

The Ummah Support Initiative: Some Good News!

By Jim Clark (12) 64-66

Thanks to a grant of \$2,381 from FON, lots of hard work from parents, students and teachers, and the coordinating efforts of VSO volunteers Glynis Manger and Kasia Fiderkiewicz, students at Cheta Primary School are now studying in a much safer and more



comfortable learning environment.

During a visit to the communities of Gasiki and Cheta during her VSO

placement from February to June 2011, Glynis discovered that the school in which the primary grade students were studying was rapidly falling apart. (See “before” photo.) Working with a local group of community supporters and parents calling themselves the Umma Support Initiative (ISI), Glynis submitted a grant request to FON to cover the cost of materials needed to repair the school and make it safe for students to attend. Members of the Cheta Primary School agreed to furnish the labor.

As soon as the FON grant funds were made available, volunteers went to work and worked in earnest so the project could be completed prior to the onset of the rainy season. By October 2011, the two end walls of the building containing classrooms and the headmaster’s office were completely rebuilt. Windows and doors were installed to help stabilise and secure the building. Plaster work to the walls and



Cheta Primary School following renovations.

floors followed and new coats of paint were applied. By the end of December 2011, the renovations were complete, new doors with locks were installed and the Cheta Primary School was officially reopened.

Thanks to all the local volunteers, VSO representatives and FON, students in the Cheta community now attend their primary school classes in a safer, cleaner and much more inspiring learning environment.

Happy Birthday, Nigeria

By Bob Criso (21) 66-67

The floats roll down Second Avenue from 54th to 44th Street on a dazzling fall Saturday afternoon in New York City. Women draped in a kaleidoscope of colorful African prints and men in ceremonial robes fit for kings dance and wave the green and white stripes of the Nigerian flag, their smiles as wide as the Atlantic. The infectious rhythms of West African hip-hop blast from gigantic speakers on the back of the trucks, igniting the crowd on the sidewalks to dance along. A flock of supporters surrounds each float like buzzing bees, dancing, spinning, unable to contain their enthusiasm. Miss Nigeria, resplendent in

a regal white gown and sparkling tiara, passes in a chauffeured shiny red convertible, surrounded by a court of attendants in flowing white dresses like bridesmaids in a royal wedding party. On the sidewalks, the crowds are four and five deep, dancing, waving flags and cheering their favorite floats, groups and music as they pass. Imo State gets a cheer, then the Nigerian Christian Church of God, Nigerian Students of City University and the Organization for the Advancement of Nigerians. Curbside promoters hand out flyers and cards advertising their wares: Ibadan Descendants of New York Inc., Mirage African Restaurant, Africa.com/deals.

It’s Nigeria’s fiftieth birthday and I’m standing on 49th Street watching the Nigerian Independence Day Parade and Festival, 2011. It’s also the forty-fifth anniversary of my arrival in Ishiagu as a

Peace Corps Volunteer. As I absorb the spectacle and the mood, I feel a rush of emotions that I didn’t know were still

(Continued on page 3)



National Peace Corps Association
Announces the First
Peace Corps Connect “Annual Gathering”
June 29-July 01, 2012
Minneapolis Convention Center
1301 2nd Avenue
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Details online at
www.peacecorpsconnect.org

President's Column

By Mike Goodkind (16) 65-67

If you miss kola nuts, the prospect of Star Beer and Nigerian food, come to Minneapolis June 29 through July 1 for FON Dinner scheduled as a highlight of the National Peace Corps Association's annual gathering in that city. John Romano, who has morphed into an educational psychologist at the University of Minnesota after serving as an RPCV in Ogbomoshó from 1964-67, has taken the lead in what promises to be a great Nigerian reunion and bash on either Friday or Saturday night of the aforementioned weekend.

John reports that Queen Obasi plans to reprise a fabulous Nigerian meal she prepared for a similar FON meeting in the Twin Cities in August 1999. (Queen started a health care initiative in Nigeria, as reported in the summer 2009 issue of this newsletter.) In Minneapolis, the elder who conducted a kola nut ceremony plans to return for this occasion. Star Beer and palm wine? Stay tuned for that and other details of what promises to be a taste-driven reunion with old and new friends. John hopes to open the event to other West African alumni attending the NPCA's Minneapolis event. Details will be presented on the Google Group, so this gives me a great opportunity to suggest you contact me to join that listserv if you haven't already. I'm at goodkind@gmail.com. I'd like to offer a special thanks to John for jumping on this once-every-13-year event so enthusiastically.

We can't save the world, but we as reported in this issue of the newsletter, we can help build a school or a fish pond or buy a metal silo. Your generous dona-

tions have made these projects on the ground in Nigeria move toward completion, as particularly the photos of the Cheta Primary School attest. The metal silos are a concrete outcome of our support of the Fantsuam Foundation, while VSOs on the ground led us to the Cheta School and the Kibori Fish Farm Project. FON Board Member Andy Philpot, himself a former VSO volunteer, has led this project to convert much of our philanthropy from the abstract — support of worthy, yet broad-based international organizations — to support of specific worthy projects that help connect us to Nigeria — and the current generation of volunteers, local leaders and others who are making a difference where most of us once tread.

I'd like to offer a welcome to Steve Clapp to our board. Steve's history is detailed in an article in this issue, so I won't repeat that here. I got to know and appreciate the talents and good humor of Steve when I worked with him at biennial DC meeting last September. Steve has already attended his first board meeting in March. The FON Board holds regular meetings, despite the thousands of miles and two countries (U.S. and Canada) where the 12 members live. A major topic of these conference call meetings is to identify opportunities for Friends of Nigeria to become involved in projects and activities where we might help. We always welcome your input on this and other matters. If you have an idea, please start a discussion on our Google Group, or feel free to email me, goodkind@gmail.com, or other board members listed in this newsletter or our directory.

students seemed to know only that about Americans. I was really being humorous. Some students did joke, I think, with me about horses and guns and Americans. And, some may have believed it.

I got around on a Honda motor cycle and did not carry weapons. The place does not sound as safe as it was back then. Sadly.

Sincerely, Clay Hollister, (7) 63-65.

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

Larry Lesser asked in a letter in the Winter 2011 edition if I had horses and six-guns in Nigeria. I had made mention in an earlier article that some

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(Happy Birthday, Nigeria,
continued from p. 1)

there. I'm transported back forty-five years and six thousand miles. I see myself teaching English in a stifling classroom, drinking palm wine in a mud hut, dancing at a highlife bar in Enugu. Why do so many of the faces at the parade seem familiar? Doesn't that man look just like Ekuma, one of my fellow teachers? That woman over there reminds me of Eze who made the clay pots in Ishiagu. And I could swear that's Samuel, the guy who drove the taxis to Afikpo.

My eyes connect with a short, thin young man on the City University float. We both smile. Just like Felix, I think, one the youngest students at my school. He bends down as the float passes, scoops up something from behind him and throws it at me. Startled and surprised, I catch a green Nigerian Day Parade tee shirt with a tan geometric African design on the back. I'm thrilled and I give him a quick thumbs-up while I rock my shoulders and arms to the music. He points both his hands at me, forefingers straight out like a cowboy holding six-shooters, leans back and fires a smile at me that I'll never forget. I thought I had put it all behind me, especially after my return visit in 2008, so why are my eyes welling up? Here it is again, Nigeria, refusing to be forgotten, still haunting me as if it was yesterday.

A festival follows on 46th Street between First and Second Avenues at Dag Hammarskjöld T.T. Plaza, near the UN. More vendors, more music, some long-winded speeches and, of course, the food: okra stew, pounded yams, jolof rice, fufu, pepper soup, stockfish, goat meat. I recall the time I ate the goat intestines at a local wedding in Ishiagu and liked it. I approach one of the female cooks who looks like an Igbo. "Kedu," I say and she responds automatically before seeing me as she is stirring her pepper soup, "A dim ma." Her eyes almost pop out when she looks up. I ask her if she has any achicha and garri. She doubles over in laughter and delight and calls her friend over. "Esther, come here and meet this man." She speaks to me

in that musical Igbo-accented English, warmly as if she were talking to an extended family member. "You have been living in Nigeria," she says. "Tell me, what place were you staying?"

Like so many prior experiences I've had, Nigerians are thrilled when you know their language, their town, their father's town, their food or their history:

"You were there during the war! I can't believe it," a man selling Nigerian CD's says. "Tell me about the war," he asks. "My parents won't talk about it."

"Hah" another man exclaims. He has that high-pitched exclamation of surprise that many Easterners use when they can't believe what they are hearing. "You have been to Yenagoa! It is so hard to go there, especially in those days." Of course, Peace Corps Volunteers went to many remote areas. My friend Dave and I went to visit Josh, another volunteer, during one of our school vacations.

• • •

Later that night, I begin to digest what happened that afternoon. I went to the parade on the spur of the moment when I saw it listed in the morning paper. So why was so much feeling stirred up? Nostalgia? Was it Nigeria that I was missing or my youth? I was twenty-two when I was there, full of energy, hope, curiosity and adventure. I was also pretty innocent and naïve. I shudder when I think about some of the risks I took: the poisonous snakes around my house, some of the dicey food and water choices I made while traveling, the confrontations at the roadblocks after the war started. But we were immortal then, weren't we?

I thought about all the optimism in Nigeria and the world after independence, Nigeria, the largest and most promising democracy in Africa. I thought about the vision of the early leaders, Azikwe, Balewa, Awolowo, Nigeria's Washington, Jefferson and Hamilton. What happened to the dream? A flyer I picked up from the Organization for the Advancement of Nigeria says their goal is "to embrace innovative strategies aimed at fostering unity and cooperation among Nigerians." "Diversity is

our strength," it emphasizes in dark print -- something that is often said about America as well. Diversity as strength? Diversity was the problem when I was there. It led to tribal massacres, Biafra, the kwashiorkor babies, millions dying during an endless war because of oil, money and political power grabs that were rooted in tribal and religious conflict. I couldn't face the stories in the New York Times when I got back to the States: Enugu falls, thousands of casualties, Owerri is overrun, and Red Cross planes fly food and medical supplies into Biafra under cover of night, pictures of those babies on the front pages. All of it while the world watched and waited, like Bosnia. It wasn't just another war in Africa; those were my students who were dying while fighting for their lives. "It was kill or be killed," as one of the students who survived the war told me in 2008.

I thought about my trip back in 2008: the railway no longer running because of neglect, poverty as bad as or worse than ever despite billions in oil revenues, crime out of control, travel treacherous, Christians and Muslims killing each other in Jos. Have I just matured to the harshness of life or have things gotten worse? "Things fall apart," the words Chinua Achebe borrowed from Yeats for his brilliant novel, seemed prophetic.

And what about the parallels to the US today: all that money bunched at the top, poverty and hunger rising, foreclosures climbing, a culture fragmented and divided against itself, corruption and special interests controlling elections, looking for a leader to take the helm and lead us out of the darkness. So much of the world seems adrift and rudderless, not just Nigeria.

Then I think about my experience at the parade again earlier in the day. I often find hope when I encounter Nigerians. I admire their spirit, their perseverance, their capacity to enjoy despite it all. After forty-five years, I continue to mine the gold from my Peace Corps experience.

Fantsuam: An Update and a Proposal

By Greg Jones (22) 66-68

In a recent conversation, John Dada with the Fantsuam Foundation gave me



Almajirai children receiving nutritional support at a Qur'anic school

an update on the current situation in Kafanchan. According to John, the local and national sectarian violence has created additional hardships for the residents of the Kafanchan area and has resulted in more and more people requiring assistance. John states that “we have gone ahead to start grains purchase in our preparation for the hunger months. We are having to prioritize beneficiaries of this program with children, the elderly and people living with HIV/AIDS as our primary targets.”

The sectarian violence and resulting shortage of petrol has resulted in a shortage of available grains and much higher prices when grain is available. With food supplies running very low all across the Kafanchan area, the Fantsuam Foundation is considering using its remaining \$776 of FON grant funds to open a soup kitchen to serve cooked meals to children during the “hunger period.” That action, however, cannot continue indefinitely and is dependent upon financial assistance from groups like FON.

John added that prior assistance from FON had not gone unnoticed. “We had a visit from the Chief Executive of Partners for Development from Washington,” John said, “and he mentioned that he heard of

the support we have been getting from FON. Thanks ever so much for keeping us going, and for being one of the lights at the end of this long dark tunnel. Please give our best wishes to the members of FON. Mun gode.”

Proposal

In October of 2011, John Dada emailed a proposal to a number of donor organizations including Friends of Nigeria (FON). The purpose of the proposal was to secure funding to mitigate anticipated food shortages during the “hungry season” – the period toward the end of the dry

season when food runs out and new crops have not had a chance to grow. That time will soon be upon them again and, unfortunately, subsequent events have made the need for this effort even greater. The hike in the price of petrol has caused a dramatic increase in the price of grains. The loss of manual farm labor, the reduction in total area of land cultivated, the scarcity of money due to bank closures and the total lack of food and farm inputs in the critical planting months have all combined to create a situation of impending food shortages. Consequently, John has submitted an additional request to FON for funds that he and the Fantsuam Foundation will use in the following manner:

1. The purchase of additional metal silos. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has devised a metal silo for the storage of maize and other cereals to protect them from moisture, rats and insect pests. The silo is an airtight cylindrical metal structure constructed by locally trained welders specifically for grain storage. The silos hold up to 1,000kg and cost N6, 000 (US\$40.00). [This price has remained the same.]



2. The purchase of grains. Current prices of grains in Kafanchan are as follows:
 100kg soya beans – N14,000 (US\$25)
 100kg maize – N8,000 (US\$50)
 100kg rice – N10,000 (US\$63)
 100kg beans (Ife Brown) – N22,000 (US\$140)
 100kg Acha – “Fonio” – N40,000 (US\$250)
 100kg, guinea corn – N80,000 (US\$500)”

In addition to already designated member donations, the FON board is being requested to donate \$2,795 for the purchase of silos and grains. Since a silo filled with soya beans would cost \$290, an additional \$2,795 from FON could buy 9.6 of them. A silo filled with maize would cost \$540 (\$40 for the silo and \$500 for ten kilos of grain), so the requested amount could buy five of them. One silo filled with rice would cost \$670 (\$40 for the silo and \$630 for ten kilos of rice) so four of them could be bought. Clearly, the decision as to how many silos and which grains to buy to is best left to Fantsuam since they are in a better position to evaluate the local needs and respond to local market prices.

Fantsuam, as required by its board of directors, has already opened a ledger to account for all expenditures related to the project. They will provide a thorough accounting of their purchases and the number of people they were able to

serve with our donations. Fantsuam is directly involved in the community and is responding to its needs. They could use our help now more than ever.

In response to this proposal, the FON Board voted unanimously to match the individual contributions designated for Fantsuam and send a total of \$5600 to Fantsuam for hunger relief. The vote was not initially unanimous, as there was concern about some of the details of the proposal, but with a few clarifying and

improving amendments, the proposal passed without dissent. The money has been received at Fantsuam, and they are putting it to work buying silos and the grain to fill them. The silos are a permanent addition to Fantsuam's facilities, so should similar efforts be required in the future, Fantsuam will be better prepared.



John Dada (R) greeting visitor to Kafanchan

The Kibori Fish Farm Project

By Jim Clark (12) 64-66

The Kibori Fish Farm Project was funded in part by Friends of Nigeria (FON) to revive the community fish farms in the Kibori Community (Kaduna State) which were abandoned due to a variety of challenges faced by the farmers. In his first-quarter report, Simon Kirumira, VSO and project director, reported that the Kibori Fish Farm Project “had a slow start but is picking up speed despite the challenges encountered.”

The project, scheduled to run from



A meeting of the Alheri Fish Farmers Cooperative Society

October 2011 to June 2012, began with the reforming of the Alheri Fish Farmers Cooperative Society (AFFCS), an organization consisting of farmers and six fish-farming volunteers from different regions in southern Kaduna State (Madaikiya, Zonkwa, Fadiya, Kibori, Kaura, and Kanufi). Simon met with the all the stakeholders and put together a plan that emphasized working collectively to restore the abandoned fish farms in Kibori. He pointed out that the lack of production of cat fish had resulted in higher market prices and decreased consumption by locals. Farmers were encouraged to capitalize on the availability of two key fish-farming resources in the region—abundant land and water—and restart their efforts to produce high quality fish for the area.

At its first meeting, the AFFCS agreed to dig and stock two ponds and stock each with 100 “fingerlings” or baby fish. All farmers in attendance were encouraged to dig and stock their own ponds as well. They discussed also the use of water

pumps to maintain the ponds during the dry season and the most appropriate and effective methods for marketing the grown fish.

Simon and others are continuing to conduct training classes and are carrying out community sensitization efforts. However, Simon reports that the ongoing



Locating abandoned fish ponds

sectarian violence in the area has prevented the completion of some key activities but that the project has generally gotten off to a good start.

Keep The Lorry Rolling!

As of March 2012:

VSO Project (since 2004):

Total raised: \$42,454
 Number of donations: 807
 Number of donors: 371

Fantsuam Project (since 2008):

Total raised: \$19,631
 Number of donations: 308
 Number of donors: 206

VSO Blogs

Emily Bullock (UK) 2010-

<http://www.emily-in-nigeria.blogspot.com/>

In Memoriam

Walter Robert Chenchik (7) 63-65.

Walter Chenchik served as a Latin and math teacher at Trinity High School in Oguta from the summer of 1963 until summer 1965. Walter passed away on October 11, 2011. At the time of his death, he was living in Hiram, OH.

[Source: Michelle Chenchik]

James A. Sheridan (25) 66-68.

James Sheridan served as a community development volunteer in Gombe from 1966-68. He passed away on November 2, 2011, and, at the time of his death was living in Intervale, MA. A graduate of Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y., Jim was a retired schoolteacher who for many years taught at Kennett High School where he also served as head of the English Department. He was a long-standing member of the board of directors of the World Fellowship organization. Jim was an avid reader, enjoyed gardening, solving New York Times crossword puzzles, and had a lifelong love of animals. His brother, Richard, of Wilton Manors, Fla., survives Jim.

[Source: *The Conway Daily Sun*]

Lucien G. Maurer (25) 66-68.

Lucien Maurer served in both Nigerian towns of Kabba and Zaria. After graduation from high school, Lucien earned his bachelor's degree in Agronomy at Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture. Following two years as a volunteer in Nigeria, he entered the Army and honorably served a two year tour of duty in Vietnam. Lucien was a member of the Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren for nearly 30 years and was employed as a rural letter carrier for the Mifflinburg Post Office for many years until he retired in April 2009. Surviving in addition to his wife Kathryn E. (Mohn) Maurer are three sons and one daughter-in-law: Uriah L. Maurer of Mifflinburg, Elias S. and Christianna Maurer of Liverpool, and Malachi G. Maurer of Mifflinburg and his fiancé Ashley Estep of Mercersburg; one brother, Paul M.

Maurer of Mifflinburg; and a brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Jack and Janet Sulzer of Lemont.

Margery M. Heffron (1) 61-61.

Margery Heffron of Exeter, N.H. passed away on Friday, Dec. 9 of cancer. Until her death, she was at work on a biography of Louisa Catherine Adams, wife of the sixth U.S. president. She was a graduate of Smith College and earned a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University. She was press secretary to Rep. Edward J. Markey, 1979-80; associate director for media relations at the Harvard University News Office, 1981-89; and associate vice president for university relations at Binghamton University (SUNY), 1989-95. A native of Foxboro, MA and a longtime resident of Westwood, she is survived by her husband of 49 years, Frank H. Heffron; daughter Anne Heffron (Chris) Sigler of Palo Alto, Calif.; sons John Heffron of Providence, R.I., and Samuel (Ashley) Heffron of Kittery Point, Me.; three grandchildren: Keats Iwanaga of Los Gatos and Palo Alto, Calif.; and William and Phineas Heffron of Kittery Point, Me. Services will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 17, at Christ Church Episcopal, 43 Pine St., Exeter NH. Contributions in her memory can be made to the Exeter Public Library or the Smith College for the Class of 1960 Memorial Fund.

[Source: *The Boston Globe*]

(The following commentary by John Coyne on the death of Margery Heffron is reprinted from his website, www.peacecorpsworldwide.org, with his permission, in its entirety.)

This recent newspaper announcement does not give Margery's maiden name — Micheltmore.

As Micheltmore, Margery went to Nigeria in 1961 with the first group of PCVs, in the first year of the Peace Corps and wrote the most famous, or infamous, Peace Corps letter home, a postcard sent in the first months of Training at the University of Ibadan.

She was then twenty-three-year-old magna cum laude graduate of Smith College, an attractive, funny, and smart woman she was selected to go to Nigeria. After seven weeks of training at Harvard, her group flew to Nigeria to complete a second phase of teacher training at University College at Ibadan, fifty miles north of the capital of Lagos.

By all accounts, she was an outstanding Trainee. Then on the evening of October 13, 1961, she wrote a postcard to a friend in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Here is what she had to say:

Dear Bobbo: Don't be furious at getting a postcard. I promise a letter next time. I wanted you to see the incredible and fascinating city we were in. With all the training we had, we really were not prepared for the squalor and absolutely primitive living conditions rampant both in the city and in the bush. We had no idea what "underdeveloped" meant. It really is a revelation and after we got over the initial horrified shock, a very rewarding experience. Everyone except us lives in the streets, cooks in the streets, sells in the streets, and even goes to the bathroom in the streets. Please write. Marge. P.S. We are excessively cut off from the rest of the world.

The postcard never was mailed. It is said that it was found on the grounds of University College near her dormitory. The finder was a Nigerian student at the college. Copies of the postcard were made and distributed. Volunteers were immediately denounced as "agents of imperialism" and "members of America's international spy ring." The protest made front-page news in Nigeria and it sparked a minor international incident. As the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States put it, "No one likes to be called primitive."

Micheltmore resigned from the Peace Corps and flew home. When she arrived at Idlewild Airport in New York there was a handwritten note of sympathy waiting for her from President Kennedy.

The postcard she had written home to the boyfriend she left behind, and the

(Continued on page 8)

The Three Rs: Rendition, Repatriation, Reparations

By Tom Hebert (04) 62-64

Since leaving any remaining Nigerian art and artifacts collected while in the Peace Corps to one's family doesn't really keep much alive after another generation or so, a couple years back I decided to return my several pieces of "material culture" to Nigeria which is fast losing its traditional culture and heritage.

Background

I just happened to live on the right street in Ibadan with the scoundrel Yoruba art and artifact collectors waiting to hit our house at dinnertime to barter and sell their goods. Their having the chance at some chop, I was thus in the loop of the major academic collectors and we all worked together to see that the best Yoruba images and other artifacts coming out of the Yoruba villages--as the Yoruba religion died--went where the materi-



Benin Sentinel

als would be safe. We would warn these scamps that if we heard that such and such piece had gone to an AID home or someplace else where it would end in a yard sale outside London or Akron, that there would be hell to pay.

As it happened, my eye became quite good over time. And this material is likely the best of what I got out. For example, my Ibadanan edire cloth is today worth well over a thousand bucks and the rest is fairly valuable.

Email Correspondence with Wole Soyinka

In this divestiture effort, I began to work with Wole Soyinka, an old friend

from those Ibadan days and since then, the 1986 Nobel laureate in literature:

From: Tom Hebert, October 29, 2008; To: Wole Soyinka; Subject: Hebert's Letter of Last Instructions

"Wole: I hope this finds you well. Godamighty, when I finish my lengthy Letter to two friends who have agreed to be executors of my estate--my Last Will and Testament, etc. (we bachelors have no one else to clean up the mess of our lives,) I fear the world will end or I will.

"Anyway, attached are photographs of a few Nigerian treasures I still have (objects that back in 1964 the Federal Nigerian Museum in Lagos licensed me to export home to the US in exchange for keeping the best of my then sizable collection).

"I just turned 70 and am in excellent health, but I don't want these to go to anyone here (I have no family). So I am making prior arrangements. You I would simply give them to, ship them to. If you can't accept them for any reason, I would sell them (after I had film portraits made of them). Thoughts?

"The kola nut bowl below is 8.5 inches high, the two bronze Ogboni Society figures (male and female) are about 5" high, and the terra-cotta piece is about 4" across. I bought it from O. Idah, the King of Benin's bronze maker. It was a trial piece which was going to be part of a larger bronze affair. It portrays a Benin sentinel on the Benin walls blowing his trumpet to alert the people of an impending attack.

"Because, like you, I have lived with these pieces so long, I would be bereft without them. So, last week I took them to a professional photographer who did them up fine. Nicely framed, these old friends are still with me and will go to my family who will be happy, if not thrilled, to know that they are alive and well and living in Nigeria.

"An odd thing: The more I loved these pieces, the happier I am to repatriate them. While they were certified and exported to me by the Federal Museum

in Lagos, they were in a sense renditioned. I want that ended. Tom"

Several months later, on January 4, 2009, Soyinka wrote:

"Tom, First, all good wishes for this New Year. Just going through my flagged mail, I find that it very likely that I had not taken care of this last from you. If you have not disposed of these treasured items, you may want to donate them to the ESSAY FOUNDATION in Abeokuta where all my own items are displayed. I would create a special section just for this - the Tom Hebert Collection - with a note on its donor etc. etc.

"Needless to say, how to conserve my own collection for the Soyinka-less future has preoccupied me much but is now resolved, the ESSAY Foundation collection placed in charge of a Management Trust. So, best I can offer. If you've already disposed of them, or stumbled on a more congenial don't bat an eyelid.

"But if this is agreeable to you, they'll travel home with me on my next direct trip - in May - and join the gang. I'll send you photos of your collection in their



Tom's Collection

new home. Please send me an invoice for shipping and packing plus the insurance

(Continued on page 8)

premium.

“I have the feeling that this Great Repatriation Scheme marks the beginning of a unique, private adventure. All the best, Wole”

In the event, because of some security concerns when he wasn't home, Soyinka decided against Abeokuta in favor of Lagos. Eventually they were actually nicely exhibited in the Lagos Festival of the Arts, which Soyinka helped organize. From July 25, 2010:

“Hallo Tom,

“Sorry you haven't gotten your photographs from Nigeria. It wasn't too difficult a mystery to solve, once I was back on the ground - unfortunately I've been traveling mostly between the US and Europe once the Lagos Arts Festival was underway.

“It's a rather typical Nigerian story, alas. Take a look at the mounted piece - notice the flute is missing? Some careless gallery attendant broke it, so he kept the cameraman away from the 'REPARATION [sic] CORNER - BACK TO ORIGINS'. Soon as the Festival was over, he re-packaged the collection so fast, his dedication had to be commended! Just had it re-arranged more or less as originally displayed and photographed. The

flute will be expertly restored. **Ah well, my Naija!**”

From: Tom Hebert, July 24, 2010;
To: Wole Soyinka; Subject: Re: The pictures

“Ah, Wole, the display is just so neat! So much more than I expected. And I know O. Idah's Benin sentinel's bugle will be restored, because I broke it off once and a girlfriend fixed it up fine--Elmer's glue fixes all, maybe even our Naija. Where is the gallery located? Tom”

July 25, 2010 from Soyinka:

“The temporary gallery was at TERRA KULTURE, VI - just for the Festival. The final home for your collection will be at the new Culture Park standing on the former grounds of Broad Street Prison - a brilliant concept. Wole”

Conclusion

After Soyinka received my box of goods at his stateside home outside Los Angeles, Wole again told me to send him at least a bill for shipment. But after having gone this far, I knew I wasn't going to bill a “titan” like Wole (the *New York Review of Books* called him a titan). But he did send me an autographed copy of a book of his poems with a nice note in it.

I believe both Wole and I see this project as a small, even tiny, but living bridge between peoples.

This story is told with more pictures in a just-published book about *Wole: WS: A Life In Full*, 284 pages, large format, about 10” x 9.5”, paperback or hardback.



Terra Cotta Piece

It is a second edition of the original book published in 2004. The new book doesn't yet show up on Amazon, although the 2004 edition does. Note from the publisher says, “We have the greatest pleasure in offering to readers worldwide, this lavish photo-biography of Wole Soyinka, a fitting tribute to one of the most engaging individuals of our time.”

Check Your Attic!

By Peter Hansen (27) 66-68

Friends of Nigeria was founded in 1996, but at least three other Nigeria RPCV organizations preceded us. The first Friends of Nigeria was founded in the 1970s, a second Friends of Nigeria in 1987, and a third organization named “Nigeria 24” in 1988.

Both the second Friends of Nigeria and Nigeria 24 published newsletters. Unfortunately we have copies of only three issues:

Friends of Nigeria Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1987

Nigeria 24 News, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 1990 (ed. Charlene Baldwin)

Nigeria 24 News, Fall 1992 (ed. George Kanzler).

In April 2010, a Friends of Nigeria archive was established in the Special Collections Library of the American University Library in Washington, DC. This archive has complete sets of our newsletters, directories, board minutes, financial

reports, etc., but lacks documents from our predecessor organizations.

Hence the title, “Check your attic!” – as well as your basement and garage. The AU Special Collections Library is interested in the documents of Nigeria RPCV organizations, but not documents and memorabilia related to your Peace Corps service in Nigeria. The latter is the purview of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

In Memoriam

continued from p.8)

man who she would later marry, describing her culture shock at how underdeveloped and unhealthy conditions were on urban streets became a worldwide news story. The way the other PCVs in-country in Nigeria, their director, Murray

Frank, and PC/W officials handled the matter prevented the incident from torpedoing the entire PC experiment within months of its creation. That postcard proved to be a cautionary tale to other PCVs and a blessing to the agency for years to come.

After Nigeria, Margery would work in Peace Corps Training in Puerto Rico,

and then return to Washington, D.C. to develop the first Peace Corps newsletter for Volunteers before going onto earn a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University

Now fifty years later, that postcard, in many symbolic and metaphorical ways has arrived home. Thank you, Margery.

The Tenth Parallel, Dispatches from the Faultline between Christianity and Islam

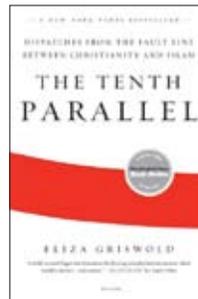
by Eliza Griswold

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (2010), \$27.00

Reviewed by David Strain (07) 63-64

Nigeria at independence in 1960 had 40 million people; today that number has quadrupled to 168 million, this although life expectancy is only 47 years. There are ten cities with populations that exceed a million; Lagos now has eight million people. Half of Nigeria's population still lives by farming, although with the coming of the oil boom, government facilitation of agricultural exports, and the exports themselves, these jobs have all but disappeared. People have, as a result, rushed to the cities where there are few jobs. One statistic has it that 90% of the non-oil related gross domestic product has evaporated since the latest democratic outburst in 1999. Griswold states that there are 60 million jobless youth.

Clearly today's Nigeria is far different from the Nigeria most of us knew in the sixties. Griswold's book, based on seven years of investigation along the 10th degree parallel north of the equator, is an on-the-ground study of the consequences of these changes in the context of the battles along the 10th parallel between Christian and Muslim forces. Historically the 10th parallel marked the extremity of Arab Muslim southerly progress in Africa, where their horses and camels were turned back by the tsetse fly and in Sudan by The Sudd, a great swamp. Nineteenth century Christian missionary activities sought to buttress that line. But the Sahara moves southward by a quarter to half mile a year, which together with increased populations, forces northern herders south into conflict with southern Christian farmers. These numbers are not small – every year an average of ten million people is forced from their



homes in the Sahel by environmental factors. Griswold's interviews put flesh on the almost daily reports we read of killings in the Middle Belt.

Nigeria's governments provide almost no services – education, rule of law, electricity, water, sanitation, are at minimums, and religion has stepped in to fill the gap. Crowds of three hundred thousand Christians meet weekly north of Lagos, and Islamic leaders in this aggressive competitive religious environment are doing the same. The church varieties brought by the colonials increasingly are displaced by African Initiated Churches, most of a fundamentalist stripe. Nigeria's economic strains have been forced into religious molds, and both politicians and religious higher-ups do not hesitate to launch unemployed youth against their adversaries.

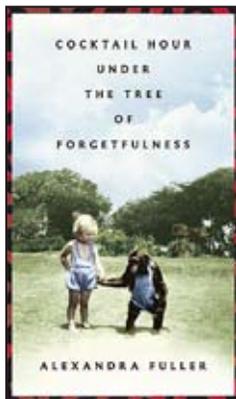
Griswold's fascinating stories and analyses continue through Sudan, Somalia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. I highly recommend this book as a way to get a grip on the changed world of Nigeria, and to do so with a beautifully written narrative by a thoughtful and persistent observer.

Cocktail Hour under the Tree of Forgetfulness

By Alexandra Fuller

Reviewed by Greg Zell (6) 62-64

This delightful memoir is a must-read for all Africa hands and anyone interested in colonialism as it was. Fuller's portrait, told around her mother Nicola, is full of cynical barbs tossed as only the Brits can sling them. Family members and pomposity of any sort are not



spared. Alexandra's first memoir, "Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight," published in 2001, was so well received by readers that her mother refers to it as "That Awful Book."

Mum calls herself Nicola Fuller of Central Africa to reflect the vanishing of Scotland as home after so many years. Much of Nicola's youth was spent in Kenya (colonial pronunciation: Keenya) and then Rhodesia until Nicola and her husband finally arrive in Zambia where they manage a farm today. Every village or farm where they live has a Tree of Forgetfulness which can be quite curative when you sit under it, particularly if joined by a cocktail. Many flow in this book as they do among the European communities overseas today.

Tribalism is discussed in several forms: their clan of Scots on the Isle of Skye; Mau Mau in Kenya; Whites in

Rhodesia; the civil war in Mozambique a few km. from the Fuller farm; and the changes pushing forward in South Africa. The images are searing. Who can forget Mum checking her Uzi before driving the children to school in Rhodesia? Although this is not meant to be a definitive history, it provides insights that are quite revelatory.

The inconvenience of death, mental illness, love, marriage, war, terrorism and alcoholism all come up. Death in UK: too far to travel; other ills in Africa: if only we had been in UK. Even bouts of malaria are not enough to get Africa out of your blood and mind. So, Mum and dad end up in Zambia, as managers, not settlers. Alexandra marries an American, passes her citizenship test, but remains a White African at heart. This epic of a lifetime is something you experienced in two years.

Part II- The Value of Our Stories: The Long Exit

By Stephen Vincent (10) 65-67

From June 1966 through July, 1967, we Volunteers who served in what then was called Nigeria's Eastern Region became participants in an unfolding National trauma; events transpired that for most of us would, if nothing else, make indelible and lasting marks on our memories.



Steve Vincent now.

Because of the terrible May pogroms in the North, we now worked and lived in a region whose leadership set about to reject its Nigerian identity. By September, when General Ojukwu called for Easterners to return "home" from the North and the West, there was an inevitable sense that the East would attempt to secede from Nigeria; it was already possible, despite all diplomatic attempts to the contrary, to imagine that the consequences of secession from the Federation would lead to military action. Indeed, in the months building up to Ojukwu's May 30th proclamation of the new nation of Biafra, the traumas – dangerous and sometimes comic – had already begun to happen. What had been

the flowering and excited optimism that was generated by the January coup, was now drenched in depression, failure and apprehensions of a civil war. As Volunteers, even if we believed that the United States Government could somehow lift us out any real danger, many of us became anxious and frightened by what we began to witness. As Yeats via Chinua Achebe's novel again prophesied ... "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Even if there were still voices on both sides of the Niger that spoke with bravado and confidence about solutions to the country's predicament, we were in a country that was falling apart. We were no longer in a safe place.

I suspect all Volunteers in the East have stories of incidents in villages, in schools or traveling on roads with police and military checkpoints. The commitment to secession was far from universal. Suspicions were rampant, loyalties constantly in question. Many of the minority tribes were suspicious of Igbo intentions. Many preferred the creation of a federal / state model of government and were deeply opposed to a new, weak, and unworkable nation. For the Igbo leadership, however, the apprehension of more genocide in the North locked out the consideration of any other kinds of political solution. Anger, grief, and distrust prevailed. Formal secession and war became inevitable.

So, there we Volunteers were, nevertheless, continuing to work and live as if no disaster was about to occur, as if the danger would not really happen. Yet, increasingly there were signs everywhere. I was a lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. By April, the campus was rife with preparations for secession and defense. The town would be the first target of federal battalions ready to invade from the North. Students without arms or equipment chanted and marched in formation up and down in the fields between classroom buildings while inside I taught creative writing Yeats, *The Great Gatsby*, plays by Wole Soyinka, and

Milton's *Lycidas*.

Meantime among the faculty, various professors became fierce supporters of secession. One in the physics department was allegedly developing bombs and other munitions. One of my colleagues fashioned a definition of the mystical core of a Biafran identity as different from those in the North and the West. One day a helicopter descended on the soccer field with Ojukwu. Its loud engine and whirling blades caused a human stampede from across the campus and local villages. Almost no one had ever seen Ojukwu up close, nor a helicopter. The general spoke shortly, then was soon gone. Modern spectacle had been introduced to Nsukka. Meanwhile, without a picture handy, I was trying to describe a New York skyscraper in *Gatsby* to a student from a village in the bush.

Yet, as often happens during pending wars, people tried to go on as normal. The English department needed a new chairman. Most of our senior faculty was Nigerian. Somehow, they brought in an alcoholic Englishman with a history of positions in former British colonies. When he hosted our meetings, he had two bottles of Star beer for each chair at the table. Commencement plans for June were in the planning stages. The Nigerian head of the theater department – deadly serious without any sense of irony – planned to stage both Sartre's *No Exit* and Cocteau's *Infernal Machine*. Sadly or inevitably, it was a prophetic choice of titles.

Meanwhile the suspicions grew. One day a military vehicle arrived and took away a journalism professor who was an Efik tribe member. Nobody publicly asked why. The suspicion was he was involved in treasonous activity. I had close colleagues who were opposed to secession. Among them was Ken Tsara-Wiwa. We would talk in private. He was from an important family in the Rivers. He wanted a state in the delta to protect their interests, not an Igbo general in Enugu determining his fate. He was

constantly writing plays, partly because he was good, but partly because the politics were driving him crazy. Obi Wali, a colleague from Port Harcourt, was also opposed, but could not speak. Not long before I was to leave, he confided in me that he was one of the instigators and writers of the manifesto for the short-lived first coup. He told me "When that coup failed, we had to rush to Onitsha and burn the printed proclamation." A Marxist with a Ph.D from Northwestern, he had once appeared with Malcolm X on a Chicago panel. He had no patience for campus colleagues who saw a new nation as their way to get more cake. "They are all dreaming of becoming high paid ambassadors or provincial administrators," he complained. He had no faith whatsoever that a Biafra would do anything but be a mirror of the same corruption and other issues that already defined Nigeria. Perhaps more to the point he said, "If federation is impossible, eastern alignment is also impossible."

I would listen to all their arguments against secession; since they could not speak for fear of arrest, I would rearticulate many of their views. It was touchy with my students – a mix of Igbos and minorities - so I said little. Instead, I would often argue with fellow campus based Peace Corps Volunteers, expat professors and others. I think I must have gotten out of hand. Oko Wonodi, my poet friend, who was sympathetic to secession, told me that I should keep quiet. "People who you do not know are listening," he said. I got scared too.

Meanwhile the campus was rampant with rumors. Someone told me that one Igbo professor had told his class that students from the minority tribes would be put on the front line. A minority tribe server in the student cafeteria was accused of trying to poison the food. As war talk increased, things were getting nuttier and scarier. Nevertheless, I was remaining good friends with my students. We had a weekly poetry group in my apartment living room and never talked politics, but mainly poetry. Only men, they wrote about girls and sacred

groves; we talked about contemporary African poets. For the last two years, I had invited important poets (J.P. Clark and Gabriel Okara) to give campus readings. Poetry had become a way of defining the world. During the war, my students continued to write, often about the horrors of bombing raids; through international courier, I received the poems and letters. Others, like my colleagues Obi Wali and Ken Tsara-Wiwa escaped to the other side from where I would also receive their letters. Obi would damn the Biafran radio propaganda efforts of our former department faculty. "Kala Uka," a colleague, "talks as



Stephen Vincent with the late Okobule Wonodi, fellow poet, friend & English Department colleague & family.

if the horrors of this war are poetry." A sense of unfolding tragedy was everywhere.

By May, the campus felt like an exposed nerve. Evacuations of expat families had begun. At night when the campus was often quiet, I could hear the tapping of hammers used to build wooden shipping trunks. Occasionally off my balcony porch I could see and

hear the whoosh of military signal fares. We were on war footing. The United States, which did not want to look as if it was looking like they were withdrawing support from the East, would not evacuate us, yet. However, with the fear of a surprise attack on the campus, the Peace Corps ordered us to Enugu each weekend. We stayed at the Presidential Palace Hotel and drank endless bottles of Star beer on the patio. Overhead, occasionally we could see and hear the screeching sound of Ojukwu's jet taking off or landing; allegedly it was a gift-- pilot included-- from Israel. The hearsay was that Israel wanted to stem any Muslim aggression from the North down to the Atlantic. Ironically, the Seven Day War began shortly after the July start of the Nigerian-Biafran war.

In April, all the Volunteers in my group gathered at the Presidential Hotel for what was called our termination conference. Two or three officials from Peace Corps Washington were there to debrief us. Apparently, this was done all over the world with groups being readied to go home. I suspect they were usually cathartic events, but war nerves were hot on the surface. Jeffrey Goldberg, his fingers and jaw quivering, lifted his hands off the table and claimed he would not relax until he felt the wheels of the plane lift off the tarmac. Little did he know that he would be taken out on a barge going down the Niger. Bob Fitzgibbons described his life living in his house with a chimpanzee flying back and forth across the living room, occasionally relieving himself in midair. Some women Volunteers described how it was to go through a roadblock where the young men would ask them about the use of Kotex – something they were totally unfamiliar with. Others described very young teenagers marching through their villages with wooden rifles. Collectively things sounded very nuts and we were very much part of it

Foreign journalists began to show up at Nsukka. They would gather faculty colleagues on a local bar patio and ask,

(Continued on p.13)

Nigeria, Salsa and a Missing Sax (Part II)

By Jeff Goodkind

Author's note: In the previous article it was mentioned incorrectly that Sal's former identity was Cheka. To clarify, Sal was the timbale player of our band, and Cheka was the London-educated Nigerian bank president, whom Sal met and befriended on the plane to Lagos. Later in midst our boredom, Sal rang up Cheka to see if we could meet up at the Jazz Hole.

On Victoria Island, the most privileged area of Lagos, it seemed normal for most of the Nigerians to have formal education from abroad and many had distinctive British accents. One dancer, Michael Agedoke, lived in Los Angeles but was in Lagos visiting family over the holidays. (A couple months afterwards I saw a flyer for one of his dance shows in California. It was a benefit to raise money for his family's village, I believe). This replication of an almost LA-style salsa scene, it seemed to me at the end of the night, was just for the privileged Lagosians though salsa music itself was popular throughout all social classes.

We finished our night trying out Suya, the richly spiced meat grilled and sold on the streets, Nigeria's answer to our Los Angeles' bacon-wrapped hot dog. While at the stand we got a few stares, of course. Though maybe it might have been against somebody's "better judgment," in a few minutes I was leading my staring neighbors in a sing-along of Bob Marley's "One Love." Yes, O.K., alcohol was partly responsible, but at least now the guys in the band weren't waiting cautiously in the car for their dinner.

New Year's Eve morning was spent promoting our New Year's event at three different radio stations around Lagos. The first one was a popular FM Christian radio station, which reminded me of Nigeria's megachurches and Christian conversion. The second one was an R&B station that catered to mostly the wealthy population's taste. We were able to meet three DJ's at that station, Tintin, Buki, and Afro-Logic, who interestingly had a show of indigenous Nigerian music. At

the third radio station, we had technical difficulties, weren't really clear on who the DJ was, and ended up just leaving a brief pre-recorded promotional message. At the end of the day, I was still wondering who in Lagos would give up US \$250 for a pair of tickets to a New Year's event.

Back at the guesthouse while I show-ering for the New Year's Eve event, live music drifted into the bathroom window though it had been inaudible from the bedroom. It sounded like authentic Nigerian music. Apparently, it was. Some guys had seen King Sunny Ade's bus parked right around the corner from us at the neighboring house. What a treat! I really wanted to party there on New Year's.

As we quietly expected, our banquet hall was rather empty and the performers found themselves trying hard in the face of a small crowd. There was a good jazz band that performed before us, then Dare's dance troupe that we saw rehearsing a few days before, and then a little stand-up comedy from another event organizer. We led the midnight countdown and played after. Honestly, it was not one of my favorite playing experiences in itself, but cool nonetheless to say that I played in Lagos for New Year's Eve.

Early New Year's morning I woke up to a phone call from the lobby. The pianist from the jazz band that opened for us was there and wanted to meet with me. He was interested in staying in touch and sharing music and resources with each other.

Later in the morning while I was sitting outside at the end of the driveway, Olivia walked by, saying she was headed to the market to pick up a few items for the house. With most of the band yet to wake up and Hader somewhere else, I could accompany her and finally walk around Victoria Island a bit. Gosh, the guys would be jealous! She called for a taxi out to the market which turned out to be closed. So we took a walk. She showed me the small shopping center where she had worked prior and introduced me to some of her friends working outside. She told me she wanted to prepare for and take a qualifying exam to get an administrative job with an international airline, thus opening up the possibility of travel for her. However, the combined cost of the course and exam was US \$2000, more than a year's wage for many Lagosinians, and no guarantees for employment.



Jeff (far right, second row) and his band in Lagos

Her cell phone rang; it was Hader telling her she had to get back. For a small fare, many locals get around on privately owned motorcycles. We ended up riding one back to the house, and I think it was probably the most exhilarating time I had in Lagos, speeding through the city in the open air.

The girls were sad to see us go. Lydia was crying quietly as she descended our stairway. Alice opened up my room when I locked myself out that day and quickly kissed me. We thought we ought to have stayed there, form another band, build our own Shrine, and take the girls there to live with us.

We stayed up all night in the house lobby chatting with the girls and the male salsa dancers that put on this event. It was a long but fun way of saying goodbye.

The early morning drive to the airport on the Sunday after New Year's Day, January 2nd, 2010, went thankfully without incident, without traffic. Many Lagosians with rural connections spend their holi-

days in the countryside, and so the city was relatively empty, a relief our drivers reiterated throughout the week.

Leaving the airport was the tough part. Airport employees checking our baggage before we even arrived at the ticket counter asked for big tips (or bribes?). They told our band's leader to "act like one," holding out hands to show where his money was to go and with it the possibility of leaving Lagos hassle-free. At the ticket counter we discovered our plane reservations were incomplete; we did not have a confirmed flight from our stop in Casablanca to New York JFK and, therefore, were not allowed on the flight out of Lagos. Eventually, after haggling between them and the promoters who booked our flights, we were able to get through.

After we went through customs, there was another checkpoint at the gate. A lady was inspecting the carry-on luggage. She claimed that one of our band members had an overweight or excessively large bag and asked for US \$100 to let

it by. Thinking it ridiculous and, more so, because she waived the next Nigerian passenger by with an equally heavy and large bag, we stood by in exasperation, wondering if we'd EVER get to leave. At this time our bass player was running back to customs frantically looking for a passport he misplaced. After a \$20 tip for the lady at the gate, a recovered passport, an on-time flight, rest on the plane, and touchdown in Casablanca, we finally felt a big relief.

Well, for a short time, at least. Once in Casablanca, we found, as we had previously learned, that our tickets were indeed not confirmed and there was a five-day wait for any flight to New York. That was all thanks to a bunch of overbooked flights and Mr. Underpants Bomber. Luckily, after three days of standing by at the airport, we got a flight back home. Good thing I packed enough underwear – you never know.

(The Long Exit *continued from p.11*)

"How do you define Biafra? What will make it a unified nation?" No one could quite say what it would be or not be. The future, as far as I could see, was already floating on thin ice. But the wheels of war were already much in motion.

After classes were over in June, the Peace Corps asked me to terminate early. Optimistically, I had a big shipping trunk made out of beautiful teak for my books, my papers, my masks, and the cloth I had collected. Of course, with the invasion, the trunk never got out of Nsukka; it was the first place to be captured. I gave my Honda 30 motor scooter to Mat, my cook and houseboy. Even if the Peace Corps knew I had one, I knew they would never be around to take it back. I wanted to imagine Mat driving as far as the Cameroons to escape the killer force that was soon to come down the road.

Two days before I left, I invited a woman student from the Rivers – with whom I had been a little friendly – to come to dinner. Unconsciously, I sus-

pect, I was preparing my farewell. She said she liked to cook and wrote out careful shopping instructions on a fragile piece of blue paper:

What the boy needs to buy is fresh pepper, fresh vegetables, water laes, fruits (any), yam, crayfish, 1/2 cup of ground egusi, red palm oil, Plantain leaves for tying and then dried fish. 2 fingers of plantains could be bought, not the ripe type; the green preferable.

The dinner never happened; in fear of oncoming events, she had to return home. I do not know why I find this list precious. It is dated 14/6/67, three weeks before the campus would be captured. I treat it as one of my most soulful, tender parting gifts from Nigeria. Of course, it does not make up for all my former colleagues, students and friends who died because of the conflict. But it does bring memories of all the good and close times of being temporarily at home and connected to a most different, exciting of worlds.

Considering the events that occurred

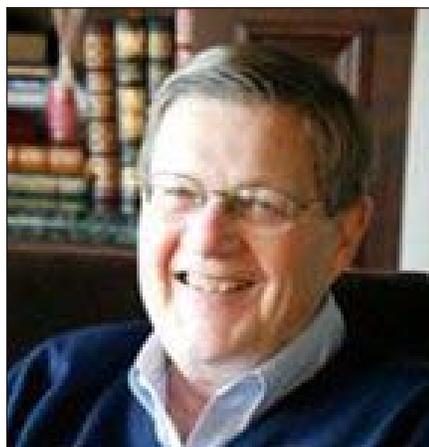
in these last months and that so many of us experienced in the East – alternatively hard, beautiful, fractious and crazy, I suspect many of us found it hard to bring the experience home and talk with any kind of confidence what we had been through and what it meant. But this was, I remember, 1967. Viet-Nam, anti-war and civil rights movements claimed the attention of many of us and our 'returning' selves. The psychedelic revolution – the much-imagined utopia of music, sex and drugs – claimed another part. Even with the eventual media attention to hunger and atrocities in Biafra, nobody in America had much reason to take interest in the day-to-day reality of a Peace Corps Volunteer, even if one serving in a war zone. Compared to the other astonishing conflicts in the 1960's, there was something *unreal* about our experience. Looking back now almost fifty years later, we were like soldiers in a state of post-war shock, unable to talk, and with no one to listen. Maybe it takes this many years.

Reflections on the Peace Corps

By Don S. Samuelson (04) 62-64

Background: Don wrote this for his Dartmouth 50th Yearbook Reunion next May. Some of the Peace Corps information came from Tom Hebert (04) 62-64, who has a wealth of information on this topic.

The Peace Corps celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2011 in local gatherings large and small all over the country. There have been lots of discussions about its origins, its importance to host



Don Samuelson

countries and volunteers, its potential relevance today - the types of things you discuss during 50th anniversaries.

In many respects the Peace Corps was the start of the "60's." Senator Humphrey's staff was aware of a program in Great Britain that connected volunteers with assignments in former English colonies in Africa. The idea was passed along to Senator John F. Kennedy who raised it as a question toward the end of a late night speech he gave at the Michigan Student Union at 2:00 AM on October 14, 1960. Lots of late night impromptu ideas don't look so good in the morning. But this one had legs.

Warren Wiggins, who became the COO of the Peace Corps, converted the idea into a program that was an alternative to the "ugly american" and a new image for U.S. foreign aid. Sargent Shriver read the 30-page Wiggins report at 2:00 AM on February 6, 1961 and

arranged an "all hands on deck" meeting the next morning. Wiggins and Shriver had only a few key principles:

1. Start immediately. Forget pilot studies and demonstrations.
2. Start big, pick a large number.
3. Keep it independent, autonomous and free from existing programs.
4. Give it a leader of national prominence, and close to the White House.
5. Proclaim it from the White House and then from the rooftops.
6. Invest it with recognition, romance and honor.

On March 1, 1961, President Kennedy issued the Executive Order establishing the Peace Corps. Sargent Shriver needed only 21 days to get the Peace Corps organized. Volunteers were screened, selected and trained in the spring and summer and were in the field in the fall of 1961.

At Dartmouth Dean Dey of the Tucker Foundation began to circulate the idea of Peace Corps service in the fall of 1961, about the time that Marjorie Michelmore dropped her postcard at the University of Nigeria at Ibadan negatively commenting on public health conditions. Big PR dust up. Meanwhile, Dean Dey begins to talk about the Peace Corps with the Class of 1962. The result was that six 62's signed up for Peace Corps service in the spring of 1962: Lou Setti, Paul Tsongas, Ross Burkhardt, John Coe, Ben Vogel and myself. Other 62's served later - Bill Wolfe and Dennis Neiwoehner. There were other classmates in Dartmouth Project Asia: Mike Coffield, Frank Kehl, and Stefan Mason (who wound up in Moisha, Tanganyika, apparently thinking it was Africa). Peter Brink went to Lesotho later.

When Lou Setti was asked by the Daily Dartmouth why he chose Thailand, he said: "I want to go to Thailand because I understand that all of the girls have great thighs." I then said, revealing my limited sense of actual mileage:

"I wanted to go to Nigeria because it is 10,000 miles from Thailand." So much for well-considered reasons for joining the Peace Corps. Hopefully, Paul Tsongas had more mature thinking.

Peace Corps training was a delight. It was like taking a three-month Nigerian Studies program in an all-inclusive resort - like the Dartmouth cruises in the Mediterranean with a classics professor. My training was at UCLA. There were classes during the day in Nigerian history, geography, arts and culture, language, sports, religion, politics, current events. Our athletic training was provided by Rafer Johnson and CK Yang, the 1960 Olympic decathlon winners. The classes were coed. Memories of high school. Panel discussions, Nigerian food, manners, music and dance. Educational and fun.

The purposes of the Peace Corps were drilled in to us. They involved:

1. Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women,
2. Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served,
3. Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

The Peace Corps sent volunteers only to those countries where their services and skills were genuinely needed and desired. The PCVs were there to help host countries to achieve their educational, health and community/economic development objectives. We were not there to tell them what to do.

Over the past 50 years, almost 250,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps in more than 100 countries. Many Returned Peace Corps Volunteers ("RPCV"s) developed careers in diplomacy and Foreign Service. At least two became Senators - Chris Dodd and Paul Tsongas - and many Congressmen. Many went into academic careers involv-

(Continued on p. 19)

Nigeria Bids Ojukwu Farewell

Traffic throughout Lagos came to nearly a standstill on February 23 while the late Ikemba Nnewi, Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, former leader of Biafra, lay in state in Tafawa Balewa Square. Nigerian leaders and chief executives of Lagos, Anambra and Imo states, as well as other dignitaries from throughout the country, paid tribute to Ojukwu, while Igbos closed their shops, abandoned their businesses, and nearly paralyzed major markets dominated by them, to join in bidding him farewell. There was a march past by the King's College Cadet School, of which Ojukwu was a member during his school days, and renowned highlife musician Emeka Maduka Morocco entertained the crowd for the greater part of the six-hour event.

The former leader of Biafra died in London, November 26, at the age of 78, after a long illness. Following the ceremonies in Lagos, he was to be transported to Abuja before returning to Aba on February 28, followed by final burial at his country home in Nnewi. Imo State Government, which organized a seven-day burial program, declared that the seventh day would be a public holiday, with all markets closed, to give Imo people an opportunity to pay their last respects to Ojukwu. (Sources: *Daily Trust* [Lagos], [Owerri], 2/24/12; *The Moment* [London], 2/24/12; *This Day*, 2/24/12; *Vanguard*, [Aba], 2/23/12, 2/24/12).

Odera Ozoka to Shoot Film on Biafra

Award-winning Nigerian film maker Odera Ozoka, who is based in the U.S., has secured \$400,000 from two private investors to shoot a film on Biafra entitled "A Forgotten Place". Shooting is to begin next year, but Ozoka has begun to meet with actors like Emeka Ike, Kate Henshaw, Step-Nora Okere, and others. He believes that it is time for such a movie to be released, as he believes that the country is in constant danger of a breakup. He also believes that the movie will be a way of reminding people of

the struggle and the cost it took to keep the country united. (Source: *Vanguard*, 2/25/12).

Nigerian Pirates Attack Dutch-Owned Ship

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reported that eight Nigerian pirates opened fire on a Dutch-owned cargo ship on February 28, robbed the 14-member crew, and then escaped in a small speedboat with the ship's captain and engineer. An additional crew member was reported missing, and another suffered injuries.

Pirates in the Gulf of Guinea have become increasingly bold, with seven reported attacks in the region this year. They recently carried out another hijacking in the area, killing the ship's captain and chief engineer. Although not as active as pirates from Somalia, the IMB has, nevertheless, posted warnings about traveling through the Gulf of Guinea. (Source: *VOANews.com*, 2/29/12).

Violence Attributed to Boko Haram Continues

Bombings and shootings believed to be by the militant Islamic group Boko Haram, also known as Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad, have increased in recent months. Tens of thousands have been forced to flee their homes, while 500 were reported to have been killed last year, ending with the Christmas Day bombing of a church near Abuja which killed 40 people, a bombing and shooting attack on a beer parlor in Mubi injuring 15, and an attack on a military checkpoint in Maiduguri which killed four worshippers leaving a mosque after Friday prayers. This led to the imposition of a state of emergency by President Jonathan on 15 local government areas hardest hit by Boko Haram attacks in Borno, Yobe, Plateau, and Niger states, and the closure of Nigerian borders with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon in the north.

Many analysts believe that Boko Haram is working with other terrorist organizations in Africa, but it is not clear to what degree. The organization has

generally gone after domestic targets, but a suicide bomb attack on the U.N. headquarters in Abuja in August 2011 strengthened the idea that it might have ties to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Algeria and to al-Shabab in Somalia. Others, including Professor Jean Herskovits, who has studied Nigerian politics for many years, believe that there is no proof that a well-organized, ideologically coherent terrorist group called Boko Haram even exists today. She believes that evidence suggests that, while the original core of the group remains active, criminal gangs have adopted the name Boko Haram to claim responsibility for attacks when it suits them. She urges that the United States not be drawn into a Nigerian "war on terror" that would make it appear biased toward a Christian president and might turn Nigerian Muslims against the U.S. without addressing the problems that are causing instability and sectarian strife in the country. Wole Soyinka believes otherwise and describes how, in his mind, a corrupt nation bred Boko Haram. He believes that Boko Haram has developed ties with al Qaeda and its borderless company of religious insurgency. He maintains that, "Only a few have sown the wind, but that wind was fanned by the breath of appeasement. Only one choice remains: to ride, or else reap, the whirlwind."

As the year 2012 wears on, the violence continues. On January 20, Boko Haram bombings killed 211 in Kano, in response to the arrest of several sect members. The bombings struck eight government sites, leaving the police headquarters and other government buildings in charred ruins. Police subsequently discovered 10 car bombs and hundreds of other unexploded devices. Following the incident, the U.S. based group Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on the Nigerian government to take further steps to end the "campaign of terror", maintaining that Boko Haram is responsible for the deaths of at least 935 people since the beginning of its violent campaign in 2009, including 250 people in the first weeks of 2012. HRW urged that the government do more to

insure that those responsible are brought to justice, and it called for increased police presence in violence-stricken areas. Amnesty International also criticized the police, accusing them of being poorly trained and ill-equipped and of carrying out extra-judicial killings and other violations, in response to the Boko Haram attacks. The police reaction to the attacks also prompted President Jonathan to fire Nigeria's inspector general of police.

In mid-January, many of the tens of thousands who fled their homes following the attacks of Boko Haram were unable to return home and were without shelter. Yet, local authorities have been wary of setting up camps for the displaced, according to the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), because they could become Boko Haram targets. As an alternative, some Igbo leaders have urged a mass evacuation of women and children from the north (while agreeing that the men stay to look after their businesses), and the Igbo community in the southeast has set up shelters to house the evacuees.

Attacks continued on January 26 when gunmen shot and killed at least 16 people and burned their bodies in Zamfara state. The incident occurred when about 100 armed men blocked a highway, delayed traffic, and took hostages. Some of the hostages stormed the gunmen, resulting in a deadly shootout. Two days later, Nigerian security forces killed 11 suspected Islamic militants in Maiduguri a day after the group attacked a Mandawari police station in Kano province.

On February 1, police arrested the spokesman of Boko Haram in Maiduguri after tracking his mobile phone. They have been trying to identify the man known by his nom de guerre Abul Qaqa; they believe that he is a Nigerian citizen. He has been instrumental in getting Boko Haram's messages to the general public via journalists and social media.

As February drew to a close, unknown gunmen shot and killed two police officers on February 23 and five worshippers at a Kano mosque the next day, but no one claimed responsibility.

An eyewitness said that the latter attack was to eliminate the leader of a vigilance group, Alhaji Sule Kwaran, whom they suspected was leaking information about Boko Haram to the security agencies. Unfortunately, the gunmen, on motorcycles, opened fire and killed five persons. It was also feared that many were killed when more than 20 bombs planted at the new Army Division and Gombe Police Station went off.

On February 26, Boko Haram confessed to the bombing of a Christian church in Jos, killing three people and wounding dozens more. In retaliation, Christian youths seeking revenge beat to death two Muslim men. (Sources: *BBC-News*, 1/1/12, 2/1/12; 2/24/12; *Chicago Tribune* [Lagos], 1/11/12; *Chicago Tribune* [Johannesburg], 12/26/11; *CNN.com* [Lagos], 1/28/12, 2/2/12; *The Daily Beast.com/Newsweek*, 1/16/12; *Daily Trust*, 2/24/12; *IRIN* [Dakar], 1/20/12; *IRIN* [Kano], 1/19/12; *IRIN* [Nairobi], 1/13/12; *Leadership* [Abuja], 2/25/12; *The New York Times* [New York], 12/25/11, 1/2/12; *The New York Times* [Kano], 2/25/12; *Vanguard* [Kano], 2/24/12; *VOANews.com*, 12/25/11, 12/28/11, 1/7/12, 1/11/12, 1/12/12, 1/22/12, 1/23/12, 1/24/12; *VOANews.com* [Dakar], 1/30/12, 2/27/12; *VOANews.com* [Nairobi], 12/27/11; *VOANews.com* [Rome], 12/26/11).

Armed Gunmen Free 119 from Nigerian Prison

Heavily armed gunmen on motorbikes blew open the front gate of a prison and freed 119 inmates in Koton Karifi, although about 25 were later recaptured. No group claimed responsibility for the attack which left one guard dead. Some sources blamed the attack on Boko Haram, but a prison spokeswoman said it was believed that the attackers were members of a robbery gang freeing fellow gang members. (Source: *Chicago Tribune*, 2/17/12; *CNN.com*, 2/17/12).

U.S. Considers a Consulate Office in Kano

The Associated Press (AP) reported that the U.S. is considering opening a

consular office in Kano. According to the AP, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria said that the US is considering the move in order to burnish America's own image among a people still suspicious about Western influence. However, when asked whether the U.S. would deploy troops in Nigeria to counter the influence of Boko Haram, the Ambassador said, "Absolutely not." Boko Haram, has not attacked any American interest so far, although it did suicide bomb the United Nations head office in Abuja last year.

The Ambassador stated that the U.S. is working with Nigeria's police to help them learn how to carry out forensic investigations, and a bomb expert from the FBI has been working with authorities on how to detect explosives before they detonate. He also said that the U.S. would be open to training Nigeria's military in counter-terror techniques, though Nigeria has not asked for that assistance.

The Ambassador stated that intelligence-gathering is a concern for the U.S. in Nigeria, especially after a failure to take seriously a warning about Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab before he boarded a U.S.-bound flight that he attempted to bring down with a bomb in 2009. He emphasized, however, that "adequate systems" are now in place to receive such warnings and that the U.S. has "robust relations" with Nigerian intelligence agencies. (Source: *This Day*, 2/24/12).

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab Gets Life Term

The Nigerian who tried to detonate explosives hidden in his underwear aboard an international flight to Detroit on Northwest Airlines on Christmas Day 2009 has been sentenced to life in prison by the U.S. District Court in Detroit. After sentencing, the 25-year-old son of a wealthy Nigerian banker said that he "was proud to kill in the name of God." On the second day of his trial last October, he pleaded guilty to eight counts, including conspiracy to commit an act of terrorism and the attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction. He used a four-minute address to the court to repeat that his attack was intended to

avenge “the attacks of the United States on Muslims.” He continued that, “The jihadi is proud to kill in the name of God, and that is exactly what God told us to do in the Quran.”

Abdulmutallab's father had informed the CIA that he was concerned that his son might launch an attack, but that information was never checked against Abdulmutallab's visa when he boarded the flight in Amsterdam. Abdulmutallab's family later released a statement saying that they were “grateful to God that the unfortunate incident that day did not result in any injury or death.” (Source: *Chicago Tribune*, 2/17/12).

Criminal Gang Masquerades as MEND, Attacks Pipeline

Nigeria's military has named seven people it believes were behind an attack on an oil pipeline belonging to Italy's Eni on January 4 and denied that the former separatist militia in the Niger Delta, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), was responsible. The explosion of Eni's Nembe-Brass pipeline in Bayelsa state shut down a route that carries some 4,000 barrels of oil equivalent a day. Some suspect that regional power struggles ahead of an election for the governorship of Bayelsa on February 11 may have been behind the attack. Others suggest that it may have been the work of youths angry at being excluded from a lucrative amnesty for thousands of militants who gave up their weapons in exchange for training schemes and stipends. Often, the attacks are simply a result of gangs stealing oil for illicit refining and sale. (Source: *Reuters* [Port Harcourt], 2/4/12).

Nigerians Protest Removal of Fuel Subsidy

On January 1, the government removed a fuel subsidy, resulting in a doubling of the price of petrol and, as a result, the price of transport, as well. Consumers demonstrated throughout the country, as prices increased from 65 naira (\$0.41) per liter to at least 140 naira (\$0.89) in filling stations and from 100 naira (\$0.63) to at least 200 naira

(\$1.27) on the black market where many buy their fuel.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer, and many Nigerians believe that cheap fuel is the only benefit they get from the country's oil wealth. However, the country must import refined petrol, as years of mismanagement and corruption have prevented it from developing sufficient domestic refining capacity.

The IMF has long urged Nigeria to remove the subsidy which costs a reported \$8 billion a year. Several previous governments tried to remove the subsidy but, instead, simply reduced it in the face of public protests. Indeed, after a week of strikes, protests and national paralysis, President Jonathan announced a partial rollback of fuel prices to the around 95 naira (\$0.60) per liter, a reduction of about 32 percent, but still 46 percent higher than before the removal of the subsidy. As the president made the announcement on television, a protest by labor and other civil societies due to take place on January 16, was cancelled. However, the government announced its intent to continue to push for full deregulation of the petroleum sector. (Sources: *BBCNews*, 1/1/12, 1/3/12; *Chicago Tribune*, 1/4/12; *The New York Times* [Lagos], 1/16/12; *VOANews.com* [Dakar], 1/11/12, 1/16/12, 1/17/12).

Abacha Aide Sentenced to Death

A Nigerian federal judge sentenced Maj. Hamza al-Mustapha, the feared chief security officer of former military dictator Sani Abacha, to be hanged for ordering a security agent to kill Kudirat Abiola, the wife of Moshood Abiola, a businessman and politician widely believed to have won an annulled 1993 presidential election. Mrs. Abiola was shot dead in 1996. Mr. Mustapha denied involvement, saying that he was tortured into a false confession. A second man, Lateef Shofolahan, who was Mrs. Abiola's trusted personal assistant, received the same sentence. Both men intend to appeal the sentence. (Source: *The New York Times* (AP), 1/30/12).

Negligence Killed the Sultan of Sokoto in Plane Crash

A report of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration stated that human errors and a lack of proper safety regulation were responsible for the three deadly plane crashes in Nigeria between 2005 and 2006 which claimed 380 lives, including the late Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Abubakar Maciddo. The Aviation Development Company (ADC) plane which left Abuja for Sokoto on October 29, 2006, with the Sultan and 95 others aboard, crash landed 76 seconds after taking off, a result of pilot error. Although bad weather may have caused the situation, the pilots reacted inappropriately and stalled the plane. Moreover, the airline's operation manual for pilots and cockpit staff, approved by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, did not contain any information on action to take during adverse weather conditions; the section was blank.

The FAA report of the Bellview plane that crashed on October 22, 2005, killing 177 people, indicated that the 49-year-old pilot had not been flying for 14 years but had been working for a dairy. He had also sustained a gunshot wound to the head during an earlier robbery attempt, but the records did not contain any medical or hospitalization record of the event.

The report of the December 10, 2005 crash of a Sosoliso airlines flight which killed 107 people, mostly children returning to Port Harcourt from school in Abuja, indicated both inclement weather and pilot error. The pilot was racing a thunderstorm nearing the airport and visibility was reduced to the point that the pilot was forced to make an instrument landing and failed.

The Director General of Nigeria's Civil Aviation Authority stated that officials of the agency have worked to ensure safety regulations since then and that there have been many improvements. Nigeria has not had a major mishap since the new NCAA was put in place by the Obasanjo administration. (Source: *Vanguard*, 2/27/12),

Ex-Delta State Governor Pleads Guilty in UK

James Ibori, a former governor of Delta State and once one of Nigeria's wealthiest and most influential politicians, pleaded guilty in a UK court to 10 counts of money-laundering and conspiracy to defraud. British police accused him of stealing \$250 million over a period of eight years. The UK froze some \$35 million of his alleged assets in 2007. Nevertheless, a court in his hometown of Asaba dismissed 170 charges of corruption against him in 2009. He was finally arrested in Dubai and extradited to London in 2010.

The prosecutor said that Mr. Ibori, 53, had "tricked" his way into becoming Delta state governor by giving a false date of birth and claiming he had no criminal record. As the pretender to the office, he was able to plunder Delta state's wealth and was immune from prosecution from 1999 to 2007 while serving as governor. He spent some of the stolen money buying six houses in London and at least one in Johannesburg, a fleet of armored Land Rovers, and a \$20 million private jet. He also put his children in expensive British private schools. Yet, his annual salary as Delta State governor was less than \$25,000. His wife, his sister, his mistress, and his London solicitor have also been convicted of money laundering. He has been convicted in the UK at least twice before, for theft while employed in a hardware store, and for possession of a stolen credit card. Ibori is due to be sentenced on April 16. (Sources: *BBCNews*, 2/27/12; *Daily Trust*, 2/27/12; *This Day*, 2/27/12; *Vanguard*, 2/27/12; *Washington Post* [London], (AP), 2/27/12).

World Bank Expands Agricultural Development Project

The World Bank is expanding an agricultural development project it is co-financing to five additional states. No new funding was announced, but new project activities will be added. The \$150 million Commercial Agriculture Development Project aims to improve the efficiency of Nigeria's agriculture systems and help commercial farmers

gain greater access to markets, particularly for cocoa, fruit, palm oil, dairy, and poultry farming. Energy and road infrastructure initiatives were among the work implemented in the past years. The project, approved in 2009 for five states and managed by the Federal Ministry of Finance and the National Food Reserve Agency, is to conclude in December 2014. (Source: *Devex*, 1/5/12).

World Bank Supports Education Project in Lagos State

The Lagos Eko Secondary Education Project, a partnership between the Lagos State government and the World Bank, supports more than 500,000 public school students and 7,000 teachers and school administrators in 637 schools. Beginning in 2009, the project has aided 12,000 teachers to be trained in leadership and core subjects such as English, math and science. As a result, the project has improved student performance on the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). In 2008, the pass rate in English was 46 percent. In 2011, the pass rate improved to 60 percent. In biology, the pass rate improved from 33 percent to 65 percent, and for the first time, some schools have had 100 percent of their students pass the WASSCE. Based upon results of standardized tests conducted by the Lagos State Examinations Board, substantial improvements were also seen in English, math, and science at the junior secondary schools. (Source: *worldbank.org* [Lagos State], 1/26/12).

USAID Supports Maternal Health Project in Nigeria

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is providing \$56.3 billion for the Expanded Society Marketing Project to promote family planning and maternal health care. The project, to be run by Nigeria's Society for Family Health for five years, will raise awareness among Nigerians on the need for child spacing and will offer options on how to achieve it. It will also assess the viability of local manufacture of key health products. The maternal death

rate in Nigeria is very high, with 144 women dying every day from pregnancy and childbirth complications. Poor child spacing is one of the contributing factors to the high death rate. (Source: *devex*, 12/7/11).

Nigeria Can Be Polio-Free by 2013

The Executive Director/CEO of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr. Ado J. G. Muhammad, is confident that by 2013 Nigeria will meet the target set by the World Health Organization of eliminating the polio virus. He said that President Jonathan has provided the resources, enabling environment, encouragement, and his personal involvement. He also said that the agency is deepening its relationship with traditional leaders under the leadership of the Sultan of Sokoto, and that it is involving communities in discussions of primary health care. However, the incidence of polio, which had dropped from about 1,000 cases in 2009 to about 21 cases by the beginning of 2011 had begun to rise again. Dr. Muhammad believes that it was the result of 2011 being an election year, a transition year, which compromised supervision and quality. He believes that it was also a result of the selection of team members, not all of whom were qualified to carry out the vaccinations, and partly a result of heavy assignments which caused fatigue and compromised quality.

Dr. Muhammad also announced good news. He disclosed that 22 states in Nigeria have remained polio free for three years. The Deputy Governor of Kano also announced that during the first two months of 2012, the Kano State Government had not recorded any case of polio. He said that the Kano government had opted to use enforcement as its latest strategy to insure that all children are vaccinated, and that parents and other persons who impede the process will be prosecuted. He said that police-women and their Hizbah counterparts will escort house to house immunization officers to insure that every child is immunized. The female security personnel will comb every house, even under the

beds, to bring out children hidden by parents who do not want them to be immunized. (Sources: *Daily Trust* [Kano], 2/27/12; *Leadership* [Abuja], 1/6/12, 2/25/12).

China Donates School to Federal Capital Territory

The Chinese government has built a primary school and donated it to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in February. Admission to the school has been one of the most sought after for a public school in recent years. China has made similar donations to Ogun, Katsina, and Kaduna states. (Source: *Daily Trust*, 2/27/12).

Bino and Fino—Africa's Answer to Dora the Explorer

Tired of African children watching only imported cartoons that didn't reflect their lives, Nigerian animator

Adamu Waziri decided to do something about it. He produced an educational cartoon to teach youngsters about African culture. His creation is "Bino and Fino," a cartoon aimed at three- to five-year-olds about a brother and sister who live with their grandparents in an unnamed African city. Waziri wanted to create a brand that is as good as Dora the Explorer, made in Nigeria, that is educational and that also shows positive aspects of Nigerian/African culture, not just to Nigerian or African children, but to children everywhere.

The pilot episode celebrates Nigeria's Independence Day and looks at the issue of colonialism. It also includes segments teaching the numbers one to 10 in the Igbo and Yoruba languages. Waziri wants the program not only to teach children but to also show that what is shown on TV of starving people isn't

the only thing in Africa—that there is a middle class that has the same aspirations as elsewhere in the world. He wants to show a couple of kids using laptops, phones, going to school, and doing their daily activities.

Two episodes of "Bino and Fino" have been shown on a channel on Sky TV in the UK where it has been well received, according to Waziri. The next step, according to him is to attract funding and sponsors needed to air the cartoon in Nigeria. It takes the core team of four a month and a half to produce a single episode of the cartoon which is only eight minutes long. The slow production time is disconcerting for sponsors in Nigeria where feature-length Nollywood movies are often produced in a matter of weeks. (Source: CNN.com, 2/23/12).

(Reflections on the Peace Corps
continued from p. 14)

ing Asian, African, Latin American, Eastern European and Middle Eastern studies. The majority of RPCVs became fluent in the language of their host country. Hundreds of books have been written by RPCVs. There have been "Friends" of Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, etc. organized by RPCVs for almost all of the countries served over the years by the Peace Corps. They have become like Wikipedia resources but with highly personal anecdotes and commentaries.

So what does this all mean? There have been almost no attempts to identify, organize, and measure the results of Peace Corps Volunteers. There has been little effort to internalize the positive externalities of the hundreds of thousands of man-years of service all around the world over the last 50 years. In the 50th anniversary celebrations around the county this year there have been

thousands of anecdotes and individual testimonials of the meaning of the Peace Corps to foreign recipients.

Every RPCV, with a little prompting, can go on, and on, and perhaps on, explaining the excitement and romance of their service, the ways in which their lives were changed, the human and third world cultural insights they gained from their Peace Corps service and the ways in which they approach problems differently in their subsequent education and work. Living with little electricity (like two hours a day), no hot water, third world public transportation and little diversity in food and creature comforts can focus a mind, like the prospect of hanging, on the basics.

The experiences were highly individualized. Except for the group training and very sporadic meetings in the country of service, Peace Corps Volunteers

were largely on their own – prompting creativity, entrepreneurialism, "making do" and living a semi-frontier life for two years. Romantic. Adventurous. Purposeful. Self-revealing and fun. And unlike war, not particularly dangerous.

A Correction

In the previous edition of the newsletter in the "A Few Minutes With...Dr. Hauwa Ibrahim" article, it was stated incorrectly that one-sixth of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims live in Nigeria. It should have read "Nigeria has the sixth-largest population of Muslims of any country in the world." *Friends of Nigeria* regrets this error.

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