

The HERALD

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A Trip to Alemaya

by Ted Vestal (staff 64–66)

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ALEMAYA UNIVERSITY IN EASTERN ETHIOPIA celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its founding on 30–31 October 2004. Fifty years ago, the present day university was founded as the Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts under one of the first Point Four Program contracts between the Government of Ethiopia and Oklahoma A&M College, which is now Oklahoma State University. The Point Four Program morphed into USAID by the time the Peace Corps began. OSU built a stately campus in an area between Dire Dawa and Harar selected by Emperor Haile Selassie and established Ethiopia's first agricultural college modeled on the American land grant college system.

Because there were no students in Ethiopia qualified to attend the Imperial College, OSU founded the Jimma Agricultural Technical School (JATS) in 1952 to prepare students for university-level work. Highly-qualified applicants from throughout the nation competed for the eighty spaces available at JATS.

The College continued to receive major institutional development assistance from Oklahoma State University under contract with USAID until 1968. During that 16 year period, 185 faculty and staff from

the U.S. served in the College under OSU contracts, and 57 Ethiopian students received graduate degrees from OSU. In the 1960s some PCVs worked on summer projects at the Imperial College, but **Tom Amos** (Jimma 63–65), who taught at JATS during his second year in Ethiopia, was the only Volunteer I am aware of who was assigned by the Peace Corps to a OSU campus.

In 1961, the College became part of Haile Selassie I University (now Addis Ababa University), and during the time of the Derg, in 1984, it became an autonomous university, Alemaya University of Agriculture. In December 1996 the name was changed to Alemaya University. Today the university enrolls about 10,000 students, compared to only 500 enrolled in the 1950s and 1960s. Through the decades since its founding Alemaya University has graduated some 20,000 students with degrees and certificates. In terms of establishing a high school and college that became institutions that still play significant roles in research, extension, and the training of skilled manpower, the OSU Point Four/USAID program must be considered one of America's most successful technical assistance programs.

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A Trip to Alemaya (cont.)

I was honored to be part of a three-man delegation representing OSU at the Golden Jubilee celebration. The other two gents are living legends in the JATS and Alemaya communities: Conrad Evans, who taught twelve years in Ethiopia from 1956–68 (eight years at the JATS and four years at Alemaya), the longest tenure of anyone in the program; and Dr. Don Wagner, head of OSU's Department of Animal Science, who taught at Alemaya from 1965–68 and is the only veteran of the program still teaching at OSU.

FROM THE TIME WE LANDED IN ETHIOPIA at the impressive new airline terminal at Bole until our departure, the delegation was attentively taken care of by Alemaya alumni and university officials. The respect and affection lavished upon the two veterans by the Alemaya community has to be experienced to be believed.



During our stay in Addis we held an evening reception honoring Alemaya alumni at the Addis Ababa Sheraton, a five star hotel where, with a "state rate," one can stay for about what we paid at Chicago's Palmer House at the NPCA meeting. We were, in turn, feted at a dinner at the home of an Addis Ababa alumnus.

The highway from Addis Ababa to Harar is paved now, although you see fewer nomads with their camels along the road than in the old days. More noticeable are the non-biodegradable plastic bags lying all over the place. My memory of Dire Dawa in 1964 as a sleepy stop on the Djibouti Rail Line was shattered by staying in what is now the second largest city in the country with a population of 237,000. Harar also seemed to be bursting at the seams or at the walls, and electric green-hued chat was more dominant in the market stalls than I had remembered. The Ras hotels in both cities are showing signs of wear, but RPCVs will find them familiar. At the conclusion of the Alemaya celebration, the breakfast clientele at the Dire Dawa Ras changed

from university alumni to a fully-armed platoon of U.S. Army personnel. They didn't want to talk to us and wouldn't even reveal the outcome of the OSU-OU football game. Shades of the old MAAG.

In Dire Dawa we were impressed with Alemaya University's fruit orchards and with the massive construction of "the Tony (Mardikian) Farm Technological College." You can buy the equivalent an espresso cup of the world's best coffee at Mokonnen's Bunna Bar for the equivalent of 12 cents American. There are still plenty of *garis*, although Toyota pickups and Land Cruisers are now the vehicle of choice for the wealthy. "Balancing Rock" and "Elephant Rock" still stand, but much of the marginal lands are now under cultivation. In Errer Valley, the forests have been thinned and with them the number of lions, leopards, and cheetahs as well as the elephant herds that used to tromp through faculty campsites. We had to be content to look at grazing camels and a troop of baboons. Throughout the eastern part of the country, traditional tukuls are being replaced by chicka houses with longer-lasting galvanized tin roofs. When you look down from an airplane, those thousand points of light glittering up at you are not thatched roofs.

Natural and manmade changes have affected the Alemaya University campus. Lakes had been drained from over-irrigation and drought. Trees planted over forty years ago were no longer saplings. Some flower beds and blooming plants had been maintained in the same spots American women had planted them decades before, but other improvements such as residential rose gardens were gone. Construction of classrooms and residences was rampant as the university attempted to catch up with the physical requirements of a burgeoning student enrollment. Masonry walls had been built around university fields to keep intruders away, and ugly barbed wire barriers protected plant life on campus. A bronze plaque, a gift to Haile Selassie from OSU and the people of Oklahoma, erroneously reported destroyed by Cuban troops during the Derg regime, occupies a position of honor in front of the university's administration building.

The ceremonies at Alemaya University were impressive. In addition to the expected speeches and awards, panels of alumni and government officials presented formal papers and discussed “Transforming Ethiopian Agriculture.” About 1,600 people (the capacity of the auditorium) attended each of the sessions and stayed throughout the all-day



Ted Vestal at the 2004 Chicago conference

panels and speeches. At the conclusion of the Saturday evening program, students and local villagers formed a half-mile cordon through which participants had to walk to the campus camp fire, the final event of the day. As the *ferengi sh-emegeles* made their way through the crowd, the students ululated in appreciation — a *sui generis* experience for an academic. One of the officers of Alemaya University, Shimelis Wolde Hawariat, remembers fondly his Peace Corps teachers at Jimma. To this day, he says,

Arthur Andersen

he can sing the songs that **Marianne Fearn** (Jimma, Addis 62–65) taught him, and he thanks **John Woods** (Jimma 65–68) for providing him with his excellent facility in English.

On Sunday, an Alemaya alumnus and State Minister of Agriculture gave the final oration in Amharic on “Ways Ahead.” In the afternoon, time was set aside for “Reflections,” and the OSU representatives made brief but cogent remarks about the significance of Alemaya University and freedom of thought and expression as vital to academic freedom. These

closing reflections were subsequently criticized by Ethiopian government officials who contended that outspoken political comments against the government’s agricultural policies by some of the invited panelists on the program should not have been allowed. This despite the presence of pro-government spokesmen were on every panel and a government minister who gave the closing oration.

OSU has reason to be proud of what was accomplished in its Point Four/USAID project. The products of that labor — the alumni, especially the graduates of the early years of the OSU program — have become Ethiopia’s leading scientists, educators, businessmen, and government officials. These alumni were aptly described by Conrad Evans as the glue that built the nation’s infrastructure. Some had distinguished careers in the FAO, UNESCO, the World Bank, and other international organizations. Other Alemaya graduates established distinguished records in research. Among their outstanding accomplishments were the discovery of a vaccine for rinderpest and achievements in the development of greatly improved varieties of corn, wheat, teff, sorghum, potatoes, and coffee and other food products. The alumni’s work greatly increased potential food production and income for a developing country. In 2004, one alumnus was elected to membership in the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and also was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiologists. A bilateral technical assistance program can make a positive difference in a developing nation. As Dr. Don Wagner expressed it: “OSU can rightly claim at least some small credit for assisting and benefiting humanity in a country of polite, wonderful, and appreciative people — and providing some better hope for their future.” •

Send your email address to E&E RPCVs

Almost daily E&E RPCVs receives requests from friends looking for friends. Facilitate that communication by sending your email address to: mhbeil@rochester.rr.com

As a bonus, you will receive announcements quickly including many that are time-sensitive and don’t appear in *THE HERALD*; and you will help economize on time, printing and postage.

Chicago

MAYBE IT WAS THE SUNNY, SPLENDID and most usual Chicago summer weather — almost like Addis Ababa. Maybe it was the crackle of politics in so many conversations as the presidential election neared. Maybe it was the succession of speakers with their wise and inspiring messages, often laced with humor. Maybe it was the especially large group of RPCVs from Ethiopia and Eritrea — many of them old friends. Maybe it was the loads of special Ethiopian/Eritrea events arranged for us.



chris Matthews

But whatever the reason, the 25th Anniversary National Conference of the National Peace Corps Association in Chicago in August was judged by nearly everyone as wildly successful — especially for RPCVs from Ethiopia and Eritrea. The national office and the Chicago group of the NPCA paraded a satisfying and eclectic group of people in front of the conference. **Chris Matthews** (Swaziland 68–70) was — to no one's surprise — outrageously funny and irreverent. **Governor Jim Doyle** of Wisconsin and his wife **Jessia**, both Democrats and RPCVs from Tunisia (67–69), and **Governor Bob Taft**, a Republican and a RPCV from Tanzania (63–65), spoke of Peace Corps service and its importance now more than ever because of these difficult national times. Surin Pitsuwan, a member of the Thai Parliament and former foreign minister, told the charming story of his lessons in English by two PCVs, without whose efforts he would not have ventured beyond his remote village in Northern Thailand. Pitsuwan, a Moslem, also spoke at work-

shops about the need to understand Islam and the voices it projects in the world today. Peter Yarrow, of Peter, Paul and Mary, said that he doesn't do "musical interludes," as promised in the program. He then proceeded to give us musical interludes ("Puff the Magic Dragon," "Leaving on a Jet Plane," a wonderful all-hold-hands, all-sing-along "We shall Overcome," which left few dry eyes in the hall) — plus lots of talk from Peter about service and making the world a better place.

E&E activities

More than 80 RPCVs from Ethiopia and Eritrea, along with spouses, partners, children, and friends, attended the NPCA conference and participated in special E&E RPCVs events, many arranged by **Marian Haley Beil** (Debre Berhan 62–64), president of the E&E RPCV group and by other RPCVs.

First day fun

The Field Museum

It all started with a two hour program at the Field Museum arranged through the efforts of **Mike McCaskey** (Fiche 65–67) and **John Coyne** (Addis Ababa 62–64). Dr. Ben Williams, Library Director and Special Collections Librarian at the Field, explained that in early 1926, Ras Tafari, who later became Emperor Haile Selassie, wished to capture some of the emerging American tourist trade. He hoped to draw investments to Ethiopia by bringing influential and adventurous Americans to Ethiopia and showing off the country as hospitable and stable, rich in exotic landscapes, rare birds and fauna.

In late 1926, Chicago's Field Museum's Director Wilfred Osgood accepted Ras Tarfari's invitation and sponsored a trek by five Americans to the Ethiopian highlands. Osgood's team included renowned bird artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes, a *Chicago Tribune* sports/adventure writer, and gifted taxidermist Bill Bailey. Williams showed rare film footage and photographs taken by the group of the towns and people of Harar, Dira Dawa, Bichana,

Bahr Dar, Gondar and Debre Marcos. Most interesting were the clips of young Ras Tarafari and his ever-present pomeranian, his mom Empress Menen at the Palace in Addis, and footage of Ras Hailu in Gojjam. In 1936 after returning from the expedition, Osgood published *Artist & Naturalist in Ethiopia* with numerous color sketches by Fuertes as well as diary selections from the trip.

ATTEENDEES at the Field Museum program subsequently donated \$500 to the museum to be used for its Ethiopian collection.



Arthur Andersen

Dr. Ben Williams shows *Artist & Naturalist in Ethiopia*



Don Beil

Film footage of Ras Hailu and Wilfred Osgood, 1926

After the conference, Clare Shea obtained several copies of the now rare *Artist & Naturalist in Ethiopia* that Ben Williams talked about at our Field Museum presentation, and donated them to the Dean of the Addis Ababa University's Ethiopian Studies Department and the headmaster of the recently-opened Teacher Training Institute in Debre Marcos.

Clare is currently working with The Field's Dr. Williams on a possible project to use parts of the film that was shown and the book in a teaching aid which might be distributed in Ethiopia.



Don Beil

The display of books, paintings and other articles from the expeditions



Don Beil

In the Bears' Locker Room

Soldiers Field

The Field Museum presentation was followed by a tour of the newly renovated and spectacularly beautiful Soldier Field located adjacent to the Museum along the Lake shore. McCaskey, who is chairman of the Chicago Bears who play at Soldiers Field, acted as tour guide and host.



Arthur Andersen

Inside Soldiers Field



Arthur Andersen

Mike McCaskey and his APCD, John Coyne outside Soldier Field



Don Beil

Alice Euler Czech (Debre Berhan 64-66) with her husband Bill, Joyce Bray Wyanski (Debre Berhan 64-66) with her husband Dick, and Leo Cecchini (Asmara 62-64)



Don Beil

Board members Gloria Gieseke Curtis (Asmara 63-65) and Nancy Horn (Addis Ababa 66-68)

Miller's Pub

The first evening in Chicago E&E RPCVs repaired to Miller's Pub for a long evening of food and drink — and endless reminiscences.



Don Beil

Arthur Andersen (Debre Marcos 65-67), John Woods (Jimma 63-68), Clare Shea (Debre Marcos 65-67), and Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 63-65)



Leo Cecchini

Rusty Miller Rich and Carleen Glamzi Busse (both Dire Dawa 62–64) were reunited with a fellow teacher and his wife who now live in Chicago.

Dinner at the Ethiopian Diamond

Friday evening **Nancy Horn** (Addis Ababa 66–68) arranged a dinner — enjera, wat and all the trimmings — at Ethiopian Diamond restaurant on Chicago’s North side. More than 100 EEE RPCVs, spouses, children, partners and friends turned out — only the dinner at the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington in 2002 has brought out a larger crowd for an event undertaken by EEE RPCVs.



Leo Cecchini

Carol Mauritsen McDonald (Harar 64–66), Ginna Coon (Deder 64–66) and Barbara Buckingham (Harar 64–66) enjoy the great food at the Diamond.



Leo Cecchini

Ethi I’s Margaret O’Brien Donohoe (Dire Dawa), Bill Donohoe (Dire Dawa), Herb Resnick (Harar) and Dick Howrigan (Jimma, Addis)

E&E RPCVs had

more than twice the number registered at the conference as the next largest country-of-service group.

Our group also filled two tables of 10 at the fancy Saturday evening fundraising dinner.

See page 32 for more about the RPCV Legacy Program projects.

See page 34 to learn about the Debre Marcos Book Club.

The country-update session

Held Saturday at De Paul University, the three-hour session was filled with news of Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as information about projects being undertaken by E&E RPCVs.

John Kulczycki (Debre Zeit 63–65) and **Scott Morgan** (Debre Zeit 63–65) spoke of their RPCV Legacy Project “Children at Risk,” which hopes to provide sexually exploited children in Addis Ababa with vocational training.

Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62–64) reported on the progress of her Legacy project to send medical books to healthcare workers in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Clare Shea (Debre Marcos 65–67) updated the group on a project she and **Arthur Andersen** (Debre Marcos 65–67) are working on called, intriguingly, the Debre Marcos Book Club.

Shlomo reported on recent news from in-country

Shlomo Bachrach (Staff 66–68) did the updating on political developments in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Shlomo, who also taught in Addis in the 1960s, now does consulting involving Ethiopia and runs the East African Forum which most helpfully supplies *THE HERALD* and others interested in Ethiopia and Eritrea with a selection of news stories from the web and other sources.

Shlomo ran through recent developments in the Ethiopia/Eritrea boundary dispute. The war was over economics more than anything, but now the conflict has evolved into a matter of honor and politics. No solution is on the horizon, even though it is in the interests of both sides to settle. Shlomo also warned that ethnic identity in Ethiopia has replaced regionalism as a source of friction, but because the dispersal of ethnic groups throughout the country is so complex and uneven, a division of land on the basis of ethnicity is not a real solution.



Scott Morgan, Curt Peterson, ?, ?, Paul Reagan, John Woods, hidden, Steve Silver, John Kulczycki, Bill Chartrand, Phil Damon, Dick Howrigan, Tom Amos, Richard Crepeau, Nancy Dean Nowak, Gloria Gieseke Curtis, Mark Lewis Brecker, Bill Graff, Betty Graff, ?, Arthur Andersen, ?, Ted Vestal, Barry Hillenbrand, Mike McCaskey, Allan Brandhorst, Nancy Horn, Dennis Orwin, Mary Myers-Bruckenstein, ?, Alice Euler Czech, Carol Mauritsen-McDonald, Barbara Buckingham, Ginna Coon, ?, Judy Smith, Pat Wissler Crepeau, ?, Joyce Bray Wyanski, Kay Norris Morgan, Shlomo Bachrach, Virginia McArthur, Clare Shea, Joyce Maurer Orwin, Betty McLaughlin Hagberg, Judy Hopkins, Therese Green, Gayle Bradshaw Washburn, Dianne Brandhorst, ?, John Coyne, Marian Haley Beil, Leo Cecchini, Rusty Miller Rich, Carleen Glamzi Busse, Margot Kennard, Ellen Shively (*Apologies to the ?s*)

The IIs celebrated

The Chicago conference was also an opportunity for the Ethiopia II group to hold one of their occasional reunions. **Gloria Gieseke Curtis** (Asmara), one of the prime movers of the reunion and de facto keeper of the flame for the group, says the turn out was impressive, including some long lost members. Her list of attendees, from memory, runs: Tom Amos, Alice & Ken Atkinson (what a surprise), Pat Dewerth Corbett, Gloria Curtis, Pat & Dick Crepeau, Phil Damon (another surprise), John Denny Donahue, Jody Donovan, Betty & Bill Graff, Barry Hillenbrand, Judy Hopkins, Milt Hurwitz, John Kulczycki, Ed Lynch, Bob Matthai, Nancy Dean Nowak, Steve Silver, Judy & Dane Smith, Marvin Vinande, Gayle Bradshaw Washburn, Gigi Ott Wietecha.



Gloria Curtis waving her sign.

During the Opening Reception of the NCPA conference at the Palmer House, Gloria ran around waving with an E/E2 sign above her head gathering the Eth IIs around and sharing information about reunion activities. **Pat Corbett** (Makele, Asmara)

had reserved a meeting room and video equipment at Truman College for Friday afternoon for a "show and tell" and some private time to reflect on the past 40 years. A small group gathered to enjoy photo albums, souvenirs, and old and new stories. They viewed a video from a California Public TV station about the salt-water farms near Massawa, Eritrea.

Saturday evening was absolutely the highlight of the Eth IIs reunion, says Gloria. Pat and her husband, Michael Corbett, hosted a dinner party at their home in Winnetka. The "el" ride there was a bit of an adventure, she says. It was not quite like an Addis-Mekelle bus trip of yore, but still interesting. In the end, says Gloria, seeing Pat welcoming everyone at her door, just as she did in Makelle and Asmara some 40 years ago, was just another fantastic reunion experience. Before departing, there was general agreement to plan another reunion soon — no more than 2 or 3 years from now — probably on or near the East Coast. Later Ed Lynch emailed a group of Eth IIs with a counter-suggestion of a reunion in the summer of 2005 on the West Coast, where the group trained in 1963. A firm decision is still pending. •

Arthur Andersen



Joyce and Dennis Orwin check out old photos while Betty Hagberg and Allan and Dianne Brandhorst catch up at the home of Pat and Michael Corbett.

Darrel Hagberg



Don Curtis

The IIs at the Corbett's:
 Standing at left — Pat Dewerth Corbett, Nancy Dean Nowak
 Starting at the bottom of stairs sitting left to right —
 Jody Donovan, Judy Hopkins, Milt Hurwitz
 Gigi Ott Wietecha, Pat Wissler Crepeau
 Marvin Vinande, Dick Crepeau
 Tom Amos, John Kulczycki
 Gloria Gieseke Curtis, Gayle Bradshaw Washburn,
 BettyHite Graff
 Phil Damon, Bill Graff
 Judy Smith, Ed & Aud Lynch
 (Standing) Len Nowak - spouse of Nancy
 (in dark at top of stairs) Marilyn Underwood Lesch,
 John Lesch

E&E RPCVS booth in the Grand Bazaar



Leo Cecchini

Clare Shea and Judy Smith (Asmara 63–65) used the E&E RPCVs booth in the Grand Bazaar to sell fundraising items.

Thanks to Arthur Anderssen, Don Beil, Leo Cecchini, Gloria Curtis and Betty and Darrel Hagnerg for sharing their photos.

Shlomo speaks

RECENTLY MADE TWO TRIPS back to Ethiopia, my first visits since the Mengistu years. The trips were each for two weeks — long enough to adjust to changes and get in touch with much that was familiar. The surface changes in Addis Ababa are so great that it took me a few days to realize that appearances were misleading. The problem is population growth. Today Addis has estimated population of 4 million, compared with about 600,000 in the mid-1960s. I was startled by the size of the crowds in the streets. People spilled onto the roadways because the sidewalks or the dirt roadsides couldn't handle the numbers. Long unbroken rows of small shops now line most paved streets. In many areas there is almost no frontage that isn't built up or under construction. But once I got used to the increased numbers of everything, Addis seemed quite familiar. It still feels like a very large town rather than a city.

The unchanged character of Ethiopians helped me get past the distortions of time and memory. In almost every encounter, I found myself feeling as if I had been transported back in time. The gracious but unobsequious manners, the norm of civility, all seem the same. Though I found Addis disappointingly and depressingly poor, I also found it personally warm and receptive — as it was before.

I find it hard to connect the Addis I saw with the upbeat comments I often read. Ethiopia's poverty is overwhelming, and inescapable. The gap between the haves and the have-nots is no smaller today than before, despite two violent regime changes. The small prosperous classes live very well while the vast majority lives near the edge, or worse.

And even the relative handful of educated Ethiopians and the expatriates live in a diminished city, in my opinion. All the bookstores combined have only a fraction of what Giannapoulos used to carry. There are hardly any cinemas, so hotels have occasional screenings. Only restaurants catering to the NGO population have grown in number. A few more restaurants serve traditional food for *ferenjjs*. Many have entertainment at night — singers and dancers, often with live music. I heard an electric kirar

for the first time. But still Addis offers few urban pleasures, even for the rich.

Addis street life is still endlessly interesting. Watching from a table at one of the thousands of cafes was a daily treat. A small coffee cost Birr 1.50 (18 cents) at the Joly Bar in Arat Kilo where I used to hang out years ago. The coffee was as strong as I remembered it, and incomparably better than what we are used to in the US. A coffee specialist at the Ministry of Agriculture told me that Ethiopia, Africa's largest coffee producer, consumes a bigger percentage of its crop than any other producing country in the world.

The atmosphere in the cafes hasn't changed. Service was good. Kids came to my table offering chewing gum, candy, tissue packages, socks, combs, watches ("real Rolex, Mister"), condoms, pens. Beggars made their pleas with the familiar phrases and heartrending looks. People at nearby tables respected my privacy, but were quick to enter into conversations if I showed an interest, which I often did.

The Ethiopian political scene is mostly played out below the surface. The news items that I have been sending out describe sharp controversies and periodic violence, but a visitor in Addis sees almost none of this. A few weeks after my first visit, a bomb on the Arat Kilo campus of the university killed one student and injured several others. Protests were small and effectively muted by the government. An earlier, more serious campus event, the arrest of Oromo students in January, led to some larger protests and numerous arrests, with some still in custody nearly a year later. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission courageously brings such things to public attention. Nevertheless, the level of unrest visible to outsiders is limited. People discuss politics in private, with friends. There was little political talk in the cafes.

Whenever it seemed appropriate, I asked whether people thought Meles and his government were doing a good job. Responses were cautious, but for the most part they were not positive. The famous reticence of Ethiopians makes me particularly cau-

tious about generalizations. I heard no intemperate rants against the government of the kind that fill the Ethiopian websites and publications in the US and Europe. But I heard few positive words about the government, either.

A fair summary of what I heard is that the Meles regime is a major improvement over the Derg. Even those who were the most critical were quick to say — usually without being asked — that the level of government abuse was dramatically smaller than it had been during Mengistu's time. "These are university boys," one older man said about Meles and others in his inner circle. "They learned some violence in the fighting, but they are not professional killers like Mengistu."

The Haile Selassie era was treated surprisingly gently, particularly since some of those I talked with had been students in the 1960s and had participated in the annual campus confrontations with the Emperor's government. A view that represented the majority of those I spoke with came from a man who had been a high school student in Addis in the 1960s, whose education stopped with the 12th grade, but whose English was adequate for several pleasant conversations.

"When I was in high school, we thought that Haile Selassie was a bad man," Alemu said. "Now we know that he wasn't that bad. He did some bad things. And he protected the rich people. But those were different times. He brought many things to us, like schools. Now we have a good memory of him." Alemu said that the Derg years showed them how bad government could be for ordinary people. His comments about Meles were critical, but mild. "They are taking care of themselves," he said. "Why not?"

Was Meles better than the emperor, as a head of government? Alemu was too smart to answer such a simple-minded question. "The Emperor was in a different time. I can't compare them." When asked for some of the good things that the Meles regime had done, Alemu gave them credit for getting rid of Mengistu, but couldn't, or wouldn't, say more.

I was surprised that people were willing to be as critical as they were about the matter of ethnic politics and the constitutional right to self-determination and secession. Though they didn't directly criticize Meles, or even the government, everyone who talked about it agreed that ethnic divisions were widening and that this would have terrible consequences for national unity. It seemed that the higher the social or educational level, the greater the concern about ethnic policies. One woman, an Oromo and a successful shop owner who had returned after fifteen years in England and France, told me that when she went back to her small village far from Addis, she found that her younger relatives spoke poor Amharic. "They will not be able to travel outside of Oromia," she said with obvious unhappiness. The potential impact of ethnic separatism troubled her.

The Meles government got low marks for its handling of the economy. The economy had not grown much since 2000, when the war ended, several academics said. "Most of the improvement has come from foreign aid. When that stops, there won't be any growth at all. And sooner or later it will stop." Another said, "There is very little management experience in this government. But they think that taking advice is a sign of weakness. I think we have to wait for the next generation." There was general agreement that the reason the government still controlled most of the economy was that the leadership hadn't given up its basic Marxist beliefs.

I didn't expect to conclude, as I did, that so much has remained the same in Ethiopia, despite the surface differences. Politically, central authority is still barely challenged despite the surface empowerment of state governments, the machinery of elections and a parliament, and the almost totally new cast of characters. Socially, deference is as deeply ingrained as ever. The government is still dominated by a single ethnic group, though a different one today than before 1991. Economic growth is still hamstrung by a system where authority brings benefits to a small group and accountability is largely absent. None of this seems radically different than it was.

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Still, I saw some promising changes. I dealt with technocrats that are moving into senior positions, just below the top. I sat in on meetings with some smart and energetic officials. I was surprised at how open they were in their discussions, at the pointed questions they asked, at how they responded clearly to points raised, and reached conclusions with unexpected decisiveness. My memories of meetings with officials in the past was of a passive administrator listening but not responding, leaving me in the dark when the meetings ended.

A national election is scheduled for May 2005. It is generally assumed that Meles will remain the prime minister. He has said he would permit outside observers, but that was the case before, and his party holds about 90% of the seats in parliament. The next 5 months will reveal just how open the system has become. Progress, in my opinion, would be an election with more visible campaigning and opposition access to the radio, minimal violence, broader participation than last time, and a meaningfully larger number of seats won by the opposition even though they are unlikely to win a majority.

By the time I left Ethiopia following my second visit, I felt as much at home as I did years ago. The texture of human relations that I had found so comfortable before was still there to be enjoyed. Ethiopia's characteristic stoic acceptance of a hard life is also unchanged. Ethiopia's problems seem very much the same ones now as before: leadership, resources, unresolved historical tensions and the process by which political legitimacy is gained. New problems, particularly HIV/AIDS and a population growing faster than the economy, make things more difficult. •

Shlomo about himself:

I taught at Haile Selassie I University from 1964 to 1966, then worked for the Peace Corps in Addis until 1968. Participated in training for the PC programs in 1964, 1966, 1967 and 1968, and 1970 and 1971 in country. For the entire period, my primary focus was teaching English.

My current activities included consulting assignments from time to time, generally relating to Ethiopia, as well as the East Africa Forum.

Photo book about Asmara

Mary Houdek, wife of the former Ambassador to Eritrea, wrote: The book *Asmara Beloved* with photos by Sami Sallinen is a celebration of the city and its people; of its cultural, economic and spiritual vitality. Including an historical introduction to the city and original poetry by Haile Bizen, this is at once a book of memories for those who already know Asmara, and an inspiration for others yet to discover Eritrea and its unique capital.

For information on how to obtain a copy, contact Mary at 2030 Rhode Island Ave, McLean VA 22101; 703 534 4761; rghoudek@aol.com

Friends, students, colleagues, mentors . . .

DURING THE COURSE OF EDITING and compiling *THE HERALD* from newspapers, magazines and the web, we come across some wonderful profiles of people involved with Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Educating Ethiopian women

Some are foreigners who are doing work for Ethiopia. People like Rita Levi-Montalcini, the 95-year-old Nobel laureate who taught in the biology department at Washington University in St Louis for three decades before returning to her native Italy and becoming a senator for life. She started the Fondazione Levi-Montalcini which has committed about \$285,000 to educate 60 Ethiopian women. Nine of those women graduated this summer in nursing. Others are studying a wide variety of subjects including law and management at Unity College in Addis. "As a very young person, I became enthusiastic about Albert Schweitzer, and I wanted to go to Africa to care for people," she told the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. "I would be very happy to die knowing that these women have a future."

Training health workers

Others are extraordinary Ethiopian expatriates who are deeply involved with projects to bring aid back home.

In the summer of 2004, according to an article in *Medical News Today*, Professor Awash Teklehaimanot, a health expert with the Earth Institute at Columbia University, was instrumental in launching the Center for National Health Development in Ethiopia, a project to support an accelerated expansion of primary health care facilities. The government, reports *Medical News*, has committed to train up to 25,000 health workers over five years to provide basic promotive and preventive health services throughout Ethiopia. After a one year training, the graduates will be placed in 15,000 villages (average population 5,000 each). In addition to the training and placement of these health workers, the government plans to build and upgrade nearly 3,000 new primary health care centers and

construct thousands of basic care facilities called health posts. Teklehaimanot's group will provide technical support for the expansion. Professor Teklehaimanot has long history of working on health issues in Ethiopia, particularly on malaria.

Collecting fossils

A group of amazing Ethiopians turn up in a long and extremely fascinating story in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* about fossil collecting in Ethiopia. One is Berhane Asfaw the first Ethiopian to gain a Ph.D. in anthropology from an American university. Another is geologist Giday WoldeGabriel. And the star of the story is Yohannes Haile-Selassie, now at the Cleveland Museum and a fossil hunter extraordinaire. Haile-Selassie worked with the famed American fossil sleuths Donald Johanson and Tim White, the discoverers of the famed Lucy skeleton. *The Plain Dealer* story goes into great detail describing the discoveries made by Haile-Selassie (no relation to the former Emperor) and about the role of Ethiopians in the great fossil hunts. It's a long story, but worth the read

Send a story about a friend

We hear lots of similar tales of interesting Ethiopian and Eritrean friends who we are lucky enough to run across. Some are former students of ours who amaze us with the lives they have led since we knew them as youngsters. Some we discover in the process of putting an Ethiopian project together. Others we just happen upon. One of our colleagues suggested that *THE HERALD* should run short stories about these people written by our members. We agree. And so this is an invitation to submit a little profile of an Ethiopian or Eritrean friend. They do not have to be famous, or even prominent, just interesting. Like that seventh grader you taught who now runs logistics for Ethiopian Airlines. Or teaches math at Stanford. Please send any ideas to BarryHillenbrand@aol.com and we will encourage you along your way. •

Go to the "Of Note" page

at our website

www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org

for the full story on these ex-

traordinary people.

Book Review

Some excerpts

PREPARATION:

"I have been studying the Bible in order to be able to compete with the priests whom I shall shortly encounter, and who are wont to question and argue with me."

(8 December 1915)

UPON ARRIVAL:

"We could not have had a more cordial welcome made at Chilga [on the trade route between Sudan and Gondar], the first village of any size we struck. The Fitawari, which is a rank (a sort of general), is a young sportsman of about 22 years and an extremely nice boy and a bit of a dandy. He turned out in full kit – lion's mane headdress and covered with gold armlets, shields, and gorgeous green and gold cloak, with his officers also in full kit and some 300 rifle and spear men – and met us about three miles outside the town. . . . We returned his visit in the afternoon and took his photograph in full kit, and were entertained to local beer (made out of honey, I believe) which was really not very unpleasant though I only sipped it. Sweets which we had brought with us were a great success and were scrambled for by the men as well as the children; and we parted great friends. . . . We have also been very successful so far with the priests. I hope it is not very hypocritical of me, but I am playing up to them hard, as they are people of great influence; and we visit all the churches and present the priests with religious pictures of the patron saint of their particular church."

(5 February 1916)

LETTERS FROM ABYSSINIA, 1916 AND 1917

by Major Hugh Drummond Pearson

Edited by Frederic A. Sharf, with commentary and annotations by Richard Pankhurst
Tsehai Publishers

2004

251 pages

\$35.00

Reviewed by Neil A. Boyer (Addis Ababa 62–64)

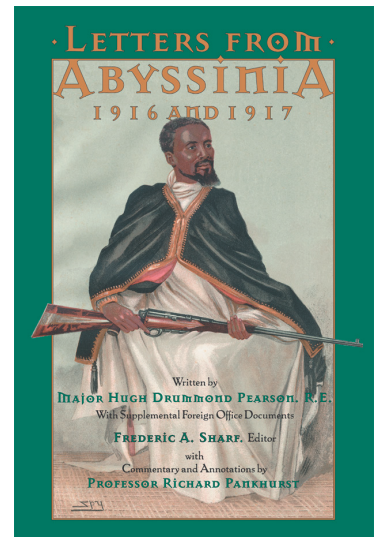
IN 1916, NEARLY 50 YEARS before the arrival of the Peace Corps, a British army major crossed from the Sudan into Abyssinia (as it was then known) and had what seems to have been a very Peace Corps-like experience. With a few colleagues and a small group of muleteers, he gradually found his way to Lake Tana (spelled Tsana in this book). For four months, he worked to map the region around the lake in preparation for the possible construction of a dam that would control the water flowing into the Blue Nile. One year later, in 1917, he was one of the first to take the train from Djibouti on its newly extended leg into Addis Ababa, where he got to meet and present honors to the newly crowned Empress Zauditu and her regent, Ras Tafari Makonnen (later Emperor Haile Selassie).

In the course of these two trips, Hugh Drummond Pearson wrote extensive letters to his mother and presented the British Foreign Office with reports on the people, the food, the game, trade, and his observations on many other things. His writings include occasional harsh comments about the country he is visiting, the kind of thing that PCVs later learned not to put on postcards. He encountered frustration with slow-moving local officials and deliberate obstructionists. He was annoyed by the culturally insensitive behavior of one of his colleagues. Even the overly formal manner of the senior British diplomat came in for his criticism.

But Pearson's team spent a lot of time getting involved with the local people. They provided medical treatment, paid for assistance in the map-

ping, attended church services, and shot snipe and guinea fowl for their meals. Pearson generally appears to have gotten very close to those he encountered — at least judging by what he wrote home. He also was pleased to be accorded honors by high dignitaries and enjoyed presenting himself in a scarlet tunic festooned with medals. (At least this part of the experience was not typical for Peace Corps Volunteers, who, to the best of my knowledge, eschewed red tunics.)

This fascinating book should appeal to Peace Corps Volunteers and others who have had similar experiences in the same areas, as well as those who will be interested in the political intrigue surrounding the unseating of Lij Yasu and the ascendancy of Ras Tafari.



Controlling Lake Tana

The background is this: During World War I, most British military and diplomatic efforts were focused on fighting the Germans and the Turks. But there was a small cadre of British officers in Cairo and Khartoum trying to get Abyssinia to sign an agreement allowing the Brits to construct a dam at Lake Tana to control the outflow of water and meet the downstream needs of the Sudan and Egypt along the Nile.

This idea had been raised with the emperor Menelik in 1902 but not pursued. As Menelik's health deteriorated, so did political affairs in Abyssinia. In 1911, Menelik designated his grandson, Lij Yasu, only 15 years old, to be his successor, and things got worse. When Menelik died in December 1913, the Brits were afraid they would lose all influence in

SUNDAY CHURCH:

"Yesterday being Sunday, I attended the local church and had over two hours of as weird a ceremony as I have ever seen. . . . All the churches are built in the centre of groves of trees, and everybody attends; and at the conclusion of service there is endless gossip in the shade outside for some hours – really quite like church in a village at home. Service begins at 5 AM an hour before sunrise, and lasted till about 9. . . . After a little time the exciting part began and the congregation took the service into their own hands, enjoying themselves hugely. One began a chant which they all took up, beating time with their long sort of shepherd's crooks which every Abyssinian carries, and coming down with a bang every now and then on the floor. Various cymbals, like rattles more or less, were handed round, and for a time they were used to mark the time. . . . The priest inside then had his innings again, but was once more taken up by one of the congregation, who was very bad and kept on forgetting his words and was jeered at and prompted by the members of the congregation. . . . I had had quite enough . . . and was very glad to get back to breakfast at 9:30, quite worn out."

(7 February 1916)

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For more excerpts and an unabridged version of this review, go to www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org/pages/library/books/reviews/rvlettabyss.html

Abyssinia and decided the time was ripe to again seek an agreement on the Lake Tana waters.

In early 1914, Lord Kitchner, Consul General in Egypt, and Sir Reginald Wingate, Governor General in Khartoum, asked Army Major Hugh Drummond Pearson, then Director of Sudan Surveys, to undertake a mission to map the area around Lake Tana. They hoped that the survey would demonstrate to Yasu that the higher level of water caused by a dam would not damage the area's prized churches and farmland, and that Yasu would sign the agreement. But the obstreperous Yasu was not at all interested in an agreement with Britain. He wanted to be on the winning side in World War I, apparently thinking the Germans and Turks would win. Even when the survey was done, Yasu refused permission for Pearson to take the results to Addis Ababa, which had been the goal of the Brits.

Just after Pearson returned to Khartoum, Lij Yasu was overthrown, defeated by the army of Ras Tafari, himself only 24 at the time. The Brits then arranged for Pearson to go to Addis to explain the Lake Tana plan to the new government, but his presentation fell on deaf ears, and the dam was never built.

(Controversy over control of the waters of the Nile actually has been a concern since the fourth century B.C. – see Daniel Kendie's detailed account at <http://old.hsu.edu/faculty/afo/1999-00/kendie.htm>. As recently as March 2004, Ethiopia was discussing creation of a hydroelectric dam along the river, a plan not well-received by downstream neighbors.)

Letters to Mama

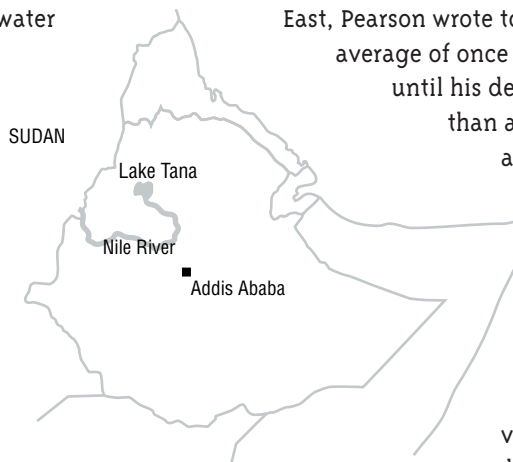
This book is not a narrative account but a clever pasting together of organized excerpts from Pearson's letters from Khartoum, the Lake Tana

area, and Addis Ababa. These are interspersed with extensive Foreign Office documents sent to London by Wilfred Thesiger, the British Minister in Addis – reflecting his own frustrations with Lij Yasu – and by very helpful commentary and context by Professor Richard Pankhurst, the prolific historian of Ethiopia.

From his travels all over East Africa and the Middle East, Pearson wrote to his mother in England on the average of once a week for 30 years, from 1892 until his death at age 49 in 1922. More than a thousand of these letters were auctioned off by Sotheby's in the year 2000, and Frederick Sharf snapped them up for a song because no one else was interested enough to bid. We can be pleased he did this, because the book is a real treasure of local observation of the Abyssinian land, culture and people, not to mention the intrigue supplied by Thesiger's reports to the Foreign Office on his dealings with Lij Yasu and other officials.

Throughout this book, Pearson (not unlike occasional Peace Corps Volunteers) worries that, while he is having a great cultural experience, he is wasting his time. His inferiors in the military are elsewhere getting engaged in real battles and earning medals and promotions, while he is literally stuck in the mud. He tells his mother he doesn't want people to think her son is a "rotter." Nevertheless, he continues to hope that his involvement in the building of a new dam will make a real contribution to Ethiopia, as well as to the needs of Sudan and Egypt.

As an indication that some problems never go away, it is interesting to note that when Pearson died of blackwater fever, he was in the Darfur region of the Sudan, mapping and hoping to erase the reason for tribal rivalries that afflict that area even today, 80 years later. •





Ethiopia news

by Barry Hillenbrand

Education

\$40M World Bank education grant

The World Bank announced a grant of \$40 million to bolster post-secondary school education in Ethiopia. The aim is to generate university-educated people to staff positions at secondary schools and universities. Ethiopia, the World Bank noted in its announcement, has witnessed a major expansion in the number of students in primary and secondary schools. That's the good news. The bad news is that there is a shortage of qualified teachers.

According to World Bank numbers, enrollments in post-secondary education in public institutions rose from around 18,000 in 1990/91 to 101,729 in 2002/03. Less than 3,000 students were being taught in technical and vocational education in 1995/96. By 2002/03 that number had increased to 54,000. Aggregate enrollments in Grades 1–12 rose at about 9 percent a year between 1993 and 2002. "This upsurge in primary enrollment has generated pressure for expansion of secondary education whose growth can only be sustained if post-secondary institutions produce more teachers, administrators and support staff," says Gary L. Theisen, the World Bank Task Team Leader for the project.

Undergraduate enrollments in Ethiopia's eight public university has nearly tripled from 35,576 in 1996/97 to 101,729 in 2002/03. And an additional 35,000 students are enrolled in the country's 12 private universities. The World Bank grants, along with considerable government resources already in the pipeline, aim to more than double public university undergraduate enrollment from 35,000 to 80,000 within three years.

Demands for higher teacher pay

Those teacher already trained and working in the country's schools are complaining that they are not paid adequately. According to an IRIN dispatch, the Ethiopian Teachers Association, which represents 150,000 teachers around the country, called for rallies protesting the scraping of a raise. The basic teacher salary is around \$90 per month. And the ETA claims that teachers have not had raises in three years. Other civil servants are better paid and get raises once every two years. The government recently introduced a performance-based scale of pay designed to improve teacher quality.

But teachers are stretched these days in Ethiopia. Only about half of all teachers have degrees. They are also overworked. The rapid expansion of enrollments in both primary and secondary schools has meant increased class size. The teacher/student ration now stands at one teacher for 60 students, according to government figures. Burdening the teachers even more is the right of students to receive instruction in their mother language. There are 19 different language groups recognized by the Ministry of Education.

Health

Factory producing HIV/AIDs drugs

According to South Africa's "Independent on Line," the Addis Pharmaceutical Company, a privately owned factory, has begun producing generic drugs which will treat HIV/AIDS. After a year of testing, the factory began producing anti-retroviral drugs in September and will step up production to

include seven different kinds of medicines by the end of the year. "It is certain that our drugs will make a difference. They will help the poor people in Ethiopia and the region to get the drug easily and with less cost compared with those being imported from overseas," Tsegaye Gebreselassie, the general manager of the factory, told Tsegaye Tadesse of Independent on Line. By the end of 2005, the US\$39-million factory in Adigrat, 800km north of Addis Ababa, plans to begin exporting the drugs to neighboring Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, according to factory officials. The production will hit 1.2 billion capsules annually.

More AIDS testing urged

On a visit to Addis in September Julie Gerberding, director of the American Center for Disease Control, called on public figures to have public tests to help in ending the stigma surrounding the virus. "Having a visible political leader getting an HIV test helps, there is no question about it," she said, according to IRIN. "I would encourage all leaders to have an HIV test as I have done." She also urged that Ethiopia expand its voluntary HIV/AIDS counseling and testing centers. "Unfortunately the number of people being tested in Ethiopia is too small," she told reporters in Addis Ababa. "There are many infected people who have not yet been diagnosed. This includes people whose lifestyles and behaviour puts them at risk." Ethiopia is one of 15 countries worldwide targeted under the America's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The funding is part of \$15 billion allocated over the next five years to combat HIV/AIDS. Ethiopia expects to get \$43 million under the scheme that will provide anti-retroviral drugs for 210,000 people, care and support for more than a million people and prevent 552,000 new cases. Gerberding praised the government for "scaling up" new anti-HIV programs.

Church opposes condoms against AIDS

According to a report run by Reuters from Addis, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church says that condoms should not be used to fight HIV/AIDS. "Our church does not condone the campaign to use condoms against HIV/AIDS because such practices are un-

christian and are not permitted under the ethics of the Orthodox Church," according to a church leaflet distributed in September. "We teach that a couple should be faithful to each other and avoid multiple partners, which is the major cause of HIV/AIDS infection," the leaflet said. About 3 million of Ethiopia's nearly 68 million people are already infected with HIV/AIDS, one of the world's largest caseloads, and the Health Ministry estimates that about 1,000 people are infected each day. The Orthodox Church claims that about 60 percent of the population are members of its congregation. Condoms are widely available in Ethiopia. A packet of three costs 0.25 Ethiopian Birr, about three cents American.

AIDS test for PM's wife

Azeb Mesfin, the 38 year old wife of Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi, became one of the few high-profile figures in the country to take a public HIV test. To mark World AIDS day in December, Azeb joined seven female ambassadors, including US Ambassador Aurelia Brazea in taking the test. "I would encourage others to follow our example and find out their status," the mother of three said after her test at Zewditu Memorial Hospital in Addis Ababa, currently Ethiopia's largest HIV/AIDS treatment center. She is spearheading a campaign in the country to raise AIDS awareness. Azeb said that her husband had taken a test. Voluntary counselling and testing is seen as a critical weapon in the fight against the epidemic. Still, few Ethiopians have the opportunity to be tested. There are only a handful of testing centers around the country and only some 9,000 Ethiopians receive antiretroviral treatment. The government hopes to expand that number to almost 50,000 by next year.

Polio outbreak in Sudan threatens Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Health ministry began inoculating against polio in areas bordering Sudan. Reports of 19 cases of polio in Sudan caused the action. "Unless the threat from Sudan is not reversed, the gains achieved [in Ethiopia] so far will dissipate into thin air," the ministry said in a statement. Ethiopia has not recorded a polio case in four years and expects

to be certified as polio-free by the World Health Organisation by the end of the year. The ministry will begin a campaign to vaccinate 300,000 children under the age of five in six states bordering the Sudan. Polio is now endemic to only six countries, but since 2003 12 African countries have reported infections imported from Nigeria, where the virus still exists.

Agriculture and Commerce

Agricultural reform debate continues

The issue of agriculture and land reform always leads to lively debate. These issues never seem to be settled in Ethiopia. At a recent government conference on developing strategies for the country's agricultural sector, Newai Gebre-Ab, chief economic advisor to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, rejected criticism that the government's state-owned land policy created insecurity among farmers. As reported by IRIN, Newai said that "Today farmers are digging water tanks — they spend money and effort digging water tanks by the thousands. It is not because the government has pressed them saying 'you dig water tanks otherwise we will not give you food aid'. So if they feel insecure about the land that they hold, they would not dig water tanks." The US Agency for International Development has pressed the government to end its hold on land. The Americans have been arguing that private ownership by farmers would boost food production.

The government rejects that position on land ownership and is pressing ahead with its own programs to improve agriculture, not only to meet Ethiopia's serious food shortages, but as a way to develop the economy. Said Newai, "Ethiopia has an immense problem of food security, so in the first instance we have to tackle food security to bring about a reasonable level of food self-sufficiency," he said. "But that would not be enough on its own. Agricultural development also has to be an engine for growth in the country." Newai rejected critics who have argued the country could never kick-start develop-

ment relying on small-scale subsistence farmers. "If you were to exclude 80 percent of the population you cannot have effective growth or development in this country," he said.

Let thousands of flowers bloom

Dutch investors have come to Ethiopia to start work on a joint venture to raise flowers for export. It's the continuation of a new trend for Ethiopia agriculture. The ET-Highland Flora Farm was established in May of 2004 with working capital of \$13.7 million. The company will start by building greenhouses on five hectares of land in the Sebeta Woreda of the Oromia Regional State.

The near 40 per cent crash in the price of coffee, Ethiopia's main foreign currency earner, has convinced the government — as well as investors — to diversify agricultural export products. Colombia, another coffee exporting nation suffering from price fluctuations, has built a highly profitable flower exporting business. Ethiopia hopes to follow suit. The sector has seen an injection of \$32 million in capital and 76 investors have been issued licenses.

New roads: Key to development

Ahh, Ethiopian roads, how we all do remember them, some more fondly than others. The good, the bad and the non-existent.

According to a story in *The New York Times*, Ethiopia is experiencing a boom in road building. Writes Celia W. Dugger of the *Times* from Urufa, near Awasa: "Road-building is coming back in style as a way to combat rural poverty in Africa. Ethiopia, an agricultural society where most farmers still live more than a half day's walk from a road, has been especially hobbled by their absence. Support for roads in Africa, particularly from the World Bank, is growing again after a decade of decline in the 1990s. Then, the bank reduced lending for roads. It was battered by aggressive opposition from international nonprofit groups, and concerned about ill-governed countries where roads deteriorated as fast as they could be built. Senior policy makers also held the mistaken belief that the private sector

would fill the void, building toll roads for profit. 'We were naïve,' said Maryvonne Plessis-Fraissard, the World Bank's transport director. 'Who was going to do rural roads in the middle of Africa?'"

The answer, of course, was that private sources were not going to build roads, and so the World Bank and the Ethiopia government have stepped in. The World Bank has doubled road lending to \$800 million, only a small amount of what is needed. The Ethiopian government has spend about \$1 billion on roads in the last seven years, much of it coming from international donors, and according to the *Times*, it expects to spend more than that amount in the coming three years.

Continues the *Times*: "It has doubled the length of its rural road network and rebuilt crumbling highways. Even with the new burst of investment, the country expects that by 2007 it will be able to reduce the total of farmers who live more than half a day's walk from a road only to 60 percent from 65 percent. Maintenance also poses a daunting challenge. In 1997, Ethiopia enacted a gas tax to pay for road upkeep. Even so, it is short of money and skilled professionals and managers. The share of roads in good condition has crept up to 31 percent from 14 percent in 1995. The goal is to have most major asphalt roads and 40 percent of the rural roads in good shape by 2007. Despite the difficulties, there is optimism in the austere offices of the Ethiopian Roads Authority. Next year will be the country's biggest for road-building. About 50,000 people are already doing the hard labor."

The issue, in the end, is development. As the *Times* says: "While no one expects roads alone to end the chronic hunger faced by millions of Ethiopians or the famines that loom periodically, most development experts agree that they are a precondition for progress — and were essential to the success of the Green Revolution that produced abundance in much of Asia but bypassed Africa. Farmers need to produce enough to feed their families and have some left to sell. Roads make it possible for them to bring in the fertilizer and seed that will improve

productivity. And roads make it possible for them to truck their crops to market."

Communications

Can you hear me now, Debre Berhan?

The Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation said in a statement that it has signed a deal with Nokia worth \$39.1 million for a two phased expansion of its mobile phone network. Within nine months, some 350,000 additional lines will be added to Ethiopia's already busy mobile phone operation. Some 200,000 of the new Nokia lines will be added in Addis before the end of the year. The remaining lines will be added by the end of next May in 104 rural towns near the five major roads connecting Ethiopia with neighboring countries. Ethiopian Telecon began mobile phone operations in 1999 with a contract with Ericsson which installed 60,000 lines in Addis. ZTE of China later installed 200,000 more pre-paid lines in Addis and around the country.

Can you text me now, Debre Markos?

Samuel Kinde, an engineering professor from the University of California at San Diego, is working on adopting Amharic for use in text messaging. "We are enabling one of humanity's oldest scripts to enter the wireless age," Samuel told the Independent on Line. Samuael is cutting the 345-letter Amharic alphabet down to 210 and then reducing that further to 28 letter base alphabet which can work on a telephone keypad for text messaging. "There is a significant amount of interest from potential users as well as from chipset manufacturers," said Samuel. Text messaging was introduced into Ethiopia last year.

Either man or beast

Bring more Falasha Mura to Israel

After a bitter court battle which went all the way to the Supreme Court, the Israeli government has decided to speed up the evacuation of some 17,000 Falash Mura who have waited years to go to Israel. The controversy over the Falash Mura caused distress and controversy in the Ethiopia Jewish community in Israel and angered many American Jews who have supported the cause of Ethiopia's long forgotten Jews. Falash Mura is the name given to people who claim to be Ethiopian Jews (the people we used to call the Falashas) but who in the 19th or 20th centuries converted to Christianity or gave up Jewish religious practices. The Falash Mura attempted to board planes to Israel during the evacuation of Ethiopian Jews in Operation Solomon in May 1991. Some succeeded, but most did not. While more than 100,000 Ethiopian Jews have come to Israel since that time, the Falash Mura have been stuck in squalid camps near Addis and Gondar. They received support from groups in the U.S. and demanded evacuation to Israel. Debate on how to deal with the Falasha Mura, whose numbers continued to increase, simmered in both Israel and Ethiopia.

In February 2003, the Israeli Cabinet voted to bring to Israel more Falash Mura from the camps. But since that time the government has delayed acting, claiming problems with financing. According to a dispatch from the news service JTA in New York, immigration from Ethiopia is far more costly than from other places due to the social gap between the new Ethiopian immigrants and the rest of Israeli society. A representative of the State Prosecutor's Office told the high court that the rate of Falash Mura return to Israel was determined by budgetary and human resource constraints, adding that it was "unacceptable for Jewish organizations to force Israel to increase the rate through the court." Now the government has agreed to take 600 Falasha Mura a month with the aim of completing the evacuation of them all by 2007.

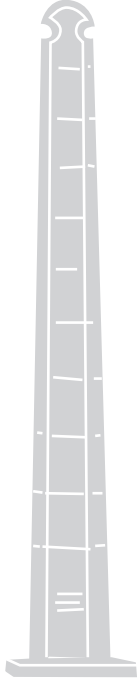
Alebachew Teka

More than 60,000 mourners turned out in the streets of Addis Ababa for the funeral of Alebachew Teka, one of the country's top television stars. Alebachew, who was only 43, was killed when his car spun off a road and into a ravine on his way from Addis to Jimma where he was filming a documentary. According to AP, Alebachew rose to prominence during the 1980s with a satirical television show that was a huge hit and a comic antidote to the brutal rule of dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam. But it was his successful series "The Alebe Show" that brought him widespread fame. In the talk show, Alebachew would persuade rich guests to pledge money to help the destitute.

Foxes and hartebeests: A survival tale

Environmentalists often sound like the load-masters on Noah's Ark. They busily tally up the species and predict a forthcoming natural disaster. Thus the report from Dr. Minase Gashaw, group leader with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, as reported in the *Addis Tribune*, noted that the number of Swayne's Hartebeests, which stood at 2,000 some years ago, has dwindled to only 241 in Senkelle Swayne's Hartebeests Sanctuary. The number of white-eared Hartebeests only found in Ethiopia and Sudan had declined from about 100,000 twenty years ago to only 8,000 today. "As the [human]population grows, the demand for additional land for agriculture, materials for house construction and firewood increases, resulting in the destruction of habitats," Dr. Menase said. He also noted that in the areas bordering Gambella "some people in the area use automatic machine-guns for hunting, causing death to many white-eared Hartebeests, including the very young ones."

But the Ethiopia fox is faring better. A report in the *Daily Monitor* says that the numbers of foxes has increased. A few years ago a survey of eleven areas in Ethiopia showed that only 450 foxes survived. But a recent tally shows that there are more than 500 thrive in six areas now. One key to the improvement has been the vaccination of dogs against rabies. Outbreaks of rabies among dogs causes dramatic decline in the number of foxes.



Axum Obelisk

It's in the mail

Really. It's going to happen. That's what Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi told Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi when he visited Rome in mid-November. "We realize that the Axum obelisk is very important for the Ethiopian people and we are happy to return it," said Berlusconi. Just to show how sincere he was, Berlusconi instructed his foreign minister, Alfredo Mantica, to sign an agreement with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin outlining the details of the exchange.

So really it's just a matter of scraping together that \$7.8 million to pay for some flights of a Russian Antonov 124, the only plane, aside from an American C-5 Galaxy (which are all otherwise engaged in Iraq these days), brawny enough to carry the three sections of the 160-ton granite stele back to Axum. Of course, they'll need a test flight to make sure the runway is adequate. And a flight for each of the three section of the obelisk. Plus another to carry the machinery to unload it. Oh, the Italians ask helpfully, are the roads in good conditions? If so, perhaps the first flight will be right after Christmas. Or certainly before the April rains set in.

The French news agency, AFP, dispatched a reporter to Axum to interview excited residents, but, he reported, "for now, there is nothing in this town of 40,000 inhabitants, perched on a sun-beaten plateau, to suggest the mammoth celebrations ahead." He found Ethiopians who talked about crowds of 350,000 to 500,000 to welcome the obelisk. And more: seven African presidents jetting in, plus a football match and dancing in the street. A large hole has been dug next to the other obelisks left behind by the Italian looters back in 1937, but the hole dates from 1997 when the Italians promised — for the second time — the stele was on its way.

So is third time lucky for Axum? **Nancy Polich**, (Adi Teclesan; Asmara 68–70), an avid reader of Axum stories over the years, suggests that we all

put 25 cents (two bits US) into a bucket and guess the date the great return will take place. The person with the guess closest to date of the actual event is the winner and gets the bucket of the quarters. And, we suggest, becomes our representative eligible to join the 500,000 celebrants in Axum. No expenses — aside from the quarters — paid, of course.

What's the word for "celebrity" in Amharic?

In the last half of 2004, Ethiopia became something of a new celebrity destination. Not exactly Cannes at festival time, but Addis saw a steady stream of actors and actresses. Now that South Asia is becoming the new focus of humanitarian attention after the tsunami, the traffic has lightened.

In October, British actress Emma Thompson visited Addis and traveled around Ethiopia on a 10-day trip as part of her work with ActionAid. Thompson is a frequent visitor to Africa having made trips to Mozambique and Uganda this year. She discussed a variety of topics. She spoke about women's rights with Prime Minister Meles, discussed coffee prices with President Girma Woldegiorgis, and visited AIDS workers.

Thompson, on her return to England, told the BBC that her trips to Africa are not "as it were, a charity, a nice thing to do for awhile and then you go back to your nice life and forget all about it. [Rather the work is] engaging with this struggle to bridge what is actually an avoidable and unacceptable gap between very, very rich people and very, very poor people which really can't go on." She readily admitted that she did not see "a direct impact [from the work.] I think that my work is my attempt, I suppose, to try and become a piece of connective tissue. I'm trying to communicate with people here and in America — in rich countries — about what I see on the ground in badly affected areas. There's an awful lot of misunderstanding here about what being poor actually means. I don't think people

understand that being poor means you have to work from dawn until dusk just to survive through the day.”

In November Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt made a 4-day visit to Ethiopia on behalf of DATA, a Washington-based lobby group co-founded by U2's Bono, which campaigns on third world trade, debt and HIV/AIDS. Pitt knows Ethiopian singer Tsedenia Gebremarkos who helped organize the trip. She said that Pitt was “very humble and really interested in the situation here.” But no quotes or interviews from Pitt or Aniston about the trip could be found.

Hollywood star and UNICEF goodwill ambassador Danny Glover followed Pitt and Aniston. Glover, best known for his parts in the “Lethal Weapon” movies, traveled out to Aletu, about 55 km from Addis, to talk about AIDS. He also made a visit to the border area between Ethiopia and Eritrea to highlight the issue of land mines. Glover is quoted by the AP as saying that he felt “a sense of embarrassment that my own country has not signed the Ottawa Treaty,” which bans land mines and has been signed by 144 nations, but not the United States. “It smells of a certain kind of arrogance and dismissiveness,” Glover told reporters. “We talk about security, peace, and building multilateral relationships, but I think this sends a bad message. The U.S. is one of the major manufacturers of land mines. It doesn't say a great deal about the world's sole superpower and the role of leadership it should play.” Glover, something of a humanitarian activist, was accompanied by Ethiopian 10,000 m champion Berhane Adere and World and Olympic 10,000 m champion Kenenisa Bekele.

Oprah Winfrey made a one day visit to Addis in December to open a new wing of the Fistula Hospital, founded in 1974 by Dr Catherine Hamlin and her late husband Dr. Regional Hamlin. Dr. Himlin had appeared on the Oprah show in January of 2004. The funds donated after that appearance financed the extension of the hospital which is named after Oprah. Oprah was given the keys to the city by the mayor, and it was said that she had spoken with the

mayor and his wife to see if “we can build a great school for girls here in Addis Ababa.”

Unquestionably the strangest celebrity visitor reported on the road to Ethiopia is Reggae singer Bob Marley. No matter that Marley died of cancer in Miami in 1981 at the age of 36 and is buried in Jamaica. The AP reported that Marley's wife, Rita, said in an interview that she would like to have Marley's body exhumed and buried in Shashemene, 155 miles south of Addis Ababa where several hundred Rastafarians have lived since they were given land by Ethiopia's last emperor, Haile Selassie. Rita, a Cuban-born singer who lives in Ghana, said, “Bob's whole life is about Africa. It is not about Jamaica.” Marley was a devout Rastafarian. Rita, according to the AP, said “How can you give up a continent for an island? He has a right for his remains to be where he would love them to be. This was his mission. Ethiopia is his spiritual resting place. With the 60th anniversary this year, the impact is there and the time is right.”

Rita is one of the driving forces behind a celebration marking the 60th anniversary of Marley's birth held in Addis. The month long celebrations, called “Africa Unite” featured concerts by Reggae and African artists. The AP story, of course, stirred up a hornet's nest in Jamaica and denials were dully issued. At last report Marley is still dead and resting in Jamaica.

Runners

Aside from famine and Haile Salasie, Ethiopia is probably best known for its long distance runners. It's a little strange, but maybe not so unusual. Sports work that way. Pelé helped make Brazil famous for something other than coffee and samba. In 1960, after Ababe Bikila won the Olympic marathon barefooted in Rome, Ethiopia achieved

new stature. Not quite enough stature, it should be noted, that anyone expected Bikila to repeat the feat in Tokyo in 1964. The Japanese did not bother to prepare for the playing of the Ethiopian national anthem, and so when Bikila was awarded the gold medal, the stadium band, extremely embarrassed, struck up the Japanese anthem instead.

In the Olympic year of 2004 the Ethiopians — and Eritreans — maintained their long distance running reputation, albeit with a few failures and surprises. The men's 10,000m proved to be the most exciting race for Ethiopia. It had the most

surprising finish. In the 17th lap, Haile Gebrselassie, 31, two-time Olympic gold medal winner and long-time running hero, pulled out from the middle of the pack and joined two of his countrymen, Kenenisa Bekele and Sileshi Sihine, at the front. The three green-shirted runners moved out ahead in splendid isolation bringing joy to the crowd of flag-waving Ethiopian supporters in the north-east corner of Athen's Olympic Stadium.



Kenenisa Bekele making his move on Kenya's Kipchoge.

David Burnett

But a 1-2-3 Ethiopian finish was not to be. Nor was Gebrselassie to win an unprecedented third Olympic gold in the 10,000m. He was suffering from an Achilles tendon injury which he said would have kept him from racing had it not been the Olympics. In Sydney in 2000 Gebrselassie thrilled the 120,000 spectators in the Olympic stadium by winning his second consecutive gold at 10,000m with an amazing last lap push. In the final straight Gebrselassie closed on Paul Tergat of Kenya, who led the entire race, winning by .9 second in one of the most thrilling long distance finishes ever. But in Athens, after a few laps at the head of the pack, Gebrselassie dropped back to come in fifth. This was a disappointment to Gebrselassie. After the race he told a press conference that he was giving up track and would concentrate now on the marathon. "I would like to run the marathon in [the] 2008 [Olympics]," he said. Whether he does that or not, his two consecutive 10,000m Olympic golds place him in an elite pantheon of long distance runners along with the likes of Finland's Paavo Nurmi.

But even without Gebrselassie on the winners' podium, Ethiopia stood proud with its two winners in the 10,000m. Bekele and Sihine did not slacken their pace and won gold and silver. With a stunning 53.02-second final lap, Bekele won in 27 minutes, 5.10 seconds, breaking Gebrselassie's Olympic record by more than two seconds. Coming in third, finishing ahead of a strong field of other Africans, was Zersenay Tadesse of Eritrea. Tadesse was something of a surprise winner, having been in international competition for only three years. He won Eritrea's first Olympic medal.

Up until Tadesse's victory the most famous and successful Eritrean runner was an Eritrean-American named Mebrahtom Keflezighi who left Eritrea with his family when he was 5 years old. After stops in Sudan and Italy, Keflezighi took up residence in San Diego, Ca. at the age of 10. Keflezighi worked hard at learning American culture and earned a running scholarship to UCLA. But he has been slow in making an impression in international running. Until Athens. He competed in Athens's hot,

grueling marathon, which was run over the original course taken by the Philippides in the first Marathon in 490BC. Philippides, according to legend, dropped dead when he finished the course, and many of the runners in Athens 2004 nearly did as well. Keflezighi finished second, behind Italy's Stefano Baldini. In his press conference, Keflezighi praised Tadesse's earlier win and tipped his laurel wreath to Eritrea. Tadesse's medal, Keflezighi said, "was huge. I was so happy for Eritrea. The first medal ever. Now it's my turn."

In Athens Ethiopia — and Eritrea, if you don't count Keflezighi — finished out of the medals in the men's marathon. The 2000 Olympic champion, Gezhagne Abera of Ethiopia, did not run because he, like Gebreselassie, suffered from an injured Achilles tendon. Bruised Achilles tendons seem to be, well, the Achilles heel of Ethiopian running.

But the Ethiopian men added another medal in the 5,000m. That too was an exciting race at the finish. Bekele was battling Algeria's Hicham El Guerrouj and Kenya's Kipchoge, the world champion. With 200m remaining Bekele passed Kipchoge who had set the pace and led throughout the race. But in the last 100m El Guerrouje turned on the gas and passed Bekele for the gold.

The women brought home medals as well

Ethiopian women did even better than the men despite some set backs. In the women's marathon, Abera's wife, Elfenesh Alemu, hoping to come out of the shadow of being Mrs. Abera and building on her impressive second place finish in the Boston marathon in 2004, placed a disappointing fourth, a full minute behind the third place finisher.

But in the 5,000m, Meseret Defar shared the lead in the race with Kenya's Isabela Ochichi until the last 200m when Defar opened a blistering pace to take the gold, leaving the Kenyan behind to settle for silver. In third place was Ethiopia's Tirunesh Dibaba.

The 10,000m was equally a challenge — and shocking disappointment for the Ethiopian women. Much to her annoyance, injury kept 10,000m world champion Berhane Adere from competing. The favorite was Tulu Derartu, who won Olympic gold in the 10,000m in 1992 and in 2000 in Sydney. Through most of the race Derartu was ahead in a field of two other Ethiopians. But with 400m to go, China's Xing Huina accelerated and passed Derartu and Ejagayehu Dibaba. The tote board showed Xing in first for the gold, Dibaba in second and Tulu third. Dibaba was stunned. She thought she had come first and that Xing was actually a lapped runner. "I didn't see where the Chinese girl came from," Dibaba explained, adding that she could have overtaken Xing had she known that the Chinese had taken the lead. Ethiopian new comer Werknesh Kidane placed fourth.

Since the Olympics, Ethiopians and Eritreans have continued their winning ways. Keflezighi finished second at the New York Marathon in November. Also in November, Zersenay Tadesse captured a commanding win in the Eleventh Cross Internacional de Soria' in Spain. He beat Qatar's Abdullah Ahmad Hassan, who was runner-up some three seconds behind.

Kenenisa Bekele, who was the winner for the last three years of both the short and long events at the World Cross Country Championship, opened his winter campaign with a victory at the prestigious Venta de Banos race in Palencia, Spain. Bekele, 22, said "In 2005, I'm leaving the short races to my younger brother Tariku." Tariku Bekele, 17, was the 2003 World Youth Championships 3,000m silver medalist. In December 2004, he won a race in Portugal.

There seems to be no end to new and exciting runners coming out of Ethiopia and Eritrea — and even from the Eritrean expatriate community. •

The Border Dispute

The long-simmering border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia took a surprising twist in November 2004 when Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi unexpectedly announced that Ethiopia would accept the rulings of the Boundary Commission set up to settle the dispute. The Commission, established under the Algerian peace agreement which brought the three-year old shooting war to an end in 2000, issued a report in 2002 and, along with other decisions, awarded the disputed town of Badme to Eritrea. Badme was the scene of heavy fighting during the war and is currently held by Ethiopia.

Although both Addis and Asmara had agreed under the terms of the Algerian settlement to accept the Commission's finding, the Ethiopian government angrily rejected the idea that it should withdraw from Badme and cede territory it won from Eritrea at the cost of so many lives. Since then the border, patrolled by an UN peacekeeping force, has been relatively peaceful, but the war of words between the two countries has persisted.

Meles' statement, which was endorsed by a vote in Parliament, is unlikely to end the controversy. Indeed, Meles sternly attacked the Commission's decision. According to a Reuters report, the Prime Minister said, "Although it is obvious that the decision of the Boundary Commission is unjust and unfair and no matter how difficult it might be, it has been decided that it would be useful and proper to accept, in principle the decision of the Boundary Commission."

Meles' statement was clearly a welcomed break in the stalled peace process. "I am not jumping up and down, but at least there is more traction there than there was," the UN special envoy to the Horn of Africa, Lloyd Axworthy, told IRIN news wire, "It could be the beginnings of a new chapter for peace, but there has to be another step, which is how the two countries begin engagement."

The problem was that Meles' announcement was not quite unequivocal. Eritrea immediately jumped on Meles' use of the words "in principle." What precisely did that mean? No one was sure. The Eritrean government demanded unconditional

acceptance of the Boundary Commission's report, and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from what they now consider Eritrean territory. Meles, for his part, suggested the opening of talks on a five-point peace program. The Eritreans replied that there was nothing further to discuss. Both sides, Asmara said, should accept the Boundary Commission's report. One Eritrean press report called Meles' statement a "gutter ploy crafted to fake acceptance and reopen a legally closed and settled matter." In an official Foreign Ministry communiqué, Asmara demanded simply that Ethiopia comply with the Boundary Commission's finding, withdraw its forces from Eritrean territory and "cooperate with the Boundary Commission to ensure expeditious demarcation of the Boundary."

In the weeks following Meles' statement the air was full of reports of troops movements, border attacks and threats of war emanated from sources in Asmara. The UN investigated the reports and could find no evidence of attacks or troop movements. And reporters sent out to gauge reaction along the border could only find sleepy towns. In New York the UN announced that it was reducing its budget for the peacekeeping operation to \$200 million and not replacing some 550 Kenyan troops on UN duty who are due for rotation. Asmara criticized the UN Security Council for not insisting that Ethiopia unconditionally accept the Boundary Commission's ruling. When Kofi Annan's plane on its way to Sharm Al-Sheik, Egypt, made a fuel stop in Asmara — hardly the region's most congenial or convenient pit stop — the government sent Askalu Menkerios, the minister of Labor and Human Welfare, out to the airport to chat with the Secretary General. Not a reception committee of the highest level.

Meles's initiative was greeted by some skepticism and disapproval in Ethiopia. According to Reuters, for example, Bedru Adem, an independent member of parliament, said the war caused Ethiopia to sacrifice "a generation" and the plan of the Boundary Commission should be examined more thoroughly. "What are we going to tell mothers and fathers whose children had been sacrificed during the border war, if we succumb to the ruling of the Boundary Commission, which unjustly gave part of

our territory to Eritrea?" he asked. Other Ethiopian opposition parties attached Meles' decision to accept the decision of the Commission, placing the Prime Minister under some political pressure. Right after New Years, tens of thousands of demonstrators, organized by the opposition, filled the streets protesting Meles' peace plan.

But there was considerable pressure from the outside on both Ethiopia and Eritrea to settle their dispute. The UN Security Council issued a statement which welcomed Meles' statement. The European Union also issued a statement urging the two sides to come to an agreement soon. The French and the Germans offered their good offices in any negotiations. Both German President Horst Koehler and British Prime Minister Tony Blair stopped by Addis and urged settlement. The Germans, perhaps in an effort to provide incentives, announced the cancellation of \$89 million of Ethiopian debt "to support economic reform in the country."



On the Web and of special interest

Falasha Mura

The *New York Times* ran an article on January 5, 2005 about the plight of the Falasha Mura based on reporting in both Israel, where the condition of the Ethiopian Jews is not as prosperous as hoped, and from Ethiopia where people waiting in Addis expressed dismay at the slow progress in processing them for emigration. The story can be found at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/03/international/africa/03jews.html>

(You must register for access to *Times* articles, but there is no charge.)

Historical notes

The Web is a constant source of fascinating information about Ethiopia. Lots of the material is political and economic. Some deals with Ethiopia's long and complex history. Much of it is marked

by a particular point of view, so it's worth being selective and skeptical. Two interesting items were posted recently.

The first is a wide-ranging interview with The Venerable Getahun Atlaw, Archdeacon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. Archdeacon Atlaw is an erudite prelate with a profound understanding of theology and Church history. The interview goes deep — perhaps too deep — into some of the complexities of old theological disputes. But the archdeacon has a wide prospective on the world. In addition to his education in Ethiopia, he studied four years in Ireland. He suggests that there are some links between the Ethiopian Coptic tradition and early Celtic Christianity. All very speculative, but fascinating. Even more provocative are his thoughts about the Ark of the Covenant which he insists is held in Ethiopia. Spielberg got it all wrong, he explains. The interview can be found at:

<http://sellassie.ourfamily.com/academics/orthodoxy.html>

Ethiopia's place in world literature

For those who never weary of reading about Ethiopia's very particular and unusual place in the imagination of the world, Richard Pankhurst turned out three wonderfully detailed articles in the *Addis Ababa Tribune*. He starts with the Greeks and Homer's mention in *The Odyssey* of the Ethiopians as *eschatoi andron*, or the most remote of men and, Book One of *The Iliad*, we have Zeus paying a visit to the "blameless Ethiopians." It's a three part series, much too long to reproduce here, but it can be found on the Web in the archives of the *Addis Tribune*. The citations are:

Part One: www.addistribune.com/Archives/2004/11/26-11-04/ Click Historical Feature>From Ancient Greece to Samuel Johnson

Part Two: www.addistribune.com/Archives/2004/12/03-12-04/ Click Historical Feature>Ethiopia's Image in World Literature, 2

Part Three: www.addistribune.com/Archives/2004/12/10-12-04/ Click Historical Feature>Ethiopia's Image in World Literature, 3

Eritrea news

by Barry Hillenbrand



Religious freedom — or lack of it

In its annual report on religious freedom around the world, the U.S. State Department in September was critical of Eritrea. On the positive side, the report noted that “there is a centuries-old history of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between Christianity and Islam in the country” and that “persons [are] free to worship at the religious service of their choice.” The report said that “The Constitution, which the Government has not yet implemented, provides for freedom of religion; however, in practice the Government severely restricted this right for all but the four government-sanctioned religions — Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics, and the Evangelical Church of Eritrea (affiliated with the Lutheran World Federation), which together represent the vast majority of the population.” According to the report, “approximately 50 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim, and approximately 40 percent is Orthodox Christian. The population also includes a small number of Eastern Rite and Roman Catholics (5 percent), Protestants (2 percent), smaller numbers of Seventh-Day Adventists, and fewer than 1,500 Jehovah’s Witnesses. Approximately 2 percent practice traditional indigenous religions.”

In 2002 the government required religions to register and the four which did register — Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics and Lutherans — have been allowed relatively free operations, but the restrictions placed on the other religions, especially small evangelical Christian groups have been severe. Singled out for special scrutiny and prosecution has been Jehovah’s Witnesses, a group that angered the government in 1993 by suggesting that its members boycott the elections. A presidential decree in 1994 declared that members of the Jehovah’s Witnesses had “forsaken their nationality” because they refused to vote in the 1993 independence referendum and because they

avoided national service. Members lost government jobs, had their business licenses revoked and were refused identity documents. Their persecution has continued ever since. Equally under pressure are small evangelical Christian groups whose house services are constantly raided and whose members have been arrested with regularity. The State Department sent representatives to discuss “religious prisoners, religious freedom, and freedom of conscience with senior Eritrean government officials,” but little progress was made. The report notes that “in September 2004, the Secretary of State designated Eritrea as a ‘Country of Particular Concern’ under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.”

The Eritrean Foreign ministry rejected the State Department report, saying that “the statement by the State Department does not come as a surprise to Eritrea as it has been no secret that the CIA and its operatives have been long engaged in fabricating defamatory statements in a bid to embark on other agendas and at the same time conceal its unwarranted intervention.”

... and human rights — or the lack of them

A resolution passed by the European Parliament in response to a riot in the Eritrean prison of Adi Abe-to, near Asmara, “firmly condemn[ed] all human rights abuses in Eritrea and call[ed] on the country’s authorities to uphold human rights, to respect the international conventions and to cooperate in full with international human rights organizations and NGOs.” Diplomats and human rights groups claim some 20 people were killed in the prison

uprising. The resolution called on Eritrea to release its political prisoners, including 11 former members of parliament who have been held without charge since 2001. "This resolution is extremely inappropriate," Yemane Gebremeskel, President Isaias Afewerki's chief of staff, told AFP. "The European Parliament doesn't know the facts, but endorses all that Amnesty International, which has no presence in Eritrea, says. At the end of the day, that will only reduce the influence of the European Parliament."

Press freedom – or the lack of it

The Eritrean government continues to come under fire because of problems with the press. In 2001 the government suspended all private media operations and arrested several journalists. Human Rights Watch claims that at the end of 2003, at least 18 journalists were being held. "What journalists?" asked Minister Ali Abdu Ahmed in an interview with an AFP correspondent. They are, he said, "agents of the enemy during and after the war." If anyone is held, it is because they have committed treason, said the minister.

Efforts at securing the release of the journalists have proven fruitless. An Eritrean parliamentary committee is working on a report dealing with the prisoners since 2001, but, says Ali Abdu Ahmed, "they have been working for three years. Three years is not too long. I have no idea of the date when the findings of the report will be announced."

Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, says that "Eritrea is the victim of a systematic repression and censorship of all independent media. There is no privately-owned press, the foreign press have been kicked out, and local journalists are harassed, detained without trial and subject to intolerable intimidation. This shameful situation cannot be ignored any longer."

But, of course, it has been ignored and will most likely continue to be ignored. Protests from the

IFJ, Reporters without Borders, and various human rights NGOs have been shrugged off by Asmara. Even pressure from the Swedish government, a generous supplier of aid, made little difference. The Swedes are pressing for the release of

release of Dawit Isaac, a journalist and Swedish citizen, who has been detained incommunicado, without charge or trial, since September 2001. But they have gotten little satisfaction.

In September 2004, the last foreign reporter was expelled from Eritrea. On short notice Jonah Fisher who had been working for the BBC in Asmara for 18 months was called to the Ministry of Information and given three days to leave the country. Fisher, in a dispatch to the BBC, said that he knew his days were numbered when the Minister of Information in an interview complained about his "racist negative reporting." The conversation ended, reported Fisher, when Ali Abdu Ahmed said that he "knew who I really worked for."

Drought 2005

According to UN food experts perhaps as much as two-thirds of the Eritrean population faces a season of drought and possible famine. They will have to rely upon food assistance from abroad – if, indeed enough relief aid arrives to take care of what has become an annual crisis. According to an AP report, the World Food Program estimates that Eritrea's population of 3.6 million consumes more than 600,000 metric tons of cereals and grains a year. But the country produced only 84,984 metric tons of cereals and grain in 2004. The data was published in a January report by the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program.

The Eritrean government has imported some food, but has appealed for 400,000 to 450,000 metric tons of food to make up the shortfall. So far, said Teklemichael Woldegiorgis, the deputy commissioner of the Eritrean Relief and Refugees Commission, the shipments of food aid have been "inter-

mittent and unreliable.” Sister Alganesh Kidane, Secretary General of the Red Cross of Eritrea, says, “After four consecutive years of drought, all food reserves are depleted. There is no doubt that previous Red Cross interventions have averted starvation, but another failed rainy season means the situation continues to worsen, and traditional coping mechanisms are being lost. More food relief is urgently needed,”

Eritrea’s situation seems to be chronic. In 1997 Eritrea became self-sufficient in grains, but then came the border war with Ethiopia and Eritrea’s food situation has yet to recover. The war took land out of production and shifted population. Perhaps as much as a quarter of the country’s productive land remains untilled because of the war.

On top of the war there is a serious problem with rains. Jean-Pierre Cebron, the World Food Program’s country director, said Eritrea, like other countries in eastern Africa, used to experience drought every five years. Droughts appear to last longer now. “It’s a new pattern . . . call it global warming, long term trends. I believe it is a climatic trend and soils are worn out,” Cebron said. “Farmers are using degenerated seeds. People cannot afford pesticides, fertilizers. Every year the harvests get worse.” Part of the solution would be the introduction of wide spread irrigation. Raising funds for food relief is difficult these days, says Cebron, but getting large sums of cash to develop irrigation is nearly impossible.

Stop-and-go mining puzzle

In a surprising and totally unexpected move, the Eritrain government ordered the suspension of all gold mining operations by foreign companies in September 2004. The order derailed the efforts by four companies, based in Canada and Australia, to develop mining operations after they had discovered some promising results in what is called the Bisha gold deposit region. Prices of the stock of one company plunged more than half after the

announcement of the suspension. Executives from the companies visited Eritrea and still could not puzzle out why the operations were closed. Finally in January, the government announced that the companies could resume work. It also told Nevsun, one of the Canadian firms, that it may alter its option to buy a contributing equity interest from a maximum of 20 per cent to 30 per cent. Stock in the four companies then soared back to their old levels.

Wiring schools

Twenty tons of computer equipment was shipped to Eritrea from Norway. It was Norway’s largest shipment of computer technology to a developing nation ever. The shipment consisted mainly of equipment donated by Norwegian companies and private individuals, in addition to the government, and included some 400 Pentium computers. The computers will be installed at ten junior high and high schools.

New money for education

The African Development Fund announce that it was providing Eritrea with some \$27 million to improve education. The funds will be used to expand libraries, provide schools with computers and generally improve the level of basic education. Special attention will be given to the attempt at closing “the education gap for girls.” About two-thirds of boys, but less than one-half of all girls, can read and write. Only one in five girls move on beyond primary school. The funds will be used to build 329 new classrooms in 60 schools. It will also help fund new science labs.

E&E RPCVs – news of the group

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:

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!

Thank you to Gloria Curtis

for sending a copy of the
Ethi II book.

E&E RPCVs changes dues requirement

Now you have the option to join only Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs for just \$15 per year.

The Board of Directors has voted to change its relationship with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) to "optional dues affiliation" (every member of E&E RPCVs can choose to belong to the NPCA or not) — from "joint dues affiliation" (every member of E&E RPCVs was required to also belong to the NPCA).

However, we continue to urge you to belong to the NPCA and support that umbrella organization of RPCV groups and its work to support and encourage RPCVs and their efforts to fulfill the Third Goal of the Peace Corps — to "bring the world back home."

If you choose to only maintain your ties to E&E RPCVs, you **MUST** send your \$15 directly to the E&E RPCVs. There is a form on the next to the last page of this newsletter. Please fill it out and send it, as directed with your check.

Your date of expiration appears on the mailing label.

To continue with both the NPCA and E&E RPCVs you can renew with either organization by sending \$50.

Please note that although E&E RPCVs is a non-profit organization, the \$15 annual fees that you pay are **NOT DEDUCTIBLE** as they go to pay for the newsletter, the website and other services and expenses.

RPCV Legacy Program projects

Announcing a new Project — **Borana Region Student Acceleration**

Started in 2004, this project provides summer classes for selected students from the Borana region. The classes are taught in Borana towns by university students who are from this region. In 2004, the first year of the program, over 200 students were taught by 17 university students in two towns, Mega and Hidilola.

Students in the Borana region are disadvantaged both because many of their families are semi-nomads, and also because initial school teaching is done in the local language (Oromiffa) and so their skills in Amharic and English are behind those of students in many other Ethiopian regions. They thus find it difficult to compete in national exams and for university entrance. This project attempts to level the playing field by providing students with additional teaching in Amharic, English, mathematics, and the sciences. It also provides badly needed summer jobs for university students from this region, thus helping them as well.



The project is being championed by Fuller Torrey (Staff/Physician 64–66). Donations of any amount are welcome. The minimum goal is \$5000 for this year's summer classes, but any additional amount will enable more students to participate.

Last year, three-quarters of the funds went for salaries for the university students, and one-quarter was spent on supplies and logistics, e.g., transportation from Addis to the Borana, plus 10 percent of the funds were paid to Teshome Shibre Kelkile, M.D., Ph.D and Wiziro Tirufat for administering the project.

Read more about all the RPCV Legacy Program projects at our website.

www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org/pages/eerpcv/legacypr/legpr.html

E&E RPCVs is a non-profit organization and donations for these projects are tax-deductible.

To make a donation:

Make your check payable to "E&E RPCVs," and note on the memo line which project you are supporting.

Include a note with your name, address and e-mail address to receive an acknowledgement of your contribution and e-mail updates on the project.

Send your check to :
E&E RPCVs
4 Lodge Pole Road
Pittsford, NY 14534

HIV Books for 200 Communities

E&E RPCVs is partnering with the Hesperian Foundation, publisher of healthcare manuals for remote communities around the world, to enable Hesperian to fulfill requests for their books that come from Ethiopian and Eritrean healthcare workers. Our assistance also enables Hesperian to include with each requested book a copy of their book *HIV Health and Your Community*.

Project champion **Marian Beil** reported that thanks to the generosity of RPCVs and friends the initial goal to raise \$6000 was reached during January 2005, but she plans to continue the project.

A donation of \$30 pays for the cost of two books plus shipping — your donation is encouraged.

The following letter received by Hesperian from Bale Robe in January, 2005 provides some insight into the impact these books can have:

Now the very reason I am writing this letter to your organization is as follows. I am Sinabna Dinsho Woreda HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office Coordinator. So the total population of our district is 183,394 and our office coordinates 41 rural kebele, 4 urban kebele, 43 school and AIDS club, 41 Orthodox church and 3 Protestant church and AIDS Clubs and more than 50 mosques and other SBO & CBO whose participates on prevention of HIV/AIDS. So when to organize and train some of them we haven't any material which needs to our organization.

We have "Vet" center but we haven't any books which helps on counseling for those (illegible) and we haven't got any recent information of HIV/AIDS so to prevent wide-spread of HIV/AIDS.

Increase of community awareness is the first selection, so to do this we haven't any books from our library. So please help us in sending any materials which is necessary for our library and give service to the community or to our working staff to develop

their knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

Sincerely Yours,
Teshome Demissie Yadete

Hesperian has sent Teshome 2 copies of *Where There is No Doctor* and 20 copies of *HIV, Health and Your Community*.

Vocational Education for Children at Risk

Project champions **John Kulczycki's** (Debre Zeit 63-65) and **Scott Morgan's** (Debre Zeit 63-65) "Vocational Education for Children at Risk" provides sexually exploited children in Addis Ababa with vocational training. The Ethiopian NGO, Children's Aid Ethiopia carries out the project.

CHAD-ET was established in 1995 to protect the rights and welfare of children in Ethiopia. It provides services for children found under difficult circumstances by offering them vocational training. The Legacy Project allows CHAD-ET to expand this program. Ato Alemu, a director of CHAD-ET, wrote after receiving an initial donation from the project of \$4580: "We have recently enrolled our first batch of trainees for our joint project. The recruitment process took some time as we wanted to be careful, and we had to consult the local administration and community leaders as well. Once the trainees were identified we had to give them the chance to choose the type of training they wanted and which training institute they wanted to go to. At last we have been able to enroll ten girls in two different fields of training: 3 in food preparation and 7 in cosmetology. Their ages are between 16 and 18. They are all from very poor families and most them are victims of sexual exploitation. Thanks for all the support you are providing for our program."

The initial goal for the project was to raise \$8,640, and in January, 2005 this goal was met thanks to the generous contributions of other E&E RPCVs and friends. The project will continue.

Friends

Late news!
The books have
arrived in
Debre Marcos

> **Clare Shea** (Debre Marcos 65–67) and **Arthur Andersen** (Debre Marcos 65–67) are working on a project called the Debre Marcos Book Club. Clare and Artur have had a leading role in raising money to secure books for the Negus Tekle Haimanot School in Debre Marcos. Together with a group of their former students from Debre Marcos who now hold prominent business and academic positions in Ethiopia and the US, they managed to amass funds to be able to ship more than 35,000 books to the school. Working in conjunction with Books for Africa, an NGO based in St Paul, the Debre Marcos Book Club had these books packed up in 661 boxes and stuffed in a 40 foot container and put aboard a ship bound for Ethiopia. Clare and Art are planning a trip to Debre Marcos in February to arrange for the unpacking of the books, and are busy raising more money to have shelves built in the NTHS library.

To help finance the shelves, gifts can be sent to the DMBC c/o Clare Shea, 6631 Wakefield Dr #410, Alexandria, Va 22307. Email: ppy154@aol.com.

> **Peter Lipsitt** (Addis Ababa 65–67), a sculptor who lives and works in Boston and whose work can be viewed online at www.peterlipsitt.com, had a show of his work at the Boston Sculptors Gallery this past Fall entitled "Tangent Links."

> The University of Mississippi's Oxford Conference for the Book on last April included the celebration of Mildred D. Taylor Day. **Mildred Taylor** (Yirgalem 65–67), a native of Mississippi, is author of ***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry***, which won the Newbery, the most prestigious award in children's literature. She is also the author of eight other novels for young readers,

> **Bill Unger** (Chimbi 69–71) writes that a group of Eth XIIs are planning to visit Ethiopia this summer and he would greatly appreciate receiving any information that would be helpful. Contact: William C. Unger, 245 Bog Hollow Rd, Wassaic NY 12592; h: 845 373 8375; email: wunger9113@aol.com

> Founded in 1969, Carolrhoda Books, an imprint of Lerner Books, is named in memory of **Carolrhoda**

Locketz Rozell (Harar 62–64). Titles include picture books, biographies, and novels for beginning and young adult readers. The publisher wrote online: "As a Peace Corps teacher-librarian, Carolrhoda Locketz Rozell, helped bring books to thousands of children in Ethiopia and other countries. Her dreams of expanding her book drives around the world were cut short when she died of cancer at the age of 28. Friends spoke of her as the girl who always had a smile for everyone, and a book for a child."

Looking for . . .

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

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

- Julius Willis (Bahr Dar 66–69) would like to reconnect with **Robert Hill** (Bahr Dar 67–69).
- Ariel Shai, from Israel wrote: I am looking after a **lady PCV in Debre Zeit** who used to teach me English during 1968–1969. During 1968–70 I lived in Debre Zeit with my parents and we had many PCV friends and we have their photos. She used to teach English literature. She was a slim, dark-haired, brown (?) eyes, about 1.65 m tall and she behaved very nicely and helped a lot with my studies.
- Temesgen Beriso is looking for **Amy Kornbluth** (Shinshicho, Ethiopia 97–99).
- **Douglas Eadie** (Addis 64–67) is being sought by his student, now living in Sweden, Tekle Melekin.

PEACE CORPS WEEK

is February 28 – March 6, 2005.

Speak about Ethiopia and

Eritrea to students, community

organizations, church attendees.

For more information, and to

receive a free presentation kit,

go to:

www.peacecorps.gov/pcweek

Ethiopia Revisited

by Jerry Knowles (Addis Ababa 63–65)

The following article provides excerpts from observations gathered by Jerry during a trip to Ethiopia 12/23/03–1/4/04. To read Jerry's unabridged article go to:

www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org/pages/stories/jknowles.html

FULLFILLING A GOAL I have had for a long time, I returned to Ethiopia some 38 years after finishing my Peace Corps tour. I had taught at the College of Business Administration of what was then Haile Selassie I University.

My wife Debby and our son Larry accompanied me on the two-week vacation. Neither had visited Ethiopia before. Our basic itinerary centered around Addis Ababa where we stayed at the Hilton (gasp); however, we did have time to fly north to Gondar and drive south to Awash National Park. I thought it might be interesting for readers of *THE HERALD* if I set down some of my impressions and experiences from our brief trip.

I have a major caveat . . . most of my impressions were formed from observations from my limited travel, talking to Ethiopians as diverse as drivers, guides, and university professors, and reading the local newspapers. I do not hold myself out as any kind of "expert" on the real issues that face the country.

- Whereas there were only a couple of universities in existence in 1965 there are now many more spread throughout the country.
- The country suffers in a major way from what Ethiopians refer to as the "brain drain."
- The university is now called Addis Ababa University, but it is still located at Arat Kilo and Sidist Kilo. There has been a lot of new building.
- The former College of Business Administration was folded into the Faculty of Social Sciences under the Communist regime and it survived by changing some of the course names. For exam-

ple, "Marketing" was renamed "Distribution."

- Addis Ababa in many ways has not changed that much since I left, but there are a lot of new buildings.
- In the city, a foreigner still gets the occasional "ferengi" moniker plus a few well-chosen English epithets, but rare.
- According to the newspapers there are currently two epidemics in Ethiopia – HIV/AIDS and malaria. The media and the government seem to be quite open about both.
- Educated Ethiopians are quite sensitive to the image of the country portrayed by the international media: a place of war and of famine.
- Our trip to Gondar was by air and from there we hired a driver and four wheel drive vehicle and drove to Bahr Dar. Neither town nor the stretch in between seemed to have changed much. The road is still dirt/gravel and was in terrible shape. The good news is that that particular stretch is being made into paved road.
- The Blue Nile dam at Lake Tana now has a hydroelectric plant.
- There is a fair amount of road work currently in progress in the country. A new "ring road" around Addis has just been completed. The Chinese seem to have all the contracts.
- As far as economic development is concerned, it is my feeling that the 17 or so years of the communist regime really set the country back.
- The issue of land ownership, seen as one of the impediments to economic and social development, appears to have gone nowhere since 1965.

Our trip was an unqualified success. No hassles, friendly and gracious people, no discernible anti-American sentiment, minimal bureaucratic holdups and of course ideal weather. Is it time to bring the Peace Corps back?

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.

Deaths

> Kat Conley wrote: My mother, **Edna Conley** (Asmara 71–73), died February 25, 2004 at the age of 86 from Alzheimers. . . . After leaving PC Ethiopia, Edna worked for the DOD as a third grade teacher on Okinawa and in the Philipines. After she retired she returned to Arizona to be near most of her children. . . . At the time of her death, she was only worried that my father, who died at the age of 37, would be disappointed in finding her an old woman!!! This was one of those loves you read about. We were all glad that she finally got to join her one true love. . . . Edna truly enjoyed her time in Ethiopia and all the people she met there. It was the first of her global adventures.

> **Gerry Hoffman** (Makele 63–65) died this past July shortly after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Gerry was a member of E&E RPCVs' Board of Directors and his kindness and willingness to assist will be missed.

> **Camilla Chickering Moore** (Debre Berhan 62–64) died in December, 2004 after several battles with cancer. "Milla," was part of the DB Ethi Ones who were more than friends, they were family.

> **Ivan Myers'** (Makele, Asmara 63–65) daughter, Jennifer, wrote that he had passed away. She is interested in hearing from anyone who knew him. Write her at j_myers1277@yahoo.com.

> **Preston Perlman** (Adi Caieh; Adi Ugri 63–65) died of lung cancer on January 2, 2005. Gloria Curtis writes: Preston and his wife, Stella, went on the Ethi Two's 1995 reunion trip back to Ethiopia and Eritrea and had a wonderful time revisiting his school and home. We will miss him very much.

Remembering our Volunteers who died in service in Ethiopia

The Fallen Peace Corps Volunteers Memorial Project, founded by the mother and sister of a PCV who died in service, seeks to 1) celebrate the lives and service of fallen Peace Corps volunteers and staff through the creation of an Internet Memorial, 2) create a network of support for the families and friends of fallen PCVs and staff, and 3) raise funds to establish, or aid in the establishment of a permanent, physical memorial honoring each Peace Corps volunteer or staff person who has died while in service.

As part of #1, the Project would like to include on the Internet Memorial at www.fpcv.org "stories and pictures of every Volunteer or staff person whose family members or friends would like to share them."

E&E RPCVs would like to do what it can to assure that the following PCVs who died while in service in Ethiopia are remembered at the Internet Memorial:

William H. Olson (Eth VI-UCLA 1965–66)

James Burns Ryan (Eth XI 1969–72)

Susan Traub (Eth VIII-U of Utah 1967)

Roderic D. Turner (Eth XVI 1971–73)

Please send your remembrances, tributes and photos to Marian Haley Beil (see "Contacts" page), who will forward them on to FPCV, or submit them directly to webmaster@fpcv.org.

Hayward Allen resigns as editor of *The Herald*

REACHING THE DECISION to retire as the editor of *THE HERALD* was not an easy journey, but it was inevitable. I think I may have found articulation to some of the reasons, and I would like to share them with you all.

From the beginning of my tenure as editor, I have found the ponderous amount of news and information that comes daily truly stunning. For me, it was also adding up to very depressing pictures of today's reality about Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the Horn of Africa. The UN, the US government, the EU, the questions of aid and economics, and the sad truth regarding the degree of success in curing ills, or healing wounds buried deep within the two countries: bad news is constantly being heaped upon the plethora of bad news.

It has finally reached a point when I must shut it off. It can't be ignored, of course, but in my role as editor/writer of *THE HERALD*, I have found it increasingly hard to digest, literally and psychologically.

The long and short wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea no doubt took many lives of my students and their families, so I fear still about their fates. Just as I think about the Mengistu nightmares and those terrifying inflictions on anyone educated. I have long been saddened by the many who have died and still struggle with AIDS. I think of the droughts that the people have suffered. Then there are the sad and seemingly impossible economics of the two struggling nations, as if drawing farm-

ers from coffee to chat will do much to heal the wounds. And there is the constancy of political corruption.

In other words, I am thinking too much of the ongoing tragedies of the past 40 years, and I need to push away from the table for a while.

There certainly has been an upside to my EERPCV experience. Meeting so many after so many years, learning about how my PCV colleagues have advanced their lives, witnessing and reporting on the hard work of several E&E RPCVs who continue to campaign for peace, for human development, for educational benefits, for the health of the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea — all of these are beneficial and worthy of my admiration.

Igizyihaber, yistillin —
Hayward Allen

I thank Hayward on behalf of you all for his many hours of work and fine service to E&E RPCVs since 2000. We all benefited from the ambitious way in which he produced articles for our consumption and enjoyment. He spent a great deal of time researching, writing and polishing articles that brought the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea to light for many. We can't thank Hayward enough for the generous way in which he contributed his time and talent to the returned Volunteers of Ethiopia and Eritrea. — Marian Beil

Welcoming a new editor

BARRY HILLENBRAND (Debre Marcos 63–65) joined *TIME* magazine in 1967, and for the next 34 years he worked as a foreign correspondent and bureau chief for the magazine living in a host of cities including Boston, Chicago, Saigon, Rio de Janeiro, Bahrain, Tokyo and London. He's written stories from all continents except Antarctica (he doesn't do penguins) and is equally proud of his reporting of six wars, five Olympics and a pair of royal

funerals (Diana and Hirohito) as he is of his cover stories on Bobby Fischer, James Levine, Gerry Adams and the great American ice cream boom. He retired from *TIME* in 2001, lives in Washington, DC, with his wife, Phuong Nga Hillenbrand, and spends his time doing yard work, practicing scales on the piano, and occasionally writing book reviews, teaching and now editing *THE HERALD*.

E&E RPCVs Board of Directors

Hayward Allen

(Harar 62-64)
librarian
264 Garnsey Road
Pittsford, NY 14534
585/264-9162
halleno2@
rochester.rr.com

Marian Haley Beil

(Debre Berhan 62-64)
President, database,
treasurer, webmaster
4 Lodge Pole Road
Pittsford, NY 14534
585/223-1155
fax 716/223-1158
mhbeil@rochester.rr.
com

C.J. Smith Castagnaro

(Harar; Debre Zeit;
Addis Ababa 65-66,
67-69)
Reunions
1124 Walnut Grove Ave.
Rosemead, CA 91770
626/280-1087
cjsmithc@earthlink.net

Leo Cecchini

(Asmara 62-64)
Vice President
Peace Initiative
17105-A6 San Carlos
Blvd. #101
Ft. Myers Beach FL 33931
239/246-1917
leo@cecchini.org

John Coyne

(Addis Ababa 62-64)
99 Reed Avenue
Pelham Manor, NY 10803
914/738-8212
fax 914/738-8211
jpcoyne@cnr.edu

Gloria Gieseke Curtis

(Asmara 63-65)
Membership renewals
15670 W 64th Place
Arvada, CO 80007-6937
h & w: 303/422-3742
Don_Curtis@msn.com

Dave Gurr

(Addis Ababa 62-64)
enCORPS
4311 Loyola Ave
Alexandria, VA 22304
703/370-2553
fax: 703/3701861
dgurr@cns.gov

Nancy Horn

2255 S. Highland Ave,
#409
Lombard IL 60148
630/932-9829
horn.n@worldnet.att.ne

Carol Mauritsen-Mc-Donald

(Harar 64-66)
6937 Blue Hill Dr
San Jose CA 95129
408/252-5923
C1McD@aol.com

Judy Smith

(Asmara 63-65)
7628 17th St NW
Washington DC 20012
202/882-3021
smarmayor@aol.com

Jim Solomon

(Massawa, Jimma
63-65)
Secretary
28484 Mission Blvd #304
Hayward, CA 94544
510/538-9889
lsj63@ix.netcom.com

Other contacts

Embassy of Eritrea

1708 New Hampshire
Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202/319-1991

Embassy of Ethiopia

3506 International Dr.
NW
Washington, DC 20008
202/364-1200
Fax (202)686-9551
email:
ethiopia@ethiopian
embassy.org
www.ethiopian
embassy.org

National Peace Corps Association

(NPCA)
1900 L St, NW, Suite 205
Washington, DC 20036
202/293-7728
fax: 202/293-7554
email: npca@rpcv.org
www.rpcv.org

Peace Corps

1111 20th St NW
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800/424-8580
www.peacecorps.gov

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Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

c/o Marian Haley Beil
4 Lodge Pole Road
Pittsford, NY 14534-4550
585/223-1155
email: mhbeil@
rochester.rr.com
www.EthiopiaEritrea
RPCVs.org

Peace Corps Collection

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journals, etc.)
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617/929-4524

THE HERALD

Editor: Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 63–65)

Copy editing, design & distribution: Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62–64)

Contributing editor — Shlomo Bachrach (Staff: training: PC/Eth 66–68, UCLA 64, St. Thomas 68).

To those who have shared articles, ideas and efforts for this issue, *THE HERALD* wishes to thank them. They are greatly appreciated.

News summaries in *THE HERALD* were compiled and written from dozens of news stories forwarded to *THE HERALD* by Shlomo Bachrach, who gathers information about life on the Horn of Africa. Sources for the news summaries include: Addis Ababa Tribune; Africast.com; Afrol.com; Agence France-Presse (AFP) (www.afp.com); All Africa Global Media (allAfrica.com); Awate.com; Chicago Tribune; Daily Monitor of Addis Ababa; Associated Press; BBC; East African Standard; Eritrea New Agency; Ethiopian Government Information Services; International Herald Tribune Online (www.iht.com); JTA - Global Jewish news service; New York Times; ONLF.org; Panafrican News Agency; Shaebia.com; United Nations in Eritrea and Ethiopia; U.N. news service; U.N. Integrated Regional Information Network

(IRIN) www.irinnews.org; USAToday; Visafric; Washington Post; Wonchif; www.reliefweb.int. Sources for other articles include: the Peace Corps, the National Peace Corps Association; PeaceCorpsWriters.org.

If you would like to review a book, or submit an article to be considered for publication, it would be appreciated if it is submitted digitally — via email or on disk (labeled as to software and computer used and with a hard copy). Photo submissions are **enthusiastically** welcomed. They should be clear, with images large enough to be easily discerned. All photos will be returned.

Send all to:

Barry Hillenbrand
3344 Upland Terrace, NW
Washington DC 20015
email: BarryHillenbrand@aol.com

ETHIOPIA & ERITREA RPCVs

Name _____

Address _____

City, state, zip, country _____

E-mail address _____

Name when in the Peace Corps if different from above _____

Home phone _____ Home fax _____

Work phone _____ Work fax _____

Dates of Peace Corps—Ethiopia or Eritrea service _____ City/town of service _____

Group # _____ Training site _____ Type of program _____

Other Peace Corps service - as staff or Volunteer - and dates _____

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Please send to:
Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs
c/o Marian Haley Beil
4 Lodge Pole Road
Pittsford, NY 14534-4550

To join both organizations online —
Go to <https://secure.schoolyard.com/rpcv/howtojoin.cfm>
(Be sure to select E&E RPCVs as your
group choice.)

Photos wanted: Jason Gordon (Moldova 2002–04) is looking for photo contributions for a large coffee-table style photo book featuring photographs taken by PCVs all over the world. for more information or if you would like to contribute a selection of your best photographs email to jegger79@yahoo.com or write:

Jason Gordon
7815 McCallum Blvd., Apt. 17206
Dallas, TX 75252

Please include your name, country of service, years of service, and a brief caption with each photograph. If sending digital, please be sure the images are 300 dpi or higher.

If published, a significant amount of the revenue from the book sales will go to support Peace Corps projects worldwide.

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

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