



THE PEACE ADVOCATE



An occasional newsletter about SMCM's Gambia PEACE program Number 7

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.

Salaam Aleikum! This issue of *The PEACE Advocate* newsletter comes to you from The Gambia. St. Mary's program in The Gambia, West Africa continues steady growth despite the global recession.

SMCM's PEACE program in The Gambia was designated a Signature Program in 2006 after 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. Further, University of The Gambia students (and now faculty) are provided the opportunity to study or teach at SMCM or Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

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 PEACE at St. Mary's or The Gambia. Enjoy, and contact me if I can answer any questions.

Bill Roberts, CRG

Congratulations 2010 SMCM Graduates!

Five SMCM students completed St. Mary's Projects based in part on their experience studying abroad in The Gambia.

Lucy Bill (sociology student award), *Ndanka, Ndanka* (Slowly, Slowly): a Microfinance Study of The Gambia;

Elena Egorova (biology), The Influence of Tourism on the Behavior of the Callithrix Monkey, *Chlorocebus Sabaeus*, at Abuko Nature Reserve and Bijilo Forest Park, The Gambia;

Erin Hendrix (English), Here, There, and the Places In-Between: Building a Home in The Gambia;

Kelly Skrabacz (biology), Red Colobus (*Piliocolobus Badius Temmincki*) Parasite Ecology and Behavior;

Katie Zdilla (biology), *Piliocolobus Badius Temmincki* and *Chlorocebus Sabaeus* Distribution, Resource Use, and Behavior in a Forest Fragment of The Gambia.

Congratulations 2010 UTG Graduates!

On Saturday, June 26, 2010 The University of The Gambia celebrated its 10 year anniversary and the installation of the third Vice Chancellor of the UTG, Professor Muhammadou M. O. Kah. Professor Kah is the first Gambian to hold the position of Vice Chancellor. The ceremonies were held in Brikama at the UTG's temporary campus with Gambia College. Presiding over the ceremonies was His Excellency Sheikh Professor Alhagi Dr. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, Chancellor of the University of The Gambia.

The following PEACE program alums were honored by the UTG as they received their graduation diplomas:

Mariama Ceesay (Payap U, UTG Honors), The Chancellor's Award for Best Graduating Female Science Student;

Mod Talla Ceesay (SMCM, UTG Honors), The Best Graduating Student in History;

Malang Fanneh (SMCM, UTG Honors), The Best Graduating Student in English Language;

Hamidou Jawara (SMCM, Cum Laude), The Chancellor's Award for the Overall Best Undergraduate Student (Class Valedictorian) as well as the best student in Economics;

Jerro Saidykhan (SMCM, Cum Laude), The Chancellor's Award for the Best Male Science Student as well as the best student in Chemistry;

Yankuba Singhateh (SMCM, UTG Honors), The Best Graduating Student in Public and Environmental Health.

Recent Publications by PEACE program participants

O'Donnell, D. A., Roberts, W. C., & Schwab-Stone, M. (2009). Community violence exposure and post traumatic stress reactions among Gambian youth: The moderating role of parents and school. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. doi:10.1007/s00127-009-0162-x

Oyelakin O., Saidykhan J., Secka. P., Adjivon A. and Acquaye H.B. (2010). Assessment of the Level of Mercury Present in Soaps by the Use of Cold Vapor Atomic Fluorescence Spectrometric Assessment – A Gambian Case Study. *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*. Vol 3(1):8-12.

First UTG Faculty Member Teaches African Traditional Religion Course at SMCM, Summer 2010

Mr. Charles Ebere, a Nigerian sociologist from the University of The Gambia, was the first UTG faculty member to teach a summer course at SMCM. Over a six-week period, four students learned about traditional African religions. Charles Ebere returned to The Gambia on June 30. His first academic activity since his return is to offer a seminar: *The PEACE Programme: A Gateway for the Promotion of Academic Excellence & Standards*.

UTG Student Joins 2010 Historic Archaeology Field School Program

Rising senior UTG History major Abdoulie Sey is the first UTG student since 2003 to take part in Historic St. Mary's City's Historic Archaeology Field School. In a recent email, Abdoulie wrote, "Though at times historians and archeologists have found it hard to agree, the two still need each other." The Gambia has yet to produce someone who wants to become a professionally trained archaeologist and join the few expatriate archaeologists working to enrich our understanding of Gambia's history and prehistory. *Inshallah!*

2010 Gambia Field Studies Program

Twenty-eight students, three faculty members, and 13 Gambian colleagues are in the final week of the seven-week 2010 summer field studies program. This summer the PEACE program began archaeological and oral history investigations at Brefet village. Brefet was founded approximately 800 years ago, and became part of the early Euro-African trade network in the lower Gambia river basin. A sample of 18th and 19th century artifacts from the site will be brought to SMCM for curation and analysis this year. Non-archaeology student research interests ranged across diverse topics including modern medical and health services, traditional medicine, Islam and spirituality, family, gender, women's empowerment, and education in The Gambia.

First Female UTG Student in Seven Years to Study at SMCM During Fall 2010

Ms. Jarrai Gassama, a third year UTG student majoring in Development Studies, will be the first female exchange student scholar at SMCM since the 2003 fall semester. Jarrai is expected to arrive at SMCM on August 24 for the international student orientation program. Please extend your hand in welcoming Jarrai to our community when you meet her next semester.

Fall 2010 Signature Semester in The Gambia

Thirteen SMCM students will travel to The Gambia for the fall semester. PEACE professor Bill Roberts plans two extensive trips to Senegal during the semester. The first will be a field visit of some of Gambia and Senegal's holy sites located in an area known as the *Peanut Basin*. Students will visit sites conducive to discussions about Islam, colonialism and environmental degradation. A second trip to *Niokolo Koba* National Park in Senegal is planned in December on the return journey to the United States.

Other News

Four SMCM students completed their spring semester in Gambia and are finalizing their service-learning/directed research papers.

Two MAT students and MAT international coordinator Julia Bates returned from teaching visits to The Gambia. As the integration of tertiary institutions under the umbrella of the University of The Gambia continues, there promises to be opportunities for further collaboration between SMCM's MAT program and the UTG education programs.

Assan Sarr (Historic St. Mary's City Historic Archaeology Field School 2003, SMCM Maryland Heritage Scholar 2008) successfully defended his dissertation in African History at Michigan State University. Assan begins a tenure-track appointment in History at the College of Charleston this fall. We wish Assan and his family great success at this important Atlantic World site.

Bala Saho (Historic St. Mary's City Historic Archaeology Field School 1998, Wolof language instructor at SMCM summers 2007 & 2009) returned to Gambia in May to complete research for his PhD in African History at Michigan State University. Bala was appointed Director General of the National Centre for Arts and Culture in early July. We wish Bala much success in leading the NCAC, one of the PEACE program's first partners in Gambia, to "higher heights."

Bakary Sidibe, pre-eminent oral historian and former executive director of the National Council for Arts and Culture, founder of the Gambia's National Museum, moved to the United States this summer to join his wife who is serving as the Cultural Officer for the Gambian Embassy in Washington, DC. Look for an announcement when Mr. Sidibe comes for a visit to SMCM. A still vigorous 80-

something, Bakary is a veritable “walking library” when it comes to the histories of families, communities and regions in the Senegambia. He remains an ardent supporter of Senegambian culture and cultural performance.

Service-Learning Semester in The Gambia, Spring 2011

Now is the time to begin making plans to study in The Gambia for the spring semester, 2011. Students must complete their applications and submit them to the International Education office no later than October 15.

Senegambia’s climate during the spring semester is ideal for several months: bright, sunny days and cool nights. Students select a service-learning/directed research project that matches their academic, personal or professional interests, and together with the program director and PEACE program coordinator, spend part of their semester working alongside Gambians in an area of mutual interest.

For more information, visit the International Education Office’s Gambia program website:

<http://www.smcm.edu/internationaleducation/Programs/gambia/index.html>

PEACE Program Website Coming Soon!

A revised PEACE program website will be coming online before the beginning of the fall semester, *Inshallah!* Watch for the announcement, and then visit the site to learn more about current program activities and past accomplishments.

Enjoy Your Summer!

All members of the PEACE program community wish you and yours a safe and satisfying summer.

Fo Nyato!