

Opportunities

Posted on [April 8, 2010](#) by [bhillenbrand](#) | [1 comment](#)

Building for Ethiopia, Again

Returning to Ethiopia, a RPCV finds that being knee-deep in all that chika can be very rewarding

by J. Fred Gage, Gondar, Addis 63-65

How does it feel to be a volunteer in Ethiopia again? In a word: Terrific! Last September I volunteered for a Habitat for Humanity building project in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. I arrived in Addis a few days early to adjust to the altitude and explore the city once again. Leaving Addis before daylight we drove northwest on a much improved highway, stopping in Debra Marcos for lunch. After lunch we attended a coffee ceremony in a Habitat home. The aromatic plants scattered on the floor, the smoldering incense and the roasting coffee beans brought back a flood of memories. An old man present talked of the first Peace Corps teachers, the Norman Rockwell visit, and of a Volunteer who developed a special relationship with the Emperor because of something he wrote home.



THE POT'S ON: the coffee ceremony in Debre Marcos

That evening in Bahir Dar we were greeted at the Tana Hotel with news that the government had sold the hotel the week before and that room rates had increased 100%. After much haggling we decided to stay there, but eat elsewhere.

The build was a 25-minute drive away in the shadow of a colorful Coptic church perched on a hill. As we approached the work site for the opening celebration, we could see an undulating line of Coptic priests with their colorful umbrellas and hear the pulsing drum and the clapping of children in pink pinafores as they sang sweetly in Amharic of Jesus turning water into wine. Our band of twelve H4H Global Volunteers was being welcomed by the community of Bahir Dar.

For ten days we worked side-by-side with new home owners and volunteers from the community in digging foundation holes, raising pole structures, pounding nails in green eucalyptus, and carrying rocks to build foundations that would not only preserve the structural integrity but also keep out water. We leveled floors and built stout walls of



CHIKA-READY: a H4H house under construction in Bahir Dar

the bible was to remind the new owners of the covenant they had made with their neighbors and community to care for their new home.

We made no wine but through our labor we transformed mud and straw and eucalyptus poles and rock into homes. As the dedication ceremony wound to a close, dressed in new *gabis* given to us by the community, we all sang together .

This year in Debre Berhan

This August 14-27, 2010, I will be leading a Habitat for Humanity build in Debre Berhan. I cordially invite you to join the team of twelve volunteers who will once again be building improved *chika* housing. Because of a rapid and steep 120% increase in cement prices caused by country-wide power shortages, *chika* remains the building material of choice. Habitat has been working in Debre Berhan since 2005 successfully completing more than 250 homes.

The Eva Hotel where we will stay is located close to the center of the town and owned by famed long distance runner Gete Wami. It is a relatively new hotel and provides both Ethiopian and European dishes. For more detailed information about how you can participate in this rewarding project back in Ethiopia go to the Habitat for Humanity [website](#). Or email me directly at fgage@wcupa.edu. Already E&E RPCV President **Marian Haley Beil** (Debre Berham 62-64) has signed on to join our team this summer.

Join me for an opportunity to build decent, affordable housing and experience Ethiopia once again.

Posted in [Opportunities](#)

chika, that all too familiar mixture of mud and straw. Building with *chika* was a delight.

We rejoiced in the tactile sensation in gathering the *chika*, the satisfying splat as we slapped it on the walls and helped the owners, some whose fingers were diminished by leprosy, smooth the walls. It was hard work but curiously satisfying. Each day we had a morning and afternoon coffee ceremony. The women in the group were invited to dress in Ethiopian style and preside over the coffee ceremony. They also got to practice their *injera* making skills.

At the end of ten days we dedicated six homes by giving six new proud homeowners a bible and a key to their new homes. As Ato Yoseph of our Ethiopian staff explained,



CHIKA, CHIKA: on your hands, on your shoes, everywhere

1 Comment

News of Ethiopia

Posted on [April 8, 2010](#) by [eerpcv](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

The Coming Elections

Five years ago elections left Ethiopia in turmoil. Voters are now heading for the polls once again. What are the prospects?

by *Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Markos 63–65)*

The parliamentary elections in Ethiopia are less than two months away, and already they are besieged by controversy. Lots of controversies. Perhaps the only thing that is not shrouded in controversy is the date of the election: May 23. The entire National Parliament will be elected and a new Prime Minister will be chosen on the basis of the results. Or, of course, the present Prime Minister,

Meles Zenawi, may be chosen for his third term. The smart money is betting on Meles.

Indeed Meles himself generated the first election controversy by claiming in a speech filled with humility that he would retire and not run for a third term. But his government party set up howls insisting that the nation could not continue without him. He relented. He will be a candidate.

Next came the controversy over the rules of the election. Negotiations for a new election code were long and complicated. The opposition is made up of more than 60 parties. While alliances and coalitions are being formed – the Medrek (the Forum), a grouping of eight important parties, being one of the major ones – the opposition remains fractured. In January after a three day negotiating session, an election code was finally formulated to give opposition access to radio and television time. Rules were made for voter registration and balloting. Still many people are skeptical that the election will be conducted fairly.

Already violence has erupted. An opposition candidate was stabbed to death in March in what opposition leaders said was part of a widening campaign of repression ahead of the elections. The candidate, Aregawi Gebre-Yohannes, was killed at a restaurant he owned near the town of Shire in the Tigray region by a group of six men who had shadowed his movements for the previous two days, said Gebre Asrat, a leader of the Arena party, a member of the Medrek opposition alliance. “They cut him, they stabbed him in the stomach, and he died,” Aregawi said. “It’s becoming very difficult to run” a political campaign, he added. A suspect confessed to the crime and was sentenced to 15 years in prison, but the killing was seen as a warning to the opposition.

Another opposition candidate was beaten in Tigray by members of the Ethiopian Army, claims Negasso Gidada, a former president of Ethiopia who has now joined the opposition. Like the candidate who was killed, the beating victim had previously been arrested for attending opposition meetings. “It is very bad news,” Negasso said. “My fear is such incidents may be intensifying.”

But perhaps the most controversial form of intimidation is the continuing imprisonment on a life sentence of Birtukan Mideksa, one of the country’s main opposition leaders. After Prime Minister Meles himself, Birtukan is arguably the most famous and popular politician in Ethiopia. She along with many other leaders of the opposition alliance in the



ON THE PARTY LINE:
Prime Minister Meles

2005 election was arrested and convicted of treason. The opposition group was pardoned and released, but Birtukan unlike many of the election leaders did not go into exile abroad. In a speech she repudiated her admission of guilt to the treason charge and was re-arrested and sentenced to life in prison for treason. She has been held in solitary confinement for much of her time in prison. The U.S. State Department's human rights report for 2009 said in March that "there were credible reports that Birtukan's mental health deteriorated significantly during the year." The report, later criticized by the Meles government, called her a political prisoner, echoing what many rights groups have claimed. Meles has said Birtukan was in "perfect" health, but that diplomats and journalists would not be allowed to visit her.

Another controversy revolves around foreign observers for the election. The Carter Center in Atlanta said that it would not send a team to monitor the election as they had for past Ethiopian elections. The Carter Center said that it had not been allowed to inspect the voter and candidate registration process and thus could not make an informed judgment on the entire election.

The European Union, after some wavering, announced that it would once again send a team of European and African parliamentarians to watch the elections. But the EU is worried about the terms of the election. Ana Maria Gomes, a Portuguese member of the European Parliament who led the EU's monitoring mission to Ethiopia during elections in 2005, said that there was risk involved with the mission because at the moment "there are no conditions for genuine democratic elections."

Still the election, genuine or not, will take place as scheduled on May 23. The results will take nearly a month to tally. The winners will be announced on June 21, a date, opposition forces note, set so that global attention is focused on the World Cup Football competition in South Africa rather than any election controversy in Ethiopia. —BH

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Static on VOA

Unhappy with election coverage and a U.S. Human Rights Report, Ethiopia jams Voice of America broadcasts

Reflecting the tensions over the election, the United States and Ethiopia are caught in a row over Amharic language short wave broadcasts of the Voice of America. In March the regular VOA broadcasts were suddenly jammed, making them unintelligible in Ethiopia. At first Ethiopia denied anything to do with the jamming, but later, in an interview, Prime Minister Meles said, rather vaguely, that yes, Ethiopia had tested some jamming methods and that may have been the cause. Meles added that VOA was guilty of broadcasting "destabilizing propaganda." Meles compared VOA to Radio Mille Collines, whose broadcasts are blamed by many for sparking the 1994 Rwanda genocide. In a later interview with Reuters, Meles said "We have given up on the objectivity of the VOA service and we have been trying to beef up our capacity to deal with it, including through jamming," In early April the jamming activities intensified, in part as a reaction to the U.S. State Department report on human rights abuses in Ethiopia and in part because of VOA coverage of the upcoming election.

The U.S. human rights report "is a smear campaign intended to portray the forthcoming elections as unfair and the conditions surrounding the election as undemocratic," said Government spokesman Shimelis Kemal. "One can discern that the prime focus of this reporting is to create a kind of weak government in Ethiopia that would easily bend to pressures from foreign elements, foreign forces." He continued: "VOA in the past has repeatedly broadcast programs and statements that tend to incite, foment hatred between different ethnic groups. Recently, it has transmitted a program alleging the government of Ethiopia had staged state sponsored genocide in Gambela."

VOA broadcasts to Ethiopia were blocked around the 2005 election, and again before the 2008 local elections. Jamming of Amharic Service programs began again February 22 and in April was extended to other Ethiopian language broadcasts, in Tigrinya and Afan Oromo. In response, VOA set up satellite radio broadcasts in hopes of bypassing the jamming. The State Department in Washington condemned the attempts at jamming VOA. Gordon Duguid, a spokesperson for the State Department said that “a decision to jam VOA broadcasts contradicts the Government of Ethiopia’s frequent public commitments to freedom of the press.” —BH

Turbulence for Ethiopian Airlines

A tragic crash causes unaccustomed trouble for EAL and a heated dispute between Ethiopia and Lebanon



PUZZLING CRASH: an EAL
jet

Usually stories in the HERALD about Ethiopian Airlines mark the continuing progress of what is Africa’s largest and most reliable airline. For example, there was news of Ethiopian increasing the number of flights from Washington to Addis from four a week to daily beginning in June. And Ethiopian Airlines is constantly buying new planes from Boeing and turning a profit.

But in January, the airline suffered a disastrous crash when a Boeing 737-800 crashed minutes after taking off from Beirut International Airport in stormy weather. All 90 people aboard were killed. Ultimately the aircraft’s voice and data recorders were recovered and sent to France for analysis, but the cause of the crash has yet to be officially determined. In a number of statements to the press, Lebanese officials implied that pilot error may have brought the plane down. They also ruled out terrorism.

Annoyed at what they consider premature judgments, Ethiopian Airline officials called media reports of pilot error “speculative.” In a statement Ethiopian Airlines said that it does “not rule out all possible causes including the possibility of sabotage until the final outcome of the investigation is known.” The investigation of the accident is being conducted by an international team including representatives from Boeing, the American NTSA, and Ethiopian Airlines staff, but led by the Lebanese. Still the Ethiopians remain deeply unhappy. The airline is now doing its own leaking to the Ethiopian press. Stories have appeared claiming that evidence from the flight recorders has been tampered with and voices of the pilots erased. Relations between Ethiopia and Lebanon have soured. —BH

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Historical Notes

Posted on [April 8, 2010](#) by [bhillenbrand](#) | [2 comments](#)

Politics, Ethiopia and Eritrea Style

As an election approaches in Ethiopia and Eritrea faces international sanctions, a RPCV and former diplomat offers a bit of background and some careful reflections on what makes these

two countries tick

by Dane Smith (Asmara 63–65)

(Editor's note: Dane Smith joined the Foreign Service in 1967 specializing in African affairs. Dane has served as ambassador to Guinea and later to Senegal. In September 2009 Dane spoke to a reunion of his fellow Ethiopia II Volunteers in Denver. What follows is an edited version of that talk.)

I am not an expert on Ethiopia and Eritrea, but I do try to follow developments there. These are my impressions about the political situation in both countries.

First let me deal with Ethiopia

In defeating the Derg in 1991 Meles Zenawi, the leader of the Tigre Peoples' Liberation Front engineered an important change in direction in Ethiopia. Since his leadership was rooted in the Tigre minority — a mere seven per cent of Ethiopia's population — he had to find a way to exercise political leadership in a highly diverse country. He created a broad movement uniting different ethnic leaders with his Tigre Liberation Front and called it the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front, which is now the ruling party of Ethiopia. He announced the creation of a multi-party system and put in place a state formally comprised of units defined by ethnicity. Today the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has nine semi-autonomous administrative regions, including such regions as Afar, Amhara, Harar, Somali, Tigray and the Southern Nations, and the two special federally administered cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. This arrangement is a special band of federalism in which small jurisdictions like Tigray have as much weight as populous ones like Amhara and Oromiya. That arrangement is not a coincidence.

The experiment came to a climactic test in the 2005 elections, the first relatively free and fair polling in the country's two thousand year history. To its great surprise, the coalition of Opposition parties won 172 seats in parliament, nearly one third of the total, and scored a crushing victory on the Addis City Council winning 137 out of 138 seats. Instead of accepting that strong minority role and building on it, the Opposition Coalition claimed fraud in election and insisted that they had won an outright victory. They began boisterous demonstrations. Meles' government, instead of relying on the courts to sort it out, came down hard. Police and troops killed at least 300 demonstrators. Opposition leaders were arrested and charged with treason. Many were given life sentences in noisy show trials. After a time in jail, they were released with "pardons" after they signed paper admitted their crimes. The pardons were mediated by a self-appointed Council of Elders, led by our friend Ephraim Isaac.

Since the election, there has been increased autocracy and repression. Some key developments:

- Birtukan Mideksa, an Opposition party leader – and considered by some the leading opposition politician – was among those arrested in 2005. She was pardoned but rearrested 2008 supposedly for violating the terms of her pardon. Her supporters, aided by the international community, continue to press for her release, but her party has weak outside leadership and is facing internal revolt.
- In 2008 Bekele Jirate a leader of the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement, a party which has struggled to work within the political system, was arrested and charged with conspiring with the separatist Oromo Liberation Front.
- In May 2009 Addis announced that former and current army personnel had formed a "terror network" aiming at selected assassinations and overthrow of the government. More than 40 people were arrested. The government



ON A LEVEL PLAYING
FIELD: Prime Minister
Meles Zenawi

claimed that they were led by Berhanu Nega, an Ethiopian-American professor living in Pennsylvania and one of the Opposition politicians who was arrested in 2005 and released in 2007.

- A recent law designates any NGO receiving more than 10 percent of its funding from abroad as “foreign.” This means these NGOs are ineligible to work on issues relating to ethnicity, gender, and conflict resolution. An anti-terrorist law proposed this year could define criticism of the government as a “terrorist act” and become a tool of further repression.
- Some parts of the country are afflicted with endemic violence. The worst is in the Ogaden, which is largely ethnic Somali, where a rebellion led by the Ogaden Liberation Front continues. In 2007 more than 70 workers at a Chinese petroleum drilling site were killed. The Ethiopian army has been accused of atrocities. Human Rights Watch in 2008 charged that the Ethiopians were following the same course as the Sudanese in Darfur.

Behind a façade of multi-party democracy there is Leninist democratic centralism. At the center of Meles’ ruling party is the central committee. It and the Prime Minister and his advisors run the show. And, in fact, the concept of ethnic nationalism or self-determination goes back to Lenin and Stalin, who set up the units of the USSR to reflect such divisions, but gave them no power to act on that self-determination. In Ethiopia, according to the International Crisis Group the government’s “ethnic federalism has not dampened conflict, but rather increased competition among groups that vie over land and natural resources, as well as administrative boundaries and government budgets.” It has promoted ethnic self-awareness among all groups. But thus far the parties which have carried the banner of ethnic self-determination are weak and have little life outside Addis.

A few words about Ethiopia’s relations with the US. Ethiopia is an important strategic partner of the United States in the war on terrorism. This partnership, which has deep roots in U.S. foreign policy since World War II, is today built on the need for a strong military ally in the Horn of Africa, where chaos in Somalia provides a potential continuing platform for al-Qa’ida. What Ethiopia, in fact, contributes to dealing with that issue is, of course, problematic. Although the U.S. carries on a dialogue with Meles about his democratic deficiencies, there is little evidence he takes American chiding seriously. Hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. assistance continue to pour into the country.

Now let me deal briefly with Eritrea

The Eritrean Government has been obsessed with the failure of Ethiopia to implement the 2002 finding of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission that Badme, the desolate scrap of land which was a cause of the war, fell under Eritrean sovereignty. The Commission was constituted by the Algiers Agreement ending the war; both sides had agreed to be bound by its decision. When the international community did not act to enforce the decision, the Eritrean Government, in effect, declared war on the U.N. and the West. It forced the U.N. peacekeepers to withdraw in 2008. It began supporting the radical Islamist faction in Somalia with arms shipments. It made border incursions into Djibouti, where French and U.S. forces are based. The U.N. and the European Union have both imposed sanctions of Eritrea.



RUNNING THE SHOW:
President Isaias Afwerki

The war with Ethiopia had a deforming effect on the Eritrean political system. When in 2001 senior members of the government sent a letter to President Isaias Afewerki, criticizing his approach to the war, he arrested all those in the country. They have never been seen since. The group includes my most outstanding student, Mahmud Sharifo, previously Minister of Territorial Administration. No one knows whether he’s alive or dead.

Eritrea makes Ethiopia look like a liberal democracy. There is no constitution, no freedom of speech, press or assembly. The courts don’t operate with any independence. Freedom of religion has been sharply abridged. International NGOs are not permitted to work in Eritrea. It maintains a huge standing army.

During the liberation war the Eritrean insurgents depended on voluntary contributions from the diaspora. After independence they were able to develop a financing system based on a “voluntary” tax of 2% of income from Eritreans living abroad. Despite increasing dissatisfaction with Isaias, the government is still able to rely on these contributions. All payments to families go through the government. Remittances actually increased in the past decade.

Over half of Eritrea’s people are dependent on food aid. Per capita income is \$130, or \$.36/day. Eritrea appears on the list of countries with the highest rate of child mortality under five years.

In August there was a report of an assassination attempt against Isaias by a member of the Eritrean military who was shot dead. External opposition elements exulted, but there has been no further reporting on this episode. The Obama Administration is trying to decide whether to place Eritrea on the list of countries facilitating terror.

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Books

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A skillful retelling of the trauma of revolution and the terror it brought

Present in Addis when the coup deposed Haile Salassie, an RPCV finds a new novel spanning the period to be compelling and realistic

Beneath the Lion’s Gaze: A Novel

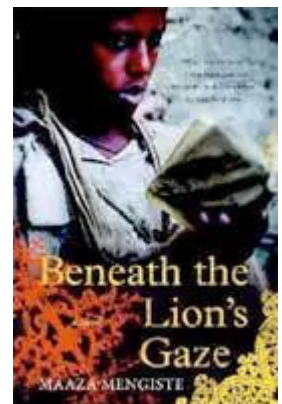
by Maaza Mengiste

W.W. Norton & Co. \$24.95

Reviewed by Janet [Danzl] Lee (Endeber 74-76)

Thursday, September 12, 1974, the first day of the Ethiopian year found me in the capital city of Addis Ababa when the announcement blared from radio and television alike that H.I.M. Haile Sellasie was overthrown. After having settled into my village, Endeber, as a new Peace Corps Volunteer, I was making some last minute preparations for school to start in a few weeks. There were so many unknowns at the time because of the political climate. Would school really start? The students went on strike the year before. Would we try to fit three semesters into two? Who would be the new director of the school? The students had petitioned for the removal of the last one. What grade would I be assigned?

The news of the takeover spread like wildfire; we could hear chants of jubilation from the windows. Although we were advised by the Peace Corps office to stay put, naturally, we took to the streets as well, walking up toward the Piazza on Churchill Blvd. There were throngs of young men chanting, marching, raising staffs in the air. “Haile Sellasie, the thief” was shouted out in Amharic. Just three weeks prior, I had waited outside of a church and stood in awe with



others as the Emperor exited after prayers and entered his limousine in full regalia. Even though tensions had been building, the coup was still a startling turn of events. Nonetheless, I felt completely safe, and in fact, I never felt more invisible. There were no beggars seeking alms; no shoeshine boys offering to shine my tennis shoes; no street boys selling gum or lottery tickets or souvenirs. Somehow we managed to drive by the palace only to see more young men congregating and tanks bedecked in bunches of flowers.



Maaza Mengiste

Back in my village, school eventually started and I was assigned seventh grade English. Life was peaceful and somewhat routine. If it were not for the BBC and the Voice of America, I would not have been aware of the bloodbath that was occurring. I was a world away, although in the same country. Therefore it was with some anticipation as well as trepidation that I read Maaza Mengiste's *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*. In recent years my Ethiopian contemporaries have related stories of their escape overland in fear of their lives during this tumultuous time. This book rings true and on more than one occasion gave me chills.

The story opens with Hailu, a doctor at a leading hospital, pulling a bullet out of the back of a student protester all the while worrying about his own son, Dawit, also a student activist, and his dying wife who is suffering greatly in a nearby ward. Maaza, to refer to her in the traditional Ethiopian manner, skillfully interweaves the personal conflict of Hailu and his family (father against son, brother against brother) and the turmoil in the beautiful country that he loves. She accurately describes the military presence on every street corner, every major building, and checkpoints leading into and out of the city. The nightly curfew curtailed the activities of the student protesters as well as the social and business life of all others.

Using different narrative voices, Maaza tells the story of a family being torn apart and a country in complete disarray. Her portrayal of Haile Sellasie is sympathetic, at times almost deferential. Notably absent is any mention of exiled leader Mengistu Haile Mariam, the brutal leader of the Derg, the military committee that was responsible for the ouster and the ultimate death of Haile Sellasie. In no way does this detract from the novel; in fact it places the emphasis on the victims rather than the perpetrators. There are sufficient composite characters that describe the brutality of the leaders of that period of time.

Although Hailu's immediate family is the focal point of the story, the lives of various characters intertwine. Dawit finds an ally in Sara, his brother Yonas' wife, who helps him properly dispose of bodies of student protestors while she herself deals with her belief in a God who would take two babies from her womb and allow her only living child to suffer in a horrific accident. Mickey, Mikias at birth, Dawit's best friend enlists in the army because unlike Dawit, he was not a child of means. He is sent to Wello, his homeland where as a child he witnessed the death of his father as he collapsed behind another man's plow. Through letters Mickey describes the horror and death as a result of the great famine, further enflaming the emotions and conviction of Dawit to the cause. Mickey is called to return to Addis Ababa to guard the imprisoned deposed leader and later is forced to commit unspeakable deeds at the command of his crazed military leaders. Minor characters, such as the neighboring houseboys, portray the randomness of evil.

There is a reconciliation of sorts at the end of the novel, but thus begins the great migration of the Ethiopian Diaspora fleeing the "Red Terror" as it has become known. The stories are too painful even now for most of that generation to tell.

Over thirty-five years after I left my adopted home, I found myself once again in a small café on Churchill Blvd. Addis had changed dramatically, but still memories of that day of the Coup in 1974 flood my mind as my friend recounts his role as a student revolutionary. He reminds me so much of the young Dawit. Like Dawit, he was good at recruiting fellow activists. Like Dawit, he refused to carry a gun but used words and ideas as weapons. "Who is afraid of death?"

he recalls, was their revolutionary chant. They certainly were not afraid. As we sip tea and coffee he laments that the youth of Ethiopia today do not understand the significance of that time period nor do they comprehend the struggles of that generation. I, too, fear that most Americans have no idea of the bravery and idealism that took place in this remote mountainous region on the other side of the world. *Beneath the Lion's Gaze* masterfully tells a tale that needs to be told.

Click on the book cover or the bold book title to order from Amazon and Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs, an Amazon Associate, will receive a small remittance.

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Letters to THE HERALD

Posted on [April 8, 2010](#) by [bhillenbrand](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

More thoughts on the electronic HERALD and a remembrance of a memorable snow in Ethiopia

The second posting of HERALD stories brought a flurry of comments attached to stories (we encourage that) and some letters containing interesting observations, a bit of flattery and some checks (we like that!) sent to support the HERALD and the work of the E&E RPCV

To the HERALD:

Thanks so much to Marian for all she is doing and all she has done for E&E RPCVs. What Barry is doing with the electronic newsletter is terrific, too. Cheers,

Kitty Spalding (Sebeta 73-75)

•

Dear Heralddeers:

Interesting "publishing" of the Herald. I like it. Just scroll up & down & sidewise if you want. Read the whole HERALD in one computer session. Bravo. Here is my check in the mail. Thanks.

Jody Donovan (Adi Ugri 63-65)

•

To the HERALD:

What a wonderful surprise to at last receive the HERALD online. The layout thus far is great and I look forward to receiving future issues. Ditto for sending our dues online. I passed on this message to other RPCVs who would be interested in receiving the newsletter. Thank you for the work you have done to make this happen. It is much appreciated.

Cynthia Tse Kimberlin (Adi Ugri/Asmara 62-64)

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To the HERALD:

Regarding your story on snow in Ethiopia, I have this to report. It's the truth, I didn't dream it up.

While serving in Makale in December of 1971, just before Christmas, I was invited along with all of the other Peace Corps Volunteers to the Palace of the Governor of the Province of Tigray, His Royal Highness, the Ras Mengesha Seyum. The purpose was the singing Christmas carols, and, in general, his wishing all the PCV's in his province a Merry Christmas. Having worked with previous groups of PCVs, the governor knew that at Christmas we were all a bit homesick, if not a lot homesick. So the invitation went out, and to my knowledge, everyone went. Who wouldn't go to Palace of the Governor of the State?

We walked from our house to the Palace at the appointed time. It was a very cold, crisp Ethiopian night, cold enough to see your breath. As we walked we could see in the dim lights of the street, big flakes of snow ! It snowed hard for about five minutes. Wonderful wet snow on your face, in your hair, on your gabi, all over your shoulders. As we neared the Palace, it stopped. Just as abruptly as it had started. It was a wonderful time that I will always remember and I will treasure that memory every Christmas for the rest of my life. It does snow in Ethiopia, iwnetegna.

Peace.

Ernie Franz (Mikele 71-74)

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To the HERALD:

Marian: THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Joe Adair (Lekempti/Ambo 62-64)

•

To the HERALD:

I'm sending my \$15 subscription payment and looking forward to getting the HERALD regularly. I've read the newsletter off and on, but have not been a subscriber before, so I'm eager to get news regularly. Thanks for your work on keeping it going!

I was in Ethiopia from 1967-69, the first year in Maichew, Tigre province, the second year in Wollamo Soddo. I'm now living in Minneapolis where there are many Ethiopians, and some wonderful restaurants so I eat injerra and wat frequently.

Solveig Nilsen (Maichew/ Wollamo Soddo 67-69)

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