

## The Herald

News for those who served with the Peace Corps in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

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MONTHLY ARCHIVES: JULY 2013

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### Editor's note

Posted on [July 6, 2013](#) by [janetlee](#) | [1 comment](#)

by Janet Lee (Emdeber 74-76)

Water. It is something that we Americans often take for granted, even in the drought-stricken West. As I turn on the local news and hear yet another story of wildfires in my home state of Colorado, in nearby New Mexico and Arizona, or not so distant California, due in large part to lack of moisture, I cannot help but be grateful for the natural resources and wise planning of those who came before me. Undoubtedly, each of us RPCVs can recall an experience related to water: the water woman who brought us a jug of spring water each week, drawing water from a well in our compounds, boiling and filtering water until it was crystal clear, a weekly sponge bath or shower. Our lead story, by Bob Gausman, (Bodditti, Sidamo Province 70-72) is about a water project in Ethiopia initiated by members of Ethiopia XIII. Bob's sense of humor comes through as he tackles a serious problem.

Many displaced Eritreans have found themselves in difficult circumstances having fled their homeland. The *America Team for Displaced Eritreans* founded by John Stauffer (Adi Kayeh, Akele Gazai state, Eritrea 1966-68) has come to their aid providing financial and logistical assistance both in the U.S. and abroad. The Herald includes in this issue a much condensed version of a recent interview by Stauffer concerning the formation, challenges, and successes of the *America Team for Displaced Eritreans*.

On a lighter note, Gloria Gieseke Curtis (Asmara 63-65) describes the fun and camaraderie when members of Eth II reunite and celebrate their 50th anniversary. I am envious of their long-term commitment to each other.

*The Herald* has been fortunate to have talented writers among the range of current Volunteers in Ethiopia. Many of their experiences are similar to ours: fighting diseases, teaching in schools or teacher education programs, and traveling around the country. The difference is they blog about these experiences whereas we relied on those little blue aerogrammes. Chuck Adams (Bonga 2011-) describes an African-wide anti-malaria project called Stomping Out Malaria in Africa. One component of this project is BAMB (Blog About Malaria Month) in which many of the current Volunteers blog about their individual malaria projects or experiences. Malaria is still the leading cause of preventable deaths and who better than PCVs to demonstrate anti-malaria measures through the use of art, parades, and distribution of bed nets. Check out Chuck's article and the links to this blogging effort.

Ethiopia and Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and The Herald are pleased to celebrate one of our own as the recipient of the 2013 Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service: Phil Lilienthal (Addis Ababa, 1965-67). Phil is the founder and president of Global Camps Africa, currently in South Africa. The concluding article highlights the efforts of this most worthy recipient and fellow Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Ethiopia.

Social media plays an important part in our daily lives, including keeping in contact with our fellow Volunteers. Please consider joining the [E&E RPCV Facebook page](#). Using Facebook is ideal for spreading the word about time-sensitive information or news tidbits.

Speaking of social media, here is a link to a [Youtube video produced by current Ethiopia Country Director Greg Engle](#). It is beautiful and touching!

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1 Comment

## Projects

Posted on [July 6, 2013](#) by [janettlee](#) | [4 comments](#)

# Bringing Clean Water to Ethiopian Communities — One Well at a Time

by **Bob Gausman (Bodditti, Sidamo Province, 1970–72)**

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from my fourth trip to Ethiopia in the past seven years. The purpose of the trip was to look for possible sites for water improvement projects on behalf of Peace Corps XIII, but more about that later.

## FIRST, MY GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE COUNTRY

### Addis vs. the country side

Ethiopia is truly a “tale of two countries.” Addis and some of the larger cities are rapidly developing, but for the majority of the people still tied to the land, little has changed since we were there 40 to 50 years ago. Addis is basically unrecognizable except for the Piazza and a few buildings on Churchill Road. There are literally hundreds of high-rise apartments and condos that encircle the city and the city even has its own beltway. There seems to be thousands of small bars, restaurants, and hotels everywhere and many office buildings are under construction. The average farmer, however, is still plowing his small plot with oxen. If he is lucky, he may be able to afford a little fertilizer, and hope that the rains are sufficient to grow one crop per year. The average family size has gone down from six or seven members to around five. Most children are allowed to attend school if their families do not need them to tend the animals or collect water. The average family income is under \$300 a year.

### The population

When I first landed in Ethiopia, my most overwhelming impression was that the overpopulation that exists is going to lead to continued problems for future development. The population is estimated to be above 85 million. In order to give this number some perspective, the country is about the size of Texas, and Addis alone probably has somewhere between four- and five-million people. In 1970, approximately the time that many of us were serving, the population was around 450,000.

### Addis Traffic

The traffic situation in Addis is worse than in Washington, DC. While there are still many small Fiat taxis, the fare is between \$3 and \$5 a trip, which is more than the average person can afford. There are also thousands of vans that patrol the streets, travelling on fixed routes. You simply signal them and they will stop if there is room. The fare is about 25 cents. If you are going some distance, you may need to take two or three different vans. The average person uses a bus for transportation. The fare is about ten cents, and they are just as packed as they ever were.

### The people of Addis

The street kids are just as charming as I remember and never seem to tire of reminding me that I am a “ferenji.” They were not as aggressive as they used to be, or at least I don’t remember wanting to strangle any of them this time.

People still make a living in some of the most amazing ways: young boys sell a bottle cap full of peanuts for two cents, people who own a scale charge five cents to weigh a passerby, women sit outside of a public phone and make change, and some people sell nothing but partial rolls of toilet paper.

### **Schooling**

The education system is much different than what I remember. Regardless of their size, most communities have at least one primary school. In rural areas, children still have to walk anywhere from one to five miles to school. High schools, on the other hand, are a more serious problem. Only larger towns are able to support a high school, and with the large number of primary schools recently constructed, the pressure to get into a high school is very great. Those students who live in a rural area and who passed the entrance exam for high school have to travel 10 miles or more to the nearest high school, requiring them to find a place to live nearby. This situation is not practical for the majority of students.

Although the number of universities has increased significantly, there is an equally severe bottleneck in trying to attend college. Most large cities now have a university. Addis Ababa University enrolls 42,000 students, Gondar 23,000, Awassa 26,000, and Makelle has 24,000. As is expected in a rapidly growing educational system, the quality of teaching has a lot of room for improvement. Some of the elementary school teachers only receive one year of training after high school, and secondary school teachers only receive three years of higher education. Many of the university professors come from other African or Asian countries with mixed results.

### **Exports**

There are several positive developments taking place in the country that are very promising. Coffee continues to be the leading export and generated over 850 million dollars in revenue last year. The cut flower industry is growing rapidly and now employs 85,000 people mostly in the area around Lake Zwai in the south. However, the jobs are hardly well paying as the average employee only receives about \$30 a month. Every night, plane loads of cut flowers leave Addis for western Europe. This industry generates around 200 million dollars yearly. The third leading export is hides and skins at 75 million dollars.

Another growing export lately, though hardly a positive development, has been the transportation of young Muslim girls from Ethiopia to middle-eastern countries. When I was at the airport waiting to come home, I must have seen at least 300 Muslim girls between the ages of 15 and 25 leaving on planes for Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Dubai. They will work as domestic help in private homes throughout that area of the world. I was told that this scene is repeated almost every night. They are expected to work almost 24 hours a day and they are only paid \$125 a month for their labor. I imagine a sizable portion of this is sent home to their families.

### **The economy**

Even with the recent global economic downturn, Ethiopia's rate of growth is still among the best in the world, and has averaged over 9% annually in the past five years. Much of the investment taking place in Addis and the larger cities is being financed by members of the Ethiopian diaspora around the world. It would be good, however, if more of the funds were directed into basic industries rather than the bars and restaurant industry. On this last trip, I noticed a few places with wireless internet, but for the most part, internet access is still limited to dial up service. This is a serious hindrance to development and is recognized as such by the Ethiopian government.

## **THE ETHIOPIA XIII WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

The purpose of my most recent trip was to find a suitable village that is in need of a water improvement project for the Peace Corps XIII group. As you are well aware, much of rural Ethiopia still suffers from a lack of clean water. Women and young girls spend a considerable portion of their day carrying water, usually polluted, from a nearby stream or spring. The United Nations estimates that 250,000 children die each year in Ethiopia from water-borne diseases, while 70% of the country does not have access to clean water.

My first trip outside of Addis was to the Bale National Park area in the southeastern part of the country, where there was a village that was a possible candidate for our group water project. A local resident and I attempted to visit the site in the morning, but the rains started early that year, and while they were not heavy, it did rain almost every day for an hour or two. The “road” to the village is bad on a good day, and considering the conditions, it was even worse. We only went about half way when it became impassable and we decided that we would have to walk. When I got out of the car, my guide pointed to a hill that looked like a training site for the US ski team, and said we had to go up there. At this point, the elevation is around 9,000 feet and he wanted me to climb even higher. He and another fellow took off and left me to follow them. Twenty minutes later, they were almost to the top and I was barely half way there. At that point, I was sucking down what little oxygen was available and had already taken three breaks. I then crawled my way to the top ready for the exhilaration I imagined those reaching Mt. Everest must feel, when to my disappointment, my friends pointed to another hill even higher that awaited us. My only thought at that point was that if these people can survive at this altitude, a little dirty water was not going to hurt them. As I began looking around for some strong branches so that they could make a stretcher to transport me, one of them took the opportunity to inform me that last year the government put in two wells in the very area we were headed. That was all the news it took for me to realize that we needed to find another site, preferably one below the cruising altitude of most commercial aircraft. In retrospect, Bale National Park was just as beautiful as I remembered. I saw mountain nyala, bushbuck, reedbuck, wart hogs and baboons.

The next day I left for an area in southwestern Ethiopia where I was confident we would find sites that needed assistance. After traveling all day, I spent the night in Shasamanae. I know it is hard to believe, but the city is even more dysfunctional now than it was before. I stayed the night at the Bekelle Molle. If you remember these hotels, I can assure you they look exactly the same, except for the fact that absolutely no maintenance has taken place in the past 40 years. The cold shower still floods the entire bathroom, there is no toilet seat, and the 10 watt bulb hanging from the ceiling flickers most of the time. Despite these drawbacks, the price was right at \$9.00 a night. The next day was a four-hour bus ride to Soddo. I thought about staying at the Bekelle Molle, but opted for a newer hotel. The new hotel solved the water on the floor problem by not providing water at all. This is just one example of the many inconsistencies I discovered in seeking accommodations. When I checked into my hotel in Addis, I was given two bars of soap, a towel, and toilet paper. Other guests at the hotel told me that when they checked in, they were given two bars of soap, a towel, toilet paper, and two condoms. This is clearly age discrimination and my lawyers are looking for a remedy.

The area where I traveled is roughly equidistant between Soddo and Jimma, about 250 miles southwest of Addis. The next day we inspected three sites, and the quality of the water defies description. All three were mountain springs that, at their source, provided perfectly pure water, but once the water came out of the ground, it became so polluted with animal waste,

## Long-distance bus travel

To explore possible locations for my water improvement project I relied on distance bus transportation as my primary mode of travel. Let me tell you about that!

The process begins at 5:30 am, which is when most buses begin to board. The closest thing I can think of to describe this process is a rugby scrum. At about 6 o'clock, people begin to hover around the door to the bus. Then a variation of musical chairs begins. One moment you are in front of the door and the next you feel like you may be pushed under the rear wheel. Your location in this mass when the door finally opens determines your seating location — or if you will even find a seat.

Once the bus begins to fill up, it is visited by a contingent of beggars. Their theory is that they have a captive audience and anyone who can afford \$3.00 for a bus ticket must be dripping with money. Once the beggars have left, the bus is then invaded by an army of vendors. They know that you are going to be sitting on that bus for maybe eight or ten hours, so what better way to pass the time than to chew a couple pounds of khat or stock up on chewing gum, which will end up right where your knee goes under the seat in front of you.

Finally, after everyone has found a seat, the chickens have been tied down, and hopefully there is not a goat between you and your fellow passengers, the bus begins to move. Invariably within 10 minutes, someone will yell out “stop” because we have reached his destination. This bus is going to travel maybe 300 miles that day, which causes me to wonder why they are selling tickets to people who are only going 5 miles. To make matters worse, the local that yelled stop has luggage tied on the roof, which requires one of the porters to climb up to the top and retrieve it.

After you have been on the bus for 30 minutes, you discover the leg room is about 6 inches too narrow for anyone over the age of 12 to sit comfortably and you have 9 and a half hours to go.

Around noon, the temperature begins to heat up and you think it would be nice to have a window open, so you reach over to open one. Immediately, three people lunge at the window to close it. Then you remember the old Ethiopian superstition that wind rushing too fast across your face can suck the life force right out of you. You are thinking that if that window doesn't open soon, someone's life force is going to be in jeopardy, but not because of the wind. I suspected that some of the buses I saw in the country were in service 40 years ago, and this was confirmed when I sat down and saw carved into the back of the seat in front of me the words I had written in 1972, “just shoot me.”

erosion, and human contact that it resembled a cesspool more than anything else. The springs provide the daily water supply for up to 900 people in the surrounding vicinity. These people have no other source of water. They use it for cooking, cleaning and drinking and usually do not boil it first. Every day young girls and women come to the spring, typically twice a day, and fill five-gallon containers to carry home.

Some may have to walk over two miles each way. The situation was heartbreaking.



You get the idea?

The local Development Association has a good deal of experience with spring protection programs. They propose that the spring first be dug out to get to its source, then a large concrete cap be placed over it to fully encase and protect it. Depending on what is needed, a concrete and stone reservoir could be built nearby to hold water, and then slightly downhill from that would be the final distribution tap where people would receive clean water. In many cases an animal trough is constructed off to the side. Although the springs are now completely polluted, after proper construction, they would return to their pristine condition. Initial cost estimates are between \$6,000 and \$9,000 per site.

It is the intention of the Peace Corps XIII group to fund the construction of one of these projects through fundraising and private donations. A video of two of the springs in their present condition can be found at: <http://www.razoo.com/story/Central-Highlands-Foundation> The site also provides an opportunity to contribute to the health of thousands of Ethiopians suffering from water related diseases. I can assure you that every dollar received will go directly to the construction of one of these spring improvement projects.

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**4 Comments**

## Projects

Posted on July 6, 2013 by janetillee | [Leave a comment](#)

# John Stauffer leads The America Team for Displaced Eritreans

Since 2004, John Stauffer (Adi Kayeh, Akele Gazai state, Eritrea 1966-68) has been involved in Eritrean causes, both political and humanitarian. His interest in Eritrea began as a teacher of science and English in the B.G. Lorenzo Tazaz Junior Secondary School in Adi Kayeh, where he became friends with many Eritreans and became connected to the local culture.

Many years later, he reconnected with former students who had moved to the U.S., one whom he invited to the U.S. From this former student, he learned of the gross injustice and mistreatment of much of the population and vowed to do something about the situation.

After 38 years of working in industry, he joined two Eritreans and two other Americans in an informal organization whose objective was to create awareness of the problems facing Eritrea. They accomplished this primarily through the use of social media and visits to think tanks and U.S. government officials.

Eventually, the group's focus turned to paying greater attention to refugees who had fled Eritrea, many to refugee camps in neighboring Ethiopia. They provided some financial help, clothing, and medicine to refugees and soon established college



scholarships for Eritrean refugees living in these camps. Through that effort, they have provided 34 scholarships primarily for students to study nursing in Addis Ababa. At the same time, they began assisting refugees through advocacy and material support in acute situations of need for clothing, advocacy and cash assistance.



PCV John Stauffer and girls in Adi Caieh, Eritrea

In early 2010, the team decided to work exclusively on humanitarian issues focusing on the refugees, and gave up their political activities. They incorporated as a Pennsylvania nonprofit, effective April 1, 2010 and registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity and were formally recognized as the [America Team for Displaced Eritreans](#) with Stauffer serving as President.

The America Team has been successful in achieving many objectives ranging from assisting individuals and families to assimilate in the U.S.; coming to the aid of asylum seekers in the U.S.; and helping get resources and assistance to Eritreans in acute situations of danger or need in various countries. Stauffer states, "The area that is most challenging is that of refugees kidnapped from Eritrea and from the Sudan, and trafficked to Egypt where they are sold to renegade Egyptian Bedouins who detain, torture and extort the refugees."

The America Team is sometimes approached, usually by an immigration attorney, to provide expert testimony for a hearing where an asylum seeker is being heard about his or her case. These efforts have proven successful in about a dozen U. S. cases.

In addition to the U. S., the America Team is primarily active in Ethiopia, where there is a volunteer refugee agent assisting in various types of cases, ranging from medical needs to facilitating communication with agencies such as UNHCR — the UN Refugee Agency, and ARRA — Administration of Refugee and Returnee Affairs. There is also an agent and members in Israel, where there is an acute problem facing acceptance of about 35,000 Eritrean refugees. In a broader sense, The America Team has worked extensively to create awareness of the overall problem with the mistreatment of Eritreans and in particular the torture and abuse and extortion of refugees in the Sinai.

In respect to the situation of Eritreans in Ethiopia, Stauffer states,

There has been some significant adjustment and acceptance of Eritrean refugees who enter other countries. Ethiopia for example has accommodated over 60,000 Eritreans who have fled their home country, and have gradually increased the opportunities available for these refugees. Ethiopia should be commended and thanked for their humanitarian response to the refugee crisis, particularly since they have taken over 5,000 Eritrean refugees from the prisons of Egypt.

The America Team has also assisted Eritrean refugees in other countries. Examples of recent activities include assistance for:

- An Eritrean woman who was trafficked to Thailand.
- A refugee who was hospitalized in the Ukraine and in need of an expensive antibiotic for an infection in his spine.

- A group of four refugees in the Ukraine, who had not been accorded asylum there, and who had attempted to move to Slovakia.
- The Eritrean football team that had defected to Uganda in 2012 and needed assistance to relocate to a new safe place.

The [America Team for Displaced Eritreans](#) works with limited resources and funding. It frequently responds to acute situations of danger and need, respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality of its clients who may be in harm's way.

Editor's note: This article was based on an interview given by John Stauffer, President of the America Team for Displaced Eritreans. For the full interview, please visit [http://eritreanrefugees.org/files/Interview\\_Questions\\_5-11-2013.pdf](http://eritreanrefugees.org/files/Interview_Questions_5-11-2013.pdf) or contact Stauffer at [John@EritreanRefugees.org](mailto:John@EritreanRefugees.org)

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## Reunions

Posted on July 6, 2013 by janetillee | [Leave a comment](#)

# ANOTHER FABULOUS ETHIOPIA II (1963–65) REUNION

by Gloria Gieseke Curtis (Asmara 1963-65)



EVERY GREAT EVENT starts with a fabulous idea and leaders bursting from the pack to pull it off. Since quite a few of our “twos” group have homes in Florida, Ed Lynch invited anyone interested to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of our training at UCLA with him in Englewood.

Where the Hell is Englewood, Florida? Who cares? If that is the destination for an Ethiopia II reunion, then it shall be found! Fly into Tampa, go south past Bradenton (home of Dannie and Daryle Russell) along the Bay coast to Lemon Bay, and look for a pastel cluster of buildings named “Wanna-B Inn.” What a beautiful location, right on the shore, to meet and greet dear old friends. Every reunion, we are joined by at least one person who has never been to an Ethiopia II event, and this year it was Moe Rosen and his lovely wife, Jackie.

Thanks to the hard work and creative planning of our fabulous “hosts” (The Russells, The Hillenbrands, and the Lynch Team), we were treated to a long weekend of food, drink, fun, sun, water, music, stories, laughing, crying, nostalgia, book reviews, Ethiopia updates, and more food and drinks. Dannie’s event-planning experience really showed with her gourmet food and fun “extras” like the Ethiopia-Eritrea bracelets and souvenir palm tree drinking glasses, which were well used all weekend. I’m always amazed at how hard the non-PCV spouses work to make these events a success, and they deserve our sincere thanks.

The original plan was to start with an evening reception Friday, April 19, and end with a goodbye brunch on Sunday, April 21. Of course, that would never be enough time for the fanatic “Twos” who needed more reunion time. So many folks decided to come in early and stay later that our flexible hosts kept adding activities. The extended weekend ended up with an open house, abundant food and drinks, and a “meet and greet” at the Ed Lynch vacation home in Englewood Thursday afternoon into evening. Then Friday morning was a scenic boat trip out of Sarasota.

The Friday evening poolside reception was a special treat. First, the “Private Party” sign went up at the hotel pool area. Ed arranged for musicians to play songs from “the good old days” of our 1960s Peace Corps experience. The big surprise was hearing the wonderful solo voices of Ted Vestal, former PC Assistant Director in Ethiopia, and Pat Bailey (Addis Ababa 63-65), one of our own, singing their specialties and then leading the group in some favorites. We ended with a rousing version of “We Shall Overcome . . .”

Saturday morning is usually set aside as the “business meeting” for reunions, but for our group there is always some experience that keeps us from getting too serious. We heard very thorough and thoughtful updates of life in current Ethiopia, plus some wonderful travel stories from recent visitors. Our leaders were Prof. Ted Vestal, Dane Smith, Haskell Ward, and travelers Marvin Vinande and Doug Worthington and their wives who went on the “Return to Ethiopia” trip last September. A special treat was viewing the beautiful scrapbook that Lynn Worthington made up to remember their trip. Some told of what must be one of life’s most exciting experiences for RPCVs — finding former students from the 1960s, especially when they are healthy and successful in their work and personal lives. Others spoke of the support they are giving to projects in the homeland that benefit students and educational projects.

Elias Wondimu from [Tsehai Publishers](#), a guest of Ted Vestal, brought literature describing the many interesting books about Ethiopia already published by the company, or will be published later this year.

While our outstanding grill cook, Barry, was doing duty for lunch outside at the Englewood Community Center, the rest of us told stories inside the clubhouse. We ranged from cheers to tears as Dannie led us in a round of informal story telling. Although this was our group’s official 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year reunion, it really did seem like we were back in Ethiopia as Volunteers. We are an emotional group. The memories are so strong. Of course, the stories continued around the seaside picnic tables as we devoured the lunch prepared by our hosts.

Saturday night was a really fun time at the official farewell dinner held in a funky beach bar and restaurant.

The farewell brunch at Ed and Aud Lynch’s home was really fun. Even some of their neighbors dropped by to meet these strange folks who went to a strange place with Ed and stayed for two years already! Of course, we can’t part company without planning the next reunion and we all agreed that the Fall of 2015 would officially commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> year of our LEAVING Ethiopia. Warren and Marti Fritz stepped up to suggest Traverse City, Michigan, their home area — and a cheering vote confirmed the deal. Our Peace Corps banner and the Eth 2 Party Sign were passed to Warren to make the plan official.

Over the years I’ve met so many returned Peace Corps Volunteers who have never been to a reunion or who have lost contact with everyone in their group. This is always a shock to me and a source of great sadness. Barry has suggested that as a project before 2015 we “Twos” make an effort to contact every person in our group. Hopefully, other Ethiopia groups will try to do the same. Someone needs to VOLUNTEER!



## PCVs in Ethiopia

Posted on [July 6, 2013](#) by [janetillee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

# Stomping Out Malaria in Ethiopia

By **Chuck Adams (Bonga 2011-)**

HIS FACE LOOKED ASHEN, his clothes rumpled, the blanket over his shoulders a mystery in this bright, sweltering sun. Back from the hospital, my neighbor and colleague, Ketema, explained his ailment as only a biology instructor could: “*Plasmodium falciparum*.” I gasped. “And typhus.” I gasped, again, and gulped, thankful that I had been taking my malaria prophylactics on a regular basis.

In Ethiopia, malaria is a strange bedfellow. Some say it doesn’t exist over 1,800 meters above sea level, others say the “safe zone” doesn’t start until 2,200 meters. While Ethiopia is a mountainous country, with highlands plateau stretching across the most populated sections, it is still highly susceptible to outbreaks of malaria. Every peak has its valley, and it’s in those valleys where malaria lurks. My neighbor found this out the hard way.

I asked Ketema if he had a bed net. “Yes.” I asked if he uses it. He just shook his head. “I have, but I’m lazy.” We both concluded that he took the risk and suffered the consequences. But he was a lucky one. Most do not have such easy access to Coartem, the medicine that can quickly alleviate malaria symptoms. To this day, malaria is a leading cause of preventable death in Ethiopia. This is where Peace Corps Volunteers come in to play.

In 2011, PCVs in Senegal launched a continent-wide Peace Corps initiative named “Stomping Out Malaria in Africa,” a project that hopes to engage PCVs in Africa working in all types of programs in the battle against malaria. One component of the project that many PCVs have taken on is Blog About Malaria Month (BAMM). During the month of April, PCVs from target countries compete to come up with the most blog entries related to malaria as possible. This year Ethiopia tied Guinea for 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 24 blog entries. Zambia was 2<sup>nd</sup> with 32 entries. Senegal won with 37 entries.

PCVs in Ethiopia wrote about a wide variety of topics related to malaria. Julia Duch (Dilla 2012-) wrote about her [malaria-themed mural](#); Forrest Copeland (Aby Ady 2012-) described his [mefloquine-induced dreams](#); Morgan Davison (Aykel, 2012-) [spoke to her soccer team about malaria before a practice](#); Sarah Crozier (Gonder 2012-) stuck her foot outside her bednet for a night and [reported on the mosquito bites she received in a single evening](#); Dan Allen (Gonder/Addis 2010-13) [wrote about his attempts to give insightful presentations on malaria at Pre-Service Training and In-Service Training](#). These are just a select few of the many entries PC/Ethiopia submitted.

I decided to create a podcast for my BAMM entries. I interviewed my neighbor on his bout of malaria, in which he thoroughly convinces me he is an expert on malaria (and yet still doesn’t use a bednet), as well as interviewing my site-mate Laura Harrington (Bonga 2011-), who has led a World Malaria Day march in Bonga for the past two years. The march starts at the top of the hill, near where she lives (above the malaria zone), and winds its way through town, down the hill to the valley of the teachers college where I work (in the malaria zone). Along the way, students wave banners, chant songs, and hold a bed net aloft all in the spirit of raising awareness on this silent killer. For my part of the collaboration, I secured a large meeting hall at the teachers college where participants can rest, drink water and tea, eat a biscuit, and hear a short

presentation on malaria prevention from a local health official. The day is capped off with voting on the best banner in several categories.

These are just small steps — the only steps PCVs can really take — but they are fun and creative ways to battle a public health issue that continues to kill over 70,000 people in Ethiopia each year, mostly children. If even one life is preserved, our efforts will be worth it.

To learn more about “Stomping Out Malaria in Africa,” and to read all of the Ethiopia PCV “Blog About Malaria Month” entries on malaria, go to [StompOutMalaria.org](http://StompOutMalaria.org).



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## Friends

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## Phil Lilienthal receives Sargent Shriver Award



Phil Lilienthal with campers

Ethiopia and Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and *The Herald* are pleased to celebrate one of our own as the recipient of the 2013 Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service: Phil Lilienthal (Addis Ababa, 1965–67). Lilienthal is the founder and president of [Global Camps Africa](#), an organization that strives to change the lives of South Africa’s vulnerable children and youth by providing HIV/AIDS prevention education and training through high-impact residential and day camp experiences.

The award, named to recognize the first Peace Corps Director, Sargent Shriver, is bestowed annually by the National Peace Corps Association to a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who continues to make a substantial and distinguished contribution to society. Lilienthal joins a host of distinguished humanitarians, including the late Senator Paul Tsongas (Ghion 62–64), to receive the Shriver Award. Tsongas was among five recipients in 1986, the inaugural year of the award. The award was presented to Lilienthal at the NPCA's Peace Corps Connect—Boston held June 28–29, 2013.

As a native of New York, Lilienthal spent much of his youth at his father's camp, Camp Winnebago, in Fayette, Maine, both as a camper and later as a counselor. Upon graduation from law school at the University of Virginia, he and his wife, Lynn, were selected to join the Peace Corps in Ethiopia where he worked in Addis Ababa with various ministries within the Ethiopian government on legal projects. Seble Desta, granddaughter of Emperor Haile Selassie, expressed interest in setting up a residential camp for Ethiopian youth. Not surprisingly, Lilienthal's experience with camps caught the attention of John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62–64; PC/Ethiopia staff 65–67) who was serving as the Associate Director of Peace Corps in Ethiopia. Coyne mentioned Seble's interest to Lilienthal and asked him if he was interested in taking on the project. In the two years that Lilienthal oversaw the project, he masterminded the formation and operation of the camp, which included arranging the use of land from a member of the royal family, locating equipment and supplies, acquiring arts and craft supplies, and arranging for medical assistance. A significant achievement was melding together youth from different tribal and ethnic backgrounds into groups that were cohesive and worked well together. In the two years that Lilienthal supervised Camp Langano, there were four two-week long camps serving 285 youth. Camp Langano remained in existence until 1974 when the Derg came into power and the Emperor was overthrown.

Following a successful career as a lawyer and business owner, and having taken over the ownership of the family-owned Camp Winnebago, Phil felt drawn back to those camp experiences he had fostered as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia and his vision to help children in Africa in a way that he knew best. However, unlike Camp Langano, which was fashioned heavily on an American model, he wanted these camps to be truly African. To do this, he had to find the right local partner, one that shared his vision and one that would be self-sufficient and sustainable. After visiting a number of African countries, he found a most suitable match in South Africa, and in 2004 Camp Sizanani, appropriately named after a Zulu word "helping one another," was born.

Camp Sizanani is located in a rural area north of Johannesburg. It is a camp like no other, catering to the needs of children from the toughest parts of South Africa. Some have experienced unspeakable horrors. Many of the children have tested positive for HIV, a disease that is prevalent in South Africa. The eight-day camp sets about to empower the children and provide them with skills to make a difference in their lives and the lives of those whom they encounter. The discussion of sexuality and HIV are taboo subjects in South Africa, as in many parts of the world. The camps provide the campers with knowledge and the skills to confront the disease in order to better manage their own lives once they leave the camps.

Importantly, the experience does not stop there. The children are encouraged to join one of the five clubs established by Global Camps Africa that meet twice a month. In these clubs — in effect day camps — the children have a safe place to gather, take enhanced life skills courses, and continue the dialogue with their camp counselors.

The results have been remarkable: more than 5,200 children have attended the camps since Camp Sizanani opened in 2004. Participants of the camps have been able to stay out of trouble in greater numbers, have delayed or had fewer pregnancies, avoided joining gangs, and learned they have choices and opportunities. Many of the participants later return to the camps as counselors. Nine South African counselors are in the U.S. this summer as camp counselors in U.S. camps, widening their experiences and enhancing their skills.

Lilienthal has fond memories of his experiences in Ethiopia and has travelled back twice since he was a Volunteer. He is encouraged by recent Peace Corps Volunteer experiences with Camp GLOW (See Paul Voigt's [article in The Herald about Camp Glow.](#)) Lilienthal was also a major contributor to the recent Peace Corps manual: [Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and other Leadership Camps](#) published in January 2013.

In reflecting on the Sargent Shriver award, Lilienthal states: “This project would not have come into being without my Peace Corps Ethiopia experience. I believe that the greatest praise that I can receive is when my family recognizes the work that I have accomplished and acknowledges that achievement. Receiving this award from an organization that has been such an integral part of my life is as significant to me as receiving recognition from my family and closest friends.”

Congratulations, Phil, on an honor well deserved from all of us who served with you in Ethiopia in time or in spirit.

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## Books

Posted on [July 6, 2013](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

# Home is Where My Earrings Are

by Dannie Russell (Eth II 1963-65)

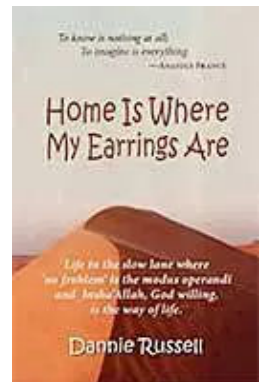
Peppertree Press, 2012

\$19.95 ([paperback](#))

*Reviewed by Gloria Curtis (Asmara 63-65)*

FOR ALL THE ADVENTUROUS TRAVELERS out there, and the wanna-bes, including those seeking to live and work in a foreign culture — please read this wonderful paperback book. Follow the author from her early Peace Corps assignment as a young wife and teacher in Ethiopia, to her many “assignments” in foreign countries as her spouse, Daryle Russell, develops a very successful career in the International School system. Peace Corps Volunteers have many descriptions of culture shock, but Dannie’s reaction to arriving in Addis Ababa is a gut-wrenching story.

With a strong feminine perspective on life, Dannie appreciates and learns from all her travel, and working experiences, realizing how fortunate she is. Enjoy this book slowly so you can absorb all the little funny and sad and lonely and “Oh, My God” moments.



# The Tenth Saint

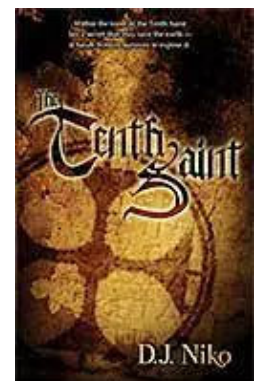
by D. J. Niko

Medallion Press, 2012

\$14.95 ([paperback](#))

Reviewed by Janet Lee (Emdeber 74-76)

SARAH WESTON, A CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGIST and female “Indiana Jones,” is assigned to lead an expedition to unearth a royal necropolis outside of Aksum, Ethiopia, in the empire that the author describes as the most powerful kingdom in East Africa and Arabia centuries ago: “The fabled ancestral land of the Queen of Sheba. The home of kings and powerful warriors and untold wealth,



all buried in great labyrinths beneath the broken stelae standing like silent eternal soldiers on the foothills of Mount Saint George.”

Routine excavation soon leads to intrigue when Sarah is approached at a local eatery by an Ethiopian who shares with her some broken pieces of pottery and promises of greater treasures. Captivated, though suspicious, she meets with him the next day and is lead to an obscure tomb and burial place of Gabriel, “The Tenth Saint” of Coptic Ethiopian tradition. Always falling under the shadows of her famous archaeologist father, she is determined to pursue this lead on her own and initially thwarts the guidance and advances of American scholar Daniel Madigan, a legend in his own right, but someone who also plays well to a camera.

Together Sarah and Daniel track down clues to the mysterious Gabriel and find themselves in enough close calls to put Indiana Jones to shame. The quest leads them to Addis Ababa, the monasteries and churches of Lalibela, and the wilderness of the Simien Mountains. The plot involves time travel and prophesies of the demise of the world through an environmental catastrophe, which appear will be foiled due to the intervention of this intrepid team.

The author, D. J. Niko, thoroughly researched the history and geography of Ethiopia, providing sufficient authenticity to the story line and plot to satisfy even the most skeptical Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. Her descriptions of the people and countryside sufficiently matched many of my recollections of the areas around Aksum and Lalibella as to not distract from the storyline. It is a work of fiction, after all. She briefly describes the food, the children, and the great churches and monasteries. But obviously the author was as taken with Ethiopia as many of us were. At the conclusion of the novel, Sarah returns the sacred texts to one of the monasteries perched high upon the mountain. “At the cliff’s edge, Sarah surveyed the craggy highlands of Ethiopia, a place she could neither forgive nor forget. Somewhere in those hostile hills lay the tomb of the tenth saint with all its secrets and unrequited hopes.”

This is the first of a series of Sarah Weston Chronicles. The second, *The Riddle of Solomon*, is set in Saudi Arabia and was just recently published.

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**END OF ISSUE 15 — 6/2013**

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