book.

Sefi Atta's first novel *Everything Good Will Come* received the inaugural Wole Soyinka Prize in Literature in Africa. It was reviewed in the summer 2005 issue of this newsletter. Atta lives with her husband, Gboyega Ransome-Kuti, a medical doctor, in Mississippi.

With this edition, Friends of Nigeria is unveiling a new format for the publication of obituaries. Many organizations with similar characteristics to FON (e.g. alumni associations, civic clubs and professional groups) now use formats similar to the one you will see in this new In Memoriam section. This format allows us to recognize and memorialize all of our recently-deceased former colleagues and friends for their contributions both during and after their service in Nigeria, in a more succinct, yet respectful and thorough manner. We invite your comments and welcome your assistance in notifying us of the passing of any of our former volunteers or staff.

William D. "Bill" Schulz (07) 63-65. Dr. William Darvin ("Bill") Schulz of Richmond KY, died at St. Joseph's Hospital in Lexington, KY, on August 3, 2010. He was a professor of chemistry at Eastern Kentucky University for 38 years before retiring in 2006 and remaining as a professor emeritus. He had received his Bachelor of Science degree from Mankato State and his master's and doctorate degrees from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA. Bill served as a Peace Corps volunteer as a member of Nigeria VII from 1963-65. He was a

teacher of science and math at Ife Grammar School in Ife Ezinihite via Nbwasi (Imo State).

[Sources: *Lakewood Standard*, and Renate Schulz (07) 63-65]

Fred Pettem (Staff) 66-67. Former Peace Corps staff member Fred Pettem passed away in January, 1976. At the time of his death, he was working for the Food and Agriculture Organization in Laos. From 1966 until being evacuated due to the Biafran conflict in 1967, Fred served on the Peace Corps (Eastern Region) staff under the late John McConnell as agriculture and rural development/contractor's representative. After evacuation, Fred was relocated to Saigon. After spending many years in Spain, Fred's surviving spouse, Gwen, now resides in Orange County, California. [Source: Susan Pettem, daughter]

Warren Michael Green (20) 66-67. W. Michael Green of Rancho Mirage, CA, passed away in July, 1995, at the age of 54. Michael was a volunteer teacher with the Peace Corps serving as a member of Nigeria XX during the turbulent years leading up to the Biafran war.

[Source: Sandra Demerly (20) 64-66]

Lloyd R. Karnes (4) 62-63. Former volunteer Lloyd O. Karnes passed away on November 9, 2010. Lloyd was among the earliest Peace Corps volunteers to be assigned to Nigeria, where he served as a teacher at Ekiti Parapo College in Iddo Ekiti. At the time of his death, Lloyd was residing in Horton, KS.

Willie C. Saulters (12) 64-67. Former volunteer Willie Saulters passed away on January 14, 2002. In Nigeria, Willie served as an agricultural/community development specialist stationed in Agbaja-Ngwo, but went on to serve an additional eight years with the Peace Corps in other countries, mostly in Africa. Following his Peace Corps service, Willie joined the Agency for International Development where he served as a Foreign Service officer until his retirement in 1996. During his 31-year career in government service, he served in Africa, Southeast Asia and Europe and received the Meritorious Service Award for his work in Vietnam. Willie is survived by his widow, Vivian, and two daughters, Wendy Cherie and Vicki Marshelle.

[Source: Vivian Saunders]

Chief Enahoro Dies

By Ron Singer (10) 64-67

On Wed., Dec. 15, Chief Anthony Enahoro (1933-2010) died in the hospital in Benin City. When he was in exile in a Washington suburb in 1999, I interviewed this lifelong fighter for Nigerian Independence and democracy. Here is an excerpt from that interview:

FON: If I had to write your epitaph I might be inclined to write, "He served his masters--too well." Each stage of your career has been devoted to an ideal that you pursued wholeheartedly. You worked with Azikiwe to get an independent Nigeria, then with Awolowo to build that nation, and so on, yet at each stage you've wound up in jail or exile.

Enahoro: And pretty near death, under Abacha! I did have the temptation of retiring between '75 and '79 and again between '83 and '92. But each time I felt that there were things required to be said that were not being said.

FON: It becomes a habit, doesn't it?

Enahoro: Well, it grows on you.*

Chief Enahoro's most recent project had been a people's convention to rewrite the Nigerian Constitution in a way that would deal with the North-South divide and oil-revenue allocation.

**Friends of Nigeria Newsletter*, Summer, 1999 (reprinted in *African Link*).

Chinua Achebe's Hope for Nigeria

Several of our members posted Chinua Achebe's January 16th op-ed contribution to the *New York Times* on FON's GoogleGroup. For those who didn't see it, it's worth reading: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/opinion/16achebe.html>.

Starting with Africa's colonial history, Achebe moves to the initial excitement of independence followed by the often-disappointing aftermath of corruption, rigged elections, and rule of the wealthy. He ends with a plea for Nigeria's National Assembly to pass a freedom of information bill as a first step towards true democracy.

Edited by Virginia DeLancey (04) 62-64

Goodluck Jonathan is PDP's Candidate for President

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) selected Goodluck Jonathan as its candidate for the April presidential elections during the party's primary in Abuja on January 14. In what some commentators called the "cash and carry" primary, which supposedly involved cash, favors and gifts granted in return for political support, Jonathan won 78% of the available votes and became the man most likely to win the presidency next year. Namadi Sambo will be his running mate for Vice President.

Jonathan was the favorite candidate within the governing party, even though some of the party officials said that he should not run. He is a southerner, and the PDP has a tradition of alternating power between north and south of the country, which means that the PDP candidate should have come from the north. However, during the primary, Jonathan overwhelmingly defeated a northerner, ex-Vice-President Atiku Abubakar. Last year, the party's governors suggested that if Jonathan won the primary, he should only seek one term, as a compromise, and Jonathan promised to do so.

The PDP candidate has won every election since the end of military rule in 1999. The main opposition candidates are former anti-corruption campaigner Nuhu Ribadu and General Muhammadu Buhari. (Sources: BBC News [London], 1/14/11, 2/1/11; *The Economist* [London], 1/22-28/11).

Goodluck Jonathan Has Much Work to Do

Goodluck Jonathan became the interim President of Nigeria last May, upon the death of then President Umaru Yar'Adua. At the time, he promised to solve Nigeria's three biggest problems—rigged elections, poor supply of electricity, and the militancy in the delta.

Since taking office, Mr. Jonathan has developed a privatization plan for the power sector, setting forth investment conditions. Foreign investors are interested,

but they probably will not invest before the election. Mr. Jonathan has also done much to clean up elections, appointing a respected academic to head the election commission, and compiling a voters' register, complete with photographs and finger prints. His work with security in the delta has had less success. He has also left a record of substantial spending with little to show for it except, perhaps, for payments to delegates and promises of political appointments. Although it has been challenging, Mr. Jonathan's backers say that he will come into his own if he gets a proper mandate in April. (Sources: BBC News [London], 2/1/11; *The Economist* [London], 1/22-28/11).

Eleven People Killed in Election Rally Stampede

Eleven people were killed and at least 29 others were injured at a rally for President Goodluck Jonathan prior to the April primary. The crowd panicked after a policeman fired into the air to try to disperse crowds leaving through the gates of a crowded sports stadium in Port Harcourt at the end of the rally. (Source: BBC News, 2/12/11).

Voters Have Difficulty Verifying Registration

Voter registration began slowly on January 15, with many electoral commission workers struggling to link computers, printers, digital cameras and fingerprint scanners to produce voter identification cards on site. Long lines of prospective voters criticized the preparations, especially since registration had been postponed from last year. As a result, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) extended voter registration for two weeks, and then by another 48 hours to cope with last minute registrations, and sent technicians to solve computer problems at more than 120,000 registration centers.

People who registered for the presidential election should have returned to their polling sites during a designated five-day period in February to search for their names against lists prepared by INEC. INEC indicated that this would be the only opportunity for voters to make

changes or file complaints, as the final list of eligible voters would be published by March 2 and as the registry would be "firmly applied" during the April elections. The chairman of INEC stated that he expected to register about 66 million voters by the end of the exercise. However, some who looked for their names were unable to find them on the list, and many of the 120,000 polling locations remained empty during the designated five-day period, preventing people from verifying that they will be able to vote in April. One person admitted to registering in three different neighborhoods to make sure he could vote in the elections, but he couldn't find a list at any of the three.

For the upcoming election, INEC spent more than \$230 million to purchase laptop computers, digital cameras and fingerprint scanners to register voters. However, many complained about the equipment and long lines as registration took place. Some complained about officials misspelling names and putting the wrong biographic information on their paper voter identification cards. It is unclear what remedy, if any, voters will have on April 2, the first of the three election dates in the country.

The INEC in Ekiti State intends to reduce fraud from a common source, multiple registrations. The commission is installing special software to detect multiple registrations in the just concluded registration exercise in the state. It will be done centrally at the Commission's headquarters in Ado Ekiti immediately after the Commission ends the display of the Registers in the polling units. (Source: *Chicago Tribune*, 2/18/11; *Daily Champion* [Abuja], 2/15/11; *Daily Trust*, 2/15/11, 2/17/11; *This Day*, 2/16/11; *Vanguard*, 2/17/11; VOANews.com [Dakar], 2/8/11+).

INEC Budget is Insufficient for Upcoming Elections

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has expressed fears that it may not be possible to conduct the upcoming elections with the N45.3 billion (\$293 million) provision for it in the 2011 budget of

the Federal Government. That budget was developed for two levels of elections before the amendment of the Electoral Act to provide for three levels of elections, the National Assembly, Presidential, and Gubernatorial/House of Assembly.

The Chairman explained that the costs of the elections have also increased. He said that the agency will need at least 360,000 temporary workers to conduct the upcoming elections in April, requiring that the employment of an additional 4,000 permanent staff be put on hold. The ad-hoc workers will cost N9.9 billion (\$64 million), as each electoral officer will be paid N10,000 (\$65), compared to the N5,000 (\$32) paid in 2007. The Chairman maintains that the latter sum is no longer feasible, considering inflation and the complexity of the process. (Source: *Daily Independent* [Lagos], 2/17/11; *Vanguard* [Abuja], 2/18/11).

Senate Passes Anti-terrorism Bill

The Senate has passed an Anti-Terrorism Bill prescribing death for any act of terror including kidnapping, pipeline destruction or similar acts that lead to loss of human life. Persons convicted of belonging to terror groups would be liable to a maximum of 20 years imprisonment while individuals convicted of involvement in kidnapping which does not lead to loss of life would be liable to imprisonment for up to 10 years.

President Jonathan had pleaded three times with the National Assembly to fast-track the passage of the Bill following international pressure on Nigeria to step up the fight against terrorism. The proposed law requires endorsement by the House of Representatives. However, the House has suspended consideration of it because of the concerns of some lawmakers about hasty passage. (Source: *Daily Independent* [Lagos], 2/17/11; *This Day*, 2/17/11; *Vanguard* [Abuja], 2/18/11).

President Obama Appoints Nigerian to Key Position

Olufunmilayo Falusi Olopade was among six individuals appointed recently to key administrative posts by President Barack Obama. Dr. Olopade is the Walter

L. Palmer Distinguished Service Professor of Medicine and Human Genetics, Associate Dean for Global Health, and Director of the Center for Clinical Cancer Genetics at the University of Chicago. President Obama appointed her a member of the U.S. National Cancer Advisory Board. Olopade, who is an authority on cancer risk assessment, prevention, and individualized treatment based on risk factors and quality of life, is also a practicing clinician and director of the university's Cancer Risk Clinic.

Dr. Olopade is a recipient of numerous professional honors and awards, including the MacArthur Foundation's "Genius Award", ASCO Young Investigator Award, James S. McDonnell Foundation Scholar Award, and the Doris Duke Distinguished Clinical Scientist Award. She also works with educators, doctors, government officials and pharmaceutical companies to improve access to quality education and medical care in low-income communities. She earned an M.B.B.S. from the University of Ibadan, completed her residency in internal medicine at Cook County Hospital in Chicago and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in hematology and oncology at the University of Chicago. (Source: *This Day*, 2/25/11).

Pirates Attack Foreign Ship in Lagos

Pirates off the coast of Lagos attacked an unnamed foreign chemical tanker in February. The Associated Press reported that when the tanker attempted to evade a suspicious boat, the pirates opened fire on the ship. The pirates then attempted to use a grappling hook to board the tanker, but failed after chasing the boat for an hour.

On the same day, it was reported that pirates in Nigeria freed two merchant navy officers whom they had kidnapped from a Greek-managed cargo ship. The Ukrainian captain and Greek first engineer had been kidnapped in a January 26 attack on the *Perseus* which had been moored off the port of Onne, waiting to load cargo. Two Egyptian sailors were wounded in the attack.

Pirate attacks have increased in the vicinity of Nigeria in recent years. (Source:

This Day [Lagos], 2/12/11).

Nonstop Flights to Begin from Houston

Continental Airlines plans to begin nonstop flights from Houston to Lagos on November 16, 2011 for \$1,099. The flights will take 11 hours, 35 minutes, leaving Houston in the afternoon/evening and arriving in Lagos the next day. (Source: Continental Airlines, 1/24/11).

Air Fares to Rise as Price of Aviation Fuel Rises

Airlines are increasing their fares in order to absorb the increased price of aviation fuel. At the beginning of the year, oil marketers were selling a liter of aviation fuel for N107 (\$.69), but the marketers increased the pump price of the product to N120 (\$.78) in Lagos, N133 (\$.86) in Abuja, and N138 (\$.89) in Kano. Because it has a multiplier effect, the airlines would be losing more than 25 percent if they did not increase fares, as aviation fuel constitutes more than 75 percent of their operational cost. (Source: *This Day*, 2/15/11).

The IMF Proposes Devaluation of the Naira

Public spending in Nigeria increased from 10 percent in 2009 to 37 percent in 2010, causing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to suggest that the Central Bank of Nigeria should increase the monetary policy rate (MPR) to curb rising inflation. The MPR is the rate at which commercial banks borrow from the Central Bank; it was increased from 6.25% to 6.5% in January. Although the IMF maintained that the increase was appropriate, it noted that short-term interest rates remained negative.

Inflation has remained in the low double-digits for two years and foreign reserves have been falling as the Central Bank of Nigeria focused on maintaining exchange rate stability and low interest rates. Although world oil prices were well above the budget benchmark price, the government spent all current oil revenues and drew on savings in the Excess Crude Account. (Source: *This Day*, 2/18/11).

UK Pledges Support for Nigeria on Cote d'Ivoire

The United Kingdom said that it will support whatever action Nigeria takes to resolve the current political impasse in Cote d'Ivoire in addition to the sanctions already imposed on the country. The minister in charge of Africa and the UN in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office told the Nigerian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs that he understood that it has been tough for ECOWAS to stand firm on the issue but that Nigeria, as head of ECOWAS, has to remain firm. He praised President Jonathan for remaining focused on the issue. (Source: *Daily Trust*, 2/15/11).

Women Gain Admission to Nigeria Defense Academy

President Jonathan made history when he ordered that women interested in becoming combatant officers for the Nigerian armed forces should be admitted into the Nigeria Defense Academy in Kaduna. He emphasized that other countries in Africa are already admitting women to their service academies. He noted that the Nigerian armed forces had always had openings for female officers, but women have always been limited to non-combat duties, thereby limiting their career path, irrespective of their competence. He noted that the army has female technicians, medical personnel, armored tank drivers and paratroopers, for examples, but that he wants to have strong, virile armed forces devoid of discrimination, able to command major units of the military services and to rise to become Chief of Defense Staff.

The female cadets will earn a degree in a chosen academic field and a regular commission into the armed forces. They will compete with their male counterparts in all aspects of military training. Upon graduation, they will be able to command major units of the army, fly fighter jets and command combat sea-going vessels of the Nigerian navy. (Sources: *Daily Trust*, 2/15/11; *Vanguard*, 2/14/11).

Eight Nigerian Universities Rank in Africa's Top 100

Eight Nigerian universities ranked in

the top 100 institutions in Africa in a list dominated by South African universities, and a total of 13 from Nigeria appeared in the global rankings in the 2011 Webometric ranking of universities. The University of Ilorin, ranked 20th in Africa, was the top university in Nigeria. The University of Jos, ranked 42nd in Africa, was second in Nigeria, while the University of Nigeria, ranked 54th in Africa, was 3rd in Nigeria. Other Nigerian universities were the University of Lagos (58th), Obafemi Awolowo University (63rd), Ahmadu Bello University (69th), National Open University of Nigeria (86th), and University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (95th).

Three new Nigerian universities were included in the overall global rankings, including the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode; and Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, although the latter two were not in the top 100. Two Nigerian universities dropped out of Africa's top 100. (Source: *Daily Independent* [Lagos], 2/17/11).

American University of Nigeria Appoints Four Renowned Trustees

The American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola, has appointed four new members of the Board of Trustees to strengthen its international linkages. Dr. William Bernard, a senior consultant to the World Health Organization, is a leading authority on public health issues, especially HIV/AIDS. Dr. Eamon Kelly, Executive Director and Professor of International Development and Technology Transfer at the Payson Center, Tulane University, has 11 current and 54 former board affiliations. Dr. Lawrence Kay, an adjunct professor at the Payson Center, has been a senior associate at John Snow, an international health consulting firm. And, Dr. Earl Kellogg, Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois, has carried out extensive research on the economics of agricultural development and has been involved in international project development, design and management work. These new members join a Board that has an array of other prominent members. (Source: *Leadership* [Abuja], 2/17/11).

Arik Air Begins Cargo Operations

Arik Air has initiated cargo operations across its regional and domestic network, following approval by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority. It will add Johannesburg, South Africa to its schedules in London Heathrow and New York JFK, flying wide-body Airbus A330-200 planes. Arik Air has the widest domestic coverage in Nigeria, and the new cargo service is in response to demand by passengers and traders whose cargo shipping needs will be met with flights to Accra, Cotonou, Freetown, Dakar, Banjul and Monrovia. (Source: *Vanguard*, 2/14/11).

Federal Government Intensifies Search for Oil in Sokoto and Chad Basins

The Federal Government is intensifying efforts to explore for crude oil in the Sokoto and Chad Basins as a result of emerging new technology in oil exploration and a renewed assurance by China that there are prospects for discovery of oil in the area. The Chinese investors, who discovered oil in neighboring Niger and Chad, are the new partners of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The NNPC New Frontier Exploration Division is working with a renowned geophysicist and consultant to the United Nations, Prof. Deborah Ajakaiye who is leading a team of Nigerian and foreign geologists/geophysicists in search of hydrocarbon deposits in the Nigerian Frontier Inland Sedimentary Basins (NFISB). The search covers the entire NFISB which includes the Anambra, Bida, Dahomey, Gongola/Yola and Sokoto Basins along with the Middle/Lower Benue Trough. The NNPC had earlier abandoned the search for oil in the Chad Basin after 23 wells were drilled without success by other companies. (Source: *This Day*, 2/15/11).

Nigeria Cedes Power Plant to Chinese Firm

The Federal Government has handed over the Olorunsogo Power Station in Ogun State to a consortium led by Sepco III Electric Power Construction Corporation of China and an indigenous company,

Pacific Energy. This is in line with the government's decision to cede its controlling stakes in electricity generation and distribution to private investors under the privatization program. The Chinese firm was chosen because the Federal Government has not been able to repay the loan provided by the Chinese government for the construction of the plant. The Chinese government provided 65 percent of the funding for the 335 mw-capacity Olorunsogo plant and the 335 mw-capacity Omotosho Power Station in Ondo State. The loan was provided through the contractors for the projects, Sepco III Electric Power Construction Corporation and China National Machinery & Equipment Import & Export Corporation. Following the inability of the Federal Government to repay the loan for the two plants, the contractors were said to have left with the manuals and other documents relating to the running of the plant, while the few documents left to help Nigerians to manage the plant were written in Chinese. The Minister of State for Power noted that this development might have contributed to the inability of Nigerians to successfully run the plants. (Source: *This Day*, 2/16/11).

Indian Hospitals Attract Nigerians

Indian hospitals are taking advantage of lapses in the Nigerian healthcare delivery system to attract Nigerians seeking high class medical treatment. One such hospital is the Primus International Super Specialty Hospital located in a suburb of Abuja. The chairperson of the India-based hospital said that the objective was to establish a network of world class centers in health care by providing state of the art facilities and creation of ethical, compassionate patient care through professional excellence. The 120 bed facility will offer several state-of-the-art services including neurosciences, kidney transplantation, and bariatric surgery. Reducing the cost of travel for prospective Nigerian patients was also a consideration in the establishment of the hospital. (Source: *Vanguard*, 2/15/11).

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Arrests Nigerian Lawyer

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arrested a Nigerian lawyer based in the U.S. over the fraudulent sale of Nigerian Embassy property in Washington between 2005 and 2007. The EFCC is seeking to determine who benefited from the sales, and is in custody of the proceeds, as well as the tax refund, which have not yet been remitted to the government. The property includes the Nigerian Ambassador's official residence in Chevy Chase, sold in August 2007 for \$1.6 million, and a property on Woodlawn Ave., Washington, sold in August 2005 for \$3.25 million. Other properties include one on 16th St., near the Ritz Hotel sold for \$7 million in 2006 and one on M Street, NW, sold for \$14.2 million. The lawyer is now in the custody of the EFCC. (Source: *This Day*, 2/16/11).

Super Eagles Go to America

The Super Eagles landed in Dallas on February 24, a team of 20 players and nine officials, led by a member of the Executive Committee of the Nigeria Football Federation. The team was to play two matches in the invitational U.S. President's Holiday Celebration Soccer Tournament, otherwise known as the Green Bowl Soccer Tournament, in the Cotton Bowl Stadium. The team was to play against their Mexican counterparts, with the result determining whether they would play in the Losers Final or Final Match on the following Sunday. Costa Rica and Panama were the other two teams in the tournament which had been reduced from an 8-nation tournament to a 4-nation one. (Sources: *This Day*, 2/24/11; *Vanguard*, 2/25/11).

American Football Goes to Nigeria

American football star, Amobi Okoye plans to popularize the sport in Nigeria by developing a coaching clinic for new coaches and youths interested in the game. Okoye plays as a defensive tackle for Houston and is the youngest player to feature in the NFL since 1967. He arrived in the U.S. at the age of 12 and learned to play the game by playing a video game

called MFL Madden. He later played in college while earning a degree in psychology.

To realize his dream of making Nigerians embrace the game, he set up the Amobi Okoye Foundation which, in four years, has invested \$1 million in medical facilities in five states in Nigeria, awarded scholarships and donated books to deserving students. The goal of the foundation is to offer greater opportunities to young Nigerians through sports, create more jobs through coaching and broadcasting, and ultimately foster a stronger team-oriented nation with a stronger work ethic.

Okoye will be embarking on his fourth trip to Nigeria in March, with visiting teams of 20 doctors who will give free medical assistance and treatment. He is also sending three containers of books and medical supplies.

As part of the effort to popularize American football, the president of the International Federation of America Football (IFAF) and other IFAF officials will also visit Nigeria in March, in collaboration with the Amobi Okoye Foundation, and with the plans to set up a continental federation to govern the game in Africa. At present, American football is governed by IFAF through four continental federations—Asia, Europe, Oceania and Pan American. Establishing Africa as a fifth territory would satisfy one of the many requirements necessary to apply for International Olympic Committee recognition. To accomplish this, the IFAF Executive Committee has appointed a Development Director for Africa.

There are many players in the NFL with African connections. They were either born in Africa and moved to the US when they were young, or they have family ties to Africa. At a recent meeting in Austin, Texas, officials representing IFAF, the Amobi Okoye Foundation and national federations which will implement the African initiative discussed plans to introduce the sport to Nigeria, Senegal and the Congo before expanding to additional countries. (Source: *Vanguard*, 2/14/11, 2/17/11).

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