



## THE PEACE ADVOCATE



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

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.

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This is the fourth issue of *The PEACE Advocate*. St. Mary's program in The Gambia, West Africa has grown steadily since its inception in 1996. Its designation as a Signature Program in 2006 was recognition of a full decade of mutually beneficial collaborative activity with a wide range of educational, research and service organizations in The Gambia. Increasing numbers of SMCM students, faculty, staff, and community members travel to The Gambia. SMCM is in a unique position to strengthen through collaborative activities the country's first national university, the University of The Gambia.

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

Bill Roberts, CRG

### **Kudos!**

Ya Haddy Njie (SMCM 2009). Ya Haddy is the first Gambian student to enroll directly from a Gambian secondary school and graduate from SMCM (studio art major). Ya Haddy plans to work for a year in the United States before returning to The Gambia.

Yamai Secka-Jack. Yamai joined the PEACE program full-time as the resident coordinator in January, 2009. Yamai has worked part-time for the program for many years, and served as Associate Peace Corps Director in The Gambia for Education for 18 years. She made her first visit to SMCM in June, and returns to SMCM this week before heading back home to Gambia.

Femi Ojo-Ade. Professor emeritus Femi Ojo-Ade recently completed two years as the SMCM PEACE professor at the University of The Gambia. Femi will be teaching at a Nigerian University in the upcoming academic year, but intends to continue his affiliation with the University of The Gambia.

Christy Wolovich. Christy is a primatologist (U of Miami) who will be the next SMCM PEACE professor at the University of The Gambia. Christy is leading a group of 11 SMCM students to Gambia this fall, and will carry out her own research on *Galago senegalensis*, the bushbaby, a nocturnal prosimian distributed throughout Gambia.

Assan Sarr and Marion Gladys Mendy Sarr. Assan and Marion had a baby girl, Fatou Sarr, in June, 2009. Assan is finishing the full draft of his dissertation in African History at Michigan State University, while Marion is taking maternal leave from her MA in African Studies at Ohio University.

Muhammadou Kah. Professor Kah (<http://profkah.com/>) is the new Vice Chancellor at the University of The Gambia. Former Dean of the School of Information Technology and Communications at the American University of Nigeria, he is eager to expand collaboration in the areas of faculty exchange, professional development, and service with St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Pierre Gomez. Dr. Gomez is the academic liaison for the SMCM/UTG PEACE program. He presented his paper last March, *Prospects for PEACE at the University of The Gambia*, at the 69<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This month he travels to Douala, Cameroon, to present his paper, *Violence and Harmful Cultural Practices Against Children in The Gambia Through the Prism of Literary Imagination and Ethnographic Survey*, at the International Conference on New Frontiers of Child and Youth Research.

Megan Bilas (SMCM 2009), Liam Bradley, David Farkas, Lauren Schreiber, Ellie Gutowski. These students presented papers or posters on their Gambia based research at the 69<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Baba Ceesay, Orlando Ridout V, Liza Gijanto. Each presented papers about their work on the Banjul Historic District and Cultural Heritage project at the 69<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Isatou Ceesay. Isatou made her first visit to the United States to present a paper at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings in Santa Fe about the women's group from Njau village.

Matt Adams, Avanti Fernandez, Sara Greenback, Catherine Koch, Aubrey Lawrence and Renee Wilburn. All graduated from SMCM's MAT program in July after completing part of their student teaching internships in The Gambia this past spring.

Renee Angelo. Renee graduated from SMCM in May (Sociology). She completed her SMP, *Ndanka Ndanka: the process of education in The Gambia*. Renee studied in The Gambia during the 2007 spring semester and 2008 fall semester.

Dan Combs. Dan graduated from SMCM in May (Sociology). Dan completed his SMP, *Loneliness is Sickness: a comparative look at the aging process and integration between two small places in West Africa and the United States*. Dan studied in Gambia during the 2008 fall semester.

Ellie Gutowski. Ellie graduated from SMCM in May (Psychology). Ellie completed her SMP, *"Nerves" Syndrome in The Gambia, West Africa, and its Social and Global Context*. Ellie went to the Gambia with the Field Study Program in 2008.

Lauren Schreiber. Lauren graduated from SMCM in May (Anthropology). Lauren completed her SMP, *Biomedicine and Marabouts: a situational analysis of traditional medicine and the concept of 'integration' in The Gambia's health care policy*. Lauren spent the spring and summer of 2008 in The Gambia.

Malang Fanneh. Malang completed the spring semester at SMCM as the UTG international exchange student scholar and returned to Gambia in June.

Bintou Sonko. Bintou completed both spring and summer sessions at Payap University in Chiang Mai Thailand as the UTG international exchange student scholar. Bintou returned to Gambia in July.

2009 Spring Service-Learning student cohort. Eleven SMCM students returned to the United States the end of May after a semester in The Gambia. You'll hear more from these students during the upcoming fall semester.

### **Current Activities**

Eleven SMCM students leave August 25 for the Fall 2009 Signature Semester in The Gambia. The fall semester cohort, led by PEACE professor Christy Wolovich, will likely be the first SMCM group since the 2008 Nitze group to visit Niokolo Koba National Park in eastern Senegal. SMCM/UTG courses offered this fall include Introductory Wolof, Ecology and Conservation, Animal Behavior, Environmental Management and Introduction to African Literature.

Peace Corps Gambia volunteers have offered to host SMCM students for weekend home stays during the fall semester. Peace Corps Gambia volunteers and staff would like the SMCM community to join them and raise money for insecticide treated bed nets that will be given to poor Gambian families before the 2010 rainy season. Malaria is a major cause of morbidity and under-five mortality in The Gambia. To read more, please see <http://www.againstmalaria.com/Fundraiser.aspx?FundRaiserID=5392>

UTG international exchange student scholars Sunkary Badjie will study at Payap University this fall, and Yankuba Singhateh will study at SMCM this fall.

College archivist Kat Ryner is going to The Gambia this fall to visit the National Archives (Banjul) and Oral History Archives of the National Centre for Arts & Culture (Fajara). She will also visit the department responsible for maps and the personal archives of the great oral historian Bakary Sidibeh, who is the cultural coordinator for the PEACE program and founder of the Gambia National Museum.

UTG students who have studied at SMCM or Payap University are forming a PEACE alumni association at the University of The Gambia.

### **Upcoming Events**

Look for information in September for the 2010 Spring Service-Learning Semester in The Gambia. Applications are due by October 15, 2009.

The 2010 Gambia Field Study Program (May 28 – July 16) will provide participants with an opportunity to conduct archaeology or do research into a contemporary issue. Instructors include Bill Roberts (anthropology), Debbie O'Donnell (psychology) and Liza Gijanto (archaeology). Applications are due by January 30, 2010.

Are you interested in teaching in The Gambia at the UTG during the summer of 2010? Contact Bill Roberts and look for more information to follow.