

# THE PEACE ADVOCATE



## An occasional newsletter about SMCM's Gambia PEACE program Number 10

Mission: To expand the exchange of SMCM and other non-Gambian students, faculty and staff with the University of The Gambia and other educational institutions in The Gambia and Senegal to increase understanding and enhance academic excellence among all partners.

This summer issue of *The PEACE Advocate* provides information to the SMCM community about the PEACE program's activities over the spring semester, 2011. This is the first issue illustrated with photographs that I hope will be "worth a thousand words."



Traditional naming ceremony held for SMCM students

The St. Mary's program in The Gambia, West Africa has grown steadily since its inception in 1996. Its designation as an SMCM Signature Program in 2006 was in recognition of a full decade of mutually beneficial collaborative activity with a wide range of educational, research, and service organizations in The Gambia. Every

year, SMCM students, faculty, staff, and community members travel to The Gambia through this program. SMCM's PEACE program in The Gambia is uniquely positioned to enhance academic excellence at both the University of The Gambia (UTG) and St. Mary's College of Maryland.



Youth Ambassadors of Peace Program

This newsletter informs you about and invites you to support our PEACE program. Enjoy, and contact me if I can answer any questions.

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Kanifing, The Gambia

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### **Congratulations new SMCM alums!**



Rachel Mendy (left) & Marie Rose (right)

Congratulations to all the recently graduated 466 St. Mary's College seniors who received their diplomas on Saturday, May 14, 2011. This year's commencement speaker, Ms. Carrie Hessler-Radelet, deputy director of the United States Peace Corps, lived for two years in Brikama, The Gambia. Among the new graduates were Gambian students Marie Rose Thorpe (Nitze Scholar and political science major) and Rachel Mendy (independent student designed major). Marie Rose and Rachel began their career at SMCM as interns from the Gambia YMCA during the spring semester, 2007. Marie Rose and Rachel's graduation now doubles the number of Gambian graduands from SMCM. The first two were Bintou Sowe (2008) and Ya Haddy Njie (2010).

### **SMPs by PEACE program participants**

Five students from the class of 2011 completed SMPs that related to their experiences in The Gambia:

Molly Devlin (anthropology) *Urban Development in The Gambia: perceptions and goals.*

Chris Morihlatko (anthropology) *Preventing the Juan Williams Syndrome: Anthropology and Post 9/11 Stereotypes of Muslims.*

Claire Solinsky (anthropology/biology) *Vaccine Development for Malaria.*

Kaitlyn Grigsby (political science/public policy) *“Rise Up and Walk”: How Official Aid to Africa Fosters Environmental Crises and How America Can Help Africa Get Back on Its Feet.*

Megan Knipp (environmental studies/psychology) *Normative Messages Influence on Conservation Behavior: Study on the Townhouse Greens.*

### **SMCM Student Poster Presentation in Seattle, WA**

SMCM senior anthropology major Jackson Webb, who studied in Gambia during the summer, 2010, presented his poster at the 2011 annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Seattle, WA. Jackson’s poster, *Bicycle Repair in Rural Gambia, Fostering Effective Positive Changes*, was based upon his research project with a bicycle mechanic from Brefet village, Gambia. Jackson worked alongside Brefet’s bicycle mechanic for about a month and a half in June and July, 2010.

### **SMCM students return from spring semester in The Gambia**



Sarah Brown in traditional clothing

Three SMCM students and one student from Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand, completed a very successful spring service-learning semester in The Gambia. Each student spent the semester at a service-learning site with an organization actively working in an area of academic, personal or professional interest.

Sarah Brown (biology major) worked at the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital and the Gambia Family Planning Association. Sarah’s paper, *Most Common Women’s Reproductive Health Problems in the Gynecology Ward of the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital, Banjul, The Gambia*, focused a great deal of attention on the lack of school after graduation. You can read about Sarah’s adventures in Gambia on her blogsite, *An American Girl in Kanfing*,



Thanawuth Kittivan in traditional attire

Thanawuth Kittiwon (aka Champion, English major) was the first Thai student to study in The Gambia at the University. Champ worked with the Youth Ambassadors for Peace, a non-profit organization that focuses on promoting peace in The Gambia and West African subregion. Champ's paper, *The Gambia's Contemporary Relationships with Senegal*, examined the changing roles of Gambian youth, especially with regard to the relationships between The Gambia and Senegal. Champ is the first PEACE program student to spend an afternoon with the first president of The Gambia, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. Champ will graduate from Payap this year, and plans to pursue a career in International Relations, hopefully with the Thai diplomatic corps.



Bethany Townsend wearing traditional attire

Bethany Townsend (biology major) also worked at the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital. Bethany's paper, *The Causes and Clinical*

*Treatment for Hepatocellular Carcinoma in The Gambia: a study at the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital*. Bethany is weighing medical school or medical research as career options. Bethany also worked with a UTG student group, HOPE, that seeks to raise awareness and intervene in the area of domestic violence and violence directed towards females.

Kay Zagrodny (anthropology major) worked for a short time with the Gambia Women's Financial Association before finding her place with the Indigenous Business Advisory Service. Kay's paper, *Microfinance and Morals: the Interplay of the Moral Economy and Capitalist Interests Through Business in The Gambia*, will be the basis for her senior SMP.



Kay Zagrodny in traditional attire

Congratulations to these students for a great semester in The Gambia. This group definitely "raised the bar" for future students by demonstrating how much a student is able to "give and gain" in a single semester in The Gambia.

### University of The Gambia "Aces" Abroad

Congratulations to UTG exchange students Sering Touray (economics major) and Seedy Drammeh (development studies major) who represented the University of The Gambia this past spring semester at their study abroad sites at St. Mary's College and Payap University respectively. Both Sering and Seedy earned "A"s in each and every one of the courses they took for a combined 4.0 spring semester 2011.

Office: "The knowledge acquired, the experience earned, the friends made, the barriers bridged, the life lived, the accomplishments registered were priceless. Ones that I could not have learnt in any economics class neither any computer science class. For that, I will treasure them as long as I live."

Thank you Sering and Seedy for your excellent work as ambassadors for the University of The Gambia.

### **Welcome Momodou Bah**

University of The Gambia history major Momodou Bah received a scholarship from Historic St. Mary's City and the PEACE program to come to the College and take part in the 2011 historical archaeology field school, directed by Dr. Tim Riordan.

Although there is an extensive archaeological record of Euro-African contact in The Gambia that began in the mid-fifteenth century, there has never been a Gambian trained to the PhD level in archaeology.

### **Ask Professor Sandy About Africa**

Math professor Sandy Ganzell went to Senegambia after graduation in May to learn more about the PEACE program first hand. Apparently he liked what he saw of the program, as he plans to return to Gambia in 2013 (*inshallah*) as the SMCM PEACE professor with his family and teach at the UTG. Professor Sandy had his initiation into West African travel on his return trip to the United States, but for details, ask him!

### **BCA students to join PEACE program for Fall 2011**

Seven students recruited through the BCA study abroad organization (Bridge, Connect, Act, [www.bcanet.org](http://www.bcanet.org)) will join seven SMCM students in The Gambia for the fall semester, 2011. The students from Elizabethtown College, Manchester College, and Bridgewater College include majors in social work, political science, biology, educational studies, and peace studies.

The fourteen PEACE program participants represent the largest single cohort to study in The Gambia for a semester length program. Next fall's academic leader, anthropologist Susannah Chapman, will teach a required seminar on the topic of food, farmers and globalization, in addition to a course on the sociology of law for the UTG.

Participants will leave August 22 and spend the final week of the holy month of Ramadan in Senegambia, and then take part in the *Tabaski* (Eid Al Adha) celebrations before beginning classes at the UTG.

In addition to classes, PEACE program participants will have opportunities for many diverse experiences while there, including:

A service-learning project (12 students) and visits to Peace Corps/The Gambia volunteers;

Weekend visits with UTG students to Gambian villages, including: Tumani Tenda (<http://www.smcm.edu/gambia/Publication/pdfs/2002/SentaBennett.pdf>); Brefet, Sanyang, and the World Heritage sites of Juffure and James Island;

A visit to the endangered World Heritage Site of Niokolo Koba National Park (<http://www.senegal-online.co.uk/niokolo-koba-national-park.htm>) for a safari experience at the end of the semester;

Students will spend a night (or two) at another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the famous trading community at Gorée Island (<http://webworld.unesco.org/goree/en/index.shtml>).

### **UTG Exchange student Malang Jarju**

University of The Gambia economics major Malang Jarju is the recipient of a PEACE program scholarship to study at St. Mary's College of Maryland for the fall semester, 2011.

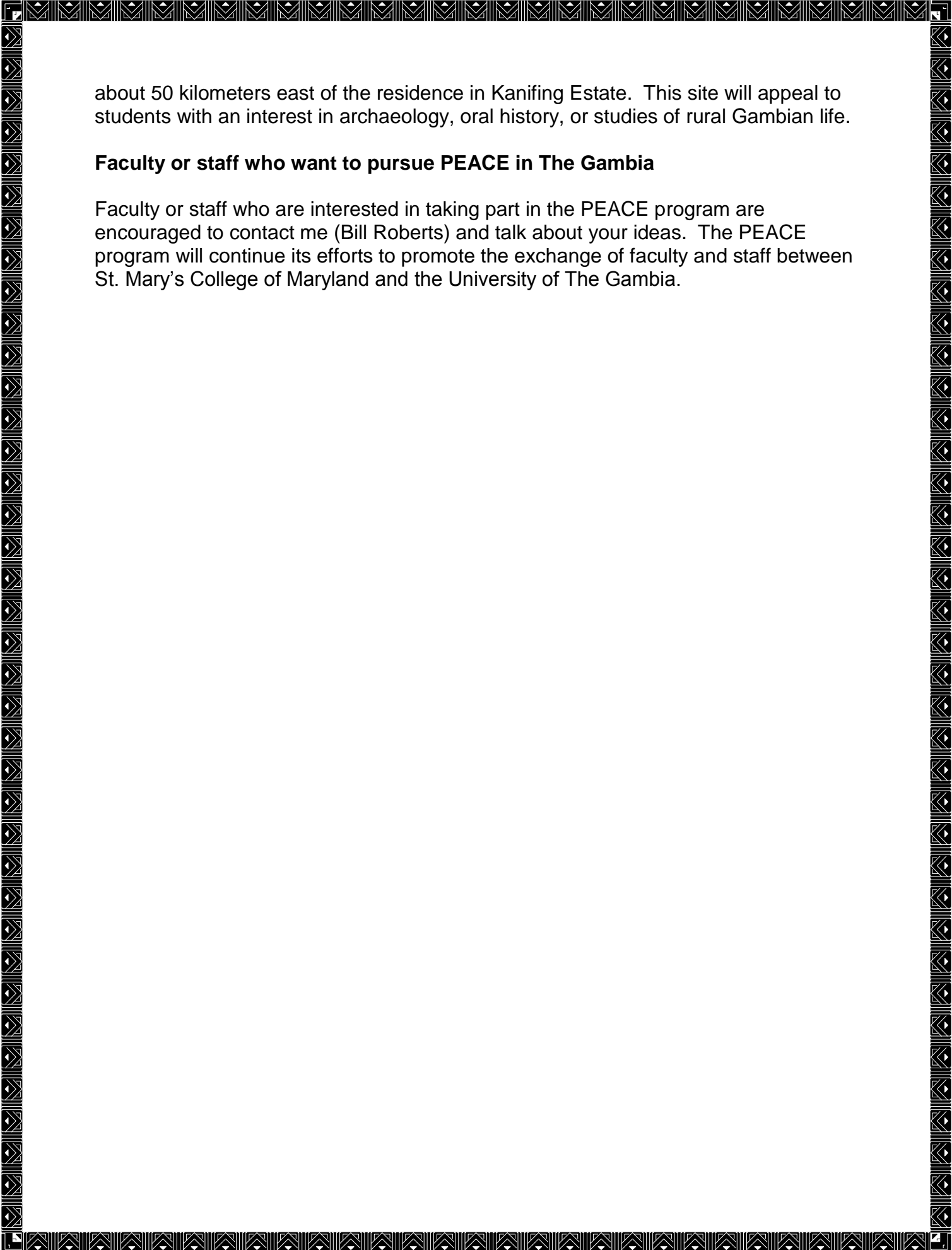
Political Science major Oumie Sissokho is the recipient of a scholarship from the PEACE program and Payap University to study in Thailand next fall.

### **Students who want to pursue PEACE in The Gambia**

Students interested in studying in The Gambia next spring (approximate dates January 15 – May 28, 2012) through the PEACE program should complete an application with the St. Mary's College Office of International Education. Students who complete their applications and other required materials in a timely manner will be eligible for a \$1200 stipend towards the cost of their RT air ticket.



The 2012 Field Studies Program in The Gambia will offer students two options where they can live and study over a period of seven weeks next summer. One placement will be at the College's urban residence in Kanifing Estate. This site will appeal to students with an interest in the arts, education, modern or traditional medicine, music, urban life or youth. A second placement will be in the Mandinka village of Brefet,



about 50 kilometers east of the residence in Kanifing Estate. This site will appeal to students with an interest in archaeology, oral history, or studies of rural Gambian life.

**Faculty or staff who want to pursue PEACE in The Gambia**

Faculty or staff who are interested in taking part in the PEACE program are encouraged to contact me (Bill Roberts) and talk about your ideas. The PEACE program will continue its efforts to promote the exchange of faculty and staff between St. Mary's College of Maryland and the University of The Gambia.