

The Herald

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

MONTHLY ARCHIVES: JULY 2016

Editor's note

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [1 comment](#)

Peace Corps Celebrates 55 Years of Service and We Will be There!

Janet Lee (Emdeber, 1974-76)

The National Peace Corps Association's annual conference is scheduled for September 21-25, 2016 and E&E RPCVs will have a definite presence. Board member Amanda Sutker (*Adaba, West Arsi, 2012-14*) is serving as the Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. She writes of the current status of programming in our first Herald article. We look forward to getting together with our fellow RPCVs.

David B. Levine (Emdeber 1964-66, PC/Ethiopia Staff 1967-70, Director, OPTC, PC/W 1977-81) takes us back to his site in Emdeber, where he served as the first PCV in that remote village. It is hard to imagine that the high school in which I taught is now 50 years old. I am grateful for these shared memories.

Rick Stoner (Addis Alem, Shoa 68-70 & Training 72-75) and his wife Elizabeth Ambaye provide an update on the Old Adwa Cultural Museum, a project that is sure to bring back memories for those who served in the north in that historical battleground area of Adwa.

Current Volunteer *Jessica Dubow (Lode Jimata, Oromia, 2015-2017)* shares a simple solution to a problem that keeps girls out of school for days every month in "Keeping Girls in School: Family Planning, Sex Education, and RUMPS (Re-Usable Menstrual Pads)." A step-by-step guide can be shared with girls and teachers around the world.

Doug Eadie (Addis Ababa 1964-67) was honored to deliver the keynote address at the third General Assembly of the Tafari Makonnen Alumni Association of North America on May 29. Read his brief introduction and watch the video presentation in "Remembering Tafari Makonnen at the Third TMSAANA General Assembly." The presentation is inspirational and the response from his former students is heartwarming.

No Volunteer serves in Ethiopia for the praise, but it is very gratifying when one of our own is recognized for going beyond the call. *Bob and Nancy Sturtevant (Hawassa, 2010-2013)* recently received the Ram Pride Service Award at the Colorado State University (CSU) System Board of Governors meeting in May for a book donation project for the University of Hawassa. Congratulations Bob and Nancy.

To close, *John Coyne (Addis Ababa 1962-64)* reviews the book "Kalubi" by Edmund P. Murray. Although published in 1973, "Kalubi" is still somewhat relevant today. Coyne provides added insight with a personal interview of the author.

I will be traveling to Kenya with a colleague in late July and would not want to miss an opportunity to just hop on over to Ethiopia on my return. I will visit Adama (what I knew as Nazaret) to visit with the Aurora, CO Sister City partner and then fly up to Axum to get an update on the library project which Dwight Sullivan has written about previously in *The Herald* about [supporting the development of the Axum Childrens Library](#).

Watch for frequent updates about the DC Conference and much, much more on the E&E RPCVs Facebook page at facebook.com/groups/eerpcv/

And don't forget to "like" us!

Posted in [Editor's Note](#)
Tagged [Janet Lee](#), [July 2016](#)

1 Comment

Peace Corps and NPCA

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

CELEBRATE THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS AT THE ANNUAL RPCV CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, SEPT 21–25

The National Peace Corps Association's Peace Corps Connect: Peace Corps Beyond will be holding its annual conference in Washington, D.C. September 21st through September 25th and celebrating 55 years of Peace Corps.

For general information and registration for the conference click on the following link: [Peace Corps Connect registration 2016](#).

PLEASE NOTE: There is a special film presentation on Thursday, September 21st from 10:30am to 12noon on the **Eritrean refugee crisis**, followed by a discussion with the America Team for Displaced Eritreans to learn more about the issues and how you can get involved.

And now a message from the chair of the E&E RPCVs local arrangements committee, Amanda Sutker:

We are looking forward to participating in the National Peace Corps Association's Peace Corps Connect conference this September.

Our group has reserved a block of rooms at the [Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport](#) for the event at the following rates: September 21 - \$234; September 22, 23, 24, 25 - \$109. You may reserve your room by calling [1-800-228-9290](tel:1-800-228-9290).

Be sure to mention Ethiopia and Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.



Bete Biyorgis in Lalibela



Stelae in Axum

In addition to NPCA's scheduled programming, the Ethiopian ambassador will host us at the Ethiopian Embassy on Friday, September 23rd. The Ethiopia/Eritrea Returned Peace Corps group will also hold a general members meeting at the hotel on Saturday, September 24th. We will introduce the new board, present projects from the Legacy program, honor Marian Haley Beil, and hold group reunions at that time.

For additional questions, please contact Amanda Sutker at amsutker@gmail.com.



Amanda Sutker is chairing the local arrangements committee

Posted in [Peace Corps and NPCA](#)

Tagged [2016 RPCV conference](#), [Amanda Sutker](#), [Washington](#)

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Journeys

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janettlee](#) | [5 comments](#)

You Can Go Home Again

A RETURN VISIT TO EMDEBER

by *David B. Levine (Emdeber 1964-66, PC/Ethiopia Staff 1967-70, Director, OPTC, PC/W 1977-81)*

September 1964

Fifty-two years ago, in early September 1964, my then wife, Nancy Langford, and I arrived in Emdeber as its first Peace Corps Volunteers. Our assignment was to add a secondary school unit - the first such in all of Gurage country - to its functioning elementary school. We were also PC/Ethiopia's first "experiment" with a "remote location" - a euphemism for a post without year round transportation or telecommunication services, without water or electricity, and in this case, without prior Peace Corps vetting of the site. Why and how Emdeber became a Peace Corps site and how we managed to get ourselves selected for the assignment are part of a longer tale of the Gurage commitment to education.

Nancy and I started a 150+ student ninth grade, and were joined later that year by PCVs Jack Caraco (an Ethi II transfer from Addis), and Ethi IVs Phillipe LeBel and Kathy Moore. Jack completed his tour that year; Nancy and I the next, having opened the 10th grade; Phillipe and Kathy completed theirs, and Phillipe arranged a direct contract with the Ministry of Education to stay another two years to see the first 12th grade graduation.

The Gurage enthusiasm for education, the warmth, richness and welcoming nature of Gurage culture and its people, and Emdeber's isolation from Addis Ababa, combined to make it an idyllic Peace Corps assignment for all of us.

Fast forward fifty years to this June.

I returned to Ethiopia after an absence of almost twenty years. While I'd been back as a PC/E staff member from 1967 to 1970 (during which time my son, Daniel, was born), and been able to return another few times, once during the Derg, and a couple of times in the 1990s, this trip was different. It was a family outing of myself, my wife Judith Katz, Daniel, his wife Marian, and our 16-year-old-granddaughter Morgan — a trip for which Daniel and Morgan had been lobbying for several years — to see Ethiopia "through my eyes."



The old school has withstood time and still serves the lower grades

After a couple of days in Addis and the usual whirlwind tour of the Simien Mountains, Gondar, Lalibela, Axum and Harar, we were ready for the highlight of the trip: a two-day return to Emdeber and Gurage country. Through the efforts of Deneke Hailemariam, a longtime friend from Emdeber now living in New York, his brother Yakob Hailemariam, and Fikre Hugiane, a former head of the Gurage Development Authority, plans for our visit were formulated — and several surprises were arranged.

We left Addis early the morning of June 8th — two Land Cruisers, two drivers, Tariku (our Travel Ethiopia-provided guide for our entire Ethiopia stay), the five of us, and Ato Fikre. The drive took us first through what is now unending urbanization and the extension of Addis right through Alem Gena, and then through Tefki, Teji, Tullubollo, Wolisso, and Welkite, now with multi-story buildings and no longer merely the one road bus and truck stops they were. Overall, after a combination of familiar though expanded agricultural activity mixed with almost unrecognizable changes, we arrived at the Emdeber Secondary School.

Our visit was in many ways serendipitous. The Emdeber Secondary School has been planning 50th Anniversary celebrations, and the arrival of one of its founding teachers dovetailed well.

The school is now located on its own, separate campus, comprising several buildings of classrooms, a library and computer room, *shinte bets* and washrooms, and athletic fields. There is a staff of more than twenty — including women teachers, of whom there'd been none in the 1960s — and a population of over 1,000 students, with many more girls among them than in our day. Though the semester had officially ended early that morning, students had been asked to stay pending our arrival.

Woreda officials and school staff were introduced to us, the assembled students were called to order, we were introduced and a bit of our history reviewed, and speeches were made. In mine, I emphasized how the school had started because of the Gurage's enthusiasm for education and willingness to push the system, and that their recognition of the 50th showed that enthusiasm was still there, and needed to be continued right through university.



The library at the secondary school has withstood the test of time and is in active use



The computer lab at the “new” secondary school during the 50th anniversary celebration

We then toured the school, accompanied by a video team that stayed with us all day and at some point conducted a formal interview of me. We all then went to the old elementary school where the secondary unit had its roots, pointed out



Students stand at assembly welcoming the return of one of the first PCVs to expand the school to the secondary level

where the library and basketball court that we PCVs had built had been, and located the compound in which Nancy and I, and four students had lived. We all then proceeded to an Emdeber hotel at which a special luncheon had been arranged. The hotel had gotten out its finest Gurage pottery and baskets, and we had kitfo, ayb, goman, kotcho, injera, drinks, and of course good Gurage coffee. At the end of the meal, more speeches, gifts for each of the five of us, and a teary thank you from me.

When we’d first come to Emdeber in the 1960s, a major force for Gurage education and development, and a remarkable human being, was Abba Francois Markos, a Gurage Catholic priest who was then in his mid-fifties (he died in 1989). He presided over a large Catholic Mission — an impressive stone church, a group of Sisters, schooling in domestic crafts for young women, etc. He had remarkable relations with all — local community leaders and government officials, as well as leaders of the Muslim, Orthodox, and traditional religious communities. When we first arrived in Emdeber Nancy and I had stayed at the Mission for a few weeks while our house was being completed and relied heavily upon Abba for our introduction to the community. Phillipe and Abba developed a special and very close relationship. I firmly believe that much of early Gurage development and much of the education and launch of so many successful young Gurages can be traced to the efforts of this remarkable man.



The Catholic church had a significant physical, spiritual, and developmental presence in the community

The Mission remains an impressive compound, and now has a statue and small shrine to Abba Francois. The interior of the church is now as extraordinary as the interiors of any of Ethiopia’s more famous churches! Within the past couple of years, the entire interior has been repainted by an Addis Ababa church artist in a style best called contemporary-traditional. All the standard scenes – the Trinity, Mary, saints, heaven and hell – are represented, and familiarity with Ethiopia’s traditional church painting guides one through the myriad of representations. Some contemporary scenes have been included – even some with Abba Francois. The quality and comprehensiveness of the work should put this on the must-see list of anyone with a strong interest in Ethiopian church painting.

In 1964, Nancy and I hired a young woman, Tamra Mariam, as our housemaid. She’d been trained at the Mission and recommended by Abba. When I returned on PC staff, we brought her to Awassa and then Addis to work for us, and when

Daniel was born, she was his *mamita* and carried him on her back for the first year of his life until we left Ethiopia. Tamra might have been any age from 15-30 then, and might be anything from 70-85 now — neither we nor she knew! We'd sent word that were she still alive we'd like to meet her at the Mission — and there she was. The reunions were sweet and powerful, with Daniel and Tamra's being quite special. Again, there were lots of smiles and lots of tears.

As I still believe that the Gurages build the best houses in Ethiopia — maybe even Africa! I'd wanted us to visit one and take a close look at its remarkable construction. So, from the Mission, we continued to Ato Fikre's *saar bet* in Gura, Cheha, perhaps a 15-minute



The interior of the Catholic church and its beautiful artwork



In honor of Abba Francois



The magnificent Gurage homes with thatched roofs

drive on one of the many connecting roads within Gurage linking up the extensive network of now asphalted ones. What magnificent structures these houses still are! And many now have windows — an innovation for which the early Emdeber PCVs take credit (whether deserved or not!) — and some have small solar panels embedded in the thatch roofs: that was indeed a surprise. Ato Fikre has added a small rectangular house in his compound, with electricity and fuel generated by bio-energy — one of various innovations he's introducing for community consideration. One piece of bad news regarding housing — thatch for roofing has become increasingly hard to obtain and expensive beyond most folks' means. The days of the Gurage house may be numbered.

We returned to Welkite for the night, which was highlighted by a wonderful dinner at the home of one of my former students, Yoseph Hailemariam. His wife, Trunesh, prepared a multi-course meal for us, with all the Gurage trimmings. Yoseph is a retired teacher, living on a very modest government pension, and so the efforts they went through to welcome and feed all of us — my family, Ato Fikre, our guide and our drivers — was another indication of the lasting impact our years of service and the relationships we establish during them can have.

Early the next morning we visited Welkite University — a new institution not far from Welkite on the road to Agena. WU was established 5 years ago with 2,000 students; it now has 10,000 and is anticipating 20,000 by 2020. Located on a massive campus of 40 hectares, it will have its own water treatment and bio-energy generating plants, and incorporates quite extensive research, outreach and community engagement programs. It is one of 44 (!) universities now functioning throughout the country. The number and rate of expansion raise questions about teacher qualifications and quality of education: balancing demand, expansion and educational quality is clearly a challenge, and the question of what all those graduates will do has no good answers at this point.

We continued to Gubre, the highest part of Gurage country, and then down off the Zebider mountain escarpment to Butajira. This road, from Agena up, and then from Gubre to Butajira was built in the last 2-3 years, and is one of the most spectacular I've driven in Ethiopia. You start in the clouds and after uncountable switchbacks wind up several thousand



The enchanting landscape of Sebat Bet Gurage.

feet lower. If you have the opportunity to make this drive, seize it! Butajira has a lovely service-oriented hotel, the Redeit Hotel, at which we had a delightful lunch, and then continued to our final stop at the edges of Gurage country — the Tiya stele, quite different, and likely older than the Axum stele — before returning to Addis.

In Conclusion . . .

To close, a few overall observations. Some of the differences — size, population, roads, water, electricity, numbers of both elementary and secondary schools, clinics and hospitals, Welkite University — are obvious and other than the surprise at actually seeing them, are to be expected. Yet even within these, the extent of the paved road network, both connecting all the sabat bet and linking them directly to Ambo, Hosanna and Butajira was a marvel. The growth of agriculture, whether in the almost ubiquitous small household plots

for teff, wheat, etc., to supplement the ever present enset, or the large flower plantations we saw, was unanticipated by me, as of course were the roof top solar panels and the many water towers. Also unanticipated by me was the increased visibility of mosques and Muslim population. While the population was always there, it was often indistinguishable from the Christian and animist populations. Now, the number of head scarves, and the rarer but present bourkas, along with new mosques in virtually every town, make the Muslim presence clear.

More important is what hadn't changed — the beauty of Gurage country, the warmth of its people, the continuity of tradition, whether in the look and feel of homesteads or the hunger for education and the desire for personal and communal improvement. That celebrating the 50th anniversary of the school should be important enough to demand over a year of planning, and the surprising seizing of our visit both to honor its origins and to provide an opportunity for documentation and preparation, was of course deeply personally touching, but also a manifestation of what we've always admired about the Gurage.

We're left with wonderful memories, deep appreciation for Ato Fikre and all those who welcomed us, admiration for the continuing struggles of life in Ethiopia, and a suspicion that maybe you can go home again...



Although many things have changed — roads, electricity, tall buildings — the smiling faces of children have remained the same.

Posted in [Journeys](#)

Tagged [David Levine](#), [Emdeber](#), [Gurage](#)

5 Comments

RPCV Projects

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [2 comments](#)

Old Adwa Cultural Museum

by *Elizabeth Ambaye and Rick Stoner (Addis Alem 68-70; Training 72-75)*

Twelve years ago my wife Elizabeth and I set out to build a cultural museum on the site where her father was born. Her grandfather's house was one of those lovely stone and mud/plaster homes built around Medhane Alem Church in Adwa. Sadly it had fallen into ruins after nationalization and neglect. The compound adjacent to the beautiful stone church walls and above the River Assem has magnificent views of Mt. Soloda and the mountains of Adwa; however, with walls and outbuildings mostly fallen, the upper half of the compound had served as the neighborhood dump for thirty years. Our ambition was to rebuild the old home into a museum to highlight the rich social, political and cultural history of Adwa and help preserve some of the crumbling old stone buildings and walls of the neighborhood of MedhaneAlem.



We teamed up with Professor Fasil Giorghis. Ethiopia's foremost preservation/renovation architect, and pulled together a vision and master plan for the museum, cafe, amphitheater, public toilets and small resident bedrooms within the compound - all surrounded by traditional stone walls.



The steep slopes surrounding the area and the three decades of garbage within the compound have presented us with numerous challenges. Several times we have been set back by landslides and collapsing walls during the rainy season. However, with patience, resilience and perseverance (all good Peace Corps traits) we've made enough progress to now turn our attention to the contents of the museum and the eventual use of the compound.

Original focus

Old Adwa Cultural Museum rebuilt on site of grandfather's home

Our current thinking is for the museum to highlight the rich history of Adwa in the 19th & early 20th centuries. Initial themes are:

- Old Adwa as seen by early travelers and painters ;
- 19th Century local history and personalities;
- Local church history and missionary presence; and
- Italian presence and influence.

Broadening our goals

Although we began with preservation in mind, we have broadened our focus to include education and sanitation.

We have helped renew a local kindergarten near our compound and have built public toilets near the church square in an effort to help address the sanitation issues in the area.



Ribbon cutting at opening of kindergarten from left: Elizabeth, Rick, and a member of the school organizing committee.



The River Assem during the dry season, and the steps up to Medhane Alem Church. The beginning of the lower Museum compound is on the right.

Recently we have begun to work with the City Administration to clean up the River Assem which separates much of the old town from the new. Hundreds of people use the path that comes down from the Adigrat road, across the river and up the hill past our compound to Medhane Alem Church and neighborhood. Sadly despite its beauty, walking paths and its use for washing and bathing, much of the riverside area serves as an open toilet.

The City has designated the riverside from the Italian Bridge to the Stadium Bridge as Assem Park. We have committed to partner with the City to develop the section of the park below the museum's compound as a pilot to show what can be done, and hopefully our efforts will attract other donors and support for the overall effort.

The plan calls for a clean and green landscape with public toilets, all weather paths and a pedestrian bridge over the river (usually a trickle, but at times a raging torrent in the rainy season).

Project partners and their commitments to the plan are —

- Save the Children is developing a fundraising proposal for the toilets and a “zero defecation” campaign,
- Green Ethiopia is doing the landscaping and tree planting.
- We are supporting the bridge building and all weather paths.
- The City is providing part of the material and labor and leads the overall effort through its Park implementation Committee.

The project will begin in October.

Much has been done, but there is lots to do! Frustrating at times, but personally very rewarding. RPCVs, does this sound familiar?

For the last few years we have been working on site in February, May and October. If you visit Adwa, please stop by. If you miss us, just sign the guest book and send us your comments and suggestions via email.

Posted in [RPCV Projects](#)
Tagged [Adwa](#), [Rick Stoner](#)

2 Comments

PCVs in Ethiopia

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [1 comment](#)

Keeping Girls in School

FAMILY PLANNING, SEX EDUCATION, AND RUMPS (RE-USABLE MENSTRUAL PADS)

by *Jessica Dubow (Lode Jimata, Oromia, 2015-2017)*

Ethiopia is ranked 126 of 127 countries on the UNESCO [Education for All Development Index](#). For every 100 boys enrolled in secondary school, there are only 77 girls enrolled. In addition to low enrollment the number of female dropouts is high in Ethiopia, especially in the transition from primary to secondary education. Eighty percent of Ethiopian girls are enrolled in primary school, but only 30% of girls are enrolled in secondary education.

Educating girls has a positive impact on those girls, their families, and their communities. Girls who complete primary and secondary education are likely to earn higher incomes, have fewer unwanted pregnancies, and break the cycle of poverty. Educated girls marry later than girls who do not attend school.

In Ethiopia if the wife marries before age 15, the average age difference between spouses is 10.1 years compared to a difference of 8.6 years if the wife marries after age 20. When girls are married at a young age, the power in the relationship usually belongs to their older husbands, and girls do not take part in making family decisions like when and how many children to have. Married girls are significantly more likely than their unmarried peers to be sexually active (73% versus 0.3%) and because of tremendous social pressure for them to prove their fertility, these young brides become young mothers. Sixty-eight percent of married girls in Ethiopia have unprotected sex compared to only 1% of unmarried sexually active girls. For this reason, young married girls are at high risk for HIV infection and for pregnancy.

Pregnancy is dangerous for adolescent girls. Risk of pregnancy-related death is twice as high for girls aged 15-19 and five times as high for girls aged 10-14 compared to women in their 20s. It is estimated that if all these high-risk pregnancies

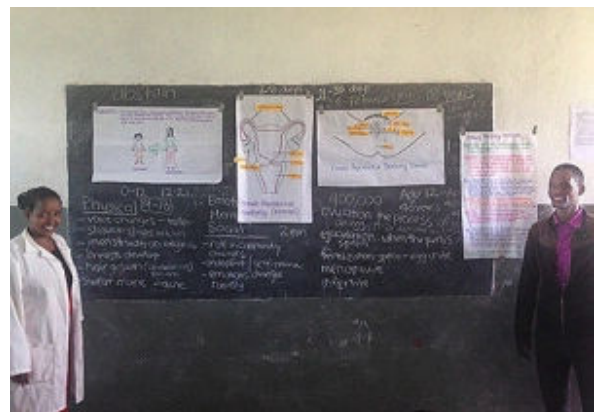
were avoided through the use of family planning, one quarter to one third of maternal deaths could be prevented. The World Health Organization has found that “Family planning saves lives of women and children and improves the quality of life for all. It is one of the best investments that can be made to help ensure the health and well-being of women, children, and communities.” A girl’s educational status is a significant predictor for her use of family planning because education affects the distribution of power in a household. Educated girls are more aware of their family planning options, and they are more likely to feel empowered to demand that their partner use a condom or to discuss family planning with their partner. In turn, girls who use family planning are more likely to stay in school longer, even if they get married early.

When educated girls eventually do have children, they provide better health care and education to their children who then grow up to be healthier and to earn higher incomes, eventually breaking the cycle of poverty. A single year of primary school has been shown to increase a woman’s wages later in life by 10%–20%, while each year of secondary school increases a woman’s wages later in life by 15%–25%. On average, girls reinvest 90% of their income in their families (on average, men reinvest 30%–40% into their families) which means their children are more likely to go to school and subsequently be immunized. If every Ethiopian girl finished school it would add almost \$4 billion to the economy.

Introducing sex education to girls at my secondary school

Given the overwhelming evidence that education and family planning can have a positive impact for economic development, public health, and gender equality on individual, family, and even national levels, I wanted to have a frank conversation with girls at my local secondary school about puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and family planning. Because there are many cultural taboos that make it uncomfortable for Ethiopians — especially young women — to talk and ask questions about sexual and reproductive health, I decided to plan a girls-only workshop to reduce their embarrassment.

I spent many tea breaks talking to teachers in the staff lounge, and they identified menstruation, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy as barriers to girls’ education in my community. Without hesitation these fantastic teachers volunteered their time to co-teach two 2.5 hour workshops for 9th and 10th grade girls — one in the morning for students who are in class during the afternoon shift, and one in the afternoon for students who are in class during the morning shift. By the afternoon workshop, my counterparts were teaching with little support necessary from me; I am confident they will continue to be mentors and trusted adults the girls can consult on these topics. Between the two workshops, 124 girls were in attendance.



Sexual Education 101

We started with a low-risk discussion of the many physical, emotional, and social changes that girls experience during puberty. In their brainstorm, the girls identified menstruation as one of these changes, which provided a transition to identifying internal and external female reproductive anatomy that I had drawn on posters.

The girls were visibly embarrassed when I called them forward to label sexual organs, but I wanted to engage them before speaking on each organ’s purpose. They blushed and giggled through the lecture, but my counterparts handled everything with incredible class and without any sign of awkwardness. Using the posters as aids, I demonstrated the cycle of an egg as it moves from the ovaries through the fallopian tubes where it can either be fertilized by sperm and result in pregnancy or it can be expelled through the vagina along with the lining of the uterus as menstruation. I gave the girls as many facts as I could, especially those facts that corrected their misconceptions. I showed them how the urethra and the vagina are separate for a girl, so urinating after intercourse cannot wash out sperm and cannot prevent pregnancy. I

showed them how incredibly small the cervix is and explained that only sperm can pass through it into the uterus — if a condom comes off during intercourse it cannot go anywhere but into the relatively shallow vagina — important because many students fear that a condom can get lost deep inside a woman's body, discouraging condom use. I explained what a hymen is and that it can be stretched or broken through physical exercise long before a girl's sexual initiation, so not bleeding on her wedding night is not necessarily a sign that she is not a virgin.

I don't think anyone has ever given these girls such comprehensive information, information that can affect their behavior and help them make better, educated decisions.

To check the girls' comprehension, I asked them to use their bodies to form the shape of internal reproductive anatomy. One girl represented an egg and she had to travel from the ovary (several girls standing in a circle holding hands) through the fallopian tube (two girls with their arms stretched out) towards the uterus. Another girl represented sperm and in one scenario she traveled up through the vagina, cervix, and uterus to hug the "egg." In another scenario the "sperm" did not enter the "vagina" and so the "egg" traveled out of the body. The girls directed each other through the process.

I brought examples of each method of family planning available at my local health center for show-and-tell and passed them around. Through health posts and a Health Extension Worker program, Ethiopia has improved access to family planning services in even the most rural parts of the country. All family planning is free of charge, but there are many cultural barriers to utilization. Even though the condoms were wrapped, the girls tossed them to each other like hot potatoes, they were so embarrassed to touch them. It made me realize this should be the first of many family planning workshops; if a girl won't touch a wrapped condom, it seems unlikely she'll push her partner to use an unwrapped one. The girls were more comfortable with the birth control pill and injection, but looked at me with shock and horror when I explained implants and IUDs.

After explaining the effectiveness, risks, and correct use of each method of family planning, I wanted to use the remaining time to answer questions. I offered to continue the workshop for any interested girls two days later. It was three days before Easter, a major holiday, so I was pleased that between the morning and afternoon shifts 54 girls returned for Part II of the "Women's Health Workshop." We began with an interactive review in which one side of the room represented "True" and one side of the room represented "False." My counterpart read a statement and the girls had to stand relative to their beliefs and then use prior knowledge to explain their position. I was impressed with how much they remembered, and the game allowed me to informally make clarifications or answer their questions.

Making re-usable menstrual pads

Many rural girls miss school during their menstruation because they cannot afford to buy store-bought pads on a regular basis. Instead they use unhygienic alternatives (like dirty rags) that result in embarrassing leaks on their school uniforms. When girls miss school for up to a week every month, they fall behind in classes, underperform on tests, and are more likely to drop out.

Re-Usable Menstrual Pads (RUMPs) are a popular solution among Peace Corps Volunteers in Ethiopia. RUMPs reduce waste because they are re-usable, can be made from materials at home, will last for a year or more, and allow girls to feel safe going to school. I made a sample RUMP and demonstrated how to use it, how to take care of it, and how to maintain proper menstrual hygiene. I brought sewing needles, thread, stencils, scissors, buttons, and cloth for the girls to make their own RUMPs.

RUMPs can be made from any scraps of cloth at home, but for the demonstration my counterparts helped me find materials around town. This included a hilarious exchange at the tailor where my counterparts asked the tailor which cloth would absorb the most blood and he replied, "I'm not sure, I've never tried that before!"



Cutting fabric for a casing for a RUMP

For the rest of the session, we played music and walked around giving the girls feedback and answering questions while they sewed. An unexpected highlight was how many girls copied the stencils into their notebooks to take home and make future RUMPs.



The finished product

Giving girls the knowledge and the tools to make healthy decisions regarding their bodies is just a start. For long-term behavior change and utilization, girls have to become comfortable with these topics and these tools. Cultural changes need to happen that allow girls to ask questions and access resources without fear or embarrassment. And boys need to be involved in future discussions because family planning is the responsibility of both partners. But, I'm pleased with this

initial workshop. The teachers and the students increased their capacity and will hopefully pass on their sexual health knowledge in my community. After all, to educate a girl is to educate a generation.

How to Make a Reusable Menstrual Pad:

Step 1: Trace the pattern onto your fabric. Your fabric or material should be 100% cotton. You can use old t-shirts, school uniforms, baby blankets, etc. The material to make "shitties," or pajamas, works well.

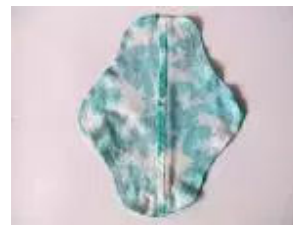


Cut out your pattern pieces, two of each. Cut one of the cloth pad wings in half.

Step 2: Prepare the bottom piece of the pad. Take the two halves (these form the bottom piece) and fold the opening edge over 1/4 inch, press then fold over again, press and sew in place.



Step 3: Prepare the bottom of the pad. Pin the pieces together and sew around the edge. Do not sew the center line (that'll be where you insert the liner).



Step 4: Sew the top to the bottom. Press the cut out piece of fabric from Step 1 to the bottom you have been sewing. Top stitch around the edge and sew down each side to form the wings. Add buttons to the wings.

Step 5: Make the insert for the pad. You can use the template cloth pad liner or you can simply use a square piece of fabric folded in quarters. Layering 3-4 pieces of cloth is recommended; you can add more layers if you have a heavier flow. Thick cloth, like an old rag or washcloth, is recommended for the pad insert. If you have a sewing machine, you can randomly quilt the pad center to keep it in shape.



Step 6: Place the insert inside the pad



The pad is complete!

Care Instructions: When you have your period, you will need a day pad and a night pad. You need to make at least two outer parts and at least two pad inserts because while you are wearing one pad, the other will need to be washed and dry. Make sure to consistently change your pad and wash your dirty one during the course of your cycle. To wash the insert and the pad, place both separate pieces in cold water with soap and let them soak for a few minutes. Then scrub the inside and outside of both pieces. Once you have scrubbed everything, hang them in the sun to dry. The sun will kill any bacteria on the pad. The pad and insert will have stains on them, but this doesn't mean they are dirty — blood is hard to remove from cloth.



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1 Comment

Reminiscences

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Remembering Tafari Makonnen at the Third TMSAANA General Assembly

by *Doug Eadie (Addis Ababa 1964-67)*

I'm pleased to share the two videos below of the keynote address I delivered at the third General Assembly of the Tafari Makonnen Alumni Association of North America on May 29, 2016: "Remembering Tafari Makonnen."

I was truly honored to be invited to speak by Bisrat Aklilu and his TMSAANA Board colleagues, but, to be honest, I was very reluctant to accept the invitation, in light of the many distinguished Ethiopian graduates of Tafari Makonnen School more worthy of the honor than I.



Doug Eadie in the Early Years

However, I am certainly glad that I did accept the invitation to reflect on my experience as a TMS teacher from 1964 to 1967. Not only did the keynote afford me the pleasure of reuniting with several former students and meeting other members of the extended TMS family that I'm proud to be part of, I found preparing my comments to be a path to rediscovering my love for TMS and for the students whose lives had become entwined with mine during my three years at what was then Ethiopia's premier secondary institution. I didn't anticipate the emotion I'd feel as I worked on my keynote, searching for the right words to describe my experience as a twenty-something thousands of miles from home a half-century ago, and I certainly didn't expect the intense joy that frequently engulfed me as I rehearsed the words I'd speak on May 29.

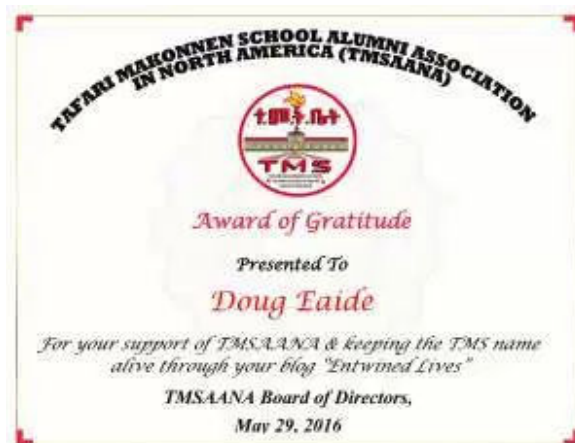
Allow me to tell a story I forgot to share at the General Assembly.

In the summer of 1966, after my first two years at TMS, I returned to the States to spend a few weeks with my parents, who were then living in Pocatello, Idaho, where Dad, who'd sold his business in Illinois, was a university freshman. It was great to be with my parents and three of my siblings again, and to hear about Dad's exciting educational journey, but as my visit drew to a close, I woke up one night thinking, "I'm really ready to get back home to Addis." And as my plane landed in Addis a few days later, it did, indeed, feel like arriving back home.

How wonderful to have the opportunity — in spirit at least — to travel back home with you on May 29! I deeply appreciate your making me feel so much a part of the TMS family at the General Assembly, and I hope these video recordings of my keynote address will enrich your memory of our days together. By the way, I'm sorry about the two brief interruptions in the first video — resulting from a faulty camera battery — but the record of my comments is 99 percent complete.

[Click on link to view part 1 of the video of Doug's presentation](#)

[Click on link for the video of audience comments and questions](#)



Award of Gratitude to Doug Eadie

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RPCV Projects

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#) by [janettlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

RPCVs Bob and Nancy Sturtevant Receive Prestigious University Award



from left: Paul Evangelista, Nancy Sturtevant, Bob Sturtevant, CSU VP of PR, Dean of Wondo Genet, manager of main store

RPCVs Bob and Nancy Sturtevant (Hawassa, 2010–13) along with colleague, Paul Evangelista, received the Ram Pride Service Award at the Colorado State University (CSU) System Board of Governors meeting in May. The Ram Pride award recognizes “service above self” in upholding CSU’s land-grant mission and character. The award was presented by CSU President and System Chancellor Tony Frank, who noted in CSU’s website [Source](#), “This award recognizes those who ensure the value we place on service is more than just rhetoric – who treat it as a high calling and commit to modeling excellence service in every interaction with students, alumni, parents, and the public.”



The award recognized Bob and Nancy and Paul’s efforts in conducting a book drive for Ethiopia’s Hawassa University starting in 2012 while they served as Volunteers, and for helping CSU form a strategic partnership and strong research relationships with the University. Although the University had built a new library, it was seriously deficient in books and research material. With prior experience with book drives, Bob and Nancy started to work on the project during their Peace Corps service and continued after returning home to Fort Collins.

“We actually went back to Ethiopia three times between July and September of last year to make sure all the correct paperwork was filled out and filed with Customs,” Bob told CSU’s [Source](#). “When the boxes finally arrived at Hawassa after a long voyage and customs process, they were re-inventoried and sorted among the four college libraries.”

Bob retired from a long career with the Colorado State Forest Service but has now returned working with CSU part-time, and Nancy now works as a coordinator in CSU's Office of International Programs.

The Journey of the Books

Volunteers from the Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity at CSU sorting, cataloging, stamping and boxing the books.



Books loaded in the container and ready for shipment to Ethiopia.



Books at the Hawassa University "main store" (comparable to our central receiving facility). Here the books were re-inventoried and then divided into which college library they would be sent.



Ceremony at Hawassa to celebrate the distribution of the books to the various libraries

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