

Nigeria Redux: Boston General Meeting/Reunion, August 2009

By *Charlie Wyzanski (23) 66-67*

A recent article in the *Boston Globe* confidently predicted that Facebook and other online networks had “rendered reunions obsolete” because everyone knows “what you did last summer. And last year. And last night.”

The article obviously didn't apply to Friends of Nigeria members. FON members are no longer so young as to



Brynne and Dan Haines (03,03) at the Kennedy Museum.

want to be on Facebook. Nor have they ever tried to adhere to American norms, when it comes to reunioning or anything else.... And so it was that well over a hundred Nigeria RPCVs convened Aug. 14-15 in Boston. Although generally known as the Athens of America, Boston was not without its relevant aspects.

The Newsletter It Is a-Changin'

We hope you will enjoy the crisp, attractive and professional new design in this issue of the newsletter, thanks to our new layout editor, Owen Hartford (23) 66-67 (bio on page 19.) In addition, the web version (www.friendsofnigeria.org) of the newsletter will feature color photos starting with this issue. The board is also considering offering a choice of delivery methods for the newsletter in the future – email with color photos or snail mail as we now do.

Friday night there was the African Cuisine restaurant in Hyde Park, where eight volunteers from Eastern Nigeria's storied Group XXIII drank palm wine and Star Beer while feasting on fu-fu, fried plantains, pepper soup, and other less well identified delicacies.

Many of us had not laid eyes on each other since our evacuation from Biafra some 42 years ago. Of course, we allowed that we looked just the same. There was **Denny Dunmire**, coming all the way from Madrid, Spain; **Warren and Jody Keller** from Berkeley, California; **Ed Stokes** and his wife Maggie from Randolph, Vermont; **Penny Partridge** from Amherst, Massachusetts; and **David Rosen, Owen Hartford, Charlie Wyzanski** and his wife Nilgün, all from the Greater Boston area.

We learned that many of us had stayed involved in education. Others had drifted into business, consulting, writing, and the law. A few of us had managed to stay in touch, working on projects, making music, or just playing tennis. We didn't last as long into the night, as in our earlier days. We assured ourselves it was not age but the extensive program scheduled for the following day.

At ten the next morning, we assembled with all the rest of FON at the Kennedy Library in South Boston. Looking at the films and exhibits, we could not help but be forcefully reminded of



Tony and Mary Ann DeVita Palmieri (05,06) distributing name tags.

JFK and the youthful idealism with which we had joined the Peace Corps. We were gladdened to realize that today we once again have a president of whom we can be proud--and, in addition, one whose ancestors hail from Africa! We didn't find it easy to give our full attention to all the exhibits at the Museum. Interesting as they were, the living artifacts who swirled around us from “back in the day”--our former fellow PCVs--were even more captivating. Once we started to talk, we just couldn't stop--in the library and then at a sumptuous New England clambake at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) campus.

In fact, we didn't quiet down until we were insistently gaveled to order by FON Board Member **Greg Jones (22) 66-68**. Then we dutifully listened to

(Continued on page 2)



Lunch (traditional New England clambake) at the UMass campus.

Reunion

(Continued from page 1)

presentations about the VSO, FON's microlending program, and the American University of Nigeria in Yola.

Professor Ifeanyi Menkiti of Wellesley



David (03) and Deborah Danielson really enjoying lobster.

College and Onitsha also took the floor. It was from him that some of us in group XXIII learned our first words of Igbo at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. He mesmerized us with two of his longer poems. The acoustics could not do justice to his words or the deeply accented, musical, sing-song tones in which he brought back the continent which none of us will ever forget.

There followed slides and moving presentations from a few of the 20 PCVs who last year returned to their places of service. The schools had changed and grown more crowded, the female students in the north were now covered, and a tragic number of students and teachers had died in the Biafran war. And yet the spirit and hope of the people remained.

From UMass, we went without interruption on to the Arlington Street Church in downtown Boston. Once again we feasted on Nigerian style food along with the requisite Star beer. We then danced the night away to the music of a high-life DJ.

Later, as we drifted off to our various destinations, some of us were doubtless left to wonder what it all had meant. Perhaps, if Margaret Mead were to write our collective biography, she would call it "Coming of Age in Nigeria". But could we say that we were the "change agents" that Washington had grandiosely intended? Not really. At most we might hope to have been

remembered the way **Bob Criso (21) 66-67** had been. When he went back to Nigeria last year, he learned, much to his surprise, that after our evacuation every student in his school named Robert--of whom there were many--would insist on also being called Bob.

Did we make a difference? Most certainly to ourselves. All of us felt that the Peace Corps had permanently broadened our perspective and made us better citizens of the world. We continued to volunteer to try and make a difference. We traveled widely and worked overseas. We sought out friends and even married spouses from different cultures. In honoring Senator Ted Kennedy with the



Kevin Burke, Phyllis Noble, Joe Doucet from group 17.

Presidential Medal of Honor, President Obama had reminded us of a story that Ted would often tell. It's about a boy who sees an old man tossing starfish stranded by a receding tide back into the sea. "There are so many," the boy says. "What difference can your efforts possibly make?" The old man studies the starfish in his hand and tosses it to safety, saying, "It makes a difference to that one." At least in that perspective, I think that we can safely say that we, too, made a difference.



Dinner (Nigerian food) and high life music at the historic Arlington Church.

FRIENDS OF NIGERIA NEWSLETTER

Quarterly publication of Friends of Nigeria, Inc. affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association

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Reunion



Greg Jones (22) presiding at the General Meeting.



Martha Bewick (spouse) offering a choice of beer – large Star or small Star.



Cathy Zastrow Onyemelukwe (04) and her sister Beth Hardig, Betsey and Owen Hartford (23), Robert Kent (13), ??, Phyllis Noble (17) in the buffet line.



Poetry by Professor Ifeanyi Menkiti of Wellesley College and Onitsha.



Greg Jones with caterers Neca Mutawakil, her daughter, and DJ Godwin Echebiri.



Good food, good beer, good conversation.



Bob Wynne (04), wife Sandy, Lucinda Boyd (05) on the subway.



High life dancing.



Nigerian folk dancing.

Group 22 Reunion

By Greg Jones (22) 66-68

Eight members of Group 22 met Friday night at the Dugout Café. **Pat Corey, Eleanor Epner** (now **Chloe**



Tad.

Weil), Peggy (Gekas) Hackman, Steve Hantman, Neil Jacobs, Greg Jones, Tad McArdle, and Tom Sharpe shared a few beers and caught up after 43+ years. In addition **Nat Ellis** was at the meeting but missed the reunion. The Dugout was actually in pretty good shape - it has not changed much since our summer 1966 training, but the elimination of smoking has made it a much more pleasant place. Despite the painted radiators, a dingy

hallway leading back to a restroom with a sprung door, cracked cement on the edges of the floor and ancient signs on the walls, it was brighter and everybody else had gotten MUCH younger.

What did we talk about? I cannot recall all the details, as there were always at least 3 conversations going, often more. Pat, Eleanor, Steve, & Tom had lived together in Roxbury during training, so they had more than the rest of us to talk about. Steve's son (now probably 40) was there as well, and I have to admit I recognized Steve through his son more easily than Steve himself.

Several who were unable to attend made efforts to communicate. **Sam Carmalt** and **Gail (Swantko) Lamont** sent letters that were shared with the group. **Rosalie (Petersen) Bhatnagar** sent in several pictures of herself and her gorgeous family. **John and Debbie Lossee** added before and after shots, **Chris Clarkson** added a write-up of his trip to Nigeria in 1998 as an election observer, and there is a link to **Alan Frishman's** Hobart and William Smith College web site. **Tad McArdle** and **Dick Holmquist** each added pictures. These can all be seen in the Group 22 section on WikiFON. (See *wikifon article on page 6*)

Tad, Peggy, & I walked back to our hotels after the reunion broke up around 11. It was a nice warm night



Tom.

and Boston was hopping. We were impressed. Here we old fogies were heading for home while the younger crowd was just getting revved up. Then it hit us: we were that age when we had the formative experience of Nigeria. No wonder it had such a profound impact.



Barb and Greg.

Group 23 Reunion

Edited by Jody and Warren Keller (23,23) 66-67

We were eight, as mentioned in Charlie's article (*see page 1*), and had a wonderful time reliving the past; we really do all look exactly the same as in 1966! Here are short bios on us, in our own respective words, for your pleasure.

Denny Dunmire: Married a traveling woman during a two-year teaching stint in Cleveland and headed to Zambia for 2+ years and one beautiful daughter. Michigan State for grad school for both Karen and me and then we bounced out to Jakarta for six of the

next eight years and one more beautiful daughter via Singapore. During the two odd years stateside (home forever) we taught at an elementary boarding school in Lake Placid, NY, caught the 1980



Charlie and Denny.

Olympics along the way, and bought a house to boot. From this point we headed to Abu Dhabi, back home to LP, on to Kuwait and Warsaw and now we are in possibly our last(ish) post in Madrid. Great life/schools/jobs/kids/travels/memories

Owen Hartford: (*See page 19 for a full-length bio of our new newsletter layout editor.*)

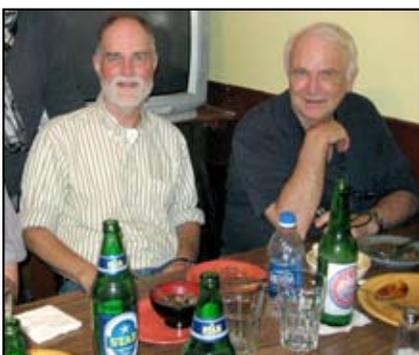
Warren Keller: Returning to Berkeley in 1968 (after our second Peace Corps year in Uganda), I spent the next 32 years working for IBM -- systems engineer and data base instructor -- until retiring in 2001. Married for nearly 46 years, we have three children and three



Maggie and Ed.

grandchildren. Travel remains a major interest – in addition to Nigeria last fall with FON, I've been in Tanzania to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in 2008 and we both went to S. Africa and Botswana on camping safaris in 2002 and 2003.

Jody Keller: After Uganda, home to Berkeley, three children born, then law school; have worked for 25+ years as a criminal appellate lawyer. Will retire as soon as my last, capital, case is over, if ever. Traveling, yes! Going back to Africa has been especially rewarding; as have been our self-defined "sabbaticals" -- nine months in Lawrence, Kansas (1995-96) and another in France (Provence, 2003-



Warren and Owen.

04). We volunteer regularly at a S.F. soup kitchen with a great community of folks.

Penny Callan Partridge: I went to social work school and then started Adoption Forum in Philadelphia - a rounding up of adopted people, adoptive parents, birth parents, etc., to help

us connect around our experiences. Besides adoption, my other two callings have been parenthood - two kids, two grandchildren - and poetry. My latest book, *The People They Brought Me*, is about people I've met through my poems. I love performing poems and doing a performance piece about my relationship with the Pandora story. Working on a book about adoption and social class.

David Rosen: After Nigeria I went to Liberia for two-plus years. Back home, I joined the Teacher Corps (with Owen Hartford and other RPCVs from all over Africa.) After an M.A. in International Education, a doctorate in curriculum development and evaluation, and several positions in education, I became the director of UMass Boston's Adult Literacy Resource Institute. Since 2003 I have been a full-time consultant with education and employment and training projects throughout the world, including South Africa and Liberia. I hope that more of my work will focus on Africa. My wife Rita, a PCV in Liberia, and I have lived in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston since 1978; we had one son, Jeffrey. Owen and I started a traditional music band in the 1970s that still flourishes <http://www.hornpipe.org>. We play Celtic, maritime, New England and American Colonial music.

Ed Stokes: Spent several years with the National Students Association in DC then returned to CA to work in politics and government. Wrote legislation creating the California Public Broadcasting Commission, served as its Executive Director until 1980 when I moved to Vermont and bought a small radio station. Retired from radio after 20 years in 2000. Three grown kids and 6 grandchildren, we spend our winters in San Diego and a good deal of time in Bozeman, MT.

Charlie Wyzanski: Spent my second Peace Corps year teaching in Senegal.

From there, law school in New York, legal services in Philadelphia, and a year at the Salzburg Seminar, where I met my Turkish wife-to-be, Nilgün Gökür. In 1978, back home to Cambridge where I've been ever since: teaching law and practicing it--in the private sector, as an Assistant DA, as Counsel to the Massachusetts prison system, and, for the past 10 years, as an Assistant Attorney General trying civil rights



Penny, David, Jody and Nilgun.

and employment discrimination cases. Daughter Talya is working in Istanbul and Tamara intending to find medical work in San Francisco after an internship in Pune, India. Nilgün does short-term World Bank, EU, and other consulting assignments in Africa and elsewhere as a development economist. Our family vacations are in Turkey.

Several other group 23 folks wrote about their activities, including **Lance Brown, Doug Shult, Margery Pasco, John Sherman, Bruce Durding, Lanny Andrus, Sharon Meeker Johns, Ned Greeley, Daryl Sande and Sonny Berg.** Hopefully we'll find a way, maybe wikiFON, to share more of these with you at a later date. Sharon's and Sonny's are already on WikiFON. (See *wikifon article on page 6*).

Photos compliments of Bob Wynne (04), Lucinda Boyd (05), Howard Soroos (11), Phyllis Noble (17), Barbara Jones (spouse), Peggy Gekas Hackman (22), Owen Harford (23), Jody Keller (23) and Warren Keller (23).

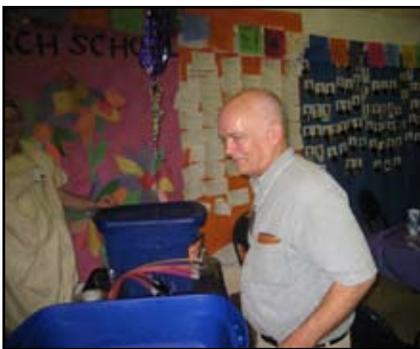
Group 11 Reunion



Bob Parr, Barbara Tansey Bush.



Neil Cullen, Phil Peek.



Bill Rodgers.



Cliff Schoff, Doug Hoecker.



Howard Soroos, Anne Beaman.



Neil's wife Bitsey, Sally Levin.



2008 Nigeria trip reunion, Rosaland Malloy (14), Barbara Jones (Greg's wife), Jody Keller (23). Not shown, Greg Jones (22), Warren Keller (23), Brynne Levinson Haines (03), Dan Haines (03), Lucinda Boyd (05), Bob Criso (21).

WikiFON

If you haven't checked out WikiFON (www.wikifon.org) lately, you really should. Scroll down to the "Quick Table of Contents" and click on "Groups." Find your group and click on any of the five options to the right of your group number – some may be empty; if so, just go back and try another or add your own new material. Both Groups 22 and 23 have new material since the Boston reunion. We encourage other groups to submit similar material – it's amazing how interesting our lives have been. And please add names or details to what is already there, as that is the strength of a wiki.

Group 23 includes bios of **Sharon Meeker Johns, Owen Hartford, David Rosen and Sonny Berg** at http://wikifon.org/index.php?title=Group_XXIII_Bios.

Group 22 includes photos from **John and Debbie Lossee, Tad McArdle and Dick Holmquist**. If you have your own photos from the day you can add them to http://wikifon.org/index.php?title=Group_XXII_Photos or if you want to share photos from later life, you can add them to the "Life Since Nigeria" section under the group 22 "description." (http://wikifon.org/index.php?title=Group_XXII_description). Currently in this section are photos and/or bios of **Rosalie (Petersen) Bhatnagar, John and Debbie Lossee, Chris Clarkson, Alan Frishman and Tad McArdle**.

FON General Meeting

The first part of the meeting, with FON president **Mike Goodkind (16)** presiding, focused on FON's VSO and Fantsuam projects. This part included a video on the value of these projects (board members **Anne Sherwood (11)** and **Fr. Edward Inyanwachi**) and talks about the recent merger of CUSO and VSO in Canada (**Anne Philpot (CUSO)**) and an update on the Fantsuam project (**Greg Jones**) (*page 8 for an even more recent update*).

The second part focused on FON members recent experiences in Nigeria. This included school visits and student reunions during FON's Nigeria trip last fall (**Dan Haines (03)**, **Lucinda Boyd (05)** (*Winter 2008 Newsletter*) and **Bob Criso (21)** (*Winter 2008 Newsletter*) and **Jim Garofalo (04)**'s just-completed four-year tenure as Academic Vice President at the American University of Nigeria in Yola (*Summer 2009 Newsletter*).

Carol E. (Kirkley) Hantman (22) 66-68

Friends of Nigeria has just learned of the death of Carol E. Hantman. Carol was a member of Nigeria XXII and was stationed in the Soba from 1966-1968. Her husband, Steve Hantman (22) 66-68, was stationed in nearby Funtua.

Carol died on March 13, 1993, in Cambridge, MA. She is survived by her husband and two children, Emily and David.

[Source: Steve Hantman]

Daniel S. Leegant (09) 63-65

Friends of Nigeria is sorry to learn of the death of Daniel Leegant. Daniel passed away in May, 2009, at the age of 80 in Santa Monica, CA.

As a member of Nigeria IX, Daniel taught theater arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 1963 to 1965. He also founded a travelling theater group comprised of young actors from Nigeria.

Prior to and after his Peace Corps service, Daniel was a film and stage actor. He appeared in episodes of Hawaii Five-O in the early 70s. His most significant film role was as the co-star of the Rob Nilsson (09) 63-65 film, Signal 7, in 1986. The movie Earnest Goes to Jail also featured Dan playing the role of the bank manager. Dan is fondly remembered by his family and friends as a wonderful character actor and story teller. He will be missed by all.

[Source: Stephen Vincent (15) 65-67]

George Browne Dines, Sr. (staff) 64-66

It is with deep regret that *Friends of Nigeria* reports the passing of George Browne Dines, Sr. George served as Northern Region Director in Nigeria from 1964-66.

George Dines was born February 28, 1931, in Washington, DC, and attended public school in District of Columbia Schools graduating from Dunbar High School in 1950. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Howard University in 1954 and completed US Army Infantry Officer School, Fort Benning, GA, in 1955. In 1957, he married the former Dorothy

Leona Baham to whom he was married for forty-seven years. In 1961, George moved to Kaduna, Nigeria, to work with the Ford Foundation as a program specialist. In 1964, he was appointed Peace Corps Regional Director for Nigeria's Northern Region.

Following his Peace Corps service, George returned to the states where he served as Chief of the Office of Program Planning and Evaluation for the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare. From 1975-79, he served as the Assistant Director for Program Management for the Office of the US Surgeon General and International Health in Rockville, MD. In 1980, he began a fifteen-year tenure as the Associate Administrator for International Health and Human Services during which he represented the department at the 2nd African-American Summit in Dakar, Senegal, and the 3rd African-American Summit in Libreville, Republic of Gabon. From 1995-99, George served as the Senior Advisor for International Health Affairs for the US Department of Health and Human Services where he received the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service. He was also a member of Vice President Gore and South African Vice President Thabo Mbeki's Working Group on Health and Sustainability.

Throughout his personal and professional life, George Dines maintained leadership roles in combating racial segregation, hatred and the neglect of African-American youth in Montgomery County (MD) schools. He was an avid supporter of the anti-apartheid movement in the United States and vigorously supported causes connected to social justice, service to youth and service to the poor.

George B. Dines, Sr. is survived by his three sons, George B. Dines, Jr., of Silver Spring, MD, Kedric Dines, Sr. of Tenafly, NJ, Christopher A. Dines of Fredericksburg, VA, two daughters-in-law, two grandchildren, one sister, nieces, nephews, cousins, and innumerable friends and cousins.

[Source: George B. Dines, Jr.]

James Frederick Myrick (03) 61-63

Friends of Nigeria is saddened to report the death of James Frederick "Tid" Myrick. James was a member of Nigeria III and served as a chemistry and physics teacher at Nike Grammar School (near Enugu) from 1961-1963. He passed away on July 3, 2009, after a long battle with leukemia.

James was born February 8, 1938, in Elizabethton, TN to Thomas and Florence Howard Myrick. He earned a B.S. in Chemistry at Knoxville College where he was a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Following his Peace Corps service in Nigeria, he married Barryett Enge on February 5, 1966, and was married for 22 years. He later earned a Masters Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Illinois and completed postgraduate studies at the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University.

As a career Foreign Service Officer, James worked for the U.S. State Department for over 20 years, during which time he and his family lived overseas in Mexico, Zaire, France, Jamaica, Panama, Australia and Greece. Following his state department service, he moved to Los Angeles, CA, where he worked as Associate Director of the study abroad program at Cal State University for an additional ten years. After retirement from Cal State, James moved back to Upper East Tennessee to be close to his family, friends, and beloved childhood home. He enjoyed travelling, tennis, and watching the LA Lakers. He was an avid fisherman, devoted father and loyal friend.

James Myrick is survived by his three children: Alissa Myrick, Ph.D. (Gregory Castillian) of Oakland, CA; Frederick Myrick (Akiko Kaneko) of Tokyo, Japan, and Christopher Myrick, Ph.D. (Gail Dethloff, Ph.D.) of Ft. Collins, CO; four grandchildren; three sisters; numerous nieces and nephews, his dear friend and fraternity brother, Garmon Moore, and his fellow Peace Corps volunteer, Bill Burke (05) 62-65.

[Source: Tetrick Funeral Home]

(Continued on page 9)

Fantsuam Project Update

By Greg Jones (22) 66-68

The Fantsuam Foundation has recently been awarded a N40 million (more than \$250,000) loan by Partners for Development (www.partnersfordevelopment.org). This is good news in that it confirms that FON found a trustworthy organization that has a microlending program others endorse as well. But it also strains their capacity to effectively put that much money to work in microloans. We thought we were doing a good thing extending their capital from \$50,000 to \$56,000 during the last year. How about quintupling their capital?

Since this is explicitly a loan, Fantsuam needs to put the money to work earning interest in order for the deal to work for them. But it also means that right now they don't need any additional money from FON for microlending. However, they do need additional money for other aspects of their microlending program. For example, their loan officers often have trouble traveling to remote villages. They have one four-wheel drive vehicle and two Peugeots. The Peugeots are not designed for the Nigerian roads, so they frequently break down. This results in missed appointments or delays

in returning from servicing remote loans. Upgrading their cars would significantly improve their chances of putting the \$250,000 to work.

Consequently, the major focus for the FON – Fantsuam relationship will likely be shifting away from microfinance. Fantsuam (Director John Dada specifically) is a font of new ideas for attacking poverty in Southern Kaduna. Furthermore, with VSO working on site at Fantsuam, we have excellent communications so we will be well informed of what our money is accomplishing. Once again the confluence of VSO and Fantsuam comes to the fore.

Other recent Fantsuam accomplishments include winning the NPCA's Africa Rural Connect competition (<http://arc.peacecorpsconnect.org/Round1Winners>). The idea is to use internet and communications technology to provide better information to guide rural farmers to the best time to bring their produce to market. For details, see <http://arc.peacecorpsconnect.org/view/299>. Cicely Brown, the VSO volunteer who wrote the application for the Africa Rural Connect competition, was interviewed on Voice of America September 9th about the program. The program was called Zittnet (Fantsuam's name for its communications network), so if you hear a British voice talking about that or



Agricultural Network Centers (where the market information will be communicated) on National Public Radio, you will know that they are talking about Fantsuam's project.

Fantsuam has also been selected by the Nigerian

Communications Commission (NCC) to provide one of 109 Community Communications Centers. This will make use of and allow them to extend their internet services and enable local entrepreneurs to create cyber cafes. They are also building a Food Store funded by another international agency to improve their nutritional support program for people living with HIV/AIDS. So Fantsuam has many things going on in addition to microlending that FON support can extend or enhance.

In addition to making your own donation to FON in support of

Keep The Lorry Rolling!

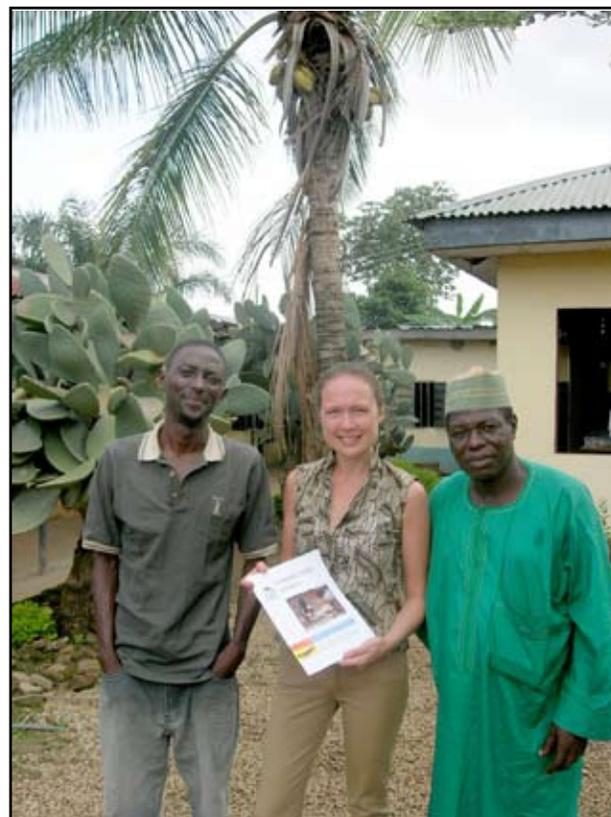
As of August 31:

VSO Project (since 2004):

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Total raised: | \$34,542 |
| Number of donations: | 607 |
| Number of donors: | 342 |

Fantsuam Project (since 2008):

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Total raised: | \$6,005 |
| Number of donations: | 104 |
| Number of donors: | 104 |



VSO volunteer Cicely Brown with Isaac and Haruna at the Fantsuam Foundation.

Fantsuam, please consider the following: A group of FON board members plans to create a holiday card with a photo of some of the work Fantsuam is doing and the inside caption: "\$___ has been donated in your name to The Fantsuam Foundation to extend their work in fighting poverty in Nigeria." We hope to have those cards available for the coming holiday season. This can solve the issue of what to get for the problem people on your gift list and for those who don't really need more "stuff." The same amount sent as a donation to Fantsuam could make a real impact. Contact Greg Jones at gregory.j@comcast.net for more information.

We also plan to have a progress report in the Winter 2009 Newsletter about the women in Zankan Marwa and in Dangoma who were microloan recipients of FON's \$5,000 donation earlier this year.



VSO Project Update

By Warren Keller (23) 66-67

FON's VSO support project has reached its fifth-year anniversary still going strong. We have helped sponsor ten volunteers and donated over \$34,000 during that time. **Bob Wilkinson** and **Esther Ten Hoorn** have completed their one-year assignments and have returned home. **David Perry** decided to stay on for another year. We expect to have new "adopted" volunteers to introduce to you in the Winter Newsletter. In the meantime you may be interested in reading about VSOer **Cicely Brown's** work with the Fantsuam Foundation in her informative and entertaining blog, <http://cicelyinnigeria.blogspot.com/>.

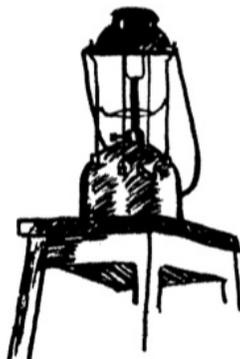
The Demise of the Tilley Lamp

By George Kanzler (21) 66-68

When I arrived in Nigeria in April 1966, I was given material for a *Tilley Lamp* issue from the outgoing editors (forget their names) and put it into shape by adding contributions from others (essays, short stories, poetry) and my own short play. Instead of Peace Corps administration approval and funding for publication, I got a runaround.

Finally, invited by PC administration to a meeting in Lagos I, disliking that city (I lived in Ibadan), reluctantly attended and found that PC administration had decided to take over the newsletter and scrap the name *Tilley Lamp* - the excuse being that not every PCV used one - for, get this, *Spectrum*. Then they also revealed they'd chosen a couple of PCVs to drop out of their PC jobs to put out *Spectrum*, which turned out to be a glossy PR magazine for propaganda about, not a vehicle for the creative expression of, PCVs in Nigeria.

I ended up putting out the newsletter for Mbari Artists & Writers Club in Ibadan (where, invited by J.P. Clark and Wole Soyinka, I was Secretary *Pro Tem.*), writing for Nigerian Armchair Theatre (a TV show), and contributing to Nigeria radio as a jazz DJ and occasional drama critic - all with the grudging permission, but no support or curtailing of my PC job from PC administration. Too bad, since the *Tilley Lamp* could have remained a lively creative outlet and forum for Nigeria PCVs.



Obituaries

Joseph W. Adams (02) 61-63

It is with regret that *Friends of Nigeria* reports the death of Joseph W. Adams. He passed away on May 7, 2009, at the age of 72 in Warwick, NY. He taught in Nigeria from 1961-1963 as a member of Nigeria II.

Joseph was born in February, 1937, and graduated from Cornell State College of Veterinary Medicine in 1961. He later earned his MPH at Columbia University. Following his Peace Corps service, he practiced veterinary medicine for over 40 years. He was the former Chief Veterinarian for the New York Zoos and was a lifelong member of the NYS Veterinary Medical Society. He was the owner of the International Veterinary Clinic in Warwick and was a member of the Warwick Reformed Church.

Dr. Adams is survived by his wife, Wendy Adams of Warwick; his children Joseph G. Adams of Boulder, CO; Sharon M. Dispoto and her husband Michael of Ringwood, NJ; Warren Adams of Warwick, NY; Timothy Adams of Warwick, NY, and several nieces and nephews.

Donald J. Heider (25) 66-68

Friends of Nigeria is saddened to report the death of Donald J. Heider who passed away in October, 2008, in Reading, PA. Don had just retired from Albright College in Reading when he suffered a fatal heart attack.

As a Peace Corps volunteer, Donald served as a teacher at the Girls Secondary School in Bama & Maiduguri from 1966-68. Don spent his years following the Peace Corps in college admissions, most recently at Albright College in Reading, PA. He was very innovative and produced marketing and promotional materials that were sent to prospective students of the college.

[Source: Sister-in-Law Ann Heider]

Edited by Virginia DeLancey (04)
62-64

Nigeria Marks Ten Years of Democratic Rule

May 29 was celebrated as “democracy day” in Nigeria, marking ten uninterrupted years since the return to civilian rule in 1999. Nigeria had been ruled by the military for 32 of its 49 years since gaining independence in 1960. In 1999 former military leader Olusegun Obasanjo was elected to once again establish civilian rule. While some say that the restoration of democracy has put Nigeria back on track to become one of the economic powers of Africa, other Nigerians say that they have little to celebrate because the democracy dividends that they had hoped for have yet to be attained. One university professor suggested that rather than “democracy day”, it should be called “civil rule day”. (Source: VOA News, 5/29/09).

Human Rights Watch Criticizes President Yar’Adua

As President Umaru Yar’Adua reaches the mid-point of his first term, Human Rights Watch (HRW) says that he is undermining anti-corruption efforts, failing to address the root causes of violence in the Niger Delta, or rein in abusive security forces, while maintaining discriminatory state policies against “non-indigene” inhabitants of states. HRW also says that elections in Nigeria are still determined by fraud and violence, and embezzlement of public funds bars citizens from accessing basic services such as clean water or education. The group says that after promising “zero tolerance” of corruption, the President fired the “dynamic” head of the anti-corruption commission.

In a 10-point human rights agenda for Nigeria, HRW calls for improving oversight of government expenditure, holding government officials accountable for embezzling funds or instigating violence, barring discriminatory “non-indigene” policies and prosecuting security force members found to be

involved in extrajudicial killings. (Source: IRIN [Dakar], 6/9/09).

Government Offers Amnesty Program

In mid-July, the Nigerian government offered amnesty and unconditional pardon for rebels in the Niger Delta, in a 60-day deal aimed at reducing unrest in the region. The initial response was far below the government’s expectations, with many of the rebels taking a wait-and-see attitude because of widespread doubt about the government’s seriousness. Analysts maintained, at the time, that the most important militant group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), had to take part and publicly endorse the process for it to succeed.

Hundreds of militants turned in their weapons, but the amnesty program was in danger of falling apart by the end of the first four weeks. Although the government said that the program was on course, and that several rebel commanders had chosen to disarm, MEND criticized the offer as a sham and vowed to resume attacks when the 60-day cease-fire expires. MEND says that the plan does not address the decades-old grievances such as pollution, economic development and a greater share of the oil wealth for the delta, while the coordinator of the Amnesty Implementation Committee has maintained that the government is not willing to negotiate any deals other than the official amnesty.

The government estimated that as many as 10,000 gunmen could participate in the program. It set up 27 rehabilitation camps in the Niger Delta to process rebels who surrender and accept the amnesty, but most of the camps remained empty after four weeks of the program. Local leaders say that the camps are not functional because the government has not provided any facilities, equipment, supplies, or personnel to handle the work. Others say that the government had promised to give cash (\$135 a month plus approximately \$100 a month for food

for several months) and job training along with the pardons. The last amnesty offer, in 2004, collapsed after rebels complained about disarmament payments and found no jobs waiting for them. The current amnesty program ends on October 4. (Sources: VOA News [Abuja], 8/21/09, 8/31/09, 9/13/09).

Social Security to Begin Next Year

After 49 years of independence, the Federal Government has said that it would begin implementation of a national social security system beginning in January. General Yakubu Gowon, former Head of State who is now Chairman of the National Working Committee on Social Security Policy, submitted the draft policy to the Minister of Labour. (Source: *Leadership* [Abuja], 8/28/09).

Billions of Missing NLNG Funds Traced to the U.S.

N325 billion (\$2.1 billion) belonging to Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) has been discovered in an unnamed Nigerian bank and another bank in Chicago. The amount is said to be part of the total amount of N500 billion (\$3.3 billion) proceeds accruing to the Federal Government from the gas venture. Details from the two banks were not available at publication time; however, the NLNG Manager of Communications declared that it was not true that government funds had been diverted and maintained that all payments by the NLNG to the government were made by electronic wire transfer which provides an audit trail. (Source: *This Day* [Abuja], 9/1/09).

Impounded Ukrainian Aircraft Linked to Militants

A Ukrainian aircraft seized at Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport in June is suspected of having links with Niger Delta militants. It was reported to be loaded with 18 crates of arms and ammunition when it was impounded by security agents. The Director of Military Intelligence is carrying out the investigation. It was suggested that the aircraft might have made an

emergency stop in Nigeria because of technical problems on its way to Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, but that is doubtful, as some of the documents and weapons recovered during a raid on one of the militants' camps indicated that Ukraine was a major source of arms and ammunition to the militants. However, intelligence officers are investigating whether the arms were supplied to the militants from Ukraine via Malabo. (Source: *This Day* [Lagos], 6/19/09).

Schools Benefit from Microsoft IT Academy Program

Anambra State government is the latest state to partner with Microsoft on IT education, the Microsoft IT Academy, to enable institutions to offer a curriculum utilizing the latest technologies while learning about information technology and earning Microsoft technology certifications. Each school under the scheme will receive 50 PCs.

Microsoft Nigeria announced six months ago that it has produced its youngest ever Microsoft Certified Professionals. With 287 academies, Nigeria now has the most IT Academies within the Middle East and Africa region and is ranked among the top 10 countries in the world adopting the Microsoft IT Academy Program. (Source: *Vanguard*, 9/1/2009).

Shell Settles Lawsuit Over 1995 Deaths of Activists

Royal Dutch Shell has agreed to pay \$15.5 million to settle a lawsuit over the 1995 deaths of Nigerian author and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and others. The lawsuit, brought to a federal court in Manhattan by family members and surviving activists, alleged that Shell was complicit in the deaths of Mr. Saro-Wiwa and other activists. Shell has denied that it played any role in the execution by the military government but said that it was prepared to go to court to clear its name.

A massive oil spill in Ogoniland in 1970 inspired Mr. Saro-Wiwa, founder of the Movement for the Survival of

the Ogoni People (MOSOP), to launch a campaign against Shell's Nigerian onshore unit. The campaign eventually led to abandonment of oil production in Ogoniland in 1993. This issue of Ogoniland also brought international criticism of the oil industry when Mr. Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists were executed by a Nigerian military regime in 1995.

The plaintiffs of the lawsuit said that \$5 million of the settlement would go into a trust fund for social programs for the Ogoni people. In addition, a spokesperson said that Shell still has to address pollution, neglect and degradation in Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta region. (Sources: VOA News, 6/9/09; *The Wall Street Journal* [New York], 6/10/09).

2009 Rainy Season Causes Damaging Floods

The 2009 rainy season has caused heavy damage from flooding throughout West Africa, affecting hundreds of thousands of people and killing 160 according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The damage has stretched from Mauritania to Cameroon. The Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said that flooding in late August affected 150,000 people and displaced tens of thousands across the north. Kaduna, Gombe, Niger, Benue, Adamawa, Nassarawa, Zamfara Sokoto and Jigawa states, as well as Abuja have been the worst affected. NEMA's Director General reported that floods had submerged entire villages and washed away burial grounds, although no lives had been lost in Nigeria. However, as of early September, it was not yet the end of the rainy season. (Source: IRIN [Dakar], 9/11/09).

Forty "Lady Mechanics" Graduate

After three years of intensive auto repair training, including internships in Nigeria's most important auto companies, 40 women sponsored by the MTN Foundation under the "Lady Mechanic Initiative" graduated

as qualified auto mechanics, and 35 of them have already secured employment. The MTN Foundation partnered with the Lady Mechanic Initiative to help underprivileged young women quit a life of financial dependency and start earning an honest living through auto repair work. Each of the successful graduates received a set of tools, while the top three also received various gifts, including a DVD mini Hi-Fi system, a microwave, and a pressure cooker. (Source: *Daily Independent* [Lagos], 8/21/09).

New Education Index Places Nigeria 79th out of 100 Developing Countries

A new index (School Success Index for Developing Countries) that indicates how well prepared children are to succeed in school puts Chad last among 100 countries studied, followed by Afghanistan, Burundi, Guinea Bissau, and Mali. Nigeria was ranked 79th among the 100 countries. Save the Children compiled the index by evaluating primary school-age children not attending school, under-five survival, Grade 1 repetition, female literacy and female fertility. In the bottom 5 countries, 20 percent of children do not reach age five, and those who do often suffer cognitive and physical impairments limiting their productivity and development, according to the report, "State of the World's Mothers 2009: Investing in the Early Years". The new index indicates that in Nigeria, 19 percent of children do not reach age five. The index also states that in Nigeria, 35 percent of primary school-aged children were out of school in 2007 (8.1 million in 2006). The female literacy rate for Nigerian women was only 64 percent in 2007 and the total fertility rate was 5.4 (high, though not the highest on the African continent). (Source: IRIN [Dakar], 5/7/09).

Designers to Represent Nigeria in New York's Fashion Week

New York will welcome designers and models from around the world to

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

its New York Fashion Week to exhibit their Spring/Summer 2010 collections in September. Nigeria's international designers Joan Okorodudu of House of Joia, Lanre Dasilva of LDA, Ngozi Cardow of Zizi and Frank Osodi of House of Bunor are expected to showcase the uniqueness and beauty of African clothing. Top models from Joan Okorodudu's Isis Models will participate, as well as Nigeria's newest singing sensation Nyanya, who will be performing to guests on the red carpet. New York hosts two major events each year to unveil fall designs in February and spring collections in September. (Source: *Vanguard*, 8/28/09).

Nollywood Goes to Canada

Nollywood, the second largest film industry in the world, is preparing to capture the world. The Nollywood North America Film Festival is scheduled for September 24-27 in Canada. Prior to the festival, various stakeholders, including film makers, make-up artists, costumiers and Nollywood stars, are expected to explore the opportunity to showcase the best of Nollywood to the world.

Film maker and director Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, representing the organizers, noted that the festival is heavily backed by the Nigerian High Commissioner in Canada and that it was conceived as a means of popularizing Nollywood movies, especially in North America, and help put Nollywood on the global map of leading film-making nations. The festival follows the successful premier of the documentary on Nigeria, *Nollywood Babylon*, made by Canadian film makers, which allowed Nollywood to present itself to the world without distortion. (Source: *Vanguard*, 8/28/09).

Coastal Populations at Risk

Several African cities are at risk from rising sea levels and intense storms, according to experts. Poor neighborhoods and slums in Buguma and Okrika in Nigeria, Freetown in Sierra Leone, Bathurst in the Gambia,

and Tanga in Tanzania, are especially vulnerable. In low-income urban centers, infrastructure is often non-existent or ill-maintained, according to a World Bank report, "Sea Level Rise and Storm Surges - A Comparative Analysis of Impacts in Developing Countries," while storm-water drainage infrastructure is often outdated and inadequate. In Nigeria, much of the land in and around Lagos is less than 2 meters above sea level, so it too is expected to be affected by rising sea levels.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a trend has emerged since the mid-1970s where storms tend to last longer and be more intense, with a strong correlation to the rise in tropical sea surface temperature. In sub-Saharan Africa, storm surge zones are concentrated in Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique and Nigeria. Other African countries noted in the report are Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, South Africa, and Somalia. (Source: IRIN [Nairobi], 5/7/09, 5/20/09).

Vaccination Campaign Succeeding

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that vaccination campaigns are reaching more children than ever in polio-prone states in northern Nigeria. The number of children in Nigeria who have never been immunized against the disease has decreased since last year to 8 percent from 16 percent. Progress has been most pronounced in Kano state where evaluators have found that 12 percent of children have never been immunized, compared to 50 percent in 2008.

From the beginning of the year until May 12 (the latest figures available from WHO), 243 people in Nigeria were diagnosed with polio, up from 167 confirmed cases in the same period in 2008. Last year, 799 people were infected with polio in Nigeria. It is important to stop the transmission of the virus in Nigeria because until that happens, other West African countries will continue to be at risk of re-infection. (Sources: Devex, Global Development Briefing

[briefing@devex.com], 5/28/09; IRIN [Dakar], 5/20/09).

Unintended Births are Increasing

A new study by the US-based Guttmacher Institute and the Women's Health and Action Research Center in Benin City reports that despite large improvements in young women's education between 1990 and 2003, there have not been major gains in sexual and reproductive health awareness. There has been some increase in contraceptive use, which means that young women are making an effort to protect themselves against unintended pregnancies and STDs, including HIV, but they are not doing it as successfully as they should. One of the reasons is that young people lack the kind of information they need. For example, between the years 1990 and 2003, the proportion of young people who know where to obtain contraceptive methods declined from 31 percent to 18 percent. Also, according to the study, government policies to promote sexual and reproductive health information for young Nigerians exist on paper but they have not been successfully implemented. (Source: VOA News [Washington, D.C.], 6/16/09).

Childbirth is Too Deadly

Only 35 percent of births in Nigeria are attended by a skilled health professional, and one in 18 women dies in pregnancy or childbirth, according to World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) statistics. The Chair of the Nigerian Senate Health Committee reported that Nigeria's maternal mortality rate is comparable to those countries at war or just emerging from war. Half of Nigeria's maternal deaths are due to postpartum hemorrhaging, which unskilled health workers lack the knowledge or equipment to stop. Also, with an average of 5.5 births per woman, West Africa has the world's highest fertility rates which puts women at greater risk of dying in birth, according to UNICEF. A fifth birth can be more dangerous than all of the previous pregnancies put together.

Becoming pregnant at a young age also increases the chances of mortality, and many Nigerian women, particularly in the north, give birth in their teenage years. However, reducing early pregnancy can be difficult, given women's social position, according to UNICEF's latest "State of the World's Children" report. (Source: IRIN [Abuja], 6/3/09).

Scams Evolve but Motive Remains Money

Early Nigerian scams based on an orphaned prince reclaiming his inheritance or a bank employee sharing access to a fortune if the money can be transferred to an overseas account have evolved into a family of scams that include romance scams, rental scams, and even puppy sale scams. They reveal the adaptability of the scammers to stay a step ahead of law enforcement and find new ways to dupe victims.

The scams have been going on in various forms for many years, and they are well known, but people still fall for them. The Nigerian Embassy in Washington has even issued warnings. Its website states in all caps, "YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED AGAIN!!"

But, people still fall for the scams, and it is believed that the explanation is more complex than simple greed and stupidity. Andrew Smith, a professor at the University of Glasgow believes that the scammers skillfully exploit Western notions of Africa as being chaotic and of Africans as being unsophisticated and "needing white guidance or support" in capitalizing on their resources. This is why, he maintains, that on the streets of Nigeria there is celebration of the "scammer" as someone who is taking a kind of historical revenge against the greed and arrogance of white people in their dealings with Africa. (Source: *Chicago Tribune*, 9/14/09).

Economy is Expected to Grow by 5 Percent

The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria has expressed optimism that the

country is expected to achieve a growth rate of 5 percent this year as a result of non-oil growth in the agriculture sector, improved oil prices, renewed production following the amnesty program in the Niger Delta, reduction in inflation, and the country's robust foreign reserves. He also has said that as a result of the efforts to improve infrastructure, particularly in the power sector, Nigeria has the potential to attain double digit growth by 2010 and 2011. (Source: *This Day* [London], 8/29/09).

U.S. Deports 63 Nigerians

The U.S. deported 63 Nigerians for possession of illegal fire arms and residing in the country illegally. The deportees were returned to Nigeria and handed over to Nigerian Immigration Services. Most of the seven women and 56 men had been living in the U.S. for between 2 and 10 years. Some had originally traveled to the U.S. when they could not secure a decent job in Nigeria. (Sources: *Daily Trust* [Lagos], 8/28/09; *This Day* [Lagos]).

Treasurer's Report

Fiscal Year 2008-09

Peter Hansen, Treasurer

Income:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| FON dues | 8,392.50 |
| NPCA dues | 3,150.00 |
| Unrestricted donations | 2,160.00 |
| VSO & Fantsuam Projects | 10,285.00 |
| <u>Miscellaneous</u> | <u>36.41</u> |
| Total Income | \$24,023.91 |

Total Income fell short of last year's by about \$7,000. This decrease can be attributed principally to two factors, (1) a decrease in dues received – about \$2,000 – a concern of the board, and (2) the \$5,000 of ticket sales for the San Francisco Event, included in last year's income. On the upside, unrestricted donations were up by over \$1,300.

Expenses:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Publications (newsletters and directory) | 7,761.57 |
| NPCA (dues rebates, affiliation fee & donation) | 4,550.00 |
| VSO & Fantsuam Projects | 9,000.00 |
| Membership Solicitation & Fundraising | 924.47 |
| USPS & website | 277.88 |
| <u>Miscellaneous</u> | <u>111.39</u> |
| Total Expenses | \$22,625.31 |

Total Expenses were less than last year's by about \$5,500. Last year's expenses included about \$4,500 for the San Francisco Event, and about \$4,000 more in grants to our VSO Project. On the other hand, this year's publication expenses were up by about \$2,800, owing to publication of the 2009 FON Directory and increased postage costs. This year we also donated \$1,000 to the NPCA for their Peace Corps 50th Anniversary preparations. It should be noted, that we also invested \$1,500 of our reserves in the NPCA's Microenterprise Fund.

Say You're One of Them

By Uwem Akpan

Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Co., New York, 2008

Reviewed by Bob Graham (07) 63-65

A few weeks ago I happened to see a full-page color ad in the New York Times Book Review. The ad was a collection of compliments raving about the first book by a citizen of the old Eastern Region of Nigeria. The book contains five stories of the traumatic struggles faced by contemporary young people in five African countries. After reading these stories, I largely agree with the glowing appraisals.

The author is a well-traveled and highly educated native of Ikot Akpan Eda. Father Akpan, a Jesuit priest, studied at Kings College, Lagos; Creighton and Gonzaga Universities and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. His most recent degree is a 2006 MFA from the University of Michigan.

The shortest, and “lightest,” story,

“What Language Is That,” describes the mutual affection of two young girls (whom Western kids would call BFF) and how they are separated as the wealthier family decides to move to Addis Ababa to escape worsening Muslim-Christian conflict in their small Ethiopian town.

Another short story takes place in the slums of Nairobi. “An Ex-mas Feast” portrays an impoverished family’s struggle to survive – a struggle that is alleviated by the income from 12-year-old Maisha’s labor as a prostitute. Her little brother cannot go to school unless he can pay school fees; only Maisha can bring home enough money to help her beloved brother.

The grisly, horrendous slaughter of Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda is encapsulated in the story of one “mixed marriage” family. Nine-year-old Monique anchors the telling of the traumatic events of the last days that her family is intact. The beautiful countryside, with “plantain trees ... leaves rolled up, like yellow-green swords slicing the wind” where “when it rains, the red earth runs like blood under a green skin” contrasts with the actual machete-swords and real blood. Read “My Parents’ Bedroom” and weep.

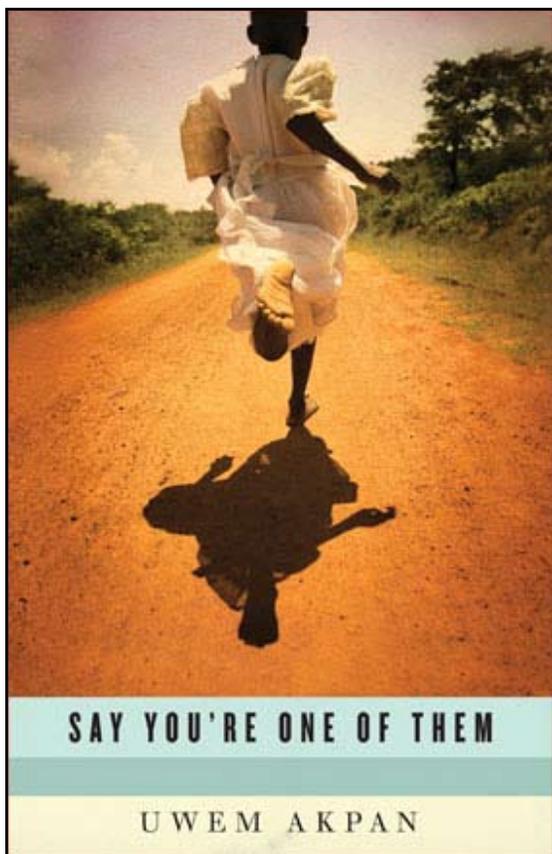
Two novelettes continue the themes of dramatic life-threatening adventures of pre-teen and teen-age children. “Fattening for Gabon” and “Luxurious Hearses” are each 136-page narratives in which the reader has an inkling of impending doom almost from the start. Akpan describes with just the right amount of detail the foods, clothes, language,

terrain, and especially the physical traits and belief systems of the characters. Writing as if seeing the events through the eyes of children, but very perceptive and worldly-beyond-their-years children, he conjures up their undercurrents of anxieties that suddenly erupt in terror when events take a turn for the worse. The protagonists cope as best they can with amazing fortitude. But the reader is taken along on their harrowing roller-coaster rides through joy to anguish, simple pleasures to intense pain, optimistic anticipation to powerless dread, and calm acceptance to terrifying anxiety.

Although most of the tales might plausibly have taken place in Nigeria, the FON reader will find “Luxurious Hearses” the most familiar. Recent rampages, mainly in the North, and the sporadic outbursts of tribal/religious/political conflict over the past 40 years, are personalized in this story. The saga of poor Jubril, who has lived in both Khamfi (a northern town my research failed to locate) and the Delta, and is Muslim although baptized Catholic, is a microcosm of Nigeria’s recurring and unpredictable violence. Kafka-esque dilemmas provoke questions: Who is my friend? Who is my enemy? Can I trust anyone? Will God protect me? Where IS God??

To this reader, some conversations and arguments seem rather implausible, and emotional states of main characters sometimes reverse with impossible rapidity. However, these supposed flaws may simply be the result of narrating so many opposing social, economic, political, religious, and tribal beliefs as succinctly as possible.

A remarkable feature of the book is Akpan’s very colorful use of language. The interesting patois of local dialects, English and occasional French, with plentiful use of idioms and proverbs, is often confusing, and sometimes comical.

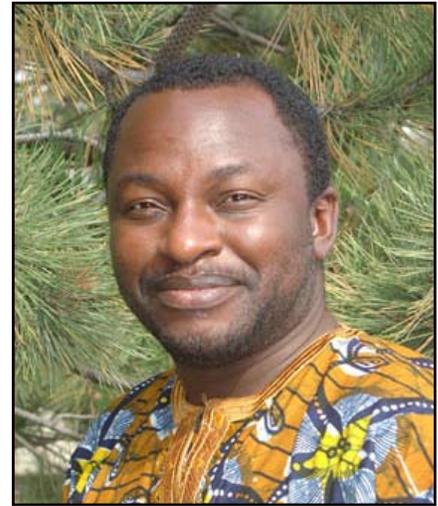


The linguistic gymnastics would be all the more impressive, I am sure, if I knew the vernaculars. Many inventive phrases remind one of the strange (to us PCVs) sayings and speech patterns that helped make the Nigeria we knew so colorful. Familiar items from the 60s – “wahala,” the harmattan, amala and garri and stews, motorcycles, agbadas, the gorgeous coconut palm-lined coast of Dahomey (Benin), etc. – may also push your nostalgia button.

Above all, Akpan is a master at instilling unremitting tension and expectation of disaster even while simply describing rather mundane activities. Far

from light reading, these stories leave one feeling fatigued and drained. They are an excellent vehicle to carry straight to the heart the moral and emotional impact of the tragedies that have bedeviled Africa. One wishes the heartbreak were relegated to a distant past.

To counter the atmosphere of pessimism that is created, one would like to see a book recounting numerous examples of upbeat, positive ongoing efforts that portend a more sanguine future for the continent. But that is not what Akpan was about.



Uwem Akpan

It's Our Turn To Eat, The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower

By Michela Wrong

HarperCollins, 2009, 354 pages, \$25.99

Reviewed by David Strain (07) 63-66

FON's Googlegroup has generated a raft of comments on corruption in Africa, and our Secretary of State has lectured Africans on the topic during her recent trip there. I reviewed a book on Nigerian corruption at the local level, *A Culture of Corruption* by Daniel Jordan Smith, an American married to a Nigerian (FON Newsletter Spring 2007). One difficulty with some discussions for me has been the hypothetical nature of the inquiry owing to the lack of facts about the actions and motivations of the bad guys, particularly at the highest levels of government.

No such problem obtains in *It's Our Turn to Eat*, Michela Wrong's exciting account of John Githongo. A member of the Kenyan Kikuyu elite, Githongo is appointed in 2003 to be the anti-corruption czar in the newly elected administration of President Mwai Kibaki, whose election campaign pledged to clean up the corruption of the former President Daniel arap Moi. Githongo reports directly to the President, and his office is two doors down from the President's. Confident of his abilities

from his past work for Transparency International and assured by President Kibaki that he will have the President's ear, Githongo and his staff embark on an active anti-corruption campaign. . . only to find that Kibaki's cabinet members are deep into corruption scams, and so unconcerned by John Githongo that they have no reluctance to detail their frauds in Githongo's presence (unfortunately for them when Githongo was secretly taping the conversations.) They're sure that as a Kikuyu in a Kikuyu administration, he will not reveal their activities. More distressingly, it slowly becomes clear that President Kibaki has no plans to do anything about it, and may be involved himself. Githongo resigns and flees to England, with his notes and a set of the incriminating undercover tapes. He releases his information to the press while hiding in fear of assassination by the Kenyan secret police.

Throughout her depiction of this cloak and dagger situation the author discusses the pressures on Githongo not to rat out his Kikuyu colleagues, his fears of retribution on his family and the effects on his career. The author has a front row seat. She is close to Githongo

(sympathetic but not uncritical) - he hides in her apartment during his first days of exile in Britain. The result is a book with the suspense of a spy novel, giving a detailed analysis of what it is to buck the crony system. As for culprits, foreign aid givers are not spared. Wrong faults Britain and the World Bank for their willingness to ignore governmental corruption (even after Githongo's disclosures) while handing over large sums for development to the Kenyan government. On this issue the approach of the Bush administration, and of Paul Wolfowitz when President of the World Bank, to limit aid to countries with good governance has much to be said for it.

Michela Wrong is a journalist for the Financial Times, Reuters and the BBC, who previously wrote *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, a well regarded book on the depredations of Mobutu in the Congo. *It's Our Turn To Eat*, with its vivid descriptions of corruption at the highest level, is as close as we'll get to understanding Nigerian corruption until the biographies of Nigeria's former whistle blowers, Nuhu Ribadu and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, are written.

Then and Now

By Floyd Sandford (10) 64-66

Born in 1940 on Long Island, NY, I attended St. Lawrence University then headed west to Southern Illinois University for a Master's degree in Wildlife Management. Confused about a future direction and harboring a desire to see Africa ever since reading Frank Buck novels as a kid, I applied for the Peace Corps. I received a telegram from Sargent Shriver inviting me to join the training program for Nigeria X less than an hour after the news reached my Carbondale office that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas.

Because of my interests in natural history, I requested to "go bush" in a rural location, but was assigned instead to teach science at a private Ibadan secondary school, Ibadan Boys High School. Looking back, I consider the years 1964-66 as two of the most exciting and personally fulfilling of my life. My book *"African Odyssey: The Adventurous Journeys of a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa"*, published by iUniverse in 2007, recounts my time in Africa and the three months of travel throughout Europe immediately afterwards.

Returning to the States, I attended Michigan State University for a year, then finished my PhD in Zoology (animal behavior) at the University of Oklahoma. My wife Sharon (whom I had met at MSU) and I worked as nature counselors at Camp Chewonki in Maine for two summers, and I joined the biology department at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I worked at Coe until 2004. I took a phased retirement from teaching, having



Floyd, then.

reached the conclusion that 35 years of being underpaid, overworked, and underappreciated were enough.

A strong advocate of off-campus study and learning experiences, I often took students to distant locales such as San Diego, Texas, and Belize, including teaching a course in seashore biology on Dog Island, Florida for a month every January for 20 years. While Iowa offers all of the benefits of the midwestern lifestyle, it lacks proximity to an ocean, a favored destination, and so I developed a research program in marine biology that involved studying marine symbiotic associations and especially the relationship between hermit crabs and hermit crab sponges. My study of hermit crab sponges, a uniquely fascinating group of sponges (see www.public.coe.edu/departments/Biology/hermit.html) and the only sponges that move, resulted in research trips and attendance at scientific meetings in many different parts of the world.

I continue to do research and am currently studying the association between certain sponges and sponge-dwelling shrimp in Belize. This research is being done in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Ostrava, Czech Republic. In 2009 we published a scientific paper describing a new species of sponge-dwelling shrimp from the Caribbean, and we are currently preparing other scientific articles on interesting aspects of sponge/shrimp associations.

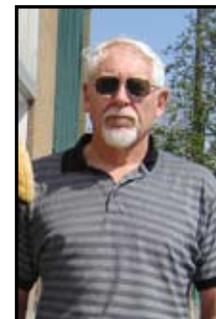
Intrigued by the opportunities offered by theatre to both entertain and educate, in 2000 I wrote a one-man play, *"Darwin Remembers,"* which describes the life and work of the English naturalist, Charles Darwin. I perform the play upon request at colleges, universities, natural history museums, churches, and humanist societies throughout the country and to date have given over 30 performances (see www.public.coe.edu/~fsandfor/Darwin/index.html).

Ever since I can remember, a lifelong dream has been to own and manage land for increased biodiversity and as a wildlife sanctuary. Prior to my retirement from college teaching I purchased 30 acres of land in the beautiful rolling forested hills

of northeast Iowa. Off-grid life on my sanctuary in the country, far removed from the world of texting and twittering, is simple and uncomplicated. I have an Amish-built log cabin with electricity provided by photovoltaic panels, a roof rainwater collection system, and a sturdy outhouse. On my acreage I plant dozens of native trees each year, maintain a small hazelnut plantation, tend a garden, and create habitat (e.g. brush piles and hibernacula) for wildlife. When I sit on my porch to watch the hummingbirds visiting my feeders, the bluebirds and wrens nurturing young in their nest boxes, and the turkey vultures soaring overhead, all I can see on the landscape are wooded undulating hills and farm fields. Not long ago I finished building a small pond for amphibians, and within days it was filled with recently hatched gray tree frog tadpoles.

I continue to engage in one of my favorite pastimes – travel to foreign locales, often to do long distance hiking. Favorite destinations include Belize, Peru, the British Isles, and Prague (with ten visits to date) and favorite hikes include the scenically beautiful Pembrokeshire Coast Path in Wales, the coast paths in Devon and Cornwall, and the Kerry Way in Ireland. I typically gravitate to off-the-beaten-track locales at off-season times, usually staying in modest B and Bs, youth hostels, or monasteries. Because of my interest in preservation and conservation, I often join Earthwatch Expeditions. On the four expeditions I've joined so far, I've studied macaws in the Peruvian Amazon, parrot fish on the Belizean barrier reef, basking sharks in the waters of the Scottish Hebrides, and echidnas and gowannas on Kangaroo Island, Australia.

In my spare time I volunteer as a docent at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. I also work as a tutor at the Catherine



Floyd, now.

McAuley Center, where I teach English and help recent immigrants prepare for citizenship. To date, I've attended citizenship ceremonies for two of my students and am currently helping three women of Nigerian birth prepare for their citizenship test.

Sharon and I have two children, a son Stephen who is a graphic artist, and a daughter Susan who is currently

finishing her second year as a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru. She recently accepted a position as a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) and will be extending her service in Peru for a third year. She will be working in Chaclayo, spending half her time working with new volunteers on site development and the other half working with a local Peruvian agency on solid waste management issues.

Since my Peace Corps days I have returned to Africa twice – once for a tour of Egypt and the other occasion to visit Dar Es Salaam and Zanzibar for sightseeing and snorkeling. I have thought about returning to Nigeria, but there are many other places I have not yet seen, and I think I would rather remember Nigeria as I knew it, so full of promise, in the 60s.

A Glimpse of Nigeria in 2008

By Larry Lesser (09) 63-65

I would have liked to join last year's FON revisit to the land of our Peace Corps service, but work intervened



Larry with track team members at Government Technical Institute, Enugu, 1964-5.

instead. As luck would have it, however, my work took me briefly to Nigeria after all. I was hired to participate in an evaluation of Department of Defense-funded projects to strengthen counterterrorism capability in cooperating countries. The evaluation was conducted by an interagency team from the inspector general offices of the Departments of Defense and State; I was one of the two State representatives.

The Nigeria program consisted of establishing radar stations for coastal surveillance, as part of a cooperative regional system envisioned for the entire West African coast. The approval process within the Nigerian government and between the Nigerians and the US was prolonged; when our group visited

Nigeria the radar equipment was finally arriving and was being installed but was not yet operational. The Nigerian Navy was the recipient and operator of the radar equipment, and they were our hosts for the evaluation. Four members of our evaluation team spent three busy days in Abuja and Lagos talking to Navy officers and visiting one of the newly-installed radar stations. We also had excellent briefings at the American Embassy in Abuja.

Although there was nothing especially sensitive about our mission in Nigeria, our team (three in US military uniform) was required by the embassy to follow strict security procedures in both cities. We were not allowed to go out on our own into the towns. We were taken to our appointments in armored vehicles; otherwise we had to remain at our comfortable hotels. So I didn't have an opportunity to experience street life.

We did get a vivid idea of the tumult of life in Lagos during our ride to and from the Navy headquarters in Apapa at the port of Lagos. My military colleagues and I were impressed by the mass of people and traffic all along the roadway. Traffic moves so slowly that endless lines of hawkers patrol between the lanes with a bewildering array of products for sale. Almost all of the hawkers are young men or boys. They were selling such things as individual cigarettes, batteries, cell phones, children's games and toys, lottery tickets, electronic games, even toilet seats – you name it. It didn't look like they were doing much business. When we passed

a marketplace seen from an overpass we were impressed by the amazing density of humanity in the area.

Our contacts with the Nigerian Navy officers were cordial, professional, and friendly. During an informal gathering with several of them after our briefing session, I mentioned that I had been a PCV in Enugu back in the 60s. That stimulated lively conversation, especially with the two or three easterners in the group. It occurred to me (and to them too, I suppose) that I was a teacher in Nigeria before these officers were born. And yet it doesn't seem that long ago to me.

It was a wonderful lucky break for me to get even that little glimpse of Nigeria more than 40 years after I finished my time as a PCV. It would have been interesting to go back to Enugu where I had been stationed, but that wasn't in the cards. But not a problem; that old sense of comfort and delight to be among Nigerians came back in full force, together with the awareness that the country had changed enormously since the first post-independence years. It's dangerous to generalize from this tiny sample



Larry, now.

of what's going on, but I feel confident in saying that there is still enormous vital and positive energy in that great society – at least in the first-class hotels, in the Navy, and among those hawkers.

The Elerai Clinic

By Diane Magri Raleigh (PCV) 63-64

I served in the Peace Corps from 1962 to 1964 in Somalia and Nigeria. In Owerri, Nigeria, a man from the local tribe walked out of the bush,



Diane at the Owerri baby home.

handed me his three-month-old malnourished baby, weighing no more than five pounds. Her mother had, like so many rural mothers, died in childbirth. The baby needed milk and no wet nurses were available. I took that baby, Chickwem, into my home for a year until she could return to her father.

My mission had found me. Nestle supplied powdered milk every month. A contractor in Lagos provided whitewash, and numerous others contributed cribs and even made the nurses' uniforms. The Owerri Baby Home was launched with a celebration attended by the chiefs and Warren Zeigler.

There was no shortage of motherless babies. For the next year the Baby Home flourished, and by the time I left, 37 babies were thriving. The Christian Children's Fund continued to support the home until the Biafra war. I was sure, however, that the Owerri Baby Home hadn't survived the capture of the Biafran capital of Owerri by Federal Nigerian troops in January of 1970. Then in September of 2009, I met a young Nigerian in San Francisco, who, when I told him my story, said, "Oh,

you mean the Owerri Motherless Baby Home. It is still there and doing well!"

The experience of establishing the Baby Home has remained vivid in my memory. One can do so much with so little. After subsequently traveling to eighteen countries in Africa during the last 45 years, I returned in May to Tanzania to apply the lesson learned in Owerri. My goal was to find an economical way in rural societies to reduce the death rate from childbirth and to give babies a healthy childhood.

Upon arrival, I met with a woman who has a history of humanitarian projects in the area. We toured hospitals, clinics and orphanages, eventually deciding to heed the call of a Maasai midwife who asked for our help. She showed us an incomplete building that would have served as a clinic. The women had built the walls with handmade bricks that are now crumbling because they ran out of money. They offered to contribute the land and their full support if a clinic could be built. These same women build the family hut, walk miles to fetch water, and attempt to meet the medical needs of their community. The Maasai women and their children are the primary beneficiaries of our efforts.

Health is at risk for most rural people in developing nations. In Tanzania, one of the most poverty-stricken countries in the world, pregnancy and childbirth kill more than 13,000 women annually due to the shortage of doctors, nurses, drugs, equipment, roads,

and transportation. There are few clinics with even rudimentary levels of care in rural Tanzania, and women who need pre-natal care and access to clean birthing conditions must walk for tens of kilometers. Giving birth by the side of the road is a common occurrence with the resulting post-partum mortality or injury that one might expect.

This condition is, however, not inevitable. Improvement begins with attention to the overall healthcare delivery system in rural areas. The first line of defense for the health of the entire tribe must include access to vaccines, first aid, mosquito nets, and malarial treatment, along with safe and clean childbirth. Rural medical clinics that can supply this basic level of care are uncommon, but they need not be. The Tanzanian government can and will supply medical staff, vaccines, and supplies, but the infrastructure, the bricks and mortar, is beyond its means and certainly those of the local tribes.

THE PROJECT: My colleague and I are proposing to build a prototype rural clinic in a remote area in northern Tanzania. It will serve an area of 400 square kilometers populated by over 2,000 Maasai. Qualified staff consisting of a doctor and nurse will be assigned to the clinic and paid by the Tanzanian government. We also have the commitment of the same dedicated Tanzanians who have over the last eight years succeeded in constructing



Diane with Maasai.

and supervising area schools using philanthropic contributions. They are demonstrably competent and trustworthy.

The provision of adequate pre-natal delivery and post-partum care are of vital importance to all communities. With proper care babies can be safely delivered without the transmission of HIV from their infected mother and can receive immediate attention to any presenting problems. Women can get the full benefits of clean and educated medical care throughout pregnancy and delivery, resulting in fewer deaths and healthier babies. The clinic will also serve as a center for the prevention of disease, education, well-baby care, and medical emergencies. Prevention will include malaria testing, distribution of nets, vaccinations for polio, TB, DPT and measles, as well as HIV/AIDS testing. Education will focus on issues pertaining to family planning, clean water, HIV, and other health concerns. Prevalent diseases such as malaria, worms, and pneumonia will be

professionally diagnosed and treated.

THE RESOURCES: Since our return to the U.S., we have been fortunate in acquiring numerous committed resources including free medical equipment for the entire clinic, a promise of interns and residents from a major medical school, and the donation of medicines for the prevention of HIV transmission. The land was donated by the Maasai with the architectural plans provided by the Tanzanian government. As mentioned, the government will staff the facility and supply the pharmaceuticals, ensuring sustainability. We will provide the funds by obtaining philanthropic donations. If we are able to secure these needed funds to build the clinic we envision, we will have significantly contributed to the well-being of a tribe. If any of the readers know of any avenues of funding, I would be most appreciative.

[Diane Raleigh may be contacted at dlraleigh@yahoo.com.]

An Apology

Above your name on the mailing label on the last page of the newsletter should be the date on which your membership expires. In the Summer Newsletter this date was missing on at least some mailing labels which led some readers to conclude that their memberships had expired when in fact they had not. Membership Chair Peter Hansen investigated this omission and received the following response from Lucy Haight, Customer Service Rep at Leesburg Printing Company:

“For some reason our software did not pick up on all of the membership expiration dates. We are looking into this matter to be sure it does not happen in the future. I apologize for the inconvenience.”

FON adds its apology as well and sincerely hopes that this won't happen again.

New Layout Editor Owen Hartford (23) 66-67

I went to Nigeria in the summer of 1966 with Group XXIII -- teachers in the Eastern Region. I was posted in the Ohafia area, which is east of Umuahia and not far from the Cross river. On a clear day you could see the volcanoes in the Cameroon Republic. I was there for a year until the beginning of the Biafran war and was then reassigned to Liberia where I continued to teach for another two years.

Most of my life after the Peace Corps has been involved with education in various forms. **David Rosen (23) 66-67** and I ended up in the same Teacher Corps program in 1969 in Worcester, Massachusetts. It involved teaching inner-city kids and developing an African studies curriculum while getting a Masters in Education. It was made up only of returned Peace Corps volunteers

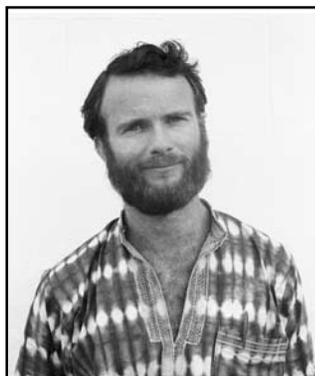
from Africa so it was a unique way to put our firsthand experiences into correcting the very outdated curriculum materials on Africa that existed at the time.

The curriculum guide was published and distributed by the University of Massachusetts' School of International Education. I've been mostly involved with producing educational materials -- printed and audiovisual -- ever since. My wife and I now work from home doing mostly publications and fundraising for nonprofit organizations.

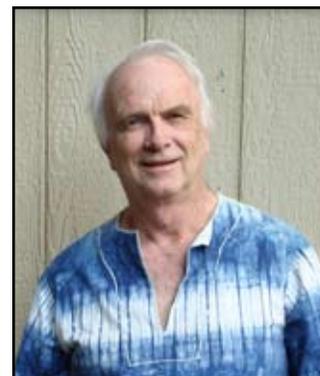
David Rosen and I still work together from time to time. We are currently producing educational videos for adult learning

and literacy. We provide examples of classroom teaching and post them online as a resource for others in the field (www.mlots.org).

I also play the fiddle in a folk group, compose music for and play the mandolin in a classical music group, and do photography. I've posted online a number of photos that I took in Liberia (www.bluehillsmedia.com).



Owen, 1967.



Owen, 2009.

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