

The Herald

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

MONTHLY ARCHIVES: APRIL 2015

Editor's Note

Posted on [April 25, 2015](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

From the Editor

Janet Lee (Emdeber, 1974-76)

The Internet has served as a wonderful conduit of information for RPCVs from Ethiopia and Eritrea, be it on our [Facebook Page](#) or [Peace Corps Ethiopia Facebook Page](#), blogs like *The Herald*, or individual blogs. We can keep up to date with Current or Returned Volunteers, news of interest about politics and development in Ethiopia, or projects and journeys of our fellow Volunteers. It has definitely made my job easier. But the best form of communication is still word of mouth. Let me know if you have a story to share. And as always, remember to “like” us on Facebook.

The Peace Corps Ethiopia Annual Report for 2014 has been published. It recognizes the long tradition of volunteerism in Ethiopia by including a brief history and photos of early Volunteers. There are currently 232 Volunteers serving in three sectors: Education, Health, and Environment. The average age of the Volunteer is 25. Females outnumber males 156 to 76 and the Volunteers come from 40 different states. They serve in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and S.N.N.P.R. (Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Region). The report is filled with stories of the volunteers and the projects in which they work. Click on: [Peace Corps Ethiopia Annual Report](#). Follow the link to download the report.

We are very fortunate to hear firsthand about the current status of Peace Corps Ethiopia in a recent interview with Country Director, Brannon Brewer. He most recently served in Ebola-stricken Liberia. Welcome to Ethiopia, Brannon.

Remembrances

As RPCVs we all remember being asked that dreaded question, “So how was Ethiopia?” Two years of your life. Two years that changed you forever. We recite our two-minute elevator speech as our listener's eyes glaze over. Shayna Rosenblum (Frewyeini (Sicata) Tigray, 2012–14) told her story first on a blog (she is part of the new wired generation after all) and now as a post for *The Herald* in *On Bravery*. She is refreshingly honest making this a “must read” for all females considering volunteering for the Peace Corps. She, too, has been touched forever by her experience in Ethiopia and shares her experience through a series of short stories, some happy, some sad, but all very brave.

In *Epistles and Stories* by RPCVs from Ethiopia, Alan Smith (*Debre Marcos Group XVI (1971–73)*); Vocational trainer of new Volunteers: *Group XVII (Summer 1972)* and *Group XIX (Summer 1973)* edits and compiles a sample of stories and letters

from other RPCVs from the early years. Do you remember those little blue aerogrammes or venturing to Addis Ababa to make a phone call? If so, the stories captured here will resonate.

Hoyt Smith (Addis Ababa, 1962–65) reflects on his experiences as background for his book with Ted Vestal in *Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: The Story behind the Story*. His book, *Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: Revisited* was published this past year and is reviewed in our book section. Hoyt relates his experience as a Public Relations photographer for the early Peace Corps office and the opportunities that gave him. In this reflection, he includes photos not published in his book and speaks about the brief moments when he met HIM (His Imperial Majesty) Haile Selassie. If you have not yet had an opportunity to purchase his book, this is the time to do so. The photos are magnificent!

PCVs in Ethiopia

Many of us RPCVs have had a chance to return to Ethiopia and connect with current Volunteers, who have been both welcoming and curious about our experiences. We are fortunate in this issue to have three short pieces from current Volunteers in the field.

Deborah Massey (Injibara, 2012—) had experienced the normal set of frustrations in working on projects when she began a reading program. She describes her triumph in *Welcome to Reading Outcome: Ethiopian primary school students excited to read!* She was able to build upon the work of previous volunteers and set up a reading program at the Injibara Public Library that includes 150 books in two languages, math flashcards, a table where students can draw, card games and an educational video program in Amharic.

Evan Craig (Quiha 2014—) describes a transformational experience he had in working in Ethiopia in *The Transitional Hive: A Quiha Story*. Evan thought he had found a place for himself in Ethiopia by training local farmers how to set up transitional bee hives, only to discover that he had worked himself out of a job — the ultimate Peace Corps success story.

For the past few summers, PCVs in Ethiopia have been invited to assist in the Youth Solidarity and English Language Summer Camp. In *English Only*, Forrest Copeland (Abi Adi, Tigray 2012-14 and Addis Ababa, 2014-) writes about his observations at this amazing summer camp. The goals of the YSEL-Ethiopia program are to improve English language skills, develop critical thinking, build leadership skills and create solidarity among the students from the diverse areas of Ethiopia. Volunteers with whom I have spoken have stated that this was a major highlight of their Peace Corps experience.

And Other News

The Board of the Ethiopian and Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers welcomes our newest Board Member, Karen (Preskey) Glover (Agaro, 2007-2009). Recently returned from her service in Ethiopia, she brings a contemporary perspective of the experiences of recent Volunteers and the networking capability to help the organization to thrive.

Gloria Gieseke Curtis (Asmara 1963–65), retired E & ERPCVs board member has a fundraising idea to supplement efforts for the RPCV Legacy program. If you are interested in traditional cultural objects or contemporary jewelry, check out Gloria's article for more information.

Alice Gosak Gary (Harrar 1964-67) shares photos and stories from the Ethiopian III reunion in San Antonio. And in our Friends section, let us honor two requests for finding PCVs from long ago.

Book Reviews and More

And finally, my favorite section, Book Reviews and More. This issue has reviews for Hoyt Smith's *Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: Revisted*, *Mellow Yellow - Dead Red* a mystery by Sylvia Rochester (Jimma, 1964-66), *The Essential Guide to Tigrinya: the Language of Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia* co-authored by Andrew Tadross (2011-13, Endodo and Mekelle, Tigray) and *Zemene* a documentary film.

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Peace Corps

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Interview with new Peace Corps/Ethiopia Country Director Brannon Brewer

by [Janet Lee \(Emdeber, 1974-76\)](#)

The Herald: Please give us a brief overview of your background, including prior Peace Corps Director assignments, other international posts, and where you served as a Volunteer?

Brewer: My background has been varied and spanned a number of locations. I worked as staff to a couple of U.S. House Members when I was younger, and had a business in the States. But my true career was really set in motion when I joined Peace Corps as a Small Business Volunteer in Moldova in 1997. For all the wonderful people I came to know, and the experiences I would never trade, it was still a rather bleak place to be following the fall of the Soviet Union. I did, however, meet my wife, Sophia, while we were both serving. So Moldova started both my overseas career and my family at the same time. Sophia now serves as a USAID Health Officer in Addis.



But back to the question, I found the overseas experience somewhat addictive, and we soon moved to Romania for several years, and children started entering the picture for us. I then became the country director for an NGO in Addis, where we spent about three and a half years between 2007 and 2010. But for me, NGO work didn't have the same satisfaction as my PCV days, so I joined Peace Corps as a country director and I served in Guyana and then Liberia. Ebola was ravaging the people and country, and we evacuated the PCVs from

Liberia, though not a single Volunteer wanted to leave their friends, students and communities. It was a hard time on many levels. But Peace Corps offered me the opportunity to join the team in Ethiopia, and I gladly jumped at the chance! Sophia and I now have three kids, and our youngest was actually born in Addis the last time we were here. It seems we were meant to be back.

The Herald: How have your experiences differed from country to country? What has been a unifying theme?

Brewer: Every country is so different, and that's really the whole draw of living abroad. We all as people share certain things in common, yet it is the things that are unique and special about each culture and society that should be recognized and celebrated. It troubles me if people talk about entire regions of the world in broad strokes that ignore their particular qualities. It's commonly done when referring to "Africans" as if it's one big country, but it's also done for South America, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and so forth. Until you live within a culture, learn it's traditions, values, and ways of life, then it's very difficult to understand and appreciate the differences. And no one gains that insight and appreciation like a Peace Corps Volunteer.

The Herald: I believe Ethiopia has one of the largest contingents of Volunteers in Africa. What makes it so popular? What role does the Ethiopian government (at all levels) play in its success?

Brewer: Even though Peace Corps was re-established only in 2007, it is among the largest posts in terms of Volunteer numbers. Ethiopia has such a rich history that it is an attractive post even for those who have never travelled abroad. We have roughly 225 Volunteers and Trainees right now working in our three projects of Health, Environment and Secondary Education, and I anticipate we will average about 260 by the end of 2015. Peace Corps has programs in the countries where the needs match well with the strengths of the agency and the qualifications of generally younger Volunteers, though many of the most effective are those who join with an entire career of experience to draw from. Working as complements to the government of Ethiopia, Volunteers are able to engage in activities that improve the opportunities in life for others, improve their quality of life, and to help communities realize their aspirations. Ethiopia has a current population of about 90 million, so there are plenty of communities that can benefit from hosting a dedicated, resourceful, and technically qualified Volunteer.

The Herald: There is obviously no typical Volunteer. What are the demographics of the recent groups? Youngest to oldest, male and female. What are their assignments? Where are they stationed? Rural or urban?

Brewer: There is no typical Volunteer, as we all come from every demographic, but I believe there are shared characteristics that every Volunteer has in common. I find that enthusiasm, perseverance, resourcefulness and creativity are some of the most important qualities. Volunteers care for people and earn personal fulfillment and gratification from benefitting someone other than themselves. I've heard some say that the current generation of younger Volunteers lacks the sense of service, work ethic, etc. of previous generations of Volunteers, but I don't find that at all the case. Those who join Peace Corps today are made of the same fabric, and join for the same reasons, as those who first answered the call of President Kennedy. Yes, it's a different

world, but the adventurous, can-do spirit of service, is still found in those that commit themselves to our three goals.

The average age of our Volunteers is 25, and being 70 percent female — numbers that basically match the agency ratios. The projects have largely been urban based, but we are in the process of shifting sites to more rural environments where an average *kebele* community may consist of only a couple of thousand people. These are the environments where PCVs can thrive, where they can work directly with the people, and develop personal relationships.

The Herald: My group trained in Harrar and Dire Dawa, areas that have been forbidden to current Volunteers until recently. Volunteers in my day were pulled from the north after the Derg took over and travel was forbidden up north. Recently Volunteers have been stationed as far north as Axum. What considerations are taken to ban or open up a site to Volunteers? Have you had an opportunity to do many site visits? How does your office communicate with Volunteers in remote areas?

Brewer: Volunteers are allowed to visit Dire Dawa and Harrar, though not the areas surrounding those specific towns. Peace Corps places PCVs in only the four regions of Tigray, Oromia, Amhara, and SNNP. These are the regions with the highest population densities and offer conditions where PCVs can live and work with the greatest assurance of physical well-being. Ethiopia is in a rough neighborhood within the Horn of Africa, and most border areas present concerns. Our post has a safety and security team that assesses each site, and we share information with numerous organizations and agencies, including the U.S. Embassy, to continually evaluate the safety of our program areas.

The Herald: What is your vision for the future of Peace Corps/Ethiopia?

Brewer: I want to see a post where Volunteers and staff share common goals, and are all moving in the same direction and for the same purpose. I want to see projects that fill a niche in the development of Ethiopia, and that result in clear impact on a broad scale. I want Peace Corps to be well known for the contribution our Volunteers offer through their service, and I do not want us to be the best kept secret in Ethiopia. I want Volunteers who are so well prepared to participate in their communities that they don't want to leave after two years. I want them to thrive, to excel, and to find the fulfillment and satisfaction that makes them appreciating the opportunity they had for the rest of their lives. Likewise, I want all Ethiopians who have ever known a Volunteer to remember fondly the time they spent together, and to realize the opportunities in life that they would not have had had they not benefitted from the Volunteers' service in their communities. All of this is why we are here.

Reminiscences

Posted on [April 25, 2015](#) by [janetllee](#) | [2 comments](#)

On Bravery

by **Shayna Rosenblum** (Frewyeini (Sincata) Tigray 2012-14)

I never remember my parents having to teach me to be brave. I was never afraid of the ball playing sports. In fact, I was a little too fearless at times. I gave speeches in front of the mayor when I was in elementary school. And I loved sleepaway camp — one month in the mountains alone without my parents. No one had to ever tell me not to be afraid of the ball or to speak louder or not to be homesick. This is who I was and in a sense foreshadowing who I would eventually become. But if you ask my parents they would tell you that I had a hard time with change and making the decision that would evoke that change. But now, I find myself in a pretty big period of change. Getting on that plane . . . making it real will be difficult. Like my childhood self I am a little hesitant for this change and to let go of this life abroad.



In class (click)

In a few days, I will land on U.S. soil for the first time in two and a half years. I have mixed emotions about my arrival stateside in a similar way that I had mixed emotions about leaving Ethiopia for good. If you ask most Volunteers, they would describe it as bittersweet, but that's so predictable. Bittersweet is not how I would answer people when they ask the very very loaded and dreaded question "So, how was Ethiopia?" How do you answer such a thing? Over two years of things no one else can relate to. How do I speak these words in English nonetheless? "What has Ethiopia taught me?" or "How are you different?" would be better questions to ask a returned Volunteer. If you think you know about bravery I'd say I know more. I have been braver than anyone I know in America and that's what Ethiopia is. It's brave. I am

brave. My fellow Volunteers are brave. My students are brave. My friends are brave. Sometimes, you have no choice but to be brave in the face of what Ethiopia is.

But even then, I couldn't answer these questions. I would likely tell you a story instead. I was at a farmers market in New Mexico before I left. I was in a bad place. I had a bad year. This guy at the market went on and on about his cucumbers. I remember listening because of how proud he was. I remember thinking, "Gosh, I wish I was ever that proud of anything in my life." My jealousy was apparent that he loved his cucumbers more than anything I had ever put work into. I always remember him because as I walked away he smiled and said "enjoy your moment." It was powerful to me specifically at that time. So when people ask me about Ethiopia I'll explain some of the moments that added up to make me . . . well, me, and how proud I am of what I've done. I am even more proud than the hippy man and his cucumbers.

Ask me about Ethiopia and I'll tell you about a girl named Danyite (*all names changed throughout*) who has a skin pigmentation problem, and was removed from school. I desperately tried to get her back in school. I rubbed myself all over her skin to prove that it's not contagious, and told the other kids how smart and cool she was. By the time I walked out of the village with my bag she was the queen of the block, organizing games and speaking better English than some of my co-workers. She returned to school and was ranked number 3 in her second grade class.

Ask me about Ethiopia and I'll tell you about how Danyite was almost beaten to death by her mom. The way I waited one second too long to pull the breast-feeding mom (with a 3-day-old infant) away from kicking the girl's head into the wall kind of haunts me. How am I different? I won't wait. I won't hesitate when I see bad things happen. I am braver than I once was. I'll tell you of the way she loved stroking my arm, telling me how beautiful I am the same way I told her how beautiful she was every day. The way she disappeared for six months and everyone told me she was in the village. I was brave letting it go, moving on with my life and hoping that she was alive and safe. She arrived like magic one day like nothing happened and we picked up with her English right where we left off.

I'll tell you about Haymanot, the outspoken teenage girl who stood up to bullies and adults who wouldn't look at her burnt, scared face. She stood in class and corrected her teacher's English with a slight slur because of her hanging lip. From that moment on I wanted to know her. A girl speaking up. A girl without fear whom the community shuns. She showed me what bravery is. I insisted on painting the nails on her deformed hand with nail polish one afternoon. I was just asking for the other hand like nothing was weird. I pretended like I didn't see the strange shapes or the lack of nail and we smiled. I painted what I could. I ran my fingers across her skin one last time as I remember her shining at Camp and everyone voting her the "most inspirational" award. I advised her to continue her education. "Gobez iya" (I am awesome/smart), she said. We laughed.



BFF (click)

I'll tell you about my co-worker Mibratu who spoke four languages and loved to learn. He bought eight baby chickens with all of his savings. A big deal and an investment he told me one day. In his hand was a book titled *How to Become Successful and Rich* with a picture of a white guy in a suit on the front. "I have to try, Shay, right? I have to try and keep trying. I have a family, you know." He later informed me that all but two of the chickens died. "I am in trouble," he said. "That was all of my savings." He spoke proudly at the school's coffee ceremony, a monthly social program, reciting English phrases to impress me and teach the others. He sat next to me and whispered translations into my ear from the trivia game and became really excited when I knew the answers. Like I was a child and everyone was not equal. I got the first shot at the answer while everyone clapped for me. All he wanted from me was the promise that we could continue to practice English. He just wanted a simple letter from America. Maybe his family was hungry (teachers make \$65 a month) but all he cared about was learning and keeping in touch. He's so brave to be living in a place with little opportunity. But his spirit and smile I could never forget.

Or Hiwot and her daughter Merahawit. Hiwot never went to school and can't read or write even in her native language. When she got a cell phone I watched her daughter help teach her to memorize the keypad. She did a "work for food" program building the roads carrying heavy rock day after day. "It's work," she'd say as if she wasn't tired or her 90-pound body wasn't sore. Week after week she'd give me some of the rice she earned. "No, no," I'd protest, but she insisted.

Or Atsbaha whose parents both died (presumably from HIV) and he continued to smile as long as you didn't talk about HIV education. He was the number one student in his grade 9 class this year.

Or Germanesh, who was in an arranged marriage at the age of 11. She had two children when her husband left her years ago. She works as a maid making \$10 a month, but continues to make everyone smile and laugh when she comes around. She is somewhat of a class clown and a good friend. I learned her story just weeks before I left.

Or Getaneh, who was raised in the rural area, poor and hungry, whose town was bombed as he walked to school. He later worked as a soldier and then tried to escape through the desert to Sudan but was caught. He came to my door

and often we'd stand outside and talk about philosophy for hours. Culturally not allowed to enter the home of the opposite sex, we stood and squatted for hours sometimes. One night he said, "Shay. I have a big question for you. I want to marry Frewyeini, but I don't have money (dowry) to pay and her father said no. We made a plan. We will get pregnant so that he must say yes." "Is that bad?" he asked. "I am not a bad person." "Do you love her?" "Yes," he said. "Then don't let her go, and do whatever you need to. And no, I don't think that you are a bad person." A few months later, I was in their wedding, drinking beers with the groomsmen as we all got ready. A few months later, a week before the baby was born Getaneh was transferred for work and Frewyeini had to rely on neighbors to rush her to the clinic (I was also away at camp). Without power or a doctor she asked me for my blood type before I left afraid of bleeding out. And then, when the baby was born I walked with Frewyeini and the new-born out of the church in a procession through town for the christening. Getaneh was promoted at work and now runs the accounting department of a bank.

Or Weini. The brightest most interesting and impressive single Ethiopian woman I know. She's a professor at the local university and is interested in talking about philosophy, religion and life. She's adventurous and is up for anything new and exciting, which is rare for Ethiopians and women especially. She keeps up with us running and loved yoga when I taught it at summer camp. I left her my mat and some videos. She took us to where her family is from on the border as we hiked the mountainside and crossed bridges together and I felt sad that she couldn't cross to America with me.

All of these people were examples of what perseverance and bravery really is. My acts of bravery came in the form of punching men in broad daylight for grabbing me. Or getting the community to rally around me when a man started to stalk me on my runs, in cafes, outside of my house and masturbated. I stood in a room full of men confronting the guy as my community asked, "Do you want us to kill him?" "No," I said. "I just don't want him to come near me." Simply buying my food at the weekly market brought challenges. I had to go in, swat hands away from my breasts and argue over pennies for the right price. Snapping at them in their native language, "I heard you. You just told him 8 birr and now you are telling me 12." "No," I would say, walking away. Simply to eat, to buy my food took bravery and conviction. Getting on a bus was like a wrestling match or better yet a wrestling match within a mosh pit sometimes. Clutching my purse to my boobs, protecting both, I used my size as leverage and yelled at people when they didn't let old women and moms with kids on first. "*Balage* (bad!)" I'd yell as men pushed the girls to the ground making space for them to get a seat. Running a double marathon in The Tigray Trek that was outright crazy. Something like 50 miles in two days. Who knew I could? But we were all brave those days, not thinking about the miles behind us just set on reaching the next town. The next week getting my wisdom teeth pulled wide awake digging my nails into the chair trying not to jump away. Gripping brave and strong because the people I was surrounded by daily were just that.

Ethiopia has been a whirlwind of experiences. Imagine if someone asked you for your life story, but really only wanted your two minute elevator speech. What would you say? I am thinking about that as I write this. And though I enjoy talking about Ethiopia it is also really difficult. Being brave maybe comes more naturally to some than others, but Ethiopia is another beast. Another level of assertiveness that I really never naturally had within me. Like saying "F*** you" takes a lot of energy for me. But Ethiopia taught me to say it and act like that at times for the sake of safety. And it taught me love for the sake of sanity and hope for the sake of simple survival. Ask another Returned Peace Corps Volunteer how they have changed and some from Ethiopia will tell you things like they have become meaner, less patient, and angry. But most will tell you that they have become braver and wiser and stronger than they ever thought possible.

I don't know if anything has concluded. I am significantly more well read, more understanding of the world around me, meaning I know nothing with certainty. I am less afraid of anything, more curious and I stand "in the middle" or

undecided on a lot of things that I once thought that I was certain of. I am neither a Republican nor Democrat, and after a passionate early 20s campaigning and protesting for or against things I once found important — I do not believe in politics with any conviction or certainty anymore. I am frustrated by systems that forget about “the people.”

My fervor is not for religion or politics. It’s for people, young people more specifically, my girls’ group for their openness to the world for change and their bravery because they have to stay there. Opinions matter, but they only matter if you can see, understand, and appreciate the other side. I do not believe in saving Africa or charity in the way westerners do. I will never give money to Africa, and avoid buying anything that claims to be a charity. I do not believe for a moment that Africa will progress on its own with western money. I believe in sustainability and empowering local people. I believe that kids will be that change for the next generation and I believe in deep friendship that cross all sectors, languages and religion.



Girls rock! (click)

“Yakanyalay, Tigray” and “Amaseganalo, Ethiopia.”

Epistles and Stories by RPCVs from Ethiopia

edited and facilitated by Alan Smith (Debre Marcos Group XVI 71-73)

Vocational trainer of new PCVs: Group XVII (Summer 1972) and Group XIX (Summer 1973)

I HOPE YOU FIND this sampling of stories and letters home as enjoyable and encouraging as I have. Every PCV from Ethiopia had similar experiences, no matter what their years of service. These and many more stories are chronicles that show life in Ethiopia during different time frames and with different challenges.

There were many struggles that had to be overcome or at least worked around to fulfill our desire to “do good” in the world.

- Many female Volunteers experienced harassment or disrespect because of a woman’s place in the culture.
- During the late ’60s and early ’70s males experienced the “draft dodger” or the CIA label especially during their travels.
- Contact with the outside world was by aerogrammes (small, blue, self-folding into its own envelope) that sometimes made it — and sometimes not. The best turnaround time for an exchange of communications from the U.S. was one month.
- Packages sent from the U.S. rarely made it intact.
- Phone calls — find a phone at a school? a post office? a suk? — were expensive and most often had to be made in Addis Ababa. If you were to receive a call at your site, some runner would need to track you down and you would go to the phone and hope that the party on the other end had not gone far.
- Looking for foreign foods? Cans and boxes could be purchased in Addis, put in a cardboard box, and be put under your feet on the bus back to your site.
- Let us not forget the cultural shocks — a public hanging in the market; the stoning of a person to drive them out of town . . .

Each era produced a unique set of obstacles to overcome so we could continue to work at our site. Some PCVs actually extended for one or more years.

Additional examples of stories can be found at [E&E RPCVs' Facebook page](#) . Looking for a place to archive your letters and other memorabilia for posterity? [Click here](#) for further information about donating your materials to the Hoover Institution that is archiving materials from PCVs who served in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Inspired by these authors? Want to share here in The Herald? E-mail me at: asmithtech@yahoo.com for further information.

ENJOY!

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ROCKET SCIENCE

by Charlie Ipcar (Addis Ababa 65-67, Ebdeber 67-68)

I remember when I was an advisor to the Science Club at the Technical School in Addis Ababa where I was a Peace Corps teacher, some students approached me one day requesting the formula for rocket fuel. I had experimented with small scale rockets in high school and imagined that they were working with a similar project. I dutifully looked the formula up in my old reference book [Twentieth Century Formulas](#) under “pyrotechnics” and ascertained that what they needed were equal parts of sulfur, carbon, and potassium nitrate, carefully mixed together.

The students went off happily to mix it up. I didn't think much about it until they invited me for a test firing a short time later and I saw the six-cylinder rocket launcher they had built, each rocket being about a foot long and cast out of aluminum, with an electric firing mechanism. This was a technical school I reminded myself.

I would continue this story but I am probably boring people . . .

Or not!

The multiple rocket launcher worked well in its initial test. The students aimed it up about 90 degrees, and fired off one rocket that sailed up about a 1,000 feet and came down in the soccer field.

The next weekend when Emperor Haile Selassie paid a visit (I actually got to bow to HIM), the students tried again. I was somewhat concerned that if there were an accident that I'd be shipped home within 24 hours, either in a box or strait-jacket. The Indian teacher who was the actual Science Club advisor was, if possible, even more surprised and concerned.

I was standing by with my camera, and everything went off perfectly well for a second time, except for my brown underwear.

One added benefit for the students was that the police from the barracks across from the school had also witnessed the rocket launching and for years never interfered with student demonstrations.



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WAAAAAY OUT IN THE ETHIOPIAN COUNTRYSIDE

by **Randolph Marcus (Asella, Arussi 66-1968)**

These pictures depict a weekend I spent waaaaay out in the Ethiopian countryside in 1967 with the family of Teshome Worku, one of my students. The trip from Asella was a couple of hours by bus and then two or three hours by mule. The Worku family lived in a remote open plain, far from even the tiniest village. Their tukul was the only man-made structure for miles around. Being the guest of honor, I was given their only bed, a wooden frame with a straw mattress. The rest of the family slept on the floor along with several farm animals. They had a few head of cattle and some horses. I went horseback riding in the afternoon and promptly fell off as we galloped across the field. Fortunately, my only bruise was my ego. All in all, it was an eye-opening experience. Living and working in a small Ethiopian town like Asella was one thing. But this glimpse of life in the rural highlands really showed me the grit, dignity, and fortitude of the independent Ethiopian landholder. Unfortunately, the picture of me is not very sharp- but hey, there were no selfies in those days. Teshome took that shot.



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THE FIELD TRIP

by Michael O'Brien (Grawa 66-69)

I bought a pair of binoculars in East Africa and was using them to observe birds and a family of baboons that lived around the cliffs below Grawa. When I showed one of our students how they magnified the view they got all excited, told other kids about the cool science-thingy, and the next I knew we had to organize a science field trip. Here's the group during the only organized moment of our expedition. Needless to say the birds and baboons vanished as we trooped out, but the kids had a good time. They liked science.



(Click for larger photo)

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A LETTER TO MY BROTHER AT THE END OF TRAINING 1971 —DIRA DAWA

by Alan Smith (Debre Marcos 71-73)

Ron,

Today I sit on the porch in front of my room and write about what my eyes see. Standing with the background of mountains that seem miles away. They thrust up thousands of feet from the valley and are encased in a thin haze. As the breeze blows, the trees, flowers and grass sway. Upon this current a hawk glides, plunging towards the earth to recover the glide again. The blue of the sky is broken occasionally by the white of a cloud. Among all this beauty what do my eyes detect? The movement of one of nature's strangest creations — Man — Homo Sapiens! Why is it that even in a culture that is known for its slow pace of life, man always seems to be on the move? With all man's mastery of nature, why has he been unable to live in harmony with nature and his fellow kind? In my experiences here I have found answers to many questions only to find new and different question raised. I am still working on trying to imagine or find the type of life I would fit into.

Continuing - I never seem to finish a letter.

Let me get real, in letters to mom and dad I cannot always tell everything that is on my mind. My permanent site is a small town called Debre Marcos. It is the capitol of Gojjam province and is found at an altitude of 8,700 ft. It is like Goba (except they need a woodworking teacher not a business teacher), however there are not big mountains nearby just a high plateau. The school is two years old and there are adequate tools, both hand and machine, in USAID crates in a store room. The room and supplies will be adequate to teach (I should not have to ask many times for pencils). Only thing wrong with my new assignment is that I will, as before, be alone! This being alone scares the h**t out of me. However, I believe once I get there for good and make some friends, that this feeling will lessen.

Take care,

Your Bro



Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: The Story Behind the Story

by Hoyt Smith (Addis Ababa, 1962-65)

THERE ARE MANY REASONS why each of us chose to enter the Peace Corps in the early '60s. I was sympathetic to the civil rights movement and I wanted to experience Africa while working on a Master's Degree in Painting from the University of Tulsa. The Peace Corps seemed like a good way to accomplish this.

Having endured a rigorous training program, I soon found myself in Addis Ababa in John F. Kennedy's first group of Ethiopia Peace Corps Volunteers in September 1962. Known as "Ethiopia I," there were 277 Volunteer teachers, making it the largest Peace Corps group at the time ever to come to a single country. Because of my experience as a Publications Photographer for the University of Tulsa, I became the unofficial Peace Corps photographer for Harris Wofford, Peace Corps Country Director in Ethiopia, taking PR photos of visitors like Sargent Shriver, the first Director of the Peace Corps. I was so pleased with Peace Corps Ethiopia that I stayed a third year and established and developed a curriculum for a Mechanical Drawing Department at Tafari Makonnen School in Addis Ababa. I also set up a black and white photo lab there.

In addition to Peace Corps PR events, I liked to photograph people, places, and wildlife in Ethiopia, from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Fortunately I had several occasions to photograph Emperor Haile Selassie: twice in the Jubilee Palace and again in 1965 at Jan Hoy Meadow, where he invited Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip to watch a demonstration of the sport of *Yeferas Guks*, a spectacular display of horsemanship. A group of mounted warriors armed with shields lead off from a starting point and were followed by a second team of horsemen shortly thereafter throwing spears in mock battle. Both warriors and horsemen were bedecked in their finery. The warriors put on quite a show for photographers as well.

Both visits to the Jubilee Palace were special. During the first, the Emperor stood on the balcony of the Palace

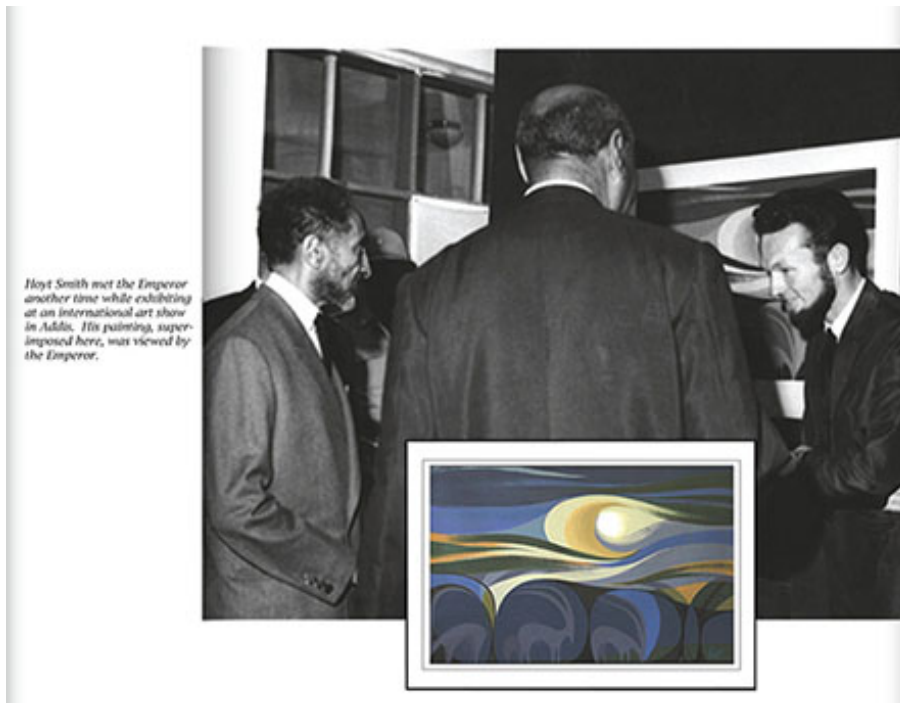


and welcomed our group to Ethiopia soon after we arrived. Inside the palace, he served us wine and shook hands with our entire group. Photos 1B & 1C.

At Christmas, the Emperor invited PCVs in Addis back to his Palace for a party. I had been working on a pastel portrait of him to hang on the wall at my school. Harris Wofford got word of this and insisted I take my unfinished drawing along. Against my better judgment I complied and received a chance to speak with the Emperor personally about the unfinished portrait.



The third time I met the Emperor was at an International Art Exhibit in which I had one of my thesis paintings on display .



He seemed more impressed with my painting of an elderly Ethiopian priest.



THESE STORIES SERVE as background to the many opportunities I had to focus on photography in Ethiopia. I did not include most of these photos in my new photo book ***Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: Revisited*** because the book is not about me or the Peace Corps, but rather about the people and places in Ethiopia.

During vacations I traveled to Ethiopia's Historic Sites and captured how they appeared over 50 years ago. From grand castles and churches hewn out of rock, to the faithful who spent their days in prayer, I tried to capture the essence of this beautiful country.

After returning to the U.S., I had several Ethiopia photo exhibits and slide shows, providing me with both a chance to relive my experience and to share it with others. Many years later I decided it was a waste letting hundreds of photos lie around in boxes so I designed and had Apple print a 100-page coffee table photo book entitled *Haile Selassie's Ethiopia in the Early Days of the Peace Corps*.



In 2012 my wife and I went to Ethiopia for the RPCV Reunion where I intended to supplement this book with changes we saw there. To my surprise we identified eight major areas of change and I brought back thousands of new digital photos. These categories of change include: Government, Population of Addis Ababa, Churches & Mosques, Trends & Fashion, Education, Construction, Ethiopian Airlines, and Countryside & Historic Sites. I changed the title of the book to *Haile Selassie's Ethiopia - Revisited* and devoted the second half of the book to these changes. Not surprisingly, it now has doubled in size. I added a special black and white Ethiopian Portrait Gallery to the first half of the book.

Fortunately Theodore M. (Ted) Vestal, Associate Director, Peace Corps Ethiopia, 1964–66, lives in my hometown of Tulsa. Among Ted's many accomplishments are that he is a Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Oklahoma State University and is an author of several publications on Ethiopia including [The Lion of Judah in the New World](#). I asked Ted if he would be my co-author by transferring my rough text to his elegant style, adding historical significance and getting my foot in the door with potential publishers.

Ted and I chose to self-publish a first edition of 250 soft cover books geared to Ethiopia RPCVs, 30 of which include the 2012 Ethiopia Reunion group photo taken in front of Emperor Haile Selassie's old Jubilee Palace. A few of these remain. The books sell for \$45 plus \$7.10 for shipping by Express Mail. You may order from our website at <http://www.ethiopiarevisit.com>. This site gives you an overview of the book and payment information. Please read a [review of the book](#) by Alan Smith in this edition of *The Herald*.

Posted in [Reminiscences](#)

2 Comments

Tagged [Alan Smith](#), [Hoyt Smith](#), [Michael O'Brien](#), [Randolph Marcus](#), [Shayna Rosenblum](#)

PCVs in Ethiopia

Posted on [April 25, 2015](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Welcome to Reading!

OUTCOME: ETHIOPIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS EXCITED TO READ!

by *Deborah Massey (Injibara, Amhara Region 2012-14)*

[\[click on each photo to view a larger version\]](#)

MANY PROGRAMS I have started during my service in Injibara have tapered out to nothing due in part to the excessive number of school holidays that lower attendance, teachers who lose interest or become busy, or my own personal schedule. But "Welcome to Reading" is one activity that has been easy to run and has yet to fail!

Remember all those little kids who always met you on the street running? Either calling your name, which made you smile, or calling you other things, which didn't.



Inviting all these kids to "Welcome to Reading" has made the terrorizers my friends, and all my friends excited to come to the Injibara Public Library!

Thanks to the Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Injibara before me, the project started with 20 children's books in English and 6 in Amharic. That number rapidly increased in both languages as I found books online to purchase,

bought books in Addis, and called out to Facebook friends to send books they had at home. Now our bi-weekly reading programs include 150 books in both languages,



math flashcards,



a table where students can draw, card games like Uno and Go Fish and an educational video program in Amharic.



Each program begins with 45 minutes of free reading and flashcards, then two students are invited to read a story in front of the group.



Then students are invited to tell their own stories.

At the end of the program we set up the projector and show 20 minutes of an educational video like *Abebe and Abeba* or *Tsehay Loves to Learn*. Before the students leave they line up to get a sticker and a high five!



Deborah with one of the happy readers

Despite all the difficulties I have faced in Injibara over the past two year, the kids are where the difference is made. I know I've done something good when students are lined up outside the library compound before I even arrive and when simply telling 10 children the time and day of the program brings over 50 participants. These children will always think reading is fun and **that** makes for a successful program that I feel proud about.

The more that you read, The more things you know. The more that you learn, The more places you go!

(Dr. Seuss. *Oh, the Places You'll Go*)



The Transitional Hive: A Quiha Story

by Evan Craig (Quiha 2014-)

[\[click on each photo to view a larger version\]](#)

IT ALL STARTED in Holetta with my fellow environment/agriculture Volunteers during In-Service Training (IST).

We learned about beekeeping in Ethiopia and the current methods and technologies commonly used. The two common types of beehives found in Ethiopia are the traditional (fixed comb) hive and the modern (moveable frame) hive. The traditional hive cannot be properly inspected, and produces a quite limited amount of poor-quality honey. Modern hives on the other hand can be inspected, maintained, and allow for “true beekeeping” with high yields of quality honey, but they are too expensive, require extra tools and equipment, and are therefore out of the reach of the typical rural farmer.

Researchers at the Holetta Honeybee Research Facility introduced us to the transitional (moveable comb) hive. The transitional hive design is basically akin to a DIY modern hive that produces exponentially more honey than traditional hives, and allows for quality inspections and advanced beekeeping techniques. The real value of these hives, however, is that they can be made from a variety of readily available materials like eucalyptus, *shambako* (in Tigrigna) — a bamboo-like plant, animal dung, a pocket full of nails, and some string.

After returning to my site from IST, I found the beekeeping expert in my office and asked how many transitional hives were in-use in the woreda. To this question, she answered “zero.” She added that there were some modern hives being used, but the majority of hives in the woreda were of the traditional variety.

I had found a gap!

I TOOK MY GAP to the next level and found a beekeeper in town who has built transitional hives in the past and was very willing to work with me. I set up a time for him and me to meet just to make sure that he and I were on the

same page with this transitional hive business. Before I knew it, one thing led to another, and we were building a transitional hive together. Later, after a healthy portion of reminding and follow-ups, I convinced my woreda office to spill per-diem for transitional hive training for the development agents (DAs) of my woreda. I chose to pitch the DA training first (instead of a rural farmer/beekeeper training) for two reasons:

1. The DAs are the go-to people for questions regarding beekeeping from folks in the rural communities. If the DAs aren't hip to transitional hives, the rural folks definitely won't be hip.
2. Since there are only 17 DAs in my woreda, the training would be more affordable for the office and therefore more feasible (keep in mind this was the first time the office pulled the trigger by spending money and paying per-diem on one of my trainings).



Hive-building demonstration

The training consisted of a short presentation on the benefits of adopting and promoting transitional hives, and was followed by the construction of three hives by the DAs.



The DAs and their 3 hives

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT I took the DAs to a model farmer's property in a rural kebele for training on how to transfer bee colonies from

traditional hives to transitional hives. I believe this farmer's participation played a key role in the success of the training, and ultimately the acceptance of the transitional hive technology, because he volunteered one of his own colonies (valued at $\geq 1,000$ birr in the Enderta Woreda) to be transferred to a transitional hive. He demonstrated to the woreda office workers, the DAs, and friends and farmers nearby, that he was willing to take a leap of faith on this new technology, which paid off in spades in the end.

The training was a success and the transitional hive technology seemed to be well accepted by the DAs.

SIX WEEKS LATER my office counterparts and I revisited the model farmer to follow-up on his new transitional hive colony. We met the farmer at his home where he shared some homemade beverages with us. While we were talking about unrelated topics I noticed that he had a transitional hive against the far wall of his compound. He told us that he was so pleased with the productivity of his new hive, and the strength of the colony since the transfer that he made another one by himself (he wasn't even at the construction portion of the DA training; he figured out how to do it on his own!). This made me feel exuberant and full of cheer! After dark we traveled to his apiary and taught him how to inspect and manage transitional hives. Before we departed the village, he filled a container with fresh honey comb and sent it home with me, just to say thanks.

I FOLLOWED UP with the office and urged them to hold training for farmers and interested beekeepers in the woreda. I was told by the animal sciences supervisor that he would call to the farmer training centers (FTCs) in the rural kebeles, and if enough farmers were willing to attend a training (without per-diem) about the transitional hive, then we could do it. It turns out, however, that the DAs had promoted and pitched the transitional hive

technology in their kebeles after having returned from the training, and now many rural farmers and beekeepers were ready and interested in hearing more about the technology.

This is where they took it all away from me.

Upon hearing the interest from the DAs and farmers to introduce this transitional hive to the kebeles, they took the initiative and planned a training for 150 farmers and beekeepers in the Enderta Woreda to attend. This time (unlike the first) *they* collected all the necessary materials, *they* planned the presentation timeline, *they* gave the presentation, and *they* were the maestros of the hive construction.



The farmers build the beehives

This time around I only helped some of the farmers with the hive construction. I wasn't needed, I was wanted, but *they didn't need me*. The feeling was odd at first, like I just gave away my hypothetical daughter in a hypothetical wedding. To be honest, something was upsetting me; maybe it was a feeling like they had taken advantage of me and elbowed me out of the transitional hive scene.



The farmers with their hives
(Click)

I talked about this with my wife, Kristen, and she reminded me that what just happened, no matter how it felt, is what was supposed to happen. She was right, I just didn't realize I really had *worked myself out of a job*.

I am very thankful to the Enderta Woreda Agricultural Office for welcoming me to their community and workplace. It wasn't always easy, and at times I had to be persistent, but in the end, I'm grateful that they took a chance by supporting and supplying me with what I needed to introduce this technology. I'm happy to announce that the Enderta Woreda Office has formed an agreement with [SNV](#), a not-for-profit international development organization that will further fund their transitional hive training for the next five years.

English Only

THE YOUTH SOLIDARITY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE (YSEL) SUMMER CAMP

by Forrest Copeland (Abi Adi [Tigray] 2012-14, Addis Ababa 2014-16)

In August last summer, I attended the Youth Solidarity and English Language (YSEL) summer camp for a few days in Debre Zeyit and was blown away by how American this camp was. This camp transformed a little piece of Ethiopia into a real American summer camp. The camp was held on a beautiful compound that had nice dorm rooms, excellent food, friendly staff, immaculate landscaping, and even a functional computer lab. However what really made this feel so American was the English only rule: All students were required to speak English ALL THE TIME. This meant I could once again eavesdrop on student conversations, classes didn't waste time with translations, and I had to bite my tongue over and over again when I instinctively responded in Amharic or Tigrinya. I felt American again.

The reason for this English-only rule was to enable students to improve their English language abilities, obviously, but also because English may be their best form of communication. Ethiopia is home to more than 80 local languages and although Amharic is the official language, many people don't speak it well. All of the 44 students attending the YSEL summer camp were interviewed for their English abilities and were pretty impressive English speakers. Since those students came from all 11 regions in Ethiopia, and represented a huge variety of peoples and cultures, it made as more sense to use English as the *lingua franca* rather than Amharic.

This was the second annual YSEL camp held in Ethiopia. The camp was organized by the NGO [American Councils for International Education](#) and was fully funded by the US Embassy in Addis Ababa. It's a pretty interesting program that developed from the American Councils' international exchange program. The American Councils for International Education facilitates exchange students around the world and Tom Toomey, the YSEL Ethiopia Camp Director, has been working with youth from Afghanistan for years doing similar camps.

These camps offer a great way for students from all over diverse countries to come together and work as one group. According to their press release, "the goals of the YSEL-Ethiopia program are to improve English language skills, develop critical thinking, build leadership skills and create solidarity among the 44 students from the diverse areas of Ethiopia." These high school students rarely have a chance to interact with students from other regions and this camp provided a forum to create new friendships and share ideas among the leaders of tomorrow's Ethiopia.

In order to attend this program, students had to submit a comprehensive written application. Over 300 students submitted an application and around 100 were selected for interviews with Camp Director Tom Toomey and Assistant Director Endalkachew Tesera. These students represent the best of the best and aspire to become astronauts, doctors, engineers, and pilots. Ultimately 22 female and 22 male students from all 11 regions in Ethiopia were selected to attend the month-long summer camp.



The students were taught by Peace Corps Volunteers from the Education sector. Paul, one of the teachers, mentioned how exciting it was to be teaching students with such a voracious appetite for knowledge. "They want to learn!" I was lucky enough to be invited along to facilitate a few sessions about "burning issues" in Ethiopia and how it's up to youth to make changes and improve the current state of this country. Over the course of three days we brainstormed, rehearsed, and filmed eight different public-service-announcement videos that the students could bring back to share with their communities after leaving camp. The idea for this session originally came from Shayna's session at the 2014 Mekele Camp Glow where we filmed seven dramas with great results. The YSEL-Ethiopia students loved it and they all participated in creating messages about drug abuse, corruption, work ethic, cleaning the environment, and immigration.

While at camp I sat in on some classes held by Education Sector Peace Corps Volunteers Paul, Jennifer, Pete, and Merre. On Friday night there was a talent show and on Saturday we visited a local factory where they build everything from bicycles to buses to tanks. It was a fun few days to spend with these great kids in this little American summer camp, which just happened to be in Ethiopia.

Hats off to the talented PCV teachers, the camp staff (Tom, Endalk and Birhan) and the four amazing Ethiopian student counselors for making this camp possible! And thank you, American taxpayers, for funding it!

You can read more about the camp by reading [the camp blog](#).

Update in March 2015: Most of the students have kept up the YSEL spirit and have created clubs in their local schools. In fact, last weekend I went to visit two students who started a mini-YSEL club in their high school in Addis Ababa. We talked about goal setting and planning for the future. It's incredibly inspiring to see the recurring effects of this month-long summer camp on community service projects, life skill trainings, and English language study sessions. I follow along with most of the students on Facebook and over the past months most posted pictures of their successes back in their hometowns spread across all 11 regions in Ethiopia.

Posted in [PCVs in Ethiopia](#)

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Tagged [Deborah Massey](#), [Evan Craig](#), [Forrest Copeland](#)

E&E RPCVs Group News

Posted on [April 25, 2015](#) by [janetllee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

The E&E RPCV Board welcomes new Board member Karen (Preskey) Glover (Agaro 2007-09)

The Board of the Ethiopia and Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers welcomes Karen (Preskey) Glover (Agaro, 2007-09) as a new member. She was in the third wave of Volunteers to serve in Ethiopia, and part of the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers to re-enter Ethiopia after a 10 year absence. Karen was assigned to the Agaro Health Center to work on HIV/AIDS related care and prevention activities with the Health Office.

She initiated a series of meetings with community members and health care workers to compile and analyze HIV data to assess the community's health needs. Over a two year period, she worked with community members to address the identified needs and made a concerted effort to understand the culture and integrate into the community, using a combination of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English in her work and daily interactions. She helped write the Peace Corps/Ethiopia Amharic and Afan Oromo language training manuals.



Karen with her Mothers' Support Group

In addition, Karen initiated a Mothers' Support Group (MSG) for mothers living with HIV to improve prevention of mother-to-child transmission services. She wrote and received a Peace Corps grant to train two health care providers as site coordinators and five HIV positive women as peer educators. She provided daily support to mentor mothers and managed the budget. She facilitated weekly sessions with the mentor mothers for MSG members about HIV prevention, anti-retroviral drug adherence, positive living, and partner disclosure. At the end of her service, 10 women were enrolled and over 200 had received prevention messages and she handed over program management duties to local staff ensuring sustainability. As the first Peace Corps/Ethiopia Volunteer to start an MSG, she outlined the process to help more Volunteers start Mothers' Support Groups. Karen linked local Iders (traditional social support societies) with the Organization for Social Services for AIDS to improve care and support for orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV by training 70 volunteers to provide care and support for 700 such youth; including psychosocial, educational, income-generating, and nutritional support.

Karen facilitated a community conversation for 60 people in her first year of service to discuss myths about HIV, prevention methods, and the value of getting tested. She then arranged two HIV testing campaigns in which 180 adults and children were tested. Karen taught two extracurricular high school English courses incorporating HIV/AIDS prevention messages into the curriculum for 33 grade 11/12 students and 50 grade 9/10 students for one year. She taught Life Skills to 20 Girls Club members emphasizing HIV prevention, assertiveness, self-esteem, and gender empowerment and other health related issues. She linked [Scenarios from Africa](#) and Peace Corps/Ethiopia resulting in cooperation to create Amharic versions of some Scenarios films with HIV prevention messages.

Finally, Karen collaborated with the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control on the Global Polio Eradication effort in September 2008 and April 2009. She monitored and evaluated vaccination teams and supervisors in Agaro and in other towns within the zone and conducted rapid convenience surveys to estimate percent coverage. Karen participated in two Operation Smile missions in Jimma, Oromiya to provide surgeries for people with cleft lips and palettes by coordinating efforts in Agaro to find potential patients and encouraging other Volunteers to do the same. During the mission, she translated between English, Afan Oromo, and Amharic for the

nurses and surgeons. Karen corresponded with two elementary classrooms and a middle school class in the United States throughout her service to expose them to other countries and cultures.

Karen is currently a PhD candidate in Biochemistry at North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND with an anticipated completion date of May 2016.

She is interested in supporting microfinance institutions in Ethiopia with Kiva.org, an organization that partners with microfinance institutions committed to alleviating poverty by allowing lenders to provide capital for loans online. She is interested in helping Ethiopian microfinance institutions become Kiva field partners as there aren't currently any Ethiopian institutions participating in Kiva.

As a member of the first group of Volunteers to serve since the re-entry of Peace Corps to Ethiopia, she will be a valuable addition in expanding E&E RPCVs' network of recently returned Volunteers.



John Coyne returns as Board member

After some reconsideration John Coyne (Addis Ababa 1962-64) has agreed to return to service on the Board.

Posted in [E&E RPCVs Group News](#)

Tagged [board members](#), [John Coyne](#), [Karen Glover](#)

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RPCV Legacy Program

Posted on [April 25, 2015](#) by [janettlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Unique Fundraising Opportunity for E&E Legacy Projects

by [Gloria Gieseke Curtis](#) (Asmara 1963-65)

Lois and Terry Shoemaker (Ethiopia I - Asmara 1962-64) brought home a very complete and unique collection of Ethiopian cultural items, art work, clothing and artifacts. Terry passed away in 1975 and Lois has kept the collection in storage since then. Last year she decided to put the items in the hands of Ethiopia II fundraiser, Gloria Curtis, hoping to sell or auction items and raise money for E&E RPCV's Legacy Program projects.

Funds raised with these sales will benefit the newest Legacy project, championed by Nancy Horn (Addis Ababa 1966-68) and supporting Ethiopia Reads, Lois's favorite project, or a project of your choice.

Click to view a few of the items from Lois's collection:

- [animal skin with map of Ethiopia](#)
- [basket](#)
- [coffee wares](#)
- [enamelware](#)
- [olive wood items](#)
- [pair of embroidered cotton pillows](#)
- [portrait of girl](#)
- [portrait of woman](#)
- [shield, spear tips, sword](#)
- [Solomon and Sheba painting](#)
- [watercolor - tukel village \(unframed\)](#)
- [watercolor - monastery \(unframed\)](#)
- [wooden bowl](#)

Gloria is adding to the offering her recently-made necklace and earring sets that feature Ethiopian silver crosses. Click to view some of her necklaces with matching earrings:

- [B - green and silver beads](#)
- [C - rust beads](#)
- [E - turquoise and coral beads](#)
- [G - blue and silver beads with Star of David](#)
- [H - multicolor beads](#)
- [I - coral beads](#)

Many more pieces are available and interested parties are asked to contact Gloria Curtis in Denver at 303-422-3742 or e-mail: don_curtis@msn.com for additional photos, prices, shipping arrangements, etc. The jewelry sets are \$25 and the items from Lois are available for a fair price donation to Ethiopia Reads or any other Legacy project.

Checks should be made out to E&E RPCVs with the Legacy Project of your choice on the memo line. Send checks to Marian Beil, 492 Staten Ave. Apt. 1003, Oakland, CA 94610-4908. Thank you all for your support.

New RPCV Legacy Program project

The E&E RPCVs Board has voted to initiate a new RPCV Legacy Program project the goal of which will be to give support to Peace Corps Partnership projects designed by current PCVs in Ethiopia. Board member Leo Cecchini will be the champion of the project. Announcements will be made when PC/Ethiopia projects are announced.

Reunions

Posted on [April 25, 2015](#) by [janetllee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Ethiopia III Reunion in San Antonio

by [Alice Gosak Gary \(Harar 1964-67\)](#)

When the Peace Corps general reunion met in Washington, D.C. in 2011, some of the Ethiopia III volunteers felt that they wanted to meet again in a cozier setting where they could comfortably sit and talk to each other for as long as they wanted. Since many of the meetings took place in Washington or in eastern locations, there were even those who lobbied for a reunion on the West Coast. Three years hence, 2014, was roughly targeted as the date for this reunion.

By 2014, a number of things had happened. A group, including some of the Ethiopia III RPCVs had returned to the country for a visit. Others had gone independently. Nonetheless, a small self-appointed committee of Darrel and Betty McLaughlin Hagberg and Alice Gosak Gary with advice from Al and Dianne Brandhorst and Judy Woods plodded ahead. The guidelines they set were that the venue had to be easily accessible by air and reasonably priced with lots of informal seating. The requirement of an Ethiopian restaurant had to be dropped as smaller cities do not necessarily have one.

After a false start with Asilomar on the Monterey Peninsula, San Antonio was chosen as the site for the reunion. The Drury Suites on the Riverwalk, an older hotel with plenty of comfortable lobby seating, was chosen. From October 19 till October 21, 2014, a group of 48 Ethiopia III members and some of their spouses from 16 states met for an update on Ethiopia today and to renew old acquaintances.

One of the days was devoted to a program with an update on education in Ethiopia and the E&E RPCV Legacy Program by Nancy Horn (Ethiopia VII), a program evaluator and frequent traveler to Ethiopia; a presentation by Ted Vestal and Hoyt Smith (Ethiopia I) on their splendid book, *Haile Selassie's Ethiopia Revisited*; a DVD presentation of Ethiopia 1965 by Tom Andrews; and films, *Making The Crooked Straight* about the work of Dr. Rick Hodes, and [Sincerely Ethiopia](#) by Nathan Araya and Hellen Kassa about the efforts of young Ethiopians to improve conditions for people there. A panel of people who had visited the country on the 2011 return trip and a talk about planning a trip to the country also were included. By far the most spontaneous, but well appreciated event, was an update by those in attendance, a "what I have done in the intervening 50 years."

Some of the reunioners:



Milli Quam (Mekele 64-66), Gary Daves (64-66)
and Beth Crockett Shorer (Mekele 64-66)

.



Judy Woods (Addis Ababa 64-66) and
Barbara Mann Spence (Debre Berhan 64-66)

.



Steve Krashed (Kotabe; Addis Ababa 64-66),
Eula Persons Krashen (Addis Ababa 64-66) and
Hoyt Smith (Addis Ababa 62-65)

.



Thurman Ragar (Harar, Sodo 64-67) and
Joe Ciuffini (Harar 64-66)

.



Walter Rathkamp (Mekele 64-66) and
Milli Quam (Mekele 64-66)

Although the reunion was heartwarming, no plans are being made for another one. It is hoped that less formal meetings of the Ethiopia III group and others will take place in connection with NPCA's Peace Corps Connect conferences in the future. Follow developments with the Ethiopia III group by [going to their web site](#) or visiting the [Ethiopia and Eritrea Facebook page](#).

A Reminder

PEACE CORPS CONNECT/BERKELEY CONFERENCE

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and the Northern California Peace Corps Association (NORCAL) will host Peace Corps Connect/Berkeley in Berkeley, CA on Friday and Saturday, June 5-6, 2015.

E&E RPCVs plans to have a program and a social gathering

Housing accommodations

A limited amount of low-cost housing has been reserved in a UC Berkeley dormitory where some of the conference programs will be presented. Reserve before May 15. Go for more information to:

www.peacecorpsconnect.org/annual-gathering/berkeley-2015/

(Click on “Attendees” on the left side of the page to download a pdf listing those who have registered as of April 15th to see those registered who served in Ethiopia.)

Posted in [Reunions](#)

Tagged [2014](#), [Ethiopia III](#), [Peace Corps Connect - Berkeley](#)

Leave a comment