



## THE PEACE ADVOCATE



**An occasional newsletter about SMCM's Gambia PEACE program  
Special Spring Break Issue**

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 a special spring break 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 an SMCM Signature Program in 2006 was in recognition for 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 and St. Mary's College of Maryland.

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

### **Go Seahawks!**

All PEACE program staff, students and alums are pulling for the SMCM men's basketball team as they play for the two victories that will take them to the Final Four. GO HAWKS!

## **PEACE and Peace Corps, The Gambia**

Peace Corps Gambia volunteers and staff invite 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 Faculty offer courses at SMCM summer 2010**

This summer St. Mary's College students will have an opportunity to take part in an African learning community right here on campus. Charles Ebere, a Nigerian sociologist from the University of The Gambia, is offering a six week course on Traditional African Religion at SMCM. The course can be taken for anthropology or religious studies credit, and counts as an elective for the Africa and African Diaspora Studies minor. Charles taught as an adjunct faculty member for SMCM's Signature Semester in The Gambia during the fall of 2007 and 2008. Cajetan Nnaocha, a Nigerian historian from the University of The Gambia, is offering a six week course on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Gambian History at SMCM. This course also counts as an elective for the Africa and African Diaspora Studies minor.

You can view the summer course offerings online:

[http://www.smcm.edu/continuinged/summercourses\\_listings.html](http://www.smcm.edu/continuinged/summercourses_listings.html)

## **2010 Gambia Field Studies Program**

The 2010 summer field studies program in The Gambia will be the largest yet! The program received 29 applications, including an anthropology major enrolled at Washington & Lee University. The group will spend just over 50 days in West Africa. Most students will have an opportunity to live and work in both the rural village of Brefet and the Greater Banjul urban Area. In the village, the program will begin historical archaeological investigations of a European-African contact site that dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. At Happy Camp, students will pursue a variety of ethnographic and service-learning projects.

## **2010 Fall Signature Semester**

Ten St. Mary's students have applied for the Fall Signature program in The Gambia. Next fall's group will travel extensively in Senegal, with trips planned to the holy Muslim sites surrounding an area historically known as the "Peanut Basin," and another trip to Niokolo Koba National Park in Eastern Senegal. The fall program should be one of the most exciting signature semesters yet!

## **Other News**

The Four SMCM students studying in The Gambia this spring have had a busy semester, even without snow.

Anthropology major Molly Devlin and Political Science major Megan Knipp are working together at the Lord Mayor of Banjul's office. They have begun their research project by interviewing male and female Banjulians of different generations about their perceptions of life in the city. This weekend, Megan's mother, sister and a family friend are traveling to Gambia for a two-week visit.

English major Jenn Pruitt has begun her project with female Gambian artist Isha Fofana, founder of *Mama Africa* Women's Center and Museum. She is also working with the curator of the National Museum, Hassoum Ceesay, and helping with research on his next book about Gambian women.

Anthropology major Sarah Blaik is working with the National Agricultural Research Institute staff on the issue of food security. She is looking at the impact of the adoption of a new rice variety, *NERICA*, at the household and community levels.

The students were joined today (Friday, March 12) by LaRita Hagar and Joanne Goldwater, who will spend a week in The Gambia working with students, PEACE program staff, and our colleagues at the University of The Gambia.

MAT students Lauren Gill and Jevanina Schettini leave for Gambia the end of this month to complete part of their student teaching requirement in Gambian schools. They will be joined by Julia Bates, coordinator for international student teacher internships, who will visit the schools where Lauren and Jevi will be teaching, and learn more about the Gambian educational system.

## **Spring Break, 2010**

The PEACE program wishes SMCM students, faculty and staff a restorative and safe spring break. See you this coming spring.