

The Griot



Volume XII Issue 2

the Friends of Mali Newsletter

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photograph by Shawn Davais

Smithsonian Folklife Festival

Did you make your plans yet?! The 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival is right around the corner and Friends of Mali is cooking up a good time for members, family and friends on the National Mall the weekend of July 4th. So not only will you have the opportunity to get a little patriotic, enjoy the fireworks on the mall, go to a couple of museums, but you can also help *Friends of Mali* through its partnership with the Smithsonian Institution and the Embassy of Mali promote an understanding of the people and culture of Mali, West Africa.

The Folklife Festival, held every year on the National Mall, is an event sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. The Center "promotes the understanding and continuity of contemporary grassroots cultures in the United States and abroad." This year's festival will be held from Wednesday, June 25 through Sunday, June 29 and Wednesday, July 2 through Sunday, July 6.

And if you did not already know that Mali would be brought to life on the National Mall at the 37th annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival this summer, then the *Friends of Mali* has not been doing its job!

Letter from the President

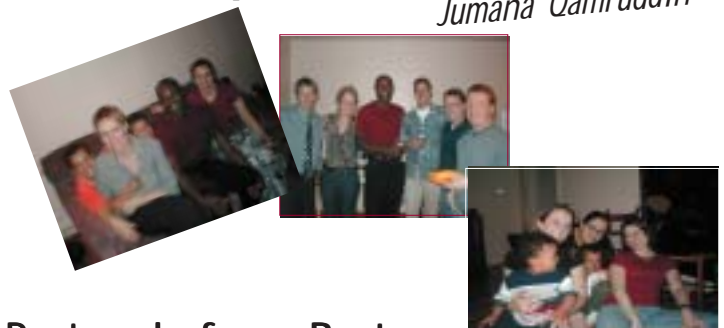
Greetings from Washington DC!

Our third official newsletter finds us extremely busy and working towards the realization of this year's Folklife Festival. There is a lot to be done and we are working closely with the Malian government and the Smithsonian to see how we as group fit in and what we can offer. We have a number of initiatives going on, including a fundraising campaign and a call for interested people to volunteer at the festival. We also hope that the weekend of the 4th of July will bring together friends of Mali through a number of planned activities in DC.

Although the festival is on everyone's minds, we want to make sure that members stayed involved in Friends of Mali activities close to home. Hopefully, you stopped by the National Potluck on Saturday, May 3rd, learned about what's going on, and how you can get involved in FOM activities. We are grateful to all of the hosts who offered their time and their homes to this membership building event, bringing together all current and potential Friends of Mali in a more family friendly manner across the nation. (I hear that smoky bars aren't the best environment for members with kids!). Also, keep an eye on the website. We have highlighted some PC Partnerships projects and a Global Teachnet initiative that we hope you will participate in.

Suggestions/comments, criticism (the constructive kind), and participation are always welcome. If there is an idea or project that you want to initiate or take the lead on, please approach us about it. Remember, the group is only as good as its membership, so if you haven't done so already, please register as a member. This is your group and we want you all to take ownership of it!

Jumana Oamruddin



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Postcards from Boston

Aw bisimilah! Bouba and Kristen Coulibaly, Coulibaly kids Gabrieland Sinaly, John and Jen Leahy, Matt Heberger, Chris Linders, Paul, Heather McCurdy, Gabriela Gomez and Ashley Barrat gather at Nina Saleten's house for the Friends of Mali Potluck in Boston.

2003 Folklife Festival

Mali: From Timbuktu to Washington, D.C.

Close to 100 Malian artisans and musicians will come to Washington D.C. to share their history, geography, arts, crafts, and culture with an American audience on a grand scale. Visitors to the festival will taste Malian cuisine, hear Malian music, learn the dances of the Dogon, Bambara, Fulani, and Bozo peoples, watch mudcloth be made from hand-spun and hand-woven cotton, see traditional masons build examples of Sudanic adobe architecture, relax inside a Touareg tent, and marvel at the works of traditional blacksmith and silversmiths and experience the arts of personal adornment (henna, hair braiding). Griots will be on hand to celebrate and recount the history of the Empires of Mali, Ghana and Songhai through song. The past will be represented through its present and hopes for the future.

The 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival will also celebrate the living traditional cultures of Scotland and Appalachia. And of course we want everyone to experience those cultures too but we know where our priorities lie! The Friends of Mali has pledged to help make the Folklife Festival as fantastic as possible for both the Malian participants and the Festival visitors. We need you to make this goal a reality!

With your support, Friends of Mali hopes to:

1. Help the Smithsonian in meeting its goal of supporting the participation of 120 Malian artisans.
2. Enhance the experience of the Malian participants by hosting activities to allow them to explore Washington DC while they are in the U.S.
3. Support the quantity and quality of volunteers available for participation at the Festival.

How can members of Friends of Mali help out? This is your chance to be a *jatiki!* Not in the sense of physically lodging someone but helping to make the transition from Mali to the District of Columbia a lot smoother for neophytes to the United States. You can donate your time by [volunteering](#) or [donate financially](#) to what is sure to support this living exhibit of the peoples and cultures of Mali. What better way to return the generosity that so many of us experienced as neophytes in Mali?

The Smithsonian is looking for approximately 100 volunteers to make the Festival a success. As a volunteer to the festival, one would have the opportunity to assist Malian participants, many of whom have never been outside of Mali let alone to the United States. Can you imagine the culture shock? For many in Mali the only images of

American life seen in Mali are from those horrendous French-dubbed, made-for-television movies.

If you are able and willing, your experience with the language and the culture will make you a cultural guide for our West African friends. Volunteers are needed to assist in all aspects of the Festival, including: pre-Festival site preparation and technical support; working with performers, craftspeople, musicians and visitors. More importantly, the Smithsonian Institution does not require that participants speak English; thus, volunteers will be needed to act as translators. Volunteers can also participate in a booth dedicated to Friends of Mali and the Peace Corps experience in Mali. Volunteers are asked to commit for at least one full day and those who wish to serve for multiple days are encouraged to do so.

If you can not make it to DC or perhaps you are bit bogged down with work or school and can not make a commitment to being a volunteer, we hope that you will consider supporting the festival financially. Unfortunately, bringing Mali to America is not free. There are enormous costs associated with covering the participants travel, meals and accommodation, the transportation equipment, in addition to the informal entertainment and activities that will be arranged through the collaboration of the Malian Embassy, the Smithsonian Institution and the Friends of Mali.

Your financial participation is an integral key to enhancing the experience of the artisans and musicians for their brief stay in the United States. ***With the generosity of members like you, FOM has already raised \$620!*** We hope that you will continue to help us make a sizable contribution to this incredible event.

You can donate to FOM Folklife Festival Fundraising Drive by credit card or check. To donate via credit card, please go to the Friends of Mali website http://www.friendsofmali.org/phpshop/?page=shop/flypage&product_id=19 and follow the on-line Checkout procedure. All credit card transactions are managed through PayPal.

If you would like to donate by check, there is no need to do anything on the website. Simply send your check, with Folklife Festival referenced in the Note section, to Friends of Mali, P.O. Box 27417, Washington, D.C. 20038-7417

Do not let this opportunity to advance the third goal of Peace Corps slip away.

First Annual General Meeting Weekend

The Friends of Mali Executive Board would like invite you to our first Annual General Meeting.

A lot has happened in the brief seven months since the re-establishment of the organization. The July 4th weekend is an opportunity for members to old and new friends, catch up on Peace Corps and Friends of Mali news and spend time in a great city! The Friends of Mali bylaws and articles of incorporation require a yearly membership meeting for the Executive Board to report the status of the organization.

The General Meeting will be held on Friday, July 4, 2003 on the National Mall.
Time to be Announced.

Members will be able to meet and greet the Executive Board, learn about current and future FOM activities and propose and discuss new items.

And of course, once we get you to D.C. we are not going to let you go that easily! Other activities surrounding the General Meeting Weekend include:

Friday, July 4 - Picnic and Fireworks on the National Mall. Time to be Announced.

Saturday, July 5, 7 pm - Happy Hour at Bossa Bistro at 2463 18th St. NW in Adams Morgan.

We look forward to seeing you there.



President: Jumana Qamruddin
Secretary: Allison Williams
Newsletter Editor: Sabrina Washington
Membership/Webmaster: Jeff Spivak

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Peace Corps Partnership

National Gender and Youth Development Conference by Sabrina Washington

August 2003 will see the fourth Annual Youth Retreat in Mali gathering youth from towns and villages throughout Mali for two weeks of education, inspiration and cross-cultural interaction.

The Annual Youth Retreat is the principle vehicle of the Peace Corps Gender and Development Committee (GAD) in Mali to promote gender equality and encourage understanding among men and women. All youth participants take part in activities led by a Malian professional on topics such as Role of Women and Youth in the Community, Importance of Education and Career Planning, Anatomy and Sexual Health, Contraception and Family Planning and Improved Village Agricultural Processes.

The retreat started out as Camp Yere Yiriwa for young girls between the ages of 10 and 14 in August 2000 with Peace Corps Small Project Assistance Funds. Then Peace Corps Volunteers Jumana Qamruddin and Bronwyn Barnes initiated this nationwide event after a successful turnout for a Take Your Daughters to Work event in Segou. Eight girls from six regions of Mali spent a week at Tubani So, the Peace Corps training facility outside of Bamako, to learn and discuss health topics that affect them and their communities. Peace Corps Volunteer counselors also led sessions exploring the skills and knowledge that young women could draw upon for successful futures in professional, educational and everyday life. The camp offered a mix of self-discovery, sexual education, physical activities, and culinary arts. The girls were excited to be able to come into Bamako, for some the very first time, to interact with their peers from different communities and ethnic groups.

Only three years later, the camp has grown by leaps and bounds. Eighty campers will descend upon Bamako over two weeks in August 2003! Boys and girls! As of August 2002, the Mali Youth Retreat was the only organized retreat or camp activity in a Peace Corps country to include boys. Mali GAD recognized that for a true reevaluation of the cultural position of women to succeed, Malian men and boys have to be engaged in the gender analysis discussion.

According to past participants, the retreat has been a great success because it provides practical knowledge through fun and exciting venues. The adolescents receive information on AIDS, basic health and nutrition, and spend a morning with a Malian who holds a position in the community that they may not have otherwise had the chance to meet. They play sports, participate in arts and crafts, and meet other children from all over the country. The Annual Youth Retreat helps boys and girls, age 14-17, and prepare for their futures by building self-esteem and confidence through exposure and knowledge to the different options and opportunities available to them.

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AFRICAN RHYTHMS

Acoustic Revolution

by Matthew Heberger

Acoustic recordings have been a much talked about trend in West African music recently. In the past few years, a number of musicians have made acoustic or semi-acoustic recordings that make more use of traditional instruments and rely less on electric guitars, keyboards, and studio effects like mixing and overdubbing. This quarter, I'll look at recent recordings from a handful of musicians whose names are familiar to most Friends of Mali.

The timing of this column is unfortunate—both of the artists whose albums are discussed below have finished a US tour in the past several months. I would have loved to bring these excellent recordings to your attention a year ago, in advance of these artists' US tours. But at the time, the Friends of Mali was still in hibernation and this newsletter didn't exist. I was lucky to see both Habib Koite & Bamada and Salif Keita in Boston during the past year. They were both excellent (and very different) shows. Similarly, these are both excellent and very different albums.

Salif Keita – *Moffou*

2002, Universal Music

★★★★☆

Gone are the electric guitars, the saxophones, the synthesizers, and the studio theatrics that marked a number of Keita's former albums. Here they are replaced by the *ngoni*, the *calebasse*, and the *djembe*. Having dropped the trappings of contemporary western music, Keita may have made his most accessible albums to date. Not that this album marks a complete return to his Mande musical roots—you'd never hear anything like it at village *fête*. The recording was made in Paris, with the



assistance of musicians from a number of different backgrounds.

On the very first track, "Yamore", Cape Verdean diva Cesaria Evora lends her transcendent guest vocals. Members of her band on acoustic guitar and percussion give the song an upbeat, rolling island rhythm. Benoit Urbain's accordion lets you know you're still well within the francophone sphere. And the amorous trilingual refrain (French, Criolu, Maninka, but I won't give it away, listen to the album!) pretty much sums up all the intermingling cultures thrown into the mix.

Keita shines on a handful of tracks when he plays unaccompanied, just his acoustic guitar, and the voice that has made him world famous. On the melancholy "Iniagige" his voice is surprisingly raw and plaintive.

There are also a handful of uptempo dance anthems, such as "Madan," which is based on a harvest rhythm. I could easily imagine bopping around to this tune in a *bôte* in Bamako in between songs by Youssou Ndour and Nelly.

During his recent US tour, Keita did an interview with Sean Barlow and Banning Eyre from Afropop Worldwide while in New York City in September 2002. In this surprisingly frank discussion, he talks about making *Moffou*, sounds off on corruption in the Malian music business, and warns of the disturbing rise of radical political Islam in Mali. You can find the transcript online at www.afropop.org by searching for "Salif Keita interview".

Keita is clearly a musician with a social conscience and a deep love for his home and people. His own words printed in the CD case proclaim, "Let's build the country of our children/ And stop taking pity on ourselves/ [...] Let's be happy to be its sons, and fight to build our happiness." Heady words

and inspiring music from one of the living legends of Malian music.

Habib Koite & Bamada – *Baro*

2001, Putamayo

★★★★☆

The much-anticipated release *Baro*, Habib Koite's third album, follows on the success of *Saramaya*, released in the US by the Putamayo label in 1998. On first listen, this album stuck me as more mature and contemplative, but not as "catchy" as *Saramaya*. However, this is one of those discs that gets better with each listen.

Koite is an extraordinary guitar player, and shows his chops on *Baro*. He is also a cultural ambassador, singing in at least 4 different languages, and borrowing rhythms, lyrics, and melodies from the Kassonke, Bozo, and Peulh people.

On the opening track, "Batoumambe", it is astounding how his band creates a Cuban sound with only a handful of traditional Malian instruments. Koite was inspired to write "Sambara Bulaman" (Blue Shoes), by Elvis' "Don't Step on my Blue Suede Shoes", which he had never actually heard! He begins by describing his search all across the markets of Mali to find special blue shoes, but goes on to warn of *sambaranintigw*, those who would come in to your home and learn your secrets, and then go out and spread them in the street. Incidentally, this song has been a huge hit in Mali, but hasn't really struck a chord with his Western fans.

Another highlight is a new recording of Bamada's first big hit "Cigarette Abana" (No More Cigarette), this time with a Latin rhythm, and Spanish lyrics.



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Online Teacher's Toolbox



by *Jumana Qamruddin &
Sabrina Washington*

"It's great to live here in M-A-L-I
It's great to rule here in M-A-L-I
We have every thing that a King can enjoy
Our empire you can't destroy"

Now read those four lines again but this time to the tune of "YMCA," the 70's disco hit by the Village People.

Now imagine 25 third graders in Arlington, Virginia belting out this tune with enthusiasm and charisma after an informative presentation on contemporary Mali.

No, this is not a dream. Friends of Mali President Jumana Qamruddin was treated to this rendition of the '70's hit by third graders at public elementary school in Arlington, Virginia. Their teacher Ms. Stawchansky revised the lyrics to this '70s hit in order to facilitate a more interactive learning environment for her students.

Third grade students are now required to study the early West African Empire of Mali. In 2001, the Virginia Board of Education required that third grade students have an essential understanding of the physical, economic and cultural characteristics of the people of the West African Empire Mali in addition to those of Ancient Greece and Rome. Virginia counties are eagerly tracking down resources and materials on the West African Empire of Mali for third grade teachers preparing their students for the end-of-year Standards of Learning exam in Social Sciences.

The Standards of Learning (SOL) were developed to provide statewide requirements on the information and skills that every pupil must learn or perform as they move forward academically. The SOL tests in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science given in grades 3, 5, and 8 and

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BRINGING THE WORLD HOME....

PEACE CORPS DAY 2003

Peace Corps Day is a national opportunity for current and returned volunteers to support the third goal of Peace Corps: "Bringing the World Home." Volunteers are able to promote a better understanding of the people of in their host countries among people in the United States. Each year, volunteers commemorate Peace Corps by sharing the cross cultural experiences and insights gained from their service overseas.

This year, Peace Corps Day was on February 28, 2003 and Mali RPCV Colleen Donovan (Mopti '99-'02) responded to the call to share her Peace Corps experiences with her current community in New York.

Her first stop in celebration of national Peace Corps Day was a presentation to students at St. Patrick's Elementary School (Owego, New York). The students were delighted to hear about different aspects of Malian culture and customs. They were very curious about how people in Mali live,

what they wear, and what types of jobs they have. Traditions such as the tattooing of lips among the Fulani women fascinated the children. The students were very attentive (even the kindergartners!) during the entire presentation, and their questions ran well over the time allocated.

That evening, Ms. Donovan took her presentation to a mixed audience of Ithaca Baha'i families at a potluck dinner celebrating the feast of Ayyam'i'ha. The adults were more attentive, as the kids were somewhat distracted by balloon-volleyball, but everyone enjoyed the sampling of Malian music filling the room. The question-and-answer session following this presentation focused on more political and historical questions about Mali, and the Peace Corps, making Ms. Donovan work considerably harder than she needed to for the elementary students to find good answers!

In all, with two very different presentations springing from the same props, Peace Corps Day 2003 Ithaca-style was a huge success.

M-A-L-I

(Sung to the tune of YMCA)

We Kings, have no need to feel down
Because we have gold all over our town
We have salt here and we trade it all, too
We even live North in Timbuktu

Through the Sahara our caravans travel around
We pick up salt and yell, "look what we've found!"
On the Niger river, we continue our trade
We are proud of all that we've made

(Refrain:
It's great to live here in M-A-L-I
It's great to rule here in M-A-L-I
We have every thing that a King can enjoy
Our empire you can't destroy

We rule, we have plenty you see
Mana Musa built a university
Sundiata was a famous King, too
He controlled trade for me and you

Now that you hear the stories we tell
You can say the kings of Mali are swell
We have scholars, teachers and merchants, too
Now we have made S.O.L's for you

(Repeat Refrain)

--Stawchansky 03



Dear Members,

You may have noticed a strong emphasis, on our website and in our newsletters, on our membership drive. Please be assured that we're not just out to get your money, nor do we simply want to grow for growth's sake. We honestly feel that our effectiveness and usefulness will grow exponentially as the number of members and visitors to our website increases.

Think of the beginnings of the fax machine: the very first person with a fax machine had no use for it—there was nobody else to send a fax to! When the second person bought a fax machine, the first potential communications path was created—the birth of a network.. The third person added, not one, but two new communications paths; the fourth added three more. As the number of members in a network grows, the number of communication paths grows even faster, and so does the network's effectiveness.

As we manage to attract more and more members, and bring more and more traffic to our website, our discussion boards, and our events, we increase our opportunities to learn and share information with you and with the world. As of mid May, we have 94 paid members and another 127 people have registered with us via our website.

So please bear with us as we repeatedly shout from the rooftops in our efforts to let the world know that we exist, that we have been revived, and that we're eager to welcome anyone who shares our interest in Mali and the Malian people.

Jeff Spivack, Membership Coordinator

New Membership Options!

We've created two new membership options!

You can save 11% and the hassle of having to renew every year with our 3-year membership.

Family Memberships are available for \$25 a year, allowing a married couple and their children to benefit from all that the Friends of Mali offer.

More information about both of these is available on the Friends of Mali website.

MEMBER SEARCH IS NOW ON-LINE! Looking for long lost teammate? Check out the Friends of Mali Members search in the Membership area on the website.

FEEDBACK! FOLIKE!

An organization is only as strong as its membership! We are doing our best to ensure that we are responsive and serve the needs of as many of our members as possible. We look forward to your continued input in order to better respond to your interests. This space is for you. Letters to the Editor, suggestions, announcements, comments, concerns and criticisms are all welcome.

ALA K'A KE KELEN YE (MAY YOU BE ONE)

After patiently waiting through all of the hurdles that Immigration could find, **Jeanette Hale** ('98-'01) and Seydou Keita tied the knot in an American ceremony on February 8, 2003 in Columbus, Ohio attended by close family & friends.

Chad Rathner ('98-'01) and Jodie Rembacz were married on March 22, 2003 in a Jewish wedding complete with a guitar strumming Rabbi, a Huppa held by **Abby Hantgen** ('98-'01) and **Aoife Meehan** ('98-'00) at the Columbia Country, Club in Bethesda, Maryland. The dance of the Hora ended dramatically with Chad and groomsman, Issiaka Ongoiba, embracing on the dance floor. RPCV groomsmen were **Mark Berryman** and **Matt Reining** and bestman **Danny Engelberg**. Other Mali RPCVs in attendance were **Deedee Swesnik**, **Paul Gilman**, **Blythe Sidall**, **Denise Mortimer**, **Perri Sutton**, and **Heidi Voigt**.

DOUBLE WHAMMY!

Asma Mohammed ('98-'00) newly minted with her Masters degree in English as a Second Language from Queens College in New York City is working as an elementary school teacher in Queens and is engaged to be married! "So I'm now officially an elementary school ESL teacher, got engaged in March, and getting married in August. What can I say, everything happens to me at once I guess."

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Peace Corps Mali is exporting RPCVs and their families all over West Africa. After serving in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire, **Julie Donahue** ('91-'94) was sworn in as Peace Corps Country Director in Burkina Faso in January 2003. Keeping her sane in Ouagadougou are husband Zana Coulibaly and their daughters Mariam and Sarah. And who did Julie find in Ouaga but **Molly Glenn** ('92-'93) serving as Admin Officer.

KUDOS

A big shout out of admiration to **Christine Oberto** ('00-'01) for completing the Boston marathon.

FOM BOARD MEETINGS

Next board meeting is June 29, 2003.

ANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN?

Zame anyone? **Jill Norris** ('99-'01) would like your best zame recipe. Jill has gone through her network of Denver-ite RPCVs but no one seems to have brought back the secret recipe. So let's help out our friends in the Mile High City. If you got a good recipe, let's taste it. ... I mean let's hear about it, in the July 2003 issue of **The Griot**. That means you gotta submit something!

But in case the submissions thing fails, don't fret Jill, I am sure FOM's super duper cross country organizer **Heather McCurdy** ('99-'01) may be able to help you out. She just moved to Boston after successfully completing her Masters in Elementary Education at San Francisco State University and is offering tigadigna to anyone with leads on teaching jobs for grades K-3 in the Boston area. Contact Heather for the details about the meal but more importantly, let's get this girl a J-O-B! Email: heather_mccurdy@yahoo.com

"WHAT DEFINES YOUR GENERATION OF WOMEN?"

Marcy Spaulding ('00-'02) is working on International Museum of Women's (IMOW) project "Imagining Ourselves: An Anthology of Art and Ideas." The project is an anthology of visual and literary work from young women, age 18-35, from all over the world. The museum is looking for women from all walks of life. Those chosen will receive a great deal of international exposure and publicity. IMOW needs help contacting women who would like to submit work for consideration, particularly women from Sub-Saharan African countries, as the region is quite underrepresented. If you know of any young Malian women or women's groups that you think would have something great to add to this project, please see website at www.imow.org/imagining for information. Submission can be made in any language, including French, Bambara, Fulfulde, Malinke, Dogon etc. The deadline for submissions is JUNE 1. Questions, comments, and feedback can be directed to imagining-ourselves@imow.org or by phone at +1 (415) 543-4669x115.

WRITERS? PHOTOGRAPHERS? EDITORS? REPORTERS? FILM CRITICS?

Looking for 15 minutes of fame? Make a literary or visual contribution to **The Griot** or the FOM website. If you have suggestions on features or interviews, contact Sabrina Washington at newsletter@friendsofmali.org

spring. Student performance on the exams must be considered as a factor in determining whether the child can be promoted to the next grade. In addition, seventy percent of a school's students must pass SOL tests in these subjects for the school to gain full accreditation. The spring 2003 Social Science exam will be the first one to cover the 2001 changes in the curriculum.

One of the frustrations that the teachers expressed in their preparation for the Social Science exam was a lack of interactive learning materials on Mali. Luckily, Stawchansky's class had a special guest Qamruddin to elaborate on her experiences in Mali. Qamruddin was able to share slides, instruments and souvenirs of Mali with the class. The children "enjoyed dressing up in boubous. Everybody, including the boys, wanted to try it on." Their questions ranged from "How hot is it there?" to "Do they eat camels?" to "Do boys have to wear the long skirts too?" Jumana strongly believes that the presentation made Mali more real to the children and helped them to appreciate what they are learning in school. "It was amazing to watch kids really enjoy learning about a subject and the educators that enjoy teaching them." Not all Virginia students will be so lucky to have a guest, but with the assistance of Friends of Mali teachers can access additional learning tools about Mali.

Friends of Mali members can be a part of making this curriculum come alive in classrooms all over Virginia. Friends of Mali wants to create Online Teacher's Toolbox on Mali for teachers looking to supplement their lesson plans with experiences of individuals who have lived and worked in Mali. The Peace Corps experience can help to broaden and diversify the Virginia curriculum on the Empire of Mali. "RPCVs have been making presentations on Mali since returning from Peace Corps. There is a wealth of resources that have been created or used over the years to make our presentations interesting to children, adults, and everyone in between," explained Qamruddin when laying out what can be accomplished through the Friends of Mali network. Members can assist with the diversification of lesson plans with stories, photographs, games and songs of contemporary life in Mali. As a part of this toolbox, Friends of Mali can provide a list of RPCVs in the Virginia area who would be willing to be special guest speakers. Friends of Mali members who are also teachers would have the opportunity to share lesson plans or classroom ideas with their colleagues in Virginia and nationwide. The possibilities are endless.

Friends of Mali is soliciting ideas on how to move forward with this project. If you are an educator or simply interested in the Third Goal of Peace Corps "Bringing the World Home" please contact Jumana Qamruddin at president@friendsomali.org. This could be an opportunity to have educational resources gathered for the benefit of many people.

SOURCES:

Virginia Department of Education website: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>
The Washington Post, May 29, 2002; Page B3

Due to the rapid increase in the size of the camp, the retreat has become too large to hold sessions for the boys and the girls simultaneously and still foster an environment for frank and candid discussion. So, the camp has been moved from Tubani So to the Abbe David Center in Sebeninkoro. Forty boys will participate from August 17 – August 23 and forty girls will participate August 24 – August 30. Campers from previous years will be instructors. More importantly, in order to increasingly promote local ownership of the activity, all the campers in their essay must detail what they can contribute to the camp whether it is a song, a dance, a story, or any other item. The campers will be broken up by regions and on the second night of the camp will be asked to give a presentation to everyone else using any creative means.



Each year the retreat attracts more and more local participation. In the summer of 2002, the retreat received a food donation from a rice importer and assistance from Malian non-governmental organizations to lead some of the informational sessions. This year, GAD has secured the involvement of counselors, doctors, teachers, peer educators and professionals from the local community involved with Youth Development. GAD has also united with UNICEF financially and programmatically to extend participation to Malian children who have been the victims of kidnapping and trafficking.



This activity has been an overwhelming success that all Friends of Mali should be proud of. GAD's informational handouts proudly boast of camper accomplishments and the

resources that the children return with to their communities. "We have seen the difference this retreat makes in the lives and thought processes of these children. They feel empowered. They are given coaching to help them realize their problems and the resources to solve them without assistance. The information these children learn is sustainable. Every girl or boy who attends the retreat, carries knowledge with her or him to pass to peers back home."

GAD is looking to raise funds from individuals and corporations to close the gap in their \$11,000 budget. Approximately 30% of the operating budget for the Annual Youth Retreat has already been secured. This is enough to cover food and lodging for the campers and has mostly been obtained through individual donations, local NGOs and UNICEF; however, GAD still needs assistance with the administrative, programmatic and transportation costs to operate this annual event. (Remember gasoline is not \$1.60 a gallon in the rest of the world! And you thought that was expensive!) Any donations whether it be physical supplies or monetary gifts would be greatly appreciated. GAD recently submitted a request for project assistance through Peace Corps Partnership but you can contact Synda Mahan at GandD@hotmail.com for additional information on how you can make a personal contribution to this incredible activity. Please also keep an eye on the Peace Corps and Friends of Mali websites for additional information on the retreat and ways that you can contribute to the activity.

We wish GAD and the campers continued achievement for the summer of 2003 and in their futures. They are all on the right track for success.

Habib did a great interview on the radio show "The Connection" when his band passed through Boston in February 2003. The interview is archived on their website—go to <http://www.theconnection.org> and search for Koite. Highlights include his description of how he changes his guitar's tuning to play different scales depending on his audience, and his take on the connection between traditional Malian music and the blues. The live acoustic version of "Saramaya" he played in the studio makes a visit worthwhile on its own. Again, the staff at Afropop doesn't miss a trick—they've got a great interview with Habib online in which he explains the double-meanings behind some of his lyrics, and the various sources of his musical inspiration.

One of the great things about this album is that the CD's booklet has the complete lyrics for every song, alongside a French and English translation. And even though they're written in the old French-style phonetics (e.g. "Bidôn kaguélé

instead of the more familiar "bi don ka gelen"), I wish that every Malian artist would follow the lead and print the lyrics. Wouldn't that have been a fun way to study language during *stage*? In short, this album is a great musical stew from one of the biggest new stars in contemporary Malian music.

In the next newsletter: The acoustic revolution continues with fantastic new CDs by two venerable figures of Malian contemporary music: Djelimady Tounkara's *Sigui* and Kassemady Diabate's *Kassi Kasse*

Editor's Note: You can contact Matt at treasurer@friendsofmali.org to make suggestions for future columns.

"I sa ga ba, amma a ga ba tontoni"

The river is big, but it would like to be bigger.

Songhai proverb courtesy of John Hutchinson, Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures, Boston University