

F.O.M. Newsletter



Number 8

March 2007

WHAT I DO AS A PCV IN MALAWI

By Dee Watts (reprinted from PC Malawi Newsletter)



Hi, my name is Dee Watts and I'm a second year PCV working in the Health Care Sector. As many of you know my site is in Mtakatika located on [the] lakeshore just before you get to Mwa. My site is a new one and with all new sites finding a job to do is quite challenging. My area has lots of NGOs so allowances are always being handed out. Of course, I have no money to hand out and this is a problem. So what do I do?

During our PST we were taken to Chongoni Lay Training Center to meet with Nelson Moyo. He is involved with medicinal gardens and teaching about natural medicine. This interested me very much since I am a Registered Nurse in America, so I started to get to know this man to learn more about what he is teaching. In February, I attended a seminar Nelson was teaching along with 28 Malawian ministers. Most of the seminar was in Chichewa but the books were in English so I was able to retain a lot mostly from the books and one on one sessions with Nelson. With my medical background and interest for natural medicine, Nelson and his two other facilitators asked me to join their teaching team. In June, I attended a seminar in Tanzania, taught by Dr. Hans-Martin Hirt, the Co-ordinator of Action for Natural Medicine (Anamed) in the Tropics. This seminar was taught in English and I learned so much information. The seminar was

10 days long for those interested in becoming seminar leaders. So now I am teaching Anamed seminars. Let me tell you a little about Anamed.

Anamed aims to enable people in the Tropics to become as self-reliant as possible, particularly with regard to their health. One of our most important works is to run week-long seminars. These include the recognition and cultivation of healing plants, the preparation of natural medicines and their use in the treatment of common health problems and diseases.

We are not only teaching about medicinal plants but also about how to keep our environment healthy. If the environment is not taken proper care of, then our natural medicine will not be healthy. We encourage the importance of being in complete harmony with the environment. We teach biology and agriculture, how to set up for a demonstration garden and a production garden. Recipes are given on how to make organic insecticides and how to make and use compost. We show people how to make "A" frame and user friendly measuring scales. We talk about the advantages of cook stoves and how to make solar ovens with the importance of their uses and how to utilize solar energy.

A section of our seminar teaches about medical problems most common in the Tropics. We teach how to prevent them and how to treat them. We encourage people to have seminars at their sites so we can concentrate on what plants are there that can be used, and then we discuss how to plant other valuable plants that could be of beneficial use.

There are five valuable trees and plants that can be readily grown all over Malawi that you can [use to] treat a vast range of health problems. In addition, you can purify water and produce a good insecticide.

Cont. page 4

F.O.M. BOARD MEMBERS

President: John Staub, 98-99: Washington, DC
Vice President:
Treasurer: Lance Cole, 93-94: Portland, OR
Secretary: Ericka Harney: Lexington, KY
Membership: Kristen George, 02-04: Baltimore, MD
Grants: Katie Reidy, 99-01: Washington, DC
Ellen Collisson, 68-70: Claremont, CA
Newsletter: Beth Evans, 62-64: Longmeadow, MA
Angela Sanders, 00-02: Lewiston, IL
Delegate to NPCA: Sandra Lauffer serves as the representative for Central and Southern Africa

HOW TO CONTACT F.O.M.

F.O.M. MAILING ADDRESS:

Friends Of Malawi
c/o Ericka Harney
3099 Kirklevington Drive #16
Lexington, KY

MEMBERSHIP:

Kristen George
kristengeorge00@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER:

Beth Evans
evans85@comcast.net

GRANT APPLICATIONS:

Katie Reidy
FOMgrants@yahoo.com (Grant application forms available on request from this address)

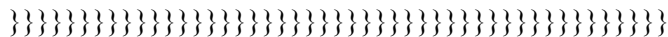
PLEASE SEND INFORMATION AND ARTICLES FOR FUTURE ISSUES TO:

E. E. Evans
85 Inverness Lane
Longmeadow, MA 01106
evans85@comcast.net

PREVENTING BLINDNESS

The Lions SightFirst Eye Hospitals in Lilongwe and Blantyre are working with the International Eye foundation (IEF) to combat blindness by confronting the four leading causes of blindness in the developing world: **cataracts** in adults and children; **trachoma**, **onchocerciasis** (river blindness), and **vitamin A deficiency** in children.

Since the IEF’s involvement, there is a 139 percent overall increase in cataract surgeries and the use of intra-ocular lenses is up from 20 percent to 95 percent. Ninety-six percent of patients receive treatment free of charge.



EDUCATION OF AFRICAN GIRLS

Malawi National Public Radio has reported that girls are greatly outnumbered in African schools. They make up nearly 60 percent of children who should be attending school, but in fact they do not. One aspect of the problem is economic. While primary school is free, tuition must be paid to go to secondary school. However, another aspect is rooted in societies that undervalue girls and, in some cases, even abuse them, or force them into marriages at an early age. And, in patriarchal societies, boys are given preference. These problems also are prevalent in Malawi, but progress is being made.



DDT ENDORSEMENT

The world Health Organization (WHO) has called on African countries to begin spraying DDT to fight malaria. Long banned in the USA for outdoor spraying, it will be used to control malaria carrying mosquitoes by spraying it indoors to coat the walls of mud huts. Countries that have used DDT this way have found it to be safe, effective and cheap. Dr. Arata Kochi, WHO’s malaria chief said, “We must take a position based on the science and data. One of the best tools we have against malaria is indoor residual house spraying. Of the dozen insecticides WHO has approved safe for house spraying, the most effective is DDT.”

CAMPSKY SUMMER SCHOOL

By Ashely Kent

This year's summer school, CAMPSKY, was held November 20 to December 4, at Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School in the Mzimba district. Second year Education Volunteers with about 20 Volunteers from other sectors worked together to teach over 80 people, including students, junior counselors, and Malawian teachers from Community Day Secondary Schools (SDSS) around Malawi.

Each day, students had classes in core subjects and computers. Electives were offered in the afternoon, including creative writing, Spanish, astronomy, engineering, dance, invisible theatre, natural medicine, and sewing. One might also have observed students playing with a catapult, or clapping their hands to count syllables as they tried to write haiku, or doing a do-si-do with a square dance partner.

In addition to daily activities, several special days were planned. On health/science day, students began with a biology lesson by dissecting goats, then, they visited Ekwendeni Hospital and College of Nursing. Most were eager to ask questions of the doctors, but were particularly excited when they learned that one of the nursing students was from a community day secondary school. They were encouraged again by a visit from a Bunda College student who came from a CDSS, and attended the first Peace Corps Summer School in 2001. Now she is completing her fourth year at Bunda. They now know that it is possible for them to pass their MSCE and go on to college if they work hard.

A fun-filled Environment Day, led by Environment Volunteers, showed students and teachers how to take care of the environment, make jam, and how to use natural medicines. On Career Day, students traveled to Mzuzu and visited a range of businesses, including the courthouse, National Bank, ESCOM, and Southern Bottlers, where they learned a bit about how organizations run and about different career opportunities. They ended with a visit to Mzuzu University.

Overall, students learned a lot and had a lot of fun. The program went relatively smoothly despite frequent losses of electricity and water.

NETTIE'S MCV SEWING PROJECT

Sewn products made this past year have been mainly school uniforms, men's and women's National Wear and uniforms for employees of the resort lodges on the lake. Once seen as a source of steady income, providing school uniforms on consignment has backfired because school administrators were charging students almost double, rather than offering them at cost.

This past summer, Fate intervened. Nettie met a manager of a tea and coffee estate that employs 800 to 1,200 people. He was interested in her work and set up a meeting with the distributor of work clothes for all of the tea estates. Pleased with the quality of the workmanship of samples, MCV will now make the dustcoats and aprons worn by the estate employees. A chance meeting with a fabric manufacturer of twill in Malawi, has provided a cost effective source of material for the MCV workshop.

Samples of sarong skirts, shirts, drawstring pants, children's outfits and bags were taken to hotel resorts for the tourist trade. Four resorts have agreed to sell these items and accounts have been set up. This will bring good profit.

Having moved into a new building, the workshop was able to set up an assembly line with the experienced tailors working on the dustcoats. New trainees work on clothing for the orphans until their skills are good enough to work on the resort line. Individual orders have been stopped so that efforts can be put toward more profitable work and trainees can earn an income.

Students in the program continue to write letters of gratitude for the support that they are getting. For many the program is all that they have. After floods wiped out his home and all of his possessions were lost, one student never missed a day of work. For others, it is the only way they have of helping out younger brothers and sisters for whom they are responsible.

Besides donations given in 2006 by family and friends for supplies, lunches, and bicycles for the Sewing Project, donations also went toward purchasing blankets, diapers, *cont, page 9.* **3**

IN MEMORIAM

Diane Elizabeth Safarik served in Malawi V and was assigned to work on and conduct the first Malawi census. Diane passed away from cancer on February 6, 2006. She and her husband Bob Hart lived in Zomba where he taught at the Secondary School.

We have received news that former Peace Corps Volunteer, **Alice Lutz**, passed away October 2, 2006, at the age of 100. She served in Malawi VII from 6/65 to 7/67. She was a medical secretary for Dr. Peck under contract from the University of North Carolina doing a study on tuberculosis. Later, she worked for the United States Department of the Interior for 14 years in Saipan, Marianas Islands, until she retired at the age of 76.

On November 20, 2006, **Dr. Nicholas Viek** died at the age of 80, at his home in Cooperstown, N.Y. He and his second wife Jeanne “JeJe” became PCVs in Malawi in 1990. Dr. Viek practiced surgery and he learned the language so that he could better serve his patients by communicating directly with them. After leaving Malawi, the Viek family spent winters volunteering in various African countries. Dr. Viek delivered babies, performed a large number of operations and procedures, and taught continuing medical education to African medical personnel. Contributions in his honor may be made to the “Malawi Outreach Fund” of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 7690 State Highway 80, Springfield Center, NY 13468.

What I Do....cont. from page 1

Who are we teaching and how do people find out about us? We are teaching local Malawians. Word of mouth is the best advertisement there is around. Nelson and I have been receiving phone calls from various NGOs interested in seminars for their outreach programs and support groups. NAPHAM just sponsored 43 women who work in HIV/AIDS support groups in various villages and communities to attend one of our seminars. Norwegian Church AID sponsored 35 men and women who came from as far north as Karonga and as far south as Nsanje. Evangelical Church sponsored 8 people working in outreach programs to attend. World Vision has shown interest and in my area they are putting together a means of

having a seminar. These are just a few interested organizations. We encourage people to talk with their DHOs and involve the health centers. Zomba District Hospital is interested in putting together a nutritional/medicinal garden and it will be happening soon. Anamed is backed by the World Health Organization and follows the Code of Conduct for “Natural Healers”.

+++++

STUDY TO PROTECT WOMEN

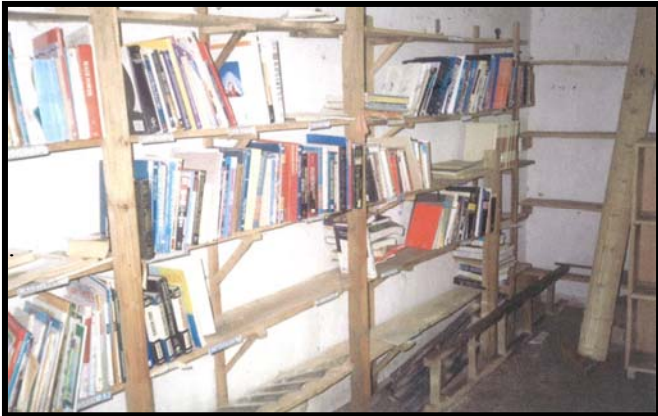
The research center at Johns Hopkins is studying two gels to see if they are effective in protecting women from catching HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The principal investigator in Malawi, Dr. Bonus Makanani at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, said that preliminary studies showed that PRO2000 and Buffer Gel killed HIV in the laboratory. “Now we are looking at whether the gel can kill the virus in a woman’s vagina” he said. About 200 sexually active women in Blantyre have volunteered to apply a gel about an hour before sex. The number of participants will be expanded to take 520 HIV negative women. The assumption is that everyone who has sex is at risk of contracting HIV and this study is an attempt to reduce that risk. The control group for the study is a group of women who get condoms only. Funded by the National Institute of Health in the US, the study also is being conducted in Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Philadelphia and will involve 3200 women. At the end of the study, the HIV prevalence rates in the control and experimental groups will determine effectiveness of the gel.

.....
??

DO YOU KNOW THE ADDRESS OF A FORMER PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER WHO DOES NOT RECEIVE THE F.O.M. NEWSLETTER? If so, please send it to membership chairperson, Kristen George: kristengeorge00@yahoo.com.

??

Chizungu Community Library Project



The Old Library



A. Munthali and Library Committee



New shelves



Construction in progress on
Chizungu Community Library



Library Committee and Chiefs



Librarian's Office

PEACE CORPS FELLOWS PROGRAM

By Angie Sanders

After being in Malawi for about a year as a PCV (00-02), I started to actually think about what I might be doing when I got back to the U.S. One of the possibilities came to my attention in the much used PCV resource room at the Lilongwe office in the form of a Peace Corps Fellows program. But which one, and why?

Being originally from Illinois, and somewhat missing home, I gravitated to one of the two Illinois university programs. Once I got home, I started researching the two and I decided that Western Illinois University was the place to be! I found that WIU was a good fit for me because 1) it had a great (if not better) financial package and 2) I could get a Master's degree in Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration, with an emphasis in community development through the Fellows program. So, after trying a couple of different jobs, I decided to go back to school in January 2005. And to be honest, the Fellows program at WIU has been very good to me. I have never looked back on my decision.

The program has a two-fold mission: To train the next generation of community development specialists and to assist small towns with the implementation of community development projects while enhancing citizen capacity. Now that I am about to graduate in May 2007, I can see that the program really lives up to its mission. I would be the first one to admit, however, that it is not free of faults and that I had to be proactive in certain situations in order to enhance my experience. But, if you want an Americanized version of Peace Corps in the rural Midwest, while earning your Master's degree, then come here.

A Fellow has several different majors from which to choose, in addition to taking special community and economic development classes. After the class requirements are satisfied, each Fellow goes into a rural community in Illinois for an 11-month internship (also an AmeriCorps volunteer contract) to work in his/her respective field in step with community development.

Now, my internship is at the University of Illinois Extension office in Fulton County and I am working on nature-based tourism development. My three main projects include the county's Greenways and Trails plan, the Canton and Havana "Loops" within the Illinois River Country Nature Trail and our local part along the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway. Within these projects I am working on organizational development,

event planning (Trails Day is June 2 – come on down to Spoon river Country!) and marketing and promotion initiatives. I'm also taking in my fair share of local events and outings, including a lawnmower poker run back in September and weekly bluegrass shindigs at the local pub.

So, if you are a PCV or RPCV thinking of how to serve a rural American population somewhat similar to how you did in Malawi, you might want to give WIU's Peace Corps Fellow program a look. You might want to give all the Fellows' programs in the USA a look. I can vouch only for WIU's program, but if you make it out here, look me up! And if it is September, I might have to drag you along on my friend's riding lawnmower, playing poker around town and rubbing elbows with the locals!

The Peace Corps Fellows Program in Community Development began in 1994 with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation. The program provides high quality students who have served overseas in the Peace Corps, an opportunity to earn a Master's degree in one of six areas of community development. Practical experience is gained through an internship in rural Illinois. Applications are accepted on an on-going basis for admissions in January and August. To begin application, contact Karen Peitzmeier, Internal Coordinator, at 800-526-9943 or email PCF@wiu.edu.

WOMEN BUSINESS MANAGERS

The Chronicle Newspaper (Lilongwe) featured an article stating: "Despite all the stereotypes that women suffer in the hands of men in all aspects of the country, women are said to be better business managers than their male counterparts in as far as repaying back loans and posting profits is concerned."

Luckwell Ng'ambi, head of planning and marketing for the Opportunity International Bank of Malawi (IOBM), disclosed that nearly 70 percent of its customers are women and that women clients of the bank had no problems repaying the loans. He attributes their success to their flexibility and organizing themselves into groups. He said that the women do not find problems working as a group, unlike most men who would rather do things on their own. Ng'ambi claimed that a woman would think first of transforming her home, unlike most men who would think of having several wives or buying excessive beer so as to show off to the public that they have money.

NEEDED: BOOKS FOR NEW UNIVERSITY

How To Ship Books:

Founded in 2003 on the Khondowe plateau overlooking Lake Malawi, is the University of Livingstonia (www.ulivingstonia.org). The University of Livingstonia is operated by the CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian) and is open to students of all faiths and ethnicities. It currently has 500 students. The Faculty of Education is expected to graduate its first secondary school teachers in 2007. These graduates should help ease the country's dire shortage of teachers.

The head librarian of the University is Dr. Augustine Msiska. Dr. Msiska retired from the University of Malawi in 2003 to join the University of Livingstonia. He is spearheading the effort to increase the textbooks and reference materials available to all students and faculty. The University currently has no computers and internet access, and during the rainy season it becomes somewhat isolated from the larger metropolitan areas due to impassable roads.

Dr. Msiska has written, "To date, my work has included trying to set up a small library. It has not been easy. We are in dire need of educational textbooks, Sociology, Psychology, Methodology, Principles and Practice, Curriculum Development, Creativity, etc. In short, all academically related subjects such as History, Geography, Language and Communications, Linguistics, Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Environment, etc., are our top priority."

Donated college-level books (<15 years old) should be sent to:

**Dr. Augustine Msiska, Head Librarian
University of Livingstonia - Education
Department
P.O. Box 112
Mzuzu, Malawi
C. Africa**

1. Place books in a sturdy carton. Maximum weight is 66 lbs. Include a sheet of paper with the recipient's name and address inside the carton. Secure with plenty of tape. Write the recipient's name and address on the outside of the box.
2. Also write with a magic marker on the carton – "DONATED EDUCATIONAL BOOKS – NO COMMERCIAL VALUE".
3. Take the box to the post office and tell the clerk you want it sent by "M-Bag". S/he will give you an M-Bag tag to fill out and a customs sticker. On the customs form, under contents, write "Used, donated educational books". Put your return address on the box and tag. Assign the value at \$5.00. Malawian recipients do not have to pay duty – books are duty-free. Postage will be \$1.00/lb. (Books travel by boat and will take 3-6 months (sometimes 9-12 months!) to arrive.

Questions may be sent to Shannon Brown, Coordinator of the FOM Book Project at zikomo@easystreet.com. Zikomo kwambiri!

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@
F.O.M. Members: When moving, please send CHANGE OF ADDRESS information to Membership Chairperson Kristen George: kristengeorge00@yahoo.com
@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ 8

BOOK REVIEW

MALAWI MOONSMOKE: Changing a Part of Our World-One Life at a Time
by Bee Biggs-Jarrell (Outskirts Press)

Malawi Moonsmoke chronicles the experience of a volunteer in the Nsanje District in southern Malawi. Sixty-something Bee Biggs-Jarrell, a nurse practitioner, public health worker, and extremely devout Seventh Day Adventist from Idaho is recruited to direct a child survival project.

Courageous, determined, and in constant dialogue with Jesus Christ, the Holy spirit, and other Christian luminaries, she and her hew husband set off, having sent ahead of them an air conditioner, double bed, clothes washer and dryer for their comfort. With neither experience nor identification with people of the developing world, their culture shock is acute. And unfortunately, as Biggs-Jarrell announces at the end of two years, “My sense of cultural shock never really dimmed; it always was a sensory roller coaster.”

Unfortunately this makes the book more about *her* than about the Malawians she came to help. Though her projects and organizational maneuvering have their upside, and she is clearly a person of good heart and intentions, the ever present evangelistic overlay is a major distraction, both for the reader and for Biggs-Jarrell. She is uncertain, for example of how much time to devote to actual health vs. religion. In addition, she appears more concerned about “the abomination of alcoholism” than about the AIDS crisis. Family planning is taught, but condoms and other methods of birth control are neither mentioned nor apparently available. Perhaps a title indicating her religious bent would have been more fair to the reader.

More disturbing, however, is the fact that the author’s references to those she calls “black Africans” (i.e., indigenous people) are often infantilizing and always “other,” while she is clearly drawn to the more prosperous Asian Muslim population. Would she have even considered teaching Asians the “Hokey Pokey” as she did the black African health trainees? Does one need to

point out at this late date that impoverished people lack opportunity but not brains?

Of course, Biggs-Jarrell’s sponsors, ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) and USAID, no doubt have their own agendas. Also, the Malawian government has its rules about what is and is not permitted in the spending of the \$500,000 grant.

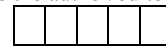
At the end of two years, the author lists her accomplishments as follows: 22 health surveillance assistants, each of whom trained 25 volunteer “village mother” visitors, making, she claims, an ‘army’ of more than 500 teachers and role models; village and water committees; a horticultural program with more than 100 gardens; the digging of 11 shallow wells; the purchase of a sewing machine; the opening of immunization clinics and nutrition clinics; 4 AIDS drama teams.

Questions of oversight and follow-up evolved, along with the frustrations of dealing with a population whose work ethic differs from western ways. Along the way, the accounting procedures got out of hand, and in the end, \$30,000 was somehow “lost.”

Malawi Moonsmoke is self-published and apparently had no professional editing. Grammatical, spelling and other writing errors are rampant. These are further distractions that make the volume much less than it should be.

Profits beyond publishing costs will go to professional nurses training in Malawi

Book Review by Jean Colgan Gould who traveled to Mzoma, Malawi in 2003. She is the author/editor of four books.



SEWING PROJECT *Cont. from page 3.*
soap and other basic needs for the orphanage. Donations given to the sewing project for 2007 will go toward separating training from production, seeking new business contracts and securing continuous employment for the orphans in the program. Nettie plans to return to Malawi for three months this summer in order to work toward all of the new goals. **Donations are tax deductible and may be mailed to FOM treasurer Lance Cole at 7940 SW 11th, Portland Oregon. 97219. Be sure to write “Sewing Project” in the lower left corner of the check.**

FOM Newsletter

C/o E. Evans or F. Ushe
Friends Of Malawi
Judd Gymnasia, Springfield College
263 Alden Street
Springfield, MA 01109 USA

NON-PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID SPRINGFIELD, MA PERMIT NO. 693

Return Service Requested**Editors' Note:**

Please send a **change of address** when you move. Each time the FOM Newsletter is mailed, dozens are returned. This is both costly and time consuming because addresses have to be changed and first class postage applied.

If you know the address of any of the following people, please notify Membership Chairperson, Kristen George and/or FOM President, John Staub: Stephen **Allison**, Kathy & Alan **Bickers**, Marilyn **Cali**, Warren **Collins**, Douglas **Dorland**, Dr. & Mrs. Lee **Ellison**, Heidi **Ehrlich**, Jessica **Fehringer**, Thomas **Fink**, Samuel **Graitcer**, William **Hall**, Michael **Hill**, Noel **Kimball**, Patrick **King**, Ruth **Larson**, ReAnna **Montwheler**, Capt. Robert **Neill**, Karen **Peixe**, Laura **Porter**, Dr. Charlotte **Rappsilber**, Nicole **Ruch**, Harold **Salmon**, Anna **Scherzer**, Kristi **Schober**, Stefanie **Slade**, Susan **Umstot**.

AIDS UPDATE

According to Doctors Without Borders, currently there are 1 million people in Malawi living with HIV/AIDS, including more than 420,000 pregnant women and 40,000 children. Since the start of the epidemic, 390,000 children have lost one or both parents and there are 70,000 more orphans every year. Drugs to treat the condition are available now, but even at a reduced price, the monthly cost is many times the average salary. "In many cases, doctors send their patients home to die simply because treatment is not affordable."

Maryline Mulemba, Doctors Without Borders Head of Mission, Malawi, says, "If tomorrow 1 million would die because of an earthquake, everybody will rush here and bring help, but people will die slowly and in silence more or less; the help coming is still very slow. If you want to provide antiretroviral therapy, it has to start somewhere, and we need to learn now to do it in this context."