



ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS-USA  
PORTLAND, MAINE PROFESSIONAL CHAPTER

## EWB PORTLAND MAINE MEETING MINUTES

**TY Lin International**  
**September 13, 2010 6:00-7:30 PM**

|                   |                       |                                  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Attendees:</b> | <b>Brandon Newman</b> | <b>Althea Masterson</b>          |
|                   | <b>Shanta Keller</b>  | <b>Jake Jacobson</b>             |
|                   | <b>Kathy Kern</b>     | <b>Karen Arnold</b>              |
|                   | <b>Karie Senus</b>    | <b>Pious Ali (special guest)</b> |

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### **EWB-USA/NORTHEAST REGION UPDATE**

**Northeast Regional Workshop** - will be held on November 5-7 in Pittsburgh, PA. It's a 2.5-day workshop, great opportunity for networking.

**Grants** - EWB fall grants - \$40K in total funds available. Now that our project has been accepted, we should consider applying for a grant.

**Travel Insurance** - EWB-USA has picked up an exclusive insurance carrier for travel, emergency evacuations – Seven Corners.

### **FUNDRAISING**

**“The Early Show”** - Sara has been following up with her friend Mike who owns the theatre in Buckfield. He is going to join our chapter! He has done a lot of fundraising; he secured a \$225K grant from Rotary for work in Africa. Mike will help us set up two shows – one in Lewiston/Auburn and another one in Portland.

**Yard Sale** - We will be having a yard sale on October 16<sup>th</sup> in Cumberland. Brandon sent out an email forwarding Jake's information on the event. At Will's suggestion, Brandon will be submitting information on this for publication in ASCE's October issue of the Informant.

### **WEBSITE**

We need to update our website. Althea offered to meet with Brandon and Kyle to transcribe the knowledge they have regarding what they did to establish the website, etc.

There was discussion regarding someone who might volunteer some time to help us. Kathy will ask Cindy Talbot about her son's availability – he has website experience. Pious said he may have a connection – he knows a USM student and has contacts through his high school community service work. Karen Arnold will check with Gorham High School, and Jake will



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check with Greeley. We would have the student get the website up to speed, then we'll update. Down the line they may revamp it for us to be more appealing.

### **STUDENT CHAPTER UPDATE**

Brandon heard from Kyle that the trip was remarkably successful. Karen Merritt and Al Frick went with the students. Karen's translating skills were extremely valuable on this trip.

### **DOGOBOM PROJECT UPDATE**

**The 501 New Program application has been approved!!!!!!!**

Even though this won't be an "official" assessment trip, it will basically be a thorough assessment trip, and we are hopeful that we will get approval after the fact. As mentioned at the August meeting, the next official step is to submit the Travel Form (521 Pre-Assessment). There won't be time to have official approval for this trip (this form is supposed to be submitted at least 2 months prior to travel). We may fill out and submit the 521 beforehand. There may still be a second assessment trip as well.

Shanta gave Pious a brief background of his connections to Ghana, how he got connected with CDDF, and a quick summary of our project.

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

Pious Ali was this evening's guest speaker. Karen Arnold and Jake had dinner with Pious beforehand; Karen provided a brief introduction, and then Pious gave us information on his background, his work in Maine, and advice for our work in Ghana.

**Background** - Pious is originally from from Acrra, Ghana. His ancestors several generations back were from Nigeria. After high school, he became a photojournalist in Ghana for a local news publication. There are two newspapers in Ghana, one of them is The Ghanaian Times and the other is a bit more on the entertainment/tabloid side of journalism – that is the publication for which Pious worked.

**Work in Maine** - He has lived in the United States for 10 years of which he's lived in Maine the past 8 years. He is involved in several non-profit and faith-based organizations for youth in the Greater Portland and statewide, including:

- **Maine Interfaith Youth Alliance** – he started this alliance. It is comprised of kids from different ethnic/race/religious backgrounds. They work on projects together with the goal to break down barriers. He has created a youth advisory board made up of 8-16 kids; this board comes up with projects on which other kids can participate. For example, in the month of Ramadan, he has kids going to work at the soup kitchen once a week.



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- [The Portland Youth Forum](#) – provides guidance to students – this fall students of different faiths will each take turns making monthly presentations to other students about their religion (e.g., Judaism 101 type of thing).
- [Lighthouse Shelter](#) – he’s a youth advocate.
- [Volunteers of America](#) – this is his paid job. He is an overnight counselor who works with men who are out of work and have substance abuse issues.
- [Maine Civil Rights Conference](#) – he is connected with this conference.
- [Longcreek Group](#) – assists with conflict resolution.

Pious speaks at several high schools in Maine and conducts workshops on tolerance.

He is on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/piousali](http://www.facebook.com/piousali)

#### **Advice for Our Work in Ghana -**

- Bring libations – libations are very much appreciated when greeting Ghanians. Schnapps is preferable.
- Pious has a friend who writes a travel & leisure newsletter. This friend may have good information on logistics, etc.
- Karen inquired as to what questions we should be asking the NGO now in advance of our trip. Pious replied as follows:
  - [Language](#): English is pretty prevalent.
  - [Skills/Earning Potential](#): We will see a lot of tie-dye items when we are over there. They make a lot of tie dye items. It’s a skill they’ve developed for self help, earning power.
  - [Set up meeting with the community](#): Since Shanta is working with Kwabena [CDDF contact], Shanta should ask Kwabena to set up a meeting with the community. It will be important for him to set this up, as some communities have a day that no one goes to farm to work. In some communities it’s Monday, others Tuesday, etc.
  - [Get publicity about the visit](#): CDDF can take care of this.
  - [Learn about political structure](#): Pious said he is not sure what the political structure is in Dogobom. Usually there are towns, then regions. The regions have commissioners.
  - [Etiquette](#): Chief of community – will stand, then all stand. When he sits, all will sit. It is very disrespectful to sit in front of him with your leg crossed up across your knee. They will probably give you local stuff to wear, wear it gracefully.
  - [Goods, etc.](#): We will be asked for a lot of stuff. It would be good to bring pencils, erasers, nike socks, flip flops. Books are good, also, but cost more to ship and are available for purchase at stores in Accra, etc.
  - [Requests for additional assistance](#): Pious said we will be asked to help with folks’ sick family members, etc. He said we should not end up taking on the problems of the community, be ready to say no.

Pious knows a Ghanian in South Portland who moved here from England – he’s the director of an engineering company. Pious will touch base with him on our behalf.



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### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Brandon will submit a brief writeup about the yard sale for publication in the ASCE October informant.
- Kathy, Althea, Karen Arnold, and Jake will touch base with folks about website assistance.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, October 11, 2010 at Woodard & Curran.

I have prepared these meeting minutes to the best of my knowledge. If you have any comments or edits, please forward them to me.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kern