

# The HERALD

Winter 2003-04 — Number 28

## The RPCV Legacy Program

### A new effort by E&E RPCVs

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As teachers, health care providers, agricultural advisors and more, we Peace Corps Volunteers left a legacy of service to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Our organization — Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs — will now provide the opportunity to each of you to continue your commitment to these countries in this time of their great need through the RPCV Legacy Program.

#### Be a champion

We ask each of you: Can you name a project that you would like to see conducted that would promote opportunities to achieve sustainable economic development, relieve poverty and/or improve the quality of life in Ethiopia or Eritrea?

We now ask: Would you become the “champion” of that project by shepherding its development and personally pledging 10% of its estimated cost to assure the success of the project?

If so, the RPCV Legacy Program Development Team will help you:

- Develop an efficient and effective project with the potential for long-term impact.
- Assist you in obtaining talent to make the

project a success, be it from fellow RPCVs from Ethiopia and Eritrea or others.

- Provide guidance and support in raising the funds necessary to implement the project.
- Offer support in the development of evaluation procedures for the project.

The Development Team is made up of:

- Audrey Aanes (Addis Ababa 65-67)
- Ron Gonella (Adi Qualla 66-68)
- Wayne Kessler (Adi Teclesan 64-66)
- Jonathan Wechsler (Adi Ugri 66-68).

They are all working as volunteers and will receive no salaries or reimbursement for personal expenses such as travel, food or lodging — as will be the case for any other RPCVs who provide other support for the RPCV Legacy Program.

The Team will recommend projects to be supported by the Program to the Board of Directors of E&E RPCVs which will give final approval to proceed. The selected projects will be announced on our website, via email and in *THE HERALD*.

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### **RPCV Legacy Program (cont.)**

## **Be a supporter of RPCV Legacy Program projects**

If you would like to support the Program, but do not want to champion a project, there are two ways in which you can help.

First — you can make a financial donation to support a project of your choice

Second — you can volunteer your talents to help a project succeed. We are especially looking for people to help with fund-raising.

## **What about the money?**

Recently, Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs has been designated by the I.R.S. as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit tax-ex-

empt organization. Consequently all donations you make in support of the RPCV Legacy Program either as a champion or a supporter will be tax deductible. (See more about this in the "Incorporation and non-profit status.")

## **Learn more**

If you would like to have more information about becoming a project champion or supporter, contact: Marian Haley Beil at mhbeil@rochester.rr.com

Our goal is to implement a program that will continue the Peace Corps where there is no Peace Corps. In another generation there will be few left in Ethiopia and Eritrea who remember our original service. We hope that with this effort, we can leave them reminders that many may never forget.

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## **Incorporation and non-profit status!**

For several years the Steering Committee of E&E RPCVs has talked about the group applying for non-profit status. Thanks to a recommendation by Ed Lynch (Nazareth 63-65), we finally have it. Ed hooked us up with a terrific lawyer who specializes in incorporation and non-profit applications, and the process went along swiftly and smoothly.

E&E RPCVs is now a non-member Not-for-Profit Corporation, incorporated in the state of New York, and led by a Board of Directors. The previously name E&E RPCVs Steering Committee has become the Board with all the members of the former agreeing to serve as directors.

The stated purpose of the Corporation reads as follows: "The Corporation is formed and shall be operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes that include, to promote world peace and understanding, particularly among the peoples of the United States, Ethiopia and Eritrea; to inform and educate the general public about other coun-

tries, particularly Ethiopia and Eritrea; to promote opportunities for achieving sustainable economic development and the relief of poverty in Ethiopia and Eritrea, by providing volunteers, equipment, services and financial resources which are needed to further this purpose."

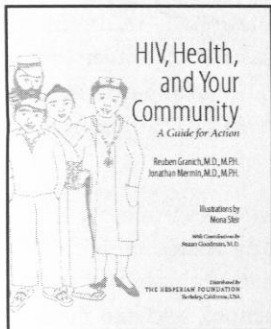
Additionally, as stated earlier, the group has been granted 501 (c)(3) non-profit tax-exempt status by the I.R.S. Consequently any donations you make in support of Legacy Program projects or other projects of E&E RPCVs will be tax deductible. The annual charge of \$15 that you pay for the newsletter, website and other services is NOT tax deductible. Nor would be payments for reunion/conference activities, etc.

You can read the By-laws, Certificate of Incorporation, and the commentary that accompanied the Application of Exemption at our website. Click on "E & E RPCVs" in the left column of the home page to go to links for these items.

## Legacy Program Projects

# HIV books for 200 communities in Ethiopia and Eritrea

*Scourge — A source of widespread dreadful affliction and devastation such as that caused by pestilence or war.*



HIV and AIDS have become an incredible scourge in Ethiopia where 3 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS — that is 7.3% of the population. It is projected that 7–10 million will be infected by 2010. The incidence of HIV/AIDS in Eritrea was a relatively low 2.8% at the end of 2001, but that number was expected to grow with the demobilization of soldiers from the border war.

I am championing a Legacy Program project to partner with the respected\* Hesperian Foundation, a publisher of basic health books for use by health workers in the smallest communities around the world. I want to provide two of their books — **HIV Health and Your Community** and **Where There Is No Doctor** — to 200 communities in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Two hundred was chosen as it is the number of communities in these two countries that have been served by Peace Corps Volunteers.

I will work with Lee Gallery (Dire Dawa 64–66), who is the volunteer head of Hesperian's Gratis Books program. She will keep a record of where our donated books were sent, and will report back to us.

A donation of \$30 will purchase one set of books and cover the cost to ship them, so the goal of this project is to raise \$6000. Being the "champion" of this Legacy Program project, I have already donated 10% of this amount. I urge you to make a donation of \$30 (or more) in honor of your "other hometown," and join in the effort to fight the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia and Eritrea. If you

would like, you can request that your donation be used to send books to a specific person or address in Ethiopia or Eritrea.

**If you would like to make a donation to the HIV Books Project**, send your check made out to EEE RPCVs, and indicate "HIV Book Project" on the "Memo" line. Send to:

EEE RPCVs  
c/o Beil  
4 Lodge Pole Road  
Pittsford NY 14534

— Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62–64)

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\* This from our sadly missed Dr. Mike Brady: "The Hesperian Foundation (and its book, **Where There Is No Doctor**) is a truly great help to health care providers the world over. I have used it in training health care workers in Ethiopia. I heartily endorse it and its crucial work."

Note: For more about the Hesperian Foundation, go to their website at [www.Hesperian.org](http://www.Hesperian.org). There you can access .pdf copies of their books. (The 246-page HIV book is 5.8 MB.)

Note: Thank you to Charlie (Woody) Jewett (Aggaro, Addis 66–69) for researching HIV/AIDS issues in our countries for the Legacy Development Team.

**Donate \$30 in honor of your Peace Corps town to send two invaluable health books to assist a health worker in a community in Ethiopia or Eritrea**

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### Legacy Program projects (cont.)

## Other projects being pursued by E&E RPCVs

This past October **Bill and Betty Graff** (Addis, Sodo 63-65) travelled back to Ethiopia, and while there they met with more than 50 individuals to explore potential projects for the RPCV Legacy Program. Among those they met with were the U.S. Ambassador Aurelia E. Brazeal, and people at the University of Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa College of Technology and Commerce, the Ministry of Education, USAID, Association of Ethiopian Micro Financial Institutions, Habitat for Humanity, Association of the Physically Handicapped.

Bill's conclusion: "Ethiopia is a humanitarian's heaven. The worthwhile projects have no end. The question for us is what should we do as a group for a Legacy Project that uniquely represents us and our previous service."

E&E RPCVs is indebted to Bill, and also Betty, for tirelessly seeking out opportunities that we RPCVs might embrace in our desire to continue to serve the people of our countries of service.

### A books project

During their meetings in Ethiopia the Graffs found an overwhelming desire for books by those working in education — books for the elementary grades through to university.

Based on this need, **Clare Shea** (Debre Marcos 65-67) has volunteered to head up a books project for E&E RPCVs' RPCV Legacy Program. We will partner with the non-profit organization Books for Africa (BfA) which has stringent policies for choosing the books they would ship based on their age, condition, and their reflecting a sensitivity to the values of the recipients. Books for Africa receives millions of new textbooks each year, many donated from major publishing houses including McGraw Hill, Pearson Learning, Follett, etc. Clare has already been working on a project with BfA. She and other Debre Marcos RPCVs Charles McClellan (67-70),

Nancy and Arthur Andersen (65-67), Carolyn (63-65) and John (62-65) Collins, Sally and David Lockwood (65-67), Fran Williams Davidson (65-67) and Jan Clymer (Finote Selam 72-74) [who is on the Advisory Board of BfA] are assisting a group of their former students who for many years have been building a group of development-minded Ethiopians in the DM community & in the diaspora. The students who are now a wonderful group that includes of airline executives, nationally recognized scientists, educators, and deans at US universities & at Addis Ababa University. The group is currently working to rebuild the Debre Marcos High School into a modern facility.

As part of their efforts they will be shipping books from BfA, and Clare has already visited their headquarters in Minneapolis to evaluate and select books for the Debre Marcos school, and had numerous conversations with them. The DM book shipment will include approx 25,000 to 30,000 books. 80% are new math, science, and English textbooks for upper and lower secondary school levels.

Clare and the group have found that shipping is a very complicated process — customs-wise, and arranging for delivery to the final destination, but can be worked out with patience.

She sees this effort by the Debre Marcos group as a model for other communities, and in her leadership role in this Legacy Program project will draw on her experiences to advise and guide our efforts.

If you would like to join Clare in working on this project, or support it with a donation, contact her at: ppy154@aol.com, phone: 703/660-5956

### Professionals for Ethiopia

Another need expressed in Ethiopia to Bill and Betty was for RPCVs — primarily teachers, but also those with other expertise. **Dave Gurr** (Addis 62-64), our enCORPS coordinator, will be following up on the leads that the Graffs have developed, and more information about this will be shared in the coming months.

For more about

Books for Africa,

go to

[www.BooksforAfrica.org](http://www.BooksforAfrica.org)

# The anger at the border goes on

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For an excellent description of border medical conditions in Eritrea, BBC correspondent Peter Biles' story is located at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2951118.stm>.

### Demarcation delays

Originally, the final demarcation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea border was scheduled for May, then July, then October — and the act of physically marking out the border still hasn't happened. Current delays in carrying out the Hague-based independent Eritrea-Ethiopian Boundary Commission decision are the result of Ethiopia's rejection of the Commission's decision regarding placement of the border in the Badme area.

Once the Commission's final demarcation is announced, there are still two other issues to be resolved. The African Union was delegated responsibility for identifying causes of the war, and the international claims court at the Hague must complete its analysis of the war's financial impacts and whether compensation is due Ethiopia and/or Eritrea.

### Badme

The 2000 Algiers peace agreement signed by the two countries included the Commission's creation and that its ruling would be final and binding. In March, 2003, the Commission ruled that the village of Badme, the nationality of which triggered the firing of first shots of the two-year border war, was ruled to be in Eritrea.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi declared the decision "wrong and unjust." Eritrean officials declared the Badme matter finished and "hermetically sealed." Meles, while denouncing the Commission's choice, insisted that Ethiopia would not go to war over the issue. "We will not shoot at anybody, Eritrea included. The only circumstance where we may have to shoot is if shot at."

### Reaction in Tigray

Senior Tigrayan officials have been vocal in denunciations of any proposed border demarcation changes. Tigray's president, Tsegay Berhe, issued a 50-page report expressing the region's concerns

and reactions to proposed border and political changes. Solomon Inquai, Tigray regional council speaker, stated that his people would not allow the Boundary Commission process to be finalized without Tigray input. "They cannot come," he said. "We will not let them. Nobody in their right mind will let them demarcate, because everybody is against this. The border will be demarcated if the Boundary Commission can adequately explain how they have reached [an] unjust conclusion."

UNMEE chief diplomat Legwaila Joseph Legwaila commented, "In Ethiopia, we deal with the government of Ethiopia; in Eritrea, we deal with the government of Eritrea. We don't deal with the regional governments."

### Border incidents

Badme may be peaceful, even if its residents are confused as to their citizenship, but by August the peace-keeping UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was protesting Ethiopian incursions in the off-limits 25-kilometer Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). At least three incidents were being investigated, according to UNMEE's commander, Brigadier General Walid Kreishan.

The tension was highest in the central section of the current 1000-kilometer border, where several cases of cattle rustling have occurred. "Some [of the infiltrators] were armed, some were wearing uniforms, and some were in civilian clothes," UNMEE spokespersons said at a weekly press briefing in Asmara and Addis Ababa.

At the beginning of November there was a clash between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces along the border.

On November 28th the UNMEE reported that Eritrea had moved 20,000 troops to the western part of the country, and that the UNMEE was watching the situation very closely.

## The Mereb Bridge incident

While it wasn't exactly streams of tour buses moving across the Peace Bridge to see Niagara Falls, the passage of 28 South African tourists across the Mereb Bridge from Ethiopia to Eritrea on July 28 did mark what is hoped to be a turning point in the continuing crisis at the border.

"I think the significance was that if there is a will to let people move from Ethiopia and Eritrea on both sides, it can happen," said UNMEE Major General Robert Gordon.

Journalists, UNMEE and UN personnel, repatriated civilians and soldiers of both countries, ex-POWs — these people have traveled the Mereb Bridge since the war ended. The small South African contingent, however, is being used to by tourist agencies to illustrate the safety of traveling in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The group's destination was eventually Egypt. The travelers began in Cape Town and journeyed through Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, and Kenya before reaching Ethiopia, and then Eritrea.

Editor's note: While not exactly the reverse of Paul Theroux's (Malawi 63–65) journey which he wrote about in his newest book, *Dark Star Safari: Overland from Cairo to Cape Town\** [Houghton Mifflin, 2003], and there were better than two dozen in the party, they must have passed some of the same places.

For John Coyne's fascinating interview with Theroux, check out the March 2003 edition of PeaceCorpsWriters.org.

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\* This book can be borrowed from the EEE RPCVs library.

## About the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) forces

The UNMEE force is made up of 1500 soldiers from India's 27<sup>th</sup> Rajput regiment and 2500 other peacekeepers from Kenya and Jordan.

Among the forces are "good-will" workers, such as Dr. Upansna Thakur, a 35-year-old major in the Indian army, who administers medical care to the civilian population in Adrigatu, Ethiopia. Called Mariam by her patients, Dr. Thakur works three times weekly to heal her charges' medical problems, seeing an average of 250 people each time. She is one of three doctors. Additionally there are ten paramedics.

"We see a lot of patients with gastroenteritis and worms," she said. "We also see respiratory infections, eye infections, and malnutrition. We find a lot of children who are malnourished, possibly because of the war and the drought."

It is estimated that the medical team treats around 5000 patients monthly. The Indian regiment has also repaired the area roads, improved water systems, and taught computer skills to at least 100 people, including local officials, according to the group's commanding officer.

# Eritrean news

Compiled by Hayward Allen (Harar 62-64)

## General image, outsiders' views

### IRIN report

*IRIN News published "Eritrea: A Special Report on 12 Years of Independence" in a May 22 news release. Here are some points made in the lengthy article "on the eve of its 12<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary and its 10<sup>th</sup> year of formal independence."*

Essential to any understanding begins with the "emancipation from neighboring Ethiopia [that] came at a huge cost." The population suffered deaths into the tens of thousands and massive numbers of people fled as refugees to Sudan. The victorious Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) "was faced with a mammoth task of reconstruction and economic revival."

The EPLF became the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and found the newly independent citizenry eager to rebuild the nation. Promises were made by the PFDJ that general elections and multi-partyism would come to pass.

Now landlocked, Ethiopia's need for the ports of Massawa and Assab brought needed revenue to Eritrea. All seemed bright until 1998 and the border battle between the two countries. Two years of warfare decimated Eritrea, again. "The war has so deeply scared Eritrea that it seems no longer able to define itself except in relation to its opposition of Ethiopia," a political observer commented.

Eritrea denies this view, stating that, since the war's end in 2000, it has been "acting to preserve its territorial security and to keep its borders safe." The government has insisted that this has been the motivation for the arrests of prominent individuals and general protesters, as well as the shutting down of the private, independent press and media.

"People are free to write whatever they want," asserts the acting minister for information, Ali Abdu

Ahmed. "They are free to express their opinions." Meanwhile, the jails and prisons are filled with prisoners held incommunicado, without charges and trials by independent courts. International human rights groups have become adamant in their protests of constant and consistent violations of human rights by the Eritrean authorities.

As IRIN points out, though, "Regional observers point to the fiercely independent, 'go-it-alone' Eritrean psyche, borne out of a 30-year struggle that was largely unsupported by the international community. In independent Eritrea, officials frequently state their refusal to 'play the game.'" What the global community began heralding with the emerging independence of Eritrea and its volatile leader, Isayas Afewerki, has changed to a dirge of disappointment, resulting in a drastic diminishing of development aid.

"Author and academic Dan Connell, who spent many years as a journalist with the EPLF, agrees that from 1991-1998, there was remarkable social and economic progress," the IRIN report continues. "He notes the rapid development of the infrastructure, the construction of health clinics and schools, irrigation projects for the rural community — a series of measures aimed at pulling the nation together.

"The effort of social justice and economic democracy is one of Eritrea's greatest achievements," Connell told IRIN. "It overcame religious, ethnic and regional differences to give everyone access to basic services and economic opportunities."

Even the devastating two-year war did not stop the ongoing infrastructural development, the CIA World Factbook reveals. However, after the war, the army is yet to be demobilized, elections have been postponed, and the question of border demarcation is still looming.

"The exclusionary character of post-independence parties provides a basis for the opposition to portray the system as essentially undemocratic," said David Pool, another academic, with ties to Eritrea's 1970s wartime past. He also points out that for the younger generations, there is increasing distance in time from the first days of independence and its achievements and conditions today.



"Informal opposition" is emerging as a serious concern of both outsiders and the PFDJ, as well as rifts in the party itself. Violence is erupting from the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement, which is an example of not so "informal opposition."

#### **"Eritrea's bright light is dimming"**

In May, South Africa's independent news media included this headline atop a story by Mike Crawley of the Deutsche Presse-Agentur. Like the IRIN report, much is being made of the day-night contrasts between Eritrea's image internationally in the first few years of independence and those of today.

The primary thrust of Crawley's piece is the human rights abuses and absence of political opposition to the PFDJ. "The Eritrean government is not very eager about becoming a democracy," a western diplomat is quoted. "The Eritrean government rules by fear," a human rights researchers said.

Crawley cites the conflicts with the European Union and the withdrawal of some US support, "but the diplomatic wrist-slaps have had little effect." He quotes Woldai Futur, and advisor to President Isayas, "Human rights are relative to me. All countries have human rights issues. Is Eritrea the worst in these terms? I don't think so."

The reporter also writes of Eritrea's obligatory national service program, described as "forced labor" of the country's young people.

#### **"Cracks surface in Eritrea's veneer"**

So reads the headline of Declan Walsh's *Boston Daily Globe* story of May 4. "On a continent of raucous and sometimes dangerous cities," he wrote in his lead, "this highland capital seems a model

of dignity and elegance. Carefully maintained cars cruise broad, tree-lined boulevards. On the main thoroughfare, café patrons sip from cups of *machiato* coffee, brewed in old chrome machines. Couples stroll by, holding hands."

The article continues its travelogue tone until it segues to "Everyone here knows that trouble awaits careless critics of the government." From that point, Walsh begins to dig beneath "the veneer of civility" to uncover problems Eritrea is facing: political disension, drought, human rights abuses, etc.

### **Prisoners**

In May, Amnesty International determined that hundreds of Eritreans are imprisoned as "prisoners of conscience." In a statement published by IRIN News, Amnesty International asserts: "300 or more prisoners of conscience [have been] arrested since September 2001 [who] include Eritrean diplomats, civil servants, business people, journalists from the state media as well as the banned private press, army and security personnel, including former EPLF fighters, two local employees of the US embassy, Eritreans forcibly returned from Malta in September 2002, and a recently visiting Eritrea with Swedish citizenship."

According to the human rights organization, the detainees have been imprisoned "on account of their non-violent opinions and criticisms of the government or, in some cases, their opposition to military conscription. None has been brought before a magistrate, although the constitution and laws require this within 48 hours . . . None has been [formally] charged with any offence. Their detention is unlawful, but no lawyer or judge dares to challenge this."

Published a month earlier, a US State Department report cited "arbitrary arrests and detentions continue to be a problem." According to the IRIN story that followed publication of the State Dept. report, "The report noted that government informers were present throughout the country, and there are



reports that telephone calls and emails were being monitored.”

The same article mentioned that a “prominent EPLF veteran, Ermias (Papayo) Debessai, who had been held since 1997” had been released. Ermias had been serving as Eritrea’s ambassador to China when he was recalled and jailed after being sentenced to seven years for “embezzlement.” According to the IRIN story, his release was considered “encouraging and, hopefully, a sign of things to come” as well as happening as the European Union was approving a multi-million Euro development assistance package.

On World Press Freedom Day, May 3, the international Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) announced its list of the ten “worst places on earth to be a journalist” — among them is Eritrea. The CPJ deplored the fact that 18 Eritrean journalists were being held in “secret jails.”

In a letter sent to the African Union’s president, another group, Article 19, so-named after the specific article in the Eritrean constitution guaranteeing freedom of the press, declared, “We are deeply concerned that the whereabouts of these detainees are unknown to their families and lawyers. We are gravely concerned that these detentions are linked to the peaceful expression of opinion about political matters.”

The Eritrean ministry of information denied that anyone was in prison for political points of view. Acting Minister Ali Abdu Ahmed said to IRIN News, “This is an issue of national security. It has nothing to do with politics . . . We don’t work that way.”

In July the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) called for the immediate release of a Voice of America stringer, Aklilu Solomon, who had been arrested at his home July 8 after being stripped of his press credentials. Authorities claimed he was being detained due to biased reporting meant to “please the enemy.” In addition, he was being

taken to a military camp to complete his military obligation.

The IFJ’s colleagues at CPJ, however, obtained information from the VOA which verified that “Solomon had documents proving that he had already completed a part of his service and was exempt from the rest for medical reasons.”

“With Aklilu Solomon’s outrageous arrest, the government has eliminated one of the few remaining sources of information about Eritrea,” CPJ executive director said.

“Such disregard for the fundamental rights of journalists to report freely and critically reflects the deplorable state of the media in Eritrea,” said the IFJ’s general secretary.

According to the IFJ, Aklilu’s arrest most like stems from his report to the VOA on June 23, “in which he contradicted the Eritrean state-run media account of family reactions to the deaths of Eritrean soldiers killed in the 1998–2000 conflict with Ethiopia.”

In August, Reporters without Borders (RWB) and the Association of Eritrean Journalists (AEJE) in Exile issued a joint news release that corrected their numbers of journalists being held to 15. Three thought to be in custody were released: Zemenfes Haile, Biniam Haile and Simret Seyoum. Another, Selamynghes Beyene, was thought to have been jailed but had never been arrested.

Nonetheless, the organizations continued their denunciation of “the secrecy always surrounding the arrests of journalists and the blackout on information about their fate.”

The AEJE is an organization of about 50 Eritrean news media workers who are living abroad in exile or asylum.

According to RWB and AEJE, only the BBC, AFP, and Deutsche Welle have correspondents in Eritrea, “and they cannot work freely or safely.”

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## **An Alliance of Opposition**

Thirteen Eritrean groups opposing President Isayas Afwerki and his ruling party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, joined forces in October 2002 under the banner of the Eritrean National Alliance, with offices in Addis and Khartoum.

"We wish to get rid of the dictatorship in our country," ENA General Secretary Hiruy Tedla Bairu, "and the natural thing to do is to ally ourselves with our immediate neighbors." His remarks came in a BBC interview in early May held in Addis.

While eschewing assassination as being too problematical in the long run, Hiruy asserted that the ENA's "military arm" would also not take on the Eritrean army. The military unit was beginning a two-month training program in Ethiopia.

"By establishing a military arm, we also make it possible for the opposition forces within the army itself to join us," he told IRIN News. It is not going to be against individuals, it is not going to be against personnel, but things like institutions and the economy. Our strategy is to build an army capable of giving a good left hook whenever that possibility is available to us."

He also said that Ethiopia, Sudan, and Yemen had offered the ENA "material support" but not military equipment. He denied that he and his organizations are "Ethiopian stooges."

Meanwhile, in Eritrea, the government was making light of the ENA's development and its military aspirations. Acting Minister of Information Ali Abdu Ahmed told IRIN, "We don't bother to respond to non-existent people. As far as we are concerned, this is good entertainment."

Later in May, the Ethiopian government arrested three members of the Movement for Democratic Change-Eritrea (MDCE). Yohannes Almaz, Jemal Abdul Awel, and "Hadish." MDCE is led by Kesete Semere, the former University of Asmara student association president who escaped from captivity, fled to Sweden and then went to Ethiopia.

The charge against the three individuals was based upon the MDCE's assertion that the highly controversial border town of Badme was in Eritrean territory. Ethiopian officials found that endorsement to be a "failure to align on foreign policy" of the country in which they were residing.

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## **Eritrea's famine aid**

### **"Eritrea: Forgotten by the world"**

Such was the title of a joint news release by Oxfam International and Care International in April. The two NGOs were urging Poul Nielson, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian and Development Aid, to set an example by increasing aid to Eritrea. "While exact figures on total food supply in the country are not available," the release stressed, "the current state of the Eritrean economy and recent crop failures, make it clear that there is a need for the international community to commit more funds to the food crisis.

"The aid agencies have seen a paralysis of response while donors procrastinate over the extent of the problem facing Eritrea. 'Lack of information and reliable data have discouraged donors from committing aid, although this is not a sufficient reason for the inadequate donor response,' said [Care's Eritrea Country Director] Liz Sime."

"Eritrea may be come another casualty of the war on Iraq, with increased insurance costs for shipping, possible disruptions in the Red Sea, and the international community's attention focused elsewhere,," said Oxfam's Basil Lucima.

### **European Commission increases Eritrean aid**

In May, the EC added 11 million Euros to the nearly 40 million Euros committed to Eritrean aid. Five million Euros would be allocated to the World Food Program for supplementary feeding and 6 million Euros to NGOs focusing on aid to Eritrean provinces of North and South Red Sea, as well as Anseba.

### **WFP in Eritrea**

Early in 2003, the UN's World Food Program called upon donor nations for US\$100 million in food aid for what the WFP called Eritrea's "most vulnerable 1.4 million people." This figure represents about one-third of the country's population. By June only US\$49 had been pledged. According to WFP's in-country director, Christiane Berthiaume, this meant that only about one-half of the famine-stricken citizens would receive help, and she predicted that food stocks would be depleted by the end of July.

By August Berthiaume was lamenting the receipt of only US\$28 million. "Lack of money means we've had to cut to 600,000 the number of people who are getting help."

### **Other aid programs continue**

In May, the International Red Cross (ICRC) reported that it had distributed 115 metric tons of cereal grains in Eritrea. That represents about 25 percent of a planned total tonnage. The ICRC aid program is focusing efforts on villages in the Debub and Gash Barka regions, which are located within or close to the Temporary Security Zone on the Eritrean-Ethiopian border. More than 7100 families were designated recipients of the food aid. By the time the project ends, the Red Cross will have helped about 20,000 families or approximately 100,000 people who have received seed and one-month food rations.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also announced in May that FAO would be also be distributing food aid in Debub and Gash Barka regions. It was expected that 30,000 families would benefit from the 400 metric tons of seeds.

The FAO stated that the total seed requirement for Eritrea is about 16,000 metric tons, and there was still a shortfall of 4,000 metric tons received, meaning about 100,000 subsistence farmers would go without seeds to plant.

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### **Floods**

Called Eritrea's "worst floods in 40 years," the Gash River has "inflicted heavy losses to crops, vegetation and agricultural facilities," according to officials overseeing flood recovery efforts. In particular, heavy crop losses were experienced in the Tesseney area.

The US Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) had tied Eritrea's agricultural recovery between June and September to the extent of the *kremti* seasonal rains. According to an August IRIN story, "The rains have been particularly heavy this year in the western breadbasket region of Gash Barka," and a FEWS representative noted that the impact of the heavy rains and flooding would not be known until the harvests in November.

"The fact that the rains have come does not mean the drought is over," said WFP's Laura Melo. "These are localized, heavy flood rains which may help the pastoralists but are not conducive to good agricultural production."

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### **Civil liberties – Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan at the bottom of the list**

A UN Human Rights Commission report has listed 16 countries and three territories as being the worst offenders in terms of civil liberties and human rights. Ranking alongside China and North Korea are Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. On a scale of 1-7, with seven as the worst rating, Eritrea earned a seven for political rights and a six for civil liberties.

In Somalia, "although more than 80 percent of Somalis share a common ethnic heritage, religion and nomadic-influenced culture, discrimination is widespread," the report stated. "Clans exclude one another from participation on social and political life. Minority clans are harassed, intimidated, and abused by armed gunmen." Using the UNHRC scale, Somali earned a six for political rights and seven for civil liberties.

Sudan's ongoing civil war has perpetuated constant human rights abuses on all sides, including

slavery, abductions, forced servitude, and religious persecution. "Arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture are widespread," the report stated, "and security forces act with impunity. Prison conditions do not meet international standards." Sudan was scored with seven in both political rights and civil liberties.

## **Eritrea miscellany**

### **Closures and expulsions**

In late July, the Eritrean government told the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the international oversight force maintaining peace along the border, to close its two outreach centers located in Asmara and Barentu.

"We are very concerned," said UNMEE spokesperson Gail Bindley Taylor Sainte. "We set these centers up for the benefit of the people in the area." She said that hundreds of people were coming to the "documentation" centers weekly to learn about the peace process and about the United Nations.

Eritrean police guards were placed outside the two centers to prevent people from entering. "We have not closed the centers, but if the centers are not patronized, then we will be forced to close the centers," Sainte said.

UNMEE special representative to the Kofe Anan, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, met with Eritrean officials to try to resolve the issues. Talks were also being conducted in New York at the UN between its Eritrean ambassador, Ahmed Tahir Baduri, and senior UN officials.

In June, the government ordered the Halo Trust, the largest demining organization, to leave the country by July, declaring that Eritrean demining operations would do the job. Since the end of the two-year war, more than 100 Eritrean adults and children have been killed by mines and unspent ammunition. There are more than 300 square miles of mine fields in the areas where Ethiopia and Eritrea fought.

Halo had been told to leave, along with other demining companies more than a year ago, but had been given permission to stay as the departure deadline approached in 2002. The clearing rate dropped to 25 percent of the previous year's records. Even though Eritrea created its own demining authority, by the end of this past summer none was working to clear the mine fields.

### **Chinese-built hospital given to Eritrea**

In May, Eritrean President Isayas officially opened a new hospital in Asmara, accepting the symbolic front-door key from the Chinese ambassador. The US\$10 million Orotta Hospital, named after a battlefield of the 30-year war, was financed by a grant and an interest-free loan by the Chinese. The 200-bed facility becomes the largest hospital in the nation.

According to a Chinese news agency press release, 54 Chinese doctors have worked in various areas of Eritrea since 1998. More than 100 Chinese workers assisted in the construction of the hospital.

### **Homegrown water bottler in business**

Twelve miles outside Asmara, a new plant, called Mai-liham Pure Water Production, is turning out 1,000 bottles of "pure water" per hour, according to a IRIN News story. IRIN notes that the water is "devoid of any gas compound which means it can be drunk by children."

"Taking into account the fact that only ten percent of Eritreans have access to pure water, the contribution of this factory to our consumers will be vitally important," Asmerom Russom, the owner of the Mainefhi facility, said. "Our factory will save over US\$1 million a year."

Imported water costs about one dollar a liter; Mai-liham water will be priced at about half that amount. "Ninety-five percent of the ingredients necessary for producing the water are available here in the country," Asmerom told IRIN. The main source of the "pure water" is located about a half-mile from the bottling plant.

The plant employs 100 workers, who operate on three shifts daily.

### **Back on the track to Massawa**

In February, Eritrea re-started its train service to the port of Massawa. By July, at least one travel writer had filed a story about the ride.

"The reopening of the railway line . . . has meant people are now again enjoying rides through some of the most spectacular scenery in Africa," wrote Jonah Fisher in *BBC Focus On Africa* magazine. "The line descends 2,300 meters in total, nearly all downhill all the way . . . to the Red Sea. It goes through steep, cloud-filled mountains of breathtaking beauty."

The line was built by the Italians during their occupation of Eritrea, and after their expulsion it was maintained first by the British and then by Ethiopian authorities. Closed in the 1970s to passengers during the Derg, the rail-line was used for a while to transport munitions to Asmara from Massawa. Eritrean fighters attacked the railway and the facilities fell into disuse as sleepers and tracks were pulled up to be used as bunkers and trenches. In 1991, with the cessation of the 30-year war, efforts to rebuild the line were begun, according to Fisher.

"Key to this was the re-employment of the railway's previous workers, hence the large numbers of elderly Eritreans who still work on the line," he wrote. "But progress was hampered by the lack of available manpower due to conscription, and work was completely halted in 1998."

"The project is seen as something of a triumph, as Eritrea has been able to do it with virtually no foreign assistance and is genuinely hopeful of the benefits of tourism. However, the trains remain unreliable and replacing the antiquated engines would cost money Eritrea — with all its problems of drought, food shortages and border disputes — simply does not have," Fisher wrote.

### **New at**

**[www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org](http://www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org)**

- from **Wayne Kessler** (Adi Teclesan 64-66)  
— Inspired by Paul Theroux's *Dark Star Safari*, Wayne tells of his and his wife Laurie's overland trip from Addis to the Kenyan border in 1966.
- Wondimu Mekonnen fondly remembers his favorite teacher, **Mike Brady** (Metu, Harar 68-72)
- The EEE RPCVs' By-laws, Certificate of Incorporation and the commentary that accompanied our application for tax-exempt status.
- Some Ethi 1 photos (Send some of your group!)
- Some Debre Berhan photos (Send some of your town.)

### **Get the news from Shlomo**

This from Shlomo Bachrach (staff: 66-68) who culls the internet for news articles from Ethiopia and Eritrea which are frequently the source from many of the articles in *THE HERALD*:

I would be happy to add any Ethiopia-Eritrea RPCVs — or others who may be interested — to my email list. The list has grown a lot . . . it now includes some Congressional offices, people at State, USAID, NGOs, UN, World Bank, etc. I'm particularly happy to have people at both embassies on the list, and a growing number of people in both Ethiopia and Eritrea. There is so much false information flying around, that I think it particularly important to offer news from identifiable sources.

Write Shlomo at [shlomo@catiusa.com](mailto:shlomo@catiusa.com)

# Ethiopia news

Compiled by Hayward Allen (Harar 62-64)

## Ethiopian news, generally

### Governmental standings

A June issue of the *Indian Ocean Newsletter (ION)* carried a story headed "Meles Zenawi in Search of a Second Wind." It dealt with the ruling political party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and its "pushing an audacious political and institutional reform" in anticipation of the country's general elections in 2005. At the core of the efforts is the "strengthening [of] the government's powers over those of the regional states, in large part wiping out the ethnic federalism that was until now the credo of the Ethiopian regime."

Cited as examples: the purging of the EPRDF's hardliners in its own Tigray People's Liberation Front, the creation of a constitutional amendment that allows the prime minister to get rid of the army's senior officers, and the consideration of legislation that would send in the national troops and police into regions where the Meles government has determined "flagrant human rights violations, insecurity, or when the constitution is in danger."

The *ION* also indicated that Meles' endorsement of a new moderate party, the Ethiopian Democratic League, largely founded by his supporters, is fundamentally a "reconstruction" within the Ethiopian Democratic Party. It is conjectured that the move was made, in part, to ameliorate the "wishes of international donors."

In an August story filed by the UN's IRIN News agency, the government acknowledged the nation's poverty and absence of democracy, as well as problems of governing wisely, at the roots of many of Ethiopia's problems. "It is believed that the major threat to our security emanates from our poverty and backwardness," an official statement concluded. "The crucial factor that decides our

relations with any nation is the element of its effect on our attempt to develop ourselves and to build a democratic system.

"Our security can be ensured only when a democratic system becomes a reality, good governance prevails and development is accelerated," the report quoted. "Our enemy is poverty and we cannot afford to continue on this path," an unnamed spokesperson said as the report was released by the information ministry. "So the lynch pin for this policy must be economic development."

In July, the *Ethiopian Reporter* published a story by Abraham Gelaw titled "Controversial Intervention Bill Gets Through." In it, he describes the draft proclamation as giving the federal government the right to intervene in regional governance when it judges it necessary. It was not without considerable debate that the bill was passed.

"One MP said that the federal government overlooked or unduly involved itself in instance of the killing of people and the destruction of properties in southern Ethiopia in the past," Abraham wrote. Another MP argued that "it was better to strengthen the capacity of regional states and consolidate the democratic order rather than putting too much emphasis on intervention."

Fourteen members of the House of People's Representatives abstained from voting, and only one MP voted against the legislation.

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## International relations

### Ethiopians and Koreans agree, culturally

Although conceived in 1998, it took five years to implement an official Cultural Agreement between South Korea and Ethiopia. A joint statement was released by the Ethiopian Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and Korea's ambassador to Ethiopia.

YSC Minister Teshome Toga and Ambassador Kim Sang Yoon spoke of improving the ties Ethiopia and Korea have enjoyed for a half-century. Teshome said the agreement would pave the way for further cooperation and exchange in the areas of tourism, mass media, the arts, culture and education. Korea has also agreed to help Ethiopia in the areas of water technology and agriculture.

### **German support**

An agreement was signed in July by the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) and the German government which would grant 17,000 Euro to assist the EHRCO in its humanitarian mission. EHRCO Chairman Mesfin Woldemariam accepted the financial support, which will be spent on office furniture, computers, and communication equipment in the EHRCO offices in Nekemte, Asella, Dessie, Awassa, Jimma, Bahr Dar, Mekelle, and Dire Dawa.

### **Ethiopian aid to Liberia**

Ethiopian military will be part of the UN peacekeeping force in Liberia, according to Ethiopian Defense Minister Abadula Gemedo. "We have agreed to deploy the Ethiopian army to the Liberia peacekeeping force," as spokeswoman told IRIN News in August. "This was submitted to parliament, and they have approved the proposal." It was not yet determined how large the military contingent would be or the exact timetable; October was the projected plan. The action followed the Economic Community of West African States' commitment to sending Nigerian troops to Monrovia.

### **Swiss rejection of claims**

In May, the Swiss justice ministry refused to return US\$8 million to the Ethiopian government that was part of an embezzlement scheme of the country's former prime minister, Tamirat Layne between 1991-1995. Tamirat had sent the funds to banks in Geneva prior to his capture and imprisonment. The money was part of a US\$16 million loan made to the Ethiopian government by a private individual. Ethiopia has been trying since 1997 to recover the pilfered funding. Tamirat is currently serving an 18-year prison sentence.

### **Pan-African anti-terror task force**

Eleven African nations have established a task force "to combat disasters and help ward off terrorism" in the region," according to an IRIN News story filed July 30. The US Central Command leader, John Abizaid, endorsed the group's mission. The Command sponsored a 2003 Golden Spear Symposium intended to increase African discussions and dialog regarding regional security.

"We seek stability," he said at a news conference in Addis. "We seek a defense against the terrorist attacks that have been active, not only throughout this region but also throughout the world. We know that we can only defeat terrorism collectively."

The cooperating nations are Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Uganda.

"Ours is a region which has been prone to conflict and has had more than its fair share of the calamities that are the consequences of conflicts," said Ethiopia's PM Meles Zenawi. "Ours has also been a region that has attracted the attention of those determined to spread chaos. No other region of the world requires an extended respite from economic development and economic renewal as our region does."

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### **World Bank notes**

The World Bank's country director, Ishak Diwan, stated in July that Ethiopia's national debt was "unsustainable" in light of Ethiopian export earnings. As a result provision of new World Bank loans was a very cautionary process, he told the Amharic weekly *Reporter*. This did not mean a cut-off of grants, however, but "Mr. Diwan said the World Bank had given priority to the reduction of the debt burden of Ethiopia."

What was needed, he told the newspaper, was a "need for a practicable investment policy to attract foreign investment into the country." At present, he noted "the very high tax and high price of land lease were prohibitive" to outside investors.

Diwan told the *Reporter* that World Bank officials

were going to come to Addis "to consult Ethiopian authorities on the ongoing privatization process." One of the discussions would be about the telecommunications sector. An earlier World Bank report had noted that Ethiopia ranked lowest of developing nations in the use of information and communication technology. A recent study had pointed to the existence of "a wide gap between the demand and supply of relevant and up-to-date information, that information systems are not systematically organized and that information infrastructure targeted towards supporting development activities is very weak."

When asked by **Reporter** writer Kaleyesus Bekele about World Bank loans to the private sector, Diwan said that the Bank did not make such loans, but that they might be secured through the International Finance Corporation. He did say that the Bank "was conducting a study which dealt with the constraints the [Ethiopian] private sector faced."

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## Famine Headlines

"The Ethiopian Famine"

"Vicious circle traps starving Ethiopians"

"Hunger Gnaws at Ethiopia"

"Ethiopia hunger crisis deepens..."

"Behind the Famine in Ethiopia: Bad Glut and Aid Policies Gone"

"Ethiopia's worst famine in 20 years"

The headlines may seem to sensationalize the tragic conditions of Ethiopia and, to a lesser degree, Eritrea, but nowhere in recent history have there been two nations so plagued, so often. Here is a sampling of stories emanating from many media.

### **New York Times, July 28**

"Famine is again stalking Ethiopia," a **Times** editorial writer lamented. Comparison with the famine of 1984-85 came to mind dramatically: one million died then, "today more than 12 million are at risk, half of those are children under 15." Worse than that, the opinion piece notes is that food donors

can cover the short-term, "but they cannot keep hunger from returning year after year."

The writer points to drought as the major factor but couples it with the imponderables of poverty and widespread sickness. Deforestation, soil depletion, drought create the sad spiral of agricultural failures and increase the proclivity of famine. The **Times** points to outside causes, as well, noting that "Washington's extravagant subsidies for America's cotton farmers" has further undercut Ethiopian exports of the cotton the country can grow.

### **The Guardian, May 21**

Writer Rory Carroll wrote of the ironic contrasts seen in Ethiopia today: "infants with pot-bellies suckling the emaciated breasts of mothers" and a "countryside lush and green, damp from rain, with cattle and goats nibbling the foliage . . . it could be the Lake District."

"When the recent rains turned the south verdant, it was too little too late for this planting season." Carroll points to a UN emergency report and an elaboration of the same conclusion, "This lush landscape hides a famine that . . . is the result of structural deficiencies, scarcity of land, overpopulation, and lack of development."

Coffee prices have collapsed, farmers' debts for seeds and fertilizer are overwhelming, and "coping mechanisms falter." Children can't afford to go to school, "ensuring that the next generation will be as badly educated as the previous was. Those not killed by malnutrition are stunted, physically and intellectually."

### **Wall Street Journal, July 2**

**WSJ** reporter Roger Thurow datelines his story from Boricha, Ethiopia. Thurow begins with a comparison of farmers two years ago lugging heavy grain sacks to market, while today they are "cradling emaciated children in their arms."

"Drought is once again choking Ethiopia, leaving more than 12 million people desperate for food aid from abroad. But this food shortage began before the rains stopped," he writes.



His story is headlined "Behind the Famine . . . Bad Glut and Aid Policies Gone." The extravagant harvest of 2001 overwhelmed the market, and "prices collapsed, sapping the incentive for farmers . . . to produce as much as they could." They had trouble covering costs, so had to buy cheaper seeds for their small plots, and couldn't afford fertilizer. Then came the drought, and dust.

Thurow found the "unfolding tragedy is compounded by this absurdity: while the country begs for food, great stretches of fertile land in the more-drought-resistant wheat and corn belts are lying fallow or being underworked."

**Christian Science Monitor, May 28**

"The Ethiopian crisis is the worst in Africa in terms of numbers of people," the CSM editorial states. The newspaper lists the elements that are at the foundation of the crisis: agricultural procurement and storage systems; a program to catch and conserve rainwater for irrigation; reduction of the national birth rate; infrastructure to help distribute donor foodstuffs; land reform.

**Reuters, May 28**

"The United Nations food aid agency is short of cash to tackle Ethiopia's worsening hunger crisis," a Reuters story reported after an announcement that the World Food Program (WFP) was looking for \$90 million for its Ethiopian relief program. WFP chief James Morris said that the financial shortfall required cutting the agency's monthly cereal rations by about 20 percent, plus an anticipated more than one-third decrease in tonnage in 2003. "Besides a food shortage," Morris stated, "the situation in Ethiopia is exacerbated by the lack of clean drinking water, a widespread seed shortage, and poor sanitation, nutrition, and primary health care."

**Los Angeles Times, May 19**

"So far, the pain [of the 'hungry season'] has been confined to pockets of misery across this drought-stricken nation, thanks to food aid that now supports about 13 million Ethiopians, or about one-fifth of the population," wrote **LA Times** reporter Davan

Maharaj. "Aid workers say more people would have died if aid agencies had not predicted a year ago that Ethiopia faced a looming famine.

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## Floods

The stories of Ethiopian floods began in early May, with the news that ten people were taken by the rain-engorged Wabe Shebelle River in the Ogaden. Eighty thousand inhabitants were forced to flee their homes in Mustahill and Kelafo, only to be stranded on the high ground they reached. Crops and livestock were also drowned by the rains pouring off the highlands of Bale.

Then the problems of receding waters would plague the victims. "The problems in areas where the floods had receded are serious, wide-ranging and likely to get worse for the weak," said Abdulreshid Dulene, who heads the Somali Regional State relief effort.

The number of deaths quickly advanced to 40, while the evacuees numbers approached 100,000. Ethiopia's minister of mines, Mohamoud Dirir Gheddi, told the BBC, "For the last two years people have been praying for rain . . . Very unfortunately, according to what I have seen . . . villages virtually are submerged. Houses have been destroyed . . . People have fled to the mountains. They have been left with virtually nothing."

By the end of May, however, relief was reaching the affected population. In addition to food aid, other items, such as tarpaulins, jerry cans, plastic buckets, cooking pots, medical supplies, temporary plastic shelters, and blankets were being received.

The International Red Cross had to use boats where roads had been either washed out or were inaccessible. "The river banks burst at some points and the areas along the river filled up like ponds," said ICRC worker Gunther Kreissl. "We could not reach the villages that are along the river as well as those that have been cut off by the floods."

Perhaps the most dramatic tale of flood-related fatalities was the Reuters story about a number of people killed by crocodiles.

UNICEF was also concerned about the possibility of other deaths in the aftermath of the floods. "With few safe water supplies functional in the area, people are drinking directly from the river and are at great risk of getting waterborne diseases," a worker said.

## Children and their parents

Nicholas Kristof, of the *NY Times* in May wrote a story from Adi Keih, Eritrea: "Helping Binyam, When His Mother Won't."

"Alas," he wrote, "there are several good reasons not to help starving Africans." He was writing not just about Binyam, "a 14-month-old boy . . . who came within a whisker of starving to death." Kristof was commenting on Binyam's mother, "a 20-year-old woman [who] . . . looks healthy and plump . . . wearing a nice dress and had purple nail polish on her toenails." But his father — the family bread winner had been drafted into the army.

Or a father, growing a belly, who insisted "The man eats first, and then the children and the wife eat together" whatever remains, when he brought his 31-pound, seven-year-old son to a clinic.

Kristof talked with a hungry family whose crops had failed, even though they lived within 100 yards of a lake. Why not irrigate? he posed. One reason: fear of being trampled by hippos. Main reason: hauling water was the women's work, tilling the field was man's work. "This cultural impasse left them stymied — and starving," he wrote.

He was dismayed and distressed by what he was witnessing. "When children are dying in front of you — or at the risk of permanent brain damage if they survive — practical objections to food aid lose their force. And it's not true that giving such aid is always pouring food aid down a rathole. In the 1970s," he wrote, "Bangladesh perpetually seemed in famine and was famously dismissed by Henry Kissinger as an 'international basket case.' Since then, Bangladesh has grown economically faster than the U.S."

## Beles

Another story, from news24.com, reports of young expatriate Eritreans hanging out in summertime Asmara were described as being "rigged like American youth with caps glued to their heads and baggy trousers like rappers." They were born and raised away from the country of their parents' birth, people who had left during the long war of independence.

"In the streets of the city constructed by Italian colonialists, young girls of Eritrean origin who speak Swedish, German or even English with a pronounced American accent, meet Eritrean-raised women wearing the traditional dress of white cotton drapes that cover their heads."

The locals call them *beles*, meaning "prickly pears," which grow during the rainy season from June until September.

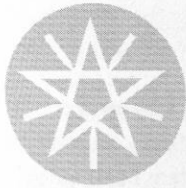
## New curriculum

According to IRIN News, the Eritrean government is installing a new school curriculum during this school year. IRIN took the story off the country's official Shaebia website. According to the minister of education, Osman Saleh, the curriculum is designed to "enable students to be productive citizens once they finish school."

All Eritreans will be required to attend school through the eighth grade. Following completion of this stage, those who go on through the twelfth grade will find their last year spent at the Sawa national military training center, with expenses divided between government funds and the student's own money.

## Number of students and teachers increase

In another educational report, one given to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child by Eritrea's minister of labor, Askalu Menkorios, stated that the country's numbers of students and teachers have doubled over the last decade. The minister also noted that only seven percent of the national budget was devoted to education, but an increase was coming.



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## AIDS marches on

- In April, at a conference on orphans, Ethiopia's UNICEF chief Bjorn Ljungqvist warned that Ethiopia is facing a collapse of "social services, governance, and safety nets" within the next ten years because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He pointed to the "rapid increase of children orphaned or made vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS is affecting the traditional ways of caring and protecting children who have lost their parents," according to an IRIN News story. "What we will see repeating itself is the familiar picture where the increase of HIV infections in the population will be followed, after a period of five to ten years, of an increase of AIDS," which in turn will be followed by the complete inability by both the government and the NGOs to handle the myriad problems that will have materialized.
  - In July, a Reuters Health article stated, "AIDS is now the cause of nearly 70 percent of deaths that occur annually in men and women between the ages of 20 and 54 in Ethiopia, according to a survey conducted in the capital city." Dr. Eduard Sanders of the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute in Addis said, "This would translate to 7,000-9,000 adults."
  - Also in July, it was announced that the government would soon be distributing HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral drugs for the first time. Unfortunately, they will be given only to those who can pay for the medications. Some 300 healthcare workers had already been trained in delivering the imported drugs and that distribution sites had been selected. "The government cannot buy drug because it is not affordable from the treasury," said Dr. Yigermu Abebe, a HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO) board member. The annual health budget is US\$120 million. HAPCO is seeking outside donors for a broader, more public dispersal of drugs, as well as looking for ways to reduce the prices being charged by the pharmaceutical companies.
- The drugs, imported from India, cost about US\$40 per month per person.
- The US Center for Disease Control has stated, IRIN reported, that one-third of the people voluntarily taking HIV/AIDS tests prove to be HIV positive. The CDC has tested about 6,000 people at its various voluntary counselling testing locations in Addis. "Most of the people coming to the VCT centers are worried because they had risky sex or exposure to the virus," said Dr. Tadesse Wuhib, CDC's country director.
  - In late July, there was an HIV/AIDS conference in Addis. Among the data delivered was that of 600 people per day dying of AIDS in Ethiopia, and that rate was on the increase.
  - In August, the chairman of the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia, Gebeyehu Mekonnen, said that the government should offer testing to the entire population of the country. He had just returned from a UNICEF-sponsored trip to Uganda, where he learned that the virus had almost been brought under control, according to IRIN News. "Had we started earlier in the fight against HIV/AIDS," he said, "we would have saved lives at all levels. The elite need to push this forward and advocate before we are engulfed. Services should be available to everyone. Our work should not be limited to seminars, to training centers. The services should be there . . . also through mobile teams so that every health facility in the country can offer that service. Everyone needs to have the knowledge about HIV and to know his or her status."
  - In October, the Ethiopian government announced that free anti-retroviral drugs would be given to the poor afflicted with HIV/AIDS. The delivery of drugs and training of personnel is made possible, in part, by US\$60 million given the country by outside donors.

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## The land tenure issue

In Ethiopia, land is owned by the government. Many of the internal and external critics of the

Anybody out there interested

in exploring

"Fair Trade Coffee" issues,

and recommending to

EEE RPCVs how we can

support it in an effort

to help Ethiopian coffee

farmers get a fair price for

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Contact Marian Beil at

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585/223-1155

country's agricultural policies point to the insecurity felt by small farmers regarding the earth they cultivate, or can't, or won't. In July, the government announced that it was beginning a "land certification scheme" that would try to remedy the situation. It is hoped that implementation of a more generous policy would encourage farmers to invest more in their holdings.

The UN's representative in Ethiopia, Sam Nyambi, told IRIN News that he felt the move to be a positive step forward albeit not yet as liberal as privatization. "What they have done is move towards guaranteed tenure," Nyambi said at a news conference in Addis. "The government has given a lot of attention to it, and they have stated that the real problem right now is securing guaranteed tenure of land for farmers."

With the new policy, farmers will be given a certificate of registration for their current land holdings, assured for 99 years, and capable of being passed to their progeny and on to their children's children. "I'm not sure a piece of paper will bring about that security," Dessalegn Rahmato, head of the Ethiopian-based Forum of Social Studies, told IRIN, "because it leaves all other aspects of the land tenure system intact, like interference by the authorities."

Dessalegn also raised the question of whether or not the certificate could serve as collateral for banks for land improvement; currently poor farmers cannot get loans because they do not "own" the land they work. There is also the question of land surveys that would be requisite in any determination of boundaries of land cultivated. "How they identify which plots belong to which household is difficult to envisage," Dessalegn said.

Currently, the new program is being launched in Tigray and Amhara Regions.

In a later IRIN interview, Dessalegn elaborated on his concerns. Asked if he felt land tenure was Ethiopia's "most pressing issue," he replied, "Yes, because this country, being a very poor country, the main resource we have is land, and unless we can use it efficiently and care for it, which only

security of tenure can bring about, you are going to face crisis after crisis in the coming years."

At the same time, Dessalegn noted that he was not fully in support of privatization. "I see dangers in it . . . I have argued in favor of a system I call associated ownership, which is a combination of freehold and community responsibility." The farmer would have full rights of the land, including the right of disposal, but the community would also have a way to consider the issue of sale "hostile to the interests of the community."

The head of the new opposition party, the United Ethiopian Democratic Party, Admasu Gebeyehu, said that land reform will be "the key manifesto strategy" for the UEDP's campaigns for the 2005 national elections. "The land issue is a priority for us and will go for land privatization for the rural farmers," he told IRIN in July. "We hope we can have a significant impact."

## Coffee/khat

In the spring, Ethiopia's Coffee and Tea Authority announced that Ethiopia's coffee tonnage in 2002 exceeded expectations but earned less than expected. The national coffee auction centers in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa processed sales on 126,000 tons, almost 25,000 tons over the planned for figures. At the same time, however, earnings dropped appreciably. In the first half of the year, the price of washed and dried beans was 78 (US) cents a pound, while the second half of the year yielded only 53 cents per pound.

This has been an ongoing trend, and the Coffee and Tea Authority stated that declining prices on the international market have cost the country at least US\$830 million over the past five years.

Tea fared poorly for 2002, as well, with only 286.8 tons exported when futures had predicted 400 tons, and the earnings fell nearly 50 percent off expectations. More than half of Ethiopia's export revenues is tied to coffee. More than one million families are tied to the cultivation, harvest, and sales of Ethiopian coffee. Seventy-five percent of these people are in the Haraghe region.

Ethiopia still remains Africa's leading coffee exporter. Other export nations — such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania — have suffered under similar market conditions. Across the board, coffee prices are the lowest they have been in three decades.

Meanwhile, between drought and depression of coffee prices, more farmers are planting khat to the extent that the khat crops have become Ethiopia's third largest agricultural export, ranking above gold, hides, oil seeds, sugar, and fruit.

Illegal in many western countries, khat has a high demand on the Horn of Africa, as well as nations in the Islamic sphere.

According to Ethiopia's *Fortune* magazine, though, even earnings from khat have fallen in the past two years. In 2001, khat brought in 273.5 million birr. During the first half of this past year, revenue had dropped by almost 40 percent from the previous year's accounting. According to the magazine, "The government mainly attributes the alarmingly declining export of khat to the widespread of contraband trade that it says has intensified more than ever lately."

In the most recent CIA "country fact book," on illicit drugs, Ethiopia is highlighted. Khat's cultivation and export to countries on the Horn is mentioned despite its being legal trade commodity in the area. The country also is described as a "transit hub" for heroin traveling from southeast Asia to Europe and North America, as well as cocaine destined for southern Africa.

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## Getting along with the neighbors

### Ethiopia and Somalia

Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka hopes that his government can broker better relations between Ethiopia and Somalia. Somalia has accused its neighbor meddling with its internal affairs. Somalia's president, Dr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan had read a statement in the assembly of the African Union stating that Ethiopia had been acting as a negative factor in the peace process in his country.

"I must admit that in the three years of its existence," said Hassan, "the Transitional National Government could have done more had it not been the continuous and daily interference by Ethiopia in our internal affairs."

According to a reporter at Kenya's *Sunday Standard*, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki has agreed to serve as a mediator and had sent two delegations to Addis "to persuade Ethiopia to help Somalia stand on its feet."

President Kibaki accused Ethiopia of "sponsoring the creation of a rag-tag opposition group in large part to undermine" the transitional government. A UN Security Council report has stated that Ethiopia's military presence in eastern Ethiopia has led to invasions of Somali territory.

### Egypt

A story in the *Addis Zena* in August, reported comments by Cirma Birru, Ethiopia's minister of trade and industry, which accused Egypt of having a negative policy towards Ethiopian peace and democracy. Egypt had been a supplier of arms to Eritrea in the recent war, he said. "Egypt had [also] been pressuring international financial institutions to desist from assisting Ethiopia in carrying out development projects in the Nile basin."

Earlier, Ethiopia PM Meles Zenawi had remarked to a reporter of a Saudi newspaper that his country's relations with Egypt "were strong and deeply-rooted" and a failed assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak years ago in Addis had not affected the relations between the two countries. Meles also praised the work being done by a joint Ethiopia-Sudan-Egypt committee working on plans for usage of the waters of the Nile.

### Yemen

On July 23, a South African news bulletin stated that, following a three-day visit by the Yemeni president to Ethiopia, a US\$24 million deal was closed to buy 60 Russian-made tanks from Yemen. It had reportedly been part of a trilateral agreement between Sudan, Ethiopia, and Yemen, which had procured 300 tanks from Russia. The story

appeared in an independent Ethiopian weekly, *The Reporter*.

One day later, a Yemeni official called the tank story "fabricated and unfounded." He said "priorities of cooperation with Ethiopia were strengthening political, economic and cultural ties, as well as bolstering joint security efforts against terror."

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## The children and their parents

### The famine

In May 13's *New York Times* an op-ed piece by Nicholas Kristof was titled "Ethiopia's Dying Children." It's opening sentence: "Ladawi is a 16-month-old girl with twigs for limbs, blotched skin, labored breathing, eyes that roll back and skin stretched tautly over shoulder blades that look as if they belong to a survivor of Auschwitz."

Kristof related his experiences in southern Ethiopia in the midst of the drought and ongoing famine. He compared the conditions to Biafra and Ethiopia of two decades ago — "sick and dying children are everywhere."

His reflections gave him pause in the early aftermath of Iraq's conquering: "Since weapons of mass destruction haven't turned up so far in Iraq, there's been a revisionist suggestion that the American invasion was worthwhile because of humanitarian gains for the liberated Iraqi people. Fair enough. But as long as we're willing to send hundreds of thousands of troops to help Iraqis, what about offering much more modest assistance to save the children dying here?"

### Fistula Hospital

On May 16, the *Times* carried another Kristof piece, this one, titled "Alone and Ashamed," about the Fistula Hospital in Addis (see previous *Herald* issues). At the center of Kristof's column was 79-year-old Dr. Catherine Hamlin, who founded the unique medical facility decades ago, and whom Kristof called "the new Mother Teresa of our age."

His point, though, was that Addis's Fistula Hospital's success has encouraged efforts by a few

Americans to help African women and children cope with treatment for the dread condition.

He included websites to which contributions could go, and from which information may be received: [www.fistulahospital.org](http://www.fistulahospital.org), [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org) and [www.wfmic.org](http://www.wfmic.org).

Editor's note: In September, *The Herald* received an email from EEE RPCVs' own American Fistula Hospital champion, Ric Haas (Dembidolo, Addis 67-69), whose website, [www.fistulahospital.org](http://www.fistulahospital.org) was mentioned by Kristof. "[The article's] led to over \$300,000 in donations," Ric noted. "People do care about things like this if they get a chance to hear about it," Ric wrote. The website also is running Kristof's full editorial.

A story ran in July, written by IRIN news, which in part was based upon a Save the Children-UK release. "Twenty years of missed opportunities," it opened. "If Ethiopia is destroyed, it will not be by an outside enemy," IRIN reported. STC President Charles MacCormack said at an Addis press conference. "It will be illiteracy, hunger, disease and AIDS." MacCormack also stressed that more must be done to curtail the Ethiopian population explosion, "which has doubled to 67 million in the last 30 years."

### At the bottom of the list

Ethiopia ranks 115th of 117 on the list of "best and worst countries in which to be a mother" was released in May. The USA was 11th, with the best being Sweden and the worst Niger.

### Education

The president of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, Dr. Taye Wolde Semayat, told an international audience in Addis in August that his government is creating a barrier to quality education in the country, reports IRIN News. "Our country is already sinking into the marshes of poverty and destitution," Dr. Taye said. The former Addis Ababa University professor said that officials had not consulted teachers in drawing up the nation's education policy, even though school enrolment now includes about half of the school-aged children. Dr.

Taye was sent to prison in 1996, accused of forming an illegal party and conspiring against the state, charges he continues to deny. He was freed in May 2002, after serving six years, thanks to intervention by international human rights groups.

The IRIN article also included comments by Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of Education International, a global teachers' union. She said that Ethiopia still ranked in the lower 28 "non-achievers" in education. "Investing in the well-being of the children of Ethiopia is investing in and strengthening the future of every Ethiopian." She also said that teachers "should be at the front-line of any education policies or guidelines" if Ethiopia wants to reach the 2015 Millennium Development Goal Targets.

### **Child prostitution**

According to a study sponsored by Save the Children-Denmark, child prostitution in Ethiopia is "increasing at an alarming rate," reported IRIN News in July. The report was compiled by the Ethiopian government and a national children's rights organization; in four districts in Addis there were 100 child prostitutes. Researchers noted that it was very hard to determine the real numbers of child prostitutes, but a "booming number of traffickers is evidence of the rapid increase." Several factors contribute to the tragedy: family deaths, lack of employment, poor education, teen pregnancies and back-street abortions, and HIV/AIDS. "Most of the children work on the streets, in small bars, or local alcohol houses," IRIN reports the study found, "or in rented houses where drugs or the mild stimulant chat are taken. Each location exposes the children to different risks and hazards."

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## **An Ethiopian miscellany**

### **Resettlement warnings**

In July, IRIN News reported that the national resettlement program — "a central plank of [Ethiopia's] anti-poverty strategy — is already facing challenges by the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations. One warning involved Ethiopian families resettled to lowland areas, where dangers

lurk for malaria, sleeping sickness, ethnic tensions, and "ecological damage."

According to a UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia report that focused on resettlement in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SN-NPR), it is one of the country's major locations of the food crisis. About a half-million people will be relocated in SNNPR when the government's plan is fully implemented.

"Experiences in Ethiopia, elsewhere in Africa, and the world over show that things often go wrong in resettlement operations unless managed with meticulous care," said Dr. Wolde Selassie Abbute, who authored the report. "Hasty execution of the resettlement might have humanitarian consequences and hence the program needs thorough preparation to achieve food security as intended." Food aid is to be provided for the first eight months of resettlement.

Nationwide, overall the resettlement program will move 2.2 million people by 2006.

### **Health Notes**

#### **Cardiac center**

Ethiopia is building the first cardiac center for the country. According to Dr. Belay Abegaz, the nation's only pediatric heart surgeon, "heart disease ranks as the top killer in the country." He estimates that 200,000 new cases occur annually. In an IRIN News interview, he said that there are fewer than ten doctors in Ethiopia who can perform heart surgery.

The cardiac center, which he expects to open in 2004, is receiving support from Addis Ababa University, which will also serve as a training facility. It will be located on the grounds of the Black Lion Hospital in Addis.

#### **Health coverage woes**

The Ethiopian Red Cross has completed an analysis of health coverage in Addis and finds it sadly wanting. Red Cross chief Seleshi Tilahun told a gathering of Red Cross workers and supporters that there were only 16 government and 8 private hospitals,

20 government and two non-governmental health centers, six public and 340 private clinics currently serving health needs in the capital city. Seleshi also indicated that there are 126 pharmacies, 39 "drug shops" and eight drug vendors in the city of three million people.

"The health coverage is very low. A lot remains to be done in order to enhance the current poor health coverage," he said. "The concerned [organizations] and private investors should give attention to the problems."

The director pointed to the city's problems as contributing to the lowered health coverage. "The city is characterized by low productivity, high rate of unemployment, little access to basic social services, food insecurity, high maternal, infant and child mortality, with low life expectancy contributing to a low level of development."

More than 60 percent of the people, he said, live below the poverty line.

#### **Student nurses serve the south**

In July more than 200 student nurses were sent to the drought-stricken southern region of Ethiopia. It was an effort organized by the UNICEF. They were to work at emergency feeding centers helping with malnourished children. UN Country Representative Sam Nyambi said the new program would commit the trainees to three months work during their summer break.

UNICEF also expected the young nurses would assist in other health areas, such as malarial outbreaks.

#### **Editor suspended**

Tsege Gebreamlak, longtime editor of the English language **Ethiopian Herald**, was suspended from his job by the Ethiopian Press Agency in May. His office was closed and sealed, according to a story in the **Addis Tribune**. Tsege's deputy editor, Kisut Gebre-Egziabher, was appointed editor-in-chief of the government daily newspaper.

Apparently, Tsege published an editorial response to two **Herald** readers concerned about the Ethio-

pian Press Agency's controls over the newspaper's ability to express ideas freely. Tsege's answer: "In my view, the situation in the Ethiopian Press Agency is rather worse than what [the reader] mentioned. For many, the working environment of the agency is increasing being turned into little short of a nightmare."

His suspension followed due to "lack of discipline," and meant he was shut down and shut up for a month, without pay.

#### **Ethiopian defections**

In July, US Ambassador to Ethiopia Aurelia Brazeal cancelled all US visits organized by the embassy for its Ethiopian employees. According to the **Indian Ocean Newsletter**, diplomatic guards and embassy security people would not be given preferential treatment when getting visas to visit the US. The new policy was issued after a dozen Ethiopian guards who traveled there sought political asylum.

Ambassador Brazeal had called a special meeting with Ethiopian security personnel July 7. The employees "were caught totally off-guard" because they had "thought she was going to announce a salary raise," and not being told that they would have to get in line and apply for American visas just like everyone else in Ethiopia.

The embassy employee defections are the latest in the trend of many government officials, elected members of the parliament, and journalists to defect to the United States or various European nations. Among them, the chairman of the Ethiopian Foreign Relations Committee, Zekaria Lingeso, the head of the parliament's economic commission, M. Eshetu, and a politician, M. Mulegeta. The editor of the **Addis Tribune**, Engidu Welde, sought asylum in Washington, DC, after being threatened because he had spoken out against the government's new media laws.

#### **Addis news**

##### **The new mayor's POV**

Six months after PM Meles Zenawi dissolved and sacked the Addis Ababa city administration, the



new mayor, Arkebe Oqubay, took time to discuss the problems he and his new urban government are facing. In a lengthy IRIN interview, he described some of them.

"The biggest is unemployment, which is about 35 percent. Housing is critical because we have a backlog of 250,000 houses. And HIV/AIDS . . . The other issue we need to address is making the city habitable, a pleasant place to live and work, which means it must be cleaned up . . . We need to completely change the civil service . . . Infrastructure is weak and requires big investment, particularly the city's water supply and roads. We must also mobilize all stakeholders, private sector and non-governmental organizations and local communities. Not enough has been done," he said, for starters. The mayor also discussed the problem of beggars, of traffic congestion and accidents, of bribery and corruption.

Addis has a population estimated at over three million people. The city budget is about US\$324 million ("We need three times this amount," he said.)

#### **Ring around Addis**

In April, the second stage of a new ring road around Addis was formally opened by Mayor Arkebe and the Chinese ambassador to Ethiopia. The Chinese began building the 20-mile road in 1998, at a cost of US\$76 million. The final segment will be completed by the end of 2003.

#### **City Council and army flats**

The first installment of a building project that will reach 100,000 residential units by 2006 has begun in Addis. According to Tekabe Getachew, spokesperson for the Addis Ababa City Council, the first plots have been selected for 20,000 condominium units. The council has set aside about US\$3.5 million for the total project.

Meanwhile, the army has completed construction on a dozen six-story apartment buildings to house 480 military families. Eight more buildings are in the construction phase.

## **Travel**

### **Tourism numbers good**

More than 150,000 travelers visited Ethiopia in 2002, according to Habtamu Bekele, who heads the Tourism Promotion Department (TPD). Translated into revenue, Habtamu told the *Addis Tribune* that it meant US\$77.1 million into Ethiopian coffers. The 2002 numbers showed an increase of US\$2.1 million over the previous year; the tourist total advanced by 7,889 against 2001 entrants.

The TPD official noted that 2003 figures are revealing another increase in visitors. "Axum, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the castles of Gondar, and the Semien Mountain National park, which are recorded by UNESCO as some of the world's heritages, are the major tourist attractions and potential income earners of the sector," he said.

### **EAL's new look**

Proudly displaying the green, yellow, and red national colors, and highlighting the feather symbol of flight, the modernized logo is bold and yet graceful with clean, contemporary lines," rhapsodizes one writer found on the Ethiopian Airlines website ([www.FlyEthiopian.com](http://www.FlyEthiopian.com)). "The design symbolizes simplicity, price, and elegance. The feather motif, minimalist in style, signifies dynamism in its upward swing, while the airline's name in large lettering expresses pride and confidence."

### **If it's in the Trib —**

Elliott Hester filed a special story for the *Chicago Tribune* after visiting Ethiopia. "While traveling around the country I visited island monasteries, grandiose castles, 2,000-year-old sculpted monoliths, ancient churches carved out of volcanic rock, and the fossilized remains of Lucy — our 3.2 million-year-old human ancestor, the 'missing link' that seems to prove, once and for all, that human-kind evolved from apes."

While Lucy proved quite fascinating to Hester, "Ethiopia is more than old bones," he wrote. So, he trekked on to Bahar Dar, Gondar, Aksum, and Lalibela, about which he glowingly wrote.

### **The Success of Long Distance Runners**

Kenenisa Bekele is a runner of extraordinary grace and power. The 21-year-old Ethiopian became the first to win two gold medals in successive world cross-country championships in the 4-K and 12-K races, in March at Lausanne, Switzerland. Kenenisa won the 10,000 meter race in the Netherlands June 1, and then took the 5,000 meters gold in Oslo three weeks later.

He then went on to take the gold in the 10,000 meters race at the World Championships in Paris in August. Remarkably, Ethiopia took home more medals than nearly any other nation, finishing just behind the US and Russia in the Paris totals. The track team returned to a heroes welcome in Addis, cheered by thousands of fans at Addis' national sports stadium in early September.

In May, another Ethiopian runner, Dejene Berhanu, took the gold in the 25th annual Boulder Boulder Men's Elite 10K race. Dejene also took home US\$3,000 for the victory. He defeated Kenya's Paul Koech, overtaking him at the 6K mark, but the lead see-sawed until the last six meters of the race, when the 23-year-old Ethiopian charged in front for good.

In September, Ethiopia's great distance runner, Haile Gebreselassie was promoting the upcoming third annual Great Ethiopian Run to be held in late November. "The race has become a tradition now," the two-time Olympic and four-time World 10,000 meter champion said as the race promotion began. "At the time of another terrible drought in Ethiopia, I don't need to tell you how important this kind of event is for our country. We must stand up and show the outside world that Ethiopia is not just a country of poverty and problems."

The 10K race course runs through Addis. A field of 18,000 runners is anticipated. Last year US\$72,000 was raised through sponsorships and entry fees.

UNICEF is the chief sponsor, according to IRIN News. The sponsorship is part of the organization's HIV/AIDS awareness efforts; UNICEF will sponsor 2,000 young runners in the race. "Athletes are the rock

stars of Ethiopia," said UNICEF's Bjorn Ljungqvist, "and are much more effective in educating other youths in HIV/AIDS prevention. Only by actively involving the youth of this country can we make a difference in lowering transmission rates among our youth."

Haile hoped that Dejene would race in the Great Ethiopian Run. "This man is fantastic," said the 30-year-old runner who has held 17 world records. "Dejene is the new Haile. Sport is like this. You cannot succeed forever. You can succeed when you are young, but it is more difficult when you are older."

Nonetheless, Dejene only beat Haile by fractions of seconds in Paris.

Haile has become one of Addis most prosperous businessmen, according to IRIN, where he owns two blocks of office buildings, a popular watering hole, a restaurant, a fitness center, and a movie theater.

### **Other notes**

#### ***That looted obelisk, again***

In May, Discovery News was reporting that "a daredevil flight might soon end a decades-long diplomatic dispute between Italy and Ethiopia over a looted obelisk."

The 1700-year-old, 160-ton, 78-foot stele (see previous issues of The Herald) was to be loaded into a plane and flown from Rome to Ethiopia. Most recently, the 4th century Axum stone structure was struck by lightning, but has been restored by Roman archeological engineers. In order to make the trip, however, the obelisk had to be cut into four sections.

Why ship by air? "The Ethiopian government required that the monument is transported by a plane," an Italian government official said in the Discovery interview, "but there are only two kinds of planes able to carry that weight. We wonder whether or not the airstrip will bear the obelisk's huge weight."

By October, however, the chopped-and-wrapped Christian statue was still residing in Italy, in a warehouse, as the search for a plane continued. Stay tuned —

### **Omo wins**

"Omo: Journey to Prehistoric Times," a documentary featuring Ethiopia, has won the Silver Gantian, at the Mountain Film Festival in Trento, Italy. The prize was in the "exploration film" category. Pavol Barabas, noted Slovak documentary film maker, made the movie, which follows a journey through Ethiopia "on a river full of rhinos and crocodiles," as reported in the *Slovak Spectator*.

### **Liya Kebede, super model**

When *Time* magazine's special Style & Design issue came out this autumn, its cover featured Liya Kebede, pretty in pink ruffles and downright gorgeous. Inside, the 25-year-old Ethiopian-born model is the focus of an article, "The Role of Race."

Michele Orecklin describes how Liya got her start in "Chicago slogging away at catalog work, the style-world's equivalent of toiling off-off-Broadway." Then came Gucci, then Chanel, then Vogue began using her regularly. It was, however, a Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche campaign that brought Liya her most noteworthy appointment. And the rest, as the cliché runs, is history.

In April, Liya was named the "new face of Estee Lauder." In terms of financial advancement, it means a contract of an estimated \$3 million annually. In terms of cultural significance, Liya's elevation marks the first time in Estee Lauder's 57-year history that a black woman has been chosen as the representative of cosmetics giant.

"The first thing with Liya is the beauty," Aerin Lauder, Estee Lauder VP for advertising, told *NY Times* reporter Guy Trebay. "The beauty buzz is first. Second is ethnicity."

### **A Birr for a Compatriot**

In 1985, "Live Aid" raised more than \$60 million to help Ethiopia cope with a famine that killed at least

one million people, and to raise the level of global conscience and obligation. On May 25, Ethiopian musicians set a goal of raising \$1.7 million for relief from this year's famine through a concert in Addis.

"We Are the World" was the memorable song of the 1985 appeal, and this year's concert organizer Selome Tadesse hoped that "Negarit" ("War Drum"), a song that attacks hunger as the country's enemy, would provide the impetus for donors. "Let's fight the enemy with hoes and spades," the lyrics implores, "and other better ways and means. To change our name from receivers to achievers. Our flag, symbol of unity, of liberty and victory — where is your full grace and beauty, if it fails to free the country from the horrors of poverty?"

"If we are going to get out of this situation every citizen must take some responsibility in fighting poverty. We need to ask what are we doing ourselves, not donors" Selome said in a UN IRIN interview before the event.

The Irish rocker, Bob Geldof, who was the master planner behind Live Aid and Band Aid, happened to be in Addis at the time of this year's effort. "The European Union have been pathetic and appalling, and I thought we had dealt with that 20 years ago, when the electorate of our countries said never again," Geldof said in a *NY Times* story.

According to the *Times*, "A Birr for a Compatriot" organizers said the concert raised more than \$1 million. The article also pointed out that one birr equaled twelve American pennies.

# E&E RPCVs

## Still looking for mug books

E&E RPCVs continues to try to build the definitive list of PCVs who served in Ethiopia and Eritrea. We need the training books for the following groups:

- II 63-63
- V 65-67
- VII UCLA 66-68
- VIII Littleton 67-69
- VIII UCLA 67-69
- XVIII 72-74

Please send photocopies

or originals to:

Marian Haley Beil  
4 Lodge Pole Road  
Pittsford NY 14534

You can be reimbursed for copy and postage costs.

Thanks!

Thanks to the following for sending their group books after the request in the last

HERALD:

- Judy White (VI UCLA)
- Richard Main (VIII Utah)
- Paul Doherty (X St. Croix & St. Thomas)
- Lew Mermelstein (XIII)
- Steve Finch (XVII)

## E&E RPCVs talks to the Peace Corps

As discussions about potential RPCV Legacy Program projects developed, the question arose about the possibility of our RPCVs serving with the Peace Corps Crisis Corps in Ethiopia. With famine, drought followed by floods followed by malaria and HIV/AIDS, the country certainly has crises that our RPCVs could potentially respond to.

In October, E&E RPCVs Board president, Marian Haley Beil met with Henry McCoy, Peace Corps Regional Director for Africa and Dan Sullivan, Peace Corps Director of Crisis Corps. McCoy and Sullivan stated that because of safety and security issues the Peace Corps no longer sends Crisis Corps Volunteers to countries that do not have an existing Peace Corps program. They are unwilling to have CCVs in any country where there is no staff to provide support.

McCoy did say that the Peace Corps — and he — are anxious to return to Ethiopia. In fact, some work has already been done to explore the possibility of reentry. Budget restraints are the stumbling blocks to this currently, however, as it is quite expensive to get a program up and operational.

Beil had the opportunity to tell them of our group, of the incredible talents we have, that we have people anxious to go back, and of the continuing affection for the country that our RPCVs have. I also gave him some PC/Ethiopia history so that he would understand the major impact we had on the country because of our early numbers. She also told of the real affection that Ethiopians have for PCVs which McCoy was aware of from the country assessment.

At the close of the meeting both McCoy and Sullivan expressed a great interest in working with E&E RPCVs should the opportunity arise.

## 2003 NPCA annual meeting in Portland, Oregon

The National Peace Corps Association annual meeting was held in Portland August 1-3. While not a RPCV conference, there were some events and workshops of RPCV interest. Among the presenters was **Sam Greer** (Addis 66-68) who spoke on job seeking, and **David Arnold** (Asbe Tefari 64-66), **Marian Haley Beil** (Debre Berhan 62-64) and **John Coyne** (Addis 62-64) who participated in a panel on publishing your Peace Corps story.

E&E RPCVs did have an organizational meeting to discuss the Legacy Program. The discussion was lead by **Bill Craff** (Addis, Sodo 63-65). Our group also enjoyed a dinner of injera and wat at Jarra's Ethiopian Restaurant attended by over 40 RPCVs, spouses and friends. A special thanks to **Robert Hamilton** (Bahr Dar 65-67) and his wife Paula for organizing the dinner.

During the weekend, NPCA President **Dane Smith** (Asmara 63-65) turned over the reins of the organization to Kevin Quigley (Thailand 76-79), and Dane was saluted for his work at a special dinner.

## 2004 NPCA conference would like crafts from Ethiopia and Eritrea

Organizers of the International Marketplace are looking for someone to sell Ethiopian and Eritrean arts and crafts items. Contact Nancy Horn at [horn.n@worldnet.att.net](mailto:horn.n@worldnet.att.net) if you can help with this.

# Chicago

## August 5-8

### RPCV Conference

The next big get-together for RPCVs will be in Chicago next summer, where the NPCA and the Chicago Area RPCVs will host a conference from Thursday, August 5 through Sunday, August 8. It will be held in the Palmer House Hilton Hotel in downtown Chicago.

For full and current info, go to [www.rpcv2004.org](http://www.rpcv2004.org)

Click on "Registration" in the left column for registration costs (there are early bird discounts until 3/31), and hotel reservation info and costs (\$135 per night for 1-4 in a room). Also check out "Program & Schedule" for timing of conference events.

## Special E & E RPCVs events

### Thursday 8/5

#### Special viewing of Field Museum Abyssinia Expedition Collection

Michael McCaskey (Fiche 65-67) has arranged for RPCVs from Ethiopia and Eritrea to see the Field Museum historic collection from their Abyssinian Expedition\* of 1926-27. A special viewing is being planned for the afternoon of Thursday, August 5, 2004, the first day of the NPCA 2004 National Conference in Chicago.

This collection includes 113 original pencil and watercolor zoological field studies by famed ornithological painter Louis Agassiz Fuertes, the C.S. Cutting film of the expedition, and other materials. Nearly all of these valuable documents are held in the Library's Rare Book Room. This special viewing is being arranged through the kindness of John McCarter, President and CEO of the Field Museum, a friend of McCaskey.

\* You read about this expedition in the last issue of *THE HERALD* (#27) in the review of the book about the expedition, *Unknown Ethiopia: New Light on Darkest Abyssinia*.

### Friday 8/6

#### Dinner

There are a number of Ethiopian and Eritrea restaurants in Chicago, and Nancy Horn (Addis 66-68) has volunteered to research which will be the best for our injera and wat dinner. More details will come later.

### Saturday 8/7

#### Country-of-service updates - 2-5 p.m.

Our group will present a program including updates about Ethiopia and Eritrea and a discussion of group projects.

### Sunday 8/8

#### Flag Ceremony and Closing Ceremony - 8 a.m.

March behind our country flags.

## Some things to do in Chicago

Nancy has also begun to scope out activities that you may enjoy while visiting the city.

- Architectural Boat Tour
- Architectural walking tour
- The Field Museum
- The Aquarium
- The Museum of Science and Industry
- the Art Institute (featuring "Seurat and the Making of La Grande Jatte")
- lots of ethnic restaurants all over the city
- the Miracle Mile shopping along Michigan Ave.
- Formal High Tea at the Drake Hotel or the Four Seasons,
- the scrumptious Cheesecake Factory
- trips to the top of the Hancock Building
- swimming in Lake Michigan
- Blue Man Group (Briar Street Theatre, 773/348-4000)
- The Second City (comedy theater at its best)
- The Hellenic Museum (celebrating Greek-American culture)
- Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum
- Children's Museum of Immigration
- DuSable Museum of African American History
- The Polish Museum
- Spertus Museum (Jewish religion, art. culture)

Send your  
email address to  
[mhbeil@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mhbeil@rochester.rr.com)  
to make sure you receive all  
the announcements about  
our activities at the Chicago  
conference

## Ethi IIs will celebrate in Chicago

The Ethiopia II (63-65) group

will celebrate their

40th anniversary in Chicago.

Contact Gloria Curtis (Asmara)

what and when.

15670 W 64th Place

Arvada CO 80007-6937

303/422-3742

[Don\\_Curtis@msn.com](mailto:Don_Curtis@msn.com)

# Friends

**Harris Wofford** (CD 62-64) was presented with a Lifetime of Idealism Award by the city of Philadelphia on May 29. He was awarded the honor for his decades of national and community service. Currently Harris is the co-chair of America's Promise, and previous to that he had been chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, elected to the US Senate from Pennsylvania, college president Bryn Mawr College, and presidential advisor to John F. Kennedy. And somewhere in the mix was a connection to the Peace Corps and Ethiopia and Eritrea...

**John Garamendi** (Metu 66-68) was, for a brief time, among the best-qualified candidates in the California gubernatorial race. Running as a Democrat and current State Insurance Commissioner, John decided that it might be best to not stay the costly, complicated, relatively futile course. Meanwhile his daughter Elizabeth, recently graduated from Berkeley, began her own Peace Corps service in Honduras, a chip off the blocks of like John and her mother Patti (Metu 66-68).

**Jim Solomon** (Massawa, Jimma 63-65) was elected to the Board of the National Peace Corps Association this past summer to represent RPCV groups from North & East Africa. His term runs through 2006.

**Ron Gonella** (Adi Quala 66-68), who serves on the E&E RPCV's Legacy Program team, recently returned from a trip to Eritrea where he was on a consciousness-raising mission. He sent messages about his travels in July and August and promises an article for a future issue of *THE HERALD*. In one communiqué, he described a visit to Massawa, where he visited with a former student who serves as the port manager. He was witness to the delivery of 40K tons of American wheat. One comment about the under-supply of food aid, "Part of the problem here is that the American government is responding to the needs of those affected by the drought/famine, but not the needs of those people who have been

impacted as refugees from Sudan and expellees from Ethiopia."

While there, Ron had discussions with representatives of the governmental Drought Commission, Ministry of Health, the Refugees and Relief Commission, NGOs like Vision Eritrea, UNICEF, Concern, and Mercy Corps.

His advice to assist: lobby the US government to respond to "the true needs here on the ground"; volunteer as nutritionists, teachers, "water people," energy experts, etc.; provide financial assistance through UNICEF, or to governmental or NGO projects.

More to come —

Meanwhile Ron may be contacted at [rongo98@hotmail.com](mailto:rongo98@hotmail.com).

**Melvin Foote** (73-75), president and CEO of the Constituency for Africa, was honored by the Peace Corps last June. He received the 2003 Director's Award, one of the awards given to RPCVs of color who have used their overseas experience to promote a better understanding of other peoples and cultures.

As part of the same award ceremony, **W. Morris Baker** (Bahr Dar 66-68) was one of eleven other winners of the 2003 Franklin H. Williams Award.

**John Rex** (Debre Berhan 62-64), who retired from his Unitarian ministry last spring, has re-upped in the Peace Corps, this time volunteering to go to Namibia. His departure date was October 21. "I have been advised not to take a laptop computer . . . so I expect to be out of e-mail touch . . . for about two-and-one-half years" he wrote friends. "Most likely I will have access to the internet from time to time, and I will do some e-mail, but not regularly or on a casual basis." His Namibia address is: Peace Corps, PO Box 6862, Ausspanplatz, Windhoek, Namibia.

To commemorate the 43rd anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps, returned Peace Corps Volunteers will celebrate Peace Corps Week **March 1 - 7, 2004**

Check [www.PeaceCorps.org](http://www.PeaceCorps.org) for details

**John Coe** (Jimma, Addis 62-64) has left his position as executive director of the Wyoming Arts Council to become special projects director with the Division of Cultural Resources. His task is to develop outreach programs for the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. His arts and cultural career has included stints in Nebraska and New Hampshire. In a statement issued by the Arts Council, John described his tenure as an honor and pleasure. "Eleven years ago, I made the decision to take 'the road' to Cheyenne instead of Japan. To quote from Robert Frost's poem, 'I chose the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference' from the beginning of that trip to the ones more recent, have helped make this journey the best." John may be emailed at [jcoe@state.wy.us](mailto:jcoe@state.wy.us).

#### **You Can Go Home Again...**

Early in the year **John Kulczycki** (Debre Zeit 63-65), **Scott Morgan** (Debre Zeit 64-66) and **John Goulet** (Debre Zeit 64-66) returned to Ethiopia. Kulczycki, now a history professor at University of Illinois-Chicago, sent a lengthy communiqué to friends and family after returning in March. Here are some excerpts.

"It was a highly emotional trip for me, varying from exuberance and delight to near despair over the poverty of the country and the deterioration over the last 40 years." He and the others arrived in Addis at 2 a.m. and settled in at the Chion Hotel. They awakened later in the day to the commotion of wedding parties gathering in the hotel's gardens to have their pictures taken. "Nearly all the brides and bridesmaids wore Western-style gowns and many looked stunningly beautiful and the grooms handsome. Family and friends gathered round the newlyweds as they arrived in decorated cars, chanting, singing, and dancing in their traditional way, including rolling the shoulders and ululating. The spontaneous joy that was evident literally moved me to tears as I watched."

A member of one party talked with John and "could not believe my tears of delight over being back in Ethiopia." In turn, he told his group about it and

John and the others were invited to join in with the picture-taking. John also learned that the man's brother ran an Ethiopian restaurant in Chicago, a place John had been and had met the man before leaving the Windy City. The Chion experience was a wonderful re-introduction to Ethiopia.

"The first encounter set the tone for most of our contacts with Ethiopians. We found them to be overwhelmingly friendly and hospitable when in direct contact, that is, our hired tour guides, taxi drivers, the employees of restaurants and hotels where we ate and stayed, and shops that we visited." John and the others even began to discover that their Amharic attempts "always elicited a warm response of amazement." They occasionally got a discount in some places after people learned they had lived in Ethiopia forty years earlier.

The return to Debre Zeit was a moving experience. "We found DZ almost unrecognizable because of the enormous growth in population. The hill overlooking Lake Bishoftu that was virtually empty 40 years-ago . . . was now so overgrown with houses, huts, and shacks that the car could barely find its way to the top . . . We also had difficulty finding the public school where we all taught because of the number of dwellings between it and the main road that were not there before. When we found the school, it made a depressing impression. It looked as if it had been subjected to 40 years of neglect. A closer inspection of classrooms and buildings we remembered teaching in only confirmed this impression."

John found the two houses where he had lived. Although one had its gate locked, the other was open, and he and the others were invited in for coffee. "The house looked the same, though more cared for than the schools. Inside, the large living room-dining area was now divided in two by a wall but otherwise it was the same."

The RPCVs did The Tour, via Bahr Dar, Gondar, the Simien Mountains, Axum, Lalibella and Harar. John's 16-page "letter home" is full of his insights as an historian, traveler and RPCV. *THE HERALD* will

**READ** John Kulczycki's full report and see Scott Morgan's photos from their trip to Ethiopia at our website — click on "Stories"

## To send money to friends in Eritrea

Wayne & Laurie Kessler

(Adi Teclesan 64-66) write:

"We have set up a simple process for sending money

to friends in Eritrea during

its extreme economic

difficulties. We wire funds

from our bank directly to

the account of our friend

and business partner in

Asmara who hands the

money to the designated

families, and then sends a

monthly report.

"If you have friends

who you want to help

on a one-time or regular

basis, contact us at

LWKessler@shasta.com or

530/474-1646, and we'll give

you the details."

continue to cover the trip's descriptions in future issues. If readers wish to contact John directly, his email address is kul@uic.edu. His traveling companions may be contacted at scottmorgan@earthlink.net and gouletjohn42@hotmail.com

In September, we received an email from John's office which will be of interest to RPCVs. We forwarded to all on the database whom we know to be social workers, but for those we missed:

"We [at the university] are starting to try to put together a database of people interested in co-teaching or teaching courses in social work at Addis Ababa University starting in the fall of 2004 through spring semester 2006. These time periods coincide with the planned start-up of Ethiopia's first-ever graduate degree in social work." For a full copy of the needs and process of application, contact Alice Johnson, akj@uic.edu.

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### Fran Williams Davidson's Memories, cont'd

In the last issue of *THE HERALD*, a Christmas memory from **Fran Williams Davidson's** (Addis/Debre Marcos 65-67) time in Ethiopia. Here is the second part of her letter to the editor.

Speaking of a Christmas celebration in Debre Marcos, she wrote "What I remember most that day . . . was being summoned to the post office by a runner. I had a TELEPHONE call coming in. It was a good half-hour walk from our house to the eucalyptus-shaded building, and I passed both familiar and touching sights: our neighboring tukul with blue smoke, its bare-bottomed boy in his khaki shirt, the village's horses returning to their own corrals with the ancient horseman far behind down the broad red road, the tailor shops with their manual sewing machines propelled by feet in rust-colored Chinese shoes, the somewhat wider place in the dirt road where several students were waiting the excitement of the arrival daily bus from Addis ('Madam, is it that you are going to the hospital?'), the empty building promised to us for a library, and a group of bent women carrying

firewood home who managed to acknowledge my nod as I trotted past.

"At the post office, the manager was wonderfully agitated; somehow my father had managed to arrange a call. As I waited for it to come through, I stood in the late afternoon shadows and had a hard time envisioning my family in a real ranch house in Whittier, California, half a world away. Even though I knew I'd have to stay up late to fight the horribly messy mimeograph we used to publish lessons and to correct 45 exercise books for one of my classes, I knew I was right where I wanted to be.

"Now it is hard to envision Debra Marcos and to not think of my days there as a lovely fantasy. Hard to believe that those lively students are not fifty-something-years-old. How many still live in Debre Marcos? How many are driving taxis in Atlanta? . . . How many still live? Did that small boy survive the hard times? Is there a library there? In some trunk in Gojjam are there some well-corrected exercise books and smudged sheets of lessons?"

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### Searches for someone or something

#### Chief Justice Warren's 1963 Ethiopian visit

**Theodore Vestal** (staff 64-66) writes for assistance on a writing project. Prof. Vestal teaches political science at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. He is looking for information and memories of an official visit that the late Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl and Mrs. Warren made to Ethiopia July 27-30, 1963. He addressed an audience of 2,500 at Haile Selassie Theater; his speech was titled "Equal Justice Under Law."

U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Korry called the presentation a "major intellectual event of the year, if not the decade." Vestal writes in his note to *THE HERALD*, "In the limited archival material at the Supreme Court, there is a letter from Mrs. Warren that states [that she] 'met with Peace Corps Volunteers who are certainly dedicated young people to put up with the inconveniences and small living quarters.'



"My questions: do any of the RPCVs have recollections of meeting the Warrens? Where? What was talked about? Did any attend [the Chief Justice's] address?"

Contact Ted at: [vestal@okstate.edu](mailto:vestal@okstate.edu), phone 405-744-7586 or fax 405-744-6534. Read more about him at <http://fp.okstate.edu/vestal/>

Ted also noted that plans are in the works for a traveling exhibit that will commemorate Haile Selassie's first visit to the US in 1954.

#### **Looking for Asmarom Legesse**

Tanya Omeltchenko is trying to reach Prof. Asmarom Legesse. He is the author of ***The Uprooted: Case Material on Ethnic Eritrean Deportees from Ethiopia Concerning Human Rights Violations***, a 62-page report written on behalf of Citizens for Peace in Eritrea and published in the US by the Eritrean Human Rights Task Force in 1998.

Tanya is working as a research assistant for a professor working on human rights issues in Africa. She asks: "Could you please help me in identifying where [Asmarom] is currently working and what he is currently working on? I know that in the 70s he worked at the Haile Selassie University."

She may be contacted at [tomeltch@gmu.edu](mailto:tomeltch@gmu.edu).

#### **Looking for Mengistu videos**

Bisrat Woldeyohannes sent a note to *THE HERALD*: "I was just wondering if there is a way I can either buy or rent videos of former president of Ethiopia Mengistu Hailemariam." Bisrat may be contacted at [bwoldeyohannes@sughrue.com](mailto:bwoldeyohannes@sughrue.com) or phone (in Washington DC) 202-663-7412.

#### **A Letter to the Editor**

Dear Mr. Allen,

We are eighth graders who are doing a documentary on the Peace Corps for National History Day. We discovered your website and were wondering if you could tell us more about your libraries. We wanted to know where you are located and if we could borrow/buy any videos made by RPCV's.

If there is anything you think would help us that you could send, please send it to:

54 Woodbine Road  
New City NY, 10956

Thank you for your time,  
Aliyana Gewirtzman and Jessica Seminelli

#### **Wants to hear from RPCVs**

Gobena Shiferaw wrote *THE HERALD*: "I am an Ethiopian very interested to hear what the RPCVs of Ethiopia and Eritrea say about my beloved country." Gobena may be contacted at [cambolij@cox.net](mailto:cambolij@cox.net).

## Looking for . . .

Please send any contact information you might have for the following RPCVs who are being sought so that we may facilitate their reconnection.

Send info to: Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs c/o Marian Haley Beil, 4 Lodge Pole Road, Pittsford NY 14534 or email: [mhbeil@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mhbeil@rochester.rr.com)

- **Tony and Jamie Flaherty** (early 1970s) sought by Lew Mermelstein (70-73)
- **Jack Hamilton** (Assella 66- ) sought by Susan Hansen (Debre Zeit 67-69)
- **Harriet Maxey** (Dire Dawa 65 ) sought by her former student Gashaw Mekuria Gebre.
- **Dale Andersen** (Bonga 66-68) sought by his roomie Tom Beck (Bonga 66-68; Misan Teferi 68-69)
- **Mary Bush** (Gondar 1970) sought by her student at the Gondar Public Health College, Senait Shiferaw Robson.
- **Judith & Stephen Schroeder** (Bedelle 66-68) sought by their student at Ras Bitwedded Tessema Nadew Elementary School, Hirut Gebre-Egziabher.
- **Thomas Catucci** (Hirna 68-70) sought by his student Israel Dessalegne.



## Hats!

Cotton, khaki-colored baseball hats embroidered in full color with the flags of Ethiopia and Eritrea. To order, send a check made out to EEE RPCVs for \$14 (includes postage) to: Marian Haley Beil, 4 Lodge Pole Road, Pittsford NY 14534

## Facilitate reconnecting

with friends. Make sure

EEE RPCVs has your email

address.

Send to:

[mhbeil@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mhbeil@rochester.rr.com)

### How to build a tukel CD available

Michael Santarelli (Gura 70-73), who photographed the construction of a wonderful Gurage tukel during his Peace Corps service, now has a CD of those photos, with commentary, available for purchase. The CD — which has 164 photos — is for sale for \$12, and a portion of that goes to support projects in Ethiopia. You can learn more about the CD at [www.cdslideshow.com](http://www.cdslideshow.com). It can be purchased online, or write Michael at CDslideshow, P.O. Box 988, Lakeport, CA 95453.

### Deaths

**Dr. Mike Brady** (Metu 68-72) died unexpectedly at his home in Tacoma, Washington in October. He was stricken while sitting on his sofa looking at a photo album of his mother's — who had died recently.

Since his Peace Corps service, Michael had travelled frequently to Ethiopia to improve the medical care for Ethiopians. His continuing devotion to his students and to Ethiopia was immense.

One of Mike's student, Wondimu Mekonnen, who lives in London, has written a tribute to him. A short excerpt from that piece tells a bit of Mike's devotion to Ethiopia:

For the Dergue regime, every American was a potential CIA spy, and therefore an enemy. However, that did not deter Michael from returning to Ethiopia with a burning desire to serve the people he loved so much. Contrary to the advice of every one, including his students and close friends from Mettu, Harar and Addis Ababa, Michael traveled to Ethiopia in 1980. What happened to him would have put him off forever. He made the mistake of going to Mettu to see relatives of his ex-students. While he was in the home of one of the families of his poor students, who he helped to travel to the US and get life, Dergue cadres arrested and detained him. That broke the hearts of all those parents who knew Michael as their own close family

friend and someone who cared for them more than any one else. Mothers came out crying and begged for mercy. After seven days of detention, Dergue cadres eventually released him, took him to Addis and demanded that he leave Ethiopia immediately. As Michael had already finished his money by then, he obeyed their orders and left but vowed to return. Michael used to say that there was no force in the entire world that would prevent him from going to see Ethiopia whenever he longed to return. He lived up to his words.

Upon return to the US, Michael was offered the post of Students Medical Director in Claremont University. He served the university brilliantly, but his heart was in Ethiopia, particularly, Mettu. He approached various organizations and secured medical equipment for the Pediatric Department of Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa. He also managed to secure some medical facilities for Mettu Hospital. He managed to secure scholarships in medicine for Ethiopian doctors and assisted them in developing their careers in the USA and return to Ethiopia. He forged friendship with Ethiopian doctors and started supplying them with medicine and the necessary things wherever he could whenever needed. Every year, he saved money and traveled to Ethiopia, regardless of the risk he faced. He was ready to pay any sacrifice for the love of that country and the people.

You can read the entire tribute at our website at: [www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org](http://www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org). Click on "Stories" and locate it in the listing.

**Henry Scott** (Deputy Director 63–65) died July 6, 2003, in San Francisco, California, of complications following surgery. He was surrounded by his family — six children, three wives and his brother Tom.

He served in Ethiopia under Directors Harris Wofford and Don Wilson. He was liaison to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education during that period. This involved visiting towns and villages all over the empire to determine placement for Peace Corps Volunteers and monitor their progress there.

Henry was born July 14, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was married in 1949 to Cynthia Kiel. They traveled to Addis Ababa with their three children, Molly, Katie and Peter, who attended the English School there. He was a graduate of Phillips Academy, Andover and of Stanford University, BA and

MA. He was a professor of biology at San Francisco State College at the time of his appointment to Peace Corps Staff in 1963. After his return from Ethiopia he worked for Peace Corps Washington from 1965 to 1967. Following that period he was Dean of Students at State University of New York at Old Westbury.

He later divorced and remarried Catherine Berne. Their three children, twins Chloe and Will and son Sam, were born in the 1980s. He was Dean of Students at California Institute of the Arts and Director of Hidden Villa in Los Altos, California. At the time of his death he was married to Caroline Helmuth. He will be missed by his family and all who knew "Hank" in the Peace Corps and elsewhere.

— **Cynthia K.S. Francisco**

### **E&E RPCVs Library**

**Our library contains a wide variety of materials including books, videos, and magazine articles of special interest to our members. All materials in the library can be borrowed at no cost by members of the group. Go to our website for a listing of the library contents — or if you are not online contact Librarian Hayward Allen, at 264 Garnsey Road, Pittsford, NY 14534, or 585/264-9162 to receive a printed list.**



**CORRECTION:** Paul Doherty kindly wrote in with the names of those who were not identified in this 40+1 reunion photo.

Ethi Xs (68–70) at the Embassy Reception: Mike Brady, Neal Sobania, Charles Fischer, Debbie Kendall, Julianne Alandt Madden, Nancy Polich, Judy Maier Nichols, Ninian Beall, Samuel Weingart, Paul Doherty, Richard Sherman. All of us in the picture were from the St. Thomas group except Mike Brady and Nancy Polich who trained in Maine.

# Books + Writers

## Recent books by Ethiopia and Eritrea Peace Corps writers

### **BIRDING IN SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY Site Guide and Annotated Lists**

(second edition)  
by Eugene Hunn (64-66)  
Seattle Audobon Society  
June, 2003  
\$7.95

### **VOLUNTEER TALES**

#### **Experiences of Working Abroad**

Edited by Savita Bailur & Helen Rana  
RPCV Contributors:

Kathleen M. Moore (Emdeber 65-67)

Gina Perfetto (Butajira 97-99)

Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press,  
www.lutterworth.com

192 pages

September, 2003

15 pounds (\$25.47)

### **CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF KENYA**

by Neal Sobania (Addis Ababa 68-72)

Greenwood Publishing Group

July, 2003

256 pages

\$45.00

### **Transforming the Multicultural Education of Teachers**

#### **Theory, Research, and Practice**

by Michael Vavrus (Gidole 72-74)

Teachers College Press

240 pages

August, 2002

\$24.95

The Journals of Peace:

PeaceCorpsWriters.org is

publishing all available

essays read during this Vigil

marking the 25th anniversary

of the death of John F.

Kennedy. Among the pieces

published so far are those by:

George B Breznay  
(Addis 66-68)

Dan Close  
(Bekoji 66-68)

Patricia Ingle Eimerl  
(Axum 67-69)

Betty Hite Graff  
(Addis, Sodo 63-65)

Neil G. Kotler  
(Asmara 64-66)

(Go to the site & do a "search"  
for each name)

## Reviews

### **ASMARA**

#### **Africa's Secret Modernist City**

by Edward Denison, Guany Yu Ren and Naigzy  
Gebremedhin

Merrell; 2003

240 pages

\$65.00 (\$45.50 at amazon.com)

*Reviewed by John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62-64)*

**T**HIS IS A TERRIFIC BOOK for anyone at all interested in Asmara and/or who has lived in Ethiopia as a PCV. This beautiful coffee-table-size book of text and photographs focuses on the Modernist architecture of Asmara, a city that was almost entirely built by the Italians in 1930s. Today, Asmara has one of the highest concentrations of Modernist architecture anywhere in the world, and these three authors have showcased the city in all its past and present glory, as well as told the history of the city and Eritrea.

According to the authors, Asmara came to be because, "Desperate to build quickly, the colonial government of the time allowed radical architectural experimentation that would not have found favour in the more conservative European environment. Asmara therefore became the world's prime building ground for architectural innovation during the Modern Movement."

With lavish details, stunning color photographs, and detailed maps of the city (yesterday and today), this book is a product of the Cultural Assets Rehabilitation Project (CARP), an initiative of the Eritrean Government and the people of Eritrea.

Do you remember the Odeon Cinema bar? Cinema Impero? San Antonio Church? The Grand Mosque? The Casa del Fascio (Fascist Party Headquarters) that, by the way, began as the Ministry of Education? Villa Quarter? The Fiat Tagliero service station? They are all here, and more.

*John Coyne is the editor of PeaceCorpsWriters.org.*

Cloria Curtis (Asmara 63-65)

writes that

*ETHIOPIA, THE UNKNOWN*

*LAND: A CULTURAL AND*

*HISTORICAL GUIDE*

by Stuart Munro-Hay

[I. B. Tauris, 2002]

is "spectacular."

### **ETHIOPIA MY HOME\***

#### **The Story of John Moraitis**

Told by Elizabeth Germany  
Shama Books, Addis Ababa; 2001  
\$25.00

**Reviewed by Frances Fisher LaCroix (Debre Berhan 62-64)**

Last November I received a book as a gift from Marian Haley Beil, my Peace Corps roommate. The title of the book: *Ethiopia, My Home: The Story of John Moraitis* immediately intrigued me. Who was this man? Why was his tale significant? Why did Marian think I should read it?\*\*\* This certainly was not on the Georgetown reading list of eons ago!

I explored the contents, and was not disappointed. Ninety minutes later I was impressed by Mr. Moraitis' incredible story of his career and dedication to the Ethiopian empire during most of the twentieth century. For ninety-one years he lived and actively participated in the twists, turns and events of Ethiopian history from Haile Selassie's coronation to the Italian occupation, through prosperity to the worst of the Communist era.

In 1912, at age five, John Moraitis arrived in Addis with his Greek family. A year later he attended the French School. Many of his classmates were from notable Ethiopian families, and later in life he recalled these contacts to access information from the power elite.

Becoming a Reuters correspondent in 1938 had a significant impact on Moraitis' life. His thirty-year journalism career led Moraitis to intimate knowledge of the workings, politics, and goals of Haile Selassie and his inner circle. Speaking fluent Amharic, Moraitis became an invaluable advisor, facilitator, friend and confidant of high-ranking rases and His Imperial Majesty. His easy-going

personality, great organization and communication skills combined with integrity and outstanding loyal service brought Moraitis as close to the Emperor as any *ferenge* could be. During the Italian invasion, Moraitis relayed letters from Selassie to Balambaras Abebe Aragay, the renowned Ethiopian patriot leader. At one point Moraitis was allowed access to the Emperor twice a week at any moment he liked. His service was valued and trusted by the most powerful Ethiopian leaders.

Chapters which piqued my interest especially were those of the Italian invasion; the escape and survival of both His Imperial Majesty and Moraitis in exile; and the chapter on palace politics involving Empress Mennen and other opponents as they colluded. The details of the abortive coup of 1960 revealed how treacherous the situation was with General Mengistu Neway and his brother, Germame, as they plotted with the Chief of Security, Colonel Workneh Gabayehu to overthrow the government.

As a government employee serving in several ministries, Moraitis saw a lot, learned a lot and in his mid-nineties recorded a lot of random reminiscences on tape. These tapes were the origin of this book. It was a painstaking process to decipher and translate the fragments which had to be put into historically accurate order. The resultant book is a printed text with accompanying photos which were hidden by Moraitis and then salvaged after the Communist period. As the publisher notes: "This book represents moments of Ethiopian history which are gone."

For me the great part of the book was revisiting times and places of the past. Boldly I used the glossary at the back of the book to test my forlorn Amharic. The results were only slightly worse than in 1964. Haile Selassie Yimut!

\*\* One of the photos in the book shows the Ethi Is having just arrived in-country — with Fran front and center.

\* This book can be borrowed from the EEE RPCVs library.

**WOULD YOU LIKE to**  
review a book for The  
Herald? Contact Editor  
Hayward Allen. We  
currently have a couple  
of travel books available  
for review. We are also  
interested in hearing  
your suggestions of titles  
that would be of interest  
to our members — either  
for you or others to  
review.

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# THE HERALD

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www.irinnews.org; **USAToday**; Visafric; **Washin-gon Post**; Wonchif; www.reliefweb.int. Sources for other articles include: the Peace Corps, the National Peace Corps Association; PeaceCorpsWriters.org.

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