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Why Somalia — and Islam — matters to Ethiopia

by Shlomo Bachrach (staff 66–68)

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Editor's note: The emergence of a new Islamist government in Mogadishu has unsettled Washington policy makers who fear that a new base for terrorists may develop in the Horn of Africa. It has also set nerves on end in Addis where the Meles government now faces a new threat to its stability. An aggressive government in Somalia could mean a war over the Ogaden. And if Islamic fundamentalism gains ground in Somalia, Meles could be facing yet another destabilizing force within the Ethiopia itself. Meles' menu of problems is extensive: the furor over the elections continues, as does his crack down on Opposition parties and the press, and pressure from Eritrea continues on the border dispute. Somalia is just the newest problem. Shlomo Bachrach traces Ethiopia's long and tangled relationship with Islam and Somalia.

OVER THE CENTURIES Christian Ethiopia's relationship with Islam has been mostly difficult. It began well enough. Mohammed sent his daughter with a small party to safety in Axum in 616 AD. Before his death, Mohammed supposedly instructed his followers, "Leave the Abyssinians in peace unless they take the offensive." Maybe this is why

Ethiopia was spared the jihad that soon swept the region.

After Mohammed's death, Islam's initial good will faded. In subsequent centuries, external threats to Ethiopia usually carried the banner of Islam, but usually the objectives of these attacks were as much territorial as they were religious. Red Sea ports were often closed to Christian Ethiopian merchants. Ethiopia — formerly a regional heavyweight — turned inward. Muslim rivals were a constant threat to Christian emperors. The most successful was Ahmed Gagn (the Left-Handed), who rampaged through the highlands for several years in the sixteenth century, killing, looting, razing churches and monasteries, burning manuscripts. When he was a remarkably randy teenage, Lij Iyasu, Emperor Menelik's grandson and heir, seriously weakened his status, particularly in the eyes of the Church, by taking wives from among the Muslims in the Ogaden. Despite Iyasu's lineage, his behavior made it easier for Haile Selassie to outmaneuver him and eventually claim the throne.

Muslims living in Ethiopia

Despite occasional episodes of violence, Muslims generally lived peacefully in Ethiopia. Traditionally

they were a distinct minority in the highlands. In recent years the Muslim population has grown significantly throughout the country. The expansion of Imperial control in the past 125 years has brought areas with large Muslim populations under central administration, especially in the east, south and west. A high Muslim birth rate and greater success in converting non-Christian peoples, a job the Ethiopian Orthodox Church does less well, have also contributed to the growth of Muslim population.

Population statistics in Ethiopia have political impact. It is widely claimed that Ethiopia has a Christian majority although the margin is admittedly smaller than it once was. But now claims are heard that Christian and Muslims are found in roughly equal numbers. And some say that there is already a Muslim majority — or at least there are more Muslims than there are Christians. The balance of the population is composed of followers of traditional beliefs.

Recent history

Whatever the demographic truth, the government has been dominated by Christian Ethiopians since Christianity arrived in the fourth century. Tension between Islam and Christian Ethiopia remains a fact of life. Ethiopia offended its Muslim neighbors by maintaining good relations with the State of Israel. This led to severe pressure on Ethiopia after Israel's Yom Kippur War in 1973, when Ethiopia's neighbors finally prevailed on an aging Haile Selassie to cut official diplomatic relations with Israel.

After Somalia became independent in 1960, the heavily Islamic Ogaden became the center of a territorial battle that took on strong religious overtones. Somalia claimed five regions on the Horn of African that had ethnic Somali populations. This was symbolized by the five-pointed star on the Somali flag. They included the former British and Italian Somaliland colonies, Ethiopia's Ogaden, Djibouti and part of Kenya.

In 1964 war between Ethiopia and Somalia broke out. While borders were the primary issue, everyone was aware that one side was entirely Muslim

and the other was dominated by Christians. Even though Ethiopia prevailed, Somalia's ambitions continued. In 1977, Ethiopia's central government was in disarray as Mengistu sought to consolidate his power after the fall of Haile Selassie and a rebellion was gaining momentum in Eritrea. Somalia seized the moment and invaded the Ogaden. Well armed by the USSR, Somalia surrounded Harar and threatened Dire Dawa before being repulsed by Ethiopian forces supported by Cuban and Yemeni troops. As before, religious motives played a secondary role, but they were not overlooked.

In the 1980s, Ethiopia made a determined effort to destabilize Somalia which was already faltering. Clan loyalties — probably the strongest ties for most Somalis — took precedence over a newly invented and relatively weak national identity. Through bribes and selective arms supplies, Ethiopia's strategy was to divide the warlords and obstruct the formation of a central government that might invade the Ogaden again.

In the late 1980s these local Somali developments intersected with wider international events in dramatic fashion. Al Qaeda sought to establish an East Africa presence by training cadres in Sudan. Their aim was to infiltrate Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. These groups, called Al Ittihad Al Islamiya, were funded from the Sudan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. They brought Islamic fundamentalism to a region that had long been home to a moderate form of Islam. In Ethiopia, Al Ittihad met an aggressive response from the government and achieved little beyond mere survival. In Kenya, the group has been blamed for the bombings of the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. They are said to have used Somalia as a staging area. The Kenya branch of Al Ittihad was hunted down after the embassy bombings. Those who escaped arrest fled the country.

Somalia's government collapsed in 1991. The warlords, some with foreign support including money from the United States and arms from Ethiopia, had free reign to create fiefdoms of whatever size they could manage. Bribes and extortion, enforced by

uncontrolled clan-based militias, replaced civil government. Al Ittihad continued in Somalia under various names, including the Islamic Courts.

Current events


After 15 years of chaos and corrupt rule by the warlords, including those who led the feeble Transitional National Government, Al Ittihad created a coalition of warlords under the banner of the Islamic Courts Union. Led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, a former Somali military officer who has become a fundamentalist, the forces of the Islamic Courts defeated the disorganized militias of the other warlords. Some of those who went down were supported by the US and Ethiopia. The triumphant Islamic Courts have received arms through Eritrea, according to the UN, creating the appearance of a proxy war fought by Somali factions on behalf of outside sponsors. Because the US government had no formal or commercial presence in Somalia after 1991 it effectively out-sourced much of its Somalia intelligence gathering and policy execution to Ethiopia.

The Islamic Courts have now stated its intention to take the Ogaden. Both the US and Ethiopia fear a new war and that an Islamist Somalia could again become a haven for extremists. The Associated Press reported that a recruiting video targets Arabic speakers to join the fight in Somalia. For the US, Somalia is a new and dangerous front line in the war on terror.

For Ethiopia the main concern remains the Ogaden. Yet there is also the potential for conflict between Christian and Muslim on a broader scale within Ethiopia. As the numbers of Muslims and Christians approach parity, demand for more power and resources for the Muslim community will likely increase. Concessions to the Muslim community have already increased but the government remains firmly in Christian hands.

An Ethiopian government that does not openly acknowledge its Christian past is unimaginable to most Christian Ethiopians. Adding to the complexity is that Ethiopia's mild Sufi version of Islam is it-

self being challenged by fundamentalist trends financed from abroad. Madrassas, funded, it is said, by Saudi money, have been established. Young men are sometimes taken abroad for training and return with a new puritanical zeal. Money from outside the country is also flowing in to finance the building of attractive new mosques, particularly in urban areas and the south.

A newly militant and unstable Somalia has the potential to cause problems for Ethiopia and for its new and very worried best friend in the region, the United States. The border may flare. The Ogaden may be attacked — or religion may suddenly become an issue. At the moment these threats are being contained, but stay tuned. 

Good Morning Mother

by Marilyn Snyder Halper (*Asbe Teferi & Ambo 66–68*)

AS IF I NEEDED A REMINDER that thirty-seven years had passed since my last visit to Ethiopia, the chorus of young school children calling out, “Good Morning Mother! Good Morning Mother! How are you?” did the trick. Never mind that it was actually afternoon, the troubling thing was that they had failed to realize that, to me, I was still the very same “miss” I had been in 1968.



Halper as PCV

There were three of us on my trip back to Ethiopia, Karen Blanchard (*Assella 66–68*), my daughter, Pauline Halper, and me. We set aside ten days in Addis before traveling to the countryside because we felt that we needed time to re-acclimate to the altitude and to the culture. We chose the Chion Hotel because it was a national hotel and because, sadly, the Gondar Hotel had been razed, we assumed as part of a war on bedbugs and fleas. And the Itege and the Plaza were no longer in business. Although Peace Corps would not have approved, we saw no need this time to test and toughen ourselves in discomfort and squalor to, somehow, after only a few days, become properly hardened to withstand our assignments.

We were drawn again to the warmth of Ethiopian culture. All that touching — men and men, women and women, hand in hand — was still pervasive. If those from other cultures delight in the same way when meeting and greeting their friends — the broad smiles, the tri-part kissing, the salutations, the kissing, the holding hands, the kissing — I have not seen it. It is still lovely and seems uniquely Ethiopian.

A moving aspect of staying at the Chion was witnessing the many babies and children with their new adoptive parents — Italians, Australians, French, German, Spanish, American. This daily morning display of new love more than compensated for the bland breakfasts and burned coffee. Whether these babies had been in orphanages or with relatives, my unscientific observation showed them to be undamaged, happy, loving, and eager to be with their new families — and so beautiful.

Surely, the warm physicality of the culture is one reason why Ethiopian children are so sought-after — that and their tragic availability, and, yes, the Angelina Jolie effect. We wondered how these children would gain a feel for Ethiopia from their far-off, well-fed middle class lives. We encountered one Australian mother gamely trying to re-introduce Ethiopia to her culture-shocked nine year-old. The little girl, reunited with her siblings after many years in Australia, seemed shell-shocked by the well-meaning reunion.

Overpopulation was not a factor when we lived in Ethiopia, but it is now. Addis was vital and chock-full — more people than we could ever have imagined clogging the sidewalks, streets, cafes, taxis, and busses. Where once goats, sheep, and cows had no competition, they now shared the shoulderless roads thick with SUVs, Land Rovers, and Toyotas, all joined in some undeclared race. The roads were further burdened with unending clusters of Addis citizens, three or four deep, refusing the sidewalks that were impossible to navigate, pockmarked moonscapes better suited to breaking bones than taking a stroll.

In addition to an exploding native population, there is also an explosion in foreign aid workers. While we were visiting, the government-run Ethiopian Herald reported that there were 2,633 non-governmental agencies in Ethiopia, 1,511 of them involved in development activities. You could see and feel their presence in Addis and in regional towns.

A substantial middle class, new to us, was in evidence in the many upscale cafes crowded with young people, drinking *macchiato* and eating pastries, sometimes served to them in their cars, gabbing on their cell phones or chatting to friends, trying and succeeding in making a dent in their parent's disposable income. The tight jeans, revealing tank tops, young men and women flirting, and physical contact between the sexes would not have seemed out of place in Manhattan.

The capital city is developing, or sprawling, depending on your viewpoint. Architecturally striking but vulnerable looking, rickety wooden scaffolding perched everywhere, announced the future. Forlorn-looking half-finished buildings also dotted the landscape. Development projects are also easily recognized outside of Addis, in the construction of new roads with the help of the Chinese and the building of new schools and concrete tract homes standing in suburban unison in unexpected places, such as on the edge of the religious and tourist town of Lalibela.

We reveled in the familiar smells of Ethiopia — the eucalyptus, the wood fires, the body odor; the tastes of Ethiopia — injera, berbere, dabbo qolo, ayib, coffee, chai, shiro, the sound of Amharic, nights full of vibrant music, the sights of ethnic dancing, snapping and rolling of heads and shoulders, brought it all back. And, like a baguette that cannot be perfectly duplicated outside of France, the injera made in Ethiopia has no substitute in Washington, D.C. or New York.

On a pilgrimage to Assella, Karen found her old school and the street, but not the house where she lived. Here, in particular, on the uneven, grass covered back streets with long views of Mount Chilalo, we found a beauty and almost touched the past. At Karen's secondary school, Ras Dargay, the director spoke proudly about improvements, educational television from Addis, and its all-Ethiopian teaching staff. We wondered, however, if the television lessons made up for the impossibly crowded conditions (split sessions were necessary everywhere we traveled), and what seemed to us to be a general erosion of teaching quality, the inevitable result, perhaps, of keeping out foreigners, especially native English speakers.

We were hoping to run into some of Karen's old students — old is the operative word now — but we didn't. We did, however, create a small stir on the main street where we again heard "*farenge, farenge,*" and found ourselves entertaining the many students who joined to walk besides us in our

walk — to welcome us, to ask our purpose, and to practice their English.

This was a new experience for Pauline. Sticking out because of skin color, there were many times when she longed for invisibility. Still, I recall that leaving this near celebrity behind was a distinct loss when trying to readjust to life in America — like Cinderella’s coach, into an ordinary pumpkin again. Pauline loved what we loved, the spectacular terraced countryside, the food, the gracious friends we made, the music, the warmth. Our story was compelling to everyone we met — two women — friends, returning after years away and a young woman just about our age during our Peace Corps service, the daughter of a returning Peace Corps Volunteer, along to share the experience with her mother.

The most poignant and disturbing aspect of our trip were the political conversations about the state of the government. We met and were invited to dine with several Ethiopians from different economic strata, and with Americans working in the Foreign Service. Some of our friends had belonged to the Ethiopian Diaspora (one called the group that left for the West after Haile Selassie was deposed, the lost generation), returning after 1994 to re-unite with their families, to build businesses, to contribute to the re-building of Ethiopia after the collapse of the devastating Dergue of Mengistu Haile Miriam. All shared the same depressing recognition

that their long wished for chance for a fair, pluralistic, democratic society was slipping away. The administration of Meles Zenawi was displaying the familiar symptoms: denying the legitimacy of a loyal opposition, undermining the rule of law, consolidating power, stacking the deck to benefit their fellow tribesmen, ordering unwarranted arrests and jailings under the cover of protecting stability, imposing censorship, draining profits from successful businesses, and on and on. A friend told us that it was widely believed that Meles with just three or four of his trusted ministers were running the entire country.

It was at a school in the village of Bussa outside Awassa, as I was participating in a training exercise with a small non-profit called “THE CONDOM PROJECT,” where the school-children called out “Good Morning, Mother!” The school housed 3,000 students, though its capacity was perhaps 600. It had no library, no computers for the teachers or students, no notebooks or pens. Teachers were begging us for help, and we were asked if we could supply clothing to the many orphans who were students there.

After thirty-seven years, Ethiopia was not exactly as we left it. Progress in many areas was apparent. But, whether its leaders will help guide it to greater freedom and prosperity or, like too many of their predecessors, look out only for themselves remains an open question. The struggle will continue. 🇪🇹🇳🇪

A few questions about the trip for Pauline Halper

HERALD: After years of hearing about Ethiopia from your mother, what surprised you about the place?

PAULINE: Nothing can prepare you for the experience of being in Ethiopia. It was all a surprise. I didn't know what to expect. One thing that really stuck me was the hospitality. The people were all so gracious and generous, taking time to show us around and inviting us into their homes for coffee and dinner. As an American I expected some hostility, but we really experienced very little of that. People were very friendly and warm.

HERALD: Right, but wasn't drinking coffee in those small cups and eating injera with your hand a bit tricky? Or had mom coached you?

PAULINE: My mom started me on injera when I was just a baby. She's been treating me to Ethiopian dinners all my life. It became my favorite food. As for the coffee, it was always the best when it was made traditionally at people's houses. The only thing was that I felt obligated to keep drinking, even when I felt jittery. All I wanted after a big meal was to go to bed.



Pauline Halper (right) enjoys some of that great injera with Karen Blanchard (left) and her mom, Marilyn Snyder Halper.

HERALD: But wasn't the food better in Ethiopia? Hotter? And injera crisper on the edge and a touch like sour dough?

PAULINE: The food in Ethiopia was amazing! People who don't know anything about Ethiopia think that's funny, but it's true. It was so much better than what we can get here in New York City. Especially the injera. My mouth waters just thinking about it. My favorite injera was the really dark sour kind. The best of which I had in Lalibella. In fact, I haven't even had any Ethiopian food since I came back because I know the injera will disappoint.

HERALD: Okay. People are great. Food is delicious. But come on, there must be some things which disappointed you and were hard to take. Flies? The rain? The mud? The showers, or lack thereof?


PAULINE: Of course. What was hard to take was the poverty. It is difficult to see so many people with so little. I can never look at life the same way, again. It made me aware of all that we have that we don't need. That is one reason that I found the hospitality so touching. People who don't have much by American standards were so welcoming and generous.

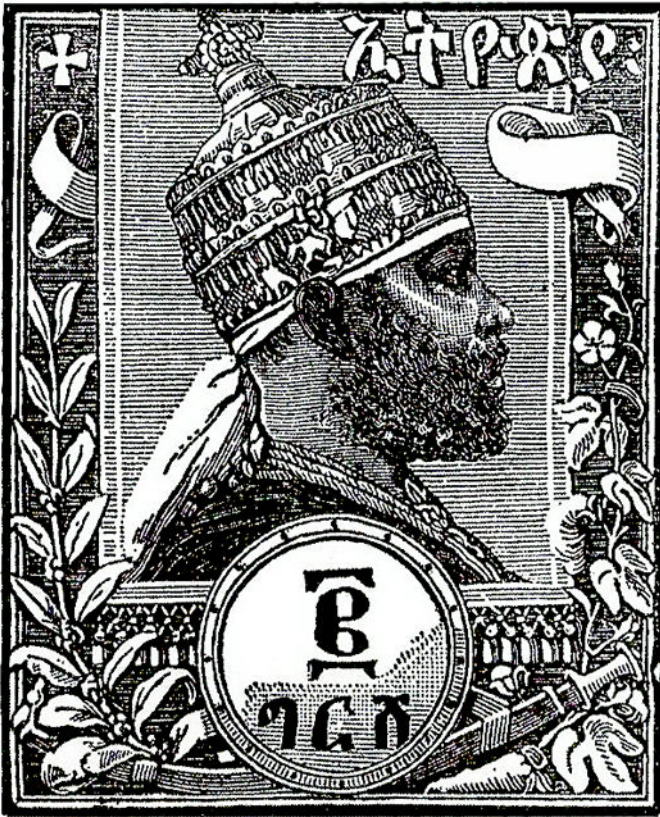
It was also difficult to stick out so much. When I walked in the markets, I felt like having white skin was the same as having on a dollar sign. Depending on the town we were in, children would yell "one dollar!," or "gimmie!" That was difficult.

HERALD: Looking back, did the trip have a special bonding effect on you and your mom?

PAULINE: Yes, it brought us closer. But we were also experiencing really different things. She was re-visiting Ethiopia and I was visiting it for the first time.

HERALD: Would you consider living in Ethiopia for two years — in or out of the Peace Corps?

PAULINE: When I was younger I always wanted to do something like that. Now, it doesn't seem very likely. Maybe when I am older. It still sounds wonderful. There are so many things that I want to experience in my life. We'll see . . . 



Meneilik stamp from 1894
from: "One House: The Battle of
Adwa 1896"

Reflections on the Battle of Adwa

by Ted Vestal (staff 64–66)

IN 1896, ITALY, A SLOW-FOOTED SCRAMBLER for colonial spoils in Africa, made her move to conquer Ethiopia, the only remaining unclaimed-by-Europeans prize on the continent. Expansionist leaders of the recently unified Kingdom of Italy dreamed of a second Roman Empire stretching from the Alps to the Equator, and it was assumed that a show of military might would quickly bring "barbarian" lands and riches into an *Africa Orientale Italiana*. The Italian dream was turned into a nightmare, however, in the mountain passes and valleys near the northern Ethiopian city of Adwa. The Italians retreated from the scramble with egg on their faces. The battle put Ethiopia on the map of the modern world and had ramifications that are still being felt today.

Italy entered the Horn of Africa through a window of commercial opportunity. Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, an Italian steamship company purchased the Port of Assab on the Red Sea from the Sultan of Raheita as a refuelling station for \$9,440, a bargain for such a hot property.

Later imperialists in the parliament of the newly united Kingdom of Italy proclaimed that the "key

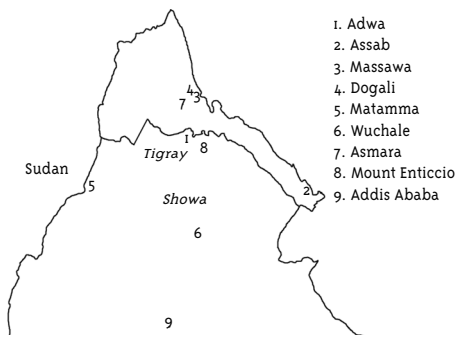
to the Mediterranean was in the Red Sea." In 1882, the Italian government bought Assab for \$43,200, thereby providing the steamship company a handsome profit on its investment and unofficially establishing the first Italian colony in Africa since the days of the Caesars.

In 1884–1885 Italy participated in the Conference of Berlin that "divided up" the remainder of Africa left after the initial scramble of European colonial powers. Italy was "awarded" Ethiopia, and all that remained was for her troops to occupy the prize. To ensure the safety of its new port, Italy moved to the surrounding interior and also occupied nearby Massawa in 1885. At that time, the Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes was distracted by wars in the highlands

Emboldened by their easy occupation of the coastal areas, the Italian army and local conscripts invaded the highlands in the late 1880s. They encountered an Ethiopian force of 10,000 led by Ras Alula Engeda at Dogali, and some 500 Italians were massacred in battle. The Italian government moved aggressively to retaliate by pursuing a policy of divide and conquer. They provided arms to Ras Mengesha

of Tigray and other chiefs hostile to the Emperor. Even the Negus of Showa, Menelik, sought closer collaboration with the Italians who he saw as allies in a common Christian front against the Mahdists of Sudan.

When the Emperor Yohannes was killed in battle against the Madhists at Matamma in March 1889, the Italians sensed an opportune moment to solidify their foothold in the country. They negotiated the Treaty of Wuchale with the new Emperor, Menelik II, in May 1889. Under the treaty, the Italians were given title to considerable real estate in the north in exchange for a loan to Ethiopia of \$800,000, half of which was to be in arms and ammunition. The *piece de resistance* for the Italians, however, was Article XVII, which, according to the Italian version, bound Menelik to make all foreign contacts through the agency of Italy. The Amharic version made such service by the Italians optional.



Proudly displaying their version of the treaty in Europe, the Italians proclaimed Ethiopia to be their protectorate. Prime Minister Francesco Crispi ordered the occupation of Asmara, and in January 1890, he announced the existence of Italy's first official colony, "Eritrea." In April 1892, Great Britain recognized the whole of Ethiopia as a sphere of Italian interest. In 1893, however, Menelik denounced the Wuchale treaty and all foreign claims to his dominions. In a display of integrity rare among belligerent nations, Menelik paid back the loan incurred under the treaty with three times the stipulated interest. He kept the armaments, however, and sought to rally the nation against a foreign invader.

The Italians railed at this insubordination by a "black African barbarian chieftain." They massed arms and men in their *Colonia Eritrea* while their agents sought to subvert Ethiopian *rases* against the Emperor. Italy carried out further intrusions into Ethiopia in 1895 which fuelled the anger of the Ethiopian masses. Emperor Menelik's reforms had

transformed the economy and improved the tax base of the country enabling him to equip armies. In the highlands, Menelik massed his troops and marched north to meet the Italian aggressors.

In late February 1896, the Italian army, the strongest colonial expeditionary force that Africa had ever known at that time, was entrenched around Mount Enticchio in Tigray. Led by General Baratieri, 20,000 Italians and native auxiliaries waited for the Ethiopians to attack their fortified positions. When the attack did not come, Baratieri ordered what he hoped would be a surprise attack on the Ethiopians assembled near Adwa. Defeat was unthinkable for a modern European army of such size. Unfortunately for Baratieri, he was manoeuvring over unfamiliar terrain without accurate maps, relying upon ineffective intelligence, and leading troops garbed in uniforms designed for European winters — a disastrous combination.

Awaiting the Italians was a massive Ethiopian army of 100,000, with contingents from almost every region and ethnic group of the country and commanded by an all-star team of warriors in "an eloquent demonstration of national unity." When the Italian troops made a three-column advance against Ethiopian positions on March 1st, St. George's Day, the combined forces of Greater Ethiopia surrounded them and destroyed many of the enemy in the bloodiest of all colonial battles.

The Italians fought bravely and inflicted heavy casualties upon the Ethiopian peasant troops who battled ruthlessly and competently. The Italian artillery crews were especially noteworthy in firing their cannons until they were all killed. But the Italian force was caught in Menelik's strategic trap and hammered by Ethiopian infantry and artillery. The Italians had suffered one of the greatest single disasters in European colonial history. There were 11,000 dead on both sides, including 4,000 Italian soldiers. Remnants of the Italian army retreated northward, leaving behind 1,900 Italian and 1,000 Eritrean *askari* prisoners of war.

Menelik chose not to pursue the routed army. With the battle over, he held a religious service of

thanksgiving and proclaimed a three-day period of national mourning. The victory celebration of the jubilant Ethiopians was muted because the Emperor saw no cause to rejoice over the death of so many Christian men.

The military advantage won by Menelik was not followed up politically. Why he did not press his advantage and drive the foreigners from his country remains a puzzle. The Emperor may have been concerned about consolidating his territorial interests in the south and may have been afraid of over-extending his resources. At the time, the kingdom was beset with famine and internecine quarrels. Whatever his reasons, Menelik allowed the Italians to remain in their colonial foothold in Eritrea creating what was to be a continuous source of problems for Ethiopia ever since. He also missed a golden opportunity to guarantee Ethiopia an outlet to the sea. What Menelik had demonstrated, however, was that he had the power to defy any European imperialists.

For the victor, the spoils were immediate and long lasting. In the negotiated peace following the battle, the Treaty of Wuchale was annulled, ending Italy's self-proclaimed "protectorate" over Ethiopia. The settlement acknowledged the full sovereignty and independence of Ethiopia. The Italians paid an indemnity of \$5 million in gold and were allowed to remain in Eritrea, which instead of paying for itself, devoured money. The Red Sea evidently was not a key to the Mediterranean


By winning the battle, Menelik had preserved and extended the territories of ancient Ethiopia — with the important exception of Eritrea. By uniting most of the leaders from almost all parts of the country against a common foe, the Emperor began to implement the idea of a central government rather than the Ethiopian Orthodox Church being the symbol of national unity. Thus, the battle gave momentum to the creation of the modern Ethiopian empire-state, and the future of Ethiopia became different from that of the rest of Africa.

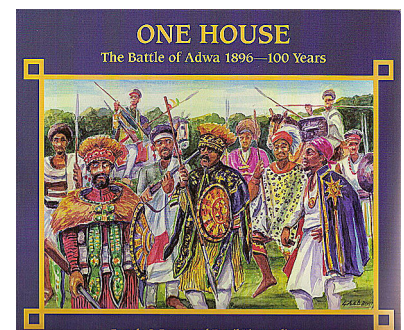
Internationally, Ethiopia supplied the most meaningful negation to the sweeping tide of colonial

domination of Africa. Egged on by Italy's defeat, European nations scrambled to make treaties with Menelik's government. Indeed, 1896 became the "year of the *ferenji*" in Ethiopia. Expatriate traders flocked in and spearheaded stepped up economic activities.

In addition to material changes, the Battle of Adwa produced psychic rewards. Ethiopians basked in national pride and a sense of independence, some say even superiority, that was lost to other Africans mired in the abasement of colonialism. The image of independent Ethiopia, the nation that successfully stood up against the Europeans, gave inspiration and hope to Africans and African-Americans fettered by racial discrimination and apartheid. Ethiopia provided a model of independence and dignity for people everywhere seeking independence from colonial servitude.

Editor's note: For further reading during this 110th anniversary year of the battle of Adwa, two excellent books are available. "The Battle of Adwa," edited by Paulos Milkias and Gethachew Metaferia and published by Algora Press, New York, contains a collection of essays including a much more detailed version of the one Ted Vestal generously adapted here for the HERALD.

"One House: The Battle of Adwa 1896," edited by Pamela S. Brown and Fassil Yirgu, Nyala Publishing, Chicago, also contains a group of essays by scholars, but includes some fascinating pictures, maps and documents of the era, making it an attractive coffee table book. Both books are available via Amazon.com or directly from the publishers. Nyala Publishing (www.nyala-publishing.com) has a small but most interesting list of books about Ethiopia and Africa. 



An Ethiopian Journey

by Jack Cahill (Gondar, Gorgora 69-71)

IN EARLY FEBRUARY my partner, Craig Wilson, who is a USA Today columnist, and I boarded a plane for Ethiopia for what proved to be one of the nicest vacations we have ever had. As a PCV — Ethiopia XII — I taught school in Gondar and Gorgora from 1969 to 1971, and for the last several years Craig had suggested that we might return to these places for a reunion of sorts. Believing that life is short and that you can't go back, I thought of other parts of the world to visit. But as the notion took hold, I began to think about this trip in more positive light. I asked myself a few questions: Had I really lived in a mud house in a village in Ethiopia 37 years ago? Did I really go without electricity and running water? Thirty-seven years is a lifetime ago. Who would remember? And so, in search of answers, we left for Ethiopia on a cold winter's day.

When we arrived at night in Addis, Bole Road was brightly lit and the city looked somewhat familiar. But I must admit that the names of Sidist Kilo and Arat Kilo rang clearer in my head than when I saw the buildings that now surround them. We stayed in Addis only long enough to hang out at the Hilton

pool, visit the mausoleum of Emperor Haile Selassie, and see the bones of Lucy.

Gorgora was the next stop on this journey. Flying northward over the mountains and the dry riverbeds, the familiarity of what we were about to encounter came back. Thanks to Travel Ethiopia, a tour agency, we were picked up by our driver, Muhammad, at the Gondar airport and driven south to Gorgora. On the trip down, I shared with him old photos of my life in the village when I was 22. I wanted him to understand where I fit into the fabric of Gorgora. I also wanted his assistance in finding a few of the friends I left behind.

We headed to a hotel in Gorgora on Lake Tana. The hotel was built by Mengistu about 5 years after he deposed Haile Selassie. The look was Soviet, but it was nonetheless comfortable as long as we kept our expectations low. In other words, the food, bedding, and lack of electricity swiftly brought me back to my old life as a PCV.

Gorgora looked the same, but then again it didn't. My memory had faded in three decades, and so had some of the mud houses that I remembered. A telecommunications station was where a soccer field had been. A well had been put in at the end of the dirt road. These were two improvements that I noted. The dirt road, the lack of electricity, the mud houses and the flocks of chickens and herds of goats, all remained the same.

Minutes after arriving at the hotel we were noticed by a man in his 40s who was sitting in the compound. Was I Mr. Jack or Mr. Paul [Sugarman], he asked our driver. And so began a reunion with Tesfaye and several others. I was touched by the impact that we had left many years ago. With Tesfaye's assistance, we reconnected with my maid, Huluagerish, who still lived in the same house next to the one that had been mine. Later in the trip, thanks to Tesfaye's cell phone, we would meet her son who was five years old when I lived there. We also hooked up with my houseboy who we had supported for a few years after we departed from Ethiopia.



Jack Cahill as a PCV

I was interested in meeting with current students. Unfortunately, the schools were closed for a nine-day teachers meeting. I did manage to visit the compound where I taught and with the assistance



Craig Wilson met some classic gregarious Ethiopian boys.

of our driver talked our way into the locked classrooms. It was a depressing sight. The school, built by the World Bank some 40 years ago, was in disrepair. Very little had been done to improve it over the years. The desks were broken and the classrooms were littered with paper. Nonetheless, photos of Mr. Jack and Mr. Paul were still prominently displayed in the school library.

What struck us during our visit was that people remembered. Our photos on the school bulletin board and my

reconnection with Huluagerish, Tesfaye, and Dawit were evidence of this. And they were moved that I remembered them. About a month after our visit, Huluagerish had our driver write a letter to Craig and me. In the letter she said how happy she was to see that I remembered her. Of course, how could I not remember? She was family.

When I was a Volunteer, I felt that the real crux of my service was not so much teaching English but breaking down barriers. Living in this village, I had hoped that people might see that we had much in common and that international boundaries were less important. Today, I still feel the same way, and to some extent I think those feelings are shared by my friends in Gorgora. At the time of our visit, they seemed to care little of the fact that I was an American. What they wanted to know was how I was. How had life treated me? Was I married? How many children had I had? And, how was Mr. Paul?

Although life had changed and the politics of the world are on a slippery slope, none of that matter as we delved into these more important aspects of our lives.

Following Gorgora, we were on to Gondar. I hoped we'd have a visit to the imperial compound, a walkabout through the city, and reconnect with some of my students. At the Goha Hotel I showed photos of me with my seventh grade class. The hotel staff looked at the dated picture and shook their heads. Sadly I learned that after Mengistu's rise to power many of my students were killed. If they managed to survive, they most likely walked out of Ethiopia into the Sudan and then fled to Europe or America.

Back in my Peace Corps days 37 years ago when we flew into Lalibela we rented a mule and a guide, and rode into town. Our 2006 arrival was more than upscale: a new airport, a paved road leading into town, and a SUV and a driver waiting for us. But Lalibela is still a very poor place. Little of the tourist money seems to have trickled down to improve the welfare of the residents. Beggars, lepers, and the disabled still line the exit of the churches. Compared to 1970, the hotel accommodations, at least at the Roha Hotel, were more than acceptable. But, even with that, water and electricity were only available periodically throughout the day.

What I was not prepared for — or had forgotten — was how often we would be asked for money. That deluge of requests from kids and adults was certainly there in 1970, but somehow I had forgotten what it was like to give to some and to deny others. I didn't like that feeling then and I still don't.

Back at the Hilton Hotel in Addis, Craig and I spent our last night in Ethiopia reminiscing about our trip, stuffing our bags with Ethiopian coffee, and meeting Dawit, my houseboy, who had become a parasitologist at the University of Addis Ababa. With a great deal of excitement, I left the country feeling that I wanted to do more for the Ethiopian people and that this would not be my final trip to Ethiopia. You can, after all, go home again. 

As reported in the USA Today



Ato Jack and Huluagerish

Jack Cahill's partner, Craig Wilson, a columnist for USA Today, wrote several pieces about their trip back to Ethiopia. His description of Jack's re-union with a long lost friend in Gorgora appeared February 28, 2006:

"Is Huluagerish still alive?" Jack asked Tesfaye, referring to the feisty woman who cooked for him and "Mr. Paul," another Peace Corps volunteer, now an attorney in San Francisco.

"Yes, yes. She's still up in her house," he said.

What happened next is all a blur. We were scrambling up a hillside filled with dogs and children and chickens. And there, on the path in front of us, appeared the woman I had heard about for years.

She made a noise I'd never heard before. It was a cross between a scream and a cry of joy. She grabbed Jack and wouldn't let go. And then she grabbed me so tight I thought my ribs would break. She didn't have a clue who I was.

Jack cried. I cried. Huluagerish cried. Even our Ethiopian driver broke down.

She then pulled us into her two-room mud house — it says volumes about her that in this monochromatic brown village, she had painted her house turquoise and pink — and sat down next to Jack, repeatedly slapping his forearm so hard I thought it would break. Maybe she was making sure it was really him in the flesh.

"Ato Jack," she kept saying. "Ato Jack." 



Ethiopia news

Compiled by Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 63–65)

Worrying unrest

Between 50 and 100 Muslims rampaged through the streets of Jijiga shouting “God is Great” after discovering that a local Christian-run restaurant was using pages of the holy book in which to wrap food. “From the morning until mid-day, students and others were demonstrating on the streets,” an aid worker said from Jijiga, the capital of Somali region. “They threw stones at houses where Christians live until the police dispersed the crowd.” Police in Jijiga confirmed the rioting had occurred but stressed that there had been no deaths or injuries in the unrest, which is believed to be the first such incident between Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia.

A great poet dies

Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin, the poet and dramatist, died at aged 69. The Guardian of London called Tsegaye Ethiopia’s poet laureate and “certainly one of the most important literary figures that country has produced in the last hundred years.” He was also Ethiopia’s best-known writer, both in Ethiopia and abroad.

Literary critics say his most important accomplishment was refocusing Ethiopian literature from the life and feats of royalty and the clergy to that of the life of ordinary people. But perhaps Tsegaye’s greatest achievement was surviving three difficult and oppressive governments. He once estimated that of 49 of his works, 36 had at one time or another been censored. Under the Derg, he spent time in jail — writing poems on the bags his meals were delivered in. He wrote a play about the fall of Haile Selassie I, *Ha Hu be Sidist Wer* (ABC in Six Months), and then another, *Ha Hu Weynis Pe Pu* (A or Z, a play about peace), which the current regime has banned, and which referred to the period when the emperor was deposed.

Tsegaye was born of an Amhara father and Oromo mother. He spoke both of the languages of his parents and learned Ge’ez as a boy. He later studied at the Wingate School in Addis. He went on to earn a degree from the Blackstone School of Law in Chicago in 1959. He studied at the Royal Court Theatre in London and the Comédie Française in Paris. He was a man of the international literary world translating Shakespeare and Molière. His plays, some written in English, were produced around the world. But his Ethiopian language plays were, of course, his legacy. Yekermew Sew (Tomorrow’s Man) established his place in Ethiopian theatre. “Drawing from Ge’ez and Amharic and Oromiya, he was able to coin phrases which, in normal Amharic language, don’t exist, but are powerful and expressive,” Tamarat Gebeyehu, author of the Ethiopian entry in the World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre, told the Guardian of London. It was, he said, “a pleasure to hear his characters talk, even though chances were you did not understand 50% of what they were saying.”

In 1998 Tsegaye moved to New York to undergo dialysis, and to be near his children. He remained active, promoting Ethiopian culture, until the end. In 2002 the African Union took one of his poems as its anthem. “All sons and daughters of Africa, flesh of the sun and flesh of the sky,” the anthem reads, “Let us make Africa the tree of life.”

Listing for Harar

UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee announced it had put Ethiopia’s fortified historical town of Harar Jugol onto the world heritage list. Called simply *Gey* (“the City”) by its inhabitants, Harar was founded between the 7th and the 11th century — depending on which history book you read — and emerged as the center of Islamic culture and religion in the

Horn of Africa. Harar Jugol is considered “the fourth holiest city of Islam” with 82 mosques, three of which date from the 10th century, and 102 shrines.

Still waiting at Axum

The rains started in June and will end by mid-October. After the last drop falls, the good engineers from UNESCO plus various bureaucrats from the Ethiopian and Italian governments promise

that a new foundation for the famed obelisk will be ready. Then the monument, now in sections and sheltered under tin roofs like a *zibanya* in the rain, will be put together and erected. All the work will be finished by the end of the year. Absolutely. For sure. No doubt. At which time the workers will be free to fly off and help with Boston’s Big Dig. The projects share remarkable similarities.



HEALTH

Tales of bird flu

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development says that signs of avian flu have been observed in Endibir Woreda district of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s (SNNP) State. Laboratory tests carried out locally indicated the existence of a bird flu-like disease, but samples sent to an Italy-based veterinary laboratory to verify the existence of the disease were less conclusive. Still the government reported that it was taking preventive measures to contain the disease from spreading to other areas. An embargo was put on chicken and poultry products within a radius of 60 kilometers around Gubere where signs of the disease were evident. The veterinary department said that 6,082 chickens were reported dead at the Gubere Poultry Center, and the examination carried out on 49 chickens has confirmed that they died from a bird flu-like disease. The birds were burnt.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Neighbor problems

Ethiopia has neighbor trouble on nearly all sides these days. Somalia is problem number one, of course. But the Eritrean border issue remains unsolved and festering.

And then there is Sudan — which is linked to Ethiopia’s headaches with both Somalia and Eritrea. In June, Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki had extensive talks with his Sudanese counterpart, Omar al-Beshir, in Khartoum. This was a rare visit. The two presidents had last met at a summit of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in Khartoum in 2001. Eritrea has been accused of supporting rebels in Sudan’s eastern province and so relations were not good, especially since Eritrea accused Sudan of funding trouble in Eritrea.

But in June the two presidents agreed to make nice, according to reports out of Khartoum. Sudan and Eritrea upgraded their diplomatic relations to ambassador level. Eritrea sponsored peace talks in Asmara between the Sudanese government and the rebel Eastern Front. It was very lovey-dovey, which, of course, annoyed Ethiopia.

Even worse, was that Sudan sponsored a meeting between Somali Islamist militia and the transitional government held in Khartoum in June. Then Khartoum recognized the new interim government in Somalia that Ethiopia is trying to contain. Ethiopia was not pleased, even though the Sudanese said they were acting in their role as rotating president of the Arab League.

But Japanese friends

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi assured visiting Japanese Premier Junichiro Koizumi that Ethiopia would support Tokyo’s campaign to secure a permanent seat with the United Nations Security Council. The assurance was given during the first round of talks in Addis Ababa between Meles and Koizumi. Koizumi said it was reassuring to get Ethiopia’s support for his country’s candidacy for a permanent seat “because this country enjoys an important place

in Africa as the seat of the African Union and other regional organizations.”

BUSINESS/ECONOMY

World Bank: all is forgiven

During a visit to Addis in July, World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz said that the bank's decision to resume aid to Ethiopia was a sign of improved confidence in the country. Last year many donors cut direct support because of the political turmoil that followed the election. But, said Wolfowitz, "I think there is more reason to feel confident that people are learning the right lessons from the experiences of last year." The World Bank is Ethiopia's biggest lender and investor. It resumed work in Ethiopia with the approval of a \$274.72 million credit to support its projects on rural development, rural electrification and road development.

In addition, the World Bank Country Office said that Ethiopia would receive an overall debt relief of \$3.616 billion under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) that took effect on July 1 2006 and would cancel the International Development Association debt of some of the world's poorest countries. "We have secured a level of financing commitments from donors that allows us to begin implementing the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative," the country office quoted Wolfowitz as saying. "Additional debt relief will help Ethiopia channel resources into programs that directly help the people who need it most — the poor who need and deserve a better education, better health services, greater access to clean water, and greater opportunities to escape poverty."

Hopes for gas and oil

China's Zhongyuan Petroleum Exploration Bureau began testing for oil in the Ogaden basin, but their first well turned up dry. The test well in Gambella was 3,000 deep, but empty of oil. The Chinese are working with Malaysia's Petronas, which won drilling rights to 36,000 square miles of land. The firm said that the empty well did not mean that there was no oil in the basin and would conduct further

seismic surveys during the dry season in order to drill more exploration wells.

This will not be ZPEB's first foray into the Ethiopian energy industry. In 1998, the government paid the firm \$5.6 million to prepare eight gas wells for production at the Calub site which is one of five sedimentary basins in Ethiopia that have shown oil and natural gas reserves in geological studies. The country is believed to have 24 million cubic meters of natural gas.

But it may not be easy to get the gas and oil out safely. In May the government sent heavily armed troops to reinforce military garrisons already positioned in the area. Addis signed a deal in April with two Indian companies to explore for oil and gas prospects in the Ogaden basin of Somali Region. The Ogaden National Liberation Front published a warning to the Indian companies to not explore in a region under "military occupation." The army's move into Somali Region is designed to serve as a protection force for the Indian companies' scientists and researchers who began their work.

Water power profits

Three new hydropower dams costing \$1.4 billion will be built in hopes of generating not only power, but also millions of dollars in foreign currency for Ethiopia that will export any excess electricity to three neighboring countries. "By 2010, the construction of the Tekeze hydro power dam with a capacity of 300 MW, Geligele Gibe II with a capacity of 420 MW and Belesse hydro power dam with a capacity of 435 MW will be completed," Sendeku Araya of the state-owned Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation told Reuters. "The power will be sold to Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya, and earn millions of dollars," Sendeku said. The cost of building the dams will be covered by the Ethiopian government as well as by loans from the Italian government and the European Investment Bank.

Too much population growth

High population growth is a major problem for Ethiopia's development and could slow efforts to alleviate poverty, a finance ministry report said.

The population now stands at 75 million, with 2.5 million babies born every year. "The population growth has become a development threat to the government," said Suhan Ahmed, Ethiopia's Minister for Finance and Economic Development. Nearly 44 percent of Ethiopia's population is younger than 15, compared with 3.1 percent over the age of 65. Only 16 percent of the population lives in urban areas. This high population growth rate is also responsible for the large number of the people dependent on food aid. Between 7 and 8 million people are estimated to experience recurring food shortages, according to the report.

According to the New York-based Population Council, Ethiopia has one of the most severe crises of child marriage in the world today. The legal age of marriage is 18 for both males and females, but it is widely ignored. "Much more attention needs to be directed to girls in marriages," says Judith Bruce, Director of Gender, Family and Development at the Population Council. Bruce says that a large and neglected subgroup of very young adolescents in both rural and urban areas of Ethiopia were not attending school.

Don't ask about the missing cash

Ethiopia's auditor general says that 7.2 billion birr or about \$830,000 was unaccounted for in the first nine months of the fiscal year. "This is unbelievable and embarrassing. If it were in other countries the officials — the criminals — involved in this would have lost their jobs," Temesgen Zewde, a representative of the opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUDP) told Reuters. .

In response to the report, the Ministry of Economy and Finance told the auditor general that it is not the ministry's responsibility to check where the money goes and what it was spent on. Their duties only entail registering the budget as an outflow. "Living in poverty and getting the money through taxes, loans and donations, it is amazing that the ministry says that it isn't its responsibility to follow up on where the money goes," Temesgen said.

THE PRESS

Block that HTM

Government officials in Addis may be taking something from China's playbook by quietly blocking Internet sites that carry criticism of the government. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) charge that suddenly several prominent political blogs have mysteriously become inaccessible. Bad telecommunications? Or is it part of Ethiopia's bad record on freedom of speech? After all, 15 newspaper editors were arrested last year on treason charges. And, according to RSF, there are 21 imprisoned journalists in Ethiopia, the highest in Africa. Veteran journalist Goshu Moges, for example, is charged with seeking to "overthrow, modify or suspend the constitution." That's a capital offense. Goshu publishes and writes for the Amharic-language weekly newspaper *Lisane Hezeb* and a monthly magazine of the same name.

Tackle those foreign reporters

In other press problems, Ethiopia has made trouble for foreign reporters. One, Inigo Gilmore, whose report appeared in the London weekly *The Observer*, had his press credentials lifted after he filed a report recounting alleged human rights abuses in Ethiopia.

In January Ethiopia expelled Associated Press correspondent Anthony Mitchell, who had been based in the country for five years, accusing him of "tarnishing the image of the nation repeatedly, contravening journalism ethics" and "disseminating information far from the truth about Ethiopia."

DROUGHT/FOOD AID

Disaster insurance

The United Nations World Food Program announced in March that an insurance company, AXA RE, has been awarded the world's first insurance contract for humanitarian emergencies. The contract provides \$7 million in contingency funding in a pilot scheme to provide coverage in the case of an extreme drought during Ethiopia's 2006 agricultural season. "So much of our work is like triage — doing

our best to save lives after a drought or other disaster has already done its damage. Today we need to feed six million people across the Horn of Africa who lost their life savings when drought claimed their cattle and crops,” said James T. Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme. “The humanitarian emergency insurance contract might, in the future, offer us a way of insuring against these massive losses before they spell destitution for millions of families.” The policy, a derivative based upon a calibrated index of rainfall data gathered from 26 weather stations across Ethiopia, takes advantage of financial and technical innovations in the weather risk market. Payment will be triggered when data gathered over a period from March to October 2006 indicates that rainfall is significantly below historic averages, pointing to the likelihood of widespread crop failure. While the experimental pilot transaction only provides a small amount of contingency funding, the model has been designed on the basis of the potential losses that 17 million poor Ethiopian farmers risk should an extreme drought arise.

Miscellany


Lucy's ancestors

A 4.2 million-year-old fossil discovered in Middle Awash helps scientists fill in the gaps of how human ancestors made the giant leap from one species to another. The newest fossil, the species *Australopithecus anamensis*, was found in the region of the Middle Awash — where seven other human-like species spanning nearly 6 million years and three major phases of human development were previously discovered. “We just found the chain of evolution, the continuity through time,” Ethiopian anthropologist Berhane Asfaw told the AP. “One form evolved to another. This is evidence of evolution in one place through time.” The findings were reported in April in the scientific journal *Nature*.

The species *anamensis* is not new, but its location is what helps explain the shift from one early phase of human-like development to the next. All eight species were within an easy day's walk of each other.

Until now, what scientists had were snapshots of human evolution scattered around the world. Finding everything all in one general area makes those snapshots more of a mini home movie of evolution. “It's like 12 frames of a home movie, but a home movie covering 6 million years,” said study lead author Tim White, co-director of Human Evolution Research Center at University of California at Berkeley. “The key here is the sequences. It's about a mile thickness of rocks in the Middle Awash and in it we can see all three phases of human evolution.”

Celebrity silliness

Angelina Jolie is buying her own country to help impoverished Africans, according to one web site. She is purchasing Richard Branson's man-made version of Ethiopia, located in Dubai. Branson is planning to build 300 country-shaped luxury island developments built in the form of a map of the world. He is selling parts of the “world” to anyone rich enough to afford them. And so Jolie is going to buy one and turn it into a fair-trade paradise for hundreds of Africans. Or that's the story. Says one un-named source: “Angelina has been obsessed with Ethiopia ever since she adopted her second child Zahara from there.” 

Eritrea news

Compiled by Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 63–65)



Travel permits required

The government has imposed new, tighter travel restrictions for foreigners. Diplomats, aid workers and visitors will need permits to travel from town to town. Previously certain areas were off limits and required permits, now the rule covers the entire country. "As of June 1, 2006, all foreign nationals including resident diplomats are required to have travel permit papers to travel to areas outside Asmara," the foreign ministry said in the statement. Similarly, those foreigners working outside Asmara, if they are to travel outside the towns they are working in, will be required to have a travel permit from the zonal administration in their respective areas.

Information minister Ali Abdu denied that the new rule was imposed for security reasons but declined to discuss the government's reasoning for tightening the existing regulations. "We feel it's necessary," he told AFP. On main roads, there are regular checkpoints at which soldiers verify that travel has been approved and send those without permits back to their town of origin.

Food prices increase

Food has become more expensive since the government slashed free foreign food aid to more than a million people late last year. Food warehouses have been shut since September when Eritrea cut the number of people receiving free food from 1.3 million to 72,000. "Some indications of food insecurity have been reported in most regions due to government restrictions on the free flow of grains and the unwillingness of farmers to sell their outputs to the Eritrean Grain Board," said a weekly report by the U.N. World Food Programme. "The high price of food commodities and the limited purchasing

power of poor households are already apparent." Aid workers estimate that the harvest in 2005 was better than in 2004.

Send home the cash

The Eritrean treasury has hard currency reserves equal to only one month of imports. And Eritrea pays 50 times more for imports than it gets from exports. How to make up the difference? "This economy lives off two things: diaspora and loans," an Asmara-based analyst told Reuters. Eritrea has been exploring the possibilities for debt relief in discussions with the IMF but no agreements have yet been reached. Loans have come from financial institutions such as the World Bank and bilateral donors, including the United States, China, Italy and Middle Eastern countries.

A key source of foreign currency is Eritrea's sizeable diaspora, many of whom live in the United States and Europe. Some expats pay a two percent income tax to qualify for privileges back home, like the right to buy housing and land. But many of the younger Eritreans aboard are less interested in maintaining formal ties with the homeland.

Still, many send money back to families. Without remittances, the country would not get by. Estimates are that remittances were worth around 70 percent of Eritrea's GDP. Diplomats say they fell from \$462 million in 2003 to \$420 million in 2005.

A World Bank report says Eritrea's economy has the potential to grow by 4 percent annually, which is higher than the under 2 percent rate recorded in the last two years. "Poverty remains pervasive, defense spending large and fiscal deficits and government debt are at unsustainable levels," says the IMF.

Gold in those deserts

Eritrea hopes to give a shot to its economy when gold mines come on stream. Several companies — Canadian Nevsun Resources and Sunridge Gold, American-Canadian Sanu Resources, Canadian-Eritrean MDN/Eritrean Minerals Corporation and Australia's Sub-Sahara — have entered the potentially lucrative search for minerals. None has yet begun to extract, but they have all started digging and working on preparatory projects. The best hope is Nevsun's Bisha mine in western Eritrea, which is the biggest project in the country and may come on stream in 2008. "We hope the others will follow later," said Alem Kibreab, director general of Mines at the Ministry of Energy and Mines. "Mining will boost the economy, employment, the currency,"

Eritrean officials are reluctant to say how much revenue they expect from mining, but it could generate hundreds of million of dollars a year. "The money will start coming in by the end of 2008", said Stan Rogers, the director of Nevsun in Eritrea. Gold is only part of the mix, says Rogers. Nevsun believes its miners will extract gold for the first two years, before hitting a copper reserve beneath for another two years and then zinc. "It's like a three-layered cake," Rogers says. He is confident that his Vancouver-based firm would more than recoup its initial investment.

Gold mining is not a new phenomenon. Gold production in Eritrea was recorded in the times of the Pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty, and there are records of gold mining during the Portuguese occupation in the 17th century. Modern mining came with the advent of the Italians at the end of the 19th century.

Oops, you lobbied for whom?

Politics in 2006 are getting rough and even Eritrea can be an issue. When Bob McEwen, a former Republican congressman from Ohio, attempted a comeback in a high-profile primary against U.S. Rep. Jean Schmidt, he had to answer questions about some \$120,000 he received from Eritrea to act as their lobbyist in Washington. The problem is that

Eritrea shows up regularly on a Bush-administration list as a "Country of Particular Concern" for severe violations of religious freedom. The State Department's International Religious Freedom report says that Eritrean authorities have closed down some Protestant evangelical denominations, arrested and brutalized churchgoers and spy on worship services.

The problem is that McEwen counts as his supporters prominent leaders on the Christian right. According to the Cincinnati Plain Dealer, McEwen had endorsements from the Rev. Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association; Dr. James Dobson, the founder of Focus on the Family; and Phil Burrell, who heads Citizens for Community Values in Ohio.

McEwen countered that most of his work had to do with the Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute and, besides his work for Eritrea had stopped in 2005. During campaign stops McEwen was heckled by college students who carried signs noting the link between McEwen and Eritrea.

In the end, McEwen lost the primary, 48% to 42%. The winner was Jean Schmidt famous for being booed off the House floor last November during a speech about the Iraq war in which she attacked Rep. John Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat. She said "cowards cut and run, Marines never do." Schmidt was forced to apologize, and is now known as "Mean Jean."

Italian squabbles

It all sounds a bit like one of those Italian movies about a divorce gone terribly sour — maybe a Fellini flick. It started when Eritrean police in Massawa jailed Ludovico Serra, the number two official of the Italian embassy in Asmara. Serra was ordered out of the country. His offense was trying to intervene in a battle over a 1960s-era villa near the Red Sea port of Massawa. The villa belonged to the Melotti family who once owned a well-known brewery in Eritrea, but the Eritrean government wished to acquire it. The building had been identified as a leading tourist attraction in Massawa. "With its stunning

setting on the seafront, gardens and swimming pools, it has the decadent grandeur of a Fellini film set," the Lonely Planet guide book for Eritrea said in its most recent edition. It had a swimming pool the shape of Africa.

When the government and the Melotti family disagreed about the price Asmara was willing to pay to acquire the villa, the family asked help from Rome. Big Mistake. First Serra got the boot and then the wreckers simply showed up and leveled the place. Eritrea's information minister Ali Abdu said, "This is part of the Massawa reconstruction program. People need to refrain from politicizing construction programs." He said the Serra expulsion had nothing to do with the villa.

Khat dangers

Okay, it did seem to be a bit debilitating and certainly you didn't want to take your SATs after a good chew, but could khat be really dangerous? Doctors in Britain think so. They say khat chewing is an under-recognized problem. Studies in Yemen had found a 39-fold increased risk of heart attack in heavy khat chewers. "It seems to be a mixture of

effects on clotting and spasm of coronary arteries," Dr Clare Dollery, of London Heart Hospital told the BBC. Long-term use could also increase the risk of liver damage, and esophageal cancer, warns a report in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine. The United States and many countries in Europe have banned the import of khat, but it is legal in the UK and about six tons of the leaf are airlifted into Britain each week.

Free Berhane

Helen Berhane, a 30-year-old Eritrean singer, has spent most of the past two years locked inside a shipping container. Conditions are sweltering hot by day, freezing cold by night. According to Amnesty International, her crime is that she angered the Eritrean regime by refusing to stop producing gospel music. She was arrested in May 2004 as part of a crackdown on evangelical Christians — and their music. The singer remains held on indefinite detention. A collection of British rock stars including Coldplay, Sting, Duran Duran and even the punk band Anti-Flag have distributed petitions at gigs to campaign for her release. 

The Sports Page

Now, Ethiopian hockey.

In Des Moines, Iowa, the guy playing for the Iowa Stars in the American Hockey League, is a Swede named Yared Hagos who grew up in Stockholm. But he is, yep, Ethiopian. Yared is the son of Ethiopian immigrants who have been in Sweden for more than 30 years. His parents have become big promoters of hockey, watching Iowa Stars games on the Internet, following the results online and sharing information with friends and family in Sweden. "They grew a love for the game after awhile," Hagos, 23, told the Des Moines Register. "They started to pick up all the small things. You know how moms are. She will say, 'I saw the game the other day, and you were coming off the wing there. You should have shot instead of passed.'" Yared's parents, Terfu and Terry, moved from Ethiopia to Sweden separately for school and met in their new country.



Yared Hagos (Iowa Stars)

Yared made his first trip to Africa last summer to meet part of his family for the first time. "I feel so guilty each time summer goes and I haven't been to visit," says Yared. "I always have something else, like hockey school. It was nice visiting and seeing my heritage."

Yared grew up in the club system, working his way through the junior ranks. He played three seasons in the Swedish Elite League, starting in 2001-02. His intense hockey schedule forced him to quit school at about 17.

"My dad didn't like it at all," says Yared. "He's a really educated guy. He has his doctorate in science. School was really important to him, obviously, and he was disappointed I was taking this hockey thing and not going to school. But after awhile my dad supported me. He's still pretty mad. I always told him I will go back to school and do school later on. School will always be there. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." His mother owns a restaurant. His father works as a project leader helping people new to Sweden establish businesses.

More victories for Meseret Defar

Editor's note: Here, slightly abridged, is what Brain Cazeneune, Sports Illustrated's famed Olympic reporter, wrote online about Meseret Defar:

On the wall of the Queen of Sheba Ethiopian restaurant in New York's Hell's Kitchen stands a mural depicting the Queen's visit to King Solomon centuries ago. The queen, known as Mekeda, arrived in Jerusalem bearing gifts of previously unknown spice from the mysterious foreign land. Below the mural late Saturday night, Ethiopia's modern queen was being feted for making her own history and bringing her own spice to New York.

Meseret Defar's historic run at Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island hours earlier [June 3] established a world record for 5,000 meters. With a blistering 61-second final lap, the defending Olympic champion finished in 14 minutes, 24.53 seconds, breaking the mark set by Turkey's [Ethiopian born] Elvan Abeylegesse two years ago by a scant .13 seconds. Defar's feat made her the first runner to break a world record in a certified distance event (1,500 meters to 10,000 meters) on U.S. soil since Henry Rono broke the mark in the 3,000-meter steeplechase in Seattle in 1978. Defar, 22, wasn't even alive.

Defar ran a near-perfect race, emerging from the pack at 3,000 meters and stringing together 70-second laps until the final 400 meters. Her closing kick called to mind the reserve bursts of Haile Gebrselassie, Defar's countryman who is widely considered one of the greatest distance runners in history and surely its most devastating kicker. Earlier this month, Gebrselassie told Defar before a meet in Hengelo, the Netherlands, that she was primed to break her first world record on a track. Defar had recently smashed the less-esteemed 5,000 world record on the roads (14:46) and declared after that race, "Anybody in shorts is my competition."

She had tried twice earlier this year to break records on the track, running the third-fastest time in his-

tory for 3,000 meters in Boston four months ago. "Honestly, I was dreaming, after that 3,000," she said, "that I would finally have the strength for a record."

It took a transcendent gallop to outdo the likes of U.S. Olympic champions Justin Gatlin and Marion Jones, each of whom won 100-meter races on Saturday, and Defar actually ran into the record books during the day's final race, minutes after ESPN had ended its live coverage of the meet and turned off its light from the stadium's makeshift television tower. With no anticipation of history to celebrate, the race wasn't recorded for posterity. It's a telling irony about running in the States that a track world record generating such confined joy would be celebrated in the Big Apple before an emptying stadium with TV cameras that had just been turned off.



Meseret Defar celebrates her record-breaking run. (Reuters)

They should have seen the restaurant. Defar entered the restaurant to a wave of cheers, passing the narrow confines of the bar area as if she were taking a walk of honor on a red carpet. She made her way to the back where she and teammates Workitu Ayanu, Tadesse Mestawot and Legesse Meskerem formed a circle around a *mesob*, the basket upon which food is placed for a communal feast. Food arrived on a large tray in dollops of traditional *wats*, blended in *berbere*, the spice and pepper sauce that also gave rise to Defar's nickname. "Meseret has the nickname 'Meteta,' which is a spicy powder," a member of the delegation explained. "She has this name because she talks a lot."

Conversation loosened as the hours passed and the women began teasing one another for having slow kicks and flawed running form. Defar sipped only once during a champagne toast in her honor and then stood up to join in an impromptu *eskista*, a gyrating shoulder dance for which good form is surely beside the point. As several male teammates began clapping and enjoying the rhythms of Amharic pop tunes, another woman began waving an Ethiopian flag behind the revelers as men from the bar clapped a chorus and feted the young legend before them.

Defar probably needed to negative-split her celebrations. After a weekend of training and sleeping, Defar and her team planned to loosen the discipline to enjoy a New York excursion. "We are going shopping," she said. "I will buy anything I might like."

That's heady progress for the girl who began running in shoes her older brother would outgrow and discard because her family in Addis was too scrapped for money. "Fifty people in this restaurant will remember what she did here and remember this night forever," Philipos Mengistu, the restaurant's owner and chef, said in the wee hours of Sunday morning. "It's a small world, but now the world is hers." 🇪🇹🇺🇸

E&E RPCVs — news of the group

Peace Corps 45th Anniversary meeting AND E&E RPCVs reunion

The National Peace Corps Association will hold its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. from September 14 to 16. Thursday there will be a some lobbying of Congress, the usual annual meeting and a board meeting, plus, on Saturday, what is billed as the "Anniversary Picnic," marking the 45th anniversary of the founding of Peace Corps.

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs is planning some special activities for the occasion. They will include a Group IV reunion, country updates (with the HERALD's own Shlomo Backrach as speaker), Peace Corps Writers book reading, RPCV Legacy Projects presentations, recording of our Peace Corps stories, and some dinners.

So that we know how much *doro wat* to order and *tej* to brew, a reservation is needed for the Saturday night dinner at the Hillenbrand's house in Washington. Incongruously, some Vietnamese food will also be served. You MUST RSVP for this dinner

The headquarters hotel will be the Hotel Harrington at 11th and E St. N.W. in the District. www.hotel-harrington.com 800-424-8532. This is a reasonably priced hotel, and YOU must make your own reservations.

For questions, to indicate that you will be attending any of the events, or to give an RSVP for the Saturday evening dinner, contact C.J. Smith Castagnaro at 626-280-1087 or cjsmithc@earthlink.net.

For subsequent updates on specifics, go to our web site at www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org. Those who indicate to C.J. that they will be attending will receive email updates.

Thanks go to CJ Smith Castagnaro (Harar; Debre Zeit; Addis Ababa 65-66, 67-69), Leo Cecchini (Asmara 62-64), John Coyne (Addis 62-64), Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 63-65), Nancy Horn (Addis 65-67) and Judy Smith (Asmaa 63-65) for their efforts in planning this reunion.

RPCV Legacy Program projects

Board donation

Recently the Board of E&E RPCVs voted to donate \$1,000 to each of the group's RPCV Legacy Program projects from its general funds. The Board is extremely pleased to recognize the high quality of each of these projects with these donations.

We urge YOU to continue to support these projects that foster sustainable economic development, relieve poverty and improve the quality of life in Ethiopia and Eritrea as well.

NEW

Support for Girls' Advisory Committees

In April, the Board was delighted to approve a new RPCV Legacy Program project designed to support Ethiopian school-aged girls continue their education, and championed by Nancy Horn (Addis Ababa 66-68) and CJ Castagnaro (Harar 1964-66, Debre Zeit 67-69). We hope you will support this project with the same enthusiasm that you have for the other three.

Will you support this new project to increase girls' enrollment in primary schools in Ethiopia and to help them stay in school until graduation?

Girls' Advisory Committees (GAC) are a very inspiring part of a project funded by USAID to provide grants for capital improvements and the mobilization of community support for schools.

GACs include teachers, parents, students, and community leaders who come together to determine key issues that prevent girls from either attending or staying in school. The Committees then work on removing these barriers.

During the summer of 2005 Nancy conducted an evaluation of 20 schools that already have GACs. She found that girls' enrollment had increased when the committees worked to eliminate such barriers as early marriage contracts and female genital cutting. Also girls enrollment benefited when tutoring programs for girls were set up or when income generating projects were developed to support

Visit

<http://EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org/pages/rpcvlegacyprogram.html>
for more details about the RPCV LEGACY PROGRAM projects, and lists of donors for each.

Please donate

E&E RPCVs is a non-profit corporation and all donations to these projects are tax deductible.

All donations go directly to the recipient organizations. E&E RPCVs does not withhold any monies for operating costs.

To donate to any of these projects use the form on page 31.

If you would like to make a donation in honor of someone, please just let us know. They will be notified directly, and noted at our website.

To donate online

Use the secure e-philanthropy site "Network for Good" which deducts 3% of your donation to cover costs.

Go to

EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org

and click on the blue and white button labeled "Donate Now through Network for Good."

Be sure to indicate which project you wish to support.

girls who are HIV/AIDS orphans. Also, more destitute girls stayed in school when they were awarded money to purchase school supplies. The GACs have done these programs without any financial support from the USAID program because it only finances capital improvements.

In this Legacy Project, we hope to provide financial support for GACs in approximately 120 schools with grants of between \$30 and \$50. This aid will allow more girls to attend school for longer periods of time. GACs can use the grants for such efforts as: establishing small income-generating projects to purchase school supplies for girls; working with lawyers to have a marriage contracts broken; or traveling to girls' homes to convince parents that their daughters should stay in school.

Partnering with E&E RPCVs on this project will be the two organizations currently working on the USAID project — World Learning and Save the Children U.S. They will obtain a plans from the GACs on how the funds will be used, award the grants, establish a monitoring system, and report to Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs on how the grant has improved education for girls.

Your donation of \$50 — or more — will help us begin to achieve this goal.

Vocational Training for Children at Risk

— championed by John Kulczycki (Debre Zeit 63-65), and Scott Morgan (Debre Zeit 64-66), with donor champions Virginia McArthur (Addis Ababa 64-66), Charles Wood Jewett (Aggaro, Addis Ababa 66-69), and an anonymous donor.

The goal of this project is to provide poverty-stricken children in Addis Ababa with the means to achieve economic independence in legitimate professions. The project's partner is an Ethiopian NGO, Children Aid — Ethiopia (CHAD-ET), which was established in 1995 to protect the rights and welfare of children and to provide services for children in difficult circumstances. CHAD-ET's program includes vocational training based on the child's interests and job prospects in areas such as tailoring, catering, and teaching.

John Kulczycki writes: "The latest report about the trainees in the Children at Risk Legacy Project contains some good news about those who have completed training in food preparation. For those now in apprenticeships, we will be providing a transportation and lunch allowance as requested.

"More difficult to meet is the request of those who trained in cosmetology, who are asking for financial support to start their own businesses, which is beyond our current resources. As some donors have suggested, I have investigated the possibility of the trainees obtaining micro-financing, but this is not done with individuals just starting a business. Prof. Johnson of the Jane Addams College of Social Work of the University of Illinois at Chicago, the co-director of the project that created a graduate program in Social Work at Addis Ababa University, suggested that the trainees seek unpaid internships to gain more experience, but the trainees insist that such internships are difficult to find and do not necessarily lead to employment on completion of the internship.

"In other news, Ato Alemu, who is the CHAD-ET employee coordinating our project, just returned from a three-week stay in the U.S. visiting American NGOs. Scott Morgan, one of the original champions of the project, was able to meet with him and was very impressed. We are fortunate to be working with such dedicated and capable people. Further evidence of the quality of CHAD-ET's work is the financial support the Irish NGO Concern and the British NGO ChildHope provided to CHAD-ET for its program in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Please donate to help us continue this project."

HIV BOOKS FOR 200 COMMUNITIES

— championed by Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62-64) with donor champions Charles Wood Jewett (Aggaro, Addis Ababa 66-69), Lois Shoemaker (Asmara 62-64), and an anonymous donor.

E&E RPCVs is partnering with the publisher The Hesperian Foundation to provide health-care manuals for medical workers in remote communities in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Our donations provide

funds to enable Hesperian to fulfill requests for their books that they receive from Ethiopian and Eritrean health-care workers. It's not always easy to get the books to Ethiopia. Recently, Lee Gallery of the Foundation wrote that "all the books the Hesperian Foundation sent to Ethiopia in March were returned." She continued: "When we went online to the U.S. Post Office information on sending mail there, we got a message which said that 'All international economy mail services [to Ethiopia] are suspended due to a lack of surface transportation. However, this suspension of service does not affect International Surface Air Lift (ISAL) mail.' So, because we have your Legacy donation money, we will re-send the packages marked Airmail."

So thanks to the generous donations from our group these much needed and much appreciated health care books are able to reach those who can use them the most.

This from a note sent to Lee from Workineh in Yirgalem who received the books *Where There Is No Doctor*, and *HIV, Health and Your Community*: I would really thank you from the core of my heart for remembering me in all your dedicative effort to fulfill all my questions. I would also like to thank "Peace Corpus Volunteers" who cooperated and strived its best to send me the books. I found the books the most essential and useful in all my ways whether it be for myself to know many essential and most useful things from it or to make my friends, classmates, the children and other in my area know and study them.


Borana Region Student Acceleration

— championed by **E. Fuller Torrey** (Ethiopia staff: physician 1964-66) with donor champion **Kathleen Moore** (Emdeber 64-66)

Since 2004 the Ethiopian registered NGO Mega Vision Developmental Association (MVDA), the Borana Region Student Acceleration project each summer provides classes for selected students from the Borana region in far southern Ethiopia. It is managed by Teshome Shibre Kelkile, M.D., Ph.D. The classes are taught in the Borana towns of Mega and Hidilola by university students who come from that region. In 2005, the second year of the program, 208 students (119 males, 89 females) from grades 5 to 10 were taught by 20 university students.

Students in the Borana region are disadvantaged in a number of ways. Many of their families are semi-nomads. Initial schooling is done in Oromiffa, the local language, and so their skills in Amharic and English are behind those of students in many other regions. They thus find it difficult to compete in national exams for university entrance. This program 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.

MVDA plans to initiate a program to provide educational material support for girls who, as we all know, face serious obstacles in getting an education in Ethiopia. This year the program will support 40-50 girls chosen on the basis of performance. They will receive support for school uniforms, books, school supplies and residential house rental cost for those who do not live with their parents.

Your contribution of any amount is welcome. 

Friends

Reunion report: Ethiopia/Eritrea XIII – 35 Years Later

Tom Holt (Debre Zeit 70–72), along with some considerable help from his friends, wrote the following reflection on the reunion of Ethiopia/Eritrea XIII.

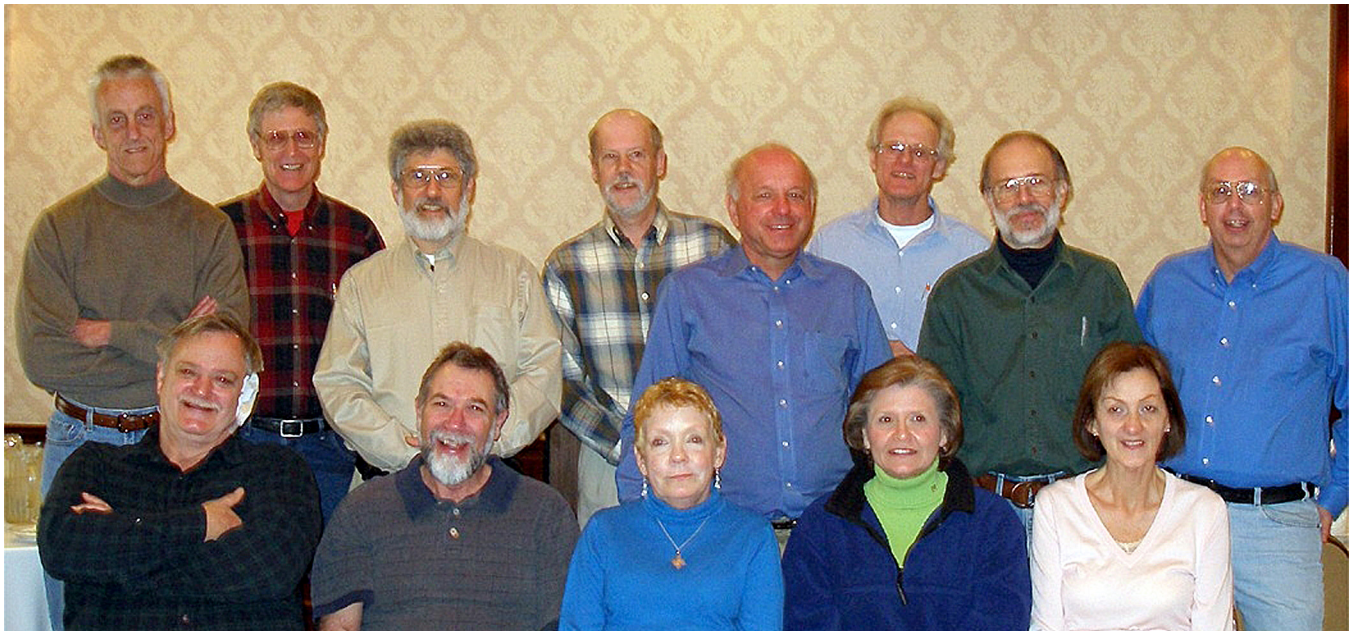
Bob Gausman (Dorze, Boditi 70–72) called last fall and asked if I would be interested in going to a reunion of our group. It seemed like a good idea and he was willing to do all the contacting. Locating about 30 people who had issues with authority and commitment to any organization was a tough challenge but he did it. The result was a gathering of a diverse group of aging former Volunteers, united by a shared adventure 35 years ago.

We arrived in Washington, DC the last week of March. Bob had found a hotel and meeting space for us on the Potomac River that wasn't too pricey, sort of reminiscent of the Sylvania Hotel in Philadelphia. My first shock was checking in with this

old guy calling my name. Who could it be? It was **Wendell King** (70–73) and his wife. Could I have aged as much as he had? Probably, but the shock of change from 24 to 58 in a glance was quite a surprise.

Our program in Ethiopia was farm based. Many of the Volunteers had grown up on farms and returned to them two years later. Many of us had worried about the draft; if was, after all, the early 70s and America was still at war in Vietnam. Two of the Volunteers were married and those marriages survive to this day. Several of the Volunteers were nurses who continued in nursing after they got home. The rest of us had pursued a variety of careers from farming to an import/export business, a landscaper, teachers, lawyers, appraisers, and myself, a veterinarian.

Saturday morning we had a slide show. One of the Volunteers had just gotten back from a trip to Ethiopia so he gave us a glimpse of paved roads and skyscrapers and cell phones in the capital city. Our old slides of 35 years ago were a glimpse back to our youth, to friends no longer with us, to a



Left to right — top row: Bob Redwine, Phil Cox, Lew Mermelstein, Bob Gausman, Dwight Sullivan, Wendell King, Flip Miller and Tom Holt. Bottom row: Bill Kendall, Russ Burkey, Barbara Miller West, Linda Redwine and Maryann Melzl. (Missing from the photo: Bill Hunt, Bobbie Vann, Gary Kowalczyk, Anne Haynes, Dave Courtney, Fred Seligson and Eleanor Norwood.)

time of hope and expectations with our whole lives ahead of us.

Bob had made contact with Tsehay Teferra at the Ethiopian Community Development Council in Arlington where he works. Tsehay was one of the language instructors for our group in both Addis and Awassa. He hosted a dinner of home made Ethiopian food for us and then caught us up with the last 35 years of Ethiopian politics and economic development. The news is both good and bad with tremendous population growth, much in the way of political troubles, and much remaining poverty. We were heartened to hear of a grade school with three shifts to accommodate the students who want to attend but allow time for them to work at farming or shepherding flocks in the off hours.

Sunday breakfast was for good byes and a group photo of those who were still around. Like all Peace Corps activities, there was a lot of freedom to come and go, participate or not. We hope to gather five years from now and exchange the news. 35 years is too long to be away from people who shared such a life altering experience as two years in Ethiopia.

A project in South Africa

Philip Lilienthal (Addis Ababa 65–67) reports that the first two years of his summer camp project in South Africa has gone very well. The following is from a recent letter from Phil to contributors:

It's hard to believe that in January 2004 we held our first camp in South Africa. For those of you less familiar with WorldCamps, our camp program delivers a traditional camp experience with a special emphasis on HIV/AIDS awareness to South African youth. In the last year alone we doubled the number of children who were able to attend our camps. We have served a total of 1,512 campers at the 12 camps we have had since inception in January 2004. Our post-camp Kids Club programs, which serve as a follow-up mechanism for our campers, have doubled in size. Last week, alone, 500 former campers attended one of the four clubs. So far, 53 international volunteers have joined us at World-

Camps, seven of whom have returned for a second (and in one case, a third) camp.

Our second year has brought us grants for camp from such well-known organizations as the Elton John AIDS Foundation, the MAC AIDS Fund, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Gilead Sciences, Inc. Recently, WorldCamps received the American Camp Association's highest award for program excellence, the Eleanor Eells Award. As a Camp Director for over 30 years I can tell you that this is really quite a feather in our cap.

This year promises to be another filled with program growth and exciting partnerships. During the first two years WorldCamps hosted camps at three different sites. This year we hope to build a permanent site. Such a step not only reinforces our commitment to our work in South Africa, it also allows us to host more children at our camps by keeping the administrative costs of rentals low.

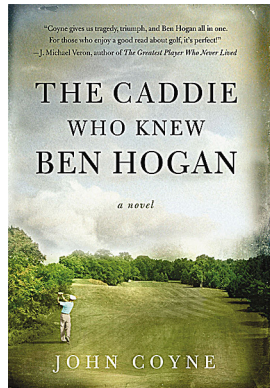
To learn more about the program or to donate, go to WorldCamps.org.

Looking for...

Gabrielle Dolphin (Dire Dawa, Harar 74–76) would like to reconnect with **Nick Hunsacker** (Bekoji 73–75). If you can help, write mhbeil@rochester.rr.com

Books by friends

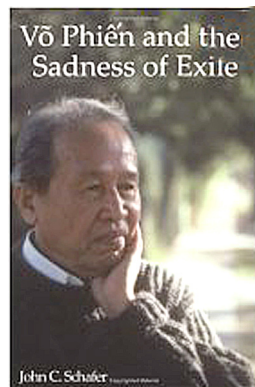
If you've seen **John Coyne** (Addis Ababa 62–64) in your town recently it's because he is been on the road promoting his new book, *The Caddie who*



Knew Ben Hogan, published by Thomas Dunne Books. At Washington's Politics and Prose bookstore Coyne read selections from the book to an audience sprinkled with former Peace Corps types, including Ethiopia's first country director, Harris Waford. Coyne's novel is set in Chicago and tells

of a 1946 match between Hogan and a club pro as seen through the eyes of a 14-year caddy. It's full of nostalgia, a bit of romance and a suspenseful golf story. Coyne, once a caddy master at Midlothian Country Club on Chicago's South side, has the atmosphere down to a tee.

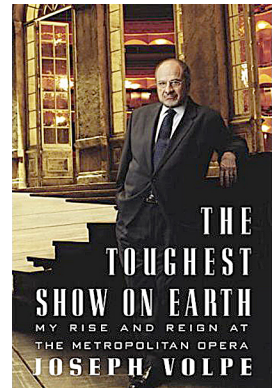
John C. Schafer (Debre Markos 63–65) has a new book out called *Vo Phien and Sadness of Exile*, the



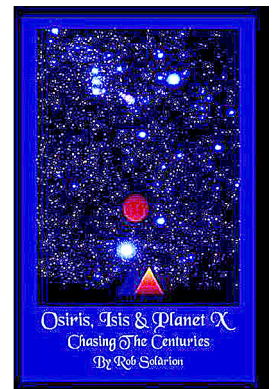
first book-length study in English of a modern Vietnamese writer. The book, published by Southeast Asia Publications, is the biography and study of one of Vietnam's most popular writers. Vo Phien's books explored the complexities of village life in Vietnam in the 50s and 60s. Later when forced into exile, he wrote

hauntingly of the melancholy of being a refugee. Schafer, who spoke pretty good Peace Corps Amharic, learned Vietnamese while teaching at the University of Hue in the 1970s and now devotes most of his time to Vietnamese literature.

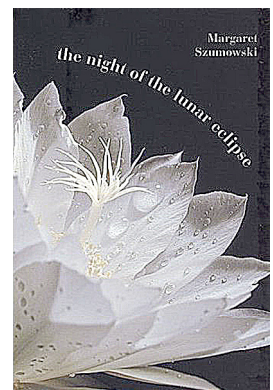
Outgoing GM of the Met Joseph Volpe collaborated with **Charlie Michener** (Addis Ababa 62–64) to produce his memoir *The Toughest Show on Earth: My Rise and Reign at the Metropolitan Opera* published by Knopf in May. Michener previously worked with Peter Duchin and Robert Evans to write their memoirs.



Robert Russell (Massawa 64–66) has published *Osiris, Isis & Planet X: Chasing the Centuries* through Author House. It is his third book written under the pseudonym of Rob Solarian. The others — *Planet X Nibiru: Slow-Motion Doomsday*, and *Apollonius of Tyana and the Shroud of Turin*.



Margaret Szumowski (Addis Ababa 74–75) had her second book of poetry published in September of 2005 by Tupelo Press entitled *The Night of the Lunar Eclipse*. Her first, published in 2001 was *I Want the World*. 🇪🇪



Letter to the editor

In his review of *Bond without Blood*, William Seraile (Mekele 63–65) in issue #31 of *The Herald* mentions the “miniskirt riot” in 1968. I’m not sure if this really happened or not. I was out of the country at the time, but when I came back to Ethiopia in 1969, a woman at the university had been arrested for putting on a fashion show at the University. She was an American, but not a PCV. I knew her from my

last days on the staff. I wonder if that is the same event? In his book *The Emperor*, Ryszard Kapuscinski mentions that one of HIM’s servants said that this incident was the beginning of the downfall for Haile. I doubt that, but it is interesting. Maybe we should claim it.

John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62–64; staff/Ethiopia 65–67)

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We’d like to thank those who volunteered articles, ideas and effort for this issue of *THE HERALD*. We especially appreciate the work of the book reviewers who carried a particularly heavy load this issue.

The news summaries in *THE HERALD* were written from dozens of items forwarded to *THE HERALD* by Shlomo Bachrach, who culls news stories about Ethiopia and Eritrea from many sources and sends them out to a long list of interested parties, including many RPCVs. He can be contacted at: shlomo@eastafricaforum.net

Sources for the news summaries in this issue include: Addis Ababa Tribune; Africast.com; ; Agence France-Presse; All Africa Global Media (allAfrica.com); Awate.com; Daily Monitor of Addis Ababa; Associated Press; Reuters; BBC; East African Standard; Eritrea New Agency; Ethiopian Government Information Service; The New York

Times; ONLF.org; Panafrican News Agency; Shae-bia.com; the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia; U.N. news service: U.N. Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) www.irin-news.org; USA Today; Visafric; The Washington Post; www.reliefweb.int.

Please send articles

THE HERALD is most eager to receive submissions. Our pages are open to all. Have you recently revisited Ethiopia or Eritrea? Have you made contact with former students or friends from Peace Corps days? Have you come across interesting articles, books, exhibitions that you think the rest of us would like to know about? Have you had some new thoughts about your Peace Corps service? About Ethiopia or Eritrea? About teaching and development? All these would make wonderful articles for *THE HERALD*. We also enthusiastically welcome photo submissions.

Send ideas, submissions, suggestions, or even cranky letters-to-the-editor to:

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Our library contains a wide variety of materials including books, vide os, 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.

Does it say “Expired” above your name in the address block?

If so, it’s time to send in your \$15 fee to continue to receive *THE HERALD*, an award winning newsletter edited by retired *Time* magazine correspondent **Barry Hillenbrand** (Debre Marcos 63–65) and to continue to support other activities of Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs that include

- the RPCV Legacy Program projects
- the great reunions we organize.
- the website that has been so instrumental in helping RPCVs reconnect with friends and former students.

Below is a form to renew your affiliation with E&E RPCVs. Please continue your support of our efforts.

Support one, two, three or all of our RPCV Legacy Program Projects

- “Borana Region Student Acceleration”
- “HIV Books for Rural Communities”
- “Support for GACs”
- “Vocational Training for Children at Risk”

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Name when in the Peace Corps if different from above _____

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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 _____

\$15 Annual fees for E&E RPCVs (Not tax deductible)

or

\$50 If you wish to join the NPCA as well. (Those outside the U.S. — add \$20 for NPCA postage)

Make checks payable to E&E RPCVs and send to:

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

c/o Marian Haley Beil

4 Lodge Pole Road

Pittsford, NY 14534-4550

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