

# 2009 FoSL Annual Meeting

## Minneapolis, MN

### July 3, 2009

#### A. LOGISTICS

1. The meeting began with Jeff Hall, our gracious host going over logistics for the conference. Then President Peggy Murrah welcomed all to the conference at the hotel. She asked everyone at the meeting to give a brief introduction of themselves to the group. This included all of the people in the room plus 2 on the conference call: Jim Sheahan and Gary Schulze.
2. Peggy then introduced the Board Members. New board members include Ed Monaghan and Tom Hull. Peggy also announced that we are in need of a Fundraising Chairman.
3. Peggy announced that we have various things for sale:
  - T-shirts from 2008 meeting in Freetown
  - Sweatshirts
  - Books: Green Oranges on Lion Mountain and Black Man's Grave: Letters From Sierra Leone
  - Note cards for Schools for Salone
  - Photos—for the SLPP group
  - Jewelry—for the Solar Project
  - If you are interested in joining FoSL, there was information available to sign up.

#### B. BUSINESS Portion of the Meeting

1. We conduct all of our meetings by phone conference except for the annual meeting and the board retreat (every other year).
2. Jim Sheahan related his telephone conversation with Jim Hunter (Acting Director for West Africa for the State Department) which took place on Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Mr. Hunter pointed out the importance of President Obama's plan to include a stop-over in Ghana after his visit to Moscow and Rome (for the G8 conference). Michelle Gavin, who previously worked in Senator Feingold's office and has always been supportive of our efforts to get Peace Corps back to Salone is handling details for the Africa portion of the trip. The stopover there (July 11-13) is very important because Ghana represents a stable ongoing government that just held successful national elections. President Obama has additional trips to Africa planned in the near future.
  - Sierra Leone is viewed as a bright spot for Democracy in action right now. The country seems to be moving forward in the critical areas of economic development, education and healthcare.
  - Mr. Hunter said that all signs are positive for a return of Peace Corps Volunteers, but not having the PC director in place is impeding the process.

- While he said it is a good idea to anticipate that Peace Corps may go back to Sierra Leone in the next 12 months, he cautioned that the current world economic situation does present problems.
  - Mr. Hunter also referred to U. S. Ambassador Perry's recent complimentary message recognizing FoSL's work on Capitol Hill seeking support for the return of Peace Corps to Sierra Leone.
3. Former Ambassador Tom Hull said he could amplify on what Jim was speaking about in regards to Peace Corps and Sierra Leone. He said that the House has already approved \$450 million for the Peace Corps budget and that there is a very important vote on 7/7/09 by the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Relations. There is much more information on this at [morepeacecorps.org](http://morepeacecorps.org). You can go to this website to get the information on contacting the key senators to get this passed. The larger budget will be imperative for Sierra Leone getting Peace Corps again.
  4. Someone asked what the cost for a Peace Corps volunteer for one year. Amb. Hull said that with the infrastructure (Admin, medical, staff, housing, recruiting, a building, etc) it cost about \$100, 000 per year per volunteer.
  5. Peggy spoke about the Lillian Carter Award presented at the Carter Center in Atlanta, GA. She introduced herself to the interim Peace Corps Director (Jody Olsen) and she had good thoughts on Peace Corps going back into Sierra Leone. She said that going back in depends on the budget and the new director.
  6. The organization, Peace Corps Response, was mentioned as a possible interim before sending in Peace Corps.
  7. Someone asked the question if anyone knew when a new director would be named and all said, "NO!"
  8. Jim Sheahan also mentioned that Georgia Senator Johnny Isakson, who is a ranking member on the African Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, is very supportive of FoSL's effort to get PC back in Salone. He said Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss is also supportive.
  9. Peggy spoke about the Vice President's visit to the Peace Corps office. Upon VP Samuel Sam-Sumana's return to Salone, he made an announcement that PC was coming to the country in 2010. The article was going around the internet. Angus Martin and Jennifer Brown (with PC Washington) said, "We hope to be giving you good news soon."
  10. Report from the **Treasury Committee**: (Mark's report is attached to this email)
    - The money for the Bo's Teacher Workshop was raised separately. What was Operation Classroom in Makeni has now ended. The new workshop is in Bo this July. Most participating teachers have very little training. This workshop works to train them with materials that are available in Sierra Leone. Teachers from Makeni are participating as trainers in this workshop.
    - Bunce Island—this money is what is left from the donation from Isaiah Washington.
    - Projects committee—We still have \$10, 000 for projects after the 2 projects this year are paid for. If you know of a good project, encourage it to be written up and sent in. No donated money goes toward Administrative costs for FoSL.

- Solar Initiative—there is money raised for that purpose and that money is dedicated toward that project alone.
- We are very budget minded! Encourage people to make donations for projects!

#### 11. **Committee Reports:**

- **ADVOCACY:**
  - i. Once there is a new PC director, they will continue with their activities in Washington, DC
  - ii. They are asking the membership to please be aware of things asked for them to do online and in newsletters.
  - iii. WE ARE NOT GOING AWAY!
  - iv. It was noted the FoSL members are getting grey! It has been 15 years since PC was in Sierra Leone!
  - v. There was a letter in our packet from Ambassador Perry thanking for FoSL for our efforts on behalf of bringing PC back to Salone.
- **PROJECTS:** the committee was able to fund 3 projects over the past year:
  - The Women's Agriculture and Income Generation Project in Kabala received \$3000 in Dec. of 2008
  - The Gborie Vocational Institute in Bo received \$3000 to repair classroom roofs
  - The Wellbodi Project received \$3000 to train personnel in-country for the Pediatric Hospital in Freetown
  - Teacher workshop in Bo. About 70 teachers will be taking part in this workshop set up by 5 FoSL members.
  - Establishment of the Scholarship fund in memory of Daphne Sawyer-Dunn at the Milton Margai School for the Blind in Freetown. There is about \$1200 in this fund, to be administered by school director Barbara Davidson.
  - **Jim Hanson amended the minutes to reflect that we voted to start the scholarships at the Blind School in Daphne's name.**
- **BUNCE ISLAND** (see the flyer attached to this email)
  - There is a Bunce Island initiative and they are trying to obtain 501c3 status. Isaiah Washington's lawyer is giving pro bono service to work on this.
  - There is a struggle between preservation and tourism for this site.
  - FoSL is not alone in working on this. Charlie Hughes is the head of the Monuments Commission in Sierra Leone; the World Bank is giving money for this project and President Koroma is promoting tourism and is supporting this project.
  - The Ruins are in imminent danger of collapse. The goal is to save the ruins as a silent monument to those who passed through it.
  - FoSL is very involved in this project but we do not have the money to preserve the ruins!

### **C. Year in Review:**

Peggy had a wonderful powerpoint of photos (can this be put onto the webpage?) to summarize what FoSL has done in the past year:

1. 2008 Annual Meeting in Freetown
  - Volunteer day at the school for the Blind
  - Photos of projects
2. Inauguration Parade with Dave O'Neill and Peggy Murrah
3. Bunce Island Workshop for teachers in Georgia
4. Award was given to Joe Opala—Distinguished Lifetime Member
5. Trip to South Carolina at Ashley Landing. This is where the Bunce Island Ships landed
6. Bunce Island Exhibit at Peggy's School
7. Bo Child Rescue Centre Fun Run in April in Virginia
8. Peggy's trip in June:
  - i. Setup of Memorial Scholarship for Daphne (with her sister) at the Milton Margai school for the blind
  - ii. Pediatric Hospital in Freetown in Kissy (they are going to have a "BED RUN" in Freetown to raise money for this. If you happen to be there for this, please take photos!!!)
  - iii. iEARN
  - iv. Emmanuel Gborie at work

Respectfully and Dutifully Submitted,  
Patty Bruzek  
7/7/09